

Christianity and Homosexuality Reconciled

New thinking for a new millennium!

by

Rev. Joseph Adam Pearson, Ph.D.

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Dedication

This work is dedicated to the untold number of GLBT people who have been rejected, abused, tormented and murdered in the name of the LORD and to those who have injured themselves or taken their own lives because of the pain from their victimization. The message of this work is simple for those who are still alive: Take back your lives through Jesus Christ and be victorious. Today, in Christ, you can have

new hope!

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Foreword

What a privilege it is for me to have the opportunity to write, revise and edit the book version of “Christianity and Homosexuality Reconciled: New Thinking for a New Millennium!” In the early 1990s, I began teaching a seminar and workshop on this topic through Christ Evangelical Bible Institute (CEBI) in Phoenix, Arizona. The seminar and workshop eventually became so popular that I received invitations from churches throughout the USA and Canada to present it to their congregations in order that they might better understand the scriptural basis for the affirmation that God loves and accepts both heterosexuals and homosexuals alike (that is, without viewing one as better than the other).

In order to help meet the demand, I ended up professionally video-taping the seminar and workshop and offered the resulting three-and-one-half hour series through CEBI as both part of its “Christianity and Homosexuality” correspondence course as well as on a standalone basis for those who were not interested in pursuing course completion or program certificates. Overall, the video tape series did quite well, not only having sold throughout most of the United States but also as far away as Vancouver (British Columbia), London (England) and Harare (Zimbabwe).

Though the video tapes were designed so that they could be used without ancillary materials, I also developed an accompanying workbook and manual that provided pre-viewing activities, biblical citations, and post-viewing questions for each segment as well as transcripts of the video tapes, edited to enhance comprehension, so that students might more effectively study and better reflect on the lessons contained therein. To date, the complete package — consisting of video tapes, workbook and manual, and transcripts — has been used by many

students of the Bible in individual, small group, and whole group congregational study.

Recognizing that it was time for new thinking and new ideas on the issue of Christianity and homosexuality to be presented to a significantly greater number of people for this new millennium, in the late 1990s I took all of my previous writings and additional notes and committed them to book form in order to meet the ever-increasing demand for information on this topic. It is important for more people to be exposed to this information in order to better facilitate discussion, Christian dialogue and debate, and eventual understanding and acceptance that Christianity and homosexuality are, indeed, reconcilable to one another.

In 2010, I recorded an audio series based on this work to facilitate easy listening and convenient learning. Currently, my seven one-hour mp3 broadcasts may be found at:

http://www.christiangays.com/articles/joe_pearson_audio.shtml

You may download the mp3 files and send or broadcast them to anyone provided that each one hour broadcast is not partitioned or segmented in any way. Each audio file must be sent and broadcast in its entirety.

There are three reasons that my materials on this topic are free:

1. I have taken to heart Proverbs 23:23, which states that we should be willing to buy the truth but not to sell it.
2. I have also taken to heart Matthew 10:8 (NIV), which states, “Freely you have received, therefore freely give.” And,
3. I have made my materials free and on the internet so that they might more easily be accessed nationally as well as internationally.

I have written this book: 1) to help resolve conflict within people's minds concerning the reconcilability of Christianity and homosexuality; 2) to better equip both heterosexuals and homosexuals to combat tyranny from those who would try to rob homosexuals of what is rightfully theirs through Christ Jesus (i.e., salvation, spiritual power, peace, joy, faith, hope and love); and, 3) to bring more honor and glory and praise to our Creator, Savior and Sovereign King, Jesus Christ, by drawing more people closer to His cross and, thereby, closer to each other.

There are many homosexuals whose guilt has been etched deeply by the official positions of various Christian denominations. And, there are many homosexuals throughout the world whose pain has been exacerbated by the unkindness shown to them through the actions and reactions of church-goers. They include including family-of-origin members, co-workers and longtime friends. It is my hope and prayer that the seeming dilemma between homosexuality and Christianity be resolved, and that a higher spiritual understanding of sexuality be settled within their minds, once and for all, both now and throughout the rest of their earthly days.

This book also attempts to provide a rationale for traditional churches to become open, affirming and reconciling. There are at least seven reasons for denominations and local churches to become open, affirming and reconciling:

- 1. First, churches need to become open, affirming and reconciling to more effectively reach homosexual Christians as well as their loved ones who may have erroneously concluded that God does not desire to have a relationship with them.**

Many homosexuals and their loved ones have been driven out of local churches by hateful sermon messages and some have even been politely asked to leave by church leadership. This is not Christian, at all.

- 2. Second, churches need to become open, affirming and reconciling to more effectively reach nonchristians who may believe that accepting Christ is not an option for them.**

Recently, I conducted my seminar and workshop in San Francisco, California. At the end of the session, someone came up to me and expressed gratitude. Although he was not Christian, he attended the seminar to find out if Christianity could be an option for him. He was grateful for the seminar, because he learned through it that Christianity is, indeed, an option for nonchristian homosexuals.

- 3. Third, churches need to become open, affirming and reconciling to better minister to homosexual people already in their congregations.**

Recently, when presenting my seminar and workshop at a non-affirming church in Lake Forest, California, I was told by church leadership there, “We know what to do with homosexuals who no longer wish to be homosexual, but we do not know what to do with those who do not desire to change.” This view, of course, is born of ignorance by those who think that, in order to not be homosexual, all that is required is to not have intimacy with someone of the same sex. Such people equate homosexuality with a sexual act and not with a psychosocial orientation.

It was very telling when the same church leadership told me that they had “ex-gays.” To them, however, “ex-gay” meant to refrain from romantic expression. The leadership acknowledged that the so-called “ex-gays” still had desires for people of the same sex; they just did not act on those desires. In the final analysis, there is no such thing as “ex-gay” for truly homosexual people. Perhaps there is such a thing only for bisexual people or for others on a broad gay-straight sexual orientation continuum, who choose someone of the opposite sex as their lifelong covenant spousal partner.

- 4. Fourth, churches need to become open, affirming and reconciling to more effectively demonstrate Christian love and inculcate morality throughout the whole population.**

It is no wonder that many homosexuals have decided that, if they are going to hell because they are homosexual (an erroneous

assumption, of course), then they might as well do whatever they like. Ironically, churches unwelcoming to homosexuals actually promote promiscuity within the homosexual community and within society as a whole.

5. Fifth, churches need to become open, affirming and reconciling to help activate and better utilize the spiritual gifts God has given to homosexual people.

Homosexual people have substantial God-given gifts and talents that need to be used for the greater good of the Body of Christ — which is, of course, the Church Universal.

6. Sixth, churches need to become open, affirming and reconciling to continue to meet the needs of the changing landscape of the local church.

Today, there are more divorced people than ever attending churches. If church leadership continued to harp on the sinfulness of divorce, divorced people would be driven out of the church in droves in the same way that homosexuals have been driven out. Let it be known that God requires mercy from local church congregations and their leadership, not condemnation!

7. And, seventh, churches need to be open, affirming and reconciling to help heal and unite the Body of Christ.

From beginning to end, this book is meant to present a body of evidence to Christian “jurors,” so to speak, who have mostly, or only, heard the prosecution’s side of the story. I present this work as a body of evidence in defense of reconciliation, — not “reconciliation” between sinner and God (because the blood of Jesus Christ does that), but “reconciliation” between the seeming incongruity of Christianity and homosexuality that still exists today because of unchallenged traditional thinking. This book is intended to challenge such thinking.

To be sure, “Coming out” about one’s Christian faith and sexual orientation, or gender identity, definitely includes reconciliation.

Reconciliation also means being reconciled to yourself and others as the gay, lesbian, bisexual or transgender¹ (GLBT) person that you are.

Before you can “come out” to your loved ones and friends, you really must first “come out” to yourself. Such reconciliation includes four things: 1) acknowledging who you are as a GLBT person; 2) understanding who God made you to be as a GLBT person; 3) accepting who you are as a GLBT person; and, 4) loving and celebrating who and what you are as a GLBT person.

Education is really the key here. You must learn about yourself. You must learn about others who are like yourself. You must learn about the history of those who have had a faith walk as well as those who have an active prayer life at the same time that they were coming to acknowledge, understand, accept, and celebrate who God made them to be as a GLBT person. And, you must learn that the Holy Bible does not condemn who and what you are.

“Coming out” not only requires you to grow in acceptance of who you are but also to grow in understanding that God accepts you and loves you just as you are. According to Scripture, God knew you before you were born. It says in Psalm 139 that you are fearfully and wonderfully made and that God foreknew everything about you even when you were still taking shape in your mother’s womb. It says in verse 16 of Psalm 139 that all of the days that God has ordained for you were written in God’s Book of Life before one of them ever came to be. It also says in verse 4 of that Psalm that God knows what we are going to say even before we say it.

You do not need to “come out” to God. God already knows everything about you. However, you do need to “come out” to yourself, so you can be a whole person at the same time that you seek God to lead, guide and direct you; and, you need to come out to your loved ones and friends so they can begin to see you as a whole person.

¹ **Transgender** is a word whose meaning is still in flux and currently used as an umbrella term applied to a variety of individuals, behaviors, and groups involving tendencies to vary from traditional and customary gender roles.

Just as your faith walk after your salvation is a personal journey, so is “coming out” to yourself and others a personal journey. If you are a loved one and friend to a GLBT person, your personal acceptance and understanding of what you cannot control is also a personal journey. We human beings understand incrementally. Understanding takes time. Be patient with yourself, and be patient with others.

Readers of this book might include a GLBT senior adult who is married to someone of the opposite sex as well as a GLBT secondary school student. If, by chance, you have already come out, what I have written may be useful to you as you counsel and advise others who are new to “coming out.”

First and foremost, God does not want GLBT people to put themselves in an unsafe place. God does not want you to be reckless with your life or someone else’s life. And, as stated in Matthew 7:6, God does not want you to “cast your pearls before swine.” (NKJV) Please don’t misunderstand me. *Swine* here do not represent your loved ones or friends; *swine* include those who are pig-headed and have their minds in mental swill. God does not want you to put yourself in jeopardy where someone is going to physically, emotionally, mentally, or spiritually abuse you or victimize you. And, God does not want you in a church where the leadership butchers GLBT lambs or other innocent people.

Concerning disclosure, as described within the Holy Bible, at times Jesus himself purposely did not disclose who he was for three different reasons: 1) because the timing was not right; 2) because the people with whom he was surrounded were not in the right frame of mind; or, 3) because the people were not sufficiently prepared to receive that information. Similarly, God wants you to be circumspect and judicious in “coming out.” (Being circumspect and judicious includes being aware of the right time, the right set of circumstances, and preparing both yourself as well as others.)

God does not want you to be reckless in “coming out.” That is why you should first “come out” to your loved ones and friends. Yes, you need to be aware of possible ramifications. If you are in secondary school and your loved ones are going to throw you out of their home, then maybe the timing is not right and their frame of mind is not right for you to

come out to them without substantial and significant practical preparation on your part. If there is a strong possibility that your friends are going to betray your confidence at work to your employer, at school to a teacher or other students, or at church to a church leader or other congregational members, then maybe the timing is not right and maybe your friends are not in the right frame of mind for you to disclose to them who you are without significant and substantial practical preparation on your part.

Again, let me emphasize the phrase “significant and substantial practical preparation.” You were made in the image and likeness of God. Because God’s intelligence is part of that image and likeness, God wants you to act intelligently. God is smart. Therefore, God want you to be smart. God does not want you to deny who you are. However, God wants you to proceed methodically, with due diligence, one step at a time.

God does not want you to put yourself in an unsafe place. God does not want you to place yourself in, or remain in, an abusive or dangerous situation. God does not want you to put your well-being in jeopardy. If you are being bullied, or if your GLBT child is being bullied, then you must act swiftly to protect yourself or to protect your child. If authorities at school are not instantly responsive, and you are being harassed and threatened on a daily basis, or if your child is being harassed and threatened on a daily basis, then you must remove yourself or your child immediately from that dangerous situation.

As recorded in Matthew 5:39, Christ Jesus teaches us to turn the other cheek. However, he did not teach us to run up and get our faces slapped (or even worse). Fortunately, today, there are alternatives to dangerous school environments in home schooling or education in parochial and charter school settings or even at the local community college, which might better meet the specific needs of GLBT young people today.

It would be irresponsible if anyone encouraged you to put yourself in harm’s way. That is not what is meant here about “coming out.” You need to protect yourself as well as protect your loved ones and friends if they are not emotionally or mentally stable enough to receive the

information without putting you in harm's way or themselves in harm's way. If you are married to someone of the opposite sex, and your husband or wife is emotionally or mentally unstable, then you must not disclose who you are until you have made significant and substantial practical preparation for them to understand without blaming themselves.

God would have me write to you about truth, courage, and fear. Why does God want you to disclose who you are by "coming out" to loved ones and friends? Our God is a God of truth and not a god of lies. God does not want you to be less than whole. Being less than whole includes pretending that you are someone you are not, denying who you are, and not standing up for others who are less able to protect themselves. As recorded in John 8:44, Christ Jesus teaches us that it is Satan who is the father of lies and that lying is "his native language." (NIV) We need to speak the truth about ourselves without shame or embarrassment. It is unhealthy for us to live our lives in secret or for us to lie to those who are our loved ones and friends.

In our faith walk, we each should have a prayer life. In our prayer life, we should ask the Lord for direction and guidance relative to preparation, timing, and educating others concerning who we are. Of course, educating others requires that we first educate ourselves before we "come out."

I remember vividly the first time that I jumped off the high platform at our newly built Olympic-type local swimming pool when I was twelve years of age. I had to walk up each level of stairs. I had to walk the platform. I had to listen to the lifeguard tell me to point my toes. And, after surveying the swimming pool and whether or not someone was in my diving and landing path, I then closed my eyes and jumped. Yes, my heart raced before that jump. And, it raced in follow-up jumps, but each time my heart raced a little less until the jumping became natural and matter-of-fact. To be sure, I never learned how to dive gracefully or elegantly like the Olympic champion Greg Louganis. But, it felt good to me that I met my fears and was able to jump. So, too, is "coming out" for the first time like jumping into a swimming pool from a high platform. With each disclosure, however, it gets a little easier until you are able to say with confidence and trust in God: "I am gay," or "I am

lesbian,” or “I am transgender” and “my son is gay,” or “my daughter is lesbian,” or “my child is transgender.”

The first few times I jumped from that high tower, I forgot the advice of the lifeguard to point my toes and I paid the price for not being sufficiently prepared to enter the water. So, too, must you listen to the good advice from others before you take the plunge of “coming out.” My prayer for you, right now, in Jesus’ Name, is that you learn to trust in the Lord to lead, guide and direct you as well as to sufficiently strengthen you. When the Prophet Daniel entered the lions’ den,² his courage was not his own. Daniel had courage because he trusted in the Lord. The point that is being made here is that our strength and courage really comes from God. Like Daniel, then, you need to turn to the Lord concerning “coming out.” You will find that the Lord will turn to you and grant you sufficient courage and wisdom to “come out” as the person you were created to be.

For a Christian GLBT person, reconciliation requires understanding that the Holy Bible does not condemn homosexuals or transgenders. That is what this book is all about.

² You may read more about Daniel in the lions’ den in Chapter Six of the Book of Daniel in the Old Testament.

Introduction

Historically Controversial Human Rights Issues in the Christian Church

Over the centuries, there have been at least five major controversial human rights issues that have developed in the Christian Church, including:

- 1) Judaization and the rights of Gentiles;
- 2) Anti-Semitism and the rights of Jews;
- 3) Slavery and the rights of racial and ethnic minorities;
- 4) Female clergy and the rights of women; and,
- 5) Homosexuality and the rights of gays and lesbians.

Unfortunately, at different times in history, what many people have done relative to these issues is to select out particular verses and passages from the Bible to support less than whole and less than circumspect views on Gentiles, Jews, racial and ethnic minorities, women, and homosexuals. Have all such people been malicious and stupid? Unfortunately, no. Many were well-intentioned and earnest in trying to apply what they thought the LORD God Almighty wanted them to believe and how He wanted them to practice their faith. I wrote, “unfortunately,” because it would be much easier to attribute all anti-homosexual attitudes and biases to malice and stupidity.

To be sure, some readings of Scripture can result in two different conclusions even among intelligent people of good will. However, it is important to also remember that, although Christians of good will can disagree on an interpretation of Scripture relative to a serious issue, they should still remain in fellowship as they await a more perfect and complete understanding from their Lord.

Judaization and the rights of Gentiles

Because the earliest converts to Christianity were Jews, many of them struggled with the role of Gentiles in the church and the degree to which they would be permitted to retain their non-Jewish cultures, mores, and customs. When the twelve Apostles were sent out to preach, Jesus himself gave them these instructions: “Do not go among the Gentiles or enter any town of the Samaritans. Go rather to the lost sheep of Israel.” (Matthew 10:5-6 NIV)

Because Jesus also taught that “Salvation is of the Jews,” (John 4:22 KJV) many early Jewish converts to Christianity believed that in order for Gentiles to be received into the body of Christ (i.e., the Church), they would have to first convert to Judaism.

The Apostles had also heard Jesus refer to Gentiles as “dogs” (that is, lawless pagans, barbarians, and idolaters). Consider what Jesus said when the woman of Canaan had sought a healing from him for her daughter. At first, Jesus ignored her. However, after his disciples asked him to make her stop bothering them by sending her away (Matthew 15:23), Jesus told her that he had been sent to the house of Israel (Matthew 15:24) and not to the “dogs.” Jesus said to her: “It is not fair to take the children’s bread and throw it to the dogs.” (Matthew 15:26, RS)

Students of the Bible know that after the Canaanite woman’s response to the Christ was most worshipful: “Yes, Lord,” she said, “but even the dogs eat the crumbs that fall from their master’s table.” (Matthew 15:27) Jesus marveled at the faith behind her answer and, in response, he healed the daughter based on her mother’s faith. So, too, today, Christians who happen to be gay, lesbian, bisexual or transgender are

being healed by Christ Jesus, not of their sexual orientation or gender identification, but of the pain of rejection from their fellow Christians, who think of them as modern day “dogs” — which is to say, rejected by God, incapable of receiving salvation, and unable to take a place among God’s elect. This thinking, of course, is erroneous and incompatible with the entirety of Holy Scripture.

Early in Church history, the Apostle Peter also believed that Gentiles were unclean and impure. However, the Apostle Peter was then taught directly by God not to demean the people God chooses to save. The Apostle Peter was told, “Do not call anything impure that God has made clean.” (Acts 10:15b NIV) Later, that Apostle recounted his revelation to Cornelius, a Gentile at whose house Peter had been invited to stay:

“You are well aware that it is against our law for a Jew to associate with a Gentile or visit him. But God has shown me that I should not call any man impure or unclean.”

Acts 10:28 NIV

Even though our Lord had ministered to the Apostle Peter personally and directly when Peter “fell into a trance,” (Acts 10:10 NIV) he eventually succumbed to his old way of thinking as well as to the peer pressure from the legalists of his day. To be sure, without guidance from God’s Holy Spirit, the human mind cannot escape accommodating and assimilating legalism. It is impossible. Legalism, generally, is the brain’s natural default in order for it (the brain) to more easily interpret its environment. Religious legalism, however, is worse, because the people who entertain it erroneously think that God is on their side.

The Apostle Peter himself could not resist the thinking that Christian Gentiles needed to be fixed. To be sure, many other early Christians tried to impose Jewish traditions and customary laws on Gentile converts to Christianity, even going so far as to convince them of the necessity for all believers to follow Jewish practices, including circumcision:

Some men came down from Judea to Antioch and were teaching the brothers: “Unless you are circumcised, according to the custom taught by Moses, you cannot be saved.”

Acts 15:1 NIV

This is just like the men and women who currently teach the church that, “Unless you are heterosexual, according to the custom taught by Moses, you cannot be saved.”

Further, in Acts 15:5 (NIV), it is recorded:

Then some of the believers who belonged to the party of the Pharisees [who were the extreme legalists of that day] stood up and said, “The Gentiles must be circumcised and required to obey the law of Moses.” [brackets mine]

This is just like the men and women who currently teach the church that, “Homosexuals must be [made] heterosexual and required to obey the laws of Moses. They must be changed.”

The Apostle Peter’s entrenchment in legalism, nationalism, racism and elitism eventually became so detrimental to the early Christian movement that the Apostle Paul “opposed him to his face, because he was clearly in the wrong.” (Galatians 2:11 NIV)

Today, Christians who happen to be gay, lesbian, bisexual or transgender need to oppose those who are clearly in the wrong about who they are and what they can do, or cannot do, in the body of Christ.

I believe that, just as the Apostle Paul had to admonish the Apostle Peter almost 2,000 years ago for his unwillingness to fellowship with Gentile Christians by telling Peter that “he was clearly in the wrong,” (Galatians 2:11) so, too, should enlightened Christians rebuke the preachers, pastors, teachers, evangelists and so-called prophets of today for their unwillingness to allow full participation and involvement by Christian GLBT people in the modern Church.

When the Apostle Paul described his evangelistic team as co-laborers with mainstream leadership in the Lord's ever-so-great harvest field, he acknowledged that the hardships they endured included being regarded by the Church as "imposters" even though they were "genuine." (2 Corinthians 6:8 NIV)

Although Paul was personally called by our Lord to be an Apostle, he was regarded as suspect because he had not been discipled by Jesus Christ when he was in the flesh. He was also suspect because he was called to minister to Gentiles, who were the "dogs" of his day. The Apostle Paul was part of God's elite and, yet, he was often viewed by his fellow church leaders, at best, as a second class citizen of the Kingdom of God or, at worst, as no citizen at all.

Today, Christians who happen to be gay, lesbian, bisexual or transgender can relate to how the Apostle Paul and his evangelistic team members were viewed two thousand years ago. Today, they are: 1) rejected outright as imposters, even though they are genuine; or, 2) they are assigned to second class citizenship within the local church, permitted to sit in pews and donate our financial resources, but not permitted to minister to others with their God-given, and unique, talents and spiritual gifts.

Do you see how Judaization and the rights of Gentiles in the early church are applicable to the plight of modern day Christian homosexuals? This issue is every bit as relevant to Christianity and homosexuality as the very Bible passages that are used against homosexuals. Don't run to the verses in the Bible that are used against homosexuals without first running to the rest of the Bible. In order to be a good student of the Bible, we must hold the whole Bible while we simultaneously attend to its various parts.

Anti-Semitism and the rights of Jews

Later in church history, as Hellenist Christians gradually overtook Hebraist Christians in number, there was a shift from the Judaization of Christianity to de-Judaization. In Our Father Abraham: Jewish

Roots of the Christian Faith, Marvin R. Wilson notes:

Although a few Jewish Christians apparently still attended synagogue in [St.] Jerome's day (ca. A.D. 400), the parting of the way seems to have been largely finalized by around the middle of the second century. By the time of Justin Martyr (ca. A.D. 160) a new attitude prevailed in the Church, evidenced by its appropriating the title "Israel" for itself. Until this time, the Church had defined itself more in terms of continuity with the Jewish people; that is, it was an extension of Israel.³

Wilson traces how de-Judaization gradually gave way to anti-Judaism and even anti-Semitism:

In the fourth century, when Constantine made Christianity the official religion of the Roman empire, Jews experienced a further wave of discrimination and persecution. They lost many of their legal rights; they were not permitted to dwell in Jerusalem or to seek converts. In 339 [A.D.] it was considered a criminal offense to convert to Judaism. Several decades later the Synod of Laodicea ruled against Christians feasting with Jews, classifying those that did so as heretics. Around 380 [A.D.], Ambrose, bishop of Milan, praised the burning of a synagogue as an act pleasing to God.⁴

To be sure, Jesus addressed the Jews of his day as illegitimate heirs to the promise given to Abraham:

"If you were Abraham's children," said Jesus, "then you would do the things Abraham did. As it is, you are determined to kill me, a man who has told you the truth that I heard from God. Abraham did not do such things. You are doing the things your own father does."

John 8:39-41 NIV

³ Wilson, Marvin R. Our Father Abraham: Jewish Roots of the Christian Faith. William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, Grand Rapids, 1989, page 83. [brackets mine]

⁴ Ibid. page 95. [brackets mine]

“You belong to your father, the devil, and you want to carry out your father’s desire.”

John 8:44 NIV

“The reason you do not hear is that you do not belong to God.”

John 8:47 NIV

Yes, there is a rather sharp and bitter polemic against unbelieving Jews in the Bible, but, when found, it is spoken or written by other Jews (that, those who believed in Christ). As such, it was a family fight. Consequently, Gentiles should not take those passages and others like them out of their historic context and use them to justify their own anti-Semitism. They need to remember that in Romans, Chapter Eleven, the Apostle Paul teaches that God has not rejected the Jews (verse 1) and that all Israel will eventually be saved (verses 25-26).

It is recorded in Scripture that the chief priests and Jewish elders persuaded the crowd in Pontius Pilate’s presence to ask for the prisoner Barabbas to be released instead of Jesus and to demand Jesus’ execution. (Matthew 27:20) Finally, when Pilate washed his hands concerning Jesus’ fate, the Jewish crowd who condemned Jesus then responded, “Let his blood be on us and on our children [or, in other words, on us and on our descendants]!” (Matthew 27:24) [brackets mine]

Unfortunately, some nominal Christians have distilled from the Bible the idea that Jews are Jesus-killers and used it as their foundation for anti-Semitism. However, true Christians should be strongly opposed to anti-Semitism, since the family of Jehovah (Yahweh) includes our brothers and sisters who happen to be Jews. (By extension — so, too, must seemingly anti-gay passages be interpreted in their historic context and never used to bash gay people by straight people.) Be reminded that “there is neither Jew nor Greek [Gentile] ... for [we] all are one in Christ Jesus.” (Galatians 3:28 NIV) [brackets mine]

God is not done with the Jewish people or the nation of Israel. They are still among God’s chosen. Just as Christian homosexuals number among God’s chosen.

Do you see how anti-Semitism and the rights of Jews in the church are applicable to the plight of modern day Christian homosexuals? This issue is every bit as relevant to Christianity and homosexuality as the very Bible passages that are used against homosexuals. Don't run to the verses in the Bible that are used against homosexuals without first running to the rest of the Bible. In order to be good students of the Bible, we must hold the whole Bible while we simultaneously attend to its various parts.

Slavery and the rights of racial and ethnic minorities

Concerning slavery and human rights, students of the Bible could look at different passages in Scripture, especially within the first five books of the Bible (Torah or the Pentateuch⁵), to find verses that support slavery. For example:

Your male and female slaves are to come from the nations around you; from them you may buy slaves. You may also buy some of the temporary residents living among you and members of their clans born in your country, and they will become your property. You can will them to your children as inherited property and can make them slaves for life, but you must not rule over your fellow Israelites ruthlessly.

Leviticus 25:44-46 NIV

If a man beats his male or female slave with a rod and the slave dies as a direct result, he must be punished, but he is not to be punished if the slave gets up after a day or two, since the slave is his property.

Exodus 21:20-21 NIV

If a man hits his manservant or maidservant in the eye and destroys it, he must let the servant go free to compensate for the eye. And if he knocks out the tooth of a manservant or

⁵ The first five books of the Bible are called "Torah" by most Jews and "the Pentateuch" by most Gentiles.

maidservant, he must let the servant go free to compensate for the tooth.

Exodus 21:26-27 NIV

It is absolutely phenomenal that on the floor of the United States Congress in the 1830s, 1840s and 1850s many congressmen were in support of slavery. For example, on February 1, 1836, United States Senator James Henry Hammond said the following on the House floor concerning Black Americans:

The doom of Ham has been branded on the form and features of his African descendants. The hand of fate has united his color and destiny. Man cannot separate what God hath joined.⁶

In order to bolster their case that slavery should be the law of the land, many elected representatives held up passages like those previously quoted from Leviticus and Exodus, as well as those written by the Apostle Paul that express his tacit approval (or, seeming endorsement) of slavery. *For example*, the Apostle Paul stated:

Slaves, obey your earthly masters in everything; and do it, not only when their eye is on you and to win their favor, but with sincerity of heart and reverence for the Lord.

Colossians 3:22 NIV

The burden of my argument is not to point out how horrible or immoral slavery is. Civilized and cultured people already know that. Rather, it is to point out that, for the majority of time that Christianity has been on the earth, there also has been slavery and that many Christians either owned slaves themselves or condoned slavery (and even been a part of slave trading), and that nowhere in Scripture are Christians specifically forbidden from owning slaves.

⁶ Miller, William Lee. *Arguing About Slavery: The Great Battle in the United States Congress*. Alfred A. Knopf, New York, 1996, page 139.

This illustrates that a majority of Christians can be wrong a majority of the time, just as they have been wrong about GLBT people.

Nonetheless, as the children of God mature in Christ, each and every Christian can come to a more enlightened moral understanding relative to specific human rights issues involving racial and ethnic minorities as well as GLBT people.

Why should slavery not be the law of our land? Because it is inconsistent with the entirety of God's written Word. God has no preferred socioeconomic status and God makes no social distinction:

**There is neither Jew nor Greek, slave nor free, male nor female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus. [emphasis mine]
Galatians 3:28 NIV**

Likewise, why should anti-homosexual feelings not prevail within the Christian church? Because they are inconsistent with the entirety of God's written word.

Do you see how slavery and the rights of racial and ethnic minorities in the church are applicable to the plight of modern day Christian homosexuals? This issue is every bit as relevant to Christianity and homosexuality as the very Bible passages that are used against homosexuals. Don't run to the verses in the Bible that are used against homosexuals without first running to the rest of the Bible. In order to be a good student of the Bible, we must hold the whole Bible while we simultaneously attend to its various parts.

Female clergy and the rights of women

Concerning female clergy, even in this day and age there are some individuals who will not enter into a church where a woman is preaching, because they feel that it is against God's written Word and codified Will. Often, to justify their misogynistic position, they quote Bible passages such as the following:

Women should remain silent in the churches. They are not allowed to speak, but must be in submission, as the Law

says. If they want to inquire about something, they should ask their husbands at home, for it is disgraceful for a woman to speak in the church.

1 Corinthians 14:34-35 NIV

A woman should learn in quietness and full submission. I do not permit a woman to teach or to have authority over a man; she must be silent.

1 Timothy 2:11-12 NIV

Those who would quote such passages to support an anti-feminist viewpoint fail to realize that the distinct separation of the sexes in the Apostle Paul's day not only determined where women sat within the synagogue but also curtailed their opportunities for education and leadership as well. All society was distinctly different then. It was still a mostly patriarchal, male-dominated and male-dependent society that had been born out of hunter-warrior days, when brute strength alone provided the survival advantage and edge. However, things are much different now, at least in some parts of the world.

When I went to Brazil to do my seminar and workshop, a newspaper reporter asked me what I thought the future held for homosexual people in Brazil. I answered that not until women had equal rights and parity within the country could I hope for much progress to be made in the area of God-given human rights for homosexuals. When I go on missions trips to Tanzania in East Africa and to India, I note that men and women still sit in separate groups. To be sure, different cultures and societies throughout the world are at different stages in their development concerning these issues.

Perhaps the unique cultural situation regarding women that Paul was addressing in the previously quoted passages is no longer fully understandable to us (many Bible references to situations and cultural practices are no longer fully understandable). But, whatever he meant, because Scripture cannot contradict Scripture, these difficult passages

must be interpreted in the light of other Bible passages, which indicate parity of the sexes in God's eyes (such parity discussed later in Chapter One).

To be sure, the Apostle Paul's actual practice, which included an extensive use of female co-workers in the gospel, as well as the whole Bible's understanding of human, as both male and female made in God's image, must be factored in:

So God created man [not one male, but humanity] in his own image, in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them. [brackets mine]

Genesis 1:27 NIV

An enlightened view of gender includes an understanding of the following Bible verse:

[Christ Jesus said] "When the dead rise, they will neither marry nor be given in marriage; they will be like the angels in heaven."

Mark 12:25 (NIV)

During the 1950s and 1960s, I regularly attended the services of the then well-known Evangelist, Kathryn Kuhlman. She would come to the McCormick Place Convention Center in Chicago a few times each year. Every time that I saw her, she was flanked on the stage platform by as many as one-hundred seated men from the Full Gospel Businessmen's Association. She would say to the audience, "I know that some of you are wondering why I am standing here instead of one of these men." (She knew that there would be some in the audience who would object to having a female in such a prominent Christian leadership role.) She would then say, "If God can speak through a donkey, then He certainly can speak through Kathryn Kuhlman." (She was referring to Numbers 22:28-30, where it recounts that the Angel of the LORD spoke through Balaam's donkey.)

God is not a sexist. God has no gender preference. Consider the Old Testament roles of Miriam, Deborah, and Huldah and the New

Testament role of Anna as well as other female prophets referred to in the Holy Bible. Indeed, “there is neither Jew nor Greek, slave nor free, male nor female, for [we] are all one in Christ Jesus.” (Galatians 3:28 NIV) [brackets and emphasis mine]

Once, when I was doing my seminar and workshop, a male attendee responded when I reached this point, “Well, I tend not to count the Scriptures about Deborah, because she is an exception.” My response to him and to you is: “As we build our own personal theology based on Scripture, we must remember to factor in all exceptions.”

Do you see how female clergy and the rights of women in the church are applicable to the plight of modern day Christian homosexuals? This issue is every bit as relevant to Christianity and homosexuality as the very Bible passages used against homosexuals. Don’t run to the verses in the Bible that are used against homosexuals without first running to the rest of the Bible. If we are going to be good students of the Bible, we must hold the whole Bible while we simultaneously attend to its various parts.

Homosexuality and the rights of gays and lesbians

To be sure, individual Bible verses have been used to foster ethnocentrism, racism, and sexism. However, it should be clear that only half-truths are presented when the Bible is not taken in its entirety. That is why, rather than building church doctrine upon only a few selected verses, Christians need to hold the whole Bible while they simultaneously attend to its various parts. They must do this as they seek to understand the fundamentals of their faith. They must understand that the Bible is a divinely inspired book, and that there is a continuity in it unequaled and unparalleled by any other book, especially when one considers the numbers of individuals who were involved in its production. It is only when Scripture is taken in its entirety that one comes to a more perfect and complete understanding of the whole truth on any particular topic or issue.

One’s approach to Bible study, interpretation, and application needs to be hermeneutically-sound if one is to derive and practice the truer, or

higher, meaning of Scripture. For the sake of clarification, hermeneutics is herewith defined as “the science and methodology of interpretation, especially of the Bible.”⁷ In other words, students of the Bible must resist using only a few words or verses of Scripture to represent the entirety of God’s Word, just as they should resist only using a half-truth to represent the whole truth: “Study to show thyself approved unto God, a workman that needs not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.” (2 Timothy 2:15 KJV) Quality study involves time, effort and energy and a consistent interpretation based on the entirety of God’s written Word.

If we selectively pull out a verse here or there, and build a theology around it, we really are not bringing honor and glory and praise to the LORD God Almighty. What we are doing is furthering a personal, political and/or social agenda that cannot be pleasing to the LORD. Such has been the case with Bible passages that have been used to support Judaization, anti-Semitism, opposition to female clergy, slavery and the general idea that one group of human beings is superior to another. Though I believe that the writings of the Bible were under holy guidance (meaning, they were authored by the Holy Spirit), selective dependence on single verses or passages will lead to error in overall interpretation and general application. While individual Bible verses express absolute truth, sometimes they do not have universal application.

For example, the Bible verses that are commonly used against homosexuals to tell them that their sexual orientation is an abomination to God have been interpreted out of context. Their historical and literary contexts are ignored. In other words, they have been interpreted without holding the whole Bible while simultaneously attending to its various parts. This, of course, I will attempt to prove through careful analysis and synthesis of those passages against their historical and literary backdrops (that is, in their historical and literary contexts). includes understanding passages immediately adjacent to them as well as those located in other parts of the Bible that provide insights to their intended, as well as actual, meaning(s). This will require an understanding of passages immediately adjacent as well as those located in other parts of the Bible, which provide insights to

⁷ Webster’s II New Riverside Dictionary, Riverside Publishing Company, 1984, page 577.

intended meaning. Sometimes, when there are not adjacent verses or verses elsewhere in the Bible that will help with meaning, we must turn to historical context in order to elucidate the truer meaning.

Thus far, we have gone through Judaization and the rights of Gentiles, anti-Semitism and the rights of Jews, slavery and the rights of racial and ethnic minorities, and female clergy and the rights of women.

Discussing these issues and related passages in the Bible is just as important as explaining the so-called clobber passages that are used against homosexuals, against homosexuality and against the homosexual orientation. Sometimes, those who use Christian apologetics to defend the doctrine of reconciliation between Christianity and homosexuality are accused of having their own so-called “gay theology.” This is not true. We have theology and our understanding of it. Rather, it is those who accuse us of having a gay theology that are the ones who have a gay theology, because of the importance they place on convincing others that what they believe about homosexuality is true.

If you are a Gentile Christian and a Jewish Christian came up to you and began to focus on passages in the Bible that put Gentiles in second class status, you would know immediately that the person had his or her own personal, political and/or agenda.

If you are Jewish and a Gentile Christian came up to you and began to focus on passages in the Bible that put Jews in a bad light, perhaps relative to their disobedience to Yahweh, or relative to the crucifixion of Jesus Christ, you would know immediately that the person had his or her own personal, political and/or social agenda.

If you are a racial and/or ethnic minority and someone from the racial or ethnic majority came up to you and began to focus on passages in the Bible that directly or indirectly support a caste system or slavery, you would know immediately that the person had his or her own personal, political and/or social agenda.

If you are a female and a male came up to you and began to focus on passages in the Bible that directly or indirectly support women as second class citizens or, even worse, as the property of males, you would

know immediately that the person had his or her own personal, political and/or social agenda.

Likewise, if you are gay, lesbian, bisexual or transgender and a heterosexual comes up to you and begins to focus on passages in the Bible that are interpreted to be against homosexual, bisexual or transgender people, you would know immediately that the person has his or her own personal, political and/or social agenda.

Do I have an agenda in writing this book? Yes, of course. This work is dedicated to the untold number of gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender people who have been rejected, abused, tormented and murdered in the name of the LORD and to those who have injured themselves or taken their own lives because of the pain from their rejection and victimization. The message of this work is simple for those who are still alive: Take back your lives through Jesus Christ and be triumphant. Today, in Jesus Christ, you can have new hope!

Sometimes, when I share my seminar and workshop with groups who believe they already know all there is to know about the topic of Christianity and homosexuality, attendees want to get immediately to the half dozen or so passages in the Bible that seem to be anti-homosexual. In their zeal, they often fail to gain insights from other passages in the Bible that are EQUALLY IMPORTANT to this issue. For example, 1 Corinthians 1:27-29 states:

{27} But God chose the foolish things of the world to shame the wise; God chose the weak things of the world to shame the strong. {28} God chose the lowly things of this world and the despised things — and the things that are not — to nullify the things that are, {29} so that no one may boast before the Lord.

According to God, no flesh should boast, neither heterosexual flesh nor homosexual flesh. Boasting is an outward manifestation of pridefulness. And, God hates pridefulness.

What do the Anti-Gentile Church, the Anti-Semitic Church, the Racist

Church, the Misogynist and Anti-Female Clergy Church, and the Homophobic Church all have in common? They have in common the sin of arrogance. Arrogance is a manifestation of pridefulness. God hates all forms of pridefulness. And, God hates all forms of arrogance, including doctrinal arrogance. We are to love and respect our Roman Catholic brothers and sisters. We are to love and respect our Baptist brothers and sisters. We are to love and respect our Apostolic brothers and sisters. And, every other Christian denomination and group that have not been named here, we are to love and respect.

Chapter One: The Seeming Dilemma

The God of the Bible is No Respector of Persons

One of the things that we are taught through God's Holy Word is that God is "no respecter of persons." To be sure, this is a commonly-used phrase in the King James Version of the Bible. (See Acts 10:34; 2 Samuel 14:14; 2 Chronicles 19:7; Romans 2:11; Ephesians 6:9; and 1 Peter 1:17.) Other translations render that phrase as God does "not show favoritism" or that He has "no partiality." In other words, the Godhead is not impressed by our outer human appearance. (Really, the Creator is not even impressed by our individual human personalities.)

As a trained biologist,⁸ I can attest that much of human personality is biochemically-inclined, physiologically-predisposed, and endocrinologically-predetermined. Indeed, genetically-determined hormone levels impinge upon our brain and cause it to act and react the way it does. That is one of the reasons that children are so very much like their parents relative to personality and temperament. More often than not, adult children display virtually the same animated behavioral profile, or lack thereof (which is to say, "flat affect"), as their parents. Regardless, in the final analysis, there should be no value judgment associated with whether someone has an "animated" or a "low key" personality. God really does not care. He understands that much of the human personality is predisposed and not chosen.

Instead, what God cares most about is what is within our individual hearts. We find this as a good object lesson in 1 Samuel 16:1-13. As

⁸ B.S. and M.S. in Biology from Loyola University (Chicago), one year in a doctoral program in Anatomy at the University of Illinois Medical Center, and one year in a doctoral program in Biology and Biochemistry at the University of Chicago. My earned doctorate is a Ph.D. from Arizona State University and is in Education with specialization in Language, Literacy, and Linguistics.

recorded there, the prophet Samuel evaluated the sons of Jesse relative to whom God was going to choose as the second king of the nation of Israel. As the first son, Eliab, passed by, Samuel looked at him and said, “My, this is an impressive individual. Surely, this is the one whom the LORD is going to choose! This must be the one!” (1 Samuel 16:6) [paraphrase] However, the LORD responded to Samuel by instructing him that He is “no respecter of persons,” and that He does not evaluate outward expression as human beings evaluate it:

The LORD said to Samuel, “Do not consider his appearance or his height, for I have rejected him. The LORD does not look at the things man looks at. Man looks at the outward appearance, but the LORD looks at the heart.”

1 Samuel 16:7 NIV

In other words, the LORD looks at the inner core of an individual and the intent of his or her heart. According to God, the true stature — or, measure — of a person is determined by how much love is in his or her heart. It is very important for us to understand that our human person is merely an outward expression that may or may not reflect our inner core, attitude, or intent accurately. That is why God is not impressed by our outward expression, and that is why He shows no favoritism based on it.

Indeed, our physical appearance is not impressive to God. Our personality is not impressive to Him. Additionally, He is not impressed by our sexual orientation. He does not really care about any of these things, unless, of course, we are not acting in a godly manner in relation to them, or we are not acting in keeping with what it is that He would have us to do relative to them. To be sure, abuses related to our physicality — such as vanity, self-loathing, deception (that is, presenting ourselves as other than who or what we are), and sexual addictions — are repugnant to the LORD.

