

Homosexual Marriage?

What the Bible Says

Richard T. Ritenbaugh

Given 30-Aug-03; Sermon #628

On August 13, 2003, conservative columnist, Kathleen Parker wrote an opinion piece that appeared in the townhall.com website. The piece is called, "Just Because You are Heterosexual Does Not Mean You are Wrong." I would like to read a few isolated excerpts.

She writes:

Our either/or cultural template has come to an unattractive head during the recent "Gay Moment," as these days are being dubbed.

Of course we have already named it. We can't just let an epoch or a decade or a moment slip by without a title. A label. A category.

Labeling, in fact, is one of our favorite things in compulsive, either/or America. As in, you're either for us or against us. you're either from Mars or from Venus. You're either pro gay-marriage, or you're a right-wing, fascist, dogmatic homophobe.

Well, no, not really. Sometimes you're not a homophobe, you may not be a homophile either. Sometimes you're not from Mars or from Venus. Sometimes you're from Earth, and, boy, is it lonely down here.

And, boy, things sure do change fast. . .

In a matter of weeks—mere nanoseconds if you are a millennium-gazer—we have passed from decriminalizing sodomy to ratifying a gay Episcopal bishop to seriously pondering homosexual marriage.

Now she certainly is right about the break-neck speed of the homosexual agenda over the past few months.

Not long ago, the news was full of the Vermont homosexual civil-union news. And now, the whole nation of Canada, and the state of Massachusetts are going the way of several northwest European nations—meaning that they are on the verge of legalizing

the oxymoronic "gay-marriage."

Recently, there have been rumblings of bills in state legislatures that would reciprocally recognize Vermont's civil unions. Meaning, that if a homosexual couple goes up to Vermont and has a "legal gay union" performed there, then the other states would have to honor it, and give them all the benefits and recognition in terms of the Vermont legislation.

There are even rumblings from the Supreme Court that they will mandate these reciprocal agreements across the nation. Strictly, and constitutionally, they cannot do that. But the courts have been meddling in making law rather than just interpreting law for quite a few years now. Do not be surprised if it happens.

But how can only two percent of the population hold sway over a country of three hundred million people? Meaning, how can six million people lead the rest of us around by the nose through this legislation, and cultural thinking?

Polls show—you have probably heard them—that over fifty percent of Americans disapprove of both civil unions and the so-called "gay marriage." Yet, evidently, enough people among the straight ninety-eight percent in this nation are simply caving in to pressure to appear tolerant, or politically correct, or even to appear hip-with-it-progressive.

I would like to read another bit of an article. This one is from a former presidential candidate, Pat Buchanan. He also writes for townhall.com. And, on August 10, he had an editorial called, "Yes Virginia! There is a Religious War!"

He writes:

He may be beloved of progressives everywhere, but the Rev. [and I will put that in quotes] V. Gene Robinson, now bishop-elect of the Episcopal Church of New Hampshire, is a flaming fraud.

Insensitive, you say? Consider his conduct. Fifteen years ago, Robinson dissolved his marriage, dumped his wife, abandoned his two little girls and went off to shack up. He thus violated his marriage vows, flouted the teachings of the Anglican faith he was ordained to uphold and entered into a sinful liaison his church has always taught was perverted.

Having failed to conform his life to scriptural command, Robinson now

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demands that Scripture be reinterpreted to conform to his deviant life style. .

Now, with massive moral arrogance, Robinson protests that if the Episcopal faithful do not accept him as a consecrated bishop, they—not he—will have broken communion and be responsible for dividing the church.

Faithless to every vow he ever made, this impious cleric now proclaims undying faith to boyfriend Mark Andrew. . .

Robinson is being portrayed in the prestige press as a man of moral courage. But a man of moral courage would have stayed with his family, kept his vows, and fought his temptations.

Robinson ditched his family, dishonored his vows and disgraced himself. He should have been defrocked and excommunicated, not elevated to bishop.

As for the Episcopal faithful, they have little choice but to break communion. For if Robinson is morally qualified to be bishop, then Scripture is wrong. If Scripture is right, Robinson is a reprobate. You cannot teach it both ways. Either homosexual acts are immoral or the Episcopal Church has been teaching homophobia 600 years.

To witness the moral confusion at the Minneapolis convention of the American Episcopal Church is to understand which way the wind is blowing. Gay rights has become the civil rights cause du jour of our cultural elite, and politicians—those most reliable of weather vanes—are signaling recognition of the new correlation of forces. . .

