

# Religion in Reverse

Text: Hebrews 8:5

## Introduction:

1. Moses was commanded to build the Tabernacle “according to the pattern” given to him by God.
2. God still expects man to obey Him in harmony with His pattern – for salvation, worship, and work.
3. Sadly, the tendency of man is to become dissatisfied with God’s plan and to alter it to his or her own taste.
4. Thus, many change the order of God’s instructions and practice religion in reverse...

## I. Faith and Repentance Reversed (Mark 1:15)

- A. The denominational world teaches that the sinner is to repent first and then believe in Jesus.
  1. They teach this in an effort to justify the doctrine of salvation by “faith only.”
  2. However, even if repentance comes first, this is not “faith only.”
- B. They will take the words of Jesus out of context and apply them to salvation after the cross (Mark 1:15).
  1. When Jesus said, “Repent ye, and believe the gospel,” He was speaking to an audience of Israelites (cf. Matthew 15:24).
  2. They had been taught the Old Testament Scriptures from childhood.
  3. They already believed in God and His Word (cf. Acts 20:21).
  4. Now, they needed to repent of their sins and believe the Gospel – the good news that Jesus is the Messiah, Savior, and Son of God (cf. Acts 19:4).
- C. Under the New Testament, faith precedes repentance (cf. Acts 2:36-38; 2 Corinthians 7:10; Hebrews 11:6).
- D. The pattern of God must not be reversed.

## II. Baptism and Salvation Reversed (Mark 16:16)

- A. Many teach that salvation comes before baptism.
- B. However, the New Testament always places baptism before salvation.
  1. Baptism → salvation (Mark 16:16; 1 Peter 3:21)
  2. Baptism → remission of sins (Acts 2:38; 22:16)
  3. Baptism → in Christ (Rom. 6:3-4; 1 Cor. 12:13; Gal. 3:27)
  4. Baptism → rejoicing (Acts 8:38-39; 16:33-34)
- C. The pattern of God must not be reversed.

## III. Baptism and Prayer Reversed (Acts 8:12-22)

- A. The denominations teach that a sinner should pray in order to be saved and that one who is saved should be baptized.
- B. The New Testament teaches that a sinner should be baptized to be saved.
- C. And, it teaches that the one who is saved enjoys the privilege of prayer.

1. There is no command for an alien sinner to be saved by prayer.
  2. There is no example of an alien sinner being saved by prayer.
    - a. Saul prayed but was told to be baptized to be saved (Acts 9:11; 22:16).
    - b. Cornelius prayed but was told to hear and obey the Gospel (Acts 10:1-6, 32-33, 48; 11:13-14).
  3. Only a Christian has the right to pray for the forgiveness of sins (Acts 8:12-13, 22; James 5:15-16).
  - D. The pattern of God must not be reversed.
- IV. Baptism and the Water Reversed (Acts 8:38-39)
- A. Many teach that sprinkling or pouring water upon someone are valid forms (modes) of baptism.
  - B. Thus, they bring the water to the person.
  - C. However, in the New Testament the person was always brought to the water!
    1. Jesus came to John (Matthew 3:13).
    2. Philip and the Ethiopian went down into the water (Acts 8:36-39).
    3. Baptism is immersion – a burial in water (Romans 6:3-4; Colossians 2:12).
  - D. The pattern of God must not be reversed.
- V. The Kingdom and the World Reversed (Matthew 6:33)
- A. Sadly, even many Christians get things backwards.
    1. They seek material things before the kingdom of Christ.
    2. They put relationships before the kingdom of Christ.
    3. They place sinful pleasures before the kingdom of Christ.
  - B. In fact, the Lord's church is often last place in their hearts and lives.
  - C. The New Testament demands the proper order: "Seek ye first the kingdom of God, and His righteousness."
  - D. The pattern of God must not be reversed.

Conclusion:

1. If one's religion is in reverse – out of order with God's pattern – changes need to be made.
2. Put things in the proper order by believing and obeying the Gospel of Christ.