

## MARRIAGE AND HOMOSEXUALITY: TOWARD A BIBLICAL UNDERSTANDING

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*A clear pattern of attack on the biblical definition of marriage has emerged alongside the recent widespread propagation of a homosexual agenda. The ultimate goal of the widely publicized deviant lifestyle is to destroy marriage, reverse sodomy laws, and force acceptance of different rules on society as a whole. The movement comes in conjunction with an attempt to eliminate male-and-female gender distinctions and a reinterpretation of biblical texts that support those distinctions. In particular, the biblical command to love one another suffers from distortion as proponents of homosexuality plead for tolerance toward their deviations. Their proposals are a far cry from the biblical perspective on marriage as expressed in the Genesis account of creation. That account outlines five purposes of God in His creative work: reproduction, the union of one woman and one man, woman functioning as a complement to man, picturing the relationship between Christ and His church, and a fulfilling of distinctive roles by husband and by wife. A same-sex union cannot possibly fulfill any of such perspectives. In addition, the Mosaic Law clearly forbids homosexuality as does Paul's epistle to the Romans. Scripture never approves of any sexual relationship except the marital, monogamous, one-woman, one-man union.*

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For more than fifty years, the traditional family has been disappearing from the American scene. From single parent homes to children born out of wedlock to simple cohabitation, the traditional family has been losing traction and spiraling downward. In 2003, the *New York Times* announced, "The United States is becoming a post-marital society."<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>*New York Times*, November 23, 2003, quoted in *What's Wrong with Same-Sex Marriage?* by D. James Kennedy & Jerry Newcombe (Wheaton, Ill.: Crossway, 2004) 15.

Over the past decade, the legalization of same-sex marriages in a handful of states has exacerbated this dilemma. Though there are lulls in the firestorm of legislative debates, it is apparent that these moments are merely brief respites for the purpose of reloading and re-energizing a frontal assault on the very foundation of society—the traditional marriage and family.

It is certainly understood that, for the Christian, the issue of marriage and homosexuality must find its anchor and focus in the Word of God. Only there can the divine definition and intent for marriage be discovered. And once that definition is uncovered, it becomes evident that the same-sex marriage model is incapable of fulfilling the stipulations prescribed in the divine revelation.

However, before the biblical texts are examined, a number of corollary factors that frame such a study must be exposed. An investigation and explanation of these factors, intrinsically linked to marriage, will aid in understanding the ultimate goals and underlying agenda of the homosexual attack on the traditional one-man, one-woman institution of marriage.

## **I. The Foundational Issues and the Homosexual Agenda**

When undertaking this investigation, a number of complementary factors that are inexorably intertwined are remarkably evident. The factors are more than merely concomitant or coincidental; they are rudimentary and foundational. They are nerve endings that have not only taken root in the spinal column of the same-sex marriage debate, but have been exposed as primary causes of society's deadly cancer.

### **A. The Redefinition and Destruction of Marriage**

Those who advocate same-sex marriage are not merely interested in cohabitation. Rather, they are unrelenting in their desire to redefine marriage. No, not just to redefine it; they are adamant in their efforts to drive marriage into oblivion! During the decade of the nineties, households led by married couples plummeted below 25 percent.<sup>2</sup> As a result, in certain strongholds of liberal and antinomian thought, kindergarten and first-grade teachers are carefully instructed that a family is a "unit of two or more persons, related either by birth or by choice, who may or may not live together, who try to meet each other's needs and share common goals and interests."<sup>3</sup> In 1997, then-President Bill Clinton, speaking at a "Hate Crimes" conference at George Washington University, exhorted schools across America to design and institute pro-homosexual diversity programs "to teach [children] a

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<sup>2</sup>Eric Schmitt, "For the First Time, Nuclear Families Drop Below 25 Percent of Households," *New York Times*, May 15, 2001.

<sup>3</sup>Alan Sears and Craig Osten, *The Homosexual Agenda: Exposing the Principal Threat to Religious Freedom Today* (Nashville: Broadman and Holman, 2003) 52.

different way.”<sup>4</sup>

Although homosexuality occupies a prominent position in this discussion, it is increasingly evident that in reality this is not a debate about homosexuality. Rather, “it is first and fundamentally an argument over marriage.”<sup>5</sup> The real issue is not homosexuality; the central focus is marriage—or, more accurately, the dissolution of marriage. Quite simply, the plot is to overthrow traditional marriage. Why? Because gay or lesbian marriage will not erase the negative stigma that accompanies same-sex relationships. Says one lesbian author, “We must not fool ourselves into believing that marriage will make it acceptable to be gay or lesbian.... Marriage is not a path to that liberation.... We must keep our eyes on the goals of providing true alternatives to marriage and of radically reordering society’s view of family.”<sup>6</sup>

In 2004, San Francisco mayor Gavin Newsom ordered the city to issue same-sex marriage licenses. Claiming constitutional footing, Mayor Newsom argued that to do otherwise would be discriminatory. Invoking his own version of inalienable rights, he resorted to an illegal bending and twisting of the laws of equal rights, hoping thereby to enhance his own political agenda and force the unacceptable upon society as a whole.

