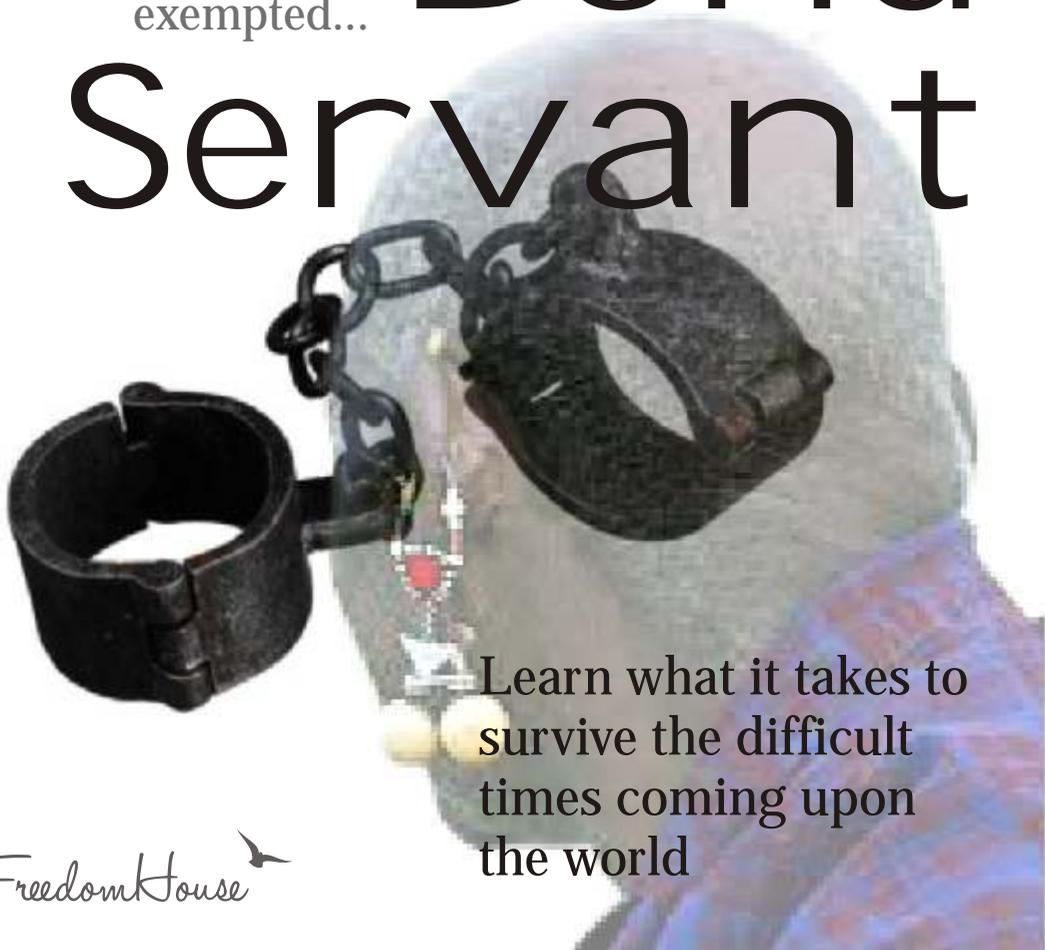


ERNEST~PAUL

Not everyone
will be hurt by
the impending
global crisis.
one man will
be divinely
exempted...

...The Bond Servant



Learn what it takes to
survive the difficult
times coming upon
the world

FreedomHouse 

Published by FreedomHouse Publishers
Printed in Nigeria.

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Cover Design by Ernest Paul
Ep Global Designs Ltd.
0803 301 6299

Published for CentrePort
Abuja
Email: centreportc@gmail.com
www.centreportonline.org
0806 445 2910

...The Bond Servant



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Introduction



Transcending a Woman's Love

Bible stories have for many centuries both inspired and challenged many people the world over. The sacred book is replete with stories of ordinary men who through faith in God transcended the natural to do the most astonishing things, like the story of the shepherd boy who felled a giant and delivered the Philistine army into the hands of King Saul and his company. O, how that story thrills my soul. I love the story, and what great lessons are there to learn from it, but I am particularly intrigued by the ending where after Goliath is killed David is brought to the King “*And it came to pass, when he had made an end of speaking unto Saul, that the soul of Jonathan was knit with the soul of David, and Jonathan loved him as his own soul.*” (1Sam.18:1) This is repeated in the third verse: “*Then Jonathan and David made a covenant, because he loved him as his own soul.*”

I love the way the BBE translation renders 1Sam.18:1. It says, “*Now after David's talk with Saul was ended, the soul of Jonathan was joined with the soul of David, and David became as dear to him as his very life.*” “As his very life”? How utterly suggestive! Of this love David himself testifies, “*Your love to me was wonderful, surpassing the love of women.*” (2Sam.1:26)

What degree of love could this be? How could one love another as his own soul, as his very life? What sort of love would lead a crowned prince to give a poor shepherd boy his robe that was on him and his armor, even to his sword and his bow and his belt? And as if that were not enough Jonathan was willing to vacate his future throne just because he loved this boy.

