

# The Old Testament and Homosexuality

 The Bible and Homosexuality

 Pastor Jeremy Thomas

 August 19, 2015

 fbgbible.org

 Fredericksburg Bible Church

107 East Austin Street

Fredericksburg, Texas 78624

(830) 997-8834

**Q:** How do 1 Cor 5:1-3 and 15:33 relate to what you have been teaching relative to befriending homosexuals?

**A:** Good question. Maybe at some points my approach does not square with your understanding of Scripture. It's good to ask questions to clarify. We'll look at both of these texts. Remember that 1 Corinthians is written to Christians who have had plenty of time to learn to live by the Spirit but are still living by the flesh. Paul classifies these Christians by the Greek word *σαρκικοί*. The classification *σαρκικοί* is very important to understand. Paul is not addressing new Christians. That term is *σαρκινοίς*. He expected new Christians to live by the flesh as they were trying to learn how to live the new life by the Spirit. However, for a Christian to continue to live by the flesh for several years was unacceptable. Paul classified them as *σαρκικοί*. They had been Christians for several years and had still not learned to live the new life by the Spirit. So keep in mind the Christians Paul is instructing here are *σαρκικοί*.

With the audience in mind let's look at 1 Cor 5:1-3. This is the case where the Church at Corinth was tolerating one of its male members having a sexual relationship with his stepmother. The text reads, "It is actually reported that there is immorality among you..." The pronoun "you" throughout is plural and refers to the Church at Corinth. It had been reported to Paul that there was sexual immorality taking place within or in the midst of the Church at Corinth that was well-known. He then states, "and" an "immorality of such a kind as does not exist even among the Gentiles," it was peculiarly vile, namely, "that someone has his father's wife." "You" that is the Church at Corinth, "...have become arrogant and have not mourned instead, so that the one who had done this deed would be removed from your midst," the Church was arrogant not to remove the individual by proper church discipline. "For I, on my part, though absent in body but present in spirit, have already judged him who has so committed this, as though I were present." This is judgment within the body of Christ. Though Paul had done this the Church at Corinth had not. This is arrogance because it presupposes that the members of the Church will not be tempted with the same sin. In 5:6 this danger is clear. Paul asks, "Does not a little leaven leaven the whole lump?" What the Church needed to do was remove the sinning member. In 5:9 we see that they had misunderstood an earlier letter of Paul. Apparently Paul wrote that they should not associate with the immoral. They interpreted Paul to mean the immoral of this world but what Paul meant was with immoral

believers. In 5:10 Paul clarifies, "I did not at all mean with immoral people of this world, or with the covetous and swindlers, or with idolaters, for then you would have to go out of the world. But actually, I wrote to you not to associate with any so-called brother if he is an immoral person, or covetous, or an idolater, or a reviler, or a drunkard, or a swindler—not even to eat with such a one." Paul condemned the local church for allowing a Christian characterized by a vice to remain in good standing. He did not condemn associating with sinning unbelievers because then we would have to go out of the world. When applied to our study on homosexuality, our local church should not permit a Christian to openly live in a homosexual relationship without implementing church discipline. But as far as unbelievers go, there is no indication that we should not associate with them. The example I used was Matthew having tax collectors and sinners in his home in order to introduce them to Jesus. I think this text is right in line with that text. In connection with this text I would also like to call your attention to Gal 6:1. Gal 6:1 is where Paul warns about restoring a Christian who has fallen into sin. He says "Brethren, even if anyone is caught in any trespass, you who are spiritual, restore such a one in a spirit of gentleness; each one looking to yourself, so that you too will not be tempted." This is a similar situation but with a different focus. This passage focuses not on the church's responsibility to exercise church discipline but on the individual believer's responsibility to restore a fallen believer. If there is a believer that gets "caught in any trespass." The Greek means that it was unintentional, he got tripped up and now he has fallen into sin, then the spiritual believer, which in this case is a mature believer, someone sound in doctrine and stable for many years, should restore the brother in a spirit of gentleness, all along being cognizant of the danger he himself could be in due to the possibility of temptation. This shows that there is a responsibility to help a fellow believer get out of a sin pattern that he somehow got caught in. Another difference between this passage and the 1 Cor 5 passage is that this is clearly a more private issue than the other passage which was public. They're both important to the issue we are studying.

