

The Rainbow and the Cross

What does the Bible Teach about the LGBTQ Community

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[draft]

Introduction

Confusion and division reign about what was once a straightforward issue in the church. More and more churches are beginning to fly the LGBTQ flag, showing their support for lifestyles once universally considered to be sin. What is the cause of the confusion? Isn't the Bible clear about this topic?

Proponents of the pro-LGBTQ movement frequently cite relationships such as that of David and Johnathon or verses such as "...there is neither male nor female..." or "...there are some that were born eunuchs..." as evidence that God approves of homosexual or trans lifestyles. However these arguments are neutral at best. If you read about David and Johnathan while assuming that homosexual relationships are okay, then it is natural to conclude that theirs was possibly a homosexual relationship, but if you read about them assuming that homosexual relationships are a sin, then is it natural to conclude that the two simply had a kind of deep male friendship that is rare to find today. In any case none of the passages commonly used to support a Biblical pro-LGBTQ stance are evidence that indicate a Biblical condoning of such lifestyles, only neutral statements that can be taken as examples for either side.

Other common arguments revolve around the defense that we have advanced as a human race and understand things better now. That the authors of the Scriptures were just doing the best that they could given the knowledge of the time. So even though the Bible forbids LGBTQ lifestyles, we can ignore that, because we understand human sexuality better now. This argument works nicely if you do not believe that Scripture was inspired by an omniscient God, but fails if you believe that God is the ultimate author and that Scripture stands the test of time.

So the primary pro-LGBTQ arguments are flawed, but for us to dismiss their case out of hand is irresponsible. If people are truly seeking the truth as outlined in Scripture, then they deserve an answer, a solid argument for or against the acceptance of LGBTQ lifestyles in the church. However, if we want to ascertain such a solid argument, there are a few important points that must be noted:

First, all passages must be taken in the context of the entire Bible. Cherry-picking verses that support a given viewpoint and ignoring those that counter it is an irrational and deceptive tactic. If such a tactic were viable, then the Bible could be used to support literally any stance. This is part of the reason that there is so much

confusion surrounding doctrine today. The Bible is actually rather straightforward and non-contradictory when viewed as a whole. But I digress...

Second, specific arguments must reference the original Greek or Hebrew texts. English and Latin are remarkably dull and un-descriptive languages when compared to Hebrew and Greek, and much has been lost in translation. Major points and themes carry through, but whenever you begin delving into a line-by-line or word-by-word analysis, you must verify that the detailed meanings of the original text were completely captured in translation.

Third, we must recognize that the Bible does not have to specifically condone something for it to be allowed. As long as there is no instruction against something – either directly or indirectly – then it must be assumed to be permitted and accepted. If this were not the case, and we were to hold that the Bible must specifically condone something for it to be allowed, then the technology that you are using to read this would have to be considered sin. (As much technology was considered in during the Dark Ages)

So, armed with this background, let's take a look at what the Bible has to say about the LGBTQ community by analyzing every passage that relates to the topic.

Sodom & Gomorrah

Genesis 19:1-13

Probably the most often cited argument against homosexual relationships is the story of Sodom and Gomorrah.

In the story, Sodom's sin is never specifically mentioned, though it does describe an attempt at homosexual gang rape. So was the sin homosexuality, rape, both, or something deeper? The word sodomy is used throughout the Bible to reference Sodom's sin, but the word does not specifically refer to homosexual sin, rather it simply means, "The sin of Sodom," whatever that may have been. Considering how often Sodom is used as an example of extreme wickedness in Scripture, it would be nice if we were given a clear explanation of exactly what they did that was so evil. Fortunately, Scripture provides such descriptions in three different places.

Ezekiel 16:49-50

"Behold, this was the guilt of your sister Sodom: she and her daughters had pride, excess of food, and prosperous ease, but did not aid the poor and needy. They were haughty and did an abomination before me..."

2 Peter 2:7-10

"...and if he rescued righteous Lot, greatly distressed by the sensual conduct of the wicked... especially those who indulge in the lust of defiling passion and despise authority. Bold and willful, they do not tremble as they blaspheme the glorious ones..."

Jude 1:7

"...just as Sodom and Gomorrah and the surrounding cities, which likewise indulged in sexual immorality and pursued unnatural desire, serve as an example by undergoing a punishment of eternal fire."

