



World Christian Fellowship

www.wcflondon.com
wcflondon@gmail.com

Galatians

Lesson 04 True and False Religion

Why does religion exist in the world?

Materialists portray that there is nothing but the material world, and there is no supernatural world.

But, still, religion exists.

Why does religion exist?

Why is it so universal?

Why is it so personal?

Why is it in every period, in every location, every culture, every society, every ethnic group that's ever lived?

Why also does religion take so many forms?

Why is there religion everywhere?

Why are there so many kinds of religion?

As we looked at our first lesson on the letter to Galatians how can a man be right with Holy God?

These are longstanding questions.

Religion is defined as *'the connection between human beings and supernatural beings'*

Connecting the people with their deities is religion. Rather it looked as bridge between the natural world with supernatural world.

Why is it universal?

All people are created by God and in the image of God. Since all bear the image of God, they naturally feel that connection.

The Bible says that all societies feel after God. It's an internal impulse built in.

Romans 1:19-20, *because what may be known of God is manifest in them, for God has shown it to them. ²⁰For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even His eternal power and Godhead, so that they are without excuse,*

Law of God is written in their hearts.

Romans 2:15, *who show the work of the law written in their hearts, their conscience also bearing witness, and between themselves their thoughts accusing or else excusing them)*

We know what is right and wrong, and that knowledge triggers our conscience to either excuse us or accuse us.

Why religion?

Man is made for God, and something naturally in a man drives him in the direction of God.

The law of God is written in his heart, so that he has a sense of fear when he violates that law and the fear of the Judge, the God who made him.

That is what it means to be human.

Why are there so many forms of religion?

There are only two real religions in the world!

The true religion of God and the false religion of Satan in its multiplicity of forms.

The true religion is what God has revealed Himself in the Holy Scriptures, which is that salvation comes by grace through faith through believing His Son Lord Jesus Christ.

The false religion is that which declares that salvation comes to man by man's own effort, by his own achievement, by something he does – some morality, some religiosity, some ritual, some rite, some ceremony, and some behaviour.

Satan knows there is Only One God, and One Saviour, and One gospel, and One salvation, and One way to heaven.

Satan also knew that there is only one true living God. Satan knows that God is a Triune being: Father, Son Jesus Christ, and the Holy Spirit.

Even when our Lord was on earth, the demons themselves, as well as Satan, knew who He was and responded accordingly. But he has corrupted human history and the world with as many religions as conceivable in the sinful hearts of men and the wicked minds of demons.

Why does Satan then devise so many false religions?

He is the archenemy of God.

He, along with a third of the holy angels who rebelled against God were cast away from the presence of God. Those demons work together against the will and the purposes of God in the human lives.

God is one, but these demonic forces are many, so they form many religions, thousands and thousands.

So, in effect we can conclude this way,

- True religion declares that salvation comes by grace through faith through believing.
- False religion declares that salvation comes by your own works.

- True religion declares that salvation is solely by God
- False religions declare that salvation by God plus human effort.

- True religion is of divine accomplishment.
- False religion is a tool of Satan's and is the religion of human achievement.

False religion and its routes.

Genesis 1 & 2

Creation by God in six days.

Genesis 1:31, *Then God saw everything that He had made, and indeed it was very good. So the evening and the morning were the sixth day.*

A perfect creation, including man and there is no sin.

Man, and women were there, and they were naked and no shame.

Genesis 2:25, *And they were both naked, the man and his wife, and were not ashamed.*

There was nothing to be ashamed of.

There was no sin.

Perfect universe, perfect man, and a perfect woman.

There was no religion.

There was no need for a bridge to God.

There was no barrier between man and God.

There was no alienation.

There was no separation between God and man.

Adam and Eve are living in the garden in perfect fellowship with God.

There was no need to find a way to reconcile with God.

There was no need for cry how to be right with God.

Genesis 3

Satan finds Eve, Eve finds Adam, and they disobey God. The Fall of human occurs there. Sin has entered the world. Immediately there was an alienation and separation between man and God.

Genesis 3:7, *Then the eyes of both of them were opened, and they knew that they were naked; and they sewed fig leaves together and made themselves coverings.*

What did sin do?

Sin has separated man from God.

- ✓ From communion to alienation.
- ✓ From fellowship to separation.

- ❖ There was a barrier between man and God.
- ❖ The need for reconciliation occurs.

How did they manage to bridge this gap?

Genesis 3:7, *“They sewed fig leaves together and made themselves loin coverings.”*

Here is the birth of False Religion!

That is the first act of man to create a way in which he himself could deal with his own shame!

Man wants to deal with his iniquity by covering himself.

What is the result of this effort?

