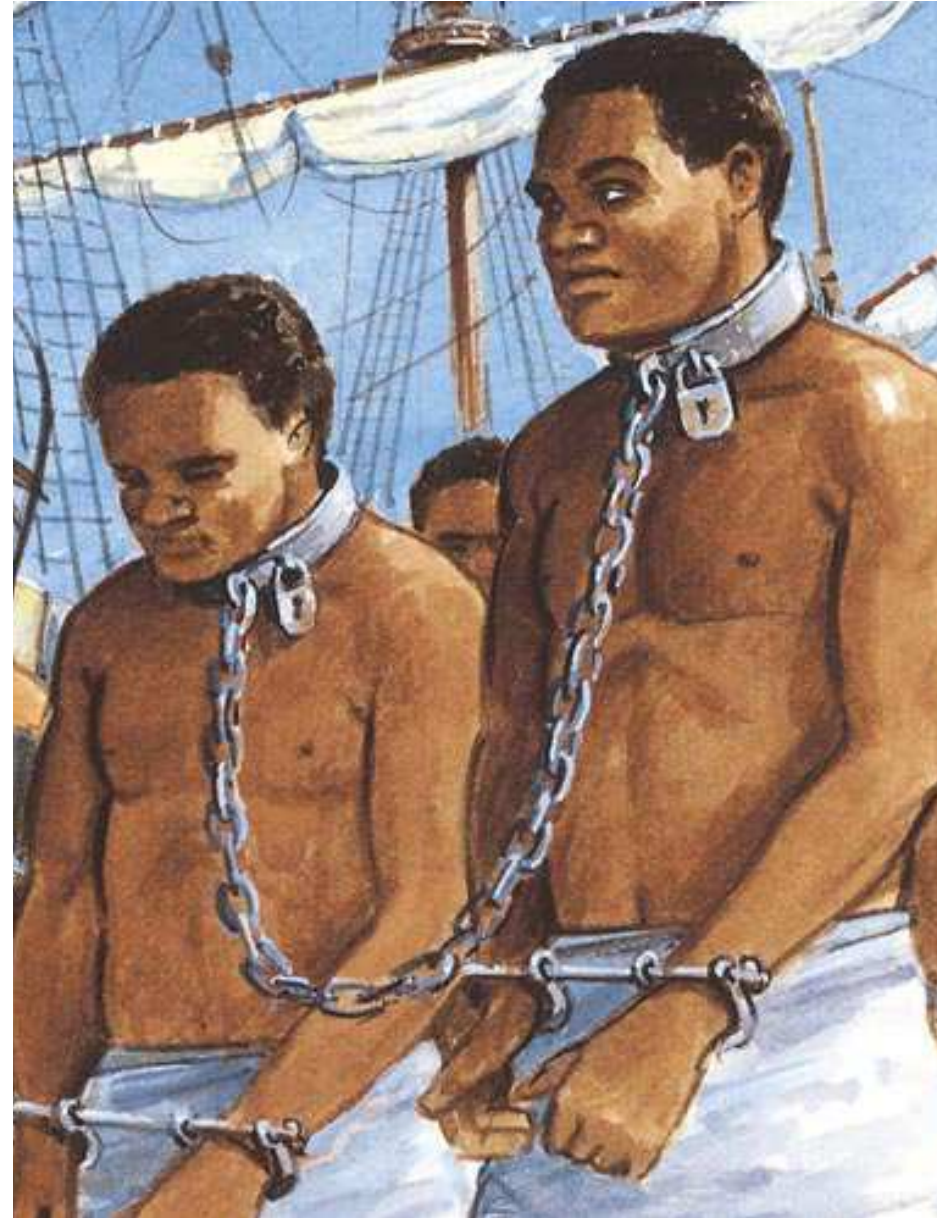


SETTING THE  
CAPTIVES FREE



# DEFINITION OF SLAVERY

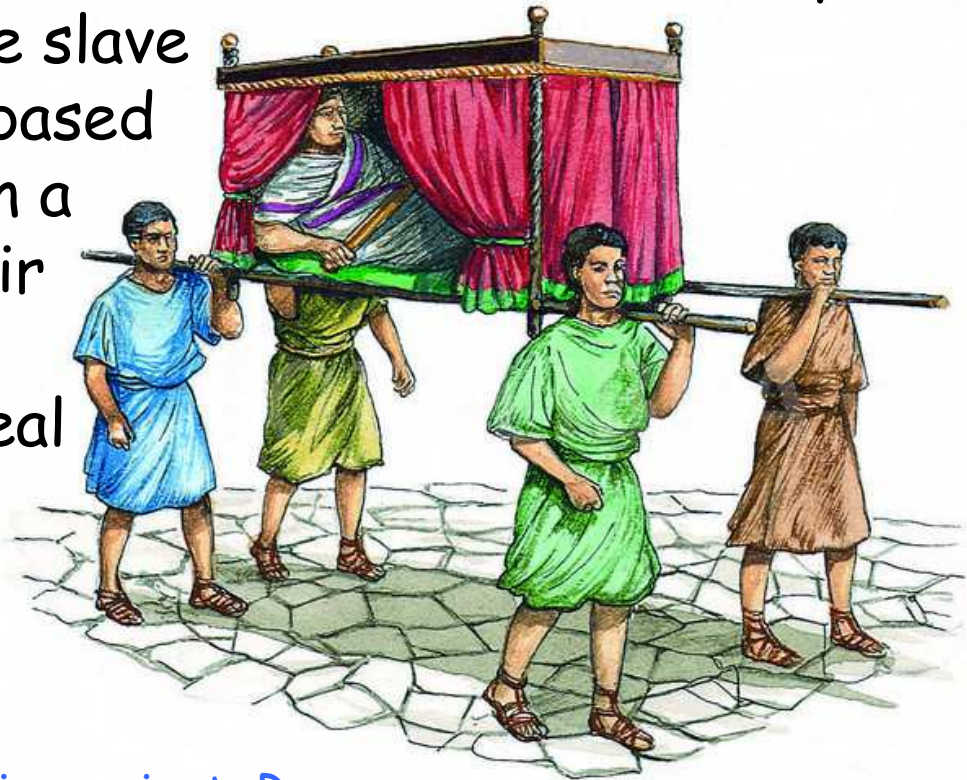
- ❑ Collins Concise English Dictionary defines a slave as follows:
  - a person legally owned by another and having no freedom of action or right to property
  - a person who is forced to work for another against his will
  - a person under the domination of another person or some habit or influence





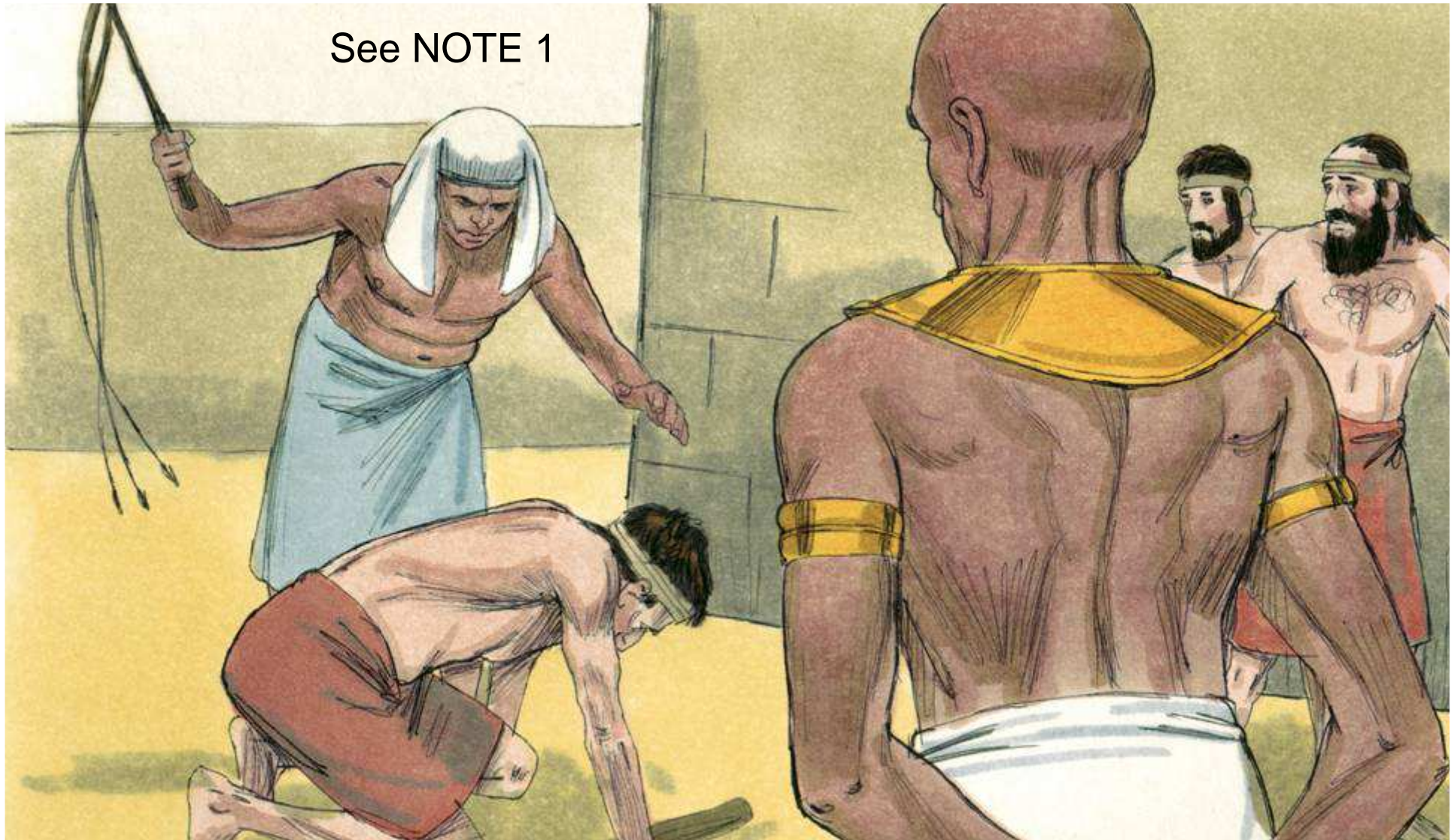
# ROMAN SLAVES

- ❑ ... slaves were considered property under Roman law and had no legal personhood. Unlike Roman citizens, they could be subjected to corporal punishment, sexual exploitation (prostitutes were often slaves), torture, and summary execution. The testimony of a slave could not be accepted in a court of law unless the slave was tortured—a practice based on the belief that slaves in a position to be privy to their masters' affairs would be too virtuously loyal to reveal damaging evidence unless coerced.<sup>1</sup>



