

**The Invisible Church**  
My thoughts on query eighteen July 2016

**The query:**

Why have men invented the idea of an “invisible church” when there is no such term in the Bible?

**My response:**

First, a very, very, brief view of history (as I see it):

The Roman Empire, in which the Christian branch of the church was first conceived, started as a single Pagan city supposedly about 753BC, and officially its people worshipped many gods and goddesses. Legend has it that it was ruled by elected kings at first, but as it expanded it turned into a republic (509BC), in which a senate was elected to govern for the people, led by a consul. (Two men were elected as consuls each year to serve for a one-year term and each one governed for a month at a time.) But eventually it was taken over by Julius Caesar who in 63BC became chief priest (Pontifex Maximus) of the main religion, and in 59BC was one of the consuls. Some years later, with the help of his army, he declared himself dictator (a benevolent one who looked after the people). This was about 49BC.

Things changed dramatically when Caesar was killed in 44BC and even more so after a time when Augustus became sole emperor.

Luke 2:1-2.

“And it came to pass in those days [at the birth of Christ], that there went out a decree from Caesar Augustus, that all the world should be taxed. (And this taxing [and its census] was first made when Cyrenius was governor of Syria).”

\*\*\*\*\* (Begin Quote)

<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Augustus>

[I have added some of the comments in the square brackets, but the “notes” are in the original.]  
**Augustus** (Latin: *Imperator Caesar Divi Filius Augustus*;<sup>[note 1][note 2]</sup> 23 September 63 BC – 19 August 14 AD) was the founder of the **Roman Empire** and its first **Emperor**, ruling from 27 BC until his death in 14 AD.<sup>[note 3]</sup>

He was born **Gaius Octavius** into an old and wealthy **equestrian** [horse owning, therefore senior] **branch** of the **plebeian** [indigenous, common] **Octavii** family [See my **endnote 4**]. Following the **assassination** of his maternal great-uncle **Julius Caesar** in 44 BC, Caesar's will named Octavius as his **adopted** son and heir. Together with **Mark Antony** and **Marcus Lepidus**, he formed the **Second Triumvirate** to defeat the assassins of Caesar. Following their victory at **Philippi**, the Triumvirate

[the three rulers] divided the **Roman Republic** among themselves and ruled as **military dictators**.<sup>[note 4]</sup> The Triumvirate was eventually torn apart under the competing ambitions of its members: Lepidus was driven into exile and stripped of his position, and Antony [and Cleopatra] committed suicide following his defeat at the **Battle of Actium** by Augustus in 31 BC.

[The **First Triumvirate** was the political alliance of **Gaius Julius Caesar**, **Marcus Licinius Crassus**, and **Gnaeus Pompeius Magnus**.<sup>[1]</sup> Unlike the **Second Triumvirate**, the First Triumvirate had no official status whatsoever; its overwhelming power in the **Roman Republic** was strictly unofficial influence, and was in fact kept secret for some time as part of the political machinations of the Triumvirs themselves. It was formed in 60 BC and lasted until Crassus' death in 53 BC.]

After the demise of the Second Triumvirate, Augustus restored the outward facade of the free Republic, with governmental power vested in the **Roman Senate**, the **executive magistrates**, and the **legislative assemblies**. In reality, however, he retained his autocratic power over the Republic as a military dictator. By law, Augustus held a collection of powers granted to him for life by the Senate, including **supreme military command**, and those of **tribune** and **ensor**. It took several years for Augustus to develop the framework within which a formally [outwardly formal] republican state could be led under his sole rule. *He rejected monarchical titles, and instead called himself **Princeps Civitatis** (“First Citizen of the State”). The resulting **constitutional framework** became known as the **Principate**, the first phase of the **Roman Empire**.*

The reign of Augustus initiated an era of relative peace known as the **Pax Romana** (*The Roman Peace*). Despite continuous wars of imperial expansion on the Empire's frontiers and one **year-long civil war** over the imperial succession, *the Roman world was largely free from large-scale conflict for more than two centuries.*

[During this time the Christian church flourished despite persecution from the Pagans.]

