

# Christianity on homosexuality and adultery

## **What does the Bible say about homosexuality?**

Very little. In fact, the word 'homosexual' did not even exist until the 20<sup>th</sup> Century, It is not used at all in the Bible and Jesus Christ never spoke a word against homosexuality. The closest word to describe a 'gay' person at that time would be 'eunuch.'

## **What does the Bible say about adultery?**

Plenty! There are literally hundreds of references against adultery in both the Old Testament and the New Testament.

### **Old Testament**

Chapter 20 of Leviticus (from verses 6 to 21) refers to the Old Testament penalties for breaking the Mosaic law (ie. the law of Moses).

Leviticus 20:10 (Adultery)

**“The man who commits adultery with another man’s wife, he who commits adultery with his neighbour’s wife, the adulterer and the adulteress, shall surely be put to death.”**

**Note:** Old Testament laws and penalties do not apply to Christians, unless they are repeated and confirmed by Jesus in the New Testament. So this one does apply, because Jesus also condemns adultery.

Leviticus 20:13 (Sodomy or anal intercourse)

**“If a man lies with a male as he lies with a woman, both of them have committed an abomination.”**

**Note:** This does not say “If a man lies with a male”, but rather it says “If a man lies with a male as he lies with a woman” in other words, having intercourse. So this is not a condemnation of homosexuality, but it might be a condemnation of men who have anal intercourse with other men.

### **The Ten Commandments**

The Law of Moses states that ‘You shall not commit adultery’ (Exodus 20:14, Deuteronomy 5:18) but nowhere does it say you shall not commit homosexuality. This does not mean that homosexual acts are allowed, but that being homosexual itself is allowed because it has never been condemned, as some fanatical Christians would have us believe.

Interestingly, when Jesus Christ is asked by a man what he must do to have eternal life, Jesus tells him to ‘keep the commandments’, but He only confirms six of the Ten Commandments, including the law against **adultery**. (Matthew 19:17-18)

Even the Book of Revelation refers to ‘that woman Jezebel’ and how God will cast her ‘and those who commit adultery with her’ into great tribulation, unless they repent of their deeds. (Revelation 2:20-22).

## New Testament

Most people today define 'sodomy' as anal intercourse, but not all scholars agree on this interpretation. Some say that the sin of sodomy refers to the lack of hospitality, and has nothing to do with homosexuality. There are only three (3) references to sodomy in the entire New Testament. None of them are in the Gospels, but only in the Epistles (letters) of St Paul. Those three are:

**1) "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 the their error which was due." (Romans 1:27)**

**Note:** This tends to suggest that these men were already with women, and then they left their women, and went with men. This is more like adultery than homosexuality, since it appears to be referring to men who were already with women, and then started leaving their women to go with men. So it does not appear to be referring to men going with men, but condemning men who were already in a relationship with women and then leaving them to go with men (ie. adultery).

**2) "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 \*catamites, nor sodomites, nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners will inherit the kingdom of God." (1Corinthians 6:9-10)**

**\*Note:** Some versions of the Bible (printed in the 20<sup>th</sup> Century) have wrongly translated the word 'catamites' as 'homosexuals.' The word 'homosexual' was not even used in the English language until the 19<sup>th</sup> Century and first appeared in the Oxford Dictionary in its 1892 Edition. The original Greek version reads 'malakoi' which can mean masturbators or soft or submissive. English versions of the Bible started to translate 'malakoi' as 'homosexuals' from as late as 1958! The Greek word for 'homosexuals' is 'omofilofiloi' and this word does not appear anywhere in the Bible. The Ancient Greek word for homosexuality was 'kinedos' and this word also does not appear anywhere in the Bible.

**3) "Knowing this: that the law is not made for a righteous person, but for the lawless and insubordinate, for the ungodly and for sinners, for the unholy and profane, for murderers of fathers and murderers of mothers, for manslayers, for fornicators, for sodomites, for kidnappers, for liars, for perjurers, and if there is any other thing that is contrary to sound doctrine, according to the glorious gospel of the blessed God which was committed to my trust." (1Timothy 1:9-11)**

**Note:** This refers to fornicators and sodomites, so it is equally condemning heterosexual acts outside of marriage as homosexual acts, if we accept the interpretation that 'sodomites' means those who commit anal intercourse. Some scholars say that a 'sodomite' refers to a person who comes from the City of Sodom, just like an israelite comes from Israel, and more probably means a person who lacks hospitality.