Genesis 3:8, *And they heard the sound of the Lord God walking in the garden in the cool of the day, and Adam and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the Lord God among the trees of the garden.*

He hides, because he hasn't yet found a way to face God.

This is what the false religion does to a person. Men make ways to cover their own sin, but it does not clear their guilty conscience, and so they hide from God.

False religion is a form of hiding from God and from His presence.

This does not work!

Genesis 3:9-10, *Then the Lord God called to Adam and said to him, "Where are you?"¹⁰ So he said, "I heard Your voice in the garden, and I was afraid because I was naked; and I hid myself."*

A sweet communion between God and man is over. Man fears God, because his conscience is accusing him of sin. He felt shame and that's why he and his wife covered themselves. They were afraid of God and hiding from Him.

They disobeyed God!

Genesis 2:15-17, *Then the Lord God took the man and put him in the garden of Eden to tend and keep it. ¹⁶ And the Lord God commanded the man, saying, "Of every tree of the garden you may freely eat; ¹⁷ but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die."*

The relationship between God and man has dramatically changed and not only with Adam and Eve but every human being.

The religion comes along and says, "Make some leaves. Make yourselves some covering for your shame."

It doesn't work.

God exposes their sin, and God curse, and wrath of God fell on Man.

- ✓ God curses,
- ✓ the serpent,
- ✓ the woman,
- ✓ the man,
- ✓ the earth and
- ✓ the end of the created universe.

The curse of God touched every molecule of matter, every element of infinite space. The curse went instantaneously to the ends of creation. Everything was cursed - everything, including man. The coverings that manmade are useless.

The covering religion invented,

- do not cover his shame,
- they do not hide him from God, and
- they do not remove him from divine judgment.

Genesis 3:21, *Also for Adam and his wife the Lord God made tunics of skin, and clothed them.*

The first act of true religion.

If a sinner is to have a covering then it must come from God, and it must come by death.

This is the first death since creation began and God is the killer. We can see that the theory of evolution is not workable since it is simply elongated series of death.

See the picture of Christian doctrine here right in the first pages of our Bible.

1. Adam and Eve were warned by God that they will die the day they eat that fruit.
2. They disobeyed the voice of God
3. Sin came into the world

4. They tried to cover themselves since the death pronounced was coming towards them.
5. They saw the death but it's not theirs
6. Death of an innocent lamb as a substitute.
7. They lived for 930 years
8. Birth of False Religion by trying to cover themselves
9. Beginning of True Religion
10. Only God can provide the covering by death.

Progress of both religions:

True religion:

True religion that requires death, the death of the substitute. Throughout the history of Israel there were thousands and thousands of animals that has been sacrificed but none of them could atone their sin. All those animal sacrifices were pointing towards the perfect lamb of God that would die and take away their sin.

Remember the cry how can I be made right with God?

The way to God is by the death of a perfect sacrifice!

Hebrews 9:22, *And according to the law almost all things are purified with blood, and without shedding of blood there is no remission.*

The perfect sacrifice was none other than Jesus Christ!

True religion has always realized and accepted that the sinner deserves death.

God will provide a substitute through that God will forgive and meet out His punishment on someone else who is innocent. That's what the sacrificial system communicated. True religion is based on faith in what God will provide!

False religion:

Whereas the false religion has always said, "Make something to cover yourselves and hide."

False religion is based on the works that I provide.

All false religion by any name, any title, in any form, language, or structure, social context is always the same: "You provide your own covering to somehow satisfy the deity."

You need to contribute to you being right with God. Works are needed to be right with the Holy God.

See how both the religion progressed!

Adam and Eve got together and had two sons!

Genesis 4:1-2, *Now Adam knew Eve his wife, and she conceived and bore Cain, and said, "I have acquired a man from the Lord."*² *Then she bore again, this time his brother Abel.*

Now Abel was a keeper of sheep, but Cain was a tiller of the ground.

Take a moment to think about this first family. Think about the first parents what they would have taught their children? Only two other people living in the planet, so I want you to imagine with me.

If not too many lessons on how to live I am sure they would have taught them one thing very clearly from what they have learnt from God in their life.

Sacrifice:

We are sinful,

We are cursed,

The sentence of death is on our heads.

Don't offer God something of your own doing.

There must be a sacrifice.

We tried on our own by covering ourselves, but we failed miserably so the offering must be a sacrifice to please God.

I am sure you will agree with me that Adam and Eve taught their sons that lesson, because that is the one lesson they learned from God which is recorded in the first 3 chapters of the book of Genesis.

But see what happened?

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

Cain is offering something that he harvested from the work of his hands. This is exactly what his parents did the first time. Again, he was doing the same thing what his parents did and failed before God.

