

Why Did God Allow Slavery in the Bible?

Exodus 12:43-44: (NASB) ⁴³*The LORD said to Moses and Aaron, This is the ordinance of the Passover: no foreigner is to eat of it; ⁴⁴but every man's slave purchased with money, after you have circumcised him, then he may eat of it.*



Slavery! It is a function of a sin-ridden, imperfect human race. When we hear of people being slaves the reality of what that means has a dramatic range. There was the inhuman harshness of Egyptian domination over Israel and the enslavement of Africans a few hundred years ago. Then there were the Roman and Greek versions of slavery. Then there was the indentured servitude of several cultures. In all cases it is easy for us who live in the 21st century to look back and wonder why. We think we know better.

Here is the problem - at this very moment cruel and heartless slavery still exists. It includes the abuse of minors, sex trafficking and other forms of inhuman behavior. We know that God has allowed slavery to occur among His chosen people. What kind of slavery was it and why did He allow it?



General observations:

- In ancient times some people were in a position to need servants to work their lands, tend their flocks and conduct trade.
- Servants were those who had debts they could not pay, had no land or flocks and needed to live.
- They were sojourners in the land or were sometimes captured enemies from war.
- Servants/slaves provided their owners stability, while laborers were hired on a day-to-day basis.

Abram (Abraham) had MANY servants (slaves):

Genesis 14:14: (NASB) *When Abram heard that his relative had been taken captive, he led out his trained men, born in his house (within his household), three hundred and eighteen, and went in pursuit as far as Dan.*

Abram's trained men were part of his household, but they were not his relatives. They were indentured servants who worked for him. They lived under his roof; he fed them and provided them with a place to sleep, and in turn they gave him labor every day. That is the way people lived in those days.

Some were in very important and respected positions within Abram's household:

Genesis 15:2-5: (NASB) ²*Abram said, O Lord GOD, what will You give me, since I am childless, and the heir of my house is Eliezer of Damascus?* ³*And Abram said, Since You have given no offspring to me, one born in my house is my heir.*

Abram was telling God: I do not have an heir and if I die, Eliezer - a foreigner and slave - would inherit my household. Eliezer held an honored position within Abram's household. He was essentially an heir by default due to the lack of a physical heir.



⁴Then behold, the word of the LORD came to him, saying, This man will not be your heir; but one who will come forth from your own body, he shall be your heir. ⁵And He took him outside and said, Now look toward the heavens, and count the stars, if you are able to count them. And He said to him, So shall your descendants be.

(Source: McClintock and Strong's Cyclopedia) ...The servants born in the house were, perhaps, entitled to greater privileges than the others. Eliezer of Damascus, a home-born servant, was Abraham's steward, and, in default of issue, would have been his heir (Genesis 15:2-4). This class of servants was honored with the most intimate confidence of the masters and was employed in the most important services. An instance of this kind will be found in Genesis 24:1-9, where the eldest or chief servant of Abraham's house, who ruled over all that he had, was sent to Mesopotamia to select a wife for Isaac, though then forty years of age...





Abram trusted this class of servants. They were born in his household and he treated them as though they were extended family. They had to work but they were treated with respect.

All of Abram's male servants were to be circumcised:

Genesis 17:13-14: (NASB) ¹³A servant who is born in your house or who is bought with your money shall surely be circumcised; thus shall My covenant be in your flesh for an everlasting covenant. ¹⁴But an uncircumcised male who is not circumcised in the flesh of his foreskin that person shall be cut off from his people; he has broken My covenant.

God instructed Abram to circumcise his servants. Abram was bringing his servants under the protection of God's covenant. Their humanity was valued which showed great respect.

What do we know about slavery/servitude from Abram, God's chosen patriarch of Israel?

-  Servants were part of the household.
-  Servants were trusted to fight alongside their master.
-  Servants could be entrusted with great responsibility and even be an inheritor.
-  Servants were to be treated with respect and were positioned to be acceptable to God.



Biblical Servitude:



Abram, God's chosen one, had multitudes of servants and by all indications he ruled over them with justice, equity and kindness.

So far, servitude in the Old Testament does not seem too bad - at least in relation to Abram, God's chosen!

What about slave trading? Did God allow it? What were God's rules for the treatment of servants?

Sadly, history shows us a past where some factions of Christianity seemed to go out of their way to support slave trading, claiming it was a biblically-sound practice. Nothing is further from the truth! Not only was the buying and selling of human beings prohibited, but they were to adhere to strict rules.



Well, wait a minute. Didn't we just read in Genesis 17:13 that Abram bought servants with his money?

If someone had debt they could not pay, their debt could be purchased which essentially bought them. It was a choice. This had nothing to do with the trafficking of humanity.

The audio clips are from a Christian organization based in Texas called Elijah Rising. It is an uncomfortable subject matter about women being trafficked for sex in today's world.

