

Thankfully most Christians have heard of Polygamy because they read their Bibles. It is common knowledge that King Solomon had lots of wives along with other Old Testament saints who feature significantly in the Lord's outworking of His redemptive purposes.

For the most part main stream Christianity leaves polygamy in the Old Testament conceding that God permitted it but it was not His original intention. They believe the New Testament condemned and abolished the practice and marriage is now divinely defined as one man and one woman. That simple summary is sufficient for most Christians; it is widespread and constantly reinforced from the pulpit.

We would like to present a brief overview of Biblical Polygamy because we believe the traditional summary above is inadequate and in error. Most discussions about polygamy center on a very limited Scriptural examination. We hope, after this introductory overview, Christians will be better placed to re-consider polygamy and even draw conclusions based on examinations of all the Word of God.

We will present passages orthodoxy tends to discard or ignore and examine a few they try to use against it. Please open your Bibles and read every passage and be brutally honest about how the Bible, speaking for itself, compares to what we've heard. There is nothing to fear in the truth of God's Word, for the Word assures us; [There is no fear in love, but perfect love casts out fear, because fear has torment. He who fears has not been perfected in love. 1Jn 4:18](#)

Studying polygamy does not imply any condemnation of monogamy or demand anyone consider living the lifestyle. There is no threat to any relationship simply because we re-examine God's Word regarding this marriage structure.

Polygamy is viewed in a bad light for a number of reasons but especially as a result of the media bias against it. When a polygamist does something wrong it is deemed far more newsworthy than the same actions reported in an "ordinary" person. Have you ever seen the headline "Monogamous wife murders her monogamous husband"?

Polygamy is also poorly esteemed because of traditional Christian denunciations and this deepens the unease polygamy brings among those not culturally accustomed to it. It is not surprising then that any unsavory act by a polygamist highlights the perceived evil of polygamy but there is no perception of evil in monogamy when monogamy commits the same act.

Christianity has fallen into this same sensationalist media mindset when it argues that only bad things come from polygamy. Does this sound logical, let alone scripturally correct to you? If only bad things come from polygamy then we would

need to erase the two books of Samuel from our Bibles.. Do we consider the 12 tribes of Israel all bad? Our Lord and Saviour has many in His family tree who were polygamists, would we dare turn to the Lord and remind Him that only bad things come from polygamy? I would suggest caution since our Lord is not bad but He came through polygamy.

What a nonsense argument to suggest that only bad things come from polygamy. Equally bad things come through every marriage structure, in fact, most genocidal maniacs were monogamous. Adam was monogamous, he disobeyed God and sin and death entered the world. That is the ultimate bad through monogamy.

For this limited Biblical survey we begin in the beginning and Genesis chapters 1-2 are esteemed as bastions for the monogamy only position. We have been told that God only made one wife for Adam and when God said that the two shall become one flesh He could only mean one man and one woman;

Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave to his wife and they (two) shall be one flesh. Gen 2:24.

Monogamy is extolled as the implied “command” of God and His original intention on this passage without comparing other Scriptures in the Word of God.

Traditionalists argue that since God only made one wife for Adam the case is proven.

This all sounds reasonable but a comparison of Scripture proves these deductions are wide of the mark.

Not once did God use Gen.2:24 against any of His servants who were polygamous. This contradiction between tradition and God who called, used and blessed polygamists should send the jury back to the jury room. God’s understanding of His own Word doesn’t appear to align with tradition, He does not imply monogamy.

Moses, who wrote Genesis, had more than one wife as did Terah, Abraham, Caleb, Gideon, Jacob, Hosea, Manasseh, Nahor, Simeon, Shemei and most of the tribe of Issachar to name but a very few. Not once does God send any prophet against these and remind them of Gen.2:24.

While tradition beats the Gen.2:24 drum Bible students notice that our God made laws which demanded polygamy, how could this be if tradition is correct? Please stop and read Deut.25:5-10.

God instructed the elder brother to marry his dead brother’s wife and produce offspring for his dead brother. This was not permission; it was an instruction for all Israel. It is called “the duty of a husband’s brother” or levirate. The brother who refuses to marry his dead brother’s wife was to bear shame in Israel. Why shame if God demanded monogamy? In Gen.38:8-10 Onan refused to perform his duty and

was struck dead by God. Why would God strike a man dead if polygamy was only His permission? Perhaps tradition is incorrect which says God permitted polygamy. Tradition is incorrect, levirate polygamy was not permitted it was commanded.

In the light of Deut.25 we should now re-consider the story of Ruth. Boaz was not single and neither was the nearer kinsman who had the prior right to redeem the property and marry her. Naomi nursed the child, not Boaz and Ruth.

There is another law found in Ex.21 given for the man who takes more than one wife;

[If he takes himself another wife, her food, her clothing, and her duty of marriage shall not be lessened. Exo 21:10](#)

Why would God make this law contrary to His original intention if monogamy was His implied command? Does God weaken His position because of wayward people? No, God corrects wayward people. Did God permit Cain to murder his brother? When we teach that one wife for Adam and Gen.2:24 means monogamy we teach doctrines out of step with the teachings of the Word of God. After Eden, polygamy was included by God as a marriage structure; laws were given for it. Remember, clothes were given for those who were originally made naked. God doesn't change as to virtue but He changes the conditions.

The Lord refers to Gen.2:24 in Matt.19 which is a NT focus for the monogamy only tradition. Please read Matt.19:3-12. This begins with the Pharisees tempting the Lord with their question. Before we conclude that this passage abrogates all the OT laws for polygamy we remind ourselves that the Lord did not come to destroy the Law (Matt.5:17-18). The Law provides for a husband to take more than one wife. The Lord and the Pharisees knew this.

