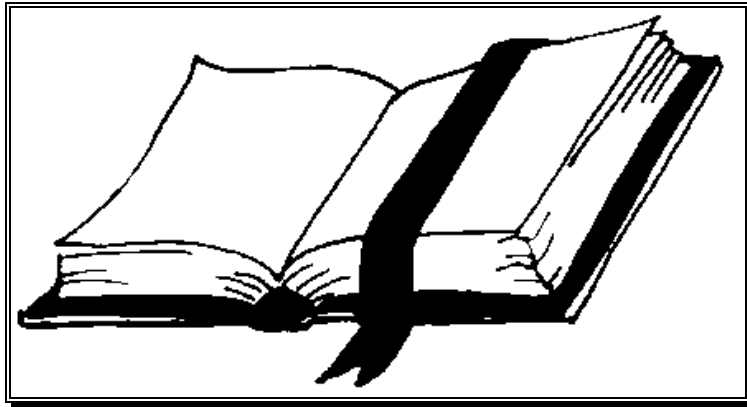


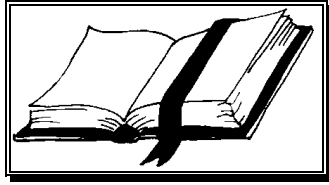
The Bible Speaks



On Important Issues to the Church

**A Four Part Series
on
HOMOSEXUALITY**

**By
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The Bible Speaks

On Important Issues to the Church

PART 1

I. The Issue: Homosexuality

One of the hottest debates going, within society, and within some churches, is the issue of homosexuality. In fact just this past week, a major court decision relating to a homosexual mother splashed its way across the newspapers. As Christians though, our answers don't come from court decisions or from society's knowledge or so-called enlightened politically correct attitudes. Our answers come from the Word of God. For the next several weeks we will be looking at various passages of scripture to see what the Bible, our final answer, has to say about the issue of homosexuality.

II. The Text

“Do not lie with a man as one lies with a woman; that is detestable.” “If a man lies with a man as one lies with a woman, both of them have done what is detestable. They must be put to death; their blood will be on their own heads.”

Leviticus 18:22, 20:13

In this section of Leviticus, God establishes his law for his people, Israel, after they have been delivered out of captivity. God commands them that they are not to live like the Egyptians, the people they have fled, or the Caananites, the people of the land where they are going. As God's chosen people, they are to be different. They are to honor God with their bodies. They are to honor God with their actions, rather than perverse God's plan, the way the rest of the world is.

God lists 18 different sexual practices or perversions that must be avoided. Most begin and end with a statement about how the person who would do such a thing, dishonors himself and God. When God mentions homosexuality however, in both passages, he states that it is detestable

to God. There doesn't seem to be any room for debate about what God thinks about homosexuality.

And yet, we have the homosexual community today convincing society that their "way of life" is normal and acceptable. How can they make such a claim?

First of all, a good majority of homosexuals have no regard for the Bible at all, and simply dismiss it altogether (most likely because of its power to indict). However there are others who seek to convince society and even some Christians that the Bible does not teach homosexuality is wrong. In light of these two verses alone, you may be asking how that can be done. It takes some twisting. Lets look at two examples.

The first argument made is that the Levitical law code has been made irrelevant by modern progress, and no Christian group abides by it anymore. We must be careful to remember the words of Jesus in Matthew 5:17-20, ". . . *Do not think that I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I have not come to abolish them but to fulfill them.* . . ." Jesus made it clear that the O.T. morality code still stands, nothing has changed, we must still live wholesome and pure lives, but now Christ has fulfilled the requirement of the sacrifice by his death on the cross. We must also remember that it is not only the letter of the law that Jesus was concerned with, but also the intent of the law. The intent of all God's sexual laws was to keep his natural order from becoming perverted, and to keep his people safe from disease and harm.

The second argument made is that these laws were culturally bound, and since societies and cultures change, we do not need to be concerned with laws written for an ancient culture. Take a look at the laws surrounding the one in question in Leviticus 18. Which of the other ones are you willing to give up on and declare "culturally specific?"