 **First exposure, *How Does Sex Trafficking Work - Cantinas, elijahrising.org***

- In the early days of Elijah Rising we did a lot of things. We were just figuring it out. We started as a prayer meeting, and we knew that we needed to raise awareness and we also recognized the need to just do intervention, like we just gotta get out there. We gotta meet women where they're being trafficked, where they're being sold. La Costa Nita was, as you said, this pretty famous, well-known cantina bar where trafficking was just so obviously taking place. It really wasn't that hidden when you went in. In those days, staff and some volunteers would just go into these places, much like we do an intervention now but with a lot less structure. We just kind of went in and just looked around and tried to find an opportunity to talk to somebody. And so, I remember going into La Costa Nita at one point, it was the first time I had ever been into a cantina, and the amount of women - I mean there were tons of women. I mean, I think that night like 20-30 or so women that were just literally lined up by the bar and on the dance floor. It was just so evident what was happening there.*



This was just in a tiny hole-in-the-wall bar in Texas.

The following is part of the human trafficking definition from the *2020 Trafficking in Persons Report* by the United States government. This is a 500-page report about worldwide human trafficking in today's world. The recruitment, harboring, transportation provision or obtaining of a person for labor or services through the use of force, fraud, or coercion for the purpose of subjection to involuntary servitude, peonage, debt bondage or slavery.

We will be stating current-day slavery facts throughout the podcast. (Source: www.theworldcounts.com/stories/Modern_Day_Slavery_Statistics)



In terms of profit, human trafficking is ranked as the third-largest international crime industry - just behind drugs and arms trafficking.

Slave trade in the Bible: The two times it is mentioned are NOT good circumstances:

Genesis 37:26-28: (NASB) ²⁶Judah said to his brothers, what profit is it for us to kill our brother and cover up his blood? ²⁷Come and let us sell him to the Ishmaelites and not lay our hands on him, for he is our brother, our own flesh. And his brothers listened to him. ²⁸Then some Midianite traders passed by, so they pulled him up and lifted Joseph out of the pit, and sold him to the Ishmaelites for twenty shekels of silver. Thus they brought Joseph into Egypt.



Joseph's brothers kidnapped him and sold him into slavery for twenty shekels of silver. That is slave trading! God took that horrific act and turned it into a blessing for all, but it does not justify what Joseph's brothers did to him.

Let's look generations later at Ezekiel's lament over Tyre, the capital of the Phoenician Empire:

Ezekiel 27:12-13: (NASB) ¹²Tarshish was your customer because of the abundance of all kinds of wealth; with silver, iron, tin and lead they paid for your wares. ¹³Javan, Tubal and Meshech, they were your traders; with the lives of men and vessels of bronze they paid for your merchandise.

They paid for merchandise with the lives of men. They were slave trading. God looked upon this as heinous.

The Law was very specific about the act of kidnapping and selling men:

Exodus 21:16: (NASB) He who kidnaps a man, whether he sells him or he is found in his possession, shall surely be put to death.

This was a common practice, but God was very specific about it being punishable by death:

1 Timothy 1:10: (WEY) fornicators, sodomites, slave-dealers, liars and false witnesses; and for whatever else is opposed to wholesome teaching.

Both the Old and New Testament tell us slave trading is wrong!

What does this tell us? Jewish ownership of slaves was to occur only under certain conditions. A foreigner with no means of survival or a countryman who had debts or hard times were those who would end up being indentured servants.



Why would God allow individuals to be owned by anyone?



God does not interfere with free will, but there are consequences when that free will leads to sin. Part of God's plan is the permission of sin and evil. When someone does not obey the word and will of God, they go down a path that creates its own consequences. Sin brings destruction, disservice, dishonor and discrepancy between people, often causing harm to innocents as well as to the sinner.

 **Secret door, *How Does Sex Trafficking Work - Cantinas, elijahrising.org***

- I had been in the bar when it was operating but then when it was shut down nobody was there. It was an abandoned piece of property. When you went through the restrooms - so, you walk into the women's restroom and there is a secret door, like a trap door of sorts, cut into the wall literally. Almost just like it was plywood. You walk through that door and you go back around the back of the building, go a couple hundred yards in this really narrow alleyway that in the middle of the night I would imagine is pitch-black dark. Right? Then you come to a big clearing with numerous structures and when you go into those buildings, it was heartbreaking. I mean, it was just mattresses lined up on the floor one after the other. And there were some rooms, you know, some had doors but some of them were like mattress right next to each other. And because the place was raided, and everybody was removed, you know just instantly one night - I mean, people's things were still there. Women's clothing, all of the things that you would assume would be in a location where 80 women are being trafficked at any given point - it was all there. All the evidence was there. It was really disturbing.*



We need to have an awareness that this is not just a problem of the past; it is happening presently worldwide.

