

## **Christianity and Homosexuality Reconciled! Audio Series**

### **PART THREE**

**Hello, this is Dr. Joseph Adam Pearson, International President and Chief Executive Officer of Christ Evangelical Bible Institute. Welcome to Part Three of my audio series entitled, “Christianity and Homosexuality Reconciled!” Truly, this is “New Thinking for a New Millennium!”**

**For almost twenty years, I have been teaching a seminar and workshop on this topic through Christ Evangelical Bible Institute. Since 1999, my free E-book on the topic has been available online and has had at least 100,000 downloads. I say, “at least,” because many churches and organizations have made my book available on their own websites. My free E-book is available at [www.cebiaz.com](http://www.cebiaz.com). Why is it free? I have taken to heart Matthew 10:8, which states, “Freely you have received, therefore freely give.”**

**Recognizing that it is time for new thinking and new ideas on the issue of Christianity and homosexuality to be presented to a significantly greater number of people for this new millennium, I am pleased to be part of an effort to disseminate this reconciling information. It is important for more people to be exposed to this information in order to better facilitate discussion, dialogue and respectful debate, and eventual understanding and acceptance that Christianity and homosexuality are, indeed, reconcilable to one another.**

**This work is dedicated to the untold number of gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender people who have been rejected, abused, tormented and murdered in the name of the LORD and to those who have injured themselves or taken their own lives because of the pain from such victimization. The message of this work is simple for those who are still alive: Take back your lives through Jesus Christ and be victorious. Today, in Jesus Christ, you can have new hope!**

In Part One of this audio series, I discussed five major human rights issues that have developed in the history of the Christian Church. I also discussed that God is no respecter of persons and that there is a Biblically-enlightened view of gender that needs to be considered. In Part Two of this audio series, I discussed organized religion and the seeming dilemma that exists for homosexuals within the Christian Church. I also discussed some biological aspects of sexual identity, gender identity, and sexual orientations as well as the importance of understanding context for correct application of Bible passages.

Today, in Part Three of this audio series, I will be discussing the story of Sodom and how it relates, or doesn't relate, to homosexuality.

(Introduction)

In this part, Part Three, the story of Sodom is recounted in order for you to come to a better understanding of what is represented by it as well as by other Biblical references to it and to the ill-chosen word sodomite.

(Abraham Pleads for Sodom)

Many of you are already familiar with the story of Sodom. Later, it would be helpful if you took a few minutes to reread the introduction to it in Genesis 18:20-33. This will help reinforce information contained within this broadcast. In Genesis 18:20-33, you will find that Abraham pleaded with the LORD God Jehovah (or, Yahweh) to spare Sodom on behalf of his nephew Lot. He asked the LORD to spare the city if fifty righteous could be found in it. In Hebrew, Genesis 18:24 sounds like this... (I would like you to listen for the two forms of the same Hebrew word “Tza-da-keem” and “Ha-Tza-da-keem.”)

אוֹלֵי יֵשׁ חַמְּשִׁים צְדִיקִים, בְּתוֹךְ הָעִיר; הֲאִי תִסָּפֵה  
וְלֹא-תִשָּׂא לְמַקּוֹם, לְמַעַן חַמְּשִׁים הַצְּדִיקִים אֲשֶׁר  
בְּקִרְבָּהּ.

In Genesis 18:24, “Tza-da-keem” צְדִיקִים and “Ha-Tza-da-keem” הַצְּדִיקִים refer to “righteous” and “the righteous,” respectively. Tza-da-

keem and Ha-Tza-da-keem can also translated as “innocent,” and “the innocent.”

The LORD said to Abraham, “All right, if there are fifty righteous within the city, then I will spare the city.” Abraham was delighted, of course, and quickly moved to ask the LORD to consider forty-five: “Will you spare the city of Sodom if there are only forty-five righteous?” And the LORD said, “Yes.” So, Abraham continued to barter with God from forty-five to forty to thirty to twenty and, finally, to ten. Although the LORD’s patience may have been tried, He ultimately answered, “For the sake of ten, I will not destroy Sodom.” Thus, the deal that Abraham worked out with the LORD was that the LORD would spare the city if ten righteous could be found within its walls.

At the time of Abraham’s conversation with the LORD, righteousness was not yet contingent on adherence to the rules, regulations, and ordinances of Levitical Law. Levitical Law, of course, [is] found in the Pentateuch or Torah (which is to say, the first five books of the Bible). At the time of Abraham, Levitical Law had not yet been given by God to the children of Israel. To be sure, Levitical Law was not put into effect until the time of Moses, more than four centuries after Abraham:

Galatians 3:17 states: **[correction of verse from the audio]**

The law [of Moses], introduced 430 years later [that is, after the length of time the Israelite people lived in Egypt], does not set aside the covenant previously established by God [with Abraham] and thus do away with the promise [that is the promise God made to Abraham].

