

SERIES: LUKE: THE SON OF MAN, THE SAVIOR
HAS COME, WEEK 30

TITLE: DO RELIGIOUS PEOPLE GO TO HEAVEN?

TEXT: LUKE 5:27-32

INTRODUCTION: (1) I WANT TO BEGIN THIS
MORNING BY ASKING A VERY IMPORTANT
QUESTION.

* AND THAT QUESTION IS: **"DO RELIGIOUS
PEOPLE GO TO HEAVEN?"**

** NOW THE ANSWER TO THAT QUESTION BY
MANY PEOPLE IS YES.

*** FOR IN THEIR MINDS, RELIGIOUS PEOPLE ARE
THE ONES WITH A RELATIONSHIP TO GOD,
RELIGIOUS PEOPLE KNOW GOD. RELIGIOUS
PEOPLE ARE GOOD PEOPLE AND GOOD PEOPLE
GO TO HEAVEN.

**** AND IF YOU WOULD FOLLOW UP AND ASK THE QUESTION, ARE MOST PEOPLE GOING TO HEAVEN? THE ANSWER BY MANY IS YES.

(2) WHY? BECAUSE MOST PEOPLE ARE RELIGIOUS IN SOME KIND OF WAY.

* AND THAT IS BACKED UP BY THE REALITY THAT HUMAN BEINGS ARE INHERENTLY RELIGIOUS.

** IN FACT ACCORDING TO DAVID BARRETT IN THE WORLD CHRISTIAN ENCYCLOPEDIA THERE ARE 19 MAJOR WORLD RELIGIOUS GROUPINGS IN OUR WORLD WHICH ARE SUBDIVIDED INTO A TOTAL OF ABOUT 10,000 DISTINCT RELIGIONS.

*** AND WITHIN CHRISTIANITY, BARRETT AND HIS TEAM HAVE IDENTIFIED 34,000 SEPARATE GROUPS - DENOMINATIONS, THINGS LIKE A SECT, INDIVIDUAL UNAFFILIATED CHURCHES, PARA-CHURCH GROUPS, ETC.

**** AND ALL TOLD, IN ALL THE RELIGIONS IN THE WORLD, IT IS ESTIMATED THAT THERE ARE 5.7 BILLION PEOPLE INVOLVED IN SOME KIND OF RELIGION ACCORDING TO ADHERANTS.COM - I TABULATED THEIR NUMBERS ON THEIR SITE A LITTLE OVER 4 YEARS AGO.

(3) NOW IF THAT IS ANYWHERE NEAR ACCURATE, THAT IS A HUGE PERCENTAGE OF **THE WORLD'S 7 BILLION** 216 MILLION PEOPLE.

* MY POINT BEING, IF MANY BELIEVE RELIGIOUS PEOPLE ARE GOING TO HEAVEN, THEN THE VAST MAJORITY OF PEOPLE ON OUR PLANET ARE GOING TO HEAVEN.

** HOW IS THAT TRUE?

*** WELL, MY ANSWER TO THE QUESTION, DO RELIGIOUS PEOPLE GO TO HEAVEN, TAKES ME TO OUR TEXT TODAY IN THE BIBLE FOUND IN LUKE 5:27-32.

**** FOR YOU SEE FOLLOWERS OF JESUS, TRUE CHRISTIANS, GO BACK TO THE BIBLE AS THE FINAL AUTHORITY FOR BELIEF, AUTHORITY AND PRACTICE, NOT OPINION AND NOT TRADITION.

(4) AND THE ANSWER TO THE QUESTION AT HAND IS CLEARLY ANSWERED BY THE BIBLE AND JESUS CHRIST, GOD THE SON.

* SO WE MUST ASK THEM, WHAT DOES THE BIBLE HAVE TO SAY AND WHAT DOES CHRIST HAVE TO SAY, FOR THOSE TWO AUTHORITIES **ARE NEVER IN CONFLICT. THE BIBLE IS GOD'S** WRITTEN INSPIRED WORD TO HIS PEOPLE AND JESUS CHRIST IS THE LIVING WORD TO HIS PEOPLE, THE ONLY SAVIOR.

** FOR IN OUR STUDY TODAY WE WILL SEE THAT MANY RELIGIOUS PEOPLE THINK THEY ARE RIGHTEOUS AND RIGHT WITH GOD, AND ARE PROUD OF THEIR RELIGION, SO THEY DO NOT SEE THEIR NEED FOR THE SAVIOR JESUS CHRIST BUT THINK THEY ARE GOING TO HEAVEN.

*** IN OTHER WORDS THEY THINK THEY ARE HEALTHY SPIRITUALLY AND NOT SICK. AND NORMALLY WE GO TO THE DOCTOR WHEN THERE IS SICKNESS OR PAIN OR FOR CHECK-UPS TO CONTROL SICKNESS, DISEASE OR PAIN.

**** BUT JESUS WILL COMMUNICATE THAT HE CAME NOT TO SAVE OR CALL THE RIGHTEOUS OR PEOPLE WHO THINK THEY ARE, WHO ARE RELIGIOUS, WHO THINK THEY ARE HEALTHY, BUT SINNERS TO REPENTANCE. HE CAME TO CALL SICK PEOPLE WHO KNOW THEY ARE SICK.