Augustus dramatically enlarged the Empire, annexing Egypt, Dalmatia, Pannonia, **Noricum**, and **Raetia**, expanded possessions in **Africa**, expanded into **Germania**, and completed the conquest of **Hispania** [Spain].

\*\*\*\*\*<sup>(End Quote)</sup>

Then, sometime later in 306AD, while a terrible 10 year persecution of the Christians was occurring in various areas of the empire (Revelation 2:10), Constantine won a decisive battle in the civil war. Just before that he claimed to have seen a vision of a cross which he then had emblazoned on his soldiers uniforms and flags, and later credited his victory to the help of the Christian God.

Here's a bit about the persecutions of the early centuries. I am not sure that I agree totally with their figures, but it does help us to put them into perspective.

\*\*\*\*\**(Begin Quote)*

<http://www.religionfacts.com/christianity/history/persecution.htm>

Out of the 54 emperors who ruled between 30 and 311AD, only about a dozen went out of their way to persecute Christians. (5) It has been calculated that between the first persecution under Nero to the Edict of Milan in 313AD, Christians experienced 129 years of persecution and 120 years of peace. (6)

The Roman persecutions were generally sporadic, localised, and dependent on the political climate and disposition of each emperor. Moreover, imperial decrees against Christians were often directed against church property, the Scriptures, or clergy only.

It has been estimated that more Christians have been martyred in the last 50 years than in the church's first 300 years. (7).

\*\*\*\*\**(End Quote)*

The old Roman view of religion was that the deities sustained their cities and country areas and therefore local gods were not only acceptable, but necessary. The emperor soon became the most important god and was tasked with the job of keeping the whole empire safe and victorious. When Christians came proclaiming that there is only one invisible God, and teaching the people to forsake the old gods, they were at first seen as threatening the structure of society, and then as traitors against the throne.

But to make a long story short, some time later in 313AD Constantine [in the west] and Licinius [in the east] made Christianity one of the official religions of the state (full and sole recognition did not come until about 392AD), but the bishops of the time attempted to meld Pagan and Christian ideas into one to make it work (a practise which some branches of the professed Christian church still do).

By 321AD they had succeeded enough to have the Pagan "Sun" day adopted as the official worship day of the official religion called "Christianity" by a decree of Constantine's, although some district churches resisted or kept both, God's Sabbath and man's Sunday.

Here is one of a multitude of quotes concerning this: [\(I have added the emphasis.\)](#)

\*\*\*\*\* (Begin Quote)

*The "Abiding Sabbath" and the "Lord's Day" by A T Jones.*

### Chapter VIII

The worship of the sun was the chief worship of all the heathen. And as ambitious bishops, in their lust of power, of numbers, and "of the ruling influences of government and society," opened the way for the heathen to come into the church, bringing with them their heathen practices and customs, the day of the sun, being the chief of these, thus gained a place under the name of Christianity, and so went on making its "deepening groove on society and in history," until it culminated in "the famous edict of Constantine," in honor of "the venerable day of the sun," and commanding its partial observance.

Of this famous edict, we shall let the author of the "Abiding Sabbath" himself tell:-  
- {1888 ATJ, ASLD 98.1}

"The Emperor Constantine was converted, and *Christianity became, practically, the religion of the empire.* It was now possible to *enforce* the Christian Sabbath and make its observance universal. In the year 321, consequently, was issued the famous edict of Constantine commanding abstinence from servile labor on Sunday. The following is the full text:--  
{1888 ATJ, ASLD 98.2}

"THE EMPEROR CONSTANTINE TO HELPIDIUS:

"On the venerable day of the sun, let the magistrates and people living in towns rest, and let all workshops be closed. Nevertheless, in the country, those engaged in the cultivation of land may freely and lawfully work, because it often happens that another day is not so well fitted for sowing grain and planting vines; lest by neglect of the best time, the bounty provided by Heaven should be lost. Given the seventh day of March, Crispus and Constantine being consuls, both for the second time."--P. 228.  
{1888 ATJ, ASLD 98.3}

\*\*\*\*\* (End Quote)

However, when professed Christianity became the sole official religion there arose a great problem for the real Christians. Thereafter, everyone born in the empire was deemed to be a Christian, an assumption which had been around since the days of Nimrod but usually only applied to nationality. This situation is usually spoken of today as, "This is a Christian nation"! (Because of this stipulation Adolf Hitler is classed as a Roman Catholic by some historians. But see endnote 5.)