Galatians 3:17 NIV<sup>1</sup>

Instead of adherence to Levitical Law, righteousness from the time of Abraham until the time of Moses was based entirely on faith in the LORD, as it is based in these New Testament times. For the sake of clarity, faith is herewith defined as “believing in the LORD God Almighty and acting unwaveringly on that belief.” From Scripture, we know that faith is a gift from God (Ephesians 2:8); we know that faith

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<sup>1</sup> See also Genesis 15:1-21 and Exodus 12:40-41.

comes from hearing (or, reading) the good news of salvation through Jesus Christ (Romans 10:17); we also know that without faith it is impossible to please the LORD (Hebrews 11:6); and, also, we know that Jesus Christ is “the author and finisher [or, perfecter] of our faith.” [brackets mine] (Hebrews 12:2 KJV)

In Romans 4:20-22 and James 2:23, Scripture clearly teaches that Abraham had faith and that righteousness was imputed to him because of his faith. From our knowledge of what happened to Sodom, it should be clear that the city did not even have ten who had faith —and, thereby, possessed righteousness (or, innocence) — in the LORD God Almighty. The people of Sodom were considered wicked or guilty by the LORD God Almighty. Why were they considered “wicked” or “guilty”? They were considered wicked or guilty, because they worshiped false gods.

(The Biblical Story of Sodom)

Upon reading Genesis 19:1-15, we learn that two angelic visitors came to Sodom and that Lot saw the visitors and beckoned them into his home. He cautioned them not to spend the night in the town square. Why would Lot do that? Town squares then were much like older downtown areas of many cities today. They were sometimes dangerous and hostile, especially to identifiable strangers. Once the angels were inside Lot’s home, it is recorded that the people of the city gathered together.

Let’s listen to the Hebrew of the Masoretic text (or, the traditional text) for Genesis 19:4:

טָרָם, יִשְׁכְּבוּ, וְאַנְשֵׁי הָעִיר אֲנָשִׁי סָדָם נָסְבוּ  
עַל-הַבַּיִת, מִנֶּעַר וְעַד-זָקֵן : כָּל-הָעָם, מִקְצָה.

Interestingly, the King James Version of the Bible does a very good job in its rendering of Genesis 19:4. It translates 19:4 as follows:

But before they lay down, the men [translated from the

Hebrew *Enosh* אֲנָשִׁי] of the city, [even] the men [again, from the Hebrew *Enosh* אֲנָשִׁי] of Sodom, compassed the house round, both old and young, all the people [translated from the Hebrew *Am* אָמ] from every quarter.

If only the Hebrew word Enosh was used in Genesis 19:4, then I might concede that it was only the males who gathered together outside of Lot's house. But it would only be a concession, since the Hebrew word Enosh can mean either "males" or "people." However, since the Hebrew word Am is also used later in the same verse in the phraseology, "all the people from every quarter," it can be interpreted that both adult males and females --- young adults and older adults --- came from all parts of the city to descend upon Lot's house.

Let's now listen to the Hebrew of the Masoretic text (or, traditional text) for Genesis 19:5:

וַיִּקְרְאוּ אֶל-לוֹט וַיֹּאמְרוּ לוֹ, אַיֵּה הָאֲנָשִׁים אֲשֶׁר-בָּאוּ  
אֵלֶיךָ הַלַּיְלָה; הוֹצִיאֵם אֵלֵינוּ, וַיַּדְעָה אֲתָם

Even though you may not have been able to identify the second to the last word in the preceding Hebrew version of Genesis 19:5, it is a verb form of the word ya-duh', ya-dah' or ya-daw' that has been translated in the King James as "that we might know."

Let's have a simple lesson in language that is relevant to our discussion now, before I discuss the Hebrew word yadaw.

If I asked you to pronounce the English word that is spelled "B – O – W," you might pronounce it "bow" with a long –o or "bow" with a diphthong –ow. You would not know how to pronounce it unless you saw the word in context. If you pronounced the word "bow" with a long –o, you would still not know the meaning of the word unless, again, you took context into consideration. Bow could mean "the ribbon in someone's hair" or it could be referring to "that by which you shoot an arrow." If you pronounced the word "bow" with a diphthong –ow, you

would still not know the meaning of the word unless, again, you took context into consideration. **Bow** could mean “the front, or forward part, of a ship,” or it could mean “bending at the waist.” B – O – W in English is representative of all Hebrew words. You really don’t know how to pronounce a written Hebrew word unless you see it in context and you really don’t know the meaning of a Hebrew word unless, again, you read it in context.

In Genesis 19:5, the second-to-last Hebrew word from which the word “know” is derived is ya-daw’ ידע — reading the characters from left to right as yod י, dalet ד, and ayin ע, all three of which together can be transliterated as ya-duh’, ya-daw’, or ya-dah’.

Most words in English are multonyms, which means that almost every word in English has multiple meanings and nuances, which can only be determined when the word is studied in context. What is true for English is even more true for Hebrew. For example, in English, the word “cleave” can mean “to join together,” but it can also mean “to separate.” In Hebrew, the word “qadesh” can mean “holy” or, depending on context, it can also mean, “something pretentiously holy” or even “unholy.” The Hebrew word ya-dah’ is somewhat like the English word date, which can mean “day of the year,” “innocent prearranged social engagement,” or, more colloquially, a “sexual encounter between a prostitute and his or her customer.”

Ya-daw’ has multiple meanings, too! Ya-daw’ has at least three possible meanings: 1) to know cognitively or intellectually; 2) to experience intimately in consensual sex; and, 3) to rape. What determines the exact meaning of this word (and the overwhelming majority of Hebrew words, for that matter) is the context in which the word is found.

*For example*, when ya-daw’ is used in Genesis 3:22 (“to know good and evil”), its meaning is “to know cognitively or intellectually.” When ya-daw’ is used in Genesis 4:1 (“Adam knew Eve”), its meaning is “to experience intimately in consensual sex.” And, when ya-daw’ is used in Genesis 19:5 and Judges 19:25, its meaning is “to rape” (and is translated as such in the American Standard and New International Version translations of Judges 19:25 but not Genesis 19:5). Then, “so

that we may *know* them” (Genesis 19:5 KJV) really means “to know *carnally* by brute force” — or, more specifically in this context, “so that we might *rape* them.”

