

CHRISTIANITY IN THE WORLD OF RELIGIONS

Our lesson comes from Paul's second missionary trip (Acts 15:36-18:22) (50-52 AD). It occurred after he received his special Call to Macedonia and westward (Acts 16:6-10).

Our lesson text comes from Paul's missionary trip to Thessalonica of Macedonia. It is on this trip when you see the dynamic effects of the grace gospel of Jesus Christ on a community and world religions.

(Acts 17:4) "And **some of them (Jews)** were persuaded and joined Paul and Silas, along with a **large number of the God-fearing Greeks** and a number of the leading women."

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| This lesson will study <u>three aspects</u> of the dynamics of Christianity in the World of Religions. |
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1. Christianity is not in competition with other religions.

It will complete them in the search for spiritual freedom. "Do not think that I came to abolish the Law or the Prophets; **I did not come to abolish but to fulfill.**" (Matt.5:17; Gal.5:1-6, 13)

Religions live by works generation, while Christianity lives by **grace regeneration** through the gospel of grace salvation (1 Cor.15:3-4; Rom.1:16; Eph.2:8-9).

(Acts 17:4) "Explaining and giving evidence that the **Christ had to suffer and rise again from the dead**, and saying, This Jesus whom I am proclaiming to you is the Christ."

(Titus 3:5) "**He saved us, not on the basis of deeds which we have done in righteousness, but according to His mercy, by the washing of regeneration and renewing by the Holy Spirit.**"

2. At best, religion operates from man's good works in order to become worthy of a relationship with God (Titus 3:5).

(Gal.2:16) "We are Jews by nature and not sinners from among the Gentiles; nevertheless knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the Law but through faith in Christ Jesus, even we may be justified by faith in Christ and not by works of the Law; since by the works of the Law no flesh shall be justified."

All mankind is classified a sinner in need of salvation whether they are religious or not religious (Rom.1-5).

(Rom.3:10) "There are **none righteous, not one.**"

(Rom.3:22-24) "**Even the righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ for all those who believe;** for there is **no distinction**; for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, being justified as a gift by His grace through redemption which is in Christ Jesus."

(Rom.3:29-30) "**Or is God the God of Jews only? Is He not the God of Gentiles also?** Yes, of Gentiles also, since indeed God who will justify the circumcised by faith and the uncircumcised through faith is one."

(Rom.5:12) "**Therefore, just as through one man** [Adam] (1 Cor.15:22) **sin** entered into the world, and death through sin (spiritual death), and so death spread to all men, because all sinned."

3. **Christianity is also unique from religions of world in that the church consists of members in heaven as well as on earth based on regeneration through the gospel of Jesus Christ.**

Members on earth are church age believers of local churches all over the world (Eph.4:4-6;).

Members in heaven are church age believers of the church body who have died and are present with the Lord (2 Cor.5:6-7; John 14:1-3).

These two groups will be united at same time in “twinkling of an eye (1 Cor.15:52)” at the Second Coming of Christ called the Rapture (1 Thess.4:13-18; 1 Cor.15:51-58).

(1 Thess.4:15-17) “For this we say to you by the word of the Lord, that we who are alive and remain until the coming of the Lord, will not precede those who have fallen asleep. For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel and with the trumpet of God, and the dead in Christ will rise first (resurrection body). Then we who are alive and remain will be caught up together with them in the cloud to meet the Lord in the air (resurrection body), and so we shall always be with the Lord.”