
Subject: Re: Catholic adoption agencies and homosexuality

Posted by [Spoony](#) on Mon, 29 Mar 2010 08:41:35 GMT

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Altzan wrote on Sun, 28 March 2010 19:16 Perhaps I wasn't trying to refute it?

shrug then i guess my earlier statement about the overall stupidity of the story can be allowed to stand

Quote:Spoony wrote on Fri, 26 March 2010 11:53 and yet throughout the bible we have innumerable cases of god eagerly punishing or threatening to punish innocents for the crimes of others. you've even defended that bullshit yourself.

That doesn't change the fact that the Bible doesn't command us to persecute Jews. well, it would be nice if all the christian authorities had said this for the last two thousand years, instead of specifically encouraging the persecution of jews, culminating in the holocaust. and if you're going to take the line that statements of "faith" don't have to be proven, then this is only a problem for your side.

Quote:When I said those two examples, I was NOT giving them as evidence to Genesis, I was bringing it up against evolution, as I already said.

So you want me to provide evidence and attempt to vindicate Genesis, but you don't think I should make any move against evolution? One-sided, no?

firstly, i never said you shouldn't try to refute the theory of evolution. no real scientist would say that, and i'm not even a scientist. evolution is a scientific theory, and since it's scientific it's open to challenges. if the best you can do is mentioning the second law of thermodynamics, then ok. i can't imagine why that's supposed to be a rebuttal to the theory of evolution, so perhaps you can explain that for us.

secondly, yes i do want you to prove the account as reported in genesis.

thirdly, i'll just repeat my earlier assertion that i don't really care whether you find the theory of evolution convincing or not, and if i ever came across anybody saying that if you don't believe their scientific theory then their boss will inflict horrific punishment upon you for your disbelief! then i'd be the first to say what a deranged and immoral pronouncement that would be.

even more so if they never put forth any decent evidence for it in the first place.

Quote:I took the liberty of changing your quoted verses to KJV.

Now here's Matthew Henry's commentary which should hopefully answer any question you have provided you read it carefully.

i have a feeling it's going to raise more questions than it answers, but i'll give it a shot.

Quote:"Here the case is put of a city revolting from its allegiance to the God of Israel, and serving other gods.

I. The crime is supposed to be committed

oh dear. already i've got to stop you. i don't accept that a crime has been committed here.

Quote:The crime is supposed to be committed, 1. By one of the cities of Israel, that lay within the jurisdiction of their courts.

Ah. I think I see what he's getting at here; it only applies to the Israelites, does it? In that case, then the verse would be totally irrelevant in a modern context. That would certainly be no problem for me; it would only be a problem for anybody who dared to say that God gave them this planet, their property etc.

But quite a lot of Christians do say that, don't they?

Quote:The church then judged those only that were within, 1 Co. 5:12, 13. And, even when they were ordered to preserve their religion in the first principles of it by fire and sword to propagate it. fun fun fun!

Quote:Those that are born within the allegiance of a prince, if they take up arms against him, are dealt with as traitors, but foreign invaders are not so.

We're back to my earlier criticism of dictatorship.

I do accept that someone who "takes up arms against" a cause they have freely chosen to swear allegiance to is considered a traitor. But there are three problems in this case.

1. The choice to swear allegiance to your god is not free. I've never heard a serious attempt to make the case that it is, either from the barbarism of the Bible or from modern-day Christians who say we're free to believe what we like but we'll go to hell for believing the wrong thing.

2. "Born within the allegiance" negates the concept of a choice at all.

3. I don't accept that simply not worshipping the god and having a different religious viewpoint constitutes "taking up arms against"

Quote:The city that is here supposed to have become idolatrous is one that formerly worshipped the true God, but had now withdrawn to other gods, which intimates how great the crime is ...no, no it doesn't.

Although, "other gods"... do you think there are (or were) any other gods?

Quote:It is supposed to be committed by the generality of the inhabitants of the city, for we may conclude that, if a considerable number did retain their integrity, those only that were guilty were to be destroyed, and the city was to be spared for the sake of the righteous in it; for will not the Judge of all the earth do right? No doubt he will.

firstly, there's nothing in the original commandment saying "this punishment is only to be carried out if they're all guilty", nor "innocent bystanders will be spared", and it's rather dishonest to suggest that there is, but then i've never come across any theology that wasn't at some stage based on dishonesty.

secondly it's worth noting that the author seems to realise that if god did do this, if he did flatten a city including innocent bystanders just because some other people in the city did something bad (not that i accept that having a different religious opinion is a crime), god would be morally wrong to do it.

