

THE PATHFINDER

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HALLMARKS OF RELIGION

Religious practice was initiated during the early hours after man was driven into the dark of night outside the bright day of paradise. For the most part, that seed of religion was to either appease an angry God, to regain a listening ear from Him, or to show love and reverence to their creator.

In the Garden of Eden man was in communion with that Source, and it wasn't until after their expulsion that two brothers formed the first couple of religions. Cain brought to the Lord an offering of the **fruit of the ground**, of which the LORD rejected. Abel brought the **firstlings of his flock and the fat thereof**, and his was accepted. **Genesis 4:3-4.**

Although no reason is given why one's offering was accepted while the other's wasn't, it is believed that the condition of Cain's heart was the issue. Regardless, it seems that Abel's religious ceremony was pure religion from above, while Cain's was not.

There is something in man as a whole that had him grasping for his roots, wanting to touch that from where he came. The human creature innately knows he came from something greater than himself, and there is a burning desire to reconnect with Him. Religious practices has, therefore, been the primary mode of attempting to make that connection.

Since its inception, religion has been sewn into the fabric of every tribe, culture and nation with each having its own specific character and form. To name a few: *Hinduism, Buddhism, Islam, Judaism*, and, of course, *Christianity* which has countless denominations under her roof. It seems as if a book has been written by a mystery writer upon every heart and each soul which is driving a force that causes them to search for and feel after its author, expect, perhaps, atheists. However, even though they disavow the existence a God, they have a religion, and it is humanism, the worship of man who they esteem to be the highest level of existence. But for today, that is a mute point and we'll not say more about the obvious self-aggrandized delusion.

It is in man's nature to gather together with those of like beliefs. It is also in his nature to rule over those who have gathered, and the strong are the ones who rise to the top and guide or drive the others; thus, religious orders are formed whether small in numbers or great, and they all have their unswayed beliefs and points of faith. The extremes to which the churches and their leaders have gone in order to protect and justify those beliefs are fascinating.

History has shown that coercion, greed, lust, and propaganda were the order of the day when the major items of doctrine were being invented and practiced. What the early church held as truth, many doctrines went way beyond them, and still remain to this day.

Regardless of who is reigning over the flocks, or what sect it might be, religion is one of the most loved as well as the most hated things on the face of the earth. The members of religious organizations generally love their church and creeds with all their might, and sometimes with such love that it appears to be greater than the love they have for their wife/husband and children or anyone else. This must be true, for we know people whose religion is foremost in their lives. It virtually towers over all things.

Hatred toward Christian religions and their members is very common today, and reflecting on some of its infamous history, this is understandable. Throughout the ages, many religions were the cause of wars, and it is no secret that

millions have been persecuted, imprisoned, tortured, and martyred by religious factions, and Christianity is not exempt from this evil lineup. This includes Catholic and Protestant alike.

One such Catholic atrocity took place in 1209 A.D. in Béziers, France. Arnaud Amalric (later to become archbishop of Narbonne) was named a papal legate and inquisitor and was sent by Pope Innocent the III with Peter of Castelnau to attempt the conversion of the Albigensians. Failing in this, he distinguished himself by the zeal with which he incited men by his preaching to the crusade against these heretics. He was in charge of the crusader army that sacked Béziers.

When it was discovered that there were Catholics mingled with the heretics, Arnaud Amalric, was asked: "Sir, what shall we do, for we cannot distinguish between the faithful and the heretics." The abbot is said to have replied "Kill them all and let God sort them out." So they killed everyone, even those who fled into the church. No cross or altar or crucifix could save them. They killed the clergy too, as well as the women and children. From 10,000 to 20,000 were slaughtered that day, and this was done in the *name* of God. Events such as this are easily seen for what they are; at least those who have not been thoroughly seduced and hardwired by the spirit of religion. Unfortunately, the works and words of the serpent are not always so obvious.

For instance, the Catholics' rule of law forbidding priests to marry. The Church was a thousand years old when it took a stand in favor of celibacy. This took place at the Second Lateran Council held in 1139, when a rule was approved forbidding priests to marry. In 1563, the Council of Trent reaffirmed the rule of celibacy.

