



The Grace Proclamator and Promulgator

“To testify the gospel of the grace of God.” Acts 20:24

PUBLISHED AS A MISSION PROJECT OF PILGRIMS HOPE BAPTIST CHURCH

Vol. XX, No. 6

June 1, 2004

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I BELIEVE GOD CONCERNING HOMOSEXUALS AND HOMOSEXUALITY

Part Two

By Wayne Camp

A SERMON PREACHED AT PILGRIMS HOPE BAPTIST CHURCH

(Continued from April 1, 2004, issue)

THE JUDGMENT THAT AWAITS HOMOSEXUALS

God used Sodom and Gomorrah and some other cities in that area as a warning of his holy hatred of the abomination of homosexuality. In Sodom and Gomorrah God, through the instrumentality of angels, smote the homosexuals with blindness. Later they were killed when God rained fire and brimstone upon them from heaven. *2 Peter 2:6 And turning the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah into ashes condemned them with an overthrow, making*

them an ensample unto those that after should live ungodly. Let me impress upon you the fact that God says that what he did to the homosexuals in Sodom and Gomorrah was what he saw to be good. Ezekiel 16:49-50 Behold, this was the iniquity of thy sister Sodom, pride, fulness of bread, and abundance of idleness was in her and in her daughters, neither did she strengthen the hand of the poor and needy. 50 And they were haughty, and committed abomination before me: therefore I took them away as I saw good.

(See HOMOSEXUALITY, Page 8, Rt. Col)

AN EXAMINATION OF THE MEDICAL EVIDENCE FOR THE PHYSICAL DEATH OF CHRIST

By Brad Harrub, Ph.D. & Bert Thompson, Ph.D.

[**Editor's note:** Due to the length of this article, it was necessary that I divide it into two parts. Part one is here and part two will be published in a subsequent issue. The entire article may be found at this URL: <http://www.apologeticspress.org/rr/rr2002/r&r0201a.htm>. This article will not be posted on our WebSite due to restrictions of the authors. However, this link will be posted so that our online readers can go to the article. These authors maintain a very informative WebSite. The publication of this article does not imply that we agree 100% with its contents but I feel it is a very insightful study of the physical sufferings of the Lord Jesus Christ. It is printed here and in a coming issue for your perusal.]

A Note From the Authors:

[The following article examines the crucifixion and death

of Christ from a medical point of view. Because of the scientific nature of the material, readers may wish to know something concerning the educational backgrounds out of which the two authors are writing. Dr. Harrub earned his doctorate in neurobiology and anatomy at the Health Sciences Center of the College of Medicine, University of Tennessee. Dr. Thompson earned his doctorate in microbiology at Texas A&M University, where he also served for a number of years as a professor in the Department of Anatomy and Public Health in the College of Veterinary Medicine, and as Director of the College's Cooperative Education Program in Biomedical Science.]

The perception of the death of Jesus Christ in the twenty-first century frequently takes place through human eyes that have been tainted with

THE GRACE PROCLAMATOR AND PROMULGATOR (USPS #000476) is published monthly (subscription free) by the authority of Pilgrims Hope Baptist Church, 3084 Woodrow, Memphis, TN 38127. Periodical postage paid at Memphis, TN 38101.

POSTMASTER: Send address changes to THE GRACE PROCLAMATOR AND PROMULGATOR, 3084 Woodrow, Memphis, TN 38127

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a sanitized, sterilized, and often-stylized "art-deco" depiction of Christ on the cross. Today, it is exceedingly uncommon to hear a description of the medical details attending Christ's crucifixion, yet a complete and thorough investigation into such evidence can lead to a firmer knowledge and a deeper-rooted faith about what actually transpired on that old rugged cross nearly 2,000 years ago.

Christ's future appearance and suffering was first foretold in Genesis 3:14-15: "**And Jehovah God said unto the serpent, "Because thou**

hast done this, cursed art thou above all cattle, and above every beast of the field; upon thy belly shalt thou go, and dust shalt thou eat all the days of thy life: and I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed: he shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel."

The phrase, "**He shall bruise thy head...**" is the assurance that Christ will reign victorious in the end. "**Thou shalt bruise his heel...**" is without doubt speaking of Satan's temporary victory over Christ at the crucifixion. While the physical aspects of crucifixion admittedly consist of considerably more than a "**bruised heel,**" this comparison certainly is valid when contrasted to the ultimate demise of Satan in the lake of fire (Revelation 19:20). Crucifixions were commonplace during the time the gospel accounts were written. Inasmuch as everyone knew about them, however, great detail was not provided in the Scriptures concerning the actual practice of crucifixion. Sadly, this omission leaves individuals living in the twenty-first century at a distinct disadvantage. How much do we really know, for example, about this ancient practice of torture and death? [Editor's note: I am convinced the Bible tells us exactly what God would have us know though I agree lack of detail leaves us the task of researching further as these men have done.]

