

6 Things You Need to Know About the Supreme Court's Gay Marriage Ruling

The U.S. Supreme Court issued its long-awaited ruling on same-sex marriage today. By a slim 5-4 majority, the nation's highest court ruled that the 14th Amendment—which was put in place to protect the rights of former slaves in the wake of the Civil War—should be applied to make same-sex marriage the law of the land nationwide.

During the past few years, federal and appellate courts have overturned dozens of state laws and constitutional amendments put in place by voters and legislators, and it was only a matter of time before the Supreme Court finally weighed in on the issue. Now that they have ruled on one of the most controversial issues in our nation's history, many leaders have issued statements against the decision.

Many worry that religious liberty and freedom of speech protections for those who hold traditional views of marriage will be undermined by the decision. Others lament what they see as the demise of the democratic principles on which the country was founded, as a handful of unelected judges have tossed out the voice of millions of Americans as decided at the ballot box. Others still fear that this decision might be the beginning of something even more dangerous, another step down a path where the values and morality that have been at the core of America for centuries may soon become criminalized. Here are some of the most resonant statements.

1. Dr. Alex McFarland—Religion and Culture Expert, Author

“Today's atrocious Supreme Court decision took the definition of marriage out of the hands of the people—and out of the Bible. The fact is that marriage is biblical, it's a gift from

God, and no one should have the power to change its definition or meaning because of societal trends and perceived cultural shifts. God was the first to define it in the Garden of Eden and He should be the last to define it. It's a sad commentary on society when nine human beings have the power to change God's laws for an entire nation."

"Even in spite of the decision, states must now work to protect the religious rights of their residents. Freedom is nothing without the right to make decisions and act accordingly on faith-based beliefs, if a person so chooses."

2. Sam Rohrer—President of the American Pastors Network and the Pennsylvania Pastors Network

"This landmark decision had deep biblical, historical and constitutional roots, and unfortunately our justices chose to redefine marriage for the entire nation, ignoring other constitutional rights and opening the door to a dangerous infringement on religious liberties. The fact that this issue even made it to the Supreme Court of the United States was an indictment against American Christians and against American churches. Even though some churches have sought to blend into the culture rather than change it, this ruling serves as a wake-up call for pastors and churches who are committed to being the salt and light of our society and standing up for truth.

"This is just the beginning, and as the culture continues to change—and move even further away from the truth of God's Word and from our constitutional roots—it is crucial that pastors and churches know the truth, speak the truth and live the truth, doing all they can to preserve God's Word and protect the religious liberties of Christians across the nation."

3. Jim Campbell—Senior Legal Counsel for Alliance Defending Freedom

"The Supreme Court has stripped all Americans of our freedom

to debate and decide marriage policy through the democratic process. The freedom to democratically address the most pressing social issues of the day is the heart of liberty. The court took that freedom from the people and overrode the considered judgment of tens of millions of Americans who recently reaffirmed marriage as the union of a man and a woman. The court cast aside the understanding of marriage's nature and purpose that diverse cultures and faiths across the globe have embraced for millennia."

4. Reince Priebus—Chairman of the Republican National Committee

"The Supreme Court failed to recognize the states' constitutional role in setting marriage policy, instead finding a federal role where there is none. In doing so, they have taken power away from the states and from the people to settle the relevant issues for themselves.

"Even though the Supreme Court has spoken with finality, there remains a diversity of opinions about marriage policy—from those celebrating today's ruling to those concerned about the constitutional balance of power.

"As a Party, we believe in the importance of traditional marriage between a man and a woman and remain committed to finding common ground to champion the family's role in society. Marriage is critically important to strengthening our country and our communities. Likewise, we will remain champions of religious liberty. Today's ruling cannot and must not be used to coerce a church or religious institution into performing marriages that their faith does not recognize. We should respect the sincerely held religious views of our fellow citizens, just as we respect those on the winning side of this case."

5. Rev. Samuel Rodriguez—President of the National Hispanic Christian Leadership Conference

“Today’s SCOTUS decision redefining marriage serves as a defacto and legal catalyst for the marginalization of Americans who embrace a biblical worldview.

“Still, we affirm the Court’s recognition to uphold proper protection of religious organizations and persons, under the First Amendment rights, as they seek to teach the principles that are so fulfilling and so central to their lives and faiths, and to their own deep aspirations to continue the family structure they have long revered.

“As children of the Cross, committed to biblical truth, we affirm the biblical definition of marriage as a sacred union between one man and one woman.

“At the same time, as Christ followers committed to the loving gospel of Jesus, we reject and repudiate all vestiges of homophobia, intolerance and bigotry.

“Accordingly, we must all work arduously to recognize the image of God in every individual, without exception, while simultaneously building a firewall against intolerance and bigotry toward followers of Christ who preach truth with love.

“For at the end of the day, I know for certain, that the moment biblical truth stands defined as hate speech in our nation, America, as we know her, will cease to exist.”

6. Alveda King—Civil Rights Activist, Author and Niece of Martin Luther King Jr.

“The Supreme Court has spoken and ruled from a position of common law—human law—that gay and lesbian couples have a fundamental right to marry. This is the highest rule that humans can make. Yet this is not the final word.

“In the end, natural law, God’s law will always trump common law. Do not fear or be confused or deceived. Remain prayerful. Keep looking up. God will have the final Word in this matter.

“Don’t be misled—you cannot mock the justice of God. You will always harvest what you plant” (Gal. 6:7, NLT).