

The Most Misinterpreted Bible Passages to LGBTQ Persons

(All passages are from the New Revised Standard Version of the Bible)

Genesis 19:1-29

The Depravity of Sodom

¹ The two angels came to Sodom in the evening, and Lot was sitting in the gateway of Sodom. When Lot saw them, he rose to meet them, and bowed down with his face to the ground. ² He said, "Please, my lords, turn aside to your servant's house and spend the night, and wash your feet; then you can rise early and go on your way." They said, "No; we will spend the night in the square." ³ But he urged them strongly; so they turned aside to him and entered his house; and he made them a feast, and baked unleavened bread, and they ate. ⁴ But before they lay down, the men of the city, the men of Sodom, both young and old, all the people to the last man, surrounded the house; ⁵ and they called to Lot, "Where are the men who came to you tonight? Bring them out to us, so that we may know them." ⁶ Lot went out of the door to the men, shut the door after him, ⁷ and said, "I beg you, my brothers, do not act so wickedly. ⁸ Look, I have two daughters who have not known a man; let me bring them out to you, and do to them as you please; only do nothing to these men, for they have come under the shelter of my roof." ⁹ But they replied, "Stand back!" And they said, "This fellow came here as an alien, and he would play the judge! Now we will deal worse with you than with them." Then they pressed hard against the man Lot, and came near the door to break it down. ¹⁰ But the men inside reached out their hands and brought Lot into the house with them, and shut the door. ¹¹ And they struck with blindness the men who were at the door of the house, both small and great, so that they were unable to find the door.

Sodom and Gomorrah Destroyed

¹² Then the men said to Lot, "Have you anyone else here? Sons-in-law, sons, daughters, or anyone you have in the city—bring them out of the place. ¹³ For we are about to destroy this place, because the outcry against its people has become great before the Lord, and the Lord has sent us to destroy it." ¹⁴ So Lot went out and said to his sons-in-law, who were to marry his daughters, "Up, get out of this place; for the Lord is about to destroy the city." But he seemed to his sons-in-law to be jesting.

¹⁵ When morning dawned, the angels urged Lot, saying, "Get up, take your wife and your two daughters who are here, or else you will be consumed in the punishment of the city." ¹⁶ But he lingered; so the men seized him and his wife and his two daughters by the hand, the Lord being merciful to him, and they brought him out and left him outside the city. ¹⁷ When they had brought them outside, they said, "Flee for your life; do not look back or stop anywhere in the Plain; flee to the hills, or else you will be consumed." ¹⁸ And Lot said to them, "Oh, no, my lords; ¹⁹ your servant has found favor with you, and you have shown me great kindness in saving my life; but I cannot flee to the hills, for fear the disaster will overtake me and I die. ²⁰ Look, that city is near enough to flee to, and it is a little one. Let me escape there—is it not a little one?—and my life will be saved!" ²¹ He said to him, "Very well, I grant you this favor too, and will not overthrow the city of which you have spoken. ²² Hurry, escape there, for I can

do nothing until you arrive there.” Therefore the city was called Zoar. ²³ The sun had risen on the earth when Lot came to Zoar.

²⁴ Then the Lord rained on Sodom and Gomorrah sulfur and fire from the Lord out of heaven; ²⁵ and he overthrew those cities, and all the Plain, and all the inhabitants of the cities, and what grew on the ground. ²⁶ But Lot’s wife, behind him, looked back, and she became a pillar of salt.

²⁷ Abraham went early in the morning to the place where he had stood before the Lord; ²⁸ and he looked down toward Sodom and Gomorrah and toward all the land of the Plain and saw the smoke of the land going up like the smoke of a furnace.

²⁹ So it was that, when God destroyed the cities of the Plain, God remembered Abraham, and sent Lot out of the midst of the overthrow, when he overthrew the cities in which Lot had settled.