But it does reveal a painful truth. America is again a house divided. The "don't ask, don't tell" moral community in which we grew up has dissolved irrevocably. Christianity, dying in Europe, is under siege in America. A paganism that holds homosexual unions to be "sacramental"—the Rev. Robinson's term—is ascending.

The sad sundered Episcopal Church is a mirror for America.

The church of God is definitely against homosexual marriage. In the spirit of being ready always to give an answer to every man that asks you (I Peter 3:15) we will see from the

Bible what the Christian view of this matter should be.

First, we need to conduct a biblical survey of what God says about homosexuality itself, and establish that as the baseline.

This is an obvious starting point especially since the Bible says nothing specific about homosexuals marrying. That should give us a clue. This in itself should tell us a great deal about God's perspective on this subject. The idea of homosexual marriage is so perverse that He did not even contemplate it—and, neither should we as an individual, or a society, or as a nation.

But we are being dragged (hopefully kicking and screaming) into this by maybe only six million people. They will tell you that they have thirty million, or about ten percent of the population. Do not let them fool you. The best surveys that have ever been done have only come up with at most three percent. And it is more like two percent.

Everything in this argument—this conflict, this debate—is being exaggerated. It is hard to see any truth coming out their side.

If you hear these debates, or read things in the paper, be aware that they are not above the fray in any way. They will shoot as low as they can to get their agenda across.

David Grabbe and I read the news every day. We see things like this all of the time coming across the various news wires, and newspapers, and journals that we happen to look into. There is always this pushing, pushing, pushing the envelope to make us think that it is more normal than it actually is.

We need to be armed with the truth from the Bible so we can combat this, and know, and be able to answer if we should happen to be dragged into this debate. If for nothing else, it is so that we know where we stand ourselves. In Genesis 13, we come across the first mention of sodomy.

We can assume—probably a pretty safe assumption at that—that homosexuality has been around since before the Flood. I do not think that any of us would dispute that, even though the Bible does not specifically say that it was. But if we were to go back to Genesis 6, we would see in verse 5 that, "Every intent of the thoughts of men's hearts were evil continually." That tells me that the whole gamut of sin was contemplated and practiced before the Flood. There was no repentance, and no change. And so God decided that He would give man 120 years (while the ark was being built), and then that would be the end of it, and He would save Noah and his family out of it.

It also says there in Genesis 6:12 that all flesh had corrupted their way on the earth. The word "corrupted" there can contain any kind of conceivable perversity, any kind of sin imaginable.

I am not saying that Genesis 13 is the first occasion of homosexuality, but rather the first recorded occasion in the Bible. This is the situation where Abraham and Lot go their separate ways. And Abraham allows Lot to choose. Lot chooses to go down into the very well-watered plain where the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah, and several others were. This is an editorial comment made by Moses under the inspiration of God.

Genesis 13:13 But the men of Sodom were exceedingly wicked and sinful against the LOORD.

Now, I do not know if you have heard of this before, but there is a rule called, "The Law of First Mention." This rule, or law says, "The first instance in which a subject is commented upon in the Bible sets the tone for the rest of the scriptural teaching on it."

There is one example that comes to mind found in Genesis 2:23-24, the first mention of marriage. That sets the tone for the rest of the Bible's teaching on marriage. This is the first time that the marriage covenant is mentioned. And the whole Bible pretty much follows the line that is given there in Genesis 2:23-24.

The same thing happens here in Genesis 13:13. Notice what it said. "It (Sodom) is exceedingly wicked, and sinful." That is bad. That is really bad. It is not just iniquitous, or just a transgression, but it is exceedingly wicked and sinful.

And then, it does not say, "against the body," or "against other men," or "against one's wife, or one's parents, or one's children," but it says that this sin is exceedingly wicked and sinful against God Himself.

Let us think about this a minute.

Homosexuality is a sin directly against God. It is not simply a lifestyle choice. It is not a private matter that does not hurt anybody else. Let us put down a few reasons why that it is so exceedingly wicked and sinful.

First of all, homosexuality breaks God's seventh commandment against sexual activity outside the bonds of marriage.

The second is that homosexuality flouts God's creation of mankind as male and female. And were we to go back to Genesis 1, we would see (and we will see this later on) that the first commandment that He gave to Adam and Eve, as recorded in Scripture is, "Be fruitful, and multiply."

And so He has made man male and female for the primary reason of producing seed—producing more people—adding, therefore, to the potential Sons of God.

The third is that homosexuality perverts the natural use of the human body. I do not want to go into this. But God made things a certain way to work a certain way. Homosexuality perverts that extremely. We will also see this "natural use" comes back in the New Testament.

But the most damaging of the reasons why homosexuality is against God Himself is that it distorts, and ultimately destroys the person from having a proper relationship with God their Creator.