Cain was going to try to come before God and cover his sin in the similar way his parents did.

Genesis 4:4, *Abel also brought of the firstborn of his flock and of their fat. And the Lord respected Abel and his offering,*

Abel brings the best of his flock, a full, fatted animal as a sacrifice.

God accepts the sacrifice, because sin requires a death. The death of an innocent substitute God will accept if the heart is right.

We can see both the religion operates from the first family itself.

False religion is illustrated by Cain who brings something that he himself has plucked up out of the ground. The plants symbolize false religion and man's efforts. That is covering without death, without the death of a substitute.

True Religion symbolised by animal death and God's provision by death which is acceptable to God in the sinner's place.

- ✓ Cain then is the prototype of false religion.
- ✓ Abel is the prototype of true religion.

- Cain offers the fruit of his labour.
- Abel brought a sacrifice.

Bringing something through your works becomes the endless pattern of false religion.

Abel offers an animal sacrifice, because he knew he had nothing in and of himself to give. But he knew God would accept a death in the place of his death.

Salvation would come by the death of an acceptable, innocent substitute.

False Religion will oppress the True Religion! Always!!

Genesis 4:5-8, *but He did not respect Cain and his offering. And Cain was very angry, and his countenance fell. ⁶ So the Lord said to Cain, "Why are you angry? And why has your countenance fallen?" ⁷ If you do well, will you not be accepted? And if you do not do well, sin lies at the door. And its desire is for you, but you should rule over it."* ⁸ Now Cain talked with Abel his brother; and

it came to pass, when they were in the field, that Cain rose up against Abel his brother and killed him.

True religion has always been slaughtered by false religion. Look around it is always false religion that leads the massacre against the true people of God. The more persecuted religion in the world is Christianity!

- The way of Cain is the way of works and hates the way of faith.
- The way of Abel is the way of faith that obeys God.

- ❖ They way of Cain trusts in himself.
- ❖ The way of Abel trusts in another.

- The way of Cain doesn't need death.
- The way of Abel demands a death.

Genesis chapters 6-8

Noah followed the way of Abel, the true religion. It was only Noah and his sons and daughters 8 of them.

The rest of the world was fully immersed in the way of Cain, and consequently engulfed in the death that came to them through the global Flood.

Even after the Flood subsided and life began again, the way of Cain, the way of Satan, dominated the world.

Genesis 11:1-4, *Now the whole earth had one language and one speech. ²And it came to pass, as they journeyed from the east, that they found a plain in the land of Shinar, and they dwelt there. ³Then they said to one another, "Come, let us make bricks and bake them thoroughly." They had brick for stone, and they had asphalt for mortar. ⁴And they said, "Come, let us build ourselves a city, and a tower whose top is in the heavens; let us make a name for ourselves, lest we be scattered abroad over the face of the whole earth."*

At the Tower of Babel, the people followed the way of Cain. They would build a tower to God, and judgment came.

You can see this pattern throughout the scripture.

Abraham

Jacob

Saul

David

Nation of Israel.

God calls out a people to follow the way of Abel, the way of faith, the way of sacrifice.

The majority of the world followed and still it is on the ways of Cain.

Abel's was the small believing remnant that came through Abraham, and initially constituted the nation Israel. But even in

the nation Israel, there were both religions existing within the framework of Judaism.

False religion is just not outside the true religion but it's both inside and outside as well. You will find the false religion inside Judaism and in Christianity too!

Satan is so cunning that he doesn't work as anti-Christian but subtly on the pretence as a Christian.

Let us look Israel as nation who were involved in the sacrificial system every single day. They were going through the motions every day and in special occasions this was repeated. But they were so busy doing things for God, but their hearts were far away.

The prophets denounced not only the nations around them and their false religion but denouncing the hypocrisy of Israel always.

God made it clear through Prophet Amos,

Amos 5:21-24, *"I hate, I despise your feast days, And I do not savour your sacred assemblies. ²² Though you offer Me burnt offerings and your grain offerings, I will not accept them, Nor will I regard your fattened peace offerings. ²³ Take away from Me the noise of your songs, For I will not hear the melody of your stringed instruments. ²⁴ But let justice run down like water, And righteousness like a mighty stream.*

God spoke through Prophet Isaiah, (Many places read Isaiah chapter 5)

To offer a sacrifice was the right thing to do, but it had to be done with a right heart.

How?

I know I'm a sinner. I know I can't earn my salvation. I trust You God to be merciful to me, to be gracious to me, and to provide a substitute in my place to take my punishment.

Luke 18:9-14,

Prayer of the tax collector and the Pharisee.

The false religion in Israel were trusting in their works, trusting in their Jewish heritage, trusting in the covenants God had given them in the past.

