

# MESSAGE: "LIFE IS GOD'S GIFT!"

## 1 JOHN 1:1-4

Today is Sanctity of Human Life Sunday. In 1973 the Supreme Court determined that Abortion was acceptable throughout gestation [intrauterine development of the child] up to the moment of birth and no state could by state law restrict access to abortion. This view is established on the principle of "right to privacy" which has dubious legal standing within the Constitution. In fact most legal scholars see Roe vs. Wade as poorly written legal precedence. Those who defend abortion on demand, now defend it as "settled law" which derives its authority based on longevity and acceptance by the community.



Psalm 139:14 I will praise You, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made; Marvelous are Your works, And that my soul knows very well.

MESSAGE: "LIFE IS GOD'S GIFT!"  
*1 JOHN 1:1-4*



Psalm 139:14 I will praise You, for I am fearfully *and* wonderfully made; Marvelous are Your works, And *that* my soul knows very well.

Surprisingly, this was the same argument used by pro-slavery advocates. Who argued that while the allowance of slavery within the Constitution was inconsistent with the principles stated in the same Constitution the longevity and acceptance of slavery indicated that it was an acceptable practice.



## 1 JOHN 1:1-4

1 That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled, concerning the Word of life —

2 The life was manifested, and we have seen, and bear witness, and declare to you that eternal life which was with the Father and was manifested to us —

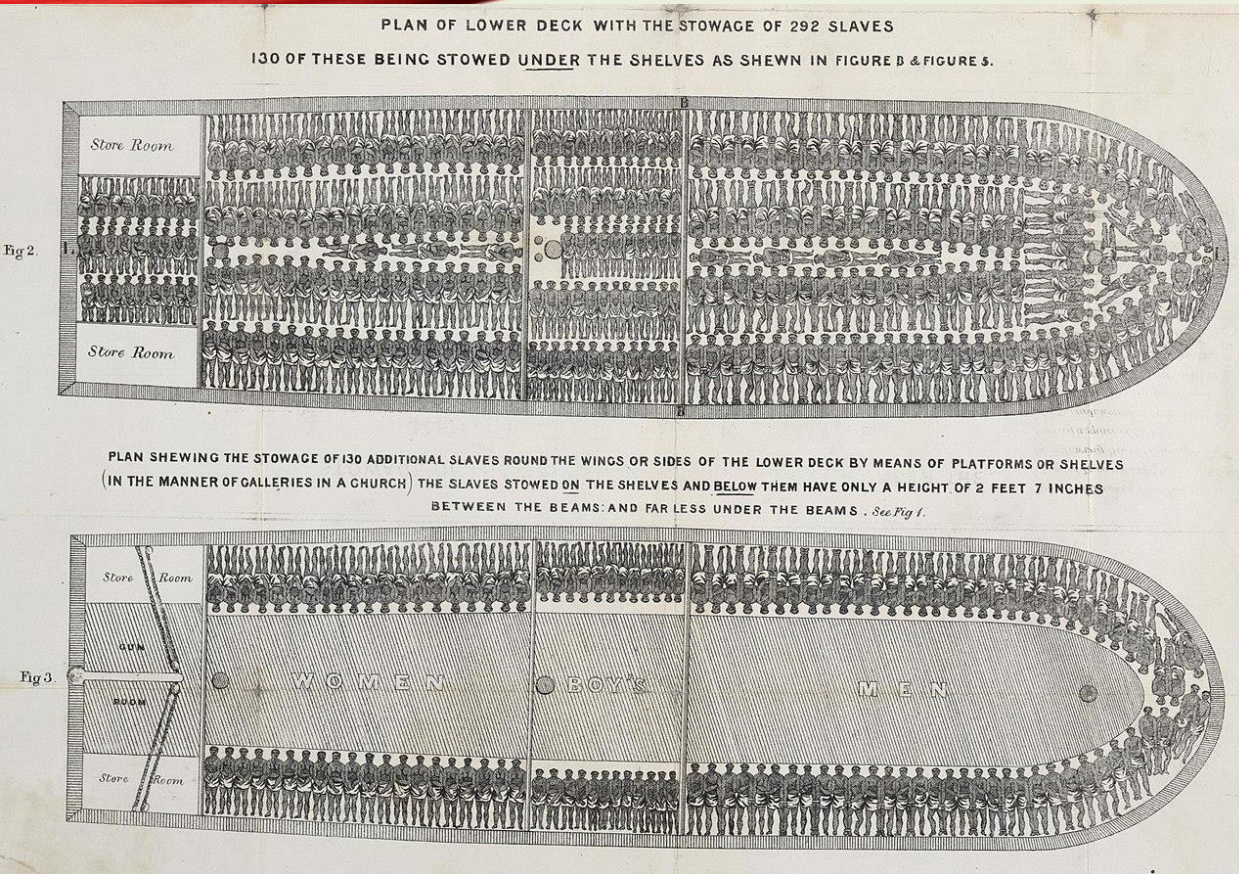
3 That which we have seen and heard we declare to you, that you also may have fellowship with us; and truly our fellowship *is* with the Father and with his Son Jesus Christ.