We are from the United States of America. There was slavery in the colonial period and also in the South. It was detestable, but there were Christian ministers who justified slavery:

There is not one verse in the Bible inhibiting slavery, but many regulating it. It is not then, we conclude, immoral. — Reverend Alexander Campbell

The right of holding slaves is clearly established in the Holy Scriptures, both by precept and example. — Reverend R. Furman

Shame on these reverends for saying only *a piece of truth* without the rest of the explanation. To misrepresent the Scriptures is despicable.

General rules of human treatment in the Old Testament: Many of these texts are general sweeping statements that would obviously apply as background in the application of specific laws.

We begin with a common respect for all men:

Key Theme:

Leviticus 19:33-34: (NASB) ³³When a stranger resides with you in your land, you shall not do him wrong. ³⁴The stranger who resides with you shall be to you as the native among you,



and you shall love him as yourself, for you were aliens in the land of Egypt; I am the LORD your God.

God was reminding the Israelites how they were treated in Egypt and they were not to treat others in that way.

Inherent warning against abusing slaves:

Exodus 21:26-27: (NASB) *²⁶If a man strikes the eye of his male or female slave, and destroys it, he shall let him go free on account of his eye. ²⁷And if he knocks out a tooth of his male or female slave, he shall let him go free on account of his tooth.*

Devastating injuries and abuse were not permitted for any slave. There were guidelines and limits to what they were allowed to do to another person.

Deuteronomy 5:14-15: (YLT) *¹⁴and the seventh day is a sabbath to Jehovah thy God; thou dost not do any work, thou, and thy son, and thy daughter, and thy man-servant, and thy handmaid, and thine ox, and thine ass, and all thy cattle, and thy sojourner who is within thy gates; so that thy man-servant, and thy handmaid doth rest like thyself; ¹⁵and thou hast remembered that a servant thou hast been in the land of Egypt, and Jehovah thy God is bringing thee out thence by a strong hand, and by a stretched-out arm; therefore hath Jehovah thy God commanded thee to keep the day of the Sabbath.*

This mentions those in servitude twice to make the point of compassion. God reminded the Israelites how they had been servants in the land of Egypt and were not allowed rest. They were now instructed to allow their servants to rest on the Sabbath just as their masters rested.

Leviticus 25:39: (NASB) *If a countryman of yours becomes so poor with regard to you that he sells himself to you, you shall not subject him to a slave's service.*

A slave's service means the lifetime assignment of slavery. There is a difference between a countryman and an alien. We will address this more in the next segment.



This is such a lesson regarding words meaning one thing to some and something entirely different to others.

What were the differences between Israel's treatment of their own countrymen as slaves and others?

Israel was God's chosen people. They were not "God's spoiled children"; they were *chosen* people, which meant they were obligated to be obedient to be blessed and suffer consequences when disobedient. They were one nation and expected to give one another the respect of that unity. God expected appropriate, humane treatment of those who were in their service.



Santa Muerte, How Does Sex Trafficking Work - Cantinas, elijahrising.org

- And you know another thing is, we didn't talk about this in the first part, but the prevalence of the occult - and like a lot of the cantinas, they'll have garlic on the door or Santa Muerte images throughout the building, and it's really ritually abusive to the women who are there. And I don't know if you want to share about an experience you had.
- Yeah, actually a number of the cantinas that we first started doing intervention in, I remember we would walk in and there would be shrines of sorts set up, and all sorts of like religious or ritualistic paraphernalia that would go along with that. I remember one cantina in particular, we opened a door and there was a room, and the entire room was dedicated - it was an altar to Santa Muerte. It just seems to be part of the system, of not just the trafficking but the traffickers and the business model of sorts as they pray for the business and things like that.

Our Lady of the Holy Death
Nuestra Señora de la Santa Muerte



(Source: Wikipedia) "Our Lady of the Holy Death" is an idol, female deity or folk saint in Mexican and Mexican American folk Catholicism. A personification of death, she is associated with healing, protection, and safe delivery to the afterlife by her devotees. Despite condemnation by leaders of the Catholic Church, her cult has become increasingly prominent since the turn of the 21st century.



The total yearly profit gained from human trafficking is a staggering \$32 billion a year.

(Source: theworldcounts.com) You are at a greater risk of being hit by a bolt of lightning than you are of going to jail if you enslave a person in South Asia.

Are we defending Old Testament Jewish slavery? Would you have liked being a slave back then?

Rick's answer: If I were in a position in ancient times where I could not support my family because of debt, having no inheritance or being an alien in the land, and I needed to go into the permanent employ of someone, if I had a choice of culture, I would have chosen the Jewish culture in Israel. Why? Because their culture had laws that would protect my dignity and my family's dignity as I became their servant for the rest of my life.

