

Religion or Christ



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Jesus said unto him: "I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me."
John 14:6

Seven times in the Bible, we find the word "religion" mentioned. Only seven times. That is a very shocking thing to the common observer to realize that the word "religion" is mentioned, in a bad connotation, six of those seven times. When we use the word "religion," we think of something good immediately. You ask a person, "Are you saved?" "Oh, yes. I belong to a religion. I am a very religious person." We think of the word "religious" as a good word, but not so in the Word of God.

In the Word of God, the word "religion" is, six times out of seven, mentioned as something bad. The only time that religion is mentioned, with a good connotation, is in James 1:27 where the Apostle says, "Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this, To visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep himself unspotted from the world." That is the only time in all the Bible where the word "religion" is mentioned as something good.

Now listen carefully. Everyone listen. Religion will send more people to Hell than liquor. More people will be in Hell because they were religious than of any single reason in the world. May I say, by way of introducing my message: Religion and Christ are in opposition to each other. Religion says man must do something to get to Heaven, join something to get to Heaven, have something done to him to get to

Heaven. Christ says, "I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me."

Now, let's trace religion shall we? Religion began in the Bible in Genesis, Chapter 3. Adam and Eve sinned in the Garden of Eden. They had eaten of the tree of knowledge of good and evil. When they did, they tried to sew themselves fig leaves. They made coverings for themselves. They were making themselves a covering for their sin. God killed an animal, and brought from that animal a coat of skins. God offered to Adam and Eve a coat that He made. A coat made by the shedding of blood. A coat made with the slaying of an animal. God gave, to Adam and Eve, that coat, as a covering for their sins.

Now listen carefully. Religion began by man trying to cover himself without a blood sacrifice. The fig leaves were not made of a blood sacrifice. God's divine law is: blood must be shed for sin. Either you must pay the price for your own sin, by being plunged into Hell forever, or you must have an innocent sacrifice to die for your sins. It has always been that way. There must be blood shed for sins.

Adam and Eve, realizing they were naked, made themselves a covering for sin. You cannot cover your own sin! God must initiate the reconciliation between the sinner and a holy God. Now listen. It is always the sinned-against that must initiate reconciliation. The sinner does not find his way back to the sinned-against. It is the one who has been offended who must initiate reconciliation. God made, from a slain animal, a coat for Adam and a coat for Eve. Religion was not enough. Making their own covering was not enough. They had to receive the covering that God had made for them.

Religion began in Genesis, Chapter 3. Religion continues in Genesis, Chapter 4. Cain and Abel, the sons of Adam and Eve, were in the field. They decided to come and bring their offerings to God. Abel brought of a blood sacrifice. He brought an animal. He killed that animal. There was blood shed. He brought that bloody sacrifice as an offering to God.

Not Cain. Cain brought some green beans, dandelions, gladiolus, squash, turnip greens. He brought sacrifice of the field. Now bear in mind that's exactly what Adam and Eve had done. They brought a covering they made from the field. God brought a covering He made from a sacrifice. Adam and Eve were saved when they reached out and took the covering that God had brought, because of the shedding of blood.

Now, why was Cain lost and his offering rejected? Why was Abel saved and his offering accepted? For the same reason Adam and Eve had to be covered by blood sacrifice. God does not accept any sacrifice that does not require the shedding of blood of an innocent substitute. Now, Cain was religious. He believed in God. He believed in sacrificing. He believed in giving. He believed in coming to church. He was religious, but the Bible says he died and went to Hell.

Abel was not necessarily more religious than Cain; but Abel brought a blood sacrifice. That's why joining a church won't get you to Heaven, because you have to have a blood sacrifice. That's why living a good life won't get you to Heaven. You have to have a blood sacrifice. That's why turning over a new leaf won't get you to Heaven. You've got to have a blood sacrifice. That's why being sprinkled as a baby

won't get you to Heaven. You've got to have a blood sacrifice.

So Cain was refused and Abel was accepted. Why? Because Abel was a better man than Cain? No. Because Abel was a nicer guy? No. Because Abel had accepted God's provision of a blood sacrifice.

Now listen carefully. You will not go to heaven because you are better than somebody else. The honest simple truth is, a lot of folks will be in Hell, who are better than a lot of people, who will go to Heaven. Did you hear what I said? A lot of people will walk the golden streets and enjoy the joys of Heaven, who are not as good as some people who will burn in Hell forever! Why? Because the difference is not how good or how bad you are but did you meet God's condition? God's condition is a blood sacrifice.