Several explanations have been offered for the decision of the Church to adopt celibacy. Barry University's Ed Sunshine said that the policy was initiated to distinguish the clergy as a special group, that a celibate clergy became the paradigm of separation from the sinful world. A.W. Richard Sipe, a former priest and author of *Sex, Priests and Power: The Anatomy of Crisis* (1995), said that "...the question at the time was who is the final power—the king or the church. If [the church] could control a person's sex life, it could control their money, their employment, their benefice." Garry Wills suggested in *Under God* that the ban on marriage was adopted to lift the status of priests at a time when their authority was being challenged by nobles and others. <https://historynewsnetwork.org/article/696>

Such is a mere glimpse at the richest, most powerful religion in the world; but each has its own way of controlling the people of whom they rule. One of the earmarks of quite a number of Protestant religions is *their perpetual war against Satan*. This *Satan* is usually viewed by them as having to do with sins of the flesh, such as drunkenness, drug addiction, adultery, prostitution, homosexuality, rape, incest, murder, and the likes. This devil is accused of tempting men, women, and children to commit mild sins such as telling little *white* lies as well as mortal sins. But let us be reminded of what one of the apostles said: "Blessed is the man that endureth temptation: for when he is tried, he shall receive the crown of life, which the Lord hath promised to them that love him. Let no man say when he is tempted, I am tempted of God: for God cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempteth he any man: But **every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed.**" **James 1:12-14.**

So you see, the temptations of lust may be enhanced by the devil, but its origin is ***from a man's own lust, which is rooted in his own nature, his own carnal mind.*** The apostle did, however, say something of the devil one time in his letter, but it had to do with ones lust of *envy (jealousy, pride)*. He wrote: "Submit yourselves therefore to God. **Resist the devil, and he will flee from you.**" **James 4:7.** the devil he warned about in this verse had nothing to do with lust of the flesh but religious or worldly jealousy.

In conjunction with that which he said about temptation being that of man's own lust, Paul said much the same, but drew it out as a personal ongoing war, and throughout those dreadful battles neither did he cite the devil! Let us see as we read from his own testimony:

"For we know that the law is spiritual: but **I am carnal**, sold under sin. For that which I do I allow not: for what I would, that do I **not**; but **what I hate, that do I**. If then I do that which I would not, I consent unto the law that it is good. Now then **it is no more I that do it**, but **sin that dwelleth in me**. For I know that **in me [that is, in my flesh,] dwelleth no good thing**: for to will is present with me; but how to perform that which is good I find not. For the good that would I do not: but **the evil** which I would not, that **I do**. Now if I do that I

would not, **it is no more I that do it**, but **sin that dwelleth in me**. I find then a law, that, when I would do good, **evil is present with me** [*evil, not the devil*]. For I delight in the law of God after the **inward man** [*must be an outward man*]: But I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to **the law of sin which is in my members** [*sin, not the devil*]. **O wretched man that I am!** who shall deliver me from **the body of this death?** I thank God **through Jesus Christ our Lord**. So then **with the mind I myself serve the law of God; but with the flesh the law of sin.** **Romans 7:14-25.**

Most can identify with Paul's struggle between serving God's law of life and the law of sin and death. Even after reading his answer to it, that the war would be won through Jesus Christ, they are still troubled. Understanding that this victory will eventually come is great; but not knowing the dynamics of the war makes it very difficult to experience the victory.

It is not our purpose at this time to go into detail concerning these battles, only to say that there are two minds at war against the other: the spiritual mind in the heavens that desires that which has its origin in Jesus, and the carnal mind that desires that which has its origin in Adam, the earth.

Can it get any clearer than this? It is the natural, carnal man, and body of flesh that is the culprit wherein lies the lust and sin. There was no devil lurking around every corner waiting for Paul to drop his guard so he could draw this righteous man of God into temptation that would perhaps land him into the arms of a harlot. If by some remote chance that Paul had done something like that, it would have been due to having been drawn away by his own lusts, not the luring temptations of Satan. Please know, brethren, the body of flesh coupled with the carnal mind needs no outside help from anyone, not even the devil.

Some may question: "If this is true, just how does this enemy fit into the scheme of things? And if he is not tempting people to stomp on their own moral characters, and he is not influencing despots to slaughter millions, including babies, what is Satan's role in the affairs of man?"

