

WWJD ABOUT LGBT?: EVALUATING LGBT CLAIMS IN LIGHT OF CHRIST’S TEACHING

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Given what He taught about the Old Testament, about sexuality and marriage, about the New Testament, and about love, it is clear that Jesus stands united with the Scriptures in condemning homosexuality as sinful. Yet He also stands united with the Scriptures in freely offering forgiveness to any who would confess the guilt of his sins, turn from them, and put his trust in Christ alone for righteousness.

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Introduction

As the church of Jesus Christ continues to engage the pro-homosexualist¹ agenda of Western culture, it is increasingly important to look to the teachings of Christ Himself concerning sexuality and marriage. This is not because we ought to be so-called “Red Letter Christians;” contrary to suppositions of an uninformed “cultural Christianity,” the words Jesus Himself spoke—i.e., those appearing in red type in our Bibles—are not any more inspired or authoritative than the rest of Scripture. Instead, it is important to examine Jesus’ teachings precisely because advocates of homosexuality appeal to His supposed silence on the matter in order to build a case for their own position. For the most part, those who argue that homosexuality may be reconciled with Christianity, if they are honest with themselves, realize that they simply cannot make a biblical case for their position. The prohibitions of homosexuality in Leviticus 18 and 20, as well as in Romans 1, 1 Corinthians 6, and in 1 Timothy 1, are unmistakable.

¹ By “homosexualist” and “homosexuality” (and so throughout the article), I am referring not just to homosexuals or homosexuality, but to the moral, political, and in many cases theological ideologies of those who believe that homosexuality is a morally acceptable lifestyle to be embraced and celebrated, and regard biblical morality and the traditional view of marriage as discriminatory, oppressive, and deserving to be eradicated from the public square.

Therefore, attempts are made to sever the Old and New Testament Scriptures from Jesus Himself. The Levitical prohibitions of homosexuality are derided as the primitive and outdated prescriptions of an unenlightened people, and therefore irrelevant to morality and ethics in the twenty-first century. The apostle Paul is accused of having corrupted the way of life and the ideology of Jesus, and is slandered as an intolerant, homophobic, xenophobic bigot—so unlike the Jesus who welcomed the marginalized and the outcast, who challenged the religious establishment, and who championed tolerance and love as the highest of virtues. The prevailing sentiment seems to be that conservative Christians have much to say about the Levitical holiness code, the Mosaic legislation, and the letters of the apostle Paul, but that we are misguided and misdirected. Instead, our “progressive” and “affirming” counterparts tell us, we ought to follow Jesus. After all, it is Jesus Himself who is the founder of our religion, not Moses or Paul. And Jesus, the argument goes, in His entire three years of ministry, was silent on the matter of homosexuality. In a culture in which much discourse plays out in social media, one often sees memes and comics in which a young person holds a sign that reads: “As Jesus said about gay people, ‘_____.’” And conservatives are chided, “If Jesus wanted His followers to make as big of a deal about homosexuality as you want to make of it, surely He would have said something about it!” The implication is that Jesus’ teaching is at odds with the antiquated and primitive moral code of the Old Testament, as well as with the oppressive, patriarchal, heteronormative misogyny of the apostle Paul, and that if there is ever a dispute between Jesus and Scripture, Jesus should always win out.

But *is* there such a contradiction between the Law of Moses and the apostle Paul, on the one hand, and Jesus, on the other? Is it true that Jesus’ supposed silence on the matter of homosexuality should be interpreted as a break from the Old Testament teaching and as support for the LGBT agenda? Is it even true that Jesus did not address homosexuality in His life and ministry? Ultimately, the answer to each of those questions is no. The aim of this article is to substantiate that “No” by offering several biblical responses to these popular arguments, and thereby demonstrate that homosexualism finds no support from the teachings of Jesus, but only the same univocal and unequivocal condemnation as the rest of the Scriptures.

Three Brief Responses

Before addressing the teaching of Jesus which bears upon the homosexualist agenda, it is necessary to respond briefly to the argument that “Jesus never addressed homosexuality, and therefore Christians ought to find it permissible.”

Special Pleading

In the first place, such an argument is an instance of the logical fallacy special pleading. Special pleading may be defined as “applying standards, principles, and/or rules to other people or circumstances, while making oneself or certain circumstances exempt from the same critical criteria, without providing adequate justification.”²

² “Logically Fallacious: Special Pleading,” <https://www.logicallyfallacious.com/tools/lp/Bo/LogicalFallacies/163/Special-Pleading> (accessed November 2017).