What it meant in practicality was that there was no easy way to distinguish the false from the true; to separate those who were born into the church and obeyed it under the law, or for personal gain, from those who chose to join Christ when they reached maturity. “And Jesus came and spoke to them, saying, . . . Go you therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the world. Amen”. Matthew 28:18-20.

The former were hypocrites pretending to be believers for the benefit it brings. (See Endnote 1.) And this occurred despite the fact that the Son of God told us that a distinction was necessary:

Matthew 5:14-16.

“You are the light of the world. A city that is set on an hill cannot be hid. Neither do men light a candle, and put it under a bushel [basket], but on a candlestick; and it gives light to all that are in the house. ***Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven***”.

2 Corinthians 4:3-6.

“But if our gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost: in whom the god of this world has blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine to them. ***For we preach not ourselves, but Christ Jesus the LORD***; and ourselves your servants for Jesus' sake. For God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, has shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ”.

Mark 6:15-16.

And He said to them, “Go you into all the world, and preach the gospel ***to every creature***. He that believes and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believes not shall be damned”. [If all are Christians then to whom do they preach? It was this thought that gave rise to Protestant overseas missions in the 18<sup>th</sup> century following the Catholic pattern.]

And the book of James is full of advice on Christian good works. (See endnote 2 for more.)

The men in the days of the Reformation faced this dilemma – which to choose? In the end they chose both! In theological terms this is called “sacralism”. (See endnote 3.)

And this problem of “universalism” against “believers” has existed to the present day in all those countries which have an *established* official religion, although in the Western world, such as Australia and New Zealand, the rule is relaxed and we have Edicts of Toleration which allows other groups to operate as nonconforming churches! But it is only by permission of the ruling religion, a fact that is carefully obscured (but not hidden) from the people at large!

Here is a concise description of the problem:

\*\*\*\*\***(Begin Quote)**

## **THE REFORMERS AND THEIR STEPCHILDREN**

(I have added the emphasis and insertions)

By Leonard Verduin (a Baptist theologian) published 1964.

Pages 82-84

How did Calvin come to write all these things which we who in so many matters are his followers find it impossible to repeat after him?

The answer must be sought in the fact that Calvin, beset by the same dilemma that tortured Luther, attempted the same impossible solution, that of combining two irreconcilable views of the Church of Christ.

*Like Luther he had learned to see that the New Testament delineates the Church as the company of BELIEVING folk; like him he had on the other hand inherited the medieval concept of the Church, in which the Church embraces ALL IN A GIVEN LOCALITY.*

*As we have already intimated, the favorite device for keeping the one from cancelling out the other was the device of “Church visible” and “Church invisible.”*

Calvin's *visible* Church is the Church of Constantinianism; his *invisible* Church is the Church of the New Testament.

The latter is for Calvin infinitely smaller than the former, “a small and contemptible number hidden in a huge multitude, a few grains of wheat tucked away in a pile of chaff.”

*The picture is that of many “christians” [note the lower case “c”] among whom there is a sprinkling of “Christians. [Note the upper case “C”.] We submit that the New Testament nowhere envisions a Church in which a tiny *ecclesiola* [a group of true Christians] lies hidden in the folds of a massive *ecclesia* [the church at large].*

To sustain this idea of *ecclesiola in ecclesia* sacralists of all ages [joiners of church and state since Constantine (see endnote 3)] have been obliged to go back to the Old Testament situation, where one can indeed find a mere “seven thousand who have not bowed the knee to Baal,” of true Israelites, hidden away in the masses of an *outward* Israel.