Of all the mysteries in the world the deepest and most profound is love. History turns upon the hinges of great love stories. Men have been reported to do the most insane things, borne unutterable pain, and endured extreme conditions all for the sake of love. Wars have been

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fought and wars have been stopped because love set in. great Generals, fierce in battle and unstoppable as killer machines have been tamed by the love of a little damsel, and what may not be done once love takes hold of the heart.

Whether it is real life or a work of fiction love stories have always moved our hearts, unlocked our tears and moved us to the uttermost fringes of our emotions. I say whether it is Romeo and Juliet, Cleopatra and Mark Antony, Lancelot and Guinevere, Tristan and Isolde, Paris and Helena, Orpheus and Eurydice, Napoleon and Josephine, Odysseus and Penelope, Paolo and Francesca or Scarlett O'Hara and Rhett Butler we've been intrigued by love and astounded by what it makes people do.

Perhaps it is easy to see why a man may love a woman, especially after they've walked hand in hand the sunset beaches or sat idly giggling at the laughter of the gossiping waves lapping ever tirelessly against the sandy shorelines. It is easy, I say, to love a woman, after one has tasted the nectar of luscious lips, or felt the warmth of her body of embraced her tender bosom.

It is also easy I think for a prince to love a giant-killer, and who would not want to be known as the hero's friend or be seen in his company?

What is not easy to comprehend is how a slave, would so love his master that when by law he is required to go free, to walk, to return to his former life, to his go back to pursuit of his childhood dreams and happiness he would say no.

The life of a slave is not an easy one. He is not a hired employee, has no rights and is not paid any wages for all the hard work he does; and yet a time comes when the Jewish law stipulates that such a man may regain his freedom and be allowed to go - to go on to be his own man, to set up on his own, maybe start a trade or travel the world a free man, but instead of grasping at this opportunity some slaves have been known to say, "No, I do not wish to be free, I love my master... and choose to serve him all the days of my life. I know that this decision means I shall never again be a freeman and that I shall forever bear in my body the mark of servitude, yet I choose to be bound, I love my master." The phrase in

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Hebrew is 'ahavti et adown' - "I love Adown." The Hebrew word of master is translated as 'lord, master, owner' and it comes from an unused root meaning 'to rule', 'sovereign', human or divine.

The Law of the Bond-servant

Exodus 21:1-6 *"Now these are the judgments which thou shalt set before them. If thou buy an Hebrew servant, six years he shall serve: and in the seventh he shall go out free for nothing. If he came in by himself, he shall go out by himself: if he were married, then his wife shall go out with him. If his master has given him a wife and she have born him sons or daughters; the wife and her children shall be her master's, and he shall go out by himself. And if the servant shall plainly say, I love my master, my wife, and my children; I will not go out free: Then his master shall bring him unto the judges; he shall also bring him to the door, or unto the door post; and his master shall bore his ear through with an awl; and he shall serve him for ever."*

Did such a thing ever happen? You may ask. Yes, it did in Bible days it did, and oh, it still happens. A man must be insane or a fool or both to make such a decision I think. But most of the tales I've heard in this connection concern men, not mad, but who in the full glare of a sound mind chose to be enslaved by love.

These sorts of lovers are referred to as bond servants. It is easy to dismiss them as folks who had no better options until you consider the story of the greatest bond servant that ever lived.

Chapter One



The Greatest Bond Servant

*“Behold **my servant**, whom I uphold; mine elect, in whom my soul delighteth; I have put my spirit upon him: he shall bring forth judgment to the Gentiles.” Isa. 42:1*

*“Behold, **My Servant** shall deal prudently; He shall be exalted and extolled and be very high. Just as many were astonished at you, So His visage was marred more than any man, And His form more than the sons of men; so shall He sprinkle many nations. Kings shall shut their mouths at Him; For what had not been told them they shall see, And what they had not heard they shall consider.” (NKJV) Isa. 52:13-15*

*“To you first, God, having raised up **His Servant Jesus**, sent Him to bless you, in turning away every one of you from your iniquities.” Acts 3:26 (NKJV)*

The Greek word used for "servant" is the word *doulos*, which literally means, "bond-servant." It's not a hired servant, someone who serves because that's their job. The Hebrew word is *ebed*, and is likewise translated as 'bond servant', meaning "one who is subservient to, and entirely at the disposal of, his master; a slave."

You wonder why God the Father should refer to our lord Jesus as His bond servant. Well, here is how it all began and this is the original act to which the idea of bond-servant hood owes its existence.

