

Clarity and Compassion: God's Word, Same Sex Marriage, and People You Love, 7
The Male Prostitution Argument: Isn't Paul Only Condemning Promiscuity?

Sunday Evening Bible Study
October 25, 2015

- 1. Summary of the Revisionist Argument:** The passages of the Bible that condemn homosexual acts are not condemning mutually loving, committed, monogamous, homosexual unions. Rather, they are condemning sexual violence, prostitution, and promiscuity. Therefore, God approves of same-sex marriage.
- 2. Summary of our Response:** While the Bible certainly condemns homosexual rape, prostitution, and promiscuity, it condemns more than that by prohibiting all sexual intimacy outside of heterosexual, monogamous marriage. The only alternative that Jesus gives to marriage is celibacy. Therefore, God disapproves of same-sex marriage.
- 3. The Argument Over Genesis 19:5**

3.1 The revisionist argument stated: "Of the thirteen references to Sodom in the Old Testament following Genesis 19, Ezekiel 16:49–50 offers the most detailed description of the city's sins...Sexuality goes unmentioned...If Sodom's sin had indeed been same-sex behavior, it's highly unlikely that every written discussion of the city for centuries following its destruction would fail to mention that." (Vines, *God and the Gay Christian*, 64).

3.2 Our response: We *affirm* that the OT prophets focused on the sins of Sodom having to do with pride, greed, and social injustice, but that is because these are the dominant sins of Israel. Though Israel struggled with many sins, homosexuality was not a leading sin at the time of Ezekiel's ministry. We *deny* that "sexuality goes unmentioned" in the OT passages referencing Sodom. Homosexuality is certainly an "abomination" in Ezekiel 16:50. Furthermore, when Jude refers to Sodom, he is writing to Christians in a Greco-Roman world and warns them clearly that homosexuality is one of the main reasons Sodom was judged (Jude 7).

4. The Argument Over Romans 1

4.1 The revisionist argument stated: "In other words, we have three very significant and pervasive sexual practices that would have been well known to Paul's audience and would shape their view of same-gender sexual practices: temple prostitution, pederasty, and the sexual services required by slaves...When reading Romans 1, would we think of two men or two women who have formed their own family unit, having made commitments to each other, and are now raising children together? Arguably not." (Ken Wilson, *Letter to my Congregation*, 65,66).

4.2 Our Response: We *affirm* that Romans 1 roundly condemns temple prostitution, pederasty, and the sexual services required by slaves. We *deny* that the condemnation is limited to these expressions of homosexuality for the following reasons:

1. Temple prostitution did not service women (26),
2. Pederasty is not in view in Romans 1 (men with men, 27),
3. Slaves are never mentioned in Romans 1 while the homosexual acts described are marked by mutual consent ("one another," 27).
4. Paul's perspective as a Jewish rabbi and lawyer reflects the uniform Jewish understanding that *all* homosexual activity was evidence of Gentile idolatry and depravity.

5. The heart of the sin is acting on unnatural desire, rebelling against the obvious intent of the Creator that is manifest in the divine design, moral order, and physical structure of the male and female bodies that are clear in the creation account of Genesis (26,27).
6. Unhealthy bodies are a common consequence of homosexual acts (27).
7. All homosexual behavior is condemned in regardless of the motive behind it, whether lustful and abusive or loving and committed. Motive is not germane to Paul's argument.
8. Romans 1 predicts the advent of revisionist theologians who will cleverly deny that Romans 1 says what it says (32).

5. The Argument Over 1 Corinthians 6:9 and 1 Timothy 1:10

5.1 The revisionist argument: "The same pairing of words [*malakos* and *arsenokoitai*] is used in Paul's First Letter to Timothy, with no further light being shed on its meaning. Whatever its meaning, there is no reason to believe that homosexual men or women, as we now understand them, are the targets of Paul's condemnations... What we do know is that when the meaning of a word or passage is unclear, the translator's own prejudices are apt to play a part in the words used to translate the unknowable meaning of the Greek" (Robinson, *God Believes in Love*, 90)

5.2 Our response: We *affirm* that "a translator's prejudices are apt to play a part in the words used to translate these two words." We *deny* that revisionist theologians are immune to their own prejudices and we deny that these two words have an "unknowable meaning of the Greek."

Malakos: Used in NT: Mt. 11:8; Lk. 7:25; 1 Cor. 6:9

1. "In the classical authors the term [*malakia*] originally meant softness, but it also came to be used of effeminate men. In the medical writers it described generalized weakness or illness." (Colin Brown, DNTT, 999).
2. "Soft to the touch...soft raiment (Mt. 11:8)...effeminate, of a catamite, a male who submits his body to unnatural lewdness" (Thayer, GELNT, 387)
3. "of persons, soft, effeminate, especially of catamites, men and boys who allow themselves to be misused homosexually." (BAGD, GELNTOECL, BAGD)
4. "...the passive partner in homosexual relations..." (Rogers and Rogers, 359).
5. So four options: Physically soft like a cloth, physically weaker like a woman, emotionally soft like a mama, or the passive partner in homosexual sex. Which does the context prefer?

Arsenokoitai: Used in the NT: 1 Cor. 6:9; 1 Tim. 1:10; Compound word: *arseen* (male) + *koitee* (bed; euphemism for sexual intercourse). *Arséen* is used three times in the NT: Mt. 19:4; Mk. 10:6; Ro. 1:27. All are relevant to the same sex marriage issue. *Koitee* is used four times: Lk. 11:7; Ro. 9:10; 13:13; 13:4.

1. "A male who practices homosexuality, pederast, sodomite" (BAGD)
2. "A male who has sexual relations with a male, homosexual..." (Rogers and Rogers, 359)

Conclusion: The pairing of these two Greek words refer to both partners in homosexual intercourse, one partner playing the passive role of being penetrated and the other playing the active role of penetrating. What other words could Paul have used to prohibit all homosexual activity?