

CHAPTER 2 UNDERSTANDING HOMOSEXUALITY BIBLICALLY

The “Gay” Agenda from the Christian World View

The first chapter of Paul’s epistle to the Romans teaches about self-evident truths, the most important truth being that God’s existence is proved by the creation itself (v. 19). Those who fail to recognize God in creation have no excuse (v. 20). The chapter also teaches that those who consistently reject self-evident truth are eventually “given over to a reprobate mind,” (v. 28) meaning that their thinking gets so filled with false beliefs that they can no longer understand the truth. Paul cites homosexual sin as the prime example of reprobate thinking (v. 26-27). Homosexuals reject the unmistakable heterosexual design of their own bodies, and as a result, “receive in themselves the penalty of their error which is appropriate” (v. 27).

Reprobate thinkers “suppress the truth in unrighteousness” by rejecting the simple and the obvious, and turning to alternative explanations (e.g. “worshipping the creation rather than the Creator”) that allow them to justify their sins. One needs no special knowledge or training to understand homosexual dysfunction and one shouldn’t feel intimidated by sophisticated arguments from science, psychology or sociology which are offered to justify homosexual sin. (This is not to say that science supports the homosexual position. The great preponderance of scientific studies refute “gay” claims, as we will show.)

Neither should any believer expect to persuade pro-“gay” opponents. Self-evident truth is its own proof, but at the same time is so foreign to the reprobate mind that there is no common ground possible in a debate between truth-loving and reprobate thinkers. We speak completely different languages. As the Scripture teaches, Christ, who *is* Truth (John 14:6), and is the designer “through whom all things were made” (John 1:3), is “foolishness to those that are perishing,” (1 Corinthians 1:18).

Paul contrasts the Jews with the Greeks as types of people with opposing world views (1 Corinthians 1:23, Romans 1:16-17). Christ is only a *stumbling block* to the Jews because they are our spiritual cousins who agree that God created this world by His own design and that a Messiah was prophesied. They just don’t recognize that Jesus is the Messiah.

But to the ancient Greeks (the original evolutionists) Christ and all of the Bible are *foolishness* because they represent a different set of presuppositions (foundational beliefs) about the origin and purpose of life. Importantly, people with a reprobate mind aren't necessarily unintelligent, it's just that their fundamental beliefs are wrong and thus their conclusions about things are not sound.

A Review of Homosexuality in the Bible

The first lesson of Scripture regarding sexuality is that we are all created with male and female gender and that this complimentary heterosexual duality reflects the very image of God (Genesis 1:27). God designed us as two halves of one whole and our sexuality is unalterably rooted in this heterosexual design. Jesus restated this precept in Matthew 19:4-6 and Mark 10:6-8: "But from the beginning of the creation God made them male and female. For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and cleave to his wife; and they two shall be one flesh."

The first mention of homosexuality (according to one school of interpretation) is Genesis 9:22-24, when Ham "saw [or uncovered] the nakedness of his father" and was then cursed by his father when "Noah woke from his wine and knew what his younger son had done to him." To "uncover nakedness" is a Jewish idiom meaning to have sexual relations (see Leviticus 18-20). In *Call of the Torah*, Rabbi Elie Munk cites Hebrew scholars who also interpret Ham's violation as "an act of pederasty" (p. 220). Thus Ham becomes "Canaan," for whom the land of Canaan is named.

One school of Jewish tradition holds that the "last straw" of human wickedness which caused God to bring the flood upon the earth, was the advent of "homosexual marriage" (*ibid.*), implying that Ham had been corrupted by homosexual sin in the pre-flood society, and carried the vice like a virus into the new world. Significantly, it was Ham's near descendants who founded and populated the Canaanite cities of Sodom and Gomorrah.

Sodom, is, of course, the site of the most infamous homosexual scandal of history. Genesis 19 records the incident. "Gay" theologians have claimed that the sin of Sodom which caused God to destroy it was "inhospitality." However Jude 1:7 states that "Sodom and Gomorrah, and the cities about them in like manner...are set forth for an example, suffering the vengeance of eternal fire," for "giving themselves over to fornication, and going after strange flesh." (We will address "gay theology" at length below.)

