

A Gay Writer Who Forgot Almost Everything Jesus Said

The statement was so remarkable I had to read it several times before I was sure my eyes were not deceiving me. It turns out the author meant exactly what he wrote, namely, “Only once in the recorded life of Jesus does he lay upon the human a requirement.”

Yes, this is the stated opinion of Jonathan, writing on . He quotes the words of Jesus in John 13:34, “I give you a new commandment, to love one another. Just as I have loved you, you also are to love one another.” And he notes that Jesus reaffirmed this in John 15:12: “My commandment is this – to love one another just as I have loved you.”

Writes Jonathan, “The ‘commandment’ is singular. That means there’s one.”

He finds affirmation for this position in the writings of Paul (Gal. 5:6) and John (1 John 3:11, 3:23, 4:7, 4:11, 4:12; see also 2 John 6), adding his own (quite bizarre) interpretations to a number of biblical texts along the way.

His thesis, described in the title and subtitle of his article (which is quite long, running more than 4,000 words), is simply this: “Jesus [Heart emoji] Gays. Let’s go through the Bible’s references and realize: Christianity was simply wrong.”

But rather than rehashing what the Bible says about homosexual practice, let’s focus on the impossibly wrong claims made by Jonathan, going from the small to the large.

He mocks the idea that “Jesus, anywhere, tells anyone to hate.”

In reality, the whole Bible encourages us to hate evil.

See, for example, Psalm 97:10a, "You who love the LORD, hate evil!" Or note Amos 5:15, "Hate evil and love good, and establish justice at the gate; It may then be that the Lord God of hosts will be gracious to the remnant of Joseph." In the words of Paul in Romans 12:9, "Let love be without hypocrisy. Hate what is evil; cleave to what is good." (These are a few examples among many.)

As for Jesus never teaching us to hate, He did say these controversial words: "If anyone comes to Me and does not hate his father and mother and wife and children and brothers and sisters, yes, and even his own life, he cannot be My disciple" (Luke 14:26).

We can certainly debate exactly what He meant by "hate." But we cannot debate that He said these words (i.e., if we believe His words were faithfully transmitted by His disciples).

So much for Jonathan's accuracy. But we're just getting started.

He writes, "New Testament theology doesn't prompt humans to follow patterns of gendered behavior. 'Do not conform to the pattern of this world,' Paul says in Romans 12:2 – gender would also be part of that."

Actually, the New Testament constantly calls humans (especially Christians) "to follow patterns of gendered behavior." See, for example, 1 Corinthians 11:1-16 and Ephesians 5:22-33, among many passages.

As for Paul's words in Romans 12:2, he's not saying that if society does something, Christians should always do the opposite. (In that case, according to Jonathan's "logic," since American society has renounced slavery and segregation, Christians should do the opposite and embrace slavery and segregation.)

Rather, Paul is saying that we must renew our minds according to God's Word rather than according to the sinful patterns of the world. Jonathan has actually turned biblical truth upside down.

But to focus on these interpretive errors, as serious and frequent as they are, is to major on the minors.

Rather, it is Jonathan's opening thesis that is so shockingly unbiblical. How can he possibly claim that "Only once in the recorded life of Jesus does he lay upon the human a requirement," and that sole commandment is to love one another as He loved us?

At the commencement of His ministry, Jesus preached a simple message: "Repent!" (See Matt. 4:17). That, in short, was a call—yes, a command—to turn from sin and to turn to God. Looks like Jonathan forgot about this—along with scores of other New Testament passages.

In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus issued repeated commands and exhortations, like this:

You have heard that it was said by the ancients, 'You shall not commit adultery.' But I say to you that whoever looks on a woman to lust after her has committed adultery with her already in his heart. And if your right eye causes you to sin, pluck it out and throw it away. For it is profitable that one of your members should perish, and not that your whole body be thrown into hell. And if your right hand causes you to sin, cut it off and throw it away. For it is profitable for you that one of your members should perish, and not that your whole body be thrown into hell (Matt. 5:27-30).

Yet this is just one of many of Jesus' commandments issued within the Sermon of the Mount alone, which explains why He said there that "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, but whoever does them and teaches them will be called great in the kingdom of heaven” (Matt. 5:19, ESV; and note the plural use of “commandments”).

Digging even deeper, one website lists 1,050 New Testament commandments while another lists 31 major commandments made by Jesus.

Do they all flow from the call to love God with all our hearts and to love our neighbor as Jesus loved us? Absolutely.

That is the heart and essence of the matter. Yet that is what Jonathan so sadly misses, since true love for God and for our neighbor demands radical changes in our behavior and lifestyle.

In fact, Jesus’ radical love demands the transformation of our very being, from the inside out.

And it was based on that transforming love that He told those He healed and forgave to “sin no more” lest something worse happened to them (see John 5:18; 8:11).

Those sound like commands to me. {eoa}

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