

Biblical Notes — Romans 1:26-27

26-27 – For this reason God gave them over to degrading passions; for their women exchanged the natural function for that which is unnatural, [27] and in the same way also the men abandoned the natural function of the woman and burned in their desire toward one another, men with men committing indecent acts and receiving in their own persons the due penalty of their error. (26. Διὰ τοῦτο παρέδωκεν αὐτοὺς ὁ θεὸς εἰς πάθη ἀτιμίας· αἱ τε γὰρ θήλειαι αὐτῶν μετήλλαξαν τὴν φυσικὴν χρῆσιν εἰς τὴν παρὰ φύσιν, 27. ὁμοίως τε καὶ οἱ ἄρσενες ἀφέντες τὴν φυσικὴν χρῆσιν τῆς θηλείας ἐξεκαύθησαν ἐν τῇ ὀρέξει αὐτῶν εἰς ἀλλήλους, ἄρσενες ἐν ἄρσεσιν τὴν ἀσχημοσύνην κατεργαζόμενοι καὶ τὴν ἀντιμισθίαν ἣν ἔδει τῆς πλάνης αὐτῶν ἐν ἑαυτοῖς ἀπολαμβάνοντες)

"There are two particularly important sets of explicit texts. First are the prohibitions in Leviticus 18:22 and 20:13, which declare that for a man to "lie with a male as though lying with a woman" is "an abomination" or "detestable act"--in Hebrew, to'evah--something utterly repugnant to God. The second set is the Apostle Paul's references to same-sex intercourse, for which the key text is Romans 1:24-27. Here he treats same-sex intercourse as "exhibit B"--with idolatry as "exhibit A"--proving gross and deliberate human sin on the part of Gentiles against the truth about God accessible in creation or nature. Also important in Paul is his reference to "males who lie with males" (arsenokoitai) and "effeminate males who play the sexual role of females" (malakoi) in the vice list in 1 Corinthians 6:9. The context here is the comparable issue of a case of incest at Corinth (1 Corinthians 5). Paul argues that the community of believers at Corinth should not deceive themselves: believers who participate in serial and unrepentant fashion in immoral sexual activity--be they participants in incest or in the solicitation of prostitutes (pornoi), adulterers, or participants in same-sex intercourse--along with believers who engage in serial and unrepentant fashion in idolatry or egregious cases of economic exploitation and the like, shall not inherit the kingdom of God. The term arsenokoitai reappears in the vice list in 1 Tim 1:10. In the discussion that follows we will not spend much time on these texts. It will suffice here to point out that what Paul means by arsenokoitai has to be unpacked in light of what Paul finds offensive about same-sex intercourse in Romans 1:24-27. Those who tend to dismiss the term arsenokoitai in 1 Corinthians 6:9 and 1 Tim 1:10 as utterly beyond knowing often act as if Romans 1:24-27 did not exist. There are also a reasonably large number of other texts that explicitly or implicitly indicate opposition to same-sex intercourse, leaving little doubt that such opposition was the consensus position of both Testaments, as well as of the historical communities out of which these texts arose."

—— Dr. Gagnon's, *The Bible and Homosexual Practice: Texts and Hermeneutics* (Nashville: Abingdon, 2001), 520.

Website Reference: <http://www.orthodoxytoday.org/articles2/GagnonHomosexuality.php>