(5) GOD SAVES AND RECEIVES SINNERS, WHO SEE THEIR NEED OF CHRIST AS SAVIOR AND **LORD, THAT THEY ARE UNWORTHY OF GOD'S** FORGIVENESS AND HEAVEN.

* BUT THE HEARTBREAKING SAD TRUTH IS MANY RELIGIOUS PEOPLE THINK THEY ARE WORTHY OF HEAVEN AND THAT THEIR SIN IS NOT AS BAD AS THEIR NEIGHBOR, FELLOW CLASSMATES AND FELLOW WORKERS.

** BUT THOSE WHO THINK THEY ARE GOOD **ENOUGH, AND THOSE WHO DON'T UNDERSTAND** THE SERIOUSNESS OF SIN CANNOT AND WILL NOT RESPOND TO CHRIST AND COME TO HIM IN REPENTANT FAITH.

*** THEY CANNOT BE HEALED BY THE GREAT PHYSICIAN OF THE SIN DISEASE, THEY CANNOT BE FORGIVEN AND RESCUED FROM A HOLY GOD, **GOD'S WRATH**, FOR THE GOSPEL CALL OF CHRIST IS A CALL TO SINNERS TO REPENT AND BE FORGIVEN.

**** **WELL, OUR STUDY OF GOD'S WORD WILL** MAKE THAT CRYSTAL CLEAR.

(6) AND THERE IS GOOD NEWS TODAY! AND THAT IS JESUS WILL CALL A MAN TO HIMSELF THAT WAS ON THE BOTTOM RUNG OF THE SOCIAL FOOD CHAIN. ONE THAT WAS VIEWED AS ONE OF THE DREGS OF SOCIETY, A LOW LIFE, A MAN WHO WAS CONSIDERED BEYOND SALVATION, A SINNER.

* SO THE SURPRISE OF OUR TEXT TODAY IS, THE MAN WHOM RELIGIONISTS THOUGHT WAS BEYOND FORGIVENESS IS FORGIVEN, BUT THE ONES WHO THOUGHT THEY WERE ALREADY RIGHTEOUS, THE RELIGIONISTS, ARE CONDEMNED.

** AND WHAT WE HAVE TODAY IN OUR PASSAGE IS TRUE SPIRITUAL HEALTH CARE REFORM AND THIS WEB SITE IS WORKING WELL AS THE GREAT PHYSICIAN HEALS OR FORGIVES A SINNER OF HIS SINS, BUT PEOPLE WHO ARE RELIGIOUS WHO THINK THEY HAVE INSURANCE, DO NOT HAVE IT AND ARE NOT HEALED. THEY REMAIN SICK.
AND THAT'S THE PLATFORM I'M RUNNING WITH
TODAY.

***** HENCE, I'VE TITLED MY MESSAGE, "DO RELIGIOUS PEOPLE GO TO HEAVEN" QUESTION**
MARK.

****** AND UNDER THAT TITLE WE'LL LOOK AT 4**
POINTS AS WE EXAMINE LUKE 5:27-32.

(7) NO. 1 THE CALL OF LEVI TO SALVATION AND TO BE AN APOSTLE, V. 27; NO. 2 THE CHANGE IN LEVI AS A RESULT OF HIS SALVATION, VV. 28&29; NO. 3 THE CONFRONTATION BY THE RELIGIONISTS IN **CHRIST'S DAY OF CHRIST'S** DISCIPLES, V. 30; AND NO. 4 THE COMEBACK BY JESUS TO THE RELIGIONISTS OF HIS DAY, VV. 31&32.

* AND WITH THOSE 4 POINTS AS OUR SPIRITUAL ROAD MAP, LOOK AT V. 27 PLEASE WHERE **WE'LL SEE OUR FIRST POINT, THE CALL.**

I. THE CALL, (READ V. 27)

A. NOW **SINCE WE'VE BEEN OUT OF LUKE FOR** TWO SUNDAYS, I WANT TO REMIND YOU OF THE CONTEXT OF LUKE CHAPTER 5, IN VERSES 1-11, JESUS WAS TEACHING IN THE AREA OF THE SEA OF GALILEE ALSO CALLED THE LAKE OF GENNESARET AND HE CALLS 3 FISHERMEN TO FOLLOW HIM NAMED PETER, JAMES AND JOHN - WHICH WOULD BECOME THE INNER CIRCLE OF THE 12 APOSTLES, THOSE CLOSEST TO CHRIST.

* THEN IN VERSES 12-16, JESUS HEALS A LEPER AND FINALLY IN VERSES 17-26 JESUS WAS TEACHING IN A HOUSE AND HEALED A PARALYTIC MAN.

** WELL, AFTER THIS REMARKABLE HEALING, JESUS LEAVES THE HOUSE HE WAS AT WHERE THE PARALYTIC WAS HEALED, AND AS JESUS IS LEAVING ACCORDING TO THE PARALLEL ACCOUNT IN MARK 2:13, HE WALKS ALONG A ROAD NEAR THE SHORE OF THE SEA OF GALILEE AND HE NOTICES A TAX COLLECTOR NAMED LEVI SITTING IN HIS TAX BOOTH.