Crucifixion is believed to have originated in the Persian Empire; however, Romans are given credit for perfecting it into a heinous means of inflicting death (see Shroud, 1871; DePasquale and Burch, 1963, p. 434). Romans appreciated the cruelty of crucifixion because it demonstrated three clear advantages over other means of execution. First, it was incredibly painful for the victim (so much so that the person being crucified often was rendered unconscious during the proceedings). Second, it provided a lingering death, which was much preferred for extremely vicious criminal acts. Third, it afforded a horrific deterrent for anyone contemplating a similar offense. So what did Christ actually endure in those few short hours? The discussion that follows is intended to be an exhaustive historical and medical review of the physical death of Jesus Christ. It is our hope that the information provided here will enable

you to pull back the curtain of history and experience a brief glimpse of the love that Jesus possesses for humankind. We believe you will find this material not only educational, but also edifying as you contemplate the physical agony Christ suffered for each one of us.

THE GARDEN OF GETHSEMANE

Even as Christ was instituting the Lord's Supper (Matthew 26:26-29), His private thoughts already were centered on His impending suffering and death (Luke 22:15). Shortly thereafter, Christ and His disciples went to the Mount of Olives, into the Garden of Gethsemane. Previously, Luke had enlightened his readers about the importance of this place, stating: "***And in the day time he was teaching in the temple; and at night he went out, and abode in the mount that is called the Mount of Olives***" (Luke 21:37). This grove of olive trees was a place to which the Lord had retreated before, and a place where He probably received a great amount of solace. However, this particular occasion at the Mount of Olives also provided the means by which His betrayer could deliver Him into the hands of the Jews who sought His death.

The name "Gethsemane" derives from the Hebrew *gat shmanim*, meaning "oil press" (Kollek, 1995). Not coincidentally, it was within this place that Christ would feel the crushing weight of the things yet to come—so much so that an angel appeared to Him from heaven, strengthening Him (Luke 22:43). It also is significant that this is the only place in the King James Version of the Bible where the word "agony" is employed. It is because of this agony over things to come that we learn during His prayer "***his sweat was as it were great drops of blood falling down to the ground***" (Luke 22:44). Some have tried to defend the impossibility of bloody sweat. However, a thorough search of the medical literature demonstrates that such a condition, while admittedly rare, can occur.

Commonly referred to as hematidrosis or hemohidrosis (Allen, 1967, pp. 745-747), this condition results in the excretion of blood or blood pigment in the sweat. Under conditions of

great emotional stress, tiny capillaries in the sweat glands can rupture (Lumpkin, 1978), thus mixing blood with perspiration. This condition has been reported in extreme instances of stress (see Sutton, 1956, pp. 1393-1394). For example, a young girl who had a terrible fear of air raids during World War I developed the condition after a gas explosion occurred in the house next door to hers (Scott, 1918). Another report details that after being threatened by sword-bearing soldiers, a Catholic nun "was so terrified that she bled from every part of her body and died of hemorrhage in the sight of her assailants" (von Grafenberg, 1585). During the waning years of the twentieth century, 76 cases of hematidrosis were studied and classified into categories according to causative factors (Holoubek and Holoubek, 1996). Acute fear and intense mental contemplation were found to be the most frequent inciting causes. While the extent of blood loss generally is minimal, hematidrosis also results in the skin becoming extremely tender and fragile (Barbet, 1953, pp. 74-75; Lumpkin, 1978), which would have made Christ's pending physical insults even more painful.

BETRAYAL AND ARREST

As the night inched toward dawn, Jesus finally relented and allowed the disciples to sleep (Matthew 26:43-44; Mark 14:41). However, He found no sleep Himself prior to His betrayer's arrival. Soon after midnight, Christ was greeted with a kiss by Judas Iscariot, who for 30 pieces of silver sold information to the chief priest pertaining to Christ's whereabouts. The angry, armed mob seized the docile Son of God and led Him away to endure a sham of an illegal trial at the hands of corrupt Jewish authorities.

JEWISH TRIALS

The persistent procession of physical insults began soon after His arrest. We are told that Jesus was mocked, smitten, blindfolded, and struck on the face (Luke 22:63-64). Hundreds of years earlier, Isaiah had prophesied about this very event, writing, "***I gave my back to the smiters, and my cheeks to them that plucked***

off the hair; I hid not my face from shame and spitting” (Isaiah 50:6). It was in response to a question from the high priest that we read where Jesus was struck yet again. **“And when he had said this, one of the officers standing by struck Jesus with his hand, saying, ‘Answerest thou the high priest so?’ ” (John 18:22).** While the exact force with which these blows were rendered is not described, it is easy to estimate that these early beatings were sufficient to incite multiple contusions, especially if Christ had suffered from hematomas earlier in Gethsemane.

