

Homosexuality: A Biblical Analysis

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This is an age of increasing acceptance and approval of homosexuality. Homosexuality is portrayed by many in government, in public education and in our colleges and universities as just one of many normal, legitimate lifestyle choices. Those who oppose the homosexual lifestyle on moral and religious grounds are usually portrayed by the intellectual elite, the media and the entertainment industry as ignorant bigots who are full of hatred, “homophobic,” and so on.

It is true that some people hate homosexuals. Some people even engage in “gay bashing.” But it must be remembered that people who engage in such activities are sinning against God; they are not at all living in accordance with the law of Christ. The true Christian loves the homosexual and shows it by treating him in a lawful manner, according to the law of God (1 Jn. 5:3). Slander, violence, hatred and scorn should never be the attitude of a Christian toward the homosexual; Christians should protect homosexuals from personal attack. Yet, while the Christian should love the homosexual by treating him lawfully, he must also love him by being biblically honest with him. A person’s attitude toward homosexuality must not be shaped by our changing, pagan culture but by God’s inspired, infallible revelation, the Bible. The Bible offers hope to the homosexual because it speaks the truth and proclaims forgiveness of sins through Jesus Christ.

The Creation Ordinance of Marriage

In order to have a proper understanding of human sexuality one must go back to the beginning of mankind. In the beginning God created one man (Adam) and one woman (Eve). God did not create two men (e.g., Adam and Steve) or two women (e.g., Eve and Yvette). God created Adam first from the dust of ground; He then created Eve from Adam’s rib. Eve was created to be Adam’s wife. The Bible says they were naked, yet they were not ashamed. God’s creation of one man and one woman to be husband and wife is the pattern or paradigm for God-sanctioned, normal, moral, blessed sexual relations. “The marriage union is God-ordained, and its sacred precincts must not be polluted by the intrusion of a third party, of either sex” (F. F. Bruce).

Jesus Christ quoted Genesis 2:24 as clear proof that polygamy (having more than one wife) and divorce (except in the case of adultery) are condemned by God (Mt. 19:5). The Apostle Paul, writing under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, said that there is only one moral, legitimate outlet for man’s God-given sex drive—marriage (1 Cor. 7:2). Monogamous, heterosexual marriage is the only way to have sex without sin and guilt. “Marriage is honorable among all, and the [marriage] bed undefiled; but fornicators and adulterers God will judge” (Heb. 13:4 [all Scriptures NKJV]). Anything contrary to the creation ordinance of marriage between one man and one woman is unacceptable before God and sinful. The Bible condemns all sexual activity outside of monogamous, heterosexual marriage: homosexuality, premarital sex, polygamy, adultery, bestiality and so on. “Let no one deceive you with empty words,” says Paul, “for because of these things the wrath of God comes upon the sons of disobedience” (Eph. 5:6).

The Law of God

God's moral law clearly condemns homosexuality of any kind: "You shall not lie with a male as with a woman. It is an abomination.... If a man lies with a male as he lies with a woman, both of them have committed an abomination. They shall surely be put to death. Their blood shall be upon them" (Lev. 18:22, 20:13). Apologists for homosexuality try to circumvent the clear, unambiguous statements of God's law with blatant Scripture-twisting and excuse-making arguments.

Some argue that the law of God does condemn homosexuality; they teach that God's law is just a human record of ancient Jewish custom and prejudice. These people deny the Mosaic authorship of the law and are ethical relativists. Their argument must be rejected because Christ and the apostles accepted the divine authorship, infallibility and absolute authority of the Old Testament (Mt. 22:39-40; Jn. 10:35; 2 Tim. 3:16-17). If you reject God's law by saying it is only the purely human ideas of ancient Jewry, then you cannot claim Christ as your Savior. You must believe either that Jesus was mistaken in His view of God's law or that He was a liar. Be forewarned: Jesus Christ is God (Jn. 1:1, 8:58-59); He cannot be mistaken or lie (Num. 23:19).