Quote:They are supposed to be drawn to idolatry by certain men, the children of Belial, men that

would endure no yoke (so it signifies), that neither fear God nor regard man, but shake off all restraints of law and conscience, and are perfectly lost to all manner of virtue; these are those that say, "Let us serve other gods,"

He really has lost me here. Why would serving a different god mean someone has no desire to be bound by laws, or any "manner of virtue"? They're just picking a different set, aren't they?

Secondly, are non-theists thrown into the same category, I wonder?

Quote:The cause is ordered to be tried with a great deal of care (v. 14): Thou shalt enquire and make search. They must not proceed upon common fame, or take the information by hearsay, but must examine the proofs, and not give judgment against them unless the evidence was clear and the charge fully made out. God himself, before he destroyed Sodom, is said to have come down to see whether its crimes were according to the clamour, Gen. 18:21. In judicial processes it is requisite that time, and care, and pains, be taken to find out the truth, and that search be made without any passion, prejudice, or partiality. The Jewish writers say that, though particular persons who were idolaters might be judged by the inferior courts, the defection of a city was to be tried by the great Sanhedrim; and, if it appeared that they were thrust away to idolatry, two learned men were sent to them to admonish and reclaim them. If they repented, all would be well; if not, then all Israel must go up to war against them, to testify their indignation against idolatry and to stop the spreading of the contagion.

this part of the commentary is uncharacteristically honest. yes, the original commandment does make it clear that it is to be painstakingly investigated.

Quote:III. If the crime were proved, and the criminals were incorrigible, the city was to be wholly destroyed. If there were a few righteous men in it, no doubt they would remove themselves and their families out of such a dangerous place

Ah.

So it's ok to flatten an entire city if some of its inhabitants commit a crime, because anyone who was innocent would "no doubt" have already left.

Quote:and then all the inhabitants, men, women, and children, must be put to the sword (v. 15)
I'm going to emphasise a part of this quote, and then I'll throw it out here and we'll see whether you have anything to say about it.

"Children must be put to the sword."

Quote:all the spoil of the city, both shop-goods and the furniture of houses, must be brought into the marketplace and burned, and the city itself must be laid in ashes and never built again, v. 16. The soldiers are forbidden, upon pain of death, to convert any of the plunder to their own use, v. 17. It was a devoted thing, and dangerous to meddle with, as we find in the case of Achan.
well, i think the real crime here is the slaughter of the city's inhabitants, not the ensuing destruction of property.

Quote:Now, 1. God enjoins this severity of show what a jealous God he is in the matters of his worship, and how great a crime it is to serve other gods.
firstly, he hasn't successfully made the case that serving another god is a crime.

secondly, even if he did make that case, this wouldn't make it morally acceptable to punish innocents if someone else was guilty.

thirdly, see my earlier question. are there other gods...?

Quote:Let men know that God will not give his glory to another, nor his praise to graven images. 2. He expects that magistrates, having their honour and power from him, should be concerned for his honour, and use their power for terror to evil doers, else they bear the sword in vain. And does he still expect that?

Quote:The faithful worshippers of the true God must take all occasions to show their just indignation against idolatry, much more against atheism, infidelity, and irreligion. Ah, so that means someone who does not take all occasions to show their just indignation against atheism and idolatry is not a faithful worshipper of the true God?

Quote:It is here intimated that the best expedient for the turning away of God's anger from a land is to execute justice upon the wicked of the land (v. 17), that the Lord may turn from the fierceness of his anger, which was ready to break out against the whole nation, for the wickedness of that one apostate city.

Here we have another example of what we noticed earlier. Earlier we noticed that the author seems to realise that if god really did flatten a city for the crimes of a few of its inhabitants, it would be an immoral thing for god to do.

Now we're seeing that again. What a good thing that God's people are laying waste to this city, he says, because otherwise God was going to destroy the entire country just for what one city did!

