

THE OLD TESTAMENT SAYS SLAVERY IS NOT ONLY ALLOWED BUT COMMANDED BY GOD

If another religion came along that opposed slavery, the Christians would object to the religion. They are so arrogant that they consider having Christianity to be worth any slavery or "mistakes" no matter what the human cost.

The Old and New Testaments condone and even encourage slavery though it seemed obvious that it was wrong. The Bible laws on slavery are all stated to have been made by God and spoken by him. The New Testament makes it clear, and so did Jesus, that the Old Testament is infallible scripture, authored by the God who cannot err. To say the Old Testament makes no moral mistakes is to say slavery is not intrinsically wrong and that it is acceptable.

Modern Christians want to forget that the book they say has the authority to tell them what to do blesses slavery. It is a shock to many that the New Testament sanctions it.

It is interesting how some Christians claim that we must accept no doctrine unless it is in the Bible and these are the ones who say, "Slavery is wrong and God didn't want to just order people to stop the practice immediately. He regulated and tolerated it hoping to wean the people off it gently and with mercy and understanding." This teaching is not in the Bible. Leviticus 25:44-46 tells Israel that it may buy male or female slaves. It even says they may be bequeathed to your sons. This is permission and not tolerance. Tolerance would be, "I am the Lord and I do not like slavery. But I will let you buy slaves." God had hundreds of years to wean them off it if the Old Testament is to be believed. And he didn't. Nothing in the Old Testament explicitly condemns slavery. No matter what massive social or cultural change Israel suffered, its acceptance of slavery was never challenged by God. When they didn't need slaves or couldn't use them, God still said nothing. The argument that God was only accommodating himself to the flawed social structures of those times in order to gently overcome them and the people's devotion to them is only a rationalisation. LGBT Christians argue that God may have banned homosexuality in the past for the same reason!

We must remember that Exodus gives the words God used when he legislated that a slave may be beaten badly but care must be taken not to do them permanent damage. It was okay to beat them up savagely as long as they didn't die during the beating but after. Read Exodus 21:7-11. When God went out of his way to make such an evil law in relation to slaves, he clearly accepts the notion of slaves being inferior beings. Nobody can be sane and argue that Israel needed the right to abuse slaves which was why God tolerated the abuse. That excuse cannot hold water here and it in fact insults those who suffered because of God's law. God gives no hint that he let the beatings take place for cultural reasons or because the people were intransigent. In fact he gives no hint that the laws are temporary or provisional. The Law of Moses claims to be an everlasting law. Indeed Exodus attacks the culture of occultism and idolatry. Exodus presents Israel as struggling to accept the law so it is nonsense to imagine that poor God had no choice but to make some bad laws to avoid having to make worse ones.

Instead of trying to pretend that God had to put up with slavery in the Bible, it is better to say the Bible is man-made and the doctrine that God put up with slavery is merely a mistake or an example of human craftiness. You cannot accuse people of being so stubborn that even God has to make evil laws to please them. You must never accuse others on faith grounds.

The Hebrews had foreign and even Hebrew slaves and God approved and controlled slavery. God's book, the Bible - see Deuteronomy 23:15-16, says that if the Hebrew finds a runaway slave then he must not give her/him back to her/his master. It cannot mean Hebrew and foreign slaves for that would mean all slaves would be running away. It cannot mean Hebrew slaves if most slaves were Hebrew. That would mean too many would be getting their freedom. It means foreign slaves must not be returned. The book Christianity is Not Great notes that the context is about runaway slaves from roundabout nations. They are given refuge simply because they were not enslaved under Hebrew law and because sending them back to the pagans would be doing the pagans some good. They were not given refuge out of kindness.

The Bible God made laws permitting buying and selling of slaves and even let masters beat them to a pulp as long as he took care to ensure that they would live for a day or two after. Do you really think he had to make this law even if Israel was stubborn? Demanding the right to have slaves does not mean you will demand the right to batter them. Also, God surely could have got Israel to buy only foreign slaves and not be buying and selling its own people as slaves. If poor God was forced by bad Israel to tolerate slavery then he still had no excuse for going that far. The conclusion is obvious, God endorsed slavery and was not merely putting up with it.

Ebed, the Hebrew word for slave, is used to describe being forced to submit to an alien power (Encyclopaedia of Bible Difficulties, page 87) so evidently to be a slave is not a nice thing. The nobles might have been said to be slaves of the king in a honorific sense (ibid, page 87) but still to be a slave is not to have real honour. If a master honours his slave he is

mocking that slave for slavery is wrong and unloving. It is the same principle as a man praising you for letting him beat you up.

Let those unscholarly types who surmise that the Law never countenanced slavery and that the word for servant is mistranslated as slave read Leviticus 25:39-46.

