

What and Who is a True Christian?

Fred R. Coulter—November 3, 2007

This was sparked as a result of being on the Americanvoice.com radio interview. I didn't know that they had such thing as Internet radio, which was connected with an FM station plus FM network. Being invited by Gianni De Vincent Hayes, I was happy to be able to have the occasion to do it.

A lot of questions came up, and it was quite a bit different than coming into church services where we have everything planned and laid out. But it pricked my mind to realize that we have been teaching the brethren who have been in a church for years and years, and that some of these very basic things, which if we're going to reach new people in the world, have to be covered. How did it come about that there is so much confusion in the Christian world?

Here's the e-mail that I got from Gianni:

You are wonderful. You're articulate, smooth, knowledgeable, and a great person to interview. I really appreciated you doing the show with me and do want to get you back on. How's January? That'll give me time to read the book on *Code of Jewish Law* and whatever else you send me. Thoroughly enjoyed talking to you last night. Listeners liked you, too. Thanks so much, Gianni.

Her website is called the New-World Order Disorder, and it's basically a patriot Christian-type radio station, and News with Views sponsors her. So, this prodded me to do what I need to do in getting some basic sermons for basic people who are new. What they want to know is: Who are you? And the first thing that comes up is: How many people are with you?

That's why I answered, 'We have around 1800 on the mailing list worldwide, maybe a little more than that. We figured two and a half people for every tape or CD we mail out. So, that's approximately 5000 and plus the 50,000 monthly that that hit the website.

I don't think many people realize the incredible history that's in the New Testament concerning how all this *religious confusion* started. That's what I covered in *Deceit Of Religion*. So, I want to cover:

- What is a *true* Christian?
- Who is?
- How do you know?
- *The Bible says you'll know them by their fruits.*

If you were just to see one of us walking down the street in a crowd of people, you wouldn't know that we're Christian. We don't have a sign that says, 'look everybody, I'm a Christian.' So, how do you know?

Just like the question was poised: Are Catholics Christians? *Well, God alone knows the heart!* You read the book *Fifty Years in the Church of Rome* by Charles Chiniquy. I read the whole book through, and he exposed everything that he went through as a Catholic, and he finally left. How many are that way in the Catholic Church? *We don't know!*

But as I pointed out in *Deceit of Religion*, there are many, many people who fall under the categories of acceptors:

- I'm a Catholic
- I'm a Protestant
- I'm in Islam
- I'm a Buddhist
- I'm a Hindu

'because my mother and father were!' Or 'I grew up in this society.' So, there are acceptors with that, like there are acceptors of the name of Christ, but that doesn't necessarily mean they are Christian.

You hear, especially in the political debates and political discussions, about 'Christian values.' What are 'Christian values'? *Christian values are basically some of the last six commandments of the ten that people accept and believe in!* One of the highest Christian values in the Protestant world is against abortion, because they know that abortion is murder. That is good that they understand that. But does that necessarily mean they are converted?

We live in a country where perhaps a greater majority of people believe that abortion is wrong and should not be; yet, in the most conservative state in America, North Dakota, they could not pass on the ballot an initiative to outlaw all abortion. So, we need to look to the Bible.

I remember that when I first began to get interested, one of the things that I heard over and over again was—and that's before we had many of the modern translations that we have now—'don't believe me, believe your Bible.'

- prove it by the Bible
- prove it by the Word of God
- then believe what it says

As a matter of fact, because of that, that's how God called me. Because of that, when it

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changed to *believe me because I'm the great apostle*, that caused us to leave.

We are to, as Jesus said, live by every Word of God. We're also told in 1-Thess. 5 to 'prove all things, hold fast that which is good,' This is what we need to do. *We need to prove all things!* If a person says, 'I'm a Christian,' but rejects the Old Testament, ***they are not Christian!*** Let's just hit one very popular idea of Christianity.

One of the altar calls that you can see at the end of almost every religious program is that the preacher says, 'I want you to pray this prayer with me.' And it goes something to the effect: 'Jesus, forgive my sins, open my heart and come in.' Then the preacher says, 'You're now saved.'

Well, you don't find anywhere in the Bible that kind of initiation into being a Christian. Then they're told, 'Now that you have done this, you're born again.' So, people go around saying, 'I'm a born again Christian.' I remember talking to a Baptist 'born again' Christian years ago, who was interested in the Church, and we got the letter to go out and visit her.

In talking to her, she said, 'Well, I'm born again, and I believe, once saved always saved.' I said, 'Is that right?' *Yes. And when Jesus returns, I'm taking off in the rapture, regardless of where I am and what I'm doing.* 'Well, let me ask you kind of an off the wall question. What if a man and woman who are supposed to be born again, but were committing adultery at the time that Jesus returned and the so called rapture occurred? Would you be saved? *Yes, they would be saved.* It brought to remembrance, what I covered in *Deceit of Religion*, ***'Let everyone that names the name of Jesus depart from iniquity, and lawlessness.'***

All right, let's take a simple born again explanation. We have it in Appendix P—What Does it Mean to be "Born Again"? and Appendix Q—What Does it Mean to Be "Born of God"? (*The Holy Bible in Its Original Order, A Faithful Version*).