Leviticus 18

Sexual Relations

18 The Lord spoke to Moses, saying:

² Speak to the people of Israel and say to them: I am the Lord your God. ³ You shall not do as they do in the land of Egypt, where you lived, and you shall not do as they do in the land of Canaan, to which I am bringing you. You shall not follow their statutes. ⁴ My ordinances you shall observe and my statutes you shall keep, following them: I am the Lord your God. ⁵ You shall keep my statutes and my ordinances; by doing so one shall live: I am the Lord.

⁶ None of you shall approach anyone near of kin to uncover nakedness: I am the Lord. ⁷ You shall not uncover the nakedness of your father, which is the nakedness of your mother; she is your mother, you shall not uncover her nakedness. ⁸ You shall not uncover the nakedness of your father’s wife; it is the nakedness of your father. ⁹ You shall not uncover the nakedness of your sister, your father’s daughter or your mother’s daughter, whether born at home or born abroad. ¹⁰ You shall not uncover the nakedness of your son’s daughter or of your daughter’s daughter, for their nakedness is your own nakedness. ¹¹ You shall not uncover the nakedness of your father’s wife’s daughter, begotten by your father, since she is your sister. ¹² You shall not uncover the nakedness of your father’s sister; she is your father’s flesh. ¹³ You shall not uncover the nakedness of your mother’s sister, for she is your mother’s flesh. ¹⁴ You shall not uncover the nakedness of your father’s brother, that is, you shall not approach his wife; she is your aunt. ¹⁵ You shall not uncover the nakedness of your daughter-in-law: she is your son’s wife; you shall not uncover her nakedness. ¹⁶ You shall not uncover the nakedness of your brother’s wife; it is your brother’s nakedness. ¹⁷ You shall not uncover the nakedness of a woman and her daughter, and you shall not take her son’s daughter or her daughter’s daughter to uncover her nakedness; they are your flesh; it is depravity. ¹⁸ And you shall not take a woman as a rival to her sister, uncovering her nakedness while her sister is still alive.

¹⁹ You shall not approach a woman to uncover her nakedness while she is in her menstrual uncleanness. ²⁰ You shall not have sexual relations with your kinsman’s wife, and defile yourself with her. ²¹ You shall not give any of your offspring to sacrifice them to Molech, and so profane the name of your God: I am the Lord. ²² You shall not lie with a male as with a woman; it is an abomination. ²³ You shall not have sexual relations with any animal and defile

yourself with it, nor shall any woman give herself to an animal to have sexual relations with it: it is perversion.

²⁴ Do not defile yourselves in any of these ways, for by all these practices the nations I am casting out before you have defiled themselves. ²⁵ Thus the land became defiled; and I punished it for its iniquity, and the land vomited out its inhabitants. ²⁶ But you shall keep my statutes and my ordinances and commit none of these abominations, either the citizen or the alien who resides among you ²⁷ (for the inhabitants of the land, who were before you, committed all of these abominations, and the land became defiled); ²⁸ otherwise the land will vomit you out for defiling it, as it vomited out the nation that was before you. ²⁹ For whoever commits any of these abominations shall be cut off from their people. ³⁰ So keep my charge not to commit any of these abominations that were done before you, and not to defile yourselves by them: I am the Lord your God.

Leviticus 20

Penalties for Violations of Holiness

20 The Lord spoke to Moses, saying: ² Say further to the people of Israel: Any of the people of Israel, or of the aliens who reside in Israel, who give any of their offspring to Molech shall be put to death; the people of the land shall stone them to death. ³ I myself will set my face against them, and will cut them off from the people, because they have given of their offspring to Molech, defiling my sanctuary and profaning my holy name. ⁴ And if the people of the land should ever close their eyes to them, when they give of their offspring to Molech, and do not put them to death, ⁵ I myself will set my face against them and against their family, and will cut them off from among their people, them and all who follow them in prostituting themselves to Molech.

⁶ If any turn to mediums and wizards, prostituting themselves to them, I will set my face against them, and will cut them off from the people. ⁷ Consecrate yourselves therefore, and be holy; for I am the Lord your God. ⁸ Keep my statutes, and observe them; I am the Lord; I sanctify you. ⁹ All who curse father or mother shall be put to death; having cursed father or mother, their blood is upon them.

