

Witness of the Old Testament (part 1)

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[0:00] Our love for Christ by putting to death sin. Now did you notice, and it's a mark upon many of the Bible's lists of sin, that they have sexual immorality in a predominant position.

There are many different lists in the Bible of sins, and yet what we see is that sexual immorality often holds a prominent place in those sin lists.

You can see it in the works of the flesh, Galatians chapter 5, are, and you'll see sexual immorality up top. Jesus, what goes into the mouth doesn't make a man unclean, but what comes out of the mouth.

What is in the heart, for out of the heart comes, and sexual immorality is way up at the top. What does that suggest to you? This is a question I want a response from.

What does that suggest to you, that when we find Bible sin lists, we find sexual immorality as a prominent player? Dare? It always affects other people.

[1:11] It's not new. It's not new. Many are caught in it. There is a definition of sexual immorality.

It's real. Yeah. Yeah. This is real life on earth. It surely is inferring to us, isn't it, that this is something that humanity has not done well on the sexuality scorecard.

This has been a problematic area for mankind as long as we have been fallen. And it's reflected in those sin lists. It shows up quite early in history, and it's still with us.

Nothing new, nothing isolated. Very common. And our study in this class is homosexuality and the Bible.

And homosexual sin is just one of the many different sexual immoralities that there are. So we're not picking on homosexuality here.

[2:21] We're rather saying we're dealing with this problem that man has always had trouble with this area of sexuality. And we must take our place beside the homosexual and say that we too are broken and fallen, even here in this area, because it doesn't just condemn homosexual sin, but every other type of deviation from God's norm, even down to lusting after someone that's not our spouse.

So we don't stand and throw the first stone with some kind of self-righteous judgmentalism, but we confess we too are sinners.

But we have a Savior who saves us not only from the penalty of our sin, but from the power, the reigning power of sexual sin. And therein is the gospel.

There is the hope. And so we are studying homosexuality. And we come at last to those passages in the Bible that speak directly about this issue.

Some six to eight passages. And they all speak in condemnation of same-sex sex. These are the passages that pro-gay interpreters dismiss as the clobber passages.

[3:52] Before we came to them, we looked first at the creation order, didn't we? In Genesis 1 and 2. And we did that because that text sets forth in positive terms what God's design for human sexuality is.

Sexual identity, sexual orientation, sexual gender, sexual behavior. You'll find God's design for sexuality set forth there.

And what we found was that God created two kinds of human beings, male and female, and that they were created for one another. And that the only legitimate expression of sexual intimacy is between a man and a woman in the covenant of marriage.

That's the only kind of sexuality praised in the rest of the Bible, and it is praised. The book of Song of Solomon goes to great lengths in praising it, as does Proverbs.

But it's only that expression, man and woman in the covenant of marriage. Now, when we come to these passages, a fair reading of every one of them condemns same-sex activity as something

forbidden by God, since it is a violation of his creative design, what he meant for us in this area.
[5:23] So today we're going to begin in the Old Testament, and we'll see how far we get. Where's the first explicit reference to same-sex sex? Genesis.

What? Sodom. Okay, Genesis 19. Let's open there this morning. And we're going to see here two angels coming into Sodom.

And so before we open up chapter 19, we need to know, why are these angels here? Why are these two men, angels who are coming as men, in the form of men, why are they here?

If you'll remember back in chapter 18, there were three of these men. And they came to Abraham. And two of them were angels.

The third one was the angel of the Lord, who we find out is none other than the Lord himself, in a pre-incarnate visit to earth. And they tell Abraham that next year, his wife Sarah will have a son.

[6:34] That's when Sarah's snickering and laughing in the tent, and so on. And so that's the situation. And then in chapter 18, verses 16 and following, when the men got up to leave, that is these three angels, because they come in the form of men, when they got up to leave, they looked down towards Sodom.

And Abraham walked along with them to see them on their way. And then the Lord said, this is that one angel, the angel of the Lord, and notice he's called the Lord, shall I hide from Abraham what I am about to do?

