Abstract: Patent law has been widely accused of allowing property rights—intellectual property rights—in human beings, thus contributing to a sort of “patent servitude”. Human beings, and the bodies and minds they possess, have long been accorded special protections under the law, such as the Thirteenth Amendment of the United States Constitution, which prohibits human beings from being property. Patents claiming human genes, human embryonic stem cells, human mental processes, and products of human in vivo conversion all potentially confer to patent owners legal rights tantamount to property interests in aspects of human beings, and patent offices in the United States, Europe, and elsewhere have granted patents claiming such inventions. Rather than clear statutory prohibitions against the patenting of human beings, human parts, and human processes, the law surrounding patents involving human beings tends to consist of piecemeal collections of statutory safe harbors, Congressional riders, funding prohibitions, judicial opinions, administrative law decisions, patent office policies, and statements by political leaders. The failure of patent law consistently to exclude human beings from patentability would have unsettling implications not simply for human dignity in the abstract, but also for practical human liberties that the laws, including the Thirteenth Amendment, are meant to protect. This Article reviews how patent law has reacted to patents claiming human genes, human embryonic stem cells, human thought, and human in vivo conversion, and suggests that, despite fears to the contrary, patent law may already largely avoid “patent servitude” by robustly limiting patents involving human beings, thereby limiting property rights in human beings.