

TRUTH OR TRADITION

God is to be praised and glorified for giving us the greatest gift of all, His Son Jesus Christ. Without this blessing, there would certainly be no salvation for us.

This Son, Jesus Christ, explained His role as Savior while speaking one night to a Pharisee named Nicodemus. These words eventually became the most famous verse in the Bible.

For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish, but have eternal life. @ (John 3:16 NASB).

In the book of Romans, the apostle Paul explains how a person receives salvation through Jesus Christ. He says

If you confess with your mouth Jesus as Lord, and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you shall be saved; for with the heart man believes, resulting in righteousness, and with the mouth he confesses, resulting in salvation. @ (Romans 10:9-10)

It is obvious from these passages of Scripture that Jesus is able to save anyone who comes to Him from death and condemnation. Those who turn away from their sins and put their trust in Him can look forward to spending a glorious eternity with Him.

However, salvation in Jesus Christ encompasses more than being spared from eternal condemnation. It includes hope and freedom for this life as well. That is why He said in John 10:10

A...I came that they may have life, and might have it abundantly. @

This abundant life also includes knowledge of spiritual truth. In John 8:31-32, Jesus explains how we can acquire this greater understanding.

If you abide in My word, then you are truly disciples of Mine; and you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free. @

To know the truth, we must become His disciples.

What does it mean to be a disciple of Jesus?

Jesus gives us this answer in Luke 14:26-27,33.

If anyone comes to Me, and does not hate {consider as being far less important} his own father and mother and wife and children and brothers and sisters, yes, and own his own life, he cannot be my disciple.

Whoever does not carry his own cross and come after Me cannot be My disciple.

So therefore, no one of you can be My disciple who does not give up all his own possessions. @

We see that Jesus' requirements for being a disciple far surpass those He has for just being saved. To be saved, one must repent of living a sinful life. He must also accept for himself what Jesus has done for him. To be a disciple, one needs to surrender his life to Christ 100 %.

Are you are a disciple of the Lord Jesus Christ?

If you say yes, that means that you cannot consider anyone or anything as belonging to yourself. If the Lord tells you to do something and your loved ones tell you to do otherwise, you must shun them to do God's will. When you receive persecution or go through other trials because of your faith in Jesus, you must endure. You must give up any convenience you have, whether money, material objects, or free time, if so called upon, for the sake of the gospel.

With all this, you must be willing to give up your right to hold on to any tradition or theological belief that you have. This can often prove to be the most difficult part of discipleship.

Why is this so?

It is because by nature we feel comfortable holding on to certain beliefs, especially if we have had them for a long time. Through them, we have grown accustomed to seeing God in a certain way. We are afraid to have our perception of reality changed, since it makes us feel insecure. As a result, we will ignore or explain away any new revelations that challenge our views. Thus, we can maintain the level of comfort and security that we have always had..

A classic example of this involves the doctrine of eternal security. Those who hold to this conviction claim that a person who truly receives Jesus as Lord can never lose their salvation.. They believe that a loving God would never forgive a repentant sinner and send him to Hell afterward if he falls away from grace.

I have great respect for many men and women of God who happen to have this belief. However, I am afraid that many of them do so for a certain reason, fear. They feel their salvation is not secure. They dread the possibility of being condemned if they struggle and fall away from God.

Nevertheless, we must accept the parts of God's Word which seem difficult to bear. For this we need faith in the Lord. He will never forsake us as long as our heart is after His.

Persecution by others can give us more incentive to ignore a revelation from God. We can become afraid of being seen as crazy or heretical by those who disagree with us. If we do decide to accept a certain truth, we will feel temptation to keep it to ourselves.

However, we don't want to view ourselves as cowards who are ashamed of a portion of the gospel. Therefore we will justify our silence. We can do this by saying that there are more important things to focus on other than a controversial doctrine. We may convince ourselves that we can be more effective in ministering to others without it. It is a way to assuage our guilt.

(Now it is true that we must be careful what we share. There are many people, including Christians, who are not ready to handle deeper truths. To give them these truths would be like giving a baby a piece of steak to eat. The baby will either not be able to eat it, will choke, or die while trying to eat it.

It is not God's will for us to tell people things they are unable to bear. However, we need to be sure that our motives for this are pure and not self-centered).

Nevertheless, if one wants to be a true follower of Jesus Christ, he has to realize that the truths of His gospel will be offensive. Jesus forewarned us of this in Matthew 10:34-36. He says.

Do not think that I came to bring peace on the earth; I did not come to bring peace, but a sword.

For I came to set a man against his father, and a daughter against her mother, and a daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law;

And a man's enemies will be the members of his household.

Our Lord never said this applied only to non-believers. Oftentimes, Christians are the ones who bring on the most persecution. Some brethren we think of as being very kind and sincere can show great hostility when a controversial revelation is explained to them. Entire churches have been split and entire Christian households have been destroyed because of spiritual truth. This has happened because some have chosen to walk in a new revelation {though no revelation is really ever new} while others have hardened their hearts and refused.

When such destruction has taken place, the ones who introduce the truth have almost always been falsely accused. We see a perfect example in Church history of how this has happened on a grand scale.

About a hundred years ago, gifts of the Holy Spirit began to be poured out in a much greater way than before. Thousands of Christians began to speak in other tongues, prophesy, heal, do miracles, and cast out devils. Instantly, many other believers took offense because it went against their tradition. This happened because they had been taught the following doctrine.

Many gifts of the Holy Spirit mentioned, called sign gifts, were manifested only until the New Testament was completely written. At that point, there was no longer any reason for God to use them among His people. Since the completed Scripture would now do the job of leading people to Christ, the sign gifts were withdrawn from the Church.

As time moved on, the manifestations of all the gifts proved that doctrine to not be true. However, many people who openly practiced or exercised them were thrown out of their churches. Many were accused of practicing witchcraft or sorcery. Most of all, they were being blamed for causing division in the Church of Jesus Christ.

What these believers experienced was nothing less than persecution for the gospel's sake. Not only did they receive harassment, but Jesus, who was living inside of them, received it as well. Nevertheless, these brethren held their ground and continued on in the grace of the Lord. Because of their obedience to God, many of us today are enjoying a

greater move of the Spirit in our churches. We are also experiencing much less persecution than they did since the numbers of people accepting that truth have grown very large.

We now have to ask ourselves a question. Have we reached a point in time where we have the full understanding of the gospel? Is there no more spiritual truth that needs to be rediscovered? Many think the answer to these questions is yes. It is for this reason that many believers from various denominations claim that the gospel they preach is the Afull gospel@.

In truth, no one can really call the gospel they preach a full gospel. Paul reminds us of this in 1 Corinthians 13:12 when he says AFor now we see in a mirror dimly, but then face to face; now I know in part, but then I shall know fully just as I also have been fully known.@ When Christ returns, Christians will receive a resurrected body. We will then have a complete understanding of the gospel of our Lord. In the meantime, we must always be seeking for more and more truth. Some of this truth may really shun our traditions. Nevertheless, through our search for the truth, we can learn more about who Christ is and what His will is.

Many years ago, I came to the conclusion that I wanted to learn the truth no matter what my denominational background taught me. I asked the Lord to reveal to me any truth to me from His Word that He wanted. In doing this, I came to the conclusion that the majority of what I had been taught growing up in church was definitely true. I fully embraced them as doctrines that I would accept. These doctrines include salvation by grace through faith, baptism by immersion in water and the Holy Spirit, and the infallibility of God=s Word. However, there were some teachings I rejected after studying the word of God.

One of these dealt with the issue of church government. In the denomination that I had grown up in, I was never taught about the importance of having apostles and prophets in the church. I had been led to believe that apostles were just missionaries and that prophets were people with prophetic gifting in the church.

After receiving some different teaching, I came to realize that those two ministries involved a lot more than what I had thought. I learned that according to Scripture, apostles function as pastors to the local churches. Their job is to travel to different places, start churches, help them grow to maturity, and ordain elders to oversee the work. Eventually, they go back and visit the churches themselves to provide encouragement and support.

Prophets on the other hand work to assist the apostles with prophetic gifting. They also use their gifts to encourage local church leaders and members as well. Like the apostles, they have greater authority in the church than evangelists, pastors, and teachers.

1 Corinthians 12:28 and Ephesians 3:20 specifically tells us that these two ministries have the most authority in the Church.

Along with that, I discovered that all spiritual leaders in the church had to be ordained by more mature ministers of the gospel. This was to be occur through prayer and fasting by those doing the ordaining (Acts 13:1-3, 14:23).

I had been taught previously that virtually every ministry position had to be filled by popular elections among church members. Whoever would be elected by a majority vote would be put into the position. These positions in turn would last for a term, after which another election would have to take place.

After I came to a different understanding on these issues, I had to put away the traditional teachings that I had been taught. I determined that if I were to be a qualified minister, I would have to teach and do things in line with the convictions I had.

Several years later, I was confronted with a new teaching. This was the teaching of polygamy. I had heard about it through a man of God from America who began to make ministry trips to Africa, where polygamy was practiced. He, an American like myself, had always believed that polygamy was not pleasing to God. After being challenged to study what the Word of God had to say on the matter, he changed his position and accepted polygamy as being Scriptural.

Soon after, he began to share his views with me. At first, I did not pay much attention to what he said. At the time I thought that I had other important issues to concern myself with. Then, about two years later I received an opportunity to minister with this man in Africa. No longer could I ignore the issue. I now had to prepare myself to minister in a context where polygamy was being practiced.

After much study and prayer, I came to the same conclusion this other minister had. I saw that polygamy was not condemned in Scripture in any place. It was only the abuses that often come along with polygamy by ungodly men that I felt I could oppose. I therefore began to understand that those who were involved in this practice were not automatically in bad standing with God. I realized that they were fully accepted by God and could be good, fruitful Christians. They could even be leaders in the Church. I also began to even see how polygamy could be beneficial to men, women, and children if practiced correctly.

Because I feel that this revelation is important, I have decided to write a book.

Throughout most of the book, I will deal with the issue of polygamy itself. I will first present several arguments, based on Scripture, to prove that polygamy is not sinful. Then I will address the counter arguments that are most commonly made from the Word.

Afterwards, I will continue to present the case by making and explaining a few points from a natural perspective. Then I will deal with some arguments that are often made to disprove polygamy from the natural realm.

In the final portion of the book, I will give a brief history as to how the monogamy-only doctrine became prevalent in the church. I will then close the book with some additional comments on the subject of polygamy.

From this point on, I can only ask that you as a reader, do the following.

Ask God to speak to your heart, whatever He desires, about this issue. Then, like the Bereans in Paul's day, search the Scriptures for yourself to see if what is being shared is true. Remember that according to the Word, our God is a rewarder of those who seek Him (Heb 11:6). He will never disappoint us if we humble ourselves and trust in Him.

1. Many Men of God Have Been Polygamous.

It is an undeniable fact from Scripture that many men who loved God had more than one wife. Here is a list of such men, along with the number of wives they had, the names of the wives they had, and the Scripture references to prove it. For the record, a concubine in the ancient Near East, in Biblical times, was considered a wife. The only difference is that concubines did not enjoy inheritance rights that regular wives did.