Far Beyond Eternity

The Bible opens in Gen.1:1, upon the majestic phrase, '*in the beginning God...*' This refers to the beginning of creation, but there is

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yet another beginning, farther down than this, of which John the beloved apostle refers in Jn.1:1 and 1Jn.1:1 respectively. “*In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.*” And “*That which was from the beginning, which we have listened to, which we have seen with our own eyes, and our own hands have handled concerning the Word of Life*” (WNT)

' In the beginning' is how Apostle John in imperfect, shadow-speech seeks to capture that indefinable epoch predating the emanation of eternity. It is the apostle's way of saying 'from the very first', 'from the first of firstness'.

God has no beginning. All things originated in Him. God has never not-existed. In fact the very concept of existence or existing originated with Him. The deepest manifestation of God referenced in the Bible is in the globe of eternity. (Isa.57:15) it is there that He first becomes manifest or knowable to the intellect. Beyond and without the globe of eternity God is as nothing to all created understandings. He is simply hid, unknowable, wrapped up in unsearchable mystery.

From the first of firstness God is Father and that by virtue of the fact that He has a Son. God did not become Father later on. He has from the very first been Father. Isaiah the prophet speaks of 'everlasting or eternal Father'. (Isa.9:6) The BBE translates 'everlasting Father' as 'Father for ever'.

God is the eternal Father of the eternal Son. Were there no Son there would be no Father and by the same token also were there no Father there would be no Son. Though the Father is the eternal generator of the Son as one who begat Him the Son at once generated as the Father's primal consciousness of Himself. This is what the apostle means when he says 'the same was in the beginning with God'.

The Son is co-eternal, co-essential and co-equal with the Father. The Son is an essential power immediately generated by the Father, out of His own divine essence. And though the Father may be said to be before the Son in order of nature forasmuch as He is the generator of the Son, we cannot say He is before the Son as to priority of time, for the Son exists from all eternity at once, and together with the Father.

When we delve into these things we find ourselves in that era before the archetypical world was in being.

God is Love

Please pardon my imperfect speech. When seeking to describe things much vaster than human experience or language one must necessarily be seen to be speaking in paradoxes bordering on error.

When at first God became conscious of Himself as God He knew Himself to be love. God is essentially love. His deepest divine is love. The deepest ground in God, the essence of all essences, the incomprehensible originality of all beings is pure love. Love is God's essential nature, as well as the source of His entire goings.

God's love first expresses itself in giving. He gave of Himself. He gave life. He did that by creating. The Son's love first expressed itself in receiving the Father's love. I love the way George MacDonald expresses this knowledge:

“Because of that eternal love which has no beginning, the Father must have the Son. God could not love, could not be love, without making things to love: Jesus has God to love; the love of the Son is responsive to the love of the Father. The response to self-existent love is self-abnegating love. The refusal of Himself is that in Jesus which corresponds to the creation of God. His love takes action, creates, in self-abjuration, in the death of self as motive; in the drowning of self in the life of God, where it lives only as love. What is life in a child? Is it not perfect response to his parents through oneness with them? A child at strife with his parents, one in whom their will is not his, is no child; as a child he is dead, and his dead is manifested in rigidity and contortion. His spiritual order is on the way to chaos. Death is at work in him. See the same child yielding to the will that is righteously above his own; see the life begin to flow from the heart through the members...”

When Jesus knew Himself as The Father's son, He **CHOSE** in Himself to be the Son that God wills Him to be. He was not merely a son because He is God's offspring, because He cannot help it, He actually decided that He would be the Son that He is. Because the Father is His father therefore He will be His son.

What you see in His earth walk where in all things He cared not for His own life but for His Father's will is but a rehearsal of that which had taken place in the beginning. When Jesus knew Himself as God's

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son he could have gone on to live as He wanted but rather, chose to die to His own interest, His life, and to accept His Father's will as His life, His only good. In this way He became the first bond-servant.

*“Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus: who, **being in the form of God**, thought it not robbery to be equal with God: But **made himself of no reputation**, and took upon him the form of a **servant**, and was made in the likeness of men: And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. “(Php. 2:5-8)*

I love the way Derby's translation renders it:

*“For let this mind be in you which [was] also in Christ Jesus; who, **subsisting in the form of God**, did not esteem it an object of rapine to be on an equality with God; but **emptied himself, taking a bondman's form**, taking his place in [the] likeness of men; and having been found in figure as a man, humbled himself, becoming obedient even unto death, and [that the] death of [the] cross.”*

If you think that rendition was awesome check out the Amplified Version:

*“Let this same attitude {and}purpose {and}[humble] mind be in you which was in Christ Jesus; [let Him be your example in humility;] who although being essentially one with God {and}[possessing the fullness of the attributes which make God God], **did not think this equality with God a thing to be eagerly grasped {or}retained**, but stripped Himself [of all privileges and rightful dignity], so as to assume the guise of a servant(slave) in that He became like men {and} was born a human being. And after He had appeared in human form He abased {and}humbled Himself [still further] and carried His obedience to the extreme of death, even the death of the Cross!”*

What you see done in time is what He did before eternity. You will recall that the Bible says that Jesus was crucified before the foundation of the world. The above scripture happened before the foundation of the world.

