



VICTORIOUS CHRISTIAN MINISTRY

Weekly Bible Study - 06:05:2009

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STUDY 15: TRANSFORMATION FROM VAIN TO TRUE RELIGION

James 1:26-27

In this text, James, by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit differentiates between two types of religion:-

- (i) vain religion, and
- (ii) pure (and undefiled) religion

Every Bible student should be aware that we are in the last days and the evil influences of unsound and misleading religion are becoming more prevalent. We are hereby warned of its dangers and reminded of the content as well as the contest / cost of keeping the faith which was once delivered unto the saints (Jude 3).

COMPONENTS OF VAIN RELIGION

James 1:26,27.

James alluded to at least four things that could constitute Vain Religion including:

1. Unbridled tongue (vs. 26)
2. Deceptive heart (vs. 26)
3. Absence of practical care and concern for the underprivileged (vs. 27)
4. Being under the influence of the world (vs.27).

(i). The Unbridled tongue

The unbridled tongue is an indication of an unbridled, un-Christ-like life, which is a reflection of a vain and empty worship (Matthew 12:34; Proverbs 25:28). A profession void of good and biblical testimony is an indication of the religion that is not acceptable before God (Psalms 78:35-36; Jeremiah 35:5-6; Ezekiel 33:31-32; Matthew 7:21; John 4:20-24; Titus 1:16; James 3:10-18).

(iii). Deceptive Heart

Obadiah 1:3 tells us that pride leads to deception of heart. Following secular philosophies, popular opinions and traditions (e.g. culture of the world or organizations) without checking out their conformity to Biblical standards also contribute to deception of heart (Colossians 2:8). When people close their eyes to the truth and facts, but rather follow sentiments, culture and traditions it damages their reasoning faculties and give rise to a deceived heart (Matthew 13:15; Acts 28:27). Fear of man is another factor that deceive human heart (Proverbs 29:25) The consequence is one being turned aside from righteousness (Isaiah 44:20 ultimately resulting in wickedness of the culprit (Jeremiah 17:9) and eternal loss of Salvation (Matthew 13:15; Acts 28:27).

(iv). Unconcerned Attitude

Being unconcerned about the plight of the less privileged robs the believer of the privilege of becoming channels of blessing and results in legalistic and ritualistic religion. Hebrews 9:1-14; 10:1-4; I Corinthians 11:14-16; Galatians

Your Spiritual Welfare Is Our Concern

1:13-14, 3:1-8, 13-14; Romans 3:19-28; Colossians 2:16; Acts 13:38-41; 15:10.

(v). Spotted By The World

Worldliness destroys spiritual foundations and power and leads to idolatry rather than true worship (Deuteronomy 4:15-19, 18:9-14; I Kings 18:21-24; Jeremiah 44:15-19,23; Acts 19-19). Love of the world damns the soul (I John 2:15-17).

CHARACTERISTICS OF PURE RELIGION

James 1:27.

It is practical, pure and undefiled, and so must be its worshippers (Psalms 119:1, Matthews 5:8; Ephesians 5:3-4). Consequent to the fall of man in Eden, the adamic nature was inherited by all (Romans 5:12; Psalms 51:5). It takes genuine salvation and sanctification of the heart to achieve the purity required of God (Deuteronomy 30:6; Ezekiel 36:25-27; John 17:17; Hebrews 12:14, 13:12; I Thessalonians 5:23; Ephesians 5:25-27; Colossians 1:22,28 I John 3:3).

It is exciting to know that the gospel of Christ, upon which the Church is built, is not a modern religion but dates back to the beginning:

- (i) In Eden Genesis 3:15.
- (ii) Abel's sacrifice Genesis 4:1-5; Hebrews 11:4.
- (iii) Isaac on mount Moriah Genesis 22:7-10; Luke 23:33.
- (iv) The lamb in Egypt Exodus 12:5-7, 13; John 1:29.
- (v) The perfect sacrifice Hebrews 10:1-12.

The gospel of Christ is the foundation of the pure and undefiled religion. The entrance is salvation from sin (Matthew 7:13-14; Luke 13:3-5). Facts about the death, resurrection, ascension and intercession of Jesus Christ are the cornerstone (Romans 8:34; Galatians 5:11). Only the way of the cross leads Home.

James 1:27 points out that adherents to the true religion are characterised by:

(i) Visitation to the fatherless and widows.

Please note that sinners are yet to have God as their Father and hence fall into the category of the fatherless. Therefore, true believers must visit them with the gospel of hope and life with a view to getting them born into God's kingdom (Matthew 28:19-20; Mark 16:15-16).

(ii) Lives That are unspotted from the world

(John 15:18,19; Psalms 1:1-3; I John 2:15-17; I John 5:21). In conclusion, as we have looked into the perfect law of liberty and seen ourselves in the mirror of the Word of God, we must pray earnestly, repenting of every vain religion. We also have to renew our consecration to the Lord, asking for grace to adhere to the old time religion to the end.