

## Christ or “Religion”?

James 1:27 “Pure and undefiled religion in the sight of our God and Father is this: to visit orphans and widows in their distress and to keep oneself unstained by the world.”

1. What does “religion” mean to you?

A. Acts 17:22-31 “I observe that you are very religious in many respects...many objects of worship.”

B. Acts 25:19 “...they simply had some points of disagreements with him about their own religion and about the dead man Jesus, which Paul asserted to be alive.”

C. Acts 26:5 Paul said, “I lived as a Pharisee according to the strictest sect of our religion.”

2. Religion as the world knows it tends to put people in bondage, under rules, ie praying, fasting, pilgrimages, abuse of the body, self-denial. With Christ, we have a relationship that brings us into favor with God.

A. Romans 3:21-27 “...the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord”.

B. Romans 5:1,2 “...justified freely by faith we have peace with God..”

C. Romans 5:17 The gift that keeps on giving. “The gift of righteousness will reign in life through the one, Jesus Christ.”

3. Christ is greater than any other religious figure in the world. The Old Testament Scriptures told about Him 1500 years before His birth. They predicted His genealogy (Genesis 21:12;49:10; Isaiah 11:10), His birth(Micah 3;5), where He would be born(Micah 5:2). In the OT names for Him, it tells us He is the Son of God, ie, Immanuel – God With Us (Isaiah 7:14). It predicted His sufferings (Isaiah 53), His death and resurrection. These predictions were made by different people over 15 centuries who lived in different parts of the world and in most cases didn't know one another personally.

***II Corinthians 4:5,6 “For we do not preach ourselves, but Christ Jesus as Lord and ourselves as bondservants for Jesus' sake. For God, who said, “Light shall shine out of darkness” is the one who has shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Christ.”***