III. Summary

God's law is God's law. Christ came to fulfill the sacrificial part, but the moral code stands. Christ also brought with him forgiveness, and a new approach to punishment. All men are sinners. We are all in need of forgiveness. All of us will be punished by death unless we turn to Christ, repent, and ask for the forgiveness offered through Christ's death on the cross. Homosexuality is a sin. So is murder. So is lying. It is a sin which affects our society as much as

any other. We must always remember God's Word is our guide. God's wisdom is the only true wisdom, and it is He whom we look to for answers.

Next we will look at what happens when God's people decide it is okay to neglect his law.

PART 2

I. The Issue: Homosexuality

As we saw last week from a study of Leviticus, it is quite obvious God believes all sexual perversion is sin. Included in the lists of perversions was homosexuality, which was singled out as being detestable. However, you may be asking the question, "How does all this effect me? I don't sin in that way, so why all the attention to this issue?" Sin effects all of us. The sin of homosexuality is not just an issue of privacy between to people. This past week, the highest ranking openly gay public official praised President Clinton for the "unprecedented" measures he has taken to see to it homosexuals have been placed in key government positions. With that and the continuing spread of the deadly AIDS virus, I don't think there is any doubt the sin of homosexuality effects us all.

II. The Text - Genesis 19, Judges 19:1-21:25

"In those days there was no king in Israel: every man did that which was right in his own eyes." (KJV) **Judges 21:25**

The passages of scripture are too long to be reprinted here, but please take time to read them carefully. If you are like me, you will be amazed and shocked by what you read.

In the Genesis passage, Lot is pleading for God to save the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah. God has said that there is nothing good in the cities, and wants to destroy them. Lot asks God to spare the cities, and in the very course of his discussion with God, men of the city come and demand to have homosexual relations with Lot's two male house guests (who happen to be angels). What further proof did God need, that the city was completely evil. The angels

told Lot to leave with his family or be killed. Then God completely buried the evil cities under fire and brimstone. God was sending the message he takes sin seriously. We saw in Leviticus God's specific instructions regarding those sins. But, did the people listen and obey?

During the early years of the nation of Israel, there was no King or strong ruler to guide the nation. The book of Judges describes for us a situation very much like the one in Genesis. However, this time God's judgment came in a little different fashion.

Once again, the men of an Israelite city, Gibeah, come and attempt to have a strange man thrown out of his host's house so that they can have homosexual relations with him (Judges 19:22). Apparently, the men of this city had no regard for God's laws, or his warning with the city of Sodom. Homosexuality was permitted openly in this city as well. Eventually, the men end up killing the visitor's concubine, after raping her. When the visitor finally gets back home he decides that these men have done a terrible evil, so he gathers all the other tribe leaders together, and they decide to wage war against the evil tribe of Benjamin. Many men are killed in the battles that ensue, and eventually the entire nation of Israel is ripped apart at the seams. Society is a unity; its depravity cannot be contained within narrow, watertight compartments. Depravity and breakdown in one area of society, if uncorrected, will lead to deterioration and breakdown in other areas, and finally, even to the destruction of society itself. God had warned them, but they failed to listen, and instead they were doing whatever was right in their own eyes.

III. Summary

Even though they may seem like small or insignificant moral detours, when moral offenses are widespread and casually tolerated, their consequences become devastating. When our communities choose a congenial toleration of evil rather than confronting and judging it, there will be serious consequences, as there were in Sodom and Gibeah. Homosexuality is a symptom. It is a symptom of a sick and godless society turning its back on God and his moral law. If we wait too long to speak up and stop it, it will be too late, and the damage will be done. Unfortunately we often overlook sin and injustice for the sake of staying out of arguments or being labeled a bigot. We don't want to be "*politically incorrect*," so we stand by and watch our country slide deeper into open sin, and open opposition to God. We say, "What two people do in the privacy of their relationship is just between them." Wrong. It is not a matter of privacy. It is not a

matter of political correctness. It is not a matter of an advancing enlightened society. It is a matter of sin, and it is a matter of life and death. What happens when sin is left unconfessed? God has shown us time and time again. The question for Christians is, have we listened? and will we stand up now and oppose those who would attempt to further pollute and infect our society with open immorality.

