Partners in Struggle

The Legacy of
William Lloyd Garrison

Study Guide

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**PREFACE**

_In many ways, African American history_ is a continuously unfolding mosaic of intricately connected human designs and patterns. Individual stories contribute to the dynamic whole. The result is an expression of the awesome creativity of God. That is the focus of this four-part study. This particular series features Americans of European ancestry who partnered with African Americans in the fight for freedom and equality. It focuses on the intriguing beauty that these particular elements bring into this unfolding mosaic. The design of this guide allows readers to “exegete” the lives of John Brown, William Lloyd Garrison, Viola Liuzzo and three college students (Michael Schwerner, James Chaney and Andrew Goodman). It provides the opportunity for exploration, reflection, critique and dialogue.

This is the first in the series of standalone study guides, with each focusing on the life of a different person. These particular people were selected for study for their outstanding contributions to the abolition of slavery and to the mid-20th Century Civil Rights Movement. Each study contains background information, review, discussion, reflection questions, resources for further study, sample lesson plans for group study and a reproducible participant handout.

The sample lesson plans contain suggested activities for various time frames. The publications in the series can be used as texts for church school classes, small group studies, church-wide retreats and interfaith events. They can also be used for occasions such as Black History Month and Women’s History Month.
INTRODUCTION

WHEN WILLIAM LLOYD GARRISON stepped onto the pages of American history in December of 1805, he was heading into a thunderstorm. It was roughly three decades after the nation’s birth but only decades before the relatively new country would split, primarily over the issue of slavery. There were an estimated one million African American people in the United States.¹ Of that number, 89.2% were enslaved.² By 1831, when Garrison would begin publishing The Liberator, the number of African American residents would grow to over two million, but still, 86% would be enslaved. By the time of The Liberator’s launch, three of the most famous of slave revolts had erupted, as the country moved towards the Civil War.³ Garrison’s work would become a major catalyst that accelerated that movement.

In his first column, “The Black List”, he published eyewitness and accounts from newspapers to expose slavery’s brutality:

“A fellow advertises a runaway slave, in a Charleston paper, to be delivered to him at ‘Liberty Hall’. He says, ‘Will may be known by the incisions of the whips on his back; and I suppose he has taken the road to Coosa Hatchie, where he has a wife and five children, whom I sold last week to Ms. Gillespie.’”⁴

In the October 2, 1829 column, he reported an encounter with “Ultimo” a strong black man, who appeared at his boarding house, with a bloody handkerchief on his head. His shirt was also bloody. He had been whipped with a cow’s skin. There were bruises from as many as 37 lashes, each from ½ to 3½ long over his entire body. Garrison did not know why this man was sent to him, but the man reported that a General Charles Ridgely had beaten him because Ridgely was unhappy with the speed with which he had loaded a truck.⁵

Garrison also wanted to expose the pirates who unloaded hundreds of slaves into Maryland, and other Northern cities, even though, by then, such trade from Africa was illegal.⁶ His reports drew a libel suit against him, for which he was imprisoned. His predicament drew widespread support from anti-slavery advocates of all persuasions. One of them, Arthur Tappan, paid the $50 fee that released Garrison from prison.⁷ This allowed him to move to Boston, Massachusetts and begin publishing the famous Liberator. Along with publications such as David Walker’s Appeal, and Frederick Douglass’ North Star, it became a major voice of the “immediatist” wing of the American abolitionist movement.

In the 1820’s and 1830’s, Garrison was one of only a few Americans of European ancestry, North or South, who openly supported an immediate end to slavery. Fewer yet were those who openly collaborated with the free black community to launch a newspaper, to circulate it nationally and to publish anti-slavery articles written by free black people. Moreover, wealthy black business people like James Forten, John Hilton and James Barbadoes supported The Liberator with sizeable donations. By 1834, 75% of its subscribers were black. By 1839, when larger numbers of white abolitionists were increasingly subscribing, the number of black subscribes still remained at 65%.⁸ Together, black and white abolitionists supported his American Anti-Slavery Society, which organized abolitionists into a political force at that time. He continued to publish The Liberator for four decades, until after the close of the Civil War.
William Lloyd Garrison’s parents were immigrants from the then British colony of New Brunswick. His father, Abijah Garrison, was a merchant sailor who moved the family to Newburyport, Massachusetts about a year after William Lloyd was born. Two years later, (1808), his father deserted the family. His mother died fifteen years after that, when Garrison was eighteen years old. In spite of these hardships, by then, Garrison, at fourteen, had already located a job as an apprentice at The Newbury Herald, where he learned compositor skills and wrote articles under the name, “Aristides”. Afterward, he and Isaac Knapp bought their own newspaper, The Free Press. In 1828, he became editor of The National Philanthropist located in Boston. He then he moved to Boston, in 1831, where he founded his own newspaper, The Liberator.

It was through this newspaper that Garrison became the voice of the “immediatists” among abolitionists. He used it to agitate for an immediate but non-violent end of slavery. A greater understanding of the significance of his work can be gained if it is examined against the backdrop of ideological warfare raging at the time.