John 3:3: "Jesus answered and said to him, 'Truly, truly I say to you, unless anyone is born again, he cannot see the Kingdom of God.' Nicodemus said to Him, 'How can a man who is old be born? Can he enter his mother's womb a second time and be born?'" (vs 3-4). *He understood the process, but he didn't understand what Jesus was saying!*

Verse 5: "Jesus answered, 'Truly, truly I say to you, unless anyone has been born of water and of Spirit, he cannot enter the Kingdom of God.'"

A lot of people think this has to do with water baptism, but it doesn't. Water baptism is a *death*, not a birth.

Verse 6: "That which has been born of the flesh is flesh..."

All of us have been born of the flesh, and we're flesh. How is it that we were born? We were born of water. As a matter of fact, you couldn't be born unless there was the amniotic fluid and, the process of contractions to get you out of your mother's womb. What does it mean, born of spirit? Jesus clarifies it here:

"...and that which has been born of the Spirit is spirit" (v 6).

Are you still flesh? *or* Are you spirit? *Those who have been baptized and received the Holy Spirit!* Are you a spirit being? *or* Are you fleshly being subject to death? *We're still subject to death!* We have to be faithful unto death! Here's what a person who has been born of the Spirit would be like:

Verse 7: "Do not be amazed that I said to you, 'It is necessary... [obligatory or required] ...for you to be born again.'.... [Jesus describes what it means to be born again]: ...The wind blows where it wills, and you hear its sound, but you do not know *the place* from which it comes and *the place* to which it goes; so *also* is everyone who has been born of the Spirit" (vs 7-8).

- you can go wherever you want to
- nothing is to stop you
- no one can see you

There cannot be a born again Christian now! Why? Because you can see them!

Now, let's see a demonstration. We all agree that when Jesus was raised from the dead, that He became a spirit being again and could manifest himself in the flesh, to appear in the flesh. But He was still spirit being because He asked the Father before the crucifixion, 'restore to Me the glory that I had with You before the world existed.'

John 20:19: "Afterwards, as evening was drawing near that day, the first *day* of the weeks, and the doors were shut where the disciples had assembled **for fear of the Jews**... [this was not a Sunday worship service, they were there because they were hiding] ...Jesus came and stood in the midst... [came right through the wall or right through the door, just like the wind] ...and said to them, 'Peace be to you. And after saying this, He showed them His hands and His side. Then the disciples rejoiced *because* they had seen the Lord" (vs 19-20).

When was Jesus born again? *At His resurrection!*

Let's look at Jesus' first birth, and then we will look at His *born again*. Now some people would say that Jesus didn't need to be born again because He didn't sin. ***Being born again has nothing to do with forgiveness of sin!*** Being born again is a process by which you become a spirit being.

Let's see what it says of Jesus when He was born of the flesh. This is after Joseph received the message to go ahead and take Mary to be his wife.

Mathew 1:25: "But he did not have sexual relations *with* her until *after* she had given birth to her Son... [How was Jesus born? *Of water*, had to be!] ...the firstborn... [*that's His first birth, and was the firstborn son*] ...and called His name Jesus.

Now, let's look at some other Scriptures, and let's see that Jesus is also called, *the Firstborn from the dead*, which then tells us that *the resurrection is the born again process!*

Speaking of Jesus; Colossians 1:18: "And He is the Head of the Body, the Church..."

Understand that ***no man*** is the head of the Church. ***No one!*** Christ is, because it is a church that needs to respond *spiritually* to Christ and God the Father and have relationship with Them.

"...Who is *the Beginning*... [of those born at the resurrection] ...*the Firstborn* from among the dead so that in all things He Himself might hold the preeminence" (v 18).

Let's understand that there are some people who say, some churches who say and believe, that Jesus was the angel Michael before He became Jesus. ***However, that's not true!*** So, we get the story flow of defining about Christ and God and so forth, and the angels:

Hebrews 1:1: "God Who spoke to the fathers at different times in the past and in many ways by the prophets, has spoken to us in these last days by *His Son*, Whom He has appointed heir of all things, by Whom also He made the ages... [so everything was created by Christ] ...Who, being *the brightness of His glory and the exact image of His person*, and upholding all things by the word of His own power, when He had by Himself purged our sins, sat down at *the right hand of the Majesty on high*" (vs 1-3).

Now we go into detail in that in our series on the book of Hebrews. Notice this very carefully, because this answers question that this excludes Jesus from having been an angel before He became the Son.

Verse 4: "Having been made so much greater than *any* of the angels, inasmuch as He has

inherited a name exceedingly superior to them. For to which of the angels did He ever say, '**You are My Son; this day I have begotten You**'?... [that's when He was begotten in the womb of the virgin Mary and subsequently born] ...And again, '**I will be a Father to Him, and He will be a Son to Me**'? And again, when He brought the Firstborn into the world... [that was when Jesus was born, the Firstborn] ...He said, '**Let all the angels of God worship Him**'" (vs 4-6).

- Didn't that happen on the night that Jesus was born?
- Didn't all the heavenly host say, 'Glory to God and Highest'?
- Yes!

Let's see that to be born again means *you must be resurrected from the dead!* So, we have seen that Jesus was the Firstborn in the flesh, we have seen that He was the Firstborn from among the dead (Col. 1) and now we are going to read it again here.

Revelation 1:3: "Blessed *is* the one who reads, and those who hear the words of this prophecy and who keep the things *that are* written therein; for the time *is* at hand. John to the seven churches that *are* in Asia: Grace and peace *be* to you from Him Who is, and Who was, and Who *is* to come; and from the seven spirits that are before His throne; and from Jesus Christ, the faithful Witness, the Firstborn from the dead..." (vs 3-5).

