



LGBT AND THE BIBLE

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Part I

INTRODUCTION

From a biblical perspective, the book of Genesis is known as the book of “beginnings” and not only serves as an introduction to the entire Bible but also introduces the creation of heaven and earth, the fall (sin), redemption, murder, judgment, hope, the flood, deliverance, nations, and the perspective of mankind being the crowning point of God’s creation to be able to enjoy fellowship with Him and bring glory to His name. However, of particular interest for this discussion is the scriptural account of the beginning of mankind (male and female in Genesis 1:27-28) and marriage between a man and a woman (Genesis 2:24). These verses clearly state – *“Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and they shall become one flesh.”*

Although God’s commandment for marriage is between a man and a woman, this biblical directive has been under aggressive opposition since the late 1960’s and has currently advanced to a secular acceptance of marriage equality of numerous sexual designations in addition to the modern common initials of **LGBT** that stands for lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender that represents an increasing diversity of sexuality and gender-based cultures. This growing sexual diversity - with a host of designations and re-interpretation of scripture – is also presenting a formidable challenge to biblical authority and the Christian Church to be accepted as mainstream diversity. Unfortunately, this challenge has recently been strengthened by the 2014 release of the book *God and the Gay Christian: The Biblical Case in Support of Same-Sex Relationships* that has received support from multiple clergy.

To better understand this subject and its increasing challenge to biblical Scripture and authority, the Christian Church and Christians let's begin by looking at (1) definitions of the common terms that are used to describe various facets of this ideology, (2) its modern history, (3) the book *God and the Gay Christian*, (4) Queer Theology, (5) Are There Gay Christians? (6) Is Homosexuality A choice Or Genetic And unchangeable, (7) Should I Attend A Friend's Gay Wedding? and finally, (8) The Response Of Christians And The Christian Church.

DEFINITIONS

The following terms (in no particular order) are representative of common mainstream self-designations that have been adopted by the majority of sexuality and gender identity-based community centers and the secular media in the United States and various other countries. This list illustrates today's expanded diversity from yesterday's terms - male, female, and heterosexual.

- **LGBT:** An abbreviation for lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender that has been used since the 1990's.
- **LGBTQ:** A variant of LGBT for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer theology.
- **Queer Theology:** This is an umbrella term for anyone with a marginalized sexual orientation or gender identity that does not fall into the four categories of LGBT.
- **GSD:** An abbreviation for gender and sexual diversity. Can be used as a replacement term for LGBTQ.
- **Asexuality:** The lack of sexual attraction or low interest.
- **Transgender:** Change in someone's gender identity (self-identification as a man, woman, neither or both).
- **Transvestism:** The practice of dressing and acting in a style or manner traditionally associated with another gender. Can include other terms such as cross dressers, drag kings, drag queens, etc.
- **Homosexuality:** Romantic/sexual attraction between members of the same sex/gender.
- **Heterosexual:** Romantic/sexual attraction between persons of opposite sex/gender.
- **Bisexuality:** Romantic/sexual attraction towards both males and females.
- **Gay:** Popular term for homosexual males, although can be applied to both homosexual males and females.
- **Lesbian:** Popular term for homosexual females.
- **Sexual Orientation:** A term used to describe a person's romantic/sexual attraction to another person.

- **Coming Out:** The term used to describe the experience in which a person identifies himself/herself as gay, lesbian or bisexual.
- **Emerging Church:** A radically open and non-conservative worldwide theological movement that believes there is value and virtue in uncertainty about scripture. The belief is that we are not supposed to understand precisely what the Bible means or from a more simple perspective, it is a denial of the clarity of Scripture.
- **Liberation Theology:** A religious school of thought beginning with Latin American Catholics according to which the Gospel of Christ demands that the church concentrate its efforts on liberating the people of the world from poverty and oppression. However, when applied to queer theology and the biblical exodus narrative, the focus becomes a desire to find acceptance for gay people by and within the church.
- **Metropolitan Community Church:** A large international self-identified Protestant Christian denomination with a specific outreach to lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender families and communities.

