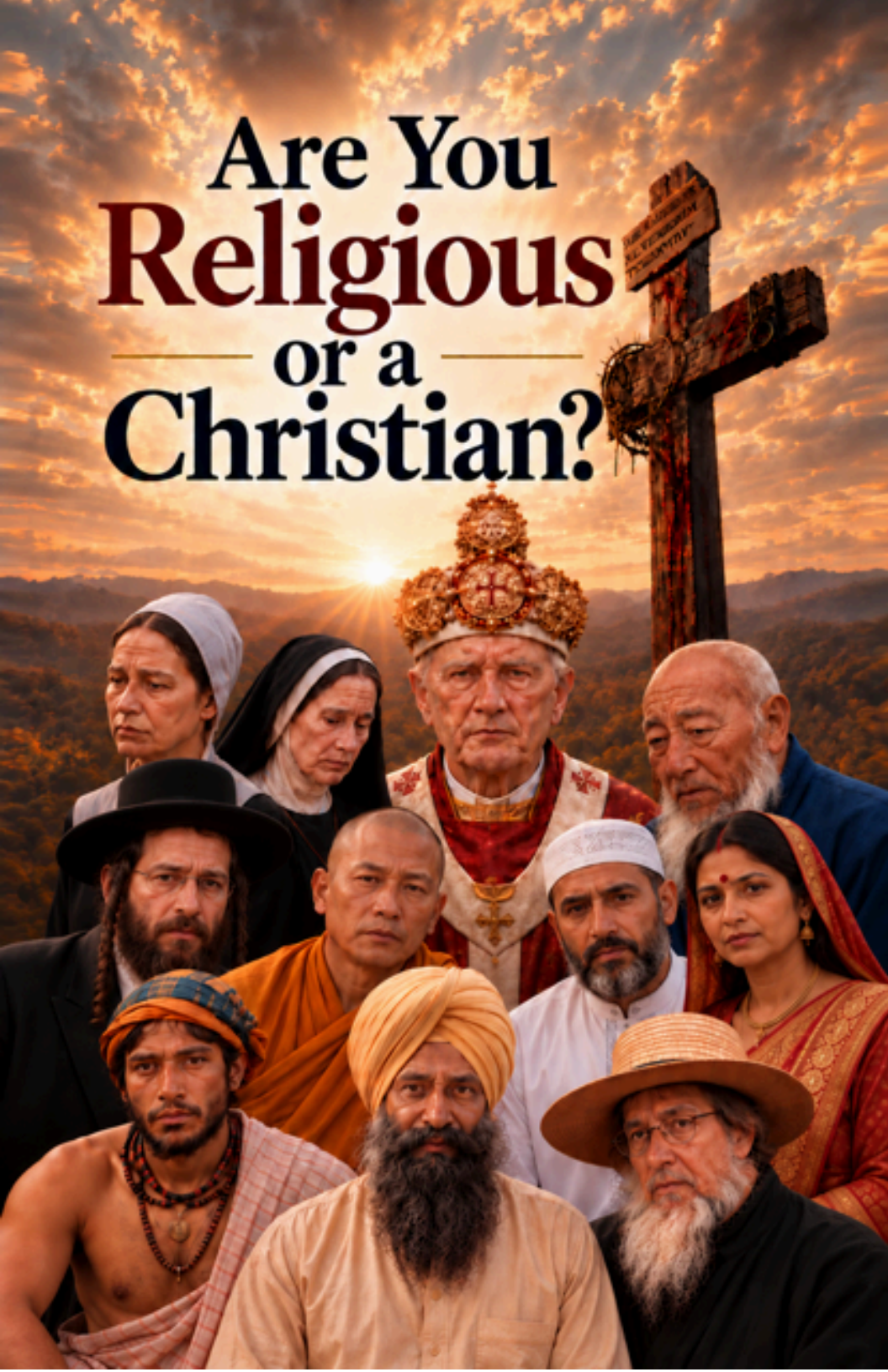

Are You
Religious
or a
Christian?

Are You Religious or a Christian?