To be resurrected means *to be born again from the dead*. Meaning you've lived in the flesh once, before you can be born again of the Spirit.

Now, here's an interesting prophecy of *the coming first resurrection*. What we find in the book of Isaiah, is the prophecy of Jesus:

Isaiah 9:6: "For unto us a Child is born, unto us a Son is given; and the government shall be upon His shoulders; and His name shall be called Wonderful, Counselor, The Mighty God..." *That's why when he was here, another name of Jesus was Emmanuel: God with us!*

This is a prophecy of the birth of Christ, a prophecy of also the first resurrection, that follows along after it, and this agrees with 1-Cor. 15, which says, 'Christ, the Firstfruit, and afterwards those are who are Christ's at His is coming.' Follows the same sequence here.

Isaiah 66:7: "Before she travailed, she gave birth; before her pain came, she delivered a man-Child." *That ties in with Rev. 12!*

Notice that it goes right in to the first resurrection; v 8: "Who has heard such a thing? Who has seen such *things* like these? Shall the earth be

made to bring forth *in one day?....*” *The first resurrection is going to be a one day event, and we know the that it is pictured by Pentecost!*

“...Or will a nation be born at once?... [yes] ...For as soon as Zion travailed, she also gave birth to her children” (v 8).

Tie that in with Heb. 12 where our names are written in the Book of Life! When we come to God, we come to Mount Zion, which is in heaven above. This is what it’s talking about.

Then God asked the question, v 9: ““Will I bring to the birth, and not cause to be born?” says the LORD. ‘Shall I cause them to be born, and shut the womb?’ says your God.” *There’s a prophecy of the first resurrection!* Amazing!

What you do when you really get into the Bible and begin to understand it, *you find that there is a unity between the Old Testament and New Testament!* So, you can call that the unity of Scripture. Zion, in this case, means *the Church*.

So, that answers the question that anyone who professes to be a born again Christian today, is *not* a born again Christian, because the first resurrection has not taken place. Now, if they still don’t believe it, then what you do, you go into the next room, shut the door and tell them come in through the wall without hurting the wall.

In the past it used to be the hatpin test. That is, stab yourself in the leg with a hatpin and if you bleed, you’re not born again. Well, walking through the walls a little easier to say, and it’s not so bloody. Well, maybe not, because if they try it, they may end up with a bloody nose or something.

There are people who believe in Jesus *but are not called to salvation!* There are people who profess Jesus *but are not converted!* They are not Christians. They may attend church on Sunday, or maybe even, in some cases, on the Sabbath. **But they must have the Spirit of God!** Let’s look at the clearest definition of what a true Christian is, and then we will ask and answer: **How do you become a true Christian?**

Rom. 8—Here is a clear definition. Remember, believing *in* Jesus is not enough to be saved. *That’s only a start!* Remember Simon Magnus? Didn’t he say he believed? *But he did not believe unto salvation!* So, there’s a difference.

Romans 8:7: “Because the carnal mind is enmity against God...”

- Do you have a mind that is *enmity* against God?
- Do you have a mind that is *an enemy* of God; yet, you profess to believe in Jesus?

Let’s just give you a simple little test:

- Do you believe we should obey Jesus in all things? *You probably answered yes!*
- Do you believe that we should walk in the footsteps of Jesus the way He walked? *Yes!*

It even says that in 1-John 2. We are to walk as he walked!

- Do you believe in Jesus enough, that you believe that He is the Lord of the Sabbath Day?
- Do you believe because He created it? *All things were created by Him!*
- Do you believe that you should keep it?

IF you’ve got all kinds of arguments against that, *and you still think you’re a Christian*, you better re-examine what you think, and you better re-examine the Scriptures, because ***IF*** you don’t keep the seventh-day Sabbath, which God says to remember, and you keep the first day of the week, and ***IF*** you argue against the Sabbath and say that’s the Jewish Sabbath.

No! It’s the Lord’s Sabbath! Who is the Lord of the Sabbath? *Jesus said He was!* So ***IF*** you’re hostile to that, you have a carnal mind. ***IF*** you’re carnal-minded, that means you’re not converted! Now you may think you are, *but you’re probably not!*

“...for it... [the carnal mind] ...is not subject to the Law of God...” (v 7).

Another test: If you believe that Jesus came to abolish the Law, *you are not a Christian*. That’s why we have Appendix H—**How did Jesus Fulfill the Law and the Prophets?** Let’s try this on for size: Do you agree with what Jesus said in Matt. 5? Because the truth is, ***if you don’t agree with Jesus Christ, do not think for one minute that you’re going to receive eternal life through Jesus Christ!*** Let’s read what Jesus said here; a very basic Scripture. Remember that it says of those who are carnal-minded, they are ‘not subject to the Law of God and neither indeed can be.’

If you’re sitting in a church where the minister stands up and says, ‘Jesus did away with the Law and we don’t need to keep the Sabbath. I know that Sunday-keeping is in the Bible.’ Well, ***you better reconsider whether that church is really preaching the Truth of God or not!*** Here’s what Jesus said:

Matthew 5:17: “Do not think...” What does that mean? *It means precisely what it says, do not let this enter your mind!*

- Don’t profess it!
- Don’t claim it!

- Don't believe it!

