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# A MESSAGE TO PROTESTANTS

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Are all Protestants Christians?

A great many people think so! There are vast numbers of people who believe that if you are a Protestant, then you are a Christian (just as vast numbers believe that if you are a Roman Catholic, then you are a Christian). But this is simply not true!

Just because you are a member of a Protestant denomination, does not mean that you are a Christian.

Being baptized as a baby (or even as an adult) does not make you a Christian either.

Being a morally “decent” person does not mean that you are a Christian.

Trying to keep the ten commandments, or the sermon on the mount, does not make you a Christian.

Praying does not make you a Christian.

Doing good works does not make you a Christian.

You may even be a *minister*, but not a Christian!

In the Bible, we are *clearly* told who are Christians, and who are not. The message of salvation which the Lord Jesus Christ preached when he was on earth, and the message which the apostles preached, we can read in the New Testament. And what do we read?

In Mk. 16:15, Jesus told his disciples to go into all the world and preach the Gospel. In v.20 we are told that “they went forth, and preached every where”. What was their message? It was this: *repent*, and *believe* in the Lord Jesus Christ, and you shall be saved (e.g. Acts 3:19; 16:30,31). *This* was the Gospel of the first Christians; the *same* Gospel Jesus himself had preached (see Matt. 4:17; Jn. 3:18). Those who repent, and by faith receive Christ, become the children of God – *Christians!* (Jn. 1:12,13).

Since the Bible is clear as to what the true Gospel is, *why* is it that so many people believe that they are Christians because they are members of some denomination, or have been baptized, or do good works?

If *you* have believed this, you have been *deceived!* You owe it to yourself to find out the truth.

Before the Protestant Reformation occurred in the 16th century, Europe was under the iron heel of the Roman Catholic institution. The masses lived in ignorance and superstition. The Bible was forbidden to them by their “Church”, their lives from birth to death were controlled by their priests (who were as spiritually ignorant and superstitious as they were), and to be a Christian, they believed, was to be a Roman Catholic. The Roman Catholic religion taught that a “Christian” was someone who had been baptized; who lived as the “Church” of Rome commanded; who tried to *earn*, or merit, salvation by performing various “good works”; etc. It was a “gospel” of *works*; of human effort (and Rome *still* teaches this). But the *Bible*, the Word of God, teaches that man can do NOTHING to earn his salvation; and that salvation is entirely by God’s grace, through faith. In Eph. 2:8,9 it says, “For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: *not of works*, lest any man should boast”. The Roman Catholic “gospel” is a *false* “gospel”. Salvation by works is the message of every false religion on earth. Only God’s Word tells us the truth: that it is by *faith*.

When the Reformation occurred, many men saw from the Word of God how one *really* becomes a Christian; and they began to preach the TRUE Gospel of Jesus Christ. People who protested against the false teachings of Rome came to be called “Protestants”. However, there were many who called themselves “Protestants”, who were Protestants in name only! They joined Protestant churches, for various reasons, but had *never* become true Christians. They had never responded to the Gospel of

Jesus Christ. They continued to believe, for example, that baptism makes one a Christian; that good works can earn one a place in heaven; etc. (various Protestant *churches*, in fact, taught these things as well). In other words, although calling themselves “Protestants”, they believed essentially the *same* false “gospel” that Roman Catholics believed – a “gospel” of *works*, according to which a man must *do* something to earn his salvation.

It has always been the case that there have been “wolves” among the flocks; false teachers, *pretending* to be Christians, who have paid lip-service to the Bible truth regarding salvation, but have not believed it, and have led many astray (see, for example, Matt. 7:15, Acts 20:29,30, 2 Cor. 11:13-15, and 2 Pet. 2:1). It was so in the first century of the Christian Church, and it has been so ever since. In Protestant circles, from the very beginning until today, there have been many who have preached the false “gospel” of works, not the true Gospel of grace. Many have done so ignorantly, not knowing the truth themselves; and others have done so *deliberately*. In particular, the *Jesuits* (and those they have manipulated) have sought by every possible means to destroy Protestantism. The Jesuits are fanatical Roman Catholic priests who, from their beginning in the 16th century, have been devoted to destroying Protestantism by any means possible. As secret agents, they have actually infiltrated Protestant churches, in order to accomplish this. They have been very successful.