Now let's look at 1 Cor 15:33. In 1 Cor 15:33 Paul is addressing believers at Corinth who at first believed the gospel that Christ died and rose again but now have stopped believing in the resurrection because of the influence of pagan philosophy. Paul says, "Bad company corrupts good morals." This is a quote from a play written by Menander. Menander was a pagan and yet Paul quotes him because even though Menander was a pagan playwright he recognized that if you set your life up around bad company then it will eventually corrupt your good morals. Paul is not saying that we must take ourselves out of the world. He already said in 5:10 that the only way to avoid associating with bad company is to go out of the world. Paul certainly did associate with people of bad repute and in the world. This is how he brought them to Christ. In this context those of bad repute are Christians who had given their allegiance to pagan philosophy. Pagan philosophy denied the physical resurrection. If a Christian then decides to make those Christians his primary circle of influence in life it will eventually result in their being persuaded to reject the resurrection, In turn this will negatively affect their good morals as well. We should not be so naive as to think that we can surround our lives with Christians whose allegiance is to extra-biblical authorities and not have our morals corrupted. In this particular case a chief

doctrine of the Christian faith was being denied, the future bodily resurrection. To deny this doctrine logically leads to a life of lasciviousness. As Paul himself said in verse 32, "If the dead are not raised, LET US EAT AND DRINK, FOR TOMORROW WE DIE." Once there is no future bodily resurrection there is no reason to live a moral life because when we die we simply return to dust. Applied to our study, we would not set up our lives around such influences. It wouldn't mean we wouldn't interact with these people, just that they wouldn't be our primary influences and our allegiance wouldn't be to them. Like the tax collector Matthew, we can control the parameters so that when we interact with these people we are in a setting to have a good interaction. Matthew was shrewd in doing this and Luke 16 certainly implores us to be shrewd in our dealings with the world in order to win them to Christ.

Last time we looked at the overarching theme of Scripture and saw that from Genesis to Revelation the picture is of one man and one woman which undergirds the picture of Christ and His Church and is founded in the unity and diversity of God Himself. This week we will begin to look at the most important texts which have been brought into this discussion. We should recall that the basic tact of SSRA is to disconnect any direct application of these texts to the issue of committed, loving SSR. That way SS is not sinful because God made me this way, it is an immutable characteristic.

## Genesis 1-2 Creation Narrative

The first major text is Gen 1:26-28, the Creation Narrative. This is a critical text because it sets the pattern for the rest of Scripture and is repeatedly referred to throughout the rest of Scripture. Gen 1:26 recounts the sixth day of creation. After forming and filling the other spheres of air and sea and filling the land with animals God now creates His crown jewel to have dominion, man made in His own image. "Then God said, "Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness; and let them rule over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the sky and over the cattle and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth." <sup>27</sup>God created man in His own image, in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them. <sup>28</sup>God blessed them; and God said to them, "Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth, and subdue it; and rule over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the sky and over every living thing that moves on the earth." Two observations are in order. First, God made man in His own image and likeness. Since God is a unity and diversity then it follows that man is also a unity and diversity. This unity and diversity is expressed in verse 27 as "male and female." Just as it is unconvincing to argue that unity and diversity is adequately captured by saying that God is "Father, Father and Father" so it is unconvincing to argue that man in God's image is "male and male" or "female and female." Neither are adequate expressions of unity and diversity. As far as the image and likeness of God is concerned the only model that makes sense from the text is "male and female." Second, male and female are necessary for procreational potential. God commanded them in verse 28 to "multiply, and fill the earth." Only a "male and female" have the potential to multiply, and fill the earth." SSRA often argue that not all males and females can procreate today. However, this does not change the original design and purpose of marriage. The situation

