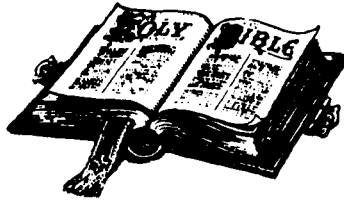


THE INSTRUCTOR



"All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness." 2 Timothy 3:16

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THE BELIEVER OF JOHN 3:16

Some believers will be lost! (Cf. James 2:19; John 12:42-43; 1 Tim. 1:19-21; 2 Tim. 2:17-18; 1 Tim. 4:1-2; Acts 1:25 & John 17:12). However, Jesus declared, ". . . **That whosoever believeth in him** (the Son of God — CRS) **should not perish, but have everlasting life.**" (John 3:16). It is obvious that **the believer of John 3:16 will receive eternal life.** Let us consider **what or which believer** is under consideration in John 3:16. In other words, **what kind of a believer** is under consideration? The **kind of believer** that is under consideration in John 3:16 is:

1. **The believer that comes to God by faith that he received by hearing the Word of God!** A study of such passages as Hebrews 11:6; John 20:30-31; Romans 10:17; John 6:44-45; 2 Cor. 5:7 and Matthew 11:28-30 should convince every honest person that such is the case.

2. **The believer with a pure heart!** Carefully read and study Matthew 5:8; Acts 15:7-9 and 1 Peter 1:22-25. It is **not** the believer whose heart is "**waxed gross**" as described in Matthew 13:15. Neither is it the believer who has an "**im-penitent**" heart! (Cf. Romans 2:5).

3. **The believer who is penitent!** The evidence for this is found in such passages as Acts 17:30-31; Acts 3:19; Acts 2:38 and 2 Cor. 7:10. NOTE: Surely no one would contend that the believer of John 3:16 is an impenitent one!

4. **The believer who is baptized!** The following passages plainly teach that one must be baptized to be saved. Mark 16:15-16; Acts 2:38; 8:12-13; 8:26-39; 22:16; 1 Peter 3:21 & Gal. 3:26-27.

5. **The believer who works by love!** Carefully read and consider Gal. 5:6; James 2:14-26 & Phil. 2:12-13.

6. **The believer who is saved by grace!** Please give diligence as you consider such passages as Eph. 2:5; 2:8-9; Titus 2:11-12 & Acts 20:32.

7. **The believer who is saved by the gospel!** Read and honestly study Romans 1:16; Mt. 28:18-20; Mk. 16:15-16; 1 Pet. 4:17-18 & 2 Thess. 1:6-10.

The believer of John 3:16 has faith, a pure heart, is penitent, has been baptized, works by love, is saved by grace and is saved by the gospel! Not every believer is the kind referred to in John 3:16. If you are not the kind of believer that Jesus had in mind in John 3:16, you should become one as soon as you can. (CRS)

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Editorial . . .

RELIGIOUS SINNERS

Man is by nature, it seems, a religious being. However, the religion he believes and practices may not be in harmony with the will of God. 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**.

The word "**religion**" appears in the Bible (KJV) only five times and the word "**religious**" is found twice. Here they are: Acts 26:5; Gal. 1:13; Gal. 1:14; James 1:26; James 1:27 and Acts 13:43.

It is possible for a person to be honest, but honestly mistaken! It is possible for a person to be sincere, but sincerely in error! It is possible for a person to be religious, but religiously wrong!

I. A PERSON CAN BE RELIGIOUS AND YET BE A SINNER! The Pharisees and Sadducees, etc. in the first century were **sinner**s although they were religious. In Mt. 16:6 Jesus said, "**Take heed and beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and of the Sadducees.**" We learn from verse 12 that Jesus was warning His disciples of their **doctrine**. On another occasion Jesus warned of

their **hypocrisy** when He mentioned their "leaven." See Luke 12:1.

We learn from Mt. 23 that the Pharisees and Scribes **loved pre-eminence**, were **inconsistent**, **hypocritical** and had **improper motives**. Instead of faithfully serving God they wanted to make a "**show**."

In Mt. 15:7-9 Jesus declared that the Scribes and Pharisees worshipped in **vain**, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men.

In James 1:26 James said: "If **any man among you seem to be religious, and bridleth not his tongue, but deceiveth his own heart, this man's religion is vain.**"

Yes, men can be religious and yet be sinners!

II. HOW CAN MEN BE RELIGIOUS, AND YET BE SINNERS! Let us now consider four ways that men can be religious and yet be sinners.

A. BY WORSHIPPING THE WRONG GOD! One of the ten commandments given by Moses to Israel prohibited the worshipping of other gods. It said: "**Thou shalt have no other gods before me . . . Thou shalt not bow down thyself to them, nor serve them. . .**" (Exo. 20:3-5)

In 1 Kings 16:31-33 we learn that Ahab, king of Israel, served and worshipped Baal. He also encouraged Israel to do likewise. They were religious and yet sinners!

In Mt. 4:10 Jesus said; "**Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve.**"

The Athenians in Acts 17:16-22 were religious but were sinners! The true God was unknown to them.

