

Endorsement

Allyson has presented a very thorough analysis of the theology and doctrines surrounding being transgender within the Jehovah's Witness denomination.

She describes, in a very readable style, the battle to unravel the dogma and patriarchal attitudes of the organisation. Although she found peace and acceptance in their community after the loss of her father, they were initially unaware that she is trans. However, this discovery was ultimately inevitable and as a result it created insurmountable problems within the church community and the dogma that the elders adhere to.

Ally has meticulously worked through the bible references on the subject and presents a challenge to the closed minds of dogma and the "Pharisaical" attitudes of this type of religion, as she now walks forward a little wiser, and with the satisfaction that her personal integrity and truth is intact.

This book would be particularly of value to those struggling with gender identity within the Watchtower movement as well as the broader Christian world.

*Jim Marjoram - author of "It's Life Jim..."
(US Review Recommended Reading)*

Love God
Love Your Neighbour
And it's ok to be Trans

Allyson Hamblett

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And God went on to create the man in his image, in God's image he created him; male and female he created them. (Genesis 1:27)

I am the Al'pha and the O-me'ga, the first and the last, the beginning and the end. (Revelation 22:13)

If God is the Al'pha and the O me'ga then God is also the Beta, Gamma, Delta, Epsilon, Zeta, Eta, Theta, Iota, Kappa, Lamda, Mu, Nu, Xi, Omicron, Pi, Rho, Sigma, Tau, Upsilon, Phi, Chi, Psi

Therefore: God created male and female, intersex, trans and gender diverse.

We are all made in the image of God, who has no sex or gender. It doesn't matter to God what sex or gender we are, or what sex or gender we become.

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A Word from the Editor

It is refreshing to read some logical research giving a believable explanation of God's love for "everyone" rather than an explanation based on our human biased interpretation of what we think is God's love for people, with the apparent exclusion of those who do not fit our biased moulds.

Every person is an individual who needs love and every individual behaves and does things in a way that is based on their personality and interpretation of the world. Just because someone doesn't do things the way we do them, does not mean they are wrong or unacceptable in God's sight. I think there is still a lot the world and individuals can learn about accepting every person for who they are, not what we think they should be.

There has always been judgement, prejudice and persecution of people based on colour, gender, sexual orientation, religion, etc. I don't think that will ever change because most people think their personal opinions and values are the right ones, and we tend to judge others based on our personal world view.

I feel privileged to be able to work with Allyson on this project, and thus expose my mind to an alternative and very valid interpretation of the scriptures. I have always believed God is accepting of everyone, otherwise, how can he call himself a god of love if he then turns around and says one person or another is

not worthy of being loved. Although I have never met Allyson in person, I feel, after editing her autobiography and now this research book, I have some very special insights into some of the struggles she has had to deal with through her life. I don't say I fully understand it all, but I understand better now than when we started out on this journey.

One question stays in my mind though: Should Allyson, a beautiful WOMAN, forever be classified as transgender? She is a woman.

Her beginning as a male 20 years ago is a valid piece of her past, but she is now a woman and it doesn't sit well with me that she should forever be labelled as transgender rather than a woman.

Phyllis Dean

Part One

Introduction

One of the scribes who had come up and heard them disputing, knowing that he had answered them in a fine way, asked him: "which commandment is first of all?" Jesus answered: "The first is, 'Hear O Israel, Jehovah our God is one Jehovah, and you must love Jehovah your God with your whole heart, and with your whole soul and with your whole mind and with your whole strength.' The second is this, 'You must love your neighbour as yourself.' There is no other commandment greater than these." (Mark 12: 28-31)

For those of us following Jehovah God, our divine beginnings began when Jehovah God created the heavens, the earth and then humankind. The divine creation of Adam and Eve was meant to give us a blueprint on how we should all live our lives. The aim of this booklet asks whether the divine creation of the first humans allows for the existence of trans women and trans men.

I am going to use the New World Translation of the Holy Scriptures (2013) as the main Bible for scriptural references, but will use other translations when required to do so, particularly with regard to the Deuteronomy chapters.

This book is not going to change doctrine that guides Jehovah Witnesses, but will hopefully allow people who read this to think critically about the scriptures in the Bible, and how they affect diversity in society: the kind of diversity that Jesus would have loved.

Mark 12: 28-31 suggests that one has to have a sense of love of

oneself: without that sense of love one cannot even begin to worship Jehovah God.

The Bible is the word of God and reflects a biblical history of the world – a literal and symbolic book that has given me the calling – the thirst to learn more. It has surprised and shocked me how quickly I began to develop and remind myself of my faith in God – and finding out his name is Jehovah, which began with a door knock in February 2016.

About Me

Jehovah found me in February 2016, and I have been attending meetings since March 2017. I love the Bible study and the Thursday and Sunday meetings. It makes more sense to me than other religions because it systematically goes through the Bible and really teaches.

I have been surrounded by God all of my life. The question “why am I here?” has been a focal point of my life. I’ve always struggled with spirituality and religion; raised in the Anglican church, I really tried my best at being Christian. It was difficult to get the understanding I wanted. Just believing wasn’t enough, but I didn’t have the confidence to ask the Vicar the deep theological questions I wanted answers to. The door knock from the church came at just the right time for me, and I enjoyed the attention they gave me. Every week they would come over to spend time with me studying and picked me up to take me to meetings.

A number of factors allow me to conclude that following Jehovah just works for me now.

- Jehovah found me at the right time
- My dad died in 2014
- Being able to take my mind off what’s happening in the world, and to focus on Jehovah
- Regularly focussing on Jehovah, three times a week at meetings

- Regularly praying
- Just being Allyson, and not being concerned about all the current labels that describe my gender identity. Just want to be female. I feel lost within the LBGTTI+ description. Maybe too much activism, lack of results and/or burnout.
- I want to be accepted as female

Over the past few months I've been obsessed with trying to find a way through the Bible to allow me to stay at the Kingdom Hall.



But there is a problem: I am a trans woman and, at face value it looks like I may have committed an unforgivable sin. The question to answer is whether Jehovah would be happy with me, a woman who transitioned over 20 years ago, attending meetings regularly,

taking care of my spiritual needs; praying to Jehovah daily. My “sin” was 20 years ago, and I live my life 24/7 as me now. I know the answer is yes, and there is no such thing as an unforgivable sin because of Jesus Christ’s ransom sacrifice in 33 CE. What does God make of it all? There isn’t a lot written on the subject, but this is my take, with Bible scriptures to back up my argument.

As a binary trans woman I want to be accepted as a woman. I like the male-female binary, as long as I can be accepted and included as female. I don’t want to be accepted as “other”; as in female and trans. I want to be accepted as female in the gender binary.

In the Beginning

I read an interesting article recently about the very nature of God. Human qualities have been given to God by humans trying to understand God. “The Bible’s use of the designation “Father” helps us to understand that our Creator can be compared to a loving, protective, and caring human father. (Matthew 6:9) This does not mean that we are to view God, or even other spirit creatures in heaven, as being male or female”¹

Could this mean that God is gender diverse? – neither male nor female. Could this mean that Jehovah made me transgender on purpose? Why would a gender diverse God have any problems with a transgender, intersex or gender diverse person?

I am frustrated that the Bible is being used against transgender people, and against the wider rainbow community. Transgender people are seen as going against the creation mould that Jehovah God used to create the first human couple. But one only has to read Genesis 1 to understand that the male-female binary of humanity isn’t all that clear, particularly after the Genesis 2 description of the creation of humans – the first divine surgery that made Eve from Adam, and one interpretation that Adam and Eve began as one earth creature, as argued by Justin Tanis (2003).

1 <https://wol.jw.org/en/wol/d/r1/lp-e/102008370>

There are two creation stories of humanity in Genesis 1 and Genesis 2:

Genesis 1: 26-27

²⁶ Then God said: "Let us make man in our image, according to our likeness, and let them have in subjection the fish of the sea and the flying creatures of the heavens and the domestic animals and all the earth and every creeping animal that is moving on the earth."²⁷ And God went on to create the man in his image, in God's image he created him; male and female he created them.

I like this account of the creation of people, because of the interesting wording of verse 27. "*In God's image he created him; male and female he created them*". It suggests that God's creation of people was a reflection of God; a reflection of the gender diversity that is God. The creation of male and female do not seem rigid binaries of male and female. Could this creation account tell us more about the ways that gender diversity is being reflected in today's society? Could trans, intersex and gender diverse people be supported by the way creation is expressed in verse 27? Should Genesis 1:27 be rewritten. "*In God's image he created him; male and female and intersex he created them.*" The "and" in "*male and female*" does not specifically mean the binary, but male and female [AND EVERYTHING IN BETWEEN]. Or does the text "*male and female*" include those of us in between? Can trans women and trans men be confident that their acquired gender is recognised in Genesis 1:27?

Similarly, scripture says God is the "alpha and omega," the first and last letters of the Greek alphabet. That's not meant

to say God is just those two letters. God is the entire alphabet, from alpha to omega and everything in between (Revelation 22:13). Christians acknowledge throughout scripture that “and” represents a spectrum, not a binary.

Revelation 22:13

¹³ I am the Alpha and the Omega, the first and the last, the beginning and the end.

An anti-trans’ understanding of the Genesis story also lacks context. Gender and sex are different things. They don’t always align, and neither is binary. The biological reality of intersex individuals is a testament to that. The biological and psychological reality of transgender and intersex individuals needs to be the context in which Christians read scripture.

Matthew 19:12 acknowledges this, particularly in the way that the New American Standard Bible translates this, “...*eunuchs who were born from their mother’s womb.*”

This verse emphasises that Matthew 19:12 wasn’t just a symbolic verse that Jesus used to explain something else, but the actual existence of something beyond male or female; something that goes against, or beyond, the creation story in Genesis, or extends its explanation to include all types of people. If Jesus knew intersexed people (and the biblical evidence is very clear that he did) during his earthly existence, then the argument that intersexed births are caused by environmental issues, rather than divine creation, is a complete non-defence.

Genesis 2: 21-24

²¹ So Jehovah God caused the man to fall into a deep sleep, and while the man was sleeping, he took one of his ribs and then closed up the flesh over its place. ²² And Jehovah God built the rib that he had taken from the man into a woman, and he brought her to the man. ²³ Then the man said: "This is at last bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh. This one will be called Woman, because from man she was taken." ²⁴ That is why a man will leave his father and his mother and he will stick to his wife, and they will become one flesh.

Brownson, (2013) makes the point that Scripture assumes this one flesh bond only takes place between a man and a woman. "Yet there is nothing inherent in the biblical usage that would necessarily exclude committed gay or lesbian unions from consideration as one flesh unions, when the essential characteristics of one flesh unions as kinship bonds are held clearly in view." Adam had already rejected the animals as partners.

Shirilau, et al. (2013) supports this by saying "We have one human being rejoicing over another human being. How much better that human-human companionship was to be than the companionship provided by the dog or cat, cow or sheep, aardvark or zebra. The man rejoiced in the *similarity* – 'bone of my bone, flesh of my flesh' – not the difference, of his companion. He was not rejoicing in the femininity, as if this were something magical. He had already seen male and female animals. He hadn't seen his own kind!" (p. 17)

Moving on to the creation of Adam and Eve, in Genesis 2. I will not go as far as suggesting that God performed the first complete

gender reassignment surgery, but Jehovah did perform surgery on Adam, removing one of his ribs, and using that rib to create Eve. Why wasn't Eve created from dust just like Adam was? The main religious argument is that it supports the love between one man and one woman, and the heterosexual arrangement of marriage. But from the lens of a trans woman, the way that Eve was created from Adam actually supports my transition. This was at the very beginning of the divine creation of human beings and is more focused on the creation, rather than the holy construct of marriage.

So by divine surgery, the first and only case of its kind, Jehovah took a rib from Adam and fashioned it into a female counterpart to be his wife and the mother of his children. Overjoyed with such a beautiful helper and constant companion, Adam burst forth in the first recorded poetry, "*This is at last bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh,*" and she was called *woman* "because from man this one was taken." ²

If we look at Genesis 1-2 critically, it does two things; describes the creation of humankind and describes the kind of life they should have led – the life that Jehovah wanted for us. If Christians read Genesis the way I've read Genesis there is no pure holiness of heterosexual relationships, because God used Adam's rib (or side, or 'sliced in half') to create Eve and then they were told to go and have children, and fill the earth. By trying to make cisgendered identity and heterosexuality the holy way of being is, in fact, to go against the creation story; going against God.