That's what John the Baptist meant when he stood on the bank of the Jordan River and said, "Behold the Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world!" He pointed to Jesus Christ and said, "There is a lamb that someday will be slain and that lamb will shed His blood and all who turn to Him for forgiveness of sin and salvation will be saved."

Now listen. You're not going to Heaven because you're a Baptist. You're not going to Heaven because you're a Catholic. You can trot down to the Catholic church and you can confess all your sins to the priest and write him a check for every dime you've got. He can absolve and cross his bosom all he wants to. You can cross your bosom all you want to, but unless you have been born of the Spirit of God, by faith and the blood of Christ, you will die and go to Hell someday. You can go to the Pope in Rome and have the Pope absolve your sins. You can have the Pope cross his bosom all he wants to, but you'll die and go to Hell unless you've been born again by faith and the blood of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Religion—that will take you to Hell. Christ—He takes you to Heaven. Let's go on. Religion began in the Bible. Fig leaves, in Genesis 3. Bloodless sacrifice, in Genesis 4. Now why is it that men do not want to accept Christ and what He did? Pride. There's something in every hunk of flesh in this building that wants exaltation. I don't care who you are, your flesh is like mine and my flesh is like yours. We want folks to brag on us. We want to do it ourselves.

When a preacher gets up and says you cannot do anything deserving Heaven, the old flesh says, "What do you mean? What do you mean? I'm not so bad. I'm not so mean. I pay my debts. I am a good neighbor. I am a good fellow. I'm an honest man." Hell will be full of honest men, whose flesh thought it could work its way to Heaven and bypass the blood of the Lord Jesus Christ. So, what is it?

Religion began in the Bible with fig leaves, in Genesis 3, and a bloodless offering by Cain, in Genesis 4. Next is organized religious in Genesis 11. In the 10th Chapter of Genesis, a man rises on the scene whose name is Nimrod. Nimrod is a man who organizes all religions into one in Genesis, Chapter 11. You recall that tower of Babel they built in the 11th Chapter of Genesis, trying to build their own way toward Heaven, trying to earn Heaven, trying to make a man-made salvation.

Man has been trying to build his way to Heaven ever since that day. Man has been trying to earn Heaven

ever since that day. But let me tell you what I've said to you, from this pulpit, a hundred thousand times and that is: There is nothing you can do to earn Heaven! There is nothing I can do to get you to Heaven! There is nothing this church can do to get you to Heaven! There is nothing the priest can do to get you to Heaven! There is nothing the Pope can do to get you to Heaven! You've got to put your faith completely in what Jesus did on the cross, if you are to enjoy the city of Heaven! There is no other way! Religion says, "Earn your way." Christ says, "I am the way." Religion says, "Join a church." Christ says, "I am the way." Religion says, "Live a good life." Christ says, "I am the way." You say, "Hold it, preacher! You mean to tell me that a fellow can live a life that's wicked, a life in sin, and die and go to Heaven?" I am saying that the wickedness of a life has not one thing in this world to do with where you go when you die. Not one thing.

There are one, two, three, four, five, six, seven, eight doors to this building. Now I don't care how good you live outside these doors, you've got to come in one of these doors to get inside. There is safety in this building from a storm on the outside. Remember the old storm cellars? How many ever had a storm cellar? That's where you ran from the storm and got bit by a rattlesnake and died.

Who was it telling me the story this morning about the fellow who decided to quit smoking? The doctor said, "You'll die with cancer if you don't quit smoking." So he quit smoking and started chewing toothpicks instead, and died with Dutch Elm disease.

You've got to get born again to go to Heaven. There are folks here tonight that, if I asked you are you saved, you'd say, "Yeah, I'm saved." "Well, how do you know?" "Well, I live a pretty good life." Listen, Hell will be full of good people. There is only one door.

A fellow can be a good fellow but there's only one way to get in that storm cellar and that is to go in the door. "Come on, Lindsey, here's the door. Get in!" And Lindsey says, "I'm a good fellow." You'll be a dead fellow if that tornado comes through there. You see, it is going in the door that saves you. It is not being good, it is going in the door! It is not being good that gets you to Heaven, it is going in the door! A lot of good people have said, "No, I'll not go in the door. No, I'll not receive Christ. No, I'll not be born again. No, I'll not be converted. No, I'll not turn my life over to God, through Christ." And you will die and go to Hell. I don't care how good you are!

Salvation is not by your goodness. It is by having enough sense to take God's way. God's way is provided through His Son, Jesus Christ, who said, "I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life. No man comes unto the Father but by me."

So religion organized in Genesis, Chapter 11—building a way to Heaven. Religion continues in John, Chapter 3. A man came to Jesus late one night. He said, "Rabbi, we know that thou art a teacher come from God: for no man can do these miracles that thou doest, except God be with him." And the Lord looked at him and started right off the bat saying, "Marvel not. You've got to be born again. You've got to get born again."