Handling the servitude of a fellow Israelite:

Deuteronomy 15:12-18: (NASB) ¹²If your kinsman, a Hebrew man or woman, is sold to you, then he shall serve you six years, but in the seventh year you shall set him free.



Service was only allowed for six years. In Jewish Law, the seventh (or Sabbath) year was a period of rest in their agricultural cycle.

¹³When you set him free, you shall not send him away empty-handed. ¹⁴You shall furnish him liberally from your flock and from your threshing floor and from your wine vat; you shall give to him as the LORD your God has blessed you. ¹⁵You shall remember that you were a slave in the land of Egypt, and the LORD your God redeemed you; therefore I command you this today.

The servant was sent away and rewarded for their service with an abundance of goods they would need.

¹⁶It shall come about if he says to you, I will not go out from you, because he loves you and your household, since he fares well with you; ¹⁷then you shall take an awl and pierce it through his ear into the door, and he shall be your servant forever. Also you shall do likewise to your maidservant.

If the six-year period of time was up and the person did not want to leave, a contract was made for permanent service. Such a person would choose to stay because of good treatment and respect - because he loves you and your household, since he fares well with you.

Human respect was paramount!

¹⁸It shall not seem hard to you when you set him free, for he has given you six years with double the service of a hired man; so the LORD your God will bless you in whatever you do.

The master was to be generous. Fair treatment for fair work! Making room for permanence showed the graciousness those in charge were supposed to exhibit.

Please see the Bonus Material for more information on female slaves and slaves marrying while in servitude.

 **Psychological bondage, *How Does Sex Trafficking Work - Cantinas, elijahrising.org***

- *There's an element of just psychological bondage there. Because many of the women might be staying at their own apartment or their own home or someone else's home. And they're free to go to the grocery store. They're free to go different places. And so a lot of people have a hard time figuring out, "Well, why don't you just leave if this is so terrible?" But they don't understand; these people that are trafficking the women understand where their families are back in Mexico, back in Central America, and a lot of times those things are held against them. We remember going to a cantina on North Main, and we were talking with a girl there and she was sharing how she was brought over from Honduras. She thought she was coming to work as a waitress. She had two kids that were staying back in Honduras with family. And at night she was really troubled because her oldest son went missing. And so, she pulled us outside, and we're on the front steps of this cantina and she's telling us all her story of how she came from Honduras and is working at this cantina in Houston. And we shared with her, hey, there are resources, there are people that can help. She was in trouble with law enforcement, so she was really terrified of being deported. It was a complex situation. She still had sort of this debt that was kind of looming over her.*



The psychological bondage is feeling there is no way out.



54% percent of modern-day slaves were recruited by strangers, and 46% were recruited by people they know.

(Source: theworldcounts.org) 161 countries are affected by human trafficking.

What about slaves who were not from Israel?

Leviticus 25:44-46: (NASB) ⁴⁴As for your male and female slaves whom you may have—you may acquire male and female slaves from the pagan nations that are around you. ⁴⁵Then, too, it is out of the sons of the sojourners who live as aliens among you that you may gain acquisition, and out of their families who are with you, whom they will have produced in your land; they also may become your possession. ⁴⁶You may even bequeath them to your sons after you, to receive as a possession; you can use them as permanent slaves. But in respect to your countrymen, the sons of Israel, you shall not rule with severity over one another.

Slaves could be passed down generationally. While this seems harsh under today's lens, it was a way of gaining permanent employment while remaining respected. There was NO "slave trade."

We have heard the phrase, "Your reputation precedes you." In communities, people talk. If a foreigner were in debt and wanted to work for an Israelite master, he would obviously look for someone kind and respectful to his servants. These slaves could marry and have families under servitude. It was important for them to look out for their families.

God's direction was to be respectful of the humanity of others.

While the "rules" of servitude regarding the alien differed from a fellow countryman, did this mean the Israelite had a God-given right to do anything they want with them?

Slaves were considered by a conscientious master as entitled to justice and honorable treatment:

Job 31:13-15: (NRSV) ¹³If I have rejected the cause of my male or female slaves, when they brought a complaint against me; ¹⁴what then shall I do when God rises up? When He makes inquiry, what shall I answer Him? ¹⁵Did not He who made me in the womb make them? And did not One fashion us in the womb?

This was a solemn warning to be respectful of those who are your slaves!

Proverbs 30:10: (NRSV) Do not slander a servant to a master, or the servant will curse you, and you will be held guilty.

It would seem easy to slander someone who appears to have no rights, but God is specific about their protection. Servitude under God's laws was different from what we see today.





Slaves were given the ability to partake of the Jewish feasts - another indication of respectful treatment:

Exodus 12:43-44: (NRSV) ⁴³The LORD said to Moses and Aaron: This is the ordinance for the passover: no foreigner shall eat of it, ⁴⁴but any slave who has been purchased may eat of it after he has been circumcised;



Episode 628: Did God Ever Sanction Slavery?

