

Scriptural Interpretation and Same Sex Marriage
January 19 -February 8, 2015

I. God's Living Word

Isaiah 55:10-11

¹⁰ For as the rain and the snow come down from heaven, and do not return there until they have watered the earth, making it bring forth and sprout, giving seed to the sower and bread to the eater, ¹¹ so shall my word be that goes out from my mouth; it shall not return to me empty, but it shall accomplish that which I purpose, and succeed in the thing for which I sent it.

Jeremiah 23:29

²⁹ Is not my word like fire, says the LORD, and like a hammer that breaks a rock in pieces?

Hebrews 4:12

¹² Indeed, the word of God is living and active, sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing until it divides soul from spirit, joints from marrow; it is able to judge the thoughts and intentions of the heart.

II. Discernment

a. Law Written on Heart

Exodus 24:12

¹² The LORD said to Moses, "Come up to me on the mountain, and wait there; and I will give you the tablets of stone, with the law and the commandment, which I have written for their instruction."

Deuteronomy 6:8

⁸ Bind them as a sign on your hand, fix them as an emblem on your forehead.

Proverbs 3:3

³ Do not let loyalty and faithfulness forsake you; bind them around your neck, write them on the tablet of your heart.

Hebrews 8:10

¹⁰ This is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, says the Lord: I will put my laws in their minds, and write them on their hearts, and I will be their God, and they shall be my people.

b. Understanding and Insight

Proverbs 2:2-7

² For learning about wisdom and instruction, for understanding words of insight, ³ for gaining instruction in wise dealing, righteousness, justice, and equity; ⁴ to teach shrewdness to the simple, knowledge and prudence to the young— ⁵ Let the wise also hear and gain in learning, and the discerning acquire skill, ⁶ to understand a proverb and a figure, the words of the wise and their riddles. ⁷ The fear of the LORD is the beginning of knowledge; fools despise wisdom and instruction.

Proverbs 3:13

¹³ Happy are those who find wisdom, and those who get understanding.

Proverbs 4:7

⁷ The beginning of wisdom is this: Get wisdom, and whatever else you get, get insight.

1 Corinthians 8:1-3

¹ Now concerning food sacrificed to idols: we know that “all of us possess knowledge.” Knowledge puffs up, but love builds up. ² Anyone who claims to know something does not yet have the necessary knowledge; ³ but anyone who loves God is known by him.

John 16:13

¹³ When the Spirit of truth comes, he will guide you into all the truth; for he will not speak on his own, but will speak whatever he hears, and he will declare to you the things that are to come.

Matthew 4:5-6 (parallel: Luke 4:9-10)

⁵ Then the devil took him to the holy city and placed him on the pinnacle of the temple, ⁶ saying to him, “If you are the Son of God, throw yourself down; for it is written, ‘He will command his angels concerning you,’ and ‘On their hands they will bear you up, so that you will not dash your foot against a stone.’” [quoting Psalm 91:11-12]

c. Communal Endeavor

Jeremiah 31:33-34

³⁴ No longer shall they teach one another, or say to each other, “Know the LORD,” for they shall all know me, from the least of them to the greatest, says the LORD; for I will forgive their iniquity, and remember their sin no more.

Proverbs 3:5-7

⁵ Trust in the LORD with all your heart, and do not rely on your own insight. ⁶ In all your ways acknowledge him, and he will make straight your paths. ⁷ Do not be wise in your own eyes; fear the LORD, and turn away from evil.

Romans 12:2

² Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your minds, so that you [all] may discern what is the will of God – what is good and acceptable and perfect.

Romans 14:5

⁵ Some judge one day to be better than another, while others judge all days to be alike. Let all be fully convinced in their own minds.

Philippians 1:9-11

⁹ And this is my prayer, that your love may overflow more and more with knowledge and full insight ¹⁰ to help you [all] to determine what is best, so that in the day of Christ you may be pure and blameless, ¹¹ having produced the harvest of righteousness that comes through Jesus Christ for the glory and praise of God.

1 Thessalonians 5:19-22

¹⁹ Do not quench the Spirit. ²⁰ Do not despise the words of prophets, ²¹ but [you all] test everything; hold fast to what is good; ²² abstain from every form of evil.

Luke 12:56-57

⁵⁶ You hypocrites! You [all] know how to interpret the appearance of earth and sky, but why do you [all] not know how to interpret the present time? ⁵⁷ And why do you [all] not judge for yourselves what is right?

III. Verse Interpretations: Imagery

Deuteronomy 32:4

⁴ The Rock, his work is perfect, and all his ways are just. A faithful God, without deceit, just and upright is he.

1 Samuel 2:2

² There is no Holy One like the LORD, no one besides you; there is no Rock like our God.

Psalm 62:2

² He alone is my rock and my salvation, my fortress; I shall never be shaken.

Psalm 78:35

³⁵ They remembered that God was their rock, the Most High God their redeemer.

Isaiah 55:12

¹² For you shall go out in joy, and be led back in peace; the mountains and the hills before you shall burst into song, and all the trees of the field shall clap their hands.

Isaiah 64:8

⁸ Yet, O LORD, you are our Father; we are the clay, and you are our potter; we are all the work of your hand.

John 6:35

³⁵ Jesus said to them, "I am the bread of life. Whoever comes to me will never be hungry, and whoever believes in me will never be thirsty."

John 8:12

¹² Again Jesus spoke to them, saying, "I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness but will have the light of life."

John 9:5

⁵ As long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world.

John 15:5

⁵ I am the vine, you are the branches. Those who abide in me and I in them bear much fruit, because apart from me you can do nothing.

Revelation 19:7-8

⁷ Let us rejoice and exult and give him the glory, for the marriage of the Lamb has come, and his bride has made herself ready; ⁸ to her it has been granted to be clothed with fine linen, bright and pure" – for the fine linen is the righteous deeds of the saints.

IV. God's New Things and New People**Isaiah 43:18-19**

¹⁸ Do not remember the former things, or consider the things of old. ¹⁹ I am about to do a new thing; now it springs forth, do you not perceive it? I will make a way in the wilderness and rivers in the desert.