Part 1: Religion vs. Christianity and

Part 2: Rewards vs. Salvation

by Joe Keim

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The Difference That Matters

There is a profound difference between man-made religion and true Christianity. Many people attend church, profess the name of Christ, and consider themselves religious. Yet the Bible teaches that outward religious devotion does not necessarily reflect a genuine relationship with God. Jesus warned:

> *"This people draweth nigh unto me with their mouth, and honoureth me with their lips; but their heart is far from me."* —Matthew 15:8

May God help us discern the difference between outward religion and true Christianity as revealed in His Word, the Holy Bible.

The purpose of this booklet is to help readers distinguish between religious activity and true saving faith in Jesus Christ. Religion emphasizes what man attempts to do for God; Christianity proclaims what Christ has already done for sinful man through His finished work on the cross. As Scripture declares:

> *"For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast."* —Ephesians 2:8–9

Religion Vs Christianity

The following chart compares two very different approaches. Religion says, "Do." Christianity says, "Done." As you read, notice whether the emphasis is on man's effort or Christ's finished work.

Religion	Christianity
1. Salvation is something **I must do**. I must somehow earn or gain salvation by the way I live.	1. Salvation is something **only God can do**. Salvation is of the Lord! Ephesians 2:8-9: *"For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast."* Jonah 2:9: *"But I will sacrifice unto thee with the voice of thanksgiving; I will pay that I have vowed. Salvation is of the LORD."*
2. Religion is summed up in one word: **DO** — man trying to do different things to please God and earn His favor.	2. Christianity is summed up in one word: **DONE** — Christ dying on the cross to save sinful man. John 19:30: *"When Jesus therefore had received the vinegar, he said,* **It is finished***: and he bowed his head and gave up the ghost."*
3. The religious man is busy **working** in order to be saved.	3. The saved person is not working but is **resting** upon the finished work of Another. Romans 4:5: *"But to him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness."*

4. **TRYING**

5. **A work to do which is never done.**

6. Man hoping to save himself.

7. **Religion** is man trying to bring himself to God by human effort, good works, ritualism, traditionalism, sacraments, etc.

4. **TRUSTING**

Acts 16:31: *"And they said,* **believe** *on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved..."*

5. **A Word to believe** about a work that is done.

1 Peter 1:25: *"But the Word of the Lord endureth forever. And this is the Word which by the gospel is preached unto you."*

1 Peter 1:18-19: *"Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain conversation received by tradition from your fathers; But with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot."*

6. God saving hopeless man.

1 Timothy 1:15: *"This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that* **Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners***; of whom I am chief."*

7. **Christianity** is Christ bringing us to God on the basis of what He did for us on the cross.

1 Peter 3:18: *"For Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust,* **that he might bring us to God***, being put to death in the flesh but quickened by the Spirit."*

8. Religion is man trusting his own good works.

   Titus 3:5: *"***Not by works of righteousness which we have done***, but according to his mercy he saved us..."*

9. A religious ritual.

10. Following rules.

11. "I must reform my life and turn over a new leaf."

8. Salvation is man trusting the good work which the Lord Jesus did on the cross.

   Romans 3:22-24: *"***Even the righteousness of God which is by faith of Jesus Christ unto all and upon all them that believe***: for there is no difference: For all have sinned and come short of the glory of God; Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus."*

9. A real relationship.

John 17:3: *"And this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent."*

10. Enjoying life.

John 6:47: *"Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that* **believeth** *on me* **hath everlasting life***."*

John 10:10: *"The thief cometh not, but for to steal, and to kill, and to destroy:* **I am come that they might have life***, and that they might have it more abundantly."*

11. "I must be born again."

John 3:7: *"Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born again."*

12. Doing something.

13. Man trying to please God in the wrong way.

    Romans 8:8: *"So then they that are in the flesh cannot please God."*

14. Seeking to earn God's favor by works.

12. Knowing Someone.

    John 17:3: *"And this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent."*

13. Man, truly pleasing God in the only way.

    Hebrews 11:6: *"But without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him."*

14. Receiving God's favor by grace through faith.

    Ephesians 2:8: *"For* **by grace are ye saved** *through faith; and that not of yourselves:* **it is the gift of God**."