And the fellow talked a while longer. He said, "I'm a teacher of religion. I am a Jewish teacher. I teach in the seminary." And Jesus said, "You've got to get born again." "Well, he said, "How can a fellow get born again when he's old? Can he go back into this mother's womb and be born again like he was the first time?" The Lord said, "No, that's not it at all." There was a story in the Book of Numbers, about the fiery serpents that came and bit the Jews. The Jews were dying by the thousands because of the biting of these serpents. Moses came to God and said, "God, what can I do for my people? Spare my people." And the Lord said to Moses, I want you to take a pole and I want you to take a piece of brass. I want you to beat that piece of brass into a serpent. I want you to put that brass serpent on that pole. I want you to life the pole high above all the Israelites so that every Jew can see the pole and the serpent of brass on the pole and tell all the Jews if they will look at that serpent of brass on that pole, they will live." Now can you picture those Jews? Fiery serpents everywhere.

I was preaching one time in the old building over here. I had a row of boys about like what we have here sitting on the front, and I said, "Serpents everywhere. Fiery serpents everywhere." I said, "If you open your oven in the morning, a fiery serpent will fall out." A lot of you will dream about it tonight. I will myself. I dream about snakes a lot. That's a sign that you don't have many friends. That's why I dream about snakes a lot.

But I said, "Serpents! Open your oven and a snake will crawl out. You pull your cover to go back to bed at night and a snake would crawl out." You know, a lot of you will be scared to go to bed tonight. A lot of you little children are going to say, "Mommy, would you sleep with me?" Unless the Mommy says, "Junior, would you sleep with me?" But anyway, serpents everywhere! And I said, "Serpents in the house. Serpents outside." I said, "Look at the serpents!" And the whole row of boys pulled their feet up. That's the way it was. Serpents everywhere!

And the Lord said, "Moses, take up a piece of brass and beat that brass into a serpent. Hold that brass high." And then Jesus said, "Now, Nicodemus, you are a teacher of the Jews." You know this. You know that story. Every Jew who knows anything about the Old Testament knows that story.

That serpent of brass represents Jesus. That pole represents Calvary. Our Lord said, "I am going to be lifted up, Nicodemus, on the cross." Every person bitten by the serpent, who is lost in sin and on his way to Hell, if you'll look to Jesus Christ on the cross, you can go to Heaven.

Let me say again, you don't go to Heaven because you know the Bible. You don't go to Heaven because you are a good man. You don't go to Heaven because you belong to a church. You don't go to Heaven because you got sprinkled as a baby. You don't go to Heaven because you got confirmed last Easter Sunday morning or any other Easter Sunday morning. You don't go to Heaven because you're Catholic and take the sacrament, because you go to Mass, because you've had communion, because you got baptized. You go to Heaven because, one day in your life you said, "I am a lost sinner and I cannot save myself. Jesus died for me and I look to the cross and trust what He did on the cross as my hope for Heaven." Everybody in this house tonight has either religion or Christ.

Religion takes you to Hell. I said, religion takes you to Hell! I am sick and tired of people saying, "I'm not so bad. I'm a religious man," or "My boy's a good boy. He's a religious boy." So is the Devil. The Bible says the devils believe and tremble. It is Christ, not religion, that takes you to Heaven.

Religion continues in Luke, Chapter 18. The story is told there. Two men go up to the temple to pray. Here are two men who come down this aisle. Now these two fellows are going to pray. One fellow, he is a good prayer. He steps up and he says, "Dear Lord, I want to thank you that I am not an extortioner. I'm honest. I want to thank you, Lord, that I give tithes of all I possess."

"Hey, fellow over there: are you an extortioner? Are you honest?" "No. I'm not honest. I'm sort of crooked. I've been pretty crooked." "Lord, I want to thank you that I am not crooked, like he is. Lord, I want to thank you that I give ten percent of my income. Hey, fellow, do you give ten percent of your income?" "No, I never have given anything to God." "Lord, I want to thank you that I am not like he is. Lord, I want to thank you that I keep the law."

"Do you keep the law, fellow?" "No, I'm afraid I don't keep the law. I don't." "Well, Lord, I thank you that I am not like he is. Lord, I thank you that I pray three times a day with my face turned toward Jerusalem. Do you pray three times a day?" "No, I'm afraid I don't pray three times a day."

Now this fellow is a good man. He is honest. He goes to church. He prays. He's a good guy! He is the kind of fellow that we would call a religious man. And this old man over here, he beats his breast. He says, "Dear God, be merciful to me a sinner." In the Greek what he says is, "Dear God, be mercy seat merciful to me a sinner."

