

*Real Answers to Real Questions*  
*(from the Bible)*



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## Leviticus 18.22; 20.13

This week we will be dealing with two of the most quoted scriptures people use in their stance against the same-gender loving community. Leviticus 18.22 says **"Thou shalt not lie with mankind, as with womankind: it is abomination."** And Leviticus 20.13 says **"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."** On the surface, it's a closed case. With a literalist interpretation of this scripture, the act of same-gender sex is wrong, and in the eyes of God is punishable by death. We will delve deeper into this issue and "take a closer look" at this scripture. Hopefully, those who read will be enlightened and liberated from church imposed guilt and shame. So, let's begin...

When looking at the "Levitical Holiness Code", we must understand that it was a code of conduct that was part of a covenant that required the children of Israel to not participate in the religious rituals of the Canaanites once they entered the land God promised to them. They were to remain separate in every way. They were not to eat with the Canaanites, intermarry, worship with/or like them. They were to remain "holy" or set apart. In obeying this covenant, they would prove themselves to be God's chosen people. They would be instantly identifiable as the people of covenant. This same code also prohibits the eating of certain foods, wearing certain types of clothes, and also discriminates against people with disabilities as it relates to worship and the priesthood.

We must also remember that it was always in the forefront of the minds of the people of Israel the covenant made with their patriarch Abraham. God promised Abraham that he would make of him a mighty nation. A nation whose number would be like that of the stars in the sky or the sand of the sea. He would be the Father of many people....a great nation (Genesis 17.5). So when making laws, or instituting a code of conduct that would govern their actions they had to keep in mind that God's covenant with the father of their faith was to make them a great nation. They could not participate in anything they thought would hinder or keep them from fulfilling that covenant.

In taking a closer look at these two verses, we will look at the transliteration from Hebrew to English. In taking each character of Hebrew into English, Leviticus 18.22 looks like this...

**"V'et zachar lo tishkav mishk'vei ishah to'evah hu"...when translated into English reads "And with a male thou shalt not lie down in beds of a woman; it is an abomination."**

Leviticus 20.13 looks like this...

**"V'ish asher yishkav et zachar mishk'vei ishah to'evah asu shneihem mot yumatu d'meihem bam" when translated into English reads "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."**

We are going to look at the words "mishk'vei" and "to'evah" and it will give us a better understanding of what these verses are trying to say. First, the word "mishk'vei" is a noun. The main form of it is "mishkav, and the root letters of the noun, sh-k-v are the same letters of the verb root in the verse (lie down). Mishk'vei is in the plural construct state, meaning "beds of", and the noun "ishah" means woman. To'evah is translated "abomination" in English. Yet the definition is key to the interpretation of the verse. Most define this word as "disgusting" or "detestable". Others simply define it as "improper" or "unclean", as if to say "good Jews just don't do that".

With what we know now, the verse says a man cannot, or should not lie down with a man in the bed of a woman. During this time period, a woman was considered property. And since women were considered unclean during certain times of month, they had beds of their own. Other than the woman herself, nobody was permitted to sleep in her bed but her husband. Husbands often didn't sleep in the same bed with their wives unless they were there for the express purpose of having sex with them. And there were rules which said when he could do that. So this verse is more about WHERE same-gender sex could occur, and not about the sex itself.

Now just why would the author even bring this up? Well, the Canaanites' religious rituals or worship included sex acts. They worshipped fertility gods who were thought to bring blessings on their crops, livestock, children, etc. During these rituals, everyone participated. Even relatives would have sex with one another. They would also burn babies as sacrifice at the altars built to these fertility gods. And since incest, human sacrifice, and having sex anywhere was part of the worship, the Israelites were not permitted to perform these acts if they were going to be different and separated unto a Holy God.

The sex acts were prohibited because of religious reasons, more specifically idol worship. This law was not a blanket prohibition of sexuality. The entire code was meant to keep Israel from engaging in the religious practices of the Canaanite people. The argument here is religious, not moral or ethical. If the Jews of this time period were to maintain a strong identity, and build a large nation, they could not be like the people around them in any way or form...including their worship.

