

The Sin of Sodom on Display in America

The Life of Abraham

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Father, thank you, again, for this incredible privilege of being in your presence, being among your people, having this opportunity to worship you, having this opportunity to be encountered by you. And now, Lord, as we open your Word we ask that you would do just that, that you would encounter us in your Word. We ask that you would grant us wisdom, that you would grant us faith, that you would grant us ears to hear, that you would grant us a willing spirit that we might obey. Grant this, we ask, in Jesus' name and for his sake. Amen.

Several weeks ago there was major controversy as the president elect made a choice of Rick Warren to offer prayer during his inauguration ceremony. And the major controversy really sort of originate, rose up, if you will, on the West Coast, out of California because Proposition 8 had passed in the state of California defining marriage as a relationship between a man and a woman and really over turning legislative action in the state of California that had allowed for homosexual marriage, really, that had mandated homosexual marriage.

So the Supreme Court there in the California had made a decision for the entire state. The state then spoke in response and revoked what the Supreme Court had said. Well, Rick Warren has the dubious distinction of being a well known pastor in the state of California who had the audacity to say publicly that he favored such a definition.

As a result, when Dr. Warren was asked to come and pray there at the inauguration individuals who had their feelings hurt over Proposition 8 felt like it was an absolute affront to have a man to come and pray at the inauguration who actually believes that marriage should be defined as a relationship between a man and a woman.

And there was a mighty uproar.

However, there is another turn of events that has been rather silent in the press. And that turn of events that has been rather silent in the press is the fact that today everything will be kicked off by a bishop named Gene Robinson.

Now, Bishop Gene Robison, you ask, “Who is that? Is he some famous preacher?”

No, not a famous preacher, not even a very good one.

“Is he some famous pastor?”

No, not a famous pastor. Actually, quite a mediocre one.

“Is he some famous theologian or some famous author?”

No. No, you have never heard of Gene Robinson because of his theology or because of his writing or anything like that.

“Is he some unbelievable prayer warrior who is known for getting prayers answered and therefore he has been called upon to...?”

No. No, absolutely not.

Bishop Gene Robinson is a self proclaimed alcoholic who abandoned his wife for another love.

“Why then,” you ask, “would he be brought in to kick off the ceremonies beginning today?”

I will tell you why, because he is the first openly homosexual man to be named a bishop by the Episcopal Church. That is the only reason that we know Gene Robinson’s name. He is absolutely disqualified biblically from being a pastor, absolutely disqualified biblically. You read 1 Timothy chapter three, you read Titus chapter one. It won’t take you long. Even apart from his homosexuality, it won’t take you long to realize that this is a disqualified man.

He is there for one reason and one reason only.

Now here is what we need to ask ourselves. If we are here in Genesis chapter 19 and we talked last week about the judgment of God, this awesome and terrible judgment of God being poured out on Sodom and Gomorrha as a reminder for all people of all times about the holiness of God and about the righteousness of God, how do we then come to a place where we so openly and so readily accept this abomination?

Well, we probably don’t have time to answer that question in full. But I think there are some clues here in Genesis chapter 19. And so we will look here at Genesis chapter 19.

And it is impossible, unfortunately, to look at Genesis chapter 19 without addressing some very serious apologetic questions in our culture and in our day because as I will demonstrate for you, it is not the consensus among most Christians that Genesis chapter 19 either number one is a direct, direct issue of open and blatant sodomy or, number two, that it has anything to do with your life and my life today or anything whatsoever to do with what the Bible has to say about what marriage is and what appropriate sexual relations are.

There are individuals—and you will hear from some of those individuals today—who make that argument, either argument number one, they try to subvert the text and they say, “No, no, no. No, no, no. Genesis chapter 19 is really not about that sin. The sin in Sodom and Gomorrah is not really about that sin.”

Or they say, “Yes, that was the issue there, however, we are now no longer under law. We are under grace and in the New Testament we don’t have such a stern pronouncement or any pronouncement at all,” some would argue against what they would refer to as loving monogamous homosexual relationships.

And, again, let me just say, the reason it is important for us to address this, number one, is because the Bible addresses it clearly and openly. But, secondly, because the individuals making these claims, the individuals whose voices are heard the loudest are individuals who are identified as being inside the Church, not outside the Church.

So what I am not saying here that a bunch of professors in other disciplines got together and said to the Church, “Church, you are out to lunch.”

No. I am saying individuals who stand up here and do what I am doing. I am saying individuals who teach in colleges and seminaries and train pastors. I am saying individuals whose names and work are known in theological circles are the ones making this kind of proclamation. And its impact is so wide spread that you and I both know. I mean we could spend the rest of the day allowing individuals to come up here and testify one by one of people that they know personally in their own lives who on the one hand claim allegiance to the Lord Jesus Christ and on the other hand believe that this issue of homosexuality is overblown and that it shouldn’t be a major issue if an issue at all within the context of the Church.

I believe this first part of Genesis chapter 19 answers all of those issues rather clearly.

Let me just read this for you in case any of you are wondering if, you know, I mean, how... how widespread is this and how overt is this? Let me just read this to you. We will start with this one. We will just warm up with a little Brian MacLaren. Brian MacLaren, well known name. Brian MacLaren is the leader of the Emergent/Emerging Church/conversation. And I put all those slashes in there because that is what they do. Some of them say, “Emerging Church.” Some say, “Emergent Church.” Some say Emerging Conversation or Emergent Conversation.” It just depends on who you are

talking to at the time. But they are all swimming in the same stream and Brian MacLaren is their leader; well known, best selling author, often called upon by the press.

This is an article that appeared in *Christianity Today*. Do you hear me? *Christianity Today* is where this appeared. The title is “Brian MacLaren on the Homosexual Question: Finding a Pastoral Response.” Finding a pastoral response to the homosexual question.

It talks about someone who came up to him and asked him a question and how he... how reserved he is about even answering when people ask him about that particular issue. And listen to what he says.

I hesitate in answering "the homosexual question" not because I'm a cowardly flip-flopper who wants to tickle ears, but because I am a pastor, and pastors have learned from Jesus that there is more to answering a question than being right or even honest: we must also be ... *pastoral*. That means understanding the question beneath the question, the need or fear or hope or assumption that motivates the question.¹

Don't answer the question. Answer the question behind the question and answer the fear that motivates the question, but by all means don't answer the question.

