

## CHURCH MEMBERS OR, CHRISTIANS, SAINTS, AND BELIEVERS? Saints or Ain'ts? Professors or Pretenders?

1. WE LIVE IN A RELIGIOUS NATION.
  1. Are you a Christian?
  2. I'm a member of such and such church.
  3. Quote of newly elected President of Southern Baptist Convention (1996). AI'm proud to be a Baptist; especially a Southern Baptist. @
  4. Very acceptable to be a church member.
  
2. CHRISTIANS.
  1. ***First called Christians at Antioch.***
    1. (Acts 11:26 KJV) And when he had found him, he brought him unto Antioch. And it came to pass, that a whole year they assembled themselves with the church, and taught much people. And the disciples were called Christians first in Antioch.
    2. Followers of Christ.
    3. Christ-like.
  2. ***Levels of those who are interested in Jesus.***
    1. Onlookers and curiosity seekers.
    2. Inquirers.
      1. The Philippian jailer: What must I do to be saved?
      2. Saul: Who art thou Lord?
      3. Pilot: Are you King of the Jews?
    3. Almost. (Acts 26:26 KJV) For the king knoweth of these things, before whom also I speak freely: for I am persuaded that none of these things are hidden from him; for this thing was not done in a corner. (Acts 26:27 KJV) King Agrippa, believest thou the prophets? I know that thou believest. (Acts 26:28 KJV) Then Agrippa said unto Paul, Almost thou persuadest me to be a Christian.
  3. ***Becoming a follower.***
    1. Following for loaves and fishes.
    2. Following far off; not wanting to be too closely identified.
  4. ***Becoming a disciple--Submitting to the discipline of the Lord.***
  5. ***Becoming a Christian.*** Taking on the nature of Christ.
  6. ***The early Christians.***
    1. Totally sold out.
    2. Willing to suffer shame and to be imprisoned.
  7. ***Drinking of His cup.*** (Mat 20:22 KJV) But Jesus answered and said, Ye know not what ye ask. Are ye able to drink of the cup that I shall drink of, and to be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with? They say unto him, We are able.
  8. ***Early martyrs.***
    1. Stephen.
    2. James. As James was led to the place of martyrdom, his accuser was

brought to repent of his conduct by the apostle's extraordinary courage and undauntedness, and fell down at his feet to request his pardon, professing himself a Christian, and resolving that James should not receive the crown of martyrdom alone.

3. Philip. Scourged, thrown into prison, and afterwards crucified.
4. Matthew. Slain with a halberd in the city of Nadabah.
5. James the Less. At the age of 94, he was beat and stoned by the Jews; and finally had his brains dashed out with a fuller's club.
6. Matthias. Stoned at Jerusalem and then beheaded.
7. Andrew. Crucified on a cross, the two ends of which were fixed transversely in the ground; hence the derivation of the term, St. Andrew's cross.
8. Mark. Dragged to pieces by the people of Alexandria.
9. Peter. Crucified upside down at his request.
10. Paul. Beheaded in Rome.
11. Jude. Crucified at Edess, A. D. 72.
12. Bartholomew. Was at length cruelly beaten and crucified by the impatient idolaters on India.
13. Thomas. Martyred by being thrust through with a spear by raging pagan priests in India.
14. Luke. Hanged on an olive tree by the idolatrous priests of Greece.
15. Simon Zeolotes. Crucified in Britain.
16. John. Cast into a cauldron of boiling oil; escaped by a miracle, without injury. Banished to Isle of Patmos. Only apostle to escape violent death.
17. Polycarp, the venerable bishop of Smyrna, hearing that persons were seeking for him, escaped, but was discovered by a child. After feasting the guards who apprehended him, he desired an hour in prayer, which being allowed, he prayed with such fervency, that his guards repented that they had been instrumental in taking him. He was, however, carried before the proconsul, condemned, and burnt in the market place. The proconsul then urged him, saying, "Swear, and I will release thee;--reproach Christ." Polycarp answered, "Eighty and six years have I served him, and he never once wronged me; how then shall I blaspheme my King, Who hath saved me?" At the stake, to which he was only tied, but not nailed as usual, as he assured them he should stand immovable, the flames, on their kindling the fagots, encircled his body, like an arch, without touching him; and the executioner, on seeing this, was ordered to pierce him with a sword, when so great a quantity of blood flowed out as extinguished the fire. But his body, at the instigation of the enemies of the Gospel, especially Jews, was ordered to be consumed in the pile, and the request of his friends, who wished to give it Christian burial, rejected. They nevertheless collected his bones and as much of his remains as possible, and caused them to be decently interred.

