

**PURPOSE OF STUDY:** To demonstrate the superiority of the Christian faith over all others in that it is the only world religion (including false Christianity) in which the love of the deity moves the deity to take the *initiative* in the salvation of His creatures; to show God's unconditional love.

**TEXTS:**

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|-------------------------|----------------------------|
| 1. AC 17:16, 22-25      | 8. MT 5:44-5               |
| 2. 1KI 18:26-8          | 9. 1PE 1:18-19 (RO 8:31-2) |
| 3. PS 115:4-8 (EX 20:4) | 10. PS 139:14-16           |
| 4. RO 3:10-11           | 11. AC 17:24-28            |
| 5. JE 31:3 (JN 12:32)   | 12. AC 17:30               |
| 6. RO 5:6-10            | 13. JE 29:11               |
| 7. TT 3:4-5             |                            |

**THE STUDY:**

- 1. What makes Christianity different from other world religions? AC 17:16, 22-25**  
*In Christianity, God takes the initiative, while heathen religions are built upon the idea of appeasing the higher power. Religion, according to the Greeks, was the attempt to gain the approval and the acceptance of the their gods. They were a poly-theistic culture (they believed in many gods), and had built elaborate temples for their gods in an attempt to persuade them to be merciful.*
- 2. Why did the Baal worshipers on Mt. Carmel leap and shout and cut themselves? 1KI 18:26-28**  
*They were trying to find favor with their god and get his attention. They felt that their god didn't care about them unless they did something to make him care. We call this behavior trying to "appease" their god. This concept of a god that needs to be appeased has led many to very frustrating experiences of constantly trying to earn the favor of God and never being quite sure if they have. Most of the world's religions are built on some form of appeasement.*
- 3. Why would anyone want to worship a god that needs to be appeased? PS 115:4-8 (EX 20:4)**  
*The appeal of idolatry is the ability to "create" a god in one's own image – a god that thinks just like you, likes what you like, does what you do. Generally, you can appease your god by some small sacrifice and then continue living the way you want. We will often go to great lengths to have things our own way.*
- 4. According to the Bible, how many people really search for God? RO 3:10-11**  
*No one seeks God; no one understands their need of Him. This begs the question,*
- 5. If nobody seeks God, then how does anyone find Him? JE 31:3 (JN 12:32)**  
*Here God declares that it is He who draws people to himself. If men seek God, it is only because He first sought them. The emphasis here is on initiative. What God is saying, in essence, is that He has taken the initiative in the salvation process.*
- 6. Who does the Bible say Jesus died for? RO 5:6-10**  
*Jesus died for the ungodly; while we were still sinners, living lives of rebellion against God, not even wanting to serve or obey Him, He gave His Son to die for us.*

**7. Is salvation available only to the people who deserve it? TT 3:4-5**

*Absolutely not! God saves us by His grace. To be gracious is to do something for someone that they don't deserve. God took the initiative to save when there was nothing in us that wanted to be saved. He demonstrated His love, and began to draw us with that love God saves us, not because of who we are, but because of who He is.*

**8. How does nature testify to the unconditional quality of God's love? MT 5:44-45**

*God's showers His goodness on both "the evil and the good." Every day life, breath, health and happiness are granted to those who serve God as well as those who rebel against Him.*

**9. How much is each person worth to God? 1PE 1:18-19 (RO 8:32)**

*It has been said that a thing is only worth what someone is willing to pay for it. Our worth to God can only be estimated by the price He paid to save us. God considers gold and silver valueless compared to what He paid for us. God paid the ultimate price. There was nothing more valuable that He could have given to redeem us, even while we were living in rebellion against Him! How amazing!*

**10. What makes God care so much about even those who hate Him? PS 139:14-16**

*God has a vested interest in us, because He made us. Before we ever had an existence, God had a purpose and a plan for us, didn't he? In His creative mind's eye, He saw all that we could become through Him, and fell in love with us!*

**11. What is God's ultimate purpose for all mankind? AC 17:24-28**

*The Bible says that God has pre-determined every human being's lifespan and where they will live for one primary purpose – that we may all come to know Him for who He is. We grope and feel when we can't see. God knows that His character has been distorted. He knows that many understand Him as a vindictive God who only wants to be appeased. They are in spiritual darkness concerning God's character. They can't see Him as He truly is, so He has taken the initiative and has come near to us because He wants to save us. Now we must be willing to seek Him for who He really is!*

**12. How does God view our sinful past, and what does He command us to do? AC 17:30**

*He is willing to overlook our sinful past, when we didn't know better, if only now we will repent – turn around –and seek His will for our lives.*

**13. When will we finally "find" the True God? JE 29:11-14**

*We need to search for Him with all our hearts, right? Then He promises that He will be found by us! So the True God – the God of Christianity – the God of the Bible – is not worshiped with men's hands; God doesn't need us to appease Him. He is not waiting for us to take the initiative, but He Himself has taken the initiative to save us even when we were unwilling to be saved! We are here for one purpose – to respond to His Spirit's drawing power and discover His purpose for our existence. He is only waiting for us to respond by turning to Him with our whole heart.*

**APPEALS:**

**Purpose** – God has created you for a purpose, but until now you have lived your own way. Today, God invites you to learn of Him; He wants to give you a bright, hopeful future. *Are you willing to study in order to know His will and purpose for your life?*

**God's Love for You** – So much of your life has been spent trying to earn the love and approval of people: parents, friends, romantic interests, and God. You have seen your value through man's eyes. Today, God wants you to realize your true value in His eyes. He has placed a value on your life that surpasses anything this world could ever hope to give. He asks only that you will seek to know Him, learn to trust Him, and let Him lead you into the plan for your life that He has prepared, to give you a future and a hope. *Will you commit yourself today to learning to know Him better?*