

The Biblical Description of the Christian (1)

Introduction

- A. What does it mean to be a Christian? The answer to that question is often given in terms of race, culture, geography or belief,
- B. The Bible describes the Christian, first of all, as one who is a follower of Jesus Christ (Acts 11:26). He is one who has received Jesus Christ as his Savior and Lord (John 1:12).
- C. It is of paramount importance that the Christian recognize who he is. How the Bible depicts the believer forms a basis for encouragement and faith.

I. The Christian is Described as a Scattered Stranger, I Peter 1:1*

Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ, to the strangers scattered throughout Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia.

Observation: These two terms designate the believer's relationship to the world. He is a stranger to the world and scattered (sown) into the world system to be a witness. Because the Christian belongs to Jesus Christ he is not at home in this world (John 15:19; 17:14).

II. The Christian is Described as a Spiritual House, I Peter 2:5.

Ye also, as living stones, are built up a spiritual house

Observation: This interesting term depicts the believer as a member of a spiritual house, or temple, wherein he is related to all other Christians and is indwelt by God. The comfort, honor, security and potential involved in this truth is overwhelming.

III. The Christian is Described as a Holy Priest, I Peter 2:5.

Ye also, as living stones, are built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ.

Observation: A priest is one who can take the hand of God and the hand of a man and bring the two together. He can bring the Word of God, and thereby grace, into the lives of others. He can bring people into the presence of God by his intercessory prayers.

IV. The Christian is Described as a Member of a Chosen Generation, I Peter 2:9.

But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of Him Who hath called you out of darkness- into His marvelous light.

Observation: The term "chosen generation" may be translated "elect race." This reminds the believer that he is chosen of God and included among all those God has chosen. Again the emphasis here is upon honor, security, comfort, potential and personal identity.

V. The Christian is Described as a Member of a Holy Nation, I Peter 2:9.

But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation

Observation: The designation "holy nation" points out the unity of all believers and also their holy character. We are all one in the church of the living God. The believer is "holy" in that he is separated unto God. The responsibility of the believer is to live according to fact and truth - he belongs to God.

VI. The Christian is Described as a Member of the Peculiar People, I Peter 2:9.

But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of Him Who hath called you out of darkness into His marvelous light.

Observation: Perhaps a better translation of "peculiar people" would be "special people of possession" or "special purchased people." However the words are translated the message is clear: the Christian is a very special person to God and has been purchased with the sacrifice of Jesus Christ.

VII. The Christian is Described as a Member of The People of God, I Peter 2:10.

Which in time past were not a people, but are now the people of God; which had not obtained mercy, but now have obtained mercy.

Observation: Here we are taught that we belong to God. The Christian is included among those God calls His own people. The verse presents a comparison. We were once a non-people as sheep without a shepherd. But now – we are united to God, recipients of His mercy and assured of His love and protection.

VIII. The Christian is Described as a Pilgrim, I Peter 2:11.

Dearly beloved, I beseech you as strangers-and pilgrims, abstain from fleshly lusts, which war against the soul.

Observation: The Christian is a pilgrim in that he belongs to Jesus Christ and therefore no longer lives for the goals of this life. The term designates a foreigner who has his citizenship elsewhere.

IX. The Christian is Described as Beloved by God, I Peter 2:11.

Dearly beloved

Observation: The word "beloved" simply means one who is the object of love. When used for the Christian it teaches that we are loved by God. The practical implications of this truth can hardly be comprehended.

X. The Christian is Described as The Flock of God, I Peter 5:2.

Feed the flock of God which is among you, taking the oversight thereof, not by constraint, but willingly, not for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind.

Observation: The imagery of the Shepherd-sheep relationship immediately comes to mind when we read this title. The Lord is our Shepherd – we shall not want

Conclusion: Rest, rejoice and live responsibly!

Victor M. Matthews