Shortly after daybreak, Jesus was tried before Caiaphas and the political Sanhedrin (with the Pharisees and Sadducees) and found guilty of blasphemy (Matthew 27:1; Luke 22:66-71). Significantly, we never read of two witnesses coming forward with collaborating stories that would permit the death sentence to be meted out to Christ. Caiaphas and the Sanhedrin were bound by Jewish law, which plainly stated: **“At the mouth of two witnesses, or three witnesses, shall he that is to die be put to death; at the mouth of one witness he shall not be put to death” (Deuteronomy 17:6).** The law went on to state: **“One witness shall not rise up against a man for any iniquity, or for any sin, in any sin that he sinneth: at the mouth of two witnesses, or at the mouth of three witnesses, shall a matter be established” (Deuteronomy 19:15).** However, we are told that at the trial many bare false witness against him, and their witness agreed not together. **And there stood up certain, and bare false witness against him, saying, “We heard him say, ‘I will destroy this temple that is made with hands, and in three days I will build another made without hands.’ ” And not even so did their witness agree together (Mark 14:56-59).**

A study of Jewish law reveals that a number of those laws were broken the night Jesus was arrested and convicted (Bucklin, 1970).

- Arrests could not be made at night.
- The time and date of the trial were illegal because it took place at night on the eve of the Sabbath—a time that precluded any opportunity for a required adjournment to

the next day in the event of a conviction.

- The Sanhedrin was without authority to instigate charges. It was only supposed to investigate charges that had been brought before it, but in Jesus’ trial, the court itself formulated the charges.
- As noted earlier, the stringent requirement of two witnesses testifying in agreement to merit the death penalty had not been met.
- The court did not meet in the regular meeting place of the Sanhedrin, as required by Jewish law.
- Christ was not permitted a defense. Under existing Jewish law, an exhaustive search into the facts presented by the witnesses should have occurred—but did not.
- The Sanhedrin itself pronounced the death sentence. During Roman captivity, however, the Sanhedrin was not allowed to impose the death sentence (John 18:31). As the Roman historian Tacitus recorded, “...the Romans reserved to themselves the right of the sword.”

ROMAN TRIALS—CHRIST BEFORE PILATE

The Jews were governed by Roman law, and thus did not have the power to execute Jesus. Therefore, we are told that early in the morning the Temple officials took Jesus to the Praetorium. Realizing that any charge of blasphemy was of little concern to the Romans, the charges against Him were upgraded from blasphemy to an allegation that Jesus claimed to be a king who forbade the nation to give tribute to Caesar, thereby fomenting sedition and treason (Luke 23:2). After an initial meeting with Jesus, Pilate admitted to finding no fault with Him. But instead of being restrained by Pilate’s declaration of Christ’s innocence and considering (as they should have!) whether they might be bringing the guilt of innocent blood upon themselves, the angry Jews were all the more infuriated.

Hearing that Christ was Galilean, Pilate placed Him in Herod’s jurisdiction. We know from Luke’s account, in fact, that Herod was in Jerusalem at the time (Luke 23:7). We are told that Herod was **“exceedingly glad”** because

he **“hoped to have seen some miracle done by him.”** [How fitting that the poorest anonymous beggar who requested a miracle for the relief of his ailment **was not** denied, while this proud prince, who asked for a miracle merely to satisfy his curiosity, **was** denied.] Herod returned Jesus to Pilate—an act that sealed the bond of a budding new friendship: **“And Herod and Pilate became friends with each other that very day: for before they were at enmity between themselves” (Luke 23:12).** Although Pilate could find no fault in Jesus, we are told that he wanted to placate the people and thus **“delivered Jesus, when he had scourged him, to be crucified” (Mark 15:15).**

CHRIST’S HEALTH—UP TO THIS POINT

The most popular means of travel in Jesus’ time were walking, boating, and riding on the backs of various animals. It is likely, therefore, that the daily rigors of His ministry, combined with His young age, ensured that the Lord was in good physical health before His walk to the Garden of Gethsemane. However, in the short span of time between the institution of the Lord’s Supper and the end of the Roman trial, Christ suffered great emotional stress (as evinced by the probable hematidrosis), abandonment by His disciples, and a physical beating after the Jewish trial. It also is important to note that Jesus was forced to walk more than 2.5 miles to and from the sites of various trials, having slept little if any the night before. All these factors would have rendered Jesus particularly vulnerable to the physiological effects of scourging.

SCOURGING

From John’s account, we learn that Pilate had Jesus scourged and then brought Him before the Jews once again, probably in an effort to forego the execution (John 19:1-2). However, the people still demanded Christ’s death. The Greek term translated “scourging” in Matthew 27:26 and Mark 15:15 is the word *phragellosas*, which is translated “having scourged.” The noun form is *phragellion*, which in Latin is translated flagellum, meaning whip or

scourge. John used a word for scourge, *emastigosen*, the noun form of which is *mastix*, meaning a whip or a scourge. [It is from this word that we get our English word mastigium, which refers to an organ found in caterpillars that possess whip-like processes to keep parasites away.]

The practice of scourging was a legal preliminary to every Roman execution (Hengel, 1977) because it weakened the victim through shock and blood loss. Without scourging, strong, condemned men might live on the cross for several days until exposure, wild animals, insects, or birds resulted in their death. The only allowable exemptions to this law were women and Roman senators or soldiers (except in cases of desertion) [Barbet, 1953, p. 45]. In their critically acclaimed article, “On the Physical Death of Jesus Christ,” in the March 21, 1986 issue of the *Journal of the American Medical Association*, William Edwards and his coauthors (of the famed Mayo Clinic) described the instrument used by the Roman soldiers for flogging as “a short whip (flagrum or flagellum) with several single or braided leather thongs of variable lengths, in which small iron balls or sharp pieces of sheep bones were tied at intervals” (Edwards, et al., 1986, 256:1457, parenthetical item in orig.). Ironically, this is the same type of instrument Jesus Himself used in John 2:15 when He drove the moneychangers from the Temple (although the text does not indicate whether He actually used it, or merely held it out as a symbol of authority).