4 And these things we write to you that your joy may be full.

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## 1 JOHN 1:1-4

Recently the "1619 Project" has attempted place the blame for slavery on America's founding. It is based on the first African slaves arrival at Jamestown colony. While this date is interesting, we have little documentation on how these "slaves" were received. What little documentation that exists seems to indicate that at first they were received as "indentured servants".



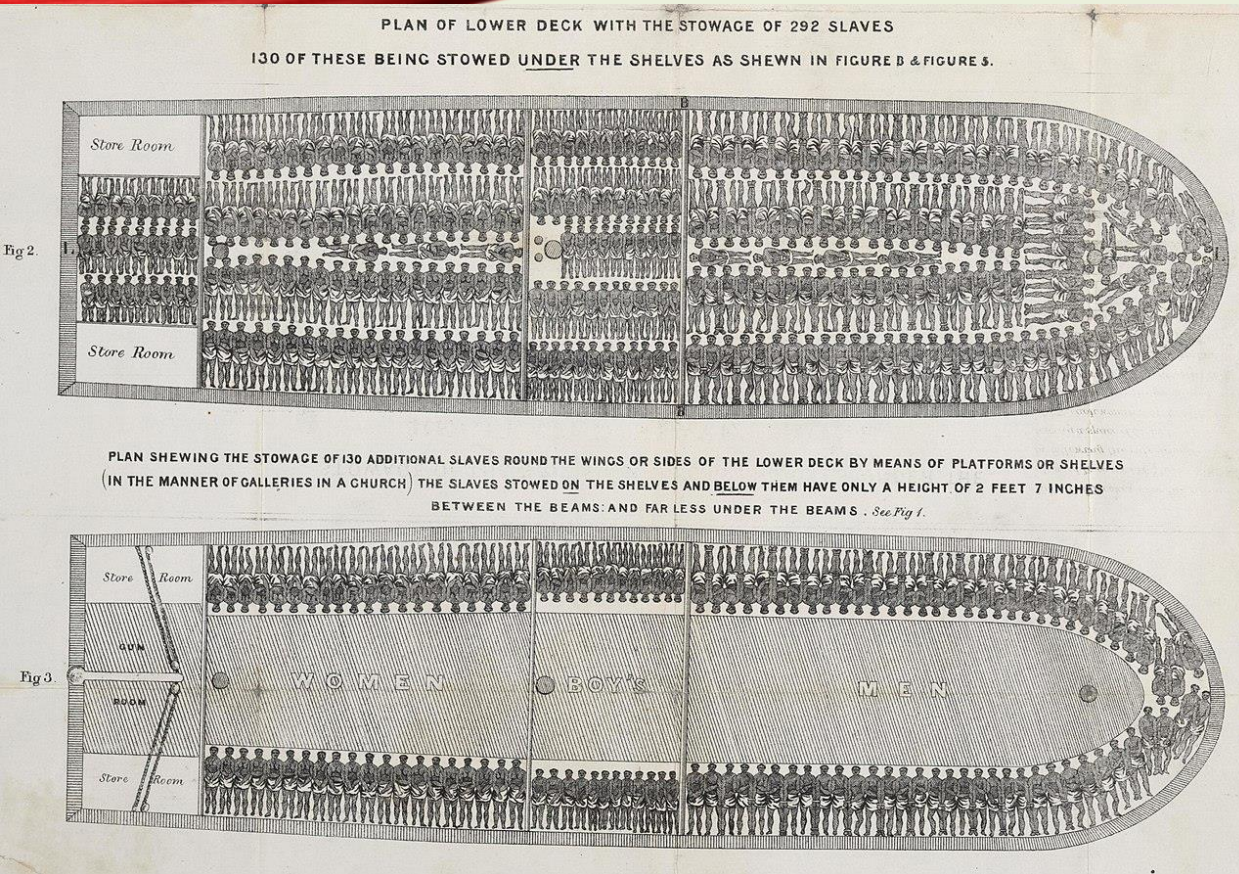
The slave ship "Brookes" from a 1788 Abolitionist poster