***** NOW THE VERB TRANSLATED "NOTICED" HERE OR "SAW" LIT. MEANS IN THE GREEK "TO GAZE INTENTLY AT, TO VIEW ATTENTIVELY, TO STARE AT."**

**** SO JESUS NOTICES – LOCKS ON TO LEVI, FOR HE HAD PROBABLY SEEN HIM BEFORE AS HE MINISTERED IN THIS AREA OF CAPERNAUM AS A HOME BASE.

1. AND MOST LIKELY, LEVI HAD HEARD JESUS PREACH AND TEACH BEFORE AND WAS UNDER CONVICTION BUT HAD NOT TURNED TO AND FOLLOWED CHRIST.

* BUT UNDERSTAND JESUS WAS NOT AT THIS SPOT NEAR THE SEA OF GALILEE AS AN ACCIDENT OR COINCIDENCE.

** THIS WAS A TIME OF DIVINE APPOINTMENT, THIS WAS A PROVIDENTIAL MEETING THAT GOD ORDAINED AND JESUS AS HE GAZED AT MATTHEW WITH HIS CONVICTING LOVING EYES KNEW HIS HEART.

*** HE KNEW HE WAS DISTRESSED AND BURDENED BY HIS SIN AND UNDER CONVICTION NO DOUBT **FROM HEARING JESUS' TEACHING** BEFORE THIS TIME. BUT HE HAD NOT TURNED TO FOLLOW CHRIST. HE HAD BEEN CALLED OUTWARDLY BUT NOW JESUS WOULD CALL HIM INTERNALLY, INWARDLY **AND SAY "FOLLOW ME." THERE'S AN OUTWARD AND INWARD CALL** HERE.

**** AND THE CALL TO FOLLOW CHRIST IS A SYNONYM FOR CALLING A PERSON TO REPENTANCE AND FAITH IN CHRIST, CALLING THEM TO SALVATION, AND WE KNOW THAT CONTEXTUALLY FOR IN V. 32 JESUS COMMUNICATES HE HAS NOT COME TO CALL THE RIGHTEOUS BUT SINNERS TO REPENTANCE.

2. BUT ALSO IN THE N.T. THE PHRASE "FOLLOW ME" IS USED BY JESUS AS A CALL TO SALVATION.

* FOR EXAMPLE IN MATTHEW 16:24-26 JESUS SAID: (QUOTE THE TEXT) (NOT A HIGHER LEVEL OF OR ELITE DISCIPLESHIP.)

** NOW A TRUE FOLLOWER OF CHRIST IS A DISCIPLE OF CHRIST, A CHRISTIAN. FOR THE FRUIT OF REPENTANCE AND FAITH ALONE IN CHRIST ALONE IS FOLLOWING HIM, FOR JESUS SAID IN JOHN 10:27-29 (QUOTE THEM). ALSO QUOTE JOHN 8:12 AND QUOTE LUKE 9:23.

*** NOW WITH THOSE SCRIPTURES BEFORE US, **JESUS REPEATEDLY USED THE PHRASE "FOLLOW ME" AS A CALL TO SALVATION, AS A CALL TO DISCIPLESHIP, AS A CALL TO BECOME A CHRISTIAN, TO TURN FROM SIN IN REPENTANCE AND FOLLOW HIM, A 180 DEGREE TURN AROUND.**

**** **NOW CHRIST HAD PREPARED LEVI'S HEART** BEFORE THIS, BUT NOW IN V. 27 OF OUR TEXT, HE CALLS HIM TO FOLLOW HIM, TO REPENT AND HE DOES **BECAUSE OF GOD'S INWARD CALL.**

3. AND THE FRUIT OF THAT COMMITMENT WILL **FOLLOW AS WE'LL** SEE IN VV. 28&29.

* BUT QUICKLY BEFORE WE GO THERE, A COUPLE OF AMAZING THINGS.

** FIRST OF ALL, NOTE THAT LEVI IS BETTER KNOWN AS MATTHEW, THE AUTHOR OF THE FIRST GOSPEL OF THE N.T. AND HE WOULD BECOME ONE OF THE 12 APOSTLES. AND MATTHEW MEANS THE GIFT OF GOD. AND HE WAS, AS HIS GOSPEL THAT HE WAS INSPIRED TO WRITE IS 28 GREAT CHAPTERS OF THE LIFE OF CHRIST.

***** BUT 2'D OF ALL NOTE, MATTHEW WAS A TAX COLLECTOR, FOR AS JESUS CALLS HIM, HE WAS WORKING IN HIS TAX BOOTH.**

**** AND THAT OCCUPATION MADE MATTHEW ONE OF THE MOST HATED AND DESPISED MEN IN ISRAEL. TAX COLLECTORS WERE THE DREGS OF JEWISH SOCIETY, THE LOWEST OF THE LOW AND WERE CLASSED WITH ROBBERS, EVILDOERS AND ADULTERERS IN LUKE 18:11, WITH PROSTITUTES IN MATTHEW 21:32 AND WITH PAGAN GENTILES IN MATTHEW 18:17.

