

The background of the entire page is a series of diagonal stripes in the colors of a rainbow, from purple at the bottom left to red at the top right. The stripes are slightly blurred and overlap each other.

Dispelling the Myth

**Exploring A Fresh View Of What
The Scriptures Say About Homosexuality**

**A Biblical Perspective
Compiled and Edited by Rev. Bob Ellis**

**Published by Logos Ministries
Irving Texas**

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ABOUT LOGOS MINISTRIES--USING THIS ARTICLE

Welcome to "Dispelling the Myth". Our purpose is to discover through the use of the fundamental rules of biblical interpretation, the truths of the teachings of Jesus Christ. "Dispelling the Myth" was conceived as an exegetical Bible study guide dealing with the traditional passages about homosexuality. Rev. Ellis has compiled and edited this information into this easy to read format. This article is an eye opening experience as it relates to the subject of homosexuality to the biblical text.

Logos Ministries comes from the Greek word *logos*₆₆, which is rendered in English as the word "Word." According to Saint John's Gospel, "In the beginning was the Word (*logos*₆₆) and the Word (*logos*₆₆) was with God and Word (*logos*₆₆) was God." One of the main goals of Logos Ministries is to recapture the true meanings of biblical terms, many have over time lost their original meaning. By doing this, it is our hope to begin understanding how these words were actually used in the time they were scribed. This will, in turn, help us all understand the true meanings of biblical passages that through inaccurate translations and even poorer interpretations have today adopted meanings never intended by the writers.

Definitions for words throughout the text areas of this article have been provided in the glossary pages at the end of this article. English, Hebrew and Greek words that are defined are in italics.

EDITOR'S NOTE

So many lives have been adversely affected by rampant *homophobia*¹⁸. It has been fueled unfortunately by a very vocal misguided few, who seem intent on representing the Gospel of Grace with condemnation. Parents have been separated from their children, brothers from their brothers, wives from husbands....and yet despite the tragedy of these broken relationships, broken hearts and sometimes the loss of life altogether, self-righteous hatred and disgust toward homosexuals continues. Surely the healing of all this brokenness lies not in hatred, but in love. "For God so loved the world that He gave His one and only Son, that *whoever*⁴³ believes in Him shall not perish, but have eternal life." Jesus did not stop there, but went on to say, "For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through Him. Whoever believes in Him is not condemned..."

A myth has grown up around the issue of homosexuality that for centuries has kept God's people in bondage to condemning and being condemned. But the message of grace is clearly "There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus, for the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has set you free from the law of sin and death." Those who believe in Jesus have been released from the continuous cycle of sin and its consequence, death. Now, we are free to love one another with the love of Christ, no strings attached. As Paul stated it, now we must "keep standing firm and do not be subject again to a yoke of slavery....." We have been set free to "through love serve one another." Those who have understood this, regardless of which side of the issue they stand on, have taken an important step toward embracing the true meaning of "GRACE", (God's unmerited favor to all); freely receiving it themselves and sharing it with every person along the way. Because of this, God causes them to "reign in life" through Jesus Christ (Romans 5:17).

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PURPOSE

Why Study Christianity and Homosexuality?

Jesus is Lord. As Christians, our behavior is subject to the Holy Word of God and all believers are accountable to the Lord. As His disciples, we demonstrate our love for Him through obedience to His commands (John 15:10). We must, therefore, understand what His commands are.

Our Mission: To Set The Captive Free! This task, left to us by the Lord himself, is the heart of our concern. The Scriptures declare that God has set us free from the Law; free to be who God created us to be; free to love him and each other (Galatians 5:1, 13-14), Jesus said that knowledge of the truth would bring freedom (John 8:32). The combination of love and truth brings about changed character enabling the maturation process in people; which is conformity to the image of Christ (Ephesians 4:13-15)

Standing By The Truth. We must share the truth with all who will listen. If challenged, we will be ready to give a defense for the truth of the hope we have (1 Peter 3:15)

Our Mission Defined. Before the return of Jesus for His bride, the church must return to its first love (Revelation 19:7). It is a love freely extended to all; as Jesus loved, so we must love one another. Much of the church has forgotten its primary responsibility to be the light of the world and instead is consumed with bringing discrimination and condemnation. Some have forgotten that no one comes to God the Father except those He invites (John 14:6); all who believe are joined to His family and in all its diversity, this family must learn to love (John 13:34-35).

Reshaping The Image. It is our responsibility to study and understand the truth and model it to the world through His church (2 Timothy 2:15). This modeling will reshape the image of homosexuality from the stereotype that has brought such condemnation to an understanding that God has made all of us and to all of us his grace is extended. Only then will freedom reign. We must seize the moment. It was for such a time as this that God has raised up those who live by the Spirit. The prevalence of the myth has kept misunderstanding in charge for centuries causing pain and suffering not only for gay people, but for their families and friends and everyone else. We now have the opportunity to break the curse and set many captives free (Esther 4:14). The captives are on both sides of the issue. Knowledge of the truth will loose the bonds and set us all free to love one another just as Christ has commanded us.

Biblical Perspective

The basis of the research contained in this pamphlet and all the conclusions and positions taken herein have at their center the understanding that the Bible, inspired by the Holy Spirit, is profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness; so that each person can be adequately equipped for every good work. It was written by men and no doubt influenced by women, appointed and anointed by God for a special purpose. Their stories testify about their encounters with the living God, the Almighty Creator of everything. Through them His character is revealed. Through them we learn about God's only Son, Jesus, through whom God redeemed the lost creation from sin that had separated mankind from Him; and He made it possible for all to come by faith and engage in a personal right standing relationship with Him. Through their testimonies we know that God has given us new life by way of regeneration and renewal (new birth) by the Holy Spirit.

This study's approach is *inductive*₂₃ by method. In doing this, the hope is to eliminate a great deal of assumption and traditional teaching. Every attempt not to bring pre-conceived ideas and beliefs which can only *prejudice*₃₃ the understanding of the Scriptures has been made. It is believed that through objectively letting the Scriptures speak for themselves through their original languages, we can reach the truth of these issues. The English *translations*₄₀ are at best "translations" where often meanings of words are sometimes lost or changed because the original text is not clearly understood or there is no comparable word in English to describe the *Hebrew*₁₇ or *Greek*₁₅ expression. In some translations, traditional points of view are perpetuated with what seems to be bias and a disregard for the clear text in the original language. Following these rules of interpretation, this study attempts to discover what the Bible is and is not saying about the subject of homosexuality.

