

# Want to be a Christian?

Isaiah 57:15

**What's that?** You say you are already a Christian. Why not take a Bible test to see the truth as to whether or not you are a Christian? If you answer all the following questions "yes," then you are a Christian as the Bible uses the term. If you answer any of the questions "no," you have not done what Bible people did to become a Christian:

- Have you **heard** that Jesus fulfilled God's promise to bless all nations with the forgiveness of sins through His sacrifice on the cross (cf. Gen. 12:1ff; Gal. 3:8, 16; Col. 1:20-22; Heb. 9:22)?
- Do you **believe** this message of truth (Jn. 8:24; Rom. 10:17; Heb. 11:6)?
- Have you **confessed** that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the Living God (Matt. 16:16; Rom. 10:9)?
- Have you **repented** of your sins (Lk. 13:3; Acts 17:30)?
- Have you been **baptized** for the remission of your sins (Acts 2:38; 22:16; I Pet. 3:20-22 comp. to Heb. 10:1-2)?
- Are you currently **remaining faithful** to the Lord by keeping His commandments (Jn. 8:31; 15:10; Titus 3:8; Rev. 2:10)?

Did you answer "No" to any of the above questions? Remember, all religious ideas can only have the inspired Word of God as their source. If you say that you have done all the above, except for being baptized for the remission of your sins, then you still have sin. To say that you are "OK" with God without baptism is to "seek a righteousness of your own" (Phil. 3:9).

Let's take a **closer look** at "hearing, believing, confessing, repenting, baptism, and remaining faithful."

- **HEARING:** You and I would know nothing of Christ's saving sacrifice if it were not for the gospel (which is known as the **truth** / cf. Eph. 1:13). The gospel sends forth a call through instructions (II Thess. 2:13-14), and those humble enough to consider their eternity will give an ear to listen (cf. Jn. 6:44-45).
- **Believing:** Some may claim faith (belief); however, Jesus tells us who the true believers are at John 3:16 and 3:36. **Truth** is the subject to be believed and obeyed (I Jn. 5:1f)!
- **Confession:** To say that Jesus is Lord is more than a verbal confession; it is a life that illustrates one's faith in **truth** (read in this order: cf. I Jn. 4:2-3; 3:9-10; 5:1-3; 2:23; II Jn. 9). The author of Hebrews tells us of those whose faith was made evident by their obedient acts (cf. Heb. 11:1ff).
- **Repentance:** To turn away from ungodly living means that one is convicted of wrong doing by **truth** (II Cor. 7:8-10).
- **Baptism:** The act of submerging one under water removes sin (compare Matt. 26:26 with Acts 2:38). Without the removal of sin one cannot be "in Christ" (Gal. 3:27), neither shall he ever have eternal fellowship with God (I Jn. 1:5ff).
- **Living Faithfully:** Christians can lose their salvation by neglect and disobedience (Rom. 2:13; I Cor. 6:9-11; Gal. 5:4, 19-21; Heb. 4:1-3).

## Bible Examples of People becoming Christians

Would you agree that the best way to determine how to become a Christian is not only to see what the Bible says about the subject of salvation but to also look at examples of men and women becoming Christians? I'm sure you agree with this.

The Bible gives many examples of how men and women became Christians. Why not do what they did to become a Christian instead of making up a new way? The book of Acts (Book of Conversions) examines 19 cases of people becoming Christians. Each of these cases involves the "preaching of Jesus" (example / read Acts 8:35). Preaching Jesus meant that the preacher told the lost person that he / she needed to hear, believe, confess, repent, be baptized, and remain faithful. Let us now examine some case studies:

- Crispus and many of the Corinthians "**heard** the gospel, **believed**, and were **baptized**" (cf. Acts 18:8).
- Paul preached in Rome (Acts 28:23ff) and apparently many **confessed** the name of Christ (Rom. 10:9).
- Peter preached to the Jews in Jerusalem on Pentecost telling them to **repent** and be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of their sins (Acts 2:38).
- The result of Philip's preaching in Samaria was that many believed and were baptized (Acts 8:5-6; 12-13). Simon was baptized for the remission of his sins as well; however, in time he sinned. Peter rebuked Simon and told him, "Repent therefore of this thy wickedness, and pray the Lord, if perhaps the thought of thy heart shall be forgiven thee" (Acts 8:22). Clearly, God intends for the Christian to **remain faithful** to Him (cf. I Jn. 1:9).

Please see that God did not demand something of one group of people that He did not from another. All converts heard, believed, confessed Christ's name, repented of sins, were baptized for the remission of sins, and lived faithfully. God requests no more or less of His people today.

**Concluding Thoughts:** Many today call themselves "Baptists," "Methodists," "Catholics," "Lutherans," or "Pentecostal" in addition to the name Christian. Can any such one find a "Methodist Christian," "Baptist Christian" and so forth in the Bible? Can we not see that the Methodists, Baptists, Catholics, Lutherans, Pentecostals (and so forth) all represent different doctrines? What do you say when reading passages like (Jn. 17:17, 20-21; I Cor. 1:10; Eph. 4:1ff; Phil. 1:27; 2:2; II Jn. 9 etc.)? God has revealed a standard by which man will be judged and that standard is the gospel message (cf. Jn. 5:48; Rom. 2:16; Eph. 4:4-5). Why not simply be a New Testament Christian?

## What did people in the Bible do to be Saved?

People	Preacher "preached Jesus"	Date	Conditions of Salvation Preached
Jews in Jerusalem	Acts 2:22ff	29 AD	Peter preached repentance and baptism
Samaritans	Acts 8:5	34 AD	Philip preached baptism
Simon	Acts 8:12	34 AD	Philip preached baptism
Ethiopian Eunuch	Acts 8:35	34 AD	Philip preached baptism
Saul of Tarsus	Acts 9:17; 22:16	35 AD	Ananias preached baptism
Cornelius	Acts 10:36ff	40 AD	Peter preached faith and baptism
Sergius Paulus	Acts 13:12	45 AD	Faith
The Galatians	Acts 13:26	46 AD	Paul preached faith (Acts 13:39) and baptism (Gal. 3:27)
Lydia	Acts 16:14	50 AD	Paul, Silas, Luke, and Timothy preached baptism
The Philippian Jailer	Acts 16:31	50 AD	Paul and Silas preached faith, repentance, and baptism
The Thessalonians	Acts 17:3	51 AD	Paul preached faith
The Bereans	Acts 17:13	51 AD	Paul preached faith
The Athenians	Acts 17:18	51 AD	Paul preached repentance
The Corinthians	Acts 18:5-8	51 AD	Paul preached hearing, believing, and baptism
Crispus	Acts 18:5-8	51 AD	Paul preached hearing, believing, and baptism
Apollos	Acts 18:26	54 AD	Pricilla and Aquila preached baptism
Disciples of John the Baptist	Acts 19:1-5	54 AD	Paul preached faith and baptism
Ephesians	Acts 19:8-10 Eph. 1:13	55 AD	Paul preached hearing, believing, and baptism (Eph. 4:4-5)
Romans	Acts 28:23-24	60 AD	Paul preached hearing, believing, confessing Christ, repentance, baptism and faithful living.

Who can deny that the above preachers preached a consistent message of salvation and the conditions thereof to all the above examples? The conditions of salvation, according to the Bible, are hearing, believing, confession, repentance, baptism, and faithful living.