Abraham -	originally 2 later on, at least 3	Sarah and Hagar Keturah and at least 2 concubines	Genesis 16:1-3 Gen.25:1,6
Jacob	4	Leah, Rachel, Bilhah, and Zilpah	Gen. 29:23,28, 30:4,9
Caleb	at least 3	Ephah, Maachah, one other concubine	1 Chronicles 2:46,48
Gideon	many	unnamed	Judges 8:30
Ibzan	many	unnamed	Judges 12:9
Abdon	many	unnamed	Judges 12:14
Elkanah	2	Peninnah and Hannah	1 Samuel 1:2
David	at least 18	Micah, Ahinoam, Abigail, Maccah, Haggith, Abital, Eglah, Bathsheba and 10 concubines	1 Sam. 18:27, 2 Sam. 3:2-5 2 Sam. 11:27 2 Sam. 15:16
Joash	2	unnamed	2 Chron. 24:2-3

The following is a continuation of our list. The only difference with these names from the ones listed above has to do with confirmed proof. It is most likely, though not definite, that these men had multiple wives living at the same time. The reasons for why I believe they were polygamous are included.

Moses	3	Zipporah An Ethiopian woman A Kenite woman	Exodus 2:21 Numbers 12:1 Numbers 11:26
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He married Zipporah while living with Jethro before he returned to Egypt to lead the children of Israel. It is unknown exactly when he married the other two. We only know that he had these three during the forty year time he was in the wilderness. Since people lived longer in those days, and nothing is mentioned about Zipporah dying or being divorced from Moses, it is most likely that he had all three at the same time.

Jair	many	unnamed	Judges 10:3-4
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He was a judge of Israel who had 30 sons. The Bible does not say how many daughters he had. It is technically possible for him to have 30 sons and few daughters with only one wife, but extremely doubtful. It is also very unlikely that he would have lost a wife and instantly married another to continue bearing all these children.

Josiah	at least 2	unnamed	2 Kings 23:30-31, 34-36
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At two different times a son of Josiah was reigning as king over Judah. Their names were Jehoahaz and Jehoiakim. They were only two years apart in age, but they are recorded as having two different mothers. In this case, like with Jair, it is unlikely that Josiah lost a wife and remarried in between the births of the two sons. Since Josiah was a man of godly character, and a major public figure, he probably did not have children out of wedlock.

Along with these men are others recorded in the Bible who had more than one wife. Though some of these men had questionable or even evil character, they are not condemned or chastised by God for practicing polygamy. A list of their names are given.

Lamech	2	Adah and Zillah	Gen. 4:19
Esau	5	Judith, Basemath, Mahalath, Adah, Aholibamah	Gen. 26:34, 28:9 36:2
Manasseh	at least 2	unnamed	1 Chron. 7:14
Saul	2 or more	unnamed wife, Aiah - concubine	2 Sam.21:11
Solomon	1000	all unnamed	1 Kings 11:3
Rehoboam	78	Mahalath, Maacah, 16 other wives 60 concubines	2 Chron. 11:18-21
Ahab	several	unnamed	2 Kings 10:1

There are only two cases in the Word where someone was rebuked by God for being involved in some type of polygamy. They involve David and Solomon.

David received a rebuke from the prophet Nathan when he took a woman named Bath-sheba for a wife. This woman had been married to Uriah the Hittite, one of David's great warriors. David lusted after her and had sexual relations with her, causing her to become pregnant. When he was unable to get her husband to lie with her, he made arrangements to have him killed in battle. Afterwards, he took Bath-sheba to be his wife and pretended to have a legitimate child with her.

The Bible makes it clear that what David did had displeased the Lord (2 Samuel 11:27). As a result, he received severe punishment from God. This included the temporary loss of his kingdom, the violation of some of his concubines by his son Absalom, and the tragic deaths of his sons Amnon and Absalom..

The sin that David committed was adultery. He had slept with a woman who had been married to another man. He also committed murder and married that man's wife. In marrying the woman, he brought greater humiliation on the man, though he was dead.

We read in Scripture that David had married other women before this incident took place. In none of them do we see the slightest hint that God was displeased. In fact, we read in 2 Samuel 5:10-13 that David was adding wives and concubines in a context where God was blessing him by increasing his valor and might. Later on in the book, I will provide stronger evidence that David's polygamy, minus the incident with Bath-sheba, was not offensive to the Lord.

The Bible says that Solomon sinned against the Lord by marrying foreign wives. He started by marrying the daughter of Pharaoh (1 Kings 3:1) and eventually married Moabite, Ammonite, Edomite, Sidonian, and Hittite women (1 Kings 11:1-2). This was in clear violation of God's commandment in Deuteronomy to all the Israelites to avoid marriage with foreigners (Deut. 7:1-5). As a result, Solomon was influenced by them to turn away from God and to start worshiping idols (1 Kings 11:4-8).

We also know that Solomon violated another one of God's commandments found in the book of Deuteronomy. As a king, he was ordered to avoid multiplying wives for himself (Deut, 17:14-17). This did not mean that he couldn't have more than one. It only meant that he could not act in a gluttonous manner as king. (We will look further into the meaning of this Scripture later on in the book).

In all this, we must ask ourselves the following questions. Why doesn't the Word of God condemn anyone for having more than one wife? How was it possible for a man to have great favor with God and be polygamous? If righteous men regularly sought out God's will, why is there no evidence from Scripture that He tried to stop them from having more than one wife?

The only logical answers to these questions is that polygamy is not a sin. Every sexual sin, including rape, fornication, adultery, and homosexuality is condemned in the Word in no uncertain terms. Polygamy is never condemned.

Nobody in Scripture was considered righteous and pleasing to God through living a lifestyle a rapist, a fornicator, an adulterer, or a homosexual. As shown before, there are plenty of examples of righteous men fostering a lifestyle of polygamy.

These same men were not just considered as being righteous. Many of them are singled out for spiritual greatness. Here are a few examples.

Abraham was called the father of many nations. He was also referred to being the friend of God. Why was he called the friend of God? It was because he was in constant communion with Him and because He always sought to please Him.

Moses was considered the most humble man on the face of the Earth in his day.

Caleb was only one of two men, who was older than 20 years old when he left Egypt, that qualified to enter the Promised Land.

Gideon was a man chosen by God to deliver the Israelites from the Midianites.

David was called Aa man after God=s own heart@. Whenever, one of his descendants would rule over the kingdom of Judah, their character was evaluated on how they compared to David. In these passages, David was always referred to as a man who served the Lord with all his heart.

God could not have spoken so well of such men if they have been actively committing what most Christians consider to be horrible sin.

Some may point to evidence in Scripture that shows how some of these men had committed serious sin. It must be noted, however, that in such places there is evidence from the Word proving that what they did was sin. God=s servants were not always perfect. They were just men who spent most of their lives loving the Lord with all their heart.

Others claim that God tolerated men abusing women through polygamy in the Old Testament, but outlawed it in the New Testament. We will see later that polygamy does not have to be abusive. We will also disprove the argument that God changed his policy about it.

If we assume that polygamy is inherently evil, we must accept certain possibilities.

We can state that the righteous men of old probably did not seek any guidance from the Lord when it came to being married. Had they done so, God would have obviously told them not to do it. But this is unlikely. If there is evidence that they sought God=s direction for their lives in many things, why would they not do so with something as important as marriage.

If they did pray for wisdom and direction, they would have had to make one of two mistakes. They would have had to miss God=s direction or they would have had to rebel against his command.

It seems unlikely to this writer that all these men, Abraham, Jacob, Caleb, Gideon, David, and several judges would have missed God=s will. This is because of the evidence from the Word of their level of maturity and righteousness. They clearly had ability to hear from the Lord as needed .

It is also unlikely that they knowingly rebelled against the Lord. One who is righteous feels hurt when God is being blasphemed. He wants to do everything to avoid that. If these righteous men of God did not want to offend God, why do we see no evidence that He tried to stop them?

Many assume that the polygamist lifestyles of these men made them fornicators and adulterers. According to 1 Corinthians 6:9 -10 fornicators and adulterers will not inherit the kingdom of God. Revelation 21:8 lists fornicators as those who will have their part in the lake of fire. Therefore, the righteous men were neither fornicators or adulterers.

2. At one time, God regulated and even commanded it to be done.

This is something that surprises a lot of people, but it is the truth. We know from Scripture that God is never unjust. He has given any commandment that has been harmful or wicked. Psalm 19:8 proves this by saying

*The precepts of the Lord are right, rejoicing the heart;
The commandment of the Lord is pure, enlightening the eyes. @
Psalm 119:151 reaffirms this.*

Thou art near, O Lord, and all thy commandments are truth @.

If polygamy was considered a sin, like adultery or fornication, it would have been banned altogether. The same God who had no tolerance for homosexuality and adultery, but punished those offenses by death, would have condemned polygamy. However, we see two places in the Law where it was regulated. The first of these places is found in Exodus 21:8-10, where God deals with female servants who are married to their master. The master is allowed to marry a second wife, but with stipulations.

If he takes to himself another woman, he may not reduce her food, her clothing, or her conjugal rights @

Out of God's concern for the first wife, he commands the man to continue to make provisions for her. He gives no indication that the man will be punished.

In Deuteronomy 21:15-17 God gives another commandment

If a man has two wives, the one loved and the other unloved, and both the loved and the unloved have borne him sons, if the first-born son belongs to the unloved,

Then it shall be in the day he wills what he has to his sons, he cannot make the son of the loved the first-born before the son of the unloved, who is the first-born.

But he shall acknowledge the first-born, the son of the unloved, by giving him a double portion of all that he has for he is the beginning of his strength; to him belongs the right of the first-born@

In this passage, God is protecting the rights of a wife who is not appreciated. He is not saying that polygamy is a sin.

By using these two quotes, I am in no way saying that a man should not love his wives. Paul commands all husbands to love their wives as they love their own bodies. I am

only trying to illustrate that God does not consider polygamy itself to be a sin. I believe that once it is done, it should be done with humility.

Some will compare the issue of polygamy with divorce. They state that God allowed divorce in the Old Testament, though he never wanted it to be done. They assume the same is true with polygamy.

There is a difference between the way God handled the two situations. In Malachi 3:13-16, He condemns the fact that many of the Jews were dealing treacherously with their wives. They were hurting them through casual divorce. That is why He says in verse 16 *AI hate divorce@*. In the New Testament Jesus, when questioned on divorce, told the Jewish leaders that God only permitted it since the hearts of the Israelites were hardened. He said that only in the case of fornication can a man rightfully obtain a divorce. There are nothing but negative connotations when divorce is mentioned.

There is no such negativity when polygamy is mentioned. God never states that He hates polygamy. In the New Testament, Jesus never gave any rebukes for men who did it. In fact, He did not even touch on the topic at all. If He felt it was important to put a stop to it, He would have said so.

This leads to the next point. In one place in the Old Testament, the Lord actually commanded it to be done.

The place where polygamy was commanded is found in Deuteronomy 25:5-10.

When brothers live together and one of them dies and has no son, the wife of the deceased shall not be married outside the family to a strange man. Her husband's brother shall go in to her and take her to himself as wife and perform the duty of a husband's brother to her.

And it shall be that the first-born whom she bears shall assume the name of his dead brother, that his name may not be blotted out from Israel.

