

Homosexuality

Introduction

Great confusion exists on the subject of homosexuality. Certain groups and individuals have vigorously fought to change traditional thinking. They have waged a multi-pronged attack in legal, social, political, and scientific arenas to advance arguments for their agenda. In the religious realm, confusion reigns because church leaders and scholars have rejected the Scriptures. Paul wrote in his epistle to the Romans of such individuals that “their foolish heart was darkened” and “they exchanged the truth of God for a lie.” The Biblical view of homosexuality is consistent and clear. This study will examine what God has revealed about it.

Jesus and Homosexuality

Perhaps the best place to start to examine Jesus’ teaching on the subject. His statements on human sexuality should end any debate. Those who promote homosexuality as acceptable and natural have sought to strengthen their arguments and mislead the public by stating that Jesus never spoke about homosexuality. They are mistaken. Jesus leveled the most devastating argument possible against homosexuality. Matthew 19.3-6 and Mark 10.2-9 record Jesus’ statements on human sexuality.

Matthew recorded:

³ *Some Pharisees came to Jesus, testing Him and asking, “Is it lawful for a man to divorce his wife for any reason at all?”*

⁴ *And He answered and said, “Have you not read that He who created them from the beginning made them male and female,*

⁵ *and said, ‘For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become*

one flesh’? ⁶ So they are no longer two, but one flesh. What therefore God has joined together, let no man separate” (Matthew 19.3-6).

Mark recorded:

² Some Pharisees came up to Jesus, testing Him, and began to question Him whether it was lawful for a man to divorce a wife. ³ And He answered and said to them, “What did Moses command you?” ⁴ They said, “Moses permitted a man to write a certificate of divorce and send her away.” ⁵ But Jesus said to them, “Because of your hardness of heart he wrote you this commandment. ⁶ But from the beginning of creation, God made them male and female. ⁷ For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother, ⁸ and the two shall become one flesh; so they are no longer two, but one flesh. ⁹ What therefore God has joined together, let no man separate” (Mark 10.2-9).

The focus of the Pharisees’ question centered upon divorce—a subject as debated then as now. How Jesus answered their question is most informative. What was the context of this discussion? Were the Pharisees seeking truth and understanding? The passages above indicate they were not. They did not approach Jesus with a desire to learn how to address the problems of difficult marriages and divorce. On the contrary, the Scriptures reveal their questions were to “test” him. They wished to discredit and condemn him.

Jesus understood their goal and answered in a way to silence them. He quoted portions of two passages found in Genesis 1 and 2. These passages are the bedrock of human sexuality.

²⁶ Then God said, “Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness; and let them rule over the fish of the sea and

over the birds of the sky and over the cattle and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth.” ²⁷ God created man in His own image, in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them. ²⁸ God blessed them; and God said to them, “Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth, and subdue it; and rule over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the sky and over every living thing that moves on the earth” (Genesis 1.26-28).

²¹ So the LORD God caused a deep sleep to fall upon the man, and he slept; then He took one of his ribs and closed up the flesh at that place. ²² The Lord God fashioned into a woman the rib which He had taken from the man, and brought her to the man. ²³ The man said, “This is now bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh; She shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of Man.” ²⁴ For this reason a man shall leave his father and his mother, and be joined to his wife; and they shall become one flesh (Genesis 2.21-24).

In the first passage, we learn God created Man, i.e., mankind, in His own image. This image was composed of male and female. The next passage enlarges on Man’s creation. From it we learn how God created woman. He built (בָּנָה “banah”) her out of the “rib” (צִדָּה—better translated, “side” or “side chamber”) of man. This creative act reestablished the “unity” of “Man” as male and female “in Adam” into two individual beings, male and female. The Bible expresses this wonder as “a man will leave his father and mother, cleave to his wife, and they will become one flesh. Hence, through marriage and sexual union, what began as a unity “in Adam” (man and woman) continues as a unity “one flesh” in two distinct individuals.

