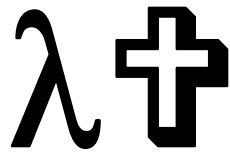


Gay and Christian?



Yes!

Rev. William H. Carey

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Dedication

This work is dedicated first and foremost to our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, the only wise God. It is further dedicated to the many Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual and Transgendered people seeking for truth amid the confusion and condemnation so prevalent in Christianity today. My prayer is that you may be reconciled to God, knowing that He created you, and loves you, as you are.

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Adam and Eve

vs.

Adam and Steve

One of the more recent, and less logical, arguments against homosexuality today is the "Adam & Eve not Adam & Steve" argument. This argument suggests that because the first couple was heterosexual, then all future couples were also intended to be heterosexual. The flaw in this logic is apparent. If we follow the same logic through, we run into serious trouble: If the first two human beings were the pattern God intended, and any deviations from that pattern are contrary to the His will, then we must, following the same logic, also conclude that anyone who is not the same color as Adam and Eve (whatever color that may have been), or does not have the same color hair or eyes, would also be contrary to God's will. When we start talking about "right"

skin color vs. "wrong" skin color, we all know we are on dangerous ground!

But let's look again at our first parents, Adam and Eve. A lot of what we have been taught about them, about the garden, about the fall, is based more upon tradition and medieval paintings than on scripture. (How many of us know that the Bible never said the fruit they ate was an apple?) A careful reading of the Hebrew text will reveal some surprising things about this couple to us.

The scripture tells us that God made man out of the dust of the ground. We know this first man as Adam, but Adam was not originally a proper name. Adam, more properly spelled with a small "a" is nothing more than the Hebrew word for human being. So God created אָדָם *adam* (ah-DAHM), a human being, out of dust. The human being was placed in the Garden of Eden. Also in the garden were the animals God created, and the human being gave them all names. The world order was different then: Because there was no sin, there was no death, and because there was no death, there was no need for any procreation. (If the animals had been reproducing in an enclosed garden, and nothing ever died, there would soon have been massive

overpopulation.) The man also gave a name to himself, different from the word *adam* that God had called him. Adam called himself **אנוש** "*enosh*." This wasn't exactly a proper name either, but meant *man*.¹ Proper names were not needed due to the fact that there was only one of him, and only a limited number of animals. (If there was only one tiger, one tigress, one lion, one lioness, etc., they could be called by those names; other names were not needed.)

It was that pairing of all the other creatures that caused the man his first "problem." The lion had a lioness that he could recognize as being "like him." The tigress had the tiger, etc. But although there are some species that look like man, there was no other creature in the garden that "*enosh*" could recognize as being like him. In that respect, he was alone.

God said that it was not good for the *adam* to be alone (Gen. 2:18) and went on to say "I will make a help meet for him." (King James Version) But what the Hebrew says here, and the manner in which God made this "help," tell us volumes about the creature He was about to present to the man. The words translated as "help meet" are **עזר כנגדו** E-

¹ In modern Hebrew, this word has become **איש** "*ish*."

zer *k'NEG-do*. The word "ezer" means "helper." But there is more to it than that. You see, Hebrew has no neuter gender; every word is either masculine or feminine. Most nouns referring to people have both a masculine form and a feminine form, like "actor" and "actress" in English. *Ezer* is masculine. The feminine form would be *ezrah*.² But God didn't say He would make an *ezrah*. He used the masculine form, *ezer*. The second half of this, *k'negdo*, means "as opposite him," that is, as a mirror image.

The way in which God created this helper is also significant. He could easily have taken some of the same dust from which He made the *adam*, and formed the helper out of it. Instead, we find that He took a rib from the man and made the woman from it. This is very significant. From what we now know about genetics, we can understand what God did: Although it sounds frightening to say it, the plain fact is, God cloned another "*adam*" from the rib. Because the new "*adam*" was made from the first *adam's* DNA, she was genetically identical to him in every way. (Was Eve also called Adam? In Genesis 1:27, the Hebrew tells us that "*adam*" was made both male and female. Genesis 5:1-2 tells

² עזרה

us the same thing, and that **their** name was called "*adam*.") When God made this new person, the Hebrew text of Gen. 2:23 tells us that Adam called her **אִשָּׁה** *inshah*, which is simply the feminine form of *enosh*. It means "woman."³ But we know from modern cloning experiments that a clone cannot have a different sex than the original. Therefore, the woman would have actually been no different from the man. (Remember that there was no need for reproduction yet.) The response of Adam when he met the woman for the first time confirms this. Think for a moment back to when you were a child, and saw another child of the opposite sex undressed for the first time. Undoubtedly, you noticed "the difference." And yet, the difference between boys and girls is minimal when compared with adults, where the "difference" is much more pronounced. And yet, when Adam saw his new wife for the first time (and remember, he had never before seen a human female), he did not say, "What are those things?" or "Why is she missing the parts below?" If there were a physical difference, he would have noticed it immediately. Instead, he recognized her as "bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh." He knew that she was his

³ Modern Hebrew: **אִשָּׁה** *ishah*

counterpart, his mirror image. He gave her the feminine equivalent of his name for himself.

The need for procreation came about as a result of the fall. Because of sin, there was now death, and with expulsion from the garden, there was a whole world to fill. All of creation now needed to reproduce. Having children was part of the curse placed on the woman. Translating from the Hebrew, God told her, "I will surely multiply your sorrow and pregnancy: In sorrow you will bear children, and your desire will be toward your man (literally, toward your *enosh*), and he will rule over you." So we see that pregnancy, bringing forth children, was not part of her original state, but was part of the curse. So if childbearing were not part of her original design, then she would not originally have needed those parts of the body associated with bearing and nursing children. (It is also probable that her husband lacked parts associated with reproduction prior to the fall as well.) What is clear is this: Prior to their sin and expulsion, the man and woman were alike, equal, and appeared to have no physical differences from each other. Their DNA was identical. They were not heterosexual in the modern sense of the word, because there was no sexuality of any kind, nor

any difference between sexes. In fact, the only difference evident in scripture before the fall was grammatical: They were both *adam*, but he was *enosh*, she was *inshah*. The difference served only to point out which "*adam*" was being spoken of. (For example, a lion and lioness: if they were originally physically identical, the different titles would serve only to indicate which big cat you were speaking of, and would not reflect any physical difference.)

After the fall, when the changes took place, which actually affected the whole world order, Adam gave his wife a new name. (These changes included diet: before the fall, no animal ate another.) When Adam realized that his wife would be bearing children, he gave her a name that reflected her new status: He called her Eve⁴ which means "living," because she would be the mother of all the living. So we see that prior to the fall, she was not a mother, she was not Eve, and physically, she was not even female, as we understand the word. So one of the first consequences of sin that came into being was heterosexuality, required to replace those humans and animals who died. But in addition, homosexuality came into being, to prevent overpopulation

⁴ Hebrew: **חַוְוָה** *CHAV-ah*

in the world. A percentage of all animal species are homosexual.⁵ Although it was sin that brought this into being, it was nevertheless God who designed the new order that resulted from our sin. His new order for creation included sexuality, absent from the garden, and included the orientations we know today.

⁵ "Biological Exuberance: Animal Homosexuality and Natural Diversity"
by Bruce Bagemihl, Ph.D.

The Sin of Sodom

Wasn't What You Think

One of the more common arguments against homosexuality used to be the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah. I say '*used to be,*' because many biblical scholars and teachers have begun to realize that there is insufficient scriptural backing for that argument. Let us together take a clear, honest look at these cities, and let us determine who the inhabitants were, and why God destroyed them.

