

Witness of the Old Testament (part 3)

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[0:00] Well, our study is homosexuality in the Bible, and we're looking at the text in the Bible that directly, explicitly forbid same-sex behavior.

! Or what one man described, we're engaged in a study of how to condone what the Bible condemns. And seeing it in those terms just reminds us how easy it is to twist the Scriptures if we want it to say something.

We've been looking at the Old Testament Scriptures that speak specifically to this issue, and we've looked at Sodom and Gibeah, two historic scenes in the Old Testament.

Now we've come to two texts in Leviticus in the law. Leviticus 18, 22, and Leviticus 20, and verse 13, which say, Do not lie with a man as one lies with a woman that is detestable.

If a man lies with a man as one lies with a woman, both of them have done what is detestable. They must be put to death. Their blood will be on their own heads.

[1:27] And so we've asked, how do they get around such clear text as this in terms of condoning same-sex behavior?

And first of all, we saw that they claimed that these texts only condemn heterosexual men having relations with other men.

They only condemn those who are wired for women having relations with men. They don't speak at all to those who are sexually orientated toward their same sex.

Then we saw as well another line of argument is that these verses are in our Bible because in that day there was much idolatry and pagan practices that engaged in homosexual behavior.

And therefore it's because of its attachment to idolatry and pagan worship that these acts are condemned. But since it's not used in pagan worship today, therefore there's nothing wrong with it.

[2:38] A third line of argument is that same-sex sex was forbidden because of the widespread male honor issues of the ancient world.

That it was a patriarchal society in the ancient East. And men were held high and for a man to be treated as a woman would be degrading to him.

That's why a man lying with a man is forbidden. We don't want to violate social norms. But since that's not the case in our day, therefore it does not apply.

And then lastly, and this is where we had to quit, there is the claim that these Levitical laws are obviously no longer relevant and no longer binding for us living in the New Testament.

Now this is the one that has real popular appeal. It's often thrown in the face of anyone who dares to quote Leviticus as forbidding same-sex sex.

[3:39] And they would simply say to us, Leviticus also condemns eating lobster and shrimp and wearing clothing made of two kinds of material.

You see, nobody believes these laws are moral laws of God anymore. And neither is the prohibition for same-sex sex. If you still hold to one law in Leviticus, you must hold to them all.

They either stand or fall together. And in the minds of most, they all fall together. They're no longer binding. Now, we began by saying that the Bible itself will not allow us to take this all-or-nothing approach to the laws in Leviticus.

It is clear that some of the laws in Leviticus are no longer binding for today. We have clear New Testament statements to that end.

So the book of Galatians and Acts 15 tell us that we no longer have to be physically circumcised to belong to Israel, to belong to the people of God, the new covenant people of God.

[4:49] The book of Hebrews tells us we no longer to bring an animal sacrifice when we have sinned against God and come to worship Him. And why didn't you bring an animal to worship today?

You say, well, those laws are fulfilled in Christ, and so we don't keep them. Exactly. So we have the book of Hebrews that tells us that, that there has been one sacrifice for sin made that makes an end of all sacrifices.

And then there are various food laws that are found in the book of Leviticus, and Jesus specifically stated that all foods are now clean in the new covenant.

They were only binding under the old covenant as long as there was a Jewish nation, a theocracy. So there are laws that are found in Leviticus and in the Pentateuch that are no longer binding.

But that's not true of all the laws found here. In fact, Leviticus 19, 18 is quoted by Jesus as being one of the two pillars on which hang all the law and the prophets. For it says, love your neighbor as yourself.

[6:01] That's found in Leviticus 19. And it's obviously binding upon men to love our neighbor as we love ourselves.

So the New Testament view of the law is far more nuanced than just this all or nothing approach that the new hermeneutic would like to throw at us.

All of these laws in Leviticus are not of the same kind. And so that begs the question, well, how do we distinguish which laws are for us and which laws are not for us in the New Testament, in this new covenant era?