Think about this for a moment.

Take a homosexual man. (Men are homosexual more often than women.) They think of other men in sexual terms. You do not have to think very long in terms of thinking of God as a Father—a male figure, which is primarily the way that He has chosen to reveal Himself to us.

You can see quickly how homosexuality can distort this man's image of God, as well as his potential Older Brother, Jesus Christ—Someone more on an "equal" plane as a brother than as a Father.

You can see how this lifestyle can distort his understanding of Jesus Christ. It would work the same way for lesbians, but I do not think that I need to go any further for you to understand how it would distort things.

Homosexuals eventually get things all backwards. Everything is turned around and twisted. Homosexuality distorts what a person understands about men and masculinity, women and femininity, and the God who created them male and female, and His divinity.

When one is steeped in sin as vile as this, it twists one's understanding of right and wrong. You cannot dispute otherwise. It makes understanding God's mind, and thus His way, nearly impossible if everything is twisted and backward.

A homosexual Christian, if we would use that term, is a most vile and twisted phrase. They are two words that do not go together at all. A person cannot be a homosexual and a Christian (at the same time).

A Christian is by definition a follower of Christ, and there is no taint of sin, or perversion, in Him. Now a person can be a former homosexual, and a Christian. But just like everything else, any other sin—adultery, murder, theft, coveting, idolatry, parent non-respecter, Sabbath breaker, you name it—must be repented of.

We must repent, and change our sinful ways before becoming a Christian. If a homosexual wishes to become a Christian, he must repent of his perversion, and live as God had created him to live, and not in a twisted and perverted manner.

I know that this is easier said than done. I hear every once in a while on the radio of a person who has done this, and joined mainstream Christianity. And when they tell their story, one of the things that comes to the surface is how difficult it is to change from this lifestyle, because it becomes ingrained.

A lot of the times, it started while they were very young when they were abused when they were children. Their minds have become trained to think in this perverted way. And, trying to come out of it and change, and have a straight mind, to have a more pure mind, is wrenching and difficult.

It is easier said than done. But frankly, those are the rules that the Bible has set down for it.

We will go across a scripture in the New Testament where Paul basically echoes this, saying that these people cannot be in the Kingdom of God. But he also says, "But thus were some of you," meaning that it can be done. It can only be done in the way that the Bible sets out that we recognize our sins, repent of them, and turn away from them totally, and live God's way of life.

I heard on the radio not too long ago, a talk-show host who had one of these people on—a reformed homosexual. And the guest was railing on the host (who was a fundamentalist Christian) because he sees a certain hypocrisy in the Christian churches who take a determined stand against homosexuality, but then they will leave adulterers and what-not in their midst.

Well, the simple answer is the other should not be tolerated either. The adulterers should not be allowed to continue their practice, just like the homosexuals should not be

allowed to continue their practice within the church.

We have a whole book of the Bible—two actually—that talk about a perverse situation, in this case, incest, where Paul did not let it happen within the confines of the church. He told those people in Corinth to get rid those people, and put the man out. And so, they did.

Later, he came back. Paul told them to extend love to him because the man had repented. That is the formula. It does not matter what the sin is—especially sins involving open relationships between men and women—things that are very apparent and out in the open have to be dealt with.

As we will see later, these things do not just affect those primarily involved. They reach out and pull other people into the web.

Let us continue our survey of homosexuality in the Old Testament, in Genesis 19. This is the description, or a sample, of the perversions going on in Sodom. Verse 1 takes place just after Abraham made the dinner for the angels, and Christ; and Christ had sent the two angels on to destroy Sodom.

Genesis 19:1-3 Now the two angels came to Sodom in the evening, and Lot was sitting in the gate of Sodom. When Lot saw them, he rose to meet them, and he bowed himself with his face toward the ground. And he said, "Here now, my lords, please turn in to your servant's house and spend the night, and wash your feet; then you may rise early and go on your way." And they said, "No, but we will spend the night in the open square." But he insisted strongly; so they turned in to him and entered his house. Then he made them a feast, and baked unleavened bread, and they ate.

This is an interesting side note because Lot does similarly what Abraham had done previously in chapter 18, just not to the same extent. He fed them like Abraham did. He was hospitable. Also the mention of unleavened bread too, which always brings up the symbol of Passover, and the sinless life. So, as it says later in the New Testament, he is "righteous Lot."

Genesis 19:4 Now before they lay down, the men of the city, the men of Sodom, both old and young, all the people from every quarter, surrounded the house.

