

# How To Become A Christian

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## HOW TO BECOME A CHRISTIAN

The name "Christian" is loosely used in our day and age for it is often applied to movements and organizations which have absolutely nothing to do with the true religion of Jesus Christ. This is regrettable because it cheapens "that worthy name" by which we are called (Jas. 2:7). To some, almost anyone qualifies to be called a Christian. If people believe in God or merely accept Jesus as a real historical figure, some would argue that they are surely Christians. But are they? Or does it take something more than this to be a Christian?

How does one become a Christian? Perhaps some find this question offensive because it implies that all men are not necessarily Christians and need to become one. It also implies that a person should not automatically assume he is a Christian without first examining himself by the divine standard, the New Testament! When the question is asked, "How does one become a Christian?", is this a scriptural question? Certainly it is, for King Agrippa said in Acts 26:28, "Paul, Almost thou persuadest me to be a Christian." You see, Agrippa was not a Christian and needed to become one. Furthermore, he knew he was not a Christian and that Paul was trying to persuade him to become one! Thus, a discussion of how to become a Christian is certainly a scriptural topic and should be one of the utmost importance to each of us.

Sometimes in trying to determine the true identity of something, it is helpful to first understand what that something is not. So before noticing how one becomes a Christian, let's first notice how one does not become a Christian. To begin with, one cannot become a Christian by inheritance. Simply because one's parents or ancestors were Christians does not in and of itself make one a Christian. A person could be raised in a Christian home or be brought up in a so-called "Christian nation" and still not be a Christian himself. Every man must "prove his own work" (Gal. 6:4) and render obedience unto Christ for himself. Remember this: God has no grandchildren! Salvation does not come by inheritance. Also, one does not become a Christian through faith alone. The case of King Agrippa proves that faith only, or mere mental assent to certain facts, does not make one a Christian. According to Paul in Acts 26:27, the King believed the prophets' testimony in regard to Christ, but this fact alone did not constitute him a Christian. Even King Agrippa understood that he needed to become a Christian, for "faith, if it hath not works, is dead, being alone" (Jas. 2:17). Neither does one become a Christian by denominational dogma. When one listens to the Gospel of Christ and obeys it, what does he become? Why, a Christian, of course. If he is permitted to remain as he is, what will he be? Without doubt he will still be just a Christian in any other way. It takes only the pure Gospel of Christ to become a Christian. Hence, if you are anything less or more than a Christian, it must be because you have obeyed something less or more than the word of God!

How does one become a Christian? It is through complete and faithful obedience to Christ. Let's notice the other two passages of Scripture where the name Christian is found to help us see what a New Testament Christian is: Acts 11:26 says, "And the disciples were called Christians first in Antioch." Here we learn

that to be a Christian is to be a disciple or follower of Christ. A true disciple, as these were in Antioch, is a learner who puts into practice what he learns. Jesus said in John 8:31, "If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed." It is to be an obedient disciple. Then we read in I Pet. 4:16 (ASV), "If a man suffer as a Christian, let him not be ashamed; but let him glorify God in this name." Here we learn that a Christian is one who has identified himself with Christ and is willing to share in the "persecution for the cross of Christ" (Gal. 6:12). Simply put, one becomes a Christian by faithfully obeying and following the teachings of Christ. We must hear the Gospel, Rom. 10:17. We must place our faith in Christ, John 3:18. We are to repent of our sins, Lk. 13:3. We are to confess Christ before others, Matt. 10:32. And we must be baptized as the Lord commanded, Mk. 16:16. After obeying the Gospel, if we wish to remain His faithful disciples, we must continue steadfastly in the Apostles' doctrine, Acts 2:42. If you are not a Christian, become one today! Submit yourself to His will and then proudly wear His name, the name divinely given for which thousands have gladly died. In the words of Jesse R. Kellems, "Oh, what delight should be ours to be counted worthy to wear that name, the name made glorious by sweat and blood and millions of noble deaths! Withered be our tongues and cursed our lips if, knowing better, we shall attempt to glorify our God in any name other than the name of "Christian."--**215 Forest Hills Dr., West Monroe, LA. 71291.**