## Why did God destroy the City of Sodom?

God destroyed the city of Sodom because He could not find 10 righteous people there. If Abraham could not find 10 righteous people in Sodom, God told him that He would destroy the city (Genesis 18:16-33). Lot pleads with the men of Sodom to not have relations with his guests, the angels, because he offered them hospitality and were therefore 'under protection of my roof' (Genesis 19:8). The importance of treating guests with hospitality is the crucial point here. Lot shows greater concern for the safety of his guests than he does for his two daughters, and offers his daughters to be raped by all the men of Sodom. Such was the high value placed on treating strangers with hospitality. The sin of Sodom is described in Deuteronomy 29:20-26 as the forsaking of the covenant of

the Lord and worshipping false gods. Ezekiel 16:48-50 states that ‘arrogance’ and ‘not giving a helping hand to the poor and needy’ were also reasons for its destruction. There is further evidence in the New Testament when Jesus describes the fate of any city that does not receive His disciples with hospitality. Jesus says that “it shall be more tolerable in that day for Sodom, than for that city’ (Luke 10:10-12). This confirms that the Sodom story had more to do with arrogance and the lack of hospitality than with homosexuality, which is why Jesus makes the Sodom comparison here in Luke.

### **Eunuchs (celibate or gay men)**

A eunuch is either a man who has been castrated by another person (usually to serve in a harem) or a man who has been born ‘effeminate’ or ‘gay’ and prefers not to marry and have sexual relations with women.

The Bible tells us there are **three** (3) types of eunuchs:

Jesus says, **“For there are eunuchs who are born thus from their mother’s womb, and there are eunuchs who were made eunuchs by men, and there are eunuchs who have made themselves eunuchs for the kingdom of heaven’s sake. Let those who can accept it, accept it.”** (Matthew 19:12)

Not all eunuchs are surgically castrated men, otherwise it would not be possible for some to be ‘born thus’ from their mother’s womb. So Jesus is referring to different groups of people here, ie. men born that way (genetically) who prefer not to marry or to have sexual relations with women. These people are known today as ‘gay’ or ‘homosexual’ men, but as these words did not exist in biblical times, they were referred to as ‘eunuchs’.

This is the clearest evidence in the New Testament to show that Jesus acknowledges that some people are born homosexual. It is not a ‘lifestyle choice’ as some people wrongly believe. The only eunuchs who make a choice are those who choose to be castrated to work in harems (brothels) or those who choose to be eunuchs (non-sexual men) to serve the Lord’s kingdom as single men or celibate priests or monks. The words ‘homosexual’ or ‘monk’ were not yet invented, as these terms (including ‘gay’ to mean homosexual) were introduced in the 20<sup>th</sup> Century, so all three types of non-sexual single men were referred to as ‘eunuchs’ at that time:

- 1) eunuchs who are **born eunuchs** from their mother’s womb (genetically)
- 2) eunuchs who were **made eunuchs** by men (castrated by choice or force), or
- 3) eunuchs who have **made themselves eunuchs** for the kingdom of heaven’s sake (by choice to serve the Lord).

Jesus did not condemn any of these three groups of eunuchs. Jesus was well aware of the existence of eunuchs/homosexuals at that time and could have spoken out against them if He wanted to, but He did not. This passage explains why Jesus never condemned homosexuality or homosexuals at any time, yet He condemned heterosexual adultery and adulterers hundreds of times! Strange how some modern day Christians, including most ignorant clergy, think they know better than Jesus. But if Jesus Himself did not speak a word against eunuchs/homosexuals, by what authority do homophobic Christians think they know better than God? They spend too much of their time judging homosexuals and hardly spend any time criticising adultery or abortion. Yet the founder of their faith, Jesus Christ, did the exact opposite! Are they following a different God?

Further evidence can be found in the example of the Roman Centurion (Matthew 8:6) and his male servant boy who was 'dear' to him. (Luke 7:2). Male and female servants were the personal property of Roman centurions and they could be sold, replaced or killed without question. So why would this Centurion go out of his way and beg Jesus in public to heal his servant? Roman soldiers did not have slaves as their friends. So why was this boy servant so special and 'dear' to him? The answer can be found in the Greek words 'pais mou' used in this Bible passage to describe his servant as 'my boy' instead of my 'doulos', which means slave. So the original Greek appears to support the view that his personal servant was 'dear' to him because he may have been his lover. It was a common practice for Roman soldiers to have male lovers at that time because serving soldiers were not allowed to marry. So whilst many soldiers chose to have relations with female servants, the Centurion in the Bible had a male servant, yet Jesus healed his servant without making any comment about their relationship being immoral or wrong.

