

SPECIAL 1996 TOPIC SERIES: Modern Controversies Facing Bible Believers Homosexuality

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Who would have thought 50 years ago (one might not have to go that far back), that homosexuality would be touted as an alternate, acceptable lifestyle. Fifty years ago there would have been a drastically different understanding of the "Gay Rights Movement" than what there is today.

Nevertheless, what would have been 50 years ago helps very little in dealing with the present situation. In fact, such lamenting hinders an objective approach to any subject. It is not the holding on to the "status quo" that we should be concerned with but how does the Bible address the issues of today. Constants in society and culture are not to be found. However, the Bible will always be relevant in whatever society or culture it is used.

With that said, what does the bible say about the current push for legitimizing homosexuality? Should the Bible even be consulted in matters such as this? These and other questions we will address in this short article.

## PROPER ATTITUDE TOWARD THE BIBLE

Unless we come to an understanding of the Bible's right to contribute to this discussion, it will matter little what it has to say. If the Bible is looked upon as a 2,000 year old book steeped in first century culture and superstition; written by men shackled with a first century understanding of nature and sexuality than we can easily dismiss what is written therein since it lacks the enlightenment and understanding currently possessed by this generation. However, if we hold the Bible to be a book of divine authorship, recorded by 1st century men but inspired by God, then what is said will hold a greater weight since it is the very revelation of the creator's mind. Let me suggest a few scriptures which will prove the Bible's right to not only comment on the current homosexuality issue but give the final word.

While it is true that the Bible was written by first century men, it is not true that they wrote from their own level of understanding. In their writing they had divine help from the Holy Spirit. Jesus told his disciples the Holy Spirit would guide them "into all the

truth" (John 16:13). Peter stated "no prophecy was ever made by an act of human will, but men moved by the Holy Spirit spoke from God" (2 Peter 1:20-21). The Apostle Paul exclaimed "the things which I write to you are the Lord's commandment" (1 Corinthians 14:37). Combine these references with two more regarding the Bible being "inspired by God" (2 Timothy 3:16-17) to reveal unto us the "thoughts of God" which "no one knows except the Spirit of God" (1 Corinthians 2:11) and you have the Bible being a product, not of first century ignorance and superstition, but the actual revealing to mankind through the guidance of the Holy Spirit and the pens of first century men the mind of the creator. If anyone has a right to comment on the current situation, it would surely be the creator!

## WHAT DOES THE BIBLE SAY?

Our first contact with homosexuality in the Bible is found in Genesis 19. This is the story of the destruction of, among other cities, the city of Sodom. Why was Sodom destroyed? The answer to that question, at least in the minds of some, is not axiomatic. Some believe Sodom's sin was anything but homosexuality. They will refer to passages such as Jeremiah 23:14 and Ezekiel 16:49-50 wherein homosexuality is not mentioned as one of the sins committed by Sodom. In defense of these passages it should be noted both prophets were comparing the sin of their day to some of the same sins found in Sodom and reminding the people what happened to Sodom in an attempt to get them to repent.

With this in mind, it is not surprising to see the sin of homosexuality not mentioned. The prophets were only concerned with those sins committed in Sodom which were also being practiced among God's people.

However from two New Testament references and noticing a few details in the story itself it becomes quite evident that among their sins was that of homosexuality. Notice Jude 7 wherein Jude states the Sodomites "indulged in gross immorality and went after strange flesh." Furthermore, the apostle Peter described Lot being "oppressed by the sensual conduct of unprincipled men" (2 Peter 2:7).

Finally combine these references with a few details from the story. The men of Sodom wanted to "know" these strangers Lot was housing. Some have suggested the "know" here has reference to checking up on. Since both Lot and his guests were strangers they were suspicious of subversion. If so, why did Lot say they were acting "wickedly"? This type of suspicion would hardly warrant the stamp of wickedness. When one factors in Lot's offer of his daughters as a way to appease the men of Sodom, it becomes quite obvious the knowledge they desired was hardly citizenship papers but to know "carnally" (NKJ) or a desire to "have relations with them." (NASB) By combining all the information available, it is obvious that among the sins of Sodom was that of homosexuality.

As we continue in the Old Testament, two other scriptures speak in very specific terms regarding homosexuality. They are Leviticus 18:22 and 20:13. Those contending for

homosexual lifestyles cannot deny the fact that what is described here is homosexual behavior. But, and the dodging begins, they say these passages are talking about ceremonial purity under the Law of Moses. Others believe it is not the homosexual act per se being condemned but the manner in which it is done. They look at the phrase "as one lies with a female" and believe the prohibition is against same-sex relations wherein one party is made to be inferior to the other, as (according to them) it happens when men have sex with women.

The first objection might sound plausible if one were to ignore the context, but when one sees that in this same context other types of moral offenses are discussed the objection loses its force. Offenses such as incest (18:6-18, 20; 20:11-14, 17, 19-21), adultery (20:10) and bestiality (18:23; 20:15-16) are also herein addressed.

In order to answer the second objection it would do us well to progress into the New Testament. A most telling passage is found in Romans 1:26-27. In this scripture we learn same-sex relations are not natural. Therefore it is not the method nor the manner used which is a sin, but the very act itself.

When one combines this passage with Gen. 2:18-25, the point is undeniable. The creator made Eve not Ed for man's companion and sexual partner. Furthermore, that which is natural has the ability to reproduce. Everything God made could reproduce "after its kind." Such cannot be said of the homosexual lifestyle. There is no method of same-sex acts which God will approve of, for such is against God's establishment and it is for that very reason that many who insist on this type of lifestyle are "receiving in their own persons the due penalty of their error."

One final scripture must be considered in light of those so-called Christians who are homosexuals. In 1 Corinthians 6:9-11, we learn homosexuality is considered as "unrighteousness" and will cause one "not to inherit the kingdom of God." Those who claim God is pleased with them just the way they are and that Jesus, if here, would accept them need to remember that God has spoken through His apostles in very clear terms. While homosexuality may be an alternate lifestyle, it is not one which can be practiced with God's approval.

## THE ATTITUDE OF CHRISTIANS TOWARD HOMOSEXUALS

I cannot close this article without a word to Christians about their attitudes toward homosexuals. Homosexuality is a sin just as surely as anything else we could list. Therefore our attitude should be no different toward a practicing homosexual as it would toward a fornicator or thief. Both are in need of God's grace and salvation. Christians must realize homosexuals can repent. (Remember 1 Corinthians 6:9-11, "such were some of you") The answer to the homosexual problem is not, as one preacher put it, "Line them up behind the barn and rat-a-tat-tat." But to recognize they too have a soul and they too can receive forgiveness. In this as in all areas of life, let us show love for the sinner while maintaining a hatred for the sin.

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