

WHAT THE BIBLE REALLY TEACHES ABOUT HOMOSEXUALITY

INTRODUCTION

- A. In our home we have an old 1958 set of The World Book Encyclopedia. There is no article on homosexuality. By way of contrast, the 1992 Encyclopedia Britannica has about a page in the Micropaedia and four pages in the Macropaedia. I rarely heard the word as a child and never knew a homosexual personally. But I now know three church families each with a young adult homosexual; children I know personally and ministered to through years of children's and youth ministries.
- B. What was once a dark and shameful secret is now paraded in the streets. Professed evangelical Christians argue that homosexuality is never condemned in the Bible and that it is a God-blessed sexual orientation. The Metropolitan Church is a homosexual denomination. Increasing numbers of liberal Protestant denominations are accepting the homosexual orientation including ordaining homosexuals to the ministry.
- C. What is a Christian to make of all this?

I. THE BIBLICAL DATA

- A. Old Testament
 - 1. The Sodom and Gomorrah Incident
 - a. The extremity of their sin: Genesis 18:20-21, "Then the LORD said, `The outcry against Sodom and Gomorrah is so great and their sin is so grievous that I will go down and see if what they have done is as bad as the outcry that has reached me. If not, I will know."
 - 1) Only time in recorded biblical history that God sent angels to destroy a city because of its sin.
 - 2) So wicked that there were fewer than ten righteous people in the two cities.
 - b. The example of their sinfulness: Genesis 19:1-11. Note:
 - 1) All the men of Sodom were involved (v.4)
 - 2) Attempted homosexual rape (v.5)
 - c. Cf. the Levite incident in Judges 19 (v.22)
 - 2. The Mosaic Law
 - a. Leviticus 18:22, "Do not lie with a man as one lies with a woman; that is detestable." (NASB, "an abomination")
 - 1. Entire chapter describes prohibited sexual practices that were commonly practiced by the Canaanites and for which God expelled them from the land (vv.24-28)
 - 2. All the sexual sins are under the banner of "detestable things" (vv.29-30) but homosexuality is specifically called out as "detestable," as incest is called "wickedness" (NASB, "lewdness") in verse 17 and bestiality is called "perversion" in verse 23.

- b. Leviticus 20:13, "If a man lies with a man as one lies with a woman, both of them have done what is detestable. They must be put to death; their blood will be on their own heads."
 - 1. Death sentence also prescribed for cursing parents (v.9), adultery and a variety of other sexual sins.
 - 2. Burning was prescribed for a man marrying a mother and her daughter (v.13)

B. New Testament

1. The Romans 1 Passage

"God gave them over to shameful lusts. Even their women exchanged natural relations for unnatural ones. In the same way the men also abandoned natural relations with women and were inflamed with lust for one another. Men committed indecent acts with other men, and received in themselves the due penalty for their perversion." (Romans 1:26-27)

2. Sin Listings

I Corinthians 6:9, "Do you not know that the wicked will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived: Neither the sexually immoral nor idolaters nor adulterers nor **male prostitutes** ("malakoi": "men and boys who allow themselves to be misused homosexually" - Arndt and Gingrich) nor **homosexual offenders** ("arsenokoitai": "a male who practices homosexuality, pederast, sodomite" - Arndt and Gingrich) nor thieves nor the greedy nor drunkards nor slanderers nor swindlers will inherit the kingdom of God."

I Timothy 1:9-11, "We also know that law is made not for good men but for lawbreakers and rebels, the ungodly and sinful, the unholy and irreligious; for those who kill their fathers or mothers, for murderers, for adulterers and **perverts** ("arsenokoitai") for slave traders and liars and perjurers - and for whatever else is contrary to the sound doctrine that conforms to the glorious gospel of the blessed God, which he entrusted to me."

II. THE OPPOSITION

A. Enemy Fire

- 1. Christians are painted as "homophobes" and "hatemongers."
- 2. Christians are subjected to shouting and harassment because they speak out against homosexuality as harmful to our kids and our culture.

B. "Friendly" Fire

1. So-called "Christian" homosexuals claim that:

* "The sin of Sodom and Gomorrah was inhospitality."

* "The most heinous sin of Sodom and Gomorrah was not homosexuality (cf. Ezekiel 16:49-50)." * "Genesis 19 is irrelevant to today's issues of homosexuality because it was an exceptional and violent act of attempted gang rape."

