

Homosexuality and the Bible

1. Though the Bible's prohibition of homosexuality is abundant and clear there are, nevertheless, some who attempt to deflect the witness of scripture by reinterpreting key passages.
 - a. **Gen. 19:1-22**-*"The sin of Sodom and Gomorrah was the sin of inhospitality, not homosexuality."*
 - i. God had already planned to destroy Sodom and Gomorrah, for the *men* of Sodom were wicked (Gen. 13:13), and their "sin was very grave" (Gen. 18:16-33).
 - ii. The Hebrew word for "know" (Heb. *yada*) most often refers to something cognitive, yet in some passages like Genesis 19:5, 8 (cf. Gen. 4:1, 25) the word has clear sexual connotations. As always, the context determines the meaning.
 - iii. The severity of God's judgment on the city seems to be indicative not of mere inhospitality, but of ongoing, unrepentant sexual sin.
 - b. **Lev. 18:22; 20:13**-*"The Leviticus passages only apply to Old Testament Israel" or "they only apply to a certain type of homosexuality."*
 - i. The prohibition against homosexuality was not merely limited to the Jews. God warns Israel not to engage in homosexual practices or divine judgment will be upon them as it was on the nations before them (18:24-27).
 - ii. Unlike laws pertaining to diet and the priesthood, restrictions related to sexuality have not been abrogated by the New Testament. There is a distinction in scripture between the ceremonial law (temporary) and the moral law (perpetual). The moral law is binding upon all regardless of time or place.
 - iii. The argument that some form of homosexuality was accepted so long as it is not associated with idolatry assumes what it is trying to prove.
 - iv. If idolatrous homosexuality is the only form prohibited in Leviticus the same must be said about adultery, bestiality, sacrificing of children, etc.
 - c. **Rom. 1:26-27**-*"The condemnation in Romans is only towards people who are heterosexual by 'nature' and yet engage in homosexual practices."*
 - i. The thrust of the passage (Rom. 1:18-32) is that humanity has distorted the truth about God, as God has revealed it to them in creation (vv.18-21), and instead chose to worship creation rather than the creator (vv. 23-25). As a judicial act God gives them over to the consequences of their sin (v.26a).
 - ii. The meaning of "against nature" (v. 26) is clear from the context. It is the deviation from the created order as a whole that is condemned. This includes both the act (v.27) and desire (v.24).
 - iii. A plain reading of the passage reveals that those who were engaging in the homosexual acts were homosexuals. The text clearly states that they desired *one another* (v.27a).

- d. **1 Cor. 6:9-11; 1 Tim. 1:8-10**-*“The Greek word for ‘homosexuals’ used in these passages should only be used to refer to exploitative forms of homosexuality.”*
- i. The word “homosexuals” (Gk. *arsenokoites*) is a word Paul derived from the Septuagint (Greek translation of the OT). Thus, Paul’s sexual ethic reflects that of the Old Testament.
 - ii. It is unreasonable to apply this interpretation to the other vices listed in 1 Cor. 6:9-11 (e.g., fornication, adultery, etc.)
 - iii. Paul is not addressing “homosexual Christians.” He does, however, mention former homosexuals—*“such were some of you”* (1 Cor. 6:11).

Bibliography and Recommended Reading

Brown, Michael. *A Queer Thing Happened to America: And What a Long, Strange Trip it’s Been*. Concord, NC: EqualTime Books, 2011.

DeYoung, Kevin. *What Does the Bible Really Teach about Homosexuality?* Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2015.

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Hubbard, Peter. *Love into Light: The Gospel, The Homosexual, and the Church*. Greenville, SC: Ambassador International, 2013.

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