This argument is thus rightly characterized as special pleading because the very objection rests upon a premise that the objectors explicitly reject—namely, that the Bible is the authoritative revelation of God's mind to man. That is to say, the only source of knowledge for the claim that Jesus never said something about any particular topic is the Bible itself. The argument is, "Jesus never said anything, that is, as we see recorded in the Bible, concerning homosexuality." Yet it is the authority of this very Bible that is denied when such objectors refuse to accept as authoritative the Levitical or Pauline teaching concerning homosexuality. They want to stand on the authority and accuracy of Scripture when they insist that Jesus was silent on the matter, and yet dismiss as irrelevant and non-binding the Bible's other explicit condemnations of homosexuality.

To use a contemporary example, in the context of the current global refugee crisis, many political "progressives" are citing Scripture in an attempt to accuse political conservatives of hypocrisy. A quick Google search yields articles by the Huffington Post,³ Slate,⁴ and the tragically misnamed Relevant Magazine,⁵ all appealing to Leviticus 19:34, which says, "The stranger who resides with you shall be to you as the native among you, and you shall love him as yourself, for you were aliens in the land of Egypt." And yet it was not long ago that these same outlets were hurling derisive epithets at Christians for appealing to Leviticus 18 and 20—i.e., the chapters immediately preceding and following Leviticus 19—concerning their explicit condemnation of homosexuality. It seems that if you cite Leviticus as evidence that homosexuality is forbidden by God, you will be scolded for appropriating your morality from an irrelevant text produced by Bronze-age farmers. But if you cite Leviticus in favor of the privileged progressive talking point of the week, you will be celebrated for your magnanimity and compassion.

Such only illustrates the claim made above: aiming to twist Jesus' supposed silence on homosexuality into support for it is a case of special pleading. It is a case of the enemies of God attempting to manipulate God's Word when it suits them—to *use* the holy Word of God, which sanctifies His people (cf. John 17:17), in order to make provision for their flesh in regard to its lusts (cf. Rom. 13:14). Those making such arguments ought to consider that God is not mocked by the machinations of inventors of evil, that He is omniscient and just, and that there is a day of coming reckoning that ought to terrify those who would use His Word as a plaything (Gal. 6:7). It is as if God Himself speaks to them in Psalm 50, as Asaph records: "But to the wicked God says, 'What right have you to tell of My statutes and to take My covenant in your mouth? For you hate discipline, and you cast My words behind you'" (Ps. 50:16–17). The enemies of God despise His Word; they reject His law as

³ Raymond Chang, "The Immigration Ban And The Refugee Crisis: A 'Bible Issue' Or Not?" http://www.huffingtonpost.com/entry/the-immigration-ban-and-the-refugee-crisis-a-bible_us_588ec859e4b0de286b25750e (accessed November 2017).

⁴ Benjamin Perry, "Because the Bible Tells Us So," http://www.slate.com/articles/news_and_politics/politics/2015/11/the_republican_party_s_immigration_and_refugee_positions_defy_the_bible.html (accessed November 2017).

⁵ Jesse Carey, "What the Bible Says About How to Treat Refugees," <http://archives.relevantmagazine.com/god/what-bible-says-about-how-treat-refugees> (accessed November 2017).

the rule of their lives. God's response is, effectively, to sharply rebuke them: "Don't you dare take My holy Word upon your unclean lips!" He goes on to say, "You thought that I was just like you; I will reprove you and state the case in order before your eyes" (Ps. 50:21). This is the language of judgment in a courtroom. It will be a fearful thing for those who *use* the Word of God to contemptuously condemn others, as in the Day of Judgment that very Word which they have cast behind them and failed to obey is revealed to be the standard of their own condemnation. God will not be mocked. Those who attempt to use His Word as a toy in a game of logical volleyball will soon find themselves at the bar of the courtroom of God under the judgment of that very Word.

Argument from Silence

Secondly, in addition to special pleading, attempting to marshal Jesus' supposed silence as support for homosexuality is also an argument from silence. This second logical fallacy demonstrates just how rationally unstable of a foundation on which this argument rests, and is illustrated nicely by a recent article from a well-known Christian satire website, entitled, "Jesus Never Said *Anything* about Felony Home Invasion:"

Want to know what I'm incredibly tired of? Christians speaking out against felony home invasion. I'll never understand why self-described 'followers of Christ' feel so comfortable rallying around a topic that *Jesus never even mentioned*. . . . Please, show me the verse where Jesus says, 'Do not forcefully enter the house of another with the intent to commit a felony, larceny, or assault once inside.' . . . Jesus said a lot of things, but He obviously saw felony home invasion as a non-issue. But that certainly doesn't stop millions and millions of hypocritical Christians from cutting-and-pasting other things He said in order to form a haphazard theology, based on their own personal prejudices and fears, that discriminates against career home invaders and seeks to deprive them of rights essential to their being.⁶

Satire is often a very effective means of communication, especially in our day.