But if the man does not desire to take his brother's wife, then his brother's wife shall go up to the gate to the elders and say, >My husband's brother refuses to establish a name for his brother in Israel; he is not willing to perform the duty of a husband's brother to me.=

Then the elders of his city shall summon him and speak to him. And if he persists and says, >I do not desire to take her.=

Then his brother's wife shall come to him in the sight of the elders, and pull his sandal off his foot and spit in his face, and she shall declare, >Thus it is done to the man who does not build up his brother's house.

And in Israel his name shall be called, >The house of him whose sandal is removed.

There is no indication in these verses that the man marrying his brother's wife had to be single. Jewish leaders themselves have always understood this. Therefore, in a situation where a man's nearby brother died without children, he had to raise up offspring for his brother or face public humiliation.

This was done because God had compassion for a man who could not have an inheritance. Since God does not take pleasure in humiliating women, one can assume that

this would have been a blessing for the woman as well. She could still have the joy of being a mother instead of being childless.

Once again, if polygamy hurt people, God would not COMMAND it to be done in any situation at any time.

It is true that Christians in the Church Age are not under these regulations of the Law. We are actually told not to be unequally yoked together with unbelievers. If a husband to a Christian woman dies, she is told that she is free to remarry, but only to a Christian man (1 Cor. 7:39). (Please note that in this passage, there is no indication that the Christian man has to be a bachelor).

We have just discussed how God permitted polygamy and commanded it to be done. Now we will investigate a situation where God gave a man several wives as a gift.

3. God blessed a man with several wives.

We know from Scripture that God loves to bless His children. He is not in the business of cursing anyone of His servants who obeys Him.

In Matthew 7:11 Jesus says,

If you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more shall your Father who is in heaven give what is good to those who ask Him.

James tells us in James 1:17

Every good thing bestowed and every perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation, or shifting shadow @.

In 2 Samuel 12:7-9, we see that God gave David a number of blessings. Included in these blessings were his ex-master Saul=s wives.

Since David had committed sin in the incident with Bath-Sheba, God had to remind him of how He blessed Him before rebuking him. God used the prophet Nathan to do this. Let=s look at the passage. I will use the King James Version here since it brings out a better translation on a particular word.

And Nathan said to David, Thou art the man. Thus saith that LORD God of Israel, I anointed thee king over Israel, and I delivered thee out of the hand of Saul;

And 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 moreover have given unto thee such and such things.

Wherefore hast thou despised the commandment of the LORD, to do evil in his sight? Thou hast killed Uriah the Hittite with the sword, and hast taken his wife to be thy wife, and hast slain him with the sword of the children of Ammon.

We see here that God gave David His master Saul=s wives into his bosom. (The King James Version uses the word bosom instead of keep, like other translations).

In the original Hebrew the word **khoke** literally means bosom. It implies something that is closed in. In other words, if these wives became part of David=s bosom, they became one with him.

It is interesting to note that in ancient Near East culture, it was common practice for a conquering king to take the wives of the defeated king and make them his own.

We see the same word used in a similar context in another part of Scripture. This is found in the story of Abraham, Sarah, and Hagar. In this particular situation, Abraham=s wife Sarah gave him Hagar, her maid, to be his wife since she was unable to bear children. After some time Hagar gave birth to a son for Abraham, Ishmael. When this happened she mocked Sarah.

Sarai then said to Abram

AMay wrong be upon thee: I have given my maid into thy bosom; and when she saw that she had conceived, I was despised in her eyes: the LORD judge between me and thee. @ (Genesis 16:5).

The same word **khoke** is used here for bosom as in 2 Samuel 12:8. To confirm that Hagar was actually a wife to Abraham and not a friend, one must only look to verse three.

AAnd Sarai Abram=s wife took Hagar her maid the Egyptian, after Abram had dwelt ten years in the land of Canaan, and gave her to her husband Abram to be his wife. @

It seems extremely unlikely, if not impossible, to believe that David had Saul=s wives as helpers or captives. What true blessing would this have been? David could have acquired helpers from anywhere in his kingdom. The wives were a part of David=s bosom. They were married to him

God would not have given David extra wives if it wasn=t good for him and the wives. He would not force David to live a life of sin and perversion.

We have already seen how righteous men have been polygamous. We have also seen how God has regulated and even commanded polygamy to be done. What would amaze most people is to find out that, in Scripture, God has referred to Himself as being a polygamist.

4. God the polygamist.

There are two places in the Bible where God speaks of Himself as having two wives He had at the same time. Both were unfaithful, causing Him great hurt.

The first of these two places is found in Jeremiah 3. In verses 8-10 He describes Himself as having Israel (the northern kingdom) and Judah (the southern kingdom) as being His wives.

And I saw that for all the adulteries of faithless Israel, I had sent her away and given her a writ of divorce, yet her treacherous sister Judah did not fear; but she went and was a harlot also.

And it came about because of the lightness of her harlotry, that she polluted the land and committed adultery with stones and trees.

And yet in spite of all this her treacherous sister Judah did not return to Me with all her heart, but rather in deception @ declares the Lord.

We know that Israel was a wife to the Lord, otherwise He could not have given her a writ of divorce. We also see that Judah was a wife, because she is spoken of as becoming a harlot also. She like her co-wife Israel did not return to the Lord with all her heart.

Historically, Israel and Judah were kingdoms existing together side by side for about 250 years. During that time God had been sending prophets to both kingdoms to bring their people back to Him. When Israel fell, Judah continued existing for another 150 years.

With this in mind, it is impossible to say that God married Judah only after divorcing Israel.

Later on in Ezekiel 23, we see the Lord speaking the same message to another prophet. In this book, he refers to Israel (with Samaria as its capital) as Oholah the elder and Judah (with Jerusalem as its capital) as Oholibah her sister.

Verses 1-4 proves that these two were wives to the Lord.

The word of the LORD came to me again saying,

Son of man, there were two women, the daughters of one mother;

And they played the harlot in Egypt. They played the harlot in their youth; there their breasts were pressed, and there their virgin bosom was handled.

And their names were Oholah the elder and Oholibah her sister. And they became Mine, and they bore sons and daughters. And as for their names, Samaria is Oholah, and Jerusalem is Oholibah. @

The fact that the Lord says that these two women became His proves that they were His wives. They also bore sons and daughters to the Lord.

In verse 5 Oholah, who is Israel (or Samaria) commits adultery against God.

And Oholah played the harlot while she was Mine and she lusted after her lovers, after the Assyrians, her neighbors @

Verse 11 portrays Oholibah's adultery.

Now her sister Oholibah saw this, yet she was more corrupt in her lust than she, and her harlotries were more than the harlotries of her sister @.

We must ask ourselves again, if polygamy were such a sin, why would God speak a parable with Himself having two wives. Does God ever portray Himself in the Word as

being a homosexual, a rapist, a fornicator, or and adulterer? Does He every speak of Himself as being any type of sinner?

There is only place in the Bible where one can remotely make this charge. This is found in 1 Thessalonians 5:2. Here Paul says

AThe day of the Lord will come like a thief in the night. @

Here the day of the Lord, not the Lord Himself, is mentioned as coming like a thief in the night. Jesus may resemble a thief by the surprise of His appearance, but He will not be taking anything that does not rightfully belong to Him.

It is preposterous to assume that polygamy was all right for God, but not for man. He would be setting a bad example for us if he described himself as a polygamist, and then condemned men for practicing it.

5. Jesus the Polygamist

This too comes as a surprise to many, but there is one place in Scripture that I believe Jesus portrays Himself as a polygamist. This is His parable of the ten virgins, found in Matthew 25: 1-12.

Then the kingdom of heaven will be comparable to ten virgins, who took their lamps, and went out to meet the bridegroom.

And five of them were foolish, and five were prudent.

For when the foolish took their lamps, they took no oil with them, but the prudent took oil in flasks along with their lamps.

Now while the bridegroom was delaying, they all got drowsy and began to sleep.

But at midnight there was a shout, >Behold, the bridegroom! Come out to meet him.=

Then all the virgins rose, and trimmed their lamps.

And the foolish said to the prudent, >Give us some of your oil, for our lamps are going out.=

But the prudent answered, saying, No, there will not be enough for us and you too; go instead to the dealers and buy some for yourselves.=

And while they were going away to make the purchase, the bridegroom came, and those who were ready went in with him to the wedding feast; and the door was shut.

And later the other virgins also came, saying, >Lord, lord, open up for us.=

But he answered and said, >Truly I say to you, I do not know you.=

The parable obviously speaks about the coming of Jesus Christ. He is the bridegroom and the virgins are Christians waiting for His coming. The five wise virgins are those who were ready and the five foolish are those who were not.

The question we must ask is this. Were these virgins bridesmaids or brides?

The church has traditionally taught that they were bridesmaids. I believe they were brides. In other words, according to the story, the groom was waiting to marry ten women at this wedding.

First of all, we see no mention in the parable of anyone being called a bride. There are only three groups of people mentioned. They are the virgins, the groom, and the man who called out at midnight to announce the groom's coming.

Second, we are aware that in ancient Jewish culture, and some Gentile cultures, it was expected that an unmarried woman be a virgin. A bride was often called a virgin. We see an example of this in Paul's writings in 1 Corinthians 7:36. Here he is giving instructions to men who had unmarried daughters.

But if any man thinks that he is acting unbecomingly toward his virgin daughter, if she should be of full age, and if it must be so, let him do what he wishes, he does not sin; let her marry.

We do not have evidence in Scripture bridesmaids always had to be virgins. If we interpret the virgins to be bridesmaids, we have to assume that all ten of the bride's closest friends were not married.

Thirdly, in this parable, the virgins seem to be entirely focused on the coming of the groom. They are not shown to be with any or to be ministering to the needs of a bride. There is no evidence that they are even looking to meet any bride at all at the groom's coming.

Lastly, we must understand that the parable does speak of the Second Coming of the Lord. At this time, He will be looking to unify Himself with a church that is ready for him.

It makes more sense to see that He is coming for brides and not bridesmaids. He is looking to marry and share intimacy with His people for all eternity!

We have just covered the major reasons why polygamy is Scriptural. At this point, we will confront the common arguments that are often used to oppose it.

ADDRESSING THE CASE AGAINST POLYGAMY - FROM SCRIPTURE

There are various arguments people use to prove that polygamy is sinful. They are taken from Scriptures from both the Old and New Testaments. In this section, I will address them in a more or less chronological order, depending on where the main Scripture is used.

I will first title and present the argument against polygamy as it is most commonly explained. Following that, I will refute them to the best of my ability.

1. Adam Had Only One Wife.

ARGUMENT - God gave Adam only one wife, not two or three, or five or ten. Adam, of course was the first man created. His marriage to Eve was the first marriage history. This was God's way of showing us that he intended all human marriages to be monogamous.

REFUTATION - It is true that Adam was monogamous. However, this does not demonstrate any proof that all men had to have only one wife. We have already seen that God gave David multiple wives.

The Lord can have a male servant of His in one of three states. They are singleness, monogamy, and polygamy. In Scripture, we see righteous men of God functioning in all three.

If anything, the story of Adam seems to cast a negative light on singleness for a man. The Lord God says in Genesis 1:18,

It is not good for the man to be alone; I will make him a helper suitable for him @.

. However, we read of no negative statement in this passage about a man having more than one wife. (Though I will note, there are other Scriptures in the Bible which speak of celibacy in a positive way).

This leads us to the question. Why did God give Adam only one wife?

I see three reasons for this.

