

HOW SHOULD CHRISTIANS RESPOND TO “GAY” MARRIAGE?

By **Ken Ham**

Most people have heard of the account of Adam and Eve. According to the first book of the Bible, Genesis, these two people were the first humans from whom all others in the human race descended. Genesis also records the names of three of Adam and Eve’s many children—Cain, Abel, and Seth.

Christians claim that this account of human history is accurate, because the Bible itself claims that it is the authoritative Word of the Creator God, without error.

To challenge Christians’ faith in the Bible as an infallible revelation from God to humans, many skeptics have challenged the Bible’s trustworthiness as a historical document by asking questions like, “Where did Cain find his wife?” (This will become highly relevant to the topic of so-called gay marriage shortly!)

This question of Cain’s wife is one of the most-asked questions about the Christian faith and



the Bible's reliability. In short, Genesis 5:4 states that Adam had "other sons and daughters"; thus, originally, brothers had to marry sisters.¹

An atheist on a talk show

This background is helpful in offering the context of a conversation I had with a caller on a radio talk show. The conversation went something like this:

Caller: "I'm an atheist, and I want to tell you Christians that if you believe Cain married his sister, then that's immoral."

AiG: "If you're an atheist, then that means you don't believe in any personal God, right?"

Caller: "Correct!"

AiG: “Then if you don’t believe in God, you don’t believe there’s such a thing as an absolute authority. Therefore, you believe everyone has a right to their own opinions—to make their own rules about life if they can get away with it, correct?”

Caller: “Yes, you’re right.”

AiG: “Then, sir, you can’t call me immoral; after all, you’re an atheist, who doesn’t believe in any absolute authority.”

The AiG guest went on: “Do you believe all humans evolved from apelike ancestors?”

Caller: “Yes, I certainly believe evolution is fact.”

AiG: “Then, sir, from your perspective on life, if man is just some sort of animal who evolved, and if there’s no absolute authority, then marriage is whatever you want to define it to be—if you can get away with it in the culture you live in.

“It could be two men, two women or one man and ten women; in fact, it doesn’t even have to be a man with another human—it could be a man with an animal.²

“I’m sorry, sir, that you think Christians have a

problem. I think it's you who has the problem. Without an absolute authority, marriage, or any other aspect of how to live in society, is determined on the basis of opinion and ultimately could be anything one decides—if the culture as a whole will allow you to get away with this. You have the problem, not me.”

It was a fascinating—and revealing—exchange.

So the question, then, that could be posed to this caller and other skeptics is this: “Who has the right to determine what is good or bad, or what is morally right or wrong in the culture? Who determines whether marriage as an institution should be adhered to, and if so, what the rules should be?”

The “pragmatics” aspect of opposing gay marriage—some cautions

Some who defend marriage as a union between one man and one woman claim that it can be shown that cultures that have not adhered to this doctrine have reaped all sorts of problems (whether the spread of diseases or other issues). Thus, they claim, on this basis of tradition, it's obvious that marriage should be between one man and one woman only.

Even though such problems as the spread of HIV might be shown to be a sound argument in this issue, ultimately it's not a good basis for stating that one man for one woman must be the rule. It may be a sound argument based on the pragmatics of wanting to maintain a healthy physical body, but why should one or more human beings have the right to dictate to others what they can or can't do in sexual relationships? After all, another person might decide that the relationship between one man and woman in marriage might cause psychological problems and use that as the basis for the argument. So which one is correct?

Say that a person used the argument that research has shown, for example, that the children of gay parents had a higher incidence of depression. Or the argument that since HIV kills people, it is vital that marriage is between a man and a woman. But note how such arguments have also been tried in the case of abortion and *rejected* by the culture.

Let us illustrate. Some researchers claim to have shown a high incidence of depression in people who have had an abortion. The culture, however, has rejected such pragmatic "we shouldn't hurt people" arguments, claiming that it is more im-

portant that others have the “right to choose.”