The first thing to realize is that it wasn't just two cities involved. Today, we only remember the names of two, but in truth, God was about to destroy all the cities of the plain. In addition to Sodom and Gomorrah, the cities of Admah, Zeboiim and Zoar were also set to be destroyed. (Gen. 14:2; Deut. 29:23) Zoar was spared so that Lot and his daughters

could flee there, but Admah and Zeboiim met the same fate as Sodom and Gomorrah. Another interesting point is that, at least in reference to Sodom and Gomorrah, the Bible doesn't tell us their real names. Consider: The Hebrew word for Sodom is **סֹדֹם** *S'dom*, and means "burnt." The Hebrew word for Gomorrah is **עֲמוֹרָה** *Amorah*, and means "a ruined heap." There can be no question that these names were given to the cities *after* they were destroyed, and were not their original names.

The inhabitants of these cities, like all the Canaanites, were worshippers of false gods. These included the god Molech, arguably the most horrible of all the idols of Canaan. Molech was a huge statue with his arms held out in front of him. A fire would be kindled between his arms, and then newborn children would be placed in his arms and burned alive. This was known as "passing your children through the fire to Molech."

Other practices engaged in by the Canaanites included adult human sacrifice, cannibalism, and temple prostitution. (Having sexual relations with temple prostitutes as a form of worship in fertility cults.) Is it any wonder that God was determined to destroy these cities?

From a spiritual perspective, people who worship idols and engage in the above-mentioned practices are extremely likely to become demon-possessed, and it is quite probable that many, if not most, of the inhabitants of the cities of the plain were possessed.

Lot, Abraham's nephew, moved to the city of Sodom with his wife and two daughters. God sent two angels to Sodom in the evening, ostensibly to investigate the rumors of the sinfulness of the city. The real purpose of their visit, though, (since God already knew what was going on) was to rescue Lot and his family from the impending destruction. The account of their visit to the city is found in Genesis 19. Lot was sitting in the gate. This is significant. The person who sat in the gate, that is, the gatekeeper, was entrusted by the rulers of the city to monitor all traffic in and out of the city, and not to admit anyone who could endanger the city in any way. This was a serious responsibility, and the fact that it was given to Lot, who was not a native of the city, but a relative newcomer, was unusual.

A word about the angels: Forget, for a moment, the traditional stereotypes of angels, that is, women with flowing blond hair and huge feathered wings. In scripture,

angels usually appeared in the form of men. Frequently, there was nothing unusual about their appearance that would suggest they were anything other than human beings.

Lot greeted the two visitors, as was his responsibility as gatekeeper. (He bowed to the ground, which was not an uncommon form of greeting from an inferior to a superior, in this case, from a public servant to strangers whose social status was unknown.) He then evidently inquired about their business in the city and specific destination, again, as part of his job. Upon learning that they intended to spend the night in the street, Lot insisted that they stay at his house. Some have argued that this was because he knew they would not be safe in the streets. The obvious aside, that there has probably never been a city where it is safe to sleep in the streets at night, the reason for Lot's insistence was actually quite different. It was simply the law of hospitality. This law was unwritten at the time, but was universal throughout the area. It simply stated that if a stranger came to your home or city, you were to treat them as if they were part of your family. You were responsible to lodge, feed and protect them, even at the cost of your own life. Examples of Abraham treating strangers in this way can be found both in

scripture and other Jewish writings. This law was later included in the Law of Moses.

After much urging from Lot, the two visitors went to Lot's house and he made dinner for them. Later that night, a mob formed outside of Lot's house, demanding he bring out the guests. Traditionalists would have us believe that the mob was made up of homosexual men, wanting to have sex with the angels. But a careful reading of the verses shows clearly that this was not the case. Gen. 19:4 tells us "But before they lay down, the men of the city, even the men of Sodom, compassed the house round, both old and young, all the people from every quarter." At first glance, it does appear to be a crowd of men. But let's look deeper. The phrase "the men of the city, even the men of Sodom" is a bit misleading. In Hebrew, **אנשי העיר אנשי סדם** "*anshei ha'ir anshei S'dom,*" could also be translated as "the people of the city, the people of Sodom." But is that a more correct translation? The rest of the verse will answer that for us: "...both old and young, **all** the people from every quarter." There is no question, then, that the entire population of Sodom gathered outside Lot's house, men, women and children. This alone tells us that the traditionalists were

wrong about the intent of this mob: If you are planning a homosexual orgy, you don't invite the wife and kids!

Of course, this begs the question, how did this mob come to form, and what did they want? The Bible doesn't tell us, so we have to read between the lines and in so doing, backtrack from the mob scene outside Lot's house to where the crowd first gathered. First, the fact that the entire population of the city was involved tells us that this was, to them, a matter of vital civic importance. They evidently felt that the visit of these two strangers was something that could affect every person in the city in some way. So logic suggests that the gathering would have begun at whatever public place Sodom used for such things, such as a City Hall or public square. Here was the situation as they would have seen it: Lot, a stranger who moved here and was given a position of some responsibility, has invited two strangers of unknown origin into the city and into his home. Sodom had only recently come out of war (Gen. 14:1-2), and for all they knew, these men could have been spies. It was essential for the safety and peace of mind of all the citizens, that they determine the identity of these men. They knew, of course, of the law of hospitality, but the safety and security of the

city overrode that. So a plan was devised: They would peacefully go to Lot's house and ask to meet the strangers and know who they were. They even had their words chosen: "Where are the men who came to you tonight? Bring them out and let us know them." It should be noted that this was phrased as a request, using a polite form of the verb to know⁶, and was not phrased in a hostile, demanding way. And so the crowd began to move toward Lot's house.

Between their starting point and Lot's house, something happened to this crowd of concerned citizens that turned them into a mob. When they reached Lot's house, they delivered their prepared request, but even though the grammar was still very polite, the character of the people was now that of an ugly lynch mob. What could have happened?

If the people of Sodom were possessed, as they most likely were, this would explain what happened. Even though the people did not know the visitors were angels, the evil spirits inside of them did. When you put a devil in the presence of someone holy, there will nearly always be a

⁶ נדעה nedah, formed by taking the word נדע neda, which means "we will know", and adding a final ה (H), which creates the polite request "let us know."

reaction from the devil. (See Mark 5:1-7) The closer this crowd got to the angels at Lot's house, the more riled up the demons got, and the more out of control the people got. This seems the only plausible explanation. The polite grammar of the crowd shows clearly that they could not have started out as a mob.

There are those who claim that when the crowd said "let us know them," they meant have sex. There are even translations of the Bible that say "let us have sex with them," or "let us know them carnally." Let me state categorically, that the Hebrew text will NOT support such "translations."

Some say that Hebrew has more than one verb for "know" and that the one used here means "have sex." Let's set the record straight on this. The root of the Hebrew verb for "know" is **יָדַע** *yada*. A form of *yada* is used here and hundreds of other times in scripture. Only about ten of those times refer to sex, and in each case, the sexual meaning is clear by the context. (Example: Adam knew his wife and she conceived.) To try to make this word mean sex everywhere will get us in a lot of trouble, because the scripture tells us that God knew David, and uses a form of this word. I don't think anyone would be foolish enough to try to attach a sexual meaning to that. When the crowd outside Lot's house said they wanted

to know the visitors, they meant exactly that: To know who they were. Or at least, that was what they meant when they started out.⁷

It doesn't take a genius to recognize a lynch mob. And a tiny family like Lot's couldn't hope to fight off such a mob. The only hope in such cases is to try to talk them out of it, or, failing in that, to try to distract them in some way. Lot tried both. He went out to them and asked them not to behave so wickedly. The hostile intent of the mob was clear to him, despite the polite words they used. It was also clear immediately that talking was not going to work. They were in what could only be termed a bloodlust. Lot, in desperation to protect his guests, did what the law of hospitality required. He was willing to sacrifice the lives of his daughters to protect the guests. A word about the two daughters: These girls were engaged to two men from Sodom. An engagement was much more binding in those days than it is today. In fact, it was as binding as a marriage, and even gave Lot some legal authority over his daughters'

⁷ Had the crowd outside Lot's house really been interested in raping the men inside, it hardly seems plausible that they would politely ask permission to do so, using a mild euphemism for sex. Hebrew has a number of verbs to describe sexual intercourse, and at least one of these, **עָנַב** *agav*, is considered somewhat vulgar. A rape gang would be far more likely to use crude verb such as this.

fiancés. Lot offered his two daughters, still virgins, to the crowd in place of the strangers. If he could distract the men of the crowd, then they, as the leaders of the city, could have disbanded the mob, and the guests would be safe.

