A New Religion; Christianity

Intro: Heb. 8:8-13 “For finding fault with them, he saith, Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah: "Not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day when I took them by the hand to lead them out of the land of Egypt; because they continued not in my covenant, and I regarded them not, saith the Lord. 10For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, saith the Lord; I will put my laws into their mind, and write them in their hearts: and I will be to them a God, and they shall be to me a people: 11And they shall not teach every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord: for all shall know me, from the least to the greatest. 12For I will be merciful to their unrighteousness, and their sins and their iniquities will I remember no more. 13In that he saith, A new covenant, he hath made the first old. Now that which decayeth and waxeth old is ready to vanish away.” 10:19-20 “Having therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus, 20By a new and living way, which he hath consecrated for us, through the veil, that is to say, his flesh;” these two passages allow us to call Christianity a new religion. It has not been handed down from generation to generation, neither was it an outgrowth of some other religion, but it is a new religion. Let’s notice some reasons why.

I. **ONLY RELIGION THAT TEACHES THE FATHERHOOD OF GOD.**

A. **Before the coming of Christ there was no such word as “mankind”.**

1. To the Jew, everyone else was a Gentile, a dog, and unfit for his association.
2. To the Greek, everyone else was a barbarian and unfit for his association.
3. Before Christ the principals of “all men are created equal” and “God is no respecter of persons” was unknown.
   a. How often do we revert back?
      (1) Germany, during the days of Hitler, thought they were a superior race.
      (2) The whites in America in relation to the blacks.
         (a) before the civil was.
         (b) now.

B. **Acts 17:26-29** “And hath made of one blood all nations of men for to dwell on all the face of the earth, and hath determined the times before appointed, and the bounds of their habitation; 27That they should seek the Lord, if haply they might feel after him, and find him, though he be not far from every one of us: 28For in him we live, and move, and have our being; as certain also of your own poets have said, For we are also his offspring. 29Forasmuch then as we are the offspring of God, we ought not to think that the Godhead is like unto gold, or silver, or stone, graven by art and man’s device.”

1. Paul sets forth a great new truth that the world had never heard.
2. He makes known the universal kinship of the human family, because we all come from a common Father.

C. **During the Patriarchal and Jewish age no one dared call God, Father, it was always God.**

1. Looking upon God as a loving heavenly father is peculiar to this new religion.
2. Mat. 6:9 “After this manner therefore pray ye: Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name.”
3. Mat. 7:11 “If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your Father which is in heaven give good things to them that ask him?”

D. **With this new religion we can become God’s children by faith:**

1. Gal. 3:26-27 “For ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus. 27For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ.”
2. It is by the faith—the Word of God—when we are baptized into Christ.
II. ONLY RELIGION TO TEACH THE STANDARD OF TRUE GREATNESS.

A. Paganism, Patriarchal, and Jewish: greatness was viewed as the one with the most authority or power.

B. Only under Christianity is the real standard of true greatness seen.

1. Notice what Christ taught about this in Mat. 20:20-28

   **Then came to him the mother of Zebedee's children with her sons, worshiping him, and desiring a certain thing of him.**  
   **And he said unto her, What wilt thou? She saith unto him, Grant that these my two sons may sit, the one on thy right hand, and the other on the left, in thy kingdom.**  
   **But Jesus answered and said, Ye know not what ye ask. Are ye able to drink of the cup that I shall drink of, and to be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with? They say unto him, We are able.**  
   **And he saith unto them, Ye shall drink indeed of my cup, and be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with: but to sit on my right hand, and on my left, is not mine to give, but it shall be given to them for whom it is prepared of my Father.**  
   **And when the ten heard it, they were moved with indignation against the two brethren.**  
   **But Jesus called them unto him, and said, Ye know that the princes of the Gentiles exercise dominion over them, and they that are great exercise authority upon them.**  
   **But it shall not be so among you: but whosoever will be great among you, let him be your minister;**  
   **And whosoever will be chief among you, let him be your servant:**  
   **Even as the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many.**

   a. James, John, and their mother had a misconception not only about the kingdom, but also, concerning the true standard of greatness.

