

INTRODUCTION:

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Is There a 'Gay Gene'?

New Genetic Regions Associated With Male Sexual Orientation Found

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1. New Testament Passages – The Writings of Paul

a. **Qualifications** For Entering the Kingdom of God

i. 1 Corinthians 6:9-10

⁹Do you not know that the wicked will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived: Neither the sexually immoral nor idolaters nor adulterers nor male prostitutes nor homosexual offenders ¹⁰nor thieves nor the greedy nor drunkards nor slanderers nor swindlers will inherit the kingdom of God.(NIV)

Some of the information was adapted from an article written by Dr. Roy Clements entitled, “Sex in the City ~ An exposition of 1 Corinthians 6.”

<http://www.courage.org.uk/articles/sexcity.shtml>

- **Attitudes** in early church history toward sex
 - Morally questionable
 - **Really** Holy people abstained i.e., Monks, Priests, etc.
 - Sex for procreation

The possibility of enjoying sex wasn't culturally examined or considered a normal view.

Leading up to this passage...

Vs. 1 ~ court cases between church members

1Cor. 6:⁸All you're doing is providing fuel for more wrong, more injustice, bringing more hurt to the people of your own spiritual family. (MSG)

As stated in vs. 8 “injustice” and “**harm** to the people of your own spiritual family” was the issue.

Paul says in verse 9, don't expect to inherit the Kingdom of God by doing such things.

Let's look at the three words referring to sexual behavior:

' Do you not know that the wicked will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived. Neither pornoi nor idolaters nor adulterers...

- 'pornoi' meaning either prostitute or those who go with prostitutes.

The first word is 'pornoi' loosely translated, 'the sexually immoral' (NIV). It means quite simply either prostitutes (the masculine plural can embrace both males and females) or those who go with prostitutes.

- The oldest profession in the world
- Around in the days of the New Testament
- Then as now it was almost always found in large cities
- In Corinth prostitution was so prolific that the town had become a byword for it – they had even coined the verb 'to corinthianize', meaning to indulge in a lifestyle of wild sexual abandon.

Paul addressed the issue back in chapter 5. There he had written an earlier letter to the Corinthians advising them not to associate with 'pornoi', i.e. prostitutes and their clients. Unfortunately, some of them had mistaken his intention, so in 5:9 Paul clarifies his meaning. I didn't mean don't socialize with prostitutes or their clients at all, he says. In a city like Corinth that would mean never talking to anybody! I simply meant that as a church you were not to continue in fellowship with those who called themselves Christians, but who were prostitutes or their clients.

- 'malakoi' very ambiguous
- 'arsenokoitai' very rare.

... nor malakoi nor arsenokoitai

These last two Greek words that lie behind that translation have been the subject of an immense amount of scholarly investigation and controversy – the first 'malakoi' because it is so ambiguous and the second 'arsenokoitai' because it is so rare.

And while there isn't time here to give a full account of the debate about these words, suffice it to say the NIV translation is highly misleading. O

The key – behaviors common in ancient Corinth, all exploitative or *abusive* in nature, and which were so obviously incompatible with Christianity that it was impossible to imagine a saved person engaging in them.

With that in mind, what could 'malakoi' refer to? It doesn't mean male prostitutes in the common sense of the word, that's for sure, because Paul has already used the word for that, namely 'porno'. Literally 'malakoi' means 'softies' or 'weaklings'. It doesn't necessarily have anything to do with sexual behavior at all – it can simply mean 'invalids'. But clearly Paul cannot possibly be referring here simply to limp-wristed wimps. He's thinking about wrongdoers who exploit or abuse other people. So there must have been some category of people in ancient Corinth who did this and who were popularly called 'malakoi'. Who could they have been? The truth is we don't really know. Roy Clements suggests he is talking about a particular class of male prostitute who used feminine behavior and perhaps even cross-dressed in order to seduce their clients.

As for the 'arsenokoitai', we are reduced to being even more *speculative* in any attempt to interpret this word, because it is unknown outside the New Testament in the literature of the period, and is only used twice in the New Testament itself – here and in 1 Timothy 1:10. Once again, the vital control if we are not to fall into the trap of reading things into the text is to remember that Paul is talking about crimes of exploitation. Interestingly, in the parallel reference in 1 Timothy this association of ideas is also apparent. This word 'arsenokoitai' is listed along with *murderers* and slave traders, as lawbreakers who commit crimes of gross wickedness and injustice.

"The 'arsenokoitai' has a very nasty edge to it. It doesn't describe a homosexual orientation, but a homosexual crime – it doesn't describe an act of tenderness and *love*, but of violence and abuse – it doesn't describe an expression of mutual and reciprocated passion, but of tyrannous sexual *abuse*."

Dr. Roy Clements

We need to ask ourselves, just as heterosexuals do, whether there is any element of exploitation or abuse in our patterns of sexual behavior.

⁹Don't you realize that this is not the way to live? Unjust people who don't care about God will not be joining in his kingdom. Those who use and abuse each

other, use and abuse sex,¹⁰ use and abuse the earth and everything in it, don't qualify as citizens in God's kingdom. (MSG)

1 Corinthians 6:12-14 will be covered in week 6

- b. Worshipping God or Idols
 - i. Romans 1:14-32

“But the Bible says...” by James Alison gives further insight to points made here. Even though the subtitle of this article is, “A Catholic reading of Romans 1” James Alison was brought up an evangelical Protestant and knows very well the ways in which we think, so really it is better tailored to Protestants as is apparent in the article.
<http://www.courage.org.uk/articles/Romans1.shtml>