The research and editing of this study is based on the *fundamental*₁₃ rules of interpretation of the Scriptures using *conservative*₇, *orthodox*₃₀ references and scholarly commentaries. *Strong's Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible* and *Thayer's Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament* were primarily used for the objective basis of this study. Other scholarly works are referenced and noted throughout the study.

The Bible itself combined with these other writings forms the basis of the hope that is within. Subjectively, let us listen to the witness of the Holy Spirit, who Jesus clearly taught would lead us into all truth. On Him we must rely heavily. All who want to come to a knowledge of the truth must lean on the witness of the Spirit Himself without whose counsel none of us could know any truth about God.

The online version of this article can be found on Mercy To All .NET (<http://mercytoall.net>)

SPIRIT-CONTROLLED BEHAVIOR

While this document hopes to prove to its readers that beyond a shadow of any doubt, God has made diversity in His creation including homosexual people, no amount of “logical” argument will convince those who have already made up their mind. It is, therefore, the recommended urging of the editor that each reader prayerfully investigate the contents herein; waiting on the Lord. It is the Holy Spirit who will reveal the loving character and nature of the Father to those who seek Him with their whole heart.

While in our flesh, as people, we are prone to argumentation in convincing those who would disagree with our position (whatever it may be). I believe, however, that the truth will never be uncovered through argument, but by the revelation of the Holy Spirit. Conversation about these matters can be helpful to some, but let us discuss the issues in a dialogue subject to the control of the Spirit; a demonstration of the fruits of the Spirit.

How to Have “Fruitful Discussions”

1. Above all else, demonstrate a sincere loving concern and consideration (with respect) toward everyone. Remember, your real enemy is not flesh and blood.
2. Let the joy of the Lord flow in your conversation. It is your strength.
3. Remember that Jesus has overcome the world and has given us his peace. Be completely calm, established on the foundation of the righteousness of God, not your own righteousness.
4. Be patient with those who disagree with your beliefs. Let them have their opinion. If they are blinded to the truth, its okay, because in the end, the truth will stand no matter what happens with your discussion.
5. One tactic of the enemy is to destroy his opponents with insults. We will instead destroy the arguments against us with kindness. Choose each word carefully.
6. Never lie. If you don't know something, say you don't know. Never condemn. Demonstrate how the goodness of God lives in your manner of living.
7. Do not hesitate to talk about the Lord's work of sanctification in your life. Your walk of faith needs to be clearly demonstrated to anyone and everyone who has eyes to see and ears to hear.
8. Approach every person with respect. Be firm about your belief, but gentle; presenting your position one step at a time allowing the Holy Spirit to do the convincing.
9. In all that you do be controlled by the Spirit. Do not grieve the Spirit through a lack of reliance on him. Remember the weapons of our warfare are not fleshly, but are divinely powerful to destroy the strongholds of the enemy and are able to demolish and pretension setup against the knowledge of God. Knowledge of the character of God is our greatest ally. The Holy Spirit will bring truth which will set free those in bondage. Regardless how things might appear, the truth will prevail to the end.

And be kind one to another, tender-hearted, forgiving each other, just as God in Christ also has forgiven you.--Ephesians 4:32

SODOM AND GOMORRAH

The traditional explanation for the supernatural destruction of the ancient cities of the plain, Sodom and Gomorrah in Genesis 19, has been God's displeasure and wrath against the sin of homosexuality. The tradition points to the "men of the city" who surrounded the house where two visitors had come to stay with Lot, Abraham's nephew. These visitors were supposed by the people to be men, but were actually angels sent by God to guide Lot and his family safely out of the city. By this traditional view, the men surrounding the house had come to have "sexual relations" with the visitors. For this, God poured out fire and brimstone to destroy the two cities where this repulsive and contemptible sin existed. Even now, the understood sin of Sodom, handed down to us through this traditional teaching, has taken the name *sodomy*³⁹.

Until recent archeological discoveries were made, the story of Sodom and Gomorrah was viewed by the scientific community with some skepticism. The area of their location was evidently fertile and the people who lived there, enjoyed a prosperity not shared by the surrounding areas which was evidently primarily desert wasteland. Under these circumstances, it is easy to understand how the people of the cities of the plain could become greedy *isolationists*²⁶, always suspicious of strangers. The world community of the time was small and was unified until the division of languages occurred at the tower of Babel. Travel between cities was very treacherous and most of the time, hotels were not available. Hospitality extended to sojourners was an established institution in the community of man. But the people of Sodom and Gomorrah, with all their abundance and wealth, were evidently suspicious and inhospitable toward strangers. There is strong biblical evidence that this is the true reason that God destroyed them.

Biblical Evidence

If homosexuality is the clear reason for God's judgment on Sodom and Gomorrah, why doesn't the writer of Genesis state it clearly as such? The prophet Ezekiel, on the other hand, clearly states the reason in the sixteenth chapter of his prophetic word, verses 49-50:

"Now this is 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. Therefore I did away with them as you have seen."

This passage says nothing about sexual acts of any kind as the reason for the destruction, but does specifically outline arrogance and a lack of concern for the needs of others as the reason. The passage teaches that inhospitable acts were the key reasons for God's judgment. Why is this explanation by Ezekiel disregarded?

Many would say that the *detestable*₁ things mentioned in the passage referred to sexual sins including homosexuality which is an *abomination*₁ to God. Proverbs 6:16-19 lists seven things that are particularly detestable to God:

"There are six things that the Lord hates, seven that are detestable to him: haughty eyes, a lying tongue, hands that shed innocent blood, a heart that devises wicked schemes, feet that are quick to rush into evil, a false witness who pours out lies and a man who stirs up dissension among brothers."