Frankly, many of us don't know what we should think about homosexuality. We've heard all sides, but no position has yet won our confidence so that we can say "it seems good to the Holy Spirit and us." That alienates us from both the liberals and conservatives who seem to know *exactly* what we should think. Even if we are convinced that all homosexual behavior is always sinful, we still want to treat gay and lesbian people with more dignity, gentleness, and respect than our colleagues do. If we think that there may actually be a legitimate context for some homosexual relationships, we know that the biblical arguments are nuanced and multilayered, and the pastoral ramifications are staggeringly complex. We aren't sure if or where lines are to be drawn, nor do we know how to enforce with fairness whatever lines are drawn.

Perhaps we need a five-year moratorium on making pronouncements. In the meantime, we'll practice prayerful Christian dialogue, listening respectfully, disagreeing agreeably. When decisions need to be made, [again, he is talking about homosexuality here] they'll be admittedly provisional. We'll keep our ears attuned to scholars in biblical studies, theology, ethics, psychology, genetics, sociology, and related fields. Then in five years, if we have clarity, we'll speak; if not, we'll set another five years for ongoing reflection. After all, many important issues in church history took centuries to figure out. Maybe this moratorium would help us

¹ <http://www.christianitytoday.com/le/currenttrendscolumns/leadershipweekly/cln60123.html>

resist the "winds of doctrine" blowing furiously from the left and right, so we can patiently wait for the wind of the Spirit to set our course.²

That is where we are. That is where we are. And here is what I would venture to say to you. The overwhelming majority of people who claim to be Christian, you go to our college campuses and you talk to the people who claim to be Christian on our college campuses between 18 and 22 years old and the reason that Brian MacLaren has such a loud voice in our culture is because on this issue, like many others, he is resoundingly more familiar to them and resoundingly more closely associated and aligned with where they are than anyone else speaking to the issue from a biblical perspective.

In fact—and I may have shared this with you before—but in every state here is what we know. In every state that has brought up the issue of homosexual marriage, in every state where it has been on the ballot, in every state it has passed overwhelmingly defining marriage as a relationship between a man and a woman. But in every state where it has passed, this one included, there has always been one demographic where it either passes by so slim a margin or doesn't pass at all, that one demographic is 18 to 24 year olds. That is the demographic, 18 to 24 year olds, future. That is where they are.

So lest you think that MacLaren can be just sort of dismissed as this voice out there in the wilderness that no one would listen to, I remind you, again. That was in *Christianity Today*. Have you ever been in *Christianity Today*? I have never been in *Christianity Today*. That was in *Christianity Today*, ok?

Let's look at Genesis chapter 19 that is so obscure and multi faceted and nuanced.

The two angels came to Sodom in the evening, and Lot was sitting in the gate of Sodom. When Lot saw them, he rose to meet them and bowed himself with his face to the earth and said, "My lords, please turn aside to your servant's house and spend the night and wash your feet. Then you may rise up early and go on your way."

They said, "No; we will spend the night in the town square."

But he pressed them strongly; so they turned aside to him and entered his house. And he made them a feast and baked unleavened bread, and they ate.³

Notice the similarities and the distinctions between his encounter and the encounter with Abraham. Notice the distinction between the way Abraham immediately recognizes who he is dealing with and Lot does not.

Verse four.

² Ibid.

³ Genesis 19:1-3.

But before they lay down, the men of the city, the men of Sodom, both young and old, all the people to the last man, surrounded the house. And they called to Lot, “Where are the men who came to you tonight? Bring them out to us, that we may know them.”⁴

By the way, you need to underline that term, “that we may know them,”⁵ because here is one of the lines of argumentation. One of the lines of argumentation is about these individuals wanting to share hospitality with these individuals.

“This was not about sodomy.”

But we have seen that word in Genesis a number of times. For example, “Adam knew his wife.”⁶ And as a result of him knowing his wife they had a child. This word does not mean “have a conversation.”

In case you are wondering how we know that, look at the next part of the text, verse six.

Lot went out to the men at the entrance, shut the door after him, and said, “I beg you, my brothers, do not act so wickedly.”⁷

Lot knows they are not talking about hospitality. If they just wanted to show hospitality, why would Lot accuse them of acting wickedly?

Look at the next part of the text, perhaps the most disturbing aspect of this entire passage.

“Behold,” Lot says, “I have two daughters who have not known any man. Let me bring them out to you, and do to them as you please. Only do nothing to these men, for they have come under the shelter of my roof.”⁸

We talked before about the rules of hospitality. An individual comes to your home, an individual comes by the way you demonstrate hospitality to them. If they were hostile, perhaps you can stop the hostilities. But you also demonstrated hospitality to them and they are to be protected in your home because if something happens to them while they are in your home that is absolutely considered an aggressive act on your part.

And so when vengeance is carried out, it is carried out against you and your home. So on the one hand we understand that Lot is actually acting in accordance with the law of hospitality in the ancient Near East, but the law of hospitality in the ancient Near East says nothing about giving away your virgin daughters.

⁴ Genesis 19:4-5.

⁵ Genesis 19:5.

⁶ Genesis 4:25.

⁷ Genesis 19:6.

⁸ Genesis 19:7.

Verse nine. “But they said, ‘Stand back!’ And they said, ‘This fellow came to sojourn, and he has become the judge! Now we will deal worse with you than with them.’”⁹

Again, supposedly this is about hospitality. Now they say, “We will deal worse with you than with them.”¹⁰ In other words what they wanted with these men was something that was terrible for these men. And the way we know that is because now they say to Lot, “It is going to be worse for you than it is going to be for them.”

Then they pressed hard against the man Lot, and drew near to break the door down. But the men reached out their hands and brought Lot into the house with them and shut the door. And they struck with blindness the men who were at the entrance of the house, both small and great, so that they wore themselves out groping for the door.¹¹

This is absolutely one of the most disturbing passages in the Bible. There are so many things about his passage that just make us uncomfortable. There are so many things about this passage that just make us wonder even about the wisdom of delving into these kinds of issues. But I want to remind you that unless we talked about the fact that God was bringing judgment on Sodom and Gomorrah in a very public way and he was reminding, he is telling Abraham what he is about to do, specifically the text says, so that Abraham could warn his children after him. God wants us to be warned about this issue.

