

I Now Pronounce You “Man and Woman-wife”

A Biblical Perspective on Homosexual Revisionist Readings



J. S. Henry

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Forward

By: Pastor Michael Mirra

There are books that need to be written. This is one of them. J.S. Henry addresses popular homosexual revisionist readings of scripture in this sensitively and carefully written work. He allows the Bible to interpret itself rather than to be interpreted in such a way that would force it to conform to *modern* socially acceptable norms. What does the Bible have to say about the popular topic of homosexuality? Are we really interested anymore in what the Bible says? Or, do we seek to alter the meaning of scripture in order to make it more palatable? This book was written for the seeker of Truth on this matter—for the honest Bible student.

In the world that we now live in, homosexuality has been largely normalized, popularized, and even celebrated. The acceptance of it often marks the difference between those who have “evolved” and those who are “left behind”. The modern phenomena of the rapid advancement of “gay rights” and the voice, perspective, and culture of the LGBTQ community has propelled itself into various spheres of modern life such as media, political discussion, entertainment, education and even faith institutions such as the Christian church. Whereas, in the past, the issue could be ignored or sidestepped: it now must be faced head on, and individuals are called to choose where they stand. This reality has hit the church and Christian community quite hard and has resulted in various responses. How should we respond to homosexuality? How should we respond to homosexuals? Our response, and therefore the answer to these questions, is determined by our perspective, values, presuppositions, and what informs them.

This book is for the purpose of allowing readers to gain a Biblical perspective and response to the issue. The issue, in turn, prompts us to determine whether or not we will seek to “cling” to the Scripture, upholding its truth – no matter what consequences may befall us; or, to conform to the modern mindset. Therefore our response to the “phenomena” has implications well beyond the issue at hand. This

matter can remind us of the question in Scripture, “How long halt ye between two opinions? If the Lord be God, follow him: but if Baal, then follow him.” Therefore, it is a matter that, in a very unique way, forces us to decide where we stand.

Because of the pressure to go along with the trends of modern society, the homosexual revisionist readings may be very appealing (especially to young people who were raised up in the church setting, and who find themselves in a dilemma as to how to get along, be popular, and be liked—yet to value Truths that are unpopular). The *readings* allow for one to feel that they are upholding the Bible and yet are not at odds with popular culture. At the very least, the readings can allow one to feel that they have not totally abandoned the traditions of the past. They can feel that they have not disregarded the faith of their parents completely, but are modern enough to get along with the world around them. Our hyper sensitivity to the feelings of others, and our desire to be politically correct, make it very easy to accept the work of the revisionists. The problem is that an honest and fair reading of the Bible reveals that the revisionists are wrong and that their message is contrary to Scripture.

In a postmodern world and nation (that is increasingly pushing the idea of egalitarianism across the board—even in matters of faith) where all opinions, truths, and **lifestyles** are held as equally valid and where the pressure for homogeneity is increasing (while at the same time upholding a certain level of “permissible” variation): the push to conform is real and felt, even though it is not always articulated or even understood (especially by the youth).

Nobody wants to be an outcast. Nobody wants to be told that they are out of touch, or insensitive. Nobody especially wants to be called a bigot. However, the parameters in modern society that determine whether one is *in* or *out* do not originate from Biblical presuppositions. Gone are the days when people generally assumed that the world was created, or that marriage was between a man and a woman. With the almost total disintegration of the American Christian *Civil Religion*—and some form of “secular-humanistic-postmodern-relativistic *religion*” pushing to totally replace it (with the purpose of forming the basis of our

values, customs, and common beliefs as a people)—we are now at a point in history where major decisions will be made and we can no longer “halt between two opinions”.

Therefore, the question goes ultimately to where our faith lies. What is our faith? What is the ultimate source of our opinions and beliefs? What determines right from wrong? What is our character to be built on? How should we live our lives?

In the end, every system of belief is a matter of faith. Every human mind is limited and, therefore, limited in perspective. Every human being will be forced to admit that, out of all there is to know, they can hardly say they know anything. After all, how can we determine what percentage we know of an unknown quantity? We simply don’t know how much knowledge we are lacking! Therefore, we have faith that we are right and faith that we should live in accordance with our limited perspective. Those who believe in God, or a god of some kind, can argue that while our subjective perspective is limited, and that it would be illogical to live by a limited perspective: it would only make sense to put our faith into, and allow our lives to be directed by, a perspective that is perfect and unlimited—God’s perspective. Christians, like me and like J.S. Henry, believe that the Bible is a Revelation from God. It reveals to us His perspective and His Law for our lives.

In today’s world, the Bible is being used to teach something, regarding homosexuality, that it has never been generally understood to teach before—ever in history! I have even heard it said (though I cannot speak authoritatively for all major religions) that every major religion of the world has denounced homosexuality. For this reason, the issue of homosexuality can perhaps cause us to question what our attitude about faith (in general) is. Should faith be determined by subjective or objective factors?

We are prompted to make a huge break from the past, and venture into uncharted territories. Taking the modern, celebratory position of homosexuality—which we are largely demanded to take—causes us to disregard the wisdom of the past. It can also cause us to basically question anything! After all, if something as obvious (as it generally was

up to this point in history) as the fact that men should be with women is no longer obvious—what is? We would therefore need to look to the “experts” and “social engineers” to be the determiners of truth for our times rather than the age old wisdom of the past and, ultimately, the Wisdom of the Ages.

Thus, this issue is a *forefront* issue in our times. The path we choose to take in regard to this issue will have consequences well beyond it—both for individuals and for nations. The Christian, therefore, will seek to “get this one right”! We cannot afford not to. In dealing with the question of revisionist readings, we are called to understand what we believe and why we believe it.

This book does much more than to merely address each revisionist argument—which it does very well. It reestablishes our confidence and understanding of scripture. It shows us that the Logic of God is far superior to the logic of man. It also reestablishes the fact that God’s ways are timeless and not subject to modern trends. It reveals to the reader the more general lesson of how to properly study the Bible, including: how to allow it to speak to you by focusing on context, the original meanings of crucial words (and how they illuminate the text), and how to compare scriptures to one another. Moreover, the book points us to the Ultimate Teacher that we should put our trust in: Jesus Christ!

Introduction

This presentation takes an in-depth look at the practice of homosexuality from a Biblical perspective. It explores the arguments used by many revisionists in favor of an interpretation of the Bible that validates homosexuality. This presentation analyzes these arguments from a Bible based standpoint discerning truth from error and encouraging readers to take an honest and truth seeking approach to studying the Bible. The presentation was written in response to ideas distributed across the internet and in literature circulated throughout the community (including but not limited to public institutions) containing misinformation from professed Christian leaders. This is not intended to debate the issue of homosexuality from a non-Biblical standpoint, but addresses the matter solely from a Biblical world view.

In his 2nd book, Peter stated that Paul's writings were often "wrested" from their proper context by the unlearned so that they could lead people away with the error of "lawlessness". The popular culture, institutions of education, and trends of our time seem to be placing undue pressure on Christianity to conform to the norms of society. Specifically, this seems to be the case in terms of gender roles and views on sexuality.

Among different sects, denominations, and schools of thought within Christianity—there are differing views upon these issues. However, the Bible holds a particular view on these matters which does not conform with the direction currently trending.

Nevertheless, the media, pop culture, and thinkers of our time seem to be pushing for acceptance and embracing of these things not only in the secular world but also in the church. Those who do not conform are often at risk of being called "bigot", "intolerant", or "hateful". Paul states that the wisdom of God is often considered foolishness by man. There is a natural "enmity" of thought and philosophy between the church and the secular—this is expected!

However, one of the church's greatest challenges resulting from this enmity is the transmission of Christian values to succeeding generations amid the interference and opposition of the post-modern secular world. This challenge is intensified by the fact that there seems to be an almost targeted campaign aiming at getting individuals, especially youth, to reject some traditional values or at least "water them down".

Homosexuality is now more popular on TV, in movies, in books, and in music. Some cartoons even blur the distinctions of gender roles. Popular news channels advocate for same-sex marriages and paint those opposed in a negative light. School teachers and administrations seek to bring more awareness about the LGBTQ community and advocate for celebration of it. Our society is becoming more and more celebratory of things that seem to violate Biblical norms. This does not surprise me.

On the other hand, what does surprise me is the increasing secular attitude of the church. This not only surprises me, but worries me. It seems that many church members are unclear on where to stand regarding these issues. Is this an area in which the church needs to evolve or stand their ground? The youth, in particular, seem pulled in different directions as their parents teach one thing and the public education system encourages another route.

Why Write?

Two circumstantial cases that were brought to my attention prompted the writing of this book. The first was a scenario in which a documentary on transgender operations was played in a high school setting for classroom students. Presumably, in respect for religious or other parental concerns, students were allowed to opt out of seeing the film. Most didn't. The film went on to talk about the transgender experience and even described operations and the process one goes through to change their sex. This didn't bother me.

When approaching these sorts of cases, one must have the understanding that the secular world will view the matter differently than

the church does. When one frequents a secular institution, a certain level of toleration is appropriate in that one must expect that secular people will not hold religious views and both groups will be somewhat resistant to the other's subjectivity.

However, about 5-10 minutes toward the end of the film a Christian minister was shown preaching to his congregation on the subject. As this was brought to my attention, at first I thought, "*Why was a Christian preacher's voice heard in a public school setting? Shouldn't church be separate from state?*" This preacher was advocating for the acceptance of transgender people in his church. He stated that we should be like Jesus and love everybody. Who are we to judge?

It wasn't the transgender operations, the testimony of those who had the experience, or any other aspect of the video that caught my undivided attention. As the case was presented to me, I was stuck on why the minister was endorsing it. Why was he allowed to preach a sermon in the hearing of a public school classroom (via the video)? It wasn't Biblically accurate, but regardless—isn't church and state supposed to be separate?

Secondly, another case was brought to my attention regarding a magazine for teens, called YCTeen. A public institution had determined to distribute this literature to a teen population. As I surveyed a copy of the paper, I noticed the headline: "Identity Its Complicated", and underneath, "Pansexual and proud". I started thinking the same thing you're probably thinking? What is a pansexual? That was a new term.

First, for some reason Pan from Dragonball GT came to mind. But there was no connection there, nor with Peter Pan. I started thinking about other words that I knew starting with the word "pan" and arrived at "pantheism": the belief that "theos" (God) was in "pan" (everything). So I determined that "pan-sexual" must be someone open to all kinds of sexual experiences.

As I looked the word up, to see if I was right, the definition read:

“Expressing or involving sexuality in many different forms or with a variety of sexual outlets.” (dictionary.com) I still wasn’t fully settled on a definition. But I was settled on the matter that I probably will not be sending my children to this type of public institution. I almost burst out into laughter at the thought of the look on my mother’s face if an adult or one of my teachers had assigned me to read a magazine that had “Pansexual and Proud” as a headline for any article. Then, I got lost in thought thinking about how some of the more expressive parents amongst my friends would have reacted. But, this took place in New York City. The diversity makes this sort of encounter expected. I decided I would read through the paper so I could get a better idea of how people of different persuasions than mine view things.

Returning my eyes to the front page, I read the next headline, “I Can’t Pray Away Being Gay”. That caught my attention. I turned to the article and began reading while I was informed that over 300 youth would receive the literature from that particular institution mentioned in the case—many of whom are Christian. As I read the article, I understood that the writer was struggling with his identity as a “Christian” and at the same time “Homosexual”. As I got to the bottom of the article I read the line about how this individual learned from a program on TV that some Christian churches are ok with homosexuality. *How is that possible?* I wondered.

Soon my eyes glanced over at the right side page where a man was photographed in a suit. This was a teen newspaper, written entirely by youth, but this man was much older. There seemed to be some religious artwork on the page and soon my suspicion was confirmed. This was a minister. *But how did he get into a newspaper that was supposed to be about youth having voice? Shouldn’t this be against the rules?* As I read further, I learned that this minister was being interviewed probably by a teen writer. This gave him a unique platform and a voice in the student paper.

Basically, as I read it, I learned that this gay minister was talking about his journey as a gay Christian. In several instances he misinterprets scripture during the discussion. First, he asserts that the Bible's command on homosexuality should not be taken literally since we don't take literally the passages about slavery or women not speaking. On that one, he failed to mention that the latter two were in the context of particular issues in a New Testament church setting while the first was a written command in the moral law. Second, he considered the issue of David being bi-sexual "up for interpretation". *What?!*

As I read on, he stated, in reference to what he came to understand, that, "God would accept me as I am." Suddenly, I remembered a statement made in one of our last Bible study classes: "And you shall call His name Jesus, for He shall save His people FROM their sins... not IN them!"

Finally, in one of his last statements, he says, "Jesus is saying heaven is a place where people from different nationalities, sexual orientations, religious paths, and gender identities all fit together in the same house, the same church, the same society."

Has this guy lost his mind? I remember thinking. The first thing that caught my attention was the part about "religious paths". I understood why a gay pastor would want to believe that people of different sexual preferences would be in the same heaven. Not that I agree. But I understand why he would think that way. But "religious paths"... was he for real? I guessed that perhaps he must be part of that ecumenical movement: People who never studied the part of scripture where Jesus affirms that He is the only path to the Father and no one comes except through Him (John 14:6). I agreed that people of different nationalities would be in heaven, but this man seems not to understand that not everyone that says "Lord, Lord" enters the kingdom but "those who do the will of my Father" (Matt 7:21). Since Homosexuality was

against God's law, it was not likely that this man's statement could be accurate.

Now let's be clear. My reason for publicly objecting isn't about the LGBTQ issues. The world knows that there are populations of Christians that don't subscribe to this. Christians know that the world has a population of people who don't care what the Bible says on these matters. In a public setting, one must at times respectfully agree to disagree and not strive for confrontation. If the magazine and the film were only about homosexuality or transgender identity from a secular perspective, there would be little cause for me to write a response. In institutions of learning, no one is allowed to solicit their religion: I respect those rules.

However, how come this minister and the one from the transgender documentary get to share their faith and I can't share mine? What gives them the right to have a voice in a public school (or another institution) setting while mine and the voices of others are silenced? That bothers me! Some have even been fired for voicing their beliefs on social media, outside of the institution they work in, when those beliefs contradict the values of the company they work for. This typically is done toward conservative Christians while people of Islamic faith seem not to be as publicly challenged for holding to a faith with such beliefs. The Qur'an states the following:

“And [We had sent] Lot when he said to his people, ‘Do you commit such immorality as no one has preceded you with from among the worlds? Indeed, you approach men with desire, instead of women. Rather, you are a transgressing people.’” (Qur'an 7:80-81 *Sahih International*)

“Do you approach males among the worlds and leave what your Lord has created for you as mates? But you are a people transgressing.” (Qur'an 26:165-166 *Sahih International*)

“So when Our command came, We made the highest part

[of the city] its lowest and rained upon them stones of layered hard clay, [which were] Marked from your Lord. And Allah 's punishment is not from the wrongdoers [very] far.”^[1] (Qur'an 11:82-83 *Sahih International*)

Furthermore, much of what is said about the Bible condoning homosexuality is inaccurate. Things that, when other Christian believers were presented with the claims that were presented to me, people laughed at. Many employees of a variety of companies are faced with a big dilemma. They are in some ways forced to remain silent while Biblical misinformation is publicized.

To expect people to stay silent about views on homosexuality in public institutions of learning is one thing; but to publicize Biblical misinformation and expect Christians to stay silent, while the Word of God is slandered and misquoted, is ludicrous. It not only steps on our constitutional rights to freedom of expression and religion, but tramples on, binds up, and holds hostage our faith. They are essentially saying, “We don’t want to hear anything you have to say about the Bible... but, sit quietly, and you better not challenge us, while we slander it.”

If any institution is going to be bold enough to slander Biblical truth, any Bible believer should have the right to correct inaccuracies in interpretation. People are free to believe as they choose: however, they should not have the right to misrepresent the Bible and threaten people’s livelihood if they are challenged by what the Bible actually says. That, to me, sounds like a double standard and it’s also dishonesty. If one wants to believe as they choose, just don’t use the Bible to justify it if one’s views are not Biblical.

While there are many things in scripture that can be debated and challenged, this is an area in which many know the information presented

[1] Translations taken from: "The Noble Qur'an - القرآن الكريم." The Noble Qur'an - القرآن الكريم. N.p., n.d. <http://Quran.com/> 05 July 2015.

is false. Yet, this magazine was about to be distributed to a young population. That's when it dawned on me...

No wonder our youth are so misinformed. The secular world allows religion to infiltrate public education whenever it suits their purposes and silences those who speak against their agenda. If kids read this paper, there was a strong possibility a seed could be planted. Kids would begin to question what they had been taught all on the basis of this misinformation. This would have serious consequences for the church if people start thinking there is a Biblical basis for homosexuality in the church. Kids could say, "If David can be bisexual, why can't I?"

As I pondered this matter further, I realized that through the endorsement of the pastors, during the documentary and in this magazine, religion seemed like it was in support of these practices, thereby giving children a green light. While not all kids would be deceived by this misinformation, depending on the qualitative nature of Bible study in their churches, some (if not many) could be lead astray. Wasn't religious instruction supposed to be disallowed in a public school setting? Apparently that only applies when the institution doesn't like what that religion has to say.

Some may say, "This is just providing another outlook. There's nothing wrong with informing kids that there is a different view point." However, I would make the case that if one were to distribute a similar article, even if written by a youth attending the same institution, containing the traditional perspective on homosexuality from a Biblical view—it would probably lead to whoever distributed the document getting fired were it to gain enough publicity and the right attention from certain activist groups.

The truth is that freedom of expression and religion has in many ways become a lie. You're not truly free when if you express your views on the matter, and the general public doesn't agree, employers can still exercise disciplinary action and in some cases termination—even if it wasn't expressed at the institution where you work.

One example could be a Facebook post.[2] If the post contained

derogatory comments using the worst terminology, that would be one issue: however, if a person even expresses that they view homosexuality as “unnatural” and voices or preaches [3] that it’s not part of God’s plan from a Biblical perspective, that can lead to job-related consequences.

In some cases people who know the truth are forced to be quiet for fear of these consequences which should not be so in a country that claims to champion freedom of expression and religion. In other words, the world has a right to disagree—not to silence and not to take punitive action.

The overlying issue with this, for me, is the fact that churches are struggling with getting the youth to be more spiritually minded. The last thing they need is to receive Biblical misinformation in a public classroom or any other setting. Granted, I don’t have a child that is school aged yet; however, if I did, I would not be sending that child to school to learn Biblical misinformation! I would expect that they learn Math, Science, History, Language Arts, Health, and other things... but religious instruction would be delegated to the home and the church.

Don’t get me wrong. I wouldn’t be riled up due to a student or youth misquoting and misapplying the Bible. I hear them do it

[2] Zambito, Thomas "N.J. Teacher Who Made Anti-gay Remarks on Facebook Scores Legal Victory in Bid to Get Job Back." *New Jersey Advance Media*. New Jersey Advance Media, 25 Feb. 2015. http://www.nj.com/news/index.ssf/2015/02/nj_teacher_who_made_anti-gay_remarks_on_facebook_s.html (accessed 6/20/2015) This article gives an example of how a teacher could be fired for comments made off work hours and outside of a public institution.

[3] Anon "Distinguished Public Health Official Denied Top Post By State of Georgia For His Religious Faith." *Liberty Institute*. N.p., 23 Sept. 2014. <https://www.libertyinstitute.org/walsh> (Accessed 6/20/2015) This gives an example of a Seventh Day Adventist doctor discriminated against for preaching against homosexuality, evolution, and other subjects as an expression of his beliefs in his local church.

periodically. The issue is that adults find ways to infiltrate student voice with Biblical misinformation and to push an agenda to a youthful population. This particular generation is unprepared to meet these challenges. They know very little about the Bible and scarcely read it.

As I took a second look at the article leaning back in my seat, I thought to myself: “How would a teenager know, as I know, that this information wasn’t accurate?”

I knew it wasn’t accurate from my study of the Bible and having come across such arguments in the past. The quality of my research would also be superior to that of a teenager. But how would a teen know that this was just misinformation? What if they had questions? What if the adults in their lives didn’t know how to answer those questions?

Even if this book were read in a setting with a teacher that happened to be religious, they couldn’t break down the Greek and Hebrew exposing the error of these doctrines without being accused of forcing religion on people. Unless the upbringing of these children is strong, and unless there is a decent Bible study program at their local churches, I came to the conclusion that over time—these kids are sitting ducks for every whim of society that activists can pay off some minister to advocate for.

This presentation is designed to shed light on some confusing misinformation put forth by those with an agenda to revise the way scripture reads toward a more homosexual friendly interpretation. Such a reading is not accurate. This presentation will explain why on several levels. This is not intended for a public school audience, but rather as a resource for churches to better inform the youth and answer tough questions stemming from deceptive misinformation. When people misinterpret scripture it becomes necessary to expose spiritual wickedness in high places.

Revisionists seem to fall in line with aspects of the so called “higher criticism” which too often seeks to re-interpret Bible passages in new ways and sometimes entirely invalidates portions of scripture through their professed scientific approaches. The problem is that these

newer approaches to scripture undermine faith and destroy the spirituality of churches. Christians should not be accepting of every wind of doctrine—even if it’s a popular belief.

“Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world.” (1 John 4:1)

It is in the Spirit of trying (or “testing”) that this presentation was developed. Do the claims of these revisionists really hold up? What does the Bible really say? It is too often that the views of men don’t coincide with that of the Bible. The reader should keep in mind that I’m addressing the subject of homosexuality solely from a Biblical standpoint and I present ideas, logic, and applications of Biblical truth as I see them expressed in scripture. In other words, this isn’t my view—this is the Word of God! I’m not saying anything: I just read, explain what I read, and show how it applies.

The Outline of The Arguments

In this presentation we will first focus on evaluation of the most popular arguments made by revisionists on the topic. The arguments of the revisionists will be presented in bold-black, while my answers to these claims will follow. If you’re using this book as a resource, you can feel free to skip to the sections that are most relevant to you.

After the sections on the most common arguments, we will then evaluate the implications of the Biblical teaching for church policy and practice. We will analyze more practical aspects for Christian living and I will share some suggestions as to the practicality of these matters.

Argument 1: In Matthew 8:5-13 Jesus affirms a “gay couple”: the centurion and his “boy”.

This argument is supported by the idea that the Greek word “pais” can carry the meaning “boy lover”, as was believed to be an idiom, supporting the idea that a “pais” could be a homosexual lover. Since Roman centurions were not allowed to marry it is believed that they bought “pais” servants to gratify their sexual desires. Since Luke 7 calls the same servant, in need of healing, “honored slave” it is affirmed that the servant cannot be a son to the centurion and must therefore be his “lover”.

Several problems exist with this interpretation. First, The Greek word “pais” inherently does not carry the meaning of “boy lover”. The interpretation that the Greek word carries this meaning is based on an idiomatic use of the term by some ancient extra-Biblical writers. It meant boy, servant, boy servant, or girl servant as indicated by most lexicons. In fact, the term was even used in reference to Jesus (Luke 2:43). The word carried no sexual implications inherently but was used by some extra-Biblical authors to refer to sexual relationships in a figurative way (hence an idiom). However, the use of the idiomatic expression (or slang), though used in such a way by non-Biblical authors, was not used by any Biblical authors of the Greek Old or New Testament.

One may ask, how do we know for certain that Biblical authors could not have made use of the Idiom even in a single-rare case like in the Centurion story? Stephen D. Moore, a professor of NT Theology, indicates that the sexual partnership implication of “pais” is not a usage acknowledged by Liddell-Scott-Jones or Bauer-Arndt-Gingrich-Danker. [4]

John Byron, a professor of NT Theology states:

“...it is true that pais could be used as a term of endearment for slaves. As bad as slavery was/is there were those cases when a slave and master did become close. But that does not automatically translate into homosexuality. For instance, we have a copy of a letter sent by Augustus to one Stephanos of Laodicea. In the letter Augustus says ‘you know how fond I am of my Zoilos.’ This Zoilos was a former slave of Augustus who apparently became very close with the emperor. But no one is suggesting that the two were lovers in a same-sex relationship. Zoilos was apparently very valuable to Augustus and the emperor developed affection for him.”[5] (Byron)

Another issue is that the term “honored slave / servant” doesn’t indicate that the slave was a lover. There are many scenarios in which a servant or slave could be valued. First, although Joseph was sold into slavery in Egypt as a boy, he rose to favor with his masters and was eventually given greater responsibilities over Potiphar’s house until the incident with Potiphar’s wife.

Second, Daniel rose to favor with King Nebuchadnezzar, ruler of the Babylonian empire, as well as Darius during the Medo-Persian reign. At first, Daniel was a captive.

A third example is the case of Naaman whose wife had an Israelite servant girl. This servant informed Naaman that he could obtain healing from a prophet of God. Once he was healed, imagine the level of appreciation he must have had for his servant girl.

[4] Moore, Stephen D. "God's Beauty Parlor: And Other Queer Spaces in and Around the Bible" Stanford University Press, 2001 p 257

[5] Byron, John. "The Biblical World." : *Did Jesus Heal a Centurion's Same-Sex Partner?* N.p., 09 Aug. 2012. <http://thebiblicalworld.blogspot.com/2012/08/did-jesus-heal-centurions-same-sex.html> (Accessed 5-27-2015)

Even in American slavery there were (though probably very few) examples of highly regarded and cared for slaves (both male and female) who were greatly appreciated by their masters. Appreciation can be obtained due to some rare skill, a demonstration of loyalty, a favor performed, trusted honesty, among a host of other factors. While some slave drivers were indeed cruel, and no slave could obtain their favor, it is unfair and dishonest to suggest that no slave master could ever have highly regarded a slave and developed endearing, but non-sexual, attachments to that individual. In many cultures, such attachments are even developed toward animals.

This doesn't change the fact that the slaves were viewed as property or in many cases as "less-than-human"; however, it does make a strong case that, in their own way, a population of slave owners may have highly cared for and (relatively speaking) properly treated their slaves. It is feasible that an exceptional slave-owner might even have risked his life to protect the life of a slave in rare circumstances as the owner of an animal would do for his pet.

Throughout history there have been individualized occasions in which a ruling oppressive entity holds an oppressed entity in high esteem (as stated earlier in the case of Augustus). We saw evidence of this in the stories of Joseph, Daniel, and (reasonably implied) in the story of Naaman's servant girl. We also have the example of an official, of the same rank as the centurion, who wrote an affectionate passage about his two dead slaves, clearly mourning the loss of them.

Wendy Cotter, a theology professor at Loyola University, writes:

"Michael Speidel, an expert on the Roman army, discusses the role of the "boys" who served the soldiers, and his treatment shows that "Pais / Puer" generally is used for the servants without any pederastic meaning. In his remarks on the genuine affection that many Roman soldiers had for the boys who traveled with them and served them, he includes a poignant funeral tribute (which he

and Silvio Panciera discovered) for two deceased servant boys. The boys' master, Aurelius Sanctinus, a cavalry officer (which is a rank equal to that of a centurion) composed this memorial:

[Translated version]Two boys are buried here together in this grave, though born in different places. The one buried first is from the North Sea shore and the Marsacan land; the other is born by the Black Sea, the land of Achilles. Now like brothers they lie under the same weight of Tiburtan stone.

“The scholars comment, ‘Revealing the love of an Emperor’s horseman for those around him, even though they be of very different national origin, the epitaphs Sanctinus wrote for the two boys show forth a kindness Roman soldiers no doubt felt as much as other men of their time, but for which we too often lack documentation.’”^[6] (Cotter)

Even if one made the argument that it was uncommon for high ranking officials in the time period of the centurion to have a level of compassion and high regard for a slave, this does not make it unfathomable. The cited evidence shows that there were, in fact, instances in which high ranking officials had special (unsexual) regard for their slaves and greatly regarded their lives (or the loss of them). This Roman officer did not have to compose a memorial for two dead slaves; yet, the fact that he chooses to is significant. In what other ways might Roman officials have regarded their slaves (in an unsexual manner) if it was clearly possible, as depicted here, for slaves (in some cases) to gain

[6] Quoting from Michael P. Speidel and Silvio Panciera, “From the North and Black Sea Shores: Two New Gravestones for Boys of the ‘Equites Singulares Augusti,’” in *Roman Army Studies* (2 vols.; Stuttgart: Franz Steiner, 1992), 2:353-60, esp. 354-55.)

the affection of their masters? It is even possible that though the slave of the Centurion may not have been his son, he may have been regarded or (in some sense) thought of as a son.

The Centurion's slave could have been "honored" and highly regarded for any number of reasons readers are not informed about. It may be possible that his servant was Jewish and that through his service the Centurion (like Nebuchadnezzar in the stories of Daniel, and later the 3 Hebrews) may have come to know God. This would explain the Centurion's appreciation for the Jews and the building of their synagogue. Nothing in the term "honored slave" necessitates the idea that the relationship with the slave was of a sexual nature: only that the slave was highly regarded. The rationale for the high regard is not explicitly stated. To infer that since the slave was highly regarded-- and because the Greek word "pais" was used to describe the slave-- that this somehow hints at a sexual relationship is unfounded.

The Biblical use of pais never indicates any sexual relation in its Greek New Testament or Septuagint use. We have every reason to interpret the word pais as "boy servant" and "honored slave" as a slave who was highly regarded by the Centurion. The historical examples show that it was not impossible for slaves to gain favor with their masters in some instances. God has shown His ability to bring Jewish slaves / captives into favor with their enemies, captors, and masters for His own purposes. It would be consistent to read the text in a manner in accordance with the boy being a servant rather than a sex slave.

Furthermore, it should be considered that the 1st century Jews—particularly the Pharisees who condemned adultery and fornication (any sexual relationship outside of marriage)--would not have been in favor of such a relationship between a man and his boy servant. This would have been an example of pederasty: sexual relations between two males, especially when one of them is a minor. Yet, this man was highly esteemed by the Jews. Though he had helped to build a synagogue, it

must be remembered that Herod helped to build the Jerusalem Temple: yet he was not favored among the Jews. John the Baptist did not overlook his sexual relationship with his brother's wife.

Wendy Cotter states that the opponents of the traditional interpretation fail to acknowledge the Jewish condemnation of pederasty (which would be the specific type of homosexual relationship depicted between the centurion and his pais). Since the Jews state that the centurion is "worthy" and seem to consider him a friend to the Jewish people, it is highly unlikely that they would have made such a statement if he were guilty of pederasty. The fact that he helped to build them a synagogue is irrelevant: Herod built them a temple.

"The problem with their research is that it does not present the Jewish abhorrence of sexual aberrations, which certainly included pederasty. It is very unlikely that the mere presence of Pais was understood as signaling a pederastic relationship, for Jesus' praise to the centurion for his 'reluctance' in having Jesus come to his home, and praising him above everyone else in Israel for his astonishing 'faith' in being content with a distance healing. That reluctance would constitute a shocking laxity for Jesus, a seemingly sinful condoning of evil. Moreover, it would be impossible to explain why Matthew would have preserved such a term in his story for this very Jewish Gospel and this very Jewish Jesus."^[7] (Cotter)

[7] Cotter, Wendy "The Christ of the Miracle Stories: Portrait Through Encounter" Baker Academic, Nov 1, 2010 (p 124-125) Note that Cotter cites several resources as she makes this assertion.

Cotter also remarks that Luke uses the Greek word “axios” in describing the centurion as “worthy” indicating that he was virtuous, had love for Jews, and was generous:

“In fact, it is Luke who introduces axios into his version of the story, where he adds the element of Jewish elders telling Jesus that the centurion is ‘worthy’: ‘He is worthy of having you do this for him, for he loves our people, and it is he who built our synagogue for us’ (Luke 7:4-5). This indeed is the ordinary meaning of axios. The centurion is deserving because of his virtuous conduct, his love for the people, and his generosity in paying for the synagogue.”^[8] (Cotter)

If “worthy” is at all indicative of his moral character, it is unlikely that he would have participated in pederasty. In the event that someone would suggest that he was worthy solely by virtue of his professed love for the Jewish people and building a synagogue, one should remember that Herod helped to build and beautify a temple: the greatest structure that could be built by Jews; yet, he was not well appreciated by Jews and was often rebuked for sin by John the Baptist. This fact indicates that the centurion was more than just financially generous; he was likely of good moral character as Cotter suggests.

The idea of “pais” being a homosexual partner is foreign from the definition of this word. No standard Greek lexicon agrees with such a definition. The suggestion of this meaning is based on how a select few, non-Biblical, writers (like Plato) used the Greek term over 350 years

[8] Cotter, Wendy "The Christ of the Miracle Stories: Portrait Through Encounter" Baker Academic, Nov 1, 2010 (p 132)

prior to the New Testament being written. However, there is no evidence suggesting that the Bible writers made such a use of this term.

A search of all the texts using “pais” yields the results showing that, in the overwhelming majority of cases, the New Testament used this term to indicate “boy” and in some other cases “servant”. One has to use conjecture to arrive at the revisionist suggested meaning based on the Centurion story since no sexual connotation exists in the passage. The term “pais” and “honored slave” is not enough to suggest a sexual relationship: the context would need to yield much greater evidence in support of such an interpretation.

Argument 2: Ruth and Naomi had a homosexual relationship.

This argument is based on two texts of scripture: one stating that Ruth “clave” to Naomi (Ruth 1:14), the other stating that “a man shall leave father and mother and ‘cleave’ to his wife” (Gen 2:24). Because the same word, “dabaq” (translated cleave, clung, follow close, etc. in the Old Testament Hebrew), was used—some suggest that this passage was used to indicate a homosexual relationship between Naomi and Ruth. They argue that Naomi was connected to Ruth in the same way that Adam was connected to Eve and shared the same kind of emotional attachment.

This is an erroneous argument. The term “dabaq” (cleave) does not always indicate marriage or sexual relationships. In the case of Adam and Eve it indicated their God-ordained union: the first marriage. In the case of Shechem and Dinah, “cleave” indicates that Shechem loved and had deep emotional attachment to Dinah. “His soul clave unto Dinah” (Gen 34:3). However, the following verse indicates that they were not officially married as Shechem makes the request: “Get me this damsel to wife”.

Other uses of the term “cleave” can include the relationship between God and His people. God commands in several places that His people “cleave” to Him. In other cases the same word is used to describe the deep loyalty that a group had for a nation or a king (Josh 23:12; 2 Sam 20:1-3). The men of Judah [soldiers] were said to have “cleaved” to David. This didn’t mean that he had a homosexual relationship with each one of the men of Judah; but rather, as a military leader, they were loyal and stuck with him. “Dabaq” is also used as a way to indicate being “on-top-of” something—an American idiom we use to indicate that we closely monitor or are actively engaged and closely connected to a task or thing.

Remember the saying: “I’ll be on you like white on rice”? This is an expression that teachers and parents have used to indicate that they will be closely monitoring and engaged with the subject of whom the expression was pronounced—it doesn’t mean that the person will be literally on top of the other person.

That being said, in the military sense, “dabaq” indicates that some were pressed or “followed hard” in battle—one army cleaved to the attacked army in such a way as to provide no relief. Therefore, when “dabaq” is used in a military context it indicates that one army was “on-top-of” their opponents to such an extent that they were figuratively attached and intensely connected to the opposing army (in a negative way, causing the soldiers of that army to die and theoretically begin to lose the war).

The uses of the Hebrew word “dabaq”, though differing slightly, shows consistent understanding of its core meaning. It doesn’t always indicate marriage—rather, it indicates close connection which can be marriage, romantic love, friendship, political loyalty, divine appreciation, or military conquering. The key to breaking down the deception presented is to understand that the word “dabaq” is a word commonly

used to express the sentiment that something is deeply or intensely connected to something else—but not necessarily sexually since the word can imply any kind of intense or deep rooted connection (even a soldier [Eleazar] connected to his sword 2 Sam 23:10).