Anyone who tries to make the story of Sodom just a story about getting to know someone intellectually is doing the written word of God an injustice.

The story of Sodom is not about getting to know people intellectually. The story of Sodom is not about consensual sex between two adults. The story of Sodom is about intended rape, which is always violent and brutal. And, the story of Sodom is not about rape just between males but the intended rape of two angelic visitors by all of the adult townspeople. Even if I conceded that it may only be referring to the males of the city, it is still referring to rape. How can anyone confuse consensual sex with rape?

Naturally, Lot was horrified by this for a number of reasons, but especially because these visitors were guests within his own home. People at that time respected and honored the Law of Hammurabi, which dictated that, when you extended hospitality to visitors, you agreed to provide them protection even at the cost of your own life as well as the lives of your immediate household. As a result, Lot offered his daughters to the townspeople, but the townspeople refused them. Anyone who tries to make the story of Sodom solely an issue of hospitality is doing the written word of God an injustice. The story of Sodom is not just about hospitality.

After Lot offered his two daughters, what happened next is that the angelic visitors struck the townspeople blind, and Lot and his family immediately left the city. The city was then destroyed. Unfortunately, the story of Sodom is often linked erroneously to modern-day homosexuality.

In order to better understand the events just described, we need to recognize that what was intended by the townspeople of Sodom was not consensual intimacy but, rather, brutal group rape. Fortunately, we are living in a time when we understand that rape is not so much a sexual act as it is a psychopathologic action meant to demean and victimize

others by overpowering them. Rape is based on the desire to dominate or domineer as well as to demonstrate one's seeming superiority over others who are, often, physically weaker and, therefore, especially vulnerable. Rape is intended by the psychologically sick and criminal mind to draw attention to the victim's supposed gross vulnerabilities, infirmities or defects at the same time that it draws attention away from the perpetrator's own feelings of inadequacy, inferiority, and lack of control. Rape is an act of violence, domination and rage meant to victimize others in order to humiliate and control them. Again, the issue in the story of Sodom is not an issue of consensual sexual activity or intimacy between two people but an issue of violence and victimization through group rape.

If there is anyone listening to this broadcast who has been the victim of rape, I pray, right now, in the Name of Jesus Christ, that our Lord take away any guilt or shame that you may have unwittingly accepted and that our Lord imbue you with the perfect love that will enable you to forgive the perpetrator of this horrible and heinous crime against you. Please know that, more likely than not, your forgiveness of the perpetrator is a process and will take time. Don't be hard on yourself if you have not yet found forgiveness in your heart toward the perpetrator of this crime. This perpetrator committed a crime against you and, indirectly, the loved ones who grieve for you. I encourage you to talk not only with your pastor and your loved ones but also a trained psychotherapist to help sort through your traumatized emotions. God bless you and comfort you!

In addition to what I have just described relative to a contemporary understanding of rape, it is also essential for us to know that warring peoples (in this case, barbarians) throughout most of ancient history commonly used rape and commonly raped conquered peoples, both women as well as men. They did this in order to indicate that they (that is, the conquerors) had complete statutory control over those vanquished as well as to warn other potential aggressors of their ferocity.

Many insights to the Genesis 19 account of Sodom are provided by a very similar set of circumstances within the Bible that begins in Judges 19:1 and ends at Judges 20:5. Although I will now share some of the



parallels between the two accounts and draw some analogies, I encourage you to read the two accounts for yourself after this broadcast to reinforce what we are covering now. Later, read and compare Genesis, Chapter 19, with Judges, Chapter 19 and Chapter 20:1-5. In the Judges 19 account, we find a Levite (a male of the tribe of Levi) traveling with his concubine. In today's language, and in this context, a concubine might be considered a man's "mistress," sexual partner who has no primary spousal legal rights or entitlements, or it could also be referring to a member of a harem of women as well. (As a footnote here, these definitions will be useful to us when we get to 1 Corinthians 6:9 in a future broadcast.) As the two are traveling, they happen upon the city of Gibeah (Giv-ah' or Gib-ah' in Hebrew), where they were cautioned not to stay in the town square (like the angels who visited Sodom). They were cautioned by a older resident of Gibeah, who said, "No, please do not stay in this dangerous place. Instead, come to my home, where I will provide for you and protect you." So the Levite and his concubine ended up going home with the older man of Gibeah.

Then, as in Sodom, Scripture reports that the people of Gibeah also described in Judges 19: as the "offspring of Belial [or, in Hebrew, ben-ee be-lai-aye-el בְּנֵי-בְלִיעַל] gathered around the residence, where the two guests (meaning, the Levite and his concubine) were staying, and demanded that the host send out the Levite in order that they might *know* him — יָדַע (ya-daw') here again — or, as indicated previously, that they might *rape* him. In response, the old man of Gibeah replies, "Oh, no, please do not do so; take, instead, his concubine and my daughter and use them accordingly, but do not do so to the male visitor." Eventually, they send out the Levite's concubine, and the people of the city end up raping and ravaging her until she swaggers to the doorstep of the home of the old man from Gibeah, where she falls down dead.

