

## **Christian Worldview of Sexual Ethics on the Issue of Homosexuality & Marriage Principle: Focusing on Old Testament Teaching**

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### **ABSTRACT**

The purpose of this paper is to argue that legalizing same-sex marriage is problematic in terms of distorting Christian worldview of sexual ethics as well as the will and purpose of God's creation of humanity. This will be done by solving the hermeneutical problem of our attitude toward homosexuality today, by not only avoiding an allegorical interpretation of the Scriptural passages, but also by exploring the meaning of sexuality in terms of a biblical framework of creation. Since we are on the verge of a new biblical interpretation of homosexuality in relation to theology and ethics, this paper confirms that perverted or promiscuous homosexual practices are sinful and an abomination in the eyes of God. That is, sinful behavior must be recognized as such. The outline of this paper will be as follows: (1) Leviticus 18:22; 20:13: The Holiness Code; (2) Genesis 19 and Judges 19 as the References to Homosexual Acts; (3) The Creation Account as the Marriage Principle of Christian Sexual Ethics; (4) Chapter five as concluding remarks confirms homosexual practices as sinful and abomination in the eyes of God but heterosexual monogamous relationship as God's ordained marriage principle.

**Key Words : Christian Sexual Ethics, Homosexuality, Marriage Principle, Creation Account, Old Testament Teaching**

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## I. Introduction

### 1. Statement of the Problem

The role of the Old Testament in addressing the contemporary question of the place of homosexuality and its related-practices in the Korean Church is ambiguous and complex. Only two passages in Leviticus 18:22 and 20:13 explicitly command the people of God not to lie with a male as with a woman. Regarding this matter, some homophile scholars (Bailey, 1955; Boswell, 1980; Countryman, 1988; Edwards, 1984; McNeill, 1993; Scroggs, 1980) hold that the Old Testament does not condemn homosexuality itself. Throughout the Bible there is no mention of the origin or the effects of a homosexual orientation, namely the causes and the description of homosexuality, but just a prohibition against engaging in homo-genital practices.

That is to say that the Mosaic Law (Lev. 18:22 and 20:13) is simply regarded as a religious prohibition rather than a moral or ethical prohibition. This is because the proscription of homosexual practices and other proscriptions such as the eating of rabbit, oysters, clams, shrimp, and lobster (Lev. 11:11, 26; 17:10), wearing of mixed fabrics (Deut. 22:11), and having marital intercourse during the menstrual period (Lev. 20:18), are mentioned in the same Old Testament Code. Thus, the passages in Leviticus are not against homosexuality and its related-practices today, but only against the practice of cultic religions in the ancient world.

For instance, Jacob Milgrom, in his article entitled, "Does the Bible Prohibit Homosexuality?: The biblical prohibition is addressed only to Israel. It is incorrect to apply it on a universal scale," argues that the biblical prohibition of homosexuality in the Holiness Code only constrains the people of Israel to remain 'holy' in God's sight, as well as to keep different from the Gentiles; especially the Canaanites and Egyptians (1993: 11). This is because the Holiness Code itself is very distinctive in its nature since it is considered as a central requirement of Jewish Law, which is based on the traditional Mediterranean cultural setting as well as elements of meaning drawn from traditional Mediterranean vocabulary.

At this point, this is the conservatives' question to homophile scholars: "Are bestiality (Lev. 18:23), engaging in incest (Lev. 18:6), adultery (Lev. 18:20), and child sacrifice (Lev. 18:21) okay for today?" (Boa & Bowman, Jr., 1997: 313-325). Most conservatives assert that the condemnation of homosexual practices in the Holiness Code is still highly significant because the proscriptions against homosexual acts have been repeated in the New Testament Code. To be specific the New Testament's references to homosexual acts mainly came from Paul's letters: Rom. 1:26, 27; 1 Cor. 6:9-10; and 1 Tim. 1:8-10. For 1 Tim. 1:8-10 and 1 Cor. 6:9-10, homosexuals' acts belong to the list of those who cannot 'inherit the Kingdom of God'. Furthermore II Pet. 2:6-10 refers to the practices in Sodom & Gomorrah as 'filthy', 'lawless', and 'unnatural in sexuality' and Jude 7 explicitly identifies the wickedness in question as sexual: "In a similar way, Sodom & Gomorrah & the surrounding towns gave themselves up to sexual immorality and perversion."

