

WHAT ABOUT SLAVERY, PAUL?

1 Timothy 6:1-2

Maid Idea: Although slavery is a product of sin, slaves should live for the glory of God and the advancement of the gospel.

Slavery in History...

- **World history is filled with various types of slavery.**
 - Hebrew servanthood.
 - Roman slavery.
 - Indentured servitude.
 - African slave trade.
- **Biblical history is filled with various perspectives on slavery.**
 - Slavery is not a part of creation; it is a product of sin.
 - Specific situations in a sinful world warrant specific instructions to a sinful world.
 - Biblical instructions concerning slavery do not imply biblical approval of slavery.

Slavery in Scripture...

- **The Bible condemns slavery.**
 - Slavery that undermines God's creation.
 - We have equal dignity before God.
 - We are equally submissive to God.
 - We will receive equal justice from God.
 - Slavery that violates God's Word.
 - The Bible denounces physical abuse.
 - The Bible denounces human trafficking.
- **The Bible regulates slavery.**
 - God mandates physical protection for slaves.
 - God requires financial provision for slaves.
 - God ensures caring supervision of slaves.
 - God promotes (and in some ways guarantees) eventual freedom from slavery.
- **The Bible encourages slaves.**
 - Honor unbelieving masters.

- For the glory of God.
- For the advancement of the gospel.
 - Christianity is not aimed primarily at social reform.
 - Christianity is aimed primarily at personal redemption.
- Respect believing masters.
 - Work wholeheartedly.
 - Serve selflessly.
- **The Bible redeems slavery.**
 - The beauty of Christ...
 - Our Master has become our servant.
 - The essence of Christianity...
 - We gladly become His slave.

WHAT ABOUT SLAVERY, PAUL?

1 Timothy 6:1-2

“Four score and seven years ago our fathers brought forth, upon on this continent, a new nation, conceived in liberty, and dedicated to the proposition that ‘all men are created equal.’”¹

Thus began one of the most famous speeches in all of American History, the Gettysburg address, delivered on November 19, 1863, by then President Abraham Lincoln. Lincoln’s call for equality was a direct affront to the practice of slavery that dominated the Confederate South, what some would even call the “Christian South.” Pastors and church members all across communities in the Southern states were buying, selling, trading, using, and even abusing predominantly African slaves. This was, without question, one of the darkest periods of American Christian history. This dark period of our history makes a passage of Scripture like 1 Timothy 6:1-2 all the more sensitive. The most important perspective on this issue is not man’s opinion, but God’s Word. Here in our passage Paul briefly addresses the issue of slavery:

“All who are under the yoke as slaves must regard their own masters to be worthy of all respect, so that God’s name and His teaching will not be blasphemed. Those who have believing masters should not be disrespectful to them because they are brothers, but should serve them better, since those who benefit from their services are believers and dearly loved.”

As soon as they come across Paul’s reference to slaves in verses 1-2, many Christians begin to wonder whether the apostle Paul was promoting slavery. Other passages in the New Testament that deal with slavery, like Col 3:22-4:1, may leave us wondering the same thing. And when we

¹The transcript of the Gettysburg Address can be viewed at:
<http://www.ourdocuments.gov/doc.php?flash=true&doc=36&page=transcript>

turn to see how slavery was dealt with in the Old Testament, the issue may be further confused in our minds. Maybe you're wondering now, "Does God support slavery?"

Slavery in History...

The question of slavery is one of the most significant questions posed to Christianity, particularly in light of the kinds of slavery practiced by Christians in Europe and America in previous centuries. That's why we need to understand what the Bible has to say on this issue, and more specifically, why Paul would write what he does in 1 Timothy 6. Although we'll begin by looking at the practice of slavery in history, we need to understand that this issue is relevant for us now in the twenty-first century.

It will be helpful to provide some background and context to our discussion of slavery so that we can better define our terms. **World history is filled with various types of slavery**, which means that we should be careful when we talk about this subject. When you hear the word "slavery," it's likely that certain images immediately pop up in your mind, images which represent abuses and injustices. While many of these images may be historically accurate in certain contexts, not all forms of slavery have looked the same in their respective era or location. Consider below four different ways in which slavery has been practiced in history.