Verse 17: "Do not think that I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I did not come to abolish, but to fulfill.... [then He makes another incredible statement]: ...For truly I say to you, **until the heaven and the earth shall pass away, one jot or one tittle shall in no way pass from the Law until everything has been fulfilled**" (vs 17-18). ***He's including all the Law, all the Prophets, and all the Writings with that one statement!***

Are heaven and earth here? *Yes, we're on it!* If you believe that He came to abolish the Law, and you believe you're a Christian, ***you have a false belief!*** You can truly be called a pseudo-Christian, or a *false* Christian.

If that offends you, then maybe you better get your nose in the Bible and *believe the Bible* and find out what it says. There are a lot of people who profess Christ, who believe that He came and abolished the Law.

Romans 8:7: "Because the carnal mind is enmity against God..."—*an enemy of God!*

- if you don't keep His Laws
- if you don't keep His Sabbath
- if you don't keep His Holy Days

you're an enemy of God!

"...for it is not subject to the Law of God; neither indeed can it *be*. But those who are in the flesh cannot please God" (vs 7-8).

This means if you don't have the Spirit of God, you can't please Him. You can please Him if you have the Spirit of God and keep His commandments (1-John 3:22). So, if you are converted, here's how God looks at you:

Verse 9: "However, you are not in the flesh... [you're not carnal-minded] ...but in the Spirit, ***if the Spirit of God is indeed dwelling within you....***"

How do you receive the Spirit of God? "...***if the Spirit of God is indeed dwelling within you....***" This definition makes an absolute dividing point between those who are *true* Christians, and those who are *false* Christians.

"...But if anyone does not have ***the Spirit of Christ***, he does not belong to Him" (v 9). ***You have to have the Spirit of Christ!***

- How do you get the Spirit of Christ?
- Do you go to a 'holy roller' meeting, and you're baptized by the Holy Ghost? No!

The Apostle Peter showed how people receive the Holy Spirit. We'll look at that in Acts 2,

a very basic Scripture. This is the very first one that you need to know and understand ***if*** God is dealing in your life, and ***if*** God is calling you to be a true Christian.

You can't get it any better than what Jesus inspired to be said on the day that the Holy Spirit was given in power to the apostles. Most everyone understands that Jesus came to die for the sins of the world. The sins of the world are the sins of everyone individually *and* collectively. So, this then is applied to each individual.

What is the Bible definition of sin? *It is the transgression of the Law!* Let's think for just a minute here, ***if*** Jesus really abolish the Law then that means *there is no sin*, because ***where there is no Law, there's no sin!***

Acts 2:37: "Now, after hearing *this*, they were cut to the heart..."

That means there has to come a defining moment in your attitude toward God and Christ, because they were told that they crucified Jesus Who was both Lord and Christ. Jesus was crucified for your sins and for my sins.

"...and they said to Peter and the other apostles, 'Men *and* brethren, what shall we do?'.... [because there's something you need to do] ...Then Peter said to them, 'Repent and be baptized...' (vs 37-38).

Repentance means ***a complete remorseful turning away from your sins!*** A defining moment in your life, *spiritually, mentally, emotionally, and physically!*

- You repent!
- You recognize that sin is the transgression of the Law!
- You recognize that you have sinned against God, and it cuts you to the heart!

Now what do you do? You stand before God and you acknowledge that you're a sinner: 'God, take away my sins!' How does God take away your sins?

"...Repent and be baptized each one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for *the* remission... [the removal] of sins, and you yourselves shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit" (v 38).

Now, if you've been sprinkled in baptism, ***that's not a baptism unto salvation.*** The Greek word verb for baptize is 'baptismos,' which means *to be completely immersed in water, wholly covered!* Now, even if you were baptized at one time, ***if*** you didn't begin keeping the laws and commandments of God, and ***if*** you didn't receive the Spirit of God, you need to be baptized again, as we find in Acts 19. Then ***you receive the gift of the Holy Spirit!***

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Now let's see what baptism really pictures. As we saw, it is *not* a birth. Rom. 6 tells us what baptism really is. It helps to begin to give us an understanding of our commitment to God.

(go to the next track)

Paul starts out after showing how your sins are forgiven through the sacrifice of Christ.

Romans 6:1: "What then shall we say? Shall we continue in sin..."

Remember that sin is the transgression of the Law! Shall you continue breaking the Law of God? That's why we covered in Rom, 8 that *the carnal mind is enmity against God and not subject to the Law of God, neither indeed can be!*

"...Shall we continue in sin so that grace may abound?" (v 1).

Verse 2 in the *King James* says, 'God forbid.' But the Greek there is 'me ginoito,' which means:

Verse 2: "**MAY IT NEVER BE!** We who died to sin, how shall we live any longer therein?"

So, dying to sin is accomplished through the operation of baptism. It is a burial, *not a born again!* We'll see this as we go along.

Verse 3: "Or are you ignorant that we, as many as were baptized into Christ Jesus, were baptized **into His death?**"

That's quite a statement! Since Jesus died for your sins, to forgive you your sins, and His blood covers those sins. In order for that to be applied to you, *you are baptized into His death!* That means a personal one-to-one application of the death through crucifixion and the shedding of the blood of Christ to forgive your sins. That's why Jesus becomes your personal Savior.

