

Reasserting an Evangelical Stand on Homosexuality and Same-Sex Marriage using the Genesis Creation Narrative (Genesis 2:18)

Obedben Mmesomachukwu Lumanze

Abstract

This study asked and answered the questions, “Is homosexual behavior and same-sex marriage sinful?” Should it be seen as simply another element of human diversity to be acknowledged and accepted, or should it be subjected to stigmatizing moral opprobrium? Many evangelical Christians would have negative responses to these questions. Besides, recently, it seems that many are beginning to acknowledge the fact that there is a distinction between same-sex attraction and same-sex behavior. Though, while many clearly acknowledge that same-sex behavior, from the biblical point of view, is sinful, many are afraid to agree that it is either normal or sinful. Hence, the purpose of the study was to discover whether there is a theological rationale for the prohibition of homosexuality and same-sex marriage. The methodology adopted for the study is the exegetical method of biblical research. Genesis 2:18 was exegeted and the findings showed that the word, ‘ezer/Helper seems to express the idea of an ‘indispensable companion’. Consequently, the woman was created to supply to the man what he was lacking, and the man also is to supply what the woman was lacking, including sexual needs. Thus, Homosexuality and same-sex marriage in light of Creation is a severely disordered habit. The paper recommended that Christians are to offer help to those struggling with homosexual behavior/addiction offering them

love, encouragement and support. Though Believers in Christ are not to condemn homosexuals they are not also to compromise their stand on the issue.

Keywords: Homosexual[ity], Same-sex Marriage, Behavior, Sexuality, Christian.

Introduction

Looking at the contemporary world, it is obvious that a lot of things have really changed. Cultures and worldviews are rapidly changing toward a more inclusive mindset. Lifestyles that were summarily condemned or prohibited in the past are being recently revisited with new perspectives or perceptions. In today's culture, people do not just accept beliefs and ideas without critically questioning and examining them. The modern person thus often will like to test everything: values, ethos, norms, ideologies and philosophies in the light of the new mandate for relevance and tolerance.

One of the things that have really changed recently is people's perception of sex and human sexuality. Generally, sex is one of the most talked about issues in most human cultures or societies. Though many cultures have difference perceptions about sex and human sexuality, however, sex is often an attractive topic wherever it is being discussed- whether in the public or private, serious, or entertaining mood. Hence, Igboin avers, "[Sex] is a pervasive issue that has attracted varied assumptions. As a topical issue, it seeks definition, clarification, meaning and function that can most clearly position it within it"⁵⁶²

⁵⁶² Benson, Igboin, A Moral Appraisal of Homosexuality in Biblical, Western and African Worldviews. in Abogunrin S. O. (Ed). *Biblical View of Sex and Sexuality from African Perspective* (Nigeria: NABIS, 2006), 340.

Many have researched, written, and spoken on the issues of sex, sexuality and morality.⁵⁶³ While some have tried to evaluate and interpret these subject-matters in the light of the Scriptures; others have simply waved the Bible aside and evaluated them based on human experience, logic, and popular culture. However, for this author, the later approach is a major limitation. Such authors or researchers, who wave the Bible aside when discussing sexual or moral issues, are only limited by their experiences, viewpoints and assumptions. Moreover, as Christians, this author believes that the Bible is the major presupposition which they are to be committed to. It is unfortunate that nowadays, many Christian researchers and authors seem to approach moral issues with a “modern, humanistic, liberal and scientific attitude” of objective study.⁵⁶⁴ Though these methods are good, to avoid prejudice; nevertheless, they have serious weakness in that they do not include any Divine standard to determine or decide Truth from error. Such approaches or attitudes cannot produce Truth. Truth must be found elsewhere-and that is, in the Scriptures (2Tim 3:16).

For this reason, this paper intends to realize what the Bible says about the practice of homosexuality and same-sex behavior. The question the paper seeks to answer is: What should be the attitude of Evangelical Christians toward homosexuality in the context where many Christian organization and/or denominations especially in the West, have “revised” their theologies to accommodate or even celebrate homosexual behaviors. Recently, many activists and

⁵⁶³See Denny, Burk, *What Is the Meaning of Sex?* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2013), for some of the various ideas about sex.