   b. They, like the other apostles, were accustomed to the teachings of paganism and Judaism in regards to greatness: vs. 25 **“But Jesus called them unto him, and said, Ye know that the princes of the Gentiles exercise dominion over them, and they that are great exercise authority upon them.”**

2. Christ has set the example for us.

   a. Christ did not set himself up as an earthly king would have.

   b. Mat. 20:27-28 **“And whosoever will be chief among you, let him be your servant:**  
   **Even as the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many.”**

   c. John 13:4-17 **“He riseth from supper, and laid aside his garments; and took a towel, and girded himself. After that he poureth water into a bason, and began to wash the disciples' feet, and to wipe them with the towel wherewith he was girded. Then cometh he to Simon Peter: and Peter saith unto him, Lord, dost thou wash my feet? Jesus answered and said unto him, What I do thou knowest not now; but thou shalt know hereafter. Peter saith unto him, Thou shalt never wash my feet. Jesus answered him, If I wash thee not, thou hast no part with me. Simon Peter saith unto him, Lord, not my feet only, but also my hands and my head. Jesus saith to him, He that is washed needeth not save to wash his feet, but is clean every whit: and ye are clean, but not all. For he knew who should betray him; therefore said he, Ye are not all clean. So after he had washed their feet, and had taken his garments, and was set down again, he said unto them, Know ye what I have done to you? Ye call me Master and Lord: and ye say well; for so I am. If I then, your Lord and Master, have washed your feet; ye also ought to wash one another's feet. For I have given you an example, that ye should do as I have done to you. Verily, verily, I say unto you, The servant is not greater than his lord; neither he that is sent greater than he that sent him. If ye know these things, happy are ye if ye do them.”**

   d. Phi. 2:5-11 **“Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus: Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God: But made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men: And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name: That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; And that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.”**
III. ONLY RELIGION EVER TO PROMISE ABSOLUTE FORGIVENESS OF SINS.

A. Paganism: the very highest concept of their religion was to suffer some form of penalty to appease the wrath of his God.

B. Patriarchal and Jewish: there was no such thing as absolute forgiveness of sins. But what about the sacrifices they offered for their sins?

1. The sacrifices and their significance.
   a. Bulls and goats were offered on the altar for their sins. Lev. 16.
   b. However, sins were not forgiven but just rolled forward for another year; Heb. 10:1-3 “For the law having a shadow of good things to come, and not the very image of the things, can never with those sacrifices which they offered year by year continually make the comers thereunto perfect. For then would they not have ceased to be offered? because that the worshippers once purged should have had no more conscience of sins. But in those sacrifices there is a remembrance again made of sins every year.”
   c. Heb. 10:4 “For it is not possible that the blood of bulls and of goats should take away sins.”
   d. They did have assurance that when the Messiah did come their sins would be forgiven, if they had been faithful in their sacrifices.
   e. Zec. 13:1 “In that day there shall be a fountain opened to the house of David and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem for sin and for uncleanness.”

2. Under these two systems absolute forgiveness was not known.

C. Only under the New Covenant of Christianity is absolute forgiveness made known.

1. Remission of sins:
   a. Luke 24:46-47 “And said unto them, Thus it is written, and thus it behoved Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead the third day: And that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem.”
   b. Acts 2:38 “Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost.”
   c. Acts 10:43 “To him give all the prophets witness, that through his name whosoever believeth in him shall receive remission of sins.”

2. Forgiveness of sins: Acts 13:38 “Be it known unto you therefore, men and brethren, that through this man is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins:”

3. Wash away your sins: Acts 22:16 “And now why tarriest thou? arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord.”