Verse 4: "Therefore, we were buried with Him through the baptism **into the death...**"—which we won't cover here because it gets to be quite an in depth study, but it goes beyond just dying to sin. You actually make a covenant unto God unto death.

"...so that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, **in the same way we also should walk in newness of life**" (v 4).

We're to live our lives differently. What does that mean?

- we have God as the center of our life
- we're to love God with all our heart, mind, soul and being
- we're to walk in obedience to the commandments of God.

That's why Jesus said, 'If you love Me, keep the commandments, namely Mine.' Now, compared to how you used to live, isn't that a new way of living? *Yes, it is!*

Verse 5: "For if we have been **conjoined** together in the likeness of His death..."

Conjoined is as close of a relationship that you can possibly get. You're conjoined to His death. That shows that through the operation of baptism God mercifully applies the death of Jesus Christ to you for the forgiveness of your sin. Here's a promise:

"...so also shall we be *in the likeness of His resurrection*" (v 5). *That's something!* So, it goes from the beginning of being a Christian, having your sins forgiven and being baptized and receiving the Holy Spirit, *to the accomplishment of the end of your conversion, which is the resurrection!* Be in the likeness of His resurrection.

Here it shows a process, because once you come up out of that watery grave, and you have the hands laid on you to receive the Holy Spirit (Acts 8 and 19, then this describes the process; baptism is the end of the old carnal life. Coming out of the watery grave is the newness of life, but you have to do something with the old self, because you have to change. This gives us the struggle of overcoming sin.

Verse 6: "Knowing this, that our old man was co-crucified with *Him* in order that the body of sin... [our carnal human nature] **...might be destroyed...**" *Not instantaneously changed, but as you grow in grace and knowledge and overcome!*

"...so that we might no longer be enslaved to sin" (v 6)—*because if we're living a life of sin, we're in bondage to sin!* We are enslaved to sin. No longer be that way. We'll show how that needs to be to define a true Christian. We're seeing how one becomes a true Christian.

Verse 7: "Because the one who has died to sin has been **justified** from sin"—*meaning your sins have been forgiven, all of them forgiven!* Now then, you're able to come to God every day, and if you fall short. If you sin and if you repent, you have forgiveness of sin through the operation of grace.

Verse 8: "Now, if we died together with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with Him, knowing that Christ, having been raised from the dead, dies no more; death no longer has any dominion over Him. For when He died, He died unto sin once for all; but in that He lives, He lives unto God" (vs 8-10).

Here is the attitude that we have to have after baptism. This is the beginning of conversion.

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Conversion does not take place instantly; conversion is a process.

Verse 11: “In the same way also, you should indeed reckon yourselves to be dead to sin, but alive to God through Christ Jesus our Lord.... [then He explains how this is done] ...**Therefore, do not let sin rule in your mortal body by obeying it in the lusts thereof**” (vs 11-12).

You no longer live a life of sin, the transgression of the Law. That’s why we are told we are to keep the commandments of God, and ‘His commandments are not burdensome.’ This means you overcome sin. This means you overcome lust. Then here is how this battle is waged, and is waged every day:

Verse 13: “Likewise, do not yield your members as instruments of unrighteousness to sin; rather, yield yourselves to God as those who are alive from *the* dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness to God.” *That’s how we’re to live our lives!*

Now let’s look at the commitment that we make for baptism. Let’s look at it this way:

- What was the commitment that Jesus Christ made for you?
- Did He give all for you?
- Everything?
- *Yes, He did!*

Luke 14:25 ties right in with what we covered previously, which is the way to God is a straight and narrow way. The way of the world is the broad way, and many be that go there in.

Luke 14:25: “And great multitudes were going with Him; and He turned *and* said to them... [this is a tough statement. Let’s think about this; this is really difficult] ...‘If anyone comes to Me and does not hate his father...’” (vs 25-26).

This means *to love less in comparison to God!* But maybe even your relatives would take it as hatred, because now you’re devoted to God instead of them in the same degree that you were in the past.

“...and does not hate his father, and mother, and wife, and children, and brothers and sisters, and, in addition, his own life also... [you’ve got to abhor sin and self] ...he **cannot** be My disciple” (v 26)—the Greek means *the impossibility* of being the disciple of Christ.

So, it’s quite different from what is generally given out to be what a Christian is, if you would go to any Sunday-keeping church or listen to a Sunday preaching minister—quite different. There’s another obligation that comes with it:

Verse 27: “And whoever does not carry his **cross** and come after Me... [symbolic of the trials and difficulties that you will have] ...cannot be My disciple.”

So, we have to make a measured decision in this. This is not an emotional thing where you would go to church and minister preaches hellfire and brimstone and threatens you with burning in hell forever, and then says, if anyone wants to give His heart to the Lord, come forward. Of course, no one wants to burn in hell forever.

A lot of people come and give their heart to the Lord. They found by survey 95% of them are back where they were, within a couple of months. Comment was made that in a church like that, that she’d been to as a little girl, the preacher would give the altar call, and they would play the music—‘Just as I am...’, and play that over and over again, and no one would come. Everyone would look around and pretty soon someone would get up and come to the altar just to get the music to quit! But you see, Jesus doesn’t want you as you are. Jesus wants you with this commitment and repentance. It has to be a measured decision, not an emotional one.