The truth has been speaking to us from the scriptures for centuries; but *religion* has done a remarkable job of blinding their subjects from seeing what it is, and the façade has made it way into the world.

When the scriptures speak of either ***Satan, the devil, or the serpent***, each one always has to do with spiritual matters between man and God, and it is apparent that the primary objective is to sever our bond between Him and us. When this is done, man becomes his own god and sole provider of his livelihood and destiny, which ultimately ends in destruction and death.

Before continuing, let us note that our English word, *Satan*, is the *transliterated* Hebrew word "*satan*." It is the same word and is pronounced *saw-tawn*, which means "***opponent or adversary***".

In the Hebrew language, as it is in English, proper names neither have a definite article (the) nor an indefinite article (a/an) associated with it. For example, Margit is the name of my darling wife, and no definite or indefinite article is ever used in connection with her name. We never call her *the* Margit, but simply Margit. However, if we spoke of her gender, we might say *the* woman's name is Margit, but never, the woman's name is *the* Margit. It just does not work that way, neither in today's English nor in times past of the Greek or Hebrew scriptures.

The Hebrew word, *satan*, of the Old Testament occurs 19 times, and the Greek, *satanas*, in the New Testament 37 times. Each instance is with a definite or indefinite article, never once as a proper name. Therefore, ***the satan***, or ***a satan*** is not the **Name** of ***an opponent*** but indicates that a certain entity is ***an opponent***. For example, ***God Himself*** was called ***a satan***, not *Satan* as a proper name, but ***a satan, an opponent or adversary***: "And he was **an adversary** [Hebrew: *a satan*] to Israel all the days of Solomon...." **1 Kings 11:25.**

In both the Old Testament and New Testament, ***satan*** is a term that never refers to a named individual and should, therefore, be correctly ***translated*** rather than ***transliterated*** as a proper noun. Whether intentionally or out of ignorance, by transliterating ***a satan*** as ***Satan***, a grave injustice has been done.

People are in error when they link all the evil in the world to *Satan*; for outside of religion and God using this *opponent* as a chastening rod of judgment, worldly evil is generated by the carnal mind of man and should not be

associated with the devil. Please search this out on your own; but I have found no place in the Bible where it states that a *personage* of *Satan* has nothing to do with anything but religion and judgment. This devil is the lying master of man's religion, the father of it, with the primary role of severing people from their living God by saying "Eat of this religious tree. You will like it."

This serpentine devil deceives them by transforming himself into an angel of light, so much so, that multitudes submit routinely to its doctrines, rituals, pompist regalia, teachers, preachers, pastors, bishops, and popes. What a tree from which to dine. Roloids or baking soda won't help the acid reflux that it brings about.

The devil's ground work and inspiration is rooted in the carnal mind. This enemy is not a two-horned diabolic monster who is in charge of torturing billions in sulfuric flames of hell, as this transducer has been portrayed. As it is with his offspring, the Pharisees, this nefarious creature is very religious, and is one you would want to be your neighbor.

Oh, you thought Satan worked in dives of immorality and crack-houses, or he drew his servants into heinous rituals under the cloak of darkness, and he thirsts for the blood of babies that is poured upon crude altars with upside-down pentagrams carved in them as impish demons gleefully dance around midnight fires! Brethren, if that is your image of *Satan* and his followers, you have been grossly misled, and I challenge you to produce one scripture that remotely relates to such foolishness. People surely do such things in the misnomer name of "*Lucifer*" but it does not make is so.

You may draw our attention to the babies that were sacrificed to Molech; but that was a heathen practice of people who did not know God, and having been totally carnal, their world was in the pit of ignorance and fear. Israel was enticed to join them in their idol worship, which they often did. Even so, this was inspired by *the spirit of religion—a satan*. It was a religious practice, and it served its purpose very well by keeping the people very far from their living God, and there were no indications that immoral lusts of the flesh were litigating influences.

Simply put, the scriptures do not indicate to any degree that this adversary is the instrument that tempts people to immoral things of the flesh in individuals' lives. Nor do they suggest the devil is the root of famines, drug addiction, prostitution, and murder throughout the world. Frankly, the devil is much more sinister and covert than this. Even though religious men and regimes involve themselves in these things, it is the carnal mind that brings them into the picture, not the serpent.

