

Religious Isms

by John Isaac Edwards

Merriam-Webster declared ‘ism’ as word of the year for 2015. This got me to thinking about some religious isms.

1) **Buddhism.** Founded by Siddhartha Gautama (the “Buddha”) in India in the 5th century B.C., Buddhism is a widespread Asian religion. Buddhism states that all existence is suffering, that the cause of suffering is desire, that freedom from suffering is nirvana, and that this is attained through an eightfold path: right belief, right aim, right speech, right conduct, right livelihood, right effort, right mindfulness, and right meditation. Buddhism does not believe in God as Creator. The Bible says, “In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth” (Gen. 1:1). Buddhism teaches that the solutions to our problems are within ourselves. The prophet Jeremiah taught, “O Lord, I know that the way of man is not in himself: it is not in man that walketh to direct his steps” (Jer. 10:23).

2) **Calvinism.** The religious teachings of the 16th century reformer John Calvin are known as Calvinism. The tenets of Calvinism are represented by the acronym **TULIP**:
T - Total Hereditary Depravity (All are born totally depraved, a

condition one inherits from his parents). Ezekiel revealed, “The soul that sinneth, it shall die. The son shall not bear the iniquity of the father...” (Ezek. 18:20).

U - Unconditional Election (God chose the person, individually, to be lost or saved, without involving his choice in the matter). Revelation 22:17 says, “And the Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say, Come. And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely.”

L - Limited Atonement (Christ died only for the elect). The apostle stated, “And he is the propitiation for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world” (1 Jn. 2:2).

I - Irresistible Grace (One unconditionally elected to salvation cannot resist God’s grace to save him). If this is true, then all will be saved and none will be lost, “For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men” (Titus 2:11). Religious leaders in Acts 7 were told, “...ye do always resist the Holy Ghost: as your fathers did, so do ye” (v. 51).

P - Perseverance of the Saints (once saved, always saved — one saved by God’s grace cannot so sin as to fall from grace and be eternally lost). Paul told Galatian Christians, “...whosoever of you

are justified by the law; ye are fallen from grace” (Gal. 5:4).

3) **Catholicism.** This is the faith, practice, and order of the Roman Catholic Church. Catholicism sprang up as a result of apostasy which was already at work in the first century (2 Th. 2:1-7; 1 Tim. 4:1-3). The Roman Catholic Church originated in Rome centuries after the New Testament. The church revealed in the New Testament began in Jerusalem on the first Pentecost following the resurrection of Jesus (Acts 2). The teachings of the Roman Catholic Church are at variance with the Bible.

4) **Hinduism.** The dominant religion in South Asia, most notably in India and Nepal, Hinduism is the world’s third largest religion. The common Hindu considers everything as God — the tree is God, the sun is God, the moon is God. The Bible teaches that God made the trees, the sun, and the moon (Gen. 1). “For in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is...” (Ex. 20:11). Hindus share a belief in reincarnation, a person or animal in whom a particular soul is believed to have been reborn. The Scriptures teach that death brings an end to one’s earthly existence (Job 16:22; Heb. 9:27).

5) **Judaism.** This is the religion of the Old Testament. The Old Testament ends with expectations unrealized, and that is where Judaism is today. It ignores the New Testament, the coming of the Messiah, the fulfillment of the prophecies and promises, and relegates Jesus to a noble teacher or wise philosopher. The Bible teaches that Jesus is the Messiah of the Old Testament (Acts 8:35), the Son of God (Jn. 20:30-31) and the Savior of the world (Jn. 4:42).

6) **Lutheranism.** It is the system of ideas founded by the late 15th and early 16th century German theologian and reformer, Martin Luther. While he protested against the sale of indulgences and papal authority of Roman Catholicism, he preached the doctrine of justification by faith alone. The Bible teaches that we are justified by faith (Rom. 5:1), but not by faith only (Jas. 2:24). Romans 5:9 says of Christ, "Much more then, being now justified by his blood..." If we are justified by faith only, then you eliminate the blood. If we are justified by the blood of Christ, then you must strike out the word "only." You can't have it both ways!

7) **Methodism.** This is a branch of religion based on the teachings of John Wesley. There were no 'Methodists' before the 18th century. There is no mention of the 'Methodist Church' anywhere in the Bible. The 'Methodist Discipline' is vastly different from the "one faith" (Eph. 4:5).

8) **Mormonism.** Mormonism is the religious beliefs and practices of members of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints, a religion founded in the U.S. in 1830 by Joseph Smith. Smith claimed to have found and translated The Book of Mormon by divine revelation. Mormonism says the Bible does not contain all the truth. The Bible says, "...his divine power hath given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness..." (2 Pet. 1:3).

9) **Muhammadanism.** This is another name of Islam, the religion of the Muslims, a faith regarded as revealed through Muhammad as the prophet of Allah. The ritual observances and moral code of Islam were said to have been given to Muhammad as a series of revelations, which were codified in the Koran. Islam

is regarded by its adherents as the last of the revealed religions, and Muhammad is seen as the last of the prophets, building on and perfecting the examples and teachings of Abraham, Moses, and Jesus.

10) **Pentecostalism.** It is the philosophy and practices of Pentecostal Churches. There are two main branches: The Assemblies of God (three persons in the Godhead) and The United Pentecostal Church (one person in the Godhead, Jesus only). Pentecostalism affirms that Holy Spirit baptism and spiritual gifts continue today. These practices ceased in the first century (Acts 1:2-8; 1 Cor. 12:8-10; 13:8). 'Pentecost' was a day (Acts 2:1); not the name of a church!

11) **Universalism.** It is the belief in universal salvation. Jesus taught that the way which leadeth unto life is narrow and few find it (Mt. 7:13-14) and that many will hear Him say, "...I never knew you: depart from me..." (Mt. 7:21-23).

These isms denote practices, systems, and philosophies distinct from the word of God.

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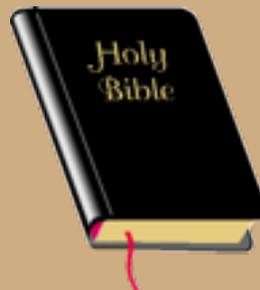
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