The Book of Leviticus, stating the law as it was given to Moses by God, contains the harshest language against homosexuality in Scripture. It is designated in Leviticus 18:22 and 20:13 as an "abomination," which is a translation of *toeva*, the strongest possible condemnation in the Hebrew language. Leviticus teaches that homosexuality is so evil and defiling that it is listed along with adultery, incest, child sacrifice and bestiality as sins which cause the land itself to "vomit out" its inhabitants (Leviticus 18:25).

Judges 19 tells of another homosexual scandal reminiscent of Sodom and Gomorrah. In this story, however, the men of the city (of the Tribe of Benjamin), ravaged and killed the concubine of their intended victim in place of the man himself. The Benjamites' unwillingness to repent then led to civil war among the tribes.

Homosexuality is condemned continually throughout the Old Testament, where it is most often mentioned in conjunction with pagan ritual prostitution. For example Deuteronomy 23:17-18

states, “There shall be no whore of the daughters of Israel, nor a sodomite of the sons of Israel. Thou shalt not bring the hire of a whore, or the price of a dog [homosexual prostitute], into the house of the LORD thy God for any vow: for even both these are abomination unto the LORD thy God.” Homosexual perversion was an integral part of pagan idolatry, and its practice continually evoked God’s anger against the Israelite kings. One king who “did what was right in the sight of the Lord” is Josiah, who was commended by the Lord for his proactive repentance for the sins of Judah and told that he would be spared the coming judgment (2 Kings 23:24). He is honored in Scripture for breaking down the high places (of pagan ritual), and destroying “the houses of the sodomites” (23:7).

We emphasize here that the condemnation of homosexuality is not limited to the letter of the Mosaic law. This is important, because “gay” apologists now compare the ban on homosexuality to other “repealed” sections of the law, such as the ban on eating oysters, to claim that “gay” relationships are no longer against God’s law. While it is true that those who abide in Christ are not subject to the letter of the Mosaic law as it was understood in the Old Testament (John 1:17, 4:23, Romans 6:14; 7:6-7), the *principles* of the law are constant and perpetually binding (Psalm 119:44-45, Matthew 5:17-18). This is especially clear in the matter of the law banning homosexuality, which both pre-dates the Mosaic law, and is repeatedly affirmed in the New Testament.

The New Testament scriptures most useful in this study include Romans 1:18-32 and 1 Corinthians 6:9-11. As noted above, the Romans passage explains that homosexuality is a punishment for those who deliberately reject God’s truth as manifested in the self-evident heterosexual design of their bodies and are thus given over to a reprobate mind. They then suffer the natural consequences of their conduct in themselves (v. 27), while at the same time exhibiting a range of destructive anti-social behaviors (v. 28-32). I Corinthians 6:9-11, the “ex-gay passage” offers the good news that people can be and have been delivered from homosexuality. Importantly, this passage tells us that “ex-gays” were a recognized part of the early church.

Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Be not deceived: neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, *nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind*, nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God. 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. (Emphasis added.)

Early Church Authorities

The following series of quotes, is part of a larger set which was compiled by the Christian writer and researcher Allan Dobras and published online at the Culture and Family Institute of Concerned Women for America (www.cultureandfamily.org). It was published to refute

postmodernists and homosexual activists [who] have made a serious effort to remold public opinion regarding homosexual behavior. In a basic sense, these efforts are intended to show that the Biblical texts — from which Western culture has derived

its concepts of homosexuality — have been misunderstood. They attribute these “misunderstandings” to inaccurate translations and the confusion of modern commentators on the substance of what the writers of the Bible actually meant when they discussed homosexual behavior, or what the Bible calls “sodomy.” Fortunately, a significant number of writings by patriarchs of the faith and other early commentators express — in forthright and unambiguous terms — personal views of same-sex sexual behavior. The following commentaries reflect these views:

Philo of Alexandria (c. 20 B.C. to A.D. 50), Jewish philosopher, theologian and contemporary of Jesus and Paul, writing on the life of Abraham:

The land of the Sodomites, a part of Canaan afterwards called Palestinian Syria, was brimful of innumerable iniquities, particularly such as arise from gluttony and lewdness, and multiplied and enlarged every other possible pleasure with so formidable a menace that it had at last been condemned by the Judge of All...Incapable of bearing such satiety, plunging like cattle, they threw off from their necks the law of nature and applied themselves to ... forbidden forms of intercourse. Not only in their mad lust for women did they violate the marriages of their neighbors, but also men mounted males without respect for the sex nature which the active partner shares with the passive; and so when they tried to beget children they were discovered to be incapable of any but a sterile seed. Yet the discovery availed them not, so much stronger was the force of the lust which mastered them. Then, as little by little they accustomed those who were by nature men to submit to play the part of women, they saddled them with the formidable curse of a female disease. For not only did they emasculate their bodies by luxury and voluptuousness but they worked a further degeneration in their souls and, as far as in them lay, were corrupting the whole of mankind.

Flavius Josephus, Jewish historian (c. A.D. 37-100), commentary on the history of the Jews:

As for adultery, Moses forbade it entirely, as esteeming it a happy thing that men should be wise in the affairs of wedlock; and that it was profitable both to cities and families that children should be known to be genuine. He also abhorred men's lying with their mothers, as one of the greatest crimes; and the like for lying with the father's wife, and with aunts, and sisters, and sons' wives, as all instances of abominable wickedness. He also forbade a man to lie with his wife when she was defiled by her natural purgation: and not to come near brute beasts; nor to approve of the lying with a male, which was to hunt after unlawful pleasures on account of beauty. To those who were guilty of such insolent behavior, he ordained death for their punishment.

Methodius, bishop of Olympus and Patara (A.D. 260-312), commentary on the sin of Sodom:

But we do not say so of that mixture that is contrary to nature, or of any unlawful practice; for such are enmity to God. For the sin of Sodom is contrary to nature, as is also that with brute beasts. But adultery and fornication are against the law; the one whereof is impiety, the other injustice, and, in a word, no other than a great sin. But neither sort of them is without its punishment in its own proper nature. For the practicers of one sort attempt the dissolution of the world, and endeavor to make the natural course of things to change for one that is unnatural; but those of the second sort — the adulterers — are unjust by corrupting others' marriages, and dividing into two what God hath made one, rendering the children suspected, and exposing the true husband to the snares of others. And fornication is the destruction of one's own flesh, not being made use of for the procreation of children, but entirely for the sake of pleasure, which is a mark of incontinency, and not a sign of virtue. All these things are forbidden by the laws; for thus say the oracles: *Thou shalt not lie with mankind as with womankind. For such a one is accursed, and ye shall stone them with stones: they have wrought abomination.*

St. Basil, archbishop of Caesarea in Cappadocia (c. A.D. 330-379), the first canonical epistle:

They who have committed sodomy with men or brutes, murderers, wizards, adulterers, and idolaters, have been thought worthy of the same punishment; therefore observe the same method with these which you do with others. We ought not to make any doubt of receiving those who have repented 30 years for the uncleanness which they committed through ignorance; for their ignorance pleads their pardon, and their willingness in confessing it; therefore command them to be forthwith received, especially if they have tears to prevail on your tenderness, and have [since their lapse] led such a life as to deserve your compassion.

St. John Chrysostom, Archbishop of Constantinople (A.D. 347-407), on Romans 1:26-27:

ALL these affections then were vile, but chiefly the mad lust after males; for the soul is more the sufferer in sins, and more dishonored, than the body in diseases. But behold how here, too, as in the case of the doctrines, he deprives them of excuse, by saying of the women, that "they changed the natural use." For no one, he means, can say that it was by being hindered of legitimate intercourse that they came to this pass, or that it was from having no means to fulfill their desire that they were driven into this monstrous insaneness. For the changing implies possession. Which also when discoursing upon the doctrines he said, "They changed the truth of God for a lie." And with regard to the men again, he shows the same thing by saying, "Leaving

the natural use of the woman.” . . . For genuine pleasure is that which is according to nature. But when God hath left one, then all things are turned upside down. And thus not only was their doctrine Satanical, but their life, too, was diabolical.