The purpose of this paper, therefore, is to propose the Christian worldview of sexual ethics on the issue of homosexuality and marriage principle, by avoiding an allegorical interpretation of the homosexual acts-related Old Testament passages. For this reason this paper does not provide all the detailed socio-psychological and politico-religious-medical definitions of the term 'homosexuality' as well as its related hermeneutical argumentations. By exploring the meaning of sexuality in terms of a biblically-based evangelical framework of creation, it definitely argues the monogamous heterosexual marriage as ethical norm and injunction that are

provided by Scripture in the acts of God.

## 2. Outline of the Chapters

Chapter two explores a biblical interpretation of the Holiness Code, especially Leviticus 18:22 and 20:13. And then Genesis 19 and Judges 19 are interpreted for a further understanding of the issue of homosexual practices in the Old Testament passages in chapter three.

In the fourth chapter, the creation account as the most profound principle of the Christian sexual ethics will be presented for the purpose of establishing both heterosexual partnerships as the normative expression of intimate sexual love in the context of the doctrine of creation, and a mutual covenant of trust and love.

Chapter five as concluding remarks confirms that perverted or promiscuous homosexual practices are sinful and abomination in the eyes of God and sinful behavior must be recognized as such. This is because the Bible not only rules out all forms of homosexual relationships or activities, but also condemns these publicly as rebellion against God's authority and established ethical order. Therefore it concludes that legalizing same-sex marriage is problematic in terms of distorting the will and purpose of God's creation of humanity.

## II. Leviticus 18:22 and 20:13: the Holiness Code

Leviticus primarily focuses on the issue of God's call to holiness by recording the laws and rituals which make it possible for men and women to be holy. 'Holiness' was one of the most important parts of Old Testament life which had influenced every sphere, such as both the Israelites' society and the individual. In this sense, Old Testament ethics can be deontological and there are three levels which indicate the case for holiness in relation to ethical norm and its criteria: (1) the explicit statements in the 'Law of Holiness' (Lev 18-20); (2) the definition of holiness is equivalent to the term 'Godhead' as a standard for what is religious, moral, and ethical; and (3) the norm for what is the good, just, right, and an appropriate standard of acting and being for the people of God themselves (See Kaiser, Jr., 1983: 235-44; Douglas, 1966: 49-54; Porter, 1976: 134-137). Thus, the mainspring of Old Testament ethics is relatively referred to as the concept '*Imago Dei*' (the Image of God): "Speak to the entire assembly of Israel and say to them: Be holy because I, the LORD your God, am holy (Lev. 19:2)."

On the basis of the idea of 'holiness' as 'unity, integrity, perfection of the individual and of the kind' (Douglas, 1966: 54), forbidden activities are listed in the Holiness Code, such as bestiality (sexual contact with animals, cf. Lev. 20:23; Exod. 22:19; Deut. 27:21), male homosexual acts, adultery (Cf. Lev. 20:20; Exod. 20:14; Deut. 22:22), sexual intercourse with a woman during her menstrual period (Cf. Lev. 15:24; 20:19; Scanzoni, 1978: 60), and incest (sexual contact with relatives-children, parents, siblings, in-laws, and so on). As a matter of fact, the Holiness Code in the Book of Leviticus, as Martin Noth definitely has argued, refers to an unconditional concern for the stability and well-being of the family (1965: 146-151 and cf. Plant et al., 1981: 877-880). According to Scanzoni & Mollenkott, the reasons given for these proscriptions involve several factors:

(1) Separation from other nations and their customs (Lev. 18:1-5), (2) Avoidance of idolatry and any practices associated with it (Lev. 20:1-7), and (3) Ceremonial uncleanness. The first two reasons are clearly related to the proscription of homosexual acts...intercourse be avoided during menstruation; and similarly an emission of semen rendered men ceremonially unclean (see Lev. 15). Thus, a kind of 'double uncleanness' might have been associated with male homosexual acts. (1978: 60)

It is worthy to note the fact that the Hebrew term *vdq* (holy) is based on the idea of 'separation' and 'consecrate' or 'be set apart' or 'show oneself sacred' or 'purify oneself' from uncleanness (See McComiskey, 1980: 786-787). In the fertility religions of Israel's neighbors, e.g., the Egyptians, whose land Israel has left, and the Canaanites, to whose land Israel has yet to come, male temple prostitutes (Deut. 23:17; 1 Kgs. 14: 23-24; 15:12; 22:46; 2 Kgs. 23:7) were employed for homosexual acts (Scanzoni, 59-60).

