

## **Sodom's Behavior: Homosexuality Or Gay Rights?**

Many people attempt to reconcile homosexuality with the Bible. They offer their interpretations of Scriptures on homosexuality as well as Jesus' response. (See chapter on "What Jesus Said About Homosexuality.") In some instances, they simply reject the clear statements in the Bible against homosexuality.

However, such efforts fail. You cannot reconcile truth with error. The battle to legitimize homosexuality begins with an all-out attack upon the Biblical record of Sodom. This assault changes the story of Sodom from homosexuality to inhospitality. It further misinterprets the other references to Sodom in the Bible to refer to acts other than homosexuality.

When all else fails, and the LGBTQ community cannot alter the clear meaning of a Biblical text that refers to homosexuality, they simply reject it as irrelevant to the issue. Thus, they, in essence, remove any passage of Scripture that remotely describes the sinfulness of homosexuality.

These misinterpretations and denials developed into an accepted error. They form the foundation of the homosexual movement. Those in the LGBTQ community believe that the Bible legitimizes their behavior. In fact, many professing evangelicals accept and promote these errors, too. Consequently, it appears that the Bible not only fails to condemn homosexuality, but it also actually permits it.

Do we believe falsely that Sodom and Gomorrah exemplify the sin of homosexuality? What happened that night when the men of Sodom confronted Lot? How does the Bible characterize Sodom? Has the homosexual community interpreted the Bible correctly? Should evangelicals and non-Christians accept the LGBTQ version?

These questions deserve a response. The Bible provides ample confirmation of God's attitude toward homosexuality. In particular, the Bible explains what occurred that night in Sodom. It makes it an example throughout all of Scripture. A comparison of Bible texts confirms the Bible's stance on Sodom and homosexuality, which contradicts the version promoted by the LGBTQ community.

The proper understanding of the events in Sodom begins many chapters before the record in Genesis 19. It begins prior to the flood as recorded in Genesis 6. As God viewed the world before the flood, he described the wickedness of mankind and the total corruption of humanity. (1) This awful wickedness included the full range of sexual immorality: fornication, incest, and homosexuality, even homosexual marriage. (2) The practice of homosexuality predates the flood.

After the flood, the Bible records another homosexual event. After Noah and his family departed from the Ark, Noah planted a vineyard. Sadly, he drank too much of the fruit of the vine and became drunk. The wickedness of Ham ensued. Ham uncovered the nakedness of his father, whom Ham saw lying drunk on the floor of his tent. (3)

This description sounds innocent. However, a detailed examination gives

a different story. When Ham saw his father, it literally means that he gazed with satisfaction upon his nakedness. (4) His look occurred with purpose and intent, not accidentally or harmlessly. (5) Rabbinic exegesis of this passage indicates that Ham's gaze turned into homosexual rape of his father. (6)

After the incident between Ham and Noah, Ham told his brothers what he had done. With great care, his brothers covered their father without observing his nakedness. After Noah awoke from his drunkenness, he learned of Ham's behavior toward him. Then, because of Ham's wicked act, Noah cursed Ham's son, Canaan. (7)

The effects of Ham's wicked act upon Noah and Noah's curse upon Canaan do not appear until Genesis 13. This chapter records the split between Abram and his nephew Lot. Abram gave Lot the first choice of land, which allowed Lot to separate from Abram and to take his family and herds to a new location. Lot chose the Plain of Jordan and moved his family toward Sodom in the Plain of Jordan.

The Canaanites occupied Sodom. (8) Genesis 13.13 describes the people of Sodom as "wicked and sinners before the Lord exceedingly." Adam Clarke, in his commentary upon this passage, said that it describes persons breaking the established order of things, openly before God. Radically evil, they sought satisfaction in sensual gratification with depraved, shameless, out of order passions. (9)

Not long after Abram and Lot separated, God appeared to Abram in the form of three persons. God renewed his covenant promise to Abram and then prepared to leave. As the three men rose to depart, they told Abram of their plan to visit Sodom. They told him that they had heard the outcry of Sodom, because of their grievous sin. They planned to visit the city to see firsthand the condition of the city. (10)

In fact, the practice of homosexuality permeated the Canaanite peoples long before the record of Sodom. The Mesopotamian, Middle Assyrian, and Hittite peoples (descendants of Canaan) openly practiced homosexuality in those days. Eventually, this wicked practice became commonplace in Grecian and Roman cultures. (11)

Two of the three men who visited Abram continued their way to visit Sodom, knowing its wickedness. At Lot's insistence, they did not stay out in the city square at night as planned but went into Lot's house. While there, the men of the city came to Lot and demanded that he release the men to them in order that they might *know* them. The two men protected Lot by sending blindness upon the men of the city. In the morning, the two men dragged Lot, his wife, and his two daughters out of the city and then destroyed it. (12)

In contradiction to the LGBTQ version of these events, the Bible clearly depicts the homosexual wickedness of Sodom, which began many years previously. This passage contains several key elements that require explanation. Together with the context in the Bible (and nonBiblical records) these delineate the homosexual behavior of Sodom. A proper understanding begins with the meanings of key words in the text.