today where certain males and females have lost procreative potential is a post-Fall phenomenon due to man's sin.<sup>1</sup> At times God supernaturally closes and opens wombs for His own purposes. But what is essential to understand is that the Fallen world is not normal and should not be normalized. If features of a fallen world are to be normalized then we might equally conclude that divorce is normal. However, divorce is not normal. As Jesus said in Matt 19:4, "Have you not read that He who created *them* from the beginning MADE THEM MALE AND FEMALE,<sup>5</sup> and said, 'FOR THIS REASON A MAN SHALL LEAVE HIS FATHER AND MOTHER AND BE JOINED TO HIS WIFE, AND THE TWO SHALL BECOME ONE FLESH'?<sup>6</sup>" So they are no longer two, but one flesh. What therefore God has joined together, let no man separate." Marriage permanence is normal, divorce is abnormal. A feature introduced at the Fall is not ever to be normalized. So the fact that some males or females have lost procreative potential is not a valid argument for SSR. It is normalizing the abnormal. In conclusion, Gen 1:26-28 teaches two things directly; that the image of God is a unity and diversity expressed in a "male and female" and that a "male and female" are necessary to procreate. As a final note on these verses, while celibacy is often pointed out by SSRA to argue that against the exclusivity of OSR, celibacy is a gift that was not a part of the original design and purpose at creation. It was introduced only in a post-Fall world. And though not sinful it is not the normal expression. Celibacy relates to unique situations in a post-Fall world such as the apostle Paul's commission to spread the gospel into dangerous territory, hardly a commission that would foster a healthy marriage and family.

The second major text is Gen 2:7, 15-25, more of the Creation Narrative. Gen 2 recapitulates the creation of man in Gen 1:26-28 and gives further detail. In Gen 2:7 God originally created man outside the Garden in Eden "of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul." At this point there was a man alone. In 2:15 "Then the LORD God took the man and put him into the garden of Eden to cultivate it and keep it." In 2:18 "Then the LORD God said, "It is not good for the man to be alone; I will make him a helper suitable for him."<sup>19</sup> Out of the ground the LORD God formed every beast of the field and every bird of the sky, and brought *them* to the man to see what he would call them; and whatever the man called a living creature, that was its name.<sup>20</sup> The man gave names to all the cattle, and to the birds of the sky, and to every beast of the field, but for Adam there was not found a helper suitable for him.<sup>21</sup> So the LORD God caused a deep sleep to fall upon the man, and he slept; then He took one of his ribs and closed up the flesh at that place.<sup>22</sup> The LORD God fashioned into a woman the rib which He had taken from the man, and brought her to the man.<sup>23</sup> The man said, "This is now bone of my bones, And flesh of my flesh; She shall be called Woman, Because she was taken out of Man."<sup>24</sup> For this reason a man shall leave his father and his mother, and be joined to his wife; and they shall become one flesh.<sup>25</sup> And the man and his wife were both naked and were not ashamed." Several observations are in order. First, God originally created a "man" who was both "man" and the embodiment of all "mankind" since all would eventually come from him, including woman. The man alone was then given the responsibility to cultivate and keep the garden of Eden. This sequence of man's creation and responsibility frames the entire discussion. Second, in 2:18 we learn that the man being alone in His God-given task was "not good" and therefore the LORD God said, "I will make him a helper suitable for him." SSRA argue that what was "not good"

