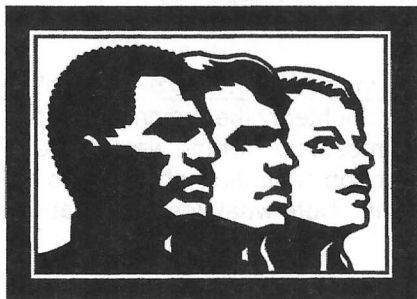


EUNUCHS

Who and What are they?



A Strawberry Mountain View
"Unique – Challenging – Controversial!"



"Berry Good News!"

by:

Frederick L. Pattison

EUNUCHS

When the Bible was being written **who and what were eunuchs?** According to Nelson's Illustrated Bible Dictionary: "A eunuch was a male servant of a royal household in Bible times. Such servants were often emasculated by castration as a precautionary measure, especially if they served the wives of a ruler's harem." See - 2 Kings 9:32.

Were eunuchs homosexuals? Not necessarily. Undoubtedly the majority of eunuchs were not homosexual. Some were made eunuchs through castration while others were born eunuchs. Note what Jesus said about eunuchs.

"For some are eunuchs because they were born that way; others were made that way by men; and others have renounced marriage because of the kingdom of heaven. The one who can accept this should accept it." (Matthew 19:12) NIV

The AMPLIFIED BIBLE renders it thusly,

"For there are eunuchs who have been born incapable of marriage, and there are eunuchs who have been made so by men, and there are eunuchs who have made themselves incapable of marriage for the sake of the kingdom of heaven. Let him who is able to accept this, accept it."

Christ said that some are born who are incapable of marriage. **What was Jesus saying?** Some people are born with a low sex drive with little or no interest for sexual intimacy, some are asexual. However, could it be that in this category were homosexuals who had little desire for sexual intimacy with people of the opposite gender? *Why do we say this?* To the **true homosexual** the idea of marrying a person of the opposite sex and having sexual

relations with that person can be repulsive, frightening and unfulfilling. Many homosexuals can function sexually in a heterosexual union, however this often becomes increasingly more difficult with the passing of time. As a pastor who spent many years ministering in the **GLBT community** I dealt with many people who had entered into heterosexual marriages knowing that their sexual orientation was homosexual but hoping, and often believing, that a heterosexual marriage will change them from homosexual to heterosexual. **This seldom happens!!** I am convinced that **an individual's sexual orientation is determined** either before birth while still in their mother's womb or shortly thereafter. Even though many heterosexual Christians reject this suggestion it makes sense. Few homosexuals can **recall** a time **when they chose their sexual orientation**. Most homosexuals know that they were attracted to people of their own gender from their earliest recollection.

When the Bible was being written it was assumed that everyone was heterosexual. **Everyone** was expected to marry and engage in sexual intimacy in order to procreate. However, it is obvious that there has **never been a time** when everyone was heterosexual. In biblical days some who were not predisposed to heterosexual sex **may have been classified as eunuchs**. Society would not have known exactly how or where a homosexual would fit in. From their birth such individuals might have appeared uninterested in engaging in sexual intimacy with members of the opposite sex. Of course, we have no proof whether or not this is the case. However, it seems to be a viable premise. It would be interesting to know if Jesus had this in mind when He referred to eunuchs. We will never know the answer to this on this side of heaven. Eunuchs who were slaves were made eunuchs by their masters in order to protect harems as a safety precaution

of their property. Throughout history there have been a small group of people who believe that celibacy is best for them in order that they can more effectively do the work of God. The apostle Paul was evidently one of those people. He did not oppose marriage for others but for himself he believed that he could be more effectively used by God as a single man. Monastic orders developed early in the history of the Church. Members of these orders took a vow of celibacy. Later in history this vow was enforced upon the clergy of the Roman Catholic Church. It is interesting to note that a vow of celibacy was *not* the rule of the early churches. Celibacy is **an unnatural state of living** for most people *unless* they have been given the gift of celibacy by God. The majority of people are meant to live in relationship with another person whether heterosexual or homosexual. The rule of celibacy that was placed upon members of the Roman priesthood was and continues to be one of many unscriptural additions that have come into the institutional Church through the centuries.

The Hebrew Scriptures [Old Testament] reveal that eunuchs were not permitted to enter the House of the Lord [Temple]. They were a despised lot. **What a similarity this is to homosexuals in our day**. Jesus changed the attitude toward eunuchs. We discover from reading Isaiah 56 where it was prophesied that the day would come when there would be **many eunuchs** who would come into belief of the Lord God with the barriers crumbling and with eunuchs welcomed in the Lord's House.

I wonder if the Ethiopian eunuch whom we read about in Acts 8 knew of the old prohibition against his kind as recorded in Deut. 23:1? I'm sure that he did know this prohibition. Nevertheless he had come to Jerusalem to worship. The Temple at that time was located in Jerusalem and was the place where **every good Jew**

was required to periodically come to worship.

Could it be that this Ethiopian eunuch was not a eunuch who was made a eunuch as described in the Deuteronomy passage? Could he have been a eunuch by choice?

This eunuch had become a believer in YHWH [Jehovah] the God of Israel. As he was returning to his homeland in Africa he was sitting in his chariot reading from the prophet **Isaiah chapter 53**. Phillip, a deacon-evangelist, was instructed by the Holy Spirit to share the Good News of the Gospel with this Ethiopian man. The result of Phillip's witness was that this eunuch accepted the message, received Christ into his heart and life and was baptized. Tradition says that Christianity was introduced into Ethiopia by this early convert to Christ.

Did Phillip have apprehensions in sharing the Gospel with one who would have been despised by 'the good' religious Jews of his day?

I do not believe that Phillip had any reservation in sharing the Gospel with this man from Ethiopia. Phillip had become a believer in Christ. His life and attitudes had been changed by the power of the Gospel. We know this to be true from the record in the Book of Acts recounting how Phillip shared the Gospel with the despised Samaritans. Whatever prohibitions and prejudices that Phillip had learned as a youth he evidently no longer held because he had become a follower of Christ. He had come to realize that in Christ all are one. What a powerful lesson for churches in our day to learn. We desperately need more Christians and churches to begin following the example set forth by Phillip. Christians need to learn that the Gospel is for all people not just for those who are **'our kind'** whoever that happens to be.

Am I saying this that the Ethiopian eunuch was a homosexual? **NO!** Scripture is silent. I **do not know** whether or not his sexual orientation was homosexual or heterosexual. However, I believe that undoubtedly some of the despised eunuchs were homosexual by normal, natural nature. In all likelihood some were born with a homosexual orientation. Their sexual orientation dictated that they did not or could not engage in a meaningful, fulfilling heterosexual relationship. The writers of Scripture **knew nothing of sexual orientation**. Remember, the writers were people of their time and culture. Also keep in mind that the writers of scripture were from the East, not the West. Therefore, they wrote from an Eastern mindset. It has only been rather recently in history that sexuality has been studied to any degree.

The Commission given by Christ to Christians to share the Gospel with all people remains in force. **See - Mark 16:15**. Homosexuals, heterosexuals, bisexuals and asexuals, all need to hear this Gospel that Christ is Savior and Lord **of all** who trust and believe in Him.

For a listing of free literature dealing with sexual orientation and being a Christian your inquiry is welcome.

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