[However], In the New Covenant they “do *not* teach every man his brother, saying ‘Know the Lord’ for *all* [in that company] shall [already] know me . . .” (Hebrews 8: 11). [The last two insertions are Verduin’s.]

***The category of “Christian [christian?],” i.e., a person who is neither a heathen man nor a Christian is foreign to the New Testament.***

[Speaking of Lutherans, he says,] One would expect that people who have had occasion to witness the rise of the reign of terror under Nazism would let go of the notion of a “Church” that embraces a total society;

one would expect that men who can themselves recall how that when these Nazis began to say “Gemeinschaft des ganzen Volkes hat die Kirche zu sein, nicht Gemeinschaft fiir sich in separativer Bildung,”\* [as he says, one would expect] the [Protestant] clergy [would do something about it, but they] had no objection (until it was too late – so accustomed were they to this sacralist representation);

[After the Second World War was over] one would expect that they would review their theological heritage which made this possible.

But instead we find men toying still with the sacralist formula.

[For instance] In the Netherlands, Noordmans pleads for an enlargement of the structurization of the Church so as to make room in it for believer and disbeliever alike . . .

\*\*\*\*\* (End Quote)

By now we should be able to see that this idea is wrong.

Yet the concept of an *invisible portion in the true church* is still very strong among Adventists today, and is often based on the text, “Then shall the kingdom of

\* A literal translation of the German would be: “Community of the whole people has to be the church, not community for itself in separate education”. My understanding of this is, “The Church and State are one, not separate”.

heaven be likened to ten virgins, which took their lamps, and went forth to meet the bridegroom. And five of them were wise, and five were foolish [i.e. five are active believers and five are not]”. Matthew 25:1-2. Many take this to mean that we cannot tell the difference between them, but the parable shows that this is not true, for one group has the extra oil in a separate vessel.

This “invisible” idea is not true in this instance, for we have been told:

{COL 406.3 - 411.1} [The Scriptures have been modernised, and I have added the emphasis.]

They [the foolish ones] are called virgins because they profess a pure faith . . .

The class represented by the foolish virgins are *not* hypocrites.

They have a *regard for the* [Sabbath] *truth*, they have *advocated* the truth, they are *attracted* to those who believe the truth; but they have *not yielded* themselves to the Holy Spirit’s working. [They are working members of the Seventh-day Adventist church, but still have “hard” hearts, stony ground.]

They have not fallen upon the Rock, Christ Jesus, and permitted their old nature to be broken up. This class are represented also by the stony-ground hearers. They receive the word with readiness, but they fail of assimilating its principles. Its influence is not abiding. The Spirit works upon man’s heart, according to his desire and consent implanting in him a new nature; but the class represented by the foolish virgins have been content with a superficial work.

They do not know God [personally]. They have not studied His character; they have not held communion with Him; therefore they do not know how to trust, how to look and live. Their service to God *degenerates* into a form.

“They come to you as the people comes, and they sit before you as My people, and they hear your words, but they will not do them; for with their mouth they show much love, but their heart goes after their covetousness.” Ezekiel 33:31.

The apostle Paul points out that this will be the special characteristic of those [in the church too] who live just before Christ’s second coming. He says, “In the last days perilous times shall come: for men shall be lovers of their own selves; . . . lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God; having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof.” 2 Timothy 3:1-5.

It is *because WE want to know* who are, and who are not, Christians in the church today, that we think of the “visible” and “invisible” church, and then we think we can denounce some and praise others! This concept is actually greatly condemned in Romans 2:1. “Therefore you are inexcusable, O man, whoever you are that judges [a fellow Christian]: for wherein you judge another, you condemn yourself; for you that judge do the same things”.

The “virgin” situation of Matthew 25 is an entirely different one to that which is followed by so many “national” Christians. As we have read, they think of everybody in a given location as being under the Christian yoke while only a select few really are. This may partially be so, but it is a twist on the truth, and is, therefore, a lie.