Human personhood includes outward expression, physical appearance, genetic makeup, personality, and sexuality (that is, sexual identity, sexual orientation and, in the case of bisexuals, sexual preference). Spiritually speaking, *true man* is really the expression, or person, of

God, since, collectively, we constitute the body of His Christ. What I mean by the last statement is that, though we are not God and can never be God, when we invite Him into our lives, and when He lives within us and we do His Will, then He really is our true self. In other words, our true *being* and only real identity come from God. As the Apostle Paul clearly stated, it is in God that “we live and move and have our being.” (Acts 17:28 NIV) And, as John the Baptist declared when he saw Jesus, “He must increase, but I must decrease.” (John 3:30 KJV) Paradoxically, it is in losing ourselves to God that we end up finding ourselves.

An Enlightened View of Gender

We need to come to a better understanding — or, an enlightened view — of gender, which includes understanding these two verses from the Bible:

There is neither Jew nor Greek, slave nor free, male nor female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus. [underlining mine]

Galatians 3:28 NIV

When the dead rise, they will neither marry nor be given in marriage; they will be like the angels in heaven.

Mark 12:25 NIV⁹

Ultimately, God does not evaluate us in terms of our physical reality. To be sure, He is aware of who and what we are, but He does not evaluate us on the basis of features or characteristics that have neutral value. He does evaluate us in terms of our reactions to our environment and earthly circumstances. More importantly, however, as Christians the LORD looks at the righteousness that has been imparted to us through the blood of His only-begotten Son, our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.

⁹ See also Matthew 22:30 and Luke 20:35-36

As attested to in the previously-quoted Mark 12:25 , when we go to heaven, we are not going to be gendered males or females. Rather, we will be “like the angels in heaven.” Often, this boggles our minds, because as human beings we have a tendency to think only in terms of images and allusions that relate to human referents — or, in other words, in terms that relate to what we now see and with which we are currently familiar. Of course, such thinking is understandable, but we really do need to elevate our thinking by focusing on things supernal:

Since, then, you have been raised with Christ, set your hearts on things above, where Christ is seated at the right hand of God. Set your minds on things above, not on earthly things. For you died, and your life is now hidden with Christ in God. When Christ, who is your life, appears, then you also will appear with him in glory.

Colossians 3:1-4 NIV

Let me ask this of you: In the reality of God, are we spiritual beings or physical beings or both? In 1 Corinthians 15:49-50 KJV, we read:

And as we have born the image of the earthy, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly. Now, this I say, [brothers and sisters], that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; neither doth corruption inherit incorruption. [brackets mine]

To be sure, the testimony of the whole Bible is that human beings are both spiritual and physical. However, what we now wear is a corruptible body, — a body that perishes. But, one day we will have a new body, — a body that is incorruptible and that does not perish. And, that body will be glorious, for we shall be wearing the glory, or brightness, of God (that is, we will be reflecting His glory)!

I believe very strongly in the triune nature of God: God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit. As I have searched the Scriptures, I find everything that points to that particular doctrine being sound as well as providing a solid foundation for understanding the one

Godhead. Some people misinterpret the phrases “God the Father,” “God the Son,” and “God the Holy Ghost” to mean that Christians are polytheistic, because they worship three gods. That could not be farther from the truth. All authentic Christians, independent of what they call themselves, believe in one God, regardless of semantics or how they express their beliefs.

I also believe that there is a triune nature to His created (we are “His created” collectively as well as individually), and that the triune nature for each individual consists of “spirit, soul, and body,” as described in 1 Thessalonians 5:23 (NIV).

Thomas L. Constable, Professor of Bible Exposition at Dallas Theological Seminary, defines this threefold nature as follows:

The *spirit* is the highest and most unique part of [a human being] that enables [the human being] to communicate with God. The *soul* is the part of [the human being] that makes [the human being] conscious of himself [or herself]; it is the seat of [the] personality. The *body*, of course, is the physical part through which the inner person expresses himself [or herself] and by which he [or she] is immediately recognized.¹⁰

So, the body is the form in which the individual takes shape — that is, the person’s appearance. We know what shape we are in right now (that is, how we presently appear), but we do not yet know what we will look like in heaven. In response to the question of our heavenly appearance, the Apostle John wrote:

Dear friends, now we are the children of God, and what we will be [what we will look like] has not yet been made known. But we know that when he [meaning, Christ Jesus] appears, we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is.
[brackets mine]

1 John 3:2 NIV

¹⁰ Constable, Thomas L. “1 Thessalonians.” In The Bible Knowledge Commentary by John F. Walvoord and Roy B. Zuck (eds.), Victor Books, USA, page 710.

In other words, one day we will have a glorious body and heavenly form just as our Lord and Savior now has a glorious body and heavenly form. In this way, we await the redemption of our bodies:

**The creation waits in eager expectation for the [children] of God to be revealed. For the creation was subjected to frustration, not by its own choice, but by the will of the one [that is, God] who subjected it, in hope that the creation itself will be liberated from its bondage to decay and brought into the glorious freedom of the children of God. We know that the whole creation has been groaning as in the pains of childbirth right up to the present time. Not only so, but we ourselves, who have the firstfruits of the [Holy] Spirit, groan inwardly as we wait eagerly for our adoption as [children], the redemption of our bodies.
[brackets mine]**

Romans 8:20-24 NIV

A few verses farther, Scripture states that God's servants are "predestined to be conformed to the likeness of His Son." (Romans 8:29) That is exciting! Praise the Lord! Praise God that we have this to look forward to!

God relates to His people in terms they can understand. The invisible God does not have a penis and testes. In all probability, God presented Himself to primitive people in masculine terms so that they (who easily understood the concept of strength as in brute strength) might better relate to His power and might. My point in this section is that God is not as gender-focused as we happen to be.

Organized Religion

To date, organized religion has really served as a stumbling block, hindering many homosexuals from coming to terms with the Creator as well as coming to an understanding of who the Creator is as our Father through His only-begotten Son, our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. This stumbling block exists in contemporary Christianity, in particular, but

also in Judaism as well, though it has been less difficult for many Jews to reconcile their religion with homosexuality. For example, in the December, 1993 issue of Bible Review, Rabbi Jacob Milgrom provides us with one Judaic perspective of the prohibition of same-sex activity, as recorded in Leviticus 18:22, in his article entitled, “Does the Bible Prohibit Homosexuality?”

From the Bible we can infer the following: Lesbians, presumably half of the world’s homosexual population, are not mentioned [in Leviticus 18:22]. More than ninety-nine percent of the gays, namely non-Jews, are not addressed. This leaves the small number of male Jewish gays subject to this prohibition. If they are biologically or psychologically incapable of procreation, adoption provides a solution [to compensate for any loss of their seed].¹¹

Many rabbis would tell Gentiles that the God of the Bible only requires Gentiles to obey the rules, regulations and commandments, in what Christians call the Old Testament and Jews call the Tanakh, up through the time of Noah. Noah is considered a Gentile by Jews, because the Semitic people technically originated through Noah’s son, Shem. Therefore, Noah is a Gentile and not a Jew. “Noachide Laws” refer to laws in the Bible up through the time of Noah.

For this reason, Rabbi Milgrom added this footnote to his work:

It is true that some rabbis would include homosexuality under the Noachide Laws, binding on all humanity, but this is a later interpretation, not the plain meaning of the biblical text.¹² [“Noachide Laws” are laws in the Bible up through the time of Noah.]

To be sure, Rabbi Milgrom does not take into consideration the Christian perspective that God’s grace fulfills as well as supersedes the Law of

¹¹ Milgrom, Jacob. “Does the Bible Prohibit Homosexuality?” In Bible Review, December 1993, page 11. [brackets mine]

¹² Ibid, page 11. [brackets mine]

Moses, nor does he take into account the role that male temple cult prostitution played in causing the LORD God Almighty to originally institute the Levitical prohibition against same-sex behavior. (Male temple cult prostitution, Levitical Law and God's grace will be treated in Chapters Two and Three.) Additionally, keep in mind that in Judaism there are Orthodox and Conservative perspectives as well as Reform perspectives, and that I do not mean to suggest that all three are capsulized by Rabbi Milgrom's comments.

Here, I would like to point out that there is a difference between the phraseology "same-sex behavior" and the "homosexual orientation." People who are uneducated, under-educated or miseducated about the homosexual orientation often conclude that sexual activity itself determines whether someone should be called homosexual or heterosexual. They fail to realize that same sex activity does not determine the homosexual orientation. Behavior does not determine who is homosexual or heterosexual. Not all people who have had an opposite-sex experience are heterosexual. Not all people who have had a same-sex experience are homosexual. Not all people who are heterosexual have had an opposite-sex experience. And, certainly, not all people who are homosexual have had a same-sex experience. Behavior does not determine who is homosexual or heterosexual, nor for that matter, who is supposedly ex-gay or supposedly ex-straight.

Concerning Christian perspectives, the Roman Catholic Church has historically taken the hard-line stance that sexuality is for procreation and procreation alone. Thus, the Roman Catholic Church is opposed to masturbation, birth control, and homosexual acts, because they do not serve a reproductive purpose or process. In the 1986 document, "On the Pastoral Care of Homosexual Persons," the Sacred Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith states that the homosexual "inclination itself must be seen as an objective disorder" (which, of course, is in contradistinction to the prevailing psychiatric and psychologic view). This document was prepared by Joseph Cardinal Ratzinger, who was then Prefect of the Sacred Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith. Of course, some of you may recognize the name of Joseph Cardinal Ratzinger as the Cardinal who would become Pope Benedict XVI.

In a 1975 document, entitled "Declaration on Certain Questions Concerning Sexual Ethics," the Sacred Congregation for the Doctrine of

the Faith earlier put forth the idea that, for some individuals, homosexuality is an “innate instinct.” I find it very curious that those two words, “innate instinct,” are used in that document, and that, despite their use, homosexuality is still condemned. If one takes “innate instinct” to its logical conclusion, one should recognize that God would not condemn people for a condition with which they have been born. Indeed, such a position is not only contradictory, it is illogical as well.

In many ways, Roman Catholicism has distanced itself from homosexuals, and many homosexuals have felt unwelcome in Roman Catholic churches, However, Roman Catholicism really has not been responsible for the extreme activism against homosexuality that has been demonstrated by many Protestant sects, denominations and local churches, especially through so-called evangelical fundamentalists.

Now, I consider myself a fundamentalist in many ways. And, I consider myself an evangelical. However, the word fundamentalism has taken on such a negative connotation relative to the Religious Right, and its insistence on certain exclusionary views, that I often prefer the word foundationalism over fundamentalism. To me, a Christian “foundationalist” is someone who has the foundation for his or her belief-system in the Bible, not only believing the Bible to be the inspired written word of God (and acting as such), but also holding the whole Bible and its entire message while simultaneously attending to its various parts. To be sure, this holistic approach must be taken to discern the truths necessary for building sound and solid personal theologies as well as church doctrines.

Although Roman Catholicism may view homosexuals as incurably disordered, many fundamentalists would view homosexuals as depraved heterosexuals (that is, perverted versions of God’s standard). They think of us as people who can and should be cured. Since they do not understand us as homosexuals, they end up thinking that the basic nature of all humankind is heterosexual and, for that reason, homosexuality needing to be cured. When you think about the so-called ex-gay movement, it really was not born out of Judaism or Roman Catholicism but, rather, out of evangelical Protestantism. Those who have bought into the notion of our heterosexual conversion think that they can fix us or make us “whole” through such things as aversion therapy, hormone therapy, prayer, and reeducation as well as special opportunities for parental figure nurturing and bonding.

When I was in Uganda in 2003 to do my “Christianity and Homosexuality Reconciled” seminar, I had to conduct it within a fenced compound into which attendees were admitted only if someone on the premises knew them personally. The climate in Uganda as well as in many other countries of the world is still hostile to homosexuals and certainly to the idea of human rights for homosexuals.

In fact, many economically emerging nations are hostile to human rights and civil rights for homosexuals. There continues to be a wave of propaganda in a few emerging nations that is similar to the propaganda of the Nazi war machine against Jews. Citizens of economically emerging nations are being mis-educated to believe that the homosexual agenda is in place in their countries in order to recruit their children into homosexuality and that homosexuals are typically involved in such depraved acts as eating feces. Such vulgar psychopathologic behaviors are erroneously touted as uniquely representative of homosexuals and homosexuality.

The Protestant ministers who promulgate this disinformation fail to mention that all vulgar psychopathologic behaviors such as child molestation and child pornography as well as bizarre and extreme adult paraphilial sexual practices are found in both heterosexual and homosexual subpopulations. Examples of such vulgar and extreme sexual behaviors can be found on pornography web sites that appeal to both psychopathologic heterosexuals as well as psychopathologic homosexuals.

People who export homophobia to economically-emerging nations do not realize that there are insufficiently organized human rights and civil rights initiatives in such countries to protect homosexuals from being disemboweled, raped, hanged, mutilated, decapitated and burned alive. People who export their own homophobia to economically-emerging nations are, at best, unwitting tools and, at worst, willing accomplices, of demonic forces. Unfortunately, the systematic extermination of homosexuals is desired in some economically-emerging nations even today.

Obviously, heterosexuals who view homosexuals as perverted versions of God’s standard have not walked in our shoes. The overwhelming majority

of homosexuals would tell them (if they would only ask us) that as we were developing, maturing, and “growing up,” we would have given anything to be like them. Why? Because no one would actually choose to be despised or looked at as depraved and perverted. Nobody wants to be rejected by the majority of society. And, even though other people have been oppressed and rejected, I believe that there is an extra burden for homosexuals, because, for example, though ethnic and racial minorities often experience rejection from a prejudiced majority group, they can generally turn to their own families for nurture and support. For many homosexuals, such nurture and support are simply not available. To be sure, many — if not most — homosexuals throughout the world have been rejected even by their own family members. My own parents rejected me, and I certainly am not an exception.

And, so, the advice I share with those of you who may have homosexual family members is that you need to accept them for who and what they are, continue to love them, and serve as a support system for them. Without the support of family-of-origin members, many homosexuals have taken their own lives, because they could not bear the emotional and mental pain from the rejection of those they loved as well as those whose love they desired and needed. Homosexuals learn to deal with the rejection at the same time that it leaves a hole in our hearts. Fortunately, Christ Jesus fills the gap through His love and acceptance. It states in Scripture, “When your father and mother reject you, the Lord will take you up.” (Psalm 27:10)

I am sixty-two years of age at the time of this writing (2010), and I have been socialized by gay and lesbian culture (I am not saying “lifestyle” but “culture”). I have known gay and lesbian people for nearly half a century. Unfortunately, I have known several people who have committed suicide, including those who found the rejection by their family members to be much too great an emotional pain to endure and burden to bear. Certainly, I believe that there is individual responsibility for such acts of desperation, but I also believe there is societal and familial responsibility as well. And, I believe that many people will be asked by our Lord and Savior, “Why did you keep these people from Me? Why did you hinder them from approaching My cross? Why did you not share the Gospel with them in nonjudgmental, noncondemning, and loving ways?” I think it will be very difficult for those who hear such questions at God’s judgment seat

(or, “Great White Throne”¹³) to answer in a way with which they themselves will be pleased, let alone our LORD.

Previously, Christian gays and lesbians who wanted to attend church had only two options: Either they could go to a church that accepted them because it watered down Scripture due to theological liberalism; or, they could go to a church which threatened expulsion if they were honest about who they really are. Today, Christian gays and lesbians need to attend churches whose spiritual culture and climate are conducive to personal growth without compromising the gospel message. I am hopeful that such communities of faith will continue to develop during this third millennium after the birth of Jesus Christ.

The Need for Healing Homophobia

Homophobia is the fear and/or hatred of homosexuals. Sometimes homophobia is based on ignorance. Sometimes it is based on malice. And sometimes it is based on inner fears of being gay and not being willing to be identified as such. What follows is a short quiz for homosexuals that might help them determine if they themselves are homophobic (Figure One).

Quiz for Homosexuals

- 1. Do you think that it is better when gays and lesbians are more “straight acting,” because “men should be men” and “women should be women?”**
- 2. Do you cringe when a gay or lesbian character is shown on TV or in a movie?**
- 3. Do you wish you were not gay or lesbian?**
- 4. Do you pretend that you are straight?**
- 5. Do you only desire to have shared sexual experiences with others of the same sex and not shared companionship?**

¹³ Revelation 20:11, King James Version.

- 6. Are you afraid that others will reject you if they find out that you are gay or lesbian?**
- 7. Do you purposely refrain from speaking with a gay or lesbian person in a work setting or public place, because others might conclude that you are gay?**
- 8. Do you have indiscriminate sex with others?**

A “yes” to more than two of the above eight questions should indicate to a homosexual that he or she may be harboring homophobic attitudes or exhibiting signs and symptoms of homophobia.

Figure One

It is no wonder that homosexuals become self-loathing due to social pressure from homophobia. To be sure, it is all right to not want to suffer emotional pain from rejection, victimization, harassment and persecution because of one’s sexual orientation. However, it is not all right — from the standpoint of one’s own personal emotional health and well-being — to wish not to be homosexual when one is. We should not desire to change a trait that should be viewed as blameless as skin color or as neutral as being right-handed or left-handed. In fact, homosexuals should celebrate that their sexual orientation contributes to their uniqueness, since God foreknew what they would be:

For you created my inmost being, you knit me together in my mother’s womb. I praise you because I am fearfully and wonderfully made; your works are wonderful, I know that full well. My frame was not hidden from you when I was made in the secret place. When I was woven together in the depths of the earth, your eyes saw my unformed body. All the days ordained

for me were written in your book before one of them came to be.

Psalm 139:13-16 NIV

With regard to additional possible causes, homophobia is sometimes manufactured as a means for going along with the crowd, or — in the case of certain televangelists and politicians — as a rationale for asking for money from the crowd. Yes, homophobia has become a political agenda, because it is a money-maker. From World War II up through most of the 1980s, two of the biggest money-making issues that drew huge financial support, especially for the ministries of many televangelists, were 1) communism and 2) homosexuality.

As communism fell, televangelists lost one way to pull in money from viewing audiences, who were made to fear communism’s potential encroachment, terror, and threat looming on the horizon. However, after the fall of communism, the issue of homosexuality still remained. The existence of homosexuality became a convenient agenda for many public figures who wanted to enlarge their power base and increase their financial resources. I would submit to you that some people understand and even accept homosexuality and, yet, would speak out against it pretentiously, because speaking out furthers their own personal political agendas and increases their public support.

People who fear and/or hate homosexuals need to understand that sexual behavior (meaning, the sexual act) does not determine who is straight or gay. As mentioned earlier, behavior does not make a person gay, just as it does not make a person straight. Just as one can be a heterosexual and remain celibate, so also can one remain a homosexual and never act on his or her sexual orientation. Indeed, one could even be involved in same-sex behaviors and still be heterosexual. For example, some individuals in prison are involved in same-sex behaviors although their sexual orientation is definitely not homosexual. Also, many homosexuals get married in order to help avoid the emotional pain from the social stigmatization of being homosexual. Even though they lived as heterosexuals, they certainly were not heterosexuals. Vaginal intercourse does not make someone heterosexual.

It is my hope that, eventually, society comes to understand that homosexual does not mean “one who engages in same-sex behaviors.” To be sure, the perspective I share is in agreement with that expressed by the American Psychological Association, which states: “Sexual orientation is different from sexual behavior because it refers to feelings

and self-concept. Persons may or may not express their sexual orientation in their behaviors.”¹⁴

Overall, “sexual orientation” is a better phrase to describe homosexuality than “sexual preference.” “Sexual preference” connotes choice and, for most homosexuals, there is no choice concerning their particular orientation. The only time a same-sex relationship is a choice is when a bisexual decides to actively, and exclusively, seek a companion of the same sex. For people who are gay, and not bisexual, the only choice involved in their sexual orientation is whether or not to act on their natural desires. And, seeking same-sex companionship and intimacy for gay people is just as natural as seeking opposite-sex companionship and intimacy is for straight people.

In a publication from the Oregon Psychological Association (also published and distributed by the Arizona Psychological Association), the following statement is made in response to the question, “Is the homosexual orientation a choice?”

Research indicates that sexual orientation is not a choice and cannot be changed for most people. Sexual orientation involves much more than performing sexual acts. It involves powerful inner feelings, self-concept and social identity.

Psychologists generally agree that people who accept and integrate their sexual orientation (accept and act in accord with their inner feelings) are psychologically better adjusted than those who don’t. Thus, homosexually-oriented people can refrain from acting upon their feelings and from letting others know of their sexual orientation, but only at a substantial cost to their personal well being.¹⁵

I will now also include an eight question quiz for heterosexuals. Although I personally authored the previous one on homophobia, the

¹⁴ “Answers to Your Question About Sexual Orientation and Homosexuality,” American Psychological Association, 750 First Street NE, Washington, DC 20002-4242.

¹⁵ “Answers About Homosexuality,” prepared by the Oregon Psychological Association and distributed by the Arizona Psychological Association, 202 East McDowell Road, Suite 170, Phoenix, Arizona, 85004.

following eight questions are adopted from a twenty-question “Quiz for Heterosexuals,” authored by Dr. Martin Rochlin in the 1970s. This quiz is designed to help heterosexuals think outside of their own sexual orientation as well as challenge them as to what degree their own sexual orientation was, or is, a choice.

Quiz for Heterosexuals

1. What do you think caused your heterosexuality?
2. When, and how, did you first decide you were a heterosexual?
3. Is it possible that your heterosexuality is just a phase that you will grow out of?
4. To whom have you disclosed your heterosexual tendencies and how did they react?
5. Why do so many heterosexuals feel compelled to seduce others into their sexual orientation?
6. Because a disproportionate number of child molesters are heterosexual, do you really want to expose your children to heterosexual teachers?
7. Why do heterosexuals place so much emphasis on sex?
8. Why are there so few stable spousal relationships within the heterosexual community?

Figure Two

True heterosexuals would not think of changing their sexual orientation, because they cannot. So, too, true homosexuals should not think of changing their sexual orientation. Unfortunately, however, because of the prejudices and biases of a society whose majority is heterosexual, many homosexuals end up closeting themselves and pretending (and even longing) to be heterosexual.

It is unfortunate that many homosexuals have accepted the shame and guilt assigned to them by society. This shame and guilt causes them to feel less than whole and often act in terms of a split-consciousness.

Homosexual people need to have more positive gay role models after whom they might pattern their thinking, feeling, and behavior. As long as society enforces “don’t ask, don’t tell, don’t-be-yourself” policies, gay people will continue to suffer, and even die, needlessly.

Unfortunately, the victims of homophobia are not only gay people. They also include homophobes. Hate is an insidious thing that — regardless of the outward damage it may do to others — helps to kill the inner self of those who permit it access to their hearts, minds and souls. In the final analysis, it is somewhat queer to me that so many have abandoned the foundational Christian principle of love in order to judge and condemn others based on traits and characteristics about which they know so little. Perhaps one way that homophobia proves that some people are not really born of God is through the hate and fear from homophobia itself. Unfortunately, homophobia often reproduces itself. Fortunately, there is a cure for homophobia.

Deviations from the Norm

On a number of occasions, I have heard the following statement uttered by so-called Christian fundamentalists to combat the possible social acceptance of homosexuality: “God made Adam and Eve, not Adam and Steve.” The ignorance of that statement astounds me both as a Christian and as a biologist. Because it is simplistic and reductionist, the statement fails to take into consideration the multivariate nature of this world. It fails to take into consideration that there might be a third kind or gender, not neuter but “gay.”

There is a whole category of Christians who not only want nothing to do with science but who would like to discredit all science that does not fit into their own personal world-view, which world-view is based on their own interpretations of the Bible. It is important to remember that Galileo was convicted of heresy by the church in 1633 for following the teachings of Nicolaus Copernicus that the earth revolved around the sun

and that our solar system is not the center of the physical universe. After his conviction, Galileo “was placed under house arrest for the rest of his life.”¹⁶

Many unusual phenomena related to sexual identity occur within the natural world. For example: 1) Certain avians and fish undergo spontaneous sex reversals and are even capable of reproduction in their newfound gender. 2) Various unfertilized insect eggs develop into males. 3) The females of specific flying insects possess “XY” sex chromosomes and the males possess “XX.” 4) An all-female species of fish has been discovered, the Amazon molly, whose eggs develop through parthenogenesis (stimulation of ova without the customary fusion of male and female cells). And, most importantly, 5) a wide range of human intersexuality exists that fits on a continuum between normal male and female “genital identities” (the word normal used here in the sense of “population-normed,” or “that which occurs most frequently”).

The issue of human sex identity is a complex one. There are many legitimate questions regarding the genetic (or, chromosome) status, phenotypic (or, anatomic) status, psychological (or, gender identification) status, and sociological (or, society-assigned) status of sex identity. In humans, sex identity may be determined by chromosome composition (generally, XX for female and XY for male). However, genetic testing is not always the best indicator of sex. Why? There are a fair number of individuals who fall into intersex categories. For instance: 1) those with abnormal chromosome composition or genetic code variances; 2) genetic males who differentiate into anatomic females due to androgen inaction or insensitivity; and, 3) genetic females who differentiate into anatomic males because of exposure to abnormally high amounts of androgens either *in utero* from their mothers’ hyperactive adrenal glands or *post partum* from their own hyperactive adrenal glands. (See Appendix A for a more detailed classification of intersexuality.)

Perhaps you have heard or read that the basic human form is female. That is not entirely true or accurate. What is true is that it is virtually impossible to determine the sex of a developing human embryo five

¹⁶ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nicolaus_Copernicus (as it appeared in 2010)

weeks after conception. At that stage, external genitals include an undifferentiated glans area that will eventually become the penis in a male or the clitoris in a female. Undifferentiated labioscrotal swellings on either side of a general opening, known as a urethral groove, will either eventually fuse on the midline to form the scrotum in a male or remain separate as they develop into the labia majora (“outer lips”) in a female.

At five weeks after conception, internal genitals include undifferentiated sex glands (also known as gonads) that will develop into testes in a male or ovaries in a female. In the case of an anatomic male, the testes usually make their descent into the scrotal sac from one to three months before birth. Internal genitals in the five-week-old developing XX or XY embryo also include two sets of tubes: 1) the paramesonephric or Müllerian ducts and 2) the mesonephric or Wolffian ducts. In the case of most developing males, the paramesonephric ducts degenerate and the mesonephric ducts develop into the vasa deferentia (singular: vas deferens) or ducti deferentia (singular: ductus deferens), the major sperm-carrying tubes that connect the testicles to the urethra. In the case of most developing females, the mesonephric ducts degenerate and the paramesonephric ducts develop into the Fallopian tubes (oviducts or uterine tubes) as well as the uterus.

The external and internal changes described in the previous paragraphs are all mediated by various genes which trigger the release and/or inhibition of various sex steroid hormones and enzymes that convert inactive sex steroid hormone forms into active forms. In developing males, one of the most important regulating genes in the processes described is known as the SRY gene, — the so-called Sex-determining Region of the Y chromosome.¹⁷ In developing males, this gene triggers a cascade of events between the fourth and seventh weeks after conception that results in the production of testosterone by the sex glands as they begin to differentiate into testes. Without the production of testosterone, or its conversion into a special active form known as dihydrotestosterone, internal and external genitals simply would not virilize — which is to say, they would remain somewhat ambiguous,

¹⁷ Haqq et al. “Molecular Basis of Mammalian Sexual Determination: Activation of Müllerian Inhibiting Substance Gene Expression by SRY.” *Science*, Volume 266, December 2, 1994, pages 1494-1500.

resulting in indeterminate primary and secondary sexual characteristics. (Primary sexual characteristics are those with which you are born, and secondary sexual characteristics are those that you begin developing at the onset of puberty.)

Generally, the SRY gene is found on the short arm of the Y chromosome in a developing Y sperm. (By Y sperm, I mean a sperm that contains a Y chromosome.) However, sometimes it translocates (fragments and moves) and ends up spliced into an X chromosome in a developing X sperm. (By X sperm, I mean a sperm that contains an X chromosome.) When the SRY gene is missing from the Y chromosome of a sperm that has fertilized an egg, the resulting XY individual generally develops a feminine anatomic form. When it has translocated and is on the X chromosome of a sperm that has fertilized an egg, the resulting XX individual usually develops a male anatomic form (provided succeeding events, which the SRY gene initiates, proceed as they normally would). Hence, intersexuality includes XY females and XX males as well as individuals with ambiguous external and/or internal genitalia.

Since as many as 0.1% of the population fall into intersex status categories,¹⁸ there may be more than six million people on earth whose sexual identities are in question using one basis for classification or another. Since these people are not “real” Adams or “real” Eves (the definition of “real” here left in question), are we to assume that intersex individuals were not created by God? No, we should never use: 1) the presence, absence, or size of external genitalia; 2) numbers and kinds of chromosomes; 3) sex hormone blood levels; or, 4) skeletomuscular dimensions to classify “real” men and “real” women.

Though sex identity is not equivocal to sexual preference (however, from a statistical standpoint, the two are positively correlated), the point I am trying to make is that not all things are as black and white as some Christian fundamentalists would like them to be. Today, within the biological community there is legitimate debate about the biological basis of homosexuality in the light of recent scientific work: 1) that

¹⁸ Wilson, Jean D., M.D. “Sex Testing in International Athletics.” Journal of the American Medical Association, Vol. 267, No. 6, 1992, page 853.

correlates sexual orientation in males to a locus on the X chromosome;¹⁹ 2) that links brain morphology and sexual orientation;²⁰ and, 3) that demonstrates statistical significance in favor of a genetic contribution to sexual orientation using identical and fraternal twins.²¹ Thus, it is more than likely that some seemingly unnatural and sinful behaviors (“unnatural” and “sinful” from the standpoint of Christian Fundamentalism) are actually part of nature. Can we assume that God made only some people and not others? Are we to assume that “God made Adam and Eve but not Adam and Steve [nor Ada and Eve]?” No, simply stated, God created all of humanity. God created each one of us.

In our discussion of what is natural (that is, what occurs in nature), I will digress a little and share this anecdote with you:

My grandmother had a chicken farm and, on that farm, as a child, I noted that once in a while there was a rooster who wanted to be a brooding hen. What he would do was bother the hens, trying to steal their eggs so he could sit on them. Because the hens usually would not allow that to happen, he would end up finding a nice smooth stone somewhere to sit on. Also, I noted within the coop that, once in a great while, there would be a hen that was transformed into a rooster. Later, in my biological studies I came to understand that, though every hen has two gonads (meaning, the two sex glands that are specialized as ovaries in most female animals), only the right gonad in the hen is differentiated into an ovary while the left gonad remains undifferentiated, or unspecialized. Later on in the hen’s life, if the right gonad is destroyed by a disease process, then the left gonad can either develop into an ovary or a testis. If it develops into a testis, the hen becomes transformed into a fully-functioning rooster, which is even capable of fertilizing eggs produced by the other chickens that were born hens.

In order to be a hermaphrodite from a human standpoint, one must have at least some functioning testicular tissue as well as some

¹⁹ Hu, Stella *et al.* “Linkage between sexual orientation and chromosome Xq28 in males but not in females.” *Nature Genetics* 11, November 1995, pages 248-256.

²⁰ LaVay, Simon. “Brain Structure Difference Between Heterosexual and Homosexual Men.” *New England Journal of Medicine*, Vol. 162, Issue 9, 1995, pages 145-167.

²¹ Whitam, Frederick L, Milton Diamond, and James Martin. “Homosexual Orientation in Twins: A Report on 61 Pairs and Three Triplet Sets.” *Archives of Sexual Behavior*, Vol. 22, No. 3, November 3, 1993, pages 187-206.

functioning ovarian tissue. It does not matter what other body parts the individual has, or does not have. As long as these two criteria are met, then the person is considered a true hermaphrodite. Additionally, there are individuals who might appear to be hermaphrodites but are actually pseudohermaphrodites.

Interestingly, there is one group of pseudohermaphrodites (known as guevodoques in Spanish), who, because they are born appearing as if they are anatomic females, are raised and socialized as females; however, at the onset of puberty, testosterone surges within them, eventually transforming them into anatomic males. Perhaps the most curious thing is that, although these individuals have been socialized as females, many of them end up functioning as males within society and even fathering children. Again, the point I am trying to make is that sexual identity is not as simple as many people would have us believe. Also, it is important to note that, in this case, nature takes precedence over nurture.

There really is no good legal definition of gender. Certainly, one cannot define a male as someone having two testes. Does that person stop being a male if he must have a bilateral orchiectomy (both testes removed) because of cancer? Should that person no longer be considered a male? No, I think you see how ridiculous that would be. Does a woman who has had a total hysterectomy stop being female? No, from a biological standpoint, maleness or femaleness is first and foremost a state of mind.

So much of who we are, and what we are, is provided to us by the brain. Indeed, this particular organ is actually the primary sexual organ. Naturally, sexual differences exist within the brain as a result of varying hormone levels. And hormones impinge upon both the structural and functional development of the brain. For example, it is well known within the scientific world that a high concentration of androgens (which category of hormones includes both testosterone and dihydrotestosterone) tends to suppress the development of the left cortex of the brain during embryonic and fetal development in males, contributing to population differences between males and females in languaging abilities and spatial conceptualization.²²

²² Kimura, Doreen. "Sex Differences in the Brain." *Scientific American*, September 1992, page 124.

It may come as a surprise to you, but even the so-called “male” and “female” hormone categories are misnomers, because both males and females produce both androgens and estrogens. It is the relative proportions of these two categories of hormones that differ and not so much the hormone categories themselves. Generally speaking, in the adult human population, 90% of the sex steroids in males are androgens and 10% are estrogens; concomitantly, 90% of the sex steroids in females are estrogens and 10% are androgens. (Just as “androgen” is a category of sex steroid hormones, so, too, is “estrogen” a category of sex steroid hormones, including β -estradiol, estrone, and estriol.)

Substantial scientific investigation has been conducted to elucidate the complex differences between males and females relative to hormones and brain functioning. Yes, hormones act upon our development. Beginning the fourth week after conception and continuing through the seventh week, a cascade of hormones kicks in, causing a rather unisex-looking little embryo to begin manifestly changing from the fifth through eighth weeks either into the male anatomic form or continuing on (in what might appear to some) as the female anatomic form. However, not only is the appearance of external genitals determined hormonally, brain morphology (or, brain structure) is also determined by the presence or absence of the same sex steroids and their varying levels as well as relative proportions. And, because these hormones greatly impact on our mental and emotional development, they influence the development of gender identity and sexual orientation during embryonic and fetal life. The evidence leads one to conclude that how we view ourselves and how we evaluate others as potential sexual partners and spousal companions are biologically predetermined through hormones.

In a 1995 issue of *Development Psychology*, one article states that for some women who took diethylstilbistrol (DES), a synthetic form of estrogen that was once used to help stabilize pregnancy, there is a greater incidence of lesbianism within their daughters.²³ That is not to say that all lesbianism is the result of DES. Rather, there may be some contributing factors to gender identity and sexual orientation relative to

²³ Meyer-Bahlburg, Heino *et al.* “Prenatal Estrogens and the Development of Homosexual Orientation.” *Developmental Psychology*, 31, 1995, pages 12-21.

even maternal hormones that are being produced or artificially administered during pregnancy. The authors emphasize:

Many investigators see the sex hormones as the likely major biological factor in the development of sexual orientation because sex hormone action underlies [early] sexual differentiation and the development of the secondary sex characteristics. As studies of the association of systemic sex hormone levels during adolescence and adulthood with sexual orientation have yielded largely negative results, especially in men, most of the psychoendocrine research on homosexuality is currently focused on prenatal hormones.²⁴

Despite some recent scientific breakthroughs, in many ways we still live in a medieval world. Thus, scientific explanations for the causes of gender identity and sexual orientation will not be worked out easily or quickly. Personally, I believe that what happened in my own development is that certain hormones kicked in during embryonic and fetal life, which hormones contributed not only to my outward appearance but also to the anatomy and physiology of my brain — which, in turn, contributed to the formation of my own neural grids for personal gender identity and sexual orientation within my fetal brain. (Such neuratomic grids, or brain fabrics, determine how we view others as well as ourselves.) Consequently, I am homosexual. Interestingly, though I did not have the terminology to describe my innermost feelings then, I viewed myself as homosexual as a prepubescent child, even as early as six or seven.

What makes you personally heterosexual or homosexual, I do not know. I think it is possible that the cause may vary for different individuals. Perhaps there are some cases that are environmentally-caused, some psychologically-caused, others genetically- and/or hormonally-caused. However, with some psychotherapeutic exceptions, I do not think that the causes should really matter. Rather, what I do think should matter is that no one become enslaved to sexuality or to fears concerning it.

²⁴ Ibid., page 12. [brackets mine]

So, there still remains a dilemma, then, for many people who are Christian, who would like to be Christian, or who would like to continue in their Christianity, relative to the issue of homosexuality. To them, our anomalous condition (that is, our homosexuality) is considered sinful, perverted, and disgusting. Additionally, they believe that our condition is considered an abomination by the LORD God Almighty.

To help understand anomalous conditions in general, from the biological standpoint I think that we can look to intersexuality to serve, by extension, as a neutral model (or prototype) for homosexuality. Did God not create intersexuals (that is, people for whom biologic sexual identity is somewhat hazy)? Of course, He created them! Do others have the right to determine for individual intersexuals which sexual intimacies are normal for them or to whom they should look for a normal sexual partner or spousal companion? Indeed not! They neither have the right nor the knowledge to do so.

Though some people might say, “Intersexuality is a direct result of the Adamic Fall (meaning, iniquity and sin), and that is why intersexuals exist,” I would point them to the passage in the Bible where the Apostles turned to Jesus and asked, “ ‘Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?’ ” (John 9:2 NIV) You see, in the Apostles’ minds, only a direct link with intergenerational iniquity or personal sin could explain the man’s blind condition. Our Lord clearly answered them by saying, “Neither this man nor his parents sinned, but that the glory of God might be made manifest in his life.” (John 9:3) In other words, Jesus was saying that there are anomalous conditions that are neither intergenerational nor personal in origin.

To be sure, there are those who would argue that because Jesus went on to heal the blind man so, too, will he heal homosexuals of their homosexuality. The answer to the question of whether or not homosexuals need to be healed of their homosexuality will be carefully considered based on Scripture in the chapters to follow.

In bringing this chapter to a close, I would like to add that just as most people consider vision the ideal condition in contrast to blindness, so, too, do most consider heterosexuality the ideal condition in contrast to homosexuality. However, some blind people actually consider their

blindness a gift from God. Likewise, so do some homosexuals consider their sexual orientation a gift from Him as well.

As we prepare for study in the following chapters of this book concerning Bible passages that have traditionally been used against homosexuals, homosexuality and the homosexual orientation as well as transgenderism, I would like to add the following:

When studying the Holy Bible, we need to hold the whole Bible while simultaneously attending to its various parts. We should never translate, interpret or apply individual Bible verses in isolation! I emphasized this already, and I will continue to emphasize this in the chapters to follow.

When studying the Holy Bible, we need to remember that “pure religion” does not contradict true science and that true science does not contradict pure religion. For the sake of clarification, science is not a bad word. Science simply means “objective knowledge” and “factual understanding.” Also for the sake of clarification, religion is not a bad word. Religion is “the practice of our faith.” I like the way the New American Standard Bible renders James 1:27, which states:

Pure and undefiled religion in the sight of *our* God and Father is this: to visit orphans and widows in their distress, *and* to keep oneself unstained by the world.

In other words, we are to share our resources with those who are the most vulnerable, and we are to resist demonic and fleshly temptations. We are to learn as much as we can about ourselves through science, so that we can correctly apply religion in principle, ethically and morally, with analysis through deductive and inductive reasoning, as well as in good conscience.

When studying the Holy Bible, we need to understand context, because — as every Bible school student has been taught — “to proof text without context is pretext.” Not only is it true for real estate that “location, location, location” are the three most important considerations, so too is it true in Bible study that “context, context,

context” are the three most important considerations. The various segments of the Holy Bible are framed by the contexts in which they were written, including: historical context, social context, cultural context, political context, literary context and linguistic context.

The following questions need to be answered for in-depth Bible study:

- 1. To whom was a passage written?**
- 2. What kind of people were the original intended recipients?**
- 3. What was their society like and how was it stratified?**
- 4. What were the daily activities and practices of the people?**
- 5. What type of civil and/or religious government did they have?**
- 6. Why was a passage written?**
- 7. What was the intended meaning?**
- 8. How do cross references within the Bible help to elucidate the truer meaning of a passage?**
- 9. What is the etymology, or origin, of each Hebrew, Aramaic and Greek word used in the Bible passage?**
- 10. What did the word(s) mean when written?**
- 11. Do the words have application to contemporary situations and settings?**
- 12. How does the immediate context help us to uncover word meaning or multiple meanings.**

Taking the answers to all twelve of these questions into consideration will help us to understand the meaning of various Bible verses when they were written as well as correctly apply them, or not apply them, to contemporary circumstances and situations.

Chapter Two: Sodom and Sodomites Revisited

Introduction

In this chapter, the story of Sodom is recounted in order for us to come to a better understanding of what is represented by it as well as by other Biblical references to it and to the ill-chosen word sodomite.

Abraham Pleads for Sodom

Many of you are already familiar with the story of Sodom. Ideally, it would be helpful if you took a few minutes to reread the introduction to it in Genesis 18:20-33 before you continue reading this chapter. There, you will find that Abraham pleaded with the LORD God Jehovah (Yahweh) to spare Sodom on behalf of his nephew Lot. He asked the LORD to spare the city if fifty righteous people could be found in it.

In Hebrew, Genesis 18:24 looks like this:

אוֹלֵי יֵשׁ חַמְשִׁים צְדִיקִים, בְּתוֹךְ הָעִיר; הֲאֵף תִּסָּפֶה
וְלֹא-תִשָּׂא לְמַקּוֹם, לְמַעַן חַמְשִׁים הַצְּדִיקִים אֲשֶׁר
בְּקִרְבָּהּ.

In Genesis 18:24, “Tza-da-keem” צְדִיקִים and “Ha-Tza-da-keem” הַצְּדִיקִים refer to “righteous [people]” and “the righteous [people],” respectively. Tza-da-keem and Ha-Tza-da-keem can also translated as “innocent [people],” and “the innocent [people].”

The LORD said to Abraham, “All right, if there are fifty righteous within the city, then I will spare the city.” Abraham was delighted, of course, and quickly moved to ask the LORD to consider forty-five: “Will you spare the city of Sodom if there are only forty-five righteous?” And the LORD said, “Yes.” So, Abraham continued to barter with God from forty-five to forty to thirty to twenty and, finally, to ten. Although the LORD’s patience may have been tried, He ultimately answered, “For the sake of ten, I will not destroy Sodom.” Thus, the deal that Abraham worked out with the LORD was that the LORD would spare the city if ten righteous could be found within its walls.

