

Joshua 07-05-25a

This is Friday, the 25th of May, 2007. We have assembled this evening to study together the truth of God's Word. We're going to have a little bit of a special study tonight.

It is loosely connected to our study in the book of Joshua, but only loosely, and I make no apology for that. It is something that I think we need to cover. But we'll begin, as we always do, by taking just a moment to organize our thoughts, focus our concentration, ensure that we are susceptible to the ministry of God's Holy Spirit, without which, pretty much everything we do is a waste of time.

Shall we pray? Father, we thank you for the opportunity to gather as believers of like mind to enjoy the benefits of fellowship, of the gifts that you have distributed to each one of us. We are grateful for the presence and the enthusiasm and the faithfulness of each one who has taken time out of a busy week to dedicate this portion of the day to a study of your Word and to the meditation upon it and conversation about it with fellow believers. We ask your blessing on us as we study.

We ask it in Jesus' name. Amen. One of the reasons that God sent Joshua and the children of Israel across the Jordan and into the land of Canaan was to judge the inhabitants thereof.

If you turn in your Bible to Leviticus chapter 18, we're going to take a look at one of the practices for which those people were condemned. It is a practice which is widely celebrated and encouraged, tolerated, and has been made a great social cause in our day. It is the practice of homosexuality.

Believe me, this is not one of my favorite subjects, but it is something that we need to cover. It is covered rather thoroughly in the Word of God, and it is something that we need to understand. We need to understand the Bible's perspective, the Bible's statements, God's will and God's Word on this subject, particularly in our present day, our present time, and our present social climate.

Leviticus chapter 18 is part of the Bible's moral code. There are different parts of the Law of Moses. You know already that Leviticus is part of the Pentateuch, one of the five books of Moses.

It emphasizes, and you see this in its name, Leviticus. It emphasizes, it looks primarily at the function of the priests. The priests, the Levites, were the custodians of the worship life of Israel.

They ran it, they maintained it, they operated the sacrificial system. They were the arbiters of ritual purity according to the law that God gave Moses on Mount Sinai. If you had a spot on your skin, you would go to the priest and he would determine if it was

clean or unclean.

If you had had a bout of a skin disease and you thought you were cured, you were not restored to form and function within the nation of Israel until you saw the priest. Jesus himself, when he cleansed the lepers, the first thing he said to them was, Go, show yourself to the priest as Moses commanded. You're not clean until the priest declares you clean.

Of course, they disobeyed and didn't do what Jesus told them to. But, here in Leviticus chapter 18, we are in a section of the book that deals not just with the priests, although some try to make it that, but to all the children of Israel. You see this at the beginning of the chapter.

The Lord spoke to Moses saying, Speak to the children of Israel and say to them, I am the Lord your God. Now, let me just pause here. We've had discussions in the past about the angel of the Lord.

Moses did not stand up in response to this command and say, He is the Lord your God. Did he? God said, Moses, go stand in front of the children of Israel and say to them, I am the Lord your God. Now, do you think anybody confused Moses with God when Moses stood up and said, This is the word of the Lord.

I am the Lord your God. Moses is a messenger. He is the voice of God.

He is a human intermediary. There are angelic intermediaries who speak in the first person on behalf of God. And this is what Moses does.

So, just a little additional light shed on the angel of the Lord in the Old Testament. According to the doings of the land of Egypt where you dwelt, you shall not do. According to the doings of the land of Canaan where I am bringing you, you shall not do, nor shall you walk in their ordinances.

You shall observe my judgments and keep my ordinances to walk in them. I am the Lord your God. You shall therefore keep my statutes and my judgments, which, if a man does, he shall live by them.

I am the Lord. Now, in verse 6, going all the way down through verse 18. These are descriptions of incest.

Immoral, prohibited sexual relations with near kin folks. You don't sleep with your near relatives. It is forbidden.

Now, when you get down to verse 21, after some other prohibitions about sexual relations with women, either at times or in relationships that make them prohibited, look at verse 21. You shall not let any of your descendants pass through the fire to Molech.

The fire, as you can see from the italics, is not actually there, but it's implied in the verb.

