



## Lesson 81

### LGBTQ+ Rights

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The great test for our time is not the Sabbath. There were three major sins which brought about three curses; those curses have caused problems all through history. Beginning in the alpha history of Modern Israel God has been restoring humanity by removing one curse at a time. First was the curse of racism, in the time of the Millerites and the Civil War the issue of racial equality began to be dealt with. The next curse to be fixed was false worship. Shortly after October 1844 the truth of the Sabbath was opened up, and in the 1888 history worship was a major subject. The first curse to affect humanity- and the last curse to be addressed- was and is sexism. Of course racism and worship are still issues, but sexism is the great test for our time. Sexism is gender inequality. In today's lesson we are going to look a little at a subject that falls under that heading: homophobia. We will look at the history of LGBTQ+ rights specifically beginning in France, then we will see how they are being addressed by the main players today. Homophobia is a part of sexism and as such it is part of our great test.

## **The 1260**

### **LGBTQ rights in the 1260**

Discrimination against LGBTQ people can be traced back a long time. In the 1260 the Catholic church was in control; they combined church and state which made them even more able to force their beliefs on people. One of the things they hated most in the 1260 was homosexuality, and they did what they could to criminalize it. In 314 AD, the Catholic Council of Ancyra took place. While not during the 1260, the rules issued from the council became the standard against homosexuality that was carried out during the 1260. In the 6th century, which was around the beginning of the 1260, two bishops were punished for "homosexual practices". They were both tortured and one was exiled. The Emperor of Rome decreed in favor of such punishments which resulted in many LGBTQ deaths. In 693 AD another council decreed that LGBTQ clergy and laymen would be punished with degradation, exile, or 100 lashes. The Council of Paris in 829 AD went further and endorsed the death penalty. In later years homosexuality began to be denounced as one of the worst sins. So we see in the 1260 LGBTQ people were persecuted and put to death because they were gay: they had no rights.

# The French Revolution

## The Bible's perspective

“And I will give power unto my two witnesses, and they shall prophesy a thousand two hundred and threescore days, clothed in sackcloth. And when they shall have finished their testimony, the beast that ascendeth out of the bottomless pit shall make war against them, and shall overcome them, and kill them. And their dead bodies shall lie in the street of the great city, which spiritually is called Sodom and Egypt, where also our Lord was crucified.” Revelation 11:3,7,8. The two witnesses represent the Old and New Testament. The prophesying happened during the 1260. After they prophesied, they were killed- or tossed aside. Their “dead bodies” remained in the streets of the city called Sodom and Egypt: France. The application of Revelation 11 is the French Revolution when the Bible was thrown aside. The Bible's perspective of the French Revolution was that it was a bad thing.

## Our perspective

In describing France during the time of the revolution Ellen G. White calls it a “power of satanic origin” (The Great Controversy 269.3). From the Bible's perspective, that Ellen White is referencing, it is also evil. But in the perspective of this study France is not evil- it is good. As we know most of the known world was under the control of the Papacy, which was conservative, and that included France. The Catholic church restricted the freedoms of everybody and the people of France finally got tired of it. That is why the French Revolution happened: the people were tired of the dictatorships of the monarchy and the Catholic church- which worked together in a union of church and state to support each other. In the revolution they killed both civil and religious leaders. They formed a new government and a new “religion”: The Goddess of Reason. They separated the institutions of church and state. The Papacy had interpreted the Bible to further their own ends and used the state to persecute anyone who disagreed with them. So when Revolutionary France kicked out the Papacy they kicked out the Bible too. We now know that many things the Bible says don't apply today and we need to apply what is written to our time. In a sense France did the same thing: they got rid of the Papacy's distorted and literal interpretation of the Bible and adopted reason. They decided to think reasonably about things and not listen to the Bible. In our story Revolutionary France did the right thing. They destroyed religion (the Catholic church's religion) and their Bibles (the Catholic church's Bible) because they were tired of the dictatorship of the Papacy in the 1260. As we will see, getting rid of religion caused other changes in France.