4. AND THE REASON FOR THAT IS TAX COLLECTORS HAD A CERTAIN AMOUNT OF MONEY THAT THEY WERE REQUIRED TO COLLECT FOR THE ROMAN GOVT, AND WHATEVER THEY COLLECTED BEYOND THAT THEY WERE PERMITTED TO KEEP.

* BECAUSE OF THAT THEY COULD AND MOST WOULD OVERCHARGE AND THERE WAS PLENTY OF ROOM FOR LARCENY, EXTORTION, EXPLOITATION AND EVEN LOAN SHARKING.

** FOR SOME TAX COLLECTORS LOANED MONEY AT EXTREMELY HIGH INTEREST RATES TO THOSE WHO WERE UNABLE TO PAY THEIR TAXES.

*** TAX COLLECTORS ALSO EMPLOYED THUGS TO PHYSICALLY INTIMIDATE PEOPLE INTO PAYING AND TO BEAT UP THOSE WHO DID NOT PAY UP.

**** NOW BECAUSE OF THOSE THINGS, AND THAT THEY AS JEWS WERE WORKING FOR THE ROMAN GOVT. IN OCCUPIED ISRAEL, OCCUPIED BY THE ROMANS, TAX COLLECTORS WERE ALSO VIEWED AS TRAITORS AND WERE CLASSIFIED AS UNCLEAN AND WERE BARRED FROM THE SYNAGOGUE.

5. THEY WERE ALSO FORBIDDEN TO GIVE TESTIMONY IN A JEWISH COURT BECAUSE THEY WERE CONSIDERED TO BE LIARS.

*** AND HERE'S MY POINT, THAT JESUS WOULD** SAVE AND CALL A MAN LIKE THAT TO BE HIS DISCIPLE, HIS FOLLOWER, WAS OUTRAGEOUS TO JEWISH RELIGIONISTS OF THAT DAY.

** IN THEIR MIND, PEOPLE LIKE THIS WERE BEYOND SAVING AND GOING TO HEAVEN. BUT JESUS IS THE FRIEND OF SINNERS, OF PEOPLE THAT SEE THEY ARE SINNERS AND SEE THEIR NEED OF HIM AND THAT ARE NOT SELF-RIGHTEOUS HYPOCRITES, AS WERE THE JEWISH RELIGIONISTS OF HIS DAY AND RELIGIONISTS OF OUR DAY.

*** SO THIS IS STUNNING THAT JESUS WOULD CALL A MAN LIKE THIS, IT WAS AMAZING, IT WAS INCREDIBLE, UNBELIEVABLE. BUT THOSE ARE THE KIND OF PEOPLE THAT JESUS SAVES. NO ONE IS BEYOND SAVING FROM THE GUTTERMOST TO THE UTTERMOST, FROM DOWN AND OUTERS AND UP AND OUTERS! (QUOTE I TIMOTHY 1:15, I CORINTHIANS 1:26-29)

**** BUT UNDERSTAND THIS. WHEN JESUS TRULY SAVES SOMEONE, WHEN HE CALLS THEM, THEY ARE MADE NEW AND CHANGE. AND **THAT'S OUR 2'D POINT TODAY ABOUT LEVI OR MATTHEW, THE CHANGE.** LOOK AT V. 28 PLEASE.

II. THE CHANGE, (READ V. 28)

A. NOW WHAT FRUIT FOLLOWS A PERSON THAT COMES TO CHRIST, THAT TURNS TO FOLLOW CHRIST?

* WELL, CHANGES. (QUOTE II CORINTHIANS 5:17. ALSO QUOTE I CORINTHIANS 6:9-11 AND EPHESIANS 5:8)

** NOW THE CHANGE WE SEE IN MATTHEW IS HE GETS UP FROM HIS TAX BOOTH AND LEFT HIS LUCRATIVE LYING DECEITFUL CAREER BEHIND AND FOLLOWS CHRIST.

*** HE ABANDONED HIS WICKED CAREER. HE HAS NEW HOLY DESIRES. HE COULD NO LONGER BE A LIAR, A THIEF, A LOAN SHARK, AND FOLLOW CHRIST. GOD HAD WROUGHT CHANGE IN HIS HEART THROUGH HIS SOVEREIGN WORK.

**** AND UNLIKE PETER, JAMES AND JOHN WHO CAME TO CHRIST EARLIER IN THE CHAPTER, WHO COULD GO BACK TO THEIR FORMER CAREERS, MATTHEW COULD NOT.

1. FOR IF YOU LEAVE YOUR BOOTH AS A TAX COLLECTOR, SOMEONE WILL TAKE OVER QUICKLY AND THERE WAS NO RETURN.

* FOLKS, MATTHEW LEFT HIS CAREER TO FOLLOW CHRIST.

** MATTHEW MADE A DECISIVE BREAK WITH HIS OLD LIFE INDICATED BY THE AORIST ACTIVE INDICATIVE OF THE VERB FOLLOW WHICH MEANS THIS WAS A CONTINUOUS PATTERN OF LIFE.

*** AND THIS OLD RIP-OFF ARTIST WOULD BECOME WHAT HIS NAME MATTHEW MEANS, A **GIFT TO GOD'S PEOPLE.** (AND HIS GOSPEL IS THAT.)