⁵⁶⁴For example, in 2015, Matthew Vines released the book, *God and the Gay Christian: The Biblical Case in Support of Same-Sex Relationships* (New York: Convergent Books, 2015), 2, where he argued that “Christians who affirm the full authority of Scripture can also affirm committed, monogamous same-sex relationships”. For details of other contemporary claims for homosexual acceptance, see James B. DeYoung, *Homosexuality: Contemporary Claims Examined in Light of the Bible and Other Ancient Literature and Law* (Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel Publications, 2000).

authors have boldly come out to argue that there is a clear difference between “same-sex attraction” and “same-sex behavior”. According to these activists, no matter how spiritual one may be, often times, many continue to experience “same-sex attraction” and continuously struggle with the feelings. Therefore, since this feeling is “spontaneous”, “unchosen” and “uninvited”, people should not be condemned for it.⁵⁶⁵

The methodology adopted for the study is the phenomenological and exegetical methods of research. The text under study, Genesis 2:18 will be exegeted to prove that right from the beginning, God intended sex to be heterosexual and not homosexual when He created a male and a female.

Understanding the Concept Evangelical[ism]

Before going further in the study, it is important to explain the term, “evangelical[ism]” since the study focus on evangelical stand on homosexuality and same-sex marriage. By “Evangelical”, we mean Christians who believe in and stress the preaching of the gospel of Jesus Christ, in personal salvation (by faith), personal conversion experiences and more especially in the doctrines of the Inspiration, Infallibility, Inerrancy and Sufficiency of the Bible (both the Old and New Testaments). Such Christians thus believe that the Bible is the sole authority or basis for faith and morality.⁵⁶⁶ Evangelicals are more committed to simple New Testament Christianity and the teachings of the Apostles more than they are committed to church traditions and/or ecclesiastical accretions. They maintain that only the Scriptures (Old and New Testament) alone contains God’s objective truth and is thus authoritative

⁵⁶⁵For more details on these two concepts, see Danny Burk, Is Homosexual Orientation Sinful? in *Journal Of The Evangelical Theological Society*. *JETS* 58/1 (2015), 95–115; Simon, LeVay, “A Difference in Hypothalamic Structure Between Heterosexual and Homosexual Men,” *Science*, (August 1991) 253: 1034; and Kevin, DeYoung, *What Does the Bible Really Teach About HOMOSEXUALITY?* (Wheaton: Crossway, 2015), 26.

⁵⁶⁶ www.britannica.com/topic/evangelicalism

and must take precedence over reason, tradition, ecclesiastical authority and subjective experiences.⁵⁶⁷ The major beliefs of most Evangelical are thus summarized: belief in the Gospel (good news), proclamation of the Gospel, Personal encounter and transformation. The movement could be traced to the Protestant Reformation under Martin Luther.

Recent study at the Center for the Study of Global Christianity (CSGC) at the Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary suggests that out of the 115 million Christians in Africa, about 23% are evangelicals and the number is still counting. Other studies suggest that there are over 150-180 million evangelicals in Africa and this of course, surpasses the estimation of the CSGC as mentioned above.⁵⁶⁸ Churches that can be classified as evangelicals in Africa include the Methodist church, Baptist church (Convention), Presbyterians, Evangelical Reformed Church of Christ, United Evangelical Church, Deeper Life Bible Church, Evangelical Church of West Africa (ECWA), Church of the Brethren in Nigeria and other HEKAN churches including Church of Christ in Nations among others, Anglican Communion, and most Pentecostal/Charismatic and Holiness churches.

Understanding Homosexuality

Generally speaking, homosexuality has to do with having sexual relations with someone of the same sex. It also could mean having psychological and emotional tendency strong enough to mate the person of the same sex rather than someone of the opposite sex. According to Kunhiyop, "Homosexuality has to do with sexual attraction to those of same sex. Homosexuals may either be male or female (with the

⁵⁶⁷ For more details, see David, Bebbington, *Evangelicalism in Modern Britain: A History from the 1730s to the 1980s*. (London: Unwin Hyman, 1989); Alister, McGrath, *Evangelicalism and the Future of Christianity*. (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1995).

⁵⁶⁸ See Anthony, Balcomb, *Evangelicalism in Africa: What it is and What it does*. In *Missionalia* 11:2 (117-128) www.missionalia.journals.ac.za

latter group sometimes called lesbians).”⁵⁶⁹ Also, Olson defines homosexuality as “The persistent preoccupation with erotic encounters involving members of the same sex, which may or may not be acted out with another person.”⁵⁷⁰ Furthermore, homosexuality may also include mutual masturbation, or anal sex, lesbianism and sapphism are all under this umbrella word.⁵⁷¹ Consequently, the term “Homosexuality” is a compound word that comprises any sexual act that is homogeneous.⁵⁷² When someone engages in both homosexual and heterosexual acts, the individual is said to be bisexual.

