

## **ROY MOORE'S SUPPORTERS APPEALED TO THE BIBLE TO DEFEND HIM IN THE FACE OF ALLEGATIONS THAT HE HAD BEEN SEXUALLY TAMPERING WITH YOUNG GIRLS**

**Posted online in 2017 response to Roy Moore's defenders trying to use the Bible to justify his alleged sex abuse of young girls**

The fact remains that many people who read their Bibles and know their history is that "God's word" does indeed fail to condemn child sex abuse in marriage. There are condemnations of bestiality and adultery and gay sex and no mention of the respect due to the sexual innocence of a child. Silence is consent anyway. But silence is more consent in a holy book which claims the right to be obeyed as the word of God and which encourages people to see that they must obey the book just because it says they must do it.

Those biblical cultures did accept and even celebrate (marriage was a celebration!) men having sex with girls whose bodies were not ready for sex or having babies. Men married female children.

There are several clues in the Bible that a man is allowed to molest the child he "marries." The child at least should have the right to get away from the husband who raped her and abused her and who could divorce her to get his hands on a new child bride.

Jesus reinforced these doctrines by saying that a girl cannot divorce her husband or she becomes an adulteress if she weds another. What is worse is he was being hypothetical for women did not have a right to divorce in his society.

Calling her an adulteress was abusive in itself and was virtually calling for her murder for the Jewish God had decreed death by stoning for adulteresses. (And Jesus made no attempt to do away with stoning in his ministry. The adulteress who was brought to him for stoning was brought to him as a test but even then he said she should be stoned but only by worthy accusers. He did not stone her for it was not his place and it was never done by one person. And it was a test anyway. He did nothing to stop her being stoned under more legal circumstances. Silence gives consent.)

I repeat: the fact remains that these women were forced into marriage, were too young as well and had every right and perhaps the duty to leave their husbands. A male could easily divorce his child bride and marry another so that you have serial child molesting of serial child-brides.

The story of Jesus starts with Mary conceiving him seemingly without sexual intercourse. It is hard to know what conceived by the Holy Spirit means in an age that did not know about sperm. It may mean she found herself without child after a sexual assault and this was God's plan.

I think that the expression that Jesus is being conceived by the Holy Spirit is a euphemism for Mary conceiving by a human sperm without full sex. She was probably molested by Joseph which resulted in a "miraculous" pregnancy. It would have seemed marvellous in an age that did not understand about eggs and sperms. Whatever the conception means the word is there and it was thought to have something to do with a man and that is the bottom line.

Luke has Mary being asked if she would have the baby for God and she consents after a short conversation. That is not consent. It was too brief for that and how could she really think of all the consequences? It is what child molesters do, make a child think she consents. She was only a child. She was oppressed. She was possibly a sickly girl. She was poor. She was malnourished. She is commonly thought to have been twelve but her twelve would have been more like eight. Her body was not ready for a baby. And childbirth in those days was as easily a cause of death as a cause of a baby coming.

When Joseph took her to wife he had to take her that day to the chupa and then present the bedclothes stained with blood from her hymen to the authorities as proof that it was a real marriage and she was a virgin and he was capable of sex.

This is clearly another sexual assault.

**Alabama conservatives are right: Roy Moore's behavior is perfectly biblical — and that's the problem  
Some conservatives have defended Moore's behavior by citing the Bible**

**by Valerie Tarico from Alternet**

Conservative Christians often proclaim that the Quran encourages marriage and molestation of girls who are too young for consent. But it's rare that they take to the airwaves proclaiming that the Bible does the same. By citing the Bible and

Christian tradition in defense of Roy Moore, that is exactly what they have done. And their arguments have merit.

Moore is a former Alabama judge, now Senate candidate, who believes emphatically that the Bible should take precedence over the U.S. Constitution and American tradition of jurisprudence. He fought long and hard to keep his preferred version of the Ten Commandments — carved in stone — on display in the state supreme court. Moore boldly proclaims his allegiance to the Bible, citing verses at will. So, when he was accused recently of making unwanted sexual advances toward several young teens while a lawyer in his 30s, people accused him of hypocrisy. But if Moore's only transgression was exploiting his greater age and status to seek sex or intimacy from teenagers, the accusation is unfair. His behavior was perfectly biblical.

In the Bible, females are created for the benefit of males. A man's right to expect that females will serve his needs and desires is established on literally Page 2 of the Bible, in the second creation story in the book of Genesis. In this version of creation, Eve is made from Adam's rib to be his "helpmeet" because none of the other animals is a suitable companion and helper for him. The next chapter, the well-known serpent-and-"apple" story, reveals even more about how the writers and their culture view women. After Adam and Eve eat from the Tree of Knowledge, God punishes Eve with a curse, saying: "I will greatly increase your pangs in childbearing; in pain you shall bring forth children, yet your desire shall be for your husband, and he shall rule over you." (Genesis 3:16)

This brief passage distills three core components of Judeo-Christian attitudes toward women that persisted down through the rest of the Bible and through the words of Church fathers, and into many modern-day pulpits: 1. Discomfort or pain women feel around sexuality and childbearing are inevitable, even morally proper. 2. Regardless, women really want it. 3. Men are in charge.