Such examples are only the tip of the iceberg. Nevertheless, they demonstrate the inevitable watershed nature of an agenda, giving an all-too-evident look at the consequences. Eager for the legal right to engage in sinful activities, a small, aberrant segment of society, under the rubric of equal rights, is demanding a definition of marriage of their own liking. Erwin Lutzer expands this thought when he writes,

George Dent, writing in *The Journal of Law and Politics*, says that once same-sex marriage is affirmed, then other forms of “marriage” will quickly be affirmed as well, such as polygamy, endogamy (the marriage of blood relatives) and child marriage. In fact, the policy guide of the American Civil Liberties Union calls for the legalization of polygamy, stating, “The ACLU believes that criminal and civil laws prohibiting or penalizing the practice of plural marriage violate constitutional protections for freedom of expression and association, freedom of religion, and privacy for personal relationships among consenting adults.”<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>4</sup>Paul Bedard, “Clinton Urges School Diversity Training,” *Washington Times* (Nov 11, 1997):A1, quoted in “Family News From Dr. James Dobson,” *Newsletter* (June 1998):3.

<sup>5</sup>David Frum, quoted from Sears and Osten, *The Homosexual Agenda* 92.

<sup>6</sup>Paula Ettelbrick, “Since When is Marriage a Path to Liberation?” in *Same-Sex Marriage: The Moral and Legal Debate*, eds. Robert M. Baird and Stuart E. Rosenbaum (Amherst, N.Y.: Prometheus Books, 2004) 261.

<sup>7</sup>Erwin Lutzer, *The Truth About Same-Sex Marriage* (Chicago: Moody, 2004) 29. Michael Kinsley writes, “The solution is to end the institution of government monopoly on marriage. And yes, if three people want to get married..., let ‘em. If you and your government are implicated, what do you care?” (“Abolish Marriage: Let’s Really Get Government Out of Our Bedrooms,” *Washington Post* (July 3, 2004):A23).

Homosexual write, Michelangelo Signorile openly acknowledges the driving motive for this agenda. He writes, "A middle ground might be to fight for same-sex marriage and its benefits and then, once granted, redefine the institution of marriage completely, to demand the right to marry not as a way of adhering to society's moral codes but rather to debunk a myth and radically alter an archaic institution."<sup>8</sup>

The words of French philosopher Michel Foucault are even more direct and chilling. Prior to his AIDS-related death in 1984, he wrote,

Rules are empty in themselves, violent and unfinalized; they are impersonal and can be bent to any purpose. The successes of history belong to those who are capable of seizing these rules, to replace those who have used them, to disguise themselves so as to pervert them, invert their meaning, and redirect them against those who had initially imposed them; controlling this complex mechanism, they will make it function so as to overcome the rulers through their own rules.<sup>9</sup>

The agenda is *not* marriage for gays and lesbians; it is imperative that this underlying principle be clearly understood. The ultimate agenda is to change the rules—to destroy marriage, reverse the sodomy laws, and to force acceptance on society.

## **B. The Removal Gender Distinctions**

The redefinition and destruction of marriage has been joined, interestingly, by another segment of today's society. If one pulls back the covers, one finds another agenda—one that has marriage and family clearly in the cross-hairs. What is the target? Their aim is to expunge marriage of its biblical moorings. The homosexual agenda has coupled with the Women's Liberation movement to erase marriage of its beauty and reduce it to rubble. In the 1988 issue of the National Organization of Women's magazine, called *NOW Times*, Dr. Sheila Craven asserts, "Since marriage constitutes slavery for women, it is clear that the women's movement must concentrate on attacking this institution. Freedom for women cannot be won without the abolition of marriage."<sup>10</sup>

The November 1971 issue of the *Declaration of Feminism* magazine blatantly asserts, "The end of the institution of marriage is a necessary condition for the liberation of women. Therefore, it is important for us to encourage women to leave their husbands, and not to live individually with men.... We must go back to

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<sup>8</sup>Michelangelo Signorile, "Bridal Wave," *OUT* magazine (December/January 1994):161.