    Ephesians 1:6: *"To the praise of the glory of* **his grace**, *wherein he hath made us accepted in the beloved."*

15. I can work my way to heaven and earn my salvation.

    Romans 6:23: "**For the wages of sin is death**, *but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.*"

15. I could never live well enough to earn my way to heaven. Christ had to pay the price for my salvation.

    1 Corinthians 6:20: *"***For ye are bought with a price***: therefore, glorify God in your body and in your spirit, which are God's."*

    1 Peter 1:18-19: *"Forasmuch as ye know that* **ye were not redeemed with corruptible things***, as silver and gold, from your vain conversation received by tradition from your fathers; But with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot."*

16. "Salvation is something that a person must earn."

16. "Salvation is a free gift."

    Romans 6:23: *"For the wages of sin is death; but* **the gift of God is eternal life** *through Jesus Christ our Lord."*

    Ephesians 2:8-9: *"For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves:* **it is the gift of God***: Not of works lest any man should boast."*

    John 4:10: *"Jesus answered and said unto her If thou knewest* **the gift of God** *and who it is that saith to thee Give me to drink; thou wouldest have asked of him and* **he would have given thee living water**."

17. The sinner sees himself as **good**.

    Luke 18:11-12: *"The Pharisee stood and prayed thus with himself, God, I thank thee that I am not as other men are extortioners unjust adulterers or even as this publican.* **I fast twice in the week I give tithes of all that I possess."**

17. The sinner sees himself as **sinful**.

    Luke 18:13: *"And the publican standing afar off would not lift up so much as his eyes unto heaven but smote upon his breast saying* **God be merciful to me a sinner**.*"*

18. The religious man compares himself with others.

    Luke 18:11: *"The Pharisee stood and prayed thus with himself, God,* **I thank thee that I am not as other men are** *extortioners unjust adulterers or even as this publican."*

18. The saved man sees himself as God sees him.

    1 Samuel 16:7: *"But the LORD said unto Samuel look not on his countenance (outward) or on the height of his stature because I have refused him: for the LORD seeth not as man seeth; for* **man looketh on the outward appearance but the LORD looketh on the heart."**

    Romans 3:10-12: *"As it is written there is* **none** *righteous no* **not one***: There is* **none** *that understandeth there is* **none** *that seeketh after God. They are* **all** *gone out of the way they are together become unprofitable; there is* **none** *that doeth good no* **not one**.*"*

19. TRUSTING **SELF**.

Luke 18:9: *"And he spake this parable unto certain which* **trusted in themselves** *that they were righteous and despised others."*

19. TRUSTING **CHRIST**.

Ephesians 1:12-13: *"That we should be to the praise of his glory who first trusted in Christ. In whom ye also trusted after that ye heard the word of truth the gospel of your salvation: in whom also* **after that ye believed ye were sealed** *with that holy Spirit of promise."*

20. BOASTING IN **SELF**.

Luke 18:11-12: *"The Pharisee stood and prayed thus with himself God I thank thee that I am not as other men are extortioners unjust adulterers or even as this publican.* **I fast twice in the week I give tithes of all that I possess**."

20. BOASTING IN **THE LORD**.

1 Corinthians 1:29-31: *"That no flesh should glory in his presence. But of him are ye in Christ Jesus who of God is made unto us wisdom and righteousness and sanctification and redemption: That according as it is written* **He that glorieth let him glory in the Lord.**"

Ephesians 2:9: *"Not of works* **lest any man should boast**."

21. I have kept the law! I have done that which God has required.

    Matthew 19:16-20: *"And behold one came and said unto him Good Master what good thing shall I do that I may have eternal life? And he said unto him why callest thou me good? there is none good but one that is God: but if thou wilt enter into life keep the commandments.*

    He saith unto him Which?

    Jesus said Thou shalt do no murder Thou shalt not commit adultery Thou shalt not steal Thou shalt not bear false witness Honour thy father and thy mother: and Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.

    The young man saith unto him All these things have I kept from my youth up: what lack I yet?"

21. I have broken the law, but I am trusting the One who came into this world to save guilty lawbreakers.

    1 Timothy 1:15: *"This is a faithful saying and worthy of all acceptation that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners; of whom I am chief."*

22. A religious man trying to earn his way to heaven by works may be likened to a man trying to swim from New York to London by his own efforts. He will never make it!