# Romans, Chapter 1

It's been argued that the first time homosexuals, or homosexual acts are addressed in the New Testament is in Romans the 1st chapter (mainly verses 26 and 27). That is if you disregard the two occasions that eunuchs are mentioned (sorry, that's another Bible Study). And like the scriptures we have addressed in this forum, this one has been misinterpreted, taught in error, and caused much spiritual and emotional harm to same gender loving people.

The thing most people who erroneously teach this scripture seem to forget is, when interpreting scripture, you cannot just take one or two verses of a chapter, build a sermon, teach it as "God's Word" and live it as a doctrine. You have to carefully see what the scripture (and all others relating to it) is saying. It's been advised that we read the chapter before, and after the chapter we are studying so that we can get some type of contextual view of what the author was talking about. In this case, we are dealing with Apostle Paul's letter to the Christians in Rome. In fact, the text in verse 7 says it..."my dear friends in Rome" (New Living Translation). Since that's who he was addressing, we have to infer that he was dealing with their situation. Am I saying that he couldn't have any relevant truth for 21st Century America? Not at all. I AM saying that if we are going to correctly interpret what is being said, we need to understand that first and foremost, who Paul was addressing was 1st Century Rome. Let's take a closer look and find out what that truth is.

The first thing we need to address is the cultural climate of biblical Rome. It was a societal norm for people to be bisexual. And with that being the "normal" sexuality that society ascribed to, it was expected for everyone to be that way. Since now we know that all people aren't bisexual (in fact most are heterosexual), we can understand how pressured a heterosexual or homosexual person would be to engage in acts that weren't "natural" for him or her. The definition of the word "natural" in this text comes from the Greek word "phusikos", meaning instinctive or native disposition. If a person is a native to some place, they were born there. So, a native disposition would be how a person is born. The word "nature" in this text likewise comes from the Greek word "phusis", which means production or lined descent; growth by germination, or native disposition. Just keep "instinctive/native disposition" in mind.

When Paul talks about the "natural use" of the woman, he is coming from several different places. First from a place of male dominance that thought that the only use a woman has is having babies to continue the man's lineage. That's all. A

woman was a man's property (paid for with a dowry)...his "baby maker" per se. So any sexual deviation that would produce offspring was not looked upon favorably. In fact, not until this century did some in the church start teaching that sex had more than just a procreative purpose.

Secondly, Paul was coming from a sexual orientation angle. He was not making a blanket statement of what is and isn't "natural". He couldn't have been. Science has proven that in all species of animals, homosexuality is present (ref. "Biological Exuberance: Animal Homosexuality and Natural Diversity" by Bruce Bagemihl). So, since homosexuality occurs in nature, it cannot be considered unnatural. And since most people are instinctively heterosexual and that is their native disposition, it IS highly unnatural for one to do otherwise. In this scripture, Paul is telling the Romans that it is unnatural for a person to go against their "native disposition" or what is "instinct" for them and do something else with their bodies to fit in. Now, we can jump on the ex-gay and DL thing right here, but we don't have the space or time. But do you get the point? If your nature is heterosexual, be that. If you are born homosexual, be that. If you indeed are bisexual, then that's you. Don't try to change who you are to fit societal norms. It's like telling God that He made you the wrong way.

Next, Paul was dealing with some religious issues as well. Paul in fact is saying homosexual activity is not a sin, but a punishment for idol worship and faithlessness. It is a result of heterosexuals not worshipping God but His creation. Turning the truth into a lie. Denying God. His argument is, if a man (being straight) is SO confused and faithless that he cannot discern who God is when creation even tells of His existence, then it's not so far fetched that that same man (being straight) would be confused sexually and do what is unnatural for him to do. These verses couldn't be an blanket indictment against homosexuality in that most of the most highly anointed, profound, gifted, talented, and FAITHFUL Christians are homosexual people.

