

Yes, Jesus Loves Me!

a Bible Study

"I do not feel obligated to believe that the same God who has endowed us with sense, reason and intellect, has intended us to forgo their use."

~ Galileo Galilei

Many lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgendered people have concluded that the Bible is a book of condemnation for LGBT people. This assumption is based upon the views of many of the more prominent representatives of the Church who purport to know its contents. But there is a difference between truth and tradition. Traditional Christian teaching often condemns non-heterosexual people and their same sex relationships.

In the same way, it was "tradition" in which Galileo was condemned by the Church, because he taught that the Earth revolves around the sun. The Church's traditional view based its "stationary earth theory" on scriptures like the purposefully poetic Job 26:7 "He stretches out the north over empty space; He hangs the earth on nothing." I Chronicles 16:30 "Fear before him, all the earth; the world also shall be stable, that it be not moved." Psalms 104:5 "Who laid the foundations of the earth, that it should not be removed for ever." I Samuel 2:8 "...for the pillars of the earth are the LORD's, and he hath set the world upon them."

The astronomer/scientist Galileo was therefore labeled a heretic, was told to renounce his claims because they were contrary to scripture, and lived the remainder of his life under house arrest.

In the same way, the traditional Church has taught you from birth their own biased interpretations concerning homosexuals and their relationships. But just as Galileo received a formal apology from the Church in 1979, 337 years after his death, read the explanations of what the scriptures are truly saying in the context in which they are given. Read the old words with new understanding, and let His Word set you free! First, the traditional "clobber" passages...

Genesis 19:4-13

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The residents of Sodom wanted to violently rape the guests of Lot out of their arrogance and show of dominance, and is in no way a condemnation of loving, committed relationships.

Leviticus 18:22; 20:13

... page 6

“Man shall not lie with man” is a small portion of “the Law” which was only given to the Israelites, to primarily keep them from being assimilated into the cultures of the surrounding nations. The vast majority of the Law is not practiced today.

Romans 1:24-28

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A warning for heterosexuals to not go against their own natural sexual orientation for their religion, or in pursuit of pleasure. It says nothing against gay committed relationships.

I Corinthians 6:9-10; I Timothy 1:10

... page 13

These are victimized by poor translations of “arsenokoites” and “malakos” in versions such as the Living Bible. Both scriptures are actually warnings against prostitution or being weak-willed, and do not condemn loving, committed relationships.

Jude 7

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The controversy is centered around the term “strange flesh” which has been wrongly interpreted as same-sex relations, but a simple lesson in Greek reveals it is not talking about that at all.

Genesis 19:4-13 (New International Version)

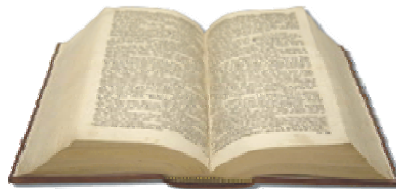
Before they had gone to bed, all the men from every part of the city of Sodom — both young and old — surrounded the house. They called to Lot, “Where are the men who came to you tonight? Bring them out to us so that we can have sex with them.”

Lot went outside to meet them and shut the door behind him and said, “No, my friends. Don’t do this wicked thing. Look, I have two daughters who have never slept with a man. Let me bring them out to you, and you can do what you like with them. But don’t do anything to these men, for they have come under the protection of my roof.”

“Get out of our way,” they replied. And they said, “This fellow came here as an alien, and now he wants to play the judge! We’ll treat you worse than them.” They kept bringing pressure on Lot and moved forward to break down the door.

But the men inside reached out and pulled Lot back into the house and shut the door. Then they struck the men who were at the door of the house, young and old, with blindness so that they could not find the door.

The two men said to Lot, “Do you have anyone else here — sons-in-law, sons or daughters, or anyone else in the city who belongs to you? Get them out of here, because we are going to destroy this place. The outcry to the LORD against its people is so great that he has sent us to destroy it.”



It’s important to notice the Bible says in the NKJV “...the men of the city, the men of Sodom, both old and young, all the people from every quarter, surrounded the house.” In other words, down to the last man. But this has been interpreted to imply that every last man, both young and old, were gay. This cannot be the case, first of all because Lot’s daughters were likely pledged to be married to men of Sodom, or Lot would not have settled there. Also, if all the men were homosexuals, Lot would not have offered his daughters to appease them. If the men of this entire city were gay, there would have been no heterosexual sex to sustain them, and they would have grown old and died out.

Any reasonable interpretation of the story must account for the facts that all the males of Sodom (both homosexual and heterosexual), and perhaps even the women, participated in this attack. For instance, in the Matthew 14:21 where Jesus fed the multitude, it says: about five thousand men, besides women and children. In biblical accounts, it is often only the men who are counted. Also, remember that God had agreed to spare Sodom if just ten righteous inhabitants could be found. If their ‘sin’ was homosexuality, would there not have been at least 10 people in the entire city who were not homosexuals?

Since Lot didn't comply with their wishes, they said they would do worse to him than to the two guests. They were trying to force down the door. The intentions of that event was violent rape, not loving relationship, but was fueled by the urge to dominate and humiliate the guests of Lot. Archeological records and writings show that it was common practice in the Near East during ancient times for soldiers to use homosexual rape as a way of humiliating their enemies. When victorious soldiers wanted to break the spirit of their defeated enemies, they would 'treat them like women' by raping them. The practice was not driven by sexual desire, but by brutality and hatred toward the enemy.

The 'sin' of Sodom and Gomorrah worthy of total destruction - the great 'outcry' God is referring to in chapter 18 is not homosexuality, and the Bible makes it clear...

Ezekiel 16:48-50

"As surely as I live, declares the Sovereign LORD, your sister Sodom and her daughters never did what you and your daughters have done. Now this was the sin of your sister Sodom: She and her daughters were arrogant, overfed and unconcerned, they did not help the poor and needy. They were haughty and did detestable things before me. Therefore I did away with them as you have seen."

Detestable is always translated from the same Hebrew word *shiqquts* (Strongs 8251), it always relates to idol worship, idolatrous, an idol — disgusting, abominable. So nothing resembling homosexuality is mentioned.

Amos 4:11

"I overthrew some of you as I overthrew Sodom and Gomorrah. You were like a burning stick snatched from the fire, yet you have not returned to me," declares the LORD.

In reading the entire book of Amos, it says that God promises to overthrow Israel as He overthrew Sodom and Gomorrah, for 3 things: turning away from God (unfaithfulness), being evil to the poor, and living selfishly. Nothing resembling homosexuality is mentioned.

