

# **What the Bible Really Says About Homosexuality**

## **An Analysis by Bill Fortenberry**

The December 15, 2008 edition of Newsweek magazine featured a cover story by Lisa Miller entitled "Our Mutual Joy." In that article, Ms. Miller claims to discredit religious objections to gay marriage by demonstrating that the few biblical passages dealing with this topic can be simply ignored or thrown away. Ms. Miller is not alone in her beliefs. Our new president and many Christians also think that a loving God would approve of homosexuality, but they are very much mistaken. The Bible contains no less than fifteen direct references to homosexuality, and every single one of them is negative.

### **Genesis 19:5**

The events referenced in Genesis 19 took place within the city of Sodom which was destroyed by God because of its wickedness. Homosexuality is the only sin mentioned in these verses, and it is referred to as being wicked. God destroyed Sodom and all the cities around her because of her wickedness.

### **Leviticus 18:22**

Leviticus 18 presents a list of several sexual sins. Homosexuality is included in this list and is called an abomination and a defilement of the land. God promised that homosexuals would be "cut off from among their people." This promise is not limited to the Children of Israel.

### **Leviticus 20:13**

Leviticus 20 lists several of the sexual laws that God set up for the nation of Israel. Homosexuality is listed as a criminal offense punishable by death. As a criminal offence, the sentencing for homosexuality was subject to the ruling of the courts as established in Deuteronomy 17. If one was found guilty of homosexuality, the law called for the death penalty. This law did not give citizens the right to kill homosexuals at will.

The two passages in Leviticus are undoubtedly two of the most direct condemnations of homosexual behavior to be found in the Bible, and Ms. Miller was quick to present her belief that these are "throwaway lines" from a "peculiar book" and that her "modern understanding of the world has surpassed its prescriptions." What she has neglected to mention is that these same "throwaway" passages also condemn adultery, bestiality, incest, and child sacrifice. I do not know if Ms. Miller has a family of her own, but I would imagine that if she did she would strongly disapprove of their involvement in any of these behaviors. Nevertheless, Ms. Miller's opinion on the application of these verses to today's society really doesn't prove her case at all. The simple fact still remains that, in spite of her desires to the contrary, the Bible does indeed condemn homosexuality as sin.

### **Deuteronomy 23:17-18**

Deuteronomy 23 presents commandments against prostitution. The word "sodomite" is a reference to homosexual men. That it is not just a reference to whoremongers can be seen by comparing the Hebrew word "qadesh" (sodomite) with the word "q@deshah" (whore). The two words are simply the masculine

and feminine versions of the same root. The relevance to homosexuality is further solidified by the reference to these sodomites as dogs in the very next verse. These verses clearly state that homosexual prostitution is an abomination to the Lord.

### **Judges 19:22**

Judges 19 presents another account of homosexual behavior similar to that found in Genesis 19. The homosexual desires of these men were called wicked, foolish, and vile. In this incident, homosexuality was considered more abominable than rape. This does not justify rape (both sins were punishable by death); it simply demonstrates the intensity of the Bible's condemnation of the homosexual lifestyle.

### **I Kings 14:24**

I Kings 14 chronicles the wickedness of the nation of Judah during the reign of Rehoboam. In describing their wickedness, the Bible states that there were sodomites in the land and that the people committed all the abominations of the nations that had previously inhabited the land. The word "sodomites" is the same Hebrew word "qadesh" used in Deuteronomy 23.

### **I Kings 15:11-12**

I Kings 15 describes the major events of King Asa's reign over Judah. He is praised for removing homosexuals from the nation, and his actions are said to be right in the eyes of the Lord.

### **II Kings 23:7**

II Kings 23 lists several of the acts of Josiah during his reign over Judah. He also is praised for removing homosexuals from the land. He is stated to have turned to the Lord more than any other king before or since.