No where here do we see condemnation of sexual sin of any kind, much less homosexuality. This is not to say that homosexual acts were not occurring in Sodom or that they were acceptable to God. The incident outside

Lot's house (Genesis 19:1-10) clearly shows that the intentions of those gathered around the house were to have sexual relations with the "angels" supposed to be men. A loving act, however, was not intended, but in this case rape. This kind of treatment was not uncommon in ancient civilizations. It was a demonstrative way of showing power over enemies. But by itself, this cannot be the reason for the destruction of Sodom, since the Lord had already determined to destroy the city prior to the angels' visitation (Genesis 18).

In Jude 7, the writer says that the people of Sodom and Gomorrah had gone after "strange flesh". Some believe that this is referring to homosexuality. The translation "strange flesh" is from the Greek words *heteros*₆₃ *sarx*₇₃ (#2087 and #4561) meaning "different flesh". Had the writer wanted to refer to homosexual acts, it would have made more sense to use terms *homos*₆₄ *sarx*₇₃ (#3676 and #4571) meaning "same flesh". The Old Testament Pseudopigrapha suggests an alternative rendering of this verse might be that Jude was stating that "just like the wicked angels, the inhabitants of Sodom and Gomorrah left their first grace and gave themselves to idolatrous prostitution and the violent treatment of other people, so they have become an example by suffering the vengeance of eternal fire."

Jesus commented on the sin of Sodom indirectly (Matthew 10:14-15) when he gave his disciples instructions concerning their proper response to inhospitable acts toward them. He stated that "if anyone will not welcome you or listen to your words, shake off the dust of your feet when you leave that home or town. I tell you the truth, it will be more bearable for Sodom and Gomorrah on the day of judgment than for that town." Through this statement, the inference by contrast is clear: Jesus says that Sodom and Gomorrah were destroyed because of inhospitable acts.

The traditional interpretation of this story largely stems from the unfortunate translation of the word *enoshe*₄₉ (#582) in Genesis 19:4. Most versions say "men".

"Before they had gone to bed, all the men from every part of the city of Sodom - both young and old - surrounded the house"

The Hebrew word *enoshe*₄₉ is not gender specific but indicates mortals or people. The word *esh*₅₀ (#376) would have been used to mean "man" or *eshal*₅₁ (#802) to mean "woman" if gender specific terminology was meant. This mistranslation gives the impression that just the men of the city had surrounded Lot's house and the further impression that they were all homosexuals out to have sex with the angels. The word *enoshe*₄₉ is used in Genesis 17:23 with the word *zechar*₅₈ (#2145) meaning "male" demonstrates this point. The King James Version states it this way:

"Abraham took Ishmael and...every male among the men of Abraham's house..."

The question arises, what other kind of men are there but males? Abraham was selecting the males from among all the "people" on his household for circumcision. The more modern translations corrected Genesis 17:23 to indicate people (or in this case household), but for some reason did not make the same correction in Genesis 19:6.

The intentions of the people surrounding Lot's house were to *rape*₃₆ the visitors. Most people regard rape as an act of violence rather than a sexual act. As it would be illogical to condemn all heterosexual sexual acts simply because some people acted abusively, it is also illogical to bring condemnation to all homosexual acts when only some acted irresponsibly.

Women in the culture of the Old Testament were treated as property; to be used as their owners saw fit. Men, on the other hand, were to be given respect. Sexual violence against a man by another man was an all too common demonstration of dominance over another. Its purpose was to take away the dignity of the subdued; to humiliate the man through forced anal intercourse. This was carried out by men who were not necessarily homosexuals themselves. Compare with Judges 19.

Prostitutes were a common part of the religious fertility rituals in ancient times and no doubt were prevalent in Sodom and Gomorrah. A word used by many today to condemn homosexuals is the word Sodomite. Many use this term as a reference to those who lived in Sodom and supposing them to be homosexuals, have used this word synonymously with homosexual as a negative slam. The word, however, does not appear in the story of the destruction of Sodom. It is used six times in the Bible and never in connection with the story of Sodom and Gomorrah. It is the word *kawdashe*₅₂ (#6945). It refers to male temple cult prostitutes as in Deuteronomy 23:17. Their counter parts, *kedayshaw*₅₃ (#6948), the female temple cult prostitutes are also mentioned. These are not homosexuals. They are prostitutes who were active in the worship of the pagan fertility gods and goddesses of ancient Palestine, according to Dake's Annotated Reference Bible. The word *sodomite*₃₈ originated in the King James Version, but only in reference to these temple cult prostitutes. Later versions must have picked up the homosexual connotation from the traditional understanding and interpretation of what the sin of Sodom was, and have since been used to condemn homosexuality. But this conclusion is completely untrue and nonsensical.

These misinterpretations and the refusal by some biblical scholars to denounce such obvious mistranslations appear to be an attempt to keep homosexuality in general under condemnation. When faced with the evidence, many have turned a deaf ear and not given serious consideration to the possibility that the traditional interpretation may in fact be in error. This tradition is so strong that those having a different interpretation are often ostracized for their non-conformity. Standing for the truth on this issue could mean professional suicide for clerics looking for recognition and acceptance; and those in the spotlight already, are fearful of losing face and will not speak out either.

Is there no one who will stand up for the truth no matter what it appears to be? One thing is for sure, the truth will be the truth no matter how anyone might try to cover it up.

THE LAW OF MOSES

The first five books of the Old Testament are called the Pentateuch (literally 5 tools). They are traditionally attributed to Moses' authorship and contain the Law (*Torah*₅₆). The Law contains more than six hundred regulations governing everyday living for the Children of Israel. They cover everything from instructions on how to wear clothes and prepare ceremonial foods to laws concerning the observance of holy days and the prescribed punishments for certain crimes. The Law was specifically given to the ancient Israelites and was never intended to be the law for the Gentiles. In that sense, no one living today ever has been under the Law and there is no need for anyone to be under it now.

The Apostle Paul observed that the ones who have fallen away from grace (Galatians 5:4) are the ones who have put themselves under the Law. The belief that Christians need to be governed by the Law was perpetuated by a sect known as the *Judaizers*₂₇. The Law was given to show that the righteousness of God (right standing relationship) could not be obtained by legalistically keeping rules. It gave the people knowledge of sin (Romans 3:20) and demonstrated the impossibility of anyone being able to measure up and be accepted by God on the basis of keeping it.