Jeremiah 23:13,14

Among the prophets of Samaria I saw a repulsive thing: They prophesied by Baal and led my people Israel astray. And among the prophets of Jerusalem I have seen something horrible: They commit adultery and live a lie. They strengthen the hands of evildoers, so that no one turns from his wickedness. They are like Sodom to me; the people of Jerusalem are like Gomorrah.

No references to homosexuality.

In Matthew 10:11-15, Jesus compares the sin of Sodom to the sin of faithlessness in people who reject the Gospel and are inhospitable. There is no reference to sex sin.

In Matthew 11:20-24, Jesus again makes reference to Sodom's destruction as He talks about unrepentant Korazin and Bethsaida, and the miracles they had among them. The subject is religious unfaithfulness and unbelief, not homosexuality.

In II Peter 2:9,10, it talks about them being lawless and lustful, that they were presumptuous, self-willed, that they despised authority and spoke evil of dignitaries, but there is no mention of specific sex sin.

There are about 20 references to the story of Sodom in the Bible, and none of them state that homosexuality was the sin of Sodom.

Only Jude 7 seems to express otherwise, but it is a passage which is often misinterpreted. A simple study reveals something completely different.

The word “sodomy” itself is a misnomer, but has not been prevented from being entered into law books as the term for the ‘unlawful’ act of performing anal sex. This perpetuates the term being linked with the incorrect definition.

There is no word in biblical Greek or Hebrew for “sodomy” as a description of anal sex. Sodomite would normally, simply describe a person from Sodom. But instead, it is an old English word for homosexual, based on original flawed understanding of why Sodom was destroyed.

The King James Bible was published in 1611, under the authorization of King James I who was a homosexual. His nobles were able to banish his lover to France and broke up the relationship. The scholars who translated the Authorized 1611 version of the Bible deliberately mistranslated the word *qadesh* into Sodomite as a warning to the king that God would not tolerate such activity.

There is 1 “sodomite” and 4 “sodomites” in the entire KJV, and they are all translated from this Hebrew *qadesh* (Strong's 6945) which is: a sacred person, a male devotee (by prostitution) to licentious idolatry. In all five instances where the word appears in the Bible, it is referring to male religious ritual sex, not homosexual relationships.

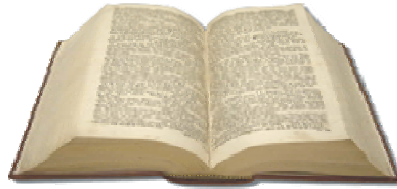
Even the name “Sodom” means burned or scorched and was likely a term given to the region after its destruction. Knowing it was destroyed by God, those describing the region would have been reluctant to so much as mention the name. So it is likely that the original name for the city may not have survived.

Leviticus 18:22; 20:13 (New King James Version)

You shall not lie with a male as with a woman. It *is* an abomination.

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If a man lies with a male as he lies with a woman, both of them have committed an abomination. They shall surely be put to death. Their blood *shall be* upon them.



These two verses are a part of a group of hundreds of rules and regulations called the Law. It is always referred to in the singular form: the Law of Moses, the Law of the Lord, the Law of God, the Book of the Law, the Law. Jesus said “It is easier for heaven and earth to disappear than for the least stroke of a pen to drop out of the Law.” These rules were to be taken as one Law — all or nothing.

Chapters 1-7, rules about different kinds of offerings and sacrifices, Chapter 8-10, rules for priests regarding the offerings, and other priestly duties, Chapter 11, rules about clean and unclean foods, Chapter 12, rules about purification of woman after childbirth, and circumcision for males, Chapter 13-14, rules related to skin disorders, Chapter 15, rules about purification of women after their period, and for men after seminal discharges, Chapter 16, more priestly rules, Chapter 17, not consuming blood, Chapter 18, rules about sex, Chapter 19, dealing fairly with others, no crossbreeding of animals or crops, no mixed fabrics in your clothes, no cutting sideburns or trimming beards, Chapter 20, more rules about sex.

These rules have to do with being clean or unclean and were only given to the Israelites. Exodus 19:5-6: Now therefore, if you will obey my voice indeed, and keep my covenant, then ye shall be a peculiar treasure unto me above all people: for all the earth is mine. And ye shall be unto me a kingdom of priests, and an holy nation. These are the words which thou shalt speak unto the children of Israel.

Israel was to be a kingdom of priests. The function of a priest is to lead in worship and offer sacrifices to God on behalf of sinners. This was the reason they were called by God. They had to be set apart from the other nations, and consecrated in order to be purified for worshipping and serving a Holy God. Leviticus 20:7-8: Sanctify yourselves therefore, and be ye holy: for I am the LORD your God. And ye shall keep my statutes, and do them: I am the LORD which *sanctify you*. (or “who makes you holy.” NIV)

The only way to be purified for worship was by the blood of a lamb, sheep, goat or bull. Hebrews 9:22: In fact, the law requires that nearly everything be cleansed with blood, and without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness.

Once they were purified for worship they worshipped at the Tabernacle. The heart of the Tabernacle was the Holy of Holies or the Most Holy Place. The heart of the Holy of Holies was the Ark of the Covenant. The lid of the Ark was the Mercy Seat. The plans for the tabernacle were given by God in great detail. Accuracy was very important because the tabernacle was an earthly copy of the Tabernacle in heaven. The Tabernacle was a model of the throne room of God and the Mercy Seat was His throne.

The only person who was allowed to enter the Most Holy Place was the High Priest. All of the laws and ritualistic cleansing and the sacrificial blood was so the High Priest could enter the Holy of Holies where more blood was sprinkled so that God would forgive the sin of the people and accept their worship.

To enter the Most Holy Place the High Priest entered through a veil. While Jesus was on earth, the Law was still in effect. However, the moment He died the Law was fulfilled, because the veil that symbolized the separation between man and God was miraculously ripped open from top to bottom (see Matthew 27:51, Mark 15:38, Luke 23:45).

Now, we can approach God with confidence and without fear of being 'unclean' because the blood of Jesus was shed for us. The blood of Jesus is the only lasting sacrifice required. Jesus fulfilled the Law because the purpose of the Law was to gain forgiveness for the people. If observing the Law made us right with God, then Jesus would have died for nothing, (see Galatians 2:21 and 5:4).

A literal translation of Lev. 18:22 renders: "And with a male you shall not lay lyings of a woman, it is ritually unclean." This is vague at best, and ancient Hebrew linguistics have shown that equally viable translations would be that a man shouldn't have sex with a man with the woman present, or upon her bed.