First, we have the model of **Hebrew servanthood**. When we look at God's laws for His people in the Old Testament, we see a system of Hebrew servanthood that was set up for impoverished Israelites to become servants. This servanthood was designed to provide for poorer Israelites and their families. Even though Deuteronomy 15:1-18 tells us that God's desire was for there to be no poor among His people, He nevertheless provides for those in poverty since poverty

is a reality in a sinful and imperfect world. Leviticus 25:35-43 helps us understand more about God's perspective on slavery:

³⁵ “If your brother becomes destitute and cannot sustain himself among you, you are to support him as a foreigner or temporary resident, so that he can continue to live among you. ³⁶ Do not profit or take interest from him, but fear your God and let your brother live among you. ³⁷ You are not to lend him your silver with interest or sell [him] your food for profit. ³⁸ I am Yahweh your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt to give you the land of Canaan and to be your God.

³⁹ “If your brother among you becomes destitute and sells himself to you, you must not force him to do slave labor. ⁴⁰ Let him stay with you as a hired hand or temporary resident; he may work for you until the Year of Jubilee. ⁴¹ Then he and his children are to be released from you, and he may return to his clan and his ancestral property. ⁴² They are not to be sold as slaves, because they are My slaves that I brought out of the land of Egypt. ⁴³ You are not to rule over them harshly but fear your God.

This passage describes a system of servanthood in Israel whereby someone could sell himself into slavery in order to escape poverty. Such an individual was to be treated not as a slave, but as a hired-servant, a worker. The individual would basically enter into a contractual agreement with an employer, working until he could establish himself as a free and full citizen again. Now there were certainly unjust and abusive slaveholders among God's people; Israel's sin was, after all, apparent throughout its history. However, cruelty was not God's intention for slavery in Israel, for the slavery that He chose to regulate was extremely different than the pre-Civil War slavery in the southern United States. In His mercy, God even provided a reprieve for slaves by instituting sabbatical years when they had to be released (Ex 21:2-4).

Second, we'll consider **Roman slavery**, which was different from Hebrew servanthood. Slavery was deeply ingrained into the Roman Empire and its economy. Some scholars estimate that over one third of the people in the Roman Empire were slaves—that's approximately 50 or 60 million individuals! Out of those 50-60 million slaves, there were a variety of different practices of

slavery in this era of history. Some slaves were simply employees who did a variety of different kinds of work: teachers, craftsmen, managers, cooks, and even government officials. Many slaves owned slaves themselves. It's also important to recognize that Roman slavery was not fundamentally based on ethnicity or skin color, but on economic and social status. In order to gain Roman citizenship and thus enter into Roman society, many people would sell themselves into slavery. In many cases, slavery was beneficial for poorer individuals, providing security and stability for slaves in a variety of different venues. There were also opportunities beyond slavery, for many slaves were released by the time they were 30 years of age, as they had become capable of providing for themselves at that point.

Despite the more humane practices of slavery in some cases, we don't want to paint an idealistic picture of slavery. After all, a slave was still a slave—in many ways marginalized and powerless, often prone to disgrace or insult. While some slaves were indeed salaried employees with great responsibilities, others were subjected to grueling labor and harsh treatment, including sexual abuse. There is no denying the fact that slavery could be and sometimes was extremely degrading and destructive. Yet, we shouldn't make the mistake of thinking that all slavery in the Greco-Roman world was inhumane. This system, which was so ingrained into the economy of the Roman Empire, was in many ways very different from the slavery of the Antebellum South.

A third form of slavery we need to consider is **indentured servitude**. This form of slavery was more common in colonial America, as many could not afford to come to the new country on their own. They would contract themselves out as indentured servants and agree to work in certain households in apprentice-type roles until they could earn enough money to pay off their debt. Historians estimate that over one-half to two-thirds of European white immigrants who

came to America came as indentured servants. This picture of slavery is much closer to Hebrew servanthood than anything else.