We know that there was this practice. There was a sort of low view of children in the ancient world amongst the pagan cultures, certainly not in Israel. But the pagans would say, I can get 10 or 15 years worth of good crops if I take this newborn infant and make a live burnt offering out of it to Molech.

Nor shall you profane the name of your God. I am the Lord. Verse 22.

You shall not lie with a male as with a woman. It is an abomination. Nor shall you mate with any animal to defile yourself with it.

Nor shall any woman stand before an animal to mate with it. It is perversion. Do not defile yourselves with any of these things, for by all these the nations are defiled, which I am casting out before you.

Egypt was defiled with these perversions. This is what God mentioned at the beginning of the chapter. Canaan was defiled with these perversions, as mentioned at the beginning of the chapter.

God reiterates that again here. These nations are defiled. I am casting them out before you.

The land is defiled. Therefore I visit the punishment of its iniquity upon it. And the land vomits out its inhabitants.

You shall therefore keep my statutes and my judgments and shall not commit any of these abominations, either any of your own nation or any stranger who dwells among you. Not only are you not to do it, but you don't tolerate those who do. For all these abominations the men of the land have done who were before you, and thus the land is defiled.

Lest the land vomit you out also when you defile it, as it vomited out the nations that were before you. For whoever commits any of these abominations, the persons who commit them shall be cut off from among their people. This generally means executed.

Therefore you shall keep my ordinance, so that you do not commit any of these abominable customs which were committed before you, and that you do not defile yourselves by them. I am the Lord your God. Now, this seems pretty clear.

In particular, when you look at verse 22, you shall not lie with a male as with a woman. It is an abomination. You think, well, that would be about as clear and accurate a description of homosexuality between two men as you can get.

However, there is a widespread and ever-growing movement to claim that not only is homosexuality okay, natural, perfectly healthy for people who are bent in that direction,

but the Bible really does not come out against homosexuality at all. Now, this is a head-scratcher to me, having just read this passage, but you would be amazed at the creativity of those who decide that the Bible says something else. I want to read you a sampling of Bible scholars and theologians who have come to the conclusion that homosexuality is not a sin and the Scriptures do not object to homosexuality at all.

There was a survey put out by a group called PFLG. This is the Parents and Friends of Lesbian and Gays. PFLG, or PFLAG, I guess is the acronym.

I don't mean anything by that. It's P-F-L-A-G. Parents and Friends of Lesbians and Gays.

They gave this survey to a wide range of theologians and Bible scholars, and then they printed the results that I'm about to read to you. I don't know if they got other surveys back. They certainly didn't send one to me.

And if they had, I don't believe they would have published the answers. But I want you to listen carefully because, and this is why, pay attention now. You are going to be in a discussion.

If you have not been already, you will be. I promise you, you young people especially. Someone is going to engage you in conversation and say, if you have any biblical objections, if you have any reservations as a Christian about homosexuality, you are wrong.

Your Bible does not say anything, and it's your bigoted misunderstanding that is the problem. It's important for you to know what the Bible teaches and where these allegedly biblical arguments go astray. So listen to this.

These are the two questions that were asked by the P-Flag people. In your opinion, does God regard homosexuality as a sin? In your opinion, does God regard homosexuality as a sin? The second question. In your opinion, do the scriptures object to homosexuality? Here is the answer from our first batter, our first man up to bat here.

The Reverend Dr. William R. Staten, Baptist minister, certified sexologist, associate professor of psychiatric and human behavior, servant on the faculty of LaSalle University's Graduate Department of Religious Studies, holder of the Master of Divinity from Andover Newton Theological School, and a PhD, that's a doctor of theology, from Boston University. Here are his answers. Number one, in your opinion, does God regard homosexuality as a sin? Absolutely not! Exclamation point.

There is nothing in the Bible or in my own theology that would lead me to believe that God regards homosexuality as a sin. God is interested in our relationships with ourselves, others, the things in our lives, and with God. And he quotes Matthew 23, 36-40 for support.

There is nothing in the mind of God that could be against a loving sexual relationship freely entered into without coercion among sincere adults, whether gay, bisexual, or straight. And I think he worked carefully on that statement to be inclusive and comprehensive, and to carefully exclude things like NAMBLA, what is that, the National Association of Man-Boy Love, or whatever the heck it is, that pederasty is out, you don't abuse children, they're against that. So he says, there is nothing in the mind of God that could be against a loving sexual relationship freely entered into without coercion among sincere adults, whether gay, bisexual, or straight.

