

The Common Aim of all Godly Religions



All godly religious traditions seek to live a life that is holy, righteous, and in harmony with the will of God. Over the centuries and millennia, humans have sought to know spiritual realities - whatever names they may have given them. By grace, they have encountered aspects or “particles” of the divine within themselves, within nature, within the universe.

Ultimately, knowing God in the sense of having a relationship with God boils down to being aware of or awake to emanations of the divine all around and to spiritual laws working throughout the universe. True life in the Spirit then is not just a set of doctrines or beliefs (theology), it is above all a way of life – aligning oneself with the universal spiritual laws and will of God. This way is characterised by more than following a set of laws, rules, or rituals. Rather it is the heart expression of God-given love, unity, harmony, and connectedness to God and other humans.

Despite differing concepts of God and things of the spirit, of which we all understand only a tiny part compared to the infinite and unsearchable whole, and which from individual perspectives may seem contradictory, *the way of love is indeed the one thing that unites all those who “walk in the Spirit”* regardless of which among the godly religions and spiritualities they embrace. This is not earning salvation by works, but rather a Spirit-led life, only possible by the Holy Spirit (which imparts divine love and other divine traits) dwelling in one’s heart, which comes purely by grace.

The below Bible-based reflections on salvation suggest that, as one writer put it, God’s Holy Spirit indeed travels along all the religious and spiritual paths to find those who are ready to respond. After all, we all have a very limited grasp of what God is doing in the world (John 3:7-8) and don’t want to be guilty of restricting God to our image. As another writer wisely observed, if we think we understand God, what we have understood is not God.

Bible teaching about salvation

It is solely by grace

The man born blind (John 9) is symbolic of the universal incapacity of humans for divine life. The only solution is birth anew, from above, through transformation by the Spirit (see John 3:3-5). This is nothing short of a divine miracle. Like the blind man in the story, people have little choice and a relatively small part to play in the process – it comes solely by God's initiative and grace - not of human will or decision (John 1:13; Eph 2:8-10).

It involves a supernatural process

Several steps intertwine in the process of the divine making of child of God who is then saved both in the present, as well as on the path to complete salvation in the future. In a mysterious, but powerful way, God works in the hearts, minds, souls, and lives of individuals wherever he chooses – raising the spiritually dead, giving sight to the blind, and opening the ears of the deaf (see Matt 11:2-6; Luke 4:17-22; Isa 61:1-2). A heart change occurs in each case (Ezek 11:19; 36:26). It is the heart that determines outward goodness or otherwise (Matt 7:15-20; 12:33-35; 15:18-20; Luke 6:43-45).

It results in a new state of being

Rising from the dead, begetting, new birth, new creation, regeneration, transference from the kingdom of darkness to the kingdom of light – these are scriptural concepts, found in John's gospel (John 1:12; 3:3,5; 5:21; 10:16, 27; 11:40; 16:27-30; 17:2-3, 6-9, 14, 25) and elsewhere in the New Testament, of what must supernaturally occur before a person can embark on the road to salvation.

It manifests itself in love

The saved state is preceded by God-given repentance (becoming aware of and turning away from rebellion against God – Acts 2:38-40; 11:13-18). The Holy Spirit imparting the divine love within is the evidence and guarantee of the saved state (Rom. 5:5; 8:8-14; 2 Cor 1:21-22; 5:5; Eph 1:13-14). Transforming the heart, the Spirit/divine love manifests itself by the "fruit of the Spirit" – including love, peace, patience, and self-control – which fulfills and transcends the law (Gal. 5:22-24). In a corollary, those who habitually love others through divine love dwelling in their hearts have God, are in God, and are being saved (1 John 2:3-10, 2:29; 3:24; 4:7-8; Tit 1:16; 3:5-9).