

RELIGIOUS TEXTS USED TO JUSTIFY OPPRESSION: AN ASSIGNMENT

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Throughout the ages, individuals and groups have used a number of religious texts from three monotheistic religions (Judaism, Christianity, and Islam) to justify and rationalize the marginalization, harassment, denial of rights, persecution, and oppression of entire groups of people based on their social identities.

At various historical periods, people have applied these texts, sometimes taken in tandem, and at other times used selectively, to establish and maintain hierarchical positions of power, domination, and privilege over individuals and groups targeted by these texts. This assignment will include three major sections:

SECTION I: SLAVERY AND LGBT PERSECUTION

You will investigate religious texts and interpretations of these texts that have been employed to justify:

1. The institution of slavery in the United States,
2. The persecution and denial of rights of lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender people in the United States.

Include some of the texts you have found and the ways they have been used to justify points #1 and #2 above.

SECTION II: INTERRACIAL MARRIAGE AND SAME-SEX MARRIAGE

Compare and contrast the controversy between interracial sexuality and marriage, culminating in the Supreme Court decision, of 1967, and the current controversy around same-sex marriage.

In your analysis, detail the major arguments used to deny marriage to these groups. In this analysis, include a comparison and contrasting of the religious arguments applied by opponents of interracial marriage as well as same-sex marriage.

SECTION III: CRITICAL ANALYSIS

Critically analyze the statement in the first paragraph of this assignment that religious texts have been used throughout history and more recently to justify and rationalize persecution.

1. Do you believe this to be true, false, true in some situations while inappropriate in others, etc.? *Fully* justify your response.
2. Do you believe the connections between religious texts used to justify slavery and restrictions between interracial couples and limitations on people with same-sex desires and same-sex couples to be appropriate, inappropriate, somewhere in between, etc. *Fully* justify your response.