

Holy Scripture on Homosexuality

With every passing year human society has been moving in the direction of becoming more tolerant and approving of homosexuality. Advocates speaking in favor of this manner of living have been found in the private sector, religious community, public education, medical field and in government. Evidence of this can be seen in the public schools of New York city where the school board approved the use of two books for the first grade level, which portray homosexuality and lesbianism as normal and acceptable ways of living. There are medical researchers who have made the claim that some people are born with the trait of homosexuality. Religious groups, in some cases, have either completely condoned homosexuality or have stated that while they believe the act of homosexuality is sinful, they do not consider the sexual orientation in this regard as being sinful. And government officials are working toward removing legal barriers to homosexuals and lesbians and decriminalizing sodomy.

Since this is a moral issue, which affects both the physical and spiritual lives of people, children of God need to turn to the Word of God for counsel and guidance in this matter. We need to be reminded of what God's unchangeable will is in this regard so that we are not misled in any way and also so that we can help others who are living in the delusion of error and sin.

Homosexuality in Old Testament Times

Genesis 18, 20 And the LORD said, "Because the outcry against Sodom and Gomorrah is great, and because their sin is very grievous, 21 "I will go down now and see whether they have done altogether according to the outcry against it that has come to Me; and if not, I will know."... 23 And Abraham came near and said, "Would You also destroy the righteous and the wicked? 24 "Suppose there were fifty righteous within the city; would You also destroy the place and not spare it for the fifty righteous that were in it?... 32 And he said, "Let not the Lord be angry, and I will speak but once more: Suppose ten should be found there?" And He said, "I will not destroy it for the sake of ten." 19:1 Now the two angels came to Sodom in the evening, and Lot was sitting in the gate of Sodom. When Lot saw them, he rode to meet them, and he bowed himself with his face toward the ground. 2 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." 3 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. 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. 5 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 (to have sexual intercourse with the two guests)" 6 So Lot went out to them through the

doorway, shut the door behind him, 7 and said, "Please, my brethren, do not do so wickedly! ... 9 And they said, 'Stand back!' Then they said, 'This one came in to sojourn, and he keeps acting as a judge; now we will deal worse with you than with them.' So they pressed hard against the man Lot, and came near to break down the door. 10 But the men reached out their hands and pulled Lot into the house with them, and shut the door. 11 And they struck the men who were at the doorway of the house with blindness, both small and great, so that they became weary trying to find the door. 12 Then the men 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! 13 "For we will destroy this place, because the outcry against them has grown great before the face of the Lord, and the Lord has sent us to destroy it."... 24 Then the Lord rained brimstone and fire on Sodom and Gomorrah, from the Lord out of the heavens. 25 So He overthrew those cities, all the plain, all the inhabitants of the cities, and what grew on the ground.

The first Biblical record of homosexuality is from the days of the patriarch Abraham when he dwelled in the land of Canaan with his family. His nephew, Lot, had chosen to live in the city of Sodom, which Moses describes as being "exceedingly wicked and sinful against the LORD." (Gen.13:13) The LORD told Abraham that Sodom and Gomorrah were guilty of very grievous sins, which cried out for divine judgment. Evidence of their great wickedness was demonstrated on the occasion when two men, who were angels in human form, came to deliver Lot and his family from Sodom before God destroyed the city. Lot, being aware of the perverse and dangerous conditions that prevailed in Sodom, insisted that the two visitors not spend the night in the open square, but rather stay in his home for the night. When news of the visitors' presence became widely known, there were both young and old men who came from all over the city to Lot's house. The men did not come in order to welcome the visitors, but rather to gratify their own fleshly passions at the expense of the visitors. They wanted Lot to hand the two visitors over to them so that they could have sex with them. (The term 'sodomy' is derived from this shameful practice in Sodom. Sodomy is the act of anal or oral sexual intercourse.) Homosexuality, which involves men having sex with men, was not an isolated thing in Sodom and the surrounding area. The text reports the extent of young and old men who came to Lot's house as being "all the people from every quarter" of the city. Lot spoke of the men's intentions as being "wicked" and pleaded with them not to do it. The men of Sodom did not look very kindly upon Lot judging their intentions as being wicked. Because of this, they had plans to rape Lot and treat him worse than what they had planned for the two visitors. While God does not delight in the death of the wicked (Ezekiel 18:32), yet, when people rebel against Him and spurn His efforts to reprove

them, He pours out His righteous wrath upon them when their time of grace is at an end. Because of the pervasive wickedness and deep degradation in Sodom and Gomorrah, God completely destroyed these cities with fire and brimstone raining down from the skies above.

