

1 Kingdoms in Conflict

2 SCOTUS

- This week, the Supreme Court of the United States struck down part of the Defense of Marriage Act (DOMA) in response to a lawsuit by Edith Windsor who declared discrimination for not being able to claim her deceased same-sex partner as her legal spouse and so receive federal tax exemptions from her partner's estate.
- The portion of the DOMA law that has been ruled against is a provision that denies federal benefits to legally-married gay couples.
- Gay couples, under federal law, will now be considered "married," if the state they are living in has provision for same-sex marriage.
- The rulings, though, do not impact gay marriage rights in the 38 states where it is currently not legal on the books.

3 DOMA

- The Defense of Marriage Act was a United States federal law that allowed states to refuse to recognize same-sex marriages performed under the laws of other states.
- Initially introduced by Republicans in May 1996, it was passed by both houses of Congress by large majorities and was signed into law by President Bill Clinton, in an election year, in September 1996.
- The main provisions of the act were as follows:
 - This Act may be cited as the "Defense of Marriage Act".
 - No State, . . . shall be required to give effect to any public act, record, or judicial proceeding of any other State, . . . respecting a relationship between persons of the same sex that is treated as a marriage under the laws of such other State, . . . , or a right or claim arising from such relationship.
 - In determining the meaning of any Act of Congress, or of any ruling, regulation, or interpretation of the various administrative bureaus and agencies of the United States, the word 'marriage' means only a legal union between one man and one woman as husband and wife, and the word 'spouse' refers only to a person of the opposite sex who is a husband or a wife.

4 George O. Wood

- The day after this Supreme Court decision, I received an email from George O. Wood who is the General Superintendent of the General Council of the Assemblies of God in the United States.
- What he said about the decision and how the Supreme Court justices reached their conclusion on this case got my attention.
- According to Dr. Wood,

- Not only did the justices use the “equal liberty” or “due process” clause of the Fifth Amendment,
- But that the 1996 Defense of Marriage Act was motivated by “animus.”
- Animus refers to something that is done with a strong dislike or enmity; hostile attitude; and animosity.
- In other words, Justice Kennedy—writing for the majority, wasn’t saying that the DOMA was unconstitutional, but rather that the motivation for the Defense of Marriage Act was based on homophobia and bigoted attitudes and biases and thus should be struck down.

5 George O. Wood

- Again, according to Dr. Wood,
 - “To apply the word "animus" to those who hold to the view that marriage is reserved for a man and woman is an inflammatory accusation that ignores our principled arguments and demeans our motives.”
 - “If the culture can dehumanize followers of Christ by attaching hateful labels to them, then it’s only a matter of time until
 - Christians are marginalized for their faith,
 - Deprived of their 1st amendment rights, and
 - Ultimately persecuted.”
 - “Americans disagree about the advisability of same-sex marriage. In their often-heated debates, they deserve to have their reasons and motivations portrayed honestly by the other side. And they deserve the right to resolve these issues at the ballot box, one way or another. This is the essence of self-government.”

6 SCOTUS

- In his dissent, Justice Scalia predicted that this decision was only the first shoe to drop.
- Dr. Wood also predicted . . .
 - As American culture shifts away from its Judeo-Christian heritage, the speed of that shift will only be accelerated in the days to come.
 - The decision this week is a call to Christians to fervently pray and actively work for a great spiritual awakening in our land.

7 Churches Celebrate

- This week when the SCOTUS struck down section 3, of the DOMA, the National Cathedral in Washington DC along with several other churches, rang their church bells.
- Rev. Gary Hall, Dean of the Cathedral, released a statement soon after the rulings were announced voicing his satisfaction:

- “We are ringing our bells at the Cathedral to celebrate the extension of federal marriage equality to all the same–sex couples modeling God’s love in lifelong covenants.”
- “Our prayers for continued happiness are with them and with all couples who will be joined in matrimony in the years to come, whether at Washington National Cathedral or elsewhere.”

8 The World has Changed

- Even Rush Limbaugh, who is not necessarily a religious man, notices a change in the standards of decency, decorum, and behavior of our society.
- In fact, just this week, he remarked that there is an all out ‘War on Religion.’
- Here is what he said, . . .
 - “it is clear, there is an all–out war, and it’s been going on for a long time.”
 - “I think it’s just the idea that is now having a little bit more success than we would like, the all–out war against religion, the war against God. God, religion, the Bible, that is the source for morality.”