At the time of Abraham’s conversation with the LORD, righteousness was not yet contingent on adherence to the rules, regulations, and ordinances of Levitical Law found in the Pentateuch or Torah (that is, the first five books of the Bible), because Levitical Law had not yet been given by God to the children of Israel. To be sure, Levitical Law was not put into effect until the time of Moses, more than four centuries after Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob:

The law [of Moses], introduced 430 years later [meaning, after the length of time the Israelite people lived in Egypt], does not set aside the covenant previously established by God [with Abraham] and thus do away with the promise [God made to Abraham]. [brackets mine]

Galatians 3:17 NIV²⁵

Instead of adherence to Levitical Law, righteousness from the time of Abraham until the time of Moses was based entirely on faith in the LORD, as it is based in these New Testament times. For the sake of clarity, faith is herewith defined as “believing in the LORD and acting unwaveringly on that belief.” From Scripture, we know: that faith is a gift from God (Ephesians 2:8); that faith comes from hearing (or, reading) the good news of salvation through Jesus Christ (Romans 10:17); that without faith it is impossible to please the LORD (Hebrews 11:6); and, that Jesus Christ is “the author and finisher [or, perfecter] of our faith.” [brackets mine] (Hebrews 12:2 KJV)

²⁵ See also Genesis 15:1-21 and Exodus 12:40-41.

Scripture clearly teaches that Abraham had faith and that righteousness was imputed to him because of his faith. (Romans 4:20-22 and James 2:23) From our knowledge of what happened to Sodom, it should be clear that the city did not even have ten people who had faith—and, thereby, possessed righteousness—in the LORD God Almighty, Yahweh. The people of Sodom were considered wicked or guilty by the LORD God Almighty. They were considered wicked or guilty, because they worshiped false gods.

The Biblical Story of Sodom

Upon reading Genesis 19:1-15, we learn that two angelic visitors came to Sodom and that Lot saw the visitors and beckoned them into his home, cautioning them not to spend the night in the town square. Why? Town squares then were much like older downtown areas of many cities today. They were sometimes dangerous and hostile, especially to identifiable strangers. Once the angels were inside Lot's home, it is recorded that the people of the city gathered together and called out, "Send the two visitors out that we may *know* them." (Genesis 19:5 KJV)

Let's look at the Hebrew of the Masoretic text (or, the traditional text) for Genesis 19:4:

טָרָם, יִשְׁכָּבוּ, וְאֲנָשֵׁי הָעִיר אֲנָשֵׁי סֹדֶם נָסְבוּ
עַל-הַבַּיִת, מִנְעַר וְעַד-זֶקֶן : כָּל-הָעָם, מִקְצֵה.

Interestingly, the King James Version of the Bible does a very good job in its rendering of Genesis 19:4. It translates 19:4 as follows:

But before they lay down, the men [translated from the Hebrew word (above) *Enosh* אֲנָשֵׁי] of the city, [even] the men [again, from the Hebrew word *Enosh* אֲנָשֵׁי] of Sodom, compassed the house round, both old and young, all the people [translated from the Hebrew word *Am* עָם] from every quarter.

If only the Hebrew word Enosh אֲנוֹשׁ was used in Genesis 19:4, then I might concede that it was only the males who gathered together outside of Lot's house. But it would only be a concession, since the Hebrew word Enosh אֲנוֹשׁ can mean either “males” or “people.” However, since the Hebrew word Am עַם is also used later in the same verse in the phraseology, “all the people from every quarter,” it can be interpreted that both adult males and females — young adults and older adults — came from all parts of the city to descend upon Lot's house.

Let's now look at the Hebrew of the Masoretic text (again, the traditional text) for Genesis 19:5:

וַיִּקְרְאוּ אֶל-לוֹט וַיֹּאמְרוּ לוֹ, אַיִה הָאֲנָשִׁים אֲשֶׁר-בָּאוּ
אֵלֶיךָ הַלַּיְלָה; הוֹצִיאֵם אֵלֵינוּ, וַיַּדְעָה אֹתָם

Even though you may not have been able to identify the second to the last word in the preceding Hebrew version of Genesis 19:5 (in red above), it is a verb form of the word ya-daw' that has been translated in the King James as “that we might know.”

Let's have a simple lesson in language that is relevant to this discussion before I discuss the Hebrew word yadaw.

If I asked you to pronounce the English word that is spelled “B – O – W,” you might pronounce it “bow” with a long –o or “bow” with a diphthong –ow. You would not know how to pronounce it unless you saw the word in context. If you pronounced the word “bow” with a long –o, you would still not know the meaning of the word unless, again, you took context into consideration. Bow could mean “the ribbon in someone's hair” or it could be referring to “that by which you shoot an arrow.” If you pronounced the word “bow” with a diphthong –ow, you would still not know the meaning of the word unless, again, you took context into consideration. Bow could mean “the front, or forward part, of a ship,” or it could mean “bending at the waist.” In a way, B – O – W in English is representative of all Hebrew words. You really don't know how to pronounce a written Hebrew word unless you see it

in context and you really don't know the meaning of a Hebrew word unless, again, you read it in context.

In Genesis 19:5, the second-to-last Hebrew word from which the word “know” is derived is ya-daw' ידע — reading the characters from left to right as yod י, dalet ד, and ayin ע, all three of which together can be transliterated as ya-daw', ya-duh', or ya-dah'.

Most words in English are multinyms, which means that almost every word in English has multiple meanings and nuances, which can only be determined when the word is studied in context. What is true for English is also true for Hebrew. For example, in English, the word “cleave” can mean “to join together,” but it can also mean “to separate.” In Hebrew, the word “qadesh” can mean “holy” or, depending on context, it can also mean, “something pretentiously holy” or even “unholy.” The Hebrew word ya-daw' is somewhat like the English word date, which can mean “day of the year,” “innocent prearranged social engagement,” or, more colloquially, a “sexual encounter between a prostitute and his or her customer.”

Ya-daw' ידע has multiple meanings, too! Ya-daw' ידע has at least three possible meanings: 1) to know cognitively or intellectually; 2) to experience intimately in consensual sex; and, 3) to rape. What determines the exact meaning of this word — and the overwhelming majority of Hebrew words, for that matter — is the context in which the word is found.

For example, when ya-daw' ידע is used in Genesis 3:22 (“to know good and evil”), its meaning is “to know cognitively or intellectually.” When ya-daw' ידע is used in Genesis 4:1 (“Adam knew Eve”), its meaning is “to experience intimately in consensual sex.” And, when ya-daw' ידע is used in Genesis 19:5 and Judges 19:25, its meaning is “to rape” (and is translated as such in the American Standard and New International Version translations of Judges 19:25 but not Genesis 19:5). Then, “so that we may *know* them” (Genesis 19:5 KJV) really means “to know *carnally* by brute force” — or, more specifically in this context, “so that we might *rape* them.”

Anyone who tries to make the story of Sodom just a story about getting to know someone intellectually is doing the written word of God an injustice. The story of Sodom is not about getting to know people intellectually. The story of Sodom is not even about consensual sex between two adults. The story of Sodom is about intended rape, which is always violent and brutal. And, the story of Sodom is not about rape just between males but the intended rape of two angelic visitors by all of the adult townspeople. Even if I conceded that it may only be referring to the males of the city, it is still referring to rape. How can anyone confuse consensual sex with rape?

Naturally, Lot was horrified by this for a number of reasons, but especially because these visitors were guests within his own home. People at that time respected and honored the Law of Hammurabi, which dictated that, when you extended hospitality to visitors, you agreed to provide them protection even at the cost of your own life as well as the lives of your immediate household. As a result, Lot offered his daughters to the townspeople, but the townspeople refused them. Anyone who tries to make the story of Sodom solely an issue of hospitality is doing the written word of God an injustice. The story of Sodom is not just about hospitality.

After Lot offered his daughters to the men of the city, what happened next is that the angelic visitors struck the men blind, and Lot and his family immediately left the city. The city was then destroyed. Unfortunately, the story of Sodom is often linked erroneously to modern-day homosexuality.

In order to better understand the events just described, we need to recognize that what was intended by the townspeople of Sodom was not consensual intimacy but, rather, brutal group rape. Fortunately, we are living in a time when we understand that rape is not so much a sexual act as it is a psychopathologic action meant to demean and victimize others by overpowering them. Rape is based on the desire to dominate or domineer as well as to demonstrate one's seeming superiority over others who are, often, physically weaker and, therefore, especially vulnerable. Rape is intended by the psychologically sick and criminal mind to draw attention to the victim's supposed gross vulnerabilities,

infirmities or defects at the same time that it draws attention away from the perpetrator's own feelings of inadequacy, inferiority, and lack of control. Rape is an act of violence, domination and rage meant to victimize others in order to humiliate and control them. Again, the issue in the story of Sodom is not an issue of consensual sexual activity or intimacy between two people but an issue of violence and victimization through group rape.

If there is anyone reading this book who has been the victim of rape, I pray, right now, in the Name of Jesus Christ, that our Lord take away any guilt or shame that you may have unwittingly accepted and that our Lord imbue you with the perfect love that will enable you to forgive the perpetrator of this horrible and heinous crime against you. Please know that your forgiveness of the perpetrator is a process and will take time. Don't be hard on yourself if you have not yet found forgiveness in your heart toward the perpetrator of this crime. This perpetrator committed a crime against you as well as the loved ones who grieve for you. I encourage you to talk not only with your pastor and your loved ones but also a trained psychotherapist to help sort through your traumatized emotions.

In addition to what I have just described relative to a contemporary understanding of rape, it is also essential for us to know that warring peoples (in this case, barbarians) throughout most of ancient history commonly raped conquered peoples, both women as well as men. They did this in order to indicate that they (the conquerors) had complete statutory control over those vanquished as well as to warn other potential aggressors of their ferocity.

Many insights to the Genesis 19 account of Sodom are provided by a very similar set of circumstances within the Bible that begins in Judges 19:1 and ends at Judges 20:5. Although I will now share some of the parallels between the two accounts and draw some analogies, I encourage you to read the two accounts for yourself, now, before you continue to the next paragraph.

In the Judges 19 account, we find a Levite (a male of the tribe of Levi) traveling with his concubine. In today's language, and in this context,

concubine might be considered a married man’s “mistress” or sexual partner, who has no primary spousal legal rights or entitlements; or, concubine could also be referring to a member of a harem of women as well.

As the two are traveling, they happen upon the city of Gibeah, where they were cautioned not to stay in the town square, like the angels who visited Sodom. They were cautioned by an older resident of Gibeah, who said, “No, please do not stay in this dangerous place. Instead, come to my home, where I will provide for you and protect you.” So the Levite and his concubine ended up going home with the man of Gibeah.

Then, as in Sodom, Scripture reports that the people of Gibeah — described in Judges 19 as the “offspring of Belial [or, in Hebrew, ben-ee be-lai-aye-el בְּנֵי-בְלִיעַל] — gathered around the residence, where the Levite and his concubine were staying, and demanded that the host send out the Levite in order that they might *know* him — יָדַע (ya-daw’) here again — or, as indicated previously, that they might *rape* him. In response, the old man of Gibeah replies, “Oh, no, please do not do so; take, instead, his concubine and my daughter and use them accordingly, but do not do so to the male visitor.” Eventually, they send out the Levite’s concubine, and the people of the city end up raping and ravaging her until she swaggers to the doorstep of the home of the old man from Gibeah, where she falls down dead.

To be hermeneutically sound, an accurate interpretation of Genesis, Chapter 19 must consider Judges 19:1-20:5. For the sake of clarification, hermeneutics is defined by Webster’s II New Riverside Dictionary as “the science and methodology of interpretation, especially of the Bible.”²⁶

The parallels that exist between Genesis 19:1-15 and Judges 19:1-20:5 are summarized in Figure Three, on the following page.

²⁶ Webster’s II New Riverside Dictionary, Riverside Publishing Company, 1984, page 577.

Parallels between Genesis 19 and Judges 19

Sodom Account	Gibeah Account
two visitors or travelers:	
two angels	a Levite and his concubine
cautioned not to spend the night in the town square:	
by Lot	by an old man of Gibeah
demands of group rape by the men of the city and two women offered instead	
Lot's two virgin daughters	the old man's virgin daughter and the Levite's concubine
ידע same Hebrew word (ya-daw') used in:	
Genesis 19:5 "know" (KJV)	Judges 19:25 "raped" (NIV)

Figure Three

A very important principle in understanding difficult passages in the Bible is expressed by the statement, “Scripture interprets Scripture.” In other words, as we read and study a difficult passage in the Bible, we will eventually discover that there are helpful explanations as well as keys to unlock its truer meaning provided in other passages located elsewhere in the Bible. Consequently, it is very important that we all read and study the written Word of God completely or we may fall into the same trap that many people fall into by stopping short of a full understanding and, then, sharing that imperfect knowledge of truth, or incomplete understanding, with others. However, if we study God’s entire written Word, the Holy Spirit will guide us to the whole truth that is to be found in Scripture. Remember, there is great continuity in the Bible from beginning to end and we must hold the whole Bible, while we simultaneously attend to its various parts, in order to understand and apply the truth contained therein.

To be sure, it is in Judges 20:5 that we are provided tremendous insight relative to the intentions of the men of Gibeah and, also, transferably so, to the intended rape of the two angelic visitors in Sodom. In retelling the story when he returned home, the Levite states:

During the night the men of Gibeah came after me and surrounded the house, intending to kill me. They raped my concubine, and she died.

Judges 20:5 NIV

Historians would consider the Levite a primary source: Simply stated, he was there when it happened. When the Levite himself describes what would have happened to him, he said, “The men of the city surrounded the old man’s residence, intending to kill me.” The Levite’s statement tells us that the men of Gibeah had fully intended to kill him by brutally raping him. That they had succeeded in doing this to his concubine is proof of their evil intention. Also, we need to understand that this intended raping of a man — especially in the case of Judges, Chapters 19:1-20:5 — was not by homosexuals: As a homosexual male, let me assure you that there are no homosexual males that I know of who are capable of raping a female. That the people of Gibeah would have stepped out of their heterosexual “nature” (that is, their instinctual

predisposition or heterosexual orientation) to victimize the Levite should be clear, much like modern-day prisoners step outside of their heterosexual nature to rape fellow inmates. Additionally, what is also provided by the story of Gibeah is that the intended male-male group rape recounted in Genesis 19 was not an isolated activity specific to Sodom, but, instead, more widespread throughout the land at that time.

Relative to the depiction of women in the Sodom and Gibeah stories, I think it important to emphasize that most ancient societies subscribed to the notion of female inferiority and subordinancy. Indeed, women were regarded no better than property or chattel (as they still are in many places throughout the world today). That the Bible recounts these stories does not mean that God condones or that Scripture endorses the poor treatment of women. Rather, the Bible is retelling events that occurred and how they occurred.

Remember also to consider these stories in their historical and literary contexts and not in the context of the desperately needed current movements toward equality and fairness for women. Also, remember that most of the great strides that women have made in modern-day societies were really not made until the 20th century and that women are still treated as property in many economically-emerging nations and unenlightened societies throughout the world today.

In comparison to murder, whether rape is the ultimate or penultimate act of contempt for another person, you must decide for yourselves. Neither act takes into consideration the victim's desires or wants; and, both acts are intended to brutalize others. Regardless of your decision, it should be clear to you that the story of the intended brutal rape in Sodom has nothing to do with loving, monogamous, committed relationships between consenting adults of the same sex.

Canaanite Pagan Deities

I would now like to introduce you to a few Canaanite pagan deities that played a major role in shaping the culture of Sodom and its surrounding area.

Genesis 10:19 (NIV) indicates that “the borders of Canaan reached from Sidon toward Gerar as far as Gaza, and then toward Sodom, Gomorrah, Admah and Zeboim, as far as Lasha.” Sodom and Gomorrah, then, were part of Canaan, the land that was eventually conquered by the children of Israel. And, not only were these cities part of Canaan geographically, they were part of Canaan culturally. This is especially germane to our story, since Canaanite fertility cults played a particularly important role in the day-to-day activities of the indigenous peoples who inhabited this general region as well as those who migrated there. Indeed, “Canaanite fertility cults, which were more lewd and influential than any other nature cults of the Middle East, made incursions into the austere, wilderness-born faith of Israel.”²⁷

In order to consider further the issue of Sodom, we need to cover some historical background relative to a few of the more popular fertility pagan deities that were worshiped during much of the two millennia preceding the birth of Christ.

Though there were other pagan deities worshiped in Canaan, the major fertility deities included the gods Molech and Baal and the goddess Ashtoreth (all summarized in Figure Four):

Molech In Old Testament times, Molech was a male fertility god to whom devotees sacrificed the lives of their “seed,” or children, by ritualistic burning. (See Leviticus 18:21 and 20:2-5.) The word Molech is derived from the Hebrew word Melek מֶלֶךְ, which means “king:”

The LORD said to Moses, “Say to the Israelites: ‘Any Israelite or any alien living in Israel who gives any of his children to Molech must be put to death. The people of the community are to stone him. I will set my face against that man and I will cut him off from his people; for by giving his children to Molech, he has defiled my sanctuary and profaned my holy name. If the people of the community close their eyes when that man gives one of his children to Molech and they fail to put him to death, I will set my face against that man and his family and will cut them off from

²⁷ Miller, Madeleine S. and J. Lane. The New Harper’s Bible Dictionary. Harper and Row, New York, 1973, page 89.

their people both him and all who follow him in prostituting themselves to Molech.

Leviticus 20:1-5 NIV

Baal Often, the Baal-type god was specific for different city-states that existed within the Canaanite region. At times, **Baal** בַּעַל was used as an umbrella term for all “Baalim” (the Hebrew “-im” ending here denotes the masculine plural) or “Baal gods” of the region. Variant forms of the name **Baal** include “Bel,” and “Beel.” The name **Baal**, or one of its variant forms, was often incorporated into the names of various pagan people, like **Jezebel**, who was a devotee, or priestess, of Baal, and her father, **Ethbaal**:

In the thirty-eighth year of Asa king of Judah, Ahab son of Omri became king of Israel, and he reigned in Samaria over Israel twenty-two years. Ahab son of Omri did more evil in the eyes of the LORD than any of those before him. He not only considered it trivial to commit the sins of Jeroboam son of Nebat, but he also married Jezebel daughter of Ethbaal king of the Sidonians, and began to serve Baal and worship him. He set up an altar for Baal in the temple of Baal that he built in Samaria. Ahab also made an Asherah pole and did more to provoke the LORD, the God of Israel, to anger than did all the kings of Israel before him.

1 Kings 16:29-33 NIV

It was not by accident that Jesus Christ referred to the Devil as “Beelzebub,” (Matthew 12:26-27) which is derived from “Baal-Zebub, the god of Ekron,” (2 Kings 1:2), whose literal meaning is “lord of the flies.” “Lord of the flies” is an apt description, indeed, for Satan, who is behind every form of idolatrous worship. (Just as dung draws flies here on earth, so does Satan draw every unclean spirit, devil and demon in the world of the unseen.)

Though **Baal** represents an evil thing, the word **Baal** itself is not evil; it simply means “lord” or “master” in Hebrew. Although the word means “lord,” “Baal” should not be confused with **Adonai** or **Shem** (or its

variant HaShem), which are often used in place of the unpronounceable Hebrew tetragrammaton **יהוה** Yahweh (the most holy name of God, or “YHWH”) and often translated in the Old Testament (especially in the King James Version) with all upper case letters as “LORD.”

Ashtoreth The singular form for many feminine nouns in Hebrew ends in “-eth.” For such nouns, it is the “-oth” [or, “-ot”] ending that makes the plural form. In other words, although the Hebrew word “Ashtaroth” **עֲשֵׁתְרוֹת** looks similar to “Ashtoreth” **עֲשֵׁתֶרֶת**, the former word is the plural form. And, just as there were many manifestations or representations of the god Baal, so, too, were there many representations of the goddess Ashtoreth. Ashtoreth is the very same goddess referred to in Babylonian and Assyrian times as “Ishtar” and “Ashtar” and in Greek and Roman times as “Astarte.” We even find that the Scandinavian fertility goddess “Easter” is likely derived, symbolically as well as etymologically, from the Greek word “Astarte” (hence the fertility symbols of eggs and rabbits used at “Easter”). That is why some Christians prefer using “Resurrection Sunday” rather than the word “Easter.”

Finally, Ashtoreth, Ishtar, Ashtar, and Astarte all represent the pagan goddess often referred to by the appellation “Queen of Heaven.” (See Jeremiah 7:18; 44:17-19; and 44:25.) The “Asherah pole” **אֲשֵׁרָה**, mentioned earlier in 1 Kings 16:33, was a huge pole or totem, made of stone or wood, erected in honor of one of the manifestations of Ashtoreth (and sometimes Baal) and thought to be in the form of a phallus (or, penis).²⁸

The king [Josiah] also desecrated the high places that were east of Jerusalem on the south of the Hill of Corruption — the ones Solomon king of Israel had built for Ashtoreth, the vile goddess of the Sidonians ... Josiah smashed the sacred stones and cut down the Asherah poles and covered the sites with human bones [to indicate that these sites were cursed].

2 Kings 23:13-14 NIV

²⁸ Nicoll, Reverend W. Robertson (editor). The Expositor’s Bible, Volume 6, Funk and Wagnalls, New York, 1900, pages 304, 389.

And the children of Israel did evil again in the sight of the LORD, and served Baalim, and Ashtaroth.

Judges 10:6 KJV

Common Fertility Gods and Goddesses

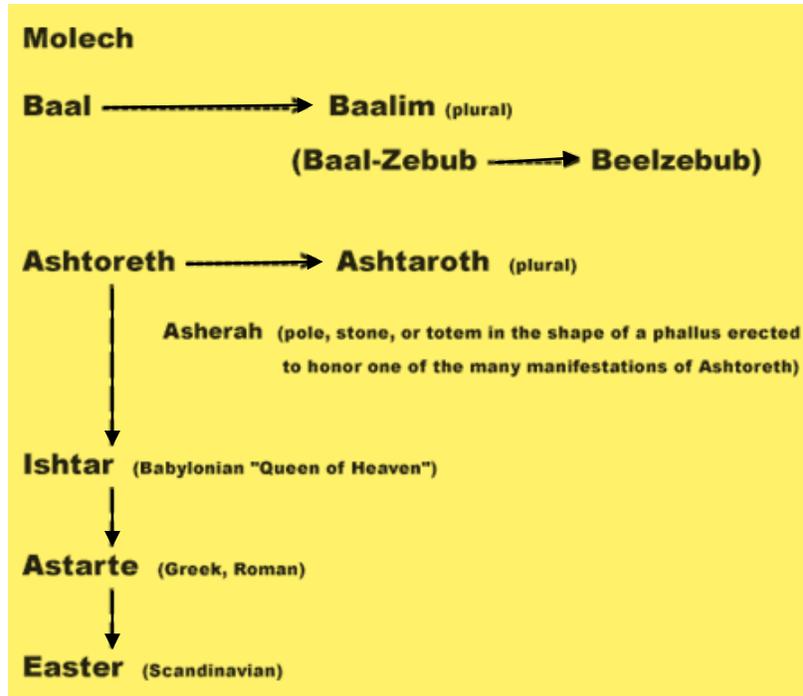


Figure Four

The pagan deities worshiped in Canaanite times were attributed special powers of fertility. In order to curry their favor and receive blessings of abundance upon crops, livestock and offspring, the ways that they were served by their acolytes included orgies and partnered sexual activities as forms of sacrifice and worship to each deity. I know it sounds absurd from the standpoint of contemporary society, in which very few people would confuse sexual activity with worship (with the exception, perhaps, of some animists and Satanists). However, the idea here is that so-called priests and so-called priestesses, who existed then, were functionaries of

cults that worshiped these fertility gods and goddesses. And “fertility cults” is really a good descriptor for them. In order to honor these pagan deities, worshipers either offered their seed (that is, their “life”) through masturbation and sacrifice of their children; or, they committed sexual acts with the so-called priests and priestesses, who worked either in the temples constructed to these false gods or in quarters adjacent to them. To be sure, there were many different cult priests and priestesses who functioned as temple prostitutes throughout antiquity in lands that bordered the Mediterranean Sea, including Canaan, the land in which Sodom was located.

Idolatry is what the children of Israel were faced with when they entered into the Promised Land (“the land of Canaan”). One of the reasons that the LORD God Almighty had told them to slay everyone and get rid of all of the people who were occupying the land of Canaan was to prevent the children of Israel from gradually being influenced by idolatrous worship practices and, subsequently, ending up estranged from the LORD God Almighty by adopting such profane behaviors. Hence, the LORD gave the following directives:

You must destroy all the people the LORD your God gives over to you. Do not look on them with pity and do not serve their gods, for that will be a snare to you.

Deuteronomy 7:16 NIV

The images of their gods you are to burn in the fire. Do not covet the silver and gold on them, and do not take it for yourselves, or you will be ensnared by it, they are **to-ev-ot תוֹעֵבָה** [“detestable,” “abominable” or “idolatrous”] to the LORD your God. Do not bring a **to-ev-ah תוֹעֵבָה** [a “detestable thing,” an “abomination” or an “idol”] into your house or you, like it, will be set apart for destruction. Utterly abhor and detest it, for it is set apart for destruction. [brackets and underlining mine]

Deuteronomy 7:25-26 NIV

But if you turn away and ally yourselves with the survivors of these [pagan] nations that remain among you and if you intermarry with them and associate with them, then you may be sure that the LORD your God will no longer drive out these nations before you. Instead, they will become snares and traps for you, whips on your backs and thorns in your eyes, until you perish from this good land, which the LORD your God has given you. [brackets mine]

Joshua 23:12-13 NIV

Unfortunately, in the end, “the Israelites lived among the Canaanites, Hittites, Amorites, Perizzites, Hivites and Jebusites [the very pagan peoples they were commanded to slay]. They took their daughters in marriage and gave their own daughters to their sons, and served their gods.” [brackets mine] (Judges 3:5-7 NIV)

Even King Solomon, son of King David, fell to such idolatrous worship:

King Solomon, however, loved many foreign women besides Pharaoh’s daughter — Moabites, Ammonites, Edomites, Sidonians, and Hittites. They were from nations about which the LORD had told the Israelites, “You must not intermarry with them, because they will surely turn your hearts after their gods.” Nevertheless, Solomon held fast to them in love. He had seven hundred wives of royal birth and three hundred concubines, and his wives led him astray. As Solomon grew old, his wives turned his heart after other gods, and his heart was not fully devoted to the LORD his God as the heart of David his father had been. He followed Ashtoreth, the goddess of the Sidonians, and Molech, the detestable god of the Ammonites. So Solomon did evil in the eyes of the LORD; he did not follow the LORD completely, as David his father had done. On a hill east of Jerusalem, Solomon built a high place for Chemosh, the detestable god of Moab, and for Molech, the detestable god of the Ammonites.

1 Kings 11:1-7 NIV

Yes, the hearts of the children of Israel were constantly turned in the direction of idolatrous worship practices. They were regularly pulled in the direction of offering sexual “sacrifices” to fertility gods and goddess and other pagan deities. Finally, just like those who indulged the idolatrous practices of the Roman Empire common during the beginning of New Testament times, “God gave them over in the sinful desires of their hearts to sexual impurity.” (Romans 1:24 NIV)

The Role of Temple Cult Prostitution

This historical background concerning Canaanite pagan deities is of particular significance relative to the word sodomite. In the King James Version of the Bible, first published in 1611, the word sodomite exists in its singular form only once, and that is in Deuteronomy 23:17; its plural form, sodomites, is found in four additional references, including 1 Kings 14:24, 15:12 and 22:46 as well as 2 Kings 23:7:

There shall be no whore of the daughters of Israel, nor a sodomite of the sons of Israel.

Deuteronomy 23:17 KJV

And there were also sodomites in the land; and they did according to all the abominations of the nations which the LORD cast out before the children of Israel.

1 Kings 14:24 KJV

And he took away the sodomites out of the land, and removed all of the idols that his fathers had made.

1 Kings 15:12 KJV

And the remnant of the sodomites, which remained in the days of his father Asa, he took out of the land.

1 Kings 22:46 KJV

And he [King Josiah] brake down the houses of the sodomites, that were by the house of the LORD, where the

women wove hangings for the grove [translated here from the Hebrew “Asherah”]. [brackets mine]

2 Kings 23:7 KJV

The five times that the singular and plural forms of the word sodomite are used are particularly significant, because most people (even most people who are not Christian) view the words homosexual and sodomite as synonyms — which is to say, that they are interchangeable.

In other words, even when most students of the Bible read the words sodomite and sodomites, they automatically assume the meaning of the words to be “homosexual” and “homosexuals.” But, relative to etymology, sodomite and homosexual are *not* interchangeable. In other words, relative to the Hebrew derivation from which the words sodomite and sodomites have been translated, a sodomite is *not* a homosexual.

If we go back to the original Hebrew, we find that the word sodomite has been translated from the Hebrew word qadesh קִדְּשׁ (qadesh could also be pronounced as “kaw-dash” or “kaw-dash-e”). There are three different characters (or, alphabet letters) found in this Hebrew word. In Hebrew, one reads from right to left, so the first character (called “kof”) on the right roughly represents the “q,” “k,” or “g” sound of the English alphabet, the second character (called “dalet”) represents the “d” sound, and the third character (called “shin”) represents the “sh” sound (hence, “qadesh” or “kawdeshe” or “gadeshe”). The plural of the masculine form (“qadesh”) is “qadeshim” קִדְּשִׁים, which, of course, refers to more than one “sodomite.” Female counterparts are “qadeshah” קִדְּשָׁה and “qadashoth,” the “-oth” (or, “-ot”) ending here indicating the feminine plural form (just as “Ashtaroth” (or, “Ashtarot”) is the plural form of “Ashtoreth.”)

“There shall be no **qadeshah** קִדְּשָׁה [female temple cult prostitute] of the daughters of Israel, neither shall there be a **qadesh** קִדְּשׁ [male temple cult prostitute] of the sons of Israel.” [brackets mine]

Deuteronomy 23:17

Now, the word qadesh itself is not an evil word — just like the Hebrew word Baal is not an “evil” word — but the word qadesh represents an evil thing. Actually, in contexts different from that currently considered, the word qadesh simply means “sacred, “set apart,” “consecrated,” or “holy.” However, the true Hebrew meaning of “sodomite” in these particular literary contexts (that is, the indicated five verses in which sodomite/sodomites is found) refers to a male consecrated to idolatrous worship through sacrificial prostitution. In Strong’s Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible, we find that “qadesh” or “kawdashe” has a significantly different meaning from “homosexual.” Basically, what the word means in this context is “a quasi-sacred person — that is, technically, a male devotee by prostitution to licentious idolatry.”²⁹ In this case, the male devotee was devoted in idolatrous worship to one of the Canaanite fertility deities, such as Molech, Baal, or Ashtoreth.

So, the word sodomite is an unfortunate word choice representing qadesh in the King James Version of the Bible for two reasons: 1) sodomite does not represent “someone from Sodom;” and, 2) the word sodomite is erroneously associated with modern-day homosexuals. Actually, by implication and through extension, it could mean “someone from Sodom” from the standpoint of licentious idolatry and the “priestly” male temple cult prostitutes, who served pagan deities, and who certainly would have been found in the Canaanite cities of Sodom and Gomorrah. But, that is not what the overwhelming majority of people think when they hear or read the word sodomite; they do not understand that the original Hebrew term means “male temple cult prostitute” and not “homosexual.”

Most Bible scholars are knowledgeable of what qadesh means. Yet, despite its true meaning, we find that in all five citations in the King James Version of the Bible, the translated form is “sodomite” or “sodomites” rather than “male temple cult prostitute” or “male temple cult prostitutes.” Some renderings of qadesh or qadeshim (the plural form) in other translations and paraphrases of the Bible are even worse!

²⁹ Strong, James. “Hebrew and Chaldee Dictionary of the Bible” in Strong’s Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible. World Bible Publishers, 1973, page 135. [The original was published in 1890.]

In the Modern Language Version of the Bible, we find that qadesh in Deuteronomy 23:17 is translated as “temple prostitute,” which is certainly more accurate than “sodomite,” but, then, the plural form for the other four verses is translated only as “male prostitutes.” This is unfortunate, since “male prostitutes” is just not accurate enough. To be sure, there are male prostitutes who exist in every major city in the United States, but that does not mean that they are idolaters to the extent that they are involved in temple cult prostitution. Though “male prostitutes” is closer to the true meaning than “sodomites,” it still does not accurately represent the meaning intended in the original Hebrew.

Although one might expect the Hebrew translation of the Bible to be executed more precisely by the Jewish Publication Society, the plural word qadeshim is also translated in the Hebrew-English Tanakh as “male prostitutes” rather than the more accurate “male temple cult prostitutes.” (The Hebrew Tanakh is what Christians call the Old Testament.)

If we consider the New International Version of the Bible, “shrine prostitute” is used in place of “sodomite” and, in the majority of the verses that use the plural form, “male shrine prostitutes” is used in place of “sodomites.” Although this rendering is accurate, the preferred translation relative to clarity concerning this particular issue (that is, the issue of temple cult prostitution versus homosexuality) happens to be in the Revised Standard Version of the Bible. In the Revised Standard Version of the Bible, the majority of the references is to “male cult prostitutes.”

Unfortunately, the New King James Version of the Bible does not do a very good job. It translates “qadesh/qadeshim” as “perverted person/perverted persons.” So, if readers are already biased (that is, believing homosexuals to be perverted versions of God’s standard), there would be no reason for them to question the accuracy of the New King James Version relative to this particular rendering in the New King James Version of the Bible.

The absolutely worst rendering is in the Living Bible, which is very popular. Many of you may know, or recall, that the Living Bible is not a word-for-word translation of the Bible but, rather, a paraphrase. It is

an attempt to make concepts more understandable in terms of modern common language. The writers took a fair measure of liberty from the original in order to contemporize the language in an attempt to more easily engage its readers. For example, the phrase in 1 Samuel 25:22 that reads "...pisseth against the wall" in the King James Version is rendered "...went to the bathroom" in the Living Bible. Obviously "bathrooms" as we know them today did not exist back then, but that is the rendering used by the paraphrasers, since most people today use the expressions "go to the bathroom" and "went to the bathroom" to represent elimination of waste products.

Compare Deuteronomy 23:17-18 in the Revised Standard Version with that in the Living Bible:

There shall be no cult prostitute of the daughters of Israel, neither shall there be a cult prostitute of the sons of Israel. You shall not bring the hire of a harlot, or the wages of a dog, into the house of the LORD your God in payment for any vow; for both of these are an abomination to the LORD your God.

Deuteronomy 23:17-18 RS

No prostitutes are permitted in Israel, either men or women; you must not bring the earnings of a prostitute or a homosexual, for both are detestable to the LORD your God.

Deuteronomy 23:17-18 LB

The writers of the Living Bible have promoted the error that all male homosexuals are prostitutes! It would be just as inaccurate for us to conclude that all female heterosexuals are prostitutes, because we saw one female heterosexual prostitute on the street. How unfair would that be?

Now, compare 1 Kings 14:24 in the Revised Standard Version with that in the Living Bible:

And there were also male cult prostitutes in the land. They did according to the abominations of the nations which the

LORD drove out before the people of Israel.

1 Kings 14:24 RS

There was homosexuality throughout the land, and the people of Judah became as depraved as the heathen nations which the Lord drove out to make room for His people.

1 Kings 14:24 LB

If you are a typical heterosexual Christian — or homosexual Christian, for that matter — and, if you are studying the Bible, there would be no reason for you to scrutinize every single word and wonder, “Did the translators, writers or paraphrasers get this particular translation, word or paraphrase right?” Or, if you are not doing analytical Bible study, and you come across the rendering in the Living Bible that states, “There was homosexuality throughout the land,” (I Kings 14:24) you are not going to pause and say, “*Maybe* this is inaccurate. *Maybe* there really *wasn't* homosexuality in the land.” To be sure, the average reader generally gives credence to what he or she is reading, especially when it is in the Bible! This misunderstanding is especially reinforced if you regularly listen to a pastor or televangelist who harps on how immoral and wrong homosexuality is. All of this just ends up further supporting the average reader’s idea that the Bible *must* be speaking about *those* perverted people known as homosexuals and that “abominations” *must* be referring to the sexual acts in which *those people* engage.

When many heterosexuals imagine intimate acts between two homosexuals, they think of the intimacies as the “detestable practices,” “abhorrences,” or “abominations,” which words are imprecisely rendered in various Bible translations from “to-ev-ot” תּוֹעֲבוֹת (the plural of “to-ev-ah” תּוֹעֲבָה).

Consider 1 Kings 14:24:

And there were also male temple cult prostitutes in the land. They did according to the “to-ev-ot” תּוֹעֲבוֹת [the idolatries] of the nations which the LORD drove out before the people of Israel.

Translating “to-ev-ot” תּוֹעֲבוֹת as “detestable acts,” “abhorrences,” or “abominations” is just not good enough. “To-ev-ot” תּוֹעֲבוֹת are actually “idolatrous practices.” They are “idolatrous customs.” They include “idolatrous activities” and “idolatrous things.” Thus, 1 Kings 14:24 would be more accurately rendered as:

And there were also male temple cult prostitutes in the land.
They did according to the idolatrous customs of the nations
which the LORD drove out before the people of Israel.

Heterosexual imaginings of intimacies between homosexuals provide no clue about the companionship and sharing that might exist between two people of the same sex in a committed, monogamous relationship. To be sure, there is a reason why intimate acts are called “intimate.” They are supposed to remain private. Perhaps it should be disgusting for any of us to imagine sexual acts between any other people, because it is prurient (that is, of unhealthy interest) as well as not our business. In the final analysis, thinking about sexual intimacies between two people other than yourself and your committed partner should be just as disgusting to you as thinking about sex between your parents.

Perhaps the most damning of all idolatrous practices adopted by the children of Israel relative to male temple cult prostitution is that indicated in 2 Kings 23:7. Here are five different translations of 2 Kings 23:7:

[King Josiah] tore down the houses of the male prostitutes
[“male prostitutes” translated from the Hebrew qadeshim
קִדְּשִׁים] in the area of the house of the LORD, where the
women wove robes for the shame image. [“Shame image”
translated from the Hebrew word Asherah.]

2 Kings 23:7 ML

[King Josiah] also tore down the quarters of the male shrine
prostitutes [“male shrine prostitutes” translated from the
Hebrew qadeshim קִדְּשִׁים] which were in the temple of the
LORD and where women did weaving for the Asherah

[remember, again, an Asherah is a stone, pole or totem crafted in the shape of a penis or phallus].

2 Kings 23:7 NIV

[King Josiah] broke down the houses of the male cult prostitutes [“male cult prostitutes” translated from the Hebrew qadeshim קְדָשִׁים] which were in the house of the LORD, where the women wove hangings for the Asherah.

2 Kings 23:7 RS

[King Josiah] tore down the ritual booths of the perverted persons [“perverted persons” translated from the Hebrew qadeshim קְדָשִׁים] that were in the house of the LORD, where the women wove hangings for the wooden image.

2 Kings 23:7 NKJV

[King Josiah] also tore down the houses of male prostitution [“male prostitution” translated from the Hebrew qadeshim קְדָשִׁים] around the Temple [meaning, the Jerusalem Temple], where the women wove robes for the Asherah-idol.

2 Kings 23:7 LB

It is especially clear in the Revised Standard Version that the idol, or Asherah, was “in the house of the LORD” (that is, in the Jerusalem Temple built by King Solomon for Yahweh). The idolatrous image was indeed detestable, since it was a pole, stone, or totem carved in the shape of a giant phallus (or, penis). It was used to honor the goddess Ashtoreth (that is why it was called an “Asherah”)! It was this image for which the women wove “hangings” or “robes” (which may have been pulled down to represent the foreskin being pulled back during a penile erection).

Though you may think it absolutely unbelievable that the form of the penis was worshiped, all you have to do is wander past the display cases in most museums that house antiquities, and take a look at the artifacts that have survived from both ancient Greek and Roman

societies, and from many earlier cultures and civilizations as well, and you will find that, in a majority of these pagan societies, the penis was idolized.

The penis is still idolized and worshiped in many cultures today. As one example, all you need to do is put in the words “Hounen Penis Fertility Festival” into your internet search engine and you will easily find pictures of people worshiping the penis today, even engraving their prayers on the sides of plastic and ceramic penises.

I was fortunate to have lived in Chicago at the time that the Pompeii Exhibit was brought to that city’s Art Institute. As I looked at the artifacts from Pompeii, it was absolutely amazing to me that a major focus was on external genitals, specifically the phallus. For example, an ashtray or little decorative piece that might have been hanging from someone’s ceiling or wall would have multiple phallic symbols dangling from it! Truly, it was a decadent, depraved, immoral society that crept into the consciousness of the children of Israel and encroached upon their worship of the LORD God Almighty, even going so far as to introduce phallus worship (vis-à-vis the worship of the Asherah pole) within the Holy Temple of the LORD God Almighty in Jerusalem! Yes, such a thing is “detestable,” “disgusting,” and “abominable.”

In summary, the pagan deities that were worshiped (including Molech, Baal, and Ashtoreth) had a significant impact not only on the Canaanite people but also on the children of Israel. Though reforms were introduced at various times, they did not seem to do a lot of good relative to keeping the children of Israel from departing often from their worship of Yahweh. However, it should be noted that after exile due to their Babylonian captivity, the remnant of Jews who returned to the Promised Land never again returned to idolatry. The Book of Maccabees relates how some Jews even preferred martyrdom rather than eating ceremonially unclean food (that is, food from animals sacrificed to idols).

Lest you think that food sacrificed to idols is just an activity from the ancient past, when I was in Brazil doing my seminar and workshop entitled, “Christianity and Homosexuality Reconciled,” I found many, many street vendors on street corners as well as throughout the streets,

who belonged to the Candomblé, selling meat that had been sacrificed to pagan gods and goddesses This happens today in many regions of the world.

Going back to the Jews, it is their renewed commitment to Yahweh and resolve to eschew idolatry after their Babylonian captivity that helps us to understand the psychological profile of 1st century Jews as well as the historical contexts for the Apostle Paul's horror and anger concerning sexual idolatry in the worship of fertility gods and goddesses, which he witnessed during his own lifetime and reacted to in his various epistles.

“Dogs” are Male Cult Prostitutes, Not Homosexuals

In 1990, David H. Stern, who is a Messianic Jew, translated the New Testament from the original Greek in an attempt to bring out its Jewishness linguistically, culturally, religiously and theologically. For the most part, he did an excellent job in producing a work most valuable for students of the New Testament who need to better recognize its Jewish roots. I write, “for the most part,” because of his mistranslation of the word “dogs” from the following verse:

Outside are the dogs: those who practice magic arts, the sexually immoral, the murderers, the idolaters and everyone who loves and practices falsehood. [For God, “practicing falsehood” is not just lying but devising a system of worship for anything other than the Lord God Almighty.]

Revelation 22:15 NIV

The original Greek **κύνες** (“kunes”) in Revelation 22:15 clearly means “hounds” or “dogs,” which word is defined by the activities that follow in the verse; however, Stern renders it as follows:

Outside are the homosexuals, those who misuse drugs in connection with the occult, the sexually immoral, murderers, idol worshipers, and everyone who loves and

practices falsehood.

