

# **RELIGIOUS , BUT LOST**

**Mt.7:21-27**

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## **I. Introduction**

1. Perhaps the vast majority of people who believe in the one true God of the Bible, also believe that all such religious people will be saved eternally.
2. They encourage people to “be religious,” to be “people of faith,” regardless of what faith they espouse as long as they are sincere in their faith in God, even if they don’t necessarily believe in Jesus as the Son of God.
3. It seems that this vast majority of people are reluctant to reprove or rebuke or even question anyone who is sincerely religious as long as that one claims faith in the one true God of the Bible.
4. And perhaps many of these same people would even include those of other religions of other gods.
5. It is no uncommon thing for people to say: “Join the church of your choice;” “one church is as good as another;” “I’m religious, but I’m not into or I do not believe in organized religion.” “Either one is a matter of choice, just as long as one is religious.” “We are all headed to the same place, just following different ways or different plans or paths.”
6. Question: Does the inspired text teach this? Or, does it teach that one may be religious, even sincerely religious, but lost?
7. The answer is obvious from the following Bible examples.

## **II. DISCUSSION**

### **A. THOSE OF MT.7:21-23 WERE SINCERELY RELIGIOUS, BUT LOST.**

1. It’s obvious that those of this text were religious.
2. It’s obvious that they were sincerely religious; that they were believers in Jesus Christ.
3. Note what they claimed to have done and in whose name they claimed to have done these things, V.22.
4. Yet, they were denied and rejected by the Lord on the basis that they were “workers of iniquity,” or “lawless ones,” who had claimed him as their Master, but had not been doers of the Master’s will, vv.23,21. Cf. Vv.24-27.

5. These were not “lawless ones”, rejected and lost because they were immoral, etc. Cf. Heb.5:8,9; Jno.12:48-50.

**B. THE SCRIBES AND PHARISEES OF MT.23 WERE RELIGIOUS, BELIEVED IN AND WORSHIPPED GOD, THOUGH THEY REJECTED JESUS.**

1. Proof that they were religious worshippers of God.
  - a. They sat “in Moses’ seat,” V.2.
  - b. They loved “the chief seats in the synagogues,” the places for the Jewish religious gathers, V.6.
  - c. They loved “to be called of men, Rabbi, Rabbi,” a religious title of respect by which Jewish teachers of religion were addressed, V.8.
  - d. They made “long prayers,” V.14.
  - e. They would compass “sea and land to make one proselyte,” V.15.
  - f. They paid “tithes of mint, anise and cumin,” V.23.
  - g. They appeared “beautiful and righteous outwardly,” Vv.27,28.
2. Proof that though they were religious, they were lost.
  - a. They said, and did not, V.3.
  - b. They bound heavy burdens on others shoulders, which they themselves would not move with one of their fingers, V.4.
  - c. they did all their works to be seen of men, V.5. (For which “they have their reward,” Mt.6:5: they are seen of men!)
  - d. They shut up the kingdom of heaven against men; they themselves neither go in, neither suffer them that are entering to go in, V.13.
  - e. For a pretense they made “long prayer,” V.14.
  - f. Those proselyted by them were made “twofold more the child of hell than yourselves,” V.15.
  - g. They were “blind guides,” and “fools” “who strain at a gnat, and swallow a camel,” Vv.16,17,24.
  - h. They “omitted the weightier matters of the law, judgment, mercy, and faith,” V.23.
  - i. They were “full of hypocrisy,” V.28.
  - j. They were ‘serpents, a generation of vipers’ who could not “escape the damnation of hell.”
3. Yes, they were religious, but lost!