And that's where we left off, and I assigned you to dig out your confession of faith and to read chapter 19. If you want to follow along in the Trinity Hymnal, if you have one that says, that doesn't say the Baptist edition on the cover, then it's going to be found on the little page 682.

If you do have one that says the Baptist edition, and when I say that, what you're going to find is the Westminster Confession of Faith, the Presbyterian Confession of Faith.

[7:16] But it's very similar. It's the document that our Baptist Confession of Faith was taken from. But if you have the Baptist edition, it's page 680.

And it's chapter 19, and it's entitled, Of the Law of God. I'm going to be reading out of our Faith to Confess, which is an updated English version of it, instead of the old King James language of the 17th century.

But you'll notice, and the first paragraph in the Baptist Confession says that God gave Adam a law that was written in his heart, and he required full obedience of him to keep that law.

Paragraph 2, then. The same law that was first written in man's heart continued to be a perfect rule of righteousness after Adam fell into sin, and was given by God upon Mount Sinai in the form of ten commandments, written in two tables.

The first four constitute our duty towards God, and the remaining six our duty to man. The ten are known as the moral law.

[8:36] Paragraph 5 goes on to say that this moral law remains forever binding. In the gospel, Christ in no way cancels the necessity for this obedience.

Rather, on the contrary, he greatly stresses our obedience to obey the moral law. Not as a way of life, not as a way to salvation, but as the rule of life by which we live.

As the standard that determines what is right and wrong for all ages. So that's the moral law. First written on Adam and Eve's heart, and then by the finger of God written on the two tablets of stone. Alright? Those laws are not set aside as the history of redemption proceeds.

Paragraph 3. Besides the moral law, God also gave to the people of Israel ceremonial laws, which served as types of things to come. They fell into two main groups.

[9:39] In one group were rights partly related to worship, which prefigured Christ. His graces, his actions, his sufferings, and the blessings that he procured for us.

The other group contained a variety of instructions about moral duties. By divine appointment, all these ceremonial laws were to be observed.

But only until they were abrogated in New Testament days by Jesus Christ, the true Messiah and only lawgiver, who was empowered by the Father to terminate them.

So there are certain ceremonial laws, and we just talked about that. Why didn't you bring an animal sacrifice? Because that prefigured Christ. And once Christ came and made the one sacrifice for all, they were abrogated.

They were done away with. And they are no longer binding upon us. They have been fulfilled by the Lord Jesus Christ himself.

[10:41] Those are ceremonial laws. They differ from moral laws. And then paragraph four goes on to say, And to the people of Israel, God also gave sundry judicial laws, which applied as long as they remained a nation.

The principles of equity which appear in them are still valid, not because they're found in Moses' law, but in virtue of their unchanging character. So there were judicial laws.

We might liken these to our constitution that tells how our nation is to be governed, how it's to operate, who is to lead, the three different offices, executive, legislative, judicial, and such as that. So the nation of Israel was a theocracy. God was her king, and he told them how to operate as a nation. That included what punishments do we give to different crimes, and so forth.

But those laws ran their course and fulfilled their primary purpose when Israel was no longer a nation, when God's people were no longer confined to one nation on earth.

[11:56] Now his people are scattered throughout all the nations of the world. And so there is no more judicial law ruling over a theocracy. There is no more theocracy.

A God-ruled nation such as Old Testament Israel. You are the holy nation, Peter says to all the believers.

We make up that nation. And we're not told how we are to operate as if we were a political entity anymore. So those judicial laws have been fulfilled.

The principles of them, insofar as they set forth what is just and right, can still be instructive to us. But we don't obey them because they are found in the law of Moses.

So you see how these pastors and scholars got together and hammered out these statements to distinguish that there are different kinds of laws found throughout the Old Testament.

[13:01] And indeed, within the book of Leviticus. And it does us well to understand their distinctions and not treat them all the same. The Bible itself does not let us do that.

So now we come to these laws. It's detestable for a man to lie with a man as with a woman. What kind of law is that? Is it moral?

Is it ceremonial? Is it judicial? Let's start with the last. Is it judicial? Is this just something that is to apply to the nation of Israel as long as they are a theocracy? No, we don't see any reason to say that.