The world had gone the way of Cain.

Most of Israel had gone the way of Cain and ended up killing the prophets who were going the way of Abel.

Judaism, the religion of Cain was killing those who were in the religion of Abel.

2 Chronicles 36: 14-16, *Moreover all the leaders of the priests and the people transgressed more and more, according to all the abominations of the nations, and defiled the house of the Lord which He had consecrated in Jerusalem. ¹⁵And the Lord God of their fathers sent warnings to them by His messengers, rising up early and sending them, because He had*

compassion on His people and on His dwelling place. ¹⁶ But they mocked the messengers of God, despised His words, and scoffed at His prophets, until the wrath of the Lord arose against His people, till there was no remedy.

When we read the life of Prophets in the Old Testament every one of them were scoffed, mocked, killed and sown into two pieces.

The same thing happened, and it is happening in Christianity. In the history of Christianity true Christians have been massacred by false Christians.

Romans 9:6, *But it is not that the word of God has taken no effect. For they are not all Israel who are of Israel*

There are Jews who are Jews outwardly, but only few are Jews inwardly. Those who trust God for their Salvation that because of their faith like Abraham, who believed God and it was accounted to him righteous.

Only few remnants will be there as true Christians.

In the time of Jesus was on the earth we could name them few Jews who were followers of true religion. Zacharias, Elizabeth, Joseph, Mary, Simeon, Anna, etc very few.

The nation at the time of our Lord was hypocritical. Judaism was basically defined by the Pharisees who would say, *"I thank You*

that I'm not like other men. I'm not a sinner like this tax collector over here. I tithe, I fast" etc.. etc... – "I'm worthy to be received by You, O God."

The Bible is clear that the Jews trusted in themselves.

They did it through their whole history.

They certainly did the same at the time of our Lord.

They continued even at the time of the apostles.

They had replaced the Word of God with Rabbinic traditions.

They taught and believed that you can achieve right relationship to God by observing strict obedience to Mosaic rules and ceremonies, characterised by the scribes and Pharisees. These people gloated over their hypocritical false religion.

Jesus made this daring statement looking at the false religious leaders.

Matthew 21:31-32, *Which of the two did the will of his father?" They said to Him, "The first." Jesus said to them, "Assuredly, I say to you that tax collectors and harlots enter the kingdom of God before you.³² For John came to you in the way of righteousness, and you did not believe him; but tax collectors and harlots believed him; and when you saw it, you did not afterward relent and believe him.*

Then Pentecost came, and the church is born.

The church comprises of Jews in Jerusalem who have become Christians. This is a problem for some Jews. Out of that vast, legalistic, proud Jews, rises a group called the Judaizers, Judaizers because they wanted to Judaize Gentiles.

These Judaizers said that “We believe in Christ, and we believe He is the Messiah. We believe in His death and resurrection. But we don’t believe you can be saved by simply believing in Him. You must be circumcised, and you must adhere to the law of Moses and the ancestral traditions.”

They did not believe that the atoning work of Jesus Christ was all-sufficient. They believed that to be saved it was necessary that you had add your works.

That essentially is what all false forms of Christianity!

They denied,

- rejected the sufficiency of the atoning,
- substitutionary death of Jesus,
- demanded that Gentile converts must be circumcised
- observe all Mosaic rules and
- traditions.

They were so adamant about this that they trailed the apostle Paul in his ministry and went into the churches that he founded and began to propagate this message.

Is it true?

Do Gentiles have to go through Mosaic formulas such as circumcision and ritual and rules?
Do they have to be circumcised?

Paul writes to Galatians to say, "Absolutely not."

Romans 4:1-4, *What then shall we say that Abraham our father has found according to the flesh? ²For if Abraham was justified by works, he has something to boast about, but not before God. ³For what does the Scripture say? "Abraham believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness."⁴ Now to him who works, the wages are not counted as grace but as debt.*

Abraham believed God, and it was counted to him for righteousness before he was ever circumcised. Circumcision plays no role in that. The Mosaic law didn't come until long after Abraham.

Paul sees this addition to Christ!
Jesus Christ died and rose. That's the Gospel.

Judaizers said that it's not enough. You must be circumcised.
You must adhere to the law.

Paul saw that this as a false gospel.

Paul is fighting now.

Paul is fighting for the true gospel.

Paul is fighting for the gospel of grace alone, through Christ alone, received by faith alone.

Paul would say based on what we read in Romans 4.

At no time in history has any person been saved, made right with God, been forgiven, escaped judgment because of anything that person has done at no time.

No one has ever been saved by works, never.

That is the way of Cain.

No one ever was saved by works.

That is why faith is so much the subject that dominates Paul's letters especially this Galatians.