Numbers 11:26-29

²⁶ Two men remained in the camp, one named Eldad, and the other named Medad, and the spirit rested on them; they were among those registered, but they had not gone out to the tent, and so they prophesied in the camp. ²⁷ And a young man ran and told Moses, "Eldad and Medad are prophesying in the camp." ²⁸ And Joshua son of Nun, the assistant of Moses, one of his chosen men, said, "My lord Moses, stop them!" ²⁹ But Moses said to him, "Are you jealous for my sake? Would that all the LORD's people were prophets, and that the LORD would put his spirit on them!"

Joel 2:28-29

²⁸ Then afterward I will pour out my spirit on all flesh; your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams, and your young men shall see visions. ²⁹ Even on the male and female slaves, in those days, I will pour out my spirit.

Ruth 1:15-17

¹⁵ So she said, "See, your sister-in-law has gone back to her people [Moabites] and to her gods; return after your sister-in-law." ¹⁶ But Ruth said, "Do not press me to leave you or to turn back from following you! Where you go, I will go; where you lodge, I will lodge; your people shall be my people, and your God my God. ¹⁷ Where you die, I will die – there will I

be buried. May the LORD do thus and so to me, and more as well, if even death parts me from you!”

(note prohibition on marrying foreign women, e.g. **Ezra 10:10-11** – ¹⁰ Then Ezra the priest stood up and said to them, “You have trespassed and married foreign women, and so increased the guilt of Israel. ¹¹ Now make confession to the LORD the God of your ancestors, and do his will; separate yourselves from the peoples of the land and from the foreign wives.”)

V. God’s Commands

A) Today

a. Adultery

Leviticus 20:10

¹⁰ If a man commits adultery with the wife of his neighbor, both the adulterer and the adulteress shall be put to death.

Deuteronomy 22:22

²² If a man is caught lying with the wife of another man, both of them shall die, the man who lay with the woman as well as the woman. So you shall purge the evil from Israel.

Ezekiel 23:45-47

⁴⁵ But righteous judges shall declare them guilty of adultery and of bloodshed; because they are adulteresses and blood is on their hands. ⁴⁶ For thus says the Lord GOD: Bring up an assembly against them, and make them an object of terror and of plunder. ⁴⁷ The assembly shall stone them and with their swords they shall cut them down; they shall kill their sons and their daughters, and burn up their houses.

Numbers 5:12-19

¹² Speak to the Israelites and say to them: If any man’s wife goes astray and is unfaithful to him, ¹³ if a man has had intercourse with her but it is hidden from her husband, so that she is undetected though she has defiled herself, and there is no witness against her since she was not caught in the act; ¹⁴ if a spirit of jealousy comes on him, and he is jealous of his wife who has defiled herself; or if a spirit of jealousy comes on him, and he is jealous of his wife, though she has not defiled herself; ¹⁵ then the man shall bring his wife to the priest. And he shall bring the offering required for her, one-tenth of an ephah of barley flour. He shall pour no oil on it and put no frankincense on it, for it is a grain offering of jealousy, a grain offering of remembrance, bringing iniquity to remembrance. ¹⁶ Then the priest shall bring her near, and set her before the LORD; ¹⁷ the priest shall take holy water in an earthen vessel, and take some of the dust that is on the floor of the tabernacle and put it into the water. ¹⁸ The priest shall set the woman before the LORD, dishevel the woman’s hair, and place in her hands the grain offering of remembrance, which is the grain offering of jealousy. In his own hand the priest shall have the water of bitterness that brings the curse. ¹⁹ Then the priest shall make her take an oath, saying, “If no man has lain with you, if you have not turned aside to uncleanness while under your husband’s authority, be immune to this water of bitterness that brings the curse.”

Matthew 5:28

²⁸ But I say to you that everyone who looks at a woman with lust has already committed adultery with her in his heart.

b. Slavery

Exodus 21:5-7

⁵ But if the slave declares, “I love my master, my wife, and my children; I will not go out a free person,” ⁶ then his master shall bring him before God. He shall be brought to the

door or the doorpost; and his master shall pierce his ear with an awl; and he shall serve him for life. ⁷ When a man sells his daughter as a slave, she shall not go out as the male slaves do.

Ephesians 6:5-6

⁵ Slaves, obey your earthly masters with fear and trembling, in singleness of heart, as you obey Christ; ⁶ not only while being watched, and in order to please them, but as slaves of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart.

c. Appearance

Leviticus 19:19

¹⁹ You shall keep my statutes. You shall not let your animals breed with a different kind; you shall not sow your field with two kinds of seed; nor shall you put on a garment made of two different materials.

Leviticus 19:27-28

²⁷ You shall not round off the hair on your temples or mar the edges of your beard. ²⁸ You shall not make any gashes in your flesh for the dead or tattoo any marks upon you: I am the LORD.

Ecclesiastes 9:8

⁸ Let your garments always be white; do not let oil be lacking on your head.

d. Miscellaneous

Exodus 23:19a

¹⁹ The choicest of the first fruits of your ground you shall bring into the house of the LORD your God.

Leviticus 19:32

³² You shall rise before the aged, and defer to the old; and you shall fear your God: I am the LORD.

Leviticus 19:33-34

³³ When an alien resides with you in your land, you shall not oppress the alien. ³⁴ The alien who resides with you shall be to you as the citizen among you; you shall love the alien as yourself, for you were aliens in the land of Egypt: I am the LORD your God.

Leviticus 20:27

²⁷ A man or a woman who is a medium or a wizard shall be put to death; they shall be stoned to death, their blood is upon them.

Mark 9:43-47

⁴³ If your hand causes you to stumble, cut it off; it is better for you to enter life maimed than to have two hands and to go to hell, to the unquenchable fire. ⁴⁴ ⁴⁵ And if your foot causes you to stumble, cut it off; it is better for you to enter life lame than to have two feet and to be thrown into hell. ⁴⁶ ⁴⁷ And if your eye causes you to stumble, tear it out; it is better for you to enter the kingdom of God with one eye than to have two eyes and to be thrown into hell.