To be hermeneutically sound, an accurate interpretation of Genesis, Chapter 19 must consider Judges 19:1-20:5. For the sake of clarification, hermeneutics is defined by Webster's II New Riverside Dictionary as "the science and methodology of interpretation, especially of the Bible."<sup>2</sup> The parallels that exist between Genesis 19:1-15 and

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<sup>2</sup> Webster's II New Riverside Dictionary, Riverside Publishing Company, 1984, page 577.

Judges 19:1-20:5 are summarized as follows:

**Parallels between Genesis 19 and Judges 19**

<b>Sodom Account</b>	<b>Gibeah Account</b>
<b>two visitors or travelers:</b>	
<b>two angels</b>	<b>a Levite and his concubine</b>
<b>cautioned not to spend the night in the town square:</b>	
<b>by Lot</b>	<b>by an old man of Gibeah</b>
<b>demands of group rape by the people of the city and two women offered instead</b>	
<b>Lot's two virgin daughters</b>	<b>the old man's virgin daughter and the Levite's concubine</b>
<b>ידע</b> <b>same Hebrew word used in:</b>	
<b>Genesis 19:5 "know" (KJV)</b>	<b>Judges 19:25 "raped" (NIV)</b>

*Figure One*

A very important principle in understanding difficult passages in the Bible is expressed by the statement, “Scripture interprets Scripture.” In other words, as we read and study a difficult passage in the Bible, we will eventually discover that there are helpful explanations as well as keys to unlock its truer meaning provided in other passages located elsewhere in the Bible. Consequently, it is very important that we all read and study the written word of God completely or we may fall into the same trap that many people fall into by stopping short of a full understanding and, then, sharing that imperfect knowledge of truth, or incomplete understanding, with others. However, if we study God’s entire written Word, the Holy Spirit will guide us to the whole truth that is to be found in Scripture. Remember, there is great continuity in the Bible from beginning to end and we must hold the whole Bible, while we simultaneously attend to its various parts, in order to understand and apply the truth contained therein.

When you read Genesis, Chapter 19, you must also read Judges, Chapter 19 and Chapter 20:1-5. To be sure, it is in Judges 20:5 that we are provided tremendous insight relative to the intentions of the people of Gibeah and, also, transferably so, to the intended rape of the two angelic visitors in Sodom. In retelling the story when he returned home, the Levite states:

During the night the men of Gibeah came after me and surrounded the house, intending to kill me. They raped my concubine, and she died.

Judges 20:5 NIV

Historians would consider the Levite a primary source: Simply stated, he was there when it happened. [Story about John, Alice, and the automobile break-in.] When the Levite himself describes what would have happened to him, he said, “The men of the city surrounded the old man’s residence, intending to kill me.” The Levite’s statement tells us that the men of Gibeah had fully intended to kill him by brutally raping him. That they had succeeded in doing this to his concubine is proof of their evil intention. Also, we need to understand that this intended raping of a man — especially in the case of Judges, Chapters 19:1-20:5 — was not by homosexuals: As a homosexual male, let me assure you

that there are no homosexual males that I know of who are capable of raping a female. That the people of Gibeah would have stepped out of their heterosexual “nature” (that is, their instinctual predisposition, or orientation, toward heterosexuality) to victimize the Levite should be clear, much like modern-day prisoners step outside of their heterosexual nature to rape fellow inmates. Additionally, what is also provided by the story of Gibeah is that the intended group rape recounted in Genesis Chapter 19 was not an isolated activity specific to Sodom, but, instead, more widespread throughout the land at that time.

Relative to the depiction of women in the Sodom and Gibeah stories, I think it important to emphasize that most ancient societies subscribed to the notion of female inferiority and subordinacy. Indeed, women were regarded no better than property or chattel (as they still are in many places throughout the world today). That the Bible recounts these stories does not mean that God condones or that Scripture endorses the poor treatment of women. Rather, the Bible is retelling events that occurred and how they occurred. Much of the Bible is in narrative form. In other words, it is in story format. For the sake of clarity, I do not mean “fictitious” story but “factual” retelling.

Remember also to consider these stories in their historical and literary contexts and not in the context of the desperately-needed current movement toward equality and fairness for women. Also, remember that most of the great strides that women have made in modern-day societies were really not made until the 20th century and that women are still treated as property in many economically-emerging nations today.

In comparison to murder, whether rape is the ultimate or penultimate (meaning, “next to the highest”) act of contempt for another person, you must decide for yourselves. Neither act takes into consideration the victim’s desires or wants; and, both acts are intended to brutalize others. Regardless of your decision, it should be clear to you that the story of the intended brutal rape in Sodom — even if I were to concede the Hebrew word Enosh may be referring to males rather than both males and females — has nothing to do with loving, monogamous, committed relationships between consenting adults of the same sex.

Let us now turn to:

### Additional Biblical References to Sodom

In order to make our study of the biblical use of the word Sodom complete, let us turn to the four additional times that the city of Sodom is referred to in the Old Testament.

In Isaiah 1:10-11, Israel's degenerate condition is figuratively compared to Sodom and Gomorrah:

Hear the word of the LORD, you rulers of Sodom; listen to the law of our God, you people of Gomorrah! "The multitude of your sacrifices — what are they to me?" says the LORD. "I have more than enough of burnt offerings, of rams and the fat of fattened animals; I have no pleasure in the blood of bulls and lambs and goats."

Isaiah 1:10-11 NIV

In Isaiah 3:8-9, the sinful conditions of both Judah and Jerusalem are compared to Sodom. The LORD God Almighty compares the sins of Sodom to the sins of Jerusalem and Judah:

Jerusalem staggers, Judah is falling; their words and deeds are against the LORD, defying His glorious presence. The look on their faces testifies against them; they parade their sin like Sodom; they do not hide it. Woe to them! They have brought disaster upon themselves.