Verse 28: “For which one of you, desiring to build a tower, does not first sit down and count the cost, whether he has *sufficient* for *its* completion; lest perhaps, after he has laid its foundation and is not able to finish, all who see *it* begin to mock him, saying, ‘This man began to build, and was not able to finish’? Or what king, when he goes out to engage another king in war, does not first sit down *and* take counsel, whether he will be able with ten thousand to meet him who is coming against him with twenty thousand? But if not, while his *enemy* is still far off, he sends ambassadors and desires the *terms* for peace” (vs 28-32).

Notice the condition that Jesus Himself set, v 33: In the same way also, each one of you who does not forsake all that he possesses cannot be My disciple.” *That means that you let nothing stand between you and God:*

- no man
- no woman
- no person
- no power
- not prestige
- not even your own life

You are committed to God! That’s the commitment that we are to have!

Let’s see a little parallel account here with it. Then God the Father and Jesus Christ become the center of our life and our existence in loving and serving God and doing the things that please Him.

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Matthew 10:32: “Now then, whoever shall confess Me before men...” *That doesn’t mean you stand there and just confess alone!*

- you confess by your works
- you confess by your deeds
- you confess by your words

“...that one will I also confess before My Father Who *is* in heaven. But whoever shall deny Me before men, that one will I also deny before My Father, Who *is* in heaven” (vs 32-33). *Those are pretty strong words!*

- Do you want Christ to deny you?
- How do you deny Christ, though you may think that you’re a Christian?
 - ✓ by believing false doctrine
 - ✓ by believing that Sunday is just fine
 - ✓ by believing that the holidays of this world are just fine
 - ✓ by believing that you don’t have to keep the Laws of God

You’re denying Him!

He says it’s going to be a struggle; v 34: “Do not think that I have come to bring peace on the earth...”

Every Christmas time, what do they say? *Peace on earth!* The pope prays for peace while war is breaking out the very day. Doesn’t sound like he has an inside track to God, does it?

“...I did not come to bring peace, but a sword.... [then he says it may get tough for you even in your own household]: ...For I have come to set a man at variance against his father, and a daughter against her mother, and a daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law. And a man’s enemies *shall be those of* his own household. The one who loves father or mother more than Me is not worthy of Me... [this interprets hate father and mother (Luke 14); it means to love God more] ... and the one who loves son or daughter more than Me is not worthy of Me. And the one who does not take up his cross and follow Me is not worthy of Me” (vs 34-38).

Those are pretty strong words, and this is the commitment that we are to make. This is how we become true Christians, not by just being ‘good’ people. Yes, we are to be good, that’s true. ***But the goodness of human nature is never going to save you!*** It has to be the goodness of God.

Verse 39: “The one who has found his life shall lose it; and the one who has lost his life for My sake shall find it”—*through baptism, and denying the world and denying sin!*

Verse 40: “The one who receives you receives Me... [He is talking to His disciple] ...and

the one who receives Me receives Him Who sent Me.”

So, you’re receiving God the Father and Jesus Christ. That’s how you become a true Christian. What does this tell us? This tells us an awful lot. This tells us that there may not be very many true Christians in the world when you compare them to all of the professing Christians that are around, ***especially with all the false prophets that are around!***

Let’s look at a couple of other Scriptures here that are important for us to consider. Let’s see something else that Jesus said. Here’s quite a parable. I won’t go through the whole parable. But let’s look at this statement:

Mathew 22:14: “For many are called, but few *are* chosen.

It’s not everyone who wills, is it? *You have to be chosen!* Why are few chosen, though many are called? *Because they’re not willing to do the things we have just covered!*

- they are not willing to really repent
- they are not willing to love God more than anything else in this world
- they are not willing to go through what they need to go through, to really become converted
- they are not willing to, in some cases, have to stand alone for the Truth of God

Now let’s see how God chooses you. There are a lot of people who have Bibles, and as I wrote for *The Holy Bible in Its Original Order, A Faithful Version*, I have a section there just before the commentaries: [Why Are There So Many Bibles in the World? In America](#), there are four Bibles for every household! But how many people have forsaken sin, and are following what God says?

Well, let’s see why. There’s a parable that Christ gives, which shows that some people do not make the commitment. Oh they get excited when they hear the Word of God. Oh yes, it is quite a thing that they go through and they may go to church. I remember that some people said that they went to a different Feast site because their relatives went there, and they wanted to be with their relatives. When they got there, they found out that the group that they were with had special music for an hour and a half every morning! ***Conversion, and growing and overcoming is more than just singing!***

Mark 4:3: “Listen well *to this!* Behold, the sower went out to sow. And it happened *that* as he was sowing, one *seed* fell by the way; and the birds of heaven came and devoured it. And another *seed* fell on a rocky place, where it did not have much

soil; and it quickly sprang up, because it did not have depth of soil; but after *the* sun rose, it was scorched; and because it did not have root, it withered away. And another *seed* fell among the thorns, and the thorns grew up and choked it, and it did not yield *any* fruit. And others fell into the good ground and yielded fruit, growing up and increasing; and one brought forth thirtyfold, and one sixtyfold, and one a hundredfold.' Then He said to them, 'The one who has ears to hear, let him hear'" (vs 3-9). *So the disciples wanted to know what this is all about!*

Verse 10: "Now, when He was alone, those who were around Him with the twelve asked Him *about* the parable. And He said to them, 'To you it has been given to know the mystery of the Kingdom of God; but to those who are without, all things are done in parables; so that *in* seeing they may see, and not perceive; and *in* hearing they may hear, and not understand; lest they should be converted, and *their* sins should be forgiven them.'" (vs 10-12).