For instance, do we see any of these characteristics in the beginning when he became the first liar, the father of the lie, and murderer—*not a murderer like we see of those in the streets in Juarez, Mexico by the drug cartels*, but a murderer just the same? He did not come to Eve with an *AK-47* in a rage of violence, but in serenity, speaking soft words of logic that gave her cause to doubt God, thereby, indicating that God may have lied.

Let us list a few times that Satan had a role to play and see that it had nothing to do with tempting people to inordinate sex, murder, rape, adultery, incest, and the likes, but had everything to do with false religion:

1. The first record of this opponent is in the third chapter of Genesis and is portrayed as a subtle serpent that persuades Eve to eat the fruit from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. She then gave it to her husband to eat. This in turn resulted in them having been separated from God in the same manner that religious legalism will do. It was man's way of being like God by his own hand, wit, and might. Self-righteousness!
2. It was not until 1 Chronicles that the word, *satan*, was first used. This instance caused David to trust in numbers rather than God: "And Satan stood up against Israel, and provoked David to number Israel. And David said to Joab and to the rulers of the people, go, number Israel from Beersheba even to Dan; and bring the number of them to me, that I may know it." ***1 Chronicles 21:1-2***. David's act was a religious one that may have been prompted by fear. When there are enemies at your backdoor that could potentially take your kingdom, the adversary of fear can be a strong motivating factor to trust in the arm of flesh, horses and chariots, and vast numbers watching your back. Or if not fear, the adversary could be pride, being lifted in oneself due to having such a mega church of 10,000 or more members. When kings or preachers count their members, it can lead to self-sufficiencies and the lack of need for God. This is religion, and it will surely sever men from their fellowship with God. In essence, it is telling Him that now that He has brought them this far, we don't need You. We can do the rest on our own; for with such numbers, we cannot fail.

3. The third time the word, *Satan*, is mentioned makes it very clear that it is a religious event. It is in the first chapter of Job when the sons of God presented themselves before the LORD, and *Satan* (The Septuagint has ὁ διάβολος *the devil*) came among them. What a Spirit-filled church conference that must have been! Imagine the sons of God coming together in one place, and, no doubt, in one mind and in one accord! Not only then, but to our present day, this is where you can count on the religious foe to show up in full regalia for the trial of the saints' lives. With the adversary's hand upon Job, religion began its due process. The heavens became silent, all was lost, his boil-ridden body was a painful, loathsome mess; thus some of the fruits of the whispering serpent.

We will not go into detail; but there are other places of the Old Testament that *this satan* is called into service; such as, in Psalms 109:6-7 where the wicked who came against David were condemned and *a satan* was a part of it. And then in Zechariah 3:1-2 *the adversary* resisted Joshua. In the New Testament, the fourth chapter of Matthew, the third chapter of Mark, and Luke the fourth chapter is the record of the devil tempting Jesus in the wilderness. In 2 Corinthians 11:14 we are told that he transforms himself into an angel of light and his ministers into righteousness. In doing so, they would appear to be very holy and with Christ-like illumination. But in all this, and the other references of "*Satan*," there is not one place where he tempts people to commit adultery, homosexuality, promiscuity, pornography or sins that find their roots in the flesh.

You see, *the satan* is very *religious*. It is the realm in which he works. Some, however, may contest this by quoting Jesus' words from ***John 8:44***—"Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts [*longing*] of your father ye will do. He was **a murderer from the beginning**, and abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own: for **he is a liar**, and the father of it." However, if you will notice, Jesus was speaking to the religious Pharisees and was not saying that their natural birth was from some sort of diabolical conception in their mother's wombs. We all know that He was speaking of spiritual matters, that the religious spirit by which they lived and imposed on others was that of the adversary which is always opposed to Jesus Christ. That is simply the nature of the carnal mind.

The first lie ever told was instrumental in the first murder in the history of mankind, and it had to do with religion, that is, man's relationship to God. It was committed by the serpent when he told the woman that she would be like God and not die if she ate the fruit from the tree she and her husband were commanded not to eat. She was drawn away from God and enticed as she began to believe the lie. ***When her lust*** (Grk. *epitumia*, **longing**) ***had been conceived, it brought forth sin, and when the sin was finished, it brought forth death*** ***James 1:15***, and finally to her physical body after death had finished its course a few hundred years later. The second murder was when Cain killed his brother Abel, which was also a religious murder due to sacrifices offered to God and His acceptance of Abel's sacrifice, and rejection of Cain's.

