

Paul also teaches:

Now the deeds of the flesh are evident, which are: immorality, impurity, sensuality, (Galatians 5:19)

But do not let immorality or any impurity or greed even be named among you, as is proper among saints; (Ephesians 5:3)

Therefore consider the members of your earthly body as dead to immorality, impurity, passion, evil desire, and greed, which amounts to idolatry. (Colossians 3:5)

Scripture confirms that God forbids immoral sexual relationships. Jesus describes the seriousness of the issue as well as it can be stated in Matthew 5:27-28:

“You have heard that it was said, ‘You shall not commit adultery’; but I say to you, that everyone who looks on a woman to lust for her has committed adultery with her already in his heart. (Matthew 5:27-28)

Before exiting this subject matter, we need to emphasize that believers who have compromised their virginity prior to marriage will be presented to Christ as pure virgins at the marriage ceremony in heaven:

For I am jealous for you with a godly jealousy; for I betrothed you to one husband, that to Christ I might present you as a pure virgin. (2Corinthians 11:2)

...that He might present to Himself the church in all her glory, having no spot or wrinkle or any such thing; but that she should be holy and blameless. (Ephesians 5:27-28)

Even the nation of Israel, after centuries of disobedience, will return to the Father at the end of the Tribulation. This remnant, after accepting Jesus as Messiah, will return as a pure virgin:

“At that time,” declares the LORD, “I will be the God of all the families of Israel, and they shall be My people.” Thus says the LORD, “The people who survived the sword found grace in the wilderness-Israel, when it went to find its rest.” The LORD appeared to him from afar, saying, “I have loved you with an everlasting love; therefore I have drawn you with lovingkindness. “Again I will build you, and you shall be rebuilt, o virgin of Israel! Again you shall take up your tambourines, and go forth to the dances of the merrymakers. “Again you shall plant vineyards on the hills of Samaria; the planters shall plant and shall enjoy them. “For there shall be a day when watchmen on the hills of Ephraim shall call out, ‘Arise, and let us go up to Zion, to the LORD our God.’” (Jeremiah 31:1-6)

Can there be any doubt that God is a God of grace, love, and forgiveness?

When a society ignores the warnings regarding sexual sin between a man and a woman, greater repercussions occur as described in Romans 1:26-27:

For this reason God gave them over to degrading passions; for their women exchanged the natural function for that which is unnatural, and in the same way also the men abandoned the natural function of the woman and burned in their desire toward one another, men with men committing indecent acts and receiving in their own persons the due penalty of their error. (Romans 1:26-27)

Because their previous unwise choices resulted in a passion to enter into greater rebellion, men desired sexual relationships with men and women with women. As a result, “*God gave them over to*” their desires even though their desires were “*unnatural.*” This stage is next to last and precedes the destruction of a society, for time is normally short when behavior of this type appears. Genesis 18-19, Jude 7, and 2Peter 2:6-8 confirm this fact by addressing the sin and destruction of Sodom.

Three men appeared to Abraham, one of Whom was the Lord (Genesis 18:1-2). The other two men were angels (Genesis 19:1). Angels appear as men, and for this reason “*some [people] have entertained angels without knowing it*” (Hebrews 13:2). As the Lord was departing, He revealed to Abraham that He would visit Sodom to evaluate its sin (Genesis 18:16-21). Abraham, aware that Lot resided there, asked if it was right for Him to “*sweep away the righteous with the wicked*” (Genesis 18:22-23). The Lord promised Abraham that if as many as “*ten*” righteous lived in the city it would not be destroyed (Genesis 18:24-32).

Genesis 19 deals with the events surrounding Lot’s deliverance from wicked Sodom. Lot was sitting in the gate of the city when the two angels arrived (Genesis 19:1). This positioning tells us that Lot held a place of leadership in the city or was close friends with those who did (city officials met at the city gate). Lot asked that the two angels (who appeared as men) stay in his house rather than in the court square (Genesis 19:1-2), for homosexuality ran rampant in the city. Once the angels entered Lot’s home, the men of Sodom asked that they might have sexual relations with Lot’s visitors (Genesis 19:3-5). Lot refused and even offered his two daughters instead (Genesis 19:6-8), but the men of the city objected and turned against him (Genesis 19:9). Lot’s two visitors (the two angels) rescued him and struck the mob with blindness (Genesis 19:10-11). Lot was then delivered from the city (Genesis 19:12-29).

This account places Jude 7 in proper context:

Just as Sodom and Gomorrah and the cities around them, since they in the same way as these indulged in gross immorality and went after strange flesh, are exhibited as an example, in undergoing the punishment of eternal fire. (Jude 7)

Genesis 18-19 verifies the type of sin that Jude is addressing while stating: “*indulged in gross immorality and went after strange flesh.*” According to Jamieson, Fausset and Brown, “*Strange flesh*” refers to “departing from the course of nature.”¹ Consequently,

“*strange flesh*” points to men with men and women with women, homosexuality and lesbianism in other words, “*unnatural*” acts according to Romans 1:26-27.