In Genesis 2:24 the word is appropriately used to describe the union of Adam and Eve, but simply means that they clung together and that heterosexual married couples must follow this example of “cleaving”—staying together closely, connecting on several levels, and abiding together. They are to be closely, deeply, and intensely connected.

However, though this word describes the “closeness” aspect of their union on many different levels, it does not directly focus on the physical attraction or the sexual intimacy aspects of their union. Therefore, the same word can be applied to many different settings and types of relationships without carrying any sexual implications. It can also be applied to romantic settings indicating that the couple is closely connected or that at least one member of the party is intensely fixated on the other (as was the case with Shechem and Dinah). On the other hand, it can also be applied to the closeness of a family, a military campaign, and faith-based zealotry.

In addition to the word study, the context also shows us the truth of the matter. First, let’s consider the people involved. A man named Elimelech and his wife Naomi moved from Bethlehem, Judah to the land of Moab with their two sons Mahlon and Chilion. Shortly after Elimelech died and left Naomi a widow. Her two sons decided to marry Moabite women-- which was against God’s law (Deut 7:3; Deut 23:3; 1 Kings 11:1-2). The two women they married were Orpah and Ruth. After the marriage, before having a chance to bare children, both of Naomi’s sons died. This misfortune leaves Naomi at an economic disadvantage living with both her daughter-in-laws and no male breadwinner.

From a spiritual perspective, it was inappropriate for God’s people to move to pagan lands and intermarry with the heathens. The death of Elimelech can easily be seen as a divine judgment followed by

further judgment upon his two sons who broke a clear command not to intermarry with heathen women (the women of Moab were listed specifically in one passage). Though scripture doesn't say that this was a divine judgment, and this interpretation among Biblical scholars may not be fully settled, what is clear is that the actions of this family were inappropriate in the light of God's expectations as expressed in the Law of Moses.

Never-the-less, Naomi was widowed with her two Moabite daughter-in-laws. The first chapter of Ruth indicates that Naomi stated she was too old to marry again and too old to have additional sons. She also considered both women her daughters. (See Ruth 1:11-13) It should be noted that it is likely that the two girls were young women, at child rearing age, since they were recently married and widowed before their husbands had opportunity to engage in child rearing.

If Naomi is too old to have children that puts her at least above the age of 40 while the two girls were considerably younger. Her statement that she was too old to get married is also important. It means that her youthful attractiveness had passed. It is reasonable to consider that if she had been youthful, like the two other girls, she could remarry (at least for love, if not children) and have a male breadwinner able to take care of her and her two daughter-in-laws. Yet, Naomi suggests that she has passed the age for that to be a reasonable option. These facts make it absurd to insinuate that Naomi and Ruth had a homo-sexual attraction toward one another.

The fact that Ruth is Naomi's daughter-in-law makes this assertion incestuous. Are advocates of the position that Ruth and Naomi were sexually attracted to one another seriously making the argument that a young girl is sexually attracted to her mother-in-law that is so advanced in age that she can't have children or seriously consider attracting a husband? Leviticus holds that such a relationship would not be blessed by God:

“Thou shalt not uncover the nakedness of thy daughter in law: she *is* thy son's wife; thou shalt not uncover her nakedness.”

(Lev 18:15)

Furthermore, in verse 14, after Naomi decides to move back to Judah, Orpah decides, seemingly reluctantly, to return to her people rather than stay in Israel. Scripture states that Ruth, in contrast, “clave unto her”. The statement seems to be made in contrast to the earlier part of the verse which focuses on Orpah deciding to leave. It is not a standalone statement.

“And they lifted up their voice, and wept again: and Orpah kissed her mother in law; but Ruth clave unto her.” (Ruth 1:14)

As indicated earlier, “clave” does not carry a sexual or romantic connotation in all cases. It simply means that they were attached, connected, or sticking together. In tough times, families often do stick together rather than allowing misfortune to tare the family apart. This word should be understood in the context of a daughter in law described with her elderly mother in law who had fallen on tough times—presumably due to disobedience of God’s command not to be joined to the heathen nations or allow marriages between Israelites and these nations. Naomi seems to attribute her misfortune to God’s “dealing” with her. (Ruth 1:19-21) If Naomi pursued a sexual relationship, or cleaved in marriage to Ruth, she would be equally as guilty as her sons who fell in love with and cleaved to forbidden pagan women.

It should also be noted that this passage doesn’t say that Naomi and Ruth loved each other as Adam and Eve did. No scripture makes that statement. That statement is conjectured by the false interpretation that the term “clave” in Ruth 1:14 carries the same implication that it does in Gen 2:24—this was proven to be false by the fact that the term can mean

different things in different settings and does not focus on the sexual aspect of a marital relationship, but rather the closeness of any relationship. In the marriage context the closeness is described as two individuals becoming one flesh (implying the closest of all relationships with the exception of man and divinity). In other contexts the relationship is close, but not necessarily as close as the marriage relationship. It is inaccurate to equate the two uses of the word as implying the same level of closeness.

Next we need to consider Ruth's vow toward Naomi. A vow which some suggest may have been an indication of romantic favor.

“And she said, Behold, thy sister in law is gone back unto her people, and unto her gods: return thou after thy sister in law. And Ruth said, Intreat me not to leave thee, *or* to return from following after thee: for whither thou goest, I will go; and where thou lodgest, I will lodge: thy people *shall be* my people, and thy God my God: Where thou diest, will I die, and there will I be buried: the LORD do so to me, and more also, *if ought* but death part thee and me.” (Ruth 1:15-17)

It should be considered that in Israel, this vow was necessary for Naomi to make because of the Israelite culture. There was no toleration for off-shoot religions and worship of pagan gods. Bringing a pagan to the nation with her customs and heathen practices would have been a huge problem. In this vow, Ruth is agreeing to abandon her heritage and traditions and take on the life of an Israelite.

Essentially, she is volunteering to be a proselyte as this is the only way she could continue to dwell with Naomi in Bethlehem, Judah. She vows not only to stay with Naomi and live with her, but to become an Israelite and take on Israel's religion. There is nothing of a sexual-romantic nature implied here.

This passage simply demonstrates the strong mother-daughter bond between Naomi and Ruth. While it is true that love motivated these

actions—not all forms of love are erotic in nature. The Greeks had four distinct words that described differing aspects of love, while in English we have only one. To suggest that sexual or romantic “love” was the “only one word that could explain [Ruth’s] actions” is absurd and dishonest. Clearly it was familial love, admiration, and respect toward an aged mother-in law that motivated Ruth to stick with and cleave to Naomi.

It is true that the passage containing the vow of Ruth may be used at weddings, but this does not indicate a romantic relationship between two women. To the contrary, it has more to do with the joining of a person to a family. Specifically, Ruth choosing to be joined to her dead husband’s surviving family member and her people as she supported this elderly woman (as a kindhearted wife should). Yet, this passage makes an excellent read at weddings, though Biblically it was not romantic in nature, because marriage has to do with the joining together of families into a single family. In that sense it makes an excellent marriage vow, but a vow of marriage was not intended by the original context of the passage. Instead, the vow was based on familial love and ties for a dead husband’s unsupported, unfortunate, and elderly mother.

The next aspect of this discussion to be considered is the assertion that because Boaz is not mentioned when Ruth bares a child, but the emphasis is on Naomi and Ruth, that this text is therefore indicative or implying a homosexual relationship. Yet, those who hold to this idea may have limited knowledge of Old Testament constructs and way of life. They forget or have no knowledge of the law of the “Kinsmen Redeemer”.

“So Boaz took Ruth, and she was his wife: and when he went in unto her, the LORD gave her conception, and she bare a son. And the women said unto Naomi, Blessed *be* the LORD, which hath not left thee this day without a kinsman, that his name may be famous in Israel. And he shall be unto thee a restorer of *thy*

life, and a nourisher of thine old age: for thy daughter in law, which loveth thee, which is better to thee than seven sons, hath born him. And Naomi took the child, and laid it in her bosom, and became nurse unto it.” (Ruth 4:13-16)

Notice the terminology used here. It’s true that verse 15 states that Ruth’s love to Naomi was better than 7 sons—yet it doesn’t state husbands. This shows that the focus of the love is on the mother-daughter relationship. Usually the son would be the most esteemed in the family, rather than the daughter, because in this culture sons carried the responsibility of the household in the absence of the father. Yet, here, Ruth’s love is considered better than that of sons. Why? Also notice the use of the terms “kinsman” and “restorer of thy life”. Why is this terminology used?

While it’s true that Ruth loved Naomi, the word used for “love”, in both Greek and Hebrew, can be applied to many different kinds of relationships: Some of a romantic nature, some not of that nature. However, defining the aforesaid terms can give us a clear picture of what’s going on here.

The “kinsman redeemer” was a concept based on Levitical law. It allowed for a person who was poor to have his possessions “redeemed” by a near relative although he, himself, could not afford to redeem what he lost. If you fell on hard times, and had to sell everything, your family member could essentially bail you out of trouble even if you had previously sold all your possessions. In this patriarchal society, women could not be the redeemer. Hence, the redeemer would be one’s closest male relative. Without one, you were poor until the year of Jubilee. However, in the case of Ruth, with no surviving male relative to lay claim to the property or inheritance—she was out of luck.

“If thy brother be waxen poor, and hath sold away some of his possession, and if any of his kin come to redeem it, then shall he redeem that which his brother sold.” (Lev. 25:25)

In death circumstances, Deuteronomy contained a law allowing for the redemption of the dead person’s household. If a family member died without an heir, the brother of the deceased person could marry and have sex with the widow of the deceased in order to produce an offspring. The firstborn child would be considered the deceased brother’s child as if the deceased brother had conceived the child himself. The first born child would carry the family name of the deceased brother and would be considered the deceased person’s child having all rights to the property and inheritance of the dead person. Through this ritual the family name could continue to be passed down and the household of the dead brother would not be lost to misfortune. In essence, the principle behind this ritual is that the living brother redeems the household of the dead brother.

“If brethren dwell together, and one of them die, and have no child, the wife of the dead shall not marry without unto a stranger: her husband's brother shall go in unto her, and take her to him to wife, and perform the duty of an husband's brother unto her. And it shall be, that the firstborn which she beareth shall succeed in the name of his brother which is dead, that his name be not put out of Israel.” (Deut. 25:5-6)

Based on Ruth’s case, it was clear that if no brothers survived that this law could be extended to include nearest kinsman. Such an individual had the ability to redeem all that was lost to the deceased males. The nearest kinsman refused to do his part when he learned that in obtaining the property a widow would come with the package. Boaz agreed to be both the redeemer of the lost property and raise up seed for the widow.

Ruth 4:14-15 shows that the women of Israel had the

understanding of this redemption in how they call Boaz both “kinsman” and “restorer of life”. They suggest that through the birth of a son from Ruth, this son would have the effect of nourishing Naomi in her old age (rather than leaving her in poverty). Why do they emphasize this fact about the son? Because Boaz was a kinsman, the offspring he produces through Ruth would count as the redemption son of Ruth’s former husband. This offspring would be the heir to all that Ruth’s deceased husband had lost.

The offspring would also count for the continuation of the former husband’s household and would thus be as if she were Naomi’s child (or grandchild) in function. Essentially, this child becomes extremely important for Naomi as an Israelite because it is the continuation of her household. Ruth had the option, though she refused it, of returning to Moab. Naomi had no options. Thus, an offspring produced through the kinsman’s duty (raising up seed for the household of the deceased) has important implications for Naomi more-so than Ruth. This child was essentially the continuation of her household. It meant that her household was not fallen and that she’d have a second chance at quality of life.

Thus, this story doesn’t depict a homo-erotic relationship between Naomi and Ruth, it focuses on the kinsman redeemer law which, through Ruth’s loyalty to her mother in law, allowed that mother in law to regain everything she had lost through Ruth’s child. If that child died, they could be back to square one!

This is why the text focuses on how the women of Israel seem to remind Naomi of how blessed she is to have such a loyal and devoted daughter in law. It then focuses on Naomi nursing and caring for her grandson—the heir to everything she lost through the death of her husband and, later, her two sons. Boaz takes less of a focus because his role as kinsman had been complete. The emphasis is on the restoration of Naomi’s household through which the lineage of David and eventually Jesus (the ultimate “kinsman redeemer” of humanity) would come.

Ironically, as the women emphasize, this redemption was

engineered by God through the loyalty of a daughter-in-law rather than a son. In that way, she was better to Naomi than 7 sons. If you remove Ruth from the picture, even if Boaz had redeemed Naomi's lands, they would be lost after her death since there was no continuation of her household. Her household name would have been lost forever. When you add Ruth to the story, you have a continuation that lead to the greatest legacy mankind has ever known.

In conclusion, to suggest a homo-erotic relationship between Naomi and Ruth is erroneous at best. Nothing in the text suggests that kind of relationship; certainly not the focus on Ruth and Naomi at the end of the account to the exclusion of Boaz. This is done simply to emphasize what was accomplished through the law of the kinsman redeemer. It is conjecture to assume that the loyalty of Ruth toward Naomi was motivated by sexual love rather than familial love. While some rightly suggest that love was a motivating factor in Ruth's dedication, it is misguided to imply that the form of love that motivated this dedication was sexual or romantic in nature. Naomi was an old, elderly woman!

Furthermore, to suggest such a thing is to suggest an incestuous relationship which would continue during Ruth's marriage to Boaz—and therefore adulterous. Such an assertion doesn't follow logic or the textual evidence. It's both wrong and insulting to the true focus of the story.

Ruth and Naomi's story is a beautiful story about redemption. How one can lose everything and have an entire household redeemed by a kinsman. This story was designed to be a mini-picture of the redemption method Christ used to save humanity.

Argument 3: Jesus said some were born gay, and a gay man was accepted by the church.

The latter argument is based on Acts 8:26-40 and its use of the word "eunuch". Because the Ethiopian eunuch was "accepted" and baptized, some suggest that homosexuality is acceptable in the NT church. The former argument is based on the use of the word

“eunuch” in Matthew 19:10-12. Because some assume that eunuchs always have sexual relations with their masters, it is also assumed that if a person becomes a eunuch, they are becoming gay; If a person is born a eunuch, they are born gay; if a person becomes a eunuch for the sake of the “Kingdom of God”, they become gay by divine appointment.

There are some big problems with this interpretation. First, the use of the term “eunuch” does not necessitate homosexuality. While some masters may have sexually abused or been in relation with eunuchs, this does not mean that people were made eunuchs for the purpose of homosexuality. In America, when Africans were enslaved, often black women were raped and mistreated by white slave owners. However, this did not mean that every slave owner practiced this; nor does it mean that enslaved black women were always mistresses for white-male slave owners. This may have been the case in some circumstances, but should not be applied across-the-board.

While some eunuchs may have been sexually abused by their masters, or may have been in relation with them, it is a mistake to assume that, across-the-board, every eunuch (or almost every) was in a homosexual relationship with their masters to such an extent that even the term “eunuch” implies (or would be a synonym for) a homosexual relationship.

When researching the literature[9] on this subject most articles will say that eunuchs were not “always” castrated—indicating that “some” were not, but others were. The literature also states that born eunuchs **could “include”** homosexuals—this does not mean that born eunuchs were “always” homosexual: it indicates that some born eunuchs **could include** homosexuals. The literature, quoting scholars like Dr. Robert Gannon, indicates, therefore, that there were **some** instances in which eunuchs **may have** been homosexual; however, this was not

always the case and should not be interpreted in that way.

The term “born eunuchs” referred to those with genital abnormalities resulting in impotence, paralysis, Downs, and other sexually debilitating conditions that would make marriage unrealistic. Born eunuchs could fall into any of these categories. It should not be assumed that a born eunuch was gay.

A eunuch was a form of slave usually assigned to work with important women. The mere mention of the word should not indicate sexual orientation; rather, it indicates subservience. The use of the term in Acts and Matthew does not indicate sexuality—it indicates that the person was a slave and may have been castrated. There is no clarity in the text as to whether or not the Ethiopian eunuch was born a eunuch or castrated to become one. To take either position is speculation. However, if the Ethiopian eunuch was born a eunuch this would not necessitate his leaning toward a homosexual persuasion. There were born eunuchs that were not gay: some people were born eunuchs because they were impotent, diseased, or in some way physically unable to have children.

Some slander the book of Acts by making the assertion that the term “born eunuch” was always an indication of homosexuality. This is conjecture and projecting a homosexual reading onto the text. When it is taken into account that many born eunuchs were not homosexual, we can state firmly that no Biblical evidence suggests that the Ethiopian was gay. Those who suggest this are making an assumption—which can’t be

[9] By “literature” I’m referring to a group of sources: websites, books, articles, etc. from both sides of the argument. I read through a number of scholarly sources on the subject which all seem to say the same thing. None of them use all-inclusive language: ie. “all, most, or definitely”. Each uses the language of possibility. In other words, the more scholarly the source, the more the source abstained from using definitive terms. Blogs, on the other hand, while citing scholars, used more definitive terms than the scholarly sources they cite. Dr. Robert Gagnon was frequently cited by articles on both sides of the issue.

substantiated with scripture—based on the idea that some ancient born eunuchs could **possibly** be gay.

Secondly, it is important to realize that the text in question is in the context of marriage. Jesus was specifically speaking about the subject of marriage and divorce between a man and a woman/wife. He states that if a man divorces a wife (unless she's been unfaithful) to marry another woman, he commits adultery. He also states that a man who marries a divorced woman causes her to commit adultery. In response to this teaching the disciples stated the following:

“His disciples say unto him, If the case of the man be so with *his* wife, it is not good to marry.” (Matt 19:10)

The disciples thought that in order to avoid the charge of adultery, it was better not to marry at all. People's hearts had become so hardened that divorce and remarriage were common. However, if to remarry meant committing adultery, and it was impossible for the initial relationship to work out: the disciples concluded that it seemed better not to get married in the first place. To this assertion Jesus responds:

“But he said unto them, All *men* cannot receive this saying, save *they* to whom it is given.” (Matt 19:11)

In other words, Jesus is not suggesting that everyone remain unmarried. Not all men can “receive” or accept this saying. The teaching was given to Pharisees and those present when Jesus was speaking as they were discussing the subject of marriage between a man and a woman. Jesus explains why only some people, but not all, can receive this saying:

“For there are some eunuchs, which were so born from *their* mother's womb: and there are some eunuchs, which were made eunuchs of men: and there be eunuchs, which have made

themselves eunuchs for the kingdom of heaven's sake. He that is able to receive *it*, let him receive *it*." (*Matt 19:12*)

In this passage, the word “eunuch” is mentioned 3 times indicating 3 separate situations in which a person would not be able to marry. First, a person could be born with a physical abnormality which would make them unable to marry and have offspring, or lack the desire for marriage. In this way, a person could be born a “eunuch”.

Second, when individuals were taken captive by armies or sold into slavery/servitude, they would be made eunuchs by other men who castrated them. These eunuchs were often used to guard important women, yet ensuring that no sexual relations would take place since the eunuch was castrated.

Additionally, the second category could possibly refer to men who take a vow of celibacy to perform the duties of a eunuch (thereby men making themselves eunuchs).

In these cases homosexuality is not implied; instead, the emphasis is on the individual’s inability to be involved in marriage and sexual activity. Remember that Jesus is responding to the statement, “...it is not good to marry”. He states that not everyone can go without being married, but there are those to whom “it is given” not to be married. This term, “it is given”, suggests that this is the hand that an individual has been dealt. The term “it is given” implies that God has “given” or handed the person this allotment or circumstance—He has permitted it to be the person’s circumstance or He has gifted it.

In other words, for some people, life circumstances (or divine influence) prevent them from being able to get married. In verse 12 he gives an example of individuals who have received such a lot in life (not being able to marry). Beginning with the word “for” which can also be translated “because” he tells of 3 different kinds of “eunuchs”. The term “eunuch” was used to indicate a person who could not marry at all. The

use of the word “for” or “because” shows a continuation in what he began saying in verse 11. This is important so that the context is not separated.

Only when the context is separated can we misinterpret the passage. Jesus was not stating in this passage that if a person can’t stay in a committed relationship with a woman that they should try becoming eunuchs and having a same-sex relationship. He was also not making a blanket statement about marriage and sexuality in which he listed different types of relationships—this was not the context.

In other words, Jesus was not stating “some people can be married, some people are born gay, some people are made gay by other people, and some people become gay for the sake of the kingdom of heaven.” To the contrary, the context shows that Jesus’ focus was on marriage between a man and a woman.

Since the context is marriage, and all forms of sex before marriage are prohibited by scripture, Jesus is clearly stating that there are three circumstances in which a person could not be married at all. Since the person (eunuch) could not be married at all, and Jesus’ words are in the marriage context, a homosexual relationship could not be implied, suggested, or hinted here. The context doesn’t allow for that.

The key words that prove this fact in verses 11-12 are “this saying”, “it is given”, and “for”. When Jesus responds to “this saying” he is specifying the context of the idea that “it is good not to marry” (this was the “saying” in question). The words “it is given” connects to “this saying” and “it is good not to marry” in that, for some people, the “saying” “it is good not to marry” applies because it is given to them (or their allotment of life circumstances make it so) that they can’t marry.

The word “for / because” connects the ideas of verse 11 with the 3 examples of verse 12. This demonstrates that the 3 examples must be examples of individuals that can’t marry at all, and not 3 substitute forms of relationships for those who can’t be with women. Jesus uses the term “eunuch” in verse 12 to refer to people who are unable to marry.

The text should be read in this manner:

“But he said unto them, All *men* cannot receive this saying [that it is good not to marry at all], **except** those people to whom it is given [or allotted by God not to marry at all]. **Because** there are some eunuchs [people who can’t marry at all], which were so born from *their* mother's womb: and there are some eunuchs, which were made eunuchs **by other** men: and there be eunuchs, which have made themselves eunuchs for the kingdom of heaven's sake. He that is able to receive [the saying], let him receive [the saying].”
(Matt 19:11-12 Author’s Translation 1)

If we replaced “eunuchs” with homosexuals the passage wouldn’t make sense with the context and even if it did, they would show Jesus’ condemnation of same-sex marriage.

“All *men* cannot receive this saying [that it is good not to get married at all], **except those people** to whom it is **allotted by God not to marry at all**. **Because** there are some homosexuals, which were born that way, some homosexuals, which were made homosexuals **by other** men: and there are homosexuals, which have made themselves homosexuals for the kingdom of heaven's sake. He that is able to receive [the saying], let him receive [the saying].”
(Matt 19:11-12 Author’s Translation 2)

Such a translation would be saying that not everyone can go without being married except those that are allotted never to be married. The reason why some are allotted never to be married is because they are born gay, made gay, or become gay for the sake of God’s kingdom—which doesn’t allow any sexual or marital relations outside of the context of marriage (Note how the latter statement invalidates the former). If this were a correct translation, it would automatically invalidate gay-marriage since interpreting the passage in this way would suggest that some people

are never meant to be married at all because they are homosexual. Such a statement by Jesus would suggest that He believed homosexuals were never meant to be married at all.

The key in correct interpretation, however, is how we understand the word “eunuch”. If eunuchs are always equated with homosexuality, the latter translation would seem reasonable. However, equating a eunuch with a homosexual lover is like equating an “alter-boy” as the lover of a Catholic priest. While there are circumstances in which priests have abused alter-boys, this abuse was never their intended function. They served as “alter-boys” and were sometimes abused in some cases by priests. However, every priest does not engage in homosexual relationships with “alter-boys”, nor is such a relationship the implied function of the “alter-boy”.

In the same way, eunuchs were servants. Sometimes they were abused or engaged in homosexual relationships. But this was not their implied function. Eunuchs were not able to have sexual relations with women and were entrusted with service toward important women. Therefore, it is a mistake to assume that by “eunuch” Jesus means a homosexual. The Ethiopian eunuch was not someone’s homosexual lover either. We can’t conclude that he was solely based on his status as a eunuch.

Finally, in the third mention of “eunuch” in Matthew 19:12, Jesus introduced something new. He stated that some would become eunuchs for the sake of the “kingdom of God”. He was not implying that in order to go to heaven, some people had to become homosexual. Instead, he was implying that, for some, “it is given” or “allotted” to them to become single and stay single for the sake of the “Kingdom of God”.

Singlehood was considered a gift from God that would enable a person to accomplish more for the advancement of God’s Kingdom as well as the lessening of distractions for one’s own personal relationship

with God. This fact demonstrates that Jesus could not have equated “eunuchs” with “homosexuality”; instead, Jesus equated “eunuchs” with being single and unable to marry. Paul demonstrates this fact in the following passage.

“The wife hath not power of her own body, but the husband: and likewise also the husband hath not power of his own body, but the wife. Defraud ye not one the other, except *it be* with consent for a time, that ye may give yourselves to fasting and prayer; and come together again, that Satan tempt you not for your incontinency. But I speak this by permission, *and* not of commandment. **For I would that all men were even as I myself. But every man hath his proper gift of God, one after this manner, and another after that. I say therefore to the unmarried and widows, It is good for them if they abide even as I. But if they cannot contain, let them marry:** for it is better to marry than to burn. And unto the married I command, *yet* not I, but the Lord, Let not the wife depart from *her* husband: But and if she depart, let her remain unmarried, or be reconciled to *her* husband: and let not the husband put away *his* wife.” (1 Cor 7:4-11 emphasis mine)

Paul speaks about marriage and husbands and wives avoiding the abstinence of sexuality within the context of their marriage. He warns that if they abstain from sex they “defraud” each other and open the doors to temptation. Only under the conditions of temporary fasting and prayer should they abstain from sex; however, afterward, they should get back to business. If they don’t, Satan may tempt them to seek relations outside of the marriage.

Paul recommends, however, that people follow the path he has chosen. This path is the path of being single. He states that the unmarried

and those whose husbands have died should be as he is [single]. Paul states that this would be good for them. However, if they can't, he concedes that they should marry rather than burn in lust.

Notice that, in verse 7, Paul states that remaining single is a gift of God. Gifts from God are things that are given to men. These gifts are not the same for every person. Paul suggests that the ability to remain unmarried is a gift from God that not every person can receive. This makes Jesus' statement in Matthew 19:11 more clear. To some, the "gift" is "given" to remain unmarried (as Paul was) for the sake of God's Kingdom. But why would God give such a gift? What purpose would remaining unmarried serve in the purposes of God's Kingdom? Paul makes the matter clearer:

“Now concerning virgins I have no commandment of the Lord: yet I give my judgment, as one that hath obtained mercy of the Lord to be faithful. I suppose therefore that this is good for the present distress, *I say*, that *it is* good for a man so to be. Art thou bound unto a wife? seek not to be loosed. Art thou loosed from a wife? seek not a wife. But and if thou marry, thou hast not sinned; and if a virgin marry, she hath not sinned.

Nevertheless such shall have trouble in the flesh: but I spare you. But this I say, brethren, the time *is* short: it remaineth, that both they that have wives be as though they had none; And they that weep, as though they wept not; and they that rejoice, as though they rejoiced not; and they that buy, as though they possessed not; And they that use this world, as not abusing *it*: for the fashion of this world passeth away.

But I would have you without carefulness. He that is unmarried careth for the things that belong to the Lord, how he may please the Lord: But he that is married careth for the things that are of the

world, how he may please *his* wife. There is difference *also* between a wife and a virgin. The unmarried woman careth for the things of the Lord, that she may be holy both in body and in spirit: but she that is married careth for the things of the world, how she may please *her* husband.

And this I speak for your own profit; not that I may cast a snare upon you, but for that which is comely, and that ye may attend upon the Lord without distraction. But if any man think that he behaveth himself uncomely toward his virgin, if she pass the flower of *her* age, and need so require, let him do what he will, he sinneth not: let them marry.

Nevertheless he that standeth stedfast in his heart, having no necessity, but hath power over his own will, and hath so decreed in his heart that he will keep his virgin, doeth well. So then he that giveth *her* in marriage doeth well; but he that giveth *her* not in marriage doeth better.” (1 Cor 7:25-38)

Paul makes clear that those who are unmarried can serve God without distraction while those who are married are pre-occupied with their spouse to some degree. For this reason, it is good for those who can remain single to remain unmarried so that they can use their abilities unhindered by the distractions of marriage. While it is not a sin to be married, Paul suggests that it’s better not to be married. Yet, Paul understands that not everyone can do this, as he has chosen to.

Some people are chosen to remain unmarried to maintain their focus on the kingdom of God and to accomplish the work of the kingdom of God. Since Paul was a person who received this gift, he functions as a prime example of what Jesus was discussing in Matthew 19:11-12. Paul was not a homosexual eunuch; rather, he chose to remain single (it was “given to him” to remain unmarried) for the sake of what God wanted to

accomplish in and through him.

There is much that indicates the two texts are parallel passages. Both Matthew 19 and 1 Corinthians 7 are in the context of marriage. Both suggest the benefit of avoiding marriage and avoiding temptation toward adultery when the husband and wife are apart. Both state that not everyone can be single and that people should marry if they can't remain single. Both address the issue that husbands and wives should not divorce each other. Clearly, Paul is addressing the exact same teaching of Jesus in Matthew 19.

We, therefore, have a more sure interpretation of what Jesus meant by “eunuch” in his third circumstance regarding “eunuchs for the kingdom of heaven’s sake”—a person who had been given a gift from God to be able to choose to remain unmarried for the sake of the advancement of God’s kingdom. The term “eunuch”, therefore, has nothing to do with homosexuality, but with those who either can't **or** are gifted with ability to choose not to be married at all. Jesus used the term "eunuch" to refer to one who remains celibate.

“For there are some [celebrate people], which were so born from *their* mother's womb: and there are some [celebrate people], which were made **celebrate by other** men: and there be [celebrate people], which have made themselves [celebrate people] for the kingdom of heaven's sake. He that is able to receive *it*, let him receive *it*.” (*Matt 19:12 Author's Translation 3*)

The last statement where Jesus suggests that those able to “receive it” should “receive it” therefore implies not just receiving the saying “it is not good to marry” but also the gift of choosing not to marry and remaining celibate to focus one’s attention on God as Paul did.

Scripture gives no examples of the benefits of being homosexual instead of being married. Human beings can make projections and use conjecture based on their own inclinations, but scripture itself makes **no such distinction**. Instead, when we look at Paul’s statement, it becomes

clear that there are benefits to being single. Therefore, when Jesus discusses marriage in Matthew 19 (which parallels Paul's statements in 1 Corinthians 7), he is most likely talking about celibate people rather than homosexuals when he uses the term "eunuch".

Since Matthew 11 indicates that being unmarried is something to be "received" and must be "given", Paul's statement about celibacy being a "gift" (something that is given by one and received by another) is the proper context for us to understand what Jesus means in the Matthew 11:12 passage. The slandering of this passage is due to the projection of homo-erotic readings onto a passage that does not lend itself to such an interpretation.

Furthermore, in regard to the Ethiopian eunuch, since Jesus clearly used the term "eunuch" to refer to those who were "celibate" (and Paul indicates that some never marry because they are given the gift of celibacy), we can conclude that the Ethiopian eunuch may have been celibate from birth, made celibate through castration, or was born celibate due to a physical defect. It would not be accurate to assume that he was homosexual and nothing in the context suggests that he was.

Argument 4: David and Jonathan

Some assert that David and Jonathan were in a homosexual relationship. This idea is based on circumstantial evidence: David declared at Jonathan's funeral that Jonathan's love was better than the love of women. The Bible states that the souls of David and Jonathan were knit together. The Bible also gives an example of when David and Jonathan kissed each other and wept. Homosexual revisionists conclude that they must have been a couple.

Again we find another example of reading into the text what isn't there. First, let's examine what scripture says about their relationship.

“And it came to pass, when he had made an end of speaking unto Saul, that the soul of Jonathan was knit with the soul of David, and Jonathan loved him as his own soul.” (1 Sam 18:1)

While revisionists claim this to be romantic love, the text seems more in harmony with Biblical agape love.

“Jesus said unto him, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This is the first and great commandment. And the second *is* like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.” (Matt 22:37-39)

As demonstrated in the text, the Biblical expectation was that a person: love others as they love themselves. Jonathan was stated to love David as his own soul. This is a clear example of the applying of Jesus’ words and does not imply something homo-erotic. The word translated “knit” from the Hebrew “qashar” can also mean “to be bound to” or to “conspire against”. It is used several times in scripture to suggest that parties were bound together against another party. In other words, they were in allegiance to ally against someone else. When translated “bound” the implication does not seem to be what was indicated in Genesis with Adam and Eve. Jonathan and David were not “one flesh” but were bound and loved each other as they loved themselves.

Another thing to consider is the following passage:

“And *one* told David, saying, Ahithophel *is* among **the conspirators** with Absalom. And David said, O LORD, I pray thee, turn the counsel of Ahithophel into foolishness.” (2 Sam 15:31 emphasis mine)

The word used for “conspirators” is “qashar”. The text, therefore, suggests that Ahithophel was among those bound with Absalom. Yet, no one suggests that this was a homosexual relationship. Clearly, it was an alliance.

In the case of Jonathan and David their deep friendship indicated that they were bound or allied together. Nothing in the passage suggests anything more than a deep rooted friendship. In fact of the 44 times “qashar” is used and the 16 times “qesher” (a similar word) is used, both words are never used in reference to a relationship between a man and woman or any romantic relationship. It is therefore reasonable to conclude that in the use of the word “qashar” to describe David and Jonathan, the intent is to illustrate their strong friendship. They were allied and bound together as close – even best—friends.

The other passage, from Jonathan’s funeral, can now be examined as we analyze their relationship:

“How are the mighty fallen in the midst of the battle! O Jonathan, *thou wast* slain in thine high places. I am distressed for thee, **my brother** Jonathan: very pleasant hast thou been unto me: thy love to me was wonderful, passing the love of women.” (2 Sam 1:25-26 emphasis mine)

Clearly, revisionists have overlooked the first part of verse 26 and chosen to focus only on the later part. David states that Jonathan is his brother. They were not biologically related, but their friendship was so close that they viewed one another as if they were brothers. Nowhere in the passage is Jonathan called David’s lover. To the contrary, David suggests that Jonathan was a brother. Revisionists, in projecting a homosexual reading on these passages, seem to have made the same mistake that was made when they assumed that because Ruth was better than seven sons, somehow the relationship between them must have been

homosexual. David does state that Jonathan's love passes the love of women. However, it's important to consider what he means by this.

Jonathan had protected David from his father, hiding him from danger. On some occasions it was evident to King Saul that Jonathan was conspiring to prevent him from finding David. This demonstrates that on more than one occasion, Jonathan had saved David's life. His loyalty was remarkable. It is easy to see how Jonathan's love toward David was better than the love of women (plural). When best friends look out for each other, save each other's lives, and demonstrate the level of loyalty that Jonathan had for David—the love does often surpass the love of women. In the case of Samson, he was betrayed by a woman he loved as the Philistines put pressure on her to obtain his secret.

Romantic involvement does not always guarantee loyalty and true companionship. For this reason, a friendship could easily surpass the romantic love between two parties. It should be noted that the love of David's "brother Jonathan" "surpassed" the love of women. This means that brotherly love exceeded the worth of romantic love. The fact that Jonathan is called a brother rather than a lover makes this case certain. The term indicates the nature of their friendship and is a sure evidence that his words of endearment should not be taken out of context to support homosexuality. Such a reading denies the fact that a solid friendship can be more worthwhile than sexual exploits with women (plural).

Today, there are many people who can claim that the love of a close friend is better than the love of their significant other. Some may not say it out loud, since it can have consequences on a marriage, but the brotherly (or sisterly) love of a best friend can sometimes exceed the love of a partner. David's words aren't really that surprising.