1 Corinthians 6:7

⁷ In fact, to have lawsuits at all with one another is already a defeat for you. Why not rather be wronged? Why not rather be defrauded?

1 Corinthians 7:4

⁴ For the wife does not have authority over her own body, but the husband does; likewise the husband does not have authority over his own body, but the wife does.

1 Corinthians 7:20-21

²⁰ Let each of you remain in the condition in which you were called. ²¹ Were you a slave when called? Do not be concerned about it. Even if you can gain your freedom, make use of your present condition now more than ever.

1 Corinthians 14:34-35

³⁴ Women should be silent in the churches. For they are not permitted to speak, but should be subordinate, as the law also says. ³⁵ If there is anything they desire to know, let them ask their husbands at home. For it is shameful for a woman to speak in church.

B) Mixed Messages

a-1. Food Prohibited

Leviticus 3:17

¹⁷ It shall be a perpetual statute throughout your generations, in all your settlements: you must not eat any fat or any blood.

Leviticus 11:7-8

⁷ The pig, for even though it has divided hoofs and is cleft-footed, it does not chew the cud; it is unclean for you. ⁸ Of their flesh you shall not eat, and their carcasses you shall not touch; they are unclean for you.

Deuteronomy 14:9-10

⁹ Of all that live in water you may eat these: whatever has fins and scales you may eat.

¹⁰ And whatever does not have fins and scales you shall not eat; it is unclean for you.

a-2. Food Allowed

1 Corinthians 10:25-27

²⁵ Eat whatever is sold in the meat market without raising any question on the ground of conscience, ²⁶ for “the earth and its fullness are the Lord’s.” ²⁷ If an unbeliever invites you to a meal and you are disposed to go, eat whatever is set before you without raising any question on the ground of conscience. [quoting Psalm 24:1]

b-1. Hung on Tree

Deuteronomy 21:22-23

²² When someone is convicted of a crime punishable by death and is executed, and you hang him on a tree, ²³ his corpse must not remain all night upon the tree; you shall bury him that same day, for anyone hung on a tree is under God’s curse.

b-2. Jesus Hung on Tree

Galatians 3:13

¹³ Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law by becoming a curse for us – for it is written, “Cursed is everyone who hangs on a tree.”

C) Jesus Breaking God’s Commands?

a-1. Sabbath

Exodus 20:10

¹⁰ But the seventh day is a sabbath to the LORD your God; you shall not do any work – you, your son or your daughter, your male or female slave, your livestock, or the alien resident in your towns.

Exodus 31:14-16

¹⁴ You shall keep the sabbath, because it is holy for you; everyone who profanes it shall be put to death; whoever does any work on it shall be cut off from among the people.

¹⁵ Six days shall work be done, but the seventh day is a sabbath of solemn rest, holy to the LORD; whoever does any work on the sabbath day shall be put to death. ¹⁶ Therefore

the Israelites shall keep the sabbath, observing the sabbath throughout their generations, as a perpetual covenant.

Numbers 15:32-36

³² When the Israelites were in the wilderness, they found a man gathering sticks on the sabbath day. ³³ Those who found him gathering sticks brought him to Moses, Aaron, and to the whole congregation. ³⁴ They put him in custody, because it was not clear what should be done to him. ³⁵ Then the LORD said to Moses, “The man shall be put to death; all the congregation shall stone him outside the camp.” ³⁶ The whole congregation brought him outside the camp and stoned him to death, just as the LORD had commanded Moses.

a-2. Jesus on Sabbath

Mark 1:21, 23-25 (parallel: Luke 4:31b-36)

²¹ They went to Capernaum; and when the sabbath came, he entered the synagogue and taught... ²³ Just then there was in their synagogue a man with an unclean spirit, ²⁴ and he cried out, “What have you to do with us, Jesus of Nazareth? Have you come to destroy us? I know who you are, the Holy One of God.” ²⁵ But Jesus rebuked him, saying, “Be silent, and come out of him!”

Mark 1:29-31 (parallel: Luke 4:38-39)

²⁹ As soon as they left the synagogue, they entered the house of Simon and Andrew, with James and John. ³⁰ Now Simon’s mother-in-law was in bed with a fever, and they told him about her at once. ³¹ He came and took her by the hand and lifted her up. Then the fever left her, and she began to serve them.

Mark 3:1-5 (parallel: Matthew 12:9-13; Luke 6:6-10)

¹ Again he entered the synagogue, and a man was there who had a withered hand. ² They watched him to see whether he would cure him on the sabbath, so that they might accuse him. ³ And he said to the man who had the withered hand, “Come forward.” ⁴ Then he said to them, “Is it lawful to do good or to do harm on the sabbath, to save life or to kill?” But they were silent. ⁵ He looked around at them with anger; he was grieved at their hardness of heart and said to the man, “Stretch out your hand.” He stretched it out, and his hand was restored.

Luke 13:10-17

¹⁰ Now he was teaching in one of the synagogues on the sabbath. ¹¹ And just then there appeared a woman with a spirit that had crippled her for eighteen years. She was bent over and was quite unable to stand up straight. ¹² When Jesus saw her, he called her over and said, “Woman, you are set free from your ailment.” ¹³ When he laid his hands on her, immediately she stood up straight and began praising God. ¹⁴ But the leader of the synagogue, indignant because Jesus had cured on the sabbath, kept saying to the crowd, “There are six days on which work ought to be done; come on those days and be cured, and not on the sabbath day.” ¹⁵ But the Lord answered him and said, “You hypocrites! Does not each of you on the sabbath untie his ox or his donkey from the manger, and lead it away to give it water? ¹⁶ And ought not this woman, a daughter of Abraham whom Satan bound for eighteen long years, be set free from this bondage on the sabbath day?” ¹⁷ When he said this, all his opponents were put to shame; and the entire crowd was rejoicing at all the wonderful things that he was doing.

