

Does the Bible Allow Slavery?

Read this article online here:

<http://creationliberty.com/articles/slave.php>

Author: Christopher J. E. Johnson

Updated: June 3, 2019

There's also free full teaching MP3's available at <http://creationliberty.com/audio.php>

The typical Bible-hating scoffer will condemn God's Word for allowing slavery. Before we discuss this issue, it is important to note that Christians do not have any obligation to answer to moral accusations until the atheist can give a justification for morals in an atheist universe, apart from the Christian God of the Bible, which they are unable to do. The only response an atheist has to questions of morality is to attack the Christian God of the Bible, demonstrating that atheists are unable to maintain a rational approach to ethical discussion, and thus, this article is intended only to help Christians understand the Bible's definitions of slavery.


(Read "Atheists Can't Justify Morals" here at creationliberty.com for more details.)

slave (n): 1. A person who is wholly subject to the will of another; one who has no will of his own, but whose person and services are wholly under the control of another. In the early state of the world, and to this day among some barbarous nations, prisoners of war are considered and treated as slaves. The slaves of modern times are more generally purchased, like horses and oxen.

2. One who has lost the power of resistance; or one who surrenders himself to any power whatever; as a slave to passion, to lust, to ambition.

(See 'slave', Noah Webster's Dictionary, 1828, retrieved Apr 1, 2014, [webstersdictionary1828.com])

When considering what a slave actually is at its core, most people today in America are slaves. They are slaves to a corporate boss. They are slave to the lusts of their hearts. They are slaves to the government. Even children are slaves to their parents. Today, none of these seem to receive much ridicule, and obviously, this is not what the atheist scoffer is referring to when he/she says "slavery."



SLAVERY

A friendly reminder, in case you thought the 13th Amendment abolished it.

When Bible scoffers use the word "slave," they know full-well that the average American will immediately think of black African slavery, and that's how they attempt to deceive others. As we see in the definition above, there are many different forms of slavery, so when we talk about slaves, we need to specify which type we're talking about.

Most Christians might be surprised to learn that the word "slave" is only used twice in the entire Bible. ([Jer 2:14](#), [Rev 18:13](#)) The places in the Bible where scoffers make accusations of evil in terms of slavery are actually "bondmen" or "servants," which are what we know today as "indentured servants."

indentured servant (n): a person who came to America and was placed under contract to work for another over a period of time, usually seven years, especially during the 17th to 19th centuries. Generally, indentured servants included redemptioners, victims of religious or political persecution, persons kidnapped for the purpose, convicts, and paupers

(See 'indentured servant', Random House Dictionary, 2014, [www.dictionary.com]; See also Collins English Dictionary, 10th Edition, William Collins Sons & Co, 2009)

And if thy brother, an Hebrew man, or an Hebrew woman, be sold unto thee, and serve thee six years; then in the seventh year thou shalt let him go free from thee. And when thou sendest him out free from thee, thou shalt not let him go away empty: Thou shalt furnish him liberally out of thy flock, and out of thy floor, and out of thy winepress: of that wherewith the LORD thy God hath blessed thee thou shalt give unto him. And thou shalt remember that thou wast a bondman in the land of Egypt, and the LORD thy God redeemed thee: therefore I command thee this thing to day.

-Deuteronomy 15:12-15

Of course, these are operating procedures given to the Hebrews, and are not given to the born-again Christians, but even so, according to God's standards of servitude, there is a time limit, and once that time limit was up, they were free to go, and God commanded that the owner/master give his former servant out of his abundance so the newly freed man could go start a farm on his own land. This was a great opportunity for those who were poor and had nothing, as they could sell themselves to work for a few years, and afterwards, gain enough profit to build a life on his own property and wealth.

Masters, give unto your servants that which is just and equal; knowing that ye also have a Master in heaven.

-Colossians 4:1

In the united States, black African slavery was commonplace in the south, but there were also other types of slaves, though less common, and these were a mixed nationality of people. Some, who had nothing, and no way to cross the Atlantic, would sell themselves into slavery (i.e. indentured servant) to work for a few years to pay off the debt of their tickets to travel, or in relief of other such debts they owed.

"By most estimates, between one-half and three-quarters of all white immigrants to the American colonies in the seventeenth century came as indentured servants."

-Gwendolyn Mink & Alice O'Connor, Poverty in the United States, ABC-CLIO, 2004, p. 402, ISBN: 9781576075975

"Of the 200,000 people who crossed the Atlantic from England to North America... Around three-quarters of the emigrants were indentured servants, so called because they signed a written contract or indenture before boarding ship to start a new life across the ocean. The indenture was a printed document with spaces left for details to be inserted of the name and age of the emigrant, the name of the ship captain, the witnesses, and, in some cases, the length of the contract. Usually, indentured servants had their ship passage paid by the captain in return for the sale of their labour for periods of between three and seven years after they reached their destination."

