

Dr. Martz's Principles of Biblical Interpretation
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1. The Bible is like a chorus rather than a solo voice. It consists of 66 books written over a period of 1000 years. There are different perspectives within those 66 books and there are variances.
2. The Bible is a book of theology and not geology. It is most valuable when answering questions of "Why?" rather than questions of "How?" For instance, why are we here? What is our purpose? rather than, How did that big fish swallow Jonah? or How did the universe come into being?
3. The Bible does not tell us everything about everything.
4. The Bible contains history but it also contains prehistory, poetry, and symbolic story. The story of the man and woman in the Garden does not have the same historical evidence as the story of Moses or of David.
5. The Bible contains the word of God and the word of culture. The Bible was written in a time when women were treated as inferior to men and when it was the norm to own slaves. Those cultural norms are reflected in Scripture along with other more revolutionary attitudes.
6. Christ is the benchmark for us to use to discern the difference between the Word of God and the words of culture. His life, teaching, and ministry can help us know what in the Bible is eternal and what is temporary. Christ is the "Word of God".

Resources on the Bible and Homosexuality

Marcus Borg "Convictions" especially chapters 5 and 6

James V. Brownson, "Bible, Gender, Sexuality"

Rev Rob Fuqua "Faithful and Inclusive" DVD from Abingdon Press

Adam Hamilton, "Making Sense of the Bible"-particularly chapter 29 on Homosexuality

Furnish, Victor Paul, "The Moral Theology of Paul-Revised Edition"

Rev Joe Miller, "Homosexuality: A Scriptural Way Forward"

Eric C. Smith, "Paul the Progressive", especially Chapter 3

Walter Wink, "Homosexuality and the Bible", a 16 page monograph available from THE FELLOWSHIP OF RECONCILIATION Bookstore, box, 271, Nyack NY 10960; phone (845) 358-4601; bookstore@forusa.org

"The Bible Tells Me So," in video from Amazon.

A Response to Thomas Lambrecht · Blog from Author & Methodist Minister Adam Hamilton · A Response to Thomas Lambrecht · Adam Hamilton
<https://www.adamhamilton.com/blog/a-response-to-thomas-lambrecht/#.YKPhiy1h2Rt>

GLAAD Reference Guides:

Lesbian, Gay, Bi, Queer Reference Guide: <https://www.glaad.org/reference/lgbtq>
Transgender Reference Guide: <https://www.glaad.org/reference/transgender>

Center for LGBTQ and Gender Studies in Religion:

Scripture and Homosexuality: <https://www.clgs.org/multimedia-archive/neither-judgement-nor-condemnation-reading-again-the-biblical-text-on-homosexuality/>

Trans Faith Curriculum: <https://www.clgs.org/multimedia-archive/transgender-curriculum-for-faith-communities/>

Mel White's lecture: <https://www.clgs.org/multimedia-archive/clobber-the-passages-queer-people-and-the-seven-deadly-biblical-verses-an-online-lavender-lunch-with-mel-white/>

CLOBBER PASSAGES CONVERSATION

December 6 2019 at St Andrew UMC

Rev. Dr. Harvey C Martz

Please mark the following statement based on whether you agree or disagree

- The Bible is like a chorus. It consists of 66 books written over a period of about 1000 years. There are different perspectives within those 66 books and there are variances
- The Bible is a book of theology and not geology. It is most valuable in answering "why" questions instead of "how" questions.
- The Bible writers were not as concerned with consistency as much as we are. They were willing to put stories together that did not quite match up (cf., Genesis 1 and 2)
- The Bible does not tell us everything about everything.

- The Bible contains history, but also contains pre-history, poetry, metaphor, and symbolic story.
- The Bible contains the Word of God and the words of culture. Parts of the Bible affirm slavery and treating women as chattel or “second class”.
- Christ is our benchmark in discerning between what is the “timeless will of God” and what is a temporary cultural point of view.
- I believe that Jesus is THE WORD OF GOD.
- I believe that the Bible is THE WORD OF GOD.
- The condemnations related to same gender intimacy in the Bible pertain to gang rape, temple prostitution, idolatry, and pederasty. But these are very different from two people sharing their lives together in a covenant relationship. (Hamilton, 271)
- United Methodist Christians are asked to look at Scripture along with the resources of Tradition, Experience, and Reason/science.
- “What saddens me in this whole raucous debate (over same gender relationships) in the churches is how sub-Christian most of it has been” (Wink, 14)
- “If in reading the Bible you find justification for abusing, humiliating, disgracing, harming, or hurting-especially when it makes you feel better about yourself, you are absolutely wrong.” (Fred Craddock)
- A person’s stance on same gender behavior depends on two things: whether they approach scripture from a literalistic or a contextual perspective, and whether they believe same gender orientation is a choice or a discovery. (Joe Miller 1-2)
- “Our savior spent his earthly life addressing suffering, hunger disabilities, forgiveness, love, and teaching about the wealth gap between the rich and the poor. We tend to sweep those aside as we scapegoat the gay community” (Miller, 20)
- The most important teachings of the Bible are.....