History of Homosexuality

It is difficult to give a perfect history of homosexuality—a universal history of the behavior remains a desideratum. However, the practice seems to have been an age-long practice. It is as old as humanity. The practice was much prevalent in Noah’s and Lot’s generations and even in the New Testament period (Gen. 19:4ff; Rom. 1:26ff) though recently, many scholars, gay activists and their allies try to twist these biblical narratives in order to create their own “revisionist gay theologies.” For instance, some of them argue that the cities Sodom and Gomorrah were destroyed because of inhospitality, and not because of homosexuality. They further argue that Paul’s thoughts in the New Testament, do not understand homosexuality the way evangelicals do today. He was talking about temple prostitution or child abuse.⁵⁷³

In the ancient Near East, it seems homosexuality was somehow associated with rituals and occultism; and probably,

⁵⁶⁹ Samuel, W. Kunhiyop, *African Christian Ethics*. (Bukuru, Jos: ACTS Book, 2008), 308.

⁵⁷⁰ Loren, Olson, *Finally Out: Letting Go of Living Straight*. (New York, inGroup Press, 2011), 3.

⁵⁷¹ Benson, *Ibid*.

⁵⁷² James, F. Childress and John, Macquarrie, eds., *A New Dictionary of Christian Ethics* (USA: SCM Press Ltd, 1986), 271.

⁵⁷³ Kevin, *Ibid*.

that contributed to the reason why the Bible frowns at it (cf. Lev. 20:13). However, from all indications, it is possible that the practice was prevalent or even accepted throughout the ancient world- it existed in ancient Egypt, Babylonia, Assyria, Syria, Phoenicia, Persia, India, China and many other places.⁵⁷⁴ Also, almost certainly, the Israelites may have become entangled in the practice when they entered the land of Canaan (cf. Judgs. 19: 22; 1Kgs. 14: 24; 2Kgs. 23: 7). Hence, God warns them never to be involved in it (Lev. 18: 22; 20: 13). Commenting on Leviticus 18, Kaiser notes,

God had given the code of holiness after the event of exodus when the Israelites took over Canaan and got settled over there. The Canaanites who lived in Canaan before Israelites freely indulged in human sacrifice, profanation, homosexuality etc. The section in Leviticus depicts the law of holiness. Homosexuality also carried strong disapproval of Scripture. The word used is *toebah*, which means - abomination. It means -to detest, -to hate or -to abhor. This word shows the hatred and detestation of God toward this sin and therefore is an offensive to the moral sense.⁵⁷⁵

Paul's letter to the Romans already indicates that homosexuality and other acts of sexual perversions were prevalent in the New Testament times (Rom. 1: 27ff). Aside the above biblical references, there are some extra biblical evidence to show that the practice of homosexuality has a long history in human society. For example, tradition has it that, of the first fifteen Emperors that Rome produced, Claudius was the only one whose taste in love was entirely correct or

⁵⁷⁴DeYoung, Ibid. Also see Jay, Sklar, "The Prohibitions against Homosexual Sex in Leviticus 18:22 and 20:13: Are They Relevant Today?" in *Bulletin for Biblical Research*, Vol. 28, No. 2, 2018.

⁵⁷⁵Walter C. Kaiser, *Toward Old Testament Ethics* (Michigan: Zondervan Publishing House, 1991), 118.

normal- meaning heterosexual. This means, the Roman Empire was ruled for almost 200 consecutive years by emperors who were homosexuals.⁵⁷⁶In ancient Rome, the habit was somewhat prohibited by the law but later became legalized. Rhys acknowledges that “the Greco-Roman society of Paul’s day tolerated homosexuality with considerable ease.” According to him, “Some advocates it was viewed as superior to heterosexuality.”⁵⁷⁷ John

Boswell corroborates the above observation. According to him, Clement of Alexandria in his days, claimed that homosexuality was legal (*Paedagogus* 3.3 [pg, 8:585]); while Lactantius adds that the acts were “trivial and virtually admirable” among the Romans (*Institutiones divinae* 6.23.10).⁵⁷⁸ On the issues of morality, the Romans were more sexually loosed than the Greeks were. The Greeks frowned at sexual perversion even though that did not mean they were innocent of or free from it. This is because Plato in his *Symposium* makes it clear that love between men was widely known and accepted among ancient Greeks. The above evidences prove that Homosexual behavior has always existed, and was accepted throughout the ancient world. However, the Hebrew/Jews, as earlier noted, were prohibited from practicing it. It was in the nineteenth century AD (1869) that some German same-sex devotees created the term “Homosexual”.⁵⁷⁹ This for them was seemingly more neutral and scientific than derogatory terms like “Sodomy”.

⁵⁷⁶ William, Barclay, *The Letter to the Romans* (Edinburgh: St. Andrews, 1957), 32.

⁵⁷⁷ H. Rhys, *The Epistle to the Romans* (New York: Macmillan, 1961), 26.