Garrison was working in a milieu where the practice of dismembering families, and relocating and enslaving entire communities was at least a millennium old. Nearly every continent in the known world had been involved. The practices predated the United States by thousands of years. Belief systems that enabled people to engage in such activities without apparent guilt could be traced at least as far back as ancient Greece and Rome. There, slavery was considered a natural byproduct of war. Heraclitus, for example, had said, “War is the father of all, the king of all. He turns some into slaves and sets others free”. Slavery was considered an economic necessity. Probably a world without slaves would have been difficult to conceptualize. One rarely found literature or art from the ancient world that did not contain slaves. Moreover, Heraclitus had said that certain climates, like those in Anatolia, had created “placid” and submissive people who were naturally suitable as slaves.

Even Aristotle had echoed Heraclitus in Politics, where he said that what separated the ruler from the slave was that the ruler could focus with his mind and
was therefore naturally a ruler as opposed to an animal, or slave who could comprehend reason but had not “gotten the deliberative part at all.” In Aristotle’s era, the concept of race, as known today, was not a classification. Later Sophists, stated that all men belonged to the same race but some men were slaves with the souls of freemen and vice versa. Finally, Aristotle had argued that the only way that one person could impose slavery on another was that the master was better than the slave in keeping with natural law. Residuals of these classic themes can be found in the biblical interpretations that Garrison’s pro-slavery opponents used as the moral basis for their support of the institution of slavery in 19th Century America.

While described as a “lightening rod” by some, at 26, he might have reminded others of David before Goliath. In public speeches and from pages of *The Liberator*, he “took aim” at key pro-slavery arguments such as:

- The Curse of Ham
- The Table of Nations
- The Mark of Cain
- The Ordained Powers
- The Existence of Slavery in the Bible.

First, he questioned whether the Bible was infallible, and whether all parts of it had equal authority in 19th Century America. He refused to apply logic based on the “Curse of Ham”, “Table of Nations”, or “Mark of Cain”. He also questioned whether the existence of slavery in the Bible was a license for its use in America of that day. While he did argue that there were many very relevant and important passages in the Bible, he said that not all passages had equal authority. He taunted his opponents with questions like whether adultery in the Bible legitimated it outside of the Bible.

Based on the same logic, Garrison has challenged the pro-slavery argument’s use of Romans 13: 1-7. As a “non-resister”, he refused to vote and/or join the military because the U.S. government supported slavery. He was particularly irritated by the 1850 Fugitive Slave Law, which “made every citizen a slaver hunter and slave catcher.” He said that he did not believe that all forms of government were wrong, as claimed by his pro-slavery opponents. However, he pointed out that Jesus had said, “My kingdom is not of this world...” Garrison cautioned that most people clung to human governments that were fashioned in the spirit of their own disobediences. That was true of the slavetocracy and of the government that supported it. He warned that such tyrants would be toppled because they denied (Black people) freedom. He criticized the clergy who would not put pressure members of their churches and their denominations to abolish slavery immediately. For this, he was mobbed several times and barely escaped with his life.

Garrison’s “immediatist” views kept him at the center of public attention, particularly in the South, where his publications, along with those of other abolitionists were commonly banned. As the conflict escalated between him and the supporters of slavery, subscriptions to *The Liberator* also escalated. After the close of *The Liberator*, Garrison continued in public life, championing for women’s rights and working for the passage and implementation of various civil rights legislations until his death on May 24, 1879.
Luke 4:14-21

14. Then Jesus, filled with the power of the Spirit, returned to Galilee, and a report about him spread throughout all the surrounding country. 15. He began to teach in their synagogues and was praised by everyone. 16. When he came to Nazareth, where he had been brought up, he went to the synagogue on the Sabbath day, as was his custom. He stood up to read. 17. And the scroll of the prophet Isaiah was given to him. He unrolled the scroll and found the place where it was written, 18. “The Spirit of the Lord is upon me and he has anointed me to bring good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim release to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind to let the oppressed go free. 19. To proclaim the year of the Lord’s favor.” 20. And he rolled up the scroll, gave it back to the attendant, and sat down. The eyes of all in the synagogue were fixed on him. 21. Then he began to say to them, “Today this scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing.” (Luke 4:14-21, New Revised Standard Version)

At the time that Jesus stood, reading in the synagogue, an estimated two million out of six million people were enslaved by The Roman Empire. In the City of Rome alone, about 300,000 to 350,000 people were enslaved. That is, in the most populous parts of the Empire, as many as one in three people were slaves. Commonly, wealthy private citizens owned as many as 428 slaves per house, and individual Roman citizens owned anywhere from two to six slaves each.

Mining, agriculture and construction work on the elaborate Roman buildings required mostly male slaves. The life expectancy for slaves was about 20 years of age, compared to the 20-30 year life expectancy for the general population. Because slaves entered at various ages, the time spent in slavery before death could be around ten years. That meant that as many as ½ million new slaves were needed annually.

One of the ugliest chapters in the history of the Roman government is how it got its slaves. One source was self-reproduction. However, men outnumbered women, so this source was not adequate. Therefore often women were bred. Children of these women became slaves, because their mothers were slaves. Another source was prison labor. However, there were not enough prisoners to do the massive amount of work handled by slaves. Another source was debt bondage, where people sold themselves or their children into slavery to settle debts. This could include people who had been cheated out of their mortgages through corrupt business schemes. Again, while this practice was widespread, it did not produce enough slaves.