<sup>9</sup>Michel Foucault, *Language, Counter-Memory, Practice* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1977) 151, quoted in Thomas E. Schmidt, *Straight & Narrow? Compassion & Clarity in the Homosexual Debate* (Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity, 1995) 49.

<sup>10</sup>Phil Stringer, "Militant Feminism," online at <http://usiap.org/Family/Unit/MilitantFeminism.html>, accessed 7/25/2008.

ancient female religions like witchcraft.”<sup>11</sup> The *NOW Times* adds, “Every woman must be willing to be recognized as a lesbian to be fully feminine.”<sup>12</sup> As anyone can see, the two agendas are inextricably woven together.

Nor is this agenda the sole propriety of the far-left. Egalitarians within the so-called evangelical camp encourage, unwittingly I believe, this agenda as well. When they appeal to the apostle Paul’s words in Gal 3:28 that “...there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus,” they overlook the fact that the context is one of justification by faith, whereby all classes of Christians are children of God and joint-heirs with Jesus Christ. Chuck Colson argues that this is all a part of a unisex movement. He writes: “All this gender blending grows out of and feeds on...an aggressive gay subculture. Homosexuality could not survive as a valid ‘alternative lifestyle’ in a culture that took gender distinctions seriously.”<sup>13</sup>

### C. The Reinterpretation of Biblical Texts

For the homosexual agenda to gain any traction in America, especially among evangelicals, it must find a way to undermine the Bible and erode its enormous authority and influence. In his article, “Liberating Gay Theology,” Rev. Jeffery Dennis writes that gays and lesbians do not need counseling, healing, or understanding. Rather, the Scriptures need to be redefined according to social norms. He contends,

Gays and lesbians are here to transform the church.... We need a gay God, a God who would lead us toward a more affirming, harmonious, creative, socially conscious, and spiritually profound life.... We need a gay Spirit, a Spirit which would retain the particularity of individuals in the global village, not to be reviled but to be cherished. This Spirit’s goal would not be unity but a “unity in diversity,” not the wedding feast of the Lamb but the festival of Cain and Abel, the archetypal brothers, bringing their first fruits together to God.<sup>14</sup>

This agenda is verifiable countless times over. Dr. Anna Carter Florence, professor of preaching at Columbia Theological Seminary, recently made a startling announcement to the homosexual audience at the Trinity Presbyterian Church in Atlanta. Regarding her ministry to future church leaders, she remarked, “First-year seminary is all about learning to lose. First, we take their Jesus away. Then we mess with their Bible. Then their heads. By the first of November, they don’t know who

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<sup>11</sup>Ibid.

<sup>12</sup>Ibid.

<sup>13</sup>Chuck Colson, “What Can Gender Blending Render,” *World* (March 2, 1991):5 n. p.

<sup>14</sup>Jeffery P. Dennis, “Liberating Gay Theology,” *The Other Side* (September-October 1993):7-58. Also cf. William J. Webb, *Slaves, Women & Homosexuals* (Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity, 2005), and the March 2, 2007 blog by R. Albert Mohler Jr., “Is Your Baby Gay? What If You Could Know? What If You Could Do Something About It?” online at <http://www.albertmohler.com/blog>, accessed 8/30/2007.

they are any more.”<sup>15</sup>

Of course, once the biblical God is deposed, then special revelation (the Scriptures) is rendered non-existent; no basis for moral law exists. Man becomes a law or god to himself, leaving him to read the tea-leaves of general revelation in search of some form of moral compass. Known as existentialism, this makes experience pre-eminent. As a result, they must filter all moral guidelines through the grid of current social ideals, values that have been spawned and nurtured in the cradle of one's personal perspective of the world around him. Because there is no divine authority, all history (biblical and otherwise) must be interpreted and aligned with perspectives that are in tune with personal experience.<sup>16</sup>

#### **D. A Misconstruing of God's Commandment to Love One Another**

Everyone seems to be aware of a few well-known biblical phrases, including “God is love.” From the studio of “Larry King Live,” to the floor of the Senate, to the columns of the *Los Angeles Times*, Jesus is quoted as being in support of gay marriage. His words are repeatedly invoked as a magical formula, a sacred mantra that supposedly endorses any relationship and declares it to have divine blessing. Although the people wielding them are oblivious to the fact that they are grasping onto the wrong end of the sword, they nonetheless confidently (and blindly) thrust these words forth, hoping to undercut any biblical perspectives that speak to the contrary and thereby silence any church-going critics.