Luke 14:1-6

¹ On one occasion when Jesus was going to the house of a leader of the Pharisees to eat a meal on the sabbath, they were watching him closely. ² Just then, in front of him, there was a man who had dropsy. ³ And Jesus asked the lawyers and Pharisees, “Is it lawful to cure people on the sabbath, or not?” ⁴ But they were silent. So Jesus took him and healed

him, and sent him away. ⁵ Then he said to them, “If one of you has a child or an ox that has fallen into a well, will you not immediately pull it out on a sabbath day?” ⁶ And they could not reply to this.

John 5:5-18

⁵ One man was there who had been ill for thirty-eight years. ⁶ When Jesus saw him lying there and knew that he had been there a long time, he said to him, “Do you want to be made well?” ⁷ The sick man answered him, “Sir, I have no one to put me into the pool when the water is stirred up; and while I am making my way, someone else steps down ahead of me.” ⁸ Jesus said to him, “Stand up, take your mat and walk.” ⁹ At once the man was made well, and he took up his mat and began to walk. Now that day was a sabbath. ¹⁰ So the Jews said to the man who had been cured, “It is the sabbath; it is not lawful for you to carry your mat.” ¹¹ But he answered them, “The man who made me well said to me, ‘Take up your mat and walk.’” ¹² They asked him, “Who is the man who said to you, ‘Take it up and walk?’” ¹³ Now the man who had been healed did not know who it was, for Jesus had disappeared in the crowd that was there. ¹⁴ Later Jesus found him in the temple and said to him, “See, you have been made well! Do not sin any more, so that nothing worse happens to you.” ¹⁵ The man went away and told the Jews that it was Jesus who had made him well. ¹⁶ Therefore the Jews started persecuting Jesus, because he was doing such things on the sabbath. ¹⁷ But Jesus answered them, “My Father is still working, and I also am working.” ¹⁸ For this reason the Jews were seeking all the more to kill him, because he was not only breaking the sabbath, but was also calling God his own Father, thereby making himself equal to God.

b-1. Father and Mother

Exodus 20:12 (parallel Deuteronomy 5:1)

¹² Honor your father and your mother, so that your days may be long in the land that the LORD your God is giving you.

Ephesians 6:1-3

¹ Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right. ² “Honor your father and mother” – this is the first commandment with a promise: ³ “so that it may be well with you and you may live long on the earth.”

Colossians 3:20

²⁰ Children, obey your parents in everything, for this is your acceptable duty in the Lord.

1 Timothy 5:4

⁴ If a widow has children or grandchildren, they should first learn their religious duty to their own family and make some repayment to their parents; for this is pleasing in God’s sight.

b-2. Jesus’ Parents

Matthew 10:35-36 (parallel Luke 12:51-53)

³⁵ For I have come to set a man against his father, and a daughter against her mother, and a daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law; ³⁶ and one’s foes will be members of one’s own household.

Mark 3:31-35 (parallel Matthew 12:46-50, Luke 8:19-21)

³¹ Then his mother and his brothers came; and standing outside, they sent to him and called him. ³² A crowd was sitting around him; and they said to him, “Your mother and your brothers and sisters are outside, asking for you.” ³³ And he replied, “Who are my mother and my brothers?” ³⁴ And looking at those who sat around him, he said, “Here are my mother and my brothers! ³⁵ Whoever does the will of God is my brother and sister and mother.”

VI. Prohibitions on Same Sex Intercourse

a-1. Sodom and Gomorrah: Genesis 19:1-13

¹ The two angels came to Sodom in the evening, and Lot was sitting in the gateway of Sodom. When Lot saw them, he rose to meet them, and bowed down with his face to the ground. ² He said, "Please, my lords, turn aside to your servant's house and spend the night, and wash your feet; then you can rise early and go on your way." They said, "No; we will spend the night in the square." ³ But he urged them strongly; so they turned aside to him and entered his house; and he made them a feast, and baked unleavened bread, and they ate. ⁴ But before they lay down, the men of the city, the men of Sodom, both young and old, all the people to the last man, surrounded the house; ⁵ and they called to Lot, "Where are the men who came to you tonight? Bring them out to us, so that we may know them." ⁶ Lot went out of the door to the men, shut the door after him, ⁷ and said, "I beg you, my brothers, do not act so wickedly. ⁸ Look, I have two daughters who have not known a man; let me bring them out to you, and do to them as you please; only do nothing to these men, for they have come under the shelter of my roof." ⁹ But they replied, "Stand back!" And they said, "This fellow came here as an alien, and he would play the judge! Now we will deal worse with you than with them." Then they pressed hard against the man Lot, and came near the door to break it down. ¹⁰ But the men inside reached out their hands and brought Lot into the house with them, and shut the door. ¹¹ And they struck with blindness the men who were at the door of the house, both small and great, so that they were unable to find the door. ¹² Then the men said to Lot, "Have you anyone else here? Sons-in-law, sons, daughters, or anyone you have in the city – bring them out of the place. ¹³ For we are about to destroy this place, because the outcry against its people has become great before the LORD, and the LORD has sent us to destroy it."

a-2. Similar Story: Judges 19:15-30

¹⁵ They [a Levite, his concubine, and his servant] turned aside there, to go in and spend the night at Gibeah. He went in and sat down in the open square of the city, but no one took them in to spend the night. ¹⁶ Then at evening there was an old man coming from his work in the field. The man was from the hill country of Ephraim, and he was residing in Gibeah. (The people of the place were Benjaminites.) ¹⁷ When the old man looked up and saw the wayfarer in the open square of the city, he said, "Where are you going and where do you come from?" ¹⁸ He answered him, "We are passing from Bethlehem in Judah to the remote parts of the hill country of Ephraim, from which I come. I went to Bethlehem in Judah; and I am going to my home. Nobody has offered to take me in. ¹⁹ We your servants have straw and fodder for our donkeys, with bread and wine for me and the woman and the young man along with us. We need nothing more." ²⁰ The old man said, "Peace be to you. I will care for all your wants; only do not spend the night in the square." ²¹ So he brought him into his house, and fed the donkeys; they washed their feet, and ate and drank. ²² While they were enjoying themselves, the men of the city, a perverse lot, surrounded the house, and started pounding on the door. They said to the old man, the master of the house, "Bring out the man who came into your house, so that we may have intercourse with him." ²³ And the man, the master of the house, went out to them and said to them, "No, my brothers, do not act so wickedly. Since this man is my guest, do not do this vile thing. ²⁴ Here are my virgin daughter and his concubine; let me bring them out now. Ravish them and do whatever you want to them; but against this man do not do such a vile thing." ²⁵ But the men would not listen to him. So the man seized his concubine, and put her out to them. They wantonly raped her, and abused her all through the night until the morning. And as the dawn began to break, they let her go ²⁶ As morning appeared, the woman came and fell down at the door of the man's house where her master was, until it was light. ²⁷ In the morning her master

