

# PathLights

*"Your word is a lamp to my feet  
and a light to my path"  
Psalm 119:104*

October 29, 2017

## Are You Religious?

by Frank Himmel



Most people probably think of themselves as religious. Hopefully, you do too. While that is vital, even a brief Bible study of the words *religion* and *religious* reveals that being religious does not necessarily mean one is pleasing to God.

Paul told the Athenians, "Men of Athens, I observe that you are very religious in all respects" (Acts 17:22). In the next verse, however, he pointed out that these idolaters worshiped in ignorance. Later he concluded, "... God is now declaring to men that all people everywhere should repent" (v. 30). *One who is religious but ignorant needs to change in order to please God.*

No one was more religious than the Pharisees of the New Testament era. They were "the strictest sect of our religion [Judaism]" (Acts 26:5). Yet Jesus, applying Isaiah's prophecy to them, said, "But in vain do they worship Me, teaching as doctrines the precepts of men" (Matthew 15:9). *One who follows man's teaching instead of God's teaching has a vain religion.*

Consider how Paul described his life before becoming a Christian: "For you have heard of my way of living in time past in the Jews' religion, how that beyond

measure I persecuted the assembly of God, and ravaged it. I advanced in the Jews' religion beyond many of my own age among my countrymen, being more exceedingly zealous for the traditions of my fathers." (Galatians 1:13-14, World English Bible). Paul proves that *sincerity and zeal are no guarantee one's religion is right.*

The early Christians were warned about "matters which have, to be sure, the appearance of wisdom in self-made religion... but are of no value against fleshly indulgence" (Colossians 2:23). *Just because a religious practice is popular or appears to be wise does not mean it is valuable or acceptable to God.*

Finally, consider these verses from James. "If anyone thinks himself to be religious, and yet does not bridle his tongue but deceives his own heart, this man's religion is worthless. Pure and undefiled religion in the sight of our God and Father is this: to visit orphans and widows in their distress, and to keep oneself unstained by the world" (James 1:26-27). Clearly, it is possible to be self-deceived about one's religion. *Acceptable religion requires taking the truth to heart, from which it governs our daily conduct, both abstaining from wrong and positively doing right, as well as formally worshiping God.*

Jesus warned that many religious people will be rejected at the judgment (Matthew 7:22). Do not be in that number. Do not assume, do not rely on your feelings, and do not just accept whatever you are told. Read your Bible. Learn the truth, then put it into practice. ■

# Jesus Must Be Seen Through the Eyes of Scripture

by Frank Himmel

The afternoon of His resurrection, Jesus appeared to two of His disciples on the road to Emmaus (Luke 24:13-35). For a good while they did not recognize the Lord. Luke says “their eyes were prevented”; that indicates some sort of supernatural obstruction.

Thinking they were talking to a stranger, the two expressed how they had hoped that Jesus was the redeemer. His crucifixion, however, had dashed those hopes. Now they were revived a bit by reports of the empty tomb. Still, those who investigated the tomb did not see Jesus.

Jesus mildly rebuked these disciples. He explained that their problem was really lack of faith in what the Scripture said. He then showed them from Moses and all the prophets that the Christ had to suffer.

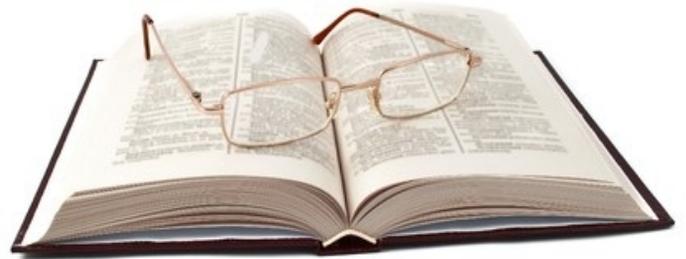
Equipped with a proper understanding of the Scriptures, these two disciples could now see the Christ for what He really was. In fact, what had been an impediment to faith—the idea of a suffering Savior—was now a powerful evidence for faith as they contemplated numerous fulfilled prophecies. And

once their mind’s eyes were seeing more clearly, their physical eyes were opened to recognize Jesus.

In our day, people believe all sorts of things about Jesus. Some of it is true, some of it is guesswork, and some of it is a blatant contradiction of the Biblical record. The solution is the same as in the case of these disciples: go back to the Scriptures and listen to what they say about the Christ—all that they say.

Folks, you cannot learn about Jesus by reading works of fiction. You cannot learn about Him by listening to “scholars” who arrogantly exalt their speculation above the eyewitness testimony of the gospel writers. You cannot know Him through your own imagination, either. Jesus must be seen through the eyes of Scripture.

“You search the Scriptures because you think that in them you have eternal life; it is these that testify about Me” (John 5:39). ■



## Service Leaders for the Week

|                     | Sunday Morning      | Sunday Evening | Wednesday Evening  |
|---------------------|---------------------|----------------|--------------------|
| GREETER             | Bruce Williams      | Howard Moore   | Bruce Williams     |
| SONG LEADER         | Gary Hagler         | Bruce Williams | Albert Harrison Sr |
| OPENING PRAYER      | Greg Winget         | Carlos Garcia  |                    |
| LORD’S SUPPER       |                     |                |                    |
| BREAD               | Steven Turner       | Steven Turner  |                    |
| CUP                 | Josh Baucom         | Josh Baucom    |                    |
| CONTRIBUTION PRAYER | Rawland Daniel      |                |                    |
| SERMON/INVITATION   | Frank Himmel        | Frank Himmel   | Howard Moore       |
| CLOSING PRAYER      | Albert Lee Harrison | Kerry Gray     | Bruce Williams     |