¹⁰ If a man commits adultery with the wife of his neighbor, both the adulterer and the adulteress shall be put to death. ¹¹ The man who lies with his father's wife has uncovered his father's nakedness; both of them shall be put to death; their blood is upon them. ¹² If a man lies with his daughter-in-law, both of them shall be put to death; they have committed perversion, their blood is upon them. ¹³ If a man lies with a male as with a woman, both of them have committed an abomination; they shall be put to death; their blood is upon them. ¹⁴ If a man takes a wife and her mother also, it is depravity; they shall be burned to death, both he and they, that there may be no depravity among you. ¹⁵ If a man has sexual relations with an animal, he shall be put to death; and you shall kill the animal. ¹⁶ If a woman approaches any animal and has sexual relations with it, you shall kill the woman and the animal; they shall be put to death, their blood is upon them.

¹⁷ If a man takes his sister, a daughter of his father or a daughter of his mother, and sees her nakedness, and she sees his nakedness, it is a disgrace, and they shall be cut off in the sight of their people; he has uncovered his sister's nakedness, he shall be subject to punishment. ¹⁸ If a man lies with a woman having her sickness and uncovers her nakedness, he has laid bare her

flow and she has laid bare her flow of blood; both of them shall be cut off from their people. ¹⁹ You shall not uncover the nakedness of your mother's sister or of your father's sister, for that is to lay bare one's own flesh; they shall be subject to punishment. ²⁰ If a man lies with his uncle's wife, he has uncovered his uncle's nakedness; they shall be subject to punishment; they shall die childless. ²¹ If a man takes his brother's wife, it is impurity; he has uncovered his brother's nakedness; they shall be childless.

²² You shall keep all my statutes and all my ordinances, and observe them, so that the land to which I bring you to settle in may not vomit you out. ²³ You shall not follow the practices of the nation that I am driving out before you. Because they did all these things, I abhorred them. ²⁴ But I have said to you: You shall inherit their land, and I will give it to you to possess, a land flowing with milk and honey. I am the Lord your God; I have separated you from the peoples. ²⁵ You shall therefore make a distinction between the clean animal and the unclean, and between the unclean bird and the clean; you shall not bring abomination on yourselves by animal or by bird or by anything with which the ground teems, which I have set apart for you to hold unclean. ²⁶ You shall be holy to me; for I the Lord am holy, and I have separated you from the other peoples to be mine.

²⁷ A man or a woman who is a medium or a wizard shall be put to death; they shall be stoned to death, their blood is upon them.

Romans 1

Salutation

¹ Paul, a servant of Jesus Christ, called to be an apostle, set apart for the gospel of God, ² which he promised beforehand through his prophets in the holy scriptures, ³ the gospel concerning his Son, who was descended from David according to the flesh ⁴ and was declared to be Son of God with power according to the spirit of holiness by resurrection from the dead, Jesus Christ our Lord, ⁵ through whom we have received grace and apostleship to bring about the obedience of faith among all the Gentiles for the sake of his name, ⁶ including yourselves who are called to belong to Jesus Christ,

⁷ To all God's beloved in Rome, who are called to be saints:
Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

Prayer of Thanksgiving

⁸ First, I thank my God through Jesus Christ for all of you, because your faith is proclaimed throughout the world. ⁹ For God, whom I serve with my spirit by announcing the gospel^[G] of his Son, is my witness that without ceasing I remember you always in my prayers, ¹⁰ asking that by God's will I may somehow at last succeed in coming to you. ¹¹ For I am longing to see you so that I may share with you some spiritual gift to strengthen you— ¹² or rather so that we may be mutually encouraged by each other's faith, both yours and mine. ¹³ I want you to know, brothers and sisters, that I have often intended to come to you (but thus far have been prevented), in order that I may reap some harvest among you as I have among the rest of the Gentiles. ¹⁴ I am a debtor both to Greeks and to barbarians, both to the wise and to the foolish ¹⁵ —hence my eagerness to proclaim the gospel to you also who are in Rome.