Merriam Webster’s definition of “natural” is:

“...in conformity with the ordinary course of nature...”ⁱⁱ

Thus, the “*unnatural*” of Romans 1:26-27 points to that which is not “in conformity with the ordinary course of nature”—something out of the ordinary. Homosexuality and lesbianism are “*unnatural*” lifestyles contrary to God’s original design. Thus, Lot was “*oppressed by the sensual conduct*” of the inhabitants of Sodom:

and if He condemned the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah to destruction by reducing them to ashes, having made them an example to those who would live ungodly thereafter; and if He rescued righteous Lot, oppressed by the sensual conduct of unprincipled men (for by what he saw and heard that righteous man, while living among them, felt his righteous soul tormented day after day with their lawless deeds), (2Peter 2:6-8)

Even during the days of the judges the same behavioral flaws were manifested. They were manifested because “*every man did what was right in his own eyes*” (Judges 17:6) rather than what was right in God’s eyes. Homosexuality prevailed, for in Judges 19 men from the tribe of Benjamin desired to perform homosexual acts with a Levite, again confirming the type of sin that prevails when God’s truth is replaced with man’s fleshly desires:

While they were making merry, behold, the men of the city, certain worthless fellows, surrounded the house, pounding the door; and they spoke to the owner of the house, the old man, saying, “Bring out the man who came into your house that we may have relations with him.” (Judges 19:22)

We should be grieved as we observe the downward spiral of morality within our land, for our souls are “*tormented day after day with their lawless deeds*” (2Peter 2:8). However, God’s grace will sustain and “*rescue*” us for Peter writes:

then the Lord knows how to rescue the godly from temptation, ... (2Peter 2:9)

What a mighty, faithful, and loving God we serve! Yet, our land is accepting this corrupt lifestyle on an ever-increasing basis—confirming God’s ability to predict sin’s toll on a wayward people. The fact that Paul penned these words some two thousand years ago verifies that truth is not only unchanging and fixed, but also applicable to any society in any season of time. Yes, truth is eternal and impossible to alter, regardless of how man perceives it in this present age. Note: God loves the adulterer and homosexual, for He accepts them with open arms when they repent and exercise faith while depraved. However, their sinful actions break His heart. After all, marriage communicates that God

alone is enough; adultery communicates that God alone is not enough; homosexuality communicates that God is not needed at all.

Before leaving this topic, I would like to describe a personal experience that gave me tremendous compassion for those involved in a homosexual lifestyle.

One evening, I was counseling a man who desired to be freed from his homosexual past. He was a believer in Christ, but his previous experiences had generated habits and memories that persistently unsettled his soul. On top of this, he had developed a friendship with a man with homosexual tendencies. When his friend walked by the room where we were talking, I noticed a dramatic change in the man I was counseling. He had broken into a sweat and was bolting for the door when I stood in his way to prevent his leaving. The expression on his face of reckless abandonment, rage and evil intent, yet tempered with an unnerving look of despair, remains etched in my mind to this day. I could visibly observe (and feel) the powers of darkness waging war with the power of light. Never have I witnessed an environment more intense than that moment. When I said, "Over my dead body will you leave this room," the Spirit of God extinguished the darkness and he wept. He then thanked me for blocking his path and a few months later married a wonderful lady whose passion is Christ. He has remained faithful to the Lord and is a wonderful testimony of God's grace. After all, he, as a believer, was not a homosexual. He was a saint who struggled with the sin of homosexuality. A great difference exists between these two perspectives, as will be validated throughout the remainder of this study.

I believe that Jesus Christ can deliver an individual from any spiritual stronghold. This fact is confirmed time and time again in the Scriptures, and my experience that evening is a living testimony to the validity of God's transforming power.

As was addressed earlier, Ephesians 5:25-27 states that Christ, Who is referenced as "He," will be married to the "church," which is referenced as "she":

Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself up for her; that He might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word, that He might present to Himself the church in all her glory, having no spot or wrinkle or any such thing; but that she should be holy and blameless. (Ephesians 5:25-27)

Marriage, therefore, is between a man and woman, as indicated by Ephesians 5:31-33:

For this cause a man shall leave his father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife; and the two shall become one flesh. This mystery is great; but I am speaking with reference to Christ and the church. Nevertheless let each individual among you also love his own wife even as himself; and let the wife see to it that she respect her husband. (Ephesians 5:31-33)

