

# **Welcome to: - Bible House of Grace.**



*God, through His Son Jesus, provides eternal grace for our failures and human limitations.*

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## **Prejudice in the Church.**

**Same Sex Relationships.**

**Love, Grace and the Bible.**

**Homosexuals and Lesbians.**

(2013)

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The Bible not only reveals God's eternal Plans, Purposes and Promises,

But also shows how you can know God for yourself.

***Teach it, don't demand it.***

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Thank you for clicking on this topic, my aim in this study is not to change anyone's mind to a particular view, but rather to dispel some of the antipathy and hostility there is toward those who love Christ, but happen to be born for whatever scientific or medical reason with a natural attraction to a partner of the same sex. Please take the time to read the title, "About the Author and Testimonies" to understand the motive and intent of my heart in writing these articles.

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## Prejudice in the Church.

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History shows that church teaching has not always been correct, religious leaders of Jesus generation (the chief priests, the Pharisees and scribes) rejected Christ. The Roman Emperor known as Constantine the Great and a selected group of Bishops in 325 AD., at the Council of Nicaea introduced many false doctrines into the Christian faith. The Catholic Church tried to crush the reformation and in turn many Lutherans rejected the Anabaptist movement. In the mid 1700's the Anabaptist (Baptists) returned the favour and persecuted the Methodists. The church splintered again in the 1800's over the issue of slavery and then again with the advent of the Holiness movement and the Baptism of the Holy Spirit (Azusa Street) these examples are only a few of the many.

Christian history is littered with many such stories of certain Christian believers within the global community of the Christian faith being ostracized and maligned by other church groups in the same global Christian community. These stories shine a spotlight on the truth that those born for whatever medical or scientific reason naturally attracted to another human of the same sex gender (homosexuals and lesbians) are not the first group to be ostracized and maligned by the church neither is it the first time leaders within the church have missed what is right.

Even today the global church is divided on a variety of doctrines, each one believing they are the only ones that have the truth and that they are the only true church, but the divisions and confusion are made even worse since within each Christians own local religious institution or organisation there are splits and schisms because one group holds a different view of the Bible to the other.

**Change, schisms and contention:** the pace of God's revelations has quickened over the past hundred years with each ensuing wave of revelation, the church buckles, bends and stretches, some invariably accept God's revelations while others shy away from the unfamiliar and stick close to the known. Change invariably causes strife and contention within the church and schisms within her leadership ranks. During such times of tumult and pain, the minority who have caught sight of this new thing invariably feel put upon, rejected, and even persecuted by the powers that be.

It is a sad fact that the great majority of people pass judgment on someone or something without knowing all the facts, they prejudge according to their preconceived idea, objection or complaint about someone or something. They don't examine all the evidence of both sides of an idea, a doctrine or an argument with an open mind. One of the reasons for this is that it takes courage to step out of one's own comfort zone and question what one has been taught. Fear or laziness is often what prevents people from moving into new dimensions and freedoms.

Sadly many in the church are prejudice, meaning they have formed beforehand an opinion often unfavourable and often ill-informed based on insufficient knowledge, irrational feelings, or inaccurate stereotypes that they are holding onto to, but sadder still is the fact some individuals and groups often have a dislike of something or somebody: an unfounded hatred, fear, or mistrust of a person or a group all based on insufficient knowledge. They prejudge and form an opinion about somebody or something in advance, this is a common mistake especially during difficult times.

Take for instance the religious leaders of Jesus generation (the chief priest the Pharisees and the scribes) these religious leaders had many preconceived ideas concerning the Messiah. One of these notions was that the Messiah would lead a great army and liberate Israel from their Roman oppressors. They believed the Messiah would then install them as the rightful leaders of God's new Kingdom. Instead Jesus' grand entrance into Jerusalem was on the back of a donkey, and His army consisted of women, children and men of little or no rank. Overthrowing the Romans was not one of Jesus goals, Jesus told the Jews to pay their taxes, and worse yet, to respect and pray for their Roman governors and as for installing the religious elite into leadership positions?

Jesus told them that to be the greatest they must be the servant of all. To top it off, instead of accolades, Jesus saved his harshest criticism for these same religious leaders calling them: -

- Whitewashed tombs (Matt. 23:27-28).
- Hypocrites who had neglected justice and love (Matt. 23:13) (Luke 11:42).

The religious leaders were not pleased they were not willing to accept a Messiah that didn't conform to the Messianic image they steadfastly believed in. Accepting Jesus would come at a high price for the religious leaders it meant letting go of the religious institutions, organisations and doctrines that they had spent lifetimes constructing. The chief priests Pharisees and the scribes were bound by pride, fear and greed they didn't want to question the very laws and doctrines that legitimized their power and authority. The final error the religious leaders committed was equating the salvation of Israel, not with obedience to God and acceptance of their Messiah the Christ, but with the preservation and continuation of their religious institutions as the following verses show: -

- The chief priests and the Pharisees gathered the Council and said, "What are we to do? For this man performs many signs. <sup>48</sup>If we let him go on like this, everyone will believe in him, and the Romans will come and take away both our place and our nation." <sup>49</sup>But one of them, Caiaphas, who was high priest that year, said to them, "You know nothing at all. <sup>50</sup>Nor do you understand that it is better for you that one man should die for the people, not that the whole nation should perish" (John 11:47-50).