So he is specific about what he is dealing with, not graphic, not graphic, but specific. And let me just put a footnote here. Let me put a footnote here. Especially, I know we have got a lot of home school families here. And one of the things that we hear often times... You home school families know exactly what I am talking about. You know exactly where I am coming from. One of the things we hear is this. “Well, you know, I just don’t want to shelter my children like that because if they are going to be out there in the world some day, I want them to be aware.”

Folks, God does not treat his children like that. He does not give us graphic, sinful, unnecessary details. And yet even without the graphic, sinful, unnecessary details, we know this is a bad thing. You don’t have to see it. You don’t have to experience it. You don’t even have to walk closely with it to know that it is vile and that it is to be avoided.

God doesn’t get graphic with us. We don’t have to be graphic with our children. Our children don’t have to experience sin to know that sin is wrong. Our children don’t have to walk with people who live in the gutter to know that they shouldn’t live in the gutter. Our children don’t have to be exposed to the most graphic and vile things of the world in order for them to recognize and be aware of the fact that there are graphic and vile things out there that they should flee from and, in fact, shouldn’t even open their minds to.

That is the way we should act towards sin. That is the way we should treat sin.

⁹ Genesis 19:9.

¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹ Genesis 19:9-11.

So don't you ever apologize for sheltering your children. I believe we are commanded to shelter our children, amen? Don't you ever apologize. Regardless of what kind of choices you have made with your children. All of us in this room, regardless of those kinds of choices—I use that one because it is the most obvious and probably the most common in the room—but all of us have some choices that we have made with our children that sometimes people come down on because they talk about this issue of sheltering.

Here is the other thing. You know your children and what some of them need as opposed to what others of them need, amen? Never apologize to that.

But here is the other thing. The idea is: We protect our children, but we still give them the information. And you can give the information without the graphic nastiness. You know, I can just put another footnote here. I always... there have been a number of times where I have wished that I could say this to a person who was in the process of sharing their testimony. Amen?

“Sometimes my life was awful,” is enough. Amen. Sometimes we don't need to know exactly how awful it was. We don't need to know exactly what your experiences were. We don't need to know exactly how gross and how vile things were. Sometimes you can speak volumes by just saying, “There were things in my life that I wish I had never seen and never done.” Everybody in the room can go, “Amen. Hallelujah. Praise the Lord.” Move on from there. Amen?

God opens the door here. He lets us know exactly what he is dealing with, exactly what he is talking about. But he does not bring us to a place where we end up being tempted with the sin by being brought into the graphic nature of it.

Several things I want to say about the sin of Sodom. Number one, the sin of Sodom was sodomy. The sin of Sodom was sodomy. And I say that because there are a host of individuals who make the argument that the sin of Sodom really wasn't about sodomy.

They go, for example, to Ezekiel chapter 16. In Ezekiel chapter 16 Ezekiel is speaking metaphorically about Sodom. Sodom is not there anymore just like in Isaiah chapter one, you know.

“Hear my words, you rulers of Sodom. Give ear, oh you people of Gomorrha.”¹²

Well, is Isaiah written to Sodom and Gomorrha? No. Isaiah is not written to Sodom and Gomorrha. Sodom and Gomorrha are toast already when Isaiah is writing. Sodom and Gomorrha has become a metaphor for wickedness and for sinfulness. And there in Ezekiel chapter 16 we see the term being used metaphorically and he speaks about a lack of hospitality there in Ezekiel chapter 16 and a lot of people use that as a proof text to come back and say, “See, what we were talking about there in Sodom and Gomorrha is explained in Ezekiel chapter 16. And it was really about hospitality.”

¹² See Isaiah 1:10.

Well, you know, that is not the only place it is talked about. How about Jude verse seven? Listen to what Jude says in Jude verse seven. “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.”¹³

Amen. Hallelujah. Praise the Lord. Argument over.

The Bible clearly teaches that the sin of Sodom and Gomorrha was the sin of sodomy. That is what we are dealing with here. That is why there was hell fire and brimstone. That is what is going on here. It was not some other sort of nuanced thing happening. It was clear. And the author goes out of his way to make himself clear, as clear as he can possibly be without getting graphic.

We see the clarity there in a number of ways. Number one, because of the terminology that he uses.

These men come out and say, “We want to know them.”¹⁴

Folks, if you have been paying attention from Genesis one all the way up to where we are in Genesis chapter 19. You are well aware of what that phrase means.

“We want to know them.”¹⁵

And in case that was not enough, Lot comes back out and says, “Don’t do this wickedness.”¹⁶ He refers to it as wickedness. So now we have got clue number two.

Here is clue number three. It is horrible that Lot does this and we will get to that in a moment. But clue number three is, in case you were wondering if we are talking about sodomy here, in case you were wondering if that is why these individuals are beating down the door. First, the terminology used. Second, referring to it as wickedness. And, thirdly, Lot basically saying, “I would rather you guys do that to my daughters than to these two men.”¹⁷

And in case those three things in the text are not enough, then just let Scripture interpret Scripture. We come to the New Testament and Jude makes it as clear as day. It was sexual immorality and it was pursuing unnatural desires.¹⁸

The sin of Sodom was sodomy.

¹³ Jude 7.

¹⁴ See Genesis 19:5.

¹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶ See Genesis 19:7.

¹⁷ See Genesis 19:8.

¹⁸ See Jude 7.

It was homosexuality. That is what we are dealing with here. The Bible is unambiguous as to whether or not that is sin, absolutely unambiguous.

Here is a second thing. The sin of Sodom was especially and uniquely heinous. The sin of Sodom was especially and uniquely heinous. It is not like other sins. And I say that and we get sort of uncomfortable because we, “Well, I thought all sins were the same.”

Really? Listen to Jesus in John chapter 19 verse 11. “Jesus answered him, ‘You would have no authority over me at all unless it had been given you from above. Therefore he who delivered me over to you has the greater sin.’”¹⁹ See, interesting.

Common American church culture believes all sins are equal. Jesus disagrees. He believes there are some sins that are greater than others. The Bible does not teach that all sins are equal. Some sins are greater than others. Some things are more wicked than other things. We are told not to worry or be anxious about anything. Trust me, the sin of worry is not equal to the sin of murder.

How could we say that with a straight face?