The major source of condemnation today against homosexuality and other social moral issues, has come from those who have not fully grasped the significance of the law of Grace as opposed to the Law of Moses and their belief that homosexuality is a violation of God's Law. Nearly every argument against homosexuality has at its root the Law of Moses. They mistakenly believe that *sodomy*₃₉ is forbidden by the Law. This is not true. The word sodomy is a modern word, coined under the mistaken belief that Sodom was destroyed because of rampant homosexuality. The word sodomy does not appear in any of the main translations (KJV, RSV, NASB, or NIV). It has took on new meaning in the twentieth century referring to any sexual act other than copulation between a man and a woman who were married to each other. It varies from state to state in its legal definition. This variance illustrates one of the prime difficulties in understanding the Scripture in its original language. To understand and explain what the writer has written, one must understand the words the writer used as the writer understood them. Word meanings change over time and the unlearned can come away from passages with a total misunderstanding of the writer's meaning.

Leviticus 18:22 and 20:13 are the traditional condemnation passages against homosexual acts and appear in our modern English translations to be clear cut prohibitions. Some have said these passages would justify capital punishment of homosexuals; but would these same people also bring judgment against adulterers (Leviticus 20:10) and stone them to death? Following suite, would they also prescribe the death penalty for their stubborn and rebellious sons (Deuteronomy 21:18-21)? One thing is clear from Paul's teaching: anyone who puts themselves under any one point of the Law obligates themselves to keep the whole Law (Galatians 5:3) or they are guilty of violating the whole Law and are worthy of death.

In truth, it is uncertain what Leviticus 18:22 is saying. The literal transliteration reads:

“You must not sleep the sleep of a woman with a man; it is ritually impure.”

Some scholars believe this saying represents an *idiom*₂₀ that has lost its meaning over time due to cultural traditions of the era that have long since been forgotten. Dr. John Boswell makes a case in *Christianity, Social Tolerance and Homosexuality*, 1980, that this prohibition cannot be a blanket condemnation of homosexuality, because the writer uses the Hebrew word *toevah*₅₅ (#8441) referring to the act as being *detestable*₁ or an *abomination*₁. The Hebrews used special words to condemn specific wicked or abominable

misdeeds. If this passage had been referring to sexual misconduct, the writer would have instead of *toevah* used the word *zimmah*₅₉ (#2154).

The land was full of *idolatry*₂₁. The Palestinian god of the sun, *Baal*₄₇ and his consort, the fertility goddess *Ashtoreth*₄₆, were commonly worshipped in the area and the word *toevah* appears throughout the Law to denounce these idolatrous practices. But *zimmah* is used specifically wherever immoral acts such as prostitution or *rape*₃₆ are the subject. Conclusion: whatever *detestable*₁ act here is prohibited has something to do with *idolatry*₂₁.

In the New Testament, we find that Jesus said nothing we can identify clearly about homosexuality; but homosexual relationships in the Greco-Roman world were common place at the time of Jesus. Had these relationships been so very detestable to God, certainly Jesus would have commented on them. Surely Paul would have commented on them; and some believe he did. In our next section we will consider Paul's writings.

ROMANS 1:18-32

Of all the passages of Scripture in the Bible used to condemn homosexuality, the most frequently used is this one here in Romans. Some of the words used here have been distorted, but for the most part, the translations we have today appear to be faithful to the *Greek*₁₅ and accurate renderings of the text. The passage is clearly speaking of homosexual acts. This may at first appear to be an admission that homosexuality is not acceptable to God, but the context of the passage makes no such blanket condemnation. Street walkers are commonly seen in cities across America and Europe, soliciting their bodies for money. There is no blanket condemnation of heterosexuality as the result of the misbehavior of these sex workers. In the same way, homosexuality in general cannot be condemned on the basis of its abuse by some.

Examining the context of this passage reveals that Paul is exposing the practice of the pagan rites of fertility, common in Rome and throughout the known world of the time. Paul's concern (rather than a warning against homosexuals) was for the Christian's involvement in these fertility rites. In Corinth, where evidently a man was sleeping with his father's wife and all knew of it (1 Corinthians 5:1), but did nothing about it, Paul took authority, exposing him and requiring his expulsion. He must have had a similar concern that the Roman Gentile believers, who had formerly been actively involved in the temple cult fertility rites, might continue to do so. Rather than a blanket condemnation of homosexuality, this passage is a slam against the hypocritical Christians who were themselves continuing to participate in the temple cult orgies. The participants were not predominantly homosexuals, but heterosexuals participating in homosexual acts.

Paul describes the individuals who commonly participate in temple cult worship. They have some very distinct characteristics. First, they have rejected the knowledge of God (verse 20). Second, they do not glorify God or acknowledge his provision for them and their hearts and minds have become "darkened" (verse 21). Third, they have exchanged the glory of God for idolatry (verses 22-23). Fourth, they degrade one another through *promiscuous*₃₄ sexual acts (verse 24). Fifth, they have believed lies, serving created things and not the Creator (verse 25). Sixth, they have exchanged their own "natural" sexuality for the "unnatural" (verses 26-27). Seventh, they have depraved minds that promote unbridled lawlessness (verses 28-32). These are very specific characteristics and while there may be many who fit these descriptions today; these definitely do not describe the modern mainstream homosexual community and for sure do not even come close in describing those gay men and women who are believers, serving the Lord. The problem here is that many church-goers cannot see the difference between what Paul is describing here in Romans chapter 1 and committed loving relationships. There is a big difference.

In verse 26 and 27, translated to our English word "natural" is the Greek word *phusikos*₆₈ (#5446) which means *intrinsic*₂₄; that which is born or inherent. It does not describe something that is necessarily universally true, but intrinsic for the individual. What is intrinsic for one person is not necessarily intrinsic for the next person. For example, one person may be intrinsically tall (as height runs in his/her family) while another person may be intrinsically short. Both are intrinsically influenced, but not in the same way. Both are "natural" in their appearance but with opposite results. Those in this passage, involved in the fertility rites, were giving themselves over to do those things that were not natural (intrinsic) to themselves. Even the English word "nature" means that which is inborn or inherent to the individual. The assumption here which causes so much confusion is the belief that Paul was saying that "natural" refers to the heterosexual persuasion; that all humans are naturally heterosexual from birth. This assumption, based on the evidence of experience does not hold true.