Isaiah 3:8-9 NIV

Jeremiah 23:13-14 specifically refers to how the children of Israel were lead astray by followers of Baal. Keep in mind as you hear the word adultery in the following passage, that it is referring to idolatrous worship practices; and, keep in mind that when you hear the word Baal, it's referring to a fertility god and the practices associated with the fertility god:

**Among the prophets of Samaria I saw this repulsive thing:  
They prophesied by Baal and led my people Israel astray.  
And among the prophets of Jerusalem I have seen  
something horrible: They commit adultery and live a lie.  
They strengthen the hands of evildoers, so that no one turns  
from his wickedness. They are all like Sodom to me; the  
people of Jerusalem are like Gomorrah.**

**Jeremiah 23:13-14 NIV**

**In Ezekiel 16:47-50, the LORD specifically identifies the sin of Sodom and her “daughters.” (The word daughters, here, refers to other adjacent urban areas that originated from the city of Sodom.) The phrase “detestable things” in the passage should not trigger “homosexual acts” within your mind unless your mind is playing recordings from old mental tapes. In other words, if you go to the Bible with the preconceived notion that God is referring to homosexuals as inhabitants of the city of Sodom, then you would naturally interpret the “detestable things” to be homosexual acts. However, what was detestable were the pagan orgies and ritualistic so-called “consecrated” sexual acts that occurred within temples erected to honor Baal, Ashtoreth, and Molech (as well as other fertility gods and goddesses that I will discuss in just a little bit). This included the sacrifice of children, sexual acts with both male and female cult temple prostitutes, and sex with animals. (Yes, bestiality occurred within the pagan temples and their related houses of cult prostitution, too.)**

**Ezekiel 16:47-50 (NIV) states:**

**You not only walked in their ways and copied their detestable practices [here, “detestable practices” is translated from the Hebrew “to-ev-ot” תועבה or “idolatrous practices”] but in all of your ways you soon became more depraved than they. “As surely as I live,” declares the Sovereign LORD, “your sister Sodom and her daughters never did what you and your daughters have done. Now this was the sin of your sister Sodom: She and her daughters were arrogant, overfed and unconcerned; they did not help the poor and needy. They were haughty and**

did detestable things [here, the “did detestable things” is translated from the Hebrew that they “committed to-ev-ah” תועבה, or that they practiced “idolatry”] before me. Therefore I did away with them as you have seen.”

Naturally, we have a tendency to interpret things from a modern-day standpoint. That is our referent. Because we do not see such pagan activities, and because we do not have temples built to Molech, Baal, and Ashtoreth, or to any of the other deities mentioned in the Old and New Testaments, we distance ourselves from the possibilities of sexual acts in the context of pagan worship. Most people today can’t even imagine it; they do not really have a good sense of what it meant, or means, to worship fertility gods and goddesses, or what “religious” practices were actually involved in, concerning pagan worship.

As stated previously, God is against idolatry, for, in the eyes of the LORD, idolatry *is* spiritual adultery. Another way to put it is that, if someone is an idolater, he or she is worshipping for God what is not God. Now, we understand today that idolatry goes well beyond worshipping graven images, statues, poles, totems and icons. We understand that it can also be the worship of possessions or the practice of materialism and other such vain philosophies, which, generally speaking, are not identified by particular figurines, statues or pictures.

Yes, God hates idolatry. Idolatry was, is, and always will be “abominable” and “detestable” [in other words, תועבה “to-ev-ah”] to Him [they will always be “to-ev-ot” תועבה to Him]:

And God spoke all these words: “I am the LORD your God, who brought you out of Egypt, out of the land of slavery. You shall have no other gods before me. You shall not make for yourself an idol in the form of anything in heaven above or on the earth beneath or in the waters below. You shall not bow down to them or worship them; for I, the LORD your God, am a jealous God, punishing the children

for the sin of the fathers to the third and fourth generation  
of those who hate me.”

Exodus 20:1-5 NIV

**Idolatry — taken together with the detestable things that people did, and still do, in different parts of the world today (that is, integrating sexual activities in the worship of false gods and goddesses) — that is what God hates. Idolaters are identified in Exodus 20:5 as “those who hate” God.**

**As one studies the entirety of Scripture, it becomes increasingly obvious that Bible verses commonly used to “bash” homosexuals are not speaking about homosexuals but about temple cult prostitutes or what’s known in Hebrew as “qadeshim;” and, the Bible is not speaking about homosexuality but about “toevah” (or, in other words, idolatry). “Qadeshim” are not homosexuals but temple cult prostitutes. And “toevah” is not just “something disgusting” but something “disgustingly idolatrous.”**

**If Martin Luther understood that qadeshim should be translated as “die Tempelhurer” (that is, “the male temple whores”), then why has that meaning been lost to contemporary society? Why is qadeshim now translated as “homosexuals?” Please tell my homosexual brothers and sisters — who have been persecuted by bullies, despised by those who fear what is different, condemned by society, rejected by family members, excommunicated from churches and even killed by homophobes because of their homosexuality — please tell them why that is.**

**In Part Four of this audio series, I will spend significantly more time in discussion of fertility cults [“to-ev-ah”] and temple cult prostitutes [the “qadeshim”].**