HISTORY

In reality, the *open desire* for acceptance of marriage equality began in North America with the Metropolitan Community Church (MCC) and with recent support from the secular media and the current White House as follows:

- The MCC was founded in Los Angeles in 1968 and presently consists of 222 member congregations in 37 countries with Official Observer status with the World Council of Churches. Every MCC church is required to celebrate the Eucharist at least once a week (and practice open communion), offer a picture of Christianity and religion which celebrates God's diverse creativity, and bring the message of God's love to homosexual persons.
- In December of 1968, the first same-sex wedding ceremony in the United States was performed at the MCC.
- In December 1969, the Los Angeles Times carries a break-through story "A Church for Homosexuals" and details programs and ministries of the MCC. This story breaks the Times long standing policy against coverage of LGBT events and the use of the word "homosexual."
- In December 1971, Life magazine prints an article in its year-end review issue titled Homosexuals in Revolution: A Church for Homosexuals.
- In 1972, the first Canadian same-sex wedding is performed at the MCC in Los Angeles and then the wedding party flies to Canada to hold a press conference for same-sex marriage rights.
- In 1975, the MCC performs the first same-sex wedding in Denver, Colorado.

- In 1994, the MCC performs the first mass lesbian-gay blessing of couples in Rio in South America.
- In 2000, the MCC performs the world's largest celebration of same-gender marriage for 3,000 couples on the steps of the Lincoln Memorial in Washington D.C. as part of the Millennium March on Washington for Equality.
- In 2001, the MCC files a lawsuit to have same-sex marriages legalized in Canada.
- In 2003, the Supreme Court of Ontario legalizes same-gender marriage throughout Ontario, Canada.
- In 2004, the MCC files the first federal lawsuit for same-gender marriages in the United States.
- In 2006, same-sex marriage is legalized in South Africa.
- In 2008, the California Supreme Court rules in favor of same-gender marriage in California.
- In 2010, female MCC clergy members are legally married in the District of Columbia on the first day it becomes legal.
- In 2011, Australia's governing Labor Party changes their position to pro marriage equality.
- In 2012, marriage equality is secured for the first time in Maryland, Maine, and Washington.
- In 2013, the United States Supreme Court strikes down a key provision of the Defense of Marriage Act (DOMA).
- In May 2014, President Obama issues a Presidential Proclamation - Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender Pride Month for June 2014. The following excerpts are from the Proclamation:
 - *As progress spreads from State to State, as justice is delivered in the courtroom, and as more of our fellow Americans are treated with dignity and respect – our Nation becomes not only more accepting, but more equal as well. During Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender (LGBT) Pride Month, we celebrate victories that have affirmed freedom and fairness, and we recommit ourselves to completing the work that remains.*
 - *My Administration proudly stands alongside all those who fight for LGBT rights.*
- The feature article for the June 9, 2014 issue of Time magazine (with related cover photo) states – The Transgender Tipping Point, America's next civil rights frontier.
- As of 2014, 19 states in the United States have legalized same-sex marriages.

- Currently, the secular media continues to portray homosexuality and same-sex marriage as a desire for equality and equal rights.

THE BOOK - GOD AND THE GAY CHRISTIAN

In 2012, Matthew Vines - an openly homosexual man and also a professing Christian - posted a self-made YouTube video (that received national attention) calling for the church to affirm same-sex relationships. In 2013 he again garnered national attention when he started his ministry titled The Reformation Project and hosted a conference that focused on teaching people how to reform the church on the issue of homosexuality. Then in April of 2014, he released his new book *God and the Gay Christian: The Biblical Case In Support Of Same-Sex Relationships* that attempts to justify a biblical case for a homosexual lifestyle by reinterpreting, deleting, or ignoring portions of scripture to make scripture fit his worldview.

After a review of the book, some Christian leaders have offered glowing comments as follows:

- *"It is a game changer. Winsome, accessible, and carefully researched, every page is brought to life by the author's clear love for Scripture and deep, persistent faith. Matthew Vines emerges as one of my generation's most important Christian leaders"* – Rachel Held Evans, Christian author
- *"Vines work is a significant contribution, not only to scholarly conversation, but also for the average person who wants to think more deeply about God, the Bible, and the Gay Christian"* – James Brownson, professor of New Testament at Western Theological Seminary in Michigan
- *"For anyone who wants to know why some evangelicals find that the Bible does not condemn same gender marriage, Matthew Vines book answers the question. Christians who oppose gay marriage should consider what he has to say"* – Tony Campolo, professor emeritus of sociology at Eastern University

As these types of comments proliferate from the clergy on the basic subject of same gender marriage, LBGT and related ideologies, books from Matthew Vines and other similar materials will appear to be more mainstream not only in global secular society but in the Christian Church as well. Additionally, this viewpoint also has the potential to mislead people (secular and Christian alike) to believe the homosexual lifestyle is consistent with Scripture. This perspective can also lead to an increasing acceptance of the homosexual lifestyle within the Christian Church. As Dr. Mohler, president of Southern Baptist Theological Seminary has commented on Vine's book, *"Soon, there will be no place to hide, and there will be no way to remain silent."*

