

John Newton and William Wilberforce

Historical Theology

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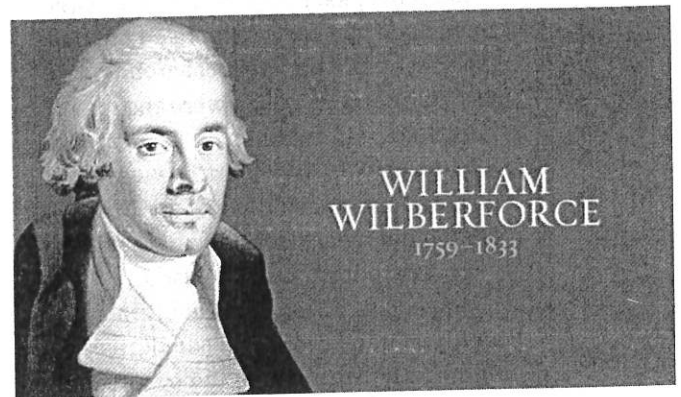
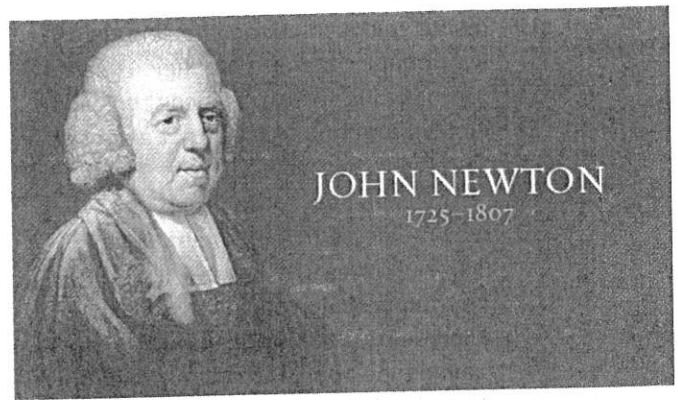
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- A. Early Life
1. Born in London
 2. Mother was godly; he was raised to know the Bible
 3. Father was the captain of ship in the merchant marine
 4. Mother died when he was seven
 5. Went to school and lived with relatives but did poorly
 6. At the age of eleven, he joined his father on the ship
 7. His father retired when John was eighteen
- B. Very difficult twenties
1. 1743: Impressed into the British Navy
 2. Often disobeyed orders
 3. Flogged to the point of death
 4. Was suicidal but cling to thoughts of Mary (Polly) Catlett made him hang on to life
 5. Navy gave him over to the slave trading ship – the Pegasus
 6. They took captives from West Africa to the Caribbean
 7. Newton was such a problem sailor that the captain of the Pegasus gave him over to a white slave trader in West Africa
 8. Newton became a slave of the slave trader's wife
 9. He was freed by the captain of another ship who was sent by Newton's father to find him.
- C. His Conversion
1. Newton was returning to England on the Greyhound when the ship was hit by a gigantic storm.
 2. Everyone on board feared for their lives.
 3. Newton remembering the teaching of his mother, repented and prayed for forgiveness.
 4. **'I stood in need of an Almighty Saviour, and such a one I found described in the New Testament. The Lord had wrought a marvellous thing.'**
 5. He would look upon this for the rest of his life as the time he trusted Christ for salvation (celebrated the day annually)
 6. The Greyhound barely was able to make it to land, finally reaching Ireland,
- Newton immediately went to the nearest church and dedicated his life to God
7. When he reached England, he soon married Mary (Polly) Catlett (1750)
- D. Strangely enough
1. Newton's skill was the sea, so he became first mate on a slave ship
 2. Eventually, he was made the captain
 3. He made 3 voyages as captain of a slave trading ship
 4. He did not like the conditions, but more out of how nasty things were than the morality of enslaving humans.
 5. Bad conditions and situations included a mutinous crew and twenty slaves getting out of their chains.
 6. He tried to make things better than most by not packing the ship so tightly, better diets, and cleaning the hold.
 7. His first trip they lost 28 out of 174
 8. Second trip, six died (also six crew members)
 9. Third trip, no deaths of the captives.
 10. When preparing for a fourth voyage, Newton fell to the ground with either a seizure or a stroke.
 11. That ended his career on the seas
 12. He took a job as a tax officer with the Britain Customs office.
 13. During these nine years, he studied the scriptures, Greek and Hebrew on his own.
- E. Preaching
1. Newton believed he was being called into the ministry
 2. The Church of England was not interested in Newton, because he lacked a formal education.
 3. The Church also balked at appointing Newton because of his disagreements with some of the aspects of the Anglican Prayer Book.
 4. When Lord Dartmouth (an evangelical nobleman) heard Newton give his testimony things changed.
 5. His first church was in the town of Olney
 6. In 1780, Newton was given a church in London to minister (it made him only the second evangelical minister in the city)