It is realized that even in light of what the scriptures say, or do not say, such a thought is inconceivable to some; for there is a certain mystical intrigue about a devil, and many are reluctant to release their fabled grip on him. For them to not believe in Satan as a fallen angel the way they have been taught would be almost an unforgivable blasphemy. Sadly, but it is true, it is not unusual for Christian people to view their beliefs about *Satan* as sacred as their beliefs about God, and to forsake such would be unthinkable.

Notwithstanding, rather than those age-old, religious images being real, this enemy goes about as a roaring lion devouring everybody possible. This is done by arraying himself with religious garments and acting righteous. With such a non-threatening appearance, people are easily drawn into those religious lairs. Once this is done, those proselytized are made two-fold more the sons of religious hell than their leaders, as Jesus accused them of doing in ***Matthew 23:15***. Although the pretense is to bring people closer to God, everything about the **imposters* steers people away from Him. This enemy is steadily deceiving them by replacing a living relationship in Christ Jesus with legalism, rituals, programs, and unprofitable works. To put it plainly—they are eating deadly fruit of religion from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.

***Please note: We believe that most of the *imposters* do not know they are believing and teaching lies. They are just as deceived as their congregations. Some, however, know what the truth is, but refuse to teach it.**

Religion is an interesting word. It comes from the "Latin, *religio* which means, *to bind anew; re and ligo, to bind again*. This word seems originally to have signified an oath or vow to the gods, or the obligation of such an oath or vow, which was held very sacred by the Romans." Webster's 1828 Dictionary.

Although ignorance of knowing the true God was common place with the Romans, they were just as bound as if they had been captured by an enemy, shackled by chains, and cast into prison. The apostle Paul said something along these lines when he wrote: "Which things have indeed a shew of wisdom in **will worship**, and humility, and neglecting of the body; **not in any honour** to the satisfying of the flesh." **Colossians 2:23**. They became bound again in their *will worship*.

The Greek used for *will worship* is a compound word, *ethelothrēskeia*. The Strong's definition is: "*voluntary (arbitrary and unwarranted) piety, that is, sanctimony.*" And to be reminded, *sanctimony* is the quality of being *hypocritically* devout. Such is clear evidence that they have been *bound again* to the carnal man.

Peter said that they were *willingly ignorant* of the word of God. **2 Peter 3:5**. They were twice bound by their religion of rejecting the truth that would make them free.

There is a *pure religion*, James wrote about it, saying, "**Pure religion** and undefiled before God and the Father is this, To visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep himself unspotted from the world." **James 1:27**. This type of religion is ministering to the fatherless and widows, caring for them as if they are your own, and that comes by being joined to the Lord (*re-ligo, bound again*).

If we are *bound again*, when were we *bound before*? I believe it was when we were created in Him before the foundations of the earth were laid. Therefore, *the only way the sons of God can be religious is to be bound again to He in Whom we were originally created, and that religion is a holy union. It is pure! It has nothing whatsoever with going to church and being exercised in routine religious practices!* However, this union in Christ can be experienced during church services; but going through the motions is not what causes it. Going through the motions alone is being *religious/bound again* to that which is of the old man.

The English words, *religious* and/or *religion*, are used a total seven times in the Bible and are all in the New Testament. They come from three Greek words: *sebomai* (once), *Ioudaismos* (twice), and *thrēskeia* (4 times).

Sebomai means *to revere, adore* and is used in **Acts 13:43**, "Now when the congregation was broken up, many of the Jews and **religious** proselytes followed Paul and Barnabas: who, speaking to them, persuaded them to continue in the grace of God." It is not clear to whom *reverence/adoration* was directed, to God or to Paul and Barnabas; but it is obvious that "*religious*" is not the best English word to have been used here.