To position a man for scourging, soldiers tied the victim (frequently naked) to an upright post (Barbet, 1953, p. 46) in a bent position (Vine, et al., 1996, p. 551). The common method of Jewish scourging was via the use of three thongs of leather, the offender receiving thirteen stripes on the bare breast and thirteen across each shoulder (which explains the 40 stripes less one administered to Paul in 2 Corinthians 11:24). However, there was no such limit on the number of blows the Romans could deliver during a scourging, thus Christ’s flogging at their hands would have been much worse. Christ would have received repeated blows to His chest, back, buttocks, and legs by two soldiers (known as lictors), the severity of which

depended mainly on the mood of the lictors at the time. Initial anterior blows undoubtedly would have opened the skin and underlying subcutaneous tissue of His chest (Davis, 1965, p. 185). Subsequent blows would have tattered the underlying pectoralis major and pectoralis minor muscles, as well as the medial aspects of the serratus anterior muscle (Netter, 1994, p. 174). Once these layers were ravaged, repetitive blows could fracture intercostal ribs and shred the three layers of intercostal muscles, causing superficial and cutaneous vessels of the chest to be lacerated. However we know that Christ did not suffer any broken bones because He was crucified in such a manner that **“a bone of him shall not be broken” (John 19:36)**, as was foretold by earlier prophecies (cf. Exodus 12:46; Numbers 9:12; Psalm 34:20). Therefore, at best, the exposed superior epigastric artery and vein may have been compromised, while all other major anterior vessels would have been protected behind the ribs themselves (Netter, p. 175). Edwards and his colleagues described Christ’s scourging in the following manner: Then, as the flogging continued, the lacerations would tear into the underlying skeletal muscles and produce quivering ribbons of bleeding flesh. Pain and blood loss generally set the stage for circulatory shock (1986, 256:1457).

During scourging, the victim would experience an oozing of blood from cutaneous capillaries and veins until the wounds went deep enough to cause arterial blood to spurt out rhythmically with each successive heartbeat. In many cases, scourging “was itself fatal” (Kittel, 1967, 4:517).

Blows to Christ’s back would have started in a similar fashion, with skin being torn with the initial strikes. Subsequent blows then would have resulted in the laceration of the superficial back muscles (i.e., trapezius and latissimus dorsi). Continued beatings would begin to flay into the deep erector spinae muscles (iliocostalis, longissimus, and spinalis) that are innervated by dorsal rami from the spinal cord (Netter, p. 133). The perforation of these muscles would have sent excruciating pain to the spinal cord and then directly to the brain. No doubt in many victims the spinous processes

that extend out in a posterior fashion from each vertebrae would have splintered as a result of the harsh blows. Having the ribs intact would protect the posterior intercostal arteries, the veins, and the intercostal nerves. During the scourging, it would be commonplace for the lacerated skin and bloodied, underlying muscle tissue to take on the appearance (in a quite literal fashion) of “shredded meat.” Peter referred to the beating of Christ when he reminded first-century Christians that it was Jesus **“by whose stripes ye were healed” (1 Peter 2:24)**. Significantly, the term “stripes” in the original language is in the **singular** number, suggesting that the back of the Lord was such a mass of bleeding, bruised tissue, that it appeared as a **single wound** (Wuest, 1942, p. 69).

The blood loss suffered by Christ during His scourging would have been substantial, and would have resulted in a lowered blood pressure and reduced flow of blood throughout His body. If this condition persisted, hypovolemic shock would have set in (characterized by reduced blood flow to cells and tissues), which then would lead to irreversible cell and organ damage, and eventually death. Jewish law originally allowed for 40 blows (Deuteronomy 25:3), but that number later was reduced to 39 to avoid inadvertently violating the law (Barbet, 1953, p. 46). The prophet Isaiah provided a graphic description of the outward appearance of our Lord after He had undergone the scourging: **“Like as many were astonished at thee (his visage was so marred more than any man, and his form more than the sons of men)” [Isaiah 52:14]**. Christ’s body was so disfigured that He almost did not appear human anymore. Yet, sadly, the worst was still to come.

CROWN OF THORNS

In an act of pure sadistic torment, Roman soldiers placed an imitation crown on Christ’s head and mockingly bowed down to Him in reverence. But this was no ordinary crown. John 19 states:

Then Pilate therefore took Jesus, and scourged him. And the soldiers platted a crown

of thorns, and put it on his head, and arrayed him in a purple garment; and they came unto him, and said, "Hail, King of the Jews!" and they struck him with their hands (v. 1-3).

