
THE DEFENDER OF THE DEFENSELESS

EXODUS 21:1-11



Human beings oppress the weak. Whenever someone has power over another person, they are always likely to abuse that power. You've probably seen that in school, in the workplace, and even in your own family. To some degree, we've all been victims of bullying, oppression, and abuse. It's a horrible experience isn't it? We feel defenseless and helpless.

One of God's most beautiful character traits is his defense of the defenseless, his help of the helpless. Let's see how God reveals his beautiful character in his care for the weak and abused in Exodus 21:1-11.

LEARNING

GOD FREES THE CAPTIVES (1-6)

God hates slavery and loves freedom. We've seen that in how God delivered the Israelites from Egyptian slavery and reminded them of that in Exodus 19 and 20. God loves freeing captives. We see God's love for captives and his passion for freedom in Exodus 21's laws about slaves. There he issued rules to ensure that any Hebrew slave was released for nothing after six years.

However, God also recognized that some slaves would come to love masters who treated them and their families well and would want to stay in these circumstances. **But if the slave plainly says, 'I love my master, my wife, and my children; I will not go out free,' then his master shall bring him to God, and he shall bring him to the door or the doorpost. And his master shall bore his ear through with an awl, and he shall be his slave forever** (5-6). This permanent mark would be a testimony to the mutual love and commitment of both the Master and the slave.

WE ABUSE POWER TO DAMAGE THE WEAK,
BUT GOD USES HIS POWER TO DELIVER THE WEAK.

GOD DEFENDS THE DEFENSELESS (7-11)

In verses 7-11, God sets special protections for female slaves who would be especially vulnerable to abuse. God protected them from male slaves (7), from foreigners (8), and from abuse in her Master's family (9-10). Knowing the tendencies of the human heart, God looked ahead, saw the potential for oppression and abuse, and got ahead of it with laws to defend and deliver from it. Isn't that beautiful? Isn't God beautiful?

This is one of the reasons I admire Rachael Den Hollander so much. Abused by the American gymnastics team doctor, Larry Nasser, over many years, she showed the heart of God in standing up against her abuser and the gymnastics establishment. And having secured his conviction, she and her husband Jacob now campaign against abuse in every walk of life. That is a flesh-and-blood revelation of the heart of God and it's beautiful to see.

BULLYING IS UGLY,
DEFENDING THE BULLIED IS BEAUTIFUL.

LOVING

As the perfect flesh-and-blood revelation of God, Jesus showed this same heart for the oppressed and abused, especially those spiritually oppressed and abused by their own sin. **“Truly, truly, I say to you, everyone who practices sin is a slave to sin...So if the Son sets you free, you will be free indeed”** (John 8: 35, 37). Jesus delivers from our greatest bully, oppressor, and abuser – our own sinful hearts.

LIVING

Worship and imitate the God who frees captives and defends the defenseless.
