

Title: DIFFERENCES BETWEEN RELIGION & SALVATION

Text: Acts 4:12

Intro: At certain seasons of the year, we find many religious celebrations being conducted. We find that the natural man wants to be religious. He will often do many pious things in hope that he is performing an act of worship and service to the Lord. But God in His word teaches that religion is not salvation! The Bible teaches that you can be very religious and still miss Heaven when you die!

Our text declares to us that there is no salvation in any other name than the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God. Our text says that there is none other name given under heaven whereby we can be saved. You are either saved by Jesus Christ or you are not saved at all! How clear and concise is our text! There should be neither confusion nor contradiction. Yes, there are many names under heaven in which we can find in religion but salvation can be found in one only, and that is the name of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Unfortunately, there is no salvation in prophets, apostles, priests, pastors, ministers, or any religious leaders but only in Jesus Christ. You may boast of your fine church buildings, large membership; be active in religious and charitable work, but all these are powerless to produce eternal life! People are so glad to be called Christians but also refuse to accept in their hearts the Lordship of the Christ of the Bible!

Let us now look at 12 unmistakable differences between man-made RELIGION and God-given SALVATION –

1. RELIGION is man's attempt of reforming his old sinful nature. SALVATION is God's work of transforming man's old sinful nature into that of a new divine nature (**II Pet. 1:4**).

2. RELIGION clothes us with the robes of our own self-righteousness (**Isa. 64:6; Rom. 10:3**). SALVATION clothes us in the perfect righteousness of God which is in Christ Jesus (**II Cor. 5:21; Phil. 3:9**).

3. RELIGION is what great things a man does for God (**Luke 18:10-14**); SALVATION is what great things God had done for man (**Psa. 126:3** cf. **Mark 5:19**).

4. RELIGION is the offering of man's imperfect work so God would accept him (see Cain in **Gen. 4**). SALVATION is the offering of God's perfect work so man would accept Him (**Psa. 111:2-3**).

5. RELIGION depends on man's working, SALVATION depends on man's believing (**Rom. 4:5**).

6. RELIGION says we must do our best. SALVATION says we must receive God's best (**Rom. 6:23; John 1:12**).

7. RELIGION relies fully on the sufficiency of man. SALVATION relies on the sufficiency of God (**II Cor. 3:5**).

8. RELIGION trusts in a repetitive, never-ending sacrifice of an earthly priest. SALVATION trusts in a finished and once for all sacrifice of our Heavenly Priest (**Heb. 10:10-12**).

9. RELIGION is firmly founded upon the traditions of men. SALVATION is firmly founded upon the word of the Lord (**Gal. 1:13-14; Mark 7:8-9**).

10. RELIGION is often concerned with that which pleases men. SALVATION by way of Gospel preaching pleases God (**I Cor. 1:21; I Thess. 2:4**).

11. RELIGION says we must believe in the church to be saved. SALVATION says we must believe on the Lord Jesus Christ alone to be saved (**Acts 15:11; 16:31**).

12. RELIGION is wishing and hoping to be saved in the future. SALVATION is knowing and being assured that you are already saved in the present (**Eph. 2:8; Tit. 3:5a**).

Conclusion: Again, may I remind you of our text in **Acts 4:12**....RELIGION or SALVATION? My friend, which one do you have? If you have salvation, you now have the promise of eternal life with God and His Son forevermore. This is God's very clear promise in **I John 5:11-13**. If you only have religion, then you will miss Heaven and spend eternity apart from God and His Son in a place of torment called Hell! Dear friend, you cannot escape the damnation of Hell if you neglect God's offer of salvation. God never promised that we would still be alive tomorrow. He has only guaranteed today as the opportune day and chance of your salvation!