### **Ezekiel 16:49-50**

Ezekiel 16 presents an account of the sins of Jerusalem. The sin of Sodom is referenced in comparison. In this passage, God explains that He destroyed Sodom because "they were haughty, and they committed abomination." God also states that the destruction of Sodom for this abomination was a good thing. The only recorded abomination of Sodom was that of homosexuality.

### **Hosea 9:9 and 10:9**

Hosea 9 also depicts the sins of the nation of Israel. In describing their sinful condition, God makes reference to the men of Gibeah mentioned in Judges 19. God states that those homosexual men were deeply corrupted. It is here explained that since Israel has also become deeply corrupted, they will have to pay for their sins. Chapter 10 makes an additional reference to the men of Gibeah.

### **Romans 1:26-27**

The passage in Romans chapter 1 which Ms. Miller was so quick to dismiss as "not dealing with anything like gay love or gay marriage" is, in fact, dealing directly with the topic of "gay love," (Paul refers to it as "vile affections"). That this is not simply a reference to the Roman emperors is evidenced by the statement in verse 18 that Paul is referring to all the ungodliness and unrighteousness of men. It's also

rather obvious that the condemnation of lesbianism found in verse 26 could not be a reference to the actions of Rome's male emperors. These verses clearly state that those who knowingly reject God are given up to uncleanness, dishonor, vile affections, and a reprobate mind. These vile affections are described as homosexual acts between women or men. This passage further states that those who do such things are worthy of death.

### **I Corinthians 6:9**

I Corinthians 6 provides a list of those people who will not be allowed in heaven. The phrase "abusers of themselves with mankind" is a reference to homosexuals. The good news is that homosexuals can be forgiven of their sin through the sacrifice of Jesus Christ.

### **I Timothy 1:9-10**

I Timothy 1 presents a list of those who are not considered righteous. The list includes those that defile themselves with mankind. This is a reference to homosexuality, and it is stated to be unrighteous and contrary to sound doctrine. This passage also gives hope for homosexuals by stating that "Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners," and that all those who believe on Him will receive mercy and eternal life.

### **II Peter 2:6**

II Peter 2 reiterates previous statements that Sodom was destroyed because of her wickedness. The citizens of that city are said to have been ungodly with filthy conversations and unlawful deeds. The destruction of Sodom is said to have been a warning to all those who follow in her footsteps.

### **Jude 7**

Jude repeats the statements made in II Peter that Sodom was destroyed as an example to others. In this passage the Bible clearly states that Sodom was destroyed because of its sexual sins. The phrase "going after strange flesh" is a reference to their homosexual behavior recorded in Genesis 19.

### **Conclusion**

The Bible has much more to say on the subject of homosexuality than Ms. Miller implied. Contrary to the premise of her article, everything that the Bible says about homosexuality is negative. It condemns such behavior as wickedness, an abomination, a defilement, a criminal offense, foolish, vile, deeply corrupted, unclean, dishonorable, a vile affection, the result of a reprobate mind, an action worthy of death, unrighteous, contrary to sound doctrine, and ungodly. Those nations in the Bible which accepted homosexual behavior were judged by God and destroyed, and those who rejected homosexual behavior are praised. The Bible also established civil laws which made homosexuality a capital offense in Israel.

However, along with this condemnation, the Bible also presents very clear instructions prohibiting personal retaliation against homosexuals. The Bible established a judicial system for the nation of Israel which was to try all cases, including those against homosexuals, according to a very strict set of guidelines; and harsh punishments were prescribed for any citizen that decided to take the law into his own hands. The Bible also calls for an attitude of mercy and forgiveness toward homosexuals stating

that Jesus Christ loved them enough to die for them and that many Christians had been just as wicked before they accepted Christ's forgiveness.

Therefore, the Christian view of homosexuality should be that while homosexual behavior is a great wickedness and a danger to our nation, those who participate in such behaviors are still people that God loves and longs to show mercy toward. The Bible justifies Christian efforts to suppress homosexual behavior through politics, but it also demands an attitude of love and mercy toward homosexuals themselves.