⁵⁷⁸ John, Boswell, *Christianity, Social Tolerance and Homosexuality* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1980), 112.

⁵⁷⁹According to Kunyihop, the term, “Homosexuality” was first used by Maria Karolyn while referring to same-sex marriage. Ibid, 303.

Types of Homosexuals

Traditionally, there are two major types of homosexuals. In the first instance are people who have predominant and psychosexual attraction towards members of the same sex—referred to as “*Constitutional*” (or *static*) homosexuals and, in the second instance are people who sometimes in their life had had homosexual experiences but later successfully reverted to heterosexuality. The initial experience may be because of war, imprisonment, molestation, etc. They are referred to as “*Situational*” (or *dynamic*) homosexuals.⁵⁸⁰ Again, there are those called “Pervert” and “Invert homosexuals. A “pervert” is someone who though is a heterosexual but occasionally indulges in homosexuality; while the “invert” is someone who claims to be homosexual because of “his nature.”⁵⁸¹

Some people try to sympathize and justify homosexuality on the ground that some people are born homosexuals. They claim that at the genetic level, such people are homosexually oriented. This claim is what has divided the church in taking sides when it comes to homosexuals. Howbeit, it was not until 1973, that the American Psychiatry Association was unified in its understanding that homosexuality and lesbianism were a mental and emotional disorder. Before this time, homosexuality was seen as a problem; but bowing to the pressures of gestapotype lobbying by gay activists, the APA took these two habits off the lists of disorders and redefined them innocuously as “sexual orientation disturbance”. In a 1974 referendum, 37% of APA members expressed their disapproval by voting against the redefinition. However, only a year later their colleagues in the American Psychological Association recommended removing the stigma off mental

⁵⁸⁰Kunyahop, Ibid

⁵⁸¹John, Harvey, *The Truth about Homosexuality: The Cry of the Faithful* (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1996).

illness that has long been associated with homosexual orientation.⁵⁸²

Causes of Homosexuality

To understand the phenomenon of homosexual and same-sex relations, one must first discover what research shows about the origins of such attractions. Basically, there are two major theories as to the factors that cause homosexuality and same-sex behavior. These are biological or genetic factors and environmental factors. According to the former theory, some people are born homosexuals and cannot do anything about it because it is in their genes- they were born that way. While the second theory argues that environmental factors like rejection and abandonment, especially from one's father, mother, siblings or peer group, unmet needs, peer-group pressure, or familial wounds and psychological influences are significant as to why some people get involved in homosexual/same-sex actions/behaviors. The latter theory, that is, environmental influences has gradually declined in the public square and the former theory is gaining more ground. Many gay activists often base their arguments that some people are "born gay". However, according to Pomeroy's report, there is no evidence that people are born gays. Pomeroy recorded more than 450 homosexual histories to come to this conclusion. His findings thus contradict that of the infamous sex researcher, Alfred Kinsey and many others, whose writings many use to seek approval for same-sex attraction and behavior.⁵⁸³

⁵⁸²For more details, see Wardell B. Pomeroy, *Dr. Kinsey and the Institute for Sex Research* (New York: Harper & Row, 1972), 76; Dean H. Hamer, et al., "A Linkage Between DNA Markers on the X Chromosome and Male Sexual Orientation," *Science* 261 (1993), 321-327; American Psychological Association, -Answers to Your Questions: For a Better Understanding of Sexual Orientation and Homosexuality, accessible at <http://www.apa.org/topics/lgbt/orientation.pdf>.

⁵⁸³Wardell, Pomeroy, *Dr. Kinsey and the Institute for Sex Research*(New York: Harper & Row, 1972), quoted in DeYoung, *Ibid*.

The Relationship between Homosexuality and Fornication

Fornication is not just sexual intercourse between two unmarried people. It includes and involves many other immoral sexual activities. Fornication is in a general sense, simply any sexual expression that violates God's standard of morality.⁵⁸⁴Hence, any immoral act(s) that amounts to sexual pleasure or gratification is often classified as fornication. Fornication is thus not only restricted to copulation intercourse. Ann et al corroborate, "embracing, fondling, kissing (i.e. erotic-mouth to mouth), anal, and oral sex, homosexuality, lesbianism, vagina intercourse are all forms of sexual expression."⁵⁸⁵The word, "fornication" is translated from the Greek word,