That's quite a statement, isn't it? Unless people are willing to make that commitment to God they don't understand it!

Verse 13: "And He said to them, 'Don't you understand this parable? Then how will you know all the *other* parables?... [He began to explain]: ...The sower sows the Word.... [the message of God] ...Now the ones by the way, where the Word was sown, these are the ones who hear, but Satan comes at once and takes away the Word that was sown in their hearts'" (vs 13-15).

So, they said, 'Oh that's wonderful. That's a nice message. Oh, I really believe this. This is great. Then the temptations of the world and Satan comes along, *whoa, I can't handle that*—takes it out of their hearts.

Verse 16: "And the ones which were in like manner sown upon the rocky places, these are *the ones* who when they hear the Word, immediately receive it with joy; but *because* they have no root in themselves, they do not endure; when tribulation or persecution arises because of the Word, they are quickly offended" (vs 16-17).

Let me give you an example. You believe the Word and you hear about the Sabbath and you say, 'Oh boy, I want to keep the Sabbath. So, you go to your boss, and you say, 'Oh, I can't work on Saturday anymore. I want to keep the Sabbath.' He says, 'Well, if you don't work on Saturday, you don't have a job!' *Oh, I can't handle that. I've got to support my family. I've got to feed myself and the family. I've got to work. Unable to handle it!*

Or someone says, 'You mean, you believe in the Sabbath? 'Don't you know that the whole Christian world doesn't believe in it? Why would

you want to do that? Why become like a Jew? 'Well, I can't handle this,' and they opt out.'

Well, it happened to me this way. When I saw that I needed to keep the Sabbath. I was working in a restaurant and I would work seven days a week. I was going to college, and I had to make the money and so forth. I wasn't religious at all. So, I came to my boss and I said, 'I can't work Friday night any longer. I need to have Friday off'(because I worked at nights).

Why? *I said because of my religion.* he looked at me and said, 'When did you become religious?' *Look, I'll give you two weeks. And if not, I'll find another job!* 'Hold on, let me go look at the schedule.' So, he went back and looked at the schedule came out and said, 'I can't see any way that I can do this.' I said, 'How about if I look at the schedule.' He said go ahead, because he didn't want to lose me because I was a good employee. I went back there, and I saw that the chef, which is eight to four, was his shift. I thought, I bet the chef would like Friday off, because that's the day of all the heavy preparation, do extra salad, do extra things for the burgers and make extra french fries, and all this sort of thing.

I came back and I said, I think I have a solution. How about if I work for the chef, Friday morning, and he has Friday off. Then I come in Saturday night, and I work the graveyard shift, which would give me the Sabbath off because I would be done at four in the afternoon on Friday. And I would not come back to work until midnight Saturday night.

That's how I kept the Sabbath. Then I had Tuesday as my day off. And the chef was really happy. Every Thursday, he was singing up a storm because he didn't have to do all the extra work on Friday. There is a way that it can be done. ***If you're willing to obey God, He'll figure a way out!***

Another person told me when they first told their about the Sabbath, and said, 'I have to keep the Sabbath. And he said, 'Well then you'll have to quit.' *Okay, I quit.* Then he went out and got a better job with the Sabbath off. It always pays to obey God, and it always pays to keep the commandments of God.

Verse 18: "And those which were sown among the thorns, these are the ones who hear the Word.... [that's wonderful, that's lovely] ...but the cares of this life, and the deceitfulness of riches, and the lusts of other things *that* come into *their* lives choke the Word, and it becomes unfruitful" (vs 18-19).

They look at it and they say, 'WOW, I get overtime on Saturday. I need that money to buy this,

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that and the other thing. I've got to have this car, I've got to have this home.' "...and the lusts of other things *that* come into *their* lives choke the Word, and it becomes unfruitful."

What happens is that the Word of God *did not take root unto repentance*. Were they called? *Yes!* They heard the Word. Whenever you hear the Word, that's part of a calling. ***But they were unwilling to go God's way!*** So, they were never converted. They just heard the Word. Because they didn't repent, *they were not chosen!*

We'll see what happens when you choose God and you're willing to repent, v 20: "Now, those which were sown upon the good ground, these are *the ones* who hear the Word and receive it..."

Now that means *to act upon*. Not just hear it, as if you're listening to a symphony, or listening to someone talk, and you're not willing to act upon it. This means they're willing to act upon it.

"...and bring forth fruit... [you develop in Godly character, understanding the Word of God and everything] ...one thirtyfold, and one sixtyfold, and one a hundredfold" (v 20). *That's through the course of your life!*

God will take care of them later. And the ones who do not respond God takes care of later. They're not going to have the blessing of the first resurrection.

This is talking about those who are called to the first resurrection. Now in order that there be no mistake made, for those who received the Word. Let's see what God does, because it says, many are called but few are chosen. Now, when it comes to being chosen, how does God do this? *Well, it's something that God does!* It's not something that an individual appoints himself to do by saying,

I want to become a Christian, and there's a nice church down on the corner. Well let's see, it's Presbyterian. Well, I guess I could handle that. At least they're not 'holy-roller' Pentecostal, or they're not whatever. It's close by and it's convenient. They have church at 10 in the morning, and I can be home by 12 o'clock so I can watch football on Sunday. Hey, that's a good deal.