2 <https://wol.jw.org/en/wol/d/r1/lp-e/1200000089>

Tanis, (2003): The Interpreter's Bible suggests that Adam was one earth being. Eve was part of Adam; they were one, a male and female being, and so God's divine surgery made them into separate beings. Phyllis Tribble (1978) also argues that Adam was one earth being and God was the anaesthetist and surgeon who brought Eve into being. For me, this changes the tale once more, and supports trans people in today's society. If Adam and Eve were, indeed, one human creature then the male-female binary is not so clear cut. There appears to have been a lot of decisions being made on the 'design making process.' I can imagine the conversation:

"Let's make one being that's male and female"

"To reflect your gender diversity lord god"

"Yes"

"No let's make male and female"

"Binary"

"No – male and female, the alpha and the omega of creation – my human creation"

"Let's confuse them, down there"

"Well we've given them the wrong book to guide them"

"The Bible"

"Yes"

"Holy male, female, alpha and the omega"

"Bless them"

Was it God's intention to create the male-female binary? Why would a gender diverse God create the binary? I am pretty sure that Jehovah God is proud of their transgender creations.

Mollenkott, (2001) argues that “...both Jewish and Christian scholars have recognised that the original created being is either, hermaphroditic or sexually undifferentiated – closer to a transgender identity than to half a binary gender construct.” Greenberg, (2004) backs up this argument, suggesting that God’s original design was the androgynous Adam, the first attempt at human creation. Heterosexuality was not the original plan.

After this, Adam named his wife Eve, because she was to become the mother of everyone living. 21 And Jehovah God made long garments from skins for Adam and for his wife, to clothe them (Genesis, 3;20-21).



This was the first time clothing came onto the scene, and Jehovah God became the first fashion designer, who gave Adam and Eve

similar clothing. What would Jehovah God make of Deuteronomy 22:5? What sin did Jehovah God just commit?

Women and the Bible

The importance and significance of gender begins right at the beginning of the Bible in Genesis. Jehovah God wanted a helper for Adam, and created Eve from Adam through divine surgery.

First, let's journey back to the future to 1987. The Danvers Statement summarises the need for distinct clarity between men and women and their gender roles in society. The Council on Biblical Manhood and Womanhood (CBMW) serves as an overview of our core beliefs. This statement was prepared by several evangelical leaders at a CBMW meeting in Danvers, Massachusetts, in December of 1987. It was first published in final form by the CBMW in Wheaton, Illinois in November of 1988.

Their deep concerns include the widespread uncertainty and confusion in our culture regarding the complementary differences between masculinity and femininity; the tragic effects of this confusion in unravelling the fabric of marriage woven by God out of the beautiful and diverse strands of manhood and womanhood; and that Adam's headship in marriage was established by God before the Fall, and was not a result of sin, and that The Fall introduced distortions into the relationships between men and women.

It's very interesting, because I doubt whether Rahab, Hannah, Deborah and Jael could measure up to the feminine standards

that the Council of Biblical Manhood and Womanhood seemed so very concerned with. Would Jael have been able to kill Sisera with a tent peg in 1987? Would Deborah have been able to be a political and military leader in 1987? And I am sure that Rahab would have been condemned in 1987 by her work as a prostitute. Let's look at their stories by looking at the biblical accounts of these women and how their actions pleased Jehovah, probably horrifying the Council of Biblical Manhood and Womanhood:

Rahab

“Pushed to the margins of her own society, Rahab found worth in God's eyes.”

The story of Rahab inspires me, because she was chosen by God to play a key role in Jehovah's plan – yet Rahab was possibly sexually immoral when she worked as a prostitute. Pushed to the margins of her own society, Rahab found favour in God's eyes. Rahab had been inspired by what she knew of God and wanted to be on the side of God.

Joshua 2:8-14

⁸ Before the men lay down to sleep, she came up to them on the roof. ⁹ She said to the men: “I do know that Jehovah will give you the land and that a fear of you has fallen upon us. All the inhabitants of the land are disheartened because of you, ¹⁰ for we heard how Jehovah dried up the waters of the Red Sea before you when you left Egypt and what you did to the two kings of the Am'or-ites, Si'hon and Og, whom you devoted to destruction on the other side of the Jordan. ¹¹ When we heard about it, we lost heart, and no one has any courage because of you, for Jehovah your God is God in the heavens above and on the

earth beneath. ¹² Now, please, swear to me by Jehovah that, because I showed loyal love to you, you will also show loyal love to my father's household; and you must give me a sign of good faith. ¹³ You must spare the lives of my father and mother, my brothers and sisters, and all who belong to them, and you must save us from death." ¹⁴ At that the men said to her: "We will give our lives for yours! If you do not tell about our mission, then we will show loyal love and faithfulness toward you when Jehovah gives us the land."

Hannah

Hannah could not have children and was reminded of this regularly in her home that she shared with her husband, Elkanah, with second wife Peninnah. Hannah poured her heart out to Jehovah at the tabernacle in Shiloh. Hannah made a vow to God that she would give her firstborn son back to God, if God allowed her to have children.

Hannah kept on praying to Jehovah. She prayed intensely to God. When life looked bleak for Hannah, she kept on praying and Jehovah answered her prayers at the right time. Hannah refused to let go of her dream.

1 Samuel I: 1-15

Now there was a man of Ramathaim-zophim of the mountainous region of E'phra-im whose name was El-ka'nah, the son of Je-ro'ham, the son of E-li'hu, the son of To'hu, the son of Zuph, an E'phra-im-ite. ² He had two wives; one was named Han'nah, and the other was named Pe-nin'nah. Pe-nin'nah had children, but Han'nah had no children. ³ That man went up from his city year after year to worship and to sacrifice to Jehovah of armies in Shiloh. That is where the two sons of Eli, Hoph'ni and Phin'e-has, served as priests to Jehovah. ⁴ One

day when El-ka'nah offered a sacrifice, he gave portions to his wife Pe-nin'nah as well as to all her sons and her daughters,⁵ but to Hannah he gave a special portion, because Hannah was the one he loved; but Jehovah had not given her children.⁶ Moreover, her rival wife taunted her relentlessly in order to upset her because Jehovah had not given her children.⁷ That is what she would do year after year; whenever Hannah went up to the house of Jehovah, her rival would taunt her so much that she would weep and not eat.⁸ But her husband Elkanah said to her: "Hannah, why do you weep, and why do you not eat, and why are you so sad? Am I not better to you than ten sons?"⁹ Then Hannah got up after they had finished eating and drinking in Shiloh. At the time, Eli the priest was sitting on the seat by the doorpost of the temple of Jehovah.¹⁰ Hannah was extremely bitter, and she began to pray to Jehovah and to weep uncontrollably.¹¹ And she made this vow: "O Jehovah of armies, if you look upon the affliction of your servant and remember me and you do not forget your servant and give to your servant a male child, I will give him to Jehovah all the days of his life, and no razor will touch his head."¹² While she prayed for a long time before Jehovah, Eli was watching her mouth.¹³ Han'anl was speaking in her heart, only her lips were trembling, but her voice was not heard. So E'li thought she was drunk.¹⁴ E'li said to her: "How long will you stay drunk? Stop drinking your wine."¹⁵ At this Han'nah answered: "No, my lord! I am a woman under great stress; I have not drunk wine or anything alcoholic, but I am pouring out my soul before Jehovah.

Deborah

Deborah's courage, decisiveness, and unwavering trust in Jehovah resulted in a military victory for her people. She was a prophet and a judge. People looked to her to settle their disputes. One day she summoned a man named Barak and told him to assemble an army of 10,000 Israelites. The Lord, she said, was going to deliver the Canaanites into their hands.

Under Deborah's leadership, Barak led the Israelites into battle against the Canaanites. When the fighting was done, not one person in Sisera's army was left alive. On one level, it's a powerful subversion of the patriarchal culture of the day. On another level, it reveals the perspective that makes Deborah a role model to people everywhere. She was acutely aware of a woman's place in her society, but she was also aware of her God-given gifts of leadership. As a result, Deborah earned a revered place in Israel's history.

Judges 4: 4-16

⁴ Now Deb'o-rah, a prophetess, the wife of Lap'pi-doth, was judging Israel at that time. ⁵ She used to sit under Deb'o-rah's palm tree between Ra'mah and Beth'el in the mountainous region of E'phra-im; the Israelites would go up to her for judgment. ⁶ She sent for Ba'rak the son of A-bin'o-am out of Ke'desh-naph'ta-li and said to him: "Has not Jehovah the God of Israel given the command? 'Go and march to Mount Ta'bor, and take 10,000 men of Naph'ta-li and Zeb'u-lun with you. ⁷ I will bring to you Sis'e-ra, the chief of Ja'bin's army, along with his war chariots and his troops to the stream of Ki'shon, and I will give him into your hand.'" ⁸ At this Ba'rak said to her: "If you go with me, I will go, but if you do not go with me, I will not go." ⁹ To this she said: "I will certainly go with you. However, the campaign you are going on will not bring you glory, for it will be into the hand of a woman that Jehovah will give Sis'e-ra." Then Deb'o-rah got up and went with Ba'rak to Ke'desh. ¹⁰ Ba'rak summoned Zeb'u-lun and Naph'ta-li to Ke'desh, and 10,000 men followed his steps. Deb'o-rah also went up with him. ¹¹ Incidentally, He'ber the Ken'ite had separated from the Ken'ites, the descendants of Ho'bab, Moses' father-in-law, and his tent was pitched near the big tree in Za-a-nan'nim, which is at Ke'desh. ¹² They reported to Sis'e-ra that Ba'rak the son of A-bin'o-am had gone up to Mount Ta'bor. ¹³ At once Sis'e-ra assembled all his war chariots—900 chariots with iron scythes—and all the

troops that were with him from Ha-ro'sheth of the nations to go to the stream of Ki'shon. ¹⁴ Deb'o-rah now said to Ba'arak: "Rise up, for this is the day that Jehovah will give Sis'e-ra into your hand. Is Jehovah not going out before you?" And Ba'arak descended from Mount Ta'bor with 10,000 men following him. ¹⁵ Then Jehovah threw Sis'e-ra and all his war chariots and all the army into confusion before the sword of Ba'arak. Finally Sis'e-ra got down from his chariot and fled on foot. ¹⁶ Ba'arak chased after the war chariots and the army as far as Ha-ro'sheth of the nations. So Sis'e-ra's whole army fell by the sword; not even one remained.

Jael

Of all the tents in all the plains in the entire ancient world, Sisera walked into hers. Jael killed Sisera with a tent peg and a hammer.

Judges 4:17-21

¹⁷ But Sis'e-ra fled on foot to the tent of Ja'el the wife of He'ber the Ken'ite, for there was peace between Ja'bin the king of Ha'zor and the house of He'ber the Ken'ite. ¹⁸ Then Ja'el came out to meet Sis'e-ra and said to him: "Come in, my lord, come in here. Do not be afraid." So he went into her tent, and she covered him with a blanket. ¹⁹ Then he said to her: "Give me, please, a little water to drink, for I am thirsty." So she opened a skin bottle of milk and gave him a drink, after which she again covered him. ²⁰ He told her: "Stand at the entrance of the tent, and if anybody comes and asks you, 'Is there a man here?' say, 'No!'" ²¹ But Ja'el the wife of He'ber took a tent pin and a hammer in her hand. Then while he was fast asleep and exhausted, she stealthily approached him and drove the pin through his temples and beat it into the ground, and he died.

Hartke, (2018), suggests that both Jael and Deborah do some unladylike things in the scriptures, from leading and directing a battle to killing a high ranking military official with just the

tools at hand. Deborah is described briefly in the scriptures as a female prophet, a wife and a mother, but what other characteristics make her female according to the androcentric society's designation of what is female. Deborah is not the caring mother, but rather a mother who is a military commander. She is a prophet, judge and a leader, all of which are male traits. Would Deborah pass the test of biblical womanhood...? If these heroic biblical characters who spoke with God and liberated thousands don't fit the criteria, who can?

