

Christianity and Homosexuality Reconciled! Audio Series

PART FOUR

Hello, this is Dr. Joseph Adam Pearson, International President and Chief Executive Officer of Christ Evangelical Bible Institute. Welcome to Part Four 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.

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. In Part Three of this audio series, I discussed the story of Sodom and how it relates, or doesn't relate, to homosexuality.

Today, in Part Four of this audio series, I will be discussing the worship of fertility cult gods and goddesses and how biblical references to them, and worship practices associated with them, have been confused with the homosexual orientation as understood today.

Though there were other pagan deities worshipped during both Old and New Testament Bible times, the major fertility deities included the gods Molech and Baal and the goddess Ashtoreth. Although these were mentioned in Part Three of this audio series, I will begin Part Four by discussing them again:

The first fertility cult god is known as *Molech*. In Old Testament times, Molech was a male fertility god to whom devotees sacrificed the lives of their "seed," or children, by ritualistic burning. (See Leviticus 18:21 and 20:2-5.) The word Molech is derived from the Hebrew word Melek מֶלֶךְ, which means "king" in Hebrew. Leviticus 20:1-5 (NIV) state:

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 off from their people both him and all who follow him in prostituting themselves to Molech.

The second fertility cult god is known as *Baal*. Often, the Baal-type god was specific for different city-states that existed within the Canaanite region. At times, the word Baal בַּעַל was used as an umbrella term for all “Baalim” (the Hebrew “-im” ending here denoting the masculine plural) or “Baal gods” of the 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. For example, the name Baal is incorporated into the name of Jezebel, who was a devotee, or priestess, of Baal, and into the name of her father, Ethbaal. It is recorded in 1 Kings 16:29-33 (NIV):

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 also 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.

It was not by accident that Jesus Christ referred to the Devil as “Beelzebub,” (as recorded in Matthew 12:26-27) which is derived from “Baal-Zebub, the god of Ekron,” (from 2 Kings 1:2), whose literal meaning is “lord of the flies,” a most appropriate name for Satan.

Though Baal represents an evil thing, the word Baal בַּעַל itself is not evil; it simply means “lord” or “master” in Hebrew.

The third fertility cult god (or, in this case, goddess) is known as *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 Ashtaroth **עֲשְׁתָרוֹת** looks similar to Ashtoreth **עֲשְׁתָרֶת**, 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.” Ashtoreth, Ishtar, Ashtar, or Astarte (all one in the same) represent the pagan goddess often referred to by the appellation “Queen of Heaven,” as recorded in the Book of the Prophet Jeremiah (see 7:18; 44:17-19; and 44:25). The “Asherah” **אֲשֵׁרָה** or “Asherah pole,” mentioned in 1 Kings 16:33, was a huge pole, totem, or stone erected in honor of one of the manifestations of Ashtoreth and thought to be in the form of a phallus or penis.¹

It is recorded in 2 Kings 23:13-14 (NIV):

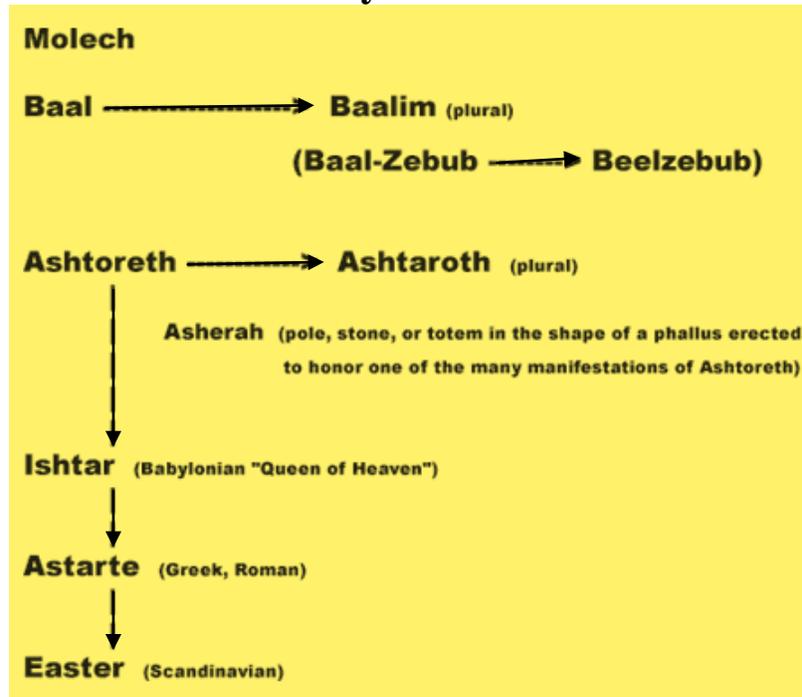
The king [Josiah] also desecrated the high places that were east of Jerusalem on the south of the Hill of Corruption — the ones Solomon king of Israel had built for Ashtoreth, the vile goddess of the Sidonians ... Josiah smashed the sacred stones and cut down the Asherah poles and covered the sites with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

Judges 10:6 (KJV) records:

And the children of Israel did evil again in the sight of the LORD, and served Baalim, and Ashtaroth.

¹ Nicoll, Reverend W. Robertson (editor). *The Expositor’s Bible*, Volume 6, Funk and Wagnalls, New York, 1900, pages 304, 389.