The thorns used to form this special crown were more than a few mere briars. Botanists familiar with foliage of the Middle East have suggested that the thorns could have come from the lote tree—the *Zizyphus spina christi*. This tree had thorns averaging one inch in length. It was improbable for anyone to form a wreath-like crown using these thorns without being injured. It would be more probable, therefore, that the crown of thorns was more like a helmet. In fact, it would have been easier to cut off a bush and use it as a helmet of thorns (see "Crown of Thorns," 2001).

Unlike the traditional crown, which often is depicted in artists' portrayals as an open ring, the actual crown of thorns probably covered His entire scalp (Lumpkin, 1978). The gospel accounts record that following His crowning, Jesus received continued blows to the head. These blows would have driven these thorns deep into the highly vascularized scalp and forehead, penetrating both the frontalis and occipitalis muscles (Netter, p. 21). Perforations of any of the numerous arterial or venous tributaries encircling the cranium—such as the frontal and parietal branch of the superficial temporal artery and vein—would have caused extensive bleeding. Additionally, branches of the superficial cutaneous nerves of the head, such as, for example, the greater occipital nerve and the auriculotemporal nerve, would have been perforated, causing indescribable pain.

The significance of Jesus bearing a scarlet robe during the course of this agonizing persecution signifies His taking on the sins of the world. Isaiah commented on the meaning of the scarlet color: "**Come now, and let us reason together, saith Jehovah: though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool**" (*Isaiah 1:18*). Each time Jesus was stripped or made to wear this robe, the fresh wounds would reopen and bleed, inflicting still more pain. And yet He continued on towards the cross, even though He had the

power to stop the pain and agony at any given second.

CRUCIFIXION

The Jewish historian Josephus aptly described crucifixion, following the siege of Jerusalem by the Romans in A.D. 66-70, as "the most wretched of deaths" (*War of the Jews*, 7.203). The apostle Paul penned these beautiful words describing Christ: "**And being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself and became obedient to the point of death, even the death of the cross**" (*Philippians 2:8*). Knowing that He had to continue on for humanity's sake, a beaten and scourged Jesus began that long walk to the site of His death. Archaeological evidence strongly suggests that criminals during the time of Christ were not forced to carry an entire T-shaped cross as is commonly portrayed in art-deco jewelry or Hollywood films, but rather only the crossbeam (known as a patibulum), which would have weighed between 75 and 125 pounds. It was customary, however, for convicted criminals to carry their own cross from the scourging site to the place of crucifixion (Barbet, 1953, p. 46; Tenney, 1964, p. 286; Bromiley, 1979, 1:829). Their hands normally were tied (or even left unbound) during the procession, rather than being nailed to the patibulum. The effects of the scourging on Christ's physical condition can be inferred from His severely weakened condition—as demonstrated by the fact that later, Simon of Cyrene would be compelled to carry the patibulum. As a bloodied Christ struggled with that crossbeam, a centurion led the procession, which usually consisted of a full Roman military guard (Barbet, 1953, p. 49; Johnson, 1978, 70:100). One of the soldiers in the procession carried a sign that later would be attached to the top of the cross, denoting the convicted man's name and crime (Johnson, 70:100). Measurements indicate that the distance from the Praetorium to the site of Christ's crucifixion was approximately one-third of a mile (600-650 meters) [Davis, 1965, p. 186; Bucklin, 1970; Johnson, 1978, p. 99; Edwards et al., 1986, 256:1456]. The Bible never actually mentions that Christ collapsed under that heavy

load. However, consider the possibility that if His hands were tied to the crosspiece and He had fallen, Jesus would have been unable to break the fall. Researchers have speculated that falling under the weight of a crossbeam very likely would have “resulted in blunt chest trauma and a contused heart” (Ball, 1989, p. 83).

Golgotha is the common name of the location at which Christ was crucified. In Greek letters, this word represents an Aramaic word, *Gulgaltha* (Hebrew *Gulgoleth*), meaning “a skull.” The word Calvary (Latin *Calvaria*; English *calvaria*—skullcap) also means “a skull.” *Calvaria* (and the Greek *Kranion*) are equivalents for the original *Golgotha*. This particular area was located just outside the city on a rounded knoll that has the appearance of a bare skull. It was here, flanked by two thieves, that Christ would bear the sins of the world. The Roman guards who accompanied Him in the procession were required to stay with Him until they could substantiate His death (Bloomquist, 1964; Barbet, 1953, p. 50).

Having suffered considerable blood loss from the scourging, Jesus likely was in a dehydrated state when He finally reached the top of this small knoll. Jesus was offered two drinks at Golgotha. The first—a drugged wine (i.e., mixed with myrrh) that served as a mild analgesic to deaden some of the pain—was offered immediately upon His arrival (Shroud, 1871; Davis, 1965, p. 186). However, after having tasted it, Christ refused the concoction. He chose to face death with a clear mind so He could conquer it willfully as He submitted Himself to the cruelty of the cross. “And when they came to a place called Golgotha, they offered him wine to drink, mixed with gall; but when he tasted it, he would not drink it” (Matthew 27:33-34). This particular drink was intended to dull the pain in preparation for the next step of crucifixion—the nailing of the hands and feet. Thus, it would have been around this time that a battered, bleeding Jesus was thrown to the ground and nailed to the cross. [We will discuss later in this article the second drink offered to Christ.]

