

WHAT IS A BIBLICAL CHRISTIAN?



Albert N. Martin

Course WBC

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Name: _____ Student ID: _____ Date: _____

WHAT IS A BIBLICAL CHRISTIAN?

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Sample Answer Sheet

_____	_____	<u>WBC</u>	_____	_____
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Question Answer

skip a line between questions

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WHAT IS A BIBLICAL CHRISTIAN?

Lesson One Where We Stand

Introduction

There are many matters in which total ignorance and complete indifference¹ are neither tragic nor fatal. I am sure that there are few of us who can explain all the processes by which a brown cow eats green grass and gives white milk—but we can still enjoy the milk! Many of us are totally ignorant of Einstein’s theory of relativity, and if we had to explain it, we would really be in trouble. And not only are we ignorant of Einstein’s theory, but most of us are quite indifferent as well—yet our ignorance and indifference are neither tragic nor fatal.

There are some matters, however, in which ignorance and indifference are both tragic and fatal. One such matter is the answer to the question, “What is a biblical Christian?” In other words, according to the Scriptures, when does a man, woman, boy, or girl have the right to the name “Christian”?

One must not make the assumption lightly that he or she is a true Christian: a false conclusion at this point is both tragic *and* fatal. Therefore I want to set before you four strands of the Bible’s answer to the question, “What is a biblical Christian?”

1. Personal Sin

a. Overview

According to the Bible, a Christian is a person who has faced honestly the problem of his own personal sin.

¹ **indifference** – not caring about something one way or the other.

One of the many things that separates the Christian faith from the other religions of the world is that Christianity is basically a *sinner's* religion. When the angel announced to Joseph the approaching birth of Jesus Christ, he did so in these words, "And she shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt call his name Jesus: for he shall save his people from *their sins*" (Mat 1:21). The apostle Paul wrote in 1 Timothy 1:15, "This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save *sinners; of whom I am chief.*" The Lord Jesus Christ Himself says in Luke 5:31-32, "They that are whole need not a physician; but they that are sick. I came not to call the righteous, but *sinners* to repentance." A Christian is one who has faced honestly the problem of his own personal sin.

When we turn to the Scriptures, we find that each one of us has a two-fold personal problem in relation to sin. On the one hand, we have the problem of a bad record and, on the other hand, the problem of a bad heart. If we start in Genesis 3 and begin with the tragic account of man's rebellion against God and his fall into sin, then trace the biblical doctrine of sin all the way through to the *Book of the Revelation*, we see that it is not oversimplified to say that everything that the Bible teaches about the doctrine of sin can be reduced to these two fundamental categories: the problem of a bad record and the problem of a bad heart.

b. A bad record

What do I mean by "the problem of a bad record"? I am using those words to describe what the Scriptures say about human guilt because of sin. The Scriptures tell us plainly that we obtained a bad record long before we had any personal existence upon the earth: "by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned" (Rom 5:12).

When did the "all" sin? We all sinned in Adam (Rom 5:12-19). He was appointed by God to represent all of the human race (1Co 15:45-49). When he sinned, we sinned in him and fell with him in his first transgression.² That is why the apostle Paul writes in 1 Corinthians 15:22, "For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive." Man was created without sin in the Garden of Eden; but from the moment Adam sinned, we too were charged with guilt (Rom 5:18). We fell in him in his first transgression, and we are part of a race that is under condemnation.

Furthermore, the Scriptures teach that after we are born, more guilt is added to us for our own personal sins. The Word of God teaches that "there is not a just man upon earth, that doeth good, and sinneth not" (Ecc 7:20); and every single sin adds more guilt. Our record in heaven is a bad one. Almighty God measures the total of our human experience by a standard that

² **transgression** – violation of a law or command; sin.

is absolutely inflexible. This standard touches not only our external deeds, but also our thoughts and the very motives of our hearts—so much so, that the Lord Jesus said that unjust anger is murder, and the lustful look is adultery (Mat 5:22, 28)!

God is keeping a detailed record. That record is among “the books” which will be opened in the Day of Judgment (Rev 20:12). In those books are recorded every thought, every motive, every attitude, every act, and every word that is contrary to the standard of God’s holy Law, either failing to measure up to its standard or falling short of it. We have the problem of a bad record—a record showing that we are guilty. We have *real* guilt for *real* sin committed against the true and the living God. This is why the Scriptures tell us that the entire human race stands guilty before Almighty God (Rom 3:19).