He goes back to the days when the High Priest would walk into the Holy of Holies and take the blood of that innocent substitute and sprinkle that blood on the Mercy Seat. And he said, "Lord, like you were merciful to the Old Testament people because of the sacrifice of atonement: Oh, dear God, be merciful to me, a sinner. I don't tithe, but I want mercy. I don't fast, but I want mercy. I am an extortioner, but I want mercy."

This fellow who didn't tithe. This fellow went down to his house and testified and the other fellow went to Hell. Now that means, tonight there is a good man burning in Hell and a bad man enjoying Heaven. Right? A good man in Hell tonight who has been burning for two thousand years. A good man! And here's a man who is not as good as this other fellow on any point who is in Heaven and has been enjoying Heaven for two thousand years. Why? I'll tell you why. Because he didn't try to save himself, or trust a church, or religion to do it. He trusted the blood of the Lord Jesus Christ!

Now listen to me! You hear me and you hear me well! There are people in this house tonight who, if asked if they were saved, would say, "I am a Lutheran, Missouri Synod." I don't care if you're of the Hawaii Synod, or the lower Slabovia Synod, or even the Texas Synod. Now if any synod would get you there, it would be the Texas Synod. I don't care what you are. If you are a Lutheran, confirmed, sprinkled when you were a baby, been to church every Sunday, take communion regularly, you'll die and go to

Hell if you've not been born again! I say, "Are you saved?"

I was in a barber shop one time and I said to a fellow, "Have you been born again?" And he said, "My church doesn't believe like that." I said, "Jesus does and you'd better change churches or you're going to go to Hell."

Oh, this theologian down at Thurman University! I wanted to give him a glorified punch in the nose. And it is a Southern Baptist school, God pity them. He came out in a book and he said that we need a new Bible, to fit the modern generation. Boy, wouldn't it be some Bible? I've got one in my office. It came from a Lutheran Church in Griffith. I've got one where Jesus said something like, "I dig you, Nicodemus. Come on all you squares." Yeah! Out here, in a Lutheran Church in Griffith.

You say, "Brother Hyles, you shouldn't mention the name of the denomination." I'd give the name of the church, if I could think about it! You say, "I don't like that!" Well, then you figure out some way to lump it the best way you can. We don't need a new Bible to fit this wicked, vile, long-haired, beatnik, moustached, goateed, hippie generation that needs a bath and a haircut. We need a generation who will change to fit the old Bible! That's what we need. Here's the answer to the whole world's needs: The Word of God!

We have made our lives as wicked as the Devil. I am ashamed that some of you boys come to church looking like hippies! Absolutely! Now, I am not mad at you, I love you. But God pity you, get a shave and a haircut and look like a decent human being, rather than an ape, or a baboon, out of Lincoln Park Zoo! You don't like that? Well, I don't either! God help us to have some decency and character again!

By the way, do you know what that long hair is? I'll just go ahead and tell you. Do you know what it is? It is a part of the rest of your rebellious nature. A child who rebels against his Dad is not surprising when he has long hair. I'm glad I thought of this and I'm glad you reminded me of it.

I was sitting at Bob Jones University last Tuesday at noon eating a six course meal. Now, I have six course meals often. Nothing unusual—McDonald's French fries, McDonald's hamburgers, McDonald's milkshakes, McDonald's fried pies, and so forth. But anyway, I was having a delicious, beautiful, six course dinner. I even ate with one hand. Now, boy, that's something for me! I chased that English pea all the way across the plate.

We were talking and Dr. Bob Jones, Jr., said, "I can tell you when a boy is about to get rebellious in school." I said, "How?" He said, "If he lets his hair grow much longer, invariably, he is about to get in trouble." That's what he said. Now boy, the way I'm going, I won't be in trouble ever. And the way some of you fellows are, you're sanctified already. But he said that.

If you're here tonight with long, shaggy hair, your dad couldn't take care of you, and you don't mind your mother, either. Because when you rebel against God's order that a man has short hair, that is a sign that you've been rebelling against somebody else a long time.

After the service, (I love you. I won't get mad at you.) I'll tell you what you do. You come to see me in my office after the service, with your shaggy hair, and I'll bind you one thing, you have been in trouble with the law, or you have rebelled against your dad and mother, or you and your dad have a falling out, or you have rebelled against school, or you have had some marijuana in your possession. Now I dare you; I dare you to come! There is open rebellion!