You see, God was about to destroy Sodom and Gomorrah, wasn't he? Abraham has a nephew in Sodom, named Lot. And as the Lord has come and visited Abraham, he's saying, shall I hide from him what I'm about to do in destroying Sodom?

And we see what he goes on to say then in verse 20 and following, then the Lord said to Abraham, the outcry against Sodom and Gomorrah is so great, and their sin so grievous that I will go down and see if what they have done is as bad as the outcry that has reached me.

If not, I will know. The men turned away and went towards Sodom. And so the two go off, and the Lord remains behind to talk with Abraham.

[8:09] And you remember, that's where Abraham bargains with the Lord and gets him, would you spare the city just for 50? And then he gets him to 40, 30, 20, 10. And the Lord is willing to spare Sodom if he can find 10 righteous souls in Sodom.

So that's the background to Genesis chapter 19. So the two angels arrived. Verses 1 to 11, we're going to read.

The two angels arrived at Sodom in the evening, and Lot was sitting in the gateway of the city.

When he saw them, he got up to meet them and bowed down with his face to the ground.

My lords, he said, please turn aside to your servant's house. You can wash your feet and spend the night and then go on your way early in the morning. No, they answered, we will spend the night in the square.

But he insisted so strongly that they did go with him and entered his house. It's later that we will understand why he insisted so strongly that they not stay in the city square.

[9:19] He prepared a meal for them, baking bread without yeast, and they ate. Before they had gone to bed, all the men from every part of the city of Sodom, both young and old, surrounded the house.

They called to Lot, where are the men who came to you tonight? Bring them out to us so we can have sex with them. Lot went outside to meet them and shut the door behind him and said, no, my friends, don't do this wicked thing.

Look, I have two daughters who have never slept with a man. Let me bring them out to you and you can do what you like with them, but don't do anything to these men, for they have come under the protection of my roof.

Get out of our way, they replied. And they said, this fellow came here as an alien and now he wants to play the judge. We'll treat you worse than them.

They kept bringing pressure on Lot and moved forward to break down the door. But the men inside reached out and pulled Lot back into the house and shut the door.

[10:33] Then they struck the men who were at the door of the house, young and old, with blindness so that they could not find the door.

And what follows then is the announcement to Lot that the place is so wicked that we're going to destroy it. So get out of Sodom.

And that's what follows the fire and brimstone that falls from heaven and destroys the whole city, all five cities of the plain. Now, it cannot be denied that the traditional view of this passage that we read has always been that same-sex sex is what is being condemned in this passage.

In fact, our very term sodomy, which is a term denoting unnatural sexual perversion, it finds its origin in this city of Sodom, taken from the biblical account in Genesis chapter 19.

So it's hard to get away from the fact that its long historical use points to the nature of Sodom's sexual sin.

[11:46] That was never seriously, this traditional understanding was never seriously questioned until around 1955, Dr. Sherwin Bailey presented his radical new interpretation that it was not sexual, same-sex sin that was condemned here in Sodom.

He rather would posit that Sodom was destroyed for its inhospitality and not because of homosexuality. In fact, he would say that there is no evidence in the text that homosexual acts were even found in Sodom.

It's all been read into the text. And so, the version of Mr. Bailey is that Lot was violating Sodom's customs by entertaining guests in his home without the permission of the city's elders.

And so, the men of the city come, and they come to Lot's house, and they simply wanted to bring them out so that they could have a social chat and get to know them, to get acquainted, to be sure that they're friendly folk and not enemy spies coming among them in disguise.

Now, the NIV, which follows a dynamic equivalence form of translation, often gives us the sense of what they said in verse 5 when they said, bring them out to us so that we can have sex with them.

[13:16] Young and old, all the men of the city and they're wanting to bring them out that we might have sex with them. That's the dynamic equivalent of what was said. Literally, what was said was bring them out so that we might yada them.

