



THE ANÁSTASIS CENTER  
FOR CHRISTIAN EDUCATION & MINISTRY

# Slavery is Still a Problem: Does God Care?

Mako A. Nagasawa

# Slavery Today

1. Sex trafficking, forced prostitution
2. Bonded labor
3. Child soldiers
4. War captives

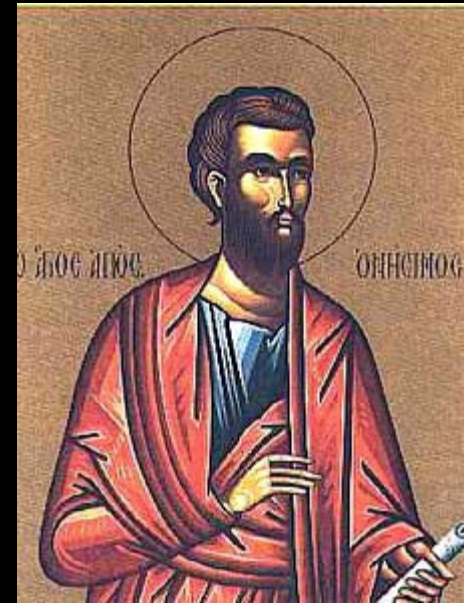


# Moral Foundation: Christian Faith?

1. What does the Bible say, really?
2. If the Bible is ambiguous at best, can we do better?
3. Do I need to interpret the Bible metaphorically?

# Christian Emancipation

- 54 AD: Onesimus, the freed runaway slave whose master was Philemon, becomes third bishop of Byzantium, according to Eastern Orthodox church tradition



# Christian Emancipation

- ~90 AD: Clement of Rome observes, 'We know many among ourselves who have given themselves up to bonds, in order that they might ransom others. Many, too, have surrendered themselves to slavery, that with the price which they received for themselves, they might provide food for others.'
- ~90 AD: Polycarp (69 – 155 AD) and Ignatius (~50 – 117 AD), second generation Christian leaders, free their slaves.

# Christian Emancipation

- 95 – 135 AD: Ovidius, appointed bishop of Braga (in modern day Portugal) under Pope Clement I in 95 AD, emancipates five thousand slaves.
- 98 – 117 AD: A Roman prefect named Hermas received baptism at an Easter festival with his wife, children, and twelve hundred and fifty slaves. On that occasion, he gave all his slaves their freedom and generous gifts besides.

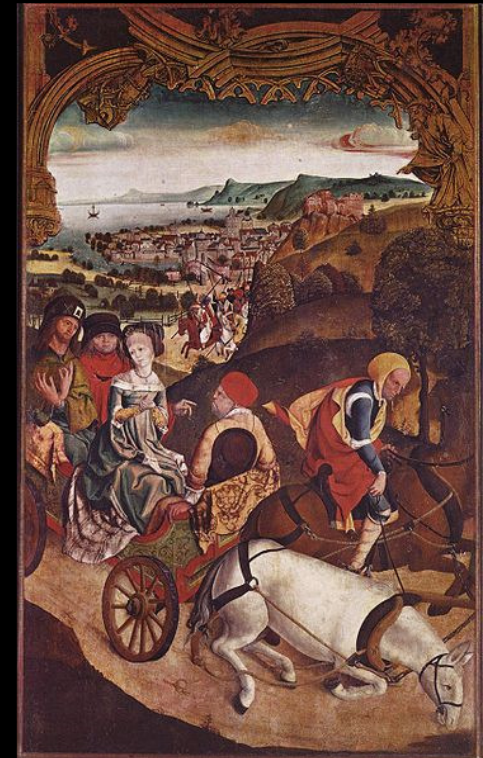
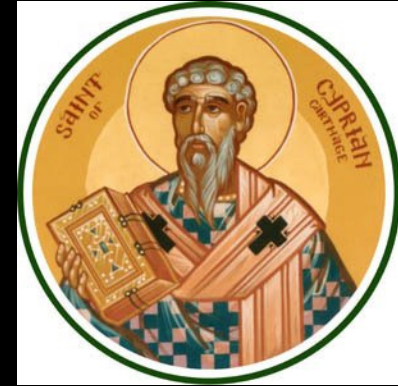
# Christian Emancipation

- Several epitaphs in the Roman catacombs mention manumission of slaves, exact dates unknown.
- 140 AD: Pius I, believed to be a former slave, becomes Bishop of Rome.
- 217 AD: Callixtus, a former slave for a crime, becomes Bishop of Rome (to 222 AD).
- 284 – 305 AD: Chromatius emancipates fourteen hundred slaves after they are baptized with him



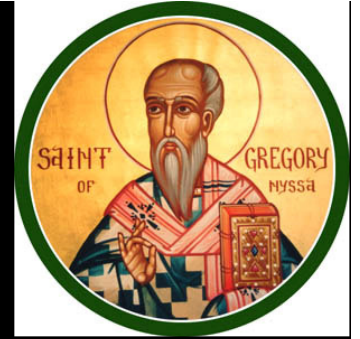
# Christian Emancipation

- 208 – 258 AD: Cyprian of Carthage condemns slaveholding
- Early 300's AD: Cantius, Cantianus, and Cantiannilla, members of an old Roman family, set all seventy-three of their slaves at liberty at baptism





# Christian Emancipation



- 379 AD: Gregory of Nyssa, in a sermon during Lent, preaches:

‘God said, let us make man in our own image and likeness (Gen 1:26). If he is in the likeness of God, and rules the whole earth, and has been granted authority over everything on earth from God, who is his buyer, tell me? Who is his seller? To God alone belongs this power; or rather, not even to God himself. For his gracious gifts, it says, are irrevocable (Rom 11:29). God would not therefore reduce the human race to slavery, since he himself, when we had been enslaved to sin, spontaneously recalled us to freedom. But if God does not enslave what is free, who is he that sets his own power above God’s?’ (Fourth Homily on Ecclesiastes)

# Christian Emancipation

- 390 – 400 AD: The *Apostolic Constitutions*, a summary of Christian teaching to that point, directs Christians, 'As for such sums of money as are collected from them in the aforesaid manner, designate them to be used for the redemption of the saints and the deliverance of slaves and captives.'

# Christian Emancipation

- 395 AD: Augustine (bishop of Hippo from 395 – 430 AD) notes that the Christian community regularly used its funds to redeem as many kidnapped victims as possible, and had recently purchased and freed 120 slaves whom the Galatians were boarding onto their ships.



