

# The Old Paths

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## “Are All Religions Equal?”

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In our land of freedom, we are well aware of the fact that we are given the right to freedom of religion. Folks in our country can worship Jehovah, or nothing at all. We can worship nature, or the stars. We can worship self. Our country affords us the right to worship or not worship as we please. This is a man-made law, true, but I am thankful to God for it because such a right allows me to preach, teach, write, etc., in order to spread the gospel. In this country, I do not have to worry about retaliation taken by the government or others in authority against me simply because I am spreading God’s word. The apostles would have loved to see a day when they could preach the gospel and not be danger of a prison cell or death.

In this society, though, such a right is a “double-edged sword.” This is because while we have the right to spread the gospel, so also do people have the right to spread the doctrines of men and call it “religion.” Therefore, we see various religions of men taught and promoted as “good” and often presented on an equal plane with the gospel found in the New Testament. Yet, can we say that any religion one chooses is as good as, or equal to the religion found within the pages of God’s word? Absolutely not! Sadly, I observe people who have a tendency to consider each religion “equal”. Their attitude is, “Put

all religions in a sack, shake them up, and accept whichever one falls out.” Friends, beware!

### Many Religions In The World Today

There are literally thousands of religious groups these days. Their doctrines vary, as do their practices, but they are nonetheless available to the “seeker.” We could go from Astrology to Zoroastrianism, and do nothing but further the confusion most folks feel when it comes to spiritual matters. How can we know what (if anything) is true religiously? Is there such a thing? In our culture, we are encouraged to believe that anything and everything can be categorized as “religious” so long as we believe in God. Social movements called “pluralism” encourage people to believe whatever they want. There is a cry today for “religious tolerance,” wherein we are told that all religions are equal, worthwhile, and produce good things in people, in society, etc. Therefore we are told that we need to accept all religions. Yes, man tells us that all religions are equal in purpose and function.

In such cases, for someone to even suggest that there is only one true religion, this person is considered a bigot, narrow-minded, prejudiced, and the like. It is interesting for me to observe that the only “intolerance” that the religiously “tolerant” tolerate is being “intolerant” to those who say there is only one true religion which worships the one true God!

### A Standard Is Needed

If we are ever going to learn about true religion, then we cannot merely claim to follow the one true God. Following the one true God demands that we submit to the right standard of authority. In other words, as John told us to not only love in word, but also in deed and truth (I Jn. 3:18), so also, we need to claim respect for God’s authority, and also submit to that authority (Col. 3:17). Therefore, upon what will we base our standard of authority? Will our authority be the Constitution? Will it be a denominational creed book? Will we follow the writings of Confucius? Will we encourage folks to listen to other philosophers? Just what will it be?

Many in our culture answer this question of authority in a variety of ways. However, if we are going to follow the religion God prescribes, then we need to follow what He says in the Scripture! How can we know what God wants? We can know what God wants when we listen to Him. In order for this to happen, we need to be reading and following the Bible (Eph. 3:4; Mk. 4:23).

### What Has God Said About Religion?

When we read and study the Bible, we see that God allows for only one true religion. The religions invented by men are not to be considered “equal” to, or similar to what God made. This fact is made clear when we read the Scriptures, and find God condemning folks for perverting pure worship. Such actions began with Cain (Gen. 4:5-7), continued through the times of the Israelites (Ex. 20), into the time of the kings (I Kings 12-13), and finally the condemnation of the Jews who had perverted God’s worship (Mal. 1:7-8, 10, 12-14).

When Jesus walked the earth, He told the woman at the well, "Woman, believe me, the hour cometh, when ye shall neither in this mountain, nor yet at Jerusalem, worship the Father. Ye worship ye know not what: we know what we worship: for salvation is of the Jews. But the hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshipers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth: for the Father seeketh such to worship him" (Jn. 4:21-23). On another occasion, He condemned the Pharisees for their false teaching. He told them, "Ye hypocrites, well did Isaiah prophesy of you, saying, This people draweth nigh unto me with their mouth, and honoreth me with their lips; but their heart is far from me. But in vain they do worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men" (Matt. 15:7-9). Obviously, He thought there was only one religion which was pleasing to God!

Today, it is the same. "God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth" (Jn. 4:24). That word "must" is a key word. When we see that word "must" in the Bible, we know there is no option except to do it exactly as God prescribes. Too, we must worship "Him" (God) "in spirit and in truth". God our Creator made sure that we understand that we worship Him, and in so doing, we worship Him a certain way! This was true with Cain and Abel, for one was accepted, and the other rejected (Gen. 4:1-11). This fact was true in the days the Jews lived under the law of Moses. In like manner, it is true today for those of us who live under the law of Christ (Gal. 6:2; Col. 2:14; Heb. 8:13). We are subject to this "new" law, this "better covenant established upon better promises" (Heb. 8:6). When we understand this, then we will be open to listening to what God

has said in terms of true worship and true religion.

### All Religions Are Not Equal

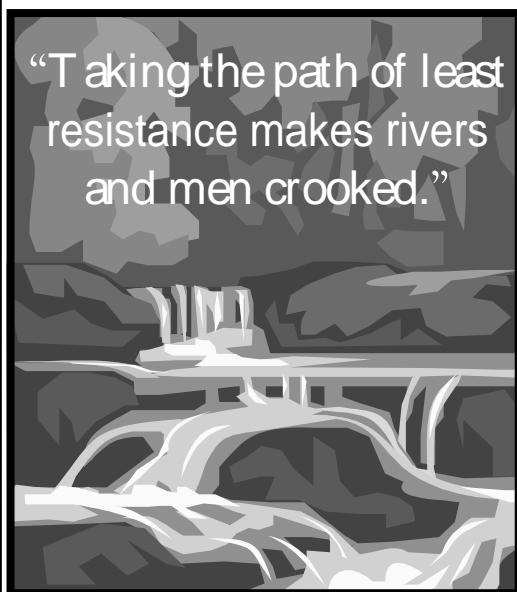
Having learned what we have about God's word, and the need for respecting His authority, we can be assured that all religions are not equal! When we remember that God has only one religion, then we know that all religions cannot be equal.

For further proof that all religions are not equal, remember that Jesus promised to die for His church, and nothing else (Matt. 16:18). His blood was shed to redeem His people (Matt. 26:28). No other world leader, or religious philosopher made such a claim. In addition to this, let us be reminded that many religions (ex: Islam) use carnal force in order to press and promote their precepts. Yet, the Bible tells Christians, "For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war after the flesh: (For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strongholds;) Casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ" (II Cor. 10:3-5). Study what James was inspired to write, "Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this, To visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep himself unspotted from the

world" (Jas. 1:27). This definition is far different from what much of the world describes as "religion." No, all religions are not equal. There is only one true religion, and it was authored by the one true God!

### Conclusion

I know we call April 1 "April Fool's Day," but don't be fooled into thinking that all religions are equal. There is **only one** religion God endorses, and has its origin with Christ (Matt. 16:18), the founder of His church (Rom. 16:16). His people wear His name (Acts 11:26), and live faithfully for Him (Rev. 2:10).



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