

HOW DO WE DEFINE A CHRISTIAN ?
&
WHY BE A
CHRISTIAN ?

A Scripture study
by
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(Study # 6)

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PREFACE.

Many people have differing views on what a Christian should, or should not be.

Some say that to be a Christian, one has to belong to a certain church, denomination, or cult of some sort, or perhaps be baptised in a certain way. Others say that a person must do endless good deeds, so as to earn salvation and the right to be a Christian. Yet others, that one must live by the Ten Commandments. There are even those that say, you must show evidence of having some ‘spiritual’ gift.

Then there are those at the other end of the spectrum, who say that it does not matter what we believe or do, for everyone will get to Heaven eventually anyway.

However, it doesn’t really matter what people say; it’s what God says, through His Word, the Bible that counts.

It is my hope and prayer that this study, based on God’s Word, will make clear what the requirements are for becoming, and being a Christian.

THE DEFINITION

Well first, the definition of a Christian is highlighted in Acts 11: 26, as being a disciple, or follower of the teachings of Jesus Christ; It reads, *“The disciples were first called Christians at Antioch”*. So we see here that one must be a disciple to be a Christian. A disciple is one who believes, follows and adheres to the teachings of his/her teacher. God gave us the Bible as containing the inspired record of Christ’s teachings. To be a disciple and Christian we need to believe in and abide by that teaching. John 8:31,32, reads; ³¹*Then Jesus said to those Jews who believed Him, “If you abide in My word, you are My disciples indeed.”*³²*And you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.”*

Christ taught that the Old Testament records were reliable and God inspired. – In Mat. 5: 18. Christ said,

“For assuredly, I say to you, till heaven and earth pass away, one jot or one tittle will by no means pass from the Law till all is fulfilled.” Then in 2 Tim. 3: 16,17., we read, *“All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work”*.

This includes the record of creation in Genesis, and all the prophecies concerning Christ’s first and second coming. – Being a Christian involves believing all this: Christ Himself taught the acceptance of the creation record. Read; Mat. 19: 3-6. – Rom. 5: 12-19. – Heb. 4: 3-10.:

However, you may say, “Science and Geology have shown that creation is just a myth, and evolution is the way that everything has come into being.” – Well, it’s true that the majority of our so-called scientists make this claim. The fact is however, that they cannot back this claim up with true scientific fact. True science, which is the pursuit of truth and facts, first develops theories: Then by testing the theories, they separate fact from fiction, and until a thing is proven to be a fact, it has to remain designated as a theory or fiction.

Most modern day scientists however, because of their bias against God, teach the unproven and unprovable theory of evolution, as though it were a fact. – There always has been adaptation within species, where environment and diet have had an effect. In addition, genetic faults can cause mutations within species, but this is not evolution. Never has one species evolved into another. God set boundaries within the species, which we find recorded in, Gen. 1: 11, 12 & 24, 25. We see there that everything was according to its kind.

Either we believe Christ’s teachings, or we don’t. It’s that simple. By our choice, we believe and are a Christian, or we don’t believe and are not a Christian.

What do you believe?

GEOLOGY'S FLAW

In the field of geology, we also have the very unscientific way that scientists argue in circles, dating organisms by the rocks they are found in, and dating rocks by the organisms they contain.

The British geologist, R.H.Rastall, admits this when he says, *"It cannot be denied that from a strictly philosophical standpoint geologists are here arguing in a circle. The succession of organisms has been determined by a study of their remains embedded in the rocks, and the relative ages of the rocks are determined by the remains of organisms that they contain."*

("Geology" – Encyclopaedia Britannica, 1956, x, 168.)

These same geologists would have us believe that all these fossils appear in the rocks in a set progressive order, starting with the so-called simpler life forms from the older rocks, to the higher life forms in the newer rocks. In reality, this is rarely the case. – Their reason for grasping at these straws must surely be that they are prepared to believe anything, no matter how feeble, rather than believe the Bible.

The alternative of course, is to believe God's record as revealed in the Bible, and as accepted by sincere Jews, Christians and Moslem's.

(To view a few of the lies & deceptions inflicted on the world by some so called geologists & scientists read Study # 8.) also visit <http://nwcreation.net/evolutionfraud.html> .