Common Fertility Gods and Goddesses



Figure

The pagan deities worshipped in Canaanite times were attributed special powers of fertility. In order to curry their favor and receive blessings of abundance upon agricultural crops, domesticated livestock and human offspring, the ways that they were served by their acolytes included orgies and partnered sexual activities as forms of sacrifice and worship to each deity. (As a footnote here, the word acolyte means “follower, worshiper or attendant.”)

It sounds absurd from the standpoint of contemporary society, in which few people would confuse sexual activity with worship (with the exception, perhaps today, of some animists and Satanists); but, the idea here is that the priests and priestesses who existed then were functionaries of these fertility cults. (And “fertility” 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 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. And, as we shall see a little bit later, even in the Jerusalem Temple.

There were many different cult priests and priestesses, who functioned as temple prostitutes throughout antiquity in lands that bordered the Mediterranean Sea, including Canaan, Egypt, Greece and Rome as well as their conquered territories.

Idolatry is what the children of Israel were faced with when they entered into the Promised Land (that is, “the land of Canaan”). One of the reasons that the LORD God Almighty had told them to slay everyone, and get rid of all of the people who were occupying the land of Canaan, was to prevent the children of Israel from gradually being influenced by idolatrous worship practices and, subsequently, ending up estranged from the LORD God Almighty by adopting such disgustingly profane behaviors.

The following directives were given by the LORD God Almighty to the migrating children of Israel. Recorded in Deuteronomy (7:16 NIV), it reads:

You must destroy all the people the LORD your God gives over to you. Do not look on them with pity and do not serve their gods, for that will be a snare to you.

Deuteronomy 7:25-26 (NIV) record:

The images of their gods you are to burn in the fire. Do not covet the silver and gold on them, and do not take it for yourselves, or you will be ensnared by it, they are **to-ev-ot תּוֹעֵבָה** detestable [“abominable” or “idolatrous”] to the LORD your God. Do not bring a **to-ev-ah תּוֹעֵבָה** detestable thing [an “abomination” or an “idol”] into your house or you, like it, will be set apart for destruction. Utterly abhor and detest it, for it is set apart for destruction. [brackets and underlining mine]

Joshua 23:12-13 (NIV) record:

But if you turn away and ally yourselves with the survivors of these [pagan] nations that remain among you and if you intermarry with them and associate with them, then you

may be sure that the LORD your God will no longer drive out these nations before you. Instead, they will become snares and traps for you, whips on your backs and thorns in your eyes, until you perish from this good land, which the LORD your God has given you. [brackets mine]

Unfortunately, in the end, “the Israelites lived among the Canaanites, Hittites, Amorites, Perizzites, Hivites and Jebusites [the very pagan peoples they were commanded to slay]. They took their daughters in marriage and gave their own daughters to their sons, and served their [fertility] gods.” [brackets mine] (Judges 3:5-7 NIV)

Even King Solomon, son of King David, fell to such idolatrous worship. It is recorded in :

King Solomon, however, loved many foreign women besides Pharaoh’s daughter — Moabites, Ammonites, Edomites, Sidonians, and Hittites. They were from nations about which the LORD had told the Israelites, “You must not intermarry with them, because they will surely turn your hearts after their gods.” Nevertheless, Solomon held fast to them in love. He had seven hundred wives of royal birth and three hundred concubines, and his wives led him astray. As Solomon grew old, his wives turned his heart after other gods, and his heart was not fully devoted to the LORD his God, as the heart of King David his father had been. He followed Ashtoreth, the goddess of the Sidonians, and Molech, the detestable god of the Ammonites. So Solomon did evil in the eyes of the LORD; he did not follow the LORD completely, as David his father had done. On a hill east of Jerusalem, Solomon built a high place for Chemosh [also referred to as Asthor-Chemosh], the detestable god of Moab, and for Molech, the detestable god of the Ammonites.

Yes, the hearts of the children of Israel were constantly turned in the direction of idolatrous worship practices. They were regularly pulled in

the direction of offering sexual “sacrifices” to fertility gods and goddess and other pagan deities.

[The Role of Temple Cult Prostitution]

This historical background concerning Canaanite pagan deities is of particular significance relative to the word sodomite. In the King James Version of the Bible, first published in 1611, the word sodomite exists in its singular form only once, and that is in Deuteronomy 23:17; its plural form, sodomites, is found in four additional references, including 1 Kings 14:24, 1 Kings 15:12 and 1 Kings 22:46 as well as 2 Kings 23:7:

There shall be no whore of the daughters of Israel, nor a sodomite of the sons of Israel.

Deuteronomy 23:17 KJV

And there were also sodomites in the land; and they did according to all the abominations of the nations which the LORD cast out before the children of Israel.

1 Kings 14:24 KJV

And he took away the sodomites out of the land, and removed all of the idols that his fathers had made.

1 Kings 15:12 KJV

And the remnant of the sodomites, which remained in the days of his father Asa, he took out of the land.

1 Kings 22:46 KJV

And he [King Josiah] brake down the houses of the sodomites, that were by the house of the LORD, where the women wove hangings for the grove [translated here from the Hebrew “Asherah”]. [brackets mine]

2 Kings 23:7 KJV

The five times that the singular and plural forms of the word sodomite are used are particularly significant, because most people (even most

people who are not Christian) view the words homosexual and sodomite as synonyms — which is to say, that they are interchangeable.

