

The Book of Hosea is referred to as enacted prophecy that reflects the infidelity of Israel to God in Gomer's unfaithfulness to Hosea. Israel's history is littered with their failing the living God by assimilating the local gods and religions. The Jews were well aware of the existence of temple prostitutes in these religions, so much so that the Bible uses specific words for them.

Table 1: Hebrew words for prostitutes in religious and secular contexts

Type	Male	Female
Temple Prostitute	Qedesh	Qedesha
Street Prostitute	Kelev	Zanah

These were the groups Paul had in mind when he talked about exchanging natural relations for *un-natural relations*. It is the temple prostitutes offering sexual favours as fertility-rites that he says *degrade* their bodies. It is the animist religions worshipping birds, and reptiles, and animals that he says partake in *shameless acts*. It is NOT same-gender lovers partaking in homogenital acts as an expression of their love for each other that he has in mind here.

Despite these accusations being levelled against these groups, the words unnatural, degrading and shameless all deserve further study to ensure that we have a correct understanding of what Paul is talking about. In part two we will examine these words more closely to ascertain a clearer view of what Paul is teaching us.

The Manifesto of Romans:

The Manifesto of Romans sets out the foundation for what Paul unearths for us throughout Romans:

The origin of the Gospel: it is the Gospel of Christ (v. 16a)

The operation of the Gospel: it is the power of God (v. 16b)

The outcome of the Gospel: it is the power of God to salvation (v. 16c)

The outreach of the Gospel: "to everyone that believeth" (vv. 16d-17).

Part 2 will continue our study in freedom. You do not need to be ashamed to be a worker who accurately handles the word of God.

Free to Live as You



"Do your best to present yourself to God as one approved, a workman who does not need to be ashamed and who correctly handles the word of truth." 2Tim2:15



Romans 1 revisited – Pt 1

Shame is sometimes inflicted like a weapon by those who think they are superior upon their victims. The Apostle Paul starts his Epistle to the Romans with his Manifesto (Rom1:15-17) in which he states clearly that he is not ashamed of the Gospel. He uses a linguistic tool called antiphrasis to make his point; by using the negative of a word he emphasises the opposite. So, "I am not ashamed" becomes "I am exceedingly proud."

We all should have pride in the gospel. The *Manifesto Verses* of Romans set the foundation for the whole of Romans:

15That is why I am so eager to preach the gospel also to you who are at Rome.

16 For I am not ashamed of the gospel, because it is the power of God for the salvation of everyone who believes: first for the Jew, then for the Gentile.

17For in the gospel a righteousness from God is revealed, a righteousness that is by faith from first to last just as it is written: "The righteous will live by faith."

This is the true context for Romans chapter 1 and the rest of the epistle. Paul sets his argument up on the basis of a gospel of grace and contrasts it to the stringency of legalism and the licentiousness of the liberal religions. For him, the journey is “by faith from first to last.” It is not a matter of religious practice, nor a matter or severity of sin that underpins a person’s salvation. Salvation is by grace through faith in Christ alone.

The book of acts records that Paul was a Roman Citizen (Acts 22:25; Acts 27-28). As a Jew, Paul had every reason to be legalistic, yet in Philippians he states:

If anyone else thinks he has reasons to put confidence in the flesh, I have more:
5circumcised on the eighth day, of the people of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of Hebrews; in regard to the law, a Pharisee; 6as for zeal, persecuting the church; as for legalistic righteousness, faultless.
7But whatever was to my profit I now consider loss for the sake of Christ. 8What is more, I consider everything a loss compared to the surpassing greatness of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, for whose sake I have lost all things. I consider them rubbish, that I may gain Christ 9and be found in him, not having a righteousness of my own that comes from the law, but that which is through faith in Christ—the righteousness that comes from God and is by faith.

Having the advantage of both education systems, Paul often demonstrates his training in rhetoric. In Romans chapter one he employs a simple rhetorical model which stacks up connected reasons finally linking them to a conclusion which is unexpected.

The reasons that he stacks up are all connected with a conjunction “for” or “because” (or the like) which translate the Greek word γαρ (gar). This word occurs in the following verses of Rom.1: 9,11,16,17,18,19, 20, 21, 25, 26. The most important occurrence is in verse 18.

In many translations of the Bible, verse 18 marks a division in the text often highlighted with a title (which are extra biblical and insertions made by the translators not the original writers.) Translators are correct to note a shift in the argument, but they are incorrect to assert that this is a change in thought or a new thought. This is untrue. Paul’s shift is a deliberate part of his rhetorical schema. He is deliberately using the shift to set-up the audience who are being

morally superior. The start of the chapter is laden with person pronouns: come to you, see you, impart to you, want you, among you, impart to you, preach to you - everything is you, you, you. Then in verse 18 he begins to incite them against the religions.

Within this rhetorical device Paul is reflecting back to his audience their own perverted world-view and their corrupted view of God and salvation – and it isn’t until chapter 2 that his is obvious. From verse 18 Paul uses their distaste for animist and heathen religions to provoke and rouse their anger towards these religions. Israel’s history of straying into these religions makes this self-sanctification all the more ironic. He marks his incitement to anger with a switch in pronouns. *They* do this, *they* do that, *they* do the other – and *they* even enjoyed it!

In the middle of this rhetorical device, in which Paul has repeated connected arguments with the conjunction “for,” and in which he uses a switch of pronouns from first to third person switching the emphasis from you to they, Paul inserts a text which has been used to indiscriminately inflict shame on members of the LGBT community despite this text being clearly linked to animist and heathen religion at the time.

22Although they claimed to be wise, they became fools
23and exchanged the glory of the immortal God for images made to look like mortal man and birds and animals and reptiles.
24Therefore God gave them over in the sinful desires of their hearts to sexual impurity for the degrading of their bodies with one another.
25For they exchanged the truth of God for a lie, and worshiped and served created things rather than the Creator—who is forever praised. Amen.

Creature worship is clearly therefore the major reason for the corruption of this group. Serving other God’s was their crime not sex. Sex was how they served their false God’s – it wasn’t the crime in and of itself. It was the reason for the sex and the object of the sexual act that was the sin. They were animists serving created false gods all too well known in Greek, Roman and Egyptian cults.