Furthermore, both Jonathan and David were married. To have a homosexual relationship would have been adultery. Additionally, a closer look at the word used for "love" indicates other possibilities instead of romantic love. David writes:

“For my love they are my adversaries: but I *give myself unto* prayer. And they have rewarded me evil for good, and hatred for my love.” (Psalms 109:4-5)

“But all Israel and Judah loved David, because he went out and came in before them.” (1 Sam 18:16)

The first text demonstrates that the word used for love in these passages doesn't always mean romantic love. It also has to do with the love that one would have for friends, family, countrymen, neighbors, etc. This is why David could say that those whom he gave his “love” to are his adversaries. He was not talking about his romantic interests becoming his enemies. He was talking about his countrymen whom he showed love and loyalty to. This shows that even the word “love” is no indication of any romantic interest between Jonathan and David.

The second passage also uses the same word for “love”. Yet no one interprets this passage to mean that all the men of Israel and Judah were romantically in love with David. Again, there is no textual indication that anything in this passage suggests more than a friendship.

The fact that David refers to Jonathan as a “brother” indicates the kind of “love” they had for each other. There is no textual evidence to suggest that their relationship was any more than a deep rooted friendship that exceeded the love of women (which in many cases was superficial since David and others had many wives).

Later on, David didn't have Bathsheba killed to obtain and sleep with Uriah; he had Uriah killed for Bathsheba once he saw her with clothes off. This fact further weakens the idea that David preferred a homosexual relationship over the love of women. To the contrary, he preferred the brotherly love of his best friend over the love of women, but was still very much attracted to and enjoyed intimacy with women. Nobody twisted David's arm to force him to look at a woman as she was

taking a bath—especially at a time when David was supposed to be at war.

This brings us to the last passage in question:

“*And* as soon as the lad was gone, David arose out of *a place* toward the south, and fell on his face to the ground, and bowed himself three times: and they kissed one another, and wept one with another, until David exceeded.” (1 Sam 20:41)

In context, “exceeded” refers to David exceeding in tears. The New King James translates the ending phrase “and they wept together, but David more so.”

What seems strange to revisionists in this passage is the fact that David and Jonathan kiss one another. However, revisionists are wrong to assume that this is the same kind of kiss that one would use to kiss a partner in a sexual relationship. Note the following examples:

“And he fell upon his brother Benjamin's neck, and wept; and Benjamin wept upon his neck. Moreover he kissed all his brethren, and wept upon them: and after that his brethren talked with him.” (Gen 45:14-15)

In this example Joseph falls on Benjamin’s neck (hugging him) and then kisses all his brothers and cried while holding each of them. Clearly, this was not an example of homosexual behavior. In this culture, as well as throughout Biblical culture, it was culturally appropriate to kiss a brother and hug him. This was also true of other family members that were of the same sex or different sex. Homosexual readings should not be projected onto these instances.

“And his father Isaac said unto him, Come near now, and kiss

me, my son. And he came near, and kissed him: and he smelled the smell of his raiment, and blessed him, and said, See, the smell of my son *is* as the smell of a field which the LORD hath blessed” (Gen 27:26-27)

“And it came to pass, when Jacob saw Rachel the daughter of Laban his mother's brother, and the sheep of Laban his mother's brother, that Jacob went near, and rolled the stone from the well's mouth, and watered the flock of Laban his mother's brother. And Jacob kissed Rachel, and lifted up his voice, and wept. And Jacob told Rachel that he *was* her father's brother, and that he *was* Rebekah's son: and she ran and told her father. And it came to pass, when Laban heard the tidings of Jacob his sister's son, that he ran to meet him, and embraced him, and kissed him, and brought him to his house. And he told Laban all these things.” (Gen 29:10-13)

“And Esau ran to meet him, and embraced him, and fell on his neck, and kissed him: and they wept.” (Gen 33:4)

These are just the examples in Genesis. Yet, they clearly show that one regarded as a brother, sister, son, father, etc. were hugged and kissed... unless someone wants to charge Jacob with being out of control and purposely kissing every warm body he could get his lips on.

Since David regarded Jonathan as a brother, it's not surprising that they hugged and kissed. While this is not practiced today, especially in American culture, it was common in David's time and socially appropriate. Even if he was crying while doing it, scripture shows several examples of crying, hugging, kissing and getting emotional without sexual implications. Even Jacob and Rachel's first kiss wasn't sexually motivated. He kissed her as a relative. Later on, he had a new kind of interest in her. This interest motivated him to work 14 years to be able to marry her.

The following text shows Samuel kissing Saul after anointing him king:

“Then Samuel took a vial of oil, and poured *it* upon his head, and kissed him, and said, *Is it* not because the LORD hath anointed thee *to be* captain over his inheritance?” (1 Sam 10:1)

Again, this shows nothing uncommon. The mention of a kiss in scripture should not be an indication of anything romantic or erotic. To suggest so is to misinterpret scripture, not factoring in its cultural context. No serious Bible student would interpret the scriptures in this manner. When Judas kissed Jesus or when John was on Jesus’ bosom, we should not read something sexual into these accounts. They were common for the culture at that time. Conjecture, again, is used as a weapon in the hand of revisionists to suggest homosexual implications that do not apply and that ignore the cultural context of these Biblical stories.

Argument 5: Romans deals with rape not homosexuality as a practice.

Revisionists argue that Romans 1:21-28 deals with God haters and idol worshippers that use gay sex only as a means to perform pagan worship practices or for the thrill of it. They argue that this passage does not deal with modern homosexual couples who love God and are in same-sex relationships. Instead, they attribute the text solely to temple prostitution and deny its application outside of the context of temple prostitution. Revisionists argue that as long as a same-sex couple loves God and participates in a mutual relationship, Paul’s words would not apply to them.

“Because that, when they knew God, they glorified *him* not as God, neither were thankful; but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened. Professing

themselves to be wise, they became fools, And changed the glory of the uncorruptible God into an image made like to corruptible man, and to birds, and fourfooted beasts, and creeping things.

Wherefore God also gave them up to uncleanness through the lusts of their own hearts, to dishonour their own bodies between themselves: Who changed the truth of God into a lie, and worshipped and served the creature more than the Creator, who is blessed for ever. Amen.

For this cause God gave them up unto vile affections: for even their women did change the natural use into that which is against nature: And likewise also the men, leaving the natural use of the woman, burned in their lust one toward another; men with men working that which is unseemly, and receiving in themselves that recompence of their error which was meet. And even as they did not like to retain God in *their* knowledge, God gave them over to a reprobate mind, to do those things which are not convenient;” (Romans 1:21-28)

Revisionists don’t seem to deny that gay sex was described in this passage. They assert that the way in which gay sex was applied is wrong but that the passage does not address the issue of homosexuality as a whole. This gives us a starting point from which to address this issue. When we really take the time to explore what Paul is saying in this passage, we can see that the revisionists have it wrong. The context does apply to homosexuality as a practice.

First, because these men changed the truth of God into a lie, we find that God gives them up to “vile affections”. The Greek word translated “affections” is “pathos”. It is used three times in the NT to indicate lust. Each time, this lust is spoken of in a negative way and in the context of sexual immorality.

“For this cause God gave them up unto vile **affections**: for

even their women did change the natural use into that which is against nature:" (Romans 1:26 emphasis mine)

"Mortify therefore your members which are upon the earth; fornication, uncleanness, **inordinate affection**, evil concupiscence, and covetousness, which is idolatry:" (Col 3:5 emphasis mine)

"For this is the will of God, *even* your sanctification, that ye should abstain from fornication: That every one of you should know how to possess his vessel in sanctification and honour; Not in the **lust** of concupiscence, even as the Gentiles which know not God: That no *man* go beyond and defraud his brother in *any* matter: because that the Lord *is* the avenger of all such, as we also have forewarned you and testified." (1 Thess 4:3-6 emphasis mine)

Notice that the text in Thessalonians states that it is the Christian's sanctification (setting apart) to avoid fornication. Instead, Paul says that we are to possess our bodies in sanctification and honor. In verse 5 he then gives the opposite or contrast to this sanctification and honor: "lustful passion". Paul states that this "lustful passion" is performed by those who don't know God and that it should not be practiced. He also states that by possessing the body in sanctification and honor, no one would be able to defraud his (spiritual) brother through acts of lustful passion.

When God gives the ungodly men up to "vile affections" or "shameful and disgraceful passions and desires", Paul states that women changed their "natural" use to what was "unnatural". The keyword here is "nature". Women changed the use they were given by nature to a use that was against and ran contrary to nature. The question then becomes: "what is nature?" and who decides "what is natural?" This brings us back to Genesis.

“So God created man in his *own* image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them. And God blessed them, and God said unto them, Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it: and have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over every living thing that moveth upon the earth.” (Gen 1:27-28)

The first two chapters of Genesis show us the natural order of what God established in creation. Everything that is “natural” stems from the creation account in Genesis 1 and 2. God created only two individual humans (a male and female) according to the creation account. He then commanded them to be fruitful and multiply.

“Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh.” (Gen 2:24)

The creation account demonstrates that the natural use of the woman is to be “one flesh” with the man and together they are to be “fruitful” and “multiply”. The book of Romans suggests that women left their “natural use” and instead went with what was against nature (not creation based).

“And likewise also the men, leaving the natural use of the woman, burned in their lust one toward another; men with men working that which is unseemly, and receiving in themselves that recompence of their error which was meet.” (Rom 1:27)

Verse 27 starts with the term “likewise” which indicates that men were doing the same thing that women were doing. They left the “natural” use of the woman and lusted after other men. In participating in

these same-sex relations, Paul declares what they did “unseemly” or “shameful” and “unfit” (v28).

Notice more of the language that is used here. The word “use” in verse 26-27 is only used here in the NT and implies a “sexual function”. Remember that the word “for” can also be translated “because”. With these understandings in mind the passage’s message becomes more clear, reading in the following way:

“Because of this, God surrendered them to vile lusts: because even their women did change their natural sexual function to what goes against nature. In the same way, the men also left the natural sexual function of the woman, burning in lust toward each other (men with men) working that which is shameful.” (Romans 1:27 Author’s translation 1)

Thus, we can understand that the passage is not saying that God made these individuals homosexual as a punishment for changing the truth of God into a lie. Instead, the passage suggests that because these men changed the truth of God into a lie, God surrendered them to their vile lusts and passions. In addition to changing the truth into a lie, both men and women had abandoned the natural sexual functions between men and women to participate in same-sex lustful practices. This was an additional reason (in combination with the other reasons given) why God gave them over to a “reprobate mind” (v.28).

In other words, since this was what they wanted to do, God gave them over to it and no longer intervened to prevent them and draw them away from sin. They were allowed to choose this path for themselves and act out their lustful practices receiving the consequences of these choices.

Nothing here is mentioned explicitly about pagan temple prostitution. Paul does not say that these men and women participated in “excessive” or “wrongly applied” same-sex relationships. He states

clearly that the problem was abandoning the “natural sexual function” for an “unnatural sexual function”. The use of the terms “natural” and “unnatural” invalidates that the context is only focused on temple prostitution.

Paul seems to complain that the sexual exploits are not happening between men and women, but are now happening in an “unnatural” way between same-sex pairs when he says “change the natural use” and “leaving the natural use”. For Paul, it’s not just about people fornicating: now, they were abandoning what was natural. He emphasizes this in verses 26-27.

Think about it. Paul could have said everyone is indulging in too much lust: men and women, women and women, and men with men. But he chooses to emphasize that the same-sex exploits were unnatural while he does not explicitly call the opposite sex exploits unnatural. Why does Paul take the time to emphasize that the homosexual relations were unnatural? The term “nature”, as stated before, links us to Genesis and the origins of sexual relations which are to be between a man and a woman.

Further Exploring the “Natural” and “Unnatural”

In regard to the word “unnatural” and “natural” revisionists argue that the word doesn’t mean “nature as in laws of nature” but rather something “characteristic”, “instinctual”, or a “kind”. They use the examples of Galatians 2:15, Romans 2:14, Romans 2:27, Romans 11:24, and 1 Corinthians 11:14 to suggest that the Greek word should be interpreted as “characteristic” and not a “natural law” established in Creation. However, let’s examine these passages.

“But when I saw that they walked not uprightly according to the truth of the gospel, I said unto Peter before *them* all, If thou,

being a Jew, livest after the manner of Gentiles, and not as do the Jews, why compellest thou the Gentiles to live as do the Jews? We *who are **Jews by nature***, and not sinners of the Gentiles, Knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law, but by the faith of Jesus Christ, even we have believed in Jesus Christ, that we might be justified by the faith of Christ, and not by the works of the law: for by the works of the law shall no flesh be justified.” (Gal 2:14-16 emphasis mine)

At this time period, Gentiles were considered to be non-Jews. Yet, in this passage, the Gentiles Paul refers to are Gentiles Peter was trying to convert to Christianity. When one becomes a Christian they are “spiritual Jews”, yet Paul is not saying here that Peter was living like a Gentile while trying to get Gentiles to live like “spiritual Jews”. Paul was a proponent of being “all things to all people”. Instead, Paul is talking about Peter living like a Gentile and then reverting back to Jewish customs in the presence of other Jews and trying to push those customs on the Gentiles while he did not always live in this manner.

When Paul states, “We who are Jews by nature” he is talking about being naturally Jewish. In other words: “born Jewish”. Paul is suggesting here that he and Peter were biologically Jewish because they were born into the faith and raised that way. Gentiles could convert, but were not natural Jews. They could become “spiritual Jews”; however, they were not biologically related to Abraham.

The Jewish faith is not only a set of customs and beliefs, but also includes bloodlines and lineage traceable to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. For this reason, the term “natural Jew” implied not only something characteristic (like being Jewish through circumcision), but also being biologically Jewish (as descendants of Abraham) and therefore “natural”. In this text, the term “natural” seems to include qualities that one is born

with. Paul and Peter were innately Jewish.

“For when the Gentiles, which have not the law, do **by nature** the things contained in the law, these, having not the law, are a law unto themselves:” (Romans 2:14 emphasis mine)

“And shall not uncircumcision which is **by nature**, if it fulfil the law, judge thee, who by the letter and circumcision dost transgress the law?” (Romans 2:27 emphasis mine)

In the first passage, Paul talks about obeying God’s law instinctively. Rather than forced or effort-driven obedience, obedience has become an instinctive characteristic of the Gentile believer. The obedience is a natural part of who he/she is.

The second passage refers to how “uncircumcision” is something natural: people are born this way. Every human being is born uncircumcised. We were created this way. This use of the word “nature” seems to refer to a natural law. Paul uses the term to refer to people who are uncircumcised, yet obey God. In his discourse on that, he points out that people are naturally uncircumcised and if they who are uncircumcised obey God, they are more likely to be in good standing in comparison to those who are circumcised and yet transgress God’s law.

Paul makes the case that how one is naturally born (ie. with a physically uncircumcised penis) does not inhibit them from receiving salvation; God will accept all who yield their obedience to Him by faith—whether circumcised or not. An uncircumcised person will be accounted as circumcised when they walk according to God’s law.

Since humanity was created uncircumcised, and this trend continues through the successive generations of Adam, we can conclude that uncircumcision is a natural law or natural order to things established in Creation (ie. the way things naturally are). The term “nature” therefore

links us back to “natural order” and Creation.

"For if God spared not the **natural** branches, *take heed* lest he also spare not thee. Behold therefore the goodness and severity of God: on them which fell, severity; but toward thee, goodness, if thou continue in *his* goodness: otherwise thou also shalt be cut off. And they also, if they abide not still in unbelief, shall be grafted in: for God is able to graft them in again. For if thou wert cut out of the olive tree which is wild **by nature**, and wert grafted contrary to **nature** into a good olive tree: how much more shall these, which be the **natural** branches, be grafted into their own olive tree?"

(Romans 11:21-24 emphasis mine)

Here Paul points out that there are wild olive trees and there is the good olive tree. The wild olive tree is not controlled, pruned, or maintained by humans like the “good olive tree” which was clearly owned and maintained. Paul uses these terms to refer to Gentiles and Jews making an agricultural analogy. This passage screams of nature!

Wild olive trees naturally have their branches. In creation, plants and trees were made after their kind and grow according to their kind. Paul suggests that God takes the branches of a wild tree and grafted them onto a good olive tree. God can also take the fallen natural branches of the good olive tree and graft them again. By this, Paul is talking about a tree representing the Church. Jews, who were disobedient, were the branches that fell off. Gentile believers are the wild natural branches grafted on. Jews who repent and “abide not in unbelief” (v.23) will also be grafted back on.

The branches of the wild olive tree were natural to the wild olive tree, while the branches of the good tree were natural to the good tree. In other words, each tree was born (or brought into existence) with their natural branches as was established in creation. The branches were not only characteristic of the tree, but a law of nature established in creation.

Paul is suggesting that God is doing something “contrary to nature” (or unexpected), with the wild branches, in that through this illustration Paul is explaining the manner in which Gentiles have been included in the plan of salvation. The word “nature” as used in this context clearly refers to the “natural world” as established in Creation and continued into the present. God’s “unnatural” act refers figuratively to His unexpected inclusion of the Gentiles in the plan of salvation. The implications of this analogy do not change the way in which Paul uses the word “nature”. It still suggests something in the natural created world.

When the branch is taken from one tree to be grafted to another, the act goes contrary to the natural order of things established in creation just as God’s actions seemed to go contrary to the Jewish understanding of the order of things. The text isn’t using the analogy to suggest that God is doing something wrong or unnatural, but is using something that humans do (which is not natural) to describe the surprise of God’s inclusion of the Gentiles grafted into a Jewish olive tree (church). There is no getting around the use of the word “nature” referring back to a natural order established in Creation.

“Doth not even nature itself teach you, that, if a man have long hair, it is a shame unto him?” (1 Cor 11:14 emphasis mine)

This is another use of the word “nature” that seems to refer to Creation. Even if we were to interpret “nature” as “instinct” it would imply that this “instinct” was placed in humanity, ultimately, at Creation. Paul seems to believe that the “natural order of things” is such that men should have shorter hair. What exactly in nature (ie. animals or man’s instinct) teaches that men should not have long hair is somewhat obscure. However, the next verse seems to indicate that a woman’s long hair was by divine appointment.

“But if a woman have long hair, it is a glory to her: for *her* hair **is given her** for a covering.” (1 Cor 11:15 emphasis mine)

The phrase “is given” implies that God appointed and established this principle. If this is the case, the woman’s long hair (and conversely the man’s short hair) was established as a principle in Creation. Therefore the term “nature” applies not just to a cultural characteristic but a “natural order” established in Creation.

“Howbeit then, when ye knew not God, ye did service unto them which **by nature** are no gods.” (Gal 4:8 emphasis mine)

This text seems to imply that according to natural law and the natural order of things, angels are not gods. This holds true since angels are created beings and, though powerful, are not divine. The term “by nature” seems to imply how these beings were created and established.

“Among whom also we all had our conversation in times past in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind; and were **by nature** the children of wrath, even as others.” (Eph 2:3 emphasis mine)

Ephesians 2:3’s use of the term “nature” seems to imply instinctual characteristics not established in Creation (ie. fallen nature).

“For every **kind** of beasts, and of birds, and of serpents, and of things in the sea, is tamed, and hath been tamed of man**kind**:” (James 3:7 emphasis mine)

This text seems to indicate “kinds” of animals (i.e. the natural characteristics of the animal). Yet, these natural characteristics were

established in Creation by God. Man has tamed all kinds of animals after “the Fall”; but, before the Fall, all animals were tamed and ruled by man.

“And God blessed them, and God said unto them, Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it: **and have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over every living thing that moveth upon the earth.**”

(Gen 1:28 emphasis mine)

The statement in James 3:7 is consistent with the Creation account. On the other hand, there is another way to view the passage. The same word translated “nature” is used to describe kinds of animals and human kind; however, the word typically used in the LXX for “species” or “kind” in Genesis is “genos” (Matt 13:47, Matt 17:21, Mar 9:29, Acts 4:6, Acts 7:13, 1 Cor. 12:10, etc.). The text seems to suggest that the “natural characteristic” of every animal is tamed and has been tamed by man’s nature. In other words, the ferocious natures of animals like beasts (lions, tigers, bears), birds (eagles, hawks, etc.), serpents, and sea creatures have been tamed by man’s nature. Thus, nature seems to refer to “instinctive” qualities of these animals being tamed by the instincts of men.

“Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises: that by these ye might be partakers of the divine **nature**, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust.” (2 Peter 1:4 emphasis mine)

This use of the term “nature” seems to suggest being able to acquire divine instinctive qualities or “natural characteristics” that God has and initially created humanity to have. Lust and corruption have

perverted these qualities in us, eliminating the likeness of God that we were designed with in Creation. In any case, “nature” seems to refer to an attribute or characteristic of God. The context of a passage shows whether “nature” is describing the order God intended or the sinful (fallen) nature. In the case of Romans 1, for example, it clearly shows that going against nature is negative.

“But these, as **natural** brute beasts, made to be taken and destroyed, speak evil of the things that they understand not; and shall utterly perish in their own corruption;” (2 Peter 2:12 emphasis mine)

This final passage refers to instinctive qualities of certain wild animals. Peter uses these animals as a metaphor for wicked people that slander the gospel. Peter seems to suggest that natural brute beasts are “made” [born or brought forth] for the purpose of being taken and destroyed (perhaps for food). This was certainly the post flood God ordained rule. The phrase “natural brute beasts” seems to indicate that the beasts were created naturally without intelligence and ability to reason. They are naturally without ability to reason as human’s do. Thus, this nature was instilled in them during Creation.

SO WHAT?

We have explored 12 texts, which are the only texts of scripture that use the word natural (“phusis” or “phusikos”). In some instances, there were cases in which Paul was clearly referring to the natural world, natural order, and Creation. In other instances Paul and other writers referred to instinctive characteristics. This suggests that the term can be used in different ways.

However, to uncover the mystery, it can also be helpful to study the meaning of the word itself:

Thayer defines the word “phusis” as “nature”. It can mean “the nature of things, the force, laws, order of nature”. It can be “as opposed to what is monstrous, abnormal, perverse” or “as opposed what has been produced by the art of man: the natural branches, i.e. branches by the operation of nature”. Nature can be a reference to “birth, physical origin” or “a mode of feeling and acting which by long habit has become nature”. Finally, Thayer suggests it can also be “the sum of innate properties and powers by which one person differs from others, distinctive native peculiarities, natural characteristics: the natural strength, ferocity, and intractability of beasts”.[10]

Strongs defines the word relating to another word implying “growth” (as a plant that germinates or growth by expansion). This word implies natural production in the sense of lineal descent. By extension it can mean a “genus” or “sort”. Figuratively, it can mean a native disposition, constitution, or usage.[11]

Again we find that the word can be used in multiple ways. It has figurative, implicative, and blatant meanings. We saw examples of this in the passages we explored. Some assert that a meaning of “para phusis” (“against nature” Romans 1:26 in the KJV) is “contrary to nature”. However, in the context of Romans 1:26 revisionists assert that “para phusis” means “against their nature”.

[10] <http://biblehub.com/thayers/5449.htm> (Accessed 5-29-2015) Thayer’s Greek Lexicon (G5449)

[11] <http://biblehub.com/strongs/greek/5449.htm> (Accessed 5-29-2015) Strong’s Exhaustive Concordance (G5449)

Such an interpretation implies that the women did what was against their individual disposition to experiment with homosexuality. However, the Greek does not support this rendering. “Their” is read into the text to support the revisionist (unbiblical) position. That word is not there!

Based on what *is* there, the text could read “their women did change the natural use into that contrary to nature.” The latter phrase could also be translated “Contrary to instinct”, “contrary to natural order”, “contrary to the innate disposition [of women]” or “contrary to the kind [of women]”.

When revisionists use the word “their” in the phrase “contrary to *their* nature” they want readers to think of an individual’s nature and not the nature of women collectively. They try to insinuate that the women in Romans 1:26-27 were going against their individual heterosexual natures, which may not necessarily be innate in all women collectively. This is a false reading.

Even with the word “their” (which is not there) the text would still read in a way where “their” refers to “all women” and their innate nature. Yet, “their” is not found anywhere in the text. The revisionist insertion is what makes the text read something more individualized when the passage does not lend itself to that.

The literal translation of the words “para phusis” is “against nature”. “Nature” therefore stands alone as something which the women’s actions were “against”. The women of the passage exchanged “the phusikos (produced by nature) sexual function” for what was “against nature”.

In other words:

1. They exchanged THE instinctive sexual function for what was against instinct.

2. They exchanged THE innate dispositional sexual function for what was against innate disposition

3. They exchanged THE natural sexual function for what was against nature.

4. They exchanged THE characteristic sexual function for what was against character

Regardless of which words you choose, all the renderings of the passage have the same message. The word “the” next to “phusikos” indicates that the women didn’t exchange “their” personal disposition, instinct, or natural order but “THE” disposition, instinct, or natural order. This was exchanged for what was contrary to that disposition, instinct, or natural order. Even to translate the passage “against instinct” would indicate that God gave women the natural instinct of heterosexuality (during Creation), and these women went against the natural instinct of women.

The main idea here is that while we can guess at what exactly Paul means by the words “Phusis” and “phusikos”, debating whether Paul meant natural order, instinct, innate disposition, characteristic of, etc.: what is clear is that the pronoun “their” cannot be read into the text. With this in mind, what was exchanged was something “innate” to all women for what was contrary—not something innate to only a group of women.

A rendering of the words of this passage could suggest the following: “their women exchanged **the** instinctive sexual function for [something] against instinct”.

Any way you look at it, the text cannot refer to an individualized matter. It speaks to the “nature” of women as a whole. If this is the case, (whether interpreted as instinctive, natural law, or otherwise) the text links to Creation and what was established then as “natural”.

The context of the overall passage links to Creation in that Paul is discussing rebellion against the Creator. This is because “**the** innate” or

instinctive heterosexuality of women was established by God in Creation. It is therefore reasonable to understand this text as referring to a “natural law” of Creation. Perhaps if Paul meant a combination of the definitions, the heterosexuality of women could be: innate, instinctive, inborn, characteristic of, and a natural law established at Creation.

At the very least the phrase “para phusis” could mean “abnormal” which still implies “against natural order” established in Creation. “Natural” seems to suggest, in this context, what was established by God, while unnatural suggests what goes against the established order. But can we be sure about how to interpret “phusis” and “phusikos”?

Overall, when looking into the context, the following points become clear. Romans 1:20 carries the phrase “from the creation of the world”. Verse 23 makes an implied distinction between Creator and creation: the Creator is incorruptible while created beings (like men, birds, beasts, and creeping things) are corruptible.

Verses 26-27 follow verse 25’s emphasis on God as Creator. This verse condemned making created things more important than the God who created them. Establishing God as Creator immediately draws our attention to the Genesis account in Genesis 1-3. Additionally, Paul uses the terms “females” (thçleiai) and “males” (arsenes) instead of “women” (gynaikes) and “men” (andres or anthorôpoi) which creates another allusion to the Genesis account by following the style of Gen 1:27 “‘male and female’ (arsen kai thçlu) made he them”.^[12]

All this demonstrates that, in Paul’s discourse on the wicked’s rejection of God, He focuses on Creation: making the point that because of Creation and what it reveals—the wicked are without excuse. This purposeful allusion to Creation gives us insight as to what Paul means by “para phusis”.

As Paul discusses the roles of females and males, he is pointing

us back to the Genesis Creation account. For this reason, by the term “phusis” in the phrase “para phusis” Paul is likely talking about the “natural” order or characteristics established at Creation. This makes sense since his argument about the wicked is that they reject the Creator and attempt to exalt the wisdom of the created over the creator and worship created things in the place of the Creator. God, for this reason, surrenders them to vile lusts. They defied Creation in abandoning not only the truth of God, but changing the “natural” order of things.

It also becomes important to note that many Bible scholars are in agreement that the phrase “para phusis” was used throughout Hellenistic, Stoic, and Jewish literature as a terminology against homosexuality^[13]—declaring it against the natural order of things (established in Creation). Thus, what was at first unclear, looking at the usage of the terms, becomes very clear as we consider the context. The Creation context of these verses indicates that we can be sure that “para phusis” refers to what is unnatural (according to Creation) and phusikos refers to what is natural (according to Creation).

Back to the main argument on Romans 1:26-27

Paul’s words may certainly apply to temple prostitution, but the language he uses declaring a “man with a man” or a “woman with a woman” as “unnatural” is sound evidence that his disgust with the same-sex relations applies across-the-board. While Paul could have said that all

[12] Hess, Maranatha "Paul's View of Para Phusin as Applied to Romans 1" (Supervisor : Prof. J.A. du Rand) University of Johannesburg: November 2005 p50 (Logic was paraphrased but derived from this resource).

[13] Hess, Maranatha "Paul's View of Para Phusin as Applied to Romans 1" (Supervisor : Prof. J.A. du Rand) University of Johannesburg: November 2005 p78

forms of “vile lust” were unnatural, he instead says that leaving the natural function of a man or woman (heterosexuality) is unnatural--emphasizing that not participating in heterosexual sex is unnatural.

Revisionists attempt to read into the text what is not there and read out of the text what is there. In this case they correctly apply this passage in the context of temple prostitution; however, Paul’s wording shows him to be making a general statement about homosexuality as “unnatural” rather than it only being unnatural when applied in the context of temple prostitution.

Pagan sex cults that practiced temple prostitution were known for heterosexual exploits also. Yet, Paul doesn’t emphasize this in his discourse. He focuses on the homosexual relations which seems to suggest that it particularly caught his attention and bothered him. His discourse in Romans could easily have declared heterosexual and homosexual temple prostitution unnatural and vile, yet Paul focuses on the latter. This is significant.

Revisionists also make the mistake of misquoting Paul suggesting that the people Paul is referring to only gave up “their” natural or innate passion for the opposite sex to explore same-sex relations. However, this is not what Paul says. Paul states that “they” gave up “the” natural or innate passion for the opposite sex.

“For this cause God gave them up unto vile affections: for even their women did change **the natural use** into that which is against nature: And likewise also the men, leaving **the natural use** of the woman, burned in their lust one toward another; men with men working that which is unseemly, and receiving in themselves that recompence of their error which was meet.” (Romans 1:26-27 emphasis mine)

The use of the phrase “THE natural use” implies that this use was

the rule. It does not personalize the experience, but suggests that all women and all men are by nature heterosexual. It also suggests that as these individuals practiced otherwise, they had to “give up”, “change”, and “leave” what was “THE natural”. The words “Their natural use” appear nowhere in these passages and is a dishonest reading. The Greek word used for “the” in this context is not possessive. We can, therefore, again conclude that while Paul’s words apply to those who practiced temple prostitution, the context of his word choice indicates that any sexual deviations from heterosexuality were considered by Paul not to be “THE natural use” of a man or woman.

Temple prostitution was merely a scenario in which people practiced what was not “THE natural”. Since Paul’s discussion was on what was “natural” and “unnatural” it is clear that the context is more far reaching and applicable than temple prostitution alone; otherwise, Paul would have needed to specify that what he called “unnatural” was only “unnatural” in the context of temple prostitution—Paul doesn’t do this.

Revisionists have it wrong—Romans 1:21-28 does apply to all homosexuality; it gives the Bible student firm Biblical ground upon which to say that homosexuality is vile, a shameful passion, an inordinate lust, and an unnatural practice according to scripture.

Argument 6: Leviticus not an appropriate proof text.

Revisionists argue that Leviticus 18 and 20 are not prohibitions against all forms of homosexuality. They argue a strict interpretation that both chapters should only be understood in the context of temple prostitution. Research demonstrates that temple prostitution took place in these lands which allowed for all kinds of different sexual exploits: incest, orgies, gay-sex, etc. Basically, people would have sex with anything and anyone.

In some instances people prostituted themselves in the temple.

Revisionists argue that gay-sex resulting from temple prostitution, and not committed relationships, are the only thing addressed in these passages. They argue that since history validates that homosexual temple prostitution took place during the time period in which Moses wrote Leviticus, that this proves we should strictly interpret his words to be a reference to temple prostitution and not gay-sex in general.

It is true that temple prostitution took place at the time Moses wrote Leviticus. Yet, it is a flawed argument that because this one form of gay-sex was proven to be practiced at that time that we should assume it was the only form of gay-sex practiced and that Moses is only addressing this form of homosexuality. Moses makes no specification, addressing a particular form of homosexuality. The historical argument only proves that gay-sex took place during temple prostitution. It does not prove that this is the only thing Moses was talking about.

To understand what Moses meant, therefore, we'll need to pay more close attention to what he actually writes. As Leviticus 18 begins, God begins speaking to Moses directing him to tell the children of Israel that because the Lord is their God, they should not repeat the practices of the land of Egypt or Canaan. He also emphasizes that the Israelites should not obey the ordinances of Egypt and Canaan.

Two things are specified that one, who has the Lord as their God, should not do: "doings of the land" and "ordinances". The Hebrew word translated "doings" can also be translated "works" or "deeds". The Hebrew word translated "ordinances" can refer to "appointments, customs, the manner of something, site, statute or ordinance". These "ordinances" seem to refer to common practice or obligated practices (like laws or official customs that were expected and/or mandated to be followed) that would have taken place in these countries, while "doings" would seem to suggest a practice, deed, or work that anyone could do and people were known to do in that region. God states that, in contrast, Israel was to keep His judgments and ordinances. God then begins a discourse

from verse 6 to 23 with a series of statutes or ordinances that Israel was to keep in place of the “works” and “ordinances” of both Egypt and Canaan.

The first 12 verses (6-18) of these commands are all laws in the context of sexuality and particularly against incest. Verse 17 even specifies that having sexual relations with people of the same family is “wickedness”. He does not specify that it is wickedness only in the context of temple prostitution, but wickedness in general. These were timeless ordinances that God commanded His people, assuring that they would not practice the deeds and ordinances of the nations that God punished. God states, further down in the passage, that when any nation does these things it “defiles the land” and will result in the land spitting out (rejecting) its inhabitants.

It should be noted that while these things could be practiced in a temple prostitution setting, God says nothing about idols or pagan worship in this particular passage. His focus is on the sexual acts and does not specify their context in worship. God clearly intends that these incest sex practices are not to be done in any setting. In other words, if a person happens to fall in love and is willing to be in a committed loving relationship with their wife’s daughter (from another marriage), their fathers new wife, or a grandparent: the practice is still wickedness.

This passage does not specify that the rules only apply in the context of temple prostitution. The acts themselves are considered wicked. In this passage, God does not say anything specifically condemning idolatry (though He does in other places); instead, the focus seems to be on what people do while practicing idolatry that adds to the wickedness. If Idolatry were the only issue, God would have to uproot every nation but His own nation. However, He doesn’t do this historically.

God seems to address the issue of idolatry itself with a more patient disposition. He places His people in the midst of idolaters to be a witness to them and to convince them of their error. However, God chooses to uproot nations based on additional wicked behavior as described here. This demonstrates that the focus of Leviticus 18 is not on

the sin of idolatry specifically, but on what's done by people who practice idolatry. It is also reasonable that these sexual acts may carry over into people's personal lives outside of the temple—or that what went on during temple prostitution was merely a carrying out of desires that originate from outside of the temple setting. In either case, it is not the context of a pagan temple that makes these acts so bad: it is clearly the acts themselves.

This was important to specify since time and culture may one day change, and if people in our post-modern world practice incest relationships, they may attempt another revisionist attitude towards Leviticus 18 claiming that only incest in temple prostitution was condemned in this passage. The context clearly doesn't allow for such an interpretation because God does not specify anything about the location in which these sexual acts take place, but specifies the action "deed" itself. God also does not specify an issue with the motive behind these sexual exploits, He specifies the sexual act itself suggesting through the term "nakedness" and "uncovering" that family members (kinsmen) are not to be sexually involved at all.