Homosexuality in Pagan Worship

Deuteronomy 20:16-18 "But of the cities of these peoples which the LORD your God gives you as an inheritance, you shall let nothing that breathes remain alive, but you shall utterly destroy them: the Hittite and the Amorite and the Canaanite and the Perizzite and the Hivite and the Jebusite, just as the LORD your God has commanded you, lest they teach you to do according to all their abominations which they have done for their gods, and you sin against the LORD your God."

I Kings 14:24 "And there were also perverted persons (sodomites) in the land. They did according to all the abominations of the nations which the LORD had cast out before the children of Israel."

Sodom and Gomorrah was not the only area where homosexuality was in vogue. It was prevalent throughout Canaan, Phoenicia, Syria, Phrygia, Assyria, and Babylonia. Homosexuality was sanctioned in these regions under the pagan religion that worshipped the goddess Astarte. The 'perverted persons' were male temple prostitutes who engaged in sex with men as a religious ceremony or rite.

Because of this practice and other abominable ways in Canaan, the LORD instructed the Israelites that when they went in to take possession of Canaan, they were to completely destroy and cast out the inhabitants. God gave the Israelites this command so that they would not be subjected to the evil influences of these people and be led to sin against God in such wicked ways.

Levitical Laws on Homosexuality

Leviticus 18:22 "You shall not lie (have sexual intercourse) with a male as with a woman. It is an abomination."

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."

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

According to the Levitical laws, which God delivered to the Jews in order to govern their civil, moral, and religious life in Old Testament times, the LORD prohibited the practice of homosexuality in the people's private lives and in their worship lives. God declared homosexuality to be '*an abomination*', that is, detestable, loathsome, vile, and shameful. There was to be no toleration of this

behavior. Those who were found guilty of it were to be put to death.

Homosexuality among the Israelites

Judges 19, 1 And it came to pass in those days, when there was no king in Israel, that there was a certain Levite sojourning in the remote mountains of Ephraim. He took for himself a concubine from Bethlehem in Judah.... 9 And when the man stood to depart -- he and his concubine and his servant -- his father-in-law, the young woman's father, said to him, "Look, the day is now drawing toward evening; please spend the night. See, the day is coming to an end; lodge here, that your heart may be merry. Tomorrow go your way early, so that you may get home." 10 But the man was not willing to spend that night; so he rose and departed, and came to a place opposite Jebus (that is, Jerusalem). With him were the two saddled donkeys; his concubine was also with him. 11 They were near Jebus, and the day was far spent; and the servant said to his master, "Come, please, and let us turn aside into this city of the Jebusites and lodge in it." 12 But his master said to him, "We will not turn aside here into a city of foreigners, who are not of the children of Israel; we will go on to Gibeah." 13 So he said to his servant, "Come, let us draw near to one of these places, and spend the night in Gibeah or in Ramah." 14 And they passed by and went their way; and the sun went down on them near Gibeah, which belongs to Benjamin. 15 They turned aside there to go in to lodge in Gibeah. And when he went in, he sat down in the open square of the city, for no one would take them into his house to spend the night. 16 Just then an old man came in from his work in the field at evening, who also was from the mountains of Ephraim; he was sojourning in Gibeah, whereas the men of the place were Benjamites. 17 And when he raised his eyes, he saw the traveler in the open square of the city; and the old man said, "Where are you going, and where do you come from?" 18 So he said to him, "We are passing from Bethlehem in Judah toward the remote mountains of Ephraim; I am from there. I went to Bethlehem in Judah, and now I am going to the house of the Lord. But there is no one who will take me into his house, 19 "although we have both straw and fodder for our donkeys, and bread and wine for myself, for your maidservant, and for the young man who is with your servant; there is no lack of anything." 20 And the old man said, "Peace be with you! However, let all your needs be my responsibility; only do not spend the night in the open square." 21 So he brought him into his house, and gave fodder to the donkeys. And they washed their feet, and ate and drank. 22 Now as they were enjoying themselves, 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 (have sex with him)!" 23 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."

I Kings 14:24 "And there were also perverted persons (sodomites) in the land. They did according to all the abominations of the nations which the LORD had cast out before the children of Israel."

2 Kings 23:7 Then he (Josiah, a godly king of Judah, who sought to bring about a spiritual reformation in Israel) tore down the ritual booths of the perverted persons (sodomites, who were male prostitutes in the temple) that were in the house of the LORD, where the women wove hangings for the wooden image.

In spite of God's instruction to completely remove all the Canaanites from the land when Israel came in to possess Palestine, Israel permitted pockets of Canaanites to remain. As a result of this, the Israelites eventually adopted the wicked and perverse ways of the Canaanites. During the period of the Judges an incident occurred in Gibeah which mimicked what had happened in Sodom. Gibeah was mainly inhabited by Benjamites, who were numbered among the tribes of Israel. Like as in Sodom it was dangerous to stay overnight in the open square in Gibeah, because of the wicked and perverse people who lived there. Certain Benjamite men wanted to have sex with a visiting Levite man, who was also a Israelite.