Romans 1:14 I am under obligation both to Greeks and to barbarians, both to the wise and to the foolish:¹⁵ so I am eager to preach the gospel to you also who are in Rome.¹⁶ For I am not ashamed of the gospel: it is the power of God for salvation to every one who has faith, to the Jew first and also to the Greek.¹⁷ For in it the righteousness of God is revealed through faith for faith; as it is written, ‘He who through faith is righteous shall live.’¹⁸ For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and wickedness of men who by their wickedness suppress the truth.¹⁹ For what can be known about God is plain to them, because God has shown it to them.²⁰ Ever since the creation of the world his invisible nature, namely, his eternal power and deity, has been clearly perceived in the things that have been made. So they are without excuse;²¹ for although they knew God they did not honor him as God or give thanks to him, but they became futile in their thinking and their senseless minds were darkened.²² Claiming to be wise, they became fools,²³ and exchanged the glory of the immortal God for images resembling mortal man or birds or animals or reptiles.²⁴ Therefore God gave them up in the lusts of their hearts to impurity, to the dishonoring of their bodies among themselves,²⁵ because they exchanged the truth about God for a lie and worshipped and served the creature rather than the Creator, who is blessed for ever! Amen.²⁶ For this reason God gave them up to dishonorable passions. Their women exchanged natural relations for unnatural,²⁷ and the men likewise gave up natural relations with women and were consumed with passion for one another, men committing shameful acts with men and receiving in their own persons the due penalty for their error.²⁸ And since they did not see fit to acknowledge God, God gave them up to a base mind and to improper conduct.²⁹ They were filled with all manner of wickedness, evil, covetousness, malice. Full of envy, murder, strife, deceit, malignity (mul – lig’ – nity), they are gossips,³⁰ slanderers, haters of God, insolent, haughty, boastful, inventors of evil, disobedient to parents,³¹ foolish, faithless, heartless, ruthless.³² Though they know God’s decree that those who

do such things deserve to die, they not only do them but approve those who practice them.

Romans 2:1 *Therefore you have no excuse, (vs. 19-20 above) **O man, whoever you are, when you judge another; for in passing judgment upon him you condemn yourself, because you, the judge, are doing the very same things.***

‘**Therefore**...’ Normally, a sentence beginning ‘Therefore’ is an indication that the conclusion to the preceding argument is about to be given. That is, the whole point of what went before is about to be made clear.

I’ll return to this in a moment but the issue of concern was “passing judgment.”

Ancient Rome had temples and shrines filled with images of idols.

- Many pagan **temples**
- Idolatrous sexual behaviors
- Temple castrations
- Eunuch **priests**

These are exactly the sort of things that went on in and around pagan temples throughout the Mediterranean world in Paul’s time. The article describes the specific nature of the behavior.

All Paul’s readers and listeners would know exactly to what he was referring. Ancient cities were full of temples and shrines with images of gods, goddesses, cats, jackals, crocodiles, serpents, and so on.

Paul’s audience saw the obvious idolatry of those who were the subject of Paul’s writing.

- ***they did not see fit to acknowledge God***
- ***a base mind and to improper conduct***
- ***filled with all manner of wickedness, evil, covetousness, malice***

There was no reference to anything sexual here.

Those who were in the church of Rome could easily pass judgment on the non-believers of their city.

Though they know God’s decree that those who do such things deserve to die, they not only do them but approve those who practice them.

But then the emphasis changes from the list of idolatrous activity to the subject of judging.

Therefore you have no excuse, O man, whoever you are, when you judge another; for in passing judgment upon him you condemn yourself, because you, the judge, are doing the very same things.

Paul explains to his listeners that although they may not have been doing these things (1st list), they still share in exactly the same pattern of desire, something they have in common with those they judge.

We (not “they”) know that the judgment of God rightly falls upon those who do such things.

The implication here is that “we” know even though “they” may not.

Do you suppose, O man, that when you judge those who do such things and yet do them yourself, you will escape the judgment of God? Or do you presume upon the riches of his kindness and forbearance and patience? Do you not know that God’s kindness is meant to lead you to repentance? But by your hard and impenitent heart you are storing up wrath for yourself on the day of wrath when God’s righteous judgment will be revealed.

CONCLUSION:

My personal experience with this passage was less theological, less scholarly, and more experiential.

- ***Vs. 17 ‘...He who through faith is righteous shall live.’***
The only way we can achieve righteousness is through faith – not through our behavior.
- ***they did not honor him as God***
- ***or give thanks to him***
- ***became futile in their thinking***
- ***and their senseless minds were darkened***
- ***exchanged the glory of the immortal God for images***
- ***because they exchanged the truth about God for a lie and worshipped and served the creature rather than the Creator***
- ***They were filled with all manner of wickedness, evil, covetousness, malice.***
- ***Full of envy, murder, strife, deceit, malignity, they are gossips,***
- ***³⁰ slanderers, haters of God, insolent, haughty, boastful, inventors of evil, disobedient to parents,***
- ***³¹ foolish, faithless, heartless, ruthless.***

Verses 18-23 describes an idolatrous condition of the heart (there is no reference to anything sexual in these first verses). The result of the idolatry brought into people’s lives what is described in verses 24-32.

There are people living in the state of existence described in verses 24-32 regardless of sexual identity. Gay and heterosexual people who live *“filled with all manner of wickedness”* (vs. 29).

I see many gay believers who have nothing in common with what is described in these verses as well.

One final thought...we come to Jesus to be justified through our faith in him. If we live in idolatry our faith cannot be in Jesus. If we live in a loving relationship with God through Jesus, we cannot live in idolatry.

For now, we live by faith, trusting that God’s grace will cleanse us from our every sin. Jesus has delivered us from these bodies of death even though we are still in process of receiving the full and complete gift of salvation.

Live in faith. Live in trust. Live in love with Jesus. He, having begun this great work in us will complete it. We will be conformed into the image of our Savior.

Questions