Before we take a brief look at Matthew Vines book and its comments regarding same-sex relationships, homosexuality and the Bible, let's first consider that God's definition of marriage and condemnation of homosexuality is abundantly clear from the very beginning of the Bible as follows:

Marriage

Genesis explains what marriage between two humans' looks like in God's design as follows:

- Genesis 1:27 – *So God created man in His own image; in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them.*"
- Genesis 2:24 – *"Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and they shall become one flesh."*
- Mark 10:6-9 – *"But from the beginning of the creation, God made them male and female. For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh; so then they are no longer two, but one flesh. Therefore, what God has joined together, let not man separate."* (see Matt. 19:5)

Homosexuality

All homosexual behavior is prohibited and condemned by God as follows:

- Lev. 18:22 – *"You shall not lie with a male as with a woman."*
- Lev. 20:13 – *"If a man lies with a male as he lies with a woman, both of them have committed an abomination."*
- Rom. 1:26 – *"For this reason God gave them up to vile passions. For even their women exchanged the natural use for what is against nature. Likewise also the men, leaving the natural use of the woman, burned in their lust for one another, men with men committing what is shameful, and receiving in themselves the penalty of their error which was due."*
- I Cor. 6:9 – *"Do not be deceived. Homosexuals will not inherit the kingdom of God."*
- I Tim 1:10 – *"The law is not made for a righteous person, but for the lawless and insubordinate, for the ungodly, and for sinners, for fornicators (homosexuals), etc."*

Now, let's examine **two** of the interpretations of Matthew Vines book and how he attempts to re-interpret scripture so it fits his worldview interpretation of same-sex relationships and homosexuality (for a complete review of the book, go to the website at AIG.org to access the response to Matthew Vines by Dr. Albert Mohler).

Same-Sex Relationships

From the beginning of the book, Vines separates specific passages from the flow of the biblical narrative, particularly scripture dealing with the meaning of human, both male and female. His primary opinion is the church has misinterpreted the doctrine of human sexuality in that male and female is neither essential to Genesis 1&2 or to any following texts. Further, he believes that same-

sex sexuality can be a part of the original creation. As an example, when God said *“it is not good for man to be alone”* the solution to the isolation of Adam could be a sexual relationship with someone of either sex.

Next, Vines believes that God’s command to be *“fruitful and multiply”* is secondary to finding a satisfying relationship - which according to Vines is in the eye of the beholder. Vines also believes that Eve was a woman *“out of necessity”* as Adam’s and Eve’s sameness, not their gender difference was what made them appropriate partners. In effect, Vines believes there is no clear biblical definition of marriage, rather marriage is based on *“sameness”* – even if that perspective means two women or two men enter a same-sex marriage.

Note: From a biblical perspective, Genesis 2:24 and Matthew 19:4-6 makes it clear that there is no other option for another marriage arrangement such as a man being joined to a man, woman joined to a woman, etc.

Homosexuality

As we have previously discussed, there are numerous verses that specifically deal with homosexuality from the following three standpoints:

- Homosexuals will not inherit the kingdom of God (I Cor. 6:9).
- Homosexuality is an abomination (Lev. 20:13).
- Homosexuality is a shameless and vile passion (Rom. 1:26).

Although there are other similar verses that deal with the same issue, the preceding three verses clearly condemn homosexuality and state that homosexuals will not inherit the kingdom of God! So, how does Vines book attempt to alleviate the clarity of scripture and offer a false sense of hope to a homosexual male or female person? Remarkably, Vines believes the Apostle Paul was not fully aware of homosexuality and wrote against it in I Corinthians out of ignorance. As an example, here is how Vines justifies the sixth chapter of I Corinthians – *“The context in which Paul discussed same-sex relations differs so much from our own that it can’t reasonably be called the same issue.”*

As a counterpoint to Vines assertion that same-sex relations are much different today than in Paul’s day, homosexuality dramatically appears in Genesis 19:4-11 in the account of Sodom and Gomorrah and has continued throughout human history. Additionally, Nero was the Roman Emperor during the time Paul wrote Corinthians and had a full wedding to marry a young boy named Sporas. Life was the same in Paul’s day as modern times.