Rather, we see that this is a law that's rooted at creation. And we see that it's applied not just to Israel but to the pagan nations that were in the promised land.

Indeed, Leviticus 18 ends by saying these detestable things are done by the nations in the promised land.

[14:04] And as you're coming into the promised land, you must not do the detestable things they do. And he calls them sins. And he says it's because of their sins, these sins, these detestable sins, including same-sex sex, that the land is going to vomit them out.

I'm going to judge them and chase them out of the promised land. Take away their home. Their homeland. And give it to you. Because they sinned against me. Now, they didn't have Leviticus.

But they had the law of God written on their heart. The moral law of God. They had that. And that was enough to condemn them. So that commandment was not just something for Israel.

Rather, we find that it was applied to Sodom. Sodom was not an Israelite city. And yet God applied his law to these pagan nations. So it's not judicial.

Was it ceremonial? Is it something that's prefiguring Christ and who he is and his work of salvation? No, it doesn't fit that category. Well, could it be moral?

[15:12] Could this just be the way God means for society to work? For man to behave toward him and toward one another? Ah, that's the kind of command we have here.

That at the very beginning, God was laying out. How is man to behave toward himself? How is mankind to behave?

Well, they're to behave along certain gender lines. And sexuality is only to be expressed in a way that is acceptable to me by one man with one woman in the covenant of marriage.

So, you see, that's a moral command. That's the way it's meant to be. That's the way it's supposed to be. And so, for all of human history, that is the law that is binding. And you can see then how we cannot be dissuaded and turned aside by this cavalier approach that just says, Well, Leviticus doesn't let us eat shrimp.

So, if you're wanting to hold to this anti-same-sex law of Leviticus, then you need to quit visiting Red Lobster and so on. That's not treating the Bible, the law of God, as the Bible itself treats it.

[16:31] Same-sex sex violates a timeless moral law that goes right back to creation. It's one of those creation ordinances. Before there were ever nations, there were creation laws.

Not only written upon the heart, but God had spoken about male and female, have I created them, gender.

God had spoken about proper sexual activity. The one flesh union only to be found in the context of marriage between a man and a woman, a husband and his wife.

And so, these creation ordinances reveal that these laws of Leviticus, though they may be right beside a ceremonial law or right beside a judicial law, are nevertheless moral laws.

And we're not to treat them as something that they're not. But we still have this matter of capital punishment attached to chapter 20 and verse 13, don't we?

[17:39] What about the command to put to death those who are guilty? Those men who are guilty of lying with a man as a man lies with a woman. And this is often used to poke fun at our view as well, to uphold this law as a ridiculous thing.

You see, if you believe in that, are you saying that we ought to be killing homosexuals? We ought to be killing lesbians? We ought to be putting them to death? You see how ridiculous that this is?

And so they would like to throw the baby out with the bathwater. But it's a failure, again, to distinguish moral law from judicial law. And sometimes they're in the same verse.

The command not to lie with a man as a man lies with a woman is a moral commandment. It stands for all time.

The command, Israel as a nation, what are you to do then if someone in Israel does this detestable thing? You are to put them to death.

[18:42] You are to put them both to death. You see, that's a command given to the nation of how they are to deal with this detestable practice. So we can have, even within the same verse, elements that are moral and elements that are judicial.

And again, we see that the Bible is far more nuanced than just this idea that we treat all of Leviticus in the same way.

Now, before we move on, I want to stop and ask, are there questions or comments on the Leviticus texts? What we covered in the two weeks ago or even just in summary form this morning.

Any questions about that? I trust that we can at least see the general layout of the turf that the Bible itself doesn't allow us just to take an all or nothing approach to the laws that we find in Leviticus.

It isn't always real easy to distinguish. Is this ceremonial? Is this judicial? But I think as we understand the categories, it does help us in seeing that the Bible itself makes distinctions.

[20:05] Mark and then Steve. I was just wondering, how do we explain the difference between applying the moral law to our system of laws in our country, differentiating that between how it would be punishable in our society as opposed to ancient Israel?

