



The New Testament and the Same-Sex Debate

PowerPoint Presentation by Dr. Jeffrey A. D. Weima

**“The New Testament
&
The Same-Sex Debate”**

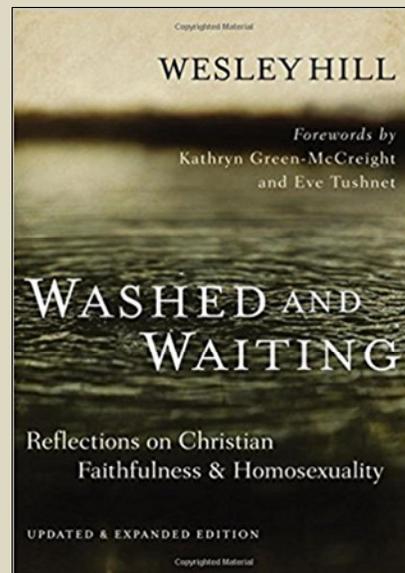


Dr. Jeffrey A. D. Weima
Calvin Theological Seminary
weimje@calvinseminary.edu
www.jeffweima.com

PRELIMINARY INTRODUCTIONS

Dr. Wesley Hill

- Professor of New Testament,
Trinity School for Ministry,
Ambridge, PA



Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2010

PRELIMINARY INTRODUCTIONS

Rev. Mary-Lee Bouma

- Pastor in the Christian Reformed Church of North America
- Works in Vancouver, British Columbia, with REED—“Resist Exploitation, Embrace Dignity”—a ministry to get rid of sexual exploitation



PRELIMINARY INTRODUCTIONS

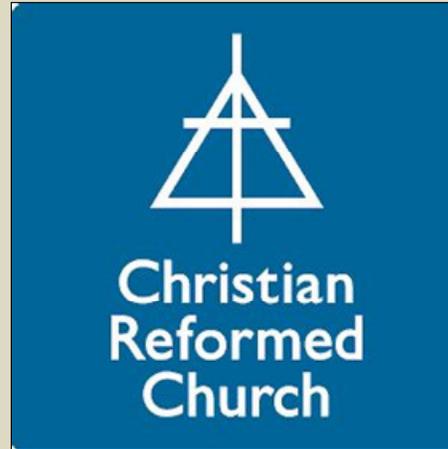
Laurie Krieg

- Founder of “Hole-in-my-Heart” ministries (www.himhministries.com)
- Located in Grand Rapids, MI



PRELIMINARY OBSERVATION #1

- Key distinction exists between *orientation* and *activity*
- NT refers only to sexual acts and does not address orientation
- 1973 Synodical Report: “*We must distinguish between the person who is homosexual in his sexual orientation and the person who engaged in explicit sexual acts with persons of the same sex*” (page 612)



A Reformed denomination in both the USA and Canada since 1857

PRELIMINARY OBSERVATION #2

- Same-sex acts should not be ranked as worse than other sins
- Vice-list of 1 Corinthians 6:9: “*9 Or do you not know that wrongdoers will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived: Neither the sexually immoral nor idolaters nor adulterers nor men who have sex with men ¹⁰ nor thieves nor the greedy nor drunkards nor slanderers nor swindlers will inherit the kingdom of God*”



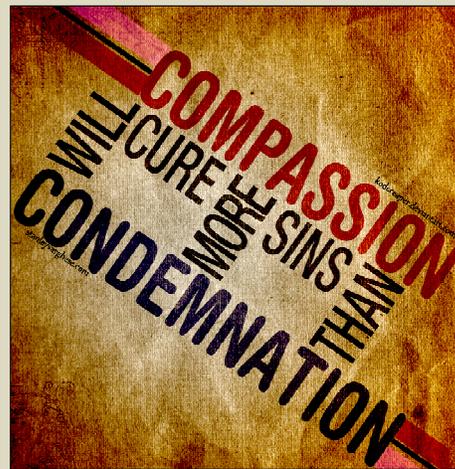
PRELIMINARY OBSERVATION #2

- NT lists same-sex acts alongside many other acts that are equally forbidden to Jesus-followers
- Fact that Paul lists the “greedy” shortly after “men who have sex with other men” as those who will not inherit the kingdom of God suggests the church today should be just as concerned about those who pile up money in their 401(k) retirement fund and yet fail to share their abundance with others as the church is concerned with those who engage in same-sex acts



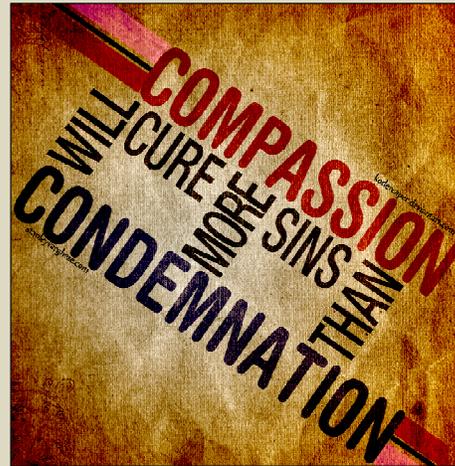
PRELIMINARY OBSERVATION #3

- Church needs to demonstrate much more effectively compassion and support (i.e., grace) for those with same-sex orientation
- Church must acknowledge that it has largely failed in its calling both to demonstrate in concrete ways empathy for our homosexual brothers and sisters and to provide the kind of supportive environment in which they are equipped to live a life of holiness



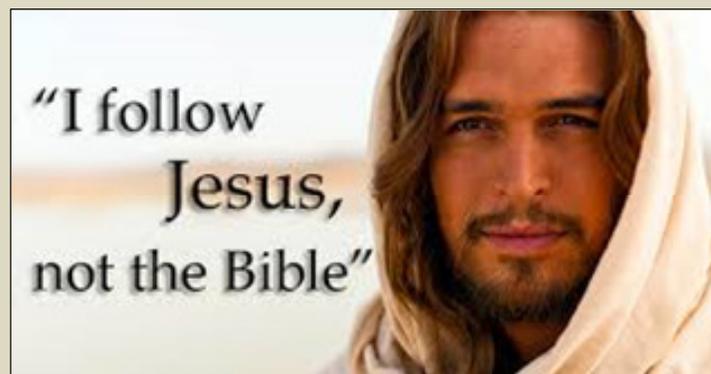
PRELIMINARY OBSERVATION #3

- 1973 Synodical Report: *“It is one of the great failings of the church and Christians generally that they have been lacking in sympathy and concern for the plight of the homosexuals among them”* (page 614)