**** BUT THE CHANGE OF MATTHEW IS ALSO SEEN FURTHER BY WHAT HE DOES IN V. 29. LOOK AT V. 29 PLEASE.

B. READ V. 29. NOW WE SEE AT LEAST THREE **MORE THINGS IN LEVI'S LIFE THAT GIVE** EVIDENCE OF SALVATION.

* NO. 1 WE SEE GRATEFULNESS. FOR HE HAS A BIG RECEPTION FOR HIM - FOR JESUS IN HIS HOUSE. HE IS GRATEFUL THAT JESUS CALLED HIM AND RESCUED HIM FROM HIS FORMER LIFE.

** AND WHEN YOU TRULY KNOW JESUS CHRIST AS YOUR LORD AND SAVIOR, GRATEFULNESS FLOWS FROM YOUR HEART FOR YOU REALIZE THAT IT WAS AMAZING GRACE THAT SAVED A WRETCH LIKE YOU AND ME.

*** NO. 2 WE NOT ONLY SEE GRATEFULNESS, **BUT ALSO GENEROSITY. THIS WAS A "BIG"** RECEPTION WITH A GREAT CROWD, A COSTLY EVENT TO FEED ALL OF THE PEOPLE THAT WERE INVITED.

**** AND THE PHRASE RECLINING AT THE TABLE IN V. 29 NOT ONLY CONVEYS THE CUSTOM OF THAT DAY AT A DINNER PARTY BUT ALSO A LENGTHY MEAL. THEY HAD A FEAST ENJOYING THE CUISINE. THIS WAS A BIG BASH. GENEROSITY IS SHOWN IN HOSPITALITY. YOU WANT TO GIVE BACK TO CHRIST.

1. BUT NOT ONLY DO WE SEE GRATEFULNESS AND GENEROSITY, WE ALSO SEE A BURDEN FOR HIS FRIENDS AND ASSOCIATES TO BE INTRODUCED TO CHRIST. WE WANT THE GRACE OF THE GOSPEL PROCLAIMED WHEN WE TRULY HAVE COME TO CHRIST.

*** FOR IT SAYS IN V. 29, "THERE WAS A GREAT CROWD OF TAX COLLECTORS AND OTHER PEOPLE."**

** AND MATTHEW HIMSELF IN HIS GOSPEL IN MATTHEW 9:10 CALLS THE OTHER PEOPLE SINNERS.

*** SO WE HAVE THE UP AND OUTERS AND THE DOWN AND OUTERS AT THIS BANQUET, THIS RECEPTION, THIS PARTY.

**** AND MATTHEW KNEW THAT IF HIS NEEDY FRIENDS WOULD MEET JESUS AND HEAR HIS WORDS, THEY COULD BE MOVED TO FOLLOW HIM ALSO.

***** AND A FRUIT OF TRULY KNOWING CHRIST IS YOU HAVE A BURDEN TO INTRODUCE THE PEOPLE CLOSEST TO YOU TO CHRIST. YOU WANT TO TELL THEM ABOUT JESUS. (ILLUST. MY MOM AND FRIENDS, CLASSMATES AND FAMILY)

2. AND FOLKS, WHEN CHRIST SAVES US, WE BECOME GRATEFUL, WE BECOME GENEROUS AND WE WANT THE GRACE OF CHRIST AND HIS GOSPEL PROCLAIMED.

* SO LEVI GIVES EVIDENCE OF SALVATION, NOT TO BE MADE RIGHT WITH GOD, BUT BECAUSE HE HAS BEEN MADE RIGHT WITH GOD BY THE GRACE OF THE GOSPEL.

**** BUT THERE'S A REACTION TO JESUS THAT HE** WOULD GO TO A BANQUET LIKE THIS, FROM THE JEWISH RELIGIONISTS OF HIS DAY IN V. 30. **IN FACT THEY CONFRONT CHRIST'S DISCIPLES.** LOOK AT V. 30 **PLEASE WHERE WE'LL SEE OUR** THIRD POINT TODAY, THE CONFRONTATION.

III. THE CONFRONTATION, (READ V. 30)

A. NOW THE PHARISEES AND THEIR SCRIBES WERE PART OF THE MAIN RELIGIOUS ESTABLISHMENT IN ISRAEL IN THAT DAY, A POWERFUL RELIGIOUS GROUP.

* AND THEIR NAME BASICALLY MEANS TO SEPARATE AND THEY WERE THE SEPARATED ONES IN THEIR MINDS THAT TRULY KNEW GOD AND REPRESENTED HIM IN RELIGIOUS LIFE IN THAT.

** AND THE PROBLEM WAS, ALTHOUGH THEY HAD A LOT OF KNOWLEDGE ABOUT GOD AND HIS **LAW, THEY DIDN'T KNOW GOD, THEY** WERE PROUD ZEALOTS THAT TOOK CARE OF THE OUTSIDE IN THEIR BEHAVIOR BUT ON THE INSIDE WERE DEAD.