The Son's love for His Father totally astounds us. How could He give Himself so completely to God? How could He vacate His own life? Here's the answer: “To whom, though himself in the form of God, **it did not seem that to take for oneself was to be like God**; But he made

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himself as nothing, taking the form of a servant.” Php.2:6-7a. (BBE)

Did you notice the text in bold fonts? **“It did not seem that to take for oneself was to be like God”**. How powerful! How utterly suggestive! Love takes no thought for itself; love does not seek to have the upper hand, it does not scheme to gain advantage.

The true son, therefore, is one who on the basis of love has come to become a bond-servant.

We have come into the era of sonship. Very recently many believers have become intelligent about sonship issues. What are the true marks of sonship? Not ability to do miracles or work wonders but the degree of servant hood.

The apostle Peter called himself a bondservant of Jesus Christ in II Peter 1:1. So did Paul in Romans 1:1 and Titus 1:1, and so did James (the Lord's biological brother) in James 1:1, and so did Jude (also the Lord's earthly sibling) in Jude verse 1, and so did John in Revelation 1:1. These apostles started off their letters with this declaration of bond-servanthood. Did they know something we do not know today? What did this word mean to them? It meant they had voluntarily given up their freedom to walk away from their Master. But it also meant that they loved their master above their lives.

Chapter Two



The Reason For This Book

This book was initially born out of the desire to present the church of Christ, to present you, with the way out of the coming global upheaval soon to rock the world. We are approaching earth's final hours and things are getting messier around the world. Escalating waves of terrorism, global climate change, unrelenting, worldwide natural disasters, economic crisis, poverty, wars, civil unrest, diseases and etcetera seem to cover the landscape that defines today's reality. And to think that this is just the beginning of the evil days!

We are living in crisis times. And things would definitely grow worse for behold, the darkness shall cover the earth, and gross darkness the people. Men's hearts are already failing them for fear it seems the good times are forever gone. But not everybody would be affected. I found that there would be a select class of people who would be divinely exempted from the onslaught, who will experience a different reality when men are being plagued.

Noah's ark presented salvation when God's wrath visited the ante-diluvian world, and Goshen provided safety when God unleashed His judgment upon Egypt. What would provide us with safety in the days ahead? What, I say would be the sure way of escape from the bitter sting of the last day's crises?

We have found the answer. It is recorded in Rev. 7:1-3

¶ *“And after this I saw four angels standing upon the four corners of the earth, holding fast the four winds of the earth, that no wind might blow upon the earth, nor upon the sea, nor upon any tree. And I saw another angel ascending from [the] sun rising, having [the] seal of [the] living God; and he cried with a loud voice to the four angels to whom it had been given to hurt the earth and the sea, saying, **Hurt not the earth, nor the sea, nor the trees, until we shall have sealed the bondmen of our God upon their foreheads.**” (DBY)*

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Here's how BBE puts Rev. 7:1-3

¶ “ *After this I saw four angels in their places at the four points of the earth, keeping back the four winds in their hands, so that there might be no moving of the wind on the earth, or on the sea, or on any tree. And I saw another angel coming up from the east, **having the mark of the living God**: and he said with a great voice to the four angels, to whom it was given to **do damage to the earth and the sea**, Do no damage to the earth, or the sea, or the trees, **till we have put a mark on the servants of our God.**”*

There is a number associated with these bond-servants and that number is 144,000. We do not know for sure that it is a literal number or whether it is symbolic representing some dimension or reality in God as are several other tokens in the book of Revelations but we do know that it refers to spiritual Israel.

Does it not give you some relief to know that you can be divinely exempted? The mark of the living God is the seal of exoneration. The only issue is that it would only be given to bond-servants. Are you a bond-servant? Can you say with utmost fidelity that you are? Would God agree with you?

Let us take a closer look at the profile of these bond-servants: who are they?

Revelations 14:1-5

1 ¶ And I saw the Lamb on the mountain of Zion, and with him a hundred and forty-four thousand, **marked on their brows with his name and the name of his Father.**

2 And a voice from heaven came to my ears, like the sound of great waters, and the sound of loud thunder: and the voice which came to me was like the sound of players, playing on instruments of music.

3 And they made as it seemed a new song before the high seat, and before the four beasts and the rulers: and no man might have knowledge of the song but the hundred and forty-four thousand, even those from the earth whom God has made his for a price.

4 These are they who have not made themselves unclean with women; for they are virgins. These are they who go after the Lamb wherever he goes. These were taken from among men to be the first fruits to God and

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to the Lamb.