Finally, Paul was dealing with what was going on in Rome from the standpoint of a Jew. There were just some things that were not customary or "natural" for a good Jew to do. Not to say that there are no homosexual Jews, there are. But one must remember that Paul was a very well educated and respected man in his time. He was a good Jew who knew and tried his best to live by "the law" according to the Torah. So to be in another land (not native to Israelites) and submerged into another culture (Rome) trying to live according to how Jews "customarily" or "normally" lived, it must have been hard to do since the society was so different.

So, is Romans 1.26-27 a blanket indictment against homosexuals? With the information we have, we can say no. Paul was more than likely addressing cultural, religious, and orientation issues in this scripture. Contrary to popular opinion, the theme of this text isn't homosexuality. In fact it isn't about sexuality at all. It's about people keeping in mind who God is. It's about understanding that humanity is without excuse when it comes to reverencing God in that creation itself tells of His glory. It's about understanding the truth and the fact that it comes from God. And lastly, it's about not being judgmental or hypocritical. Remember when we said that one should study the chapter before and after the text being focused upon? Well, Romans Chapter 2.1-7 Paul gets on people who are pointing at those who have forgotten God and saying how wicked they are, yet are doing the same things. Bottom line, God judges sin. It doesn't matter who you are. Make sure you are right with God for yourself. Let God handle the rest in His own way.

# Genesis 18:20 - 19:29

**Subject:** The TRUTH About Sodom and Gomorrah - Part I

What can be said about Sodom and Gomorrah that hasn't already been said? We know that God destroyed the two large cities. And we know that if a loving God destroyed them, they must have been in such a horrible spiritual state, that He could no longer withhold justice, and He had to take judgmental action. God HAD to destroy them. But why?

Certainly you've heard that it was because of "inhospitality to strangers" or because of their "blatantly homosexuality". And who knows what else is floating out there as justification for these two cities' destruction? The purpose of TAKING A CLOSER LOOK is to discover the truth. Why should we delve deeper to find out something other than what we've been taught? Because believe it or not, the knowledge of the truth about Sodom and Gomorrah has very important spiritual applications to ALL people. There are so many questions that are left unanswered with the "old school" teaching of this story.

Was there ONE definitive reason, or were there many reasons? Were they destroyed for homosexuality or inhospitality? Was idol worship a factor? Did the "men" of the city really want to have sex with the visiting angels? And more relevant to today, if God destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah for homosexuality, will He also destroy our society?

These questions and many more plague the minds of so many people. And since we are seeking answers about a Biblical account, why not consult the very place where we've been taught in error? The Bible. We must be mindful that the truth is not in just the letter of the Word, but in the spirit of the word. The truth about Sodom and Gomorrah can only be revealed by careful study and the proper life application of it's spiritual truths.

Traditionally, we have been taught that the Biblical cities of Sodom and Gomorrah were destroyed for "homosexuality" and other "perverted sexual behavior". That just may have had a part to play in the destruction of the two cities. But I submit to you that this is not the only or premier reason for it, if it had a part to play in it at all. Let's just deal with the text shall we? As the story goes in Genesis 19:1-11, two angels arrived at Sodom at night, and Lot was the one sitting at the gate of the city. He bowed before them and asked them to stay at his house to wash their feet and

spend the night (which was common custom in those days when dealing with strangers. It was a show of good hospitality). When they refused, he insisted that they go to his house and he prepared a meal for them.

Before they all tore it down for the night, all the "men" from every part of the city came and bum rushed the house, asking about the two. The crowd insisted that they be brought out so that they could "know" or have sex with them. Lot goes out and pleads with these "men" not to do this wicked thing, and asks them to take his daughters and have their way with them. The "men" of the city pressed their way and accused Lot of trying to be "all that" when he was just a stranger in their city himself. They threatened to do worse to him than they would do to the angels if they weren't brought out to them. It got so bad, the "men" tried to break down the door. But luckily, the angels had Lot's back and pulled him back inside the house and struck all SODOM AND GOMORRAH the "men" outside with blindness so they couldn't find the door (paraphrasing mine).