was that Adam did not have a companion. They claim that a SSR is completely biblical because a SS partner meets the biblical requirement of companionship. However, the man was not alone in the sense of needing a companion. He already had the most important companion any person could have, God. The Hebrew word "alone" means "only a part" or "a portion." It therefore refers to a lack of completeness. It was "not good" that the man lacked completeness in his God-given task of keeping and cultivating the garden. The meaning of the Hebrew word for "good" is "that which brings prosperity, efficiency." As a result God said, "I will make him a helper suitable for him." The meaning of the Hebrew word for "suitable" is "that which is opposite, that which corresponds to, contrary, against." In 2:19-20 God gives the man the assignment of naming all the cattle, the birds and beasts but the conclusion of this assignment is that "there was not found a *helper suitable* for him." The cattle, birds and beasts were opposite the man but none also corresponded to him in a way that would help him fulfill his God-given task of keeping and cultivating the garden.<sup>2</sup> Of course, animals can help in keeping and cultivating a garden, such as oxen in plowing, birds in seed dispersal, et. al. But the particular kind of helper the man needed was not found among the cattle, the birds or beasts. The task God gave the man was not only to keep the garden, a protective or guarding role, but also to cultivate it, a developmental task. This requires another mind opposite of his own but also corresponding to his own. Since the cultivation task would require extending the garden over the face of the whole earth (the garden of Eden was by definition in a limited locality), procreative potential is also a necessary requirement of the helper suitable. Third, God provides a woman as the helper suitable in 2:21ff. "So the LORD God caused a deep sleep to fall upon the man, and he slept; then He took one of his ribs and closed up the flesh at that place. <sup>22</sup>The LORD God fashioned into a woman the rib which He had taken from the man, and brought her to the man." The woman meets the criteria of being "suitable" since she is both the opposite of and corresponds to the man. The SSRA claim that a SS person could meet this criteria is not at all convincing. For SSR to be valid God would written a very different creation story. Fourth, the man recognizes that the woman is suitable for him, that is, that she is both opposite of him and also corresponds to him and names her with a gender specific term. In 2:23 "The man said, "This is now bone of my bones, And flesh of my flesh; She shall be called Woman, Because she was taken out of Man." To name an object is to exercise authority over the object. The name the man gives his counterpart is "woman." The Hebrew for "woman" is *ishah* and can also be translated "wife." It is the feminine form of the word "man" which is *ish* and can also be translated "husband." The terms are gender specific and point to a male and a female joining in the God-given task of cultivating and keeping the garden so as to spread it over the whole earth by way of labor and procreation. Fifth, 2:24 teaches that "man" and "wife" are male and female because they use the gender specific terms *ish* and *ishah*. Accordingly, marriage is gender specific. In God's eyes a marriage can only be between an *ish* and an *ishah*, that is, between a male and a female/a husband and a wife. It is not possible to override the gender specificity by referring to a male and a male as husband and wife or to a female and a female as husband and wife. The terms husband and wife are strictly gender distinct. Jesus quotes this very passage in Matt 19:5 to show that the marriage bond is between one whose gender is male and the other female. These genders are strictly distinct and at the same time correspond to one another. The distinctions and correspondences refer to

various aspects of man's physical, emotional and spiritual makeup. Together male and female enhance one another. Of course, due to the Fall there are abnormalities introduced by sin and so gender identity is sometimes confused by physical or psychological abnormalities. However, this does not mean such abnormalities should be viewed as normal. At the same time they should not be viewed as necessarily sinful but rather as serving God's purposes. Some of us are blind, some of us stutter, some of us are deformed, we all have abnormalities but God has a purpose for them all. Sixth, in 2:24 the basis for family is 2:23 the original creation of the female gender out of the male gender. "For this reason a man shall leave his father and his mother, and be joined to his wife; and they shall become one flesh." It requires a "father" and "mother" to have an offspring. This offspring, if male, can join himself to a female. To be "joined" is to be permanently glued to one another in an indissoluble unit. The two shall then "become one flesh." This is forever the model of how new families are formed. In a post-Fall world there is adoption and through adoption one can become a member of a family. However, this again is not the original design or purpose. It is an accommodation to our fallenness as sinful human beings. Of course, that does not make being adopted sinful. It just means that being adopted is not to be viewed as the original and normal way God designed it. The concept of "one flesh" is one of the major pillars in the argument for same-sex relationships. Brownson argues that this does not refer to gender complementarity but to kinship bond. He cites the Brown Driver and Briggs Hebrew and English Lexicon of the OT as designating "one flesh" as "relatives." He cites Gen 29:14 where Laban said to Jacob, "Surely you are my bone and my flesh" to argue that two men were "one flesh." Therefore SSR are valid "one flesh" relationships.<sup>3</sup> It's true that this expression can be used of blood relatives. However, as in Gen 2:24, for two people of the SS to become relatives requires a heterosexual relationship. In other words, while two people, say brothers or cousins can be considered "one flesh" that relationship grew out of a heterosexual union. This reality underlies every "one flesh" relationship described in Scripture. This means that procreational potential is a necessary pre-requisite to having a kinship bond. SSR cannot procreate. Brownson's argument is not convincing.

