

## What is a Christian?

Prior to his conversion, the apostle Paul was a persecutor of the church. He loved his idea of Christ, but hated Jesus whom he believed to be an imposter. It was not until he met Jesus on the road to Damascus that he began to preach that Jesus IS the Christ. This is the reason the disciples began to be called Christians. They believed and preached that Jesus of Nazareth is The Christ, the Son of the living God. Such was the saving power of the gospel they believed that the apostle John would say, “Whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ is born of God.” They are “Christians!”

A “Christian” is “born of God.” As a matter of fact, Jesus said that without this new birth no one could “enter,” or even “see the kingdom of God”. I John 3:5-7. Anyone who has been “born of God” is “born again” with a “new heart” and a “new spirit.” Ezekiel 36:26. They have, by new birth, “the mind of Christ” I Corinthians 2:16, and are “partakers of the divine nature.” II Peter 1:4.

The apostle gives two more absolute truths about “Christians” (those who are “born of God”). First he says, “Whatsoever (whosoever) is born of God overcometh the world” I John 5:4. They are “overcomers,” not by their “efforts,” but because Christ lives within them and “greater is he that is in you, than he that is in the world.” I John 4:4.

John gives a second absolute truth about a “Christian” saying, “We know that whosoever is born of God sinneth not...” I John 5:18. A “Christian” is not “also a sinner.” They have been washed from their sins in the blood of Christ. Revelation 1:5.

A “Christian” does not have two natures. That would be what a psychologist would call a “multiple personality disorder.” Our “old man” is “crucified with Christ” Romans 6:6, and the “body of sin is destroyed,” according to the truth of the gospel.

If we believe the surveys concerning the percentages of “Christians” who are also “addicted” to everything from drugs, and alcohol, to sex, pornography, and moral perversion, we lose sight of what it really means to be a “Christian.” The apostle Paul said, “Be not deceived: neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind, nor thieves, nor

covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God” I Corinthians 6:9-10. Many consider this a harsh statement, but Paul continued with the remedy, saying, “And such WERE some of you: but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God.”

Those who are “washed, sanctified, and justified” are no longer sinners. Christ came into the world to “make an end of sins” Daniel 9:24-25, and He did it, through His death on the cross, for everyone who will “trust in Christ.” Although sin resides in the heart of a sinner, those whose heart has been “purified by faith” Acts 15:9 do not sin because it is impossible to commit a sin that is not in your heart. I John 3:9. Christ shed His precious blood to “purify the heart” of everyone who will believe the gospel of Christ.

There is no “program” of the church that can take sin out of the heart of anyone, but that exactly is what Christ died to do. He is “The lamb of God which takes away the sin of the world” John 1:29, out of the heart, nature, and mind of everyone who believes the gospel. Romans 1:16.

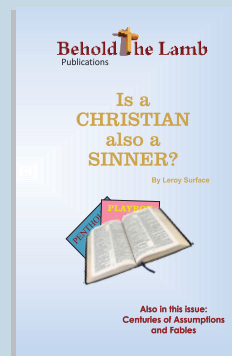
If you are one who struggles continuously with unclean thoughts by day and filthy dreams at night, your answer is not found in something “to do” but in something “to believe.” I know, because I was there at

one time. I was not “living in sin,” but sin was rampant in my thought life. I was “a sinner” who was preaching hard against sin, but had no answer. I sought God diligently for the answer, which He gave to me in understanding why Christ shed His blood for us. This was in the spring of 1991.

I was reading the passage: “How much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?” Hebrews 9:13-14. Paul compared the “blood of Christ” and the “blood of animals.” He posed the

question that if the blood of animals could purify the flesh, “How much more shall the blood of Christ...purge your conscience...?” I researched the word “conscience” in this verse, and found it to be “the innermost thoughts and imaginations of man.” I wept before God, “That’s my problem!” Weeping turned to rejoicing as the light of truth flooded my heart and soul. I cried to Jesus, “Thank you for shedding your blood to wash me inside, where I could never wash myself.” Instantly the filth was gone. It “turned off” exactly as a water faucet is turned off, and I was gloriously free, inside and out.

## Are God’s people still sinners?



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