In other words, even when students of the Bible read the words sodomite and sodomites, they automatically assume the meaning of the words to be “homosexual” and “homosexuals.” But, relative to etymology (or, word origin), sodomite and homosexual are *not* interchangeable. In other words, relative to the Hebrew derivation from which sodomite and sodomites have been translated, a sodomite is *not* a homosexual.

If we go back to the original Hebrew, we find that the word sodomite has been translated from the Hebrew word qadesh קִדְּשׁ (qadesh could also be pronounced as “kaw-dash” or “kaw-dash-e”). There are three different characters relative to this Hebrew word... three different characters or alphabet letters. In Hebrew, one reads from right to left, so the first character (called “kof”) on the right roughly represents the “q,” “k,” or “g” sound of the English alphabet, the second character (called “dalet”) represents the “d” sound, and the third character (called “shin”) represents the “sh” sound (hence, “qadesh” or “kawdeshe” or “gadeshe”). The plural of the masculine form (“qadesh”) is “qadeshim” קִדְּשִׁים, which, of course, refers to more than one “sodomite.” Female counterparts are “qadeshah” קִדְּשָׁה and “qadashoth,” the “-oth” ending here indicating the feminine plural form (just as “Ashtaroth” (or, “Ashterot”) is the plural form of “Ashtoreth.”)

“There shall be no **qadeshah** קִדְּשָׁה [female temple cult prostitute] of the daughters of Israel, neither shall there be a **qadesh** קִדְּשׁ [male temple cult prostitute] of the sons of Israel.” [brackets mine]

Deuteronomy 23:17

Now, the word qadesh itself is not an evil word — just like the Hebrew word Baal is not an “evil” word — but the word qadesh represents an evil thing. Actually, in contexts different from that currently considered, the word qadesh simply means “sacred,” “set apart,” “consecrated,” or “holy.” However, the true Hebrew meaning of “sodomite” in these particular literary contexts (that is, the indicated

five verses in which sodomite/sodomites is found) refers to a male consecrated to idolatrous worship through sacrificial prostitution. In Strong's Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible, we find that “qadesh” or “kawdashe” has a significantly different meaning from “homosexual.” Basically, what the word means in this context is “a quasi-sacred person — that is, technically, a male devotee by prostitution to licentious idolatry.”² In this case, the male devotee was devoted in idolatrous worship to one of the Canaanite fertility deities, such as Molech, Baal, or Ashtoreth.

So, the word sodomite is an unfortunate word choice representing qadesh in the King James Version of the Bible for two reasons: 1) sodomite does not represent “someone from Sodom;” and, 2) the word sodomite is erroneously associated with modern-day homosexuals. Actually, by implication and through extension, it could mean “someone from Sodom” from the standpoint of licentious idolatry and the “priestly” male temple cult prostitutes, who served pagan deities, and who certainly would have been found in the Canaanite cities of Sodom and Gomorrah. But, that is not what the overwhelming majority of people think when they hear or read the word sodomite; they do not understand that the original Hebrew term means “male temple cult prostitute” and not “homosexual.”

Most Bible scholars are knowledgeable of what qadesh means. Yet, despite its true meaning, we find that in all five citations in the King James Version of the Bible, the translated form is “sodomite” or “sodomites” rather than “male temple cult prostitute” or “male temple cult prostitutes.” Some renderings of qadesh or qadeshim (the plural form) in other translations and paraphrases of the Bible are even worse!

In the Modern Language Version of the Bible, we find that qadesh in Deuteronomy 23:17 is translated as “temple prostitute,” which is certainly more accurate than “sodomite;” but, then, the plural form for the other four verses in the Modern Language Version is translated only as “male prostitutes.” This is unfortunate, since the phraseology “male prostitutes” is just not accurate enough. To be sure, there are male

² Strong, James. “Hebrew and Chaldee Dictionary of the Bible” in Strong's Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible. World Bible Publishers, 1973, page 135. [The original was published in 1890.]

prostitutes who exist in every major city in the United States, but that does not mean that they are idolaters, or that they are involved in temple cult prostitution. Though “male prostitutes” is closer to the true meaning than “sodomites,” it still does not accurately represent the meaning intended in the original Hebrew.

Although one might expect the Hebrew translation of the Bible to be executed more precisely by the Jewish Publication Society, the plural word qadeshim is also translated in the Hebrew-English Tanakh as “male prostitutes” rather than the more accurate “male temple cult prostitutes.” (As a footnote here, the Hebrew Tanakh is what Christians call the Old Testament.)

If we consider the New International Version of the Bible, “shrine prostitute” is used in place of “sodomite” and, in the majority of the verses that use the plural form, “male shrine prostitutes” is used in place of “sodomites.” Although this rendering is accurate, the preferred translation relative to clarity concerning this particular issue (that is, the issue of temple cult prostitution versus homosexuality) happens to be in the Revised Standard Version of the Bible. In the Revised Standard Version of the Bible, the majority of the references is to “male cult prostitutes.”