The Bible says that the Law was set forth to prevent the Israelites from doing what the Egyptians and Canaanites did. Biblical historians say the Canaanite religions surrounding the Israelites at the time of Leviticus often included fertility rites consisting of sexual rituals. These rituals were thought to bring the blessing of the god or goddess on crop and livestock production. During the rituals, whole families, including husbands, wives, mothers, fathers, sons, daughters, cousins, aunts and uncles would sometimes have sex. Also included was sex with temple prostitutes. In short, every kind of sexual practice imaginable was performed at these rituals, including homosexual sex.

We know that the Canaanites and Egyptians worshipped a goddess of love and fertility called Astarte or Ishtar. Within her temples were special priests called *assinu*, who were deemed to have special powers. Physical contact with the *assinu* was believed to ward off evil and promote good luck. Worshippers would often ritually touch them as part of their worship practices. Sexual intercourse was considered especially effective for gaining the goddess' favor, because the male worshipper was offering his greatest possession, semen (which was thought to be the essence of life), to the goddess through her priests. Depositing semen in the body of a priest of the goddess was believed to guarantee one's immortality. Similar cultic sexual practices flourished in connection with many other ancient deities.

This is what was going on in Canaan and Egypt at the time the law was given — homosexual ritual sex. Leviticus 18 and 20 specifically say they were written to address cultic religious practices. Leviticus 18 begins with "You shall not do as they do in the land of Egypt, where you

lived, and you shall not do as they do in the land of Canaan where I am bringing you.” Chapter 20 is even more specific and begins with an injunction against the cultic practices associated with the god Molech. Both chapters include long lists of sexual practices which are likely corresponding to the rituals mentioned above. It was important for the Israelites to separate themselves from, and keep from being absorbed by the larger cultures around them. By prohibiting foreign cultural elements (diet, dress and grooming) and emphasizing divergent social relations (who one may marry, how one farms) the Israelites would more easily avoid being enticed away from the worship of God to their neighbors’ idols.

Historians have found that loving, long-term homosexual relationships did not meaningfully exist in Canaanite culture. It was a tribal culture and offspring were essential to survival in their primitive agricultural economy. There were rigid distinctions between women’s work and men’s work. If two men had lived together as a couple, for example, one of them would have been placed in the position of doing women’s work, and the presence of a man working among the women of the village would not have been tolerated.

It is not reasonable to believe 18:22 or 20:13 were intended to prohibit a form of homosexual relationship that did not exist at the time. When read in textual and historical context, they are clearly directed at religious ritual sex.

Further, in the instances of both 18:22 and 20:13, the word “abomination” is translated from *toebah* or *towebah* (Strong’s 8441) “toeyvah” which refers to the customs of idolatry. It is a Hebrew word for a ritually unclean thing, and appears over 100 times in the original text of the Old Testament.

And it is easier for heaven and earth to pass, than one tittle of the law to fail.

Luke 16:17 KJV

...Can’t eat rabbit, pork or shrimp (11:6,7,10) ...Women unclean for 7 days or 14 days after birth; mandating circumcision for men (12) ...Pronounced clean or unclean for skin disorders including leprosy, eczema, pimples, and severe dandruff; and home cleaning mandates (13-14) ...Ritual cleansings for men’s seminal discharges, and for women after their period (15) ...No blood pudding or rare steaks (17) ...Not allowed to cut the hair at the sides of your head or clip the edges of your beard. (19:27) ...no mules, no tangelos, no mixed fabrics in your clothes, not allowed to eat fruit from your fruit tree until three years after planting (19) ...if a man has sex with his wife during her period, both are cut off from their people, and the penalty for adultery is death for both (20) ...banks are not to lend money while charging interest, and grocery stores are not to sell food at a profit (25) ...other cultural- and era-specific aspects.

With all of these in mind, it is not reasonable to believe that the Leviticus passages against men lying with men are more “toeyvah” than any of the others, when the vast majority of the Leviticus law is describing things which are ritually unclean, yet are practiced without either religious or social penalty today.

Both Eusebius of Ceasaria, and the Apostolic Constitutions state that the uncleanness that is derived from this behavior found in Leviticus 18 and 20 is ritual, not moral (Boswell (1980), pg. 102).

Further, there is no ‘thou shalt not’ in the Ten Commandments concerning homosexuality.

Even further, Jesus said, “‘You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind.’ This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it: ‘You shall love your neighbor as yourself.’ On these two commandments hang all the Law and the Prophets.” Matt. 22:37b-40.

Colossians 2:13,14 (NKJV)

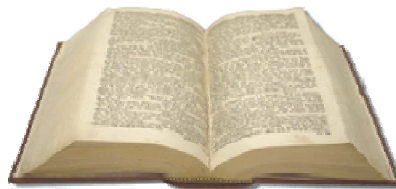
And you, being dead in your trespasses and the uncircumcision of your flesh, He has made alive together with Him, having forgiven you all trespasses, having wiped out the handwriting of requirements that was against us, which was contrary to us. And He has taken it out of the way, having nailed it to the cross.

Romans 1:24-28 (New International Version)

Therefore God gave them over in the sinful desires of their hearts to sexual impurity for the degrading of their bodies with one another. They exchanged the truth of God for a lie, and worshiped and served created things rather than the Creator—who is forever praised. Amen.

Because of this, God gave them over to shameful lusts. Even their women exchanged natural relations for unnatural ones. In the same way the men also abandoned natural relations with women and were inflamed with lust for one another. Men committed indecent acts with other men, and received in themselves the due penalty for their perversion.

Furthermore, since they did not think it worthwhile to retain the knowledge of God, he gave them over to a depraved mind, to do what ought not to be done.



Wherefore God also gave them up to uncleanness through the lusts of their own hearts, to dishonour their own bodies between themselves: ...

Working backwards from the “Wherefore”, or the “Because of this” as it also appears in other translations, the beginning of the passage actually starts at 1:16.

Paul was trained as a scholar of Greek classics and Hebrew literature, and his style may seem obscure to some. He thoroughly explains the factual assumptions and rationale behind his condemnation of the behavior described here.

In verses 16 and 17 Paul describes the Gospel: “it is the power of God for salvation of everyone who believes.” Then he gives the reasons for that in 17, “a righteousness from God is revealed” and that this righteousness comes by faith in the Gospel. Righteousness means being right with God from having faith in the Gospel (that Jesus died for our sins and was raised from the dead.) One could say that Righteousness does not come by heterosexuality, nor is it prevented by homosexuality. Righteousness is not earned.