5 And in their mouth there was no false word, for they are untouched by evil.

Chapter Three



The Mark Of God

“And I saw another sign in heaven, great and marvelous, seven angels having the seven last plagues; for in them is filled up the wrath of God. And I saw as it were a sea of glass mingled with fire: and them that had gotten the victory over the beast, and over his image, and over his mark, and over the number of his name, stand on the sea of glass, having the harps of God.” (Rev.15:1-2)

*“And that no man might buy or sell, save he that had **the mark**, or **the name** of the beast, or **the number** of his name.” (Rev. 13:17)*

Ever since I was a boy growing up in a little Pentecostal church in Jos, Plateau state, I have been trained to fear the antichrist, and to particularly dread the 'mark of the beast'. The number 666 was inscribed in my consciousness as that deadly computer code that would bring men into final damnation in the last days. Great books have sold this idea and millions of dollars have been gained by selling the church on fear and speculation.

Do you know that never once were we taught about the mark of God? Do you know I wasn't even aware that any such thing existed until I was much older? And I can assure you it did not come from that Pentecostal church where I grew up.

Instead of getting so pre-occupied with a biometric code and walking in constant fear of it I think it would be much better to focus on receiving the mark of God don't you? Then again folks have been concerned about 'the mark of the beast' and yet that is not all there is to reject. Rev.13 speaks of three things:

1. The mark of the beast
2. The name of the beast
3. The number of his name.

Folks are not to receive any of these things described here, not just one of it. Rev.13:18 describe the number 666 as the number of the

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beast. This, I presume, corresponds to the third item the number of his name; but what about the mark of the beast or even more troubling, the name of the beast?

In order for us to properly understand what the Bible truly teaches about these we must first see what it means to have the mark of God or have His name written on our foreheads.

It should be remembered that when the Bible was written it was not divided into chapters and verses; these came in later just to facilitate navigation. Rev.14:1, which talks about the folks who are marked on their foreheads with the name of God and of the lamb could well have been Rev.13:19, for it is the next verse after the one talking about the mark of the beast (Rev.13:18). Therefore both ideas are linked. The one is as the other. Read Rev.13 through 14 and you would immediately get the sense.

The question to ask is, 'The marks of God, or the names written on the foreheads of the Overcomers, are these to be applied by means of computers as well? Are they like tattoos that would be visible on our foreheads?' If your answer is 'yes', then why isn't anybody telling us where we could get these vital markings? And then again you would recall that it is an angel that is responsible for the marks. Do you suppose we would have some angels coming around with a computer? Just musing! No, that is not the direction.

In Gal.6:17 Paul the apostle speaks of already bearing in his body the marks of the Lord Jesus. In Rev.3:12 the Lord Jesus promises to write upon the Overcomer the **name of His God**, and **the name of the city of His God**, which is new Jerusalem, which comes down out of heaven from God: and **Jesus' new name**. What do these names mean?

It is interesting to note that this particular promise is made to the church in Philadelphia. Philadelphia actually means 'love of the brethren'. This is a church that understands how to love. It is equally interesting to note what else Jesus promises this church: “also **I will keep thee out of the hour of trial**, which is about to come upon the whole habitable world, to try them that dwell upon the earth.” Rev.3:10 (DBY)

Are the marks connected to their being divinely exempted from the global crisis or is it mere coincidence that it is lovers to whom the

Lord makes this promise to write names upon their foreheads; and these are the folks who escape the trial?

What is the New Name of Jesus?

Before Mary conceived of her firstborn child she was told: “And, behold, thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and bring forth a son, and shalt call his name JESUS” (Lk.1:31) thus the child was christened Jesus, or Yeshua. When Jesus was raised from the dead, brought again into life, He was given a new name. Why? Because He became other than He was before He went to the Cross.

What is His new name? To answer this we have to understand what a name is. A real name:

1. **Defines one's rank (Heb. 1:4** ¶ “Being made so much better than the angels, as he hath by inheritance obtained a more excellent name than they”; **Php. 2:9** “Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name.”)

2. **Declares one's authority (Php. 2:10** “That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth;”)

3. **Reveals one's operation/purpose/task (Mt. 1:21**” And she shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt call his name JESUS: **FOR** he shall save his people from their sins.”)

4. **Declares one's identity (Mt. 16:13** ¶ “When Jesus came into the coasts of Caesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, saying, 'who do men say that I the Son of man am?'"

The name of Jesus is the name of His resurrection; it is the name of His exaltation. It is His power to operate in the Age to come. It is the principle by which He executes His life in the Eternal Kingdom of love. It is the authority by which He governs the universe. It is God's revelation of what Jesus is; therefore, it is a key that unlocks the Father's depth.