Now, nothing in these verses specifies homosexuality, though there are a few that could certainly imply it. Let's look at each of these.

"...did an abomination before me..."

This phrase could be referring to the act of attempted gang rape described in Genesis 19, but it still doesn't lead us any closer to knowing what was the precise sin (or sins) in that

incident. Also, the word translated abomination, is also translated abominations, so this may refer to any number of severe sins. Based on the context, it appears that such abomination or abominations are centered around pride and greed, not sexual sin. All we know for sure from this phrase is that those of Sodom committed at least one, if not many, severe sins against God.

“...sensual conduct...”

This term means unbridled or excessive conduct or behavior, or in today’s terms, hedonism. Literally, “indulging the senses.” The inhabitants of Sodom had a lot of sex, ate a lot of food, were incredibly vain, and otherwise had their priorities wrong. While this could certainly include homosexual intercourse, this specific phrase would not damn such an action, only excess of it.

“...lust of defiling passion...”

This phrase, *miasmos epithymia*, literally means defiling desire. So while it could refer to homosexual acts (assuming we conclude that Scripture does indeed consider such acts defiling.), it could also refer to any other desire that God deems defiling. Again the point here appears to be not to connect homosexual activities to Sodom’s destruction, but to paint a broad picture of Sodom’s wickedness.

“...sexual immorality...”

This is the Greek word *Ekporneuo*, which means giving oneself over to prostitution or promiscuous hedonism. Literally, “extreme prostitution” Rather than being a sweeping term describing all forms of sinful sex, this is a very specific accusation that goes right along with the “sensual conduct” of 2 Peter.

“...pursued unnatural desire...”

This phrase is *Aperchomai opiso heteros sarx*, which means pursuing other living creatures or other flesh. The phrase “unnatural desire” is nowhere in the original text. This speaks much more of bestiality than of homosexuality.

There is a consistent theme that threads through these verses. The inhabitants of Sodom and Gomorrah were the epitome of hedonism, caring only for themselves and their pleasure, and doing everything in excess at the expense of others. This was the sin of Sodom; this is sodomy: Arrogantly living in excess at the expense of others.

The sin of the men and the angels was an expression of this selfishness, hedonism, and arrogance. Gang rape was a common method of humiliation and enforcement of a power hierarchy in those days. When the men of Sodom saw the angels, they saw that they were foreigners, so they proceeded to try to show them their place.

Now, the fact that the men of Sodom turned down Lot's offer of his daughters is often used as evidence that the men of Sodom were gay – they only wanted to violate the male angels – however, if we look at this story through the lens provided in Ezekiel, Peter, and Jude, the story still makes sense. Lot's family had become assimilated into the culture of Sodom (considering the sin of city, it makes one wonder what they had to go through to receive such status. Lot had likely been gang-raped when he first settled there, providing him with more conviction that he would not allow such a thing to happen to his guests.), and his daughters were likely born there, so the men had no interest in humiliating them. However, as soon as Lot questioned the group, he became a target as well, not simply because he was male, but because he – a foreigner – was trying to tell them what to do.

Of course, this outline of the sin of Sodom does not indicate that homosexual relations are not sin: homosexuality could very well been one of many unnamed sins that Sodom was guilty of. However, this outline does show that Sodom cannot be used as the ultimate argument against homosexual relations. Like the alleged pro-LGBTQ passages mentioned in the introduction, the story of Sodom is actually a neutral passage on the topic. If we read it believing homosexuality is wrong, then it shows the punishment for such acts, but if we read it believing that gay lifestyles are not sinful, there is nothing in the story to state otherwise.

The Old Testament Law

Leviticus 18:22 & 20:13;

These verses are very straightforward: “You shall not lie with a man as with a woman; it is an abomination.” “If a man lies with a male as with a woman, both of them have committed an abomination; they shall surely be put to death; their blood is upon them.” The commands explicitly forbid gay relationships. However, there are two important points to consider before using the verse a blanket instruction against all homosexual relationships.

First, the verse only forbids male homosexual intercourse; it says nothing about lesbian relationships. Of course, one could easily make the point that the principle still applies – instruction given to men applies also to women throughout Scripture - except for the fact that God seems to be going out of His way to not condemn lesbian intercourse. The vast majority of commands given in this passage have clauses for both male and female versions of the given sin, but the one forbidding gay intercourse has no such mirror forbidding lesbian intercourse. Admittedly, this is a potentially minor point depending on what the rest of Scripture says, but it important to keep in mind.