(To be continued in a future issue)

(HOMOSEXUALITY Cont. From Page 1)

We have already seen that they will not inherit the kingdom of God. *1 Corinthians 6:9 Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Be not deceived: neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind.* This does not mean that a homosexual cannot be saved. But, it does mean that a practicing homosexual is not saved and will not go to heaven if he dies a practicing homosexual. I know that this sounds hard but it comes down to the fact that one who is given to a habitual life of sin, he is not saved. *1 John 3:7-10 Little children, let no man deceive you: he that doeth righteousness is righteous, even as he is righteous. 8 He that committeth sin is of the devil; for the devil sinneth from the beginning. For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that he might destroy the works of the devil. 9 Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin; for his seed remaineth in him: and he cannot sin, because he is born of God. 10 In this the children of God are manifest, and the children of the devil: whosoever doeth not righteousness is not of God, neither he that loveth not his brother.* In this passage the idea is not that a child of God lives a sinlessly perfect life. It is not that the child of God does not commit single acts of sin from time to time. John is telling us that the child of God leads a life that is characterized by righteousness. He is also telling us that the person who habitually practices sin is not a child of God.

According to Jude, homosexuals will suffer the vengeance of eternal fire. *Jude 7 Even as Sodom and Gomorrha, and the cities about them in like manner, giving themselves over to fornication, and going after strange flesh, are set forth for an example, suffering the vengeance of eternal fire.* It is true that the people of Sodom suffered death by fire and brimstone. What a horrible death they died. But, this fiery death ushered them into the eternal fires of hell from whence no one ever escapes.

Many homosexuals are beyond redemption because God has given many of them over to reprobate minds. *Romans 1:28 And even as they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, God gave them over to a reprobate*

mind, to do those things which are not convenient. A practicing atheist is no more lost and doomed than a practicing homosexual. A person who rejects God and goes about to satisfy his vile, abnormal affections would have to experience the new birth and its consequent graces of faith and repentance before he could ever be saved.

It should also be pointed out that most homosexuals are headed for a short life and an early death—there are not many old homosexuals around. *Leviticus 20:13 If a man also lie with mankind, as he lieth with a woman, both of them have committed an abomination: they shall surely be put to death; their blood shall be upon them.*

SODOM AND GOMORRAH EXAMPLES FOR THOSE WHO COMMIT SUCH ABOMINABLE ACTS

The homosexuals of Sodom and Gomorrah have stood as testament to God's hatred of the sin of homosexuality and his judgment upon those guilty of that sin down through the ages. *2 Peter 2:6 And turning the cities of Sodom and Gomorrha into ashes condemned them with an overthrow, making them an ensample unto those that after should live ungodly. Jude 7 Even as Sodom and Gomorrha, and the cities about them in like manner, giving themselves over to fornication, and going after strange flesh, are set forth for an example, suffering the vengeance of eternal fire.*

God used Sodom as a warning to the Israelites. *Deuteronomy 29:23-24 And that the whole land thereof is brimstone, and salt, and burning, that it is not sown, nor beareth, nor any grass groweth therein, like the overthrow of Sodom, and Gomorrah, Admah, and Zeboim, which the LORD overthrew in his anger, and in his wrath: 24 Even all nations shall say, Wherefore hath the LORD done thus unto this land? what meaneth the heat of this great anger? Lamentations 4:6 For the punishment of the iniquity of the daughter of my people is greater than the punishment of the sin of Sodom, that was overthrown as in a moment, and no hands stayed on her. Amos 4:11 I have overthrown some of you, as God overthrew Sodom and Gomorrah, and ye were as a*

firebrand plucked out of the burning: yet have ye not returned unto me, saith the LORD.

God used those cities as a warning to Babylon. *Isaiah 13:19 And Babylon, the glory of kingdoms, the beauty of the Chaldees' excellency, shall be as when God overthrew Sodom and Gomorrah.*

God used Sodom as a warning to Edom. *Jeremiah 49:17-18 Also Edom shall be a desolation: every one that goeth by it shall be astonished, and shall hiss at all the plagues thereof. 18 As in the overthrow of Sodom and Gomorrah and the neighbour cities thereof, saith the LORD, no man shall abide there, neither shall a son of man dwell in it.*

God used Sodom as a warning to the Chaldeans and Babylon. *Jeremiah 50:35-40 A sword is upon the Chaldeans, saith the LORD, and upon the inhabitants of Babylon, and upon her princes, and upon her wise men. 36 A sword is upon the liars; and they shall dote: a sword is upon her mighty men; and they shall be dismayed. 37 A sword is upon their horses, and upon their chariots, and upon all the mingled people that are in the midst of her; and they shall become as women: a sword is upon her treasures; and they shall be robbed. 38 A drought is upon her waters; and they shall be dried up: for it is the land of graven images, and they are mad upon their idols. 39 Therefore the wild beasts of the desert with the wild beasts of the islands shall dwell there, and the owls shall dwell therein: and it shall be no more inhabited for ever; neither shall it be dwelt in from generation to generation. 40 As God overthrew Sodom and Gomorrah and the neighbour cities thereof, saith the LORD; so shall no man abide there, neither shall any son of man dwell therein.*

