

## **A TIME TO CONSIDER OUR WAYS**

Text: Haggai 1:7

It is appropriate on this July 4<sup>th</sup> weekend to address the recent lawless decision of the Supreme Court of the United States. The judges of this high court are called justices. The five who voted to legalize same-sex marriage have contradicted the very title of their office. God said of His people who chose the wrong direction, *"And judgment is turned away backward, and justice standeth afar off: for truth is fallen in the street, and equity cannot enter"* (Isaiah 59:14). Today in America justice is standing far, far away and truth has fallen and is now being trampled in the street!

I admonish you as my brothers and sisters in Christ to remain steadfast in the paradigm of cultural change. Christianity is not living any way we want and insisting on God to change His mind on moral absolutes. He changes not: Malachi 3:6 and Hebrews 13:8!

Jesus said in Matthew 19:4b-6b: *"...Have ye not read, that he which made them at the beginning made them male and female...What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder."* God defined marriage. No one and definitely no organization, government or court has the right to re-define it.

Since God does not change, what does He think about this issue? Romans 1:26, 27 informs us, *"For this cause God gave them up unto vile affections: for even their women did change the natural use into that which is against nature: And likewise also the men, leaving the natural use of the woman, burned in their lust one toward another; men with men working that which is unseemly, and receiving in themselves that recompence of their error which was meet."* In these two verses God declares homosexual behavior with three very important facts:

### **1. It is vile affection.**

Romans 1:26

The Greek word for vile is "atimia" which is also translated disgraceful, dishonorable and shameful.

## **2. It is against nature.**

Romans 1:26

Please observe with me the opening lines of the Declaration of Independence: ""When in the Course of human events, it becomes necessary for one people to dissolve the political bands which have connected them with another, and to assume among the powers of the earth, the separate and equal station to which the Laws of Nature and of Nature's God entitle them, a decent respect to the opinions of mankind requires that they should declare the causes which impel them to the separation." What did Jefferson mean by these words, "Laws of Nature and Nature's God? John Quincy Adams was involved in a court case in 1841. He claimed that: "In the Declaration of Independence the Laws of Nature are announced and appealed to as identical with the laws of nature's God, and as the foundation of all obligatory human laws." Bill Fortenberry says, "Jefferson's reference to the laws of nature and of nature's God had a very specific meaning that was well understood by eighteenth century Americans. Thomas Jefferson was a student of Lord Bolingbroke. He first began studying Bolingbroke's writings at the age of fourteen, and he read them again at the age of twenty-three as he was preparing for a career as a lawyer. Jefferson's Literary Commonplace Book contains more quotations from Bolingbroke than from any other author, and I do not know of a single historian who has not given Bolingbroke the credit for Jefferson's famous phrase regarding 'the Laws of Nature and of Nature's God.' What some scholars keep hidden is the fact that Lord Bolingbroke provided a very specific definition for this phrase.

In a renowned letter to Alexander Pope, Lord Bolingbroke wrote the following words which were to become the basis for Jefferson's opening paragraph of the Declaration of Independence: 'You will find that it is the modest, not the presumptuous enquirer, who makes a real, and safe progress in the discovery of divine truths. One follows nature, and nature's God; that is, he follows God in his works, and in his word.' Here we find a definition from the very individual that all scholars recognize as the source of Jefferson's phrase. According to Lord Bolingbroke, the law of nature's God is the Law found in God's Word. This was the definition intended by Jefferson, and this was the manner in which his words were understood by our forefathers. The law of nature's God upon which our nation was founded is nothing less than the Bible itself." Since America

became a country, the courts of our land have traditionally defined homosexuality as a "crime against nature" or "against the order of nature."

### **3. It is error.**

Romans 1:27

In light of the sinful action of the Supreme Court of the United States of America, we must remember that we must all answer to the highest and most Supreme Court of the universe.

The argument that says this is a civil right is totally off base. I cannot choose the color of my skin. I can choose my sexual behavior. For one to say he or she has this base desire for the same sex and therefore has a right to pursue a lifestyle that permits him or her to do whatever they want is ludicrous. If a man has a desire to leave the wife to whom he has vowed to be faithful unto death, shall he then follow a base, ungodly desire? If a man develops a sadistic thrill to stop shooting zombies on his video games and start shooting and killing his fellow human beings, shall we permit this? I disagree with those who say they were born with a desire for homosexual activity...but if I may be the Devil's advocate, allow me to say we are all born with ungodly desires because we are born in sin. God commands us to repent. In other words, turn from the direction we are going and invite Christ to come into our heart and life and allow Him to change us.

### **Conclusion: Marriage is the Cornerstone of God's Creation**

In his book, *What Does the Bible Really Teach about Homosexuality?* Kevin DeYoung says, "The redemptive-historical significance of marriage as a divine symbol in the Bible only works if the marital couple is a complimentary pair. Think about the complimentary nature of creation itself. In the beginning, God created the heaven and the earth (Gen. 1:1). And not only that, but within this cosmic pairing, we find other "couples": the sun and the moon, morning and evening, day and night, the sea and the dry land, plants and animals, and finally, at the apex of the creation, man and his wife. In every pairing, each part belongs with the other but neither is interchangeable. Just as heaven and earth were created to be together--and, indeed, that's how the whole story of the Bible ends--so marriage is to be a symbol of this divine design: two differentiated entities uniquely fitted for one another.

It makes perfect sense, then, that the coming together of heaven and earth in Revelation 21-22 is preceded by the marriage supper of the Lamb in Revelation 19. Marriage was created as a picture of the fittedness of heaven and earth, or as Ephesians 5 puts it, of Christ and the church (verses 31-32). The meaning of marriage is more than mutual sacrifice and covenantal commitment. Marriage, by its very nature requires complimentary. The mystical union of Christ and the church--each "part" belonging to the other but neither interchangeable--cannot be pictured in marital union without the differentiation of male and female. If God wanted us to conclude that men and women were interchangeable in the marriage relationship, He not only gave us the wrong creation narrative; He gave us the wrong metanarrative. Homosexuality simply does not fit with the created order of Genesis 1 and 2. "

Genesis 2:18 says, *"And the LORD God said, It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him an help meet for him."* The woman was created to be a helper to her counterpart. She was given to man "to help toward a function" and that function is explained in Genesis 1:27,28a: *"So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them. And God blessed them, and God said unto them, Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth...."* Without that complimentary differentiation, a same-gendered couple cannot accomplish the same purposes. This noble principle is laid down at the end of the Old Testament in Malachi 2:14, 15, *"...She thy companion, and the wife of thy covenant.*

*And did not he make one? ... And wherefore one? That he might seek a godly seed...."*

There is hope for America still, but we will have to return to our Holy God and His ways! Jeremiah 4:1-3; Hosea 10:12; Malachi 3:7b, *"...Return unto me, and I will return unto you...."*

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Johnny Pope". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style with a long horizontal line extending to the right from the end of the name.