First, he wanted the whole human race to see themselves as part of the same family. If Adam had more than one wife, this would not be so. There would have been the tendency for humans to see each other as half breeds.

Second, we see that it was part of the divine plan for a descendant of Eve to destroy Satan in the end. This was prophesied in Genesis 3:15 where the Lord rebukes the serpent for having tempted Eve. He says,

*And I will put enmity between you and the woman,
And between your seed and her seed;
He shall bruise you on the head,
And you shall bruise him on the heel @*

The fulfillment of this prophecy came through Jesus Christ, when He overcame the Devil through His death on the cross and His resurrection.

Third, in Adam and Eve, God was defining what a marriage was. Every marriage is a binding relationship between a man and a woman. A man who is involved in polygamy does not have one marriage to several wives. Instead, he has an individual marriage contract with each one. He does however, have one family.

If Adam would have had more than one wife, this aspect would have been harder to see. Many of his descendants would also have concluded that it was God's will for all men to have multiple wives. This obviously is not the case.

2. The Two Shall Be One Flesh

ARGUMENT - In Genesis 2:21-23, God mandated that in a marriage there would be two partners who would become one.

And the Lord God caused a deep sleep to fall upon the man, and he slept; then He took one of his ribs, and closed up the flesh at that place.

And the man said,

This is now bone of my bones

And flesh of my flesh;

She shall be called Woman,

Because she was taken out of Man. @

For this cause a man shall leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave to his wife; and they shall become one flesh.

He did not say that three or four would become one.

In the New Testament, Jesus quotes this passage of Scripture in dealing with a question from the Pharisees about marriage relationships. By doing this, he reaffirms that monogamy is the only acceptable form of marriage.

REBUTTAL - As stated before, a marriage is a binding contract between two people. The husband has an obligation to his wife, and the wife to her husband. In a plural wife family, the multiple wives are not in a contract with each other. They may have to work together, but they both are called to fulfill marital obligations to their husband.

In the New Testament, Jesus does quote the passage when the Pharisees questioned Him on the issue of divorce. This incident is found in Matthew 19:3-9.

*And some Pharisees came to Him, testing Him, and saying, **Is** it lawful for a man to divorce his wife for any cause at all? @*

*And He answered and said, **Have** you not read, that He who created them from the beginning made them male and female,*

*and said, **For** this cause a man shall leave his father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife; and the two shall become one flesh=?*

Consequently they are no longer two, but one flesh. What therefore God has joined together, let no man separate.

*They said to Him, **Why** then did Moses command to give here a certificate and divorce her? @*

*He said to them, **Because** of your hardness of heart, Moses permitted you to divorce your wives; but from the beginning it has not been this way.*

And I say to you, whoever divorces his wife, except for immorality, and marries another woman commits adultery. @

Jesus is actually asked two questions about men divorcing their wives. He gives two answers addressing this issue. He says absolutely nothing here about polygamy. Therefore, it cannot be argued, that Jesus is making any change at all concerning the institution of polygamy. If that had been his intention, it would have been clearly stated in the text, and not left for assumption.

Some may use the last verse cited to prove that Jesus is condemning polygamy, since there is mention of marrying another wife. However, divorce is the key issue which he is defining.

He mentions that it is wrong for a man to get rid of his wife and marry another for a casual reason. This is because He considered the marriage relationship to be very sacred. He also had compassion on women who were being humiliated by the practice. Unfortunately, many of the Jewish men at this time did not feel the same way. They instead were using the letter of the law to dismiss themselves of any marriage obligation that they did not want to keep.

Jesus did not say that it was wrong for a man to have a second wife. A man was free to take one, so long as he did not neglect his marital responsibilities to his first one.

3. Pairs in the Ark

ARGUMENT - The animals entered Noah's Ark in pairs, one male and one female each. This is a sign from nature to show us that God works in monogamous relationships and not polygamous.

REBUTTAL - The animals came into the ark in pairs, but only for the purpose of reproduction. This is spelled out in God's instruction to Noah found in Genesis 7:2-3.

You shall take with you of every clean animal by sevens, a male and his female; and of the animals that are not clean two, a male and his female; also of the birds of the sky, by sevens, male and female, to keep offspring alive on the face of all the earth.

Animals, unlike humans, have no institution of marriage. They also do not have formal family units like people do. This is why it is foolish to directly compare them to us.

In the ark, there was limited space. Therefore, there was no room to bring many animals. God had to bring in only enough to keep various species from going extinct. For divine purposes, he allowed seven pairs of clean animals and birds to come in. It is possible more clean animals were needed for Noah's family to make sacrifices later on. Also, we see from other parts of Scripture that seven symbolically represents the number of completion.

God=s wrath was on all mankind, including all creation, because of the wickedness of man. This is why the maximum number of animals had to die in the flood.

4. Lamech

ARGUMENT - The Bible mentions its first polygamist as a man who committed murder. It also states that he living and practiced polygamy in the years before the flood. This was a time, according to Scripture, when the whole world was corrupt. This two facts provide evidence that God does not approve of the practice of polygamy.

REBUTTAL - This account of Lamech is recorded in Genesis 4:19, 23-24.

And Lamech took to himself two wives: the name of the one was Adah, and the name of the other, Zillah.

And Lamech said to his wives, Adah and Zillah, Listen to my voice, you wives of Lamech, Give heed to my speech, For I have killed a man for wounding me; and a boy for striking me;

If Cain is avenged sevenfold, then Lamech seventy-sevenfold.

It is obvious that Lamech committed murder. He seemed to act in hot revenge after being struck by somebody. We do not know the reason why he had been hit.

Lamech must have believed that his act of murder was more justified than Cain=s.

This Scripture provides no evidence that Lamech=s polygamy was a sin. We read nothing that even comes close to stating this. We cannot assume that because he killed somebody that it automatically makes his polygamy wrong.

To follow this line of logic, we must conclude that it is wrong to build cities. Cain is the first person mentioned in the Word to build a city (Gen. 4:17). He also is shown to have committed the first murder. This does not mean that his decision be a city builder is proof of his wickedness before God.

According to historical accounts, Adolph Hitler had a dog. We cannot assume that owning a dog is a sin, since a dog owner killed millions of innocent people.

Along these same lines, we cannot conclude that Lamech=s polygamy was evil because it is mentioned as occurring in an evil time. Scripture says that Lamech=s son Jabel was the father of those who dwell in tents and have livestock. His other son, Jubal was the father of all those who play the lyre and pipe. Nobody would conclude that dwelling in tents, having livestock, and playing instruments are sinful for that reason.

5. The Command For The Kings of Israel Against Multiplying Wives

ARGUMENT- In Deuteronomy 17:17, God prohibits kings of Israel from multiplying wives. This means that a king cannot have more than one wife. It also means that it is wrong for every man to have more than one wife.

REBUTTAL - The passage mentioned above comes from a section where God is giving commandments to the future kings of Israel. Let us look at the entire passage from verses 14 - 17.

When you enter the land which the Lord your God gives you, and you possess it and live in it, and you say, AI will set a king over me like all the nations who are around me, you shall surely set a king over you whom the Lord your God chooses, one from among your countrymen you shall set as king over yourselves; you may not put a foreigner over yourselves who is not your countryman.

Moreover, he shall not multiply horses for himself, nor shall he cause the people to return to Egypt to multiply horses, since the Lord has said to you, AYou shall never again return that way. @

Neither shall he multiply wives for himself, lest his heart turn away; nor shall he greatly increase silver and gold for himself.

In order to understand what is being said about a king=s married life, we must look closely at the Hebrew word used for multiply. This word is **ravah** and it literally means to greatly increase or to make many.

A king was prohibited from greatly increasing the number of wives he had. He was not banned from having more than one. The reason for this prohibition was to keep him humble. He was called to be a servant to the people. He was not anointed to glorify and exalt himself.

The same word **ravah** is used in verse 16, where the subject of multiplying horses is mentioned. Nobody would assume that God is mandating that a king could have only one horse. Therefore, It is illogical to assume that a king could have only one wife.

If this were the case, God would have violated his own law to give David his wives.

6. Hagar

ARGUMENT - Abraham married Hagar, his wife=s maid. He also had a son through her named Ishmael.. Afterwards, he receives a promise from God that Sarah would have a son. This son would become his heir instead of the son he had through Hagar.

Some time after Sarah had her son, Hagar mocked her. Therefore, Abraham was commanded by God to send Hagar and her son away from his presence. This shows that God disapproved of his polygamy. It even shows some repentance on Abraham=s part.

Many problems also emerged through Ishmael and his descendants. Ishmael lived at odds with his relatives. His descendants became the Arab Muslims who today are causing problems for the Jews in Israel. This would not have happened if Abraham stayed monogamous.

REBUTTAL - This reasoning against polygamy is built on a lot of assumption. It has also been used to reenforce some prejudice that some evangelical Christians have against Arabs and Muslims.

There is nothing in the narrative that indicates that either Abraham (then Abram) or Sarah (then Sarai) did anything wrong. Abraham did not yet receive the promise about Isaac at the time he married Hagar. Even if he had, he still would not have been sinning. This is because only one son could be the heir of the promise. We see that later on in life Abraham had other sons who received gifts but not the promise.

It was customary in that culture (and even in some cultures today) for a wife to ask her husband to take another wife if she could not have a child. This was seen as a sign of respect that a woman had for her husband. Sometimes a woman would do this even if she gave her husband a son. This happened later on with Jacob=s wife Leah. She gave him her maid, Zilpah, so that her husband could have another son. This is why the son was named Issachar. Issachar means wages. Leah believed that God would reward her with blessings for considering her husband=s honor in giving him Zilpah.

There is no evidence in the Word of God that this behavior was sinful. If it was, we would have an indication that it was.

Getting back to Abraham, Sarah, and Hagar, we see two instances in Scripture where Hagar flees from Abraham and Sarah. The first of these is found in Genesis 15:4-6, when Abraham was still called Abram and Sarah was called Sarai.

And he (Abram) went in to Hagar, and she conceived; and when she saw that she had conceived, her mistress was despised in her sight.

And Sarai said to Abram, AMay the wrong done me be upon you. I gave my maid into your arms (lit. bosom); but when she saw that she had conceived, I was despised in her sight. May the LORD judge between you and me. @

But Abram said to Sarai, ABehold, your maid is in your power; do to her what is good in your sight. @ So Sarai treated her harshly, and she fled from her presence. @

Hagar was forced to flee for one reason. She mocked Sarai for not being able to have a son. She should have shown respect for her, since Sarai was the one who made it possible to be married.

There is no evidence that Abram divorced her. She continued to be his wife, but had to live away from him for a while.

Hagar later returned to Abram but was forced to flee a second time. This account is given in Genesis 21:8-14.

And the child (Ishmael) grew and was weaned, and Abraham made a great feast on the day that Isaac was weaned.

Now Sarah saw the son of Hagar the Egyptian, whom she had borne to Abraham, mocking.

Therefore she said to Abraham, ADrive out this maid and her son, for the son of this maid shall not be an heir with my son Isaac. @

And the matter distresses Abraham greatly because of this son.

But God said to Abraham, ADo not be distressed because of the lad and your maid; whatever Sarah tells you, listen to her, for through Isaac your descendants shall be named. And of the son of the maid I will make a nation also, because he is your descendant. So Abraham rose early in the morning, and took bread, and a skin of water, and gave them to Hagar, putting them on her shoulder, and gave her the boy, and sent her away. And she departed, and wandered about in the wilderness of Beer-sheba.