Now if what we are trying to communicate is that for individuals who are without God, for individuals who are without Jesus Christ, for individuals who are unregenerate, for individuals who are not saved, they will die and they will be separated from God forever regardless of what sins in particular they have committed then amen. Hallelujah. Praise the Lord. That is absolutely true. But there are some sins that are more heinous than others. And this is one in particular.

The sin of homosexuality is particularly heinous. And, by the way, we already know that by Genesis chapter 19. Why do we already know that by Genesis chapter 19? Here is a couple of things just if all we have got is Genesis.

Number one, we know that this sin is a perversion of the created order. It is a perversion of the created order. You just go back to Genesis chapter one and Genesis chapter two and it does not take a rocket scientist to figure out that this was not what God had in mind, amen? It is a perversion of the created order.

Secondly, it is a perversion of the procreation command. First command in the Bible, Genesis 1:28. “Be fruitful and multiply.”²⁰ This sin is a perversion because it makes it impossible for us to do what God has commanded us to do. God has given us marriage. God has given us the relations between men and women in marriage for specific purposes. And chief among them is procreation.

Now, again, I have to put a footnote here. We have to be very careful, because here is what happens often times when people make this argument. We go out there. We are

¹⁹ John 19:11.

²⁰ Genesis 1:28.

making the argument in the culture and we say, “Well, no, that is just not right. And it is just not right because, well, you know, they can’t have children.”

And all of the sudden the homosexual advocate, he is licking his chops. He loves that line of argumentation because he turns right back around and he says, “Oh, wait a minute. So you are saying that really sex is for procreation. So there are two things that you just told me you believe. Number one, you believe it is inappropriate for a man and a wife to ever engage in that activity unless it is for the purpose of procreation. And, number two, you just told me that two people in their 60s if they are widowed they shouldn’t be allowed to get married. Why? Because they are too old to procreate.”

And then we just sit there and we go...

Be very careful when we make that argument.

Now did I just say we shouldn’t make that line of argumentation? That is not what I said at all. That is not what I said at all for a couple of reasons. Number one, because it is a categorical. By categorical here is what I mean. That categorically God has designed men and women to be able to procreate as a category. Does that mean that it always occurs? No. It doesn’t mean that it always occurs. God hasn’t designed it that way for it to always occur. One of the reasons God hasn’t designed it for it to always occur that way, 1 Corinthians chapter seven gives us a clue.

Paul makes it very clear that we are not to deprive one another sexually because the enemy uses that against us because there are certain desires that we have that God intended to be satisfied in the context of a marital relationship.

Now the category is men, women because that leads us to procreation. The activity is appropriate because God tells us clearly in 1 Corinthians chapter seven that he has particular activity in order for us to have a place where we can live in righteousness and holiness and yet still satisfy those desires that God gave us. By the way, he gave us the desires because it is those desires that lead to procreation.

So don’t be afraid to make that argument.

Thirdly, not only is it a perversion of the created order and perversion of the procreation command, but it is also a perversion of the promise. Remember what we have been talking about in the life of Abraham? Remember what we have been talking about since Genesis chapter three and verse 15?

The *proto euangelion*, the first proclamation of the gospel there in Genesis chapter three and verse 15 is about the seed of the woman crushing the head of the head of the serpent, the seed of the serpent. So from then on what is the serpent trying to do? He is trying to kill the seed from then on. That is what the serpent wants to do. That is the work of the devil. That is the work of the serpent, to kill the seed.

What a better way to kill the seed than to send women with women and men with men. You do that, no chance the promised Messiah is ever going to come. This is another tool of the adversary in order to avoid the fulfillment of the promise of the coming of the Messiah.

So it is a perversion of the created order. It is a perversion of the procreation command. It is also a perversion of the promise.

So even before we have the law, folks—and this is a thing because we people will often make this argument. “Oh, well, you know, actually you find that in Leviticus and that is the law and we are no longer under the law. And so you can’t go to the law.”

Well, first of all, yes, you absolutely can go to the law. God’s moral law is transcendent. But, secondly, this is before the Levitical law. And they are getting wiped off the face of the earth for it before the Levitical Law.

The sin of Sodom was sodomy. The sin of Sodom was especially and uniquely heinous.

Here is the other thing. The sin of Sodom was ubiquitous. Look at what he says here in verse four. I want you to grasp this. I hadn’t noticed this before. I mean, it really hadn’t just dawned on me before like it did in my preparation. But look with me at verse four.

“But before they lay down.”²¹ Notice how quickly this happened. He is in the city gates. You almost get this picture. You almost get the picture that Lot sees these guys coming and he goes, “Uh, oh.” Because there is no way that this is new. You follow me on that? There is no way this is new. And these guys are coming and Lot is at the city gate and lot says, “You all need to come to my house.”

“No, we are going to go to the city center.”

“No. You all need to come to my house, now, please.”

And the text says in verse four, “Before they lay down...”²²

Someone spotted them on the way to Lot’s house and by the time they had eaten and before they lay down listen, look at the next part of this. “The men of the city...”²³ And remember, we have talked about this before. We have talked about this rhetorical device of saying something three times in three different ways in order to make your point. In email terminology that is bold, italics and underline all in the same, ok, phrase. That is what he does here. He says, “The men of Sodom.”²⁴ He could have stopped there, but he

²¹ Genesis 19:4.

²² Ibid.

²³ Ibid.

²⁴ Ibid.

didn't. "Both young and old."²⁵ He could have stopped there, but he didn't. "All the people to the last man."²⁶

You know what that ought to bring to mind? It ought to bring to mind last week. "God, what if there is 50?"

"Ok."

"What if there is 45?"

"Sure."

"What if there is 40?"

"Ok."

"What if there is 30? What if there is 10?"

"Sure."

There is not. The text says every man in the city. It just... just think about that for a moment. I mean we all know that there are parts of town, that there are parts of the country. We all know. You know, I will never forget, you know. I was in San Francisco and I was preaching at Golden Gate Seminary and one of the professors there at Golden Gate took me to this neat little place up there in Marin County in San Francisco. And we go to this little place and it is a place where they had these old, old records, you know, these like old jazz records and stuff from the 20s and 30s and 40s and these old magazines. See, like that sort of thing.

And so I got some copies of *Life* magazine and stuff like that from the 20s and 30s and 40s. And you try to find, you know, issues from when certain things happened, when World War II first kicked off and all this sort of stuff. I am engrossed. I am absolutely amazed. I am going through this stuff and I cannot believe it. I am pulling things out.

