THE SIN OF SODOM

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The Gentiles in the first century were very wicked and sinful. They refused to believe in God. They made idols and worshiped them. "*Therefore God also gave them up to uncleanness, in the lusts of their hearts, to dishonor their bodies among themselves*" (Romans 1:24). They sank so low that they practiced the perversion known as "homosexuality." "*For this reason God gave them up to vile passions. For even their women exchanged the natural use for what is against nature. And likewise also the men, leaving the natural use of the woman, burned in their lust toward one another, men with men committing what is shameful, and receiving in themselves the penalty of their error which was due*" (Romans 1:26, 27).

Some today are telling us that homosexuality is normal and right. Our Lord tells us what is normal and right in sexual relationships: "*And He answered and said to them, 'Have you not read that He who made them at the beginning made them male and female, and said, For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh? So then, they are no longer two, but one flesh. Therefore what God has joined together, let not man separate'*" (Matthew 19:4-6).

Many religious leaders defend the practice of people having sexual relations with those of the same sex. The United Methodist Church in the USA recommended that their members regard homosexuals as "persons of sacred worth" and accept them into fellowship. The Evangelical Lutheran Church of the Netherlands says that homosexuals can become "ordained ministers" in their denomination. Other denominations have also fully accepted homosexuals without requiring them to repent of their sin.

There is much confusion today about the difference between right and wrong. This was also true in the days of Isaiah, the prophet. Isaiah wrote, "*Woe to those who call evil good, and good evil; who put darkness for light, and light for darkness; who put bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter*" (Isaiah 5:20). Just because some people say homosexuality is right does not make it so!

Some say that we should not discuss homosexuality because it is a political issue. However, it was a moral issue long before it became a political issue. The Bible teaches that

homosexuality is a sin. If a person does not repent of it, he will be lost eternally (Galatians 5:19-21).

The first example of homosexuality was found in the city of Sodom. The wickedness of this city is described in Genesis 19:4-7.   Men, both young and old, wanted to have sexual relations with Lot's male visitors. The New Testament mentions this shameful event and confirms it is a true account (Matthew 11:23,24, Jude 7; 2 Peter 2:6-8). God destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah because of this vile perversion. The sins of these two cities serve as the standard to which other sins are compared (Isaiah 3:9; 13:19; Jeremiah 23:14; Matthew 11:23,24).

The Law which God gave to Israel at Mt. Sinai condemned the practice of homosexuality. "*You shall not lie with a male as with a woman. It is an abomination... Do not defile yourselves with any of these things; for by all these the nations are defiled, which I am casting out before you*" (Leviticus 18:22, 24). "*If a man lies with a male as he lies with a woman, both of them have committed an abomination. They shall surely be put to death. Their blood shall be upon them*"(Leviticus 20:13). "*There shall be no ritual harlot of the daughters of Israel, or a perverted one of the sons of Israel. You shall not bring the wages of a harlot or the price of a dog to the house of the LORD your God for any vowed offering, for both of these are an abomination to the LORD your God*" (Deuteronomy 23:17, 18). The word "dog" here is a name the people of ancient Israel used to describe a homosexual prostitute. "Dogs" will not be in Heaven (Revelation 22:14,15).

The New Testament also makes it very clear that homosexuals will not go to Heaven unless they repent of their sin. The apostle Paul wrote: "*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 homosexuals, nor sodomites, nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners will inherit the kingdom of God. And such were some of you. But you were washed, but you were sanctified, but you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus and by the Spirit of our God*" (1 Corinthians 6:9-11; Read also 1 Timothy 1:8-10). The word "sodomite" is sometimes used to describe homosexuals.

Can homosexuals be saved? God loves all people (John 3:16). He wants everyone to be saved (1 Timothy 2:4). Homosexuals can be saved in the same way that other sinners are saved. They must hear and believe the Gospel of Jesus Christ (Romans 10:17; John 8:24). They must repent of all their sins (Acts 2:38; 17:30, 31). This means that they will stop their evil practice of homosexuality. They must confess that Jesus Christ is the Son of God (Acts 8:37; Romans 10:10). Then they must be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of their sins (Acts 2:38; Romans 6:3,4). Notice what Paul said about evildoers at Corinth who had obeyed the Gospel: "*And such were some of you. But you were washed, but you were sanctified, but you were justified in the name of our Lord Jesus and by the Spirit of our God*" (1 Corinthians 6:11). When they became Christians, they stopped their sinful practices. This shows people can change.

Great pressure is placed upon Christians by society to ignore sin. It is not popular to take a stand against sin today. Neither was it popular for the prophets in the Old Testament to stand

against sin, but they did it anyway! It was not easy for the Christians in the first century to preach the Gospel to the heathen world, but they did it! It will not be easy today, but we must obey God (Acts 5:29).

Homosexuals are guilty of a vile sin. They will suffer eternal punishment if they do not repent of it (Romans 6:23)! God loves them, however, and will forgive if they truly repent!