

IS THERE A TRUE RELIGION FROM GOD'S STANDPOINT?

Note to the speaker:

Indicate just how deeply people's attitudes are influenced by their religious beliefs. While speaking with respect for people who adhere to different religious beliefs, contrast attitudes that displease God with attitudes that Jehovah favors

THE REASON WHY NOT ALL RELIGION IS ACCEPTABLE TO GOD (4 min.)

Most people are born into their religion and accept it as they accept their nationality; some equate religion with nationality

Others choose their form of worship based on personal opinion

Recent survey found that 86 percent of the world's population profess some form of religious affiliation (w08 6/1 9)

Believers belong to 19 major religions

Professed Christians are spread among 37,000 denominations

But can all conflicting beliefs be true?

Rather than teaching that all religion is acceptable to God, the Bible clearly speaks of worship that is not approved by him (Jg 10:6, 7; Mr 7:6, 7; 1Co 10:20; rs 322-323)

The Scriptures show that some worship is futile but that there is a form of worship that God approves [Read James 1:26, 27]

God places great importance on how people treat one another

What we believe has a large impact on how we act

THE PURPOSE OF TRUE RELIGION (4 min.)

Main objective of true religion is to honor, praise, and obey God (Ec 12:13; Re 4:11)

Jehovah God deserves our praise and honor; creation and the Holy Scriptures reveal God's wonderful qualities (Joh 3:16; Ro 1:20)

Secondary objective of true religion is to guide man to the best way of living (Isa 48:17, 18) [Read Micah 6:8]

Some hold that all religions promote essentially the same objectives, namely to believe in God and to do good

Yet, what a religion produces in its adherents can serve as a basis for judging whether it is true from God's standpoint

INSPECTING THE FRUITAGE OF RELIGIOUS BELIEFS (11 min.)

There is a direct connection between what we believe and what we become or practice [Read Matthew 7:16-20] (g95 7/8 26-27)

For example, hatred, drunkenness, sexual depravity, and other vile traits were notable among the gods of ancient Greece and Rome (it-1 978-979)

History shows that many worshippers of such gods found pleasure in immoral revelries and in observing men and beasts fight to the death in the arena (w02 6/15 28; w81 11/1 4-5; g97 11/8 27)

Those who believe in racial superiority have perpetrated horrendous forms of human oppression (g98 3/8 24; g93 8/22 6-8)

People's view of death has a profound effect on their life

Many who have no hope in the resurrection focus attention on getting as much as possible out of life now (1Co 15:32)

Thinking that the timing of all affairs is predetermined, believers in fate assume little responsibility for their actions (w96 9/1 6)

Belief that spirits of dead humans affect the living leads people to perform superstitious acts that result in hardships and displease God (w05 1/1 29-30; w98 7/15 21)

Many believe that God's Kingdom will come through human rule

Such thinking ignores the fact that remaining without spot from this world is a key element of "the form of worship that is clean and undefiled" (Jas 1:27)

Additionally, varying political viewpoints result in divisions and foster hatred

People fail to appreciate that God's Kingdom is a real heavenly government that will rule over all the earth (Da 2:44; Mt 6:10)

We must examine religion by its fruitage; if a religion allows or promotes practices that the Bible condemns, is it measuring up to God's standards?

It is vital that we answer that question, not from our standpoint, but from God's

PRACTICE RELIGION THAT IS TRUE FROM GOD'S STANDPOINT (11 min.)

Leading a godly life is linked to having an accurate knowledge of God (Tit 1:1) [Read Colossians 3:10]

Hence, true religion from God's standpoint must be based on the truth as found in the Holy Scriptures (Joh 8:32; 17:17)

True religion will produce people who do God's will and reflect the wisdom from above [Read James 3:17, 18]

It must guide people in the way of love (Joh 13:34, 35; 1Jo 3:10)

People who practice religion that is true from God's standpoint exalt God's name and preach about his Kingdom (Ps 83:18; Mt 24:14)

They are readily identifiable by their works of faith

True religion encourages everyone to examine the Scriptures and prove to themselves the perfect will of God (Ro 12:2)

This can be done by learning what the Bible teaches (Joh 17:3)

Allow the Bible's teachings to produce good fruitage in you (1Th 2:13)

Examine the evidence for yourself, and practice "the form of worship that is clean and undefiled from the standpoint of our God and Father"

(Not all cited texts need to be read)

No. 173-E—page 2

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TO BE COVERED IN 30 MINUTES

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