- a. Part of the defense of homosexuality is the claim that the word, "know," in Genesis 19 has no sexual connotation in the passage. Could the word in this passage just mean to know people? The word does have a broad application in the OT.
 - 1) The same word for "know" is used in all the following verses (KJV):
 - Genesis 3:7, "And the eyes of them both were opened, and they knew [NIV: "realized"] that they were naked..."
 - Genesis 4:1, "And Adam knew [NIV: "lay with"] Eve his wife; and she conceived, and bare Cain..."
 - Genesis 4:25 "And Adam knew his wife again; and she bare a son, and called his name Seth..."
 - Genesis 19:5, "bring them out unto us, that we may know [NIV: "have sex with them"] them."
 - 2) Context determines the meaning. Eve didn't get pregnant because Adam and her had a conversation and the men of Sodom weren't interested in just having a chat. Cf. the fact that Lot offered the men his daughters clearly for sex as a bargaining alternative (Genesis 19:8).
 - b. The book of Jude makes clear that the sin of Sodom was indeed sexual perversity. Cf. Jude 7, "In a similar way, Sodom and Gomorrah and the surrounding towns gave themselves up to sexual immorality and perversion. They serve as an example of those who suffer the punishment of eternal fire."
 - 1) Context: Those false teachers who "change the grace of our God into a license for **immorality**" (v.4) will be judged as was Sodom and its surrounding cities.
 - 2) Parallel: v.8, "In the very same way [i.e., as the Sodomites), these dreamers [the false teachers] **pollute their own bodies...**"
 - 3) Jude reveals that the homosexuality of Sodom was not one incident of attempted violent gang rape, but a **settled practice** of perversion: "**gave themselves up to.**"
 - c. Homosexuality was not the only sin of the Sodomites as is attested by Ezekiel 16:49-50, "Now this was the sin of your sister Sodom: She and her daughters were arrogant, overfed and unconcerned; they did not help the poor and needy. They were haughty and did **detestable** things before me. Therefore I did away with them as you have seen." However, there is no need to dismiss homosexuality as included in "detestable things." Jude 7 confirms this.
2. So-called "Christian" homosexuals argue that "Unclean animals and other objects and practices that today are amoral are also called "detestable" (or

"abominations") in the Old Testament. Why not treat homosexuality in the same way?"

- a. These "amoral" issues were not capital offense as was homosexuality.
 - b. These "amoral" issues were "shadow of the realities" (Colossians 2:17; Hebrews 10:1) issues that have been clearly abrogated for the New Testament believer (Colossians 2:14). In fact, it is heresy to teach the observance of Old Testament Law to gain or perfect salvation (Galatians 3:1-5). Therefore God has set aside circumcision (Galatians 5:2), unclean items and foods (Colossians 2:16, 20-21), and holy days (Colossians 2:16) as unnecessary matters for New Testament believers.
 - c. These above-listed "detestable" items (cf. Leviticus 18:22-30) are clearly in a different class than the levitically prohibited "amoral" behaviors. Jesus not only did **not abrogate** the Old Testament prohibitions against sexual immorality, He specifically condemned such practices as do the New Testament epistles.
3. So-called "Christian" homosexuals claim that "Paul did not write against homosexuality in general, but against only abuses in homosexuality." This is an impossible position to maintain for the following reasons:
- a. If homosexuality and heterosexuality are equally valid sexual orientations, then Paul's general prohibitions against "sexual immorality" and "adultery" would be sufficient. Why would he specify homosexual sins later in the list? (I Corinthians 6:9)
 - b. All the sins in the I Corinthians 6:9 list are **absolute** sins. There is no such thing as "responsible" idolatry or "responsible" theft just as there is no such thing as "responsible" homosexuality. (Cf. "The Condemnation of Homosexuality in I Corinthians 6:9" by David E. Malick, Bibliotheca Sacra, October-December, 1993. pp.479-480)
 - c. "...it is striking that every time homosexual behavior is mentioned in the Scripture it is condemned. There are only two ways one can neutralize the biblical witness against homosexual behavior: by gross interpretation or by moving away from a high view of Scripture." ("The Loving Opposition" by Stanton L. Jones, CT, July 19, 1993, p.20). Note that the Bible approves and celebrates heterosexual love in marriage. It is the only form of sexual expression created and blessed by God.
 - d. Some say that Romans 1 only addresses the sin of heterosexual people committing homosexual acts unnatural to them (but which are natural and wholesome to homosexuals). Since the Bible uniformly condemns homosexuality, this is a wildly irresponsible interpretation of this text.