This time Hagar is driven out. She apparently had not learned her lesson from the first time. Here she mocked Sarah again. This time it was because her husband was giving a feast to her son Ishmael and not to Isaac.

If she had not acted in such a condescending way, there would have been no problems.

The Scripture again does not say that Abraham divorced her.

This mocking was the only reason why Hagar and Ishmael were sent away. This also seems to be part of God=s divine plan. The Lord knew that Abraham had a special attachment to Ishmael. He now wanted him to more fully understand that Isaac was the one with the greater blessing. The text mentions nothing about Abraham having a change of heart concerning polygamy. If anything, the Bible says that he was distressed about sending him away.

In Genesis 25:6, we see that Abraham had concubines. We do not know exactly at what time he had them. Since he lived 75 years after the birth of Isaac, and since he married another wife after Sarah died, we can probably expect that he had more than one wife at the same time. Here too, we see no proof that God was displeased with this.

Lastly, we cannot assume that the modern day problems in the Middle East are a result of Abraham=s Asin@. There were many people living in the Middle East at the time of Abraham. Anyone living there now could be a descendant of anyone living during Abraham=s time. What makes us assume that all Arabs are descendants of one man who lived at that time?

It is likely that many Jews today are descendants of Ishmael. This is because many ancient Jews intermarried with the people around them. Among these would be Ishmealites.

Also, not all Arabs are Muslims. Some are born again Christian believers. Should we assume that they are considered inferior in the eyes of God because of this logic? Those who are Muslim should be seen primarily as people God wants to save.

The Word states that Ishmael=s descendants were actually blessed, since they are the offspring of Abraham.

7. Problems With Biblical Characters

ARGUMENT - In the Bible we see several cases where there was obvious jealousy between wives when they shared a husband. We also see that there was problems among half brothers and sisters who shared a father, but had different mothers. These problems would not have occurred if all those men were monogamous.

REBUTTAL - We see a few places in the Bible where there were obvious conflicts between co-wives. As we have seen, there was tension between two of Abraham's wives, Sarah and Hagar. In Genesis 30 we see a rivalry between Jacob's two wives, Leah and Rachel. Later on in 1 Samuel 1, we see a conflict between Peninnah and Hannah, who were the wives of Elkanah, Samuel's father.

However, we do see that there were various reasons for problems between co-wives. In the situation with Sarah and Hagar, we have seen that Hagar provoked Sarah unnecessarily two times.

In the case of Leah and Rachel, the problems were largely caused because of favoritism. Genesis 29:30-31 says

So Jacob went in to Rachel also, and indeed he loved Rachel more than Leah, and he served with Laban for another seven years.

Now the Lord saw that Leah was unloved, and He opened here womb, but Rachel was barren.

And Leah conceived and bore a son and named him Reuben, for she said, >Because the Lord has seen my affliction, surely now my husband will love me=

Jacob had originally wanted to marry only Rachel. Rachel was the younger sister of Leah. Jacob had worked seven years to receive Rachel, but was given Leah instead. He was forced to work for Laban another seven years in order to have Rachel.

This makes it easier for us to understand why there was favoritism in his marriages. This does not justify it whatsoever. It also does not show that polygamy is a sin.

Laban should have told Jacob about this custom at the beginning. He did not because of the pride and deceitful spirit he had in his heart. Even after that Jacob should have weighed the consequences. He should have understood that as a man of God, he needed to show equality in his marriages. Apparently, he was so captivated by Rachel that he decided to marry Leah, without preparing to love her fully as a husband should.

Love is not something we feel. It is something we choose. Although he had affection for Rachel only, God would have given him what he needed to love Leah if he sought the Lord. Otherwise, he could have refused to get married altogether.

The problem is not polygamy itself. It is in what people choose to do with it.

This led to the rivalry between Leah and Rachel with having children. As we have seen, God felt compassion on Leah and enabled her to have children. He temporarily withheld the blessing from Rachel. This made Rachel jealous. Genesis 30:1-2 gives the account.

Now when Rachel saw that she bore Jacob no children, she became jealous of her sister; and she said to Jacob, >Give me children, or else I die=

Then Jacob's anger burned against Rachel, and he said, >Am I in the place of God, who has withheld from you the fruit of the womb?=

Rachel showed insecurity in this incident. She could have rested in the Lord, knowing that He would never leave her or forsake her. In that case, she would not have been jealous. In fact, she would have rejoiced with her sister since God had blessed her.

The rivalry eventually led to each wife giving their husband Jacob their maid for a wife. Rachel gave him Bilhah and Leah gave him Zilpah. Both Rachel and Leah wanted to outdo each other in bearing sons for their master, even if it came through their maids.

God worked through this rivalry to build the house of Israel, though it did not need to take place. It does not prove that polygamy is wrong. It only shows what people will do when inspired by jealousy and fear. If the polygamy itself would have been sin, the Bible would have given indication.

A similar situation occurred later with Elkanah and his two wives, Peninnah and Hannah. It is found in 1 Samuel 1: 1-7.

Now there was certain man from Ramathaim-zophim from the hill country of Ephraim, and his name was Elkanah, the son of Jeroham, the son of Elihu, the son of Tohu, the son of Zuph, and Ephraimite.

And he had two wives: the name of one was Hannah and the name of the othere Peninnah; and Peninnah had children, but Hannah had no children.

Now this man would go up from his city yearly to worship and to sacrifice to the Lord of hosts in Shiloh. And the two sons of Eli, Hophni and Phinehas were priests to the Lord there.

And when the day came that Elkanah sacrificed, he would give portions to Peninnah his wife and to all her sons and her daughters;

but to Hannah he would give a double portion, for he loved Hannah, but the Lord had closed her womb.

Her rival, however, would provoke her bitterly to irritate her, because the Lord had closed her womb.

And it happened year after year, as often as she went up to the house of the Lord, she would provoke her, so she wept and would not eat.

Here again we have a situation of a man favoring one wife over another. He favored Hannah over Peninnah. He would give her a double portion of his sacrifices. This naturally tempted Peninnah to be jealous.

Peninnah took out his rejection on the other wife. She taunted her for not being able to have children.

In all cases, we do not see Elkanah and Peninnah walking in the wisdom and humility of the Lord. Had they done so, there would have been peace in the family. The Bible says that God Himself does not show favoritism. He expects us to be the same.

Yet there are many who believe that these favoritisms and rivalries are inevitable. Many feel they are the natural result of sin. This is not true.

God would not have given David his wives into his bosom if only tension could be the result. He would not have issued the Levirate law if there would have been no way for peace to exist in a polygamous household.

Jealousies tend to thrive whenever there is more than one. This is especially true when it comes to parents having children.

Isaac had two sons, Jacob and Esau. Isaac favored Esau and his wife Rebekah favored Jacob.

The two brothers strove with each other on several occasions. Jacob used trickery to get his brother to give him the birthright. He also deceived his father into giving him the blessing that should have gone to Esau. After these things, Esau made plans to kill Jacob. Jacob in turn fled the land where he lived.

Later on, Jacob had sons of his own. He favored Joseph more than his other ten sons. He gave Joseph his multicolored tunic. The other brothers did not receive such a valuable gift from their father. This inspired them to resent their brother. They even made plans to kill him. In the end they sold him as a slave to the Ismaelites.

Nobody would use these stories in the Bible as proof that having multiple children is sin. (Although in Isaac's case it could not be helped, since he had twins). No one would condemn a couple for trying to have more than one child today. Instead we understand that brothers and sister ought to share and to respect one another. We also feel that it is a father and mother's job to be fair to all the children.

We should also teach fairness and respect in polygamy.

Lastly, we should recognize that favoritism and jealousy will exist between siblings regardless of whether their fathers are polygamous or not. As we have seen, Jacob and Esau were at odds with each other. They were full brothers.

Some believe that the problems in David's family were a result of his polygamy. However, the Bible mentions David's familial problems occurring after his sin with Bath-Sheba. 1 Samuel 12:9-10 records a portion of the prophet Nathan's rebuke of David after this sin.

Why have you despised the word of the Lord by doing evil in His sight? You have struck down Uriah the Hittite with the sword, have taken his wife to be your wife, and have killed him with the sword of the sons of Ammon,

Now therefore, the sword shall never depart from your house, because you have despised Me and have taken the wife of Uriah the Hittite to be your wife.

Subsequently, we see that his son Absalom murdered his brother Amnon. Afterwards, Absalom stole that kingdom from David. Then, he was murdered by Joab, one of David's commanders.

If David had not sinned in the Bath-sheba incident, he probably would have been spared from these unfortunate happenings.

Nevertheless, when we choose to do evil in the sight of the Lord, there are consequences to our sin.

8. Divorce and Remarriage Without Fornication Is Adultery

ARGUMENT - Jesus says in Matthew 5:32

ABut I say to you that everyone who divorces his wife, except for the cause of unchastity, makes her commit adultery; and whoever marries a divorced woman commits adultery @

This is proof that Jesus speaks against a man taking a second wife.

REBUTTAL - Jesus does not mention here that it is a sin for a man to have two wives. He only says that a man cannot divorce one **in order to** marry someone else. The sin is in the divorce. A man who divorces his wife for an illegitimate reason shames his wife. He shows no fear of God in valuing the sacredness of the marriage. He sins even further when he replaces her with somebody else.

This is different from a man adding an additional wife, while keeping his marriage commitment to a wife he already has. A man can marry a second wife without rejecting the first. He should always fulfill his obligations to the first. He should love her as Christ loves the church, regardless of how many wives he adds on.

A man should not take a second wife because he no longer finds his first wife exciting and romantic. This would be a selfish reason for doing so. However, if he does, he would not be sinning anywhere near as much as if he divorced the wife in order to marry another.

Why is it that, especially in America, we tolerate men who divorce their wives for frivolous reasons, and marry others? Many, including some Christians will not only tolerate, but even support, women who divorce their husbands, marry another, simply because they no longer feel like they are in love.

Men and women who behave like this are often allowed to stay in the church. If they are in positions of leadership, they will often be allowed to stay on. However, a man marries a second wife, even for a humble reason, will be despised. He will be kicked out of almost any church. This is clearly a hypocrisy.

9. No One Can Serve Two Masters

ARGUMENT - Jesus says in Matthew 6:24.

No one can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will hold to one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and mammon.

Even though he is speaking about Himself and money, the principle is still the same with marriage. A man cannot serve two wives.

REBUTTAL - This argument highlights the problem of our modern day unbiblical thinking. It makes the wife the master and the husband the servant! This is diametrically opposed to the Word of God! In a marriage the man is the leader and the wife serves and submits to him. The man is called on to be a compassionate and giving leader like Christ is to the Church. Yet he is the leader indeed.

The Scripture cited above can actually be used to support polygamy. A husband, who is a master, can have multiple servants (wives).. A wife cannot have two husbands. She can only have allegiance to one.

10. Let Each Man Have His Own Wife

ARGUMENT - Paul gives us teaching on the relationships between husbands and wives. In 1 Corinthians 7:1-2, he says

Now concerning the things about which you wrote, it is good for a man not to touch a woman.

But because of immoralities, let each man have his own wife, and let each woman have her own husband.