But the old text of the 7,000 who have not bowed the knee to Baal can still apply to modern spiritual Israel who are waiting for the Bridegroom to come while the church is separate from the state. Both groups in the visible church respond to the call “Behold, the bridegroom comes”, but only one is ready for it.

{COL 412.1-2}

When the earnest voice proclaimed at midnight, “Behold, the bridegroom comes; go you out to meet him,” and the sleeping virgins were roused from their slumbers, it was seen who had made preparation for the event. Both parties were taken unawares; but one *was prepared* for the emergency, and the other was found *without preparation*. So now, a sudden and unlooked-for calamity, something that brings the soul face to face with death, will show whether there is any real faith in the promises of God. It will show whether the soul is sustained by grace. The great final test comes at the close of human probation, when it will be too late for the soul’s need to be supplied.

The ten virgins are watching in the evening of this earth’s history. All claim to be [Adventist] Christians. *All have a call, a name, a lamp, and all profess to be doing God’s service. All apparently wait for Christ’s appearing.* But five are unready. Five will be found surprised, dismayed, outside the banquet hall.

So the two conditions are very similar, but are not the same, and we should not confuse them. One is an attempt by men to find a solution to an irreconcilable problem and the other is a God-given description of the last-day church (within a state).

### Conclusion:

The man-made term “invisible church” was coined to explain the fact that the majority in the geographical church do not behave as Christians should. This makes it difficult for some to accept the book of James to be divinely inspired, for he claims that Christians should be obvious by their works. It also allows the multitude of denominations to exist and to be called “Christian” even though they have such divergent beliefs! It even permits the thought that there are true Christians in the heathen religions, when the message should be, “Come out of her, My People”! It is true that they are there, and that they will be saved in the resurrection, but they cannot go through “Jacob’s” trouble and be translated if they stay there.

### Next query:

The Roman Catholic system of indulgences states that when money is paid to the church, the “past, present, and FUTURE” sins of the donor (or those of another if it is a gift from him), are forgiven. (GC 59.1 and 127.3)

The Protestant system of forgiveness is that Christ PAID for the sins of all men, past, present and future, when He died on the cross, and gives it to us as a gift.

Where is the difference?



### Endnote 1:

\*\*\*\*\* (Begin Quote)

<http://www.gotquestions.org/Bible-hypocrisy.html>

In essence, “hypocrisy” refers to the act of claiming to believe something but acting in a different manner. The word is derived from the Greek term for “actor”—literally, “one who wears a mask”—in other words, someone who *pretends* [my emphasis] to be what he is not.

The Bible calls hypocrisy a sin. There are two forms hypocrisy can take: that of professing belief in something and then acting in a manner contrary to that belief, and that of looking down on others when we ourselves are flawed.

The prophet Isaiah condemned the hypocrisy of his day: “The Lord says, ‘These people come near to me with their mouth and honor me with their lips, but their

hearts are far from me. Their worship of me is made up only of rules taught by men” (Isaiah 29:13). Centuries later, Jesus quoted this verse, aiming the same condemnation at the religious leaders of His day (Matthew 15:8-9). John the Baptist refused to give hypocrites a pass, telling them to produce “fruits worthy of repentance” (Luke 3:8). Jesus took an equally staunch stand against sanctimony—He called hypocrites “wolves in sheep’s clothing” (Matthew 7:15), “whitewashed tombs” (Matthew 23:27), “snakes,” and “brood of vipers” (Matthew 23:33).

We cannot say we love God if we do not love our brothers (1 John 2:9). Love must be “without hypocrisy” (Romans 12:9, NKJV). A hypocrite may look righteous on the outside, but it is a façade. True righteousness comes from the inner transformation of the Holy Spirit not an external conformity to a set of rules (Matthew 23:5; 2 Corinthians 3:8).