<sup>1</sup> [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Slavery\\_in\\_ancient\\_Rome](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Slavery_in_ancient_Rome)

See NOTE 1

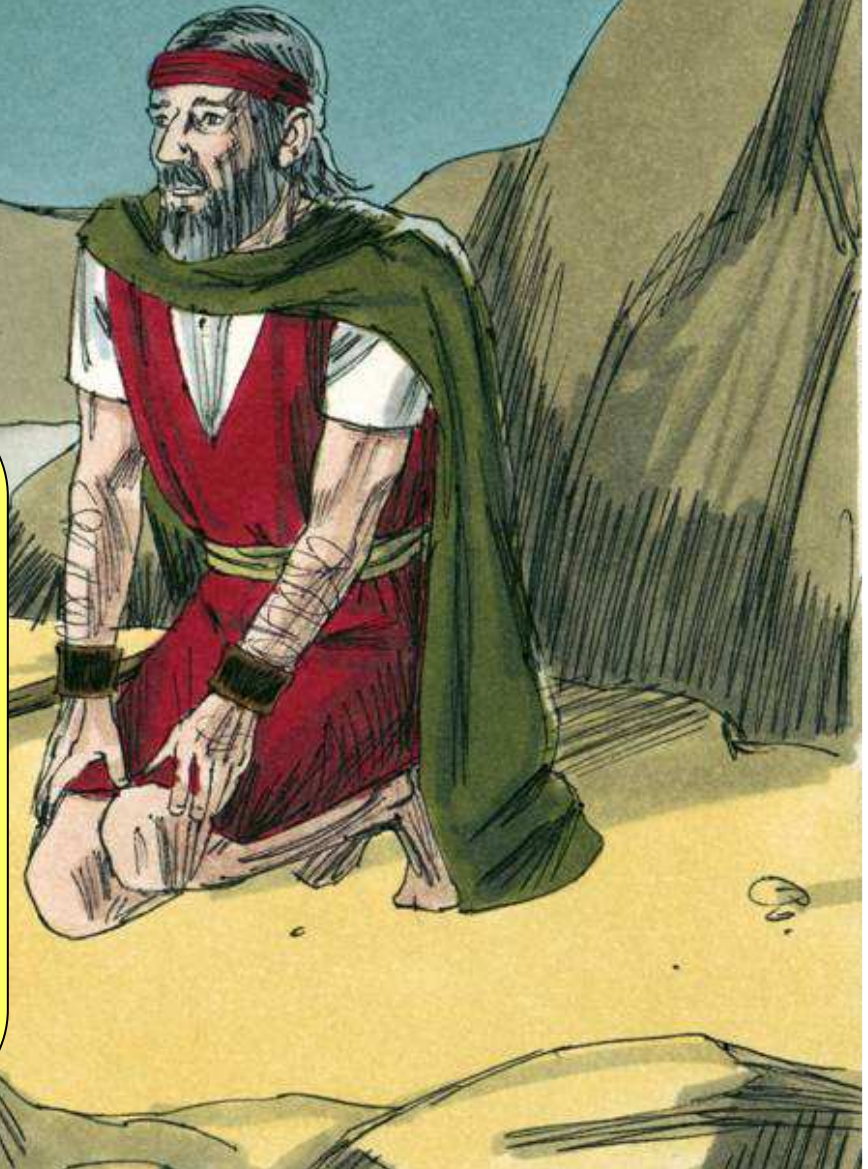


In Exodus we read how the Israelites were slaves in Egypt: "They made their lives bitter with hard labour in brick and mortar and with all kinds of work in the fields; in all their hard labour the Egyptians used them ruthlessly." (Ex 1:14)



See NOTE 1

I have indeed seen the misery of my people in Egypt. I have heard them crying out because of their slave drivers, and I am concerned about their suffering. So I have come down to rescue them from the hand of the Egyptians ...



But Moses, who was a type of Jesus, was called by God to free his people from slavery. (Ex 3:7-10)

# SLAVES TO SIN

## ❑ BIBLICAL DEFINITION OF A SLAVE:

You are a slave to whatever has mastered you, or to whoever you obey:

- 2 Pet 2:19 They promise them freedom, while they themselves are slaves of depravity—for a man is a slave to whatever has mastered him.
- Rom 6:16 Don't you know that when you offer yourselves to someone to obey him as slaves, you are slaves to the one whom you obey—whether you are slaves to sin, which leads to death, or to obedience, which leads to righteousness?

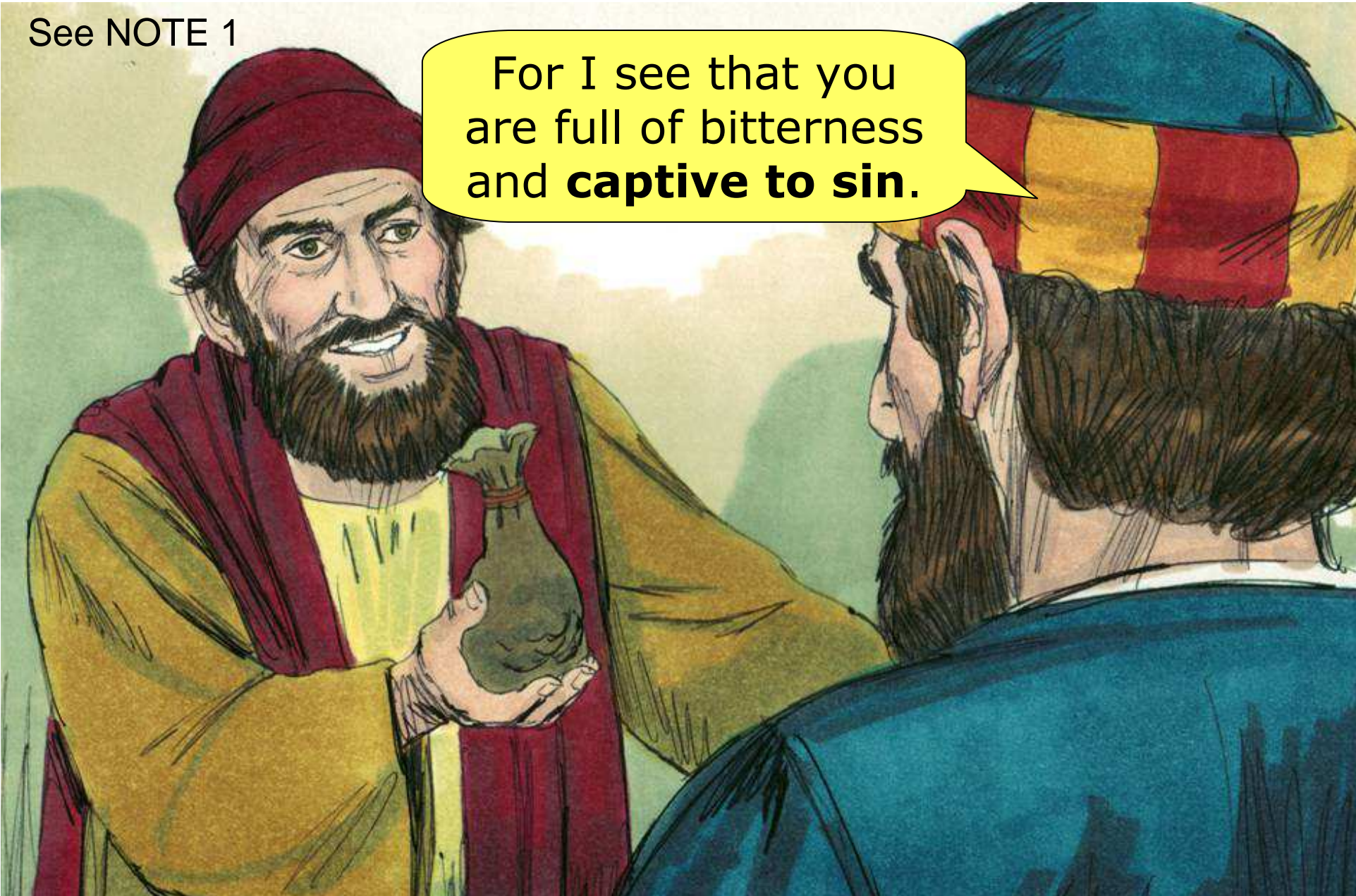
❑ Sin and depravity can enslave a person:

- Prov 5:22 The evil deeds of a wicked man ensnare him; the cords of his sin hold him fast.
- Gal 3:22 But the Scripture declares that the whole world is a prisoner of sin...
- John 8:34 I tell you the truth, everyone who sins is a slave to sin...





See NOTE 1

An illustration depicting a scene from the Bible. On the left, Peter, with a beard and wearing a red turban and a yellow robe with a red sash, holds a small brown bag. He is looking towards Simon the Sorcerer on the right. Simon is shown from the back, wearing a blue and red striped turban and a blue robe. A yellow speech bubble from Peter contains the text: "For I see that you are full of bitterness and **captive to sin.**"

For I see that you  
are full of bitterness  
and **captive to sin.**

Remember what Peter said to Simon the Sorcerer when he tried to buy the ability to impart the Holy Spirit. (Acts 8:23)



# THE SLAVE OWNER

- ❑ The slave master is the devil:
  - 2 Tim 2:25-26 Those who oppose him he must gently instruct, in the hope that God will grant them repentance leading them to a knowledge of the truth, and that they will come to their senses and escape from the trap of the devil, who has taken them captive to do his will.





- ❑ John Salisbury Cochran relates how, as a boy in West Virginia, he witnessed a slave auction in 1851. A Quaker in the crowd explained to the boy the evils of slavery, and especially how badly woman slaves might be treated.



