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## Christ The Servant of Exodus 21 - Loving His Master

### Reading:

Ex. 21:1-6  
Deut. 15:12-18  
Psa. 40:6-8  
Heb. 10:5-9

### Introduction

One of the loveliest foreshadowings of the Lord is that of the servant who manifests his love and suffers in devotion by having his ear bored with an aul. This activity was a triple witness in that it bore witness to:

- a) His love for his master.
- b) His physical, and not just verbal, pledge of perpetual service to his master.
- c) His desire for maintained relationship and fellowship with his wife and children.

The law concerning the Hebrew servant is a development from the sent servant (Gen. 24:2) who served out of obedience (he was sent by Abraham, Gen. 24:4, 10). There was no indication of love for the master, and he never had to pay a price to manifest devotion and love. Yet, there are at least two similarities, for in neither case is the servant unnamed, nor is there any indication of how long he had been a servant.

### Peculiarities

Considering the last clause, there is no way of knowing how long his servitude lasted before He said: "I love my Master". This raises the question: "How long had the Lord been a servant, or manifested servant attitude before He said: "I love the Father" (Jn. 14:31). My understanding is that this was His attitude from a past eternity. The Lord answered the need prophetically saying: "Here am I; send me" (Isa. 6:8). His taking the "form of a servant" (Phil. 2:7) was not out of coercing, intimidation, or unspoken pressure, but an act of His own volition. How amazing this is. The Lord of glory (1 Cor. 2:8), the Son of the Highest (Lk. 1:32), He who was in the form of God, took in genuineness the form of a servant and as such, was made in the likeness of men (Phil. 2:6-7).

GLORY be to God on high, and peace on earth descend!  
God comes down, he bows the sky, and shows himself our friend:  
God the invisible appears! God, the blest, the great I AM,  
Sojourns in this vale of tears, and Jesus is his name.

Him the angels all adored, their Maker and their King.  
Tidings of their humbled Lord they now to mortals bring.  
Emptied of his majesty, of his dazzling glories shorn,  
Being's source begins to be, the son of God is born!

See the eternal Son of God a mortal Son of man;  
Dwelling in an earthly clod, whom heaven cannot contain!  
Stand amazed, ye heavens, at this! see the Lord of earth and skies;  
Humbled to the dust he is, and in a manger lies.

... *Charles Wesley*

### The Decisions Made Before The Physical Marking

Before the decision to be a servant forever and suffer in his body the pains, other considerations had to be thought about and decided upon. He was:

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- a) Entering a pathway He had never known before. With the physical vow once taken, there was no turning back irrespective of what was asked of him. What a picture of our Lord. That lovely man “learned He obedience by the things which He suffered” (Heb. 5:8).
- i) For the first time He was going to learn what it was not only to be rejected, but to be utterly hated. (Jn. 1:11; 15:25)
  - ii) Instead of adoration He learned what it was to be spitefully envied. (Matt. 27:18)
  - iii) He who had known the sphere of joy was going to learn what it meant to be the man of sorrows. (Isa. 53:3)
  - iv) His name, instead of exultation, would be the song of the drunkards. (Psa. 69:2)
  - v) He would learn what it was to be tempted. (Matt. 4:1-10)
  - vi) He would learn what it was to live amongst humanity in a family context. (Matt. 12:46)
  - vii) He would learn what it was to be constantly under the gaze of criticizing and critiquing eyes. (Mk. 3:2)
  - viii) He would learn what it was to be hungry (Matt. 21:18), thirsty (Jn. 19:28), and weary (Jn. 4:6).
  - ix) He would learn what it was to pray. (Matt. 26:42)
  - x) He would know what it is to weep and to do so with strong crying and tears. (Jn. 11:35; Heb. 5:7)
  - xi) He would know what it is to have the heavens silent and no one to turn to on earth for comfort. (Psa. 69:20)
  - xii) He would learn what it was to endure humiliation and shame. (Heb. 12:1-2)
  - xiii) He would know what it is to enter into death and rise again. (Lk. 23:46; Acts 4:10)
  - xiv) He would learn what it was to trust in God for the provision of the needs of others. (Jn. 6:5, 11-13)
  - xv) He would know what it is to silence the fault seeking Pharisees and associates. (Mk. 12:14; Matt. 17:24-26)

Before He ever left the heights of bliss and joy, He knew in its fulness the darkness of the path that lay before Him, and yet He came. Well, may we sing:

Oh twas love, was wondrous love, the love of Christ to me  
It brought my Saviour from above, to die on Calvary.

It was a lonely path he trod, from every human soul apart  
Known only to Himself and God, was all the grief that filled His heart  
Yet from the track He turned not back,  
Till where I lay in want and shame,  
He found me—Blessed be His name!

- b) Furthermore, He was going to endure sufferings which he never knew before, nor would he know again. In other words, there was a willingness to suffer “once for all”. Reviewing, we read: “Christ also hath once suffered for sins” (1 Pet. 3:18); “He died unto sin once” (Rom. 6:10); “Who needed not daily . . . to offer up sacrifice . . . for this He did once” (Heb. 7:27); “Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many” (Heb. 9:28); “We are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all” (Heb. 10:10). Such was the sufficiency of the work of Christ that it never needs repeating or renewing. The sacrifices of an ancient day which were repeated every morning and evening (Ex. 29:39); the Sabbaths, every new moon; and the set feasts (1 Chron. 23:31) every year (Heb. 10:1), yet they could never take away sin nor cleanse the conscience. How true are the words of the wise man: “I know that, whatsoever God doeth, it shall be for ever: nothing can be put to it, nor anything taken from it” (Ecc. 3:14).
- c) It was a decision He made of His own volition. “God loveth a cheerful giver” (2 Cor. 9:7), and never desires that which is begrudged to Him. He said: “I came down from Heaven, not to do mine own will, but the will of Him that sent me” (Jn. 6:38). He did not say: “I was asked to come down”. It was a voluntary act.