PART 3

I. The Issue: Homosexuality

First we examined what God's law specifically demanded and condemned. Then we saw how God's people refused to follow His law, and the destruction it brought down on them. Now we turn to the New Testament to see if God's will has changed or "lightened up" after the coming of Christ. The author Paul's writings relating to homosexuality will be carefully considered for the next two weeks. With an issue as polarizing and volatile as this, it is imperative we as Christians seek out the truth in God's Word. It is always our source for the answers. If we disagree or attempt to throw out one portion or passage of our Bible, we may as well toss the rest. Either it is God's good and perfect truth, or it is a worthless piece of religious mumbo-jumbo that is not worth the paper it is printed on. There is no middle ground.

II. The Text

“Because of this, God gave them over to shameful lusts. Even their women exchanged natural relations for unnatural ones. In the same way the men also abandoned natural relations with women and were inflamed with lust for one another. Men committed indecent acts with other men, and received in themselves the due penalty for their perversion.” **Romans 1:26-27**

At first reading this passage, just as in the Old Testament's references to homosexuality, there doesn't seem to be any question of what Paul and God think of homosexuality. Yet, those within the homosexual community attempt to sidestep this scripture in some slippery ways.

It is argued that when Paul says “natural” or “unnatural” he is appealing to prior notions that we have about what makes an ordered society. Paul is not talking about what is ordained by God, but rather a general, culturally bound idea. What is natural for some, may be unnatural to others. Perhaps God has made homosexuality “natural” for me. He surely wouldn't want me to change to that which is unnatural for me. God made me gay, therefore why would He want me to change. This passage is about those who leave their primary orientation for another, not those who were born that way.

This is the argument that is gaining more and more support among those in favor of homosexuality, including some Christians. Watch how the arguments fall apart though.

Paul uses the word ‘natural’ with the only understanding of that word in his day. “Natural” meant the constitution of man, his being, as derived from his Creator—God’s natural order, not society’s. One cannot ascribe meanings to Paul’s words that did not exist at that time. It is clear that Paul considers homosexuality to be unnatural—against God’s ordained plan. This idea of “what is natural for me” was completely unknown to Paul or anyone else of his day, therefore this in no way can be its meaning. It is only a very recent idea someone could actually be born gay, and therefore this be their natural orientation. Man loves to twist and turn God’s word into all types of forms which are completely contrary to God’s truth. Don’t be misled by these arguments, no matter how “good” they sound.

One of the other favorite arguments used by homosexuals when interpreting this scripture, is to say that Paul is only condemning homosexual acts, and not homosexual orientation. Paul never says that it is wrong to be involved in a loving, same-sex relationship.

Paul’s language is much more inclusive than just acts. In verse 24 Paul claims that “sinful desires” and “shameful lusts” are also condemned. Homosexuality is a corruption of the mind as well as of the body. But some would say, “Okay, then, Paul is only talking about lustful homosexuality, not pure, monogamous, loving relationships.” My friends, there is no such thing. Homosexuality knows no other way. It is always lustful, always detestable, always perverse. Those who live in homosexual relationships have, as Paul said, “Exchanged the truth of God for a lie.”

III. Summary

Because of their rejection of God's laws, and their refusal to repent, God has given over homosexuals to their perversion, which itself is a penalty. Homosexuals have much greater instances of suicide, social diseases, AIDS, depression, alcoholism, chain smoking, abusive and multi-partner relationships. What God promised them for their perversion of his perfect law is coming true.

Because of how lost they are, the church needs to work that much harder to convince them of their sin, and seek to help them receive the forgiveness that is available in Christ for all sinners. No one is out of reach or beyond God's forgiveness.

Next we will conclude this series by looking at one other passage which categorizes homosexuality as sin, and challenges us to be active in helping those lost in the sin.

