Last Saturday the people of the Irish Republic voted to change the definition of marriage from being between one man and one woman to being between two persons of the same or of opposite sex. The 'traditional' definition of marriage had been enshrined in the Irish constitution, a document which can only be amended by public referendum. Over sixty-percent of those who took part in the referendum voted for the proposal, which also received strong backing from the southern political parties, commercial companies and the mainstream media. News of the result received widespread praise from celebrities and politicians alike who lauded it as a victory for 'equality'...

Quote: *“Among those voicing their approval of the outcome was UK Prime Minister David Cameron who tweeted: "Congratulations to the people of Ireland, after voting for same-sex marriage, making clear you are equal if you are straight or gay."*

The referendum in the Republic came just a few days after a court judgement in Northern Ireland against the Ashers bakery on the issue of homosexual 'marriage'. Gareth Lee, a homosexual rights activist for QueerSpace, had requested Ashers bakery to supply him with a cake with the words 'Support gay marriage' printed on the icing. The McArthur family felt that by creating a cake with this message on it, they would be violating a fundamental teaching of the Bible that marriage is between a man and a woman (Matthew 19:5-6). Even though homosexual 'marriage' is illegal in Northern Ireland, Judge Brownlie said that by refusing to supply the cake, Ashers had unlawfully discriminated against Mr. Gareth Lee on the grounds of his sexual orientation and political beliefs. The judge added that although she sympathized with the Ashers regarding their deeply-held religious beliefs, Ashers were not a religious organization and so had an obligation to fulfil their contract with the customer.

The definition of marriage is firmly rooted in the Bible, and has its foundation in the creation account of Genesis 1-2. The institution of marriage is based on the creation of Adam and Eve, the first man and first woman, so it is impossible to separate it from its Biblical origins. Regarding the creation of Adam and Eve, the Bible states in Genesis 2:24, “Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh ”. So in the very first chapters of the Bible, we are told that the true definition of marriage is between one man and one woman. When addressing the issue of divorce in the New Testament, the Lord Jesus Christ quotes this very passage from Genesis, but then adds, “ What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder

", Matthew 19:6. So from the words of the Lord Himself, marriage is an institution created by God which man has no right to change. Of course the Bible does speak of men who had more than one wife, for example, Jacob, David and Solomon. But this was never what God intended, and in every case without exception, departing from God's pattern of one man and one woman resulted in trouble and heartache for those involved.

Marriage was also intended for the purpose of pro-creation, and for the raising of children in a stable and loving environment (Genesis 1:28). God created marriage because He cares about people and wants the very best for them. He didn't want children to grow up without a father or mother to look after them and nurture them. He also created marriage so that men and women would enjoy committed and lasting relationships, which in turn would be a reflection of His everlasting love for the people He had made (Ephesians 5:25). That is really what marriage is all about.

The government supports marriage through tax relief and legal protections for the benefit of our society. And so they should. But the government did not create marriage, so they have no right to change its definition. Marriage is not an 'equal rights' issue either. By nature's definition, marriage has to be between a man and a woman. It is physically impossible to extend that 'right' to people of the same sex. Biologically, they are two completely different lifestyles. But if the people decide to reject the true definition of marriage, which is based on biology and on the Scriptures, and adopt a definition based on 'rights' instead, there is a danger that eventually anything will become permissible and the concept of marriage will be rendered completely meaningless. For instance, there is already talk about redefining marriage again to allow multiple partners, and it won't stop there.

Of course we know that it is really Satan who is behind all of this. He has always sought to destroy everything that God has created. Praise God that in the end, Satan won't succeed. The greatest example of what marriage should be, as I have already said, is the love the Lord Jesus Christ has for His people. We are told in the Bible that husbands are to love their wives “as Christ loved the church and gave Himself for it
". The rapture of the Church is also likened in the Scriptures to a bridegroom coming to take his bride home to be with himself. We have the type portrayed in the story of Isaac and Rebecca in Genesis 24, the parable of the marriage supper in Matthew 22, the parable of the five wise and five foolish virgins in Matthew 25, and in Revelation 19 we have the mention of the church as the bride of Christ. What a day that will be when we see our Saviour for the first time, and go to be with Him forever!

But is He coming for you? Will you be like the five wise virgins who were ready when the

bridegroom came? Or will you be like the five foolish ones who missed his coming and were locked out of the marriage feast? Don't wait until it's too late. God loves you so much He sent His only Son Jesus Christ into the world to be your Saviour (John 3:16). He bore God's punishment for your sin when He died upon the cross. And all who believe on Him for salvation can know their sins forgiven and have everlasting life in heaven. Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ for salvation today.

Revelation 22:17
And the Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say, Come. And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely.

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