THE TESTIMONY OF JESUS

- Revisionists—those who argue against the traditional position that the Bible condemns same-sex activity—are often quick to point out the silence of Jesus on homosexual conduct
- Argument: *“If same-sex acts are so bad, why didn’t Jesus say anything about it?”*



THE TESTIMONY OF JESUS

Response #1:

- Judaism of Jesus' day was unanimous in condemning same-sex activity
- Must begin with assumption, therefore, that Jesus also would condemn same-sex activity, unless he explicitly states the opposite position

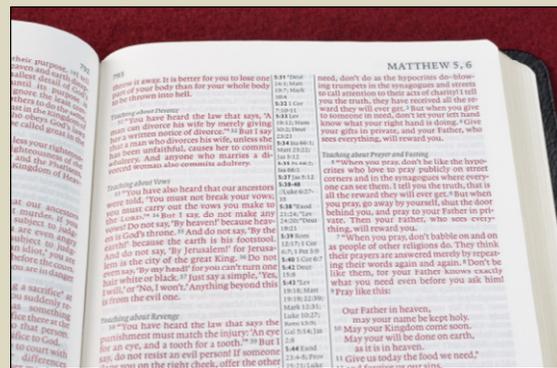


1st Century Judaism

THE TESTIMONY OF JESUS

Response #2:

- Despite the popularity of “red-letter” Bibles, Christians should not treat Jesus’ words as more important than the rest of Scripture
- What Paul has to say about same-sex acts is just as much “*the word of God*” (1 Thess. 2:13) as what Jesus says, or, in this case, does not say

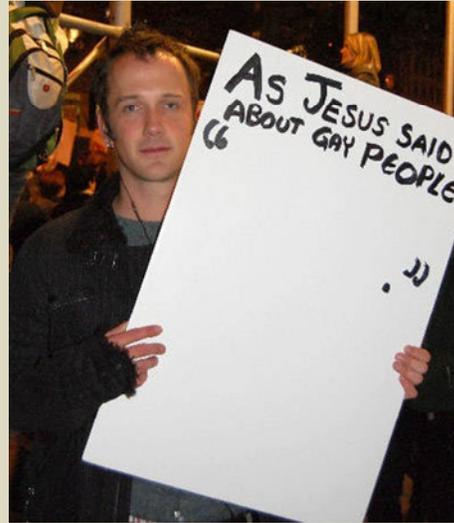


“Red-letter Bible”

THE TESTIMONY OF JESUS

Response #3:

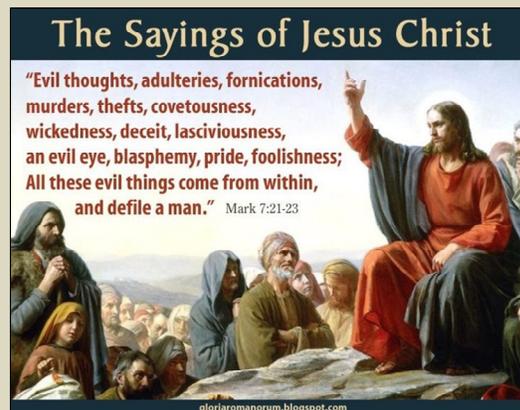
- Danger of “argument from silence”
- Jesus never says anything against other sexual sins such as prostitution, incest, pederasty or bestiality, but no one would conclude from Jesus’ silence that he was tolerant of such sexual acts



THE TESTIMONY OF JESUS

Response #4:

- Mark 7:21-23: Jesus lists several things that defile a person, including “sexual immorality” (NIV 2011)
- Greek: plural *porneiai* = “sexual immoralities”
- Suggests that Jesus, who knows well OT law, has in mind the different kind of sexual sins (plural) forbidden in Leviticus 18 and Leviticus 20, including same-sex acts

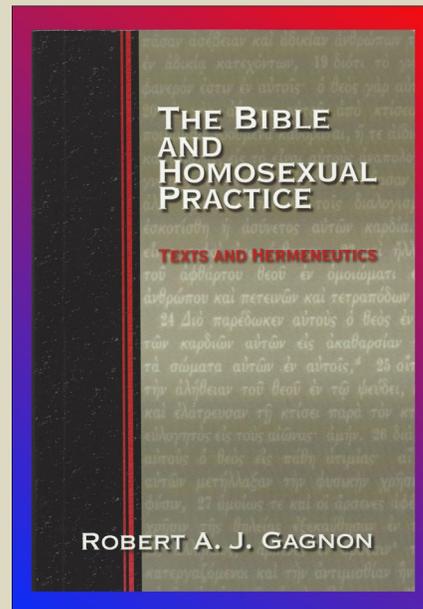


THE TESTIMONY OF JESUS

Summary:

- Robert Gagnon:

“The portrayal of a Jesus as a first-century Palestinian Jew who was open to homosexual practice is simply ahistorical. All the evidence leads in the opposite direction” (page 228)



Nashville: Abingdon, 2001

THE TESTIMONY OF PAUL

Introduction:

- Paul, like Jesus, was a first-century Jew and thus would have shared the unanimous condemnation of same-sex acts found in the Jewish community of his day, unless we find explicit statements of his which reveal that he had a different view



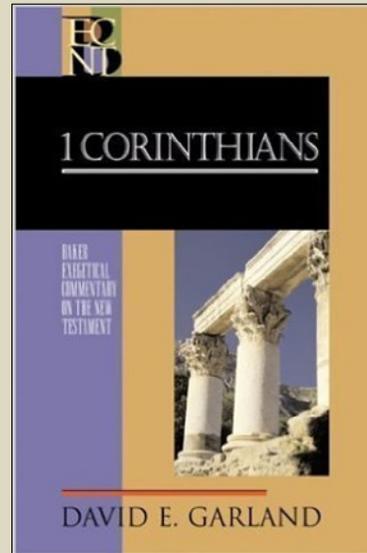
1st Century Judaism

THE TESTIMONY OF PAUL

Introduction:

- David Garland:

“Though homosexual acts were generally accepted in the ancient world, Hellenistic Jewish texts are unanimous in condemning them and treat them [homosexual acts] and idolatry as obvious examples of Gentile moral depravity. Not suprisingly, Paul shares this Jewish aversion to idolatry and homosexual acts” (page 213)



Grand Rapids: Baker, 2003

THE TESTIMONY OF PAUL

Introduction:

- Paul’s position on sex generally is quite conservative:
- 1 Thess 4:3-5 *“that you should avoid sexual immorality; that each of you should learn to control your own body in a way that is holy and honorable, not in passionate lust like the pagans”*



Apostle Paul (494-495 AD)
Chapel of St. Andrew
Ravenna, Italy

THE TESTIMONY OF PAUL

Introduction:

- 1 Corinthians: Paul sharply rebukes the church for tolerating a sexual relationship between a man and his stepmother (1 Cor 5:1-11) and for accepting members who were engaging in the sexual services of prostitutes (1 Cor 6:12-20)
- Ephesians 5:3 “*among you there must not be even a hint of sexual immorality*”



Apostle Paul (494-495 AD)
Chapel of St. Andrew
Ravenna, Italy

THE TESTIMONY OF PAUL

Introduction:

- In light of both (1) Paul’s Jewish background and (2) Paul’s statements on sexual conduct generally, we can plausibly expect that he would not approve of same-sex acts
- This is exactly Paul’s position in the three key NT texts dealing with same-sex acts:
 - Romans 1:24-27
 - 1 Corinthians 6:9
 - 1 Timothy 1:10

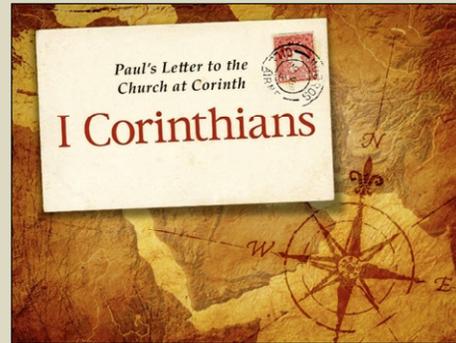


Apostle Paul (494-495 AD)
Chapel of St. Andrew
Ravenna, Italy

THE TESTIMONY OF PAUL

1st Key Text: 1 Corinthians 6:9

- Two key words occur as part of a vice-list: “*9Or do you not know that wrong-doers will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived: Neither the sexually immoral nor idolaters nor adulterers **nor men who have sex with men** [Greek: malakoi & arsenokoitai] nor thieves ¹⁰nor the greedy nor drunkards nor slanders nor swindlers will inherit the kingdom of God” (NIV 2011)*



THE TESTIMONY OF PAUL

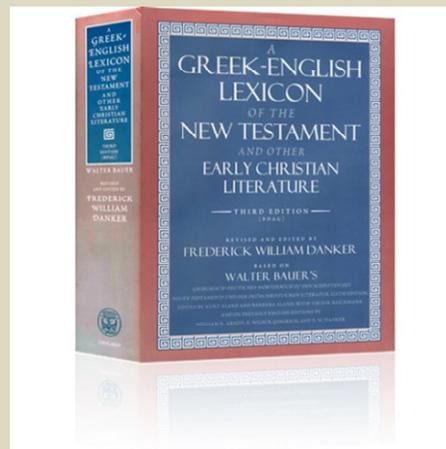
1st Key Text: 1 Corinthians 6:9

- Two Greek words:

malakoi = ?

arsenokoitai = ?

- **Issue:** How should these two words be translated?



THE TESTIMONY OF PAUL

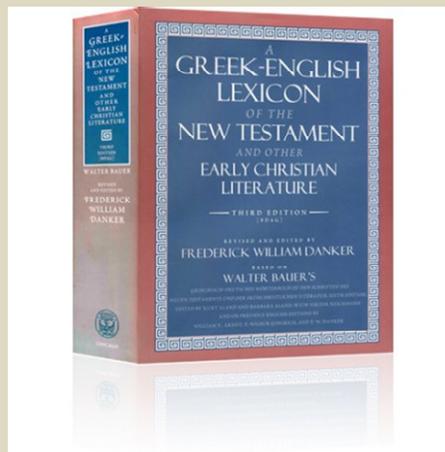
1st Key Text: 1 Corinthians 6:9

- Revisionist translation:

malakoi = pederasts

arsenokoitai = male prostitutes

- **Implication:** Paul is only against abusive or exploitative forms of same-sex acts, not long-term, monogomous same-sex relationships



THE TESTIMONY OF PAUL

1st Key Text: 1 Corinthians 6:9

- **Response #1:** If Paul, in fact, had in view only exploitive same-sex acts like pederasty, the apostle could have easily made this clear by using any one of several Greek words that refer specifically to this exact same-sex act—all of which were commonly known and used in the writings of his day: e.g., *paiderastês*, from which we get the English word “pederast”; word pair *erastes* (older man) and *erömenos* (younger man)

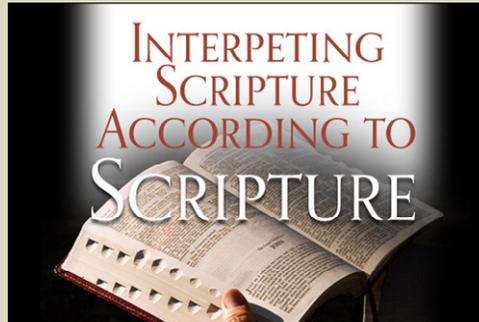


There's a special word for that.