God is not against it. Question two, in your opinion, do the scriptures object to homosexuality? Answer, there is nothing in the Bible regarding homosexual orientation. Notice the careful wording.

There is nothing in the Bible, nothing underlined, nothing in the Bible regarding homosexual orientation. We just read Leviticus chapter 18 that talks about homosexual practice, right? But it doesn't say, thou shalt not be oriented to gayness. In fact, the Bible does not concern itself with sexual orientation.

Notice he is answering the wrong question here. The question was not, do the scriptures object to homosexual orientation? But that's what he's answering. Because he doesn't want to have to address what the scriptures have to say, both here and in some other passages we're going to look at tonight.

Nothing in the Bible regarding orientation. Doesn't concern itself with orientation. It does speak out probably against, Bible probably speaks out against gang rape, male prostitution for religious purposes, and pederasty, sex between an adult and youth.

I lead Bible study programs on this subject and am convinced that the Bible does not address the issue of a person's sexual orientation. Three times he diverts his answer to orientation and mysteriously avoids dealing with the passages, such as the one we just read. Our second batter up, Bishop John S. Spong, Episcopal Bishop, most published member of the Episcopal House of Bishops, author of 11 books and 50 published articles, Phi Beta Kappa graduate of UNC Chapel Hill, University of North Carolina, holds the Master in Divinity and an Honorary Doctorate in Divinity from Protestant Episcopal Theological Seminary.

He has received an Honorary Doctorate in Divinity from St. Paul's College. Does God consider homosexuality a sin? Some argue that since homosexual behavior is, quote, unnatural, it is contrary to the order of creation. Behind this pronouncement are stereotypical definitions of masculinity and femininity that reflect rigid gender categories of patriarchal society.

There is nothing unnatural about any shared love, even between two of the same gender, if that experience calls both partners to a fuller state of being. Contemporary

research is uncovering new facts that are producing a rising conviction that homosexuality, far from being a sickness, sin, perversion, or unnatural act, is a healthy, natural, and affirming form of human sexuality for some people. Findings indicate that homosexuality is a given fact in the nature of a significant portion of people and that it is unchangeable.

Our prejudice rejects people or things outside our understanding, but the God of creation speaks and declares, I have looked out on everything I have made, and behold, it is very good. Genesis 1.31 The word of God in Christ says that we are loved, valued, redeemed, and counted as precious, no matter how we might be valued by a prejudiced world. Now, in answer to the second question, does the scripture come out against homosexuality? The bishop here, Bishop Spong, does actually engage the text, and I want you to listen carefully to his interpretation.

There are a few biblical references to homosexuality. The first, the story of Sodom and Gomorrah, is often quoted to prove that the Bible condemns homosexuality. But the real sin of Sodom was the unwillingness of the city's men to observe the laws of hospitality.

You may remember when we went through Genesis, we covered this interpretation. The intention was to insult the stranger by forcing him to take the female role in the sex act. The biblical narrative approves Lot's offer of his virgin daughters to satisfy the sexual demands of the moth.

The biblical narrative approves? I think that verse must have gotten left out of my version. How many would say, this is the word of the Lord? When the Bible is quoted literally, it might well be well for the one quoting to read the text in its entirety. We will do so.

Leviticus in the Hebrew Scriptures condemns homosexual behavior, at least for males. Yet, abomination, the word Leviticus uses to describe homosexuality, is the same word used to describe a menstruating woman. Paul is the most quoted source in the battle to condemn homosexuality.

Romans 1, 26-27, and 1 Corinthians 6, 9-11. Two other passages we will look at. Romans 1, 26-27, 1 Corinthians 6, 9-11.

There is also a passage in Timothy. Homosexual activity was regarded by Paul as a punishment visited upon idolaters by God because of their unfaithfulness. Homosexuality was not the sin, but the punishment.

I'm not sure how that releases you from the biblical condemnation, but he seems to think it does. In 1 Corinthians 6, 9-11, Paul gave a list of those who would not inherit the kingdom of God. The list includes all kinds of things, idolaters, sexual perverts, thieves, greedy drunkards, revilers, robbers.