To close out this argument, what you need to be equipped to deal with when talking to SSRA are three basic arguments. First, they will argue that the main purpose of marriage is companionship. To meet this argument you need to be able to explain that in the context the man's aloneness was not loneliness since He was with God in perfect harmony, but rather alone in keeping and cultivating the garden for the glory of God. Second, they will argue that the helper suitable is someone like the man and therefore may include either a man or a woman. To meet this argument you need to be able to show that the word "helper suitable" refers to someone who is the opposite of but corresponds in kind and therefore refers exclusively to the opposite sex. Third, they will argue that the "one flesh" refers to any kinship bond formed by the act of marriage. Here you will need to be able to show that kinship bonds depend upon a heterosexual union.

All said and done these arguments that try to affirm same-sex marriage from Gen 1-2 are very man-centered and miss the bigger picture. God is both a unity and a diversity. He is a unity of essence, there is but one God and He is a diversity of persons, He is three persons. Amongst the three persons there is a shared essence and a

submission of role. He created man in His own image so that man also has a unity and diversity. The unity is seen in that there is one image of God, the diversity is seen in that there is male and female. Amongst male and female there is a shared essence and a submission of role. Since God's work during creation week involved the Father, the Son and the Spirit then the work God gave man to accomplish in the garden involved male and female coming together in marriage. Involved in cultivating the garden in order to spread it over the face of the whole earth is the necessary ingredient of procreating to produce children in a family to accomplish this endeavor for the glory of God. This is God's great vision and purpose for the human race that is outlined in Gen 1-2. This vision failed to be realized by Adam and his sinful fallen race but its fulfillment is to be realized by Christ and His redeemed race in the kingdom. To conclude that such a vision could be accomplished by SSR that are loving and committed is not convincing.

As Kevin DeYoung says, "If God wanted us to conclude that men and women were interchangeable in the marriage relationship, he not only gave us the wrong creation narrative; he gave us the wrong *metanarrative*. Homosexuality simply does not fit with the created order in Genesis 1-2. And with these two chapters as the foundation upon which the rest of the redemptive-historical story is built, we'll see that homosexual behavior does not fit in with the rest of the Bible either."<sup>4</sup>

## **Genesis 19; Ezekiel 16; Jude 7 Sodom and Gomorrah**

The third OT text of interest is Genesis 19:1-11, Sodom and Gomorrah, and the related texts of Ezekiel 16 and Jude 7. In light of accommodating interpretations of this passage some traditionalists have concluded that it does not touch on the issue of what the Bible says about homosexuality. However, many still think it does touch on the issue and it remains a lively part of the discussion. We should at least understand these texts and see if they have any bearing on God's view of homosexuality.

Sodom and Gomorrah were two cities that were located south of the Dead Sea in the valley of the plain. The reason Sodom is listed first is because it was the larger of the two cities. The region has been studied by paleobotany and shown to have been very fruitful and abundant.<sup>5</sup> Strong agriculture led to the immense wealth, arrogance, complacency, inhospitality and immorality of the inhabitants of the two cities as well as other neighboring cities. In Genesis 18:17 the Lord asked whether he should "hide from Abraham" what He was about to do to these two cities. The Lord's reasoning was that He had promised Abraham that he would surely become a great and mighty nation and all the nations of the earth would be blessed in him. Since this may lead Abraham to think that God might bless without respect to justice He decided to show Abraham that blessing would only come upon the righteous and not the wicked. In 18:20 "The Lord said, 'The outcry of Sodom and Gomorrah is indeed great, and their sin is exceedingly grave.'" The text actually does not say that "the outcry" came from "Sodom and Gomorrah." The Hebrew indicates that "the outcry was *against* Sodom and Gomorrah" from those outside the city. We are to understand that the people of the region who had visited Sodom and Gomorrah had

suffered greatly at the hands of those in Sodom and Gomorrah and therefore cried out against them. The idea of 18:21 that the Lord would “go down...and see” if their sin was exceedingly grave is an anthropomorphism designed to accommodate to Abraham. God knew but to teach Abraham about His justice He took him to the edge of the Promised Land so he could see into the valley, possibly at or near Masada. From here Abraham asked the Lord a series of questions relative to God’s justice and eventually Abraham is satisfied. What is clear from Gen 18 is that these cities had abused many people and there was a great outcry against the cities.