On the face of it, the presence of male prostitutes in Israel is severely condemned, and their dismissal accepted as a sign of spiritual reformation (Cf. Deut. 22:5). The people who loved and served the God of Israel were strictly forbidden to have anything to do with such idolatry, and Jewish men were commanded never to serve as temple prostitutes (Scanzoni, 59-60). It is thus important to note that Israel put a very distinctive value on sexual purity, which was highly concerned with holiness by forcing Israel to separate from the ungodly surrounding nations.

Therefore Leviticus 18:22 and 20:13 are the important part of the Holiness Code, which states God's laws for maintaining the ritual, moral and religious purity as well as harmony with, or conformity to, nature, its separation from its pagan neighbors, and specific instructions on sexual matters. This is because the people of God could be absorbed from their neighbors' cultural and religious practices unconsciously (Porter, 1976: 83-85).

At this point, homophile scholars argue that the proscription of homosexual intercourse originated from a system of cultic taboos and fears in early Jewish culture and life, which was influenced by certain socio-historical and cultural circumstances (Gerstenberger, 1996: 298 and Edwards, 1984: 51-54). Particularly, McNeill asserts that these texts can merely reflect culturally conditioned circumstances in the light of the Jewish consciousness of idolatry. Homosexual practices outside of an idolatrous situation also remain unaddressed by Old Testament texts and the Leviticus prohibition against homosexual acts is quite clearly cultic in origin (1993: 56).

G. Edwards reads the texts in Leviticus in terms of a historical perspective as applicable only to cult prostitution (1984: 51-54). T. Horner states that "the forcing of male captives in war to submit to anal rape, (something that the Jews had actually experienced?), has a great deal to do with the anti-homosexual polemics of Leviticus 18:22 and 20:13" (1978: 83). Within this context, for both Horner and Edwards, the condemnation of homosexual acts can be regarded as one of the collection of Jewish laws. The Holiness Code is for them silent regarding the question of sexual orientation. In other words, it strongly prohibits engaging in male homosexual intercourses in terms of emphasizing primarily the question of sinful desire and acts in the eyes of God, but there is no divine condemnation against men of homosexual orientation, or of love between men.

However, Leviticus 18:22 and 20:13 from the Holiness Code in the Old Testament directly mention that homosexual practices are contrary to the will of God and the order of creation, that is, abomination (*toebah*) in the eyes of God. The texts are very clear, brief, and useful to quote here: "Do not lie with a man as one lies with a woman; that is abomination" (Lev. 18:22), "If a man lies with a man as one lies with a woman, both of them have done what is abominable. They must be put to death; their blood will be on their own heads" (Lev.

20:13). The explicit Leviticus prohibitions referring to homosexuality condemn homosexual acts. The punishment for these sins is the death penalty.

John Davis understands that the Hebrew word *toebah* (Cf. Ex. 8; Prov. 6:16; 11:1; Jer. 7:31), used six times in Leviticus 18 and 20 (18:22, 26, 27, 29, 30; 20:13), is a term of strong disapproval or disgust, literally meaning something detestable and hateful in the context of English usage (1985: 117). Accordingly Davis argues that its predominant meaning in the Bible is mainly related to the religious truth in relation to its applicable Christian morality and ethical norm today. Richard Lovelace in his work *Homosexuality: What Should Christians Do About It?* supports Davis' argumentation by commenting that "the component of divine inspiration which the church has always recognized in the Levitical legislation...does contain material which is of continuing ethical significance for Christians today, including the Ten Commandments and a valuable deposit of social legislation" (1978: 88-89).