I mean, is it fair to say that God requires us to obey the moral law in our country's laws, but gives us liberty as to the enforcement or the punishment for violating those laws, that he leaves that at our discretion?

We don't. I think part of it has to do with the different spheres of authority that God has given.

Basically three. He's given the family.

He's given the church. And the government. And you have these three spheres of authority. And God has given authority to each one. And you're asking, whose authority is it to determine how we would punish homosexual behavior?

Well, the church doesn't have that role. We do not bear the sword to enforce the law of God. In the Old Testament, the church was a theocracy.

[21:38] They did have that responsibility. So the church, the nation, it was one. And so that's why God said, put them to death. But the government does have the responsibility to enforce the moral law.

Right. I believe that's true. But my point is, so the church's role then is to inform the government about their responsibility. You have authority given you from God.

You need to see that you're wielding the sword and you're using your authority in a way that upholds God's moral laws. We have, in that sense, a prophetic voice to call our government to deal faithfully with the authority given to them.

We don't have the sword, but we have the mouth. We have the witness to stand up in the public square and to speak to our government as to their responsibility.

And then they must wrestle out with that issue. What is the way that we as a nation should uphold the biblical law of marriage and so on.

[22:49] So that doesn't answer all your question. I understand. We'd be here all day if we tried to get to the bottom of it. Thank you, Mark. Rex? I look at it as we are put to death.

Ourself is to put to death. Every sin that comes into us, we are supposed to cast it out. We have the tendency, this tendency, but other sin tendencies, we have to pull it out and put it to death.

And that only by the blood of Christ, we have to ask for his help to give those sins of help. So we are judgment because it's in our heart. We put that into our hearts to say, you've got to be rid of this. Put it to death. Yeah. Yeah, that's right. We don't have the sword to wield against the other man's sin, but we are to mortify sin in ourself. But we still have to deal with this issue that in the Old Testament, it was more than just putting to death this sin.

It was actually the king wielding and his men with their swords actually putting to death those that violated certain laws. For instance, the Sabbath law was capital punishment for such.

[24:03] So again, yeah, we don't see those laws as binding upon any nation because there is no more theocracy in which God is king.

Lane? You're right, Lane. And that's something we dealt with in an earlier lesson when we looked at this whole thing of sexual orientation.

And we saw that we too must stand beside them and say that just as you have certain sinful tendencies that you may have been born with, we're not ready to just totally sell out.

But even if that is true and you were born with these, I too have tendencies towards sin that I have been born with. And it's not that God made me that way. If you want to talk about how God made us, we need to go back to Genesis chapter 1.

If you want to talk about how I entered the world, you need to come up to chapter 3 and 4 and 5 because I have come into the world as a sinner.

[25:04] So you can't blame God for creating me this way. He created us upright and man has gone in seeking many schemes and devices. So there's a distinction there.

We dealt with that. I'll try to give you the lesson number for that lane later. But you're right. We need to be very careful how we speak about orientation, how we speak of the judgment of God.

We need to stand condemned beside any lawbreaker because we too have broken God's laws on sexuality. I'm going to ask that we move on if I can.

All right. Any other pressing questions that just need an answer? All right. Thank you for that because I want to at least introduce the New Testament. We've seen the Old Testament.

We're coming into the New Testament. And as we do, we want to look at New Testament texts that speak directly, explicitly to same-sex sex.

[26:06] And we'll begin that in three weeks, Lord willing, when we're back from Switzerland with Romans chapter 1. So if you want to get started, yeah, read through Romans chapter 1.

And we'll see when we take this up again what the New Testament has to say about it. But first we need to consider, I believe, what our Lord's view is on same-sex sex or on homosexuality.

There's a sign that will inevitably be waved at gay parades that says, here is what the Lord, here is what Jesus says about homosexuality.

Semicolon. Followed by a blank line. Okay? Here's what Jesus says about homosexuality.

Nothing. All right? The point being made that if Jesus didn't say anything about it, that it didn't matter to him and it shouldn't matter to us.