**C. THE PHARISEE IN LK.18:9-14 WAS VERY RELIGIOUS, BUT HE WAS LOST.**

1. He was lost in spite of the fact that:
  - a. He was not an extortioner.
  - b. He was not an unjust man.
  - c. He was not an adulterer.
  - d. He was not a thief.
  - e. He was a moral man.
  - f. He was a worshipper of God.
  - g. He fasted twice a week.
  - h. He gave tithes of all his possessions.
  - i. He was a praying man.
2. He was lost because:
  - a. He was self-righteous and was guilty of despising others.
  - b. He thus exalted himself – he thought more of himself than he should have.
3. Note Jesus' concluding thought concerning this self-righteous religious man in V.14.
4. Humility precludes self-exaltation. Cf. Prov.16:18; 11:2; 29:23.

**D. THE ATHENIANS OF AC.17:16-32 WERE VERY RELIGIOUS (V.22), BUT LOST.**

1. Athens was a “city wholly given to idolatry,” V.16.
2. To them Paul “seemed to be a setter forth of strange gods: because he preached unto them Jesus, and the resurrection,” V.18.
3. It seems that along with their idolatry, they were worshipping the true God in ignorance (V.23), whom Paul preached unto them, of whom all men are the offspring (Vv.24-29).
4. Some of them mocked “when they heard of the resurrection of the dead;” while others said, “We will hear thee again of this matter,” V.32.
5. They were religious, but lost!

**E. THE ETHIOPIAN EUNUCH OF AC.8:26-39 IS ANOTHER BIBLE EXAMPLE OF ONE WHO WAS RELIGIOUS, BUT LOST UNTIL HE HEARD, BELIEVED AND WAS BAPTIZED INTO JESUS CHRIST.**

1. He had traveled from Ethiopia to Jerusalem to worship, V.27.

2. On his return to Ethiopia, he was sitting in his chariot reading the book of Isaiah, the prophet, V.28.
3. Philip, the evangelist, upon the instruction of the angel of the Lord, had been led to the eunuch (V.26,27).
4. Then the Holy Spirit instructed Philip to join himself to the eunuch's chariot, V.29.
5. Obeying the Spirit, he asked the eunuch the question: "Understandest thou what thou readest?" V.30.
6. The eunuch's answer was: "How can I, except some man should guide me?" V.31a.
7. What follows is a revelation:
  - a. Of what and where he was reading in Isaiah, Vv.32,33.
  - b. Of the eunuch's question about what it meant, V.34.
  - c. Of Philip's explanation and his preaching Jesus to the eunuch, V.35.
  - d. Of the eunuch's response and his obedience, Vv.36-39.
8. Then he was saved! But only after he by faith was baptized into Jesus Christ for the remission of sins. Mk.16:15,16; Ac.2:36-38; 22:16; Rom.6:3-6; Gal.3:26,27.
9. He was religious both before and after his obedience to the gospel. But he was lost before. Before, he was religious. After, he was religiously right.

**F. SAUL OF TARSUS IS ANOTHER BIBLE EXAMPLE OF ONE SINCERELY RELIGIOUS, BUT LOST.**

1. Saul, after the most straitest sect of the Jew's religion, lived a Pharisee, Ac.26:5.
2. Saul, as a religious Jew, had been "brought up...at the feet of Gamaliel, and taught according to the perfect manner of the law of the fathers, and was zealous toward God," Ac.22:3.
3. Concerning the righteousness which was in the law, he was blameless, Phil.3:6.
4. He exercised himself to have always a conscience void of offence toward God and toward man, Ac.24:16; Cf. Ac.23:1.
5. Everything he did prior to his conversion to Christ, including denying Jesus and persecuting the followers of Christ, he did believing he was right doing it.

6. He later learned and admitted he had been wrong; that he was lost; that he did all these things in “ignorance and unbelief,” and was “foremost among sinners” while doing them, 1Tim.1:12-15.
7. He was sincerely, devoutly religious, but lost until he by faith obeyed the gospel of Christ, Ac.9:4-6; 22:16; 1Cor.1:21; 15:1,2; 2Th.1:6-10.