Samson's Mother

Jehovah's angel came to Samson's mother and told her that Samson would take the lead in saving Israel out of the hands of the Philistines, but said that Samson's hair must remain long because Samson's long hair would give him the physical strength needed to carry out his divine mission in life. Samson was not a disgrace and turned out to be a glory for Samson, and a glory for God.

1 Corinthians II:14-15

Does not nature itself teach you that if a man wears long hair it is a disgrace for him, but if a woman has long hair, it is her glory? For her hair is given to her for a covering.

Was Samson a disgrace? Long hair gave him the strength he needed to please God.

It was not up to Paul to dictate whether a man was a disgrace due to his hair length: it was up to God.

Judges 13:5

⁵ Look! You will conceive and give birth to a son, and no razor should touch his head, because the child will be a Naz'i-rite of God from birth, and he will take the lead in saving Israel out of the hand of the Phi-lis'tines."

Genesis 3:16

To the woman he said, "I will surely multiply your pain in childbearing; in pain you shall bring forth children. Your desire shall be for your husband, and he shall rule over you."

1 Peter 3:7

Likewise, husbands, live with your wives in an understanding way, showing honor to the woman as the weaker vessel, since they are heirs with you of the grace of life, so that your prayers may not be hindered.

Hyatt, (2015) argues that a more careful examination of this verse will reveal that Peter is not referring to a weaker frame or constitution of the woman, but to a weaker status in the culture of the day. A closer look will also reveal that Peter is not affirming a male hierarchy in marriage but is calling for mutual respect and partnership.

I like Hyatt's argument because trans people have a weaker status in today's society. There is a cultural war against us at the moment through a lack of understanding. Across the globe transgender people are murdered just because they are trying to live their lives. This wouldn't please Jehovah God at all.

1 Corinthians II: 3

³ But I want you to know that the head of every man is the Christ; in

turn the head of a woman is the man; in turn, the head of the Christ is God.

The Apostle Paul

Hubner, (2015) states; “there are strong physiological connections associated with “headship” in Paul’s writings, so the big-picture, Eve-from-Adam, Woman-from-Man, the sense in which man is the “head” of woman may be the sense of Corinthians 11:3.

This makes sense when we look at the creation story in Genesis, just by quickly and simply reading Genesis 1.27, but the deep analysis of the Adam and Eve story this book has given you, reveals that there may be more to human creation than the binary “male and female” if we look at the last book of the bible that describes God as the Alpha and the Omega. We have also suggested that God may have created Adam and Eve as one, omnigendered earth being that God later separated.

Part Two

1 Corinthians 6: 9-11

This scripture nearly flipped me out and almost made me walk away from my association with the church as a bible student. Let's examine and debunk this scripture:

⁹ Or do you not know that unrighteous people will not inherit God's Kingdom? Do not be misled. Those who are sexually immoral, idolaters, adulterers, men who submit to homosexual acts, men who practice homosexuality, ¹⁰ thieves, greedy people, drunkards, revilers, and extortioners will not inherit God's Kingdom. ¹¹ And yet that is what some of you were. But you have been washed clean; you have been sanctified; you have been declared righteous in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and with the spirit of our God.

It is talking about how people can become righteous in the sight of God, by being washed clean of sexual immorality, idolaters, adulterers, and men who practice homosexual acts, thieves, greedy people, drunkards, revilers and extortioners. Perhaps Jehovah had seen me out partying one night getting slightly drunk. Seriously though (and sad for the narrow minded bible study conductor), sexual immorality and homosexuality were being directed at me because of a misunderstanding between 'porneia' and 'gender identity'.

King James Version (KJV)

⁹ Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Be not deceived: neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate [malakoi], nor abusers of themselves with mankind

(arsenokoiitai],¹⁰ Nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God.¹¹ And such were some of you: but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God.

The KJV version presents two Greek words, malakoi and arsenokoi. The Greek word *malakoi*, which is the plural of malakos, and the Greek word arsenokoites are both used in I Corinthians 6:9.

The arsenokoit stem is used only twice in the Bible, in I Corinthians 6:9 and I Timothy 1:10 but the apostle Paul does not define its meaning in either usage. What we do know with absolute certainty is that arseno-koitai did not mean lesbian or gay because it is never used with those meanings in any extant Greek manuscript available to us today.

There were a number of ancient Greek words Paul could have used in I Corinthians 6:9 and I Timothy 1:10 if God intended to prohibit committed gay and lesbian partnerships yet he did not use any of them.

In our study of malakoi we demonstrated that malakoi usually referred to cult prostitution or shrine prostitution or temple prostitution or moral weakness or some kind of softness which implied effeminacy but malakoi was rarely, if ever, used to refer to homosexuality.

Historian and philosopher Michel Foucault argued that homosexual and heterosexual identities didn't emerge until the 19th century. Prior to that time, the terms described practices and not identity. Foucault cited Karl Westphal's famous 1870 article

Contrary Sexual Feeling as the “date of birth” of the categorisation of sexual orientation.

1 Timothy 1: 8-10

⁸ Now we know that the Law is fine if one applies it properly, ⁹ recognizing that law is made, not for a righteous man, but for those who are lawless and rebellious, ungodly and sinners, disloyal and profane, murderers of fathers and murderers of mothers, manslayers,¹⁰ sexually immoral people, men who practice homosexuality, kidnappers, liars, perjurers, and everything else that is in opposition to the wholesome teaching¹¹ according to the glorious good news of the happy God, with which I was entrusted.

They also lived in a society that was notoriously immoral, a society that, in the temple prostitution and other ways, actually glorified promiscuous sex. To have sexual relations with a prostitute was so common in Corinth that the practice came to be called “Corinthianizing”. Many believers had formerly been involved in such immorality, and it was hard for them to break with the old ways and easy to fall back into them – it was also hard for them to give up their sexual immorality.

Vines, (2014) claims, that the Bible doesn’t address the issue of same-sex orientation – or the expression of that orientation. While the six references to same-sex behaviour are negative, the concept of same sex behaviour in the Bible is sexual excess, not sexual orientation. What’s more, the main reason that non-affirming Christians believe the Bible’s statements should apply to all same sex relationships – men and women’s anatomical complementarity – is not mentioned in any of the texts”

Holiness Code

Leviticus 18:22 – “You must not lie down with a male in the same way that you lie with a woman. It is a detestable act.

Leviticus 20:13 – “If a man lies down with a male the same as one lies down with a woman, both of them have done a detestable thing. They should be put to death without fail. Their own blood is upon them.

The Holiness Code is at the heart of Leviticus and was written to assist captive Jews to live a separate and Holy life, by following very strict moral laws. They established the 7th day as the Sabbath and refused to work on those days but to attend the synagogue

God blessed the Sabbath. Interestingly Jesus may have enjoyed annoying the Pharisees by working and healing people on the Sabbath. WAS Jesus slightly rebellious? The exiled Jews also adhere to dietary laws that appear in Leviticus; a good way of keeping the Congregations together. The two scriptures that appear homophobic served the religious leaders well in trying to maintain strict control over their people, but I am not sure that the references to homosexuality were actually anything to do with same sex romantic relationships at all. Dershowitz, (2018) argues that an earlier version of the laws in Leviticus 18 permitted sex between men. The prohibition was added in an attempt to try and remove any idea that same sex relations had once been

allowed. The main focus of Leviticus 18 was rules against incest and accidentally became a prohibition against homosexuality.

Baldock, (2014) argues that in 1946 the creators of the Revised Standard Version RSV of the Bible were the first to translate Greek words associated with same sex behaviour as 'homosexual'

This makes it clear to me that God would have no problem with today's same sex relationships.

Leviticus and Disability

While we are talking about Leviticus let's take a look at one verse which may condemn disabled people. Leviticus 21:16-24 and the contradictory arguments that seem to crop up in the Old Testament.

*¹⁶ Jehovah continued to speak to Moses, saying: ¹⁷ "Tell Aaron, 'No man of your offspring throughout their generations who has a defect may approach to present the bread of his God. ¹⁸ If there is any man who has a defect, he may not approach: a man who is blind or lame or has a disfigured face or one limb too long, ¹⁹ a man with a fractured foot or a fractured hand, ²⁰ a hunchback or a dwarf, or a man with an eye defect or eczema or ringworm or damaged testicles. ²¹ No man of the offspring of Aaron the priest who has a defect may approach to present Jehovah's offerings made by fire. Because he has a defect, he may not approach to present the bread of his God. ²² He may eat the bread of his God from the most holy things and from the holy things. ²³ However, he may not come near the curtain, and he may not approach the altar, because there is a defect in him; and he should not profane my sanctuary, for I am Jehovah, who is sanctifying them."
²⁴ So Moses spoke to Aaron and his sons and all the Israelites.*

A simple read of this possibly is a condemnation of disabled people partaking fully within the church. But this is blown apart when we look at the relationship between God and Moses. Moses talks to God on Mt Sinai overlooking the plains of Israel where the Israelites wait for Moses to address them. Moses had speech difficulty that is described in Exodus 4:10 "....I am slow of speech and slow of tongue", but God doesn't see his speech defect as

enough of an excuse to get out of addressing the Israelites. One commenter suggests he may even have had cerebral palsy but there isn't enough biblical evidence for this.

What I find intriguing here is that God accepts disabled people but Leviticus doesn't. There appear to be contradictions here.

Patriarchy

We live in a very patriarchal world, and it was even more so in Bible times. Biblical patriarchy, also known as Christian patriarchy, is a set of beliefs in evangelical Christianity concerning gender relations and their manifestations in institutions, including marriage, the family, and the home. It sees the father as the head of the home, responsible for the conduct of his family.

The very idea of a Trans woman challenges the patriarchy of society; to be accepted as a woman freaks those whose gender identity is congruent with their birth gender. It seems to go against Biblical Patriarchy, but gender isn't as clear cut as evangelicals may desire.

Marriage Or Complementarian

Complementarianism is a theological view in Christianity, Judaism, and Islam, that men and women have different but *complementary* roles and responsibilities in marriage, family life, religious leadership, and elsewhere. The word “complementary” and its cognates are currently used to denote this view. For Christians whose complementarian view is biblically-prescribed, these separate roles preclude women from specific functions of ministry within the community. Though women may be precluded from certain roles and ministries they are held to be equal in moral value and of equal status.

Holy Spirit and Creation

I've heard the argument that Jehovah God wanted human creation to reflect Jehovah's qualities through the holy spirit rather than a physical reflection of a gender diverse God.

Elements of Jehovah's Holy Spirit include love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faith, mildness and self control. "On the other hand, the fruitage of the spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faith, ²³ mildness, self-control" (Galations 5: 22-23).

The elements of the Holy Spirit of God are certainly very good qualities to aspire to and Jehovah lord God certainly wants us to lead a happy life that honours God and allows us to demonstrate Jehovah's Holy Spirit by the way we engage with everyone we meet. Jehovah's second supreme commandment was to "Love Your Neighbour". This is expressed precisely in Matthew 22:37-39:

Matthew 22:37-39

³⁷ He said to him: "You must love Jehovah your God with your whole heart and with your whole soul and with your whole mind." ³⁸ This is the greatest and first commandment. ³⁹ The second, like it, is this: "You must love your neighbor as yourself."

Loving God is the first, highest supreme commandment. Loving your neighbour as yourself is the second, highest supreme commandment. To be able to love God completely, one has to be complete, and to feel complete, otherwise one's worship to Jehovah God is not full worship – the kind of worship that Jehovah

God wants us to do. Jehovah also does not want people to feel overwhelmed by his commandments:

1 John 5: 2-3

² By this we know that we love the children of God, when we love God and carry out his commandments. ³ For this is what the love of God means, that we observe his commandments; and yet his commandments are not burdensome.

Born into a body that does not fit with one's gender identity makes it really tough to be complete and to feel complete. But obeying Jehovah God's commandments are indeed, burdensome on God's transgender creations who have to return to their birth gender in order to serve Jehovah God in the Kingdom Arrangement.

