

# [It religion and death are the main subjects](https://assignbuster.com/it-religion-and-death-are-the-main-subjects/)

It is natural to formprejudice and sin by being deceptive to your own true self identity; it is apart of human heritage.

Flannery O’Conner, the former writer and short story essayist, expresses this idea in hershort story titled “ A Good Man is Hard to Find”. Prejudice, religion and death arethe main subjects of the short story, in which she strongly addresses not only humansfutile attempts to use religion to escape death but also how human identity is definedexternally and easily manipulated. Similary, Shirley Jackson in her short story” The Lottery” draws on death as anextreme metoraphical example of how societies get rid of innocent people forabsurd prejudicial reasons. The lottery describes where society leads to ifhumans continue to follow the masses and in group selection, by not questioningtheir prejudices and long followed traditions critically. In a sense, Shirley’sstory begins where Conner’s story ends, a fact that account for both thesimilarities and differences between the two works. The two essays can becompared on the basis of their subjects, and their use of common ideas.

So what is prejudice orsin and how might it lead to death? In “ A Good Man is Hard to Find” prejudicecan be metaphorically equated to sin as a preconceived opinion the grandmotherhad about the “ Misfit” that was not based on reason or actual experience. The grandmother had prejudiced beliefs and feelings whichcaused her to act in a prejudiced way because she was conforming to what isregarded as normal within the social comfort of the group she belonged to. Inresponse to this socialization, it is interesting to note the use of the word “ MISFIT” the grandmother used to describe the killer. Moreover, being a “ lady” wasimportant for the grandmother’s self identity. She asks if she looked like alady so that the MISFIT wouldn’t shoot her which reflects the predjuce and hypocrisythat she still relied on for external justification and fulfilled it to a certaindegree through her appearance and class. Again, the emphasis on status, prejudice and wealth is treated as a sin and is ultimately meaningless when comparedto the final context of death when the Misfit shoots her. Similarly, “ The Lottery” displays how prejudice and the pressure towards a traditional group not onlyintensifies pre-existing sentiments, but also begins cultivating a deep seatedtribalism.

By using main characters whose snobbishand selfish personalities rigidly conform and reject those they consider to beinferiors, we go through the entire process of men in the society picking namesfrom the blackbox. Ironically, we never know what the lottery is about or anykind of function. The sinful act of killing innocent Tessie and causing herdeath as she protests the decision is still being carried through as the remainingmembers of the society have learned to generalize and judge only according toone specific experience. Those who are persecuted become “ marked” because of atrait or characteristic that is out of their control— for example Tessie’s namebeing picked out of random chance from the blackbox. Though these works, inthese ways, share some topics and aspects, their ideas are distinct andindividual regarding religion.

Once the grandmother’s prejudiced sentiment wason the scene, the stage was set for the arrival of religion to be referenced duringher death scene. As she realizes the Misfit is going to shoot her, she beginsto beg the MISFIT to pray to Jesus almost as if this can clear the MISFIT’sconscience of all the evil deeds he has committed to be saved by god’s grace. On the other hand, in the “ Lottery” there is no direct reference to religionbut the lottery itself serves as a symbol of sacrificial killing. Similarly, the black box serves as a symbol of omen on who will die that day and thesociety’s eagerness to kill using stones as some sort of a holy ritual thateverybody needed to take part in to glorify and sanctify themselves.

On a balance, both the differences and similaritiesbetween the stories strive to make their audiences make a universal commitmentto the unity of humanity against prejudice or sin. Reference: O’Connor, Flannery. “ A Good Man is Hard To Find.” 1983. Jackson, Shirley.

“ The Lottery.” 1991.