Part II
July 8, 2014

QUEER THEOLOGY

Another aspect of the gay movement or LGBT ideology that should be briefly considered for an informational perspective is queer theology that is defined as *“anyone with a marginalized sexual orientation or gender identity that would not be classified under the four categories of LGBT.”* In conjunction with the Emerging Church (a radically open and non-conservative worldwide theological movement that does not believe in the clarity of scripture), queer theology seeks to actively make a new theology, one in which the Bible is *“interpreted through the lens of queer, trans, and gay/lesbian experience.”* Biblical passages typically used against the LGBT community are re-examined followed by an outline of the tenets of emerging queer theology. Consider the following tenets of liberation and biblical re-interpretation as stated by the paper Queer Theology: Reclaiming Christianity for the LGBT Community:

Liberation

“The queer community needs to be liberated from the heterosexism latent in Christian theology. Queer theology can become a legitimate practice and mode of biblical exegesis if the queer community can liberate heterosexuality biased Christian theology. Queer Christians need to reclaim their right to participate in Christianity and detail their experiences as gay and lesbian Christians. Christianity has traditionally been a patriarchal and heterosexual institution. Queer people challenge the patriarchal and heterosexual culture of Christianity by refusing to accept the rules laid out by traditional Christian theology, namely that one must follow the rule of males and be heterosexual. The queer community can reclaim Christian theology for themselves using the model of liberation theology to create a queer theology.”

Biblical Re-interpretation

“There are many branches of Christianity that use scripture to condemn gays and lesbians as an abomination or perversion. This condemnation comes from a literal reading of the Bible, but it is important to remember the context and original languages the Bible was written in. Some branches of progressive Christianity have moved to a more modern and inclusive reading of the Scriptures which focuses attention on the love preached by Jesus so as to welcome gays and lesbians into full inclusion of the church. Even with more Christian traditions heading towards inclusion, such as the Presbyterian Church, the majority of Christians incorrectly believe the Bible condemns gays and lesbians. It is important to note that this erroneous belief has led to devastating policies that unfairly target gays and lesbians because of their supposed immorality. In addition to these policies, the psychological damage done to LGBT individuals as a result of the church’s stance is immeasurable.”

Many people who adhere to LGBT and Queer Theologies are well aware of biblical Scripture that explicitly denotes homosexuality as sin. However, how do the aforementioned theologies co-exist with biblical Scripture? The answer is found in the re-interpretation of Scripture to fit their worldview and starts in the very first chapter of Genesis. The following two examples are re-interpretations of biblical scripture that are found in Queer and LGBT Theology and are also similar to the same re-interpretations of biblical scripture that are found in Matthew Vines book:

(1) *"The first chapter of the first book of the Bible is often used to argue against homosexuality. In Genesis 1 God makes all the beings on the earth, including humans. Genesis 1:27 reads – So God created humankind in His image, in the image of God He created them; male and female He created them – The term humankind in Hebrew is adam. Adam is genderless; it simply means humankind. Genesis 1 shows how humans are made in God's image. Using Genesis 1 to advocate for heterosexual marriage is an artificial construct designed to deny the rights of marriage to those who are homosexual. Genesis 1 simply states that God created humans in His image and then continues with the commandment to be fruitful and multiply. The best way for humans to be fruitful is to bond together in community. The commandment to multiply, if taken literally, can also be achieved by all couples, gay, or straight, through technological advances."*

(2) *"In Genesis 2:18 God seeks to create a partner for the first human out of the rib of the first human. There is no male or female before this; rather, there is just a human being. The English reads – a suitable partner – which is understood to mean a man and a woman. However, the original Hebrew was – ezer kenegdo – which means equal strength or corresponding help. In this verse, rather than finding an argument for the complementary partnership of male and female there is actually an argument in favor of same-sex relationships because human beings are portrayed from the very beginning as needing a partner and that partner does not have a clearly defined gender."*

Note: As opposed to the preceding definitions of Adam, and ezer kenegdo, Strong's Hebrew Concordance defines Adam as man, human being and humankind. The Hebrew expression ezer denotes helper (or supplying what the man was lacking) and the Hebrew expression kenegedo literally means according to the opposite of him.

To view further examples of reinterpreting Scripture from a queer theological viewpoint, Google Queer Christ: A Primer on LGBT Theology and Queer Theology: Reclaiming Christianity for the LGBT Community.

IS HOMOSEXUALITY A CHOICE OR GENETIC AND UNCHANGEABLE?

This question has been at the forefront of homosexual ideology for decades, but never more than today as homosexuality, same-sex marriages, and other forms of sexual orientations strive to become more mainstream and also perceived as ordinary. Although the answer to choice or genetics can vary depending on who is giving their opinion, modern secular science has currently been unable to conclusively answer this question. However, if we look at biblical scripture (which secular science refuses to do), the Bible does clarify this issue.