God used Sodom as a warning to the Moabites. *Zephaniah 2:9 Therefore as I live, saith the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel, Surely Moab shall be as Sodom, and the children of Ammon as Gomorrah, even the breeding of nettles, and saltpits, and a perpetual desolation: the residue of my people shall spoil them, and the remnant of my people shall possess them.*

Jesus used Sodom and Gomorrah as a memorial to God's judgment upon those who

would not receive those whom he sent forth to preach the gospel. *Matthew 10:14-15 And whosoever shall not receive you, nor hear your words, when ye depart out of that house or city, shake off the dust of your feet. 15 Verily I say unto you, It shall be more tolerable for the land of Sodom and Gomorrhah in the day of judgment, than for that city.*

Jesus used these cities and their sudden destruction as a warning to those who may be still living in unbelief when he will come again. *Luke 17:29-30 But the same day that Lot went out of Sodom it rained fire and brimstone from heaven, and destroyed them all. 30 Even thus shall it be in the day when the Son of man is revealed.*

Isaiah and Paul declared that Israel would have been as Sodom and Gomorrhah if God had not graciously preserved a remnant of that people. *Romans 9:29 And as Esaias said before, Except the Lord of Sabaoth had left us a seed, we had been as Sodoma, and been made like unto Gomorrhah.*

EXPRESSIONS INSPIRED BY THE HOLY SPIRIT THAT CHARACTERIZE HOMOSEXUALITY

(Please forgive some repetition here but I think it needful.)

What does God think of homosexuality? One way to determine the answer to this question is to examine expressions found in Scripture where those holy men of God spoke as they were born along by the Holy Spirit. The terms they used to describe homosexual behaviour are God's terms.

According to the inspired apostle Paul homosexual relations are unseemly or inappropriate. *Romans 1:27 And likewise also the men, leaving the natural use of the woman, burned in their lust one toward another; men with men working that which is unseemly, and receiving in themselves that recompence of their error which was meet.*

Again, according to Paul's inspired epistle, homosexual activity is the exercise of vile affection. *Romans 1:26 For this cause God gave them up unto vile affections: for even their women did change the natural use into that which is against nature.*

In the book of Judges we are told that homosexual sin is an extremely vile act. *Judges 19:22-24 Now as they were making their hearts merry, behold, the men of the city, certain sons of Belial, beset the house round about, and beat at the door, and spake to the master of the house, the old man, saying, Bring forth the man that came into thine house, that we may know him. 23 And the man, the master of the house, went out unto them, and said unto them, Nay, my brethren, nay, I pray you, do not so wickedly; seeing that this man is come into mine house, do not this folly. 24 Behold, here is my daughter a maiden, and his concubine; them I will bring out now, and humble ye them, and do with them what seemeth good unto you: but unto this man do not so vile a thing.*

Homosexual conduct is declared to be against nature or unnatural. *Romans 1:26 For this cause God gave them up unto vile affections: for even their women did change the natural use into that which is against nature.* I recall as a child occasionally hearing that someone was charged with crimes that were against nature. This was apparently charges against homosexuals or against those who were involved in incest.

It is apparent from the conduct of the men at Sodom that homosexual conduct is the result of burning, sinful lust. James said that when lust is conceived it brings forth sin. And lust, unnatural, vile, burning lust is what drives homosexuals. *Romans 1:27 And likewise also the men, leaving the natural use of the woman, burned in their lust one toward another; men with men working that which is unseemly, and receiving in themselves that recompence of their error which was meet.*

Homosexuality is uncleanness. *Romans 1:24 Wherefore God also gave them up to uncleanness through the lusts of their own hearts, to dishonour their own bodies between themselves.* Being unclean does not simply refer to the fact that they sinned in their paganism. Homosexual relations are themselves unclean. It is no wonder that our own country is in an epidemic of Aids. While some innocent people have been infected through blood transfusions, Aids is predominately a disease of homosexuals. It is

passed through their unclean sex acts.

These unclean relationships are dishonoring to the bodies of those involved. *Romans 1:24 Wherefore God also gave them up to uncleanness through the lusts of their own hearts, to dishonour their own bodies between themselves.* I shudder at the thought of what most of these people do.

There is also something about homosexuality that makes those who become homosexuals effeminate and self-abusive. *1 Corinthians 6:9 Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Be not deceived: neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind.* The last two—effeminate and abusers of themselves with mankind—are both descriptions of homosexuals. Rarely does one see a homosexual who is not effeminate. They usually act more like a woman than a man. In reverse, most lesbians—female homosexuals—often have male qualities in their lives and conduct.