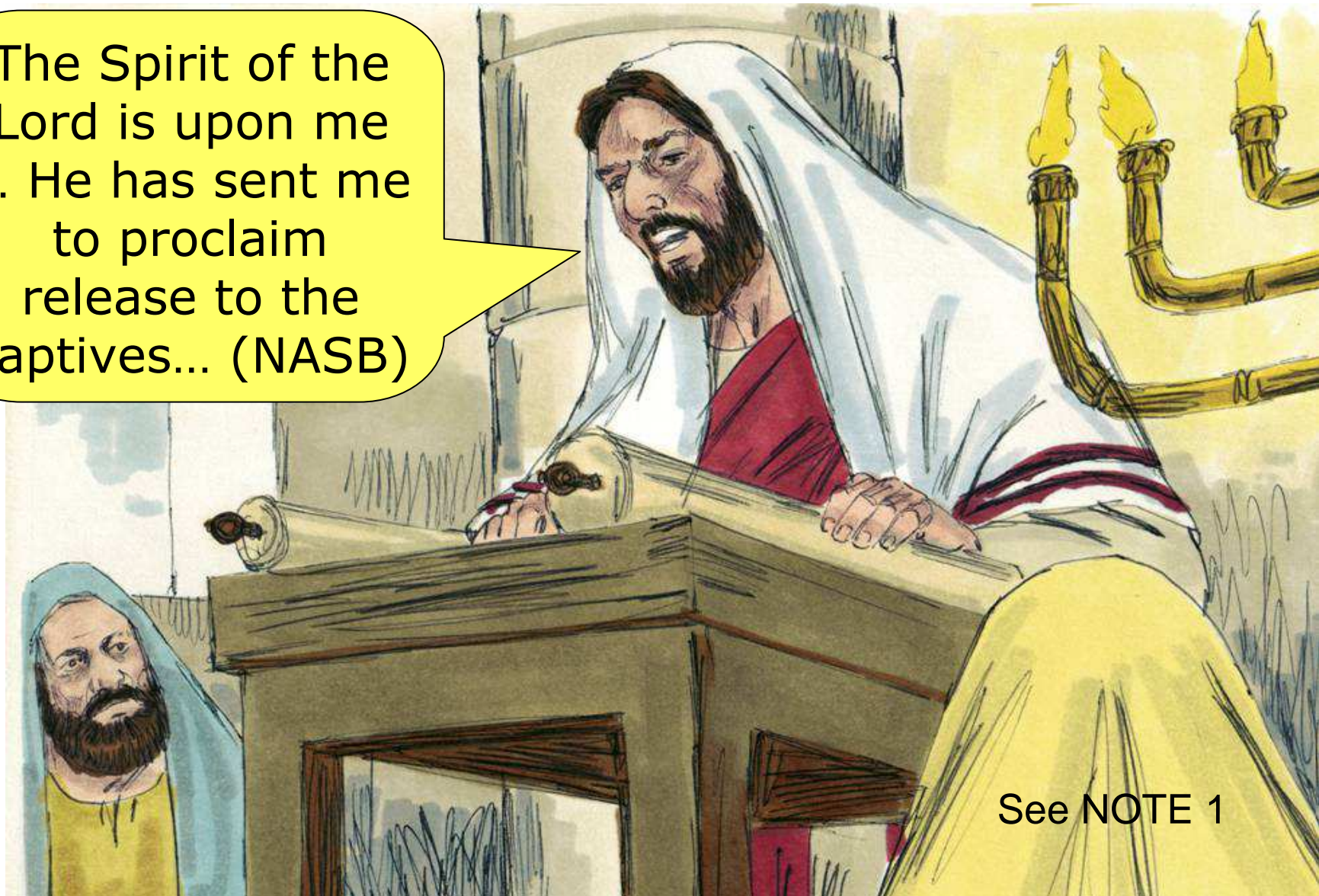
# DELIVERER FROM SLAVERY

- As two men started bidding for an elderly Negro woman, the Quaker was moved with compassion and stepped to the auction area and began to bid for her. The bidding went up and up, but eventually the Quaker outbid the prospective slave owner. The Quaker, a man called Joshua Cope, took the bills of sale, read it over and then wrote something across the back. A change come over the face of the slave - she was radiant with joy. He had written, "I, Joshua Cope, the within owner, hereby manumit, release, and forever set free, the within slave, Matilda Taylor." <sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> SOURCE: <http://strattonhouse.com/index.php?section=history&content=30011831>



The Spirit of the Lord is upon me ... He has sent me to proclaim release to the captives... (NASB)



See NOTE 1

Jesus too purchased freedom for those who were enslaved by sin. In the Nazareth synagogue, Jesus said that he came "to preach **deliverance to the captives**" (Luke 4:18 KJV).



# A SLAVE TO SIN

□ Paul describes the human condition as follows:

- Rom 7:14-21 We know that the law is spiritual; but **I am unspiritual, sold as a slave to sin.** I do not understand what I do. For what I want to do I do not do, but what I hate I do. And if I do what I do not want to do, I agree that the law is good. As it is, it is no longer I myself who do it, but it is sin living in me. I know that nothing good lives in me, that is, in my sinful nature. For **I have the desire to do what is good, but I cannot carry it out.** For what I do is not the good I want to do; no, the evil I do not want to do—this I keep on doing. Now if I do what I do not want to do, it is no longer I who do it, but it is sin living in me that does it. So I find this law at work: When I want to do good, evil is right there with me.

- ❑ Rom 7:22-25 For in my inner being I delight in God's law; but I see another law at work in the members of my body, waging war against the law of my mind and making me a prisoner of the law of sin at work within my members. What a wretched man I am! Who will rescue me from this body of death? Thanks be to God—through Jesus Christ our Lord! So then, I myself in my mind am a slave to God's law, but in the sinful nature a slave to the law of sin.





# ADDICTIONS

- ❑ Are you a slave to sin? "Addiction" is a modern word that means a similar thing.
  - You might know of a drug user who promises the counsellor that he's kicked the habit for good . Six months down the road, he's drugging again.  
That is slavery!
  - Or take the alcoholic who vows to his wife and children, and even God that he'll never touch another drink; but a week later, he's back drinking again.  
That is slavery!

# ADDICTIONS

## □ Medical Definition of Addiction

- Addiction is a **persistent, compulsive dependence on a behaviour or substance...**

Addiction has been extended, however, to include mood-altering behaviours or activities.

Some researchers speak of two types of addictions: **substance addictions** (for example, alcoholism, drug abuse, and smoking); and **process addictions** (for example, gambling, spending, shopping, eating, and sexual activity).<sup>1</sup>





□ In the U.S.:

- By eighth grade, 52% of adolescents have consumed alcohol, 41% have smoked tobacco, and 20% have smoked marijuana. Compared to females, males are almost

four times as likely to be heavy drinkers, nearly one and a half more likely to smoke a pack or more of cigarettes daily, and twice as likely to smoke marijuana weekly.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Ibid





**Kill a Cigarette  
and Save a Life.  
Yours!**

- ... 25% of the population regularly uses tobacco. Tobacco use reportedly kills 2.5 times as many people each year as alcohol and drug abuse combined. According to data from the World Health Organization, there were 1.1 billion smokers worldwide and 10,000 tobacco-related deaths per day.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Ibid

# ADDICTIONS

- An estimated four million Americans over the age of 12 used prescription pain relievers, sedatives, and stimulants for “nonmedical” reasons during one month.<sup>1</sup>



<sup>1</sup> Ibid



- Eating disorders, such as anorexia nervosa, bulimia nervosa, and binge eating, affect more than five million American women and men. **Fifteen percent of young women** have substantially disordered attitudes toward eating and eating behaviours. More than 1,000 women die each year from anorexia nervosa. <sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Ibid





- A Harvard study found that an estimated 15.4 million Americans suffered from a gambling addiction.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Ibid

# FALSE RELIGION

- ❑ But it's not just substance dependence that causes addiction or slavery - people can be slaves to any type of sin, or even slaves to pleasure.
- ❑ We can be enslaved by wrong thinking or by our ungodly world view:
  - Col 2:8 See to it that no one **takes you captive through hollow and deceptive philosophy**, which depends on human tradition and the basic principles of this world rather than on Christ.
- ❑ You can be enslaved by false religion:
  - Gal 4:8 Formerly, when you did not know God, **you were slaves to those who by nature are not gods.**

# LEGALISM

- ❑ You can also be enslaved by legalism:
  - Gal 4:9-10 ... how is it that you are turning back to those weak and miserable principles? **Do you wish to be enslaved by them all over again?** You are **observing special days and months and seasons and years!**
  - Gal 2:4 This matter arose because some false brothers had infiltrated our ranks to spy on the freedom we have in Christ Jesus and **to make us slaves.**
  - Gal 3:23 Before this faith came, **we were held prisoners by the law, locked up** until faith should be revealed.



# LEGALISM

- Matt 23:4 They tie up heavy loads and put them on men's shoulders, but they themselves are not willing to lift a finger to move them.
- Gal 5:1-4 It is for freedom that Christ has set us free. Stand firm, then, and do not let yourselves be burdened again by a yoke of slavery... Again I declare to every man who lets himself be circumcised that he is obligated to obey the whole law. You who are trying to be justified by law have been alienated from Christ; you have fallen away from grace.



# FEAR & PHOBIAS

- ❑ Some people are enslaved by their fears and phobias.
- ❑ Phobias are described as **an irrational fear, panic, terror, or dread that happens to you in a relatively harmless situation.** You may realize the fear you have is irrational and way out of proportion to the event but are unable to control the responses. You may have a racing heartbeat, sweaty hands, shortness of breath, or the urge to run away. You may stand and shake with fear. This response will interfere with your social life, your career and your ability to care for your body.<sup>1</sup>
  - Rom 8:15 For you did not receive a spirit that makes you a **slave again to fear**, but you received the Spirit of sonship.

<sup>1</sup> <http://www.fountia.com/phobias-stress>

# SLAVES OF PLEASURE

- ❑ If we submit to all our passions, we can even be enslaved by desire for pleasure:
  - Titus 3:3 At one time we too were foolish, disobedient, deceived and **enslaved by all kinds of passions and pleasures**. We lived in malice and envy, being hated and hating one another.
- ❑ Do your pleasures enslave you and rule your life?
  - Watching TV, computer gaming, surfing the internet
  - Materialism - Love of money and possessions
  - Food



# DEMONIC OPPRESSION

- ❑ People can be bound by demons:
  - Luke 13:10-11 On a Sabbath Jesus was teaching in one of the synagogues, and a woman was there who had been **crippled by a spirit for eighteen years**. She was bent over and could not straighten up at all.
- ❑ Jesus referred to her as "a daughter of Abraham, **whom Satan has kept bound for eighteen long years**" (Luke 13:16).
  - Luke 13:10-11 When Jesus saw her, he called her forward and said to her, "**Woman, you are set free from your infirmity.**" Then he put his hands on her, and immediately she straightened up and praised God.

# FREEDOM

A close-up, high-contrast photograph of a heavy metal chain. The chain is broken, with several links flying through the air in a dynamic, explosive motion. The links are dark and metallic, with bright highlights and deep shadows that emphasize their three-dimensional form. The background is a plain, light color, making the dark chain stand out prominently.