## 3. PRETENDERS.

1. ***Jesus despised hypocrites*** (a person who operates under false pretenses).
2. ***Hypocrites love to be seen.***
  1. (Mat 6:2 KJV) Therefore when thou doest thine alms, do not sound a trumpet before thee, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets, that they may have glory of men. Verily I say unto you, They have their reward.
  2. (Mat 6:5 KJV) And when thou prayest, thou shalt not be as the hypocrites are: for they love to pray standing in the synagogues and in the corners of the streets, that they may be seen of men. Verily I say unto you, They have their reward.
  3. (Mat 6:16 KJV) Moreover when ye fast, be not, as the hypocrites, of a sad countenance: for they disfigure their faces, that they may appear unto men to fast. Verily I say unto you, They have their reward.
3. ***Hypocrites engage in vain worship.*** (Mat 15:7 KJV) Ye hypocrites, well did Esaias prophesy of you, saying, (Mat 15:8 KJV) This people draweth nigh unto me with their mouth, and honoureth me with their lips; but their heart is far from me. (Mat 15:9 KJV) But in vain they do worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men.
4. ***Hypocrites hinder others from entering.*** (Mat 23:13 KJV) But woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye shut up the kingdom of heaven against men: for ye neither go in yourselves, neither suffer ye them that are entering to go in.
5. ***Hypocrites leave off weightier matters.***
  1. Lack of compassion and mercy. (Mat 23:14 KJV) Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye devour widows' houses, and for a pretence make long prayer: therefore ye shall receive the greater damnation.
  2. (Mat 23:23 KJV) Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye pay tithe of mint and anise and cummin, and have omitted the weightier matters of the law, judgment, mercy, and faith: these ought ye to have done, and not to leave the other undone.
6. ***Hypocrites concerned about appearance.***
  1. (Mat 23:25 KJV) Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye make clean the outside of the cup and of the platter, but within they are full of extortion and excess.
  2. (Mat 23:27 KJV) Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye are like unto whited sepulchres, which indeed appear beautiful outward, but are within full of dead men's bones, and of all uncleanness.
7. ***Hypocrites are very religious.*** (Mat 23:15 KJV) Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye compass sea and land to make one proselyte, and when he is made, ye make him twofold more the child of hell than yourselves.

8. ***Hypocrites did not receive the messengers of the Lord.*** (Mat 23:29 KJV) Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! because ye build the tombs of the prophets, and garnish the sepulchres of the righteous, (Mat 23:30 KJV) And say, If we had been in the days of our fathers, we would not have been partakers with them in the blood of the prophets. (Mat 23:31 KJV) Wherefore ye be witnesses unto yourselves, that ye are the children of them which killed the prophets. (Mat 23:32 KJV) Fill ye up then the measure of your fathers. (Mat 23:33 KJV) Ye serpents, ye generation of vipers, how can ye escape the damnation of hell? (Mat 23:34 KJV) Wherefore, behold, I send unto you prophets, and wise men, and scribes: and some of them ye shall kill and crucify; and some of them shall ye scourge in your synagogues, and persecute them from city to city: (Mat 23:35 KJV) That upon you may come all the righteous blood shed upon the earth, from the blood of righteous Abel unto the blood of Zacharias son of Barachias, whom ye slew between the temple and the altar. (Mat 23:36 KJV) Verily I say unto you, All these things shall come upon this generation. (Mat 23:37 KJV) O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them which are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not! (Mat 23:38 KJV) Behold, your house is left unto you desolate. (Mat 23:39 KJV) For I say unto you, Ye shall not see me henceforth, till ye shall say, Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord.

#### 4. ATTITUDES OF A TRUE CHRISTIAN.

##### 1. ***Attitude toward our enemies.***

1. Bless them that persecute you; bless and curse not.
2. Recompense no man evil for evil.
3. If thine enemy hunger, feed him; if he thirst, give him drink--in so doing thou shalt heap coals of fire on his head.
4. Avenge not yourselves.
  1. Give not place unto wrath.
  2. Vengeance is mine; I will repay saith the Lord.
  3. Hold your peace; let the Lord fight your battles.

##### 2. ***Attitude toward sin.***

1. Abhor that which is evil; cleave to that which is good.
2. Give no place to the devil.
3. Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good.
4. Shun the very appearance of evil.
5. Let not your good be evil spoken of.

##### 3. ***Attitude toward the saints.***

1. Be kindly affectioned (tenderly loving) one to another with brotherly love.
2. In honor preferring one another.
  1. More concerned about others' welfare than our own.
  2. Not being self-centered; selfish; not needing to be the center of

attention.

3. Mind not high things, but condescend to men of low estate (humility).
4. Identifying with the feelings of others.
  1. Rejoice with those that rejoice.
  2. Weep with those that weep.
  3. (1 Cor 12:26 KJV) And whether one member suffer, all the members suffer with it; or one member be honoured, all the members rejoice with it.

## 5. THAT WHICH SHOULD DISTINGUISH US AS A CHRISTIAN.

1. ***Inward.***
  1. Righteousness.
  2. Peace.
  3. Joy.
2. ***Outward.***
  1. Love.
    1. (Rom 12:9 KJV) Let love be without dissimulation (hidden feelings, motives by pretense; hypocrisy).
    2. (Rom 12:10 KJV) Be kindly affectioned one to another with brotherly love; in honour preferring one another.
    3. By this shall all men know ye are my disciples.
  2. Mercy. (Mat 12:7 KJV) But if ye had known what this meaneth, I will have mercy, and not sacrifice, ye would not have condemned the guiltless.
  3. Forgiveness.
    1. Eph. 4:31-32 - *"Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamour, and evil speaking be put away from you, with all malice; And be ye kind one to another even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you."*
    2. Col. 3:12-14 - *"Put on therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, longsuffering; Forbearing one another, and forgiving one another, if any man have a quarrel against any; even as Christ forgave you, so also do ye."*
    3. (Mat 6:12 KJV) And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors.
    4. (Mat 6:14 KJV) For if ye forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you: (Mat 6:15 KJV) But if ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses.
      1. An attitude of unforgiveness is a reason for unanswered prayer.
      2. If we want our prayers answered, if we want to be forgiven by God, we must forgive those who sin against us.