Has the problem of your own bad record ever become a burning, pressing, personal concern? Have you faced the truth that Almighty God judged you guilty when your father Adam sinned, and holds you guilty for every single word you have spoken contrary to perfect holiness, justice, purity, and righteousness? He knows every object you have touched and taken in violation of the property of others. He knows every word spoken contrary to perfect, absolute truth. Has this ever broken in upon you, so that you have awakened to the fact that Almighty God has every right to summon you into His presence and to require you to give an account of every thought, word, and deed contrary to His Law, which has brought guilt upon your soul?

c. A bad heart

But this problem of a bad record is not our only problem. We have an additional problem: the problem of a bad heart. The Bible teaches that the problem of our sin arises not only from what we have done, but from what we *are*. When Adam sinned, he not only became guilty before God, he also became impure and corrupted in his nature.

This corruption is described in Jeremiah 17:9: “The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked: who can know it?” Jesus describes it in Mark 7:21: “From within, out of the heart of men, proceed evil thoughts”; and then He names all the various sins that can be seen in any newspaper on any given day—murder, adultery, blasphemy, pride. Jesus said that these things rise out of an artesian well³ of pollution, the human heart. Notice carefully that He did not say, “For from without, by the pressure of society and its negative influences, come forth murder and adultery and pride and theft.” That is what our so-called “sociological experts” tell us.

³ **artesian well** – well whose shaft penetrates through solid rock layer, causing the water to rise of itself under pressure; thus, that which springs forth by itself.

They say it is “the condition of society” that produces crime and rebellion; but Jesus says it is the condition of the human *heart*.

Each of us by nature has a heart that the Scriptures describe as “desperately wicked,” a fountain of all forms of wickedness. Romans 8:7 asserts, “The carnal⁴ mind is enmity⁵ against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be.” Paul does not say that the carnal mind, that is, the mind that has never been made new by God, has *some* wickedness; he calls it wickedness *itself*: “The carnal mind *is* enmity against God.” The disposition of every human heart by nature can be pictured as a clenched fist raised against the living God. This is the inward problem of a bad heart—a heart that loves sin, a heart that is the fountain of sin, a heart that is independent from and in rebellion against God.

Has the problem of your bad heart ever become a pressing personal concern to you? I am not asking *in theory* whether you believe in human sinfulness. You might agree that there are such things as a sinful nature and a sinful heart. My question is, have *your* bad record and your bad heart ever become matters of deep, inward, pressing concern to you? Have you known anything of real, personal, inward consciousness of the awfulness of your guilt in the presence of a holy God? Have you seen the horribleness of a heart that is “deceitful above all things and desperately wicked”?

A biblical Christian is a person who has in all seriousness taken to heart his own personal problem of sin. The degree to which we feel the awful weight of sin differs from one person to another. The length of time over which a person is brought to awareness of his bad record and his bad heart differs. There are many variables, but Jesus Christ as the Great Physician never brought His healing power [in a soul saving way] to anyone who did not know himself to be a sinner. He said, “I am not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance”⁶ (Mat 9:13). Are you a biblical Christian, one who has taken seriously your own problem of sin?

⁴ **carnal** – fleshly; sensual, as opposed to spiritual.

⁵ **enmity** – hatred; hostility.

⁶ **repentance** – the change of heart through God’s mercy that turns from loving sin to hating it, and from hating God to loving Him.

Lesson One: Where We Stand

Study Questions

Please read section 1 before answering these questions.

Very Important Note: We ask you to always use your own words in your answers. The answers to most questions are found in the reading text, but please do not merely quote the text for your answer. Rather, read what the text says, think about the meaning of what it says, and summarize its meaning in your own words for your answer. In this way, you will learn much more than simply a “search, find, quote” method for answering the questions.

Introduction

1. Why is a false conclusion about what is a *biblical* Christian, both tragic and fatal?

Personal sin (1)

Overview (a)

2. a. How is Christianity different from all other religions of the world?
b. What does the study guide mean by the term “sinner’s religion”?
For each of several Scriptures that support your answer, write the reference and meaning of the phrase in the verse that relates to personal sin.