A slave could partake of the Passover! This was the ritual feast reminding the Israelites of God's mercy. This was another way that slaves were treated as "one of us," that is very different from other kinds of slavery.

Biblical Servitude:

The ancient culture of Israel was clearly steps above neighboring nations when dealing with those who were in a condition to be slaves.



God did not remove the consequences of sin from the lives of slaves, but He did proclaim compassion and respect to be given to them.

It is important to remember that God lets the inequity of sin affect humanity, both on the guilty and on the innocent. It is an eternal lesson!

When we fast-forward to New Testament times, what was the same and what was different regarding slavery?

Now that Israel was under Roman rule, they were subject to Roman Law. The Greek and Roman version of slavery was quite different than the Jewish version. While privilege was sometimes attainable, any slaves' disloyalty in a household could lead to the death of several innocent slaves. When we look at Greek and Roman slavery, there was a sense of necessary compliance or else severe consequences ensued. There was fear of reprisal always hanging over a slave's head. This was not true in the Jewish version of slavery or indentured servitude.

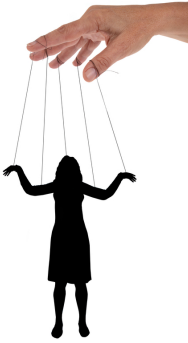
We have great admiration for those of Elijah Rising. They are very bold in their attempt to undo damage one person at a time.



Exploitation of vulnerability, *How Does Sex Trafficking Work - Cantinas, elijahrising.org*

- *This whole situation - sex trafficking - really is the exploitation of vulnerability. The stories that you're telling right now and the stories that we continue to tell, which are so important because it gives a larger understanding of how this all occurs, is these individuals are being exploited. But the factors that bring them to that place is their vulnerability.*

I mean, that woman in particular, she's coming from an abusive marriage, she has numerous children, so she sees no other way. Also, she has somebody influencing her that says, this is a way. She ends up in this cantina and fortunately, by the grace of God, our team, you in particular, you were there to intervene. But that happens over and over and over again, doesn't it? I mean most of these women are there because there's some vulnerability; whether it's poverty, hunger or homelessness, or immigration even, it is being exploited and then they find themselves in these situations.



Israelites and Christians saw the harshness and brutality of slaves under the Roman rule. But being a Christian, they had to live higher and not be influenced by the cruelty they witnessed all around them. It is easy to exploit anyone who is vulnerable. Vulnerability presents the opportunity to be exploited. Christianity is supposed to be above this.



78% in the labor industry, 22% in the sex industry. There is more than sex trafficking going on today.

The early Christian view of slavery was to be the best you could be whether a slave or a slave owner:

Ephesians 6:5-9: (NASB) ⁵Slaves, be obedient to those who are your masters according to the flesh, with fear and trembling, in the sincerity of your heart, as to Christ; ⁶not by way of eye service, as men-pleasers, but as slaves of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart.

This is powerful advice. This is hard! Slaves were to be obedient - not just faking it with submissive words but meaning the gesture. It was difficult to obey when a slave had to do things they did not want to do. Christian slaves were to perform their tasks as though they were slaves to Christ, from their hearts. The Apostle Paul is talking to Christians who were indentured servants and giving them advice on living within the culture of that day.

⁷With good will render service, as to the Lord, and not to men, ⁸knowing that whatever good thing each one does, this he will receive back from the Lord, whether slave or free.

No matter *slave or free*, render good things to others. This will bring the blessing of God. This is powerful advice!

⁹And masters, do the same things to them, and give up threatening, knowing that both their Master and yours is in heaven, and there is no partiality with Him.

To one who was a master and reading this, the first part of this Scripture is very appealing. The slaves/servants were to render heartfelt obedience. But then a slave owner reads verse 9, it now reverses to their behavior. Do not go down the road of exploitation, pushing your weight upon somebody who is vulnerable. Within the culture of his time, the apostle was very specific about being the best person possible in these situations. Christianity is not about overthrowing current systems. Christianity is about the eternal replacement of those systems in God's time. It is about being an example of Christ's humility in the process.

Just as there was a constant reminder of Israel's deliverance from bondage and cruelty to focus the Jews on the respectful care of those in their service, so we have a constant Christian reminder of our accountability to God for *our* actions. We must do everything as unto God through Christ. We cannot compromise.

