

An Introduction to World Religions

Comparing World Religions Study

ELM GROVE BAPTIST CHURCH

January 9, 2011

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- **What is religion?**
 - The aspect of one's experience in which he attempts to live harmoniously with the power or powers he believes are controlling the world
- **What is a cult/false religion?**
 - A perversion, a distortion of biblical Christianity and/or a rejection of the historic teachings of the Christian church (biblical truth)
- **What might other religions teach?**
 - Jesus was not God
 - Jesus was created by God
 - There are three separate gods: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, not one God in three persons
 - Jesus is not necessary because there is no sin
 - The virgin birth is a myth or irrelevant
 - Jesus was not raised bodily from the dead
 - Jesus was a great prophet, but not God
 - There are many ways to God, not just one
 - Jesus is not necessary because people must pay for their own sins
 - Jesus died for sins, but people can't be saved unless they obey all the teachings of the church
 - Jesus is God, but less than God the father
 - Jesus was just a man
 - Jesus is not the only son of God
 - Jesus will never come again
 - The Bible is not the inspired, inerrant Word of God
- **Ten Tests for Truth in Religion**
 - The God Test
 - Does the group in question recognize the one God of the Bible as the true God, the God who is the almighty Creator of heaven and earth?
 - Does the group believe in the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ?
 - Does the religion believe that God is Father, Son, and Holy Spirit?
 - The Jesus Test
 - Does the group in question exalt Jesus Christ as the only eternal Savior, as the only eternal Son of God?
 - Does the particular religion look to Jesus as the final revelation of God?
 - Does it consider Jesus to be God incarnate?
 - The Bible Test
 - Does the group really follow the Bible?
 - Are the clear and dominant teachings of Scripture believed?

- Are the many and varied commands of the Bible obeyed?
- Does the particular religion or denomination add to, take away from, or ignore God's Word?
- The Love Test
 - Does the group in question follow the high moral standard of the Old and New Testaments?
 - Is love central to the group, and is it really practiced by the leaders and members?
 - Does the particular religion illustrate that love is seen as the chief goal by loving both God and their neighbors?
- The Spirit Test
 - Does the group show a desire for following the Holy Spirit?
 - Does a desire for purity and authentic spirituality exist?
 - Do signs of legalism or shallow ritualism pervade the culture of the particular movement?
- The Freedom Test
 - Does the group offer real freedom to individuals?
 - Do the religious leaders offer psychological wholeness?
 - Does the religious group advocate a sexuality that honors biblical teaching about sex?
 - Is your money safe in this group?
- The Psychological Test
 - Is the specific religious group mentally healthy?
 - Are the leaders arrogant and proud?
 - Does the group allow self-criticism?
 - Do the leaders show signs of grandiosity and paranoia?
- The Social Test
 - Does the group care for the social well-being of individuals?
 - Are its leaders doing anything practical to address poverty, disease, and injustice?
- The Prophetic Test
 - Have the leaders of the group claimed prophetic status and made false prophecies?
- The Rational Test
 - Are the specific teachings of the religion true?
 - Does the group respect wisdom and reason, or do the leaders teach wild and erroneous ideas?
 - Does a given idea seem reasonable, in keeping with the path of wisdom and truth?
 - Is the specific claim of a religious leader, in fact, true?

Sources:

Handbook of Today's Religions by Josh McDowell & Don Stewart

Nelson's Illustrated Guide to Religions, edited by James A. Beverley

World Religions and What People Believe by Bryan McNally

So What's the Difference? by Fritz Ridenour

The Kingdom of the Cults by Walter Martin