# Christian Emancipation

- 400 AD: Acacius, bishop of Amida, in modern day eastern Turkey/western Mesopotamia ransoms seven thousand Persian prisoners being held by Romans.
  - ‘When the war [between Byzantium and Persia] ended in 422, it may have been this generous gesture of Acacius that speeded the negotiations for peace and brought an end to persecution in Persia. The peace treaty contained the remarkable stipulation that freedom of religion was to be granted on both sides of the border, for Zoroastrians in the Byzantine Empire and for Christians in Persia’ (Samuel Hugh Moffett, *A History of Christianity in Asia*, Volume 1 (Orbis Books: Maryknoll, NY, 1998), p.160). This incident was surely unusual in its magnitude, but probably not in its character.

# Christian Impact on Law & Policy

- 315 AD: Two years after issuing the Edict of Milan, legalizing Christianity, Constantine imposed the death penalty on those who kidnap and enslave children. He later forbids separating slave families and eased the conditions of manumission so that a slaveholder could simply go to a church service and declare their emancipation before the bishop. Since Constantine was a new Christian, this suggests that the Christian community had a strong antislavery position.



# Christian Impact on Law & Policy

- 595 AD: A council at Rome under Gregory the Great permits a slave to become a monk without any consent from his master.
- 649 AD: Clovis II, king of the Franks, frees and marries his British slave Bathilde. Together, they dismantle slavery in France.
- 1000 AD: Stephen I of Hungary abolishes slavery.

# Christian Impact on Law & Policy

- 1102 AD: The London Church Council forbids slavery and the slave trade, which abolishes both throughout England. This decree emancipates 10% of England's population.
- 1117 AD: Iceland abolishes slavery.
- ~1300 AD: The Netherlands abolishes slavery.
- 1335 AD: Sweden (which included Finland at this time) makes slavery illegal.

# Christian Impact on Law & Policy

- So how did these Christians understand the Bible?

Part 1: The Old Testament

Part 2: The New Testament



# The Old Testament: A Shallow Glance

## **“Against Slavery”**

- Creation: no slavery
- Exodus: freedom from slavery

## **“For Slavery”**

- “You shall not covet your neighbor’s...male slaves or his female slaves or his ox or his donkey or anything that belongs to your neighbor” (Ex.20:17)
- “You may acquire male and female slaves from the pagan nations that are around you...bequeath them to your sons after you, to receive as a possession; you can use them as permanent slaves.” (Lev.25:44 – 46)

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**Favoritism? Schizophrenia?**

# The Old Testament

- Creation: Humanity in a garden
  - God parted the waters (Gen.1:6)
  - God placed Adam and Eve in a garden land (Gen.2)
  - No slavery



# The Old Testament

- Exodus: A new humanity in a new garden
  - Deliverance from slavery (Ex.1 – 13)
  - God parted the waters (Ex.14)
  - God led Israel back to a “garden land” (Lev.25)



# OT: Basic Question

- The Hebrew word
  - *ebed* (singular) and *ebedim* (plural)
- The Greek word used in translation
  - Septuagint
  - *duolos* (singular) and *douloi/doulai* (plural)
- English translations
  - Slave?
  - Servant?
  - Something else?
- Words and Contexts
  - “I’m mad about my flat”

# OT: Context

- What we call 'slavery' or indentured service reflects the fact that ancient Israel's primary political and economic institution was the *household*; they did not have apartments or homeless shelters (to house), banks (to lend), corporations (to employ), police (to enforce laws), prisons (to incarcerate), or halfway houses (to rehabilitate); *households on farmlands* served all those functions.

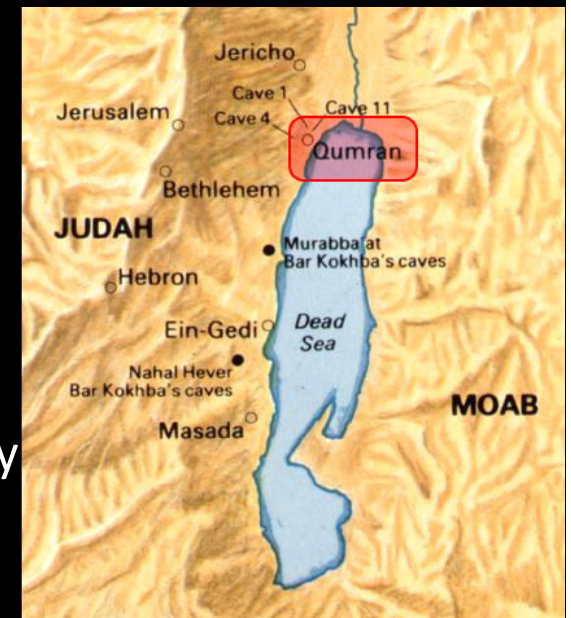
# OT: Context Sensitive Reading

- Jews in Alexandria, Egypt
  - Not in the garden land
  - “They do not have slaves to wait upon them as they consider that the ownership of servants is entirely against nature. For nature has borne all men to be free, but the wrongful and covetous acts of some who pursued that source of evil, inequality, have imposed their yoke and invested the stronger with power over the weaker.” (Philo of Alexandria, *On the Contemplative Life*, chapter 9)



# OT: Context Sensitive Reading

- Jews in the Dead Sea region
  - Not in the garden land
  - “The Essenes rejected slavery in principle as incompatible with the equality of all men before their Creator.” (Henry Chadwick, *The Early Church* (London: Penguin Books, 1967), p.14)
  - Chadwick is probably drawing on Josephus, a 1<sup>st</sup> century Jewish historian: “This is demonstrated by that institution of theirs, which will not suffer anything to hinder them from having all things in common; so that a rich man enjoys no more of his own wealth than he who hath nothing at all. There are about four thousand men that live in this way, and neither marry wives, nor are desirous to keep servants; as thinking the latter tempts men to be unjust.” (Josephus, *Antiquities of the Jews* 18.1.5)





# The Old Testament

<i>Source of slaves</i>	<i>Ancient world</i>	<i>OT: of Hebrews</i>
War captivity	Common	No
Kidnapping, piracy	Common	No
Purchase from slave trade	Common	No
Perpetual involuntary servitude (birth to slaves)	Common	No
Sale by parents	Common	No
Indentured servitude: misfortune	Common	Very limited
Indentured servitude: debt	Common	Very limited
Penal servitude	Common	Very limited
Voluntary servitude	Common	Possible, but limited
Political vassalage	Common	No

# OT: No War Captivity

- The twelve tribes of Israel were not to war against each other.

