

## IS YOUR RELIGION IN THE BIBLE?

The Bible, the Word of God, is the source of true religion. It sets forth God's will thoroughly, completely and perfectly. The apostle Paul said in 2Timothy 3:16, 17 All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: 17 That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works. And in 2Peter 1:3 Peter records these words: According as his divine power hath given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of him that hath called us to glory and virtue. These two passages make it very clear that everything we need to be acceptable to God is found in the inspired Scriptures, the word of God, the Bible. The logical conclusion from this fact is that the religious faith and practice based upon what the Bible actually says, is the only one that is unquestionably right in the sight of God.

The important question, then, is whether your religion is really in the Bible. Is it? This is not to ask whether your religion contains some Bible principles, most religions do contain some Bible principles. Neither is the question whether or not in your religion you practice some truth, because most religions do practice some truth. Here is the question we are asking and one you need to answer: "Is your religion from its center to its circumference and in its entirety, actually found in the Bible?"

Are you willing to subject your faith and practice to a Bible test in order to be sure they are actually found therein? I believe I can give Bible authority for everything I teach and practice religiously, can you? Where does the Bible tell you how to become a member of the church of which you are presently a member? If you are a Baptist, where does the Bible tell you how to become a Baptist? If you are a Methodist, where does the Bible tell you how to become a Methodist? Does the Bible ever tell anyone to be a Catholic, Pentecostal, Lutheran, Presbyterian or anything else other than a Christian? We are not being "self-righteous", because Jesus condemned that kind of attitude in the Pharisees; nor are we just picking on various religious denominations. We simply want you to examine, by the word of God, what you are and what you practice religiously. We even hear people who are asked what they are religiously, say: "oh, I'm a church of Christ." The Bible nowhere tells anyone to become a church of Christ. In fact, an individual cannot "be" a church of Christ, because the church, (the body of Christ Colossians 1:18), is not one member but many according to what Paul said in 1Corinthians 12:14. Therefore, one person cannot be a church. The word that is translated "church" is also translated "assembly". In fact, the Greek word that is translated "church" means a "called out assembly" and obviously one person cannot be an assembly. As Paul said, it takes more than one member to be a church. One person, if they have fulfilled God's requirements, is a "member" of the Lord's church and no other.

Yes, the Bible tells an individual how to become a member of the Lord's church, (the one which He died to purchase and build Matthew 16:18; Acts 20:28), Acts 2:37-41 and that if one is not a member of that church for which Jesus died they cannot be saved, because all the saved are added to the church Acts 2:47 "Praising God, and having favour with all the people. And the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved." and Jesus is the Saviour of the body Ephesians 5:23 "For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church: and he is the

saviour of the body." But nowhere does the Bible tell anyone how to be anything except a Christian, the name by which the disciples were called Acts 11:26 "And when he had found him, he brought him unto Antioch. And it came to pass, that a whole year they assembled themselves with the church, and taught much people. And the disciples were called Christians first in Antioch." Agrippa was not almost persuaded to be called by some manmade name, but he was almost persuaded to be a Christian, Acts 26:28 "Then Agrippa said unto Paul, Almost thou persuadest me to be a Christian."

Well, you say, "I am a Christian." Then if you are a Christian, you should be able to explain from the Scriptures what you did to become a Christian. Also, if you are a Christian, why do you call yourself by some manmade name? If you are a Christian you should be able to give Bible authority, that is, book chapter and verse, for everything you practice in religion. Remember Jesus said in John 8:31 "If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed:" This phrase implies that there are some who are not "indeed" that is, in fact, or in reality, His disciples, even though they claim to be,. Why not just obey the simple plan of salvation revealed in the New Testament and the Lord will add you to His church (Acts 2:47). Then you will continue to learn and practice that which the Scriptures teach and that only. 2Peter 3:8 says: "But grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. To him be glory both now and forever." You will be a member of the Lord's church, the church which belongs to Christ (the church which is OF Christ, hence the church of Christ) and not some human denomination.

We want each individual to honestly face this fundamental question. If the Bible is the truth, the word of God, (which we believe it to be) then an individual must be able to prove his religious practices by the Bible, or else his religion is vain. (Matthew 15:9 "But in vain they do worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men.") All Christians (that is, those who are "disciples indeed") will continually be examining themselves, their doctrine and practice by the Bible the word of God. Paul, in 2Corinthians 13:5 says: "Examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith; prove your own selves. Know ye not your own selves, how that Jesus Christ is in you, except ye be reprobates." Are you willing to examine yourself in the light of God's word?

(JLH)