

"Called Christian(s)"

Acts 11:25-26; Acts 26:28 & 1 Peter 4:16

²⁵ Then Barnabas departed for Tarsus to seek Saul. ²⁶ And when he had found him, he brought him to Antioch. So it was that for a whole year they assembled with the church and taught a great many people. And the disciples were first called Christians in Antioch. Acts 11:25–26 (NKJV)

²⁸ Then Agrippa said to Paul, "You almost persuade me to become a Christian." Acts 26:28 (NKJV)

¹⁶ Yet if *anyone suffers* as a Christian, let him not be ashamed, but let him glorify God in this matter. 1 Peter 4:16 (NKJV)

I am not sure exactly when it was, but maybe the 1980s atheist comedian did a comedy routine against RELIGION ...

It seemed shortly after that I started hearing the saying, "we are not religious, we have a relationship."

Believers started treating the word "religion" as if it were a dirty word –

James 1:26–27 (NKJV)

²⁶ If anyone among you thinks he is religious, and does not bridle his tongue but deceives his own heart, this one's religion *is* useless.

²⁷ Pure and undefiled religion before God and the Father is this: to visit orphans and widows in their trouble, *and* to keep oneself unspotted from the world.

Similarly we have surrendered the rainbow

And now transgenders and others are claiming the word Christian and calling us the Patriarchy ...

And some believers are willing to give up the word "Christian" too -

In the Bible, we find the word "Christian(s)" only in the three verses. Yet, despite the scarcity of New Testament use, it is the key word that is used today to describe someone who holds to our faith.

Not only that, but the use has come with abuse. People who have no clue about true Christianity or Christ, and some who even war against Biblical Christianity, have claimed the word "Christian" for themselves, dragging it often through ungodly, worldly mud! Because of this, a few have suggested that Jesus Christ's Church chose a different moniker. Instead of "Christian" they say, use disciple, or use "the Way" – **Acts 9:2**.

I have no problem with being called a "disciple of Christ" but I have a problem with "disciple" replacing Christian. Why Keep the Word Christian?

I. Because Christian and Disciple are two different words, both Biblical, with two different meanings, one does not replace the other.

1. *The word disciple means "learner" or "follower" in the New Testament we see both John the Baptist and Jesus had "disciples."*

A. John's disciples -

¹⁴ Then the disciples of John came to Him, saying, "Why do we and the Pharisees fast often, but Your disciples do not fast?" Matthew 9:14 (NKJV)

B. Jesus' disciples -

²⁴ Then Jesus said to His disciples, "If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me.

2. *One of the differences between true disciples and true Christians is men can make disciples, but by strict definition only God / Christ / The Holy Spirit can make a true "Christian."*

⁸ The wind blows where it wishes, and you hear the sound of it, but cannot tell where it comes from and where it goes. So is everyone who is born of the Spirit." John 3:8 (NKJV)

A. Men can "make disciples" –

**¹⁹ Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit,
²⁰ teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age." Amen.
Matthew 28:19–20 (NKJV)**

B. Yet, because disciples are "man-made" they can stop learning and following -

⁶⁶ From that *time* many of His disciples went back and walked with Him no more. John 6:66 (NKJV)

C. Christian in the fullest sense of the word describes not only learners and followers, but like "Christ" true Christians are "anointed" with the Holy Spirit, born again -

II. *The word Christian comes from the word Christ and so shares meaning with the word Christ –*

⁴¹ He first found his own brother Simon, and said to him, "We have found the Messiah" (which is translated, the Christ). John 1:41 (NKJV)

Let us start with Jesus Christ!

I think too often people hear the name "Jesus Christ" and, influenced by our culture, think, "Christ" was Jesus' last name. That is an error. Christ was not and is not a name, Christ is a title meaning "The Anointed One."

Jesus was the Anointed One, Messiah, Christ because such a Person was prophesied and promised.

⁶¹ "The Spirit of the Lord GOD is upon Me, Because the LORD has anointed Me To preach good tidings to the poor; He has sent Me to heal the brokenhearted, To proclaim liberty to the captives, And the opening of the prison to *those who are bound*; Isaiah 61:1 (NKJV)

Now, in the Old Testament, there were three anointed offices: Prophet, Priest, & King. The men God called to these offices were anointed:

1. With oil, which was and is symbolic.
2. They were anointed with God's Holy Spirit, the third Person of the Godhead, is Who the oil was symbolic of!

