



The Caller

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Confidence

Corner

John F. Board

In this week's *Confidence Corner* we want to examine why one religious group claims that the term "firstborn," in Colossians 1:18, cannot refer to one who is "prime, most excellent, most distinguished," the pre-eminent one, as Christians claim.

First, the witnesses reason, if "firstborn" simply refers to the one who is most excellent, "why are the Father and the Holy Spirit not also said to be the firstborn of all creation?" Why is only the Son called "firstborn"? The Watchtower organization wants people to think that the term cannot refer to pre-eminence because God the Father, who is undoubtedly pre-eminent, is never called "firstborn." This reasoning is based on a logical fallacy. One cannot evaluate a statement about one person on the basis of statements made or not made about another person.

For example, a young mother says to her daughter, "you have two hands." According to this argumentation, her young son could deny the truthfulness of his mother's statement about his sister, claiming, "you never said I had two hands!" Also, this reasoning reveals a lack of knowledge of Jewish literature, for God is called the firstborn. Various Jewish rabbis called God "the firstborn of the world."

More importantly, however, the term firstborn does not simply indicate pre-eminence in the manner the Watchtower describes. Instead, it describes a specific type of pre-eminence: Messianic pre-eminence. The term "firstborn" is a Messianic term; therefore, it is appropriate only for Jesus, not for the Father or the Holy Spirit. Thus, the term was not used of either of them in Scripture.

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Whatever you do
IN WORD OR DEED,
DO ALL
IN THE NAME OF THE LORD JESUS,
giving thanks through Him
TO GOD THE FATHER.

COLOSSIANS 3:17

Sunday's Sermons:

AM — *The Gospel*

Romans 1:16-17

PM — *Mechanical Instrumental Music*

Colossians 3:16-17

God's View of Homosexuality?

In this week's inside article of *The Caller*, we want to examine some information regarding how the interpretation of Scripture's teaching regarding homosexuality has changed so drastically in the past 40 or so years. Please understand that what the Bible actually teaches has not changed—only a few scholars' interpretations of what the Bible teaches. We often warn, as did Paul, regarding man's wisdom (wisdom derived from man's wisdom regarding what Scripture teaches) vs. God's wisdom (derived from the Scriptures).

C. S. Lewis is famous for the saying "Odd, the way the less the Bible is read the more it is translated." This seems to be the case when it comes to our modern society's view regarding homosexuality. Since there is more and more a push by a vocal minority toward the acceptance of homosexuality, people seek a way to conform the Bible to society's view. After all, as they think, their God could not possibly be so unloving, could He? The problem here is with the definition of love.

For more than 4000 years (2500 years of extra-biblical material) Jews and Christians alike have taught that God forbids homosexual relations. This long-standing position on homosexuality is under relentless attack today! Beginning in the 1970s, the likes of Derrick Bailey, John Boswell, and John J McNeill have claimed that homophobia and prejudice have led to the traditional interpretation of the text (Genesis 19) rather than what they see as the "plain meaning of the text." What you may ask is their "plain meaning of the text?" They claim that all the inhabitant of the city of Sodom wanted to do to the guest lodging at Lot's house was to get acquainted with them (know them ...Genesis 19:5). One reason they suggest such is that they might be worried about foreigners coming into the land to overthrow the city.

Homosexual proponents rightly claim that the Hebrew term translated "to know" (*yada*) occurs 943 times in the Hebrew Bible. Of these 943 times, they note that only about 15 times does the term *yada* have a reference to sexual knowledge (intercourse). From this information, they incorrectly reason that it is highly unlikely that the term has a sexual meaning in the Sodom narrative. Such a conclusion is a common fallacy of Biblical "word studies."

The proper way to find the meaning of a particular biblical word in a passage is always to examine the word in the context of the passage. When such is done with the word *yada* (to know) in Genesis 19, the meaning becomes extremely clear. If all the men of the city wanted to do was to "become acquainted" with Lot's visitors, it would make no sense for Lot to refer to their "wanting to know the men" as an act of "wickedness." In addition, if all the men of the city wanted to do was "meet the visitors" why would Lot offer his "virgin" daughters to come out to the men that those men might "know" (*yada*) them?

The truth of the matter is that God's view of homosexuality has not changed. Our society seeks to change God's view and then they "champion" those "scholars" who will find a way for Scripture to support their homosexual agenda. But man's attempt to change God's will is just that—God's will remains the same. No matter what our laws become in the future, we must continue to write and teach this truth of God's Word. Souls, and most importantly, the souls of practicing homosexuals are at stake! Do we love them enough to tell them what God desires of them?

John F Board

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