The next – much more significant – thing to consider is that this is the old covenant: a law that was fulfilled with the coming of Christ. Obviously, that does not mean that we never reference it anymore, but we have to be careful in how we interpret the Law’s significance in day to day life. We can either take the stance that everything in the Law is still valid unless the New Testament says otherwise or we can take the stance that no command in the Law still has the weight of law unless that command is reinforced in the New Testament. But we cannot simply pick and choose which commands we think are still relevant based on our own opinion.

If we take the former option, then cutting the hair on our temples (Leviticus 19:27), having intercourse with a woman during her period (Leviticus 20:18), and wearing clothing made of mixed materials (Deut. 22:11) is still sin. If we take the latter option – the one that Scripture seems to indicate is correct (Romans 10:4; Hebrews 8:13) - then the vast majority of the law is null and void at this point, and there is no weight in using these verses to condemn the LGBTQ community. We must instead go to the New Testament. Incidentally there are no other verses specifically condemning homosexual relations in the Old Testament.

Note: Many will make the argument that any sins that the Old Testament refers to as an “abomination” (such as gay intercourse) have a special significance, and that they still apply today regardless of what is or isn’t said about them in the New Testament.

However, I cannot find any Biblical evidence that such an assumption is valid, and if it were, then such abominations remarrying a one’s former spouse after being divorced (Deut. 24:4), and possibly even eating pork (Deut. 14:3) would also still be sinful. Now, to be fair, other, much more significant sins are also referred to as abominations (Worship of other gods, idolatry, and necromancy to name a few), but these sins are reinforced as such in the New Testament.

Inheriting the Kingdom of God

1 Corinthians 6:9-10; 1 Timothy 1:10

These passages provide similar lists of lifestyles that cannot exist in proper Christian living: "...Do not be deceived: neither the sexually immoral,...nor men who practice homosexuality...will inherit the kingdom of God." "...the law is not laid down for the just but for the lawless and disobedient, for the ungodly and sinners, for...the sexually immoral [and] men who practice homosexuality..."

This seems to sum up the issue nicely: here is Paul reaffirming the Old Testament's stance on homosexual relations. However, there is a deeper story here.

The word translated "men who practice homosexuality" is *arsenokoites*. There is a lot of discussion about the translation of this word. *Arsenokoites* appears to have been a word invented by Paul, since there is no record of it being used outside of his writings. *Arsenokoites* is a compound word made of the words *arren* (man) and *koite* (bed). This concept of "man bedding" could be seen as consistent with the English translation, but it seems strange that Paul would have created a new word to describe this when there were over a dozen words in ancient Greek that described homosexual activities. It is more likely that he was creating a word to describe something for which there was no word in Greek: rape.

The word *arren* comes from the word *airo* meaning "to lift with force." In ancient Greek, the concept of male as compared to female was "the strong one." So, it is likely that *arsenokoites* could refer to "strong bedding" or "forceful bedding"; in other words, rape.

This argument is strengthened by the fact that if we do not translate *arsenokoites* as rape, then there is no passage in the New Testament that condemns the practice. While it could be argued that rape (or homosexuality for that matter) could be covered by the blanket term "sexual immorality" – which is condemned frequently in the New Testament – this word, *pornos*, literally means "one who sells sex." It is referring exclusively to prostitution, nothing else.

Note: It is also worth noting that even if *arsenokoites* is translated as "man bedding," and then further interpreted to mean homosexual relations between men, then Scripture would again be going out of its way to omit condemnation of lesbian intercourse.

Unnatural Relations

Romans 1:26-27

This verse is clear in its stance against the sin described: a description that is very detailed. This is definitely talking about men have sex with men and women having sex with women. In fact, this is the only place in Scripture that directly mentions lesbian intercourse.

It is easy to say, “it’s done then, case closed. Here is the verse that solidly confirms what we have been teaching all along.” However, as with most things, there is more if you look at the passage objectively.

The word translated “natural” in the text means inborn or instinctual. These people are going against their instinctual attraction to the opposite sex in order to engage in orgies with people that they are not even attracted too. It is a base form of promiscuity; they are so consumed with a desire for superficial sexual encounters, that they will engage with anyone willing, even if there is no attraction: the addiction is just too strong. Phrases like “burn with desire” and “lust after” indicate that these are promiscuous flings, not loving relationships. This verse is condemning an out-of-control addiction to sex that has so consumed these people that they’ll do it with anyone.