All in the name of tolerance, this is an attempt to turn the focus away from the Word of God and towards the love of God. They seek to highlight the love morality of Scripture at the expense of the law of morality.<sup>17</sup> One advocate puts it this way:

We need the Bible as a source to understanding Christ—but we need to spend more time observing His spirit as related there rather than the “letter of the law” given by His followers in attempting to spread His message. Pick up an addition [*sic*] of the Bible with Christ's recorded statements printed in red. Study only His words, comparing His positive approach throughout the Scriptures. Notice His emphasis on love—His silence

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<sup>15</sup>Jean Patrick, “Speaker compares battle for LGBT ordination in PCUSA to Exodus story,” *The Layman Online*, online at <http://www.layman.org/layman/news/2007-news/speaker-compares-battle-for-lgbt.htm>, accessed 7/23/2008. Cf. Peggy Campolo, “In God's House There are Many Closets,” in *Homosexuality and Christian Faith*, eds. Anthony and Peggy Campolo (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1999) 100-104.

<sup>16</sup>Though some who embrace this would disavow God's existence, others would accept the reality, though they would deny that He has accurately and inerrantly revealed Himself. Rather, they would contend that God and His will must be discovered through existential methods of testing, i.e., through general revelation.

<sup>17</sup>Rabbi Immanuel Jakobovits, commenting on this perspective, remarks, “Jewish law holds that no hedonistic ethic, even if called ‘love,’ can justify the morality of homosexuality any more than it can legitimize adultery, incest, or polygamy, however genuinely such acts may be performed out of love and by mutual consent” (“Homosexuality,” *Encyclopaedia Judaica* [Jerusalem: Macmillan, 1971] 8:962).

on the means of sex but concern only with the motives behind it.<sup>18</sup>

In other words, God has no concern for how sex is done, whether heterosexually or homosexually. Rather, He is only concerned “with the motives behind it.” Supposedly, as long as it is done within the context of love, it meets with divine approval.

There is no question that God is a God of love. The biblical text is replete with assertions that announce and support this truth. But His attribute of love does not evacuate the intrinsic content and value of His other attributes, such as His holiness and righteousness. The love of God never condones sinful actions. Biblical love, as with all divine attributes, has moral ground rules that guard its parameters and infuse it with a requisite fullness of meaning and breadth of understanding. God’s command to love one another never overrides or contradicts His requirements for holiness. The Scripture is clear. “Homosexual behavior can never be the ‘loving thing’ to do.”<sup>19</sup>

## II. The Biblical Perspective of Marriage & Its Implications

God’s plan for the human family is clearly set forth in Scripture. Consequently, when discussing marriage and homosexuality, it is imperative that one understand the biblical basis of marriage and its divine purposes. Defense of any perspective of marriage, whatever that might be, is doomed to moral and social failure unless it is rooted and grounded in the explicit teaching of God’s Word.

The Scriptures contain a number of texts that address this issue in one way or another—passages such as 1 Corinthians 7, 1 Timothy 3, and Titus 1–2. In this article, however, the focus will be directed primarily on the creation account, with a brief look at Leviticus 18 and Romans 1.

### A. The Creation Account

Scripture as a whole is not silent about marriage, but the Genesis account speaks most specifically about it and God’s intention for it. The opening pages of human history explicitly present God’s design for human sexuality and marriage, laying the foundation of a biblical theology of marriage.<sup>20</sup> Thus, it is only appropriate to begin with the creation account of the first man and the first woman. Further, that these divine proclamations occurred *before* the Fall should not be overlooked. Before sin entered the world and depravity began to distort man’s perspective, the account of Adam and Eve unmistakably reveals God’s intention for their relationship in

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<sup>18</sup>Kim Stablinski, “Homosexuality: What the Bible Does and Does Not Say,” *The Ladder*, July 1969, n.p., quoted by P. Michael Ukleja, “Homosexuality in the New Testament,” *Bibliotheca Sacra* 140 (October–December 1983):357.

<sup>19</sup>Ukleja, “Homosexuality in the New Testament” 357.

<sup>20</sup>“Gen 2:24 makes explicit that God’s original design for sexuality and marriage in the relationship between Adam and Eve is set forth as a pattern for all future sexual relationships” (Richard M. Davidson, *Flame of Yahweh: Sexuality in the Old Testament* [Peabody, Mass.: Hendrickson, 2007] 16).

marriage and lays the foundation for marriage's purpose and function in His created world.