Porneia, which describes as well as includes a wide variety of sexual activities or plays outside the marriage relationship including the touching of the intimate parts of another's body or viewing the nakedness of another person, flirting, homosexuality, lesbianism, pornography, anal sex, lust, lasciviousness; harlotry, incest, etc. All these attitudes or behaviors are included in the term (cf. Lev. 18; 6-30; 20:11; 17:18-21; Matt. 5:32; 1Cor. 6:18; 1 Thess. 4:3). Abbot-Smith commenting on the word, "fornication" notes that the word is related to "Lasciviousness" translated *Aselgeia*- which denotes the absence of clear mental principles and specifically the disregard of sexual reserve and restraint that maintains pure and chaste behavior. It means "licentiousness, wantonness, and excess"⁵⁸⁶ Thayer defines it as "licentiousness, debauchery, sensuality." He has a long list: "unbridled lust, excess, outrageousness, shamelessness, insolence and so

⁵⁸⁴ Daniel, Olukoya, *Prayer Rain*. (Lagos: Battle Cry Press, 2005).

⁵⁸⁵ Mary, Ann et'al, *Understanding Sexuality* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1985), 116.

⁵⁸⁶George, Abbot-Smith, *Manual Greek Lexicon of the New Testament* 2nd Ed. (Edinburg: T&T. Clark, 1923), 63.

on.⁵⁸⁷ The New International Version (NIV) has “sensuality”. This seems to be the most meaningful translation for today. Lasciviousness scripturally includes the inclination towards indulging in or arousing sinful lust that may amount or lead to indulging in sinful, unholy and immoral conduct. Pornography is also included in this act. Any act or practice that can arouse an individual sexually is a lascivious act; and the bible condemns such act or habit. According to Biblical ethics, any individual that indulges in any of the above-mentioned act is culpable. However, homosexuality should not be seen as the same with immoral heterosexual activities. It is a distortion or perversion of sex and natural order. Thus, the Bible and many human cultures and societies prohibit it.

Traditional African and Biblical Views about Homosexuality

Up to the recent times, there has been no much detailed account of the African concept of homosexuality and same-sex marriage. As a result of this, there are not many scholars to cite or reference in relation to this subject-matter. However, the ongoing Gay activism and pressures from western liberal cultures have generated interest in the African concept of homosexuality. Even though the purpose of this study is not to compare and/or contrast Traditional African cultures and that of the Old Testament, however, a close look at the two shows there are similarities- especially in the areas of worldviews, sexuality, chastity, marriage, burial, etc.

Kunhiyop has noted that, “In traditional Africa, homosexuality and lesbianism, same-sex intercourse and same-sex marriage were not mentioned in the public. If they were mentioned at all, it was only in hushed tones...Homosexual intercourse was considered even more disgusting.”⁵⁸⁸ Thus, relatively, most

⁵⁸⁷Joseph, Thayer, *A Greek- English Lexicon of the New Testament* (New York: American Book Co., 1886), 79.

⁵⁸⁸ Ibid, 304.

African cultures frown at it. Probably, the reason for this attitude towards homosexuality and same-sex marriage maybe because for Africans, bearing of children is important and since homosexual union cannot lead to procreation, it is useless. Adejuwon affirms that in Africa, “Homosexuality is perceived as a cultural value distortion because it was to lack the basic intention of sexual union which is for procreation.”⁵⁸⁹

On the other hands, some researchers like Awondo have claimed that homosexuality was accepted in many African cultures. According to them, homosexuality was common in places like some parts of Cameroon, Burkina Faso, Benin and Zimbabwe and so on.⁵⁹⁰ However, among the Igbo tribe of Eastern Nigeria, homosexuality and same-sex intercourse and/or marriage is seen as an abomination. Even though Azuah has claimed that same-sex marriage, especially women marrying fellow women, existed in Eastern Nigeria before colonialism, such practices served different purpose. Such marriages or union were not for pleasure but for surrogacy. In Igbo culture, a barren woman could marry a wife for the husband or a lady may marry another lady and keep in her father’s house to bear children for the parents if she was the only child of the parents. Thus, even though she has married, the family name would still be perpetuated. Also, in northern Nigeria, the *yandaudu* (male prostitutes/cross-dressers) existed before the coming of *Sharia* law in that part of the country.⁵⁹¹ Africans value heterosexual relationships and family life and that is why many of her traditional, political and religious leaders have publicly condemned homosexual actions and same-sex marriage. Though many of the cultural

⁵⁸⁹ Ezekiel, Adejuwon A., “Homosexuality: An African Christian Perspective” in *International Journal of Innovative Social Sciences & Humanities Research* 8 (1): 159-168, Jan.-Mar., 2020.

⁵⁹⁰See Patrick, Awondo, “Religion Leadership and the Re-politicization of Gender and Sexuality in Cameroon” in *Journal of Theology for Southern Africa*, 155 (July, 2016 Special Edition), 105-120.