Others teach that the laws condemning homosexuality were meant only for the nation of Israel. The Old Testament laws passed away with the coming of Jesus Christ. This view is popular among those who claim to be "evangelical homosexuals." This view is totally unbiblical. When the New Testament says that Christians are dead to the law, it means that Christ has fulfilled the law (the covenant of works) for the believer, and removed the curse of the law through His sacrificial death. Christians who are united to Jesus Christ in His perfect sinless life and His sacrificial death are raised with Christ and enabled by His Spirit to live unto God. Paul says that "the law is holy, and the commandment holy and just and good" (Rom. 7:12). Christ did not get rid of the moral law. He obeyed it perfectly for the believer. He died to remove the guilt of sin and He sends the Holy Spirit so believers have the power to obey God's law. If Christ did away with the law in the sense that homosexual apologists assert, then there would be no need for Him to die, for if there is no law, there is no sin and guilt. The only laws which are no longer binding are laws specifically tied to the land of Israel (e.g., the jubilee) and the ceremonial laws. The ceremonial laws pointed to Jesus Christ and His work through types and figures. God's moral law and the civil case laws based on the moral law are still in force. God's law is based on His nature and character; therefore, it is absolute, unchanging and eternal.

It is obvious that the prohibitions against homosexuality have nothing to do with the sacrificial system; they clearly are not ceremonial in nature. Furthermore, if the laws against homosexuality were only meant for the nation of Israel, then why is homosexuality condemned in Sodom, over four hundred years before the nation of Israel existed: "as Sodom and Gomorrah, and the cities around them in a similar manner to these, having given themselves over to sexual immorality and gone after strange flesh [homosexuality], are set forth as an example, suffering the vengeance of eternal fire" (Jude 7)? Although Sodom was generally characterized by wickedness, Genesis 19 presents homosexuality as the last stage of debauchery. The men of Sodom desired homosexual relations with Lot's guests and were willing to rape them if necessary. God wrought total destruction upon Sodom. Sodom was not destroyed because the inhabitants were inhospitable, as some claim. Just being inhospitable would not explain such a total judgment by God. God utterly destroyed the city; only Lot and his family were spared.

Some homosexual apologists argue that God's law only condemns male cultic prostitution. They argue that modern homosexuality has nothing to do with the idolatrous, pagan homosexuality practiced in ancient times. God does clearly condemn male prostitution and the cultic fertility rites associated with it; Deuteronomy 23:17-18 does apply to cultic prostitution. But Leviticus 18:22 and 20:13 do not mention cultic prostitution at all. "If a man lies with a male as he lies with a woman, both of them have committed an abomination. They shall surely be put to death. Their blood shall be upon them" (Lev. 20:13).

The attempt to consolidate all the prohibitions against homosexuality into only one which deals with ancient cultic prostitution reveals an obvious pro-homosexual bias by these interpreters. They are forcing the biblical text into a pro-homosexual mold. They are being dishonest with the clear intent of God's Word. They are reading their own pro-homosexual presuppositions into God's law. It is illegitimate to condense three distinct prohibitions (Lev. 18:22, 20:13; Dt. 23:17-18) into one. Pro-homosexual interpreters know this but do not care, because they are not interested in the truth; they are only interested in justifying their wicked, perverted behavior. Furthermore, their interpretation could be used to justify having sexual intercourse with sheep and goats, because bestiality was also part of ancient cultic fertility rites. Don't be deceived. God is against homosexuality in all its forms, both cultic as well as personal. The arguments in favor of homosexuality are nothing more than pitiful excuses for a behavior that God hates and will clearly judge. "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 *homosexuals*, nor *sodomites*, nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners will inherit the kingdom of God" (1 Cor. 6:9-10). Homosexuality was condemned by God, centuries before the giving of the law (e.g., Gen. 19). It is explicitly condemned by God's law (Lev. 18:22, 20:13). As will be shown, it is also clearly condemned in the New Testament by the Apostle Paul.

The New Testament

The New Testament agrees with and confirms the Old Testament's condemnation of homosexuality. Could any passage of Scripture be more clear in its condemnation of homosexuality than Paul's statement found in the first chapter of Romans: "Therefore God also gave them up to uncleanness, in the lusts of their hearts, to dishonor their bodies among themselves, who exchanged the truth of God for the lie, and worshiped and served the creature rather than the Creator, who is blessed forever. Amen. For this reason God gave them up to vile passions. For even their women exchanged the natural use for what is against nature. Likewise also the men, leaving the natural use of the woman, burned in their lust for one another, men with men committing what is shameful, and receiving in themselves the penalty of their error which was due. And even as they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, God gave them over to a debased mind, to do those things which are not fitting;...who, knowing the righteous judgment of God, that those who practice such things are deserving of death, not only do the same but also approve of those who practice them" (Rom. 1:24-28, 32).