Further proof is in the fact that God says nothing here about fornicating couples: heterosexual relations between two unmarried parties. In the context of temple prostitution it wouldn't be uncommon for unmarried parties to engage in sexual activity—yet, God seems particularly concerned with incestuous relationships and later (v.20) adulterous ones between heterosexual parties.

“Also thou shalt not approach unto a woman to uncover her nakedness, as long as she is put apart for her uncleanness.” (Lev 18:19)

This particular verse seems to assume that sex will take place between a man and a woman. It does not rebuke the act of sex itself, but states a condition. A man cannot have sex with a woman while she's

menstruating. This, also, was not a sin unique only to temple prostitution: It was another location-less principle. God never specifies pagan temple worship as the context, but states this rule as if it applied generally.

Evidence of this truth is in the fact that it does not condemn the practice of sex between a man and a woman—if temple prostitution were the context, promiscuous sex between a man and a woman would still be wrong in the pagan temple context. All forms of temple prostitution would be a sin. Yet in this passage (v6-20) only incest, adultery, and sex during menstruation are condemned while no mention is made of heterosexual sex between two unmarried and unrelated parties. The text, in verse 19, seems to assume that heterosexual parties are interested in having sex, but warns not to do it under the conditions of menstruation.

This fact eliminates the context of Leviticus 18 from solely being about temple prostitution and makes its context much broader. In fact, a husband and wife should not have sex while the wife is menstruating—not just in the pagan temple, but anywhere. If this passage were in the context of pagan temple worship, where is the passage that says: “thou shalt not approach unto a woman to uncover her nakedness... PERIOD!” The fact that no such passage exists means one of two things.

First, that if Leviticus 18 is truly strictly in the context of pagan temple worship, as revisionists say, then God must be ok with some forms of promiscuous sex that took place in this setting since He does not mention and condemn all the potential sexual relations that took place in this setting. He strictly forbids incest, adultery, and menstrual sex while He does not address heterosexual sex between unmarried parties. To this class, He states only that they may not have sex when the woman is menstruating. Is God, therefore, ok with fornication and prostitution between men and women in the temple context while condemning adultery, incest, and later homosexuality? Why would heterosexual prostitution be held in higher esteem than other forms of prostitution? Why would the incest, adulterous, and homosexual forms of temple sex worship be punishable or considered abomination, while it is assumed (and not condemned) that heterosexual sex will take place between

parties.

Revisionists have a huge problem here, because to take this approach to interpreting this text demonstrates the superior nature of unmarried heterosexual sex. On the other hand, if we take the approach that Leviticus 18 is not strictly about temple prostitution, but general, broader rules that define acceptable sexual practice—things start to make more sense. While incest, adultery, and sex during menstruation are condemned, heterosexual relationships are ok as long as the parties don't have sex while the woman menstruates. Scripture condemns fornication (unmarried sex), and, if fornication is a sin, prostitution is certainly a sin.

"Mortify therefore your members which are upon the earth; **fornication**, uncleanness, inordinate affection, evil concupiscence, and covetousness, which is idolatry: **For which things' sake the wrath of God cometh on the children of disobedience:**" (Col 3:5-6 emphasis mine)

"Know ye not that your bodies are the members of Christ? **shall I then take the members of Christ, and make *them* the members of an harlot? God forbid.** What? know ye not that **he which is joined to an harlot is one body?** for two, saith he, shall be one flesh." (1 Cor 6:15-16 emphasis mine)

"**Do not prostitute thy daughter, to cause her to be a whore;** lest the land fall to whoredom, **and the land become full of wickedness.**" (Lev 19:29 emphasis mine)

"**They shall not take a wife *that is* a whore,** or profane; neither shall they take a woman put away from her husband: **for he is holy unto his God.**" (Lev 21:7 emphasis mine)

These texts demonstrate that ANY form of prostitution or fornication would be a sin. Yet, Leviticus 18 seems too selective in what

it covers to be strictly in the context of temple prostitution. It totally leaves out heterosexual fornication and general heterosexual prostitution. As thorough as God tends to have Moses write, it seems strange that none of the passages in this chapter state “thou shalt not approach unto a woman to uncover her nakedness... PERIOD!”

Since God clearly condemns prostitution and fornication, the evidence shows, convincingly, that this passage cannot be interpreted in the narrow context in which revisionists would like it to be interpreted. Instead, as the evidence shows, this passage contains general guidelines for sexuality. While they would certainly apply in the temple prostitution context, which probably existed during that time period, they were not limited only to that scope.

Basically, God was saying to the male Israelites, “You’re only allowed to have sex with a woman, but you have to do it when she’s not menstruating! If you have any of the aforesaid forms of deviant sex, expect punishment because that’s exactly why I overthrew the nations which occupied this land before you.” [Author’s paraphrase]

Furthermore, additional evidence supports this view. Namely, how Ezekiel applies the understanding of these words to sins committed in Israel many years after Moses had penned Leviticus. Ezekiel, as He proclaims God’s rebuke of Israel’s sins, seems to believe that the commands written in Leviticus 18 were generally applicable and not only applicable merely in the context of temple prostitution.

“Behold, all souls are mine; as the soul of the father, so also the soul of the son is mine: **the soul that sinneth, it shall die. But if a man be just, and do that which is lawful and right, *And hath not* eaten upon the mountains, neither hath lifted up his eyes to the idols of the house of Israel, **neither hath defiled his neighbour’s wife, neither hath come near to a menstruous woman,** *And hath not* oppressed any, *but* hath restored to the debtor his pledge, hath spoiled none by violence, hath given his bread to the hungry, and hath covered the naked with a garment; He**

that hath not given forth upon usury, neither hath taken any increase, *that* hath withdrawn his hand from iniquity, hath executed true judgment between man and man, Hath walked in my statutes, and hath kept my judgments, to deal truly; **he is just, he shall surely live, saith the Lord GOD.**” (Eze 18:4-9 emphasis mine)

Ezekiel did not specify the context of temple prostitution. He believed that the rules of Leviticus 18 were applicable in a much broader context. These sins were not to be practiced at all under any context—let alone temple prostitution. This evidence demonstrates that the context of Leviticus is not temple worship, though these things were commonly done in pagan temples, but were principles that guided sexuality in every context.

“Moreover thou shalt not lie carnally with thy neighbour's wife, to defile thyself with her. And thou shalt not let any of thy seed pass through *the fire* to Molech, neither shalt thou profane the name of thy God: I *am* the LORD.” (Lev 18:20-21)

The only verse in this text that has anything to do with idolatry or pagan worship directly is verse 21 which deals with allowing “seed” to pass through the fire to the pagan god Molech (the consort of Ashtoreth). In doing so, God considers these actions to profane His name. However, this one text does not invalidate the broad context of the entire passage (as general rules for sexuality) nor is it a point at which the context is switched. Notice that verse 21 begins with the conjunction “and” which automatically connects it to the previous verse or verses. With all the sexual promiscuity going on, women may have become pregnant often. Sacrificing children to Molech, as the heathen women did, was strictly forbidden.

Verses 6-20 dealt with forbidden heterosexual exploits that would likely result in children from worship of Ashtoreth. The prohibition

against offering one's children to Molech would therefore make sense. Since the rest of the chapter doesn't deal with heterosexual sex, this prohibition makes sense here given that only women can get pregnant. This text doesn't suggest that God is only speaking about temple prostitution however; to the contrary, it speaks to the results of promiscuous sex: people had lots of children (resulting from temple prostitution and sexual misconduct outside of the temple) and then thought it would be a great idea to throw them through fire. In those days there was no such thing as "protection". It stands to reason that if people were having all this sex, fertility would be at a high. With conception and child rearing being so prevalent, I suppose the lives and wellbeing of children may not have been as highly regarded.

In any case, since heterosexual relations are the focus of verses 6-20, verse 21 is logical since it addresses the fruits of promiscuous sex and how people treated that fruit. The verse does not invalidate that general broad context of rules for sexuality. Ashtoreth is never even mentioned, only the actions are mentioned which could have been done in a pagan worship service. Looking at verses 19-21 together may suggest that people were looking for ways to have promiscuous sex without having children. Perhaps they tried to have sex when women were menstruating so they couldn't get pregnant. If they did get pregnant, after conceiving, there was a possibility Molech was angry and would only be appeased by a child sacrifice. Convenient! Molech almost sounds like an ancient abortion clinic.

Ashtoreth was the pagan goddess of fertility who was the wife/consort of Molech. Even if the context were strictly temple prostitution, verse 21 would still seem out of place in a passage about sexual misconduct. It is also likely that many women besides temple prostitutes took part in this practice. Thus, the children of temple prostitutes as well as regular sexual and incestuous affairs, outside of the temple, would and could have been passed through the fires to Molech. This demonstrates that verse 21 in no way forces the context of Leviticus 18 to be solely about temple prostitution.

Furthermore, while it does hint that Ashtoreth worship practices are included, it does not prove that the laws are only relevant in the context of pagan worship. For example, it would be just as wrong to have sex with animals in one's home as it would at a pagan temple. It would be just as wrong to have sex with one's daughter in law or grandmother in the temple as elsewhere. Since every single law included before and after the law on homosexuality would apply in a broader much wider context as well as the Ashtoreth context: we can conclude that the same-sex law applies in a much wider and broader context as well.

The argument is put forth that as long as homosexuals are in a committed relationship, it would not be the same thing as what was going on in these pagan worship practices. However, if one had a committed relationship with an animal or a grandparent, would the same argument apply? No! Therefore, it can't apply to the homosexual setting either. Leviticus 18 condemns it as a general rule!

Again, the chapter clearly focuses on general guidelines for sexuality. Thus far, the practices forbidden in verses 6-21 are forbidden in any context—not just temple prostitution. They are location-less principles and timeless principles. These sins are forbidden today and are not to be practiced by Christians. The sexual guidelines are still binding on the Church. Are there any Christians, today, that think its ok to have sex with family members or married women and then pass the offspring of that relationship through fire in order to satisfy pagan gods that don't exist? Yea, there may be some professed "Christians"... but God strictly forbids these practices—all who do such things are not true Christians!

“Thou shalt not lie with mankind, as with womankind: it *is* abomination. Neither shalt thou lie with any beast to defile thyself therewith: neither shall any woman stand before a beast to lie down thereto: it *is* confusion.” (Lev 18:22-23)

These last two verses conclude the list of rules on sexuality. The first deals with homosexuality, calling it an abomination. The last deals

with bestiality—having sexual relations with animals: men are not to do it to the animal and women are not to be on the receiving end of any animal.

Since this presentation deals with homosexuality, let's address verse 23 first. While these things may have happened in a temple setting, they could also have happened in other settings as well. Regardless of where they actually happen, the rule is no less binding. It is a timeless, location-less, moral principle that bestiality is universally wrong no matter where or how it takes place. In other words, God was not only suggesting that bestiality is wrong in the context of temple prostitution—it's wrong PERIOD!

Now that we've covered all the other rules, we are in a more firm position to cover verse 22. The rules for sexuality are contained in verses 6-23. We established that verses 6-21 contain timeless, location-less, moral principles. We also established that verse 23 is a timeless, location-less, moral principle. Are revisionists trying to suggest that only verse 22 is a location specific time bound rule that does not apply to homosexuals today? Are they really suggesting that the context of that verse is strictly temple prostitution while all the other verses are clearly broader in scope? Sure they are, but such a position doesn't stand up to scrutiny!

Furthermore, the use of the pronoun "neither", in verses 23, puts the bestiality commands (grammatically) in the same grouping with the command in verse 22. This suggests that these commands are on the same level.

Chapter 17 of Leviticus dealt with matters regarding food and the sacrificial system. Chapter 19 was a set of rules governing a variety of things. Chapter 18 stands by itself as a list of laws specifically dealing with sexual sins. This, with the other discussed information, gives us a clear context for chapter 18. If Leviticus 18:6-21 and verse 23 are all timeless, location-less, moral principles, then it stands to reason that verse 22 would be also. Trying to separate it from that context is to make the same error that many Christians make today in their analysis of the Ten Commandments—stating that commands 1-3 and 5-10 are binding while the Fourth Commandment (dealing with the Sabbath) is nailed to

the cross; Yet, it is clear that the 9 other Commandments are all timeless moral principles that could never be unbinding. Scripture, however, does not support such an approach.

“For verily I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled. Whosoever therefore shall break one of these least commandments, and shall teach men so, he shall be called the least in the kingdom of heaven: but whosoever shall do and teach *them*, the same shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven. For I say unto you, That except your righteousness shall exceed *the righteousness* of the scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no case enter into the kingdom of heaven.” (Matt 5:18-20)

“By this we know that we love the children of God, when we love God, and keep his commandments. For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments: and his commandments are not grievous. For whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world: and this is the victory that overcometh the world, *even* our faith.” (1 John 5:2-4)

Thus, looking at the clear context of Leviticus 18:22, we can see that temple prostitution is not mentioned anywhere in the chapter. The commandment against homosexual sex is listed in the midst of timeless, location-less, moral principles and is itself a timeless, location-less, moral principle. It would be just as wrong to practice it in the temple setting as it would be to practice it elsewhere. The context of the verse is in a chapter of Leviticus dealing with general guidelines for sexuality. Of all the rules mentioned in this chapter, this was the first to be called an abomination. Verse 26 later labels all the forbidden practices of this chapter as abominations; yet, God specifies gay-sex as an abomination earlier in verse 22. This is significant!

While revisionists often say that the context is “uncontrolled lust” and would not apply to a “love-driven” committed relationship, that notion is easily rebutted by the fact that even if you had a committed relationship with an aunt, grandmother, step parent, or your pet—it would still be an abomination. Leviticus 18 is irrespective of the commitment behind these sexual perversions and is more concerned with the act itself—not what motivates the act. It suggests that to practice these sexual deviations under ANY context is an abomination. Since this is true of verses 6-21 and verse 23: it holds true for verse 22 also.

Nothing in the context specifies a strict contextualization in temple prostitution; therefore, we must conclude that the entire passage is about basic guidelines for sexuality. The revisionist is wrong to conclude that Christians take this “clobber passage” out of context. It is they who have read into the text a misleading context. It is true that temple prostitution would be addressed by these commands, and it certainly was an issue during the time period. However, there is no indication in the passage that these rules were not applicable in all contexts since we know that verses 6-21 and verse 23 are not appropriate in any setting, context, or time period.

The last verses from 24-30 state that the things listed from verse 6 through 23 were all abominations. The nations prior to Israel which occupied Canaan did all these things. It was for this reason that God judged them and gave the land to the Israelites. God specifies that anyone doing any of these wicked deeds would be cut-off from among their people. This is similar language to what is used for the person that doesn't take the Day of Atonement seriously. Performing any one of these actions is considered to be a defilement of God's people. God specifies that it was for these reasons that the previous nations were overtaken and that any nation that repeats any one of these acts would be in danger of suffering the same fate.

“Sanctify yourselves therefore, and be ye holy: for I *am* the LORD your God. And ye shall keep my statutes, and do them: I *am* the LORD which sanctify you. For every one that curseth his father or his mother shall be surely put to death: he hath cursed his father or his mother; his blood *shall be* upon him.

And the man that committeth adultery with *another* man's wife, *even he* that committeth adultery with his neighbour's wife, the adulterer and the adulteress shall surely be put to death. And the man that lieth with his father's wife hath uncovered his father's nakedness: both of them shall surely be put to death; their blood *shall be* upon them.

And if a man lie with his daughter in law, both of them shall surely be put to death: they have wrought confusion; their blood *shall be* upon them.

If a man also lie with mankind, as he lieth with a woman, both of them have committed an abomination: they shall surely be put to death; their blood *shall be* upon them.

And if a man take a wife and her mother, it *is* wickedness: they shall be burnt with fire, both he and they; that there be no wickedness among you.

And if a man lie with a beast, he shall surely be put to death: and ye shall slay the beast. And if a woman approach unto any beast, and lie down thereto, thou shalt kill the woman, and the beast: they shall surely be put to death; their blood *shall be* upon them.” (Lev 20:7-16)

Leviticus 20 starts out with a warning against worshipping Molech. However, God again addresses timeless, location-less, moral rules that most would agree are wrong. He emphasizes the

inappropriateness of incest, bestiality, disrespect for parents, and adultery. These principles are not only binding in the context of pagan temple worship. In other words, it's not ok at any time to curse one's father or mother; nor is it ok to have sexual relations with an animal, a family member, or someone of the same-sex regardless of the setting.

If we can easily grasp the fact that, as a rule, having sex with animals is wrong, why is there a problem with accepting the rule in regard to homosexuality? Every rule, before and after it, is a binding rule without time constraints or emphasis upon location. It is therefore dishonest to suggest that one rule is only limited to the context of temple prostitution. Whether a relative had sex with a relative to worship Ashtoreth or did it outside of the worship setting would not make the practice any less wrong.

It is important to note that we have at least one clear example of an incest relationship taking place outside of the temple prostitution context. Moab and Ammon were two nations that came into existence through an act of incest: Lot's daughters got their father drunk and had sex with him (Gen 19:31-38). It's also interesting that the oldest daughter makes the statement that there was not a man on the earth to "come in" to them (have sex with them) after the manner of "all the earth". (Gen 19:31) This text makes it clear from the perspective of Lot's daughters that sex between a man and a woman was the "manner of all the earth" or the natural way of doing things. Apparently, they learned at least something from the experience with Sodom and Gomorrah. Yet, their act of incest shows that they were not converted.

Each of Lot's daughters became pregnant with a male child that started the nations of Moab (from Moab) and Ammon (from Benammi). Both nations forsook belief in the one true God and eventually adopted pagan practices: for example, both adopted the worship of Molech. They did not seem to share Lot's faith. Although Balaam, a prophet of God from that region (and not of Israel), is mentioned to have been consulted by the king of Moab, we also learn that this prophet was corrupted by greed and did not fully follow God. (Numbers 22-25; 31:16) Hence, though connected to, and originating from, a believer like Lot, these

nations did not continue in belief—even the mentioned prophet from that region was corrupted. They replaced faith in God with paganism and pagan practices in spite of their ancestors' experience in Sodom and Gomorrah. This is not surprising considering the unconverted hearts of Lot's daughters.

In the case of the Moabites, these practices included temple prostitution. Given the origins of these nations stemming from an act of incest on the part of Lot's daughters, it's not hard to see how such a light view of incest may have been adopted which would result in, or possibly encourage, the wicked occurrences and indulgences of temple prostitution (a context in which relatives could become sexually active). The origins of the Moabites and Ammonites, who later adopted temple prostitution, stem from the incest of Lot's daughters and show an example in which the incest described in the Levitical prohibitions took place outside of the temple prostitution context.

Incest was not viewed as a positive thing; in fact, to go through with such a sin, Lot's daughters had to get him drunk so he wouldn't know what was being done to him. Scripture states Lot had no idea when his daughters got in bed and got back out. (Gen 19:33-35) If such a thing had to be done with such secrecy and with such manipulation, how could incest be viewable as a positive thing even though it took place outside of the temple prostitution context? Clearly the Leviticus prohibitions against incest were all-inclusive and not narrowed to a particular context.

Again, as in chapter 18, heterosexual temple sex is never mentioned which surely took place and would be a sin. Yet God focuses on particular practices that are timeless, location-less, and moral issues. While they certainly apply to the worship of Ashtoreth, there is no indication that these rules apply strictly to that context. This is especially the case since God doesn't specify in this chapter that ANY of these practices are ok as long as they are done in a committed relationship.

Instead, God focuses on the actions, never mentioning Ashtoreth (the fertility god), while Molech was mentioned by name. It's hard to make the argument that God is only focusing on pagan worship practices and not the actions themselves. This is especially true since part of those

worship practices involved fornication, yet heterosexual fornication is not mentioned in this passage (nor in chapter 18).

Therefore, while these practices were typically done during the worship of Ashtoreth, they were still equally wrong outside of that worship setting. Not one practice in all these verses is condoned, yet revisionists want to single out homosexuality because of its increased popularity today. They declare that condemnation was only applicable when homosexuality was applied in a worship and lust context—yet, every act before it and after it was condemnable in any context. Such an argument is disingenuous.

“And the soul that turneth after such as have familiar spirits, and after wizards, to go a whoring after them, I will even set my face against that soul, and will cut him off from among his people.” (Lev 20: 6)

“For every one that curseth his father or his mother shall be surely put to death: he hath cursed his father or his mother; his blood *shall be* upon him. And the man that committeth adultery with *another* man's wife, *even he* that committeth adultery with his neighbour's wife, the adulterer and the adulteress shall surely be put to death.” (Lev 20:9-10)

Additional evidence can be seen in that God includes other timeless moral principles in this list of Commandments. He also addresses magic and divination users, which were practices strictly forbidden in all contexts (Isa 8:19-20). Certainly, in regard to Molech, God is addressing the Second Commandment which deals with graven images. In addressing the issue of cursing father or mother, God touches on the Fifth Commandment. In discussing adultery, He references the Seventh Commandment.

Since the Ten Commandments are timeless, location-less, moral principles, and those who break them in the context of the worship of

Ashtoreth and Molech are just as guilty as those who break them outside of that context: why would we limit the context of any of these laws – restricting them to apply in only a pagan worship setting? Such interpretations defy both logic and honesty, especially since heterosexual unmarried relationships are not included in the discussion.

In conclusion on these passages, we can agree that the temple prostitution setting does apply to Leviticus 18 and 20 but is certainly not limited to that context. The strongest evidence is that each of the same-sex passages is in the midst of several timeless, location-less, and moral passages that most would agree apply in any setting regardless of the context. It is therefore unfair and dishonest to limit the context of the homosexual passages to a strict and convenient context, when all the other passages apply broadly. According to the Bible, homosexuality is as wrong as bestiality, incest, dishonoring parents, idol worship, witchcraft, and adultery.

Revisionists seemingly champion the idea of the “context” stating that these passages talk about temple prostitution, which was a setting where many of these commandments would be broken. However, their arguments become weak in that they do not consider additional context—they instead seek to limit and constrict context for convenient purposes.

If one takes the approach that homosexuality is ok as long as it’s not in a pagan worship setting, then we should be able to say the same thing about incest, bestiality, and witchcraft. After-all, according to the revisionists, temple prostitution is the strict context of chapter 18 and 20: it seems as though (to them) none of these commands would apply in any other setting. What about cursing one’s parents? As long as this isn’t done in a pagan worship setting or during temple prostitution, would it be ok? Certainly not!

“For God commanded, saying, Honour thy father and mother: and, He that curseth father or mother, let him die the death. But ye say, Whosoever shall say to *his* father or *his* mother, *It is a gift*, by whatsoever thou mightest be profited by me; And honour

not his father or his mother, *he shall be free*. Thus have ye made the commandment of God of none effect by your tradition. *Ye hypocrites, well did Esaias prophesy of you, saying, This people draweth nigh unto me with their mouth, and honoureth me with their lips; but their heart is far from me. But in vain they do worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men.*"
(Matt 15:4-9)

Again, the revisionists have it wrong. If all these listed commandments apply in broader contexts, so does the one on homosexuality. There is no indication that any of these texts only apply in a strict context. The evidence points to them applying in a much broader context. Such a position stands on much more stable ground than the former.

To the contrary, the National Gay Pentecostal Alliance states that the KJV version's interpretation of Leviticus 18:22 and 20:13 is a mistranslation. They state that the original Hebrew says: "And a man who will lie down with a male in beds of a woman, both of them have made an abomination; dying they will die. Their blood is on them."^[14]

There are two Hebrew words generally used for bed: "mittah"⁴²⁹⁶ and "Mishkab"^{H4904}. By looking at the use of the latter (Mishkab), we can clearly see that this commandment is not simply a command for homosexual couples not to have sex on the literal beds of literal women. The specific Hebrew word "Mishkab" carries a sexual undertone. It often implies sexual intercourse and marital intimacy.

[14] Anon, "What does Leviticus 18:22 really say?", Pamphlet, National Gay Pentecostal Alliance (NGPA)

“Unstable as water, thou shalt not excel; because thou wentest up to thy father's **bed**; then defiledst thou *it*: he went up to my couch.” (Gen 49:4 emphasis mine)

“Now therefore kill every male among the little ones, and kill every woman that hath known man **by lying** with him.” (Numbers 31:17 emphasis mine)

“And this *is* the thing that ye shall do, Ye shall utterly destroy every male, and every woman that hath **lain by** man. And they found among the inhabitants of Jabeshgilead four hundred young virgins, that had known no man **by lying** with any male: and they brought them unto the camp to Shiloh, which *is* in the land of Canaan.” (Judges 21:11-12 emphasis mine)

“And the Babylonians came to her into **the bed** of love, and they defiled her with their whoredom, and she was polluted with them, and her mind was alienated from them.” (Ezekiel 23:17 emphasis mine)

Although not in every case, the Hebrew word Mishkab has a sexual connotation. Clearly it is used in Numbers and Judges to imply that women who had sex with men were to be killed. Those who were virgins were spared. When one entered the “bedchamber” it was implied that it was for sexual purposes.

Therefore, the Leviticus 20:13 and 18:22 passages are not simply talking about homosexual’s having sex in a female’s bed; rather, it is talking about men having relations with men the way men entering a bed chamber with a woman have relations. In short, when looking at the original language a correct translation would read: “If a man lie with a man [as if going to a bed chamber] with a woman: it is abomination!” On

the other hand, the word “Mishbak” can clearly be translated “lying with” as we see in Judges and Numbers. However, in either case, the sexual nature of the event is implied. It should be noted that Ezekiel even describes the Mishbak as “the bed of love”.

To further support the point, based on the NGPA’s translation “in beds of a woman”, it should be noted that the Hebrew word used for “woman” is the same word used for “wife”. Even if this rendering were correct, that phrase would simply refer to the “beds of a wife” or the “marriage bed”. The words “of a” can mean that the wife owns the bed; thus, as far as males are concerned, the bedroom is for the purposes of having a wife, not a male partner. However, I think the KJV holds the best and most honest translation, stating that mankind is not to lie with mankind: it is an abomination.

Argument 7: Sodom, more about gang rape than homosexuality

Revisionists argue that the events of Genesis 19 were more about gang rape and humiliating foreigners than about homosexuality as a practice. They assert that the passage only condemns gay rape for humiliation purposes and not gay relationships. Since “all the men” of the city gathered together at Lot’s door, they argue that not everyone could have been gay and there must have been heterosexuals within the mob. The presence of heterosexuals in the mob, for revisionists, suggests that the gang raping was more about humiliation than gay sex and would have been just as wrong if they were going after females.

They argue: “Some pastors cite Genesis 19, a passage that condemns homosexual rape, as proof that God hates all homosexual behavior. Yet they would never quote a verse that condemns heterosexual rape and state that it applies to all heterosexual activity.”^[15]

Next, they support these claims by arguing that passages of scripture referencing Sodom do not state homosexuality as the cause of its destruction. They argue that Jude 7 refers to heterosexual relationships between human women (from Sodom) and angelic males, just like some scholars suggest took place in Genesis 6:1-4 leading up to the flood. For these reasons, they assert that Sodom and Gomorrah had nothing to do with homosexuality as a practice.

At first glance, it seems like the revisionist strategy is contextualizing a passage to fit strictly into a gang-rape scenario while ignoring other parts of the context. It is true that the situation in Sodom would have been a homosexual gang-rape. It may be true that these actions were used to humiliate foreigners. It is also true that Lot was unaware that his visitors were angels and wanted to show hospitality to foreigners.[16] But let's look further into what the context has to say.

First, we have no reason to believe that the men surrounding Lot's house were not all the men of the city. In ancient times cities were probably not as populated as cities today. But, scripture makes it clear that the "men" of the city surrounded the house and that these were both young and old. There is also the possibility that the men may have been bi-sexual, experimenting with men while also being married to women. What is clear is that the spokesperson for these men told Lot:

[15] Robinson, B.A. http://www.religioustolerance.org/hom_bibi1.htm Ontario Consultants on Religious Tolerance 1996 – 2011 Updated: January 10th 2011. (accessed 6-01-2015)

[16] Some hold differing opinions on this matter, but the events of the text suggest that Lot's actions may have been a practice of the time used to greet and take care of strangers—he likely did not recognize the guests as heavenly visitors. Many commentators of varying denominations hold this view. For Seventh-day Adventist commentary: read Patriarchs and Prophets "the Destruction of Sodom" (158).

“And they called unto Lot, and said unto him, Where *are* the men which came in to thee this night? bring them out unto **us**, that **we** may **know** them.” (Genesis 19:5 emphasis mine)

According to this person’s statement, we see that the men of the city were planning to rape these visitors. The word “know” in this passage is used in scripture for sexual activity (See Gen 4:1, 17, 25; 38:26). The person speaking spoke on behalf of all the men surrounding Lot’s home. This person also suggests that the men were in agreement with his words and that all the bystanders were participants either by intent to take action or by association and consent. Some would even argue, like in the case of pornography, that if you enjoy watching—even if you don’t participate—one is as guilty as if the action were performed by that person because of mental engagement.

In response to the threat, Lot offers them his daughters. This action may have implied that Lot considered it better for them to have sex with his virgin daughters than to have sex with the male visitors that came to stay with him. Why doesn’t Lot offer himself or his own wife? Why does he choose his virgin daughters? If he had known, previously, that his visitors were angels, this might have made more sense. However, since he was unaware, we are faced with the question of why Lot thought this was better.

Revisionists like to make the argument that gang rape would be wrong in any context; Lot wanted to protect his guests, therefore he offered his daughters to be gang raped instead. This would suggest that to gang rape citizens of the city was better than doing it to total strangers who were just visiting. However, what father would consider it better that his children be humiliated rather than visitors or even himself?

Lot clearly seems to think that the gang rape of women, who were virgins, was better than that of men or Lot himself. In fact, one scholar, in the book "The Bible and Homosexual Practice: Texts and Hermeneutics", states:

“...it is difficult to say from the story's perspective how much of Lot's desire to give up his own daughters instead of offering himself is due to plain self-interest, how much is due to a devaluation of women in ancient culture, and how much is due to the revulsion felt for same-sex eroticism.” (Gagnon 74)

Gagnon seems to suggest here that the answer could have been any combination of his three suggestions. However, the fact that Lot was spared from Sodom's destruction suggests his strong relationship with God and makes it unlikely that he didn't love his daughters and care for them deeply (See Psa 127:3; 2 Peter 2:8). If this is true, it adds support to the idea of the Bible's view of heterosexual sex as superior—even in the context of rape. Further evidence of this can be seen in Lot's words spoken when the men try to get Lot to deliver his visitors to them: “brethren, do not so wickedly”. These words imply that their intentions were “so wicked” while the alternative Lot gave them (his daughters) was for some reason less wicked.

This shows that the sin of Sodom, in this case, is not merely gang rape alone. Whether they did it with Lot's daughters or the visitors, they were still committing the same sin. If raping was the only issue, Lot would have been enabling them (by giving his daughters over) to do the very thing that was bringing about their destruction and would have been a participant in it. He essentially attempted to prostitute his daughters in exchange for the safety of his visitors. Why would their safety be so important over the wellbeing of his family? Why does he not offer them his own wife or himself (The words “we will deal worse with you [Lot] than with them [the visitors] implies that Lot would have been sexually assaulted instead of his daughters.)?

With these things in mind, we can conclude that the Genesis 19 description of Sodom was indeed an instance of attempted homosexual

gang rape (probably committed many times before) and was not in the context of a consensual relationship. The passage is not intended to be a general rule, but rather an account of an event that took place (in which a gang rape would have occurred). Lot's protective actions can be seen as a zealous attempt to defend visitors from the inhospitable, cruel treatment they would have received. However, when we take into account Lot's righteousness (2 Peter 2:8) and the laws of Leviticus, it would seem that in addition to Lot wanting to protect his guests, there might have been additional reason for Lot sending out his daughters: So that the men of Sodom would commit a sin less wicked than the one they originally intended.

As God describes why He will visit Sodom, He states that the sin is "very grievous" (Gen 18:20). While raping Lot's daughters would be a sin, raping the men would have been a horrible and humiliating way to welcome guests to the city, not to mention an abomination. Scripture seems to indicate that while heterosexual rape is a deplorable crime, homosexual rape is even worse. In the Law of Moses, if a man rapes a virgin female, there were provisions for the father to be paid a fine and the couple was to be married. This was not true of homosexual rape.

"If a man find a damsel *that is* a virgin, which is not betrothed, and lay hold on her, and lie with her, and they be found; Then the man that lay with her shall give unto the damsel's father fifty *shekels* of silver, and she shall be his wife; because he hath humbled her, he may not put her away all his days." (Deut 22:28-29)

When a homosexual rapes a man, there was no marriage between the two permitted. Thus, the commandment stands: "mankind shall not lie with mankind as he lieth with a woman, it is abomination" (Lev 18:22). Genesis 19 suggests that more is at stake here than the crime of rape. Rape of a man or woman was considered a crime; however, in

heterosexual rape there were marital provisions, whereas homosexual rape was punishable by death in the Law of Moses.

“If a man also lie with mankind, as he lieth with a woman, both of them have committed an abomination: they shall surely be put to death; their blood *shall be* upon them.” (Lev 20:13)

This fact in ancient Israel (based on the Law of Moses containing statutes and judgments from God Himself—and therefore very telling about how God judges these matters) suggests that, in Lot’s time, he might have viewed it as better for the men of Sodom to rape his daughters than to rape the visitors or himself. As the Creation account suggests: a man and a woman become one flesh. This holds true even if a marriage ceremony doesn’t take place and the couple simply has sex (John 4:18). Even in prostitution the principle applied (1 Cor 6:16). No scripture indicates that same-sex relations apply the concept of “one flesh”. This would explain why a marriage provision would exist for a heterosexual rape, but not a homosexual rape—punishable by death (Lev 20:13).

The next point to look at is whether the homosexual gang rape was an issue regarding gang rape (in general) and inhospitality, or was it an example of the larger context of homosexuality being strictly condemned by the Bible? While revisionists claim that none of the other scriptures that make reference to Sodom and Gomorrah mention homosexuality as the cause of its destruction, readers should take a second look at what the passages do say. First, Sodom and Gomorrah are often used in passages of scripture metaphorically, outside of the context of the Genesis story (For example Isa 7:1-17). This is often done to warn the disobedient of their impending judgment which will bare similarity to that of Sodom and Gomorrah. For this reason, many of the passages revisionists refer to, when making this claim, do not apply because they are talking about other nations (like Israel) using the terms of Sodom and Gomorrah metaphorically. Ezekiel 16, however, is a passage that talks

specifically about the sins that led to the destruction of both cities.

“Behold, this was the iniquity of thy sister Sodom, pride, fullness of bread, and abundance of idleness was in her and in her daughters, neither did she strengthen the hand of the poor and needy. And they were haughty, and committed abomination before me: therefore I took them away as I saw *good*.” (Eze 16:49-50)

While revisionists claim homosexuality is not mentioned, they may need to take a closer look at verse 50. Included with the reasons of pride, oppression of the poor, idleness, and being haughty: the prophet includes that she (Sodom) also committed abomination! This term refers us back to the Leviticus and Deuteronomy passages which define what God considers “abomination”. These are specific sins that disgust God. In the Genesis account of Sodom, the attempt to rape the male visitors would fall under the category of abomination (Lev 18:22; 20:13).

Further evidence is in the fact that “abomination” is in the singular form in verse 50. Since this is the case, it cannot parent or be an umbrella term for all the sins before it. Instead, it is in addition to the sins of “pride”, “fullness of bread”, “idleness”, “oppression of the poor and needy”, and “haughtiness”. Ezekiel 18:12 is another instance that contains a list of sins followed by “an abomination” and then a list of two additional sins. In these cases “an abomination” could not be a parent term for all the sins. Yet, in Ezekiel 18:13, the phrase “all these abominations” is used which serves as a parent term for all the sins listed before. This is similar to how the word abomination is used in Leviticus.

