

Biblical Self Defense

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Historical-critical interpretation: seeks to understand what was meant when it was written by analyzing historical and cultural context, the author, audience, knowledge and values of the time, to determine its original intent and guidance it offers today.

Hebrew Scriptures/Old Testament

The Story of Sodom: Genesis 19: 1-11, 24-25

“The two angels came to Sodom in the evening, and Lot was sitting in the gateway of Sodom. When Lot saw them, he rose to meet them, and bowed down with his face to the ground. He said, "Please, my lords, turn aside to your servant's house and spend the night, and wash you feet; then you can rise early and go on your way." They said, "No, we will spend the night in the square." But he urged them strongly, so they turned aside to him and entered his house; and he made them a feast, and baked unleavened bread, and they ate. But before they lay down, the men of the city, the men of Sodom, both young and old, all the people to the last man, surrounded the house; and they called to Lot, "Where are the men who came to you tonight? Bring them out to us, that we may know them." Lot went out of the door to the men, shut the door after him, and said, "I beg you, my brothers, do not act so wickedly. Look, I have two daughters who have not known a man; let me bring them out to you, and do to them as you please, only do nothing to these men, for they have come under the shelter of my roof." But they replied, "Stand back!" And they said, "This fellow came here as an alien, and he would play the judge! Now we will deal worse with you than with them." Then they pressed hard against the man Lot, and came near the door to break it down. But the men inside reached out their hands and brought Lot into the house with them, and shut the door. And they struck with blindness the men who were at the door of the house, both small and great, so that they were unable to find the door. Then the Lord rained on Sodom and Gomorrah sulfur and fire from the Lord out of heaven, and he overthrew those cities, and all the Plain, and all the inhabitants of the cities, and what grew on the ground.”

What did the Hebrew Scriptures say the sin of Sodom was?

Pride, gluttony, complacency, failure to help the poor and needy – Ez 16:49-50
Refusal to accept strangers; - Wisdom (Apocrypha) 19:13-14

What did Jesus say the sin of Sodom was? "[W]henever you enter a town and they do not welcome you, go out into its streets and say, Even the dust of your town that clings to our feet, we wipe off in protest against you. Yet know this, the kingdom of God has come near. I tell you, on that day it will be more tolerable for Sodom than for that town." Lk 10:10-12 (See also Mt 10:14-15, to same effect)

The Abominations

Leviticus 18:22: “You shall not lie with a male as with a woman; it is an abomination.”

Leviticus 20:13: “If a man lies with a male as with a woman, both of them have committed an abomination; they shall be put to death; their blood is upon them.”

Other abominations:

unclean food – Lev 11:3,7-12

(pig, shrimp, lobster, shellfish)

remarriage after divorce Deut 24:4

woman wearing a man's garment
Deut 22:5

sewing discord in a family Prov 6:16-19

arrogance – Prov 16:5; 6:16-17

magic – Deut 18: 11-12

touching skin of a dead pig Deut 14:8

Other actions punishable by death:

stubborn or rebellious son – Deut 21:18-21

working on the Sabbath – Ex. 31:14; 35:2

adultery – Lev 20:10, Ex. 18: 11,13

woman not virgin on marriage – Deut 22:13-21

sorcerer, wizard or medium – Lev 20:27

blasphemers – Lev 24:14-16

oppressing the poor or needy- Ex. 18:12-13

cursing your father or mother – Ex 21:17

charging interest on a loan – Ex 18:13

Purity Rules: These are over 600 purity rules (“Holiness Code”) in the Hebrew Scriptures, governing diet, hygiene, sacrifices, etc., to help set the ancient Jews visibly apart as a special nation in covenant with God. Violating these cultural rules was a social taboo in the ancient Jewish culture but was not necessarily a sin.

The Old Laws are Abolished

“Now before faith came, we were imprisoned and guarded under the law until faith would be revealed. Therefore, the law was our disciplinarian until Christ came, so that we might be justified by faith. But now that faith has come, we are no longer subject to a disciplinarian, for in Christ Jesus you are all children of God through faith. As many of you were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ. There is no longer Jew or Greek, there is no longer slave or free, there is no longer male and female; for all of you are one in Christ Jesus.” Gal 3:23-29

‘He has abolished the law with its commandments and ordinances, that he might create in himself one new humanity in place of the two [Jews and Gentiles], thus making peace, and might reconcile both groups to God in one body through the cross.’ Eph 2:15-16

[Jesus said]: “Do you not see that whatever goes into a person from outside cannot defile, since it enters, not the heart but the stomach, and goes out in the sewer?” (Thus he declared all foods clean). And he said, “it is what comes out of a person that defiles. For it is from within, from the human heart, that evil intentions come.” Mk 7:18-21

Jesus gave us the great commandments – to love the Lord our God with all our heart, soul, strength and mind, and to love our neighbor as ourselves. “Do this and you will live.” Luke 10: 26-28.