Quote:It is promised that, if they would thus root wickedness out of their land, God would multiply them. They might think it impolitic, and against the interest of their nation, to ruin a whole city for a crime relating purely to religion, and that they should be more sparing of the blood of Israelites: "Fear not the" (says Moses), "God will multiply you the more; the body of your nation will lose nothing by the letting out of this corrupt blood."

Here we have it again! The author is recognising that some people might have had a problem with this commandment!

Unfortunately, even though that's a good starting point, he totally fucks it all up by saying "even if you think this is morally wrong, you should do it anyway because there's something in it for you". Oh dear.

Quote:Lastly, Though we do not find this law put in execution in all the history of the Jewish church (Gibeah was destroyed, not for idolatry, but immorality)

I wasn't sure what was originally meant by Gibeah, so I looked that up. I do recognise the story, though not as 'Gibeah'. The one about the baying mob who want to rape the male visitor, and the decision by the men to throw the young women to the mob to save themselves. So the visitor's woman gets raped to death. That one. It's similar to the Lot story, isn't it? The similarity of the narrative, the almost identical speech reported, and the fact that modern Christians seem to draw some really odd moral lessons from it, i.e. homosexuality is evil, but if you find yourself faced by a mob of rapists, just throw a defenceless young girl at them and save yourself.

Quote:yet for the neglect of the execution of it upon the inferior cities that served idols God himself, by the army of the Chaldeans, put it in execution upon Jerusalem, the head city, which, for is apostasy from God, was utterly destroyed and laid waste, and lay in ruins seventy years. What's he saying here?

Quote:Though idolaters may escape punishment from men (nor is this law in the letter of it binding now, under the gospel), yet the Lord our God will not suffer them to escape his righteous judgements. The New Testament speaks of communion with idolaters as a sin which, above any other, provokes the Lord to jealousy, and dares him as if we were stronger than he, 1 Co. 10:21, 22."

This is quite an odd kettle of fish, isn't it?

So, idolatry, serving other gods etc, they're things which absolutely infuriate God. Yes, the old testament makes that clear... and it doesn't exactly work in his favour. There are plenty of evil actions he either doesn't mind or positively recommends - slavery, for example - but if you have a different religious opinion, you'd better watch out.

So there must be a law against this "crime" in the Old Testament. But as he says here, in the New Testament, the law is not binding anymore, but it still infuriates God and he'll still punish people who do it? So why repeal the law?

Quote:"Further provision is made by this branch of the statute against receiving the infection of idolatry from those that are near and dear to us.

I. It is the policy of the tempter to send his solicitations by the hand of those whom we love, whom we least suspect of any ill design upon us, and whom we are desirous to please and apt to conform ourselves to. The enticement here is supposed to come from a brother or child that are near by nature, from a wife or friend that are near by choice, and are to us as our own souls, v. 6. Satan tempted Adam by Eve and Christ by Peter. We are therefore concerned to stand upon our guard against a bad proposal when the person that makes it can pretend to an interest in us, that we may never sin against God in compliment to the best friend we have in the world. The temptation is supposed to be private: he will entice thee secretly, implying that idolatry is a work of darkness, which dreads the light and covets to be concealed, and in which the sinner promises himself, and the tempter promises him, secrecy and security.

This all assumes that the person doing the "tempting" has evil intentions... what if they're just someone like you, evangelising? Someone who genuinely believes in their God, and wants to spread the good news?

as an aside, do you really believe that the snake in the garden was Satan?

Quote:Concerning the false gods proposed to be served
Define "false god", please.

Quote:1. The tempter suggests that the worshipping of these gods was the common practice of the world; and, if they limited their adorations to an invisible Deity, they were singular, and like nobody, for these gods were the gods of the people round about them, and indeed of all the nations of the earth, v. 7.

makes sense to ask why worship something intangible.

Quote: This suggestion draws many away from religion and godliness, that it is an unfashionable thing so far so good

Quote: and they make their court to the world and the flesh because these are the gods of the people that are round about them.
??

Quote: Moses suggests, in opposition to this, that it had not been the practice of their ancestors; they are gods which thou hast not known, thou nor thy fathers. Those that are born of godly parents, and have been educated in pious exercises, when they are enticed to a vain, loose, careless way of living should remember that those are ways which they have not known, they nor their fathers. And will they thus degenerate?
Ask the Jews who rejected the message of Jesus.