got up, opened the doors of the house, and when he went out to go on his way, there was his concubine lying at the door of the house, with her hands on the threshold. ²⁸ “Get up,” he said to her, “we are going.” But there was no answer. Then he put her on the donkey; and the man set out for his home. ²⁹ When he had entered his house, he took a knife, and grasping his concubine he cut her into twelve pieces, limb by limb, and sent her throughout all the territory of Israel. ³⁰ Then he commanded the men whom he sent, saying, “Thus shall you say to all the Israelites, ‘Has such a thing ever happened since the day that the Israelites came up from the land of Egypt until this day? Consider it, take counsel, and speak out.’”

a-3. Interpretations

Jude 1:7

⁷ Likewise, Sodom and Gomorrah and the surrounding cities, which, in the same manner as they, indulged in sexual immorality and pursued unnatural lust, serve as an example by undergoing a punishment of eternal fire.

Ezekiel 16:49-50

⁴⁹ This was the guilt of your sister Sodom: she and her daughters had pride, excess of food, and prosperous ease, but did not aid the poor and needy. ⁵⁰ They were haughty, and did abominable things before me; therefore I removed them when I saw it.

Matthew 10:11-15

¹¹ Whatever town or village you enter, find out who in it is worthy, and stay there until you leave. ¹² As you enter the house, greet it. ¹³ If the house is worthy, let your peace come upon it; but if it is not worthy, let your peace return to you. ¹⁴ If anyone will not welcome you or listen to your words, shake off the dust from your feet as you leave that house or town. ¹⁵ Truly I tell you, it will be more tolerable for the land of Sodom and Gomorrah on the day of judgment than for that town.

b-1. Leviticus 20:13

¹³ If a man lies with a male as with a woman, both of them have committed an abomination; they shall be put to death; their blood is upon them.

b-2. Context

Leviticus 20:22-23

²² You shall keep all my statutes and all my ordinances, and observe them, so that the land to which I bring you to settle in may not vomit you out. ²³ You shall not follow the practices of the nation that I am driving out before you. Because they did all these things, I abhorred them.

c-1. Romans 1:24-27

²⁴ Therefore God gave them up in the lusts of their hearts to impurity, to the degrading of their bodies among themselves, ²⁵ because they exchanged the truth about God for a lie and worshiped and served the creature rather than the Creator, who is blessed forever! Amen.

²⁶ For this reason God gave them up to degrading passions. Their women exchanged natural intercourse for unnatural, ²⁷ and in the same way also the men, giving up natural intercourse with women, were consumed with passion for one another. Men committed shameless acts with men and received in their own persons the due penalty for their error.

c-2. Context

Romans 1:20-23

²⁰ Ever since the creation of the world his eternal power and divine nature, invisible though they are, have been understood and seen through the things he has made. So they are without excuse; ²¹ for though they knew God, they did not honor him as God or give thanks to him, but they became futile in their thinking, and their senseless minds were

darkened.²² Claiming to be wise, they became fools;²³ and they exchanged the glory of the immortal God for images resembling a mortal human being or birds or four-footed animals or reptiles.

Romans 1:28-31

²⁸ And since they did not see fit to acknowledge God, God gave them up to a debased mind and to things that should not be done. ²⁹ They were filled with every kind of wickedness, evil, covetousness, malice. Full of envy, murder, strife, deceit, craftiness, they are gossips, ³⁰ slanderers, God-haters, insolent, haughty, boastful, inventors of evil, rebellious toward parents, ³¹ foolish, faithless, heartless, ruthless.

d-1. 1 Thessalonians 4:3-4

³ For this is the will of God, your sanctification: that you abstain from fornication; ⁴ that each one of you know how to control your own body in holiness and honor.

d-2. Context

1 Thessalonians 4:5-8

⁵ not with lustful passion, like the Gentiles who do not know God; ⁶ that no one wrong or exploit a brother or sister in this matter, because the Lord is an avenger in all these things, just as we have already told you beforehand and solemnly warned you. ⁷ For God did not call us to impurity but in holiness. ⁸ Therefore whoever rejects this rejects not human authority but God, who also gives his Holy Spirit to you.

e-1. 1 Corinthians 6:9-10

⁹ Do you not know that wrongdoers will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived! Fornicators, idolaters, adulterers, male prostitutes, sodomites, ¹⁰ thieves, the greedy, drunkards, revilers, robbers – none of these will inherit the kingdom of God.

e-2. Context

1 Corinthians 6:15-19

¹⁵ Do you not know that your bodies are members of Christ? Should I therefore take the members of Christ and make them members of a prostitute? Never! ¹⁶ Do you not know that whoever is united to a prostitute becomes one body with her? For it is said, “The two shall be one flesh.” ¹⁷ But anyone united to the Lord becomes one spirit with him. ¹⁸ Shun fornication! Every sin that a person commits is outside the body; but the fornicator sins against the body itself. ¹⁹ Or do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit within you, which you have from God, and that you are not your own?

e-3. Translation Problems

1 Timothy 1:10 – “Sodomites” (ἀρσενοκοίτης)

¹⁰ fornicators, sodomites, slave traders, liars, perjurers, and whatever else is contrary to the sound teaching.

