

The Apostle Paul Condemned Homosexuality

Currently, the LGBTQ (lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer) community asserts forcefully that the Apostle Paul did not denounce homosexuality in his writings. In their minds, their interpretation of Paul's comments confirms their attempts to legitimize, even Biblically, homosexuality. Despite extraordinary efforts, their attempts fail.

Paul wrote three different passages in which he commented on homosexuality, a prominent practice in his day, contrary to the assertions of homosexuals. The following sections evaluate the LGBTQ opinions.

Romans 1.26-28

"For this cause God gave them up unto vile affections: for even their women did change the natural use into that which is against nature: And likewise also the men, leaving the natural use of the woman, burned in their lust one toward another; men with men working that which is unseemly, and receiving in themselves that recompence of their error which was meet. And even as they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, God gave them over to a reprobate mind, to do those things which are not convenient..."
(Romans 1.26-28)

To refute Paul's statements on homosexuality, the LGBTQ community bases their arguments on the meaning of the words "natural" and "unnatural." The gay society says that the word "natural" describes what comes naturally for a given person. Here, homosexuals assert their different orientation, same sex attraction, as their normal desire and behavior. Therefore, for a person with same sex attraction, heterosexual behavior turns into unnatural sexual practice. They conclude that when Paul condemned unnatural behavior, he endorsed homosexual desires and conduct.

In support of its position, the homosexual population fails to provide satisfactory textual, contextual, or linguistic evidence to authenticate it. They rely upon their interpretation of these words to explain Paul's comments. They eliminate what appears as Paul's obvious condemnation of homosexuality.

A plain reading of the text reveals the true meaning of the words "natural" and "unnatural." In verse 27, Paul described the unnatural exchange that men made when they abandoned the natural sexual intimacy between a man and woman and instead burned with lust for men. The word "likewise" links this description of homosexuality back to the exchange of the natural for the unnatural that women of that day practiced with other women. In both instances, it describes homosexuality as the unnatural activity contrary to nature. (1)

Natural sexuality expresses the created order that God established when he created man and woman, and thus sexual intimacy between a man and a woman. In fact, nowhere in Scripture does it describe homosexuality as

natural. God always describes same sex intimacy as unnatural and against his divinely established order.

Contrary to the LGBTQ community's assertions, the culture of Paul's day interpreted same sex relationships as "homosexual orientation" and did not condemn it, as God did. These relationships included those who believed what the same sex people of today call homosexual orientation. Some in that day chose homosexuality to express their love for others of the same sex. (2) In fact, Plato's *Symposium* prior to Paul discussed these beliefs of homosexuality(orientation and loving homosexual relationships). (3)

Further, the Stoic and Hellenistic Jewish traditions of Paul's era included definitions of natural and unnatural. They based their meanings upon the same ones expressed in God's created order. (4) When he created man and woman, he designed for them to fulfill his purpose for sexual intimacy together through heterosexual marriage.

Therefore, when Paul addressed homosexuality in this text, it included every expression of it in his culture, including but not limited to men with men, women with women, men with boys, and sexual orientation. To interpret otherwise twists Paul's intent and neglects the realities of culture at that time.

1 Corinthians 6.9-10 and 1 Timothy 1.9-10

"Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Be not deceived: neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind, Nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God. And such were some of you: but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God." (1 Corinthians 6:9-11)

"Knowing this, that the law is not made for a righteous man, but for the lawless and disobedient, for the ungodly and for sinners, for unholy and profane, for murderers of fathers and murderers of mothers, for manslayers, For whoremongers, for them that defile themselves with mankind, for men stealers, for liars, for perjured persons, and if there be any other thing that is contrary to sound doctrine..." (1 Timothy 1:9-10)

The LGBTQ community attacks these references from Paul's writings in a similar fashion as with the previous passage from Romans. They attempt to reinterpret the key words from these passages. In essence, it boils down to the interpretation of two Greek words translated "effeminate," "abusers," and "them that defile themselves with mankind."

Paul, they say, did not know about sexual orientation or inversion. Additionally, they attempt to distinguish homosexual acts from orientation, as if Paul condemned homosexual acts but not orientation. (5)

In writing these texts, Paul relied upon the LXX, the Greek translation of the Old Testament. He referenced Leviticus 18.22 and 20.13, which clearly addressed same sex activity and God's condemnation of it. In both passages from Paul's writings, he merged the Greek words employed in the LXX passages from Leviticus for homosexual behavior. (6) Therefore, Paul, again, as in Romans condemned homosexuality.

Contrary to the LGBTQ people, the records of nonBiblical writings prior to Paul confirm the presence of the full spectrum of homosexuality. This widespread behavior included transvestism, cross dressing, homosexual propensities and orientation, and love between same sex partners. This refutes the argument presented that Paul did not know of homosexual orientation as currently defended to justify it. (7)

Summary

In conclusion, the arguments against Paul's statements on homosexuality fail. They interpret Scripture inaccurately. They neglect or ignore the nonBiblical sources that describe the prevalence of homosexuality and the propensities of those who practiced it in Paul's day.

Paul condemned homosexuality without reservations. At the same time, he also reported the victories that some experienced who previously indulged in same sex relations. Some of the Christians in the Church at Corinth he described in the last part of the passage, verse 11:

"And such were some of you: but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God. "

Some found forgiveness and relief from their disobedience against God's law regarding homosexuality. The Holy Spirit convicted them of their sin and pointed them in faith to trust Jesus Christ to save them. In faithfulness to his promise, Jesus reconciled them to God who forgave them and accepted them. You may have already trusted in Christ and know of his saving power as these people did.

If you have not yet trusted him, trust him today. Trust his promise to accept all who come to him. May the Holy Spirit give you new life and bring you to faith upon Jesus Christ, God's gracious provision to reconcile to himself people like you and me. Only the Holy Spirit can enable you to turn from your sinful lifestyle and renew your life.

References

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06. Schreiner, Ibid.

07. DeYoung, James B. "The Source And NT Meaning Of ARSENOKOITAI, With Implications For Christian Ethics And Ministry." TMSJ 3/2 (Fall 1992); 191-215. Additional references on this issue: David F. Wright ("Homosexuals Or Prostitutes?"; *Vigillae Christianae* 38; 1984; 125-153, E. J. Brill, Leiden); Mark L. Strauss and Peter T. Vogt "A Biblical Perspective on Homosexuality"