The Power of the Gospel

¹⁶ For I am not ashamed of the gospel; it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who has faith, to the Jew first and also to the Greek. ¹⁷ For in it the righteousness of God is revealed through faith for faith; as it is written, “The one who is righteous will live by faith.”

The Guilt of Humankind

¹⁸ For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and wickedness of those who by their wickedness suppress the truth. ¹⁹ For what can be known about God is plain to them, because God has shown it to them. ²⁰ Ever since the creation of the world his eternal power and divine nature, invisible though they are, have been understood and seen through the things he has made. So they are without excuse; ²¹ for though they knew God, they did not honor him as God or give thanks to him, but they became futile in their thinking, and their senseless minds were darkened. ²² Claiming to be wise, they became fools; ²³ and they exchanged the glory of the immortal God for images resembling a mortal human being or birds or four-footed animals or reptiles.

²⁴ Therefore God gave them up in the lusts of their hearts to impurity, to the degrading of their bodies among themselves, ²⁵ because they exchanged the truth about God for a lie and worshiped and served the creature rather than the Creator, who is blessed forever! Amen. ²⁶ For this reason God gave them up to degrading passions. Their women exchanged natural intercourse for unnatural, ²⁷ and in the same way also the men, giving up natural intercourse with women, were consumed with passion for one another. Men committed shameless acts with men and received in their own persons the due penalty for their error.

²⁸ And since they did not see fit to acknowledge God, God gave them up to a debased mind and to things that should not be done. ²⁹ They were filled with every kind of wickedness, evil, covetousness, malice. Full of envy, murder, strife, deceit, craftiness, they are gossips, ³⁰ slanderers, God-haters, insolent, haughty, boastful, inventors of evil, rebellious toward parents, ³¹ foolish, faithless, heartless, ruthless. ³² They know God’s decree, that those who practice such things deserve to die—yet they not only do them but even applaud others who practice them.

1 Corinthians 6

Lawsuits among Believers

6 When any of you has a grievance against another, do you dare to take it to court before the unrighteous, instead of taking it before the saints? ² Do you not know that the saints will judge the world? And if the world is to be judged by you, are you incompetent to try trivial cases? ³ Do you not know that we are to judge angels—to say nothing of ordinary matters? ⁴ If you have ordinary cases, then, do you appoint as judges those who have no standing in the church? ⁵ I say this to your shame. Can it be that there is no one among you wise enough to decide between one believer and another, ⁶ but a believer goes to court against a believer—and before unbelievers at that?

⁷ In fact, to have lawsuits at all with one another is already a defeat for you. Why not rather be wronged? Why not rather be defrauded? ⁸ But you yourselves wrong and defraud—and believers at that.

⁹ Do you not know that wrongdoers will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived! Fornicators, idolaters, adulterers, male prostitutes, sodomites, ¹⁰ thieves, the greedy, drunkards, revilers, robbers—none of these will inherit the kingdom of God. ¹¹ And this is what some of you used to be. But you were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and in the Spirit of our God.

Glorify God in Body and Spirit

¹² “All things are lawful for me,” but not all things are beneficial. “All things are lawful for me,” but I will not be dominated by anything. ¹³ “Food is meant for the stomach and the stomach for food,” and God will destroy both one and the other. The body is meant not for fornication but for the Lord, and the Lord for the body. ¹⁴ And God raised the Lord and will also raise us by his power. ¹⁵ Do you not know that your bodies are members of Christ? Should I therefore take the members of Christ and make them members of a prostitute? Never! ¹⁶ Do you not know that whoever is united to a prostitute becomes one body with her? For it is said, “The two shall be one flesh.” ¹⁷ But anyone united to the Lord becomes one spirit with him. ¹⁸ Shun fornication! Every sin that a person commits is outside the body; but the fornicator sins against the body itself. ¹⁹ Or do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit within you, which you have from God, and that you are not your own? ²⁰ For you were bought with a price; therefore glorify God in your body.

1 Timothy 1

Salutation

¹ Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by the command of God our Savior and of Christ Jesus our hope,

² To Timothy, my loyal child in the faith:
Grace, mercy, and peace from God the Father and Christ Jesus our Lord.