Note: It must be remembered that although men wrote the Bible, God, the creator of the universe, earth, and specifically, humankind, inspired them. Therefore, God is well qualified to discuss the issue of choice or genetics as applied to His creation.

With the preceding thoughts in mind, let's examine I Corinthians 6:9-11 where the Apostle Paul is writing to the Corinthian Church in Corinth who had a serious problem with worldliness – *“(9) Do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived. Neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor homosexuals, nor sodomites, (10) nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners will inherit the kingdom of God. (11) 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 and by the Spirit of our God.”*

Beginning in verse 9, Paul emphatically states that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God and follows with Christians should not be deceived. Paul then uses verses 9 through 10 to give examples of unrighteous people;

- Fornicators: People who indulge in sexual immorality, particularly unmarried persons.
- Idolaters: Worship of any false god or follow any false religious system. Not surprisingly, fornicators and idolaters have always been historically connected.
- Adulterers: Married persons who indulge in sexual acts outside their marriage.
- Effeminate: Passive homosexual partners.
- Homosexuals: People who exchange and corrupt normal male-female sexual roles and relations. Included are transvestism, sex changes, and other gender perversions.
- Sodomites: Although sodomites and homosexuality go together, sodomites are so named because the sin of male-male sex dominated the city of Sodom. This sinful perversion is always condemned in any form by scripture.
- Thieves: Greed. Thieves actually take something that does not belong to them.
- Covetous: People who desire what belongs to others.

- Drunkards: Under the influence such as alcohol, drugs, etc.
- Revilers: People who try to destroy others with words.
- Extortioners: Swindlers and embezzlers who steal indirectly, taking unfair advantage of others for their own financial gain.

This portion of scripture clarifies that people who are *characterized* by the aforementioned iniquities are not saved and are not going to heaven. While believers can and do commit these sins, they do not characterize them as an unbroken life pattern. An unbroken life pattern demonstrates that a person is not in God's kingdom. True believers are characterized by people who do sin, resent that sin and seek to gain the victory over it.

Following verses 9 and 10, Paul then makes another emphatic statement in verse 11: - *"And some were such as you. But you were washed, but you were sanctified, but you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus and by the Spirit of our God."* This verse clearly states that although the Corinthian Church congregation was comprised of sinners – some of whom were guilty of homosexuality and other sexual perversions – they had now been changed as follows:

- **Washed:** Refers to a new life through spiritual cleansing and regeneration (John 3:3-8, 2 Cor. 5:17, Eph. 2:10, Titus 3:5).
- **Sanctified:** This results in new behavior that a new life always produces. Sin's total domination is broken and replaced by a new pattern of obedience and holiness. Though not perfection, this is a new direction (Rom. 6:17, 18, and 22).
- **Justified:** This refers to a new standing before God, in which the Christian is clothed in Christ's righteousness (Rom. 3:26, 4:22-25, 2 Cor. 5:21, Phil. 3:8-9, 1 Peter 3:18).
- **By the Spirit:** The Holy Spirit is the agent of salvation's transformation (John 3:3-5).

Applied to the Bible and LGBT debate - and particularly when homosexuality is alleged to be generic and unchangeable - I Corinthians 6:9-11 provides a clear understanding to this discussion as follows:

- The unrighteous are not going to inherit the kingdom of God.
- Homosexuality, sodomy, and fornicators are not unique sin-issues as they are listed with other common sins.
- Paul settles this issue by using a past and present perspective.
- The past refers to some in the congregation who were past homosexuals, sodomites and fornicators (*some of you*).
- The present refers to the same homosexuals, sodomites and fornicators who had received a new life (*washed, sanctified and justified*).

- This scripture clearly indicates that the homosexual lifestyle is not generic and unchangeable, instead it is a sin that can either continue as un-repentant or can be changed to a new life through Christ by a genuine repentance and new pattern of obedience to Christ.

Part III July 28, 2014

ARE THERE GAY CHRISTIANS?

To address this question, let's first revisit three principal considerations as follows:

- The definition of a gay person: A popular term for homosexual males, although it can be applied to both homosexual males and females.
- Matthew Vines believes that his orientation to homosexual behavior is just a part of who he is and is unchangeable (as well as applying to other homosexual persons).
- The fact that scripture condemns homosexual behavior and describes it as *"against nature and shameful"* (Romans 1:26-27, I Timothy 1:10,) and all homosexual behavior is *"an abomination"* (Leviticus 18:22).