⁵⁹¹U.noma, N. Azuah, quoted in Ezekiel, Ibid, 160.

practices and values of Africans are being gradually influenced or eroded by the more liberal western culture and values, the truth still remains that many Africans societies/cultures still frown at homosexual behaviors.

Interpreting Genesis 2: 18

The book of Genesis is the first of five Books of the Old Testament. These five books are often regarded as one volume; hence, Genesis is considered as the first chapter of this one volume. It is the most significant and authoritative in Jewish tradition partly because, it is the book of origin and development. It contains the origins of all things: the universe, light, atmosphere, dry land, vegetable life, the light-holders, land animals, man, marriage union, sin, salvation, nations etc. Strahan observes that Genesis touches existence at every point and areas. According to him, it touches manners and customs, ethnology and ethics, highways and byways of history, births and weddings, burials, love and wars, eating and drinking, laughter and tears- all the sunshine and shadows of life are found in this book.⁵⁹²

The Context of Genesis 2: 18-23

Genesis 1 and 2 contain the Hebrew accounts of how the heavens and the earth came into existence. This account is believed to be a general account of the creation of the heavens and the earth; followed by a more detailed description of the making of man. However, many scholars argue that Genesis 2 is the second account of creation- that it is different from the first creation account of Chapter 1 in that it focuses on man and is written from a different perspective.⁵⁹³ Aside this, starting from Genesis 2, the narrator purportedly uses a

⁵⁹² James, Strahan, J. *Hebrew Ideals in Genesis* (Michigan: Kregel Publications, 1982).

⁵⁹³ For more details, see Walter C. Kaiser, *The Literary Form of Genesis 1-11 in Perspectives on the Old Testament* Payne, J. Barton (ed.) (Waco, Texas: Word Books, 1970)

different name for God. In the first account, the narrator uses *Elohim* (God the Creator, the great and lofty One who inhabits eternity). However, from Chapter 2 downwards, Yahweh *Elohim* is used. Though many scholars have argued that the two accounts of creation (Genesis 1 & 2) as noted above, are of different traditions, namely the so-called “Documentary Hypothesis” or the “Development Hypothesis, however, for Kaiser, “Such arguments are certainly inconclusive...these accounts are not two separate accounts...the first chapter is a general account of creation, and the second supplies the necessary details.”⁵⁹⁴From Genesis 2, the narrator gives a detailed account of the creative work of a loving God, who is the Creator. This chapter returns to the matter of the creation of man with a much more detailed account. Starting from this chapter God is being portrayed as more than a God of power (that is, *Elohim*: the Hebrew term for the mighty God of transcendent power); He is the “LORD God”. He is the Jehovah who comes down by Himself and out of His love, creates man (in His image). In Chapter 1 man is given every herb/plant to eat (1:29-30), in Chapter 2 it is understood that Yahweh *Elohim* created man (Heb. Adam) and then planted a garden in Eden in the east; where man is to live. Furthermore, Chapter 2 seems to serve as an introduction and preparation for the account of the fall of man in Chapter 3. According to the author, in the midst of this garden, there were two special trees: the tree of life and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.

Man is not however made to be alone. According to Howard Jr., man was “...not made for a solitary, self-sufficient existence and neither the animals, birds nor other creatures could provide the kind of companionship that he

⁵⁹⁴ Ibid, 74.

needed.”⁵⁹⁵Consequently, Yahweh *Elohim* creates woman (*is-sah*), a new being, yet sharing man’s own essential nature.

A Translation of the Text

Genesis 2: 18 has so many implications: it is the verse that gives the clue to the context of the *pericope* (2:18-23) in focus, and hence, we shall focus on this verse alone.

English Standard Version (ESV)	BHS 1996 Edition
Then the LORD God said, “It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him a helper fit for him.”	וַיֹּאמֶר יְהוָה אֱלֹהִים לֹא־טוֹב הָיִיתָ הָאָדָם לְבַדּוֹ אֶעֱשֶׂה־לּוֹ עֵזֶר כְּנַגְדּוֹ:

Lexical Analysis and Exegetical Comments

This verse is a complex sentence; with one dependent clause and two independent clauses, “Then the LORD God said” makes it clear to the reader that the idea of heterosexual (marriage) relationship was one initiated by God Himself. *לֹא־טוֹב* / *lo’ tov* meaning “not good” implies that from God’s own perspective, all was not “well” or “beautiful” with the man—something was missing in his life. *טוֹב* / *tov*, as an adjective is being used here in an absolute state. Because the man was not complete, God said, *אֶעֱשֶׂה* / *’e’esheh*, “I will make” from the verb *’ashah* meaning “to do or make” (KJV: accomplish, appoint, bestow, bring forth, bruise etc).