Consider this: If the men of Sodom were homosexual, there is no way Lot would not have known. He would have known it would be pointless to offer women to homosexual men. He could, and would, have offered them something they would be more likely to accept: He could have offered his sons in law, since the engagement of his daughters gave him that right, or, he could even have offered himself.

Lot's offer was refused, and they seized him, and said they were going to do worse to him than they were planning to do to his guests. Did they attempt any type of sexual contact with Lot? No! Rather, they tried to kill him. There was no sexual situation here at all. But, just for the sake of argument, if the intent of the crowd had been to force the angels to have sex, the crime would have been rape, not homosexuality.

Ezekiel recorded the sins of Sodom: Ezek. 16:49:50 - pride, fullness of bread, abundance of idleness, they did not strengthen the hand of the poor and needy, they were

haughty and committed abomination. A note about this unspecified abomination: In the Law of Moses, many things are called abomination, including such things as eating pork and shellfish, having sex with a woman during her period, etc. But Sodom and the other cities were destroyed before the Law was written, so we'll need to look prior to the Law for the definition of this word. Outside the Law, the word abomination almost always refers to the practices associated with idol worship, some of which were enumerated earlier. It should also be noted that ancient Jewish commentaries on Sodom⁸ all agree that Sodom and the other cities were destroyed because of their failure to help the poor. None of them suggests anything in regard to homosexual activity. In fact, historically, the first document to suggest such a connection was the Koran (c. AD 600).

What about Sodomites? In recent times, the word sodomy was incorporated into many states' laws. But it did not mean the same thing in each state. In some states, for example, sodomy referred only to anal intercourse. In other states, it also included homosexual oral sex, and in some places, it even included heterosexual oral sex. For some,

⁸ Mishnah

anything other than heterosexual vaginal intercourse was sodomy, and was illegal.⁹

These definitions all go back to the incorrect notion that Sodom was destroyed for "unnatural" sexual activity. As we have seen above, this simply wasn't the case. But what about biblical references to Sodomites? In the King James Version, this word can be found in two places: Deut. 23:17 and 2 Kings 23:7. In some translations, the word is even found in the New Testament. But if we look at the Hebrew Old Testament and the Greek New Testament, that is, if we look at the Bible in its original languages, we will never see the word Sodomite in there. So if we see it in an English translation, we must acknowledge that the translators have lied to us. Let us look at the above two verses in more detail: Deut. 23:17 tells us that there will not be a "whore" of the daughters of Israel, nor a "Sodomite" of the sons of Israel. Now, if we look at the verse in the Hebrew text, it tells us that there will not be a קדשה *k'deshah* of the daughters of Israel nor a קדש *kadesh* of the sons of Israel. Even if you don't know a word of Hebrew, you can see that the words are very similar. In fact, *k'deshah* is simply the feminine form

⁹ The US Supreme Court ruled such laws unconstitutional in *Lawrence & Garner v. the State of Texas*, June 26, 2003

of *kadesh*, so whatever it is that the daughters were not to be, is exactly the same as what the sons were not to be. So which is it, whore, or Sodomite? Actually, neither. A *k'deshah* is not a prostitute in the usual sense, that is, not the "street hostesses" who ply their living by having sex for money. Rather, *kadesh* and *k'deshah* are temple prostitutes. These were a feature of Babylonian, and later Canaanite, fertility religions. The temple prostitutes usually lived in or near the temple, and having sex with one of them was a form of worship to the goddess of fertility. The money paid to the prostitute was put in the temple treasury. It should be noted that both men and women would visit the temple prostitutes to "worship" in this way. It should also be noted that because this was part of a fertility cult, temple prostitution was **ALWAYS** heterosexual. Israel ignored this law fairly early in their history. In 1 Samuel, 2:22, we read that the two sons of the High Priest Eli, Hophni and Phineas, who were themselves priests, were having sex with the women of Israel in the doorway of the Tabernacle (this public location proves this was temple prostitution, and not just the two men cheating on their wives).

Let's look now at 2 Kings 23:7: The translation in the King James refers to Sodomites again, but is also in error with other parts of the translation, so the verse is reproduced here translated directly from the Hebrew text: "And he broke down the houses of the temple prostitutes (Hebrew: קדשים *k'deshim*) that were in the house of the LORD, where the women wove houses (i.e., shrines) for Asherah." (Note: Asherah was one of the names given to the Babylonian fertility goddess.)

One final thought about the cities of the plain, that is, Sodom, etc.: Jude 7 talks about the people of these cities giving themselves over to fornication (definition: any sexual activity outside of marriage, including temple prostitution) and "going after strange flesh." (King James Version). What does that last part mean? The truth is, no one knows. But the translation isn't exact. The Greek does not say "strange flesh," but rather "other flesh." The word for other is ἑτέρας *heteras*, which is, incidentally, the root of our word heterosexual. Exactly what the phrase means is unclear. But since the word translated as *flesh* is also the word for *meat*, it may well be that it is referring to the practices of cannibalism associated with early Canaanite culture.

Leviticus 18:22

וְאֵת־זָכָר לֹא תִשְׁכַּב מִשְׁכְּבֵי אִשָּׁה תוֹעֵבָה הוּא:

V'et-zachar lo tishkav mishk'vei ishah to'evah hu.

(Transliterated using modern Israeli Sephardic pronunciation.)

וְאֵת *V'et* - This is two words. First, וְ *V'*, which means *and*. This word cannot exist by itself, and therefore is attached to the word that comes after it, that is, אֵת *et*. This word means *with*. So the first two words of this verse are *And with*.

זָכָר *zachar* - This word means *male*. Hebrew has no indefinite article (a, an), so when the definite article (the) is not used, as in this case, an indefinite article is understood. Therefore, this word translates as *a male*. The verse so far reads *And with a male*.

לא *lo* - This word is the Hebrew equivalent of our words *no* and *not*. It is used in this case to negate the verb that follows it. Because English has a more complicated verb structure than Hebrew, it will take more than one English word to translate the next Hebrew word, and the *not* will need to go in the middle of those words, so we won't add this word to our translation yet.

תשכב *tishkav* - This is a verb. Unlike English verbs, everything we need to know about tense and person is contained in this one word. No additional pronouns or tense markers are needed. The root of the verb is the last three letters: **שכב** *sh-k-v*, and it means *lie down*. The first letter of the word, **ת** *t*, is not part of the root, but indicates person and tense and even gender. To translate *tishkav* into English will require four words, as well as a parenthetical note to indicate the gender of the pronoun. The word translates as *Thou (male) shalt lie down*. The previous Hebrew word, **לא** *lo*, negated the verb, so we have *And with a male thou (male) shalt not lie down*.

משכבי *mishk'vei* - This is a noun. The base form of the noun is **משכב** *mishkav*, and it can be seen that the last three letters of the base, **שכב** *sh-k-v*, are also the three letters of the verb root above, meaning *lie down*. This noun means *bed*. Hebrew nouns have more than one form. In addition to having singular and plural forms, many nouns also have absolute and construct forms. An absolute noun stands alone, with its own meaning. A construct noun is grammatically tied to the noun that follows it. In English it usually translates by placing the English word "of" between the two nouns. A good example is the Hebrew **בית-לחם** *Beit Lechem* (Bethlehem), which in English translates as *House of Bread*. This is because the first word, **בית** *Beit*, is in the construct state. *Mishk'vei* is in the plural construct state, meaning *beds of*. It would be a good idea here to explain a bit about Hebrew prepositions: Hebrew *has* prepositions that correspond to ours, but doesn't always use them the same way. For example, when people leave us, in English we say that *we miss them*. But in Hebrew, the verb *to miss* is used with a preposition, and we say that *we miss to*

them. The same works in reverse, that is, sometimes English requires a preposition when Hebrew doesn't. If a preposition can be derived from context, Hebrew will sometimes leave it out. In English, we need it. Therefore, we need to insert the English word *in* before the words *beds of*, in order for the sentence to make sense in English. The verse so far reads *And with a male thou shalt not lie down in beds of*.

