Homosexuality and the Bible. Why not?
Biblical Texts in question

- Gay and Evangelical theologians all use the same texts to prove their viewpoints. The question is interpretation.
- The texts we'll examine tonight are:
  - Genesis 19:4-8
  - Leviticus 18:22
  - Leviticus 20:13
  - Romans 1:26-27
  - 1 Corinthians 6:9 and 1 Timothy 1:9-10
- We'll begin with the Gay Theology Perspective
Gen 19:4-8  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. (5) And they called to Lot, "Where are the men who came to you tonight? Bring them out to us, that we may know them." (6) Lot went out to the men at the entrance, shut the door after him, (7) and said, "I beg you, my brothers, do not act so wickedly. (8) Behold, 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."

•Gay Theology Perspective
  •Lot's inhospitality caused the anger of the Sodomites. The men of Sodom only wanted to "know" the visitors.¹
  •Gang rape is what is condemned in Gen 19²
  •Spies and vulnerability
Lev 18:22  You shall not lie with a male as with a woman
Lev 20:13  If a man lies with a male as with a woman, both of them have committed an abomination

Gay Theology Perspective
• It is idolatry that is specifically condemned in these scriptures. The word for “abominations” in both verses is associated throughout the Old Testament with idolatry in many contexts.³
• These verses are culturally specific and not applicable today. The Pentateuch lists scores of laws that are peculiar to us today and of uncertain origin. Consider Deu 22:8-12 "When you build a new house, you shall make a parapet for your roof, that you may not bring the guilt of blood upon your house, if anyone should fall from it. (9) "You shall not sow your vineyard with two kinds of seed, lest the whole yield be forfeited,⁴ the crop that you have sown and the yield of the vineyard. (10) You shall not plow with an ox and a donkey together. (11) You shall not wear cloth of wool and linen mixed together. (12) "You shall make yourself tassels on the four corners of the garment with which you cover yourself.⁴
• Christians do not follow these laws so they pick and choose what laws they want to follow.
Rom 1:26-27  For this reason God gave them up to dishonourable passions. For their women exchanged natural relations for those that are contrary to nature; (27) 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.

Gay Theological Perspective

- “exchanged natural relations” (v 26) refers to going against one's own nature and prohibits heterosexuals involved in homosexuality or homosexuals involved in heterosexuality.
- Romans 1 condemns idolatry. Idolatrous homosexuality is what Paul speaks against. There is no reference to homosexuals who worship God.
- Pederasty is what is objectionable and is what “contrary to nature” means (v 27). Greek society permitted man boy love and Paul had these societal customs in mind. Jewish writers and philosophers railed against pederasty in Greek culture. Paul must have had this mind.
1Co 6:9  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

1Ti 1:9-10  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, 
(10) the sexually immoral, men who practice homosexuality, enslavers, liars, perjurers, and whatever else is contrary to sound doctrine

Gay Theology Perspective
The Greek word rendered “homosexuality” (arsenokoite) exists in no other Greek literature anywhere! It does not occur anywhere else in Scripture. We do not know what it means. What we do know
• Whatever it is, it refers to males
• Contextually it seems to have something to do with idolatry or wrongful economic gain
• This economic gain could have been sexual exploitation (“prostitute” is a possible translation for “sexually immoral” in 1 Cor 6:9)
Gen 19:4-8  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. (5) And they called to Lot, "Where are the men who came to you tonight? Bring them out to us, that we may know them." (6) Lot went out to the men at the entrance, shut the door after him, (7) and said, "I beg you, my brothers, do not act so wickedly. (8) Behold, 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."

Evangelical Theology Perspective

- although yada (translated knew or know) is a common word with multiple meanings, it unmistakably means sexual intimacy in some uses
- Gen 4:1  Now Adam knew Eve his wife, and she conceived and bore Cain, saying, "I have gotten a man with the help of the LORD."
- Gen 4:17  Cain knew his wife, and she conceived and bore Enoch. When he built a city, he called the name of the city after the name of his son, Enoch.
- Gen 4:25  And Adam knew his wife again, and she bore a son and called his name Seth, for she said, "God has appointed for me another offspring instead of Abel, for Cain killed him."
- Gen 24:16  The young woman was very attractive in appearance, a maiden whom no man had known. She went down to the spring and filled her jar and came up.
Lot offered his daughters to the men of Sodom to appease them instead of bringing out the strangers. He could not have intended that his daughters “get to know” the men of Sodom. His actions make no sense if the men of Sodom only wanted to “get to know.”