 You do not belong here, *How Does Sex Trafficking Work - Cantinas, elijahrising.org*

- *For the previous intervention we were at a cantina and the guard - they all have guards at the door, and he was like, what are you doing bringing gifts here? You guys don't belong here. You are church people. You don't belong here. We just told him, "Hey, we know that you don't typically see church people here but you're the people that God cares about. He cares about the people that are in this club and so that's why we're here - to just share the love." It was so shocking to him and we just begin sharing and we said, "Hey, can we pray?" And all of a sudden it was like the parking lot guy; he came to be in the circle. He took off his hat and bowed his head and then all the women are just kind of like - they are arriving to their job and they're seeing the circle of people gathered and we're just praying and we're praying a blessing over them and you just begin to see the women begin to cry. The Lord begins to touch them. It's probably one of the first times that they felt cared for, loved on, and you know we don't know what their situation is and how they wound up there, but I guarantee you they're going to remember that night.*



Just giving these people the idea that somebody cares about them is amazing. They probably do not ever hear that or have reason to believe that their lives have worth.



CURRENT-DAY SLAVERY FACT

55% of modern-day slaves are women and children and 45% are men and boys. 26% of them are children under 18 years old.

This is not only a problem of the past; *it is a problem of the present.*

Whether privileged or in servitude, our accountability spreads through all aspects of our life:

Titus 3:1-2: (NASB) ¹Remind them to be subject to rulers, to authorities, to be obedient, to be ready for every good deed, ²to malign no one, to be peaceable, gentle, showing every consideration for all men.

Let our citizenship be an example to those around us. Today, we are required to pay taxes on what we earn. If we try to hide income or lie about our earnings, it is as though we are cheating God.



I have an example: I own a service business. When I receive payments of cash instead of checks, I deposit and record everything. Many in my field pocket the cash and never report it. That's cheating. We are to be honest and subject to our rulers.



This is an important concept. Even though we are not slaves or owners, we still must do what is right - all of the time. We saw in the Old and New Testament, those who owned servants had to treat them the right way all the time.

All in Christ were equal, no matter what their life status. This was a CONSTANT early Christian principle:

1 Corinthians 12:13: (NRSV) *For in the one spirit we were all baptized into one body—Jews or Greeks, slaves or free—and we were all made to drink of one spirit.*

All were *baptized into ONE body*. It does not matter what the status, all were considered the same by God.

Galatians 3:28: (NRSV) *There is no longer Jew or Greek, there is no longer slave or free, there is no longer male and female; for all of you are one in Christ Jesus.*

He is not saying that we can walk away from our circumstance, leave our shackles behind. He is saying that in God's eyes we are not judged by our social rank, but by the heart and mind focused on doing God's will. We are to give glory to God, no matter our status, by giving our best effort.

Colossians 3:11: (NRSV) *In that renewal there is no longer Greek and Jew, circumcised and uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave and free; but Christ is all and in all!*

This is repeated frequently. No matter what our status, we are the same as every other Christian. This is the beauty of the call of Christ.

When we look at slavery in the Bible, this is what we see:



- ✚ There are widely varying degrees of servitude, some very civil and some utterly cruel.
- ✚ God NEVER sanctioned any abuse of, or cruelty to, any servant at any time. He kept reminding Israel that He had removed them from unbelievable bondage, so they must not treat others in that way.
- ✚ God did not remove sin's consequences from those who would experience servitude. Our experiences may be from our own mistakes or due to circumstances outside of our control.
- ✚ Men, in an effort to justify their own hard-heartedness, found ways to use the Bible to defend their position. This is despicable. When we take God's Holy Word, with all its compassion, and brush aside that compassion to justify doing what we want to do because part of God's word says so, we are despicable. Take the word of God in its entirety.

Finally, let's look at what Jesus was described as doing with his own life:

Philippians 2:7-11: (NASB) *⁷but emptied himself, taking the form of a bondservant, and being made in the likeness of men.*

The word *bondservant* is the same word we have been discussing in all the other Scriptures. This is saying that Jesus, the right hand of God, takes on the form of a slave.

⁸Being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross. ⁹For this reason also, God highly exalted him, and bestowed

on him the name which is above every name, ¹⁰so that at the name of Jesus every knee will bow, of those who are in heaven and on earth and under the earth, ¹¹and that every tongue will confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

Jesus did everything exactly the way his heavenly Father asked of him. He was a servant or a slave to God.

Jesus gave his disciples this lesson when he washed their feet:

John 13:15-17: (NASB) ¹⁵For I gave you an example that you also should do as I did to you. ¹⁶Truly, truly, I say to you, a slave is not greater than his master, nor is one who is sent greater than the one who sent him. ¹⁷If you know these things, you are blessed if you do them.

We should serve one another if we are following in Jesus' footsteps. When we say Jesus was a slave to God, we have to look at it through the right lens. In Jewish history and under Jewish Law, the owners of slaves were to give compassionate orders to get the work done. Jesus came to do the work of God and the work of God only. It is a beautiful picture of servitude, not a horrible picture of slavery because we have to see slavery being spoken of through the right eyes. This is a big picture to help us understand that when we talk about biblical servitude it reflects Jesus' service to God. That willingness was evident when he talked to his disciples about washing their feet.



