

What would be considered a “dead Christian”?

I don't mean someone who has physically died; I mean someone who is religious.

God hates religion.

But Al, “I thought God invented religion!” Sorry, but God invented man and man invented religion.



God created Man for the express purpose of mutual relationship with him, but gave Man the power of choice and free will. Man chose to break that relationship and has been trying to find his own way by inventing religions and cults of all kinds in an effort to replace that void left by lack of relationship with his Creator.

But relationship with God cannot be found through religion or through the flesh. In fact, religion is the biggest roadblock to seeking a relationship with God. Religion is simply man trying to reach out to God by doing something that he thinks will please God.

“If I can do enough, say enough, pray enough, give enough, be good enough, sacrifice enough perhaps God will show me favor”. **Every religion** is based upon this “works theology”. Neither ceremony, liturgy, church attendance, hymns, creeds, sacraments nor money have ever brought one soul into a reconciled relationship to God; nor into heaven!

Abstaining from sin, drugs, alcohol, tobacco, illicit sex and the places that provide them is a healthy thing to do but cannot of itself restore a broken relationship with God. Giving up a favorite food or drink or reciting ‘programmed prayers’ does nothing to convince or satisfy God.

You're still dead.

“But Al, my denomination teaches...” Do you really believe that God favors your denomination over others? Quite the contrary, if your denomination professes to be “the only true way”, I can pretty well guarantee that it isn't favored! Do you think that God's intention was to have thousands of different denominations and factions of His Church? Does anybody really think God has people segregated into religious groups in heaven?

**“Our Father in heaven, Hallowed be Your name. Your kingdom come. Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven.” Matthew 6:9-10**

People that follow their own will on earth rather than God's will on earth are therefore what?

A simple enough question. According to God... are they Christian? Are they dead?

So you may be wondering where in the Bible it says that God hates religion. Starting in the Old Testament I will show you several references and then finish off with what Jesus Christ Himself said concerning religion.

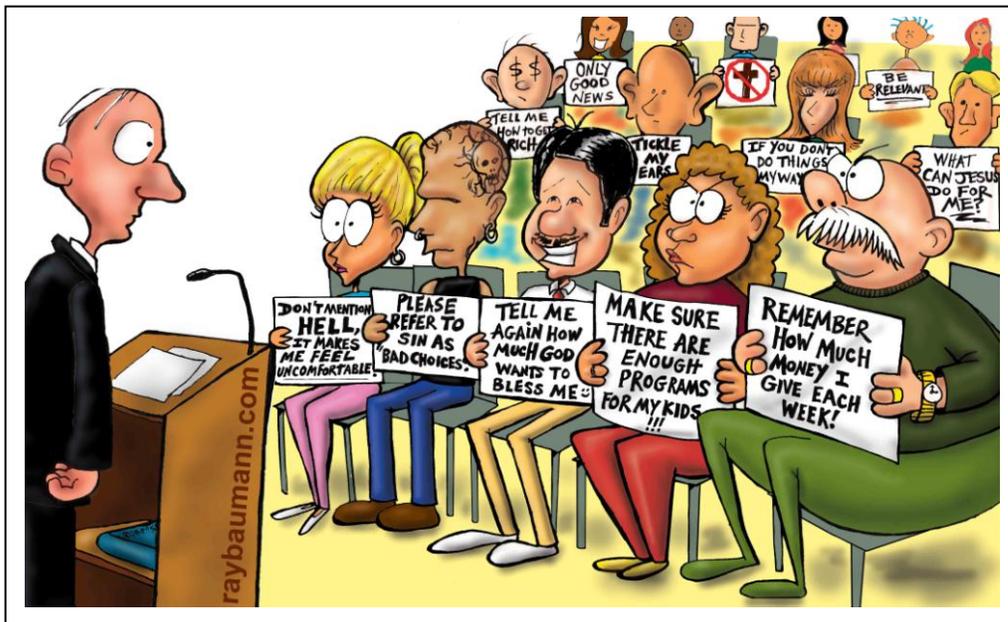
Isaiah 1:13-14 states, “Bring no more vain oblations; incense is an abomination unto me; the new moons and Sabbaths, the calling of assemblies...it is iniquity...Your new moons and your appointed feasts my soul hateth: they are a trouble unto me; I am weary to bear them.”

David prays to God in Psalm 40:6, “Sacrifice and offering thou didst not desire;... Burnt offering and sin offering hast thou not required.”

Amos 5:21 says, “I hate, I despise your feast days, and I will not smell (the odors of their sacrifices) in your solemn assemblies.”