In Gen 19:1 we read, “Now the two angels came to Sodom in the evening as Lot was sitting in the gate of Sodom.” Observe that the “two angels” are referred to in verse 5 by the men of the city as “men” and in verse 8 by Lot as “men.” In other words, the men of the city and Lot did not know that these were angels. To them they appeared as men and were human flesh even though we know they were angels. In the middle of verse 1 it says, “When Lot saw *them*, he rose to meet them and bowed down *with his* face to the ground.” Since Lot was sitting in the gate of Sodom we gather that he was a judge. As they entered he honored them by bowing down to them. In verse 2, “he said, “Now behold, my lords, please turn aside into your servant’s house, and spend the night, and wash your feet; then you may rise early and go on your way.” What Lot showed is hospitality to the two strangers. Then they responded, “No, but we shall spend the night in the square.”<sup>3</sup> Yet he urged them strongly, so they turned aside to him and entered his house; and he prepared a feast for them, and baked unleavened bread, and they ate.” In other words, Lot showed more hospitality. In verse 4, “Before they lay down, the men of the city, the men of Sodom, surrounded the house, both young and old, all the people from every quarter;<sup>5</sup> and they called to Lot and said to him, “Where are the men who came to you tonight? Bring them out to us that we may have relations with them.” Observe in verse 4 that the emphasis is on all the men of the city, both young men and old men, all the men from every quarter came and surrounded Lot’s house. While hyperbole may be employed it is clear that what takes place was thoroughly dominant in Sodom. In verse 5 we observed that all these men thought that the two angels were men and their desire is that Lot bring them out so that they “may have relations with them.” The Hebrew translated “have relations” is *yada*. It is commonly translated “to know.” SSRA sometimes argue that all they wanted to do was “get to know” them in a personal sense. However, this is unconvincing because in verses 9-10 they almost break down the door trying to get inside Lot’s house. It is well known that *yada* often refers to “having sexual relations.” In Gen 4:1 the same word is used to describe how Adam had relations with his wife Eve and she bore Cain. The kind of knowledge these men were seeking was sexual knowledge, they wanted to have intercourse with them. SSRA who admit that they wanted to have intercourse with them correctly argue that their intent was to violently rape them. This is clearly shown by verse 9 where one of the Sodomites said, “This one came in as an alien [Lot], and already he is acting like a judge; now we will treat you worse than them.” Clearly they intended to treat the visitors badly and so it is right to understand that their intent was to violently rape them. In verse 6, “But Lot went out to them at the doorway, and shut the door behind him,” in an attempt to protect the visitors. Verse 7, he “said, “Please, my brothers, do not act wickedly.” He certainly expected that they were going to do something wicked. He knew

these people and what they wanted. Verse 8, "Now behold, I have two daughters who have not had relations with man; please let me bring them out to you, and do to them whatever you like; only do nothing to these men, inasmuch as they have come under the shelter of my roof." Much is made of this verse by SSRA. They claim that Lot offered his virgin daughters to the men outside because he was following the ethics of honor-shame that are familiar to patriarchal cultures. Under the ethics of honor-shame it was more shameful for a man to be abused sexually by another man than for a woman to be abused sexually by a man. Hence Lot was following the ethics of patriarchal culture to protect the honor of his two male visitors. It is possible to conclude that Lot was following the honor-shame ethic of a patriarchal culture but that is not the only possibility. It is also possible that he is buying time knowing that they prefer to have sex with men even over virgin women. Men who are gay today describe their lust for the SS as a lust that is inflamed and a fire that cannot be quenched. That every man both young and old from every quarter of the city lined up to have sex with these two men shows that they were inflamed with lust for other men. When considered realistically, this is not how a sin pattern begins but where it ends. Obviously they had begun with lustful SS thoughts, then they began to have consensual SS with one another. After that became boring they began to fulfill their fantasies by abusing one another and finally by gang raping SS visitors of the city. It is possible that Lot knew that they would reject his daughters and was only trying to buy time. It is a telling note that his daughters had lived in the city all their life and were still virgins. To conquer another male sexually in patriarchal cultures is considered more valuable and honorable than to conquer a female. That very well could be the issue here. After Lot made the offer they responded in verse 9 saying, "Stand aside." In other words, they rejected Lot's offer of his daughters. Furthermore, they said, "This one came in as an alien, and already he is acting like a judge; now we will treat you worse than them. So they pressed hard against Lot and came near to break the door." When they were on the brink of breaking in "the men [angels] reached out their hands and brought Lot into the house with them, and shut the door.<sup>11</sup> They struck the men who were at the doorway of the house with blindness, both small and great, so that they wearied *themselves trying to find the doorway.*" Ultimately nobody had sex with anybody. It is because of this that some commentators say this passage has no bearing on the question of SSR. However, intent is clearly in view and the intent described here is wicked. What is in view as wicked is clearly a violent gang rape. Everyone agrees that this is sinful. The issue is whether this passage addresses or other possibly related passages address consensual, committed, SSR.