Could this be the name The Lord our righteousness? (**Jer. 23: 5 - 6**) “*See, the days are coming, says the Lord, when I will give to David a true Branch, and he will be ruling as king, acting wisely, doing what is*

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right, and judging uprightly in the land. In his days Judah will have salvation and Israel will be living without fear: and this is the name by which he will be named, The Lord is our righteousness.”

The Name of His God

In Gen.48:5-6 Jacob surnames Joseph's sons and thus inherited them. The surname settles forever the question of ownership. “Now **your two sons**, who were born to you in the land of Egypt before I came to you into Egypt, are mine; Ephraim and Manasseh, even as Reuben and Simeon **will be mine**. Your issue, who you become the father of after them, will be yours. **They will be called after the name of their brothers** in their inheritance.”

When God's name is written upon you His operations, authority, identity and class are conferred.

The Name of the City of my God

The New Jerusalem is a 'coming' world. It is always descending from God. It is the state of the eternal order. It is our new reality and life. It is Zion. It is the new civilization that is emanating from God. Jesus promises to incorporate all these authorities in the bond-servant.

The Mark of God

I drove my car towards the mountains close to my house just the other day when I set out to write this book. As I set out to work some herdsmen drove their cattle in the direction of my car. As these animals filed past me I noticed that their ears had been pierced and each had these tags bearing different inscription on them. I immediately felt the Lord was giving me a witness about His being with me on this project; but I did not fail to see that these tags were means by which the cattle owner recognizes which cow is his.

Some herdsmen actually use a hot iron to brand each cow on its body, usually the owner's initials or symbol.

One day Jesus was asked if it was lawful to pay taxes. Requesting

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for a coin He looked at it and asked whose image and inscription is on it. They said Caesar's. Then He said "Give to Caesar what belongs to Caesar." The image that we bear IN OUR SOULS is what will determine whose property we are. It matters not whether we profess to be believers, or whether we even cast out devils. The question is 'whose image is visible in your soul? Whom have you conformed to?'

Ro. 8:29 ¶ "For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to **be conformed to the image of his Son**, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren."

1Co. 15:49 "And as we have borne the image of the earthy, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly."

Friend, the sum of it all is this: whose property is this soul? Jacob Behmen says, "There is ever a strife over man's image; the devil and hell say, 'It is mine, by right of nature; it is generated out of my root.' The spirit of this world says, 'It is mine, I give it life, nourishment, and bring it up, and give to it my power and wonders.' The kingdom of God says, 'I have set my heart upon it; I have regenerated it; I sought and found it; it is mine. It is now in my kingdom, and it must reveal my wonders!' And the poor soul of man is in continual warfare."

To bear the image of Christ is to receive of end of our faith, which is the salvation of our soul. (1Pe 1:9) It is to come to the full measure of the stature of Christ. It is to arrive at sonship.

The Process of Sonship

To be a son of God is to have the life of Jesus in you; it is to be one with Him. It is to have Him living through you... One might at once retort, 'I don't want anyone living through me, I want to live my own life!' But that is a big mistake. That was Adam's mistake. You don't have your own life! Nobody truly owns his life! You did not create yourself so which life are you laying claim to as yours?

That is utter madness. That is what it means to be insane when a

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created thing seeks its own autonomy as though it created itself. Before it was created it was nothing. It could not exist, it had no life, no plans, no ambitions, nothing. Its creator probably one day thought to himself, 'Let me create me so and so...' And that was how it came to be. Now it is here. It has forgotten its root. It is now laying claims to its life and in so doing is intent upon denying its creator his right, the pleasure and reason why he created it in the first place.

This is the root of the first sin. "This sin has been described by saint Augustine as the result of pride, of the movement whereby a creature (that is, an essentially dependent being whose principle of existence lies not in itself but in another) tries to set up on it's own, to exist for itself" De Civitate Dei, xiv, xiii.

Says C.S. Lewis, "From the moment a creature becomes aware of God as God and of itself as self, the terrible alternative of choosing God or self for the centre is opened to it". It is a choice of adopting either of two philosophies of life. The creature can say, "Nothing I have is originally my own. I am not even mine; I live to please my owner, and the life He has offered me is the one I'll live" or he could say, "I do not trust my owner. I am cleverer than He. I know what is good and what is bad I want my own space". The latter choice will tear the created thing from its creator. This is what the Bible calls rebellion. Not merely the refusal of the creator's will but the discovery and exploitation of self in an illegitimate fashion.

When God breathed into Adam's nostrils, a new kind of consciousness which could say "I" and "me", which could look upon itself as an entity, which knew God, which could make judgments of truth, beauty, goodness and etcetera descended upon him.

Pointing to the tree of the knowledge of good and evil in the midst of Eden's primal garden God said to Adam, "don't eat of it", thus presenting a platform upon which Adam could offer obedience to God and choose God's will instead of his will. The story is that Adam disobeyed God, and in subjecting himself to his own will actually submitted himself to Satan's will.