Unfortunately, the New King James Version of the Bible does not do a very good job. It translates “qadesh/qadeshim” as “perverted person/perverted persons.” So, if readers are already biased (that is, believing homosexuals to be perverted versions of God’s standard), there would be no reason for them to question the accuracy of the New King James Version relative to this particular rendering in the New King James Version of the Bible.

The absolutely worst rendering is in the Living Bible, which is very popular. Many of you may know, or recall, that the Living Bible is not a word-for-word translation of the Bible but, rather, a paraphrase. It is an attempt to make concepts more understandable in terms of modern common language. The writers took a fair measure of liberty to more easily engage the readers of the Bible. For example, the phrase in 1 Samuel 25:22 that reads “... pisseth against the wall” in the King James Version is rendered “... went to the bathroom” in the Living Bible.

Obviously “bathrooms” as we know them today did not exist back then, but that is the rendering used by the paraphrasers, since most people today use the expressions “go to the bathroom” and “*went* to the bathroom” to represent elimination of waste products.

Let us compare Deuteronomy 23:17-18 in the Revised Standard Version with that in the Living Bible:

There shall be no cult prostitute of the daughters of Israel, neither shall there be a cult prostitute of the sons of Israel. You shall not bring the hire of a harlot, nor the wages of a dog, into the house of the LORD your God in payment for any vow; for both of these are an abomination to the LORD your God.

Deuteronomy 23:17-18 RS

No prostitutes are permitted in Israel, either men or women; you must not bring the earnings of a prostitute or a homosexual, for both are detestable to the LORD your God.

Deuteronomy 23:17-18 LB

The writers of the Living Bible have promoted the error that all male homosexuals are temple cult prostitutes! How ridiculous is that! It would be just as inaccurate for us to conclude that all female heterosexuals are prostitutes, because we saw one female heterosexual prostitute on a street corner. How unfair would that be?

Now, let us compare 1 Kings 14:24 in the Revised Standard Version with that in the Living Bible:

And there were also male cult prostitutes in the land. They did according to the abominations of the nations which the LORD drove out before the people of Israel.

1 Kings 14:24 RS

There was homosexuality throughout the land, and the people of Judah became as depraved as the heathen nations

which the LORD drove out to make room for His people.

1 Kings 14:24 LB

If you are a typical heterosexual Christian — or homosexual Christian, for that matter — and, if you are studying the Bible, there would be no reason for you to scrutinize every single word and wonder, “Did the translators, writers or paraphrasers get this particular translation, this particular word or paraphrase right?” Or, if you are not doing analytical Bible study, and you come across the rendering in the Living Bible that states, “There was homosexuality throughout the land,” (as recorded in 1 Kings 14:24) you are not going to pause and say, “*Maybe* this is inaccurate. *Maybe* there really *wasn't* homosexuality in the land.” To be sure, the average reader generally gives credence to what he or she is reading, especially when it is in the Bible! This misunderstanding is especially reinforced if you regularly listen to a pastor or televangelist who harps on how immoral and wrong homosexuality is. All of this just ends up further supporting the average reader’s idea that the Bible *must* be speaking about *those* perverted people known as homosexuals and that “abominations” *must* be referring to the filthy sexual acts in which *these people* engage.

When many heterosexuals imagine intimate acts between two homosexuals, they think of the intimacies as the “detestable practices,” “abhorrences,” or “abominations,” which words are imprecisely rendered in various Bible translations from “to-ev-ot” תועבת (the plural of “to-ev-ah” תועבה).

Consider 1 Kings 14:24:

And there were also male temple cult prostitutes in the land. They did according to the “to-ev-ot” תועבת [the idolatries] of the nations which the LORD drove out before the people of Israel.

Translating “to-ev-ot” תועבת as “detestable acts,” “abhorrences,” or “abominations” is just not good enough. “To-ev-ot” תועבת are actually “idolatrous practices.” They are “idolatrous customs.” They include

“idolatrous activities” and “idolatrous things.” Thus, 1 Kings 14:24 would be more accurately rendered as:

And there were also male temple cult prostitutes in the land. They did according to the idolatrous customs of the nations which the LORD drove out before the people of Israel.

Heterosexual imaginings of intimacies between homosexuals provide no clue about the companionship and sharing that might exist between two people of the same sex in a committed, monogamous relationship. To be sure, there is a reason why intimate acts are called “intimate.” They are supposed to remain private. Perhaps it should be disgusting for any of us to imagine sexual acts between any other people, because it is prurient (that is, of unhealthy interest) as well as not our business. In the final analysis, thinking about sexual intimacies between two people other than yourself and your committed partner should be just as disgusting to you as thinking about sex between your parents.

Perhaps the most damning of all idolatrous practices adopted by the children of Israel relative to male temple cult prostitution is that indicated in 2 Kings 23:7. I will read five different versions from 2 Kings 23:7:

[King Josiah] tore down the houses of the male prostitutes [“male prostitutes” translated from the Hebrew qadeshim קְדָשִׁים] in the area of the house of the LORD, where the women wove robes for the shame image. [“Shame image” translated from the Hebrew word Asherah.]

2 Kings 23:7 ML

[King Josiah] also tore down the quarters of the male shrine prostitutes [“male shrine prostitutes” translated from the Hebrew qadeshim קְדָשִׁים] which were in the temple of the LORD and where women did weaving for the Asherah [remember, again, an Asherah is a stone, pole or totem crafted in the shape of a penis or phallus].