7. The church grew under his leadership preaching, and teaching
 8. Newton also mentored a young man: William Wilberforce (1785)
 9. In 1787, Newton helped found the Anti-Slavery Society
 10. In 1788, he began to publicly speak against the slave trade
 11. Published *Thoughts upon the Slave Trade*, he grieved over his past role in sending people to a lifetime of slavery
 12. The booklet described the horrors of the trans-Atlantic slave trade and he sent a copy to every member of Parliament.
 13. In 1807, Parliament abolished slave trading. Newton died nine months later.
- F. Hymn writing
1. Newton liked to write poems as conclusions for his sermons.
 2. Amazing Grace is one of those poems
 3. Many hymns were written in those days without set music or tune to go with it
 4. William Cowper (pronounced Cooper) moved to Newton's town of Olney in 1764 and the two worked on several hymns together.
 5. They produced the *Olney Hymns*- 348 hymns
 6. (William Cowper was extremely frail and battled depression. *)
- G. Other work by Newton
1. In 1780, he published a collection of letters on spiritual counsel, *Utterance of the Heart*
 2. He was also known for his wit. He once recalled his trip to Warwick, England to preach: "I was somewhat fearful about going there, but then I comforted myself on God's word to Paul in Corinth, 'Do not be afraid, but speak, and do not hold your peace, for I have much people in this city.' But the results of that day were disappointing. It was then that I realized- I was not Paul, and Warwick was not Corinth!"
- H. Newton Quotes
1. The more vile we are in our own eyes—the more precious Christ will be to us!
 2. How unspeakably wonderful is it, to know that all our concerns are held in hands that bled for us!
 3. Our sea may sometimes be stormy—but we have an infallible Pilot, and shall infallibly gain our port.
4. Our work is great—our time is short—and the consequences of our labors are infinite.
 5. My grand point in preaching, is to break the *hard* heart—and to heal the *broken* heart.
 6. I have reason to praise Him for my trials—for most probably, I would have been ruined without them!
 7. The *storms* are guided by the hands which were nailed to the cross.
 8. We are never more safe, than when we are most sensible that we can do nothing without Christ.
- II. William Wilberforce
- A. Early Life
1. Born August 24, 1759 in Yorkshire, England
 2. From a wealthy family
 3. His father died when William was eight and his sister died shortly after that.
 4. Then, soon after the death of the sister, William's mother became very ill and was slow in recovering.
 5. Therefore, for two years William went to live with his uncle and aunt, William and Hannah Wilberforce.
 6. His uncle and aunt were committed evangelical Christians who also happened to be good friends with John and Polly Newton
 7. When William's mother was strong enough to raise her son, she was horrified that he had been adopting some of the religious convictions of his relatives and their friends
 8. William's mother was successful in stamping out these "extreme and unhealthy" views on life. She wanted him to enjoy the major diversions of life such as card parties, balls and the theatre.
 9. Studied at John's College and University of Cambridge
 10. In school, he became a good friend of William Pitt (Went on to become the Prime Minister of England, Pittsburgh, PA gets its name from him)
 11. In college and his youthful days afterward, he was a "party boy"
 12. He was witty, charming, and was a great conversationalist.