"Oh, Jasmine would love this. Percy will love this. Trevor... oh, I can't believe... do you see what year this is? Oh, it is unbelievable."

So I got my head down. I am doing this and all of the sudden there is some fishnet pantyhose and some boots right there and they are big boots. And then I am going around and I am... you know, I don't think anything of it. And then all of the sudden I bump somebody and it is the fishnet pantyhose and the big boots.

And I say, "Oh, excuse me."

²⁵ Ibid.

²⁶ Ibid.

And I hear, “No problem. How are you doing, sir?”

And I look up and all around me as far as the eye could see inside this store homosexuals and transvestites. Go outside and right next door there was a salon that was a homosexual and transvestite salon right next door. And I am just going, “This is... I am not in the Bible belt anymore.”

Just coming. Nobody thought anything of it.

That pales in comparison to what happened in Sodom. We are not just talking about a lot of people. We are not just talking about it becoming culturally acceptable. We are talking about this having infected every one in the culture except Lot. That is what we are talking about here. It was everywhere. It was everywhere.

And that just tells me things can and probably will get worse. Amen? It has never been this bad. Never before, never since was it this bad. Things can get worse.

Fourthly, the sin of Sodom even affected righteous Lot. And don't miss that. The sin of Sodom even affected righteous Lot. Why do I call him righteous Lot? If you remember last week Peter calls him righteous Lot.

Do you think this split second decision that he made about his daughters just came from nowhere? Where did it come from? God? Absolutely not. It didn't come from God. Where did it come from?

It came from where Lot lives. It came from what Lot has been bathing in. It came from what Lot had absolutely surrounded himself with and become inundated with and become comfortable with. That is where it came from.

Listen to these strong words from one commentator. “As the constancy of Lot in risking his own life for the defense of his guests deserves no common praise,” and by the way it does. Now he did. He risked his life. Lot walked outside and closes the door behind him. And he says, “No, don't do this wicked thing.”²⁷ That is courageous. And we ought to just say, “Amen. Hallelujah. Praise the Lord. That's courageous.”

But just like we should, so now Moses relates that a defect was mixed with the great virtue which sprinkled it with some imperfection. For being destitute of advice, he devised, as is usual in intricate affairs, an unlawful remedy. What an understatement. He does not hesitate to prostitute his own daughters that he may restrain the indomitable fury of the people. But he should rather have endured a thousand deaths than have resorted to such a measure. Amen. Hallelujah. Praise the Lord. He should rather have endured a thousand deaths.

It was not appropriate for him to do that. But where does something like that come from? Where else could it have come from?

²⁷ See Genesis 19:7.

What is amazing here is that Lot lives in this stuff and he has got two virgin daughters. That is what is amazing here. But, evidently, according to the culture here in Sodom, they were pretty safe. And yet he devises this scheme.

And, remember, he is virtuous, righteous Lot.

I want you to understand something. Here is what I want you to hear on this. It is real easy for us to look at this type of behavior and look at this type of sin and look at it in this sort of pompous, self righteous way. But I want you to know that the encroachment of our culture in this area is affecting us. It has affected some more than it has affected others, but it has affected us.

Trust me when I tell you this. Had I grown up 50 or 100 years ago and been in that store in San Francisco when I looked up, I probably would have just passed out. My brain would have just short circuited and I would have just... can you imagine somebody 100 years ago standing up in that store? They would just probably would have just died on the spot, just killed them on the spot.

Me? Not so much.

I was surprised by the number. I was surprised by the magnitude. But, quite frankly, Not really surprised by the behavior much anymore. It is everywhere. I am affected by it. You are affected by it. But there are different levels of being affected by it.

Listen to a couple of these things. This is from Lisa Miller. Lisa Miller is the religion writer for *Newsweek*. And in the December sixth edition, this was our Christmas present from *Newsweek*, she wrote an article, "Marriage our Mutual Joy." And listen to what she says here about marriage in this *Newsweek* article. This is *Newsweek*, ok? This is the big guns. This is *Newsweek*. You got *Time*. You got *Newsweek*. This is *Newsweek*.

The Bible does condemn gay male sex in a handful of passages. Twice Leviticus refers to sex between men as "an abomination" (King James version),²⁸

She has in parenthesis, which is in and of itself is a misrepresentation. King James is not the only place where you find that. But she puts that in parenthesis so people will think, you know, yeah, the archaic version of the Bible.

... but these are throwaway lines in a peculiar text given over to codes for living in the ancient Jewish world...²⁹

"Throw away lines," she says.

²⁸ <http://www.newsweek.com/id/172653/page/2>

²⁹ Ibid.

... a text that devotes verse after verse to treatments for leprosy, cleanliness rituals for menstruating women and the correct way to sacrifice a goat—or a lamb or a turtle dove. Most of us no longer heed Leviticus on haircuts or blood sacrifices; our modern understanding of the world has surpassed its prescriptions.... our modern understanding of the world has surpassed its prescriptions.³⁰

Now, listen. I don't heed Leviticus on the sacrificial system, but not because I am too sophisticated, but because Christ has fulfilled that part of the law. She says it is because we are more sophisticated than people in Bible times.

There has never been a man on the face of the earth that has probably been as sophisticated... never has there been a man that as sophisticated as Adam was, never. Who would have been more sophisticated than Adam? Nobody. Just by virtue of how long he lived and by virtue of him having been created in the perfect environment as the perfect man. You put the perfect man in the perfect environment and let him live some 900 years. Nobody will ever be as sophisticated as him, ever, nor those in his first 10 generations.

But she says it is because we are more sophisticated.

Listen to this also.

Why would we regard its condemnation of homosexuality with more seriousness than we regard its advice, which is far lengthier, on the best price to pay for a slave?³¹

Now I want you to notice that she goes through the slavery issue. And I want you to see something here. Again, bear with me. We won't do this much longer, but you have to know this. That was by design. This book, I may have referred to this book to you before. It is called *After the Ball: How America Will Conquer its Fear and Hatred of Gays in the 90s*. This book was published in 1989. It is important to keep that in mind for a couple of reasons. Number one, because it is now 20 years later and this book is just absolutely pressing it. What we have seen over the last 20 years is the program outlined in this book 20 years ago by these two authors.

