

# MARK JENKINS MINISTRIES

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Christianity Is Not A Religion

Dear Friend,

Christianity is not a religion, although people for ages have tried to make Christianity a religion. The word “Religion” is defined to be: “a personal set or institutionalized system of religious attitudes, beliefs, and practices.” This could apply to a whole host of things having absolutely nothing to do with a personal relationship with Jesus Christ.

In fact, when you look at the false “religions” of the world you find that the person they identify as god isn’t someone with which a mere human can fellowship. Their god isn’t personable. On the contrary, their god is to be feared and is generally unreachable by common man. I would suppose the reason for this must be because their god isn’t really a god at all.

What is so sad to me is to see the complete and total devotion the followers display in their worship of a god that doesn’t exist. Think of the hours of prayer and fasting, and in some cases the physical torture in an effort to appease their false god. The devil will even join in and put on a show for anyone looking to substitute a false god in place of the one true God.

Buddhism, for example, has its own monasteries where monks are trained in all the rituals of their religion. These are devout men who dedicate themselves to long seasons of prayer and disciplined lifestyles, all in the hopes of pleasing a false god that doesn’t exist.

In some cases you can see entire ethnic groups serving false gods with such utter devotion that they willingly sacrifice their babies in an effort to appease their god. This was the case with the Incas of Machu Picchu. In an effort to please their false god, whom they apparently thought was causing the eruption of a volcano, the Inca’s threw their babies into the volcanoes. Think about how strongly you would have to be convinced of something in order to actually throw your own baby into the flames of a volcano. This just goes to show how misguided people can be in their efforts to serve their gods.

Sadly, every single one of those babies died in vain because none of what they were doing was God ordained. Imagine how many babies were needlessly sacrificed in the name of some false god. This should show you just how dangerous believing something false can actually be.

In most cases, the one who is identified as god is untouchable by those who serve him. Their religious rituals boil down to the person trying to make themselves acceptable to their god. They might offer gifts and sacrifices to appease him. They might commit themselves to repeating prayers over and over again in their effort to be heard by their god. The bottom line is that false religions focus on the individual attempting to make themselves good enough to approach their god.

What is sad to me is that this same mentality can be seen in some Christian churches today. All too often the focus of attention is on the efforts of the individual instead of focusing on what Jesus accomplished for us at Calvary. Just as the people who serve the false gods focus on their own efforts, many Christians are sadly doing the same thing.

Always remember; everything that was needed to make us acceptable before God has already been accomplished in Jesus. Jesus was made unto us wisdom, righteousness, sanctification and redemption. (I Corinthians 1:30) There was absolutely nothing left out! No human effort could ever add to what Jesus has done for us. All of man's efforts to be more holy are fruitless and actually show a lack of understanding in the completed work of the cross.

On the other hand, all the false gods of this world are unapproachable by the followers unless they offer something. The one true God became one of us in order to provide Himself with what He needed to save us. This is unheard of in the false religions of the world. Their gods don't lower themselves to the same level as the lowly humans. It was only the true and living God who joined Himself to His creation to rescue them from an eternity in hell.

Not only that, but our God laid down everything that it meant to be God in order to become one with us. The next time you are thinking that God doesn't care about you, take a look at these words. (Philippians 2:5-8)

***“Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus: (6) Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God: (7) But made Himself of no reputation, and took upon Him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men. (8) And being found in fashion as a man, He***

***humbled Himself and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.”***

You will not find one of the world religions in which their god laid down all that it meant to be god, became one of his own creations, and then died in place of his creation. No, the world religions focus on the individual's efforts to do enough to be acceptable in the sight of their god.

Our God didn't stop there. He went above and beyond anything imaginable by not only dying in place of His creation, but also providing a way for His creation to become members of His own family. (Romans 8:16-17)

***“The Spirit itself (Himself) bears witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God: (17) And if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with Him, that we may be also glorified together.”***

Instead of God telling us to bring our own sacrifices in an effort to please Him, He came Himself to become our sacrifice and pave the way for us to be reborn along with Himself into the family of God. No false religion comes close to anything like what Jesus did for us. I would suppose that the reason for this is because false religions are the product of the devil and he longs to be worshipped. All the efforts of those in false religions to worship their false gods must somehow be received by the devil.

It's not enough to know what Christianity is not; we need to have a clear understanding of what it is. We have alluded to it already. Christianity is a family. When we surrender our lives to the Lordship of Jesus, through the substitutionary work of the cross, we enter into the death of Christ. Thank goodness we don't stay dead. Just as Jesus was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too are raised up with Him. (Romans 6:3-4)

***“Know you not that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into His death? (4) Therefore we are buried with Him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life.”***

This should answer every question that any Christian might ever have about trying to earn anything from God by our own efforts. We have what we have by the grace of God not by our own efforts. (Ephesians 2:8-9)

***“For by grace are you saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God. (9) Not of works lest any man should boast.”***

Anytime you come across anyone preaching a message that focuses on your actions and not on the substitutionary work of Jesus, realize that you are coming face to face with religion. It might be dressed up and looking good, but it is a counterfeit sent by the enemy to sidetrack you and convince you that what Jesus did wasn't enough. Furthermore, you must now do something to earn what Jesus made available by grace. This is a lie.

The truth is that what Jesus did is more than enough. It's not about how many hours you spend praying, although prayer in and of itself is right. It's not about how many times you read over the scriptures, although reading the word is right. And, it's not about how many days you fast, although fasting is good. It's not about anything that you do in the natural to try to "move" God into acting on your behalf. He has already done everything He is going to do for you and me. Our job is to simply believe His word and receive what He has already done for us.

Thank God for making Christianity so simple. We have to have help to misunderstand it, and sadly there has been far too many people helping us misunderstand the amazing gift God has given to us. Always remember, Christianity is not a religion, it is a family and God is our Father and Jesus is our Lord and elder brother. The moment you think your place in the family of God can in some way be improved by your own efforts, you have just stepped into religion. Your place in the family of God is insured by the person of the Holy Spirit and established in Jesus. We are seated with Him in heavenly places (Ephesians 2:6) in Christ Jesus. ***Thank you Jesus!***

~ Jesus Loves You!

*Mark Jenkins*