Jesus affirmed the image of God as man and woman with his quotation of Genesis. Alternative alignments of man/man,

woman/woman reject God's creation and deface the image of God. No greater rebellion can be waged against the Creator than to reject his highest creation—the creation of Mankind created in the image of God. Jesus told the Pharisees, “what therefore God has joined together, let no man separate”. This is precisely what those who argue for homosexuality wish to destroy. They desire to redefine the singularity of God's image into their own image. Therefore, while not mentioning the word “homosexuality,” Jesus made it clear that only man and woman constituted a legitimate union. Jesus' words on the man and woman relationship as the image of God should silence all argument for alternate sexual unions and partnerships. Those who contend for a different relationship face Jesus Himself as their chief opponent. This should concentrate the minds of all but the most spiritually darkened and hardened rebels against God.

In addition to Jesus' strong statements above, he upheld the inerrancy of the Hebrew text. He declared,

¹⁸ For truly I say to you, until heaven and earth pass away, not the smallest letter or stroke shall pass from the Law until all is accomplished. ¹⁹ Whoever then annuls one of the least of these commandments, and teaches others to do the same, shall be called least in the kingdom of heaven; but whoever keeps and teaches them, he shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven (Matthew 5.18-19).

But it is easier for heaven and earth to pass away than for one stroke of a letter of the Law to fail (Luke 16.17).

Jesus' declaration that it is easier for the universe to cease to exist than for the Scriptures to fail is at first glance shocking. But upon reflection, Jesus' statement reveals the simple fact that the faithfulness of God, indeed the character of God, is more secure than the existence of the universe. When Jesus spoke of the “Law” He used it as a metonymy for the

entire body of Scripture. According to Jesus, all that had been written, from Genesis to Malachi, was inerrant. With Jesus' validating imprimatur of the Scriptures, it is instructive to consider what they declare regarding homosexuality.

Sodom and Gomorrah

Genesis 18-19 records how God delivered Lot from the city of Sodom which he afterwards destroyed. According to Genesis 13.13, "Now the men of Sodom were wicked exceedingly and sinners against the LORD." Genesis 18.20 states, "And the LORD said, 'The outcry of Sodom and Gomorrah is indeed great, and their sin is exceedingly grave.'" One of the sins of Sodom was homosexuality. The account in Genesis reads:

⁴ Before they lay down, the men of the city, the men of Sodom, surrounded the house, both young and old, all the people from every quarter; ⁵ and they called to Lot and said to him, "Where are the men who came to you tonight? Bring them out to us that we may have relations with them." ⁶ But Lot went out to them at the doorway, and shut the door behind him, ⁷ and said, "Please, my brothers, do not act wickedly (Genesis 19.4-7).

The translation, "have relations" is the Hebrew word יָדָע and means "to know". It is used of intellectual, experiential, and sexual knowledge. Clearly, what is in view in this passage is sexual knowledge, cf. Genesis 4.1, "Now the man had relations (or "knew," יָדָע) with his wife Eve, and she conceived and gave birth to Cain, and she said, "I have gotten a manchild with the help of the LORD." The context of Genesis 19 reveals that the men of Sodom wished to have homosexual relations with the two "men"², who had come to deliver Lot from the immorality of the city and its impending destruction. Lot begged the men of Sodom (Genesis 19.7) not to act

“wickedly” (□□□□). This word is always used of evil activity.

Lot continued to appeal to the men of Sodom:

⁸ Now behold, I have two daughters who have not had relations with man; please let me bring them out to you, and do to them whatever you like; only do nothing to these men, inasmuch as they have come under the shelter of my roof.” ⁹ But they said, “Stand aside.” Furthermore, they said, “This one came in as an alien, and already he is acting like a judge; now we will treat you worse than them.” So they pressed hard against Lot and came near to break the door (Genesis 19.8-9).

These verses expand insight into the horror of this unnatural union to Lot’s mind. Rather than have the men of Sodom violate the two “men”, i.e., angels, under his care, Lot offered them his virgin daughters. This dreadful offer should give any reader pause. What father would choose his daughters to be gang raped? There is only one logical answer: only a father so stressed at the thought of sex against the two angels that he regarded such a choice a lesser evil. Lest we think that Lot’s judgment on this matter unique we will examine another account in the Scriptures with a similar plot in Judges 19.