Now, it makes sense that Paul uses the example of same-sex intercourse to drive home this point, because homosexual attraction is relatively uncommon, so the majority of his audience would find the scenario described to be revolting, while those who did have an inborn same-sex attraction would recognize the warning against a debased, sex-crazed mind.

Now of course, as with every other example, if we read this passage assuming that same-sex attraction is sin, then its meaning seems to obviously support that stance. Indeed, even someone that has no opinion on the matter but is only attracted to the opposite sex may interpret it that way. But for someone reading the passage whose only attraction from the first time they were stirred in that way was for those of the same sex, reading “instinctual relations” would mean to them the intimacy that comes from their inborn attraction to those of their own sex. So again we have a passage that both sides of the debate can use to affirm their respective positions, but on deeper reading it really does not address the topic at all.

LGB to TQ

That is every passage of scripture that touches on the concept of homosexuality. After studying the passages, I believe that it is clear that at the very least, same-sex attraction is not the epitome of abominations that it is so often taught to be, but that in fact, it is an act that is not addressed in any relevant passage of Scripture. If we apply our rule described in the beginning, that if Scripture does not condemn something as sin then we must assume it is permitted, then we must conclude that same-sex attraction is not sin at all.

However, we are not done yet. For the last several pages, we have discussed the LGB of the rainbow flag, but have said nothing about the TQ. Let's continue.

Transgender, Transsexual, and Queer

The transgender and queer population are frequently misunderstood, so I will provide a brief outline of their definitions. If we use society's current definitions, then someone's sex refers to their physical anatomy and corresponding male or female parts, while one's gender refers exclusively to how they present themselves to the world. Gender, in many ways, is synonymous with personality. It covers dress, interests, mannerisms, and the like.

According to these definitions, sex is a distinction created by God, while gender is largely a social construct. Things that are considered masculine in one part of the world or period of history are considered feminine in other parts of the world or periods of history, and *vice versa*. Based on this fact alone, unless we can find passages in Scripture that say otherwise, at first glance gender norms seem to be a product of culture, not of God. We will cover this soon.

Based on these definitions, anyone that does not fit their culture's gender norms could be considered transgender. In 21st century America, this can technically take the form of a sensitive boy who likes dolls or a rambunctious girl who loves mud and plastic army men. But usually such individuals fall close enough to the gender norms that they are just considered quirky or special. It can go much deeper though: a boy who loves dresses and makeup or a girl that feels uncomfortable in anything but male clothes with a buzz cut and chooses to speak with deeply resonant voice. These individuals' personalities flip the established gender binary. These individuals also typically identify as transgender.

There is another level though. Transsexual refers to individuals who experience a deep discomfort with their body, feeling as though they should have been born in the body of the opposite sex. Such individuals do not decide that they want to be the opposite sex one day, they literally feel as if they have always been a woman in man's body or a man in a woman's body. This feeling is persistent throughout their lives, and usually starts around three or four years old. Individuals who strongly identify as transgender frequently also identify as transsexual.

That leaves queer. Queer is essentially a term for anyone that doesn't fit any of the norms in gender. The lines frequently blur between some forms of transgender and queer, but Queer is simply someone whose personality doesn't fit any gender norm.

Now it is important to note, that I said nothing about sexual orientation in the preceding paragraphs. Being transgender, transsexual, or queer does necessarily determine the gender/sex that someone is attracted to.

There is increasing research discussing biological explanations for all members of the LGBTQ community, but that is not why we are here. Whether or not the feelings have a biological basis, Scripture can instruct us as to whether or not it is appropriate to act on those feelings.

Clothes & Haircuts

The Bible is remarkably silent on the topics of transgender, transsexual, and queer, but there are two verses that are commonly cited.

Deuteronomy 22:5

“A woman shall not wear a man’s garment, nor shall a man put on a woman’s cloak, for whoever does these things is an abomination to the Lord your God.”

This is a clear instruction against cross-dressing, but there are two issues with using it as argument against TQ lifestyles. First, *if* we consider that that a transsexual individual is truly a woman with a birth defect that left her in man’s body, then this passage would not apply. In fact, it would condemn them for wearing the clothes made for their body. That is, of course a big if, and brings in much assumption.