THE TESTIMONY OF PAUL

1st Key Text: 1 Corinthians 6:9

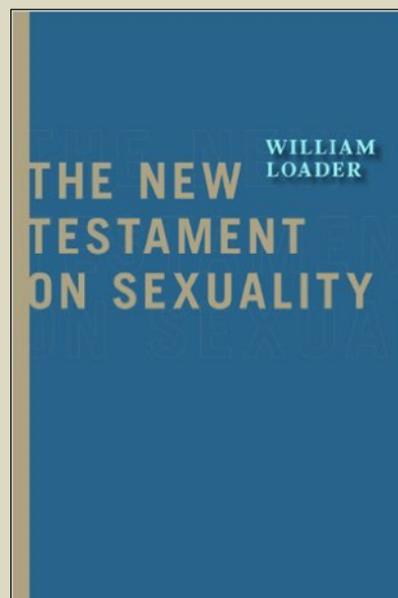
- **Response #2:** Let a longer clear text help interpret this brief and less clear text (1 Cor 6:9)
- Paul elsewhere condemns lesbian relations (Rom 1:26) which does not narrowly involve pederasty
- Paul elsewhere condemns *both* persons in same-sex acts, not just the active member (Rom 1:27 “they were consumed with passion *for one another*”)



THE TESTIMONY OF PAUL

1st Key Text: 1 Corinthians 6:9

- William Loader:
“...the reference to lesbian relations which does not fit pederasty, and Paul’s depiction in [Rom] 1:27 of mutual desire (*eis allêlous*, ‘for one another’) suggest that what he has in mind is not primarily exploitive pederasty and certainly not limited to it” (p 325)

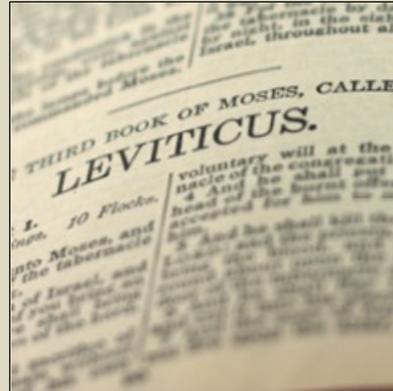


Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2012

THE TESTIMONY OF PAUL

1st Key Text: 1 Corinthians 6:9

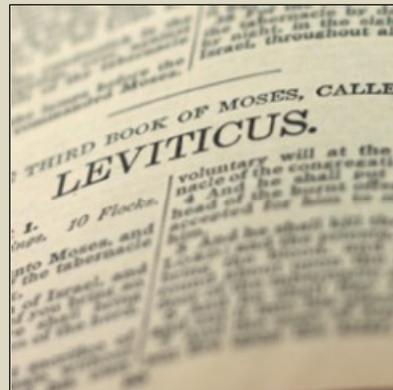
- **Response #3:** Allusion to Leviticus 18:22 and 20:13 in Paul's unique use of the word *arsenokoitai* (also 1 Tim 1:10)
- Compound word made up of two parts:
 - *arsen* = "male"
 - *koitê* = "bed" but euphemistically refers to sexual acts that take place on a bed; BDAG: "a male who engages in sexual activity with a person of his own sex"



THE TESTIMONY OF PAUL

1st Key Text: 1 Corinthians 6:9

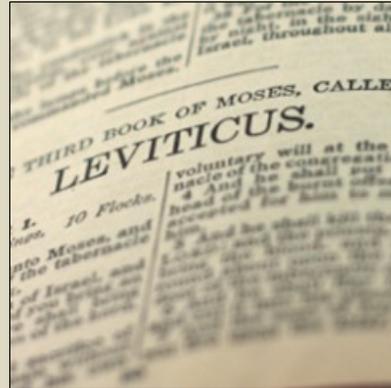
- Leviticus 18:22
kai meta arsenos ou koimêthêsê koitên gynaikeian
"And with a male you shall not lie as with a woman"
- Leviticus 20:13
kai hos an koimêthê meta arsenos koitên gynaikos
"And whoever will lie with a male as with a woman"



THE TESTIMONY OF PAUL

1st Key Text: 1 Corinthians 6:9

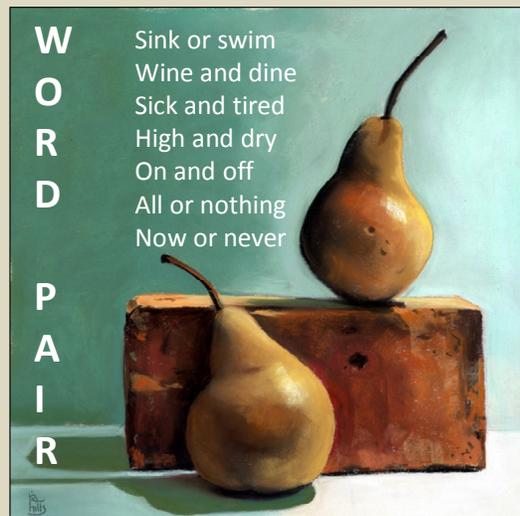
- Q: Why is it significant that the unique word *arsenokoitai* Paul uses in two key texts dealing with same-sex acts comes from Leviticus 18:22 and 20:13?
- A: Since these OT texts deal with *all* types of same-sex acts—not just exploitive ones such as pederasty and prostitution—Paul’s use of this word suggests that he is also thinking of the Mosaic law where any kind of sexual act between two males is forbidden



THE TESTIMONY OF PAUL

1st Key Text: 1 Corinthians 6:9

- Response #4:** The pairing of the two words is significant
- Widespread agreement among grammarians that the first term, *malakoi*, refers to males who played the female role in sex by allowing themselves to be penetrated, while the second term, *arsenokoitai*, refers to males who penetrate other males



W
O
R
D

P
A
I
R

Sink or swim
Wine and dine
Sick and tired
High and dry
On and off
All or nothing
Now or never

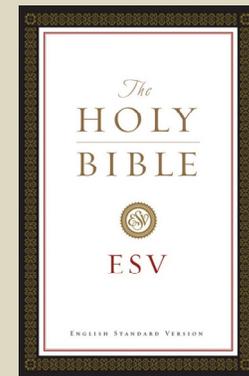
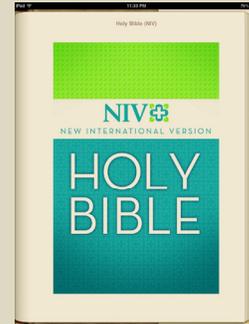
THE TESTIMONY OF PAUL

1st Key Text: 1 Corinthians 6:9

- This widespread agreement is seen in the NIV 2011 and ESV translations, which both have exactly the same textual note on this verse:

“The words ‘*men who have sex with men*’ translate two Greek words that refer to the passive and active participants in homosexual acts”

- Paul, by pairing these two words, is referring not narrowly to pederasty or prostitution but *comprehensively* to both the passive and active partner in any same-sex relationship