אִשָּׁה *ishah* - This is the Hebrew word for *woman*.

Since there is no definite article (the), it is understood to mean *a woman*. *And with a male thou shalt not lie down in beds of a woman*.

Punctuation as we know it was not part of the original text. Even modern Hebrew Bibles contain only one punctuation mark, which looks like a colon ':', but serves only to point out the end of a verse (but not necessarily the end of a sentence). English is very difficult to read without punctuation marks, so we insert them as we translate. After the word *woman*, we may insert either a semicolon, or a period, to indicate that the following words are not part of

the first phrase, but simply offer further information about it. *And with a male thou shalt not lie down in beds of a woman;*

תועבה *to'evah* - This is a noun. It translates as *abomination*. Without a definite article, it translates as *an abomination*. Hebrew word order often varies from ours, and this is one case where this is true. In English, this will be the *last* word in the sentence, so we will hold off on adding it to the translation until we have finished with the next word.

הוא *hu* - This little word serves so many purposes, not only for readers of the Hebrew text, but also for those today who wonder about the accuracy of the Hebrew text. You see, this word is a grammatical error made by Moses. Moses was well schooled in the arts and sciences of ancient Egypt, but not in the tongue of his own people. Although he evidently spoke Hebrew well enough to be understood, like so many today, he did not always use proper grammar. His meaning remained the same, but the grammar was wrong. I want to say that again: **His meaning remained the same, only the grammar was wrong.** The word **הוא** *hu* means both *he* and *it*. It means *it* when applied to masculine nouns.

But *to'evah* is a feminine noun, so Moses should have used the word **היא** *hi*, which means *she* and *it*. It means *it* when applied to feminine nouns. (All Hebrew nouns are either masculine or feminine; Hebrew has no neuter gender. This gender concept is grammatical in nature only, and has nothing to do with men or women, per se. For example, in Hebrew a table is masculine, whereas in the Romance languages, it is feminine. It has nothing to do with the nature of the table; it's simply grammatical.)

So what does Moses' error do for us? It doesn't change the meaning, as we mentioned above. It still means *it*. But the significant thing is that the error has never been corrected. Why? Didn't anyone notice it? Of course they did. But the Jewish people consider the text of the Hebrew Bible so sacred, that they will not alter even simple grammatical errors. The Jewish people considered even the shapes of the letters of the alphabet to be holy. The most they could do about the error was point it out, without correcting it. They did this by using the vowel points for the correct word on top of the incorrect word: **היא** The resulting word is more or less unpronounceable, but serves to alert the reader to the

error. (The Hebrew alphabet itself has no vowels, only consonants. The reader was expected to be able to supply the vowel sounds from context, etc. By the early Middle Ages, Hebrew was developing dialects, primarily due to the fact that there were no vowels to tell people how to pronounce it. The Rabbis and scholars devised a system of dots and dashes to represent vowel sounds. These vowel “points” are placed inside, above, below and next to letters, but may not touch the letters. They are not considered part of the text. Today they are used in Bibles, prayer books, song and poetry books and children's books, but are rarely used in newspapers, novels, etc.) *And with a male thou shalt not lie down in beds of a woman; it*

Our next point of grammar involves the present tense forms of the verb *to be*. In English these forms are *am, art, is* and *are*. Hebrew *has* such forms,¹⁰ but almost never uses them, except in reference to God, or when absolutely necessary for context. The reason for this may be that the forms are too close to God's name in Hebrew. While this may seem awkward to us, there are many other languages

¹⁰ הוּוֹה hoveh, הוּוָה hovah, הוּוִים hovim, הוּוֹת hovot

that don't use the present tense of the verb *to be*. For example, Russian has become so used to ignoring the forms, that some of them are completely obsolete. The Russian equivalent of *am* (есть) can't even be found in a dictionary or grammar book any more. They get along fine without it, and so does Hebrew. But English can't, so we have to insert the appropriate forms when translating: *And with a male thou shalt not lie down in beds of a woman; it is*

Finally, we put in the words *an abomination*: *And with a male thou shalt not lie down in beds of a woman; it is an abomination*. This is the correct translation of Leviticus 18:22. It can be seen that, rather than forbidding male homosexuality, it simply forbids two males to lie down in a woman's bed, for whatever reason. Culturally, a woman's bed was her own. Other than the woman herself, only her husband was permitted in her bed, and there were even restrictions on when he was allowed in there. Any other use of her bed would have been considered defilement. Other verses in the Law will help clarify the acceptable use of the woman's bed (Lev. 15).

Leviticus 20:13

(Note: Some of the material in this chapter is identical to the previous chapter, due to the similarities in this verse and Lev. 18:22.)

וְאִישׁ אֲשֶׁר יִשְׁכַּב אֶת־זָכָר מִשְׁכַּבֵי אִשָּׁה תוֹעֵבָה עָשָׂו
שְׁנֵיהֶם מוֹת יוּמָתוּ דְמֵיהֶם בָּם:

*V'ish asher yishkav et-zachar mishk'vei ishah
to'evah asu shneihem mot yumatu d'meihem bam.*

(Transliterated using modern Israeli Sephardic pronunciation.)

וְאִישׁ *V'ish* - This is two words. First, וְ *V'*, which means *and*. This word cannot exist by itself, and therefore is attached to the word that comes after it, that is, אִישׁ *ish*. This word means *man*. Hebrew has no indefinite article (a, an), so when the definite article (the) is not used, as in this case, an indefinite article is understood. Therefore, this word translates as *a man*. So the first two words of this verse are *And a man*.

אשר *asher* - This word means *who, which* or *that*, depending on context. Since it is used with a man, it would mean *who*. *And a man who*.

ישכב *yishkav* - This is a verb. Unlike English verbs, everything we need to know about tense and person is contained in this one word. No additional pronouns or tense markers are needed. The root of the verb is the last three letters: **שכב** *sh-k-v*, and it means *lie down*. The first letter of the word, **י** *y*, is not part of the root, but indicates person and tense and even gender. To translate *yishkav* into English will require four words. The word translates as *he will lie down*. If a subject is already present in the sentence, as in this case, then the pronoun of the verb (he) is omitted in translation. *And a man who will lie down*.

את *et* - This word means *with*. *And a man who will lie down with*.

זכר *zachar* - This word means *male*. The verse so far reads *And a man who will lie down with a male*.

משכבי *mishk'vei* - This is a noun. The base form of the noun is **משכב** *mishkav*, and it can be seen that the last three letters of the base, **שכב** *sh-k-v*, are also the three letters of the verb root above, meaning *lie down*. This noun means *bed*. Hebrew nouns have more than one form. In addition to having singular and plural forms, many nouns also have absolute and construct forms. An absolute noun stands alone, with its own meaning. A construct noun is grammatically tied to the noun that follows it. In English it usually translates by placing the English word 'of' between the two nouns. A good example is the Hebrew **בית-לחם** *Beit Lechem* (Bethlehem), which in English translates as *House of Bread*. This is because the first word, **בית** *Beit*, is in the construct state. *Mishk'vei* is in the plural construct state, meaning *beds of*. It would be a good idea here to explain a bit about Hebrew prepositions: Hebrew *has* prepositions that correspond to ours, but doesn't always *use* them the same way. For example, when people leave us, in English we say that *we miss them*. But in Hebrew, the verb *to miss* is used with a preposition, and we say that *we miss to them*. The

same works in reverse, that is, sometimes English requires a preposition when Hebrew doesn't. If a preposition can be derived from context, Hebrew will sometimes leave it out. In English, we need it. Therefore, we need to insert the English word *in* before the words *beds of* in order for the sentence to make sense in English. The verse so far reads *And a man who will lie down with a male in beds of*.

