

# MASTERS OR SLAVES?

## INTRO

This study considers the threat to jobs from AI, both to blue-collar and white-collar workers. It looks at what the bible teaches about work and leisure as part of God's natural order and the consequences of people losing the dignity of having a job.

## THAT'S MY JOB!

- Software AI applications, such as medical image analysis, are easy to replicate and transfer around the globe.
- Almost all business and industries are using some form of AI to replace tasks that humans once did, from credit checking to bail applications and interviewing to drug discovery.
- Robots are more expensive to develop and to purchase but they are becoming more sophisticated, enabling them to perform tasks like fruit picking previously requiring human manual dexterity.
- AI can bring many benefits from improving drug discovery to robots replacing humans in hazardous environments.

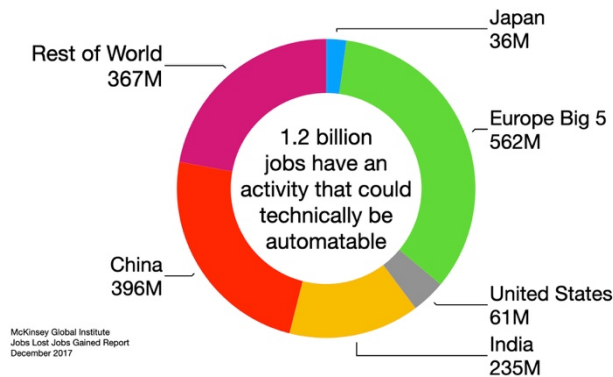
## A REVOLUTION!

- 18<sup>th</sup> Century Industrial Revolution created new jobs for skilled and unskilled.
- As economies developed people moved from agriculture to industry and then

- migrated to the service sector as more jobs were automated and moved to Asia.
- Robots can work 24/7 doing jobs previously needing a human but they don't need comfort breaks. A boon, perhaps, for warehouses under pressure for the way they treat employees.
- Industries - like automotive - could change replacing the jobs of taxi and delivery drivers. Do they have the soft skills for caring for the elderly or social work that might be available as economy changes?

## PAID TO DO NOTHING?

- Analysts are divided on how many jobs will be lost, McKinsey estimate between 75 and 350 million by 2030.



- Proposals have been made for a Universal Basic Income for people who lose their job because of automation – a bit like a social security payment.

## CREATED TO WORK

- God worked in creating the Universe, even planting the garden in Eden.

- He continues to work upholding the universe by the 'power of his might'.
- Man worked in the garden of Eden before the fall, but after it became more difficult.
- Bible teaches us the importance of work in OT and NT to provide for others – family and the poor.

## LEISURE IS A CYCLE

- God rested on the 7<sup>th</sup> day and commands his people to also rest on the 7<sup>th</sup> day of the week – to keep a sabbath to the Lord.
- The sabbath serves to allow people to physically and emotionally rest from their normal labours, to remember God's provision and to find spiritual refreshment too.
- There is therefore a God ordained cycle of work and rest. God intends us to work.
- We are not made solely for leisure.
- We must be careful not to let technology usurp God's natural order.
- Being made after his likeness, to have dominion as vicegerents, means that there is purpose and dignity in work itself.
- This is the 'functional' view of Imago Dei and is an aspect of how we mirror God's image.
- Will our thirst for convenience and efficiency take away the dignity of work and diminish our ability to reflect that part of God's image in us?

Next Study – Mirror World or Reality  
Now do the bible study for unit 7.

## Read Genesis 1:26-31, Genesis 2:5-9, 15-23, Genesis 3:17-23

What do these passages teach us about work?

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What is the purpose of work?

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How did work change after the fall?

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What does it mean for us to have dominion over the earth and to subdue it?

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How do our inventions and technology fit into having dominion over the earth – especially robots?

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## Read Jeremiah 29:5-7

What does Jeremiah tell the exiles to do and how does that relate to today?