*** THEY HAD ABANDONED TRUE RELIGION OF THE HEART FOR MERE OUTWARD BEHAVIOR MODIFICATION AND RITUAL.

**** THEY WERE SELF-RIGHTEOUS HYPOCRITES WHO HAD REPLACED RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD FOR OUTWARD RITUALS.

1. AND CHRIST'S MOST BLISTERING, STINGING REBUKES IN THE GOSPELS ARE RESERVED FOR THESE RELIGIOUS PROUD, SELF-RIGHTEOUS HYPOCRITES.

* FOR EXAMPLE IN MATTHEW 23:13-15, VV. 25-27, JESUS PRONOUNCES JUDGMENT AND WOE UPON THEM AND CALLS THEM HYPOCRITES, FOR HE SAID:

V. 13 - BUT WOE TO YOU, SCRIBES AND PHARISEES, HYPOCRITES, BECAUSE YOU SHUT OFF THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN FROM PEOPLE; FOR YOU DO NOT ENTER IN YOURSELVES, NOR DO YOU ALLOW THOSE WHO ARE ENTERING TO GO IN.

V. 14 – WOE TO YOU, SCRIBES AND PHARISEES, **HYPOCRITES, BECAUSE YOU DEVOUR WIDOWS'** HOUSES, AND FOR A PRETENSE YOU MAKE LONG PRAYERS; THEREFORE YOU WILL RECEIVE GREATER CONDEMNATION.

V. 15 – WOE TO YOU, SCRIBES AND PHARISEES, HYPOCRITES, BECAUSE YOU TRAVEL AROUND ON SEA AND LAND TO MAKE ONE PROSELYTE; AND WHEN HE BECOMES ONE, YOU MAKE HIM TWICE AS MUCH A SON OF HELL AS YOURSELVES.

V. 25 – WOE TO YOU, SCRIBES AND PHARISEES, HYPOCRITES! FOR YOU CLEAN THE OUTSIDE OF THE CUP AND OF THE DISH, BUT INSIDE THEY ARE FULL OF ROBBERY AND SELF-INDULGENCE.

V. 26 – YOU BLIND PHARISEE, FIRST CLEAN THE INSIDE OF THE CUP AND OF THE DISH, SO THAT THE OUTSIDE OF IT MAY BECOME CLEAN ALSO.

V. 27 – WOE TO YOU, SCRIBES AND PHARISEES, HYPOCRITES! FOR YOU ARE LIKE WHITEWASHED TOMBS WHICH ON THE OUTSIDE APPEAR BEAUTIFUL, BUT INSIDE THEY ARE FULL **OF DEAD MEN'S BONES AND ALL UNCLEANNESS.**

** NOW THE PHARISEES WERE THE BRUNT OF THIS INTENSE REBUKE BY CHRIST.

***** AND IT'S THE PHARISEES AND THEIR SCRIBES** WHO START COMPLAINING AFTER THEY HEAR OR SEE WHAT HAD HAPPENED.

**** FOR ALTHOUGH THEY WERE NOT IN ATTENDANCE AT THE RECEPTION, MANY TIMES THEY FOLLOWED JESUS AROUND TO TRY TO DIG UP SOME DIRT ON HIM.

2. AND POSSIBLY AS CHRIST AND HIS DISCIPLES ARE LEAVING THIS GREAT BANQUET, THEY ARE **THERE AND CATCH JESUS' DISCIPLES AND ASK** THEM A QUESTION.

* AND THEY ARE GRUMBLING AT THIS POINT, THEY ARE COMPLAINING, THEY ARE TICKED OFF.

** **SO THEY ASK CHRIST'S DISCIPLES, NOT CHRIST HIMSELF, BUT HIS DISCIPLES, WHY DO YOU EAT WITH SUCH RIFF-RAFF?**

*** **WHY ARE YOU SOCIALIZING WITH SUCH LOW-LIFE'S, WITH SUCH OUTCASTS, THE SCUM OF THE EARTH, DESPICABLE PEOPLE.**

**** AND OF COURSE THEIR QUESTION WAS ASKED IN PRIDE AS THEY VIEWED THEMSELVES AS BETTER THAN THESE DREGS OF THE EARTH WHOM DESERVED HELL.

3. AND IT WAS THIS CONDESCENDING SELF-RIGHTEOUS ATTITUDE THAT BLINDED THEM OF THEIR OWN NEED OF CHRIST.

*** I MEAN IN THEIR VIEW, CHRIST'S DISCIPLES**
AND CHRIST HIMSELF HAD BEEN DEFILED BY
EATING WITH SUCH OUTCASTS, WITH BAD
PEOPLE. I MEAN EATING WITH SOMEONE
INDICATED FRIENDSHIP AND FULL ACCEPTANCE.