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## 1 JOHN 1:1-4

The same year in the Dutch colony of "New Amsterdam" [modern New York] slaves from Africa via the Caribbean, were received. In fact, this Dutch colony hosted the 1<sup>st</sup> slave market in what would become the USA. The Dutch already were deeply involved in "Transatlantic slave trade" they had Caribbean and Brazilian colonies that were based on slave labor. The slaves brought to Jamestown in 1619 were actually Dutch pirate spoils from a Portuguese slave trader delivering African slaves to Spanish Mexico. The full number was 20 and we know only the names of 2 who settled into the Jamestown colony.



The slave ship "Brookes" from a 1788 Abolitionist poster

1 Timothy 1:8-12

## 1 TIMOTHY 1:8-11

8 But we know that the law *is* good if one uses it lawfully,

9 knowing this: that the law is not made for a righteous person, but for *the* lawless and insubordinate, for *the* ungodly and for sinners, for *the* unholy and profane, for murderers of fathers and murderers of mothers, for **manslayers**,

10 for fornicators, for sodomites, for **kidnappers**, for liars, for perjurers, and if there is any other thing that is contrary to sound doctrine,

11 according to the glorious gospel of the blessed god which was committed to my trust.



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## 1 JOHN 1:1-4



A Roman fresco from the city of Philippi showing slaves at various tasks.

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This was distinctly different than the slavery of the ancient world. People from Africa were generally seen as “pagans” by both Islam and Christianity. As a result, Islam first then Europeans viewed them as being appropriate to enslave. In fact this view was so strongly held in Europe that many of the slave colonies had laws that hindered evangelization of slave populations. Slavery in ancient cultures resulted from 3 causes: 1. Debt Slavery. 2. Criminal or political activity. 3. Conquest. In Jewish law debt slavery was abolished. Romans also abolished debt slavery for Roman citizens.

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**1 JOHN 1:1-4**

Roman slavery was not based on race or educational status. Many professional people in the Roman world were slaves, doctors, bookkeepers, secretaries, teachers, etc. Many merchants and shop-keepers were slaves set up in business by their masters. There were public slaves that were often the clerks and functionaries of the state. Prisoners were assigned to slavery in the mines, considered a death sentence. The slavery that we think of in our history was not like the slavery known in the New Testament.

**1 Corinthians 7:20-23 & Galatians 3:28**

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A Roman fresco from the city of Philippi showing slaves at various tasks.

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## 1 CORINTHIANS 7:20-23

20 Let each one remain in the same calling in which he was called.

21 Were you called *while* a slave? Do not be concerned about it; but if you can be made free, rather use *it*.

22 For he who is called in the lord *while* a slave is the lord's freedman. Likewise he who is called *while* free is Christ's slave.

23 You were bought at a price; do not become slaves of men.

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



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**1 JOHN 1:1-4**

Dr. Samuel Cartwright proposed in 1851 that slaves run away because they are mentally ill.