Interestingly, it is God who determines that it is not good for man to be alone (2:18–25). According to Walter:

There is no indication that Adam himself was dissatisfied with his circumstances. After making

⁵⁹⁵David, M. Howard Jr., *An Introduction to the Old Testament Historical Books* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1993), 128.

his evaluation (v. 18a), God proposes a solution (v. 18b). God will provide a helper for Adam. God already is Adam's helper (but a superior helper). The animals are also Adam's helpers (but inferior helpers). This helper, then, must be one that will be equal to him. Furthermore, she is to be suitable for him. The Hebrew word for "suitable" suggests something that completes a polarity, as the North Pole is "suitable" to the South Pole. One without the other is incomplete.⁵⁹⁶

In the woman, God thus supplied what was lacking in the man; and both were to complement each other. God did not create for Adam one with the same genital organs like him; but created one with different genitals and features.

לְבַדוֹ/*lebadow* is another important Hebrew common noun used in this verse. The root is בָּדַד/*bad* meaning "separation, solitude" and related to *badad* "to be separate". The word is frequently used with לֵ/le and a suffix. Finally, the word, עֵזֶר/*'ezer* meaning "helper" is very important here. According to Allen "In the biblical Hebrew the word, "helper" is used frequently of the LORD. The word...signifies help in the sense of aiding or supplying something that an individual is incapable of supplying for himself or herself."⁵⁹⁷ God is often described in the Scriptures as human "Helper" because, He does for humans what they can't do for themselves...He meets people's needs. Concerning this word, the NET Bible comments: "In this context [Genesis 2:18], the word [Helper] seems to express the idea of an 'indispensable companion'. The woman would supply what the man was lacking, and the man would also supply what the woman was lacking...including sexual needs. Hence, from both the

⁵⁹⁶ Elwell, Walter A., *Evangelical Commentary on the Bible* (Grand Rapids, Mich. : Baker Book House, 1996), (Baker Reference Library 3), S. Gen. 2:18.

⁵⁹⁷ Ross, R. Allen, *Introducing Biblical Hebrew* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Academic, 2001), 382.

Scriptural and traditional point of view, sexual intercourse or activity as a universal act is to be between two opposite sexes in a marriage relationship or union. Commenting on the above text, Donald corroborates:

God gave Adam one of his own kind, but of the opposite sex, to be his companion. The man and the woman were equal in status as being made in God's image (cf. 1:27) and were harmoniously united, to the exclusion of all others (18–25). The woman was later given the name Eve, meaning 'life' or 'living', because she was the one through whom future human life would come.⁵⁹⁸

The name given to the woman, Eve, is significant. It shows how important the woman is in God's agenda for humanity. She is to be the gateway through which all other humans must pass to enter this world.

Implication of the Study

First, the text exegeted shows that the Bible has clearly presented humans with God's original norm that sexual activity was to be within the platform or context of marriage. The text understudy and few other passages of the Scriptures (Lev. 18; Rom. 1:26ff), prove that God disapproves homosexual practices. Thus, the story of the creation begins with God creating humanity in His image, male and female. Commenting on the issue of sexuality and God's design for marriage, Glenn Stanton observes,

Male and female, together, are the fullest picture of the image of God in creation. That's why they need each other. Adam wasn't complete without Eve. In everyday terms, this means that only the difference and the complementary interplay of

⁵⁹⁸ Fleming, Donald C.: *Concise Bible Commentary* (Chattanooga, Tenn. : AMG Publishers, 1994), 19.

male and female uniquely reflect the image and likeness of the persons of the Trinity in creation. As a result, sexual love between married man and woman is a life-giving act of mutual giving and receiving that mirrors the Trinity like nothing else on earth.⁵⁹⁹

The Creation account in Genesis clearly states that God created two distinct but complementary creatures, made for each other. Thus, right from the beginning, God is seen declaring His will and/or purpose for humanity. After He created Adam and Eve, He blessed and united them in marriage and commanded them to “be fruitful and multiply” (Gen. 1:28). Glenn goes on to note that this marriage union was originally designed to be permanent, committed, exclusive and self-giving.⁶⁰⁰ Consequently, in God’s original plan and economy, this union between a man and a woman is a complete union and the goal was to perpetuate humanity (cf. Gen. 2:23-24).