With these thoughts in mind, and using Matthew Vines' book as a template, our initial focus in secular philosophies and Vines' book is that people form identities based on their experiences and feelings - which is an experience-based thought process. As a result, it is alleged that homosexual behavior is just a part of a homosexual person and as a result, is used by Christians who fight with same-sex attraction to adopt the term gay Christian. However, this descriptor by a *"professing Christian who has repented of their sin"* - is problematic, as Christians are not defined by their sin but by their new life in Christ. The obvious dilemma is that 2 Corinthians 5:17 states - *"Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new."* Not surprisingly, scripture repetitively confirms that believers have a new life and identity in Christ as their identity is not substantiated and/or characterized by their homosexual sin. Obviously some repentant Christians who have dealt with same-sex attractions will continue to encounter the same temptation for some or all of the rest of their lives. But, homosexuality is like anger, pride, and heterosexual lust that are sinful desires, not an orientation that is a part of a person and unchangeable (see the next section titled *Is Homosexuality A Choice or Genetic and Unchangeable* for additional information on this subject).

So, what is the answer to the Christian who struggles with the desires and temptations of homosexuality? The clear answer is repentance as found in Proverbs 3:7 - *"Fear the Lord and depart from evil,"* Amos 5:14 - *"Seek good, not*

evil,” 1 Thessalonians 5:22 – *“Abstain from every form of evil,”* and 2 Timothy 2:22 – *“Flee also youthful lusts but pursue righteousness, faith, love, peace with those who call upon the Lord out of a pure heart.”* Notice the central theme of these verses is to flee evil, not embrace it and make it a part of your being. The assertion that homosexuality is part of a Christians identity does not agree with Scripture.

As a result of the preceding scriptures clear stand on homosexuality and the fact that a true Christian has a new identity in Christ, is a new creation, and all things have become new, the question of can a homosexual be a Christian is answered from the biblical perspective of true repentance. If a homosexual person calls himself or herself a Christian and is unrepentant, **then how can they be a Christian?**

SHOULD I ATTEND A FRIEND’S GAY WEDDING?

During 2013, President G.W. Bush and his wife Barbara attended a gay wedding of two lesbians – Bonnie Clement and Helen Thorgalsen - that was held in Kennebunkport, Maine. Not surprisingly, this event immediately made national headlines as follows:

- *“Another prominent Republican has come out in support of same-sex marriage – or, at least, in support of one particular same-sex marriage”* – Washington Post
- *“George and Barbara Bush are apparently in favor of same-sex marriage since they not only attended a lesbian couple’s wedding on Saturday, but served as witnesses as well”* - Daily Intelligencer

These news reports point to an emergent reality that a person’s attendance at a gay wedding can signal an agreement to the ceremony. The history of wedding ceremonies typically identifies the attendees as agreeing to the appropriateness of the ceremony/marriage. This is validated by the hosting minister asking the audience to *“speak now or forever hold their peace”* if anyone believes that the future union is invalid. As a result of asking for a validation of the marriage, the audience has a choice to remain silent and confirm the marriage - as well as acting as witnesses - or to publically disagree to the marriage (which is virtually never done).

This conundrum presents a significant dilemma to a Christian who believes that God created marriage to be between one man and one woman (Genesis 2:18-25) and is also invited to attend a same-sex wedding. In this case, they have to decide between honoring the biblical marriage mandate or honoring the wishes of friends, relatives, and/or acquaintances. To illustrate the visual importance of a Christian attending a same-sex wedding, remember that the aforementioned wedded lesbian Bonnie Clement spoke of the Bush’s presence at the wedding as a powerful affirmation that the union was *“real and normal.”* Therefore, the presence of a Christian at a same-sex wedding supports the

validity it is right and normal whether you voice your opinions or not. A Christian cannot allow sentimentality to take precedence over biblical Scripture.

WHAT IS THE RESPONSIBILITY OF THE CHRISTIAN CHURCH?

When considering the responsibility of the Christian Church to the increasing mainstream acceptance of LGBT and related ideologies, the last word that should be at the forefront of this discussion is “*tolerance*.” Today, Christians and the Christian Church are faced with three choices as follows:

- Oppose the LGBT ideology and face the anger of those who are demanding equality and tolerance.
- Tolerate the LGBT ideology.
- Accept the claims of LGBT ideology.