Now what I am saying is this: We need to conform ourselves to the Bible! We don't conform ourselves to Mom and Dad. We don't conform ourselves to the law. We don't conform ourselves to school teachers. We don't want anybody over us. So then we get to the end of the road and we look at God and say, "God, we don't want you, either!"

Anarchy always leads to atheism. It has to, because atheism is the end rebellion of an anarchist mind. What am I saying? I am saying that it does not matter how good you are; salvation is not because you're good—Hell is not because you're bad. It is because you failed to yield yourself to God's provision. So we are trying to change the Bible to fit our own lives, when the truth is, nobody goes to Heaven who doesn't receive the Christ of the Bible and His salvation as a free gift.

Religion continues in the story of a rich man; a young man who came to Christ. He said, "Good Master, what must I do to inherit eternal life?" The Lord listed some of the commandments that He knew the fellow had kept. He said, "Keep these." The young ruler said, "Why, these have I kept from my youth up." What he said was, "These have I kept since I was the age of this boy over here. From my childhood up, I have kept these." And the Lord said, "Okay. Go and sell all you have and give to the poor." And he went away sorrowful.

What was our Lord trying to show him? Our Lord was trying to show him that he was trying to get to Heaven on his own merit, trying to earn his way to Heaven.

Sunday night after Sunday night, folks come to this church to visit, get mad at me, go home and cuss a blue streak about me. There are folks in this house, right now, who will leave tonight and they'll cuss me if I am right with God. Unless I am sadly mistaken, I'll be disappointed if folks don't curse me tonight. Why? I'll tell you why. Because the flesh does not want to yield itself to an outside force. The flesh wants to save itself. The flesh says, "I'll doctor myself up and I'll be good and I'll go to Heaven because I'm good."

Now, I'm an unsaved person and ask me if I am saved. "Are you saved?" "Oh, sure I'm saved. Boy, I'm a good guy. I pay my debts. I'm friendly. I don't owe anybody anything. I'm an honest man. I don't do anything to hurt anybody." But, all of a sudden, I do something one day to hurt somebody and my flesh says, "I'll tell you what. I'm not as good as I thought I was." So the next thing I'll do is, I'll doctor you up. I'll put a long, flowing robe on you. I'll put a certain kind of turban up here. I'll make you grow a long beard. I'll put a white deal here and make you take your tie off. I'll fix you all up and I'll say, "Well, if I can't save me, I'll find some other flesh to save me." See?

If my flesh can't do it, rather than yield to what God has done, I want to find somebody else's flesh that can." You follow me? That's why we have priests to confess our sins to. We don't want to confess our sins to the true God. We want to confess our sins to flesh because flesh does not want to humble itself to anything but flesh. So, I'll fix your flesh up. I'll confess my sins to you, you see. Now if that won't work—come here. I'll get some more flesh up here. Yeah, we have a whole choir full of flesh. Could the whole choir stand, please?

All right, boy, now we're going to organize a church; a whole bunch of flesh up here. We will organize a church. I want to join this flesh, you see. Either way it is the flesh wanting to be saved by flesh. Right? Okay. You say that won't do it. Okay, flesh, baptize me, would you please? Baptize me, flesh. Both hands. Oh, you want to sprinkle me. All right, good. That's a lot better. You see what I've done?

First, I've tried to save myself with my own flesh. But my flesh came to the end of its rope and I realized it couldn't save me. But rather than turn to Him that is not flesh, I turn to other flesh. I doctor up some flesh. If that won't save me, then I get me a bunch of flesh that I can join.

"Are you a Christian?" "Yeah, I joined the church." It just means I've got a hunk more flesh up here. That's all. But at least I didn't have to trust Jesus. I could trust some more flesh. But that wouldn't do it. I felt like joining the church but that didn't give me the answer. A flesh baptized me or sprinkled me. That didn't do it. Okay, flesh. I confess my sins to you, flesh. So I confessed my sins to you. That didn't do it. Well, give me communion. I want to take communion. That won't do it.

Look, the whole rat race of religion in the world tonight: National Counsel of Churches, liberal preachers, modernistic churches, Bible-rejecting preachers, all of it is simply a big hunk of flesh trying to figure some way for the flesh to save itself. Whether it is my flesh, his flesh, collected flesh, church full of flesh, confessing your sin to a flesh; all of it is the flesh refusing to yield itself to the Christ who died for it on the cross. Now, are you getting what I am saying?

That's why joining the church can't save you because the church is full of flesh. That's why the preacher or the pope can't save you. That's why the rabbi can't save you. He is made of flesh. That's why the communion can't save you. It is administered by flesh.