Now this is tha deal...if you are gonna study scripture, you need to study it in its proper context and with the right spirit. You can't be trying to prove a point or be "theologically correct" in a debate. You have to be searching the heart and mind of God for the truth that He placed in His Word so you can properly use it to help yourself, and to help others. The Bible says, "All scripture is God breathed, and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correction, and training in righteousness" (II Timothy 3.16). Nowhere is "abuse" and "used for debate and political gain" mentioned. The Word, even when used in rebuke or discipline, is meant to edify or build people up and not tear them down. With that being said, it is important to realize that the Old Testament was originally written in Aramaic or Hebrew. And the New Testament was written in Greek. And to properly ascertain the true meaning and spirit of the text you must go back to the original language. In doing so, I believe God will guide you into the truth of His Word. Let me break it down to you on tha real.

The angels came into the city and Lot was sitting at the gate (that's what the scripture says). And when they approached him, he bowed before them and invited them into his home thus offering them proper hospitality (which was common in that time period). After they all ate dinner and were about to go to bed, the "men" from every corner of the city surrounded Lot's house insisting that he bring the two angels out.

Now, the Hebrew word for "men" in this particular text is "enowsh", defined "mortals (as in Adam); humanity; people; congregation; male and female" not just

"males" as with the Hebrew word "iysh," as some would like you to believe. The people wanted to "know" the men (or angels). Now, this is the tricky part. The Hebrew word for "know" is "yada", meaning to properly ascertain by seeing; observing or reflecting; or to know by experiencing. And in this text, there is no differentiation. The Bible, in this particular text, does not say either/or. So one cannot logically, or correctly say that the male population of Sodom wanted to "have sex" with the angels as traditionally thought. We might also add that in the Bible, the Hebrew word "yada", meaning "to know" is used 943 times. Of those times, only 10 have a sexual connotation. Therefore, the likelihood of it having a sexual meaning in this text is very slim.

This is where the debate comes in. One school of thought uses the fact that Lot offered his daughters to the crowd and pleads with them to have their way, but not to do "this wicked thing" to the men as proof that their intent was to have sex. Another school says that the daughters or women were "property" (like women were in that time), and he was offering them as slaves to the crowd. When in all actuality, Lot could have become wealthy by receiving "dowries (or money)" for his daughters when their hand was asked in marriage. One school of thought says the "men (meaning males)" of the city were sex perverts and sought after the men with lustful intent. Another says that the men were trying to figure out if these "men" were spies who knew Lot, and wanted to make sure they weren't in the city to try to take over. There are other issues that can be introduced and addressed here. Like the fact that when the men of the city were victorious in war or in a conquest, they would often beat and rape the men they defeated as to exercise ultimate dominion over them. Thus making them no more important or valuable to society than women or "property". This was a humiliating and emasculating experience for any man to endure.

Let me also throw in that in that time, common practice was to question visitors about their journey and their intent as to determine if they were spies and if they were trying to take the city by force. The "men" of the city were keepers of the cities in which they lived and were responsible for it's protection. And the arguments go on, and on, and on, and on, and on. Nobody really cares that the Bible explicitly SAYS why Sodom and Gomorrah were destroyed. Check this out...

*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. (Ezekiel 16.49-50)*

Now, as I said before, sexual perversion and other behavior may have been part of the reason Sodom and Gomorrah was destroyed. If it was, it wasn't the ONLY thing that brought on the destruction. And if you really STUDY the Word, you will remember that God was already gonna destroy the cities BEFORE the angels even got there. The truth about Sodom and Gomorrah is, GOD JUDGES SIN (anything causing spiritual separation from God)!!! God allowed that story to be printed in the Bible to teach us that inhospitality to our fellow man, idolatry, and violence are sins that make Him sick, and they bring about the destruction of ANY people. The story of Sodom and Gomorrah is a warning to all of us that how we treat others is important to God in that He made us all, and wants us to live in harmony.

