

# Does the Bible Encourage Bigotry?

by Edward O. Bragwell, Sr.

In the current furor over "gay rights," there seems to be a concerted effort to brand anyone opposed to homosexual behavior as bigots still living in the Dark Ages. We are constantly bombarded with calls to wipe out bigotry and to be more tolerant of people different from us, regardless of the source or nature of that difference.

It is becoming ever more politically expedient to cater to the "gay rights" cause. Our new president-elect promises swift action to overturn the ban on homosexuals in the military. This will force all military personnel to consider all the gays to be just one of the guys. To do otherwise will be to condone bigotry.

Efforts are also underway to ban discrimination against homosexuals in housing, jobs, and other areas. The goal is to force the American public to grant to "gays" all the rights and protection that are rightfully granted to racial and ethnic minorities. The propaganda mills and the liberal news media are working overtime to depict the opposition to this movement as bigotry. Our educational system, in many instances, is conditioning our children to accept anyone regardless of his "race, color, or "sexual preference."

Religious groups are being pressured to get in step with modern society by accepting "gays," not only as members, but into their leadership. Any group who makes any kind of gesture in that direction is generally, and often generously, praised by the news media for being enlightened and progressive. Such efforts are considered as just another step away from the bigotry of the past.

All of this has caused me to ask, sometimes out loud, "Does the Bible condone bigotry? Were some of those we read about in the Bible bigots? Is God a bigot?" The answer is "yes" -- if opposition to "gays" and their perverse lifestyle makes one a bigot.

God destroyed Sodom, a city with the dubious distinction of having a sin named for it. The nature of her prevailing sin is learned from reading Genesis 19. On the eve of her destruction, two angels in the form of men were guests in the home of Lot, Abraham's nephew. That night, the Bible says, "The men of Sodom, both old and young, all the people from every quarter, surrounded the house. And they called to Lot and said to him, 'Where are the men who came to you tonight? Bring them out to us that we may know them carnally'" (vv. 4-5). To protect his guests, Lot offered the men what he considered a lesser evil -- his two virgin daughters. This did not appease this "gay" mob. In verse 9, they just told Lot to "stand back!" and accused him of keeping on acting as a judge (v. 9). I guess they thought he was some kind of bigot. But God made good his threat to destroy the city. It went up in smoke. Was God a bigot?

In giving the law of Moses, God included a ban on homosexual conduct. He said, "If a

man lies with a male as he lies with a woman, both of them have committed an abomination. They shall surely be put to death. Their blood shall be upon them" (Lev. 20:13). Was God a bigot in commanding such? Was Moses a bigot for passing it on to Israel?

Paul wrote, "For this reason God gave them up to vile passions. For even their women exchanged the natural use for what is against nature. Likewise also the men, leaving the natural use of the woman, burned in their lust for one another, men with men committing what is shameful, and receiving in themselves the penalty of their error which was due. . . . Who, knowing the righteous judgments of God, that those who practice such things are worthy of death, not only do the same but also approve of those who practice them" (Rom. 1:26,27,32).

Again he wrote, "Do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived. Neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor homosexuals, nor sodomites, nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners will inherit the kingdom of God" (1 Cor. 6:9).

Was Paul a bigot? Paul said, "These things we (Paul and other inspired men -- eob) also speak, not in words which man's wisdom teaches, but which the Holy Spirit teaches" (1 Cor. 2:12,13). He also said that the things that he wrote were the commandments of the Lord (1 Cor. 14:37).

Are the biblical writers, the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit to be charged with bigotry? Certainly not! Neither should anyone who follows their teaching on the moral issue of homosexuality.

Does God love the "gay" person? Of course, He does. He also loves the drunkard, the thief, the murderer and the heterosexual fornicator. Jesus died for them and all other sinners. If they will meet the Lord's conditions of salvation they can be washed from their sins in the blood of Christ. When they do this, their guilt is removed. They are no longer unrighteous, but made righteous by the mercy of God. They are washed, sanctified and justified "in the name of the Lord Jesus and by the Spirit of our God" (1 Cor. 6:9-11). One of the conditions for all of this is repentance. God does not accept them "just as they are" without any change of heart and behavior. Until people turn from their ungodly conduct, they have no right to expect the same "rights" as those who do not practice such sins against God and society.

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