## The French Penal Code

The French Penal code ended persecution of LGBTQ+ people. In the 1260 the Catholic church persecuted LGBTQ+ people, and while they could enforce it in France, the French monarchy enforced it without the Catholic church's help. Despite this, there were still some people that were openly gay but lived because they were wealthy and powerful. The French Revolution began in 1789. The French people were tired of their controlling and elite-favoring government and of the Catholic church. They wanted a new government that treated people equally and didn't interfere with their daily lives. As a result, when they overthrew the justice system, they had to write a new penal code, which is the list of punishments for every crime. The French Penal Code was written in 1791 and was included in the new French Constitution. The French Penal Code, like the people wanted, didn't interfere with “personal” matters, and thus didn't mention homosexuality, decriminalizing it. The French Penal Code and the new government transformed France into a

more equal country: the people burned Bibles in the streets signifying their rejection of the Catholic church. Although people didn't just accept LGBTQ+ people immediately, the beginning was in place. So the rights of LGBTQ+ people went from not acknowledged in the 1260, to acknowledged in the French Revolution.

## **Napoleon's Penal Code**

Napoleon Bonaparte passed another penal code on June 3, 1810: The French Penal Code of 1810. "The new Penal Code was to replace various laws adopted during the first ten years of the Revolution, the backbone of which was the Penal Code of 1791 and the Code of Offences and Penalties of 1795. An important feature of these two texts, which came after centuries of relentless severity, was to have fixed penalties to keep the role of judge strictly distributive, therefore eliminating the dangers of arbitrary sentencing. With the 1810 Penal Code, however, the sentences were given a set range, letting the judges decide more freely on the severity of the punishment. Like the 1791 Penal Code, the 1810 Penal Code did not include 'imaginary' crimes such as heresy, sodomy or blasphemy, thereby legalizing them by omission." *Wikipedia*. Like the penal code before it, the penal code of 1810 said that sodomy, homosexuality, was not a crime; it did not include punishments for religious crimes.

# LGBTQ+ Rights Around the World

## LGBTQ+ rights in other countries

Although France decriminalized homosexuality in 1791 other countries did not follow soon after. As France expanded its empire though, it imposed its penal code on those new territories. Later in the 1800s a few smaller countries started to decriminalize homosexuality like Brazil in 1830. In 1896, a German writer coined the word “homosexual” in a pamphlet speaking against its decriminalization in another European country. In the 1900s Hitler and the Nazi government persecuted and killed homosexual people as well as Jews, putting them all in concentration camps. Later, in 1967, England and Wales decriminalized homosexuality, Canada did in 1969, Russia in 1993, the last major part of Australia in 1997, and officially the whole United States in 2003. But decriminalizing homosexuality isn’t the only form of rights for LGBTQ+ people. The countries that decriminalized homosexuality have not all legalized gay marriage (the United States did officially in 2015); countries also don’t have the same rules for transgender people. Over this time LGBTQ+ people have also begun to speak up more and demand that they be treated fairly. Rights for the LGBTQ+ community have only really begun to change after the French Revolution when they decided to be reasonable.

## Stonewall Riots

In 1969 LGBTQ+ equality riots began. In New York, discrimination against LGBTQ+ people was everywhere, except in gay bars and clubs. LGBTQ+ people gathered there where they could socialize without trouble. New York made it illegal for bars to sell gay people alcohol, but some gay bars did anyway; causing them to be repeatedly harassed by police. One of those bars was Stonewall Inn. It became popular because it welcomes all LGBTQ+ people and though you were supposed to bring your own alcohol, they served it anyway. Police raids still took place, but the police usually warned the Inn first, which gave them time to hide the illegal activity. But one day, on June 28, 1969, police raided the Inn without warning. The people in the Inn and neighborhood residents that hung around to watch became more and more angry as the police violently handled individuals. People started throwing stuff at the police and eventually a riot began. These Stonewall riots lasted five days and sparked gay rights movements in the United States and around the world. This is when LGBTQ+ people began to get their rights acknowledged, and has led to the amount of equality they have today.