Paul says that a man should have his own wife, not wives. This implies that he can have only one, the same way a woman can have only one husband.

REBUTTAL - Paul makes the statement that he would like to see some men abstain from marriage. Later on in the chapter, he explains how this can help them to focus more on the Lord and on ministry. Since the Corinthians were succumbing so much to fornication, he acknowledges that many could not handle his teaching on celibacy. He then goes on to speak about marriage relationships. As stated earlier in this book, all marriages are a covenant between two people. Within the confines of that marriage there are guidelines, where each partner has a responsibility to the other.

Verse three in this passage confirms this by saying

Let the husband fulfill his duty to his wife, and likewise also the wife to her husband..

This by no means says that a man can't have more than one wife. If Paul meant that, he would have made it more clear. Instead, he just says that he should fulfill his obligations to his wife. A man cannot have sexual relations with a woman that he does not have a covenant with. That is fornication. He can however marry a second wife.

If he does this, he will still have two wives to himself instead of one. In each case, he will have his own wife.

11. A Man Does Not Have Authority Over His Own Body

ARGUMENT - 1 Corinthians 7:4 says

The wife does not have authority over her own body, but the husband does; and likewise also the husband does not have authority over his own body, but the wife does.

Paul is primarily speaking about sexual relations between a husband and a wife. He says that each partner must submit to the other=s will when it comes to relations. A man cannot consider himself under his wife=s authority if he has more than one.

If both of his wives want to have them at the same time. He cannot submit to both wives at the same time.

REBUTTAL - For this, we have to look at other Scriptures to have a clear perspective.

There are no other Scriptures which mention a husband being under his wife=s authority in any way. In fact, Ephesians 5:22-24 states that wives are to submit to their husbands as the church submits to Christ. In order to understand 1 Corinthians 7:4, we must see how the church and Christ ought to relate to each other.

We see that Christ leads the church. However, he does not lead it with an iron fist. Rather, he leads through love. He does this through a form of submission.

He showed his submission by his lifestyle. As he obeyed his father, he denied himself much comfort to serve his people. Ultimately, he died on the cross in order to purchase the church for himself.

Even today, He is working all the time to minister to the church. Hebrews 3:1 tells us that He serves as our High Priest. Romans 8:34 says that he intercedes for us at the right hand of God. Jesus sees Himself with a responsibility and an obligation to the Church. He cannot and will not shirk this, though he is the Lord. In other words, He has to serve us.

We as Christians are obligated to serve our Lord. Our role is different in the relationship than his. Nevertheless, we cannot live for ourselves, but for Him.

In marriages, a man must serve whatever wives he has. He cannot neglect his responsibilities to any one. This includes the sexual relations. In that sense, he must consider himself to be under the authority of his wives. This does not mean that he literally has to obey orders to have sex at any moment with a wife. It just means that he generally must fulfill his obligations.

12. Husband Of One Wife

ARGUMENT - In 1 Timothy 3, Paul gives a list of moral characteristics that a man must have if he wants to be a deacon or an elder. One of these is that he has to be a man with only one wife. This shows that God disapproves of polygamy.

REBUTTAL - Let=s look at the Scriptures which deal with this. We will use the verses found in the King James Version

A bishop {elder} must be blameless, the husband of one wife, vigilant, sober, of good behaviour, given to hospitality, apt to teach. (1 Timothy 3:2) KJV

Let the deacons be the husbands of one wife, ruling their children and their own houses well. (1 Timothy 3:12).

For this cause left I thee in Crete, that thou shouldest set in order the things that are wanting, and ordain elders in every city, as I had appointed thee: if any be blameless, the husband of one wife, having faithful children not accused of riot or unruly. (Titus 1:5-6).

From these passages many assume that Paul is directly stating that it is unlawful for elders and deacons of churches to have two or more wives. While some claim that this prohibition exists only for church leaders, most believe that it covers everyone. They come to this conclusion because these passages mention specific moral characteristics that leaders should have. The characteristics such as being vigilant, sober, of good behavior, and hospitable seem to be qualities that every believer should have. The ability to manage a household well seems to apply to every Christian man who is married and has a family. Therefore, many conclude that Paul is including a man having only one wife as being one of those godly characteristics that every man should have. They extrapolate this to mean that single women should only seek to marry men who have no wife. They also conclude that Paul is opposed to married women encouraging their husbands to take another wife.

To understand this what is really being said, we should look at the three Greek words were used in the expression *A*husband of one wife@.

These words are **mia gune aner** (in that order). **Mia** is the word which is translated *of one*, **gune** as *wife*, and **aner** as *husband*. In the original text the words only or but one are NOT found in any relation to these three words! However, these words have been added to many of the English translations that we have today. Here are a few examples.

New International Version

*A*now the overseer must be above reproach, the husband of but one wife... @ (1 Timothy 3:2)

*A*a deacon must be the husband of but one wife... @ (1 Timothy 3:12)

Amplified Bible

*A*Let deacons be the husbands of but one wife... @ (1 Timothy 3:12)

A[These elders should be] men who are of unquestionable integrity and are irreproachable, the husband of [but] one wife... @ (Titus 1:6)

Living Bible

*A*For a pastor must be a good man whose life cannot be spoken against. He must have only one wife... @ 1 Timothy 3:2.

*A*Deacons should have only one wife... @ 1 Timothy 3:12.

New American Standard Version

Let deacons be husbands of only one wife... @ 1 Timothy 3:12.

It is obvious that these words have been inserted into the English translations for a reason. It is to convey the meaning that the translators merely believed was intended; that elders and deacons must be monogamous. However, as stated before, these additional words are NOT found in the original text.

(It is interesting to note that the majority, if not all, of the translators of these versions came from Western cultures. In the Western world, both Christians and non-Christians believe that polygamy is evil).

The next thing we must understand is what the original words included in the text mean. Since a word can have more than one meaning or interpretation in a language, it is good to look at all the possible definitions. Once that is done, it is necessary to see how the word is used in various contexts. Then one will get a better feel for how a word should be translated in a given situation. We will use Bauer=s Greek Lexicon to supply us with the meanings of the words.

According to this lexicon, the word **gune** can only mean an adult female or a wife. Due to the context of the passages, the word wife must be the only logical translation.

The word **aner** can only mean an adult male, a generic person (similar to how we say >God created man on the Earth=), or husband. Once again, the context obviously calls for the interpretation to be husband.

The word **mia**, on the other hand, has other definitions that can be substituted for the one traditionally given in the above English translations. Let=s look at what they are.

(It must be noted that in Greek, the word **mia** comes before feminine nouns it modifies. Another word, **heis**, means the same exact thing as **mia** but modifies masculine nouns. **Hen** is the word that modifies neuter nouns. To keep things simple, we will refer to all forms of the word as **mia** throughout this rebuttal).

One translation for the word **mia** is the cardinal number one. (Cardinal numbers are numbers like one, two, or three).

A second translation for the word is the ordinal number first. (Ordinal numbers are numbers like first, second, or third).

A third possible translation are the words a certain.

A fourth is the singular indefinite article (a or an). Thayer=s Greek-English Lexicon says the following about **mia** being translated as an indefinite article. AThe numerical force of this word...is so often weakened that it hardly differs from the indefinite pronoun...or from our indefinite article: @.

The cardinal number one is a word that is frequently used in any language. Therefore it is no surprise that in the majority of cases in the New Testament the word **mia** is translated that way. This holds true especially since the New Testament frequently speaks of there being only one God and one body of Christ. However, as stated, there are passages of Scripture where one of the other meanings must be the proper translation. We will again use the King James Version for these examples.

The following verses are good examples of where **mia** has to be translated as first.

In the end of the Sabbath, as it began to dawn toward the first day of the week, came Mary Magdalene and the other Mary to see the sepulchre. (Matthew 28:1).

*Upon the first day of the week let every one of you lay by him in store, as God hath prospered him, that there be no gatherings when I come.
(1 Corinthians 16:2).*

*A man that is an heretic after the first and second admonition reject.
(Titus 3:10).*

There is another word in Greek that is used far more frequently for first. That word is *protos*. In these passages however, the word **mia** means the same exact thing as *protos* does in other places. This provides one example of how a word can have more than one meaning.

Along with that, it is possible to see in other Scriptures how *mia* should be translated as >a certain=.

And a certain scribe came, and said unto him Master, I will follow thee whithersoever thou goest. (Matthew 8:19).

And there followed him a certain young man, having a linen cloth cast about his naked body, and the young men laid hold on him. (Mark 14:51).

And it came to pass, when he was in a certain city, behold a man full of leprosy who seeing Jesus fell on his face, and besought him, saying, Lord if thou will, thou canst make me clean (Luke 5:12).

In the English language, it would be cumbersome to use the word one in these places.

Finally, there are places where the indefinite article makes for the best translation. The following verses are examples of these.

And when he saw a fig tree in the way, he came to it, and found nothing thereon, but leaves only... @ (Matthew 21:19).

And I beheld, and heard an angel flying through the midst of heaven... @ (Revelation 8:13).

And I saw an angel standing in the sun. @ (Revelation 19:17).

I am convinced that the indefinite article is the proper translation for **mia**, instead of one, in the 1 Timothy 3:2,12 and Titus 1:6 passages. Therefore, the words **mia gune aner** should be read as husband(s) of a wife and not husband(s) of one wife. I believe that Paul is only stating that if candidates for deacons and elders have families, they must show evidence that they are managing them well. In order for a man to have a family to manage,

it is assumed that he has a wife (or more than one wife). This of course leaves out situations where a man is either widowed, divorced legitimately, or has incurred familial responsibilities through previous relationships (for which he has repented). This also does not disqualify a candidate who is single, since Paul himself was single and yet an apostle. According to Scripture, an apostle has even greater authority in the church than deacons and elders.

Paul=s statements in 1 Timothy 3:2,12 and Titus 1:6 can also be compared to a man who owns a company that delivers small merchandise to stores. If he cannot provide a vehicle for the employee, he will state that in any employment advertisement he puts out that the applicant must be the owner of a car.

In making such a statement he is not claiming that the potential employee must have only one car. He can have two or three, since it only takes one car to make the deliveries. The emphasis then is not on how many cars the applicant owns, only that he has at least one to do the job.

To give further evidence of why **mia** should be translated as an indefinite article instead of one, we can look to the only other place in the New Testament where **mia**, **gune**, and **aner**, come together. (In this passage the word **heis** is used instead of **mia**). This is found in 1 Timothy 5:9.

In this passage we see the words being used in a way opposite that of 1 Timothy 3:2,12 and Titus 1:6. Here the situation deals with widows receiving material assistance from the church.. Paul is listing the requirements for helping such women. He says,

ALet not a widow be taken into the number under threescore years old, having been the wife of one man. @

We must ask the following question. Was Paul was saying that widowed women had to have only one husband while married?

It is obvious that this could not be what he meant the practice of polyandry (a woman with two or more husbands). This is because polyandry was never a part of ancient Jewish or Roman culture.

We must note the following. When the words **mia**, **gune**, and **aner** come together in 1 Timothy 3:2,12 and Titus 1:6, the translators insist that Paul must be speaking about a man having only one wife at a time. They make no such claim when those same words come together for in the 1 Timothy 1:9 passage. They do not believe that the text states that the widows had to have only one husband at the same time.