In the biblical account of the creation of the first man and first woman, five perspectives speak directly to the subject of marriage and its comparison with homosexuality. The five are not intended as a full theology of marriage. Rather, they are the ones that most directly interact with the issue of homosexuality in contrast to God's design for marriage.

**1. Biblical Marriage from the Reproductive Perspective.** The Genesis account is very explicit in recounting how God created the birds, fish, and other animals "according to their kind." They were designed to reproduce according to their specific kind; any kind of cross-breeding was strictly forbidden (Lev 19:19; Deut 22:9-11).

Consequently, that the account of man's creation carries a similar theme with similar directives is not surprising; a marked symmetry is evident throughout this early biography. Mankind was intentionally created in two sexes—male and female. The order of creation is vividly portrayed from the very beginning; they were sexually distinct human beings.

God's first instruction to the first man and the first woman follows closely His deliberate creation of them (Gen 1:27): "Be fruitful and multiply" (Gen 1:28).<sup>21</sup> First of all, it is noteworthy that this instruction to procreate immediately follows the divine blessing upon the newly created man and woman. The text reads, "And He blessed them and He said to them, 'Be fruitful and multiply.'" Procreation is one of God's blessings designed for the marriage union. Same-sex marriages, on the other hand, are unable to produce offspring and cannot fulfill this aspect of God's design. They are incapable of receiving this divine blessing.<sup>22</sup>

Second, Adam and Eve were designed to procreate—to give birth to offspring. And though it is not the only purpose for marriage,<sup>23</sup> its being given first must not be underestimated or overlooked. Genetically incapable of fulfilling this command, homosexuality obviously has no place in God's design for mankind. It is a breach of God's opening instructions to the first married couple. Gordon Wenham observes, "To allow the legitimacy of homosexual acts would frustrate the divine

<sup>21</sup>The same instruction was given to Noah and his family after the flood (Gen 9:1, 7). This is noticeably different from the instructions of the Mesopotamian gods (*Epic of Atrahasis* 3:7:1-8).

<sup>22</sup>Reproduction is repeatedly viewed as a blessing in the Hebrew Scriptures (Gen 12:2; 17:2; Ps 127:3-5).

<sup>23</sup>This is certainly not the only purpose, as Gen 2:18, 20 and Prov 5:15-19 clearly enunciate. Davidson adds: "Still, sexuality cannot be wholly subordinated to the intent to propagate children. Sexual differentiation has meaning apart from the procreative purpose. The procreative blessing is also pronounced upon the birds and fish on the fifth day (v. 22), but only humankind is made in the image of God. Genesis 1 emphasizes that the sexual distinction in humankind is created by God particularly for fellowship, for relationship, between male and female" (*Flame of Yahweh* 49).

purpose.”<sup>24</sup> From the beginning, confusion of sexual identity has had no place in God’s design.

Third, reproduction is an integral dimension in God’s plan for His newly created earth. Accordingly, He follows his instruction to be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth with a command to subdue it and rule over it (Gen 1:28). “It is necessary that humans ‘be fruitful and multiply’ in order to create enough humans to exercise stewardship; hence sexes are necessary; hence ‘male and female’ (1:27).”<sup>25</sup> Again, as noted earlier, same-sex partnerships are incapable of fulfilling this divine stipulation.

Fourth, procreation is the means God has ordained to propagate His eternal truths. Though the Bible commands all to evangelize, Scripture holds traditional marriage, comprised of a father and a mother, to be the primary prescription for evangelism (e.g., Deut 6:4ff.).

**2. Biblical Marriage from the One Woman/One Man Perspective.** The creation account sets forth a beautiful picture of the perfect marriage. Remarkably, it does so in contrast to other aspects of God’s creative activity. In an apparent effort to expedite His command to fill the extensive amount of open space, swarms of sea creatures were created. Then followed His command to be fruitful and multiply (Gen 1:20-22). Such was not the case, however, with the creation of mankind. Even though the command to be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth is the same, God created only one man and one woman and thereby erected a marriage construct for all subsequent generations.<sup>26</sup>

Yes, polygamy, concubines, and divorce were permitted because of sinfulness and “hardness of heart.”<sup>27</sup> But Jesus added that “from the beginning it has not been this way” (Matt 19:8). That God’s design for marriage was between one man and one woman is quite obvious. The Pastoral Epistles reiterate that standard when they restrict leadership in the church to those marriages characterized by a one-woman/one-man relationship (1 Tim 3:2; Tit 1:6).<sup>28</sup>

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<sup>24</sup>G. J. Wenham, “The Old Testament Attitude to Homosexuality,” *The Expository Times* 102/12 (September 1991):363. Also see Wenham, *Genesis 1–15, Word Biblical Commentary*, eds. David A. Hubbard, Glenn W. Barker, and John D. W. Watts (Waco, Tex.: Word, 1987) 33. At the same time, it should be noted that the Genesis 2 account makes no mention of reproductivity. The fullest degree of marriage is accomplished in leaving, cleaving, and becoming one flesh, without any reference to procreation; sexual love in and of itself between a man and his wife has divine blessing.