You would think the Christian Jews would have learned their lesson from the Pharisees, but not so soon after Jesus' death and the arrival of the Holy Spirit, the Christian movement began to grow and expand. The problem was that more than just the Jews were getting saved. Many Gentiles and Samaritans were hearing the message of the cross and the Gospel and accepting Jesus Christ as well! What was the church supposed to do with these people? There was no love lost between the Jews and the Gentiles. Long standing cultural prejudices existed between the two groups. Religious doctrines only deepened this rift the following are three examples of the difficulties and problems the Jews and Gentiles faced.

1. The Jews believed that merely walking into a Gentile's home or eating a meal with them caused a Jew to be defiled and required the Jew to be ceremonially cleansed. Making the whole idea of conversion even harder to accept was the widely held belief that the Messiah was only coming to save the Jews. So why were the Gentiles being saved? Even more troubling! What was the church supposed to do with these new converts?

Many Christian Jews were concerned that if they accepted the Gentiles just as they were, they ran the risk of alienating their existing congregations, even worst they would be admitting to the world that they had misinterpreted the Lord's wishes concerning this matter since they had openly declared that Jesus had only come for the Jews! Not only would this cause a great deal of embarrassment to the Jews but it could raise some serious doubts concerning the validity of their leadership!

2. If anyone could be accepted into God's Kingdom what now was the role for the Jew? Were they still God's chosen people? The Gay Christian movement today is very similar to the story of the Gentiles and their grafting into and being accepted by the established church during the New Testament era. Christian leaders today face many of the same questions and issues the early apostles did. They wonder what to do with their established doctrine and the Gay Christian movement (those that are even aware of them) and question how to reconcile acceptance of men and woman who love the Lord Jesus Christ, are law abiding citizens and show kindness to others but for whatever medical or scientific reason have been born with an orientation and natural disposition toward people of the same sex gender (homosexuals and lesbians).
3. If homosexuals and lesbians are condemned to eternal death, then why are they being saved and how can the proliferation of spiritual gifts in Gay congregations be explained?

How should they address the homosexual lifestyle that seems unnatural and offensive to many? Should they require homosexuals to be celibate or should they be left alone? If Gays were welcomed into their churches how could it be done without alienating their existing congregations? The particular period of church's history during the New Testament era offers some valuable insights into the churches own situation today.

**For instance: -**

- How did the Gentiles deal with being rejected by the Jewish religious leaders back in Jerusalem?
- What did the Gentiles do during those long years before Jewish Christians finally accepted them?
- What caused the Jewish Christian community to finally accept them?
- What did the Gentiles do during this period to help their Jewish counterparts overcome their fears and prejudices?
- What caused Christian Jews to realize their mistake?
- What gave the Jews the courage to change their doctrine?
- How did the Jews unify the church during this ordeal and overcome their prejudices, misconceptions and fears concerning these outsiders?

Though the nation of Israel as a whole still remains blinded to the truth their Messiah came to them, many Jews did accept Jesus and fellowshiped with Gentile Christians in their home churches (there were no church buildings at the time of the apostles) and the church grew and multiplied throughout the villages, towns and cities amongst Jews and Gentiles. This should give those who love Christ and faithfully follow him who have been condemned and cast out of the church great comfort and strength since the Christian Jews and Christian Gentiles did eventually unite and together took the message of the bloodstained cross and the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ to the world.

Maybe looking at the path both sides took to reconciliation could be used as a roadmap for Christians today especially since it was not through force and violence or picket lines and protest marches, but through the following four things: -

1. Prayer and dedication to doing the good work God had given each group to perform.
2. Through the continued teaching of the message of the bloodstained cross and the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ
3. Through their lifestyle of love toward Jesus and lifestyle of compassion shown toward others.
4. Through their acceptance of others who followed Christ even though they themselves were not accepted as Christians.

It was by these four godly attitudes of love, mercy and grace that the Gentiles and the Jewish Christians overcame their prejudices and fears and carried the message of reconciliation to their communities and eventually back to the Christian church.

**The Bible is Silent:** the Bible is silent on people have been born with an orientation and natural disposition toward people of the same sex who are in a committed loving and caring relationship, devoted to God and the Lord Jesus Christ, are not breaking any laws and are showing kindness to others. Whenever the Bible condemns same sex relationships it has in focus heterosexual men and women who chose to be sexually active with each other. Maybe much like Roman and Greek orgies at the time of the apostles in which drunken men and women cavorted sexually together with each other (a practise common at that time).

Even today heterosexual men and women organise mixed sexual freedom parties in which nothing is taboo. Added to this immoral conduct is the reality that when Scripture speaks against same sex relationships it is almost always in the context of men and women who not only deny God, but actually hate Him and in the context of rape, violence, abuse rebellion and in many case the worship idols.

**Consider for a moment:** when we reject and condemn to eternal hell-fire those who are in a caring committed same sex relationship and love the Lord Jesus Christ and do-good simply because they are born with an orientation and disposition toward the same sex we maybe in danger of bringing judgment on ourselves. Especially since we all have dwelling within our fallen corrupted bodies our own particular sinful aberrations and dysfunctions so not one of us can stand before the Lord Jesus Christ and the Holiness of God and claim we are free of sin and not one of us could be saved without the washing and cleansing power of Christ's blood and God's abundant grace.

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I, like the Jews of old who had to work their way through adopting Gentiles into their midst and work out-together what that meant for each group, still have certain questions that I am working though myself and for that reason my aim in these articles is not to tell anyone what they should or should not believe, but simply present unbiased information that hopefully will help people who like myself were influenced by my generation to dehumanize homosexuals and lesbians and by certain church leaders to condemn everyone who was in a same sex relationship to condemnation and hell-fire.

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End.