In consequence, it is obvious that from the biblical point of view therefore, sexuality functions mainly within marriage.⁶⁰¹ Thus, anything short of this is held to be pervasive, immoral, abnormal, distortion and evil. This is because, when God said, “*It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him a help meet for him*” (Gen 2:18), He did not create another man nor did He leave the man to satisfy his sexual desires by himself. If he had wanted sex to be a homosexual affair, He would not have created Eve for Adam. He would have created another man for Adam. That incident is why homosexuality and whether same-sex “attraction” or “behavior” is forbidden by God (cf. Gen. 2: 18; Lev. 18: 22; Rom. 1: 26, 27). He did not

⁵⁹⁹ Glenn T. Stanton *My Crazy Imperfect Christian Family*. (Colorado Springs, CO: NavPress, 2004), 86.

⁶⁰⁰ *Ibid*, 3.

⁶⁰¹ It is only when sexual impulses are expressed in that specific fashion or context is the bed undefiled.

prohibit these practices to wicked us or restrict us from “enjoying” ourselves, but to help us live a clean and happy life.

Second, Homosexuality in light of creation is a severely disordered habit. The practice as far as God is concerned, can never be assimilated into the divine order of creation. It basically belongs to the realm of man’s fall into sin. It is a perverted consequence of man’s fall. In the creation order, God made a male and a female and blessed them. It is only this type of union that receives God’s benediction; anything short of it attracts His curse (Lev. 18; cf. Heb. 13:4f). Heterosexual coitus is what God endorses as the normative direction for sexual impulse or relation. It is however unfortunate that we are living in a permissive world where people are being encouraged to lead “alternative lifestyles” that are contrary to God’s law.

Third, though the Bible is not a compendium of ethical norms, however, it has so many things to say about human sexuality and God’s vision for human kind. God gave us the Scriptures so that we can be trained in righteousness; and when we forsake the precepts that the Bible outlines, we cannot progress as individuals and as a nation (1Timothy 3:16-17). No nation, whether Christian or not, can have real (holistic) progress without adhering to godly values and ethos. For, “Righteousness exalts a nation and sin is a reproach to any nation” (Proverbs 14: 34). Many western nations experienced real progress in their histories because at one time or the other, their founding fathers imbibed, propagated and enforced godly values especially, the Judeo-Christian ones.⁶⁰² However, the destinies of these nations will be determined by how their present citizens lead their lives today. If they are not careful, they will use their own hands and destroy the civilization they have built over the years.

⁶⁰² For more details, see Loren, Cunningham. *The Book that Transforms Nations: The Power of the Bible to Change any Country* (Seattle, WA: YWAM Publications 2007).

Recommendations

Having carried out this study, I would like to submit the following recommendations:

1. Evangelical Christians are to be compassionate in dealing with those who engage in homosexual behavior even though they are not to sympathize with them. Christians are not to fail in helping and walking alongside those struggling with habit. They are to offer them love, encouragement and support.
2. Christians should always be ready to offer help to homosexuals who are ready for change. Instead of condemning them, believers are to pray for them, and counsel them.
3. Christians must be ready to accept homosexuals when they see them coming for help or when they see that there is a change in them. Homosexual should not be discriminated against in the church.
4. Christian theologians/leaders should develop curricula, teachings and programs with the sole purpose of upholding, disseminating and inculcating godly values in the minds of the younger generations. They are not to be silent on the matter or shy away from publicly condemning and discouraging it.
5. Finally, the church is to disciple repentant homosexuals who renounce the habit to grow in faith and in Christ and then integrate them into the Body of Christ without prejudice.

Conclusion

This paper examined evangelical stand on and theological understanding of homosexuality and same-sex marriage based on the Genesis account of creation. Thus, God's original design for human sexuality has been the basis and/or starting point of this discussion. From the onset, the author argues that Christians are to obey and follow the teachings of the Scriptures when it comes to sexual and moral issues, and not western liberal traditions or so-called "secular culture". The Bible remains the final authority. Based on the exegesis of the text under study, Genesis 2:18, it was discovered that the Hebrew word, word, 'ezer meaning, "Helper" expresses the idea of an 'indispensable companion'. Hence, the woman was created to supply to the man what he was lacking, and the man also is to supply what the woman was she was lacking, which included sexual needs. In consequence, Homosexuality and same-sex marriage in light of Creation is a severely disordered habit.

Even though the paper established that homosexuality is bad in the light of the creation account of Genesis and other texts of the Bible; the paper however recommended that Christians are to offer help to those struggling with homosexual behavior/addiction offering them love, encouragement and support. Though Believers in Christ are not to condemn homosexuals they are not also to compromise their stand on the issue. This is because Christians are accountable in upholding and proclaiming a vibrant, biblical sexual ethic to our world. In that regard, they are to condemn homosexuality and not homosexuals. Christians to step up and boldly declare God's purpose and vision for humanity which is, a marriage relationship between one man and one woman.