God oversaw the natural inequities of a sinful world when He dictated how His people were to respect one another.

Biblical Servitude:



While He did allow the wealthy and impoverished to exist, He did not allow inhumane treatment of those in servitude by His people.

God gives His guidance to give compassion where compassion would normally not be given, in places where humans would take advantage of others. Man's injustice to man is the opposite of that. God said among His people injustice would not exist. Compare Lucifer, before his fall he was self-serving. This is Satan's present evil world. It brings the destruction of other human beings through slavery and entrapment. Selfishness and being self-serving is the root of all evil. Jesus served God, and God only, with his whole heart, mind, soul and strength. Essentially, he bought the human race from Satan's rule, and will give it back to God where none of this will be allowed to exist in the future.

Let us understand servitude the way the Scriptures explain it and thank God for His mercy and compassion!



*So, why did God allow slavery in the Bible?
For Jonathan and Rick and Christian Questions...
Think about it...!*



Join us next week for our podcast on September 14, 2020

Ep. 1143: What Does Jesus Expect From Us?

The Wise and Foolish Virgins

Bonus Material and Study Questions

Those who deny freedom to others deserve it not for themselves; and under the rule of a just God, cannot long retain it. — Abraham Lincoln

Treatment of Hebrew slaves:

Exodus 21:1-6: (NASB) ¹Now these are the ordinances which you are to set before them. ²If you buy a Hebrew slave, he shall serve for six years; but on the seventh he shall go out as a free man without payment. ³If he comes alone, he shall go out alone; if he is the husband of a wife, then his wife shall go out with him. ⁴If his master gives him a wife, and she bears him sons or daughters, the wife and her children shall belong to her master, and he shall go out alone. ⁵But if the slave plainly says, I love my master, my wife and my children; I will not go out as a free man, ⁶then his master shall bring him to God, then he shall bring him to the door or the doorpost. And his master shall pierce his ear with an awl; and he shall serve him permanently.



Exodus 21:7-11: (NASB) ⁷If a man sells his daughter as a female slave, she is not to go free as the male slaves do.

Why would a man sell his daughter?

(Source: McClintock and Strong's Bible Encyclopedia) Again, a father might sell his young daughter to a Hebrew, with a view either of the latter's marrying her himself or of his giving her to his son (verses 7-9). It diminishes the apparent harshness of this proceeding if we look on the purchase money as in the light of a dowry given, as was not unusual, to the parents of the bride;

Women simply did not have the same rights as men. Why? Remember the curse on Eve?

⁸If she is displeasing in the eyes of her master who designated her for himself, then he shall let her be redeemed. He does not have authority to sell her to a foreign people because of his unfairness to her. ⁹If he designates her for his son, he shall deal with her according to the custom of daughters. ¹⁰If he takes to himself another woman, he may not reduce her food, her clothing, or her conjugal rights. ¹¹If he will not do these three things for her, then she shall go out for nothing, without payment of money.



Rules regarding female slaves:

(Source: McClintock and Strong's Bible Encyclopedia) In respect to marriage, there were some peculiarities which, to our ideas, would be regarded as hardships. A master might, for instance, give a wife to a Hebrew servant for the time of his servitude, the wife being in this case, it must be remarked, not only a slave, but a non-Hebrew. Should he leave when his term had expired, his wife and children would remain the absolute property of the master (Exodus 21:4, 5). The reason for this regulation is, evidently, that the children of a female heathen slave were mere slaves; they inherited the mother's disqualification....

Exodus 21:20-21: (KJV) ²⁰And if a man smite his servant, or his maid, with a rod, and he die under his hand; he shall be surely punished. ²¹Notwithstanding, if he continue a day or two, he shall not be punished: for he is his money.

(Source: Poole's Commentary on the Holy Bible) With a rod; a fit and usual instrument for correction, whereby it is implied, that if he killed him with a sword, or any such weapon, he was to die for it.

Under his hand, i.e. whilst the master is correcting him.

He shall be surely punished; not with death, for then it would have been said so, as it is before and after; but as the magistrate or judge shall think fit, according to the diversity of circumstances; and therefore, no particular punishment is set down.