A much larger number came from masses of soldiers and civilians captured in the wars. The vast number of slaves that would have existed at the time of Christ had come from such campaigns, as the Roman Republic transitioned to the Empire. Most likely, those slaves worked on the huge number of building projects of that era. In the decades leading to Jesus’ birth, Palestine had been a battlefield for soldiers coming from Europe, Africa and Asia. In 53 BCE, Cassius had displaced and sold about 30,000 people from Taricheae in Galilee. Families in such areas lived in constant fear of soldiers ravaging their homes for supplies or suddenly drafting their children into the military. It was a brutal business, and as many as 100,000 people could be taken at once and shipped away from their families into other parts of the Empire or sold over its borders.

When Augustus Caesar reduced the number of these wars in order to focus on building infrastructures, this source of slaves declined. Then the primary source of slaves became abandoned infants. Most of these infants were females who were no doubt bred eventually. By the first century CE, child abandonment was a widespread practice. If a family wanted no more than one or two children, the “excess” left in vacant fields and along the roadsides. Female children were not as valued as male children were because they were not likely to become warriors or transmit the family property. If their biological fathers did not acknowledge such children, they were not considered belonging to the human family. Aristocrats then paid people to gather such children to be raised as slaves. This practice produced millions of slaves annually.

The Roman patronage systems were also forms of bondage, often fraught with corruption. There was also the fear, for slaves, that they would suddenly be drafted into the military, or for fighting vicious animals in gladiator games. The only escape from the life sentence of slavery would be through manumission, which was not common. Most of these practices were against
the social ethnics that underlay many of the Mosaic Laws (the Year of the Jubilee, protection of children, and selling people.).

When Jesus stood, reading the scroll in the synagogue that day, it is no telling what expressions came across people’s faces when they heard him mention that he had come to free the captives.

QUESTIONS

FOR REVIEW
- Given your understanding of the role of slavery in the Roman Empire, why might people there have been staring at Jesus?
- What factors determined what value was placed on given human lives in the Roman Empire? In that system, who gained and who lost? Why?
- What factors determined values placed on given human lives in Antebellum America? In that system, who gained and who lost? Why?
- What are the differences between Garrison’s and McCain’s views of the Bible’s authority?
- Compare and contrast Garrison’s position on slavery with those of Heraclitus and McCain?
- What distinguished Garrison from others of anti-slavery sentiment?
- Why did some consider him a “lightning rod?”
- What role did the free African American community play in his life and in the life of “the movement”?

FOR DISCUSSION
- Are there ways that different interpretations of the Bible’s authority still affect race relations?
- Is Galatians 3:27-29 relevant, or problematic for the 21st century (See the side bar below.)?
- Is there still a need for an abolitionist movement against slavery?

FOR REFLECTION
- What biblical passages have had the strongest influence in shaping the way you relate to others?
- Which ones have had the most impact on your relationships with people of other races, religions, sexual orientations, political views and positions within the economy?
- In what complex ways might the work of the 19th Century abolitionists have affected your personal life?
“The other races in Europe differ from one another, both as to stature and shape, owing to the changes of the seasons. And the same may be said of their dispositions, for the wild, and unsocial, and the passionate occur in such a constitution; for frequent excitement of the mind induces wildness, and extinguishes socialness and mildness of disposition, and therefore I think the inhabitants of Europe more courageous than those of Asia; for a climate which is always the same induces indolence, but a changeable climate, laborious exertions both of body and mind; and from rest and indolence cowardice is engendered, and from laborious exertions and pains, courage. On this account the inhabitants of Europe are more courageous than the Asiatics, and also owing to their institutions, because they are not governed by kings like the latter, for where men are governed by kings there they must be very cowardly, as I have stated before; for their souls are enslaved, and they will not willingly, or readily undergo dangers in order to promote the power of another; but those that are free undertake dangers on their own account, and not for the sake of others; they court hazard and go out to meet it, for they themselves bear off the rewards of victory, and thus their institutions contribute not a little to their courage. Such is the general character of Europe and Asia.

— Heraclitus, fragment #53 in Hippolytus, Refutation of All Heresies, IX, 9.4

“If we turn, Sir, to the oldest book in existence, and, of the truth of those records, there can among Christians, be no doubt that we will find that, at a very early period, of time, the institution of slavery was predicted and ordained by God Himself, through his servant Noah. The prophetic denunciation of Noah of one of the three branches of his family is the first notice of slavery upon record; and it was uttered at the very dawn of time. He spoke under the impulse and dictation of Heaven. His words are the words of God himself and by them was slavery ordained. This was an early arrangement of the Almighty to be perpetuated to cement and compact the whole human family – to establish the system of mutual relation and dependency, and to sustain the great chain of subordination, so essential, to the Divine as well as all human governments. The words of Noah are: “Cursed be Canaan: a servant of servants shall he be unto his brethren. And he said, “Blessed be the Lord God of Shem and Canaan shall be his servant. God shall enlarge Japeth, and he shall dwell in the tents of Shem and Canaan shall be his servant (Genesis 9:25-27)