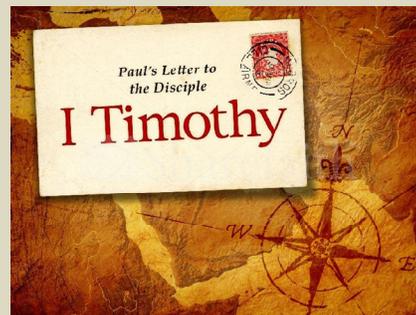


THE TESTIMONY OF PAUL

2nd Key Text: 1 Timothy 1:10

- Same word *arsenokoitai* occurs again in another Pauline letter:

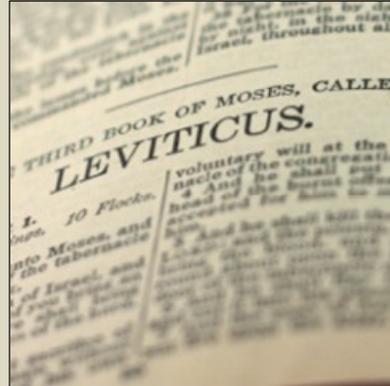
“⁹We also know that the law is made not for the righteous but for law-breakers and rebels, the ungodly and sinful, the unholy and irreligious, for those who kill their fathers or mothers, for murderers, ¹⁰for the sexually immoral, **for those practicing homosexuality** [Greek: *arsenokoitai*], for slave traders and liars and perjurers—and for whatever else is contrary to the sound doctrine”



THE TESTIMONY OF PAUL

2nd Key Text: 1 Timothy 1:10

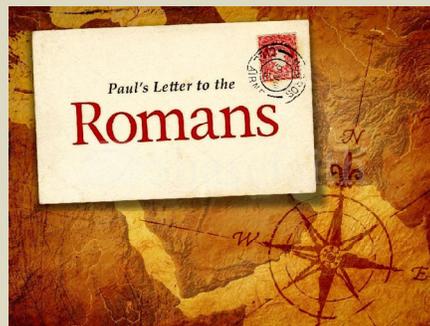
- Use of *arsenokotai* here also refers back to Leviticus 18:22 and 20:13
- Notice how this unique word occurs in a verse immediately following a reference to “the law”, i.e., the Mosaic law where Leviticus 18:22 and 20:13 are found
- This again (so also 1 Cor 6:9) suggests that Paul has in view the OT’s comprehensive prohibition against males having sex with males and not narrowly only exploitive same-sex acts



THE TESTIMONY OF PAUL

3rd Key Text: Romans 1:24-27

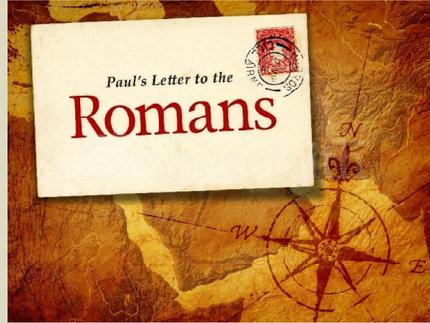
- This is the most important NT text dealing with same-sex activity for three reasons:
 - Length
 - Explicit reference to both gay and lesbian conduct
 - Argumentation



THE TESTIMONY OF PAUL

3rd Key Text: Romans 1:24-27

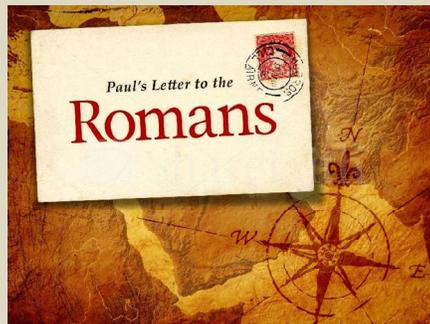
“²⁴Therefore God gave them over in the sinful desires of their hearts to sexual impurity for the degrading of their bodies with one another. ²⁵They exchanged the truth about God for a lie, and worshiped and served created things rather than the Creator—who is forever praised. Amen. ²⁶Because of this, God gave them over to shameful lusts. Even their women exchanged natural sexual relations for ...



THE TESTIMONY OF PAUL

3rd Key Text: Romans 1:24-27

... unnatural ones. ²⁷In the same way the men also abandoned natural relations with women and were inflamed with lust for one another. Men committed shameful acts with other men, and received in themselves the due penalty for their error.”



THE TESTIMONY OF PAUL

3rd Key Text: Romans 1:24-27

- **Revisionists:** *Excessive-lust argument*

- Paul here is arguing against a narrow form of same-sex activity—a form characterized by excessive lust, lack of self-control and overindulgence
- Paul, therefore, is not arguing against normal same-sex desires and thus Rom 1:24-27 does not condemn consensual, monogamous, long-term gay and lesbian relationships

Normal desire

versus

Excessive lust

THE TESTIMONY OF PAUL

3rd Key Text: Romans 1:24-27

- **Response #1:**

- Greek word “desire” (*epithumia*) in Rom 1:24 does not always have the negative meaning of lust: e.g., Paul uses the same word to refer to his “desire” to return to the Thessalonians (1 Thess. 2:17)
- If Paul wanted to refer to excessive negative sexual desire (i.e. lust) in Rom 1:24, he could have added the adjective “much” as he did in 1 Thess. 2:17 (*en polle epithumia*)

Normal desire

versus

Excessive lust

THE TESTIMONY OF PAUL

3rd Key Text: Romans 1:24-27

• **Response #2:**

- Paul argues that the “wrath of God” (Rom 1:18) is directed against the two sins that Jews typically accused Gentiles of committing: idolatry & sexual immorality
- These two typical Gentile sins both involve not a problem of wrong *degree* (excessive behavior) but of wrong *object*

Normal desire

versus

Excessive lust

THE TESTIMONY OF PAUL

3rd Key Text: Romans 1:24-27

• **Response #2:**

- *Sin of idolatry* (Rom 1:19-23): involves not degree (normal idolatry is ok but excessive idolatry is not) but object (people worship created things rather than the Creator)
- *Sin of Same-sex Activity* (Rom 1:24-27): involves not degree (normal desire for same-sex activity is ok but excessive passion/lust is not) but object (women having sex not with men but with women and men having sex not with women but with men)

Normal desire

versus

Excessive lust

THE TESTIMONY OF PAUL

3rd Key Text: Romans 1:24-27

• **Revisionists:** *'Against nature' argument*

- Paul here is referring to people who out of excessive lust act in an “unnatural” way (Greek: “against nature”, *para physin*) by having sex with people other than those whom they are by nature attracted
- Thus, Paul is referring not only to *heterosexual* women and men who have sex with same gender, but also *homosexual* women and men who act in an unnatural way “against [their] nature” and have sex with opposite gender



What does “unnatural” (“against nature”, *para physin*) mean?

