

Jon Stewart, Gene Robinson Strike Out on the Bible and Family

What happens when Gene Robinson, the country's first openly gay Episcopalian bishop, joins Jon Stewart on *The Daily Show*? You get a mockery of Jesus, a misinterpretation of the Bible and some real howlers on the meaning of *family*.

Robinson joined Stewart on Monday to promote his new book, *God Believes in Love: Straight Talk About Gay Marriage*, a book endorsed by President Obama himself.

Responding to a question from Stewart, Robinson said this about Jesus, to the delight of the crowd: "Here's a guy who, in a culture that virtually demanded marriage, was a single guy, spent most of his time with 12 men, singled out three of them for leadership and one of them is known in the Bible as 'the one whom Jesus loved.' Now I'm not saying Jesus was gay, but let's be careful to rope this guy in for a husband, wife and 2.2 children model for family. He knew about families of choice and so do LGBT people."

Talk about bad comedy—especially from the lips of an ordained bishop.

First, while being celibate was the exception to the rule in first-century Jewish culture, it was certainly not unheard of (in the Old Testament, Jeremiah was celibate, as were other religious Jews in Jesus' day, like some of the Essenes). Second, it was the norm for a rabbi/teacher to gather a group of male disciples around himself. The fact that Jesus also had some female followers (see Luke 8:1-3) was unusual. Third, choosing three men for leadership in a male-led society is exactly what we would expect. Fourth, when the Bible talks about God loving someone or someone loving God, there's

obviously nothing of a sexual nature implied. The same applies when spoken about Jesus.

Robinson, however, has the temerity to claim that Jesus is a poor example for advocates of natural marriage and family, stating that, "He knew about families of choice and so do LGBT people."

Which "families of choice" did Jesus know about, Bishop Robinson? And have you forgotten, sir, how He answered a question about divorce by asking, "Haven't you read ... that at the beginning the Creator 'made them male and female,' and said, 'For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and the two will become one flesh'? So they are no longer two, but one. Therefore what God has joined together, let man not separate." (Matt. 19:4-6, NIV)

This is the clearest statement about God's intent for marriage found anywhere in the Bible, and it comes from the lips of Jesus himself. Yet Robinson wants Jesus to be an advocate of genderless marriage, not to mention possibly gay himself.

Jon Stewart also put his foot in his mouth when he stated, "If you read Leviticus, eating shellfish is an abomination," which led him to wonder out loud why religious conservatives weren't trying to shut down Red Lobster.

His argument, of course, was that since Leviticus 18:22 says that male-male intercourse is an abomination and it also says that eating shellfish is an abomination, then those who claim to follow the Bible should campaign against restaurants like Red Lobster.

The problem for Stewart is that the only sin singled out as an abomination in Leviticus (in Hebrew, *to'evah*) is homosexual intercourse. A different word is used with reference to the dietary laws in Leviticus 11, a fact that is obscured in some English translations. More importantly, the dietary laws were given to keep the people of Israel separated from the nations;

the laws concerning forbidden sexual relationships applied in God's sight to Israel and the nations (see -30; for a one-minute primer on this, see [here](#).)

But the most absurd part of the dialog between Stewart and Robinson occurred when they presented same-sex "marriage" as something conservatives should embrace.

According to Robinson, when Americans look at gay couples and the kids they are raising, "What they're seeing is all American family values."

To be sure, a large majority of gays and lesbians are not seeking to be married and are not raising kids, and so those who are already represent a more conservative part of the LGBT community. And it is certainly positive to see gays and lesbians recognize that marriage is not something to be despised, in contrast with the extreme attacks on marriage in earlier gay activist literature.

But how can Bishop Robinson possibly think that having two daddies or two mommies equates to "all American family values"?

Stewart is equally in the dark, saying that, "It's so surprising to me that this is not a conservative issue, to try to bring more people into the fundamental unit that they believe to be the foundation of any rational structured society. More people getting married seems better than less."

Mr. Stewart, may I point out to you that the "fundamental unit" we believe in is not two people joining together in holy matrimony but rather a man and woman joining together? It is the lifelong union of a man and woman, producing children who are joined to them, that is "the foundation of any rational structured society." Put another way, human society was not built on *Heather Has Two Mommies*.

But what else should we expect? Despite Robinson's irenic tone

and Stewart's serious intent, we are, after all, talking about Comedy Central.

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