

Does the Bible Call Homosexual Behavior Sin?

Dr. John Ankerberg, Dr. John Weldon

Dr. John Ankerberg: I'd like to talk a little bit about the fact of the gay community using some of the Bible verses against the traditional view of homosexuality and its condemnation in the Scripture. Dr. Weldon, let's start with the first one, Sodom and Gomorrah. Genesis 18:20 says, "And the Lord said, 'Because the cry of Sodom and Gomorrah is great, and because their sin is very grievous,'" God says that He will condemn them. In Genesis 19:5 concerning the story where Lot meets the men and it says, "And they called unto Lot and said unto him, [talking about the men of Sodom and Gomorrah] 'Where are the men which came in to thee this night? [Talking about the two angels that had come to rescue Lot.]" The men of Sodom and Gomorrah said, "'Bring them out unto us that we may know them.' And Lot went out at the door unto them and shut the door after him, and said, 'I pray you, brethren, do not so wickedly,'" or "don't do this wicked thing."

What the gay community is saying is that God is condemning this city because of its inhospitality to strangers not that it's condemning homosexuality. And secondly, that the word *yada* — to know — is not talking about sexual intercourse, knowing in a sexual way, but it's talking about just acquaintance. And therefore, Christians have misinterpreted this down through the ages and we need to reinterpret it today. What would you say to that?

Dr. John Weldon: John, the teaching here is very clear. It is a condemnation of homosexuality. Not only has this been the historic viewpoint of Jewish tradition and Christian tradition, it is the unanimous viewpoint of all commentators with the exception of one or two. The word *yada* is used eleven or twelve times in Genesis and in ten of those instances it clearly refers to sexual activity. So the word in this context means sexual intercourse.

Secondly, Lot's response is out of character if the townspeople simply want to become acquainted with the strangers. He says in verse 7, "Please, my brothers do not act wickedly." Now, that's not the kind of response you would expect from people who simply want to get to know or become better acquainted with other people.

Ankerberg: All right.

Weldon: In addition, 2 Peter 2:7-10 specifically states that the sin of Sodom referred to "the sensual conduct of unprincipled men." And Jude 7 says that they indulged in gross immorality and went after "strange flesh". So other Scripture also clearly teaches that this is referring to sexual immorality.

Ankerberg: What would you say to those who say, "But yes, Jude and Peter got those remarks out of the popular writings of the day not from historical information?"

Weldon: Well, Jude and 2 Peter were inspired by the Spirit of God. The entire Bible is the Word of God and it is profitable for reproof, correction, training, etc. [2 Tim. 3:16]. It's an irrel-

evant argument.

Ankerberg: Yeah. And even if they had taken it from the popular sources, that was the standard Jewish interpretation of Sodom and Gomorrah. And they were writing not in a poetic or fictional fashion; they were talking didactically so that it is teaching in from the apostles.

Another passage of Scripture is Leviticus 18:22 and Leviticus 20:13 which says, “If a man also lies with a man [kind] as he lies with a woman, both of them have committed an abomination: they shall surely be put to death, and their blood shall be upon them.” Now the standard interpretation from the gay community is that this condemnation actually is a condemnation of the fertility rights and the temple prostitution of the Canaanites and therefore, it’s not talking about homosexuality per se, but the practices of another nation. What do you say about that?

Weldon: Well, even your liberal theologians such as Derrick Bailey and Bishop John Spong admit that this refers to homosexuality per se. In addition, the entire context of Chapter 18 is referring to various kinds of sexual immorality. In verse 20 it’s referring to adultery. In verse 21 it’s referring to human sacrifice. In verse 22 it refers to homosexuality and verse 23 it refers to sex with animals—bestiality. These are things that God says to stay away from in the first four verses of chapter 18. He says, “Do not do any of these...,” and in the last five verses of this chapter no less than nine times does He call these kinds of behaviors abominable and something that is sin and not to be practiced.

Ankerberg: What would you say to somebody who says this is part of the holiness code of the Old Testament and not for us today?

Weldon: There is no indication in the chapter that this is restricted to an ancient culture. As a matter of fact, if we throw out the verses on homosexuality, we have to throw out the verses that condemn adultery, and bestiality, and making human sacrifice and other things as well.

Ankerberg: Plus we’ll see in just a moment that they are reiterated again in the New Testament.

Weldon: Exactly.

Ankerberg: Let’s go into the New Testament. Paul, the apostle, writing in the book of Romans says in verse 26 of Chapter 1, “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. [So here you have, it seems, a condemnation of lesbianism.] 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 recompense 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.”

Now those would seem to be straight out words against homosexuality. How has that changed today?

Weldon: The argument of the critics and gay theology here is that Paul is really not condemning homosexuality per se. They believe that he is condemning the ancient practice of pederasty, the Greek practice of a homosexual man in relations with a young boy. Or that Paul is really condemning **heterosexuals** who practice homosexual acts—which is something unnatural for them, but it is not something unnatural for homosexuals.

Paul very clearly is condemning something that is against nature and he doesn’t even mention the Greek practice of pederasty. He doesn’t even mention that he’s condemning heterosexual behavior here. It is clearly a condemnation of homosexual activity.

Ankerberg: Dr. Weldon, the final one that is at stake here is 1 Corinthians 6:9-10: “Do not be deceived: Neither the sexually immoral nor idolaters nor adulterers nor male prostitutes nor homosexual offenders nor thieves nor the greedy nor drunkards nor slanderers nor swindlers will inherit the kingdom of God.”

Weldon: The critics attempt to teach that this is referring to exclusively practices of the ancient world or that there has been mistranslation here and that the first word relating to homosexuality, *malakos*, just means a general moral weakness; and the second word is exclusively restricted to male prostitutes and has no relevancy to modern homosexual relationships.

The problem with that is that the words themselves are dealing with modern homosexual relationships. *Malakos* literally means “soft to the touch” and it was used in Greek culture metaphorically for the homosexual who took the passive role in the homosexual act.

Ankerberg: Yeah. That’s translated “effeminate” in the King James.

Weldon: Right, and in other translations. The second word there comes from two Greek words: *arsen* which means “male” and *koitai* which means “bed” and it literally means “male in a bed”. It was used metaphorically in Greek culture for the one who took the active role in the homosexual act.

To say that this passage is restricted to an ancient culture does not make sense because it says clearly, “Do you not know the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God?” We don’t want to restrict unrighteousness to an ancient culture. It’s quite abundant around us.