While the sin of Sodom involved more than homosexuality, (cf. Ezekiel 16.49-50) homosexuality was an overt indicator of its immorality. Its citizens not only practiced it, but were shameless about it (cf. Isaiah 3.9; Romans 1.32). Throughout the Scriptures, Sodom and Gomorrah are held as examples of gross immorality. The Jewish prophets frequently referred to these cities as standards of evil when they identified their own nation’s sin. Jesus referred to these cities in his preaching of repentance to Israel (cf. Matthew 10.15; 11.23-24; Luke 10.11; 17.29).

Some have maintained the sin of Sodom and Gomorrah was not homosexuality but “abusive homosexuality”. The problem with

this interpretation is that the Scriptures make no such a distinction. Homosexuality is abusive *by definition* for it profanes the image of God. Others maintain the sin of the men of Sodom was inhospitality. Such a suggestion has no Scriptural support and is not serious Biblical scholarship.

God destroyed both Sodom and Gomorrah (the two major cities) as well as the cities of Admah and Zeboiim. The entire valley was morally corrupt. Jude commented of the destruction:

⁶ And angels who did not keep their own domain, but abandoned their proper abode, He has kept in eternal bonds under darkness for the judgment of the great day, ⁷ just as Sodom and Gomorrah and the cities around them, since they in the same way as these indulged in gross immorality and went after strange flesh, are exhibited as an example in undergoing the punishment of eternal fire (Jude 1.6-7).

The translation “strange flesh” is the expression σαρκὸς [ἐτέρας](#). The Greek language has two words that mean “other” or “another”, ἄλλος and ἐτέρας. The word [ἄλλος](#) denotes another of the same sort while ἐτέρας denotes another of a different sort. For example, Jesus promised to send another ἄλλος Comforter (John 14.16), i.e., another like Himself. Paul warned the Galatians against another ἐτέρας gospel, i.e. a gospel different in content than that which he preached—“another” (ἐτέρας) gospel which is not “another” (ἄλλος), Galatians 1.6-7. So, Jude, by using the word ἐτέρας meant flesh of a different kind.

Jude’s statement “went after strange flesh” is intriguing. What does he mean by “strange flesh?” On the surface, it might appear that “strange flesh” is Jude’s way of referring to homosexual relations. But Jude seems to mean more than this since he brings up the matter of “angels who did not keep their own domain”. Who were these angels? The most likely explanation is that they are the beings found in

Genesis 6. There we find an account of “sons of God” (אֱלֹהִים בָּנִים) who had sexual relations with women. These women produced mighty offspring, the Nephilim. The expression, “sons of God” has been debated by scholars. But the interpretation is not difficult. The phrase אֱלֹהִים בָּנִים is always used in the Scriptures of angels—never men (cf. Job 1.6; 2.1; 38.7). Therefore, the lexical evidence supports אֱלֹהִים בָּנִים being angels. As strange as sexual activity between fallen angels and humans may have been, the Bible declares such unions occurred—and may happen again (Matthew 24.37). From these unions arose the Nephilim (Genesis 6.4; Numbers 13.33). These beings are the source of the stories of “gods” and “demi-gods” of pagan mythology. God destroyed these beings in the Flood. But even after the Flood this kind of sexual activity occurred resulting in giants such as Goliath, cf. Genesis 6.4; 1 Samuel 17.4-23; 21.9; 22.10; 2 Samuel 21.19; 1 Chronicles 20.4-8). Such demi-gods as Goliath were of the tribes of the Rephaim, Emim, Anakim (Deuteronomy 2.10-11) and the Zamzummim (Deuteronomy 2:20) which occupied the ancient near east. It was because of this genetic corruption of the human race that God commanded Israel to completely destroy them.

Jude’s statement seems to indicate that the men of Sodom knew the visitors were angels. The Genesis text does not reveal this, however. In any case, the angels were in the form of men and sex with them would have been a homosexual act. Lot’s response revealed he regarded the demand of the men of Sodom as evil.

Idolatry and Immorality

The Holiness Code of Leviticus 18 and 20 gives God’s instruction of how Israel was to deal with homosexual activity. Leviticus 18.22 stated,

“You shall not lie with a male as one lies with a female; it is an abomination.”

Leviticus 20.13 stated,

"If there is a man who lies with a male as those who lie with a woman, both of them have committed a detestable act; they shall surely be put to death. Their bloodguiltiness is upon them."