Matthew 11:8/Luke 7:25 – “male prostitutes” (μαλακός)

⁸ What then did you go out to see? Someone dressed in soft robes? Look, those who wear soft robes are in royal palaces.

²⁵ What then did you go out to see? Someone dressed in soft robes? Look, those who put on fine clothing and live in luxury are in royal palaces.

VII. Gentiles in the Church

A) Requirement for Circumcision

Genesis 17:10-14, 23-27

¹⁰ This is my covenant, which you shall keep, between me and you and your offspring after you: Every male among you shall be circumcised. ¹¹ You shall circumcise the flesh

of your foreskins, and it shall be a sign of the covenant between me and you.

¹² Throughout your generations every male among you shall be circumcised when he is eight days old, including the slave born in your house and the one bought with your money from any foreigner who is not of your offspring. ¹³ Both the slave born in your house and the one bought with your money must be circumcised. So shall my covenant be in your flesh an everlasting covenant. ¹⁴ Any uncircumcised male who is not circumcised in the flesh of his foreskin shall be cut off from his people; he has broken my covenant.” ²³ Then Abraham took his son Ishmael and all the slaves born in his house or bought with his money, every male among the men of Abraham’s house, and he circumcised the flesh of their foreskins that very day, as God had said to him. ²⁴ Abraham was ninety-nine years old when he was circumcised in the flesh of his foreskin. ²⁵ And his son Ishmael was thirteen years old when he was circumcised in the flesh of his foreskin. ²⁶ That very day Abraham and his son Ishmael were circumcised; ²⁷ and all the men of his house, slaves born in the house and those bought with money from a foreigner, were circumcised with him.

Exodus 12:48-49

⁴⁸ If an alien who resides with you wants to celebrate the passover to the LORD, all his males shall be circumcised; then he may draw near to celebrate it; he shall be regarded as a native of the land. But no uncircumcised person shall eat of it; ⁴⁹ there shall be one law for the native and for the alien who resides among you.

Leviticus 12:1, 3

The LORD spoke to Moses, saying: ³ On the eighth day the flesh of his foreskin shall be circumcised.

B) Circumcision for Gentiles

a. Acts 10 – Conversion of Cornelius the Gentile

¹ In Caesarea there was a man named Cornelius, a centurion of the Italian Cohort, as it was called. ² He was a devout man who feared God with all his household; he gave alms generously to the people and prayed constantly to God. ³ One afternoon at about three o’clock he had a vision in which he clearly saw an angel of God coming in and saying to him, “Cornelius.” ⁴ He stared at him in terror and said, “What is it, Lord?” He answered, “Your prayers and your alms have ascended as a memorial before God. ⁵ Now send men to Joppa for a certain Simon who is called Peter; ⁶ he is lodging with Simon, a tanner, whose house is by the seaside.” ⁷ When the angel who spoke to him had left, he called two of his slaves and a devout soldier from the ranks of those who served him, ⁸ and after telling them everything, he sent them to Joppa.

⁹ About noon the next day, as they were on their journey and approaching the city, Peter went up on the roof to pray. ¹⁰ He became hungry and wanted something to eat; and while it was being prepared, he fell into a trance. ¹¹ He saw the heaven opened and something like a large sheet coming down, being lowered to the ground by its four corners. ¹² In it were all kinds of four-footed creatures and reptiles and birds of the air. ¹³ Then he heard a voice saying, “Get up, Peter; kill and eat.” ¹⁴ But Peter said, “By no means, Lord; for I have never eaten anything that is profane or unclean.” ¹⁵ The voice said to him again, a second time, “What God has made clean, you must not call profane.” ¹⁶ This happened three times, and the thing was suddenly taken up to heaven.

¹⁷ Now while Peter was greatly puzzled about what to make of the vision that he had seen, suddenly the men sent by Cornelius appeared. They were asking for Simon’s house and were standing by the gate. ¹⁸ They called out to ask whether Simon, who was called Peter, was staying there. ¹⁹ While Peter was still thinking about the vision, the Spirit said

to him, “Look, three men are searching for you.²⁰ Now get up, go down, and go with them without hesitation; for I have sent them.”²¹ So Peter went down to the men and said, “I am the one you are looking for; what is the reason for your coming?”²² They answered, “Cornelius, a centurion, an upright and God-fearing man, who is well spoken of by the whole Jewish nation, was directed by a holy angel to send for you to come to his house and to hear what you have to say.”²³ So Peter invited them in and gave them lodging.

The next day he got up and went with them, and some of the believers from Joppa accompanied him.²⁴ The following day they came to Caesarea. Cornelius was expecting them and had called together his relatives and close friends.²⁵ On Peter’s arrival Cornelius met him, and falling at his feet, worshiped him.²⁶ But Peter made him get up, saying, “Stand up; I am only a mortal.”²⁷ And as he talked with him, he went in and found that many had assembled;²⁸ and he said to them, “You yourselves know that it is unlawful for a Jew to associate with or to visit a Gentile; but God has shown me that I should not call anyone profane or unclean.²⁹ So when I was sent for, I came without objection. Now may I ask why you sent for me?”

³⁰ Cornelius replied, “Four days ago at this very hour, at three o’clock, I was praying in my house when suddenly a man in dazzling clothes stood before me.³¹ He said, ‘Cornelius, your prayer has been heard and your alms have been remembered before God.³² Send therefore to Joppa and ask for Simon, who is called Peter; he is staying in the home of Simon, a tanner, by the sea.’³³ Therefore I sent for you immediately, and you have been kind enough to come. So now all of us are here in the presence of God to listen to all that the Lord has commanded you to say.”