The point, however, is well-made. One searches the Gospels in vain for a single instance in which Jesus used the words "idol," "idols," "idolatry," or "idolatrous." Should we therefore conclude that Jesus is walking back the severity of the Old Testament's condemnation of idolatry? Should we conclude that He is modeling a more broad-minded, inclusive approach to the worship of the gods of other cultures, and that His followers ought to emulate that? Surely not! The entirety of Jesus' teaching testifies to the necessity of true worshipers of God to worship Him in spirit and truth, with single-minded, unyielding devotion (e.g., John 4:24). He exposed the idolatry of the rich young ruler's heart when He called Him to demonstrate His single-minded devotion to Him by giving up his many possessions (Luke 18:22). He explained that

⁶ "Jesus Never Said Anything about Felony Home Invasion," *The Babylon Bee*, <http://babylonbee.com/news/jesus-never-said-anything-felony-home-invasion/>

no one can serve two masters, but must hate the one and love the other, or be devoted to the one and despise the other (Matt. 6:24). He explained that love for Him must exceed even one's love for his own family (Matt. 10:37; Luke 14:26). And He taught that the true convert is one who has apprehended Christ as such a treasure that he joyfully parts with everything in His life in order to lay hold of Him (Matt. 13:44). Jesus does not have to explicitly use the word "idolatry" in order to condemn it.

Similarly, the Gospels never record Jesus saying anything about pedophilia. There is no account of Jesus commenting on the wickedness of bestiality. Not a single syllable of the Gospels reports Jesus' thoughts on the evil of rape. Yet it would be beyond absurd to seek to garner support for any of those abominable acts on the basis of such silence. In the same way, the fact that Jesus never uttered the word "homosexual" or "homosexuality" is no more an endorsement of homosexuality than His silence on pedophilia, bestiality, incest, rape, child molestation—and any number of heinous sexual sins—is an endorsement of those practices.

Silence as Tacit Agreement

A third brief response considers that the absence of any explicit mention of homosexuality is evidence for Jesus' tacit *agreement* with what would have been the predominant, traditional view in first-century Israel. Given Jesus' cultural and religious context, silence makes sense. Jesus lived among and ministered primarily to Israel and those familiar with the Law of Moses in an age under the Mosaic Covenant, which explicitly condemned homosexuality as an abomination to God (Lev. 18:22; 20:13). Indeed, it is mentioned in the same breath as God's condemnations of adultery, child sacrifice, and bestiality (Lev. 18:20–24). Unless there was some precipitating issue that would compel Jesus to comment on homosexuality, the only reasonable conclusion is that His view of homosexuality was the Old Testament's view of homosexuality. New Testament scholar, Robert Gagnon, puts it this way. He writes,

The univocal stance against homosexual conduct, both in ancient Israel and the Judaism of Jesus' day, makes it highly unlikely that Jesus' silence on the issue ought to be construed as acceptance of such conduct. . . . Silence on the subject could only have been understood by his disciples as acceptance of the basic position embraced by all Jews. If Jesus had wanted to communicate affirmation of same-sex unions he would have had to state such a view clearly since first-century Judaism, so far as we know, had no dissenting voices on the matter.⁷

What *Did* Jesus Say?

The three preceding responses have sought to explain how Jesus' silence on the matter of homosexuality need not be interpreted as support for the LGBT agenda. The proper way, however, to ascertain what Jesus believed about the LGBT agenda comes from what He *did* say during His life and ministry. Rather than making arguments from silence, the words of Christ, which are recorded for us in Scripture, ought

⁷ Robert A. J. Gagnon, *The Bible and Homosexual Practice: Texts and Hermeneutics* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 2002), 188.

to be the focus of our attention. Thus, the remainder of this article will be devoted to examining four topics of Jesus' teaching, and bringing those teachings to bear on His view of marriage and sexuality. We will examine Jesus' teaching concerning the Old Testament, concerning sexuality and marriage, concerning the New Testament, and concerning love.

Jesus' Teaching Concerning the Old Testament

First, it is necessary to understand what Jesus taught concerning the reliability and relevance of the Old Testament. This is so because the view that claims Jesus supports homosexuality by His silence depends entirely upon there being a clear break between the doctrine of the Old Testament and the teachings of Jesus. However, if Jesus affirms the abiding authority and relevance of the Old Testament, then one is constrained to conclude that Jesus' view on homosexuality *was* the Old Testament's view on homosexuality.