Christian Scriptures/New Testament

1 Corinthians 6:9-10: “Fornicators, idolaters, adulterers, male prostitutes (*malakoi*), sodomites (*arsenokoitai*), thieves, the greedy, drunkards, revilers, robbers – none of these will inherit the kingdom of God. “

1 Timothy 1:9-10: [T]he law is laid down not for the innocent but for the lawless and disobedient, for the godless and sinners, for the unholy and profane, for those who kill their father or mother, for murderers, fornicators, sodomites (*arsenokoitai*), slave traders, liars, perjurers and whatever else is contrary to sound teaching.

	Malakoi	Arsenokoitai
KJV (1611)	effeminate	abusers of themselves with mankind
RSV (1946)	homosexuals	homosexuals
RSV (1972)	sexual perverts	sexual perverts
NRSV (1989)	male prostitutes	sodomites
Other versions	sensual Catamites (boy prostitutes) undisciplined moral looseness related to sex & money call boy (prostitute) concerned with one's own looks	given to unnatural vice male prostitutes child sexual abuse/pederasty same-sex sexual relations male same-sex acts

Romans 1: 26-27: “God gave them up to degrading passions (*atimias*). Their women exchanged natural intercourse (*physiken*) for unnatural (*para physin*) and in the same way also the men, giving up natural (*physiken*) intercourse with women, were consumed with passion for one another. Men committed shameless (*aschemosyne*) acts with men and received in their own persons the due penalty for their error.”

Atimias = not socially approved, but not sinful. Paul uses that term to describe himself as being held in disrepute or shame because of his commitment to Christ, in 2 Cor 6:8 and 11:21

Para physin = unusual, not culturally prevalent, unexpected, but not sinful

Aschemosyne = unseemly, inappropriate, not nice. Paul uses that term for parts of the body that he considers unseemly (the genitals), as a matter of social disapproval, but not to imply moral judgment – 1 Cor 12:23

Loving Same Sex Relationships in the Bible

We don't know if these friendships were also sexual, but they are offer loving examples of same sex relationships akin to many homosexual relationships today.

Ruth and Naomi (Ruth 1:16-17)

Ruth said, "Do not press me to leave you or to turn back from following you! Where you go, I will go; where you lodge, I will lodge; your people shall be my people, and your God my God. Where you die, I will die -- there will I be buried. May the Lord do thus and so to me, and more as well, if even death parts me from you!"

David and Jonathan

1 Samuel 18:1-4: When David had finished speaking to Saul, the soul of Jonathan was bound to the soul of David, and Jonathan loved him as his own soul. Saul took him that day and would not let him return to his father's house. Then Jonathan made a covenant with David, because he loved him as his own soul. Jonathan stripped himself of the robe that he was wearing, and gave it to David, and his armor, and even his sword and his bow and his belt.

1 Samuel 20:17, 41-42: Jonathan made David swear again by his love for him; for he loved him as he loved his own life. ... David rose from beside the stone heap and prostrated himself with his face to the ground. He bowed three times, and they kissed each other and wept with each other. David wept the more. Then Jonathan said to David, "Go in peace, since both of us have sworn in the name of the Lord, saying, 'The Lord shall be between me and you and between my descendants and your descendants forever.'"

2 Samuel 1:26-27: I am distressed for you, my brother Jonathan; greatly beloved were you to me; your love to me was wonderful, passing the love of women.

Further reading:

What the Bible Really Says about Homosexuality, by Daniel Helminiak, Ph.D (2000)(available on Amazon)

"The Bible Doesn't Say that Homosexuality is a Sin", by Janet Edmonds (2016)

Bible, Gender, Sexuality: Reframing the Church's Debate on Same-Sex Relationships, by James V. Brownson (2013)(available on Amazon)

Jesus, the Bible and Homosexuality: Explode the Myths, Health the Church, by Jack Rogers (2009)(available on Amazon)

UCC ONA office resources: http://www.ucc.org/lgbt_ona