PART 4

The Issue: Homosexuality

Over the past several weeks we have established through a close analysis of several scripture passages that homosexuality is a sin, and like all sin detested by God. We have seen what happens to men who continue to live this life style, their penalty is in their perversion. We have also established there is no "good" homosexuality, just as there is no "good" rape or "good" incest or "good" adultery. But what about forgiveness? I have seen on several occasions, a homosexual person stand up on a talk show and scream at a Christian, "Doesn't your Bible tell you to love other people? You are a hypocrite! You have to love us! You have to accept us!" This is where many Christians start to give ground. Perhaps they know someone who is gay. Maybe it is a friend. They think to themselves, "But he is such a nice person, how can I be mean and condemn him." What does the Bible say about these questions?

II. The Text

"Do you not know that the wicked will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived: Neither the sexually immoral nor idolaters nor adulterers nor male prostitutes nor homosexual offenders nor thieves nor the greedy nor drunkards nor slanderers nor swindlers will inherit the kingdom of God. And that is what

some of you were. But you were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God.”

1 Corinthians 6:9-11

Homosexuals will do virtually anything they can, to get you as a Christian to lower your standards. They will appeal to you on the basis of “love,” as sighted above. But love of what? Of course we are to “love thy neighbor as thy self,” however, we are not to “love thy neighbor’s sin as we love our own.” We must separate the person and the sin. Love the person. Hate the sin. Loving someone does not mean ignoring their sin. True love is something much greater than that.

In the text above, Paul reminds us not to be fooled by the most tasty and cunning lie of Satan. Satan whispers in the ear of the world, “Pssst, your okay. God will still accept you. How could he turn you away, you’re a good person?” Paul warns us not to fall into that trap. He says the wicked, the unrighteous, will not get to heaven, no matter how nice of people they are. One’s disposition isn’t the deciding factor. Sin blocks our path, and only the forgiveness offered through Christ can clear the way. The ONE and ONLY way.

Included in Paul’s list of those who will not inherit the kingdom are “male prostitutes” and “homosexual offenders.” The two terms translated this way actually represent the passive (feminine) partner and the aggressive (masculine) partner in a homosexual relationship. Both are equally condemned. Also condemned are adulterers and thieves etc. . . Is there no hope for sinners then? Paul tells his readers, “that’s what some of you were.” When you accept Jesus Christ into your life, and ask for forgiveness, past sins are washed away, you become a new creation. But, if you continue to live in your old sinful ways it will show you were never truly repentant. Is there a difference between being a thief, and stealing something? To steal something is a sin, a mistake. Being a thief, is a way of life. It is a sinful life no Christian with Jesus in his heart would live. Jesus changes you. Where before you were a thief, Christ changes you. You may still every once in a great while steal something in a moment of weakness, but you will ask for forgiveness and desire to work harder. A thief on the other hand enjoys, wallows, and glories in his sin. No person like that will inherit the kingdom of heaven.

The sin of homosexuality is the same way. Homosexuals can and do come to Christ, and the power of Jesus can and will change their old sin nature. They, like us, won't be perfect, but neither will they live in that sinful lifestyle. Our goal as Christians is to stand strongly against the sin of homosexuality. We must expose it for what it is. We must confront those who live in its wicked grip. And, we must do all we can to protect our society from allowing homosexuality to become a protected and glorified way of life. The way things stand today, I am afraid to say, it looks as if we are already well on our way towards that type of a world.

III. Summary

Christians need wake up calls quite often. This is one. As we have seen from the Old Testament, if things are left unchanged and unchallenged, our society is headed for a moral collapse. What can we do?

- 1. Know the scripture - recognize homosexuality for what it is, a sin.**
- 2. Show love and compassion for people but not for their sin.**
- 3. Become active in the fight to stop the moral decay of our society by voting for those who oppose homosexual rights policies.**
- 4. PRAY! For our country, for our leaders, for the lost.**

Written by Pastor Evan D. Baltz®