

How Theology Determines Sexuality

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Considered by former president and Founding Father John Adams to be one of America's three most notable Founding Fathers, Dr. Benjamin Rush was an advocate for free public schools for all youth. In fact, he can rightly be called the father of public schools under the Constitution.¹ Dr. Rush once wrote that "the only means of establishing and perpetuating our republican forms of government is the universal education of our youth in the principles of Christianity by means of the Bible."² He also wrote, "The Bible, when not read in schools, is seldom read in any subsequent period of life... [T]he Bible... should be read in our schools in preference to all other books because it contains the greatest portion of that kind of knowledge which is calculated to produce private and public happiness."³ In other words, the father of public schools would be appalled to learn that the Bible is no longer welcome in the American public school system. What was once considered to be the foundation for our educational system is today verging on illegal. This is because societies change; cultures change; principals, morals, and convictions change when given enough time. Recognizing this, we cannot allow social preference and cultural agreement to determine our morality. Specifically, we cannot allow social preference and cultural agreement to determine the morality of same-sex relationships.

As Christians, we serve an all-knowing and sovereign God who has spoken the end from the beginning according to [Isaiah 46:9-10](#), "*I am God, and there is no other; I am God, and there is none like me, declaring the end from the beginning and from ancient times things not yet done, saying, 'My counsel shall stand, and I will accomplish all my purpose.'*" Furthermore, [2 Timothy 3:16](#) teaches that all Scripture is God-breathed, and [2 Peter 1:20-21](#) teaches that no Scripture is the interpretation or understanding of man but is rather the result of God's inspiration—these men having been "carried along" in their writing by the Holy Spirit. In other words, these Scriptures—instructions and teachings that we today refer to as "the Bible"—come from a God who knows in advance every philosophy and cultural shift that mankind will ever experience, and He has produced the Bible for His people in a manner that is uncorrupted by man's understanding and prejudices. Because of this, we hold the Bible as our inerrant and eternal standard for truth. Regardless of the latest scientific study or theory, regardless of the political temperature of our nation, regardless of our emotions and circumstances, we hold the Bible to be our only reliable standard for determining truth and morality.

Unfortunately, there is not space to review the plethora of internal and external evidences that substantiate the authenticity and reliability of the Bible. This is a book that was penned by more than 40 different authors in all walks of life and in multiple civilizations stretching over 1,500 years. Despite this and the fact that the Bible addresses history's most controversial political, social, and spiritual issues, there is never a contradiction that is not discovered to be in harmony with the

¹ Barton, "Dr. Benjamin Rush."

² Barton, "The Founding Fathers on Jesus, Christianity and the Bible."

³ Barton, "The Founding Fathers on Jesus, Christianity and the Bible."

remainder of Scripture when adequately studied in context. Moreover, the testimony of Scripture is continually reaffirmed through archaeological discoveries of locations and customs that have been forgotten by all other known records. Suffice it to say that there is vastly more reason to trust the reliability of Scripture than any other historical record. If one were to dismiss the reliability of Scripture, then one would be compelled to dismiss the credibility of all known history. For a far more thorough examination of the subject, read Josh McDowell's book *New Evidence that Demands a Verdict*.

Simply put in relation to this study: Our theology determines our sexuality. According to the Bible, we as human beings are unique from the animals in that we have been created in the image of God. Precisely what is involved in serving as imagers of God has been greatly debated by theologians throughout the centuries, but one thing that has not been debated is the fact that mankind is created in God's image. This is the clear teaching of [Genesis 1:26-28](#):

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Then God said, “Let us make man in our image, after our likeness. And let them have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over the livestock and over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth.” So 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 have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over every living thing that moves on the earth.”

The Hebrew word translated as “man” is “*adam*” and means “human being” or “mankind.” Thus, [Genesis 1:27](#) reveals that God made mankind in His own image, and mankind was created as consisting of male and female genders. Somehow, our sexuality—the fact that we are gender-based creatures—is an integral part of our being created in God's image.

