

# Sodomy: The History of a Christian Biblical Myth (Bibleworld)

Michael Carden



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Sodomy is a study of the reception of Genesis 19, Sodom and Gomorrah, together with the parallel story in judges 19-21, the outrage at Gibeah, in both Christian and Jewish traditions from antiquity through to the Reformation period. The book sets out to detoxify the dominant homophobic interpretation of Genesis 19, in which Sodom and Gomorrah serve as an archetypal story of divine antipathy towards same sex love and desire, by showing it to be a Christian invention, emerging in the first few centuries of the Christian era. The Jewish traditions concerning Genesis 19, in which Sodom and Gomorrah are associated primarily with inhospitality, xenophobia and abuse of the poor, provide an alternative perspective on the story and one from which Christianity diverged. Together with the reception of the parallel Judges story, this Jewish understanding is employed to highlight the inconsistencies and ethical problems inherent in the dominant Christian homophobic interpretation of Genesis 19. By demonstrating the wide plurality of readings of this narrative over time, the book further relativises the Christian homophobic understanding. The book makes very important contributions to contemporary debates on sexuality in Christianity and Judaism. Sodomy will also serve as a valuable resource for a great many readers of both Genesis and Judges.



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