**** SO HOW COULD THEY DO THAT? BUT IN
REALITY THE PHARISEES' CONFRONTATION OF
CHRIST'S DISCIPLES REALLY REVEALED THEIR
HEARTS.**

***** THEY WERE PROUD, MERCILESS,
UNGRACIOUS, UNKIND, HYPOCRITES WHO
VERBALLY SAID THEY KNEW GOD BUT THEIR
HEARTS WERE FAR FROM GOD, FOR JESUS SAID
OF THEM IN MATTHEW 15:8 - THE PHARISEES
AND SCRIBES (QUOTE IT).**

****** WELL, ALTHOUGH THE PHARISEES THOUGHT
THEY WERE NEAR TO GOD AND EXTERNALLY
PURE, THEIR HEARTS WERE FAR FROM GOD.**

4. AND WHAT IS REVEALED IS THEY HAVE RELIGION WITHOUT RELATIONSHIP. THEY THINK THEY ARE RIGHT WITH GOD, BUT THEY ARE NOT.

* AND JESUS WHO PROBABLY IS NOT FAR BEHIND HIS DISCIPLES COMING OUT OF THE BANQUET HEARS THEM AND REBUKES THEM. FOR NOTICE **CHRIST'S** COMEBACK, OUR LAST POINT TODAY. LOOK AT V. 31 PLEASE.

IV. THE COMEBACK, (READ V. 31)

A. NOW THE LORD'S COMEBACK HERE IS VERY CLEAR AND HIS RESPONSE COMES FROM EVERYDAY LIFE, FROM AN ANALOGY PROBABLY USED IN THAT DAY AND THAT WAS SELF EVIDENT.

*** AND THAT IS HEALTHY PEOPLE DON'T NEED A DOCTOR, SICK PEOPLE NEED A DOCTOR.**

** AND ESPECIALLY IN THAT DAY, YOU ONLY WENT TO SEE A PHYSICIAN IF YOU WERE REALLY SICK. SICK PEOPLE GO TO THE DOCTOR. THEY UNDERSTAND THEY ARE SICK AND OBVIOUSLY FROM THAT SEE THEIR NEED OF A PHYSICIAN.

*** AND THE PHARISEES COULD NOT DISPUTE THAT THE TAX COLLECTORS AND SINNERS WERE SPIRITUALLY SICK, IN FACT IN THEIR SELF-RIGHTEOUS MINDS THE SICKEST OF THE SICK.

**** SO HOW COULD THEY ARGUE THAT THE GREAT PHYSICIAN SHOULD NOT MINISTER TO THEM. JESUS HAD DINNER IN A HOME WITH SINNERS.

1. HE DIDN'T GO TO A PRIMARY PLACE OF EVIL, A WILD BAR, A STRIP JOINT, A PLACE OF ILL REPUTE, BUT TO A HOME AS A DOCTOR TO TREAT SICK PATIENTS. HE MADE A SPIRITUAL HOUSE CALL. JESUS IS NOT TEACHING CONTEXTUALIZATION.

*** AND FRIENDS, IT'S IMPORTANT TO SEE THAT THE LORD'S COMEBACK HERE WAS A POWERFUL INDICTMENT OF THE PHARISEE'S COLD HARD WICKED HEARTS.**

**** AND V. 32 BRINGS THIS COMEBACK INTO CLEAR VIEW. AND EXACTLY WHAT JESUS MEANT IS MADE ABUNDANTLY CLEAR. LOOK AT V. 32 PLEASE.**

B. READ V. 32. NOW JESUS IN HIS ADVENT TO EARTH CAME NOT TO CALL RIGHTEOUS PEOPLE TO HIMSELF, BUT SINNERS TO REPENTANCE.

*** AND THE CLEAR TRUTH IS CHRIST'S MISSION TO SAVE PEOPLE FROM THEIR SIN WAS FOR THOSE WHO SEE THEIR NEED OF REPENTANCE.**

**** AND IT'S NOT THAT THE PHARISEES WERE RIGHTEOUS, THEY JUST WERE BLINDED TO THAT AS UNRIGHTEOUS PEOPLE AND DID NOT SEE THEIR NEED.**

*** THE TRUTH IS GOD WILL NOT SAVE THOSE WHO THINK THEY ARE RIGHTEOUS. THE TRUTH IS GOD WILL NOT SAVE THOSE WHO ARE SELF-RIGHTEOUS, WHO REFUSE TO SEE THEIR NEED, THEIR LOSTNESS.

**** AS JESUS WOULD SAY LATER ON IN THE BOOK OF LUKE, IN LUKE 19:10: (QUOTE IT)

1. AND BEFORE YOU CAN BE FOUND, YOU MUST SEE THAT YOU ARE LOST. BEFORE YOU CAN GET HELP FOR A DISEASE, YOU MUST SEE THAT YOU HAVE IT AND NEED HELP, THAT THERE IS NOTHING YOU CAN DO ON YOUR OWN TO CURE THE DISEASE AND MORE SPIRITUALLY TO HEAL THE SIN DISEASE.

*** CHRIST'S WORDS WERE AIMED AT THE SELF-RIGHTEOUS PHARISEES, WHO, LIKE MANY TODAY, THOUGHT THEY WERE RIGHTEOUS AND WITHOUT ANY REAL SPIRITUAL NEED.**

** AND FOLKS, THIS TEXT MAKES IT CLEAR THAT THE INVITATION TO SALVATION IN CHRIST ALONE THROUGH REPENTANT FAITH ALONE IS NOT EXTENDED TO RIGHTEOUS PEOPLE, THAT IS, NOT TO THOSE WHO CONSIDER THEMSELVES WORTHY, BUT RATHER TO THOSE WHO ARE UNWORTHY AND IN DESPERATE NEED AND SEE IT.