What, then, did Jesus teach concerning the Old Testament? In the first place, He taught the doctrine of the inspiration of the Old Testament Scriptures. In Matthew 22:42, Jesus asked the Pharisees, "What do you think about the Christ, whose son is He?" They answered the way their Scriptures taught them to answer, i.e., that the Messiah would be the Son of David. Jesus responded, "Then how does David in the Spirit call Him 'Lord,' saying, 'The Lord said to My Lord, 'Sit at My right hand, until I put Your enemies beneath Your feet''?" (Matt. 22:43–44; cf. Ps. 110:1). The key phrase in Jesus' response is "in the Spirit." In Jesus' view, David was not the sole source of his words in Psalm 110. According to Jesus, when David penned Psalm 110 he was speaking *in*, or *by*, the Holy Spirit of God. The word of the man, David, is the Word of *God* when the Holy Spirit is superintending it (cf. 2 Pet. 1:21). Just as Paul would eventually write in 2 Timothy 3:16, Jesus believed that "all Scripture is inspired by God"—that is, it is *θεόπνευστος*, breathed out by God, the very Word of God Himself.

In addition to the inspiration of the Old Testament, Jesus taught that the Old Testament was infallible and therefore inerrant. In John 10, the Jews attempt to stone Jesus for blasphemy because He was claiming to be God (vv. 31–33). In response, Jesus answers, "Has it not been written in your Law, 'I said, you are Gods'? If he called them gods, to whom the word of God came (and the Scripture cannot be broken), do you say of Him, whom the Father sanctified and sent into the world, 'You are blaspheming,' because I said, 'I am the Son of God'?" (vv. 34–36). Quoting Psalm 82:6, Jesus reasons that if the writers of Scripture could apply the term 'gods' to corrupt rulers in Israel, it could not be improper for Him, the sinless Son of God, to be called God as well. In the midst of that argument, though, Jesus makes the parenthetical comment that the Scripture cannot be broken. That is to say, the Old Testament Scriptures cannot be set aside; no portion of the Scriptures can violate or contradict any other portion. Notably, He does not merely claim that Scripture *is* not broken, though that would be enough to affirm the doctrine of biblical inerrancy; He says it *cannot* be broken. In Jesus' eyes, Scripture is unbreakable; it is infallible. The Old Testament not only does not err; it is *incapable* of erring.

Jesus also taught that the Old Testament was abidingly authoritative. He speaks of the relevance of the Pentateuch when He informs the Pharisees that they will be

judged by the standard of righteousness revealed in the Mosaic Law (John 5:45). In the proceeding verses, He explains that if they did not believe Moses' writings they would never believe His words (John 5:46–47). Thus, Jesus saw an organic connection between the Pentateuch and His own messianic office and mission. Further, Jesus affirmed the validity and relevance not only of the Pentateuch as a whole but of the Ten Commandments in particular. In the tenth chapter of Mark, when the rich, young ruler asks what he must do to inherit eternal life, Jesus replies, "You know the commandments," and then lists five of the Ten (vv. 17–19). Inasmuch as the Ten Commandments are a summary of the Old Testament, Jesus' citation of them in this interaction indicates their abiding relevance. In the words of Gagnon, then, "Jesus accepted the commandments of the Decalogue as normative and illustrative of a broader sweep of the Torah's legislative authority."⁸ Still more particular than the Ten Commandments, Jesus also regarded single verses of Scripture as abidingly authoritative and relevant in the context of His ministry. The verse He referred to more often than any other during His earthly sojourn, like the prohibitions of homosexuality, was found in the Book of Leviticus: ". . . you shall love your neighbor as yourself" (Lev 19:18). Apparently, the Lord Jesus Christ regarded the Book of Leviticus as a legitimate source of moral authority.

Evidence abounds in support of the notion that Jesus believed the Old Testament to be abidingly authoritative. He affirms the Old Testament's negative evaluation of Sodom and Gomorrah by holding those cities up as a byword for extreme wickedness (Matt. 10:14–15; 11:23–24; Luke 10:10–12; 17:26–30); He repeatedly asks those who challenge Him, "Have you not read?"—fully expecting them to have taken heed to the authoritative Word of God (Matt. 12:1–5; 19:4; 22:29–31; Mark 12:10, 24–26; Luke 6:3); and when He finds Himself in the throes of temptation from Satan himself, He battles that temptation by constantly retreating to the Scriptures: "It is written. . . for it is written . . . it is written" (Matt. 4:1–11; cf. Luke 4:1–13). However, chief among Jesus' teachings concerning the abiding authority of the Old Testament are His comments in Matthew 5:17–19:

Do not think that I came to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I did not come to abolish but to fulfill. For truly I say to you, until heaven and earth pass away, not the smallest letter or stroke shall pass from the Law until all is accomplished. Whoever then annuls one of the least of these commandments, and teaches others to do the same, shall be called least in the kingdom of heaven; but whoever keeps and teaches them, he shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven.

