

Human Sexuality and the Sovereignty of God

What the Bible Actually Teaches About Homosexuality- Part 2

August 9, 2015

Leviticus 18

1 Then the Lord spoke to Moses, saying,

2 "Speak to the sons of Israel and say to them, 'I am the Lord your God.

3 'You shall not do what is done in the land of Egypt where you lived, nor are you to do what is done in the land of Canaan where I am bringing you; you shall not walk in their statutes.

4 'You are to perform My judgments and keep My statutes, to live in accord with them; I am the Lord your God.

5 'So you shall keep My statutes and My judgments, by which a man may live if he does them; I am the Lord.

6 'None of you shall approach any blood relative of his to uncover nakedness; I am the Lord.

7 'You shall not uncover the nakedness of your father, that is, the nakedness of your mother. She is your mother; you are not to uncover her nakedness.

8 'You shall not uncover the nakedness of your father's wife; it is your father's nakedness.

9 'The nakedness of your sister, *either* your father's daughter or your mother's daughter, whether born at home or born outside, their nakedness you shall not uncover.

10 'The nakedness of your son's daughter or your daughter's daughter, their nakedness you shall not uncover; for their nakedness is yours.

11 'The nakedness of your father's wife's daughter, born to your father, she is your sister, you shall not uncover her nakedness.

12 'You shall not uncover the nakedness of your father's sister; she is your father's blood relative.

13 'You shall not uncover the nakedness of your mother's sister, for she is your mother's blood relative.

14 'You shall not uncover the nakedness of your father's brother; you shall not approach his wife, she is your aunt.

15 'You shall not uncover the nakedness of your daughter-in-law; she is your son's wife, you shall not uncover her nakedness.

16 'You shall not uncover the nakedness of your brother's wife; it is your brother's nakedness.

17 'You shall not uncover the nakedness of a woman and of her daughter, nor shall you take her son's daughter or her daughter's daughter, to uncover her nakedness; they are blood relatives. It is lewdness.

18 'You shall not marry a woman in addition to her sister as a rival while she is alive, to uncover her nakedness.

19 'Also you shall not approach a woman to uncover her nakedness during her menstrual impurity.

20 'You shall not have intercourse with your neighbor's wife, to be defiled with her.

21 'You shall not give any of your offspring to offer them to Molech, nor shall you profane the name of your God; I am the Lord.

22 'You shall not lie with a male as one lies with a female; it is an abomination.

23 'Also you shall not have intercourse with any animal to be defiled with it, nor shall any woman stand before an animal to mate with it; it is a perversion.

24 'Do not defile yourselves by any of these things; for by all these the nations which I am casting out before you have become defiled.

25 'For the land has become defiled, therefore I have brought its punishment upon it, so the land has spewed out its inhabitants.

26 'But as for you, you are to keep My statutes and My judgments and shall not do any of these abominations, *neither* the native, nor the alien who sojourns among you

27 (for the men of the land who have been before you have done all these abominations, and the land has become defiled);

28 so that the land will not spew you out, should you defile it, as it has spewed out the nation which has been before you.

29 'For whoever does any of these abominations, those persons who do *so* shall be cut off from among their people.

30 'Thus you are to keep My charge, that you do not practice any of the abominable customs which have been practiced before you, so as not to defile yourselves with them; I am the Lord your God.'"

To the Glory of God

Now concerning the controversy of human sexuality that is raging in our nation right now, this Passage of God's Word is Ground Zero. And this morning I'm going to try, by God's help, to ask and answer two very important questions about what this Chapter says:

1. Exactly what activity is prohibited and condemned here?
2. Are these Words binding on New Testament Christians?

Now, this is the fifth installment of our series on "Human Sexuality and the Sovereignty of God", and next week I will discuss how to handle objections, like "Jesus never said anything about homosexuality." And in the previous three messages- we have covered a lot of ground. And today- I want to get into the *exegesis* of what the Holy Bible actually says about homosexuality so that we may have a Biblical understanding of this issue.

Now at some point between AD 64-68- the Apostle Peter wrote these words in **1Peter 1:15&16**:

15 but like the Holy One who called you, be holy yourselves also in all *your* behavior;

16 because it is written, "*YOU SHALL BE HOLY, FOR I AM HOLY.*"

And the Apostle was quoting three different verses from Leviticus where God Himself said that:

Leviticus 11:44&45

44 'For I am the Lord your God. Consecrate yourselves therefore, and be holy, for I am holy. And you shall not make yourselves unclean with any of the swarming things that swarm on the earth.

45 'For I am the Lord who brought you up from the land of Egypt to be your God; thus you shall be holy, for I am holy.'"

Leviticus 19:2

Speak to all the congregation of the sons of Israel and say to them, 'You shall be holy, for I the Lord your God am holy.

