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## Should men be stoned to death for looking at an attractive woman?



Earlier this year (July 2019) Piers Morgan and Susanna Reid interviewed Dr David Mackereth.

Piers Morgan called Dr Mackereth a bigot, claiming that the Bible says that if a man looks at a woman in an adulterous manner they should be stoned to death. He took Dr Mackereth by surprise and when the Dr tried to correct the response adding clarity Piers Morgan just spoke over him by claiming that if Dr Mackereth were a good Christian he should be tolerant of everything even if the Doctor is made to talk in untruths, i.e. to lie (to be dishonest).

So does the Bible say that if a man looks at a woman in an adulterous manner they should be stoned to death?

..... **actually NO**

Piers Morgan was rightly claiming that Dr Mackereth is a Christian. To be a Christian means that we believe in Jesus Christ and so that is what the word "CHRISTian" means. So any Christian needs to see what Jesus Christ says.

Does the Old Testament say that if a man looks at a woman in an adulterous manner they should be stoned to death?

..... **NO**

Leviticus chapter 20 describes all the relationships (brothers, sisters, parents, first-cousins etc) that should not get married and somebody could argue that it says they should be put to death, but even then you are connecting the offence to the punishment when the connection isn't there either in the same place or in such an isolated and simple way - and Jesus Christ himself, whom Christians follow, made clear to everyone that to understand the Bible you need to look at Scriptures holistically.

Firstly Jesus Christ castigated severely Pharisees who took verses in isolation and made laws out of them without taking proper account of what the Scriptures say as a whole in the Bible. Yet this was exactly what Piers Morgan was doing! Piers Morgan had taken one verse, out of any context, and not even quoted it correctly, and then simply called his interviewee a bigot whilst then talking over his reply!

In Matthew chapter 23 it says:

*<sup>33</sup> You serpents, you brood of vipers, how are you to escape being sentenced to hell? <sup>34</sup> Therefore I send you prophets and wise men and scribes, some of whom you will kill and crucify, and some you will flog in your synagogues and persecute from town to town,...*

In Luke chapter 11 Jesus says:

*<sup>46</sup> And he [Jesus] said, "Woe to you lawyers [Pharisees and Sadducees] also! For you load people with burdens hard to bear, and you yourselves do not touch the burdens with one of your fingers. .... <sup>52</sup> Woe to you lawyers! For you have taken away the key of knowledge. You did not enter yourselves, and you hindered those who were entering."*

More than that, Jesus only says in the Sermon on the Mount (Matthew chapter 5) that if a man wants to be pure in attitude then he should not look with lust at a woman .... but Jesus does not, and never did say, anyone should be stoned to death at all.

In Matthew chapter 5 Jesus begins the Sermon on the Mount by talking of all those who are blessed:

*<sup>2</sup> And he opened his mouth and taught them, saying:*

*<sup>3</sup> "Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.*

*<sup>4</sup> "Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted.*

*<sup>5</sup> "Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth.*

*<sup>6</sup> "Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be satisfied.*

*<sup>7</sup> "Blessed are the merciful, for they shall receive mercy.*

*<sup>8</sup> "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God.*

*<sup>9</sup> "Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called sons[a] of God.*

*<sup>10</sup> "Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.*

*<sup>11</sup> "Blessed are you when others revile you and persecute you and utter all kinds of evil against you falsely on my account. <sup>12</sup> Rejoice and be glad, for your reward is great in heaven, for so they persecuted the prophets who were before you.*

Jesus then says:

*27 You have heard that it was said, 'You shall not commit adultery.' 28 But I say to you that everyone who looks at a woman with lustful intent has already committed adultery with her in his heart.*

To commit adultery in your heart is NOT to physically commit adultery at all and comes back to the feelings of people who want to be pure and how hard that is.

This is Jesus talking about what you need to keep yourself pure and he describes harsh actions by yourself against yourself but even then there is much more about that in the New Testament showing you CAN receive full forgiveness in Jesus Christ.

Yet, much more than any of that, there is an account in John's gospel about adultery and stoning a woman to death. At the very beginning of John chapter 8 Jesus uses the Pharisees own knowledge of Scripture to show to themselves [*The Pharisees and Sadducees*] not only that it is wrong to stone anyone to death, but, in doing so, showed the Pharisees that they were the ones at fault. This turns the tables on those who would do the stoning, precisely because they have taken an account, exaggerated it severely beyond what it actually says, and made it into a wrong law contrary to the Bible.

Now other newspapers (October 2019) have followed quoting this event as if Piers Morgan words were true .... which they never were!

So, NO, the whole of the Bible does NOT say that we should stone anyone to death, or kill anyone and Christians are NOT bigots at all, but have the humility to realise that they are equally fallen human beings and gain nothing by exacting punishment on anyone.

In the book of Exodus we find the commandment, "***Thou shalt not kill***". This is an absolute commandment to all Christians and Jews alike which is found at Exodus chapter 20 and is in the Bible (NIV translation in modern English) stated as:

*13 "You shall not murder."*

It is really as straight-forward and simple as that.

Jesus Christ not only keeps these commandments for us all he additionally adds that we should LOVE our enemies. In the Gospel of Matthew chapter 5 Jesus says to us:

*"...But I say to you, Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, so that you may be sons of your Father who is in heaven, for he makes his sun rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the just and on the unjust."*

So this is going even further by saying to Christians that we are not only commanded not to murder but we are also commanded to LOVE our enemies. So we should pray for those who persecute Christians and therefore we should pray for Piers Morgan.

Love in this case, as in most of the New Testament, means to care for them.

In Romans chapter 13 St Paul talks of the law (i.e. the Judaeo-Christian law) and says the law is ..... summed up in this sentence,

*"You shall love your neighbour as yourself." Love does no wrong to a neighbour; therefore love is the fulfilling of the law.*

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