Jesus addressed the other form of hypocrisy in the Sermon on the Mount: “Why do you look at the speck of sawdust in your brother’s eye and pay no attention to the plank in your own eye? How can you say to your brother, ‘Let me take the speck out of your eye,’ when all the time there is a plank in your own eye? You hypocrite, first take the plank out of your own eye, and then you will see clearly to remove the speck from your brother’s eye” (Matthew 7:3-5). Jesus is not teaching against discernment or helping others overcome sin; instead, He is telling us not be so prideful and convinced of our own goodness that we criticize others from a position of self-righteousness. We should do some introspection first and correct our own shortcomings before we go after the “specks” in others (cf. Romans 2:1).

\*\*\*\*\* (End Quote)

Consider also the following thought:

\*\*\*\*\* (Begin Quote)

Matthew 23 *The Message (MSG)*

### Religious Fashion Shows

**23** <sup>1-3</sup> Now Jesus turned to address his disciples, along with the crowd that had gathered with them. “The religion scholars and Pharisees are competent teachers in God’s Law. You won’t go wrong in following their teachings on Moses. But be careful about following *them*. They talk a good line, but they don’t live it. They don’t take it into their hearts and live it out in their behaviour. It’s all spit-and-polish veneer.

<sup>4-7</sup> “Instead of giving you God’s Law as food and drink by which you can banquet on God, they package it in bundles of rules, loading you down like pack animals.

They seem to take pleasure in watching you stagger under these loads, and wouldn't think of lifting a finger to help. Their lives are perpetual fashion shows, embroidered prayer shawls one day and flowery prayers the next. They love to sit at the head table at church dinners, basking in the most prominent positions, preening in the radiance of public flattery, receiving honorary degrees, and getting called 'Doctor' and 'Reverend.'

8-10 "Don't let people do that to *you*, put you on a pedestal like that. You all have a single Teacher, and you are all classmates. Don't set people up as experts over your life, letting them tell you what to do. Save that authority for God; let *him* tell you what to do. No one else should carry the title of 'Father'; you have only one Father, and he's in heaven. And don't let people maneuver you into taking charge of them. There is only one Life-Leader for you and them—Christ.

11-12 "Do you want to stand out? Then step down. Be a servant. If you puff yourself up, you'll get the wind knocked out of you. But if you're content to simply be yourself, your life will count for plenty.

\*\*\*\*\* (End Quote)

Endnote 2.

(I don't know who these people are, but I agree wholeheartedly with what they say here.)

\*\*\*\*\* (Begin Quote)

<http://twelvetribe.org/articles/epistle-of-straw>

It is a well-documented fact that Martin Luther is quoted as having said that the book of the New Testament called *James* was an "epistle of straw."<sup>1</sup> This can only mean it is going to burn like a pile of straw in the Day of Judgment.<sup>2</sup> Why did he say that? Obviously it is because he did not like the things written in that portion of Scripture. But **why? What bothered him so much about the words of James?**

**He did not like what James said about *faith and works*.** It did not go along with his newfound doctrine, "saved by faith alone." Martin Luther's revelation of "saved by faith" is the foundation for his split from his former church, the Roman Catholic Church. He thought that the heavy burdens of *good deeds* that his church was extorting from her members were unnecessary. He had been tormented by a deep sense of guilt about his own behavior and inability to measure up to the good deeds necessary for his church to grant him freedom from purgatory and entrance to heaven. So, his revelation of "faith only" was the answer. According to his revelation, Martin Luther taught that salvation is by faith alone, thus anything else that might be expected from a believer would be heresy, or *works salvation*.

Yet, the book of James explains just the opposite concerning salvation. So, of course, rather than doubt the authenticity of his own personal revelation about faith, he doubted the Bible. <sup>3</sup>

### **Faith that Doesn't Work**

The point of the book of James is that any faith that is real faith will be obvious by the kind of deeds (works) it produces. If the faith does no works, then it is a faith that literally doesn't work. In other words, that faith will not gain for you the eternal life you hope for.