As a matter of fact the Hebrew term *toebah* is commonly referred to male homosexuals or male prostitutes who regularly serviced men, in ancient Egyptian and Canaanite societies (Cf. Deut. 23:17-18), where they had much in common with Mesopotamian culture (Coleman, 1980: 52-57). In Deuteronomy, it appears quite often by referring to idolatry (7:25; 27:15), eating unclean animals (14:3), human sacrifice (12:31), and witchcraft (18:9-14). Ezekiel describes it as inordinate sexual acts (22:11; 33:26), idolatry in relation with the image of harlotry (16:36, 43, 57; 23:36), and violation of sacred ritual (44:6, 7). Simultaneously Proverbs defines *toebah* as sins such as "haughty eyes, a lying tongue, hands that shed innocent blood, a heart that devises wicked schemes, feet that are quick to rush into evil, a false witness who pours out lies and a man who stirs up dissension among brothers (6:16-19)."

It is worth comparing how the English and Latin Versions variously translate the term *toebah* in the passages of Leviticus 18:22 and 20:13 by referring its meaning to intimate homoerotic activity:

VERSIONS	Lev. 18:22 ' <i>toebah</i> '	Lev. 20:13 ' <i>wse toebah</i> '
Septuagint	an abomination	wrought abomination
The Latin Vulgate	<u>abominatio</u>	nefas[wicked or forbidden act]
King James	abomination	committed an abomination
New International	detestable	are detestable
Living Bible	an enormous sin	death to both parties
Revised Standard	an abomination	committed an abomination
New Revised Standard Version	an abomination	committed an abomination
Revised English Bible	an abomination	commit an abomination
New American Bible	an abomination	abominable deed
New Jerusalem Bible	a hateful thing	a hateful thing

<Table 1> English Version Comparisons Regarding the Term *toebah*

Based on the above comparisons, *toebah*, in Leviticus, refers to condemn the immoral sexual practices on the basis of depicting its implication as uncleanness and sexual offences, and the characteristic of non-Christian worship and a violation of sexual nature. It is in this regard that *toebah* is used to refer to unnatural abhorrence of any willful destruction of the male semen, that is, "...in any way that did not have to do with

procreation” (Horner, 1978: 83). Also, it should be clearly noted that *toebah* means ‘unnatural’ and ‘sinful’ in the sense of prohibiting any abominable homosexual activity (Cohen, 1990: 4).

On the other hand the Hebrew phrase *hva ybkm* directly refers to forbidden homosexual intercourse and it literally reads “You shall not have intercourse with a man of the type one generally has with women” (Levine, 1989: 123). It is undoubtedly addressed to a sinful male-homosexual act. Lesbian interaction however is not mentioned, because it was not related to the special quality of semen in the ancient times. Semen is understood as the most sacred function for the purpose of procreation. Thus male homosexual intercourse is contrary to this procreative purpose and leads to a misuse of semen.

Apparently the Holiness Code in the Book of Leviticus not only prohibits any types of promiscuous homosexual activity which was prevalent in the ancient Canaanites as well as the Egyptians, but also expresses the mind of God toward His people regardless of mostly human socio-cultural-historical milieus or backgrounds. The Holiness Code entirely demonstrates that any promiscuous homosexual acts are seen as abomination before God, the penalty for which is death, that is, capital punishment (Lev. 20:13). Therefore it reflects the biblically-based relevant ethical norm for Christians today in the light of prohibiting against any detestable homosexual acts and its related ungodly same-sex marriage or partnership.

### III. Genesis 19 and Judges 19 as the References to Homosexual Acts

The story of Sodom & Gomorrah in Genesis 18 & 19 takes place within the larger history of Abraham, the father of the Hebrew people, through whom God’s redemptive purpose begins. Abraham went to the land of Canaan (Gen. 12:1-3) and Lot went to Sodom (Gen. 13:13). This story leads us to the drama which followed where, after Abraham failed in his intercession for Sodom, the city was destroyed. Traditionally in Christianity, as the most conservative scholars have agreed, the story in Genesis 19: 1-11 (Cf. Gen. 18:20-22), has purported to show God’s punishment of male homo-genital acts as well as God’s abhorrence of homosexual practices, in a particularly bad light (See Lewis, 1981: 366-367; Kidner, 1973: 52; Cundall, 1973: 196-197, and cf. McNeill, 1993: 47).