Revelation 22:15 JNT

To be sure, there is a basis in the Old Testament for connecting “dogs” to sexual acts involving male temple cult prostitutes (but not “homosexuals”) as recorded in Deuteronomy, the fifth book of Moses:

There shall be no cult prostitute [qadeshah] of the daughters of Israel, neither shall there be a cult prostitute [qadesh] of the sons of Israel. You shall not bring the hire of a harlot [zonah] or the wages of a dog [or “kelev” כֶּלֶב] into the house of the LORD your God in payment for any vow; for both of these [practices] are an abomination [they are “to-ev-ot” תוֹעֵבֹת or “to-ev-at” תוֹעֵבָה, which means “of an idolatrous nature”] unto the LORD your God. [brackets and underlining mine]

Deuteronomy 23:17-18 RS

Clearly, both of the previously-quoted verses are referring to male temple cult prostitution, not homosexuality. The interchangeability of male temple cult prostitutes and “dogs” has been noted by David F. Greenberg in his book The Construction of Homosexuality:

The words *zonah* and *qadeshah* were sometimes used interchangeably, as in the story of Judah and Tamar [Genesis 38:15 & 24]. The parallel construction in Deuteronomy [23:18-19] identifies *qadesh* and *kelev* as a male counterpart.³⁰

Further, Greenberg states:

A Phoenician inscription on Cyprus dating from the fourth century B.C., referring to a category of temple personnel who played a role in the sacred service of Astarte

³⁰ Greenberg, David F. The Construction of Homosexuality. University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 1988, page 965. [brackets mine]

[Ashtoreth in the Old Testament], identifies the *kelev* ["dog"] as a religious functionary.³¹

Revelation 22:15 in toto describes pseudo-sacred cultic behaviors and delineates who is excluded from the heavenly city known as New Jerusalem. That "dogs" are excluded from this holy city is not referring to either canines or homosexuals but to male temple cult prostitutes and all who prostitute themselves by serving false gods. (Remember, God hates idolatry. Idolatry is the practice of falsehood.)

Interestingly, when Jesus spoke of "dogs," (Matthew 15:26) he was referring to the Gentiles of his day, most of whom were idolaters and pagans. He was not referring to homosexuals.

It is important to note that Stern's inaccurate translation of the Greek word for dogs as "homosexuals" illustrates that cultural and personal biases play an important role when even well-intentioned and smart people translate Scripture from its original languages. It is difficult for all of us to erase the indelible "tapes" that are playing in our minds because of what we have been taught to think by highly-respected role models (*for example*, parents, teachers, professors, pastors and rabbis — all people to be respected but who have gotten this issue wrong and have taught us incorrectly). Many, most or all of them (depending on your life experience) have incorrectly taught us that homosexuals are outside of the Kingdom of God. Forgive them, but don't believe that any longer!

Additional Biblical References to Sodom

In order to make our study of the biblical use of the word Sodom complete, let us turn to the four additional times that the city of Sodom is referred to in the Old Testament.

In Isaiah 1:10-11, Israel's degenerate condition is figuratively compared to Sodom and Gomorrah:

³¹ Ibid., page 965. [first set of brackets mine]

Hear the word of the LORD, you rulers of Sodom; listen to the law of our God, you people of Gomorrah! “The multitude of your sacrifices — what are they to me?” says the LORD. “I have more than enough of burnt offerings, of rams and the fat of fattened animals; I have no pleasure in the blood of bulls and lambs and goats.”

Isaiah 1:10-11 NIV

In Isaiah 3:8-9, the sinful conditions of both Judah and Jerusalem are compared to Sodom. The LORD God Almighty compares the sins of Sodom to the sins of Jerusalem and Judah:

Jerusalem staggers, Judah is falling; their words and deeds are against the LORD, defying His glorious presence. The look on their faces testifies against them; they parade their sin like Sodom; they do not hide it. Woe to them! They have brought disaster upon themselves.

Isaiah 3:8-9 NIV

Jeremiah 23:13-14 specifically refers to how the children of Israel were lead astray by followers of Baal. Keep in mind as you read the word adultery in the following passage that it is referring to idolatrous worship practices; and, keep in mind that when you read the word Baal, it is referring to a fertility god and the idolatrous practices associated with fertility:

**Among the prophets of Samaria I saw this repulsive thing:
They prophesied by Baal and led my people Israel astray.
And among the prophets of Jerusalem I have seen
something horrible: They commit adultery and live a lie.
They strengthen the hands of evildoers, so that no one turns
from his wickedness. They are all like Sodom to me; the
people of Jerusalem are like Gomorrah.**

Jeremiah 23:13-14 NIV

In Ezekiel 16:47-50, the LORD specifically identifies the sin of Sodom and her “daughters.” (Here, the word daughters refers to other adjacent urban areas that originated from the city of Sodom). The phrase “detestable things” in the passage should not trigger “homosexual acts” within your mind unless your mind is playing recordings from old mental tapes. In other words, if you go to the Bible with the preconceived notion that God is referring to homosexuals as inhabitants of the city of Sodom, then you would naturally interpret the “detestable things” to be homosexual acts. However, what was detestable were the pagan orgies and ritualistic “consecrated” sexual acts that occurred within temples erected to honor Baal, Ashtoreth, and Molech — which included sexual acts with both male and female temple prostitutes as well as sex with animals. (Yes, bestiality occurred within the pagan temples and their related houses of cult prostitution, too.)

You not only walked in their ways and copied their detestable practices [“to-ev-ot” תועבות or “idolatrous practices”] but in all your ways you soon became more depraved than they. “As surely as I live,” declares the Sovereign LORD, “your sister Sodom and her daughters never did what you and your daughters have done. Now this was the sin of your sister Sodom: She and her daughters were arrogant, overfed and unconcerned; they did not help the poor and needy. They were haughty and did detestable things before Me. [Here, “did detestable things” is translated from the Hebrew that they “committed to-ev-ah” תועבה or, that they “practiced idolatry.”] Therefore I did away with them as you have seen.”

Ezekiel 16:47-50 NIV

Naturally, we have a tendency to interpret things from a modern-day standpoint. That is our referent. Because we do not see such pagan activities, and because we do not have temples built to Molech, Baal, and Ashtoreth, or to any of the other deities mentioned in the Old and New Testaments, we distance ourselves from the possibilities of sexual acts in the context of pagan worship. Most people today can’t even imagine such practices. They do not really have a good sense of what it

meant, or means, to worship fertility gods and goddesses, or what “religious” practices constituted pagan worship.

As stated previously, God is against idolatry, for, in the eyes of the LORD, idolatry *is* spiritual adultery. Another way to put it is that, if someone is an idolater, he or she is worshiping for God what is not God. Now, we understand today that idolatry goes well beyond worshiping graven images, statues, poles, totems and icons. We understand that it can also be the worship of possessions or the practice of materialism and other such vain philosophies, which, generally speaking, are not identified by particular figurines, statues or pictures.

Yes, God hates idolatry. Idolatry was, is, and always will be “abominable” and “detestable” [“to-ev-ah” תועֵבָה] to Him. Idolatrous practices will always be “to-ev-ot” תועֵבֹת to Him:

And God spoke all these words: “I am the LORD your God, who brought you out of Egypt, out of the land of slavery. You shall have no other gods before me. You shall not make for yourself an idol in the form of anything in heaven above or on the earth beneath or in the waters below. You shall not bow down to them or worship them; for I, the LORD your God, am a jealous God, punishing the children for the sin of the fathers to the third and fourth generation of those who hate me.”

Exodus 20:1-5 NIV

Idolatry — taken together with the detestable things that people did, and still do in different parts of the world today (that is, integrating sexual activities into the worship of false gods and goddesses) — is what God hates. Idolaters are identified in Exodus 20:5 as “those who hate” God.

As one studies the entirety of Scripture, it becomes increasingly obvious that Bible verses commonly used to condemn homosexuals are not speaking about homosexuals but about temple cult prostitutes, or what is known in Hebrew as “qadeshim;” and, the Bible is not speaking about

homosexuality but “toevah” (or, in other words, idolatry). “Qadeshim” are not homosexuals but temple cult prostitutes. And “toevah” is not just something disgusting but something disgustingly idolatrous.

If Martin Luther understood that qadeshim should be translated as “die Tempelhurer” (that is, “the male temple whores”), then why has that meaning been lost to contemporary society? Why is qadeshim now translated as “homosexuals?” Please tell why that is to my homosexual brothers and sisters — who have been persecuted by bullies, despised by those who fear what is different, condemned by society, rejected by family members, excommunicated from churches and even killed by homophobes because of their homosexuality.

In the next Chapter, I will spend significantly more time in discussion of fertility cults [“to-ev-ah”] and temple cult prostitutes [the “qadeshim”].

Interestingly, when we come to passages in the New Testament in which Christ Jesus refers to Sodom, we find that he refers to the city of Sodom in the context of hospitality to the gospel (that is, receptivity to the good news of salvation through Jesus Christ). This is especially interesting, since we find there was also an issue of hospitality in the original story of Sodom, too. The Messiah told his itinerant disciples that, if the cities they would visit were inhospitable to the message of salvation, then it would be more bearable for Sodom on Judgment Day. In other words, God’s wrath will visit the cities that have rejected His gospel to an even greater extent than the wrath He visited upon Sodom! Christ Jesus said:

I tell you the truth, it will be more bearable for Sodom and Gomorrah on the day of judgment than for that town.

Matthew 10:15 NIV

And you, Capernaum, will you be lifted up to the skies? No, you will go down to the depths. If the miracles that were performed in you had been performed in Sodom, it would have remained to this day. But I tell you that it will be more bearable for Sodom on the day of judgment than for you.

Matthew 11:23-24 NIV

As part of the Great Commission, Jesus tells his followers to “go,” “preach,” “make disciples,” “teach,” and “baptize in his name.” (Matthew 28:19-20) However, Jesus also tells us what to do when we have done our part and the hearers reject the gospel message:

And if any place will not welcome you, shake the dust off your feet when you leave, as a testimony against them.

Mark 6:11 NIV

Those of us who carry a message that God has asked us to deliver should not take it personally if we are rejected. Rather, we should remember what the LORD said to Samuel: ““They have not rejected thee, but they have rejected me.”” (1 Samuel 8:7 KJV)

The Lord Jesus Christ, when referring to Sodom, did so relative to the hospitality of cities concerning the preached Gospel, or “evangel.” So, basically, our Lord was saying to evangelists that if the inhabitants of a city are inhospitable to the gospel message, then leave the city and it will be far worse for its inhabitants than it was for the inhabitants of Sodom. In other words, when the two types of inhospitality are compared, it will be worse to be judged inhospitable to the evangel rather than being judged inhospitable to an angel.

By the way, Jesus nowhere in the Bible addresses the issue of homosexuality. Not once. He was as silent about homosexuality as he was about electricity. Indeed, our Lord was, and is, aware of everything, because He is omniscient. He was certainly aware that electricity (as we know it today) would develop, but He made no mention of it. And, without a doubt, He was aware that there would be homosexuality, as we know it today, but He made no direct comment about it. (We will see in Chapter Three of this book how he may have made an indirect comment about homosexuals when he referred to “eunuchs.”)

“Sodomites” in the New Testament

In the King James Version of the Bible, the word sodomite is not used in the New Testament. In the New King James Version, however, it is used to translate the Greek word **ἀρσενοκοῖται** (arsenokoitai) regarding those who will not inherit the kingdom of God:

Do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived. Neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor homosexuals, nor sodomites, nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners will inherit the kingdom of God.

1 Corinthians 6:9-10 NKJV

Upon first glance, it would appear that there is some redundancy in the previously-quoted passage (that is, the list that contains both “homosexuals” and “sodomites”). The translations of the two words here are somewhat puzzling, especially when homosexuals and sodomites are supposed to be one and the same! Actually, there is no redundancy in the Greek, just inconsistency and inaccuracy in the English translations of the two words malakoi (translated in the NKJV as “homosexuals”) and arsenokoitai (translated in the NKJV as “sodomites”).

We find that these two important Greek words used in 1 Corinthians 6:9 are often inaccurately rendered by Bible translators, who really do not know exactly what to do with them. This inability to accurately translate them is underscored by the variety of ways in which each word has been rendered (or avoided) in various versions and paraphrases of the Bible:

Malakoi

For example, in the New International Version of the Bible, the Greek word **μαλακοὶ** (malakoi) is interpreted as “male prostitutes.” In the Modern Language Version, both malakoi and arsenokoitai are rendered

together as “partakers in homosexuality.” The Revised Standard translates malakoi as “sexual perverts,” and the Living Bible, as you might guess, combines both malakoi and arsenokoitai in the appellation “homosexuals.”

In the King James Version of the Bible, malakoi is translated as “effeminate.” As we relate “effeminate” to modern English, it is very easy for many people (especially those who think that the average profile for homosexual males includes so-called feminine mannerisms) to assume that the word is referring to gay males. To be sure, this is stereotypic and not representative of all male homosexuals (and certainly not the majority of male homosexuals with whom I have been acquainted over the years).

Please do not misinterpret here that I think something is wrong with a male being nurturing and/or even flamboyant. Please do not misinterpret here that I think something is wrong with a male being effusive and/or passionate in displaying emotion. It is perfectly alright for each one of us to exhibit the personalities that God has given to us and that have been shaped by nurture as well as nature.

Since the word malakoi — as we relate it to various modern English word forms — has a portion in common with the root of the English word malleable, which refers to something “soft” or “pliable,” some translators would prefer to render the word malakoi as “soft ones” (which, in fact, is its true and literal meaning in classical Greek). However, because the literal meaning of malakoi does not fit exactly within the literary context of 1 Corinthians 6:9, it most likely had another connotation in the colloquial speech of St. Paul’s day. This is especially likely, since the Apostle Paul wrote his epistles in *Koine* (or, common) Greek (that is, street vernacular) rather than classical Greek.

There are those who would argue that malakoi, by extension, might be referring to “lazy people,” “indolent ones,” or “the pampered rich” — which message would not be so far afield from this statement by Christ Jesus:

I tell you the truth, it is hard for a rich man to enter the

kingdom of heaven. Again I tell you, it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God.

Matthew 19:23-24 NIV

However, “malakoi” referring to the pampered rich in 1 Corinthians 6:9 is really quite a stretch. Since the word is sandwiched between sexual sins in 1 Corinthians 6:9, malakoi is probably referring to moral weakness or a particular type of immorality.

In The Zondervan Parallel New Testament in Greek and English, the word malakoi has been translated as “voluptuous persons.”³² Who are voluptuous persons? Voluptuous persons are those who have a “come-hither” look — which is to say, those who are trying to sell their sexual “wares” or favors in the most provocative of ways. Consequently, some scholars might prefer to translate malakoi as “abusers of themselves as women” (that is, persons deceptively presenting themselves as women although they are not women), which, in a way, would be most revealing. To be sure, such a perspective is in agreement with that of Robin Scroggs,³³ who argues that, by the time of the Apostle Paul, the word malakoi had assumed a pejorative slang meaning in reference to young call boys or youths who actively sought sexual encounters with men for money, something considered quite distasteful in the majority of both Greek and Roman societies. Robin Scroggs interpretation is in agreement with the Catholic Study Bible, which explains malakoi as catamite “boy prostitutes,”³⁴ who dressed in feminine attire to attract their male customers.

Personally, I think that the most substantive clue for the meaning of malakoi can be found in Saint Jerome’s Latin Vulgate version of the Bible, which was published in 405 AD. In order to translate the Hebrew Old Testament and Greek New Testament into Latin, Saint Jerome (c. 345 - 420 AD) had to be a scholar of Hebrew, Greek and Latin. What he tried to do was translate the Old Testament Hebrew and the New Testament Greek into an overall Latin version that could be used within

³² The Zondervan Parallel New Testament in Greek and English. Zondervan Bible Publishers, Grand Rapids, 1975, page 495.

³³ Scroggs, Robin. The New Testament and Homosexuality. Augsburg Fortress Publications, 1994.

³⁴ The Catholic Study Bible (Second Edition). Oxford University Press, New York, 2006, page 1523.

the developing Roman Catholic Church. Interestingly, Saint Jerome chose to translate qadeshim in the Old Testament using the Latin word effeminati. Saint Jerome understood that the effeminati (which is the plural form of the word effeminatus) were not people who were just “effeminate” (that is, “sissified” or “mollified”), but people who donned female clothing in order to serve as male transvestite temple cult prostitutes — who were an integral part of temple cult prostitution in many Canaanite religions as well as many Greek and Roman religions (some of the latter having been derived from the former). In place of the Greek word malakoi, Saint Jerome used a Latin synonym of effeminati (singular effeminatus) — which is to say, molles (singular mollis). Thus, like the “effeminati,” the “molles” (in Latin) or “malakoi” (in Greek) are also transvestite male temple cult prostitutes. (This also helps to explain the King James Version scholars’ choice of “effeminate” in 1611.) To be sure, malakoi and molles are based on the same base word, the same root word, or the same origin).

Interestingly, the scholars who translated the 1611 version of the King James New Testament often adopted the same Latin-based terminology found in the 1582 Catholic New Testament translation known to Roman Catholics as the Douay-Rheims Bible. Although the King James scholars were expressly forbidden from drawing from the Douay-Rheims Bible, it is clear that they did so in preference over slightly less erudite Bible translations such as the Tyndale Bible, the Coverdale Bible or the Geneva Bible. The Douay-Rheims Bible is a direct translation of St. Jerome’s Latin Vulgate version of the Bible, which was completed by St. Jerome in 405 AD.

Translations of “malakoi” in 1 Corinthians			
Tyndale (1524 AD) 6:9	Coverdale (1535 AD) 6:9	Luther (1545 AD) 6:9	Geneva (1560 AD) 6:9
“weaklinges”	“weaklinges”	“die Weichlinge”	“wantons”

Translations of “malakoi” in 1 Corinthians		
Latin Vulgate (405 AD) 6:10	Douay-Rheims (1582 AD) 6:10	King James (1611 AD) 6:9
molles (“effeminati” used as translation of <u>qadeshim</u> in 1 King 14:24)	effeminate (“effeminates” used as translation of <u>qadeshim</u> in 1 Kings 14:24)	effeminate (“sodomites” used as translation of <u>qadeshim</u> in 1 Kings 14:24)

In summary, the King James Version’s use of the word “effeminate” is not from the Germanic-based words used in the Tyndale Bible (published in 1524 AD) or the Coverdale Bible (published in 1535 AD.) Both of these translate malakoi into the Germanic-based Early Modern English word “weaklinges.” “Weaklinges” is in keeping with Martin Luther’s German translation of malakoi as “die Weichlinge” (that is, the “weaklings” or so-called “sissies”). Instead, the King James Version takes the Latin-based word effeminate from the Douay-Rheims Bible, published in 1582 AD. The Douay-Rheims scholars used the Latin word effeminate, which is derived from the Latin word effeminati, a synonym for the Latin word molles that St. Jerome used. St. Jerome used the Latin word effeminati to translate the Hebrew qadeshim, or male temple cult prostitutes, into Latin.

All things taken together, the most accurate rendering of malakoi is “male transvestite temple cult prostitutes!”

David Greenberg states:

More plausibly, the term in this context [meaning, in 1 Corinthians 6:9] referred to ... cult prostitutes. Corinth and Ephesus, where Timothy was stationed, were

strongholds of the Mother Goddess and had long-established religious prostitution.³⁵

Many fertility Mother-Goddess cults existed in ancient Greek and Roman societies. Those attended by transvestite and/or castrated male priests who engaged in same-sex ritualistic practices included cults devoted to Cybele, Aphrodite, Hecate, Artemis, Magna Mater, Ma, Anaitis, and Astarte.³⁶ (Again, “Astarte” is essentially the same goddess known as “Ashtoreth,” “Ashtar,” and “Ishtar” during Old Testament times.) Indeed, these perverted “shriners” were common during the Apostle Paul’s lifetime. In The Life of Constantine, the Church historian Eusebius Pamphili, who lived, roughly, between 260 and 360 AD, and who was the Bishop of Caesarea, indicates that the effeminate priests [that is, the “effeminati”] of the goddess Cybele still engaged in temple cult prostitution in his own time.

Arsenokoitai

Though malakoi is only used once in the New Testament, arsenokoitai is used twice. In addition to its use in 1 Corinthians 6:9, it is also used in 1 Timothy 1:10, where it, too, is translated as “sodomites” in the New King James Version of the Bible:

... the law [meaning, the “Levitical 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. [brackets mine]

1 Timothy 1:9-10 NKJV

³⁵ Greenberg, Op cit., page 213. [brackets mine]

³⁶ Greenberg, Op cit., page 98.

Because arsenokoitai is not a classical Greek word, it has no clearly translatable modern-day meaning. Either the Apostle Paul coined the word himself or it had already been coined by the society of his day. Simply stated, there is no extant literature that contains this word before the Apostle Paul's use.³⁷

Koine Greek was the language of the streets, or conventional vernacular, that the Apostle Paul used to write and dictate his now-famous letters to the Christian peoples of his day. Rather than the language of the more literate elements of ancient society, *Koine* Greek is the language that the Apostle Paul used to try to reach the common person. Unfortunately, little has survived that provides a clear understanding of the word arsenokoitai as it was used then. Indeed, the exact meaning of this word is unknown today. This helps to account for the wide range of interpretations provided by various Bible scholars.

Arsenokoitai can be divided into two portions: the base word koitai, referring to active sexual partners who provide sexual service, and the prefix arseno-, which simply means "male." It is unclear if the arseno- prefix is used here in a qualifying or objective sense (which is to say, that those who were providing the sexual service were themselves male or that they were servicing males). This uncertainty is especially germane, since in ancient societies that predate Greece and Rome, there existed male temple cult prostitutes who sexually serviced both male and female temple-worshippers that participated in pagan rituals. And, coincidentally, they serviced both male and female worshippers anally.

Relative to the word arsenokoitai, John Boswell states:

In no [Greek] words coined and generally written with the form "arseno-" is the prefix demonstrably objective ...
[brackets mine]

"Arsenokoitai," then, means male sexual agents, i.e., active male prostitutes, who were common throughout the Hellenistic world in the time of Paul. That such a designation existed in the Latin of the time is well known:

³⁷ Boswell, John. Christianity, Social Tolerance, and Homosexuality. The University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 1980, page 345.

[these were] male prostitutes capable of the active role with either men or women. [brackets mine]

“Arsenokoitai” was the most explicit word available to Paul for a male prostitute.³⁸

Some have argued that the Apostle Paul or the Hellenistic Jewish society of his day coined arsenokoitai from the Septuagint Greek translation of Leviticus 18:22 and 20:13, where the uncompounded Greek phrase **αρσενος ... κοιτην** arsenos ... koitun is used to translate the original Hebrew of “lying with a male,” which would help show Paul’s intended meaning, since (as I will demonstrate in Chapter Three) the historical and literary contexts for Leviticus 18:22 and 20:13 are idolatrous and prostitutional in nature by cross-referencing Leviticus 18:22 with 1 Kings 14:24.

For arsenokoitai, St. Jerome used “masculorum concubitores.” “Concubitor” denotes an active sexual partner, just as “concubine” denotes its female passive counterpart. In the case of “concubitor” or “concubine,” the implication is a sexual partner who has been bought and paid for, either on a one-time basis or for an extended period of time. Thus, St. Jerome’s Latin rendering could be translated “the male prostitute of men.” This is certainly in keeping with the types of male-male sex with which the Apostle Paul was familiar.

To be sure, the Apostle Paul was not exposed to homosexuals who pursued committed monogamous relationships. And, he was not writing about Christian homosexuals. He simply did not know any. The Apostle Paul did not write about what he did not know.

In the final analysis, the arsenokoitai are most probably male temple cult prostitutes who sexually serviced both male and female temple-worshippers that participated in pagan fertility rituals. (Again, both male and female worshippers were serviced anally.)

³⁸ Boswell, Op cit., page 344.

The types of male-male sexual relationships that were common in ancient Greece and Rome are summarized in Figure Five:

Types of Male-Male Sex Common in the Apostle Paul's Day

- 1. Sexual relationships between elite and powerful citizens and statutory minors (those who did not have full legal rights, including slaves and youth).**
- 2. Ambisexual encounters, where participants were ambivalent or indifferent to the gender of their individual sex partners (*for example*, in orgiastic sex).**
- 3. Male prostitution in male brothels (especially in seaport cities like Rome and Corinth).**
- 4. Male temple cult prostitution in pagan temples or in quarters adjacent to them.**

Figure Five

There were four types of male-male sexual relations that were common in ancient Greece and Rome to which the Apostle Paul was exposed during his own lifetime. Here, again, it is important for me to remind you that there is a distinction between “same-sex behaviors” and “homosexual practices.” Romantic involvement between people of a homosexual orientation are different from same-sex sexual activities that may occur between people of unresolved sexual orientation. I say “unresolved” not to describe their internal conflict or the uncertainty of how they view themselves but, rather, to describe that it is indeter-

minate whether the same-sex behaviors in the Bible — often used to condemn homosexuals today — are really between obligate homosexuals (that is, people who have no choice in their attraction) or between heterosexuals simply involved in ambisexual activity.

The word ambisexual refers to a “complete indifference to the gender identity or genital identity of a sexual partner.” For example, Julius Caesar was described by the Roman historian Cato as “every woman’s husband” as well as “every man’s wife.” Julius Caesar was completely indifferent concerning with whom he had sex. That Julius Caesar had sex with everyone and anyone best represents the ambisexual mindset common during the Apostle Paul’s day. Certainly, the plural sex, group sex, or orgiastic sex that took place in Roman bath houses, at lavish Roman feasts and festivals, and in pagan Roman temples involved ambisexual sex. Ambisexuality represents the first type of sexual relations that the Apostle Paul was acquainted in which males had sex with other males.

The Apostle Paul did not know any monogamous homosexual partners. The Apostle Paul did not know any Christian homosexuals. The Apostle Paul did not write about what he did not know.

The second type of male-male sexual relations with which the Apostle Paul was acquainted occurred between elite and powerful Roman citizens and statutory minors. In this usage, “statutory minors” were those who did not possess full legal rights as Roman citizens, including slaves and youth.

The Roman society of the Apostle Paul’s time was a slave-based society. For example, the city of Corinth had 400,000 inhabitants, 150,000 of whom were free-born citizens and 250,000 of whom were slaves. Some of the slaves held by the Roman citizens were sexual slaves. Sexual slaves included both young females as well as young males. The Latin word concupini (which is the plural form of concupinus), which was in use during the Apostle Paul’s time, refers to “slave boys acting as bedroom partners.”³⁹

³⁹ From The Arapanacana Press. In 2010: <http://www.arapacana.com/glossary/co.html>

Youth involved in male-male sexual relations also included the transvestite call boys or catamites that were referred to by the Greek word *malakoi* in 1 Corinthians 6:9, also known in Latin as *effeminati* or *molles* and referred to as such by St. Jerome in his Latin translation of the Holy Bible. The Catholic Study Bible clearly and accurately translates the Greek word *malakoi* in 1 Corinthians 6:9 as “call boys” and uses these transvestite “catamites” in its footnote to help explain not only the male-male sex reference in 1 Corinthians 6:9 but also in Romans, Chapter One, as well.⁴⁰

The Apostle Paul did not know any monogamous homosexual partners. The Apostle Paul did not know any Christian homosexuals. The Apostle Paul did not write about what he did not know.

The third type of male-male sexual relations with which the Apostle Paul was acquainted occurred between male prostitutes and the procurers of their sexual services, especially in seaport cities like Corinth and Rome. Male prostitution was so common in the city of Corinth and the city of Rome that male prostitutes were taxed. In fact, April 24th was the legal holiday for male prostitutes in ancient Rome.

The Greek word *arsenokoitai*, used by the Apostle Paul in 1 Corinthians 6:9, is a coined Greek word that St. Jerome translated into Latin as “*masculorum concubitores*,” which literally means, “the purchased male sex slaves of men.”⁴¹ Although the Latin word concubitor “may be used to denote a male lover,” more often than not it “connotes an *exoletus*, or an active male prostitute who sexually services both females and males anally.”⁴² Thus, St. Paul was not referring to homosexuals joined in holy union but people who were involved in prostitutional sexual activity or slave-based sexual activity. The Catholic Study Bible gets it partly right by referring to the *arsenokoitai* in its footnote to 1 Corinthians 6:9 as the procurers of the sexual services of the transvestite call boys or catamites, denoted by the Greek word *malakoi*. I wrote, “partly right,” because the *arsenokoitai* were male prostitutes who serviced both men and women anally.

⁴⁰ The Catholic Study Bible (Second Edition). Oxford University Press, New York, 2006, page 1523.

⁴¹ The Greek word *arsenokoitai* also used by the Apostle Paul in 1 Timothy 1:10 is translated by St. Jerome into Latin as “*masculorum concubitoribus*.” “*Concubitoribus*” is a Latin synonym for “*concubitores*.”

⁴² From The Arapanacana Press. In 2010: <http://www.arapacana.com/glossary/co.html>

The Apostle Paul did not know any monogamous homosexual partners. The Apostle Paul did not know any Christian homosexuals. The Apostle Paul did not write about what he did not know.

The fourth type of male-male sexual relations with which the Apostle Paul was acquainted occurred between both transvestite and non-transvestite male temple cult prostitutes who dedicated male-male anal intercourse (and male-female anal intercourse) to fertility gods and goddesses. For example, fertility mother goddess cults were attended by castrated and/or transvestite priests who engaged in same-sex practices. These so-called priests could be found in temples, and quarters adjacent to them, and were consecrated to serve various fertility goddesses.

The Apostle Paul did not know any monogamous homosexual partners. The Apostle Paul did not know any Christian homosexuals. The Apostle Paul did not write about what he did not know.

There were other Greek words that the Apostle Paul could have used, whose meanings today would be much clearer than the two Greek words used in 1 Corinthians 6:9, malakoi and arsenokoitai. For example, the word pair philerastes and pederastes and the word pair philetor and eromenos constitute two word pairs that indicated males who were involved in same-sex activities, some of which were transgenerational and some of which were not. Here, “transgenerational” refers, for example, to the sexual relationship between an older soldier or mentor and a younger male in his mid-teens to early twenties. Their temporary sexual pairing was really quite common in some segments of both ancient Greek and Roman societies. In ancient Greece, there was even a god of such unions, called “Eros.” Regardless, the Greek words malakoi and arsenokoitai, used in 1 Corinthians 6:9, do not mean “modern-day Christian homosexuals.” Modern-day Christian homosexual society did not exist at the time that Paul lived.

Paradoxically, committed monogamous relationships between members of the same sex, who were of the same social standing and age, were derided in both ancient Greek and Roman societies. Such relationships were avoided, because they suggested weakness in those who might be

so paired. Although you may have heard or read that the Greek and Roman empires fell because of homosexuality, that simply is not true. Those empires may have fallen because of pagan idolatry and their pleasure-driven societies but not because of homosexuality. Lifelong unions between same-sex couples were virtually nonexistent during ancient Greece and ancient Rome. Committed monogamous relationships between people of the same sex were rare and considered distasteful.

With the exception of committed monogamous unions, the panoply of same-sex relationships in ancient Greek and Roman societies paralleled the panoply of opposite-sex relationships that existed then, just as they are paralleled today. Simply stated, whatever exists in the homosexual world also exists in the heterosexual world and vice versa.

The Apostle Paul did not know any monogamous homosexual partners. The Apostle Paul did not know any Christian homosexuals. The Apostle Paul did not write about what he did not know.

Translating various Hebrew and Greek words in the Holy Bible as homosexual is not accurate. Such translations remind me of this statement by the renowned theologian, John Calvin: “I consider looseness with words no less of a defect than looseness of the bowels.”

What three words best describe use of Bible passages against Christian homosexuals? Mistranslation, misinterpretation and misapplication!

Is temple cult prostitution “abominable” and “detestable” to the LORD God Almighty? Of course it is! To be sure, in some ways, it is even worse than simple prostitution, since it was not done just for money or to satisfy an unhealthy sexual addiction but was an attempt to “worship” pagan deities as part of Satan’s overall attempt to rob the Creator of His glory, honor and praise.

Chapter One of the Apostle Paul’s Epistle to the Romans helps make this recurring magnetic pull toward pagan cultism crystal clear, since it speaks of the tendency of worshipers to turn from God toward idolatry.

Paul's Letter to the Romans

Let us now consider Romans 1:18-34, paying particular attention to the words and phrases that I have underlined for emphasis:

{18} The wrath of God is being revealed from heaven against all the godlessness and wickedness of [people] who suppress the truth by their wickedness, {19} since what may be known about God is plain to them, because God has made it plain to them. {20} For since the creation of the world God's invisible qualities — his eternal power and divine nature — have been clearly seen, being understood from what has been made, so that [people] are without excuse. {21} For although they knew God, they neither glorified him as God nor gave thanks to him, but their thinking became futile and their foolish hearts were darkened. {22} Although they claimed to be wise, they became fools {23} and exchanged the glory of the immortal God for images made to look like mortal man and birds and animals and reptiles. [The Greek word tetrapodon, translated as “animals,” should have been translated as “mammals.” In other words, verse 23 should state, “and exchanged the glory of the immortal God for images made to look like mortal man and birds and mammals and reptiles.”] [brackets mine]

Romans 1:18-23 NIV

It should be clear to anyone who has ears to hear or eyes to see that those who changed the glory of this incorruptible and invisible God into images made to look like corruptible and visible beings — including human beings, birds, mammals, and reptiles — were pagan idolaters. Although somewhat redundant, I am using the words “pagan idolaters” together to give added emphasis as to who were actually involved in the acts described in the verses of Romans, Chapter One, that follow.

So, wherever the words “they,” “them,” and “their” occur, I am going to replace them with the words “the pagan idolaters” or the words

“pagan and idolatrous” to constantly remind you about whom the Apostle Paul was writing.

Romans, Chapter One continues...

{24} Therefore God gave them [meaning, **the pagan idolaters**] over in the sinful desires of their hearts [their **pagan and idolatrous** hearts] to sexual impurity for the degrading of their bodies [their **pagan and idolatrous** bodies] with one another. {25} They [**the pagan idolaters**] exchanged the truth of God for a lie, and worshiped and served created things [that is, idols made to look like human beings and animals] rather than the Creator — who is forever praised. Amen. {26} Because of this, God gave them [**the pagan idolaters**] over to shameful lusts [or, unbridled desires]. Even their women [meaning, their **pagan and idolatrous** women] exchanged natural [or, **conventional**] relations for unnatural [or, **unconventional**] ones.

Although many people like to quote Romans 1:26 as if it reads, “women with women,” that is NOT how it reads in the original Greek. The Greek does not indicate that women were having sex with other women, but that they were being serviced anally rather than vaginally.

And, although the Greek words of Romans 1:26 *para physin* **παρὰ φύσιν** (*physin* **φύσιν** from *physis* **φύσις**) are translated as “against nature” in the King James Version, or as “unnatural” in the New International Version, *para physin* can also be translated as “unconventional,” just as the Greek word *physikun* **φυσικὴν** (from *physikos* **φυσικός**) can be translated as “conventional.”

For example, when the Apostle Paul was referring to men’s hair length in 1 Corinthians 11:14, he was not referring to nature or biology but to the traditions or conventions of the day:

In the King James Version of the Bible, 1 Corinthians 11:14 reads:

Does not even nature itself teach you, that, if a man have long hair, it is a shame unto him? [The word “nature,” here, has been imprecisely translated from the Greek word *physis* φύσις.]

The Apostle Paul certainly did not intend for the Greek word *physis* φύσις to be translated as “nature” in 1 Corinthians 11:14, since nature itself *does show* that hair length grows continuously! Indeed, nature, or biology, shows that both men and women grow long hair if it is not cut. In writing about hair length, the Apostle Paul was commenting about what is conventional and not what is “against nature” or “in agreement with nature.” Similarly, in the King James Version of Romans 1:26, the words “against nature” have been imprecisely translated from the Greek words *para physin* παρὰ φύσιν. Although the Greek word *para* παρὰ can be translated as “against,” it can also be translated as “beside” or “along side of.” To illustrate this, the paratroopers that are sent out in war are not sent to fight “against” the troops or foot soldiers, they are sent to fight “beside,” or “along side of” the troops. The word “unconventional” is important here, because it does not conjure up the condemnation that is invoked by the words “against nature.” By using “unconventional” instead of “against nature,” Romans Chapter One, becomes more of the report (or, retelling) that the Apostle Paul intended.

The fact that Romans 1:26 is not about sex between women, coupled with the complete absence of a reference to women in Leviticus 18:22 in the Old Testament, should be clear, compelling, and convincing to you that the Holy Bible does not address female same-sex behaviors. ...Never! ...Not once! That the Holy Bible never addresses lesbianism should be problematic for those who believe that the Holy Bible gives a blanket condemnation against all homosexuals. If you must believe that homosexuals are condemned by the Bible, then you can only believe that male homosexuals are condemned. And, if you can only believe that male homosexuals are condemned, then it should begin to tear away at your misconceptions of what the Bible does say, and does not say, about homosexuals, homosexuality and the homosexual orientation.

Romans, Chapter One continues...

{27} In the same way the **pagan and idolatrous** men also abandoned **conventional** [translated from the Greek word physikun φυσικὴν] relations with women and were inflamed with lust for one another. **The pagan and idolatrous** men committed indecent acts with other **pagan and idolatrous** men, and received in themselves the due penalty for their perversion [“perversion,” here, referring to their wanton and promiscuous sex].

That pagan and idolatrous men abandoned vaginal intercourse for anal intercourse with both women and men in idolatrous settings was, indeed, “indecent” and “reprobate.” And, it is understandable that the pagan and idolatrous men received in themselves “the due penalty” of diseases and disorders that were common then, just as they are common today.

Romans, Chapter One continues in verses 28-32:

{28} Furthermore, since they [**the pagan idolaters**] did not think it worthwhile to retain the knowledge of God, God gave them [**the pagan idolaters**] over to a depraved mind [“depraved” is used in the New International Version and “reprobate” is used in the King James Version], to do what ought not to be done. {29} They [**the pagan idolaters**] became filled with every kind of wickedness, evil, greed and depravity. They [**the pagan idolaters**] are full of envy, murder, strife, deceit and malice. They [**the pagan idolaters**] are gossips, {30} slanderers, God-haters, insolent, arrogant and boastful; they [**the pagan idolaters**] invent ways of doing evil; they disobey their parents; {31} they [**the pagan idolaters**] are senseless, faithless, heartless, ruthless. {32} Although they [**the pagan idolaters**] know God’s righteous decree that those who do such things deserve death, they [**the pagan idolaters**] not only continue to do these very things but also approve of those who practice them. [brackets mine]

That it says in verse 32 of Romans, Chapter One, “they *knew* God’s righteous decree,” and “that those who do such things deserve death,” means that these people were not just simply barbarians but people who understood the Law of God in Torah relative to it being against idolatry and religious practices associated with idolatry, and that idolatrous practices were worthy of the death penalty.

It should be clear from the ancient historical context that the people in question here are those who turned from worshiping the one true and only real God, *whom they had already known*. As verses 21 and 28 state, “although they knew God ... they did not think it worthwhile to retain the knowledge of God.” These same people turned toward, or returned to, worshiping pagan idols. As stated in verse 23, they worshiped “images made to look like mortal man and birds and animals and reptiles.” That these idolatrous people were “depraved” (as it states in the NIV), or “reprobate” (as it states in the KJV), means that they had failed the test of remaining true to God. And, it was not that they had been worshiping God only as the “Unknown God,” whom the Apostle Paul had spoken of in his address to the people of Athens (and recorded in Acts 17:23). No, in Chapter One of his Epistle to the Romans, the Apostle Paul describes people who had known God but refused to live their lives in consecration to Him; as a result, they were “illegitimate children and not true heirs” (as indicated in Hebrews 12:8). They were reprobate, because they had failed to pass the test of faithfulness to God. These people fell to the societal ills of their day as well as their own unbridled lust and practiced sexual activities that were common at that time.

What does the historical context of the Apostle Paul writing require us to understand?

1. The historical context of the Apostle Paul’s writings requires us to understand that the Apostle Paul was familiar with sex for the purpose of “worshiping” fertility gods and goddesses. This so-called worship included pseudo-sacred ritualistic sexual offerings of anal intercourse with both male and female temple cult prostitutes.
2. The historical context of the Apostle Paul’s writings requires us to understand that the Apostle Paul was familiar with group sex in

which individuals had sex with multiple partners multiple times (for example, in “orgies” at Bacchanalian-type feasts and festivals as well as in bath houses and during idol worship).

3. The historical context of the Apostle Paul’s writings requires us to understand that the Apostle Paul was familiar with sex for the sake of sex in unbridled inflamed “lust,” which was indulged in promiscuous sex.

The Apostle Paul did not know any monogamous homosexual partners. The Apostle Paul did not know any Christian homosexuals. The Apostle Paul did not write about what he did not know.

In verses 22 through 26 of Romans, Chapter One, are found at least three pairs of parallel constructions all referring to people who exchanged one thing for another: 1) verse 24 describes people who exchanged the glory of God for graven images; 2) verse 25 describes people who exchanged the truth of God for a lie; and, 3) verse 26 describes people who exchanged “conventional” sexual relations for “unconventional” ones. All three verses are describing the same idol-worshiping people. In other words, the Apostle Paul is not speaking of homosexuals seeking to live their lives in consecrated monogamous relationships. Rather, the Apostle Paul is describing people who were involved in sexual activity within the context of pagan idolatry. Regarding verses 24, 26, and 27 of Romans, Chapter One, the Life Application Bible Commentary: Romans, which is a theologically conservative work, and accepted by many mainstream Christian educators, helps educate us relative to the context of the sexual impurity addressed:

Here [in verse 24] Paul introduces the subject of *sexual impurity*. He returns to it in verses 26 and 27. The context indicates that he is referring in part to cultic prostitution and the fertility cults that made use of temple prostitutes in their rites ... Paul, writing from Corinth, the home of the temple of Aphrodite, was surrounded by evidences of the horrible evil of such belief (see also 1 Corinthians 6:9-10; 2

Corinthians 12:21).⁴³

So, the “they,” “them,” and “their” of Romans, Chapter One, verses 18 through 34, all refer to pagan idolaters — specifically, those who reverted back to idolatry after having known the one true and only real God. Again, what kind of idolaters, and what kind of idolatry existed during Paul’s time? The same kind that existed during Canaanite times and throughout the entirety of Old Testament history, when the worship of fertility gods and goddesses was the order of the day.

