

RCF Academy

The Bible and a Just Society:

Ancient Truths and Modern Applications

Topic 2:

The Dignity of Man and The Just Society (Part 2)

- I. Other protections of human dignity
 - a. Women
 - i. God elevates women – not property but they could own property
 1. The Court case *Daughters of Zelophehad v. State of Israel*
 - a. **Numbers 27:1-8**
 2. Sounds pretty mundane but keep in mind that American women could not own property without a husband or father involved until the 20th century
 3. Property is vitally important in a just society and we will come back to it again and again
 4. Education – all children were to be taught
 5. Widows to be cared for and respected
 - a. In many cultures widows are disposable
 - i. American tribes
 - ii. ANE
 - iii. Witches
 - iv. Modern India
 6. Rape and violence against women **Deut 22: 23-27**
 - a. Long before the #MeToo movement God was believing the woman and punishing the man unless the woman clearly had a chance to get help and did not
 - b. Orphans and aliens
 - i. The other two groups that have historically been abused and neglected are the outsiders and the unclaimed
 - ii. Along with widows they have been considered useless or even dangerous
 - iii. Goes back to the idea that people see others as means (or hinderances) to selfish ends
 - iv. Verses
 - v. Caleb was not a Jew
 - c. **Q: What about slavery? The Bible condones slavery doesn't it and how is that protective of human dignity?**
 - i. Different kinds of slavery
 1. War captives – The tribes of Canaan were evil **Lev 18:25-30**

- a. Child sacrifice
 - b. Fertility Cult prostitution – Baal and Ashtoreth
 - c. Pagans – 234 different gods
 - d. God used Israel as a punishment **Gen 15:13-16**
 - i. He gave the Amorites (Canaanites) 400 years to get it together
 - ii. Sodom and Gomorrah – Gen 19
 - iii. Abraham was there as was Isaac and Jacob
 - e. This was a punishment for evil sometimes slavery was the second best option when total destruction was possible and sometimes ordered
 - f. No application to today other than the church should not tolerate evil but we are not called to take violent action against it
2. Debt slavery
- a. A person could be forced or voluntarily enter service to pay off a debt
 - b. Limited time arrangement (6 years max) Deut 15:12-15
 - c. Was not racially based or look anything like modern notions of slavery
3. Voluntary slavery – Rules in Exodus 21
- a. If at the end of 6 years a person could choose to stay in service but it was the slaves' choice
 - b. Allowed access to the court system
 - c. Granted all legal protections

Second Principle of a Just Society: There are no lesser people. All are worthy of dignity, respect and to be full members of society. To do otherwise is to hinder our Christian witness and to exclude them from using their talents to serve God and others to the best of their ability.

Question: How is the US doing with protecting human dignity?

How about aliens and orphans? What does this imply about immigration policy?

What about within Christianity and the church? Is 11:00 on Sunday still the most segregated hour of the week?