Clearly our sexuality is not the only aspect of being imagers of God because most animals are also created as sexual creatures, being male and female, but they are not created in the image of God. It is precisely because of the similarities between human and animal that so many understandings exist regarding the image of God. Some have argued that just as God consists of three distinct Persons, so also, we are comprised of three—being body, soul, and spirit—and yet we are one. There are several other interpretations, but every one of them is based upon deductive reasoning. The one and only aspect of being created in God's image that can be absolutely derived from the Genesis creation account is the fact that mankind has been created as sexual beings. In other words, God's only explanation of what being created in His image constitutes is that He created mankind as male and female. Interestingly enough, because God Himself is neither male nor female, and because male and female are quite different from one another both physically and emotionally, the image of God must be most complete in the combination of the two. In this sense, the image of God is greatest when male and female complement one another in unity. This unity is described in [Genesis 2:23-24](#), “*Then the man said, ‘This at last is bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh; she shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of Man.’ Therefore a man shall leave his father and his mother*

and hold fast to his wife, and they shall become one flesh.” This union is known as “marriage.” Regardless of whether we fully understand how this can all be true, we are compelled to accept that our being created in God’s image includes our sexuality because it is the clear teaching of God’s Word.

The implications of this are significant. If the sexual design of our bodies is created by God as at least a partial reflection of Himself, then our sexuality is sacred. This too is evidenced within the text in [Genesis 2:21-22](#), *“So the LORD God caused a deep sleep to fall upon the man, and while he slept took one of his ribs and closed up its place with flesh. And the rib that the LORD God had taken from the man he made into a woman and brought her to the man.”* The sacred design of man in this text is obscured by the translation. The Hebrew word translated as “rib” is *“tsela”* which, in the 40 other occurrences of this word in the Old Testament, always refers to the side of something. In nearly every instance, it refers to the side of sacral architecture, such as the Ark of the Covenant, or the temple.⁴ Thus, [Genesis 2:21-22](#) references Adam’s body as sacral architecture in its account of how gender was established.

Until this point, the Genesis account has referred to the character named Adam as an *“adam,”* which means a “human being.”⁵ The very word *“adam”* is a genderless term. However, God declares in [Genesis 2:18](#) that it is not good for the human being to be alone, and He determines to create a counterpart for Adam. This word *“neged”* is usually translated as “fit,” “meet,” or “suitable”; but it means “counterpart” or “one who corresponds to but is opposite from.”⁶ In other words, God determined to make a helper for Adam who corresponded with Adam—one who was a human being—but who was also opposite from Adam—one who did not have the same tendencies, strengths, or physical features as Adam. To accomplish this, God removed a piece of Adam’s sacred architecture—part of his side, or rib—and from this sacred piece, God created Adam’s counterpart. It is only after this act that the Genesis account begins to refer to Adam in terms of gender.⁷

In [Genesis 2:23-25](#), Adam declares himself to be an *“iysh”*—a man—and his counterpart to be “woman,” *“Then the man said, ‘This at last is bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh; she shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of Man.’ Therefore a man shall leave his father and his mother and hold fast to his wife, and they shall become one flesh.”* At this point, gender is established, and because gender is established, marriage is also established. Adam declares that because God created woman out of man, the two can be united together to become one flesh.⁸

The union of man and woman is natural because they are of the same flesh. It is possible for the two to become one flesh because they originally emerged out of the same flesh. They began as one, but God separated the two. It took a divine act to separate the two, and according to [Matthew 19:4-6](#), it requires a divine act to once again unite the two. God separated the two when God took the rib from Adam and transformed it into a separate entity, and God united the two in [Genesis 2:24](#) in the act of marriage. This is affirmed in [Matthew 19:4-6](#) where Jesus answered a question regarding marriage

⁴ The Hebrew word *“tsela”* (*Strong’s*, #H6763), occurs 41 times in 33 verses: [Genesis 2:21-22](#); [Exodus 25:12 and 14](#); [Exodus 26:20, 26-27 and 35](#); [Exodus 27:7](#); [Exodus 30:4](#); [Exodus 36:25 and 31-32](#); [Exodus 37:3, 5 and 27](#); [Exodus 38:7](#); [2 Samuel 16:13](#); [1 Kings 6:5, 8, 15-16 and 34](#); [1 Kings 7:3](#); [Job 18:12](#); [Jeremiah 20:10](#); [Ezekiel 41:5-9, 11 and 26](#).

⁵ Strong, *Strong’s Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible*, #H120, 9.

⁶ Ibid, #H5048, #H5049.

⁷ Jim Garlow, “Robert Gagnon.”

⁸ Ibid.

and divorce by referring back to [Genesis 2:24](#), saying, *“Have you not read that he who created them from the beginning made them male and female, and said, ‘Therefore a man shall leave his father and his mother and hold fast to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh’? ‘So they are no longer two but one flesh. What therefore God has joined together, let not man separate.’”* According to Jesus, marriage exists because God chose to make separate genders—male and female—and it is an act that is made possible only through divine intervention.