In his book, History of Orgies, author Burgo Partridge details the sado-masochistic orgiastic debaucheries that occurred throughout the Roman empire, where participants reveled in animal instincts in frenzied group sexual activities:

The worship of Cybele, besides involving self-castration in a state of frenzy, and dedication of the severed organs to the goddess, had also, as an important part of the ritual, a baptism by blood which came, appropriately enough, from a bull or ram. Banquets were given in honour of this goddess at private houses, but the actual consummation of her worship appears to have been performed by the priests alone. According to Apuleius, the priests of Cybele also indulged in [idolatrous same-sex] practices with strong young peasants.⁴⁴

Partridge then gives example after example of this utterly contemptible society in which same-sex and opposite-sex temple cult and brothel prostitution abounded and where huge phallic symbols were worshiped on almost every street corner by emperor and subject alike. Indeed, people were “inflamed” in depraved lust for one another.

I now want to spend some time commenting about what is biologically natural as well as what, in fact, does occur in nature.

⁴³ Barton, Bruce B., David R. Veerman and Neil Wilson. Life Application Bible Commentary: Romans. Tyndale House Publishers, Inc., Wheaton, 1992, page 32.

⁴⁴ Partridge, Burgo. A History of Orgies. Bonanza Books, New York, 1960, page 59. [brackets mine]

What is “Natural” in Romans 1:26 & 1:27?

If you still believe that Scripture is unequivocally against modern-day Christian homosexuals, then you need to understand the mind of God relative to this issue. To this end, you need to understand that true science does not contradict the Holy Bible nor does the Holy Bible contradict true science. True science shows that there are exceptions to the so-called absolute scriptural rule of “male and female” (referred to Genesis 1:27) in the form of intersexuals as well as in same-sex pair bonding throughout much of the animal kingdom. And, the Holy Bible shows that there are exceptions to the so-called “absolute” scriptural rule of “male and female” in the form of eunuchs — of whom, Christ Jesus said, “some [are] born that way” (Matthew 19:12).

In an article, entitled “Brain Differences in Sheep Linked to Sexual Partner Preference,” published in November, 2002, the Oregon Health and Science University states:

Research conducted at Oregon Health & Science University (OHSU) has demonstrated structural brain differences associated with naturally occurring variations in sexual partner preferences. These are the first findings to demonstrate such a correlation in research animals, in this case sheep.

The article continues...

Domestic rams were used as an animal model for this research because they display distinct, natural variations in sexual attraction, making them valuable in studying the biological basis for sexual partner preference. Previous studies documented that approximately 6 percent to 8 percent of domestic rams court and mate with other rams exclusively.⁴⁵

⁴⁵ **Oregon Health Science & University (OHSU) News Release, November 4, 2002, “Brain Differences in Sheep Linked to Sexual Partner Preference,” Portland, Oregon.**

Yes, both intersexuals and same-sex pair bonds throughout the animal kingdom serve as biological examples of what is natural and what occurs in nature. And, eunuchs “born that way” serve as biblical examples of deviations from the norm in nature. Thus, God accounts for exceptions to supposed rules of gender and sexual orientation both naturally (that is, biologically) and scripturally.

From a biological standpoint, the presence or absence of genitals is a state of nature; and, gender is a state of mind. These combined states are ultimately responsible for an individual’s instincts. If you think that the homosexual orientation is a perverted instinct, then you have made heterosexuality a law-unto-itself (or, universal law), which law is contradictory to the full spectrum of what occurs in nature. Indeed, such an absolute fails to take into consideration the myriad departures in nature that deviate from the norm (norm defined here as “that which occurs most frequently”). It also fails to take into consideration spiritual law, which states in Galatians 3:28 that in Christ there is neither “male nor female.”

Through science as well as scripture, we now know that: 1) intersexuals are “born that way,” 2) animals that court and mate exclusively with other animals of the same sex are “born that way,” and 3) some eunuchs, as Christ Jesus said, are “born that way.” Should we deny the existence of any of these? No, of course not!

Given the context of idolatry and pagan sexual ritual orgies that included group sex as well as sex without commitment, Chapter One of Paul’s Epistle to the Romans is referring to what is, in essence, spiritual adultery. Spiritual adultery should be foreign and repugnant to the children of God: 1) because God hates idolatry; and, 2) because, as stated in Hebrews 13:4, God’s ideal requires monogamous covenant ties between individuals before they consummate their unions sexually. I will say more concerning this ideal in Chapter Four of this book.

In Romans 1:27, it says that the men “were inflamed with lust for one another.” Does this describe unholy thinking, unholy behavior and unholy union? Of course, it does! Unbridled lust with multiple partners is sexual obsession and addiction. Depraved or reprobate lust

is the reduction of any other individual to an object for one's own self gratification, which is always wrong in the eyes of God — for heterosexuals as well as for homosexuals. That people exchanged committed monogamous relationships for ambisexual orgiastic activities is indeed depraved, and appropriately labeled “against God.”

Although you have already read my comments that the English words “conventional” (from the Greek word *physikun φυσικῆν*) and “convention” (from the Greek word *physin φύσιν*) should have been used in Romans 1:26 and 27, I would now like to offer further commentary on the English words nature and natural that have often been used in many Bible translations instead.

For the sake of discussion, if I concede that the terms nature and natural should have been used, then either the term natural in Romans 1:26 and 1:27 only refers to what the Apostle Paul understood of nature (a limited understanding) or it refers to all of nature, for all time, in all situations and circumstances.

On the one hand, many (if not most) Bible scholars and theologians would agree that a Bible word's meaning is limited to the definition of the word at the time that it was used (that is, its original meaning at the time). Therefore, if the word natural only refers to what the Apostle Paul understood of nature, was exposed to, and studied personally, then it cannot be all-inclusive and, therefore, must not include contemporary homosexuals for whom the homosexual orientation is innate or instinctual. (For example, the Apostle Paul was not a naturalist and, therefore, was not aware of animals who exclusively court and sexually couple with others of the same sex. And, the Apostle Paul did not know any Christian homosexuals. The Apostle Paul did not write about what he did not know.)

On the other hand, if the English words natural and nature are all-inclusive (and refer to all of nature, for all time, in all situations and circumstances), then the inclusivity itself opens the door for the traditionally-inferred meaning in Romans 1:26 and 1:27 to be counterbalanced by modern scientific contributions to the meaning of sex, gender, and sexual orientation through an understanding of

developmental biology and cognitive psychology.

Either way, an intelligent understanding of the homosexual orientation wins out. To be sure, God does not want us to be stuck on stupidity or remain in ignorance.

Here, it is important for me to again remind you that there is a distinction between “same-sex behaviors” and “homosexual practices.” Romantic involvement between people of a homosexual orientation are different from same-sex sexual activities that may occur between people of unresolved sexual orientation. I say “unresolved” not to describe their internal conflict or the uncertainty of how they view themselves but, rather, to describe that it is indeterminate if the same-sex behaviors in Chapter One of Romans are between obligate homosexuals (that is, people who have no choice in their attraction) or between heterosexuals simply involved in ambisexual activity, which includes sex with everyone and anyone.

It is also important to note that, in the Apostle Paul’s mind, lifelong homosexual pair bonding was not an option for anybody. That it was not an option colored his interpretation of what is “natural” and “unnatural,” just as the role of women in the society of his day colored his interpretation of roles for women in church leadership. The Apostle Paul’s perspectives on these issues of gender and sex do not have universal application, because his perspectives must be interpreted in the historical context of his day.

Concerning the reference to the “depraved” or “reprobate” mind in Romans 1:28, I hope that life experience has already taught you that God only gives us over to a reprobate mind when we are indulging that mind to begin with. In other words, the indulgence of sinful addictive behaviors results in more of the same until, or unless, we consciously decide to turn, or return, the reins of all aspects of our lives over to God. If you have not yet learned that, and if you belong to God, then you eventually will learn it. Of this, I am certain. Again, God does not turn us over to what we are not already indulging.

As you seek to understand Scripture, it is important to not only *read the*

lines (that is, word meanings, grammar and syntax), but it is also important to *read behind the lines* by understanding historical context, word etymology (or, origins) and purpose. As you seek to understand Scripture, it is important to not only read behind the lines, but it is also important to *read between the lines* by understanding implication and inference. And, as you seek to understand Scripture, it is important to not only read between the lines, but it is also important to *read beyond the lines* concerning application as well as misapplication to future events, circumstances, and realities.

It is important for us to come to an understanding that — if we hold the whole Bible as we simultaneously attend to its various parts — the Bible addresses male same-sex behaviors only from the standpoint of: 1) idolatry, 2) prostitution, 3) unbridled lust and 4) brutal sexual assault (remember, such assaults were depicted in the intended group rapes recorded in Genesis 19 for the city of Sodom and recorded in Judges 19 for the city of Gibeah). The Holy Bible never addresses the issue of homosexual relationships between women. Never! Not once! And, the Holy Bible never addresses the issue of homosexual relationships between males from the standpoint of committed monogamous relationships. It never addresses that either! Not once!

The sum of the matter is this: teach homosexuals to be moral, because you cannot teach them to be heterosexual, for that would be unnatural to them (which is to say, contradictory to what is innate within them or instinctive in them). To help understand this, you must either grasp the multivariate nature of biological life or transcend (which is to say, go beyond) using [only] a physical referent for meaningful relationships.

Closing the Chapter on Sodom

The last reference to Sodom in the Bible often used against homosexuals is found in Jude, verse 7 (there are no chapters in Jude):

In a similar way, Sodom and Gomorrah and the surrounding towns gave themselves up to sexual immorality

and perversion. They serve as an example of those who suffer the punishment of eternal fire.

Jude 7 (NIV)

Rather than describing homosexuality, the two Greek words rendered together as “perversion” in the NIV and separately as “strange flesh” in the King James Version could just as well be describing the bestiality common to many Canaanite fertility rites as it could be describing the attempt by the townsmen of Sodom to rape the two angelic visitors, whose flesh was indeed “strange,” or “different.” This explanation is especially plausible in view of the verse’s comparison (“in a similar way”) to the fallen angels in the previous verse, who “abandoned their own home” Jude, verse 6, indicates that they commingled with human beings by having sex with them (see Genesis 6:1-2):

And the angels who did not keep their positions of authority but abandoned their own home — these [God] has kept in darkness, bound with everlasting chains for judgment on the great Day. [brackets mine]

Jude 6 NIV

When men **הָאָדָם** [or, human beings] began to increase in number on the earth and daughters were born to them, the sons of God **בְּנֵי-הָאֱלֹהִים** [or, angels] saw that the daughters of men were beautiful, and they married any of them they chose. [brackets mine]

Genesis 6:1-2 NIV

The nephilim (or, “giants”) referred to in Genesis 6:4 (NIV) have been inferred by some Hebrew scholars to have been the offspring of the fallen angels and human beings, since the word nephilim may mean “fallen ones.”

Ironically, the two words translated as “strange flesh” in the KJV of

Jude 7 are *heteras sarkos* **ἑτέρας σαρκὸς**⁴⁶ — which is to say, “hetero[sexual] flesh,” and not “homosexual flesh.” And, although my use of “hetero[sexual]” in the previous sentence is obvious and intentional hyperbole, it takes one no more far afield than requiring students of the Bible to believe that the perversion written about in verse 7 of Jude is homosexuality.

The Word Biblical Commentary (also *very* mainstream) on Jude is in agreement with the latter interpretation just given:

As the angels fell because of their lust for women, so the Sodomites desired sexual relations with angels. The reference is to the incident in Genesis 19:4-11. **σαρκὸς ἑτέρας**, “strange flesh,” cannot, as many commentators and most translations assume, refer to homosexual practice, in which the flesh is not “different” (**ἑτέρας**); [therefore] it must mean the flesh of angels. The sin of the Sodomites (not strictly, of the other towns) reached its zenith in this most extravagant of sexual aberrations, which would have transgressed the order of creation as shockingly as the fallen angels did.⁴⁷

⁴⁶ I have intentionally reversed the order of the words in Greek for the reader to more easily compare them to their English counterparts.

⁴⁷ Bauckman, Richard. *Word Biblical Commentary: Jude-2 Peter* (Volume 50), Word Books, Waco, 1983, page 54.

Chapter Three:

Levitical Law and Grace

Introduction

In Chapter One, we considered the seeming dilemma that exists between Christianity and homosexuality. We also considered how it is so necessary to hold the whole Bible while we simultaneously attend to its various parts. And, we considered that things are not often as black and white as some people might like us to believe relative to interpreting the Bible. In Chapter Two, we considered the story of Sodom, as well as extensions of it relative to the gadeshim, who were referred to in the King James Version of the Bible as “sodomites” but, more correctly, should have been referred to as “male temple cult prostitutes.” And, we considered the historical role of the worship of fertility gods and goddesses in pre-Canaanite times, in Canaanite times, and in ancient Greek and Roman times as well. This historical role will be explicated further within this chapter, too, as we discuss Levitical Law and grace.

The Major Question

The major question that we need to consider relative to this chapter is, “Why the seemingly hard-line stance by God concerning same-sex behavior, cross-dressing, and eunuchs?” — as commonly quoted from the following verses of the Torah:

Do not lie with a man as one lies with a woman; that is detestable [that is, an “abhorrence” or an “abomination”].
[brackets mine]

Leviticus 18:22 NIV

If a man lies with a man as one lies with a woman, both of them have done what is detestable [that is, “abhorrent” or “abominable”]. They must be put to death; their blood will be on their own heads. [brackets mine]

Leviticus 20:13 NIV

A woman must not wear men’s clothing, nor a man wear women’s clothing, for the LORD your God detests [“abhors” or “finds abominable”] anyone who does this. [brackets mine]

Deuteronomy 22:5 NIV

He that is wounded in the stones [“testicles”] or has his privy member [“penis”] cut off, shall not enter into the congregation of the LORD. [brackets mine]

Deuteronomy 23:1 KJV

Understanding Why Levitical Law was Originally Imposed on the Children of Israel

In order to answer the major question just posed in the previous section, I want to remind the reader that “Torah” is another word for “the Law.” Though many people might think only of the 10 Commandments (found in Exodus 20:1-17 and Deuteronomy 5:6-22) when they read or hear of “the Law,” it is really much more than that. Generally speaking, the recorded Law or “written Torah” is used synonymously with the first five “books” of the Bible known as the Pentateuch: Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers and Deuteronomy. As such, “the Law” includes all of the covenant requirements, commandments, statutes, rules, regulations, and ordinances laid down by the LORD God Almighty throughout the Pentateuch and found in varying degrees in each of those five “books” (some of which are more concerned with a narrative retelling of events than with actual laws, rules, regulations, and ordinances).

I have chosen to use the title “Levitical Law” in this chapter as

representative of “the Law” for the following reasons: 1) because Leviticus is the most thoroughly legalistic book of the Pentateuch as well as the entire Bible; 2) because Levitical Law serves as the embodiment of the myriad rules, regulations, and ordinances imposed by the LORD God Almighty on those who were to inhabit the Promised Land; 3) because most of the laws found in the largely legalistic section of Deuteronomy can be viewed as an amplification of Leviticus; 4) because Leviticus is the location for two of the most often used passages against homosexuality; and, 5) to help the reader keep separate religious law (or, “Torah”) from civil, or governmental, law.

The more than six hundred rules, regulations and ordinances detailed in Leviticus are quite extensive, covering every major aspect of the human condition experienced by the children of Israel. *For example*, Levitical prohibitions included dietary restrictions:

The rabbit, though it chews the cud, does not have a split hoof; it is unclean for you. And the pig, though it has a split hoof completely divided, does not chew the cud; it is unclean for you. You must not eat their meat or touch their carcasses [that is, their dead bodies]; they are unclean for you. [brackets mine]

Leviticus 11:6-8 NIV

But all creatures in the seas or streams that do not have fins and scales — whether among all the swarming things or among all the other living creatures in the water — you are to detest [or, “abhor”]. And since you are to detest [or, “abhor”] them, you must not eat their meat and you must detest [or, “abhor”] their carcasses. Anything living in the water that does not have fins and scales is to be detestable [or, “abominable”] to you. [brackets mine]

Leviticus 11:10-12 NIV

for the record, the English words “detest,” “abhor,” “detestable,” and “abominable” used in Leviticus 11:10-12 have not been translated from

the Hebrew word *to-ev-ah* תועבה , which means “idolatrous practice,” but from the Hebrew word *sheqets* שקץ , which means “filthy” or “scummy.”

In other words, Levitical Law required the children of Israel to refrain from eating rabbit, pork, shrimp, lobster, clams, oysters, and even catfish!

Further, Levitical Law also restricted the children of Israel in the following ways:

Do not mate different kinds of animals. Do not plant your field with two kinds of seed. Do not wear clothing woven of two kinds of material.

Leviticus 19:19 NIV

Thus, allowing a horse to mate with a donkey (or, “jackass”) to produce a mule or hinny would be against Levitical Law. Planting rye and barley in the same field would be contrary to what is allowed by Levitical Law. And, wearing garments made of mixed fiber, like cotton and wool, would be considered by Levitical Law to be unholy as well.

Levitical Law prohibited the children of Israel from tattooing themselves and even provided guidelines for men’s haircuts:

Do not cut your bodies for the dead or put tattoo marks on yourselves. I am the LORD.

Leviticus 19:28 NIV

Do not cut the hair at the sides of your head or clip off the edges of your beard.

Leviticus 19:27 NIV

Penalties for disobeying Levitical Law were quite severe by today’s democratic standards:

If anyone curses his father or mother, he must be put to death. He has cursed his father or his mother, and his blood will be on his own head. If a man commits adultery with another man's wife — with the wife of his neighbor — both the adulterer and the adulteress must be put to death.

Leviticus 20:9-10 NIV

If a man lies with a woman during her monthly period [during menses] and has sexual relations with her, he has exposed the source of her flow, and she has also uncovered it. Both of them must be cut off from their people. [brackets mine]

Leviticus 20:18 NIV

I would like you to take the time and read through the whole book of Leviticus. I know it is rather tedious reading, but I think it will be challenging for you to find that there were some constraints placed upon the Israelites that were not only severe but also next to impossible to observe, including some prohibitions that, from a modern-day standpoint, just do not make sense without a global view of what the LORD was trying to instill in the hearts and minds of those He intended to be His people at that particular time.

Do the hundreds of rules, regulations and ordinances detailed by Levitical Law appertain to Christians? No, certainly not. Why not? Because the Nation of Israel and the Church of Christ are two distinctly separate entities. (To be sure, the LORD God Almighty is not finished with nonchristian Jews, but collectively they are not the same as God's Church.) Here, a distinction is made between national Israel and spiritual Israel. "National Israel" includes nonbelieving Jews, and "spiritual Israel" includes all who believe in Christ, including Messianic Jews (that is, those who believe that Jesus is the prophesied Messiah). Just as God is not finished with spiritual Israel, God is not yet finished with national Israel.

So, then, you may ask, why were the rules, regulations, and ordinances of the Torah laid down? I think that question is best answered through

understanding the following verse:

You shall make a distinction and recognize a difference between the holy and the common or unholy, and between the unclean and the clean.

Leviticus 10:10 NIV

Again, we need to keep historical context in mind. The people whom the LORD was trying to regulate and draw closer to Him were a nomadic and, in many ways, primitive people. Perhaps you may gain additional insight through a comment made by Moses to the children of Israel just before they were to enter the Promised Land:

“You have been rebellious against the LORD ever since I have known you.”

Deuteronomy 9:24 NIV

Moses didn't say, “I've been with you for 40 years. I've walked with you in the wilderness. We have had some good times and some bad together. I wish you well, and I will miss you!” Instead, he said, “You have been stiff-necked from the very first day that I knew you!” Indeed, the LORD was dealing with a very difficult group of people as difficult as you and I are this very day!

Because they were stubborn, and because they originally had barbarous customs, He wanted to instruct them that they had to consecrate even the smallest details of their lives to God if they were going to truly be His people, and that such consecration would not be easy. Thus, the rules, regulations, and ordinances of the Torah were laid down to help this stiff-necked and rebellious nomadic group of people come to understand that in order to become a holy people, they had to learn to separate themselves from barbarous customs and idolatrous practices, discipline themselves, and offer even the minutest of their daily activities up to God as proof of their willingness to be God's people. To be sure, in addition to “Law,” the word Torah also means “teaching.” It also means “instruction.” And, it also means “direction.” God was

teaching, instructing and directing the children of Israel to be holy through following the practices that He laid down in Torah. Lest any of you boast, it is important to state that modern-day Christians are no less stubborn and no less rebellious today than the children of Israel during ancient times.

Does this mean that Christians should throw out the Ten Commandments? No. However, it does mean that we should pay special attention to what Christ Jesus said were the greatest commandments, or what “sums up the Law and the Prophets,” (Matthew 7:12 NIV) —which is that we should love the LORD our God with all of our heart, all of our soul, and all of our mind (and all of our might); and that we should love our neighbor as much as we individually love ourselves. (Matthew 22:36-40) That is what Christ Jesus said summarizes the Law. To be sure, as Christians, though we worship every seven days, most of us do not worship on the Jewish Sabbath, which is from Friday sundown to Saturday sundown. So, the overwhelming majority of Christians do not even keep all of the Ten Commandments. Interestingly, even when some Christian denominations keep the Jewish Sabbath as their day of worship, they often end up unnecessarily adhering to many of the other ordinances and restrictions that are written in the Law of Moses as well.

Why should all Christians read, study, and comprehend the Old Testament, including the Law of Moses? There are at least eight reasons:

1. To understand the origin of the universe.
2. To understand the origin of mankind.
3. To learn the history of mankind since Adam and Eve as well as to learn the origin of iniquity and sin.
4. To understand the promises of God to mankind concerning the Jewish Messiah, who is the only Savior of the world.

- 5. To understand the prophecies of God that have already been fulfilled, that are being fulfilled, and that will be fulfilled at a later time (perhaps even right now).**
- 6. To learn from the journey of the Children of Israel and how it mirrors the personal journey of individual Christians.**
- 7. To learn basic spiritual principles and apply them to daily living today.**
- 8. To better understand Old Testament quotations and imagery used throughout the New Testament. (One really couldn't understand the fullness of the Book of Revelation unless you understood Old Testament symbols.)**

Christians should not read, comprehend, and study the Law of Moses in order for them to follow Levitical Law. Levitical Law was written for a different group of people at a different time in history, who lived in a different place! As recorded in Romans 6:14, Christians are not under the law of Moses but under grace. [See also the discussion of circumcision in Galatians, Chapter Five.] Unfortunately, many Christians often resort to, or revert to, a default condition of legalism in their practice of Christianity. As stated earlier, legalism is the brain's natural default in order for it (the brain) to more easily interpret its environment.

Levitical Law required perfection not only in the people who ministered to the LORD but also in the animals that were to be sacrificed to Him:

The LORD said to Moses, "Say to Aaron: 'For the generations to come none of your descendants who has a defect may come near to offer the food of his God. No man who has any defect may come near: no man who is blind or lame, disfigured or deformed; no man with a crippled foot or hand, or who is hunchbacked or dwarfed, or who has any

eye defect, or who has festering or running sores or damaged testicles. No descendant of Aaron the priest who has any defect is to come near to present the offerings made to the LORD by fire. He has a defect; he must not come near to offer the food of his God. He may eat the most holy food of his God, as well as the holy food; yet because of his defect, he must not go near the curtain or approach the altar, and so desecrate My sanctuary. I am the LORD, who makes them holy.’”

Leviticus 21:16-23 NIV

The LORD said to Moses, “Speak to Aaron and his sons and to all the Israelites and say to them: ‘If any of you — either an Israelite or an alien living in Israel — presents a gift for a burnt offering to the LORD, either to fulfill a vow or as a freewill offering, you must present a male without defect from the cattle, sheep or goats in order that it may be accepted on your behalf. Do not bring anything with a defect, because it will not be accepted on your behalf.’”

Leviticus 22:17-20 NIV

Centuries later, Jesus spoke of fulfilling the Law:

“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.”

Matthew 5:17 NIV

Christ Jesus did not mean that he came to reinstate or reinstitute Levitical Law. Jesus meant that Levitical Law required the offering of an unblemished, or perfect, blood sacrifice as an atonement for iniquity and sin. And, that he himself was to serve as that offering in the establishment of a New Covenant as “the Lamb of God” (John 1:29 and 36) and, in that way, fulfill the entirety of Levitical Law. In his perfect obedience to God, Jesus fulfilled the Law’s requirements. That is what Jesus meant when he stated that he had come to fulfill the Law. To be sure, he ended up canceling the whole (the entire) written code (that is,

releasing people from bondage to Levitical Law), as stated in Colossians 2:14:

[God] forgave us all our sins, having **canceled** the written code [the Law], with its regulations, that was against us and that stood opposed to us; he took it away, nailing it to the cross.” [brackets mine]

Colossians 2:14 NIV

According to the Bible, the blood sacrifice of Jesus canceled the rules, regulations and ordinances of Levitical Law, having nailed them to the cross!

Understanding Levitical Law in Relationship to Grace

Christians need to understand that Levitical Law is something that was put in place in order to help people learn that God requires His people (no matter who they are and no matter in what age) to be “set aside” — which is to say, to be truly consecrated to, and sanctified unto, Him. How can people become sanctified? Well, the ancients were challenged by Levitical Law to live their lives in a way that *approached* true holiness by trying to follow all of its rules, regulations, and ordinances recorded in Torah.

Christians should be careful about trying to live in accordance with Levitical Law or trying to impose on others what they themselves will not, and cannot, fulfill. Concerning hypocritical adherents to Levitical Law, Christ Jesus said many times, “Woe to you teachers of the law and Pharisees, you hypocrites.” (Matthew 23:1-39 NIV) He called these legalists “blind guides!” And, he said, “You strain out a gnat but swallow a camel.” (Matthew 23:24 NIV) He chided them with, “You snakes! You brood of vipers! How will you escape being condemned to hell?” (Matthew 23:33 NIV) Who or what is a hypocrite? An unfaithful servant, or someone who, in the name of God, requires someone else to do what he or she cannot do.

To be sure, we can come to a better understanding of Levitical Law through understanding New Testament teachings. Remember, Christians are taught that they “are not under law, but under grace.” (Romans 6:14 NIV) Indeed, Christians are liberated from following the rules, regulations, and ordinances of Levitical Law. Anyone who says that Christians should follow the rules, regulations, and ordinances in Leviticus is deceived and in bondage and seeks to put others in bondage as well. Anyone who says that Christians should follow the rules, regulations, and ordinances in Leviticus has placed themselves under a curse and seeks to place others under the same curse. (Galatians 3:10)

The LORD God Almighty established a covenant with Abraham, because Abraham was a righteous person. Why was Abraham considered a righteous person? Abraham was considered righteous by God, because he was a man of faith. The Bible teaches that righteousness was imputed to him because of his faith:

[Abraham] did not waver through unbelief regarding the promise of God, but was strengthened in his faith and gave glory to God, being fully persuaded that God had power to do what he had promised. This is why “it was credited [or, “imputed” in the KJV] to him as righteousness.” [See also Genesis 17:5] The words “it was credited [or, “imputed”] to him were written not for him alone, but also for us, to whom God will credit righteousness — for us who believe in him who raised Jesus our Lord from the dead. [brackets mine]

Romans 4:20-25. NIV

So, God recognized that Abraham had faith. Therefore, God established a covenant with Abraham. And it was not until the children of Israel left Egypt after more than four centuries in bondage that the various rules, regulations, and ordinances of Levitical Law were put in place. Are we to believe, then, that there were no people who were righteous in God’s sight from the time of Abraham up to the time that the Law was imposed? Or, are we to believe that there were no people

who had faith in the LORD God Almighty during that interval of more than four hundred years? Of course not! There were people of faith; some of the descendants of Abraham were people of faith and were considered by the LORD to be righteous, just like Abraham, because of their faith.

The point I am trying to reiterate here is that the Bible teaches, “Without faith it is impossible to please God.” (Hebrews 11:6 NIV) In other words, what the LORD looks at is whether or not we have faith. The Bible also teaches that the Lord Jesus Christ himself is the author and finisher, or perfecter, of that faith. (Hebrews 12:2) Again, it is faith that is crucial to our right standing with the LORD God Almighty. It was faith that was crucial for Abraham as well as for the people who lived in the centuries between the Abrahamic covenant and the imposition of the rules, regulations and ordinances of Levitical Law. And, it is faith that is still crucial now after the first Advent of Jesus Christ and the time of his atonement for our iniquity and sin through his crucifixion and death. Even under Levitical Law this was true, since the purpose of Levitical Law was to teach the children of Israel to put their faith and hope in the coming Messiah (or, Moshiach) promised by Moses and, later, reiterated by the Old Testament prophets.

If Levitical Law could have made the children of Israel righteous, there would have been no need for blood sacrifices, and if the sacrifices of unblemished animals had been sufficient, there would have been no need for an unblemished Savior. So, Levitical Law and its required sacrifices all pointed to the need for a Redeemer. Having faith has always been, and still is, what the LORD God Almighty holds to be more valuable than adhering to Levitical Law!

Romans 2:25-29 declares that, spiritually speaking, those who are true descendants of Abraham are those who have humbled themselves before the LORD and have their faith, and thereby their righteousness, in Him:

For circumcision is indeed profitable if you keep the Law, but if you are a breaker of the Law your circumcision has become uncircumcision. Therefore, if an uncircumcised

man keeps the righteous requirements of the Law will not his uncircumcision be counted as circumcision? And will not the physically uncircumcised, if he fulfills the Law, judge you who even with your written code and circumcision are a transgressor of the Law? For he is not a Jew who is one outwardly nor is circumcision that which is outward in the flesh [this describes national Israel], but he is a Jew who is one inwardly and circumcision is that of the heart in the spirit [of love], not in the letter [of the Law], whose praise is not from men but from God [this describes spiritual Israel]. [brackets mine]

Romans 2:25-29 NKJV

Romans 2:25-29 reminds me of a personal story. One of my good Christian friends, Steve, who happens to be heterosexual, is someone with whom I had worked for a long time. He was in a quandary, because he knew that my life demonstrated the principles of Christ and yet, at the same time, he knew that I was homosexual. However, no matter how much we discussed the issue, he could not reconcile my homosexuality with my Christianity based on his understanding of the Bible. To be sure, we had discussed this issue often. (And I was willing to do that, because he was an analytical person, willing to listen as well as to share his comments in non-judgmental and non-condemning ways.)

Steve and I went through all Scriptural aspects even obliquely related to same-sex behaviors in the Bible but to no avail. The breakthrough did not come for Steve until (thinking of the previously-quoted Romans 2:25-29) I asked him, “Isn’t it possible, Steve, that, if the LORD God Almighty can view uncircumcision as circumcision when the uncircumcised person has faith, then could the LORD not also view a homosexual who has faith, and who is righteous in God’s sight as a result of that faith, to be equal with heterosexuals who have faith? If, as the Bible states, circumcision is God’s standard and God treats uncircumcision as equivalent to circumcision when the person has faith, could God not also treat the homosexual orientation as equivalent to the heterosexual orientation if the person has faith?” In other words, although God at one time viewed circumcision as the sign, token or

standard through which people demonstrated that they had a covenant with God (Genesis 17:11), in this New Covenant dispensation God views uncircumcision the same as circumcision, providing that people's hearts are in the right place. Concomitantly, could God not also end up in this dispensation to view the homosexual orientation the same as the heterosexual orientation for those people whose love for God, faith in God and hope in God are not displaced?

Though Steve and I had discussed this issue for many months, these particular questions and the particular scriptural references just quoted created the turning point in understanding for Steve. The Holy Spirit moved in a special way, and Steve said, "Oh, I understand. That makes sense!"

Sometimes, the Holy Spirit uses different verses, different passages, or different phrases from the Bible in order to impinge upon our consciousness the same basic truth. Steve was helped by understanding, interpreting and applying Romans 2:25 to how God might view the homosexual who is righteous (that is, who has faith in Him). Romans 2:25 (NIV) states: "Therefore, if an uncircumcised man keeps the righteous requirements of the law will not his uncircumcision be counted as circumcision?" For Steve, it was as if the Scripture were rewritten to say, "Therefore, if a homosexual has faith in the LORD God Almighty, then will his homosexuality not be counted equivalent to heterosexuality?" This, of course, assumes that heterosexuality is the ideal type or standard. And, perhaps it *was* relative to reproduction and one of God's earliest commandments to "be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth" as recorded in Genesis 1:28 (KJV0; but, we also know through Scripture that God has special promises for those who do not reproduce. (For example, God comforts eunuchs, who do not reproduce, in Isaiah 56:3-5.)

To be sure, the Gospel message is a very simple message; but, when we end up reading verses and passages within the Bible like Romans 2:25-29, it is not until the Holy Spirit elucidates and illuminates those passages that we are able to more fully understand their implications and applications. Indeed, to the human mind, Romans 2:25-29 is somewhat obtuse; so, unless the Holy Spirit resides in us and/or

ministers its specific meaning of particular verses to us, we really cannot understand some Bible verses, because it would just seem like double-talk or “doublespeak” (which is to say, “convoluted”). We must depend upon the Holy Spirit for interpretation and meaning relative to the Scriptures:

The [person] without the Spirit does not accept the things that come from the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him, and he cannot understand them, because they are spiritually discerned. [brackets mine]

1 Corinthians 2:14 NIV

The reason that I am spending considerable time on the particular issue of Levitical Law versus grace is that, too often, people would have others live according to Levitical Law, when the LORD God Almighty has done away with adhering to it as a criterion for entering God’s Kingdom. Many Christians, both heterosexuals as well as homosexuals, have been deceived into believing that Levitical Law pertains to Christians. They have been deceived into believing that people of the homosexual orientation cannot inherit the Kingdom of Heaven. It is time to get rid of such stinking thinking!

It is not God’s desire for Christians to live according to Levitical Law. So, do not quote Levitical Law to one another as the ideal standard or measure, since that would be very dangerous. Dangerous? Yes, it is dangerous to use Levitical Law in order to evaluate or assess the lives of other individuals or to impose its restrictions on others. Galatians 3:10 tells us of that danger, and this is what it says: “All who rely on observing the law are under a curse, for it is written ‘Cursed is everyone who does not continue to do everything written in the Book of the Law [that is, the Torah].’” (NIV) [brackets mine] So, if you think that other people should live by Levitical Law, you actually put that measure (or, standard) upon yourself, and you yourself are then cursed, because you cannot ever fulfill or live up to the obligations of all of the rules, regulations and ordinances that are found in Leviticus or, for that matter, in the rest of the Pentateuch. There is only one thing that fulfills Levitical Law and that is love:

Owe no one anything except to love one another, for he who loves another has fulfilled the law. For the commandments, “You shall not commit adultery,” “You shall not murder,” “You shall not steal,” “You shall not bear false witness,” “You shall not covet,” and if there is any other commandment, are all summed up in this saying, namely, “You shall love your neighbor as yourself.” Love does no harm to a neighbor; therefore love is the fulfillment of the law.

Romans 10:8-10 (NKJV)

The Apostle Paul also states:

We who are Jews by birth and not “Gentile sinners” know that a man is not justified by observing the law, but by faith in Jesus Christ. So we, too, have put our faith in Christ Jesus that we may be justified by faith in Christ and not by observing the law, because by observing the law no one will be justified.”

Galatians 2:15-16 NIV

Those who try to apply Levitical Law to the lives of others should also seek understanding of the following passages:

Do not judge, or you too will be judged. For in the same way you judge others, you will be judged, and with the same measure you use, it will be measured to you.

Matthew 7:1-2 NIV

You, therefore, have no excuse, you who pass judgment on someone else, for at whatever point you judge the other, you are condemning yourself, because you who pass judgment do the same things.

Romans 2:1 NIV

Scripture shows that Christ Jesus Himself broke Levitical Law, according to the legalistic views of the people of his day, by working on the Sabbath in direct violation of Leviticus 23:3:

There are six days when you may work, but the seventh day is a Sabbath day of rest, a day of sacred assembly. You are not to do any work; wherever you live, it is a Sabbath to the LORD.

Leviticus 23:3 NIV

How did Jesus “work” on the Sabbath day? He healed the sick on the Sabbath. (John 7:23) And, He permitted His disciples to pick grain on the Sabbath:

At that time, Jesus went through the grainfields on the Sabbath. His disciples were hungry and began to pick some heads of grain and eat them. When the Pharisees [who were legalistic hypocrites] saw this, they said to him, “Look! Your disciples are doing what is unlawful on the Sabbath.” [brackets mine]

Matthew 12:1-2 NIV

Responding to these legalists, Jesus reminded them that even King David also broke Levitical Law when he ate bread that had been consecrated to the LORD (Matthew 12:3-4; see also 1 Samuel 21:6 and Leviticus 24:5 and 9).

Not only did Jesus fail to enforce Levitical Law when he prevented the adulteress from being stoned (John 8:3-7; see also Leviticus 20:10), he changed or altered the Law by challenging the crowd to examine themselves first before they judged her. To be sure, Jesus elevated the Law to a higher level, or more spiritual plane, when He taught:

“You have heard that it was said [in the Law] to the people long ago, ‘Do not murder, and anyone who murders will be subject to judgment.’ [in Exodus 20:13] But I tell you that anyone who is angry with his brother will be subject to judgment.” [brackets mine]

Matthew 5:21-22 NIV

**“You have heard that it was said [in the Law], ‘Do not commit adultery.’ [in Exodus 20:14] But I tell you that anyone who looks at a woman lustfully has already committed adultery with her in his heart.” [brackets mine]
Matthew 5:27-28 NIV**

**“You have heard that it was said [in the Law], ‘Eye for eye, and tooth for tooth.’ [in Exodus 21:24; Leviticus 24:20; and Deuteronomy 19:21] But I tell you, Do not resist an evil person. If someone strikes you on the right cheek, turn to him the other also.” [brackets mine]
Matthew 5:38-39 NIV**

**“You have heard that it was said [in the Law], ‘Love your neighbor and hate your enemy.’ [Leviticus 19:18] But I tell you: Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, that you may be sons of your Father in heaven.” [brackets mine]
Matthew 5:43-44 NIV**

Relative to the issue of Levitical Law versus faith, the Apostle Paul wrote:

Where, then, is boasting? It is excluded. On what principle? On that of observing the law? No, but on that of faith. For we maintain that a man is justified [made righteous] by faith apart from observing the law. [brackets mine]

Romans 3:27-28 NIV

Titus 3:9 (NLT) gives this good advice to Christians: “Do not get involved in foolish discussions about spiritual pedigrees or in quarrels and fights about obedience to Jewish laws. These kinds of things are useless and a waste of time.”

Understanding Biblical Contexts for Laws Regarding Forbidden Sexual Liaisons, Cross-Dressing, and Eunuchs

So, why the seemingly hard-line stance by God in the Torah concerning same-sex behavior, cross-dressing (transvestitism), and eunuchs (castrated males)?

As I stated earlier in the case of both male and female cult prostitutes (the qadashim and qadashoth), God is against activity that is associated with idolatrous worship no matter what that activity happens to be. All fertility religions during Old Testament times and early New Testament times incorporated ceremonial practices that involved ritualistic sexual immorality (including anal intercourse between members of the same sex as well as opposite sex), cross dressing, and even self-mutilation through castration. Let's now consider further the role that these cult practices had in terms of shaping Levitical Law.

I indicated in the previous chapter what a substantial role temple cult prostitution had in terms of worshiping fertility gods and goddesses. Let us consider 1 Kings 14:24. I think this is an important enough verse to underscore a particular key phrase that helps provide an interpretive link to one of the two "clobber" verses in Leviticus commonly used against homosexuality and homosexuals:

And there were also sodomites in the land; and they did according to all the abominations of the nations which the LORD [had] cast out before the children of Israel. [brackets mine]

1 Kings 14:24 KJV

... and male prostitutes were found in the land; they followed all of the abominations of the peoples which the LORD dispossessed before the Israelites.

1 Kings 14:24 ML

... and there were also male cult prostitutes in the land. They did according to the abominations of the nations

which the LORD drove out before the people of Israel.
1 Kings 14:24 RS

There were even male shrine prostitutes in the land; the people engaged in all the detestable practices of the nations the LORD had driven out before the Israelites.
1 Kings 14:24 NIV

There was homosexuality throughout the land, and the people of Judah became as depraved as the heathen nations which the LORD drove out to make room for His people.
1 Kings 14:24 LB

Regardless of the Bible translation or version, we now know from the groundwork laid down in Chapter Two of this book that 1 Kings 14:24 really states that “there were male temple cult prostitutes in the land.” Any translation other than “male temple cult prostitutes” or “male shrine prostitutes” is not an accurate, or precise, rendering of the Hebrew qadeshim (the male temple cult prostitutes who were used in ceremonial sexual rituals for Ashtoreth, Baal and Molech and various other fertility gods and goddesses worshiped throughout Old Testament and early New Testament times, even as late as the fifth century A.D.).

So, in looking at 1 Kings 14:24 (KJV), it says, “there were also male temple cult prostitutes in the land who did according to all the abominations [**ha-to-ev-ot** **הַתּוֹעֵבֹת** or, the “idolatrous practices”] of the nations which the LORD [had] cast out before the children of Israel.” [brackets and underlining mine]

The part of the sentence that I underlined above is “the nations which the LORD had cast out before the children of Israel.” “[Had] cast out,” “dispossessed,” “drove out,” and “had driven out” from the previously-quoted versions are translated from the past tense of a Hebrew verb. In other words, there were male temple cult prostitutes in the land who did according to the abominations (or, idolatrous practices) of the nations which the LORD God Almighty had already — that is, “by then” — cast

out before the children of Israel (which is to say, “after” the children of Israel had taken over the Promised Land).⁴⁸

As I proceed, you will see how important this is as a link to the interpretation of the Levitical reference in Chapter Eighteen, verse 22, which many think applies to modern-day homosexuals, homosexuality and the homosexual orientation.

Before we turn to Leviticus 18:22, let me remind you that, by now, you should know that holding the whole Bible while simultaneously attending to its various parts is imperative in understanding Scripture. And, when you interpret the Bible, you need to look at the literary context in which a particular verse is found (not only the literary context in terms of surrounding verses but also cross references and links to it in other places within the Bible as well), and you need to look at each verse relative to its historical context. Why? Because, when taken alone, individual Bible verses often only present part of the truth. It is the whole Bible that imparts the whole truth. (That is why we need to cherish and study the whole book.) To understand, interpret, and apply Scripture, we need to abide by the dictum, “To proof text without context is pretext.”

Do I believe that the Bible is the inspired word of God? Yes, I believe that the Bible is the inspired word of God, but I also believe that we need to attend to everything it says with equal emphasis. Yes, everything with equal emphasis, and not just selectively take out of context what we want to take out. One of the reasons that Christianity has so many denominations is because of selective interpretation and selective misinterpretation as well as selective application and selective misapplication.

