



We hear folks talk about how they "got religion." Others are exhorted to "get religion." Some talk about "heart felt religion," and others about "old time religion." Advertisements encourage, "attend the church of your choice"-- just be religious! Many people have been led to believe that as long as an individual has religion of some form, it is enough to be pleasing to God. Though serving God acceptably involves religion, our religion must include proper obedience to His will.

This can be seen in the record of the gospel being preached on Pentecost. The people that were there and heard the gospel first proclaimed were very religious. Their religion was directed to Jehovah. In fact, the very reason they were there was because of the Passover feast and had remained there through Pentecost. "Now there were Jews living in Jerusalem, devout men, from every nation under heaven" (Acts 2:5). Notice they were devout, religious Jews. But just because someone is devout and religious doesn't mean they are saved. The very ones whom the Bible says were devout Jews were those who were in need of hearing the gospel of Christ and obeying it in order to be saved. When the apostles proclaimed the gospel of Christ, these devout individuals were pierced to the heart and said, "Brethren, what shall we do?" (Ac. 2:37). Did Peter answer, "You just keep on being devout Jews-- just keep on being religious in your own way, attend the synagogue of your choice"? No! The Scriptures tell us that Peter answered, "Repent and let each of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins..." (Ac. 2:38). Though these individuals were devoutly religious, and though their religion was directed toward true God of heaven, they were not saved. Neither did they receive forgiveness until they obeyed

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What kind of religion do you have?

There are many devout people who are very religious. These are people whose worship is directed toward the God of heaven. However, they do not have salvation having never properly obeyed the truth. To be saved we must obey in the same way as those we read of in the New Testament. Saving religion involves proper obedience.

He was educated under a leading rabbi, Gamaliel, strictly according to the law of the fathers. He was so zealous for God he persecuted Christians, binding and putting both men and women into prison, believing them to be wrong (Ac. 22:3-5). All this he did with the intentions of directing worship to God. Paul was religious, but he still had to become a Christian through proper obedience to the word of God. He did this when he complied with Ananias' exhortation to "Arise, and be baptized, and wash away your sins, calling on His name" (Ac. 22:16).

God in the proper way by repenting and being baptized (Ac. 2:41). Saving religion involves proper obedience.

That religion must have proper obedience can also be seen in the example of the eunuch from Ethiopia. When we first read of him, we learn that he was a very trusted and honorable man, for he was the treasurer of the queen of Ethiopia (Acts 8:27). He too, was a very religious man. The reason he had traveled such a distance to Jerusalem was for the purpose of worshipping God. In fact, we are told that as he was returning home, he was sitting in his chariot reading the prophet Isaiah (Ac. 8:28). This eunuch was a good, religious man, yet, he was not a saved man. Saving religion involves proper obedience and the eunuch had not yet heard the message of the gospel that he might obey. The Lord, however, sent Philip who preached Jesus to him. The result was that the eunuch believed and was baptized and went on his way rejoicing (Ac. 8:38-39). Now, not only was his religion directed toward God, he had properly obeyed the will of God and was saved from his sin.

There is also the example of Cornelius, whom the Bible says was "a devout man, and one who feared God with all his household, and gave many alms to the Jewish people and prayed to God continually (Ac. 10:1-2). Cornelius, too, was a very good and religious man, whose religion was directed toward Jehovah. Yet, like the previous examples, Cornelius was not saved until he heard words by which he could be saved and obeyed those words, by repenting and being baptized (Ac. 11:14; 10:48).

The same was true concerning Saul, who later became