Some have argued that the word "abomination" (אָבִימִינַת) refers to *ritual* uncleanness. But the only passages with an element of ritual uncleanness are Leviticus 18.19 and 20.18 which involve menstrual impurity. No serious Biblical scholarship accepts that these two verses govern the two chapters. The plain reading of the text is that what is in view is moral purity not ritual cleanliness. To maintain a "ritual uncleanness" view is like arguing murder is on the same moral level as a *faux pas* of using the wrong dinner fork. Both Leviticus 18 and 20 enumerate rules of moral behavioral for the new Jewish national entity. They were not to follow the practices of the Egyptians. God's moral rules defined and prohibited incest, adultery, homosexuality, bestiality, spiritism, and child sacrifice. The conclusion of both chapters is, "Thus you are to be holy to Me, for I the LORD am holy; and I have set you apart from the peoples to be Mine" (Leviticus 20.26). Such as statement demolishes any argument of ritual purity.

Some maintain the issue at stake in these chapters is idolatry, not homosexuality. But one does not exclude the other. Idolatry was always associated with aberrant sexuality. An examination of idolatry in the Hebrew Scriptures (e.g. Ezekiel 16.20-50; Leviticus 20.1-5; Deuteronomy 12.28-32) reveals the gross immorality in the practice of idolatry. This fact is further revealed in secular literature and by archaeology. Paul expounded on the issue in Romans 1 when he argued that rejection of the true God results in idolatry resulting in moral degradation. False religion and false sexuality are partners.

Idolatry is the worship of false gods, that is to say, the worship of any other God than the God of the Bible. The word "idolatry" comes from two Greek words, εἶδον, the aorist form of the verb ὁράω "to see" and λατρεία which means "service". The Septuagint (LXX) used λατρεία exclusively for divine service. Therefore, idolatry means to render divine service to that which is visible. The God of the Bible is invisible and beyond sensory perception in his essential nature. This is the reason why God ordered the Jews not to make idols or representations of God.

Pagan cults almost by definition had idols and were rife with sexual immorality—both heterosexual and homosexual. Preachers rarely expound on idolatry and its associated phallic cult. Therefore most churchgoers are ignorant about what transpired in ritual idolatry. But such practices are well-known to historians and archaeologists who have studied the ancient near east, ancient Greece, ancient Rome, and all the ancient world. Every culture that engaged in idolatry engaged in aberrant and licentious sexual behavior that violated the sexual pattern God set forth in Genesis and in the Mosaic Law. Idolatry in ancient cultures included human sacrifice, demonism, homosexuality, lesbianism, bestiality, and incest. Sexual promiscuity was endemic in the phallic cults and pagan "worship" involved priests and priestesses sexually acting out the roles of the fertility gods.

Debasement of the Concubine

Few stories are more sordid than the one recorded in Judges 19. It is as shameful a tale of immorality and debasement as one can imagine. The story involves a Levite who went to restore his concubine³ who had committed adultery against him. He traveled to her father's house where he spent several nights as his guest. Eventually he and his concubine left and arrived at a town opposite Jerusalem. Unable to find a place to stay for the night, he was resigned that they would have to

stay in the open square of the town. However, an old man came in from working in the fields to his rescue. He told him that he and his concubine were not to stay in the public square. They could spend the night with him. The Levite accepted the hospitality of his host and went to his house.

At this point, the story assumes characteristics similar to the account of Lot in Genesis 18-19. Certain men of the city, aware a stranger had arrived in town, began to pound on the old man's door. They demanded, "Bring out the man who came into your house that we may have relations with him" (Judges 19.22). The word for "sexual relations" is the Hebrew וַיִּשְׁכַּב as noted above. Judges recounts: "Then the man, the owner of the house, went out to them and said to them, 'No, my fellows, please do not act so wickedly; since this man has come into my house, do not commit this act of folly'" (Judges 19.23). The word for "wickedly" is the Hebrew word רָעָה seen in Genesis 19. The phrase "act of folly" is the Hebrew מַעֲשֵׂה שׁוֹרְטָה. The translation "folly" is insipid to modern ears. It conveys the sense of "silly" and connotes the trivial. But מַעֲשֵׂה שׁוֹרְטָה carries the same sense as the word שׁוֹרֵט. Both words mean "fool" or "foolish" but not in the sense of "silly" or "trivial." They mean one who is insensible to God and to right and wrong. Moses called his generation "foolish" (Deuteronomy 32.1-6) because they were insensible to God and His goodness. The "fool" of Scripture is one who cannot think correctly for he denies God's existence (Psalm 14.1). Premeditated rape is וְהִרְמִיזָהוּ and is translated "disgraceful thing" in Genesis 34.7. Each of these occurrences contains no trace of triviality but denotes a perverse insensitivity to what is good and right.