Let’s begin by sharing Leviticus 18:22 in its immediate context:

{21} Do not give any of your children to be sacrificed to Molech [a fertility god], for you must not profane the name

⁴⁸ 1 Kings 14:24 references the time of King Rehoboam of Judah, who was Solomon’s son. To put this in proper chronology, Solomon reigned from 961 through 922 BC, approximately 350 years after the children of Israel entered the Promised Land in 1273 BC.] So, God is speaking, as recorded in 1 Kings 14:24, approximately 400 years after Leviticus 18:21-24 was recorded.

of your God. I am the LORD. [I AM YAHWEH.] {22} Do not lie with a man as one lies with a woman; that is detestable [תועבה “to-ev-ah,” or “an idolatrous practice”] {23} Neither shalt thou lie with any beast to defile thyself therewith: neither shall any woman stand before a beast to lie down thereto: it is confusion. {24} Defile not yourselves in any of these things: for in all these the nations are defiled which I [am going to] cast out before you. [brackets and underlining mine]

Leviticus 18:21-24 KJV

Now that you have read Leviticus 18:21-24, you see that it starts with, “You must not profane the name of the LORD by sacrificing your children to the fertility god Molech.” Remember that Molech is one of the Canaanite fertility gods, and that profaning the LORD’s name includes worshiping false gods through sexual acts committed with male temple cult prostitutes dedicated to those false gods (addressed in verse 22) and ritual acts committed with animals in temples dedicated to them as well (indicated by verse 23).

Leviticus 18:22 looks like this in Hebrew with its transliteration immediately following:

כב וְאֶת-זָכָר--לֹא תִשְׁכַּב, מִשְׁכְּבֵי אִשָּׁה: תוֹעֵבָה, הוּא.
ve'et zakhar lo tishkav mishkeve ishah toevah hi

ve'et zachar: “and [with] a male”
lo tishkav: “do not bed”
mishkeve ishah: “lyings of a woman”
toevah hi: “it [is] idolatrous practice
(or, ritual uncleanness)”

The phrase “*mishkeve ishah*” is only used in Leviticus 18:22 and in Leviticus 20:13. And, its precise meaning, “lyings of a woman,” is debatable.

How do we know that the male-male sex indicated in verse 22 is with male temple cult prostitutes? First, through the literary shift away

from illicit sexual activities with relatives, near relatives, step-relatives, in-laws and neighbors (in verses 6 through 20) to the worship of the fertility god Molech (in verse 21). Second, because of the presence of the Hebrew word תועבה “to-ev-ah” in verse 22 that marks idolatrous practices (imprecisely translated in the King James Version as “abomination” and in the New International Version as “detestable”). And, third, through the important link that exists between 1 Kings 14:24 and Leviticus 18:24. Leviticus 18:24 reads, “Do not defile yourselves with any of these things (including the idolatrous activities in verses 21, 22 and 23), which defiled the nations [that] I am going to cast out before you.” Because this “casting” is future tense, that phrase can also be translated, “which I will cast out before you,” referring to the same nations in 1 Kings 12:24, “which the LORD had cast out before the children of Israel” (partly because of the worship practices of the male temple cult prostitutes, which God specifically refers to in the beginning of 1 Kings 12:24 by the use of the word “qadashim”).

Again, what important link exists between 1 Kings 14:24 and Leviticus 18:24? In 1 Kings 14:24, the LORD explains what specifically was included as defiling the nations for which cause in Leviticus 18:24 He promised He was going to cast them (“the nations”) out.

Then, considering the link that exists between 1 Kings 14:24 and Leviticus 18:24, as well as the lead-in of Leviticus 18:21, what is the context of Leviticus 18:22?

The context is that “they [the male temple cult prostitutes] did according to all of the abominations [that is, the idolatrous practices] of the nations which the LORD had cast out before the children of Israel.” (1 Kings 14:24 NKJV) [brackets and underlining mine] This is significant, because it gives us insight into what type of male-male sex is signaled in Leviticus 18:22 through its cross-reference to Leviticus 18:24 (“ . . . for by all these [practices] the nations are defiled which I am going to cast out before you”).

Had homosexuality been the reason that the LORD cast out the nations before the children of Israel, the LORD would not have referred specifically to male temple cult prostitution in 1 Kings 14:24. Thus are we provided in 1 Kings 14:24 with the important link to Leviticus 18:22

that God is referring to male-male sex in the context of temple cult prostitution. And, just because I am using the expression “male-male sex” does not mean that the sexual activity took place between homosexuals. Just because two males have shared sexual activity does not mean that they are of the homosexual orientation.

Further, in Leviticus 18:21-24, all four verses must be taken together. The “. . . for by all these *things* . . .” in Leviticus 18:24 [plural emphasis mine] includes the idolatrous worship to Molech explicitly stated in verse 21 and the pagan practices incorporated into such worship, which practices included the murderous sacrifices of children (verse 21) as well as sexual relations between male idol worshipers and male temple cult prostitutes (verse 22) as well as between both male and female idol worshipers and animals (verse 23).

So, in reading Leviticus 18:21-24, we have gone back to an earlier time (relative to 1 Kings 14:24), and the LORD is saying “these idolatrous people are doing abominable things (that is, involving themselves in idolatrous practices); and, for the things that they are doing, I am going to cast them out before you as you enter and take their land.” Thus, the literary and historical contexts provide this most important biblical link to help us understand God’s seemingly hard-line stance against same-sex activities in Leviticus. What’s the context for the male-male sex that’s mentioned in verse 22? An idolatrous one! Verse 21 is an introductory sentence. Although those verses do not form what we think of as a paragraph in modern-day terms, Verse 21 is a literary shift away from the forbidden sexual liaisons with family and neighbors referred to in the earlier verses (6 through 20) of Chapter Eighteen. Verse 21 is an introductory sentence to a discussion of fertility god worship to the same degree that verse 6 is an introductory sentence to a discussion of forbidden sexual liaisons with family and neighbors.

Although the Bible was not written in paragraph form, verse 21 is an introduction to this whole subsection and it mentions the fertility god Molech. How was Molech worshiped? Molech was worshiped in all sorts of unseemly ways. *For example*, sometimes worshipers went so far as to actually sacrifice their children to Molech by “passing them through the fire” (that is, burning them to death). This is the context in which verses 22 through 24 have been written in Leviticus, Chapter

Eighteen. To be sure, bestiality and male cult prostitution were common within houses of worship dedicated to Molech as well as in the houses of worship dedicated to other pagan fertility gods and goddesses.

Many Bible scholars understand what I have just stated. Here is just one example, using Volume Two of The Expositors Bible. I am purposely quoting from its 1900 edition to show you that this is not a recently contrived view born of a “gay theology.” The 1900 edition was a 25-volume set provided as a study tool and reference aid in many Bible colleges, schools, seminaries and institutes. Volume Two covers Leviticus and Numbers. Here is what was said in 1900 concerning the Levitical references to “abominable” sex:

The inconceivably unnatural crimes prohibited in verses 22, 23 [meaning, the specified male-male sex and bestiality] were in like manner [like verse 21] essentially connected with idolatrous worship; the former [the male-male aspect] with the worship of Astarte or Ashtoreth [remember that it was the high priests and priestesses of Ashtoreth that actually ended up worshiping the Asherah, which was a pole or totem shaped like a phallus or penis, by offering up sexual sacrifices as temple cult prostitutes] and the latter [in reference to bestiality] with the worship of the he-goat at Mendes in Egypt as the symbol of the generative power in nature. What a hideous perversion of the moral sense was involved in these crimes, as thus connected with idolatrous worship, is illustrated strikingly by the fact that men and women, thus prostituted to the service of false gods, were designated by the terms *qadesh*, *qadeshah*, “sacred” or “holy!” No wonder that the sacred writer brands these horrible crimes, as in a peculiar and almost solitary sense, “abomination” and “confusion.”⁴⁹ [brackets mine]

Regarding these and other unlawful sexual relations, it is recorded that the LORD God Almighty said the following to Moses:

⁴⁹ Nicoll, Reverend W. Robertson (editor). The Expositor's Bible, Volume 2, Funk and Wagnalls, New York, 1900, pages 387-388.

“Speak to the Israelites and say to them: ‘I am the LORD your God. You must not do as they do in Egypt, where you used to live, and you must not do as they do in the land of Canaan, where I am bringing you. Do not follow their [idolatrous, pagan and barbaric] practices.’” [brackets mine]

Leviticus 18:1-3 NIV

My discourse on the same-sex question in Leviticus is summarized on the next page in Figure Six, which is intentionally on one page so that it might be photocopied and used as a handout for discussion purposes:

The Pearson Amplification & Paraphrase of Leviticus 18:3 & 21-24 with Cross Reference to 1 Kings 14:24

Leviticus 18

{3} You must not do as they do in Egypt, where you used to live, and you must not do as they do in the land of Canaan, where I am bringing you. Do not follow any of their [pagan, barbaric and idolatrous] practices.

{21} You should not dedicate your seed [neither sperm nor children] to the fertility god Molech. This profanes the Name of your God. I MAKE THIS PRONOUNCEMENT, MY NAME IS YAHWEH. {22} You men should not dedicate your seed to any fertility god by sowing seed with a male temple cult prostitute as you would sow seed with a woman. This idolatrous practice causes you to be unclean. {23} And both men and women will be ritually unclean if they cross the species barrier and have sacred sex with temple animals. {24} Do not make yourselves unclean by any of these practices; for in all these pagan, barbaric and idolatrous practices the nations are defiled, which I am going to cast out from before you.

Who were the overseers of all three of the activities in Leviticus 18:21-23? The answer comes from 1 Kings 14:24: The individuals in question were the qadeshim, the so-called “sacred ones” or “pagan priests” of the fertility religions, more accurately referred to as *temple cult prostitutes*. It was because of the idolatrous practices of these so-called “holy ones” that the LORD cast the nations out of Israel’s promised land:

1 Kings 14

{24} And there were also temple cult prostitutes in the land: and they involved themselves in all the pagan, barbaric and idolatrous practices of the nations which the LORD had cast out before the children of Israel.

Figure Six

I think the most disturbing thing, dear reader, is that interpretations such as the one just given have been around for decades as well as centuries (*for example*, in the 1900 edition of The Expositor's Bible), but they are just pushed to the side in order to permit the promulgation of a particular agenda against homosexuals, which, to be sure, is a political agenda born out of religious legalism and personal distaste.

Yes, some people are ignorant of what it means to be homosexual. And because they are ignorant of what it means to be homosexual, they assume that, because they are not homosexual, it must be unnatural. And, they assume that others who are homosexual must be depraved or perverted, because thoughts and ideas of companionship with someone of the same sex are abhorrent, distasteful and foreign to them. Of course they are abhorrent, distasteful and foreign to heterosexuals, but that doesn't mean that they are wrong for other individuals. Nor does it mean that the Bible condemns modern-day homosexuals.

Regarding promulgation of such a one-sided perspective, I fault less the people who attend church in ignorance of the Bible and who are being fed from the pulpit one perspective and one perspective alone regarding homosexuality. On whose shoulders I think the responsibility rests are the pastors and the teachers and the Bible scholars who allow a certain viewpoint to be presented relative to this particular issue without ever presenting the alternate hypothesis or view. This does a great disservice to the gospel of Christ. Do you know why it does a disservice? Because many homosexuals (as well as some of those sympathetic to their plight) are kept from the cross of Christ. Many are kept from the blood of the Lamb. They are hindered, because they end up believing either that God doesn't love them or that God cannot be an honorable God if preachers and ministers of His gospel foster hatred and condemnation.

Do you know what it means to be a homosexual and sit in a church only to hear a pastor or a preacher say that you are depraved and are bound for hell? Indeed, you would not sit in that church for very long. And, if you are not saved, you may exit that church before you ever really hear (that is, understand) the gospel message. As a result of that, you might decide (and I have known people who have decided this), "Well, if I am going to hell, then I am going to hell *real good*." And, they do that exactly! This is not to negate that homosexuals have individual

responsibility; it is to remind Christians that they have the responsibility to reach out to each and every other person in order to bring them to the cross of Christ by demonstrating Christ in their lives through loving others at the same time that they share the gospel message, which is the good news that atonement has been given for us all through the substitutionary offering of the perfect and blameless only-begotten Son of God, Jesus Christ. If you are a heterosexual Christian, you will not be able to effectively minister to homosexuals if you condemn, judge or disparage them.

Those of you who know the Bible could very well be asking now, “So why the double reference to male-male sex in both Leviticus 18:21 and Leviticus 20:13?”

Leviticus 20:13 states:

If a man lies with a man as one lies with a woman [“lies with a woman” translated here from *mishkeve ishah*], both of them have done what is detestable [translated here from תּוֹעֵבָה “**to-ev-ah**” or “**idolatrous**”]. They must be put to death; their blood will be on their own heads. [brackets mine]

Leviticus 20:13 NIV

Simply stated, Chapter Eighteen of Leviticus identifies the “crime” of committing the idolatrous offense and Chapter Twenty prescribes the “punishment” for committing it. In other words, the ancient Jews read the nature of the crimes in Chapters Eighteen as well as Nineteen and, then, looked up their type of punishment (the so-called “Penal Code”) in Chapter Twenty. (Please keep in mind that, although the Bible is written by the Holy Spirit, the chapters of the Bible are man-made and, thus, artificial.)

As you read or reread Chapters Eighteen and Nineteen in Leviticus, you will find that, basically, they contain a listing of various crimes against God. Chapter Twenty is the so-called penal code in Leviticus; and, so, it restates most of the crimes in Chapters Eighteen and Nineteen and, in

addition, lists the punishment for each particular crime. It is as if you went to court and the judge opened up one book and said, “Well, I see that you have violated section so-and-so of a particular ordinance;” and, then, the judge would take out a different book containing the penal code (that is, the list of punishments) and say, “Since you have violated the law by breaking section so-and-so, here is the punishment for that particular crime.”

This is the reason there is a double reference to male-male sex in Chapters Eighteen and Twenty of Leviticus. The Chapter Eighteen reference states the so-called crime, and the Chapter Twenty reference indicates the punishment for that particular crime. I recommend that you read or reread Chapters Eighteen and Nineteen (“the crimes”) and Chapter Twenty (“the punishments”) to confirm for yourself the written division between the identified crimes and their prescribed punishments.

The sum of the entire matter of Levitical Law and grace is twofold:

- 1) Christians are not under Levitical Law; they are under grace; and,
- 2) Levitical Law does not address Christian male homosexuals who are in committed monogamous covenant-based relationships. (Levitical Law does not refer to any female-female sexual liaisons.)

Christians who fail to understand God’s grace have either been blinded by God, or they have blinded themselves, because they are satisfied with their own ignorance. In the final analysis, ignorance on any topic is the lack of an inquiring mind coupled with the ease of availability of information on the topic.

The Bible and Gender Norms

Biblical quotations often used against exceptions to gender norms include Genesis 1:27-28:

So God created man [that is, humanity] in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them. [brackets mine]

Genesis 1:27 NIV

God blessed them and said to them, “Be fruitful and increase in number [which is to say, reproduce and multiply], fill the earth and subdue it ... [brackets mine]

Genesis 1:28 NIV

To be sure, the previously quoted passages express the general rule but are not universal or absolute. Exceptions to this general rule are found both in nature and in Scripture itself.

From a biological standpoint, the presence or absence of genitals is a state of nature; and gender is a state of mind. These two states are ultimately responsible for an individual’s instincts. In this work, I refer to the kind of sexual organs that one possesses as “genital identity;” and, I refer to the kind of gender one views oneself having as “gender identity.”

Considering both genital identity and gender identity, if you think that transgressors⁵⁰ are perversions of nature, then you have made “male and female” an absolute or universal law, which law is contradictory to the full spectrum of what occurs: 1) in nature, 2) in the Bible, and 3) in the realm of Spirit:

- 1) In nature, such an absolute fails to take into consideration the myriad departures in biology that deviate from the norm (norm defined here as “that which occurs most frequently” as opposed to the connotations of “normal” versus “abnormal”).**
- 2) In the Bible, such an absolute also fails to take into consideration departures from males and females in Biblical references to eunuchs.**

⁵⁰ **Transgender** is a word whose meaning is still in flux. The word is currently used as an umbrella term applied to a variety of individuals, behaviors, and groups that vary from what is traditional and culturally-accepted.

- 3) In the realm of Spirit, such an absolute fails to take into consideration spiritual law, which states that in Christ “there is neither male nor female.” (Galatians 3:28) Spiritually speaking, God does not discriminate using genital identity or gender identity. Certainly, in heaven such distinctions do not exist. As recorded in Matthew 22:30 (NIV), Christ Jesus said, “At the resurrection people will neither marry nor be given in marriage; they will be like the angels in heaven.”

True science does not contradict pure religion nor does pure religion contradict true science. True science shows that there are exceptions to the so-called absolute biblical rule (Genesis 1:27) of “male and female” genital identity in the form of intersexuals; and, pure religion shows that there are exceptions to that rule in the form of eunuchs — of whom, Christ Jesus said, “some [are] born that way.” (Matthew 19:12) (An intersexual is “a person whose biological sex is ambiguous at the biochemical level, genetic level, chromosomal level and/or anatomic level.”)

In other words, intersexuals serve as biological prototypes for transgenders; and, eunuchs serve as scriptural prototypes for them. Thus, God accounts for exceptions to the general rule of “male and female,” both naturally and biblically. The word prototype means, “an original type, form, or instance that is a model on which later stages are based or judged;” it can also mean, “an early typical example.”⁵¹ In other words, a prototype provides a pattern for understanding, because it serves as an example of a future class. For the sake of clarification, I do not mean to imply that biblical or Talmudic eunuchs are homosexuals or transgenders.

The Holy Bible not only acknowledges that there are exceptions to the rule of anatomic males and females, the Holy Bible also acknowledges that there are exceptions to the directive for them to reproduce (in other words, not all human beings are expected by God to “be fruitful and multiply”). If anatomic males and anatomic females were a universal law, and the directive to reproduce was an absolute, God would not have consoled eunuchs as he does in Isaiah 56:3b-5:

⁵¹ Webster’s, *Op. cit.*, page 947.

{3} And let not any eunuch complain, “I am only a dry tree” [“dry tree” here connoting the inability to reproduce]. {4} For this is what the LORD says: “To the eunuchs who keep my Sabbaths, who choose what pleases me and hold fast to my covenant — {5} to them I will give within my temple and its walls a memorial and a name better than sons and daughters [“sons and daughters” here referring to those who do reproduce]; I will give them an everlasting name that will not be cut off.” [brackets mine]

Isaiah 56:3-5 NIV

So, why the seemingly hardline stance when God states:

A woman shall not wear anything that pertains to a man, nor shall a man put on a woman's garment, for all who do so are an abomination to the LORD your God.

Deuteronomy 22:5 NKJV

He that is wounded in the stones or has his privy member cut off, shall not enter into the congregation of the LORD [stones, here, is an archaic word in the King James Version for “testicles” and privy member is an archaic expression for “penis”]. [brackets mine]

Deuteronomy 23:1 KJV

Why did God take such a hardline stance against cross-dressing or transvestitism? Surely, God is omniscient; our LORD knows that various cultures and traditions have different forms of dress. And, certainly, since civilization and culture have evolved in the ways that they have, we find there really is less and less distinction concerning different kinds of apparel for males and females — except, perhaps, in some countries that are just now economically-emerging and/or governed by Sharia, or Islamic law.

Is God really unwavering relative to dresses for women and pants for men? Of course not! The word “abomination” in Deuteronomy 22:5 is

imprecisely translated from the plural Hebrew word “to-ev-ot” תּוֹעֲבוֹת, which actually means “idoltrous practices,” thus clarifying the context for the reference in Deuteronomy 22:5 concerning female to male cross-dressing and male to female cross-dressing. More precisely translated from the intended Hebrew meaning, Deuteronomy 22:5 should read, “A woman shall not wear anything that pertains to a man nor shall a man put on a woman’s garments in idoltrous practices. Such practices are an affront to the LORD your God.”

If the King James Version of Deuteronomy 22:5 is taken alone and out of its linguistic, cultural, and historical contexts, students of the Bible might easily fall to condemn transgenders. Certainly, such condemnation is evident in the world today. Again, keep in mind that the word transgender has become an umbrella term that often includes both pre-operative and post-operative transsexuals as well as heterosexual cross-dressers and even some performance artists known as “drag queens” and “drag kings.” Some in these individual categories have gender dysphoria while others do not. So, transgenderism is much more complicated than others might have you believe or that you may have concluded for yourself!

It is very unfair to use Deuteronomy 22:5 against transgenderism. This verse was written, because idoltrous temple practices involved in the worship of fertility cult goddesses included young male prostitutes dressing up as women to emulate the form of their female “idol” as well as to attract and better satisfy the procurers of their religious sexual services. “Procurers” here refers to the males, often heterosexual, who would purchase their “sacrifices” of ritual sexual activity in anal intercourse. So, transvestitism in itself is not bad; it was the ancient context that was evil; it was the idoltrous intent that God hated.

God does not care about our outer appearance. Instead, what God cares about is what is within our individual hearts. We find this as a good object lesson in 1 Samuel 16:1-13. As recorded there, the prophet Samuel evaluated the sons of Jesse relative to whom God was going to choose as the second king of the nation of Israel. As the first son, Eliab, passed by, Samuel looked at him and said, “My, this is an impressive individual. Surely, this is the one whom the LORD is going to choose! This must be the one!” (1 Samuel 16:6) However, the LORD’s Holy

Spirit responded to the prophet Samuel by instructing him that God is “no respecter of persons,” and that God does not place as much importance on outward appearance as we do:

The LORD said to Samuel, “Do not consider his appearance or his height, for I have rejected him. The LORD does not look at the things man looks at. Man looks at the outward appearance, but the LORD looks at the heart.”

1 Samuel 16:7 NIV

In other words, the LORD looks at the inner core of an individual and the intent of his or her heart. According to God, the true stature — or, measure — of a person is determined by how much love is in his or her heart. It is very important for us to understand that our human body is merely an outward expression that may or may not reflect our inner core attitudes, desires, or intents accurately. That is why God is not impressed by our outward appearance, and that is why God shows no favoritism based on it.

Indeed, our physical appearance is not impressive to God. Our personality is not impressive to God either. Additionally, God is not impressed by our genital identity, sexual orientation or gender identity. God does not really care about any of these things, unless, of course, we are not acting in a godly manner in relation to them, or we are not acting in keeping with what it is God would have us to do relative to them. To be sure, abuses related to our physicality — such as vanity, self-loathing, deception (that is, presenting ourselves as other than who or what we are) — are repugnant to the LORD.

If we took a decontextualized view of Deuteronomy 22:5 and compared it to 1 Samuel 16:7, it would seem, then, that the God of the Bible is schizophrenic, because on one hand the LORD says in 1 Samuel 16:7, “No, I look at your heart; I do not look at your outer appearance,” and then, on the other hand, if you were to take Deuteronomy 22:5 out of context, it seems that the LORD is saying, “I care more about your outer appearance than the intent of your heart.” Well, the God of the Bible is not schizophrenic. The one true and only real God is much brighter, healthier, and more knowledgeable than we can even imagine! In fact,

considering the limitations that we have as human beings, we have little understanding of God's omniscience, complete health and perfect knowledge to be able to come to a basic understanding of the magnificence and the wonder of God's self-existent intelligence. God understands all things, including intents as well as outcomes. Simply stated, ancient temple cult practices involved transvestitism. That is the reason why God was against cross-dressing in Deuteronomy 22:5.

Rabbi Jon-Jay Tilsen provides us with his Jewish perspective:

The Torah's concern in this verse [meaning, Deuteronomy 22:5], then, is not with creating or reinforcing gender differences per se, but in preventing gender associations of clothing... from being used to deceive others for purposes leading to sexual immorality. The key here seems to be deception for illicit purposes. Indeed, this law appears in Deuteronomy in the context of laws against deceit.

Rabbi Tilsen continues . . .

While the legal interpretations of this verse from Deuteronomy have been diverse, most of Jewish legal discussion has not taken the verse to suggest a blanket ban or condemnation of what today we call "cross dressing."⁵²

Indeed, Rabbi Tilsen acknowledges, if Jews believed in the universal applicability of Deuteronomy 22:5, they would not be permitted to cross-dress on the festival of Purim, which commemorates the deliverance of the Jewish people throughout the Persian Empire as recorded in the Biblical Book of Esther.

Rabbi Tilsen further states, "... the history of legal interpretation in Jewish law is not unlike that of other legal systems in that judges ultimately must apply the laws to real-life situations and are thus forced to define the terms in a way that will make sense within the framework of their codes, case law and social reality." Yes, the rabbis, priests and

⁵² Tilsen, Rabbi Jon-Jay. URL in 2000: <http://www.usci.org/ctvalley/beki/crossdress.html>
URL in 2009: <http://www.beki.org/crossdress.html>

judges of ancient Israel examined the relevancy and contexts of situations before they decided the applicability of the written laws of Moses. Such examination demonstrates the significant intelligence and wisdom that can only be provided through the self-existent LORD God Almighty. (Indeed, any true intelligence or wisdom we have is derived from God's Holy Spirit, who is the teacher of all truth.)

If we consider the Apostle Paul's stance relative to this issue of culturally-accepted gender-related roles and appearances, we find that in 1 Corinthians 11:2, he states, "I praise you for remembering me in everything and for holding to the *teachings* just as I passed them on to you." [Italics mine.]

In verse 6 of that chapter, he states:

{6} If a woman does not cover her head, she should have her hair cut off; and if it is a disgrace for a woman to have her hair cut or shaved off, she should cover her head.

And, then, in verses 13 through 15, he states:

{13} Judge for yourselves: Is it proper for a woman to pray to God with her head uncovered? {14} Does not the very nature [from the Greek word *phusis* φύσις] of things teach you that if a man has long hair, it is a disgrace to him, {15} but that if a woman has long hair, it is her glory? For long hair is given to her as a covering.

1 Corinthians 11:6,13-15 NIV

Now, I find it really curious that many people might refer to what they think are biblical injunctions against homosexuality and transgenderism and they pay absolutely no attention to the idea of women's head coverings in church. Am I advocating that women cover their heads when they pray? No, of course not! We just need to understand the cultural and historical contexts of the Apostle Paul's position, just as we need to understand that many people apply principles for biblical interpretation arbitrarily or, at least, selectively.

In order to understand the verses I just quoted from 1 Corinthians, Chapter Eleven (verses 6 and 13-15), we need to go back to verse 2 in that chapter. The Apostle Paul said, “I praise you for remembering me in everything and for holding to the teachings.” The word which is rendered “teachings” in the New International Version of the Bible is translated “traditions” in the Modern Language and Revised Standard Versions of the Bible. In other words, verse 2 states “the traditions that have been given to you.” The words “teachings” and “traditions” have been translated from the Greek word *paradosis* **παράδοσις**, which is defined in Strong’s Concordance as “Jewish traditionary law.”

We know that traditions and customs change. The LORD God Almighty understands that traditions and customs change. Ask yourself: Do you *really* think that the LORD God Almighty cares whether a woman has short hair or a man has long hair? Do you *really* think that God cares if we wear unisex clothing? I trust you can answer these questions intelligently for yourself.

When the Apostle Paul wrote about hair length for males, he certainly was not being circumspect or all-inclusive, since he did not even take into consideration the Nazarites (from the Hebrew *nazirim* **נָזִירִים**), who do not cut their hair as a vow to God, as detailed in Numbers 6:1-21. Although the Jewish Nazarite vow was often of a specific duration, it is recorded in the thirteenth chapter of Judges (specifically, verses 5, 7, and 17) that Samson was a Nazarite (or, *nazir* **נָזִיר**) from his dedication at birth and was not supposed to cut his hair throughout his entire life. Early recorded eyewitness accounts of the external appearance of Jesus (for example, such as the one by the Roman Publius Lentullus⁵³) also attribute long hair to Jesus. As living history, we can even see the long sidelocks, or payot **פְּאוֹת**, of some Orthodox Jewish men and boys even worn today.

Whenever we are tempted to judge another on the basis of their apparel and appearance, we need to remind ourselves that “all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ.” (Galatians 3:27 NIV) In other words, in the reality of God, when we accept the

⁵³ The Oldest Views and Literary Data on the External Appearance of Jesus: The Description of Publius Lentullus, URL in 2010: http://www.thenazareneway.com/likeness_of_our_saviour.htm

Lord Jesus Christ as the only-begotten Son [of God] and our personal Savior, we are *dressed* in God. We need to remember that in heaven we will be clothed in God glory! Truly, God cares not one whit about how we are dressed on earth unless we are not dressed properly for inclement weather.

Again, what God cares most about is what is within our individual hearts. Why? The heart is the central core of each soul. Within the heart, we find the core attitudes, desires and intents of the individual.

Eunuchs

Let us now consider another verse that, if taken out of context, would pose quite a dilemma for males who have had a bilateral orchiectomy (both testicles removed) or who have had a penectomy (penis surgically removed):

No one who has been emasculated by crushing or cutting
may enter the assembly of the LORD.

Deuteronomy 23:1 NIV

To be sure, some ancient cult practices involved castration. Why would pagan devotees castrate themselves? They would do so in order to emulate the fertility goddesses they idolized, including Ashtoreth, Cybele, Aphrodite, Astarte, Magna Mater, Ma, and many others. They were all catered to by transvestite male temple cult prostitutes wanting to devote themselves in life-long commitment to, and worship of, these individual fertility goddesses. In order to do that, they wanted to make their bodies resemble, as closely as possible, the bodies of the idols they served. And, they wanted to present their severed organs as a coveted prize to them. This they each did in order to honor their individual fertility deity.

For these transvestite male temple cult prostitutes, there were two common castration options or practices: One practice was to break a clay pot and, from the shattered pieces, to take a shard and cut the testicles off (and sometimes the penis as well) in honor of the fertility

goddess. Another way was to take the testicles and crush them in between two stones or rocks in order to render oneself a physiologic — and, to a certain extent, an anatomic — eunuch.

In the King James Version, Deuteronomy 23:1 is translated, “He who is wounded in the stones [“stones” meant “testicles” in Early Modern English] or has his privy member cut off [“privy member” here refers to “private member” or “penis”] shall not enter into the congregation of the LORD.” Taken out of historical context, that is mighty strong language, as well as very puzzling language, relative to modern-day applicability. For example, there have been football accidents in which a player has actually had to have both testicles removed because of damage sustained during the accident. Does that mean, based on the Law, that he should not be a part of the congregation of the LORD? No, the Law needs to be considered in the context in which it was written.

The reason that God did not want a male who had his penis cut off, or testes crushed or removed, to enter into His congregation at that time was because such mutilation was characteristically done in honor of pagan fertility goddesses. Of course, they were rather extreme tokens of personal commitment and covenant vows made by pagan people to their idols. These actions disgusted God, — as they should disgust God! They were, and still are, “detestable” (that is, “abominable”) to Him, because of their association with idolatry. Thus, they were “detestably idolatrous.” God hated this self-mutilation, because, though unknown to most of its practitioners, it broke the First Commandment and sought to bring honor to Satan himself.

Concerning the damaged testicles referred to in Deuteronomy 23:1, there is a different reference relative to blemishes in general in Leviticus 21:16-20 (NIV):

{16} The LORD said to Moses, {17} “Say to Aaron: ‘For the generations to come none of your descendants who has a defect may come near to offer the food of his God. {18} No man who has any defect may come near: no man who is blind or lame, disfigured or deformed; {19} no man with a crippled foot or hand, {20} or who is hunchbacked or

dwarfed, or who has any eye defect, or who has festering or running sores or damaged testicles.’”

Doesn't that sound somewhat strange to you? In terms of contemporary society and the understanding the Lord Jesus has brought through His Holy Spirit, you know that the LORD God Almighty would not prevent a dwarf from approaching Him in prayer or keep a little person from salvation. Why did it matter in ancient times? Because the LORD God Almighty was trying to convey to quite unsophisticated people that He is worthy of unblemished individuals and perfect sacrifices. He did not mean that He was rejecting these people forever, just that they were not to serve in priestly roles in Old Testament times if they were disabled or disfigured. So, even though Leviticus 21:20 and Deuteronomy 23:1 both include eunuchs, Deuteronomy 23:1 is really speaking of those who have self-mutilated in order to honor fertility goddesses and Leviticus 21:20 is speaking about those of the children of Israel who were “blemished” accidentally or congenitally. To be sure, at that time the LORD was trying to convey that He is worthy of perfect sacrifices, the embodiment of which would later be found in the sacrifice of Christ Jesus on the cross as the pure and perfect “Lamb of God.” (John 1:29 & 36)

A blanket statement that eunuchs cannot enter into the congregation of the LORD is definitely not true. It is not true that Deuteronomy 23:1 has universal application or that it is relevant to today's dispensation. We do know that, if God were really against eunuchs, they would not have been consoled by God in Isaiah 56:3-5:

{3} Let no foreigner who has bound himself to the LORD say, The LORD will surely exclude me from his people. And let not any eunuch complain, I am only a dry tree [“dry tree” connoting the inability to reproduce]. {4} For this is what the LORD says: “To the eunuchs who keep my Sabbaths, who choose what pleases me and hold fast to my covenant — {5} to them I will give within my temple and its walls a memorial and a name better than sons and daughters [“sons and daughters” referring to those who do reproduce]; I will give them an everlasting name [and, then,

here is evidence of God’s sense of humor] that will not be cut off.” [brackets mine]

Isaiah 56:3-5 NIV

Previously, in the Deuteronomy reference, the LORD stated that He didn’t want eunuchs to be a part of His congregation and, yet, later on, in the 56th chapter of Isaiah, He comforts them, saying “do not lament that you are not able to reproduce, because, if you keep My judgments and My precepts and if you honor My laws, I am going to give you a better name, — an everlasting name, a name better than those who do reproduce: one that will not be cut off!”

“What’s in a name?” you might ask. Biblically-speaking, a name embodies the character and identity of an individual. Consider the many Biblical names that incorporate “-el” (meaning, “God”) or “-yah” (a shortened form of “Yahweh”). Names like “Ezeki-el” and “Dani-el” and “Isa-iah” and “Jerem-iah.” Such names speak of dedication to — as well as identity in and through — the LORD God Almighty. We know that when we are in heaven, we will have such a name given to us.

Revelation 2:17 (NIV) states:

... who has an ear, let [that person] hear what the Spirit says to the churches. To [the one] who overcomes, I will give some of the hidden manna. I will also give [that person] a white stone with a new name written on it, known only to [the one] who receives it. [brackets mine]

As “Lord” and “Savior,” Jesus has the best name in heaven! Perhaps people who have better names than others in heaven will be those who stayed faithful to God despite trials, tribulations, persecutions, and spiritual, emotional and physical assassination. Maybe a blind, quadriplegic Christian lesbian will have a better name in heaven than someone who enjoyed a more privileged and carefree existence. Of course, I do not know. But, based on Scripture, I think it possible — especially since we know that everything is reversed in the Kingdom of God: the first here are last there; the last here are first there; those who

are humble here are great there; those who are arrogant and proud here are humbled there; those who are poor here are rich there; and, finally, those who are rich and selfish here are poor there. (Read Matthew 19:30.)

In terms of the nomenclature of God, our names really have great significance. Not the earthly or human appellations that we use today. Rather, when we get to heaven, we are going to have names that are representative of who we are in God and what we did for God on earth furthering the gospel and, therefore, bringing more honor and glory and praise to God's Holy Name. Why should someone who has had an extra burden in life receive a "better name" than someone who has been less burdened? Simply stated, because they have clung to God despite the difficulties they experienced.

To be sure, some people on this planet lead more privileged lives than others. And, although God loves all of us the same, and although, when we are made righteous in God's sight, we are all made the same (that is, "justified"), God also recognizes that some of us cling to our Him despite great adversity (and, perhaps, because of it), and in spite of people telling us that we have no right to cling. Our Lord is both touched emotionally as well as honored spiritually by that. And, because God is honored by it, God in turn chooses to honor us. (See John 12:26.) Although the wages are the same for every authentic believer (that is, salvation), rewards in heaven for individuals are different based on their works of faith.

Sometimes, I am asked questions by people who are struggling with the issue of Christianity and homosexuality relative to the idea that all should reproduce and be fruitful and stock the earth. Well, I tell them, the earth is already fully stocked; and, in addition to making that point, I instruct them that, in the Bible, there are eunuchs who represent non-reproducing individuals, whom the LORD specifically blesses, as recorded in Isaiah 56:3-5.

In addition to those eunuchs blessed by the LORD in Isaiah 56:3-5, the LORD also blessed a eunuch in the New Testament by granting him repentance through the knowledge of salvation:

Now an angel of the LORD said to Philip, “Go south to the road — the desert road — that goes down from Jerusalem to Gaza.” So he started out, and on his way he met an Ethiopian eunuch, an important official in charge of all the treasury of Candace, queen of the Ethiopians. This man had gone to Jerusalem to worship, and on his way home was sitting in his chariot reading the book of Isaiah the prophet. The Spirit told Philip, “Go to that chariot and stay near it.” Then Philip ran up to the chariot and heard the man reading Isaiah the prophet. “Do you understand what you are reading?” Philip asked. “How can I,” he said, “unless someone explains it to me?” So he invited Philip to come up and sit with him. The eunuch was reading this passage of Scripture [from Isaiah 57:3-8]: “He was led like a sheep to the slaughter, and as a lamb before the shearer is silent, so he did not open his mouth. In his humiliation he was deprived of justice. Who can speak of his descendants? For his life was taken from the earth.” The eunuch asked Philip, “Tell me, please, who is the prophet talking about, himself or someone else?” Then Philip began with that very passage of Scripture and told him the good news about Jesus. As they traveled along the road, they came to some water and the eunuch said, “Look, here is water. Why shouldn’t I be baptized?” And he gave orders to stop the chariot. Then both Philip and the eunuch went down into the water and Philip baptized him. When they came up out of the water, the Spirit of the LORD suddenly took Philip away, and the eunuch did not see him again, but went on his way rejoicing. [brackets mine]

Acts 8:26-39 NIV

Do you see an important point? If we were very strictly interpreting an isolated scriptural passage literally as opposed to considering its context, we would be faced with some enormous contradictions: In Deuteronomy 23:1, we are told that eunuchs should not enter into the congregation of the LORD; and, then, in Isaiah 56:3-5, the eunuchs themselves are comforted; and, later, in the New Testament, a eunuch is actually invited by the Holy Spirit to receive the Lord Jesus Christ as

his personal Savior. Quite a dramatic turn around by God if we were just interpreting scripture in isolation! But, again, I emphasize that context is just as important to this issue as well as it is to the issues of modern-day homosexuality and transvestitism.

So, what is the context of Deuteronomy 23:1? The context is that some forms of ancient idolatrous worship involved castration in addition to transvestitism and sexual prostitution. That is why God took such a hard-line stance against some eunuchs as well as some cross-dressers and all temple cult prostitutes. The LORD God Almighty is against everything and anything associated with idolatry. The eunuchs who are comforted in Chapter Fifty-Six of Isaiah are those who *are* part of the congregation of the LORD and who could not reproduce either because they were born that way or because they were accident victims. The eunuch called to salvation in Chapter Eight of Acts was seeking to understand prophetic scripture, indicating that the intent of his heart was directed toward righteousness and that his gaze was fixed on the LORD; hence, he was called by the LORD to receive salvation.

Just as I believe that intersexuals serve as biological prototypes for homosexuals, so, too, do I believe that eunuchs serve as scriptural prototypes for modern-day transgenders. In a way, eunuchs, as referred to in the various verses of the Bible, serve as a prototype for understanding how the LORD views modern-day homosexuals, too. If, during the early days of the New Testament, a eunuch (who would have been prohibited by an unwaveringly narrow interpretation of the Law of Moses from approaching the LORD) could receive salvation, then surely, during these latter days, homosexuals (also cut off from the congregation of the LORD by an unwaveringly narrow interpretation of the Law of Moses) can be saved — that is, received by Christ into His Kingdom.

Rather than being anatomic eunuchs, homosexuals are, to a certain extent, akin to physiologic eunuchs. 1) Except for those homosexuals who may have felt compelled to enter into relationships with members of the opposite sex in order for society to accept them and, thereby, had children as a result; 2) except for those homosexuals who may have adopted children; and, 3) except for those homosexuals who have used artificial insemination (because it is their choice and right to do so),

most homosexuals who have lived openly as homosexuals (in some cases with lifelong committed partners) do not have children, because, of course, reproduction is not possible between members of the same sex at this time. Regardless, the LORD God Almighty, in Isaiah 56:3-5, said, “Do not worry if you cannot reproduce, because if you keep My precepts and My judgments and My laws and do My Will, then I am going to give you a name better than those who do reproduce.”

To be sure, Jesus used eunuchs figuratively when he responded to a statement from the disciples that it would seem easier to be celibate than remain faithful to one lifelong spouse. Jesus said:

“For there are some eunuchs, which were so born from their mother's womb: and there are some eunuchs, which were made eunuchs of men: and there be eunuchs, which have made themselves eunuchs for the kingdom of heaven's sake. He that is able to receive it, let him receive it.”

Matthew 19:11-12 KJV

For the sake of comparison, that verse reads as follows in the New International Version of the Bible:

“Not everyone can accept this word, but only those to whom it has been given. For some are eunuchs because they were born that way; others were made that way by men; and others have renounced marriage because of the kingdom of heaven. The one who can accept this should accept it.”

Matthew 19:11-12 NIV

Again, do not misconstrue my meaning. Biblical eunuchs are not homosexuals or transgenders. However, Biblical eunuchs *represent* homosexuals and transgenders. Jesus understood that there are males who do not have intercourse due to a diminished libido — either because they were born without testes or without functioning testes (that is, “born that way”). Jesus also understood that there are males who do not have intercourse due to a diminished libido because of loss of both testes either accidentally or intentionally (which is to say, “made that way by men”). Relative to intentional castration in ancient times,

some males had their testes removed in order for them to serve in certain roles, either because they could then be trusted not to commit adultery with the women in a harem they were protecting and could be trusted not to steal from their masters for their own children (since they would have none). Finally, Jesus understood that there are some people who do not have intercourse, because they have chosen to be celibate in response to a specific heavenly calling to keep themselves chaste (referred to in Matthew 19 as those who “renounced marriage because of the kingdom of heaven”). Jesus added that, in the case of the latter, only those who are called to celibacy will be able to understand and accept it. He understood that the majority of people are not asked to be celibate and that, even for those who are asked, celibacy can pose quite a difficult challenge. He also recognized that not everyone would understand that some are called, or elected, to celibacy. (Only those thus called or elected can *fully* understand, just as only those Christians who are homosexuals or transgenders can fully understand their condition and situation and their saved position relative to the cross of Christ.)

By extension through application to modern-day homosexuals and transgenders, I believe that the principle of Matthew 19:11-12 can be understood in my refocused paraphrase:

Not everyone can understand this word, but only those to whom the understanding has been given and those who are willing to understand. For some are homosexuals because they were born that way (that is, their “physical nature”); others were made that way through environmental conditions (which is to say, through “societal nurture”); and still others have been created as homosexuals to answer a specific heavenly calling (or, spiritual challenge). The one who can understand, or who is willing to understand this, should accept this understanding without mental or emotional turmoil. Those who are unable or unwilling to understand the homosexual orientation or transgender condition should get on with their own individual lives.