The Apostle Paul's letter to Philemon was all about a slave:

Philemon 1:1, 10-21: (NASB) ¹Paul, a prisoner of Christ Jesus, and Timothy our brother, To Philemon our beloved brother and fellow worker, ¹⁰I appeal to you for my child Onesimus, whom I have begotten in my imprisonment, ¹¹who formerly was useless to you, but now is useful both to you and to me. ¹²I have sent him back to you in person, that is, sending my very heart, ¹³whom I wished to keep with me, so that on your behalf he might minister to me in my imprisonment for the gospel; ¹⁴but without your consent I did not want to do anything, so that your goodness would not be, in effect, by compulsion but of your own free will. ¹⁵For perhaps he was for this reason separated from you for a while, that you would have him back forever, ¹⁶no longer as a slave, but more than a slave, a beloved brother, especially to me, but how much more to you, both in the flesh and in the Lord. ¹⁷If then you regard me a partner, accept him as you would me. ¹⁸But if he has wronged you in any way or owes you anything, charge that to my account; ¹⁹I, Paul, am writing this with my own hand, I will repay it (not to mention to you that you owe to me even your own self as well). ²⁰Yes, brother, let me benefit from you in the Lord; refresh my heart in Christ. ²¹Having confidence in your obedience, I write to you, since I know that you will do even more than what I say.

Paul is drawing clear attention to the fact that freedom in Christ (which he ironically calls being a prisoner) is greater than any earthly bondage, even if that bondage remains throughout one's entire lifetime!

Statistics on modern-day slavery are varied. Here is one example of how rampant this heinous practice is:

(Source: www.theworldcounts.com/stories/Modern_Day_Slavery_Statistics)

Slavery still exists: You might find it hard to believe since we are all supposed to be a modern and sophisticated species. Slavery is still as brutal and inhumane today as it was in history. It affects the lives of millions of people across the world. The good news is that more countries are joining the fight against modern day slavery.

There is an estimated 20 to 30 million slaves across the world today. It is hard to count the exact numbers of a hidden population.



- 90% of women and children who end up as sex slaves were victims of childhood sexual abuse before they were recruited.
- You are in greater risk of being hit by a bolt of lightning than you are of going to jail, if you enslave a person in South Asia.
- An estimated number of 800,000 people are illegally trafficked across international borders every year.
- There are 161 countries affected by human trafficking.
- The total yearly profit gained from human trafficking is a staggering \$32 billion a year.
- The majority of modern slavery victims are between the ages of 18 and 24 years old.
- 1.2 million children are enslaved through forced labor and exploited in the sexual industry each year.
- In 1850, the cost of a slave, if converted in today's dollar value, would be \$40,000. The cost of a modern-day slave is \$90.
- Brazil leads the world in fighting modern day slavery.
- In terms of profit, human trafficking is ranked as the 3rd largest international crime industry - just behind drugs and arms trafficking.
- 54% percent of modern-day slaves were recruited by strangers and 46% were recruited by people they know.
- 78% of modern-day slaves are in the Labor Industry, while 22% are in the Sex Industry.
- 55% of modern-day slaves are women and children and 45% are men and boys. 26% of them are children under 18 years old.

HUMAN TRAFFICKING DEFINED

The TVPA defines "severe forms of trafficking in persons" as:

- sex trafficking in which a commercial sex act is induced by force, fraud, or coercion, or in which the person induced to perform such an act has not attained 18 years of age; or
- the recruitment, harboring, transportation, provision, or obtaining of a person for labor or services, through the use of force, fraud, or coercion for the purpose of subjection to involuntary servitude, peonage, debt bondage, or slavery.

A victim need not be physically transported from one location to another for the crime to fall within this definition.

10 2020 TRAFFICKING IN PERSONS REPORT

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Study QUESTIONS

Ep. 1142: Why Did God Allow Slavery in the Bible?

<https://christianquestions.com/doctrine/1142-slavery/>

See:  **CQ Rewind**
SHOW NOTES

1. How did Abram, the patriarch of Israel, treat his servants? What can we learn about slavery in Israel from his example? (See Genesis 14:4, 15:2-5, 17:13-14)
2. How does the Bible portray slave trade? What does this teach us about slavery in the Bible? (See Genesis 37:26-28, Exodus 21:16, Ezekiel 27:12-13, 1 Timothy 1:10)
3. How were the Israelites supposed to treat slaves according to God's Law? (See Exodus 21:26-27, Leviticus 19:33-34, 25:39, Deuteronomy 5:14-15)
4. How long did servitude last in Israel? What happened when it was time to release a servant? (See Deuteronomy 15:12-18)
5. What did slavery look for those who came from outside of Israel? How were they treated? (See Exodus 12:43-44, Leviticus 25:44-46, Job 31:13-15, Proverbs 30:10)
6. What was the view of slavery in the New Testament? (See Ephesians 6:5-9)
7. How can we apply the lessons on slavery to our lives today? (See 1 Corinthians 12:13, Galatians 3:28, Colossians 3:11, Titus 3:1-2)
8. How did Jesus show servitude in his life? What can we learn from this example? (See John 13:15-17, Philippians 2:7-11)
9. How is slavery portrayed in the Bible? Is it the same as the slavery that we see today?
10. Why would God allow slavery to exist in the world when the practice is so evil?