

## RELIGIOSITY

[According to Jesus in John 4:23, Religious service is entered when man's spirit (lower case "s") yields to the TRUTH taught by Jesus.

God is Spirit (Upper case "S"). Thus, when man goes to God in service, he must go in his spirit and be connected to God, the Spirit through the God/Man, Jesus Christ.]

There's no shortage of religiosity in the world. Never has been. Evidence from anthropological 'digs' forces everyone to admit that, in every society, man has always had some kind of religious order of worship-sometimes extreme; such as, 'child sacrifices.' But man has always worshipped.

Even today, a variety of religiosity exists. However, Christians have stayed on the correct road by following the Bible. It is their source of faith and practice.

Until the New Covenant became available to man by the ratification of Jesus and His death, it was within Israel that man reached the Almighty.

Today, mature Christians realize that it is their responsibility to represent God correctly through Biblical Theology. They show themselves approved by studying the Word; which is "profitable for doctrine, reproof and instruction in righteousness" (2Tim 3:16).

From the Word, believers soon come to understand that the Lord's body, the church, is the only place where they can learn fully about God and honor Him within their lives of faith. Ephesians 3:21 states: "Unto Him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus throughout all ages, world without end."

Clearly, God did not leave it to man to stumble into true religion. Rather, God has always CALLED men, teaching them about His Person, beginning with Abraham (Ge 12).

Abraham was told to leave the polytheistic system and go to a land promised by God. Later, God promised Abraham that he will become the father of all the faithful ones (Rom. 4).

There's a continuous link between the church and Israel. First, What God promised Abraham would be fulfilled by the Seed of Abraham, Jesus; who would establish a spiritual people in the church body.

The Bible clearly explains: "Now to Abraham and his seed were the promises made. He saith not, And to seeds, as of many; but as of one, And to thy seed, which is Christ," Galatians 3:16.

And, the church was to learn, centuries later, what the offspring of Israel learned: "Hear O Israel: The LORD our God is one LORD," Dt 6:4.

In the first three commandments of the Ten, God lets His people know that He is jealous (Ex 20:5). God will not allow idols or images to be worshipped. Varied religiosity of service was never allowed by God. Not then nor today.

"You shall not worship them or serve them; for I, the Lord your God, am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers on the children, on the third and the fourth generations of those who hate Me, Exodus 20:5.

Thus, whichever way you look at it, multiple religiosity is not received by God. True Religiosity service began with Abraham and then Israel, within the Old Testament. And, when we come to the New Testament, it is written, "... one Lord, one faith, one baptism," Ephesians 4:5.

The Bible does not present two kinds of paths or, many ways of faith. If we represent the one true God, our faith has to like He is, just one; and, we understand that our service comes by 'solo gratia' (only by grace).

Looking back, when God led Israel out of the Egyptian bondage, the instructions were to defeat every enemy that got in the way of Israel's travel to the Promise Land; not, embrace them and accept their gods.

So, we see that, from Moses to Solomon, Israel constantly battled gentile nations. But, even with a strong history behind her, Israel never fully heard the message of SEPARATION, that God kept repeating.

And, the prophets were sent. "You only have I chosen among all families of the earth;" Amos 3:2a. "Therefore, I will punish you for all your iniquities," Amos 3:2b.

Because of an uncircumcised heart, Gentile nations over powered Israel, finally taking Her away from Her beloved holy land of Jerusalem. Even though She returned (See Ezra/Nehemiah), Israel was never to be the free nation She was during David's reign. At the time of Christ, Israel was under control of the Roman Empire.

**But, who needs nationalistic freedom, anyway?** We sing, "This world is not my home" because we have learned that the church established by Jesus was, and is, built within the religiosity of "spirit and truth", John 4:23. That's because "God is Spirit: and they that worship Him must worship Him in spirit and in truth," John 4:24.

As Abraham looked for a city, so we look for that same "city whose builder and maker (architect) is God," Hebrews 11.

Notice: Religious service is entered when man's spirit (little "s") yields to the TRUTH taught by Jesus. God is Spirit (Upper case "S"). Thus, when man goes to God in service, it must be in his spirit, being connected to God, the Spirit.

In other words, we serve, not through any other means, but our spirits. Locations, times and rituals are meaningless to the Almighty. They are all the wrong religiosity service.

However, getting to the place of the New Covenant where we can serve in **spirit and truth** was no small achievement; in time or in action. It took a great deal of both.

Exiting Egypt was impossible for Israel, by Herself. The Egyptians were the number one nation with magicians and sorcerers (Ex 7:11) so powerful that they matched Moses and Aaron, almost miracle for miracle.

But, the Exodus was God's doing. He was ending Israel's bondage. No longer will His people live under Egyptian religiosity that mixed pantheism and animal worship as their form of worship, calling their god Ra, or the sun god.

God's people serve Jehovah. His salvation is not of man nor of religious activity done by man. Salvation belongs to the Lord and He will provide for Israel's release, in type, by an animal. But, true freedom comes later when God's only begotten Son releases all men from bondage.

Therefore, when we view the entire scene of Egypt we see a picture of the whole world - Israel is a miniature world, picturing the fact that all men are in bondage, needing to be saved out of it.

Therefore, notice carefully, this next truth. While, it was **God's power** through **plagues** to bring the **Pharaoh under submission**, it was the **Passover Lamb** that allowed Israel to come under **God's Personal care**.

Of course, the Lamb was a type of Jesus. He gave His blood in order to redeem the people of God and take them away from the wrath that is coming on the world.

Since Abraham's day, things have not changed much. In early New Testament times, Jesus could not change Israel's religiosity of the Law. And, Paul's experience at Athens was a religiosity disaster. Why, there were more idols that people, causing Paul's the exclaim, "**I perceive that in all things ye are too superstitious,**" Acts 17:22b.

Wikipedia gives a definition of Religiosity that hits today's world on the nose. "**... one can accept the truthfulness of the Bible (belief dimension), but never attend a church or even belong to an organized religion (practice dimension).**"

It seems that the great delusion sent by God (1Thess. 2:11) includes any religiosity that the masses accept. That's not the Bible way, is it?

But, it is what it is: "Satan, with all power and signs and lying wonders, and with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish; because they receive not the love of the truth, that they might be saved," 2 Thess 2:9-10.

Then, the called ones who actually gather together (**Ecclesia: church definition**) and practice the truth about spiritual service and the life-hereafter. To these, Jesus says, "**Blessed: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven,**" Matthew 5:3-12.