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Are Christians Misogynists?

The Bible society, in the run-up to this year (2020), did some research into people's thoughts about the Bible.

Amongst secular society as a whole the Bible society found that *".....In the Lumino research, the most common words that people associated with the Bible were Outdated and Contradictory. Other negative words, though less common, were Judgmental, Homophobic and Anti-women."* but the research found that many people did believe the Bible and were interested in what the Bible had to say.

To answer these thoughts I have already written about the ideas that "**Judgemental**" and "**Homophobic**" to show clearly from the Christian perspective, that in both cases that they are NOT.

Now I tackle the subject of the idea that Christians are **misogynists** (woman haters).

To be a Christian means that we believe in Jesus Christ and so that is what the word "CHRISTian" means.

The difficulty we begin with is that *all* of society, many years ago, was pro-men and anti-women. Take, for example, in Britain we find that titled nobility were male and only the oldest son could inherit. Henry VIII was so completely desperate to have a son that he was clearly disappointed that Henry VIII's first children were girls.

Edward VI was eventually born (Henry VIII having discarded several wives brutally in the process) and, when Henry died, it was Edward who inherited the throne and not his elder sisters at all.

Edward's elder sisters only got the throne when Edward himself had died and there was NO male heir.

So we live in society that, for centuries, treated women as lesser people than men. So it is that in the Old Testament we discover a society that had the idea that women were often not as important as men.

In the Old Testament we have the history of Israel in which on many occasions Israel does not understand God, gets many things wrong, and even worships other gods. For Israel it



is a difficult time of discovery. There are many occasions in the Old Testament which shows a dismissive attitude to women and often showing women treated almost as property. It is in the New Testament that we discover God on earth when Jesus came to earth.

To be a Christian means that we believe in Jesus Christ and so that is what the word "CHRISTian" means. So any Christian needs to see what Jesus Christ says and does.

Let us begin with the story of Martha and Mary in Luke's gospel account of Jesus Christ. We find the section at the end of Luke chapter 10.

³⁸ As Jesus and his disciples were on their way, he came to a village where a woman named Martha opened her home to him. ³⁹ She had a sister called Mary, who sat at the Lord's feet listening to what he said. ⁴⁰ But Martha was distracted by all the preparations that had to be made. She came to him and asked, "Lord, don't you care that my sister has left me to do the work by myself? Tell her to help me!"

⁴¹ "Martha, Martha," the Lord answered, "you are worried and upset about many things, ⁴² but few things are needed—or indeed only one. Mary has chosen what is better, and it will not be taken away from her."

Now the words do seem a bit unfair towards Martha, but let us look at what it actually says. We begin looking at verse 38.

Firstly, we learn later that Lazarus also lived in the house, but it was NOT the house of Lazarus (the man) but the house of Martha (the woman), so straight-away it acknowledges the importance of Martha's role.

Secondly, in verse 39, it says something very significant:

³⁹ She had a sister called Mary, who sat at the Lord's feet listening to what he said.

For many of us we miss the point of what this actually means.

It was the practice at the time (about 30 AD) that ONLY men sat at a teacher's feet and listened, women were simply NOT there. Yet, here, Martha is sitting equally with the men listening to the teacher. So we discover that Martha is treated by Jesus in exactly the same way as any other man.

Therefore, when in verse 42, Jesus says:

Mary has chosen what is better, and it will not be taken away from her."

Jesus is emphasising his approval of Mary sitting equally amongst the men (the disciples) and wanting to hear and understand Jesus' teaching.

Even before the passage about Martha and Mary Luke's gospel already tells us how important women were to Jesus. In Luke chapter 8 we are told about women accompanying Jesus, and not just men.

¹ After this, Jesus travelled about from one town and village to another, proclaiming the good news of the kingdom of God. The Twelve were with him, ² and also some women who had been cured of evil spirits and diseases: Mary (called Magdalene) from whom seven demons had come out; ³ Joanna the wife of Chuza, the manager of Herod's household; Susanna; and many others. These women were helping to support them out of their own means.

Clearly women were equally amongst men following Jesus, it wasn't just the disciples.

In Matthew's gospel at chapter 27, we are told at the crucifixion:

⁵⁵ Many women were there, watching from a distance. They had followed Jesus from Galilee to care for his needs.

So women had followed Jesus from Galilee.

The resurrection, the most important message of all was given to women first.

In Luke chapter 24 we are told:

*¹⁰ Now it was Mary Magdalene and Joanna and Mary the mother of James **and the other women** with them who told these things to the apostles,*

So there were indeed many women equally amongst the followers of our Lord Jesus Christ and not just the disciples at all.

Given when the Gospel documents were written down that we are often told the names of men, and yet women are not named, we must acknowledge that these are very early documents, and for many, many years our own documents in Europe did exactly the same.

The Last supper at which Jesus celebrated communion for the first time with the disciples was a Passover supper. There are parts of the Passover supper that can only be done by women as well as parts by a child. Women (and children), therefore must have been at the Last Supper, yet neither women nor children are mentioned.

St Paul writes in 1 Corinthians chapter 11:

²³ For I received from the Lord what I also passed on to you: the Lord Jesus, on the night he was betrayed, took bread, ²⁴ and when he had given thanks, he broke it and said, 'This is my body, which is for you; do this in remembrance of me.' ²⁵ In the same way, after supper he took the cup, saying, 'This cup is the new covenant in my blood; do this, whenever you drink it, in remembrance of me.'

That Last Supper was a Passover Supper so women were there as well as men.

In the Christian view we are all created equal and we care for others and welcome others including strangers and foreigners. Christians do, however, expect people to become better (to constantly change for the better).

Right at the very beginning of the Bible in Genesis chapter 1 at verse 27 we are told:

*So God created mankind in his own image,
in the image of God He created them;
male and female He created them.*

That fundamental concept, that we are all created in God's image, is then used throughout the Bible. If we are all created in God's image then we are all equal and all equally valuable. We are all also created male and female and both are equal as they are both the image of God.

So, no, Christians are required to NOT be misogynists.

St Paul wrote to us in Galatians Chapter 3:

*²⁸ There is neither Jew nor Gentile, neither slave nor free, **nor is there male and female**, for you are all one in Christ Jesus.*

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