A study on the incidence of homosexual orientations occurring in identical twins was done years ago at Johns-Hopkins University. In all the cases studied where one of the twins was homosexual, the other was also. More recently, in the July 26, 1993 issue of Time Magazine, the Science Editor describes recent findings that lean toward a genetic explanation for homosexuality. "This new work and the studies of the twins are two lines of evidence pointing in the same direction. But the DNA evidence is much stronger than the twins study", according to Simon LeVay, whose research on the human brain differences is widely accepted. Science is progressively confirming what many gay men and women have known all along, they were created that way.

When (and if) science finishes its work and proves genetic rationale for the incidence of homosexuality, this will, of course, not end discrimination. Much like racial prejudice, people will need to redefine their understanding of homosexuality to end the revulsion and hatred American culture has generated toward the gay community. As Christians, we must end this war against a segment of humanity, proclaiming God's love and acceptance rather than His rejection of anyone. This also represents a special call to gay Christians to set an example of integrity as a demonstration of the redemptive work of God in the gay community. This example is for believers and non-believers, whether they are gay or straight; to be a light in the darkness of prejudice and hate.

1 CORINTHIANS 6:9

Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Be not deceived: neither fornicators nor idolators, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind, nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God.

King James Version, 1611

The English translations have taken a great deal of liberty in this particular passage; translating three different words very carelessly. Some versions have taken two of the Greek words used here and combined them into the one word “homosexual”. This passage has become one of the more quoted clobber passages used against homosexuals. An attempt to perpetuate a view that the Apostle Paul could not possibly have had concerning gay people has forced itself into the meaning of these words. Assumption comes greatly into play in translating when little is known about the exact meanings of words. Meanings of words used in biblical texts are largely understood as the result of the word’s usage in other places. Using biblical and non-biblical sources as a reference point, the ancient languages can be understood through their repeated usage in authentic period documents. In other words, the more a term is used, the better we can understand its meaning.

Fornication

The King James Version, 1611, has assigned the word “fornicator” as the meaning for the Greek word *pornos*₇₂ (#4205) used in this passage. The word *fornication*₁₂ in the year 1611 meant “voluntary sexual intercourse between a man and an unmarried woman.” The word *pornos*, literally means “male prostitute”. Together with its counterpart *porne*₆₉ (#4204) which refers to female *prostitutes*₃₅ (*harlots*₁₆), both are derived from the root word *porneia*₇₀ (#4202) meaning “harlotry”. The more modern translations, such as the New International Version, 1978, use an even more indistinct term for this word, “sexual *immorality*₂₂”. This meaning has a much broader connotation and is way beyond the original meaning of the text. In his much used reference manual, Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament, 1979, J. H. Thayer admits that a much broader term “must be adopted in these passages”....because we have learned “how leniently converts from among the heathen regarded this vice and indulged in it”. In other words, he is telling us that we must modify the way we translate the Bible so that we can ensure a general condemnation of sexual acts outside of marriage regardless of what the text actually says. The New Testament writers did not put it just right, so we must help them through this correction. It is this lack of integrity in translation that makes it look as though a conspiracy of some kind has taken place in an attempt to deceive those of us who do not have access to the original documents and who do not fluently speak *Hebrew*₁₇ and *Greek*₁₅.

Effeminate

The second word *malakoi*₆₇ (#3120) is found in the New Testament only three times (Matthew 11:8, Luke 7:25, and 1 Corinthians 6:9). It is a homonym (having a double meaning) in the Greek much like words in English. An example is the word light. Its usage in a sentence determines its meaning whether it is in reference to heaviness or a source of illumination. In much the same way, *malakoi* literally means first “softness” as it applies to the feel of fine fabric. Secondly, the word is used to describe a character flaw, and in this case it means “weak willed” or “easily beguiled”. Our modern slang expression “softy” used to describe someone who is soft hearted, kind and easy to get along with seems closer to the meaning, except that it has

a positive connotation. But *malakoi* has something to do with a moral weakness in context. It is perhaps an inability by some to maintain moral integrity and be self-controlled because of the ineptitude of their convictions and the lusts of their heart. The word better fits the pattern we see in our modern culture to those with addictive personalities. *Addicts*₂ are controlled by their cravings such as drugs, alcohol or sex; a common problem in our culture. Translating this word to “addicts” would not only make more sense in the context, but would be in keeping with the meaning of the word. The Latin Vulgate, 405 AD, translated *malakoi* to the word “*mollis*” which has exactly the same meaning, but the word “*mollis*” became a slang expression that referred to men who wore silky refined clothing. This meaning explains why the King James translators in 1611 decided to use the word *effeminate*₉. In later translations, *malakoi* becomes “*Catamite*₅” which was a young boy slave used sexually by his master. Another uses the word *lecchouris*₂₈ (lecherous) and another *voluptuous*₄₁ and still another *sissies*₃₇. The multiple ways we see this word being translated is a testimony to the confusion of the translators and the disagreement between biblical scholars. It is evidence of an attempt to prejudice scripture against homosexuals.

Abusers of Themselves With Mankind

The third word, *arsenokoitai*₆₁ (#733) is used only twice in the New Testament (1 Corinthians 6:9 and 1 Timothy 1:10). Its true meaning is the most questionable of the three. If it refers to homosexuals, the question arises why Paul would have used such an obscure and questionable term when he could have used another much clearer term to describe what he really meant. The Greek culture was filled with homoerotic words used to describe various homosexual relationships, but instead he used a word that does not appear anywhere else in surviving Greek literature. The only two places this word is used anywhere is in these two passages. Paul coined this word. Transliterated, the word *arsenokoitai* means “man-active-bed”. It could mean a male prostitute who takes the active role sexually. Modern day male prostitutes are differentiated by their trade, either for women, *gigolos*₁₄ or for men, *hustlers*₁₉. Similarly, the Greeks also may have identified prostitutes by their trade. If Paul had wanted to condemn a group more inclined to be exclusively homosexual, he might have coined the term *arenokoitai*₆₀ (“man-passive-bed”) which would indicate a male prostitute who takes the passive role sexually.

