

TRUTH & RIGHT

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PREJUDICED

Prejudiced thinking is around us everywhere. As much as we may try to fight it, we all have moments where it can creep into our own behavior. Sometimes even those who claim to be the most against it can even become guilty of passing judgment before having all the facts. One way we can often practice prejudiced behavior is in prejudging an individual predominantly based on the people they are associated with. As in everything else we seek to overcome, Jesus is our perfect example in fighting against a prejudiced mindset. The Pharisees and Sadducees were among the fiercest enemies that Jesus ever had, and were predominantly responsible for putting Him to death. And yet, it was a Pharisee, Nicodemus (Jn. 3:1; 7:45-50), who buried Jesus, along with Joseph of Arimathea, two men who were

not consenting to His death (Lk. 23:50-51; Jn. 7:50-51). Jesus treated Nicodemus with such respect (Jn. 3:1-21) and saw him as an individual for the qualities he had and not for the party of which he belonged. Another great example of this is Jesus calling a Pharisee to be one of His apostles after He had gone back to Heaven, the apostle Paul. Paul said he was a Pharisee who was descended from Pharisees (Philip. 3:5; Acts 23:6), and yet Jesus saw him for his individual qualities as one who could be counted as faithful. "I thank Christ Jesus our Lord, who has strengthened me, because He considered me faithful, putting me into service," 1 Timothy 1:12. One group of people with whom the Jews had virtually no dealings with was the Samaritans (Jn. 4:9), yet Jesus didn't make a distinction among them. On

one occasion, the Samaritans refused to receive Jesus and His disciples and denied them hospitality and lodging (Lk. 9:51-56), but that didn't stop Jesus from treating individual Samaritans with great respect. In a conversation with a Samaritan woman (Jn. 4:7-14), Jesus stated how eager He was to offer her a well of water springing up to eternal life, and on another occasion even made a Samaritan the hero in one of His stories (Lk. 10:30-37). Following His death, burial and resurrection and just preceding His ascension to Heaven, Jesus indicated how He wanted the gospel of salvation found in the blood He shed for sinners to be proclaimed throughout Samaria (Acts 1:8). Jesus showed He was interested in individual Samaritans and didn't judge the individual by the group.

Another group, the publicans, who were tax-collectors, were hated by the people because of their involvement with being taxed by a foreign government as well as their reputation for dishonesty in the amount the people were being taxed, getting rich off the backs of the poor. Amazingly, Jesus actually called one of the publicans to be an apostle, Matthew (Mt. 9:9), who would end up writing the gospel of the same name. On His way to Jerusalem to be crucified, Jesus even stopped

along the way to visit in the home of Zaccheus, a chief tax-collector who climbed into a sycamore tree to see Him (Lk. 19:1-10). Even though the crowd couldn't believe Jesus would actually be the guest in the home of one they saw as a sinner, Jesus looked at Zaccheus as an individual, rather than judging him for the group he belonged to. This is what we must fight as well. Many different groups have a variety of unfavorable reputations, yet, we must, like Jesus, look beyond these associations and treat individuals with respect for their individual qualities. On the reverse side of this, we must also be extremely careful about belonging to a group that has a positive reputation and believing that we may get away with having a less than honorable character and still be seen for the qualities of the group. An individual may belong to a congregation of Christians who are known for their good reputation and yet have a sinful character, but don't count on being able to get by with the good reputation attributed to the entire group. Just as Jesus is able to see the good qualities of individuals despite the unfavorable reputation of the group they belong to, Jesus is just as able to see an individual's sinful heart and character despite the

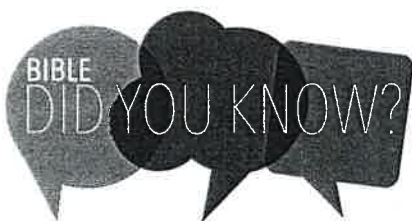
favorable reputation of the good congregation they belong to.

Jesus spoke very highly and favorably of the church at Thyatira. "I know your deeds, and your love and faith and service and perseverance, and that your deeds of late are greater than at first," Revelation 2:19. And yet He spoke of one woman there whose sinful character was seen by Him and called upon her to repent, despite belonging to a congregation whose honorable reputation was praised by the Lord (Rev. 2:18-29). God sees us as individuals, and we must see others as individuals as well. Don't judge a person by the color of their skin. Don't judge a person by their nationality. Don't judge a person by the amount of money they have. Jesus said you will know them by their fruits (Mt. 7:20), and that is how we may avoid a prejudiced mindset as well. "He who gives an answer before he hears, it is folly and shame to him," Prov. 18:13. "But the LORD said to Samuel, 'Do not look at his appearance or at the height of his stature, because I have rejected him; for God sees not as man sees, for man looks at the outward appearance, but the LORD looks at the heart,'" 1 Sam. 16:7. "For by one Spirit we

were all baptized into one body, whether Jews or Greeks

whether slaves or free, and we were all made to drink of one Spirit," 1 Cor. 12:13. "I solemnly charge you in the presence of God and of Christ Jesus and of His chosen angels, to maintain these principles without bias, doing nothing in a spirit of partiality," 1 Tim. 5:21. "There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free man, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus," Gal. 3:28.

-- Daniel Ruegg



"Do not be envious of evil men, nor desire to be with them; for their minds devise violence, and their lips talk of trouble. By wisdom a house is built, and by understanding it is established; and by knowledge the rooms are filled with all precious and pleasant riches. A wise man is strong, and a man of knowledge increases power. For by wise guidance you will wage war, and in abundance of counselors there is victory."

Prov. 24:1-6

People, Places, and Things of the **BIBLE**



Son of Immer Inscription Found

An enigmatic sculpture of a king's head dating back nearly 3,000 years has set off a modern-day mystery caper as scholars try to figure out whose face it depicts. The 2-inch sculpture is an exceedingly rare example of figurative art from the Holy Land during the 9th century B.C. — a period associated with biblical kings. Exquisitely preserved but for a bit of missing beard, nothing quite like it has been found before. While scholars are certain the stern bearded figure donning a golden crown represents royalty, they are less sure which king it symbolizes, or which kingdom he may have ruled. Archaeologists unearthed the diminutive figurine in 2017 during excavations at a site called Abel Beth Maacah, located just south of Israel's border with Lebanon, near the modern-day town of Metula. Nineteenth-century archaeologists identified the site, then home to a village called Abil al-Qamh, with the similarly named city mentioned in the Book of Kings. During the 9th century B.C., the ancient town was situated in a liminal zone between three regional powers: the Aramean kingdom based in Damascus to the east, the Phoenician city of Tyre to the west, and the Israelite kingdom, with its capital in Samaria to the south. Kings 1 15:20 mentions Abel Beth Maacah in a list of cities attacked by the Aramean King Ben Hadad in a campaign against the Israelite kingdom.

"This location is very important because it suggests That the site may have shifted hands between these Politics, more likely between Aram-Damascus and Israel," said Hebrew University archaeologist Naama Yahalom-Mack, who has headed the joint dig with

California's Azusa Pacific University since 2013. Yahalom-Mack's team was digging through the floor of a massive Iron Age structure in the summer of 2017 when a volunteer who arrived for the day struck pay dirt. The layer where the head was found dates to the 9th century B.C., the epoch associated with the rival biblical kingdoms of Israel and Judah. The royal figurine is made of faience, a glass-like material that was popular in ancient Egypt and the Near East.

