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THE SURE WORD by Jonnie Hutchison

WHAT WILL YOU SAY TO JESUS?

Dear reader, you and I and every person will stand before the judgment seat of Christ and give an account of our lives whether they have been good or evil (2 Corinthians 5:10). Jesus pictured this final event in the history of mankind with the words, "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). According to Jesus, there will be religious people who will not be allowed to enter into heaven. They will claim allegiance to the Lord and that their religious practices were done in His name or by His authority but instead the Lord will reject their religious practices as "lawlessness." Since only those who do the will of the Father will enter into heaven, it follows that those religious people addressed by the Lord did not do the will of the Father.

How important is it that we make sure that we are practicing in religion only that which God has authorized in His Word – that we are doing the will of the Father and not our own will? Jesus' picture of the judgment teaches us that it is not sufficient just to be religious. No, we must be religiously right! We cannot engage in religious practices that are not found in the Word of God and still enter into heaven. For example, where does the Bible authorize the "blessing of animals" as a part of worship? Yet, some religions include such activities in their worship evidently believing it is acceptable to God. Claiming to "bless animals" in the name of Jesus in no way proves He has authorized it. Is it found in the Word of God? Is there a command to practice it? Is there an approved example of it being practiced in the New Testament church? This is just one example of many such religious practices.

If you practice in religion that which is not found in the Father's will, what will you say to Jesus when you stand before His throne in judgment? Make sure that your religious beliefs and practices are authorized by God in His Word for you do not want to hear the Lord say, "I never knew you. Depart from Me you who practice lawlessness."