The King James Version, 1611, avoids a direct translation of this word with the phrase “abusers of themselves with mankind”, but it is interesting to note that even though the word homosexual did not exist at the time and wasn’t even coined until the late 19th century, a word did exist in 1611 which if used by the King James translators would have left no question as to what they were talking about. This word is *invert*₂₅, which meant homosexual. But they did not use it. More in keeping with the context in both this passage and in 1st Timothy 1:10, a suggested better translation might be “rapist” since it has something to do with someone who is taking an aggressive active role in the sex act.

The following chart demonstrates how ridiculous and far-fetched some of the translations have gone with this passage. For instance, translating to “child *molester*₂₉” is completely ridiculous and “those with infamous habits” seems extremely vague. Some kind of male pervert is unquestionably referred to, but not homosexuals in general.

TRANSLATION	YEAR	RENDERED AS:	
Koine Greek	56	<i>malakoi</i> ₆₇	<i>arsenokoitai</i> ₆₁
Latin Vulgate	405	mollis	masculorum concubitores
Wyclif	1508	<i>lecchouris</i> ₂₈	synne of Sodom
Tyndale	1525	weaklings	abusers of themselves with mankynde
Reims-Douai	1609	<i>effeminate</i> ₉	liars with mankind
King James (Authorized Version)	1611	<i>effeminate</i> ₉	abusers of themselves with mankind
The Revised Version	1881	<i>effeminate</i> ₉	abusers of themselves with men
American Standard Version	1901	<i>effeminate</i> ₉	abusers of themselves with men
Revised Standard Version	1946	sexual <i>perverts</i> ₃₂	
Jerusalem Bible (French)	1955	<i>effeminate</i> ₉	people with infamous habits
Interlinear Greek-English New Testament	1958	<i>voluptuous</i> ₄₁ persons	<i>Sodomites</i> ₃₈
The Amplified Bible	1958	those who participate in homosexuality	
New American Standard Bible	1963	<i>effeminate</i> ₉	homosexuals
Today's English Version	1966	homosexual <i>perverts</i> ₃₂	
Jerusalem Bible (German)	1968	<i>Sissies</i> ₃₇	child <i>molesters</i> ₂₉
Jerusalem Bible (English)	1968	<i>Catamites</i> ₅	<i>Sodomites</i> ₃₈
The Living Bible	1971	homosexuals	
New International Version	1978	male <i>prostitutes</i> ₃₅	homosexual offenders

These obvious mistranslations do not exonerate the prevalent homosexual *promiscuous*₃₄ lifestyle, for clearly Paul's condemnation is against unbridled promiscuity in any form, homosexual or heterosexual. It is, therefore, the responsibility of gay Christians to redefine "gayness" as it relates to Spirit controlled Christian living; operating as new creatures before Jesus Christ who is Lord; setting an example to all unbelievers as a demonstration to everyone that they truly are the children of God.

Because those who are led by the Spirit of God are sons of God.--Romans 8:14

WHO ARE THE EUNUCHS?

Some have taken Jesus' statements in Matthew 19:9-12 about divorce and remarriage as an indication that he condemned homosexuality by omission, confirming that heterosexuality is the only "normal" relationship possible. On closer examination, it would seem that just the opposite is true. Jesus is talking about eunuchs and defines them as those who are unable (or unfit) to function in marriage for one of three reasons:

- They were born that way and so are intrinsically eunuchs.
- They were made to be eunuchs by other men.
- They made themselves eunuchs for the sake of the kingdom of heaven.

In our culture, the word eunuch is commonly understood to be a reference to *castrated*₁₀ males. The Hebrew word *saris*₅₄ (#5631) often translated to the English word eunuch, is used to refer to men, who sometimes for political reasons in some eastern cultures, were castrated to insure no threat through procreation. But this condition was not synonymous with eunuchry in general. Eunuchs were often trusted officials with great responsibility and political power. The Old Testament often uses the word chamberlains, court officials or officers when translating the word *saris* and can easily be missed when reading the English versions. This same meaning belongs to the Greek word *eunukos*₆₂ (#2135). Eunuchs were often in charge of harems; responsible for the protection and care of the wives of the king because they posed no threat sexually. They were overseers of the beauty treatments for the women to make them presentable to the king (Esther 2:3, 12-13). The Ethiopian Eunuch was the treasure keeper (Acts 8:27) for Queen Candace. Often Eunuchs were recognized for their spiritual sensitivity and wisdom and were chosen to advise the king. Daniel and the Hebrew children were eunuchs in the court of King Nebuchadnezzar.

Isaiah prophesied that Hezekiah's children would become eunuchs in the palace of the king of Babylon (2 Kings 20:16-18). This was fulfilled when Daniel and the three Hebrew children (Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego) who were described as "beautiful men" (Daniel 1:4), were presented as eunuchs to King Nebuchadnezzar's court. The chief of the king's eunuchs, Ashpenaz, gave "tender love" (Daniel 1:9) to Daniel. The Hebrew word used here is *checed*₄₈ (#2617), meaning affectionate love. The modern translations have watered this down significantly. *Checed* is used 250 times in the Old Testament and translated 174 times to "love", but for some reason when referring to Ashpenaz's relationship to Daniel, the New International Version says "favor and sympathy".

It is important to note and clarify that eunuchs and homosexuals are not synonymous terms. However, in Matthew 19:11, Jesus indicates that whoever the eunuchs are, they are that way because of the gift of God given to them. J. H. Thayer identifies them as being "(b) naturally incapacitated for marriage or begetting children." Sterility can certainly incapacitate a man from begetting children, but what can incapacitate one from marriage? Tom Horner in his book *Jonathan Loved David: Homosexuality In Biblical Times* indicates from his research that wherever eunuchs were present, there is the presence of overt homosexual activity, or at least a very strong possibility of it. James Tinny, the late founder of Faith Temple in Washington, D.C. taught that eunuchs who served as royal chamberlains must of necessity be emotionally or psychologically homosexual or they would not be trustworthy. A heterosexual man, even though he may be physically *emasculated*₁₀, would still have a heterosexual drive to caress and kiss.

Because of their incapacitation toward marriage for whatever reason, the Jews regarded eunuchs as cut-off from their heritage since children were seen as the only way of extending yourself passed this life. Isaiah 53:1-8 is the passage the Ethiopian Eunuch was reading when Philip joined him by direction of the Holy Spirit to

explain how he (the Messiah) could be cut-off with no descendants (verse 8). Jesus, therefore, was also a eunuch.