9 Non–profit Status

- Ben Shapiro writing for breitbart.com suggest that the way that the Supreme Court ruled on the Defense of the Marriage Act could be used by the IRS to remove non–profit status for churches across the country.
- This is not too far fetched, because in 1983, the Supreme Court ruled in Bob Jones University v. United States that it was within the scope of the IRS to revoke the tax exempt status for the university based on its policy prohibiting interracial dating.
- The Court determined that the “Government has a fundamental, overriding interest in eradicating racial discrimination in education ... which substantially outweighs whatever burden denial of tax benefits places on [the university’s] exercise of their religious beliefs.”
- So then, if the government believes it has an overriding interest in eradicating racial discrimination, will it also believe that it has an overriding interest in what it feels is bigotry.

10 Non–profit Status

- On the state level, a movement is already under way to revoke non–profit status for religious organizations that do not abide by the same–sex marriage.
- In Massachusetts in 2006, Boston Catholic Charities withdrew from adoption services thanks to the state mandate on same–sex adoptions, rather than fight the issue in court.

- In California, a bill is already making its way through the legislature to bar non-profit status for any religious youth group that discriminates on the basis of “gender identity, race, sexual orientation, nationality, religion, or religious affiliation.”

11 Recent Developments

- Just yesterday a federal judge blocked Michigan's ban on domestic partner benefits for employees who work for public schools or local governments, saying state lawmakers simply wanted to punish gays and lesbians.
- In his 51-page opinion, Lawson cited this week’s decision by the U.S. Supreme Court that struck down a portion of a federal law barring certain benefits to married same-sex couples.
- Further commenting on the SCOTUS decision, Lawson said, “This is great news. It’s a very mean-spirited law.
- According to thehill.com, Gay rights lobbyists now plan to use their victory at the Supreme Court to push legislation that would ensure married same-sex couples are eligible for federal benefits in all 50 states.

12 Joseph Biden

- Vice President Biden applauded the Supreme Court's rulings earlier this week overturning the Defense of Marriage Act and California's Proposition 8, saying that “we’re on the verge of seeing America move even further” on same-sex marriages.
- Biden heralded the Supreme Court's ruling as “a great day for every gay and lesbian couple and it should be a great day for every straight couple in America.”
- “Now we can look each other in the eye and say: We're on the road to absolute fairness and equity.”

13 Gay Marriage?

- So then, what’s wrong with Gay Marriage?
- First of all both the Old & New Testament condemn homosexuality.
 - “Do not lie with a man as one lies with a woman; that is detestable.” (Lev 18:22 NIV)
 - “If a man lies with a man as one lies with a woman, both of them have done what is detestable. They must be put to death; their blood will be on their own heads.” (Lev 20:13 NIV)
 - Do you not know that the wicked will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived: Neither the sexually immoral nor idolaters nor adulterers nor male prostitutes nor homosexual offenders nor thieves nor the greedy nor drunkards nor slanderers nor swindlers will inherit the kingdom of God. (1 Cor 6:9–10 NIV)

14 Shameful Lust

- Because of this, God gave them over to shameful lusts. Even their women exchanged natural relations for unnatural ones. In the same way the men also abandoned natural relations with women and were inflamed with lust for one another. Men committed indecent acts with other men, and received in themselves the due penalty for their perversion. (Rom 1:26–27)
- Furthermore, since they did not think it worthwhile to retain the knowledge of God, he gave them over to a depraved mind, to do what ought not to be done. (Rom 1:26–28 NIV)

15 An Abomination

- Homosexuality is more than a sin, it is an abomination.
- An abomination is something that is immoral, disgusting, horrible, shameful, and intensely disliked.
- According to Lev. 18:22–24, homosexuality along with bestiality defiles the land and was the chief reason the nations were driven out before Israel.
- However, in Lev. 18:25–28, Israel was warned that if they did any of these detestable things too that they would defile the land and it would vomit them out as well.

16 Other Considerations

- Other issues with same-sex marriage.
 - It violates natural law and the purpose of sexuality.
 - It denies a child of either a father or a mother.
 - It promotes the homosexual lifestyle.
 - It turns a moral wrong into a civil right.
 - It does not create a family but a naturally sterile union.
 - It imposes its acceptance on all society.
 - It opens the door to other logical next steps to sexual freedom such as incest, pedophilia, bestiality, and other forms of unnatural behavior.

