

## Some Things Never Change

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Things that happen with regularity in America today were unheard of a few generations ago, and the current homosexual movement is certainly toward the top of this glaring list of the previously unheard. Many issues are involved in the present debate over the acceptance of homosexuality as an “alternative lifestyle.” Some in genetics say that homosexuality is biologically determined. Some in religion say that the practice of homosexuality is always wrong. Others, trying to synthesize biology with religion, advocate the acceptance of homosexuality as long as the relationships involved are characterized by “fidelity, commitment, mutuality, and generativity” (Lamacchia 146).

If issues of sexuality are matters that fall under the realm of morality, they must be dealt with according to some moral standard. However, if matters of sexuality fall under the realm of biology, they must be studied in the light of science. If it is the case that the practice of homosexuality can be justified on the basis of biology, then the accusations of “homophobia” to those who believe otherwise are somewhat substantiated. On the other hand, if it is the case that the practice of homosexuality violates an objective standard of morality, then the practice of homosexuality is objectively sinful. Therefore, no accountable person who continues in such practice can be in fellowship with God. The question then concerning homosexuality is “homophobia or homo-*hamartia*”? (where *hamartia* is the transliterated New Testament word for “sin.”)

Since other articles in this issue deal with the biological side of homosexuality, this article will consider the subject from a Biblical perspective. It is important to note from the beginning that the practice of homosexuality is condemned in all three Biblical dispensations (Patriarchal, Mosaic, and Christian). Thus even before examination, this subject, because of its prohibition in each dispensation, is something that always has been and always will be morally wrong.

### ***Homosexual Practice Condemned in the Patriarchal Age***

Consider the obvious teachings in Genesis 19:4-5. The verdict on Sodom’s warped view

of sexuality was given long before one comes to the details of what transpired at Lot's house (Genesis 13:13; 18:20). At least part of their wickedness had to do with homosexual practices. The men of Sodom wanted to “know” the messengers that Lot protected in his house. Although these messengers were angels, they appeared in the form of men; therefore one cannot say that their sin was wanting to “know” angels.

The focus of this passage regarding homosexuality is on the word *know*. While it is true that the Hebrew word for *know* means “knowledge or acquaintance” in the majority of occurrences, it is the context, not the majority of occurrences, that determines the meaning of a word in a particular setting. In the context of Genesis 19, the word *know* has reference to carnal and/or sexual knowledge (Genesis 19:8, cf. Judges 19:22-23 where “know” [KJV] is also used in such fashion). The wickedness of Sodom was such that it demanded divine destruction, and included in that wickedness, as the text shows, was the practice of homosexuality.

However, not all would agree that the sin of Sodom was homosexuality. According to some, the destruction of Sodom was not a judgment on homosexual acts but a judgment on the sin of inhospitality to strangers. It is further claimed that the Sodomites did not want to “engage in homosexual acts as such, but to employ this heinous cultural practice as a way of showing inhospitality to the strangers Lot was harboring” (Grenz 203).

In response to these claims, one must consult the God-inspired commentary on this event in Sodom. Jude 7 sets Sodom and Gomorrah as examples that punishment is certain to the ungodly (cf. Jude 4). The ungodliness of Sodom was that they gave themselves over to fornication and went after “strange flesh.” “Giving themselves over to fornication” (KJV) is from a word (*ekporneuo*) that may be defined as indulging in immorality, or “giving themselves up utterly” to fornication (Vincent 714). Furthermore, Jude says that the Sodomites went after “strange flesh,” which is descriptive of “horrible licentiousness, not simply with women not their wives or in other nations, but even unnatural uses for which the very word ‘sodomy’ is used” (Robertson 189). Since the context of Genesis 19 reveals that Sodom’s perversion was sexual, and since the origin and usage of the word *sodomy*, comes from Sodom and denotes homosexual perversion, it follows that the sin of Sodom was not inhospitality, but the practice of homosexuality.

Another passage that deals with homosexual practice outside of the Law of Moses, yet

before the Christian dispensation is Romans 1:26-27. One reason why God gave these people up was because “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” (Romans 1:27, KJV). This description condemns both male and female homosexual practices. Note that Paul says they shall receive the “recompense of their error.” The attempt to make this a mere cultural condemnation involves a serious twisting of the Scripture.