Imago Dei

Imago Dei translated is Image of God. We find that in Genesis 1:27 (“And God went on to create the man in his image, in God’s image he created him; male and female he created them”)

I’ve thought hard about what this means, to be created in God’s image. Is God a reflection of me? Am I a reflection of God? The imagery of a mirror separating the heavenly and the earthly realms as a creation took place, is conjured up in my mind. I believe that we are all created in the Image of God, because God created us.



Michelangelo's creation of Adam – Why is God wearing a dress

God doesn't confine themselves to a single gender. God's identity is complex and multifaceted, and humanity is created in God's image. The Rev. M. Barclay, the first openly non-binary person

to become a deacon in the United Methodist Church, has said that “because all human bodies are made in God’s image, anything that harms the lives and bodies of transgender, intersex or gender-nonconforming people also harms God.”³ Not only does God’s heart break at the oppression of their children, but discriminatory and narrow laws and rhetoric concerning the transgender community are an assault against God’s very identity. To all of my transgender friends: You are created in the very image of God. Nothing another human says or does can make that untrue or erase your identity. You are here. You are strong. You are loved.

There’s Genesis 1:27, which refers to God’s creation of humanity as ‘male and female’, though this describes the norm before the Fall rather than the complexities of an imperfect world; there is the implication of complementarity in Genesis 2:18, that men and women are equal-but-different. We might draw further inferences from verses about same-sex practice and cross-dressing from Leviticus and Deuteronomy, but it would be a dangerous stretch to make a convincing and properly nuanced argument about gender identity from these.

God the Potter

The idea that God is the master potter and we are the clay provides another way to understand the complexity of Jehovah God.

Isaiah 64:

⁸ But now, O Jehovah, you are our Father. We are the clay, and you are our Potter; We are all the work of your hand.

God is the potter and we are the clay. It's the idea that God moulds us into what Jehovah wants us to be; in much the same way as a potter moulds the clay. To me, this ties in to imago dei; we are made in the image of God. Evangelicals are most likely to argue that being a trans woman rebels against God; going against the master potter, but I would argue that God moulded me to be who I am today; by design. The Master Potter, Jehovah God, never speaks against trans people, who are never mentioned in the Bible anyway and, it seems as if a more fluid notion of gender was exactly what God wanted. And I know God is proud of those who break the mould.

Michael Bradly, (2018), states that God cannot even begin to mould and transform us in this life unless we are willing to do our part first. Part of that is reading and understanding the Bible. This is what I have done most of my life, and I have been moulded and transformed. My faith in God is stronger than ever. This book is testament to this.

Love the Person, Hate the Sin

Love the person, hate the sin sounds like a contradiction in terms, but it is a phrase that is used by Christians particularly around people in LGBT communities.

The simple fact that we label the person we are talking about as a 'sinner' indicates that we do not have love for them in the first place.

To label someone a 'sinner' is to imply they are outside of God's grace and unless they clean up their act, cannot be forgiven.

So if you really, really want to hate someone's sin, hate a sin which is actually hurtful to them and to others. Hate a sin like rape, murder, incest, child abuse, torture, sex slavery, or one of the other multitudes of damaging and destructive sins, but please stop hating LGBT people.

Intersexed

DeFranza, M. K. (2015) p. 9, “Many evangelicals...continue to defend the traditional Christian (hetero) sexual ethics, even in the face of serious cultural and theological challenges. But in holding to the significance of sex complementarity for marriage (one man and one woman), theologians within these traditions have, at times, overemphasised the significance of sex differences using sex complementarity to justify theological notions of gender complementarity. In their attempts to provide theological justification for heterosexual ethics, some have turned a blind eye to the presence of intersexed persons in the Scriptures...while others have argued that intersex can be fixed through medical technology in order to approximate what they believe to be ‘creational givens’.”

If the scriptures are, indeed, Holy, why are they being ignored by those who are praying for Holiness each and every day. Why are evangelicals ignoring the word of their God? Why are they ignoring the existence of one of God’s valued creations? Why does it incense evangelicals that intersex, trans and gender diverse people are made in God’s image: *imago dei*?

Shirilau, M & J (2011) pg52, argues that gender is not as black and white as we usually assume – there are even babies born with indeterminate or ambiguous genitalia – who are raised as the

wrong gender according to their genetic makeup. We cannot categorically and absolutely declare that God made each of us either male or female – that absolute dichotomy is just not true – it is not an accurate perception of nature. Most of us are XX or XY at the chromosomal level, but a few people are XXY or XYY. Most have either penis or vagina, but others are born with both and others have neither.

It seems to be that one has to be perfectly biologically formed as XX and XY; as male or female to be a perfect reflection of imago dei; the perfect reflection of God; the perfect Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden. But didn't God start off with an intersexed earth creature (adamah)?

“Intersex people are born with any of several variations in sex characteristics including chromosomes, gonads, sex hormones, or genitals” that, according to the UN Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, “do not fit the typical definitions for male or female bodies”. Such variations may involve genital ambiguity, and combinations of chromosomal genotype and sexual phenotype other than XY-male and XX-female.”⁴

History

The existence of intersex people was known to many ancient and pre-modern cultures. The Greek historian Diodorus Siculus wrote of ‘hermaphrodites’ in the first century BCE that Hermaphroditus “is born with a physical body which is a combination of that of a

4 *The UN Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights*

man and that of a woman”, and with supernatural properties.

In European societies, Roman law, post-classical canon law, and later common law, referred to a person’s sex as male, female or hermaphrodite, with legal rights as male or female depending on the characteristics that appeared most dominant. The 12th-century *Decretum Gratiani* states that “Whether a hermaphrodite may witness a testament, depends on which sex prevails.”⁵ The foundation of common law, the 17th Century *Institutes of the Lawes of England* described how a hermaphrodite could inherit “either as male or female, according to that kind of sexe which doth prevaile.”⁶ Legal cases have been described in canon law and elsewhere over the centuries.

In some non-European societies, sex or gender systems with more than two categories may have allowed for other forms of inclusion of both intersex and transgender people. Such societies have been characterised as ‘primitive’, while Morgan Holmes states that subsequent analysis has been simplistic or romanticised, failing to take account of the ways that subjects of all categories are treated.

During the Victorian era, medical authors introduced the terms ‘true hermaphrodite’ for an individual who has both ovarian and testicular tissue, ‘male pseudo-hermaphrodite’ for a person with testicular tissue, but either female or ambiguous sexual anatomy, and ‘female pseudo-hermaphrodite’ for a person with ovarian

5 *12th Century Decretum Gratiani*

6 *17th Century Institutes of the Lawes of England*

tissue, but either male or ambiguous sexual anatomy. Some later shifts in terminology have reflected advances in genetics, while other shifts are suggested to be due to pejorative associations.

Matthew 19:12 tells us that Jesus knew three types of Eunuchs and the one type that was born that way, surely reflects modern day intersex people, and shows us that intersex people have always been born that way. People in the ancient world were far more familiar than many contemporary Christians are, and they supplemented their binary model of human sex/gender with the marginal category of the eunuch.

Matthew 19:12

¹² For there are eunuchs who were born that way, and there are eunuchs who were made eunuchs by men, and there are eunuchs who have made themselves eunuchs on account of the Kingdom of the heavens. Let the one who can make room for it make room for it.

If we go back to Matthew 19.3-12, we find that the discussion was about divorce

³ And Pharisees came to him intent on testing him, and they asked: "Is it lawful for a man to divorce his wife on every sort of grounds?"

⁴ In reply he said: "Have you not read that the one who created them from the beginning made them male and female ⁵ and said: 'For this reason a man will leave his father and his mother and will stick to his wife, and the two will be one flesh?' ⁶ So that they are no longer two, but one flesh. Therefore, what God has yoked together, let no man put apart."⁷ They said to him: "Why, then, did Moses direct giving a certificate of dismissal and divorcing her?"⁸ He said to them: "Out of regard for your hard-heartedness, Moses made the concession to you of divorcing your wives, but that has not been the case from

the beginning. ⁹ I say to you that whoever divorces his wife, except on the grounds of sexual immorality, and marries another commits adultery.”¹⁰ The disciples said to him: “If that is the situation of a man with his wife, it is not advisable to marry.”¹¹ He said to them: “Not all men make room for the saying, but only those who have the gift. ¹² For there are eunuchs who were born that way, and there are eunuchs who were made eunuchs by men, and there are eunuchs who have made themselves eunuchs on account of the Kingdom of the heavens. Let the one who can make room for it make room for it.”

One argument is that there are some eunuchs who remain single for the sake of the kingdom – to preach the good news to people, foregoing marrying and having a family. Jesus was not afraid of eunuchs. He was not disgusted by them. He did not ridicule them, nor did Jesus speak of them as proof of the Fall.

David Hester, points out that Jesus heals the blind, the paralyzed, the fevered, the leprous, the haemorrhaging, even the dead; restoring them to full societal membership. In the case of the eunuch, however, there is no implication of illness or social deformity in need of restoration. Instead the eunuch is held up as a model to follow. DeFranza M., (2015), said; Jesus was calling them to learn from those whose gender identity was not secure, to learn that gender identity is not the central value in the kingdom of heaven.

In my opinion, intersex was part of the original design beginning in Genesis I and 2. God wanted an intersexed creation, so created Eve from Adam’s rib. Genesis has to go beyond male and female to include us all and God wanted us to work out how to get on and relate with each other, instead of a narrow XX, XY look at

creation, and it's not a big stretch of the imagination in the actual, 'divine surgery' (or first sex change) of Adamah.

Transgender

People who have gender dysphoria feel strongly that their gender does not match their biology. A transgender woman has an intense desire to have a female body and to be accepted as a female. The same can be applied to a transgender man who wants to be accepted as a male.

Feeling that your body does not reflect your true gender can cause severe distress, anxiety, and depression. 'Dysphoria' is a feeling of dissatisfaction, anxiety, and restlessness. With gender dysphoria, the discomfort with your male or female body can be so intense that it can interfere with your normal life. But the mismatch between body and internal sense of gender is not a mental illness.

In June 2018 the World Health Organisation announced that its newly released edition of the International Classification of Diseases, gender incongruence will now be classified as a sexual health condition. Transgender is not classified as a mental illness.

The science is just beginning to explain why transgender people feel the way they do. MRI's of the brain have revealed that the trans brain looks more like the brain of their acquired gender. That is to say the brain of a trans woman looks more like the brain of a cis gendered woman.

Zhou et al. (1997), argues that the central subdivision of the bed

nucleus of the stria terminalis (BSTc) is sexually dimorphic. On average, the BSTc is twice as large in men as in women and contains twice the number of somatostatin neurons. A sample of six trans women (male-to-female) were found to have a female-typical number of cells in the BSTc, whereas a trans man (female-to-male) was found to have a male-typical number. The authors (W. Chung, G. De Vries, Dick, Swaab) also examined subjects with hormone-related disorders and found no pattern between those disorders and the BSTc while the single untreated male-to-female transsexual had a female-typical number of cells. They concluded that the BSTc provides evidence for a neurobiological basis of gender identity and proposed that such was determined before birth.

Sexuality and Gender Identity

When I began writing this I just thought the focus would be on gender identity. Going through Genesis and Deuteronomy it can be seen that gender is fluid; God is gender diverse; but certain doctrines made by human churches struggle with the idea that trans women are, indeed women, and base sexuality on biological gender, which is really interesting because the biological makeup of men and women is not discussed in the bible, so there really isn't any biblical basis for this fear.

When I asked the question of whether I could be baptised as a Sister if I was to promise not to marry and be celibate in this current system, the bible instructors and I engaged in a conversation that suggested that in order to be baptised I needed to conform and become the man I was born; to be a Brother. I should have walked away at that point, but I am sure that Jehovah has other plans for me; to remain going to meetings and attending conventions; my very presence is creating change.

I'm not sure why I promised not to marry and to be celibate in the current system. I think I was trying to get the "Yes, you can be baptised as a Sister" and I subconsciously knew the answer was not going to be as simple for me.

One of the reasons was that if I was to become a Sister then got attracted to a Brother then it would be one of those unforgivable

sins. The continuing thought would be that if I became a Brother, and was attracted to a Sister...the discussion ended on the former thought.

