Of Human Bondage:
SLAVERY: Does the Bible Condone It? Does Christianity Foster It? Is our Nation Founded on It?

Old Testament

Exodus 21

- **Exodus 21:16** – Forbids Kidnapping as a means to acquire slaves
  "You shall not steal." **– Exodus 20:15**
  "A kidnapper, whether he sells his victim or still has him when caught shall be put to death."
- **Exodus 20:8-11** – Commandment "Keep Holy the Sabbath Day" includes Slaves
  "No work may be done then either by you, or your son or daughter, or your male or female slave, or your beast or by the alien who lives with you."
- **Exodus 21:2** – Grants Liberation of all slaves during a Jubilee Year (every Seven Years)
  "When you purchase a Hebrew slave, he is to serve you for six years, but in the seventh year he shall be given his freedom without cost."
- **Exodus 21:5-6** – A person can *choose* to remain a slave.
  "If, however, the slave declares, 'I am devoted to my master and my wife and children; I ill not go free,' his master shall bring him to God and there, at the door or doorpost, he shall pierce his ear with an awl, thus keeping him as his slave forever."

New Testament

Spoken of as a matter of fact in Jewish Society:

"No slave can serve two masters." – **Matthew 6:24**

In terms of our previous servitude to sin:

"…you, having once been slaves of sin…" – **Romans 6:17**

"Formerly, when you did not know God, you were enslaved to beings that by nature are not gods." **– Galatians 4:8**

"For we ourselves were once foolish…slaves to various passions and pleasures…" – **Titus 3:3**

As a state of being in service to God:

"…and now, Lord…grant to your slaves to speak your word with all boldness." – **Acts 4:29**

"'These men are slaves of the Most High God, who proclaim to you a way of salvation.'" – **Acts 16:17**

"Paul, a slave of Jesus Christ, called to be an apostle, set apart for the gospel of God." – **Romans 1:1**

In terms of our present service to one another:

"I have made myself a slave to all, so that I might win more of them."
– **1 Corinthians 9:19**

"...we proclaim Jesus Christ as Lord and ourselves as your slaves for Jesus' sake."
– **1 Corinthians 12:13**

As people of salvation:

"As slaves of God, live as free people, yet do not use your freedom as a pretext for evil." – **1 Peter 2:16**

Equality before God:

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

"...whatever good we do, we will receive the same again from the Lord, whether we are slaves or free." – **Ephesians 6:8**

Does not encourage emancipation outright:

"Were you a slave when called? Do not be concerned about it. Even if you can gain your freedom, make use of your present condition now more than ever."
– **1 Corinthians 7:21**

"Slaves, obey your earthly masters in everything, not only…in order to please them, but wholeheartedly, fearing the Lord." – **Colossians 3:22**

"Let all who are under the yoke of slavery regard their masters as worthy of all honor, so that the name of God and the teaching may not be blasphemed." – **1 Timothy 6:1**

Hints at a sentiment against slave-trading:

"...fornicators, sodomites, slave-traders [kidnappers], liars, perjurers and whatever else is contrary to the sound teaching..." – **1 Timothy 1:10**

The Treatment of a Fellow Christian:

"I wanted to keep [Onesimus] with me, so that he might be of service…but I preferred to do nothing without your consent, in order that your good deed might be voluntary and not something forced." – **Philemon 13-14**

"Perhaps this is the reason he was separated from you for a while, so that you might have him back forever, ***no longer as a slave but more than a slave, a beloved brother****— especially to me, but how much more to you, both in the flesh and in the Lord. So if you consider me your partner, welcome him as you would welcome me."* **– Philemon 15-17**

The United States Founding Documents:

The Declaration of Independence - July 4, 1776

Statement of Principles:

"We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness."

Northwest Ordinance – July 13, 1787

"There shall be neither slavery nor involuntary servitude in the said territory, otherwise than in the punishment of crimes whereof the party shall have been duly convicted: Provided, always, That any person escaping into the same, from whom labor or service is lawfully claimed in any one of the original States, such fugitive may be lawfully reclaimed and conveyed to the person claiming his or her labor or service as aforesaid."

-- Article VI.

Constitution of the United States - Sept. 7, 1787

The Slave Trade – Article 1, Section 9, Clause 1

"The Migration or Importation of such Persons as any of the States now existing shall think proper to admit, shall not be prohibited by the Congress prior to the Year one thousand eight hundred and eight."

Fugitive Slave Clause – Article IV, Section II, Clause III

"No person held to service or labour in one state, under the laws thereof, escaping into another, shall, in consequence of any law or regulation therein, be discharged from such service or labor, but shall be delivered up on claim of the party to whom such service or labour may be due."

The "Three-Fifths" Compromise -- Article 1, Section 9, Clause 1

"Representatives and direct Taxes shall be apportioned among the several States which may be included within this Union, according to their respective Numbers, which shall be determined by adding to the whole Number of free Persons, including those bound to Service for a Term of Years, and excluding Indians not taxed, three fifths of all other Persons."

13th Amendment

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."*

Section 2. *"Congress shall have power to enforce this article by appropriate legislation."*

Passed *Congress* – **January 31, 1865**
Ratified by *States* – **December 6, 1865**