

SAME-SEX INTERCOURSE AND THE BIBLE - WHAT DO THE TEXTS SAY AND WHAT DO THEY MEAN?

There is not a single passage or verse of Scripture that speaks positively about same-sex intercourse. Every time it is mentioned in the Bible same-sex intercourse is condemned. There are no exceptions to this. It is condemned throughout the **entirety** of Scripture (Old and New Testaments). It is condemned **absolutely** (without any exceptions). And it is condemned **strongly** (not as a matter of preference or cultural norm).

I say this to underscore what **Robert Gagnon** calls the "**extraordinary burden of proof**" for those seeking to overturn the Scriptural teaching. Gagnon says, "**If the authority of Scripture means anything, those who seek to overturn its core values must meet an extraordinary burden of proof. The evidence must be so strong and unambiguous that it not only makes the witness of Scripture pale by comparison but also directly refutes the reasons for the Bible's position.**"

"For example, it would not be enough to prove that (1) the only models for homosexual behavior in antiquity were exploitive, or (2) modern science has demonstrated that homosexuality is congenital and fixed. One would also have to prove that the Bible condemned homosexual practice (3) primarily on the grounds that it was exploitive (e.g., because it abused boys), or (4) on the grounds that all participants in homosexual behavior experienced desires for the opposite sex" - (meaning they were acting **against** their homosexual orientation and, in Paul's words, against their "**nature**").

It is relatively easy to **say** the Bible condemned homosexuality because there are examples in antiquity where boys were abused in corrupt temple worship. It is quite another thing to demonstrate **from the Scriptures** that homosexuality is **only** condemned in those abusive cases. There is **nothing** in the Scriptures that even **hints** that it is only **abusive** same-sex intercourse that is condemned, or only incidents where **heterosexual** people engage in **same-sex intercourse** and act "**against their nature.**" That these acts are tragic and sinful is undeniable. But there is not even a hint that these are the **only** cases where these acts are sinful.

I am going to argue that the condemnation of same-sex intercourse in the Scriptures is made with the awareness that same-sex desires are often deeply rooted in an individual's **orientation**. And those condemnations of same-sex intercourse are made with the full awareness that there are relationships that are **loving** and **consensual**. I am arguing that the repeated, consistent condemnation of same-sex intercourse is based on a **creational assumption** that all sexual relations are to be between one man and one woman. And the best place to begin examining this creational intent is the creation account.

1) SEXUAL COMPANIONSHIP AND THE CREATIVE WILL OF GOD

Genesis 2:18-24 - "Then the LORD God said, "It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him a helper fit for him." [19] Now out of the ground the LORD God had formed every beast of the field and every bird of the heavens and brought them to the man to see what he would call them. And whatever the man called every living creature, that was its name. [20] The man gave names to all livestock and to the birds of the heavens and to every beast of the field. But for Adam there was not found a helper fit for him. [21] So the LORD God caused a deep sleep to fall upon the man, and while he slept took one of his ribs and closed up its place with flesh. [22] And the rib that the LORD God had taken from the man he made into a woman and brought her to the man."

[23] "Then the man said, "This at last is bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh; she shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of Man." [24] Therefore a man shall leave his father and his mother and hold fast to his wife, and they shall become one flesh."

The significance of this account is it gives us a clear picture of sexual partnership and gender distinction **before** the effects of the Fall and the ongoing disorientation of original sin. We see the original creation as God defines it "**good.**" And this "**goodness**" is clearly defined as the way the Creator **intended it to be**. Hence my earlier mention of the Genesis account and the **creational intent** of God.

Even though the creation itself is good, Adam is still alone - **Genesis 2:18** - "**Then the LORD God said, 'It is not good that the man should be alone....'**" Of course, there is a sense in which the man is **not** alone. He has fellowship with God. He is surrounded by animals. But there is clearly no answer to the **kind** of loneliness God describes in this verse. There is no **sexual counterpart** for Adam.

God will, in fact, emphasize this point by requiring Adam to specifically identify each of the other animal species (**2:19-20**). **They** have counterparts. But **he** has none.

So God Himself will create a sexual partner for Adam. Adam doesn't **choose or design** his companion. Eve is all of God's design and making. Adam doesn't even **ask** God for a partner. This is the **Creator's intention** being made visible.

Here's the core point. The Creator's answer to Adam's aloneness and sexual completeness is **another anatomical gender**. These partners are creationally defined by **anatomical gender**, not by **male or female personality traits** (which we discussed earlier in this series). Adam and Eve are not two poles on a male/female continuum where one has a 90% male brain and another a 70% female brain. The creation account clearly understands personhood in terms of two permanently distinct human **genders**. The Creator's intent couldn't be more clear. The missing element for Adam's aloneness is the **opposite** sex.