Jesus’ teaching in [Matthew 19](#) regarding marriage is important because this is the Creator God Himself expressing His original intent for marriage. According to Jesus, the creation account reveals that marriage is not merely a social contract; it is a sacred act in which the two—man and woman—are made one flesh in a lifelong union.

In addition to providing the purpose and nature of marriage, the Genesis account also provides definitions for the terms “husband” and “wife.” [Genesis 2:23-25](#) defines “wife” as being a woman united to a man through a marriage relationship, *“[S]he shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of Man.’ Therefore a man shall leave his father and his mother and hold fast to his wife, and they shall become one flesh.”* Likewise, [Genesis 3:6](#) defines “husband” as being a man united to a woman through a marriage relationship, *“So when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was a delight to the eyes, and that the tree was to be desired to make one wise, she took of its fruit and ate, and she also gave some to her husband who was with her, and he ate.”* Throughout all of Scripture, there is never an exception to these definitions. Instead, these definitions are affirmed by the Apostle Paul in [1 Corinthians 7:2](#), *“But because of the temptation to sexual immorality, each man should have his own wife and each woman her own husband.”* They are further affirmed by the gender-specific language associated with the terms “husband” and “wife” in [1 Corinthians 7:2-3 and 10-17](#).

Thus, every instance of the terms “husband” and “wife” in Scripture refers to a man or a woman in a heterosexual marriage relationship. There is never an exception. Moreover, the very definition of marriage is established in the creation account as being exclusively heterosexual based upon God’s decision to create mankind as consisting of male and female genders designed to satisfy each other’s needs. This is testified to by both the Lord Jesus Christ and the Apostle Paul. Because of these clearly defined definitions, there can be no such thing as homosexual marriages. It is a self-contradicting title. Also Scripture is clear in passages such as [1 Corinthians 7:2](#) and [Galatians 5:19-21](#) that sexual intercourse is only acceptable within the confines of marriage. Therefore, if all Biblical marriages are heterosexual unions, and if all acceptable sexual intercourse must be performed within the confines of marriage, then homosexual intercourse is necessarily prohibited without exception. It can never occur within the acceptable parameters established by God, thus making it sexual immorality. As such, one can firmly declare all homosexual intercourse to be a sin before God. Indeed, God has already done this on our behalf.

Throughout the Bible, God declares the practice of homosexuality to be sin. As such, it should be no surprise to learn that every reference to homosexuality in Scripture is negative:

- [Leviticus 18:22](#), *“You shall not lie with a male as with a woman; it is an abomination.”*
- [Leviticus 20:13](#), *“If a man lies with a male as with a woman, both of them have committed an abomination; they shall surely be put to death; their blood is upon them.”*

- [Romans 1:24–27](#), *“Therefore God gave them up in the lusts of their hearts to impurity, to the dishonoring of their bodies among themselves, because they exchanged the truth about God for a lie and worshiped and served the creature rather than the Creator, who is blessed forever! Amen. For this reason God gave them up to dishonorable passions. For their women exchanged natural relations for those that are contrary to nature; and the men likewise gave up natural relations with women and were consumed with passion for one another, men committing shameless acts with men and receiving in themselves the due penalty for their error.”*

As a side note, Dr. John Corvino is well known for his lecture titled “What’s Morally Wrong with Homosexuality” in which he concludes with the challenge that people ought not to question whom someone loves but whether someone loves. Similarly, gay activists such as Matthew Vines present heart-rending appeals to their opponents asking that homosexuals simply be permitted and encouraged to love the person of their choice. It would appear that God strongly disagrees with these appeals because [Romans chapter one](#) teaches that God views homosexual love as “dishonorable passions” and “shameless acts.” The King James Version of the Bible translates this as “vile affections.” According to God, homosexual love is not true Biblical love.