The stronger point is simply that this is the Old Testament, and if we follow our previous conclusion, then we cannot use an Old Testament Scripture to condemn an act unless it is backed up by a New Testament teaching.

1 Corinthians 11:14

“Does not nature itself teach you that if a man wears long hair it is a disgrace for him, but if a woman has long hair, it is her glory? “

This is a very interesting passage that is commonly used against TQ individuals, stating that the actual meaning of the verse is that a man should not try to look like a woman nor a woman like a man. There are three problems with this interpretation though. First, the weak argument. As stated before, if we accept transsexual as a real medical phenomenon, then it would actually encourage a transsexual individual to live according to their internal sex. But again, that statement comes with much assumption.

Second, saying that defining relative hair lengths means that we shouldn’t try to look like the opposite sex is a rather large logical leap. A leap that is perfectly justified if there is already an established precedent that such action is wrong, but on its own is a bit of a stretch.

Thirdly, there is much discussion about the translation of this passage. The original Greek is not written in typical Greek prose, but appears to be a broken fragment. The hair translation is most Bible scholars best guess, but the translation is far from conclusive.

God Does Not Make Mistakes

There are the only the two specific Scriptures that touch on the TQ community, and most Christians agree that they are rather weak arguments. So the most common argument against TQ lifestyles is simply that God does not make mistakes. God made male and female. There is no confusion. If you have male parts you are a man; if you have female parts you are a woman. End of story.

There is beautiful logical simplicity in this argument, and it does make a lot of sense, but there are a couple of problems with it.

First, this argument really only refers to transsexual individuals. Since the Bible has very little to say about gender norms, saying that someone's anatomy should affect their personality has little weight. So based on this argument alone, there is nothing wrong with a guy wearing makeup and high heels, a girl going "butch," or any person presenting themselves in a way that you can't tell if they are a guy or a girl. Such presentation may make us feel uncomfortable, but, based on the absence of conclusive Scriptural teaching on the matter, the discomfort is far more likely to be due to experiencing a situation that society has told us is wrong rather than because it is sin.

Secondly, while I believe that it is clear that God's original plan was for each of us to be either fully male or fully female, life shows that this, like so many other things, has devolved from His original plan. Once sin came into the world, genetic mutations began to occur, leaving us with hundreds of genetic issues. I believe that most Christians would agree that Down's Syndrome, Sickle Cell Anemia, Hemophilia, and even extra fingers or toes, were not part of God's original plan. But what many don't realize is that the genetics that determine one's sex can also be affected by genetic disorder.

It has been reported that anywhere from 2%-5% of the population fall under the category of a phenomenon called intersex. An intersex individual displays biological markers from both sexes. This can take the form of something like XX male syndrome, where someone has female DNA, but develops anatomically as male, to hermaphroditism, where someone has a fully functional set of both male and female organs. There are many variations in between these two extremes, and in most cases an intersex individual is surgically modified at birth to match the sex chosen by the child's parents. In any case, the existence of intersex individuals clearly shows that, regardless of God's original plan, the divide between male and female can be muddled in the current state of the world.

Therefore, if the genetics that determine how the body develops can code for a combination of male and female, then it stands to reason that the genetics that cause the brain to expect a certain influx of hormones and certain developments during puberty, as well as the genetics that cause the brain to expect certain genitalia (in the same way it expects arms and legs) could code for one sex while the genetics that cause the body to develop a certain way could code for the other sex. Based on this reasoning (which is consistent with current medical research), transsexual is simply another form of intersex.

So at its core, a transsexual individual is the victim of a genetic disorder. The core components of their brain are telling them their body and hormones should be one way, yet their body and hormones do not agree. The hormonal imbalance alone can create severe anxiety and depression, not to mention emotional and mental fatigue. The brain is constantly fighting to make sense of the conflicting signals. In some ways it is similar to the phantom pain that an amputee experiences, but amplified by the hormonal imbalance.