# OT: No Kidnapping

- No stealing, coveting (Ex.20:15, 17). Stealing property required the perpetrator to recompense 2 – 5 times the original amount (Ex.22:1 – 14). But ‘he who kidnaps (steals) a man, whether he sells him or he is found in his possession, shall surely be put to death’ (Ex.21:16).
- ‘Slavery is the highest possible violation of the eighth commandment. To take from a man his earnings, is theft. But to take the earner is compound, superlative, perpetual theft. It is to be a thief by profession. It is a trade, a life of robbery, that vaults through all the gradations of the climax at a leap—the dread, terrific, giant robbery, that towers among other robberies, a solitary horror, monarch of the realm.’ (Theodore Dwight

*Weld, The Bible Against Slavery, 1837, p.9.)*

# OT: No Slave Trade

- 'For they are **My** servants whom I brought out from the land of Egypt; they are **not to be sold in a slave sale.**' (Lev.25:42)

# OT: No Perpetual Servitude

- Every Jubilee year: ‘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. He shall be with you as a hired man, as if he were a sojourner; he shall serve with you until **the year of jubilee [every fifty years]**. He shall then go out from you, he and his sons with him, and shall go back to his family, that he may return to the property of his forefathers.’ (Lev.25:39 – 41)
- Or, in the seventh year of her/his service: ‘**in the seventh year you shall set him free**’ (Dt.15:12)
- Whichever happened first
- **Israel’s vision of family-land inheritance was a window into the original creation. Adam and Eve inherited the ‘garden land’ and should have passed it on to their descendants. Each Israelite family inherited and passed on their portion of their ‘garden land.’**

# OT: No Sale by Parents

- Exodus 21:7 – 11 refers to a preliminary form of wedding betrothal for young girls
  - not a sale by parents of the girl into slavery
- The daughter being ‘sold’ into betrothal became a free woman within the new family
  - not a servant with servant duties, and not a chattel slave that could be resold (Ex.21:8)
- Any breach of marriage contract by the betrothed man/family earns the girl her freedom and the would-be husband receives no compensation (Ex.21:10 – 11)

(Nahum M. Sarna, *Jewish Publication Society Torah Commentary Series: Exodus*, 1991, note on Exodus 21. See also Ken Campbell (editor), *Marriage and Family in the Biblical World*, InterVarsity Press: Downers' Grove, IL, 2003, p.55 – 57.)

- Not required; just regulated to protect the girl

# OT: Very Limited Self-Indenture

- Lending money with **interest was strictly forbidden**, which protected the poor from exploitation (Ex.22:26 – 27, Lev.25:35 – 38, Dt.23:19).
- Lending money without interest was mandatory upon being asked: 'If there is a poor man with you, one of your brothers, in any of your towns in your land which the LORD your God is giving you, you shall not harden your heart, nor close your hand from your poor brother; but **you shall freely open your hand to him, and shall generously lend him sufficient for his need in whatever he lacks**' (Dt.15:7 – 8).

# OT: Very Limited Self-Indenture

- Debts were cancelled every seven years!! ‘At the end of **every seven years** you shall grant a remission of debts’ (Dt.15:1).
- Interest-laden loans were the chief cause of people being sold into slavery in many places in the Ancient Near East and contributed significantly to slavery in classical Greek and **Roman society** (T. Desmond Alexander and David W. Baker, editors, ‘Slavery’, in *Dictionary of the Old Testament Pentateuch*, InterVarsity Press: Downers’ Grove, IL, 2003).



# OT: Very Limited Self-Indenture

- Furthermore, provision was made for Hebrews to not return to indentured servitude: 'When you set him free, you shall not send him away empty-handed. You 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. You 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.' (Dt:15:13 – 15)
- The poor were to be cared for, left fields for them to glean, not oppressed, honored, and protected (Dt.24:10 – 22) minimizing the need to borrow money.

# OT: Very Limited Penal Servitude

- A thief who couldn't repay a theft could become a 'slave' for a time: 'If a man steals an ox or a sheep and slaughters it or sells it...He shall surely make restitution; if he owns nothing, then he shall be sold for his theft' (Ex.22:1 – 3).
- Note: There were no prison systems in Old Testament Israel.
- Note: The U.S. 13<sup>th</sup> Amendment permits penal servitude, and we do use it
  - Section 1. Neither slavery nor involuntary servitude, except as a punishment for crime whereof the party shall have been duly convicted, shall exist within the United States, or any place subject to their jurisdiction.

# OT: Voluntary Servitude

- Indentured servants could bind their masters to accepting them: 'But if the slave plainly says, 'I love my master, my wife and my children; I will not go out as a free man,' then 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.' (Ex.21:5 – 6).
- Note: The Jewish Encyclopedia online says that even the voluntary slave went free in the jubilee year (the 50<sup>th</sup> year) or upon the death of the master. Israel's vision of each family owning its own piece of land overruled the idea that the slave served 'permanently.'

# OT: No Political Vassalage

- The twelve tribes could not make vassals of one another.
- Israel had no stable political institution until King David's dynasty, and the kingship was very limited in its power: 'Moreover, he shall not multiply horses for himself...nor shall he greatly increase silver and gold for himself' (Dt.17:14 – 20). So the house of David could not make vassals of other Israelites.
- There was no forced military service or even a standing army (Dt.20:1 – 9).
- There was no police force in Old Testament Israel.

# OT: Standard Terms of Exit

- Slaves set free **after six years of service**
  - ‘in the seventh year you shall set him free’ (Dt.15:12)
  - or **in the jubilee year** (Lev.25:39 – 41), whichever happened first.
- Or earlier, if **redeemed by family or self**:
  - ‘One of his brothers may redeem him, or his uncle, or his uncle’s son, may redeem him, or one of his blood relatives from his family may redeem him; or if he prospers, **he may redeem himself**’ (Lev.25:48 – 49).
  - This means slaves owned their own wealth.
- Or bodily harm:
  - ‘If 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. And if he knocks out a tooth of his male or female slave, he shall let him go free on account of his tooth.’ (Ex.21:27 – 28)
- Or when restitution is paid, in the case of penal servitude.

# OT: Standard Terms of Exit

- Or escape:
  - ‘You shall not hand over to his master a slave who has escaped from his master to you. He shall live with you in your midst, in the place which he shall choose in one of your towns where it pleases him; you shall not mistreat him’ (Dt.23:15 – 16).
  - Note also there was no police force in Old Testament Israel so running away was easy. (See also the ‘city of refuge’ in Num.35:9 – 34; Josh.20:1 – 9)
- ‘A slave could also be freed by running away...This provision is strikingly different from the laws of slavery in the surrounding nations and is explained as due to Israel’s own history of slavery. **It would have the effect of turning slavery into a voluntary institution.**’ (Raymond Westbrook, editor, *A History of Ancient Near Eastern Law*, 2003, volume 2, page 1006.)

# OT: Limits on Slavery

- Indentured servants under the Law of Moses held
  - Right to Sabbath rest, feasts, holy days
  - Right to their bodies
  - Personal legal rights relating to physical protection and payments

# OT: Limits on Slavery

- Right to Sabbath rest, feasts, holy days
  - released from labor nearly one half of the entire fifty year time period between two jubilee years
  - no large plantations or mines in Israel but only farmland enough to sustain the household
  - master and servant would have worked together in the fields
  - no segregated quarters for indentured servants, so masters provided for them at the same level of lifestyle they had
- ‘Such servitude was in fact not slavery at all, in the proper sense of the term.’