A letter came through to the Elders, working out what to do with me within the Congregation. Basically I would need to become male again because of their limited world view of diversity, probably backed up by Biblical womanhood.

I would go as far as saying that the response to trans women is a form of gender abuse.

So a homosexual man can become baptised if he does not engage in homosexual activity. The same would apply to Lesbians, but for transgender women one would need to abstain and revert back to one's birth gender. There is no understanding by the church of gender identity. Satan must be laughing his head off.

Transgender is seen as sexual immorality and a subset of homosexuality. The bible doesn't actually address transgender, but it does address sexual immorality and, for convenience sake and lazy theology, transgender people are deemed sexually immoral.

Porneia

The idea of sexual immorality is based on the Greek word, 'Porneia'. It's difficult to find an accurate English translation, so let's have a look at the word now. It's very interesting.

According to Wikipedia, *porneia* meant prostitution, a usage still in use today. The debate also turns on the definition of the two Greek words *moicheia* (μοιχεία, adultery) and *porneia* (ε:πορνεία, prostitution), from which the word pornography is derived). The first word is restricted to contexts involving sexual betrayal of a spouse, however the second word is used as a generic term for illegitimate sexual activity, although many scholars hold that the Septuagint uses 'porneia' to refer specifically to male temple prostitution. Elsewhere in First Corinthians, incest, homosexual intercourse (according to some interpretations) and prostitution are all explicitly forbidden by name

It should be noted that the phrase 'sexual immorality' is a weak translation of the Greek word *PORNEIA*, in verses like Matthew 5:32 and 19:9. 'Weak' because the phrase is much broader and more vague than the actual Greek word it is supposed to be translating. The English word 'fornication' is a more precise translation, but has been avoided in more recent versions because translators feel it is an archaic term and a hard word. The problem is the vague phrase 'sexual immorality' has caused people to lump anything

that they feel is sexually immoral (such as pornography) into the word. As a result you have wives claiming the right to divorce because they caught their husband looking at pornography on the Internet; citing

Matthew 19:9 (NKJV)

“And I say to you, whoever divorces his wife, except for sexual immorality, and marries another, commits adultery; and whoever marries her who is divorced commits adultery”

as their justification. In Matthew 19:9 the Greek word is *PORNEIA*.

The real shame is that people are lumping into the meaning whatever they assume would be included in the English phrase ‘sexual immorality’ and then claiming that the Greek must also include the same idea. The reasoning is backward, inaccurate, and improper. The word used by the Holy Spirit is *PORNEIA*. We need to understand what was meant by *PORNEIA* and then apply that definition. Observe:

- “‘Porneia’, which is relatively rare in classical Greek (Moulton-Milligan), originally stood for ‘prostitution’ ... In other, later contexts it denotes ‘illicit sexual relations’ of any kind (‘fornication’ is a somewhat archaic but common translation).” [*The Complete Biblical Library*].
- “Illicit sexual intercourse: adultery, fornication, homosexuality, lesbianism, intercourse with animals, etc. sexual intercourse with close relatives; sexual intercourse with a divorced man or woman” [*The New Testament Greek Lexicon*]

- Porneia (fornication) “is used for illicit sexual intercourse...” (Vine)
- Fornication: “illicit sexual intercourse in general” (Thayer)
Fornication: “The New Testament is characterized by an unconditional repudiation of all extra-marital and unnatural intercourse” [*Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*].

Wilson, (2014), Indicates that porneia is the Greek word that has been translated as ‘sexually immoral’. It’s difficult to accurately translate but the root of the word is sex for sale. This is interesting because it indicates that the 6 bible verses that are often used to demonise homosexuality, are probably describing temple prostitution and pederasty. Transgender is very different; nothing to do with sex for sale. A Trans person just wants to be accepted in the gender they identify as. As a trans woman I just want to be accepted as one of the girls. The most simplest way to understand gender identity is that it’s not about who we go to bed with, but who we go to bed as. It’s a 24hr 7 days a week identity.

Shirilau et al., (2011), argue; that prostitution was radically different to what we think about today. It did not refer to women in gold miniskirts (or men in torn jeans) walking up and down the streets. It meant priests and priestesses of the pagan gods who had sex with the faithful as part of the fertility cult. The idea was that if you wanted a good harvest, you would go to the temple, make a monetary offering, and have sex with the priest or ‘temple prostitute’. It makes porneia even more irrelevant to our 21st century way of life. Since sex was associated with fertility

(appropriately so), this act would please the gods and cause them to send a fruitful harvest.

I do wonder if the situation would be different if I had been a Trans man, because the Watchtower Organisation is a very patriarchal organisation. Would a Trans man be accepted as a Brother in the organisation?

Galations 3:26-28

²⁶ You are all, in fact, sons of God through your faith in Christ Jesus. ²⁷ For all of you who were baptized into Christ have put on Christ. ²⁸ There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor freeman, there is neither male nor female, for you are all one in union with Christ Jesus.

Galations 3:26-28 supports the lazy theology of religion because after baptism it does not matter whether one is male or female because all baptised Christians are one in union with Jesus Christ. The humanly doctrinal stance against transsexuals is not supported by this verse in Galations. Theologians and Christians read your bible!

Wilson, (2014, p.162), argues that: “Jesus undermined plenty of gender norms in his day, as did Paul. And Paul, who only knew the Risen Lord, radically de-emphasised the significances of gender differences when he said, “In Christ there is no male, nor female.” I’m not saying gender is no longer significant. I’m saying its significance seems to diminish as the kingdom of God nears.

My sense of self is strong and I am a woman; not a man. Attending meetings for just over a year now (11/5/18) has strengthened, not

weakened my sense of self. Intense emotional outbursts on occasion, but I am strong. I maintain appearance just like any other sister and I have absolutely no desire whatsoever to be male again. I'd rather go before God for judgement than to de-transition. The holy way to righteousness just seems tainted more with Satanic influence, than with Jehovah's, in the way that trans people are treated by the church. Wilson, (2014), p. 4, states that "We're not just singling the issue out. We are singling people out. This pleases the hater of humanity and grieves humanity's lover."

Jehovah is said to command and demand conformity to God's standards, or rather it is the 7 rulers of The Watchtower Society who command and demand conformity. I enjoy the conformity to some extent, to try and cope with life in my world since my father died and my family is coping without him. The righteous standards that Witnesses adhere to are the same righteous standards I'm trying to reach, but going through a secondary sex change is not one that I am considering – the thought just seems too horrid to even consider, a thought that Jehovah would be grieved by; because of what we really do find in the Bible:

I've taken you through Genesis and the story of creation, but let us have a deeper look at the story of Sodom and Gomorrah in Genesis, Leviticus, Romans, Corinthians and Timothy, which targets homosexuality. (Wilson, 2014) supports my view that there is no biblical scripture that is against monogamous, homosexual relationships.

1) *Sodom and Gomorrah*

Many Christians use this story to make an argument against homosexuals and homosexuality, but the story of Sodom and Gomorrah was about gang rape and rape was the sin. Wilson, (2014), p. 37-38 states that “the crime was attempted gang rape, a crime of violence attempted by the whole town, not a few men with same-sex orientation. In Judges (19:1-30), the eventual victims were women, not men.”

The story begins in Genesis 19:

¹ The two angels arrived at Sod'om by evening, and Lot was sitting in the gate of Sod'om. When Lot saw them, he got up to meet them and bowed down with his face to the earth. ² And he said: “Please, my lords, turn aside, please, into the house of your servant and stay overnight and have your feet washed. Then you may get up early and travel on your way.” To this they said: “No, we will stay overnight in the public square.” ³ But he was so insistent with them that they went with him to his house. Then he made a feast for them, and he baked unleavened bread, and they ate. ⁴ Before they could lie down to sleep, the men of the city—the men of Sod'om from boy to old man, all of them—surrounded the house in one mob. ⁵ And they kept calling out to Lot and saying to him: “Where are the men who came in to you tonight? Bring them out to us so that we may have sex with them.” ⁶ Then Lot went out to them to the doorway, and he shut the door behind him. ⁷ He said: “Please, my brothers, do not act wickedly. ⁸ Please, here I have two daughters who have never had sexual relations with a man. Please, let me bring them out to you for you to do to them whatever seems good to you. But do not do anything to these men, for they have come under the shelter of my roof.” ⁹ At this they said: “Stand back!” And they added: “This lone foreigner came to live here, and yet he dares to judge us! Now we are going to do worse to you than to them.” And they crowded

in on Lot and moved forward to break down the door.¹⁰ So the men reached out their hands and brought Lot into the house with them, and they shut the door.¹¹ But they struck the men who were at the entrance of the house with blindness, from the least to the greatest, so that they wore themselves out trying to find the doorway.¹² Then the men said to Lot: “Do you have anyone else here? Sons-in-law, your sons, your daughters, and all your people in the city, bring out of this place!¹³ For we are going to destroy this place, because the outcry against them has indeed grown great before Jehovah, so that Jehovah sent us to destroy the city.”¹⁴ So Lot went out and began to speak to his sons-in-law who were to marry his daughters, and he kept saying: “Get up! Get out of this place, because Jehovah will destroy the city!” But to his sons-in-law, he seemed to be joking.”

Brownson, (2013), p.41 argues that “the story of Sodom and Gomorrah, revisionist interpreters correctly note, first of all, that other biblical texts focus on the sin of inhospitality in this story, rather than on the alleged sin of same-sex relations. Moreover, they note that even one concedes that the ‘wickedness’ of Sodom might have included the sinfulness of the attempted rape of Lot’s male guests by the men of the city, the text says nothing about consensual same-sex intimate relations in committed relationships, but instead speaks to the abhorrence of the violence and violation of rape.”

2) *Leviticus 20:13*

¹³ *“If a man lies down with a male the same as one lies down with a woman, both of them have done a detestable thing. They should be put to death without fail. Their own blood is upon them.*

Wilson, (2014), p.61 argues that this scripture refers to male temple prostitution. “Male shrine prostitutes are mentioned several

times in the Old Testament”. Robert Gagnon, a conservative scholar, who argues for the traditional view, notes that Leviticus 18 was produced with homosexual cult prostitution in view, given the context of Canaanite and Egyptian idolatry

The Greco-Roman world was rife with a practice known as pederasty, which refers to a widespread practice in which men took young men and boys under their wing as mentors. The older men provided the young males, access to privileges that only elders had access to in exchange for sexual services. The older men weren't interested in 'gay sex' the way we think of it. Today, pederasts would be treated as criminals for the sexual exploitation of vulnerable boys.

This raises an important question of interpretation. Is the text a sweeping condemnation of all same-sex practice or does it speak to the predominant practices of the time, especially temple prostitution and pederasty?

Liberated Christians (1997), also argue that the verses in the bible that are generally used to condemn homosexuals have nothing to do with homosexuality, but pederasty. In the New Testament, a Greek word study clearly indicates that Paul was discussing the Greek-Roman practice of pederasty or male prostitution, not homosexuality between two consenting, same age, and non-prostitute loving male couples.

3) *Romans 1:24-27*

²⁴ *Therefore, God, in keeping with the desires of their hearts, gave*

them up to uncleanness, so that their bodies might be dishonored among them. ²⁵ *They exchanged the truth of God for the lie and venerated and rendered sacred service to the creation rather than the Creator, who is praised forever. Amen.* ²⁶ *That is why God gave them over to uncontrolled sexual passion, for their females changed the natural use of themselves into one contrary to nature;* ²⁷ *likewise also the males left the natural use of the female and became violently inflamed in their lust toward one another, males with males, working what is obscene and receiving in themselves the full penalty, which was due for their error.*

The verses in Romans are about excess of sex; heterosexual as well as same sex. It has nothing to do with sexuality within a loving, monogamous, committed relationship. Wilson, (2014), p. 62, “Romans I is framed as a commentary on pagan idolatry. The practices referenced are, in fact cited as the effect of end-stage paganism. God is said to have ‘given over’ the pagan idolaters to such behaviour because of persistent and egregious idolatry. The pagan idolaters of Romans 1:24-27 are inflamed with lust”

The Greco-Roman were viewed as sexual beings. Zeus practiced pederastic sex with Ganymede, a young male god. The practice of temple prostitution linked sexual perversion with idolatry, the historical context of Romans I.