From these words, it is plain that Christ had not come to abolish, set aside, or overthrow the Old Testament, but rather to be its fulfillment. He insists that not a jot or a tittle would be annulled. Being Himself the eternal Word (cf. John 1:1), His own teaching could never undermine even the smallest stroke of the pen from the written Word of God. This is not the attitude of someone who would propose to flippantly set aside the moral principles of the Old Testament!

⁸ Gagnon, *The Bible and Homosexual Practice*, 193.

In summary, the Law taught unequivocally that marriage between male and female is the only legitimate context for sexual intimacy, and that homosexuality is an abomination to God. Jesus taught that that Law was inspired, infallible, inerrant, and abidingly authoritative. Given these facts, one is shut up to conclude that Jesus' view of homosexuality *was* the Old Testament's view of homosexuality.

Jesus' Teaching Concerning Sexuality and Marriage

In the second place, Jesus' teaching concerning sexuality and marriage also disproves the claim that He was, or would have been, favorable or indifferent to homosexuality. While the advocates of pro-homosexualist doctrine would picture Jesus as *relaxing* the inflexible demands of the Old Testament law in favor of a more moderate and inclusive standard of sexual morality, the Bible portrays Him as doing just the opposite. For example, in the Sermon on the Mount, He says, "You have heard it that it was said, 'You shall not commit adultery;' but I say to you that everyone who *looks* at a woman with lust for her has already committed adultery with her in his heart" (Matt. 5:27) The Jews of Jesus' day may have read the Seventh Commandment and concluded that one kept the law of God if he had sexual intercourse with no one but his own wife. But Jesus says the true intent of that commandment is not merely abstinence from fornication and adultery, but the kind of purity of heart that does not even *think* about fornication or adultery.⁹ Far from being more lenient on sexual ethics than the Old Testament and His surrounding culture, Jesus only heightened the standard for sexual purity.

So many conceive of Jesus as the supreme model of the postmodern version of tolerance. However, the second chapter of the Book of Revelation reveals a Jesus who is decidedly intolerant of the church's tolerance of error and immorality. In Jesus' letter to the church of Thyatira, he commends them for their deeds, their love, their faith, their service and perseverance (2:19). Whereas the church of Ephesus needed to repent and do the deeds she did at first (cf. 2:4–5), Jesus approvingly declares that Thyatira's "deeds of late are greater than at first." Yet while their deeds were laudable, their love could be undiscerning and blindly affirming.¹⁰ Jesus says, "But I have this against you, that you *tolerate* the woman Jezebel, who calls herself a prophetess, and she teaches and leads My bond-servants astray so that they commit acts of immorality" (Rev. 2:20, emphasis added). He is intolerant of Thyatira's tolerance, and promises severe judgment because of it: "Behold, I will throw her on a bed of sickness, and those who commit adultery with her into great tribulation, unless they repent of her deeds. And I will kill her children with pestilence, and all the churches will know that I am He who searches the minds and hearts" (Rev. 2:22–23). This is not a Jesus who is soft on sexual immorality! And those churches who compromise the Word of God in an effort to be more "tolerant" and more "affirming"

⁹ Gagnon comments, "Not only is it a matter of great urgency to confine sexual intercourse to one's wife, but it is also a matter of great urgency to constrain one's sexual thoughts as well. It is not enough to refrain from fornication and adultery. One must also refrain from actively imagining one's sexual involvement with another woman" (ibid., 205).

¹⁰ Kevin DeYoung, *What Does the Bible Really Teach about Homosexuality?* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2015), 123.

than Jesus is will find themselves under the judgment of the One whose eyes are like a flame of fire (Rev. 1:14), whose feet are like burnished bronze (Rev. 1:15), whose robe is dipped in blood (Rev. 19:14), and who strikes down the nations with the sword of His mouth (Rev. 19:15).

Besides intensifying the Old Testament's demands for sexual purity and showing Himself to be intolerant of immorality, Jesus also repeatedly condemns the sin of πορνεία (Matt. 5:32 15:19; 19:9; Mark 7:21), translated by the New American Standard as "fornications," but perhaps more accurately to be rendered as "sexual immoralities," or "deeds of sexual immorality," because of the breadth of its semantic range. Πορνεία encompassed every kind of sexual sin, and would have been unmistakably understood by His hearers to include homosexuality. The leading Greek lexicon defines it as "unlawful sexual intercourse, prostitution, unchastity, fornication,"¹¹ which is to say any sexual activity outside the covenant of marriage. The Septuagint uses the verb form of πορνεία to refer to both male and female temple prostitutes (Deut. 23:18 LXX; Eng. 23:17), which thus includes homosexuality. Extrabiblical Greek also provides occurrences of πορνεία in reference to homosexual practice.¹² All of this leads Robert Gagnon to conclude, "No first-century Jew could have spoken of *porneiai* (plural) without having in mind the list of forbidden sexual offenses in Leviticus 18 and 20 (incest, adultery, same-sex intercourse, bestiality)."¹³ Similarly, Kevin DeYoung writes, "Jesus didn't have to give a special sermon on homosexuality because all of his listeners understood that same-sex behavior was prohibited in the Pentateuch and reckoned as one of the many expressions of sexual sin (*porneia*) off limits for the Jews."¹⁴ Thus, if the semantic range of πορνεία includes homosexuality, as the linguistic evidence demands, and if Christ explicitly and repeatedly condemns πορνεία as sin, He therefore condemns homosexuality as sin.