Leviticus 20:7

You shall consecrate yourselves therefore and be holy, for I am the Lord your God.

So the entire Book of Leviticus is about Holiness. The words “**holy**” and “**holiness**” are mentioned 87 times in this inspired Book. Everything that Israel understood about worship began with the fundamental premise that God Himself is Holy, and, therefore, those who follow Him must *also* strive for holiness.

And the issue of Holiness- in the two senses of God Himself being Holy and that those who follow after Him also striving for holiness- was transferred into the New Testament as well. You can't read very far into any of the 27 books of the New Testament and not see some wording or statement that *commands* and *expects* God's people- who were saved by Grace alone through Faith alone in the finished Work of Christ alone- to pursue Biblical Holiness *on purpose*.

And as I've told you many times, you will never stumble accidentally into holiness. Nobody trips and falls into holiness. You must *consciously* pursue holiness with resolute conviction or it will never occur in your life. And that means that you are consciously choosing “this” over “that”, you are consciously *not* doing “this” while you are doing “that”, and you were doing “that” on an *ongoing* basis in the Power of the Holy Spirit to the Glory of God.

And lest somebody has deceived you into thinking that holiness is somehow *optional* – as though *some* saved people pursue holiness while others- who are equally saved simply choose not to – let me tell you what the Bible says. The writer of **Hebrews** said this in **Hebrews 12:14**

Pursue peace with all men, and the sanctification without which no one will see the Lord.

... so here we see that if anybody plans on seeing God in Heaven- then they must *pursue* holiness or sanctification. And the truth is that sanctification or pursuing holiness is the “by-product” of *already having* the new Divine Nature that was given through the miracle of the New Birth. And so if a person is *not* manifesting this byproduct- at least in *some* way- there is no reason to believe that he is saved.

In other words- saved people do not ever sit on their "double-wides" but they are *busy*- rejecting sin in *all* its forms, and *embracing* Jesus Christ and *all* that goes with Him.

Now I have told you previously how that the word "Sanctification" was invented by the Church to try to explain what the Bible taught about pursuing holiness. The literal word should have been "Holification". And if I was alive back then I probably would have made that the word- but I wasn't, and so we are stuck with Sanctification- which literally means: "being made holy". And this is a huge part of Biblical Christianity. In fact, the ongoing pursuit of Biblical Holiness is one of the key ingredients that is grossly lacking with far too many in the modern church.

But it's not lacking with God. In fact, the very Purpose of God chastening us or disciplining us, or God exposing our weaknesses and *forcing* ongoing transformation upon us after we are saved- is so that we may share His Holiness with Him in Heaven. Please turn with me to read what the writer of Hebrews said about this in **Hebrews 12:4-11**

4 You have not yet resisted to the point of shedding blood in your striving against sin;

5 and you have forgotten the exhortation which is addressed to you as sons, "MY SON, DO NOT REGARD LIGHTLY THE DISCIPLINE OF THE LORD, NOR FAINT WHEN YOU ARE REPROVED BY HIM;

6 FOR THOSE WHOM THE LORD LOVES HE DISCIPLINES, AND HE SCOURGES EVERY SON WHOM HE RECEIVES."

7 It is for discipline that you endure; God deals with you as with sons; for what son is there whom *his* father does not discipline?

8 But if you are without discipline, of which all have become partakers, then you are illegitimate children and not sons.

9 Furthermore, we had earthly fathers to discipline us, and we respected them; shall we not much rather be subject to the Father of spirits, and live?

10 For they disciplined us for a short time as seemed best to them, but He *disciplines us* for *our* good, so that we may share His holiness.

11 All discipline for the moment seems not to be joyful, but sorrowful; yet to those who have been trained by it, afterwards it yields the peaceful fruit of righteousness.

So those who are *not* “**trained**” by God’s discipline in their lives are those who will *not* see the “**peaceful fruit of righteousness**” yielding in their lives.

But we must understand that the lack of holiness is not simply about losing some rewards in Heaven. It is about going to Heaven in the first place. Read verse 10 again with me:

For they [our earthly fathers- verse 9] **disciplined us for a short time as seemed best to them, but He *disciplines us for our* good, so that we may share His holiness.**

So holiness is a real big deal with God. And the two main ways that the Bible repeatedly and clearly teaches that we are to maintain godly purity on this earth is:

- ✓ With our money and possessions
- ✓ With our sexuality

The Bible in both the Old and New Testaments talks about these two issues in relation with purity of heart more than any other thing. And it is no coincidence that the Bible also teaches in both the Old and New Testaments that false teachers and heretics *always*, and in *all* cases, manifest ungodly behavior in these two areas as well.