### **Words of Jesus against homosexuality?**

Nothing!

That's right, nil. Except that some eunuchs were born that way (Matthew 19:12). Jesus did not say anything at all against homosexuality. Likewise, there is nothing in the Bible that specifically prohibits oral sex. This does not mean it is encouraged, but it is certainly not mentioned or prohibited. Yet, Jesus did say plenty of words against heterosexual adultery and divorce.

### **Words of Jesus against adultery?**

Plenty!

There are far too many condemnations of heterosexual adultery in the Bible to list them all. Suffice to say that Jesus Christ Himself spoke out against adultery on numerous occasions. Adultery is condemned in both the Old Testament (including the Ten Commandments) and throughout the New Testament.

Jesus Christ says:

"But I say to you that whoever looks at a woman to lust for her has already committed adultery with her in his heart." (Matthew 5:28)

**Note:** Here, Jesus is referring to 'perving' or looking lustfully at women – something that most heterosexual men do on a regular basis.

"But I say to you that whoever divorces his wife for any reason except sexual immorality causes her to commit adultery; and whoever marries a woman who is divorced commits adultery." (Matthew 5:32)

**"You shall not commit adultery."** (Matthew 19:18)

"So He said to them, Whoever divorces his wife and marries another commits adultery against her. And if a woman divorces her husband and marries another, she commits adultery." (Mark 10:11-12) and (Luke 16:18).

Remember, all these verses (above) are from the Gospels and were spoken by the Lord Jesus Christ Himself. There are numerous other verses in the Bible against adultery, but these are only a few samples. So if homosexuality is claimed to be such a 'great sin', why does Jesus Christ say nothing about it? Do we claim to know better than Christ? Surely

not! God does not ‘forget’ to mention important laws and teachings, and God does not make mistakes!

So if Christians today think they know better than God, they better be prepared to face His divine judgement and to explain from where they get their authority to condemn homosexuals, since it clearly does not come from Jesus or the Bible!

### **Marriage or the single life?**

Marriage is considered to be a blessed union between a man and a woman, but it is only for those who lack self-control, and is a secondary option to being single. In other words, as the Bible says “...if they cannot exercise self-control, let them marry.” (1Corinthians 7:9)

Being single is considered by God to be a higher calling than being married.  
“So then he who gives her in marriage does well, but he who does not give her in marriage does better.” (1Corinthians 7:38)

“He who is unmarried cares for the things of the Lord – how he may please the Lord. But he who is married cares about the things of the world – how he may please his wife.” (1Corinthians 7:32-33)

Jesus Christ never married, and neither did St Paul. In fact, St Paul said he wished that all men remained unmarried, even as he was. St Paul said “I wish that all men were even as I myself...But I say to the unmarried and to the widows: It is good for them if they remain even as I am.” (1Corinthians 7:7-8)

“It is good for a man not to touch a woman.” (1Corinthians 7:1) and “...it is good for a man to remain as he is.” (1Corinthians 7:26)

So whilst marriage and monasticism are both blessed paths, remaining unmarried is clearly the more blessed path of the two.

The Wedding at Cana is used as the Bible Reading during Christian Orthodox marriage services. Yet, how many people know what happened to this married couple? According to Orthodox Tradition, after the Wedding at Cana, Simon, who was the groom at this wedding, left his wife and followed Jesus. Simon later became known as Saint Simon the Zealot, because he had greater love for Jesus than for his wife. St Simon did not marry another woman, but remained a single man serving the Lord for the rest of his life.

### **What about Adam and Eve?**

There is a catch-phrase that some people use: ‘God created Adam and Eve, not Adam and Steve’ to support their view about heterosexual marriage. However, the Genesis account has nothing to do with marriage, as Adam and Eve were not married. Adam and Eve had sexual relations and produced many children, and those children had sexual relations with each other to produce more children. Today we call this incest, but at that time it was necessary to populate the earth, and God had not yet given the moral laws for mankind to Moses. So that is why Genesis cannot be used to support heterosexual marriage, as marriage was unknown at that time.