### ***Homosexual Practice Condemned in the Mosaic Age***

The practice of homosexuality is also condemned in the Mosaic dispensation. “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” (Leviticus 20:13, KJV). This is a law against the practice of homosexuality that is an absolute prohibition. The context deals with the sexual practices of Israel’s future neighbors. Homosexuality, therefore, is not signaled out but is a component part of the morality that must not characterize the chosen people of God. One must note that this prohibition is not merely a result of so-called “homophobia,” but it is the prohibition of an approach to sexuality that “denies any boundaries in the creation order and uses sex as a vehicle to make that statement” (Keyser 52). It should be of no surprise then that this practice is an “abomination” to the Lord (Leviticus 18:22) .

However, some object that the “holiness code” of Leviticus objectively prohibits the practice of homosexuality. Some say that these prohibitions were given only because Israel was a “beleaguered, patriarchal culture struggling for survival” in a hostile environment concerned with maintaining their identity (Lamacchia 144). The implication is that the practice of homosexuality is not intrinsically wrong, but it is only consequentially wrong because Israel would then be like the surrounding nations. Therefore, it is alleged that contemporary homosexual practices are not to be compared with homosexual practices during that time. If such were true, however, then the same would be true of adultery, incest, and bestiality, which are mentioned in the same context. Indeed, such an argument is not supported by the context of Leviticus or, for that matter, the total teaching of the Bible!

### ***Homosexual Practice Condemned in the New Testament Age***

In the New Testament, it must be realized that any prohibition against “fornication” is a prohibition against homosexual practice (Acts 15:20, 1 Corinthians 6:18, Galatians 5:19, et al.). “Fornication” (from *pornea*) is defined as “prostitution, unchastity, fornication of every kind of unlawful sexual intercourse [interaction]” (Bauer 693). Since sexual relationships are God’s will exclusively for a husband and wife (Matthew 19:3-9, Mark 10:6-9, et al.), homosexual practice falls under the category of “unlawful sexual intercourse.” All homosexual acts fail to fulfill the purposes for which God created sexual relationships.

Among the list of those who cannot inherit the kingdom of God are the “effeminate” and the “abusers of themselves with mankind” (1 Corinthians 6:9-11). Although “effeminate” [homosexuals, NKJV] (from *malakos*) literally means “soft,” it is here used to refer to “men and boys who allow themselves to be misused homosexually” (Bauer 488). The term “abusers of themselves with mankind” [sodomites, NKJV] (from *arsenokoites*) refers to “a male who practices homosexuality, pederast, sodomite” (Bauer 109). Therefore, it is obvious that no accountable person who continues to practice homosexuality can inherit the kingdom of God.

However, some would say that all of the New Testament prohibitions are merely because of culture rather than objective moral principles (Lamacchia 145). In response to this erroneous claim, one must recognize that sexual function is grounded in creation principles and not in cultural practices (Genesis 2:24, cf. Matthew 19:3-9). Furthermore, Paul condemned the practice of both male and female homosexuality, citing that it “changed the natural use into that which is against nature” (Romans 1:26-27). “Natural” (from *physikos*) and “nature” (from *physis*) both refer to that which is “in accordance with nature...as the regular natural order” (Bauer 869). Since God is the author of the entire “natural order” (Colossians 1:16-17), and since He wills that sexual relationships be conducted within a monogamous heterosexual marriage (Matthew 19:3-9, et al.), it follows that the practice of homosexuality goes against the will of God and is therefore sinful.

### ***Conclusion***

Given the light of Biblical evidence, the cries of “homophobia” are unjustified. Those who oppose homosexuality based on the total teaching of the Bible are not “phobic” in the way the gay-rights agenda portrays them. The Christian must recognize that the practice of

homosexuality is sin, despite many secular attitudes to the contrary (cf. Jeremiah 10:23, Proverbs 14:12). Therefore, the continued practice of homosexuality will lead to eternal destruction (Galatians 5:19-21, Revelation 21:8).

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