The argument that abortion kills people is an important one because most people still accept the basic biblical prohibition against taking innocent human life. So we should ensure that people know that the baby is really

human. But is it going to be enough in the long term, as even this prohibition cannot be absolute without the Bible?



The morals of the majority

Over the centuries in our Western nations, people (including their leaders) almost universally accepted the belief that marriage was to be one man for one woman. In recent times, that once-prevailing view has been shifting—and rapidly.

What has brought about this change in the past few decades? The answer can be boiled down to how one considers this question: Who in society

determines what is morally wrong or right? Years ago, for example, most Americans were not pro-abortion (or even “pro-choice”) and did not want abortion legalized. But a moral absolute regarding the sanctity of life has been dramatically tossed aside in recent times, so much so that even politicians who might be morally conservative in many areas have now moved to a pro-choice position and will not raise an objection to a woman’s “right to choose.”

Over the years, as society’s beliefs about absolute moral standards have changed concerning abortion and other issues, the laws have changed accordingly. So while the majority might agree on particular standards and laws today, they can be overturned by the next generation. What may appear to be absolute for one generation might not be absolute for another,

Increasingly, people are becoming more tolerant, not only of abortion but also of gay marriage. Given the abortion example above, what is to prevent a majority of society declaring one day that same-sex marriage is permissible? And then what about polygamy, or even pedophilia? Indeed, a shifting morality can be a slippery slope, to the

point that one day society might determine that polygamy and sex between adults and children are not wrong—as long as most people believe that they are acceptable. Now, some might object and say that these now-illegal things would never be allowed in America. But who in the 1960s would have believed that America would one day allow abortions and see gay marriages performed?

Without an absolute moral standard, people are free to make up their own morals (and change them as the majority dictates). Should we be surprised when some Western nations will one day allow parents to kill their newborns because there might be a defect in the child? The majority might be lulled into sympathizing with the anguished parent, and also piously thinking something like: “Who wants to have a child go through life in that kind of condition?”

Does the church have the answer?

The gay marriage issue has been headline news across North America and on other continents. Even the acceptance of gay clergy has been widely noted in both secular and Christian media outlets.

- In November 2003 a part of the Episcopal

Church voted to ordain a gay bishop. Thus, the world saw part of the church now condoning homosexual behavior.³

- On March 18, 2004, the Pacific Northwest Conference of the United Methodist Church in America supported a lesbian pastor. Once again, the world looked on as a large denomination legitimized homosexual behavior.⁴



As part of the public debate on the gay marriage issue, many church leaders have been interviewed on national TV programs and asked to share their position on this topic. While the majority of church leaders have been speaking against gay unions and have been defending marriage as being between one man and one woman, many of these same church leaders have not been able to adequately defend their position.

One Christian leader was interviewed on MSN-BC-TV and was asked about the gay marriage issue. The interview went something like this:

TV host: “Did Jesus deal directly with the gay marriage issue?”

Christian leader: “No, but then Jesus didn’t deal directly with the abortion issue or many other issues”

This is such a disappointing response. A proper response could have been such a powerful witness—not only to the interviewer but to the potential millions of viewers watching the news program, so people could understand why this Christian leader opposed gay marriage.

The same Christian leader appeared on CNN-TV doing an interview that, in part, went something like the following:

Interviewer: “Why are you against gay marriage?”

Christian leader: “Because down through the ages, culture after culture has taught that marriage is between a man and a woman.”

We believe this kind of answer actually opens the door to gay marriage! How? Because it basically says that marriage is determined by law, tradition, or opinion.

So, why is it that we don't see many Christian leaders giving the right sorts of answers? We think it's because the majority of them have compromised with evolutionary beliefs in astronomy, geology, and so on, including a belief in an old universe. As a result, the Bible's authority has been undermined, and it's no longer understood to be the absolute authority.⁵ Let me explain further.

Gay marriage—is evolution the cause?