NOTE: The most influential pro-homosexual book advocating biblical approval is Christianity, Social Tolerance and Homosexuality by John Boswell. The book met immediate acclaim and is highly regarded in homosexual literature. Other reactions have been less flattering:

- 1) Boswell's interpretation of the New Testament "has no support in the text and is a textbook case of reading into the text what one wants to find there" (NT scholar Richard Hays of Duke Divinity School in "Sorry, No Sale" by Richard John Neuhaus, Focus on the Family Citizen, August 15, 1994, p.2)
- 2) "The conclusion must be that for all its interest and stimulus, Boswell's book provides in the end of the day not one firm piece of evidence that the teaching mind of the early church countenanced homosexual activity." (David Wright in Encyclopedia of Early Christianity quoted in Neuhaus, op.cit., p.4)

III. THE CONTEMPORARY ISSUES

A. The Genetic Argument

1. "The greatest error being promoted by LeVay, Pillard, Bailey, and others is the assumption that they can normalize homosexuality by proving its biological sources..." ("Born Gay?" by Joe Dallas, CT, June 22, 1992, p.20)
2. Status of genetic research:
 - a. Simon LeVay, homosexual activist neuroscientist, found that the "hypothalamus that allegedly governs sexual activity to be smaller in homosexual men than in heterosexual ones." But the results of his scientific study were vague and the control group was undocumented as heterosexual.
 - b. Pillard and Bailey conducted studies on twins with the published result that "52 percent of the identical twins of homosexual men were also found to be homosexual." (Dallas, Op.cit., p.22). But even they admit that this may be predominately due to environment, not genes. A similar twins study in Britain yielded only a 20 percent figure.

B. The Civil Rights Argument

1. The homosexual lobby promoted the analogy of homosexuals and blacks as oppressed minorities.
2. "I have known former homosexuals, but never any former African-Americans." (Kay Cole James of the Washington D.C.-based Family Research Council). "She cites Gen. Colin Powell who called the comparison `convenient but invalid.'"
3. "Unlike blacks three decades ago, gay men and lesbians suffer no discernible communal economic deprivation and already operate at the highest levels of society..." (Andrew Sullivan, the openly gay editor of the

New Republic) (In "Two Men Don't Make a Right" by David Neff, CT, July 19, 1993, p.14)

4. The U.S. Supreme Court has established three criteria as "'touchstones,' in awarding special protected status to disadvantaged minority classes.

Criterion 1: A history of discrimination evidenced by lack of ability to obtain economic mean income, adequate education, or cultural opportunity. ["Homosexuals have an average household income of \$55,430 versus \$32,144 for the general population and \$12,166 for disadvantaged African-American households. More than three times as many homosexuals as average Americans are college graduates."]

Criterion 2: Specially protected classes should exhibit obvious, immutable, or distinguishing characteristics, like race, color, gender or national origin, that define them as a discrete group.

Criterion 3: 'Protected classes' should clearly demonstrate political powerlessness."

("Oppressed Minority, or Counterfeits?" by Tony Marco, Focus on the Family Citizen, April 20, 1992, p.1-4)

C. Political Correctness

1. Public Education

- a. The Rainbow Curriculum was inaugurated in 1991 in the New York public-school system, the largest in the country with 930,000 students. Some of the recommended books were Daddy's Roommate, Heather Has Two Mommies and Gloria Goes to Gay Pride. "...an assortment of parents, school boards, and religiously based coalitions rose up to challenge....Not only did they win concessions in the curriculum, but they also contributed to the chancellor of schools losing his job at the end of June." (Rainbow Curriculum Loses Momentum" by Warren Bird, CT, date?, p.68)

- b. The July 29, 1988 "Draft Report on Gay and Lesbian Youth" commissioned by the Seattle Department of Human Resources recommended for Seattle schools that they:

- 1) "Incorporate accurate information about sexual orientation and the experience of being gay or lesbian into the curriculum of health courses for all students and in family health courses."
- 2) "Train all school staff about issues facing gay and lesbian youth....Ensure that sexual orientation is an acceptable topic of discussion in both the counseling and classroom setting."
- 3) "Provide positive role models for gay and lesbian students. Establish clear district policies so that gay and lesbian

identified staff can be visible without risk of losing their jobs or opportunities for career advancement."

- 4) Identify at least one well-trained staffperson in each middle and high school who is sensitive to the needs of gay and lesbian youth. Publicize these individuals specifically as resources for students with sexual identity concerns."

2. AIDS Policies

3. Thought Police

Andy Rooney got in hot water with CBS for a piece on "60 Minutes." He said that "There had been some recognition during 1989 `that many of the ills which kill us are self-induced. Too much alcohol, too much food, drugs, homosexual unions, cigarettes. They're all known to lead quite often to premature death." ("Rooney May Be Back, But Along with CBS, Worse for the Wear" by Joel Beltz, World, March 10, 1990, p.3)

D. Distortion

1. It is a distortion that many homosexuals are living in loving, monogamous homosexual relationships. "...male homosexuality tends to be strongly associated with promiscuity: The famous Bell and Weinberg study (Homosexualities) suggested that about a third of gays have had over 1,000 sexual partners in their lifetimes. Very few gays are in committed, long-term relationships; Bell and Weinberg found that less than 10 percent of gays are in such relationships. Those who are in stable relationships do not tend to be sexually monogamous. McWhirter and Mattison (The Gay Couple) found that 0 percent of the 100 stable male couples they studied were sexually monogamous after being together for five years. The authors of that study, themselves a gay couple, said that to be gay is to be nonmonogamous, and that monogamy is an unnatural state that some gay men attempt because of their internalized homophobia; so that when you finally grow to accept your own gayness, you shed monogamy like a butterfly sheds a cocoon.