A bad record (b)

3. What is meant by the term “a bad record”?
Also write the meaning of the phrase in Romans 5:12 that relates to personal sin. As always, use your own words.
4. a. When did “all” sin?
b. Why do we say this?
5. a. How is more guilt added to us?
b. Describe the standard used to measure guilt.
6. a. What is meant by “the books”?
b. What is recorded in them?
7. ***Making It Personal***
 - a. Has the problem of your own bad record ever become a pressing concern to you? Why or why not?
 - b. Do you believe God holds you guilty for every word and deed contrary to His perfect holiness? Why or why not?

A bad heart (c)

8. What is meant by the term “a bad heart”?

9. For each of the following, write the meaning of the phrase regarding a bad heart. *As always, use your own words.*
 - a. Jeremiah 17:9
 - b. Mark 7:21
 - c. Romans 8:7
10. Describe some characteristics of a bad heart.
11. *Making It Personal* Have you known anything of a real, personal, inward awareness of the awfulness of your guilt before a holy God? Why or why not?
12. Why do we say that Christ has never brought His healing power in a soul-saving way to anyone who did not know himself to be a sinner?

Lesson Two God's Solution

2. The Divine Remedy for Sin

A biblical Christian is one who has seriously considered the one divine remedy for sin.

In the Bible we are told again and again that Almighty God has taken the initiative in doing something for man, the sinner. The verses some of us learned in our youth tell us that God provided a remedy for sinful man: “For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son”; “Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation⁷ for our sins”; “But God, who is rich in mercy, for [because of] his great love wherewith he loved us, Even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us [made us alive] together with Christ, (by grace ye are saved)” (Joh 3:16; 1Jo 4:10; Eph 2:4-5).

A unique feature of the Christian faith is that it is not a religious self-help scheme, where you patch yourself up with the aid of God. It is a unique belief of the Christian faith not only that Christ is the only Savior for sinners, but also that all of our true help comes down from above and meets us where we are. We cannot pull ourselves up by our own bootstraps; God in mercy breaks in upon the human situation and does something that we could never do for ourselves.

⁷ **propitiation** – sin offering that turns away wrath; an appeasement.

When we turn to the Scriptures, we find that God's divine remedy has at least three simple but very wonderful truths.

a. In a Person

First of all, God's remedy for sin is in a Person. Anyone who begins to take seriously the divine remedy for human sin will notice in the Scriptures that the remedy is not in a set of ideas, as though it were just another philosophy, nor is it found in an institution; but it is entirely in a Person: "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son"; "And she shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt call his name Jesus: for he shall save his people from their sins" (Joh 3:16; Mat 1:21). Jesus Himself said, "I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me" (Joh 14:6).

The divine remedy for sin is in a Person, and that Person is none other than our Lord Jesus Christ—the eternal Word Who became man, uniting a true human nature to His divine nature (Joh 1:1-3). Here is God's provision for man with his bad record and his bad heart: a Savior Who is both God and man, the two natures joined in the one Person forever. If your personal problem of sin is ever to be remedied in a biblical way, it will be remedied only as you have personal dealings with the person of the Lord Jesus Christ. Such is the unique truth of the Christian faith: the sinner in all his need, united to the Savior in all the fullness of His grace; the sinner in his naked need, and the Savior in His almighty power, brought directly together in the gospel. That reality is the glory of God's good news to sinners!

b. Centered in the cross

Secondly, God's remedy for sin is centered in the cross upon which Jesus Christ died. When we turn to the Scriptures, we find that the divine remedy in a unique way is centered in the cross of Jesus Christ. John the Baptist uses the Old Testament image of the sacrificial lamb when he points to Jesus and says, "Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world" (Joh 1:29). Jesus Himself said, "the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many" (Mat 20:28).

True preaching of the gospel is so much centered in the cross that Paul says it is the message of the cross. "For the preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness; but unto us which are saved it is the power of God" (1Co 1:18). When Paul came to Corinth—a center of human learning and pagan Greek philosophy—he did not follow their normal pattern for public speaking, but said that he "determined not to know any thing among you, save Jesus Christ, and him crucified" (1Co 2:2).

The cross is not to be thought of as a concept or a religious symbol; the meaning of the cross is what God declares it to mean. The cross was the

place where God, by imputation,⁸ heaped the sins of His people upon His Son. On that cross there was substitute curse-bearing. In the language of the apostle Paul, “Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us” (Gal 3:13), and “he [God the Father] hath made him [Christ the Son] to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him” (2Co 5:21).