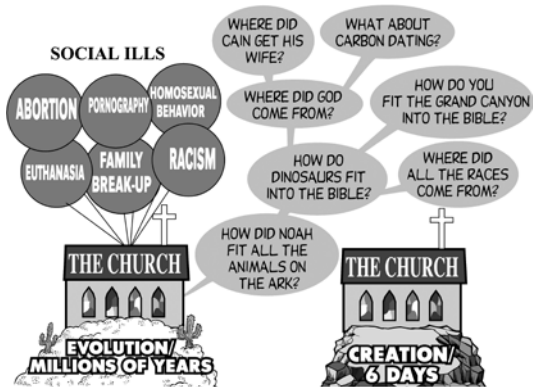
After reading explanations from Answers in Genesis such as those above, some critics have concluded that we are saying that belief in millions of years or other evolutionary ideas is the *cause* of social ills like gay marriage. This is not true at all.

It is accurate to say that the increasing acceptance of homosexual behavior and gay marriage has gone hand in hand with the popularity and acceptance of millions of years and evolutionary ideas. But this does not mean that every person who believes in an old earth accepts gay marriage or condones homosexual behavior.

But the more people (whether Christian or not) believe in man's ideas concerning the history of the universe, the more man's fallible ideas are used as

a basis for determining “truth” and overriding the Bible’s authority.

People need to understand that homosexual behavior and the gay marriage controversy are ultimately not the problems in our culture, but are the *symptoms* of a much deeper problem. Even though it’s obvious from the Bible that homosexual behavior and gay marriage are an abomination (Romans chapter 1 and other passages make this very clear), there is a foundational reason as to why there is an increasing acceptance of these ills in America and western societies like it.



Cultures in the West were once pervaded by a primarily Christian worldview because the majority of people at least respected the Bible as the authority on morality.

It needs to be clearly understood that over the past two hundred years the Bible's authority has been increasingly undermined, as much of the church has compromised with the idea of millions of years (this began before Darwin) and has thus begun reinterpreting Genesis. When those outside the church saw Christian leaders rejecting Genesis as literal history, one can understand why they would have quickly lost respect for all of the Bible. If the church doesn't even believe this Book to be true, then why should the world build its morality on a fallible work that modern science supposedly has shown to be inaccurate in its science and history?

The Bible has lost respect in people's eyes (both from within and without the church) to the extent that the culture as a whole now does not take the

What does the Bible say about homosexual behavior and gay marriage? Study the following verses:

Genesis 2:18–25; Leviticus 18:22; Mark 10:6; Romans 1:26–27; 1 Corinthians 6:9–10; 1 Timothy 1:9–10

Bible's morality seriously at all. The increasing acceptance of homosexual behavior and gay marriage is a symptom of the loss of biblical authority, and is primarily due to the compromise the church has made with the secular world's teaching on origins.

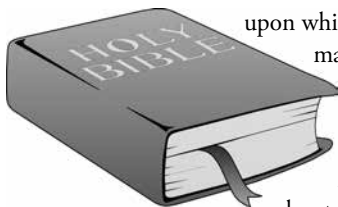
Mocking the Bible

For example, consider the following. A New Orleans newspaper printed a commentary entitled, "In gay rights debate, Genesis is losing."⁶ The column pointed out (correctly) that God intended marriage to be between one man and one woman. The writer even quoted Genesis 2:24, which declares, "Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother and shall cleave to his wife: and they shall be one flesh."

The author then, mockingly, wrote, "Ah, Genesis. Heaven and earth created in six days, a serpent that talks and a 600-year-old man building an ark. Just the guide we need to set rational policy."

This secular writer recognized that the literal history of Genesis was the basis for the belief that marriage is one man for one woman. However, by mocking the Genesis account (just as many church leaders effectively do when they reinterpret

Genesis 1–11 on the basis of man’s fallible ideas), the writer removed the foundations upon which the institution of marriage stands. This opens the door to gay marriage or anything else one might determine about marriage.

