

Clarity and Compassion: God's Word, Same Sex Marriage, and People You Love, 4
The Shellfish Argument: Don't Christians Inconsistently Pick and Choose From the Bible?

Sunday Evening Bible Study
October 11, 2015

The Argument Stated (In Reference to Leviticus 18:22 and 20:13)

“In practice, we modern-day Christians have regarded most of the injunctions in the Holiness Codes of Leviticus and Deuteronomy as culturally bound to the ancient times of the Hebrews—but not binding on us. These same purity codes forbid eating shellfish. . . . We cannot, then, isolate these passages about homosexual acts and impute to them the kind of enduring authority that we ascribe to nothing before or after them. . . . [I]t is no longer appropriate for us to condemn men who have intimate sexual relationships with other men based on this proscription in the Leviticus Holiness Code. Either all of these proscriptions must be eliminated as binding on us, or all of them must be adhered to. Biblical literalists cannot have it both ways, picking and choosing which proscriptions will still be enforced as eternally binding and which may be casually tossed aside or explained away.” (Gene Robinson)

Our Response

1. Gay theologians do in fact believe that many of the proscriptions in Leviticus are binding (Lev.19:11f).
2. Both sides practice “picking and choosing which proscriptions will still be enforced.”
3. The guiding principle for gay theologians is to pick and choose the proscriptions that support their subjective notions of love and justice.
4. This subjective approach allows marriage to be redefined as the right of anyone to marry anyone they think they love (polygamy, incest, etc.). In the words of Brad Pitt, "I've said that we would not be getting married until everyone in this country has the right to get married."
5. However, our guiding principle is the objective standard of Scripture. The Reformers championed *sola scriptura*, and the hermeneutical principle that “Sacred scripture is its own interpreter.” Therefore, we trust the Bible itself to do the picking and choosing for us.
6. Jesus and the apostles place these Old Testament laws in three different categories.
 - 6.1 Civil Law: Necessary for running the only legitimate theocracy in history with mercy and justice. Spiritual leaders have the power of the sword. Coming of Jesus renders the theocracy obsolete, church and state are separated. **Repealed** in Jn. 18:36; Ro. 13:4, etc.
 - 6.2 Ceremonial Law: Laws concerning ceremonies and rituals for the nation of Israel. The purpose of these laws concerning diets, dress, and days was to prepare God's people for the first coming of Christ. With his coming, he fulfilled these laws and rendered them obsolete. Galatians, Colossians, and Hebrews are written largely to show why these laws are no longer binding. **Repealed** in Mat. 5:17; Mk. 7:19; Col. 2:16-18; 1 Tim. 4:3,4; Heb. 10:1, etc.
 - 6.3 Moral Law: The God-given, timeless, absolute standard of right and wrong, binding for every person in every generation and every culture. For example, murder is forbidden before law of Moses (Gen. 4:8ff; Gen. 9:6), when the Law of Moses was given, and after the law of Moses was fulfilled (**Repeated** in Luke 18:20; Ro. 13:8,9; James 2:11, etc.).
7. These categories (moral, civil, ceremonial) have not been conveniently developed recently:
 - 7.1 “We must bear in mind the common division of the whole law of God published by Moses into moral, ceremonial, and judicial (civil) laws. And we must consider each of these parts, that we may understand what there is in them that pertains to us and what does not.” (John Calvin, 1536)
 - 7.2 “Beside this law, commonly called **moral**, God was pleased to give to the people of Israel, as a church under age, **ceremonial** laws, containing several typical ordinances, partly of worship, prefiguring Christ, . . . ceremonial laws are now abrogated under the New Testament. . . . To them also, as a body politic, he gave sundry **judicial** laws, which expired together with the state of that people, . . . the moral law does forever bind all.” (Westminster Confession, 1647)
8. The question: Do Jesus and the apostles repeat the Leviticus proscriptions on homosexual acts as the moral law? See Mt. 19:3-9; Romans 1:26,27; 1 Cor. 6:9; 1 Tim. 1:8-11; Jude 7.
9. Conclusion: We are not free to pick and choose which laws of the Old Testament we are to obey. We are bound to submit only to the laws that Jesus and the apostles pick and choose for us.

Clarity and Compassion: God's Word, Same Sex Marriage, and People You Love, 5
The Polygamy Argument: Doesn't The Bible Contradict The 'Traditional' Definition of Marriage?
Sunday Evening Bible Study
October 11, 2015

The Argument Stated

1. "One man and one woman, united in marriage for life, mutually exclusive and 'faithful' sexually, and joined because of their love for each other, is a relatively modern notion of marriage. Such was not the case in ancient times. From the earliest Old Testament accounts, polygamy seemed to be the practice of the day... In the ancient Hebrew culture having more than one wife was commonplace." (Gene Robinson, 113).
2. "Most Christians believe God will only accept an Adam and Eve style marriage yet scripture challenges and contradicts that viewpoint... A polygamous marriage is not an Adam and Eve style marriage relationship yet God accepted, affirmed and blessed polygamous marriages in scripture. Strangely enough, modern Christians reject polygamy, a Biblical form of marriage, on the basis that in our modern world, polygamy is illegal and is not affirmed by modern culture. Polygamous marriage provides strong proof that God does not affirm the complementarian view of Adam and Eve." (<http://www.gaychristian101.com/Marriage-in-the-Bible.html>)

Our Response

1. It is true that several Old Testament figures were polygamists.
 - 1.2 The first polygamist: Lamech's trusted in intimidation and revenge (Gen. 4:19).
 - 1.3 The biggest polygamist: Solomon's trusted in wealth and status (1 Kings 11:3-4).
 - 1.4 The last (?) polygamist: Joash trusted in human schemes and wisdom (2 Chr. 24:3).
2. These things are also true about polygamy in the Bible.
 - 2.1 The Bible never commands polygamy.
 - 2.2 The Bible never commends polygamy.
 - 2.3 The Bible temporarily permits it as a cultural reality (1 Sam. 25:32ff).
 - 2.4 The Bible regulates it to protect the weak (Ex. 21:10).
 - 2.5 The Bible offers no positive example of polygamy in which women thrive (Gen. 29:17ff).
 - 2.6 The Bible reports the dysfunction, abuse, injustice, exploitation, and dehumanization of women linked to polygamy (2 Chron. 11:21; 13:21; Gen. 16:29-31; 1 Sam. 1; 1 Kings 11; Dt. 17:17)
 - 2.7 Jesus and the apostles reaffirm the definition of marriage that excludes polygamy (Mt. 19; Col. 3:19; 1 Peter 3:7).
 - 2.8 Jesus is monogamous (Eph. 5:25; Rev. 21:9).
 - 2.9 The New Testament clearly condemns polygamy (1 Tim. 3:2).
3. Conclusion: The precepts and principles of the Bible *necessarily* lead to the abolishment of polygamy in any culture where Christianity spreads. The Bible's dramatic and forthright reporting of polygamy and its dismal consequences is a strong warning to those who redefine marriage.