The next thing Paul describes are people who have no faith in God. These are people who reject the Creator for a lie. Paul was speaking of both men and women in verse 18 in the phrase; “godlessness and wickedness of men,” *anthropos*. They chose to worship and serve created things rather than the Creator. They exchanged the glory of God for images made to look like mortal man and birds and animals and reptiles. This clearly describes idols and idol worship.

In verse 24, he’s still saying ‘they and them’ connecting back to the *anthropos* in verse 18, as he refers to the temple prostitution acts between men and women, so when they were given to sexual impurity for the degrading of their bodies with one another... this was both homosexual and heterosexual sex. The point of the passage is not homosexuality, but it is the condition of people who turn from God.

When following the passage step-by-step, Paul is moving through a logical progression. He is talking about people who:

- Refused to acknowledge and glorify God. (21)
- Began worshipping idols (images of creatures instead of the Creator). (23)
- Were more interested in earthly pursuits than spiritual pursuits. (25)
- Gave up their natural (innate) passion for the opposite sex in search for pleasure (and in service of idols.) (26,27)
- Lived lives full of covetousness, malice, envy, strife, slander, disrespect for parents, pride, and hatred of God. (29-31)

The type of homosexual behavior Paul was addressing is temple prostitution and/or religious-ritual sex; and people who, in an unbridled search for pleasure (or because of religious rituals associated with idolatry), went against their own in-born sexual orientation, and participated in promiscuous sex. In other words, heterosexuals engaging in homosexual sex against their own nature, because “they exchanged” *metyllaxan* (or metallasso) refers to a substitution of one thing in place of another. So when “God gave them over” *paradwken*, He allowed the natural course of events to occur in pursuing their idol worship.

The things Paul describes in verses 29-31: fornication, wickedness, covetousness, maliciousness, envy, murder, debate, deceit, malignity, whisperers, backbiters, haters of God, despiteful, proud, boasters, inventors of evil things, disobedient to parents, without understanding, covenant breakers, without natural affection, implacable, and unmerciful; describe many heterosexuals. Some homosexuals also fit that description, but not all homosexuals do those things and neither do all heterosexuals. They describe things that violate the three principles: loving God, loving your neighbor, and loving yourself.

The phrase “shameful lusts” in some translations the word “affections” (also passions) in 1:26 is the same word *pathos* (Strong's 3806) used to speak of the suffering and death of Jesus in Acts 1:3. Eros (erotic love) does not appear in the New Testament, and the word in 1:26 most likely refers to the frenzied state of mind that many ancient cults induced in worshippers by using wine, drugs or music. This had nothing to do with pair-bonding or love relationships, but Paul was instead describing religious ritual sex.

The most likely cult that Paul was referring to was the *Cybelean/Attic* which was one of the most prominent cults in Rome. The priests and priestesses, called *galli*, attempted to achieve gender neutrality in service to their god/dess. The goal was to transcend gender in order to become more like Attis (the father God, son/lover of Cybele) and Cybele (the mother goddess).

Verse 21-22: they claimed to be wise but are foolish...

The *galli* claimed to tell people's fortunes, but everybody thought they were mad, the way they danced around and cut themselves. The Greek texts talk about the “mania” of their rituals.

Verse 23: they made images of man and animals to worship...

The Cybele's temple statues were of Attis, Cybele (and others), who were surrounded by other images of animals, particularly lions and snakes. Also the temples were filled with doves, because the *galli* thought they were too holy to touch or shoo away. The fact that all of these animals were in the temples, and Paul mentioned them by name, makes it highly likely Paul was specifically referring to this Roman cult... “...birds, and fourfooted beasts, and creeping things.” vs. 23b

Verse 24: dishonour their own bodies...

Dishonour, *atimazo* (Strong's 818) which is to render infamous, to maltreat or dispise. This describes how they treated their own body as described in the following verses...

Verse 26-27: exchanging natural relations, ...

One of the primary ideas of the galli was to remove gender differences. This occurred through transvestitism, and physically cutting off one's genitals. Part of this was also assuming the sexual characteristics of the opposite gender, so the male galli would serve sexually "as women" to male worshippers in the temple. Women were known to cut off their breasts and have lesbian relationships to transcend their gender. Women had sex with men too, but in order to avoid pregnancy, again like Cybele, they would have anal sex, not vaginal (some early church fathers, like Clement and Augustine, indicate that the female behavior referred to in these verses is not female-female behavior, but female-male sexual behavior in a manner which disallowed pregnancy).

This type of ritual/religious transvestitism does not resemble modern transgender people who have gender reassignment surgery. The latter are ones who make their physical body conform to their true gender. The former were forsaking their true gender, exchanging their inborn, natural relations for something against their own nature, as Paul made clear in verse 24 through 27.

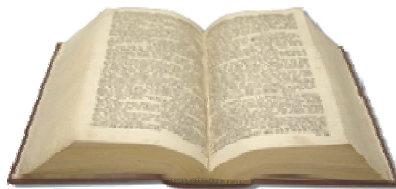
I Corinthians 6:9-10; I Timothy 1:10 (King James Version)

Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Be not deceived: neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind,

Nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God.

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For whoremongers, for them that defile themselves with mankind, for menstealers, for liars, for perjured persons, and if there be any other thing that is contrary to sound doctrine;



The Greek word translated to “effeminate” is *malakos* (Strong's 3120) and it means of uncertain affinity; soft, with fine clothing, a catamite. A catamite according to Webster's is a kept boy, or a young male prostitute. In the time of the New Testament writings, it was common for these young men to prostitute themselves to older, wealthy men in exchange for money, education or a place to live. This differs from *pais* in that these were not intended to be love relationships. Many of the older men were married to women. These boys were kept for sexual purposes as live-in prostitutes.

Other connotations of the word translated into “effeminate” are laziness, degeneracy, decadence, or lacking courage.

These verses were not always used to condemn homosexuals; up until recent times the phrase “abusers of themselves” was taken to condemn masturbators. The church as a whole has long since eased its stance on masturbation.

