

As In The Days Of Lot

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Jesus Christ gave many "indicator markings" to help us to determine when His second coming is near. One of these is mentioned in Luke 17:28-30:

Likewise as it was also in the days of Lot: They ate, they drank, they bought, they sold, they planted, they built; but on the day that Lot went out of Sodom it rained fire and brimstone from heaven and destroyed them all. Even so will it be in the day when the Son of Man is revealed.

Jesus shows us that an indicator of His imminent return is that the society around us will be similar to that of Sodom when Lot lived there nearly four thousand years ago. People will be going about their everyday lives seemingly unconcerned about the egregious evils in society, unaware that their lifestyles are abominable in the eyes of God. Thinking their ways of life are "normal," they will not expect the calamitous events that will befall them.

It is axiomatic that a dominant characteristic of Sodom's culture was rampant homosexuality. English has borrowed the words *sodomy* and *sodomite* to describe homosexuality and those who practice it. When angels came to Lot in the form of human men to inform him that God would overthrow the city, the men of Sodom came to Lot's door, demanding that the visitors come out and have a homosexual relationship with them (Genesis 19:1-5). The angels struck these Sodomites with blindness to drive them away (verse 11).

Most people would look upon such behavior as unthinkable. However, the men of Sodom apparently regarded it as "normal"; they did not view it as evil at all! Today, a similar attitude is slowly and insidiously beginning to work its way into our society. Increasingly, homosexuality is considered to be an ordinary lifestyle. Instead of being viewed as a horrible perversion, homosexuality is more and more being regarded as an "orientation" just as left-handedness is an orientation, for example. As usual, the Western world, composed primarily of the nations that have descended from Israel, is leading the way in this radical change in attitude.

Normal? Neutral?

An article appearing in the January 6-12, 1996, edition of *The Economist* entitled "It's Normal to be Queer" describes the radical changes in attitude toward homosexuals that have occurred worldwide over the last thirty years. As often happens, the changes have occurred gradually, one step at a time. First, many societies decriminalized homosexuality, and people slowly stopped considering it an illness or perversion. This led many to abandon the traditional view that homosexuality is shameful, opening the door to the idea that gays and lesbians are simply a cultural minority—like a racial or ethnic minority. Finally, some cultures are beginning to regard homosexuality as a normal but different lifestyle—simply an "orientation."

In fact, some countries have begun to look upon homosexuality as a harmless, neutral trait that a small percentage of people are born with—like having blue eyes or red hair. As such, it is seen as a characteristic that the individual did not choose and cannot change. These attitudes have led many to

accept the homosexual lifestyle as a distinct but, at the same time, normal, ordinary and harmless condition. The article in *The Economist* describes how people just seem to accept this:

So emerges that rare but proliferating species: the young woman of 20 who realises she is a lesbian but, after a period of adjustment, shrugs her shoulders, informs her family, and plans to get on with an otherwise mundane life. (p. 69)

There are, of course, exceptions to this attitude. Many countries of the Middle East where Islam is the dominant religion still treat homosexuals very harshly. Throughout most of Africa, homosexuality is rarely discussed. Even in the Western world, many homosexuals still have not "come out of the closet." Nevertheless, the changing attitude is unmistakable and is growing in most areas of the world.

Last year the first gay page appeared in a mainstream newspaper in Turkey; an openly homosexual Pakistani poet published what may be the first book of gay verse in Urdu; and Latin America's first gay resort opened in Brazil. In 1995 activists demanded marriage rights in Austria, Brazil, the Czech Republic and New Zealand. Estonia's all-lesbian group started in 1990, Hong Kong's in 1994 (followed by another last year), and Brazil has at least seven. Mexico's homosexual groups number more than a dozen; South Africa's, more than 50. . . . In short, homosexuals are emerging from the closet. And, more interesting still, they are doing it in more or less the whole world at once. (ibid.)

Reasons for Its Acceptance

There are numerous reasons for this radical change in attitudes toward homosexuals. Surprisingly, one reason is directly related to the spread of AIDS: The rising concern around the world about the spread of this deadly disease and efforts to control it forced governments to deal directly with homosexuals. Before long, the governments developed a grudging relationship with predominantly homosexual organizations. This interaction with these organizations legitimized them in the eyes of many people, leading to the development of casual attitudes toward a lifestyle that would otherwise be abhorrent to the majority.

Economics also plays a role. The world in general is becoming more wealthy, and nations that used to be mired in grinding poverty now have citizens who travel and communicate with acquaintances around the world and have degrees from Western educational institutions. This results in adoption of worldly, cosmopolitan attitudes toward life. Western attitudes toward such things as homosexuality have spread swiftly around the globe.

The emergence of democratic forms of government in many nations also contributes to a softening of attitudes toward homosexuality. Under the Franco regime in Spain, homosexuality was a crime. Now that Spain has a democratic government, however, homosexuality has been decriminalized, and about three dozen homosexual groups now operate there. A similar phenomenon is occurring in Eastern Europe where numerous nations have thrown off Soviet communism and adopted more democratic institutions. Since the elimination of apartheid in South Africa, the new government's constitution specifically prohibits discrimination against homosexuals.