Somebody has got to save you who is not flesh! The Bible says flesh and blood cannot inherit the Kingdom of Heaven. God Himself looking down on man saw that man was in a predicament, lost and without God. And God clothed Himself in human rags, human flesh, that He might pay the price for sin on the cross of Calvary. The Lord was buried in the tomb and rose again after three days and three nights in a perfect, glorified body. He alone can save, because He alone is not in the same predicament of flesh and sin in which we each find ourselves, as we travel through this life.

All right. So the rich, young ruler wanted flesh to save him. Religion continues in Acts, Chapter 10, when Peter was called to the house of Cornelius. If ever a man ought to have been saved, it was Cornelius. He

was a devout man. He was a man who had prayer meeting in his own house. He was a man who read the scriptures. He was a man of prayer. But the Bible says he had to get born again like anybody else.

Are you saved? "Oh, yes, I say my prayers every night." That doesn't mean you're saved. Are you saved? "Oh, yes, I read the Bible all the time." That doesn't mean you're saved. Cornelius was devout, prayed. But he had to get born again.

Religion continues and many shall say, "Lord, Lord. Have we not prophesied in Your name? Have we not cast out devils in Thy name? Have we not, in Thy name, done many wonderful works?" And the Lord shall say, "Depart from me. I never knew you." What? We did works in Thy name. I never knew you. What? We preached. I never knew you preachers. What? We cast out devils. I never knew you. What? We caused goiters to go off the throat. I never knew you. What? We caused the blind to see. I never knew you.

You see, dear friends, there's only one thing in this world that can please God. Listen carefully. One thing. Not a good deed. Not going to church. There's only one thing that makes contact with God's pleasure and God's palate and that is F-A-I-T-H, faith. The writer of Hebrews said, without faith it is impossible to please God. The only thing you can do to please God is put your faith in Jesus Christ. When that faith makes contact with God Almighty, God forgives your sin and writes your name in heaven and you become a child of God.

Religion continues in the sermon of the tares this morning, with church members who look like Christians, talk like Christians, act like Christians, but have not been born again. Thank God for those folks with you who came this morning. That lady up in years who came and said, "I'm a member of this church. I've been baptized, but I don't know that I am going to Heaven. I don't know that I am going to Heaven. I want to be saved!" How wise she was. The world is full, as I said this morning, of people who had their names on church rolls but know nothing of the Grace of God and being born again.

Religion continues today. Last Sunday morning, little babies that knew nothing about it trotted across the alter of churches all across this country. Parents and God Mothers and God Fathers and God daughters and God sons and God nieces and God aunts and uncles and all the rest of them came and they cried. My baby is getting sprinkled. You know what happened to your baby? He just got wet. He just needed changing on both ends instead of one. He just got wet, that's all.

Am I talking to someone tonight who thinks you're going to Heaven because you got sprinkled when you were a baby? If that's all you have as your hope for Heaven, you'll burn in Hell forever and ever. Because, without faith, it is impossible to please God. Nobody can do something for you to get you to Heaven!

Religion continues. Last Sunday morning, Easter Sunday, many a little child had taken Catechism classes. By the way, when I came to First Baptist Church Hammond, ten and one-half years ago, we had Catechism classes. Did you know that? They were called Catechism classes for children. Now, they

meant well and I think the way they did it was right. They taught the children how to be saved. They taught the Word of God. But I don't like the word Catechism classes. It denotes something that I don't like.

We had baby dedication services. Now we didn't sprinkle the babies. We just did all but that, you see. We didn't hold a dry hand up here and play like we were, but we almost did that. So the first Sunday we had baby dedication—I'll never forget it. We had it. Over here in the left corner, there were about 40 people: one family. One lady walked up to me and she was crying. It was invitation time. I said, "Do you want to get saved?" She said, "No. I'm the Godmother." I said, "You're the what?" She said, "I'm the Godmother."

I didn't say, "Hail Mary, Mother of God," but "I'm a Godmother," she said. And right behind her was a fellow and he said, "I'm a lucky guy." I said, "Why?" He said, "I'm the Godfather." Oh brother, forgive me, but I felt like taking my tie off and putting my shirt on backwards. That's exactly the way I felt.

So the next time somebody called and asked if I would dedicate their baby, I said, "Yes, I'll be at the hospital and dedicate your baby." Or I said, "I'll be at your house and we'll get on our knees and we'll pray God to make something out of the parents and help the parents to rear the child right." It is not the baby that needs praying for, it is the Godless parents! So they get confirmed and a little child is sprinkled as a baby and thinks he's on his way to Heaven. No. Don't get mad at me.

You say, "You're criticizing my church." No. I am trying to beat some sense into your head and keep you from going to Hell when you die. Jesus said you've got to get born again or you're not going to Heaven.