"It may be that the homosexual community cannot embrace monogamy because homosexual sex can never produce what God made sex for. They turn instead to promiscuity and perversions to create sexual highs. The gay community calls these perversions `high-tech sex.' Many know of oral and anal sex, but fewer know of commonly, though not universally, practiced activities such as sadomasochistic practices of inflicting pain on a partner during sex, group sex of all kinds, and more extreme distortions." (Jones, Op.Cit., p.23).

2. The 1948 Kinsey report widely published the distortion that ten percent of all American males were homosexuals. Recent research has revealed the true number to be closer to one percent.

3. An excellent book for uncovering the deceptive practices of the homosexual lobby, the unconscionable politicizing of AIDS and the hidden disgusting sexual practices of homosexuals is Exposing the AIDS Scandal by Dr. Paul Cameron, 1988, Huntington House.
4. Another excellent book that delivers the facts about homosexuality in America extremely well is Shadow in the Land by Congressman William Dannemeyer, 1989, Ignatius Press. He covers the issue of causes of homosexuality, homosexuality and the law, religion, politics, sex education and AIDS. Highly recommended by Congressman Hyde and syndicated columnist Cal Thomas.

IV. THE CHRISTIAN PERSPECTIVE

A. Just How Bad Is Homosexuality? (or, Are All Sins the Same?)

1. The concept that all sin is sin and that in the eyes of God there are no small sins and no big sins is a deception designed to promote greater tolerance by Christians toward sins that God finds particularly repugnant. The Bible clearly evidences that some sins are judged by God as much more sinful than others:
 - a. Jesus did not treat all sin with the same weight. He particularly hated hypocrisy. Note the juxtaposition of hypocrisy with adultery in John 8:11. Jesus saw the sin of spoiling the faith of a child as so serious that that man should never have been born (Matthew 18:6)
 - b. Rebellion is singled out as a sin as serious as witchcraft in I Samuel 15:23.
 - c. The language of Romans 1 describes the moral deterioration of a cultural from lesser to greater degrees of sinfulness. The sinful descent begins with idolatry (vv.21-23), deepens into sexual immorality (vv.24-25), further deepens into the sexual perversions of homosexuality (vv.26-27) and completes the sinful plunge to a totally "depraved mind" and all manner of wicked behavior. According to this passage, the approval and widespread practice of homosexuality is the last stage before the total moral chaos and disintegration of a culture.

B. Does God Love Homosexuals?

1. Christ Died for the World (John 3:16). That includes homosexuals.
2. Anyone Who Believes Is Saved. I Corinthians 6:9-11 demonstrates that some of the Corinthian Christians were saved out of homosexuality, "And that is what some of you were. But you were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God." (v.11)
3. Sinning Christians Are Disciplined by God and His Church. Should a professed Christian begin to practice homosexuality he will feel the

chastisement of God (Hebrews 12) and the discipline of the church body (Matthew 18 and I Corinthians 5).

4. Unbelievers Are Under Judgment by God. John 3:36, "whoever rejects the Son will not see life, for God's wrath remains on him."

C. What Should Christians Do Today?

1. Balance Firmness with Love
 - a. Calvary Church of Grand Rapids has built a strong ministry to people suffering with AIDS. Fundamentalist pastor Ed Dobson says, "The first lesson we learned is that to demonstrate Christ's love to the gay community you have to drop all pejorative, gay-bashing language from your vocabulary....The next thing we learned is that we had to quit applying a double standard to new believers. If a new convert leaves a life of drug addiction, but six months later falls back into the habit, we usually demonstrate patience and understanding. But when it comes to homosexual behavior, if someone reverts to that lifestyle after conversion, we often show little grace." ("Ed Dobson Loves Homosexuals" by Tim Stafford, CT, July 19, 1993, p.22)
2. Present the Gospel. Our major assignment is not to reform society but to preach the life-changing Gospel of salvation.
3. Promote Righteousness and Protest Unrighteousness
 - a. We need to let our voice be heard and let our vote be counted as "salt" and "light" in our communities and our nation.
 - b. God does not condone Christian violence or hatred in expressing our biblical conscience. Christians must always repudiate acts of property vandalism, physical assault and character assassination

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