“If your brother becomes poor beside you and sells himself to you, you shall not compel him to serve as a bond-man (a slave not eligible for redemption), But as a hired servant and as a temporary resident he shall be with you; he shall serve you till the Year of Jubilee, And then he shall depart from you, he and his children with him, and shall go back to his own family and return to the possession of his fathers. For the Israelites are My servants; I brought them out of the land of Egypt; they shall not be sold as bondmen. You shall not rule over him with harshness, but you shall [reverently] fear your God. As for your bond men and your bond-maids whom you may have, they shall be from the nations round about you, of whom you may buy bondmen and bond-maids. Moreover, of the children of the strangers who sojourn among you, of them you may buy and of their families that are with you which they have begotten in your land, and they shall be your possession. And you shall make them an inheritance for your children after you, to hold for a possession; of them shall you take your bondmen always, but over your brethren the Israelites you shall not rule one over another with harshness.”

Verses 47-48 are fascinating, “and if a sojourner or stranger with you becomes rich and your Israelite brother becomes poor beside him and sells himself to the stranger or sojourner with you or to a member of the stranger’s family, After he is sold he may be redeemed. One of his brethren may redeem him.”

The chapter would tell us not to treat bondmen and bond-maids with harshness if we were forbidden to abuse them. But it just mentions that Israelites should not be treated with harshness. It was so easy to write that neither servants or slaves should be harshly treated. The permission to abuse bondsmen and bond-maids from other races is clearly there.

Some say that the Law only allows slavery because the realities for the time forced its use. There was no way to be declared bankrupt so you had to sell yourself into slavery. If you had to pay back what you stole when you were a thief you got enslaved if there was no other way to make restitution (Exodus 22:3). But why couldn't God keep it simple and just let the person work for nothing without this idea of selling yourself?

Abraham was thanked by the Lord for being blameless though he owned slaves and kept concubines (Genesis 18:19; Ecclesiastes 44:19). God approved of all this even though Abraham knew he was wrong – he could not have been that naive. He would not have liked to have been a slave.

A man was allowed by God to beat his slave to death if the slave survived for more than a day for then he went unpunished see Exodus 21:20,21.

Christians try to defend this by saying that the master could not be punished as it could not be proved that the beating caused the death. That would be laughable if it were not so cruel for the beating would have to play a part in it. It would be too much of a coincidence for the slave to die of something else.

The Law does not say that a man who hits another man with a stone to kill him should get off in case the victim died of shock or heart failure. When people who are punished for murder it is often because it is most likely that they committed it. It is often impossible to prove it one hundred percent. And yet here it is pretended that the cruel master is not the most likely cause of death. The law condoning the beating contradicts the law that all punishments have to be carried out under the consent of the administrators of the law (Leviticus 19:18). This all proves that slavery was not merely permitted by God but positively endorsed for there was no excuse for letting a man hit his slaves. The Christians lie when they say that God hates slavery but permits it for the people are so stubborn. If he hated it he would have mitigated it.

Exodus 21 tells us that if a slave dies a day or two following being struck by her or his master the master must not be punished for the slave is his or her master’s property. But nobody is anybody’s property. Some say that God is not being callous here but is merely stating a fact. So with this view God does not really see the slave as anybody’s property but from the viewpoint of the system the slave is the master’s property practically speaking. But God is putting the fact that the slave is treated by society as property before the fact that the slave is her or his own property and nobody else’s. God definitely thinks that the master is not entitled to pay any penalty for the slave is dead and it is punishment enough for the master to lose his slave! The master should still be punished and to say he shouldn’t is to say that the slave is just a thing.

The slave murderer should get some kind of punishment for what he did even if it is not severe just in case he did cause the slave’s death.

The idea that the master needs the slave and has lost him and so cannot be punished is no excuse. If that were true God would have made it clear that he meant this rule only for hard-up masters who had perhaps one slave. But even then letting

the master off wouldn't be right. It is like saying that murderer loses his reputation and this is sufficient punishment for him.

The punishment due to the master was not to be the death penalty which was the price for killing free people (Leviticus 24:18). Nowhere does the Law say that the killer of a slave is to be executed. If God had meant the death penalty he would have said so for laws have to be clear. The Law often treats slaves as half-persons – or dirt to be frank.

God must want us to stop accusing poisoners of murder or punishing them if they killed their victims slowly!

If a man let an animal he knew was vicious have the freedom to gore people to death he had to be put to death if it killed a free person but not if it killed a slave (Exodus 21:28-32). This certainly implies that a slave's life is not as precious as that of a free person just because of his status in society. This is snobbery at its worst.

Incidentally, when a man could get away with killing his slave if the slave lingers on a while after the attack and not with letting his animal kill a free person one sees that the basis of the first rule was the alleged inferiority of slaves.

God said that if the slave wishes to be free he must leave his wife and children if the master gave him the woman. The woman and children are the master's property. This is a trick to force slaves in such situations to stay enslaved. Marriage is seen as less important than the evil slave master. This denigrates the woman's love and puts a whitewashed crafty master first. The master must be rich when he could keep all these people so God should tell him to let the family go for he can pay workers. God just likes people to be trampled on. This was going too far even if slavery should have been morally permissible.