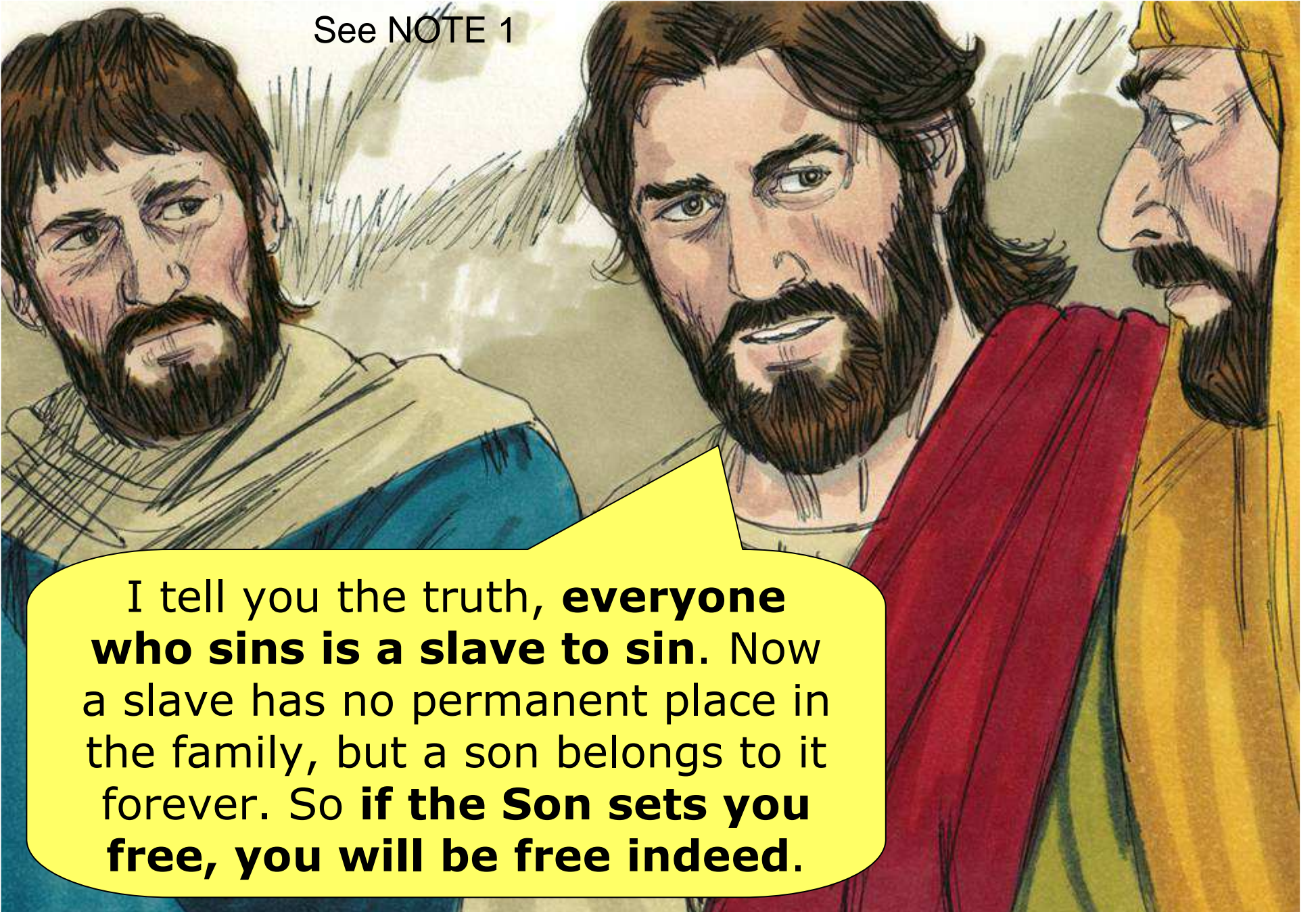
□ How are we freed from slavery to sin?

1. Hold to Jesus' teaching

➤ John 8:31-32 To the Jews who had believed him, Jesus said, "If you hold to my teaching, you are really my disciples. Then you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free."



See NOTE 1



I tell you the truth, **everyone who sins is a slave to sin**. Now a slave has no permanent place in the family, but a son belongs to it forever. So **if the Son sets you free, you will be free indeed**.

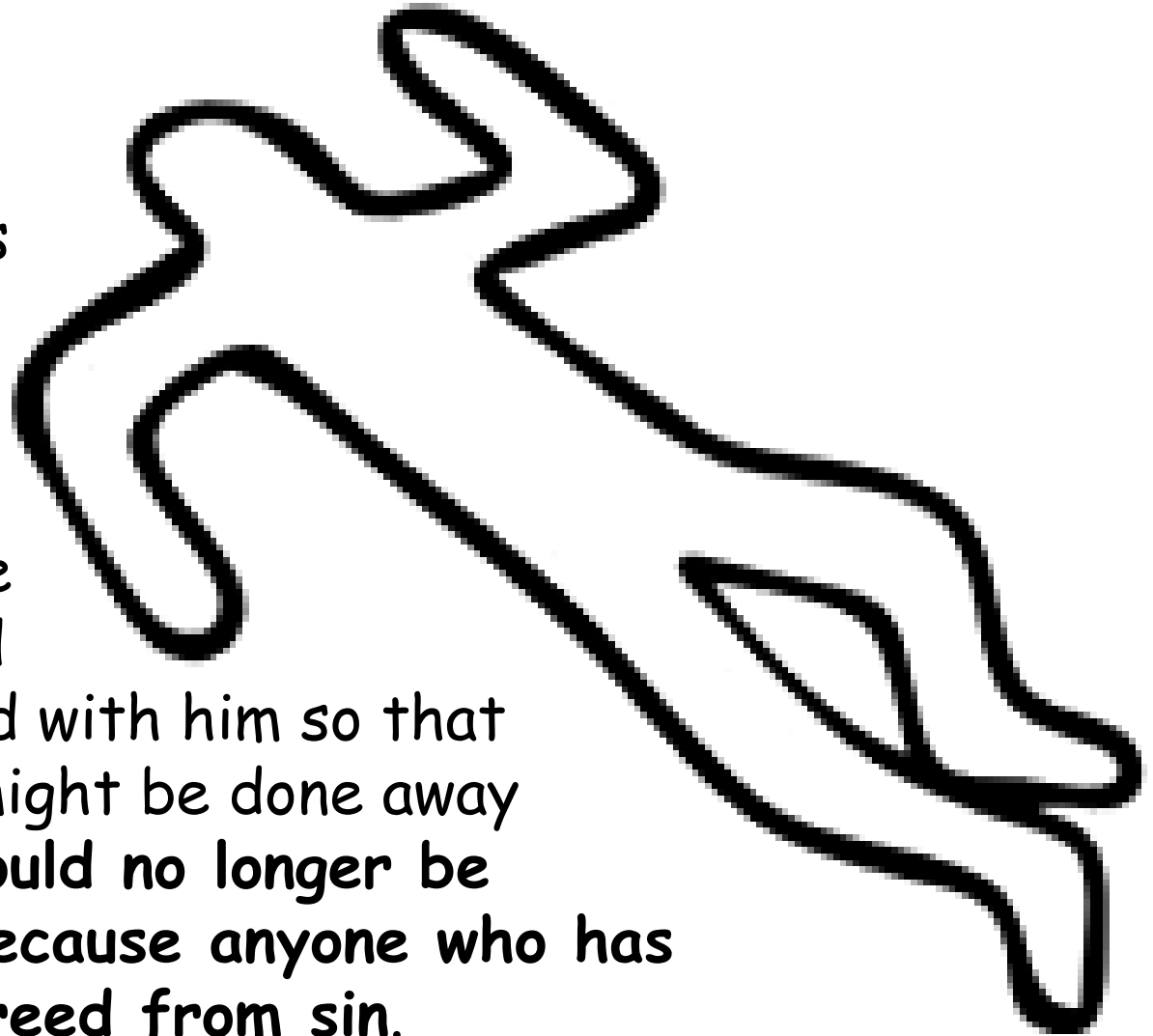
2. By having a relationship with the Son of God (John 8:33-36)



# FREEDOM BY DEATH

## 3. By death:

- ❑ If a slave dies, his master no longer has jurisdiction over him. So we need to die to sin.
  - Rom 6:6-7 For we know that our old self was crucified with him so that the body of sin might be done away with, that **we should no longer be slaves to sin— because anyone who has died has been freed from sin.**
- ❑ A dead person cannot be tempted to sin!



# A NEW MASTER

4. By getting a new owner.

- ❑ Here is another analogy used in Scripture to explain the process of being freed - When a slave is purchased by a new owner, he has no obligation to obey his old master, only the new one.
- Rom 6:17-19 But thanks be to God that, though **you used to be slaves to sin**, you wholeheartedly obeyed the form of teaching to which you were entrusted. **You have been set free from sin and have become slaves to righteousness.** I put this in human terms because you are weak in your natural selves. Just as **you used to offer the parts of your body in slavery to impurity and to ever-increasing wickedness**, so now **offer them in slavery to righteousness** leading to holiness.

# A NEW MASTER

- ❑ So if we have a new master - why are we still taking instructions from the old one? You are no longer under his authority.
- Rom 6:12-15 **Therefore do not let sin reign in your mortal body so that you obey its evil desires. Do not offer the parts of your body to sin, as instruments of wickedness, but rather offer yourselves to God, as those who have been brought from death to life; and offer the parts of your body to him as instruments of righteousness. For sin shall not be your master, because you are not under law, but under grace. What then? Shall we sin because we are not under law but under grace? By no means!**



# A NEW MASTER

- Suppose a person used to work at a warehouse and let us suppose they visit this place where they have not worked for thirty years. As they walk in the door they see their old boss. Upon seeing this person the old boss shouts, I'm glad you're finally here, get to work. The boss gives the former employee all these orders to fill and then tells them to sweep up the place when they have finished pulling the orders. The person then immediately takes off their good clothes and puts on some older clothes and begins to do all that the old boss commanded. <sup>1</sup>



<sup>1</sup> [http://www.blueletterbible.org/faq/don\\_stewart/stewart.cfm?id=573](http://www.blueletterbible.org/faq/don_stewart/stewart.cfm?id=573)

# A NEW MASTER

- ❑ What would you say if someone did something like that? You would say, The person is a fool. Why are they still obeying the old boss? They are not under his authority any longer!

Yes it would be foolish for a person to still obey a boss that has not had authority over them for some thirty years. Yet believers are just as foolish when they allow themselves to sin. Our old nature does not have authority over us any longer. When we succumb to it we are obeying a boss who does not control us.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Ibid

- ❑ In the natural realm, we realise that it is foolish to obey a previous boss, so why do we think it's acceptable in the spiritual realm?