All the male inhabitants of Sodom came to Lot requesting that two strangers be sent out to them so that they might ‘know them’ in his home (See Gen. 19:5). The Hebrew word ‘*yada*’ here has been usually translated to mean to know in the ordinary sense of ‘being acquainted with’ or ‘to have knowledge of’ (See Ackroyd, 1968 and Huffmon, 1966: 31-37). Apart from this usual meaning, ‘*yada*’ is also interpreted to imply sexual intercourse or coital knowledge (See Barr, 1968a: 19ff., 325, 328; Buchanan, 1956: 114-120; Clines, 1974: 8-14; Dahood, 1965: 210-212). In terms of a more technical skill, the term ‘*yada*’ means practical, emotional, and willing acquaintance and love (Cf. Job 5:24; 35:15; Ex. 33:12, 17), which obviously implies the meaning of sexual intercourse between a man and woman (Gen. 4:1, 17, 25; 19: 8, 5; 38:26; Nu. 31: 17f., 35; 1 Sam. 1:19; 1 Kgs. 1:4).

D. S. Bailey in his work *Homosexuality & the Western Christian Tradition*, however, indicates that “...the demand to ‘know’ the visitors whom Lot had entertained, may well have implied some serious breach of the rules of hospitality” (1955: 3-5 also cf. Barnett, 1979: 10). For Bailey there was nothing more than a desire

to get better acquainted with the strangers here for the verb 'to know'. He defends his interpretation by pointing out that "...the word '*yada*' appears some 943 times in the Old Testament, and only on 12 occasions does it clearly mean 'to have intercourse with'; elsewhere, it means 'to get acquainted with' or 'to have knowledge of'" (1955: 3-5). Bailey understands the homosexual interpretation of Sodom as a post-canonical Jewish reaction to Hellenization, where homosexuality was particularly evident.

Before Bailey argued the misinterpretation of '*yada*' as an implication of homosexual practices, more serious doubt was indicated by G. A. Barton who suggested that there was no actual necessity to give '*yada*' the sexual meaning found in Genesis 4:1. He further noticed that in the Bishops' Bible & King James' Bible, '*sodomy*' was a term used for sexual vice including bestiality, fornication, and cult prostitution, as in Deuteronomy and Kings, where it refers to temple prostitutes (1928: 672).

Furthermore Arthur Frederick Ide argues that Old Testament passages referring 'to Sodom & Gomorrah' never identify their sin as homosexual acts (1985: 39). This is because for him Jeremiah wrote that the sins of Sodom were general immoralities such as adultery, lying, and an unwillingness to repent (23:14); and Ezekiel wrote that it was pride, surfeit of food, prosperous ease and disregard for the poor (16: 49-50); Isaiah 1:9 and 3:9 represents a lack of social justice; moreover, Isaiah 13:19 and Jeremiah 49:18 also 50:40 describe Sodom and Gomorrah as proud or arrogant.

At this point of view D. Williams asserts that Matthew 10: 14-15, 11: 20-24 and Luke 10:10-13, 17: 28-29 refer to Sodom's judgment to the rejection of God's messengers, that is, the sin of inhospitality, and Leviticus 19: 33-34 and Matthew 25:35, 38, 43 the entire ancient Near Eastern hospitality to sojourners and travelers, which was a sacred religious obligation (1978: 59). According to ancient Rabbinical literature, as Williams keeps asserting, the Talmud and Midrashim often refer to Sodom in connection with the sins of pride, arrogance and inhospitality. As such, Daniel A. Helminiak correspondingly supports Williams by arguing that the Bible "...uses Sodom as an example of the worst sinfulness, but the concern is never simply sexual acts...thus, the sin of Sodom and Gomorrah is dominantly connected with homosexual assault or rape in relation with inhospitality to strangers" (1995: 41 also cf. Loader, 1990: 28).