2 Kings 23:7 NIV

[King Josiah] broke down the houses of the male cult prostitutes [“male cult prostitutes” translated from the Hebrew qadeshim קְדָשִׁים] which were in the house of the LORD, where the women wove hangings for the Asherah.

2 Kings 23:7 RS

[King Josiah] tore down the ritual booths of the perverted persons [“perverted persons” translated from the Hebrew qadeshim קְדָשִׁים] that were in the house of the LORD, where the women wove hangings for the wooden image.

2 Kings 23:7 NKJV

[King Josiah] also tore down the houses of male prostitution [“male prostitution” translated from the Hebrew qadeshim קְדָשִׁים] around the Temple [meaning, the Jerusalem Temple], where the women wove robes for the Asherah-idol.

2 Kings 23:7 LB

It is especially clear in the Revised Standard Version that the idol, or Asherah, was “in the house of the LORD” (that is, in the Jerusalem Temple built by King Solomon for Yahweh). The idolatrous image was indeed detestable, since it was a pole, stone, or totem carved in the shape of a giant phallus (or, penis). It was used to honor the goddess Ashtoreth (that is why it was called an “Asherah”)! It was this image for which the women wove “hangings” or “robes” (which may have been pulled down to represent the foreskin being pulled back during a penile erection).

Though you may think it absolutely unbelievable that the form of the penis was worshipped, all you have to do is wander past the display cases in most museums that house antiquities, and take a look at the artifacts that have survived from both ancient Greek and Roman societies, and from many earlier cultures and civilizations as well. You will find that, in a majority of these pagan societies, the penis was idolized.

The penis is still idolized and worshipped in many cultures today. As one example, all you need to do is put in the words “Hounen Penis Fertility Festival” (in quotes) into your internet search engine and you will easily find pictures of people worshipping the penis today, even engraving their prayers on the sides of plastic and ceramic penises.

In summary, the pagan deities that were worshipped (including Molech, Baal, and Ashtoreth) had a significant impact not only on the Canaanite people but also on the children of Israel. Though reforms were introduced at various times, they did not seem to do a lot of good relative to keeping the children of Israel from departing often from their worship of Yahweh. However, it should be noted that after exile due to their Babylonian captivity, the remnant of Jews who returned to the Promised Land never again returned to idolatry. The Book of Maccabees relates how some Jews even preferred martyrdom rather than eating ceremonially unclean food (that is, food from animals sacrificed to idols).

Lest you think that food sacrificed to idols is just an activity from the ancient past, when I was in Brazil doing my seminar and workshop entitled, “Christianity and Homosexuality Reconciled,” I found many, many street vendors on street corners as well as throughout the streets, who belonged to the C ,selling meat that had been sacrificed to pagan gods and goddesses This happens even today in many regions of the world.

Going back to the Jews, it is their renewed commitment to Yahweh and resolve to keep away from idolatry that helps us to understand the psychological profile of 1st century Jews as well as the historical contexts for the Apostle Paul’s horror and anger concerning sexual idolatry in the worship of fertility gods and goddesses. The Apostle Paul witnessed during his own lifetime and reacted to in his various epistles.

I would now like to emphasize that, when spoken of in a sexual context:

“Dogs” are Male Cult Prostitutes, Not Homosexuals

In 1990, David H. Stern, who is a Messianic Jew, translated the New Testament from the original Greek in an attempt to bring out its Jewishness linguistically, culturally, religiously and theologically. For the most part, he did an excellent job in producing a work most valuable for students of the New Testament who need to better recognize its Jewish roots. I write, “for the most part,” because of his mistranslation of the word dogs from the following verse:

Outside are the dogs: those who practice magic arts, the sexually immoral, the murderers, the idolaters and everyone who loves and practices falsehood. [For God, “practicing falsehood” is not just lying but devising a system of worship for anything other than the Lord God Almighty.]

Revelation 22:15 NIV

The original Greek κύνες (“kunes”) in Revelation 22:15 clearly means “hounds” or “dogs,” which word is defined by the activities that follow in the verse; however, Stern renders it as follows:

Outside are the homosexuals, those who misuse drugs in connection with the occult, the sexually immoral, murderers, idol worshipers, and everyone who loves and practices falsehood.

Revelation 22:15 JNT

To be sure, there is a basis in the Old Testament for connecting “dogs” to sexual acts involving male temple cult prostitutes (but not “homosexuals”) as recorded in Deuteronomy, the fifth book of Moses, we read:

There shall be no cult prostitute [qadeshah] of the daughters of Israel, neither shall there be a cult prostitute [qadesh] of the sons of Israel. You shall not bring the hire of a harlot [zonah] or the wages of a dog [or “kelev” כֶּלֶב] into the house of the LORD your God in payment for any vow; for both of these [practices] are an abomination

[they are “**to-ev-ot**” תּוֹעֵבֹת or “**to-ev-at**” תּוֹעֵבָה, which means “of an idolatrous nature”] unto the LORD your God.
[brackets and underlining mine]

Deuteronomy 23:17-18 RS

Clearly, both of the previously-quoted verses are referring to male temple cult prostitution, not homosexuality. The interchangeability of male temple cult prostitutes and “dogs” has been noted by David F. Greenberg in his book, entitled The Construction of Homosexuality:

The words *zonah* and *qadeshah* were sometimes used interchangeably, as in the story of Judah and Tamar [Genesis 38:15 & 24]. The parallel construction in Deuteronomy [23:18-19] identifies *qadesh* and *kelev* as a male counterpart.³

Further, Greenberg states:

A Phoenician inscription on Cyprus dating from the fourth century B.C., referring to a category of temple personnel who played a role in the sacred service of Astarte [remember that is Ashtoreth of the Old Testament], identifies the *kelev* [or, “dog”] as a religious functionary.⁴

Revelation 22:15 in toto describes pseudo-sacred cultic behaviors and delineates who is excluded from the heavenly city known as New Jerusalem. That “dogs” are excluded from this holy city is not referring to either canines or homosexuals but to male temple cult prostitutes and all who prostitute themselves by serving false gods. (Remember, God hates idolatry. And, idolatry is the practice of falsehood.)

³ Greenberg, David F. The Construction of Homosexuality. University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 1988, page 965. [brackets mine]

⁴ Ibid., page 965. [first set of brackets mine]

Interestingly, when Jesus spoke of “dogs,” in Matthew 15:26, he was referring to the Gentiles of his day, most of whom were idolaters and pagans. He was not referring to homosexuals.

It is important to note that Stern’s inaccurate translation of the Greek word for dogs as “homosexuals” illustrates that cultural and personal biases play an important role when even well-intentioned and smart people translate Scripture from its original languages. It is difficult for all of us to erase the indelible “tapes” that are playing in our minds because of what we have been taught to think by highly-respected role models (*for example*, parents, teachers, professors, pastors and rabbis — all people to be respected [who] have gotten this issue wrong and have taught us incorrectly). Many, most or all of them (depending on your life experience) have incorrectly taught us that homosexuals are outside of the Kingdom of God. Don’t believe that any longer!

[“Sodomites” in the New Testament]

In the King James Version of the Bible, the word sodomite is not used in the New Testament. In the New King James Version, however, it is used to translate the Greek word ἀρσενικοῖται (arsenokoitai) regarding those who will not inherit the kingdom of God. 1 Corinthians 6:9-10 state in the New King James Version:

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.

Upon first glance, it would appear that there is some redundancy in the previously-quoted passage (that is, the list which includes “homosexuals” and “sodomites”). The translations of these two words here are somewhat puzzling, especially when homosexuals and sodomites are supposed to be one and the same! Actually, there is no redundancy in the Greek, just inconsistency and inaccuracy in the English translations of the two words malakoi (translated in the NKJV

as “homosexuals”) and arsenokoitai (translated in the NKJV as “sodomites”).

We find that these two important Greek words, used in 1 Corinthians 6:9, are often inaccurately rendered by Bible translators, who really do not know exactly what to do with them. This inability to accurately translate them is underscored by the variety of ways in which each word has been rendered (or even avoided) in various translations, versions and paraphrases of the Bible.

Again, the two Greek words in question are malakoi and arsenokoitai.

Let us consider the first word:

Malakoi

In the New International Version of the Bible, the Greek word malakoi **μαλακοὶ** is interpreted as “male prostitutes.” In the Modern Language Version, both malakoi and arsenokoitai are rendered together as “partakers in homosexuality.” The Revised Standard translates malakoi as “sexual perverts,” and the Living Bible, as you might guess, combines both malakoi and arsenokoitai in the appellation “homosexuals.”

In the King James Version of the Bible, malakoi is translated as “effeminate.” As we relate “effeminate” to modern English, it is extremely easy for many people (especially those who think that the average profile for homosexual males includes so-called feminine mannerisms) They will assume that the word is referring to gay males. To be sure, this is stereotypic and not representative of all male homosexuals (and certainly not the majority of male homosexuals with whom I have been acquainted over the years). Please do not misinterpret here that I think something is wrong with a male being nurturing and/or even flamboyant. Please do not misinterpret here that I think something is wrong with a male being effusive and/or passionate in displaying emotion. It is perfectly alright for us to exhibit the personalities that God has given us and that have been shaped by nurture as well as nature.

Since the word malakoi — as we relate it to various modern English word forms — has a portion in common with the root of the English word malleable, which refers to something “soft” or “pliable,” some translators would prefer to render the word malakoi as “soft ones” (which, in fact, is its true or literal meaning in classical Greek). However, because the literal meaning of malakoi does not fit exactly within the literary context of 1 Corinthians 6:9, it most likely had another connotation in the colloquial speech of St. Paul’s day. This is especially likely, since the Apostle Paul wrote his epistles in *Koine* (or, common) Greek (that is, street vernacular) rather than classical Greek.

There are those who would argue that malakoi, by extension, might be referring to “lazy people,” “indolent ones,” or “the pampered rich” — which message would not be so far afield from this statement by Christ Jesus:

I tell you the truth, it is hard for a rich man to enter the kingdom of heaven. Again I tell you, it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God.

Matthew 19:23-24 NIV

However, “malakoi” referring to the pampered rich in 1 Corinthians 6:9 is really quite a stretch. Since the word is sandwiched between sexual sins in 1 Corinthians 6:9, malakoi is probably referring to moral weakness or a particular type of immorality.