The cross is not a vague symbol of self-giving love; on the contrary, the cross is the monumental display of how God can be just and still pardon guilty sinners. At the cross, God, having put the sins of His people onto Christ, pronounces judgment upon His Son as the representative of His people. There on the cross God pours out His wrath unmixed with mercy, until His Son cries out, “My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?” (Psa 22:1; Mat 27:46).

At Calvary, God is demonstrating to the visible world what is happening in the invisible, spiritual world. He covers the heavens in total darkness to let all mankind know that He is plunging His Son into the outer darkness of the hell that your sins and my sins deserve. Jesus hangs on the cross in the posture of a guilty criminal; for Him society has but one verdict: “Away with him”; “Crucify him”; “Hand him over to death”—and God does not stop it. In the theater of what men can see, God is demonstrating what He is doing in the realm where we cannot see. He is treating His Son as a criminal. He is causing Jesus to suffer, in the depths of His own soul, all of the fury of the wrath that should be vented upon us.

c. Offered to all men

Thirdly, God’s remedy for sin is enough for all men, and it is offered to all men without discrimination. Before we are aware of the severity of sin, it is very easy to think that God can forgive sinners. But when you and I begin to have any idea at all of what sin is, our thoughts are changed. We see ourselves as little worms of the dust, creatures whose very life and breath are held in the hands of the God in Whom “we live, and move, and have our being” (Act 17:28).

We begin to take seriously that we have dared to defy the God Who sentenced angels to everlasting darkness when they rebelled against Him. We confess that this holy God sees everything in our foul, corrupt human hearts. Then we say, “O God, how can you be anything other than just? If you give me what my sins deserve, there is nothing for me but wrath and judgment! How can you forgive me and still be just? How can you be a righteous God and do anything other than condemn me to everlasting punishment with those angels that rebelled?”

⁸ **imputation** – being placed onto one’s account; being charged to one’s account.

When we begin to feel the reality of our sin, how to be forgiven becomes the most stubborn problem with which our minds have ever wrestled. It is then that we need to know that in a Person, and that Person crucified, God has provided a remedy fit for all men, and offered to all men without discrimination.

If any conditions were placed on the availability of Christ, we would say, “Surely I don’t meet the conditions; surely I don’t qualify.” The wonder of God’s provision is that it comes in these basic terms: “Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters, and he that hath no money; come ye, buy, and eat; yea, come, buy wine and milk *without money and without price*” (Isa 55:1); “him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out” (Joh 6:37).

See the beauty of the free offer of mercy in Jesus Christ! We do not need God to step out of heaven and tell us that we, by name, are warranted to come; we have the free offer of mercy in the words of His own Son, “Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest” (Mat 11:28).

The divine terms are two: repent and believe. Of Jesus’ earliest ministry it is recorded, “Now after that John was put in prison, Jesus came into Galilee, preaching the gospel of the kingdom of God, And saying, The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand: repent ye, and believe the gospel” (Mar 1:14-15). After His resurrection, Jesus told His disciples that “repentance and remission⁹ of sins should be preached in his name among all nations” (Luk 24:47). The apostle Paul testified “to the Jews, and also to the Greeks, repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ” (Act 20:21).

Lesson Two: God’s Solution

Study Questions

Please read section 2 before answering these questions. Always put what you have read into your own words in your answers, to indicate your understanding.

The divine remedy for sin (2)

1. a. What is a “religious self-help” scheme?
b. Why is Christianity not a religious self-help scheme?

In a Person (a)

2. How is Christianity different from a philosophy?
3. In what way is God’s remedy for sin bound up in a Person?

Include in your answer the meaning of the key phrase about the person of Christ for each of the following: John 3:16, Matthew 1:21, and John 14:6.

⁹ **remission** – forgiveness.

4. Briefly, describe the person of Jesus Christ.
5. Describe the “unique belief” of the Christian faith in terms of the sinner and the Savior.

Centered in the cross (b)

6. For each of the following, write the meaning of the phrase regarding God’s remedy for sin being centered in the cross.
As always, use your own words.
 - a. John 1:29
 - b. Matthew 20:28
 - c. 1 Corinthians 1:18
 - d. 1 Corinthians 2:2
7. Describe what happened spiritually at the cross?
Use key points of Galatians 3:13 and 2 Corinthians 5:21 in your answer.
8. How can God be just and still pardon guilty sinners?
9. At Calvary, what happened in the invisible world?

