

## Session 5 – What Does the Bible Say? (Part 2)

The progressive argument (not the historical argument that we hold to) says that homosexuality is not condemned under the new covenant because the Old Testament law is irrelevant, and because Jesus never addressed the issue. We will address these and other issues in today's lecture.

### ***1. Is Old Testament law irrelevant?***

The New Testament authors quote the Old Testament. When they thought of Scripture, they didn't think New Testament (since it was not formalized yet); they thought of the Old Testament. When Paul says "All Scripture is God-breathed" (2 Tim. 3:16), his mindset would have certainly been thinking of the OT. So if the early Church, and especially Jesus, did not disregard the OT, we should not either.

That being said, there are many things in the OT that we do not practice anymore in the New Covenant. Should homosexuality be treated the same as eating pork and sewing different types of clothing together? This is the difference between Levitical/ceremonial laws, dietary/cleanliness laws and moral laws.

#### **Matthew 5:17**

*Do not think that I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I have not come to abolish them but to fulfill them.*

Jesus did not consider the law useless. He did, however, treat the laws differently. Jesus did not require that the ceremonial and dietary laws be followed but the moral laws were to be maintained.

### ***2. How is homosexuality different than eating pork or sewing two patches of clothing together?***

#### **Leviticus 18:22**

*Do not have sexual relations with a man as one does with a woman; that is detestable.*

Jesus makes it quite clear in the NT that under the New Covenant we do not have to follow the same dietary or ritualistic laws of the Israelites, when in Mark 7 He states that things like washing cups are unimportant or in Acts 10 when he calls previously unclean animals acceptable. But Jesus never did that with moral sins, instead He upped the ante by saying the heart mattered just as much as the action (adultery=lust).

Another indication is to read the command against homosexuality in context. It is not surrounded by commands against eating shellfish but against other morally sinful acts. The chapter starts out by saying that "you should not do as they do in the land of Egypt, where you lived, and you shall not do as they did in the land of Canaan." So are these laws going to be just for Israel then? Let's look further.

The next 13 verses deal with different forms of incest, saying things like “do not have sexual relations with your sister, or your father’s sister, or your daughter-in-law.” It basically gives a thorough list of incest acts that are unlawful. Next, the chapter speaks commands not to kill your children in idol sacrifices and then we finally come to verse 22 where it condemns homosexuality. Bottom line is this: If you are to say that homosexuality was only culturally unclean or taboo and its okay now, then you would have to say the same thing about having sex with your mother, your brother, or your dog, because those are the other sins that are condemned right along with homosexuality.

Furthermore, some argue that the OT laws were for Israel only and so they don’t apply to us today. But God draws a line between the dietary laws and the moral laws based on how He treats the Israelites compared to the other nations of the world. God never once condemns another nation for eating pork or for not properly evaluating diseases.

### **Leviticus 18:24-27**

*“Do not defile yourselves in any of these ways, because this is how the nations that I am going to drive out before you became defiled. Even the land was defiled; so I punished it for its sin, and the land vomited out its inhabitants. But you must keep my decrees and my laws. The native-born and the foreigners residing among you must not do any of these detestable things, for all these things were done by the people who lived in the land before you, and the land became defiled. And if you defile the land, it will vomit you out as it vomited out the nations that were before you.”*

Whenever the OT speaks against non-Jewish nations, it never condemns them for violating dietary laws, it condemns them for violating moral laws. When Jonah and Amos and Zephaniah speak against Gentile kingdoms, they are condemned by God for violating his moral law. God never held them to the dietary or ritualistic laws, but He did hold them, as He does to us to this day, to the moral laws, which certainly includes homosexuality.

### **3. Did Jesus support homosexuality?**

#### **Luke 7:1-10**

*When Jesus had finished saying all this to the people who were listening, he entered Capernaum. 2 There a centurion’s servant, whom his master valued highly, was sick and about to die. 3 The centurion heard of Jesus and sent some elders of the Jews to him, asking him to come and heal his servant. 4 When they came to Jesus, they pleaded earnestly with him, “This man deserves to have you do this, 5 because he loves our nation and has built our synagogue.” 6 So Jesus went with them. He was not far from the house when the centurion sent friends to say to him: “Lord, don’t trouble yourself, for I do not deserve to have you come under my roof. 7 That is why I did not even consider myself worthy to come to you. But say the word, and my servant will be healed. 8 For I myself am a man under authority, with soldiers under me. I tell this one, ‘Go,’ and he goes; and that one, ‘Come,’ and he comes. I say to my servant, ‘Do this,’ and he does it.” 9 When Jesus heard this, he was amazed at him, and turning to the crowd following him, he said, “I tell you, I have not found such great faith even in Israel.” 10 Then the men who had been sent returned to the house and found the servant well*

In this story, some argue that the Roman centurion had a homosexual relationship with his boy servant and begged Jesus to heal him so that their relationship could continue. They consider this to be a beautiful passage of scripture of Jesus affirming the homosexual relationship of a Roman centurion with his servant boy. The reason why they believe this has to do with the Greek word for servant, *pais*. This word has a few different meanings in the Greek, such as son, boy, servant, or in some cases could mean a servant who was his master's male lover.

Did Jesus really heal this servant to help a homosexual relationship? Was He affirming homosexuality? And yet, not one of the many thousands of commentators and scholars of the Gospels from the 1<sup>st</sup> through the 20<sup>th</sup> centuries ever dreamt up this interpretation before the gay "Christian" movement. If this was an acceptable interpretation, you would think someone would have suggested it before the last 100 years. But what is happening here is that people are rewriting the scriptures through the lens of their sexuality instead of letting the Word of God influence their lifestyle.