Wilson, (2014) argues that the link between sexual practice and Gentile idolatry is central, not incidental to Paul’s argument.

After writing this section, the question that burns in my mind is, what’s wrong with a trans woman worshipping Jehovah? What’s wrong with a trans woman worshipping the one true God, along with other members of the Kingdom? Answer: nothing.

4) *Gay Centurion*

“Both Matthew 8:5-13 and Luke 7:1-10 tell how a centurion asked Jesus to heal the young man referred to in Greek as his ‘*pais*’. The word was commonly used for the younger partner in a same-sex relationship. It is usually translated as boy, servant or slave. In recent years progressive Bible scholars have concluded that the centurion was in a homosexual relationship with the “slave who was dear to him” in the gospel story. It was just like Jesus to take someone disreputable and praise them as holy.”

Eunuchs

Eunuchs are defined as, in a literal sense, a castrated male. Such men were often appointed in royal courts as attendants or caretakers of the queen and the concubines. The term also refers to a man who was, not a literal eunuch, but an official assigned to duties in the court of the king. It is used figuratively for a ‘eunuch for the Kingdom,’ one who exercises self-control so as to apply himself more fully to the service of God.”

This definition doesn’t go far enough in offering an explanation to the scripture Matthew 19:12 “...born that way”. Jesus knew more about the world. Apostle Matthew knew more about Jesus. Because Jesus is the Truth, we need to stop saying every human is, clearly either, one or the other, male or female, because to say so is not to tell the truth.

When I started reading about eunuchs in the bible I thought that they may be describing modern day transgender people, particularly in Matthew 19 when Jesus described knowing 3 types of eunuchs. It is particularly interesting to note that Jesus knew “...eunuchs born that way” and suggests that Jesus knew about intersexed people. The full verse:

Matthew 19: 12

¹² For there are eunuchs who were born that way, and there are eunuchs who were made eunuchs by men, and there are eunuchs

who have made themselves eunuchs on account of the Kingdom of the heavens. Let the one who can make room for it make room for it.

This raises a number of questions that argue against the traditional XX/XY binary. Why are intersexed not included? A casual look at Genesis suggests a fixed, male and female binary system was in place, but as I've shown, God's thinking went beyond the binary. Indeed, I've shown that God tried creating the first human that reflected trans and intersex creation. Jesus recognised this in Matthew 19:12, asking earthlings to accept people like this; people like me.

In her blog, Glahn, (2016) states that, "A lot has changed since the sixth day of creation. And for millennia some people have had physical characteristics of both sexes. These conditions may include chromosomal disorders, atypical genitalia, atypical reproductive organs, and/or over- or underproduction of sex-related hormones. Some people are born with XXY chromosomal mixes. Indeed, there are around 100 different intersex conditions."

I have often been thinking and praying for a way in; a way to be accepted by Jehovah's Kingdom, and when I discovered the scripture in the Book of Isaiah – I had found my way in.

Isaiah was best known as the Hebrew prophet who predicted the coming of Jesus Christ to salvage mankind from sin. Isaiah lived about 700 years before the birth of Jesus Christ. Born in Jerusalem, Israel, he was said to have found his calling as a prophet when he saw a vision in the year of King Uzziah's death. Isaiah prophesied the coming of the Messiah Jesus Christ. He was believed to have

written chapters 1-39 in the Book of Isaiah with the balance of the book authored by several other prophets.

Isaiah 56: 3-5

*³ “The foreigner who joins himself to Jehovah should not say, ‘Jehovah will surely separate me from his people.’ And the eunuch should not say, ‘Look! I am a dried-up tree.’” ⁴ For this is what Jehovah says to the eunuchs who keep my Sabbaths and who choose what I delight in and who hold fast to my covenant: ⁵ “I will give to them in my house and within my walls a monument and a name, *Something better than sons and daughters.*”*

While the definition of a Eunuch in bible times appears quite different to modern day transgender people, it is my belief that Jesus would have quite enjoyed hanging out with us, and knows that Jehovah has given us a space in the new system “*Something better than sons and daughters*”. I hope that the heavenly realms are fully aware of the discrimination we currently face.

Those Deuteronomy Verses

An interpretation of Deuteronomy 22:5, appearing in the first Gutenberg bible may have appeared as: “No in duetur mulier veste virili: nec uir ut er veste feminea. Abominabilis eium a pud deu elt qui fatit hor...”

A quick google translation of this is “In no wear women’s clothing, women’s clothing, so that neither man. At the hour of fate that in addition disgusting den dt”. It doesn’t make a lot of sense, but it’s important to remember how the Bible has been translated and interpreted, then re translated and re interpreted.

Background

Deuteronomy means ‘second law’, a term mistakenly derived from the Hebrew word *mishneh* in Deuteronomy 17:18. In that context, Moses simply commands the king to make a ‘copy of the law’. But, Deuteronomy does something more than give a simple copy of the Law. The book offers a restatement of the Law for a new generation, rather than a mere copy of what had gone before. Deuteronomy records this ‘second law’ – namely Moses’s series of sermons in which he restated God’s commands originally given to the Israelites some forty years earlier in Exodus and Leviticus.

Moses addressed his words to ‘all Israel’ at least twelve times. This phrase emphasised the nation’s unity, initiated by their

covenant with God at Mount Sinai and forged in the wilderness. In the midst of widespread polytheism, Israel was distinctive in that they worshiped one God, Yahweh. Their God was totally unique; there was none other like Him among all the ‘gods’ of the nations surrounding them. Deuteronomy 6:4 codifies this belief in the *Shema*, the basic confession of faith in Judaism even today. “Hear, O Israel! The LORD [Yahweh] is our God, the LORD [Yahweh] is one!”

Deuteronomy was written around 1406 BC, at the end of the forty years of wandering endured by the nation of Israel. At the time, the people were camped on the east side of the Jordan River, on the plains of Moab, across from the city of Jericho (Deuteronomy 1:1; 29:1). They were on the verge of entering the land that had been promised centuries earlier to their forefathers (Genesis 12:1, 6–9). The children who had left Egypt were now adults, ready to conquer and settle the Promised Land. Before that could happen, the Lord reiterated through Moses His covenant with them.

Deuteronomy also restates the Ten Commandments and many other laws given in Exodus and Leviticus. The book delivered to Israel, God’s instructions on how to live a blessed life in the Promised Land. Chapters 27 and 28 specify the blessings of obedience and the curses of disobedience.

There are two nasty verses that may condemn trans, intersex and gender diverse people.

Deuteronomy 22:5

⁵ “A woman must not put on the clothing of a man, nor should a man wear the clothing of a woman. For anyone doing so is detestable to Jehovah your God.

Deuteronomy 23:1

¹ “No man who has been castrated by having his testicles crushed or who has had his male organ cut off may come into the congregation of Jehovah.”

First, let's deal with Deuteronomy 23:1. Craige, (1976) uses a familiar theme in his analysis: the worship of false Gods. The question of admission to the assembly of the Lord runs through Deuteronomy 23:1-8. Craige, (1976), states “The self-castrated, who carry on their bodies the sign of their recognition of another god, shall not enter the congregation”. This verse is about men, not women. This has nothing to do with trans people, and should never be used to condemn them. Once again, however, the question that burns through my mind is “What would God think about a trans woman not being allowed to be a full member of the congregation?”

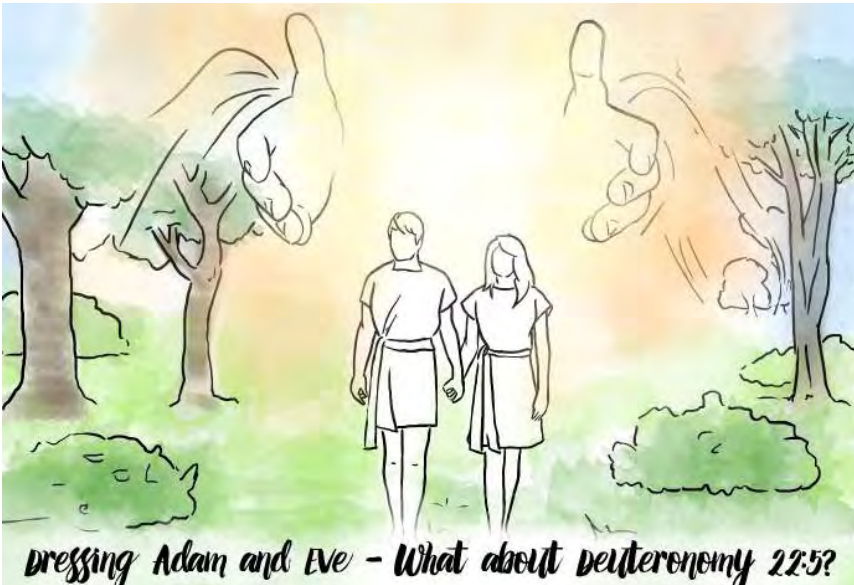
Deuteronomy 23:1-8

¹ “No man who has been castrated by having his testicles crushed or who has had his male organ cut off may come into the congregation of Jehovah. ² “No illegitimate son may come into the congregation of Jehovah. Even to the tenth generation, none of his descendants may come into the congregation of Jehovah. ³ “No Am'mon-ite or Mo'ab-ite may come into the congregation of Jehovah. Even to the tenth generation, none of their descendants may ever come into the congregation of Jehovah, ⁴ because they did not come to your aid with food and water when you were on the way going out of Egypt, and

because they hired against you Ba'laam the son of Be'or from Pe'thor of Mes-o-po-ta'mi-a to curse you. But Jehovah your God refused to listen to Ba'laam. Rather, Jehovah your God changed the curse into a blessing for you, because Jehovah your God loved you. ⁶ You should never seek their welfare or their prosperity all your days. ⁷ "You must not hate an E'dom-ite, for he is your brother. "You must not hate an Egyptian, for you became a foreign resident in his country. ⁸ The third generation of children born to them may enter the congregation of Jehovah.

Deuteronomy 22:5 is a strange little verse that's very irritating because of the way it's applied to modern day society. Deuteronomy was mostly written by Moses and became part of Mosaic Law.

Moses wrote the book of Deuteronomy, but why did he write Deuteronomy 22:5. Why was he instructed to do so by a gender diverse God? Was he instructed to write Deuteronomy 22:5 by God or man.



During Moses’s time, men and women wore robes and if we go back to Genesis we find that the first garments from animal skins were made by Jehovah for his first male and female creation. Adam and Eve wore the same garment:

Genesis 3:21

21 And Jehovah God made long garments from skins for Adam and for his wife, to clothe them.

Jehovah God didn’t make a fuss over how he dressed them. It doesn’t say he covered them from neck to ankle or that the sleeves were a certain length, or whether Adam wore pants and Eve wore a skirt, no, he dressed them both in tunics.

Right from the beginning of the bible it can be seen that Deuteronomy 22:5 has little significance on clothing and fashion back in Moses’s day and no application in today’s 21st century and certainly should never be used to condemn transgender and transsexual people. But, just for fun, let’s continue our journey to wipe out that annoying little verse once and for all.

Here is a Hebrew English transliteration of Deuteronomy 22:5,

(From http://www.scripture4all.org/OnlineInterlinear/Hebrew_Index.htm)

22:5	לֹא	-	יִהְיֶה	-	כְּלִי	-	נָגֵר	-	עַל	אִשָּׁה	-	וְלֹא	-	יִלְבַּשׁ	-	נָגֵר			
	la	-	ieie		kli	-	gbr		ol	-	ashe	u	-	la	-	ilbsh	gbr		
	not		he-shall-become		outfit-of		master		on		woman	and		not		he-shall-put-on	master		
	שְׂמֹלֶת		אִשָּׁה		כִּי		תִּשְׂבַּת		יִהְיֶה		אֱלֹהֶיךָ		כֵּל		עֹשֶׂה		פֶּה : אֵלֶּה		
	shmlth		ashe		ki		thuobth		ieue		alei	.	k		kl		-	oshe	ale : p
	garment-of		woman		that		abhorrence-of		Yahweh		Elokim-of		you		any-of		one-doing-of	these	

Interestingly this transliteration uses gbr meaning “master”

'Master' is often translated 'lord,' and denotes generally the owner or master of a servant or slave.