Eunuchs, however, who choose what pleases God and keep His covenant, have a promise from God, that He will give them a “name better than sons and daughters...an everlasting name that will not be cut-off” (Isaiah 56:4-5). This promise is for us who are set apart for God’s service as eunuchs ministering to the bride of Christ, His church. In this function, we are working toward readying the bride for the return of the bridegroom in order to present her spotless and without blemish, purified to love without hypocrisy.

WHO MAY BE SAVED?

The clear message to the gay community from the modern Church has been one of rejection. Gay people, like many other minorities or small eccentric groups, have been labeled as unacceptable to the kingdom of God. In the same way that the Jews considered Gentiles as unclean, gays have been treated as filthy; rubbish to be thrown out. Some have rejected this blanket statement and have attempted to reach out; understanding that Jesus' mission was not one of condemnation, but salvation. Even so, one Christian leader writes, "homosexuals are dogs." This terminology, he believes, is a slang expression used in scripture to refer to homosexuals. In his point of view, hate and *prejudice*³³ are justified. Terms like "family values" are used in such a way to exclude gay families; gays are presented as though they are people without any redeeming value. This makes it seem as if rejection is the only proper Christian response to homosexuals. But, nowhere in scripture can anyone justify hate as a proper response to homosexuals or anyone. All people are the creation of God. Instead, James says to treat all alike without discrimination (James 2:1-4).

The early Church, beginning from Jewish roots, had an *ethnocentric*¹¹ view of who they were to God and at first did not believe that any non-Jews had any part of God's family. This *bigotry*⁴ was clearly broken by an incident that occurred in Acts 10. This lengthy story tells how Cornelius, a Roman centurion and devout Gentile man, received the message of the gospel from Peter and subsequently the baptism of the Holy Spirit. After witnessing the event, Peter declared to the apostles and elders in Jerusalem when they questioned him about his actions in going into the house of the "uncircumcised", "who was I that I could stand in God's way?" (Acts 11:17). And later, Peter reiterated the conclusions drawn from the incident (Acts 15:8) that it is God who "knows the heart" and shows who he has chosen by giving them the Holy Spirit. This same message is still true today, that it is God who chooses and shows his choice by the giving of his Holy Spirit.

Paul's later clarification of the law of grace clearly says that God's free gift of grace (unmerited favor) is extended to all who by faith receive it (Romans 5:2). "For God so loved the world, that He gave His one and only Son, that *WHOEVER*⁴³ believes in Him shall not perish but have eternal life." (John 3:16) "Everyone who calls upon the name of the LORD shall be saved." (Joel 2:32) Paul teaches "there is no difference between Jew and Gentile, the same Lord is Lord of all and richly blesses all who call on Him, for everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved." (Romans 10:12-13) "All the Father gives me will come to me, and *WHOEVER* comes to me I will never drive away." (John 6:37) A person who is seeking God cannot even do so unless God draw him. So it is by God's invitation that anyone comes to Him. "No one can come to me unless the Father who sent me draws him, and I will raise him up at the last day." (John 6:44)

These important passages paint a picture of no matter what the Church's sins are: God's love is extended to *WHOEVER* will respond to His free gift of grace. Jesus did not come to bring condemnation to anyone, but so that the world through Him might be saved (John 3:17). Therefore, those who do not extend the free gift of God's unmerited favor to everyone as it was extended to them, are not abiding in the clear teaching of the New Testament. The witness of the Holy Spirit is all anyone needs (Romans 8:16) to come to the inward security of knowing who they really are: a child of God.

GLOSSARY

PART 1 ENGLISH DEFINITIONS

REF	WORD	DEFINITION
1	Abomination / Detestable	Differing Hebraic terms used in the Old Testament for this one English word describe specific areas of actions considered particularly detestable to God. Each Hebrew word used is unique, describing a specific behavior with varying degrees of abhorrence.
2	Addict	One who surrenders his/her will over to a behavior or substance habitually and becomes psychologically dependent on that behavior or substance.
3	Adultery	A violation of the covenant of marriage through sexual intercourse of one of the marriage partners with a third party.
4	Bigotry	Closed minded; intolerant and opinionated.
5	Catamite	A boy slave kept by a pederast.
6	Chamberlain	An attendant on a sovereign or lord in his bedchamber.
7	Conservative	Traditionally accepted methods of doctrinal interpretation.
8	Deductive (Reasoning)	A logical philosophical approach to reasoning beginning with universal truth to determine individual truth; from the general to the particulars; starting with the whole and reasoning to the part.
9	Effeminate	Having feminine qualities of softness or weakness. A person of over-refined mannerisms.
10	Emasculate (Castrate)	To deprive a man of virile or procreative power.
11	Ethnocentric	Regarding one's own group to be superior to others.
12	Fornication	Voluntary sexual intercourse between an unmarried woman and a man.
13	Fundamentalism	The belief system emphasizing the literal inerrancy of the Scriptures.
14	Gigolo	A male prostitute who caters to women.
15	Greek (Language)	Language of the Hellenes; dominant language of the world at the time of Christ due to the influence of Greek culture after the conquests of Alexander the Great. The Greek dialect "Koine" was the common language used in writing the New Testament.
16	Harlot	A woman who engages in promiscuous sexual intercourse for pay.
17	Hebrew (Language)	The primary Semitic language used in writing the Old Testament. It was the ancient language of the descendants of Abraham through Isaac and Jacob. Aramaic was also used in writing the Old Testament being a Hebraic derived dialect.
18	Homophobic	Having an irrational fear of homosexuality.
19	Hustler	A male prostitute who caters to men.
20	Idiom	A language or expression peculiar to a particular people or region.
21	Idolatry	The worship of a physical object as a god or an immoderate attachment or devotion to something other than God.
22	Immorality	Acts contrary to established standards of good behavior.
23	Inductive (Reasoning)	A logical philosophical approach to reasoning by determining universal truth beginning with individual truth; from the particulars to the general; starting with part and reasoning to the whole. Infamous Bad reputation or disgraceful.