Warning against False Teachers

³ I urge you, as I did when I was on my way to Macedonia, to remain in Ephesus so that you may instruct certain people not to teach any different doctrine, ⁴ and not to occupy themselves with myths and endless genealogies that promote speculations rather than the divine training that is known by faith. ⁵ But the aim of such instruction is love that comes from a pure heart, a good conscience, and sincere faith. ⁶ Some people have deviated from these and turned to meaningless talk, ⁷ desiring to be teachers of the law, without understanding either what they are saying or the things about which they make assertions.

⁸ Now we know that the law is good, if one uses it legitimately. ⁹ This means understanding that the law is laid down not for the innocent but for the lawless and disobedient, for the godless and sinful, for the unholy and profane, for those who kill their father or mother, for murderers, ¹⁰ fornicators, sodomites, slave traders, liars, perjurers, and whatever else is contrary to the sound teaching ¹¹ that conforms to the glorious gospel of the blessed God, which he entrusted to me.

Gratitude for Mercy

¹² I am grateful to Christ Jesus our Lord, who has strengthened me, because he judged me faithful and appointed me to his service, ¹³ even though I was formerly a blasphemer, a persecutor, and a man of violence. But I received mercy because I had acted ignorantly in unbelief, ¹⁴ and the grace of our Lord overflowed for me with the faith and love that are in Christ Jesus. ¹⁵ The saying is sure and worthy of full acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners—of whom I am the foremost. ¹⁶ But for that very reason I received mercy, so that in me, as the foremost, Jesus Christ might display the utmost patience, making me an example to those who would come to believe in him for eternal life. ¹⁷ To the King of the ages, immortal, invisible, the only God, be honor and glory forever and ever. Amen.

¹⁸ I am giving you these instructions, Timothy, my child, in accordance with the prophecies made earlier about you, so that by following them you may fight the good fight, ¹⁹ having faith and a good conscience. By rejecting conscience, certain persons have suffered shipwreck in the faith; ²⁰ among them are Hymenaeus and Alexander, whom I have turned over to Satan, so that they may learn not to blaspheme.

Affirming Texts

Genesis 1:27

So God created humankind in his image,
in the image of God he created them;
male and female he created them.

Deuteronomy 6:4-9

⁴ Hear, O Israel: The Lord is our God, the Lord alone. ⁵ You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your might. ⁶ Keep these words that I am commanding you today in your heart. ⁷ Recite them to your children and talk about them when you are at home and when you are away, when you lie down and when you rise. ⁸ Bind them as a sign on your hand, fix them as an emblem on your forehead, ⁹ and write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates.

Acts 8:26-40

Philip and the Ethiopian Eunuch

²⁶ Then an angel of the Lord said to Philip, “Get up and go toward the south^[g] to the road that goes down from Jerusalem to Gaza.” (This is a wilderness road.) ²⁷ So he got up and went. Now there was an Ethiopian eunuch, a court official of the Candace, queen of the Ethiopians, in charge of her entire treasury. He had come to Jerusalem to worship ²⁸ and was returning home; seated in his chariot, he was reading the prophet Isaiah. ²⁹ Then the Spirit said to Philip, “Go over to this chariot and join it.” ³⁰ So Philip ran up to it and heard him reading the prophet Isaiah. He asked, “Do you understand what you are reading?” ³¹ He replied, “How can I, unless someone guides me?” And he invited Philip to get in and sit beside him. ³² Now the passage of the scripture that he was reading was this:

“Like a sheep he was led to the slaughter,
and like a lamb silent before its shearer,
so he does not open his mouth.

³³ In his humiliation justice was denied him.

Who can describe his generation?

For his life is taken away from the earth.”

³⁴ The eunuch asked Philip, “About whom, may I ask you, does the prophet say this, about himself or about someone else?” ³⁵ Then Philip began to speak, and starting with this scripture, he proclaimed to him the good news about Jesus. ³⁶ As they were going along the road, they came to some water; and the eunuch said, “Look, here is water! What is to prevent me from being baptized?” ³⁸ He commanded the chariot to stop, and both of them, Philip and the eunuch, went down into the water, and Philip baptized him. ³⁹ When they came up out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord snatched Philip away; the eunuch saw him no more, and went on his way rejoicing. ⁴⁰ But Philip found himself at Azotus, and as he was passing through the region, he proclaimed the good news to all the towns until he came to Caesarea.

