

7-Religion or The Kingdom?

(Part 1)

I share this topic with you without malice, hurt, bitterness, hate or anger at the church. This is my journey to the freedom Paul wrote about which I have been on since 1987. I share it with you to instruct you, because, as a sentinel, my task is to warn believers and I'm held accountable for that.

This is a topic that will offend all Christians.

Please take this opportunity to stop reading if you think it advisable.

Was Jesus Religious?

Jesus never came to start a new religion. He came to reverse the Fall and take us back to where Adam was. There was NO religion then, only relationship with our Creator.

Jesus' main antagonists were the religious leaders who were offended by his lack of religious observance.

He attacked their religion which they had made out of what he had set up through Moses.

After his ascension and installation as King, he came back in the spirit realm as Judge & Executioner and wiped them out, as well as their religion.

What is Religion?

Myles Munroe in his video teaching says that 'religion' means 'to search'. This is wrong!

The origin of the word 'religion': from *religio* (Latin) – meaning 're-ligature'
= 're-bind'
= 'bring back into bondage'

“The ultimate origins of religion are obscure. One possible interpretation connects it with *lego*, to 'read' – i.e. in the sense of 'choose', 'go over again' or 'consider carefully'. Modern scholars favour the derivation from *ligare*, to 'bind' or 'connect' – i.e. to 'reconnect'.”

“In the ancient and medieval world, the etymological Latin root *religio* was understood as an individual virtue of worship, never as doctrine, practice, or actual source of knowledge. The modern concept of 'religion' which entails distinct sets of beliefs or doctrines is a recent invention in the English language.”

“Such usage began with texts from the 17th Century due to the splitting of Christendom during the Protestant Reformation and more prevalent colonization or globalization in the age of exploration which involved contact with numerous foreign and indigenous cultures with non-European languages.”

“In the 17th Century the concept of religion received its modern shape.”

en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Religion

Where Did Religion Come From?

The first apostasy¹ began less than 300 years after creation:

“When Seth was 105 years old, he fathered a child he named Enos. Enos was born in the year 235 AM². The book of Jasher states that at this time the first wave of apostasy began.”

“And Seth lived one hundred and five years, and he begat a son; and Seth called the name of his son Enosh, saying, Because in that time the sons of men began to multiply, and to afflict their souls and hearts by transgressing and rebelling against God. And it was in the days of Enosh that the sons of men continued to rebel and transgress against God, to increase the anger of the Lord against the sons of

1 – i.e. Turn away from the Creator

2 – AM = 'Anno Moundi': In the year of the world

men.” (Jasher 2:2-3)

“And the sons of men went and they served other gods, and they forgot the Lord who had created them in the earth: and in those days the sons of men made images of brass and iron, wood and stone, and they bowed down and served them. And every man made his god and they bowed down to them, and the sons of men forsook the Lord all the days of Enosh and his children;” (Jasher 2:4-5)

“Ancient Post-flood History” p:20

What happened as a result of this apostasy:

“In reaction to this idolatry, God caused a flood to occur that destroyed a large amount of crops; and, afterwards, God caused a drought to occur. This did not lead to repentance on the part of the idolaters. For a complete detail on the pre-flood pagan religion, see the book 'Ancient Paganism' by the author³.”

“Ancient Post-flood History” p:20

A revival occurred under Cainan in 365AM. This was followed by a 2nd apostasy somewhere between 395-460 AM. A 2nd revival occurred under Enoch from 687AM to the 800's AM.

“Ancient Post-flood History” p:20

The worship of departed ancestors (ancestral worship) began at that time resulting in the myths and legends of the gods. These gods were deified real people e.g. Hercules, Uranus, Kronos, Venus, Zeus.

“Ancient Post-flood History” p:20

A great apostasy began around 1000AM. Wars started then, as well as homosexual marriage. Idol worship and evil became so bad that God sent the global flood in 1656AM.

“Ancient Post-flood History” p:20

Some time after the Flood, Nimrod began ruling in 1948AM. He started religion in the form that was used by Babylon, Egypt, etc. He incorporated the zodiac and the arts of employing demons.

(NOTE: Noah died in 2006AM)

(NOTE: Abraham left for Canaan in 2003AM)

Religion continued right up to the time of Jesus. Jews even turned their mosaic formulation into a religion (Judaism) which took them over. It was destroyed in 70AD with the destruction of the temple and the sacking of Jerusalem by the Romans.

The first church was seen as a Jewish sect⁴ because nearly all of the early believers were Jews who kept their Jewish customs – without ritual sacrifice. Even Paul considered himself a follower of the Messiah Jesus, but a Pharisaic Jew, not a Christian.

Believers of the first church who were gentiles lived a non-Jewish life of faith. There was no religion, only freedom to be the ekklesia and to follow their Christ.

Judaizers and pagans endeavoured to bring these people back into religion, but Paul coached them to remain free.

Sadly, by the middle of the 2nd century the morph to religion had been completed.

Constantine formalized the church in the Roman Empire as a state religion in 380AD it became what is today, the Roman Catholic Church.

Almighty God never set up religion with Adam in the beginning and he never instigated it in the ekklesia that he established – it's all been men's doing.