It also has nothing to do with celibacy, otherwise monks and nuns would not be allowed under Genesis. It only tells us that God created two sexes for the purpose of procreation at that time. But marriage was dealt with much later. Indeed, the Old Testament has many examples of polygamy, such as Lamech with two wives, Esau with three wives, Jacob with four wives, Gideon with many wives, and even Solomon with 700 wives! So the Genesis account of Adam and Eve is simply the biblical explanation of the Creation of humanity – it has nothing to do with heterosexual marriage, homosexuality, celibacy, priesthood or monasticism, as all these concepts came centuries later.

### **The biggest threats to marriage**

The 3 biggest threats to traditional marriage are:

- 1) **Divorce.** Never before in history have there been so many divorces. We now have divorce on demand, and this has eroded the family unit, not to mention the devastating effect it has on children.
- 2) **De Facto relationships.** Most heterosexual couples today ignore the sanctity of marriage and choose to live a life of self-indulgence without any regard for the church or the spiritual consequences of living in sin.
- 3) **Adultery.** Adultery or ‘cheating’ on your partner is so prevalent among heterosexual couples that it is almost accepted as a normal part of married life today. In many cases, this results in the break-up of marriages.

These three problems pose the greatest threat to heterosexual marriage, yet many clergy today act like these problems do not even exist and would have us believe that same-sex marriage is a bigger problem. Gay couples wishing to get married are less than 1% of all marriages, yet heterosexual couples who are in de facto relationships, divorced, or who commit adultery come close to 90% of all married couples. Despite this, the issue of same-sex marriage seems to occupy most of the time of clergy today.

### **What can we conclude?**

The Bible and Jesus Christ are not against eunuchs/homosexuals, since Jesus tells us they were born that way. Being homosexual is not a sin, but anal intercourse is a sin. No one can say that Jesus or the Bible condemn homosexuality, unless they are misquoting the Bible, such as the so-called ‘evangelical’ groups in the USA, who are filled with hatred and know very little about Christianity or the Bible. Let those so-called Christians who think they are without sin throw the first stone. (John 8:7)  
Christians should be quick to forgive, but slow to judge. Better still, they should not judge one another at all. **‘Judge not, that you be not judged.’** (Matthew 7:1-5)

**“Let all bitterness, wrath, anger, clamor, and evil speaking be put away from you, with all malice. And be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God in Christ forgave you.”** (Ephesians 4:31-32).

**Jesus says: “By this all will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another.” (John 13:35).** Repeat: If you have love for one another, not hatred.

### **Further Reading:**

‘Gay Christian 101’ by Rick Brentlinger (Salient Press) [www.gaychristian101.com](http://www.gaychristian101.com)

‘Homosexuality and Civilization’ by Louis Crompton (Harvard)

## The Orthodox Church position

The Orthodox Church does not have an official position on this issue. Homosexuality has never been condemned or prohibited by an Ecumenical Council or by the canons of the Church throughout its 2,000 year history. Does this mean the Church has been wrong for 2,000 years? Of course not! So why are some priests and bishops today so obsessed with this issue? Why are they preaching hatred instead of love? This is because they are ignorant of what the Bible says and what the Church Fathers say on this issue.

There are a few Church Fathers who wrote against anal intercourse, paedophilia and pederasty, but no one ever wrote against homosexuality. St John Chrysostom, in his discourse 'Against the Greeks' condemns the 'pederasty' (the love of boys) of the Greeks and even accuses Plato and Socrates of making this practice 'respectable and a part of philosophy' but St John does not condemn homosexuality.

St Gregory of Nazianzus in his *Oration 37*, discusses marriage and states that 'All men cannot receive this saying, but they to whom it is given.' In other words, marriage is not for everyone. He further says: 'For there are eunuchs which were made eunuchs from their mother's womb. I should very much like to be able to say something bold about eunuchs. Be not proud, you who are eunuchs by nature.' St Gregory acknowledges that being a eunuch (ie. a man born gay) is a natural state. He also says to eunuchs: 'Having been wedded to Christ, do not dishonour Christ.' This confirms the important role that eunuch-gay men have played in the church.

The Ecumenical Council of Nicea did not exclude eunuch-gay men from Holy Communion or from serving God in the church. 'A Eunuch, whether he became such by influence of men...or was born thus, may, if he is worthy, become a Bishop.' Canon XXI of the 85 Apostolic Canons.

The canons of the Orthodox Church prohibit anal intercourse. However, there is no such prohibition in the canons against being homosexual. The 'Rudder' or 'Pedalion' (published in 1957 in English; reprinted in 1983, from the Greek edition of 1908) contains the compilation of the Holy Canons of the Orthodox Church.