<sup>25</sup>Thomas E. Schmidt, *Straight & Narrow? Comparison and Clarity in the Homosexuality Debate* (Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity, 1995) 44.

<sup>26</sup>Davidson notes, “The phrase, ‘a man and his wife’ indicates a heterosexual marriage relationship of a man and a woman as the Edenic model for all time” (*Flame of Yahweh* 21).

<sup>27</sup>Never, however, is homosexuality or any form of deviant sexuality allowed. Scripture is replete and forthright in its prohibition and punishment of such behavior (cf. Lev 18; 20; Rom 1:27).

<sup>28</sup>This is corroborated from a different perspective in 1 Cor 7:2, where the apostle Paul exhorts, “Each man is to have his own wife and each woman is to have her own husband.”

**3. Biblical Marriage from the Complementary Perspective.** The account in Genesis 2 reveals another purpose of marriage. After God had created the animals, He noted that Adam's creation was incomplete; He states that "it is not good" (Gen 2:18). As a remedy, He announced His plan to make for man a suitable partner. Quite obviously, He didn't make another man to help him! Quite the contrary! Whatever was not good in the creation of man could be resolved only by creating a woman to come alongside; someone who was now "bone of my bone and flesh of my flesh" (Gen 2:23). She came into the picture to fulfill a unique need, something that only a woman could do. After bringing the animals to Adam for naming, apparently to heighten Adam's awareness of what he was lacking, God created a woman.

The terminology employed in both 2:18 and 2:20 is derived from the Hebrew word נָגֵד (*neged*). Though commonly translated "suitable," when the preposition כִּי (*kî*) is attached, it can be more accurately rendered "corresponding to." As such, it does not describe "sameness," but rather depicts an opposite that is a perfect complement. In this case, it describes a person who perfectly fulfills and completes what is lacking in the man. Victor Hamilton correctly notes, "It suggests that what God creates for Adam will correspond to him.... The creation of this helper will form one-half of a polarity, and will be to man as the south pole is to the north pole."<sup>29</sup> Only a man and a woman can become "one flesh." Only a monogamous, heterosexual relationship can fulfill the "one flesh" description set forth in Scripture. It is impossible for a homosexual partnership to become one flesh, because it is impossible for the one partner to provide what is lacking in the other.<sup>30</sup>

**4. Biblical Marriage from the Analogical Perspective.** Marriage is a picture of the relationship between Christ and His church. Ephesians 5 quotes the creation account, providing a direct link between the two passages. Paul unmistakably notes that marriage is intended to teach, through the one-flesh union, the

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<sup>29</sup>Victor Hamilton, *The Book of Genesis: Chapters 1–17* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1990) 175. Gordon J. Wenham adds that the phrase "seems to express the notion of complementarity rather than identity. As Delitzsch (1:140) observes, if identity were meant, the more natural phrase would be 'like him,' כִּמְוֹהוּ" (*Genesis 1–15* 69). Schmidt elaborates, "Adam is not given a mirror-image companion, he is given a *her* (Gen 2:18), and he delights in her *correspondence* to him (Gen 2:23), which resides both in her likeness (human) and her difference (female). The pair are, literally and figuratively, made for each other.... The pair are complete counterparts, including their physical natures" (*Straight & Narrow* 44). Later, Schmidt adds that fully complementary partners have reciprocity, not symmetry: "The Song of Solomon witnesses to the equal delight of the man and the woman in the pleasure brought by the other, but they are different pleasures. *His* breasts are not like two fawns; *her* legs are not like alabaster columns. *Viva la difference!*" (59).

<sup>30</sup>"What does it mean to 'become one flesh?' First, and most obviously, becoming one flesh speaks of the marriage act—the joining together of man and wife in sexual union. Since Paul uses this phrase when speaking of illicit relations with a prostitute, we know that physical oneness occurs through the mere sexual act itself, as in 1 Corinthians 6:16..." (Elyse Fitzpatrick, *Helper By Design: God's Perfect Plan for Women in Marriage* [Chicago: Moody, 2003] 93).

relationship of Christ and His church (Eph 5:29-32).

