

CREATED GAY

Assurance Casts Out Fear

Gary Simpson

Isaiah 51:12 (*Contemporary English Version*) has wonderful words of comfort. I am the LORD, the one who encourages you. Why are you afraid of mere humans? They dry up and die like grass.

Chapters 51 and 52 of Isaiah encourage people to be faithful to God.¹ We can cling to the hope that no matter how bad life is, no matter how large our mistakes, there is hope. Eventually, God will restore us, eventually we will be with the Lord and eventually we will bask in God's glory.

This text is a text that queer Christians can hold very dear to their heart. Gay, lesbian, bisexual and trans people have nothing to fear from traditional churches. People in some churches do not appreciate their queer brothers and sisters in Christ. But the ignorant cannot take away the rich heritage of queer Believers. Nobody can take away your heritage without your permission. Because the heritage God gave queer Believers cannot easily be taken away, queer congregations do not have to fear those who do not understand the Word as we do.

From the perspective of a rich heritage, one that cannot be taken away, we have the ability to fearlessly reach out to others and to fearlessly implement justice in our own lives, in the lives of others and in society. Fortunately, there is more than just a cultural heritage that cannot be taken away from us. We have a spiritual heritage that also cannot be taken away.

Jesus is the source of our assurance. Because we have enough assurance to boldly approach the throne of God, we can also boldly approach people, with the news of salvation and in attempts to make society more just.

Deuteronomy 16:18 - 20 (*Christian Community Bible*) Appoint judges and secretaries for your tribes in every city which Yahweh gives you that they may judge people according to justice. ¹⁹You shall not bend the law or show partiality. Do not accept gifts because gifts blind the eyes of the wise and subvert the cause of the righteous. ²⁰Justice! Seek Justice if you want to live and inherit the land which Yahweh, your God, gives you.

Rabbi Harvey Fields identifies justice within society as one of the major themes the chapters surrounding this text² Justice is a major theme of the books of Moses. Harvey Fields notes obtaining justice is one of the most of frequent concerns Jewish tradition.³ Then Harvey Fields spends a chunk of time in his commentary discussing some of the procedures used in ancient Jewish courts to ensure they were just courts.

The contributors to the Jewish Study Bible make a very interesting point. They say that these verses are a “blueprint for a constitutional system of government.”⁴ In these verses we may see a framework upon which a government and a system of justice can be developed. This shows that God has more than just a passing interest in ensuring that His people are both treated with justice and treat others with justice. This tells us a lot about God. The Lord is a just God. God wants His people to act justly, because that reflects who the Lord is to world.

A case can be made that these verses also can be used as a framework upon which to look at congregational government and management. God is interested in congregational constitutions and in the just operation of congregations. Following the organized procedures found in constitutions is not a sign of spiritual weakness. In fact, it is a sign of spiritual maturity and bravery. The kind of maturity and bravery needed to ensure that congregations operate in a just and fair manner. For we cannot help bring justice, God’s justice, to the world if we do not have His justice in our places of worship.

Playing favorites and unjust actions really turn people off. We see that very clearly when we work with idealistic youth. Young people become very disillusioned with congregational life when they see injustice in God’s house. Queer Christians are also turned off to see favorites in the church – the favoritism of privilege shown to their straight brothers and sisters in Christ. The Spirit is more free to operate, to move, to touch lives, when we are able to provide a spiritual environment where there is justice. A good system of church government, one free of some of the evils of favoritism and injustice against queer people is one of the things good church doctrine and good constitutions help provide. A just Christian community gives the feeling of emotional and spiritual safety that is needed for spiritual growth and for people to really understand the deep things of the Lord. And this is why church doctrine and church governments in all denominations need to be modified to allow for the full inclusion of gay, lesbian, bisexual and trans people.

Church is the last place where queer people should feel weak. In church, queer Christians should feel safe and empowered. Queer congregations need to have firmly established, sound church constitutions. Our constitutions are important, because our people need the assurance that any concerns they have can be addressed in an appropriate manner. This is needed to help ensure that our congregations feel safe spiritually and politically. Protecting the weak in our congregations by ensuring constitutional safe-guards is something gay, bisexual and trans people can support fully.

[1](#) Merrill Unger. ***Unger's Bible Handbook***. (Chicago: Moody Press, 1967), 335, states chapter 51 has that theme. The case can be made that Jerusalem being given glory also fits that theme.

[2](#) Harvey J. Fields. ***A Torah Commentary for our Times***. (New York, New York: UAHC Press, 1993), 139.

[3](#) Fields, 139.

[4](#) Adele Berlin and Marc Brettler, eds. ***The Jewish Study Bible***. (New York: Oxford Univ. Press, 2004), 403.