Turn to the fourth passage of interest, Ezek 16, to see how the word of the Lord came to Ezekiel regarding the abominations of Jerusalem. In this passage Jerusalem is compared to other sinful places, including Sodom and Gomorrah. In this passage the sins of Jerusalem are said to be greater than the sins of Sodom and Gomorrah. I mentioned in the text that Lot was hospitable and proponents of SSR take the fact that Lot was hospitable and contrast that with the rest of the men of the city who were not hospitable to conclude that the chief sin of Sodom and Gomorrah was being inhospitable. Being inhospitable is wicked and gang rape is an expression of that, but we are told that nothing directly touches on consensual, committed SSR. In Ezek 16:46 you see the first

mention of Sodom. It's a comparison of Jerusalem and Samaria to the north and Jerusalem and Sodom to the south. "Now your older sister is Samaria, who lives north of you with her daughters; and your younger sister, who lives south of you, is Sodom with her daughters. <sup>47</sup>"Yet you have not merely walked in their ways or done according to their abominations; but, as if that were too little, you acted more corruptly in all your conduct than they." Jerusalem went even further in their abominations than Sodom. Verse 48, "As I live," declares the Lord GOD, "Sodom, your sister and her daughters have not done as you and your daughters have done. <sup>49</sup>"Behold, this was the guilt of your sister Sodom:" and here's where we see the sins of Sodom, "she and her daughters had arrogance, abundant food and careless ease, but she did not help the poor and needy. <sup>50</sup>"Thus they were haughty and committed abominations before Me. Therefore I removed them when I saw *it*." The SSRA argument is essentially that "they had plenty" but "did not help the poor and needy." This is true. I readily admit that inhospitality was a sin of Sodom, a grievous one. But what we read here is that it started with "arrogance." The NT says that "arrogance is the root of all evil." Added to arrogance is the fact that they had "abundant food." Paleo botany has uncovered evidence that this region was very fruitful and abundant in agriculture. Added to abundant food was wealth that led to living with "careless ease." Because life was easy, they had plenty and yet "did not help the poor and needy." So being inhospitable is part of the sin of Sodom. But there is more because verse 50 comments, "Thus, they were haughty and committed abominations before Me." Here we see that their haughtiness or arrogance ultimately led to many abominations. The Hebrew word "abominations" means "corruptions, pollutions, debauchery." It is the same word used in Lev 18 and 20 of many deviant behaviors including incest, adultery, child sacrifice, bestiality, witchcraft, disrespecting parental authority and homosexuality. All of these are sinful and may well have been a part of the sins of Sodom.

Turn to the fifth passage that relates to Sodom and Gomorrah, in the NT, Jude 7. In Jude 3-4 he is warning the believers in Jerusalem that false teachers had crept into the congregation unnoticed and how important it was that they contend earnestly for the faith because the influence of false teachers is so corrupting. In Jude 5, 6 and 7 he uses a single sentence to list several OT examples of how ungodly persons, like leaven, corrupted the rest of the group, causing them to fall away and thus come under the judgment of God. For example, in Jude 5 God saved all the Israelites out of Egypt but after there were a group of ungodly Israelites who led the others astray so that they didn't trust God and consequently God destroyed them in the wilderness. In Jude 6 there were the angels who were influenced by Satan and thus fell from their original positions of rule and are therefore reserved or kept by God for final judgment. In Jude 7 we come to the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah that influenced the cities around them to fall into their gross sexual indulgences and were put on exhibit by their judgment as examples of the inescapability of eternal punishment. We want to look at what is described here as the cause for judgment. He begins in verse 7 by saying, "just as" using the adverbial  $\omega\varsigma$  to compare what they did with what the angels did. The comparison is to having left their original position or proper domain. Angels did not keep their original position and proper domain in heaven and neither did those of Sodom and Gomorrah and the cities around them. He then describes "Sodom and Gomorrah" influenced "the cities around them: as was

