

The Son of God versus the Religion of Men

When Jesus Christ lived on this earth 2000 years ago, Judaism, a religion based on God's word in the Old Testament, was well established. One would think that those belonging to Judaism would have fully welcomed the Messiah; but surprisingly they not only rejected Him, but persecuted and crucified Him. What went wrong?

When God gave the Holy Scriptures to His people, His intention was not for them to establish a religion, a system of worship with all the laws and ordinances, rituals, activities, and traditions. God wanted them to know and enjoy Him, and to establish a personal relationship and fellowship with Him. Unfortunately, God's people turned the Scriptures into a religious system and were so zealous of their outward religious practices that they failed to recognize Jesus Christ as the Messiah, the living God Himself, who came to be their Savior. Instead of welcoming the Messiah, they crucified Him on the basis of their religious laws. Jesus called the Pharisees of that time hypocrites because they appeared to be so lawful and good, yet they were completely corrupt inwardly.

Has it ever occurred to you that after 2000 years of Christian traditions, Christianity may be doing the same thing with Jesus Christ? Some Christians fulfill their duty by going to church once a week, singing in the choir, even doing charitable works and missionary activities. Yet how many really know and experience the living Christ in their every-day life? Christianity has become a religious institution, founded on God's word in the New Testament, but now full of man's own teachings and interpretations of the Bible, rituals, outward practices and traditions, resulting in countless conflicts and divisions throughout history. Man's influence and divisive results are contrary to God's living Word. They misrepresent the person and the glory of Jesus Christ and what He wants to accomplish today. It is not a surprise that so many are turned off, or even repelled by what they see today in organized Christianity. They identify Jesus Christ with the many hypocritical practices of historical Christianity and consequently reject Christ. But God is not offering you a system of theology with many outward practices and rules. He wants to give you His own beloved Son, Jesus Christ, to be your Savior and life and to experience a new life in Christ.

God created man for His glory – not for a religion. From the very beginning He wanted man to become His sons by partaking of His divine life. The almighty and true God desires to be our Father and to have a living relationship with us. Unfortunately, man was deceived by the serpent, Satan, fell into sin, and turned away from God. Instead of becoming sons of God, man became like the serpent, sinful, whose end is condemnation and eternal death. Where there is sin, there is judgment; the sentence is eternal death!

Who can escape the judgment of the living and righteous God? Who can save his own soul? Do not be indifferent! Psalm 90:8 says: "You have set our iniquities before You, our secret sins in the light of Your countenance." Our sins are not hidden from Him. His judgment will undoubtedly come. But the GOOD NEWS is that God loves you. He does not want you to perish. Listen to His Word: "God did not appoint us to wrath, but to obtain salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ" (1 Thessalonians 5:9). God has never given up on man – He sent His only begotten Son as the "Lamb" of God as the sin offering to take away the sin of the world on the cross (John 1:29). God has never lost sight of His purpose to make us His sons and to bring us into glory. When the

Lord Jesus died on the cross, the righteous God judged Him on our behalf. Jesus died for you and me. Through His blood shed on the cross we all can receive full pardon of our sins! He gave Himself as a ransom for all (1 Timothy 2:6). On the third day after His death, He arose from the grave victoriously. God confirmed that the redemptive work of Christ was complete and fully acceptable to Him by raising Christ from the dead for our justification (Romans 4:25). Friend, this is the greatest truth in the universe! Jesus Christ lives today! In resurrection, He is now the Spirit who gives life (1 Corinthians 15:45).

Faith in Jesus Christ is not merely a superficial belief in Him as our Savior, but much more – it is a living experience of an inward relationship with Him. By this living faith and through baptism, a believer becomes united with Christ and receives His Spirit into his heart. Christ lives in him, becomes his life and is expressed in him in his daily living.

Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ and you will be saved. Based on the accomplished redemptive work of Christ, God will pardon all your sins and deliver you from eternal condemnation. At the same time you will receive the Spirit of

Jesus Christ and be born again to become His child. God Himself will be your heavenly Father! This is not a religion but a reality.

Dear friend, do not delay! Today, if you hear His voice, do not harden your heart! None of us know what may happen tomorrow. Remember, the God of love is not offering a religion, but His salvation and life in Christ Jesus to you today. Choose Him now, open up your heart to Him and pray: "Lord Jesus, I repent of all my sins and receive you as my Savior and life."

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