“To say that everything contained within the Bible is divinely inspired and to insist upon this dogma as fundamentally important, is to give utterance to a bold fiction and to require the suspension of reasoning faculties... It cannot be denied, that the question of the divine authority of the Bible is one of grave importance and therefore worthy of searching investigations... Some derive from it divine sanctions for polygamy, war, slavery, wine-bibbing, capital punishment... The Bible does not change but the interpretations of the Bible are constantly fluctuating. Those interpretations are generally in accordance with popular opinion and spirit of the interpreters. Men who are war-like, men who deem it no sin to enslave their fellow men... naturally interpret the Bible in accordance with their views....I am fully aware of how grievously the priesthood have perverted the Bible and wielded it both as an instrument of spiritual despotism and in opposition to the sacred cause of humanity; still to no other volume do I turn with so much interest... no other have I appealed to so effectively in the aid of various reformatory movements which I have espoused...


27 As many of you as were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ. 28 There is no longer slave or free, there is no longer male and female; for all of you are one in Christ Jesus. 29And if you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham’s offspring, heirs according to the promise.

— Apostle Paul, Galatians 3:27-29, (NRSV)
APPENDIX

RESOURCES FOR FURTHER STUDY

FROM THE LIBERATOR

http://fair-use.org/the-liberator/1859/10/28/the-tragedy-at-harpers-ferry


http://fair-use.org/the-liberator/1865/12/29/valedictory

The Liberator Files
http://www.theliberatorfiles.com/

Websites

Abolition: The African American Mosaic (Library of Congress Visual Collections)
http://www.loc.gov/exhibits/african/afam005.html

The American Experience Website
http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/americangreatexperience/features/primary-resources/lincolns-political-economy/

Excerpts from Slave Narratives

Douglass, Frederick, “Inconsistencies of Slavery in a Christian Nation”
http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/americangreatexperience/features/primary-resources/lincolns-inconsistencies/

Jacobs, Harriet, “The Church and Slavery” (from Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl).
http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/americangreatexperience/features/primary-resources/lincolns-church/

Photo Galleries and Virtual Tours

Political Cartoons of the 1860’s
http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/americangreatexperience/features/photo-gallery/lincolns-cartoons/

Urban Slave quarters
http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/americangreatexperience/features/photo-gallery/lincolns-slave-quarters/
Feature Articles

Shifting Political Landscape
http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/americaneexperience/features/general-article/lincolns-political-landscape/

The Press and Abolitionists

The Battle for Abolition
http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/americaneexperience/features/general-article/lincolns-abolition/

In the North
http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/americaneexperience/features/general-article/lincolns-north/

Political Economy of Slavery
http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/americaneexperience/features/primary-resources/lincolns-political-economy/

Political Party Timeline
http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/americaneexperience/features/timeline/lincolns-timeline/

The Underground Railroad
http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/americaneexperience/features/general-article/lincolns-underground-railroad/

Anti-Slavery International
http://www.antislavery.org/english/what_we_do/our_history.aspx

In motion: the African American Migration Experience
http://www.inmotionaame.org/index.cfm;jsessionid=f830145506132757700829?bhcp=1

New York Times Feature Archives: WILLIAM LLOYD GARRISON (FEATURES)
http://topics.nytimes.com/top/reference/timestopics/people/g/william_lloyd_garrison/index.html?s=oldest&

Slavery in New York
http://www.slaveryinnewyork.org/about_exhibit.htm

Slavery in New York Paperbacks
http://search.half.ebay.com/slavery%20in%20new%20york_W0QQmZbooks

Whispers of Angels: Underground Railroad (60:00)
http://www.whispersofangels.com/

Spirituals
http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mS5VlJHti-Y&feature=related
http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dcgQ-RqQ6gg&feature=related
http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2bytFrSL4_4&feature=related
VIDEOS

There are several possible sources for the following videos. Some are available through: YouTube, Netflix, and websites of PBS and C-Span. Others can be purchased through online distributors from sites like: Amazon.com, Barnes & Noble, and those listed for a given series at google.com.

http://www.amazon.com/African-Burial-Ground-American-Discovery/dp/B001W0Z2QO

**Africans in America**
http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/aia/home.html

**America’s Journey Through Slavery: Opposing Slavery – The Abolitionist Movement in America**
http://www.google.com/products/catalog?hl=en&sugexp=fwl&cp=36&gs_id=dc&xhr=t&q=(SLAVERY)+AND+(Abolition)+AND+(DVD)&pq=(slavery)+AND+(abolition)&rlz=1R2ADFA_enUS428&gs_upl=&bav=on.2,or.r_gc.r_pw.,cf.osb&biw=956&bih=489&wrapid=tljp1327552336339222&um=1&ie=UTF-8&tbm=shop&cid=11150261665740993738&sa=X&ei=a9cgT4-1AsXm0QHD3_3fCA&sqi=2&ved=0CDYQ8wIwAg#

