

RELIGION CAN BE DANGEROUS

Matthew 7:12-29 (v15)

Introduction: Every people of every age, in every place in the world, even in the darkest, most remote places of the jungles, have had some form of religion. Every society has had a recognized form of worship. History proves that "religion" can be dangerous for wars have been fought in the name of "religion." Banners and flags were carried into battle with the logo or image of some deity. Religion can be very healthy for a people but it can be dangerous as well.

I. RELIGIOUS PEOPLE GAVE JESUS THE MOST TROUBLE

1. Jesus criticized the fakery of those who prayed long and pious prayers on street corners, in order to be seen and heard. *Matthew 23:14*
2. One of Jesus' own disciples was a thief (Judas), but made pious remarks about giving to the poor while all the time stealing from Jesus and his fellow disciples. *John 12:6*
3. Religious leaders criticized Jesus and His disciples for violating their added laws of keeping the Sabbath holy when they walked through a field and pulled off some ears of corn to eat.
- *Mark 2:25*
4. According to the religious leaders, it was breaking the so called law (theirs) to have anything to do with a Samaritan so Jesus told them a parable about loving everybody, including Samaritans.
- *Luke 10:29*
5. Stoning was very popular in Jesus' day and the religious leaders used any "sin" to authorize someone to be stoned. Jesus reminded them that they were not without sin either. *John 8:5*

II. A PERSON'S RELIGION CAN MAKE HIM/HER DANGEROUS

1. It was "religion" that caused so much persecution of the early Church. *Acts 4:1*
2. It was "religion" that caused mobs to try to kill Jesus. *Luke 4:29*
3. It was "religion" that caused people cry out "Crucify Him, Crucify Him." *John 19:15*
4. It was "religion" that sent Saul/Paul on the road to Damascus to find and imprison "Christians."
- *Acts 9:1*
5. It was "religion" that caused an uproar in Thessalonica after Paul and Silas had witnessed and had to be secretly taken out of the city for their safety. *Acts 17:5*

III. EVEN "CHRISTIANITY" CAN BE DANGEROUS AND QUESTIONABLE

1. Through the centuries, in the name of "Christianity," people have been tortured, maimed, killed in countless ways because their "belief" wasn't exactly like someone else's.
2. Through the centuries wars have been fought with each side claiming God and Jesus Christ to be on their side.
3. Today in communities there are "church splits" because one group of the membership disagrees with another group.
4. There is doctrinal disagreements among "Christian" groups therefore "denominations" have been formed.
5. There are Christian "denominations" who seek to be powerful and excommunicates any of it's members who dare question anything about their "Church."
6. There are "Christian" institutions that have absolutely nothing in common with the meaning of the Cross of Jesus Christ.
7. Some "Christian" churches have actually caused people to have no interest in the things of the Lord because of their behavior and attitude.

CONCLUSION:

1. We must keep our "religion," our faith Christ-centered."
2. Our "religion," our Christianity, our Church must *"...love thy neighbor as thyself..."*
3. We must remember what Jesus Christ came to do for people and then set ourselves in trying to do the same thing.
4. We are accountable to God and to the Lord Jesus Christ, not to some organization that calls itself a "church." There is but one Church and it is founded upon the Lord Jesus Christ!
5. "Religion" gave Jesus His most problems and eventually killed Him. Let us not be associated with any such "religion."