Where there is no ongoing, deliberate pursuit of Biblical Holiness, either out of ignorance or as a result of being deceived by false teaching, there is almost *always*- excesses and abuses with money, possessions, and sexuality.

This nation just recently saw the largest and most widespread child sexual abuse scandal in the history of the world in the Roman religious system- which completely and utterly dismantled any moral authority that these people had. And sexual and financial abuse is common in the small, independent cults- where the spiritual leaders all claim to hear directly from God.

The entire concept of the Old Covenant was a holy people (the priests), with holy garments, and a holy land (Canaan), at a holy place (the tabernacle), using holy utensils and holy objects, celebrating holy days, living by a holy law, that they might be pleasing to a holy God as

a holy nation. And the Book of **Leviticus** was written so that people could see what that look like.

The entire second half of the entire Book- from Chapter 17 on- is called "The Holiness Code" because it details *how* the Israelites were to live as God's holy people. And **Leviticus 19:2** gives the underlying command and motivation:

Speak to all the congregation of the sons of Israel and say to them, 'You shall be holy, for I the Lord your God am holy.

Now **Leviticus 18** is about holiness as it relates to the family unit and sexual activity. And while this Chapter does *not* tell us everything we need to know about sex- it *does* give the basic rules:

- ✓ Sexual intimacy with blood relatives (Incest) is sinful (**Leviticus 18:6-27**)
- ✓ Being intimate with a rival wife (Polygamy) is sinful (**Leviticus 18:18**)
- ✓ Being intimate during menstrual cycles is sinful (**Leviticus 18:19**)
- ✓ Adultery is sinful (**Leviticus 18:20**)
- ✓ Killing our children (Abortion/Infanticide) is sinful (**Leviticus 18:21**)
- ✓ Being intimate with animals (Bestiality) is sinful (**Leviticus 18:23**)
- ✓ Being intimate with people of the same sex (Homosexuality) is sinful (**Leviticus 18:22**)

And in verses 24-30- God said that if His people became unclean by these things, they would be driven from the Land in the very same way that the nations before them had been spewed (vomited) out.

Now with all the talk that is going on today about "fairness" and "human rights" as it pertains to the normalization of sexual perversion and the Constitutionality of Homosexual Marriage- ultimately, all that really matters is what the Lord God has said.

And almost 1600 years before Jesus was born- the great lawgiver- Moses wrote these words in **Leviticus 18:22** in Hebrew which were translated first into Greek and then into Latin, and finally into English to read as:

You shall not lie with a male as one lies with a female; it is an abomination.

... where the Hebrew word *malakoi* was used here to describe the *forbidden* and condemned sexual union between two men- *in the same way* as a man has intimacy with a woman.

Now there are people today in the modern Church who want to try to confuse this issue by limiting *malakoi* to be defined as only sexual union between an adult and a boy, or the forcible rape of slave boys by their masters. And this is either true or it isn't. So let's find out.

So to clarify this issue- we must remember what God told Moses in verse 3 when He said:

You shall not do what is done in the land of Egypt where you lived, nor are you to do what is done in the land of Canaan where I am bringing you; you shall not walk in their statutes.

And then verses 4- 29 describe the evil acts of the Egyptians and the Canaanites with verse 30 re-emphasizing what He was talking about in the first place:

Thus you are to keep My charge, that you do not practice any of the abominable customs which have been practiced before you, so as not to defile yourselves with them; I am the Lord your God.

So God says here in verse 30 that the actions that are condemned and prohibited in verses 4-29 of **Leviticus 18** were two things:

1. **abominable customs**
2. **which have been practiced before you**

And a thorough examination of the sexual practices of both the Egyptians and the Canaanites back during that time period and before show us that indeed- homosexuality was common, and that long standing, monogamous, homosexual couples thrived under both of these pagan cultures.

And this is very important to know because one of the biggest charges levied by the people promoting the acceptance of homosexuality in our day is that neither Moses nor Paul knew anything about long

standing, monogamous, homosexual relationships during their lifetimes- which is simply not true.

Another charge that is made is that it is not homosexuality *itself* that is condemned here, but only homosexual sex with an *unwilling* partner. In other words several mainline religious organizations such as the United Churches of Christ, the Presbyterian Church USA, the Episcopal church USA, the Evangelical Lutheran Church, and others have all acquiesced and completely ignored 20 centuries of church history and 500 years of their own history to suggest that loving, monogamous, homosexual relationships were not in view in Moses' inspired writings.

In other words, these religious organizations all say that Moses, Jesus, and Paul, and the Christian Church and common sense and 2,000 years of history are all wrong, and that these people have suddenly discovered the truth about homosexuality that has somehow been hidden all these years.

