

TRAINING FOR GUYS

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Archbishop urges Christians to ‘repent’ over ‘wicked’ attitude to homosexuality

The vast majority of people under 35 think that the Christian attitude to gay people is “wicked” and “incomprehensible”, the Archbishop of Canterbury has said.

The vast majority of readers of this are under 35. So let’s have a debate in the next few weeks and months. But not an uninformed debate, and let’s go slowly. If we jump straight to a place where we are talking about feelings, or people we know, without some groundwork we will get nowhere.

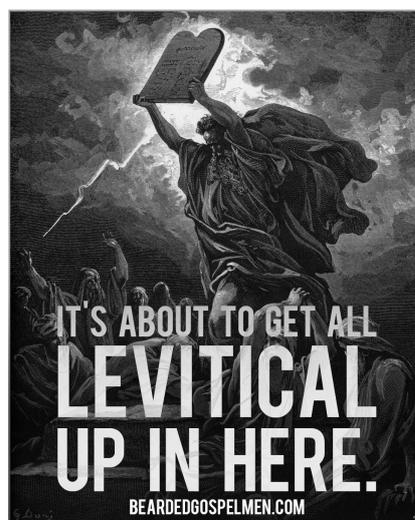
As Christians, the first place to go, prayerfully, is to Scripture. What does it say? We’ve all heard Fundamentalists quoting lines like *Thou shalt not lie with mankind, as with womankind: it is abomination* (Lev 18:22). They always use the King James to emphasise the sin, don’t they? You can almost hear the inflection rising as they slowly pronounce the word aBOMMMMMinAAAATion!

This week, let’s carefully consider the Bible references, see what their context is, and just reflect on them. Next week we’ll unpack it a bit more.

The first mention of homosexuality in the Bible is in **Genesis 19:4,5**. “*Before they had gone to bed, all the men from every part of the city of Sodom – both young and old – surrounded the house. They called to Lot, ‘Where are the men who came to you tonight? Bring them out to us so that we can have sex with them.’*” (NIV) This was just before Sodom was destroyed for its wickedness. Whilst homosexual rape is described, the passage would have been more shocking to its original readers because of the lack of hospitality, the brutal treatment of strangers and visitors, and the uncontrolled hedonism (pleasure and physical satisfaction) of the people of the city.

Whilst homosexual sex is involved, it is not ‘loving relationship, long term commitment’ but rape, domination and murder that is at the heart of it. For those sins, Sodom was destroyed. They are the same sins constantly referred to through the Bible as the ones that break God’s heart: injustice, lack of love, selfishness.

Now we come to Leviticus. There are two verses here.



Leviticus 18:22

"Do not have sexual relations with a man as one does with a woman; that is detestable." (NIV)

Leviticus 20:13

"If a man has sexual relations with a man as one does with a woman, both of them have done what is

detestable. They are to be put to death; their blood will be on their own heads" (NIV)

"If a man lies with a male as if he were a woman, both men have committed an offence (something perverse, unnatural, abhorrent, and detestable); they shall surely be put to death; their blood shall be upon them." (Amplified)

These are some of the most quoted verses on the subject. It brings up questions... why do we insist on these verses of Leviticus but not bother about 20:9, for example, which says that *if a man curses his father or mother he must be put to death* or 19:19 which says *do not wear clothing woven of two kinds of material* (both NIV). Should we obey everything in Leviticus, or none of it? Or certain bits?

I'll just add here that the context of Leviticus is that it was to set the people of Israel apart from the nations around them. *The Lord said to Moses, 'Speak to the Israelites and say to them: "I am the Lord your God. You must not do as they do in Egypt, where you used to live, and you must not do as they do in the land of Canaan, where I am bringing you. Do not follow their practices. You must obey my laws and be careful to follow my decrees. I am the Lord your God. Keep my decrees and laws, for the person who obeys them will live by them. I am the Lord. (18:1-5, NIV)*

WEEDS

This might be a good issue for me to 'come out'.

I believe God created the World in 6 days and that that took place less than ten thousand years ago.

In the past I have tried to reconcile long ages, slow evolution (guided by God, of course), with the Bible account; but I have found that the only way to do that is to stretch the Bible, or twist it. In the end I have to reject much of scripture to continue to believe in evolution.