Fourth and finally, the three pictures of slavery mentioned above were different than the slavery connected to the **African slave trade**. This latter practice of slavery was promoted across the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, such that millions upon millions of Africans were traded and sold across Europe. They were transported in cruel, grueling conditions that would leave many of them dead before arriving at their destination. Upon being sold into slavery, these slaves were subjected to harsh working conditions, as well as physical abuse, sexual abuse, and torture. Frederick Douglass, a leader of the abolitionist movement in the 1800's, wrote the following about his first slave-master, Captain Anthony:

"He was a cruel man, hardened by a long life of slave-holding. He would at times seem to take great pleasure in whipping a slave. I have often been awakened at the dawn of day by the most heart-rending shrieks of an own aunt of mine, whom he used to tie up to a joist, and whip...till she was literally covered with blood. No words, no tears, no prayer, from his gory victim, seemed to move his iron heart from its bloody purpose."²

Though I hesitate to share such an awful account, I cite this for two reasons. First, this account reminds us of the horror of what took place in slavery in our own country not that long ago. And second, we need to be reminded that this is not the kind of slavery that Paul is addressing in 1 Timothy 6. While some slaves had unbelieving and sometimes cruel masters, this passage will be very confusing to you if the only picture of slavery you have is the African slave trade. Some of the slaves the apostle was addressing were sitting in the church amidst Christian brothers and sisters who loved them, cared for them, and who were commanded to provide for them as fellow

²Frederick Douglass, Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass (Dover Publications, 1995), 3-4.

members of the body of Christ. Though Paul was not ignorant of the evils of slavery in his day, he was by no means condoning the mistreatment of slaves.

Now that we've looked at world history, we also need to consider biblical history. **Biblical history is filled with various perspectives on slavery**, from the Hebrew servanthood in the Old Testament to Greco-Roman slavery in the New Testament. It is imperative for us to realize that **slavery is not a part of creation [i.e., God's original created order]; it is a product of sin.**

Genesis 1-2 speaks of the distinction between male and female, but there is no distinction between slave and free persons, since slavery was not a part of God's creation. If you move forward to the new creation, you see once again that there is no distinction between slave and free in the new heaven and new earth. Heaven will have no poverty that leads to indentured servanthood, and no class warfare that leads to a Greco-Roman picture of slavery. And there certainly won't be any abuse and mistreatment like we saw in the African slave trade. Sin and slavery will be no more.

The fact that slavery is ultimately connected to sin in Scripture means that **specific situations in a sinful world warrant specific instructions to a sinful world.** The instructions in the Old Testament and in 1 Timothy that speak of slaves are addressing specific circumstances surrounding slavery at a specific time. When we understand this context, we see that **biblical instructions concerning slavery do not imply biblical approval of slavery.** Slavery is not God's ultimate design. It is a product of sin. When Paul addresses slavery, he is not endorsing it; he is helping to shepherd people who are involved in a sinful economic and social system in which slavery is prevalent. Consider how Scripture deals similarly with other issues.

Was divorce a part of God's original creation? No, absolutely not. Divorce is clearly a result of sin entering the world; yet, Scripture addresses divorce by giving us guidelines and regulations for this less-than-ideal reality (Matt 19:3-9; Deut 24:1-4). I think we see something similar with

slavery. Even though slavery is a product of sin, God addresses it at different times and in different ways throughout Scripture.

Slavery in Scripture

The most important question we need to answer is this, “What does the Scripture say about slavery?” To begin with, there are some very clear ways in which **the Bible condemns slavery**. Specifically, the Bible condemns **slavery that undermines God’s creation**. Genesis 1:27 should shape our thinking here: “So God created man in His own image; He created him in the image of God; He created them male and female.” Based on this truth **we have equal dignity before God**, but slavery undermines this dignity by functionally denying it. Remember, it wasn’t President Lincoln who came up with the idea that all men are created with equal dignity; God did. Job implies this when he talks about why he refuses to mistreat his servants. He asks, “Did not the One who made me in the womb also make them? Did not the same God form us both in the womb?” (Job 31:15) We see this same perspective in the New Testament.

Our equal dignity before God can be seen in Galatians 3:28: “There is no Jew or Greek, slave or free, male or female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus.” In other words, even though we have differences, we all have equal dignity before God, and as believers we have an equal position in Christ. This equal dignity is also the basis James uses for arguing against favoritism in the church (Jas 2:1). In these and other examples, the Bible is not expressly prohibiting all forms of slavery, but it is definitely ripping apart the core foundations behind many forms of slavery. As we think about these biblical texts, we need to be reminded that first century Roman slavery, the slavery practiced during the time of the New Testament, was not based upon ethnicity or skin color like

we saw in the African slave trade. The New Testament vehemently opposes any form of ethnic or racial superiority.