In The Zondervan Parallel New Testament in Greek and English, the word malakoi has been translated as “voluptuous persons.”⁵ Who are voluptuous persons? Voluptuous persons are those who have a “come-hither” look — which is to say, those who are trying to sell their sexual “wares” as prostitutes or favors in the most provocative of ways. Consequently, some scholars might prefer to translate malakoi as “abusers of themselves as women” (that is, persons deceptively presenting themselves as women although they are not women), which, in a way, would be most revealing. To be sure, such a perspective is in

⁵ The Zondervan Parallel New Testament in Greek and English. Zondervan Bible Publishers, Grand Rapids, 1975, page 495.

agreement with that of Robin Scroggs,⁶ who argues that, by the time of the Apostle Paul, the word malakoi had assumed a pejorative slang meaning in reference to young call boys or youths who actively sought sexual encounters with men for money (older men, that is), something considered quite distasteful in the majority of both Greek and Roman societies. Robin Scroggs interpretation is in agreement with the Catholic Study Bible, which explains malakoi as catamite call boys who dressed in feminine attire to attract their male customers.

Personally, I think that the most substantive clue for the meaning of malakoi can be found in Saint Jerome's Latin Vulgate version of the Bible, which was published in approximately 405 AD. In order to translate the Hebrew Old Testament and Greek New Testament into Latin, Saint Jerome (c. 345 - 420 AD) had to be a scholar of Hebrew, Greek and Latin. What he tried to do was translate the Old Testament Hebrew and the New Testament Greek into an overall Latin version that could be used within the developing Roman Catholic Church. Interestingly, Saint Jerome chose to translate qadeshim in the Old Testament using the Latin word effeminati. Saint Jerome understood that the effeminate (which is the plural form of the word effeminatus) were not people who were just "effeminate" (that is, "sissified" or "mollified"), but people who donned female clothing in order to serve as male transvestite temple cult prostitutes — who were an integral part of cult prostitution in many Canaanite religions as well as many Greek and Roman religions (some of the latter having been derived from the former). In place of the Greek word malakoi, Saint Jerome used a Latin synonym of effeminati (singular effeminatus) — which is to say, molles (singular mollis). Thus, like the "effeminati," the "molles" (in Latin) or "malakoi" (in Greek) are also transvestite male temple cult prostitutes. (This also helps to explain the King James Version scholars' choice of "effeminate" in 1611.) To be sure, malakoi and molles are based on the same base word, the same root word, or the same origin).

Interestingly, the scholars who translated the 1611 version of the King James New Testament often adopted the same Latin-based terminology found in the 1582 Catholic New Testament translation known to Roman Catholics as the Douay-Rheims Bible. Although the King James

⁶ Scroggs, Robin. *The New Testament and Homosexuality*. Augsburg Fortress Publications, 1994.

scholars were expressly forbidden from drawing from the Douay-Rheims Bible, it is clear that they did so in preference over slightly less erudite Bible translations such as the Tyndale Bible, the Coverdale Bible or the Geneva Bible. The Douay-Rheims Bible is a direct translation of St. Jerome’s Latin Vulgate version of the Bible, which was completed by St. Jerome in 405 AD.

1 Corinthians			
Tyndale (1524 AD) 6:9	Coverdale (1535 AD) 6:9	Luther (1545 AD) 6:9	Geneva (1560 AD) 6:9
weaklinges	weaklinges	die Weichlinge	wantons

1 Corinthians		
Latin Vulgate (405 AD) 6:10	Douay-Rheims (1582 AD) 6:10	King James (1611 AD) 6:9
molles (“effeminati” used as translation of <u>gadeshim</u> in 1 King 14:24)	effeminate (“effeminates” used as translation of <u>gadeshim</u> in 1 Kings 14:24)	effeminate (“sodomites” used as translation of <u>gadeshim</u> in 1 Kings 14:24)

In summary, the King James Version’s use of the word “effeminate” is not from the Germanic-based words used in the Tyndale Bible, published in 1524 AD, or the Coverdale Bible, published in 1535 AD. Both of these translate malakoi into the Germanic-based Early Modern English word “weaklinges.” “Weaklinges” is in keeping with Martin Luther’s German translation of malakoi as “the Weichlinge” (that is, the “weaklings” or so-called “sissies”). Instead, the King James Version takes the Latin-based word effeminate from the Douay-Rheims Bible, published in 1582 AD. The Douay-Rheims scholars used the Latin word effeminate, which is derived from the Latin word effeminati, a synonym for the Latin word molles that St. Jerome used. St. Jerome

used the Latin word effeminati to translate the Hebrew gadeshim, or male temple cult prostitutes, into Latin.

All things taken together, the most accurate rendering of the Greek word malakoi is “male transvestite temple cult prostitutes!”

David Greenberg states:

More plausibly, the term in this context [meaning 1 Corinthians 6:9] referred to ... cult prostitutes. Corinth and Ephesus, where Timothy was stationed, were strongholds of the Mother Goddess and had long-established religious prostitution.⁷

Many fertility Mother-Goddess cults existed in ancient Greek and Roman societies. Those attended by transvestite and/or castrated male priests who engaged in same-sex ritualistic practices included cults devoted to Cybele, Aphrodite, Hecate, Artemis, Magna Mater, Ma, Anaitis, and Astarte.⁸ (Again, “Astarte” is essentially the same goddess known as “Ashtoreth” in the Old Testament.) Indeed, these perverted “shriners” (so-called) were very common during the Apostle Paul’s lifetime. In The Life of Constantine, the Church historian Eusebius Pamphile (who lived, roughly, between 260 and 360 AD), who was the Bishop of Caesarea, indicates that the effeminate priests [that is, the “effeminati”] of the goddess Cybele still engaged in temple cult prostitution in his own time.

