



"I have but to say, the Bible is the best gift God has given to man. All the good Savior gave to the world was communicated through this book. But for it we could not know right from wrong."

—Abraham Lincoln

10-Jul-15

Would Jesus Approve of Same-Sex Marriage?

In an interview on Tuesday, July 7, 2015, former President Jimmy Carter waded into the current American cultural and political debate on homosexuality. For a devout Baptist and a self-proclaimed "born-again Christian," the 90-year old Carter made an astounding statement when HuffPost Live host Mark Lamont Hill asked him whether Christ would embrace same-sex marriage:

I believe Jesus would. I don't have any verse in Scripture. I believe that Jesus would approve of gay marriage, but I'm not—that's just my own personal belief. I think Jesus would encourage any love affair if it was honest and sincere and was not damaging to anyone else, and I don't see that gay marriage damages anyone else.

The telling sentence in the former President's answer is "I don't have any verse in Scripture." It is true that [the gospel](#) accounts contain no "thus saith the Lord," definitive condemnation of homosexuality, so Carter's admission that he has no scriptural proof of Jesus' views on the subject is accurate—but only in a technical sense.

Carter must fall back on his "own personal belief" about what Jesus would make of this situation. Clearly, his liberal political views inform his theology, and he "believes" (read: feels) that Jesus would approve of same-sex marriage. Note that he also claims Jesus would approve of *any love affair* as long as it was "honest and sincere and was not damaging to anyone else." He must be reading a different Bible—or not reading the one he has.

The absence of any outright scriptural condemnation of homosexuality from the lips of Jesus has been a mainstay of so-called Christian, pro-gay rhetoric for many years. Arguing from His purported silence on the issue—a rhetorical no-no—defenders of same-sex marriage try to co-opt Jesus as some sort of proto-liberal, a free-love advocate modeled on "[Jesus Christ](#) Superstar" rather than the sinless Messiah of the Bible. The argument has been convincing to some due to the ridiculously high level of biblical illiteracy among the general public and even among professing Christians whose doctrinal acumen plunges no deeper than the lyrics of the Beatles anthem, "All You Need Is Love."

It ought to be obvious that the same Man who says He did not come "to destroy the Law or the Prophets" ([Matthew 5:17](#))—which Law stipulates homosexuality to be an abomination ([Leviticus 18:22](#); [20:13](#))—would teach that same-sex relations are sinful and subject to God's judgment. Yet, a "grace only," dispensational mainstream Christianity has discounted the fact that [God](#) is consistent in His character, and thus His lawgiving, so Old Testament pronouncements contain little authority in such matters. Those who think this way *require* a plain statement from Jesus Himself, and a lack of one is as good as approval.

And just to sideline another apparent argument, statements by the apostle Paul, though canonized as Scripture, have no validity to such people. He writes in [I Corinthians 6:9-10](#):

Do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the [kingdom of God](#)? Do not be deceived. Neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor homosexuals, nor sodomites, nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners will inherit the kingdom of God. (See also his unambiguous denunciation of homosexuality in [Romans 1:24-32](#).)

The apostle wholly agrees with the Old Testament law regarding homosexuality, assuring us that God will not accept into His Kingdom those who practice it. Further, in [I Timothy 1:8-11](#), he declares that, "according to the glorious gospel of the blessed God," sodomites are "lawless," "insubordinate," "ungodly," "sinners," "unholy," and "profane." Yet, despite citing the gospel of God, his testimony carries no weight, as he is seen as adding his own Pharisaical prejudices to what Jesus originally delivered.

Only Jesus' own words will do.

So what does He say on this subject? He says nothing explicitly about homosexuality in the gospels, but He does make a significant ruling about marriage. What He says about marriage completely precludes same-sex "marriage." He does this in [Matthew 19:3-6](#):

The Pharisees also came to Him, testing Him, and saying to Him, "Is it lawful for a man to divorce his wife for just any reason?" And He answered and said to them, "Have you not read that He who made them at 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 then, they are no longer two but one flesh. Therefore what God has joined together, let not man separate."

Using this answer as a template, we actually do know what Jesus thinks about same-sex marriage: He is against it. How can we conclude this?

First, notice that both the Pharisees and Jesus share an understanding of marriage as comprising a man and his wife. A binding relationship of any kind other than a man and a woman is not a marriage; it does not fit the formal qualifications of the term.

Second, Christ bases His answer on what was written "at the beginning," that is, in God's original intent in creating mankind: "So God created man in His own image; in the [image of God](#) He created him; male and female He created them" ([Genesis 1:27](#)). He is, in effect, saying that Christian teaching on marriage, a relationship between a man and a woman, reflects the Bible's original

revelation about being in God's image, which Christians are to be conforming to now. Concessions (like Moses' laws regarding divorce) made in the meantime due to Israel's carnality undermined God's original intent.

Third, Jesus further cites [Genesis 2:24](#), "Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and they shall become one flesh." With both of His scriptural quotations, He implies that God made humanity in two genders for specific reasons, the most obvious of which is to marry and have children (mentioned in [Genesis 1:28](#), "Be fruitful and multiply"). Male-male and female-female unions not only nullify God's purpose of complementary genders producing offspring, but they also cannot even consummate a marriage (becoming one flesh) with the sexual organs specific to each gender functioning as God created them.

In the face of God's intent for men and women, Jesus ignores "love," "honesty," or "sincerity," or whether a relationship is "damaging to anyone else." God wants men to marry women, and no amount of emotion or attraction between two people of the same sex is enough to dislodge God's purpose for creating mankind in two genders. Jesus, being God in the flesh, establishes the boundaries of marriage for His followers, and He does not permit same-sex marriage.

- Richard T. Ritenbaugh

From the Archives: Featured Sermon

[Homosexual Marriage?](#)

by Richard T. Ritenbaugh

In a seeming nanosecond, sodomy has been legitimized, a homosexual Episcopal bishop was installed, and homosexual marriage was being debated. Homosexuality is not a lifestyle, but a sin directly against God, flouting God's creation of male and female, perverting the natural use of the human body, and destroying the natural relationship with God. Historically, God has taken the strongest punitive measures against this hideous abomination. Homosexuality, as stated by the apostle Paul, seems to be a function of eliminating God from one's mind, receiving a debased, reprobate mind as a natural consequence. God established and sanctified the marriage union between a man and a woman for the purpose of producing godly seed.

From the Archives: Featured Article

[As In the Days of Lot](#)

by Earl L. Henn (1934-1997)

Jesus says the end times will be like the days of Lot in Sodom, meaning that rampant homosexuality is a sign of the end. Earl Henn analyzes this growing, worldwide trend.

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