My refocused paraphrase could just as well be saying, “What business is

it of yours if God chooses to save and use homosexuals and transgressors?”⁵⁴

Throughout the New Testament, we are constantly reminded that Levitical Law was meant for a certain group of people (the children of Israel) for a specific dispensation and time. The Apostle Paul recognized that the Apostle Peter “was clearly in the wrong” (Galatians 2:11 NIV) as the Apostle Peter lead other Jews to believe that Gentile Christians should adopt Jewish traditions and customs and even obey certain aspects of the Law. The Apostle Paul stated:

We who are Jews by birth and not ‘Gentile sinners’ know that a man is not justified by observing the law, but by faith in Jesus Christ. So we, too, have put our faith in Christ Jesus that we may be justified by faith in Christ and not by observing the law, because by observing the law no one will be justified.

Galatians 2:15-16 NIV

All who rely on observing the law are under a curse, for it is written “Cursed is everyone who does not continue to do everything written in the Book of the Law” [The Apostle Paul here quotes Deuteronomy 27:26]. [brackets mine]

Galatians 3:10 NIV

Before this faith came, we were held prisoners by the law, locked up until faith should be revealed. So the law was put in charge to lead us to Christ that we might be justified by faith. Now that faith has come, we are no longer under the supervision of the law.

Galatians 3:23-25 NIV

For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision nor uncircumcision has any value. The only thing that counts is faith expressing itself through love.

Galatians 5:6 NIV

⁵⁴ This echoes what Christ Jesus’ said to the Apostle Peter concerning his speculation about what would happen to “John the beloved” (or, “the man whom Jesus loved”): “If I want him to remain until I come, what is it to you?” (John 21:22 ML)

Christ Jesus nailed the law to the cross. He “canceled the written code.” [Colossians 2:14] Understanding this is important for liberating ourselves and others from the doctrinal error of legalism, a recurring nightmare in the history of the Church. A little knowledge is always dangerous for human beings. In trying to interpret its environment, the human brain feels comfortable in creating an easily interpretable environment for itself. That is why human beings always default to legalism. Thus, a little religious knowledge always results in religious legalism. It is worse for religion, because those captive to their own thoughts think God supports their views. The natural man and the natural woman daily default to legalism. In contrast, the spiritual man and the spiritual woman ascend in consciousness to know God.

Looking at the references in Revelation concerning the churches of Smyrna and Philadelphia, I believe there is a message for modern-day Christian homosexuals and transgenders relative to those who would impose the Law of Moses on them. As recorded in Revelation 2:8-11 (NIV), Jesus Christ stated:

To the angel of the church in Smyrna write: “These are the words of him who is the First and the Last, who died and came to life again. I know your afflictions and your poverty — yet you are rich! I know the slander of those who say they are Jews and are not, but are a synagogue of Satan. Do not be afraid of what you are about to suffer. I tell you, the devil will put some of you in prison to test you, and you will suffer persecution for ten days. Be faithful, even to the point of death, and I will give you the crown of life. [The person] who has an ear, let [that person] hear what the Spirit says to the churches. [The person] who overcomes will not be hurt at all by the second death.”

You may recall that, according to Romans 2:25-29, a Christian is a Jew not outwardly but inwardly (that is, not naturally but spiritually). So, applying this to Revelation 2:8-11, there are many people who say they are spiritually-minded Christians but would reject Christian homosexuals and transgenders and keep them from the Lord Jesus, because they do not really love God as much as they might say and do

not really love others to the degree that Jesus would have them love. You see, it is very important for us all to demonstrate that we are children of God through love, which is not only forgiving but also noncondemning. There are some people who have no or very little love in their hearts. They say they are Christians and, yet, do not act in a Christian way.

In Revelation 3:7-13 (NIV), Jesus states:

To the angel of the church in Philadelphia write: “These are the words of him who is holy and true, who holds the key of David. What he opens no one can shut, and what he shuts no one can open. I know your deeds. See, I have placed before you an open door that no one can shut. I know that you have little strength, yet you have kept my word and have not denied my name. I will make those who are of the synagogue of Satan, who claim to be Jews though they are not, but are liars — I will make them come and fall down at your feet and acknowledge that I have loved you. Since you have kept my command to endure patiently, I will also keep you from the hour of trial that is going to come upon the whole world to test those who live on the earth. I am coming soon. Hold on to what you have, so that no one will take your crown. [The person] who overcomes I will make a pillar in the temple of my God. Never again will [that person] leave it. I will write on [that person] the name of my God and the name of the city of my God, the new Jerusalem, which is coming down out of heaven from my God; and I will also write on [that person] my new name. Who[ever] has an ear, let [that person] hear what the Spirit says to the churches.

In other words, those who say they are spiritually-minded, but are not, may be made to worship our Lord Jesus at the feet of Christian homosexuals and transgenders (that is, on a tier below them)! Amazing, is it not?

To the homosexuals and transgenders who are reading this book, I carry a message from the LORD God Almighty to you: God loves you. God sent His only-begotten Son to die for you just as much as for any other human being. Yes, God loves you. God desires that you have an eternal intimate relationship with Him through His only-begotten Son, Jesus Christ. The Lord Jesus said, “I have come that [you] may have life, and have it to the full.” (John 10:10 NIV) [brackets mine]

If you are homosexual or transgender and have not accepted the Lord Jesus Christ because other people have told you that the Bible says that you are not entitled to receive salvation or that there is no place in God’s kingdom for you, I tell you, and I have the Holy Spirit on this, that you are being invited, right now, to accept the Lord Jesus Christ as your personal Savior. “Though your sins are like scarlet,” our Lord will make them “white as snow.” (Isaiah 1:18 NIV)

I am not talking about inviting you to join a particular denomination or specific local church. What I am doing is inviting you to join the Church Universal, which is a spiritual body, the Body of Christ. God is inviting you to join a religion without walls. The truth be told, Christianity is not a religion; Christianity is a reality. Christianity is a way of life. The Holy Bible, God’s only written Word, guarantees that, if you confess your sins before the LORD God Almighty, you are just as entitled to salvation as anyone else. The Holy Bible, God’s only written Word, guarantees that, if you confess your sins and tell the LORD that you are sorry for them, and if you ask for forgiveness for them in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ — whom you have accepted as your personal Savior — be rest assured, you will be forgiven by God for all of your sins. At that time, you will be made a new creature and have a rebirth (that is, be “born again”) and be able to live with God throughout all eternity.

Does that mean that you will never sin again? No. Does that mean that you will have everything rosy or that you will have all the money that you will ever need for a wonderful earthly life? No, it does not guarantee any of that. What it guarantees is that you will have an eternity in heaven with the LORD God Almighty.

Accepting the Lord Jesus Christ as your personal Savior will not prevent your exclusion from so-called mainstream Christianity. Regarding the rejection of some of His sheep by mainstream religion, Jesus said:

All this I have told you so that you will not go astray. They will put you out of the synagogue; in fact, a time is coming when anyone who kills you will think he is offering a service to God. They will do such things because they have not known the Father or me. I have told you this, so that when the time comes you will remember that I warned you. I did not tell you this at first because I was with you.

John 16:1-4 NIV

The Lord Jesus Christ himself wants us to know that persecution is a part of living in this world as a Christian. Despite persecution, however, we need to give our lives up to God to live in ways that bring more honor and glory and praise to God's Holy Name. Understanding that, we need to trust in God completely as we continue our journey in this physical world.

Let no debt remain outstanding, except the continuing debt to love one another, for he who loves his fellowman has fulfilled the law.

Romans 13:8 NIV

Love does no harm to its neighbor. Therefore love is the fulfillment of the law.

Romans 13:10 NIV

Won't you take the time, right now, to accept the Lord Jesus Christ as your personal Savior? It is not complicated. Like the thief on the cross next to Jesus, acknowledge him as Lord and Savior and confess your sins to him and tell him that you are sorry for them. In response, he will say, "When you die, you will be with me in Paradise."⁵⁵

⁵⁵ Luke 23:40-43

What the Lord Said to Me Regarding the Law and Grace

Sometime in 1977, while pondering the idea that I had a spiritual message to convey, the malingering thought would press to the forefront of my consciousness, “Who will believe what you have to say? You are a homosexual.” I was troubled, because, although I felt comfortable with my sexual orientation, I knew most mainstream Christians would be uncomfortable with it (to put it mildly). I felt sure that any good that I might try to do would be prefaced by: “Dr. Pearson, an acknowledged homosexual ...” I knew most mainstream Christians would erroneously use *what* I was to try to define the entirety of *who* I was, and am. I knew that some would use my homosexual orientation against me to discredit anything I had to say.

I was especially frustrated, because I knew that most churched Christians would stopper their ears rather than hear me explain how the homosexual orientation is really quite different from the same sex activities described in the Bible that only relate to brutal group rape, male prostitution, idolatrous pagan fertility cult practices, and plural sex in group orgies.

As a Christian well acquainted with the Bible, I recognized long ago that most mainstream Christians would label the teaching and preaching of reconcilability between Christianity and homosexuality as heresy or even apostasy. I knew that many mainstream Christians would conclude that I should be excommunicated from the Christian Church, based on their interpretation of what the Apostle Paul taught, as recorded in Galatians 1:8:

But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed.

Galatians 1:8 KJV

Rather than listen to me, I knew that most mainstream Christians would think of the constraint articulated by the Bible verse just quoted. I knew that faithful Christians would believe that, because I was

departing from what they had learned from the pulpit or in traditional Bible classes, I should be “cursed” or “accursed.” [“Accursed” is translated in the King James Version of Galatians 1:8 from the Greek word anathema **ἀνάθεμα**, which also means “beyond redemption” and “excommunicated.”]

I remember mentally working out arguments to justify and vindicate my homosexual orientation should I ever come to public or private trial concerning it. Then, one day after earnestly praying to the Lord for an answer to give my then-imagined, but perhaps now-real, detractors — I inwardly heard (writing while hearing) from the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit directed me to state the following to anyone who might say that I was cursed (or, “accursed”):

If I am cursed, then I am joined to my Master, who was cursed of all men. In this, then, do I rejoice that I am cursed of men, for in that curse I receive the blessing of God wherewith I am received into the body of Christ: rejected by man but accepted by God, and delivered by Him from the hand of my own iniquity and sin.

Yes, it is true, the LORD God Almighty answered my prayer! Not only that, but the answer swept over and settled in my soul. I understood. I heard. It spoke to me as no biological, psychological or sociological argument could. Later, in Bible study, I came to better understand the scriptural foundation for God’s truth in the answer I received. In his letter to the Christians in Galatia, St. Paul wrote: “Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law[of Moses] by becoming a curse for us, for it is written: ‘Cursed is every one that hangs on a tree.’” (Galatians 3:13 NIV)

The Apostle Paul was referring to the Old Testament passage that states:

If a man guilty of a capital offense is put to death and his body is hung on a tree, you must not leave his body on the tree overnight. Be sure to bury him that same day, because *anyone* [emphasis mine] who is hung on a tree is under

God's curse. You must not desecrate the land the LORD your God is giving you as an inheritance.

Deuteronomy 21:22-23 NIV

While we all know that Jesus was not “hanged” in the now-common sense of the word — and certainly was not lifted up to the limb of any tree — he was hanged in the sense that the ancients understood the word, that is, “hanged up” for all to see. In ancient times, hanging was viewed primarily as a warning to potential wrongdoers. In many cases, bodies were hung up after execution rather than for execution. The Apostle Peter also affirms his acceptance of that usage through his direct references to the “hanging” of Christ:

The God of our fathers raised Jesus from the dead — whom you had killed by hanging him on a tree.

Acts 5:30 NIV

We are witnesses of everything he did in the country of the Jews and in Jerusalem. They killed him by hanging him on a tree.

Acts 10:39 NIV

He himself bore our sins in his body on the tree, so that we might die to sins and live for righteousness; by his wounds you have been healed.

1 Peter 2:24 NIV

In other words, Jesus also — which is to say, *like homosexuals* (as some might interpret Scripture) — had been cursed by the letter of the Law of Moses! Thus, as I now understand it, what the Lord's Holy Spirit said to me was this:

In that Christ Jesus, God's Chosen, was made a mock for us that we might be reconciled to God, and that his crucifixion won us pardon (if we so believe), so then does God's mercy extend to all souls in dust who feel the scorn of the lion (that is, the Devil) through the unkindnesses of humankind. God

will not turn His love away from any who suffer — even if they suffer only a fraction of the passion of His firstborn — for they remind God of His only-begotten Son. In other words, in God’s sight, all reviled are joined to the one who suffered the ultimate rejection.

Yes, there was a time when no blemished thing could come before the LORD. However, during Old Covenant times, the LORD God Almighty was trying to establish within the hearts and minds of some very primitive people that He is sovereign and that He is worthy of perfect sacrifice (of which Christ Jesus was to become, and remain, the only embodiment), much the same as He established His tabernacle and its appointments as a figure of things in heaven. (See Hebrews, Chapters Nine and Ten.) Remember, according to the Old Testament, the people of that day were “stick-necked” and “rebellious,” ungrateful for the things that the LORD was doing for them, and gross with regard to spiritual understanding. Thus, in order to help them subdue an unyielding spirit, they were subjected to the various rules, regulations, and ordinances of the Law by the LORD.

As recorded in Luke 16:16 (NIV), Christ Jesus said, “The Law and the Prophets were proclaimed until John the Baptizer. Since that time, the good news of the kingdom of God is being preached, and everyone is forcing [that is, “pressing”] his [and her] way into it.” As recorded in John 1:17 (NIV), St. John wrote, “For the law was given through Moses; grace and truth came by Jesus Christ.” As recorded in Romans 14:14 (NIV), St. Paul wrote: “I know and am persuaded in the Lord Jesus that nothing is unclean in itself; but it is unclean for anyone who thinks it unclean.” St. Paul also wrote, “For all the law [of Moses] is fulfilled in one word, even in this: ‘Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself.’” (Galatians 5:14 KJV) Keep in mind that it was those who were legalistically-minded (that is, strict adherents to the letter of the Law of Moses) that were offended by Jesus’ deeds and eventually saw to it that he was condemned to death. Also, those Gentiles who call themselves Christians today should remember that at one time Gentiles were not part of God’s chosen (refer to Romans, Chapter Nine) and were even referred to as “dogs” by Jesus. Unfortunately, like the Apostle Paul and his evangelistic team of 2,000 years ago, homosexual

and transgender Christians are “genuine, yet regarded as imposters” (1 Corinthians 6:8 NIV) by many in the Christian church today.

Why cannot more believers in Christ be like St. Peter, who said, “God has shown me that I should not call any man common or unclean.” (Acts 10:28 RS) No one is permitted by the LORD God to judge or condemn another: “You, therefore, have no excuse, you who pass judgment on someone else, for at whatever point you judge the other, you are condemning yourself, because you who pass judgment do the same things.” (Romans 2:1 NIV)

Again, I urge you to read the entire book of Leviticus as well as Deuteronomy. If you are a Christian, you will be hard pressed to find any of its rules, regulations, and ordinances that you yourself follow. Why impose them on anyone else? Why permit anyone else to impose them on you?

What the Lord Says to Us All

Let us, now, consider what the Holy Spirit says to us all in 1 Corinthians 1:27-29 (KJV):

God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise; and God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty; And base things of the world, and things which are despised hath God chosen, yea, and things which are not to bring to nought things that are: That no flesh should glory [or, boast] in his presence. [brackets mine]

Those few verses are my favorite verses in the Bible relative to the whole issue of Christianity and homosexuality. Why? Because they say so much in so little. They say that it is God who chooses to do what He will do and no one can keep Him from it. The idea is that God can choose base things, and God can choose things that are despised, and God can choose things that were, and are, rejected. Why? To confound people who think they know everything, because self-pride and false ego are an abomination to Him (just like pagan idolatry) and to prove the

immeasurable nature of His grace. Indeed, both egoism and egotism are forms of idolatry that the LORD God Almighty hates. He hates it when people sit in condemnation and judgment of others. No, we are not to judge. None of us can judge another. As stated earlier, the Bible clearly tells us not to judge, for if we judge, then with the same measure we will be judged. Thus are we cautioned not to judge.

I challenge the reader to evaluate 1 Corinthians 1:27-29 in the context of the homosexual orientation and today's world. Also, to evaluate the relationship of this world to the sphere in which God operates and His true Shekinah glory manifests. The LORD God Almighty does not care that narrow-minded people playing religion might be offended if He accepts homosexuals into His Kingdom. In fact, God often chooses to confound people who think they have all of the answers. "No flesh should glory," applied here, means that neither heterosexuals nor homosexuals should boast that their sexual orientation is better than the other.

The idea that God chooses to exalt things that are despised reminds me of what the LORD God Almighty said to Moses: "I will be gracious to whom I will be gracious, and will show mercy on whom I will show mercy." (Exodus 33:19 RS) It reminds me of this praise that Nebuchadnezzar offered God: "All the inhabitants of the earth are accounted as nothing; He does according to His will in the army of heaven and among the inhabitants of the earth and none can stay His hand or say to Him, 'What doest Thou?'" (Daniel 4:35 ML) It reminds me of the heavenly voice which spoke to the Apostle Peter and said, "Do not call anything impure that God has made clean" (Acts 10:15 NIV) — which is paraphrased delightfully in the Living Bible as "Don't contradict God! If he says something is kosher, then it is." Finally, it reminds me of the Lord's response to the Apostle Paul when he prayed for God to remove a thorn from his flesh: "My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness." (2 Corinthians 12:9 KJV)

Yes, the homosexual orientation is somewhat analogous to a thorn because of all the pain it brings from societal and familial rejection. But, we are asked by our Lord to turn to God in order that God's strength be within us so that we not become weary or faint. Jesus said:

Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy and my burden is light.

Matthew 11:28-30 NIV

If the LORD God Almighty has chosen to extend His dispensation to homosexuals and transgenders, then who are mere mortals to tell Him that He cannot or that He should not? The LORD chooses to whom He is merciful. Thank goodness humankind does not choose, for no one would ever have become a Christian. Who are any of us to question the authority or the sovereignty of the LORD God Almighty. What audacity! How full of self-pride and self-will that would be!

What is the lesson? Let the homosexual orientation and transgender status be between the created individual and the Creator. Let this be between them. And, do not hinder homosexuals or transgenders. Do not prevent them. Do not keep them from the cross of Jesus Christ. Do not keep them from corporate worship. And, do not keep them from Christian ministry simply because they are homosexual or transgender.

If little of what I have written in this book makes sense to you, that is all right. Just remember to keep your judgments or condemnations to yourself, to refrain from unkindness to me and others like me, and to try and not be too surprised when you meet many of us in heaven. And, if the idea of faggots (literally, “embers”) burning brightly for God is repugnant to you, then perhaps you are not yet fully prepared for the Kingdom of God. For this reason, I pray that you permit our Lord to change you.

To Christian homosexuals who have a broken heart because of all of the pain that they have experienced from rejection, my advice to you is to ask the LORD to use that broken heart to help you more fully yield to Him and to minister to the brokenhearted in His Holy Name. How can you ever expect to minister to the brokenhearted if you yourself have never had a broken heart?

To Christian homosexuals who are struggling to justify to Christian

family-of-origin members and friends that they are redeemed, Scripture is clear that “faith justifies,” “Jesus Christ justifies,” “faith in the Lord Jesus Christ justifies,” and “God justifies.” (See Romans 5:1 and 8:33; 1 Corinthians 6:11; Galatians 2:16-17; and Titus 3:7.) You do not need to justify to anyone that you have been redeemed, since God does that through the blood of Jesus Christ! That we testify that the Lord Jesus Christ is our Savior is testimony enough that the Holy Spirit resides in us. The witness of the Holy Spirit in us is an infallible witness that we are saved!

If we have God’s Holy Spirit in us, then we must be saved, since the Holy Spirit cannot dwell in vessels that have not been cleansed by the Lamb’s blood. If we know that the Lord Jesus Christ is the Messiah, our Savior, and the only-begotten Son of God, it is because the Holy Spirit Himself has revealed that to us. As Christ Jesus said to the Apostle Peter, “Blessed are you ... for this was not revealed to you by man, but by my Father in heaven.” (Matthew 16:17 NIV)

Regarding this, the Holy Spirit wrote through the Apostle Paul:

For who among men knows the thoughts of a [person] except the [person’s] spirit within him [or her]? In the same way no one knows the thoughts of God except the Spirit of God. We have not received the spirit of the world but the Spirit who is from God, that we may understand what God has freely given us. This is what we speak, not in words taught us by human wisdom but in words taught by the Spirit, expressing spiritual truths in spiritual words. The [person] without the Spirit does not accept the things that come from the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him [or her], and [that person] cannot understand them, because they are spiritually discerned. The spiritual man or woman makes judgments about all things, but [that person] is not subject to [anyone’s] judgment: “For who has known the mind of the Lord that he may instruct him?” [quoting Isaiah 40:13] But, we have the mind of Christ. [brackets mine]

1 Corinthians 2:10-16 NIV

if you are homosexual or transgender and unsure of your salvation, all you need do is ask yourself these five questions: 1) Have you accepted the Lord Jesus Christ as your personal Savior? 2) Do you regularly repent of sinful and addictive thoughts, feelings, attitudes and behaviors? 3) Have you confessed to others that Jesus is your Savior? 4) Can you understand spiritual things (that is, basic Christian concepts and principles)? 5) Are you able to forgive others in the name of Jesus Christ? If you have answered, “yes,” to all five, then you are saved and have God’s Holy Spirit indwelling you. Or, would you call God a liar? (Regarding forgiveness of others, please know that sometimes forgiveness is a process and not instantaneous.)

All who believe in the Son of God know that this is true. Those who don't believe this are actually calling God a liar because they don't believe what God has testified about his Son.

1 John 5:10 (NLT)

The Holy Bible teaches that “everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.” (Acts 2:21 NIV) “Everyone” is not restricted just to heterosexuals.

Because this chapter has been about the Law of Moses and God’s Grace, it is fitting that I close it with the following admonishment from God’s written Word for those who want to debate *ad nauseum* about what the Books of Leviticus and Deuteronomy say and do not say about homosexuals or transgenders:

Do not get involved in foolish discussions about spiritual pedigrees or in quarrels and fights about obedience to Jewish laws. These kinds of things are useless and a waste of time.

Titus 3:9 (NLT)

Chapter Four:

Christian Ethics and the Homosexual

Iniquity and Sin and the Need for Forgiveness

Most simply defined, iniquity is “turning from God” and sin is “action based on that turning.” To be sure, iniquity and sin exist within this state of physical being:

Wash me thoroughly from mine iniquity, and cleanse me
from my sin.

Psalm 51:2 KJV

Behold, I was shapen in iniquity; and in sin did my mother
conceive me.

Psalm 51:5 KJV

From the Bible, we know that iniquity entered into the universe because of the Fall of Lucifer — who is referred to, after his fall, as “Satan” (or, “the Adversary of God”) — and that sin entered into the world as a result of the Adamic Fall, or fall of humankind. What has happened as a result of sin is that condemnation was brought upon the world and — concomitantly — grief, guilt and shame upon all individual human beings. Yes, all of us are sinners. As Scripture teaches, “If we claim to be without sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us.” (1 John 1:8 NIV) However, Scripture also teaches that Christ Jesus “himself bore our sins in his body on the tree, so that we might die to sins and live for righteousness,” (1 Peter 2:24 NIV) and that “if we confess our sins, he [Jesus] is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness.” [brackets mine] (1 John 1:9 NIV)

The Bible teaches that, as our substitutionary offering, the Lord Jesus Christ himself bore our shame upon the cross. (1 Peter 2:24) Such redemptive sacrifice includes all people who believe on him, heterosexual or homosexual. That the Lord Jesus has served as the atonement for our iniquity and sin means that, if we so accept him as our Lord and Savior, the Creator views us as sinless (or, without blemish), just as Jesus was sinless and without blemish. I bring this up as the most important issue, because it seems that even within the Christian church, there are many individuals who do not quite grasp the sinless nature of Jesus Christ or are turned off by the requirement by God of a blood sacrifice. If, for some reason, you do not understand the substitutionary role that the Lord Jesus Christ played upon the cross when He offered Himself up as the only blood sacrifice acceptable to God the Father — or, if you mistakenly believe that He had blemishes or that He made errors in judgment or sinned like everyone else — then you are not grasping who Jesus really is. I believe that, if you are still struggling with the sinless nature of Jesus Christ, this work will help to confirm the words of the Bible as well as the certainty of their truth. Also, I believe that if you are homosexual and avoid portions of God’s written Word because you think that they condemn you, this work will help you trust in the certainty of God’s truth in its entirety. (Hold the whole Bible while you simultaneously attend to its various parts!)

The forgiveness of others is also an especially important issue for members of the homosexual community, since many who belong to it have been victimized, abused, rejected, and despised, even by their own family-of-origin members and closest friends. And, for this reason, forgiveness of others has special significance for us, since it is difficult for many of us to forgive. However, we must look to Jesus as our example and follow his command by forgiving others of their trespasses, or sins, against us.

To be sure, our triune God has demonstrated His perfect love in forgiving us of our sins. In fact, the very first thing that our Lord and Savior said on the cross was, “Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do.” (Luke 23:34 KJV) That was the very first thing Christ Jesus said on the cross! Can you imagine that? He asked that those who had committed this heinous crime against him (which is to say, his murder) be forgiven of that crime. Following Jesus’ lead, the first

Christian martyr, Stephen, said as he was being stoned, “Lord, lay not this sin up to their charge.” (Acts 7:60 KJV) In other words, Stephen was following the example that the Lord set for us all whenever we come to know persecution, oppression, victimization, and abuse.

Consequently, I urge you to not forget forgiveness, especially since this may be a primary axis issue for many who are reading this book.

(Please do not misconclude here that I am advocating that you remain in a threatening situation or an abusive relationship. Though we are to turn our cheek, we need not run up to get it slapped.)

An unforgiving spirit leads to bitterness, and bitterness leads to hatred, and hatred really is the antithesis of *agape* — or, selfless — love. And, when a person is in hatred, then he or she experiences its consequence, which is fear. Just as “perfect love [which is forgiveness] casts out fear,” [brackets mine] (1 John 4:18 KJV) conversely, unforgiveness, bitterness, and hatred permit Satan to work against us through his spirit of fear. Indeed, the verse continues, “fear has torment.” From a practical standpoint, if you live in fear or experience fear daily, it is important for you to determine if you are indulging the spirit of unforgiveness. You need to know that you will be liberated from fear as soon as you forgive others for their debts, trespasses, or sins against you.

Forgiving others does not mean that you need to become dysfunctional by pretending that others do not have specific faults, flaws, and infirmities. No, unconditional love means that you forgive others despite your knowledge of the existence of their specific faults, flaws, and infirmities. Just like Christ! (By doing this, you don’t become the Lord Jesus Christ, you are simply demonstrating His Christlike spirit.)

Our Lord also calls upon us to forgive those who have hurt us or who have been unkind to us so that we might progress spiritually. It is just absolutely amazing that, unless we forgive people who have wronged us, we remain inextricably linked to them, and, consequently, we move through life in a repetitive, downward spiraling pattern. If we really want to get on with our lives and leave all unnecessary baggage behind, then we must forgive people who have hurt or harmed us.

Relative to forgiveness, this is the command that has been given to us from Jesus Christ:

If you forgive [people] when they sin against you, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. But if you do not forgive [people] their sins, your Father will not forgive your sins. [brackets mine]

Matthew 6:14-15 NIV

The previously cited passage carries a message that is an extension of the Lord's Prayer. Basically, it tells us that unless we forgive those who have sinned against us, our Father in heaven will not forgive us of our sins. If, however, we forgive those who have sinned against us, then our Father in heaven will forgive us of our sins (provided, of course, that we believe that Jesus is His only-begotten Son and our Redeemer). Curiously, these two verses are often avoided by Christians, both homosexual and heterosexual alike; for some reason, people do not wish to pay attention to the severity of the ramifications if one refuses to forgive someone who has trespassed against him or her. Certainly, the Lord God Almighty not only teaches us that we need to forgive but has issued the edict (or, commandment) for us to do so as well.

Why are we commanded to forgive? To demonstrate that we have the same nature as our Creator, which is a forgiving one, and that He resides in us through His Holy Spirit.

It is the strangest thing, but our Lord teaches that unless we forgive, we cannot be forgiven. It is also the strangest thing that, as Christians, when people wrong us, we end up having a debt to repay them — the debt of forgiveness. Scripture tells us to demonstrate that we are perfect as our Father in heaven is perfect. (Matthew 5:48) How do we demonstrate perfection? By loving perfectly in forgiveness!

Forgiveness is a demonstration of perfect love. This is how we show that we are the children of God and that we have been born again. For those of you who may have difficulty with forgiving others, you need not do it alone. The Lord will help you. All you need to do is ask Him for His help.

Relative to the seeming dilemma between Christianity and homosexuality, I believe that my ministry is to those persons who are struggling with the issue, heterosexual or homosexual. I do not believe that my ministry is to people who have already made up their minds one way or the other. I do not believe that it is very productive to share, discuss, and/or debate with someone who is already firm in his or her convictions concerning the issue (except, perhaps, in forums using forensic guidelines).

To me, trying to convince others of the reconcilability of Christianity and homosexuality is generally a waste of time, effort, and energy — especially when there are so many people who are genuinely struggling with the issue and, as a result, deserve help in resolving it. To avoid a verbal conflagration, I try to apply the good sound advice found in Matthew 5:37 (NIV) that advises us to sometimes keep our conversation to a minimum: Simply let your “Yes” be “Yes,” and your “No,” “No”; anything beyond this comes from the evil one. (See also James 5:12) Besides, we cannot really convince anyone of anything. However, God’s Holy Spirit can convict us of the truth.

In a way, homosexuals and heterosexuals are like cats and dogs, but I do not mean that from the fighting standpoint. I have a cat and a dog at home, and they coexist. They just do not quite understand one another. Similarly, to a certain degree, heterosexuals have no clue as to what homosexuals are about and, to a certain extent, homosexuals do not have a clue as to what heterosexuals are about either. However, I will say that, generally, there is a greater understanding of heterosexuals by homosexuals than vice versa. Most homosexuals have been thoroughly exposed to, and indoctrinated by, the interests, experiences and belief systems common to the dominant heterosexual culture and mainstream climate.

Relative to dealing with people who have been unkind to us, the Bible has this additional solid advice in Romans 12:19 (NIV):

Do not take revenge, my friends, but leave room for God’s wrath, for it is written: “It is mine to avenge; I will repay,” says the Lord. (See also Leviticus 19:18 and Deuteronomy 32:35.)

So, if someone trespasses against us, we are not to avenge that sin but, rather, forgive the debt (that is, forgive what they owe to us because of their trespass). Forgive the debt and, in so doing, get on with your life. Perhaps the trespass was born of malice. Perhaps it was born of ignorance. Regardless, it is important in following the lead of our Lord to ask for our Creator to forgive the trespasser as well — just as Jesus said, “Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing.” (Luke 23:34 NIV)

In Matthew 5:44 (NIV), Jesus teaches us what we need to do: “Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you.” Yes, we need to love our enemies. We need to pray for those who hate us and spitefully use us. And, we need to bless those who curse us. These are definite commands that are given in the Bible relative to what we are to do if we are oppressed or victimized. That does not mean that we should not stand up for our rights. That does not mean that we should be very passive and give someone carte blanche to hurt us if we can prevent it. No, what it means is that we need to keep our distance from people who might try to hurt us, but we also need to keep in mind that we have certain responsibilities as Christians to forgive and try to forget. Forget, too? Yes, as Scripture teaches, love “keeps no records of wrongs.” (1 Corinthians 13:5 NIV) I have discovered that if you look at others who have wronged you through the shed blood of Jesus Christ, you will see them as God see them (which is to say, sinless and without fault). In this way, you are able to forget.

In Matthew 18:21-22 (KJV), it is recorded that the Apostle Peter approached the Lord and asked, “How often should we forgive?” The Lord responded to him and said, “Seven times seventy,” or 490 times. That is a substantial number of times, indeed! I, of course, understand that the Lord was speaking figuratively. But, even if He were speaking literally, 490 times is a great number of times to forgive one person. My good guess is that even if you spent all day thinking about how many times your greatest enemy has maligned you, you would still be hard pressed to come up with 490 separate instances. To be sure, homosexuals need to join the “490 Club” and forgive those who have wronged them even if they continue to wrong them, recognizing that most trespasses against them are born of ignorance — ignorance of the Lord Jesus Christ.

As the truth that God loves and accepts homosexuals is revealed to the Christian community (local church by local church, denomination by denomination, and nation by nation), those who victimize and bully homosexuals in the name of religion will no longer have a cloak for their trespass. Coming to an understanding that God loves everyone — and that God accepts everyone for who he or she is, and what he or she is relative to sexual orientation — is crucial to countering the lies that have been spread about the irreconcilability of Christianity and homosexuality. Unfortunately, those lies have kept many homosexuals and their loved ones from the cross of Christ. Yes, there is individual responsibility, but there is societal and familial responsibility as well with regard to spreading the gospel of Christ without condemnation or judgment to all who will listen.

Fulfilling our Commitment to Christ

The overwhelming majority of people believe that homosexuality is immoral. I do not. I believe that homosexuality is amoral and that homosexuals individually are either moral or immoral. As has been pointed out in Chapter One of this book, we are informed in the Bible that “God is no respecter of persons.” (Acts 10:34 KJV) I believe that. And, I believe it applies not only to earthly appearance but also to physical expression, personality, and sexual orientation. I believe that our Creator cares not one jot, iota, or yod about any aspect of our being human except that we try to reflect Him and His loving ways in all that we do. Spiritually speaking, love is the only real thing that can be multiplied and bear fruit.

I do not believe that any sexuality (neither heterosexuality nor homosexuality) is an expression of God except in the companionship, mutual support and shared intimacy of two people in a committed, monogamous relationship that has been blessed by Him. Indeed, I believe that sexuality is, at worst, a parody of — or, at best, a parable of — the creative powers of the LORD God Almighty and the communion His saints have with one another in their at-one-ment with Him.

I am saddened that, for many Christians, the issue of AIDS has been turned into an issue of homosexuality. Why am I saddened? I think

homosexuality is one area in which the organized Christian Church has given sanction to anti-Christian attitudes of condemnation and judgment as well as behaviors that are offensive to Christ, all of which turn many away from where they should be looking during their final days. The spirit of condemnation now operates through many who profess that Jesus is their Savior. It runs rampant through their hearts and minds and souls. For some strange reason, it “sets right” with many Christians — at least many that I have heard and seen — to take such a stand.

Once, when visiting a self-identified “Spirit-filled” church, I heard the pastor make a joke about homosexuals during his sermon. It received a good laugh from the audience; however, it made me feel badly for those homosexuals who may have been sitting in the congregation and who had already suffered rejection by many and were seeking the Lord, only to be made fun of by one of His “servants.” Brothers and sisters, believe me, whenever cruelty raises its ugly head, you can be sure that whoever raises it is not testifying of Jesus’ love and power to save.

Like King David — who chose to have retribution meted out by pestilence rather than by the hand of man (2 Samuel 24:13-15) — I think that the Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV) should be feared less than men. Viruses come nowhere near the power of evil that can be generated through human beings who have given themselves over to malice, malevolence, condemnation and vengeance. Certainly, human beings are responsible for more damage and suffering than any infectious agent. Yes, there are those Christians who would agree that homosexuals may be “saved” but only on the condition that they repent and change their ways (that is, not act on their sexual orientation).

Homosexuals do not need to be saved from their homosexuality unless, of course, they are indulging a hedonistic or sexually addictive lifestyle, just as any heterosexual in bondage to lust of the flesh needs to be saved from that appetite. Why? It is spiritually and emotionally unhealthy for anyone to view others as objects for self-gratification. Active addiction robs us of a productive life.

Unfortunately, it is plain that many people (heterosexuals and homosexuals alike) believe corporeal flesh to be the eternal reflection

and likeness of God as well as believe that the carnal nature, which animates that flesh, to be His pure, perfect and divine nature, — ideas that I see as entirely incongruent with God’s truth and, therefore, erroneous. Really, there is little I can say to clarify my views on homosexuality for them, because, for as long as they hold to such thinking, their understanding of sexuality (among other things) will remain earthbound. Simply stated, they will not be able to grasp God’s indifference to sexual orientation. (Do not misinterpret here that I am saying the Lord is indifferent to human behavior.)

For those who are genuinely struggling to reconcile what they feel inside is true concerning homosexuality with the views of mainstream Christianity (such views at variance with those feelings), I need to add this:

When I pretended that I was a heterosexual so others might accept me, I was in effect rejecting God because I was living a lie. It was not until I became honest with myself and others that I was able to come to the real truth, which is to say, to the reality of Christ. That is not to say that I believe homosexuals have a license to licentiousness. Quite to the contrary, no. Unless one has been called personally to celibacy, I believe in the unadulterated sharing of the life and love of the Lord within the sanctity of a monogamous covenant-based relationship. I believe that one of the highest relationships that can be achieved among souls within this earthly flesh is the one attained between two faithful helpmates who put God first and each other second. My mate and I have been with each other for 34 years at the time of this edition (2010) and neither one of us has been unfaithful to the other. This is one of the “secrets” to the longevity of our relationship.

The so-called “curse” of homosexuality can even be turned into a blessing for those homosexuals who do not become involved in a frenetic escape from it through sexual addiction or in unhealthy repression of their own homosexual feelings. How? By the challenge it presents. To perceive that one does not fit into an accepted mold or pattern can help lead one to the conclusion that people who are spiritually-minded are really strangers, foreigners, and pilgrims in this world. Such recognition is necessary, I think, before we can be fully returned to a heavenly home, where God expresses Himself in us and through us

without measure. In other words, when dealt with correctly, the homosexual life experience can help one yield to Christ.

With adversity, rejection, and suffering often comes enlightenment; however, generally speaking, the gifts of adversity, rejection, and suffering are not often gratefully received by souls in dust nor are they generally viewed as spiritual gifts. (I am not saying here that we should abrogate our responsibility to be active politically, demonstrate publicly, and stand up for our human rights and civil rights in peaceful protest.)

I do believe that, if I had not been homosexual, I might have rejected the gospel message, because I would have been too comfortable and “at home” in this world. For this reason, I believe that my homosexuality has been a gift from God rather than a curse. Because of the challenge it presented, it helped me to turn to the LORD.

To my friends who happen to be homosexual, I write this: Because the world has been afraid of us (it always fears what it does not understand), it has tried to suppress the natural development of our affections and emotions. And, since it has tried to repress the healthy expression of our sexual orientation as well as suppress knowledge of our existence, many of us — without positive role models of any kind — were consigned by society to lead lives in sordid, backroom-type, sinful activities. Because our personalities were fragmented, we were eaten up from the inside out by unhealthy sexual desires. However, it is time for us to break from the bondage of such a mental, emotional, and spiritual miasma. We need to resist the unhealthiness and sinfulness engendered by prevailing attitudes and actions propelled by Satan’s spirit of condemnation. We need to take charge of our lives by yielding ourselves to God’s Holy Spirit and the Will of Christ. We need to understand that our Creator loves us and that He could not care less about our sexual orientation unless, of course, we have not come to terms with it.

What are the responsibilities of homosexuals? They are the same as heterosexuals. The Apostle Paul wrote, “I beg you, therefore, brothers [and sisters], in view of God’s mercies, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your reasonable

service.” [brackets mine] (Romans 12:1 ML) Thus, we should accept our rejection by mankind as well as our acceptance by God, taking time to be holy all the while. (Again, this is not to say that we should not peacefully struggle for justice and equality.)

When they feel especially sad and lonely, should homosexuals not be able to turn to the one who knew the ultimate rejection, Christ Jesus, that their burdens might be shared with him? Can Christians who happen to be homosexual not have the same hope as Christians who happen to be heterosexual? Are homosexuals covered by God’s grace? Yes, yes, and yes. Believe me, daily I prove God’s saving grace and I am a witness of it to you, right now.

What is sexual immorality? Immorality, simply stated, is herewith defined as any sexual activity outside of the sanctity of a committed, covenant-based monogamous relationship. What does it include? It includes orgies, bath house activities, “swinging” sexually with other couples, casual sex, adultery, lust (that is, unchecked sexual desire), pornography, telephone sex, addictive masturbation, lap dancing, voyeurism, and even serial monogamy. Certainly, not one of the activities or behaviors that have just been mentioned are unique to the homosexual community. Such promiscuous behaviors are indulged by the heterosexual community as well. As stated earlier, whatever exists in the homosexual community also exists in the heterosexual community.

For the sake of clarification, “serial monogamy” is continually passing from one short-term, albeit monogamous, relationship to another. This, too, is displeasing to the Lord. When Jesus met the Samaritan woman by the well and asked her to call her husband, the woman answered, “I have no husband.” (John 4:17 NIV) Jesus replied to her:

You are right when you say you have no husband. The fact is, you have had five husbands, and the man you now have is not your husband.

John 4:17-18 NIV

The Lord God Almighty is a God of commitment, a God of vows and a God of promises. He expects the promises and the vows and the commitments that we make — not only to Him but to each other — to be executed and to be brought to full term and fruition. Thus, our God expects us to fulfill our commitments, including commitments to lifelong companionship!

There have been many extra societal pressures placed upon homosexuals. Because our relationships are not deemed natural, and because they are not fostered in emotionally-healthy ways (*for example*, there is no real courtship, as such, during middle school and high school), homosexual pair-bondings often get off to a very shaky start. Without the opportunity to experiment in developing healthy relationships during our pre-teen and teenage years, many of us are developmentally delayed — destined to repeat unhealthy relationships because we missed out on that crucial time of experimenting and learning how to develop healthy lasting intimate relationships without running away from the challenges they present. (Certainly this holds true for some heterosexuals, too.)

Because homosexuals have had the added pressure of society frowning upon us for being together, it creates an extra burden for us individually and often takes its toll on our relationships. However, though I am aware of extra pressures on homosexual relationships, I am also aware of the extra responsibilities that we have as individuals in the spousal relationships that we do form. We need to continue on with those relationships — especially when we, in the eyes of God, have been made one — by not passing from one partner to another. I would also urge the heterosexual community to consider these words as well, because all segments of society need to work on faithfulness and fulfilling commitments. It is just that, for homosexuals, there are some different burdens and added responsibilities that impact on companions remaining together, especially during the periods of difficult testing that all spousal relationships experience.

In 1 Corinthians 6:18-20 (NIV), the Apostle Paul further delineates our responsibilities to God and others. He states, “Flee from sexual immorality. All other sins a man [or woman] commits are outside his [or her] body, but he [or she] who sins sexually, sins against his [or her]

own body. Do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit, who is in you, and whom you have received from God. You are not your own, you are bought at a price. Therefore honor God with your body.” [brackets mine]

Yes, honor God with your body! Both heterosexuals and homosexuals need to flee from sexual immorality. We need to resist temptation by recognizing and affirming scriptural truth. We need to look for a life-long partner, and if we have a life-long partner, then we need to stay committed to that partner throughout life. Such is pleasing to the Lord. (Very, very pleasing!) We need to work at relationships. Both heterosexuals and homosexuals need to investigate why their relationships falter and fail.