1. In the Bible, female consent is not a thing. The Bible talks about a lot of sexual couplings and marriages, and it gives a lot of options for the form that these relations can take — a man and a slave, a man and his brother's wife, one man and two sisters, a man and hundreds of female concubines. Most of these can be found only in the Old Testament — the Bible provides clear evidence of cultural evolution over the centuries in which its texts were written — but nowhere in either the Old Testament or the New does a Bible writer communicate that a woman's consent is needed before sex. (The Virgin Birth story itself reflects this moral-cultural nexus.)

On the contrary, like livestock, children, and slaves, reproductive-age women are legal chattel — property of their male owners, who also own their reproductive capacity and the "fruits of their womb." The sexual consent required is that of the male owner — young women are given by their fathers in marriage; sold, when necessary, into slavery; and taken as war booty. The New Testament accommodates evolving social mores, but it never condemns or reverses this arrangement, and wives, like slaves, are encouraged to submit to those God has rightfully placed in positions of power over them.

2. Rape in the Bible is a violation — not against a woman but against her male owner. Under Levitical law virginity is prized because when men know who has had sex with which females, they also know who fathered any offspring. Kin groups and family obligations are clear. By contrast, female fertility that isn't regulated muddies things. A virgin who voluntarily has sex with a man, thus reducing her value as an economic asset, can be stoned. By contrast, if she is raped against her will, her rapist can be forced to buy and keep the damaged goods as happens today under some forms of Sharia. In this worldview, Roy Moore may have come precariously close to violating the rights of the fathers of the young women he pursued, but that is not the accusation made by his accusers, nor a question that his defenders have taken up.

3. In the Bible, young women are commonly given to older men. Modern Westerners decry child marriage, for very good reasons. We recognize children and youth as autonomous beings with human rights of their own, but we also recognize that cognitive and emotional capacities develop gradually over years and with them, the capacity to provide full and free consent. Caregivers (and our legal system) try to give young people choices in keeping with their capabilities but we also protect them, knowing they are easily pressured or manipulated by people who are older and more powerful.

None of these concepts—human rights of children, cognitive development, full and free sexual consent—existed in the conceptual world of the Bible writers, rooted as they were in the Iron Age cultures of the Ancient Far East. Ignorance of child development, the legal status of women and children as chattel, and the view of female fertility as a family economic asset each inclines families to swap female children for other goods as soon as they are sexually mature (or sometimes before).

4. In the Bible story of the Midianite virgins, the Israelite warriors are commanded to kill all the male adults and children among their defeated enemies, and all the women "who have been with a man." But God's anointed messenger tells them to keep the virgin females for themselves and gives them instructions on how to ritually purify the girls before having sex with them. Presumably most of these girls would have been pre-pubescent (or they wouldn't have been unmarried virgins). Even apart from this awful story, Alabama State Auditor Jim Zeigler pointed out that many biblical pairings are between older men and younger females:

"He's clean as a hound's tooth. Take the Bible. Zachariah and Elizabeth, for instance. Zachariah was extremely old to marry Elizabeth and they became the parents of John the Baptist. ... Also take Joseph and Mary. Mary was a teenager and Joseph was an adult carpenter. They became parents of Jesus."

5. Christian tradition has long assumed that Mary was a young teen. The Catholic Encyclopedia, citing customs at the time, says that the Mary of the Virgin Birth story would have been as young as 13. Jewish tradition allows betrothal at the age of 12 and consummation at sexual maturity. Outside of sacramental mythology, a story about an uneducated human girl getting impregnated by a powerful alien being would disturb many people. That Zeigler saw this story as a defense of Moore's behavior says something about the extraordinary moral and ethical exceptions our society makes for religion.

6. The Quran and the Bible largely agree on a God-given male-dominated gender hierarchy in which men can negotiate bodily rights to pubescent and prepubescent girls. Those Christians who find themselves appalled by Islam's stories about the Prophet marrying multiple wives, one of whom is six years old at the time he acquires her — and those who are appalled more broadly by Islam's subordination of women or the penchant of fundamentalist believers toward forcing young girls into marriage and killing females who transgress — would do well to remember this: The Quran contains little that is original. It derives from the same tribal shepherding culture that produced Judaism and Christianity, and much of it is explicitly derivative of the Bible itself.

You might be surprised how hard it can be to tell the two books apart. The differences may be real and consequential, but so are the similarities. All Abrahamic texts, taken literally, anchor believers to the Iron Age — a time when men alone were created in the image of a god, and women were vessels and helpmeets, and God favored patriarchs who he blessed with lots of male offspring born to not only their wives but also concubines and handmaids.

The Bible contains fragments that are uplifting and beautiful — verses that contain timeless wisdom and elevate humanity's shared moral core. But that's not all it contains. When it comes to relationships between women and men, the contents of the Bible confront modern Jews and Christians with a difficult choice. Believers can treat the "good book" as the literal and perfect word of God or they can embrace an egalitarian view of men and women, one in which sexual intimacy is rooted in shared desire and consent. These two options are mutually exclusive, and people who say otherwise are engaged in a desperate attempt to protect the Bible from itself.

Roy Moore has made his choice. You can call him disgusting or vile or sexist, but don't use the word hypocrite. Moore is living the script.