Sexual perverts is a translation of two words. We'll talk about those words and their translation. He basically says that these were prostitutes.

He goes on to say, It appears that Paul would not approve of homosexual behavior, but was Paul's opinion about homosexuality accurate, or was it limited by the lack of scientific knowledge in his day and infected by prejudice born of ignorance? In other words, poor Paul. He's an ancient man, victim of his own culture, no scientific knowledge, so he couldn't know what we know today, and that's why his views are not to be taken seriously. An examination of some of Paul's other assumptions and conclusions will help answer this question.

Who today would share Paul's anti-Semitic attitude? Paul's anti-Semitic attitude? Excuse me, I believe Paul says, I'm a Hebrew of the Hebrews, a tribe of Benjamin, grown up as a Pharisee. He was the ultimate Jew. How you call him anti-Semitic is beyond me.

His belief that the authority of the state was not to be challenged or that all women ought to be veiled. In these attitudes, Paul's thinking has been challenged and transcended, even by the church. Is Paul's commentary on homosexuality more absolute than some of his other antiquated, culturally conditioned ideas? Now, right away, I think you can see the flaw in this line of reasoning.

Is the Bible the word of Paul or the word of God? Was God limited by some ancient cultural and scientific ignorance? If it's the word of God, then these are specious arguments, meaning empty, having no traction, having no substance. Other references in the New Testament appear to be limited to condemnation of male sex slaves or showing examples in Sodom and Gomorrah of God's destruction of unbelievers and heretics. That is all that Scripture has to say about homosexuality.

Even if one is a biblical literalist, these references do not build an ironclad case for condemnation. If one is not a biblical literalist, there is no case at all, nothing but prejudice born of ignorance that attacks people whose only crime is to be born with an unchangeable sexual predisposition toward those of their own sex. This man is a bishop and a holder of several theological degrees.

And, of course, he is going to be cited by those who love to try to say biblical scholars are on my side. Most of these arguments, and there are a bunch in this document, and if you really want to wade through all of the contortions and gymnastics and prevarications that people try to make, you can. It's all up there.

There are different ones. There are bishops. There are sisters.

There are rabbis. Here's a Jewish rabbi. It's Rabbi Janet Marder.

I'm guessing that this would be a lady rabbi. Associate Director for the Union of American Hebrew Congregations, Pacific Southwest Council. Pacific Southwest, what would that

be? California.

Land of Fruits and Nuts, just so you know. At Santa Cruz. The God I worship endorses loving, committed, monogamous relationships regardless of the gender of those involved.

Well, that's fine, but the God you worship is clearly not the God of the Hebrew Scriptures. Question two. Does the Bible condemn it? She says, I believe the Hebrew Bible strongly condemns homosexuality.

And if she had stopped there, she would have been good. But she didn't. While it is part of my tradition, I do not regard all biblical laws as binding on me.

The biblical condemnation of homosexuality is based on human ignorance, suspicion of those who are different, and an overwhelming concern for ensuring the survival of the people. Since the Bible regards homosexuality as a capital crime, it clearly assumes that homosexuality is a matter of free choice, a deliberate rebellion against God. We have learned from modern science that people do not choose to be gay or straight.

Hence it is neither logical nor moral to condemn those whose nature it is to be gay or lesbian. Just so you know, science has determined no such thing. There is a great deception floating around the internet and floating around discussion groups and floating around in the minds of people who have not actually researched this subject.

There is no scientific basis for homosexuality being encoded in one's genes. None. Zero.

Zilch. In fact, there is a strong scientific argument against it. And if you get tired of arguing with the evolutionists and all of their constant harangues about evolution, well, here is your chance to hand them back their evolution scenario.

What evolutionary mechanism would select for homosexuality? How does that bring about a survival advantage? Oh, a beast. A beast. I mean, how are you going to survive? How are you going to procreate if you did have some sort of damaged gene that made you gay? How are you going to pass that on when you have no offspring? It is scientific inanity.