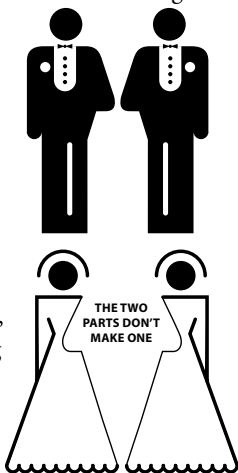


Are people born to a homosexual lifestyle?

We won’t presume to offer a definitive answer as to what causes homosexual behavior. We can point out, however, that in a world that has experienced over 6,000 years of the Curse (Genesis 3), it is not difficult to argue that genetic factors accumulated over the millennia could lead to a predisposition toward aberrant behavior. And, of course, there is the combined factor of personal choice involved, where people who are inclined toward a certain behavior can decide whether or not to follow through on a course of action. In other words, a person’s lifestyle can be influenced by that individual’s genetic makeup (and perhaps even by how that person was brought up—nature plus nurture).

In fact, Christian behavioral researchers point out, for example, that some people can be more genetically predisposed to alcoholism, to committing violent acts, etc. Now, this does not mean that these actions are to be condoned (the Bible calls them *sin*), because a predisposition does not lead a potential alcoholic to automatically walk into a bar to begin a drinking habit. Intentional, personal choice can certainly fend off that predisposition. While all people sin (Romans 3 and 6) and thus that is “natural,” it does not make the sinning correct or acceptable.

Therefore, even if some genetic component (a so-called “homosexual gene” as some might call it) were found, it does not make this sin natural or normal. As indicated before, this world suffers from thousands of years of the Curse, and in this fallen, decaying world, all kinds of genetic mistakes have been occurring. It is important



to note that such abnormalities are the result of the Curse, not of any creation by the Creator. Moreover, what Scripture teaches against certain behavior (drunkenness, infidelity, homosexual behavior, etc.,) trumps what anyone might say is acceptable behavior. There is right and wrong apart from people's opinions of what they might observe in nature and what it suggests to them, and that moral standard comes from God's Word.

It is possible that how a child grows up in certain situations might play a factor in determining sexual identity. Thankfully, though, the Bible presents all kinds of teaching on how to correctly raise children (see our book *The Genesis of a Legacy*). Sadly, however, it may not be far-fetched to say that as the breakdown of the family continues in America and as people increasingly reject biblical principles, impressionable young people will be even more inclined toward homosexuality, and thus gay marriage will probably grow. Standing up for biblical truths in the culture, though, can stem that tide.

Gay marriage—what is the answer?

In the Bible's book of Judges and chapter 17 and verse 6, we read this statement: "When they had no king to tell them what to do, they all did what was right in their own eyes." In other words, when there's no absolute authority to decide right and wrong, everyone has their own opinion as to what they should do.

So how could the Christian leader whose interviews were quoted earlier in this chapter have responded differently? Well, consider this answer:

First of all, Jesus (who created us and therefore owns us and has the authority to determine right and wrong), *did* deal directly with the gay marriage issue, in the Bible's New Testament, in Matthew 19:4–6:

"And He answered and said to them, 'Have you not read that He who made them at the beginning "made them male and female," and said, "For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh?" So then, they are no longer two but one flesh. Therefore what God has joined together, let not man separate.' "

The Christian leader could have continued:

Christ quoted directly from the book of Genesis (and its account of the creation of Adam and Eve as the first man and woman—the first marriage) as literal history, to explain the doctrine of marriage as being one man for one woman. Thus marriage cannot be a man and a man, or a woman and a woman.

Because Genesis is real history (as can be confirmed by observational science, incidentally), Jesus dealt quite directly with the gay marriage issue when he explained the doctrine of marriage.

Not only this, but in John 1, we read:

“In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made.”

Jesus, the Creator, is the Word. The Bible is the written Word. Every word in the Bible is really the Word of the Creator—Jesus Christ.⁷

Therefore, in Leviticus 18:22, Jesus actually deals directly with the homosexual issue, and thus the gay marriage issue. This is also true of

Romans 1:26–27 and 1 Timothy 1:9–10.