22. The person saved by faith is likened to a man getting on a ship in New York and trusting that ship to bring him safely to London.

    John 14:6: *"Jesus saith unto him I am the* **way** *the* **truth** *and the* **life***: no man cometh unto the Father but by me."*

23. The religious man is seeking to establish his own righteousness.

    Romans 10:3: *"For they being ignorant of God's righteousness and* **going about to establish their own righteousness** *have not submitted themselves unto the righteousness of God."*

24. Religion is pictured in Genesis 3 by the **fig leaves** that Adam and Eve made for themselves—a terrible covering.
    Genesis 3:7: *"And the eyes of them both were opened and they knew that they were naked; and* **they sewed fig leaves together and made themselves aprons**."
    Isaiah 64:6: *"But we are all as an unclean thing and* **all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags**; *and we all do fade as a leaf; and our iniquities like the wind have taken us away."*

25. CAIN'S RELIGION—"I bring to God the labour of my own hands."

    Genesis 4:3: *"And in process of time it came to pass that Cain brought of the fruit of the ground an offering unto the LORD."*

23. The saved man is satisfied with the perfect righteousness of Jesus Christ.

    2 Corinthians 5:21: *"For he hath made him (Jesus) to be sin for us who knew no sin;* **that we might be made the righteousness of God in him**."

24. Salvation is pictured in Genesis 3 by the **coats of skin** which God provided by the shedding of blood—a perfect covering.

    Genesis 3:21: *"Unto Adam also and to his wife did the* **LORD God make coats of skins and clothed them**."

    Revelation 19:8: *"And* **to her was granted that she should be arrayed in fine linen clean and white**: *for the fine linen is the righteousness of saints."*

25. ABEL'S FAITH—"I bring to God a blood sacrifice. An innocent substitute must die to save me."

    Genesis 4:4: *"And Abel he also brought of the firstlings of his flock and of the fat thereof. And the LORD had respect unto Abel and to his offering."*

26. Hoping to be saved **by good works** — a false hope.

26. Saved **unto good works** by God's grace.

    Ephesians 2:10: *"For we are* **his workmanship** *created in Christ Jesus unto good works which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them."*

27. Religion teaches that good works are the **cause** of salvation.

27. The Bible teaches that good works are the **result** of salvation.

    Titus 3:8: *"This is a faithful saying and these things I will that thou affirm constantly that they which have believed in God might be careful to maintain good works. These things are good and profitable unto men."*

28. Religion says, "Good works are those things that a person does to be saved."

28. The Bible says, "Good works are those things that a saved person does."

    James 2:18: *"Yea a man may say Thou hast faith and I have works: shew me thy faith without thy works and I will shew thee my faith by my works."*

29. "Christ is my Example and Teacher. I try to follow Him and live as He lived."

29. "Christ is my Savior and Substitute. I am trusting Him and **only Him** to save me."

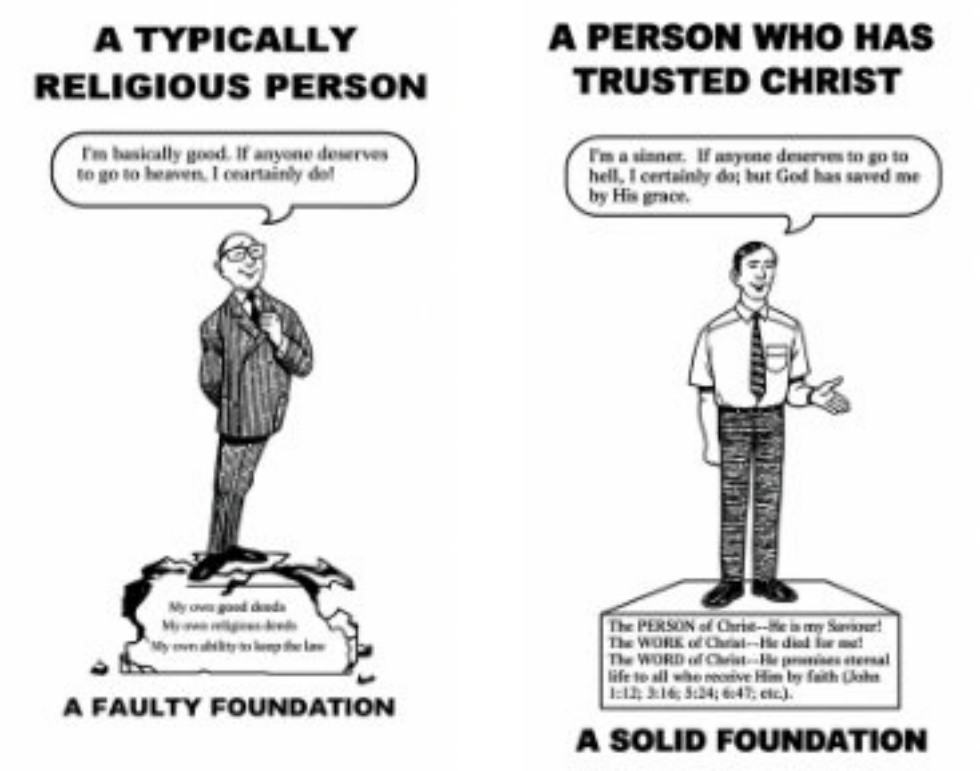
    Luke 23:42-43: *"And he said unto Jesus Lord remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom. And Jesus said unto him Verily I say unto thee today shalt thou be with me in paradise."*