Critics have a response to the Genesis creation account. **Victor Paul Furnish**, in his book, "**The Bible And Homosexuality**" says, "**....this [creation account] is an 'aetiological' account, told in order to explain why things are as they are, not to prescribe what people ought to do....These texts are not about God's will for individual members of the species [e.g., that a man should only have sex with a woman, and that only in marriage] but only about what is typical of the species as a whole [e.g. that mankind is a sexual being].**

But this argument not only **misses** the point of the Genesis account, it is surely the exact **opposite** of the point of the creation text. The whole point of the creation account is the rest of the Bible **leans back on it to prescribe marriage and sexual behavior**. The Genesis creation account is not merely a **description** of the way things were in that particular case. It is **prescriptive** of the way things **ought** to be in every case.

First, there is the Genesis text itself - **Genesis 2:24** - "**Therefore a man shall leave his father and his mother and hold fast to his wife, and they shall become one flesh.**" This is not just a repetition of the creation account. This is **instruction based on the account**. This is not a **description** of original creation. This is a **prescription** for all future sexual bonds.

Second, there is the endorsement of **Jesus - Mark 10:6-9** - "**But from the beginning of creation, 'God made them male and female.'** [7] **'Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and hold fast to his wife,** [8] **and the two shall become one flesh.'** So they are no longer two but one flesh. [9] **What therefore God has joined together, let not man separate."**

Please don't miss all that Jesus takes as normative from the Genesis 2 account. It is not merely that Jesus enforces abstract ideas of **monogamy** and **fidelity** and leaves it up to us as to the **nature** of that monogamous, faithful relationship. Jesus fully recognizes and proclaims the original exclusively **heterosexual nature** of the relationship **as prescribed in the Creator's original intent**.

Third, there is the **Apostle Paul's** restatement of the Creator's intent and the teaching of Jesus - **Ephesians 5:28-33** - "**In the same way husbands should love their wives as their own bodies. He who loves his wife loves himself.** [29] **For no one ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it, just as Christ does the church,** [30] **because we are members of his body.** [31] **"Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and hold fast to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh."** [32] **This mystery is profound, and I am saying that it refers to Christ and the church.** [33] **However, let each one of you love his wife as himself, and let the wife see that she respects her husband."**

Here again, Paul bases his instruction to the church leaning into the original creation account. He clearly sees Genesis 1 and 2 not only as describing some kind of **general description** (as in the quote by **Victor Paul Furnish**) but as **prescriptive for the behavior of those to whom he writes**.

And my point here is all the clearest evidence proves the creation account of **two permanently distinct genders**, created by God as a solution to **sexual companionship**, this creation account is treated unanimously through the whole Bible as God's **good intention** for His male/female creation. It is **never** treated merely as some general description of mankind as a sexual being who just happened to be oriented heterosexually because, well, there were no other options at the time. It is nothing but abusive to this text to ignore the Creator's pattern for all future sexual expression of the created male/female persons.

2) THE CREATION ACCOUNT IS THE FRAMEWORK THROUGH WHICH OTHER BIBLICAL TEXTS ARE PROPERLY UNDERSTOOD

I just listed the example of texts containing the words of Jesus and Paul. They clearly linked their ethical imperatives based on the very words of the Genesis 2 text. Their words are pointed in the same permanent, marriage based, exclusively heterosexual pattern. And the pattern clearly comes from the creation account.

But there are other texts. And some are more widely interpreted. Take, for example, two texts in the book of Leviticus. I'm going to read these verses with quite a bit of surrounding context, so stay with me:

Leviticus 18:22-28 - "**You shall not lie with a male as with a woman; it is an abomination.** [23] And you shall not lie with any animal and so make yourself unclean with it, neither shall any woman give herself to an animal to lie with it: it is perversion. [24] "Do not make yourselves unclean by any of these things, for by all these the nations I am driving out before you have become unclean, [25] and the land became unclean, so that I punished its iniquity, and the land vomited out its inhabitants. [26] But you shall keep my statutes and my rules and do none of these abominations, either the native or the stranger who sojourns among you [27] (for the people of the land, who were before you, did all of these abominations, so that the land became unclean), [28] lest the land vomit you out when you make it unclean, as it vomited out the nation that was before you."

Then, there are very similar sounding words in **Leviticus 20:10-16** - "If a man commits adultery with the wife of his neighbor, both the adulterer and the adulteress shall surely be put to death. [11] If a man lies with his father's wife, he has uncovered his father's nakedness; both of them shall surely be put to death; their blood is upon them. [12] If a man lies with his daughter-in-law, both of them shall surely be put to death; they have committed perversion; their blood is upon them. [13] **If a man lies with a male as with a woman, both of them have committed an abomination; they shall surely be put to death; their blood is upon them.** [14] If a man takes a woman and her mother also, it is depravity; he and they shall be burned with fire, that there may be no depravity among you. [15] If a man lies with an animal, he shall surely be put to death, and you shall kill the animal. [16] If a woman approaches any animal and lies with it, you shall kill the woman and the animal; they shall surely be put to death; their blood is upon them."