It is complete irrationality to say that homosexuality is genetic. How did it evolve? How did it perpetuate itself when there is no reproduction? What are the fundamental principles of Darwinism? Mutation and natural selection. The heart and soul of natural selection is reproduction.

You have this beneficial mutation, it confers a survival advantage, and then it gets into your gene pool and your little mutated offspring do better than everybody else. So, how does this work? Explain it to me, oh, thou science-based homosexuality believer. I fail to see any possible mechanism, using your own evolutionary logic, by which this could

possibly take place.

Oh, it is a benign mutation. It gets carried along recessively and pops out every once in a while. It doesn't confer an advantage, but it doesn't get weeded out either.

Excuse me, how does this perpetuate itself, generation after generation after generation, without being selected? You've just thrown evolution out the window. You've just thrown natural selection out the window. Survival of the fittest? Do you think that the guys who are reproducing and have seven sons are not going to go club the homosexuals to death in the Cro-Magnon world? I mean, come on.

Anyway, I exaggerated a bit, but you can see that there are real problems with the scientific argument. There is no scientific evidence. If someone says science has proven this, press them to provide you with a study.

Say, show me where this was proven, because I promise you it's not there. It's an urban legend. It's like people waking up in the bathtub full of ice with a kidney missing.

It's fun for people to believe, but it doesn't actually happen. Well, you can read the rest of this, and forgive me for saying so, tripe in the document that I put in the folder under the various study on the website. I'm not going to dignify this stuff with further reading of it.

What I do want to do is talk about this. There is immediately a divide in any discussion on this subject. First of all, do you consider the Bible authoritative for faith and practice? Do you consider the Bible to be a valid source of moral guidance, yes or no? If you do not, if you think the Bible is a human production, if it was just a bunch of old Jewish geezers who got together and invented some myths about where their people came from, and wanted to preach and publish and so on, well, you're wasting your time talking to those people, because no matter what you demonstrate from the Bible, they're going to say, well, that has no relevance.

People who think the Bible is a human document, forget it. You're wasting your time. The Bible is authoritative because it is God's word.

People who don't treat the Bible as God's word, well, fine, I mean, justify your weird practices however you want, but do not try to say that the Bible says what it does not say. Don't make the Bibles know a yes. Don't make the Bibles, thou shalt not, a feel free to.

And even people who don't believe the Bible, I will argue with them at the point that they start saying, your own Bible has nothing to say about this subject. Oh, yes it does, and I am fully qualified and equipped to tell you what it says, and I will do so. And there is a time when we need to speak up in our culture, and particularly amongst our fellow believers, and make sure that there are no delusions about what the Bible teaches on

this subject.

However politically incorrect it may seem, in our prevailing culture, the Bible is very specific, very clear, very unambiguous on this topic. Now let me hasten to add, the fact that the Bible is clear, the fact that the Bible defines this as a capital offense, a death penalty offense for Israel, needs to be understood, because it is not now a death penalty offense, and it is not our commission, it is not our instruction, it is not our place to go find and punish people who commit crimes that under the laws of Israel were capital offenses. And believe me, there were many.

Virtually all the teenagers in the Plano Independent School District would be dead now, if we tried to implement the death penalty offense thing for modern society. These things are written for our instruction. We learn principles.

We learn what is and is not moral. And I will talk about that in a bit more detail. But I hasten to assure you, it is not our place to run around and try to penalize in some way, people who make immoral choices, as the Bible defines morality.

God will judge. There is a judgment coming. And it is not our place.

So there is a straw man argument that says, oh, you believe the Bible condemns homosexuality, and all you want to do is run around and stone the homo. You just want to go out and conduct some sort of a holy war against these people. Not at all.

Our interpretation and application is for ourselves. It is not an agenda to launch a crusade. We can vote.

We can make our voices heard in society. But in terms of specific individuals or specific groups, and going out and doing some sort of overt attack, and some sort of physical violence and harm, the Bible condemns that as sinful. You don't go after a sin by committing a sin yourself.

And that is a sin. It is not our place in this day and age to do that. So let me assure you that our study tonight is not designed to promote gay bashing in any sort of overt sense.

We want to understand what the Scriptures teach. We want to have balance, and we want to make personal application from them. And that is as far as it goes.