Because of this incredible bond and the picture it depicts, it is no surprise that same-sex marriage is at the forefront of the attack against marriage. Same-sex marriage simply cannot picture the biblical truths that Scripture vividly paints for marriage. For a couple of reasons, homosexual partnerships are incapable of representing this truth. First, a partnership between two men or two women cannot replicate the essence of marriage in the Scriptures, which is always between a man and a woman. Secondly, homosexuality can never illustrate the spiritual union between Christ and His Bride, the church. Christ is not engaged to be married to Christ; the church is not awaiting marriage to itself. The analogy is absolutely devoid of any meaning if homosexuality is brought into the equation.

**5. Biblical Marriage from the Role/Relationship Perspective.** When God made man and woman, he gave them different roles. Those roles, so specifically set forth in Ephesians 5, 1 Timothy 3, and Titus 1–2, set forth the divine parameters and intentions of God’s design for marriage. Furthermore, in every marital relationship, Scripture gives specific, unique roles and responsibilities to each gender; each has specific responsibilities to bring to the relationship. God has made each gender to complement the other.

Remarkably, these roles are abundantly evidenced in same-sex relationships. One takes the more dominant role of the male and one takes the role of the female. That, of course, forces one of the partners to violate his or her God-ordained role.<sup>31</sup> In a gay relationship, one of the two partners must play the submissive role, a role not intended for him by God. In a lesbian relationship, one of the two women must take the more dominant leadership role, a role not intended for her by God. From the role/relationship perspective, homosexual partnerships violate God-intended design.

## **B. The Levitical Account**

Archaeological documents from the ancient Near East have confirmed that homosexuality was practiced from earliest times. More often than not, this was done as a part of some cultic worship. Evidence also indicates that it was practiced in Canaan during the patriarchal times (Gen 19:5)<sup>32</sup> and in the period of the Judges (Judg 19:22-25).<sup>33</sup> However, the biblical text is explicit that such was not to be so with those who worshipped Yahweh. The Mosaic Law clearly prohibits homosexual-

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<sup>31</sup>Of course, this is of no concern for same-sex relationships, since their pursuit embraces independence rather than interdependence.

<sup>32</sup>Some have suggested that a lack of hospitality was the sin of Sodom. However, Jude 7 makes it unmistakably clear that they “indulged in gross immorality and went after strange flesh,” rendering that interpretation false.

<sup>33</sup>Other references to homosexuality in the OT include Deut 23:18 where “dogs” almost certainly have reference to homosexuals. Coupled with the mention of prostitution in the same verse, the reference is most likely to male temple prostitutes (cf. also Rev 22:15).

ity. Lev 18:22 states, “You shall not lie with a male as one lies with a female; it is an abomination.” The prescribed punishment for such actions was capital—“they shall surely be put to death” (Lev 20:13). In fact, the practice of homosexuality was so abhorrent that even cross-dressing was prohibited (Deut 22:5).

### **C. The Pauline Account (Rom 1:20)**

In the Pauline account of Romans 1, little doubt exists as to God’s perspective on homosexuality. No biblical text speaks more explicitly and unequivocally than this one. But it also speaks of marriage. It clearly infers that any kind of same-sex relationship is sinful. Instead of the blessings of a heterosexual, monogamous marriage detailed elsewhere in Scripture, here there is nothing but a degenerative description of divine judgment and woe on homosexual practice. Whether gay or lesbian, both are subject to the outpouring of divine wrath and abandonment.

Same-sex marriage goes contrary to the natural order. God’s design for marriage does not work within the rubric of homosexuality. It simply can’t!

### **Conclusion**

The Scriptures establish clearly God’s intention for marriage. The biblical picture of marriage, including both its foundation and superstructure, is comprised of many different and distinct elements—the reproductive perspective, the one-woman, one-man perspective, the complementary perspective, the analogical perspective, and the role/relationship perspective. In each case, however, it is clear that homosexual partnerships are incapable of fulfilling these divinely-ordained purposes for marriage.