-Kenneth Morgan, Slavery and Servitude in Colonial North America: A Short History, NYU Press, 2001, p. 8, ISBN: 9780814756706



(Image illustrated by Henry Doyle of the Irish diaspora, which is the mass Irish emigration to America.)

Many of the God-hating scoffers' ancestors would not have made it to the U.S. if they hadn't become slaves because they could not afford the trip. The real risk in the slavery deal was the unknown factor concerning the moral virtues of the master.

Servants, be obedient to them that are your masters according to the flesh, with fear and trembling, in singleness of your heart, as unto Christ; Not with eyeservice, as menpleasers; but as the servants of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart; With good will doing service, as to the Lord, and not to men: Knowing that whatsoever good thing any man doeth, the same shall he receive of the Lord, whether he be bond or free. And, ye masters, do the same things unto them, forbearing threatening: knowing that your Master also is in heaven; neither is there respect of persons with him.
-Ephesians 6:5-9

forbearing (n): ceasing, pausing, withholding from action; patience; long suffering (See 'forbearing', Noah Webster's Dictionary, 1828, retrieved Apr 14, 2014, [webstersdictionary1828.com])

The Bible teaches slaves in what way they should serve, being willing and ready to give and do good unto their masters, and masters are instructed to treat their slaves in the same manner, doing good things unto them, and withholding from threatening them. However, due to mankind's wicked hearts, many indentured slaves were in service under cruel masters.

"The experience of indentured servitude was probably as varied as its demographics. Some indentured servants enjoyed decent treatment by their employers and had good prospects for establishing small farms after gaining their freedom. [i.e. Biblical slavery] On the other hand, historical records indicate that this was not the case for many others. Indentured servants were often beaten, the women were often raped, and intolerable living conditions spelled the death of nearly half of all indentured servants within the first two years of service." [i.e. unbiblical slavery]

-Gwendolyn Mink & Alice O'Connor, Poverty in the United States, ABC-CLIO, 2004, p. 403, ISBN: 9781576075975

It was the very Bible-hating scoffers that were buying stolen slaves and putting them to work in horrible conditions. Although some black-African slave owners may have claimed to be "Christians," they did not follow the Bible in their daily lives, as Christians are instructed to do.

Bring forth therefore fruits meet for repentance:
-Matthew 3:8

But shewed first unto them of Damascus, and at Jerusalem, and throughout all the coasts of Judaea, and then to the Gentiles, that they should repent and turn to God, and do works meet for repentance.
-Acts 26:20

Examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith; prove your own selves. Know ye not your own selves, how that Jesus Christ is in you, except ye be reprobates?
-2 Corinthians 13:5

But exhort one another daily, while it is called To day; lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin.
-Hebrews 3:13

If a brother or sister be naked, and destitute of daily food, And one of you say unto them, Depart in peace, be ye warmed and filled; notwithstanding ye give them not those things which are needful to the body; what doth it profit? Even so faith, if it hath not works, is dead, being alone.
-James 2:15-17



Specifically concerning the black African slaves, misleadingly referred to by Bible-haters scoffers when they use the term "slave" in a general sense, the Bible has a much more clear solution for the owners of stolen men:

And he that stealeth a man, and selleth him, or if he be found in his hand, he shall surely be put to death.
-Exodus 21:16

According to the Bible, anyone who steals a man from his home and/or sells him and/or keeps him ("found in his hand") was to be executed. Although the U.S. Civil War was an illegal war, started by Lincoln for purposes that were not about slavery (because states have every Constitutional right to secede from the union), for many northern soldiers and citizens, it was a war to free the slaves that were stolen from their homes in Africa. We know that the Old Testament law was given specifically to the Jews, but through it, we can see God's judgment on stolen slaves, and the black African slave plantations of the southern U.S. states had no Biblical presidence for their actions.

Further still, look at what the Bible says was supposed to be done to slaves that escaped a cruel master, and fled to another home to seek refuge:

Thou shalt not deliver unto his master the servant which is escaped from his master unto thee: He shall dwell with thee, even among you, in that place which he shall choose in one of thy gates, where it liketh him best: thou shalt not oppress him.
-Deuteronomy 23:15-16

If the slave of a household was being mistreated to the point that he would flee from his master to a neighbor's home, the neighbor was supposed to take in the slave to serve his/her remaining time in servitude. This almost creates a "capitalist" system of servants, meaning if one home in the country is treating its slaves well, and others are not, then the slaves could flee to a home where they were treated fairly and morally to serve our their time.