But let us again return to sacred Scripture and interpret the Bible from the Bible itself. There are no less than seven deviant sexual practices that are condemned in **Leviticus 18**. And there are not *any* qualifications as to *any* of them. They are all condemned in their entirety. For example- we find no wording here that would make us think that incest might be acceptable to God if the family members were old enough to agree to it and called it "love". We see no hint where polygamy might be tolerable to the Almighty as long as we could white-wash it and say that it was the custom of that particular culture. There is nothing in **Leviticus 18** that would make any reasonable person think that adultery was acceptable under any circumstances. And murdering babies whether in the womb or already born is clearly forbidden by the Lord.

And strangely, most of these unbiblical religious organizations routinely condemn six out of the seven sexual practices listed in **Leviticus 18**- at least for now. The only exception that the people of these religious groups make at this time- is an exception for homosexuality. And we need to ask why that is. Why would they agree to forbid six out of the seven sexual practices? And on what basis do they issue that condemnation? Because, there is absolutely nothing- no hint, no caveat, no exception to the absolute condemnation of homosexuality in **Leviticus 18**- none. So we are left to say that these

religious organizations have all caved in to societal pressure and they have simply *abandoned* the Holy Bible, and have now put themselves into the same place as was the Church in Ephesus when Jesus told them this in **The Revelation 2**- turn there with me.

Revelation 2:12-16

12 "And to the angel of the church in Pergamum write: The One who has the sharp two-edged sword says this:

13 'I know where you dwell, where Satan's throne is; and you hold fast My name, and did not deny My faith even in the days of Antipas, My witness, My faithful one, who was killed among you, where Satan dwells.

14 'But I have a few things against you, because you have there some who hold the teaching of Balaam, who kept teaching Balak to put a stumbling block before the sons of Israel, to eat things sacrificed to idols and to commit *acts of immorality*.

15 'So you also have some who in the same way hold the teaching of the Nicolaitans.

16 'Therefore repent; or else I am coming to you quickly, and I will make war against them with the sword of My mouth.

Now it is interesting that the Church at Pergamum was rebuked by the Lord for holding to the teachings of two really bad heretics:

1. Balaam
2. The Nicolaitans

Now all of Balaam's exploits are recorded for us in **Numbers 22**. But his entire life is summarized in two different New Testament Books, **2Peter** and **Jude**, as these two Biblical writers were moved along by God the Holy Spirit to equate false teachers and heretics to Balaam. Listen to what Peter said about this in **2Peter 2:12-16**

12 But these, like unreasoning animals, born as creatures of instinct to be captured and killed, reviling where they have no knowledge, will in the destruction of those creatures also be destroyed,

13 suffering wrong as the wages of doing wrong. They count it a pleasure to revel in the daytime. They are stains and blemishes, reveling in their deceptions, as they carouse with you,

14 having eyes full of adultery that never cease from sin, enticing unstable souls, having a heart trained in greed, accursed children;
15 forsaking the right way, they have gone astray, having followed the way of Balaam, the *son* of Beor, who loved the wages of unrighteousness;
16 but he received a rebuke for his own transgression, *for* a mute donkey, speaking with a voice of a man, restrained the madness of the prophet.

In other words- the sin of Balaam was that he offered the gift of God for sale- a horrible abuse of financial propriety. And Jesus told the Church at Pergamum that they held to the teachings of Balaam. So we see that the Church at Pergamum was filled with sins related to money.

But then Jesus also said that they held the teachings of the Nicolaitans, too. So who were these people? The Nicolaitans were the group of people who were deceived by a man named Nicolas- who according to **The Acts 6** was one of the first deacons of the Christian Church. Now this isn't inspired- but Church History tells us that Nicolas went astray and left Christianity and began his own religious organization that was characterized with many sexual perversions. According to Bede- the 7th Century English monk- the followers of Nicolas were all intimate with Nicolas' wife¹ and according to Thomas Aquinas- Nicolas taught an evil form of homosexuality combined with polygamy.² The Church historian Eusebius said that the sect of the Nicolaitans was short lived.³

But once again we see the connection to both sexual and financial evil occurring in religious groups that do not have a strong Biblical foundation. The truth is that those groups that ignore or overrule the integrity of Scriptures soon descend into these kinds of terrible sins.

Now I have no objection to these people calling themselves Presbyterians or Lutherans or Episcopalians. I have a problem with these organizations calling themselves a "Church" because they're not. And so we have added this Statement to our Doctrinal Statement and By-laws:

¹ Bede, *Explanation of the Apocalypse*, 2.16

² Aquinas, *Suma Contra Gentiles* iii; 124

³ Eusebius, *Ecclesiastical History* 7.32.4, qtd. and tr. D. S. Wallace-Hadrill, 12; Wallace-Hadrill cites J. H. Newman, *The Arians of the Fourth Century* (1890), 262, in 12 n. 4.