Do not go run out to your nearest hairdresser and punch them in the nose, whether they are gay or not. At least not for that reason. Maybe you got a bad frost job.

That may be a different deal. Let me start by clearing away the misconceptions about this passage in Leviticus. Some of these people, if you go and read this long document, and all the ways they explain away Leviticus 18, one of the things they say is this was looking at the worship practices in Canaan.

That this was temple prostitution, gay man-on-man temple prostitution, and this sort of thing. That is what is being discussed here. It has nothing to do with loving, committed relationships.

It is the abusive, coercive thing that God was coming out against. We used to have a saying which I can clean up a little bit and pass along to you in the Marine Corps. Read what the book says.

Just read the text. What does the text say here in 1822? It says, You shall not lie with a male as with a woman. It doesn't say you shall not lie with a male in a coercive, abusive, ritualistic, forceful way, does it? What does it say? It says, You shall not lie with a man as with a woman.

What is the lying with a woman scenario? This is the normal act of human copulation often leading to reproduction. It is between consenting adults who are married in Israel, right? Husband and wife. They too shall become one flesh.

This is the biblical model for that physical act, right? God says, What a man and a woman do together, man and man do not do together. A man shall not lie with a man as with a woman. Now that alone knocks all of these weird arguments about it's only abusive and coercive and ritualistic and so on out of the box.

Right? Do you understand the logic here? What is normal for a man and woman is prohibited between man and man. That is the sense of this commandment. Right? As with a woman.

So, right away all of the arguments that say the Bible is only talking about a particular kind of homosexual act. No. As with a woman.

All of the things that men and women do together within the bonds of marriage, which by the way is a wide field. What a man and woman agree to within the bounds of their marriage is okay. And I don't care if they are hanging from the ceiling with a can of shaving cream.

That's fine. Anything that a husband and wife choose to do together physically where they mutually consent and they are enjoying the freedom and the intimacy of their relationship is great. There are no limits.

As long as they are both expressing their love and their intimacy and their appreciation. And by the way, that's what physical acts are in the sexual realm. They are an expression of the relationship and the intimacy between husband and wife.

And the sky is the limit. The word perversion does not really apply within the bounds of marriage. Whatever fun a husband and wife want to have is fine.

But the Bible says that which a husband and wife do together is absolutely prohibited. And that means any form of man-to-man sexual activity is forbidden. So it's very clear.

So that knocks all of these it's only abusive relationships out of the box. Not only that, but if you go forward in Leviticus, look at Leviticus chapter 20 and verse 13. If a man lies with a male as he lies with a woman, both of them have committed an abomination.

They shall surely be put to death, their blood shall be upon them. Now, while we're here, notice what is the context in Leviticus 20. Verse 10, the man who commits adultery with another man's wife, he who commits adultery with his neighbor's wife, the adulterer and the adulteress shall surely be put to death.

The man who lies with his father's wife, now this would often be perhaps a stepmother, I mean we would hope, we would pray, but anybody who is identified as the father's wife, both of them shall be put to death, their blood is upon them. If a man lies with his daughter-in-law, all of these again forms of incest, both surely put to death. They have committed perversion, their blood shall be upon them.

If a man lies with a male as he lies with a woman, committed abomination, be put to death, their blood is upon them. If a man marries a woman and her mother, it is wickedness. This is a threesome with a mother and daughter.

Burned with fire, he and they, that there may be no wickedness among you. If a man mates with an animal, he shall surely be put to death and he shall kill the animal to put it out of its misery. If a woman approaches any animal and mates with it, kill the woman and the animal, they shall surely be put to death, their blood is upon them.

Now, what is the context here? Can you extract the homosexual thing and say, well, now this is talking about some limited case. It is in between a list of immoralities. Is there ever a case where these other things are okay? Could a man marry a mother and daughter if it's a loving and committed relationship? Could a man or a woman have physical relations with a dog or a sheep and it's okay if it's a loving, committed relationship? Can a man sleep with his daughter-in-law or a son sleep with his father's wife if it's a loving, committed relationship and they really care about each other? Is that okay? You see what I'm saying? For consistency's sake, you can't rip something out of its context and then redefine it and say, see, in most cases this is really okay.