THE TESTIMONY OF PAUL

3rd Key Text: Romans 1:24-27

• **Revisionists:** *'Against nature' argument*

- Paul is narrowly condemning “unnatural sex,” i.e., heterosexuals who ignore their natural desire for the opposite sex and are inflamed with lust for members of same sex
- This reading allows Paul to be accepting of other, more “noble” forms of homosexual relationships in which gays and lesbians follow their “natural” same-sex orientation



What does “unnatural” (“against nature”, *para physin*) mean?

THE TESTIMONY OF PAUL

3rd Key Text: Romans 1:24-27

• Response:

- Paul’s key argument in these verses is that same-sex acts violate God’s *created order* for male-female relationships
- The word “unnatural” refers to same-sex acts that violate God’s intentional design for men and women—a design established already in creation



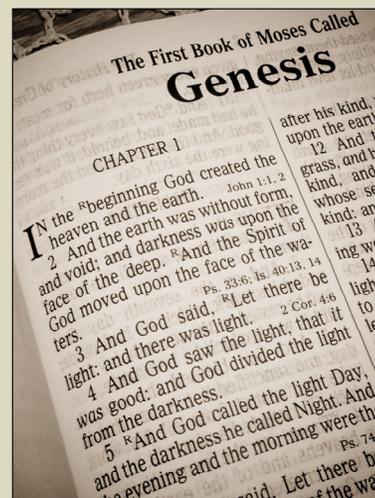
What does “unnatural” (“against nature”, *para physin*) mean?

THE TESTIMONY OF PAUL

3rd Key Text: Romans 1:24-27

• Response:

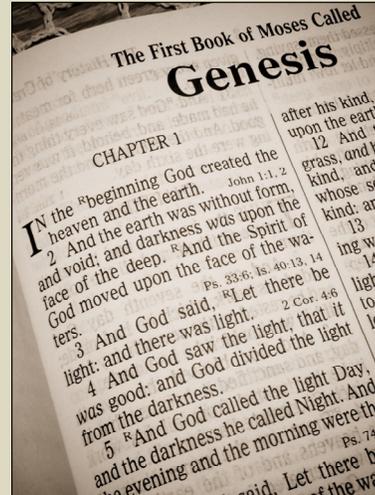
- Multiple allusions to the Genesis creation account in Romans 1:
 - 1:20 refers to the creation of the world (“*For since the creation of the world ...*”)
 - 1:23 has threefold combination of “*birds and animals and reptiles*” echoing Gen 1:30 (LXX)
 - 1:25 refers to “*the Creator*”



THE TESTIMONY OF PAUL

3rd Key Text: Romans 1:24-27

- **Response:**
 - Multiple allusions to the Genesis creation account in Romans 1:
 - 1:25 and 1:26 refer to “women” and “men,” which in the Greek text literally are “females” (*thêlesai*) and “males” (*arsenes*), thereby alluding to Gen 1:27 where we read “*male and female he created them*”



THE TESTIMONY OF PAUL

3rd Key Text: Romans 1:24-27

- **Response:**
 - **Conclusion:**
 - ❖ Paul argues that same-sex activity is “unnatural” not because it involves acting against one’s own personal sexual orientation but because it goes against creation order and God’s intentional design of each gender so that male and female fit the other in a “natural” way



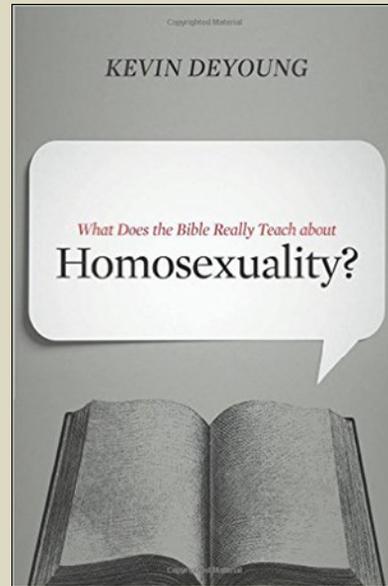
What does “unnatural” (“against nature”, *para physin*) mean?

THE TESTIMONY OF PAUL

3rd Key Text: Romans 1:24-27

• **Response:**

- Kevin Deyoung: “*With these allusions to creation in the background (the foreground really), ‘nature’ must mean more than ‘prevailing customs and social norms’ ... Homosexual practice is sinful because it violates the divine design in creation ... They have exchanged the fittedness of male-female relations for those that are contrary to nature*” (page 55)

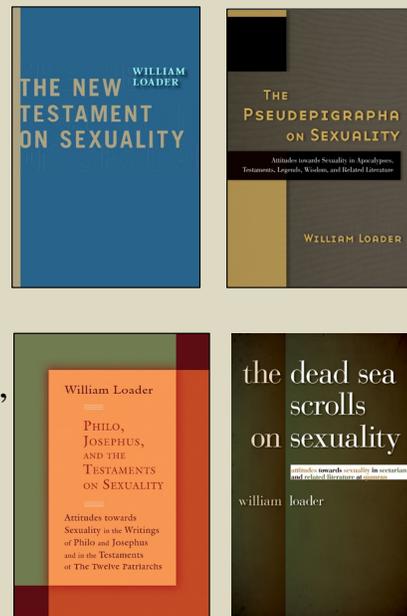


THE TESTIMONY OF PAUL

William Loader:

“For those of us whose understanding of scriptural authority does not entail such belief [i.e., that biblical writers were correct in what they said and assumed] we can only stand and wonder at the extraordinary manoeuvres which have been undertaken to re-read Paul as not condemning homosexual relations at all”

“Reading Romans 1 on Homosexuality in the light of Biblical/Jewish and Greco-Roman Perspectives of its Time,” Paper given at SNTS Meeting, Montreal, August 5, 2016.

