

## ROMANS 02: 17–29 RELIGIONISTS

A religionist is a person who is interested in religion and professes religion. It was because of the Jews' extreme interest in religion that they were looked upon as the epitome of religionists. However, most people are considered religious and profess some religion regardless of nationality. Therefore, most people can be called religionists. There are two classes of religionists.

1. There are those who feel they are good enough for God as they are, that they are doing enough good for God to accept them. They cannot believe that God would reject them when they stand face to face with Him. True, they do wrong, but not that much wrong, not enough for God to reject and condemn them for eternity. These persons go about living as they wish, worshipping God only enough to satisfy their consciences. The vast, vast majority of people are in this class of self-righteousness. Few men believe they will be rejected by God and refused entrance into heaven. They feel they have enough goodness to make them acceptable to God.

*Titus 3:5* He saved us, not because of righteous things we had done, but because of his mercy. He saved us through the washing of rebirth and renewal by the Holy Spirit.

*Prov 20:6* Many a man claims to have unfailing love, but a faithful man who can find?

*Prov 30:12* Those who are pure in their own eyes and yet are not cleansed of their filth.

2. There are those who have a sensitive conscience and feel the need to give themselves to good works as much as is humanly possible. They work and do good in order to secure the favour of God. They believe that good works is what it takes to make them righteous and to build them up in the eyes of God. Therefore, they labour all their lives trying to build up virtue and merit before God. They try their best to make themselves acceptable to God.

*Gal 2:16* Know that a man is not justified by observing the law, but by faith in Jesus Christ. So we, too, have put our faith in Christ Jesus that we may be justified by faith in Christ and not by observing the law, because by observing the law no one will be justified.

*Rom 3:20* Therefore no one will be declared righteous in his sight by observing the law; rather, through the law we become conscious of sin.

*Eph 2:8-9* For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith — and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God — not by works, so that no one can boast.

Note that a genuine believer is not being classified as a religionist. The reason is pointed: the true believer does not follow a religion; he follows Jesus Christ. Jesus Christ is alive; He is living in another world — the spiritual world, the spiritual dimension of being. The believer is in touch with Him daily, communicating through the Holy Spirit and prayer. What the believer does is follow Christ; he lives the life of Jesus Christ, not the rules of a religion. Therefore, the genuine believer is a disciple of Christ, not of religion.

***Gal 2:20*** *I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me. The life I live in the body, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me.*

***Eph 2:22*** *And in him [Christ] you too are being built together to become a dwelling in which God lives by his Spirit.*

***Phil 1:21*** *For to me, to live is Christ and to die is gain.*

***Col 1:27*** *To them God has chosen to make known among the Gentiles the glorious riches of this mystery, which is Christ in you, the hope of glory.*

***1 John 3:24*** *Those who obey his commands live in him, and he in them. And this is how we know that he lives in us: We know it by the Spirit he gave us.*

***Rev 3:20*** *Here I am! I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in and eat with him, and he with me. □*