We believe and teach that persons with current unbiblical sexual orientations and those who currently engage in any sexual perversion or misconduct are not morally qualified to be employed or hold positions of authority or leadership in this Church. They are, however, welcomed to attend the Church services, in the hope that God the Holy Spirit will bring conviction and/or Salvation to them. Those who have struggled with some areas of sexual impurity in the past may hold positions of leadership in the Church on a case by case basis under the loving approval and guidance of the Elder Board. Further- we do not acknowledge or recognize anyone who currently engages in and/or celebrates these Biblically prohibited sexual practices as being leaders or persons of authority in Christ's world-wide Church and we earnestly call on those organizations which have sexually impure persons in positions of authority and leadership to repent and to rescind the role of leadership of such persons.

The sin of homosexuality described in **Leviticus 18:22** and **20:13** is described in a way that harkens back to the Created Order. The Biblical text says *nothing* about an older man imposing himself upon a boy. It uses the generic language of "male", stipulating that a man shall not lie with a man as with a woman. And the phrase "**as with a woman**" is huge because it places the Divine Condemnation in context.

It is referring back to **Genesis 2** where God made the first woman from the side of the man that she might be his helper and his unique complement. Therefore, the *reason* for the prohibition against homosexual behavior in the Mosaic Law and the *reason* these prohibitions are stated so absolutely is because men were designed by God *on purpose* to have sex with their wives and *not* with another man. So the key consideration- which is really the only one mentioned in the verse- is the "gender" of those engaged in sexual activity.

And whether the participants of homosexual behavior were willing or "of age" is not mentioned anywhere. Therefore, the prohibition against homosexual behavior cannot, in any honest way, be reduced to victimization categories. After all, *both parties* were to receive the death penalty under the Mosaic Law.

However, in contradistinction to this- we see that God's Law, as given to Moses, prescribed absolutely *no* punishment for an innocent woman who was forcibly seized by a man. So if **Leviticus 18:22** was truly a question of homosexual rape- only the *aggressor* would have been punished. And yet we see that that was not the case. So we see that **Leviticus** is saying a whole lot more than merely condemning *unwanted*

same-sex behavior. It is condemning the act *itself*- especially when it *is* consensual.

Also in context, we see that the sexual behavior of God's people described in **Leviticus 18** is supposed to be carried out differently than the people of both Canaan and Egypt- whose sexual activity involved all seven of the forbidden practices.

Israel was called to be holy because God himself is holy. And as a holy nation, God's people were told repeatedly to be *different* from the surrounding people and their customs and their habits – *including* their sexual behavior. And that meant an absolute prohibition against homosexual behavior of every kind.

God's Divine Plan for sexual intimacy in the Garden was one man with one woman for one lifetime- not close relatives, not the wife of another man, not an animal, not more than one woman, not a child, and not another man. And the Pattern for holy behavior as it relates to human sexuality that we see in **Genesis** is the very same Pattern we see in the "Holiness Code" of **Leviticus**. And that is never changed.

So we see that the sin that is forbidden and condemned by God in **Leviticus 18:22** and in **Leviticus 20:13** is exactly what the Christian church has confessed for 2000 years. We've had it right all along; what Orthodox Christianity has taught all along in forbidding and condemning homosexuality is Biblical and correct.

So now the only question that remains is: "Is the Biblical prohibition of homosexuality in **Leviticus** still relevant to New Testament believers?" Does the Holiness Code of **Leviticus** still pertain to us today? And one of the best ways of understanding which *parts* of the Old Testament are still relevant to us is by understanding how those Commands and Prohibitions relate to the Person of Jesus Christ.

For example- Old Testament dietary and ceremonial Laws have been replaced by an infinitely superior method of worship whereby we now worship God in Spirit and in Truth. There is no New Testament Priesthood. The Bible teaches that all genuine believers are priests unto God. And we only have one High Priest – Who is the Lord Jesus Christ. Therefore, all religious organizations today that contain priests are in violation of New Testament Truth. The New Testament also teaches that at the very moment when John Baptist declared, "*Behold the Lamb of God!*" it was blasphemy to offer an animal in sacrifice to God.

The New Testament Epistles declare clearly that every creature of God is good for food and is to be enjoyed- even if it isn't very healthy to eat- because it is sanctified by the word of God and prayer. So while you certainly will not go to hell by eating pork and oysters –you just might get to Heaven a little faster.