Just as all individuals have equal dignity before God, so as believers we need to see that **we are equally submissive to God**. When Paul addresses slaves or their masters, he says that everything they do ought to be done in submission to Christ and in reverence for Him. In Colossians 3:22 Paul gives the following exhortation: “Slaves, obey your human masters in everything. Don’t work only while being watched, in order to please men, but work wholeheartedly, *fearing the Lord*” (emphasis added; see also Eph 6:5; Col 4:1). One reason we are to submit equally to God is that **we will receive equal justice from God**. In Colossians 3:25 Paul tells us that God is impartial, and in Ephesians 6:9 we hear the following warning: “And masters, treat your slaves the same way, without threatening them, because you know that both their Master and yours is in heaven, and there is no favoritism with Him.” In other words, earthly masters have a Master in heaven who will act with perfect justice in response to how slaves are treated. As for Christian slaves, even though they may endure temporary injustice, eternal justice awaits.

So we’ve seen that the Bible condemns slavery that undermines God’s creation; next we’ll see that the Bible likewise condemns **slavery that violates God’s Word**. In clear, unequivocal language the Bible speaks against slavery in two specific ways. First, **the Bible denounces physical abuse**. This prohibition would apply to many forms of physical abuse, but particularly when this abuse is associated with the institution of slavery. In Exodus 21:26-27 God makes it clear that physical abuse is intolerable, for if the master of a slave causes the slave to lose an eye or a tooth, the slave is to be set free. In verse 20 of the same chapter, we read that if a slave dies as a

result of physical abuse, then the owner is to be punished. In short, physical abuse of any kind by masters of slaves was directly condemned by God.

Second, we know slavery is condemned because **the Bible denounces human trafficking**. Exodus 21:16 says, “Whoever kidnaps a person must be put to death, whether he sells him or the person is found in his possession.” Kidnapping a slave is punishable by death, and that death penalty applies to the one selling the slave and the one buying the slave. We’re reminded at this point about what Paul said earlier in 1 Timothy concerning the need for the law to restrain evil. Among the many sins Paul mentions, including murder, sexual immorality, and homosexuality, is the sin of kidnapping (1:10). The word “kidnappers” in the original literally means a “man-stealer” or a “slave-dealer.”³ Anyone who kidnaps people in order to sell them as slaves is “lawless and rebellious...ungodly and sinful...unholy and irreverent” (1:9).

I have emphasized the evil of human trafficking for two reasons. First, if these truths had been embraced and obeyed by Christians in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, slavery never would have existed like it did in the South. The Bible is not at all silent on this issue, and it in no way tolerates the kind of slavery that took place in this country. Pastors and church members who used God’s Word to justify the practice of slavery were living in sin, because Paul clearly considered the kind of practices promoted in the African slave trade as abominable, as a violation of God’s Word and a denial of God’s gospel.

Second, the issue of human trafficking is important to think about because it is so prevalent around the world today. There are an estimated twenty-seven million slaves in the world today, which is more than any other time in history. Human trafficking, which includes buying, selling,

³Walter Bauer, W.F. Arndt, F.W. Gingrich, and F.W. Danker, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*, 3rd ed. revised and edited by Frederick William Danker (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2000), 76.

trading, and exploiting people for forced labor or for sex, is the second largest and fastest growing industry in the world today. The statistics are staggering:

- Approximately 80% of trafficking victims are women and girls, and half are minors
- According to UNICEF, 30 million children over the past 30 years have been sexually exploited through human trafficking
- Over 100,00 Nepali girls as young as 9 have been sold into India's red-light district over the last decade
- Over 10,000 children between the ages of 6 and 14 are currently in brothels in Sri Lanka

Human trafficking is one of the fastest growing criminal enterprises because it holds relatively low risk with high profit potential. Criminal organizations are increasingly attracted to human trafficking because, unlike drugs, humans can be sold repeatedly. According to the U.S. State Department, human trafficking is one of the greatest human rights challenges of this century, both in the United States and around the world. As followers of Christ, we cannot ignore these horrific tragedies. We need to see that this is a reality in the world today, and that the Bible condemns it. We are called to stand up against these evils (Eph 5:11).