Here is the second thing, the reason that it is important that it happened in 1989. In 1988 there was a meeting of the 140 leading homosexual advocates in order to devise a strategy for how they would deal with homosexuality in the United States. I want you to hear a couple of these things. Listen to what they say. Here, this is in the first chapter.

AIDS, though a loose cannon, is a cannon indeed. As cynical as it may seem, AIDS gives us a chance, however brief, to establish ourselves as

³⁰ Ibid.

³¹ Ibid.

a victimized minority legitimately deserving of America's special protection and care.³²

Listen to this.

The campaign we outline in this book, though complex depends centrally upon a program of unabashed propaganda, firmly grounded in long-established principles of psychology and advertising.³³

One of the tools they use is a tool called jamming. Jamming is the way that they make people feel guilty about their negative opinions of homosexuals.

Listen to this.

All normal people feel *shame* when they perceive that they are not thinking, feeling, or acting like one of the pack. And, these days, all but the stupidest and most unregenerate of bigots perceive that prejudice against all other minority groups- e.g., blacks, Jews, Catholics, women, et al.--has long since ceased to be approved, let alone fashionable, and that to express such prejudices, if not to hold them, makes one decidedly *not* one of the pack.³⁴

So what is their idea? Always talk about homosexuality in the context of blacks, Jews or other oppressed minorities. That is part of the jamming procedure that was outlined in this book in 1989.

And what does Lisa Miller do at the end of her paragraph about homosexuality in her article in *Newsweek* at the end of 2008? She identifies the issue of homosexuality with the issue of slavery. And in other words, if you believe what the Bible says in Leviticus about homosexuality, then you are as bigoted as individuals who used to use the Bible to justify slavery.

That did not come out of left field. That came out of a field manual that was designed to desensitize our culture on the issue of homosexuality. And this book is line by line by line the program of propaganda that we have seen over the last 20 years. And it has been so effective that now a man who is a professed alcoholic, who abandoned his wife, who has no theological merit, who has no pastoral merit, is being propped up at the inauguration today simply because he is a ground breaker who was the first homosexual to be named bishop by the Episcopal Church.

Don't you think for a moment that this is not a pitched battle.

³² Marshall Kirk and Hunter Madsen, *After the Ball: How America Will Conquer Its Fear and Hatred of Gays in the '90s*, New York: Doubleday, 1989. p. xxv

³³ Ibid.

³⁴ From "After the Ball - How America will conquer its fear and hatred of Gays in the 90s." - Penguin Books, 1989 pp. 147-157. by Marshall K. Kirk and Hunter Madsen

Well, that's just Lisa Miller, isn't it?

How about this?

Terry Davis, pastor of First Presbyterian Church in Hartford, Connecticut has been presiding over holy unions since 1992. Listen to what he says.

I'm against promiscuity—love ought to be expressed in committed relationships, not through casual sex, and I think the church should recognize the validity of committed same-sex relationships.³⁵

That is a Presbyterian pastor.

How about this from Walter Brueggemann? Walter Brueggemann is a well known theologian. Walter Brueggemann is Emeritus Professor at Columbia Theological Seminary and he quotes the apostle Paul when he looks for biblical support for gay marriage. Here is what Brueggemann says.

“There is neither Greek nor Jew, slave nor free, male nor female, for you are all one in Jesus Christ.” The religious argument for gay marriage, he adds, “is not generally made with reference to particular texts...³⁶

Now this is a religious argument for gay marriage, Brueggemann is talking about. I had to read Brueggemann as a theology student, ok? The argument for gay marriage is

The...argument for gay marriage... “is not, but with the general conviction that the Bible is bent toward inclusiveness.”³⁷

Listen to Miller again and then we will read a couple of passages of Scripture. So here is the other line of argumentation that people use. We are just talking about a couple of obscure verses in Leviticus. And, by the way, that line is almost a direct quote of our president elect who on March fifth said this.

“I don't think same sex unions should be called marriage, but I think that it is a legal right that they should have that is recognized by the state. If people find that controversial then I would just refer them to the Sermon on the Mount which I think is, in my mind, for my faith, more central than an obscure passage in Romans.”

President elect Barack Obama.

³⁵ <http://www.newsweek.com/id/172653/page/3>

³⁶ Ibid.

³⁷ Ibid.

Listen to how Miller treats this issue and then we will look at these texts and we will close.

Paul was tough on homosexuality, though recently progressive scholars...³⁸

Don't you just love that?

.... progressive scholars have argued that his condemnation of men who "were inflamed with lust for one another" (which he calls "a perversion") is really a critique of the worst kind of wickedness: self-delusion, violence, promiscuity and debauchery. In his book "The Arrogance of Nations," the scholar Neil Elliott³⁹

The scholar, the scholar. If they were talking about John Piper they wouldn't say, "The scholar," they would say, "The reverend, the pastor." Why? Because those are catch phrases for people out there. Catch phrases. They call you the reverend or the pastor, this is just some fundamentalist who just kind of Bible thumper. He is not really intelligent. He is just a guy who has wrote... you know, he has just got faith. He believes real hard. But here they use the term "scholar." That is a catch phrase that you need always be leery when people use that phrase, "scholar."

Neil Elliott argues that Paul is referring in this famous passage to the depravity of the Roman emperors, the craven habits of Nero and Caligula, a reference his audience would have grasped instantly. "Paul is not talking about what we call homosexuality at all," Elliott says. "He's talking about a certain group of people who have done everything in this list. We're not dealing with anything like gay love or gay marriage. We're talking about really, really violent people who meet their end and are judged by God." In any case, one might add, Paul argued more strenuously against divorce—and at least half of the Christians in America disregard that teaching.⁴⁰

By the way, that is just a blatant lie by Lisa Miller in *Newsweek*, that half of Christians disagree with Paul on the issue of whether or not divorce is wrong. That is a blatant lie.

What does the Bible teach? Let's look at a few passages here and then make a couple of comments and we will be done.

Move with me to Leviticus chapter 18. And it is important to remember these. And, remember, Genesis 19, Leviticus 18 when you are talking about the Old Testament.

³⁸ <http://www.newsweek.com/id/172653/page/2>

³⁹ Ibid.

⁴⁰ Ibid.