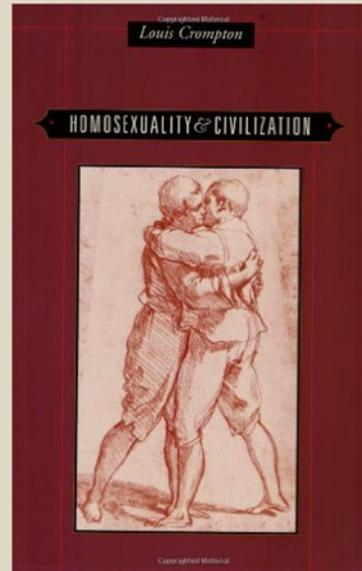


THE TESTIMONY OF PAUL

Louis Crompton:

- A homosexual scholar who pioneered LGBT studies

“Some interpreters, seeking to mitigate Paul’s harshness, have read the passage [Romans 1:24-27] as condemning not homosexuals generally but only heterosexual men and women who experimented with homosexuality. According to this interpretation, Paul’s words were not directed at ‘bona fide’ homosexuals in committed ...”

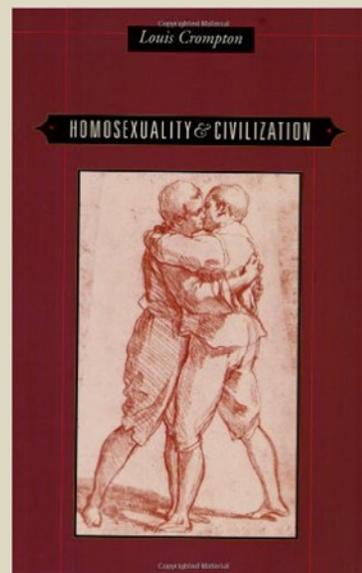


Harvard, 2003

THE TESTIMONY OF PAUL

Louis Crompton:

“... relationships. But such a reading, however well-intentioned, seems strained and unhistorical. Nowhere does Paul or any other Jewish writer of this period imply the least acceptance of same-sex relations under any circumstances. The idea that homosexuals might be redeemed by mutual devotion would have been wholly foreign to Paul or any Jew or early Christian” (page 114)



Harvard, 2003

THE TESTIMONY OF PAUL

Conclusion of Biblical Evidence

- It is NOT a situation where there are two *equal* interpretations of the biblical evidence; yes, there are revisionists arguments but no, they should not be accepted as equal and legitimate alternative interpretations to the traditional view
- Examining the relevant texts according to a Reformed hermeneutic results in a *clear, consistent and compelling conclusion* that the Bible presents all forms of same-sex acts as contrary to the will of God



THE TESTIMONY OF PAUL

Warning: Romans 1:32

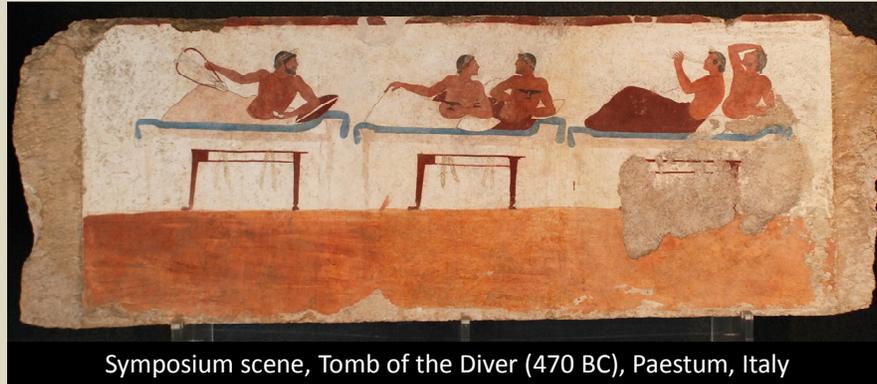
- Paul ends with a sober warning against not just those who practice same-sex acts but also those who approve of gay and lesbian acts
- Rom 1:32 “*Although they know God’s righteous decree that those who do such things deserve death, they not only continue to do these very things but also approve of those who practice them*”



ADDITIONAL REVISIONIST CLAIMS

Claim: Paul's Ignorance #1

- **Revisionist:** Paul had no examples of a more “noble” form of homosexuality involving consensual, monogamous, long-term same-sex relationships but only knew of exploitive relationships such as pederasty and prostitution

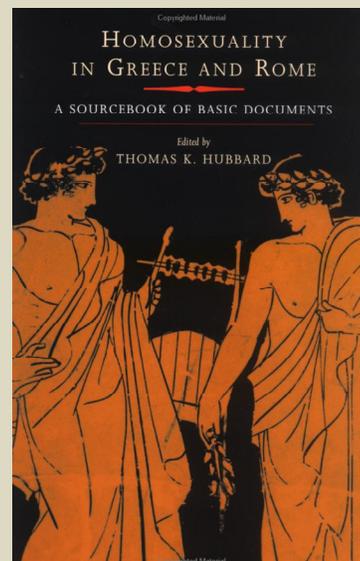


Symposium scene, Tomb of the Diver (470 BC), Paestum, Italy

ADDITIONAL REVISIONIST CLAIMS

Claim: Paul's Ignorance #1

- **Response #1:** Even if one concedes that Paul did not, in fact, know any “noble” forms of long term, monogamous same-sex relationships, there is no evidence that he would approve of them; in fact, Paul would likely disapprove on the grounds that these same-sex acts still violate the male-female relationship established by God at creation (Rom 1:24-27) and are also contrary to God's law (1 Cor 6:9; 1 Tim. 1:10)

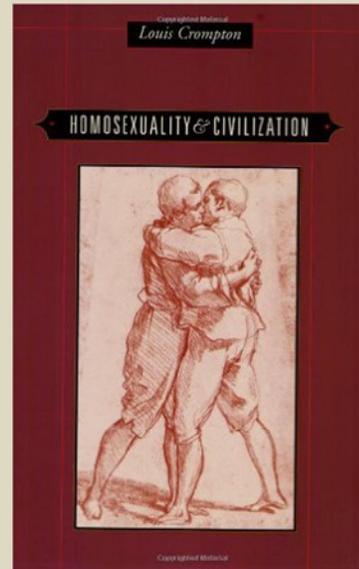


Berkley: University of California Press, 2003

ADDITIONAL REVISIONIST CLAIMS

Claim: Paul's Ignorance #1

- **Response #2:** The claim itself is false, since the existence of many different types of homosexual relations—including consensual and even monogamous—is well documented in the literature of the period (see, e.g., studies of Hubbard [previous slide] and Crompton); Paul, as a well-educated and widely traveled man, would have had ample opportunity to know about such supposedly “noble” forms of same-sex relationships