The clear answer to these three choices is found in Matthew that admonishes Christians to be the “*light and salt*” of the world (Matt. 5:13-16). This Scripture negates tolerance and acceptance! Therefore, how should this biblical directive be accomplished? Consider the following suggestions:

- Do not allow yourself to be intimidated by homosexual advocates as their arguments are without merit.
- Be familiar with biblical passages dealing with homosexuality.
- Christians should love the sinner and reject the sin.
- Strive for a balance between condemnation and compassion. This is an essential element of biblical love, and that’s something the homosexual sinner desperately needs.
- Christians and the Christian Church must preach the Gospel and call for repentance in addition to firmly standing on the authority of Scripture as related to homosexual behavior.
- Be able to show a homosexual their error, share the gospel, and call for repentance.
- If necessary, be aware of and able to recommend Christian Recovery programs that specialize in assistance. These programs are easily accessible on the Internet. Several examples are:
 - www.restoredhopenetwork.com (Anne Paulk, a former lesbian who came to faith in Christ, is director of this national recovery organization)
 - Re:Generation Recovery, Watermark Community Church, Dallas, Texas. Specifically, www.watermark.org/media/homosexuality-and-same-sex-marriage-an-apology-an-answer-an-assignment/457/ See Todd Wagner’s message delivered on 6/13/04 (1 hour 19 minutes).
 - Probe Ministries
 - Living Hope Ministries (Keys to recovery from same-sex attractions)

- Celebrate Recovery, Saddleback Community Church, Lake Forrest/Irvine, CA, Rick Warren
- And so on.....
- o Leave the results to God.

CONCLUSION

During the preceding discussion on the debate between biblical and LGBT perspectives, the Bible is clear on the fact that homosexual ideology is viewed by God as sin and is an abomination. However, the Bible is also clear that homosexuality is damaging to a society-nation and can result in the wrath of God as described in Romans 1. Although there are various types of wrath that are initiated by God - such as consequential (a person reaps what they sow), eternal (Hell), eschatological (tribulation), and cataclysmic (flood) - verses 24-28 specifically describes the wrath of abandonment. This specific type of wrath is the result of God abandoning a society-nation that willfully and deliberately suppress the truth that is visible in creation, scripture, and in the heart (conscience).

In preparation to looking at Romans 1:24-28, lets look at Romans 1:18-22 - 18: (18) *"For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who suppress the truth in unrighteousness, (19) because what may be known of God is manifest in them, for God has shown it to them. (20) For since the creation of the world, His invisible attributes are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even His eternal power and Godhead, so that they are without excuse, (21) because, although they knew God, they did not glorify Him as God, nor were thankful, but became futile in their thoughts, and their foolish hearts were darkened. (22) Professing to be wise, they became fools."*

Interestingly, these verses state that:

- o *Unrighteousness*: A result of ungodliness; a lack of conformity in thought, word, and deed to the character and law of God.
- o *Suppress the truth*: Mankind chooses to resist and oppose God's truth by holding fast to their sin.
- o *What may be known of God is manifest in them*: Mankind has knowledge of the truth.
- o *God has shown it to them*: God has shown the truth.
- o *So that they are without excuse* - Mankind is without excuse.
- o *Although they knew God, they did not glorify Him as God, nor were thankful, but became futile in their thoughts, and their foolish hearts were darkened*: Although mankind knew God, they became fools. When mankind rejects the truth, the darkness of spiritual falsehood replaces it.

- *Professing to be wise, they became fools:* Although unrighteous mankind believes they are intelligent, they are fools.

Now, let's look at Romans 1:24-28 that describes the three-step sequence of the wrath of abandonment ("*God gave them up*") of a society-nation by God and see if we can apply this portion of Scripture to our modern society in the United States.

Verses 24-25 – Step One

(24) "*Therefore, God also gave them up to uncleanness, in the lusts of their hearts, to dishonor their bodies among themselves, (25) who exchanged the truth of God for the lie, and worshiped and served the creature rather than the Creator, who is blessed forever.*"

Summary

- *God also gave them up:* This is a judicial term that is used for handing over a prisoner to his sentence. God removes his restraint and allows their sin to run its course.
- *Uncleanness:* Often used for decaying matter. Here, it speaks of sexual immorality that begins in the heart and moves to the body.
- *The lusts of their hearts:* In this context, this refers to sexual sin and indicates the first step is pornography and an obsession with sex. The sexual revolution (sexual liberation) generally began in this country during the 60's and 70's and included increased acceptance of sex outside of traditional marriage, contraception and the pill, public nudity, normalization of pornography, free love, homosexuality (and other alternative forms of sexuality) – all of which were (and are) willingly highlighted by the media and Hollywood.
- *The lie:* A denial of the existence of God and his right to be obeyed and worshiped.
- Currently, the United States has embraced Step One.