In Leviticus 18:6-21 the word “abomination” is never used. Yet, verse 22 is classified as “an abomination” while the term could not classify everything listed before it. Verse 23 lists another additional sin that is not labeled “an abomination”. Thus, of all the sins from verse 6 to

23, only one of them is listed as “an abomination”. Yet, verse 26 labels all of them, in the preceding list of sins (from verse 6 to 23), as “these abominations”: thereby classifying the entire list as abominable.

Verse 22 seems, then, to signify that same-sex relations are especially abominable since they were singled out. In the Leviticus 20 list, same-sex relations are, again, the only sin labeled “an abomination”. While in other books of the Bible other sins are labeled “an abomination”, one still can’t ignore how same-sex relations were particularly singled out in Leviticus, being specifically labeled “an abomination” among a list of other “abominations”.

In Ezekiel, there are four instances in which the term “an abomination” is used: two, specifically, refer to sexual sins (Eze 22:11; 33:26). While the other two (Eze 16:50; 18:12) are not named directly, it is likely they were also sexual sins given how Ezekiel uses the term and its similar usage to that of Leviticus. Ezekiel 16:50’s use of “an abomination”, therefore, is likely referring to some additional sexually sinful act. It also helps to consider the fact that attempted homosexual rape was one of the last acts attempted during the visit of the angels to Sodom. This makes it highly probable that “committed abomination before me” refers to the same-sex rape of visitors that often took place in Sodom.

One scholar states: “Therefore, the evidence indicates that the singular *tôcebâ* in Ezek 16:50 refers to the (attempted) commission of atrocious sexual immorality at Sodom, probably the homosexual intercourse proscribed in Lev 18: 22; 20: 13.”^[17]
(Gagnon)

Thus, by Ezekiel’s use of the term “abomination”, and the description of the angels’ visit in Genesis 19, we see homosexuality

clearly alluded to.

Gagnon also states: “Middle Assyrian Law A § 20 proscribes homosexual rape precisely because of the homosexual element. This is clear enough from the implicit application of the *lex talionis* in the punishment (castration) and by the preceding law (MAL A § 19) regarding the great social disgrace of being known as a person with whom other men have had intercourse. To ‘lie with a man as though lying with a woman’ (Lev 18: 22; 20: 13) was to treat a man as though his masculine identity counted for nothing, as though he were not a man but a woman. To penetrate another man was to treat him like an *assinnu*, like someone whose ‘masculinity had been transformed into femininity.’ Thus three elements (attempted penetration of males, attempted rape, inhospitality), and perhaps a fourth (unwitting, attempted sex with angels), 96 combine to make this a particularly egregious example of human depravity that justifies God's act of total destruction.”^[18] (Gagnon)

This evidence gives us some perspective on how some ancient cultures viewed homosexuality. It was deemed particularly insulting on grounds that it emasculated men. This would explain why the men of Sodom would use such an act to humiliate male visitors. It wasn’t just about being inhospitable. They wanted to humiliate them in such a way that they would rob them of their masculinity and treat them like women. For this reason, inhospitality can be used as an overall umbrella to

[17] Gagnon, Robert A. J. (2010-10-01). *The Bible and Homosexual Practice: Texts and Hermeneutics* (Kindle Locations 1232-1233). Abingdon Press. Kindle Edition.

[18] Gagnon, Robert A. J. (2010-10-01). *The Bible and Homosexual Practice: Texts and Hermeneutics* (Kindle Locations 1141-1151). Abingdon Press. Kindle Edition. church.

describe the sin of Sodom, but the “homosexual element” is very clear and necessary (describing the form of that inhospitality) for treating male visitors to Sodom as horribly as possible. While consenting sex was not described in this context, the passage still serves as a condemnation of homosexuality generally.

On a side note:

The evidence in Ezekiel, through use of the term “an abomination”, showed a link between the sexual immorality and abomination in the context of Sodom. Therefore, we need to bring attention to the fact that this abomination would have occurred outside of the realm of temple prostitution and would be an example of the forbidden practice in Leviticus, demonstrating that the act of homosexuality was wrong in any context (whether consented to or not).

In temple prostitution, there was a level of consent. In the raping of men, there was force and lack of consent. If the acts of gay sex, in this instance, were specifically considered to be an “abomination” it would be on the basis of the Law of Moses (Lev 18:22; 20:13) proving that the context of the Levitical passages extended beyond temple prostitution.

If the context went beyond temple prostitution and included rape outside of a worship context, then this would demonstrate that the passage’s context was a general rule and not restricted to something taking place only in a religious context. Revisionists could not claim that it only applied to rape because temple prostitution could be consented to. They could not claim that it only applied to temple prostitution because it also applied to the incident of gang rape in Genesis 19 as suggested by Ezekiel’s words. These facts would make the Leviticus passage broader in scope because the words of the passage state that gay-sex is an abomination with general (all inclusive) language and does not specify any singular or joint context.

Thus, if the actions of Sodom are an abomination, it would prove

that Leviticus' law was widely applicable rather than the stringent context revisionists force on it. Therefore, to say otherwise is to attempt to force a context on these passages which the Bible does not support, and no evidence exists for, based on one's own bias. Disagreement would also suggest that the gang rape of male visitors was not that bad of a sin to be considered at the level of "abomination". I doubt any party in this discussion wants to go on record suggesting that homosexual gang rape (let alone when applied to foreigners) is merely an average sin and is not worthy to be considered at the level of abomination.

Back to the main point:

In response to the idea that interpreters wouldn't claim all heterosexuality is wrong if the story were about heterosexual rape, remember that two women were offered to the mob to prevent them from having gay-sex. A heterosexual opportunity was offered in the place of a homosexual opportunity. This fact is significant. It makes heterosexuality Biblically superior.

When we take into account more tolerance for heterosexual rape in the Law of Moses, while gay sex was immediately given the death sentence, we must conclude that heterosexuality was viewed as superior. Additionally, there are several laws explicitly governing acceptable and unacceptable heterosexual sex; no such explicit laws say anything positive about homosexual sex. These facts invalidate the argument that the two approaches are on the same level and equally valid.

These arguments demonstrate that while the revisionist is not wrong to put Sodom and Gomorrah in the context of inhospitality, they place too little emphasis on the forms in which that inhospitality took. Since Ezekiel points out that listed among their sins was "abomination", after reading the Genesis account (which portrays the events just before the city was destroyed), we have powerful evidence that homosexual gang rape (especially of foreigners) was one of the abominations for

which these cities were destroyed.

If this gang rape is included in the concept of “abomination”, we have no choice but to broaden the context of Leviticus 18 and 20: releasing it from the stringent revisionist context of temple prostitution and accepting its wider application. While Genesis 19 doesn’t really speak to consenting gay couples, it does speak to the broader application of the laws in Leviticus. If the context of Leviticus can be broadened beyond temple prostitution, the reader has no choice but to accept that those passages were a general statement since they have no specific applicable context and are stated in general (all inclusive) language.

Further evidence for Sodom’s destruction relating to sexual sin is found in Jude.

“Even as Sodom and Gomorrah, and the cities about them in like manner, giving themselves over to fornication, and going after strange flesh, are set forth for an example, suffering the vengeance of eternal fire.” (Jude 1:7)

This passage supports that the sexual deviance was the cause of Sodom and Gomorrah’s destruction. It specifies that the inhabitants went after “strange flesh” and committed “fornication”. The Greek word used for “fornication” is “pornea” which can also be translated “sexual immorality”. Clearly, the “strange flesh” referred to here is the example given in Genesis 19 and alluded to in Ezekiel. The term “strange flesh” also uses similar description compared to Paul in Romans who called the act of homosexuality “unnatural” or “unnatural use” (unnatural sexual function). Jude’s use of the term “strange flesh” seems in harmony with the ideas of Paul.

Revisionists, on the other hand, change the context suggesting that the passage is talking about heterosexual sex between angels and

women based on Genesis 6:1-4. However, this is not accurate since Genesis 6 doesn't refer to angels having sexual relations with women. The sons of God refer to the bloodline of Seth while the daughters of man refer to the bloodline of Cain. This could not be what the passage in Jude 7 is referring to. Furthermore, the only account we read of angels visiting Sodom (in scripture) was when they came to judge it. It was the men of the city that were seeking to have sex with the angel visitors, not the women.

The contrary idea is not derived from scripture, other than the misinterpretation of Genesis 6, but is derived from Jewish legend. However, the account is not credible since Jews had many conflicting ideas with scripture given their exposure to various cultures during their captivity. The Sadducees, for example, didn't believe in the resurrection, angels, etc. and had widely different theological views from the Pharisees. For this reason, Jewish legend cannot be the basis for understanding scripture or interpreting Jude 7. Jude more than likely is in agreement with the Biblical interpretation exclusive of these Jewish legends. In fact, Paul warns about Jewish fables. (Titus 1:14; 1 Tim 1:4, 4:7; 2 Tim 4:4)

A better interpretation, standing on more stable ground, would be that: the men of Sodom, in their lust for depraved sexual intercourse with men, inadvertently pursued strange flesh (angels disguised as men) and suffered vengeance as a result. They became an example for the people of Jude's day who sexually "defiled their flesh". Gagnon writes:

“In like manner’ the false believers, against whom Jude wages combat, had through their lust for immoral sexual behavior come into conflict with the angelic guardians of this world order. The sexual freedom of the former required the rebuttal and slander of the latter. Second Peter 2: 6-10, partly dependent on Jude 7, speaks of the "licentious conduct of the lawless" Sodomites and God's judgment on them as a lesson to "those who indulge the

defiling passion of the flesh." Thus both Jude 7 and 2 Pet 2: 6- 10, like some texts in the Pseudepigrapha, connect the sin of Sodom with passions for sexual immorality, not failure to provide social justice or inhospitality.”^[19] (Gagnon)

In summary, the events leading to the destruction of Sodom cannot be removed from the context of sexual immorality. This sexual immorality takes the specific form of the gang rape of males. This practice is an abomination. The revisionists are wrong in stating that the Bible does not link the destruction of Sodom to homosexuality. The link between the word “abomination” and what took place in Sodom shows that the Levitical passages are broader in context and serve as a general rule.

These facts show that while the story in Genesis 19 says nothing about consensual gay relationships, it broadens the application of the Levitical passages beyond temple prostitution into its proper context as a general rule. The application of the Levitical passages as a general rule makes the story of Sodom an example of condemned homosexuality. For this reason, the revisionists have it wrong.

Argument 8: Christians misuse the terms “effeminate” and “homosexual”

Revisionists argue that in 1 Corinthians 6:9-10 the word translated “effeminate” (or “homosexual” in the NKJV) is misunderstood. They argue the same for the word translated “abusers of themselves with mankind”. They also argue that these

[19] Gagnon, Robert A. J. (2010-10-01). *The Bible and Homosexual Practice: Texts and Hermeneutics* (Kindle Locations 1280-1286). Abingdon Press. Kindle Edition.

words have nothing to do with homosexual couples in a relationship. It is stated that these words are “difficult” to translate; but, for each word, revisionists argue what they think to be the best possible translations.

They state that by “effeminate” (literally, “soft”) Paul means either a person who has stereotypical qualities associated with being “womanly” (examples include but are not limited to: laziness, cowardliness, fearfulness, vulnerability, and vainness), or it refers to male prostitutes receiving penetration. They conclude, therefore, that in 1 Corinthians 6:9-10, Paul wasn’t speaking against homosexual couples, but either strictly toward “receptive” male prostitutes or broadly to those men with “soft” stereotypical qualities associated with women.

They state that by “abusers of themselves with mankind” (a phrase which also appears in 1 Timothy 1:10), Paul is most likely referring to “a male who takes sexual advantage of another male”. The logic used to support this includes the term’s use in Greek mythology and an ancient legend about Naas having forced gay-sex with Adam. Revisionists seem to argue that since these cases show exploitive relations, this term applies only and strictly to exploitive homosexual cases: when one male clearly has power over the other. An example includes instances of economic power (a male paying for sex from another male who is economically disadvantaged). In short, for them, it has nothing to do with mutual consenting homosexual relationships.

In summary, the Greek word “malakoi” refers to the male prostitute who receives and the Greek word “arsenokoitai” refers to the powerful male who exploits other males (ie. prostitutes) for sex.

In tackling these issues, it may be best to start where most parties agree. The text in 1 Corinthians 6:9 contains a list of sins beginning with sexual immorality, then is followed by idolatry, and then a list of specific sexually immoral sins.

“Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Be not deceived: neither **fornicators**, nor idolaters, nor **adulterers**, nor **effeminate**, nor **abusers of themselves with mankind**,” (1 Cor 6:9 emphasis mine)

The word used for “fornicators” is “pornoï” which can also be translated “sexually immoral”. This term is often linked with “idolatry” as much Biblical imagery depicts those who are unfaithful to God as “harlots”, “adulterers”, and other “sexually-unfaithful” terms. Since Jesus is the Bridegroom and the Church is His bride—any act of idolatry would be considered spiritual “pornoï”. For this reason, the list in 1 Corinthians 6:9 makes sense in the context of sexual sin. This is supported by the fact that 1 Corinthians 5 deals strictly with an instance of “pornoï” that was forbidden in Leviticus 18:8 – a man having sexual relations with his father’s wife.

When you factor these things in the context of this first list in 1 Corinthians 6:9 seems to be about sexual sin. Since all parties seem to agree that the meaning of “arsenokoitai” has something to do with sexual immorality (though they disagree on what aspect and to what degree), it is reasonable to reject the idea that, by “malakoi”, Paul is referring broadly to males with stereotypically feminine-associated characteristics. More plausible is the revisionists’ later conclusion that it has to do with some form of sexual immorality (they suggest: “receptive” male prostitutes).

With this in mind, we can understand the context of 1 Corinthians 6:9 to be sexual immorality. Since “ponoi”, “moichoi”, and “arsenokoitai” all refer to sexual sins, and scripture shows instances in which “idolatry” is sometimes indirectly related, it is fair to conclude that “malakoi” must also be a sexual sin. Even if “idolatry” was viewed separately, the list’s last three sins begin with a sexual sin and end with one. This makes a

solid case for “malakoi” (translated “effeminate”) relating to some form of sexual immorality. Since we established that all the terms in question (“Malakoi” and “arsenkoitai”) all have something to do with sexual immorality, we must now explore what each of these words mean.

Soft Ones

First, “malakoi” which literally means “soft ones” (and clearly refers to males), would have to be a type of male committing a form of sexual immorality (as the context demands). This word appears after “adulterers” and before “arsenkoitai”. The specific form of sexual act must make the male appear to be feminine since “soft” carried the connotation of being feminine; but, in this context, it refers exclusively to a sexual act.

Some revisionists even state that it could refer to the “receptive” male-prostitute as this individual would be “soft” or “woman-like” in that exchange. However, the problem with this interpretation is that revisionists, again, attempt a strict prostitution-based interpretation when the word itself does not limit itself to the prostitution context. Yet, even some revisionists acknowledge that the word seems to have something to do with males playing the female role in sexual intercourse with other males—they just disagree on whether or not it deals with all homosexuals or prostitutes.

However, evidence from a first century Jewish writer indicates that we can be clear on the meaning of “malakoi”.

“Philo twice uses the word malakia (‘softness, effeminacy,’ alongside of the term anandria, ‘unmanliness’) in his discussion of

homosexual behavior in Spec. Laws 3.37-42 to refer to the behavior of passive homosexual partners (hoi paschontes) who cultivate feminine features.”[20] (Gagnon)

Based on Philo’s account, the focus wasn’t on “call-boys”, idolatrous connections, or exchange of money. In fact, Philo doesn’t address the issue of prostitution. He indicates that there were some cases in which the “receptive” partner could become the active partner’s mistress or wife. They would mutilate their genitals in the attempt to be permanently transformed into females. It should be noted that this was not limited to cultic practices, although it occurred there also.

Philo indicates that these things took place within and outside the realm of cultic practices. For Philo, he was more concerned with the feminizing of men: first by penetration, and then by deliberate attempts to become more feminine (mutilating the genitals, wearing perfume, styling the hair as females did, etc.) so as to attract the partner. Philo complained, “...[they] transform the male nature into female...”. In Philo’s description of Sodom, he uses the word “malakotes”. He used this word to describe the feminizing of males during homosexual activity.

This evidence from Philo’s writings makes it clear that the word “malakoi” and its variations are not limited to temple prostitution and were in fact used to describe homosexual activity. Since, Philo used the term to describe both those who prostituted themselves and those who became the mistresses or wives of their partners: we must conclude that the term is all inclusive. It doesn’t only describe prostitutes or idolaters, nor does it only describe mutual consenting homosexuals. It’s an umbrella term that could apply to both. This also was not limited to young boys but, as Philo describes, some were adults also.

While revisionists attempt to force a strict context on the term, the evidence from the first century writer, Philo, demonstrates that this

strict context is not applicable. The “malakoi” was not merely one being exploited for money, but feminized—taking on the role of the woman. For both Paul and Philo, the act of playing the role of a woman during sexual relations was exploitation in that gay-sex causes a man to take on the natural role of a woman. For them, this had nothing to do with exploiting someone for money or exercising power over them. Philo is clear that he is more concerned about the feminization process that begins with penetration of males.

This connects with the Levitical prohibitions in that they are concerned with men lying with men: “as with womankind” (Lev 18:22) or “as he lieth with a woman”(Lev 20:13). This demonstrates a concern with the male taking on the “receptive” role of a female in sexuality. Moses, Paul, and Philo seem particularly disgusted by the sexual-feminizing of men. It becomes clear, in light of this information, that “malakoi” and its derivatives deal with the sexual-feminizing of males which places them in the role of females.

“Therefore, in 1 Cor 6: 9, malakoi should be understood as the passive partners in homosexual intercourse, the most egregious case of which are those who also intentionally engage in a process of feminization to erase further their masculine appearance and manner.”[21] (Gagnon)

Paul’s writings also conclude that the “woman-wife” was given to the man implying the purpose of the “receptive” role. Since man was not

[20] Gagnon, Robert A. J. (2010-10-01). *The Bible and Homosexual Practice: Texts and Hermeneutics* (Kindle Locations 5470-5473). Abingdon Press. Kindle Edition.

[21] Gagnon, Robert A. J. (2010-10-01). *The Bible and Homosexual Practice: Texts and Hermeneutics* (Kindle Locations 5527-5528). Abingdon Press. Kindle Edition.

given to the “woman-wife”, we can conclude that the male’s created nature is not receptive.

“For the man is not of the woman; but the woman of the man. Neither was the man created for the woman; but the woman for the man.” (1 Cor 11:8-9)

Male-bedders

The second word we need to explore is “arsenkoitai”. This word originates and was probably coined by Hellenist Jews and was derived by the combining of two Greek words: “arsen” (male) and “koite” (bed).[22] Ironically, both words appear in the LXX rendering of Leviticus 20:13 and Leviticus 18:22. Some scholars believe that the relationship of the words in these texts may have been what inspired the Hellenist Jews to coin this term.

“And with a male (*arsenos*), you will not lie in bed (*koiten*) as with a woman; an abomination indeed it is” (Lev 18:22 author translation based on literal interlinear Greek-English)

“And whosoever lies with a male (*arsenos*) in bed (*koiten*) as with a woman; an abomination have committed both of them, let them be put to death.” (Lev 20:13 author translation based on literal interlinear Greek-English)

In Leviticus 20:13, it’s not hard to imagine how the term in question was derived: from “arsenos koiten” Hellenistic Jews coined “arsenokoites” adding the “-es” suffix at the end. In the context of Leviticus, *koiten* is not merely referring to a “bed” but, by implication, a

sexual act normally taking place on a bed. The suffix “-es”, which implies “one who performs--” the attached action, is added to “koit-” implying “one who performs bedding” or “one who performs laying”. When we add “arsenos” to the compound it takes on the role of the “object” (receiving action). Thus, we have: “one who performs” “bedding” “males”: in other words, “one who beds (or lies with) males [as women]”. [23]

When we look at Leviticus 20:13 in Hebrew, the phrase “miškab zakûr” appears in place of the Greek words in question. Scholars acknowledge that this phrase was used by Rabbis to refer to homosexual intercourse, whether with an adult or a minor, in extra-Biblical writings. The Greek word “arsenokoites” seems to be a transliteration of this Hebrew phrase. Additionally, while some suggest that the term is hard to interpret when it is used in a list of sins, scholars like Wright and Gagnon demonstrate that in Greek extra-Biblical writings, when “arsenokoites” (or any derivative) is used outside of the context of a list of sins, it makes reference to homosexual intercourse. This shows that it probably means the same thing when used in a list context. In some of these writings, gay-relations are forbidden in a way that would not allow for the restricting of the meaning of “arsenokoites” to only exploitative homosexual relations: it becomes clear that the condemnation is general and all inclusive.

As discussed in a previous section, since the word has its roots in Leviticus, we have additional reason not to limit its interpretation. The commands in Leviticus 18 and 20 were not limited only to the context of

[22] Wright, David F. "Homosexuals or Prostitutes?" Vol. 38, No. 2 (Jun., 1984) 125-53. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/1583059> (accessed 6-02-2015) Also see: Gagnon, Robert A. J. (2010-10-01). *The Bible and Homosexual Practice: Texts and Hermeneutics* (Kindle Locations 5540-5542). Abingdon Press. Kindle Edition.

[23] Gagnon, Robert A. J. (2010-10-01). *The Bible and Homosexual Practice: Texts and Hermeneutics* (Kindle Locations 5540-5542). Abingdon Press. Kindle Edition.

temple worship. In fact, in 1 Corinthians 5 (the chapter before the passage in question) an act of incest by a professed Christian was condemned. Clearly, temple prostitution was not the only setting in which these crimes would occur and be condemned. For this reason, it is not possible that 1 Corinthians 6:9's use of "arsenokoites" is limited only to exploitive (or prostitution related) contexts. In fact, the list in verse 9 is under the umbrella term of "sexual immorality".

In short, while revisionists attempt to force a strict meaning (or overly broad meaning) on the term "arsenokoites", the evidence is clear that such an approach is a mistake. The term refers to the active partner in homosexual relationships. This is probably why it is paired with "malakoi" (the "receiving" partner). Nothing in the context of the word suggests that the relationship necessitates exploitation. This is supported by the fact that the term's use (and its derivatives) in extra-Biblical material (as well as the use of its Hebrew equivalent in extra-Biblical material) demonstrates that it applied in many contexts: exploitative, non-exploitative, prostitution-related, mutual-consensual, etc.).

Instead, Paul and others seem to consider the behavior "exploitive" inherently in that it feminizes men—putting them in the natural role of females. Thus, whether used in 1 Corinthians 6:9 or in 1 Timothy 1:10, the term "arsenokoites" is a general reference to the active partners in gay-sex. In some cases exploitation was involved, in other cases it was not. The term refers to both scenarios and condemns the practice as a whole under the term "sexually immoral".

“Knowing this, that **the law is not made for a righteous man, but for the lawless and disobedient**, for the ungodly and for sinners, for unholy and profane, for murderers of fathers and murderers of mothers, for manslayers, For whoremongers, **for them that defile themselves with mankind** [“arsenokoites”], for

menstealers, for liars, for perjured persons, and if there be any other thing that is contrary to sound doctrine;” (1 Tim 1:9-10 emphasis mine)

Additional evidence is in how the book of Timothy points out that these sins were the very reason why “the Law” exists. Righteous people don’t need to be told these things are wrong. It is the disobedient and the lawless that require the law to function as a mirror, exposing their sins for what they really are. The words here imply that these sins were spelled out in “the Law”.

The only place discussing gay-sex in the law (that would cover “arsenokoites”) was the passages in Leviticus. This ties these scriptures to the context of the law and demonstrates that the Levitical passages were generally applicable and not limited to the specific contexts of temple prostitution or exploitation. While the LXX doesn’t use the phrase “arsenokoites”, it does use the words that make up the compound. This demonstrates that “arsenokoites” is, in fact, derived from Leviticus. This being the case, it is a transliteration of the Hebrew “miškab zakûr”—a term used by rabbis to address homosexual intercourse in any context.

In conclusion, the Bible believer can be confident in using these passages in condemnation of all homosexual practice. Revisionists have remained consistent in the technique of limiting and forcing strict interpretations; however, these methods prove deceptive upon closer examination.

Argument 9: Christians misuse the term “Sodomy”

Some argue that the KJV mistranslates the Hebrew “Quadesh” as “Sodomites” when addressing the temple prostitution issue in Deuteronomy 23:17. This argument would suggest that Sodomy has nothing to do with homosexuality and that references to

“Sodomy” are not condemnations of homosexuality.

“There shall be no whore of the daughters of Israel, nor a sodomite of the sons of Israel.” (Deut 23:17)

This argument, however, is irrelevant. The argument is based on the idea that if you can single out these passages of scripture as referring to “homosexual temple prostitution”, then one can make the texts which speak out against it isolated to that particular issue. However, based on God’s commands in Leviticus, a man is not to lie with another man at all (including but not limited to temple prostitution).

While the individuals in the temple were clearly prostituting themselves, they are still guilty of “sodomy”. Whether we address this situation as “sodomy” or prostitution, we’re talking about the act of people committing a form of sexual immorality. In the case of the males, there is the initial act of prostitution. However, the fact that they were prostituting themselves to males magnifies the wrong doing much like it did in Sodom and Gomorrah.

We know that the issue of Sodom was related to the inhospitable way in which the men of the city would humiliate visitors through gay sex. This puts sodomy, at the very least, in the context of gay sex. It should be noted that when the men of Sodom wanted to rape the angelic visitors, Lot sent out his daughters to receive the treatment the men would have gotten. He offered females in the place of males following his statement “do not so wickedly”. Yet the Sodomites were not content with the women, but wanted the males. If raping was the only issue, Lot would have been enabling them to do the very thing that was bringing about their destruction.

While it’s true, and opponents may emphasize, that the angels stopped Lot, this does not mean that the rape of women was just as bad as the rape of men. Both are wicked—granted. But, one is still worse than

the other. The fact is that Lot is described as a “righteous man dwelling among them”. This needs to be considered. As a “righteous man”, Lot’s decision to throw his daughters out to the men, stating that they should not do “so wickedly”, strongly suggests that he viewed this as a better alternative to what they were planning to do. As a “righteous man” his actions demonstrate a desire to choose the lesser of two evils.

The angels’ decision to stop Lot from doing this indicates that they were mindful and cared about preserving the safety of both Lot and his family. Their actions don’t indicate that throwing the daughters to the mob was just as bad as if the men had raped them. To the contrary, as is true of unfallen angelic nature, they protect the individual and the family of one whom God loves. However, this doesn’t change the initial decision of the “righteous man”, who made a choice based on his moral compass, choosing what he viewed to be the lesser of two evils.

Lot essentially attempted to prostitute his daughters in exchange for the safety of his angelic visitors. This would fail to make sense. However, when we look at it in the light of God’s disdain for homosexuality, we see why Lot took this course of action. It would be particularly offensive to pursue angelic males. Clearly, the pursuit of raping males was a worse crime than the pursuit of females. Lot chose the lesser of two evils when he offered his daughters to the multitude.

The term “sodomy” is rightly applied here because the sins of homosexual gang rape and homosexual temple prostitution are virtually the same. They both involve forbidden acts of gay sex which the Leviticus passage condemns in either context. It should also be noted that there is much literature containing the teachings of different groups that have condemned homosexual behavior throughout history. Some suggest that this is why homosexuality has historically been called “Sodomy”. However, it should be noted that the term “Quadesh” does not allude to Sodom and is not a derivative of it. This connection is solely made by the translators. There is certainly a connection between “Quadesh” and what

happened in Sodom, but the words are not etymologically connected. In the LXX the term is designated “sexually immoral”.

The Superiority of Heterosexual Sex

It should be noted that while Israel had a law (Deut 22:28-29) requiring a man to marry a woman if he was caught in the act of raping her (and the man forfeits the possibility of divorce in this circumstance), no such law existed or was practiced for homosexual rape. Sexuality is always viewed, in scripture, in the context of Genesis—God joining the man and woman together, the two becoming “one flesh”.

Paul’s writings indicate that even in having sex with a prostitute, which clearly involved no commitment, both parties were engaging in becoming “one flesh”(1 Cor 6:16). Jesus stated that the woman at the well had “5 husbands” because her joining with men, sexually, equated to becoming “one flesh”. The Genesis implication of “one flesh” is the origin of the concept of marriage and implies sexual intimacy.

Marriage is taken very seriously in the Bible, whether an official marriage or an unofficial “marriage” resulting from parties joining together to have sex. The point is that any man that has sex with a woman takes part in the Genesis “one flesh” principle. It is for this reason that, when an unmarried man rapes an unmarried woman, the man had to officially marry her and forfeit his possibility of divorce. No such emphasis on the importance of homosexual relationships is implied or alluded to. No laws existed back then addressing committed couples. The principles like “one flesh”, applying to males and females, did not equate to homosexuals.

“Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh. And they

were both naked, the man and his wife, and were not ashamed.”
(Gen 2:24-25)

As you can see, the context is that a “man” must leave his family and cleave (be joined to) his “wife”. The Hebrew word used for “wife” is the same word used for “woman”: implying that “wife” and “woman” equate to each other. Therefore, a “man” can’t be a “wife”. Thus the only application for the “one flesh” principle must be in the context of a heterosexual relationship. This text, therefore, specifies that the foundation and framework for a marriage must be between a man and a woman.

With that said, it becomes very clear why no laws existed in Israel addressing homosexual rape or fornication in the context of marrying the two offending parties. Homosexuality, even in the context of a relationship, was not a Biblically legitimate form of marriage. Scripture is therefore clear that heterosexual marriages are superior and valued differently. In fact, homosexual relations are considered wickedness.

“And whosoever lieth carnally with a woman, that *is* a bondmaid, betrothed to an husband, and not at all redeemed, nor freedom given her; she shall be scourged; they shall not be put to death, because she was not free.” (Lev 19:20)

In this context a slave or indentured servant that was raped or had an affair with her master could not be put to death: neither could her master. Yet, homosexuals would be stoned. This demonstrates the Bible’s view of heterosexuality as superior to homosexuality. It regards heterosexual relationships differently and with more tolerance even when sins take place. This command in no way condones the behavior (else the master would not have to make a trespass offering), but it doesn’t assign or mandate the death penalty as it did to homosexual cases.

This is further amplified by the following passage which gives us some insight to God's purposes in Creation:

“For the man is not of the woman; but the woman of the man. Neither was the man created for the woman; but the woman for the man.” (1 Cor 11:8-9)

The woman was God's gift to the man. She was created to be for him and was to be possessed by him (in a good way). When we go back to the Genesis account of Creation we see that Adam was created first, then Eve: God created man first, then woman.

“And the LORD God caused a deep sleep to fall upon Adam, and he slept: and he took one of his ribs, and closed up the flesh instead thereof; And the rib, which the LORD God had taken from man, made he a woman, and brought her unto the man.” (Gen 2:21-22)

The text states that God made the “woman” and brought her unto the man. The Hebrew word used for “woman” is “ishshah” which is the same word used for “wife”. Thus, when God created the concept of “woman”, He also created “wife”: for the concept of “wife” is embedded in the concept of “woman”—the very same word is used for both “woman” and “wife”!

“Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh.” (Gen 2:24)

The concept of marriage was manifested in the creation of the “woman-wife” and then she and the man becoming one flesh. These facts invalidate the legitimacy of same-sex relationships because a man can't

be the “woman-wife”. The “woman-wife” was God’s gift to man to satisfy his need of companionship.

“And the LORD God said, *It is* not good that the man should be alone; I will make him an help meet for him.” (Gen 2:18)

Clearly the Biblical and Creation-based view of marriage involves one man and one woman. In fact, the account describes what God was going to create for Adam as “meet for him”. The Hebrew word “neged” translated “meet” means a counterpart. It implies that what would be created would be like Adam (suitable to help him) yet in some ways opposite.

The woman could therefore provide a level of companionship that Adam could not get from any other source: she would be built to be suitable and appropriate for him in every way: in some ways she’s just like him and can do the things he can do, while in other ways she does things naturally that he can’t do (and he does things naturally, that she can’t). She can provide for the man, what nothing else can.

In essence, God didn’t just create a companion to keep Adam company: He created a counterpart that in every way completes Adam. A man can’t possibly function as a wife because the concept of “wife” was embedded in the concept of “woman” and this concept also implies being a natural counterpart for the man. In addition to being the “woman-wife”, the first lady took on an additional role:

“And Adam called his wife’s name Eve; because she was the mother of all living.” (Gen 3:20)

“Eve” (Hebrew: “chavvah”) meant “life-giver”. She was given this name to emphasize her capacity as “mother”. While men can raise a

child, no man can conceive and give birth: only a “woman-wife” can do that. She is special, unique, and her qualities are irreplaceable. While sexual acts can take place with almost any living thing, none of those sexual acts can produce what the “woman-wife” can produce when she becomes “one-flesh” with her husband.

At best, people can substitute, but the real thing cannot be produced. Through the “woman-wife”, man can produce an offspring that continues the bloodline of both he and the “woman-wife”. The offspring has both his features and her features. It carries their traits and DNA. Essentially, the child is an extension of both of them in every way. No other sexual relationship can produce this gift that God gave to humanity. At best, deviations must simulate what she does naturally.

The Bible teaches that children are a “heritage” from the Lord. (Psa 127:3) Mankind was commanded to procreate. (Gen 1:28) To engage in a sexual relationship outside of the Biblical model is to cut one’s-self off from the heritage that God intends to give humanity. One essentially cuts off their own bloodline and halts the continuation of their DNA through their offspring.

Even if a gay couple were to adopt a child, they are adopting someone else’s heritage: not their own. A child can carry the memory, customs, and teachings of an adopted parent—but not the DNA. In the case of a same-sex couple, even if one parent gives or receives the seed—the child will not have the DNA of both parties and is therefore not the embedded heritage of the couple’s love.

The DNA embedded within every child was designed to be made up of the coded language manifested from the love (and love-making) of a child’s parents (ie. as the parents *love*, and their fluids mix creating the embryo, the language from their DNA codes the DNA of their offspring: thus, the child’s DNA is made from the “*love language*” of its two parents communicating with each other.).

An adopted child can have learned traits from parents of any

kind, but only a heterosexual couple can produce a child that has the love (and love language) of the couple embedded in the DNA of the child, and the possibility of all the obtainable learned traits of both members of the couple. It is likely that a same-sex pair may love their adopted child, I would not discredit that; however, their love can never be embedded naturally in the DNA of the child.

It may be true that many parents have fallen short and failed their children. It can even be true that some homosexual couples may provide a safer and more stable environment than heterosexual couples that abuse their children; however, no form of couple can supersede the couple that correctly follows the complete Biblical model. At best, same-sex couples can only substitute for what the child's biological parents should be doing naturally according to the model of Creation.^[24]

But, even so, the professed love of same-sex couples cannot reproduce or fully substitute what God created and embedded into the marriage institution and pass that on to their offspring. The Bible attests that homosexuality is not God's design for the human family; it asserts that the best thing for the human family is always as close as we can get to the design established in Creation.