And according to Christian doctrine, those of us brethren in the Lord Jesus Christ are all equal in station:

There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus.
-Galatians 3:28

This doesn't mean we don't serve different functions in our carnal lives, but in context of the spirit cleansed in faith and baptism, we are all equal.

The contradiction to these Biblical standards is called "chattel slavery," which is the type of slavery that Bible-hating scoffers deceptively and secretly refer to when they say the word "slave."

chattel (n): a movable article of personal property; such as furniture, domestic animals, etc

(See 'chattel', Random House Dictionary, 2014, [www.dictionary.com]; See also Collins English Dictionary, 10th Edition, William Collins Sons & Co, 2009)

As we previously read, the Bible condemns chattel slavery, but despite the fact that the Bible-hating scoffer has no justification for morals at all, he/she will still attempt to accuse God's Word of allowing the nation of Israel to have chattel slavery concerning daughters, selling them off like furniture so they can be sex slaves. Instead of assuming the pretext of the scoffers, let's take a look at the context:

And if a man sell his daughter to be a maidservant, she shall not go out as the menservants do. If she please not her master, who hath betrothed her to himself, then shall he let her be redeemed: to sell her unto a strange nation he shall have no power, seeing he hath dealt deceitfully with her. And if he have betrothed her unto his son, he shall deal with her after the manner of daughters. If he take him another wife; her food, her raiment, and her duty of marriage, shall he not diminish. And if he do not these three unto her, then shall she go out free without money.

-Exodus 21:7-11

"*Selling his daughter to be a maidservant,*" means betrothal in marriage as clearly stated in the context definition of verse 8. That means that this man paid a dowry to her father in order to betroth her to himself or his son. A daughter betrothed means that she is not old enough to marry and take on the duties of a wife, and therefore, she will serve as a maidservant in the house of her betrothed until she is come of age to be married.

What the average American today doesn't comprehend is that the prices paid for betrothal for a wife could typically only be paid by those who were in a higher class of wealth. This was both beneficial to the girl, and to the family as a whole. A poor family could be provided for by the money paid for the betrothal, and the young girl would then move into a home of higher class, providing more for her than her father could provide.

If she please not her master, who hath betrothed her to himself, then shall he let her be redeemed: to sell her unto a strange nation he shall have no power, seeing he hath dealt deceitfully with her.

-Exodus 21:8

"*If she please not her master,*" means he changed his mind due to any one of a variety of reasons. It does not mean they had sexual intercourse, otherwise the Bible would have said "if he lie with her," and the punishment for forced sexual assault was execution. It simply means he changed his mind, which could be based on numerous factors, including ability, physical appearance, or even that she repeatedly disobeys him as a maidservant because she has no desire to be in his household, but changing one's mind was no simple matter because it also means that the man paying the dowry *LIED*, and therefore, the family keeps the money, and the girl is free to go.

So the girl serves in that household until she is old enough to marry her betrothed, and then becomes the lady of the household, with servants at her disposal. Assuming her husband follows God's Word, he is supposed to love, provide, and care for her, and any children she bares him, and even if he were to take another wife, not one bit of food, clothing nor any other love and care are to be taken from her.

If he take him another wife; her food, her raiment, and her duty of marriage, shall he not diminish.

-Exodus 21:10

If the man paying the dowry betroths her to his son instead, then she is not to be treated as a maidservant, but as *HIS OWN DAUGHTER*.

And if he have betrothed her unto his son, he shall deal with her after the manner of daughters.

-Exodus 21:9

If the man who paid the dowry does not do these things, or if he changes his mind and doesn't redeem her to her family, then she is to be set free to do as she pleases. (Though without money because he already paid her family.)

And if he do not these three unto her, then shall she go out free without money.

-Exodus 21:11

Is it possible for a father to sell off his daughter for a small amount of money to man who would mistreat her, just so the father could gain some extra funds for his own personal pleasures? Yes, that's possible, and that's why free societies, like ours today, and like those in the days of Israel in the Old Testament, are heavily reliant on individual people being morally virtuous. The Law of God was not a method to prevent people from doing wicked deeds, but rather, it was the Word of God on how to live a holy and righteous life. Though the Lord God established Israel, He still gave them the free will to choose to disobey Him, and because many of them did, He punished them, just as He will punish our nations today for our wickedness if we don't repent.

So next, the typical God-hating scoffer will complain about how God is a bad guy because these women couldn't choose for themselves and had other people choosing for them. Aside from the fact that the girl would be raised to a higher level status in a wealthier class to have servants of her own, which is basically what a princess is (and most little girls dream of being a princess), I'd like to point out the hypocrisy that today, in a societies where everyone chooses for themselves, we have an incredibly high divorce rate.

(Read "[Marriage: What Christians Should Know](#)" here at creationliberty.com for more details.)

