

NICK GUY & THE LAW & RELIGION AFFAIR

NICK GUY, VOLUME 13

RELEASE DATE:

THEME: What role, if any, does the Law of God play in the Laws of a Nation?

NOTES: Rules without absolutes are rules without authority. If there is no religious absolutes there can be no basis for real law. In this installment, Nick Guy & Dr. DeSoto discover that not only is the Law of God pertinent to the legal issues we face today, but it is essential for justice to be faithfully carried out.

LAW WITHOUT RELIGION: When a nation divorces it's Law from religion, that Law becomes an undisguisedly pragmatic human process. It can lay no claim to divine origin or eternal validity, but is merely the product of limited human reasoning and fallible human opinion.

Without absolute truth nothing can be considered objectively right or wrong, but satisfactory or unsatisfactory. And men can not be considered to possess inherent rights that cannot be taken away but rather privileges that have been bestowed by those in authority which can be taken away whenever those in authority decide to take them away.

Laws are determined many times by the whim of popular culture - whatever happens to be popular at any given time. No judicial decision can ever be considered "Final," but may be defined and redefined at will.

PREMINENCE OF SCRIPTURE: There are several things that give weight to the preeminence of the Law of God.

First of all, it was authored by God. God, as the Creator of all things, is in a unique position to know intimately how all things were designed to work. He does not have to guess as to what is right and wrong in each situation, He knows.

Secondly, it was affirmed by Prophets. One of the most consistent messages proclaimed by the Old Testament Prophets (including John the Baptist) was that of the need for God's people to adhere to the Law of God. His standards were never presented as merely a good option among many, but the *only* option.

And thirdly, it was accomplished by Christ. Jesus Himself proclaimed, "Do not think that I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I have not come to abolish them but to fulfill them. For truly, I say to you, until heaven and earth pass away, not an iota, not a dot, will pass from the Law until all is accomplished." (Matthew 5:17,18)

His death on the cross was necessary in securing salvation, because the penalty for sin

had to be paid, in fulfillment of the Law.

AN AGNOSTIC ARGUMENT THAT PROVES SCRIPTURE: Television host Bill Maher, a mocker and opponent of Christianity, once said that the 10 Commandments were not a great revelation. Most of what is contained in them, he said, is simply common sense (i.e. murder, lying, stealing are all bad). His point was that everyone knows that these things are wrong, and we didn't need them written down for us, we don't need the 10 Commandments to tell them how to live moral lives.

His comment is both hypocritical and validates Scripture.

Romans 2:14,15 says: "For when Gentiles, who do not have the law, by nature do what the law requires, they are a law to themselves, even though they do not have the law. They show that the work of the law is written on their hearts, while their conscience also bears witness, and their conflicting thoughts accuse or even excuse them."

By his acknowledgment that man possesses this inherent understanding that lying and stealing are wrong apart from the 10 Commandments, Bill Maher finds himself in complete agreement with Scripture. According to Romans 2, men have the Law of God written into them, and therefore have a basic understanding of righteousness.

His comment is also somewhat hypocritical. To one who, at best, doesn't know if God exists, an appeal to "Common Sense" as the reason why all men know that lying and stealing are wrong is inconsistent with his world view. In order for something to be common to all men there needs to be a transcendent authority to impart it. If there is no God, then there is no transcendent authority to impart any knowledge of good and evil. In fact, the very concept of an inherent standard of good and evil is incompatible with the atheistic world view.

To the atheist, no distinction can be made between right and wrong, and a common sense of right and wrong cannot exist.

OBJECTIONS TO THE PREEMINENCE OF SCRIPTURE # 1: One objection to the Preeminence of Scripture is argument that the Bible is outdated. We are told that times have changed, and what might have worked, and maybe even had been useful, in the past is no longer valid.

Perhaps the most vital issue the United States faces today is the acceptance and legitimization of homosexuality. Since the founding of our nation, in 1776, homosexuality has always been considered a sexual perversion. To counter this, some will say that we are more enlightened today than those who came before us. Our enlightened views persuade us to accept as normal what we once considered abnormal.

The biggest problem here is the assumption that we are more enlightened today. Maybe the opposite has happened, may our minds have been darkened and our

consciences seared. If that is the case, then we are not heading in a healthier direction, but one that will end in disaster.

