

# **To Deny Christ - What Does It Mean?**

Jesus said, "But whosoever shall deny me before men, him will I also deny before my Father which is in heaven" (Matt. 10:33). What did He mean by this statement? Can you deny Christ and not realize it? Read this article to find out the truth.

Many martyrs gave up their lives for refusing to deny Christ. "They loved not their lives unto the death." But, what did Jesus say about those who reject or deny His word? He said those who deny Him will be denied before the Father in heaven. What did Christ mean by these remarks?

### **Christ Was the Spokesman**

Christ, the Son of God, appeared on this Earth as a physical human being. Isaiah prophesied, "For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counselor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace" (Isa. 9:6). Other Old Testament prophecies anticipated the appearance of the Messiah. Prior to His human birth, Christ was the God of the Old Testament (1Cor. 10:1-4). His appearance and sacrifice were part of God's redemption plan for mankind. Jesus Christ was the propitiatory sacrifice needed to take away the sins of the world (John 3:16; 6:51; 12:27, Matt. 20:28, Heb. 2:9, 14-15, 18). Jesus brought the message of salvation to mankind, the spiritual truth of the New Testament dispensation (Heb. 1:2, John 1:17).

As the Logos or Spokesman, Jesus Christ was the Word of God personified. Along with the Father, He existed from the beginning. He was the true Light who brought spiritual enlightenment to the world (John 1:1-3, 7-9). He said, ". . . I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me" (John 14:6). Salvation to mankind came through Christ alone (John 10:7-9, Acts 4:12). He alone brought the way to eternal life (Luke 1:78-79). He was God in the flesh who dwelt among us (John 1:14).

Jesus set the perfect example for us to follow. He did not live a perfect life in our stead; rather, he came to die in our stead. His perfect life exemplified the kind of behavior and conduct we should manifest. He revealed the complete spiritual manifestation of God's Law for us to follow. He filled to the full or magnified the spiritual intent of God's law (Isa. 42:21).

### **Meaning of the Word Must Be Revealed**

To come to accept and really believe in Christ is contingent upon a divine call from God, the Father. Jesus said, "No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him: and I will raise him up at the last day" (John 6:44). God's Spirit directly intervenes to call one to a knowledge of the truth. Those who come to the spiritual truths of God are taught of God (John 6:45), and are able to comprehend the significance of Christ, what He stands for, and the meaning of His words (John 14:6, 26). Spiritual truth and Biblical understanding are not the result of human study or scholarship. Rather, they are the result of the direct intervention of God's Spirit leading the mind to grasp revelation from God (Matt. 16:15-16).

Those who grasp the significance of Christ's sacrifice and the understanding of His word begin to walk by faith (Hab. 2:4). Christians learn to live by faith, not by sight (2 Cor. 5:7). They know the truth that came to them came by means of divine revelation. They live by faith in the conviction that the truth they now possess truly came from God. They truly confess Christ in their lives by the way they think and by what they do.

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As the Logos-the Spokesman-Christ had a commission from the Father. He was to speak only that which the Father instructed. Jesus said over and over that His words were those of the Father (John 3:34; 12:49). He was under the Father's authority (1 Cor. 11:3). He said He could do nothing of Himself, that He did the works of His Father (John 5:19-20). He said He came to do the will of the Father-the One that sent Him (John 7:16). Christ did not seek to do His own will (John 5:30).

Jesus made it clear that those who would seek to do the will of the Father would be able to understand the true doctrine (John 7:17). As such, God would give them understanding of both the Old and New Testaments (Matt. 4:4). When one accepts Christ, he accepts the totality of all Bible truth found in the sacred Scriptures. Christ was the God of the Old Testament (1 Cor. 10:1-4). The word of God found in the Old Testament constitutes an essential part of the doctrinal truths. Linked with the New Testament, the doctrine becomes complete. To accept Christ's words means to accept the entirety of the Bible.

## **The Importance of the Ascension**

The Holy Spirit within the Christian grants the potentiality of eternal life (Rom. 8:11). One who has the Holy Spirit has the Son. "And this is the record, that God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. He that hath the Son hath life; and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life" (1 John 5:11-12). Those who have received the Holy Spirit both believe and practice the things Jesus taught.

The importance of the ascension, which followed Christ's resurrection, cannot be underestimated. The Holy Spirit could not be given to man until Christ ascended into the heavens. He said, "Nevertheless I tell you the truth; It is expedient for you that I go away: for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send him unto you" (John 16:7). This was the promise that the Holy Spirit would soon dwell in them (John 14:16-17). The Holy Spirit is the Spirit of truth. Those who have the Holy Spirit dwelling in them practice the truth.

Upon the ascension of Christ, the Holy Spirit that had inspired and led Christ came into the disciples. They now had the power and ability to practice the same things Jesus did when He was incarnate. Jesus lives His life in each Christian by means of the Holy Spirit (Gal. 2:20, 1 John 3:24). "Hereby know ye the Spirit of God: Every spirit that confesseth that Jesus Christ comes in the flesh is of God: And every spirit that confesseth not that Jesus Christ comes in the flesh is not of God. . ." (1 John 4:2-3). How is this refusal to confess Christ manifested? Let the Apostle Paul tell us. "They profess that they know God; but in works they deny him, being abominable, and disobedient, and unto every good work reprobate" (Titus 1:16). Those who are truly converted seek the spiritual things of God (Rom. 8:9, 14). Those who are led by the spirit are the sons of God (Rom. 8:9). They have put on Christ. They are overcoming the pulls and lusts of human nature (Gal. 5:16-17, 24). They manifest the fruits of the spirit described in Galatians 5:22-26. These are love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, and temperance. Christians walk as Christ walked (1 John 2:6).