**G. CORNELIUS IS ANOTHER BIBLE EXAMPLE, Ac.10,11.**

1. That he was a morally good, sincere, devoutly religious, God-fearing man of piety toward God is evidently by eight different expressions applied to him.
  - a. He was “a devout man,” V.2a.
  - b. He was “one that feared God with all his house,” V.2b.
  - c. He was one who “gave much alms to the people,” V.2c.
  - d. He was one who “prayed to God always,” V.2d.
  - e. He was “a just man,” V.22.
  - f. He was a man “of good report among all the nations of the Jews,” V.22.
  - g. He was a man who “fasted,” V.30.
  - h. He was a man whose prayers were “heard,” Vv.4,31.
2. Yet, he was a man who was lost and had to be told what to do to be saved, Ac.10:6; Ac.11:13,14.
3. What was he told? Ac.10:33-43,47,48; Ac.15:6-9; Rom.10:17.

**I. THE BELIEVING JEWS OF JNO.12:42,43 IS ANOTHER EXAMPLE THAT ONE MAY BE RELIGIOUS, BUT LOST.**

1. These were chief rules among the Jews of Jesus’ day – during his personal ministry on earth.
2. They even believed Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God.
3. But they were lost because did not and would not confess Jesus.
4. Why would they not confess their faith in Jesus?
  - a. “Because of the Pharisees,” “lest they should be put out of the synagogue.” Cf. Jno.9:22.
  - b. Because “they loved the praise of men more than the praise of God.”
5. They were still religious! But they were lost! See Mt.10:32,33; Mk.8:38; Lk.9:26; Mt.12:30.

**J. ANANIAS AND SAPPHIRA OF AC.5:1-11, WHO HAVING OBEYED THE GOSPEL AND WERE CHILDREN OF GOD, WERE RELIGIOUS, BUT LOST.**

1. Note what they had: Personal possessions.
2. What they did concerning the sale of a portion of their possessions.
3. Of what they were guilty: of conspiracy; of lying to God.
4. What happened to them because of their guilt!

**K. SIMON THE SORCERER IN AC.8:5-24.**

1. Philip, the evangelist, went down to the city of Samaria and preached Christ unto them, V.5.
2. The people of Samaria heard, believed and were baptized, V.12 – thus were saved; all agree. Cf. Mk.16:15,16.
3. But the record also says: “Then Simon himself believed also, and ...was baptized,” V.13. – Thus as far as the record is concerned, he was saved just as they were saved!
4. But Simon sinned and was temporarily lost, condemned in his sin, Vv.18-22.

**L. DIOTREPES OF 3JNO.9-11, A MEMBER OF THE CHURCH, IS ANOTHER BIBLE EXAMPLE OF ONE WHO WAS RELIGIOUS BUT LOST.**

**M. THE LAODICIANS OF REV.3:14-19 IS STILL ANOTHER EXAMPLE.**

1. Note their supposed spiritual condition, V.17.
2. Cf. their true spiritual condition, Vv.15,16 – Lost!
3. What they must do to recover from their lost condition, Vv.18,19.

**N. THE PEOPLE OF THE DENOMINATIONAL RELIGIONS ARE PEOPLE WHO ARE SINCERELY RELIGIOUS, BUT LOST.**

1. Their churches wear the wrong names, teach and practice the wrong doctrines, and were established at the wrong times. Cite examples.
2. They, like those of Mt.7:21-23, say, “Lord, Lord,” and claim to do what they do in the name of the Lord, but do not do the will of the Father in heaven.

3. They, like those of Mt.15:9; Col.2:20-23, “teach for doctrine the commandments of men,” which makes their worship “vain”!

### **III. CONCLUSION**

1. Being religious is necessary. But being religious in and of itself is no assurance that one is saved, or has any hope of eternal salvation. One must be religiously right!
2. To be religiously right one must do as the Lord said in Mt.7:21-23; Lk.6:46; Heb.5:89; Jno.12:48-50.
3. How sad it will be to have said, “Lord, Lord” and yet hear him say, “I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity,” that is, “lawless ones” because of not having done the will of the Father in heaven!