[27:15] We've quoted Troy Perry before, a self-professed gay Christian and a minister of the gospel. And I'm saying all this in quotes. We haven't got to our study yet of that whole terminology.

We'll get there, Lord willing. But the founder of a denomination of churches that condones same-sex marriage. And I quote him here.

As for the question, what did, this is Troy Perry, what did Jesus say about homosexuality? The answer is simple. Jesus said nothing. Not one thing.

Nothing. Jesus was more interested in love. End quote. Now, I want to respond with at least four arguments or four responses to this argument from silence.

And that's the kind of argument we have here. Jesus didn't say anything about it. Therefore, it must be okay with him. Number one, it misses the point that all scripture is the product of our great prophet, Jesus Christ.

[28:25] There's one lawgiver who's able to save and to destroy. It's the Lord Jesus. So whether you're reading Genesis or Revelation or Ruth or Ephesians or Romans 1, you're reading the words of our prophet, Jesus Christ.

And that's what we've been trying to teach in the Sunday morning series. It's not just what he spoke in Matthew, Mark, and Luke, and John. After he ascended and went back into heaven.

The Old Testament prophets spoke how? Peter says, by the spirit of Christ that was in them. Old Testament prophets speaking by the spirit of Christ, trying to understand all that they were saying. The spirit of Christ revealing truth to the Old Testament prophets. And then the epistles and the apostles, after Jesus went to heaven, he, through his spirit, revealed, reminded them of what he had said.

And revealed the meaning of what he had done. And so the whole of the Bible, and especially we would say the New Testament, I mean, it's all the word of Jesus.

[29:38] And sometimes perhaps it is the red letter editions of the Bible. I have one. I'm not wanting to condemn them and make you feel guilty if you have one. I have one too. But if we think by that that the things found in red ink are more important than the things found in black ink, it has done us a poor service indeed.

It has stripped the authority of the word of God. So we must never think that. If your children have red editions of the Bible, of the words of Jesus, please just explain that to them.

Honey, this is just saying that when Jesus was on the earth, these words actually came out of his mouth. But do you know that all the words of the Bible have proceeded out of the mouth of the Son of God?

He is God. And this is his word. It is not that what is in red is authoritative as the word of God and what's in black is the word of man.

It was all inspired. All scripture is inspired. So that's what we would say, first of all. So just because Jesus himself in the three years of his public ministry had no one record anything that he said explicitly about same-sex sex doesn't mean that it didn't matter to him and all he cared about was love.

[31:01] That's to make what is written in red more important than what's in black. Because we do have verses in the old and verses in the new that condemn it, that speak explicitly to this issue.

And they are in unison condemn it as sin. The second line of our response is that just because Jesus himself does not speak explicitly about the sin of same-sex sex by name, that does not mean that he did not say anything to condemn it.

Every time we read that Jesus speaks against sexual immorality, same-sex sex is condemned. Okay, so Mark 7, 20, Jesus says, Out of the heart of man come evil thoughts, sexual immorality, pornea.

What's that word mean? It is every kind of unlawful sexual intercourse. Every kind of unlawful sexual intercourse.

So if Jesus condemns the whole category, guess what? All the particulars in the category stand condemned as well. So if my doctor says I'm not allowed to eat ice cream, that means chocolate and strawberry.

[32:28] But you never told me that it didn't mean lemon chiffon ice cream. No, it condemns every kind of ice cream. And when Jesus condemns sexual immorality, pornea, it condemns every kind of sexual immorality, which the rest of the Bible very clearly shows same-sex sex to be.

A third response is that in Matthew 19, Jesus upholds the creation ordinance of marriage as still being regulative and binding. You remember, they came to him and asked him the question, Is it lawful to get a divorce for any and every reason?

And instead of giving a simple yes or no, Jesus does something else. He takes them back to the Creator's design for marriage in the beginning as still being authoritative.

And so he says, Haven't you read that at the beginning the Creator made them male and female? And he said, For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and the two will become one flesh.

So they're no longer two but one. Therefore what God has joined together, let man not separate. So he goes back to the beginning to establish what is right and wrong for his hearers of the first century.