# FREEDOM

- Once we realise that sin, Satan and the Law are no longer our masters, the end result is:
  - Freedom
  - Holiness
  - Eternal life
- ❖ Rom 6:20-22 When you were slaves to sin, you were free from the control of righteousness. What benefit did you reap at that time from the things you are now ashamed of? Those things result in death! But now that **you have been set free from sin** and have become slaves to God, **the benefit you reap leads to holiness, and the result is eternal life.**

# HOW LONG DOES IT TAKE?

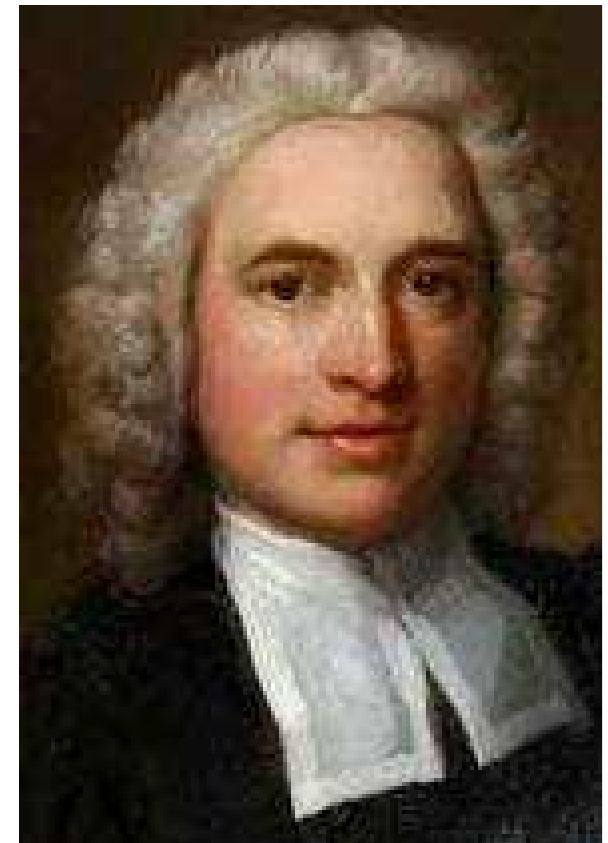
- ❑ Romans 6 lays the foundation for the Christian's deliverance from sin. Such deliverance God provides for every believer; all may enter in. Moreover, let us be unmistakably clear that **this liberation from the power of sin may be experienced the very hour a sinner accepts the Lord Jesus as Saviour and is born anew.** He need not be a long-time believer and undergo numerous defeats before he can receive this gospel. **Delay in accepting the gospel according to Romans 6 is due either to the incomplete gospel he has heard or to his unwillingness in wholly accepting and fully yielding to it.** Whereas actually this blessing should be the common possession of all the newly born.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Watchman Nee "The Spiritual Man" Volume 1: Chapter 10 "Deliverance From Sin And The Soul Life" - "The Way Of Deliverance"

# FREEDOM!

- ❑ Charles Wesley, brother of the great 18<sup>th</sup> century Methodist revivalist, John Wesley - penned these words:

➤ Long my imprisoned  
spirit lay,  
Fast bound in sin  
and nature's night;  
Thine eye diffused  
a quickening ray—  
I woke, the dungeon  
flamed with light;  
My chains fell off,  
my heart was free,  
I rose, went forth,  
and followed Thee.



**Charles Wesley  
(1707-1788)**

# FREEDOM!

- ❑ On July 31, 1838 on the Island of Jamaica, a man named William Knibbs, gathered 10,000 slaves for a great praise gathering. They were celebrating the New Emancipation Proclamation Act that would abolish slavery on the island. They had built an immense coffin and into it were placed whips, branding irons, chains, fetters of all kinds, slave garments and all the things that represented the terrible slavery system that was now coming to a welcome end.

At the first stroke of the midnight bell, Knibbs shouted out, "The monster is dying." At each stroke of the bell that followed this cry was repeated and the great crowd began to join in the cry. <sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> <http://www.sermoncentral.com/illustrations/sermon-illustration-bill-lobbs-stories-whatisevangelism-greatcommission-lordshipofchrist-1204.asp>



# FREEDOM!

- At the twelfth stroke 10,000 voices cried out, "The monster is dead, the monster is dead, let us bury him." They then screwed the coffin lid down and lowered it into a huge grave and covered it up. That night, every heart rejoiced and 10,000 voices grew hoarse, shouting and crying with joy. Once they were in bondage to slavery, but now they were free.

There is a tragic side to this story. While many rejoiced in their new liberty and freedom, there were some slaves, that lived in remote areas of the island, that did not know they had legally been set free. Because they didn't know, for many years after the Emancipation Proclamation had been made a law, they still continued to serve their slave masters. <sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Ibid

# FREEDOM!

- Their former masters successfully kept the news from them as long as they could. By law they had been declared free men and did not have to live as slaves any longer. However, ignorance of the truth kept them in bondage.

Now let me tell you an even sadder story. Today, if we'd hear a story of something like that happening, we'd be shocked, sympathetic and even angry. But the truth is, the same type of thing is happening in our day.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Ibid

# FREEDOM!

- ❑ Jesus Christ, because of his victory against sin on the cross, has issued an Emancipation Proclamation of liberty and freedom from sin to everyone on this earth. But like some of the Jamaicans were, there are those today that just don't understand that they no longer have to live as slaves to sin any longer, and the devil is trying to keep them in that mindset.
- ❑ The message of the cross is this: Satan has been defeated and sin's penalty has been paid. We no longer have to surrender to sin or be controlled by Satan. We can belong to Jesus and live to please God.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Ibid

An oil painting depicting a woman with long dark hair embracing a young child from behind. The woman's face is in profile, looking down with a gentle expression. The child's back is to the viewer, and their arms are wrapped around the woman's chest. The painting has a textured, expressive style with visible brushstrokes. The background is composed of several distinct areas: a pink and white checkered pattern on the left, a mottled yellow and blue area in the upper center, and a dark, textured blue-grey area on the right. A small, patterned rectangular object, possibly a cushion or a piece of fabric, is visible on the floor to the right. The word "Forgiveness" is written in a large, white, italicized serif font across the center of the image, partially obscuring the figures.

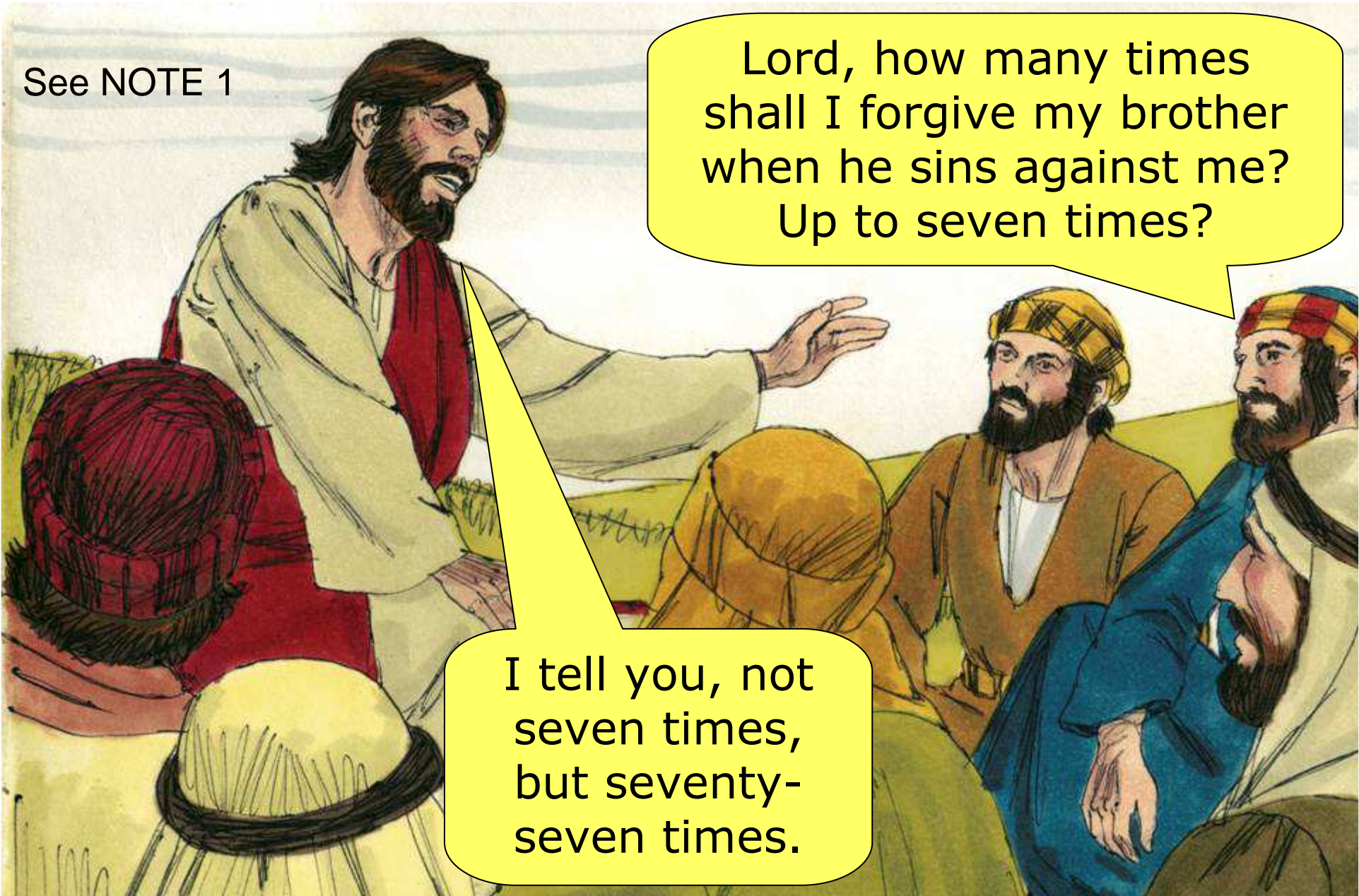
# *Forgiveness*



# UNFORGIVENESS

- ❑ Let us now look at another type of slavery - unforgiveness.
  - The heaviest thing to carry is a grudge.
- ❑ Paul implies that unforgiveness creates a foothold for the devil in our lives :
  - 2 Cor 2:7-11 Now instead, you ought to forgive and comfort him, so that he will not be overwhelmed by excessive sorrow. I urge you, therefore, to reaffirm your love for him... If you forgive anyone, I also forgive him. And what I have forgiven—if there was anything to forgive—I have forgiven in the sight of Christ for your sake, in order that Satan might not outwit us. For we are not unaware of his schemes.