Galatians 3:28

²⁸ There is no longer Jew or Greek, there is no longer slave or free, there is no longer male and female; for all of you are one in Christ Jesus.

1 Corinthians 12:13

²⁸ There is no longer Jew or Greek, there is no longer slave or free, there is no longer male and female; for all of you are one in Christ Jesus.

Romans 8:31-39

God’s Love in Christ Jesus

³¹ What then are we to say about these things? If God is for us, who is against us? ³² He who did not withhold his own Son, but gave him up for all of us, will he not with him also give us everything else? ³³ Who will bring any charge against God’s elect? It is God who justifies. ³⁴ Who is to condemn? It is Christ Jesus, who died, yes, who was raised, who is at the right hand of God, who indeed intercedes for us. ³⁵ Who will separate us from the love of Christ? Will hardship, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? ³⁶ As it is written,

“For your sake we are being killed all day long;
we are accounted as sheep to be slaughtered.”

³⁷ No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. ³⁸ For I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor rulers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, ³⁹ nor height, nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.

1 Corinthians 13

The Gift of Love

13 If I speak in the tongues of mortals and of angels, but do not have love, I am a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal. ² And if I have prophetic powers, and understand all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have all faith, so as to remove mountains, but do not have love, I am nothing. ³ If I give away all my possessions, and if I hand over my body so that I may boast, but do not have love, I gain nothing.

⁴ Love is patient; love is kind; love is not envious or boastful or arrogant ⁵ or rude. It does not insist on its own way; it is not irritable or resentful; ⁶ it does not rejoice in wrongdoing, but rejoices in the truth. ⁷ It bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things. ⁸ Love never ends. But as for prophecies, they will come to an end; as for tongues, they will cease; as for knowledge, it will come to an end. ⁹ For we know only in part, and we prophesy only in part; ¹⁰ but when the complete comes, the partial will come to an end. ¹¹ When I was a child, I spoke like a child, I thought like a child, I reasoned like a child; when I became an adult, I put an end to childish ways. ¹² For now we see in a mirror, dimly, but then we will see face to face. Now I know only in part; then I will know fully, even as I have been fully known. ¹³ And now faith, hope, and love abide, these three; and the greatest of these is love.

Micah 6:6-16

What God Requires

⁶ “With what shall I come before the Lord,
and bow myself before God on high?
Shall I come before him with burnt offerings,
with calves a year old?

⁷ Will the Lord be pleased with thousands of rams,
with ten thousands of rivers of oil?
Shall I give my firstborn for my transgression,
the fruit of my body for the sin of my soul?”

⁸ He has told you, O mortal, what is good;
and what does the Lord require of you
but to do justice, and to love kindness,
and to walk humbly with your God?

Cheating and Violence to Be Punished

⁹ The voice of the Lord cries to the city
(it is sound wisdom to fear your name):
Hear, O tribe and assembly of the city!

¹⁰ Can I forget the treasures of wickedness in the house of the wicked,
and the scant measure that is accursed?

¹¹ Can I tolerate wicked scales
and a bag of dishonest weights?

¹² Your wealthy are full of violence;
your inhabitants speak lies,
with tongues of deceit in their mouths.

¹³ Therefore I have begun to strike you down,
making you desolate because of your sins.

¹⁴ You shall eat, but not be satisfied,
and there shall be a gnawing hunger within you;
you shall put away, but not save,
and what you save, I will hand over to the sword.

¹⁵ You shall sow, but not reap;
you shall tread olives, but not anoint yourselves with oil;
you shall tread grapes, but not drink wine.

¹⁶ For you have kept the statutes of Omri
and all the works of the house of Ahab,
and you have followed their counsels.

Therefore I will make you a desolation, and your inhabitants an object of hissing;
so you shall bear the scorn of my people.