I am thinking it's not God who is angered by this, but the Pharisees of the day, and that it was a verse that's designed to maintain the power relationship between slave and master. A more accurate translation of Deuteronomy 22:5 would go something like this:

"A slave should not put on the clothing of their master."

I found another Hebrew transliteration of Deuteronomy 22:5 from Bible Hub. It uses the word ge-ber, but this time, the English translation is 'to a man' instead of 'master'. The transliteration also used ke-li, which translates to "that which pertains"

From the use of ge-ber and ke-li, Leone, (2015), suggests that the verse should have been written to reflect the actual intention of Deuteronomy 22:5:

"The wife should not put on that which pertains to the warrior, and the warrior should not put on his wife's mantel in order to escape his civic duty. Anyone who does so is mimicking the idol worship of heathen, which the Lord despises" (Leone, 2015, p. 30)

I'm not sure of this translation. It really excited me at first, the idea that it was related to military wear, but other translations have used a much simpler translation. Sometimes I think, what Moses was thinking about when he wrote it, but also thinking about Jehovah God as the first fashion designer when God dressed Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden. God wasn't concerned with

the specific clothing for Adam and the specific clothing for Eve. The rules of Deuteronomy 22:5 were of no concern to Jehovah when he created humanity. Why should it be used in the 21st century to crucify transgender people? It should not.

Another author, (McLaughlin) backs up Leone's argument, stating that "the command may be somewhat narrower than that – the word for 'man' is *geber*, which generally indicates a warrior. This is the only time *geber* appears in the entire Pentateuch – the usual word for 'man' in Deuteronomy is *ish*. Further, the word for a man's clothing is actually less precise than 'clothing.' It may also refer to 'articles' or 'implements'. In other words, the verse may be telling women not to be warriors (wearing armour, carrying weapons, etc.), and may be telling warriors not to shirk their responsibilities in war.

These interpretations back up the problems in transliterations of the original Hebrew.

Leone, (2015) also points out that fashion in bible times was very similar for men and women. There was nothing to distinguish the difference between a man's robe from that of a woman's. How was the original male-female gender diverse earth creature clothed back in the Garden of Eden?

One translation of Deuteronomy 22:5, however, made me burst into laughter. Having cerebral palsy and being a transsexual woman has real advantages here, because the verse is only relevant if one has no disability:

Reference Bible

Deuteronomy 22:5

⁵No garb of an able-bodied man should be put upon a woman, neither should an able-bodied man wear the mantle of a woman; for anybody doing these things is something detestable to Jehovah your God.

(Bose Ojo), a female pastor of Christ Embassy, [gave her own] understanding of Deuteronomy 22:5. “In the first place, there are other laws in that same chapter that are not practicable, and logically when you break one law you break all. The text says a woman shall not put on ‘what pertaineth’ to man and *vice versa*. In her own opinion, what pertains to man means what a man has put on, and not the type of fashion that belongs to men. If it is a statement about fashion we do not know what men wore different from those of women in ancient Israel; so we cannot apply it to our time what we are not sure of. Concerning trousers specifically the pastor said women’s trousers are sewn differently from those of men, so we cannot say women are putting on what pertains to men.” She explained further that fashion differs from culture to culture. For example, in Chile and Fiji Island skirts are men’s wear. She had once watched a programme by Rev. Benny Hinn from Fiji Island in which he appeared in skirts.

She also goes on to say another factor which makes a literal interpretation of the text untenable resides in the information that “Biblical references for clothes are nearly all to the costume of the males, owing doubtless to the fact that the garments ordinarily used indoors were worn alike by men and women.”

If most biblical references for clothes are to male costumes, and it was common knowledge that both male and female wore the same type of dress at home, it implies that the culture difference between male and female dressing was not emphasised; hence, a literal interpretation of prohibition of cross-dressing would not make sense in that culture. Therefore, the intended meaning of the text cannot be a reference to the usual day-to-day appearance, but certain specific, unusual occasion(s).

The argument for an unusual occasion is strengthened by the earlier suggestion of a non-Israelite-religion context which, as seen above, is in accord with the religious purpose of the D code namely religious centralisation and purification of Yahwism from heathen practices which characterised it particularly in the seventh century B.C.E. In other words, Deuteronomy 22:5 could be one of those regulations meant to stop the Israelites from patronising the foreign cults. With this religious-context interpretation, the significance of the prohibition resides not in the material worn, but in the heathen practice involved. Thus, the text should not be seen as a prohibition of cross-dressing as it is commonly misconstrued but a law against idolatry. (From: http://www.scielo.org.za/scielo.php?script=sci_arttext&pid=S10109192013000100001)

Worshipping False Gods

Another way that Deuteronomy 22:5 may be interpreted, from my research, is around the worshipping of false gods. I knew there were many gods that people in Israel worshipped, but struggled to find its link to transvestism. I had to find the link to establish why Deuteronomy 22:5 was indeed there. I think I have found that link in Deuteronomy 7:1-26. The verses describe the worship of false gods:

Deuteronomy 7:5 gets to the crux of the issue

⁵ Instead, this is what you should do to them: Tear down their altars, break up their sacred pillars cut down their sacred poles, and burn up their graven images. ⁶ For you are a holy people to Jehovah your God, and Jehovah your God has chosen you to become his people, his special property, out of all the peoples who are on the face of the earth.

The one true God, Jehovah, demands complete devotion and doesn't like the worship of false Gods, such as Ashtoreth and Baal. So what is the connection to Deuteronomy 22:5? It's the word detestable, a word that occurs in Deuteronomy 22:5 ("For anyone doing so is detestable to Jehovah your God.") and in Deuteronomy 7:26 ("You must not bring a detestable thing into your house and thereby become something devoted to destruction like it."). God finds false worship detestable. And once more the question arises; what problem would the one true God, Jehovah, have with me in his Kingdom Hall praising him as I am? It wouldn't matter to God, whether one was trans, intersex or gender diverse

or liked to cross dress, as long as they were completely devoted to him.

Mariottini, (2009), Professor of Old Testament argues that the law in Deuteronomy 22:5 is a prohibition against Israelite men and women wearing the garments that would identify them as worshipers of Asherah. Since those garments were dedicated to Asherah and since the servants of Asherah wore identical garments, any Israelite man or any Israelite woman who wore these garments would be committing an abomination against Yahweh.

Asherah, was the name of the chief female deity worshiped in ancient Syria, Phoenicia, and Canaan. The Phoenicians called her Astarte, the Assyrians worshiped her as Ishtar, and the Philistines had a temple of Asherah (1 Samuel 31:10). Because of Israel's incomplete conquest of the land of Canaan, Asherah-worship survived and plagued Israel, starting as soon as Joshua was dead (Judges 2:13 - They abandoned Jehovah and served Ba'al and the Ash'to-reth.

The intent of the law, in this last interpretation of the verse, is to prevent men and women from mixing by deceitful entry into the segregated space of the other sex with the intent of committing adultery. In the verse, *adultery* is what is called an abomination unto God. Cross-dressing is not strictly and always forbidden in the Law; it was specifically permitted beginning in the 16th-century Code of Jewish Law that allowed men to dress as women and women as men for the Jewish feast of Purim for the purpose of celebration, as opposed to with the intent to deceive and commit adultery.

Cross dressing among the ancient Israelites was, according to Bullough, (1993), “far more frequent than such prohibitions would indicate, and was even excused or actively encouraged when the motive was innocent or necessary to preserve honour.” The text from Deuteronomy is firmly fixed in a socio-historical framework and existed in relation to the continued participation of the Hebrews in the sexual practices associated with Goddess worship, including cross-dressing. This seems to indicate deeply rooted behaviours among the Hebrews which deliberately flout Judaic laws and reveal a rupture between sacred text and cultural practices.

One of the texts, known as Targum Unkulus, which (Finkelman) called “possibly the oldest authoritative translation,” was prepared around 100 to 200 C.E. It translates the verse into a prohibition against women carrying weapons and against men using the ‘vessels’ of a woman.

According to this source, (Rabbi Eliezer Finkelman) said, a woman would be allowed to sport a tuxedo, bowler hat and cigar, but she would break the law “as soon as she puts on her Uzi.”

Deuteronomy 22:5 is prohibiting a specific kind of transvestism, one in which men dressed as women and women dressed as men would identify themselves as servants of Asherah, prostitute themselves in the temple of Yahweh, and thus bring ritual impurity to the worship of the God of Israel. Transvestism was a violation of the natural order and as such, it should not be practiced by the followers of Yahweh

Shirilau & Shirilau, (2011) argue that the cross-dressing prohibition may well have been related to the Canaanitic fertility cult because of the term “to’ebah” Perhaps the male cult priest prostitutes (the qadishim) wore clothes traditionally associated with women.

When “to’ebah” refers to the breaking of a ritual law it might be better translated ‘ritually improper’, or ‘involves foreign religious cult practice. Almost all of the “to’ebah” passages are considered without significance to Christians today. Many activities which were “to’ebah” transgressions to the ancient Israelites simply do not apply to modern cultures. However, most conservative Christians consider the Leviticus 18:22 and 20:13 passages to be different from all the others and still in force today.

Shirilau & Shirilau, (2011) also argue that Deuteronomy 22:5 is not there to oppose transsexuality. The initial argument “If you were born a man that means God wanted you to be a man”, assumes that God is concerned with gender. Our gender is no more important to God than our hair colour. Our physical sex is usually determined at the genetic level, just like our natural hair colour, but very few of us would argue that it is intrinsically immoral to change one’s hair colour. Why, then, would we make that argument about changing one’s sex? Idolisation of sex is the only reason. Interestingly, therefore, those who morally oppose transsexual changes for the transgendered people who want them are themselves committing a form of idolatry, and idolatry is, by definition, the most basic immorality.

Deuteronomy 23: 17-18 directly addresses temple prostitution. It is

“something detestable to Jehovah your God”. The verse is in full below, but what is most interesting is exactly the same phraseology “...detestable to Jehovah your God” that links Deuteronomy 23:18 directly to Deuteronomy 22:5.

Deuteronomy 23:17-18

¹⁷ *“None of the daughters of Israel may become a temple prostitute, neither may anyone of the sons of Israel become a temple prostitute.*

¹⁸ *You must not bring the price paid to a female prostitute or the price paid to a male prostitute into the house of Jehovah your God to fulfil a vow, for both of them are something detestable to Jehovah your God.*

There is one more problem that we need to sort out with Deuteronomy 22:5. Via and Gagnon, (2003) “Parallel cult functionaries in Mesopotamia, known as assinnu, were disparaged as ‘men-women’ and ‘dogs’ because of their receptive role in male-male intercourse, blurring as they did their own gender identity as males.”

Gnuse, (2015) “In some literature of the Graeco-Roman era it refers to those who wore make-up, dressed as women, shaved their bodies, and indeed took a passive role in sex, men and boys who allowed themselves to be used sexually as the passive partner in a homosexual relationship, usually for money, hence the translation of ‘male prostitute’. It could also mean a slave who is used by his master as the passive recipient in a sexual relationship.”

God told Moses to write down His commandments regarding the worship of the strange gods of the Canaanites several times and told the people of Israel to utterly destroy all implements of

worship when they possessed the land of Canaan. (Deuteronomy 6:14, 7:5, 12:4, 13:1-5 and 20:17-18)

Deuteronomy 18:9-12

⁹ When you come into the land which the LORD your God gives you, you shall not learn to follow the abominable practices of those nations. ¹⁰ There shall not be found among you, anyone who burns his son or daughter as an offering, anyone who practices divination, a soothsayer, or an augur, or a sorcerer, ¹¹ or a charmer, or a medium, or a wizard, or a necromancer, ¹² For whoever does these things is an abomination to the LORD; and because of these abominable practices the LORD your God is driving them out before you.

According to the history of the culture and practices of paganism, Deuteronomy 22:5 is an indication of cross-dressing in certain heathen ceremonies that was deemed to be a cure for infertility. This was done by the Canaanites, which God strictly forbade the Israelites to participate in and ordered them to completely destroy them all (Mariottini).