Apologists for homosexual behavior try to circumvent Romans 1 by claiming that Paul was only condemning homosexual lust and promiscuity not monogamous, loving, homosexual relations. The problem with this pro-homosexual interpretation is that Paul doesn't even hint at such an idea in the text. This idea has to be read into the text because it is clearly not there. Paul was an expert with intricate ethical problems. His condemnation covers all forms of homosexual

behavior: promiscuous, monogamous and otherwise. If homosexuality is allowable under certain conditions, then are lying, murder, slander, and other sins listed by Paul also allowable under certain conditions? Would homosexual apologists also argue that sex with goats and sheep is permitted if the relationship is loving and monogamous?

Other apologists say that Paul was only referring to Greek cultic prostitution. But the text says nothing about Greek cultic prostitution. Paul was focusing on what happens when people push God out of all their thoughts and worship idols. Paul was discussing personal moral behavior. When people abandon God, their personal behavior becomes perverse. If Paul only condemned Greek cultic prostitution, then why did the early church condemn all forms of homosexuality? Why is it that every branch of the Christian church and every Christian denomination have condemned every form of homosexuality for nearly two thousand years? It has only been since the 1970s that homosexuality has begun to receive acceptance in society. It is no accident that the churches which have changed their views are usually part of liberal denominations which reject the divine authority of the Bible. If Christ and the apostles accepted monogamous homosexuality, then why was it universally condemned in the apostolic church?

The Pederasty Theory

The cleverest attempt to repudiate Paul's condemnation of homosexuality is the pederasty theory. This view states that Paul, following Greek culture, was only condemning the sexual and emotional exploitation of young boys by men. This view assumes that Paul was only a product of the pagan, Greek culture of his time. But the Bible clearly teaches that Paul wrote under the supernatural direction of the Holy Spirit (2 Pet. 3:15-16). To understand Paul's worldview, one should not look to pagan Greece or Rome but to the Old Testament, the teachings of Jesus Christ and the other apostles. Paul's condemnation of homosexuality is fully consistent with, and a continuation of, God's law revealed to Moses. Pederasty is wrong and is condemned by God because it is a form, or subset of homosexuality. It is also sinful and evil because it is a form of sex outside the bonds of lawful, monogamous, heterosexual marriage. Homosexuality is wicked, no matter what the age of the participants. The idea that once two males reach the age of 18, God approves of them having oral and anal sex is absurd. Paul condemned such wicked, foolish thinking long ago: "But we know that the law is good if one uses it lawfully, knowing this: that the law is not made for a righteous person, but for the lawless and insubordinate, for the ungodly and for sinners, for the unholy and profane, for murderers of fathers and murderers of mothers, for manslayers, for fornicators, for *sodomites*, for kidnappers, for liars, for perjurers, and if there is any other thing that is contrary to sound doctrine" (1 Tim. 1:8-10).

Act and Orientation

Any discussion of homosexuality would be incomplete without addressing the difference between act and orientation. Many homosexuals will say, "I was born a homosexual—God made me this way; therefore, my thoughts, desires, and lifestyle should not be condemned." If some people are born with a predisposition toward homosexual behavior, does that somehow make their homosexual lusts and behavior acceptable to God? Absolutely not!

The biblical doctrine of original sin teaches that all men are born with a sinful nature or disposition. The first man, Adam, was the covenant head and representative of the whole human

race before God. When Adam sinned, the guilt and pollution of sin passed to the whole human race (Rom. 5:12, 17, 19). Every person (except Jesus Christ who was conceived by the Holy Spirit) is born with a sinful nature. It is wrong to say, "God made me a homosexual (or a liar, or a murderer)," because sin did not originate with God but with man (i.e., our forefather Adam).

The fact that all human beings are born with an orientation (or proclivity) toward sin does not excuse sinful lusts or behavior. The Bible says that all men are born liars (Ps. 58:3). Yet the Bible also says that lying is a sin (Ex. 20:16, Dt.5:20); it further says that liars will not enter the kingdom of God (Rev. 21:27). If some people are born with a proclivity toward theft, homosexuality, murder, bestiality, sadomasochism, mutilation etc., that does not somehow excuse their sinful behavior. The argument that orientation towards homosexuality somehow makes it acceptable to God could be used to excuse all sinful behavior. Such an argument destroys personal responsibility; it renders God's law meaningless and salvation through Jesus Christ unnecessary. All men will be held responsible before God for every sinful thought, word and deed, regardless of one's orientation. Blaming God for one's sinful behavior may make the homosexual feel better, but it will be ineffective on the day of judgment, when all unrepentant homosexuals are cast into hell (1 Cor. 6:9-10, Rev. 21:27). Furthermore the Bible teaches that man cannot blame God for his sinful behavior, because God doesn't tempt man. Man is drawn away by his own lust: "Let no one say when he is tempted, 'I am tempted by God'; for God cannot be tempted by evil, nor does He Himself tempt anyone. But each one is tempted when he is drawn away by his own desires and enticed. Then, when desire has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and sin, when it is full-grown, brings forth death" (Jas. 1:13-15).