³⁴ Then Peter began to speak to them: “I truly understand that God shows no partiality,³⁵ but in every nation anyone who fears him and does what is right is acceptable to him.³⁶ You know the message he sent to the people of Israel, preaching peace by Jesus Christ – he is Lord of all.³⁷ That message spread throughout Judea, beginning in Galilee after the baptism that John announced:³⁸ how God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and with power; how he went about doing good and healing all who were oppressed by the devil, for God was with him.³⁹ We are witnesses to all that he did both in Judea and in Jerusalem. They put him to death by hanging him on a tree;⁴⁰ but God raised him on the third day and allowed him to appear,⁴¹ not to all the people but to us who were chosen by God as witnesses, and who ate and drank with him after he rose from the dead.⁴² He commanded us to preach to the people and to testify that he is the one ordained by God as judge of the living and the dead.⁴³ All the prophets testify about him that everyone who believes in him receives forgiveness of sins through his name.”

⁴⁴ While Peter was still speaking, the Holy Spirit fell upon all who heard the word.⁴⁵ The circumcised believers who had come with Peter were astounded that the gift of the Holy Spirit had been poured out even on the Gentiles,⁴⁶ for they heard them speaking in tongues and extolling God. Then Peter said,⁴⁷ “Can anyone withhold the water for baptizing these people who have received the Holy Spirit just as we have?”⁴⁸ So he ordered them to be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ. Then they invited him to stay for several days.

b. Acts 11:1-18 – Peter’s Defense for Baptism of Gentiles

¹ Now the apostles and the believers who were in Judea heard that the Gentiles had also accepted the word of God.² So when Peter went up to Jerusalem, the circumcised believers criticized him,³ saying, “Why did you go to uncircumcised men and eat with them?”⁴ Then Peter began to explain it to them, step by step, saying,⁵ “I was in the city

of Joppa praying, and in a trance I saw a vision. There was something like a large sheet coming down from heaven, being lowered by its four corners; and it came close to me. ⁶ As I looked at it closely I saw four-footed animals, beasts of prey, reptiles, and birds of the air. ⁷ I also heard a voice saying to me, ‘Get up, Peter; kill and eat.’ ⁸ But I replied, ‘By no means, Lord; for nothing profane or unclean has ever entered my mouth.’ ⁹ But a second time the voice answered from heaven, ‘What God has made clean, you must not call profane.’ ¹⁰ This happened three times; then everything was pulled up again to heaven. ¹¹ At that very moment three men, sent to me from Caesarea, arrived at the house where we were. ¹² The Spirit told me to go with them and not to make a distinction between them and us. These six brothers also accompanied me, and we entered the man’s house. ¹³ He told us how he had seen the angel standing in his house and saying, ‘Send to Joppa and bring Simon, who is called Peter; ¹⁴ he will give you a message by which you and your entire household will be saved.’ ¹⁵ And as I began to speak, the Holy Spirit fell upon them just as it had upon us at the beginning. ¹⁶ And I remembered the word of the Lord, how he had said, ‘John baptized with water, but you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit.’ ¹⁷ If then God gave them the same gift that he gave us when we believed in the Lord Jesus Christ, who was I that I could hinder God?’ ¹⁸ When they heard this, they were silenced. And they praised God, saying, ‘Then God has given even to the Gentiles the repentance that leads to life.’”

c. Acts 15:1-35 – Jerusalem Affirms the Admission of Gentiles

¹ Then certain individuals came down from Judea and were teaching the brothers, “Unless you are circumcised according to the custom of Moses, you cannot be saved.”

² And after Paul and Barnabas had no small dissension and debate with them, Paul and Barnabas and some of the others were appointed to go up to Jerusalem to discuss this question with the apostles and the elders. ³ So they were sent on their way by the church, and as they passed through both Phoenicia and Samaria, they reported the conversion of the Gentiles, and brought great joy to all the believers. ⁴ When they came to Jerusalem, they were welcomed by the church and the apostles and the elders, and they reported all that God had done with them. ⁵ But some believers who belonged to the sect of the Pharisees stood up and said, “It is necessary for them to be circumcised and ordered to keep the law of Moses.”

⁶ The apostles and the elders met together to consider this matter. ⁷ After there had been much debate, Peter stood up and said to them, “My brothers, you know that in the early days God made a choice among you, that I should be the one through whom the Gentiles would hear the message of the good news and become believers. ⁸ And God, who knows the human heart, testified to them by giving them the Holy Spirit, just as he did to us; ⁹ and in cleansing their hearts by faith he has made no distinction between them and us. ¹⁰ Now therefore why are you putting God to the test by placing on the neck of the disciples a yoke that neither our ancestors nor we have been able to bear? ¹¹ On the contrary, we believe that we will be saved through the grace of the Lord Jesus, just as they will.”

¹² The whole assembly kept silence, and listened to Barnabas and Paul as they told of all the signs and wonders that God had done through them among the Gentiles. ¹³ After they finished speaking, James replied, “My brothers, listen to me. ¹⁴ Simeon has related how God first looked favorably on the Gentiles, to take from among them a people for his name. ¹⁵ This agrees with the words of the prophets, as it is written,

¹⁶ ‘After this I will return,
and I will rebuild the dwelling of David, which has fallen;

from its ruins I will rebuild it, and I will set it up,
¹⁷ so that all other peoples may seek the Lord—
even all the Gentiles over whom my name has been called.

Thus says the Lord, who has been making these things ¹⁸ known from long ago.’
¹⁹ Therefore I have reached the decision that we should not trouble those Gentiles who are turning to God, ²⁰ but we should write to them to abstain only from things polluted by idols and from fornication and from whatever has been strangled and from blood. ²¹ For in every city, for generations past, Moses has had those who proclaim him, for he has been read aloud every sabbath in the synagogues.”

²² Then the apostles and the elders, with the consent of the whole church, decided to choose men from among their members and to send them to Antioch with Paul and Barnabas. They sent Judas called Barsabbas, and Silas, leaders among the brothers, ²³ with the following letter: “The brothers, both the apostles and the elders, to the believers of Gentile origin in Antioch and Syria and Cilicia, greetings. ²⁴ Since we have heard that certain persons who have gone out from us, though with no instructions from us, have said things to disturb you and have unsettled your minds, ²⁵ we have decided unanimously to choose representatives and send them to you, along with our beloved Barnabas and Paul, ²⁶ who have risked their lives for the sake of our Lord Jesus Christ. ²⁷ We have therefore sent Judas and Silas, who themselves will tell you the same things by word of mouth. ²⁸ For it has seemed good to the Holy Spirit and to us to impose on you no further burden than these essentials: ²⁹ that you abstain from what has been sacrificed to idols and from blood and from what is strangled and from fornication. If you keep yourselves from these, you will do well. Farewell.”