St. Augustine of Hippo (A.D. 354–430), *Confessions*, commenting on Genesis 19:

Can it ever, at any time or place, be unrighteous for a man to love God with all his heart, with all his soul, and with all his mind; and his neighbor as himself? Similarly, offenses against nature are everywhere and at all times to be held in detestation and should be punished. Such offenses, for example, were those of the Sodomites; and, even if all nations should commit them, they would all be judged guilty of the same crime by the divine law, which has not made men so that they should ever abuse one another in that way. For the fellowship that should be between God and us is violated whenever that nature of which he is the author is polluted by perverted lust.

John Calvin, Protestant reformer and theologian (1509–1564), commentary on Genesis 19 and Romans 1:

Moses sets before our eyes a lively picture of Sodom. For it is hence obvious, how diabolical was their consent in all wickedness, since they all so readily conspired to perpetrate the most abominable crime. The greatness of their iniquity and wantonness, is apparent from the fact, that, in a collected troop, they approach, as enemies, to lay siege to the house of Lot. How blind and impetuous is their lust; since, without shame, they rush together like brute animals! How great their ferocity and cruelty; since they reproachfully threaten the holy man, and proceed to all extremities! Hence also we infer, that they were not contaminated with one vice only, but were given up to all audacity in crime, so that no sense of shame was left them. . . . What Paul says, also refers to the same point: that God punished the impiety of men, when he cast them into such a state of blindness, that they gave themselves up to abominable lusts, and dishonored their own bodies (Romans 1:18.). But when the sense of shame is overcome, and the reins are given to lust, a vile and outrageous barbarism necessarily succeeds, and many kinds of sin are blended together, so that a most confused chaos is the result. But if this severe vengeance of God so fell upon the men of Sodom, that they became blind with rage, and prostituted themselves to all kinds of crime, certainly we shall scarcely be more mildly treated, whose iniquity is the less excusable, because the truth of God has been more clearly revealed unto us.”

Neither may homosexuals appeal to Jewish authorities for Biblical support. Jewish researcher Kevin E. Abrams offers the following quote of Rabbis Marc Angel, Hillel Goldberg and Pinchas Stopler from their joint article in the Winter, 1992-93 edition of *Jewish Action Magazine*:

There is not a single source in all of the disciplines of Jewish sacred literature — halachah, aggadah, philosophy, muscar, mysticism — that tolerates homosexual acts or a homosexual ‘orientation.’ Jews who sanction homosexuality must do so wholly without reference to Jewish sacred literature, in which case their justification has no Jewish standing; or without reference to Jewish sources, in which case they act with ignorance or intellectual dishonesty. The idea, set forth by some of the non-Orthodox leadership, that the Torah prohibited only coercive and non-loving same-sex relationships, thus allowing for a contemporary, voluntary and loving same-sex relationship, is wholly without basis in a single piece of Jewish sacred literature written in the last 3,000 years.

Biblical Law vs. Civil Law Regarding “Sodomy”

In his 1778 restatement of the common law regarding sodomy, Thomas Jefferson, third President of the United States, affirmed the classical definition of “sodomy” as sexual relations between two people of the same gender or between a person and an animal. The source of this ancient law is Leviticus 18:22-23: “You shall not lie with mankind, as with womankind: it is abomination. Neither shall you lie with any beast to defile yourself therewith: neither shall any woman stand before a beast to lie down thereto: it is perversion.” As Jefferson noted, the greater perversion was not bestiality, but homosexuality, because “[b]estiality can never make any progress; it cannot therefore be injurious to society in any great degree, which is the true measure of criminality.” In other words, homosexuality was considered a worse crime than bestiality because it can spread from person to person. (Montesq. Peterson, Merrill D. “Crimes and Punishments” Thomas Jefferson: Writings Public Papers, Literary Classics of the United States, Inc. 1984, pp. 355, 356.)

Jefferson’s observation helps to illuminate a much-misunderstood principle of Biblical law regarding sexual conduct. The principle is that God’s focus is not on forms of sexual conduct, but on types of sexual relationships. God condemns all sex outside of marriage, but does so because of the destructive nature of non-marital relations in all different forms (See Leviticus, chapters 18-22).

