

God's Definition of a Christian

Acts 11:19-26

Introduction

- God's people described and called a number of names in the New Testament:
 - Believers → Acts 5:14
 - Saints → Acts 9:13
 - Brethren → Acts 10:23
 - Disciples → Acts 6:1,7; 11:26

Introduction

- “Christian” – three places in the New Testament:
 - Acts 26:28 → Then Agrippa said unto Paul, Almost thou persuadest me to be a ***Christian***.
 - I Pet. 4:16 → Yet if *any man suffer* as a ***Christian***, let him not be ashamed; but let him glorify God on this behalf.
 - Acts 11:26 → And the disciples were called ***Christians*** first in Antioch.

Introduction

- The term “Christian” is given different meanings depending on who you ask:
 - A decent, respectable person
 - A believer in Jesus as the Son of God
 - Others as an adjective: nation, school, culture, etc.
- The only definition that matters is God’s.
 - It is His word – He is the one who gave it.
 - We must look to His word.

God's Definition Of A Christian

- A Christian is one who has heard, believed and obeyed the preaching of the Lord Jesus. (Acts 11:20)
 - Gospel preaching produces Christians. (Mk. 16:15-16; Matt. 28:18-19)
 - The effect of God's word in an honest and good heart. (Lk. 8:11,15)
 - Faith. (Acts 18:8; Rom. 10:17)
 - Repentance. (Acts 2:37-38)
 - Confession. (Rom. 10:9-10)
 - Baptism. (Acts 8:12, 35-36)

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- I Pet. 4:16-17 → Yet if *any man suffer* as a Christian, let him not be ashamed; but let him glorify God on this behalf. For the time *is come* that judgment must begin at the house of God: and if *it first begin* at us, what shall the end *be* of them that obey not the gospel of God?
- II Thess. 1:8-9 → 8 In flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ: 9 Who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power;

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- A Christian is one who has turned to the Lord.
(Acts 11:21)
 - The response of the good and honest heart to the gospel is a life that takes a new direction.
 - “Turn” summarizes the proper response of faith in conversion. (Matt. 13:15; Acts 9:35; Acts 3:19; 14:15; 26:18, 20; Js. 5:19; II Pet. 2:21)
 - The Christian does not keep going in the same direction after conversion. (I Cor. 6:9-11; Eph. 4:25-32)
 - The turn must be to the Lord.

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- A Christian Is One Who Has Received The Grace of God. (Acts 11:23)
 - Grace: not an irresistible force, but God's unmerited loving favor that made provisions for the salvation of sinners.
 - The grace of God:
 - Has appeared to all men. (Titus 2:11-12)
 - By the grace of God, Jesus died for all. (Heb. 2:9)
 - Salvation is by grace, but not grace alone. (Eph. 2:8; Matt. 7:13-14)
 - Grace does not exclude conditions. (Heb. 5:8-9)

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- A Christian is one who cleaves to the Lord. (Acts 11:23)
 - Purpose of heart → The life of a Christian is purposed life with a determination to cleave to the Lord.
 - Purpose: life is intentional, has direction.
 - Life that is lived every day recognizing who we are, our accountability to God, and striving to follow the example of Christ, with heaven always in sight as the eternal goal.
 - The determination of a Christian is to cleave (remain loyal to the Lord)
 - Not distracted by the things of this world. (Lk. 8:14)
 - Not losing heart by disappointment, suffering, etc. (Rom. 8:18)
 - Not drawn away by the lure of Satan. (Js. 4:7-8)
 - Regardless of what others may do. (Jn. 6:66-69)
 - One can fail to remain with the Lord and be lost. (Jn. 15:6)

God's Definition of a Christian

- A Christian is one who has been added to the Lord.
(Acts 11:24)
 - When one becomes a Christian the Lord adds that one to his spiritual body, the church.
 - Acts 2:47 → And the Lord added to the church daily such as should be (who were being saved -- NET)
 - Eph. 5:23 → For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church: and he is the saviour of the body.
 - Eph. 1:22-23 → And hath put all *things* under his feet, and gave him *to be* the head over all *things* to the church, 23 Which is his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all.
 - Eph. 4:4 → *There is* one body, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling;

Acts 11:19-26

19 Now they which were scattered abroad upon the persecution that arose about Stephen travelled as far as Phenice, and Cyprus, and Antioch, preaching the word to none but unto the Jews only. 20 And some of them were men of Cyprus and Cyrene, which, when they were come to Antioch, spake unto the Grecians, preaching the Lord Jesus. 21 And the hand of the Lord was with them: and a great number believed, and turned unto the Lord. 22 Then tidings of these things came unto the ears of the church which was in Jerusalem: and they sent forth Barnabas, that he should go as far as Antioch. 23 Who, when he came, and had seen the grace of God, was glad, and exhorted them all, that with purpose of heart they would cleave unto the Lord. 24 For he was a good man, and full of the Holy Ghost and of faith: and much people was added unto the Lord. 25 Then departed Barnabas to Tarsus, for to seek Saul: 26 And when he had found him, he brought him unto Antioch. And it came to pass, that a whole year they assembled themselves with the church, and taught much people. **And the disciples were called Christians first in Antioch.**