

Definition of a Christian



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Jesus said that there would be very few real, true Christians in the closing days. *Luke 17:26 "As it was in the days of Noah, so it will be also in the days of the Son of Man."* They were going about the usual routine of living when *27 "the flood came, and destroyed them all."* Only eight who really believed God and were saved from the flood. By that act of obedience to God, they escaped death by drowning, and it made Noah a righteous man.

Hebrews 11:7 "By faith Noah, being warned of God of things not seen as yet, moved with fear, prepared an ark to the saving of his house; by the which he condemned the world, and became heir of the righteousness which is by faith." That statement eliminates every excuse we could have.

Anyone is qualified to receive the same spiritual blessings people received in the Bible; and if they do not receive them, they have no excuse. If one person could receive those blessings, then everyone could receive them. It is good to be rid of all excuses concerning any lack or failure we encounter. Excuses may pass on earth, but they will never pass in eternity—they are like counterfeit bills after leaving this world.

There is no excuse when the Word has spoken clearly. *Matthew 22:11-13 "When the king came in to see the guests, he saw a man there who did not have on a wedding garment. So he said to him, 'Friend, how did you come in here without a wedding garment?' And he was*

speechless. Then the king said to the servants, 'Bind him hand and foot, take him away, and cast him into outer darkness; there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.'"

Satan manufactures excuses, and the man could have had a few for why he was not ready, or why his faith had faltered, but when it came to the next life, they do not pass. Noah eliminated every excuse—*Hebrews 11:7 "By the which he condemned the world, and became heir of the righteousness which is by faith."* Noah believed God, and his actions proved that he trusted Him for protection from drowning. This trusting faith in God made him spiritually right with God.

Jesus asked if He would find many people receiving answers to prayer, as the widow received the answer from the judge. Jesus said *Luke 18:1-5 "There was in a city a judge, which feared not God, neither regarded man: And there was a widow in that city; and she came unto him, saying, Avenge me of mine adversary. And he would not for a while: but afterward he said within himself, Though I fear not God, nor regard man; Yet because this widow troubleth me, I will avenge her, lest by her continual coming she weary me."*

Jesus then applies this parable to us—*Luke 18:6-8 "Hear what the unjust judge saith. And shall not God avenge his own elect, which cry day and night unto him, though he bear long with them? I tell you that he will avenge them speedily. Nevertheless when the Son of man cometh, shall he find faith on the earth?"* Or, will He find people receiving answers to prayer and getting their victories by persevering in faith and steadfast trust on God alone?

The fact that there are so few who will trust God to the end, makes our spiritual interests of the greatest importance. Heaven is such a magnificent and glorious place; and Hell is such a

horrible and repulsive place, that it is critical to not only *know* what it means to be a true Christian, but most importantly to live it every day.

Three things define a Christian—*First*, a new birth—being born again with a humble and submissive attitude of trust on the living God. *John 3:5-6* Jesus said—*"Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God. That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit."*

The conditions of a rebirth are clear *1 John 1:9 "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness."* That is a new birth, and a real confession always brings that result. When we confess and forsake all past sins, and we believe on the authority of that Word that we are forgiven and cleansed of all sins, *then* we are truly born again.

To not believe that we are forgiven and cleansed is to believe the devil who wants to condemn and accuse us. God's Word is always true and says—*"He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness."* We will not have a clean heart until we truly believe that—and then *continue* to believe it. A clean heart is the basis of true faith in Christ.

Millions, who profess faith in God, think that if someone has a born again experience, they are sure to make Heaven. They say that it does not make any difference what happens after that experience—they will enter Heaven simply because they were born again—citing *John 3:3*.

Jesus did not say that everyone who was born again would enter Heaven. He gave that as a first, and very important, step. There are qualifications for being President, but just because we are a natural born citizen of the coun-

try, does not guarantee reaching the presidency. It depends entirely on what happens after our birth, whether we become President or not.

Second condition for eternal life is a total commitment of our life, and submission of our will, to God. *Romans 12:1* "I beseech [plead] you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service." We belong to God by creation and purchase; He is the only One who has the right to say what we should, or should not do.

With anything that we own, we are the one to say how it is used—that is *our* prerogative, and it is *God's* prerogative to say how we are to live our life. It is not simply because He *wants* someone to obey Him, but He knows that if we do not submit to Him, then we submit to Satan—which allows him will get possession of us, rob us of everything we could have in this life, and land us in Hell with him.

An uncompromising surrender to the will of God is for our spiritual benefit; and it is an absolute necessity. God is not able to do anything for us spiritually, and He certainly cannot prepare us for Heaven, until we are fully surrendered to Him. This commitment to God means that we are willing to meet the circumstances of life as the New Testament teaches. *That* is the definition of a Scriptural life—and *that* is the definition of a Christian.

We do not always know all of God's will at first, and He does not condemn anyone who does not know His complete will at first, but everyone is responsible for one thing—to have an attitude that is willing to obey the Word as we know it, and at that moment. God does not ask us to do anything in our own strength, or by our own ability, but when we are surrendered to Him, He gives us the power to obey His Word, and to meet things as His Word says.

The *Blood* of Christ on the cross is the value paid; the *power* of God is the means; and the *words* of Scripture are the directions to obey. We can be very comfortable about this; we are responsible for the surrender of our will, and that commitment to God must be without compromise or negotiation—it is to be unchangeable.

If we do not make an absolute surrender, and we allow ourselves even the slightest privilege to disobey the Word, or to do something different than what it says, we will do it. Obedience to God's Word is not possible, if we allow or tolerate any rebellion in our heart. A complete surrender means absolute subjection to God. For our commitment to be successful, we must not leave any loophole for Satan to tempt us, which could lead us away from the Word, and rob us of God's blessings.

If we are willing to *obey* God in just the things that suit us, but to *disobey* Him in other areas, the devil will supply all the excuses, and will convince us that God does not require us to obey the Word. If we allow ourselves the license of not meeting things right, we will simply not meet them right, and which could land us in the flames forever—if not recognized as rebellion and corrected. *Luke 13:3* "Unless you repent you will all likewise perish."

Our surrender to the will of God must be complete—it is a continuing sacrifice. All too many people are offended when they are treated unfairly, or are insulted by a careless remark. If they were surrendered to God's will correctly, they would rejoice and not complain about such things.

The apostles were severely beaten for teaching in the Name of Jesus, but went home praising God for the privilege of suffering because of His Name. The disciples taught God's Truth, but the religious leaders opposed them.

Acts 5:40-41 "When they had called for the apostles and beaten them, they commanded that they should not speak in the name of Jesus, and let them go. So they departed from the presence of the council, rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer shame for His name."

It should be our highest ambition to meet every test in God's way; it should be our greatest delight to respond in a scriptural way to everything and anything encountered. When we know how valuable that is in this life, and that it can lead us to eternal life forever, it will be our only pursuit of life. We will immediately, automatically think, *What does God say about this? How can I meet it according to His will and Word?*

If we are not fully surrendered to God, we will complain and be upset when we are offended by someone. But if we are totally committed to God, we will praise Him and glorify His Name for giving us the privilege of meeting such a thing—which will search our heart and give evidence that we are a true believer, a bona fide Christian, and a follower of Christ.

We will instantly and immediately praise God for the test, even though it might not come in a very pleasant or nice looking package, but we will know that the Lord has a spiritual blessing in it for us, and that He is just preparing us for His eternal kingdom. *That* is the definition of a Christian.



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