In both cases where *Ioudaismos* is used is in reference to the **Jews religion**, or **Judaism**. *Thrēskeia*, the **religion** we are mostly addressing today, always speaks of an **outward demonstration** of *ceremonious* worship, according to Strong's Exhaustive Concordance. Thayer's Greek Dictionary confirms this by saying: "*especially external, that which consists of ceremonies...religious discipline....*"

The root word for *thrēskeia* is *throeō* and means: *to wail, to clamor, that is, to frighten*. Do we know anything that produces more wailing souls, clamoring to appear righteous, and striking fear into the hearts of people than religion? I can think of none. For instance, Islam is a religion that incites a tremendous amount of fear. We have read reports and seen news clips of the atrocities committed by the leaders and the men toward their wives and children. They recruit children, teens, young men, and sometimes women to become suicide bombers that kill and maim hundreds, thousands.

These unspeakable things are all done in the name of Allah, and supposedly for His glory. It is difficult for us to understand how people could remain in such a religion, or if not born into it, how could they willingly join it? Fear! Out of fear! Fear of eternal torment in the afterlife and/or fear of the religion's wrath upon them if they leave or disobey. Non-Muslims, especially Christians, condemn this system of unbendable, merciless laws and arcane beliefs, and rightly so. For *the adversary* is a master in that religion as well. Those members are also *twice bound*. However, their doctrine of eternal torment in unquenchable fire is very much the same. You will notice that the following quotes from their Koran sound very much like the beliefs of various Christian denominations:

"Even so God shall show them their works. O bitter regrets for them! **Never shall they issue from the Fire. S. 2:167**"

"As to those who reject Faith, - if they had everything on earth, and twice repeated, to give as ransom for the penalty of the Day of Judgment, it would never be accepted of them, theirs would be a grievous penalty. **Their wish will be to get out of the Fire, but never will they leave:** their penalty will be one that endures. **S. 5:36-37**"

"Such is the requital of the enemies of Allah, **the Fire: therein will be for them the Eternal Home.... S. 41:28**"

"If they accuse thee of falsehood, say: 'Your Lord is full of mercy all-embracing; but from people in guilt **never will His wrath be turned back.**' **S. 6:147**"

Sounds very familiar, doesn't it? And it should; for that diabolical doctrine has been flooding the souls of men since Jerome wrote the Latin Vulgate around 400 A.D. It was in that Latin version of the Bible that the Greek and Hebrew words, *aion*, and *olam* (*an age* or *eon*), were first translated *aeternum* (*eternal*) rather than *aetatis* (*an age* or *eon*) as it should have been. Augustine (354-430 A.D), the Bishop of Hippo in North Africa, accepted Jerome's Latin translation as being true, and was also responsible for making Hell eternal in the Western Church. He did not know Hebrew or Greek, and his ignorance of those languages helped to cement him in the concept of Jerome's *eternal hell*. Augustine not only said that Hell was eternal for the wicked but also for anyone who wasn't a Christian. So complete was his thought of God's exclusion of non-Christians that he considered un-baptized babies were also damned. (Ref. The Salvation Conspiracy: How Hell Became Eternal by Dr. Ken R. Vincent).

The concept of eternal hell spread and was embraced throughout the Roman Catholic church which was also a common belief with all the pagan religions in the middle east. It is, therefore, no small wonder that Islam's prophet, Muhammad, broadcasted the same in his Koran, as the angel, Jibril/Gabriel, supposedly revealed to him verbally. Think of that! Muhammad was most likely influenced by the church of Rome, and he used the similar tactics that worked for it to gain control over those of the Arab world, Ishmael's decedents. There is another story here, but it will have to wait.

We noted four verses from the Koran that speak of God's vengeful, unforgiving, wrathful judgment of eternal flames and torment upon unbelievers. The Christian community has their share of like-minded men. They have also instilled the spirit of fear in the hearts of the people, and we do not have to look far to find them. For example:

Jonathan Edwards (Newspapers reported people leaving his sermons and committing suicide from the fear he instilled in them.):

"The world will probably be converted into a great lake or liquid globe of fire, in which the wicked shall be overwhelmed, which will always be in tempest, in which they shall be tossed to and fro, having no rest day and night, vast waves and billows of fire continually rolling over their heads, of which they shall forever be full of a quick sense within and without; their heads, their eyes, their tongues, their hands, their feet, their loins and their vitals, shall forever be full of a flowing, melting fire, fierce enough to melt the very rocks and elements; and also, they shall eternally be full of the most quick and lively sense to feel the torments; not for one minute, not for one day, not for one age, not for two ages, not for a hundred ages, nor for ten thousand millions of ages, one after another, but forever and ever, without any end at all, and never to be delivered.