According to homophile scholars' argumentations stated above, it can be said that the story of Sodom and Gomorrah in Genesis 19 refers to the issue of hospitality required in the Middle East and the call for homosexual gang rape by a violent mob, rather than a loving same-sex relationship or its related homosexual practices. However, the refutation is thoroughly examined by John J. Davis as follows:

The problem...is that mere word counting is no criterion of meaning...the word '*yada*' is used 12 times, and in ten of those instances it denotes sexual intercourse. Even more to the point, in the immediate context in 19:8 *yada* is used in a way that unmistakably refers to sexual intercourse...he was offering his virgin daughters as a substitute to the men of Sodom who were demanding homosexual intercourse with his guests. Both Christian and Jewish commentators on this passage have seen in it a clear reference to homosexual activity. (1985: 115-116)

Walter Barnett supports Davis' refutation that the New Testament two passages<sup>2</sup> Peter 2:4-6 and Jude 6-7 refer to Sodom and Gomorrah as examples of God's judgment on the sexually wicked sin connected in any way with homosexual practices, which apparently adopt a sexual interpretation (1979: 10). In accordance with

Barnett, Ronald M. Springett in his article “What Does the Old Testament Say About Homosexuality?” states that “...verse 8 clearly contains a reference to *yadha* meaning coitus, ‘I have two daughters...to do them as you please’” (1990: 135). Also Springett keeps arguing that Bailey’s interpretation is ingenious but unconvincing since it fails to do justice to the immediate context. Likewise Bailey’s interpretation does not fit the wider context provided by the biblical narration nor place the same gravity on these situations that the ancient writers themselves sensed (1990: 137).

The incident of homosexual rape at Gibeah in Benjamite territory in Judges 19 is a similar story to the story of Sodom in Genesis 19. The outline of the story presents the fact that “...the account of Gibeah, as is true of Sodom, assumes the sacred duty to provide hospitality and exposes the wickedness of those who are inhospitable (Williams, 1978: 69 and Bailey, 1955: 55). Both cases are partly referred to the sign of inhospitality and its related homosexual rape.

However, according to Cundall, the context in Judges 19 is mostly the wickedness of the city, a form of selfishness, a satisfaction of fleshly desires, insensibility to the claims of God, impiety or wantonness, and clearly a sexual immorality in light of committing abominable homosexual rape (1973: 196-197). It is clear enough to argue that the men of the city were interested in engaging in homosexual acts, not simply social hospitality. In Judges 19:22 says: “Bring out the man who came to your house so we may ‘know’ him.” Hebrew verb ‘*yada*’ here reflects the same account as that noted for the Sodom story (Bartlett, 1978: 25).

As in Genesis 19, so also in Judges 19, for Bartlett, the sin of those cities was clearly attempted homosexual rape with actual heterosexual gang rape and murder that those men were intentionally not about to recognize any moral or religious claims upon them (1978: 25). At this point, S. D. Currie comments that the wrongdoing of the Gibeathites, as of the inhabitants of Sodom, included the “...violation of covenant obligations to the Lord and especially to wanton sexual conduct out of keeping with allegiance to YHWH” (1971: 19).

On the basis of the comments given above, it is not agreeable to Bailey, Williams, and other homophile scholars that both accounts of Sodom and Gibeah merely refer to a gentlemanly disagreement and inhospitality. Both the texts and the contexts suggest far more than that. Those homophile scholars’ new interpretation, as Springett has argued, is “...very weak still point out that it is clearly violent homosexual rape that is depicted and condemned in these texts” (Springett, 1990: 137). With respect to Springett’s argumentation, H. L. Wright states that “not one critical commentator that I have been able to find takes the position of Bailey and McNeill as summarized by Boswell, that Sodom was destroyed ‘not for sexual immorality but for the sin of inhospitality to strangers’”(1984: 82-83).

It is evident that the whole context in Genesis 19 and Judges 19 is sexual and the verb ‘*yada*’ undoubtedly implies sexual passions, a gratification of fleshly rapacity, a sexual filthiness, and finally unacceptable homosexual practices in the eyes of God. In the face of these, the divine judgment was immediately carried out through military action between the Israelites and the Benjamites who were defending Gibeah. Accordingly, “Gibeah, like Sodom, was severely punished for its citizens’ sin, and the implication is that this sin was fundamentally one of intended homosexual assault” (Field, 1976: 9).

Therefore it is undeniable that the incident in the city of Sodom and Gibeah has been interpreted as sinful homosexual behaviors and traditionally connected in the minds of readers with hateful homosexual practices, which was the cause of God’s judgment.