See NOTE 1

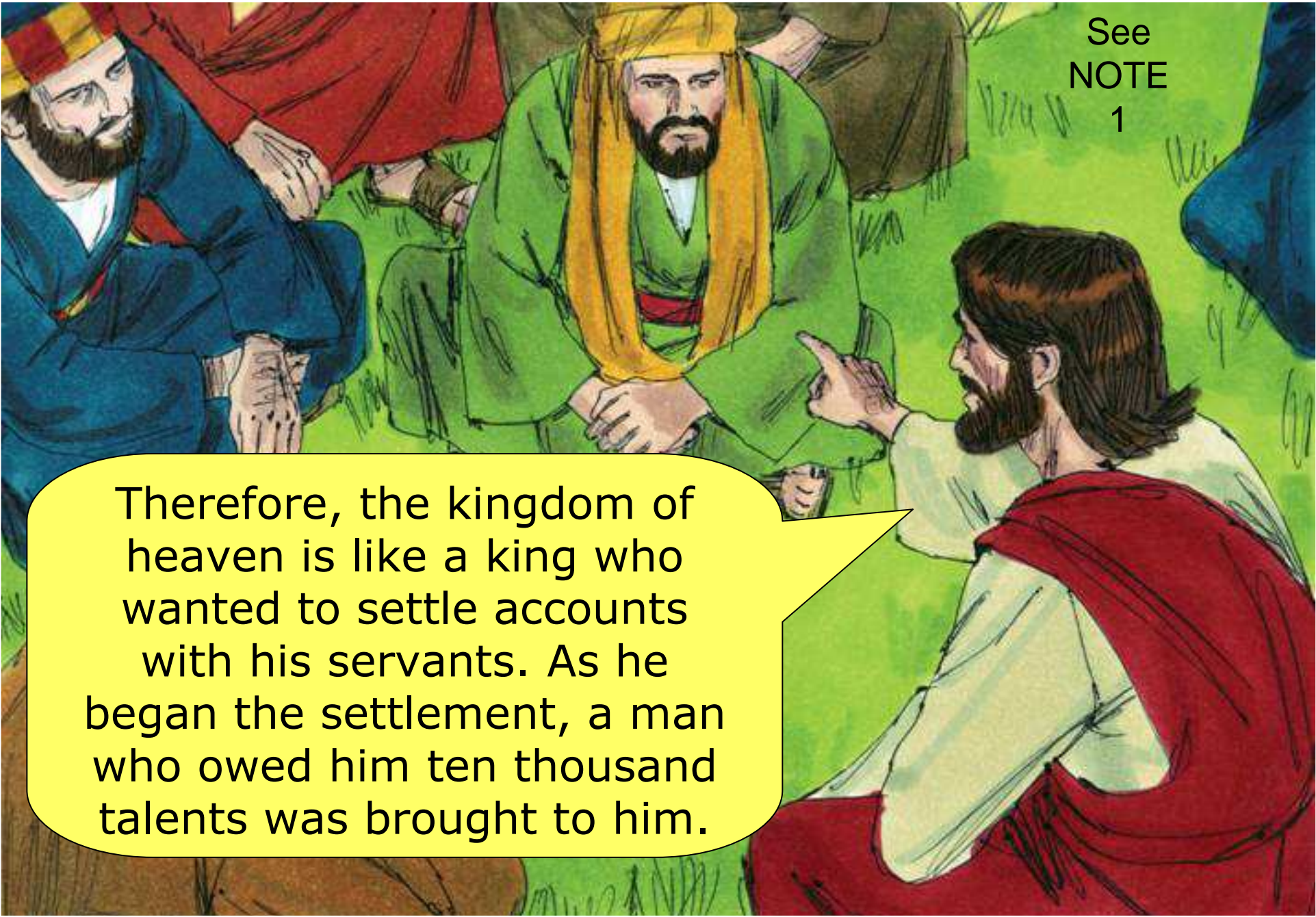


Lord, how many times  
shall I forgive my brother  
when he sins against me?  
Up to seven times?

I tell you, not  
seven times,  
but seventy-  
seven times.

We read the following account in Matthew 18:23-35  
about a question Peter posed to Jesus.





See  
NOTE  
1

Therefore, the kingdom of heaven is like a king who wanted to settle accounts with his servants. As he began the settlement, a man who owed him ten thousand talents was brought to him.

Jesus then tells a story to demonstrate his point.




See  
NOTE  
1



Since he was not able to pay, the master ordered that he and his wife and his children and all that he had be sold to repay the debt. The servant fell on his knees before him...





Be patient  
with me, and  
I will pay back  
everything.

See NOTE 1



See NOTE 1

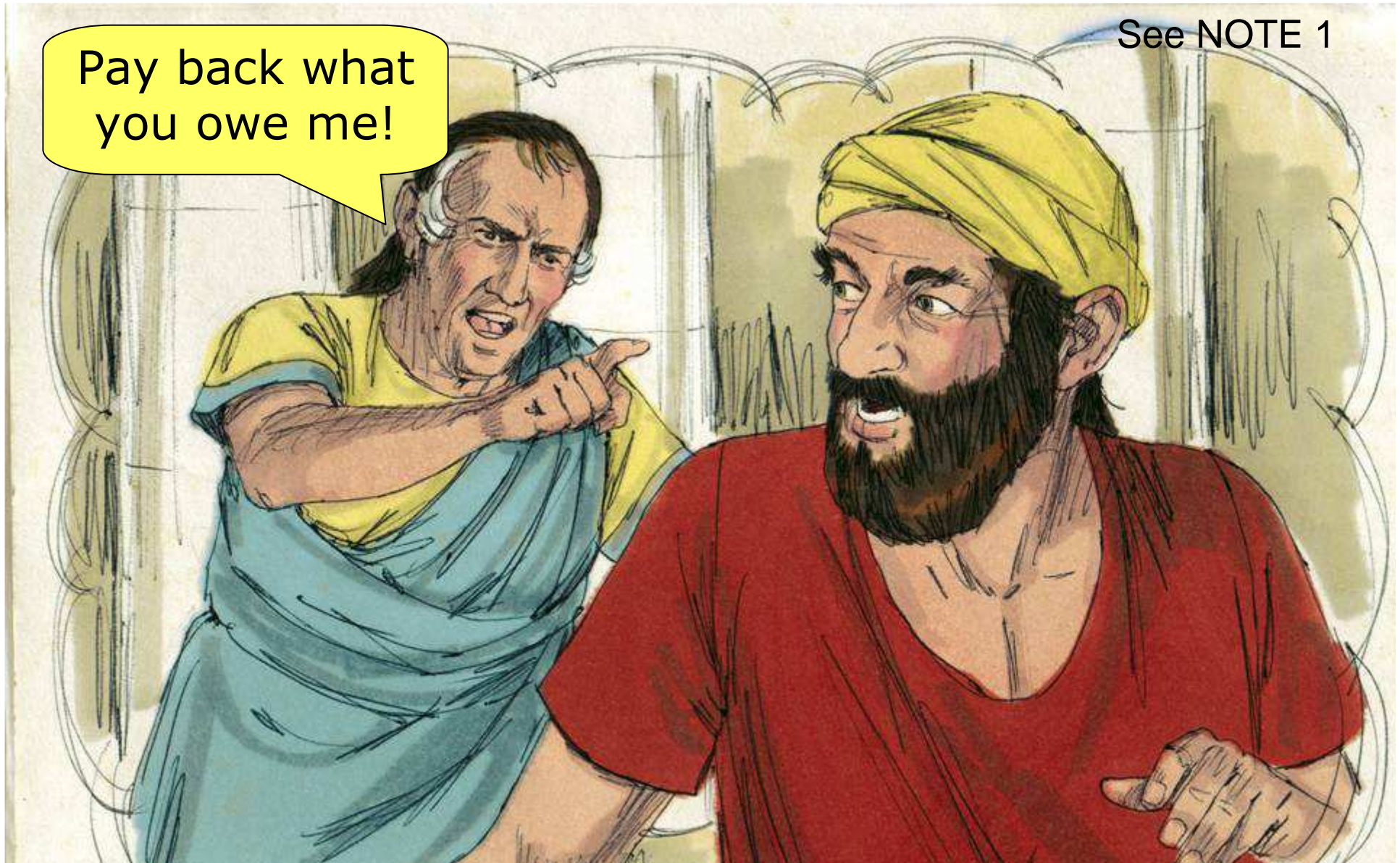


The servant's master took pity on him, cancelled the debt and let him go.



See NOTE 1

Pay back what  
you owe me!



But when that servant went out, he found one of his fellow servants who owed him a hundred denarii. He grabbed him and began to choke him.