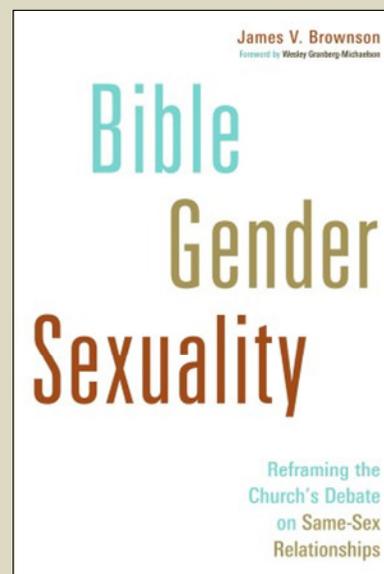


Harvard, 2003

ADDITIONAL REVISIONIST CLAIMS

Claim: Paul's Ignorance #2

- **Revisionist:** Paul did not know about a likely genetic cause for same-sex attraction; such ignorance relativizes (i.e. negates) his condemnation of same-sex acts; e.g., James Brownson: “*Writers in the first century, including Paul, did not look at same-sex eroticism with the understanding of sexual orientation that is commonplace today*” (page 166)

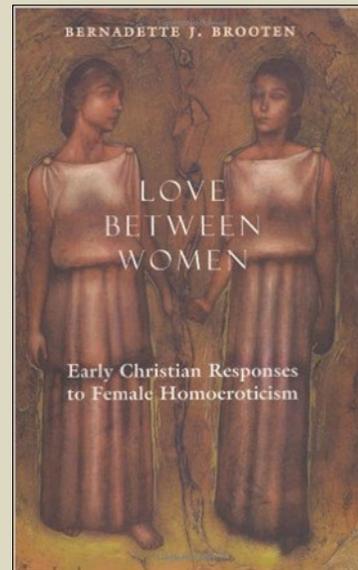


Grand Rapids: Eerdmans 2013

ADDITIONAL REVISIONIST CLAIMS

Claim: Paul's Ignorance #2

- **Response:** Although Paul did not have a scientific explanation of same-sex orientation, there is a wealth of historical evidence that many in that day did, in fact, know that same-sex desires were biologically rooted; Bernadette Brooten: *“Contrary to the view that the idea of sexual orientation did not develop until the nineteenth century, the astrological sources demonstrate the existence in the Roman world of the concept of a lifelong erotic orientation”* (page 140)

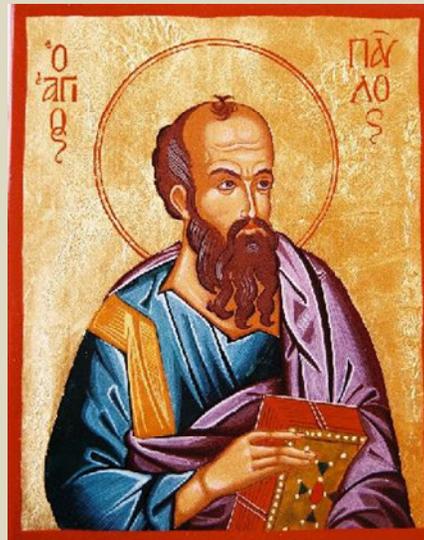


Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996

ADDITIONAL REVISIONIST CLAIMS

Claim: Paul's Ignorance #2

- **Response:** It is historically possible, perhaps even probable, therefore, that Paul also knew of some men who were born with a desire for other men; but orientation makes no difference for the apostle; Paul would still disapprove on the grounds that (1) these same-sex acts violate the male-female relationship established by God at creation (Rom 1:24-27) and (2) are also contrary to God's law (1 Cor. 6:9; 1 Tim. 1:10)



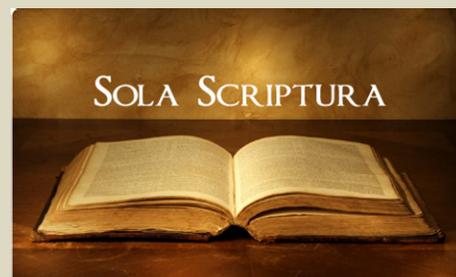
SOLA EXPERIENTIA or SOLA SCRIPTURA?

- Since the NT texts on same-sex acts clearly claim that such conduct is sinful, the real issue is *not one of interpretation but obedience*
- Will our position on same-sex acts be determined by our “experience alone”—our encounters, either personal or via public media, with gays and lesbians? Will we rebelliously pursue all kinds of clever arguments until we finally get the Bible to say what our secular culture wants us to say and what we perhaps personally desire?



SOLA EXPERIENTIA or SOLA SCRIPTURA?

- Or will we submit to the clear teaching of “scripture alone”?
- Although individual feelings and personal experiences play a part in current discussions about same-sex relationships, what Scripture teaches must come first and foremost



WHAT ABOUT GRACE?

- Final word on the topic of same-sex activity should not be about *law* and *judgement*
- Final word ought to be about *grace* and how God's grace can change lives—both for the gay and lesbian believer and for the heterosexual believer



WHAT ABOUT GRACE?

1. Dignity of Celibacy

- Grace empowers Christians—not just the gay and lesbian believer but also the single heterosexual believer—to live a celibate life
- Scripture affirms the value and dignity of a celibate life:
 - Model of Jesus
 - Celibacy as a sign of the inbreaking of the eschatological age where there is no marriage (Mark 12:25; Matt 22:30)



WHAT ABOUT GRACE?

1. Dignity of Celibacy

- Scripture affirms the value and dignity of a celibate life:
 - Paul affirms singleness as an honorable state that even surpasses marriage (1 Cor 7:38 “... *he who refrains from marriage will do even better*”)



WHAT ABOUT GRACE?

2. The Church as a Hospitable Community

- Grace also ought to be powerfully at work in the church which needs to create an environment where celibate gays and lesbians find spiritual kinship and friendship and hospitality
- The commendable practice of celibacy must never become an occasion for believers to be isolated and alone





Brentwood Baptist.
MAKING THE CONNECTION

7777 Concord Road | Brentwood, TN 37027 | www.brentwoodbaptist.com