Because Jesus in a real sense wrote all of the Bible, whenever Scripture deals with marriage and/or the homosexual issue, Jesus Himself is directly dealing with these issues.

Even in a secular context, the only answer a Christian should offer is this:

The Bible is the Word of our Creator, and Genesis is literal history. Its science and history can be trusted. Therefore, we have an absolute authority that determines marriage.

God made the first man and woman—the first marriage. Thus, marriage can only be a man and a woman because we are accountable to the One who made marriage in the first place.

And don't forget: according to Scripture, one of the primary reasons for marriage is to produce godly offspring.⁸ Adam and Eve were told to be fruitful and multiply, but there's no way a gay marriage can fulfill this command!

The battle against gay marriage will ultimately be lost (like the battle against abortion) *unless* the church and the culture return to the absolute authority beginning in Genesis. Then and only

then will there be a true foundation for the correct doctrine of marriage—one man for one woman for life.

Here's the Good News

Answers in Genesis seeks to give glory and honor to God as Creator and to affirm the truth of the Biblical record of the real origin and history of the world and mankind.

Part of this real history is the bad news that the rebellion of the first man, Adam, against God's command brought death, suffering and separation from God into this world. We see the results all around us. All of Adam's descendants are sinful from conception (Psalm 51:5) and have themselves entered into this rebellion (sin). They therefore cannot live with a holy God, but are condemned to separation from God. The Bible says that "all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God" (Romans 3:23) and that all are therefore subject to "everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of His power" (2 Thesalonians 1:9).

But the good news is that God has done something about it. "For God so loved the world,

that He gave his only-begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life” (John 3:16).

Jesus Christ the Creator, though totally sinless, suffered, on behalf of mankind, the penalty of mankind’s sin which is death and separation from God. He did this to satisfy the righteous demands of the holiness and justice of God, His Father. Jesus was the perfect sacrifice; He died on a cross; but on the third day, He rose again, conquering death, so that all who truly believe in Him, repent of their sin and trust in Him (rather than their own merit) are able to come back to God and live for eternity with their Creator.

Therefore: “He who believes on Him is not condemned, but he who does not believe is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the only-begotten Son of God” (John 3:18).

What a wonderful Savior—and what a wonderful salvation in Christ our Creator!

Please see the back cover for our contact information, or contact a Bible-believing church in your area, where the pastor accepts the accuracy and

authority of the Bible from its very first verse in Genesis (including the Genesis accounts of a recent creation and a global Noah's Flood).

- ¹ For a more detailed answer to this question, see www.AnswersInGenesis.org/Cains_wife.
- ² See "Man marries dog for luck—then dies," www.theage.com.au/articles/2004/02/04/1075853937098.html?from=storyrhs and Bates, M., "Marriage in the new millennium: love, honor and scratch between the ears," *Oak Lawn (Illinois) Reporter*, April 5, 2001, as referenced at www.freerepublic.com/forum/a3ac9e00d0a87.htm. There are many articles online that discuss the possibility of a man marrying his dog if the sanctity of marriage is not upheld; search for words like *marriage*, *man*, and *dog*.
- ³ "Episcopal Church consecrates openly gay bishop," CNN.com, November 3, 2003.
- ⁴ Read the church proceedings for and against Rev. Karen Dammann at www.pnwumc.org/Dammann.htm.
- ⁵ For more information on this important point, see chapter 7 of *War of the Worldviews* "Where did the idea of 'millions of years' come from?"
- ⁶ Gill, J., *Times-Picayune*, New Orleans, March 5, 2004.
- ⁷ See Colossians 1:15–20 as well.
- ⁸ Malachi 2:15: "Has not the Lord made them one? In flesh and spirit they are his. And why one? Because he was seeking godly offspring. So guard yourself in your spirit, and do not break faith with the wife of your youth."



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