Verses 26-27 - Step Two

(26) "*For this reason, God gave them up to vile passions. For even their women exchanged the natural use for what is against nature. (27) Likewise also the men, leaving the natural use of the woman, burned in their lust for one another, men with men committing what is shameful, and receiving in themselves the penalty of their error which was due.*"

Summary

- *God gave them up:* See previous section on verses 24-25.
- *Vile passions:* Homosexuality (man or woman). During the 70's and 80's, the homosexual revolution quickly followed the sexual liberation movement with a growing mainstream acceptance of LGBT ideology, other deviant forms of sexuality, Queer Theology and the Emergent Church.

- *Women*: Women are mentioned first to illustrate the extent of homosexual depravity. Normally, women are the last to participate in moral collapse.
- *Men*: Describes male homosexuality even to the point of burning with lust for other men.
- *Receiving in themselves the penalty*: This phrase centers on the law of sowing and reaping (Gal. 6:7-8) evidenced by the disease of HIV/AIDS.
- Currently, the United States is accommodating Step Two with rapid acceptance.

Verses 28-30 – Step Three

(28) *“And even as they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, God gave them over to a debased mind, to do those things which are not fitting. (29) Being filled with all unrighteousness, sexual immorality, wickedness, covetousness, maliciousness, full of envy, murder, strife, deceit, evil-mindedness; they are whisperers, backbiters, haters of God, violent, proud, boasters, inventors of evil things, disobedient to parents, (31) undiscerning, untrustworthy, unloving, unforgiving, unmerciful; (32) who, knowing the unrighteous judgment of God, that those who practice such things are deserving of death, not only do the same but also approve of those who practice them.”*

Summary

- *God gave them over*: See previous comments in Step One, Summary.
- *Debased*: In the Greek, this is translated as discarded as a result of too much impurity; worthless and useless.
- *Knowing*: Not ignorance but blatant rebellion.
- *Approve of those who practice them*: Become accomplices by willingly approving of the listed unrighteousness that is listed in verses 29-30.
- When looking at the United States of 2014 and our escalating anti-biblical ideology, a strong case can be made that our nation is increasingly incorporating Step Three from the perspective of a *“debased mind”* (minds that do not think right). As an example, consider the following two observations:

(1) Murder

The massive murder of infants from abortion. Since the 1973 Supreme Court case of *Roe Vs. Wade*, 53 million abortions have been performed in the United States from 1973 to 2011. From another perspective, 3 out of 10 women in the United States will have an abortion by the time they are 45. The Greek word *brephos* is used in the Bible to refer to both an unborn child and an infant. By the time a baby is conceived, he or she is recognized by God (Jeremiah 1:5: *“before I formed thee in the belly I knew thee; and before thou came forth out of the womb I sanctified thee”*).

Consequently, the Sixth Commandment of the Bible found in Exodus 20:13 states *“thou shall not kill”* applies to all human beings, including

unborn babies. Additionally, remember that unborn babies are considered human beings by the United States government (i.e., Federal Unborn Victims of Violence Act).

(2) Haters of God

Although it is easy to imagine the fact that some people hate God – remember that many similar words can be substituted for the word hate such as revulsion, disgust, animosity, abhorrence, and distaste – a notable and unashamed example of distaste for God was publicly exhibited during the 2008 and 2012 platform approval process of the National Democratic Party Convention. In the platform, the affirmation of open sex, government provided contraception (i.e., Sandra Fluke during the 2012 convention), approval of abortion (murder), and the removal of God from the platform have characterized the current Democratic Party as the “anti-God” party in addition to affirming the sins of Romans 1.

Additionally, remember that Romans 1:32 mentions “*but also approve of those who practice them.*” The following are three current approval examples:

- President Bill Clinton’s approval ratings increased after the 1998 Monica Lewinsky scandal (he is still revered as a political leader).
- Hollywood and the public at large enthusiastically endorsing the Ellen DeGeneres show (and other shows with effeminate actors).
- The May 2014 Presidential Proclamation for LGBT Pride Month for June 2014.

As a final note, people involved in the LGBT ideology openly publicize that about 10% of our population is gay, yet reliable statistics indicate that less than 3% of the population is gay. Although LGBT is a small percentage of our population, it is notable that a small minority has been very successful in advancing their ideology in the public and political forum. However, one should contemplate the potential results if Christians and the Christian Church were as vocal in becoming the “*light and salt of the world*” of Matthew 5:11!

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