Homosexuality became so deeply entrenched in Israel that during the period of the Kings sodomites were employed in Solomon's temple in Jerusalem, prostituting their bodies in a pagan religious ritual. This was one of the depraved conditions in Israel that caused God to eventually destroy Jerusalem and to enslave the people in Babylon.

God-ordained Marriage and the Sexual Union

Genesis 2, 18 And the LORD God said, "It is not good that man should be alone; I will make him a helper comparable to him...21 And the LORD God caused a deep sleep to fall on Adam, and he slept; and He took one of his ribs, and closed up the flesh in its place. 22 Then the rib which LORD God had taken from man He made into a woman, and He brought her to the man...24 Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and they shall become one flesh.

Genesis 1:28 "Then God blessed them, and God said to them, 'Be fruitful and multiply; fill the earth and subdue it.'"

Matthew 19:4,5 "And He (Jesus) 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?'"

When God created man at the beginning of time, he judged that it was not good for the man to be alone and so He decided to "*make him a helper* (the feminine case in the Hebrew text) *comparable* (lit. 'as agreeing to him' or 'his counterpart') *to him*" (*Gen 2:18*). By making a woman for the man the LORD God created a help-mate and companion for him who was a perfect counterpart to him psychologically and physiologically (Their sexual organs were mutually compatible.) When God brought the first woman to the first man, he united them together as husband and wife in the holy institution of marriage, which God established at this time. The expression "they shall become one flesh" is referring, in part, to the sexual union of the husband and wife in marriage.

One of the God-ordained purposes for the sexual union in marriage is the perpetuation of the human race. If God had decided instead to create a Steve for Adam rather than an Eve, the human race would have been limited to just two people.

God's Divine Judgment concerning Homosexuality

Romans 1, 18 For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who suppress the truth in unrighteousness, 19 because what may be known of God is manifest in them, for God has shown it to them. 20 For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even His eternal power and Godhead, so that they are without excuse, 21 because, although they knew God, they did not glorify Him as God, nor were thankful, but became futile in their thoughts, and their foolish hearts were darkened. 22 Professing to be wise, they became fools. 23 and changed the glory of the incorruptible God into an image made like corruptible man -- and birds and four-footed beasts and creeping things. 24 Therefore God also gave them up to uncleanness, in the lusts of their hearts, to dishonor their bodies among themselves, 25 who exchanged the truth of God for the lie, and worshipped and served the creature rather than the Creator, who is blessed forever. Amen. 26 For this reason God gave them up to vile passions. For even their women exchanged the natural use for what is against nature. 27 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. 28 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; 29 being filled with all unrighteousness, sexual immorality, wickedness, covetousness, maliciousness; full of envy, murder, strife, deceit, evil-mindedness; they are whisperers, 30 backbiters, haters of God, violent, proud, boasters, inventors of evil things, disobedient to parents, 31 undiscerning, untrustworthy, unloving, unforgiving, unmerciful; 32 who, knowing the righteous judgment of God, that those who practice such things are worthy of death, not only do the same but also approve of those who practice them."

Romans 2:14,15 "For when Gentiles, who do not have the law, by nature do the things contained in the law, these, although not having the law, are a law to themselves, who show the work of the law written in their hearts, their conscience also bearing witness, and between themselves their thoughts accusing or else excusing them."

People in their unconverted state have a natural knowledge that there is a God, which knowledge they receive from various evidences in nature (*Rom.1:19,20*) and from their conscience (*Rom.2:15*). By means of their conscience the unconverted have a certain degree of knowledge as to what is right and wrong behavior and that those who commit wrongful acts are deserving of God's punishment (*Rom.2:15*). God preserved this natural knowledge so that they would seek to find Him in Scripture (*Acts 17:26,27*). However, in Romans chapter 1 the apostle Paul speaks of people who have suppressed in their mind these truths about God and His

righteous ways. They chose, instead, to live in unrighteousness (*Romans 1:18*) and to make for themselves gods in man's own likeness and in the likeness of animals (*Rom. 1:22,23*). On account of their suppression of the truth in these important matters, God punished them with the following judgment - He "*gave them up*" (that is, abandoned them) to be taken over by and consumed by their fleshly passions (*Rom.1:24-27*). Among those fleshly passions that God gave them up to are the perversions of homosexuality and lesbianism. So then, when God gives people over to homosexuality and lesbianism and they suffer ill consequences as a result of their sinful behavior, they are "*receiving in themselves the penalty of their error which was due*" (*1:27*). This judgment was carried out against the Canaanites, certain of the Israelites, and other ancient civilizations, like the Romans, who chose to worship pagan idols like Astarte and rebelled against the Lord's prescribed manner of living. Paul goes on in verses 28-31 to list other base, immoral, and loveless behavior that God gives people up to when they "*suppress the truth*" of Him and His righteous ways. Although these people know by nature that homosexuality and lesbianism and other immoral behavior are wrong and are deserving of punishment from God, they continue to do them and approve of others who practice the same things (*Rom.1:32*).