Quote: II. It is our duty to prefer God and religion before the best friends we have in the world. Including your children?

What would be your response to the Abraham test, do you think?

Quote: We must not, in complaisance to our friends, break God's law (v. 8): "Thou shalt not consent to him. nor go with him to his idolatrous worship, no, not for company, or curiosity, or to gain a better interest in his affections." It is a general rule, If sinners entice thee, consent thou not, Prov. 1:10. 2. We must not, in compassion to our friends, obstruct the course of God's justice. Again, the author is recognising that people might, unbelievably, have a problem with this commandment. Their compassion might get in the way. I certainly hope so. I wonder why I've never heard a Christian say that compassion was a work of Satan.

Quote: He that attempts such a thing must not only be looked upon as an enemy, or dangerous person, whom one should be afraid of, and swear the peace against, but as a criminal or traitor, whom, in zeal for our sovereign Lord, his crown and dignity, we are bound to inform against, and cannot conceal without incurring the guilt of a great misprision (v. 9): Thou shalt surely kill him. By this law the persons enticed were bound to the seducer, and to give evidence against him before the proper judges, that he might suffer the penalty of the law, and that without delay, which the Jews say is here intended in that phrase, as it is in the Hebrew, killing thou shalt kill him. Neither the prosecution nor the execution must be deferred; and he that was first in the former must be first in the latter, to show that he stood to his testimony: "Thy hand shall be first upon him, to mark him out as an anathema, and then the hands of all the people, to put him away as an accursed thing." The death he must die was that which was looked upon among the Jews as the severest of all deaths. He must be stoned: and his accusation written is that he has sought to thrust thee away, by a kind of violence, from the Lord thy God, v. 10.
still hasn't explained where the crime is here

Quote: Those are certainly our worst enemies that would thrust us from God, our best friend; and whatever draws us to sin, separates between us and God, is a design upon our life, and to be resented accordingly
see above re: intentions not necessarily evil.

Suppose I said the following.

You, Altzan, are certainly my worst enemy that would thrust me from reason, my best friend. Whatever draws me to religion, separates between myself and my reason, is a design upon my mind, to be resented accordingly.

It's not actually so far from the truth, although I wouldn't say this would justify me killing you for trying.

Quote:And, lastly, here is the good effect of this necessary execution (v. 11): All Israel shall hear and fear. They ought to hear and fear; for the punishment of crimes committed is designed in terrorem—to terrify, and so to prevent their repetition. And it is to be hoped they will hear and fear, and by the severity of the punishment, especially when it is at the prosecution of a father, a brother, or a friend, will be made to conceive a horror of the sin, as exceedingly sinful, and to be afraid of incurring the like punishment themselves. Smite the scorner that sins presumptuously, and the simple, that is in danger of sinning carelessly, will beware."

Well, yes, if you carry out the most horrific of punishments for some "crime", people probably will avoid doing it. That doesn't mean the punishment is just, or that the "crime" is a crime at all.

Quote:Spoony wrote on Fri, 26 March 2010 11:53I'm not seeing why someone else thinking that the Christian revelations were crystal clear and think there's nothing immoral about his commandments justifies the horrific punishment threatened to anyone who disagrees with them.

It doesn't justify, sure, but I'm trying to point out a different opinion since yours is the prominent one here.

k, but the other opinion is crap, isn't it?

saying the christian revelation is crystal clear is plainly absurd; if it is, what's the need for 'faith'?

as for thinking there's nothing immoral about his commandments... well, you can even see some objections in matthew henry's commentary if you look closely.

Quote:If the people who physically did those things were still alive and were asked the question, I'm sure they'd answer... but they're not around today, are they?

the catholic church is still spreading its evil doctrine against contraception even now.

Quote:Spoony wrote on Fri, 26 March 2010 11:531. you mean the gospel says so - not the same thing at all. how do you know that everything in there is exactly what the writers wanted to say?
2. they didn't all claim the same thing. the gospels contradict each other about almost every major event in jesus' life.

3. ah. i remember you saying you hadn't read the qur'an or hadith either. well, these all claim to be revelations from the god you believe in... don't you think you should at least read them before deciding they're not the real deal?

