

The Clobber Texts in Context

Scripture commonly used against GLBTQ+ persons.

When taken in context, they tell a different story

- 1 Genesis 19:1-14
 Ezekiel 16:48-50 (and 1:23-63 for context)
 Isaiah 1:7-10 (read through 1:20 for context)
Genesis 19 tells the story of Sodom and Gomorrah, while Ezekial and Isaiah refer back to the story. Genesis 19 tells a story of attempted same sex gang rape – is the sexuality or the gang rape the problem? The book of Ezekiel calls it out as a sin against hospitality (a sacred obligation in that world) and Isaiah is unclear, though the verse is set in a discussion of insincere worship.
- 2 Leviticus 18:22 (and surrounding verses for context)
- 3 Leviticus 20:13 (and surrounding verses for context)
These verses are set in the middle of Leviticus 17-26, the “Holiness Code,” laws set out to help the Hebrew people keep their distinct identity as they moved into the Promised Land. Read the entire Holiness Code to put Leviticus 18:22 and 20:13 into context. Do you eat rare meat? Wear blended fabrics? Own a mixed-breed dog? Then don’t use these texts to condemn others.
- 4 Romans 1:18-32, 2:1
Don’t stop reading at verse 32 - continue on to 2:1 (“Therefore you have no excuse, whoever you are, when you judge others, for in passing judgement on another you condemn yourself...”) to see how Paul is setting up the listener to realize that none of us have reason to judge. Remember, Paul wrote without inserting chapter and verse – those chapter divisions were added much later.
- 5 I Timothy 1:10 and (6) I Corinthians 6:9
The Greek terms used are very difficult to translate. The word “malakoi” could mean “soft” in a moral sense, so Paul would be condemning men who are vain, fearful, self-indulgent, pleasure-seekers. Many scholars think it could refer to male prostitutes. The second word, “arsenokoitai,” is extremely rare, and likely refers to males who use their power or position to take advantage of another. Had Paul wanted to refer to same-sex activity, he had several other well-known words from which to choose.

Remember - There are over 2,000 references in the Bible to caring for the poor, and just six references to same sex relations of any type. Jesus said nothing on the topic.

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