“Abusers of themselves with mankind” is *arsenokoites* (Strong's 733), a sodomite (which itself is a misnomer: please see the Genesis study portion of the YJLM) and means a male temple prostitute. Its Hebrew counterpart is *qadesh* (Strong's 6945): a male devotee (by prostitution) to licentious idolatry. Some early writings use arsenokoites to describe the occupation of distributing gay male slaves. Whichever definition is most correct, the common thread is prostitution. Arsenokoitai, literally “man bedder” and Paul R. Johnson expert in Greek linguistics has stated that a proper definition is ‘the male who has many beds’ which is a promiscuous man, or a man involved in prostitution. In spite of all of this, some translations, including the Living Bible, translate this as “homosexuals.”

Here is the same instance of mistranslation in another passage. First of all, the more accurate New International Version...

Deuteronomy 23:17-18

No Israelite man or woman is to become a shrine prostitute. You must not bring the earnings of a female prostitute or of a male prostitute into the house of the LORD your God to pay any vow, because the LORD your God detests them both.

Now the Living Bible...

Deuteronomy 23:17-18

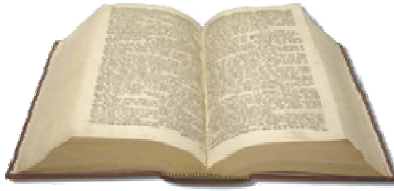
No prostitutes are permitted in Israel, either men or women; you must not bring to the Lord any offering from the earnings of a prostitute or a homosexual, for both are detestable to the Lord your God.

In this way and in similar ways, much of the condemnation and hatred toward homosexuals in the Christian church has been propagated. What “earnings” would a homosexual gain by their profession? The verse in the Living Bible doesn’t even make sense.

Arsenokoites is also the same word which appears in the I Timothy scripture as abusers of themselves with mankind. Note that in I Timothy, the sin of “whoremonger” immediately precedes the ones who “defile themselves with mankind.” Even without the knowledge of the meaning behind arsenokoites it would stand to reason that male prostitution would follow female prostitution in a list of sinful practices.

Jude 1:7 (King James Version)

Even as Sodom and Gomorrhah, and the cities about them in like manner, giving themselves over to fornication, and going after strange flesh, are set forth for an example, suffering the vengeance of eternal fire.



This is the only scripture referencing Sodom and Gomorrhah which indicates some form of sexual perversion as their “sin.”

This “fornication” is the only instance of its kind in the Bible listed in the Strong’s, no. 1608: *ekporneuo*. It means to be utterly unchaste, giving one’s self over to... Fornication.

“Strange” is: *heteros*. (Strong’s 2087) It means ‘of uncertain affinity’ and the closest match to a single word would be ‘other’ and also can mean: different, altered, or else. Hetero acts as the first part of other compound words in the Greek language, and is always simply as ‘other’ like heteroglossos ‘other tongued’ meaning an unknown (or at least undeciphered) language.

“Flesh” is: *sarx*. (Strong’s 4561) This is the most common of the ones translated “flesh” and refers to the body, differentiating it from the spirit, and can mean ‘the meat of an animal as food,’ human nature with its frailties, carnal, flesh.

So the KJV’s ‘strange flesh’ is a correct (though not terribly descriptive) translation from the Greek — a different kind of flesh. The New International does a ‘fair’ job in its translation...

“In a similar way, Sodom and Gomorrhah and the surrounding towns gave themselves up to sexual immorality and perversion. They serve as an example of those who suffer the punishment of eternal fire.”

The Living Bible on the other hand includes a very serious error...

“And don’t forget the cities of Sodom and Gomorrhah and their neighboring towns, all full of lust of every kind including lust of men for other men. Those cities were destroyed by fire and continue to be a warning to us that there is a hell in which sinners are punished.”

There is nothing in the original text of Jude 7 which suggests “lust of men for other men.” But apparently because of the perpetuated misnomer of ‘Sodomy’ and the mention of “strange flesh,” the translator of the Living Bible from his own biased understanding, and not from what the Greek plainly indicates, published this incorrect conclusion. *Sarkos heteras* is flesh of another kind, and so it is impossible to construe this passage as a condemnation of homosexual sex *Sarkos homo*, which itself would be pursuit of flesh of the same kind.

The widely accepted explanation among theologians and others, for this instance of “strange flesh” is...

At the time the book of Jude was written, many believed some of the women of Sodom had engaged in intercourse with male angels. This is derived from Genesis 6:1-4, where the “Sons of God” took the daughters of humans as wives. Some think this was the final act which brought God’s judgment on the earth in the form of a great flood, and some Jewish writers believed this was also the sin which sealed Sodom’s fate. According to first century legend, some of the women of Sodom (and other wicked ancient cities) were thought to have had sex with beings who were made of a “different flesh” — angelic flesh. It is of course a certainty that the final act in their history of going after strange (or angelic) flesh, was the men of Sodom wanting to sexually dominate the two “angelic” guests. (Nissinen, pages 91 to 93, discussing Jewish writings from 200 to 1 BC which associate the sin of the people of Sodom with that of people before the flood of Noah. Also Kelly, A commentary of the Epistles of Peter and Jude, pages 258-259; Fred Craddock, First and Second Peter and Jude, page 139; Richard Bauckham, Jude, 2 Peter, page 54; Michael Green, The Second Epistle General of Peter and the General Epistle of Jude, page 180; Cranfield, I and II Peter and Jude, page 159; Richard Hays, The Moral Vision of the New Testament, page 404.)

Some will concede it is not wrong to be gay “as long as you don’t act on it.” They argue that the Bible lacks examples of where such relationships are affirmed. Again, they would be mistaken. Here are just a few...

The Centurion who seeks healing for his Special Servant . . . *page 18*

Jesus mentions Natural-born Eunuchs . . . *page 20*

Philip and the Eunuch . . . *page 21*

...and in the Old Testament...

The nature of Ruth and Naomi’s relationship . . . *page 23*

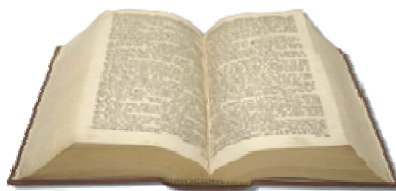
The nature of David and Jonathan’s relationship . . . *page 25*

Matthew 8:5-13; Luke 7:1-10

And when Jesus was entered into Capernaum, there came unto him a centurion, beseeching him,
And saying, Lord, my servant lieth at home sick of the palsy, grievously tormented.
And Jesus saith unto him, **I will come and heal him.**
The centurion answered and said, Lord, I am not worthy that thou shouldest come under my roof: but speak the word only, and my servant shall be healed.
For I am a man under authority, having soldiers under me: and I say to this man, Go, and he goeth; and to another, Come, and he cometh; and to my servant, Do this, and he doeth it.
When Jesus heard it, he marveled, and said to them that followed, **Verily I say unto you, I have not found so great faith, no, not in Israel.**
And I say unto you, That many shall come from the east and west, and shall sit down with Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, in the kingdom of heaven.
But the children of the kingdom shall be cast out into outer darkness: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.
And Jesus said unto the centurion, **Go thy way, and as thou hast believed, so be it done unto thee.** And his servant was healed in the selfsame hour.