Offered to all men (c)

10. What is the response of our souls when we see God’s *holiness* and our *corruption*?
11. What would be the result if God required men to meet some conditions before they could be forgiven?
12. For each of the following, write the meaning of the key phrase about God’s remedy.
 - a. Isaiah 55:1
 - b. John 6:37
 - c. Matthew 11:28
13. What are the two “divine terms” of the gospel?
14. For each of the following references, write out the divine terms detailed in the passage.
 - a. Mark 1:14-15
 - b. Luke 24:47
 - c. Acts 20:21

Lesson Three

Complying with God's Terms

3. A Biblical Christian

A biblical Christian is one who has wholeheartedly fulfilled the terms for obtaining God's provision for sin.

What are the divine terms for obtaining the divine provision? We must repent, and we must believe. Although it is necessary to discuss these as separate concepts, we must not think that repentance is ever divorced from faith, or that faith is ever divorced from repentance. True faith is full of repentance, and true repentance is full of faith. They connect with one another in such a way that, whenever there's a true receiving of the divine provision, you will find a repenting believer and a believing penitent.¹⁰

a. Repentance

What is repentance? The definition of the *Westminster Shorter Catechism*¹¹ is an excellent one: "Repentance unto life is a saving grace whereby a sinner, out of a true sense of his sin, and laying hold of the mercy of God in Christ, does, with grief and hatred of his sin, turn from it unto God, with full purpose of, and effort toward, new obedience."

Repentance is the prodigal¹² son coming to his senses in the far country. Rather than remain at home under his father's rule, he had asked to receive his inheritance early and left home for a far country, where he wasted it. Reduced to misery through his sins, he came to himself and said, "How many hired servants of my father's have bread enough and to spare, and I perish with hunger! I will arise and go to my father, and will say unto him, Father, I have sinned against heaven, and before thee, And am no more worthy to be called thy son: make me as one of thy hired servants" (Luk 15:17-19).

When the prodigal son recognized his sin, he did not sit there and think about it, write poetry about it, or send telegrams home to dad. The Scripture says, "And he arose, and came to his father" (vs. 20). He left those companions who were his friends in sin; he despised everything that belonged to

¹⁰ **penitent** – one who repents.

¹¹ *Westminster Shorter Catechism* – questions and answers prepared by the Westminster Assembly in 1646 for fathers to use in instructing their children in the doctrines of the *Westminster Confession of Faith*. There was also a *Larger Catechism* prepared for use by ministers for teaching in the pulpit.

¹² **prodigal** – recklessly wasteful; wayward; rebellious.

that life-style and turned his back on it. What was it that drew him home? It was the confidence that there was a gracious father with a large heart and with a righteous rule for his happy, loving home. He did not write saying, “Dad, things are getting rough down here; my conscience is giving me fits at night. Won’t you send me some money to help me out, or come and pay me a visit and make me feel good?” Not at all! He did not need just to feel good; he needed to *become* good. So he left the far country.

It is a beautiful part of our Lord’s picture when He says, “But when he was yet a great way off, his father saw him, and had compassion, and ran, and fell on his neck, and kissed him” (vs. 20). The prodigal son did not come strutting up to his father, talking about “making a decision” to come home. There is a notion today that people can walk up an aisle, pray a little prayer, and do God a favor by making their decision. This has nothing to do with true conversion.

True repentance involves recognizing 1) that I have sinned against the God of heaven—Who is great and gracious, holy and loving—and 2) that I am not worthy to be called His son. Yet when I am prepared to leave my sin, turn my back upon it, and come back humbly, wondering if indeed there can be mercy for me, then—wonder of wonders!—the Father meets me and throws His arms of reconciling love and mercy about me. I say, not in a sentimental way but in all truth, that He *smothers* repenting sinners in forgiving and redeeming¹³ love.

But the father did not throw his arms around the prodigal when he was still in the hog pens and in the arms of harlots. Do I speak to some whose hearts are wedded to the world and who love the world’s ways? Perhaps in your personal life, or in relationship to your parents, or in your social life where you take so lightly the moral purity of the body, you show what you really are.

