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# Cultural Daily

Independent Voices, New Perspectives

## LGBT in Early Christianity

Our Friends · Friday, August 9th, 2024

In modern debates about homosexuality, same-sex marriage, and gender identity, many people reference the Bible. However, ancient cultures did not share our current understanding of the gay lifestyle or gender identity.

Early Christian writers formed their views on sexuality by considering various influences. These included the importance of fertility, Jewish traditions, Greco-Roman culture, and philosophical ideas about the body and soul.

### Fertility and Ancient Social Structures

In ancient times, fertility played a crucial role in survival. Harsh conditions and high infant mortality made society heavily dependent on fertility for crops, herds, and people. Gods often appeared with female consorts, and people performed rituals to ensure fertility.

People linked sex to physical traits at birth, while society constructed gender roles. Families mirrored the divine order. Men were expected to marry and have children. Women held value in continuing the family line.

In today's world, entertainment has evolved significantly, offering a variety of options that cater to different interests. For example, online casinos have gained popularity among those seeking excitement from the comfort of their homes. Platforms like [Wantedwin online](#) provide a diverse range of games and opportunities to win big, making it a favorite among online gaming enthusiasts.

### The Influence of Judaism on Early Christian Thought

Christianity began as a sect of Judaism. Early Christians relied on the Hebrew Scriptures as their sacred texts. God's command in Genesis 1:28—"Be fruitful and multiply"—highlighted the importance of fertility. Mosaic Law defined men's and women's roles, often treating women as property.

In modern debates on same-sex relationships, people often cite Sodom and Gomorrah (Genesis 18-19) and Leviticus 18:22. However, these references often ignore their historical and cultural context.

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## Sodom and Gomorrah: A Closer Look

Sodom and Gomorrah were cities near the Dead Sea. The story describes God's promise to Abraham that he would become the father of a great nation. Three angels visit Abraham, but two continue to Sodom to investigate the city's wickedness.

The men of Sodom demand to "know" the angels, a euphemism for sexual intercourse. Lot, respecting the law of hospitality, offers his daughters instead. While modern interpretations often equate "sodomy" with homosexuality, this interpretation overlooks the cultural importance of hospitality and the story's original context.

## Leviticus and Sexuality in Ancient Israel

Leviticus, the third book of the Hebrew Scriptures, serves as a manual for priests. It includes the Codes of Holiness, which describe how Jews should keep their land sacred. Specifically, Leviticus 20:13 condemns male same-sex relations as an abomination. This highlights the sacredness of blood and seed, crucial for procreation.

Ancient people believed semen was a limited resource. They condemned male relationships for "wasting the seed of life." Since female same-sex relationships did not involve sperm, they were not addressed in this context.

## Greco-Roman Cultural Influences

Ancient Greek and Roman cultures often appear in discussions of same-sex behavior. In Greece, older men commonly formed relationships with younger adolescents, which society accepted as part of social mentorship. These relationships followed strict social norms, including rules about sexual conduct.

On the other hand, Roman society often ridiculed Greek practices. Although same-sex relationships existed in Rome, much of the literature reflects the moral standards of the time and includes polemical content.

## Early Christian Teachings on Sexuality

The Gospels do not record specific teachings of Jesus on human sexuality. Instead, early Christian tradition emphasized marriage and procreation, reflecting Jewish beliefs. For example, Jesus supported marriage, quoting Genesis: "God created them male and female" (Mark 10:9). Although this passage primarily addresses divorce, it is often referenced in discussions of same-sex relationships.

The Apostle Paul, an early Christian leader, often criticized the modern lifestyle he encountered during his travels. Therefore, his teachings, especially in 1 Corinthians 6-7, encouraged Christians to live as if the kingdom of God were already present.

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