~ ~ ~

NOW when he had ended all his sayings in the audience of the people, he entered into Capernaum.
And a certain centurion's servant, who was dear unto him, was sick, and ready to die.
And when he heard of Jesus, he sent unto him the elders of the Jews, beseeching him that he would come and heal his servant.
And when they came to Jesus, they besought him instantly, saying, That he was worthy for whom he should do this: For he loveth our nation, and he hath built us a synagogue.
Then Jesus went with them. And when he was now not far from the house, the centurion sent friends to him, saying unto him, Lord, trouble not thyself: for I am not worthy that thou shouldest enter under my roof:
Wherefore neither thought I myself worthy to come unto thee: but say in a word, and my servant shall be healed.
For I also am a man set under authority, having under me soldiers, and I say unto one, Go, and he goeth; and to another Come, and he cometh; and to my servant, Do this, and he doeth it.
When Jesus heard these things, he marveled at him, and turned him about, and said unto the people that followed him, **I say unto you, I have not found so great faith, no, not in Israel.**
And they that were sent, returning to the house, found the servant whole that had been sick.



The Greek word used in Matthew to refer to the servant of the centurion is *pais* (Strong's 3816). At that time *pais* had three possible meanings depending on the context. It could mean A. son or boy, B. servant, or C. a male lover (K.J. Dover, *Greek Homosexuality*, page 16; Bernard Sergent, *Homosexuality in Greek Myth*, page 10.)

In Luke 7:2, two other Greek words were used to describe the one who was sick. It says this *pais* was the centurion's *entimos duolos*. (Strong's 1784, 1401) The word *duolos* is a generic term for slave, and was never used in ancient Greek to describe a son or boy, so the *pais* could not have been "A". The word *entimos* means honored (also dear, precious), so this was an honored slave. But because he was also *pais*, he could not be a *pais* and an *entimos duolos* and be a servant, so the three terms together rule out "B" as well, which leaves only that he was the centurion's male lover.

The lovers were usually younger than the masters, often teenagers. In ancient times, commercial transactions were the predominant means of forming relationships. Under the law, the wife was viewed as the property of the husband, with a status just above a slave. In Jesus' day, a boy or a girl was considered marriageable in their early teens. It was not uncommon for an older man to marry a young girl.

A gay man who wanted a male spouse achieved this the same way, purchasing someone to serve that purpose. A servant purchased to serve this purpose was often called a *pais*.

To further support this view in Matt. 8:9, in the course of expressing his faith in Jesus' power to heal by simply speaking, the centurion says, "When I tell my slave to do something, he does it." (Parallel to his faith, he's also expressing his understanding that Jesus has the authority to issue a remote verbal command that must be carried out.) When speaking of his slaves, the centurion uses the word *doulos*. But when speaking of the one he is asking Jesus to heal, he makes a distinction and uses only *pais*.

In the Gospels, we have many examples of people seeking healing for themselves or for family members. But this story is the only example of someone seeking healing for a slave. It's even more remarkable by the fact that this was a proud Roman centurion who was humbling himself and pleading with a Jewish rabbi to heal his slave.

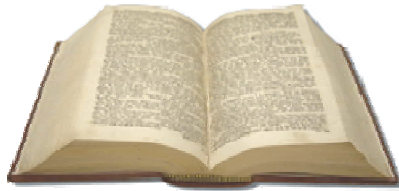
It is true that Jesus healed and ministered to the righteous and to the sinners during his ministry. When remembering the account of the harlot brought before Jesus, and He said 'he that is without sin, cast the first stone' and one by one they dispersed. He asked the woman where her accusers were, and she answered that she had none. He answered "Neither do I condemn you, go and sin no more."

As the centurion made his way to Jesus, he probably worried about the possibility that Jesus, like other Jewish rabbis, would take a dim view of his homosexual relationship. He could have simply used the word *duolos*. But he probably decided that if Jesus was able to heal his lover, he was also able to see through any half-truths. In response to his honesty, without hesitation, Jesus said, "Then I will come and heal him." The centurion said there is no need, that Jesus' word is sufficient. Instead of Jesus saying 'he is healed, go and sin no more' similar to the harlot, He said, "I have not found faith this great anywhere in Israel." He is held up as an example of the type of faith others should aspire to.

Further, He says, "I tell you, many will come from the east and the west to find seat in the kingdom of heaven, while the heirs will be thrown into outer darkness."

Matthew 19:11-12

But he said unto them, All men cannot receive this saying, save they to whom it is given. For there are some eunuchs, which were so born from their mother's womb: and there are some eunuchs, which were made eunuchs of men: and there be eunuchs, which have made themselves eunuchs for the kingdom of heaven's sake. He that is able to receive it, let him receive it.



Today, a eunuch is typically defined as a castrated male, which is actually incorrect. Castration means to remove the testicles (that were already there) or emasculate. If all eunuchs were castrated males, Jesus would not have said “were born from their mother’s womb.” The classic definition of a eunuch is a man who has no desire or ability to have sexual relations with a woman. These men were commonly used to protect the harems.

Jesus addressed three types of eunuchs. Those born that way, those made by men (either castrated, or were sexually abused), and those who decide not to have sexual relations for the sake of the Kingdom.

So Jesus stated that not everyone will marry according to the custom as in ‘male and female.’ He also said that not everyone can accept this. Then finally, those that can accept it should accept it.

When He said “born that way” (NIV) it is conceivable He could have been referring to intersex people, although intersex identify as either straight, gay, or asexual, and sometimes have active libidos, so would likely not have been chosen in ancient times to (for example) protect a harem. It is however unreasonable to assume He was referring to impotent people since impotence is a psychological and/or physical condition which is sometimes medically corrected, and most often happens to a person in adulthood, not in childhood, and certainly not ‘at birth.’

Whether referring to non-heterosexual orientations, or to intersex, or both, Jesus was most assuredly acknowledging that some people are not, and were not meant to follow what is considered the usual male/female sexual roles according to the bodies they were born with.

Acts 8:26-38

And the angel of the Lord spake unto Philip, saying, Arise, and go toward the south unto the way that goeth down from Jerusalem unto Gaza, which is desert.