A common reply to the argument that πορνεία condemns any kind of sexual activity outside of marriage is that marriage is the very institution which homosexuals are seeking, yet which Bible-believing Christians would aim to deny them. However, to those who argue that homosexuals might find legitimate sexual expression in "marriage" to one another, we must respond that Jesus recognized no such relationship as marriage. When Jesus taught concerning marriage, He explicitly defined it as a covenant between one man and one woman. In Matthew 19, the Pharisees asked Him what He thought about divorce, hoping to trap Him into disagreeing with Moses and thereby find reason to condemn Him. Jesus' response to their inquisition is that divorce is an evil thing (cf. Mal. 2:16) and was only provided for in the law of God as a result of the hardness of human hearts (Matt. 19:8–9). However, Jesus prefaces this response with a most instructive commentary on the second chapter of Genesis:

¹¹ Walter Bauer, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*, ed. Frederick W. Danker, 3rd ed. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 854. Hereafter, *BDAG*.

¹² E.g., Demosthenes, Nineteenth Oration.

¹³ Gagnon, *The Bible and Homosexual Practice*, 191.

¹⁴ DeYoung, *What Does the Bible Really Teach about Homosexuality?*, 75.

Have you not read that He who created them from the beginning made them male and female, and said, ‘For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh’? So they are no longer two, but one flesh. What therefore God has joined together, let no man separate (Matt. 19:4–5).

Three observations concerning this passage bear much on our present discussion. First, observe what Jesus believes is the authority for matters concerning marriage. It is nothing other than the Old Testament Scriptures! His understanding of marriage does not *depart* from the Old Testament, but is rather organically *rooted* in it. Second, observe once again Jesus’ belief in the inspiration of the Old Testament. He says that the same One who created them *said*—and then He quotes *Moses’* words in Genesis 2:24. Surely Jesus did not believe Moses created Adam and Eve; God did. This is another clear indication that Jesus believes that what Scripture says, God says. Third, note Jesus’ intentional ‘inefficiency’ in answering the Pharisees’ interrogation. If He wanted to simply and efficiently answer the question about divorce, He could have skipped immediately to verse 5: “Have you not read that the two become one flesh?” That sufficiently answers their question about divorce: God joins spouses together as one flesh, and therefore man must not separate what God has joined together. Why does He begin, then, by reminding the Pharisees that God made human beings male and female (Matt. 19:4)? For two reasons, at least. First, He wants to underscore that marriage is by nature a divinely-ordained institution; it is not something that man gets to define and redefine as the tides of cultural sensibilities ebb and flow. Secondly, Jesus goes out of His way to make this point, which would otherwise be superfluous, in order to make it clear that *this divinely-ordained institution of marriage exists only between one man and one woman*. Jesus regards the fact that God created humankind *male and female* as inextricably linked to the institution of *marriage*, which was instituted when God brought the man and the woman together to become one flesh as husband and wife.

Therefore, when one considers all that Jesus did say concerning sexual intimacy and the covenant of marriage, it is impossible to reconcile His teaching with the LGBT agenda. In every way, Jesus upholds and even intensifies the Old Testament’s condemnation of any sexual expression outside the covenant of marriage, which covenant He explicitly defines as legitimately entered into only by one man and one woman.

Jesus’ Teaching Concerning the New Testament

In addition to Jesus’ teaching on the nature and authority of the Old Testament, and His teaching on sexuality and marriage, we must consider His teaching on a third topic: the nature and authority of the New Testament.

Some may dismiss the foregoing argumentation and insist on the silence of Jesus concerning homosexuality. Some may discount the Old Testament’s teaching

concerning sexual ethics due to the fulfillment of the Mosaic Covenant in Christ.¹⁵ But for any Bible-believing Christian, it is indisputable that the divine law revealed in the New Testament is in force today, being the Scriptures of the New Covenant. And in that New Testament, which reveals God's directives for those who rightly relate to Him in the New Covenant era, the apostle Paul explicitly condemns homosexuality (Rom. 1:26–28; 1 Cor. 6:9–11; 1 Tim. 1:9–10). Therefore, if Jesus has taught that the New Testament Scriptures are the abidingly authoritative rule of life for His followers, His condemnation of homosexuality will be made clear.