**The Abolitionist Movement in America (12)**

**Fugitive Slave Laws (C-SPAN)**
http://www.c-spanvideo.org/program/SlaveLa&start=2922

**Prince Among Slaves (75:00)**

**Rome: Imperialism and Slavery (29:00)**

**Roots of Resistance: The Story of the Underground Railroad (60:00)**

**Slave Catchers: Slave Resisters (History Channel)**
http://www.amazon.com/Slave-Catchers-Resisters-Artist-Provided/dp/B000E37204
http://www.amazon.com/Slave-Catchers-Resisters-Yancey-Derringer/dp/B001KZVQE8/ref=sr_1_1?ie=UTF8&qid=1327619969&sr=8-1

**Slavery and Abolition – 14 Short Videos (Under: 05 each)**
http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GhwSACtj7Mg&feature=results_main&playnext=1&list=PL230E4008DABD0BCC

**Slavery and Abolition (2 Disks, 20min each)**
**Slavery and the Making of America (Four Disks (20:00 each)**
http://www.pbs.org/wnet/slavery/

Episode #1: The Downward Spiral
Episode #2: Liberty in the Air
Episode #3: Seeds of Destruction
Episode #4: The Challenge of Freedom

**Whispers of Angels (1:00)**
OVERVIEW

This lesson reviews the significance of William Lloyd Garrison’s life against the backdrop of the 19th Century conflict over slavery that culminated in the Civil War. Participants dissect pro and anti slavery arguments and identify competing interpretations of the Bible. They then explore how those competing understandings have influenced race relationships in the 19th and 21st Centuries. Garrison’s life is explored as an example of successful collaborating between people of different races, genders and economic situations for the purpose of dismantling systemic evils. The lesson is adaptable for 60 minute, 90 minute and for longer periods. A companion participant handout coordinates with each session element. Instructional aids on the sheet, “Resources for Further Study” can be explored for alternative activities. See “More Ideas”, on p. 24. These resources can also be used by participants for further study and to prepare for the session.

OBJECTIVES

During this session, the participant will:

- describe the brutality of slavery in 1st Century Palestine and antebellum America;
- identify the economic roles of slaves in both contexts;
- locate philosophical notions and biblical interpretations about humans that were used to legitimate slavery in both contexts;
- discuss how Jesus’ and Garrison’s notions about humans contrasted with those in the societies around them;
- discuss how Garrison’s ideas differed from those of others with anti-slavery sentiments;
- explain the role that Garrison played in helping to dismantle systemic evil in his day;
- discuss Garrison’s role as a “partner in struggle”;
- explore whether root assumptions underlying pro-slavery arguments still impact race relations in America;
- explore whether similar assumptions still affect interpersonal relationships between people of different genders, sexual orientations and economic situations.

- discuss how these same root assumptions can influence public debates and decision-making.

KEY CONCEPTS

- Pro-slavery sentiment
- Anti-Slavery sentiment
- Abolitionist
- Immediatist
- Curse of Ham
- Table of Nations
- Mark of Cain
- Divinely Ordained Government
- Biblical authority

MATERIALS NEEDED

- Duplicated Participant Handouts
- Bibles
- If using material that is online (such as from YouTube), a data projector, laptop, speakers and screen will be needed. If you do not have such equipment, that activity can be substituted by having the class read the story of William Lloyd Garrison from the participant handout.
- Pencils and Loose leaf Paper
- To make the quotes in the “Side Bars” available, either print them on poster board and display them in prominent places, print them onto overhead projector film and project via an overhead projector; project them onto a screen, using a laptop computer, data projector and screen; send them to enrollees via email during the week prior to the session with questions to guide their reading of them or duplicate them and then distribute them in the session itself. If the period is longer than one hour, it may be possible for volunteers to read each quote just prior to the discussion them.
- A paper bag, on which are written the names either of famous biblical characters or of famous African Americans (one for each student), and enough pins to pin one card on each students’ back. Gummed labels can also be used.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>STEP</th>
<th>A - One Hour Session</th>
<th>B - 90 Minute Session</th>
<th>C - Longer than 90 Min. Sess.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ice Breaker</td>
<td>“Round Robin” style, each person, within one minute, introduces him/herself, and explains something that occurred during the previous week, for which s/he is most thankful. If the group is large, participants can form small groups with no more than five people in each group, and share within those groups.</td>
<td>Participants divide into groups of no larger than four. Each group is given one dictionary (and/or a book of definitions of names.). “Round Robin style”, each person first hears the recorder read the definition of his/her name, then tells why his/her family gave that name and what it has meant to him/her.</td>
<td>Pin the name of a famous person from the Bible or AA history on each person’s back. Then participants divide into pairs with each partner getting help from his/her partner in guessing whose name s/he is wearing. Each partner has seven minutes. If time allows, reconvene into the larger group. Then they share one thing they have or can learn from the person they were wearing.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>William Lloyd Garrison</td>
<td>Show the YouTube video, “Slavery and Abolition: James Horton: Slavery and Abolition” (6:00). [See “Resources for Further Study” (6:00)] Ask for volunteers to briefly respond to the film, then take turns reading the short form of information on William Lloyd Garrison in the participant handout.</td>
<td>Show PBS: “Slavery and the Making of America: Episode Seeds of Destruction” (20): Ask for volunteers to briefly respond to the film, then take turns reading the related information printed on the Participant Handout.</td>
<td>Show PBS: “Slavery and the Making of America: Episode Seeds of Destruction”: Ask volunteers to briefly respond to the film, then take turns reading the background and story about Garrison from the participant handouts.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jesus in the Temple</td>
<td>Ask volunteers to read the biblical passage and then read the short story that follows it.</td>
<td>Ask volunteers to read the biblical passage and then read the short paragraph that follows it.</td>
<td>Ask volunteers to read the biblical passage and then read the short story that follows it.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Review Questions</td>
<td>Discuss the Review Questions in small groups with each group having a different set of questions from among those listed. One reporter from each group then reads his/her group’s assigned questions and reports the group’s answers to the larger group.</td>
<td>Have them select numbers and each person answers a different question in the larger group. If it is a large group, then people with the same number form groups and answer the assigned question together. The recorder reports to outcome in the larger group.</td>
<td>Answer the review questions together in the larger group.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discussion Questions</td>
<td>Return to the smaller groups, with each small group having been assigned a different set of discussion questions. One person from the group reports out to the larger group when it reconvenes.</td>
<td>Break into smaller groups. This time, each small group is assigned the same group of discussion questions. After discussing them in the smaller group, a recorder reports the answers to the larger group when it is reconvened. Each question would be reported upon separately for purposes of comparing answers.</td>
<td>Break into smaller groups. This time, each small group has the same group of discussion questions. After discussing them in the smaller group, a recorder reports the answers to the larger group when it is reconvened. Each question would be reported upon separately for purposes of comparing answers.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Additional Activity, if time allows.</td>
<td>Reflect on the session in the larger group.</td>
<td>Take the class through one of the virtual tours under “The American Experience” listed on the “Resources for Further Study”.</td>
<td>Show and discuss the video: “Rome: Imperialism and Slavery” (29:00) prior to discussing the Luke 4 passage. Then go through the other steps on the lesson plan.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Panel discussions can provide background information on various topics and they can give participants a chance to co-facilitate the session. Each panelist focuses on a different topic. Each consults a different source from “Resources for Further Study” to prepare a short presentation each. The length of time for each panelist depends on the time limitations of the overall session. Some ideas are:

- **Pro-Slavery Biblical Interpretations (See notes: 74-78 on pages 35-36)**
  Outside of class, each panelist studies a different biblical passage and pro-slavery interpretation and presents it to the class: Curse of Ham, Mark of Cain, Ordained Powers, Philemon, Presence of Slavery in the Bible). The panel and discussion would provide a feel for climate of ideas in which Garrison circulated his anti-slavery arguments.

- **Garrison’s Liberator Articles (See the collection on page 12)**
  Each panelist presents the main points contained in one of Garrison’s articles published in The Liberator. The articles on his reactions to John Brown’s Raid would make a good transition into this current study. However, there are other articles in the collection, “The Liberator Files”.

- **1860’s Political Cartoons (See “The American Experience website on page 13)**
  Each panelist studies one of the political cartoons and explains it to the class. This will be most effective if the cartoons can be projected onto a screen, using projection equipment and a laptop computer.

- **New York Times Coverage of Garrison and the Abolitionists (See the website on page 14)**
  Prior to the session, panelists plan together how to use this website locate and discuss how the New York Times covered Garrison’s activities in the decades leading into the Civil War. For other ideas on how to teach with newspapers at this cite, see the NYT information for teachers at this website.

**Film Series**

For each week that the series is being studied, present a parallel film series on a different time and location. Once a week, present a film that gives more information about the historical background of William Lloyd Garrison and the other abolitionists being studied. You might set it up like a movie theater, with refreshments, and, if time allows, have a “Talk Back” discussion following each film. See descriptions and sources for the following, on the “Resources for Further Study” (pages 15-16),

- America’s Journey Through Slavery
- Africans in America
- African Burial Ground
- Prince Among Slaves
- Roots of Resistance: The Underground Railroad
- Slave Catchers/Slave Resistors
- Slavery and the Making of America
- Whispers of Angels: The Underground Railroad

**Online Discussion Groups**

Create an online discussion group, using Yahoo, Facebook, or Blackboard. Post a given video clip and related discussion question. During the week leading into the lesson, participants view the tape, then answer the discussion question, and then respond to each other’s answers of the discussion question. In the actual class session, the discussion is continued at the appropriate time.

**Assigning Video Clips and Websites**

Once the email addresses of enrollees are obtained, cut and paste the sheet, “Resources for Further Research” within emails and ask participants to explore some of the cites, based on their interests as preparation for sharing their discoveries in the upcoming session.

**Role Play**

As participants are gathering, play spirituals that deal with liberation and freedom. Then open the session with prayer, being sure to mention some of the overall spiritual goals of the study. For examples of spirituals on YouTube, see page 15. However, professional recordings are available online at Amazon.com, Barnes & Noble and other cites.
INTRODUCTION

When William Lloyd Garrison stepped onto the pages of American history in December of 1805, he was heading into a thunderstorm. It was roughly three decades after the nation’s birth but only decades before the relatively new country would split, primarily over the issue of slavery. There were an estimated one million black people in the United States. Of that number, 89.2% were enslaved. By 1831, when Garrison would begin publishing The Liberator, the number of black residents would grow to over two million, but still, 86% would be enslaved. By the time of The Liberator’s launch, three of the most famous of slave revolts had erupted, as the country moved towards the Civil War. Garrison’s work would become a major catalyst that accelerated that movement.