Every prophet, every priest, every king in the Old Testament, we could call a lower case "m" messiah! They were all anointed with oil. Many, or at least some, were anointed with God's Spirit, for example:

A. Prophets were anointed with God's Spirit -

³⁰ **Yet for many years You had patience with them, and testified against them by Your Spirit in Your prophets. Yet they would not listen; Therefore You gave them into the hand of the peoples of the lands. Nehemiah 9:30 (NKJV)**

B. Priests were anointed with God's Spirit -

²⁰ **Then the Spirit of God came upon Zechariah the son of Jehoiada the priest, who stood above the people, and said to them, "Thus says God: 'Why do you transgress the commandments of the LORD, so that you cannot prosper? Because you have forsaken the LORD, He also has forsaken you.' 2 Chronicles 24:20 (NKJV)**

C. Kings were anointed with God's Spirit -

David -

¹⁰ **Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a steadfast spirit within me. ¹¹ Do not cast me away from Your presence, and do not take Your Holy Spirit from me. Psalm 51:10-11 (NKJV)**

Saul -

¹⁴ **But the Spirit of the LORD departed from Saul, and a distressing spirit from the LORD troubled him. 1 Samuel 16:14**

3. Christ is THE ANNOINTED ONE – He combines the THREE OFFICES in ONE PERSON!

Prophet -

²⁰ and that He may send Jesus Christ, who was preached to you before, ²¹ whom heaven must receive until the times of restoration of all things, which God has spoken by the mouth of all His holy prophets since the world began. ²² For Moses truly said to the fathers, *'The LORD your God will raise up for you a Prophet like me from your brethren. Him you shall hear in all things, whatever He says to you.* ²³ *And it shall be that every soul who will not hear that Prophet shall be utterly destroyed from among the people.'* Acts 3:20–23 (NKJV)

Priest -

⁵ So also Christ did not glorify Himself to become High Priest, but it was He who said to Him: *"You are My Son, Today I have begotten You."* Hebrews 5:5 (NKJV)

King –

⁶ *"Yet I have set My King On My holy hill of Zion."* Psalm 2:6 (NKJV)

⁵ *"Tell the daughter of Zion, 'Behold, your King is coming to you, Lowly, and sitting on a donkey, A colt, the foal of a donkey.'* " Matthew 21:5 (NKJV)

III. Our Westminster Shorter Catechism tells us how Jesus executes the offices of the Christ

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Question 24 How does Christ execute the office of a prophet?

Christ executes the office of a prophet, in revealing to us, by his word and Spirit, the will of God for our salvation. (**John 1:18**)

¹⁸ **No one has seen God at any time. The only begotten Son, who is in the bosom of the Father, He has declared Him.** John 1:18 (NKJV)

Question 25 How does Christ execute the office of a priest?

Christ executes the office of a priest, in his once offering up of himself a sacrifice to satisfy divine justice, (**Hebrews 9:14, 28 A**) and reconcile us to God; (**Hebrews 2:17**) and in making continual intercession for us. (Hebrews 7:24–27)

**¹⁴ how much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered Himself without spot to God, cleanse your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?
Hebrews 9:14 (NKJV)**

**²⁸ so Christ was offered once to bear the sins of many... Hebrews 9:28
A (NKJV)**

**¹⁷ Therefore, in all things He had to be made like *His* brethren, that He might be a merciful and faithful High Priest in things *pertaining* to God, to make propitiation for the sins of the people.
Hebrews 2:17 (NKJV)**

**²⁴ But He, because He continues forever, has an unchangeable priesthood. ²⁵ Therefore He is also able to save to the uttermost those who come to God through Him, since He always lives to make intercession for them. ²⁶ For such a High Priest was fitting for us, *who is* holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and has become higher than the heavens; ²⁷ who does not need daily, as those high priests, to offer up sacrifices, first for His own sins and then for the people's, for this He did once for all when He offered up Himself.
Hebrews 7:24–27 (NKJV)**

Question 26 How does Christ execute the office of a king?

Christ executes the office of a king, in subduing us to himself, in ruling, and defending us, (**Isaiah 32:1–2**) and in restraining and conquering all his and our enemies. (**Revelation 17:14; 1 Corinthians 15:25**)

32 Behold, a king will reign in righteousness, And princes will rule with justice. ² A man will be as a hiding place from the wind, And a cover from the tempest, As rivers of water in a dry place, As the shadow of a great rock in a weary land. Isaiah 32:1–2 (NKJV)

¹⁴ These will make war with the Lamb, and the Lamb will overcome them, for He is Lord of lords and King of kings; and those *who are* with Him *are* called, chosen, and faithful." Revelation 17:14 (NKJV)

²⁵ For He must reign till He has put all enemies under His feet. ²⁶ The last enemy *that will be destroyed is death.* 1 Corinthians 15:25–26 (NKJV)

IV. The three offices of Christ correspond to our need to restored to God's Image –

¹⁰ and have put on the new *man* who is renewed in knowledge according to the image of Him who created him, Colossians 3:10 (NKJV)

²⁴ and that you put on the new man which was created according to God, in true righteousness and holiness. Ephesians 4:24 (NKJV)

1. *Prophet corresponds to our NEED for Knowledge – Colossians 3:10*
2. *Priest corresponds to our NEED for Righteousness – Ephesians 4:24*
3. *King corresponds to our NEED for Holiness – Ephesians 4:24*

Altogether the reason God gave us Prophets, Priests and Kings and finally Christ was to restore His people to the image of God, to make us Christians, Little Christ's little anointed ones.

²⁸ And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are the called according to *His* purpose. ²⁹ For whom He foreknew, He also predestined *to be* conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the firstborn among many brethren. Romans 8:28–29 (NKJV)

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