That we might, the Hebrew yada, that we might know them. Okay? The word know. And I believe that that's probably what you'll find in the old King James language. Now, yada then means to know and it clearly can have sexual connotations of knowing intimately and the sexual act.

You remember in Genesis 4 and verse 1 in the old King James, I believe it reads something like, Adam knew Eve, his wife, and she conceived and bore Cain. So, there we see the word yada, know.

Adam knew his wife. It's a reference to sexual intimacy with his wife. That this is, and it's a very beautiful thing, that this is the most intimate of knowing between two people.

And yet, it is in that one flesh act that this knowing takes place. And so, Mr. Bailey and others would claim that this word yada is used some 943 times in the Old Testament and only a few times, 10 times, does it have this sexual connotation.

[14:43] Well, it's true that it may just mean to know and to get acquainted with and so on. So, how do we know which meaning to attach to this Hebrew word yada, to know?

Well, the context must point the way for us. There's no other hidden scientific way that if it has this marker on it, it means sexual knowing and if it doesn't have this letter, it doesn't.

There's none of that. It's rather saying, what does the context show? And it's that way in many of our English words, isn't it? That we can use the same English word and in one context it has sexual connotations and in another context the same word doesn't have any sexual connotation.

How do we know? Well, the context and what we find this is in verse 5 bring them out so that we can know them. Verse 8 uses yada again and here it is clearly sexual in meaning.

So, Lot's response to this request verses 6 and 7 I'm sorry, it's not verse 8, it's verse 7.

[16:00] So, look at Lot's response to their request and let's try to figure out what is it. Are they after a social chat or are they after sex with Lot's guests?

Bring them out that we might know them and Lot's response in verses 6 and 7. He went out to meet them and shut the door behind him and said, no my friends, don't do this wicked thing.

It is verse 8. Look, I have two daughters who have never known a man. There it is again. Never known a man. Now, our translation says they've never slept with a man.

Again, it's the dynamic equivalence. In this context, Lot was not just saying I have two daughters that have never had a chat with a man. No, we find out that they're engaged as we read on.

So they clearly had been acquainted with men. That's not what it's meaning. The NIV has it exactly right. This is a sexual connotative use of the word yadah.

[17:02] I have two daughters who have never slept with a man. So, we cannot, without violating the rule of the context, say that this is simply a social chat that they're after.

Notice Lot says, don't do this wicked thing. There's nothing wicked about a man talking with other men. But there is something wicked about having sex with other men.

If all it was was a social chat that they were after, Lot would have been fine with just saying, okay, come on in, have a chat.

But we can see that that is nowhere on his mind at all. He knew what they were intending to do. They knew what they were intending.

And it comes out, why the violence if they just wanted to get acquainted? Why breaking down the door? Why the only thing that could stop them is to have an angel strike them blind?

[18:10] Why all this? And why was the whole city destroyed by God if all they wanted was a chat with these visitors? No, the context rules out this non-sexual meaning of Yadah.

Verse 9 even goes on to show us that they don't like Lot, the newcomer, preaching to them. Here you are, you're the new guy on the block and you're preaching at us.

We'll treat you worse than them. What does that infer? that they're not going to treat them well and they're going to treat Lot even worse.

So even out of their own mouths they confirm that what they are after is not something good. So much for the view that Sodom was destroyed because of a deplorable lack of courtesy and hospitality and in all fairness many pro-gay scholars will admit that this interpretation of Bailey's is very weak at best.

And so their argument takes a different track and this is a second way that Genesis 19 is looked at and their argument is that though it may appear at first read to be opposing same-sex relations in reality it is not same-sex relations at all that it opposes but rather non consensual gang rape.

[19:42] Okay? Follow the logic. The sin condemned in Sodom is simply violence. It does not condemn a loving monogamous homosexual relationship between two consenting adults.

It's simply the fact that there was violent sexual intimacy. Rape being proposed and being desired. That's what's condemned here. How do we respond to that? Well, I don't think anyone is saying that same-sex sex was the only sin in Sodom.