"50% of first marriages, 67% of second and 74% of third marriages end in divorce in the USA (Baker, 2007). In Finland, 29,952 marriages were contracted and 13,619 dissolved in 2010 (Statistics Finland, 2010a)."

-Kaarina Maatta & Satu Uusiautti, *Many Faces of Love*, Springer, 2013, p. 63, ISBN: 9789462092068

These statistics don't point out how many couples today don't even bother getting married, but live together, fornicating with one another, and then later moving out and finding someone else to do the same thing with all over again. The following chart (from [divorcerate.org](#)) shows divorces in the UK over the past century, where the number of marriages are going down, and the number of divorces are going up.



He saith unto them, Moses because of the hardness of your hearts suffered you to put away your wives: but from the beginning it was not so.

-Matthew 19:8

How could we, as a society, sit back and criticize arranged marriages and betrothals, when our own society that promotes free will is just as wicked, if not worse? God-hating scoffers stand in their crumbling society, lacking any more virtue, and hypocritically call other societies "evil," without first having a standard of morality with which to judge anyone else.

(Read "[Unbiblical Cop-outs: Don't Judge Me!](#)" here at creationliberty.com for more details.)

Leviticus 25 makes it very clear that the servants purchased were possession of property for the buyer, but all servants that were purchased by a household were to be returned to their families on the year of Jubile (every 50 years).

But as an hired servant, and as a sojourner, he shall be with thee, and shall serve thee unto the year of jubile: And then shall he depart from thee, both he and his children with him, and shall return unto his own family, and unto the possession of his fathers shall he return. For they are my servants, which I brought forth out of the land of Egypt: they shall not be sold as bondmen. Thou shalt not rule over him with rigour; but shalt fear thy God.

-Leviticus 25:40-43

There were only two circumstances on which a man/woman in servitude would not be returned on the year of Jubile. One was concerning a slave that chose to continue serving in the master's house after six years, and then once brought before judges to hear the testimonies, the slave would then become a permanent servant, having his ear pierced with an awl as a sign of his commitment. (Exd 21:6) The other was concerning those who were bought as slaves from a foreign land (not stolen and sold, but of the servant's own free will), which was judgment and punishment from God for their wickedness, granting them mercy to serve in a righteous household and learn the ways of God through the master of the house. (Lev 25:45-46) As for everyone else, every 50 years, all servants would be returned to their homes and property given unto them in accordance to the amount of years they served their master.

Then shalt thou cause the trumpet of the jubile to sound on the tenth day of the seventh month, in the day of atonement shall ye make the trumpet sound throughout all your land. And ye shall hallow the fiftieth year, and proclaim liberty throughout all the land unto all the inhabitants thereof: it shall be a jubile unto you; and ye shall return every man unto his possession, and ye shall return every man unto his family.

-Leviticus 25:9-10

The real problem we have had, not just in the U.S., but also around the world, is that mankind decides to do things his own way, and seeks to separate himself from anything to do with the Christian the God of the Bible.

Why do the heathen rage, and the people imagine a vain thing? The kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers take counsel together, against the LORD, and against his anointed, saying, Let us break their bands asunder, and cast away their cords from us. He that sitteth in the heavens shall laugh: the Lord shall have them in derision.

-Psalm 2:1-4

The wicked Bible-hating scoffers of this world not only have attempted to cast away any connection to the Christian God of the Bible (which they cannot do), but they are turning around and attempting to make Him look "evil" in their sight. Again, the problem is that without the Christian God of the Bible, these scoffers don't have a moral standard to judge anyone or anything, which leaves them reliant on the Christian Biblical approach to morals for their daily lives, but with their mouths, they deny him.

Because that, when they knew God, they glorified him not as God, neither were thankful; but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened. Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools,

-Romans 1:21-22

And even as they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, God gave them over to a reprobate mind, to do those things which are not convenient; Being filled with all unrighteousness, fornication, wickedness, covetousness, maliciousness; full of envy, murder, debate, deceit, malignity; whisperers, Backbiters, haters of God, spiteful, proud, boasters, inventors of evil things, disobedient to parents, Without understanding, covenantbreakers, without natural affection, implacable, unmerciful: Who knowing the judgment of God, that they which commit such things are worthy of death, not only do the same, but have pleasure in them that do them.

-Romans 1:28-32

Thus, this article was not written for the Bible-hating scoffer, but for the Christian brethren to increase their learning in knowledge of God's Word. No answer from the Scripture will be enough for hater of God because they must first be converted in the heart by the Lord Jesus Christ before they will acknowledge the truth.

*In meekness instructing those that oppose themselves; if God peradventure will give them
repentance to the acknowledging of the truth;
-2 Timothy 2:25*

*And with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish; because they received not the
love of the truth, that they might be saved.
-2 Thessalonians 2:10*