Micah 6:6-8 includes; “Wherewith shall I come before the Lord and bow myself before the high God? Shall I come before him with burnt offerings, with calves of a year old? Will the lord be pleased with thousands of rams, or with ten thousands of rivers of oil? Shall I give my firstborn for my transgression, the fruit of my body for the sin of my soul? He hath showed thee, O man, what is good; and what doth the Lord require of thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God.”

“Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and he shall lift you up.” James 4:10.



You see, the Israelites of the Old Testament had forgotten the relationship with God and became dependent upon the religious system of works and sacrifice and offerings expecting spiritual redemption or to appease God. But in these passages we see God Himself saying, “I don’t care how you shake and dance, I’m not interested in your religious activities, I want your heart.” In fact that is exactly what He expresses here in Isaiah 29:13, “Forasmuch as this people draw near me with their mouth, and with their lips do honor me, but have removed their heart far from me...”. Jesus quoted this passage in Matt. 15:8-9 adding “...in vain do they worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men.”

Jesus says our doctrines, our religions, our commandments, our ways of worship are vain... are dead!

Jesus wants us to follow Him and HIS Gospel... not some “pick and choose” gospel or some “feel good” gospel or some “prosperity gospel” that man made up. Those who worship man’s religions are dead!

Imagine a pyramid which represents religion. The base is **guilt**, upon which is laid **fear**. Religion uses **guilt** and **fear** to incite **works** to **appease** which when applied results in **pride**.



Pride is the capstone of religion. Everyone is trying to work off their guilt and fear with their religious works, which creates pride. It is a bondage that Jesus confronted with a tongue lashing directed at the religious leaders of the day; the Pharisee's of Judaism. They sought to entrap and discredit Him and asked Jesus, (paraphrasing) "Why are your disciples disregarding our traditions..." Jesus answered, "**Why do you transgress the commandment of God by your tradition?... You hypocrites!**" (Matt 15:1-9)

Jesus really lets them have it in **Matthew 23**. Talking first to the people He said (paraphrasing), "**The scribes and Pharisees sit in high seats and bind heavy burdens upon you that they themselves won't even lift a finger to bear! They make themselves look pious before men so everyone will recognize their positions.**" Then turning on the religious leaders He calls them hypocrites, fools and blind, tombs full of dead men's bones. "**Every time you open your mouth death comes out!**" He called them snakes headed for the damnation of hell! These were the religious leaders! How many leaders today are dead like this! Is the leader you've chosen to lead you dead? Are they more interested in the "business" of ministry; in money; prestige; controlling people? Are they more interested in their own personal religious and social agenda (even though it looks good), rather than training and developing people to operate in the supernatural, according to God's agenda? Do they insist on being referred to by "their title" such as "pastor" or "bishop"? If so, these are the dead, pious Pharisees of today that are rebuked by God.

It is impossible to work your way into a relationship with God or work your way into heaven. You must be born into it. The second birth. The spiritual birth. Religion is not the answer. Religion is the problem.

There are people that think they're Christian because their parents are or because they have a Bible somewhere in their house or because they accepted Jesus once years ago. People think that if some "church" declares that something is OK, even sin, then it must be OK to God! One lady in her 60's had gone to the "roman catholic church" all her life but realized that she had never personally accepted Jesus as her Savior! She just thought she was somehow automatically a Christian! This is the blame of dead religious Pharisees of today, keeping people dead to Christ!

**"Having the appearance of godliness, but denying its power. Avoid such people." 2 Timothy 3:5**

So what kind of people should we be looking to for guidance; for mentoring; for fellowship? What kind of Christian should we be? There are many of God's Eagles we could examine, but let's look at Paul...

**"And I, when I came to you, brothers, did not come proclaiming to you the testimony of God with lofty speech or wisdom. For I decided to know nothing among you except Jesus Christ and him crucified. And I was with you in weakness and in fear and much trembling, and my speech and my message were not in plausible words of wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power, that your faith might not rest in the wisdom of men but in the power of God. ..." 1 Corinthians 2: 1-16**

Paul wasn't after fame; or self glory; or money. He was humble; only followed God's will; demonstrated the Spirit and power of God; turned people away from man's ways (dead religion) and taught others God's ways. Paul sought to develop people spiritually... to take them from death to life! We each need to do likewise... let's either raise the dead (especially those who think they're Christian); avoid the dead (**2 Timothy 3:5**) or expose the dead to warn others. Good Hunting!