In the 1820’s and 1830’s, Garrison was one of only a few Americans of European ancestry, North or South, who openly supported an immediate end to slavery. Fewer yet were those who openly collaborated with the free African American community to launch a newspaper, to circulate it nationally and to publish anti-slavery articles written by free black people. Moreover, wealthy black business people like James Forten, John Hilton and James Barbadoes supported The Liberator with sizeable donations. He continued to published The Liberator for four decades, until after the close of the Civil War.

BACKGROUND

Garrison was working in a milieu where the practice of dismembering families, and relocating and enslaving entire communities was at least a millennium old. Nearly every continent had been involved. The practices predated the United States by thousands of years. Belief systems that enabled people to engage in such activities without apparent guilt could be traced at least as far back as ancient Greece and Rome. There, slavery was considered a natural byproduct of war and an economic necessity. Heraclitus, for example, had said, “War is the father of all, the king of all. He turns some into slaves and sets others free.” Probably a world without slaves would have been difficult to conceptualize. One rarely found literature or art from this era that did not contain slaves. Even Aristotle had echoed Heraclitus in Politics, where he said that what separated the ruler from the slave was that the ruler could focus with his mind and was therefore naturally a ruler as opposed to an animal, or slave who could comprehend reason but had not “gotten the deliberative part at all.” In Aristotle’s era, the concept of race was not a classification. Later Sophists stated that all men belonged to the same race but some men were slaves with the souls of freemen and vice versa. Finally, Aristotle had argued that the only way that one person could impose slavery on another was that the master was better than the slave in keeping with natural law. Residuals of these classic themes are in the biblical interpretations that Garrison’s opponents used to justify slavery in America.

While described as a “lightening rod” by some, at 26, he might have reminded others, of David before Goliath. In public speeches and from pages of The Liberator, he “took aim” at key pro-slavery arguments such as:

- The Curse of Ham
- The Table of Nations
- The Mark of Cain
- The Ordained Powers
- The Existence of Slavery in the Bible

First, he questioned whether the Bible was infallible, and whether all parts of it had equal authority in 19th Century America. He refused to apply logic based on the “Curse of Ham”, “Table of Nations”, or “Mark of Cain”. He also questioned whether the existence of slavery in the Bible was a license for its use in America of that day. While he did argue that there were very relevant and important passages in the Bible, he said that not all had equal authority. He taunted his opponents with questions like whether adultery in the Bible legitimated it outside of the Bible.

Based on the same logic, Garrison challenged the pro-slavery argument’s use of Romans 13: 1-7 with scriptures that said that Jesus’ kingdom was not of this world. Garrison cautioned that most people clung to human governments that are “fashioned in the spirit of their own disobediences.” He felt that was true of the slavetocracy and of the government that supported it. He warned that such tyrants would be toppled because they denied (Black people) freedom. He criticized the clergy who would not put pressure members of their
churches and their denominations to abolish slavery immediately. For this, he was mobbed several times and barely escaped with his life. Garrison’s “immediatist” views kept him at the center of public attention, particularly in the South, where his publications, along with those of other abolitionists were commonly banned. As the conflict escalated between him and the supporters of slavery, subscriptions to The Liberator also escalated. After the close of The Liberator, Garrison continued in public life, championing for women’s rights and for the passage and implementation of various civil rights legislation until his death on May 24, 1879.

**BIBLICAL PARALLEL**

*Luke 4:14-21*

At the time that Jesus stood reading in the synagogue, an estimated two million out of six million people were enslaved by The Roman Empire. In the City of Rome alone, about 300,000 to 350,000 people were enslaved. That is, in the most populous parts of the Empire, as many as one in three people were slaves. Commonly, wealthy private citizens owned as many as 428 slaves per house, and individual Roman citizens owned anywhere from two to six slaves each.

Mining, agriculture and construction work on the elaborate Roman buildings required mostly male slaves. The life expectancy for slaves was about 20 years of age, compared to the 20-30 year life expectancy for the general population. Because slaves entered at various ages, the time spent in slavery before death could be around ten years. That meant that as many as ½ million new slaves were needed annually.

One of the ugliest chapters in the history of the Roman government is how it got its slaves. Some came from natural reproduction, some came from breeding women, some from debt bondage, and some came from movements of massive populations of conquered communities, but most came from the abandonment and sale of infants.

By the first century CE, child abandonment was a widespread practice. If a family wanted no more than one or two children, the “excess” would be left along the roadsides. Female children were not as valued as male children were because they were not likely to become warriors or to transmit the family property. If such children were not acknowledged by their biological fathers, they were not considered a part of the human family. Aristocrats then paid people to gather such children to be raised as slaves. This practice produced millions of slaves annually.

The Roman patronage systems were also forms of bondage, often fraught with corruption. There was also the fear, for slaves, that they would suddenly be drafted into the military, or forced to die fighting vicious animals in gladiator games. The only escape from the life sentence of slavery would be through manumission, which was not common. Most of these practices were against the social ethics the Mosaic Laws (the Year of the Jubilee, protection of children, and selling people).