# OT: Limits on Slavery

- Right to their bodies
  - Servanthood was a contract of labor, not ceding ownership of one's body
  - Absolutely no sex slavery; God's vision for marriage was retained in all cases and limited indentured servitude.
  - Kinship rights, marriage rights

# OT: Limits on Slavery

- Personal legal rights relating to physical protection and protection
  - From breach of contract, especially payment
  - Right to testify in court
  - Freedom of movement
  - Freedom to own weapons
  - Access to liberty by paying their debt (either through service, or with money)
    - They could accumulate savings, wealth, and property of their own
    - This was not permitted in other slave systems because of the idea in those systems that the master owns everything the slave produces, saves, or has.

# OT: Limits on Slavery

- A man (or woman) contracted *him/herself* into indentured service
  - Unlike the other Ancient Near Eastern societies, the Law of Moses did not permit family members to sell each other into indentured service to recover family debts
  - If a husband/father had a family, his family joined him as members of the master's household, but they did not become the property of the master, nor were they contracted to serve.
  - If he formed a family with a woman who had also become a servant (Ex.21:4 – 5), both contracts of service needed to be honored.
  - A Hebrew indentured servant retained parental rights over his children, and presumably marital rights to be joined to his wife, so that when he went free in the jubilee year, he would take his family (Lev.25:39 – 42).

# OT: Limits on Slavery

- What we call 'slavery' or indentured service reflects the fact that ancient Israel's primary political and economic institution was the *household*; they did not have apartments or homeless shelters (to house), banks (to lend), corporations (to employ), police (to enforce laws), prisons (to incarcerate), or halfway houses (to rehabilitate); *households on farmlands* served all those functions.

# OT: Is This Slavery?

- The meaning of the word 'slave' – like many other words, including 'buy' and 'possession' – has changed dramatically over time. **'Slave' meant a form of voluntary indentured service. Your services, not personhood, were 'bought.'**
- In Hebrew, the word 'buy' or 'bought with money' takes its meaning from the subject to which it is applied
  - Eve bought (begot) a man from the Lord (Gen.4:1)
  - God bought (gained, wrestled free) Israel (Ps.78:54)
  - A person who hears reproof buys (gets, develops) wisdom (Pr.15:32; 16:16)
  - A relative can buy (redeem) a kinsmen from slavery into freedom (Neh.5:8).
  - Even in English, we speak of 'buying' politicians, a person's loyalty, etc. without referring to chattel slavery per se.

# OT: Is This Slavery?

- To be called a 'slave' of someone else, or to have your services and abilities (not body or personhood) 'bought' by someone else, was very often positive language to use
- Absolutely not chattel slavery, as in the trans-Atlantic slave trade
- Ancient societies valued freedom, but they valued kinship and honor much more than we do today
- Recall: Words and Contexts
  - "I'm mad about my flat"

# The Old Testament

<i>Source of slaves</i>	<i>Ancient world</i>	<i>OT: of Hebrews</i>	<i>OT: of non-Hebrews</i>
War captivity	Common	No	Very limited
Kidnapping, piracy	Common	No	No
Purchase from slave trade	Common	No	No
Perpetual involuntary servitude (birth to slaves)	Common	No	No
Sale by parents	Common	No	No
Indentured servitude: misfortune	Common	Very limited	Limited
Indentured servitude: debt	Common	Very limited	Limited
Penal servitude	Common	Very limited	Very limited
Voluntary servitude	Common	Possible but limited	Possible past jubilee
Political vassalage	Common	No	No

# OT: Slavery of Non-Hebrews?

## Code of Hammurabi

<sup>197</sup> If a man has broken another man's limb, his own shall be broken. <sup>198</sup> If a man has destroyed an eye or a limb of **a poor man**, he shall pay one maneh of silver. <sup>199</sup> If a man has destroyed an eye or a limb of the servant of another man, he shall pay one-half of a mina. <sup>200</sup> If a man has made the tooth of another to fall out, one of his own teeth shall be knocked out. <sup>201</sup> If the tooth be that of **a poor man**, he shall pay one-third of a maneh of silver.

## Law of Moses

Leviticus 24:<sup>17</sup> If a man takes the life of **any human being**, he shall surely be put to death. <sup>18</sup> The one who takes the life of an animal shall make it good, life for life. <sup>19</sup> If a man injures his neighbor, just as he has done, so it shall be done to him: <sup>20</sup> fracture for fracture, eye for eye, tooth for tooth; just as he has injured a man, so it shall be inflicted on him. <sup>21</sup> Thus the one who kills an animal shall make it good, but the one who kills a man shall be put to death. <sup>22</sup> There shall be **one standard** for you; it shall be **for the stranger as well as the native**, for I am the LORD your God.



# OT: Slavery of Non-Hebrews?

- Legally, foreigners (non-Hebrews) in the land were equally protected under the Mosaic Law as Hebrews.
  - ‘You shall not wrong a **stranger** or oppress him, for you were strangers in the land of Egypt’ (Ex.22:24; 23:9).
  - ‘When a **stranger** resides with you in your land, you shall not do him wrong. The **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. You shall do no wrong in judgment, in measurement of weight, or capacity. You shall have just balances, just weights, a just ephah, and a just hin; I am the LORD your God, who brought you out from the land of Egypt. You shall thus observe all My statutes and all My ordinances and do them; I am the LORD’ (Lev.19:33 – 37).

# OT: Slavery of Non-Hebrews?

- Legally, foreigners (non-Hebrews) in the land were equally protected under the Mosaic Law as Hebrews.
  - Judicial rulings were not to favor Israelites but treat Hebrews and non-Hebrews fairly: ‘You shall have **one law** for him who does anything unintentionally, **for him who is native among the sons of Israel and for the alien who sojourns among them**. But the person who does anything defiantly, whether he is native or an alien, that one is blaspheming the LORD; and that person shall be cut off from among his people’ (Num.15:29 – 30; Dt.1:16 – 17).
  - Equal care and compassion for the foreigner was rooted in the character of God: ‘For the LORD your God is the God of gods and the Lord of lords, the great, the mighty, and the awesome God who does not show partiality nor take a bribe. He executes justice for the orphan and the widow, and shows His love for the **alien** by giving him food and clothing. So show your love for the **alien**, for you were aliens in the land of Egypt’ (Dt.10:17 – 19).

# OT: Slavery of Non-Hebrews?

- Economically, foreigners could become quite wealthy, even to the point of receiving destitute Hebrews as indentured servants (Lev.25:47), though they had to permit a Hebrew family member to redeem the indentured servant for a fair price, and had to release Hebrew servants in the jubilee year (Lev.25:54).
- Israelites could lend to wealthy foreigners with interest (Dt.15:3; 23:20), but if foreigners became poor and needy, the Israelites were to care for them without distinction (Dt.24:14 – 22; Lev.23:22).