In essence, aside from the fact that homosexuality is a sin, same-sex attempts to simulate the "one flesh" design of God from Creation are limited because only a heterosexual couple can create the by-product of their love that contains the language of their love embedded in their

[24] Adoption cases are a consequence of sin in that because of sin parents can die by accident, illness, etc. Sin is also the cause of parents giving up children due to mental illness, drug addiction, unpreparedness, rape, etc. This doesn't mean that the individual necessarily sinned or that it's a sin to adopt children: however, it does mean that adoption was not in the design of Creation and is a byproduct of the sin condition (in general). All children were designed to be with their biological parents. However, because of sin, it is a blessing that many are willing to fill in the roles where the biological parents could/would not. Yet, we must still keep in mind that, by the original design, children were intended to be with their biological parents and not adopted. Such is still the ideal.

offspring. Every child is the inheritance of the love of each parent from each generation before it. In this way, children are truly a heritage from God that culminates love embedded from the child's parents and love embedded and traceable all the way back to Adam and Eve.

The bloodline of humanity is like one big long love language (or love dialogue) that began in Creation; homosexuality cuts that string (or strand) of the bloodline and prevents the pair from God's intended gift of an "offspring-inheritance" that will continue the love dialogue down through the end of time.^[25] This fact demonstrates the Bible's superior view of heterosexuality.

Thus, it is impossible for a homosexual couple (or an inter-species "couple") to fully experience the "one-flesh" gift given at Creation. The same-sex experience would be naturally limiting and it would cut-off the "heritage" that God designed for humanity. Thus, while sex is pleasurable and stimulating, the full capacity of the joy participants are meant to experience can only be found in heterosexuality.

Theoretically, a person can know what it's like to be a father or mother, but no other type of couple can fully comprehend and experience the "one-flesh" blessing of pro-creation. In this way, the Bible champions heterosexuality while suggesting that other forms of relationships rob themselves of this blessing, cutting off and weakening their own bloodlines in attempts to substitute for the natural (Creation based) form of relationship.

Furthermore, the Bible does not recognize the idea of same-sex couples becoming "one-flesh" anywhere in scripture: the term is only used in reference to heterosexual couples, the only couples that can receive the inheritance. Through the inheritance, God uses nature to teach humanity the designed approach to sexuality.

Another evidence that speaks to the superior nature of heterosexuality is in the fact that several rules and regulations exist (specifying a heterosexual context) to protect its perpetuity, while no

rules and regulations exist for homosexual relations (specifically specifying them) other than the rules that forbid its practice. Revisionists have to find ways to read into heterosexual texts rules that could possibly apply to both relationships while the Bible never specifies any positive thing about homosexuality. Surely, were this a legitimate practice, the Christian should be able to open his/her Bible and find at least one clear specific reference that legitimizes this form of relationship explicitly and without question.

Not only can't such a reference be found, but in extra-Biblical Judeo-Christian writings, throughout history, we see condemnation of the practice and disgust with it. Homosexual-friendly readings of Bible passages are a new development. The purposed readings were not interpreted in this way throughout the history of interpreting scripture. It is only within this recent generation that such interpretations are being suggested.

No known historical evidence exists suggesting that these passages were understood in the manner purposed by revisionists until recent years. This demonstrates that the times, culture, and trends of society are attempting to influence how people understand the Bible. This is especially concerning for younger populations, not as familiar with the Bible, as the trends of society war against the transmission of solid Biblical principles handed down to succeeding generations.

Contrary to the current popular opinion, the Bible is clear in its

[25] Following the dialogue illustration, Homosexuality curtails the love conversation which began in Creation and should continue its discourse down through the end of time. Since the Godhead, including "the Word" (John 1:1-3), started and established this dialogue, beginning with Adam and Eve, humanity should not override it—to do so goes against Creation and is by nature sinful. The fact that children are called a "heritage **of the Lord**" shows that it is God who blesses, recognizes, and rewards the culmination of the love of the couple. Same-sex couples cannot independently produce any culmination of their union—there is no "fruit" that God gives them to inherit.

depiction of heterosexual relationships as superior to any other form of sexual relationship. Even anatomically, the “woman-wife” is the complete counterpart suitable for the man. What other persuasions and variants to this model must counterfeit, the “woman-wife” and her male partner do naturally (without supplement) for each other. What variants must substitute, Creation already provides for naturally.

The “woman-wife” is God’s gift to man:

“*Whoso* findeth a wife findeth a good *thing*, and obtaineth favour of the LORD.” (Prov 18:22)

“Let thy fountain be blessed: and rejoice with the wife of thy youth. *Let her be as* the loving hind and pleasant roe; let her breasts satisfy thee at all times; and be thou ravished always with her love.” (Prov 5:18-19)

The Spiritual Purpose of Marriage

God does not do things by happenstance. Everything in Creation has a purpose. This fact is indicated by scripture and helps us understand the rationale behind why God creates and mandates that things be a particular way—often going against the sinful inclinations we feel drawn to.

“The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament sheweth his handywork. Day unto day uttereth speech, and night unto night sheweth knowledge. *There is* no speech nor language, *where* their voice is not heard.” (Psa 19:1-3)

“Because that which may be known of God is manifest in

them; for God hath shewed *it* unto them. For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, *even* his eternal power and Godhead; so that they are without excuse:" (Romans 1:19-20)

All things in Creation are created specifically to show the glory of God in one way or another. Things in the natural world, especially before the taint of sin, demonstrated and taught the knowledge of God. In a way, it can be said that nature is God's lesson book. Even people without access to a Bible have access to the revelations of God as taught by nature. This is not to be confused with the pantheistic view that "God is in everything"; instead, it can be said that the knowledge, wisdom, and glory of God is revealed in every created thing and teaches us about the Creator and His love.

For this reason, since aspects of creation represent and teach particular things about God, God is very particular in His law. This fact can be seen in redemption and the laws associated with it. For example, when God commanded the sanctuary to be built, He gave Moses a particular pattern and commanded that the pattern be strictly followed. While Moses seems to have obeyed God throughout the story of Exodus, his disobedience in the matter of striking the rock prevented him from entering the Promised Land.

While Cain and Able both seemed to have "good intentions" Cain's sacrifice of crops in the stead of an animal was rejected. The high priest was given a very specific ritual to follow on the Day of Atonement that he could not vary from, in any respect, at the risk of being cut off. When Uzzah touched the Ark of the Covenant, intending to prevent it from falling on the ground, the Lord "smote" him.

There are countless examples of God's specificity in scripture. Even in the New Testament, Ananias and Sapharra died the moment they lied about the property they sold. This does not negate God's love or His compassion: but it does indicate that God orders things a particular way

at times and requires that man obey that order. In fact, obedience is equated with acts of love toward God—one cannot truly love God and not obey Him.

Sometimes, in reading the New Testament, the mistake is made of interpreting God's "grace" as "more flexibility" or even "license" to sin. This is a mistake. The same rules apply—but God extends patience and compassion rather than immediately punishing faults. There is no difference between God in the Old Testament and God in the New Testament. There is also no change in the moral law. There is only a change in the agreement (Covenant): now being established on better promises.

These facts show that, throughout Biblical history, God is "loving" and compassionate: but, at the same time, precise when it comes to order—especially order that was established in Creation. This is why, when discussing the issue of marriage, Jesus condemned the practice of divorce and pointed to the model set forth in Creation as the authority, even though Moses had made allowances for divorce.

Redemption is about the restoration of all things lost in Creation. Satan is purposely determined to reverse and/or pervert everything in God's established order. Through the degradation of mankind, Satan makes it easy to go against God's order in many different respects. Humanity is born with a propensity to sin; this manifests itself in a variety of ways. Thus, when a person claims to be "born gay", it can be true to a certain extent.

They are implying that God created them this way, and that this condition is a natural part of the order set forth by God in Creation. However, as we established: homosexuality is clearly alien to God's plan (a result of fallen nature, not Creation nature) and considered an abomination—God takes no credit for authoring it. Since it is Biblically considered an "evil" we should consider James' words that God cannot be

tempted with evil nor does He tempt others with evil (James 1:13).

To the contrary, the sinful propensity of man and the effects of sin fully explain why a person could be born with homosexual tendencies. Every human being is born with an inclination towards some sin, and this holds people captive in a variety of ways.

Sin mars the image of God in humanity. It causes some to be born with physical abnormalities, others with mental conditions, and many with tendencies toward certain moral objections (lying, stealing, lust, addictions, etc.). As an example, a person can be born honestly thinking that he/she is really an animal, in the wrong body, or the wrong gender. Sin's effect on our world influences people's lives in a variety of ways from small to colossal significance. In that sense, I would agree that an individual could be born gay, but not in the sense that "God made them" this way. There is no Biblical support for this assertion. It could be said that "nature" made them this way only in the sense that sin has corrupted "nature" (post Fall) and causes things to be produced and born which go contrary to their design in Creation.

Evidence of sin's corruption of nature includes violence and predatory instincts in the animal kingdom (which didn't exist in Creation) down to the thorns on roses (which did not exist until God cursed the ground Gen 3:18). If an animal can be born with predatory instincts, a person can easily be born with homosexual instincts. Thus, I would make the case that being gay can be both a choice and something a person is "born with". However, it's not natural, nor was it Created by God—it's a byproduct of sin.

Dr. Ben Carson received much media attention recently for his comments that straight people go into prison straight and come out gay: this may not be true of all homosexuals, but the logic he put forth is worthy of consideration. A person who is not born with homosexual tendencies can choose to be gay under the right conditions. The reverse can also be true—yet it would require supernatural effort. A person born

with any particular propensity would need supernatural strength to overcome that tendency—fortunately, God supplies that level of power. If a person is born with the propensity, they cannot break such a stronghold as easily as one not as deeply entrenched in it.

The view that I propose is supported by scripture and would likely be held in contempt by the secular world. However, this is a population that has an evolutionary world-view—this is in stark contrast to the Creationist world-view. If we approached homosexuality from the standpoint of evolution, I would have to concede that in some way it must be an offspring of nature. However, as a Creationist—the Biblical account does not allow for homosexuality being part of the original design. Thus, it must be a byproduct of sin.

Going back to the Creation purpose, the main point of this section: While sin distorts everything, ALL things in Creation were created with a purpose and show the knowledge, glory, wisdom, and majesty of God. Therefore, the “woman-wife” was created for man for a reason. The Bible indicates that the relationship between a man and a woman was illustrative of the relationship between God and man. In other words, God created this relationship as a reflection of His love.

“Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as unto the Lord. For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church: and he is the saviour of the body. Therefore as the church is subject unto Christ, so *let* the wives *be* to their own husbands in every thing.

Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it; That he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word, That he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish. So ought men to love their wives as their own bodies. He that loveth his wife loveth himself. For no man ever yet hated his own flesh; but

nourisheth and cherisheth it, even as the Lord the church: For we are members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones.

For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall be joined unto his wife, and they two shall be one flesh. This is a great mystery: but I speak concerning Christ and the church.” (Ephesians 5:22-32)

Ephesians demonstrates that the particular purpose of the relationship between a man and a woman was to be the demonstration of Christ’s love for the Church. It’s initial purpose likely served as a miniature picture of God’s love for mankind. God created the woman for man just as man was created for God (cf. 1 Cor 11:8-9; Col 1:16).

God loves humanity with a self-sacrificing love just as He states that husbands should love their wives. Christ “sanctifies” or “sets apart” the church (His “called out”) just as a man, when he chooses a woman, “sets her apart” (from all other women) as his wife. God’s people are His bride just as the woman is the bride of her husband. God’s people are to be “without spot, wrinkle, or blemish” just as a man’s wife should not be tainted with experiences with other men. God calls mankind to be holy because He is holy and they can only be in relation together with God when man is holy. The marriage between a man and a woman is holy.

The Bible shows only heterosexual relationships have ever been specifically blessed by God (Gen 1:28). Ephesians repeats that a man and woman are “one flesh”— a union, as shown before, that can only exist between a man and his “woman-wife”. Likewise, through Christ, humanity can be “one” or united with God (John 17:21).

It should be noted that, in the Old Testament, Yom Kippur was about “atonement” which meant and implied “at-one-ment with God”. Christians living in the anti-typical Day of Atonement should be united with Christ as a husband is married and united to his woman-wife. This

explains why marriage imagery is used to describe the Second Coming in Revelation.

All these connections and parallels demonstrate that the union between a man and “woman-wife” declares something about the glory of God in a unique and special way that nothing else in Creation illustrates. It is a type or sample designed to illustrate, in a tangible way, the relationship that God once had, desires to have, and will have with His people. Everything from the companionship to sexuality is designed as a lesson book teaching us something about God’s love for humanity.

In fact, throughout scripture the imagery / analogy / metaphor of a heterosexual relationship is constantly used to depict God’s dealings with humanity. When people are unfaithful they are described as “adulterous”. When God enters into covenant with them, He is described as a “husband” while they are depicted as the “bride”. These figurative references are consistent throughout scripture and are never once substituted by same-sex imagery.

For this reason, it becomes clear that the heterosexual relationship declares and manifests the glory of God in a unique way. Even the pro-creative result is a testament to the unique nature of how heterosexual marriage teaches us of God’s love. Nothing else in Creation can substitute or replace it.

Thus, the relationship between a man and a woman says something about God. When a man abuses a woman, he is depicting God abusing His people. When a woman takes advantage of a man, she depicts God’s people taking advantage of God. When a man physically harms his wife, he depicts God being a tyrant. When a woman prostitutes herself she depicts God’s people being united and connected with that which-is-not God. When husbands and wives get divorced they depict a God who gives up and abandons his people or a people who abandon their God. In short: How we treat the marriage relationship is our illustration of the heavenly “marriage”. No wonder God takes marriage so

seriously!

When a man loves a woman, it is illustrative of God's love for His people. When a woman loves a man, it is illustrative of the church's love for God. The order of Creation places the man in the role of God within the marriage, and the woman in the role of humanity.

“For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church: and he is the saviour of the body.” (Eph 5:23)

The role of a husband as the priest of his household has nothing to do with male-chauvinism. It is because of the man's role in playing out the role of God in that relationship. Marriage exists for that larger purpose. This is why Ephesians depicts the husband as the head of the wife. He is taking on the role of Christ in His relation to the church. When the marriage works as it was designed to, in its ideal context, it is a perfect and beautiful depiction of God's love in a unique way that nothing else in the universe tells that story. Man was created in the image of God and is the glory of God, while the woman is the glory of the man.

“For a man indeed ought not to cover *his* head, forasmuch as he is the image and glory of God: but the woman is the glory of the man.” (1 Cor 11:7)

Since man was made in the image of God and is the glory of God, it is fitting that he plays a particular role in the marriage relation. He was not given this role to laud it over the woman or to be oppressive, overbearing, etc. It is a sacred responsibility! He is entrusted with the gift of acting out the role of God in a living “motion-picture” of God's love. She, on the other hand, is entrusted with the role of humanity and how it should relate to God. She was not given this role to conduct herself carelessly, being arbitrary, impossible to please, insatiable, and

ungrateful. In short, when both parties “act right” towards each other, the love of God is displayed in a way that nothing else we know of could display it.

While we could certainly exhaust ourselves in a study of the true meaning of marriage, the focus here is that man and woman play particular roles in this depiction. These roles can’t be substituted. Substitution has always been Satan’s method of perverting and distorting God’s perfect order. God is specific in how He creates things and what they are meant to demonstrate about His love and His character.

When Cain attempted to substitute crops in the place of the animal God would accept, he was rejected. Cain may have thought it was a reasonable gift. He may have had good intentions. He may have found a way to rationalize why the gift of his crops could be just as good or just as complementary (to the image of the plan of salvation depicted through animal sacrifice) as the sheep brought by Abel. Yet, the record says that this was not God’s plan. When Cain attempted to substitute the order God had established, he was rejected.

Homosexuals today may believe themselves to be well-intentioned. They may believe their relationships to be complementary to the spiritual purpose of marriage. However, God requires specificity rather than substitution—obedience, rather than well intentioned sacrifice. When it comes to Creation and the plan of Salvation, God is particular.

There were particular rituals, clothing to be worn, sacrifices to be offered, and rules to be followed in the sanctuary service—even the structures erected to perform these rituals was specific. This was because of the role the sanctuary played in enacting and depicting the plan of salvation. Even events like Passover were a mini-prophecy describing things about Jesus and His ministry to the date.

If God’s people were careless and decided to do their own thing, or substitute something in this perfect picture of God’s sacrifice—the depiction would not accomplish its full intent in the minds and hearts of participants and viewers. God’s strictness in these matters is not because He doesn’t love us, but because there are things embedded in these

depictions that He wants us to study so that we can get a better glimpse of who He is. For these reasons the marriage relation between a man and a woman is holy and cannot be substituted for another model. As an illustration, we can recount the story of Nadab and Abihu.

“And Nadab and Abihu, the sons of Aaron, took either of them his censer, and put fire therein, and put incense thereon, and offered strange fire before the LORD, which he commanded them not. And there went out fire from the LORD, and devoured them, and they died before the LORD.” (Lev 10:1-2)

God commanded a specific ritual for the sanctuary. The sons of Aaron decided to substitute an aspect of that ritual with “strange fire”. They may have reasoned that their fire was just as good as the one God wanted. Yet, the testimony of the fire from the Lord, which devoured them, demonstrates that God didn’t want substitutes.

Today, homosexuals who attempt to suggest that their relationships “are as much a depiction of God’s love as heterosexual relationships” are offering strange fire before the Lord. The testimony of scripture shows us that, at Sodom and Gomorrah, fire went out from the Lord and devoured those who practiced these things among other abominations. This is because it goes against God’s prescribed order.

The companion of the man is the “woman-wife”. This is the Biblical design for “marriage”. Anything else is substitutionary for what she provides naturally. When you want God to bless something, you can’t offer Him a substitute as Nadab and Abihu did. He requires specificity—in specificity is the illustration of God’s glory. As Genesis describes the account of how God made man, we see that nothing about man was happenstance. Everything about man’s creation was for a purpose and makes him in the image of God. It is an act of rebellion to purposely go against the established order. This is why Nadab and Abihu died. We

should not repeat their mistake, albeit in another fashion.

Let's be clear that not only homosexual relationships can be considered strange fire—but unequally yoked relationships also. Sexual promiscuity is a form of strange fire. Committed relationships based entirely on passion and lust would be a form of strange fire. All these things mar the perfect picture of sexuality, and how God designed it to be a reflection of the relationship between humanity and divinity.

Some may ask, “But, doesn't God allow us to choose whom we love?” The answer would be yes, but with restrictions to that choice. For example, Christians are at liberty to choose a mate, but the person must meet Biblical criteria. Restrictions in types of choices are not only limited to gender, but also the person's belief system and moral compass. Things like race, on the other hand, are a non-issue provided that the interracial couple shares the same faith.^[26] Therefore, there is freedom of choice, but there are restrictions on that choice which humanity can choose to disobey to the neglect of their relationship with God.

For example, it is humanly possible for me to fall deeply in love with an atheist. Does God want me to act on that inclination? No! God's divine guidelines would prompt me to forsake the potential I might have to fall in love with an atheist, giving way to reason and principle, moving toward the more lucrative potential of falling in love with someone who shares my faith. Even if the person of my faith lacks some of the qualities of the atheist female, divine principle must overrule passion and will yield greater overall happiness and longevity when correctly applied.

On the other hand, God doesn't force anyone to obey these guidelines: it is possible to disregard God's criteria, giving way to feelings and emotions. However, there is blessing and greater happiness in being ruled by divine principle in comparison to fleeting feelings and emotions. Romantic love is, therefore, not only about feelings, passion, and chemistry, but must also be based on divine principle. Too many make mistakes (and in some cases greatly sin) in this area and believe that humanity should choose lovers based on the inclinations of their hearts rather than (and inclusive of) divine principle. This reminds us of

Jacob who was not free to choose whomever he had potential to love, but needed to be guided by divine principle in his choosing of a spouse.[27]

“When Esau saw that Isaac had blessed Jacob, and sent him away to Padanaram, to take him a wife from thence; and that as he blessed him he gave him a charge, saying, Thou shalt not take a wife of the daughters of Canaan; And that Jacob obeyed his father and his mother, and was gone to Padanaram; And Esau seeing that the daughters of Canaan pleased not Isaac his father; Then went Esau unto Ishmael, and took unto the wives which he had Mahalath the daughter of Ishmael Abraham's son, the sister of Nebajoth, to be his wife.” (Gen 28:6-9)

When all these things are factored in, no one is intended to choose anything and anyone they want to love without divine guidelines (doing so has consequences). These guidelines were intended to preserve the spirituality, wellbeing, health, and overall happiness of humanity. It's not that God is being stringent, but He who created us, and understands us better than we understand ourselves, knows how best to preserve our happiness. Humanity's disregard of these principles has lead, and will

[26] Deut 7:1-4 forbids Israel to intermarry with the populations of heathens they would encounter. This was not due to issues of race or superiority (as God indicates that these nations were mightier than Israel), but was solely based on the faith based implications for such marriages. Heathen women would dilute faith in the Living God and cause the people to sin. There is no Biblical evidence which speaks against interracial marriages (contrary to many politically conservative opinions).

[27] You'll notice that Jacob follows this request, but Esau only partially follows it. Esau doesn't marry another Hittite, but he marries into another family (some scholars say a rejected family) in an attempt to please his father and perhaps make up for marrying the two Hittite women (Gen 26:34-35) which were a source of grief to his parents (See also Gen 27:46). This shows that there were spiritual guidelines for who Rebekah and Isaac wanted their children to marry in order to preserve their faith in the living God.

continue to lead, to the fulfilment of prophecy which predicts excessive and inappropriate marriages.

“For as in the days that were before the flood they were eating and drinking, **marrying and giving in marriage**, until the day that Noe entered into the ark,” (Matt 24:38)

Thus, when choosing a partner, principle must be deeply considered. If a potential soul mate in any way leads one away from the principles of God’s law, this individual is not the one God intends for them to be linked with. God never goes against His own word. (Mal 3:6) If something leads one contrary to the will and the Law of God, it cannot be of God—regardless of the feelings, emotions, and perceived connection one experiences with that person.

In the case of homosexuality, since it violates the Law of God, under no circumstances (irrespective of connections, feelings, emotional attachments, etc.) can such a relationship be God ordained. God is a God of love, but also principle: He has always had restrictions on marriage which include but are not limited to gender. Does God want us to choose whom we love? If our inclinations are out of sync with His will—probably not! Remember, that Ahab was a wicked king, but once he married Jezebel (a pagan queen that encouraged his wickedness), that’s when he did more to anger the Lord than any king that came before him. (1 Kings 16:30-33; 1 Kings 21:25)

Satan seems to be approaching the church in similar fashion to the way he approached Eve in the Garden of Eden: “Ye, hath God said...” Before Eve could be persuaded to sin, she had to first be convinced that she was missing something or that God was in some way holding out on her. Satan made God’s law appear to be stringent and restricting. It was only then that she was deceived and took the fruit.

Today, homosexuals make emotional appeals to the positive elements of their relationships and what is fulfilled in them. Then, like in the Garden of Eden, the question is implied “ye, hath God said I can’t

choose who I love?”, “hath God said I can’t be with who makes me happy?” Yet, even in the Garden of Eden, the fruit of the Tree of Knowledge was a substitute.

It was substitutionary for what God had designed. It provided “knowledge” that man was never meant to have. With it, came the death sentence on all humanity. This should have proven, once and for all, that when God says something, we should trust Him and stick with it. Yet, today we challenge God’s law. While it can be understood why the world takes that approach—it shouldn’t be happening in the church!

The best way to demonstrate love for God is through obedience to the will and the Law of God. This cannot be done through homosexuality since it violates that law, defies the laws of nature established at Creation, and attempts to substitute for what God provided.

In Creation, God provided a particular relationship with a spiritual purpose. The Biblical design for marriage requires a man and a “woman-wife”: This pairing and becoming of “one flesh” parallels the love of God for humanity. Each of the pair plays a particular role in that depiction which says something about the relationship it is intended to portray. Thus, every marriage makes a statement about God to those who come in contact with the members of that relationship.

When a woman usurps the priesthood and authority of a man she makes the statement that man is more qualified than God to be the head and that God should be in submission to man’s will. While these principles can be taken to extremes (gray areas certainly exist in terms of those roles), what is clear is that the God-given roles of man and woman are not to be exchanged and ignored or substituted. The man is to represent God, and the woman—His people.

Following this logic: if a man loves a woman, it depicts God loving His people. When a woman loves a man it depicts God’s people loving God. What would same-sex relationships represent based on the exclusivity of the roles? It would depict selfishness on the part of God or humanity: The exact opposite of what the model was designed to show.

This is because a man cannot play the role of the “woman-wife”. There is no exchange of symbolism allowed in this depiction (just like no exchange was allowed in the sacrificial system, or in the Sanctuary rituals — it had to be exact). If man represents God, and he loves another man the way he should love a woman, it depicts God loving Himself selfishly. [28]

Revisionists might point to the Trinity and argue that since Adam was created in the image of God, his “role” reflects that of God, and because there are 3 persons in the Godhead: heterosexual relationships would reflect the relationship that God has with humanity, while same-sex relationships would represent the relationship each member of the Godhead has with each other (male with male) and the relationship humanity should have with each other (female with female). However, this logic is flawed in that man does not reflect the image of individual members of the Godhead—but the entire Godhead.

Man was created in the image of all 3 members of the Godhead: “Let US make man in OUR image”. Thus, in the depiction of marriage, man plays the role of all three persons that make up God! Through the marriage relationship, man demonstrates what God (or the entire Godhead) does with His love. God does not hold it within, but gives it away.

Were this not the case, if God were selfish, Jesus could not have gone to the cross. The Bible reads that God sent His only begotten son (John 3:16). This level of sacrifice demonstrates the nature of what God chooses to do with His love and how He loves. For this reason, homosexuality would be an inappropriate depiction of God’s love and would be blasphemous in its portrayal of what God does with His love. It is also incomplete. Furthermore, while scripture affirms the depiction of God’s love through the relationship of a man and a woman repeatedly throughout the Bible, nowhere does it ever affirm any depiction of God through same-sex relations.

The complete picture of love demands 3. In the Godhead all 3 members love one another unselfishly. In the human family, the husband and wife love each other and, through pro-creation, bring children into the world that also receive and share in the love. In homosexuality, there can only be two since they cannot naturally pro-create. While they can adopt, at best the relationship is substituted because the child would still not be blood related and could not be a complete by-product of shared love (if anything, adoption would be an added product, it is not produced from the love of two homosexuals.).

Additionally, from a Creation perspective, children were never intended to be separated from their families and raised by others. This is a byproduct of sin. For example, in cases where an individual's family dies it should be considered that death is a byproduct of sin and was not a part of God's original design in Creation. This doesn't mean that adoption is a sin, but that it's not the original design.

Thus, homosexuality (if it were a byproduct of Creation) still could not fully reflect the image of God because it could not incorporate more than 2. It also couldn't be a reflection of human love for each other. Types declare the glory of God and not the glory of man. God doesn't need things of typological significance to reflect aspects of things that already exist in Creation. Types are used to explain things about Divinity in relation to humanity. You don't need a type for human relationships because you experience, come in contact with, see examples of, and contemplate human relationships all the time. God doesn't need a type to explain the relationship of best friends (for example), the relationship speaks for itself.

[28] Selfishly, because we're not talking about how each individual member of the Godhead loves another member of the Godhead, but how the Godhead as a whole distributes its love as a single entity: God. Individually, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Spirit love each other. Collectively, they distribute and bestow their love self-sacrificially on others. Man represents the Godhead collectively, not individually. Together, the Godhead is united in selflessly bestowing love on all of Creation.

When a husband and a wife are apart from one another, for whatever reason, they may have pictures (ie. types) that remind them of each other. It's not that they need these reminders, but sometimes the pain of being away is eased by reminders like pictures. However, when the couple is present together, the emphasis is off of the reminders and on each other. This helps to explain why humanity would not need types for the love of humanity in Creation. In the Garden of Eden, Adam and Eve lived and came in contact with each other, no type or reminder was needed. Adam and Eve would not have needed a lesbian couple's relationship to explain or depict their relationship. They had each other. A type would be unnecessary. They were the only two people there.

God, on the other hand, does not always manifest Himself at all times. Genesis 3 seems to suggest that there were times when Adam and Eve were not aware that God was ever-present with them. There were times when "in the cool of the day" God would manifest His presence with them. This suggests that the "type" of God's love for them would be necessary, and it also explains why Adam felt "alone" without Eve.

Thus, types only reflect relationships between God and humanity. For this reason, no type of homosexual relationship could legitimately play a role in portraying aspects of God's love through marriage. Any relationship that reflects God's love must demonstrate what God does with His love and can also express what we do in response to God's love! Before "the Fall", everything in creation was the ideal and was designed in such a way that what existed in nature was humanity's lesson book about the love, majesty, and glory of God. After "the Fall", however, sin made the ideal world no longer ideal. For example, things were added to the environment, there were dietary changes for man, the ground was cursed, etc. Over time, even the nature of the animal kingdom changed: animals that once feasted on plant life, now feast on other animals. These changes illustrate the difference between "Created nature" and "fallen nature".

Additionally, it's important to point out that "types" were given to humanity (post Fall) that served the specific purpose of teaching mankind about the plan of salvation. These types were not needed in the ideal world, but became lessons of hope in the fallen world. In simple words: everything in Creation was ideal and designed to teach lessons about God's glory, love, power, and majesty, while many things after the Fall were either a corruption of Creation or introduced as "types" of God's plan to restore what existed in Creation. Pre-Fall was the ideal, Post-Fall was not the ideal.

Selfishness and self-centeredness are the characteristics of Satan. This is why homosexuality is a sin by design. It does not reflect the nature of God's love that marriage was designed to portray. Advocates of it may argue that they can treat each other with the affections and love of any heterosexual couple, but this is not enough to depict the human-divine relationship. The roles are assigned by Creation-based gender. Therefore, homosexual relationships distort the perfect picture while trying to substitute for it.

Marriage has a spiritual purpose which man can't change or intervene with. We can choose not to acknowledge it, but this purpose still stands. The spiritual purpose of marriage is, therefore, one of the strongest reasons why heterosexual relationships are superior to any other sexual relationship. Homosexuality is flawed by design. It is a counterfeit for God's spiritual purpose. Only heterosexual relationships correctly represent the divine-human relationship and were created specifically for the purpose of depicting God's love, majesty / glory, and what God does with His love. (See Ephesians 5:22-33) All other relationships counterfeit this divinely appointed illustration, thus offering strange fire.

The One Argument That Makes Sense:

On his website, [29] Matthew Vines hints at something that, in my view, is the only relevant and irrefutable pro-homosexual

argument.

To paraphrase: if Christians state that the law is no more—that the law was nailed to the cross—why, then, do they pick and choose which parts of the law they want to keep and which parts they want to reject. If the law is done away with, why do they use the law to condemn homosexuality?

In making this point Vines goes as far as to give examples saying that Christians insist on the Old Law, yet they don't regard commands like the Sabbath today?

I totally agree! It is illogical to suggest that the law is done away, but still condemn homosexuality. However, we need to be clear on what law was done away. Adventists, have long coined the term “ceremonial law”, referring to the temporary laws governing the sanctuary and its typological services, as the law that was nailed to the cross. However, the moral law has always remained in effect.

Churches today, as Vines suggests, profoundly contradict themselves choosing 9 of 10 commandments as valid but rejecting the fourth. Yet, homosexuals would advocate that the law against homosexuality is no longer valid while the others in the same list still are. The Christian world rejects that notion on the grounds that the homosexuality passages are each surrounded by timeless moral laws, yet they do not apply that when it comes to the Sabbath—which also is surrounded by timeless moral laws written with the finger of God. Instead, they reject the Sabbath for Sunday observance.

“Blotting out **the handwriting of ordinances** that was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to his cross;” (Col 2:14 emphasis mine)

“Having abolished in his flesh the enmity, *even the law of commandments contained in ordinances*; for to make in himself of twain one new man, *so* making peace;” (Eph 2:15 emphasis

mine)

“Then verily the first *covenant* had also ordinances of divine service, and a worldly sanctuary... Which *was* a figure for the time then present, in which were offered both gifts and sacrifices, that could not make him that did the service perfect, as pertaining to the conscience; *Which stood* only in meats and drinks, and divers washings, **and carnal ordinances, imposed on them until the time of reformation.**” (Heb 9:1, 9-10 emphasis mine)

Which law of commandments was “against” the people? Only one law of commandments was written for a testimony against them according to scripture. It was not the 10 Commandments (that were kept inside of the Ark of the Covenant), but, rather, the hand written law containing ordinances given by Moses which was kept on the side of the ark.

“Take **this book of the law**, and put it in the side of the ark of the covenant of the LORD your God, that it may be there for a **witness against thee**.” (Deut 31:26 emphasis mine)

Upon further study, scripture is clear that particular things were nailed to the cross, including the sacrificial system, circumcision, and other rites and ceremonies. Yet, how could any aspect of the moral law be nailed to the cross? Christians seem to pick and choose what they would like to be part of the “holiness code”. They allow their time and culture to influence what is considered permissible today. This is not sound Biblical

[29] Vines, Matthew. "Transcript - Matthew Vines." Matthew Vines. N.p., 10 Mar. 2012. <http://www.matthewvines.com/transcript/> (Accessed 07-20-2015)

interpretation. The law on homosexuality is as valid as the Sabbath. The validity of the moral law, including the Sabbath, is validated in the following passages of scripture:

“By this we know that we love the children of God, when we love God, and **keep his commandments**. For this is the love of God, that **we keep his commandments: and his commandments are not grievous.**” (1 John 5:2-3 emphasis mine)

“And the dragon was wroth with the woman, and went to make war with the remnant of her seed, which **keep the commandments of God**, and have the testimony of Jesus Christ.” (Rev 12:17 emphasis mine)

“Here is the patience of the saints: here *are* they that **keep the commandments of God**, and the faith of Jesus.” (Rev 14:12 emphasis mine)

These are all New Testament passages. Even the New Covenant suggests that the change between the Old Testament and the New Testament is not the moral law but a change in covenant promises. For this reason, the only thing that changes about the law is where it is located. Instead of external (on tables of stone) it is placed on the human heart.

“**For if that first *covenant* had been faultless, then should no place have been sought for the second. For finding fault with them, he saith, Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah:**

Not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day when I took them by the hand to lead them out of the land of

Egypt; because they continued not in my covenant, and I regarded them not, saith the Lord.

For this *is* the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, saith the Lord; **I will put my laws into their mind, and write them in their hearts**: and I will be to them a God, and they shall be to me a people: And they shall not teach every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord: for all shall know me, from the least to the greatest. For I will be merciful to their unrighteousness, and their sins and their iniquities will I remember no more.” (Hebrews 8:7-12 emphasis mine)

The commandments often called “Christ’s Commandments” are merely a summary of all the law. (See Matt 22:37-40; Romans 13:8-10) They do not invalidate the law; they summarize it and make it simple. Love is the fulfilling of the law in that one who loves cannot break any of God’s Commandments. Jesus Himself stated that He did not come to do away with the law.

“Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil. For verily I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled. Whosoever therefore shall break one of these least commandments, and shall teach men so, he shall be called the least in the kingdom of heaven: but whosoever shall do and teach *them*, the same shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven.” (Matt 5:17-19)

Therefore, the Seventh-day Sabbath is still binding on Christians (unlike the “ceremonial sabbaths” discontinued in Col 2:14-16 [30]). It

was established in Creation and it is the memorial of Creation—the very thing under attack through homosexuality. Most of Satan’s attacks seem to be pointed at discrediting everything God established in Creation. The day after marriage was created and established, the Sabbath was created. Thus, the Biblical principles of marriage and Sabbath are binding on Christians today.

Anyone who thinks that any aspect of the moral law is not binding on Christians owes Mr. Vines and the LGBT community an apology. It is not man who gets to pick and choose what commandments count. The Bible suggests that the typological ordinances and services were done away—the Sabbath does not fit that criterion.^[31] Since it is part of the moral law, it should be as regarded as the Leviticus prohibitions on homosexuality. Otherwise, we, as Christians, are being disingenuous.