Many will still say that one is the proper translation for **mia** (or **heis**) in this passage. They claim that Paul was saying that women can not have been married more than once in their lifetime.

If this were true he would be encouraging discrimination. In many cases a woman is not at fault for losing a husband at two different times. This can happen fairly easily if either a war, a plague, or a great persecution against the church is occurring in a particular area at a particular time.

In Paul=s day, a woman who had been widowed twice would most likely have been just as poor as a woman widowed once. It cannot be assumed that she would have inherited more money, thus disqualifying her from needing church assistance.

Though most widows were considered poor, it was still possible in some cases for a widow to receive an inheritance from a deceased husband. In such cases, a widow of one rich man could be financially stronger than a woman widowed twice from two poor men. In this example, it would be foolish to assume that the rich widow would qualify for assistance, while the poor one would not.

It makes the most sense to believe that Paul was merely repeating the fact that she had to have had a husband, not only one husband. This would make it possible to translate **heis** in the same way in all the passages where the words (**mia** or **heis**), **gune**, and **aner** come together.

Lastly, in speaking of 1 Timothy 3:2,12 and Titus 1:6, we must address the main problem of translating **mia gune aner**, as husband of one wife and not husband of a wife.

To translate it in that way (assuming one believes that polygamy was always sinful) would mean the following. Many of the faithful men of God in the Old Testament, if alive today, would be considered too sexually immoral to even be deacons. Yet these men had great favor from God and were raised up to be examples for the children of Israel.

(For reasons explained earlier in the book, I do not believe God made polygamy sinful in the New Testament).

Some say that polygamous men can be forgiven of their Asin@, keep their wives, but not be able to serve in the office of elder or deacon. There is a problem with this view. It states that God can hold a sin against someone long after receiving salvation. Though the Asin@ is forgiven, the polygamous believer still cannot have the joy of being a caretaker of God=s sheep. Only if he is Alucky enough@ to lose all his wives except one, in one way or another, can he serve in this capacity.

You can compare two men who receive salvation while having two wives. One man faithfully serves the Lord and proves his righteousness through treating his wives well. He is considered ineligible for church leadership. The other man backslides after some time, beats up one wife on a constant basis, and commits adultery. As a result, the abused wife decides to divorce the husband, leaving him with one wife. He can then repent of his sin and with only one wife be considered a potential candidate for deacon or elder.

Men who are homosexuals, rapists, child molesters, and murderers can likewise receive salvation, mature as Christians, and eventually become leaders. Someone else who was a polygamist, who did nothing different from what Abraham and David did, cannot.

Lastly, there are those who contend that it is not sinful for a man to be polygamous if he is not aspiring to be a leader in the church. Their reason for this view is as follows. A man with two or more wives will have too many responsibilities at home to adequately take care of God=s people.

For this we need to ask ourselves the following questions. Does a man with two wives and no children automatically have less responsibility at home than a man with one wife and ten children? If a man has a ministry large enough to support a polygamous family with two wives, does he necessarily have less time to minister than a man with one wife, a small ministry, and a secular job requiring 50 hours of work per week? The answers to both questions are obviously Ano@. They help demonstrate to us the weakness of this particular position.

A man with two or more wives has a greater challenge than a man with only one wife. He must show fairness and balanced attention to all of his wives. He also needs to

give equal treatment to all of his children regardless of which wife they come from. If he can keep a polygamous family in order, he has accomplished more than a monogamous man has. Therefore, when it comes to managing God=s people, he should be seen as being better qualified than a single or a monogamous man.

13. Jesus Had Only One Bride

ARGUMENT - The book of Revelation mentions that Jesus will be married to one bride (Rev. 21:9). That is the Church. It does not say he will have more than one bride. This is another way God is showing us that polygamy is especially not for New Testament believers.

REBUTTAL - The Bible does mention that Jesus has one bride, but that does not make polygamy a sin. That belief is totally based on assumption.

The analogy is chosen because God compares his relationship to the Church to a marriage. All marriage covenants are between two people. As stated before, a man with two wives has two covenants, one with each wife. He does not have one covenant with two wives.

It so happens that in this analogy, God chose an example of monogamy. In Jeremiah and Ezekiel, He portrayed His relationship with His people as a polygamist, with two wives, Judah and Israel.

There are three states a man can be in, singleness, monogamy, and polygamy. The concept of Jesus with a bride does not resemble singleness at all. Can we say that singleness is wrong, since it is an inaccurate portrayal of Christ=s relationship to the Church?

We have so far dealt with the issue of polygamy from a Scriptural level. We have provided evidence for it and have directly confronted the arguments against it. Next, we will deal with it from a natural perspective.

THE CASE FOR POLYGAMY - THE NATURAL PERSPECTIVE

The Bible makes it clear that we can observe spiritual truth through nature. Paul explains this to use in Romans 1:20

For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes, His eternal power and divine nature, Have been clearly seen, being understood through what has been made, so that they {men} are without excuse.

This proves itself to be true concerning the Trinity.

We see that there are three parts to a cell, a nucleus, a cytoplasm, and a cell wall. All three are considered to be part of the cell, though they are distinct parts within the cell.

The egg also has three parts. They are the yolk, the white part, and the shell. Yet all parts make up one egg.

The best analogy of all to the Trinity is the family. In a family you can have a father, a mother, and a child. All three share a common quality. They have the same name. However, they are clearly three different people.

To the surprise of many, the principle of polygamy can be seen in the natural realm.

1. Astronomical Evidence

When we look at our solar system, we see that there is one star (the Sun) and nine planets. The Sun produces the heat and light for all the planets. It also rotates on its axis, and provides a magnetic pull so the planets can revolve around it.

In this analogy, the Sun can be compared to a husband and the planets to wives of the husband. The husband has been given an ability and a glory from God to nurture more than one wife at a time. The wives receive their glory and their support from their husband. (This is similar to the way Christians receive their glory and support from Christ, but in a limited sense).

The same principle can be seen with planets with their moons. Some planets, Mercury and Venus, have no moons. The Earth has one moon. The other planets have multiple moons. They range from Mars which has two to Jupiter which has 61 known moons.

Mercury and Venus can be compared to a man who is single. The Earth to a monogamous man, and the other planets to polygamous men.

Among those planets with multiple moons, a general principle can be seen. The smaller the planet, the less moons it is likely to have. The larger the planet, the more moons it is likely to have.

Here again, the husband can be compared to a planet, the wives to the moons. In general a man with less financial resources (like a small planet) cannot afford to have many wives. A man with more (like a big planet) can.

This could possibly be seen in a spiritual sense. A man who is young in the Lord spiritually may not be able as well equipped to be a spiritual leader to multiple wives. Someone who is more mature, and has developed more of the fruit of the Spirit, can probably lead more.

2. The Marriage Age

Throughout the world, in every culture, there is a general age when males and females begin to marry. In many African and Asian cultures, and in traditional Jewish culture, the age is quite young as compared to Western cultures.

In those African and Asian cultures, males and females will marry as teenagers. In traditional Jewish culture, a female was considered eligible as soon as she received her menstrual cycle. A male could marry at the age of thirteen.

In the Western world, eighteen is considered the ideal age to start marrying.

Despite these differences, there is a common trait in all cultures. Females almost always marry earlier than males. In some cultures, the average difference is only two to three years. In other cultures, it can be as much as ten.

Common sense tells us the reason for this. Men, by nature, are considered to be the leaders (despite the modern feminist viewpoint). They are expected to be the providers and the protectors of their families.

For this reason it is generally necessary for them to start marrying at an older age than women. Their position of leadership requires more maturity than does the position of a wife.

This leads us to an obvious conclusion. There are more marriageable women than men, even though there are just as many females who are born each year as males. This makes it possible for some men to have more than one wife, without there being a shortage of women.

3. The Biological Clock

As we all know, a woman can only have offspring until she is in her early to mid forties. There can also be risks for older women of child bearing age to give birth to children with mental and physical handicaps.

A man can have children throughout his life. In the United States, the late senator from South Carolina, Strom Thurmond, had a daughter in his sixties.

I believe this is one natural sign that polygamy is warranted. It is imperative that more women receive the opportunity to have the joy of bearing children. Time is of the essence for them.

4. A Man Can Have More Children

A woman is only able to have a child once every nine months before menopause. A man has the capability of having children as frequently as he has sex for his entire lifetime.

God ordained for men to be able to father a great number of children. He did not provide a way for women to mother as many children.

Young children also need more attention from mothers than fathers. Women have the instinct to stay at home and raise up the children in the family. Men are more inclined to go out and become the breadwinners of the family.

5. War

Throughout the course of human history, men have been the ones who have mostly died in wars, since they are the soldiers. Oftentimes, after a fierce war, there have been great shortages of men available for women to marry.

It is true that when God created man, He did not create wars. However, he did know that after the fall of man, they would take place. In ancient Israel, He commanded leaders at various times to fight them. Nowadays, as in ancient times, nations sometimes need to fight wars to protect its people from an evil aggressor.

When there is a shortage of men due to a war, polygamy is especially necessary. It provides fathers for fatherless children. It also makes it possible for some widowed and single women to have a husband they need. These men can give the love and the financial provision that would otherwise be lacking.

As with the Biblical arguments, opponents of polygamy will use natural or logical arguments in an attempt to disprove it. We will therefore take a little time to refute the most commonly held natural reasons for opposing it.

ADDRESSING THE CASE AGAINST POLYGAMY - THE NATURAL PERSPECTIVE

1. Overpopulation

ARGUMENT - The world currently has a population of six billion people. It is growing larger every day. It is likely that in the near future, there will not be enough food, as well as other resources, to go around.

If we have more polygamy, we will also have more births. This will more rapidly bring us to the problem of overpopulation.

REBUTTAL - Though this is a natural argument, it can be refuted Scripturally.

The Lord makes it very clear in His Word what His plans were for the destiny of the human race. He personally shares this with Adam and Eve and then with Noah and his sons.

To Adam and Eve he says,

ABe fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth, and subdue it; and rule over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the sky, and over every living thing that moves on the earth. @ (Gen.1:28).

He says to Noah and his sons,

ABe fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth.

And the fear of you and the terror of you shall be on every breast of the earth and on every bird of the sky; with everything that creeps on the ground, and all the fish of the sea, into your hand they are given. @ (Gen.9:1-2).

There is every indication from these passages that man has a destiny to continuously multiply. Likewise, there is no instruction from God that we should be cautious about overpopulating.

Back in the 1700's many scientists believed that dire consequences were in store for the human race due to rapid population increase. Some predicted widespread famines in the 1900's because of inevitable food shortages.

What they could not predict at the time was the rapid increase in technology. This has made it possible to feed much larger amounts of people. I believe that God gave man these advances in order to help him fulfill his destiny.

It is true that there are famines in various parts of the world today. Most of them are a result of political warfare and oppression of brutal political leaders. Some of them are caused by localized droughts and an inadequate means of transporting food from one location to another. These types of famines have been occurring since the beginning of human history.

No famine in the history of the world has happened as a result of the overall increase in human population.

We must be careful not to hold to the false view that we are facing an overpopulation crisis. It can, and has led, to wicked behavior on the part of many in mankind. Countries like China have encouraged many of its women to get abortions for this reason. Abortion, we know, is nothing less than the murder of an innocent child.

