

How to become a Christian

What is a Christian?

Let's look at the first use of the word "Christian" in the Bible.

"And the disciples [of Christ] were first called Christians in Antioch." Acts 11:26

To become a Christian means to become a disciple (or follower) of Jesus Christ. In the Scriptures, Jesus is called the "Good Shepard." This means that in becoming a Christian, you become one of the sheep following the Shepard. Under the Shepard's care, there are safety (salvation), provision (nurturing relationship with the Shepard) and a great future (eternity in heaven).

However, there is one huge problem in becoming a sheep that belongs to Jesus. The Bible says that we (humans) are all goats by nature rather than sheep. In contrast to sheep, goats do not follow the Shepard, but they do whatever that seems good to them. Just as the Bible declares:

"There is none who does good, no, not one." Romans 3:12

And again,

"Everyone followed the dictates of his evil heart" Jeremiah 11:8

What happens to goats?

"When the Son of Man [Jesus] comes in His glory, and all the holy angels with Him, then He will sit on the throne of His glory.

All the nations will be gathered before Him, and He will separate them one from another, as a shepherd divides *his* sheep from the goats. And He will set the sheep on His right hand, but the goats on the left... Then He will say to those on the left hand, 'Depart from Me, you cursed, into the everlasting fire prepared for the devil and his angels.'" Matthew 25: 31-33, 41

The horrible place that Jesus speaks of is Hell, where "their worm does not die and the fire is not quenched (Matthew 9:44)." This is the just punishment for sinners who rebelled against God. Man was not created to be a sinner, but rather was created in the image of this Holy God. Yet, to His sorrow, all of us have willingly rebelled against Him.

"All have sinned and have fallen short of His glory." Romans 3:21

What happens to sheep?

Let us go back to the passage in Matthew 25.

"Then the King will say to those on His right hand [to the sheep], 'Come, you blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world.'" Matthew 25:34

The sheep (Christians) will get to spend eternity in heaven (the kingdom) with the Shepard (Jesus) that they trusted in. And because the sheep love the Shepard and each other, they will be filled with joy forever!

If I am a goat, how can I become a sheep?

You must be born again! Think of it. If you are a goat, nothing that you will do to yourself will ever make you a sheep! You could try to put on a wig that looks like a sheep, but you would still be a goat. The only solution is that you be born again. Jesus said:

"Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God." John 3:3

And again,

"Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God." John 3:5

Now how can a person be born again?

“Whoever believes in Him [Jesus] should not perish, but have eternal life.” John 3:15

You would not follow the Good Shepherd (Jesus), unless you believe in Him. Jesus is a Shepherd that loves you so much that He willingly became the sacrifice for your sins so that you would be forgiven completely and be able to have a brand new life of following Him.

“God demonstrated His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ [Son of God] died for us.” Romans 5:8

And,

“For God so loved the world that He sent His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have eternal life.” John 3:16

Recall what happens to goats at the end. God would not be a just and holy God if He simply waived that punishment for you. Through death, Jesus paid the penalty for your sins.

Therefore,

“If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.” 1John 1:9

Won't you now trust in this loving Shepherd that would even give His own life to save you from your sins and your eternal punishment? But you may ask, “if He died for me, how could I trust in Him? He's dead!”

“But now Christ is risen from the dead, and has become the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep [died].” 1Corinthians 15:20

He rose from the dead! That means that He is the One that can lead you to eternal life through resurrection. It is because of this great miracle of resurrection that we can fully trust in Jesus.

“Moreover, brethren, I declare to you the gospel [good news] which I preached to you, which also you received and in which you stand, by which also you are saved, if you hold fast that word which I preached to you—unless you believed in vain. For I delivered to you first of all that which I also received: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, and that He was buried, and that He rose again the third day according to the Scriptures, and that He was seen by Cephas [Peter], then by the twelve. After that He was seen by over five hundred brethren at once, of whom the greater part remain to the present, but some have fallen asleep.” 1Corinthians 15:1-6

It is through your faith in this Good News that you can be born again as a sheep that belongs to Jesus and follow Him for the rest of your life, after which you will get to enjoy His presence forever. If you are willing to turn from your own ways as a goat and to be obedient to the Good Shepherd, pray this simple prayer.

“God in Heaven, I acknowledge that I have sinned against You and that I have lived my life as a goat. I deserve to be sentenced to the eternal punishment. But I thank You that You did not leave me condemned, but You have sent Your only begotten Son, Jesus to carry my judgment on the Cross. I believe that He died for my sins and that He rose from the dead. So on this day of _____, 20__, I give my life entirely to the lordship of Jesus.

Lord Jesus, I renounce my own ways and my sins. Come into my life and change me that I may become Your sheep. Thank You, Lord, for Your love and sacrifice for me. My life is completely Yours and according to Your word, I shall never be ashamed and shall enjoy Your presence forever. Amen”

The Lord Jesus welcomes you to His flock and the entire assembly of angels in heaven celebrate your being born again. Welcome to the Family!