Remember, think back to the previous chapter where Abraham had asked Christ if He would not destroy the city if there were 50 righteous people, then 40, 30, 10, 5. God said, "Fine."

So, in verse 4 we see just how pervasive this perversion was throughout the city of Sodom.

Genesis 19:4-5 . . . the men of the city, the men of Sodom, both old and young, all the people from every quarter, surrounded the house. And they called to Lot and said to him, "Where are the men who came to you tonight? Bring them out to us that we may know them carnally."

We do not have to go any further on that. Verse 12. After the angels, or "men" handle the situation,

Genesis 19:12-13 Then the men [angels] said to Lot, "Have you anyone else here? Son-in-law, your sons, your daughters, and whomever you have in the city—take them out of this place! For we will destroy this place, because the outcry against them has grown great before the face of the LOORD, and the LOORD has sent us to destroy it."

This is an echo of Genesis 13:13 where it said that this sin is exceedingly wicked and sinful against the Lord. It had come before God's face, and He was determined to destroy it. In verse 23, they had gone out, and sent Lot to Zoar:

Genesis 19:23-25 The sun had risen upon the earth when Lot entered Zoar. Then the LOORD rained brimstone and fire on Sodom and Gomorrah, from the LOORD out of the heavens. [He took care of it directly Himself.] So He overthrew those cities, all the plain, all the inhabitants of the cities, and what grew on the ground.

God determined that because this sin was so pervasive in that area, He not only had to destroy the city, but He had to destroy the countryside, and everything that grew on the ground in it. He needed to wipe the slate clean.

You almost get the sense that the whole place was just stinking with this perversion,

and He wanted to remove the scent—just totally remove it.

It is funny using those terms. He did it with fire, and brimstone, which has a sulfurous odor. God would rather smell that than what came up to His nostrils from their sin. God clearly links these particular sins—these perversions—with His wrathful and just punishment.

If we were to read on, we would see how this perverse atmosphere influenced Lot's daughters in what they did. They seemed to have no compunction about committing incest. That was the first thing they thought of. They did think that the whole world had ended. Obviously, that would be probably what one might think of in that situation, but there appears to be no shame. I do not know. Maybe I am just reading it that way.

But Lot's daughters did do that to their own father immediately afterwards. They had been steeped in the society. They did not have any other way to think. They knew no other way to think. As I said before, this is not a private matter. It does affect other people.

Let us go on to Leviticus 18. This is part of the Holiness Code. If you will remember, a few years back, I gave a sermon on the Holiness Code. This is right at the beginning of the Code. Leviticus 18 gives laws on sexual morality. The first one we are going to pick up is in verse 22. Notice the wording here:

Leviticus 18:22 You shall not lie with a male as with a woman. It is an abomination.

In other words, we see the same condemnation as in Genesis 13:13.

Leviticus 20:13 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.

This is a little stronger. This is the penalty phase of the Holiness Code. And, God pronounces death for homosexuals. Both participants, notice, because in most homosexual relationships, there is a dominant, and a submissive. We will see that in the New Testament as well. God covers the bases here.

Even if one is forced into the act, God says it is an abomination, and both of them

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should die. (A merciful exception could be made in instances of rape, especially if the victim were a minor, using the principle found in Deuteronomy 22:25-27).

You have to understand God's thinking here. This is the Holiness Code. This was the standard that God had set for Israel. Obviously we do not have those sorts of authorities now because this was for the nation of Israel. But it certainly falls in line with everything else that God has said about this sin. God takes the strongest measures against this, because there is a perversion beyond the perversion.

There is a perversion beyond the physical act. Like I said earlier, it twists the mind, and it radiates out to others, and He wants it stamped out from among His people because He values their purity. He does not want this to get in the way.

If you have ever read anything like Edward Gibbons, or some of the others who have written about empires and great nations throughout the world, they almost invariably mention homosexuality as a part—not the whole reason, but a part—of the decline and fall of nations. It always seems that after a golden age a period of decline sets in, and causes the nation to fall.

I think we are seeing that in the nations of Israel. It is very interesting to notice (if you ever care to check this out) that the leading nations who are ratifying laws making homosexual activities a "normal" practice within those nations are almost exclusively Israelitish. It is being led by Belgium, Holland, and some of the Scandinavian countries. Canada, Britain, and America are not that far behind. Sad, but true.

Let us go on to Deuteronomy 23, within the second giving of the law. God has Moses repeat this just to make sure that the people of the next generation understood the same things. This time He puts it in terms of ritual prostitution—ritual perversion.

Deuteronomy 23:17 There shall be no ritual harlot of the daughters of Israel, or a perverted one of the sons of Israel.