OBJECTIONS TO THE PREMINENCE OF SCRIPTURE #2: Some will say they accept and admire Jesus, but they reject the Law of God. Many times Christians, when they are attempting to walk out what the Law commands, are chastised by non-believers and admonished to be more “Christ-like.”

But, one cannot acknowledge respect for Jesus without acknowledging respect for Law as Jesus upheld the Law (Matthew 5:17,18 - “Do not think that I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I have not come to abolish them but to fulfill them. For truly, I say to you, until heaven and earth pass away, not an iota, not a dot, will pass from the Law until all is accomplished.”)

Jesus and the Law are inseparable.

OBJECTIONS TO THE PREMINENCE OF SCRIPTURE #3: Another objection that is often made is that the Law of God, to remain pertinent, must change with the times. The thought here is that times change, and different times require a different set of rules, or a different interpretation of the rules we have.

The Law, because it was authored by God, has no need to change. God is perfect, has always been perfect, and will always be perfect. Times may indeed change, but the principles of what is right and what is wrong that He worked into His creation, cannot change.

The Law of God was not given to be adapted and modified, but to be obeyed. It was not given to suit man’s will, but to reveal God’s

The religious leaders of Jesus’ day, the Pharisees, came up with many rules as they interpreted the law of God. Despite the number, they actually made the law easier to follow. They Self-righteously reduced God’s standards and elevated their own opposed goodness. Because Jesus did not follow “their” law, they said He came to abolish it.

A major misunderstanding about Jesus, both then & today, is that He did not come to abolish the Law but to establish it. By paying the penalty for sin, He supported the Law’s claims.

Speaking on the topic of legalizing gay marriage, the Church will be lectured that we need to be more Christ-like in regards to this. And we certainly should be Christ-like on this topic and all topics. And Jesus affirmed God’s standard of marriage established in Garden of Eden in Matthew 19:4 when He said, “Have you not read that he who created them from the beginning made them male and female...”

PERMANENCE OF THE LAW: In Matthew 5:18, Jesus showed the permanence of the Scriptures. Jesus said, “For truly, I say to you, until heaven and earth pass away,

not an iota, not a dot, will pass from the Law until all is accomplished.”

The Word of God will last without the smallest change or reduction (“not an iota, not a dot, will pass”) until everything is accomplished.

God’s standard, represented in His Law, is higher than traditions, thoughts, reasons and logic of men. God’s law is a reflection of God’s character and is therefore changeless and eternal. Bible is final authority on every subject of which it speaks (including moral issues). Just because someone does not believe Bible is true, does not mean it isn’t, nor that they can escape the consequences of disregarding it.

JESUS AFFIRMED THE OLD TESTAMENT: Jesus affirmed the Old Testament’s account concerning Marriage (Matt 19:4); the murder of Abel (Luke 11:51); Noah & the Flood (Matthew 24:38,39); Abraham & his faith (John 8:56); Sodom, Lot and Lot’s wife (Luke 17:29); the call of Moses (Mark 12:26); the miracle of Manna from Heaven (John 6:31, 58); and the Bronze serpent (John 3:14).

SCRIPTURES AFFIRMED BY MEN: The preeminence, permanence and pertinence of the Bible is proven by men, even those who deny God’s existence.

As we examined earlier, Bill Maher said, in effect, that the 10 Commandments were unnecessary, since what they contain is “Common Sense.” Men do not need the 10 Commandments to know that lying and stealing are wrong. And this is exactly what Scripture says.

Romans 2:14,15 states: “For when Gentiles, who do not have the law, by nature do what the law requires, they are a law to themselves, even though they do not have the law. They show that the work of the law is written on their hearts, while their conscience also bears witness, and their conflicting thoughts accuse or even excuse them.”

JESUS USED THE AUTHORITY OF SCRIPTURE TO ESTABLISH HIS OWN AUTHORITY: When responding to the disciples of John the Baptist about whether or not He was the Messiah, He quoted Isaiah 29:18 - “In that day the deaf shall hear the words of a book, and out of their gloom and darkness the eyes of the blind shall see.” As well as Isaiah 35:5,6.

