



Exodus

THE BOOK OF THE COVENANT: GIVEN AND RATIFIED **Exodus 21:1-11**

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Deliverance - Commission - Covenant

Exodus 1-19 tells the story of Israel's deliverance from Egypt and God's commissioning of His people. Exodus 20 marks the beginning of the Covenant God creates for Israel. The Covenant explanation will not conclude until Leviticus 27.

Slavery

As followers of Jesus (and hopefully just as human beings), we unequivocally, emphatically, and holistically condemn the practice of human slavery or human trafficking in any and all forms. Period.

General Overview of Slavery/Servitude in The Book of the Covenant

- The context of any conversation about slavery in the life of Israel at this point in history is the reality of Israel's immediate past history as slaves in Egypt.
- The words "servant," "slave," "maidservant," - and the like, occur over 1,000 times in the Old Testament.
- The Hebrew word *'ebed* can be translated as "servant," "worker," "employee," or "slave."
- The Hebrew word *ba'al* can be translated as "master," "owner," "boss," or "employer."
- People who were *servants/slaves/employees* worked under the conditions of a formal contract with strict stipulations and the agreements were limited to specific jobs or functions in a household.

- Israel made no provision for the practice of ethnic slavery like they had endured in Egypt --- or akin to what we generally think of as the practice of slavery.
- Servanthood had a time duration attached to it. After 7 years, servants were to be set free from their contracts.
- Owners/masters/bosses were required to treat all servants fairly and with dignity (21:7-11, 26-27).
- God's law protected all people across the social and economic spectrums.

Specific Guidelines

1. There were time limits placed on servitude contracts.
2. Servants could voluntarily agree to a more permanent status.
3. Female servants had certain protections to guarantee their well-being.