



Written by [Michael Tennant](#) on December 24, 2012

“Queen James Bible” Clumsily Cleanses Scriptures of “Homophobia”

What do you do if you claim to be a Christian but are offended by Scriptures condemning the practice of homosexuality? If you are one of the unnamed editors of the new “Queen James Bible” (QJV), you simply rewrite the offending passages to your liking, and — *voilà!* — the problem is solved.

Based on the 1769 edition of the King James Version (KJV) of the Bible, the QJV changes eight passages that the editors, on their [website](#), say “anti-LGBT [lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender] Bible interpretations commonly cite” as evidence that “homosexuality is a sin.” “We edited those eight verses in a way that makes homophobic interpretations impossible,” they assert. Indeed they did.

Ironically, on [another page](#) of the website they explain that they chose to bowdlerize the KJV because “most English Bible translations that actively condemn homosexuality have based themselves on the King James Version and have erroneously adapted its words to support their own agenda.” Considering that multiple translations over many centuries, using a variety of sources, have translated these verses similarly to the KJV, it is obvious who is “erroneously” changing the clear words of Scripture “to support their own agenda.”

In fact, the crux of the editors’ argument for changing the passages is so weak as to make further investigation of their claims almost unnecessary. “Homosexuality,” they write, “was first mentioned in the Bible in 1946 in the Revised Standard Version. There is no mention of or reference to homosexuality in any Bible prior to this — only interpretations have been made.”

While it is true that the word “homosexual” did not appear in Bible translations until recent times, there is a good reason for that: The word did not exist in the English language [prior to 1890](#). That does not, however, mean that the subject was not broached in earlier translations. As Wheaton College professor and professional Bible translator Douglas J. Moo told the [Christian Post](#):

Few, if any English translations use the actual words “homosexuality” or “homosexual.” But the history of English translation shows that versions have consistently used other language to refer to what we would call homosexual relationships.

For instance, the King James Version of Romans 1:27 refers to “men, leaving the natural use of the woman, burned in their lust one toward another; men with men working that which is unseemly.” It would be very difficult to deny that this language, and the language found in many other places in both the [Old Testament] and the [New Testament], refers to homosexuality.

Yet that is exactly what the editors of the QJV do.





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Take the famous story of God's destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah, found in Genesis 19. Traditionally the sin that brought on the judgment has been thought to be the residents' homosexual behavior. When Abraham's nephew Lot, a resident of Sodom, received two visitors, the men of the city surrounded Lot's house and demanded, "Where are the men which came in to thee this night? Bring them out unto us, that we may know them." The next day the visitors — actually angels — led Lot and his family out of the city, and God destroyed both it and Gomorrah.

The editors of the QJV, however, say that they "side with most Bible scholars" — left unnamed — "who understand the story ... to be about bullying strangers." Thus, they changed verse five to read: "And they called unto Lot, and said unto him, Where are the men which came in to thee this night? Bring them out unto us, that we may rape and humiliate them."

And what of Jude 1:7, which in the KJV bluntly states that Sodom and Gomorrah were destroyed for "giving themselves over to fornication, and going after strange flesh"? Since the editors of the QJV have already decided that the sin of Sodom was not homosexuality per se but the attempted rape of angels, they changed "strange flesh" to "nonhuman flesh" to align with their "clarification" of Genesis 19:5. But the men of Sodom were not aware that Lot's visitors were angels, so why would God condemn the Sodomites for wanting to sleep with nonhumans?

Other, even clearer condemnations of homosexual behavior are transformed into condemnations of idolatry instead. The editors insert the phrase "in the temple of Molech" in Leviticus 18:22 and 20:13 to imply that homosexual behavior is only an "abomination" when it takes place in the context of pagan worship. For example, Leviticus 18:22 in the KJV, "Thou shalt not lie with mankind, as with womankind: it is an abomination," becomes "Thou shalt not lie with mankind as with womankind in the temple of Molech: it is an abomination" in the QJV.

As [other commentators](#) have [pointed out](#), if this same logic were applied to subsequent verses in Leviticus 18, it would transform a blanket prohibition of bestiality into one conditioned on whether it takes place in pagan temples. Is this what the QJV editors intend?

The editors tie themselves in knots trying to explain that the word translated "abomination" really means something less, such as "ritually unclean" or "taboo." But, they explain,

To simply replace "abomination" with "taboo" would only address 18:22, and not the death penalty proposed in 20:13. Furthermore, we don't believe homosexual relations to be taboo, so that solution would have been unsatisfactory. Since abominable offenses aren't all punishable by death like this one leads us to believe there was translative error at some point: If having sex with a man is punishable by death, it wouldn't be called an abomination. Therefore, we left the word abomination as is, and found a much more elegant and logically clear solution to this interpretive ambiguity....

Obviously these editors also have their own definitions of "elegant" and "logically clear."

Romans 1:26 and 1:27 get a similar, albeit more subtle, treatment as the verses in Leviticus, again premised on the idolatry theory.

Other verses, too, are subjected to unwarranted edits, but the result is the same: to sweep away Scriptures plainly declaring homosexual behavior a sin.

By the way, the QJV got its name because, according to the editors:

Commonly known to biographers but often surprising to most Christians, King James I was a well-



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known bisexual. Though he did marry a woman, his many gay relationships were so well-known that amongst some of his friends and court, he was known as “Queen James.” It is in his great debt and honor that we name The Queen James Bible so.

In truth, James’s sexuality is a matter of dispute among historians. Robert Bucholz and Newton Key, in *Early Modern England, 1458-1714*, assert that “the issue is murky.” But given the QJV editors’ lack of concern for scriptural fidelity, their similar disinterest in historical accuracy is hardly surprising.

The QJV isn’t the first attempt to rewrite Scripture to make it say what some want it to say; and if the editors get their druthers, it won’t be the last. The QJV “resolves any homophobic interpretations of the Bible,” they write, “but the Bible is still filled with inequality and even contradiction that we have not addressed.” The Almighty is surely waiting with bated breath to see how mere mortals can once more “improve” upon His Word.



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