There is a common approach taken by the gay community (and those endorsing same-sex intercourse) in approaching these texts. The verses specifically addressing a man who "***lies with another man***" are seen as warnings about the male prostitution that was common in the land God's people were about to enter. This is drawn particularly from the **Leviticus 18** text:

Leviticus 18:24-28 - "Do not make yourselves unclean by any of these things, for by all these the nations I am driving out before you have become unclean, [25] **and the land became unclean,** so that **I punished its iniquity, and the land vomited out its inhabitants.** [26] But you shall keep my statutes and my rules and do none of these abominations, either the native or the stranger who sojourns among you [27] (for the people of the land, who were before you, did all of these abominations, so that the land became unclean), [28] **lest the land vomit you out when you make it unclean, as it vomited out the nation that was before you.**"

The idea here is so it is argued, God is condemning the male prostitution of the worship practiced by the nations **before** God's people arrived. God drove those nations out because of that wicked worship. So God warns His people that **they** mustn't practice male prostitution in **their** worship of God. But this is not a condemnation of **all** same-sex intercourse, especially that which is loving and consensual.

But the problem with this explanation is the way it **redefines** the nature of the same-sex sin committed. It doesn't take seriously the actual words describing the same-sex sin. Look at it carefully again in each of these texts:

Leviticus 18:22 - "You shall not lie with a male **as with a woman**; it is an abomination."

Leviticus 20:13 - "If a man lies with a male **as with a woman**, both of them have committed an abomination; they shall surely be put to death; their blood is upon them."

These verses **tell us** what the forbidden sin is. The nature of the sin is very specifically fingerprinted. The sin is when a man lies with another man "***as with a woman***." Note it well. The sin isn't in whatever form of **worship** is being corrupted with this act. Nor is it defined in terms of some violation of **consent**. The sin lies **in the exchange**, the **substitution**, in this case, of another **man** for a **woman**. The sin lies in the breaking of the **creational intent** we examined at length in the first point of this teaching. The sin is identified as exchanging a **different** sexual gender for a **same** sexual gender. Male-male intercourse puts a male in the place of a female. That's the way the very words of these texts describe the transgression.

ORIGINAL DESIGN AND ONGOING INTENT OF OUR CREATOR

So no, it is no longer a moral sin to **“lie with a woman during her menstrual uncleanness”**(Leviticus 18:19), or a host of other things listed in **Leviticus 15**. Meats and garments and a host of other regulations were considered ceremonially **“unclean”** only because those regulations were designed **temporarily** to keep Israel separate and distinct from the other nations. This was because the coming world Redeemer was to be born, as promised, by the seed of Abraham.

But once Jesus arrived God’s kingdom was no longer **ethnically defined**. It wasn’t for the **Jewish** nation, but for **all** the nations. The ceremonial distinctives that once marked Israel as God’s people are now all abolished in Christ Jesus.

But there are other sins listed in a totally different category. They aren’t just **reminders** of ceremonial uncleanness. They betray the ongoing intention of our Creator for **all** peoples. How shall we know which sins are which?

The regulations guarding the original monogamous, permanent, heterosexual design are abiding in importance and apply to **all** the nations, even in the Old Testament. This is why those Leviticus texts, written to **Israel**, clearly state that God drove out the **“nations”** from the land when certain sins were committed, including when a man lies with a man as with a woman.

The design is stated in **Genesis 2:24** - **“Therefore a man shall leave his father and his mother and hold fast to his wife, and they shall become one flesh.”** This is the repeated norm in the New Testament. It is the standard by which God judges the sexual conduct of **all** nations. And all of the abiding regulations regarding human sexuality must be seen as **protecting this one design**.

Here’s what I mean. I’ll list a sexual sin and then restate its positive protection of the original permanent heterosexual design: **Homosexuality - too much sameness. Incest - too much sameness. Bestiality - too much difference. Adultery - no faithfulness. Prostitution - no faithfulness. Polygamy - no exclusiveness.**

Heterosexual marriage is the **measuring stick**, the **defining reference point** for **all** sexual sins. All of these sins are measured by the way in which they **betray** and **distort** the originally designed pattern of **monogamous, faithful, heterosexual** relationship. And these sins are **still** sins because God’s plan for human sexuality still needs protecting. This is the measuring stick for deciding which laws **carry over** into the New Testament church age and which **ceremonial laws** are fulfilled and terminated in Christ Jesus.

This is a crucial difference that intelligent Christians must process and think through. The Bible must be read as a meaningful whole. For example, what did Paul mean when he said, **“I know and am persuaded in the Lord Jesus that nothing is unclean in itself....(Romans 14:14)?** Was he really giving the green light for bank robbers and child molesters?

No. Paul was recognizing there used to be things that made people **ceremonially unclean** (foods, fabrics, bodily fluids) that are now abolished in Christ Jesus. But same-sex intercourse isn’t a sin in that class. And the way you can **tell** is the way it still protects the Creator’s intent for the ongoing design for sexuality and marriage.

And if you stayed with me through this whole teaching, God bless you!