What we must realize is that the fear of overpopulation is an attempt from Satan to stop God's plan for man to be fruitful and multiply. I believe the Devil is using the AChristian@ doctrine of monogamy-only to carry out the same objective.

2. AIDS

ARGUMENT - In many places of the world AIDS is spreading rapidly. In places like Africa, polygamy has contributed to this outbreak. If we do away with polygamy, or discourage people from practicing it, it will slow down the damage that AIDS causes.

REBUTTAL - This claim does not prove polygamy to be immoral. It attributes the wrong solution to the problem.

We have proven earlier in the book that God has ordained polygamy for some. He has not approved illicit and promiscuous sexual behavior for anyone. Likewise, he has not condoned addictive drug usage.

It is precisely for these reasons we have an AIDS problem. Those who are familiar with the history of the epidemic know that the disease started its damage in the United States. In the early days, the early 1980's, it spread mostly through homosexual contact between men and through drug abusers in America. It only became a major problem in Africa in the late 1980's and early 1990's.

In Africa, where homosexuality and drug abuse are far less common, the disease spread through illicit sexual contact between heterosexuals. Husbands who became infected through extramarital relations, oftentimes passed it on to their wives.

It can be argued that if all men, as well as women, limited their sexual relations to their married partners, even in polygamy, there would not have been as much of an AIDS problem. Even today, if this practice is done, the epidemic would rapidly decrease.

I also believe it is important for all to be tested for the disease before entering into a marriage.

One could also argue that if many more people stayed single and didn't marry at all, there would be less of a problem. Yet nobody could argue that it is a sin to get married. Why? Because there is no evidence to prove this in Scripture. For the same reason, we should not condemn the practice of polygamy because of the spread of AIDS.

3. Economic and Political Hardship In Areas Where It Is Practiced

ARGUMENT - There is a lot of economic hardship and political instability in the parts of the world where polygamy is practiced. In areas where only monogamy is done, there is more wealth and peace. This serves as proof that the practice of polygamy brings darkness to the lands where it is practiced.

REBUTTAL - Many make this assumption based on the fact that the countries in the West, (North America and Western Europe) are the richest in the world. They feel that God has blessed them since they have historically been the strongholds of Christianity and Christian values. Monogamy only is considered to be one of these values.

What many fail to recognize is that the West has not always been prosperous, though it has been monogamous. During the Middle Ages, the Middle East and China, where polygamy was practiced, enjoyed a higher standard of living than Europe.

In the 1300's the continent of Europe was ravaged by the bubonic plague. Nearly 25% of all Europeans were killed in a matter of three months. Along with that, there were countless wars through the centuries that brought misery to the people. Political oppression also brought poverty to many of the masses.

It is only during modern history that the Western countries have enjoyed the peace and prosperity that they have.

We must recognize that there are many factors of morality through which a nation's righteousness can be measured. Two of these factors are abortion and homosexuality.

Abortion is something that is widely accepted in the West, but condemned in places like Africa. In the United States, Canada, and most Western European countries, abortion is the law of the land. In some of these places, the government will even use the citizen's tax dollars to pay for abortions for poor women.

Homosexuality is something that is also that has much greater acceptance in the West than in Africa. Yet it is an abomination in the sight of God. I believe God will pour out wrath for the cultures who accept it, and spare those who reject it.

Lastly, we must measure darkness and light in spiritual terms more than the natural. Spiritual blessings, though unseen, are greater than natural ones.

In many places in Africa and Asia, mighty revival is taking place. Many who are poor have discovered Christ and have become spiritually rich. The faith that is needed and exercised through trials has brought out spiritual fruit.

On the other hand, there are many places in the West where there is a great hardness to the gospel. Many people in these places are not experiencing the glory of God, since they think they don't need Him. There is a much stronger spiritual darkness over these places, then in poorer areas that are having a spiritual revival.

We have now made a case for polygamy and have addressed the arguments against it from a Scriptural and natural perspective. Let us now examine briefly the history of the monogamy only way of thinking. This will help us understand why it has become so entrenched in our beliefs.

A BRIEF HISTORY OF THE MONOGAMY ONLY DOCTRINE

The view that all marriages should consist of only one man and one wife did not originate in the Scriptures. It had its roots in Greco-Roman culture. Around the time of Christ, it was the standard practice of the Gentiles in the Roman Empire. Though it was common for men to have mistresses along with their wife, they considered only one woman to be their wife.

Ironically, it was the Jews of that time who were still practicing polygamy. The Roman government, which had excused Jews from worshiping the Emperor, also gave them leeway in their marriage customs.

Evidence of polygamy among Jews can be found in the writing of Justin Martyr. Justin Martyr was a Gentile Christian leader, who lived in the second Century A.D. He held the Roman position of monogamy only and spoke sarcastically of the Jews in his day for being involved in the practice. However, his writings do state that polygamy was part of the Jewish culture.

There is historical evidence that in northern Europe, Jews continued to be involved with polygamous marriages up until the eleventh century A.D. To this day, there are some who practice it in Islamic countries.

According to secular and Biblical history, the Christian Church started off as a Jewish Church. The book of Acts begins with the account of how the Church started off in Jerusalem. After the martyrdom of Stephen, the believers began to be scattered through other areas of the Eastern Roman Empire. Soon after, they carried the message to the Samaritans and then to the Gentiles. We later read how the apostle Paul took the gospel even further from Jerusalem. He then carried it to Cyprus, Asia Minor, Athens, and eventually to Rome.

As time progressed and the original generation of the Biblical apostles died off, the Church became increasingly non-Jewish. It then became inevitable that Gentile influence, with its customs, would work its way into the Church. Unfortunately, on a spiritual level, this often meant that pagan traditions became intertwined with Christianity. An example of this can be found in the veneration of Mary.

In the pagan religion of the Roman Empire, it was customary to hold a mother goddess in high esteem. When Christianity became an official Roman religion, many of the pagans who converted to the Romanized Christianity still saw the need to have a mother figure in religion. Since the pagan goddesses had been rejected, the alternative to a mother goddess became Mary, the mother of Jesus. Statues of the goddess Aphrodite were replaced by statues of Mary. From that time on, many who would call themselves Christians would venerate Mary to a position almost equal to God.

On a social level Gentile customs became Christian customs as well. The Roman custom of monogamy only began to be imposed in the Christian faith. To be a Christian one had to be a Roman and do things the Roman way. If Romans were monogamous, then Christians had to be monogamous too.

As Christianity spread beyond the borders of the Roman Empire, the preaching of monogamy as being the only acceptable family unit went with it. Through the centuries, and to this day, this continues to happen. In areas, such as Sub-Saharan Africa, where the practice is widespread, this caused many problems.

When the missionaries first came, they told polygamous men that in order to be saved, they had to divorce all their wives except one. Many times Christian leaders would assemble to determine in individual cases which wives had to be sent away from a man. As a result, many women who were divorced had great difficulty in supporting themselves without a husband. Since many were divorced at an older age, they were not able to find other men to love and marry them. In order to support themselves, many resorted to the only means they could think of to provide an income, prostitution. More important than that, this policy caused them untold emotional damage.

Many children were hurt as well, as they were denied the right to live in a two parent household.

(One can only wonder how many men and women, who would have been saved are in Hell today because they were told to either become monogamous or perish for eternity).

Today, many churches in Africa have changed their policies. They still teach that polygamy is a sin, but will allow a man to keep his wives if he gets saved while being polygamous. However, they will still not allow them to be leaders in the Church.

This is an improvement over what was, but it still wrong to condemn a lifestyle that God hasn't condemned. It is also wrong to treat any of God's people as second-class Christians.

Lastly, it should be noted, that there are thousands of churches that have been started in Africa with a pro-polygamy position. Many of them have polygamous pastors.

In these churches God is saving, baptizing, healing, and delivering people just like He is in churches that don't teach polygamy. Most of all, many of their members are growing in the love and righteousness, which is ultimately what please God. I am a witness of these things.

In countries like the United States, there are more web-sites and organizations that have sprung up in support of polygamy. Let us pray that this movement continues.

IN CLOSING

I will make one final point before I end the book. One should not be inclined to believe that polygamy is sinful because it has not been considered Aorthodox@ doctrine. Church history has shown that at times spiritual darkness can prevent the vast majority of people, even Church leaders, from seeing the truth.

In the 1500's, when Martin Luther was starting the Reformation in Europe, he made comments on the spiritual climate of his day. He wrote that he believed that there were no seminaries or monasteries in the world of his day that were teaching the doctrine of salvation by grace through faith. Luther also initially believed that his revelation would not be accepted by his generation, only a later one.

This did not make his doctrine wrong. It just shows how powerful the spirit of evil and deception can be.

Many Christian scholars even refer to the time period between 500 A.D. and 1500 A.D. as the ADevil=s Millennium@. It was during this era that the doctrine of salvation by grace through faith was largely missing from the (Catholic and Eastern Orthodox) Church=s teachings.

In the early 1800's, the consensus among nearly all Christian leaders was that the Church would usher in the 1000 year reign of Christ. This doctrine is known as post-millennialism. In other words, it was believed that the Church would successfully convert the world to a point where Christ would come back to a world ready for him. At that time, if a person did not believe that, he was viewed as being a follower of the Seventh Day Adventist movement. (The Seventh Day Adventist movement, which started around that time, is considered by many to be a cult. Those who are a part of it combine some sound doctrines with erroneous beliefs. Among these is the doctrine that one must observe the Sabbath Day as in Old Testament Times).

Nowadays, almost no Christian believes the post-millennialist doctrine . We have been able to see, through the horrors of the twentieth century, how evil man still is and always will be.

In the early 1900's, as we stated in the beginning of the book, many gifts of the Holy Spirit, including tongues, miracles, and healing, began to be poured out in greater measure. The general belief of that time among virtually all church leaders was that this could not happen. Recent history has proven that they were wrong.

Many Christians, including leaders, consider Christians who believe in polygamy to be believers in false doctrine, even Mormon doctrine.

Polygamy is neither a false doctrine, nor a Mormon doctrine.

It is not false in that it is backed up by Scripture.

It is not a Mormon doctrine since it is from the Word of God. The Mormons of old just borrowed it and made it part of their doctrine. It must be noted that the founder of Mormonism, Joseph Smith, added to the doctrine. He believed that there were babies in the

spiritual heavenly realm that needed to be born. Therefore, more mothers were needed to legitimately produce these babies. He also believed that marriage was to last through all eternity, making it necessary for as many women to have husbands on earth as possible.

As Christians, we believe none of these things. We see no proof in the Bible of a pre-existence of human beings. We also know that according to Jesus' words, that at the resurrection of the dead, there would be no marriage. Instead, the righteous would become like the angels in heaven.

Let us be faithful to follow God's Word with humble hearts. As we seek His Kingdom first, and his righteousness, all that we need, to be His people, will be given to us. God bless you.

DEDICATION

This book has been dedicated to all the single women in the world, especially Christian women, who have been denied the blessings of marriage and motherhood due to the traditions of men.

It has also dedicated to three groups of people who have been falsely judged and treated by the majority of the contemporary Christian church. These are

1. Christian men who have married more than one wife, whether before or after confessing Jesus Christ as Lord.
2. Christian women who have agreed to become a multiple wife of a Christian man.
3. Christian women who, as the first wife of a Christian man, have supported their husbands in marrying another wife.