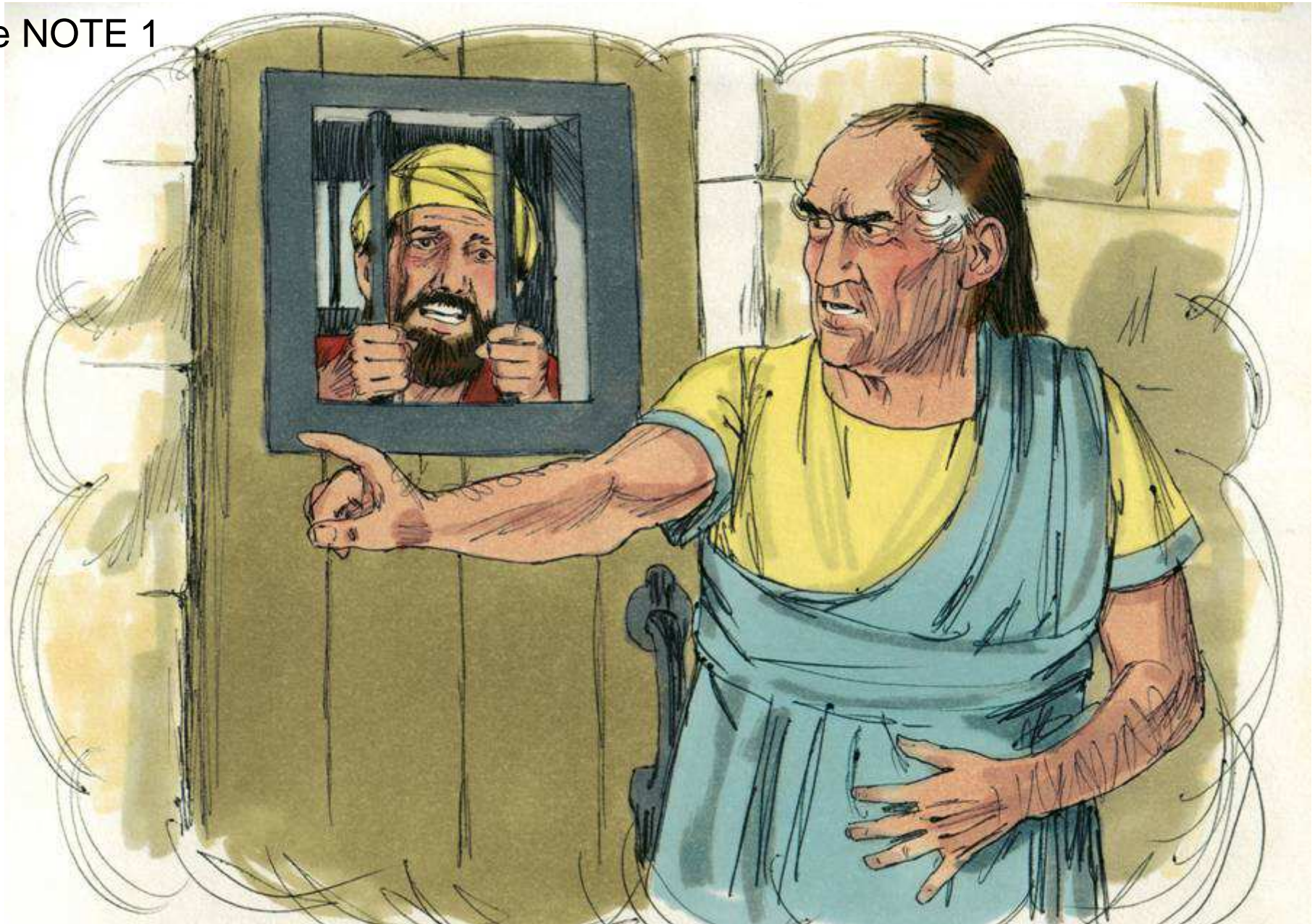


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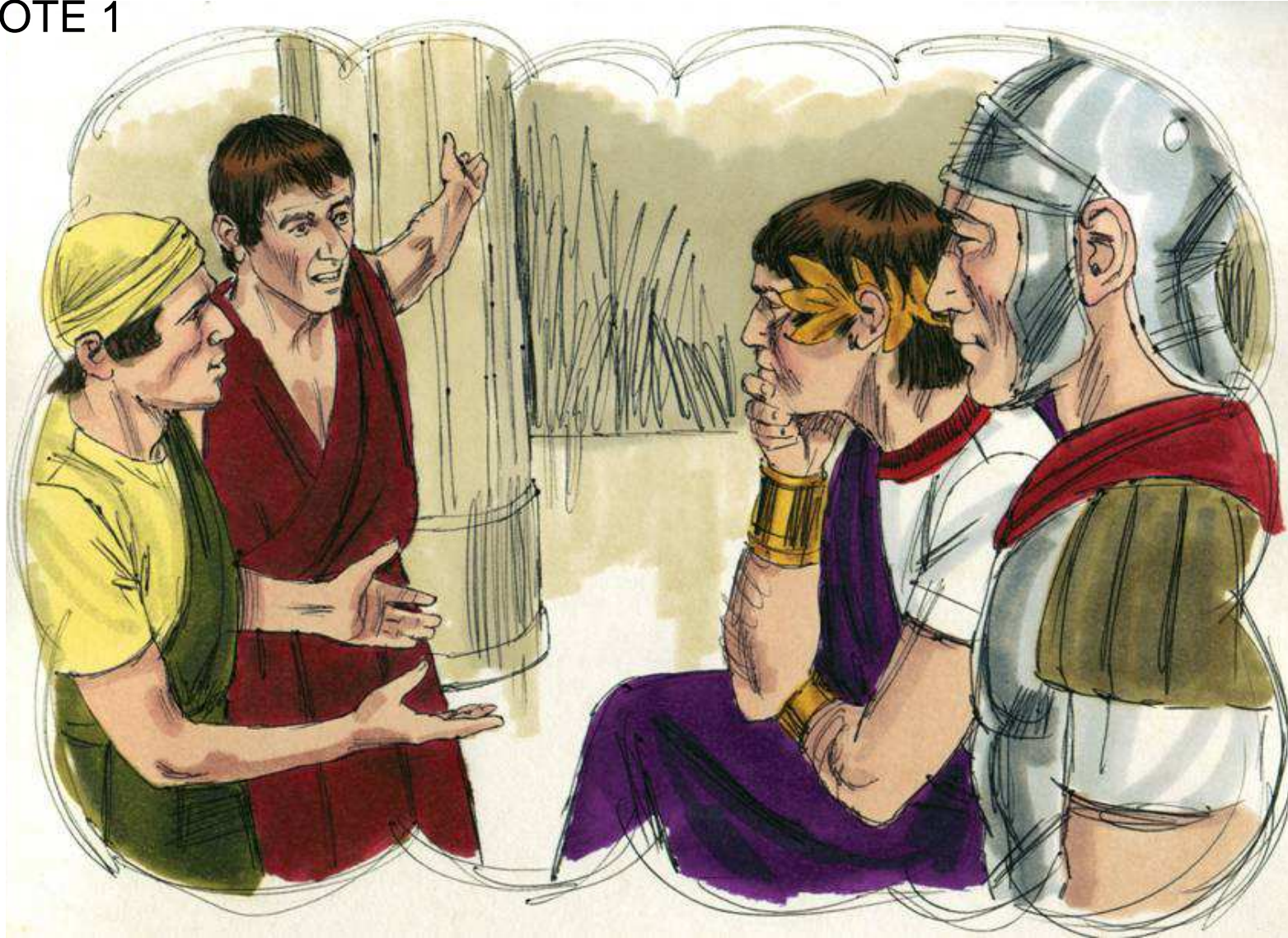
See NOTE 1



But he refused. Instead, he went off and had the man thrown into prison until he could pay the debt.



See NOTE 1



When the other servants saw what had happened, they were greatly distressed and went and told their master everything that had happened. Then the master called the servant in.



You wicked servant, I cancelled all that debt of yours because you begged me to. Shouldn't you have had mercy on your fellow servant just as I had on you?



See  
NOTE 1





See  
NOTE 1

In anger his master turned him over to the jailers to be tortured, until he should pay back all he owed.





See  
NOTE 1

This is how my  
heavenly Father will  
treat each of you  
**unless you forgive  
your brother from  
your heart.**

# THE MEASURE YOU USE

- ❑ The forgiveness we receive from God is conditional:
  - Matt 6:12-15 Forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors... For if **you forgive men when they sin against you, your heavenly Father will also forgive you.** But if you do not forgive men their sins, your Father will not forgive your sins.
- ❑ And so we are instructed to:
  - Bear with each other and **forgive whatever grievances you may have against one another. Forgive as the Lord forgave you.** (Col 3:13)
  - Be kind and compassionate to one another, **forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you.** (Eph 4:32)

□ Thomas Fuller (1608-1661), an English churchman said,  
"He that cannot forgive others, breaks the bridge  
over which he must pass himself, for every man has  
need to be forgiven."

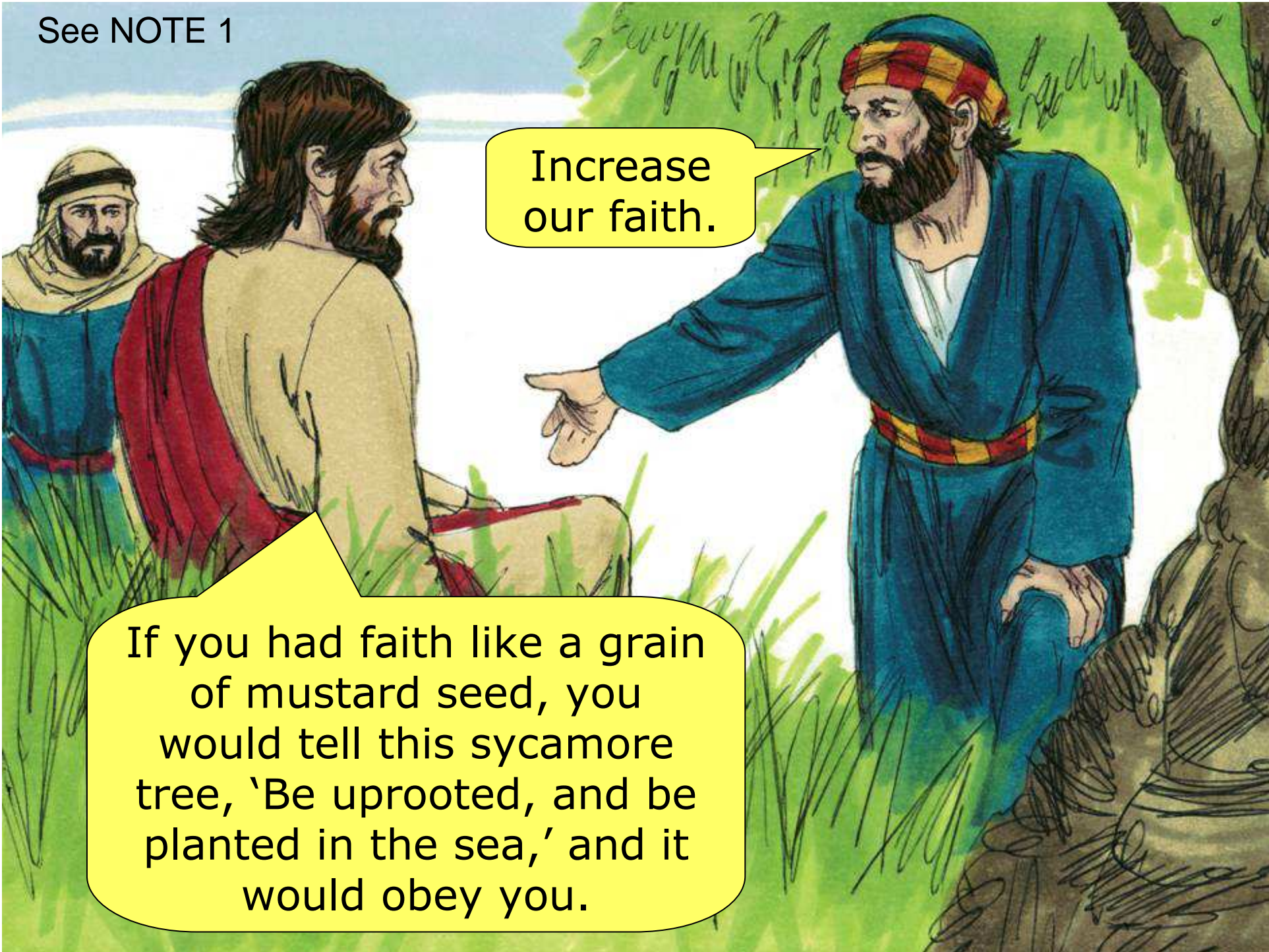


# THE MEASURE YOU USE

- ❑ This verse, used often about giving money - in context, is actually about giving forgiveness:
  - Luke 6:37-38 "Do not judge, and you will not be judged. Do not condemn, and you will not be condemned. **Forgive, and you will be forgiven.**
  - "Give, and it will be given to you. A good measure, pressed down, shaken together and running over, will be poured into your lap. For with the measure you use, it will be measured to you."**
- ❑ So the more grace we show to others, the more we experience God's grace to us in our lives.
- ❑ Let's look at another passage often quoted out of context.