**Interestingly, when we come to passages in the New Testament in which Christ Jesus refers to Sodom, we find that he refers to the city of Sodom in the context of hospitality to the gospel (that is, receptivity to the good news of salvation through Jesus Christ). This is especially interesting, since we find there was also an issue of hospitality in the original story**



**of Sodom, too. The Messiah told his itinerant disciples that, if the cities they would visit were inhospitable to the message of salvation, then it would be more bearable for Sodom on Judgment Day. In other words, God's wrath will visit the cities that have rejected His gospel to an even greater extent than the wrath visited upon Sodom! Christ Jesus said:**

**I tell you the truth, it will be more bearable for Sodom and Gomorrah on the day of judgment than for that town.**

**Matthew 10:15 NIV**

**He also said:**

**And you, Capernaum, will you be lifted up to the skies? No, you will go down to the depths. If the miracles that were performed in you had been performed in Sodom, it would have remained to this day. But I tell you that it will be more bearable for Sodom on the day of judgment than for you.**

**Matthew 11:23-24 NIV**

**As part of the Great Commission, Jesus tells his followers to “go,” “preach,” “make disciples,” “teach,” and “baptize in his name.” (Matthew 28:19-20) However, He also tells us what to do when we have done our part and the hearers reject the gospel message. He states:**

**And if any place will not welcome you, shake the dust off your feet when you leave, as a testimony against them.**

**Mark 6:11 NIV**

**Those of us who carry a message that God has asked us to deliver should not take it personally if we are rejected. Rather, we should remember what the LORD said to Samuel [Shmu-el]: “ ‘They have not rejected thee, but they have rejected me.’ ” (1 Samuel 8:7 KJV)**

**The Lord Jesus Christ, when referring to Sodom, did so relative to the hospitality of cities concerning the preached Gospel, or “evangel.” So, basically, our Lord was saying to evangelists that if the inhabitants of a**

city are inhospitable to the gospel message, then leave the city and it will be far worse for its inhabitants than it was for the inhabitants of Sodom. In other words, when the two types of inhospitality are compared, it will be worse to be judged inhospitable to the evangel rather than being judged inhospitable to an angel.

Although I have said it previously in this broadcast, it bears repeating again that anyone who tries to turn the story of Sodom solely into an issue of hospitality is doing a disservice to the written word of God.

By the way, Jesus nowhere in the Bible addresses the issue of homosexuality. Not once. He was as silent about homosexuality as he was about electricity. Indeed, our Lord was, and is, aware of everything, because He is omniscient. He was certainly aware that electricity (as we know it today) would develop, but He made no mention about it. And, without a doubt, He was aware that there would be homosexuality, as we know it today, but He made no direct comment about it.

(Closing the Chapter on Sodom)

The last reference to Sodom in the Bible often used against homosexuals is found in Jude, verse 7 (keeping in mind, there are no chapters in Jude):

In a similar way, Sodom and Gomorrah and the surrounding towns gave themselves up to sexual immorality and perversion. They serve as an example of those who suffer the punishment of eternal fire.

Jude 7 (NIV)

Rather than describing homosexuality, the two Greek words rendered together as “perversion” in the NIV and separately as “strange flesh” in the King James Version could just as well be describing the bestiality common to many Canaanite fertility rites as it could be describing the attempt by the townsmen of Sodom to rape the two angelic visitors, whose flesh was indeed “strange” or “different.” This explanation is especially plausible in view of the verse’s comparison (“in a similar

way”) to the fallen angels in the previous verse, who “abandoned their own home.” Jude, verse 6, indicates that they commingled with human beings by having sex with them (see Genesis 6:1-2):

And the angels who did not keep their positions of authority but abandoned their own home — these [God] has kept in darkness, bound with everlasting chains for judgment on the great Day. [brackets mine]

Jude 6 NIV

This refers to Genesis 6:1-2:

When men **הָאָדָם** [or, human beings] began to increase in number on the earth and daughters were born to them, the sons of God **בְּנֵי-הָאֱלֹהִים** [or, angels] saw that the daughters of men were beautiful, and they married any of them they chose. [brackets mine]

Genesis 6:1-2 NIV

As a footnote here: The nephilim (or, “giants”) referred to in Genesis 6:4 (NIV) have been inferred by some Hebrew scholars to have been the offspring of the fallen angels and human beings, since the word nephilim may mean “fallen ones.”

Ironically, the two words translated as “strange flesh” in the KJV of Jude 7 are heteras sarkos **ἑτέρας σαρκός**<sup>3</sup> — which is to say, “hetero[sexual] flesh,” and not “homosexual flesh.” Although my use of the word “hetero[sexual]” in the previous sentence is obvious and exaggeration, it takes one no more far afield than requiring students of the Bible to believe that the perversion written about in verse 7 of Jude is homosexuality.

This is in agreement with the Word Biblical Commentary (which is a very mainstream publication). It speaks of Jude as being in agreement with the interpretation that I have just given:

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<sup>3</sup> I have intentionally reversed the order of the words in Greek for the reader to more easily compare them to their English counterparts.

As the angels fell because of their lust for women, so the Sodomites desired sexual relations with angels. The reference is to the incident in Genesis 19:4-11. **σαρκὸς ἑτέρας**, “strange flesh,” cannot, as many commentators and most translations assume, refer to homosexual practice, in which the flesh is not “different” (**ἑτέρας**); [therefore] it must mean the flesh of angels. The sin of the Sodomites (not strictly, of the other towns) reached its zenith in this most extravagant of sexual aberrations, which would have transgressed the order of creation as shockingly as the fallen angels did.<sup>4</sup>

In order to complete my treatment of the story of Sodom, I would now like to introduce you to a few Canaanite pagan deities that played a major role in the shaping of the culture of Sodom.