But we digress. If we can conclude that transsexualism is a real phenomenon and that regardless of God's original plan, the sexes can become genetically blended, it poses the question: What is the appropriate, Scriptural action that such individuals should take? I believe that based on these starting points, the answer is clear. We do not tell an individual who is born with a cleft lip that they should not get it fixed because that is how God made their body, we do not find it wrong for someone to take medicine to create an optimal hormone balance if they are born without the ability to properly regulate such chemicals, and we do not condemn someone who chooses to have a fully functional sixth finger removed in order to match their body to the mental image that they have of themselves; so why should we hesitate to support someone who chooses to take hormone replacement therapy or undergo sex confirmation surgery in order to fix the results of a genetic abnormality that caused their body to develop as a different sex than their mind?

Conclusion

After prayerfully and diligently studying every Scripture referring or seemingly referring to LGBTQ lifestyles, I can with full faith and confidence say that the Bible does not condemn same-sex attraction or transgender or queer identities. And I believe that the LGBTQ community should be fully welcomed into the church, just as they are, with no attempt to shame or belittle them or their lifestyles. In fact, we as the church owe anyone identifying as LGBTQ a heartfelt, humble apology for the pain and shame that our maligned judgment has caused.

The rainbow and the cross can truly coexist.

FAQs

But Adam and Eve imply God's plan for marriage, all marriage instruction is between a man and a woman.

This is a very good point, and it is obvious that a relationship between a man and a woman is very special in God's eyes, I would even go so far as to say that, because all marriage reference exclusively refer to male/female unions, that only male/female unions count as the Biblical definition of marriage. However, just because such a relationship it is special in God's eyes – special enough to give it its own distinction – that does not mean that it is the only lifestyle allowed. In 1 Corinthians 7:8 Paul makes it very clear that marriage is optional.

So then, if male/female marriage is optional, and committed homosexual relationships are not forbidden, then – logically – such relationships are allowed under Biblical teaching.

This is overcomplicating things. We should trust the translators.

There are many cases where we accept that some translations are errors or incomplete

There are no examples of homosexuality in the Bible.

They might be, but even if there are not, positive examples are not required for something to not be a sin.

Homosexuality and transgenderism are not natural / not found in nature

There are actually many cases of observed homosexual relationships in nature. As well as animals that are born intersex or take on the role of the opposite sex.

These are new phenomena. They are just fads.

There are records of same-sex attraction and transgender individuals going back to ancient times.

This goes against church history. The church has been against it from the start.

Because it was so uncommon and because the sex-slave trade was so prominent, historically, homosexual interactions were viewed as synonymous with forced relationships for many years.

Even if this were not the case, the church has made mistakes before that lasted for centuries. That is why Scripture is our foundation, not church interpretations.

What about AIDS, isn't that God's punishment on gays?

Contrary to popular belief, AIDs did not begin in the LGBTQ community; that is a myth. Medical evidence does not suggest that there is any significant difference in the chances of contracting AIDS from a homosexual relationship with an infected individual than from a heterosexual relationship with an infected individual.

You are just twisting Scripture.

I am a firm believer, as I suspect that most Christians are, that the Bible is written so that it can be read without any outside influence. In other words, if someone reads Scripture, having no previous knowledge of any Christian teachings or principles, they can learn everything about God's plan and ideals; no other texts are required.

If this is true, then Scripture must be able to be read through the eyes of any combination of preconceived notions and beliefs. If those beliefs are in alignment with the truth, the reader will find confirmation in their beliefs; if those beliefs are contrary to Scripture, the reader will be convicted that they are in the wrong.

Therefore, if we assume for a moment that all LGBTQ lifestyles are sinful, then if someone reads Scripture believing that such relationships and identities are a normal part of life, there should be sufficient argument in Scripture to show them that they are wrong. Yes, if you believe that LGBTQ is wrong, you can find many individual verses that can be used to support your view, but, as I've shown, someone who believes that there is nothing wrong with such attraction, will find nothing to change their views.

You might think that this could be true of any topic, but that is incorrect. Indeed, it certainly could be if one were to simply pick and choose verses. As I've stated before, through talented cherry-picking, Scripture could be used to support any belief. But through diligent, context-aware, comprehensive study of Scripture, there are teachings that cannot be refuted: mankind's need for a Savior, the divinity of Christ, the sin of adultery, the sin of hypocrisy, the sin of prostitution, etc. It doesn't matter how much you want to believe these things are not true, only by cherry-picking verses and/or relying heavily on outside sources can someone provide an argument against them.

His Word fears no scrutiny: the deeper we dig, the brighter shines the truth, even if that truth has been buried for centuries. It wouldn't be the first time.