Some argue that homosexual acts are indeed immoral, but homosexual feelings and desires for some are inborn and therefore unavoidable and not sinful. The Bible does teach that it is not a sin to be tempted (Christ was tempted, yet He never committed sin, Heb. 2:18). What is sinful is when a person dwells upon that which tempts him, fantasizes and makes plans to engage in that sinful behavior. The Bible clearly teaches that it is not only a sin to commit evil acts, it is also a sin to have immoral desires, lusts and thoughts.

Jesus Christ forbade heterosexual lust in Matthew 5:27-29. Jesus said that when a man looks upon a woman to lust after her, he has committed adultery with her in his heart (Mt. 5:28). The idea of condemning only the outward act but not the inward lust was a doctrine of the Pharisees; Christ strongly condemned such false teaching (Mt. 5:21-22, 15:19-20). The Apostle Paul in forbade ungodly fantasies, lusts, and evil desires (Col. 3:5). Paul said that Christians must sanctify (i.e., make holy) their very thoughts (Phil. 4:8). James said that if desires are not controlled, sin will follow (Jas. 4:1). Inward, homosexual lust is condemned in Romans 1:24, 26, 27. The prophet Isaiah said that repentance must extend to one's "thoughts" as well as to one's "way" (Isa. 55:7). Since the Bible condemns sinful lusts and sinful acts there can be no such thing as a Christian homosexual—or a Christian murderer or a Christian thief. If a homosexual becomes a Christian, he must put away both homosexual acts and thoughts; therefore, when he becomes a Christian, he ceases to be a homosexual. He may still be tempted at times but he refuses to dwell on, fantasize about, and commit such abominable deeds. "Finally, brethren, whatever things are true, whatever things are noble, whatever things are just, whatever things are pure, whatever things are lovely, whatever things are of good report, if there is any virtue and if there is anything praiseworthy; meditate on these things" (Phil. 4:8). "We should not lust after evil things as they also lusted" (1 Cor. 10:6).

Conclusion

The Bible's condemnation of homosexuality is very clear and very strong. God says that homosexuality is an "abomination"; that means that God hates, abhors and thoroughly detests homosexual behavior. The Old Testament teaches that people who are convicted of the crime of engaging in homosexual behavior should be put to death (Lev. 18:22, 20:13). The New Testament is in full agreement: the Apostle Paul says that homosexual behavior is "worthy of death" (Rom. 1:32). This is not the opinion of man but the clear teaching of the Word of God.

The people who claim to be compassionate toward homosexuals by excusing and approving of their perverse behavior are liars and false teachers. Their attempts to reinterpret the Bible to make it accepting of homosexuality are nothing more than pitiful excuses made for those who do not want to repent. They are leading homosexuals down the broad path which leads to destruction (Mt. 7:13). They are the true enemies of the homosexual community.

Your only hope is to accept what God says regarding your sinful behavior. If you are going to repent of your sins and believe in Jesus Christ, you must first be convinced that your behavior is wrong, wicked and deserving of judgment. After Paul says that homosexuals are excluded from God's kingdom he says, "And such were some of you. But you were washed, but you were sanctified, but you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus and by the Spirit of our God" (1 Cor. 6:11). There were Christians in the church at Corinth who rejected their former homosexual lifestyle and were delivered of their sin. They repented and believed in Jesus Christ. Jesus Christ, as He is presented in the Scriptures, is the sinner's only hope of salvation: "Nor is there salvation in any other, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved" (Ac. 4:12). If you believe in Him, all your sins will be forgiven. "If you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus and believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you will be saved. For with the heart one believes unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation. For the Scripture says, 'Whoever believes on Him will not be put to shame'" (Rom. 10:9-11).

Christ's sinless blood removes the guilt and curse of sin. His sinless, perfect life is given as a gift to those who believe in Him. When Christians appear before God on the day of judgment they will be clothed with Christ's perfect righteousness. Believers go to heaven solely because of the merits of Jesus Christ. When Christ rose from the dead on the third day, it proved that His sacrifice was acceptable to God the Father. Christ rose victorious over sin, guilt, death and hell for everyone who places his trust in Him. After His resurrection Christ as the divine-human mediator was made king and Lord over everything in heaven and on earth. "Repent therefore and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, so that times of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord" (Ac. 3:19).

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