Canon IV of the Eight Canons of St Gregory of Nyssa (on page 871 of the Rudder) refers to the sins of fornication, **adultery**, bestiality and pederasty.

Canon VIII of the 35 Canons of St John the Faster (on page 936 of the Rudder) prohibits masturbation. Canon IX on the same page prohibits double masturbation (two men masturbating each other).

**Canon XVIII** of the 35 Canons of St John the Faster (on page 942 of the Rudder) prohibits copulation between men, that is, **anal intercourse**.

**Canon VII** of the 92 Canons of St Basil the Great (on page 793 of the Rudder) condemns **sodomy**, bestiality, murder, sorcery, **adultery** and idolatry to the same chastisement.

Canon LVIII of the 92 Canons of St Basil the Great (on page 828 of the Rudder) condemns **adultery**.

**Canon LXII** of the 92 Canons of St Basil the Great (on page 829 of the Rudder) condemns those who commit **sodomy** to the same penalty as those who commit **adultery**. Canon LXIV on the same page also condemns those who commit bestiality to the same penalty as those who commit **adultery**.

There are also many other references in the canons against **adultery** and bestiality, but the above three canons (**in bold**) are the only ones that refer to sodomy or anal intercourse. There are many canons against adultery, but there is no canon that prohibits homosexuality. The canons only prohibit one type of homosexual act, and that is anal intercourse, which is in line with what the Bible states.

Therefore, those priests, bishops or laypeople who say that homosexuality is against the Church or the Bible, can only say this about anal intercourse between men. After all, there is no specific condemnation of homosexuality anywhere in the Bible or anywhere in the Canons of the Church. Those who say that the Church condemns it are ignorant and merely expressing their own personal opinions. The Orthodox Church is not at all concerned with the personal opinions of clergy, no matter how senior, as these have often led to false teachings and heresies. Church history shows that some individual priests, bishops and even patriarchs have been condemned as heretics. Two well known examples of clergy who were condemned as heretics are: the Priest Arius (Arian heresy) and the Patriarch Nestorius of Constantinople (Nestorian heresy). This is why we must always refer back to the Bible and to the Church Fathers to find out the truth.

People should not be interested in the personal opinions of any cleric, monk or layperson, no matter how 'holy' or 'spiritual' they may appear to be. We should only be concerned with what the Bible says (Holy Scripture) and what the Church Fathers and Canons say (Holy Tradition). For outside of these, there is no Orthodoxy, but only delusion and error.

### **Same-sex unions in the Orthodox Church (not marriages)**

This might come as a surprise to most people, but there is clear evidence to indicate that same-sex unions were conducted in the Orthodox Church. These were not marriages, but 'brotherly unions'. The service itself is called the 'Adelphopoiesis' rite or 'akolouthia' in Greek, and has been documented in various manuscripts, some from Mount Athos, mainly from the 11<sup>th</sup> to the 16<sup>th</sup> Centuries AD.

A book called 'The Marriage of Likeness' by John Boswell, (published in Great Britain, Harper Collins, 1995) refers to all the manuscripts in detail and describes the Orthodox Church services for these unions. Professor Boswell's book also contains a manuscript from the liturgical union between the Byzantine Emperor Basil I (founder of the Macedonian Dynasty in Constantinople) and his male companion from the 12<sup>th</sup> or 13<sup>th</sup> Century, showing a priest blessing their union. Manuscripts state that Basil's first male companion was called Nicholas and his second companion was called John:





*A 12<sup>th</sup> Century Byzantine manuscript showing an Orthodox priest blessing the civil union between the Emperor Basil I and his companion John in an Orthodox church.*

Although Professor Boswell believes that this might support a case for same-sex marriages, there is no evidence to suggest that the Orthodox Church has ever allowed same-sex marriages. Same-sex unions are different from same-sex marriages, as same-sex unions were not blessed as sexual unions, but only as spiritual or brotherly unions.

There is an Orthodox icon from St Catherine's Monastery, Mt Sinai (7<sup>th</sup> Century AD) showing a church union between two men, Sts Sergius and Bacchus, with gold bands around their neck, and Jesus Christ in the middle blessing the union. The icon is now in an art museum in Kiev, Ukraine. In marriages, the gold bands or wreaths are placed on the head of the couple, but in brotherly unions they are placed around the neck:



In 527 AD, the Emperor Justinian ordered a church to be built in Constantinople, to honour these two Christian martyrs, Sts Sergius and Bacchus. This Byzantine church was so magnificent, that it was also known as 'Little Hagia Sophia.'