# OT: Slavery of Non-Hebrews?

- War captivity:
  - This stood in contrast with the prevailing military practice in most places in the world of killing all of one's enemies.
  - The Canaanites were not to be enslaved. Israel's land was limited, therefore there were no wars of expansion (Gen.15:18; Dt.11:24). And after Israel settled in the land, there was no forced military service or standing army (Dt.20:1 – 9). Therefore, any later battles were *defensive*.
- This is the only reference where the Pentateuch describes Israel's actual *means* of acquiring non-Hebrew slaves (Dt.21:10).
- The only other source would be self-indenture for economic, social, or spiritual reasons.

# OT: Slavery of Non-Hebrews?

- No kidnapping
  - ‘He who kidnaps a man, whether he sells him or he is found in his possession, shall surely be put to death.’ (Ex.21:16; Dt.24:7)
  - ‘You shall not wrong a stranger or oppress him, for you were strangers in the land of Egypt’ (Ex.22:24; 23:9).
- No slave trading
- No sale by parents
- Limited penal servitude
- No political vassalage
- Same rights to body, marriage, family, personal wealth, mobility, arms(!), legal protection, etc. as Hebrews

# OT: Slavery of Non-Hebrews?

- Perpetual involuntary servitude?
  - ‘As 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. Then, 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. You may even bequeath them to your sons after you, to receive as a possession; you can use them as permanent slaves’ (Lev.25:44 – 46).
- But is that what this is?
  - Rather: Contracts of service that can extend beyond the jubilee

# OT: Slavery of Non-Hebrews?

- Means of exit:
  - Bodily harm (Ex.21:26 – 27)
  - Escape! (Dt.23:15 – 16)
  - Conversion to Judaism, which meant freedom on the seventh year (Dt.15:12) or the jubilee year, whichever came first
  - Marriage (e.g. Rahab the Canaanite, Josh.2)
  - Adoption (e.g. Caleb the Kenizzite, Num.32:2; cf. Gen.15:19)

# OT: Slavery of Non-Hebrews?

- Hebrews made non-Hebrew slaves part of their households.
  - Circumcise non-Hebrew slaves, by Mosaic command (Ex.12:43 – 44) as well as by the example of Abraham (Gen.17:23 – 27)
  - Include them in Sabbath rest, public worship (Dt.5:14 – 15), and the annual high holy days, in particular the Passover festival (Dt.16:10 – 17), where the whole community celebrated God delivering Israel from slavery in Egypt.
  - The free foreigner, by contrast, was not to eat of the Passover feast (Ex.12:48). But the non-Hebrew slave did. This was highly unusual in the ancient world, since in other societies most slave peoples were quartered separately from the ruling class, slave classes were seen as polluting holy areas, etc.
  - **The only remaining threshold to fully convert to Judaism was profession of faith in the God of Israel, and perhaps baptism.**



# OT: Slavery of Non-Hebrews?

- The continuance of non-Hebrew slaves in Judaism was also entirely **voluntary**.
  - The person's **free choice** to offer her/his labor to a household was the crucial distinction.
  - At any time under the Law of Moses, if the non-Hebrew servant refused to attend the Feast of Passover, Pentecost, or Tabernacles, **what force constrained him to do so?** What armed guard marched with them to keep them enslaved? Especially when no standing army or police force existed in Israel and such servants could bear their own arms (Gen.14:14)?
  - The punishment for not continuing in Judaism was to 'be cut off from' the people, that is, to be excommunicated and released (Gen.17:14; Ex.12:15; 30:33, 38; 31:14; Lev.7:20; 17:4, 8 – 10; 18:29; 19:8; 20:5, 17 – 18; 22:3; 23:29; etc.), which is what the person would be already doing.

# OT: Slavery of Non-Hebrews?

- Thus, the Hebrew household appears to have been the institution for **naturalization** (politically) and **mentoring-discipleship** (spiritually and morally).
  - There was no bureaucratic state in ancient Israel for its first 450 years (Acts 13:19) to provide schooling, acculturation, and a citizenship test as is done in the U.S. today.
  - Neither did the later Davidic dynasty play the role of naturalizing new citizens/converts to Judaism.
  - Household slavery appears to be the process for naturalizing foreigners within family kinship and to full membership in Judaism. Speaking anachronistically, the Hebrew household served as the basic unit of both state (naturalization) and church (mentoring-discipleship), since 'state' and 'church' were merged in ancient Israel.
- Philip Schaff, 1861, p.14 – 15 arrives at this conclusion as well. Theodore Dwight Weld, *The Bible Against Slavery*, 1837, p.24 – 31 comes close to this conclusion by noting that this was entirely voluntary and the means of becoming a Hebrew proselyte via adoption into a household.

# The Old Testament

<i>Source of slaves</i>	<i>Ancient world</i>	<i>OT: of Hebrews</i>	<i>OT: of non-Hebrews</i>
War captivity	Common	No	Very limited/No
Kidnapping, piracy	Common	No	No
Purchase from slave trade	Common	No	No
Perpetual involuntary servitude (birth to slaves)	Common	No	No
Sale by parents	Common	No	No
Indentured servitude: misfortune	Common	Very limited	Limited
Indentured servitude: debt	Common	Very limited	Limited
Penal servitude	Common	Very limited	Very limited
Voluntary servitude	Common	Possible, but limited	Possible past jubilee
Political vassalage	Common	No	No

# The New Testament

- Context: The church was a voluntary community movement that inherited the institution of slavery from outside itself

# The New Testament

- Context: Greek elitism
  - First civilization to use mass slavery
  - Plato: ‘barbarian’ slaves vital in the republic for all of the production.
  - Aristotle: ‘From the hour of their birth, some are marked out for subjection, others for rule.’
  - Plato and Aristotle owned five and fourteen slaves, respectively, as enumerated in their wills.