Look at Leviticus 18:22. “You shall not lie with a male as with a woman; it is an abomination.”⁴¹

Turn over to Leviticus chapter 20 and verse 13, just one page if you will. “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. They shall surely be put to death. Their blood is upon them.”⁴²

Now I want to show you something that people often overlook in Romans chapter one. New Testament we start with Romans chapter one. Let’s go there. Because remember the argument is there are some obscure verses in the Old Testament, but you really don’t have anything in the New Testament that openly and clearly condemns homosexuality. Look at Romans chapter one. Let’s look at 26, 27. First let’s go back to verse 24.

Therefore God gave them up in the lusts of their hearts to impurity, to the dishonoring of their bodies among themselves, because they exchanged the truth about God for a lie and worshiped and served the creature rather than the Creator, who is blessed forever! Amen.⁴³

Not a reference to homosexuality there. It is a reference, however, to sexual impurity and lust.

Now I only point that out because the argument is that this next paragraph is about wicked Roman emperors and it is not about common practice. Look at verse 26.

For this reason God gave them up to dishonorable passions. For their women exchanged natural relations for those that are contrary to nature; and the men likewise gave up natural relations with women and were consumed with passion for one another, men committing shameless acts with men and receiving in themselves the due penalty for their error.⁴⁴

By the way, does the New Testament lighten up on God’s seriousness regarding homosexuality? Look at verse 32. “Though they know God’s decree that those who practice such things deserve to die...”⁴⁵ Where does he get that from? Leviticus chapter 20. He doesn’t think it is irrelevant. “The not only do them but give approval to those who practice them.”⁴⁶

Beyond Romans one I want you to look at 1 Corinthians chapter six. Let’s look at nine through 11 here. 1 Corinthians chapter six, nine through 11.

⁴¹ Leviticus 18:22.

⁴² Leviticus 20:13.

⁴³ Romans 1:24-25.

⁴⁴ Romans 1:26-27.

⁴⁵ Romans 1:32.

⁴⁶ Ibid.

Do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived: neither the sexually immoral, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor men who practice homosexuality, nor thieves, nor the greedy, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor swindlers will inherit the kingdom of God. And such were some of you.⁴⁷

So much for it can't change. In the first century there were people who used to be gay and then they weren't anymore because God got a hold of them. Amen?

“And such were some of you. But you were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God.”⁴⁸

He didn't say, “You used to practice these things, but it was just the far out versions and now you are nice and loving with it.” No. He says, “You are not that anymore. You were, but now you are not.”

Turn with me also to 1 Timothy 1:9-11. Go back to verse eight actually.

Now we know that the law is good, if one uses it lawfully, understanding this, that the law is not laid down for the just but for the lawless and disobedient, for the ungodly and sinners, for the unholy and profane, for those who strike their fathers and mothers, for murderers, the sexually immoral, men who practice homosexuality, enslavers.⁴⁹

By the way, does the New Testament condone slavery? No, it doesn't. It puts it in the same category as homosexuality. But you would never know that reading people like Lisa Miller. You would never know that it was, in fact, New Testament Christians whose world view gave the impetus for the end of slavery.

...enslavers, liars, perjurers, and whatever else is contrary to sound doctrine, in accordance with the glorious gospel of the blessed God with which I have been entrusted.⁵⁰

Are these obscure references? Are these just references to the worst kinds of homosexuality?

Here is another thing that I want you to note. Virtually everywhere in the New Testament where you read these words about homosexuality, sexual immorality is right there with it. It is grievous, it is heinous and it is absolutely accepted in our culture.

⁴⁷ 1 Corinthians 6:9-11.

⁴⁸ 1 Corinthians 6:11.

⁴⁹ 1 Timothy 1:8-10.

⁵⁰ 1 Timothy 1:10-11.

I want you to read one more passage of Scripture. And this one doesn't refer directly to homosexuality, but here is what I want you to see. Look at Matthew chapter 19 beginning at verse three.

And Pharisees came up to him [Jesus] and tested him by asking, "Is it lawful to divorce one's wife for any cause?"

He answered, "Have you not read that he who created them from the beginning made them male and female."⁵¹

Jesus' teaching on marriage is based in the creation order.

He who created them from the beginning made them male and female, and said, 'Therefore a man shall leave his father and his mother and hold fast to his wife, and they shall become one flesh'? So they are no longer two but one flesh. What therefore God has joined together, let not man separate.

They said to him, "Why then did Moses command one to give a certificate of divorce and to send her away?"

He said to them, "Because of your hardness of heart Moses allowed you to divorce your wives, but from the beginning it was not so. And I say to you: whoever divorces his wife, except for sexual immorality."⁵²

Notice that it doesn't say adultery there.

"...except for sexual immorality, and marries another, commits adultery."⁵³

Except for sexual immorality. The word there is πορνεία (por-ni'-ah). The Greek word is πορνεία (por-ni'-ah). It is not the word for adultery. Although that is common in the discussion among Christians that adultery is a cause for divorce and remarriage. The word is not adultery. The word is sexual immorality. And that word for sexual immorality goes back to the morality codes of Leviticus.

Now because of this—and we don't have near enough time to deal with all of this this morning, but just bear with me for a moment here and you will understand the line of argumentation—there are several schools of thought on divorce and remarriage. I want to talk to you about one of them. That is the school of thought that says the Bible does not allow for divorce and remarriage under any circumstances, under any circumstances. That is the position of this church, by the way, that the Bible does not allow for divorce and remarriage under any circumstances. The argument is based on the fact that this

⁵¹ Matthew 19:3-4.

⁵² Matthew 19:4-9.

⁵³ Matthew 19:9.

word used here is πορνεία (por-ni'-ah). He uses this word for sexual immorality, not the word for adultery.

A couple of things are very interesting here. Number one, you don't see this clause anywhere else in the New Testament where divorce is spoken of. You don't see this clause when Jesus talks about this, for example, in Luke or when he talks about it in Mark. You don't see this clause except for πορνεία (por-ni'-ah). You only see it in Matthew.

Now why would you see this πορνεία (por-ni'-ah) clause only in Matthew? Well, because the πορνεία (por-ni'-ah) clause most commonly refers to betrothal and not marriage. In other words, if you find out during your betrothal period that, number one, your intended is not a virgin, then you may break the betrothal which, by the way, was a legally binding contract. You could break the betrothal if you found out that this individual was not a virgin.