Says C.S. Lewis, "This act of self-will on the part of the creature, which constitutes an utter falseness to its true creaturely position, is the only sin that can be conceived as the fall."

Chapter Four



The Will Is The Deciding Factor

What Jesus laid down before His Father was His will. What every servant must yield up to God is his will. Then He must deny himself. 'Self' must be dethroned as the governing principle in our life. We must no longer live unto ourselves. We must put a gap between us and that thing. Its desires must not be regent. We must no longer think 'what do I want?' but what does my lord desire? Man's own will brought him to his own center, separated from God; to return to God the will must be brought under subjection to God.

Jesus, our example, submitted His will to the master, the Father in heaven. See what He said in relation to that, "*Not my will, but thine be done.*" (**Lk. 22:42**) But that wasn't the first time Jesus said such a thing. (**Jn.6:38**) "*For I came down from heaven, not to do mine own will, but the will of him that sent me.*" Before that in (**Jn.5:30**) Jesus said, "*I can of mine own self do nothing: as I hear, I judge: and my judgment is just; because I seek not mine own will, but the will of the Father which hath sent me.*" And in **Psalm 40:7-8** "*Then said I, Lo, I come: in the volume of the book it is written of me, I delight to do thy will, O my God: yea, thy law is within my heart.*"

Someone rightly said the opposite of "servant?" biblically speaking, is "selfish." A servant says, "What can I do for you?" Selfishness says, "What can you do for me?" There's our opposite. The choice of the bond servant to shun his right is the most awesome lesson on true humility. That choice in Christ to down right strip Himself of the right to be is a lesson beyond compare. O, that we would indeed learn it; that we would learn the secret of Christ.

Wrong View of Purpose

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In the early nineties certain movements with the church of Christ brought believers into a greater awareness of purpose - our purpose. Though the root of this movement was pure the teachings on purpose soon got hijacked by the human potential movement and secular humanistic philosophies that crept unawares into the church under many different guises. An error was born, and much of the church has not yet recovered from it; sadly though, most do not even know they are in error.

The error is not immediately easy to see; it's a bit tricky, because it sounds so much like truth. "YOU were created for a purpose," they teach, "seek it and pursue it. This is the secret to YOUR happiness; and herein lies the key to YOUR being great and wealthy." The danger in this teaching is that it appeals to the *self* in us. It subtly primes our lust for greatness or at best it soothes our fear for the future. It causes us to turn upon ourselves, to be self-seeking. Many are set on a task to excavate something in man which the Cross seeks to put to death.

We say to the people, "Seek your purpose..." Like I said earlier, nothing seems to be wrong with that teaching. On the surface it sound right, but here is where the slant is: we should have said to them "Seek God's purpose for your life." This is more than a play of words. You have to be calm to see it. The latter produces in us an attitude that causes our gaze to be upon God. The former suggests that we are on centre stage it's all about us. The latter focuses us on God. He becomes more important. Our love for Him is cultivated. We lose sight of ourselves, as we rightly should.

The truth is that Jesus did not come to vilify us, to strengthen us, to increase us, to help us get ahead in life, no, that is not the angle. He came to get us off that ground of self unto new grounds, unto a deeper ground. He came to help us find meaning beyond the trappings of this world. His love in our hearts brings us to a place where we must be as nothing even to ourselves, where the world must become as nothing to us, where failure and success in earthly things means little to us, and where that consciousness in us that we call our 'self' is brought down low, denied, and forsaken until we plunge into the original pool whence we came and there discover our authentic self, our son-of-God self, the Christ edition of our selves.

The Bond-Servant is Motivated by Love

The bond-servant did not become one by compulsion. It is an act of his free will to serve. He finds no other life, no other joy. 'I delight to do thy will' is his song. He has penetrated the veil of selfishness. He has discovered the secret of materialism and the tyranny of things. He has travelled to the end of earthly life and has found that there is nothing here worth grappling over. Another world is set open before his inner eyes. He sees what only the eyes of God can see. He sees the nature of Christ, who is innately a lamb. He has experienced a breakthrough into God's kind of love, 'agape'. This love does not seek its own, and is not selfish. It does not love itself more than his master otherwise he would not be a bond-servant. He says, 'ahavti et adown'.

In all the world there is no such cruel beast as that which is in the heart of every man and woman, self-love! This is the mother of all selfishness. Selfishness is natural to man; it's a part of the human condition, but the bond-servant is no longer human. He has been joined to his master in this case, God.

“Our trance of selfishness must end,” says Behmen, “for we are all being organized, by the one only life, in the *one body*. *In the body of Christ, self-seeking is a monstrosity!*”

Love not the World

The first commandment God gave the children in the Decalogue begins, "*Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God is one LORD: And thou shalt love the LORD thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might.*" (**Deut. 6:4-5**) Jesus said this is the greatest commandment. This is the basis of all true religion. God requires that we love Him. And this is exactly what the devil hates. He wonders why we must love God. He always seeks to attack the love of God in men's heart.