The point is that the New Covenant is an infinitely *superior* Covenant that is based upon infinitely *superior* Promises made by an infinitely *superior* High Priest Who offered an infinitely *superior* Sacrifice. And so Commands and Prohibitions and Declarations about wearing clothes with two kinds of fabrics and charging interest on a loan and things of that nature no longer apply to us. And I would suggest to all of us that since we no longer live in a kingdom ruled by dictator but because we live in a Democratic Republic- that the Commands and Prohibitions and Declarations about how the Jews lived in that kingdom before Jesus was born are also not applicable to us either.

But morality has never changed. And morality has not changed because morality, true morality, biblical morality is based upon the Character and Nature of Almighty God- not the laws or the customs or the societies of Man. And so human sexuality has never changed. The propensity that depraved people have to sin against God with behavior that not only dishonors God but which ultimately destroys them is huge. Therefore, the Biblical Admonition to maintain sexual purity has not changed under the New Covenant.

But, when it comes to homosexual behavior- it appears that the Apostles actually doubled down. Because the men that God used to receive the radical new Revelation directly from heaven, articulate it, and establish Christianity upon the earth- taught much about holiness, and they quoted from **Leviticus** as the foundation of their teachings about holiness. Therefore, it would be ridiculous then for us to assume that this Old Testament Book should be thrown out or ignored in its entirety – including chapter 18- which details sexual morality.

In fact, the single most detailed and significant treatment of homosexuality found anywhere in the Bible is located in the very first chapter of the greatest letter ever written in the history of the world- Paul's **Epistle to the Romans**. **Romans 1** reinforces with crystal-clear clarity all that we have seen up to this point from the Old Testament-

namely- that homosexual behavior is an abominable sin and violation of God's created order.

So let us exegete the Apostle's argument in **Romans 1:18-32**- please go there with me- so that we may understand why he concludes that same sex activity-like idolatry-is Celestial High Treason to the Design of the Creator. Hear the Word of the Lord:

18 For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men who suppress the truth in unrighteousness,

19 because that which is known about God is evident within them; for God made it evident to them.

20 For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes, His eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly seen, being understood through what has been made, so that they are without excuse.

21 For even though they knew God, they did not honor Him as God or give thanks, but they became futile in their speculations, and their foolish heart was darkened.

22 Professing to be wise, they became fools,

23 and exchanged the glory of the incorruptible God for an image in the form of corruptible man and of birds and four-footed animals and crawling creatures.

24 Therefore God gave them over in the lusts of their hearts to impurity, so that their bodies would be dishonored among them.

25 For they exchanged the truth of God for a lie, and worshiped and served the creature rather than the Creator, who is blessed forever. Amen.

26 For this reason God gave them over to degrading passions; for their women exchanged the natural function for that which is unnatural,

27 and in the same way also the men abandoned the natural function of the woman and burned in their desire toward one another, men with men committing indecent acts and receiving in their own persons the due penalty of their error.

28 And just as they did not see fit to acknowledge God any longer, God gave them over to a depraved mind, to do those things which are not proper,

29 being filled with all unrighteousness, wickedness, greed, evil; full of envy, murder, strife, deceit, malice; *they are* gossips,

30 slanderers, haters of God, insolent, arrogant, boastful, inventors of evil, disobedient to parents,

**31 without understanding, untrustworthy, unloving, unmerciful;
32 and although they know the ordinance of God, that those who practice such things are worthy of death, they not only do the same, but also give hearty approval to those who practice them.**

Now the entire argument here in **Romans 1** is connected by a combination of two Divine Revelations- that on the surface *seem* to be contradictory:

- A. The Righteousness of God that judges all sin is revealed
- B. Through the saving Message of the Gospel

So the message of Salvation through repentance and faith in the finished Work of the Lord Jesus Christ is declared- while at the same time- the Wrath of God's revealed it through God's Punishment of ungodliness and unrighteousness. And both Revelations- the Divine Wrath of unrepentant rebels and the justification of repentant sinners- depends upon what Paul calls "knowledge".

We cannot be saved apart from this knowledge of the Gospel, nor will anyone be damned except they have some general knowledge of God that they have clearly seen through the created universe. The Bible declares that God is Good, and, therefore, this Good God never condemns the innocent or the ignorant.

And yet in verses 19 and 20 Paul writes this:

19 because that which is known about God is evident within them; for God made it evident to them.

20 For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes, His eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly seen, being understood through what has been made, so that they are without excuse.

Therefore, he concludes that no human on earth who lives in any nation under any culture is innocent because none are completely ignorant. In fact, what all people know very well are two of God's invisible attributes:

- ✓ His Eternal Power
- ✓ His Divine Nature

... so that they are without excuse.

Therefore, the Apostle Paul concludes that the Wrath of God *is already* revealed now and *will be* revealed on the Day of Judgment precisely because the people of the world suppress, put down, and exchange the Truth of God that they already know for a lie and they refuse to worship God in the way He desires and the way He deserves.