- [1 Corinthians 6:9–10](#), *“Or do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived: neither the sexually immoral, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor men who practice homosexuality, nor thieves, nor the greedy, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor swindlers will inherit the kingdom of God.”*
- [1 Timothy 1:9–10](#), *“[U]nderstanding this, that the law is not laid down for the just but for the lawless and disobedient, for the ungodly and sinners, for the unholy and profane, for those who strike their fathers and mothers, for murderers, the sexually immoral, men who practice homosexuality, enslavers, liars, perjurers, and whatever else is contrary to sound doctrine,”*
- [Jude 1:7](#), *“[J]ust as Sodom and Gomorrah and the surrounding cities, which likewise indulged in sexual immorality and pursued unnatural desire, serve as an example by undergoing a punishment of eternal fire.”*

Because of the clear teaching of these passages, they have come under assault by those who support homosexuality. Largely, these prohibitions are touted as irrelevant vestiges of the Law of Moses. However, we need not fall into these semantic quagmires. Instead, most of such arguments against these passages can be avoided by recognizing that the immoral nature of homosexuality transcends the Law of Moses. Homosexuality was considered to be a sin by God before the giving of the Law, and it remained a sin after the Law of Moses was fulfilled in Christ.

In the giving of the Law in Leviticus, homosexuality was grouped with a number of sins, including:

- Incest, which is a sexual relationship with a close relative ([Leviticus 18:6–18](#))
- Adultery ([Leviticus 18:20](#))
- Infanticide ([Leviticus 18:21](#))
- Homosexuality ([Leviticus 18:22](#))
- Bestiality ([Leviticus 18:23](#))

God declares homosexuality to be one of the sins that caused God to abhor the nations who inhabited the land before Israel and to cast those nations out of the land. [Leviticus 18:22 and 24-30](#) says:

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“You shall not lie with a male as with a woman; it is an abomination.” ... “Do not make yourselves unclean by any of these things, for by all these the nations I am driving out before you have become unclean, and the land became unclean, so that I punished its iniquity, and the land vomited out its inhabitants. But you shall keep my statutes and my rules and do none of these abominations, either the native or the stranger who sojourns among you (for the people of the land, who were before you, did all of these abominations, so that the land became unclean), lest the land vomit you out when you make it unclean, as it vomited out the nation that was before you. For everyone who does any of these abominations, the persons who do them shall be cut off from among their people. So keep my charge never to practice any of these abominable customs that were practiced before you, and never to make yourselves unclean by them: I am the LORD your God.”

Also, [Leviticus 20:13 and 23](#) says, *“If a man lies with a male as with a woman, both of them have committed an abomination; they shall surely be put to death; their blood is upon them. ... And you shall not walk in the customs of the nation that I am driving out before you, for they did all these things, and therefore I detested them.”*

Not only was homosexuality a sin prior to the issuing of the Law, but God judged entire nations for this sin, among others. However, these nations did not have God’s Law to know what is right and wrong in the eyes of God. How then could a righteous God judge entire nations for a sin against which there was no commandment? According to [Romans 2:14-16](#), God has placed His Law within the hearts of men, *“For when Gentiles, who do not have the law, by nature do what the law requires, they are a law to themselves, even though they do not have the law. They show that the work of the law is written on their hearts, while their conscience also bears witness, and their conflicting thoughts accuse or even excuse them on that day when, according to my gospel, God judges the secrets of men by Christ Jesus.”*

This is often termed “natural law.” This is why every civilization has had laws against such things as murder, stealing, adultery, etc. Written within man’s heart is an inherent understanding that the acts listed in [Leviticus chapter 18](#) are immoral. According to [Romans chapter one](#), homosexuality defies what mankind innately knows to be natural and right. This is why God could justly abhor the nations who practiced these activities and could justly judge them.

[Leviticus chapters 18 and 20](#) are important passages because they reveal that the immoral nature of these acts are universal in scope and eternal in time. Their sinfulness preceded the giving of the Law, and they have remained sinful acts since Christ’s fulfillment of the Law. As such, these particular

acts cannot be compared against other portions of the Law of Moses which were given only for a time and primarily for the purpose of illustration, such as the dietary laws.

Scripture is clear: the practice of homosexuality is sinful. Homosexual activity is a moral sin just as incest, bestiality, adultery, and infanticide are moral sins. Within our culture, adultery is becoming socially acceptable—particularly with the celebration of adultery in popular media programs, such as the award-winning television show, *Scandal*. Similarly, infanticide is now socially acceptable thanks to *Roe v. Wade* and “pro-choice” political platforms. Therefore, it should not be surprising to witness our culture embrace homosexuality. Cultures, principals, morals, and convictions change in societies over time. However, God’s Word remains consistent. This is why it is imperative that we as Christians determine our sexual morals based upon the Bible. As Christians, our theology determines our sexuality, and we must be careful that we not forget this amid the social debate that surrounds us.

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