Maybe some of you are involved in fornication, or in heavy petting, or in looking at the kind of stuff that feeds your lust on television, movies, magazines, and the Internet—and yet you name the name of Christ. You live in the hog pens and then go to a house of God on Sunday. Shame on you! Leave your hog pens and your haunts of sin! Leave your patterns and practices of fleshly indulgence! Repentance is being sorry enough to quit your sin. You will never know the forgiving mercy of God while you are still wedded to your sins.

¹³ **redeeming** – obtaining release from captivity by paying a ransom; delivering from sin by paying the penalty. Jesus Christ redeemed lost sinners by bearing the penalty for their sins on the cross of Calvary (1Co 5:21).

b. Faith

Repentance is the soul's divorce from sin, but it will always be joined to faith. What is faith? Faith is the casting of the soul upon Christ as He is offered in the gospel. "But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name" (Joh 1:12). Faith is likened to drinking of Christ, for in my soul-thirst I drink of Him. Faith is likened to looking to Christ, and following Christ, and fleeing to Christ. The Bible uses many illustrations, but the sum of all of them is this: in the nakedness of my need, I cast myself upon the Savior—trusting Him to be to me all that He has promised to be to needy sinners.

Faith brings nothing to Christ but an empty hand, by which it takes Christ and all that is in Him. What is in Christ? Full pardon for all my sins! His perfect obedience is put to my account. His death is counted as mine. The gift of the Spirit is in Him. Adoption,¹⁴ sanctification,¹⁵ and ultimately glorification are all in Him; and faith, by taking Christ, receives all that is in Him. You are "in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption" (1Co 1:30).

c. Always together

What is a biblical Christian? A biblical Christian is a person who has wholeheartedly fulfilled the divine terms for obtaining the divine provision for sin. Those terms are *repentance* and *faith*. I like to think of them as the hinge on which the door of salvation turns. The hinge has two plates, one that is screwed to the door and the other that is screwed to the door frame. They are held together by a pin, and on that hinge the door turns. Christ is that door, but none enters through Him who does not repent and believe.

There is no true hinge made up only of repentance. Repentance that is not joined to faith is a legalistic repentance. It only wants to avoid the negative consequences of the sin. Likewise, there is no true hinge made up only of faith. Professed faith that is not joined to repentance is a false faith, for true faith is faith in Christ to save me, not *in*, but *from* my sin. Repentance and faith are inseparable, and "unless you repent you will all likewise perish" (Luk 13:3). The unbelieving are named among those who "shall have their part in the lake which burns with fire and brimstone, which is the second death" (Rev 21:8).

¹⁴ **adoption** – Adoption is an act of God's free grace whereby we are received into the number, and have a right to all the privileges of the sons of God.—*Spurgeon's Catechism*, Q. 33, available from CHAPEL LIBRARY. Benjamin Keach (1640-1704) had adapted the *Westminster Shorter Catechism* as a Baptist catechism, and Charles Spurgeon (1834-1892) further adapted it for use in his own congregation.

¹⁵ **sanctification** – Sanctification is the work of God's Spirit whereby we are renewed in the whole man after the image of God and are enabled more and more to die to sin, and live to righteousness.—*Spurgeon's Catechism*, Q. 34. See Free Grace Broadcaster 215, *Sanctification*, available from CHAPEL LIBRARY.

d. Evidence of being a biblical Christian

A biblical Christian is a person who shows in his life that his claims to repentance and faith are real.

Paul preached that men should repent and turn to God, and do works consistent with repentance (Act 26:20). God intends that there should be such works: “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. For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus *unto good works*, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them” (Eph 2:8-10).

Paul says in Galatians 5:6 that faith works by love. Wherever there is true faith in Christ, genuine love to Christ also will be given. And where there is love to Christ, there will be obedience to Christ. “He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me...He that loveth me not keepeth not my sayings” (Joh 14:21-24). We are saved by trusting Christ, not by loving and obeying Christ; but a trust that does not produce love and obedience is not true saving faith.

True faith works by love, and that which love works is not the ability to sit out on a beautiful starlit night and write poetry about how exciting it is to be a Christian. True faith works by causing you to go back into your home and to obey your father and your mother, or to love your husband or wife and children as the Bible tells you to do, or to go back to your school or to your job to take a stand for truth and righteousness against all the pressure of others.