Only in cases where I think it's really bad does the Bible say it's really bad. It doesn't wash, it doesn't work. Now, the same thing is true.

Go back to Leviticus chapter 18. What is the context? You shall not let any of your descendants pass through the fire to Molech, nor shall you mate with any animal to defile yourself with it. Now, is there any set of circumstances where sacrificing your child to Molech is okay? Well, if you've had a really bad run of luck and your crops have just

not come in for like five years, the Molech thing is okay.

If you have a loving, committed relationship with the priests of Molech and you want to take your... There is no situation where that's okay. Is there any situation where it's okay to abuse an animal in this horrific way? No. So why do you think that you can pick something right out of the middle of that and create a set of circumstances in which it's really okay? Context.

This is why we study book by book, chapter by chapter, verse by verse, line by line, because context helps you understand what the Word of God says. Now, there is another way around this, and this is the last point we'll make before the break. People say, well, but this is a part of the Law of Moses, and that whole law thing has gone by the wayside.

You know, we're not under law, we're under grace. That's true. And we do not reject homosexuality because it's a part of the Mosaic Law, because the Mosaic Law has been set aside.

The Mosaic Law has other commands and prohibitions that have been set aside, and we do not observe those anymore. Remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy. Don't do anything on Saturday.

We ignore that. We do all kinds of stuff on Saturday. Don't eat pork.

No bacon, no ham. We ignore that. No shellfish.

We ignore that. Don't mix kinds of cloth in your garments. I would wager that almost every one of us is wearing some blend of polyester and cotton somewhere.

Inner or outer garments someplace are likely a blend. Listen, that was an abomination in Israel. It's labeled an abomination with the very same word that is used for homosexuality and bestiality and some of these other things.

Eating shellfish is labeled an abomination in Israel. And so proponents of homosexuality say, well, you're just nuts because you eat clams and you wear Hanes t-shirts that are a blend of polyester and cotton and those are abominations and you think those are okay. You're just picking on the homos.

And that's why you're all anti-gay. It is not because it is in the law of Moses. It is because it is a principle which is embodied in the law of Moses that is also embodied in the scripture as a whole.

These other prohibitions, and I don't have time to go into great detail on this, but the other prohibitions, shellfish, pork, mixed cloth, don't trim the edges of your beard, etc., that are labeled abominations are ritual. They are cultural. They are Israel specific.

None of those are labeled as reasons why Joshua and the people of Israel are going in

and wiping out the Canaanites. Thou shalt go in and destroy the Amorites and the Canaanites because they eat clams. Thou shalt go in and eradicate all the people of the land, the Hivites and the Hittites, because they wear mixed cloth.

Thou shalt go in and destroy off the face of the earth the inhabitants of the land because they raise pigs. It doesn't say that, does it? There is a distinction, and it's easy to see, between moral abominations and between cultural and ritual distinctives that God assigned to the nation of Israel as teaching tools. The temporary tools, it's the same with things like water baptism and the Lord's Table and rituals that had a temporary teaching effect.

You've got to separate the principle from the teaching tool. Some teaching tools, tongues, healing, miraculous gifts, were temporary, designed to teach timeless truths. The fact that the temporary vehicle has gone away doesn't mean that the timeless truth has gone away.

There are certain moral imperatives. Nobody wants to explain away the Ten Commandments in terms of thou shalt not murder, thou shalt not steal, thou shalt not commit adultery, thou shalt not bear false witness, and so on, as having no relevance because they are part of the law. It's kind of like moving into a neighborhood.

I lived in a neighborhood in Garland. It had specific regulations for what you could do in and around your house. Now I live in Plano.

They have regulations up here about what I can do in and around my house, construction-wise, and so on. Well, there are principles that are common to both. I don't come up here and say, well, that rule that says I can't build a shanty in the back of my house, that was a Garland rule, and I'm not in Garland anymore.

Well, look, you're in Plano, and the same rule is up here, and the fact that it was also a Garland rule that no longer applies doesn't disable the rule. You see the point of logic here? Well, you need to understand these things. You will hear Christians arguing that it is wrong, bigoted, prejudiced, to have anything bad to say about the practice of homosexuality.

Biblically speaking, this is erroneous. We'll continue to study when we come back from our break.