# Three Different Views

## Protestantism's view

Conservative Evangelical Protestants are anti-LGBTQ+: homophobic. Even if they don't directly say it, their actions prove that. One example is from 2016; a transgender woman was fired from her job, where she worked for six years, two weeks after her employer found out she was transgender. They were sued and at first argued that transgender rights weren't protected. When that failed, they said employing her would be against their religious beliefs. But firing one transgender woman is one thing, and passing anti-LGBTQ+ laws for everyone is another thing. Former president Donald Trump banned transgender people from the military. He issued a regulation that says LGBTQ+ construction workers could be fired because they were LGBTQ+. He created a religious discrimination division that's sole purpose was to defend healthcare workers that refused patients service just because they were gay. He told four H programs (youth organizations) to remove a policy which welcomed LGBTQ+ youth, and fired the officials who wouldn't agree. And to top it all off, Trump laughed while he said former vice-president Mike Pence wanted to hang all gays (so yes, sometimes they do say it). Those are just a few examples of the anti-LGBTQ+ bills that have been passed or things that have been done.

## The Pope's view

The Papacy is the counterfeit of this Movement. As a counterfeit it can look good but it is really not, if it really were good it would not be a counterfeit: it would be the real thing. The Catholic church under Pope Francis claims to believe in equality. But while he may talk about equality he will not implement true equality. For example, some liberal Catholics want women to be able to have more rights in the Catholic church, like being able to be ordained as deacons. Pope Francis says that the work of women should be appreciated and that they should have more formal roles in the church but he is not implementing equality. In January, he formalized women's ability to have some small roles (like reading the Bible during Mass) that they were already occupying in some countries. Pope Francis is more accepting of the LGBTQ+ community than any other Pope but he does not believe that they should have the rights other people have. He has said that they should have rights from governments; he also said that he had no right to judge homosexuals. But he made a decree this year saying that homosexual people's marriages could not be blessed by a Catholic priest. He believes that gay marriage is a sin. He doesn't like transgender people either- he said that transgender people were like nuclear weapons: they are not natural. While he might say some nice things, like LGBTQ+ people deserve rights he won't really depart from old conservative Catholic doctrine. The equality that the Catholic church of today promotes is not true equality.

## Our view

We don't have the same view of LGBTQ+ people as the Catholic church or Protestantism. Even though the Catholic church isn't as rejecting of LGBTQ+ people as conservative Protestantism, they still don't treat them equally. We have a position similar to revolutionary France. LGBTQ+ inequality is an invention of the Papacy from the 1260, and we aren't to go along with it just like we don't go along with Sunday observance or baptism through sprinkling. LGBTQ+ people have the same rights as everyone else and should be treated that way: with equality. We don't discriminate against race or gender therefore we don't discriminate against LGBTQ+ people.

# LGBTQ+ Rights Today

## LGBTQ+ status in 2021

Although it's not as bad as it used to be, the LGBTQ+ community still faces much discrimination. Although there were decisions like the whole territory of European Union member states being a freedom zone for LGBTQ+ members, the bill passed in Angola that decriminalizes homosexuality, and the reversal of Trump's law that allowed healthcare companies to deny people service just because they're gay, there is still discrimination. For example, in Arkansas, a bill was passed in April that bans transgender healthcare to people under 18 years old. Half of all LGBTQ+ people say they face negative psychological impacts because of discrimination. There are also bills being introduced, proposing to make LGBTQ+ citizens second class citizens. According to the amount of anti-LGBTQ+ laws already signed and the ones being prepared to be signed, 2021 is on the path to become the worst year in modern history for the LGBTQ+ community.

## In summary:

France destroyed the Bible in the French Revolution and started to think reasonably: in this lesson that is a good thing.



That made them decriminalize homosexuality in the penal code they made in 1791 and in the penal code of Napoleon in 1810.



## LGBTQ+ RIGHTS

It took a while for other countries to catch up and even today LGBTQ+ people don't have full rights.

The Stonewall riots of 1969 were the beginnings of a movement for LGBTQ+ rights.

Conservative Protestants don't like people from the LGBTQ+ community.

The Catholic church is a counterfeit so while Pope Francis is kind to LGBTQ+ people he doesn't believe in full equality.

This Movement believes that LGBTQ+ people are on a full equality with everyone else.

Conservative Protestants are currently doing all they can to not allow the LGBTQ+ community all the rights they themselves have.



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[youthprophecygroup@gmail.com](mailto:youthprophecygroup@gmail.com)

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