The enslavement of people of African ancestry became popular in the late 1400's when the Portuguese came into contact with African kingdoms that had been selling slaves for centuries to Islamic slave traders. Slavery had ceased in most parts of Europe by this time for it was believed immoral to enslave someone of the same faith. Only on the Iberian Peninsula had slavery remained as a result of the struggle between Islamic and Christian kingdoms. From the Middle Ages onward slavery was only acceptable if the person was of another faith. People from Africa were generally seen as "pagans" by both Islam and Christianity. As a result, Islam first then Europeans viewed them as being appropriate to enslave. This view was so strongly held in Europe that many of the slave colonies had laws that hindered evangelization of slave populations.





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**1 JOHN 1:1-4**

Dr. Samuel Cartwright proposed in 1851 that slaves run away because they are mentally ill.

It was only with the late Enlightenment period that "scientific racial theories" developed. These views held that essentially humans were divided into different "species" [*the words "race" and "species" were used interchangeably*]. It was held that the different races were of separate origin as opposed to traditional Christian theology which held that all humans had descended from Adam and Eve. This view grew over the succeeding 2 centuries and was used to justify the enslavement of people due to their "race". By the 1800s these views led to the concept that the "black race" was by nature had inherent inferior genetics. Many of the traditional Christian churches with their clergy trained with enlightenment ideas held to this concept to varying degrees.

1 John 1:5- 8





## 1 JOHN 1:5-8

5 This is the message which we have heard from him and declare to you, that God is light and in Him is no darkness at all.

6 If we say that we have fellowship with Him, and walk in darkness, we lie and do not practice the truth.

7 But if we walk in the light as He is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanses us from all sin.

8 If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us.

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## 1 JOHN 1:1-4

By the 1800s Christian revival movements were challenging the concept that Black people were inferior, while most intellectuals and cultural elites viewed people of African descent as inferior. The Hegelian Dialectic cemented this view in the early 1800's and led to the view of evolution in society and among "races". The 2<sup>nd</sup> Great Awakening in America reacted strongly to this. Militant Abolitionism in America during the 1840s resulting from the 2<sup>nd</sup> Great Awakening. Most established churches wished to stay away from the issue of slavery. But this moral issue could not be swept under the rug. Major churches such as the Methodist split into 3 different denominations. Presbyterians, split into a northern and southern denomination. Baptists did the same.



37 Men from Oberlin OH many of them from Oberlin College rescued John Preston, a run-away slave from federal custody in Wellington OH in 1858, here is a picture of most of the rescuers in 1859 at the Republican convention.



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**1 JOHN 1:1-4**

The holiness movements that developed from the great revival movement strove to point out that all people were created in God's image and that slavery based on skin color or ethnic origin was completely unacceptable.

These holiness Christians linked arms with German anabaptists and Quakers as well as Northern Abolitionists in opposing slavery.

By the late 1840's there was little middle ground between the 2 positions. This moral issue was now poised to set the spark of civil war.



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## 1 John 1:9-2:2

9 If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us *our* sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

10 If we say that we have not sinned, we make Him a liar, and His word is not in us.

2:1 My little children, these things I write to you, so that you may not sin. And if anyone sins, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous.

2 and He Himself is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only but also for the whole world.



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**1 JOHN 1:1-4**

But I stand up here to say, that if for doing what I did on that day at Wellington, I am to go to jail six months, and pay a fine of a thousand dollars, according to the Fugitive Slave Law, and such is the protection the laws of this country afford me, I must take upon my self the responsibility of self-protection; and when I come to be claimed by some perjured wretch as his slave, I shall never be taken into slavery. And as in that trying hour I would have others do to me, as I would call upon my friends to help me; ... -- *Charles Langston, a free black man at his 1858 trial for the Oberlin Rescue of John Price. He was one of 2 from the 37 member rescue team who was tried. The white defendant was Simon M. Bushnell. Bushnell was sentenced to 60 days, Langston to 20 days.*



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## 1 JOHN 1:1-4

In 1973 I was not yet in High School. The issue of abortion was to most people esoteric. Christian intellectuals found lots of varying positions on the issue. Even in my early years of ministry Christianity Today, the leading Evangelical periodical ran articles by leading Evangelical writers that tried to argue for abortion on demand up to the 1<sup>st</sup> Trimester. They would of course preface the argument with personal distaste of the procedure but pragmatic circumstances called for compromise.