# The New Testament

- Context: Roman slavery
  - Standard sources of slaves: war, birth, debt, etc.
  - Slavery was also a form of career advancement, often voluntarily entered into
  - Manumission was relatively frequent
  - Harboring a fugitive slave punishable by death



# The New Testament

<i>Source of slaves</i>	<i>OT: of Hebrews</i>	<i>OT: of non-Hebrews</i>	<i>New Testament</i>
War captivity	No	Very limited	No
Kidnapping, piracy	No	No	No
Purchase from slave trade	No	No	No
Perpetual involuntary servitude (birth to slaves)	No	No	No
Sale by parents	No	No	No
Indentured servitude: misfortune	Very limited	Limited	Limited
Indentured servitude: debt	Very limited	Limited	Limited
Penal servitude	Very limited	Very limited	Limited
Voluntary servitude	Possible, but limited	Possible past jubilee	Very limited
Political vassalage	No	No	No

# The New Testament: Factors Affecting Slavery

- Jesus offers a new humanity, new creation
  - Slavery was not intended from creation
- No warfare, violence, land acquisition (**no war captives**)
- Giving up land inheritance, all wealth (**including slaves**)
- **No kidnapping, slave trading or forced enslavement**
  - 1 Timothy 1:10, 1 Thessalonians 4:6, Revelation 18:13
- Bless all humanity (**no racial slavery**)
- Marriage and sexuality (**no sex slavery**)



# The New Testament: Factors Affecting Slavery

- The human body is meant for Jesus' Spirit
  - <sup>6:19</sup> Do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God, and that you are not your own? <sup>20</sup> For **you have been bought with a price**: therefore glorify God in your body. (1 Corinthians 6:19 – 20)
  - <sup>7:21</sup> Were you called while a slave? Do not worry about it; but if you are able also to become free, rather do that. <sup>22</sup> For he who was called in the Lord while a slave, is the Lord's freedman; likewise he who was called while free, is Christ's slave. <sup>23</sup> **You were bought with a price**; do not become slaves of men... <sup>32</sup> One who is unmarried is concerned about the things of the Lord, how he may please the Lord; <sup>33</sup> but one who is married is concerned about the things of the world, how he may please his wife, <sup>34</sup> and his interests are divided... <sup>35</sup> This I say for your own benefit; not to put a restraint upon you, but to promote what is appropriate and to secure undistracted devotion to the Lord. (1 Corinthians 7:21 – 23, 32 – 35)

# The New Testament: Factors Affecting Slavery

- The church as a voluntary, countercultural community
  - Distinct from society and state
    - Christian ethics were for Christians, not non-Christians; evangelism was primary way of influence
    - Christians started applying sub-Christian ethics to non-Christians (e.g. Constantine's laws limiting slavery)
    - No prescribed punishments for crimes, sins
  - Voluntary leaving: unbelieving spouse, slave
    - <sup>7:15</sup> Yet if the unbelieving one leaves, let him leave; the brother or the sister is not under bondage in such cases, but God has called us to peace. (1 Cor.7:15)

# The New Testament: Factors Affecting Slavery

- The Christian household as a platform for Christian mission (Eph, Col, 1 Pet)
  - Households provide meeting space, hospitality, care for the sick and the poor
  - Slaves and masters have the same Christian responsibilities for love, mission, leadership, and gifting (Ephesians 4:1 – 5:21), not just locally but globally
  - Use of coercive elements (e.g. 'give up threatening' in Ephesians 6:4) is clearly seen as evil
  - Slaves had recourse to confront masters who sin, obstruct Christian mission, or ask for something immoral (Matthew 18:15 – 20)
  - Power is subverted; masters become sponsors of Christian mission (Ephesians 6:4)

# The New Testament: Factors Affecting Slavery

- The Christian household as a platform for Christian mission
  - Debts: If they were not manumitted, slaves still had to pay off debts, respectfully serving their masters (Ephesians 6:1 – 3)
  - Social Climbing: Desire for upward mobility and material gain were not considered appropriate motivations for anyone (1 Corinthians 7:17 – 35; 1 Timothy 6:2 – 11)
  - Christian leadership: But ministry was valued highly; led to early manumission (Philemon v.10 – 12); early Christian meritocracy
  - Key to understanding 'slave and master' relations: *sequencing* of responsibilities, ideas, and texts
- Amongst themselves, Christians basically ignored the legal and social stigma of slavery.

# The New Testament: Factors Affecting Slavery

- Christian slaves in non-Christian households
  - Encouraged to respectfully serve, to help the master and rest of household make commitments to Jesus (1 Peter 2:18 – 3:6; 1 Timothy 6:1; Titus 2:9 – 10)

# The New Testament: Factors Affecting Slavery

- Christians inherited a complex institution by responding in 2 ways:
  - Manumitting slaves & support in community
    - Condemnation of many sources of enslavement
    - Ethics of generosity, inclusion, hospitality, and forgiveness
      - mitigated indenture for debt and crime
      - integrated newly freed people
    - Strong leaning towards voluntary manumission
  - Ignoring slavery within the Christian community
    - Embraced the full humanity of the person, with all rights from, and responsibilities to, Jesus

# The New Testament: Factors Affecting Slavery

- Christians did not enslave anyone for three to four centuries
- War captives
  - Augustine (d.430 AD) produced the ‘just war’ theory, trying to define and limit the defensive war; this can be seen as both a good faith effort but also a rationalization
  - Conflict with Islam starting in the mid 600’s produced slaves by war captivity, in Spain and Portugal, Eastern Europe, and the Middle East

# The New Testament: Factors Affecting Slavery

- Christian faith led to the dismantling of slavery in France, Hungary, England, Iceland, Scandinavia, the Netherlands, and some city-states – the only places in the world where slavery was abolished

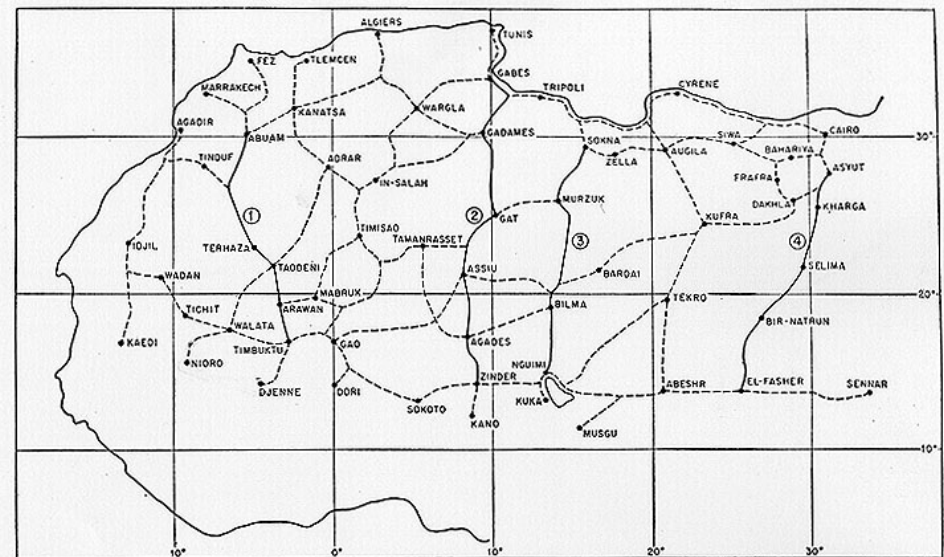


# Christian Faith: A Moral Foundation?

- Based on the 'creation order' implicit in Genesis 1 – 2 and violated in Genesis 3 – 4, the Bible provides a clear moral foundation against what we call 'slavery' today, and goes far beyond that.
- The Bible leaves open the possibility of applying sub-Christian ethics in public policy and intervention.

