

RELIGIOUS SINNERS

Mt.7:21-23; 15:9

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I. INTRODUCTION

1. To sin is to transgress the law of God, to “come short of the glory of God,” 1Jno.3:4; Rom.1:23.
2. To be a sinner as used in this lesson is not used to describe one who has committed an act of sin, but one who is practicing sin, is committing sin, and is doing that in practice of his professed religious beliefs or religious system or faith; such as in 1Jno.3:8; 1Jno.1:6; 2:4; Mt.15:9; Gal.1:13,14; 1Tim.1:12-15.
3. It seems that for the most part man is by nature a religious being, a god-worshipping being, believing in and practicing some form of religion, recognizing some form of higher being in one manner of worship or another.
4. However, the religion he believes and practices may not be in harmony with the One true and living God, the God of the Bible, even if he professes to be a dedicated servant of Him.
5. What we commonly call “Christianity” is a religion, but not all religion is “Christianity.” In fact, not all that is called “Christianity” is true religion or that which is acceptable to God.
6. The words “religion” and “religious” are Bible words, but do not always describe a religion or a religious belief and practice accepted of God; thus the followers and practitioners thereof are religious sinners, and their worship vain. Examples: Ac.13:43; 26:5; Gal.1:13,14; Jas.1:13,14; Mt.15:9; Col.1:20-23.
7. It is possible for a religious person to be dedicated and honest, but honestly mistaken; to be sincere, but sincerely in error; to be religious, but religiously wrong – thus to be a religious sinner!
8. Consider the following as proof of such –

II. DISCUSSION

A. THE PHARISEES AND SADDUCEES OF THE TIME OF JOHN AND JESUS’ PUBLIC MINISTRY WERE RELIGIOUS SINNERS.

1. Mt.3:5-7; 5:20; 16:6,11,12; 23:1-38.

B. SOME WAYS IN WHICH MEN CAN BE RELIGIOUS AND YET BE SINNERS.

1. By worshipping the wrong god.
 - a. One of the 10 commandments given by Moses to Israel prohibited the worshipping of other gods, Exo.20:3-5.
 - b. Both Ahab and Israel were religious sinners because he served and worshipped Baal, and encouraged Israel to do likewise, 1Kgs.16:31-33.
 - c. In Mt.4:10 this truth is again emphasized.
 - d. The Athenians of Ac.17:16-22 were religious sinners for the reason they were idolaters.
 - e. When Paul preached the gospel of Christ at Ephesus in Asia, declaring “that they be no gods, which are made with hands,” the worshippers of the goddess Diana “were full of wrath, and cried out, saying, Great is Diana of the Ephesians,” by which they left no doubt they were religious sinners! Ac.19:21-34; Cf. Ac.17.
 - f. Those of the Islamic religious who worship Allah are also guilty.
 - g. 1Jno.5:21 warns us: “Little children keep yourselves from idols.” Cf. 1Cor.10:14.
2. By worshipping the right God, the one true and living God, in the wrong way.
 - a. Jno.4:24. Explain. Thus all who worship God while denying Jesus.
 - b. Cain and Abel, an example, Gen.4:1-8; Heb.11:4; 1Jno.3:12; Jude 11.
 - c. Nadab and Abihu , another example, Lev.10:1,2.
 - d. Others, Mt.15:1-9; Gal.1:6-9; 3:1-3; 4:8-11; 5:1-4,7.
 - e. By adding to, taking from, substituting for. Cf. 1Cor.4:6; 1Pet.4:11; Col.3:17; 2Jno.9; Rev.22:18,19.
 - (1) By adding items to the worship.
 - (2) By adding or deleting items from the plan of salvation.
 - (3) By adding human creeds to the All-sufficient N.T.
 - (4) By adding to the work of the local church.
 - (5) By adding to the organization of the local church.
3. By worshipping the One true and living God, yet having never obeyed the gospel of Christ.
 - a. Or worshipping God without having first believed, accepted and obeyed the conditions of his will, Jno.9:31; Prov.28:9; 1Pet.3:12; Jno.8:21,24.

- b. The gospel of Jesus Christ is God's power to save the believer, both Jesus and Gentile, Rom.1:16,17; 1Cor.16:1-3.
 - c. There is only one gospel of Jesus Christ that will save, and any perversion of it condemns rather than saves, Gal.1:6-12.
 - d. The gospel of Jesus Christ must be believe and obeyed in order to save, 1Pet.4:17,18; 2Th.1:6-10; Mk.16:15,16; Ac.2:36-38,41.
 - e. Therefore, in spite of being worshippers of the One true and living God, all those who have not believed and obeyed the gospel of Christ are religious sinners.
 - f. In view of these truths consider some examples of those who were and some who are religious sinners:
 - (1) The Jews on Pentecost, Ac.2:22,23,36-41.
 - (2) The Ethiopian eunuch of Ac.8:26-39.
 - (3) Lydia of Ac.16:14,15.
 - (4) Crispus, the chief ruler of the Jewish synagogue of Ac.18:1,4,8.
 - (5) The disciples at Ephesus who were worshippers of God, but who knew only the baptism of John the Baptist, Ac.19:1-6.
 - (6) Even the good moral man Cornelius, Ac.10:1-6; 11:14; 10:33-48; Cf. Mk.16:15,16; Ac.22:16; 1Pet.3:21.
 - (7) Those of our day who claim to be of the religion or of the faith of Jesus but who deny as necessary what Jesus requires in order to be saved; in other words, who have not obeyed the gospel of Jesus Christ!
4. By worshipping the One true and living God in the right way in the public assemblies, but not living right as a professed Christian.
- a. Ananias and Sapphira, Ac.5:1-11.
 - b. Simon the sorcerer, Ac.8:12-24.
 - c. Some among the Corinthian believers, 1Cor.1:11-13; 3:3; 5:1-6, 9-13; 6:6-8; 15:12.
 - d. The apostle Peter at one point in time when he was withstood by the apostle Paul because of his sin, Gal.2:11-14.
 - e. Those of the Thessalonians who were walking disorderly, 2Th.3:6.
 - f. Diotrophes was another religious sinner, 3Jno.9,10.
 - g. The 7 churches of Asia, Rev.2,3:
 - (1) Ephesus, 2:4,5.
 - (2) Pergamas, 2:14-16.
 - (3) Thyatira, 2:20-23.

(4) Laodiceans, 3:14-19.

III. CONCLUSION

1. To avoid being religious sinners take heed to the teaching of such passages as:
 - a. Eccl.12:13,14.
 - b. Psa.119:11; 19:13.
 - c. Mt.7:21; Lk.6:46.
 - d. Lk.16:24-27.
 - e. Mt.10:28.
 - f. Rev.22:14.
 - g. 1Pet.1:13-16.
 - h. Lk.13:3.
 - i. Heb.5:8,9.
 - j. Rev.21:8.
 - k. 2Tim.4:6-8.
 - l. Jer.10:23; Prov.14:12.
 - m. Heb.12:1-4,25.