This is an interesting term, "perverted one." You will begin to understand how the Hebrews think here. "Perverted one" is the Hebrew word *qedeshah*. It is the feminine form of *qedesh*. It is interesting that *qedesh*, which is a cognate word, is "holy." So, *qedesh*, and *qedeshah*, has this idea of holiness in it. But it came to be used for ritual harlotry, and ritual homosexuality. And, even though speaking of men doing this, they used the feminine form of the word. It is kind of interesting that in speaking of male prostitutes, they use the feminine form.

The New Testament has a form of this. It is in Revelation 22. John writes:

Revelation 22:15 But outside are dogs and sorcerers and sexually immoral and murderers and idolaters, and whoever loves and practices a lie.

These are people who will not be accepted into God's Kingdom. The word, "dog," is the one. In the Greek, *kinaidos*, and it literally means a dog. But it is actually the Greek form of this same Hebrew word, *qedeshah*. It is a ritual homosexual prostitute.

Sick, is it not, that these things have to be mentioned? But these are outside the gates of New Jerusalem, and are prohibited from entering the Kingdom.

Let us continue in our survey of the Old Testament in Judges 19:22-23. It is very interesting here that, in this case, almost the exact same thing happened as in Sodom. A man was traveling, and came to the city of Gibeah, and he was going to stay in the town square, but a man invited him into his home. And so, he went with him. But the men of the city came, knocked on the door, and asked for the traveler. The man of the home says, "No." The traveler says, "I will give you my concubine," which he did.

Judges 19:22-24 As they were enjoying themselves [the traveler, and his host], suddenly certain men of the city, perverted men, surrounded the house and beat on the door. They spoke to the master of the house, the old man, saying, "Bring out the man who came to your house, that we may know him carnally!" But the man, the master of the house, went out to them and said to them, "No, my brethren! I beg you, do not act so wickedly! Seeing this man has come into my house, do not commit this outrage. "Look, *here* is my virgin daughter and the man's concubine; let me bring them out now. Humble them, and do with them as you please; but to this man do not do such a vile thing!" But the men would not heed him. So the man took his concubine and brought her out to them.

And it goes on. When he gets back, they had killed the woman. So, he took her body, (and this is sick, but he had to somehow wake up the people of Israel to what was happening) and cut it up into twelve pieces, and sent them to the twelve tribes, and sent the message along with it, "Look at what is happening in Israel!"

Do you know, that because of this episode, because of this perversion, civil war broke out in Israel—all of the twelve tribes, versus Benjamin. It was the Benjamites who held

the city of Gibeah. Do you know that from that civil war, 65,100 and more people died. What is interesting is that most of them were from the other twelve tribes, which tells me that God allowed this to happen because it was not just a sin of Benjamin. But this perversion was throughout Israel. God allowed 22,000 to die here, and 25,000 to die there, and 18,000 someplace else, and suddenly you had 65,100 men dead. And the tribe of Benjamin was decimated to about 600 men.

And then, the Bible does not give these figures, but the tribes of Israel got together, and said, "Didn't anybody come up to fight with us?" They then counted noses, and found that the city of Jabesh-gilead had not sent any men out of Manasseh. And so they went up and they conquered Jabesh-gilead, and who knows how many people died there; women, children, men. The figure is not given. And it all started with a perverse, homosexual act.

This begins to show you what I have been saying all along, that this perversion is not something that is a private matter, one's mere lifestyle choice. But it radiates out and affects others. That is why God says that when certain things like this happen, eventually the land vomits them out. That is the way that the law of God works.

Let us go now to I Kings 14. I want to show you a few examples of the way the kings dealt with this, or failed to deal with it. First, we will go to Rehoboam, son of Solomon. He is well known for being the king that lost Israel (the northern 10 tribes). Israel decided to bug out because Rehoboam would not lower their taxes, and would not decrease their work that Solomon had put on them.

I Kings 14:24 And there were also perverted persons in the land [this is that same *gedeshim*, plural form]. They did according to all the abominations of the nations which the LORD had cast out before the children of Israel.

What did Rehoboam do? Nothing! Here in I Kings 15:12, Asa, his grandson is king now.

I Kings 15:12 And he banished the perverted persons from the land, and removed all the idols that his fathers had made.

He tried to make up for their lack during his reign. I Kings 22 is about Jehoshaphat.

I Kings 22:46 And the rest of the perverted persons, who remained in the days of his father Asa, he banished from the land.

So, Asa started it, and Jehoshaphat finished it. Got rid of them all.

Let us go to II Kings 23 and we will see the best example of all—one of my favorite biblical characters. This is the reign of Josiah when he is restoring true worship back to Judah.