## ***The men of the city***

The LGBTQ community has diminished the emphasis of this phrase. They describe it merely as a delegation of men who came to see Lot. Yet, the text clearly states that "all of the men of the city, including young and old, from every part of the city, came to Lot's house." (13) They did not come to Lot's house to welcome his guests into the city nor to interrogate them. They came with one purpose: to have homosexual sex with them.

## **"Know"**

The understanding of the intent of the men of the city comes with the proper use of the word *know*. This word has different functions in the Bible. Therefore, the context of its use provides insight to its meaning within the text. The context for the meaning of this word in this text begins early in Genesis. On three previous occasions, it appears as a euphemism for sexual intercourse. (14)

In the immediate context, the conversation between Lot and the men of the city show that Lot understood their meaning as sexual intercourse. He called their demands wicked. Further, he offered his virgin daughters to them in an immoral attempt to satisfy their sexual desires. When he did, he described them as virgins who had not *known* man. (15)

Lot did not misunderstand the men's demands as a request for an interview with his guests. He fully understood their sexual demands and rejected them, hoping he could persuade them to satisfy their passions upon his daughters. This event does not describe an attempt by the men of the city to interview Lot's visitors. Nor does it hinge upon the failed interpretation of inhospitality by the men of Sodom.

The wicked behavior identified with Sodom and the surrounding peoples confirms this interpretation. Even Egyptian texts and traditions use *know* to describe sexual intercourse. (16) The LGBTQ community fails in its attempt to distort the true meaning of this term to support their agenda.

The Bible offers numerous references to this occasion and confirms its homosexual application. A brief review of these passages will verify it. Many passages use it as an example of how God detests wickedness and judges it. Sodom provides a vivid illustration.

## ***Isaiah 1.1-9, 3.8-9, 13.19, Jeremiah 23.14, Zephaniah 2.8-11, etc.***

From these references, the LGBTQ community interprets them as itemized lists of the sins of Sodom. They bypass the descriptions that identify homosexuality as the sin of Sodom. However, most of these references simply list the sins of Israel and warn it of impending judgment as God brought to Sodom.

## ***Ezekiel 16.48-56***

In particular, the homosexual community uses this verse as their trump verse. It does list many sins of Sodom. The last sin in the list, abomination, does not serve as a summary of the previous list of sins. A

singular noun, it identifies a separate sin in addition to those previously listed. The Bible calls homosexual behavior an abomination, describing it as sexually perverse behavior. In this text, abomination describes Sodom's sin of homosexuality. (17)

## **2 Peter 2.1-8**

Peter refers directly to the wickedness of Sodom and God's judgment upon it. Here he calls the inhabitants "wicked" with "filthy conversation," and their acts "unlawful deeds." In verses 1-3, Peter warns his readers about false prophets and teachers. In the next five verses, he identifies three specific examples of God's judgment upon those who followed the sinful ways of false leaders, the last one Sodom and its sister city Gomorrah.

The "filthy conversation" of the people of Sodom does not refer to their speech habits. It means their manner of life. Their behavior lacked moral restraint. They practiced sexual licentiousness. (18)

Peter's description does not call their lawlessness "lusts for angels." The men of Sodom did not recognize Lot's visitors as angels. They called them men. No, the men of Sodom experienced defiling desires and sexual lusts for Lot's visitors. (19)

## **Jude 1.7**

Jude mentions Sodom in his warning of judgment upon the wicked. He described their sin as "fornication" and going after "strange flesh." The word "fornication" describes sexual immorality of any type and kind, including homosexuality and lesbianism. (20) The phrase "strange flesh" does not refer to the angels from verse 6. It describes the practice of unnatural uses. They did not content themselves with sexual intercourse with their wives and other men's wives. The men of Sodom sought perverted homosexual sex. (21)

## **Summary**

Contrary to popular error, Sodom exemplifies the sin of homosexuality. When all the men of Sodom attacked Lot's house, they demanded that he release his two visitors to them so that they could indulge their homosexual passions. In other texts, the Bible reverberates this same understanding of those events. Sadly, the LGBTQ community and many professing evangelicals have misinterpreted the Bible's declarations of Sodom's wickedness. We must reject the homosexual community's interpretation of their behavior and accept God's explanation of their sinfulness.

Thankfully, God made provision for sinners. He gave his son, Jesus Christ, as a substitute for sinners. Jesus took the punishment that people like you and I deserve. His resurrection completed the task that God sent him to fulfill. As a result, Jesus Christ will reconcile to God every sinner who turns from self-trust and trusts Christ as his/her substitute.

God gives new life to those who come to him through faith in Jesus Christ. He washes away the sin and guilt of their past regardless of its

wickedness, forgives their sin, and makes them new creatures. I recall vividly the day that I first trusted Christ. He truly made me a new creature, and I know many others with the same testimony. If you have never trusted Christ in this way, I pray that God by his Holy Spirit will bring you to experience it today.

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