[33:57] And what God said at the beginning had to do with gender, male and female, had to do with sexual behavior, one flesh union, only for a man and his wife in marriage, and for the definition of marriage.

It's between a man and a woman in the covenant. So, again, we're seeing that anything that violates that creation design then is forbidden.

Jesus holds up the standard and says, Your views on divorce, they fall outside of what God intended from the beginning. Well, he could say that to any form.

He could talk to the prostitute and say, Your view of sexuality falls outside of the design from the beginning. It's wrong. He could say that to the homosexual. He could say that to the man that's just playing the field and jumping in and out of bed.

He could say it to all forms of sexual women holding up the standard from the beginning. And it condemns all violations of it. Very quickly, a fourth line of thought is that in response to this, we return then to Perry's claim.

[35:15] Jesus said nothing about homosexuality, not one thing, nothing. Jesus was more interested in love. As if Jesus cannot be interested in more than one thing at a time.

So, if he's not interested in this, but he is interested in love, so therefore he's really not interested in homosexuality. How does that track?

Could it be that he is interested in love, as you say, Mr. Perry? But he's also interested in who you make love with. That it's not either or, it's both.

And that very often is the way that these folks deal with the scriptures. They create an either or schematic. And if it doesn't fit, you see, it's out.

But it's not either or. Yes, Jesus is interested in love. And he's very interested as well in who you have that one flesh expression of love.

[36:18] So, this new ethic of Jesus is supposedly setting aside the Old Testament ethic of law. As if love has no boundaries of law.

That's the trouble with this new ethic of love. It's so subjective. Is this the loving thing to do? Well, I feel like it is. I feel like I'm in love with him. That is so subjective.

There are no fixed laws to define love. Or to keep it within moral boundaries. So, love trumps the old laws. It's obsolete and at odds with love. And that is to create an antithesis.

Where there is none. It's to set law against love as if they were enemies. When Jesus says, if you love me, you'll what? You'll keep my commands.

My laws. Here's the one who loves me. He who keeps my commands. John 14, 21. So, law and love are not at enmity with one another.

[37:22] And the similar thing is done by this group in seeking not only to drive a wedge between law and love. You see, Jesus is just interested in love and these old laws. They don't. They're not important to him.

They also try to drive a wedge between the scriptures and the Holy Spirit. In his book, The Gay Gospel, former gay Joe Dallas tells of a discussion.

He goes around to churches preaching the truth now. And sharing his testimony of God's deliverance of him from this sin. And he was in a Presbyterian church in Washington, D.C.

Setting forth the biblical view of same-sex sex. And the local representative of the Lesbian and Gay Concerns Committee complained, You keep talking about the Bible.

But I want to know what you think about the Holy Spirit. As if there's a wedge between the two.

[38:17] Okay, you keep talking about the scriptures. But I want to know about the leading of the Spirit. Well, you see, this is very objective, isn't it? It's in print.

It's on your lap. And you can read it. What is the law of God? What's the leading of the Spirit say?

You see how you jump right out of what's certain and absolute and into the fuzziness of, Well, I feel the Spirit moving me.

And he says it's okay. Dallas says, I can't count the number of people who've said to me, I've prayed earnestly on this issue, and I really feel that I'm doing what God told me to do.

You see, that the Spirit told me to do. No, the Spirit has already gone on record as to what is right and wrong. All Scripture is the fruit of the Spirit.

[39:20] A George Barna survey in 1991 found that 66% of Americans no longer believe there is such a thing as absolute black and white truth. And more than half of them claim to be born again Christians.

So that's what we're dealing with when we're trying to talk about, Does the Bible speak against or for? Same-sex sex. Well, we must reassert that the Scriptures are the mind of God on the matter. And that is the way that the Spirit leads us, not contrary to the word that he's in Scripture-aided. So let's draw a line there, and if you've got questions, we'll seek to take it up in two weeks as we begin, or actually three weeks as we begin then the New Testament testimony about this issue. All right? We're dismissed.