The words "his" and "himself," along with "she" and "her husband," verify that Christ, Who is male in gender, will marry the church, which is female in gender. Scripture, therefore, defines the proper and natural definition of marriage. A man is to marry a woman, not a man. A woman is to marry a man, not a woman. Man with man or

woman with woman is “unnatural,” as shown by Romans 1:26-27. After all, Adam and Eve were commanded to “Be fruitful and multiply,” something that a same-sex marriage cannot fulfill due to the “unnatural” nature of the union:

And God created man in His own image, in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them. And God blessed them; and God said to them, “Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth, and subdue it; and rule over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the sky, and over every living thing that moves on the earth.” (Genesis 1:27-28)

God will in no way accept unrepentant sinners who reject the gospel. In fact, He will give them over to their sin (Acts 7:42; Romans 1:24, 28), never forcing them to obey. For this reason Paul writes:

But we know that the Law is good, if one uses it lawfully, realizing the fact that law is not made for a righteous man, but for those who are lawless and rebellious, for the ungodly and sinners, for the unholy and profane, for those who kill their fathers or mothers, for murderers and immoral men and homosexuals and kidnappers and liars and perjurers, and whatever else is contrary to sound teaching, according to the glorious gospel of the blessed God, with which I have been entrusted. (1Timothy 1:8-11)

Or do you not know that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived; neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor homosexuals, nor thieves, nor the covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor swindlers, shall inherit the kingdom of God. And such were some of you; but you were washed, but you were sanctified, but you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, and in the Spirit of our God. (1Corinthians 6:9-11)

Homosexuality is a sinful deed in the eyes of the Father. Yet, once homosexuals exercise repentance and faith while depraved, they are made into holy and blameless saints by the God Who loves and saves them. They will be tempted to return to their previous lifestyle, just as all believers are tempted to return to the sins of their past. God’s grace, however, when accepted by the passionate pursuer of truth, will bring deliverance.

The final stage of a rebellious populace is described by Romans 1:28-32, verses that explain the fruit of a “reprobate mind” (KJV):

And even as they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, God gave them over to a reprobate mind, to do those things which are not convenient; (Romans 1:28 KJV)

And just as they did not see fit to acknowledge God any longer, God gave them over to a depraved mind, to do those things which are not proper, (Romans 1:28 NASB)

The NASB uses “*depraved mind*,” yet the context is better suited for “*reprobate mind*” found in the KJV. Every person is born depraved, for all people are Adam’s descendants. Not everyone, however, follows the rebellious path described in these passages. A “*reprobate mind*” (KJV) not only rejects truth but also basks in “*things which are not proper*”—the final stage before a society is completely destroyed. Paul describes the behavior exhibited by such individuals in verses 29-32:

being filled with all unrighteousness, wickedness, greed, evil; full of envy, murder, strife, deceit, malice; they are gossips, slanderers, haters of God, insolent, arrogant, boastful, inventors of evil, disobedient to parents, without understanding, untrustworthy, unloving, unmerciful; and, although they know the ordinance of God, that those who practice such things are worthy of death, they not only do the same, but also give hearty approval to those who practice them. (Romans 1:29-32 NASB)

Paul’s description of a “*reprobate*” society could very easily describe America today. Yet, with all of the rebellion and decadence addressed in these passages, Paul solidifies the fact that the depraved, even those who have become “*reprobate*,” know “*the ordinance of God*.” In fact, they know enough truth to realize that “*those who practice such things are worthy of death*.” Therefore, Romans 1:29-32 describes something other than a spiritual corpse, for these individuals can comprehend the consequence of sin. Comprehension can be obtained only through understanding, to some degree at least, unadulterated truth! If the “*reprobate*” can draw such conclusions, the depraved who have been less rebellious can comprehend even more. After all, Adam, subsequent to sinning in the garden and becoming depraved, understood his nakedness:

Then the eyes of both of them were opened, and they knew that they were naked; and they sewed fig leaves together and made themselves loin coverings. (Genesis 3:7)

Even though we were born with the same nature that Adam possessed after he sinned (the Adamic nature, sinful nature, old self, old man, dead spirit—all synonymous terms), we could realize that we were naked (sinful) in our depravity, repent of our sins, exercise personal faith, and receive God’s salvation. No one is born a spiritual corpse incapable of comprehending truth—as some have wrongfully supposed. The third book in our God’s Heart series, *God’s Heart as it Relates to Depravity*, covers this subject in great depth.

As a nation, we are presently headed toward the last stage at an alarming rate. Can you see the need to equip ourselves with truth? A great battle awaits us, and we must be ready.

ⁱ Jamieson, Robert, Fausset, A. R., & Brown, David. (Reference on Jude 1:7, “Strange Flesh”). <<http://www.biblestudytools.com/commentaries/jamieson-fausset-brown/jude/jude-1.html>>.

ⁱⁱ Merriam Webster, <<http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/natural>>.