His primary tool is this world. This world contains dark powers that can wipe out the love of God in a man's heart. This word appeals to our love. It attaches itself to us by means of love. But if any man loves the world the love of the Father cannot be in Him. (1Jn. 2:15)

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Furthermore the Scripture says in Jas. 4:4 “*Ye adulterers and adulteresses, know ye not that the friendship of the world is enmity with God? whosoever therefore will be a friend of the world is the enemy of God.*”

It is that vision of this world which has enchanted our soul that draws us away from being able to love God. Very often even ministers of the Gospel train people to love the world; to pursue the world in the name and power of Jesus. They have not taught us sufficiently to deny the world, yea, to hate it altogether.

What is this world anyways? By 'this world' I do not mean the world God created and means, but that dimension of falsehood, that LIE that Satan created as a prison to keep men from God. It is the software by which we interact with the Earth. It is what Satan has used to manage the Earth for centuries. It is Satan's 'day'. It is his realm. It is what is domiciled in the *flesh*. Furthermore, it is all the ways of judging, regarding, beholding, knowing, whether ecclesiastical, political, economical etc, which are not God's way of judging, regarding, beholding, knowing. It is that structure of life that is so far removed from God's will.

In saying “ahavti et adown”, “I love my master” the bond servant turns himself away from the world in his heart, and dies to it.

So, what Eventually Happens to the Bond-Servant?

When the bon-servant says, “ahavti et adown”, his master would pierce his earlobe with an awl against the door of the house. It means you're going now a part of this household. You're permanently fixed to this house and this master. I understand that it became traditional to put in a gold earring after the awl was removed. And that slave could never go free again. He could never be sold, either. He became more than just a slave; he became a servant who was permanently attached -- bonded -- to his master, a *bonds*ervant. Such bondservants were usually trusted with more of their master's affairs than a normal slave would be. Although still servants, they often were considered part of the family.

“Him who overcomes I will make a pillar in **the house of my God**, and **he will go out no more**: and I will put on him the name of my God, and the name of the town of my God, the new Jerusalem, which

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comes down out of heaven from my God, and my new name.”
(Rev.3:12)

Amen.

Safety From Evil

The Lord Jesus also told the Philadelphian church that “*Because you have kept My command to persevere, I also will keep you from the hour of trial which shall come upon the whole world, to test those who dwell on the earth.*”

This is to be accomplished by means of His Father's name which Jesus promises to place on them. **Pr. 18:10** ¶ “*The name of the LORD is a strong tower: the righteous runneth into it, and is safe.*”

What is this safety? God is able to keep the righteous from all averse natural or material conditions but by far His greatest commitment is to keeping the righteous from the evil that these adverse conditions are meant to work out in them. Not having enough food to eat is not Satan's end; it is merely his tool for manipulating men so their souls can come into evil, so they can get damaged. The evil that one needs to fear is what would be happening to men's soul. Many souls will die. Many would be corrupted.

What Jesus feared that night at Gethsemane was not the whips of the Roman soldiers nor their cross, it was the evil of being separated from God and descending into darkness; of becoming one with that nature that stands forever opposite to love and life and grace. It was what was about to happen to His soul that He dreaded the most.

The greatest evil is something spiritual, not carnal, and this is what Satan is after. The mark of the beast is a spiritual transaction. Will there be a computer code or something? Possibly. But let me assure you that should that be the case, this would only serve to deceive Believers meanwhile they are all the while receiving the real mark within their souls, which is conforming them to the world.

“And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and

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acceptable and perfect will of God.” (Rom.12:2)

“And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof: but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever.” (1Jn. 2:17)

¶ *“We know that whoever is born of God does not sin; but he who has been born of God keeps himself, and the wicked one does not touch him. We know that we are of God, and the whole world lies under the sway of the wicked one. And we know that the Son of God has come and has given us an understanding, that we may know Him who is true; and we are in Him who is true, in His Son Jesus Christ. This is the true God and eternal life.”*

“Little children, keep yourselves from idols. Amen.” (1Jn.5:18-21 NKJV)

*“Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not **the** unclean thing; and I will receive you” (2Co. 6:17)*

ABOUT ERNEST PAUL

Ernest Paul is functions in prophetic ministry as a voice to steer individuals and churches into greater proximity with the unfolding purposes of God in the earth. Executive Director of TSL Global Initiatives He is also the Senior Pastor of CentrePort Abuja, Nigeria. With over 22 years in ministry Ernest has served in various ministry capacities, at one time, serving as the administrator of Breakthrough School of Ministry, overseeing operation of some 17 schools across West Africa and Cameroun. He is married to Robyn and they are blessed with two children: Errita and John.

