

WHO IS A CHRISTIAN?

INTRODUCTION:

- A. "Christian" 3 times in N T Acts 11:26; 26:28: 1Pet 4:16
- B. Noble and honorable to wear name of Christ Jas 2:5-7
 - 1. Name rich blaspheming, no doubt, was name of Christ.
 - 2. The name by which they were called was "Christian."
- C. Christian, more than baptized person, church member, or weekly worshiper - many counterfeits, few real Jhn 8:31

DISCUSSION:

I. ORIGIN OF NAME "CHRISTIAN"

- A. God promised to give a "new name." Isa 62:1-2
 - 1. It would not be an old name with new significance.
 - 2. Given when Gentiles see righteousness of Zion.
 - 3. Mouth of Lord give name - not by enemies.
- B. To be given "within my house." Isa 56:5
 - 1. God's house is the church. 1Tim 3:15
 - 2. Unscriptural to call one a Christian not in church
- C. Be an "everlasting name"; it was to last forever.

II. MEANING AND USE OF NAME "CHRISTIAN"

- A. "Follower of Christ" (Thayer); "Adherent of Christ" (Vine)
- B. Use of the name "Christian."
 - 1. No hyphenated as "Baptist or Methodist-Christian"
 - 2. No "conservative Christian" or "liberal Christian."
 - 3. Lord never prefixed or suffixed the name Christian.
 - 4. "Christian" a noun, not an adjective! Yet tacked on many things: home, school, college, Sabbath, etc.
 - a. Term "Christian Atheist." used: if good moral Atheist, was Christian Atheist
 - b. Talk about Jewish Christians - can't be both
 - 5. If you can't scripturally baptize it, not a Christian.

III. WHO ARE NOT CHRISTIANS?

- A. Those not in God's family, the church.
 - 1. Can wear name even though not entitled to do so.
 - 2. Example: call yourself "Jones" when not in family.
 - a. It is a name assumed rather than assigned.
 - b. Identity thieves steal name & identity of another.
 - c. Abraham Lincoln ask: "If call cow's tail a leg, how many legs does she have?" Most said five "No, four, calling tail a leg doesn't make it one!"
 - d. Calling one a Christian does not make him one!
- B. Not all "good" people are Christians.
 - 1. Morality required, but does not make Christian.
 - 2. Nicodemus good man had to be born again Jhn 3:1-5
 - 3. Cornelius had to hear words to be saved. Acts 11:14

- C. Not all "religious" people are Christians.
 - 1. Some heathens are religious. Acts 17:22
 - 2. Paul held to what was false. Acts 26:5,9
 - 3. Two kinds of religion, pure & defiled. Jas 1:26-27
- D. Not all "church" members are Christians.
 - 1. Joining or attending church doesn't make Christian
 - 2. Many in "church of Christ" not Christians Jhn 8:31

IV. WHO ARE CHRISTIANS?

- A. Wearing name "American" involves duty (upholding constitution, obeying laws, good citizenship, etc. Not disobey laws, burn flag, etc. - call these un-American.
- B. Wearing name "Christian" involves life of duty to Christ.
- C. Christian something one IS, not just something called.
- D. A Christian is one who has obeyed the gospel.
 - 1. Person who is "in Christ" is a Christian.
 - 2. Baptized "into Christ" to be "in Christ" Gal 3:26-27

V. QUESTIONS TO SEE IF WE ARE CHRISTIANS

- A. Have I obeyed gospel? Not Christian if not put on Christ
- B. Did I obey gospel from conviction or convenience? Rom 6:17 If for family, prestige, etc., no conviction.
- C. Willing to suffer as Christian? 1Pet 4:16; Heb 10:32-34
 - 1. One willing to suffer for something has conviction.
 - 2. One unwilling to suffer for Christ not a Christian.
- D. Am I separated from world in recreation, language, conduct, apparel? Rom 12:2; 1Jhn 2:15-17
- E. Am I truly devoted to Christ?
 - 1. Do I love brethren, or have no time Jhn 13:34-35
 - 2. Do I attend services as little or as many? Heb 10:25
 - 3. Do I give liberally or miserly? or give leftovers?
- F. Am I truly interested in leading others to Christ? He came to seek & save lost, we follow Him 1Pet 2:21
- G. Do I appreciate strong preaching?
 - 1. Am I offended when the Bible condemns my sins?
 - 2. What is my reaction when error is exposed? Gal 4:16; Jhn 6:66
- H. Am I growing in the faith? 2Pet 1:5-8
 - 1. Am I concerned about my spiritual development and that of my family?
 - 2. We must "glorify God in this name." 1Pet 4:10-11

CONCLUSION:

- A. When spirit leaves body, important question will not be:
 - 1. Was he rich, a great athlete, scholar...?
 - 2. But rather, "Was he (she) a Christian?"
- B. Are we really Christians, or just wearing the name?
- C. You can become a Christian today?

From Austin Mobley; reworked by David Riggs (further modified by JLH)