While the Sabbath is certainly a whole different topic, I bring it up to be in agreement with Matthew Vines. You can’t be a Christian and say “the law is done away” but reject homosexuality. You can’t be a Christian and say the moral law is still binding, yet reject the Sabbath. Those who do owe Mr. Vines and the rest of the LGBT community an apology for picking and choosing which laws to keep rather than the criteria set forth in the Bible.

Christians indeed do not obey or regard many of the moral laws of the Old Testament as they should. These laws include prohibitions of unclean foods, sex during menstruation^[32], Sabbath keeping, and others. Vines’ discussion of charging interest (Eze 18), however, is irrelevant; he failed to acknowledge the context of oppression—it was not the charging of interest in and of itself that was the problem. Vines was also incorrect to suggest that the “Old Law” is no longer binding because the moral and dietary laws of the “Old Law” still hold while the rites and ceremonies were abolished. Most of the Christian world could benefit from more comprehensive study on what specific laws were abolished. This confusion makes it impossible for them to rightly condemn the LGBT community practices without being hypocritical. However, the Seventh-

day Adventists, and a few other denominations, rightly understand the aspects of the “Old Law” that are still binding.

It should also be noted that civil laws, which mandated the death penalty and specific judgments for sins were in the context of a theocracy. The laws identifying sin are still binding, but the death penalty is not given because the Christian church is not under a theocracy. It is a fallacy to suggest, because the penalty for breaking the law is no longer enforced, that the sins specified by the law are now valid practices. The woman caught in adultery was not stoned, but that didn’t change the fact that adultery is a sin.

While operating under Roman rule the death penalty could not be given to any offender without Roman permission. This is why the religious leaders brought the woman to Jesus in order to trap Him. If He condemned her to death, He would be in violation of the Roman policy. If He did not condemn her, He would be accused of not regarding Jewish law. Jesus chose neither option. Instead, His focus was on extending grace to every sinner.

The Bible indicates that the wages for all sin is death (Rom 6:23); rather than condemn people to death, Jesus intended to save people from

[30] These ceremonial sabbaths are not to be confused with Seventh Day Sabbaths. They were apart of two different laws and served two different kinds of purposes. Colossians 2:14-17 deals with these ceremonial sabbaths and not with the 10 Commandment Seventh-day Sabbath. See du Preez, Ron. *Judging the Sabbath: Discovering What Can't Be Found In Col 2:16.* Berrien Springs, MI: Andrews UP, 2008. Print. for a more comprehensive discussion.

[31] See du Preez, Ron. *Judging the Sabbath: Discovering What Can't Be Found In Col 2:16.* Berrien Springs, MI: Andrews UP, 2008. Print. for a more comprehensive discussion.

[32] Many Bible scholars agree. See, for example, Gane, Roy E. "Prohibitions of Homosexual Practice in Leviticus 18 and 20: Moral or Ceremonial?" *Old Testament Principles Relevant to Consensual Homoerotic Activity* (2014): 4-7. Adventist Biblical Research Institute. 20 Mar. 2014. <https://www.adventistbiblicalresearch.org/sites/default/files/pdf/Prohibitions%20of%20Homosexual%20Practice%20in%20Leviticus%2018%20and%2020.pdf> (accessed 07-20-2015)

their sins (Luke 9:56) and give them righteousness by faith (Rom 3). Jesus championed extending grace and compassion to sinners rather than the death penalty, but this does not invalidate the sinfulness of the sin. If everyone was executed for everything that the Bible says they should be executed for, there would be very few people left (Rom 3:23).

This, however, does not invalidate the fact that the actions are sinful: it just means that God seems to have retracted the death penalty until the Great and Dreadful Day of the Lord. Thus, homosexuals should not be stoned; but, that changes nothing in regard to how God views it as a sin. God did not do away with morality: He suspended punishment (temporarily) as an act of mercy in order to save people.

Readers misinterpret scripture when they quote “death penalty” passages in an attempt to invalidate the Law. (See Romans 6:1-2, 15) Grace does not invalidate the Law, it gives the sinner probationary time to be changed and transformed by the Holy Spirit. Christ, paid the death penalty so that sin would no longer have dominion over people’s lives through the death penalty; but this doesn’t change the binding nature of the law any more than one can immediately zoom off down the highway (at a speed over 90) after being pulled over and not ticketed because the police officer was compassionate. The speed limit still counts, so does God’s moral law!

Grace can be understood as follows: you messed up, you should have gotten in trouble, and you were shown compassion—now (out of love and gratitude) change your ways and don’t do it again, because if you don’t change, eventually you will indeed be in trouble. This is consistent with Jesus’ words: “go and sin no more”. Grace is not a license to sin: it’s an opportunity for repentance.

Although the penalty of the law was paid, Christians should understand that our time on earth is probationary. Wickedness will not go unpunished forever (2 Cor 5:10). In this probationary time, we are allotted opportunity to be sanctified by the Holy Spirit who writes God’s law on the hearts of men so that it becomes impossible to sin. (Eph 4:30; Isa 8:16; Eze 36:27; Jer 31:33; Heb 8:10; Rom 2:11-16; 1Jn 3:9) Thus, we are saved from sin, not in sin. (Matt 1:21) We are transformed to have

victory, not defeat. The law isn't done away with so that we can sin and get away with it; the penalty is done away with so that we have probationary time to become a new creature. (Rom 3:31; 1 John 5:4; Rev 22:11-12)

When Christians assert that the law is done away, they open the door to every sin because there is no transgression where there is no law. (Rom 4:15) If the law is completely invalid, there is no means by which to reject homosexuality, bestiality, incest, multiple marriages, pedophilia, offering children in fire to pagan gods, or any other sin. Someone who wants to have multiple wives, sex with minors, or to abuse animals can easily say that they have committed no sin because without the law, nothing condemns their actions. However, it is a mistake to understand the law in this way.

Instead, the moral aspects of the law are still binding while its rites, ceremonies, are not. Judgments also do not apply to Christianity because we are not under a theocracy in which divine law is the law of the land; America, for example, keeps church and state separate. Disobedient children, therefore, are not to be stoned.

Israel was not just a religion, but a nation. They, therefore, had civil laws that governed them as a nation that are not enforceable unless one is under a theocracy. Christians, operating under a grace dispensation (not a lawless one), are called to preach repentance knowing that, at the appropriate time, God will administer the death penalty in the last phase of the judgment to the unrepentant. From that perspective, the death penalty (for all sin) actually still stands—humans just don't have to administer it. Our job is, instead, to call people to repentance giving them every opportunity to know the truth, repent, and receive salvation. Since we are all worthy of death for the violation of God's laws, it makes more sense that we be used to extend grace rather than punishment; however, grace does not equate to continued disobedience of the law. (Rom 6:1-2)

The Israelite civil laws and death penalty applied to people who lived in their nation because they were all believers. As believers, who were bound to the covenant, there was no excuse for violation of the law. America and other countries are a mixed multitude (so to speak) of

believers and unbelievers. Gentile unbelievers are not held to human civil punishments for religious violations, though they are subject to divine judgment. For example, a witch in Israel would have indefinitely been stoned, while in a foreign country, no Israelite would stone such a person even during the theocracy. Notice, for example, that Daniel did not have the wise-men, magicians, soothsayers, etc. of Babylon killed once it was known that God worked through him and the others were fakes. (Dan 2)

The death penalty assumed that one was under the covenant and a resident of Israel. However, this didn't change the fact that those, from other nations, who practiced witchcraft (and other sins) were still in violation of God's law. In fact, Israel was placed, as a nation, in a strategic location to be a witness against the other nations and their sins. God wanted to reach people and turn them from wickedness, not strike them down for every offense. But, once their cup of iniquity was full, divine judgment could (and often did) follow which could include being conquered by a nation God chose to operate through as divine punishment for such sins. Thus, the moral laws were broadly applicable to all nations, but civil penalties applied only to Israel.

Stricter enforcement of the rules applied to God's people because they covenanted to be His witnesses. These rules are not applied in the church today because, since we are not a theocracy and we are under grace (probation): condemnation (the death sentence) belongs to God. Although, Romans 13 indicates that governments have the capacity to enforce punishment for disobedience, including the death penalty, at their discretion.

In any case, under the New Covenant, Christians are called to extend grace and warning rather than death penalties, but this change does not invalidate the binding nature of the moral law and cannot be used by revisionists to discredit any Biblical law. In other words, one can't say that because we can't enact the death penalty, it's therefore ok to do all the things you would normally be stoned for. Remember that there is a divine judgment coming, the wrath of God will be poured out on the children of disobedience.

There were changes between the Old and New Covenant, but the

moral law was not one of those changes, as scripture indicates. Christians that rightly understand the abolished aspects of the law are not cherry picking. Paul applied the same principles I described and gave us an example in which a person fornicated with his father's wife. Technically, he should have been stoned. It was clearly a violation of the Levitical command (included in the same list with homosexuality), but the death penalty was not enacted. However, the person was removed from the church. Although the death penalty was not applied, clearly the moral aspect of the law was binding. Revisionists cannot, therefore, use death penalty texts to invalidate the moral aspects of the law. Under the New Covenant, sinners have been given grace not license.

Since the prohibition of homosexuality is included in the moral law: God does not expect Christians to "stone" members of the LGBT community, He expects them to encourage and warn the LGBT community toward repentance—along with all other sinners.

Additionally, Vines is also incorrect in his interpretation of "abomination". He suggested that the term was only used to apply to things relevant only to particular nations. He cites the example of herding sheep being an abomination to the Egyptians (Gen 46:34) but not an abomination other nations. He concludes that anything that was an abomination to ancient Israel was only an abomination to *them* and not the Gentiles. He concludes that the abominations listed would not apply under the New Covenant.

This is completely false and demonstrates his lack of understanding of the contexts. The word "abomination", which implies that something is detestable, can apply on an individual level. In the case of Egypt, they (as a nation) viewed herding sheep as detestable. But, the laws containing the lists of abominations were things that were abominable to God (not just a nation) and thus morally inappropriate for any nation. Homosexuality, for example, is not called an abomination to Israel alone, but is referred to, generally, as an abomination. This implied it was wrong for any nation. This is strengthened by the fact that the particular prohibition is within a list of other sins, and at the end of that list God stated that any nation that does any of these things contained in

that list would suffer punishment. God also stated that He detests or abhors these things and any nation performing any of these sins is defiled. (Lev 18:24-30; 20:23)

This fact invalidates the selective definition of “abomination” Matthew Vines puts forth. He is further proven wrong in that many passages using the term “abomination” call the attached sin an “abomination to the Lord”. (Deut 7:25-26; Deut 18:10-12; Deut 22:5) This phrase indicates that the sin is detested by God Himself and is therefore morally inappropriate for anyone to perform. Thus, while the word “abomination” can apply on an individual or national level (as with the Egyptians), its use in scripture is most commonly a general (across the board) condemnation.

It may be helpful to examine some other uses of the term. This phrase was also used in the context of inappropriate sacrificial offerings, and rightly so. Offering a lamb without spot or blemish, for example, would ruin the depiction of Jesus (who was morally without spot or blemish) intended by the sacrificial offering. Such an act, in that context, would be an abomination because it would misrepresent the plan of salvation which was the whole point behind the sacrificial system.

I reference this because revisionists often point to obscure laws that, at first glance, seem arbitrary. They will then use the perceived, arbitrary nature of that law to invalidate the entire law because they don't understand the context, why it was called an abomination, or the context in which it would be an abomination. In this case, offering an animal with a blemish would be an abomination because of its purpose in illustrating the plan of salvation; not because God doesn't love animals that have blemishes.

Though the sacrificial system was abolished at the cross, offering an animal with a blemish would have been detestable to God in ancient Israel because of the specific way God was using the sacrificial system to point to Christ. After the resurrection of Christ, the sacrificial system was no longer perpetuated. Since there are no more mandated sacrifices (the spotless Lamb of God has already been slain), Christians need not follow the laws regarding these sacrifices. However, in a sense, the law still

applies to Christians today in that if you come to God with any sin offering or propitiation, other than Jesus Christ, you are offering to God an abomination because no one but Jesus was sinless and spotless in character and can suffice as an acceptable offering to make atonement between man and God. We are only saved through the merits of Jesus Christ, there is no other path to salvation but through Him. (Acts 4:12) This is the spirit of the law.

The use of “abomination” in this context demonstrates God’s specificity in regard to types and antitypes. It also shows that if something is called an abomination, that may seem ridiculous to us as Americans, there may be an underlying reason or meaning which would require further study to fully understand. The reader should not assume that the law was ridiculous and not valid. God has no ridiculous or arbitrary rules: they all serve moral, health, or ceremonial purposes depicting the plan of salvation.

Other examples of this would be the law dealing with wearing clothing made of different materials, mixing seeds when planting in a particular area, and others. Some of these commands had a ceremonial purpose and were a depiction of an aspect of the plan of salvation, while others resulted from deliberate intention for Israel to do the opposite of the pagans who associated magic or superstitions with these practices. The specific details of each case will not be discussed in this study; however, a general rationale for why such commands existed has been provided demonstrating that there were ceremonial and civil laws relevant only to Israel, but also moral and health laws applicable to everyone.

Vines, in another example, cites the Old Testament law in regard to shaving one’s head (Lev 19:26-28; 21:5), but fails to mention that this was a pagan worship practice done to worship idols or to honor the dead and would rightly be inappropriate for believers. It wasn’t cutting hair for the purpose of hairstyle that was the problem; instead, since it was a pagan practice, God strictly forbade it because of its pagan implications. If one was to shave their hair in the same context today, it would still be an abomination; however, inherently, cutting hair is not a sin, nor was the

law intended to imply that.

The dietary laws in Leviticus 11 make use of the term “abomination” throughout the chapter. It uses the phrase “abomination to you”. This, at first glance, may seem only to apply to Israelites. However, the text is simply saying that the animals were to be detested by the Israelites as far as food was concerned. God wanted them to consider eating the animals detestable. However, this does not mean that the rule only applied to Israelites and not generally (including for Christians today).

It’s important to note that Noah (before Israel existed) was instructed to bring 2 of every unclean animal and 7 of every clean animal onboard the ark. (Gen 7:2-8) After the flood, meat was introduced into man’s diet. (Gen 9:3) To eat an animal that was unclean would have resulted in the extinction of that species since only 2 were brought onboard and later left the ark. Clearly, Noah ate the clean animals. The fact that God even commands that 7 clean animals be brought on the ark is significant. This demonstrates that the laws for clean and unclean meat consumption were valid even for Noah and his family (who repopulated the planet) before the law was codified in Israel. Thus, Leviticus 11 uses the phrase “abomination to you” but it is clear that these laws are still binding generally.

As a side note, Peter’s vision in Acts 10 should not be used as a justification text for unclean meat consumption because the vision was using unclean animals to represent people: it was not a license to eat unclean foods. Peter came to no such conclusion when he relays the interpretation of the vision. Romans 14 is talking about meats sacrificed to idols, so that text also would not justify the eating of unclean foods. No Biblical passage justifies this practice. The dietary laws are still, therefore, in effect.

These facts all demonstrate, conclusively, that if something was labeled an “abomination” in the Bible, it likely applied across the board and still applies today. The only exceptions may be things that were ceremonial (like not offering an animal that had a blemish), but only because the ceremonial aspects of the law were discontinued. The use of

the term “abomination”, however, even in that context, is an understandable use because to ruin an illustration or metaphor of the plan of salvation would be detestable to God and abhorred by Him. Ceremonial aspects of the law applied only to Israel and others who wanted to worship God; however, when the term “abomination” was used in connection with any moral law, it applied universally as proven earlier. Some things were morally detestable; some things were detestable because of the statement they would make about the plan of salvation, or their associations with pagan practice. In either case, what is detestable to God is, truly, detestable.

While Matthew Vines was wrong on the matters of the application of “abomination” and what aspects of the law are done away, his strongest argument holds that if one considers the law to be done away with, there is no Biblical justification for the condemnation of the LGBT community. Churches that believe many of the laws of the Old Testament were discontinued are in contradiction with themselves because they do not rightly understand the aspects of the law that were nailed to the cross. If one wanted to make a strong argument in favor of homosexuality, Vines holds the best approach in attacking mainstream Christianity on its contradiction in not upholding the law, or cherry picking aspects of the law. However, this argument would not apply to Christian denominations that still uphold and teach that the moral law is binding.

Both Vines and much of the Christian world are wrong in holding the position that the entire law was done away. While further detail could be provided on this subject, showing that scripture is clear in regard to what was abolished and what was not, the scope of this study focuses on the LGBT related issues. Jesus, Himself, stated that the law would not pass away until heaven and earth does. (Matt 5:18) Anyone who can look out of a window and visualize heaven and earth has the clearest evidence that the law is still binding and therefore homosexuality, wearing the clothing of the opposite sex, and all the other accompanying sins are still as abominable as they were in the Old Testament.

Believers should be careful when reading revisionist

commentaries on the Old Testament law because they usually misunderstand the true meaning, applications, and contexts of these laws. Misunderstandings can result in misapplications and a distorted view of the intent of the law. Many view Old Testament laws as arbitrary when they are, in fact, very valid and meaningful when understood properly. The scope of this presentation did not allow for an in depth look and proper contextualizing of every Old Testament law, but the main point is that there are no arbitrary laws: every moral law (in proper context) is binding on believers today. People should not assume that because a law sounds arbitrary that it is arbitrary and serves as evidence that we should invalidate the entire law.

Revisionists are misleading in finding selective Old Testament laws that sound obscure to our culture, and then using that to evidence the unbiblical view that the law is not binding. In doing so, they take advantage of the fact that most people do not understand the true context and purpose of those laws. Therefore, revisionists look for apparent extremes and use those to attack the law. However, every law has a specific and relevant purpose when understood in proper context—even if we (many years removed from that context) may not fully understand or know all the details. Further study of the particular law will reveal its validity and lead to the following conclusions:

Every moral law is still binding; only the rituals, ceremonies, sacrifices, etc. that were part of the “ordinances of divine service” have been removed, along with the penalties. The term “abomination” is often used to apply to universal moral laws—evidenced by the generic use of the term abomination accompanied by “**all** that do these things...”, or phrases like “abomination to the Lord”, and God specifically stating that **any** nation doing such things would be punished. (Lev 18:24-30; 20:23; Deut 7:25-26; 18:10-12; 22:5) There is no way that after the use of that terminology, in the contexts presented, that one can come to the conclusion that “abomination” didn’t ever apply to universally immoral sins. Homosexuality was included in a universal prohibition of immoral sins that were declared abominations and specifically detestable to God.

“Thou shalt not lie with mankind, as with womankind: it is abomination. Neither shalt thou lie with any beast to defile thyself therewith: neither shall any woman stand before a beast to lie down thereto: *it is confusion.* **Defile not ye yourselves in any of these things: for in all these the nations are defiled which I cast out before you:** And the land is defiled: therefore I do visit the iniquity thereof upon it, and the land itself vomiteth out her inhabitants. Ye shall therefore keep my statutes and my judgments, **and shall not commit any of these abominations;** *neither* any of your own nation, **nor any stranger** that sojourneth among you: **(For all these abominations have the men of the land done, which were before you, and the land is defiled;)** That the land spue not you out also, when ye defile it, as it spued out the nations that *were* before you. **For whosoever shall commit any of these abominations, even the souls that commit them shall be cut off from among their people.**” (Lev 18:22-29 emphasis mine)

Although much of the Christian world may violate many of these moral laws, this does not invalidate their binding nature. Christians are accountable to God on the Day of Judgment for refusal to obey what light they had access to—today, God may be winking at ignorance. (Acts 17:30)

Church Practice and Policy

While there are some churches that allow for same-sex couples to enjoy the full rights of church membership, there are many which hold to the Biblical perspective. As we have seen in previous sections of this book, God’s Moral Law is unchangeable and binding upon Christians. As a counter to this statement, revisionists and more liberal Christians may cite some Old Testament Law which, to them, seems obscure and absurd

to practice today. When the Christian states that this law is no longer valid, they will likely claim that Christians pick and choose which laws to obey and argue that if the church holds power to “pick and choose” why not make allowances to include more people rather than turn them away. However, this logic is flawed.

Some Old Testament laws have been done away with, but this is not a license to promote lawlessness. The moral law is still intact while the ceremonial law (which prefigured and foreshadowed New Testament events) has been abolished. Since the Bible is specific about which law was done away with, the Bible should not be interpreted in a manner that rejects all moral law or binds men to all ceremonial law.

Colossians 2:14, Ephesians 2:15, and Hebrews 9:1-11 clearly indicate which commandments are no longer valid stating specifically that the “handwritten” “law of Commandments” contained in “ordinances” that was imposed on believers only until the “time of reformation” was done away with. In other words, the rights and ceremonies are done away with, while the moral laws still stand.

The very fact that the words of the New Covenant clearly state that the same moral law was to be written on the heart is irrefutable evidence that all laws and commands were not done away with. Moral laws are timeless, applicable, and are as binding upon all Christians as they are on Jews. These moral laws include but are not limited to the laws of sexuality in Leviticus. Churches that do not uphold these laws are a contradiction to the faith they profess to hold.

Shouldn't Christians Love?

With that said, the floor is open for discussion on what all this means and what it does not mean. Liberal minded Christians will often cite passages of the Bible and argue that a “love” policy should be followed. I agree that a “love” policy should be followed. However, I

disagree with what that usually means in the mouths of more liberal minded Christians.

For them, “love” means being tolerant and even accepting of individuals and their practices. For some liberals this translates to not addressing one’s sin (examples include but are not limited to homosexuality), while for others it means going as far as celebrating it and being inclusive of it. In these churches, homosexuals are baptized and given the full rights of membership within the church setting.

In doing so, churches are compromising their faith and actually violating the principles of love. Love—true love—does not mean disregard for the law. In fact, Paul argues that love fulfills the law. In other words, if you really “love” you will meet, perform, and probably exceed the requirements of the law—you will not break it. Christians too often misunderstand Jesus’ requirement that we love one another.

There is a difference between embracing the **person** and loving them in spite of their lifestyle in contrast to embracing the sin of the person and accepting the validity of their lifestyle choices. In other words, I love many people who are liars, materialistic, and foul mouthed: however, while I love the individuals who happen to practice these things, I do not accept the sin or acknowledge it as a valid practice for anyone. Instead, I love them in spite of what they do, and, when possible, encourage them not to do these things.

Jesus’ command did not mean that we embrace and accept a person’s sin. To do so, while they are still dead in their trespasses would be superficial love, not true love. In other words, it’s morally wrong to lead people to believe that they are in a saving relationship with Jesus Christ, collect their money, have them minister in the church, and never rebuke their sins: when it’s clear from the Bible that performing sins ensures that one is on the road to destruction.

True love should be honest and forthcoming. That doesn’t mean we shouldn’t be tactful—but there must be honesty. This doesn’t mean members of the LGBTQ community should be purposely insulted, embarrassed, threatened, etc. But it does mean that where reasonably

applicable, they must be told the truth about what the Bible teaches regarding their lifestyle. It should be expected that the church discourages the practice of homosexuality (as with any other abominable sin), but not in a derogatory way. We tell people they are in error in the kindest way possible given the circumstances provided.

If love is the fulfilling of the law, and one is a law breaker or in support of law breaking, than one cannot have true love manifested within them. Jesus called people to repentance. You can't read the gospels and ignore the theme of repentance. The very words of the gospel included the words "repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand". This message was preached by John the Baptist, Jesus, Jesus' disciples, and the early church.

“And she shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt call his name JESUS: for he shall save his people **from their sins.**” (Matt 1:21 emphasis mine)

Notice it states that Jesus came to save His people FROM their sins, not in them. For this reason, open homosexuals should not be baptized in churches.

Should Homosexuals be baptized and accepted as full members?

Open homosexuals should not be baptized in churches. There is a difference between the person who struggles with sin and the person who is open with sin. The specific purpose of baptism was to provide a means of open expression of repentance for sin and willingness to forsake sin and return to God's ways. The word used for "repentance" in the Bible implies a turning away from and redirection of the life from the path of sin to the path of righteousness.

“John did baptize in the wilderness, and preach the baptism of repentance for the remission of sins.” (Mar 1:4)

“And he came into all the country about Jordan, preaching the baptism of repentance for the remission of sins” (Luke 3:3)

“When John had first preached before his coming the baptism of repentance to all the people of Israel.” (Acts 13:24)

“Then said Paul, John verily baptized with the baptism of repentance, saying unto the people, that they should believe on him which should come after him, that is, on Christ Jesus.” (Acts 19:4)

In the four cited scriptures we see clearly that baptism is for the purpose of repentance and that the act of repentance through baptism brings about the “remission of sins”. In other words, contrary to Roman Catholic teaching, baptism is not a sacrament (in the way that they think). The act of going into the water does not produce a grace or merit within itself; to the contrary, the repentance, which is outwardly symbolized through this action, is what leads one to obtain the grace of God. Therefore, if one is baptized with water but was not truly repentant—the baptism is of no effect.

This relates to the issue of homosexuals seeking to be baptized in that openly gay people are not repentant of the sin. It is therefore pointless to baptize them because the baptism would be of no effect. For example, those who are in same-sex marriages have made a life-time, life-long commitment to participate in abomination. If they seek baptism, are they willing to dissolve the marriage?

To baptize the baptism of repentance while one still seeks to participate in sin is a contradiction. If one was repentant of the sin, but struggled, that situation is very different from the first. It would require prayer and careful study among other things—it is at the discretion of

each church and pastor whether they feel the person is ready on an individual basis. However, guidelines should include whether or not the person: truly intends to forsake (repent of) the sin, takes necessary steps or precautions to avoid the sin, believes that the practice is unacceptable, etc.

Some may say that everyone in the church has something they struggle with. Why the guidelines for homosexuality? Yet, in actuality, I'm suggesting that these guidelines should be followed in general. No one with an "open"[33] sin of any kind should be baptized; baptism of repentance implies a willingness and commitment to forsake sin and turn to righteous paths.

There's a big difference between struggling to get victory over something, and openly doing it. I would add that struggling implies that you intend and are actively engaged in getting victory (through the help of the Holy Spirit), rather than willfully allowing the sin to continue unchecked. If I "struggle" with sin, that means I intend to stop committing it. As John the Baptist implied, there is such a thing as "fruits worthy of repentance". If I "struggle" with alcoholism, I shouldn't make plans to go to the bar.

For further discussion on true repentance, one should consult some of the other resources on ISNministry.com: the scope of this presentation is not enough to cover the topic of repentance in depth. However, the point needs to be clear that receiving forgiveness from God is directly correlated with genuine repentance.

Since participating in homosexuality openly or being part of a same-sex marriage implies that one does not view homosexuality as a sin: it is impossible to repent of what one does not view as sinful. Since baptism is for the purpose of repentance, one cannot repent of what they do not view as wrong, and what they plan to continue doing or have made a life-long commitment to do.

For these reasons homosexuals and transgendered people should not be baptized unless they first acknowledge their lifestyle as sin and demonstrate sincere willingness to forsake it. The same approach should

apply to other open sins, homosexuals and transgendered individuals should not be singled out.

Some may view the statement that “members of the LGBTQ community should not be baptized and given full rights of membership in the church context” as bigoted and exclusionary. Those with this view will often point to the fact that all human beings are sinners—therefore, why exclude one group of sinners over another? Some, taking it further, may declare “why exclude anybody at all?”

Though my point about the necessity of repentance refutes these notions, it is also important to point out that church membership has always been—at least to some extent—historically exclusive in terms of membership; unrepentance is, and has always been, the point of exclusion (Biblically speaking). Never-the-less, one group of sinners should not be accepted over another group. Repentant sinners should be accepted, while those who are unrepentant should not.

Secondly, calling this “bigotry” or “discrimination” is really a deceptive terminology that attempts to take away from the fact that some individuals want to join an organization that disagrees and stands in contradiction to how they want to live their lives. Religious entities have always had criteria for entry since their onset. If they don’t believe as you do, you don’t join them! The idea that every community of faith should be accepting of everything, irrespective of their internal values, is outrageous. If you don’t want to be circumcised you don’t become an Orthodox Jew. Furthermore, you certainly don’t file a law suit against the Orthodox community of faith, claiming discrimination charges, because your membership request was rejected due to your refusal of circumcision. What some call “discrimination” others call standards or criteria for membership.

Third, embedded within the concept of baptism and church

[33] Please note that by “open” in this context, I mean a person who actively practices the sin and has no intention of giving it up, but plans to continue the sin in the future openly and boldly.

membership is an “exclusionary” and unaccepting attitude toward sin. Baptism seeks to be an outward symbol of the removing (or cleansing) of sin from the sinner—not giving them a green light to continue. John the Baptist seems to agree that not all are good candidates for baptism when he rebukes the Pharisees and scribes stating that they should “bring forth fruits worthy of repentance”. (Luke 3:7-14) Thus, open and active sinners who are unrepentant are bad candidates for baptism. This is why Jesus could state that not everyone who calls Him “Lord, Lord” enters heaven, but those who “do the will” of the Heavenly Father. (Mat 7:21)

This proves that there is a historic level of exclusion when it comes to joining the body of Christ. Everyone is invited to go to heaven, but not everyone accepts the necessary conditions of the invitation, and thus, they reject it. Since the onset of baptism, there has always been a level of exclusivity. Though not on the basis in which humans typically discriminate (for example, race, ethnicity, and nationality)—this exclusion is based on one’s willingness to fully surrender to God. One cannot fully surrender if one is dedicated to living lawlessly. (1 John 3:4; James 2:10, Romans 6:16)

These points demonstrate that the church is justified in denying membership when that denial is consistent with its beliefs and practices. The church is not a social club for reinforcing social bonds: it is God’s institution for the purpose of spreading the gospel. “Many are called, but few are chosen”. (Matt 22:14) Not, literally, everyone gets to join: ideally everyone can repent, but reality demonstrates that not everyone will. Scripture shows that both Jesus and John the Baptist understood that some individuals would be excluded from salvation based on their unwillingness to repent.

Jesus, Himself, was clear about this exclusivity at the end of time: The sheep would be separated from the goats (Matt 25:33), the 5 wise virgins separated from the foolish (Matt 25:2-13), the wheat from the tares (Matt 13:30), etc. This level of “exclusion” cannot be equated with “discrimination” (as we use the term today). To take away this exclusivity is a direct violation of religious liberty and a form of bigotry. Religious bodies have a right to be exclusive when exclusivity is necessary for the

free exercise of that religion.

Thus, the church has never been, and was never intended to be, a place where everyone can become a member regardless of their willingness to repent of their attachments toward sin. Instead, the church is a place where one can be reconciled to God through repentance and allowing God to transform one's life. Often churches break this protocol because doing so yields numbers and financial advantages that come with those numbers. However, such churches have misled people throughout the ages by causing them to think that all churches are meant to be open and accepting of the unrepentant. This is not true!

Doesn't the Bible say don't judge?

Another popular liberal belief is that one should not "judge". By this, most people interpret the word "judge" to mean that they should never tell someone that the actions they perform are wrong almost under all (if not under all) circumstances. They should be openly accepted, and if guilty of sin, leave it to God to convict and make the change.

Under this philosophy, the church becomes more of a social acceptance program than what it should be. Consequently, the members bring in and accept people regardless of their willingness to accept and embrace the truth, the church becomes highly financed, and people feel that: not only are they accepted, but their lifestyle is also acceptable and permissible. There are two polar extremes behind this doctrine.

The first extreme is that if we buy into the idea of not judging, we yield to an "anything goes" policy in which people can join the church and live however they want to live. This falls in line with the Laodicean church of Revelation 3.

“Because thou sayest, I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing; and knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked: I counsel thee to

buy of me gold tried in the fire, that thou mayest be rich; and white raiment, that thou mayest be clothed, and *that* the shame of thy nakedness do not appear; and anoint thine eyes with eyesalve, that thou mayest see.” (Rev 3:17-18)

This is a church that thinks it is rich, increased with goods, and believes it has need of nothing: not realizing that it is spiritually poor, blind, and naked. This condition happens when we superficially obtain riches and goods without being rich in the Spirit. One can grow a church to astounding numbers, but if no one in the institution does the will of God (the complete will, not just the parts of it that people want to hear) the growth of the church is pointless.

“And why call ye me, Lord, Lord, and do not the things which I say?” (Luke 6:46)

In this passage Jesus implied that it’s not enough to acknowledge Him with words, but one must acknowledge Him in action and practice. If one is a Christian, they should behave accordingly. Otherwise, calling Jesus “Lord” is not reasonable.

“A good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit, neither *can* a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit. Every tree that bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire. Wherefore by their fruits ye shall know them. Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven.” (Matt 7:18-21)

While showing love to others is certainly in the will of God and covered by the last 6 of the 10 Commandments, love also mandates that we love God Himself. In fact, Jesus stated that the first and greatest

Commandment is to “Love the Lord your God with all your heart, all your soul, all your mind, and all your strength...” (Mark 12:30) Love for God means fulfilling the requirements of the law naturally (through the power of the Holy Spirit). If one really loves God they would not break His Commandments or endorse them to be broken.

“By this we know that we love the children of God, when we love God, and keep his commandments. For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments: and his commandments are not grievous. For whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world: and this is the victory that overcometh the world, *even* our faith.” (1 John 5:2-4)

“Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil. For verily I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled. Whosoever therefore shall break one of these least commandments, and shall teach men so, he shall be called the least in the kingdom of heaven: but whosoever shall do and teach *them*, the same shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven.” (Matt 5:17-19)

It is crystal clear from scripture that we are to love both God and each other. Violation of the Law of God is not real love. We should not violate His law ourselves, endorse people who do, or teach that it's ok to do so. Instead, scripture teaches that one who is born of God must “overcome the world”. To have people join the church while their sin is celebrated and endorsed is a philosophy in direct contradiction with what scripture teaches.

On the other hand, there is also the other extreme in which people

begin to look down on others who they deem are worse off than them. This class of people exalts in being “better” than one who struggles with a particular sin that they don’t struggle with. The problem with this philosophy is “self-righteousness”; however, self-righteousness is not to be confused with “calling sin by its right name”.

The difference is that self-righteous people often stand in judgment, condemning people (not just their practices), and in some cases make a career out of it. They care more about appearing to be “better” and putting down the other person than they do helping the individual get re-connected with God. The rebuke doesn’t come from a place of sincerity and love for the sinner—it comes from a place of self-exaltation.

This latter form of judgment happens so often in churches that it has led to the term “judgment” or “judge” being used incorrectly and in the wrong circumstances. It is now to the point where even the minister can’t call sin “sin”. Now that we’ve addressed the two extremes, we can analyze what the Bible says about “judging”.

“Judge not, that ye be not judged. For with what judgment ye judge, ye shall be judged: and with what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you again. And why beholdest thou the mote that is in thy brother's eye, but considerest not the beam that is in thine own eye? Or how wilt thou say to thy brother, Let me pull out the mote out of thine eye; and, behold, a beam *is* in thine own eye? Thou hypocrite, first cast out the beam out of thine own eye; and then shalt thou see clearly to cast out the mote out of thy brother's eye.” (Matt 7:1-5)

“Judge not, and ye shall not be judged: condemn not, and ye shall not be condemned: forgive, and ye shall be forgiven:” (Luke 6:37)

“But why dost thou judge thy brother? or why dost thou set at nought thy brother? for we shall all stand before the judgment seat of Christ.” (Roman 14:10)

In the above passages, which are usually indirectly cited by those who say Christians are not supposed to “judge”, the Bible is clearly talking about judgment as in “condemnation”. In other words, it’s the act of declaring that someone is going to hell, casting them off as “unworthy”, and esteeming them lowly because of what one perceives about them individually. It has nothing to do with making a judgment about their actions (whether they are acceptable or not), but with what one does with that knowledge and how the person is treated.