(Canaanite Pagan Deities)

Genesis 10:19 (NIV) indicates that “the borders of Canaan reached from Sidon toward Gerar as far as Gaza, and then toward Sodom, Gomorrah, Admah and Zeboim, as far as Lasha.” Sodom and Gomorrah, then, were part of Canaan, the land that was eventually conquered by the children of Israel. And, not only were these cities part of Canaan geographically, they were part of Canaan culturally. This is especially germane to our story, since Canaanite fertility cults played a particularly important role in the day-to-day activities of the indigenous peoples who dwelled in this general region as well as those who migrated there. Indeed, The New Harper’s Bible Dictionary states, “Canaanite fertility cults, which were more lewd and influential than any other nature cults of the Middle East, made incursions into the austere, wilderness-born faith of Israel.”<sup>5</sup>

In order to consider further the issue of Sodom, we need to cover some historical background relative to a few of the more popular fertility

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<sup>4</sup> Bauckman, Richard. *Word Biblical Commentary: Jude-2 Peter* (Volume 50), Word Books, Waco, 1983, page 54.

<sup>5</sup> Miller, Madeleine S. and J. Lane. The New Harper’s Bible Dictionary. Harper and Row, New York, 1973, page 89.

pagan deities that were worshiped during much of the two millennia preceding the birth of Christ.

Though there were other pagan deities worshiped in Canaan, the major fertility deities included the gods Molech and Baal and the goddess Ashtoreth:

The first fertility god that I will discuss is Molech.

*Molech* In Old Testament times, Molech was a male fertility god to whom devotees sacrificed the lives of their “seed,” or children, through ritualistic burning. (See read Leviticus 18:21 and 20:2-5.) The word Molech is derived from the Hebrew word Melek מֶלֶךְ, which means “king:”

The LORD said to Moses, “Say to the Israelites: ‘Any Israelite or any alien living in Israel who gives any of his children to Molech must be put to death. The people of the community are to stone him. I will set my face against that man and I will cut him off from his people; for by giving his children to Molech, he has defiled my sanctuary and profaned my holy name. If the people of the community close their eyes when that man gives one of his children to Molech and they fail to put him to death, I will set my face against that man and his family and will cut them off from their people both him and all who follow him in prostituting themselves to Molech.

Leviticus 20:1-5 NIV

The next fertility god that I will discuss is Baal.

*Baal* Often, the Baal god, or Baal-type god, was specific for different city-states that existed within the Canaanite region. At times, Baal בַּעַל was used as an umbrella term for all “Baalim” (the Hebrew “-im” ending here denotes the masculine plural) or “Baal gods” of the Canaanite region. Variant forms of the name Baal include “Bel,” and “Beel.” The name Baal, or one of its variant forms, was often

incorporated into the names of various pagan people, like Jezebel, who was a devotee, or priestess, of Baal, and her father, Ethbaal.

Jezebel was a female temple cult prostitute:

In the thirty-eighth year of Asa king of Judah, Ahab son of Omri became king of Israel, and he reigned in Samaria over Israel twenty-two years. Ahab son of Omri did more evil in the eyes of the LORD than any of those before him. He not only considered it trivial to commit the sins of Jeroboam son of Nebat, but he also married Jezebel daughter of Ethbaal king of the Sidonians, and began to serve Baal and worship him. He set up an altar for Baal in the temple of Baal that he built in Samaria. Ahab made an Asherah pole and did more to provoke the LORD, the God of Israel, to anger than did all the kings of Israel before him.

1 Kings 16:29-33 NIV

It was not by accident that Jesus Christ referred to the Devil as “Beelzebub” in Matthew 12:26-27. Beelzebub is derived from “Baal-Zebub, the god of Ekron” (as referred to in 2 Kings 1:2), whose literal meaning is “lord of the flies.” “Lord of the flies” is an apt description, indeed, for Satan, who is behind every form of idolatrous worship. (Just as dung draws flies here on earth, so does Satan draw every unclean spirit, devil and demon in the world of the unseen.)

Though “Baal” represents an evil thing, the word Baal **בַּעַל** itself is not evil; it simply means “lord” or “master” in Hebrew. Although the word means “lord,” “Baal” should not be confused with the Hebrew word Adonai or the other Hebrew word Shem (or its variant, HaShem), both of which are often used in place of the unpronounceable Hebrew word for Yahweh **יְהוָה** (the most holy name of God) and often translated in the Old Testament with all upper case letters, especially in the King James Version of the Bible, as “LORD.”

The last fertility god that I will discuss is Ashtoreth, who is actually a goddess.

***Ashtoreth*** The singular form for many feminine nouns in Hebrew ends in “-eth.” For such nouns, it is the “-oth” ending that makes the plural form. In other words, although the Hebrew word עֲשֵׁתְרוֹת “Ashtaroth” [or, “-ot”] looks similar to עֲשֵׁתֶרֶת “Ashtoreth,” the former word is the plural form. And, just as there were many manifestations or representations of the god Baal, so, too, were there many representations of the goddess Ashtoreth. Ashtoreth is the very same goddess referred to in Babylonian and Assyrian times as “Ishtar” and “Ashtar” and in Greek and Roman times as “Astarte.” We even find that the Scandinavian fertility goddess “Easter” is most likely derived, symbolically as well as etymologically, from the Greek word “Astarte” (hence the fertility symbols of eggs and rabbits used at “Easter”). That is why some Christians prefer using “Resurrection Sunday” rather than the word “Easter.”