## **Denial of Christ Prophesied for the Last Days**

The Apostle Peter wrote, "But there were false prophets also among the people, even as there shall be false teachers among you, who privily shall bring in damnable heresies, even denying the Lord that bought them, and bring upon themselves swift destruction. And many shall follow their pernicious ways; by reason of whom the way of truth shall be evil spoken of" (2 Pet. 2:1-2). Notice, Peter is foretelling some future event. Notice 2 Peter 3:3-4. "Knowing this first, that there shall come in the last days scoffers, walking after their own lusts, And saying, Where is the promise of his coming? for since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of the creation." Doubt and heresy would be a rampant feature of the last days. This indicates that doubt and heresy would prevail among those who had

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gained some knowledge of God but were subverted in one manner or another. Lust would become the all-consuming passion. Ungodly lifestyles would encourage many to repudiate the significance of the times in which they are living, to reject the signs that point to the imminent return of Jesus Christ. This time period applies to the "last days." The Apostle Paul spoke of the last days when religious people would deny God's Spirit as the source of the power in their lives (2 Tim. 3:1, 5); a time when they would not endure sound doctrine (2 Tim. 4:1-4); a time when they would gather to themselves teachers who would preach what they want to hear. The result would be the acceptance of error and fables.

The last days would be distinguished by the spirit of antichrist. The antichrist denies Christ. The warning is given in 1 John 2. "Who is a liar but he that denieth that Jesus is the Christ? He is antichrist, that denieth the Father and the Son" (v. 22). "Let that therefore abide in you, which ye have heard from the beginning. If that which ye have heard from the beginning shall remain in you, ye also shall continue in the Son, and in the Father" (v. 24). "But the anointing which ye have received of him abideth in you, and ye need not that any man teach you: but as the same anointing teacheth you of all things, and is truth, and is no lie, and even as it hath taught you, ye shall abide in him" (v. 27). Clearly, this denial of Christ is the result of denying the true doctrine. No wonder Jesus said that to reject His word is to reject Him. "He that rejecteth me, and receiveth not my words, hath one that judgeth him: the word that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day" (John 12:48).

John said the spirits must be put to the test (1 John 4:1-3). Those who are of God are those truly confessing Christ-letting Him live His life in them and practicing what He taught. Those who profess Christ but refuse to follow His example deny Christ. They are led by the spirit of antichrist (1 John 4:3). The world listens to them because they are of the world (1 John 3:1-2).

## **How Can Christ Be Denied?**

The obvious way is vocally, as Peter did under great stress (Matt. 26:69-75). But this is not the only way to deny Christ. Notice what Peter told the Jews. "The God of Abraham, and of Isaac, and of Jacob, the God of our fathers, hath glorified his Son Jesus; whom ye delivered up, and denied him in the presence of Pilate, when he was determined to let him go" (Acts 3:13). Many times in the past, the Jews had denied the true servants of God (Acts 7:35, 51-52). Here in Acts 3:13 they denied that Jesus was the Christ. Those who deny that Jesus is the Christ are, according to the Bible, liars and antichrist (1 John 2:22).

The way most often used to deny Christ, though, is to profess Christianity, then fail to live up to it. Paul wrote, "They profess that they know God; but in works they deny him, being abominable, and disobedient, and unto every good work reprobate" (Titus 1:16). Godliness comes about as a result of the power and action of the Holy Spirit in one's life. But some have denied the power of the Holy Spirit in their lives (2 Tim. 3:5). Christ said He comes into the lives of the brethren by means of the Holy Spirit (John 14:23). To deny the power of the Holy Spirit is to deny Christ.

## **How Can We Confess Christ?**

Christ's words were, "Whosoever therefore shall confess me before men, him will I confess also before my Father which is in heaven" (Matt. 10:32). The common assumption is that we confess Christ by publicly accepting Him. But many who confess Christ are in reality denying Him (Titus 1:16). Confessing Christ, then, means more than just proclaiming His name. To praise God and give Him thanks publicly is certainly one way to confess Christ, but it is not the most important way. The most important way to confess Christ is to live and practice Christianity-to live the way Christ lived by means of the Holy Spirit. Those who confess Christ publicly, who openly acknowledge Christ as Lord when the occasion is called for, and practice Christianity in their lives are the ones who truly confess Christ (1 Tim. 6:12, 1 John 4:2-3).

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To confess or to deny Christ is accomplished by either living or failing to live up to the Christian requirement. Those who publicly acknowledge Christ may find that this is insufficient to prove they really confess Christ. If they fail to live up to what Christ taught they are, in reality, denying Christ. Those who turn from the truth of God, or reject the Holy Spirit as a source of power and love in their lives, have denied Christ. It is imperative for all Christians to study their Bibles to learn what Christ really taught and then to put it to practice in their lives.