

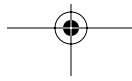
## Foreword

What do slaves, women and homosexuals have in common? Most would say their humanity—and not much else. But think about the question again. Here are three groups that in one way or another, at one time or another, have been regarded as less than human. In addition, each of these groups has been at the center of theological reflection and debate in the last two centuries.

Many regard these three groups as hermeneutically equal. What we have learned about interpreting slavery texts in Scripture should be applied to our reading of biblical texts about women and homosexuals. But how do we do this? How does one approach the discussion of each group both biblically and culturally? Is the theological hermeneutics surrounding each group really the same?

*Slaves, Women & Homosexuals* successfully walks the reader through these hermeneutical mazes. 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 relevant scriptural texts. Such an approach may enable us to think through the application of Scripture on an even broader array of topics.

This book comes with many strengths. Its case study format helps readers appreciate all the dimensions of each discussion. Juxtaposing the three topics allows one to see their similarities and differences. What I like most about this work is its balance and fairness, its truly irenic treatment of these historically contentious areas of debate. *Slaves, Women & Homosexuals* not only advances the discussion 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. At the very least it lays the groundwork for a much healthier dialogue on these matters.





If, however, you want simply to have your views confirmed, then do not read this book. It is designed to make you consider why you apply Scripture the way that you do—no matter what position you take. Its thoroughness is one of its major strengths, as is its proposed solution. This is serious fare for those willing to examine their beliefs, both theological and cultural, in these controversial areas.

This is precisely how the book should be read and assessed: Does this book help me think through these debated areas more clearly? I think you will conclude with me that it does. I wholeheartedly commend the book to you on that basis and thank Dr. Webb for writing it.

Read *Slaves, Women & Homosexuals*. Chew over its examples. Discuss them with your friends. Here is a full-course hermeneutical meal.

Darrell L. Bock  
Research Professor of New Testament Studies  
Dallas Theological Seminary