God calls them dogs when they sell their bodies in homosexual harlotry. *Deuteronomy 23:18 Thou shalt not bring the hire of a whore, or the price of a dog, into the house of the LORD thy God for any vow: for even both these are abomination unto the LORD thy God.*

Homosexuals are defiled beings. In their homosexual acts they defile themselves with persons of the same gender. *1 Timothy 1:10 For whoremongers, for them that defile themselves with mankind, for menstealers, for liars, for perjured persons, and if there be any other thing that is contrary to sound doctrine.* God considered homosexuals so defiled that under the Law of Moses they were to be put to death. *Leviticus 20:13 If a man also lie with mankind, as he lieth with a woman, both of them have committed an abomination: they shall surely be put to death; their blood shall be upon them.*

By now it should be apparent that the sin of the sodomite is very grievous. *Genesis 18:20 And the LORD said, Because the cry of Sodom and Gomorrah is great, and because their sin is very grievous.* God rained hell down from heaven upon the cities of Sodom, Gomorrah and others in the area because of their grievous iniquity. Even the children and suckling babies in those cities were destroyed. How exceedingly grievous is this sin in the sight of a thrice Holy God.

Sodomites are wicked to the extreme. *Genesis 13:13 But the men of Sodom were wicked and sinners before the LORD exceedingly. Genesis 19:7 And said, I pray you, brethren, do not so wickedly.* Biblical writers must have almost run out of adjectives and terms to describe the incredible awfulness of the sin of sodomy.

Their sin is abominable. *Leviticus 18:22 Thou shalt not lie with mankind, as with womankind: it is abomination.*

They commit folly. *Judges 19:23 And the man, the master of the house, went out unto them, and said unto them, Nay, my brethren, nay, I pray you, do not so wickedly; seeing that this man is come into mine house, do not this folly.* It is not acceptable to call a man a fool unless God has classified him as such. God has called the atheist a fool. *Psalms 14:1 The fool hath said in his heart, There is no God. They are corrupt, they have done abominable works, there is none that doeth good.* God has also classified the acts of homosexuals as folly and that makes them fools.

When one engages in sodomy he is going after strange flesh. *Jude 7 Even as Sodom and Gomorrah, and the cities about them in like manner, giving themselves over to fornication, and going after strange flesh, are set forth for an example, suffering the vengeance of eternal fire.* Commenting on this verse John Gill said. "or "other flesh"; meaning not other women besides their own wives, but men; and designs that detestable and unnatural sin, which, from these people, is called sodomy to this day; and which is an exceeding great sin, contrary to the light of nature and law of God, dishonourable to human nature, and scandalous to a nation and people, and commonly prevails where idolatry and infidelity do, as among the Papists and Mahometans; and arose from idleness and fulness of bread in Sodom, and was committed in the sight of God, with great impudence."

Matthew Henry made this comment on this verse. "They were guilty of abominable wickedness, not to be named or thought of but with the utmost abhorrence and detestation."

Homosexuals are ungodly. *2 Peter 2:6 And turning the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah into*

ashes condemned them with an overthrow, making them an ensample unto those that after should live ungodly. Some practicing homosexual may read this and take issue with what I have just said. But, it is clear from this verse that homosexuals are ungodly and live an ungodly life. I think of those words found in Jude 14-19 *Behold, the Lord cometh with ten thousands of his saints, 15 To execute judgment upon all, and to convince all that are ungodly among them of all their ungodly deeds which they have ungodly committed, and of all their hard speeches which ungodly sinners have spoken against him. 16 These are murmurers, complainers, walking after their own lusts; and their mouth speaketh great swelling words, having men's persons in admiration because of advantage. 17 But, beloved, remember*

ye the words which were spoken before of the apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ; 18 How that they told you there should be mockers in the last time, who should walk after their own ungodly lusts. 19 These be they who separate themselves, sensual, having not the Spirit.

CONCLUSION

In the light of Scripture, there is no way we can condone or minimize the sin of sodomy. There is no way one can actually insult the sin of sodomy. Use all the adjectives that describe wicked conduct and you will not make it worse than it really is. All sin is against God and all sin is wicked, but there is something about homosexuality that makes it especially hateful and abominable in the sight of God. As Matthew Henry said, It is *"not to be named or thought of but with the utmost abhorrence and detestation."*

If our nation is not already paying for her tolerance of and catering to the demands of these aberrant, perverted people who have turned to their vile affections, it will pay dearly. I believe this nation is already under a plague of Aids because of this perverted behaviour and the coddling those guilty of it are receiving. But, if Jesus does not return soon and if the leadership of the cities, counties, and states keep slouching toward Sodom, judgment may surely be swift when it does come and it will be fatal.

Let me close by affirming again that I believe God is right in his hatred of homosexuality and homosexuals as a group. Homosexuals are abominable, arrogant workers of iniquity for sure and God certainly hates them as a group. **Psalm 5:5 . . . thou hatest all workers of iniquity.**

I am not saying that there are not some homosexuals that are chosen to salvation. But, the purpose of that election is that the elect might be holy, not abominable as are practicing homosexuals. True believing homosexuals will leave off their sin and turn to righteous for no true believer in Jesus Christ will continue in that which makes him an abomination in the sight of God.

Ephesians 1:4 According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love. 1 Corinthians 6:9-11 Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Be not deceived: neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind, 10 Nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God. 11 And such were some of you: but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God.

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