When Jesus stood, reading the scroll in the synagogue that day, it is no telling what expressions came across people’s faces when they heard him mention that he had come to free the captives.

**QUESTIONS**

**FOR REVIEW**

- Considering the environment, why might people have been staring at Jesus?
- In the Empire, what seems to have determined the value of given human lives?
- In Antebellum America, what seems to have determined the value of given human lives?
- How do Garrison’s and McCain’s views of the Bible’s authority and slavery differ?
- Compare and contrast Garrison’s position on slavery with those of Heraclitus and McCain?
- What distinguished Garrison from others of anti-slavery sentiments?
- Why did some consider him a “lightning rod?”
- What role did the free African American community play in his life and in the life of “the movement”?

**FOR DISCUSSION**

- Are there any ways that basic premises underlying the proslavery justification for slavery still affect race relations today?
- Is Galatians 3:27-29 relevant today or is it, too, problematic for the 21st century?
- Is there still a need for an abolitionist movement against slavery?

**FOR REFLECTION**

- What biblical passages have had the strongest influence in shaping the way you relate to others?


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ship with Abraham Lincoln, (Boston: Little Brown, 1950).


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Rogers, William, “We are All Together Now” The Prophetic Tradition, Butler E449. R7 1995


Russo, Pasquale, “Negro Slavery or Crime of the Clergy: A Treatise on Chattel and Wage Slavery, Presenting a Brief Historical Discussion of the Negro Problem in America”, (Chicago, IL: Modern School of Pedagogy, 1923).


Genesis 4: Pro-slavery interpreters of this passage raised questions about where Cain got his wife. They say the Mark that was put on Cain was transferred down to black people. They also believed that there was a second cradle of civilization, and that black people came from this alien community where Cain got his wife. They believed descended from Cain and his alien wife, and had natural proclivities toward criminality. See: McCaine, p. 20.

Romans 1:4-1-7 Pro-slavery interpreters of this passage used it to support state’s rights. This made it easy to believe that whatever policies the Southern states instituted were ordained by God.

Supporters of slavery saw the existence of slaves in the Bible as support for their own slaves. People in the Bible who had slaves included: justified their position of slaves on the fact that so many people in the Bible had slaves. These include Abraham (Genesis 14:14), Abimelech (Genesis 20:14), Absalom (Genesis 17:13, 27), Sarah (Genesis 16:1, 12; 6; Galatians 4:22, 24, 26 and Job 1:3; Philémon).

See note # 23.

See note # 24.

Garrison, 226.

Garrison, 221.


Garrison, 118.

Garrison, Selections from Speeches, p. 91.

Garrison, 95; John 18:36 81, p. 95.

Garrison, 95.

Garrison, 116.

Van Deburg, 230.

Chapman, p. 190.

Jacobs, 161.


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Birchett, 159.

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Potter and Mattingly, 226.


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U.S. Historical Census, United States Race and Hispanic Origins, 1790-1990, Table 1.

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The Slave Revolts were those of Touissant Overture (1794), Denmark Vessey (1822) and Nat Turner (1831).

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65 Politics, 1:13, 17.


67 Euripides, Ion, 854-856 fragment 831, Politics, 1:5, 10.

68 Politics, 1:5, 10.

69 1 Samuel 17:31-49.

70 Genesis 9:18-27; Haynes, Stephen R., *The Biblical Justification of American Slavery*, (Oxford: Oxford Scholarly Press Online, November, 2003). http://www.google.com/ The pro-slavery interpretation of this verse is that, because Noah cursed Canaan, all of Ham’s descendants would be cursed. Africans were interpreted as being descendants of Ham (based on the Table of Nations), so they were cursed and required to be slaves of people of European descent. Because Semites were considered Jewish, and because Jews had not accepted Jesus as the Messiah, then Europeans were now “the chosen”, and therefore inherited Africans as slaves. This is called “supersessionism”. (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Supersessionism) (See: Alexander McCaine, “Slavery Defended from Scripture Against Attacks of the Abolitionists: in a speech delivered before the General Conference of the Methodist Protestant Church in Baltimore, 1842), p. 20.

71 Genesis 10:1-11:10. Pro-slavery interpreters of this passage said that the differentiation and dispersion of the races provides justification separation of the races, and for outlawing interracial marriage. Considered alongside “Curse of Ham” theology (see note #23), and alongside residuals of classical concepts of slavery (see the sidebars), this passage justified sending freed Africans back to Africa.

72 Genesis 4: Pro-slavery interpreters of this passage raised questions about where Cain got his wife. They say the Mark that was put on Cain was transferred down to black people. They also believed that there was a second cradle of civilization, and that black people came from this alien community where Cain got his wife. They believed descended from Cain and his alien wife, and had natural proclivities toward criminality. See: McCaine, p. 20.

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75 See note # 23.

76 See note # 24.

77 Garrison, 226.

78 Garrison, 221.


80 Garrison, 95; John 18:36 81, p. 95.

81 Garrison, 95.

82 Garrison, 116.

83 Van Deburg, 230.

84 Chapman, p. 190.

85 Jacobs, 161.


87 Madden, 111.

88 Madden, 111.

89 Madden, 109.