# The Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade

- Why did Christians get involved in slavery?
  - To compete with the Ottoman Empire
  - Inherited the Saharan slave trade in West Africa
  - To grow sugar, a semi-addictive substance



Map 4 The trans-Saharan slave trade. From George Peter Murdock, *Africa: Its People and Their Culture History* (New York: McGraw-Hill Co., 1959), p. 128. Copyright © 1959 by McGraw-Hill Book Company, Inc. Used with the permission of McGraw-Hill.

# Slavery in Great Britain

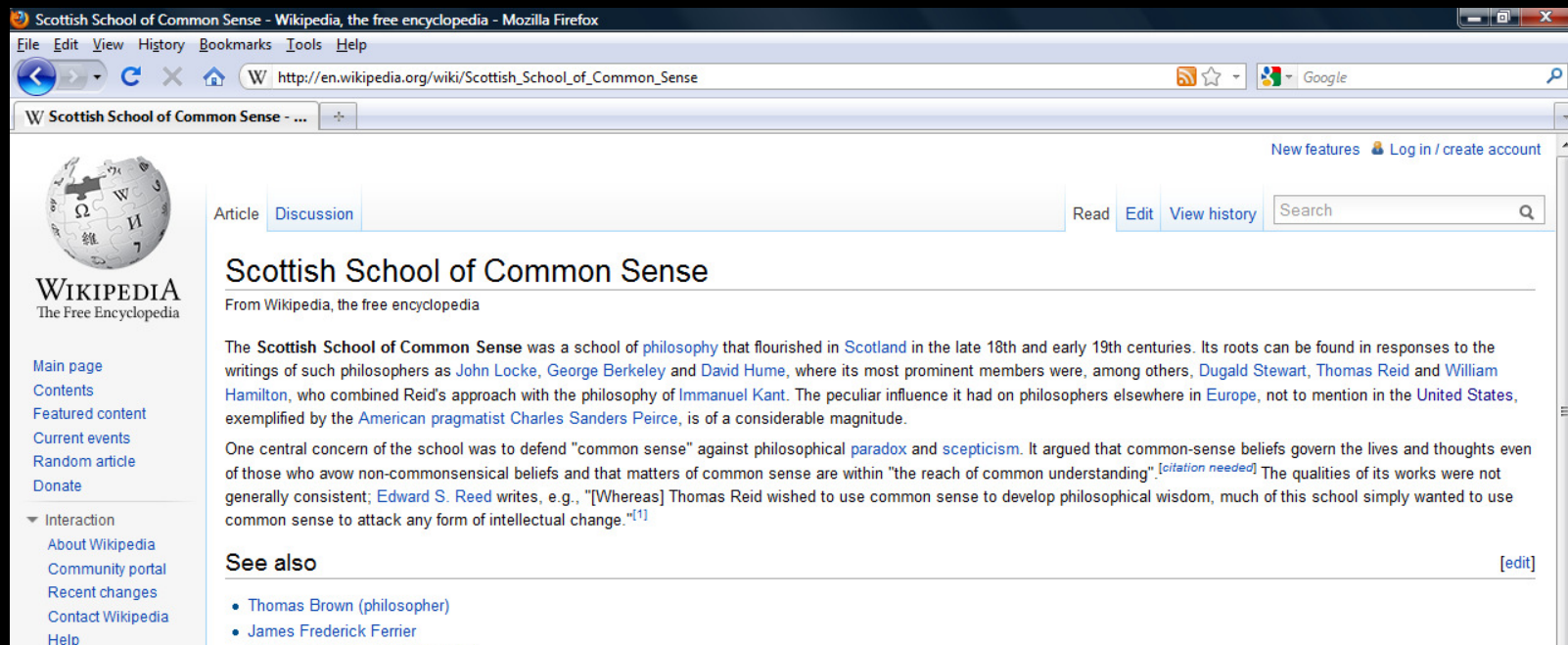
- Argumentation
  - Abolitionist: Evangelical Christians demonstrated clarity about the Bible
  - Pro-Slavery: Anglican old money men argued economics, not from the Bible
- Abolition: By emancipating all slaves in 1833, Britain committed economic suicide
- The British navy stopped slave trading elsewhere

# Slavery in the U.S.

- How did Christians justify slavery in the U.S.?
  - Non-white people are non-human
  - Non-white people are under “the curse of Ham”
  - Non-white people are less civilized, not fit for democracy
  - Non-white people are sub-Christian
  - Slavery was evil but the American “founding fathers” were men of their time
    - Slavery abolished on English soil in 1102 AD
    - Somerset case in London in 1772
  - The larger pattern: capitalism sought cheap land and labor
  - Powerful white men wanted to *practice heresy* by redefining biblical words

# Slavery in the U.S.

- How did Christians justify slavery in the U.S.?
  - Words mean what *I say they mean*: Fascism or proto-fascism
  - Scottish School of Common Sense
    - Presumption that understanding things should be *simple* (e.g. “slavery back then was the same as slavery now”)



The screenshot shows a Mozilla Firefox browser window displaying the Wikipedia article for the Scottish School of Common Sense. The browser's address bar shows the URL: [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Scottish\\_School\\_of\\_Common\\_Sense](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Scottish_School_of_Common_Sense). The page title is "Scottish School of Common Sense - Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia". The article content includes a definition of the school as a philosophy that flourished in Scotland in the late 18th and early 19th centuries, mentioning key figures like John Locke, George Berkeley, David Hume, Dugald Stewart, Thomas Reid, and William Hamilton. It also discusses the school's central concern of defending "common sense" against philosophical paradox and scepticism, and its influence on American pragmatism, specifically Charles Sanders Peirce. A "See also" section lists Thomas Brown (philosopher) and James Frederick Ferrier. The page includes standard Wikipedia navigation elements like "Main page", "Contents", "Featured content", "Current events", "Random article", "Donate", and "Interaction" links.