3 – Ken Johnson

4 – Acts 23:6; 24:14; 26:5; 28:22

Identifying Religion

“Religion is any cultural system of worship, including designated behaviours and practices, worldviews, texts, places, ethics, or organizations, that relate humanity to the supernatural, transcendental or to a cosmic order of existence.”

“Religions may or may not contain various elements, ranging from 'the divine', sacred things, faith, supernatural being or beings, or some sort of higher state that will provide norms and power for the rest of life.”

“Religious practices may include rituals, sermons, commemoration or veneration of deities, sacrifices, festivals, feasts, trances, initiations, ceremonial services, matrimonial services, meditation, prayer, music, art, dance, public service, or other aspects of human culture.”

“Religions have sacred histories and stories which may be preserved in sacred scriptures. They have symbols and holy places. All of these have a purpose: to give meaning to life.”

en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Religion

Examples of religious practices:

- Clerical uniform
- Preaching
- Sacred buildings
- Prayer with hands clasped
- Kneeling while praying
- Reading sacred scriptures

Religion focusses on these:

- Doing what they think pleases God Doing what they like to do, not what God wants
- Doing things out of fear that God will be angry if they don't do it right
- Doing things to appease their consciences
- Doing things instead of becoming who they are meant to be
- Serving God by what they do and how it is done
- Being an organisation, not an organism
- Things – rather than relationship with God
- Processes, rituals and ceremonies Holy days – a sin not to observe them
- Making things holy/sacred – rather than being holy because of who they are
- Being led by the soul and mind – instead of being led by God
- Having a clerical system with its hierarchy
- Incorporating things and processes from paganism and culture into what's considered godly
- What has always been done and not what God is doing new in the current season Adamantly defending their ways or sacred things

The Christian Religion

Many Christians today prefer to call their formalism a “faith”, not a religion. But is it a religion despite their belief?

Sacraments

- These are man-made sacred formalities that have nothing to do with the Kingdom.

Holy Days

- These are man-made celebrations and have nothing holy about them.

Church

- The Church is the designated consecrated building where Christians meet.
- Actually, we are the church. (Ekklesia more precisely)
- (See Matthew 16:18; 1 Corinthians 1:2, 10:32; 11:18; 14:4, 12)

Worship

- Having a worship service with singing is fine if you like singing and expressing your attitude to God that way. That's all.
- Worship is showing the 'worth-ship' of God which should be our focus in every area of our lives.

Services

- Weekly services are man-made.
- They are not how we are to serve our King in his Kingdom
- “I appeal to you therefore, brethren, and beg of you in view of [all] the mercies of God, to make a decisive dedication of your bodies [presenting all your members and faculties] as a living sacrifice, holy (devoted, consecrated) and well pleasing to God, which is your reasonable (rational, intelligent) service and spiritual worship.” Romans 12:1 (AMPC)

Holy Communion

- Jesus' instigation was for their Passover meal or for a simple gentile meal.
- Communion with God is spiritual connection. The highest form of this is oneness with him. This is his desire for us.
- (See Luke 22; John 17:21-23 but not 1 Corinthians 10:21)

Clergy

- Professional Christians are an enigma in the Kingdom. It produces lazy believers.
- We are all to be in full-time service. Every believer is a priest.
- (See 1 Peter 2:9)

Attendance

- The focus is on church attendance. It's a sin to miss services for no good reason or for any length of time.
- Jesus' focus is on us being the ekklesia, not attending church services.
- The 1st church met in the marketplace, synagogues and homes - any day.
- (See Acts 2:46; 5:42; 17:17)

Sacred scripture

- The treatment of the Bible as sacred text is a sure pointer to a religion when it's held in higher regard than God himself.
- Believers should focus on their relationship with God, first and foremost. They are to elevate the Word of God himself and desire what he is saying to them today above anything else.

All the following are man-made:

- | | |
|----------------------|---------------------------|
| *Wedding ceremonies | *Giving to the church |
| *Baptism ceremonies | *Days of prayer & fasting |
| *Dedication services | *Church programs |
| *Election of Elders | |

A Caveat

I have been called out of the church system, and endeavoured to eliminate all religion and legalism from myself. Needless to say, believers are free to have religious activity in their lives. It's their choice

(Read: canberraforerunners.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/03/21-freedom-to-remain-in-religion-and-legalism.pdf)

“One person esteems one day above another; another esteems every day alike. Let each be fully convinced in his own mind. He who observes the day, observes it to the Lord; and he who does not observe the day, to the Lord he does not observe it. He who eats, eats to the Lord, for he gives God thanks; and he who does not eat, to the Lord he does not eat, and gives God thanks...” Romans 14:5-6 (NKJV)

“For none of us lives to himself, and no one dies to himself...But why do you judge your brother? Or why do you show contempt for your brother? For we shall all stand before the judgment seat of Christ.” Romans 14:7, 10 (NKJV)

There is a great difference between judging a brother and correcting them with sound doctrine so they focus on growing spiritually

Realise that although religious activity is permitted if a person's attitude to God is right, it is a sign of spiritual immaturity.