30. "I **hope** I will be saved." "I **think** I will be saved." "I **feel** that I will be saved, maybe."

30. "I **KNOW** I am saved right now."

    1 John 5:13: *"These things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God;* **that ye may know that ye have eternal life...***"*

    1 John 3:2: *"Beloved,* **now are we the sons of God***, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but* **we know** *that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is.***"**



Questions for Personal Reflection

1. Am I trusting in what I have done or in what Christ has done for me?

2. Am I depending on religious activities or on Christ's finished work on the cross?

3. Do I believe I must earn salvation, or do I receive it by faith as God's free gift of grace?

4. Is my confidence in myself or in the Lord Jesus Christ alone?

Difference Between Salvation and Rewards

Salvation Vs Rewards

1) Salvation is a free gift and can't be earned.

Romans 5:15-16: *"But not as the offence, so also is* **the free gift**. *For if through the offence of one many be dead much more the grace of God and the gift by grace which is by one man Jesus Christ hath abounded unto many. And not as it was by one that sinned* **so is the gift***: for the judgment was by one to condemnation but* **the free gift** *is of many offences unto justification."*

Ephesians 2:8-9: *"For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves:* **it is the gift of God***: Not of works lest any man should boast."*

Romans 6:23: *"For the wages of sin is death; but* **the gift of God** *is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord."*

John 4:10: *"Jesus answered and said unto her If thou knewest* **the gift of God** *and who it is that saith to thee Give me to drink; thou wouldest have asked of him and he would have given thee living water."*

1) Rewards can be earned by faithful service.

Colossians 3:22-24: *"Servants obey in all things your masters according to the flesh; not with eyeservice as men-pleasers; but in singleness of heart fearing God: And whatsoever ye do do it heartily as to the Lord and not unto men;* **Knowing that of the Lord ye shall receive the reward** *of the inheritance: for ye serve the Lord Christ."*

2) Salvation is not something we deserve.

If God gave us what we deserved, the result would be judgment:

Romans 6:23: *"***For the wages of sin is death***; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord."*

2) Reward is something that the believer receives for faithful service.

"Well done, thou good servant.. ." (Luke 19:16-17). Even rewards are still connected to God's grace (1 Cor. 15:10).

Luke 19:16-17: *"Then came the first saying Lord thy pound hath gained ten pounds. And he said unto him* **Well thou good servant***: because thou hast been faithful in a very little have thou authority over ten cities."*

1 Corinthians 15:10: *"***But by the grace of God I am what I am***: and his grace which was bestowed upon me was not in vain; but* **I laboured** *more abundantly than they all:* **yet not I** *but the grace of God which was with me."*

3) Salvation is not given on the basis of works.

Titus 3:5: *"***Not by works of righteousness which we have done** *but according to his mercy he saved us..."*

2 Timothy 1:9: *"Who hath saved us and called us with an holy calling* **not according to our works** *but according to his own purpose and grace which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began."*

Romans 4:6: *"Even as David also describeth the blessedness of the man unto whom* **God imputeth righteousness without works**."

