

## Slavery in Ancient Roman Culture

“It is right that Greeks should rule barbarians,  
implying that barbarian and slave are the same in nature.”

- Aristotle, *Politics*, 1.1252b.1, quoting Euripides *Iphigenia in Aulis*, IA 1400 -

It is tempting to see Roman slavery in the same light as we see the *chattel slavery* of our American history. This is a false analogy. Romans did not enslave people because of their ethnicity or skin color, nor did they fully “own” the body of their slaves. Rather, masters owned their servants’ *labors*—their production capacity. The government strictly regulated slavery as an economic necessity.

Slavery was preferred to poverty. The lowest class of Roman society were those who could not provide for their family, so there were many who *chose* to be slaves for a period of time. Slavery was also not a permanent situation and there were quite involved laws about how a slave could be freed. In general, a slave was better protected by the law than a poor person, because his master would adjudicate legal matters for him.

Freed slaves (only men) could even receive a form of Roman citizenship called *iunian Latini*, which provided many legal rights. While the freed slave was his own man, but many chose to enter into *adrogation*, a way of surrendering your new, free identity and instead becoming the son and heir of your former master. He was literally “a new man.”

The laws concerning a slave who stole from his master were varied and convoluted. Usually, if a slave stole from his master and then fled, it was his *escape* that was punished. The master was looked down upon for having engaged a slave of such poor quality as to steal, and he would have lost *dignitas* in the eyes of others of his class. In a couple legal cases, a slave might even be applauded for the “theft” since he was simply choosing to manage his master’s resources better than the master would have.

## Financial Summary

<b>2023 Budget</b>	\$224,885	<b>Budget to Date</b>	\$103,800
<b>Weekly Budget</b>	\$4,325	<b>Giving to Date</b>	\$107,496

Thank you again to all for your generous stewardship. You can give via the offering box in the back of the sanctuary, via mail, or online at [bedfordroad.org/giving](http://bedfordroad.org/giving).

June 18, 2023

**BEDFORD ROAD  
BAPTIST CHURCH**

Welcome

Creating environments where people  
encounter Jesus and journey together