By the way, the Bible doesn't claim that the world was created 6,000 years ago as some scientist's state it does. God did not start His (six day) acts of creation until verse 3 of Genesis 1. - Verses 1 & 2, show that the earth had already been created some time before, *"In the beginning"*. We can have no way of knowing when this was. It could have been thousands, or millions of years before the events of the following verses. The Genealogy however, as revealed in the Bible, does show that Adam (not the world), was created around 6 ½ to 8,000 years ago. This subject is covered in my first study entitled, "Past, Present, & Future".

I (the author) was once a staunch Atheist, but due to the fact that I was always searching for truth and also that Christians I didn't even know at the time, were praying for me, I was delivered from the false teachings of Atheism & Evolution. – Listed below are some others I know of who were delivered from atheism, and now proclaim the truths concerning God & Jesus.

Josh McDowell: Agnostic & author of 77 books, tried to disprove Christianity, but its truths converted him. (May be viewed on Wikipedia).

Lee P. Strobel: Atheist, was a Journalist for 14 years, was editor of Chicago Tribune. He had a Master in Studies of Law Degree. Later saw the errors of atheism and became a Christian. Is now a Christian author. (May be viewed on Wikipedia).

A.S.A.Jones: Was a devout atheist for over 20 years. Graduated with high honours in a science degree. Read up on atheist philosophy. Developed a hatred of Christians. Tried to disprove Christianity, but in doing so saw the errors of atheism & became a Christian in 1998. May be viewed at <http://www.ex-atheist.com/from-skepticism-to-worship.html>

WHY BE A CHRISTIAN?

We need also to look now at the question of; ‘Why would you want to become a Christian?’ - I could start by saying that if you want to enjoy all the blessed and glorious things God has promised in the afterlife; then you need to be a Christian. - Though very little is said in the Bible about that other dimension we call ‘Heaven’; what is said, is certainly marvellous. It’s possible to give a number of Scriptural quotes to support this, but I believe that it is better we don’t develop this point, for if that were your reason for becoming a Christian, then your motivation would be wrong. Just wanting a ‘pie in the sky’ at the end of this life is simply being self-centred. It is not honouring to you, or God, and it’s not what Christianity is all about. So let’s forget ‘the pie in the sky’.

It could be said, that one should be a Christian, to avoid spending eternity in that other dimension we call ‘Hell’. Much more is said in the Bible about Hell, than what is said about Heaven, and we could go into all the gory details about Hell, supporting it with many Scripture quotes: But this would be missing the point also. To become a Christian just to avoid punishment (Hell) is not what Christianity is all about. – Again, to become a Christian for this reason is also to be self-centred. – So let’s forget the ‘Justice or fear issue’.

Many say that the Christian has the best of this life; but that is only partially true. - In this life, the Christian has the promised assurance of the indwelling Holy Spirit. He is the Christian’s, Guide, Comforter, Helper, and Strength: He is the one who is able to give victory and joy in all circumstances. (See John 14: 26, & Gal. 5: 22, 23.)

In this life also, the Christian can enjoy the company, fellowship, and support of fellow Christians. – The Christian also enjoys the sure Word of the Holy Scriptures to guide him in all truth, and in his worship of God. – Yes, these are all pluses, but it’s only part of the story. For those same Scriptures that the Christian learns to love, reveal that God does not promise the Christian a ‘bed of roses’ in this life. On the contrary, the Christian is told that he will experience tribulation, which may take the form of sickness, suffering, or any of a multitude of other problems, for we read, in Acts 14: 22.

“Strengthening the souls of the disciples, exhorting them to continue in the faith, and saying, “We must through many tribulations enter the Kingdom of God.” A deeper understanding of the tribulation of Christians can be found in the following reading from Heb. 12: 5 – 11. “... *“My son, do not despise the chastening of the Lord, nor be discouraged when you are rebuked by Him; For whom the Lord loves He chastens, And scourges every son whom He receives.”* If you endure chastening, God deals with you as with sons; for what son is there whom a father does not chasten? But if you are without chastening, of which all have become partakers, then you are illegitimate, and not sons. Furthermore, we have had human fathers who corrected us, and we paid them respect. Shall we not much more readily be in subjection to the Father of spirits and live? For they indeed for a few days chastened us as seemed best to them, but He for our profit, that we may be partakers of His holiness. Now no chastening seems to be joyful for the present, but painful; nevertheless, afterward it yields the peaceable fruit of righteousness to those who have been trained by it.”