In response to the demand of the men, the old man, like Lot, who offered his virgin daughters for the men of Sodom to rape, offered his own daughter and the Levite's concubine to the men. Both Lot and the old man faced the choice of relative evil. Either choice was רָעָה. But both Lot and the old man determined the rape of their daughters was a lesser evil

than homosexual intercourse.

The story has a horrible outcome. The men of the city seized the Levite's concubine and "raped and abused" her all night long (v. 25). She died from the abuse. The Levite put her on his donkey. When he got home he cut her up into twelve pieces and sent a piece to each tribe of Israel. Judges 19 ends, "And it came about that all who saw *it* said, 'Nothing like this has ever happened or been seen from the day when the sons of Israel came up from the land of Egypt to this day. Consider it, take counsel and speak up!'"

This passage of Scripture graphically illustrates how far the nation had fallen into sin. The accounts in Genesis 19 and Judges 19 are parallel. Both Lot and the old man judged rape of the women to be a lesser sin than rape of the men. We would do well to heed the closing words of the chapter, "Consider it, take counsel and speak up!"

The Record in 1 Kings

Israel's history under its kings is recorded in Kings and Chronicles. After Solomon, the nation divided and the north was "Israel" (ten tribes) and the south was "Judah" (two tribes). Judah had better kings and was more faithful to YHVH but eventually they too fell away from God. In each of the three passages below we find idolatry and cultic sexual immorality in the reigns of Jeroboam (Israel)/Rehoboam (Judah) through Ahab (Israel)/Jehosaphat (Judah):

²² *Judah did evil in the sight of the Lord, and they provoked Him to jealousy more than all that their fathers had done, with the sins which they committed.* ²³ *For they also built for themselves high places and sacred pillars and Asherim on every high hill and beneath every luxuriant tree.* ²⁴ *There were also male cult prostitutes in the land. They did according to all the abominations of the nations which the*

LORD dispossessed before the sons of Israel (1 Kings 14.22-24).

⁹ So in the twentieth year of Jeroboam the king of Israel, Asa began to reign as king of Judah. ¹⁰ He reigned forty-one years in Jerusalem; and his mother's name was Maacah the daughter of Abishalom. ¹¹ Asa did what was right in the sight of the Lord, like David his father. ¹² He also put away the male cult prostitutes from the land and removed all the idols which his fathers had made. ¹³ He also removed Maacah his mother from being queen mother, because she had made a horrid image as an Asherah; and Asa cut down her horrid image and burned it at the brook Kidron. ¹⁴ But the high places were not taken away; nevertheless the heart of Asa was wholly devoted to the LORD all his days. ¹⁵ He brought into the house of the Lord the dedicated things of his father and his own dedicated things: silver and gold and utensils (1 Kings 15.9-14).

⁴⁵ Now the rest of the acts of Jehoshaphat, and his might which he showed and how he warred, are they not written in the Book of the Chronicles of the Kings of Judah? ⁴⁶ The remnant of the sodomites who remained in the days of his father Asa, he expelled from the land (1 Kings 22.45-46).

The translation, "male cult prostitutes" and "sodomites" (⚧⚧⚧⚧⚧) in the passages above were men who engaged in homosexual sex as part of the cultic worship of false gods (idols). This Hebrew word comes from the root קדש which has the meaning of being set apart or consecrated, i.e. "holy." In context, it means idolaters were set apart or consecrated to evil. Israel's priests, on the other hand, were set apart to YHVH. See also the passage, Deuteronomy 23.17, which forbade Israel's men and women to be involved in cult-prostitution. Such cult prostitutes engaged in both heterosexual and

homosexual acts. This is well-known from ancient near eastern studies as well as from the Biblical text itself. Tragically, in the above occurrences, the godly meaning of "holy" had been turned into the false and immoral. If one is able to learn only one thing from the study about God in the Jewish Scriptures it is that the God of the Bible, YHWH, is fundamentally different from the gods of the ancient near east. He is ethically and morally perfect, i.e., "holy" and has no commerce with sin. God went to great lengths to teach Israel about His character through the Law of Moses, the Levitical priesthood, and the ceremonies necessary to worship and serve Him.

