

CHRIST, NOT RELIGION, SAVES

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"Jesus said unto him, Thomas, because thou hast seen me thou hast believed: blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed. And many other signs truly did Jesus in the presence of His disciples, which are not written in this book. But these are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God: and that believing ye might have life through His name." John 20: 29-31.

I am always thrilled that Christ is a person and not just a tradition or belief. He went to the cross and died in our place so that our sin could be forgiven. Do you have personal faith in Christ, who because you received Him has become your Lord? There are millions of religious people that have no knowledge of sins forgiven, and a guarantee of Heaven. Many in Jesus day practiced religion, but hated Him because He exposed their religion. I too want to expose religion and present Christ, the only sure way of salvation. **(1). Religion Majors In Works:** *"Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy He saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost."* Titus 3:5. Religion is all wrapped up in the doing, and missing the believing. From the day of the Pharisees, who argued with Christ, to the present; the way of religion is based on works. It is tradition, ritual, and ceremony. Saying the catechism, being baptized, and receiving communion, are all acts of their faith, but the heart is what matters. Many thousands praxes some religion, but true salvation depends on accepting Christ as ones' Saviour. **(2). Religion Doesn't Change Hearts:** *"The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked: who can know it."* Jer. 17:9. Jesus warned the Pharisees all they were doing was washing the outside of the cup and dish but their inner parts were full of

greed and wickedness. Having religious credentials and holding church ceremonies, seldom affect the heart of those who profess so much by their actions. Jesus himself warned much of the deception of religion, and gave the Word of truth. *"Jesus answered and said unto him, verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God."* John 3:3. Only the shed blood of the Son of God can change the hearts of men. Man is not saved by works, but by the work of Christ on the cross in our behalf. Religion can require much of those who follow it, but fail to bring about the salvation of the devotee. **(3). Religion Makes Much Of Little:** Jesus said *"But woe unto you, Pharisees! For you tithe mint and rue and all manner of herbs, and pass over love and the judgment and the love of God: these ought ye to have done, and not to leave the other undone."* Luke 11:42. The making of religious rules does not save the soul. Light all the candles, count all the beads, chant all the prayers and you still don't have salvation. So much of the tradition of religion gives no assurance of salvation. It majors in little practices instead of a genuine trust in the finished work of Christ. Its many acts by its' adherents masks the true way of redemption. Lots of little things, while they ignore the big one, how to be right with God. **(4) Religion Offers The Approval Of Men:** *"All their works they do to be seen of men."* Matt. 23:5. Great religions like to show their pomp and ceremonies with great glorification of their leaders. They make bond slaves of their followers, advocating requirements they do not keep themselves. They seek for the gain of the applause of men and positions of authority, but give no proven way of the sure redemption of the soul. They build great edifices, wave their artifacts in processions, and have little to offer to needy mankind. The emphasis should not be on sweeping acts of professed piety, but true love for the needs of others. True faith seeks the approval of God and not of man. At the

great judgment, approval by God will be what matters for eternity. (5). **Religion Makes Hypocrites Of Its' Followers:** "*Woe to you scribes and Pharisees, hypocrits! For you are like graves which are not seen, and the men that walk over them are not aware of them.*" Luke 11:44. The leaders of every religion climb up the ladder of respectability, relying on their writings and words, to lift them to higher heights of attainment, in the eyes of man, We all like to appear good in our daily lives, but what about our time on the job and among our worldly friends. Are we spiritual at home, or is that just an act put on for church? Does your testimony ring hollow to your wife who knows the real you. Religion puts on a front for all to see, but covers the truth in many ways. If your faith is not real and exciting you may be a victim of religion. (6). **Religion Makes Life Harder:** "*And He said, Woe unto you also, ye lawyers for ye lade men with burdens grievous to be born, and ye yourselves touch not the burdens with one of your fingers.*" Luke 11:46. In this verse Jesus was speaking also to the scribes and Pharisees who required sacrifice on followers but did nothing themselves. Religion cannot change a heart, but seeks to control people with man made religious laws and expectations, which the leaders do not keep themselves. It is hard to be taught a religion that gives no guarantee of Heaven. Often the adherents are taught they cannot understand the Bible themselves. No sure hope of Heaven, nor a blessed eternity with God is taught. It is hard to praxes a religion for ones lifetime, filled with question and eternity so bleak. It honestly gives little to live for. (7). **Religions Makes It Easy To Be Deceived:** "*The light of the body is the eye: therefore when thy eye is single, thy whole body also is full of light; but when thine eye is evil, thy body also is full of darkness.*" The Pharisees built great tombs and were proud to honor the prophets of the past. However Jesus said "*Woe unto you! for ye build the sepulchers of the prophets, and your*

fathers killed them." Luke 11:47. Religionists don't see themselves as the Christ rejecting people they are. If you are religious and have no hope of eternity with God then you have been deceived. You need to find someone to explain the simple gospel truth and accept Christ as Saviour now. I think further (8). **Religion Hides The Truth:** "*Jesus said unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father but by me.*" John 14:6 Deliberate blindness to the truth causes all religionists to ignore Christ as the only way to heaven. Many false faiths teach doing the best you can for a life of works, and uncertainty. with little future hope. Church membership, baptism and all the man made ordinances will never save your soul. These and many other things religion propagates, all confuse and cover the only true way of salvation. Remember Jesus is the only way! Lastly (9). **Religion Leads Converts Astray:** Jesus said, "*Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you travel land and sea to win one proselyte, and when he is won you make him twice as much a son of hell as yourselves.*" Matt. 23:15. These are strong but honest words from the lips of the Saviour. People can be converted to false doctrines and with blind eyes defend their blind leaders. Followers of false religion put themselves under a system of rules and traditions that fail to bring peace. Religion is good only when it reveals the tragedy of a sinners birth. Then shows God so loved that He gave His son as mans only way of redemption. Christ alone can forgive sin, and you must be sure you have trusted Him for your salvation. Remember "*Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy He saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost. Which He shed on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Saviour.*" Titus 3:5&6. Don't be fooled by religious trappings but be saved by faith in Gods' provision for the sure salvation of your soul. Amen!