If we would go through, we would see all the things that he started to do. He was not very old at this point. I think he was probably in his late teens, or early twenties. I would need to go back and look to see exactly when he started doing this. He may have been sixteen.

II Kings 23:7 Then he tore down the ritual booths of the perverted persons that were in the house of the LORD, where the women wove hangings for the wooden image.

Again, this is *qedeshim*. It had gotten so bad through the reigns of Manasseh, and Amon (Josiah's father) that these people had moved into the Temple itself. It was not enough that they had their own place, but they also went into the house of the Lord, and put up their booths.

And Josiah, in a kind of precursor to what Jesus would do, went into the Temple, and cleared these perverse people out. Josiah was quite a man.

So, we have one bad, and three good examples of kings who took care of this problem. And it could happen again today, but there is no one who is strong enough and no one with enough stature to do such a thing, unfortunately.

So, in the Old Testament in our survey, there is not one positive example of homosexuality. This was it. I gave them all to you—every example that is there. But what does the New Testament have to say?

You know, it is almost humorous to see some Christians attempt to rationalize homosexuality out of the New Testament. But they do. They try.

One Episcopalian priest, whose words I read in the paper, said basically that since Jesus did not specifically forbid it, one can ignore what Paul said about it, as it was just his opinion, meaning, "Jesus, good; Paul, bad."

Did you ever notice Paul always gets blasted upside the head by liberals? Paul was very pointed, very straight with these people. He told it like it was. And so, feminists do not like him. And certainly homosexuals do not like him. Paul was just too *in-your-face* for them. They would rather rely on Jesus, who in these particular cases did not come up against it quite as strongly. I know that Jesus does. They just choose to ignore it.

Let us start in Romans 1. I should mention that Paul's letters are just as valid a part of the canon as the gospels. And so it does not matter whether Paul says it, or Peter, or James, or John, or any of the other writers. If it is in the Book, it is in the Book.

This is probably the most famous of the homosexual references. Romans 1:24 is talking about how the people of this world have pushed God aside and decided to worship their own gods. Paul writes:

Romans 1:24-32 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; being filled with all unrighteousness, sexual immorality, wickedness, covetousness, maliciousness; full of envy, murder, strife, deceit, evil-mindedness; they are whisperers, backbiters, haters of God, violent, proud, boasters, inventors of evil things, disobedient to parents, undiscerning, untrustworthy, unloving, unforgiving, unmerciful; 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.

This is very clear. We do not need an interpretation of this. As I said, Paul lays these things out quite directly. I am going to pick certain words out that he uses to describe homosexuality, and it echoes Leviticus, and Deuteronomy, and Genesis, and Judges, and all the other places that we just read in the Old Testament. Homosexuality is unclean, dishonorable, vile, unnatural, lustful, shameful, an error, debased, and unfitting.

Can you find any way that you can guide your knife in there and open up a chink in the armor? I think that he covered all the bases. He adds, like Leviticus, that those who practice this sin are worthy of death. He mentions that in verse 32.

He also alludes to it in verse 27, where it says there "They received in themselves the penalty of their error which was due." This is a New Testament echo of various venereal diseases. We have one going around the world right now killing hundreds of thousands, if not millions. It is called AIDS. It can be directly traced back to homosexual practices. "They received in themselves what they are due." And their due as Leviticus 20:13 says, is death.

It says here that they get what they deserve. Then Paul mentions in verse 32 that not only those who practice it are worthy of death, but also those who approve of it. So, this not only brings in the practitioners of it, but also the facilitators. It is not very pretty.

So, Paul pulls no punches. It is wrong. And, that is the New Testament's clear condemnation of it, in a long form. But he does not stop there, of course. He has to mention it again just to drive the point home. Please turn to I Corinthians 6 where he mentions it again.

I Corinthians 6:9-11 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. 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.

So, what does he tell us here? First of all, I want to mention that he sorts out homosexuals and sodomites. If we were to get a more literal or descriptive translation, the word "homosexual" there in verse 9 should be more correctly "catamite." Remember before that I mentioned the submissive, and the dominant? The catamite is the submissive. Usually, a catamite is a boy. You probably have heard of NAMBLA, that perverted North American Man/Boy Love Association. That is what is being talked about here in verse 9—pederasty.

The same thing that those Catholic priests around the country have been caught doing, and bringing shame to the Catholic church. Sodomites here are the dominant of the two. Like I said, it is really sad, really sickening to even have to think about these things. But

God certainly covers all the bases.