And he arose and went: and, behold, a man of Ethiopia, an eunuch of great authority under Candace queen of the Ethiopians, who had the charge of all her treasure, and had come to Jerusalem for worship,

Was returning and sitting in his chariot read Esaias the prophet.

Then the Spirit said unto Philip, Go near, and join thyself to this chariot.

And Philip ran thither to him, and heard him read the prophet Esaias, and said, Understandest thou what thou readest?

And he said, How can I, except some man should guide me? And he desired Philip that he would come up and sit with him.

The place of the scripture which he read was this, He was led as sheep to the slaughter: and like a lamb dumb before his shearer, so opened he not his mouth:

In his humiliation his judgement was taken away: and who shall declare his generation? For his life is taken from the earth.

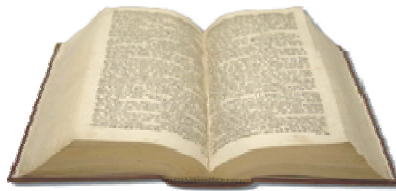
And the eunuch answered Philip, and said, I pray thee, of whom speaketh the prophet this? Of himself, or of some other man?

Then Philip opened his mouth, and began at the same scripture, and preached unto him Jesus.

And as they went on their way, they came unto a certain water: and the eunuch said, See, here is water; what doth hinder me to be baptized?

And Philip said, If thou believest with all thine heart, thou mayest. And he answered and said, I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God.

And he commanded the chariot to stand still: and they went down both into the water, both Philip and the eunuch; and he baptized him.



At a time of great revival among the Samaritans, Philip packed up there and traveled to where God told him.

The Greek word in Acts is *eunouchos*, which means literally “guardian or keeper of the couch.” They were placed in positions of highest trust in royal palaces and wealthy households. Eunuchs served and guarded the women in these households. Because of their intimate access to the royal courts, eunuchs often rose to senior government positions. They had to be men who could be trusted not to have affairs with the women — otherwise it might confuse both the line of succession to the throne and inheritance rights. Although the ancients did not have the same clear concept of heterosexual and homosexual that we do today, these were men who, as now, had a reputation for being disinterested in women as objects of sexual attraction.

In some cases where the master wanted to be extra cautious, eunuchs were sometimes castrated. (Please refer to the 3 different kinds of eunuchs described by Jesus in Matthew 19:11,12) Ancient literature indicates that various types of eunuchs were recognized. There were “Manmade eunuchs,” meaning those who had been castrated. But there are also references to

so-called “natural” or “born” eunuchs. An ancient Sumerian myth about the creation of eunuchs says they “do not satisfy the lap of women.” It says they were specifically created to resist the wiles of women. The book of Sirach, in the Old Testament Catholic Bible, says that embracing a girl makes a eunuch groan. (Sirach 30:20)

Instead, eunuchs were commonly associated in ancient culture with sexual interest in men. The Kama Sutra has an entire chapter on eunuchs seducing men. Quintus Curtius, an historian who wrote about Alexander the Great reported that Alexander’s palace included “herds of eunuchs, also accustomed to prostitute themselves [like women].” Quintus Curtius also reported that Alexander the Great fell deeply in love with a eunuch named Bagoas and they entered into a relationship of mutual love. This does not mean that all natural eunuchs were gay, but as a group, they were strongly associated with homosexual desire, at least in the popular mind.

When the Ethiopian introduced himself to Philip as a eunuch, Philip would have immediately known he was dealing with a man who was part of a class commonly associated with homosexual desire. Acts 8:32-33 says the Ethiopian was reading from Isaiah 53:7-8. This passage was already seen by early Christians as a prophecy about Jesus. Verse 3 “He was despised and rejected by others.” Verse 7 “He was oppressed and he was afflicted.” That might be a strange passage for someone to read just after worshipping in Jerusalem, but it makes sense if the eunuch himself had found himself despised and rejected by the religious leaders in Jerusalem.

Eunuchs were the sexual outcasts of Jewish religious society. By the first century Deuteronomy 23:1 was interpreted to mean anyone incapable of fathering children (either physically or by reason of what we today would call sexual orientation). They would have informed the Ethiopian eunuch when he arrived in Jerusalem that he could not enter even the outer court of the temple. He would have been assured by the ‘people of God’ that he could not become one of them.

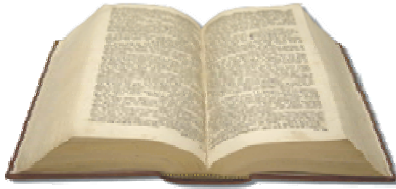
While reading about another who had been despised and rejected, oppressed and afflicted, it was at that moment Philip, guided by the Holy Spirit, came and asked “Do you understand what you are reading?” He answered “How can I unless someone guides me?” (8:31) So Philip began with the scripture he was reading, and proclaimed to him the good news of Jesus. Then they came to some water and the eunuch said, “Look, here is some water! What is to prevent me from being baptized?” Philip responded, “If you believe with all your heart, you may.”

Whether the eunuch was gay or not, we do not know, but his sexual orientation was completely irrelevant to whether he could become a Christian.

If there were some authentic scriptural basis for excluding the Ethiopian eunuch because of the real possibility he was a homosexual, we can be sure that Philip, a man who followed God even when God led him into the wilderness, would have been quick to pursue it.

Ruth 1:16-17

“Do not press me to leave you or to turn back from following you! Where you go, I will go; where you lodge I will lodge; your people shall be my people, and your God my God. Where you die, I will die - there will I be buried. May the Lord do thus and so to me, and more as well, if even death parts me from you!”



(*The Children are Free* by Rev. Jeff Miner and John Tyler Connoley is heavily quoted in the following.)

Naomi's husband Elimelech dies shortly after arriving in Moab. Several years pass, and Naomi's sons marry Ruth and Orpah, two women from the surrounding country. But before they can have children, the sons also die. Naomi, Ruth, and Orpah are left alone with no husbands or sons.

To understand the full impact of what happened, when this story was written, woman had only two acceptable places in society: They could be a daughter in their father's household or a wife in their husband's household. A woman without a man had no standing. There are Old Testament accounts of widows who almost starved, and so we see the reminders to “look after the widows and orphans” since they were among the most vulnerable people in society. One of the greatest sins of Sodom and Gomorrah as it is documented repeatedly in the Bible is that they did not care for their poor and needy, which would have encompassed their widows.