The book of James is so clear that it even says that “your religion is worthless” if it does not include the proper works. In this case the “works” James was speaking of was merely “controlling your tongue.” <sup>4</sup> Martin Luther was one who was famous for his “fiery invective” and coarse language. So, of course, he would not like that part in the Bible where it condemns men who, “With the tongue praise our Lord and Father, and with the same tongue curse men, who have been made in God's likeness.” <sup>5</sup> . . .

Although the leader of their Reformation had this view of “faith alone,” Protestant Christians today do not say that they hate the book of James. How is it then that they can still say they follow the doctrines of Martin Luther?

Understanding their reasoning will give you a key to what is going on in much of the *religious fluff* you see today across the denominational landscape. [This is their emphasis.]

Believers have been handed a “gospel” that teaches a way to read the book of James and other equally pointed truths and yet mentally disconnect when thinking through (or taking) those truths to their proper conclusions. This is what James meant by “deceives his own heart.” <sup>7</sup>

It is like saying, “Two plus two is four.” Everyone knows that is right, unless you have come under a delusion. Under a delusion you can see “two plus two” and somehow know it equals four, but still go ahead and say with confidence that it equals five. You have no apologies. You can quote, “Faith without works is dead,” and at the same time say, “You do not need to do anything.” You can justify every contradiction to the commands of the Scriptures by saying to those who would want to obey, “That is legalism; salvation is a free gift.” <sup>8</sup>

## Useless Religion

So, we see a religion full of gluttony, drunkenness, and even murder in the name of God, by people (including Martin Luther himself) who will justify their actions with the thought that they are “saved by faith alone.” But James boldly says, “***Can that faith save him?***”

James goes on to make the guidelines even tighter in writing to the believers, “If anyone one among you thinks he is religious, but does not bridle his tongue and deceives himself, this one’s religion is ***useless***.”<sup>2</sup>

So what is the “useless religion” James is talking about? He is talking to ***believers*** here, isn’t he? They think they have “saving faith” because they ***think*** they are “religious” — but by simply “not bridling his tongue” such a one is exposed by his behavior as having useless religion.

\*\*\*\*\***(End Quote)**

James and Luther were both right in a strange way (as often happens in religion).

Luther’s doctrine of salvation in which works do not register is correct for ***the gift*** of salvation (the new birth), but not for sanctification, the subsequent life of the Christian from which ***a reward*** is derived.

James, on the other hand, was concentrating ***only*** on the ensuing life of the new-born. They disagreed on two different things!

And because of that Luther began a path which led the church to where God has this to say about it.

\*\*\*\*\***(Begin Quote)**

Revelation 3:

<sup>1</sup> And to the angel of the church in Sardis [representing the Reformation time of 1517-1833] write; These things says He that has the seven Spirits of God, and the seven stars; I know your works, that you have a name [in men’s ears] that you live, and are dead [in Mine].

<sup>2</sup> Be watchful, and strengthen the things which remain, that are ready to die: for I have not found your works perfect before God. <sup>3</sup> Remember therefore ***how*** you have received and heard, and hold fast, and repent. If therefore you shall not watch, I will come on you as a thief, and you shall not know what hour I will come upon you.



the *patricii* ([Patricians](#)), a hereditary caste that monopolised political power during the [regal era \(to 509 BC\)](#) and during the early [Republic](#) (to 338 BC); the *ordo senatorius* (“Senatorial Order”), which included all sitting members of the [Roman Senate](#) and their families; and the *ordo equester* (“Order of Knights”). The groups overlapped in the sense that all Patricians and Senators also held the status of Roman Knights.

Of the three, only Patrician rank was hereditary and permanent, and thus the number of Patricians gradually declined over the centuries as male lines died out. The term **patrician** ([Latin](#): *patricius*, [Greek](#): πατρίκιος, *patrikios*) originally referred to a group of [ruling class](#) families in [ancient Rome](#), including both their natural and adopted members. In the [late Roman Empire](#), the class was broadened to include high administrative officials.