Each believer's responsibility is to grow to spiritual maturity: not religious maturity or theological maturity

“But now after you have known God, or rather are known by God, how is it that you turn again to the weak and beggarly elements, to which you desire again to be in bondage? You observe days and months and seasons and years. I am afraid for you, lest I have labored for you in vain.” Galatians 4:9-11 (NKJV)

Serving God

True religion:

- “Pure and undefiled religion before God and the Father is this: to visit orphans and widows in their trouble, and to keep oneself unspotted from the world. James 1:27 (NKJV)
- The Greek word translated 'religion' here means: Worship, religious service, outward observance

Useless religion:

- If anyone among you thinks he is religious, and does not bridle his tongue but deceives his own heart, this one's religion is useless. James 1:26 (NKJV)

Bondage or Freedom

Religion goes hand-in-hand with legalism. The religious spirit keeps adherents of religion bound up and in fear. Religion & legalism are almost inescapable because fear, rather than faith, is the driving force for compliance.

In Jesus the Messiah (Jesus Christ) we have freedom (liberty). He freed us from all religion and legalism and brought us into Father's family where there is no need to perform to gain his approval.

The Kingdom is freedom

Here are some pertinent references

- “Stand fast therefore in the liberty by which Christ has made us free, and do not be entangled again with a yoke of bondage.” Galatians 5:1 (NKJV)
- 'Bondage' here is to the Law
- “...which things are symbolic. For these are the two covenants: the one from Mount Sinai which gives birth to bondage, which is Hagar - for this Hagar is Mount Sinai in Arabia, and corresponds to Jerusalem which now is, and is in bondage with her children - but the Jerusalem above is free, which is the mother of us all. Galatians 4:24-26 (NKJV)
- NOTE: We are the New Jerusalem (See Revelation 21:9)
- “Yet not even Titus who was with me, being a Greek, was compelled to be circumcised. And this occurred because of false brethren secretly brought in (who came in by stealth to spy out our liberty which we have in Christ Jesus, that they might bring us into bondage), to whom we did not yield submission even for an hour, that the truth of the gospel might continue with you.” Galatians 2:3-5 (NKJV)
- “For you did not receive the spirit of bondage again to fear, but you received the Spirit of adoption by whom we cry out, 'Abba, Father'.” Romans 8:15 (NKJV)

Read my series “Coming Out of the Old covenant” (canberraforerunners.org/?page_id=2#Old-Covenant)

Profitable for the Kingdom

Jesus' followers thought he was going to set up his Kingdom on Earth straight away. He set the record straight by telling them a parable. (See Luke 19:12-27)

This parable is similar to the one recorded in Matthew 25 where the money is talents, not minas. The talent coins cause readers to think about personal talents (abilities), so the minas version is less distracting.

In this parable, Jesus represents himself as the nobleman who goes away to receive a kingdom for himself. This was a hidden prediction of what he was shortly going to do. (Luke 19:12-27)

The nobleman (Jesus), relating to his Kingdom personnel, instructs them to “do business” while he's away. Some translations say “Occupy til I come”, but the Greek word is about trading money in a business fashion. (See Luke 19:13)

In the parable, those who “do business” are rewarded. Those who don't are executed. (See Luke 19:17, 19, 37)

In a similar parable (Matthew 25:30) Jesus states that the person who didn't carry out his master's order was called an '**unprofitable**' servant. He was cast out of the Kingdom – into a place described like hell. (See Matthew 25:14-30)

In the segment following the Olivet Discourse, Jesus also talks about his servants who are waiting for him to return. He describes faithful and wise servants who are doing his business. They will be blessed by their master when he returns if he finds them going about his duties. (See Matthew 24:44-51)

He then describes a “wicked” servant who appears to be doing his duty, but not in the way his master would have had it done if he was present. This servant will be punished severely and thrown out where the hypocrites are – in a place described like hell. (See Matthew 24:44-51)

What does this mean for us? We are expected to be about Kingdom business while we are here on Earth before our King returns. That is: Doing only what he's told us to do. We are not free to do whatever we

like – *Rex Lex*. The parables identify such conduct as being unprofitable for the Kingdom. Also, as being wicked – ending in destruction.

And in regard to religion? Religion is doing what we want to do for God. According to the parables that labels religion as being unprofitable. The end of which is not very nice.

While we wait for the return of the King we must be about genuine Kingdom business as Holy Spirit shows us

Jesus describes servants in another parable who are only doing what their master wanted them to do. These servants don't get any thanks from him. (See Luke 17:7-10)

What does that mean for us? Jesus answers the question himself:

“So you too, when you have done everything that was assigned and commanded you, say, 'We are unworthy servants [undeserving of praise or a reward, for we have not gone beyond our obligation]; we have merely done what we ought to do.’” Luke 17:10 (AMP)

In the Kingdom, we're expected to look to do more than what is considered to be our duty

Laurence Smart

24-5-2017

(www.CanberraForerunners.org)

COPYRIGHT

All quotes are copyrighted to the authors credited.

This document is free to copy, republish and distribute, but only 'as is'.

All Canberra Forerunner documents are licensed under

Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-NoDerivs 3.0 Unported License