But I just want to mention here that if you read this whole passage, as we have just done, you will notice that Paul mentions all of these sins in one breath, you might say. He puts them all together. I do not know if there is necessarily a ranking at all. But it goes all the way from fornication down through revilers, and extortioners. Meaning that sin is sin. There are, of course, gradations of sin and how they affect other people, but as mentioned earlier, he is not hypocritical like some of the churches are. All of these types of sinners will not be in God's Kingdom.

Just like all of these types of sinners should not be fellowshiping with the church. But then he gives hope at the end of it, because he says that such were some of you, but you have been cleansed of this. There is a way out. It may not be easy. But it can be done. It happened in the Corinthian church. And it can happen now.

How we would deal with that would be a whole different matter, I mean individually. Maybe knowing some of these things and having judgment impaired by our knowledge, and our feelings, and lack of mercy, or what-not, but it can be done.

It is so rare, that I, myself, know no examples of it personally. But it can be done. I have heard of other ministers having some success with it. But like I said, it would not be easy. Let us go on to the final New Testament mention of this in I Timothy 1, verse 8. This is another example from Paul.

I Timothy 1:8-11 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, according to the glorious gospel of the blessed God which was committed to my trust.

What is Paul saying here? First of all, let us notice that sodomites are listed among the lawless, the ungodly, the sinners, the unholy, and the profane. Once again, Paul puts up a pretty good defense.

Notice that he said in his own particular way that sodomy, along with all these other sins, is contrary to the glorious gospel of the blessed God. Let that sink in for a minute.

Who came into Galilee preaching the Gospel of the Kingdom of God? Jesus Christ of course! So, whose gospel was Paul preaching? Jesus Christ's gospel! And what was part of that glorious gospel? That all these things that he had just listed are against God's law. He is basically saying that Jesus Christ says sodomy is against the law, and worthy of death, just as He said back in the Old Testament. He is the same God, yesterday, today, and forever. He changes not.

So, even though in the gospels themselves, Jesus did not mention these sins, He still mentioned them because it is part of the gospel. Paul confirms that Jesus is indeed against this perverse and horrible practice.

I am tired of feeling dirty. Just talking about this does not sit well with me. So, I want to go on to something more positive, what God says about marriage, and its use.

Let us go back to Genesis 1. Here in the Bible's first chapter, God establishes several things. I will read this, and then we will see exactly what He established.

Genesis 1:26-28 Then God said, "Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness; let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the air, and over the cattle, over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth." So God created man in His own image; in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them. Then God blessed them, and God said to them, "Be fruitful and multiply; fill the earth and subdue it; have dominion over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the air, and over every living thing that moves on the earth."

Genesis 1:31 Then God saw everything that He had made, and indeed it was very good.

The first chapter of the Bible God sets out a few very clear points. First, He establishes that He created mankind. Secondly, His template for humanity was Himself. He created them, as Mr. Armstrong used to say, after the God-kind—in His own image, and likeness.

It is also set out here that man is naturally by creation of two sexes, male and female. He did this purposefully, and in doing so in establishing these things it was very good. This was the way that He wanted it to be.

This is another one of those first mentions, as I said before. God places man in a league of his own. That is, a little lower than the angels, but significantly higher than the animal kind. He was made with the potential of being part of the God-kind.

We are in His image and likeness already.

It shows that God in His wisdom put His likeness between the two sexes. God, Himself, has certain qualities that men seem to have predominately, and women have certain qualities of God that they have predominately that men do not.

I am not saying that this is necessarily physically speaking, but certainly in terms of what He is, He splits mankind to be like Him, both male and female, with their differing qualities and characteristics.

The primary reason that He made us different physically is for reproduction, because, as I mentioned, the first command that He gives here in verse 28 is be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth and subdue it. He wanted many sons and daughters. He wanted mankind to build a society that would bring Him glory. And so, this was the first thing that He said to them, at least as mentioned in the Bible.

So, for homosexuals, this is impossible. We see that a union of man and another man, or a woman and another woman, cannot fulfill God's first directive to mankind. Immediately we see that God has set everything up to oppose any sort of homosexuality. This is how it was in the beginning.

Let us go on to Genesis 2, starting in verse 18. This is the second telling of the creation. It is from a little bit different perspective.

Genesis 2:18-20 And the LORD God said, "It is not good that man should be alone; I will make him a helper comparable to him." Out of the ground the LORD God formed every beast of the field and every bird of the air, and brought them to Adam to see what he would call them. And whatever Adam called each living creature, that was its name. So Adam gave names to all cattle, to the birds of the air, and to every beast of the field. But for Adam there was not found a helper comparable to him.

