

ANTI-SLAVERY PARALLEL

The Spanish Dominican priest ***Bartolomé de las Casas***, while not well known today, was one of the most influential Catholics of the 16th Century.

Above all, he was an opponent of Indian slavery in the New World. He spent his early years as a soldier and slave owner in Hispaniola and Cuba. While there, he witnessed atrocities against peaceful Indians, including women and children. Years later, as a priest and Dominican friar, Father Las Casas became a courageous opponent of the slavery system in the Spanish Empire. He wrote many letters and essays in which he condemned this system as barbaric and un-Christian.

These writings had an impact. Father Las Casas convinced Pope Paul III to issue the Bull ***Sublimis Deus*** (1537). This bull declared that "the Indians were human beings and they were not to be robbed of their freedom or possessions."

Father Las Casas also convinced Emperor Charles V to issue the ***New Laws*** (1542). These laws forbade the slavery of Indians in all Spanish colonies. Unfortunately, these laws were largely ignored.

Finally, Father Las Casas participated in the ***Valladolid Debate*** (1550–1551). This was the most important public dispute of the 16th Century. In the debate, Father Las Casas argued for the total abolition of slavery in the New World. His opponent -- another Dominican -- defended the slave system.

So who parallels Father Las Casas in the Old Covenant?

In my opinion, that would be the Prophet Jeremiah. In Chapter 34 ([HERE](#) or [HERE](#)), God spoke to him. In verses 8-9, God ordered the wealthy Jews to immediately release all their servants, and to do so permanently. Jeremiah warned the wealthy to obey.

Therefore, in my opinion, there is a historic parallel between the Prophet Jeremiah and the Spanish priest Bartolomé de las Casas.

To learn more about Father Las Casas and the Valladolid Debate, read these articles: [HERE](#) and [HERE](#).

Right: Bartolomé de las Casas -- Protector of the Indians.