## IV. The Creation Account as the Marriage Principle of Christian Sexual Ethics

God created 'male and female' (Cf. Gen. 1:27; 2:18; 5:2) in His own image. In the theological term '*Imago Dei*', we can more clearly understand that God created 'male and female' in His image and likeness so that humanity is like God in royal stature for the purpose of its vocational superiority and greater ecological responsibility toward the other creatures. That is to say that humanity is not only given dominion over the rest of creation, but also given sexual privilege. The evaluation 'very good' that follows the creation of woman & man make it clear that humanity is the climax of God's creative activity as well as the preeminent position in the created order.

For this reason, to be in the image of God means to represent God in dominion (Gen. 1:26), it also means to be in fellowship as female and male. To be human is to share humanity with the opposite sex. To be in the image of God is to be female and male, and to talk about humanity as such is to talk about humanity as woman & man in the light of equal unity and fulfillment. This is constitutional in terms of confirming Christian worldview of sexual ethics. In this context, Walter Kaiser, Jr., describes the image of God as a blessing by asserting the fact effectively:

...an additional part of our blessing appears to stem decidedly from the gift of the image of God. Almost identical terms are used in Genesis 1:26 and 28 to amplify one part of the image that was foremost in the mind of God when He so graciously benefited that first couple; they were to subdue and have dominion over all creation. (1978: 89)

God created in His image a female and a male in order for them to share the full image of God as well as to support and complement one another. Within their role of companion sexual pleasure itself is given to humanity as a gift of God. The distinction between the sexes does not mean that a male is superior to a female, but that both have to share their mutuality, equality and unity by fulfilling their sexual identity and function as it originated in the one flesh of humanity.

Obviously, the creation account, as Bahnsen firmly argues, provides a fundamental distinction between the two sexes and this is reflected in the one human body. That is to say that the meaning of human sexuality is found within the human body, which was "...deliberately shaped female (*neqerah*) and male (*zakar*), the Hebrew words referring specifically to biological, sexual distinction" (Bahnsen, 1978: 28). It was God's ordained design for sexual relations to be in the form of a female-male union, and for husband and wife to become 'one flesh' (Gen. 2:24; Mk. 10:6-8).

According to Tribble, woman's creation in Genesis 2:21-24 hence manifests the fact that Woman is the culmination of creation, fulfilling humanity in sexuality. Equal in creation with the man, she is, at this point, elevated in emphasis by the design of the story. With her creation *Eros* reigns. Therefore a man leaves his father and his mother and cleaves to his woman and they become one flesh. (1978: 102)

In such expressions, heterosexuality is the normative direction for sexual desire and preference, because God created sexual differentiation within one flesh for the purpose of human sexual union, which is ultimately for both procreation and the rearing of children within the biblical principle of Genesis 1:28: “God blessed them and said to them, Be fruitful and increase in number.” This passage symbolizes Adam and Eve as the prototypical couple and is significantly related to the divine purpose for both human sexuality and the rational sexual ethic for Christians today.

It is fundamental that procreation is possible within heterosexual relationship in terms of fulfilling a unit of equality between female and male. Even though Genesis 2:25 does not mention any procreating roles of woman and man, it has been regarded the marriage as a covenant relationship in the light of forming family as well as childbearing between woman and man equally. Thus God’s original intention for woman and man is to share tasks and authority in marriage as well as in ministry (See Brueggemann, 1970: 532-542; Gordon, 1981: 155-161; Spencer, 1985: 17-41).

It is also interesting to note that Jesus Himself addressed the fundamental principle of human sexuality by appealing to Genesis 1 and 2 as follows: “But from the beginning of creation, God made male and female” (Mark 10:6). In this sense, monogamous and faithful, heterosexual love is the normative expression of Christian sexual love. Although Jesus neither definitely condemns homosexual activity in the Gospel, nor approves of it, we should be reminded that Jesus firmly located human sexuality within the creation narratives of Genesis 1-2, to identify heterosexuality as the normative expression of intimate human sexual love and hope for oneness, wholeness and the communion of woman and man.

Therefore, marriage is both God’s original will for his creation before all sin, and the means he now uses to protect against the destructive power of unrestrained homosexual activity. A loving God has given us the heterosexual relationship as a merciful purpose functioning in two lives through which both may know one another to their deepest depths joyfully, reverently and faithfully. Eventually they confirm the heights and depths of their self-giving love for one another, comfort one another in their companionship, and periodically refresh their relationship. Monogamous heterosexual marriage is a God-given, holy, and spiritual bond which extends our traditional notion of marriage to the recognition of the spiritual union between heterosexual couples (Sheppard, 1985: 13-26).