# Genesis 18:20 - 19:29

**Subject:** The TRUTH About Sodom and Gomorrah - Part II

In continuation of our study of Sodom and Gomorrah, I would like to just point out a few things for your consideration. Mind you, in no wise am I trying to get you to see MY personal point of view, nor am I trying to decide FOR you what the message of this story is as it relates to your life. I am just presenting information in hopes that you will prayerfully seek God and let HIM give you what you need from this biblical account. We've already discussed the often argued and debated points of the story. And we've discovered that what we have all heard and been taught isn't necessarily the "whole truth" of the matter. In fact, in some cases, I believe we have been taught the WRONG thing altogether. Here are some other points of consideration in helping you determine what's really going on here.

## THE NAMES

First let's consider the actual names of the cities, Sodom and Gomorrah. The name "Sodom" comes from the Hebrew word "Cedom (pronounced: sed-ome') which means to scorch, or burnt. And the name "Gomorrah" is " 'Amorah (pronounced: am-o-raw' ") meaning a ruined heap, as in gathering things into a heap for burning. Now, since this is what happened to the cities, could these names have been given to them AFTER the fact? Some theologians argue that these two cities were CALLED Sodom and Gomorrah after their destruction and were not the original names thereof. If this is so, what were there actual names?

## THE WORD SODOMITE (SODOMY)

Further along these lines, let's consider the word "sodomite" which is often used by some to describe same gender loving people. Yes, the word is in the Bible as we know it today. And it has been very loosely translated as "homosexual" in some versions of the Scripture. The word is used twice in the Old Testament of King James Version of the Bible, and several times in the New Testament. But if you look in the Hebrew and Greek texts.... the word "sodomite" isn't found at all. Let me elaborate...

In Deuteronomy 23.17, the text reads: "There shall be no whore of the daughters of Israel, nor a sodomite of the sons of Israel." And II Kings 23.7 reads: "And he brake down the houses of the sodomites, that were by the house of the LORD, where the women wove hangings for the grove."

Now if you look up "whore" in Hebrew, the word is "k'deshah", meaning prostitute (temple prostitute in this case). And the word "sodomite(s)" is "kadesh", the male version of the word "k'deshah". This says there were both male and female temple prostitutes who sold their bodies in worship of the fertility goddess Asherah. God was saying in these texts that His people should not engage in this kind of activity, thus breaking the law forbidding idol worship. So in these scriptures, idol worship is the thing being forbidden.

In English, we get our word "sodomy" from the word "sodomite" in the Bible. And the definition of the word varies. In this country there are laws forbidding sodomy, and the definitions differ from state to state. Some get so extreme as to say that anything other than vaginal heterosexual sex is sodomy. So I suppose by this definition, all other kinds of sex between consenting adults is not only illegal, but is also forbidden by Scripture and participants thereof are going to hell!

## **THE REGION**

Next, let's consider that two other cities in that region were destroyed as well, Admah and Zeboim (Deuteronomy 29.23, Hosea 11.8). In fact, the only city spared in this account was the small city of Zoar. This is the city that Lot and his family were instructed to run to for escape. Why are these cities not traditionally addressed in this account? What was their problem? Was their omission in teaching this story on purpose? Or were they insignificant? If insignificant, why were they destroyed?

## **THE SOCIAL CLIMATE**

If you read from Genesis 14, you will discover that during the time of this story, the cities (to include neighboring cities) were engaged in a war. This HAD to have created a social climate where everyone was on alert. Anyone foreign to the city or to the region was held suspect and could be considered a spy. There was intense need amongst the townspeople to feel safe and secure. Thus the need for the gates surrounding the cities and the posted watchmen (remember Lot was the gatekeeper in this story). Think about it, you live in a city who was just engaged in war. The night a NON-NATIVE of the city is trusted to watch the gate (thus controlling

traffic in and out), he lets two people that NOBODY knows into the city and even more so BEHIND CLOSED DOORS FOR THE NIGHT IN HIS HOUSE! Certainly this raised some eyebrows and caused some suspicion. Don't think this scenario is possible? Consider the heightened levels of security in THIS country after 9/11/01. Same thing.