It doesn't work that way. When God chooses you, He does something. Here's what He does.

John 6:44—Jesus speaking: "No one can come to Me..."

You can't say, 'O God, I'm coming to You. I'm so good. I'm wonderful. You've got to take me because I am such a successful person.' ***NO!***

"...unless the Father, Who sent Me, draws him..." (v 44). *That's the beginning of being chosen, because you see your life and you repent!*

"...and I will raise him up at the last day" (v 44). *It shows once He's started, He will finish!*

Verse 45: "It is written in the prophets, 'And they shall all be taught by God.'..."

What it is, it's a spiritual operation in your life, that God is working *to teach you and lead you!* If you respond and repent, God chooses you. Quite a thing, isn't it?

"...Therefore, everyone who has heard from the Father, and has learned, comes to Me" (v 45).

This is why there are so many professing Christians in the world. This is why there are so few real Christians, ***because many are called and few are chosen!***

To a carnal mind, much of the Bible is not understandable. Much of it is, but they don't want to do what they hear:

- they don't want to keep the Sabbath
- they don't want to get rid of their idols
- they don't want to get rid of the rosaries
- they don't want to quit praying to Mary

So, they're not chosen! They don't understand the Bible. But when God is dealing with you, God's Spirit begins to open your mind, because you're taught of the Father.

Verse 63: "It is the Spirit that gives life; the flesh profits nothing. The words that I speak to you, *they* are Spirit and *they* are Life."

But there's one thing important about it: ***You've got to believe!*** Not just hear, ***you must hear and believe and act upon it!*** But notice what Jesus said:

Verse 64: "'But there are some of you who do not believe.'..." Those are *the flatterers*, those are *the acceptors*, those who are *professing!*

"...For Jesus knew from *the* beginning who were the ones that did not believe, and who would betray Him. And He said, 'For this reason...' (vs 64-65). ***The reason for your very calling!***

The reason that you can be chosen is because ***you allow the Spirit of God to teach you, and you repent!***

Verse 65: "And He said, 'For this reason, I have said to you, no one can come to Me unless it has been given to him from My Father.'" That's what it means to be chosen!

If I gave this sermon in a Sunday-keeping church, here's what would happen; v 66: "From that *time*, many of His disciples went back and walked no more with Him."

They would all walk out of the church. Or the Sunday-keeping preacher would study on the Sabbath and became convicted of the Sabbath. He got up in the pulpit on Sunday. Now, this has happened on occasions, some people have believed. And he said, all right folks, I want to do a study on the Sabbath today. So get out your Bibles.

He gives a sermon on the Sabbath and then at the end he says, beginning next week, we will no longer hold Sunday services, we will hold services beginning at 10:30 on Saturday morning on the Sabbath. Right afterwards, the Board of Deacons come up and say, 'If you do this, you're fired. We can't have these good people walking out, and you know that Jesus abolish the Law.'

Verse 66: "From that *time*, many of His disciples went back and walked no more with Him. Therefore, Jesus said to the twelve, 'Are you also desiring to go away?'.... [Peter denied Jesus, didn't he?] ...Then Simon Peter answered Him, 'Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life; and we have believed and have known that You are the Christ, the Son of the living God'" (vs 66-69). *Then Jesus told him in so many words, it isn't because you believe this!*

Verse 70: "Jesus answered them, 'Did I not choose you twelve, and one of you is a devil?'"

It's not because of how good we are, or what we believe, it's what God does in choosing. That makes the calling even that much greater when you understand it. But Judas was possessed of the devil.

Judas Iscariot did receive Satan the devil, and he was possessed of the devil, and he was the devil. Now, if you have if you believe that you are a Christian, maybe you ought to take the Word of God and begin studying and really see what you need to do to become a true Christian. Because there are:

- false Christians
- good time Christians
- glad handing Christians

all the way down through the spectrum of human behavior, ***until you come to the ones who are true Christians!***

Scriptures from *The Holy Bible in Its Original Order, A Faithful Version*

Scriptural References:

- 1) John 3:3-8
- 2) John 20:19-20

- 3) Matthew 1:25
- 4) Colossians 1:18
- 5) Hebrews 1:1-6
- 6) Revelation 1:3-5
- 7) Isaiah 9:6
- 8) Isaiah 66:7-9
- 9) Romans 8:7
- 10) Matthew 5:17-18
- 11) Romans 8:7-9
- 12) Acts 2:37-38
- 13) Romans 6:1-13
- 14) Luke 14:25-33
- 15) Matthew 10:32-40
- 16) Matthew 22:14
- 17) Mark 4:3-20
- 18) John 6:44-45, 63-70

Scriptures referenced, not quoted:

- 1 Thessalonians 5
- 1 Corinthians 15
- Revelation 12
- Hebrews 12
- 1 John 2
- 1 John 3:22
- Acts 19, 8

Also referenced:

Books:

- *Code of Jewish Law* by Ganzfried & Goldin
- *Fifty Years in the Church of Rome* by Charles Chiniquy

Sermon: *Deceit of Religion*

Sermon Series: *Hebrews*

from: *The Holy Bible in Its Original Order, A Faithful Version*)

- Appendix P—*What Does it Mean to be "Born Again"?*
- Appendix Q—*What Does it Mean to Be Born of God?*
- Appendix H—*How did Jesus Fulfill the Law and the Prophets?*

FRC: po/bo
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