Paul then explains in greater detail just *how* the Truth of God has been suppressed in unrighteousness- resulting in what is called the Judgment of Abandonment. And Paul does this three separate times.

21 For even though they knew God, they did not honor Him as God or give thanks, but they became futile in their speculations, and their foolish heart was darkened.

22 Professing to be wise, they became fools,

23 and exchanged the glory of the incorruptible God for an image in the form of corruptible man and of birds and four-footed animals and crawling creatures.

Here we see the rebellion of unsaved men and exchanging the glory of the incorruptible God for idolatry. So rather than giving thanks to the God of heaven-the unredeemed of the world worship images and idols-resembling everything from other human beings to creeping things-and even things that are *not* visible-like power, money, and the approval of other people. The Bible declares in no uncertain terms that this kind of darkness comes from futile thinking and a foolish darkened heart.

24 Therefore God gave them over in the lusts of their hearts to impurity, so that their bodies would be dishonored among them.

25 For they exchanged the truth of God for a lie, and worshiped and served the creature rather than the Creator, who is blessed forever. Amen.

Here we see the results of what happens when ungodly men exchange the Truth of God for a lie. Here God "gave them over" in the many wicked lusts of their hearts to impurity. And after this we see God "giving sinners over" to ever increasing and progressive evil. So as I've told you before-this manifestation of sin is not only something for

which God is going to judge at some later time-it is *in itself* the Judgment.

Now the word translated here as “**impurity**” always refers to *sexual* impurity. So it is very clear that Paul was *not* referring to *ritualistic* impurity- as the leaders of some of these churches teach- but *moral* impurity- which is in context with the body of Paul’s teaching here- and in context with how he used this same word eight different times throughout all his Epistles.

**26 For this reason God gave them over to degrading passions; for their women exchanged the natural function for that which is unnatural,
27 and in the same way also the men abandoned the natural function of the woman and burned in their desire toward one another, men with men committing indecent acts and receiving in their own persons the due penalty of their error.**

The next step in the progression of sin is God handing unbelievers over to what he called “**degrading passions**”, or in other words the kinds of desires, passions, and lusts which not only dishonor God- but which also *degrade* and *belittle* the people engaged in them.

This leads to the third exchange- God giving these unrepentant rebels over to “unnatural functions”- or sexual behavior that is contrary to nature or in other words- contrary to the way God made them to be. This makes a clear that the apostle Paul intended to explain same- sex sexual intimacy as a very clear illustration of the idolatrous human impulse to turn away from God’s Order and Design.

Those who repeatedly, ongoingly, and purposefully suppress or exchange the Truth about God as He is clearly revealed in nature-also suppress the Truth about themselves- which is also clearly imprinted in nature as well. Homosexual practice is an example on a horizontal plane of all vertical rebellion against God.

Now it is very important that we understand this. Because the emphasis of this exchange makes it clear that Paul was thinking of homosexuality *in general* and *not* merely the “bad kind” of homosexuality as the Presbyterians and Episcopalians and Lutherans have said.

When the Apostle first wrote these words down- he used this word “ ἀρσενικοίτης, ου, ό”, which is the Koine Greek word “arsenokoitai”,

which literally means: “*men bedding men*”, and does *not* refer to the rape of little boys or slaves.

And not only does the word itself forbid us to agree with the liberal theologians-but the context does to. Paul speaks here of both parties being “**burned in their desire toward one another**” which would not be true if they were correct.

Some of the revisionists argue that Paul’s real problem was merely *excessive* sexual immorality. But the “ungodly” in Paul’s mind were those who though capable of heterosexual attraction became dissatisfied with their usual sexual activity, and lusted for and sought out homosexual encounters. And Paul says they did this for one reason:

... they did not see fit to acknowledge God any longer

Therefore, homosexual behavior is a sin, not according to who practices it, or by what motivation they seek it, but because the very act itself- is a “Truth suppressing exchange” and is contrary to God’s good Design. The word “**natural function**” in verse 27 does *not* refer to the state of our *desires*- but to the state of our *Design*. And the problem with the “**degrading passions**” in verse 27 was not its *intensity*- but that it corresponded to the “giving up” of man’s natural and normal sexual complementarity with women-as it committed “indecent acts” with other men.

The logic behind the Apostles use of the word “**unnatural**” to describe homosexual behavior translates to Greek words “*para physin*”, which is not only used here in inspired Scripture- but which was commonly used throughout the ancient world to *always* speak of deviant forms of sexual behavior-especially homosexuality.