13. People enjoyed hearing him sing, so he was popular at these prestigious parties
 14. He was much about enjoying the good life without noticing that not everyone was having a great life.
- B. Professional life, but more of the same
1. He was elected to Parliament even before he was 21 years old
 2. His number one goal in life was not representing the people of Hull, but gaining the approval of other members.
 3. He gained a reputation for being an eloquent speaker and a strong debater
 4. He joined five clubs comprised of young men that also had political ambitions. Drinking and gambling were the main past-times at the clubs.
 5. By the age of 24, Wilberforce was elected to represent Yorkshire County in Parliament which was one of the most important positions in England.
 6. The year was 1784, and Wilberforce, with his good friend, William Pitt as Prime Minister, seemed to be destined for power and "good times".
- C. Trip to the continent
1. In 1785, he took a coach tour of the continent of Europe
 2. His traveling mate was Isaac Milner
 3. Milner had been a friend of Wilberforce for several years
 4. Milner was 1774 Cambridge "Senior Wrangler"
 5. Milner was well respected in the power circles and the academic world in spite of being an outspoken evangelical
 6. Milner shared the Gospel and his Biblical world-view
 7. Shortly after returning from Europe, Wilberforce secretly visited John Newton
 8. William Wilberforce was never the same
- D. The Change Was Evident
1. Instead of being irritable with family members, he was kind
 2. Instead of using biting sarcasm on his political opponents, he was patient and understanding
 3. He quit the five clubs that had been a bad influence and he gave up all types of gambling.
 4. Instead of skipping many of the meetings of Parliament, he made it a point to be at every debate and served on many committees.
 5. He tried to make up for not applying himself in college by using his free time to study history, grammar, mathematics, and foreign language.
- E. Wilberforce and his great campaign
6. He sought to use politics to serve God and his fellow man.
 1. Wilberforce was thinking of giving up politics, but Newton challenged him to stay in politics saying that God could use him greatly in Parliament
 2. William Pitt, also, encouraged Wilberforce to stay in Parliament saying, "Surely the principles as well as the practice of Christianity lead not to just meditation, but to action."
 3. In short order, evangelicals who were abolitionists went to him to convince him to pick up their ant-slavery cause.
 4. His first proposal to end the slave trade was shot down. Too many members of Parliament were getting wealthy on the slave trade.
 5. The French Revolution stopped his efforts
 6. Year after year, Wilberforce put forth his bill to end the slave trade, only to lose by big margins or sometimes by only a few votes.
 7. Attitudes began to change when John Newton and others who had first-hand experience with the slave trade became involved.
 8. It took 18 years, but in 1807, his bill to end the Britain's involvement in the slave trade was a success
 9. Besides Wilberforce's work on ending slavery he
 - a. Helped organize the Society for the Suppression of Vice
 - b. Assisted Hannah More in providing regular education, personal hygiene and Bible with the Association for the Better Observance of Sunday
 - c. Worked with the Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals
 - d. Encouraged missionaries to go to India
 10. In 1833, just a month after Wilberforce's death, Britain abolished slavery in all of the British Empire.
- F. Wilberforce Quotes
1. "You may choose to look the other way but you can never say again that you did not know."

2. "We are too young to realize that certain things are impossible... So we will do them anyway."
3. "true Christians consider themselves not as satisfying some rigorous creditor, but as discharging a debt of gratitude"
4. "It makes no sense to take the name of Christian and not cling to Christ. Jesus is not some magic charm to wear like a piece of jewelry we think will give us good luck. He is the Lord. His name is to be written on our hearts in such a powerful way that it creates within us a profound experience of His peace and a heart that is filled with His praise."



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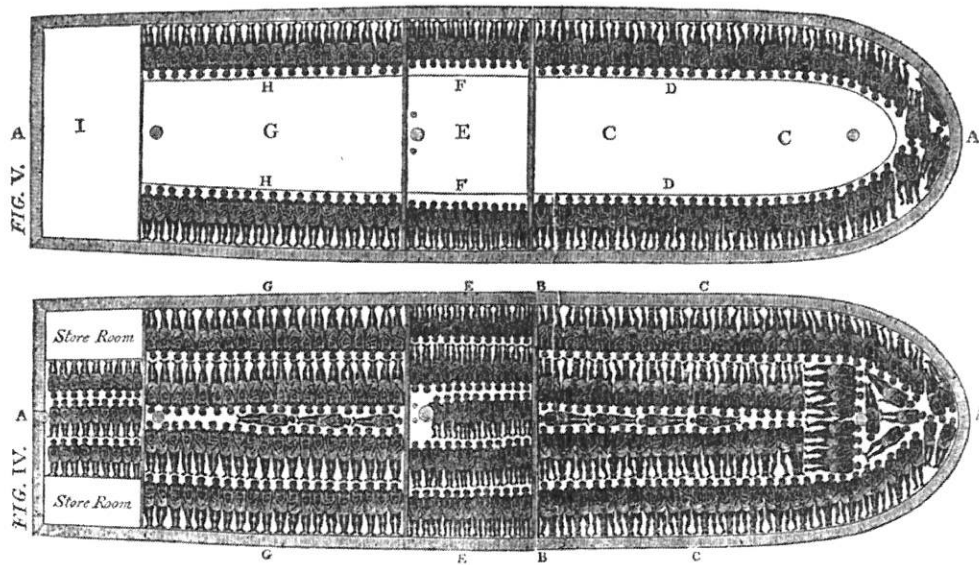
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1. What group was responsible for the images of the slave ship?
2. What group was responsible for the image of the slave?
3. Which country was the first to abolish slavery?
4. What group provided the leadership for slave abolition in that country?
5. True or False. God can transform a foul-mouthed sailor into an eloquent preacher.
6. True or False. God can transform a young man whose main interests are fun and fame into a person dedicated to helping the most helpless.
7. Which hymn has been recorded the most times and is estimated to be performed at least 10 million times each year?
8. What is the name of the award given by the Colson Center for Christian Worldview for "A current hero living out his or her Christian faith with bold and thoughtful action"