Jesus defended His actions with Scripture. For example, He quoted Psalm 69:9 to defend His cleansing of the Temple in Mark 11:17.

As we stated earlier, one cannot respect Jesus without respecting Scripture and vice versa.

CURRENT ISSUES: Again referring to the issue of homosexuality, it must be remembered that the Biblical stand has not changed. What *has* changed is society’s view. A fair question for a Christian to ask a supporter of legitimizing homosexuality is to ask them what caused this change of stand to take place.

As believers, our position should change only when it can be proven through reason of Scripture. In this case, our understanding of Scripture changes, not Scripture itself. Is Scripture still relevant in today's society? Can we still appeal to the Bible and apply its principles to current issues?

PERTINENCE OF SCRIPTURE: John MacArthur, in his commentary on the Gospel of Matthew, wrote: "The consequences of the law depend on a person's response to it. Whoever responds to it positively will receive a positive result, but whoever responds to it negatively will receive a negative result."

Matthew 5:19 lays out the negative consequences suffered from a negatively. "Therefore whoever relaxes one of the least of these commandments and teaches others to do the same will be called least in the kingdom of heaven..."

The same verse lays out the positive consequences based upon a positive response: Matthew 5:19 "...but whoever does them and teaches them will be called great in the kingdom of heaven."

PERTINENCE OF SCRIPTURE - THE SEXUAL REVOLUTION:

Antinomianism mean a rejection of law, regulation and rules. By rejecting truth we move ahead to solve a problem ignorant or in spite of the consequences.

Take the example of the Sexual Revolution of the 1960s. The mantra was "If it feels good, do it." The old rules of sexual morality were thrown off in favor of a do-your-own-thing mentality, where nothing was forbidden and there was nothing binding.

The sexual revolution has left in its wake broken lives and shattered expectations, all without fulfilling what it promised. The results have been overall catastrophically negative for men, women, and children.

Sexual freedom has degraded women to the level of sexual objects and men, being egged on by pornography in particular, enter into relationships with unrealistic expectations. They not only have idealized views of women physically, but also what constitutes a fulfilling relationship, and what things will bring them lasting joy and happiness.

Sexual freedom leads both men and women on with the promise of greater happiness outside of marriage. Promises that leave them as empty and hurt as before.

When marriage is taken lightly, entered into lightly and exited from lightly, where there is no assurance or security of commitment, men and women suffer. And, of course, the children of those relationships suffer even more so.

Anytime a married couple divorce, even in the most justifiable of situations, there is an emotional toll. People living like they are married without the commitment of marriage still experience that same emotional toll.

The Sexual Revolution calls to mind 2 Peter 2:17-19 “These are waterless springs and mists driven by a storm. For them the gloom of utter darkness has been reserved. For, speaking loud boasts of folly, they entice by sensual passions of the flesh those who are barely escaping from those who live in error. They promise them freedom, but they themselves are slaves of corruption. For whatever overcomes a person, to that he is enslaved.”

The Sexual Revolution promised freedom, but it brought about slavery and destruction.

PERTINENCE OF SCRIPTURE - ABORTION: Legalized Abortion has been in place since 1973 in the United States, and the debate continues to go on. One of the things I have discovered in life is that there are some issues, some problems, where there is no good solution. An unwanted pregnancy is one of these issues.

There are several solutions. One has the child of the unwanted pregnancy being raised by a struggling single parent (who is maybe still high school age) or by grandparents or some other relative.

Another solution is to put the child up for adoption.

None of these solutions are easy. They create hardships and can be very painful, especially if the pregnancy was the result of a very unpleasant circumstance.

But, as difficult and hard as these solutions are, they are better than the alternative. Which is to abort the pregnancy and murder the child. Regardless of the circumstances surrounding its conception, the unborn child is guiltless. It is wrong, therefore, to place the penalty of death on him or her.

There are some issues in life where there is no good solution. Some are more expedient than others, to be sure, but we should not allow ourselves to abandon what is right for the sake of expediency.

One interesting observation I have had in this debate is that Pro-Abortion advocates always speak of an unwanted pregnancy in terms of a woman’s right issue. But they completely avoid discussion of the personhood of the unborn child.