"Here all judges have a mixture of mercy, but the wrath of God will be poured out upon the wicked without mixture. Imagine yourself to be cast into a fiery oven...and imagine also that your body were to lie there for a quarter of an hour, full of fire, as full within and without as a bright coal fire, all the while full of quick sense; what horror would you feel at the entrance of such a furnace? Oh! Then how would your heart sink if you knew that after millions and millions of ages your torment would be no nearer to an end than ever it was. But your torment in hell will be immensely greater than this illustration represents." The Works of Jonathan Edwards -1785

"It is not a terrible thing to a wretched soul, when it shall lie roaring perpetually in the flames of hell, and the God of mercy himself shall laugh at them; when...God shall mock them instead of relieving them; when

none in heaven or earth can help them but God, and he shall rejoice over them in their calamity" *Richard Baxter "The Saint's Everlasting Rest"- 1846.*

"Forever harassed with a dreadful tempest, they shall feel themselves torn asunder by an angry God, and transfixed and penetrated by mortal stings, terrified by the thunderbolts of God, and broken by the weight of his hand, so that to sink into any gulf would be more tolerable than to stand for a moment in these terrors. *John Calvin (Who had some of his theological enemies burned to death in green slow-burning wood.)*

"There is the cup of trembling and of wrath. Your hands must take it, your mouth must drink it. But you can never drain it. There is no last drop. Infinite vengeance ever fills it to the brim. Eternal wrath is ever bringing more. What is the curse? It is the endless accumulation of all the miseries which God's resources can command and God's power can inflict. It is the fiery torrent from the lake of fire. It is the pain which cannot be keener, despair which cannot be blacker, and anguish which cannot be more bitter. It is eternity in the oneness of all torment." *Dean of Gloucester - Christ In All.*

"It would be difficult to measure the waters of the sea; but it is impossible to reckon the ages of a boundless eternity. After millions of years it have will only begun. God's wrath in hell will be always 'wrath to come.' Many are so tossed in this world but they have some rest. There are few tempests without some lull between the storm. But there is no pause in that storm which falls upon the inhabitants of hell." *Bishop Oxenden—Late Metropolitan of Canada: Great Truths*

For many more similar quotes, go to: <http://www.tentmaker.org/Quotes/hell-fire.htm>

Man's religion is truly a work of the serpent. It is designed to focus people's attention and energy on an unchanging, uncompromising, fearful, yet benevolent God who created the human race for the sake of companionship. He then supposedly imposed a set of laws on them that are impossible to keep, and if broken, which surely will be, they will suffer unimaginable, unending punishment.

This has proven to be effective in keeping the members of most religions in a continual state of fear and submission. Many are afraid to question the supposed intentions of God, and in many cases, they become almost robotic to their indoctrination. Many are afraid to even express their frustration as well as their own individuality. Christians, and others it seems, are taught that their purpose for existence is to pray, worship God, and to do good deeds. Almost everyone will say that they wished the sinners would not have to suffer in hell throughout eternity, and if was left up to them, they would not subject them to such a fate; but they are led to believe that their will is totally irrelevant. It seems that they never give it a thought that even though God is a God of mercy, their desires make them more merciful than Him.

Religious followers believe that they are yielding their will over to a loving God who is really not very lovely, but just the same, He has their best interests at heart. The fact is, they are handing over their will and freedoms to religions and religious people that bind them again, but this time in a world that appears holy rather the immoral and reprobate one they left.

Having read some of Islam's doctrine on eternal torment of unbelievers, and it is the same with many other religions, including quite a number that are called Christian, what is more cruel and twice binding than religion? Can we think of anything more horrid, heartless, and purely evil than *a satan's* inspired, manmade religions? I cannot recall one example that is worse. *They may have a form of godliness, they may look holy, and they may appear righteous; but they deny the truth, the life and power of Jesus Christ* as Paul wrote in **2 Timothy 3:5**. *They also search the scriptures and think that in them they have eternal life; but they will not come to the One of whom they testify—Jesus—that they may have life!* **John 5:39-40**.

Thus, some of the **HALLMARKS OF RELIGION!**

Elwin R. Roach

<https://www.godfire.net/Elwin/311-Hallmarks-Of-Religion.htm>

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