But because the Apostle Paul refers repeatedly to the Creation Account recorded in Genesis-connection is clear, homosexual practice is sinful because it violates the Divine Design of the Owner and the Creator of the Universe. So according to Paul’s logic-men and women who engage in same-sex sexual behavior-even if it seems they are being true to their own feelings and desires-have suppressed God’s Truth in unrighteousness. They have exchanged the *fittedness* of male-female relations for those that are unnatural.

**28 And just as they did not see fit to acknowledge God any longer, God gave them over to a depraved mind, to do those things which are not proper,
29 being filled with all unrighteousness, wickedness, greed, evil; full of envy, murder, strife, deceit, malice; *they are* gossips,
30 slanderers, haters of God, insolent, arrogant, boastful, inventors of evil, disobedient to parents,
31 without understanding, untrustworthy, unloving, unmerciful;
32 and although they know the ordinance of God, that those who practice such things are worthy of death, they not only do the same, but also give hearty approval to those who practice them.**

Now there are a lot of things in the Old Testament that were punishable by death that have been changed in the Revelation of the New Covenant. But homosexuality is not one of them. Here Paul states without apology that “... **those who practice such things are worthy of death...**”

And the point that the Bible makes by imposing the death penalty upon certain sins is not necessarily that we should do the same-but to show a natural example of a greater spiritual Truth.

Those who commit all sin are guilty of insulting and offending the unimaginable Purity and Righteousness of God, and they stand in the most dangerous place of all. And unless they have a change of mind that is so powerful it will translate into a change of *behavior*- which is what repentance means- they will die in their sins and face God unwashed and unredeemed, and they will spend all of eternity in the devils hell.

And the only way for anyone to be convicted of sin, the only way that anyone will ever repent and change, the only way that anyone will ever trust in the finished Work of Jesus Christ and be saved is by and through the Grace and the Mercy of God. So the point is- sinners- all sinners- need a Savior- Who will not only forgive them for all their sins- but Who will give them the Righteousness in order to stand in God's Presence. And that Salvation comes only through the Person of Jesus Christ and His finished Work.

But there is simply no way to rescue Paul from his strong condemnation of homosexual behavior. And we shouldn't even try. We simply cannot make “unclean” refer only to “ritually impure”. We cannot make “unnatural” mean “out of the ordinary or excessive”.

There is simply no honest way for anyone to make this passage to refer to child or slave rape, exploitation, or excessive passion. You just can't get there from here. The references to Genesis and the emphasis on an "exchange" will not allow for any other conclusion except the very same conclusion that the Christian Church has had now for over 20 Centuries-and that is that homosexuality in all of its forms is sinful. Therefore, God's people are not to engage in homosexual behavior or give approval to those who do.

So what are we to make of all these religious organizations and all these theologians who say that we got it all wrong? What should be our response to them? And I've been trying to find words to say this as politely and as gentlemanly as I can. But the truth is- that it is *not* because they do not know what I have said to you. They do. Some of these people are far more educated than I will ever be. So we are left with only one conclusion. The people and the organizations who have acquiesced to this situation and now sanction homosexual behavior and allow for so-called "homosexual marriages" to be carried out- simply do not like what the Bible clearly says-even though they know the truth.

So they are guilty of doing exactly the same thing as Paul describes here. These people know the Truth but they don't like the Truth, and so they *suppress* the Truth and they *exchange* the Truth of God for a lie. And all that will do is to bring forth more and more immorality in their midst. And I would suggest to you that that is the very epitome of hate rather than love.

So we must stand tall and strong in the midst of all this collapse. And we must proclaim loud and clear that God expects and demands repentance from all men everywhere- even from the homosexual. And so we must be faithful to do just that- not in anger and not with the attitude of retribution. But as broken and trembling bond-slaves of the Lord Jesus Christ.

And so as we are faithful to call the homosexual to repentance and faith in Jesus Christ- we must also be faithful to call the liar and the thief and those who dishonor their parents and those who blaspheme God and those who hate to repent as well.

And even though I have no idea what God will sovereignly allow to come to the door of the American Church- this one thing I do know. I do not fear what Man will do to me. I fear Him Who, after He kills the body, can cast my body and soul into hell fire. I do not fear the wrath of

unconverted men- I fear the Wrath of God- Who can consume my soul in unquenchable fire.

So it is more important than ever before that in this hour of great compromise and transformation that we hold fast to the reins and that we stay the course. It is more vital than ever before that we labor unendingly by God's Grace, empowered by God's Spirit, and authorized by God's Word to contend earnestly for the very same Christian Faith that was once for all handed down to the Saints- so that when Jesus returns in Power and great Glory- He will find us faithful, fruitful, and busy in the Work of the Lord. May God help us all.

Amen. Let's pray.

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The Grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit. Amen. Be watchful and quicken your pace. Soli Deo Gloria. For the Glory of God alone.