Today, the Protestant denominations are doing their utmost to please Rome, and to seek for ways to unite with Rome. This is known as the “Ecumenical Movement”. They are bending backwards to destroy the work of the Reformation, and in the process are deceiving multitudes of people. To countless modern-day “Protestants”, salvation is by baptism, church membership, good works – just as in Roman Catholicism! They have a ritualistic, *dead* religion that is simply a “Protestant” version of Rome’s “gospel” of works. The average churchgoer has *no idea* of what the Bible really teaches. And all too often, his minister does not know what it teaches either; or if he does, he does not believe it. If the blind lead the blind, Jesus said, both shall fall into the ditch (Matt. 15:14). Spiritually blind leaders are unable to point the way to those they lead. The result: millions of “Protestants”, never having received the truth, are lost and on their way to hell, believing all the while that they are Christians.

Here, then, is the simple, glorious Gospel, as it is set forth in God’s Word. The Protestant Reformation placed the Bible in the hands of the common man. The tragedy is that so many “Protestants” do not know what it says.

According to the Scriptures, you are a *sinner*, as are all men; lost, spiritually dead. “There is none righteous, no, not one” (Rom. 3:10); “For *all* have sinned, and come short of the glory of God” (Rom. 3:23); “without Christ... having no hope, and without God in the world” (Eph. 2:12); “dead in trespasses and sins” (Eph. 2:1). And the wages of sin is *death* (Rom. 6:23). God, being a just, holy God, *abhors* sin. Those who die in their sins go to *hell*; only those whose names are written in Christ’s book of life will not be cast into the lake of fire (Rev. 20:14,15).

But man can do NOTHING to earn his salvation! Being “dead in sins”, he is *powerless* to help himself. Sinful man is “unclean” in God’s sight, and any “good works” he tries to do are as “filthy rags” to God (Isa. 64:6); for, “Who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean? not one” (Job 14:4). That is why Eph. 2:8,9 says salvation is “*not* of works”. It is not, because it *cannot* be: no man is good enough, no man is righteous enough, to earn his own salvation.

But the Gospel of salvation is this: “Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners” (1 Tim. 1:15). Jesus said, “I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me” (Jn. 14:6).

Jesus was miraculously conceived in the womb of the virgin, Mary, by the Holy Spirit (Lk. 1:26-35). The Son of God, who, before he came in the flesh, had existed with God the Father from eternity, lived a sinless, perfect life on earth in obedience to the Father, so that he could become the perfect sacrifice for the sins of many (2 Cor. 5:21; Heb. 7:26,27; 9:26-28). He was crucified, and died *in the place of* sinners, the just for the unjust, the perfect substitute (Rom. 4:24,25; 1 Pet. 3:18). The penalty for sin was paid: Christ suffered and died in the place of sinners. Having no sin of his own, the Lord laid on *him* the sins of others, and he took the punishment that should have been theirs (see Isa. 53 and 1 Pet. 2:24).

Baptism cannot save you. Mere water cannot cleanse the sinful heart of man. The sinner has to be “washed” in Christ’s *blood* (see Rev. 1:5). Only his *blood* can cleanse. A sinner must be “justified by his *blood*” (Rom. 5:9), if he is to be justified at all. It is by *faith* in Christ, who shed his blood for the remission (forgiveness) of sins, that a sinner who repents is made clean (see Matt. 26:28; Heb. 9:22).

Church membership cannot save you. It is important for true Christians to meet together regularly to worship the Lord, to study his Word, etc. But simply joining a church does not save anyone. Only Christ can save.

Doing “good works” cannot save you. Have *you* been deceived on this matter? The Bible says salvation is “not of works” (Eph. 2:9). Will you believe God, or man? Salvation is by “*repentance* toward God, and *faith* toward our Lord Jesus Christ” (Acts 20:21).

Therefore, “*repent ye, and believe the gospel*” (Mk. 1:15)! Do not trust in any human effort. Trust only in *Christ*. Do not delay, but call upon him *now*. “For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved” (Rom. 10:13).

**Shaun Willcock**

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*If you have repented of your sins and believed in the Lord Jesus Christ, or if you would like to know more about Him, His Gospel, and the true Christian life, please contact us.*

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