Senatorial rank depended on the head of the family holding a seat in the Senate, which was not hereditary, but dependent on election. (Senate seats were limited to 600 during the [Principate](#), 30 BC - AD 284). Although election was for life, the seat would be forfeited if the Senator, at the quinquennial [five yearly] census, failed to meet a minimum property requirement (250,000 *denarii* under [Augustus](#)). Knightly rank was hereditary (in the male line), but again could be lost by failure to meet a property threshold (100,000 *denarii*). As only Knights were eligible for a seat in the Senate, all Senators also held Knightly rank (and would revert to it if they lost their seat).

Under Augustus, a distinction arose between hereditary Knights (known, due to historical reasons, as *equites equo publico* - “**Knights with a Public Horse**”), and the much more numerous “property-Knights”, commoners who attained the property-threshold, and were accorded Knightly status and regalia by Augustus, but did not belong to the Order and were not eligible to enter the Senate or hold the public posts reserved for Knights.

During the Roman imperial era, all the top administrative, military and religious positions - Senate seats, [state magistracies](#), provincial governorships, command of [legions](#) and [auxiliary regiments](#), state priesthoods - were reserved for Senators and hereditary Knights. Wealth accumulated over centuries by aristocratic families resulted in most land and commerce being in the hands of the same elite.

Thus, a tiny elite of around 5,000 men monopolized all of the wealth and power in an empire of nearly 60 million inhabitants.

\*\*\*\*\*[\(End Quote\)](#)

Endnote 5: Some examples of what sacralism does in practice:

\*\*\*\*\* (Begin Quote)

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Religion\\_in\\_Nazi\\_Germany](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Religion_in_Nazi_Germany)

In 1933, prior to the [annexation of Austria into Germany](#), the population of Germany was approximately 67% Protestant and 33% Catholic; Jews made up less than 1% of the population.<sup>[1]</sup> A census in May 1939, six years into the [Nazi era](#)<sup>[2]</sup> and incorporating the annexation of mostly [Catholic](#) Austria into Germany, indicates that 54% considered themselves Protestant, 40% Catholic, 3.5% self-identified as “[gottgläubig](#)“ (lit. “believers in god”, often described as predominately creationist and deistic),<sup>[3]</sup> and 1.5% as non-religious.

There was some diversity of personal views among the Nazi leadership as to the future of religion in Germany. Anti-Church radicals included Hitler's Personal Secretary [Martin Bormann](#), Minister for Propaganda [Joseph Goebbels](#), Neo-Pagan Nazi Philosopher [Alfred Rosenberg](#), and Neo-Pagan Occultist [Reichsführer-SS Heinrich Himmler](#). Some Nazis, such as [Hans Kerrl](#), who served as Hitler's Minister for Church Affairs, believed Christianity could be Nazified into “[Positive Christianity](#)“, by renouncing its Jewish origins, the Old Testament and [Apostle's Creed](#), and holding Hitler as a new “Messiah”.<sup>[citation needed]</sup>

Nazism wanted to transform the subjective consciousness of the German people—their attitudes, values and mentalities—into a single-minded, obedient “national community”. The Nazis believed they would therefore have to replace class, religious and regional allegiances.<sup>[4]</sup> Under the [Gleichschaltung](#) process, Hitler attempted to create a unified [Protestant Reich Church](#) from Germany's 28 existing Protestant churches.

The plan failed, and was resisted by the [Confessing Church](#). Persecution of the [Catholic Church in Germany](#) followed the Nazi takeover. Hitler moved quickly to eliminate [Political Catholicism](#). Amid harassment of the Church, the [Reich concordat](#) treaty with the Vatican was signed in 1933, and promised to respect Church autonomy. Hitler routinely disregarded the Concordat, closing all Catholic institutions whose functions were not strictly religious. Clergy, nuns, and lay leaders were targeted, with thousands of arrests over the ensuing years. The Church accused the regime of “fundamental hostility to Christ and his Church”.

Smaller religious minorities such as the [Jehovah's Witnesses](#) and [Bahá'í Faith](#) were banned in Germany, while the eradication of [Judaism](#) by the genocide of its adherents was attempted. The Salvation Army, Christian Saints and Seventh Day