4) Salvation is a present possession.

John 5:24: *"Verily verily I say unto you He that heareth my word and believeth on him that sent me* **hath everlasting life** *and shall not come into condemnation but is passed from death unto life."*

John 6:47: *"Verily verily I say unto you He that believeth on me* **hath everlasting life**."

1 John 5:12: *"He that hath the Son* **hath life** *and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life."*

3) Rewards are given on the basis of works.

Matthew 16:27: *"For the Son of man shall come in the glory of his Father with his angels; and then* **he shall reward every man according to his works**."

Revelation 22:12: *"And behold I come quickly; and* **my reward is with me to give every man** *according as his work shall be."*

4) Rewards are a future attainment.

Luke 14:14: *"...for* **thou shalt be recompensed (rewarded) at the resurrection of the just**."

5) Salvation is something that can never be lost.

John 10:27-28: *"My sheep hear my voice, and I know them and they follow me: And I give unto them eternal life and* **they shall never perish** *neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand."*

6) The focus of salvation is upon SIN.

Matthew 1:21: *"And she shall bring forth a son and thou shalt call his name JESUS:* **for he shall save his people from their sins**."

5) Rewards can be lost.

Revelation 3:11: *"Behold I come quickly:* **hold that fast which thou hast that no man take thy crown**."

2 John 8: *"Look to yourselves that we* **lose not** *those things which we have wrought* **but that we receive a full reward**."

6) The focus of rewards is upon SERVICE.

Ephesians 6:7-8: *"***With good will doing service as to the Lord** *and not to men: Knowing that whatsoever good thing any man doeth the same shall he receive of the Lord whether he be bond or free."*

7) Salvation involves possessing CHRIST.

1 John 5:12: *"***He that hath the Son hath life** *and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life."*

8) The sinner coming to Christ for salvation hears: "IT IS DONE!"

John 19:30: *"When Jesus therefore had received the vinegar he said* **It is finished***: and he bowed his head and gave up the ghost."*

9) Salvation was accomplished at Christ's first coming.

1 Timothy 1:15: *"This is a faithful saying and worthy of all acceptation that* **Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners***; of whom I am chief."*

7) Rewards involve possessing CROWNS.

1 Corinthians 9:24-25: *"Know ye not that they which run in a race run all but one receiveth the prize?* **So run that ye may obtain**. *And every man that striveth for the mastery is temperate in all things. Now they do it to obtain a corruptible crown* **but we an incorruptible**.*"*

8) The faithful believer about to be rewarded hears: "WELL DONE!"

Matthew 25:23: *"His lord said unto him* **Well done** *good and faithful servant; thou hast been faithful over a few things I will make thee ruler over many things: enter thou into the joy of thy lord."*

9) Rewards will be bestowed at Christ's second coming.

Revelation 22:12: *"And behold I come quickly; and* **my reward is with me** *to give every man according as his work shall be."*

2 Timothy 4:8: *"Henceforth* **there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness which the Lord the righteous judge shall give me at that day***: and not to me only but unto all them also that love his appearing."*

10) Salvation is freely received in a point of time.

John 5:24: *"Verily verily I say unto you He that heareth my word and believeth on him that sent me hath everlasting life and shall not come into condemnation but is* **passed from death unto life**.*"*

11) Salvation is based upon what Christ has done.

Romans 3:24: *"Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus."*

12) Man's part in salvation is FAITH.

Acts 16:31: *"And they said* **Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ** *and thou shalt be saved and thy house."*

10) Rewards are earned throughout a believing lifetime.

2 Corinthians 5:10: *"For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ;* ***that everyone may receive*** *the things done in his body according to that he hath done whether it be good or bad."*

11) Rewards are based upon what we have done as believers.

2 Corinthians 5:10: *"For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that everyone may receive the things done in his body* ***according to that he hath done*** *whether it be good or bad."*

12) Man's part in rewards is FAITHFULNESS.

Luke 16:10-12: *"****He that is faithful in that which is least is faithful also in much****: and he that is unjust in the least is unjust also in much. If therefore ye have not been faithful in the unrighteous mammon who will commit to your trust the true riches? And if ye have not been faithful in that which is another man's who shall give you that which is your own?"*

13) The question of salvation: DID YOU BELIEVE ON CHRIST?

