

Does Your Religion Add to or Diminish From the Commandments of Jehovah?

Deuteronomy 4:2; Revelation 22:18-19

In Matthew 16:18 (nasv), the Lord affirmed, "I will build My church ; and the gates of Hades will not overpower it." Although the Lord was to die, he would accomplish the work he came to do.

In Matthew 28:18-20, "¹⁸ Jesus came up and spoke to them, saying, All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. ¹⁹ Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, ²⁰ teaching them to observe all that I commanded you; and lo, I am with you always , even to the end of the age."

In reference to the message of the gospel, and the work of the apostles in executing it, He said, "You did not choose Me but I chose you, and appointed you that you would go and bear fruit, and that your fruit would remain, so that whatever you ask of the Father in My name He may give to you" (John 15:16).

Concerning this "fruit," Jesus, in His prayer to the Father, said, "Sanctify them in the truth; Your word is truth. ¹⁸ As You sent Me into the world, I also have sent them into the world. ¹⁹ For their sakes I sanctify Myself, that they themselves also may be sanctified in truth. ²⁰ I do not ask on behalf of these alone, but for those also who believe in Me through their word; ²¹ that they may all be one; even as You, Father, are in Me and I in You, that they also may be in Us, so that the world may believe that You sent Me" (John 17:18-21).

When the truth of the gospel went forth into the world, "⁴¹ those who had received his word were baptized; and that day there were added about three thousand souls. ⁴² They were continually devoting themselves to the apostles' teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer." Those who received the truth of the gospel entered into a unique relationship with one another, and received a "name" that distinguished them from the rest of the world: "²⁵ And he left for Tarsus to look for Saul ; ²⁶ and when he had found him, he brought him to Antioch. And for an entire year they met with the church and taught considerable numbers ; and **the disciples were first called Christians** in Antioch" (Acts 2).

As was stated by the Lord, this message and it's corresponding result, of making "Christians" out of those who obeyed, was to be unhampered by world events or devices of men, for the Lord said, "I chose you, and appointed you that you would go and bear fruit, and that your fruit would remain" (Jn. 15:16).

The Bible makes its claim to be divine in origin: this claim, in and of its self, behooves us to consider what it says. Religions today, that have established their own righteousness, do not “subject themselves to the righteousness of God” (Romans 10:2-3) and appeal to the writings of men for the validity of their doctrine and practice. We encourage you to investigate the only writings that provide man with a foundation of hope and reconciliation to God. As you consider your spiritual well-being, ask yourself the question, “By what authority does my religion exist?” “How did my religion begin, and what belief structure does it take to be what I am?”

Individuals get defensive when their religion’s beliefs are questioned. In the majority of cases, individuals are simply following the religion their parents followed, and “if it was good enough for my parents, or grandparents, it’s good enough for me,” is often the path many will follow. What we must come to grips with is that religion is not about “us”: it’s about our relationship with God, and what God would have us do so we can lead a life acceptable in the eyes of our Creator, and bring glory to His name. Religion is not about what I think, or how I feel, but one that says to God, “Speak; for thy servant heareth” (1 Samuel 3:10). ret