אשה *ishah* - This is the Hebrew word for *woman*. Since there is no definite article (the), it is understood to mean *a woman*. *And a man who will lie down with a male in beds of a woman*.

תועבה *to'evah* - This is a noun. It translates as *abomination*. Without a definite article, it translates as *an abomination*. Hebrew word order often varies from ours, and this is one case where this is true. In English, this word will come later in the sentence, so we will hold off on adding it to the translation until we have finished with the next two words.

עשו *asu* - This is a verb. It means *make* or *do*. This form is past tense, and translates as *they have made* or *they have done*. A subject for the verb is following in the sentence, so the word *they* can be left out of the translation. In English, word order is usually subject-verb-object, so in order for our translation to make sense, the next word, which is the subject, will need to come before this word and the previous word.

שניהם *shneihem* - This word is made of two particles combined. First is **שני** *shnei*, which is the construct form of the number *two*. Because it is construct, we add the English word *of* to the translation: *Two of*. The second particle is **הם** *hem*, which is called a pronominal ending. Depending on context, it translates as *they*, *them* or *their* (all masculine). Put together, this word means *two of them*, or less awkwardly, *both of them*. *And a man who will lie down with a male in beds of a woman, both of them have made an abomination;*

מות *mot* - This is a gerund form of the verb *to die*. It corresponds to our word *dying*. *And a man who will lie down*

with a male in beds of a woman, both of them have made an abomination; dying.

יומתו *yumatu* - This is a future form of the same verb.

It translates as *they will be put to death*. The phrase *dying they will be put to death* expresses the certainty of the sentence, and is rendered in some English versions as *they will surely die*. *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 be put to death,*

דמיהם *d'meihem* - This word is made of two particles combined. The first is **דמי** *d'mei*, a construct form of the word for *blood*. Because it is construct, we *could* insert *of* after it, but we will see further on that adding *of* in this case will make the translation awkward. The second particle is the pronominal ending **הם** *hem*, as seen above in *shneihem*. Put together, this word means *blood of them*. Since this is awkward, we would translate the word as *their blood*. *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 be put to death, their blood.*

Our next point of grammar involves the present tense forms of the verb *to be*. In English these forms are *am*, *art*, *is* and *are*. Hebrew *has* such forms, but almost never *uses* them, except in reference to God, or when absolutely necessary for context. The reason for this may be that the forms are too close to God's name in Hebrew. While this may seem awkward to us, there are many other languages that don't use the present tense of the verb to be. Russian, for example, has become so used to ignoring the forms, that some of them are completely obsolete. The Russian equivalent of *am* can't even be found in a dictionary or grammar book any more. They get along fine without it, and so does Hebrew. But English can't, so we have to insert the appropriate forms when translating. *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 be put to death, their blood is.*

בב *bam* - This word is a contraction. Unlike English contractions, no apostrophe is needed. It is formed by taking the preposition **ב** *b*, which means *in*, and which cannot exist as a separate word, and attaching it to the final letter of the

pronominal ending םהּ *hem*. The resulting word means *in them*. As mentioned earlier, Hebrew doesn't always use prepositions the way we do, and this is one case where English would use a different preposition to express the same concept. We would use *on*, so we will translate the word as *on them*. *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 be put to death, their blood is on them.*

This is the correct translation of Leviticus 20:13. It can be seen that, rather than forbidding male homosexuality, it simply forbids two males to lie down in a woman's bed, for whatever reason. Culturally, a woman's bed was her own. Other than the woman herself, only her husband was permitted in her bed, and there were even restrictions on when he was allowed in there. Any other use of her bed would have been considered defilement. Other verses in the Law will help clarify the acceptable use of the woman's bed. (Lev. 15.)

Same-Sex Marriage in Scripture

In this chapter, we will attempt to determine if there is biblical precedent for same-sex marriages. In the Apostolic Church, we are aware that we must have a minimum of two biblical witnesses in order to teach something. Therefore, we will need to find two examples of same-sex marriage in the Bible in order to declare such marriages valid today.

Prior to searching for these two witnesses, it is necessary to lay some groundwork, starting with the definition of the word "marriage." The modern concept of marriage is this: a couple with a government-issued license, making vows before a minister, priest, rabbi, other clergyman, or a justice of the peace. Such a concept of marriage is modern, and does not match the biblical concept of marriage.

Perhaps the most important difference between biblical marriage and its modern day counterpart is that, in biblical times, government did not regulate marriage. There was no such thing as a marriage license, nor did the government care who married whom, or how many wives a man had.

The early concept of marriage was this: two people made a covenant with each other. Regardless of whether they did this of their own accord, or through a matchmaker, or at the insistence of their families, the marriage began with the agreement or covenant between the two. Some time afterward, there would be a feast for public recognition of the agreement, and a contract would be signed by both parties, putting in writing what they had already promised to each other. After this was done, and only then, would the couple live together and be intimate with each other. Prior to the signing of the covenant, the couple was spoken of as betrothed or engaged, but this had a meaning different from today's concept of betrothal or engagement. Their betrothal was as morally binding as the marriage itself, and could only be broken by divorce, even though no contract had been signed and no sexual activity had occurred.

An example of this can be seen in Matthew 1:19, with Joseph and Mary. At this point in their relationship, they were betrothed. They had not moved in together, had not signed a contract, had not had a marriage feast, and had not had sexual contact. All they had was the agreement they had made with each other, their covenant. But when Joseph discovered that Mary was pregnant, he thought she had been unfaithful, and decided not to marry her. He could have had her stoned to death for committing adultery, but chose instead to divorce her privately. The King James Version says "put her away." The Greek word is ἀπολῦσαι *apolysai*, and it means divorce. Even though they had none of the things that would make a modern marriage binding, they were considered married, simply on the basis of their agreement to each other! So for a biblical definition of marriage we have simply one thing: a covenant. When two people make an agreement between themselves that they will live their lives together as a couple and be faithful to each other, then, biblically, they are married. They may choose to sign a contract, they may choose to have a ceremony and reception, they may choose any other forms

of public recognition, but none of those are required biblically for the marriage to be binding.

One final point before we search scripture for examples of same-sex marriage: We'll be using primarily the King James Version of scripture, with corrections to translation errors provided by Hebrew and Greek texts. It needs to be understood by the reader that words that appear in *italics* in the King James Version are not found in the Hebrew or Greek text, but were added by the translators. Sometimes those added words help clarify a concept, and adding an occasional article (a, an, the) or preposition is a valid part of translation. Literal word-for-word translation is usually impossible and rarely desirable. For example, let us take the Hebrew word **במשכנותיך** *b'mish'k'noteicha*. Even though it is only one word in Hebrew, it is impossible to translate it into English with less than three words. It means *in thy tabernacles*. But sometimes the added words of the translators do us a disservice. Sometimes they completely change the meaning (which is often what they intended to do.) For example, look at Colossians 1:19. Notice in the King James Version that the word *Father* is in italics. Other translations may have the word *God* where the King James

has *Father*. But the Greek text has neither. The verse in Greek says *For all fullness was pleased to dwell in Him*.¹¹ (Compare Col. 2:9) By inserting *Father* or *God*, the translators changed the meaning of what Paul wrote. Not only is that not helpful, it's sinful! (Rev. 22:18-19)

In I Samuel chapter 18, David and Jonathan met for the first time. It was love at first sight. Verse 1 tells us that the soul of Jonathan was knit, or intertwined, with the soul of David. Lest we think of this simply as something spiritual, let us look at the meaning of soul. There is an erroneous conception that the soul is similar to, or synonymous with, the spirit. Some preachers try to turn us into a sort of trinity, claiming that we are made up of three parts, that is, body, soul and spirit. But the scripture does not say this. We know from Genesis 2:7 that God formed our bodies out of the dust of the earth. It then says in the same verse that He breathed into our nostrils the breath of life, i.e., spirit (in Hebrew, Greek and some other languages, the word for wind and spirit are the same), and man became a living soul. So the formula isn't

¹¹ ὅτι ἐν αὐτῷ εὐδόκησεν πᾶν τὸ πλήρωμα κατοικῆσαι

BODY + SOUL + SPIRIT = MAN,

but rather,

BODY + SPIRIT = SOUL.

