

Who Is a Christian?

The words "Christian" and "Christians" are used extensively in a variety of ways when referencing a person, people, and religious organizations. Sadly, though and more times than not, those who call themselves Christian, are not. Many religious organizations, commonly called churches, will claim to be Christian and that their members are Christian as well. But we must ask, is that really so? The question is valid and requires an answer but, to get the answer, we need an authority to draw upon. The **ONLY** authority on which to draw is the Bible, the Word of God that is forever settled in Heaven. "For ever, O LORD, thy word is settled in heaven." {Psalm 119:89}

". . . And the disciples were called Christians first in Antioch." {Acts 11:26} The original usage of "Christian" was meant to be derogative as in, "these Christ ones" or "these followers of Christ." As time went on the usage of "Christian" and "Christians" became acceptable to those who were Christians, but to the non-Christian it was still a reproach even as it is today in many parts of the world. Still, the question remains, "who is a Christian?"

In the Garden of Eden when Adam first disobeyed God and thereby causing sin to enter the realm of humanity, God promised a Redeemer, one who would come as Messiah for the purpose of shedding His innocent blood and dying on the Cross of Calvary as the full and final payment for humanity's sin debt. "And the LORD God said unto the serpent, Because thou hast done this, thou art cursed above all cattle, and above every beast of the field; upon thy belly shalt thou go, and dust shalt thou eat all the days of thy life: And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel." {Genesis 3:14-15, the first Messianic prophecy} This promised Messiah {Saviour} was none other than Jesus Christ, God the Son, who left Heaven and taking to Himself the body of man that He might be able to do this on our behalf. We read about this in various places in the Bible; these verses suffice to make the point: "Now the birth of Jesus Christ was on this wise: When as his mother Mary was espoused to Joseph, before they came together, she was found with child of the Holy Ghost. Then Joseph her husband, being a just man, and not willing to make her a publick example, was minded to put her away privily. But while he thought on these things, behold, the angel of the Lord appeared unto him in a dream, saying, Joseph, thou son of David, fear not to take unto thee Mary thy wife: for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Ghost. And she shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt call his name JESUS: for he shall save his people from their sins. Now all this was done, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken of the Lord by the prophet, saying, Behold, a virgin shall be with child, and shall bring forth a son, and they shall call his name Emmanuel, which being interpreted is, God with us." {Matthew 1:18-23} So you see, Mary was conceived of by the Holy Spirit and therefore, the sin nature was **NOT** passed on to Jesus; He was born without one.

It is through death and the blood of Jesus Christ that our sin debt was/is paid. "Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins {literally because of the remission of sins; baptism cannot and does not save} and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost." {Acts 2:38} "And the times of this ignorance God winked at; but now commandeth all men every where to repent:" {Acts 17:30} Salvation is an act of God, by grace "For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast." {Ephesians 2:8-9}, and there is nothing, **absolutely nothing**, that we can do to earn it. "Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain conversation received by tradition from your fathers; But with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot: Who verily was foreordained before the foundation of the world, but was manifest in these last times for you, Who by him do believe in God, that raised him up from the dead, and gave him glory; that your faith and hope might be in God." {1 Peter 1:18-21}

Who then is a Christian, a true, Scriptural Christian? Living a good life, being born in America, doing good works, church membership, baptism, giving to charity, what the leader of some religious order says; **NONE** of these makes a person a Christian. The **ONLY** thing that makes a person a Christian is when one who has repented of their sin and, by faith alone in the shed blood of Jesus Christ, have received Him as their personal Saviour. Putting on a white jacket and hanging a stethoscope around the neck does not make a man or woman a doctor; they must go to school and receive the proper training. In like manner, no one becomes a Christian until they have repented of their sin and been cleansed in the blood of Jesus Christ. God said it and that settles it; people of the world just need to believe it.

Friend, do **YOU** personally know my Jesus as your personal Saviour? Are you absolutely sure? If not, then I most sincerely encourage you to bow your head in prayer and ask Him to come into your heart and save you. You may know without a doubt that God will forgive and save you, because He said He would. "For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved." {Romans 10:13} "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life." {John 3:16} "And this is the record, that God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. He that hath the Son hath life; and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life. These things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God; that ye may know that ye have eternal life, and that ye may believe on the name of the Son of God." {1 John 5:11-13} Please, whoever you are, wherever you are, repent of your sin and trust Jesus Christ as your personal Saviour today; do not delay for you are only a heartbeat away from eternity.

For those who know Jesus Christ as personal Saviour, it is so important to read God's Word daily and to spend time in prayer. It is also important to seek a good, fundamental Baptist Gospel preaching church, and attend it regularly to help you grow spiritually, and to have fellowship with believers of like faith.

--Richard A. Ciarrocca©2016

All Scripture references are KJV