Sex can be distorted and corrupted if it is not used according to a faithful monogamous heterosexual relationship in terms of shaping equality, independence, and respect for the value of each other’s calling and service to God. Without this kind of heterosexual monogamous marriage relationship, sexual desire would lead to prostitution and similar unchastity, which would not only destroy the soul but also the body, property, honor and friendship (Althaus, 1972: 85).

## **V. Concluding Remarks**

As we have explored the Old Testament passages such as Lev. 18:22; 20:13, Gen. 19 and Judg. 19, the homosexual act is not a precisely natural order of creation, but an unnaturally disordered condition which is “...made, not born: its disorder is developed contrary to its God-given identity, learned in opposition to the

created order, pursued in defiance of the marriage ordinance” (Bahnsen, 1978: 30). Accordingly biblical law and biblical life are completely at one in condemning the practice of homosexuality. The laws concerning sexual relationship describe male homosexual practice as an ‘abomination’ punishable with death like other major infractions of the moral code, such as sexual contact with animals and sexual intercourse between near relations, e.g., brother and sister.

Homosexual practice is not only sinful, detestable, and abominable in the eyes of God, but also considered disobedience against God’s commands, serious perversions, free choice of depraved individuals, the product of vicious desires rather than anomaly or disease, and a perverted consequence of the fall of humanity. It is not a clean or wholesome lifestyle, but dishonorable, and shameful in the eyes of God. It is undeniable fact that homosexual practice has been regarded as a “...violation of God’s will and a perversion of nature” (Batchelor, Jr., 1980: 52). Moreover homosexual relationships cannot fulfill the procreative dimensions of human sexuality and marriage, which are God’s will and intention for humanity (Davis, 1993: 114). Rather it is obvious that God ordained sex to be used within the context of a monogamous heterosexual marriage relationship.

Therefore it is an unquestionable requirement that the witness of Old Testament pertaining to homosexual practices and relationships, or anything, for that matter, is essential for our assessment of homosexuality and our response to it. We Christians need to determine the infallible Word of God in Scripture through faithful study. Recognizing the law of God as providing authoritative norms for sexual ethics is our primary purpose of establishing a complete theological, hermeneutical and ethical context within this biblical framework. For this reason, legalizing same-sex marriage or accepting homosexual relationships in our particular pluralistic modern situation is fundamentally distorting the normative biblical principle of sexual ethics as well as the will and purpose of God’s creation of humanity.

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**국문초록**

**동성애와 결혼원리에 관한 기독교인의 성윤리세계관:  
구약의 가르침을 중심으로**

김영관 (맥길대학교)

본 논문의 목적은 동성애결혼을 옹호하고 이를 지지하는 왜곡된 성경해석으로 인한 기독교인들의 신학적 규범과 윤리의식기준에 혼동을 야기시키는 논쟁들에 대한 복음주의적인 해석과 답변을 제시하기 위함이다. 비유적인 성경해석의 오용으로 창조신학의 근간이 위협받고 있는 현 시대 속에서 인간 성에 관한 올바른 구약성경적 가르침에 기초한 기독교성윤리세계관을 제시하므로 시대를 초월하여 동성결혼법의 합법화가 기독교인들 뿐만 아니라 비 기독교인들의 삶의 방식과 성에 관한 사고인식체계에 큰 혼란을 유발할 수 있고 성 역할과 관련된 가치판단결정에 있어서도 끊임 없는 논쟁을 야기할 수 밖에 없음을 역설했다. 이를 규명하기 위해 구약성경 레위기 18:22; 20:13, 창세기 19장 그리고 사사기 19장을 중심으로 동성애행위가 하나님의 눈에 용납될 수 없는 가증한 죄악이며, 창조신학적 관점에서 일부일처제에 근거한 이성간의 결혼이 하나님께서 허락하신 기독교세계관을 기초로 한 성윤리의 핵심이 됨을 주장했다.

**주제어 : 기독교성윤리, 동성애, 결혼원리, 창조신학, 구약신학**