

RELIGION NEEDS SALVATION

Matthew 7:21-23

Introduction: "Religion" is defined as "a system of beliefs about God." There are countless religions in our world today. In our own country there are hundreds of many kinds of religions, each with its own distinct method, form, characteristic and requirements. We use the term "religious" to indicate being associated with some form of "religion" and just about every person you will meet will state that they are "religious" to some degree. Each member of his/her "religion" is usually very strong about his/her beliefs and thinks that his/her religion is the "right" one and everyone else's religion is not as good. No matter how many religions there are in the world today there is but one that can actually save the human soul and that is Christianity.

I. RELIGION WITHOUT SALVATION IS POSSIBLE

1. **Luke 18:18-** tells of a rich, young ruler who had kept all the commandments of God from his youth up as this was required of his religion, yet upon seeing and hearing Jesus in person, he realized that something was missing from his religion - SALVATION, and he knew it.
2. **Acts 1:16-20-** reminds us of Judas Ischariot, a disciple and direct follower of Jesus. He was with Jesus every day, ate with Him, walked with Him, prayed with Him, YET with all this contact with Jesus, Judas lacked one thing in religion - SALVATION.
3. **Acts 8:9-19-** speaks of a man, Simon, who had been baptized into the faith but he wanted to pay to get the Holy Spirit and His power. He was a follower of the faith along with Philip yet there was something missing. He had the same religion as the disciples, the apostles, YET he found something missing - the power of the Holy Spirit and SALVATION

II. WHAT KIND OF PEOPLE HAVE RELIGION WITHOUT SALVATION?

1. **Matthew 23:1-5-** is about people who wanted to be noticed by others, so they dressed in garments that would attract attention and wore religious items that would make them seem religious.
 - There are people today who go to church because it is the thing to do. Not to worship God but they go because their family goes and they want to be seen by others.
 - Jesus called these kind of people "hypocrites" and every religion has them. We have them.
 - People who appear to be religious for selfish purposes are without SALVATION
2. **Matthew 23:14 -** speaks of those who draw attention to themselves by appearing in public to be very religious, such as praying very loud and using the same words over and over.
 - Jesus told the story about a Pharisee who drew attention to himself in thanking God that he wasn't like that poor old soul over in the corner, the Publican.
3. **3 John 9-10 -** reminds us that there are those who want to be recognized in the church so they take as many parts as they can and want to become church officers in order to have authority.

III. WHEN DOES RELIGION AND SALVATION GO TOGETHER?

1. **Matthew 10:38-39** - is where Jesus says that only when a person completely surrenders him/herself to God, takes up his/her cross will SALVATION be found.
2. **2 Corinthians 5:17** - reminds us that when one's life is changed, when everything becomes new, when all of the old, evil habits are "old" or removed, when one is conscious of a "new" self, then religion has added SALVATION.
3. **Matthew 5:6** - tells us that when one hungers for the Word of God, when one can spend hours' reading and hearing the Word of God, when one cannot satisfy his/her hunger for knowledge of God, then he/she has religion AND SALVATION.
4. The central, main theme which runs throughout true religion is the theme of LOVE.
 - Jesus, Himself, was the only perfect example of this.
 - The first thing one learns about God is that GOD IS LOVE.
 - Then from love comes all these other righteous things.
 - If we love each other, our friends, our enemies,
 - If we have a concern for lost souls, then we have this thing called LOVE and we have religion AND SALVATION.

IV. WHAT DOES SALVATION DO?

1. **Galatians 5:19-21** - Salvation saves us from our own sinful selves. We are born in sin and we continue in sin. By ourselves we are not worthy to be a child of the kingdom of God.
2. **Romans 6:12-13, 23** - Salvation saves us from sin, itself. When one turns to Jesus Christ and away from sin, he/she does the works of Jesus Christ then and therefore sin cannot, sin cannot have dominion over him/her.
3. Salvation saves us from Hell. We are saved from eternal damnation.

CONCLUSION:

1. **Matthew 28:19-20** - Once saved, we are to witness to others what has happened to us.
2. **Romans 6:22** - Jesus Christ has gone to prepare a place for those who faithfully follow Him and someday is going to come back for them.
3. So, do you have just religion or do you have religion AND SALVATION?