

**ONLY IN THE BIBLE ARE  
WE SHOWN WHAT GOD  
HAS DONE**



## From religion to Christ

The word 'religion' covers many different beliefs and faiths, some of which are completely opposed to others. The word 'Christ' speaks of a faith in a particular person and what he taught. I want to ask those of you who might call yourselves followers of Christ a question: do you really have a living faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, or do you merely have religion? Mere religion, even if it is the 'Christian' religion, is no substitute for a living experience of God which is only possible through Christ.

It's clear from the New Testament that Christ himself was not very impressed with the religion of his day. He saw it as empty and formal, and all too often hypocritical—people saying one thing and doing another. He dismissed the religious leaders as 'the blind leading the blind', and he saw the followers of these leaders as 'sheep without a

# IN AND THROUGH JESUS CHRIST

shepherd'. Religion, whether taught by hypocrites or genuinely sincere people, is a poor alternative for a living faith in God, and Jesus made it very clear that such a faith is to be found only in him.

Maybe you dismiss that idea as intolerant and bigoted, but there's no doubt that Jesus taught that he is the only way to God. The apostles continued this teaching by stating that 'salvation is found in no one else' but Jesus.

## The weakness of religion

You might perhaps be, by birth or persuasion, a Methodist, a Baptist or Roman Catholic, or belong to any other group of people who call themselves Christians; maybe this gives you a measure of comfort in the uncertainties of life. But is this comfort only the kind that Karl Marx described when he said that religion was 'the opium of the people'? Is this all there is to biblical Christianity? Is it like what the false prophets of the Bible were peddling when they preached 'peace', but actually there was no peace? Is this comfort only a temporary peace of mind, or is it the result of peace with God? The difference between peace of mind and peace with God is like the difference between illusion and reality. One is built on the flimsy foundation of man-made religion while the other rests on what God

has done for us in Christ.

Are you beginning to see the emptiness of all man-made religion? Are you questioning your so-called faith and asking, 'Is this all there is?' Are you longing for a real experience of something more, something your religion is not giving you? Many Baptists, Methodists or other Christians do enjoy this experience, but it comes to them not because of their particular denominational tag, but only because of a living experience of the Lord Jesus Christ.

## The need for new birth

In the Bible Jesus said we must be 'born again' (John 3:3). If we take Christ seriously, there is no alternative to being 'born again'. This teaching of a new birth is not an extreme doctrine of religious fanatics but the clear pronouncement of Jesus Christ. You can be religious without being born again, but you can't be a Christian without this spiritual new birth.

The word 'again' that Jesus used literally means 'from above'. Jesus is saying that we must be born from above. In other words, the new birth is the work of God the Holy Spirit and is the first step in salvation. Jesus is telling us that because of our sin, being patched-up with religion or morality is not enough; we

need a completely new beginning. This is exactly what the gospel offers us, and only the gospel can bring it about. Sometimes you hear of a man making a new start in life. He changes his home and his job and says that he's making a thoroughly new start. But he's not. He's changing several important things, but he can't change the most important thing: his nature. Spiritual new birth gives the sinner a new start with a new nature, a new heart. This can only be done by God.

We are sinners and, left to ourselves, will always remain sinners. We can no more change our natures than a leopard can change its spots. We may be kind, religious, respectable sinners or even violent, criminal sinners, but we're still sinners with sinful natures. The consequences of this are devastating. The Bible says, 'Those controlled by the sinful nature cannot please God' (Romans 8:8). This is why we MUST be born again.

## How to be born again

God works this new birth in us by bringing us to hear and consider the message of the gospel. Faith comes by hearing, not seeing. The gospel shows us our true condition, that all have sinned, even good religious people as well as the moral outcasts. God's Word convicts us that we are all no better than anyone else, and that we need to be born again.

Only in the Bible are we shown what God has done, in and through the Lord Jesus Christ, to

deal with our sins. Consider these verses carefully:

*'The Lord laid on him (Jesus) the iniquity of us all' (Isaiah 53:6)*

*'He (Jesus) bore our sins in his body on the tree' (1 Peter 2:24)*

*'God made him (Jesus) who had no sin to be sin for us' (2 Corinthians 5:21)*

These verses tell us that Jesus died in our place. He became our substitute. This was God's plan for saving guilty sinners. These truths should send us to God in repentance and faith, asking for forgiveness, and pleading that he will work this new birth in us to make us new people, to make us Christians.

If you're interested and would like to read more on this subject, please read the book entitled *From Religion to Christ* by Peter Jeffery.

# JESUS CHRIST,

# THE ONLY

# ANSWER

*Text: Peter Jeffery*  
*Illustrations: Bradley Goodwin*

© DayOne Publications  
[www.dayone.co.uk](http://www.dayone.co.uk)