The Pharisees were given a clear answer, should they divorce their wives for "every cause" other than fornication, then the divorced wife and her future husband, they and their future wives, commit adultery. This Scripture has nothing to do with the husband who, already having a wife, takes another. The hardness of heart here has nothing to do with polygamy, it relates to those who divorce their wives for "every cause". The sin of adultery is not leveled against a man having more than one wife, not here or anywhere in the Old Testament. Compare Matt.5:23. Perhaps the Pharisees were trying to avoid their lawful obligations under Ex.21:10?

To prove that having more than one wife is not adultery or contrary to Gen.2:24, we take a word of truth from the life of God's friend King David, a man after God's own heart (Acts 13:22). David committed adultery when he took Uriah's wife Bathsheba. David did not commit adultery nor breach Gen.2:24 when he took other women to be his wives. David had many wives and concubines (2Sam.5:13) at the time of his

betrayal of Uriah. David was one flesh with each of his wives and God did not condemn David for having many, in fact, look at this verse;

... I gave thee thy master's house, and thy master's wives into thy bosom, and gave thee the house of Israel and of Judah; and if that had been too little, I would have added unto thee such and such things. 2Sa 12:8 ASV

God gave David more than one wife and if David needed more wives, God would have added them. So much for the refutation which insists that God's original intention was one man one woman. So much for tradition which says monogamy was God's implied command. So much for tradition which says God never promoted polygamy. In giving David many wives, God is clearly telling us that our traditions are incorrect. God blessed His servant David with multiple wives, but David "despised the Word of the Lord" and took another man's wife, now that is adultery.

David did not commit adultery with all his wives; neither did Jacob. Their wives were not committing adultery either. Polygamist men and women were one flesh with each other according to Gen.2:24. David suffered because of his adultery; David was never punished because he had more than one wife. King Solomon suffered and his heart turned away because he took pagan, Godless wives. Solomon was not condemned because he had more than one wife. Please read carefully Deut.17:17.

Many Christians are aware that God figuratively unites Himself with Israel in a marriage bond, but few Christians have been taught that God had more than one wife. This horrifies the faithful but Jeremiah 31:31-32 is widely known and quoted; Behold, the days come, saith Jehovah, that I will make a new covenant with **the house of Israel**, and with **the house of Judah**: not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day that I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt; which my covenant they brake, although I was **a husband unto them**, saith Jehovah.
Jer 31:31-32 MKJV

God says He had two wives, He was a husband to the house of Israel and the house of Judah, can we believe Him? God is not a monogamist; He was a husband to THEM. The reader should check Jer.3:1-8 where God's two wives were committing spiritual adultery. Also read Ezekiel 23 where these same two sisters produced God's sons and daughters. If our God has two wives how can we insist His original intention was one man one woman? Gen.2:24 speaks to unity in marriage, the two (husband and wife) being one flesh and this equally applies to the husband with more than one wife. God's own figurative marriage relationship proves this.

We have heard it said that the Lord Jesus only has one bride. Since the Lord Jesus of the NT is Jehovah of the OT, that would give the Lord at least three betrothal relationships not counting the New Jerusalem, the Bride the Lamb's wife, Rev.21:9. The Lord Jesus does not have one bride only.

In Isaiah 4 God describes polygamists as holy, please go and read the passage. In the future kingdom on the earth seven women will take hold of one man and seek marriage. Since this prophet looks to a time future to the NT, it clearly squashes the error that polygamy was banned in the NT. Isaiah 4 says that the Lord sees polygamists as holy, how should we see them in the light of God's Word?

The NT passage most used, or perhaps abused by tradition is this one. We ask the reader to underline any word or phrase which bans polygamy;

Then it behooves the overseer (Bishop) to be without reproach, husband of one wife, temperate, sensible, well-ordered, hospitable, apt at teaching, not a drunkard, not contentious, not greedy of ill gain, but gentle, not quarrelsome, not covetous, ruling his own house well, having children in subjection with all honor. (For if a man does not know to rule his own house, how shall he take care of the church of God?) 1Ti 3:2-5 MKJV

This passage simply limits the Bishops and Deacons (verses 8-12) to one wife but they must have children as well. Why did Paul write "one wife" if everybody in the churches were monogamous? Why does Christianity ignore this passage and elect Bishops without wives and children and then find it convenient to use it against those with more than one wife?

Why is this scripture disregarded so that churches may elect women to the office of Bishop and Deacon? It is Bible misuse to focus on "one wife" while totally ignoring the word "husband" in the same verse. The word for "one" is elsewhere translated "first" which if grammatically correct, eliminates the verse as an argument against polygamy. But the Lord will rebuild Israel with polygamy as Isaiah 4 declares so 1Tim.3 cannot be used to argue that the NT banned it.

To conclude this brief overview, we refer to one more passage written by Paul to the Corinthians;

Now concerning what you wrote to me: *It is good for a man not to touch a woman. But, because of the fornications, let each have his own wife, and let each have her own husband.* 1Co 7:12

The adjective "own" is two different words in the original language. The word "own" as it relates to the wife and her "own" husband is a word which means exclusivity. The husband is the wife's exclusively, but the wife is not the husband's exclusively.

We have also heard that polygamy is against the Law of the land but this is also incorrect since polygamists do not marry under the law or through the church systems. Name one polygamist prosecuted under the law?

There are many other passages which when carefully considered confirm that polygamy is not the wickedness tradition claims it to be. For further reading please visit;

www.biblepolygamy.com