

God's Plan of Salvation:

1. Hear - Romans 10:17
2. Believe - Mark 16:16
3. Repent - Acts 2:38
4. Confess - Romans 10:10
5. Be baptized - Acts 22:16
6. Live faithfully - Revelation 2:10

Announcements:

Sick: Mrs. Calvert, Mr. Hadley, Ashley Law, Ms. Kim (Ashley Law's mother), Lamar Mathis, Mr. and Mrs. Pete Newsome, Ms. Sowder, Ms. Ward, Mr. Winns.

If you would be interested in any of the following ways to study the Bible, feel free to let us know:

- Home Bible Study - We will come into your home or other place you feel comfortable and study the Bible with you. Bible questions are welcome in these studies and we will seek to give a Bible answer.
- Correspondence courses - We will be glad to mail you a correspondence lesson that you can fill out and mail back to us and we will send you the next lesson.
- Call us with your Bible question - #503-707-6014.
- Visit our website: www.oakgrovechurchofchristjenningsflorida.com
- Come and visit - We always strive to have good, practical Bible instruction at each of our assemblies.

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Religious but Lost

By Derek Long

Religious people may feel they are saved just because they are religious. However, the Bible teaches there are religious people who are lost. In Acts 17:22, Paul spoke of the people of Athens as being "very religious" (NKJV). Even though they were "very religious," they were lost and needed to repent (Acts 17:30-31). How can "very religious" people be lost?

A person can be religious but lost because of ignorance. The Athenians were ignorant of the true God (Acts 17:23) and thus were lost despite the fact they were religious. Paul speaks of the Jews in the first century who were religious but lost. In Romans 10:1-3 he writes, "Brethren, my heart's desire and prayer to God for Israel is that they may be saved. For I bear them witness that they have a zeal for God, but not according to knowledge. For they being ignorant of God's righteousness, and seeking to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted to the righteousness of God" (NKJV). Here were people who were religiously zealous but were lost. The reason they were lost was due to their ignorance. Ignorance of God and His

will can lead to people doing something they think is right but actually is against God's will (Acts 13:27-29).

The book of Acts contains the record of several conversions. Many of the people who are converted in the book of Acts were religious people before their conversion. The Jews on Pentecost were in need of salvation (Acts 2:37-41) yet they were described as devout men (Acts 2:5). There are many people who are devout followers of some religious group you cannot read about in the Bible. Such people may be devout and religious but they are lost and need to be saved. The Ethiopian eunuch was a religious individual. Acts 8:27-28 tells us he, "had come to Jerusalem to worship, and was returning. And sitting in his chariot, he was reading Isaiah the prophet" (NKJV). He travelled great lengths to worship and was reading the word of God and yet he was still lost and needing to be saved. Many people are like the eunuch today. They are willing to go to great lengths to engage in religious activities but have not been baptized to be saved (Acts 8:35-39). Saul of Tarsus was a religious individual. In fact, he thought he was doing the right thing by persecuting Christians (Acts 23:1; 26:9-11) but he was lost. When he asked Jesus what to do, Jesus told him, "Arise and go into the city, and you will be told what you must do" (Acts 9:6, NKJV). When Saul came into the city of Damascus, the Lord sent Ananias to tell Saul what he needed to do. Ananias asks him, "And now why are you waiting? Arise and be baptized, and wash away your sins, calling on the name of the Lord" (Acts 22:16, NKJV). When we see a person who is zealously doing things the word of God does not teach them to do, we need to recognize they might be religious but lost. Cornelius was a religious individual. The text de-

scribes him as, "a devout man and one who feared God with all his household, who gave alms generously to the people, and prayed to God always" (Acts 10:2, NKJV). This devout, God-fearing, generous, praying individual was instructed by the angel to send for Peter, "who will tell you words by which you and all your household will be saved" (Acts 11:14, NKJV). Cornelius was religious but was obviously lost and needed to be saved.

Sometimes people may recognize those who are parts of religions which do not claim to follow Jesus as being lost (Acts 4:12). However, there are many religious groups filled with people who claim to be following Jesus but are not actually doing the Father's will. We need to remember these individuals are lost as well. Jesus said, "Not everyone who says to Me, 'Lord, Lord,' shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father in heaven. Many will say to Me in that day, 'Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in Your name, cast out demons in Your name, and done many wonders in Your name?' And then I will declare to them, 'I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness!'" (Matthew 7:21-23, NKJV). A person who is religious and claims to follow Jesus but then denies a person must be baptized in order to be saved is lost (Mark 16:16). A person who is religious and claims to follow Jesus but then says there are many churches which are pleasing to God is lost (Matthew 16:18; Ephesians 4:4; 1:22-23). A person who is religious and claims to follow Jesus but then fails to accept His words on some subject is religious but lost (Mark 8:38).