1 Corinthians 1:21: *"For after that in the wisdom of God the world by wisdom knew not God* **it pleased God** *by the foolishness of preaching* **to save them that believe**.*"*

14) In salvation, God remembers sins no more.

Hebrews 10:17: *"And their sins and iniquities will I remember no more."***15) Salvation always involves God's full approval in Christ.**

Ephesians 1:6: *"To the praise of the glory of his grace wherein he hath made us* **accepted in the beloved**.*"*

16) All believers share the same salvation.

Hebrews 2:3: *"How shall we escape if we neglect* **so great salvation** *which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord and was confirmed unto us by them that heard him."*

Ephesians 1:3: *"Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ* **who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings** *in heavenly places in Christ."*

13) The question of rewards: HAVE YOU BEEN ABIDING IN CHRIST?

1 John 2:28: *"And now little children* **abide in him***;* **that when he shall appear we may have confidence** *and not be ashamed before him at his coming."*

14) In rewards, God remembers faithful labor.

Hebrews 6:10: *"For* **God is not unrighteous to forget your work and labour of love** *which ye have shewed toward his name in that ye have ministered to the saints and do minister."***15) Rewards may involve God's disapproval.**

Colossians 3:25: *"But* **he that doeth wrong shall receive for the wrong which he hath done***: and there is no respect of persons."*

16) All believers do not share the same rewards.

Rewards differ according to the believer's faithful service before God, the righteous Judge.

1 Corinthians 3:8: *"Now he that planteth and he that watereth are one: and* **every man shall receive his own reward according to his own labour**.*"*

17) Salvation judgment took place at the cross.

Christ suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, so the believer will not come into condemnation (Isa. 53:6; 1 Pet. 3:18; Rom. 8:1).

Isaiah 53:6: *"All we like sheep have gone astray we have turned everyone to his own way and the LORD hath laid on him the iniquity of us all."*

1 Peter 3:18: *"For Christ also hath once suffered for sins the just for the unjust that he might bring us to God being put to death in the flesh but quickened by the Spirit."*

Romans 8:1: *"***There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus***..."*

17) Reward judgment takes place at the judgment seat of Christ.

2 Corinthians 5:10: *"***For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ***; that every one may receive the things done in his body according to that he hath done whether it be good or bad."*

18) Salvation costs nothing.

Isaiah 55:1: *"Ho everyone that thirsteth come ye to the waters and he that hath no money come ye buy and eat; yea come buy wine and milk* **without money** *and* **without price***."*

18) Rewards cost a life of service.

Serving Christ faithfully can be costly.

Matthew 5:10, 12: *"Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness' sake: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Rejoice and be exceeding glad:* **for great is your reward in heaven***: for so persecuted they the prophets which were before you."*

19) Salvation is received at the time of JUSTIFICATION.

Salvation is something we get at the beginning.

Romans 5:1: *"Therefore* **being justified** *by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ."*

Romans 3:24: *"***Being justified** *freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus."*

20) We show our gratitude for salvation by faithful service.

Romans 12:1-2: *"I beseech you therefore brethren by the mercies of God that ye* **present your bodies a living sacrifice** *holy acceptable unto God which is your reasonable service. And be not conformed to this world but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind that ye may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God."*

19) Rewards are received at the time of GLORIFICATION.

Rewards are something we get at the end.

Romans 8:17-18: *"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. For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us."*

20) Every believer's work will be made manifest. Clearly, it boils down to motives. What is your motive for doing what you do?

1 Cor 3:11–15: *"For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ. Now if any man build upon this foundation gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, stubble;* **Every man's work** *shall be made manifest: for the day shall declare it, because it shall be revealed by fire; and the fire shall try* **every man's work** *of what sort it is. If* **any man's work** *abide which he hath built thereupon,* **he shall receive a reward**. *If* **any man's work** *shall be burned,* **he shall suffer loss***: but he himself shall be saved; yet so as by fire."*

Final Summary

There are just over 4,000 thousand of religions in the world, but the question of salvation brings us to one basic difference: Are we trusting in our own efforts, or are we trusting in Jesus Christ? Man-made religion teaches that we must earn God's acceptance through good deeds or religious duties. The Bible teaches that salvation is God's gift, received by faith in Christ and His finished work on the cross (Ephesians 2:8–9; Titus 3:5).