17 Other Considerations

- According to Bell and Weinberg, *Is Homosexuality Healthy?*, they discovered the following information on homosexual practices.
 - 28% of homosexual men had more than 1,000 partners, 43% had sex with 500 or more partners, and 83% had sex with 50 or more partners.
 - 79% of homosexual men say over half of their sex partners were strangers.
 - Among married heterosexual females 85% report fidelity. Among married heterosexual men, 75% report fidelity. Among homosexual males there is an extremely low rate of sexual fidelity.
- According to the Williams Institute at the UCLA School of Law,

- 3.8% of Americans are gay and 1.8% are bisexual.
- In Australia gays are 1.2%, Britain 1.5%, Canada 1.0%, and in the Netherlands it is 3.0%

18 Christian Response

- Just because someone is a homosexual does not mean that we cannot love him (or her) or pray for him (her).
- Homosexuality is a sin and like any other sin it needs to be dealt with in the only way possible. It needs to be laid at the cross and forsaken.
- Homosexuality is not a special practice that is exempt from God's righteous judgment simply because they claim they are born that way, or just want to be free to love, or say that it is normal.
- People are born with a tendency to lie. Does that make it okay? People want to love each other, but since when is "love" the determiner of what is right and wrong?
- Love should never be confused with lust.

19 Christian Response

- We Christians should pray for the salvation of the homosexual the same as we would for any other person trapped in any other sin.
- This is not an issue of arrogance or judgmentalism.
- We don't want anyone to be lost due to their sin and that includes gays, lesbians, and transgenders.
- Therefore, we Christians should show homosexuals the same dignity as anyone else with whom we come in contact.
- Don't injure them. Don't hate them. Don't judge them.

20 Christian Response

- But, this does not mean that you are to approve of their sin.
- Don't compromise your witness for a socially acceptable opinion that is void of godliness and biblical truth.
- Instead, stand firm in the word that God has revealed and patiently love him/her biblically, and pray for their salvation.
- Be kind to them. Be loving. And, when appropriate, tell them the gospel.

21 Who Hates who?

- [Jesus said,] The world cannot hate you, but it hates me because I testify that what it does is evil. (John 7:7 NIV)
- "If the world hates you, keep in mind that it hated me first. If you belonged to the world, it would love you as its own. As it is, you do not belong to the world, but I have chosen you out of the world. That is why the world hates you. (John 15:18-19 NIV)

- Remember the words I spoke to you: ‘No servant is greater than his master.’ If they persecuted me, they will persecute you also. If they obeyed my teaching, they will obey yours also. (John 15:20 NIV)

22 Looking for a City

- By faith Abraham, when called to go to a place he would later receive as his inheritance, obeyed and went, even though he did not know where he was going. By faith he made his home in the promised land like a stranger in a foreign country; . . . For he was looking forward to the city with foundations, whose architect and builder is God. (Heb 11:8-10 NIV)
- All these people (Abraham, Isaiah, and Jacob) were still living by faith when they died. They did not receive the things promised; they only saw them and welcomed them from a distance. And they admitted that they were aliens and strangers on earth. People who say such things show that they are looking for a country of their own. (Heb 11:13-14 NIV)

23 Not of this World

- Jesus said, “My kingdom is not of this world. If it were, my servants would fight to prevent my arrest by the Jews. But now my kingdom is from another place.” (John 18:36 NIV)
- “You are a king, then!” said Pilate. Jesus answered, “You are right in saying I am a king. In fact, for this reason I was born, and for this I came into the world, to testify to the truth. Everyone on the side of truth listens to me.” (John 18:37 NIV)

24 Conclusion

- The seventh angel sounded his trumpet, and there were loud voices in heaven, which said: “The kingdom of the world has become the kingdom of our Lord and of his Christ, and he will reign for ever and ever.” (Rev 11:15 NIV)
- “Blessed are those who wash their robes, that they may have the right to the tree of life and may go through the gates into the city. Outside are the dogs, those who practice magic arts, the sexually immoral, the murderers, the idolaters and everyone who loves and practices falsehood. (Rev 22:14-15 NIV)
- He who testifies to these things says, “Yes, I am coming soon.” (Rev 22:20 NIV)