### **THE WORD "ABOMINATION"**

In Genesis 18.20-19.29, NOWHERE is the word "abomination" found. The story specifies that "the sin of Sodom was grievous to God" and that's it. When cross-referencing this scripture, the prophet Ezekiel mentions an unnamed abomination. Careful study will reveal that the word "abomination" was not defined until the law was given in Leviticus, and a great number of things were considered to be abomination. Therefore, when looking at this story, one cannot look to the Levitical definition of the word in reference to Sodom and Gomorrah because all the cities of the region were destroyed BEFORE the law was even given. In most cases, outside of the law, the word "abomination" is used when describing acts associated with idol worship, and thus were considered by the Hebrew people as unclean. Proverbs 6.16-19 gives a list of the things that God deems abominable... "a proud look, a lying tongue, hands that shed innocent blood, feet that are swift to do mischief, a false witness that speaketh lies, and he that sows discord among the brethren". Nowhere in this list is homosexuality mentioned (though SGL and Non-SGL people alike do all of these things).

AGAIN, the truth about Sodom and Gomorrah is GOD JUDGES SIN! And this story is proof of that. But to use this Biblical account as justification to preach hate and eternal damnation to all Same Gender Loving people is scripturally incorrect. And as we've seen in this two-part study, it is a downright misinterpretation of this scripture and its message.

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## I Peter 2.9

What does God really say about you? How does God really feel about you? According to the first six words of I Peter 2.9, you are a "Chosen People". The King James Version of the Bible says, "but ye are a Chosen Generation".

This says that God is so excited about you and the things He made you to do, that He called you out with passionate enthusiasm. He is excited, and filled with intense zeal about your destiny. He isn't ashamed of you, but He boasts and brags about electing you to be His child. To break it down, God is proud of you. He is excited that you are His. God is happy He created you, and He is filled with joy when He sees you doing the things He's created you to do.

In spite of popular opinion, I Peter 2.9 applies to same gender loving people too! And, since God made you, and He knows you best...why not believe and say what He says about you. His definition of you is your REAL identity. So when the world tries to beat you down, and life makes you feel worthless, you can hold your head up high.

You can proudly stand up and be encouraged in knowing that God - the Sovereign Creator elected and selected you to represent Him on this earth. And He's quite proud of it! You have been separated and set apart from the rest of the world, and God brags about that fact.

You are called to worship God. You are to provide service to humanity by the authority of God, the King of Kings. Listen here, you are A ROYAL PRIESTHOOD! You are a Royal Ambassador of God's Kingdom. You are a King Appointed Leader. Your purpose is to serve God in worship, serve humanity by showing His goodness, and inspire others to continue to serve God in Spirit and in Truth.

You are AN HOLY NATION! Now think about it. A Royal Priesthood doesn't sound anything like faggot, sissy, or punk does it? NO! I DON'T THINK SO! Once you think of yourself like God thinks of you, you will begin to behave like

God intended you to behave when He made you. The word "holy" means to be set apart, or separated from the world and separated to a Holy God. We are a "race" of people blessed of God. In spite of the different colors of skin, God has called all of us a Holy Nation. Just think, of all the people on this planet, God chose you. Sure you may have experimented with drugs -but He chose you!

Yeah, you've dealt with alcoholism, but He still chose you!

You've been sexually promiscuous, but He chose you!

Some of you have hurt others, but He chose you!

You may not be the smartest, or the prettiest. but God Chose You!

You have been chosen and equipped with special talents, intelligence and skills in order to bless humanity. You have been given God's ability to logically reason, create, and make all things beautiful. You have a place here on this earth! You have a purpose. And that purpose is NOT to be abused by people who don't understand you or God's will for your life. God Loves You (because you are His)! God Created You (to be a blessing to humanity)! And He's SO excited about it, He's called you ROYALTY! Why? Because if He's the King, and you're a child of The King, ROYALTY is who you are!