

Le Nouvel Esprit:  
A Video Series on the Theology of  
the Body

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# The 6th Commandment and the Law

- Over the history of the Old Testament the Israelites moved away from the true interpretation of the 6th commandment against adultery
- This moving away corresponded with the acceptance of polygamy
  - This became evident in the Law through the juridical limitations placed upon it
- There is a fundamental contradiction between marriage, which is indissoluble and monogamous, and polygamy
  - Polygamy was practiced in various ways: multiple wives, concubines, cohabitation with slaves
- Features of Old Testament Law
  - The Old Testament laws embedded sin and institutionalized it
    - Polygamy was protected and legalized, implemented into the social structures of the Israelites
  - The sexual ethos was strict against sexual deviancy, homosexuality, bestiality, and the contraceptive act of Onan
  - Marriage laws emphasized the procreative end of marriage
  - Overall, women were treated differently from men

# Language of Legislation

- The language speaks of shame, what is sexual is considered as “impure”
  - The uncovering of nakedness was equivalent to performing illicit sexual acts
- Judgments about body and sex are marked by an objectivism whose motivation maintaining societal order
  - This means that the law was unconcerned about the heart
- All of this is not to be understood as a negative condemnation of the body as something evil as Manichaeism teaches
  - Manichaeism, “a dualistic religious system with Christian, Gnostic, and pagan elements, founded in Persia in the 3rd century by Manes ( c. 216– c. 276). The system was based on a supposed primeval conflict between light and darkness.” Oxford Dictionary
  - St. Augustine was a Manichee before converting to Catholicism

# The Prophets

- A second tradition for interpreting the 6th commandment, as opposed to the legislative, is the prophetic tradition
- The prophetic tradition
  - Describes the relationship between God and Israel as spousal love
    - God is the Bridegroom
    - Israel is the Bride
  - Israel betrays this love through adultery by her abandonment of God for other gods
  - There is an analogy of the love between God and Israel and that between husband and wife
  - Isaiah emphasized God's love, overlooking the infidelities of Israel
  - Ezekiel and Hosea focused on the moral evil of the Bride and her adultery

# Thank You for Watching

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