Religion continues in people trying to live a good life or joining this church or that church. You know all over this area, we have folks that belong to a certain church because of their nationality. They have the Ukrainian Catholic, the German Lutheran, the Dutch Reformed. Let's see. What else have you got? Russian Orthodox. You got Swedish Baptist. What else? Greek Catholic, Pollack Presbyterian. Are you a Christian? Yes, my family has always been Ukrainian Orthodox. Are you a Christian? Yes, yes. We've been Lutheran through the years. Are you a Christian? You say, what are you, Independent Baptists? We're a bunch of 57 varieties. Alley cats. We're 1/50TH German, 1/50th Polish, 1/50th Ukrainian, 1/50th Slovak, and we just are all sorts of leftovers and hodge-podgers. But I'll tell you one thing, buddy, we're full-blooded Christians if we've been born again.

You see, the Apostle said, "He came unto his own and received him not." Now listen. "But to as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the Sons of God!" Who are born not of the flesh, not of the will of man, but of God. You're not a Christian because you belong to the Russian Orthodox or the German Lutheran.

Now I'll say this, you can be a Christian if you've been born again. If you're a Russian Orthodox, you ought to get born again even if you're going to stay Russian Orthodox. And if you're German Lutheran, you ought to get born again even if you're going to stay German Lutheran. If you are Presbyterian, you

ought to get born again even if you're going to stay Presbyterian. Because when the roll is called, only those who have been born again are going to Heaven.

"Well," you say, "now, Brother Hyles, that's all very sweet and cute, but we cultured people just don't see eye-to-eye with you." No. You never will because you'll be in Hell and I'll be in Heaven, and we won't see eye-to-eye then either. But if you are a cultured person and not born again, you'll be a cultured person in Hell one day. But you say, "We're more refined. We don't beat the pulpit and holler."

Okay. How do you do it? How does your preacher do it? Now I want you to feel at home tonight, "Beloved, thou hast to be born again or thou will go to Hell." It is the same thing. See? How does your preacher do it? Anybody got a bathrobe? I'll wear one. I'll do it like you're used to it. I'll whisper it! I'll shout it! I'll say it dignifiedly. It all comes out the same thing, brother. You like it or not. You get mad or not. You go home and say, well, I'll never go back there again or not. But you'd better hear for one time in your life a preacher that is trying to be honest with you when he tells you if you have not been born again by the spirit of God, whatever you are, you are lost! You've got to get born again! Have you been born again? Is your name in Heaven? I didn't ask if it was on a church roll, but is it in Heaven?

Religion continues today. There's an end for religion. I don't have time to go into it but that which was begun in Genesis, Chapter 11, someday will end in Revelation, Chapters 17 and 18, when all the false religions of this world shall come together under one great united federation. The World Council of Churches will be in that day a real world council of churches. And all the liberal preachers, all the modernists and all the people that don't believe the Word of God: people who don't believe the Christ of God and don't believe the virgin birth and don't believe the new birth—all the works crowd will gather together under one head. And that head shall be a beast.

The Bible says a great religious leader will be in charge of all religions of the world. The Bible says God in Heaven shall cry Babylon the great is fallen. These false religions under the old mother of harlots herself coming back—listen, as you see the merging of denominations, you mark it down, brother, the coming of our Lord is nearer at hand than ever before.

And so, what will happen? Let me see. Let's the three of us stand up here a minute, would you? I'm sort of handicapped without my usual actors here tonight. Now, let's see. Let me have this microphone right here. Let's say for a minute—let's all get together here. We all belong to the old mother of harlots, see; the old Catholic church. We all belong, except you don't. You and I—we're Catholics, you know, and you're born again. Okay, let's march across. You don't like this, do you? Well, then you just sit still and do the best you can to endure it for a while so you can get the truth for one time in your life!

We are walking together. The reformation comes. I'm going to pull off from you. Well, look. Let's fuss about it. I want to split off from you and I'm a Protestant. The Protestants have split off. Now we have Catholics over here and the Protestants. Now here we have the fellow who has been born again. They've been there all along. Now watch me. The day is going to come when I am going to look over and say, "Hey, would you like to have me back with you?" "I think you ought to come on back." "I think I'd like to

come back, too. We're not as far apart as I thought we were. We're all brothers. We really are. I think I'll just come on back."

So I come back and I embrace the old mother again. You see. Here's this fellow back here. He's still born again. That's one reason why, if you'll forgive me, Baptists aren't Protestants. Baptists never belonged to the old mother. Baptists have always preached the message of grace by faith in Jesus Christ.