What is equally interesting about this passage is the fact that when you look at other places in the New Testament where the word *pais* is used, not one of them comes close to inferring anything about a homosexual relationship. Let me go through a list of a few of them:

- In Matthew 2:26, the word refers to the baby boys in Bethlehem that Herod killed.
- In Matthew 12:18, the word refers to God calling Jesus "my servant."
- In Matthew 17:18, the word refers to a man's son who Jesus healed.
- In Matthew 21:15, it refers to children praising God in the temple.
- In Luke 12:45, it refers to a Jewish man's servant.
- In Acts 20:12, it refers to Eutychus, the young man whom Paul raised from the dead

No other passage in all of Scripture ever interprets this word in a homosexual context but it is used to describe a servant on numerous occasions. Furthermore, earlier in the story Luke uses the Greek word "doulos" to describe the servant, which is the word for slave or servant. Luke uses "doulos" and "pais" interchangeably and no argument is ever made in favor of "doulos" being a homosexual title.

It is incredibly important to note that no commentator for nearly 2,000 years came up with this interpretation of the Scriptures. Is that because none of them had a real understanding of the Greek language to draw this out of the passage? Hardly. The people who would have understood this the best would have been the people who lived in that day and interpreted the meaning of the text, and not one of those ancient commentators came up with this conclusion. Whenever someone comes up with a new theology that no theologians for centuries have ever come up with, it is pretty safe to say that it is not a true revelation of scripture, but rather something quite different (Galatians 1:6-10).

#### ***4. Did Jesus ever mention homosexuality? Is His silence approval?***

The same group of liberal theologians who want to use the centurion and his servant as a defense for homosexuality then like to argue the exact opposite, "Well Jesus never spoke against homosexuality. If He thought it was a sin and important to point out as such, don't you think He

would have mentioned it at least once?” They believe Jesus made an argument in favor of homosexuality based on silence. Let me ask you, have you ever heard a sermon focused on rape being a sin? Or arson? You probably have not because it’s so obvious to the people around you that those are sins it goes without mentioning. You would never say, “I’ve never heard Pastor Bruce preach against pedophilia so he must be in favor of it.” This is foolishness. The sin is so vile that silence on the matter should not be interpreted as support but rather so obvious that Jesus opposed it, it goes without saying.

Additionally, while Jesus doesn’t speak against homosexuality explicitly, He does speak against the broader subject of sexual immorality (which includes homosexuality) and does speak in favor of traditional marriage (and His marriage references only ever include one man and one woman in Matthew 19:3-12). Whenever Jesus spoke about marriage, He always used a heterosexual marriage and used the Genesis account as the example for marriage. This is not because homosexuality was foreign at this time. In fact, in the Roman Empire, homosexuality was more prevalent than it was in our culture today.

For those arguing from the position of silence, Jesus never spoke against bestiality or incest, does that mean that he condones those sins also? And is Jesus not part of the Trinity? So when God the Father speaks in the OT, is that not Jesus also speaking (John 1:1)? Lastly, how hypocritical for the same people to use a story like the Centurion’s Servant to support their position, to then argue that Jesus never spoke about homosexuality—they can’t have it both ways. Jesus’ ministry was not limited to what is written in Scripture.

### **John 21:25**

*Jesus did many other things as well. If every one of them were written down, I suppose that even the whole world would not have room for the books that would be written.*

### ***5. How is homosexuality different than slavery or male chauvinism?***

Many compare homosexuality to slavery. They say that just as the church, in the past, misused the Bible to justify and even sanction slavery, segregation, and the oppression of women, it continues to misuse the Bible to justify and sanction anti-homosexual prejudice. Let me ask you, does the Bible ever speak positively about slaves, slavery and slave/master relationships? Yes. Eleazer was a servant, but Abraham trusted him as a son. Onesimus was spoken of as a great man of God, and Paul didn’t condemn Philemon for being a master or owning a slave. And the comments about slaves and masters in Ephesians 6 shows a positive relationship, nothing like the African-American slavery of the 18<sup>th</sup>-19<sup>th</sup> centuries.

Does the Bible speak positively about women? Absolutely! Look at the many great women of God in Scripture! But show me, where does the Bible ever once describe homosexuality as good, acceptable or anything other than a clear-cut sin? It doesn’t. Whenever the Bible speaks about homosexuality it does so in a clear, negative way.

Furthermore, the color of your skin and the gender that you are born, are quite contrary to homosexuality. The Civil Rights Code have included age, gender and race. Why? Because these are qualities of a person which cannot be changed (except, in recent times in the case of gender,

by radical surgery). Sexual Orientation is not in this category, as history is replete with examples to the present time of people who have made a choice to change their behavior resulting from their sexual desires. Further to this, characteristics defined by corresponding behaviors have also not been protected as Civil Rights. Why? Because at some level, behaviors always involve a choice, to act on impulses or not. To begin protecting characteristics of people that are defined by behaviors, rather than by innate qualities that cannot be altered, opens a Pandora's Box that will legitimize any number of hurtful behaviors.

What is unequivocally clear from Genesis to Revelation is that homosexuality (and all forms of sexual immorality) is a sin. Moses said it. Paul said it. Jesus said it. There isn't a shred of evidence to suggest otherwise in Scripture. If you want to argue that homosexuality is not a sin, you will have to reject the Bible fully and completely to do so. God's Word is our final authority, and God has stated His will in His Word that homosexuality is a sin; let no one convince you otherwise.