

# I-IT RELIGION

*<sup>1</sup> So Christ has truly set us free. Now make sure that you stay free, and don't get tied up again in slavery to the law.*

Galatians 5:1 NLT

*<sup>36</sup> If the Son therefore shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed.*

John 8:36 KJV

*<sup>4</sup> For they bind heavy burdens and grievous to be borne, and lay [them] on men's shoulders; but they [themselves] will not move them with one of their fingers.*

Matthew 23:4 KJV

*<sup>6</sup> Then the LORD said to Cain, "Why are you angry? Why is your face downcast? <sup>7</sup> If you do what is right, will you not be accepted? But if you do not do what is right, sin is crouching at your door; it desires to have you, but you must rule over it."*

Genesis 4:6,7 NIV

## I. The way of Cain / The religious spirit in every age

- A. Cain tried to overcome the curse of the fall, to force from the ground, by skill, something that would contradict the thorns and thistles of the curse.
- B. Cain recognized no condition of sin, nor need of forgiveness. He treated God as an equal, as though he was exchanging a gift with a peer.

- C. Cain had a beautiful religion. His altar was rustic, festooned with flowers and vines, fruits of the orchard. It smelled heavenly and was ripe for the eating.
- D. It is the attempt of fallen human nature to find paradise without God.

## II. Six Traits of a religious spirit

- A. A religious spirit is powerless. (II Timothy 3:5)

*<sup>5</sup> having a form of godliness but denying its power. Have nothing to do with such people.*

- \* A corpse may be attractive, but it's dead. Religion has outer rituals, but no power to change your inner life.

- B. A religious spirit manipulates through excessive false guilt. (Romans 8:1)

*<sup>1</sup> Therefore, there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus,*

- \* Legal guilt is a fact, independent of feelings. (Driving 58 in a 55 mile an hour zone)
- \*\* Emotional guilt is what the enemy uses 24/7. Real feelings with no reality on the other end.

- C. A religious spirit demands perfect performance, which is impossible. (Matthew 23:4)

*<sup>4</sup> They tie up heavy, cumbersome loads and put them on other people's shoulders, but they themselves are not willing to lift a finger to move them.*

- \* This spirit is intolerant of imperfection in itself or others.

D. A religious spirit is not life-oriented it is rule-regulated. / Legalism (Colossians 2:16-23)

*<sup>16</sup> Therefore do not let anyone judge you by what you eat or drink, or with regard to a religious festival, a New Moon celebration or a Sabbath day. <sup>17</sup> These are a shadow of the things that were to come; the reality, however, is found in Christ. <sup>18</sup> Do not let anyone who delights in false humility and the worship of angels disqualify you. Such a person also goes into great detail about what they have seen; they are puffed up with idle notions by their unspiritual mind. <sup>19</sup> They have lost connection with the head, from whom the whole body, supported and held together by its ligaments and sinews, grows as God causes it to grow. <sup>20</sup> Since you died with Christ to the elemental spiritual forces of this world, why, as though you still belonged to the world, do you submit to its rules: <sup>21</sup> "Do not handle! Do not taste! Do not touch!"? <sup>22</sup> These rules, which have to do with things that are all destined to perish with use, are based on merely human commands and teachings. <sup>23</sup> Such regulations indeed have an appearance of wisdom, with their self-imposed worship, their false humility and their harsh treatment of the body, but they lack any value in restraining sensual indulgence.*

\* Outer works never change the inner life. Growth comes from the inside out.

E. A religious spirit is enraged when someone is given, by grace, what they attempted to earn by works.

\* The lead line of a religious spirit is, "After all I've done for you."

F. A religious spirit is inflexible. (Luke 5:37,38)

*<sup>37</sup> And no one pours new wine into old wineskins. Otherwise, the new wine will burst the skins; the wine will run out and the wineskins will be ruined. <sup>38</sup> No, new wine must be poured into new wineskins.*

\* Unwillingness to change or make adjustments

\*\* The old always persecutes the new.

\*\*\* What brought you this far will not take you where you need to go. (I Samuel 2:18,19)

*<sup>18</sup> But Samuel was ministering before the LORD--a boy wearing a linen ephod. <sup>19</sup> Each year his mother made him a little robe and took it to him when she went up with her husband to offer the annual sacrifice.*