That is such perversion that it's rarely found alone. That if a society is sunk to that level to where all the men of the city, young and old, are given over to that sin, you can be sure that there's a lot of other things going on in Sodom that break the law of God as well.

And rape is one of them. It's wrong whether it's between heterosexuals or homosexuals. That's a given. The Bible's clear on that. It's a sin.

[20:55] So their intended rape was wrong but so is same-sex sex. It's not an either-or and that's the thing that these interpreters like to do.

They like to put things on an either-or basis. Either what's being condemned in Sodom is homosexual activity or gang rape.

But it's like it doesn't enter in their minds that it could be that both were wrong in the eyes of God and both are being judged by fire and brimstone from heaven.

Now this is the sin that is pointed out as a readout on whether the city's sin is as great and grievous as the outcry that came against them.

Remember, why are these two angels here? They're here to see. Okay, is sin in Sodom so great that it ought to be destroyed? Every single living, breathing person in it?

[21:57] And what we find as the answer to that question in Genesis 19 is the widespread perversity of same-sex sex.

All the men from every part of the city in Sodom, both young and old, all craving to have sex with the two men that they do not know our angels.

Well, again, Lot calls their same-sex lust wicked. The very lust is wicked. What they intended to do is wicked.

And yes, the Bible condemns violence and rape is wicked, but it also condemns same-sex sex is wicked, whether violent or gentle. And these interpreters do not want to let this text say anything more than one thing at a time.

It's either forbidding same-sex sex or rape. And if it's rape, then it's not same-sex sex, so we're off the hook. Well, notice that the intended rape never took place, did it?

[23:08] This was clearly not the reason for fire and brimstone, but the sexual perversion was already being practiced when the Lord spoke to his friend Abraham about why he must destroy Sodom because of its wickedness.

And this incident in Genesis 19 reveals how widespread homosexual activity was in Sodom, that the whole city, young and old, were given over to it and were now wanting to break down the door to have their lust satisfied at Lot's house.

No wonder the sin of sodomy was named after this city. We're not saying that this was Sodom's only sin or that it was only destroyed because of same-sex sex.

But this sin clearly revealed the depravity of the city as given over to unnatural lust. This is the sin that takes prominence in the angel's report as what did we find concerning Sodom?

And so it is proof of the wickedness of the city and justification that it really did deserve to be destroyed as if nothing more needed to be said.

[24:25] than just this one thing. But what about Ezekiel 16, 49? You turn there to the prophet Ezekiel chapter 16 and verse 49.

this is the interpretation that says it was general wickedness, not homosexuality, that was the sin of Sodom and the reason for it being destroyed.

And here's the proof text, Ezekiel 16, 49. Ezekiel's taking his own people of Judah to task for their blatant sin against the Lord and he compares them to Sodom.

What a humbling thing for God's own people to be compared to Sodom. And that's what God is doing here to his own people, Judah, through his mouthpiece, Ezekiel.

And in verse 49, the Lord through his prophet says, now this was the sin of your sister Sodom.

[25:42] You see what he's calling her? Your sister to Sodom. She and her daughters were arrogant, overfed, and unconcerned. They did not help the poor and needy.

They were haughty. So you see their problem was pride, their problem was a callousness to not care for the poor and needy among them.

And that's here given as the reason for Sodom's demise. This was their sin. Not same sex, but rather these other general sins, especially pride and arrogance.

But you notice, and it's rarely pointed out in these writers, verse 50 goes on to say, they were haughty and did detestable things before me.

Therefore I did away with them as you have seen. Next week we're going to see that that word detestable things is twice mentioned in Leviticus concerning same-sex sex.

[26:48] That is detestable. It is an abomination to the Lord. And here that word is applied. I'm not saying that it's only applied to same-sex sex.

I'm simply saying that it is applied to same-sex sex in Leviticus 18 and 20. And here it is brought in among the other sins found in Sodom.

So though they would take this and say, you see, homosexual activity is never stated as the sin of Sodom, rather it's this pride and so on.