And that is precisely the case. Jesus Himself expressly prophesies of the inspiration of the New Testament. While it is true that He nowhere explicitly mentions homosexuality by name in the Gospels, the Holy Spirit—with whom Jesus shares the full, undivided divine essence,¹⁶ and whom Jesus said He would send to speak His words (John 16:12–14)—superintended what the apostle Paul wrote, so that he wrote exactly what God the Son desired to be written (2 Tim. 3:16; 2 Pet. 1:21). Strictly speaking, then, Jesus did not stop speaking when Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John finished their gospel accounts. Before His death and resurrection, Jesus told the disciples, “I have many more things to say to you, but you cannot bear them now” (John 16:12). In other words, “More revelation is coming, though I cannot give it to you now.” “But,” He promises, “when the Spirit of truth comes, He will guide you into all the truth; for He will not speak on His own initiative, but whatever He hears, He will speak” (John 16:13). This is a promise from Jesus Himself that the words the Holy Spirit would speak through the disciples would be Christ's own words. In this way, “He [the Holy Spirit] will glorify Me, for He will take *of Mine* and will disclose it to you” (John 16:14, emphasis added). And that is precisely what the Holy Spirit did. As the church was being built, the Spirit spoke Jesus' words to the writers of the New Testament. All Scripture—which included Paul's writings, according to 2 Peter 3:16—is God-breathed (2 Tim. 3:16); it is the very Word of God, His own breath.

It is objected, “But was not Scripture written by man? Yes, it was. But the Holy Spirit so superintended the minds and wills of the writers of Scripture such that the words they wrote under their own recognizance were precisely what the Triune God wanted to say to His people. That is what Peter means when he says they were “moved” (NASB) or “carried along” (ESV) by the Holy Spirit (2 Pet. 1:21). It was as if as they were using their pens, the Spirit was bearing their hands as they wrote. Therefore, the Book of Acts, the epistles of Paul, Peter, John, James, and Jude, the letter to the Hebrews, and the Revelation given to the apostle John are all the Word of God Himself. And since (a) God exists eternally as Father, Son, and Spirit, and (b)

¹⁵ In response to that argument, however, see Mike Riccardi, “Shellfish, Mixed Fabrics, and Homosexuality: Picking and Choosing?” *The CrippleGate* (blog) <http://thecripplegate.com/shellfish-mixed-fabrics-and-homosexuality-picking-and-choosing/>

¹⁶ It cannot be overlooked that the orthodox doctrines of the deity of Christ and the trinity of God are at mortal odds with the notion of a pro-homosexual Christianity, for if Christ is God—the Second Person of the eternal Trinity—then the Old and New Testaments, being the Word of God, *are* the Word of Jesus, who is God, and who acts inseparably with the Father and with the Holy Spirit in all His works, including the revelation of Scripture. To pit Jesus against the (Spirit-inspired) Levitical and Pauline condemnations of homosexuality is not only to abandon biblical sexual ethics, but to rob God the Son of His divinity and thereby rend the Trinity.

Jesus Himself is God the Son, all of the New Testament—as well as the Old Testament—is the Word of Christ.¹⁷ Even the words not appearing in red type are nevertheless the Lord of the church speaking to His church by means of the Holy Spirit, through the agency of human writers.

Did Jesus address homosexuality? Yes, He did. He did so by sending the Holy Spirit to superintend the writing of Paul such that what Paul wrote was precisely what Jesus intended, so much so that it could be said to be “God-breathed.” Jesus condemned homosexuality by means of Paul’s condemnation of homosexuality. Therefore, to deny that homosexuality is sinful is to deny Jesus Himself, and that is irreconcilable with genuine, biblical Christianity.

Jesus’ Teaching Concerning Love

Having examined what Jesus taught concerning the Old Testament, concerning sexuality and marriage, and concerning the New Testament, we have discovered that Jesus’ teaching undermines the claims of homosexualism. One final topic of Jesus’ teaching that must be addressed is the topic of love. The homosexualist commonly charges the biblical Christian with missing the forest for the trees. In the midst of all our attention to the details of Scripture, we have lost the big picture. The cardinal virtue that Jesus taught His followers was love (John 13:34–35). If we value love, what problem ought we to have with two consenting adults committing themselves to one other out of love? “Love is love is love,” we are often told, and to insist that homosexuality is sinful and to deny homosexuals the right to be “married” is simply not loving, and therefore not Christian.

