

## **MALAKOS: PAST AND PRESENT**

In both 1 Corinthians and 1 Timothy, Paul uses the word “malakoi” in lists that describe people who will not inherit the Kingdom of God. After 1946, a few Bibles began to translate this word as “homosexuals.” It’s interesting, however, to see how translators throughout the centuries have interpreted this mysterious word...

- Tyndale - 1526 - weaklinges
- Martin Luther - 1534 - weichlinge
- Coverdale - 1535 - weaklinges
- Matthews - 1537 - weaklinges
- Great Bible - 1539 - weaklynges
- Swedish Version - 1541 - weaklingar
- Geneva Bible - 1560 - wantons
- Bishops Bible - 1568 - weaklinges
- Valera Spanish - 1602 - effeminados
- Rheims-Douay - 1609 - effeminat
- King James Version - 1611 - effeminate
- Portuguese - 1690 - efeminados
- Daniel Mace New Testament - 1729 - the effeminate
- Darby - 1884 - those who make women of themselves
- Darby French - 1885 - effemines
- Young’s Literal - 1898 - effeminate
- ASV - 1901 - effeminate
- Weymouth - 1903 - any who are guilty of unnatural crime
- Louis Segund French - 1910 - effemines
- Moffat - 1913 - catamites (boys who have sex with men)
- Lamsa Translation - 1933 - men who lie down with males
- New American - 1941 - sodomites
- Revised Standard - 1952 - sexual perverts
- Amplified - 1958 - those who participate in homosexuality
- NASB - 1963 - effeminate
- New American Bible - 1970 - boy prostitutes
- New English - 1970 - guilty of homosexual perversion
- NIV - 1973 - male prostitutes
- NKJV - 1979 - homosexuals
- JW-NWT - 1984 - men kept for unnatural purposes
- New Century - 1987 - male prostitutes
- Green’s Interlinear - 1986 - abusers
- NRSV - 1989 - male prostitutes
- Bible In Basic English - 1994 - one who is less than a man
- CEV - 1995 - pervert
- NLT - 1996 - male prostitute
- Complete Jewish Bible - 1998 - active or passive homosexuality
- International Standard Version - 2000 - male prostitutes
- The Message - 2002 - those who use and abuse each other
- World English Bible - 2005 - male prostitutes
- God’s Word Translation - 2006 - homosexuals
- The NET Bible - 2006 - passive homosexual partners

## WHAT DOES THE BIBLE SAY ABOUT GAY?

*1 Corinthians and 1 Timothy: Worksheet*

### WHAT DOES "GAY" MEAN?

If the word "homosexual" appears in your Bible's translation of 1 Corinthians 6:9-10 or 1 Timothy 1:9-11, then you have a version that was written after 1946.

In order to understand what Biblical words mean, we must often look at how other writers used them.

### 1 CORINTHIANS 6:9-10: "MALAKOI"

*<sup>9</sup>Or do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived; neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate (malakoi), nor homosexuals (arsenokoites),<sup>10</sup> nor thieves, nor the covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor swindlers, will inherit the kingdom of God. (NASB)*

### "MALAKOI" FROM OTHER SOURCES

- Biblical References:
  - Matthew 4:23, 9:35, 10:1. It is translated disease in the KJV and sickness in the NAS.
  - Matthew 11:8 and Luke 7:25, Jesus uses the word to refer to soft clothing.
  - In the Bible, Jesus never used the malakos to mean homosexual.
- Extra-Biblical Writers:
  - Patristic writings (early church fathers): liquid, cowardly, refined, weak willed, delicate, gentle, debauched.
  - Pericles, 495-429 BC, praised the Greeks because they cultivated knowledge without malakia, meaning softness or effeminacy.
  - Plato, 427-347 BC, in *The Republic*, shows Socrates preaching that too much music effeminates a warrior, causing him to be malakoteroi, soft, feeble, sensitive. Plato expressed an ancient Greek concept, that too much music made a man soft, not homosexual. (Plato, *The Republic*, 360 BC, Book III.)
  - Aristotle, 384-322 BC, in *Nicomachean Ethics*, used malakos to describe lack of restraint and excessive enjoyment of bodily pleasures.

*"He who pursues the excesses of things pleasant, and shuns those of things painful, of hunger and thirst and heat and cold and all the objects of touch and taste... that men are called 'soft' [malakos] with regard to these pleasures..."*

- Josephus, AD 37-100, used malakos to describe men who appeared soft or weak through lack of courage in battle or who were reluctant to commit suicide in defeat or who enjoyed too much luxury. This usage does not indicate homosexuality. (Wars of The Jews, 7.338; Antiquities of The Jews, 5.246; 10.194.)
- Epictetus, AD 55-135, used malakos to refer to soft-headed persons, whom he regarded as unable to absorb true philosophy. This usage does not indicate homosexuality. (Epictetus, Discourse 3:9.)
- Dio Chrysostom, AD 40-120, used malakos to refer to those made soft by too much learning. This usage does not indicate homosexuality. (Dio Chrysostom 49:25.)
- John The Faster, around AD 575. Likely one of the first to use malakos to refer to masturbation. (John The Faster, Penitential).

#### WHY THE "SOFT" OR "EFFEMINATE" ONES WERE CONDEMNED:

1. Crossing gender lines (being "soft") showed you were being dominated
  2. "Soft" or "smooth" boys may refer to temple prostitutes
  3. In Paul's culture, "unmanliness" may also imply moral weakness
- "It was probably not the passivity of [homosexuals] in Rome which inspired hostility, but their promiscuity which were signs of moral weakness" (Boswell, 76).

#### WHY "SOFT" DOESN'T MEAN "HOMOSEXUAL:"

- For ancient Romans, gay males were not considered effeminate
  - Plato
  - Hercules

#### I CORINTHIANS 6:9-10 & I TIMOTHY 1:9-10

##### *Arsenokoites*

"Or do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived; neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate (malakoi), nor homosexuals (arsenokoites),<sup>10</sup> nor thieves, nor the covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor swindlers, will inherit the kingdom of God." (1 Cor 6:9-10, NASB)

"realizing the fact that law is not made for a righteous person, but for those who are lawless and rebellious, for the ungodly and sinners, for the unholy and profane, for those who kill their fathers or mothers, for murderers<sup>10</sup> and immoral men and homosexuals (arsenokoites) and kidnappers and liars and perjurers, and whatever else is contrary to sound teaching..." (1 Timothy 1:9-10, NASB)

### **PAUL, THE GREAT INVENTOR**

- Leviticus 18:22 - Do not have sexual relations (*koiten*) with a man (*arsenos*) as one does with a woman; that is detestable.
- Leviticus 20:13 - If a man (*arsenos*) has sexual relations (*koiten*) with a man (*arsenos*) as one does with a woman, both of them have done what is detestable. They are to be put to death; their blood will be on their own heads.

### **POINTS TO PONDER**

1. Compound words are not always the sum of their parts.
2. If the word is “built” from words in Leviticus, it must share a context and meaning with Leviticus.
3. After Paul coined the word “arsenokoites,” almost no other writers used it to mean “homosexuality.”