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## Am I a Christian? Does It Really Matter?

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Without a doubt, there are many people today that call themselves “Christians,” but are no closer to Christ than the demons were in the book of James; “***You believe that there is one God. You do well. Even the demons believe – and tremble***” (Jas 2:19)! Believing in God or Christ does not make one a Christian. The vast majority of Bible-believing, God-fearing, Jesus-loving people are no more saved and no more “Christ-like” than many in our Lord's day who were accused (and rightfully so) by Jesus of “***drawing nigh with their mouth, and honoring with their lips; but their heart is far from me.***” Their problem was the same problem that plagues many today from becoming New Testament Christians according to God's direction; His Word. Those that Jesus condemned were worshiping Him in vain “***teaching for doctrines the commandments of men***” (Mt 15:8-9).

When one consults their home dictionaries, they will find that most of the time the word “Christian” is defined as “*one that believes in Jesus as the Christ*” or something similar. On occasion, you will find “*one that follows the teachings of Christ.*” The latter definition is closer to what the word “Christian” really means

The word “Christian” is found just three times in the New Testament. Though the life and labors of Christians can be found throughout Scripture, the word “Christian” that describes “followers of Jesus” are few. We first find the word in Acts 11:26 to describe those that followed the example and teachings of Jesus the Christ, “***And the disciples were called Christians first in Antioch.***” When the apostle Paul gave his defense before King Agrippa, his words were almost convincing enough to cause the King to become a disciple of Jesus as well. King Agrippa told Paul “***Almost thou persuadest me to be a Christian***” (Acts 26:28). Later, as the apostle Peter would encourage the saints that were under many trials and persecutions, Peter would tell them, “***if any man suffer as a Christian, let him not be ashamed; but let him glorify God on this behalf***” (1 Pet 4:16).

These three places are where the word Christian is found. The title is to be worn by those who have heard and believe the Word of God concerning Jesus and salvation

that comes only through or by Him (Rom 10:17; Acts 4:12). Those that repent of their sins (Lk 13:3; Acts 2:3ff, 17:30) confess that Jesus is Lord (Mt 10:32-33; Acts 8:37) and turn to the precious blood of Jesus to redeem them and wash them white as snow (Rom 6:3-4, 23; 1 Per 1:18-19; 1 Jn 2:2, 4:10; Isa 1:18).

Wearing the name “Christian” is so much more than a desire to be associated with Jesus. This name is to be worn by those that are willing disciples, having entered into a covenant relationship with the Lord through obeying the Gospel. Have YOU followed the Lord's teaching concerning the salvation of your soul and the right to wear His name? Please consider the following:

<u>CHURCH</u>	<u>PLACE OF ORIGIN</u>	<u>YEAR</u>	<u>FOUNDER</u>
church of Christ	Jerusalem	33	Jesus
Roman Catholic	Rome, Italy	606	Boniface III
Lutheran	Augsburg, Germany	1530	Martin Luther
Presbyterian	Switzerland	1535	John Calvin
Baptist	Holland	1607	John Smyth
Methodist	London, England	1729	John Wesley
Jehovah's Witnesses	Pennsylvania	1803	Charles T. Russell

Are you a Christian? Does it really matter if you belong to a man-made religious organization or the Lord's church found in the Bible? Though Jesus gave His life for the whole world, He only purchased ONE church with His blood (Acts 20:28). Won't you be a member of the blood-bought church that Jesus built (Mt 16:18), add the saved to (Acts 2:47), wears His name (Rom 16:16) and will one day bring to Heaven to live for all eternity (1 Thes 4:16-17)?