Yet like the others, this argument simply does not stand up to biblical scrutiny. The heart of this error is that, in its wisdom, the homosexualist has failed to define *love* biblically. To our self-indulgent, narcissistic, perennially adolescent, self-willed culture, love means nothing more than psychologist Carl Rogers’ notion of unconditional positive regard. To love someone, according to our society, is to affirm every decision they make and to applaud them just for being them. People have confused the idea of being affirmed, accepted, flattered, and made much of with true love. They therefore conclude that to love someone is to make him feel as good as possible by magnifying his own worth, by making much of *him*. Then, those who have imbibed this erroneous conception of love turn to the Bible, where they read about love on almost every page: “God is love,” (1 John 4:8); “For God so loved the world . . .” (John 3:16); the greatest commandment in the law is “You shall love the Lord your God” and the second is “You shall love your neighbor as yourself” (Matt 22:37–40); “All men will know that you are My disciples if you have love for one another” (John 13:35). These wonderfully biblical themes come flooding into their minds! And then, tragically, rather than surrendering their own preconceptions to the authority of God’s Word and seeking to understand how God defines love, they use their own distorted definition of love that they have imbibed from society, and they foist that definition of love onto the Scriptures and onto their conception of God. Now, when they hear

¹⁷ See footnote 16.

that “God is love,” they think, “God asks no one to change. God does not judge people. God accepts everyone just as they are. So Christians must do the same!”

Yet these conclusions are not true, because that is, emphatically, not how God defines love. “In this is love,” says the apostle John, “not that we loved God, but that He loved us and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins” (1 John 4:10). “But God demonstrates His own love for us in that while we were yet sinners, Christ *died* for us,” writes Paul (Rom. 5:8). These passages teach that love is acting—even laboring—to secure someone’s greatest benefit. God labors, at great cost to Himself, and even suffers in the Person of Jesus Christ, in order to secure the greatest benefit of His beloved. When we were dead in our sin, cut off from God, and without hope, what would have been our greatest benefit? Answer: a perfectly righteous, wrath-propitiating, sin-bearing Substitute. That is exactly what God gives us. He demonstrates His own love by benefiting us with Himself in the person of His Beloved Son.

If love labors to secure the beloved’s benefit, what, then, is one’s greatest benefit? Well, it is not to be unconditionally affirmed and made to feel good about oneself “just the way you are,” because God did not design human beings to thrive on and be satisfied by the glory of self. A man’s vision of his own glory and experience of his own exaltation will not satisfy the longings of his soul for eternity. However, the vision of God’s glory revealed in the face of Jesus Christ *will* satisfy that man. God has designed man’s heart, his soul, his affections, and his will so that he would be most satisfied by God’s own glory. He even defines spiritual life as the ability to see the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Christ (2 Cor. 4:6). This means that love can only be defined by helping the beloved to see, know, enjoy God in the person of His Son, for that is the greatest benefit that can be accomplished for anyone. Love is not unconditional affirmation. Love is laboring, and oftentimes even suffering—even being mocked, being called hateful and bigoted, losing your tax-exempt status, even losing your friends and family—so that those whom you love might find joy in making much of Christ forever, because worshipping Him, not themselves, is what will most truly and lastingly satisfy them.

It is plain, then, that acquiescing to the homosexualist’s agenda of unconditional acceptance is the very opposite of love. Refusing to warn someone that homosexuals will not inherit the kingdom of God (cf. 1 Cor 6:9–11) is in fact hatred, because it is not in the best interest of sinners for Christians to affirm a lifestyle which, if unrepented of, will end in eternal destruction. We do not love like Jesus loves if we unconditionally affirm someone in a choice that robs them of true, abiding satisfaction and leads them to ruin. We love like Jesus loves when we graciously and patiently proclaim a message that has the power to free people from the bondage of their suicidal love affair with themselves—the power to liberate them into the freedom and the joy of making much of the glory of God. We love like Jesus loves when we point people away from worshipping themselves and their own desires, and when we steer them toward their greatest benefit: God Himself.

Conclusion

As the homosexualist agenda of the political left continues to rage on, the biblical-Christian worldview concerning sexuality is going to become less and less tolerated, and more and more scorned and ostracized as hatred and bigotry. Yet those who

take such positions may not appeal to the Lord Jesus Christ for support. Given what He taught about the Old Testament, about sexuality and marriage, about the New Testament, and about love, it is clear that Jesus stands united with the Scriptures in condemning homosexuality as sinful. Yet He also stands united with the Scriptures in freely offering forgiveness to any who would confess the guilt of his sins, turn from them, and put his trust in Christ alone for righteousness. Inasmuch as the repudiation of biblical sexual ethics and virulent support of the LGBT agenda is evidence our society is under the divine *judgment* of Romans 1, then we must follow the divine *prescription* found in Romans 1: “For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes.” Followers of Christ must unashamedly and unrelentingly stand upon Scripture, just as our Lord did, and must boldly proclaim the Good News of salvation from sin and destruction through repentance and faith in Christ Jesus alone.