

What is the Christian?...the Issue

Like many terms people use today, the meanings of yesteryear has been discarded and evolved into something totally different. In the religious world, such terms as “church”, “Christians”, “baptism”, “faith”, and singing are sorely misused and abused.

In this series of lessons, I intend to explain the issues that arise when we, as Christians, use these terms in the same manner as the world.

Specifically, in this series I will address the use of the term

“Christian”.

The Concern

- Christ established the mission for the Christian and the Church. Luke 9:56 says, **“For the Son of man is not come to destroy men’s lives, but to save them. And they went to another village.”**
 - He spent His life with that mission, so why should His people confuse the issue?
 - Why would we allow others to deceive and be deceived in thinking they were “Christians”, knowing that they are LOST!
 - Are we not confusing the mission of Christ? Are we not leaving souls, who think they are saved, as lost souls as they face death?

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- Classic Example: Someone mentions that friends were Christians.
 - Correct response: “Oh? Where do they attend?” Their response: “They attend the Baptist church. (or some other)”. Our response: “How then are they Christians? Did they follow God’s plan for salvation” Are the worshipping with the saints?, etc.” Their reply: “Well Christians with them were those who “believe” in Christ, and go to church somewhere. My friends “loved the Lord”, and “worshipped Him in ‘church’”, whichever that was.” Then sometimes a parent will say, “Sure, they’re ‘good’ people.”

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- **Are all “good” people Christians?**
 - Good people should be Christians, but they aren’t necessarily.
 - Mt. 19:7 – Jesus was cautious of being called “good”, and He was! But He defined His Father as being GOOD!
 - People may be better than others, but that is still not “GOOD” as God is Good. They may have some good morals or qualities about them, but they can’t be classified as “good”. Sin is still in their lives.
 - They can’t be “good” since they haven’t obeyed Christ’s teachings/commands. Mt. 7:21
 - John 14:15 – So do they really “LOVE” the Lord?
 - There are guidelines and other terms that are more befitting perhaps:

Which Term Fits?

- Alien sinner: Defined by two words: Alien and Sinner.
 - Alien: simply means foreign, and in this use would be foreign to Christ and His Kingdom, from another land.
 - Sinner: means that the person has sin in their life. They haven't been forgiven and set free, John 8:32. So, officially, they are **LOST!**
- Perfection: This term would imply a life that is perfect, without sin! This person would not be worthy of death, Rom. 6:23.
 - Christ could claim this fact, and Acts 2:24 said He was not "holden of death" meaning worthy of death. God raised him from the dead confirming this fact.

Which Term Fits?

- Hypocrite: This is a person who can point out sin in the lives of others, but then commits the sins themselves. Lk. 6:42 They “talk the talk but not walk the walk”.
- Christian: Grammatically, the term is “Christ-like”. Biblically, it is one that follows and imitates Christ by obeying His teachings. These were first known as “disciples” which means a follower. Acts 11:26. He is God’s Man, Eph. 1:3-15. I will discuss this term to much more detail throughout this study.
- Erring Christian – Withdrawn: This person followed God’s plan for forgiveness, through baptism, but then returns to the sinful lifestyle he enjoyed beforehand. Eventually, IF he doesn’t repent and return to God in obedience, he should be withdrawn from by the church, and counted as worse than the infidel. They may be rebellious when the subject of their sins are confronted. Though they had hope of Heaven for their eternal home, they are now lost, because of their unrepented sins. (illus. child) We cease ties with them except for teaching and admonishment.

The Dangers that Occur!

- Everyone falls in one of two groups. (1)the Alien Sinner/lost, and (2) the Christian/ should be saved, Acts. 2:40-47.
 - We must note here that there are variations of both groups:
 - ie. there are Alien sinners that actually do many good works according to God's definition of what is good. But they are still lost due to their sins. All of these are guilty of some form of idolatry, because this sinful like is more important that obeying God. So whatever that sin is, it is that person's god.
 - Christians have obeyed God's plan for salvation: (1)Faith-involves hearing and believing, leading one to obey, Rom. 10:17; 1:16,17, 10:9-10. (2)Repentance – the ability to change the mindset of following the world, satisfying oneself, and turn back to listening and obey God – in ALL things. We then serve God, and being the man God created us to be. At this point, we are still with our sins, guilty and worthy of death! Rom. 6:23. (3) Confession– We are acknowledging Christ as the Son of God, and confessing we will live by His teachings and directions, to be like Him, and His service to His Father. He is my mentor. Still with sin though. (4) Baptism– This is the point in which sins are removed, forgiven, and forgotten by God, Acts 2:38! 3,000 did on that day, vs. 41. Vs. 47, these should be saved. There was a condition in vs. 42-46, to continue in the doctrine and fellowship. Within that doctrine, 1 John 1:9, there is another law of pardon. We, as Christians, must remain without sin. Some will not, and must be withdrawn from.

The Dangers that Occur!

- Everyone falls in one of two groups. (1)the Alien Sinner/lost, and (2) the Christian/ should be saved, Acts. 2:40-47.
- With this in mind, understand the confusion of calling people who did not follow God's plan of salvation, not obeying God, not being baptized as He has instructed, a "CHRISTIAN". The person cannot be, for they haven't met the requirements. SO, they will be lost as Alien sinners.
 - Now, as a Christian declaring the alien sinner a "Christian", one must question if you knew what you were doing as you wen through the actions to become a Christian. Did you have the faith to enable the blood to "wash away your sins" in baptism? Mark 16:16 times the faith to the baptism, and without that faith, you are not baptized, just wet, so you are still condemned.
 - For certain, that sinner is lost, not a Christian, thus not saved. They may accept your testimony and NEVER obey the gospel, the plan of salvation, and all because of your assessment of that person. Note Isaiah 5:20, and herein is the danger for all parties.