True faith makes you willing to be counted as a fool and crazy—willing to be considered outdated—because you believe that there are eternal, unchangeable moral standards. You are willing to believe in purity and the holy value of human life, and to take your stand against premarital sex and the murdering of babies in mothers’ wombs. For Jesus said, “Whosoever therefore shall be ashamed of me and of my words in this adulterous and sinful generation; of him also shall the Son of man be ashamed, when he cometh in the glory of his Father with the holy angels” (Mar 8:38).

What is a biblical Christian? It is not merely one who says, “Oh, yes, I know I am a sinner, with a bad record and a bad heart. I know that God’s provision for sinners is in Christ and in His cross, and that it is freely offered to all. I know it comes to all who repent and believe.” That is not enough. *Do* you repent and believe? And if you say that you repent and believe, can you make what you say stick—not by a life of perfection, but by a life of purposeful obedience to Jesus Christ? “Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that *doeth the will of my Father* which is in heaven” (Mat 7:21). In Hebrews 5:9 we read, “he became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him.” 1 John 2:4

says, “He that saith, I know him, and keepeth not his commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him.”

Can you make your claim to be a Christian stick from the Bible? Does your life show the results of repentance and faith? Do you possess a life of love for Christ, obedience to Christ, and confession of Christ? Is your behavior marked by the ways of Christ? Not perfectly—no! Every day you must pray, Forgive me my trespasses as I forgive those who trespass against me (Mat 6:12). But at the same time you can also say, “For me to live is Christ” (Phi 1:21) or, in the words of the hymn,

*Jesus I my cross have taken
All to leave and follow Thee.*

A true Christian follows Jesus. How many of us are true, biblical Christians? I leave you to answer in the depth of your own mind and heart. But remember, answer with an answer that you will be prepared to live with for eternity. Be content with no answer but one that will find you comfortable in death, and safe in the Day of Judgment.

Lesson Three: Complying with God’s Terms

Study Questions

Please read section 3 before answering these questions. Always put what you have read into your own words in your answers, to indicate your understanding.

A biblical Christian (3)

Repentance (a)

1. What is repentance?
2. How does the prodigal son illustrate repentance?
3. What does walking an aisle or praying a simple little prayer have to do with conversion? Why?
4. How did the father respond to the prodigal son?
5. a. What modern day experiences are represented by the “hog pens”?
b. Why is it necessary to leave the hog pens in order to come to Christ?

Faith (b)

6. What is faith? *Use the reference and meaning of John 1:12 in your answer.*
7. How does faith receive Christ?
8. What happens in the sinner when he is joined to Christ through faith?

Always together (c)

9. How are repentance and faith like a hinge?
10. a. What is repentance without faith?
b. Why?

11. a. What is faith without repentance?
- b. Why?

Evidences of being a biblical Christian (d)

12. For each of the following, write the meaning of the key phrase about evidences. *As always, use your own words.*
 - a. Acts 26:20
 - b. Ephesians 2:8-10
13. Describe the relationship of faith, love, and obedience.
14. How does faith work? *Apply the key phrase of Mark 8:38 in your answer.*
15. *Making It Personal*
 - a. Do you repent and believe?
 - b. What do you repent from?
 - c. What do you believe for salvation?
16. For each of the following, write the meaning of the key phrase about evidences. *As always, use your own words.*
 - a. Matthew 7:21
 - b. Hebrews 5:9
 - c. 1 John 2:4
17. *Making It Personal*
 - a. Do you claim to be a Christian?
 - b. If so, can you make your claim stick from the Bible?
 - c. Do you live a life of obedience to Christ?
 - d. Is your behavior marked by the ways of Christ?
 - e. Are you prepared to live with your answers to these questions into eternity?
18. *Making It Personal*
 - a. What are the main lessons you have learned during this course?
 - b. What value is this to you?

Thank you for taking this course. Please contact MZBI
now for your next course.

*Put into practice the new insights from your study.
Re-read the main headings and your notes;
then review these main lessons regularly
during the next month.*

Detailed Course Instructions

1. Procedure for Taking the Course

- a. The reading material for this course consists of the reading text printed at the beginning of each lesson of this study guide.
- b. Before beginning to read, please pray for God's enabling to learn spiritually.
- c. Before you begin a lesson, please read the reading text completely.
- d. After reading the text, answer the related questions in this study guide. The lessons in this course are "open book," which often enhances learning by removing unnecessary pressure. In addition, some questions ask for a personal response, where the answer will not be found in the reading material. In this case, we ask only for your honesty and best effort.
- e. The questions are designed to be thought through carefully. Several of the questions are sensitive; they have to do with your heart attitudes. So please do not rush, or you will be defeating the purpose of the course! Answer all of the questions as honestly as you can. The answers are confidential.
- f. Do not go to the next question until you have answered the previous one.