To those who say that homosexuality is inborn, natural, and an acceptable manner of life, the apostle Paul declares by inspiration of God that homosexuality is an acquired behavior and is unnatural and shameful (*Rom. 1: 26, 27*). To those who say that only the sexual act of homosexuality is sinful, but not the sexual orientation, the apostle Paul speaks of the sexual orientation of homosexuality as being "*vile passions*" and "*lust*". And Jesus declares that people can be defiled by what proceeds out of their hearts, such as, "*evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornication...*" (*Mt. 15:19*)

I Corinthians 6, 9 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, 10 nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners will inherit the kingdom of God.

Jude 6 And the angels who did not keep their proper domain, but left their own habitation, He has reserved in everlasting chains under darkness for the judgment of the great day; 7 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 (reference to the homosexual act), are set forth as an example, suffering the vengeance of eternal fire.

The apostle Paul lists the homosexuals and sodomites among those people who are living in the ways of ungodliness and are

therefore outside of the kingdom of God. Unless or until they repent of their sin (confessing their sin with sorrow of heart, turn to Jesus in faith for forgiveness, and turn away from their evil behavior) they will not inherit the spiritual and eternal blessings of the kingdom of God. The impenitent will rather incur God's righteous and eternal wrath. Jude declares that the wicked citizens of Sodom and Gomorrah were sentenced to join the devil and his evil angels in hell, because of their sexual immorality and unbelief.

A Rescue Mission

Matthew 18:11 "For the Son of Man has come to save that which was lost."

Matthew 9:11-13 And when the Pharisees saw it, they said to His disciples, "Why does your Teacher eat with tax collectors and sinners?" But when Jesus heard that, He said to them, "Those who are well have no need of a physician, but those who are sick. 'But go and learn what this means: I desire mercy and not sacrifice.' For I did not come to call the righteous, but sinners, to repentance."

Matthew 21:31,32 Jesus said to them (the chief priest and elders), "Assuredly, I say to you that tax collectors and harlots enter the kingdom of God before you. For John came to you in the way of righteousness, and you did not believe him; but tax collectors and harlots believed him; and when you saw it, you did not afterward relent and believe him."

John 8:1-12 (Jesus comforted the adulteress by granting her forgiveness and exhorted her to "*sin no more*" - stop living in this sinful manner.)

Jesus is the "*Lamb of God*" who came to take away the sins of the world. As He carried out His ministry of seeking out the spiritually lost and condemned sinners in order to save them from their sins, He went also among the social outcasts, lawbreakers, and fornicators. He reached out to them in love, calling them to repentance. Those who repented of their sins and turned to Jesus in faith enjoyed the gift of the forgiveness of sins and eternal life.

As children of God we are exhorted to be like-minded with Christ. This means having a compassionate spirit and loving concern toward all people who are enslaved in sin. There is no room for "gay-bashing", which involves ridiculing, cursing or physically abusing homosexuals or lesbians. Rather, following the example of Jesus we are to seek to help homosexuals and lesbians by calling upon them to repent of their sin of sexual perversion and to turn to Jesus in faith for the forgiveness of sins.

In the Civil Realm

1 Timothy 1, 8 But we know that the law is good if one uses it lawfully, **9** 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, **10** for

fornicators, for sodomites, for kidnappers, for liars, for perjurers, and if there is any other thing that is contrary to sound doctrine.

The apostle Paul refers here to the use of the Law in maintaining law and order for the protection of people in society. In order to restrain the lawless from engaging in harmful behavior the Law clearly sets forth what kind of behavior is prohibited and threatens to punish those who go against the Law. In his list of various types of lawbreakers, for whom this use of the Law is intended, the apostle Paul includes "sodomites". Since the forefathers of our country recognized "*sodomy*" as a harmful behavior in society, they passed civil laws which prohibit "*sodomy*".

May God grant our civil leaders the wisdom to retain those laws which prohibit "*sodomy*". And may God work mightily in the hearts of people through His word, enabling them to acknowledge homosexuality and lesbianism as wrong attitudes and behaviors, which are to be repented of and forsaken.

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