

# Slaves, Women & Homosexuals: Exploring the Hermeneutics of Cultural Analysis

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In *Slaves, Women & Homosexuals* William J. Webb tackles some of the most complex and controversial issues that have challenged the Christian church--and still do. He leads you through the maze of interpretation that has historically surrounded understanding of slaves, women and homosexuals, and he evaluates various approaches to these and other biblical-ethical teachings. Throughout, Webb attempts to "work out the hermeneutics involved in distinguishing that which is merely cultural in Scripture from that which is timeless" (Craig A. Evans). By the conclusion, Webb has introduced and developed a "redemptive hermeneutic" that can be applied to many issues that cause similar dilemmas. Darrel L. Bock writes in the foreword to Webb's work, "His goal is not only to discuss how these groups are to be seen in light of Scriptures but to make a case for a specific hermeneutical approach to reading these texts. . . . This book not only advances a discussion of the topics, but it also takes a markedly new direction toward establishing common ground where possible, potentially breaking down certain walls of hostility within the evangelical community."

William Webb is an adjunct professor of New Testament/Biblical Studies at Tyndale Seminary in Toronto, Ontario. He has also written *Returning Home: New Covenant and Second Exodus as the Context for 2 Corinthians 6:14--7:1* (Sheffield) and *Slaves, Women and Homosexuals* (InterVarsity Press).

Darrell L. Bock (Ph.D., Aberdeen) is research professor of New Testament studies and professor of spiritual development and culture at Dallas Theological Seminary in Dallas, Texas. He has written the monograph *Blasphemy and Exaltation in Judaism and the Final Examination of Jesus* and volumes on Luke in both the Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament and the IVP New Testament Commentary Series. Bock is a past president of the Evangelical Theological Society. He serves as a corresponding editor for *Christianity Today*, and he has published articles in *Los Angeles Times* and the *Dallas Morning News*. "Teaching hermeneutics will never be quite the same after one reads this thought-provoking book. The ethical issues it explores raise even deeper questions of how to apply 'cultural background' in interpreting the Bible. Even those who differ on some details will find most of the book's arguments persuasive and helpful, and no one can afford to ignore the issues it raises." (Craig Keener, professor of New Testament, Eastern Seminary)

"Webb has tackled some of the most difficult and controversial issues that have faced the Christian church. Some of these issues, such as the role of women in the church and the question of homosexuality, are especially hot topics today. What makes Webb's book special is that it attempts to work out the hermeneutics involved in distinguishing that which is merely cultural in Scripture from that which is timeless. In my estimation, Webb's insights constitute major, positive progress. This book is must reading." (Craig A. Evans, professor and director of the graduate program in biblical studies, Trinity Western University (Langley, British Columbia))

"This book successfully walks the reader through the hermeneutical maze that accompanies the treatment of each of these areas. The goal is not only to discuss how these groups are to be seen in light of Scripture but to make a case for a specific hermeneutical approach to reading these texts. *Slaves, Women Homosexuals* not only

advances a discussion of the topics beyond current literature, it takes a markedly new direction toward establishing common ground where possible, potentially breaking down certain walls of hostility within the evangelical community." (Darrell L. Bock, research professor of New Testament studies, Dallas Theological Seminary (from the foreword))

"The book is well focused, thoroughly researched, carefully argued, meticulously fair to differing views and profoundly biblical. I find it very persuasive." (Stephen R. Spencer, professor of systematic theology, Dallas Theological Seminary)

#### Other Books

Finding Charity's Folk, Finding Charity's Folk highlights the experiences of enslaved Maryland women who negotiated for their own freedom, many of whom have been largely lost to historical records. Based on more than fifteen hundred manumission records and numerous manuscript documents from a diversity of archives, Jessica Millward skillfully brings together African American social and gender history to provide a new means of using biography as a historical genre. Millward opens with a striking discussion about how researching the life of a single enslaved woman, Charity Folks, transforms our understanding of slavery and freedom in Revolutionary America. For African American women such as Folks, freedom, like enslavement, was tied to a bondwoman's reproductive capacities. Their offspring were used to perpetuate the slave economy. Finding loopholes in the law meant that enslaved women could give birth to and raise free children. For Millward, Folks demonstrates the fluidity of the boundaries between slavery and freedom, which was due largely to the gendered space occupied by enslaved women. The gendering of freedom influenced notions of liberty, equality, and race in what became the new nation and had profound implications for African American women's future interactions with the state.

Ⓜ Ⓜ Ⓜ Ⓜ Ⓜ . Glymph, Thavolia. Out of the House of Bondage: The Transformation of the Plantation Household. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008. Gomez, Michael. Exchanging our Country Marks: The Transformation of African Identities in the ..."