
BIBLE TALK

This week the question is: **What does the Bible say about polygamy?**

“Polygamy” means a man with multiple wives.

Fox News reported on April 8, 2008 about a raid on a Mormon compound in Eldorado, TX. The raid began after a phone call to authorities from a 16 year old Mormon girl said she was raped. Investigations seemed to indicate the Mormon compound tolerated and practiced polygamy. A total of 401 children have been ceased from their homes and await the verdict of courts to determine their fate. Polygamous marriages were allegedly being arranged, with parental consent, between children in their mid to late teens with men in their 40s and 50s.

Polygamy was, at one time, much more prominent among Mormons in the past than it is today.

Joseph Smith, the founder of the Mormon church, claimed to be a prophet of God. On July 12, 1843, Joseph Smith made the following "revelation" concerning polygamy and claimed it was from the Lord:

For behold, I reveal unto you a new and everlasting covenant; and if ye abide not that covenant, then are ye damned; for no one can reject this covenant and be permitted to enter into my [Lord's] glory
(Doctrine and Covenants 132:4).

This “everlasting covenant” which is being described concerns polygamy as the first verse of that passage reveals. So, not only was one permitted to have multiple wives, it was demanded to progress into the highest heaven. (Mormons believe there are multiple levels in heaven).

In 1882 *the Edmunds Bill* was passed by Congress making polygamy illegal. When the Mormons failed to comply with the law, the United States threatened to send the U.S. Cavalry to confiscate all their property and disperse them. Interestingly, the leader of the Mormons, Wilford Woodruff, had a "revelation" which was supposedly from God. On Sept. 29, 1890, Woodruff issued a Manifesto which was voted on and approved by the general conference on Oct. 6, 1890. This Manifesto basically said that when man’s law interferes with God’s law, Mormons must do what man’s law says. Hence, Mormons were no longer required to keep the “*everlasting covenant*” of polygamy.

Liberal Mormons of today no longer practice polygamy because of this “revelation” given by President Wilford Woodruff. However, orthodox, conservative Mormons who take the writings of Joseph Smith seriously, still insist on practicing polygamy.

Now ... here’s the question: *What’s wrong with all of this?*

1) It’s wrong to believe God is still revealing messages to men.

Jesus promised He would reveal *all* truth to His apostles (Jn 16:13). This means there would be no more truth to reveal later in the days of Joseph Smith. Furthermore, the apostle Peter declared all truth had been revealed to the apostles before they died (2 Pet 1:3). This truth was written down in the pages of the NT (Eph 3:3-5). Therefore, all religious and spiritual truth has been revealed, recorded and divinely protected from loss and corruption.

Matthew 24:35

³⁵ Heaven and earth will pass away, but My words will by no means pass away.

The Bible has the final word to say on moral issues. There is no more revelation from God since the days of the apostles. Whatever the Bible says about polygamy is final and there is no word from God on the subject other than the revelation given in the Bible.

2) It’s wrong to believe God’s law is inferior to man’s law.

Mormon President Wilford Woodruff said he had a revelation from God saying the “everlasting covenant” of polygamy was no longer necessary because man’s law interfered. In other words, man’s law takes priority to God’s law.

According to the Bible, the true revelation from God, man’s law is inferior to God’s commands. Consider the case of the apostles. They were told by Jewish authorities not to preach the gospel. Notice:

Acts 4:18-20

¹⁸ So they called them and commanded them not to speak at all nor teach in the name of Jesus. ¹⁹ But Peter and John answered and said to them, "Whether it is right in the sight of God to listen to you more than to God, you judge. ²⁰ For we cannot but speak the things which we have seen and heard."

Therefore, since God’s word is superior to man’s law, men ought to do what God said rather than what men say.

Acts 5:29

²⁹ But Peter and the other apostles answered and said: "We ought to obey God rather than men.

If God truly required polygamy, His people should be willing to go to jail and even die – if that's what He required. This brings up the next point:

3) Polygamy has been wrong since the days of the apostles.

While it is true that polygamy was tolerated by God during the OT era, it is also true that the OT has come to an end. The laws and precepts of the OT have been replaced by the laws and precepts of the NT. In Col 2:14 the apostle Paul said the OT was "taken away and nailed to the cross." In Heb 8:13 the writer says the OT has become "obsolete and is growing old and ready to vanish away."

God's people are now under a NT. This NT allows for monogamy but not polygamy. Jesus said:

Matthew 19:4-6

⁴ ... "Have you not read that He who made them at the beginning 'made them male and female,' ⁵ 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'? ⁶ So then, they are no longer two but one flesh. Therefore what God has joined together, let not man separate."

In other words, Jesus pointed to the creation. In the beginning, God did not create one man and two women. He did not create one man and ten women. Instead, God created one man and one woman.

This arrangement of one man and one woman is the law of God since the beginning of the NT. It remains the law of God to this very day.

1 Corinthians 7:1-2

¹ Now concerning the things of which you wrote to me: It is good for a man not to touch a woman. ² Nevertheless, because of sexual immorality, let each man have his own wife, and let each woman have her own husband.

Again, this passage agrees with what Jesus previously stated: ***One man and one woman***. Divorce among God's people is restricted to one cause – the cause of fornication (Mt 19:9). In other words, the only time a Christian may divorce and remarry is if his or her spouse cheated on them. In this case, the innocent party is free to remarry.

In conclusion: The orthodox Mormons of Eldorado, TX are being true to the teachings of Joseph Smith, the founder of the Mormon Church. The liberal Mormons who reject polygamy are being unfaithful and untrue to the teachings of their founder. On the other hand, both sects of Mormons are being unfaithful to the teachings of the NT and unfaithful to the teachings of Jesus Christ – the founder of the church of Christ.

John 12:48

⁴⁸ He who rejects Me, and does not receive My words, has that which judges him — the word that I have spoken will judge him in the last day.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

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