Jude 1:7 offers this commentary on Genesis 19

Sodom is judged for at least two reasons in Jude 1:7

Jude 1:7 just as Sodom and Gomorrah and the cities around them, since they in the same way as these indulged in gross immorality and went after strange flesh, are exhibited as an example in undergoing the punishment of eternal fire. (emphasis added) (NASB)

First they “indulged in gross immorality” - this was what the men of Sodom did

Second they “went after strange flesh” - also translated “other flesh”

What is “other flesh”

3 possibilities, Jude offers insight, Jude 1:7a just as Sodom and Gomorrah and the surrounding cities, which likewise indulged in sexual immorality and pursued unnatural desireshed

Angelic intercourse: The sin of Sodom is mentioned over two dozen other times in the Old Testament but not once is intercourse with angels mentioned or alluded to as Sodom’s sin.

There is no evidence that the men of Sodom knew the visitors were angels. They ate a meal with Lot and had their feet washed

Gang rape in Jude 7 was what the men of Sodom indulged in. Yet the verse continues on to condemn with whom (other flesh) they tried to do it.

Homosexual behaviour: If it wasn't angelic intercourse, and gang rape refers to what they did, not to whom they tried to do it, then what does “going after other flesh” mean? By elimination, the sin of Sodom included homosexual behaviour
Lev 18:22  You shall not lie with a male as with a woman; it is an abomination.
Lev 20:13  If a man lies with a male as with a woman, both of them have committed an abomination.

Evangelical Theology Perspective
● "Abominations" actually has other associations besides idolatry. Consider Pro 29:27  An unjust man is an abomination to the righteous; And he that is upright in the way is an abomination to the wicked (ASV)
● Incest, bestiality, adultery among many other sins are prohibited. Are we to say that these things are not morally relevant today?
● Laws of Israel, civil, ceremonial, and moral
● Heb 8:13  In speaking of a new covenant, he makes the first one obsolete. And what is becoming obsolete and growing old is ready to vanish away.
● Mat 5:17-18 "Do not think that I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I have not come to abolish them but to fulfil them. (18) For truly, I say to you, until heaven and earth pass away, not an iota, not a dot, will pass from the Law until all is accomplished."
Rom 1:26-27 For this reason God gave them up to dishonourable passions. For their women exchanged natural relations for those that are contrary to nature; (27) 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.

• Evangelical Theology Perspective
  • “consumed with passion for one another” (v 27) is not descriptive of experimental homosexuality but of inner passion
  • If homosexuality with true worship of God is acceptable according to Romans 1, then “envy, murder, strife, deceit” (v 28) are also acceptable with true worship
  • Pederasty could well have been one meaning of Paul. However:
  • v 27 reads “for one another” indicating consensual behavior. Pederasty is clearly not mutually consensual.
  • The term used for “men” in all its 7 occurrences in the New Testament refers to male in the generic sense. The two times it refers to children, the word for child is explicitly added.
  • Other extant sources before and after Paul (Plato, Philo, Josephus) used “contrary to nature” as referring to general homosexuality, not pederasty
  • Pederasty in Greek society was man boy love. Yet v 26 speaks of women exchanging “natural relations for those that are contrary to nature” demonstrating a broader a broader application than only pederasty.
1Co 6:9  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

1Ti 1:9-10  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, (10) the sexually immoral, men who practice homosexuality, enslavers, liars, perjurers, and whatever else is contrary to sound doctrine

Evangelical Theology Perspective
• We agree with Gay Theology that the word rendered “homosexuality” (arsenokoite) exists in no other Greek literature.
• We agree with Gay Theology that the word occurs nowhere else in scripture but these two passages
• We disagree that its meaning is unclear

The word derives from the Septuagint, the Greek translation of the Old Testament.

Lev 18:22
meta arsenos ou koimethese koiten gunaikos
You shall not lie with a male as with a woman

Lev 20:13
hos an koimethe meta arsenos koiten gunaikos
If a man lies with a male as with a woman
Conclusion
Examine the texts for yourselves and see if the exegesis I've present is accurate or flawed.

Nearly 2000 years of Protestant and Catholic Church History scholarship uphold the traditional interpretation.

Be a truth seeker. Each perspective I've presented has added to our knowledge of the subject.

A thought for Evangelicals
Sources

1 Rembert Truluck, “The Six Bible Passages Used To Condemn Homosexuals” (Steps to Recovery from Bible Abuse) http://www.truluck.com/html/six_bible_passages.html
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3 Truluck, “The Six Bible Passages Used To Condemn Homosexuals”
4 Ibid
5 Don Eastmanm, “Homosexuality; Not A Sin, Not A Sickness; What The Bible Does and Does Not Say” (Universal Fellowship of Metropolitan Community Churches, 1990) http://www.mccchurch.org/HandBible/notsinnotsickness.doc
7 Ibid
14 Haas, “Hermeneutical Issues In the Use of the Bible to Justify the Acceptance of Homosexual Practice”
Further Reading

Gary Comstock, “Gay Theology without Apology” (Pilgrim Press, 1993)
Joe Dallas, “A Strong Delusion” (Harvest House Publishers, 1996)