1. "How do you know" again? Same answer - I don't.

Simple answer - we don't know.

I will give you credit where credit is due. I think this is the most honest and reasonable thing I've seen you say in these religious debates.

It goes a bit wrong from there, though... you ask me how do I know they weren't inspired by god. well, i've been waiting for quite some time for anybody to explain what they even mean by god, and prove his existence, and demonstrate that he's worth listening to.

Once they've done that, then I'll be sure to give due consideration to whether a book claiming to be inspired by him actually is. Otherwise I don't really see the point.

Quote:Spoony wrote on Fri, 26 March 2010 11:53 Firstly, you seem to be affirming that you don't think there's anything wrong with threatening someone with horrific punishment for nothing worse than disagreeing with you.

The played-down part here is "disagreeing with you" - it's a lot more than that, you know. Go on.

Quote:I could use ANY exmple here if I wanted. I'm not talking about the act in particular. Let's change it to whatever law then - the lawbreaker disagrees with the law at hand, and doesn't think it's a proper law and should not be enforced. Should we punish him anyway, or should we let him be, since it isn't fair that we punish him for breaking a law he doesn't think is fair or right? The contents of the bible aren't laws at all; nobody's ever demonstrated that they come from any position of authority.

That's the legal side. On to the moral side. What if the majority thinks the law is wrong? Can it be changed democratically?

Quote:Spoony wrote on Fri, 26 March 2010 11:53 you misunderstand me. i didn't say humans should have equal rights to 'god'. i don't see any reason why this 'god' should have any rights, since nobody's even managed to demonstrate that it exists at all.

Stop dragging the hypothetical situation to the real world - IF God did exist (IF), should we have equal rights to him?

No. If God did exist and the biblical account of his deeds are true, he should not have equal rights to us. Not after his trial, anyway.

Quote:Spoony wrote on Fri, 26 March 2010 11:53 secondly, i seem to recall having this argument with you before. apparently we're stuck as slaves to anyone who created us? well, what if you found out that you were created by a mad scientist in a lab, a modern-day dr. frankenstein? would that make you his slave, like it or not?

That's a completely different situation, eh? Mad scientists would have to work with inventions and materials around him, not create everything out of nothing with pure will. Firstly, how do you know how God supposedly made everything?

Secondly, why is this an important difference? If God creates stuff out of nothing through pure will, he's just using the tools and abilities available to him. What's the difference?

Quote:Also, if we were made by a mad scientist, we'd be wherever he was (unless he was completely alone in the universe) and would be subject to his existence as well, so... you've lost me there.

Quote:Spoony wrote on Fri, 26 March 2010 11:53if we were to find out that the origins of life on earth was because some aliens 'seeded' the planet a few million years ago, would that mean we have to be slaves to them?

Again, completely different scenario.
the only differences i see is that i find the aliens scenario a little easier to believe, and that nobody's telling me i must believe it and act accordingly.

Quote:Spoony wrote on Fri, 26 March 2010 11:53if instead you decide that you were created by your parents in the traditional way, do they rule you for your entire life?

'The traditional way'?
having sex.

Quote:Spoony wrote on Fri, 26 March 2010 11:53if the only people on this planet who've gotten it right are in your particular denomination, then apparently it is.

Again, we're not. But some (or a lot) groups have changed the scripture to suit themselves. And as the Bible says, let no man add or take away from what is written.
Matthew Henry added quite a bit, and that was only to two brief statements.

Secondly, what do you think will happen to the other kinds of Christian after they die? i.e. everyone outside your denomination who says they're a Christian but, in your church's view, are mistaken.

Quote:Spoony wrote on Fri, 26 March 2010 11:53Quote:It also is pretty simple to understand what God says is a sin and what is not.

sure, doesn't mean we need to listen to him, considering how absolutely crap his moral standards seem to be.

but that's no surprise; he was, after all, created by bronze-age middle-eastern barbarians.

But they're simple, as you just affirmed. Not cryptic at all.

firstly you don't seem to be challenging my statement that his moral standards are absolutely shit.
secondly it really is cryptic, or at least too cryptic for humans, otherwise the vast majority of the world wouldn't have a problem with it.