evidenced by the fact that “they in the same way as” the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah “indulged in gross immorality and went after strange flesh.” SSRA claim that the gross immorality is the men Sodom and Gomorrah going after nonhuman flesh, that is, angels.<sup>6</sup> However, this is not convincing for several reasons. First, because we noted in Gen 19 that as far as Lot and the men of the city were concerned, the two visitors were men, not angels. They did not know that they were angels. Certainly God would not hold them accountable for going after angel flesh when they thought they were going after human flesh. Second, Jude 7 condemns the cities around them for going after this same flesh, yet we have no indication that angels visited the other cities and the men of those cities tried to go after them. Third, if angel flesh were in view then the Greek would have likely used the word *αλλος* rather than *ετερος* since *αλλος* means “other of a different kind” referring to angel flesh whereas *ετερος* means “other of the same kind” referring to human flesh. Seeing this some SSRA claim that the “other of the same kind” were others of the opposite sex. However, this is not convincing because while fornication is wrong, the Greek word here translated as “indulged in gross immorality” is *εκπορνευσασαι* which is the intensive form of *πορνευω*, the normal word for “fornication” or “sexual immorality.” Whatever they were doing was beyond mere fornication. It was not simply heterosexual immorality. It was a gross debauchery. Homosexual immorality would fit the requirement of this word.

In conclusion, SSRA claim that the sin of Sodom is being inhospitable and attempting a homosexual gang rape. Therefore the sin of Sodom does not apply to modern committed, loving SSR. This is not convincing because a whole city of men do not wake up one day and try to go gang rape two SS visitors. The Bible teaches that there is a natural progression to sin; that it begins small and privately and gradually grows larger and becomes public. What happened in Sodom and Gomorrah and influenced the other cities around them was that they became arrogant against God, gained wealth and lived a life of careless ease, even to the point of not showing hospitality to visitors. With too much time on their hands they became bored and turned their thoughts to SS lust. This was then acted on consensually and then with their lusts inflamed they practiced it more and more with other local men until all the men were involved. Over time the novelty of SS with the local men wore off and they turned to abusing and raping SS visitors. This caused all around Sodom and Gomorrah to cry out against them. This is a huge lesson for any city or country, especially America to learn. When a people become arrogant and exalt themselves against God by kicking God out of the public marketplace of ideas, all kinds of debauchery will result. Arrogance is the root of all evil, all kinds of debauchery the end of it. Sodom and Gomorrah forever stands as the pre-eminent example of when a society has come to its end. Just around the corner is its desolation. This is why it is important to deal honestly with the text of Scripture on this issue and to carefully, kindly and compassionately share these texts with fellow believers who are SSRA or on the fence or don't really know or think it makes a difference.

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<sup>1</sup> This marring is seen in other ways in other people such as eyesight, bone structure, speech abilities, etc... All of us are marred and have a number of shortcomings. They result from the Fall. Though these are not always equally expressed among humans God has a purpose for them all (Exod 4:11-12).

<sup>2</sup> Included is an implicit condemnation of bestiality, a logical extension of SSR which is later explicitly condemned (Exod 22:19; Lev 18:23; 20:16; Deut 27:21).

<sup>3</sup> James Brownson, *Bible, Gender, Sexuality*, p 32-34.

<sup>4</sup> Kevin DeYoung, *What Does the Bible Really Teach About Homosexuality?*, p 32.

<sup>5</sup> *Bible and Spade*, Volume 12, Page 70.

<sup>6</sup> *The Queen James Bible*, p 8. [http://www.amazon.com/The-Queen-James-Bible/dp/0615724531#reader\\_0615724531](http://www.amazon.com/The-Queen-James-Bible/dp/0615724531#reader_0615724531)