*** YOU MUST SEE YOURSELF AS A SINNER, SEPARATED FROM A HOLY GOD BY YOUR SIN. FOR NONE OF US ARE RIGHTEOUS WITHOUT CHRIST, QUOTE ROMANS 3:10&23, ECCLESIASTES 7:20 AND ISAIAH 64:6.

2. AND THANKFULLY JESUS SAVES THE UNRIGHTEOUS. **AND WE'RE ALL SINNERS,** UNRIGHTEOUS WITHOUT CHRIST BUT YOU MUST SEE YOUR NEED SO YOU ARE DRIVEN TO CHRIST THE ONLY SAVIOR, QUOTE ROMANS 10:9&10&13 AND ACTS 4:12.

* AND THE GOOD NEWS TODAY IS GOD SAVES SINNERS. AND IF YOU TURN FROM YOUR SIN WITH GODLY SORROW, WITH A REPENTANT HEART, AND SEE THE HEINOUSNESS OF YOUR SIN, REPENT OF IT, TURN FROM IT, TO CHRIST ALONE BY FAITH ALONE, GOD WILL SAVE YOU.

IN WRAP UP: (1) I ASK THE QUESTION I STARTED WITH TODAY, DO RELIGIOUS PEOPLE GO TO HEAVEN?

* WELL, THE ANSWER IS, IF YOU ARE TRUSTING IN RELIGION OVER A RELATIONSHIP WITH CHRIST, OR AS A SUBSTITUTE FOR RELATIONSHIP, OR YOU THINK THAT YOU ARE **ENTITLED TO GOD'S SALVATION BECAUSE YOU** ARE A GOOD PERSON, THE ANSWER IS NO. YOU ARE NOT GOING TO HEAVEN ACCORDING TO THE BIBLE.

**** SALVATION CAN'T COME TO THE SELF-RIGHTEOUS. AND IF YOU THINK YOU ARE GOOD ENOUGH AND BETTER THAN OTHERS, YOU ARE IN THE CATEGORY OF THE PHARISEES, THE RELIGIONISTS OF CHRIST'S DAY, LOST AND YOU DON'T KNOW IT.**

*** BUT THE GOOD NEWS IS GOD THE SON WAS BORN INTO THIS WORLD THROUGH A VIRGIN, WAS PURE AND HOLY AND WITHOUT SIN AND DIED IN THE PLACE OF SINNERS AS A PERFECT SUBSTITUTE AND ROSE FROM THE DEAD.

**** AND THE ONLY ONE WHO CAN BRIDGE THE GAP, THE CHASM, THE CANYON BETWEEN A HOLY GOD AND SINFUL MAN IS CHRIST THE LORD BORN ON THAT FIRST CHRISTMAS. AND HE CAME TO SAVE HIS PEOPLE FROM THEIR SIN, QUOTE MATTHEW 1:21 AND LUKE 2:11.

(2) AND DEAR FRIENDS IF YOU WILL TURN FROM YOUR SIN IN REPENTANT FAITH TO THE SAVIOR WHO DIED AND ROSE AGAIN, HE WILL FORGIVE YOU AND JUSTIFY YOU AND MAKE YOU RIGHTEOUS.

* I CLOSE WITH LUKE 18:10-14 (QUOTE IT).

** A FINAL QUESTION TODAY. WHOM DID CHRIST JUSTIFY AND SAVE HERE? THE PUBLICAN-THE TAX COLLECTOR OR THE PHARISEE-THE RELIGIONIST? THE ANSWER IS THE TAX COLLECTOR.

**** JESUS SAID: (QUOTE V. 32) GREAT SINNERS WHO SEE IT, WHO SEE THEIR SIN, HAVE A GREAT SAVIOR! **(LET'S PRAY)**

V. 27 – AFTER THAT HE WENT OUT AND NOTICED
A TAX COLLECTOR NAMED LEVI SITTING IN THE
**TAX BOOTH, AND HE SAID TO HIM, “FOLLOW
ME.”**

V. 28 – AND HE LEFT EVERYTHING BEHIND,
AND GOT UP AND BEGAN TO FOLLOW HIM.

V. 29 – AND LEVI GAVE A BIG RECEPTION FOR HIM IN HIS HOUSE; AND THERE WAS A GREAT CROWD OF TAX COLLECTORS AND OTHER PEOPLE WHO WERE RECLINING AT THE TABLE WITH THEM.

V. 30 – THE PHARISEES AND THEIR
SCRIBES BEGAN GRUMBLING AT HIS
**DISCIPLES, SAYING, “WHY DO YOU EAT
AND DRINK WITH THE TAX COLLECTORS
AND SINNERS?”**

V. 31 – AND JESUS ANSWERED AND SAID
TO THEM, "IT IS NOT THOSE WHO ARE
WELL WHO NEED A PHYSICIAN, BUT THOSE
WHO ARE SICK."

V. 32 – **“I HAVE NOT COME TO CALL THE
RIGHTEOUS BUT SINNERS TO REPENTANCE.”**