“CLOBBER PASSAGES” IN THE BIBLE

Genesis 1-2 Statement is in 2:24 that a man leaves his parents and becomes “One Flesh”. Men in the Bible can become “One flesh” with many different women—this was a polygamous culture

Genesis 19:1-25 Tells of gang rape in Sodom-inflicted on guests/strangers-see Ezekiel 16 for what the sin of Sodom is for the rest of the Bible

Leviticus 18:22 and 20:13. Condemns male same gender sexual activity punishable by death

I Corinthians 6:9 and I Timothy 1:1-10 List of common immoral behaviors-likely refers to boy prostitutes and their customers. What sexual behaviors did St Paul know of from Corinth? Temple prostitution.

Romans 1:26-27 Paul’s longest reference to same sex practices-here and in other occasions Paul is not singling out any one group or vice as especially evil but saying there is no distinction (!) “ALL have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God”. (3:22-23) (Dr Victor Furnish in CAUGHT IN THE CROSSFIRE by Don Messer and Sally Geis)

“Other matters stand far higher on the moral agenda of the Bible: Deceitfulness, transgression of the rights of others or indifference to their needs; greed, sloth, self interest, injustice in the marketplace, oppression of the weak, exploitation of the poor and needy; proud religious posturing; self-righteousness, and lust for those of the opposite sex. On comparison with these, same sex lust and practice are of distinctively marginal concern in the Biblical traditions and writings.” Furnish in Messer and Geis

EXCERPTS FROM DR VIC FURNISH CHAPTER ON CAUGHT IN THE CROSSFIRE

58 ..What one today calls “homosexual” acts are attested in virtually all ancient cultures. In certain times and places they were tacitly approved or even affirmed.. In other times they were judged to be degrading, polluting, or unnatural (for example by many moral philosophers contemporary with Jesus and Paul).it It was universally presupposed, however, that same-sex practices were simply a matter of preference. In Biblical times, possible predisposing factors(whether genetic, social, or psychological) were not only unknown but quite beyond conceiving. The assumption was that people just chose (except in cases of rape), to have one kind of sex rather than the other, either occasionally or exclusively....

There is nothing about sexual orientation, sexual identity, or the like.

Other matters (in the Bible)stand far higher on the moral agenda of the Bible...

A survey of the passages (59-62)

- Genesis 1-2—both statements here are meant to explain what is typical of humankind as a whole
- Genesis 19:1-25 This story is not told to condemn homosexuality or even sexual lust in general, for in that case the story could not implicitly commend Lot’s offering of his virgin daughters, which it does....cf Ezekiel 16:49-THIS IS THE SIN OF YOUR SISTER SODOM: SHE AND HER DAUGHTERS WERE PROUD, HAD PLENTY TO EAT AND HAD PEACE AND PROSPERITY; BUT SHE DID NOT HELP THE POOR AND NEEDY (CEV)
- Leviticus 18:22 and 20:13: Slightly differing formulations prohibiting male, same sex intercourse, one of which mandates the punishment by death. These statutes presuppose that anything mixed is therefore polluted, impure, unclean.
- I Corinthians 6:9 and I Timothy 1:10 Two lists of wrongdoers. Similar lists appear elsewhere in the NT, but no two lists are identical. They do not presume to list all or even the worst, evils; they name only those practices generally condemned as wrong. Among the ten types of wrongdoers identified in I Corinthians 6:9 are males who play the more passive role in same sex intercourse and males who play the more active role. It is possible, but not certain, that the first term refers specifically to adolescent boy-prostitutes and the second to their customers.
- Romans 1:26-27 The most extensive Biblical reference to same sex practices, and it is one sentence in Greek: *For this reason, God gave them up to degrading passions, for just as their women exchanged natural intercourse for unnatural so also the men, abandoning natural intercourse with women, were consumed with passion for one another, men committing shameless acts with men and receiving in their own persons the penalty required by their error. (Furnish’s translation)* Here Paul takes it for granted that same sex intercourse is unnatural and in every instance an expression of sexual lust. The point he wishes to establish is that such acts are symptoms of humanity’s fundamental sin-which is refusing to acknowledge and give thanks to God....Paul is not singling out any one group or

vice as especially evil. On the contrary he is emphasizing that there is no distinction, since all have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God (3:22-23)...Paul shared three commonly held presuppositions about same sex acts: that people who perform them could have decided just as readily not to, that their performance is always and inevitably lustful, and that they are absolutely unnatural.

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