This is evident when the objection is made that male legislators should have no voice and no say in this issue because men cannot get pregnant. If the only factor in the abortion issue was women’s rights, they might have a better point. But this comment completely ignores the factor of the unborn child’s right to life.

This indicates to me that in that discussion they know they have no grounds on which to safely stand. But, rather than face it, they simply ignore it, hoping to silence the opposition.

PERTINENCE OF SCRIPTURE - HOMOSEXUAL MARRIAGE: There may be no other single issue where the Christian position is misunderstood and misrepresented

than the issue of legalizing homosexual marriage. Christians and the Christian position has been marginalized, and, being marginalized, can be ignored and treated as invalid.

Chic-Fil-A President Dan Cathy made a statement in support of traditional marriage (marriage being between a man and a woman). Some time after that statement I overheard someone say of Chic-Fil-A, "They hate gays."

No where in his statement did Dan Cathy say he hates homosexuals. That sentiment was assumed because, in our society, opposition to homosexual marriage has been successfully equated with bigotry and hatred of homosexuals, as if no other reason is possible. This is a debate that needs to be backed up a bit.

First of all, it must be recognized that the Church's position on homosexuality has not changed. The church has considered homosexuality a sexual perversion since the beginning. And from 1776 until recently, the people of the United States have shared that view. It is society that has changed, not Christianity.

Secondly, the whole debate as it is currently being waged, is based upon the presupposition that homosexuality is a legitimate alternate lifestyle.

In one confrontation with a homosexual marriage advocate I made the following point. I said that if homosexuality is natural, normal, and healthy, then I would have to agree that there is no reason that two men or two women should not be allowed to get married. But, if homosexuality is unnatural, abnormal, and unhealthy, then she would have to agree that it would not be good to allow them to get married. It is certainly not an expression of love to encourage two people to do something that will ultimately destroy them.

A third point involves the whole slippery slope homosexual marriage advocates have taken us down to justify their position. Some, in the political arena in particular, have gotten into trouble by comparing homosexuality and pedophilia and bestiality, in saying that legalizing homosexual marriage opens the door to legalize marriage for other sexual preferences as well. The offense comes to those who do not think homosexuality is a perversion, as are the other two.

Again, the Church's position on homosexuality has not changed. Our society once classified homosexuality as a perversion. If society's opinion can change on the one, cannot it not potentially change on the others?

If we can change the definition of marriage (from one man and one woman to include one man and one man, and one woman and one woman) can we not change it again? Do polygamists have grounds to push for a further redefining to include one man and several women, or one woman and several men?

CONCLUSION: In debating any issue we must always argue from a Biblical perspective. Just because our opponents do not accept the Bible as God's infallible

word, does not mean we must abandon it in the public square. To do so lowers our position to nothing more than only another opinion among many.

Here, the work of the apologist is important. As we have seen, Christians and the Christian faith have been misrepresented. This causes Christians and their beliefs to be marginalized. When this happens, our voice is easily dismissed, and the Gospel itself (which is the most powerful thing in changing societies and the only thing that can bring men eternal life) is hindered.

We may be tempted to hold our tongues for fear of offending. But the risk of offending is worth taking to be instrumental in leading someone to salvation.

We may fear being labeled old-fashioned, legalistic or hateful. Misrepresentations of Biblical positions make it hard to present truth. Assumptions may be made immediately about us based on these misrepresentations. Hopefully, given an opportunity, we can correct these misrepresentations which opens the door to speaking the truth.

The Law of God is not speculation to be considered, it is truth to be obeyed. John MacArthur, in his commentary on the Gospel of Matthew, wrote: "Because Scripture is given by God for man, nothing could be more relevant to man than this revelation. Scripture is the standard of relevance by which all other relevance is measured."

In speaking of issues like abortion and homosexual marriage, those in favor of both speak of the injustice of restricting abortion and not allowing homosexuals to marry. But, by far the greatest injustice of all is that the God of the Universe, the Creator and Sustainer of all things is treated like He's nothing, and He is neither feared nor adored.

RESOURCES: John MacArthur's Commentary on Matthew; Harold J. Berman's *The Interaction of Law and Religion*.