This is far different from the modern civil laws regarding sodomy. These vary by jurisdiction but typically define sodomy as anal and/or oral copulation between any two people. However, nowhere in Scripture is sodomy defined in this way. Neither does the Bible specifically forbid such conduct within marriage.

This is not to suggest that it is good, normal or healthy for married couples to participate in these things (anal sex is particularly hazardous to health), but they are not expressly forbidden by God. In marriage, the overarching principle of sexuality can be inferred from the design of the natural family, which argues for sexual relations which are procreative. Still, the Bible is no stranger or opponent to the concept of “recreational sex” between husbands and wives (e.g. Proverbs 5:15-19; Song of Solomon 7). However, as with any conduct that falls under the law of grace, or liberty, we remember with Paul that what is lawful is not always beneficial (1 Corinthians 6:12). Discretion, exercised with prudence, would seem to be the rule for non-procreative sexual conduct

in marriage.

The Biblical/civil distinction is very important, however, from a public policy standpoint. The author, in his capacity as Founding President of the Pro-Family Law Center, had the privilege of co-authoring a petition to the United States Supreme Court in the case of *Lawrence v. Texas* (the sodomy case) asking the justices in advance to reject the *Lawrence* case for review. Unfortunately, the court granted a writ of certiorari (agreed to undertake a review) in the *Lawrence* case and in its ruling sided with the “gay” movement, stripping states of the right to regulate sodomy.

The Texas law under attack in *Lawrence* defined sodomy as oral and/or anal sex between people of the same gender. The case was brought by two homosexual men who had been arrested for committing anal intercourse in a private home. They attacked the law as unconstitutional for singling out same-sex couples for prosecution, while not criminalizing opposite-sex sodomy. In truth, these laws were not being actively enforced in Texas, but the *Lawrence* plaintiffs, it is alleged, staged the incident for the purpose of being arrested to gain legal standing to sue for repeal of the law. The point, however, is that a truly Biblically-informed Supreme Court might never have overturned the Texas law on the grounds of unequal treatment between same-sex and opposite sex-couples because it reflected (perhaps accidentally) the authentic Biblical distinction. In short, Biblically there is no such thing as “heterosexual sodomy.”

A correct understanding of the Biblical principle also helps us overcome two of the most persuasive (if sophomoric) arguments of “gay” activists: first, that it is wrong and unfair to forbid “gays” to have a relationship “with the person whom they love.” This characterization of homosexuality as just another kind of romantic attraction seems quite compelling to the current generation, especially young women. But when we recognize that God regulates sex because it is only safe and sanctified within marriage, then we know that romance can never legitimize *any* non-marital sexual relationships. (This should be a warning to the church about its increasing willingness to condone “cohabitation.”) Romantic attraction can be a factor in nearly every type of illicit sexual relationship: between family members (incest), between people married to others (adultery), between unmarried people (fornication) and so on. It does not justify any of these sexual unions.

The second argument defeated by understanding the Biblical principle is that “heterosexuals engage in the same sexual acts, so it is hypocritical for them to single out ‘gays’ for condemnation.” From a purely spiritual standpoint, the issue is not sexual acts but sexual relationships, so the question is not what you do, but with whom you do it. If it is a consensual act with your husband or wife, you’re not under condemnation. If it is with anyone else, you are. As a practical matter, society has an interest in preserving public health, and it is arguably reasonable for government to criminalize certain acts, such as anal intercourse, which is the primary means of transmission for certain diseases such as AIDS. However, even in this situation, no one who obeys the Biblical instruction to be abstinent before marriage and faithful within it will be at risk of catching or transmitting these diseases through sex. In contrast, most non-marital heterosexual relationships tend by nature to be promiscuous and “adventurous” (some would say “reckless”) and thus highly risky; all the more so homosexual relationships, since normal intercourse is not even an option in them.

An excellent source of additional information on homosexuality from a Biblical perspective is the website of Dr. Robert Gagnon of Pittsburgh Theological Seminary: www.robagnon.net.