Why Marriage or Holy Unions?

Hindering marriage, or holy unions, between homosexuals contributes to immorality and not vice versa.

During the time of legalized slavery in the United States, because Blacks were prevented from legally marrying in the slave states, many participated in a ceremony of “jumping the broom” to signify that they were mates to one another. Even some of the more benevolent slavemasters came to “jumping the broom” ceremonies of their slaves. However, the “marriage” ceremony consisted of the intended partners merely jumping over a broom. Was this ideal? No, of course not. Why? There were no vows exchanged.

To be sure, when laws prevent marriage, we do what we can do in order to present ourselves to each other and to signal that we are committed to one another. However, it is not sufficient either to just jump a broom or simply rent a U-haul and move in together. Scripture teaches that:

Marriage should be honored by all [emphasis mine], and the marriage bed kept pure, for God will judge the adulterer and all the sexually immoral.

Hebrews 13:4 NIV

Marriage specifically involves an exchange of vows between two intended spousal partners who desire to live in a committed lifelong monogamous relationship with one another in the sight of God. For those who might say that holy unions between two people of the same sex should not be performed where they are not legal, I would respond that the laws of God are higher than the laws of man. In other words, it is God who desires that we should marry in order to escape sexual immorality. (Read 1 Corinthians, Chapter 7.) Consequently, marriages between homosexuals should not be hindered. Jesus said, “what therefore God has joined together, let not man put asunder.” (Matthew 19:6b NIV)

Scripture teaches that sexual intimacy between two people seals the vows that they have made between them “so they are no longer two but one flesh.” (Matthew 19:6a NIV) If sexual intimacy takes place without the exchange of vows, then the potential for all sorts of problems is set up. *For example:*

**Do you not know that one who unites with a prostitute is one body with [him or] her? For “The two [who join themselves sexually],” He says, “will become one flesh.”
[brackets mine]**

1 Corinthians 6:16 ML

Joining oneself to nonspousal bedpartners produces all sorts of unhealthy consequences such as shared addictions, shared emotional instabilities, and shared sexually transmitted diseases. Furthermore, Scripture is quite clear that God is against “fornication” (that is, sex outside of marriage or holy covenant commitment).

Because marriage is God’s ideal, homosexuals who profess love for one another should exchange vows. With the exchange of vows comes rights, responsibilities, expectations, and trust that honor the love that two people share. That is why marriage should be honored by all, both homosexuals and heterosexuals alike.

When I was Senior Pastor of Healing Waters Ministries in Tempe, Arizona (from 1998 to 2007), when two people came to me to perform a

holy union, I counseled them over a period of time and instructed them by discussing the following questions with them:

- 1. Have both partners accepted the Lord Jesus Christ as their personal Savior?**
- 2. Is the couple seeking to make the relationship permanent through lifelong monogamous commitment?**
- 3. Is the couple willing to stay together, and remain faithful to one another (*for example*, during extended periods of sickness or unemployment) until death separates them?**
- 4. Do the partners have a long term history of mutual love and respect?**
- 5. Have the partners disclosed to each other their respective income, assets, and liabilities and obligations?**
- 6. Is each partner willing to completely share their income and assets with the other; and, is each partner willing to jointly assume the debts, liabilities, and obligations of the other?**
- 7. Is the couple willing to demonstrate their commitment legally through joint ownership of property, shared banking and checking accounts, medical powers of attorney, and naming each other as beneficiaries in wills and on insurance policies?**
- 8. Is the couple willing to state their commitments to one another in the form of vows and promises?**
- 9. Is the couple willing to state what would make their commitment to one another null and void?**

If the answer to any one of the previous questions was “no,” then I would not perform the ceremony until such time as each answer was genuinely “yes.” Otherwise, the couple would be unequally yoked together or their relationship based on false assumptions, and their partnership would be headed in the direction of failure.

Restoration

In the broadest sense, restoration refers to the reunion of God’s people with the Lord God Almighty. That restoration is possible is a gift from the Lord and the Lord alone. It is He who has sought us. It is He who has refused to give His glory — which is to say, His creation — to the Devil. Because of His love for us, He has restrained His justified wrath from being poured out on His fallen created and, at the same time, provided a pathway of salvation for us to return to Him:

I am the LORD: that is my name: and my glory will I not give to another, neither my praise to graven images.

Isaiah 42:8 KJV

For my name’s sake I defer my anger, for the sake of my praise I restrain it for you, that I may not cut you off. Behold I have refined you, but not like silver; I have tried you in the furnace of affliction. For my own sake, for my own sake, I do it, for how should my name be profaned? My glory I will not give to another.

Isaiah 48:9-11 RS

Our lives are meaningless and without purpose unless they are lived for the glory of God. To be sure, the LORD desires humanity to be restored to Him and desires that we be restored to each other in the process as well. Scripture is clear that we are considered by the LORD to be parts of a whole through our individual membership in the body of His Christ (1 Corinthians 12:12-31) and as “living stones” in His spiritual temple, which has Jesus Christ as its cornerstone. (1 Peter 2:4-8) Indeed, all of us are parts of God’s whole.

In the body of Christ, “the eye cannot say to the hand, ‘I don’t need you!’ And, the head cannot say to the feet, ‘I don’t need you!’” (1 Corinthians 12:21 NIV) So, also, is it not permissible for Christian heterosexuals and homosexuals to say to each other, “we don’t need you!”

God has combined the members of His body and has given greater honor to the parts that lacked it, so that there should be no division in the body, but that its parts should have equal concern for each other. If one part suffers, every part suffers with it; if one part is honored, every part rejoices with it.

1 Corinthians 12:24-26 NIV

Scripture teaches that, through the wounds of Christ, all separation from God has already been healed. (1 Peter 2:24) To be sure, when souls are added to the body of Christ at the time they accept Jesus Christ as their personal Savior, they are instantly and immediately restored to God. In other words, saved souls are made whole and perfect in God’s sight as soon as they are added to the Church Universal, which consists of the visible church as well as the invisible church (the latter includes those who have already preceded the former into Paradise).

Unfortunately, the arms of the visible church are not outstretched to receive homosexuals and transgenders into fellowship with it: Some denominations will not receive Christian homosexuals at all and others will not receive them as full participants. These are the areas in which restoration must yet take place. Since the foundation for such restoration has already been laid in Christ upon his crucifixion, I anticipate that full restoration will come one day, although perhaps not completely until, Jesus returns to the earth at his Second Coming.

When asked when he was going to restore the kingdom to Israel (which occurs upon his return to earth), Jesus responded and said, “It is not for you to know the times or dates the Father has set by his own authority.” (Acts 1:7 NIV) Similarly, we may not know when complete restoration for Christian homosexuals to the visible church will occur

until it has happened. It is my hope that this book is part of a good beginning for reconciliation and restoration, since its message seeks to honor the name of the Lord, and influence others toward good, God (for, as Christ Jesus teaches us in Matthew 19:17, “There is none other good but God”).

Witnessing to GLBT Non-Christians

... A short list compiled for those who seek to share the biblical gospel of Jesus Christ with GLBT non-Christians ...

1. Pray that God grant repentance to GLBT non-Christians in the knowledge of salvation through Jesus Christ and Jesus Christ alone. Emphasize to GLBT non-Christians that they are to repent of their sins and not of their sexual orientation or gender identity. Especially pray for those GLBT non-Christians who have been taught to believe that Christ wants nothing to do with them. It is important to understand that, because of such indoctrination, these GLBT non-Christians have not yet had an opportunity to make a free will choice concerning acceptance or rejection of Jesus Christ as their Personal Savior. It is our job to help explain that Christ died for everyone. Pray that God reveal the true source of hateful judgmentalism and condemnation (all judgmentalism and condemnation are hateful) from so-called mainstream Christianity and purported fundamental Christians. Pray that God reveal the source of the Christian faith, which is the crucified and resurrected Christ, to GLBT non-Christians as well as to nominal GLBT Christians (those who might say that they are Christian but not accept their rights and responsibilities as authentic Christian believers).
2. Emphasize that God is the God of love and not the god of hatred and accusation (Satan himself is *that* god). Explain the difference between God’s righteous judgment through wrath (divine judgment) as opposed to Satan’s cruelty through fear, intimidation, terrorism, judgmentalism, condemnation and accusation. Acknowledge that, historically, mainstream Christianity and fundamental Christians have been guilty of

- ignorance and intolerance of GLBT communities and that mainstream Christianity and fundamental Christians have been guilty of attempting to convert GLBT non-Christians by forcing them to reject what God has created and designed them to be. (A real conversion is an exercise of one's free will choice and not an acquiescence to coercion or peer pressure.) Help new GLBT Christians come to understand how important it is for them to forgive others for abusing, oppressing and victimizing them. (Help them to understand that such forgiveness occurs over time through God's healing their hearts.)**
- 3. Emphasize that judgmental and condemning people distort who God is and what He has said in His written Word, the Holy Bible.**
 - 4. Emphasize that the Bible is not a work that has been corrupted over thousands of years: The roles of the ancient Hebrew "lawyers" (Torah scholars) and "scribes" (Tanakh copyists) helped to ensure that the Christian Old Testament (Hebrew Scripture) was painstakingly copied accurately and correctly. Emphasize that enough scrolls have survived through thousands of years to help substantiate the validity of the individual books of the Old Testament as well as the gospels and letters of the New Testament. Emphasize that the Holy Spirit is responsible for authoring the Holy Bible but not responsible for the mistranslations, misinterpretations, and misapplications of it. (Keep in mind that most GLBT non-Christians have only been exposed to the Bible through religious ignorance and intolerance of them as well as through error-filled secular television programs with titillating titles such as "The Lost Books of the Bible" and "Was Jesus Married to Mary Magdalene?")**
 - 5. Encourage GLBT non-Christians to read the Bible, starting with Genesis and Exodus and then the four gospels (John, Matthew, Mark, and Luke, in that order). Invite them to a home Bible study specifically designed for GLBT non-Christians.**
 - 6. Talk about God's requirement of a perfect blood sacrifice for the forgiveness of sins and how the only perfect blood sacrifice was the one He provided through His Son, Y'shua H'Moshiach (Jesus**

the Messiah, or Jesus the Christ).

7. **Talk about God's goodness as demonstrated through His grace (receiving what we do not deserve) and mercy (not receiving what we do deserve). God's grace is demonstrated through the opportunity to receive forgiveness for our sins and God's mercy is demonstrated by our not receiving eternal separation from God, which is actually what all people, gay and straight alike, deserve.**
8. **Talk about how, when we come to Christ, the burdens of: a) guilt from sin, b) condemnation by God, and c) accompanying shame are palpably removed from us and that then, and only then, do we have the freedom to be who God created and designed us to be, which includes coming to complete terms with God's acceptance of our God-given GLBT natures and personalities.**
9. **Emphasize that God desires for GLBT people to act responsibly by seeking to live up to His moral and ethical standards as proud GLBT people. Because GLBT non-Christians will be interested in what those moral and ethical standards are, be prepared to talk about God's ideals concerning covenants, commitments and faithfulness and how learning to live up to His ideals can take an entire lifetime.**
10. **Be much less concerned about force-feeding your denominational views and personal interpretations of Scripture. Use noncontroversial Scripture to help explain the foundational principles of Christian faith. Do not undermine someone's salvation, because you feel it imperative to discuss what you think is error in another denomination's doctrinal position. Be honest and open about what you believe but not dogmatic.**
11. **Be patient with new Christians. Don't expect them to understand everything all at once. *For example*, new Christians may have an easy time understanding that Jesus Christ is the "only-begotten Son of God" but a difficult time understanding that Jesus Christ is God.**

- 12. Use this list (items 1 through 11) as a “talking document” to generate discussion with other Christians concerning additional items to include or how to further refine those listed.**

Concluding Remarks

In summary, Christian heterosexuals have no right to call homosexuals unclean when God has cleansed them — even under the guise of “hating the sin but loving the sinner.” To be sure, the homosexual orientation is no more sinful than the heterosexual orientation. And, if Christian homosexuals want to lay claim to all of the promises of God, then they need to act responsibly — in accordance with the ideal of morality inscribed within God’s written Word, the Holy Bible. All who seek to enter the Kingdom of God must take time to be holy, and that includes having holy spousal relationships unless God has called them to be celibate. Those who pursue holiness will not regret it when they hear the Lord Jesus say to them, “Well done, my good and faithful servants.⁵⁶ You may enter the heavenly gates!”

Relative to the artificial division that currently exists between Christian heterosexuals and Christian homosexuals, it is fitting that I close this final chapter with Christ Jesus’ prayer to God the Father for all believers, both heterosexual and homosexual:

May they be brought to complete unity to let the world know that you sent me and have loved them even as you have loved me.

John 17:23 NIV

Because this prayer is the prayer of Christ Jesus, it is in perfect agreement with the Will of God the Father. Therefore, this prayer is being answered and its prophetic elements fulfilled, right now. Therefore, let us look forward to the time of its complete fulfillment, and our perfect unity, with eager anticipation!

⁵⁶ Matthew 25:21, King James Version

Christ Jesus is our living hope, not just hope for tomorrow but hope for this very day.

Appendix A

Examples of Intersex Categories

The following list has been included not to try to prepare you for a medical degree but to help you see that the causes for ambiguities in sexual identity and genitalia are complex and varied as well as found on a wide spectrum of the gender continuum.

I. XY individuals that feminize or fail to masculinize

A. Lack SRY gene (normally found on short arm of Y chromosome)

B. Have SRY gene

1. Decreased androgen activity due to protein receptor abnormalities

a. Complete Testicular Feminization

b. Incomplete (Partial) Testicular Feminization

c. Reifenstein's Syndrome (appearance of both enlarged mammary glands and male genitalia)

2. Increased estrogen activity

a. Abnormal pituitary hypersecretion of LH (ICSH) that leads to testicular estrogen production

b. Testicular tumor

c. Increased estrogen-androgen ratio

d. Adrenal tumor

- e. **Aromatization (i.e., peripheral conversion) of secreted androgens (sometimes due to liver disease)**
 - f. **Decrease in peripheral conversion of testosterone to its active metabolite, dihydrotestosterone**
- 3. Male pseudohermaphroditism (with 5 α -reductase deficiency)**

These individuals are usually raised as girls. However, at puberty, breasts fail to develop, pubic hair and beard develop, menses does not occur, and external genitalia virilize (i.e., masculinize). By standards for girls at puberty, testosterone production is increased. These individuals often assume male gender roles after puberty. In Spanish, sometimes referred to as *Guevodoces*.

II. XX individuals that masculinize or fail to feminize

- A. Have SRY gene (translocated from Y to X during spermatogenesis)**
- B. Lack SRY gene**

1. Female Pseudohermaphroditism

- a. Exogenously-produced androgens (intrauterine exposure during pregnancy)**
 - 1) hormone therapy**
 - 2) maternal ovarian production**
 - 3) maternal adrenal production**
- b. Endogenously-produced androgens**
 - 1) adrenal production (includes Adrenogenital Syndrome and Congenital Adrenal Hyperplasia, or CAH)**
 - 2) ovarian production (e.g., polycystic ovarian disease)**

- 2. Sexual Infantilism due to 17-hydroxylase deficiency (which mediates estrogen production)**
- 3. Turner's Syndrome (has only 45 chromosomes: lacks a second sex chromosome)**

III. Hermaphroditism

A. Pseudohermaphroditism

B. True Hermaphroditism (requires the presence of ovarian as well as testicular tissue)

1. Mosaicism

A mosaic is an organism that can arise from abnormal cell division of an XY or XXY individual during embryogenesis.

2. Chimerism

A chimera is an offspring that results from fusion of two or more different zygotes.

Appendix B

Question Assignments

Dear Students and Prospective Students:

Although the following pages provide the framework for a “stand-alone” online correspondence course, entitled *Christianity and Homosexuality Reconciled*, these course materials may also be used in conjunction with “on-the-ground” classroom instruction. Thus, if you have an in-class instructor, facilitator, or discussion leader, supplementary resources may be used to enhance instruction vis-à-vis lecture, multi-media, and/or discussion sessions.

Regardless of how you are taking this course, please always consult with the contact person(s) identified to answer your questions. If you are taking this course through an organization other than CEBI, contact the lead person identified by that organization. However, if you have recommendations for change to improve the course materials, always contact CEBI by first visiting www.cebiaz.com to find CEBI contact information there.

Although definite theological and doctrinal positions are presented in CEBI course materials, please know that there are no real divisions within the Body of Christ and that authentic Christian believers are found in all Christian denominations and persuasions. If your own personal Christian theology differs with any of the positions presented in CEBI course materials, all we ask is that you have a sound Scriptural basis for your position. (The Holy Bible is the only Scripture.) The primary position in which authentic Christian believers cannot differ is in personal salvation only through the shed blood of Jesus Christ, who is the only-begotten Son of God, and in public confession of one’s faith in

Jesus Christ as the only Savior of the world. Such faith is what unites all authentic Christian believers.

If you would like feedback as well as a certificate of course completion for “Christianity and Homosexuality Reconciled” from Christ Evangelical Bible Institute, answer the following questions carefully after reading each section of Christianity and Homosexuality Reconciled: New Thinking for a New Millennium.

Make sure that you incorporate the question itself into your answer so that each question and its answer present a unified whole. Although typed answers are preferred, a handwritten assignment is permitted if your handwriting is very clear and legible.

If you have already paid correspondence tuition for “Christianity and Homosexuality Reconciled” to Christ Evangelical Bible Institute, no additional payment is necessary. Please send a self-addressed stamped envelope (SASE) for each assignment sent. Assignments sent without an SASE or without sufficient postage will not be returned.

Mail all completed assignments to: Dr. Joseph Pearson, 1875 North Wozniak Road, Michigan City, Indiana (IN) 46360 or Email them to DrJPearson@aol.com. You may send in answers to questions from the Introduction and Chapter One, Chapter Two, Chapter Three, and Chapter Four separately or in any combination.

Introduction and Chapter One Questions

- 1. What five historically-controversial human rights issues have existed within the Christian Church? (one sentence)**
- 2. In the Old and New Testaments, slavery is both explicitly and implicitly condoned. Give the Scriptural basis as to why slavery should not be permitted by civil law? (four to five sentences)**

- 3. What does the author mean when he states, “half-truths are presented when the Bible is not taken in its entirety”? (one to two sentences)**

- 4. Students of the Bible should seek to “hold the _____ Bible while they simultaneously attend to its various _____.” (fill-in-the-blanks)**

- 5. Complete the following by referring to 1 Peter 2:24 (NIV): “He himself bore our _____ in his _____ on the _____, so that we might die to sins and live for righteousness; by His _____ you have been healed.” (fill-in-the-blanks)**

- 6. Complete the following by referring to 1 John 1:8-9 (NIV): “If we claim to be without _____, we _____ ourselves and the _____ is not in us. If we confess our sins, he is _____ and _____ and will forgive us our sins and _____ us from all unrighteousness.” (fill-in-the-blanks)**

- 7. Does the Lord show favoritism toward — or, partiality for — heterosexuals over homosexuals? Why or why not? Use scriptural references to back up your answer. (four to five sentences)**

- 8. Scripture plainly teaches that we will have bodies in heaven but not “flesh and blood” bodies. Which scriptures help us to understand that we will not be gendered males, gendered females or sexually active beings in heaven? Explain. (four to five sentences)**

- 9. Whom shall we look like when our bodies are redeemed? Give the scriptural basis for your answer. (three to four sentences)**

- 10. According to Rabbi Jacob Milgrom, is it correct to universally apply the biblical prohibition found in Leviticus 18:22 against same-sex behavior? Why or why not? Has the Rabbi taken into account grace and the role that male cult prostitution played in the Lord originally instituting such sexual prohibitions? (five to six sentences)**

11. In the “Declaration on Certain Questions Concerning Sexual Ethics,” issued by the Vatican in 1975, it is declared that for some individuals homosexuality is an “innate instinct.” What significance should the use of the word innate have for someone seeking to condemn homosexuals for their homosexuality? (three to four sentences)
12. Define the following terms: homosexual, bisexual, transgender, intersexual, sexual orientation, sexual preference, sexual identity, and homophobia. (one sentence for each term)
13. Does homosexual mean “one who engages in same-sex activity”? Why or why not? (three to four sentences)
14. How do gay and lesbian people become self-loathing? (four to five sentences)
15. According to the American Psychological Association, is sexual orientation a choice? Please explain. (three to four sentences)
16. Describe how you would respond to the statement, “God created Adam and Eve, not Adam and Steve nor Ada and Eve”? Include in your discussion a possible biological explanation for the phenomenon of homosexuality. (about 100 words)
17. Using John 9:1-3, how might you respond to someone who states that all physical, emotional, and psychosexual anomalies exist because of the Adamic Fall and are, therefore, always caused by iniquity and/or sin? (three to four sentences)

Chapter Two Questions

18. What were the conditions requested by Abraham under which the LORD God Almighty would spare the city of Sodom? (two to three sentences)
19. What parallels exist between the Genesis 19 account of the two

- angelic visitors in Sodom and the Judges 19 & 20:1-5 account of the Levite and his concubine in Gibeah? (Construct a table to indicate the parallels.)
20. What insights are provided by the Levite's statement in Judges 20:5 regarding the Sodom account of the intended rape in Genesis 19? (three to four sentences)
21. What is meant by the statement, "Scripture interprets Scripture"? (one to three sentences)
22. a) Give the names of three common Canaanite fertility deities.
b) Which goddess is also referred to as "Ishtar" in ancient Babylon and "Astarte" in ancient Greece? (two sentences)
23. a) How did intermarriage with the Canaanites, Hittites, Amorites, Perizzites, Hivites, Jebusites, Moabites, Ammonites, Edomites, and Sidonians influence the religious practices of the children of Israel?
b) What impact did such intermarriage have on King Solomon's relationship with the LORD?
c) Which pagan deities did Solomon end up serving? (three to four sentences)
24. What is a Bible concordance? (one to two sentences)
25. a) How many times does the singular form of the word sodomite occur in the King James Version of the Bible? (one sentence)
b) How many times does sodomite occur in its plural form? (one sentence)
c) Since sodomite(s) in the King James Version is used only in the Old Testament, would you expect to find the original word in a Hebrew lexicon (dictionary) or Greek lexicon (dictionary)? (one sentence)
d) Using Strong's Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible, what is the meaning of the original word from which sodomite has been translated in the King James Version of the Bible? (one sentence)

26. In 1 Kings 14:24, did the Lord really say that the people were removed because of homosexuality? Explain by referring to Strong's Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible. (two to three sentences)
27. Compare and contrast the various renderings of 1 Kings 14:24 using these versions of the Bible: King James Version, Modern Language, New International Version, Revised Standard Version, New King James Version, and the Living Bible. Which translations are the most accurate, and which are the least accurate relative to translating the word qadeshim? Explain. (four to five sentences)
28. What is the difference between a Bible translation and a paraphrase? (two sentences)
29. a) What was the Asherah or “shame image” referred to in 2 Kings 23:7? (one sentence)
b) According to the Revised Standard version of the Bible, where was the Asherah that King Josiah destroyed? (one sentence)
30. a) According to Ezekiel, what were the sins of Sodom? (one sentence)
b) Were the “detestable practices” or “detestable things” referred to by Ezekiel acts between homosexuals in committed monogamous relationships? (one sentence)
31. a) What is idolatry? (one sentence)
b) Does the Lord God Almighty condemn idolatry? (one sentence)
c) Why? Use scriptural references to back up your statements. (two to three sentences)
32. a) When Christ Jesus referred to Sodom, what is the context? (two sentences)
b) What did Jesus have to say about homosexuality in the Bible? (one sentence)

33. a) What are the origins of the words malakoi and arsenokoitai? (one sentence)
b) What are their probable meanings? (two to three sentences)
34. a) In what way does St. Jerome's Latin Vulgate translation of the Bible — published circa 405 A.D. — help us to understand the meaning of malakoi? (one sentence)
b) Who were the effeminati and molles? (one sentence)
35. Do the words malakoi and arsenokoitai refer to modern-day Christian homosexuals? Why or why not? (two to three sentences)
36. What kinds of male-male sex was the Apostle Paul knowledgeable of in his day? (i.e., What kinds of male-male sex existed in Greco-Roman societies?) (three to four sentences)
37. What is the context of Romans 1:18-32? (two to three sentences)
38. What kind of idolatry existed during the Apostle Paul's time? (one sentence)
39. What is lust? (two sentences)
40. a) In what way does the Bible address same-sex behaviors? (one sentence)
b) Does the Bible condemn committed monogamous relationships between homosexuals? (one sentence)

Chapter Three Questions

41. What is (the) Torah or the Pentateuch? (one sentence)
42. Where in the Bible is the Law found? (one sentence)
43. Find twelve examples of prohibitions in Leviticus that Christians regularly break. Include scriptural references. (Create a list with

- related scriptural references.)
44. **Do the laws of Leviticus appertain to Christians? (two sentences)**
 45. **Why were Levitical Laws laid down? (two sentences)**
 46. **What did Christ Jesus say was the “sum” of the Law? (one sentence)**
 47. **When Jesus spoke of his fulfilling the Law, what did he mean? (two sentences)**
 48. **a) What must we have in order to please the Lord? (one word)**
b) Who is its author, finisher, and perfecter? (one word)
 49. **Are Christians supposed to live according to Levitical Laws? Explain. (two to three sentences)**
 50. **What is the danger of using Levitical Law in assessing or judging others? (two to three sentences)**
 51. **Did Christ Jesus ever break Levitical Law? Explain with examples. (three to four sentences)**
 52. **How was Molech worshiped? (one to two sentences)**
 53. **What important link exists between 1 Kings 14:24 and Leviticus 18:24? (two to three sentences)**
 54. **Considering the link that exists between 1 Kings 14:24 and Leviticus 18:24, as well as the lead-in of Leviticus 18:21, what is the context of Leviticus 18:22 and 18:23? (three to four sentences)**
 55. **a) According to The Expositor’s Bible, what is the context for the prohibition against male-male sex in Leviticus? (two to three sentences)**
b) How does Leviticus 18:1-5 support this view? (two to three sentences)

- 56. After reading Chapters 18, 19 and 20 of Leviticus, explain why there is a double reference to male-male sex in Leviticus 18:21 and Leviticus 20:13. (three to four sentences)**
- 57. Why did the Lord God Almighty take such a seemingly hard-line stance against transvestitism? Is transvestitism per se morally wrong? (three sentences)**
- 58. Does the Lord God Almighty really care about hairlength or clothing type? Why or why not? (three to four sentences)**
- 59. In what way was castration used to honor fertility goddesses? (three to four sentences)**
- 60. Are males who accidentally lose both testes (testicles) really prevented from entering into the congregation of the Lord? Explain. (three to four sentences)**
- 61. In what ways are the contexts different for Deuteronomy 23:1 and Leviticus 21:20 relative to individuals missing a testis (testicle) or testes (testicles)? (three to four sentences)**
- 62. Define prototype and anomaly and discuss how eunuchs might be considered ancient prototypes for modern homosexuals. Be sure to include references to Leviticus 21:20, Deuteronomy 23:1, Isaiah 56:3 and Acts 8:26-40 in your discussion. (approximately 250 words)**
- 63. In what ways are homosexuals physiologic “eunuchs”? (three to four sentences)**
- 64. Referring to Isaiah 56, why might Christian homosexuals have “a better name” in heaven? (In other words, why might oppressed people who are faithful to Jesus Christ receive a greater reward in heaven?) (three to four sentences)**
- 65. What might be the significance of the churches of Smyrna (Revelation 2:8-11) and Philadelphia (Revelation 3:7-13) in**

- relationship to the Christian gay community? (three to four sentences)
66. What might be the significance of John 16:1-4 to the Christian gay community? (three to four sentences)
67. Was Christ Jesus himself cursed by the letter of the Law of Moses? Use scriptural references in your answer. (three to four sentences)
68. How does 1 Corinthians 1:27-29 relate to the issue of homosexuality? How can these verses help to solve the issue of condemnation of homosexuals once and for all? (three to four sentences)
69. Who can tell the Lord God Almighty to whom He should extend His mercy and grace? (one sentence)
70. How does Acts 10:15 relate to Christian homosexuals? (two to three sentences)
71. How could you use Romans 5:1 and 8:33, 1 Corinthians 6:11, Galatians 2:16-17, and Titus 3:7 to help someone who wants to justify his or her homosexuality to family members or friends? (four to five sentences)

Chapter Four Questions

72. What does Scripture tell us to do when someone has sinned or trespassed against us? Why is this especially important to the Christian homosexual? (four to five sentences)
73. According to 1 John 4:18, why should homosexuals not be afraid of their sexual orientation? (one to two sentences)
74. What is sexual immorality? (one sentence)

75. What is serial monogamy? (one sentence)
76. What are the spiritual and sexual responsibilities of both heterosexuals and homosexuals? (two to three sentences)
77. How can you honor God with your body? (two sentences)
78. Why should homosexuals be encouraged to have holy unions? (three to four sentences)
79. Discuss what homosexuals have in common with Christ Jesus? (answer length will vary)
80. What is restoration and how does it relate to Christian heterosexuals and homosexuals? (three to four sentences)
81.
 - a) Map out a strategy you might use to share the gospel with nonchristian homosexuals. (answer format and length may vary)
 - b) How would you respond to those individuals who express that homosexual Christians are “self-loathing freaks seeking acceptance from people who hate them.” (approximately 250 words)
82. Create an outline of topics with scriptural references that you can use to help minister to hurting homosexuals who, though they have accepted Christ, believe that He has not accepted their sexual orientation. (2 page outline)
83. Do you have any additional questions that have been left unanswered by this book? Please Email your questions to Dr. Pearson and he will be pleased to respond: DrJPearson@aol.com or drjosephadampearson@yahoo.com

God Bless you as you continue to seek our Lord's Will for your life!

P.S. The chapter questions in Appendix B can be useful for small or large group discussion when participants have read the chapter(s).

Appendix C

Fast Facts for Distribution Purposes

For the purpose of mass distribution, the following six pages can be printed as three separate one page documents with each document printed back-to-back (which is to say, two-sided).

When photocopying the following three documents entitled *Fast Facts*, no alterations may be made with the exception of removing the book page number in the center of the footer from each page.

Fast Facts

About Christianity and Homosexuality

by Rev. Joseph Adam Pearson, Ph.D.
President, Christ Evangelical Bible Institute

Question

How do you reconcile your Christian beliefs with the passages from the Bible, which relate to homosexual practices?

Answer

First, I make a distinction between “same-sex behaviors” and “homosexual practices.” Practices between people of a homosexual orientation are different from same-sex activities that may occur between people of unresolved sexual orientation. I write “unresolved” not to describe internal conflict or how the people view themselves but, rather, to describe that it is indeterminate within the Bible whether the behaviors often used to condemn homosexuals are really between homosexuals as opposed to obligate heterosexuals and/or people involved in ambisexual activity (“ambisexual” here referring to a complete indifference to the gender and/or sexual identity of a sexual partner).

With that said, I also turn to historical and literary contexts, Hebrew and Greek etymologies (i.e., word origins), and hermeneutics to properly divide the word of truth.

The often-quoted story of Sodom in Genesis, Chapter 19 is a story of intended brutal group rape and not a story of homosexuals who are involved in a committed, covenant-based, lifelong monogamous relationship.

The Levitical reference in Chapter 18 is properly understood within its historical and literary contexts. Verse 3 of that Chapter clearly states that the children of Israel were to avoid the practices of the Egyptians and the Canaanites, for which practices the Lord was “going to cast out the nations before them” (verse 24) — which practices are more specifically referred to in 1 Kings 14:24 as the practices of the qadeshim (the male temple cult prostitutes who served as religious functionaries in the worship of both male and female fertility pagan gods and goddesses). “Qadeshim” was translated as “sodomites” in the 1611 edition of the King James Version of the Holy Bible and, hence, has been assumed (erroneously so) to refer to modern-day homosexuals.

The Apostle Paul uses the Greek words malakoi and arsenokoitai in 1 Corinthians 6:9. Malakoi in this verse has a pejorative slang meaning that St. Jerome translated into the Latin cognate as “molles.” “Molles” is a Latin word that is a synonym to “effeminati,” which word St. Jerome used to translate the Hebrew word qadeshim into Latin. Both “effeminati” and “molles” are referring to the transvestite male temple cult prostitutes, who served in the sexual “worship” of various Canaanite fertility gods and goddesses,

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including Baal, Molech and Ashtoreth (later known as Ishtar and Astarte) as well as the Greek and Roman fertility goddesses Cybele, Magna Mater, Anaitis, Hecate, Artemis, and Aphrodite. “Arsenokoitai” is a coined Greek word that St. Jerome translates into Latin as “concupitores masculorum,” which literally means, “the bought [i.e., ‘paid for’] male sex slaves of men.” So, St. Paul was not referring to homosexuals joined in holy union but people who were involved in idolatrous and/or prostitutional sexual activity.

Chapter One of Romans is referring to same-sex activity in temple cult bath houses and other common areas that involved idolatrous pagan worshipers rather than homosexuals per se. The use of the Greek word “phusiken” that is often translated as “natural” also means “instinctual,” which brings forth a whole other discussion about biology, hormones, embryonic and fetal development, brain morphology and physiology, and cognitive and developmental psychology as they relate to, and influence, gender identity and sexual orientation.

Ironically, the “strange flesh” reference in Jude 7 (KJV) is translated from the Greek words “heteros sarkos.” I write “ironically,” because if one wanted to strain out gnats and swallow camels, one could write a scholarly treatise on how this is referring to heterosexuals (it’s really not). Though many would like to make this a same sex issue, it is clearly referring to the different kind of “flesh” of the angels that the men of Sodom wanted to rape.

All of what I have written is more completely explained in the three and one-half hour video tape series of my seminar and workshop, entitled “Christianity and Homosexuality Reconciled!” as well as more completely explicated in the following publications that I have written:

1. Christianity and Homosexuality Reconciled by Joseph Adam Pearson, Ph.D.

This is available as a free 70,000 word E-book (roughly equivalent to 230 pages) at <http://www.cebiaz.com/book.pdf> and <http://www.dr-joseph-adam-pearson.com>

It also serves as the textbook for the course by the same name that is offered through Christ Evangelical Bible Institute.

2. Do Homosexuals Need to be Healed of their Homosexuality? By Joseph Adam Pearson, Ph.D.

This is available as a free E-booklet at <http://www.cebiaz.com/healed-english.pdf>

It also serves as a free Christian tract and, as such, is most often used as a witnessing tool in the GLBT community.

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1875 North Wozniak Road
Michigan City, Indiana 46360
(219) 229-4055

Fast Facts

The Bible and the Transgendered

by Rev. Joseph Adam Pearson, Ph.D.
President, Christ Evangelical Bible Institute

The most often quoted Biblical quotations used against exceptions to gender norms include:

So God created man [i.e., humanity] in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them. Genesis 1:27 NIV
[brackets mine]

God blessed them and said to them, “Be fruitful and increase in number [i.e., reproduce and multiply], fill the earth and subdue it ... Genesis 1:28 NIV [brackets mine]

To be sure, the above passages express the general rule but are not universal or absolute. Exceptions to this general rule are found both in nature and in Scripture itself.

From a biological standpoint, the presence or absence of genitals is a state of nature; and gender is a state of mind, which state is ultimately responsible for an individual’s instincts. If you think that the transgendered are perversions of nature, then you have made “male and female” an absolute or universal law, which law is contradictory to the full spectrum of what occurs in nature. Indeed, such an absolute fails to take into consideration the myriad departures in nature that deviate from the norm (norm defined here as “that which occurs most frequently”).

Such an absolute also fails to take into consideration spiritual law, which states that in Christ “there is neither male nor female.” (Galatians 3:28) Spiritually speaking, God does not discriminate using gender or sexual distinctions. Certainly, in heaven such distinctions do not exist, for Christ Jesus said:

At the resurrection people will neither marry nor be given in marriage; they will be like the angels in heaven. Matthew 22:30 (NIV)

True science does not contradict pure religion nor does pure religion contradict true science. True science shows that there are exceptions to the so-called absolute scriptural rule of “male and female” (Genesis 1:27) in the form of intersexuals (i.e., individuals whose physical gender status is somewhat ambiguous or uncertain); and, pure religion shows that there are exceptions to that rule in the form of eunuchs — of whom, Christ Jesus said, “some [are] born that way.” (Matthew 19:12) In other words, intersexuals serve as biological prototypes for the transgendered and eunuchs serve as scriptural prototypes for them. Thus, God accounts for exceptions to the general rule of “male and female he created them,” both naturally and scripturally.

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Holy Scripture not only acknowledges that there are exceptions to the rule of anatomic males and females, Holy Scripture also acknowledges that there are exceptions to the directive for them to reproduce (i.e., “be fruitful and multiply”). If anatomic males and females were a universal law, and reproduction was an absolute, God would not have consoled eunuchs as he does in Isaiah 56:3b-5:

{3} And let not any eunuch complain, “I am only a dry tree” [“dry tree” here connoting the inability to reproduce]. {4} For this is what the LORD says: “To the eunuchs who keep my Sabbaths, who choose what pleases me and hold fast to my covenant — {5} to them I will give within my temple and its walls a memorial and a name better than sons and daughters [“sons and daughters” here referring to those who do reproduce]; I will give them an everlasting name [and, then, God shows his great sense of humor through *double entendre*] that will not be cut off.” Isaiah 56:3-5 NIV [brackets mine]

So, why the seemingly hardline stance by God when He states:

A woman must not wear men’s clothing, nor a man wear women’s clothing, for the LORD your God detests [“abhors”] anyone who does this.
Deuteronomy 22:5 NIV [brackets mine]

He that is wounded in the stones [“testicles”] or has his privy member [“penis”] cut off, shall not enter into the congregation of the LORD.
Deuteronomy 23:1 KJV [brackets mine]

These previous verses were written partly because idolatrous temple practices involved in the cult worship of fertility goddesses included castrated young male prostitutes dressed up as women to emulate the feminine form of their “idol” as well as to attract and better satisfy the heterosexual procurers of their ritualistic sexual “sacrifices.” So, transvestitism (i.e., “cross-dressing”) in itself is not bad; it was the context in biblical antiquity that was evil; it was the intent that was bad.

Finally, whenever we are tempted to judge another on the basis of his or her apparel, we need to remind ourselves that “all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ.” (Galatians 3:27 NIV) In other words, in the reality of God, when we accept the Lord Jesus Christ as our personal Savior, we are “dressed” in Him. We also need to remember that in heaven we will be clothed in His glory! Truly, God cares not one whit about how we are dressed other than that we are dressed appropriately for inclement weather or that we are dressed modestly. (God is like that, you know.)

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Fast Facts

About Holy Unions

by Rev. Joseph Adam Pearson, Ph.D.
President, Christ Evangelical Bible Institute

Hindering marriage, or holy unions, between homosexuals contributes to immorality and not vice versa.

During slavery, because Blacks were prevented from legally marrying in the slave states, many participated in a ceremony of "jumping the broom" to signify that they were mates to one another. Even some of the more benevolent slave masters attended these ceremonies. However, the "marriage" ceremony generally consisted of the intended partners merely jumping over a broom. Was this ideal? No, of course not. Why? There were no vows exchanged.

To be sure, when laws prevent marriage, we do what we can do in order to present ourselves to each other and to signal that we are committed to one another. However, it is not sufficient either to just jump a broom or simply rent a U-haul and move in together. Scripture teaches that:

Marriage should be honored by all, and the marriage bed kept pure, for God will judge the adulterer and all the sexually immoral. Hebrews 13:4 NIV [underlining mine]

Marriage specifically involves an exchange of vows between two intended spousal partners who desire to live in a committed lifelong monogamous relationship with one another in the sight of God. For those who might say that holy unions between two people of the same sex should not be performed where they are not legal, I would respond that the laws of God are higher than the laws of man. In other words, it is God who desires that we should marry in order to escape sexual immorality. (Please read 1 Corinthians, Ch. 7.) Consequently, marriages between homosexuals should not be hindered. Jesus said, "what therefore God has joined together, let not man put asunder." (Matthew 19:6b NIV)

Scripture teaches that sexual intimacy between two people seals the vows that they have made between them "so they are no longer two but one flesh." (Matthew 19:6a NIV) If sexual intimacy takes place without the exchange of vows, then the potential for all sorts of problems is set up:

Do you not know that one who unites with a prostitute is one body with [him or] her? For "The two [who join themselves sexually]," [God] says, "will become one flesh." 1 Corinthians 6:16 ML [brackets mine]

Joining oneself to nonspousal bedpartners produces all sorts of unhealthy natural consequences such as shared sexual addictions, shared emotional instabilities, and shared sexually transmitted diseases. Furthermore, Scripture is clear that God is against fornication (i.e., sex outside of marriage).

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Because marriage (holy union) is God's ideal, homosexuals who profess love for one another should exchange vows. With the exchange of vows comes rights, responsibilities, expectations, and trust that honor the love that two people share. That is why marriage should be honored by all, both homosexuals and heterosexuals alike.

When I was Senior Pastor of Healing Waters Ministries in Tempe, Arizona from 1998 to 2007, if two people came to me to perform a holy union, I counseled them over a period of time and helped them determine their answers to the following:

1. Have both partners accepted the Lord Jesus Christ as their personal Savior?
2. Is the couple seeking to make the relationship permanent through lifelong commitment?
3. Is the couple willing to stay together, and remain faithful to one another, during extended periods of sickness or unemployment until death separates them?
4. Do the partners have a long term history of mutual respect?
5. Have the partners disclosed to each other their respective income, assets, liabilities and obligations?
6. Is each partner willing to completely share his or her income and assets with the other; and, is each partner willing to jointly assume the debts, liabilities, and obligations of the other?
7. Is the couple willing to demonstrate their commitment legally through joint ownership of property, shared banking and checking accounts, medical powers of attorney, and naming each other as beneficiaries in wills and on insurance policies?
8. Is the couple willing to state their commitments to one another in the form of written and/or spoken vows and promises?
9. Is the couple willing to state what would make their commitment to one another null and void?

If the answer to any one of the previous questions is "no," then I will not perform the ceremony until such time as each answer is genuinely "yes." Otherwise, the couple would be unequally yoked together or their relationship based on false assumptions, and their partnership would be heading in the wrong direction.

May our Lord Jesus bless you as you jointly seek His Will for your lives!

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Afterword

A Message from Jesus Christ To Homosexual Christians and Transgendered Christians

Though members of My Church have rejected you, I have not rejected you! Though you have been persecuted by members of My Church, I ask that you forgive them for their trespass against you.

Since you have accepted Me as your Savior, Lord and Sovereign King, then reflect Me in all your daily social and sexual attitudes and behaviors!

**Hold tightly to the faith and righteousness you have in Me, for I am returning soon. At that time, all things wrong will be set aright.
WATCH AND PRAY!**