These passages provide us with the knowledge of the long history of homosexuality in false religion. Male and female prostitutes occupied a key role in ancient near east pagan religion. Paul wrote that the Jewish Scriptures were written for our instruction (Romans 15.4; 1 Corinthians 10.11). To the degree homosexuality is accepted into a society reveals the spiritual health of that society. Those involved in it are indicators of deceit and false religion. They serve as modern equivalents of cultic prostitution.

Paul's Indictment of Mankind

In Romans, Paul provided the Biblical analysis of the problem of the world. His analysis is a devastating indictment of mankind. Paul argued that man consciously rejects God and exchanges good for perversion and evil. What is God's response to man's rebellion? God allows man the freedom to practice evil. He "gives man over" to perversion.

Paul's indictment begins in Romans 1.18-21:

¹⁸ For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men who suppress the truth in unrighteousness, ¹⁹ because that which is known about God is evident within them; for God made it evident to them.

²⁰ *For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes, His eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly seen, being understood through what has been made, so that they are without excuse.* ²¹ *For even though they knew God, they did not honor Him as God or give thanks, but they became futile in their speculations, and their foolish heart was darkened.*

When man suppresses the Scriptures, i.e., truth, the result is futile speculation and hearts of darkness. Like nature, supernature also abhors a vacuum. Truth is replaced by falsehood. The first consequence of mankind's rejection of God is given in verses 22-23:

²² *Professing to be wise, they became fools,* ²³ *and exchanged the glory of the incorruptible God for an image in the form of corruptible man and of birds and four-footed animals and crawling creatures.*

In verses 24-25 Paul described the second consequence of man's rebellion:

²⁴ *Therefore God gave them over in the lusts of their hearts to impurity, so that their bodies would be dishonored among them.* ²⁵ *For they exchanged the truth of God for a lie, and worshiped and served the creature rather than the Creator, who is blessed forever. Amen.*

Lastly, Paul wrote of the third consequence of man's dark heart in verses 26-27:

²⁶ *For this reason God gave them over to degrading passions; for their women exchanged the natural function for that which is unnatural,* ²⁷ *and in the same way also the men abandoned*

the natural function of the woman and burned in their desire toward one another, men with men committing indecent acts and receiving in their own persons the due penalty of their error.

Paul's argument pivots upon the words translated "changed" or "exchanged" and "abandoned" found in verses 23, 25, 26, and 27. In verse 23 Paul used the word [ἀλλάσσω](#) and in verses 25 and 26 the word [μεταλλάσσω](#). The word ἀλλάσσω is used elsewhere in the New Testament five other times: Acts 6.14; 1 Corinthians 15.51-52; Galatians 4.20, and Hebrews 1.12) while μεταλλάσσω is used only in Romans 1.25-26. Why did Paul change vocabulary? In verse 23, the subject is God and the "change" is from God's glory to idols while in verses 23-26 the subject is man. This change coincides with what we have seen earlier: idolatry (worship of anything but the God of the Bible) leads to sexual perversion. Thus, in verse 24 we have Paul's statement: "Therefore God gave them over in the lusts of their hearts to impurity, that their bodies might be dishonored among them". In verse 27, Paul also used the word ἀφίημι. This word carries the sense of "leave", "abandon", "send away" or "give up". It seems to convey an even stronger sense of will in rejecting what is good for what is evil or perverse. As a result of man's determination to do evil, God allows it to run its course. The response of God to man's rejection of Himself and the truth is expressed in Paul's words: "God gave them over" ([παραδίδωμι](#)) in verses 24, 26, 28. Augustine wrote the punishment of sin is sin. He had a point.

No controversy should exist about the meaning of these verses. The passage is straightforward. It teaches homosexuality is contrary to nature, a rejection of God, and a rebellion against God's sexual design of the human race. The only reason it is controversial comes from the rejection of the Scriptures—spiritual darkness.

