

Shayla: Why do you feel that homosexuality is culturally damaging?

Meforshim:

First, I believe it because the Scriptures state:

- **Romans 1:26-27 HCSB** This is why God delivered them over to degrading passions. For even their females exchanged natural sexual intercourse for what is unnatural. (27) The males in the same way also left natural sexual intercourse with females and were inflamed in their lust for one another. Males committed shameless acts with males and received in their own persons the appropriate penalty for their perversion.

Like the individual the point at which a culture accepts homosexuality as a normal practice marks a point at which it has been “delivered over” or given up to something degrading. Anything characterized as degrading is on a slope headed toward its end. Further, we are told that this acceptance brings with it an “appropriate penalty.”

Second, I note that the nations that all lost their historic place in favor of Israel were all marked by homosexuality (among many other forms of wickedness) that led the Lord to work against them.

- **Leviticus 18:22-24 HCSB** You are not to sleep with a man as with a woman; it is detestable. (23) You are not to have sexual intercourse with any animal, defiling yourself with it; a woman is not to present herself to an animal to mate with it; it is a perversion. (24) “Do not defile yourselves by any of these *practices*, for the nations I am driving out before you have defiled themselves by all these things.”

This is abundantly and specifically illustrated in Sodom, a city which became so known for its homosexual behavior that the male homosexual act is still referred to as “sodomy” thousands of years later.

- **Genesis 19:4-5 HCSB** Before they went to bed, the men of the city of Sodom, both young and old, the whole population, surrounded the house. (5) They called out to Lot and said, “Where are the men who came to you tonight? Send them out to us so we can have sex with them!”

Hashem sent two angels to declare Sodom’s impending doom to Lot.

- **Genesis 19:13 HCSB** for we are about to destroy this place because the outcry against its people is great before the LORD, and the LORD has sent us to destroy it.”

The result was the complete annihilation of a thriving economic force in this valley.

- **Genesis 19:24-25 HCSB** Then the LORD rained burning sulfur on Sodom and Gomorrah from the LORD out of the sky. (25) He overthrew these cities, the entire plain, all the inhabitants of the cities, and whatever grew on the ground.

I would like to clarify that I DON’T think homosexuality is the cause of cultural decline but I think that it’s a significant sign of internal, moral rot that spells the doom of an empire.

The Roman Empire went through three major stages:

- Early Republic – in which homosexuality was universally regarded as a degenerate Greek practice
- Mid to Late Republic – in which homosexuality began to find acceptance – as long as the Roman played the dominant, active role. At this point it was the sole purview of those who chose to rape their slaves.
- Empire to Fall – in which homosexuality received public acceptance. At this point we even see emperors involved.

Tiberius: Tiberius spent most of the later years of his reign as emperor – from AD 26 to 37 – on the island of Capri. He had a special penchant for his *spintriae* (groups of young boys), with whom he surrounded himself and indulged in all manner of promiscuous behavior. The walls of his bedrooms at Capri were decorated with various sexual acts and positions ‘in case a performer should need an illustration of what [is] required’...” according to the historian Suetonius.

Nero: As a follower of Christ and an avid reader of early church history I think it's significant that Nero (reigned 54-68) is the first Roman emperor to marry a male. He took two homosexual lovers, Pythagoras (aka Doryphorus) and Sporus, in 'marriage'. He took the passive role with the Pythagorus taking the active role, with Nero usually screaming and whimpering like a woman in the throes of passion.

While Nero behaved as the wife to Pythagoras, he acted as husband to Sporus, whom he had castrated. Taken together with his 'artistic' performances when he often took on a female part and dressed accordingly, Nero's reign marked a tragic moral watershed in the Roman Empire.

Hadrian: Homosexuality reached its zenith under Hadrian (117-138). Hadrian loved Antinous, a young ex-slave who was famous for his beauty. The empire began decline during and immediately after Hadrian's rule.

Commodus: The megalomaniac Commodus (180-192) was bisexual. He had a harem of 300 girls and the same number of boys and put on great orgies. His reign is described by a contemporary historian as "a descent from a kingdom of gold to one of rust and iron." Many count his reign as the time from which the Roman Empire's decline became inevitable. His wicked, lewd and violent behavior made him one of the most hated emperors of the late Roman period.

Elagabalus: Elagabalus (218-222) practiced homosexuality, married five times for political ends (all five marriages being barren) and even prostituted himself within the palace! Elagabalus became involved in a series of homosexual crushes, most notably with the charioteer Hierocles. These favorites were given authority in the government, offending aristocrats, bureaucrats and troops alike. Some contemporaries wrote that Elagabalus had publicly stated that he wanted to have his genitals removed and have a vagina surgically implanted.

Edward Gibbon wrote that Elagabalus "abandoned himself to the grossest pleasures and ungoverned fury."¹ "The name Elagabalus is branded in history above all others" because of his "unspeakably disgusting life," wrote B.G. Niebuhr.² Niebuhr further described Elagabalus' vices as, "Too disgusting even to allude to them."

I find it significant that the more homosexuality was practiced, the faster the empire declined and must conclude that homosexuality is culturally corrosive.

¹ Gibbon, Edward. *Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*, Vol. 1, Chapter 6

² Niebuhr, B.G. *History of Rome*, p. 144 (1844).