

What the Bible Says About Same Sex Relations4

Lev. 20:1-8

Introduction:

1. With this lesson we continue our studies on what the Bible says about same sex relations.
2. One of the main things that we have learned is that the Bible reveals a divine pattern regarding sexual relations.
3. From Genesis and on-ward the pattern is one male and one female in a marriage relationship.
4. While we have considered specific passages that prohibit same sex relations, and will continue to notice these in this series, these specific passages must not be divorced from the overall divine pattern evidenced throughout Scripture. Indeed, it is the divine pattern that is the primary biblical argument, the specific prohibitive passages merely give some of the evidence of that argument. The male/female marriages exemplified throughout Scripture give positive force to the divine pattern.
5. The question is not merely, "Where does it say not to," but what is the positive teaching of Scripture?
6. As we study in this lesson from Lev. 20, understand that this passage is just one piece of the bigger picture of the divine plan. In many ways Lev. 20 reiterates the teaching of Lev. 18, but there are additional things to be noticed that are relevant to our study.

Discussion:

- I. Like Lev. 18, Lev. 20 is structured to contrast the culture of the sons of Israel with the customs of the nations (20:1-5, 22-23).
 - A. Verses 6-8 contrasts where the two cultures get their information.
 - B. Holiness involves consecration to God, sanctification by God and keeping God's statutes and practicing them (vs. 7-8).
 - C. This text is very particular about the consequences of the prohibited behaviors.
 1. While Lev. 18:29 speaks of those who practice the noted abominations are to be "cut off from among their people," Lev. 20 says, "he shall be put to death." This is probably identifying the way he is to be cut off from the people. Note v. 14 and v. 27.
 2. No one advocates for the death penalty against these behaviors today, given the new covenant (more about this later). Suffice it to say that the emphasis in the new covenant is on the healing available through Jesus Christ (1 Cor. 6:9ff).
- II. Reading through the text and some observations (9-27).

- A. Observe that it is not just sexual sins that are under consideration (note v. 9). There are other regulations in Lev. (cf. chap. 21ff), but note that chap. 20 constitutes a section introduced in 20:1: “Then the Lord spoke to Moses, saying . . . This is a formula used throughout the text of Leviticus. Note the chapter divisions generally have this formula, so Lev. 20 is to be recognized as a section of material. And do not neglect the fact that “The Lord spoke!”
 - B. While some object to the account of Sodom and Gomorrah saying that homosexual rape is what is being condemned, observe that here it is not homosexual rape that is under consideration in v. 13. The death penalty for both parties implies that both share responsibility and both are guilty. Thus, homosexual rape is not the issue, but same sex relations.
 - C. Some think that consensual same sex relations are ok, but that an older man taking advantage of a young boy is forbidden. Rape is never permissible in Scripture. In this text it is same sex relations that are prohibited and that includes consensual same sex relations.
 - D. Verse 13 is very explicit. It refers to two men lying with one another as those who lie with a woman.
 - E. There appears to be a progressive order in the text of Lev. 20:10-16 (cf. Lev. 18) involving movement from one man and one woman in marriage.
 1. Adultery.
 2. Father’s wife.
 3. Daughter-in-law.
 4. Same sex relations.
 5. Woman and her mother.
 6. Bestiality.
 - F. It is such sins that resulted in the land spewing out its previous inhabitants. If the people of God failed to keep God’s statutes and ordinances the land would spew them out (v. 22-26).
- III. Some might object—“This is part of the OT and therefore is not binding on us today.”
- A. Certainly, the transition from the old to the new is to be recognized.
 1. Matt. 5:17-18.
 2. Foods are clean and all men are clean (Mk. 7:19; Acts 10-11; Rom. 14:13ff).
 3. Special days are no longer binding (Col. 2:16ff).
 4. The OT sacrificial system is superseded (Heb. 7:1-10:18).
 - B. Many of the principles from Lev. 18 and 20 are reiterated in the NT.
 1. The call to holiness (2 Cor. 6:16; Lev. 21:6; 1 Pet. 1:16; Lev. 11:44).
 2. 1 Cor. 5 addresses incest. Cf. Lev. 18:8; Deut. 22:30; 27:20.
 3. 1 Cor. 6:9 addresses same sex relations.
 4. Matt. 5:27-30 addresses adultery.
 5. The only thing not reiterated in the NT regards sex during menstrual period.

Conclusion:

1. There is a divine pattern evident in Scripture.
2. While Lev. 20 reiterates the teaching of Lev. 18 it adds new information regarding the consequences to these sins.
3. Same sex relations are prohibited. Not just rape, nor an older man (person) taking advantage of a younger man (person).
4. Similar prohibitions are included in the NT so the objection that these prohibitions are not applicable for us today fails.