Number two, if you found out that you were too closely related according to the Levitical code, well, to marry would be sexually immoral so you may break the betrothal during that time.

Several other things. Now, why would Matthew bring the πορνεία (por-ni'-ah) code into play and not the other gospels? Because Matthew is the only one who has a discussion about Joseph putting Mary away during the betrothal. That is why he is the only one who talks about the πορνεία (por-ni'-ah) code, because he is the only one who talks about that.

You don't find that in the rest of the narratives about the birth of Christ. Only in Matthew and, therefore, only in Matthew do you have this reference to the πορνεία (por-ni'-ah) code.

Now what does that have to do with what we are talking about?

Here is what it has to do with what we are talking about. Jesus recognized sexual immorality the same way Moses did. What Moses says was sexually immoral, Jesus says was sexually immoral. And he actually points to these morality codes that we find in Leviticus when he makes his statement in Matthew chapter five and reiterates it in Matthew chapter 19. And ironically Matthew chapter five, that is the Sermon on the Mount which president elect says is the place where you go to justify homosexual marriage.

Folks, you can't get there from here. You can't justify homosexuality anyhow, anyway from the Old Testament or from the New Testament. And here is the problem specifically with the justification of homosexuality. Think about this for a moment. God uses Sodom and Gomorrah as an example and the names of those twin cities are used throughout the rest of the Bible as a warning, a warning. God demonstrates his righteousness and he demonstrates his wrath and he gives a warning for the rest of the time of history and he

warns then. “You remember these people who were sexually immoral. You remember what I did because of their immorality.” He reminds us of who he is and that he is the God who is going to judge again. And, ultimately, and finally here is what is so pernicious about the promotion of homosexuality.

We take what is the ultimate warning in the Old Testament and basically say, “God was wrong about that. That really wasn’t what it was about. That really wasn’t what upset God. And even if it did, he was the cruel God of the Old Testament and not the God of the New Testament.”

What is the danger in that? Here is the danger in that. Sodom and Gomorrah is supposed to make your ears perk up when you read Revelation. Amen? It is supposed to remind you not that we have been told about the judgment that is to come, but that we have been warned about a judgment that is to come by the God who turned those cities into ashes. That is why it is so pernicious.

So do I believe that we ought to bash homosexuals? Do I believe...? Absolutely not. And I hope you don’t see that as what has happened here today. Not at all. That is not my position at all. But my position is: We must hold fast to the truth of Scripture. And my position is also this: In our day and in our culture this is a front line of the battle as far as the encroachment of the evil one on the truth of the Scriptures. And we should not be surprised because what does Jude say?

“Beloved, while I was making every effort to write to you about our common salvation, I found it necessary to write to you urging you to contend earnestly for the faith which was once for all handed down to the saints.”⁵⁴

Why was this important? Jude says, “Because certain persons have crept in unnoticed, ungodly persons who turn the grace of God into lawlessness and deny our only Master and Lord, Jesus Christ.”⁵⁵

Isn’t that interesting? They creep into the Church, identify themselves as Christian. They turn grace into lawlessness, justifying sin and they deny our only Master and Lord Jesus Christ.

Well, here is the rest of the story about what is happening today with Bishop Robinson. Not only is he a bishop who turns grace into lawlessness by being an alcoholic, homosexual who abandoned his wife and then is called bishop. He turns the grace of our God into lawlessness. He also denies our only Lord and Master Jesus Christ because the bishop has said, “I looked at inaugural prayers over the last 30 or 40 years and was amazed at how aggressively Christian they were.” That’s the word he used, aggressively Christian. Not overtly Christian, aggressively Christian. Aggressive is a negative term. Overtly Christian, you are just making an observation. He says they were aggressively Christian.

⁵⁴ See Jude 3.

⁵⁵ See Jude 4.

“So when I pray I am not going to pray in Jesus’ name, not even going to pray to the God of the Bible. I am going to pray to the God of our understanding,” which is terminology he learned in Alcoholics Anonymous.

Those who have crept in unnoticed, ungodly persons who are marked out for this condemnation who turn the grace of our God into lawlessness and deny our only Master and Lord, Jesus Christ.⁵⁶

What is the big deal? Here is the big deal. The homosexual looks at Gene Robinson and says, “I am ok.” When instead what he needs to hear is, “Hey, Genesis 19, God is serious about this. Repent, believe, Come to faith in the Lord Jesus Christ who according to 1 Corinthians chapter six verses nine through 11 can save you from this and can deliver you from this and can give you wholeness and healing and use you for his glory.” And instead of hearing that, what they are hearing from individuals like Lisa Miller and individuals like Walter Brueggemann and individuals like Brian MacLaren is, “You are ok in your sin.”

I ask you this question. Who loves them more? Who loves them more? The one who will beg them with tear stained eyes to repent and come out of their wicked lifestyle or the one who says to them, “You know, what? The Bible really doesn’t mean what it says when it talks about that. You are actually ok.”

I don’t think so. And I am grieved, my heart breaks over what is happening this day in our land.

Isaiah says, “Woe to you who call wicked good. Woe to you.”⁵⁷

I am afraid for us. I am not afraid for me. I know where I am going, but I am afraid for us. And I love my brothers and sisters. My fellow Americans, I absolutely love them. And because of that I will continue to preach this truth regardless of what it costs because what we desperately need is not to become more tolerant of what God calls wicked, but what we desperately need is a word from the Lord and individuals who will, without compromise and without venom, proclaim that truth in the gospel which is the only answer. I just encourage you. I admonish you. I beg you to be that people. I plead with you.

Now I know this has been long and maybe in some areas laborious, but I absolutely believe that this is crucial. I absolutely believe that every person under the sound of my voice has people close to you who are struggling with homosexuality, people in your family who are struggling with homosexuality or worse, who are not struggling. Amen? They have just given in. It is no longer a struggle. Every one of you under the sound of my voice has people in your family or people who are close to you who look at you and

⁵⁶ Ibid.

⁵⁷ See Isaiah 5:20.

call you evil because you believe what we have just talked about here today. And every one of us has a tendency to recoil.

I want you to know that is part of the strategy. This is one of the hardest books I have ever read, not because the words were big and not because it was hard to get through. It is actually a pretty easy read, but because I have just... every five minutes I was going... I... I am through.

One more page. It is real. It is here. It is heinous. It is costly.

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