³⁰ So they were sent off and went down to Antioch. When they gathered the congregation together, they delivered the letter. ³¹ When its members read it, they rejoiced at the exhortation. ³² Judas and Silas, who were themselves prophets, said much to encourage and strengthen the believers. ³³ After they had been there for some time, they were sent off in peace by the believers to those who had sent them. ³⁴ ³⁵ But Paul and Barnabas remained in Antioch, and there, with many others, they taught and proclaimed the word of the Lord.

C) Paul Regarding Circumcision

1 Corinthians 7:18-19

¹⁸ Was anyone at the time of his call already circumcised? Let him not seek to remove the marks of circumcision. Was anyone at the time of his call uncircumcised? Let him not seek circumcision. ¹⁹ Circumcision is nothing, and uncircumcision is nothing; but obeying the commandments of God is everything.

Galatians 6:15

¹⁵ For neither circumcision nor uncircumcision is anything; but a new creation is everything!

D) Paul Accepts Diversity Regarding the Law

Romans 14:3

² Some believe in eating anything, while the weak eat only vegetables. ³ Those who eat must not despise those who abstain, and those who abstain must not pass judgment on those who eat; for God has welcomed them. ⁴ Who are you to pass judgment on servants of another? It is before their own lord that they stand or fall. And they will be upheld, for the Lord is able to make them stand. ⁵ Some judge one day to be better than another, while others judge all days to be alike. Let all be fully convinced in their own minds.

⁶ Those who observe the day, observe it in honor of the Lord. Also those who eat, eat in honor of the Lord, since they give thanks to God; while those who abstain, abstain in honor of the Lord and give thanks to God.

VIII. Purpose of Marriage

A) Can't Understand Man with Woman

Proverbs 30:18-19

¹⁸ Three things are too wonderful for me; four I do not understand: ¹⁹ the way of an eagle in the sky, the way of a snake on a rock, the way of a ship on the high seas, and the way of a man with a girl.

B) To Keep Out of Trouble

1 Corinthians 7:1-3, 5-6, 9

¹ Now concerning the matters about which you wrote: "It is well for a man not to touch a woman." ² But because of cases of sexual immorality, each man should have his own wife and each woman her own husband. ³ The husband should give to his wife her conjugal rights, and likewise the wife to her husband. ⁵ Do not deprive one another except perhaps by agreement for a set time, to devote yourselves to prayer, and then come together again, so that Satan may not tempt you because of your lack of self-control.

⁶ This I say by way of concession, not of command. ⁹ But if they [widows] are not practicing self-control, they should marry. For it is better to marry than to be aflame with passion.

C) Procreation

Genesis 1:28

²⁸ God blessed them, and God said to them, "Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth and subdue it; and have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the air and over every living thing that moves upon the earth."

D) Companionship, Union, Love

Genesis 2:18

¹⁸ Then the LORD God said, "It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him a helper as his partner

Genesis 2:24

²⁴ Therefore a man leaves his father and his mother and clings to his wife, and they become one flesh.

Deuteronomy 24:5

⁵ When a man is newly married, he shall not go out with the army or be charged with any related duty. He shall be free at home one year, to be happy with the wife whom he has married.

Ecclesiastes 4:9-12

⁹ Two are better than one, because they have a good reward for their toil. ¹⁰ For if they fall, one will lift up the other; but woe to one who is alone and falls and does not have another to help. ¹¹ Again, if two lie together, they keep warm; but how can one keep warm alone? ¹² And though one might prevail against another, two will withstand one. A threefold cord is not quickly broken.

Hosea 2:19-20

¹⁹ And I will take you for my wife forever; I will take you for my wife in righteousness and in justice, in steadfast love, and in mercy. ²⁰ I will take you for my wife in faithfulness; and you shall know the LORD.

Mark 10:2-9 (parallel: Matthew 19:3-6)

² Some Pharisees came, and to test him they asked, “Is it lawful for a man to divorce his wife?” ³ He answered them, “What did Moses command you?” ⁴ They said, “Moses allowed a man to write a certificate of dismissal and to divorce her.” ⁵ But Jesus said to them, “Because of your hardness of heart he wrote this commandment for you. ⁶ But from the beginning of creation, ‘God made them male and female.’ ⁷ ‘For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, ⁸ and the two shall become one flesh.’ So they are no longer two, but one flesh. ⁹ Therefore what God has joined together, let no one separate.”

1 Corinthians 6:16

¹⁶ Do you not know that whoever is united to a prostitute becomes one body with her? For it is said, “The two shall be one flesh.”

IX. Conclusion

2 Corinthians 5:17-19

¹⁷ So if anyone is in Christ, there is a new creation: everything old has passed away; see, everything has become new! ¹⁸ All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ, and has given us the ministry of reconciliation; ¹⁹ that is, in Christ God was reconciling the world to himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and entrusting the message of reconciliation to us.

Galatians 3:27-28

²⁵ But now that faith has come, we are no longer subject to a disciplinarian, ²⁶ for in Christ Jesus you are all children of God through faith. ²⁷ As many of you as were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ. ²⁸ There is no longer Jew or Greek, there is no longer slave or free, there is no longer male and female; for all of you are one in Christ Jesus. ²⁹ And if you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham’s offspring, heirs according to the promise.

1 John 4:7

⁷ Beloved, let us love one another, because love is from God; everyone who loves is born of God and knows God. ⁸ Whoever does not love does not know God, for God is love.

X. Further Reading

The Office of Communications. *To Set Our Hope on Christ: A Response to the Invitation of “Windsor Report ¶135.”* New York, The Episcopal Church Center: 2005.

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