

Acts 7:44-50
What is Religion?

Introduction:

According to the English dictionary: Religion is defined as, “Belief and reverence for a supernatural power or powers regarded as creator and governor of the universe. A personal or institution system grounded in such beliefs and worship.” The Scripture gives two definitions of the word, “religion,” one of which centers around what man understands; Col. 2:23, the other states the true quality of genuine religion: Jam. 1:26, 27

I. The Characteristics of a False Religion

A. Hypocrisy – v.42

1. Motivation – Luke 18:12
2. A balancing act (balancing the wrong by doing something good)
3. We think God is like us – Psa. 50:21
4. Half hearted does not work with God – Mark 12:30; 7:6; Matt. 23:25

B. Institutionalism

1. The Sanhedrin worshiped the temple – v.48,49
2. Jewish leaders taught you could only worship in Jerusalem – Turn To: John 4:19-24 cf. Acts 6:13-14; Matt. 24:1-2; I Kings 8:27 (Luther objected to institutionalized religion)

C. The Tradition of Men – Turn To: Matthew 15:1-9

II. The Characteristics of a True Religion

A. It is based entirely and exclusively on God’s revelation and teaching – v. 44

1. The regulative principle – God regulates the worship
2. The strange fire of Nadab and Abihu – Lev. 10:1-3
3. The rebellion of Korah and company – Num. 16:1-50
4. The Samaritan Woman’s ignorance in worship – John 4:22

B. It is based upon the Spirit – v.44

1. God ordained a movable tent for the place of worship – v.44
2. God’s omnipresence cannot be confined to a structure – John 4:24; II Cor. 3:6; Acts 17:22-34

C. It is based upon the free gift of God through His Son Jesus Christ

1. The good news is that God has dealt with our sin upon the cross of Christ!
2. Repent of your sin and believe in Christ alone to save you from God’s wrath, eternal death and hell.