Therefore when the soul of Jonathan was knit with the soul of David, it was not simply a spiritual thing; it was physical as well. Jonathan loved David with body and spirit.

I Samuel 18:3-4 tell us that Jonathan and David made a covenant, and that, to seal the covenant, Jonathan took off all the things he was wearing and gave them to David. The things he took off tell us a lot about the covenant itself. He took off his sword and bow and gave them to David, signifying that he intended to protect David. But it went further than that. By taking off all his clothes, he signified a much deeper and more intense relationship. Had this not been the start of a physical, sexual relationship, Jonathan's actions would have been considered bizarre indeed, by the standards of their day, or ours. From that day, David moved in with Jonathan (verse 2) and did not live at home with his parents anymore, further indicative of the type of covenant they had made. (In biblical times, a man

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generally did not leave his parents' home until he married, and sometimes not even then.)

At this point, we need to clarify a few points before going on. First, we need to understand that today's concept of monogamy was not considered the norm in biblical days. Especially among royalty, polygamy was considered essential in order to produce a large number of heirs, which would ensure that the throne would remain in the same family. Jonathan was the eldest son of the king, and had a responsibility to produce at least one heir to the throne. He did so. The prophet Samuel had anointed David to be king. This placed the obligation of producing an heir upon him as well. King Saul was well aware that Samuel had anointed David, and he warned his son that as long as David lived, he (Jonathan) would never be king. This is why the relationship between the two young men bothered Saul so much. The very reason he had fathered Jonathan was so that his son would succeed him as king, and now Jonathan was thwarting that purpose by becoming involved with the only man who threatened that royal succession!

Saul sought a way to kill David. Because David was anointed, and was also very popular, it would be

inadvisable for Saul to attempt to kill him outright. He preferred that the Philistines do it for him. He reasoned that if he got David to marry his daughter Merab, she would cause him enough distraction that he would fall to his enemies. But when the time came for David and Merab to make a covenant, Saul married her off to someone else instead. (Although he expressed his lack of worthiness to marry Merab, David raised no actual objection to the marriage, so most likely Merab herself objected. Perhaps she did so because she cared about David and understood her father's ulterior motives, or perhaps she was in love with the man she married instead.) Then Saul learned that another of his daughters, Michal, loved David. He decided to let her marry David, again for the sole purpose of causing him to fall to his enemies. (See I Sam. 18:17,21)

When Saul told David that he would give him Michal, he went on to tell David that once he married her, he would be the king's son-in-law *"in one of the twain."* (Verse 21b - King James Version) That phrase is very important. Let's put it into modern English first: *"through one of the two."* This suggests that he would be Saul's son-in-law through Michal instead of Merab. But notice that the words *'one of*

are in italics. That means they are not found in the Hebrew text. In fact, they are not even *hinted at* in the Hebrew text. Adding them completely changed the meaning of the verse. What Saul actually told David was this:

וַיֹּאמֶר שָׁאוּל אֶל־דָּוִד בְּשֵׁתַיִם תִּתְחַתֵּן בִּי הַיּוֹם

Vayomer Sha'ul el David bishtayim titchaten bi hayom

And Saul said to David, "Today you will be my son-in-law through two."

That is, he would be the king's son-in-law twice, through two of Saul's children. With which of Saul's children did David have a covenant? Only three of Saul's children are mentioned in this chapter. David had no covenant with Merab, who married someone else. He was about to make a covenant with Michal. The only other child of Saul with whom David had a covenant was Jonathan. Verse 21 proves that the covenant was a marriage covenant and that Saul recognized (but didn't necessarily approve of) the marriage.

Note the following verses that the King James and other English Bibles have mistranslated to hide the marriage of David and Jonathan:

I Samuel 20:30 –

ויחר-אף שאול ביהונתן ויאמר לו בן-נעות המרדות
הלוא ידעתי כי-בחר אתה לבן-ישי לבשתך ולבשת
ערות אמך:

*Vayichar af Sha'ul blhonatan vayomer lo ben na'avat hamardut
halo yadati ki voher atah l'ven Yishai l'vosht'cha ul'voshet ervat
imecha*

"Then Saul's anger burned toward Jonathan, and he said to him, you son of the perversion of rebelliousness! Don't I know that you are choosing the son of Jesse to your own confusion* and the confusion* of your mother's _____**?"

*confusion - The word confusion has a somewhat different meaning here than the one we usually use. Rather than meaning "being confused," it refers instead to being undone or frustrated in purpose. What Saul was saying was that by choosing David, Jonathan was a rebellious son who was confounding his own future, as well as the very reason that Saul and Jonathan's mother had conceived him, that is, to ascend to the throne of Israel when his father died. Saul expounded on this in verse 31, and then offered to "remedy" the situation by having David killed. Saul's annoyance with his son's choice had nothing to do with David's gender, but only reflected the fact that as long as David was alive, Jonathan would never be king of Israel .

** _____ There is no polite English word for the one King Saul used. He used a graphic and vulgar term for the genitalia.

I Samuel 20:41 –

הנער בא ורוד קם מאצל הנגב ויפל לאפיו ארצה
וישתחו שלש פעמים וישקו איש את־רעהו ויבכו
איש את־רעהו עד־דוד הגדיל:

*Hana'ar ba v'David kam me'etzel hanegev vayipol l'apav artzah
vayishtachu shalosh p'amim vayishku ish et re'ehu vayioku ish et
re'ehu ad David higdil.*

"The boy went, and David came up from the south, and fell on his face to the ground, and they bowed three times, and kissed each other, and wept with each other, until David experienced an erection¹²."

In II Samuel, 1:26 , David expressed his love for the late Jonathan. Please understand that when David referred to the *love of women*, the only possible love he could be referring to was sexual love. It was considered highly improper for a man to have any type of platonic friendship

¹² Hebrew: הגדיל *higdil* "became large"

with a woman. Men and women usually didn't even speak to each other in public. Even a husband and wife would not speak to each other in the street. (Some Chassidic Jews still observe this custom.) Since David would not have had any platonic relationships with women, he could only have been referring to sexual interaction. This is a further indication of the sexual nature of his relationship with Jonathan, since it would not make sense to compare a platonic relationship with a man to a sexual relationship with a woman. David clearly preferred the love of Jonathan. Nowhere in scripture will you find David expressing such love for a woman. Although he married more than once, and fathered children, he never expressed such love for any of his wives.

We now have one witness of same-sex marriage.
Let's find another:

In Daniel 1:3, we meet Ashpenaz, chief of the Babylonian eunuchs. He was put in charge of the new eunuchs brought in from Judah, the princes and chief young men who had been castrated in fulfillment of prophecy (II Kings 20:18; Isaiah 39:7). Among these were Daniel, Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego. All four were eunuchs.

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Before going on, we need to discuss the concept of eunuchs and the effect of castration. Were eunuchs capable of sexual function? There is no set answer to the question. It depends upon when they were castrated. Boys castrated before puberty, as was sometimes done to keep their singing voices from changing, would not develop sexually and would have no sexual function. They would still have normal desire for physical and emotional closeness, but could not function sexually. Those castrated after puberty would be sterile, but would most likely retain some sexual function and desire. This can be seen in the case of cats. A male kitten castrated before puberty does not develop sexually, and usually will not display any of the behaviors of adult male cats, such as spraying and mounting other cats. Male cats castrated after puberty will usually continue to spray and to mount other cats, but will be sterile.