The Internet has also assisted in spreading more tolerant attitudes toward gays. Homosexuals used to be limited in the number of other homosexuals with whom they could communicate. Now that has all changed. Numerous gay bulletin boards and electronic addresses on the World Wide Web are specifically designed to aid homosexuals in communicating with one another.

An example of how this contributes to the strength of the gay movement was demonstrated when gay protesters hounded Robert Mugabe, the President of Zimbabwe, on numerous state visits. Last August, President Mugabe stated that homosexuals did not have any rights at all. He threatened homosexuals with arrest and called them "sub-animal." Infuriated, homosexuals around the world kept tabs on Mr. Mugabe's itinerary and ensured that other gays around the world were notified about his state visits. In South Africa in August, New Zealand in November and Holland in December, protesters met him, shouting, "Two, four, six, eight, is Mugabe really straight?"

Gay Marriages

Of all the items on the gay agenda, none is more important than homosexual marriage. Traditionally, marriage is regarded as a mark of stability and normalcy. State-sanctioned marriage does more than legally bind two people together. It confers upon partners unique rights of inheritance, the sharing of economic and medical benefits, and the guardianship and care of one another. Probably no other single "gain" could confer upon gays the attributes of "normalcy" than the right to a civil ceremony legally binding together two people of the same sex in a marriage union. Those behind the gay-rights movement are pressing hard to achieve this.

There is no question that marriage rights for gays are on the horizon; it is only a matter of time. Already, Denmark, Norway and Sweden permit homosexual partners to register with the state and claim some of the prerogatives of marriage. Similar trends are developing in Holland, France and Belgium. In the United States, the state of Hawaii may legalize homosexual marriage based on the outcome of a recent court case.

Andrew Sullivan recently wrote a book entitled *Virtually Normal: An Argument About Homosexuality*. A review, also published in *The Economist*, clearly outlines the author's conclusions:

The core conclusion of the book is simple enough. All discrimination against homosexuals by the state should end: meaning in particular that open homosexuals should be allowed into the armed forces, and that they should be allowed a civil ceremony of marriage. Mr. Sullivan reasons that when homosexuals are revealed as deeply traditional, patriotic and indeed conservative, there is no reason why society should not embrace them as different but valued parts of the whole. Homosexuals (being largely free of the distraction of children, which fetter heterosexuals) *can become the movers and shakers, the volunteers, the inspiring teachers: as, indeed, many are already.* (ibid., p. 71. Emphasis ours.)

Here we see an avowed homosexual telling us that, once the state eliminates all discrimination against gays, and once they obtain the right to marry openly and bear arms, they can then become the leaders and molders of society! Clearly, this is the direction this world is headed.

God's View

Many would undoubtedly applaud this push to bring homosexuals out of the closet and allow them to practice their lifestyle openly with the same rights as "straight" people. Many would argue that this is an "enlightened" and "progressive" movement that all decent human beings should advocate. But what does God say about this? How does He see and regard homosexuality? Does God advocate gay rights?

God sees things quite differently than most people in this world. He clearly states that homosexuality is wrong (Leviticus 18:22); it is an **abomination** of which people must repent! In no uncertain terms, He decrees that *homosexuals will NOT inherit the Kingdom of God* (I Corinthians 6:9).

Many thousands of years ago, God knew that this type of movement would occur in the end time among His people, the modern-day descendants of Israel. Through the prophet Isaiah, God thunders a warning to His people today, calling them by a name that unmistakably brands them with the sin of homosexuality: "Hear the word of the LORD, you rulers of Sodom; give ear to the law of our God, you people of Gomorrah" (Isaiah 1:10). God prophesies as to where this open acceptance of the homosexual lifestyle would lead:

For Jerusalem stumbled, and Judah is fallen, because their tongue and their doings are against the LORD, to provoke the eyes of His glory. The look on their countenance witnesses against them, and *they declare their sin as Sodom; they do not hide it*. Woe to their soul! For they have brought evil upon themselves. (Isaiah 3:8-9)

God reveals that when His people accept the attitude that homosexuality is "normal," they have begun to tread the path that will ultimately lead to their destruction.

As we see the same conditions that existed "in the days of Lot" developing today, we can take comfort that the glorious second coming of Jesus Christ is drawing near. When He comes, He will make the Spirit of God available to all (Joel 2:28-32), and homosexuals will be taught that they can repent and change. Jesus is described "like a refiner's fire and like fuller's soap. He will sit as a refiner and a purifier of silver" (Malachi 3:2-3). He will cleanse the earth from all unrighteousness and perversion, and show all people how to live the way that leads to peace, happiness and joy. Then—and only then—will the homosexual lifestyle be eradicated from the earth forever.