

How Does One Become A Christian?

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Hear the Gospel: Jesus said, *"Behold, I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and dine with him, and he with me"* (Revelation 3:20). The Lord is inviting you into His kingdom. He also said, *"I am the good shepherd," and he is the "door of the sheep"* (John 10:7, 11). He invites the lost into the fold of safety, for danger is outside. For the lost, Jesus is the good shepherd that leaves the "ninety and nine" and looks for the *"sheep that is lost,"* for *"the Son of Man has come to save that which was lost"* (Matthew 18:11-14). Jesus' sheep hear his voice and follow him (John 10:27-28) for eternal life. How do the sheep hear the voice of Jesus? We are *"called by the gospel"* (2 Thessalonians 2:14), which is the *"power of God unto salvation"* (Romans 1:16). It is by the word of God that faith is produced in the hearts of the lost (Romans 10:17). Have you heard the gospel?

Believe: As the gospel story is read (Matthew, Mark, Luke and John), Jesus is shown to be the Son of God (John 20:27-31). Our faith rests in Him. We must believe that He is the Son of God, sacrificed for our sins (Matthew 16:13-16; John 8:24). Do you believe?

Repent of sins: All of us have sinned (Romans 3:23) and have died spiritually because of sin (Romans 6:23). We must face our sins and repent. Repentance is a change of mind, followed by a change of life, as illustrated in Matthew 21:28-31. The son *"repented"* and *"went"*. This repentance is required before one can be saved (Luke 13:3-5; Acts 2:36-38). Have you repented?

Confess the name of Jesus: Jesus warned that we must have the courage of our faith to openly confess Him with the mouth, an oral confession (Romans 10:10). If we do not have this courage, Jesus will not confess our name as brethren (Matthew 10:32-33). People in the New Testament times confessed Jesus' name (Acts 4:10-12; 8:37). Have you confessed that Jesus is the Son of God?

Be Baptized: Yes, baptism is a Bible doctrine, commanded by Jesus (Matt 28:18-20; Mark 16:15-16; Luke 24:48). Baptism is not administered as a "rite of the church," as a work of human righteousness or merit, but as an act of faith (Mark 16:16; James 2:17-18, 20, 24). Regardless of the animosity toward baptism in the denominational world, and in spite of their denial of its place in salvation, it is administered by the authority of Jesus for the remission of sins.

Baptism is a burial (Romans 6:1-7; Colossians 2:12) in water (John 3:1-5; Acts 2:38; Acts 8:38). It is for (unto, toward) the remission of sins (Acts 2:38) and is viewed in scripture as involved in “*washing away sins*” (Acts 22:16; 1 Peter 3:21). It is understood by Bible students that forgiveness is not in the water, but in the blood of Christ (Matthew 26:26-28; Romans 6:1-7). However, Jesus has placed the opportunity of reaching that blood in the act of baptism. It is at baptism that the sinner meets the blood of Christ, that the old man of sin dies, and the new birth takes place (Romans 6:1-7; John 3:1-5). Baptism is a re-enactment of the sinner for what Jesus did for him (death, burial and resurrection, 1 Corinthians 15:1-4). The sinner obeys, in baptism, a “form of the gospel” (Romans 6:16-18) in that he becomes dead to sin as he repents, is buried in baptism, and arises to a new life in Christ (Romans 6:1-7).

There is no other act of obedience in the New Testament that so fittingly portrays the gospel in our life as baptism. It is an act of faithful obedience (Romans 1:5; John 6:28-29; 8:39), not an act of merit or of human righteousness (Titus 3:5). At the time of baptism, Jesus forgives our sins by the power of the blood and adds us to His church (Acts 2:38, 47). Have you been baptized?

Now that I’m a Christian: Disciples of Jesus wear no denominational names or support denominational doctrines. You are not Baptist, Methodist, Catholic, etc. No such names or denominations existed when Jesus built His church, and you now belong to His church (Matthew 16:18; Acts 2:47). The name of “*Christian*” is given for you to wear, and you glorify God in that name (Acts 11:26; 4:12; 1 Peter 4:14-15). As a Christian, you will meet with other Christians for worship and service (Hebrews 10:25; Acts 2:42; 9:26-28; Ephesians 4:11-16).

Christians begin as “babes” in Christ, having been born again (John 3:1-5; Romans 6:1-7; 1 Peter 1:22-23; 1 Peter 2:1-2). Each grows toward being a mature Christian (Ephesians 4:11-15). They no longer live in sinful life-styles as in the past (Colossians 3:1-17; Galatians 5:19-24). A Christian grows by adding the attributes of grace (2 Peter 1:2-11). **Are you a Christian?**