Read also; Rom. 5: 3-5. 8: 35-39. 12: 12, & 2 Cor. 7: 4-6, & Rev. 3: 19.

HOW TO BECOME A CHRISTIAN.

So; - Why be a Christian, and how does one become one?

The answer is found in one word, **'Love'**. We read in 1 John 4: 8. *'God is love'*.

Love is the reason mankind was created. God created mankind in His own image, giving us a free will, so that we may freely choose to love or reject Him. God loves us, His creation, and wants us to love and respect Him as a child does his parents. For His is a creative, parental love to us.

Early in history, we find that the very first created couple spurned that love of God, by going against the one thing He had forbidden. In doing so, they broke that love bond of mankind towards God.

From that one act, sin entered into all of mankind. Yet God's love for His creation never faltered; but He being a Holy God, had to then find a way to bring us back into a love relationship with Him.

Just what is a true love relationship? The answer can be found in, 1 Cor. 13, & 1 John 4: 7, to 5: 5. Please read those portions.

God's love was so great towards us, that He sent His only Son, Jesus Christ to die in our place, to bear our punishment on the cross, and to be our redeemer. John 15: 13, reads, *"Greater love has no man than this, than to lay down one's life for his friends"*, and in Mark 2: 17. It reads, *"... I did not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance"*, and Rom. 3: 23. *"For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God."*

God is Holy, and in His presence, sin cannot stand; but due to His great love towards us, He has made it possible for us to be cleansed by His shed blood, and so stand before Him as sinless in His eyes: - How then do we claim this forgiveness that makes us a Christian? - The answer is so simple! It is when we respond in thankful love to God's gracious sacrificial love, and simply accept in faith that which God through Christ has accomplished.

John 3: 16 - 18 reads, *For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life. "For God did not send His son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved. "He who believes in Him is not condemned; but he who does not believe is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God"*.

God in His love has provided the only means for us to become Christians, and to be admitted into that other dimension we call Heaven. We cannot earn our way into Heaven, yet in God's grace, He has made available to us, as it were, a free ticket, but with it a free will, by which we can of ourselves, decide to accept or reject that free ticket.

We read in, Eph. 2: 8, 9. , *"For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God, not of works, lest anyone should boast."*

You see, we cannot earn our salvation, or our right to become a Christian. No good works that we may accomplish; or righteousness of any kind on our part can obtain salvation for us. We read in, Isa. 64: 6, *"...All our righteousness's are like filthy rags"* - In the eyes of the Holy God, our best, can achieve nothing! However, thanks be to God, He has made it possible for us to be accepted by Him through the works that He has done. He paid the price for our sins on the cross, and so made salvation freely available to all who by faith accept what He has done, and allow His Spirit to indwell and control them. By believing His Word and following His teachings, we become Christians, and joint heirs with Christ, in God's Kingdom.

So by God's love and grace (unmerited favour), and our response in accepting by faith these gifts of God in a spirit of grateful loving commitment; we receive His salvation, and become Christians.- In Rom. 5: 8., we read,

"But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us." -

What's required of us to become a Christian is simply to genuinely love Him who first loved us. We cannot love Him without believing Him, and being His disciple. These things are inseparable. It's as simple as that. God has done it all. We only need to believe and accept in love: Even there, God's love towards us doesn't end, for the Scriptures tell us that Christians have been **adopted** as sons and daughters of God the Father. This makes the Christian a fellow heir with Christ. What love; to be treated in this way!

It seems impossible to think that anyone could not respond with their love, back to such a compassionate and loving God: Yet sadly many still reject this love. – It is my prayer that you will not be one that rejects, but one that responds with your love back to God.

Rom. 8: 14 – 17, reads, *“For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, these are the sons of God. For you did not receive the spirit of bondage again to fear, but you received the Spirit of adoption by whom we cry out, “Abba, Father.” The Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God, and if children, then heirs – heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ, if indeed we suffer with Him, that we may also be glorified together.”*

Now may the love of God the Father, the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the Guidance and fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you. Amen.

*The author highly recommends
the free Christian literature available through*

<http://www.christiansunite.com/>

<http://www.ebcwa.org.au/>

<http://www.heraldofhope.org.au/books.html>

<http://www.blueletterbible.org/>

<http://www.biblegateway.com/>

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