If a man lay with a betrothed slave woman he had to make an atonement sacrifice of a ram but if she had been free both would have been brutally stoned to death (Leviticus 19:20-22; 20:10). This is really just saying that the slave woman is no better than an animal. The harsh penalty for a free woman implies that she is too good to let herself be degraded. Many reckon that the Bible seems to think that the slave woman could not be killed for she is somebody's property and she is needed. But in that case, why is the man spared and why is there no law that if the slave lady is not needed or soon to be freed then she can be executed as soon as possible? If he had had sex with a free woman he would have died for it. If she could not be executed for she was property then God would have said that only poor men's slaves could be spared. What use was a slave who would have sex to any impoverished master who needed her to avoid pregnancy for the sake of work? Some say the mercy was shown to her for she had a hard enough time. But lots of the free women had as bad or worse times and they were executed. The implication is that a slave is not a real human being but a possession to the extent that to corrupt them was no big deal.

The Hebrews gave their own countrymen slaves an easier time than slaves bought from other nations. Haley says that Leviticus 25:39-46 are texts which "De Wette seems to think, prohibit the purchase of a Hebrew slave; they merely provide that the service of such should be more lenient than that of a stranger. Even a foreigner might buy a Hebrew slave, but always with liberty of redemption. A gentile slave could be held for life-long service" (page 303, Alleged Discrepancies of the Bible). All things could have been equal. This demonstrates the ugly racism of the Bible for they should have been. It also proves that slavery was not something horrible that God was forced to tolerate when he made it worse for non-Hebrews. He would have made it as harmless as possible if he hated it.

In Exodus 21 the Lord plainly approves of slavery. He decrees that if a Hebrew slave wants to stay with his owner though he has the right to leave him when he has worked six years if he wants to that the owner must pierce his ear with an awl at the door and he will be his property forever. He should not be his master's property forever but for as long as he wants. It is bad enough to make a slave of a person who consents but worse to let that person rule out any hope of freedom in the future. When God goes so far it shows how deeply he approves of slavery. And it mattered little to God that the piercing could cause infection and death in those dangerous times.

In Exodus 21, if a man cannot make restitution for stealing then he is to be sold into slavery by the person he owes restitution to. This proves that God approves of slavery because he could have laid it down that the man work for nothing to repay instead. Then, in a sense he is working for something but he is not sold. Then, in a sense he is working for something but he is not sold. Even if slavery were allowable this recommendation of selling him would still be wicked and cruel. It crosses the boundary of semi-decency altogether.

One of Christianity's lies is that the Bible does not give approbation but mere toleration for slavery for the people wouldn't have obeyed God if he asked them to give it up. They use a similar argument about God's refusing to censure polygamy (Deuteronomy 21:15) and divorce (Deuteronomy 24:1-4) – and according to them the argument was inspired by Jesus (Mark 10:5). It is approval for when God upset the Israelites so much by giving them orders that they didn't want to hear (Numbers 14) he could have gone another bit to forbid slavery and polygamy and divorce. It is stupid to say that God knew what would happen if he issued laws against them. Even God does not know what will happen in a future that won't

happen. If he had he might have been pleasantly surprised. God was all for slavery and polygamy. If God had been against slavery he would not have made the edict that masters can keep slaves forever but would have put time restriction on slavery across the board. The Law claims that all its precepts are just which they would not be even if they were the best under the circumstances for then the laws would be unjust in themselves. How could they be just if they were just enacted for handiness? The idea that God had to put up with slavery is unbiblical and therefore objectionable. It is speculation for Jesus said that God allowed divorce because the people were obstinate but did not hint that it was the same with anything else and to interpret the Bible by speculation is to add to the Bible and pervert the word of God. When God did not forbid polygamy and condemned adultery the implication is that polygamous marriage is not adultery (page 123, The Encyclopedia of Bible Difficulties). If it is not adultery it must be good.

If the people were determined not to abolish slavery there was no need for God to enact laws that fed this attitude. He could have explained why he allowed slaves and asked them to be open to slowly phasing it out.

It is nonsense to claim that the Old Testament and New Testament permitted slavery for selfish men were going to fester it even if it were absolutely banned. Deuteronomy 20 disproves the claim for in it God says that the men of heathen cities are to be put to death but their women and children should be captured and used as slaves. He knew that people could give slaves some tiny wage rather than do without slaves and yet he did not command that they be paid. If slavery was wrong and men were stubborn he would have reached this compromise so the Bible says that slavery is right. No hostels were set up where abused slaves could take refuge in.

It is thought that God did not like Hebrews becoming slaves though he condoned it when a Hebrew had to agree to let himself be sold by his family. Then why didn't he have a charity set up so that there would have been no need for that? He did command that alms should be given so there is no excuse for him.

These regulations regarding slavery were all made at a time when Israel was wandering through the desert. They were fed by God all the time (page 130, *ibid*). There were two million of them to do their own work so the doctrine that God as to allow them to keep slaves for he had no choice is ridiculous. They only had slaves for their own laziness and greed.

Treating people like animals for sale made money. God could have told them that they should have soldiers instead of slaves for the wilderness was dangerous. Slavery made Israel wealthier and therefore the priesthood benefited from having wealthy congregations.

Any religion that reveres and divinises a scripture that tells it to exploit people as slaves could very well turn everybody it hates into a slave if it took over the country and could get away with it. It has nothing but itself to blame for giving us this impression.

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