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### Some Of The Truths Reflected In This Concerning Our Lord

It would seem that when brought before the judges, the man would make his confession of love. Thus, there are the words of love, followed by the wounding of love, and finally the wounds of love.

a) The words of love:

(i) The expression: “Shall plainly say” (Ex. 21:5) only occurs here in the scriptures, a fact which requires us take note of it. The emphasis is on the word “plainly” (Hebrew “amar”) which is used in a variety of contexts. However, the first occurrences are when it is recorded: “And God said” (Gen. 1:3, 6, 9, 11, 14, 20, 24, 26, 28, 29) where God is speaking with authority. Being so connected, it indicated the man spoke with resolution and a determined mindset, which brings to our thoughts the ram in it’s undeterred movements.

ii) What He said:

1. I am aware that it is often said that the man said: “I love my master, I love my wife, I love my children”. There can be no doubt that he did love them, but the scriptures do not say he said such. What he did say was: “I love my master, my wife, and my children; I will not go out free.”
2. The priority of his expression. It seems to me that we often think about the sacrifice of the lord and what we have obtained because of it. However, there is a higher level, the sacrifice of the Lord was for God. This passage clearly states that Calvary was an act of love for the Father.

b) The wounding of love:

i) First I want to make it clear that I do not agree with striving for emotionalism by speaking of the “blood that flowed from His back”; or the “tortured suffering when they hammered the nails into his hands”; or “the drops of His blood trickling down his face and falling to the ground”. These are, to my mind fleshy, for the fact is God speaks nothing about them but leaves them stark. This is a theme too sacred for emotionalism such as was had with the film: “The Passion of the Christ”. Seeking to stay within the boundaries of the scripture, the sufferings of the Lord are in two categories:

1. Those which He suffered as He “learned obedience”, that is, learnt the cost of obedience (Heb. 5:8; 2:10), none of which were for salvation but for Him to be fitted as our Great High Priest.
2. The other category is the “soul” sufferings of the Lord when in the hours of darkness He suffered for sins to be our Saviour. (Isa. 53:10)

ii) In Isaiah 53 there are several words used for the physical sufferings of the Lord. A point must be recognized. The scriptures will not allow us to read Calvary into the words: “He hath borne our griefs and carried our sorrows” (Isa. 53:4). If we read Matthew carefully we observe that when he speaks of a matter being fulfilled, he means fulfilled, it has no further significances. Within the context of physical healing Matthew writes: “That it might be fulfilled, which was spoken by Esaias the prophet, saying, Himself took our infirmities, and bare our sicknesses” (Matt. 8:17). We cannot apply this to the cross, which is a fact many saints do and think believers ought not to have sickness now because Christ bore them on the cross. The Lord did not bear our sicknesses at Calvary. On these things we must be very careful. Peter takes up another clause: “With His stripes we are healed” (Isa. 53:5), and that applies to His work in the hours of darkness.

iii) The medical world has subdivided wounds into six categories, of which at least four are related to the wounds of the Lord.

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1. Contused - a wound caused by a blunt instrument, such as was inflicted on the Lord when they smote “the judge of Israel with a rod upon the cheek” (Mic. 5:1), or when they “buffeted him; and others smote him with the palms of their hands” (Matt. 26:67; Jn. 18:22).
2. Lacerated - is a wound caused by tearing. Deep were the sufferings of our Lord when they “plowed upon my back: they made long their furrows” (Psa. 129:3); and scourged Him (Matt. 27:26; Jn. 19:1).
3. Penetrating - is a wound caused by a sharp pointed instrument. This is the sort of wound the crown of thorns would result in (Matt. 27:29; Jn. 19:2).
4. Perforating - A wound produced by a piercing instrument. Perforating comes from a Latin word to pierce through. When our Lord was dead, then a soldier “with a spear pierced His side” (Jn. 19:34).

These were the wounds of man, but who can fathom the words of Isaiah 53:4 when it speaks of Him being “Smitten of God, and afflicted”?

Wounded for me, wounded for me  
There on the cross, He was wounded for me  
Gone my transgressions and now I am free  
All because Jesus was wounded for me.

c) The wounds of love:

- i) Blessed it is to know that the wounds of the Lord are never spoken of as “scars”. A scar is that which was once a wound but now completely healed. It indicates a suffering once known but the freshness of which is gone forever. On this let us be careful for I have heard it said from early days: “Stood a Lamb freshly slain” (Rev. 5:6). The word “slain” (sphazo) is used in nine verses (1 Jn. 3:12; Rev. 5:6, 9, 12; 6:9; 13:3 (trs. “wounded”, 8; 18:24) and it never carries the thought of freshly slain. The word is “Hôs” (as if), is used because the Lamb is now alive (in appearance) but with the marks of sacrifice. (Robertson's Word Pictures). In reading the following translations, none of them speak of “freshly slain”, ASV, DBY, RSV, NIV, NASB, ISV, Young's literal, Douay-Rheims, Weymouth, Webster's.

. . . . Rowan Jennings