

Using The Bible As Our Guidebook

The baseball rule book defines a game as baseball and differentiates it from all other games. When a group of boys play a game together using the baseball rulebook as their guide, then they are playing baseball. Likewise, when people practice religion using the Bible as their rulebook, then they are practicing Christianity. But what happens if they stop using the Bible as their guide, what if they start using their own rules instead of God's?

We read in The Birmingham News, Aug 6, 2003 – The Episcopal Church approved its first openly gay bishop ... the Rev. Gene Robinson. ... Robinson ... replied ... "We have many times departed from ... Scripture." ... Robinson cited the examples of ordaining women priests and accepting divorce in the church as departures ... "Just simply saying it departs from ... Scripture does not necessarily make it wrong."

What that quote is saying is the Episcopal Church ordained its first gay bishop in 2003, and that new gay bishop admitted him becoming a bishop was a departure from scripture, but justified such by saying departures from scripture by the Episcopal church in the past allowing women preachers and divorce and remarriage were not considered wrong, and so neither should this departure from scripture be considered wrong. So the Episcopal Church is admitting they don't follow the Bible anymore, that following the scripture is not what makes something right religiously anymore. Now let me suggest that most churches take this same attitude; most churches don't follow the Bible as their guidebook anymore ...

The Bible should be our guidebook - II Tim 3:16-17 All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works. And John 17:17 says "Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth." So the Bible defines for us what God's truth is, and John 8:32 says "And ye shall know the truth, the truth shall make you free" (from sin).

Here is what the Bible says about homosexuality - I Cor 6:9-10 Do you not know ... the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived. Neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor homosexuals, nor sodomites, nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners will inherit the kingdom of God. (NKJV)

In the last few years, both the Presbyterian Church (USA) and the United Methodist Church have switched their stance to allow gay preachers and gay marriages:

- The Presbyterian Church made a historic decision ... to formally recognize gay marriage and allow same-sex couples to marry in its congregations. ... The ... denomination voted to redefine the church constitution on marriage to include 'a commitment between two people ...' (Time Magazine, 3-18-2015). The church should "re-evaluate its definition of sin to reflect the changing mores of society." (Time Magazine, 5-6-91)
- Leaders ... said they had agreed to allow ... the United Methodist Church to permit same-sex marriage and LGBT clergy for the first time in its history. (The Washington Post, Jan 3, 2020)

Are the Presbyterian and Methodist churches still using the Bible as their guidebook?

Let's talk about the other two things mentioned in the quote from "bishop" Robinson ...

Here is what the Bible says about women preachers – I Cor 14:34-35 Let your women keep silence in the churches: for it is not permitted unto them to speak; but they are commanded to be under obedience as also saith the law. And if they will learn any thing, let them ask their husbands at home: for it is a shame for women to speak in the church. My understanding is that more than 75% of congregations across America allow women to preach from their pulpit. Are these churches still using the Bible as their guidebook?

Here is what the Bible says about divorce and remarriage – Matt 19:9 **And I say unto you, Whosoever shall put away his wife, except it be for fornication, and shall marry another, committeth adultery: and whoso marrieth her which is put away doth commit adultery.** A long time ago the Methodist Church used to stand for the truth on divorce and remarriage, but they've changed:

- **1896** Methodist Creed Book: **No divorce, except for adultery, shall be regarded by the Church as lawful; and no Minister shall solemnize marriage in any case where there is a divorced wife or husband living; but this rule shall not be applied to the innocent party to a divorce for the cause of adultery** (The Doctrines and Discipline of the Methodist Episcopal Church)
- **1984** Methodist Creed Book: **Where marriage partners, even after thoughtful consideration and counsel, are estranged beyond reconciliation, we recognize divorce as regrettable but recognize the right of divorced persons to remarry.**

Most churches have compromised on divorce and remarriage in this same way. Are these churches still using the Bible as their guidebook?

Katherine Schori (head of The Episcopal Church USA) was asked by Time magazine “**Is belief in Jesus the only way to get to heaven?**” Her response was “... **to assume that God could not act in other ways is, I think, to put God in an awfully small box.**” (Time July 10, 2006). But the Bible says:

- John 14:6 **Jesus saith ... I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me.**
- John 8:24 **I said ... ye shall die in your sins: for if ye believe not that I am he, ye shall die in your sins.**

Is the Episcopal Church still using the Bible as their guidebook?

Here is what the Bible says about “faith only” justification – James 2:24 **Ye see then how that by works a man is justified, and not by faith only.** But the teaching on this has changed in most churches since Bible times:

- **Wherefore, that we are justified by faith, only, is a most wholesome doctrine, and very full of comfort.** (Article IX in The Articles of Religion of the Methodist Church)

Are the churches that teach salvation by “faith only” still using the Bible as their guidebook?

Here is what the Bible says about the form/action of baptism - Rom 6:4 **Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life.** All churches used to immerse when they baptized:

- Our Faith and the Facts, page 399: **The (Catholic) church at one time practiced immersion. This was up to the thirteenth century. The Council of Ravenna, in 1311, changed the form from immersion to pouring.**
- **Let every ... person ... have the choice of sprinkling, pouring, or immersion** (Methodist Discipline, 1956)

Are churches who practice sprinkling for baptism still using the Bible as their guidebook?

Here is what the Bible says about who should be baptized – Acts 8:36-37 - **And as they went on their way, they came unto a certain water: and the eunuch said, See, here is water; what doth hinder me to be baptized? And Philip said, If thou believest with all thine heart, thou mayest. And he answered and said, I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God** None of the first century churches practiced infant baptism.

- **The baptism of young children is to be retained in the church** (Methodist Discipline, 1956, pg.31)

Are churches who practice infant baptism still using the Bible as their guidebook?

What's the eternal fate of those who don't use the Bible as their rulebook, and of those who go along with such?

- II John 9-11 **Whosoever transgresseth, and abideth not in the doctrine of Christ, hath not God. He that abideth in the doctrine of Christ, he hath both the Father and the Son. If there come any unto you, and bring not this doctrine, receive him not into your house, neither bid him God speed: For he that biddeth him God speed is partaker of his evil deeds.**
- Matt 15:9 **But in vain they do worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men.**
- John 8:31 **Then said Jesus ... If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed;**