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Paul preached **the word of the Lord Jesus** in Ephesus and many accepted it. However, there was a great “stir” because there were those who were more concerned about “the temple of the great goddess Diana” being despised and her magnificence being destroyed than they were in worshipping and serving the true God. (See Acts 19:1-41). They were sinners although religious!

John warned Christians, saying, “**Little children, keep yourselves from idols.**” (1 John 5:21). Also see Mt. 6:24 & 1 Cor. 10:14.

B. BY WORSHIPPING THE RIGHT (TRUE) GOD IN THE WRONG WAY! Jesus declared that “**God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth.**” (John 4:24). “**In truth**” is the right way to worship God!

1. **Cain and Abel** both worshipped the right God, but one (Cain) was a sinner! He did not worship “**by faith.**” God did not accept his offering. Although he worshipped, he was a sinner! (See Gen. 4:1-16; Heb. 11:4).

2. **Nadab and Abihu** “**took either of them his censer, and put fire therein, and put incense thereon, and offered strange fire before the Lord, which he commanded them not.**” (Lev. 10:1-2) Although they worshipped the right God they did it in the wrong way and fire from the Lord devoured them. (See v. 5).

3. **Others** worshipped the right God but in the wrong way and sinned in so doing. Cf. Mt. 15:1-9. Also see Gal. 1:8-9.

4. **We must not omit, add to or substitute for what God has revealed.** (Cf. 1 Pet. 4:11; Col. 3:17; 2 John 9; Rev. 22:18-19). Anything

less than “**in truth**” will not constitute acceptable worship! It will be sin!

C. BY WORSHIPPING THE TRUE GOD, YET HAVING NEVER OBEYED THE TRUE GOSPEL — HENCE STILL LOST IN SIN! God has **not** promised to accept the worship of those who are **not** His children. Thus one may worship the true God while being a sinner and thus be a **religious sinner**. Let us consider some.

1. **Cornelius** was every religious but was lost! Please carefully study Acts 10:1-4; 11:14; 10:34-48 & Mark 16:15-16.

2. **Jews on Pentecost.** Read Acts 2 carefully and you will see that they were religious sinners.

3. **Lydia** was a worshipper of God **before** she heard the gospel preached by Paul and obeyed it. (Cf. Acts 16:14-15). Although she was religious, she was a sinner who needed to obey the gospel.

4. **The Eunuch** in Acts 8:26-39 was religious, but lost and needed to hear, believe and obey the gospel of Christ. He did!

D. BY WORSHIPPING THE RIGHT GOD IN THE RIGHT WAY IN THE PUBLIC ASSEMBLIES, BUT NOT LIVING RIGHT AS A CHRISTIAN! Some of God’s children in the first century did **not** conduct themselves properly. Although religious, they were sinners. Consider:

1. **Ananias and Sapphira** lied about their giving and were killed! (Cf. Acts 5:1-10).

2. **Simon** tried to buy the gift of God with money **after** he believed and was baptized. Although he was religious, he was a sinner! (Cf. Acts 8:12-23).

3. **The Corinthians**, although religious, were guilty of sins. (See 1 Cor. 3:1-3; & 6:1-8).

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RELIGIOUS SINNERS

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4. **Diotrephes** was a religious sinner! (Cf. 3 John 9-10).

III. WE SHOULD FEAR GOD AND KEEP HIS COMMANDMENTS! Solomon said: **“Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God, and keep his commandments: for this is the whole duty of man.”** (Eccl. 12:13).

Jesus taught His disciples to **fear God** in such passages as Mt. 10:28 and Luke 12:4-5. He also taught them the essentiality of **doing His Will** in such passages as Mt. 7:21; Luke 6:46; John 14:21-24 and John 14:15.

In Rev. 22:14 we read: **“Blessed are they that do his commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city.”**

The gospel is the power of God unto salvation. It must be believed and obeyed in order to save sinners! (See Rom. 1:17; 1 Peter 4:17-18 & 2 Thess. 1:7-9).

Man cannot direct his steps! We must depend upon God’s revelation in the Scriptures to guide us. A way may seem right to us but it may lead to death.

Are you a religious sinner? Examine your heart and search your soul in the light of God’s divine revelation and determine to be a Christian, to worship the right God in the right way with the proper motives as you live faithfully to the Lord. (CRS)

— A VOICE FROM THE PAST —

“Jesus said, ‘And no man hath ascended up to heaven, but he that came down from heaven, even the Son of man which is in heaven.’ (John 3:13) (His reference to ‘which is in heaven’ is a reference of communion or anticipation, as ‘our conversation is in heaven.’ (Phil. 3:20). Jesus also prayed, ‘And now I am no more in the world, but these are in the world, and I come to thee’ (John 17:11).”

— GENE FROST in **“The ‘Oneness Doctrine of Pentecostalism And The Bible Doctrine of the Godhead,”** p. 14-15

— SENTENCE SERMONS —

It is far better to slip with the foot than with the tongue.

* * * * *

Satan may ring your door bell, but you don’t have to let him in.

* * * * *

He who provides for the moment and neglects his soul is “wise” for a moment and a fool forever.

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