What about the young men of Judah? The prophecy spoke of the *young men* of Judah, not boys. The fact that Daniel and the others were able to speak for themselves and stand up for themselves indicates they were at least in their teens. The fact that they stood up for their religion suggests that they were at least of age for Bar Mitzvah, signifying

spiritual adulthood, generally age thirteen. So it seems pretty evident that these young men were castrated after, or at least during, puberty, and would therefore retain some sexual function. We have no information from scripture about the personal lives of Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego. But scripture does give us some clues as to Daniel's personal life.

Daniel 1:9 –

וַיִּתֵּן הָאֱלֹהִים אֶת־דַּנְיָאֵל לְחֶסֶד וּלְרַחֲמִים לְפָנָיו
שֶׁר הַסְּרִיסִים:

*Vayiten ha'Elohim et Daniyel l'chesed ul'rachamim lifnei sar
hasarisim*

“And God brought Daniel into mercy and love before the chief of the eunuchs.”

In Daniel 1:9, we find that a certain relationship existed between Daniel and Ashpenaz, chief of the eunuchs. (His name is found in verse 3.) To determine the exact nature of that relationship, we'll need to dig a little deeper than the English translation, which actually tells us very little. The King James speaks of *favor* and *tender love*. The

Hebrew words are **חסד** *chesed* and **רחמים** *rachamim*. Let's look at *chesed* first. This word has more than one possible translation. The most common is *mercy*. It may also be translated as *grace*. The scriptures that say 'His mercy endureth forever' use a form of the word *chesed*.

What about *rachamim*? This word also has more than one meaning. Additionally, it is plural, which has more than one connotation in Hebrew. Let's deal with that aspect first, before determining the meaning. In Hebrew, using the plural can be a way of emphasizing greatness or importance. Indeed, there are some Hebrew nouns that have no singular form, but are always plural. *Heaven, water, life, face*: these are words that have no singular form in Hebrew, but are always plural. In addition, God, when referring to the true God, is usually plural in Hebrew, in order to emphasize His greatness. *Rachamim* is plural, not because there is more than one, but because of its greatness, intensity or depth.

So what does it mean? There are two common meanings for the word *rachamim*. One is similar to the meaning of *chesed*, that is, *mercy* or *grace*. The other is *love*. (More on that in a moment.) How would a reader determine

which meaning is intended? From context. Since the word *chesed* was also used, for *rachamim* to have the meaning of *mercy* would be redundant. It being plural would be even more redundant, and would constitute a very poorly constructed and confusing sentence. Therefore, *rachamim* would default to its alternative meaning, *love*. But what kind of love? English is poor in that we only have one word for love, and must use other words to differentiate between types of love. The love between spouses is not the same as love between parents and children. The love between parents and children is not the same as love between friends. And yet, we have just the one word, *love*. Some languages, including Hebrew and Greek have more than one word for love. For example, the passage in John 21 where Jesus kept asking Peter "Do you love me?" is much more significant if read in Greek: Peter kept answering Jesus with the wrong word for love, embarrassed by the fact that Jesus was using Greek's most powerful word for love. Peter was basically answering, "Yes, I like you!"

Words in Hebrew are formed from root words, usually made up of three letters. Any words having those three letters, in that same order, would have similar

meanings. For example, most people are familiar with the word *shalom*, which means *peace* or *well-being*. The root letters are *SH - L - M*. Any word with *SH-L-M*, in that order, regardless of other consonants or vowels added, would have a related meaning. The root letters of *rachamim* are *R-CH-M* (the final *im* of *rachamim* make it plural, and are not part of the root). There are a number of Hebrew words that share these root letters, including one organ of reproduction. This fact indicates that when *rachamim* is used to mean *love*, it has a definite physical, sexual aspect to it.

At this point, I would like the reader to notice who was responsible for Daniel and Ashpenaz having a sexual relationship. According to verse 9, it was **God** who put them together in their relationship. Now God has no vested interest in people committing fornication, and the fact that *rachamim* means *sexual love*, and not just *sexual activity*, indicates to us that this was meant to be a life-long relationship between the two. And what do we call a life-long committed sexual relationship between two people? Marriage. No other romantic interest or sexual partner or marriage was ever mentioned in connection with Daniel in the Bible; Ashpenaz was the only one mentioned.

We have two examples of same-sex marriage from scripture. But what rules should govern these marriages? It is true that scripture does not give us rules specifically governing same-sex marriages. Does that mean we are free to make our own? Not necessarily. Notice again in I Samuel 18 that King Saul didn't seem to draw any distinction between David's marriage to Jonathan and his impending marriage to Michal. Although Saul didn't approve of the first marriage, he still recognized it as a marriage, and not just two men living together. Therefore it seems evident that the instructions given in the Bible for opposite-sex marriages were also meant to be applied to same-sex marriages.

Romans 1:26-27

Διὰ τοῦτο παρέδωκεν αὐτοὺς ὁ Θεὸς εἰς πάθη ἀτιμίας· αἱ τε γὰρ θήλειαι αὐτῶν μετήλλαξαν τὴν φυσικὴν χρῆσιν εἰς τὴν παρὰ φύσιν, ὁμοίως τε καὶ οἱ ἄρσενες ἀφέντες τὴν φυσικὴν χρῆσιν τῆς θηλείας ἐξεκαύθησαν ἐν τῇ ὀρέξει αὐτῶν εἰς ἀλλήλους ἄρσενες ἐν ἄρσενιν, τὴν ἀσχημοσύνην κατεργαζόμενοι καὶ τὴν ἀντιμισθίαν ἣν ἔδει τῆς πλάνης αὐτῶν ἐν αὐτοῖς ἀπολαμβάνοντες.

Dhia touto paredhoken aftous o Theos eis pathi atimias ai te gar thiliai afton metillaxan tin fisikin chrisin is tin para fisin, omios te kai i arsenes afentes tin fisikin chrisin tis thilias exekavthisan en ti orexi afton is allilus arsenes en arsesin, tin aschimosinin katergazomeni kai tin antimisthian i edhi tis planis afton en aftis apolamvanontes.

(Transliteration of Modern Greek pronunciation)

“Through this, God gave them over to passions of dishonor; their women exchanged the natural use into one

against nature, likewise also the men left the natural use of the female, burned in their lust for each other, committing an indecency, receiving in themselves the necessary reward for their error.”

The biggest mistake Christians make with Paul’s epistle to the church at Rome is in their failure to comprehend Romans 1:7... Paul’s epistle was addressed to first century Rome, *not* twenty-first century America. Does this mean the epistle doesn’t apply to us? Of course not: it certainly applies to every age and nation. But what verse 7 reminds us is that when we read the epistle, we need to keep in mind that it was written to first century Rome, and applies first and foremost to the situations that were extant then.

So what *was* going on in Rome? The ancient Greek and Roman concept of what was “normal” and what was moral was quite different from ours. Although such concepts as *sexual orientation* had not been studied or named, in behavior, both the Greek and Roman empires expected everyone to be bisexual. There were very specific cultural

rules regarding how this worked. A woman, for example, had one husband, and was not permitted sexual contact with any other male. But sexual contact with other women was permitted and even *expected*. For men, the rules permitted him wives, and perhaps concubines, depending on his wealth. But an adult man would also be “attached” to an adolescent male, to whom he would be teacher, mentor and lover. Any man or woman who had relations with only one gender would have been thought odd or even abnormal.

The biggest difficulty with such societal expectations is that, by nature, most people are not bisexual. This means that most of the people had to violate their own sexual orientation in order to meet society’s expectations. In the above verses, we can see that Paul spoke of the Roman women “exchanging” the natural use for one that was *against nature*. Now please understand what Paul meant by *nature*: He was not speaking of nature as creation. Indeed, homosexuality, as well as bisexuality, exists throughout nature, in virtually every species of animal.¹³ What Paul was addressing was the Roman’s *own* nature, what we today

¹³ :“Biological Exuberance: Animal Homosexuality and Natural Diversity” by Bruce Bagemihl, Ph.D.

would call their sexual orientation. Their society was expecting them to trade their own orientation, whatever it might have been, for a bisexual orientation. The men were doing the same thing. And what they were doing was indecent and an error, not because of the concept of homosexuality, but because they were violating the way they were created.