On the other hand, believing in a relatively recent Creation does not require twisting or rejection of any observed facts of nature, geology or other observations.

Evolution (godless, random, unplanned) is spoken of on the media, in textbooks and so forth as proven fact. But it is, infact, a religion requiring a belief system and faith to accept it fully. It is also full of contradictions.

For instance, recently watching two BBC science programmes I heard that mountain ranges on earth such as the Himalayas are formed over aeons as huge forces fold the land as continents collide, etc. But then there was a programme about Mercury, where it was said that a meteor collision on the planet sends shock waves through the globe and, when they meet minutes later on the opposite side of the planet huge mountains 'higher than Everest' are formed instantaneously.

The heart of evolution is a desire to prove that Man does not have a Creator and does not have to be accountable. It is the same philosophy that brought people in Genesis 11 to build a Tower at Babel.

If you have never looked into Creationism as a rational scientific way of viewing the universe, I recommend Creation Ministries International (www.creation.com) as a good starting place.

At the very least, be aware that the heart of evolution is a belief that there is no God.

Bible Study Series

**We continue our series on
Ephesians ch 2:11-22
Being in Covenant, being brought near to
God by the Blood of Christ**

Read the passage, and go to
www.tfgministries.org.uk/podcasts to join in.

Now we come to **Judges 19:16-24**

That evening an old man from the hill country of Ephraim, who was living in Gibeah ..., came in from his work in the fields. When he looked and saw the traveller in the city square, the old man asked, 'Where are you going? Where did you come from?' He answered, 'We are on our way from Bethlehem in Judah to a remote area in the hill country of Ephraim where I live. I have been to Bethlehem in Judah and now I am going to the house of the Lord. No one has taken me in for the night. We have both straw and fodder for our donkeys and bread and wine for ourselves your servants ..We don't need anything.'

'You are welcome at my house,' the old man said. 'Let me supply whatever you need. Only don't spend the night in the square.' So he took him into his house and fed his donkeys. After they had washed their feet, they had something to eat and drink.

While they were enjoying themselves, some of the wicked men of the city surrounded the house. Pounding on the door, they shouted to the old man who owned the house, 'Bring out the man who came to your house so we can have sex with him.' The owner of the house went outside and said to them, 'No, my friends, don't be so vile. Since this man is my guest, don't do this outrageous thing. Look, here is my virgin daughter, and his concubine. I will bring them out to you now, and you can use them and do to them whatever you wish. But as for this man, don't do such an outrageous thing.' But the men would not listen to him.(NIV)

Now both what the men of the city wanted to do, and the compromise solution of the man sound awful to us. It's a story of sin and depravity. But again it is not essentially a story condemning homosexuality but of unrestrained sin. Over and over again in Judges we read *In those days Israel had no king; everyone did as they saw fit.(21:25, NIV)*

So, we come to Kings. Three verses which show that, once again, homosexual activity of a sort is occurring in Israel, despite the Leviticus law read earlier:

1 Kings 14:24

And there were also male cult prostitutes in the land. They did according to all the abominations of the nations that the LORD drove out before the people of Israel. (ESV)

1 Kings 15:12

He put away the male cult prostitutes out of the land and removed all the idols that his fathers had made. (ESV)

2 Kings 23:7

He also tore down the living quarters of the male and female shrine prostitutes that were inside the Temple of the LORD, where the women wove coverings for the Asherah pole. (NLT)



²⁸ Furthermore, just as they did not think it worth while to retain the knowledge of God, so God gave them over to a depraved mind, so that they do what ought not to be done. ²⁹ They have become filled with every kind of wickedness, evil, greed and depravity. They are full of envy, murder, strife, deceit and malice. They are gossips, ³⁰ slanderers, God-haters, insolent, arrogant and boastful; they invent ways of doing evil; they disobey their parents; ³¹ they have no understanding, no fidelity, no love, no mercy. ³² Although they know God's righteous decree that those who do such things deserve death, they not only continue to do these very things but also approve of those who practise them. (NIV)

The context in these verses is false worship. They were worshipping the gods of the nations around them, and not separating themselves for true worship of the Lord. The worship rituals of the surrounding nations involved sex with prostitutes - male and female.