We can't be so sure about that, that this abomination that they're speaking of, we'll see that next week in Leviticus, what that probably is pointing to, especially after we have read Genesis 19.

And we must as well pause and say that same-sex sex is an evidence of high pride and arrogance.

[27:53] God has assigned certain sex and gender to all of his creatures and then he's assigned how that beautiful gift of his is to be expressed.

And these have said, we don't care what you've said, we're going to do it our way. If that's not pride and arrogance against the lawgiver, against the creator, the designer, of sexuality, what is.

So I do believe that this passage is pointing yes to other things as well. They didn't care about anyone else but themselves and doesn't that show itself even in this sinful act?

Very often it does, but it was pride and homosexual sex is itself an arrogant rebellion against God and as Leviticus says, it is an abomination.

So again, appeal to Ezekiel 1649 founders upon closer look. This is not an exhaustive list of all the sins that I'm sure were found in Sodom.

[29:13] You'd have found a very long list I'm sure. And the Lord is using this to shame his own people. Don't think of yourself as being better than them. You're sister to Sodom.

You need to repent of your own sin. Well, the rest of the Bible points to Sodom's sin as being sexual in nature, not just violence, not just a lack of hospitality.

We'll turn here when we come to the New Testament, but 2 Peter 2 talks about Sodom and Gomorrah. they're held up as example of those who follow the corrupt desire of the flesh. Their very desires and lusts are said to be corrupt, unclean, and defiled. And Jude 7 in a similar way says, Sodom and Gomorrah and the surrounding towns gave themselves up to sexual immorality and perversion.

And that word for perversion more literally means going after strange flesh. what is unnatural is strange.

[30 : 22] Strange and unnatural flesh concerning what God's design for sexuality was. So when we come to the New Testament, we'll see that even as it looks back on Genesis 19, it does cast the sin of Sodom in sexual terms.

So it's hard to read the Bible and to throw off this idea that homosexual sex is not being opposed in Genesis 19.

Judges chapter 19, and we don't have time to turn there, but you'll remember there there was a Levite and his servant and a concubine who came to Gibeah.

Now this is within Israel. Genesis 19 was in a pagan city of Sodom, the Canaanite city. But now, when we come to Judges, we're inside the promised land.

Israel's inside the promised land. They've been there for many years and what have they done? They've learned the ways of the Canaanites. And that's what's being held before us in Judges chapter 19.

[31 : 33] It has many similarities to Genesis 19, but the difference especially is that this is now within Israel, the covenant community of God, his covenant people, and they've copied the depraved practices of the Canaanites.

So here's this Levite, his servant, and his concubine, And he comes to Gibeah. An old man takes them in, and the men of the town come, and they want to bring him out so that we can yada, know him.

And again, so there's the issue. What are they after? And the old man says, don't be so vile. Don't do this disgraceful thing. And so instead of sending out the man who was visiting him, he sends out his concubine, and they raped and abused her to death.

It was no mere social chat that they were after. And pro-gay commentators would say of this text as well, that it only speaks of the horror of rape, not to committed same-sex intimate relationships.

What do we say to this? All rape, whether homosexual or heterosexual, is condemned. But the fact that the rape here attempted, called for, requested, demanded, was same-sex rape, is meant to show just how low Israel had sunk morally by this time in history.

[32 : 57] We're just a couple pages away from the end of Judges. You know what the last verse of Judges says, that there was no king in Israel, and so every man did what was right in his own eyes.

Well, what does that lead to when every man does what's right? Well, it leads to this. This is how bad it got in Israel, the people who had received the law from God on Mount Sinai.

So that's the lesson being taught us here, just how low they have sunk. And so same-sex desire here functions as a marker of the depths to which they had fallen, much in the same way as we'll see in Romans 1.

There were many sins mentioned in Romans 1, but the sin that is as a marker that shows a civilization that is given over by God three times, pow, pow, pow, it mentions same-sex perversity. It acts as a marker of any civilization marking its depths, of depravity and being given over to perverted same-sex desire. And so in that sense, sexual perversion of same-sex sex is a marker for Israel here in Judges 19, 20 to 26.