It was not until I began to read in early Christian history that I became profoundly pro-life. One of the documents I read was the Didache'. At the time it was believed to have been a middle 2<sup>nd</sup> century Christian document. Now it is believed to be a late 1<sup>st</sup> century Christian document.

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In 1873 the lost document called the "Didache'" was discovered, it revolutionized the study of Christian History. In the last century pages dating to the 300s were found in Egypt.

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## 1 JOHN 1:1-4

It became clear to me that early Christians were deeply opposed to abortion and considered it infanticide. Their reasons were clear – they shared the 1<sup>st</sup> two Judaism: 1) Humans were created in the image of God; 2) Humans were formed by God in the womb and considered to be fully human - Psalm 139, Jeremiah, John the Baptist and Jesus Christ; 3) The incarnation – Jesus did not come as a fully developed man but was conceived and born so human life from conception to death is sacred.

Jewish rabbis did allow abortion in the case where the mother's life was threatened. The legal view of the Jewish people was that a choice must be made between the importance of the life of woman and that of the child. The Didache' does not go into detail so we do not know if Christians allowed abortion to protect the life of the mother.

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# DIDACHE'

**CHAPTER 2. THE SECOND COMMANDMENT: GRAVE SIN FORBIDDEN.** AND THE SECOND COMMANDMENT OF THE TEACHING; YOU SHALL NOT COMMIT MURDER, YOU SHALL NOT COMMIT ADULTERY, YOU SHALL NOT COMMIT PEDERASTY, YOU SHALL NOT COMMIT FORNICATION, YOU SHALL NOT STEAL, YOU SHALL NOT PRACTICE MAGIC, YOU SHALL NOT PRACTICE WITCHCRAFT, YOU SHALL NOT MURDER A CHILD BY ABORTION NOR KILL THAT WHICH IS BORN. YOU SHALL NOT COVET THE THINGS OF YOUR NEIGHBOR, YOU SHALL NOT SWEAR, YOU SHALL NOT BEAR FALSE WITNESS, YOU SHALL NOT SPEAK EVIL, YOU SHALL BEAR NO GRUDGE. YOU SHALL NOT BE DOUBLE-MINDED NOR DOUBLE-TONGUED, FOR TO BE DOUBLE-TONGUED IS A SNARE OF DEATH. YOUR SPEECH SHALL NOT BE FALSE, NOR EMPTY, BUT FULFILLED BY DEED. YOU SHALL NOT BE COVETOUS, NOR RAPACIOUS, NOR A HYPOCRITE, NOR EVIL DISPOSED, NOR HAUGHTY.

YOU SHALL NOT TAKE EVIL COUNSEL AGAINST YOUR NEIGHBOR. YOU SHALL NOT HATE ANY MAN; BUT SOME YOU SHALL REPROVE, AND CONCERNING SOME YOU SHALL PRAY, AND SOME YOU SHALL LOVE MORE THAN YOUR OWN LIFE.

– ROBERT DONALDSON'S TRANSLATION



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## 1 JOHN 1:1-4

The Didache' meaning "the Teaching" is believed to have been produced at the end of the 1<sup>st</sup> century. It is referred to and quoted by many of the early Christian writers. It is based on Deuteronomy 30.

It was not until Christianity became the official religion of the Roman Empire that there seems to have been a softening in Christian views toward abortion [*Augustine seems to leave the door open at least up to the gestation point of "quickening"*].



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*1 JOHN 1:1-4*

The reason Christianity challenged the Greco-Roman culture on this point was that Christians with the Jewish people saw humans in every aspect as being created the "image" of God. The wanton [reckless and lawless] taking of human life at any stage was viewed as an offense against God's creation. Both the Old Testament and New Testament support this view. This is the reason I am pro-life.



Psalm 139:14 I will praise You, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made; Marvelous are Your works, And that my soul knows very well.