# Slavery and Slave-Like Conditions

## Today: Legal, Not Just Illegal

<i>Source of slaves</i>	<i>OT: of Hebrews</i>	<i>OT: of non-Hebrews</i>	<i>New Testament</i>	<i>Modern West, Legal</i>
War captivity	No	Very limited	No	Yes
Kidnapping, piracy	No	No	No	No
Purchase from slave trade	No	No	No	No
Perpetual involuntary servitude (birth to slaves)	No	Very limited	No	No
Sale by parents	No	No	No	No
Indentured servitude: misfortune	Very limited	Limited	Limited	No, but
Indentured servitude: debt	Very limited	Limited	Limited	No, but
Penal servitude	Very limited	Very limited	Limited	Very common
Voluntary servitude	Possible	Possible	Very limited	No
Political vassalage	No	No	No	No

# Slavery and Slave-Like Conditions Today: Legal, Not Just Illegal

- Debt, Goals
  - Bible's goal: restoration, no interest loans
  - Banks' goal: profit
- Debt, Results
  - Far fewer protections from poverty or bankruptcy
  - Wealth gap is larger than ever, and growing
    - Wealth gap between blacks and whites today in U.S.: increase of 4 times, from \$20,000 to \$95,000
  - Financiers *planned* on repossessing our homes
  - Private indebtedness is huge and growing

# Slavery and Slave-Like Conditions

## Today: Legal, Not Just Illegal

- Prisons, including private prisons, which means prisoners are slaves:
  - 13<sup>th</sup> Amendment permits penal servitude
    - Section 1. Neither slavery nor involuntary servitude, except as a punishment for crime whereof the party shall have been duly convicted, shall exist within the United States, or any place subject to their jurisdiction.
  - U.S. corporations use prison labor to assemble computers, make women's lingerie, do telemarketing, etc. for \$0.17 - \$0.25 per hour
  - No benefits, overtime, union laws, sick days, pensions



# Slavery and Slave-Like Conditions

## Today: Legal, Not Just Illegal

- Prisons: Increasing incarceration rates
  - U.S. imprisons more people than China, India, and Iran combined
  - California prisons: 19,600 in 1977; 170,000 in 2007, more than France, Great Britain, Germany, Japan, Singapore, and the Netherlands combined
  - We imprison more black men than South Africa did during Apartheid (1993) as a % of black male population

# Slavery and Slave-Like Conditions

## Today: Legal, Not Just Illegal

- Some see prisons and prison labor as a way to handle the inner city
  - see Georgia's laws SB 440 and SB 441.
- Racial bias
- Culture of prisons, recidivism

# Slavery and Slave-Like Conditions

## Today: Illegal, Nominally

- Labor trafficking
  - Cobalt from the Congo: child labor; etc.
  - Chocolate
  - Uyghurs in China
  - Sweatshops
  - Fair Trade laws effective?
- Sex trafficking

# Slavery and Slave-Like Conditions Today

- Lesson: Let's not snub our noses at the ancient texts, as if we 'have done better' than the Bible

# Moral Foundations: Islam

- According to Islamic tradition, Mohammed captured, freed, kept, bought, and sold slaves
  - The hadith Bukhari (72:734) refers to a slave owned by Mohammed.
  - The hadith Bukhari (34:351) refers to Mohammed selling a slave.
  - In hadith Muslim 3901, Mohammed trades away two black slaves for one Muslim slave.

# Moral Foundations: Islam

- Female concubines permitted:
  - The hadith Abu Dawud (2150) says, ‘The Apostle of Allah (may peace be upon him) sent a military expedition to Awtas on the occasion of the battle of Hunain. They met their enemy and fought with them. They defeated them and took them captives. Some of the Companions of the Apostle of Allah (may peace be upon him) were reluctant to have intercourse with the female captives in the presence of their husbands who were unbelievers. So Allah, the Exalted, sent down the Qur’anic verse: (Qur'an 4:24) ‘And all married women (are forbidden) unto you save **those (captives) whom your right hands possess.**’ This is the background for verse 4:24 of the Qur’an. Thus, the hadith suggests that captured women can be raped, in front of their husbands.

# Moral Foundations: Islam

- Female concubines permitted:
  - ‘O Prophet! surely We have made lawful to you your wives whom you have given their dowries, and *those whom your right hand possesses* out of those whom Allah has given to you as prisoners of war’ (Qur’an 33:50).
  - ‘Successful indeed are the believers...who guard their private parts [refrain from sex] except with their mates [wives] or *those whom their right hand possess* [concubines or slave girls]’ (Qur’an 23:1, 5 – 6).

# Moral Foundations: Islam

- Slaves in Islam did have more privileges than in pre-Islamic Arabia, or pre-Christian Rome
- The growth of Islam caused a vast slave trade
- There has never been an abolitionist movement in Islam
- Emancipation was initially forced onto some Islamic countries by the British or other European (Christian) powers
- Can Islam provide a moral foundation for emancipation and abolition?



# Moral Foundations: Science

- Can science alone provide values that transcend culture?
- Can science alone determine the value
  - Of the human species and the individual?
  - Of the human species only?
  - Neither?

# Moral Foundations: Science

## Species & Individual

- Does each individual have intrinsic value, not just instrumental value (for society)?
- Does secular humanism provide a foundation?

## Species only

- Utilitarianism
- Social Darwinism
- Eugenics
- Labor camps
- Designer children
- Aborting Down's Syndrome babies: 92%

## Neither

- Nihilism
- Simple self-interest

# Moral Foundations: Science

- Martin A. Nowak, a Harvard professor of biology and mathematics, and Director of the Program for Evolutionary Dynamics, says that, by itself, intellectual scientific life is ‘**inherently unstable**,’ and is unable to answer the kind of questions religion can — like the meaning of life, or the value of each human life.
- Science by itself does not give a clear moral foundation for human worth and value

# Moral Foundations: Science

- John Gray, Professor of European Thought at London School of Economics: 'Secular humanism is a Christian heresy. It is a hollowed out version of Christianity.'
- Friedrich Nietzsche: 'If you cut the root, you lose the fruit.'

# Dismantling Slavery Today

- Economic Development
- Legal Advocacy
- Legal Reform (including prison reform and financial reform)
- Aftercare
- Christian Mission, Evangelism, and Community Development

# Dismantling Slavery Today

- Building awareness: movies
  - *The Price of Sugar*, re: Dominican Republic
  - *Invisible Children*, re: Uganda
  - *Born Into Brothels*, re: Kolkata
  - *Amazing Grace*, re: British abolition

# Dismantling Slavery Today

- For further study: modern day slavery
  - *Terrify No More*, by Gary Haugen
  - *Good News About Injustice*, by Gary Haugen
  - *Sex Trafficking: Inside the Business of Modern Slavery*, by Siddharth Kara
  - <http://www.freedomcenter.org/>
  - <http://www.freetheslaves.net/>
  - <http://www.antislavery.org/>
  - <http://humantrafficking.change.org/>

# Dismantling Slavery Today

- For further study: slavery and abolition
  - *Abolition*, by Seymour Drescher
  - *Slavery in the Arab World*, by Murray Gordon
  - *Inhuman Bondage*, David Bryon Davis
  - *The Bible Against Slavery*, by Theodore Dwight Weld



# Dismantling Slavery Today

- For further study: the aftermath of slavery in the U.S.
  - *Slavery by Another Name: The Re-Enslavement of Black Americans from the Civil War to World War II*, by Douglas A. Blackmon
  - *Ensuring Inequality: The Structural Transformation of the African-American Family*, by Donna Franklin
  - *How the Irish Became White*, by Noel Ignatiev