Notice again that the heart of this passage is about *worship*. It's about relationship between people and God, and the issue Paul is addressing is that people suppress the truth about God and worship

So now we move on to the New Testament.

Romans 1:18-32

The wrath of God is being revealed from heaven against all the godlessness and wickedness of people, who suppress the truth by their wickedness, ¹⁹ since what may be known about God is plain to them, because God has made it plain to them. ²⁰ For since the creation of the world God's invisible qualities – his eternal power and divine nature – have been clearly seen, being understood from what has been made, so that people are without excuse.

²¹ For although they knew God, they neither glorified him as God nor gave thanks to him, but their thinking became futile and their foolish hearts were darkened. ²² Although they claimed to be wise, they became fools ²³ and exchanged the glory of the immortal God for images made to look like a mortal human being and birds and animals and reptiles.

²⁴ Therefore God gave them over in the sinful desires of their hearts to sexual impurity for the degrading of their bodies with one another.

²⁵ They exchanged the truth about God for a lie, and worshipped and served created things rather than the Creator – who is for ever praised. Amen.

²⁶ Because of this, God gave them over to shameful lusts. Even their women exchanged natural sexual relations for unnatural ones. ²⁷ In the same way the men also abandoned natural relations with women and were inflamed with lust for one another. Men committed shameful acts with other men, and received in themselves the due penalty for their error.



parts of his creation rather than God. Celebrity Culture, maybe. The context of this passage is also that it is addressed to *Christians, the Church*. "To all in Rome who are loved by God and called to be his holy people" (v5, NIV). It is addressed to God's people living in the godless world.

1 Corinthians 6:9-11

do you not know that wrongdoers will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived: neither the sexually immoral nor idolaters nor adulterers nor men who have sex with men ¹⁰ nor thieves nor the greedy nor drunkards nor slanderers nor swindlers will inherit the kingdom of God. ¹¹ And that is what some of you were. But you were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God. (NIV)

The context here is interesting. It is about suing other Christians. Paul is saying that if we take a brother/sister to court we are asking people who will not inherit the Kingdom of Heaven to judge them...and yet scripture teaches that the One Who will judge the world is the One Who is in us! Corinthians was written to *the church of God in Corinth, to those sanctified in Christ Jesus and called to be his holy people, together with all those everywhere who call on the name of our Lord Jesus Christ (1:2, NIV)*

1 Timothy 1:8-10

We know that the law is good if one uses it properly. ⁹ We also know that the law is made not for the righteous but for lawbreakers and rebels, the ungodly and sinful, the unholy and irreligious, for those who kill their fathers or mothers, for murderers, ¹⁰ for the sexually immoral, for those practising homosexuality, for slave traders and liars and perjurers – and for whatever else is contrary to the sound doctrine (NIV)



Paul is warning Timothy about false teachers who do not understand the Law (+OT Scriptures) and who misuse it. The letter is addressed to one person, who is a disciple of Jesus.

The final place where homosexuality is specifically mentioned in scripture is

Jude 7

And don't forget Sodom and Gomorrah and their neighbouring towns, which were

filled with immorality and every kind of sexual perversion. Those cities were destroyed by fire and serve as a warning of the eternal fire of God's judgment. (NIV)

Jude wrote his letter *To those who have been called, who are loved in God the Father and kept for Jesus Christ (v1)*. The context is again a warning to beware of false teachers.

There you have all the verses (I think!) in Scripture which directly mention homosexual activity. As I say, I want to take this slowly so I am not going any further this week. Pray over them, ask God to speak to you. In the following weeks we will do something like:

- 1/ Further contextualising these verses in the light of the full Bible and also the books they are in with a view to discovering what the Bible does teach
- 2/ In the light of that, considering what our response might be
- 3/ A consideration of 'Gay marriage' as now defined by the UK Parliament

Whether that will all happen in three weeks or whether it will take longer I don't know... watch this space!...and, *please*, make your contributions based on what has so far been covered...hold back on application, policy, etc until we get there together!

