

Session 3: Picking and Choosing



Rachel Held Evans: *Year of Biblical Womanhood*

Leviticus 20: Which of the commands found there are still valid for today?

‘Every one of us adopts the Bible and (at the same time) adapts the Bible to our culture. In less-appreciated terms, I’ll put it this way: Everyone picks and chooses. I know this sounds out of the box and off the wall for many, but no matter how hard we try to convince ourselves otherwise, it’s true. We pick and choose. (It’s easier for us to hear “we adopt and adapt,” but the two expressions amount to the same thing.)’

Scot McKnight, *The Blue Parakeet*

‘I believe there is an inner logic to our picking and choosing, but I believe we need to become aware of what it is. Until we do, we will be open to accusations of hypocrisy. It’s that simple, and it’s that lethal.’

Scot McKnight, *The Blue Parakeet*

The Anabaptists – a Christocentric approach

‘... operating with the Gospels (a narrative genre) as the primary canon within the canon, rather than with the propositional and doctrinal focus of the Reformers, has positive implications... In particular, it encourages practical application and personal discipleship rather than intellectual discussion. It fosters an encounter with the Lord of the Scriptures rather than with the text alone. It also goes some way towards bridging the gap between the biblical and contemporary horizons by involving the reader in a story...’

Stuart Murray, *Biblical Interpretation in the Anabaptist Tradition*

Who is influencing us more – Jesus or Paul?

Language used by Jesus when speaking of his crucifixion

- Ransom language – Mark 10:45
- In keeping with prophetic tradition – Luke 13:33
- The lifting up of the Son of Man – John 3:14,15
- A revealing of the glory of God – John 17:1

Some principles for ‘picking and choosing.’

1) What did Jesus say or do?

For Christ is the end of the law so that there may be righteousness for everyone who believes.

Romans 10:4

²³Now before faith came, we were imprisoned and guarded under the law until faith would be revealed. ²⁴Therefore the law was our disciplinarian until Christ came, so that we might be justified by faith. ²⁵But now that faith has come, we are no longer subject to a disciplinarian, ²⁶for in Christ Jesus you are all children of God through faith.

Galatians 3:23-26

‘When travellers cross a vast ocean and finally arrive on the distant shore, they leave the ship behind and continue over land, not because the ship was no good, or because their voyage had been misguided, but precisely because both ship and voyage had accomplished their purpose. During the new, dry-land stage of their journey, the travellers remain – and in this illustration must never forget that they remain – the people who made *that* voyage in *that* ship.’

NT Wright, *The Last Word*

2) What about the context?

‘The truth is not so inflexible that it cannot be resituated again and again. This is how we ought to view the difference between Paul and James on the doctrine of justification. It is not a matter of one being right and the other wrong, but a case of the truth of justification having to be put one way in one context and another way in another. The different formulations were required precisely to maintain the truth. The same word had to be put differently to have the proper impact on the different audiences.’

Clark Pinnock, *The Scripture Principle*

3) How did the story begin... and where is it headed to?

4) What do my brothers and sisters in Christ think about this?

Discussion questions:

- 1) Do you agree with the suggestion that picking and choosing is ok, as long as we have good reasons for why we do so?
- 2) Of the models which were suggested for picking and choosing, which did you find helpful and why?