Finally, Ashtoreth, Ishtar, Ashtar, and Astarte all represent the pagan goddess often referred to by the appellation “Queen of Heaven.” (See Jeremiah 7:18; 44:17-19; and 44:25.) The “Asherah pole” אֲשֵׁרָה, mentioned earlier in 1 Kings 16:33, was a huge pole or totem, made of stone or wood, erected in honor of one of the manifestations of Ashtoreth (and sometimes Baal) and thought to be in the form of a phallus (or, penis).<sup>6</sup>

The king [Josiah] also desecrated the high places that were east of Jerusalem on the south of the Hill of Corruption — the ones Solomon king of Israel had built for Ashtoreth, the vile goddess of the Sidonians ... Josiah smashed the sacred stones and cut down the Asherah poles and covered the sites with human bones [covering the sites with human bones would indicate that the sites were vile and cursed].

2 Kings 23:13-14 NIV  
[brackets mine]

And the children of Israel did evil again in the sight of the

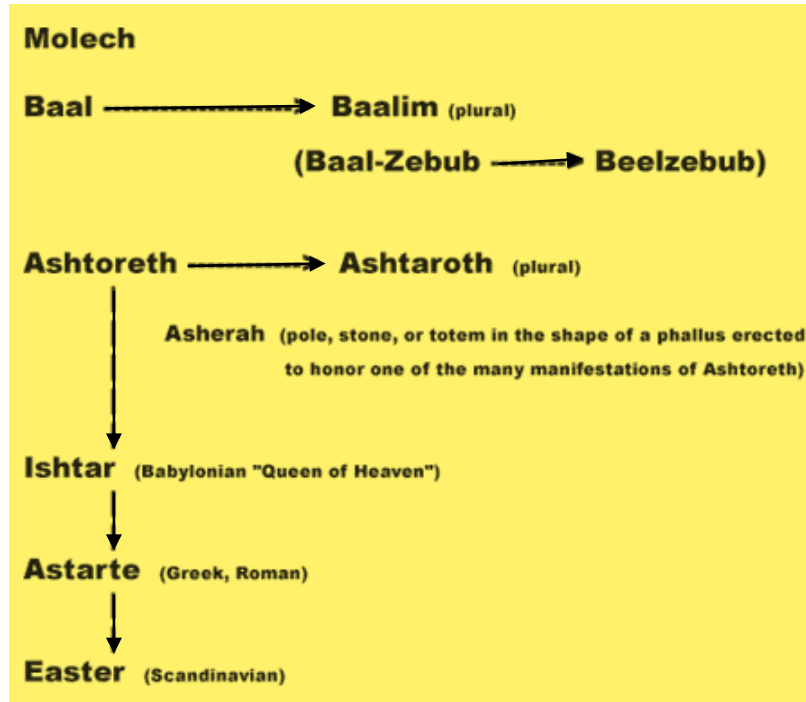
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<sup>6</sup> Nicoll, Reverend W. Robertson (editor). *The Expositor’s Bible*, Volume 6, Funk and Wagnalls, New York, 1900, pages 304, 389.

LORD, and served Baalim, and Ashtaroth.

Judges 10:6 KJV

### Common Fertility Gods and Goddesses



*Figure Two*

The idea here is that so-called priests and so-called priestesses, who existed then, were functionaries of cults that worshiped these fertility gods and goddesses. And “fertility cults” is really a good descriptor for them. In order to honor these pagan deities, worshipers either offered their seed (that is, their “life”) through masturbation and sacrifice of their children; or, they committed sexual acts with the so-called priests and priestesses, who worked either in the temples constructed to these false gods or in quarters adjacent to them. To be sure, there were many different cult priests and priestesses who functioned as temple prostitutes throughout antiquity in lands that bordered the Mediterranean Sea, including Canaan, the land in which Sodom was located.



**In closing Part Three of this audio series, I would like to read a message from Jesus Christ to homosexual Christians:**

**Though members of My Church have rejected you, I have not rejected you! Though you have been persecuted unjustly by members of My Church, I ask that you forgive them for their trespasses against you. Since you have accepted me as your Savior, Lord and Sovereign King, then reflect Me in all of your daily social and sexual attitudes and behaviors! Hold tightly to the faith and righteousness you have in Me, for I am returning soon. At that time, all things wrong will be set aright.**

**I now would like to pray with you: (Prayer)**

**This concludes Part Three of the audio series entitled, “Christianity and Homosexuality Reconciled.” Truly this is new thinking for a new millennium! If you would like a copy of the MP3 audio file or transcript for Part Three, please send an Email to me in care of [drjpearson@aol.com](mailto:drjpearson@aol.com). If you would like a full copy of the textbook, Christianity and Homosexuality Reconciled, visit [www.cebiaz.com](http://www.cebiaz.com) and download the entire book for free. Until next time, I stand on the Rock of Jesus Christ in full knowledge that our Lord will continue to provide for you, continue to reward you and continue to bless you. How do I know? It is our Lord’s nature to provide, reward, and bless His creation. Indeed, you are one of His created. This is Dr. Joseph Adam Pearson, International President and Chief Executive Officer of Christ Evangelical Bible Institute, signing off for now. God bless us all, everyone.**