24	Intrinsic	Belonging to the basic constitutional nature of something.
25	Invert	A homosexual. This word was coined prior to 1611, before the King James Version was published.
26	Isolationist	One who keeps to themselves by abstaining from political entanglements.
27	Judaizers	The early Christian Church being predominantly Jewish struggled over the issue of non-Jewish converts. At first it was thought that before becoming a Christian, one must first become a Jew, receiving circumcision. However, Peter was shown that God had accepted the Gentiles as they were and later Paul expounded on the doctrine of salvation by grace alone. The Jerusalem council upheld his teaching. Some continued to insist that the Law of Moses must be observed to the letter and became known as the party of the circumcision or Judaizers.
28	Lecchouris (Lecherous)	Given over to an inordinate indulgence of sexual activity.
29	Molester	One who makes annoying sexual advances, sometimes having injurious effect.
30	Orthodox	The conventional point of view as established by conservative doctrinal interpretation.
31	Pederast	An older man who keeps young boys as his sexual slave. This practice was common in the ancient world. Practitioners were not necessarily homosexuals.
32	Pervert	One given over to some form of extreme sexual abnormality.
33	Prejudice	A preconceived judgment or opinion based on insufficient knowledge or partial inconclusive evidence. An irrational attitude of hostility directed against an individual or group because of their adjudged inferior characteristics.
34	Promiscuous	Having multiple sexual partners without any commitments between them.
35	Prostitute	A person who engages in promiscuous sexual intercourse for pay.
36	Rape	Violent acts of a sexual nature performed by the force of an individual over another without their consent.
37	Sissies	Effeminate men or boys often thought of as cowards.
38	Sodomite	A male temple-cult prostitute. (This word has no relationship to homosexuality except by those who have mistakenly interpreted Genesis 18-19 as a story of male homosexual rape.)
39	Sodomy	Sexual intercourse between persons of the same sex; or sexual acts defined by cultural norms to be outside accepted moral practices.
40	Translation	A rendering from one language to another using cultural and textual word meanings.
41	Voluptuous	Full of delight and pleasure to the senses producing sexual arousal.
42	Vulgate	Latin version of the Bible authorized by the Roman Catholic Church in 405 AD.
43	Whoever	Anyone.
44	Whore	A woman who engages in promiscuous sexual intercourse for pay.
45	Whoremonger	A man who fornicates with whores.

PART 2 HEBREW DEFINITIONS

REF	WORD	DEFINITION
46	Ashtoreth (Asherah)	Canaanite mother-goddess of fertility, consort to Baal, god of the sun, but associated in the Old Testament with idolatrous worship using asherah poles which were wooden images of the goddess.
47	Baal	Canaanite god of the sun.
48	Checed	Lovingkindness (Strong's #2617) Used extensively in the Old Testament expressing a physical showing of affection through caressing or love-making.
49	Enoshe	Mankind. (Strong's #582) Refers to the human race, people, mortals in general.
50	Esh	Man (Strong's #376) A male person.
51	Eshal	Woman (Strong's #802) A female person.
52	Kawdashe	Male temple-prostitute (Strong's #6945) A male devotee by prostitution to licentious idolatry.
53	Keydashaw	Female temple-prostitute (Strong's #6948) A female devotee by prostitution to licentious idolatry.
54	Saris	Chamberlain (Strong's #5631) A eunuch trusted to guard the private possessions of a king or lord for whom they are employed. They are sometimes castrated to ensure the fidelity of their trust.
55	Toevah (Tobah)	Detestable or abominable (Strong's #8441) Something disgusting or abhorrent to God because of some kind of idolatrous involvement.
56	Torah (Tora)	The first five books of the Old Testament commonly known as the "pentateuch" (the five tools) often referred to as "the Law."
57	Yadah	To know (Strong's #3045) Knowing someone by way of recognition. Can mean anything from mere greeting to having sexual relations with someone.
58	Zechar	Male (Strong's #2145) Refers to the male gender, either animal or human.
59	Zimmah	Detestable or abominable (Strong's #2154) Literally meaning "a bad plan." Often used in the books of the Law to specifically characterize detestable acts that were sexually immoral.

PART 3 GREEK DEFINITIONS

REF	WORD	DEFINITION
60	Arenokoitai	A male prostitute who takes the passive role during the sex act. Transliterated it means "man-passive- bed."
61	Arsenokoitai	A male prostitute (Strong's #733) who takes the active role in the sex act. Transliterated it means "man-active-bed."
62	Eunukos	Chamberlain or bed-keeper (Strong's #2135) A trusted guardian in the service of a monarch incapacitated for marriage on the basis of intrinsic qualities, or by choice, or by emasculation. They were often powerful political officials or court officers.
63	Heteros	Different (Strong's #2087) Not the same.
64	Homos	Same (Strong's 3676) Similar to identical.
65	Koine	The common dialect of Greek used during the time of Jesus in the near eastern and Mediterranean lands. It was made common throughout the known world due to the conquests of Alexander the Great.
66	Logos	a word, speech, divine utterance, analogy.
67	Malakoi	Soft to the touch; Weak-willed (Strong's #3120) The feel of a fine fabric. When referring to the character of people it means moral weakness or unrestrained. The Latin rendering mollis has the exact same meaning. The Latin word became a slang expression at the time of Clement of Alexandria to describe certain male prostitutes who dressed themselves in finery, cropped their hair and sometimes castrated them-selves to maintain a youthful appearance and high voice. This meaning probably best explains why this term is often translated to "effeminate" in many English versions of the Bible.
68	Phusikos	Instinctive (Strong's #5446) Referring to that which one is naturally inclined to do instinctively or one's inherited physical appearance.
69	Porne	Female prostitute (Strong's #4204) A woman who engages in promiscuous sexual intercourse for pay.
70	Porneia	Harlotry (Strong's #4202) Promiscuous sexual acts with prostitutes.
71	Porneuo	To act the harlot (Strong's #4203) To engage in promiscuous sexual activity with a harlot.
72	Pornos	Male prostitute (Strong's #4205) A man who engages in promiscuous sexual intercourse for pay.
73	Sarx	Carnal (Strong's #4561) Specifically referring to flesh or skin, but in spiritual terms that which is in opposition to the spiritual; natural.