Paul's Instructions to the Corinthians

Corinth was a major metropolitan city of great commercial wealth. It had been such for generations and continued to be so in Paul's day. Paul wrote the Corinthians to correct them on factions which had divided the members of the church and to address sexual immorality. He encouraged them to holy living. Paul's attitude towards homosexuality is consistent with the rest of the Scriptures. Paul wrote the Corinthians,

*⁹ Or do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived; neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor homosexuals,
¹⁰ nor thieves, nor the covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor swindlers, will inherit the kingdom of God (1 Corinthians 6.9-10).*

Two words in the above passage refer to homosexuality. The first, translated "effeminate" is the word [μαλακός](#). Literally, the word means "soft" or "soft to the touch" (cf. Matthew 11.8). Metaphorically, it is used of catamites, of men and boys who allow themselves to be misused sexually with men. The second word, translated "homosexuals," is [άρσενικοίτης](#). This was a male homosexual or a pederast. Paul used these two words to refer to the two types of behavior in homosexual acts. The first word μαλακός referred to the passive behavior and the second ἀρσενικοίτης to the active role in the homosexuality act. Both actions are sin which will have no place in the kingdom of God.

Scientific research indicates that both genetic and environmental factors contribute to homosexuality. Some seem to be born genetically predisposed towards attraction to the same sex and environmental factors such as confused family roles from smothering or over-dominant mothers, absent or disinterested fathers, and physical or sexual abuse contribute towards this predisposition. While these all may be contributing factors, Paul made it clear in Romans 1 that

homosexuality ultimately is no different from any sin. It is rooted in rebellion against God and against conscience. Some maintain homosexuality is genetic, i.e. homosexuals are “born that way.” This is true. All are born into sin. David wrote in his great confessional psalm, “Behold, I was brought forth in iniquity, and in sin my mother conceived me” (Psalm 51.5). David did not mean his mother was guilty of committing an immoral act in his conception. He was acknowledging he entered the world a sinner.

Each of us has a genetic predisposition with certain strengths and weaknesses. For some, homosexuality is an area of weakness. For others it is fornication, stealing, lying, greed, murder, etc. Each person has a will and chooses to do the things he does. If a man is brought before the court for stealing and his defense is, “I couldn’t help it. I was born this way” what does the judge say? Guilty. Five years.

The Scriptures teach homosexuality is an aberration, an act of rebellion against God, like all sin. The good news is, like other sinful behavior, the Lord can change us. Continuing the verses above, Paul wrote the Corinthians,

“And such were some of you: but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God” (1 Corinthians 6.11).

Some of the Corinthians had been homosexuals. We must not minimize Paul’s statement. Corinth was one of the most immoral cities in the ancient world. It was a “sailor” town. Greek culture was rife with homosexuality and Paul was not naive about sexual practices. He was thoroughly familiar with the immoral activities of pagan cities. But Paul declared God had transformed them. This is the hope for all of us. Each of us who believes Paul’s gospel (1 Corinthians 15.1-4) comes to the Lord with lives of sin. But as the wonderful verse above says, we have been washed, sanctified, and justified. Thanks be to

God!

Paul's Instruction to Timothy

Paul wrote Timothy,

⁸ *But we know that the Law is good, if one uses it lawfully,*
⁹ *realizing the fact that law is not made for a righteous person, but for those who are lawless and rebellious, for the ungodly and sinners, for the unholy and profane, for those who kill their fathers or mothers, for murderers ¹⁰ and immoral men and homosexuals and kidnappers and liars and perjurers, and whatever else is contrary to sound teaching,*
¹¹ *according to the glorious gospel of the blessed God, with which I have been entrusted (1 Timothy 1.8-11).*

The word “homosexuals” in the above passage is ὁρσεννοκοίτης, examined above. It is important to note that these two passages have the same message, one to the Corinthians and one to Timothy.

