

## ***"I'm Gay and God Loves Me"***

So read, I am told, a tee-shirt worn in public by a mature (age wise) man. As strange as it may seem to some who know me, I am in complete agreement with what is actually said on the shirt. The statement is true, and I can prove it by turning to God's word. "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on him should not perish, but have eternal life" (John 3:16). God's love for the world (i.e., people living in the world) is all encompassing and excludes no one. This beautiful passage does not say, nor even imply, that God loves the righteous and those who obey Him, to the exclusion of others. Well, so much for what the shirt says.

What is not said, but what the wearer wanted people to believe, is "I'm gay and God approves of my lifestyle." What is actually said and what is implied are worlds apart. God's love (Gr., *agapao*) has naught to do with whether or not He approves of the actions (lifestyle) of the individual. The following statements (patterned after the statement on the shirt) would be just as true (concerning the love of God): "I'm a mass murderer and God loves me." "I'm a pedophile and God loves me." "I'm a rapist and God loves me." "I'm a thief and God loves me." "I'm an adulterer/adulteress and God loves me." "I'm a liar and God loves me." "I have sexual relations with a goat and God loves me." God loves each of these (and all of us who have been guilty of other sins) with a love so strong that He sent His only begotten Son to pay the penalty for their (our) sins by dying on the cross. God's Son died on Golgotha that you, the shirt wearer, and I might be saved from our sins (from the eternal penalty of our sins), but certainly not in (while embracing and living in) our sins.

The shirt wearer has evidently made the stupid mistake of implying/thinking/believing that God's love equals God's approval and/or that God's love (Gr., *agapao*) equals salvation. He certainly was not the first to make this mindless mistake (assumption), and will undoubtedly not be the last. "For God so loved the world . . ." but the truth is that the majority of God's creation will not be allowed in heaven, but will be in eternal torment. "Enter ye in by the narrow gate: for wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many are they that enter in thereby. For narrow is the gate, and straitened the way, that leadeth unto life, and few are they that find it"(Matthew 7:13-14). It is the many versus the few. No, I do not know the exact number that constitutes many nor how small the number must be to be but few, but I do understand the point being made. In the flood there were only eight who were saved (see Genesis 6-7, noting especially 7:13). In the destruction of Sodom there were, in the final outcome, only three (see Genesis 19, noting verses 15 and 26) that were not consumed in the flames or turned into a pillar of salt.

"Thou shalt not lie with mankind, as with womankind: it is abomination. And thou shalt not lie with any beast to defile thyself therewith; neither shall any woman stand before a beast, to lie down thereto: it is confusion" (Leviticus 18:22-23). "And if a man lie with mankind, as with womankind, both of them have committed abomination: they shall surely be put to death; their blood shall be upon them" (Leviticus 20:13).

"For this cause God gave them up unto vile passions: for their women changed the natural use into that which is against nature: and likewise also the men, leaving the natural use of the woman, burned in their lust one toward another, men with men working unseemliness, and receiving in themselves that recompense of their error which was due" (Romans 1:26-27). Do I hate the ones who do such things? No! No! A thousand times No!

I do not hate the murderer, rapist, pedophile, thief, liar, adulteress, nor the homosexual. Their actions are the subject of hatred, but not the individual. I would that they would come to believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God, and that the Bible really means what it says (Mark 16:16), repent of their sins (Acts 17:30), confess their faith in Christ (Matthew 10:32) and be baptized in order to the remission of sins (Acts 2:38). Then I, along with thousands of my brothers and sisters in Christ, would welcome them. This is not hatred, this is love!

- by **Bill Beasley**

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## ***Use NIV with Caution***

It has been observed that Christians in increasing numbers are using the New International Version of the Bible as their primary translation. While the NIV provides a very 'readable' copy of

the Scriptures, users should be informed about several significant difficulties.

Most notably, the NIV promotes the false doctrines of Calvinism by inaccurately translating several key verses. For instance, Psalms 51: 5 in the NIV reads, "Surely I was sinful at birth, sinful from the time my mother conceived me". Obviously, this teaches the Calvinistic notion of inherited sin which is plainly denied in many other Bible texts. The KJV and ASV read, "in sin did my mother conceive me". There is quite a difference in being conceived in sin (describing the spiritual condition of the world into which the author was born) and in being personally sinful from the point of conception.

Additionally, the NIV frequently refers to man's "sinful nature" (see Rom. 8:3ff, Eph. 2:3, Col. 2:11, & many other passages). This teaches another tenet of Calvinism, namely total depravity - the idea that man must sin – it is in his very nature to do so. Again, this is denied elsewhere in the Scriptures. Other versions simply refer to the "flesh" in these important verses.

WHAT SHOULD WE DO? Considering these and other objections to the NIV, we suggest that Christians should exercise great caution in using this translation as their principle study Bible. Other versions are much more reliable, and several are equal to the NIV in 'readability'. Choose the NKJV or the NASV if you want a trustworthy translation without the old English of the KJV. It would be best to reserve the NIV as a study aid in providing comparative readings.

**- by Greg Gwin**