Paul understood that even his service to God depended on grace. He wrote, "But by the grace of God I am what I am." Although he worked hard in serving Christ, he gave God the credit: "yet not I, but the grace of God which was with me" (1 Corinthians 15:10). God gives His people both the desire and the strength to do His will (Philippians 2:13). We have no reason to boast. Both our salvation and our faithful service depend on His grace.

Man-made religion puts the focus on what people do to earn God's favor. True Christianity points us to what Jesus Christ has already done for us. Religion says, "Do," but Jesus declared from the cross, "It is finished" (John 19:30). He died for our sins and rose again, providing the only sure foundation for our faith (1 Corinthians 15:3–4).

Salvation is God's free gift, received by faith in Jesus Christ. We cannot earn it through church attendance, religious

duties, or good deeds. God saves us because of His mercy, not because of our works (Titus 3:5).

Good works do not produce salvation; they follow salvation as the fruit of God's grace. We are saved to serve, obey, and honor the Lord (Ephesians 2:10). Our service should flow from love and gratitude for the One who first loved us (1 John 4:19).

Rewards are different from salvation. Salvation is a gift; rewards recognize faithful service to Christ. They do not purchase eternal life or add to His finished work. Scripture teaches that a believer's work will be tested. Some work will receive a reward, while other work will be lost, though the believer remains saved (1 Corinthians 3:11–15). Even our faithful service gives us reason to thank God, because His grace makes it possible.

The great question is this: **Am I trusting in myself, my religion, or my good works—or am I trusting fully in Jesus Christ alone?** Rest completely in Christ for salvation. Then serve Him with a thankful heart, depending each day on His grace.

"For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast. For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them." —Eph 2:8–10

FREE Bible Study!

God's Word says: "Study to show yourselves approved unto God, rightly dividing the word of truth" (2 Timothy 2:15). Simply tear this page out, fill it out, and send it back to us. We will send you your choice of a free Bible correspondence course to help you see for yourself what the Bible really says. Complete all the lessons in the course, and not only will we send you a certificate of completion, but you will have learned more of the Bible and grown closer to God. We currently have seven different Bible study courses from which you can choose:

1. **ABC's of Christian Growth:** How well do you know the doctrines of the Christian faith? Have you ever sat down and studied God—do you know Him? What about Heaven? Jesus Christ? The Holy Spirit? The Church? The New Birth? Prayer? Return of Jesus Christ? The Bible? Satan? Hell? The Family? Communion? This course is one of our favorites!
2. **Basic Basics:** Does the Bible tell us how we can know we are going to heaven? The answer, of course, is yes! God is very clear about it. If you have any doubts at all about your salvation, please ask for this study.
3. **Foundational Study:** Is your heart set on the Christian home? How can you gain victory over a certain sin in your life? Do you have questions about the new birth? Brokenness? Biblical separation? This course provides you clear answers straight from the Bible.
4. **Book of Books Study:** How well do you know the history, customs, geography, and measurements of the Bible? Did anyone ever sit down with you and explain how the Old and New Testaments fit together? Do you understand how to apply God's word to your life today?
5. **Verse-by-Verse Study:** This course will help you understand various books of the Bible by taking you through an in-depth verse-by-verse study. The study includes the books of John, Ephesians, and Romans.
6. **Topical Study:** Many people struggle with fear, anger, pride, doubt, loneliness, and disbelief. Others struggle with worry, faith, and a healthy prayer life. If you fall into any one of these pits, please consider signing up for this course. Join others who have signed up and are receiving the spiritual help and encouragement they need.
7. **Life's Struggles:** Most Christians struggle with fear, pride, doubt, anger, and/or worry. So the question is, can a person overcome these struggles? We believe that God's Word does tell us how to overcome these struggles. This study guide will help you find the answers. Go ahead and sign up for lesson one, and don't stop until you have completed all the lessons in the course.

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5. Verse-by-Verse Study (9 lessons)
6. Topical Study (12 lessons)
7. Life's Struggles (3 lessons)

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