So Naomi, recognizing her fate as a widow, decides to return to her father's family, and counsels her daughters-in-law to do the same. Orpah returns to her home, but Ruth clings to Naomi and makes the moving declaration in the above verses.

When Ruth spoke those haunting words, “Where you die, I will die - there will I be buried,” she wasn't talking about some theoretical distant future. She was giving voice to the very real possibility that her decision to place her life in the hands of another woman could result in death.

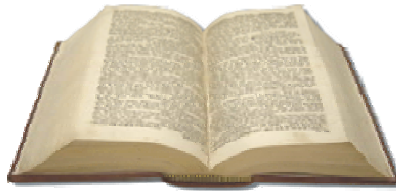
The book of Ruth continues to tell of Ruth and Naomi's life together. The focus is on the quality of their relationship. The biblical storyteller chronicles how Ruth cared for Naomi by taking the only job available to a husbandless woman, gleaning. When the author tells of Ruth's eventual marriage to a much older man, the marriage is portrayed as one of convenience, contrived to help Ruth and Naomi survive. No mention is made of Ruth's love for her husband. When Ruth finally bears a son from her marriage, the text focuses on Naomi and her reaction to the great news, not on the father. In fact, the women of the village (and the author) ignore the father entirely, saying, “A son has been born to Naomi.” (Ruth 4:17) They remind her that Ruth “who loves you, is more to you than seven sons.” (Ruth 4:15) Everyone seems to understand that, for Ruth and Naomi, their most important relationship is the one they share.

Setting aside popular preconceptions of what is possible in the Bible, the book of Ruth reads like the story of two women in love.

Christians have unwittingly acknowledged the validity of this interpretation, by including the vow Ruth made to Naomi in Christian wedding ceremonies for centuries, because it so perfectly captures the essence of the love that should exist between spouses.

I Samuel 18:1-4

When David had finished speaking to Saul, the soul of Jonathan was bound to the soul of David, and Jonathan loved him as his own soul. Saul took him that day and would not let him return to his father's house. Then Jonathan made a covenant with David, because he loved him as his own soul. Jonathan stripped himself of the robe that he was wearing, and gave it to David, and his armor, and even his sword and his bow and his belt.



(The Children are Free by Rev. Jeff Miner and John Tyler Connoley is heavily quoted in the following.)

The author of I and II Samuel is thought to have been a member of King David's court, and so he seems to know many intimate details of David's life and reign, and of his predecessor King Saul.

The preceding passage was the result of Saul being intrigued by David's courage in defeating Goliath, and so he called for David to talk with him. By the conclusion of this meeting, Jonathan apparently fell in love with David! If a female name had replaced that of David's and his gender reference from 'he' and 'him' to 'her' and 'she' in this description of their first encounter, there would be no doubt universally as to the passionate and romantic love which Jonathan had demonstrated. But because the object of Jonathan's affection is a man, cultural prejudice insists (notwithstanding the biblical evidence) that this could not have been more than a deep friendship.

But the author of I Samuel seems to have described a love-at-first-sight encounter that happened to involve two men.

As David's popularity grew, Saul became jealous and wanted to kill David, but Jonathan warned David, and he fled the palace before Saul could act. Jonathan convinced his father to allow David back, but Saul soon planned again to kill David, so he fled again. Jonathan and David met in secret. Jonathan begged David to come back to the palace, but David was afraid for his life, so together they made a plan: Jonathan would go home and try to find out what his father was thinking. If his father had cooled down, he would let David know it was safe. One night, at the royal table, the subject of David came up, and Jonathan spoke on his behalf. This was Saul's reaction:

I Samuel 20:30

"You son of a perverse, rebellious woman! Do I not know that you have chosen the son of Jesse to your own shame and to the shame of your mother's nakedness? For as long as the son of Jesse lives upon the earth, neither you nor your kingdom shall be established."

Many gay men have experienced dinner conversations that sounded very similar to this one. They made the mistake of talking about their lover at the table, and their father became furious. More often than not, the blame goes first to the mother. Then turning his anger toward the son, talking about the shame he's bringing upon the family, and dashing hopes of any sort of career unless he gives up such foolishness.

Further, Saul's reference to uncovering the nakedness of a family member was a euphemism for incest in the holiness codes of the Old Testament, so the implication is that Jonathan was bringing sexual shame on his family. Jonathan ran from the table, and that night, he went to tell David the news. This was the result:

I Samuel 20:41,42

David rose from beside the stone heap and prostrated himself with his face to the ground. He bowed three times and they kissed each other and wept with each other; David wept the more. Then Jonathan said to David, 'Go in peace, since both of us have sworn in the name of the Lord, saying, "The Lord shall be between me and you, and between my descendants and your descendants, forever.'" He got up and left, and Jonathan went into the city.

Perhaps they knew this was the end. They certainly knew their love was doomed. Jonathan reminded David that even if they could not be together, they had made a pledge and the bond between them would last through all generations. All their children and grandchildren would be like one family, bound by their love for each other.

Later, after Jonathan had been killed and David had become king, he remembered the covenant, and though he was expected to kill anyone with any connection to the previous rival king, he adopted Jonathan's only son as his own.

In II Samuel, the author tells us that after Saul and Jonathan were killed in battle, David tore his clothes and fasted. He wept and wrote a song, which he ordered all the people of Judah to sing. A portion of the song is:

II Samuel 1:23,26-27

***Saul and Jonathan, beloved and lovely!
In life and in death they were not divided;
they were swifter than eagles,
they were stronger than lions.***

***How the mighty have fallen in the midst of battle!
Jonathan lies slain upon your high places
I am distressed for you my brother Jonathan;***

***Greatly beloved were you to me;
your love to me was wonderful, passing the love of women.***

Further, we know of David that he is called "a man after God's own heart." (I Samuel 13:14) He is one of Israel's best-loved kings, he is one of the most prolific writers of Scripture, he is in the lineage of Jesus. And he loved Jonathan.

In conclusion, here is a promise from Isaiah 56:3-5 for “Eunuchs” which is a term we now suspect refers to intersex and gay people...

**Do not let the son of the foreigner
Who has joined himself to the LORD
Speak, saying,**

**“The LORD has utterly separated me
from His people”;
Nor let the eunuch say,**

**“Here I am, a dry tree.”
For thus says the LORD:**

**“To the eunuchs who keep My Sabbaths,
And choose what pleases Me,
And hold fast My covenant,
Even to them I will give in My house
And within My walls a place and a name
Better than that of sons and daughters;
I will give them an everlasting name
That shall not be cut off.**

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