[34 : 22] It's used as a marker to show how evil and just how wicked Sodom had become, and it's used in the New Testament in Romans 1 in the same way.

that is what ought to alarm us at what's happening in our nation because when a civilization is given over to same-sex sex, it is not that that is calling down the wrath of God upon that civilization so much as, according to Romans 1 18, that that is the wrath of God upon the civilization, that he has given them over to that behavior.

Yes, it cries for judgment, but that itself is the judgment of God upon a society. We'll see that in Romans 1. So, what do you think?

Genesis 19. Does it say anything about same-sex sex? can you see how they're trying to wriggle around it saying anything about loving, monogamous, faithful, same-sex relationships?

It doesn't have anything to say about that, they're saying. It's only this perverse raping business. Obviously, we're against that, too. Yes, Darren? Why now?

[35:44] Why? Voluntarily giving his daughters? That's not in the discussion. It really is outside the parameters, but the only reason we refer to that is because it was clearly for sexual relations that he offered them.

And, yeah, that's another time, and we're not told. Other than that he regarded highly the fact that he had men, maybe he knew they were angels, I don't know, that had come under the protection of his roof.

Not that that was a legitimate reason to sacrifice the virginity of his own daughters. I'm not saying that in the least, but I'm just trying to say what motivated him. He says that's what motivated him. These men have come under my protection. I must protect them. Well, your daughters are under your protection, too. You need to protect them. I don't know.

That's the short answer. I don't know. But any other questions as to how they use Genesis 19 and their arguments to dismiss this passage from being against it?

[36:59] Yes? I just have a question. What would they say was the reason for the angels coming to destroy? I mean, that's a given fact.

So what would they say that they were looking for in hospitality? That and gang rape. So they were saying that that was taking place all the time.

Well, some of them would say there was no homosexuality taking place. And that, for them, the issue was a lack of hospitality to the guests. So that was the first one that we saw that they're saying, Yada, in this passage, has nothing to do with sexual connotation.

They just want to know them. They wanted to make sure they were friendly visitors and not spies.

And so, but they were very inhospitable to them. And that was their sin.

So that's one. I mean, they're not united in how they view Genesis 19. So some, Mr. Bailey tried to posit that. Others said, oh, come on, the passage just reeks with sexual connotations.

[38:05] You can't be serious. And so they would say, there's obvious sexual connotations going on here, but it was of a non-consensual rape kind of sexuality.

And that's why God is judging them. So you see that they aren't in agreement among themselves. They try to grab hold of some idea, and it may run for a while, and everybody quotes it in their books, and then, okay, well, yeah, that's pretty foolish.

We can't go there anymore, so they go on to something else. Yeah, it was part of the custom, it was not a small sin to show inhospitality to guests, so, but is that going to change the whole reading of Genesis 19?

That's the question. Any other comments, questions? Jim? What Bible was that reading? The same one you're reading, he was reading in the Hebrew, he was a scholar, he knew the use of yada, he knew, he was able to look it up, and it's 943 times, and so, I'm pretty impressed he's got that much knowledge, I'm an educated person, I can see what it's saying in there.

Well, and I think in all fairness, many of these have recognized that and have given up on that line of argumentation, but they've found other lines to use.

[39:32] Again, it goes back to our lesson on if we want the text to say something, we can make it say that. There is no text that cannot be used to teach anything.

Peter say that they twist the scriptures to their own destruction. So, we need to beware of that, we need to come to the Bible, Lord, you teach me, don't let my preconceived notions lead me, don't let the preacher's preconceived notions lead me, you lead me, you teach me, you're the great prophet, Lord Jesus, I'm ignorant, thank you that you've come to teach me.

Well, let's go on into worship with that attitude then, shall we? We'll take up the next Old Testament passage. Don't forget, this will be in the library, the secret thoughts of an unlikely convert.