Now. When the merge comes, mark it down, brother, the trumpet is about to blow. Now then, here's a fellow over here. We have gotten together and we're all in one group now. And here's a fellow born again and the Lord says, "Touch not the unclean thing. Come out from the Babylon. Come out from her. Don't touch her." That's one reason why the First Baptist Church in Hammond, as long as this man fills this pulpit, will never belong to a National Council of Churches, never send one dime to its communistic program, never use one time it's communistic, liberalistic, revised standard version of the Bible. Why? Because God has told us to come out and be separate, and that's what we plan to do, you see.

What am I saying? I'm saying that one day soon, religion will merge under the guise of love. Under the of unity. When it is nothing in the world, but yielding conviction and giving up your conviction and doctrine. What happens? One day, every person who has not been born of the Spirit of God, trusting religious organization to save them, will be cast into the lake of Hell forever and forever. Those old-fashioned fundamentalists shall be with Christ because they have been born of the Spirit of God.

Don't misunderstand me. You can go to Heaven and be a Presbyterian. You can go to Heaven and be a Catholic. You can go to Heaven and be a Lutheran. You can go to Heaven if you're Russian Orthodox. You can go to Heaven and be Greek Orthodox. You can go to Heaven and be Ukrainian Catholic. But you can't go to Heaven under any group unless you are born again!

Jesus said to Nicodemus, "You must be born again." Now, look. I am going to say this lovingly tonight and that will be the first thing I've said lovingly. Could I say this lovingly? I'm trying to help you. The only reason I beat my head against the post, and holler and scream, and tell you to like it or lump it is because I want you to sit up and listen to me.

You know another reason? Because you are going to go out tomorrow, some of you—God bless your little pin heads—are going to go out tomorrow and you're going to say, "Well, I'll tell you, last night I never got so mad in my life!" I'm just tickled to death about it! Somebody's going to say, "Why?" "Do you know what I did?" "I heard a bigot preach." And they'll say, "What did Hyles preach on?" "I heard a bigot preach." And they'll say, "Who?" And you'll say, "Hyles. I went to worship and he hollered and screamed and beat the pulpit and said I was going to Hell. I almost had a nervous breakdown."

They'll say, "What did he say?" And you'll say, "He said you have to get born again or something, to go to Heaven." That's why I am saying it like I am saying it. I want you to repeat it because you'll be a preacher before morning's over. You see. You will have taken my message and didn't know it. Not only that, when you say it, that person will say, "Huh, you got mad, did you? I've heard a lot about that fellow. You know,

I think I'll sneak in some Sunday night." That's why you came.

The most beloved pastors in town can't even get enough folks tonight to have a service. Everybody loves them. But you've driven by the church here many times and said, "I wonder if he is as bad as they say?" And she said, "Why don't we go see?" And you said, "Let's go some Sunday night and sit way back in the back." There you are back there, I see you. I might be mean, but I ain't dumb! There you are.

I've got my seminary outlines and I could be a little homiletical, but the honest truth is, there beats something in every breast in this house tonight that must live forever. It's got to do it. I'm your friend, and I want it to go to Heaven. I don't want you to go to Hell. I am willing to make a hundred of you mad at me to get one of you to listen to me and go to Heaven when you die. You see, I want to tell you the truth because Jesus said you've got to get born again if you get to Heaven.

I want to make a deal with you. Okay. You're Lutheran. I don't know why I'm on the Lutherans tonight. I haven't been on the Lutherans in a long, long time. But you're Lutheran. All right. Let's make a deal. If you want to go back and stay in the Lutheran church, why don't you get born again tonight and go back and be a born-again Lutheran? "Well," you say, "Brother Hyles, my father is an Episcopalian rector. I go to the Episcopalian church." Okay, let's make a deal. Get born again and go back and be a born-again Episcopalian.

"Well," you say, "Brother Hyles, my church doesn't believe in the new birth." Okay. Get born again and I won't tell them you came here. I'll tell you what though, when you get born again, you can't help but tell them you got born again.

I was out soul-winning one day and won a lady to Christ and I said, "Now, you ought to make it public." And she said, "What do you mean?" I said, "You ought to go to a church, walk down the aisle, and tell the preacher you've been saved." She said, "Well, I go to the Catholic church, St. John Bosco." I said, "Well, come on to First Baptist next Sunday, walk the aisle and let me tell the folks you've been saved." "No," she said, "I've been saved but I want to do it in my own church." I said, "Okay."

Next Sunday morning that lady went at the end of the service at St. John Bosco and walked down and told the priest she'd been born again on Friday afternoon. That went over like a lead balloon, I'm sure. I'm sure it did, but I am not concerned.

Let us pray.