One might take exception to this statement, claiming that a same-sex relationship can provide sexual pleasure. After all, isn’t sexual pleasure one of God’s designs for marriage? There is no doubt that Scripture does speak of such pleasure in the marriage relationship. However, whenever it does, it is first of all always between a married man and his wife (e.g., Prov 5:15-19). Furthermore, the idea of sexual pleasure is not expressed in Scripture as a stand-alone purpose. Thus, while it is true that a homosexual partnership may be able to provide some level of pleasure, the claim overlooks the fact that when Scripture does describe sexual pleasure in marriage, it depicts it as a by-product of marital, heterosexual union. The Bible always speaks of it as a pleasure that is enjoyed within the context of fulfilling the biblically-delineated purposes for marriage. Only within God’s design for marriage can sexual pleasure be good, as Thomas Schmidt notes,

Homosexual practice lifts sexuality out of the context of time and place and constitutes a living declaration that another *expression* of sexuality is good.... There is more to sexuality than “what’s in it for me” or “what’s in it for the two of us.” We must also consider “what’s in it for everyone.” Homosexual practice constitutes a denial in practice of the good instituted by God from the beginning. That is not to say that the

homosexual consciously intends to deny the good, but that the result is a declaration in practice that something else is good.

On what basis is homosexual practice good? The most sophisticated rationale written to date maintains that in the last analysis, an individual discovers that it simply feels good. This will not do. It is unaccountable to the implications of creation for the body and for the partner....<sup>34</sup>

God designed the family to be a man and woman who are then capable of producing a child. It is in the DNA; it is the genetic structure of civilization. If you don't have that, you don't have civilization. Same-sex marriage is a strike at the very core of the existence of civilization. It is in the fabric of human thinking to understand that a man and a woman make a marriage and a family.<sup>35</sup>

Without that divinely ordained structure of civilization, society can only spiral downward and eventually plunge into a morass of moral debauchery. Erwin Lutzer queries with alarm:

If marriage is no longer the union of one man and one woman but rather any two persons who want to cohabit, then who is to say that it must be limited to two people? Why not a trio of three men or women? And why not one man with two wives or ten? After all, we must extend "equal rights" to all individuals to live according to any arrangement they wish. The end result is the destruction of marriage as we know it....<sup>36</sup>

Once there is a crack in the mortar or a chink in the armor of marriage—marriage as God designed it, as the Scriptures describe it, and as every civilization has known it—another step toward the eventual destruction of society will ensue.<sup>37</sup> It is truly the destruction not only of marriage but of civilization!

The apostle Paul is adamant about the sanctity of marriage. Any sexual act, including fornication, adultery, and effeminacy (cf. 1 Cor 6:9), is an affront to and violation of marriage. It is not just homosexuality; all deviations are sin!

Scripture never lends its approval to any kind of sexual partnerships outside the marital, monogamous, one-woman, one-man union. Every other form of sexual encounter, including looking at pornography on television, the Internet, or in

<sup>34</sup>Schmidt, *Straight & Narrow?* 48.

<sup>35</sup>John MacArthur, "Larry King Live telecast," CNN, Feb 24, 2004.

<sup>36</sup>Erwin W. Lutzer, *The Truth About Same-Sex Marriage* 27-28.

<sup>37</sup>This reality is corroborated in places such as Scandinavia. Stanley Kurtz, research fellow at the Hoover Institute, notes, "In socially liberal districts of Norway, where the idea of same-sex registered partnerships is widely accepted, marriage itself has almost entirely disappeared" (Stanley Kurtz, "Death of Marriage in Scandinavia," *Boston Globe*, March 10, 2004; quoted in Kennedy & Newcombe, *What's Wrong with Same-Sex Marriage?* [Wheaton, Ill.: Crossway, 2004] 60). In an editorial of *The Wall Street Journal* (February 5, 2004), then-governor of Massachusetts Mitt Romney wrote, "That benefits are given to married couples and not to singles or gay couples has nothing to do with discrimination; it has everything to do with building a stable new generation and nation" (quoted in Kennedy & Newcombe, *What's Wrong with Same-Sex Marriage?* 64).

magazines, is illicit and sinful in God's eyes. The connection between Paul's condemnation of homosexuality in Romans 1 and the opening verses of Romans 2 must not be overlooked. The chapter break is unfortunate, for the two are vitally intertwined. Commenting on this vital connection, one writer insightfully remarks,

This shoe fits every heterosexual who reacts with disgust at a broadcast of a gay rights demonstration and then turns the channel to stare uncritically at adultery in a drama, trivialization of sex in a sitcom, fornication in a music video, and virtual prostitution in advertisements.... More to the point, the power of the gospel is not about looking at sexual sin on a television screen but about looking at sexual sin in the mirror.<sup>38</sup>

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<sup>38</sup>Schmidt, *Straight & Narrow?* 54-55.