It did not fit (yet) the parameters that God set out.

Genesis 2:21-25 And the LORD God caused a deep sleep to fall on Adam,

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and he slept; and He took one of his ribs, and closed up the flesh in its place. Then the rib which the LOORD God had taken from man He made into a woman, and He brought her to the man. And Adam said: "This is now bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh; she shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of Man." Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and they shall become one flesh. And they were both naked, the man and his wife, and were not ashamed.

This is a re-telling of this part of the creation week, and the emphasis throughout most of this, at least the first half, is that Adam was incompatible with everything else on the earth except Eve. But at that point she was not even created yet. There was nothing on the earth even like him (this is stretching it) that was compatible. It had to be a woman.

Adam went through all these animals, gave them names, and looked them over, and saw that none of them fit the bill. God stepped in and showed him just what, or who is compatible with him—with a man.

So, God set up the parameters of marriage right here, especially there in verse 24, a man is to leave his parents, and become joined—or cleave to, or adhere—to a woman, his wife. Verse 25, then explains that any kind of sexual union outside of this particular way or method is shameful.

They were both naked, the man and his wife, and there was no shame. But any other sort of union would be shameful. So, you go to any passage in the Bible on marriage, and it will support this concept of one man and one woman.

Now, there are times in the Bible where polygamy comes in, but I do not want to get into that. But even so, in that case there is one man, and certain women, but at least it does not fall to the basement of being one man and another man. In every case where marriage is contemplated it is a man and a woman (or in certain cases multiple women). We would see that God does not look very highly on polygamy either by the time that everything is said and done. The one man, one woman idea is pretty much set in stone.

He allowed it because of the hardness of their heart, ignorance, and other things, but from the beginning it was not so. And, even in the places where He allowed it, it did not turn out very well. It created problems—jealousies in the case of Jacob, leading to favorites, and, well, you know the story. Abraham too, with wives, and concubines, and nothing but problems.

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And so, you come away from reading the Bible seeing that God supports the one man/one woman marriage. A man (singular) shall leave his father and mother, and be joined to his wife (singular). That is the way that it was at the beginning.

So, let us go to one more place on this, and then we will close with another scripture.

I want you to see that Jesus Himself validates this during His ministry. This is the famous passage on divorce but we do not need to get into the divorce area. I just want you to see what He says about marriage. You will see that He goes straight back to Genesis 1 and 2.

Matthew 19:3-5 The Pharisees also came to Him, testing Him, and saying to Him, "Is it lawful for a man to divorce his wife for just any reason?" And He answered and said to them, "Have you not read that He who made them at the beginning 'made them male and female,' and said, 'For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh'?"

Look in your margin. See where He got those scriptures? You see that there is Genesis 1:27 and 2:24.

Matthew 19:6 So then, they are no longer two but one flesh. Therefore what God has joined together, let not man separate."

Or, we could say, "What God sanctified—which is the marriage of one man, and one woman—let us not try anything else." This is the way that works.

So, anybody who says that Jesus never mentioned this topic and thus assumes that "homosexual marriage" is fair game, is just not correct. Jesus did not talk specifically about homosexual marriage because He did not even contemplate that. But He did talk about what the true and only sanctified marriage arrangement should be. And here it is in Matthew 19:3-5.

As I said before God does not change. His instruction on marriage is the same today as it was nearly 6000 years ago in the Garden of Eden.

One man, one woman joined together by God. Anything else, anything outside those bounds is a perversion of His will.

Let us conclude now in I Corinthians 7:2. I want you to take this in terms of a general principle rather than the specific thing he was talking about in this chapter. Paul says,

I Corinthians 7:2 Nevertheless, because of sexual immorality, let each man have his own wife, and let each woman have her own husband.

Notice how he puts that—because of sexual immorality. He was probably primarily thinking in terms of adultery, but the word that is used here is *porneia*, which is much broader than adultery. It can be any kind of sexual perversion, not just fornication, or adultery. It can run the gamut from homosexuality to bestiality, to any other perverse sexual thing.

I think that Today's English Version gives a modern language sense of what Paul is saying.

I Corinthians 7:2 [Today's English Version] But because there is so much immorality, every man should have his own wife, and every woman should have her own husband.

What Paul is saying is that marriage, godly marriage, the union of one man and one woman is the foundational institution of a godly stable society. And if we would go back to it, we would in time root out this problem, because if each man had a wife, and each woman had a husband, then the chances of these other things happening would be reduced significantly.

Of course, Paul was speaking directly to the church where this should be the rule. So He says here that it is better that we be married, a man and his wife, a wife and her husband, because it helps keep things moral.