We've seen now that the Bible condemns slavery. Next we need to understand that **the Bible regulates slavery**. As we saw in Exodus 21 earlier, **God mandates physical protection for slaves**. Slaves abused by their masters were immediately to be set free and compensated for their injuries (Ex 21:16, 26-27). In addition, **God requires financial provision for slaves**. Leviticus 25:39-40 talks about impoverished Hebrew servants who sold themselves to a master, and it says that they were to be well provided for. Likewise, 2 Samuel 9:9-10 talks about the economic rights of slaves, including the right of slaves to have other slaves. Many of these passages communicate a similar idea, namely, **God ensures caring supervision of slaves**. Leviticus 25 prohibits masters

from ruling ruthlessly over their slaves, even giving them the right to enjoy the Sabbath. The Old Testament also gives us examples of close, caring relationships between slaves or servants and their masters, such as the relationship between Gehazi and Elisha (2 Kings 4-8).

Finally, we see that **God promotes (and in some ways guarantees) eventual freedom from slavery**. Several passages in the Old Testament prohibit masters from keeping slaves for more than six years, unless the slave consented to it (Lev 25, Exodus 21, Deut 15, etc.). All the slaves in Israel would be released in the seventh year of each seven-year cycle so that slavery would not be a perpetual state for anyone. God provided other ways to keep people out of slavery: He commanded the poor to be provided for during harvest times (Lev 19:9-10; 23:22; Deut 24:20-21), He commanded Israelites to lend generously to the poor without interest (Deut 15:7-8; Ex. 22:25; Lev. 25:36-37), and He provided for all of a person's debts to be canceled in the seventh year in order to guard against poverty (Deut 15:4).

God's promotion of freedom for slaves is a foretaste of the coming heavenly reality when, in the new creation, slavery and the poverty that fuels slavery, will be no more. For that reason, Paul encourages slaves in 1 Corinthians 7:21 who can be free to avail themselves of the opportunity.

Our survey of the Bible on the topic of slavery has not been exhaustive, but it has provided a needed context for understanding our passage in 1 Timothy 6. When Paul is addressing Timothy in verses 1-2, he is writing to the pastor of a church where there was likely tension between slaves and masters. In this less than ideal situation—a product of sin—**the Bible encourages slaves** in several ways. They are to **honor unbelieving masters**. That Paul is addressing non-Christian masters in verse 1 is clear from the fact that he makes a contrast between them and Christian masters in verse 2. Slaves should treat their unbelieving masters as “worthy of all respect” (1); after all, they too are created in the image of God. The word “respect” here might also be

translated “honor,” and it comes from the same root as the command in 5:3, where Paul says to “*Honor widows*” (NASB; emphasis added).

It is crucial that we understand why Paul wants slaves to honor their masters. Slaves are to honor unbelieving masters “so that God’s name and His teaching will not be blasphemed” (6:1). We might break this purpose clause down into two parts. First, slaves act this way **for the glory of God**. This is the motivation that drives Paul, and it drives all of Scripture (1 Cor 10:31). In 1 Timothy we’ve already seen this in several forms. For example, we pray for all people and we honor widows because this pleases God (2:3; 5:4), and elders must have a good reputation so that God’s name is not brought in to disrepute (3:7). Paul’s deepest concern in addressing the conduct of slaves is for the glory of God to be made known, particularly before unbelieving masters. These unbelieving masters should see the grace of God in the lives of slaves who have become followers of Christ.

There’s a sense in which Paul’s words apply to all followers of Christ who have unbelieving employers. If you profess to follow Christ, you should honor your employer so that they see the glory of God in you. Everything you do at work is a representation of your God, so work hard and work well. Even when it’s not easy, we are to obey, for Peter says elsewhere,

“Household slaves, submit with all fear to your masters, not only to the good and gentle but also to the cruel. For it brings favor if, mindful of God’s will, someone endures grief from suffering unjustly. For what credit is there if you sin and are punished, and you endure it? But when you do what is good and suffer, if you endure it, this brings favor with God” (1 Pet 2:18-20).

Whether you’re a student or an employee, remember that every time you turn in a project, hand in an assignment, make a decision, or take an action, you are to reflect the glory of God.