4. It has been noted that under the Old Testament period those that had been faithful had the assurance that the coming Messiah would take away their sins.
   a. Heb. 9:15 “And for this cause he is the mediator of the new testament, that by means of death, for the redemption of the transgressions that were under the first testament, they which are called might receive the promise of eternal inheritance.”
   b. But why did Christ have to die?
      (1) Heb. 9:22 “And almost all things are by the law purged with blood; and without shedding of blood is no remission.”
      (2) Heb. 10:4 “For it is not possible that the blood of bulls and of goats should take away sins.”

5. No wonder John could say, “Behold the lamb of God which taketh away the sins of the world” in John 1:29 “The next day John seeth Jesus coming unto him, and saith, Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world.”

6. Some say, “it is one thing to forgive and another to forget” but under the new religion of Christ true forgiveness is true forgetfulness (never holding the sin against the person).
   a. Heb. 8:12 “For I will be merciful to their unrighteousness, and their sins and their iniquities will I remember no more.”
Also in this respect, we are supposed to forgive and forget (in the way God does). God has again set the pattern for us.

IV. ONLY RELIGION WHOSE TEACHINGS ARE POSITIVE INSTEAD OF NEGATIVE.
   A. Patriarchal and Jewish: review the Ten Commandments; always “thou shalt not” (9 times).
   B. Christianity is new and different for it’s positive in its scope.
      1. Christianity is never, “Lord what will thou not have me to do?” but always what can I do?
      2. Our attitude should never be, “where did the Lord prohibit it?”
         a. The person who asks this question has never learned the fundamental teaching of Christianity.
         b. Never-the-less many in the religious world today have this attitude. cf. instrumental music.
      3. The nature of man is to do as little as possible, but this new religion is positive, therefore we should try to do as much as possible, This is not only true for religion but in everything we do.
      4. It is possible for a person to do nothing wrong basically, and still go to hell.
         a. Jam. 4:17 “Therefore to him that knoweth to do good, and doeth it not, to him it is sin.”

V. ONLY RELIGION TO OFFER TO ALL MEN ETERNAL LIFE.
   A. Notice the statement to all men.
      1. Some religions have offered eternal life to some.
      2. Christianity alone offers eternal life to all men.
   B. Neither in the Patriarchal nor in the Jewish religion was there offered eternal life.
      1. The great question of the Old Testament was when a man dies shall he live again.
      2. Notice the Pharisees and Sadducees.
   C. It is only in the new religion of Christianity that eternal life is offered to all.
      1. John 11:25 “Jesus said unto her, I am the resurrection, and the life: he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live:”
      2. John 14:6 “Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me.”
      3. John 20:30-31 “And many other signs truly did Jesus in the presence of his disciples, which are not written in this book: 31But these are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through his name.”
      4. John 3:16 “For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.”
      5. In 1 Cor. 15: Paul teaches there is a resurrection from the dead; therefore, man shall live eternally.

VI. ONLY RELIGION TO EVER CALL FOR A LIVING SACRIFICE.
   A. Paganism: demands the death of those sacrificed.
      1. Usually it was the life of some animal that was offered.
      2. Sometimes it demanded the death of humans.
   B. Patriarchal and Jewish demanded animals to be offered on the altar of sacrifice.
C. **This new religion, Christianity requires a living sacrifice.**

1. Rom. 6:13 “Neither yield ye your members as instruments of unrighteousness unto sin: but yield yourselves unto God, as those that are alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness unto God.”

2. Eph. 4:22-24 “That ye put off concerning the former conversation the old man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts; 23And be renewed in the spirit of your mind; 24 And that ye put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness.”

3. 1 Cor. 6:19-20 “What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own? 20For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God’s.”

4. Rom. 12:1-2 “I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service. 2And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God.”

5. Gal. 2:20 “I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me.”

6. Phi. 1:21 “For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain.”

7. Can we truly say we have sacrificed our lives to God?
   a. There are things which show whether we have or not.
   b. Church attendance
   c. Giving of our means
   d. Whether we are working and serving God.

8. “Men will wrangle for religion, fight for it, write for it, even die for it: anything but live for it.”