2. Answer pages

Try to be concise and as clear as possible in your answers. Please write or type your answers on regular 8.5 x 11 inch (A4 metric) paper, or on the preprinted answer sheets if provided. Please write clearly and neatly, and if possible print. Note each page with Lesson #, each answer with Question #, and skip a line between questions

3. Supplies

Paper, pen, and Bible are needed to complete your assignments. The King James Version is quoted, but you may use another version if you do not have a KJV.

4. Completion of Assignments

- a. If taking this course with a local coordinator, please follow their instructions.
- b. If you are taking this course as individual independent study (non-graded), save your answer sheets for future reference. (Skip the below instructions 5 & 6).

5. Only if Correspondent Study

- a. Two months are allotted for the completion of this course. You may be granted an extension by contacting MZBI.
- b. Mail your answer sheets to MZBI after completing all Lessons 1 to 3. Only mail your answer sheets, not this Study Guide. They will be returned to you by regular mail after grading. Please ensure to write your name, student ID, course title, and lesson number on each answer sheet. Please see the sample after the Table of Contents at front. Headings should be in the following format:

Your name student ID course WBC lesson number

6. Written Feedback (only if correspondent study)

Spiritual success is not measured by high grades, but by growth in Christ-likeness to God's glory. Therefore, the motivation in taking the course is to see God change your life. There are no letter or number grades such as "A" or "100" to be earned. The grader will offer comments or suggestions from Scripture in response to your answers. Some answers have no comments because they are correct or personal.

Basic Courses from Mount Zion

Salvation

Look to Jesus	LTJ	4 lessons	Basic level
Discovering biblical truth for personal relationship with Christ (W. Reid, 1880).			
Forgiveness	FOR	3 lessons	Basic level
Our need for forgiveness, God's way, marks of being forgiven (J.C. Ryle, 1870).			
Decisional Regeneration	DRE	3 lessons	Basic level
Issues in the way to Christ: "decisions," altar calls, preaching, and theology.			

Practical Walk

A Call to Prayer	CTP	13 lessons	Basic level
Exhortation for a deeper commitment to God-honoring prayer (J.C. Ryle 1875).			
Freedom from Bitterness	FFB	2 lessons	Basic level
What it is, its causes, knowing if we have it, and surprising steps to freedom.			
Set Apart for Christ	SAC	3 lessons	Basic level
Biblical holiness in heart and life: concept, history, hindrances, growth, and joy.			
Divine Guidance	DGU	2 lessons	Basic level
Using God's provisions for knowing His will and avoiding the pitfalls.			
Spiritual Warfare	SWA	6 lessons	Basic level
What it is, why it happens, how to battle effectively (C.H. Spurgeon 1870).			
Thoughts for Young Men	TYM	5 lessons	Basic level
Key principles (for all ages) in seeking and walking with God (J.C. Ryle 1880).			

General Studies

The Life of Jesus Christ	LC	13 lessons	Basic level
Through the four Gospels chronologically: Who Christ is and why He has come.			
Story of the Puritans	SOP	4 lessons	Basic level
How brave men endured persecution to give us a legacy of truth (1500s-1600s).			
Guide to Bible Study	GBS	2 lessons	Basic level
An insightful introduction to reading the Bible profitably (H. Newcomb 1851).			

Doctrine

Pilgrim's Progress	PL	10 lessons	Basic level
Christian's progress in faith, through this world to the next (J. Bunyan 1672).			
The Cross	CRO	2 lessons	Basic level
Not self-righteousness, its meaning, its vital teachings (J.C. Ryle 1857).			
Infallible Word of God	IWG	2 lessons	Basic level
The Bible without error: purity, majesty, immutability, testing, and use.			
Bible Doctrines Simply Explained	BD	4 lessons	Basic level
The historic doctrines of the Christian faith: God, man, salvation, sanctification.			
God's Astounding Grace	GAG	3 lessons	Basic level
Concise summary and introduction to the historic doctrines of the Reformation.			

Additional courses are in development.