There is another related goal in the way slaves honor masters, that is, they honor masters **for the advancement of the gospel**. In Titus 2:9-10 Paul says, “Slaves are to be submissive to

their masters in everything, and to be well-pleasing, not talking back or stealing, but demonstrating utter faithfulness, so that they may adorn the teaching of God our Savior in everything.” This is a beautiful way to describe the goal of obedience, so that we may “adorn” the gospel. Paul’s exhortation has a missionary motivation. Unbelieving masters should see the hard work of believers and be drawn to the glory of God and the fruit of the gospel. Christians should view their jobs as serving this great purpose.

These greater purposes that Paul speaks of remind us that **Christianity is not aimed primarily at social reform**. If the purpose of Christianity was to change societal structures, then we would not expect Paul to speak like he has been in this letter or his other writings. Instead, we would expect him to exhort the Ephesian church to work against the system of slavery; but Paul tells slaves to live for the salvation of their masters. That’s because **Christianity is aimed primarily at personal redemption**. Now that doesn’t mean societal structures aren’t important; they are very significant, and God calls his people to desire and do justice and love mercy in the world around them. Yet the primary focus is always the heart of people, for as people are redeemed through the power of the gospel, they begin to live according to the gospel, desiring and doing good in ways that bring glory to God. Specifically as the church, redeemed individuals come together in a community of believers who are one in Christ and who love and labor alongside one another regardless of whether they are Jews, Gentiles, slaves, or free men. And when the gospel transforms people, slavery is seen in a much different light. As one writer put it, the gospel lays “the explosive charge...that ultimately—although sadly, belatedly—leads to detonation, and the destruction of slavery” altogether.⁴

⁴Murray J. Harris, *Slave of Christ: A New Testament metaphor for total devotion to Christ* (Downers Grove: Intervarsity Press, 1999), 68.

If, then, slaves are to adorn the gospel in the way they treat their unbelieving masters, how should they treat a master who is a believer? It seems that some slaves were taking advantage of their Christian masters, thinking that they no longer had an obligation to keep their agreements to serve. But Paul says that having an unbelieving master is all the more reason to serve him with joy and hard work. In verse 2 the apostle says that instead of being disrespectful to believing masters, slaves should “serve them better, since those who benefit from their service are believers and dearly loved.” Slaves are to **work wholeheartedly** in such situations and avoid slacking off. The same holds true for Christian employees in our own day. They should not take advantage of brothers and sisters in Christ who have authority over them in the workplace. Instead, they are to **serve selflessly**. This kind of selfless service is a fruit of gospel transformation. Does this characterize your life and work?

Ultimately, given everything we’ve seen so far, **the Bible redeems slavery**. By that, I mean that God’s Word takes slavery, a product of sin, and turns it into a powerful image of God’s goodness. Consider **the beauty of Christ** and the gospel reality that **our Master has become our servant**. As Paul says in Philippians 2:7, the same Jesus who was fully divine “emptied Himself by assuming *the form of a slave*, taking the likeness of men.” The word “slave” in Philippians 2 comes from the same word we see in 1 Timothy 6:1—*doulos*. Christ took the very form of a slave. Jesus took this posture in John 13 when He wrapped a garment around His waist and washed His disciples’ feet (4-5). And Mark 10:45 says something similar with regard to the purpose for Jesus’ coming: “For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life—a ransom for many.” That’s the gospel in a nutshell. That’s good news!

The essence of Christianity is that our Master has become our servant and so, in turn, **we gladly become His slave**. The word Paul often uses to describe himself at the beginning of his

letters is this same word—*doulos*—translated as “servant” or “slave.”⁵ A slave is one who belongs to another and is under the authority of another. That was the way Paul wanted to be identified, and it’s the way that every follower of Christ should want to be identified. We are slaves of the Lord Jesus Christ, and unlike the sinful pictures of slavery we see in the world, slavery and service to the Lord Jesus is glorious freedom. It is glad service rendered to a gracious Master. At the end of the day, the question is not whether we are slaves, but whose slaves we are. Either we will serve sin and Satan (Jn 8:34; Rom 6:11), or we will serve the King of kings.

⁵When Paul refers to himself as a *doulos* of Christ, we’re also reminded of the way the Bible describes honored servants of the Lord like Moses and David (Josh 14:7; Ps 89:3); *The ESV Study Bible*, Romans 1:1.