See NOTE 1



Increase  
our faith.

If you had faith like a grain  
of mustard seed, you  
would tell this sycamore  
tree, 'Be uprooted, and be  
planted in the sea,' and it  
would obey you.

# INCREASE OUR FAITH!

- ❑ Was Jesus really concerned about us having enough faith so that we could use it to transplant trees?
- 1. In context, the disciples ask Jesus to increase their faith, when they hear of the obligation we have from God to forgive, not just once, but repeatedly.
  - Luke 17:3-6 (WEB) Be careful. If your brother sins against you, rebuke him. If he repents, forgive him. If he sins against you seven times in the day, and seven times returns, saying, 'I repent,' you shall forgive him." The apostles said to the Lord, "Increase our faith." The Lord said, "If you had faith like a grain of mustard seed, you would tell this sycamore tree, 'Be uprooted, and be planted in the sea,' and it would obey you."

# BITTERNESS

2. The tree referred to is the sycamore-fig (or sycamine) and not the mulberry as rendered in some versions.
  - a) The sycamine tree and the mulberry tree were very similar in appearance; the two trees even produced a fruit that looked identical. However, **the fruit of the sycamine tree was extremely bitter**. Its fruit looked just as delicious as a mulberry fig. But when a person tasted the fruit of the sycamine fig, he discovered that it was horribly bitter. <sup>1</sup>
  - b) Remember the context is about forgiveness. So Jesus is speaking about unforgiveness being like a sycamore-fig tree, which had bitter fruit and a **very deep root system**. Likewise unforgiveness causes bitterness in our lives and is often deeply rooted.

<sup>1</sup> <http://www.4kingdoms.com/sycamore.html>



# DON'T STAND SO CLOSE

c) It is very interesting to note that the sycamine tree was not naturally pollinated. **The pollination process was only initiated when a wasp stuck its stinger right into the heart of the fruit.** Thus, the tree and its fruit had to be "stung" in order to be reproduced. Think of how many times you have heard a bitter person say: "I've been stung by that person once, but I'm not going to be stung again! **I'll never let them get close enough to sting me again!**" The wasp of bitterness got to them! <sup>1</sup>

□ Jesus says that if have faith as small as a mustard seed, we can command this deep-rooted tree, with bitter fruit which attracted wasps, to be uprooted and planted in the sea.

<sup>1</sup> Ibid

# UNCONDITIONAL

- ❑ We see Jesus' example in forgiving unconditionally, **without being asked** for forgiveness:
  - Luke 23:33-34 When they came to the place called the Skull, there they crucified him, along with the criminals—one on his right, the other on his left. Jesus said, "Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing."
- ❑ It really doesn't matter if the person who hurt you deserves to be forgiven. Forgiveness is a gift you give yourself. You have things to do and you want to move on.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Real Live Preacher, RealLivePreacher.com Weblog, July 7, 2003

# JOSEPH

- ❑ One of the greatest examples of forgiveness in the Bible is the case of Joseph and his brothers. Prompted by jealousy, his brothers hated him.
  - Gen 37:4 When his brothers saw that their father loved him more than any of them, they hated him and could not speak a kind word to him.
- ❑ His brothers intended to kill him (Gen 37:18-20), but Reuben delayed them (Gen 37:21-22) and Judah convinced them to rather sell him into slavery (Gen 37:26-27).
- ❑ Although Joseph and his brothers were later reconciled in Egypt, on the death of their father, Jacob, the brothers again feared that Joseph might seek revenge for their earlier actions.



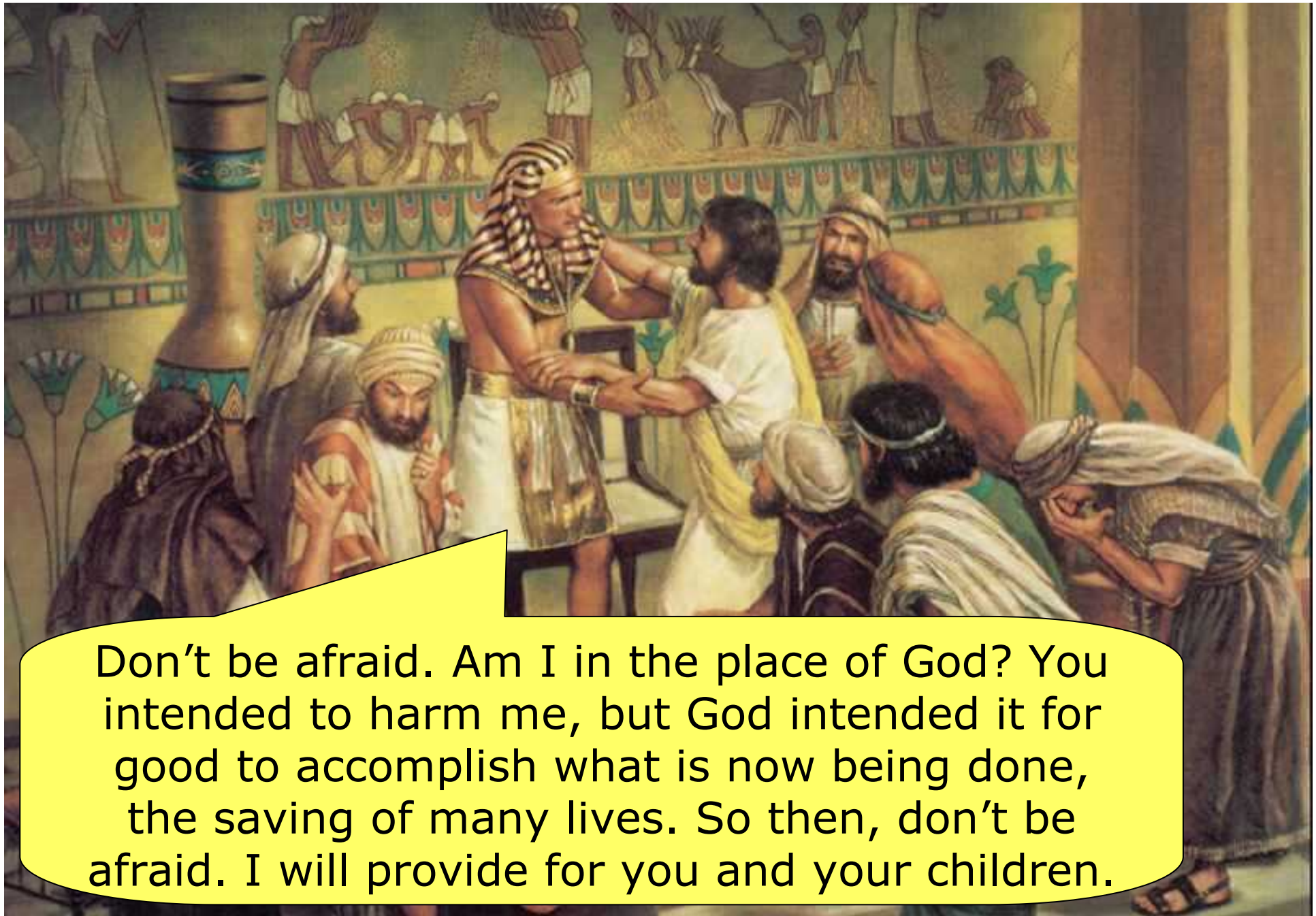
# JOSEPH

- Gen 50:15-21 When Joseph's brothers saw that their father was dead, they said, "What if Joseph holds a grudge against us and pays us back for all the wrongs we did to him?"

So they sent word to Joseph, saying, "Your father left these instructions before he died: 'This is what you are to say to Joseph: I ask you to forgive your brothers the sins and the wrongs they committed in treating you so badly.' Now please forgive the sins of the servants of the God of your father."

When their message came to him, Joseph wept.

His brothers then came and threw themselves down before him. "We are your slaves," they said.



Don't be afraid. Am I in the place of God? You intended to harm me, but God intended it for good to accomplish what is now being done, the saving of many lives. So then, don't be afraid. I will provide for you and your children.

And he reassured them and spoke kindly to them.

# FORGIVE & FORGET

- ❑ We need to forgive and forget, as God does with us:
  - Heb 8:12 For I will forgive their wickedness and **will remember their sins no more.**
- ❑ Like Joseph, we need to do the same - Love "keeps no record of wrongs" (1 Cor 13:5).
- ❑ Forgiveness is typically defined as the process of concluding resentment, indignation or anger as a result of a perceived offense, difference or mistake, or ceasing to demand punishment or restitution. The Oxford English Dictionary defines forgiveness as 'to grant free pardon and to **give up all claim on account of an offense or debt**'.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Forgiveness>



# SPURGEON - FORGIVENESS

- ❑ I wish, brothers and sisters, that we could all imitate "the pearl oyster"—A hurtful particle intrudes itself into its shell, and this vexes and grieves it. It cannot reject the evil, but what does it do but 'cover' it with a precious substance extracted out of its own life, by which it turns the intruder into a pearl! Oh, that we could do so with the provocations we receive from our fellow Christians, so that pearls of patience, gentleness, and forgiveness might be bred within us by that which otherwise would have harmed us.<sup>1</sup>



<sup>1</sup> <http://www.spurgeon.org>

# SET THE PRISONER FREE

- ❑ Forgiveness is a choice:
  - Forgiveness is the healing of wounds caused by another. You choose to let go of a past wrong and no longer be hurt by it. Forgiveness is a strong move to make, like turning your shoulders sideways to walk quickly on a crowded sidewalk. It's your move.<sup>1</sup>
- ❑ And once you forgive, the captive is set free:
  - To forgive is to set the prisoner free and then discover the prisoner was you.

<sup>1</sup> Real Live Preacher, RealLivePreacher.com Weblog, July 7, 2003

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