



True Meaning of Christianity

Christianity: The word “Christianity” is not mentioned in the Bible.

Christian: The word “Christian” only appears 3 times in the entire Bible.

- However, it was never a term the early disciples applied to themselves.
 - They called themselves “followers of the way.”

Therefore, one has to look at the times of Acts & ask:

Question 1: Did Jesus’ disciples force new believers to convert to an institutionalized religion, such as Christianity or Judaism? *No!*

- *Christianity* wasn’t even an established religion during the times of Acts — it was instituted in AD 325 during the reign of Roman Emperor, Constantine.
- *Judaism* - Paul said you *don’t* need to be part of the circumcision group (these titles are human/earthly signs).

Question 2: Did a new followers of Jesus have to follow the precepts of Judaism to be part of this group?

- Paul again said *No!* He rebukes the religious Jews forcing gentile believers to adopt their traditions as a sign of true devotion to the faith.¹
- According to Paul, Gentile believers only had four restrictions: Pollutions of Idols, fornication, eating animals that were strangled, & drinking blood (Acts 15:20)

Questions 3: Then is one required to follow the religion of Christianity to be part of this new movement of Jesus? *No!*

In Israel, there is a growing movement of Messianic Jews, but they would never consider themselves Christians.

- Why then are Christians convinced that these Messianic Jews are “saved”?

¹ These were outward human/earthly signs.

- o Because these Jews believe in their hearts Jesus was the Messiah, died for their sins, & rose from the dead to give us eternal life.

Conclusion: Following Jesus was never about a religion, rather:

- a) To bring a revelation of the true nature of God (truth of God)
- b) Creating a relational revolution of the human heart

Let's not let labels get in the way of people accepting Jesus as Messiah in their hearts

Bible verses using Christian:

Acts 11:26 - "And the disciples were called Christians first in Antioch."

- Have to understand the place, Antioch was an Ancient Greek Roman Pagan City

Acts 26:28 - "Then (king) Agrippa said unto Paul, do you think you can persuade me to be a Christian?" (He's obviously being sarcastic).

1 Peter 4:16 - "Yet if anyone suffer as a Christian, let him not be ashamed, but let him glorify God in this matter." (suffer/shame = shows it's not a positive name).

- We were also told to worship when we are whipped (exp: disciples praised). Does this mean chains/hipping is encouraged? No! When called names (Christian) or suffer physically (whipping), then rejoice!