Examples of this include how Jesus ate with sinners and the religious leaders condemned Him for doing so, stating that if He were truly of God He would know the manner of people He was sitting with. Jesus sat and ate with sinners in order to draw them to repentance. The Pharisees and scribes wouldn’t even reach out to this class of people: instead, they wanted nothing to do with them. They treated them like “cast-aways”.

While it wouldn’t have been wrong to judge it a sin to commit adultery, how one treats the sinner is the judgment Jesus was rebuking here. If we are all sinners, do we have the right to treat those who are guilty without dignity and respect? Certainly not!

With that said, I’m a firm believer that while open homosexuals shouldn’t be baptized, they should be welcomed in the church (to sit down in the pews) if they genuinely want to be there to learn about Jesus. They should be treated with dignity, respect, and kindness. Furthermore, I am adamantly against violence toward this group. They should not be harassed, provoked, or mistreated in anyway. To do any of these things would be performing the judgment Jesus talked about in these verses. It would also be hypocritical and contrary to Christian practice.

I’m sure the reader is wondering: well by what means can I also

say that they should not be baptized and accepted into church fellowship? Great question! I do not say this maliciously or without regard to the feelings and concerns of the LGBTQ community. However, I say it with the spirit of honesty. If baptism is for the purpose of repentance and one is not willing to repent, what sense does it make to be baptized? Baptism isn't about the remission of some of your sins; it is for the remission of all sins. Additionally, baptism was commanded by Jesus for entry into fellowship with the body of Christ and for entry into the kingdom of God. Without repentance, the baptism doesn't really count—though your name goes on the physical church roster penned by the church clerk.

I would go a step further and say that Christians should not support homosexual weddings or recognize same-sex relationships and marriages as a legitimate expression of love. Do you think I'm a bigot yet? Do you think I'm self-righteous? At this point, I'm sure you do; however, I can assure you that, while everyone is entitled to have their opinion: in this case—Biblically speaking—you're wrong! Here's why:

While the passages we read earlier dealt with the topic of judgment as in “condemnation” and “devaluing” it was not referring to the other meaning of “judgment” as in “discerning right from wrong”. Examine the following passages:

“Do ye not know that **the saints shall judge** the world? and if the world shall be **judged by you**, are ye unworthy to **judge the smallest matters**? Know ye not that **we shall judge angels**? **how much more things that pertain to this life**? If then ye have judgments of things pertaining to this life, **set them to judge who are least esteemed in the church.**” (1 Cor 6:2-4)

“But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of *that* bread, and drink of *that* cup. For he that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh damnation to himself, not discerning the Lord's body. For this cause many *are* weak and sickly among you, and many sleep. For if **we would judge ourselves**, we should not be

judged. But when we are judged, we are chastened of the Lord, that we should not be condemned with the world.” (1 Cor 11:28-32)

In this context, Judgment has a lot to do with discerning right from wrong or between good and evil. We are encouraged to “judge ourselves”. This is consistent with the theme of repentance which calls us to see if we are in harmony with God’s will or in need of a turn around.

Furthermore, in the matter of bringing up a law suit against another Christian, Paul states that the church should judge the matter rather than bringing it to court. Bringing squabbles to court would be an embarrassment to the church. For this reason, people were appointed within the church to “judge” matters between members.

In the 1 Corinthians 5, Paul “judged” that someone should be delivered to Satan (removed from the Church’s protection) so that he would learn not to sin. All these passages demonstrate clearly that the church had an obligation to rebuke, reprove, and correct sin. This form of “judgment” was not to be confused with what Jesus was discussing in the other passages we discussed—not all forms of judgment were intended by the prohibition.

“Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season;
reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine. For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears;” (2 Timothy 4:2-3 emphasis mine)

These facts indicate that when Jesus said that we are not to judge others, He wasn’t talking about discerning their actions. He was talking about how we often devalue the individual and “cast them off”. Yet, in the examples above, sin was rebuked, reprovved, and even grounds for

removal from the Church which would result in satanic vulnerability.

It's interesting that the sin discussed in 1 Corinthians 6 was a sin that violated the sexual laws of Leviticus. This shows the continuity of the law: Paul regarded it as not only binding, but grounds for removing an individual from the Church. This same list of Commandments is where the command against homosexuality is found—the only commandment in the list, specifically called an “abomination” (the rest were collectively called “abominations”).

Scripture is very clear, therefore, that sin is not to be tolerated in the church context. It must be rebuked and reprovved. However, Paul emphasized that the fact someone had to be removed was not something to take lightly: rather, it should deeply grieve the church. In other words, it wasn't grounds for self-righteousness, but deep sorrow and desire to restore the individual. Though restoration was the ultimate goal, the sin could not be embraced with the sinner. The passage implies that the person had to repent in order to be restored to the church context.

God loves the sinner, but hates the sin—as is so often said. This means that acceptance of an individual with their sins runs contrary to the Biblical model. It superficially loves the sinner, because it does not seek to rid the individual of what separates them from God. It allows a person to feel like they are connected to a group, when they are spiritually dead. In essence, through this practice, the church is deceptive and showing hatred to these individuals through lack of honesty.

Imagine someone inviting you to a movie with a group of friends, but none of you has any money. The person inviting you tells you not to worry because the tickets are all covered. You arrive at the time you and your friends are supposed to see the film and the person who is distributing the tickets doesn't have a ticket for you. When you inquire about why you didn't receive a ticket, the distributor says to you, “Didn't your friends tell you that you had to have your name submitted by the person sponsoring you in order to get your ticket?” You respond no. You had no idea you needed to contact a sponsor. They told you everything

was taken care of. Now you can't enjoy the movie. Your friends left out crucial information which basically caused you to waste your time, while not being able to enjoy the movie with them.

In the same way, homosexuals are being unjustly treated in that churches are lying to them. They are told that they can be accepted into heaven while their "sponsor" does not cover them because of their continued practice in abomination. This is unfair. It's not right. It's downright dishonest. Ezekiel agrees:

“When I say unto the wicked, O wicked *man*, thou shalt surely die; if thou dost not speak to warn the wicked from his way, that wicked *man* shall die in his iniquity; but his blood will I require at thine hand. Nevertheless, if thou warn the wicked of his way to turn from it; if he do not turn from his way, he shall die in his iniquity; but thou hast delivered thy soul.” (Eze 33:8-9)

Homosexuals need to be able to make an informed choice. It's unfair not to give them that opportunity. They may reject the Word of God to continue their lifestyle. That's their choice. However, it's wrong to not tell them to make the choice and have them find out on judgment day that they lived their entire lives thinking they were in harmony with God, while they are rejected due to iniquity. By not "calling sin by its right name" we do a great number of people a disservice. Yet, churches who adopt this policy think themselves more "loving".

This is why I call the love "superficial". If you really love someone, you should love them enough to tell them the truth in a respectful and tactful manner. If you lie to someone to collect their money and have them thinking they are in good standing when they really are not: how much can you really love them?

In summary, on the matter of judgment, it's theologically incorrect to say that we should not "judge". It depends on the

implications of judgment because the word “judgment” had different meanings depending on the context. If “judging” is in the context of devaluing the individual, condemning a person, and considering them a “cast-away”: this is what Jesus meant when He said that we should not judge lest we also be judged. However, if we are applying the term “judgment” in the context of discerning between right and wrong, or good and evil (specifically in terms of practice), that cannot be considered the type of judgment Jesus told his followers not to perform.

To lump all “judgment” into the same category is to make a huge mistake and contradicts all passages of scripture which clearly state that we should reprove, correct, and rebuke. Of course, even these permissible things should be done with tact and appropriateness (which often is not the case). People should not reprove and rebuke when their spiritual lives are glaring contradictions to what they profess.

However, this fact does not negate the truth that it is Biblically permissible to reprove, rebuke, and correct sin—as long as it’s done in the context and Spirit of true love, for the purpose of uplifting the fallen sinner. If not, it’s better that the person keep their mouth shut.

Furthermore, given this Biblical evidence, I have full license to say that homosexuality should not be a tolerated practice in churches. It is because people falsely apply the concept of “judging” that people are now so afraid of saying no to something out of fear that they may appear “judgmental”. Even the Pope judges himself inadequate to judge clergymen who are found to be homosexual. Yet, by virtue of his title, he claims to be the replacement of Jesus on Earth and head of the household of faith.

“In that context, brief remarks by Pope Francis suggesting that he would not judge priests for their sexual orientation, made aboard the papal airplane on the way back from his first foreign

trip, to Brazil, resonated through the church. Never veering from church doctrine opposing homosexuality, Francis did strike a more compassionate tone than that of his predecessors, some of whom had largely avoided even saying the more colloquial ‘gay.’ ‘If someone is gay and he searches for the Lord and has good will, who am I to judge?’ Francis told reporters, speaking in Italian but using the English word ‘gay.’” (nytimes.com)[34]

According to the New York Times, this seemed to suggest that he was going against or lightening the policy of his predecessor’s ban on homosexual clergy: "who are actively homosexual, have deep-seated homosexual tendencies, or support the so-called 'gay culture.'" If this is what the Pope meant in his statement, he is in blatant contradiction with scripture to accept and not rebuke gay clergy. If not, he may wish to clarify his statements with the New York Times which may have misunderstood him.

If they understood him correctly, how can someone minister to God’s people while they live a lifestyle in contradiction to the principles they profess to uphold and teach others? How can the head officer of the Roman church view this as acceptable and not “judge” the priests by discerning their actions and removing them from their respective offices if they are deemed inappropriate to correctly represent the church’s principles on sexuality due to their lifestyle? Assuming the New York Times understands him correctly, if the Pope views himself unworthy to discern, he must also be unworthy to lead and consider himself the representative of Christ.

[34] Donadio, Rachel “On Gay Priests, Pope Francis Asks, ‘Who Am I to Judge?’” July 29, 2013 http://www.nytimes.com/2013/07/30/world/europe/pope-francis-gay-priests.html?_r=0 (accessed 5-26-2015)

Again, allowing homosexuals to attend church where they receive the Word of Salvation is completely appropriate. One can't be brought to repentance without first hearing the message of warning. However, accepting homosexuals into fellowship—with full rights of membership—while they actively practice abomination is outrageous, irrespective of Christian denomination.

If the secular world considers it “judging” to call sin “sin”, then a Christian is justifiably “judgmental”. However, from a Biblical basis, it cannot be considered “judging” to call something wrong “wrong” as long as it is done in a way that respects the dignity of the wrong-doer. If I were accused of being judgmental, the first question I would ask is “by what standard?” If the reply suggested in any way that the Bible tells us not to judge, I would immediately point out that person does not understand “judgment” in its proper context.

The church cannot, from a Biblical standpoint, accept homosexuals into fellowship (let alone clergy). If one disagrees, Paul owes the man who slept with his father's wife an apology for his harsh “judgment” in delivering him to Satan for the destruction of the flesh.

People need to understand that while Jesus reached out to individuals he drew them to repentance. Jesus' outreach to sinners should not be equated with being accepting of their practices. Can anyone find a scripture which shows a clear cut example of Jesus accepting an individual's sins? I think not.

Tact, on the other hand, is a reasonable request. In the example of homosexuality, one needn't attend church and expect to hear a sermon on homosexuality every week, followed by a Bible study on the same subject, and several rebukes from elders pointing out their error followed by the addition of meddling old ladies. However, if the topic is addressed, one shouldn't be surprised to learn that the church is not accepting of the practice and will not perform ceremonies that celebrate it. Homosexuals should be embraced with love and encouraged (not hammered) to repent.

Respecting the Dignity of Homosexuals

While it's true that Christians should not condone the practice, this raises some questions of practicality. The dignity and human rights of every sinner should be respected. This means that homosexuals should not be denied jobs (unless there are religious implications, for example, church pastor); they should not be referred to in derogatory terms; they should not be the objects of violence, jokes, or jesting; they should not be denied services (with no religious implications); or any other form of inappropriate treatment. They should not be denied their right to an education, to buy property, to voice their opinion, etc.[35] Even God, who calls the practice an abomination, respects the dignity of these individuals in this way—being kind to those who are unholy. Christians should mirror their Creator in this respect.

That being said, grey areas still may need to be worked out (ie. Should a Christian photographer be sued for refusing to photograph a homosexual wedding? The Supreme Court seems to think so.[36] Should Christian hospitals be required to provide same-sex benefits to gay employees? Should they even hire homosexuals or be more exclusive in hiring practices rather than equal opportunity employers?[37]); but there are some clear cut things Christians should not do: they should not support, engage in, or endorse things related to same-sex couples

[35] However, it should be noted that I am not including homosexual marriages in this list, nor do I include spousal benefits. I argue that homosexuals should receive due reasonable human rights.

[36] McCarthy, Tom. "US Supreme Court Declines Appeal of Photographer Who Refused Gay Couple." *The Guardian*. N.p., 07 Apr. 2014. <http://www.theguardian.com/world/2014/apr/07/supreme-court-gay-marriage-new-mexico-photographer> (accessed 5-26-2015)

[37] Karemera, Valmy. "Florida's Adventist Hospitals Offer Health Benefits to Same-Sex Couples." *The Compass Magazine*. N.p., 03 Mar. 2015. <https://www.thecompassmagazine.com/news/floridas-adventist-hospitals-offer-health-benefits-to-same-sex-couples> (accessed 5-26-2015)

(especially, but not limited to, marriages).

Even the gay-straight alliance, offered in many public school settings, would be inappropriate for Christians to take part in. A true Bible believing Christian cannot be an “ally”. This is because the gay-straight alliance does not allow for respecting the Christian condemnation of homosexual practice while embracing the person in a constructive and realistic way. The gay-straight alliance is more celebratory of differences and seeks to promote the idea that being gay is “ok” and all parties should accept it as a legitimate practice even if they personally would not practice it. A Christian cannot do this, Biblically speaking.

There needs to be a respect of the line between righteousness and unrighteousness. While a Christian cannot “celebrate” homosexuality or transgender identity (Deut 22:5) there is room for building community in the sense that Christians and those who believe differently, can agree to adamantly disagree. For example, Christians, Muslims, and Jews have huge differences between their respective religions. Each believes, theologically, that the other has not embraced the truth and may be lost for eternity. However, this doesn’t have to lead to conflict in a school, work, or community settings. They have their beliefs, but agree to disagree.

There can be no Christian-gay alliance because the LGBT community is not willing to accept that Christians are not accepting of their lifestyle and cannot celebrate it or validate it (Isa 8:12-13; 2 Cor 6:14). If this were understood, there could be mutual respect between Christians and homosexuals (or transgendered people) and they could work together from the stand point of finding ways to effectively agree to disagree, tear down violence, and create reasonably safe environments. However, the Bible believing Christian will not be attending weddings or take part in endorsing and recognizing same-sex relationships as valid.

There could be room for improved relationships between the LGBT community and Christianity as long as it is understood and

accepted that the practices of the LGBT community are strictly condemned by the Bible and therefore not permissible in the Christian context. Improved relationships could be fostered in the sense that although Biblical Christianity may not accept these practices, there could be growth in terms of how Christians relate to members of the LGBT community, namely: not using offensive words to refer to members of the community, learning how to respectfully disagree, avoiding violence, and advocating for non-violence against this population, building school or work communities in which members of the LGBT community and the Christian community feel reasonably safe.[38]

You might be thinking, “But isn’t that exactly what an ‘ally’ does?” Not quite. While many of the ideas I propose and the ideas that the Gay-Straight Alliance proposes are similar—there is a crucial difference: the Gay-Straight Alliance operates from a celebratory standpoint. Many Christians may believe in advocating for non-violence, avoiding offensive language, and reducing the statistics on homosexual suicides, homelessness, etc. through creating a “safe” environment; however, we cannot do so from the capacity of “ally” because that requires a celebratory approach and acceptance of homosexuality.

Fostering improvement in relations between straight and gay does not necessitate joining clubs which celebrate and accept homosexuality and transgender identity as valid practice. Contrary to popular political opinion, Christians need to be able to retain their right to agree to disagree as a religious community—but in a respectful manner. To be blunt, we—as a Bible based Christian community—still believe and hold

[38] When I say reasonably, I have in mind that I would not feel “safe” talking about the subject of the Trinity by myself in a room full of Muslims and other anti-Trinitarian religions that disagree with the belief. In that setting, I would be less likely to bring up that subject. Likewise, politics could be a live-wire if the member of one party is surrounded by members of the opposing political party and has the fortitude to voice his opinion. While one may feel “unsafe” if the conversation does explode, one shouldn’t feel their life is threatened.

that those who practice homosexuality will be lost if the sin is never repented of. While we make no apologies for this belief, we also don't need to create hostile environments in educational or work place institutions to exacerbate the valid concerns of the LGBT community regarding statistics on violence, suicide, and homelessness.

These statistics should be concerning to Christians even though we don't agree with the LGBT community: where reasonably possible, we should minister to these concerns. We love people who happen to be homosexual: we just don't agree with what they do because it is an abomination according to God's Word.

As an illustration, the Christian community holds, for example, that Jesus Christ is the only means to salvation and that no other means of approaching salvation is valid. This would be a belief working to the exclusion of Muslims, Hindus, Buddhists, and a plethora of other religions. Yet, there are many cases in which this does not destroy the working or learning environment.

Almost all religions accept that, by the standards of other religions, those who differ would be eternally lost. I know that based on Islam, I will probably go to their concept of "hell". I have no problem with that; we agree to disagree. The fact that they may think I'm lost doesn't bother me because I do not agree with their religious beliefs collectively. However, this does not mean that we can't have successful working relationships or be part of the same learning communities.

We're there to work or to learn, not to beat each other up on points of doctrine. The work or academic environment, with some exceptions, may not generally be the appropriate forum for theological controversy. At work, one should consider themselves a representative of the state (or whatever institution employs the person).

I am always a representative of my faith; however, in a work or academic setting, my faith is not expressed through preaching because it is not the appropriate setting or forum for that. I'm being paid to represent the company. The company accepts and embraces people of all religions, genders, sexual orientations, etc. As a representative of the

company, I embrace them on behalf of the company while I still hold to and do not compromise my personal religious beliefs. For example, if I worked at a fast food chain, no one would be treated differently based on their orientation: everyone would get the same high quality service.

I do not tend to correct people every time I hear a theological error that rubs me the wrong way. Work is not usually the appropriate setting for a Bible study. However, if a colleague asks me a question privately, I will likely share my thoughts on the matter when I'm not on the clock. As a representative of my faith, I try to demonstrate my faith at work by how I live rather than how well I can expound on theology. However, if you catch me, and ask me a question, on the train or in an appropriate setting in which I can share and it's appropriate to do so—that's another story.

It is even possible for some friendships to exist between members of contrasting religions, though we have the understanding that by the differing standards of paths to salvation, the respective religious parties would be “eternally lost” depending on the views of the specific religions at play. If this is possible within differing religious communities, why wouldn't it be possible with the LGBT community without compromising Christian faith and the Christian stance on homosexuality or transgender identity? If you don't believe in or don't agree with what the religion teaches, don't join the religion! However, this doesn't change that we can go to work, or school, on Monday and respect one another—treating each other with dignity.

Christians, Jews, and Muslims have demonstrated their ability to work together in a variety of work institutions and academic settings regardless of their theological views about the salvation of the other groups. Yet, only non-religious groups or groups like the LGBT community claim that acceptance must be required in order for a working relationship to be possible (often demonstrating hyper-sensitivity to theological unacceptance).

This “all inclusive” idea is ridiculous: we don’t have to “embrace” everything in order to work together—we just have to show appropriate respect. The religious institutions that work together, while each theologically holds that the other is “lost”, disproves the idea that we all have to embrace each other as equally valid (theologically) in order to work together and can’t believe (theologically) that a population is “lost”.

Religions should not be forced or coerced into mending their theology to be more accepting or inclusive. It’s ok to believe others are “lost” as long as you conduct yourself appropriately while holding those views. I, for example, am not bothered by working with individuals who belong to religious sects that may believe I’m the one who is lost. I agree to disagree.

Many have worked with customers, students, and colleagues that are gay and / or transgender. Many have family members who are the aforesaid. My theological stand doesn’t mean that I don’t care about these individuals, or love them. I do. Biblically speaking, I can’t support what they practice because it goes against God’s will. They have to understand that I do not make apologies for my faith, while I understand that I can’t rub it in a person’s face.

If I’m invited to a neutral function like a restaurant or social event, there’s a chance I’d be likely to attend. However, I’m very clear that I’m not going to support their relationships. If someone from work invites me and other colleagues to grab something to eat, I see no problem with going. I wouldn’t have an issue with inviting a gay colleague to eat or attend an appropriate function outside of work (however, I would not allow, in almost all cases, the person to bring their partner to my house). I would only reject invitations when the invitation invites compromise—if Jesus could eat and mingle with sinners to demonstrate to them His genuine care and concern for them, Christians should follow their master. However, boundaries need to be respected.

It is too often not understood that Christians love people, even if they don’t agree with their practice. The LGBTQ community often tries to blend practice with the person—making what one does who they are

rather than a part of who they are. Christians, like Jesus, can mingle with people who don't subscribe to their theology as long as it doesn't require compromise. It is our hope that through our witness, one would be encouraged to leave a lifestyle of sin.

Christians and members of the LGBTQ community work together, learn together, and sometimes frequent the same places. This doesn't need to be an antagonistic environment (reminding people excessively, every time we see them and in every conversation, that they are "lost"). Christians should not excessively hammer people with the threat of going to "hell"—respect the dignity of the "sinner". If someone is open to Bible truth, it should be shared as opportunity presents itself—if not, than one should witness through the way they live their life.

In cases where a Christian needs to make a stand for their beliefs, they should; however, it should be done in a tasteful and tactful manner. (Hopefully I accomplished that in this presentation, though I at times used strong language because it was consistent with my Biblical theology and not at all intended to be derogatory or nasty.) When one shares their faith, they should avoid being emotional and stick with "thus says the Lord", leaving it at that.

Separation of Church and State

On the matter of institutions which require keeping church and state separate, I would not force the issue of my theological views. Teachers, for example, should not conduct a Bible study on homosexuality in a public school classroom. It's not the forum for that. Doing so would also violate the laws of the state: Christians should be in harmony with these laws as much as is reasonably possible.

Likewise, the state should stay out of the church's business and not penalize employees of any company for the religious beliefs they hold and teach. However, the employees of the company should do what

is reasonably expected in regard to treating members of the LGBTQ community with dignity and respect while not going against conscience.

In Regard to Same-Sex Marriages

Marriage is a religious institution. For this reason, marriage, while recognized by the state, should not be interfered with or redefined. If marriage becomes a state controlled matter, divorced from its religious context, churches should not be required to conduct same-sex marriages.

First, while the ceremony is conducted by the church, the state provides the license. Therefore, the ceremony is for the purpose of providing religious blessing, even though a clergyman can sign the marriage license. Since it is a violation of religious principle to conduct same-sex ceremonies, the state should support the church and have same-sex couples avoid seeking to have their ceremonies in churches that hold to Biblical standards.

However, it should also be noted that if the state encourages same-sex relationships, they run the legitimate risk of incurring the wrath of God. These practices are abominable. God warns that any nations practicing abomination would “vomit out” its inhabitants. While God is patient, active sinning can incur wrath. A nation’s troubles can be avoided by sticking to Biblical principles. This doesn’t mean that God’s wrath will immediately fall; but when the cup of iniquity is filled to its full, judgment is pending. For this reason, it’s any Christian’s duty to warn that this is not the path you want to take.

“(For all these abominations have the men of the land done, which *were* before you, and the land is defiled;) That the land spue not you out also, when ye defile it, as it spued out the nations that *were* before you. **For whosoever shall commit any of these abominations, even the souls that commit *them* shall be cut off from among their people.**” (Lev 18:27-29 emphasis mine)

If one chooses to take these warnings lightly, that is their decision to make. However, don't bring the sin to the church context. Most of us don't desire to share in or endorse "abomination".

Most churches have a policy in their statement of beliefs that states their stance on the matter of same-sex marriage. As one example, the Seventh-day Adventist church states the following:

"Seventh-day Adventists believe that sexual intimacy belongs only within the marital relationship of a man and a woman. This was the design established by God at creation. The Scriptures declare: 'For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and they will become one flesh' (Gen 2:24, NIV). Throughout Scripture this heterosexual pattern is affirmed. The Bible makes no accommodation for homosexual activity or relationships. Sexual acts outside the circle of a heterosexual marriage are forbidden (Lev 18:5-23, 26; Lev 20:7-21; Rom 1:24-27; 1 Cor 6:9-11). Jesus Christ reaffirmed the divine creation intent: ' "Haven't you read," he replied, "that at the beginning the Creator 'made them male and female,' and said, 'For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and the two will become one flesh?' So they are no longer two, but one'" (Matt 19:4-6, NIV). For these reasons Seventh-day Adventists are opposed to homosexual practices and relationships."^[39]
(Adventist.org)

For the official statement of what your denomination believes on

[39] "Homosexuality." : *The Official Site of the Seventh-day Adventist World Church*. N.p., n.d. <http://www.adventist.org/information/official-statements/statements/article/go/0/homosexuality/> (accessed 5-26-2015)

this matter, one should consult the church website.

Youth and Homosexuality

Youth, today, are particularly vulnerable to the false teachings, myths, and rumors spread regarding this subject. This was the reason for writing this book. Churches need to better educate the youth in terms of sound Biblical doctrine on this subject and many others. The youth face peer pressure, pressure from the educational institutions, and media pressure to conform to worldly standards.

When a compromise cannot be met, often pressure is put on the church to change. However, there are some God-fearing youth that genuinely want to embrace the truth—wherever it leads. They should understand that the Bible is opposed to same-sex couples and that abstinence is the policy for these types of relationships. They should be encouraged to be courteous and respectful toward individuals who don't hold to this belief. They should not constantly remind their peers, teachers, or community members that they are "lost". This language is offensive, and hammering any truth (especially without tact) runs contrary to the Biblical approach of respecting the dignity of the sinner.

Youth struggling with the temptation to sin sexually in this regard should contact their pastor and seek counsel. While it's true that homosexuality can be more complicated an issue than "praying the gay away", it should also be noted that even the most complex troubles have been "prayed away". However, prayer is in some ways a science and there are conditions for answered prayer.

It is not uncommon to feel like something that is wrong comes naturally to you. Such is the nature of sin. If it didn't feel natural or appealing in some ways we wouldn't do it or be addicted to it. Because of the consequences of sin on the natural world, the matter of

homosexuality can be complex for some while easier for others. The Christian should not be put off by that.

Youth will likely come across counter teachings in the school systems, the media, and conflicting messages from some professed Christian ministers. This is because many churches are compromising Biblical principles. It will not be uncommon, as awareness is raised by secular institutions on subjects related to the LGBTQ community, that false ministers will likely endorse the practice. In this presentation, sound theology was presented that invalidates these practices and sets forth the truth in a Biblical light. The quantity of false teachings out there are a sure sign of the last days when the Bible predicts that wickedness will be prevalent.

“For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears; And they shall turn away *their* ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables.” (2 Timothy 4:3-4)

Jesus Himself warned:

“And many false prophets shall rise, and shall deceive many. And because iniquity shall abound, the love of many shall wax cold. But he that shall endure unto the end, the same shall be saved. And this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations; and then shall the end come.” (Matt 24:11-14)

Conclusion: Wresting Scripture

“And account *that* the longsuffering of our Lord *is* salvation; even as our beloved brother Paul also according to the

wisdom given unto him hath written unto you; As also in all *his* epistles, speaking in them of these things; in which are some things hard to be understood, which they that are unlearned and unstable wrest, as *they do* also the other scriptures, unto their own destruction. Ye therefore, beloved, seeing ye know *these things* before, beware lest ye also, being led away with the error of the wicked, fall from your own steadfastness.” (2 Peter 3:15-17)

Peter indicates that there were some who twist, wrench, and pervert Paul’s writings. They also took this approach to the rest of scripture ensuring their own destruction. Peter equates this approach to scripture, and those who are led away by it, as the “error of the wicked”. The word used for “wicked” in verse 17 also implies lawlessness. Therefore, according to Peter, twisting the scriptures to arrive at and substantiate one’s own opinions and presuppositions is wickedness and lawless. He urges us to be steadfast.

Today, just as in Peter and Paul’s time, people project their presuppositions onto the Word of God. They use conjecture to project false readings and interpretations onto scripture in order to promote lawlessness. This is the case with homosexual revisionists who attempt to read homosexual interpretations into scripture.

We were told beforehand that such twisting of scripture would take place as Satan attempts to deceive the Church. Many are and will be deceived by the wrenching of scripture from its true context because our culture does not advocate or encourage and emphasize the importance of studying God’s Word. Therefore many are deceived and can’t rightly divide the Word of Truth, because they do not study!

Satan will always attack the Church, as he attacked Jesus in the wilderness, with false interpretations of scripture. This isn’t anything new. But, God’s people are called to preach the Word and to expose spiritual wickedness in high places and to expel darkness with light. For this reason, when people promote false interpretations of scripture, it becomes necessary to expose the error for what it really is. The Bible

does not condone or support homosexuality.

Those with little exposure to the Bible and who don't study it can be led away with these false ideas; but, if God's people really study the Bible, they will see that these suppositions are in error. It may not be the popular position, but it is the Bible's position. Those who have been deceived should change their views and live by the truth.

This error is being promoted in public schools as well as in the community. In fact, some Christian teachers working in secular institutions have even reported that schools are implementing LGBTQ friendly material into their curriculum, especially during "Pride Month". Some administrators are pushing teachers toward the implementation of such a curriculum.

The youth, because they don't study and very few do devotion, are made to be confused because the ministers don't want to be unpopular or politically incorrect; youth often receive false and conflicting messages from the media and through propaganda put out with all this misinformation! But now that the truth has been brought to light, no one needs to be deceived on these issues.

The Church, including the youth, need to be able to stand firm on what the Bible says and stop making concessions with the world to get along and get by. And if a person is homosexual, please understand that the purpose of this presentation was not to purposely offend, but to make clear what the Bible says and where a Christian must stand.

We stand on the Word of God as the basis and the substantiation of all faith! Therefore, we cannot condone practices which God calls an abomination! I want to make clear that we also do not condone violence or mistreatment of the LGBTQ community; but, as a people of faith who make the Bible the sole determiner of faith and practice, while we may befriend, work alongside, and love homosexual people—we make it clear that we do not support, condone, encourage, or validate the practice of homosexuality, same-sex marriages, or trans-gendering.

As of the summer of 2015, we've reached a critical point in the history of this issue in that the United States Supreme Court ruled (5 votes to 4) that same-sex marriage is a constitutional right. This ruling

essentially legalizes same-sex marriages on a federal level and overrules state legislature contrary to this ruling. Today (and even more so years from now), our world views the issues of gender and marriage far differently than the Creation position. It is likely that Christian youth will grow up in a world promoting options that run contrary to Bible principles and will not have the knowledge that things were not always this way. The media, educational institutions, political candidates, and other influential forces seek to, and have shown progress in, normalizing what is Biblically considered abomination. In fact, once the ruling was announced, even the White House was illuminated with rainbow colors in celebration of open sin.

This raises many questions and concerns about the impact the ruling will have on church institutions like schools, hospitals, and other religious establishments. For example, same-sex married employees of Christian hospitals may require the same marital benefits as heterosexual couples. To deny them this could be considered a breach of their constitutional rights. In the future, though it may not yet be a problem, many are concerned about the LGBT community pushing further to force churches to perform same-sex marriages. It is also a concern that churches, church pastors, and lay members may be pressured not to preach against homosexuality or people who believe they must become a gender contrary to their birth gender. These things could have tremendous consequences for Christian youth and the future of Christianity as interest groups strive to normalize same-sex and transgender initiatives. Youth will likely be marginalized and made to feel uncomfortable if they hold to their religious beliefs in a variety of settings. If you're not with this agenda, you are likely to be considered a bigot.

These concerns provide ample reason why churches need to spend more time educating the youth on the importance of sticking to Biblical principle—though the heavens fall! As the world recognizes and champions “Pride month”, the Christian church should not only make considerable effort to emphasize Biblical principle among its members, but also to reinforce kindness and respect for the dignity of sinners.

The United States adopting a more friendly policy toward the

LGBT community has many Christians concerned about divine judgment falling on the nation. However, though some judgments will likely befall the nation sooner than we think, America has a significant part to play in prophetic history; though its sins may indeed cause grief, it has not yet filled the cup of iniquity. It will play a role in the climax of salvation history. What we are witnessing at this time is only the beginning, assuring us that prophecies are being fulfilled.

While the White House uses the rainbow as the symbol of gay-pride, the Christian may recognize that the first mention of a rainbow in scripture was in the context of God's covenant, after the Flood, not to destroy the earth by water due to the wickedness of mankind. The last mention of the rainbow in scripture is in Revelation 10 which depicts an angel with a rainbow upon his head holding a little book. John is later told to eat this book and that it would be sweet to the mouth, yet bitter in the belly. Even so, John was told to prophesy again. As we prophesy again about God's judgment and the 2nd advent of Jesus Christ, we are reminded to uphold the principles of Creation which includes the marriage relation. Humanity has forgotten the true meaning, value, and purpose behind God's gift of the "woman-wife".

To the youth, and to those who are seeking truth, I leave you with these words:

“Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.” (2 Tim 2:15)

Are You Looking For Bible Study or Other Resources of Spiritual Truth?

J. S. Henry recommends the Inspired Network: an interactive Bible study resource available online for those who desire to come to a closer knowledge of God's Word. Their Bible studies are interactive: this means that you, the



guests, can join in on the studies and participate by webcam, phone, text chat, twitter, and facebook. Your comments and questions make the broadcast unique.

Spectators are welcomed; however, this ministry gives you the unique opportunity to get involved: ask your questions, make your comments, get instantaneous feedback. This is as close to being in a Bible class, without literally sitting in the same room with other people, as one can get. Since anyone from anywhere in the world can join in on the studies, you can study the Bible with friends from different countries across the globe. Invite your family, friends, co-workers, and others to study the Bible together; no matter how much distances may separate, everyone can still study the Bible together in an engaging, exciting, and interactive forum.

In addition to interactive Bible studies, the Inspired Network provides a host of other media. Be sure to visit their website as well as their social media pages.

ISNministry.com

YouTube: www.youtube.com/inspirednetwork

Facebook: www.facebook.com/ISNministry

Twitter: www.twitter.com/inspired7

Pinterest: www.pinterest.com/isnministry

I Now Pronounce You "Man and Woman-wife"

A Biblical Perspective on Homosexual Revisionist Readings

J. S. Henry is a theology writer and researcher who allows the Bible to interpret itself and speaks with honesty on difficult Bible subjects. Due to the plethora of questions and misinformation about the Biblical perspective on Homosexuality, this book intends to address and confront many of these concerns.

Were Ruth and Naomi or Jonathan and David a same-sex couple? Did Jesus affirm a gay couple? Was the Ethiopian eunuch homosexual? Are the "clobber passages" still valid, or were they misinterpreted?

This book is a useful tool in that it looks at many of the arguments put across by revisionists which attempt to introduce homosexual friendly readings onto Bible passages. In addition to rebutting many of these claims, this book also looks at the origins of marriage from a unique perspective and explains why the Bible holds the position that it does on the subject.

In these last days, everything in regard to Creation is under attack. However, this book will demonstrate that the Biblical concept of marriage was embedded in the creation of the first woman.

Additionally, this book will discuss application of these Biblical principles for today's context. Should homosexuals be baptized? How do we demonstrate love toward the LGBT community?

This book was intended to cover the subject of homosexuality from a strictly Biblical perspective and will likely contain views different from the secular world. Discover how the Bible's teachings have implications for the Church today.