Let’s now turn to the Greek word . . .

Arsenokoitai

Though malakoi is only used once in the New Testament, arsenokoitai is used twice. In addition to its use in 1 Corinthians 6:9, it is also used in 1 Timothy 1:10, where it, too, is translated as “sodomites” in the New King James Version of the Bible:

⁷ Greenberg, Op cit., page 213. [brackets mine]

⁸ Greenberg, Op cit., page 98.

... the law [meaning the “Levitical Law”] is not made for a righteous person, but for the lawless and insubordinate, for the ungodly and for sinners, for the unholy and profane, for murderers of fathers and murderers of mothers, for manslayers, for fornicators, for sodomites, for kidnappers, for liars, for perjurers, and if there is any other thing that is contrary to sound doctrine. [brackets mine]

1 Timothy 1:9-10 NKJV

Because the Greek word arsenokoitai is not classical Greek (it is not a classical Greek word), it has no clearly translatable modern-day meaning. Anyone who says that they definitely know what malakoi and arsenokoitai mean are being false. They don’t [know]. Either the Apostle Paul coined the word himself or it had already been coined by the society of his day. Simply stated, there is no existing literature (there is no extant literature), that contains this word before the Apostle Paul’s use.⁹

Koine Greek was the language of the streets, or conventional vernacular, that the Apostle Paul used to write and dictate his now-famous letters to the Christian peoples of his day. Rather than the language of the more literate elements of ancient society, *Koine* Greek is the language that the Apostle Paul used to try to reach the common person. Unfortunately, little has survived that provides a clear understanding of the word arsenokoitai as it was used then. Indeed, the exact meaning of this word is unknown today. This helps to account for the wide range of interpretations provided by various Bible scholars.

The Greek word arsenokoitai can be divided into two portions: the base word koitai, referring to active sexual partners who provide sexual service, and the prefix arseno-, which simply means “male.” It is unclear if the arseno- prefix is used here in a qualifying or objective sense (which is to say, that those who were providing the sexual service were themselves male or that they were servicing males). This uncertainty is especially relevant, since in ancient societies that predate Greece and Rome, there existed male temple cult prostitutes who

⁹ Boswell, John. Christianity, Social Tolerance, and Homosexuality. The University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 1980, page 345.

sexually serviced both male and female temple-worshippers that participated in pagan rituals. And, interestingly enough, they serviced both male and female worshippers anally.

Relative to this issue, John Boswell states:

In no [Greek] words coined and generally written with the form “arseno-” is the prefix demonstrably objective ...
[brackets mine]

“Arsenokoitai,” then, means male sexual agents, i.e., active male prostitutes, who were common throughout the Hellenistic world in the time of Paul. That such a designation existed in the Latin of the time is well known: [these were] male prostitutes capable of the active role with either men or women. [brackets mine]

“Arsenokoitai” was the most explicit word available to Paul for a male prostitute.¹⁰

Some have argued that the Apostle Paul or the Hellenistic Jewish society of his day coined the Greek word arsenokoitai from the Septuagint Greek translation of Leviticus 18:22 and 20:13, where the un-compounded Greek phrase αρσενος ... κοιτην arsenos ... koitun is used to translate the original Hebrew of “lying with a male,” which would help show Paul’s intended meaning, since (as I will demonstrate in another part within this audio series) the historical and literary contexts for Leviticus 18:22 and Leviticus 20:13 are idolatrous and prostitutional in nature by cross referencing Leviticus 18:22 with 1 Kings 14:24.

For the Greek word arsenokoitai, St. Jerome used “masculorum concubitores.” “Concubitor” denotes an active sexual partner, just as “concubine” denotes its female passive counterpart. In the cases of “concubitor” or “concubine,” the implication is a sexual partner who has been bought and paid for, either on a one-time basis or for an

¹⁰ Boswell, Op cit., page 344.

extended period of time. Thus, St. Jerome's Latin rendering could be translated "the male prostitute of men." This is certainly in keeping with the types of male-male sex with which the Apostle Paul was familiar.

Indeed, the Apostle Paul was not exposed to homosexuals who pursued committed monogamous relationships. And, he was not writing about Christian homosexuals. He simply did not know any. In the final analysis, the arsenokoitai are, most probably, male temple cult prostitutes who sexually serviced both male and female temple-worshippers that participated in pagan fertility rituals. Both male and female worshippers were serviced anally.

In closing Part Four of this audio series, I would now 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 would now like to pray with you: (Prayer)

This concludes Part Four of the audio series entitled, "Christianity and Homosexuality Reconciled." If you would like a copy of the MP3 audio file or transcript for Part Four, please send an Email to me in care of drjpearson@aol.com. If you would like a full copy of the textbook, visit www.cebiaz.com and download the entire book for free. Until next time, this is Dr. Joseph Adam Pearson, signing off for now. God bless us all, everyone.