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## Read 1 Timothy 5:8, Titus 3:14, Colossians 3:23

What are some of the reasons for work given in these passages?

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How does work mirror God's image in us?

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## Read Genesis 2:1-3, Exodus 20:8-11

Why did God rest?

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What are the reasons for us to rest one day in the week?

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## Reflection

What are the reasons for us to work and not be at permanent leisure?

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Would it matter if those who were made redundant and couldn't get another job were paid a basic income by the state?

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Some have suggested that Christians would have more time for evangelism and caring for people if we had a Universal Basic Income – do you agree and do you think it would be a positive development?

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Is 'full time Christian work' more important than other types of work?

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Should robots and AI applications be used to replace people??

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When might it be OK to replace people with robots and AI applications?

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What should we do about those who lose their job due to automation?

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This aim of the study is to look at what the bible teaches about work and leisure and in the light of this, help the group to think through how the threat to jobs from AI, both to blue-collar and white-collar workers, might impact what God made us for.

## Read Genesis 1:26-31, Genesis 2:5-9, 15-23, 3:17-23

What do these passages teach us about work?

- God works in creation, even making man and woman. He planted the garden of Eden first and then put man to work in it.
- Man is given dominion over God's creation to subdue it.

What is the purpose of work?

- At a basic level, to enable us to survive – to eat, have shelter and nowadays, in a money economy -education, health services etc.

How did work change after the fall?

- It became more difficult.

What does it mean for us to have dominion over the earth and to subdue it?

- The original language conveys more the idea of stewardship as vicegerents rather than greedy exploitation, in other words, we are to care for it whilst using it for survival.

How do our inventions and technology fit into having dominion over the earth – especially robots?

- We can use them in so far as it helps us to steward earth's resources and make work easier but we could argue that there should always preserve useful work that people can do – remembering that not everyone will be able to re-skill to develop software and robots!

## Read Jeremiah 29:5-7

What does Jeremiah tell the exiles to do and how does that relate to today?

- They should carry on as normal with work and day to day activities of survival. Their prosperity is linked to the prosperity of the city in which they are exiled. We should also work today to benefit the society in which we live – even though people we work for are not Christians.

## Read I Timothy 5:8, Titus 3:14, Colossians 3:23

What are some of the reasons for work given in these passages?

- To provide for others, especially family and those in need. This is an expression of our faith – in other words it is part of imitating Christ and mirroring his image (what he is like).

How does work mirror God's image in us?

- Work gives us income to bless others with and to do good works of kindness, especially to those in need. God also works and made us to work, to care for his creation, so that in work we mirror his image, we reflect something of who God is – even by the way in which we work.

## Read Genesis 2:1-3, Exodus 20:8-11

Why did God rest?

- He had finished his work of creation and rested on that day, making it holy?

What are the reasons for us to rest one day in the week?

- God commands it and it is a day in which we 'remember' God, we acknowledge that we are dependent on him for all that we work for, and that we need rest and refreshment. We bring worship and praise to him for his provision

## Reflection

Pick a few of these questions to discuss in the light of the study conclusions.

What are the reasons for us to work and not be at permanent leisure?

- God has determined a natural cycle of work and rest, not permanent leisure.

Would it matter if those who were made redundant and couldn't get another job were paid a basic income by the state?

- There would be dangers in people losing the dignity of work.

Some have suggested that Christians would have more time for evangelism and caring for people if we had a Universal Basic Income, discuss whether it would be a good thing.

- Would this allow the dignity of ordinary work to continue?

Is 'full time Christian work' more important than other types of work?

- All work is valued by God and we shouldn't create a sacred-secular divide.

When might it be OK to replace people with robots and AI applications?

- E.g. in hazardous situations and where there is other work they could do.

What should we do about those who lose their job due to automation?

- It could be argued that we should ensure that there are other jobs that could be done and that re-skilling is possible for that individual.