Deuteronomy 20:17-18

¹⁷ You shall utterly destroy them, Hittites and the Amorites, the Canaanites and the Perizzites, the Hivites and the Jebusites, as the LORD your God has commanded; ¹⁸ that they may not teach you to do according to all their abominable practices which they have done in the service of their gods, and so to sin against the LORD your God.

Craige, (1976, pg 288) argues that transvestism may appear to be a relatively harmless deviation. Transvestism may be associated with forms of homosexuality; and, in the ancient world, it is probable that transvestite practices were associated with the cults of certain deities.

Deuteronomy 22:5 appears to prevent cross dressing by men and women, but may be associated with the worship of false Gods. It's interesting that (Craigie, 1976) may see transvestism as relatively harmless, yet comes from a conservative viewpoint, suggesting that Deuteronomy is applicable in today's society. Maybe he is agreeing that cross dressing practices, that were only associated with the cults of false Gods is what really annoyed and angered Jehovah God.

About Joseph

The English Standard Version Anglicised (ESVA)

⁵ *“A woman shall not wear a man’s garment, nor shall a man put on a woman’s cloak, for whoever does these things is an abomination to the Lord your God*

21st Century King James Version:

⁵ *“The woman shall not wear that which pertaineth unto a man, neither shall a man put on a woman’s garment; for all who do so are abomination unto the Lord thy God.*

New World Translation (2013)

⁵ *“A woman must not put on the clothing of a man, nor should a man wear the clothing of a woman. For anyone doing so is detestable to Jehovah your God.*

Other translations show diversity in the wording of this verse. I wonder what the original handwritten scripts would say. It’s a pity we don’t have them.

Another point of interest is the story of Joseph and his coloured coat that his father gave him:

Genesis 37:3-4

³ *Now Israel loved Joseph more than all his other sons because he was the son of his old age, and he had a special robe made for him. ⁴ When his brothers saw that their father loved him more than all his brothers, they began to hate him, and they could not speak peaceably to him.*

2 Samuel 13:18

¹⁸ (Now she was wearing a special robe, for those were the garments that the virgin daughters of the king wore.) So his attendant led her outside, and he locked the door behind her

The coat that Jacob gave to Joseph is described as a special robe in the Genesis 37:3 account. The same use of special robe was used in the 2 Samuel 13:18 account. Could Joseph's coat have been one usually for Princesses? Why would Jacob, a loving father to his son Joseph, give him a Princess coat? Why did Joseph love it so much?

Joseph was a dreamer, and was often beaten up by his brothers – nearly killing him at one stage. Could this have been because he was wearing a princess's coat? Did Jacob break the Deuteronomic law?

I don't think that Deuteronomy 22:5 has any relevance in 21st century society. It should not be used to condemn and crucify trans people. In the Garden of Eden, when Jehovah clothed their first human creation, Jehovah wasn't concerned with Deuteronomy 22:5. Jacob gave Joseph a coat that was for princesses. There was no condemnation for that behaviour by this Deuteronomy verse. Other commentaries indicate that Deuteronomy 22:5 pertained to dressing for certain events; certain costumes or uniforms for that event; and nothing to do with what men and women wore in everyday interactions. The original Hebrew also suggests this.

Conclusion

A simple read of Deuteronomy 22.5 appears to prevent cross dressing by men and women and as soon as such people walk into

a church, the wrath of God would prevail. Despite the simplicity of the wording of this pesky little verse one has to really engage with the history and intent of the bible. If we look back at the 'homosexual attack' verses I have argued that God was against pederasty and temple prostitution.

God is not angry at the same sex behaviour and GOD is not angry with men and women cross dressing, but GOD is annoyed with the worship of other deities.

Time to Leave



The decision to leave my association with the church came unexpectedly. I was enjoying the meetings, getting up once or twice at meetings, speaking into the microphone. I got on well with a number of people, including the Elders who seemed to be ok with me in their midst.

Every now and then, I would struggle with myself being there. I would look around at the Brothers in their suits and ties, and then look around at the Sisters in their skirts and blouses, or dresses.

And then the thought of ‘They really want me to be a Brother’ just freaked me out each time I thought it. I was a woman attending the meetings, but they really wanted me to be a man.

At the end of 2017 my study conductors became aware I was a trans woman. An article was published about me in the local news. A letter had to be written to the Australasian Office to find out what to do with a transsexual. We all knew the answer. Nothing to do with the love of God, but the response time allowed me another year with the Congregation. I felt as if I belonged in that Congregation – or at least I wanted to belong.

The pressure to conform, to become male was upsetting me each time it came into my mind, but I pushed it to the back of my mind and held back the tears. Towards the end of 2018, I decided I needed to talk to an Elder. He came around to my place and we talked about the issues I had. A response from the Australasian Branch had come back, addressed to the Body of Elders. The basic answer was that if I was to become an unbaptised publisher and/or baptised I would need to dress as a male/become a male. He tried to teach me about the Holy Spirit and the quality of patience. The Brother knew that gender identity was involved, but that thought “They really want me to be a Brother” just became too intense for me. The Elder commented about a friend of his who now works at Bethel, changed back to a male; “the Holy Spirit is powerful and this is a great example of how Jehovah’s strength can help you make the changes required.” As I was listening to this I was so sad inside, thinking how cruel that was.

A friend, who had knocked on my door in 2016, met me for lunch at the beginning of 2019. We had a lovely lunch and chatted about the Congregation and my bible study and the increased faith that I sensed. I was still enjoying my journey with the Witnesses at this point – actually I still miss my association with them. After lunch we walked over to the beach. As our conversation kept going, LBGT came into the conversation. She was, apparently really interested in trans. When I said that I believed that God created me as a trans woman, she freaked out and started preaching about how the whole world is so stuffed and twisted now, and God just wanted us to be happy, but it's all so very wrong now. I became quiet at this stage and I hoped the conversation would change. Anyway, the next day I received a series of texts and one text summed up the whole situation. “You get on so well with [4 Brothers]. You don't need to become a Sister to continue that friendship...in fact the opposite.” Those last four words. I had no choice, but to leave the Witnesses.

When my bible instructors arrived on 25/1/19 they wanted to talk with me about the progress I was making. ‘they really want me to be male’ overwhelmed my mind and I made it so categorically clear that I was not going to be male that they quickly wrapped up the session; saying we will stop bible study, but may come and see you every now and then to see how you are getting on. At this point I was planning on continuing to attend meetings, but an hour or so after the two Brothers left, I sent a text saying that I've also decided to stop attending meetings.

What would Jesus say about all of this

Perhaps Jesus might say to me “Well you managed those Pharisees, well done!!”.

Jesus was about love and compassion – key components of the Holy Spirit. I think he would have been less judgemental and I can imagine him walking around with a few people like me. He may have, indeed, healed us in ways we cannot imagine but I don't think he would have liked what organised religion has done.

Elements of Jehovah's Holy Spirit include love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faith, mildness and self-control. “On the other hand, the fruitage of the spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness faith,²³ mildness, self-control” (Galations 5: 22-23)

John 9:12 describes the story of a blind man who was healed by Jesus so he could see again. Christ commented that the man had been born blind, but no one was to be blamed for his congenital blindness. The blind man had not sinned.

John 9:12

As he was passing along, he saw a man who had been blind from birth. ² And his disciples asked him: “Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, so that he was born blind?” ³ Jesus answered: “Neither this man sinned nor his parents, but it was so that the works of God might be made manifest in his case. ⁴ We must do the works of the One who sent me while it is day; the night is coming when no man can work. ⁵ As long as I am in the world, I am the world's light.” ⁶ After he said these things, he spat on the ground and made a paste with the

saliva, and he smeared the paste on the man's eyes⁷ and said to him: "Go wash in the pool of Si-lo'am" (which is translated "Sent Forth"). And he went and washed, and came back seeing.⁸ Then the neighbors and those who formerly used to see that he was a beggar began to say: "This is the man who used to sit and beg, is it not?"⁹ Some were saying: "This is he." Others were saying: "No, but he looks like him." The man kept saying: "I am he."¹⁰ So they asked him: "How, then, were your eyes opened?"¹¹ He answered: "The man called Jesus made a paste and smeared it on my eyes and said to me, 'Go to Si-lo'am and wash.' So I went and washed and gained sight."¹² At this they said to him: "Where is that man?" He said: "I do not know."

The idea that the man was blind from birth and that it was not a sin and Jesus had the power to make the blind man see; I think it confuses many who are able bodied and Christians 'He must have sinned' comes in from the back of their minds, but for those of us born disabled, John 9:12 is incredible. Congenital disability is not a sin, but it feels like it is at times. The more I think about this story, the more convinced I am that transsexuality is not a sin, but the way the Church articulates attitudes towards it, we are seen as the devil incarnate. The church has learnt to overcome Leviticus 21: 16-24, which precludes people who are physically deformed in any way from approaching the altar as there are disabled brothers and sisters who are Jehovah Witnesses, so the doctrinal teachings don't prevent disabled people from entering the kingdom, but if they obeyed every Holy Scripture...maybe they should.

Leviticus 21: 16-24

¹⁶ Jehovah continued to speak to Moses, saying: ¹⁷ "Tell Aaron, 'No man of your offspring throughout their generations who has a defect may approach to present the bread of his God. ¹⁸ If there is any man who

has a defect, he may not approach: a man who is blind or lame or has a disfigured face or one limb too long,¹⁹ a man with a fractured foot or a fractured hand,²⁰ a hunchback or a dwarf, or a man with an eye defect or eczema or ringworm or damaged testicles.²¹ No man of the offspring of Aaron the priest who has a defect may approach to present Jehovah's offerings made by fire. Because he has a defect, he may not approach to present the bread of his God.²² He may eat the bread of his God from the most holy things and from the holy things.²³ However, he may not come near the curtain, and he may not approach the altar, because there is a defect in him; and he should not profane my sanctuary, for I am Jehovah, who is sanctifying them.”²⁴ So Moses spoke to Aaron and his sons and all the Israelites.

Conclusion

I guess being a trans woman protected me from becoming a Jehovah Witness, and has protected your door from being knocked on by me.

Despite my humour that's reflected throughout this book and in my previous facetious statement, I still have more respect for those in the faith and I still wish I could have been included in their realm.

Imagine the bible without the term homosexual and without Deuteronomy 22.5 and 23.1. Imagine being able to go to churches that didn't celebrate those 'texts of terror' and actually fully welcomed people. I hope that this book makes people think about the biblical texts a bit more.

Poetic journey

O, Jehovah – Allyson Hamblett

*O, Jehovah, A poem for you
What have you done
Your holy spirit is strong in me
Loved going to your Kingdom meetings,
I feel lost and empty
Now it's over*

*Loved the people
Energy of your realm
Loved the fellowship of the Hall
Sisters and Brothers, saying hello
Microphones circulating for those to answer
I enjoyed those times when I knew what to say
Felt like a Sister, wanted to be
I felt included in the realm*

*Saw the brothers, in their smart attire
Guide us through the meetings
All the right words I heard at the right time
I did ponder on how it was done
Then I realised
I knew they were from you, O Jehovah
Answers to my prayers*

*I loved your songs
The music to show we love you
The words made me cry tears of joy
When life became tough
You made me strong
One of my favourites*

*I wrote you a song
When life got extremely tough
To get me through
I thought your love had gone
I thought I was wrong
Still feel wrong
Not sure how to be a man, 20 years on
That's what this Trans Sister has to do, to conform*

*Loved the humour, when a Brother was confused with a Sister
It came directly from you, lord God Jehovah
You wanted me to know, I was welcome in your realm
You were happy, with me there
A Trans Sister, just trying to be with her God*

*I enjoyed the weekly bible study
Strangers who became friends
Studying your word
Studying history of the world
Was excited by every chapter
Learnt so much, another book and more
I want to get there, but don't know how*

*I'm ready for baptism,
But there was a question I needed to ask
I can't be a Sister
I can't be a Brother, the earthly Kingdom would prefer*

*Please come back lord god Jehovah
Please bring me back as a girl*

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