Romans chapter one, as a whole, deals with pagan Rome's attempts to turn the creation into a god, worshipping the things created rather than the One who created them, and their attempt to remake that creation in their own design, by ignoring the inborn sexual orientation of the people, and expecting them to live bisexually. This chapter is not about homosexuality vs. heterosexuality, but rather about the error of trying to change the way we are created. God has created each of us with a sexual orientation, and for us to attempt to change it into another orientation is, in effect, telling God that He created us wrong. But if it was wrong for heterosexuals and homosexuals in the first century to try to be bisexuals, then it is equally wrong, and for the same reasons, for homosexuals

in the twenty-first century to try to be heterosexuals, or vice-versa.

There are some who would doubt that heterosexuals in the first century would live a bisexual lifestyle simply to satisfy the misguided expectations of society. To those people I say this: Look around you... all over the world there are homosexual people trying to live a heterosexual lifestyle for exactly the same reason. And the societies and the religions trying to force them to do so are just as misguided. The same God who created homosexuality, heterosexuality and bisexuality throughout the entire animal kingdom, did the same thing in us.

1 Corinthians 6:9

ἢ οὐκ οἶδατε ὅτι ἄδικοι Θεοῦ βασιλείαν οὐ κληρονομήσουσιν; Μὴ πλανᾶθε· οὔτε πόρνοι οὔτε εἰδωλολάτραι οὔτε μοιχοὶ οὔτε μαλακοὶ οὔτε ἀρσενοκοῖται...

I ouk idhate oti adhiki Theou vasilian ou klironomisousin? Mi planasthe; oute porni oute idhololatrei oute mikhi oute malaki oute arsenokitei...

(Transliteration of Modern Greek pronunciation.)

Or haven't you known that the unjust will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be misled; neither fornicators nor idolaters nor adulterers nor soft ones nor those who lie with males...

1 Timothy 1:10

...πόρνοις, ἀρσενοκοίταις, ἀνδραποδιστας, ψεύσταις, ἐπιόρκοις, καὶ εἴ τι ἕτερον τῇ ὑγιαίνουσῃ διδασκαλίᾳ ἀντίκειται,

...pornis, arsenokiteis, andhrapodhisteis, psevsteis, epiorkis, kei i ti eterov ti iyi-einousi dhidhaskalia antikitei,

(Transliteration of Modern Greek pronunciation.)

...to fornicators, to those who lie with males, to kidnappers, to liars, to perjurers, and if any other thing opposes healthful teaching,

Soft ones: The Greek word μαλακοὶ *mala-KEE* is a plural noun, derived from the adjective *mala-KOS*. The adjective means soft or fine, but is restricted in its use to describing material or clothing. It describes the type of clothing worn by wealthy people. This adjective was used in Luke 7:25, when Jesus asked the crowd if they had gone out to the wilderness expecting to see someone dressed in fine clothing. Coining a noun from this adjective would logically suggest the type of people who wear soft or fine clothing. Jesus Himself indicated the near impossibility of wealthy people entering the kingdom.

Those who lie with males: The Greek word ἄρσενοκοῖται *arseno-KEE-tay* (the form used in 1 Timothy is *arseno-KEE-tays*), is formed by combining the noun *AR-sin*,

which means *male*, with the construction *keet-*, a derivative of the verb *KEE-mei*, which means *lie down*. Combined, the word refers to *people who lie down with males*. What remains to be determined is whether the word is referring to *males* lying with males, or *females* lying with males. Ordinarily, to determine if a Greek noun is masculine or feminine, one looks at it in the nominative case with the definite article. For example, *o adhelp-OS*, the brother, is in the nominative case, and both the *os* ending and the definite article *o* tell us the noun is masculine. But the word used in these two verses presents a small challenge to us, because in ancient literature, it never appears with a definite article. Of course, we could simply look it up in a Modern Greek dictionary, and it would tell us the word is masculine and means *homosexual*. But is that the end of it? Actually, no. The dictionary's definition and assignment of gender is based on centuries of preconceived notions about what Paul was saying, and not on actual usage from the first century. So in this case, the dictionary can't answer the question for us. We need to look back to the word itself, and its context, to search for clues.

The last two letters of the word in 1 Corinthians, and the last three in 1 Timothy, are where we need to look first. Greek nouns are declined according to case. That is, the ending of a noun changes to indicate how the word is being used in the sentence. We have something similar in English pronouns: We use the word **I** as a subject, but **me** as an object. For all intents and purposes, **I** and **me** mean the same thing. But it is incorrect to say *Me want a book*, or *Give I a book*. In 1 Corinthians, the word is in the nominative case, and the ending is clearly a feminine ending. This suggests the word is referring to *women* lying with males. In 1 Timothy, the word is in the dative case, which in English corresponds to putting the word *to* before the noun. (Example: Give the book *TO ME*.) And again, the ending is feminine. Even without the definite article to prove the point, the evidence so far suggests that Paul was speaking about *women* when he used this word, not men.

There are two other pieces of evidence to weigh. First, when properly translated, Scripture contains no prior condemnation of homosexuality, and the Hebrew Old Testament contains the record of two same-sex marriages, neither condemned by God. Paul, as a Jewish scholar, could

not have been ignorant of this. So for him to suddenly, and without precedent, introduce a condemnation of homosexuality, without a word of explanation, would make absolutely no sense, and would have created an uproar in the early churches. Church history documents that same-sex marriages existed, and continued, in the Christian church up until around the 13th or 14th century.¹⁴

Another point we should note is context. There are certain other words in these verses that refer to sexual misconduct. These are *PORN-i* and *mi-KHI*, fornicators and adulterers. Both of these words are masculine. Although masculine plurals in Greek *can* refer to women, **if** there are men included also, there is a more sociological reason for these words being masculine. In the mindset of the first century, sexual relations were always thought of in terms of the male being the active partner, and the female being passive. That is, the man was thought to be the *initiator* of sexual acts. Therefore, the words describing these things tend to be masculine: Adulterer, rather than adulteress. And it could be argued by some that these words applied only to men, and didn't apply to women at all. Grammatically, they

¹⁴ "Same-Sex Unions in Premodern Europe" by John Boswell.

could be understood that way. But certainly, few would claim that Paul was opposed to sexual misconduct by men, but completely ambivalent to such activity by women. And few today would subscribe to the notion that sexual misconduct was always initiated by males, and never by females. Even Paul knew that wasn't the case. The word *arseno-KEE-tay* would address this. There are definite situations where a female initiates sexual activity. For example, a prostitute usually approaches a prospective customer, soliciting him. So this word could deal with situations where a female initiates sexual misconduct.

About the Author



William H. Carey is a retired Apostolic minister. He was cofounder of both the National Gay Pentecostal Alliance (NGPA) and the Apostolic Restoration Mission (ARM). He has worked in ministry in the GLBT community around the United States, and has published numerous booklets and tracts on topics ranging from Holiness to the nature of the Godhead, published in English, Russian and Hebrew.

Rev. Carey began studying Greek at the age of 12, and Hebrew at the age of 19. He taught beginning classes in both languages for many years. He attended Apostolic Pentecostal Bible School and Wide World of Truth Ministries Bible School (both formerly in Schenectady, NY), and wrote much of the ministerial training curriculum for Pentecostal Bible Institute, the educational division of ARM.

A native of Brooklyn, NY, he attended high school in Galway, NY, and college in Schenectady and Albany, NY. He currently resides in Ferndale, Michigan with his husband, Larry.

Other books by this author:

- **New Testament** – A new translation from Greek into Modern English
- **How Many is God?** – A short explanation of the difference between the Trinitarian doctrine and the teachings of Oneness
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