Conclusion

¹³ *Then the messenger who went to summon Micaiah spoke to him saying, “Behold now, the words of the prophets are uniformly favorable to the king. Please let your word be like the word of one of them, and speak favorably.”*¹⁴ *But Micaiah said, “As the LORD lives, what the LORD says to me, that I shall speak” (1 Kings 22.13-14).*

Ahab, King of Israel, sent his messenger to find Micaiah the prophet on the advice of Jehosaphat, King of Judah. Micaiah stood in opposition to the religious establishment of the four hundred prophets who served Ahab. In questioning them about whether he would be successful in war against Ramoth-gilead, Ahab's prophets responded, “Go up, for the Lord will give it

into the hand of the king" (v.6). When Micaiah spoke the word of the Lord to Ahab he told him he would die and lose the battle. Ahab chose to listen to his prophets. He thought he could disguise himself in the battle and be safe. He was wrong. He died.

Some things never change. Micaiah courageously stood before Ahab over 2,800 years ago and told him the truth. His example challenges us today. What are Christians to do on the matter of homosexuality? Many church leaders, like Ahab's prophets, declare nothing is wrong with it. They maintain the Bible is wrong or is misread about homosexuality, that it is not "the word of the Lord". This is an old, tiresome line. The first lie came from Satan who enticed the woman with "Hath God said?" (Genesis 3.1) The great question and the great challenge to Christians in a fallen world is whether to be faithful to God and His Word or not. How do we do that? We do it by believing what God says, by communicating the truth, and by challenging and encouraging others to believe and be faithful also. Ahab's prophets *claimed* to speak the word of the Lord. They were the majority. They were the establishment. They had the power. They were wrong. Ahab lost the battle and died. The Scriptures teach consistently and unambiguously that homosexuality is sin. Those who promote and tolerate reject the Scriptures, profane the image of God, and rebel against God.

None of us is without sin. But the glorious good news is that Christ has paid for our sins. He died on the cross and rose from the dead. He loves all sinners. He has redeemed us from the law of sin and death. As Christians, what is our message to those in the bondage and slavery of homosexuality? First, it is to believe the gospel (1 Corinthians 15.1-4). Second, it is to allow God to transform us into the image of Christ (Romans 12.1-2, Romans 8.28-29). The only way we can be "ourselves" is by being His. Paul wrote that all who believe his gospel have been changed fundamentally. We have

become new creatures. Our message to mankind and those bound in homosexuality is the message of the great apostle:

¹⁷ Therefore if anyone is in Christ, a new creation; the old things passed away; behold, new things have come. ¹⁸ Now all these things are from God, who reconciled us to Himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation, ¹⁹ namely, that God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and He has committed to us the word of reconciliation. ²⁰ Therefore, we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God were making an appeal through us; we beg you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God. ²¹ He made Him who knew no sin to be sin on our behalf, so that we might become the righteousness of God in Him (2 Corinthians 5.17-21).

¹ The Scriptures state Jesus is the Creator of all things (cf. John 1.3; Colossians 1.16; Hebrews 1.2; Ephesians 3.9; 1 Corinthians 8.6. Therefore, Jesus' response to the Pharisees was a reference to His own activity.

² Angels, when they appear as humans, always appear in the form of men.

³ A concubine was a slave and a wife of secondary rank. She was usually acquired as payment of a family debt, purchased from a poor family, or taken as a captive in war. Succession and inheritance went through concubines as with wives.

Resources consulted for this study are the following:

- G. Abbott-Smith, *A Manual Greek Lexicon of the New Testament*, T. & T. Clark, 1977.
- William F. Arndt and F. Wilbur Gingrich, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*, University of Chicago Press, 1957.
- Geoffrey W. Bromiley, *The International Standard Bible*

Encyclopedia, revised edition, William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1979-1988.

- Francis Brown, S. R. Driver, and Charles A. Briggs, *A Hebrew and English Lexicon of the Old Testament with an Appendix Containing the Biblical Aramaic*, Clarendon Press, 1979.
- R. Laird Harris, Gleason L. Archer, Bruce K. Waltke, *Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament*, Moody Press, 1980.
- James Hope Moulton and George Milligan, *The Vocabulary of the Greek Testament Illustrated from the Papyri and Other Non-Literary Sources*, William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1980.
- W. E. Vine, *An Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words with their Precise Meanings for English Readers*, Fleming H. Revell Co. 1966.

©2004 Don Samdahl. Anyone is free to reproduce this material and distribute it, but it may not be sold.

Updated, June 17, 2015