

## FALSE RELIGION AND TRUE - PHILIPPIANS 3:1-3

Philippians 3:1-3 sets before us a distinct contrast between false and true religion. The message of these three verses is of tremendous importance.

**An Exhortation** – v1 - Paul says, *“Finally, my brethren, rejoice in the Lord.”* No matter what our providential experiences and circumstances are, we always have reason to rejoice in the Lord. Here is an exhortation to joy. What a blessed command! — *“Rejoice in the Lord always: and again I say rejoice!”* Rejoice in the greatness of his person as our all-sufficient Substitute, in the power of his blood that cleanses us from all sin, in the perfection of his righteousness imputed to us for justification, in the abundance of his all-sufficient grace, in the immutability of his unfailing love, in the rule of his providence working all things together for our good, in the fact of his all-prevailing intercession on our behalf, and in the fact that our names are written in heaven. May God give us grace ever to *“rejoice in the Lord”* for the glory of Christ and the good of his people.

**A Warning** - In verse 2, the apostle gives us a serious warning. — *“Beware of dogs.”* He warns us to beware of false prophets. He calls them dogs because that is what the Word of God calls male prostitutes. False prophets are men who have for their own sakes prostituted the gospel of Christ and the glory of God (Deut23:18; Isa56:10-11). Then he tells us to *“beware of evil workers,”* referring to those same *“dogs”* (preachers) who teach, preach, and promote any system of man centred, works based, free will religion (Matt7:22-23). Man centred, works based, free will religion is the single greatest cause of evil in this world. The good works of religion without Christ are the most abominably evil works done in this world. They rob God of his glory, trample under foot the blood of Christ, do despite to the Spirit of grace, and gradually abase man to his lowest, most contemptible state (Rom1:25-31). Next, he speaks of these men as *“evil*

*workers,”* referring to all who teach that God’s salvation depends upon and is determined by man. The apostle goes on to call these work-mongers *“the concision,”* warning us again to beware of them. Those who are of the concision are men and women who teach us to cut, mutilate, and otherwise punish our bodies in hope of winning God’s favour. In essence, Paul is saying, *“Beware of Christless religion.”* Beware of any religious custom, doctrine, or service that is centred in yourself and encourages you to focus attention on yourself.

**True Religion** - In verse 3 we are given a description of true religion. — *“For we are the circumcision, which worship God in the spirit, and rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh.”* True religion is not man centred, but Christ centred. True religion is not ceremonial, but spiritual. True religion is not a matter of creed, but of conviction. True religion is not outward, but inward. *“For we are the circumcision,”* God’s true, covenant people, the Israel of God, Abraham’s true children, which *“worship God in the Spirit.”* We worship God as he is revealed in the Scriptures, by the power of his Holy Spirit, in our spirits, and in a spiritual manner. True worship is spiritual worship, not carnal, ceremonial ritualism (John 4:23-24). — *“And rejoice in Christ Jesus.”* We trust the Lord Jesus Christ alone, placing all our confidence in him as our Saviour. We are complete in him (1 Cor. 1:30-31; Col. 2:9-10). — *“And have no confidence in the flesh.”* We place absolutely no confidence in our flesh, the experiences, emotions, or (imaginary) excellencies of our flesh. The privileges of the flesh, the feelings of the flesh, and the works of the flesh are no basis of confidence before God.

**The Distinction** - In all false religion the hope of salvation and eternal life is, in some measure, found in the flesh. In true religion *“Christ is all,”* all hope is found in him alone. That is the great distinction. True religion is religion that trusts Christ alone. False religion trusts Christ, and... *Don Fortner*

# Biblical Gospel Church

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## Sunday 20<sup>th</sup> November 2022

### 11:00 am (GMT) Service

*Philippians 3:2,3*

*“God’s Proper Church”*

Traditional worship with hymns, prayer, Bible readings and a sermon based on a passage of the Bible.

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## Reading Psalm 139:14-24

80 tune 464

*J Humphreys*

1 Blessèd are the sons of God,  
They are bought with Jesus' blood;  
They are ransomed from the grave  
Life eternal they shall have.

2 God did love them in his Son  
Long before the world began;  
They the seal of this receive,  
When in Jesus they believe.

3 They are justified by grace;  
They enjoy a solid peace;  
All their sins are washed away;  
They shall stand in God's great day!

5 They have fellowship with God,  
Through the Mediator's blood;  
One with God, through Jesus one,  
Glory is in them begun!

6 Though they suffer much on earth,  
Strangers to the worldling's mirth,  
Yet they have an inward joy,  
Pleasures which can never cloy.

### Prayer

## Reading Colossians 2

### Prayer

114 tune 12

*J Berridge*

1 The sons of earth delight  
To spread their fame abroad,  
To glory in their worth and might;  
But such are not of God.

2 The heavenly word declares,  
And faithful is the word,  
That Israel's seed, the royal heirs,  
Shall glory in the Lord.

3 In Jesus they shall trust;  
From first to last each one,  
Through Jesus, shall be counted just,  
And boast in him alone.

4 Amen! the word is good;  
My trust is in his name;  
I have redemption through his blood,  
And I will shout his fame.

6 His worth I love to tell,  
And wish the world to know;  
And where the Son is honoured well,  
The Father's honoured too.

## Sermon

830 tune 450

*J Hart*

1 Jesus, once for sinners slain,  
From the dead was raised again,  
And in heaven is now set down  
With his Father in his throne.

2 There he reigns a King supreme;  
We shall also reign with him;  
Feeble souls, be not dismayed;  
Trust in his almighty aid.

3 He has made an end of sin,  
And his blood has washed us clean;  
Fear not, he is ever near;  
Now, e'en now, he's with us here.

4 Thus assembling, we, by faith,  
Till he come, show forth his death;  
Of his body bread's the sign,  
And we drink his blood in wine.

5 Bread, thus broken, aptly shows  
How his body God did bruise;  
When the grape's rich blood we see,  
Lord, we then remember thee.

**Communion** – baptised believers who trust Christ alone for their acceptance with God are welcome to share the bread and wine with us.