

What Is a REAL Christian?

It's SHOCKING, but it's TRUE! Most professing "Christians" today are not REALLY Christians! Read this frank, vital article proving it — and find out what YOU need to be doing about it!

by Garner Ted Armstrong

WHAT IS A REAL Christian? Perhaps you've heard *many different, conflicting* definitions. I have. But have you ever heard the real BIBLE definition?

It is time you understood the very basic, down-to-earth, *fundamentals* of Christianity — the very *heart*, the root and core of the teachings of Christ.

So listen! I want you to realize, once and for all, that most professing Christians today believe the exact opposite from the very simplest, the clearest teachings of Christ!

And so, let's go to the very basis of real Christianity — what is commonly called the "Sermon on the Mount."

The "Sermon" on the Mount

Actually, the scriptures found in Matthew's 5th, 6th and 7th chapters are not a "sermon," though they have been labeled as such by men who did not understand the Bible.

This is one of the very first *opposites* you will see in comparing these plain, clear statements of Christ with the commonly accepted beliefs and practices of a modern "Christianity."

"And *seeing the multitudes*, he went up into a mountain: and when he was set, his disciples came *unto* him..." (Matt. 5:1). Yes, Christ wanted to escape the big crowds. Notice it.

But haven't you always heard differently? Haven't you always taken for granted that Christ spoke in parables, similes, or analogies so the people could understand more easily? But that's not what Christ Himself said!

"And the disciples came, and said unto him, Why speakest thou unto them in parables? He answered and said unto them, Because it is *given unto you* [His disciples] to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, *but to them it is not given*. . . . For this people's heart is

waxed gross, and their ears are dull of hearing, and their eyes they have closed; *LEST* at any time they should see . . . and should be converted, and I should heal them" (Matt. 13:10-15).

Christ said, in quoting Isaiah, that the people could not understand — that He deliberately *clouded* His meaning, *lest* they should be converted!

How utterly different from what you've always assumed!

You see, Jesus did not come to convert the world *then*. He came to establish His Church, to die for the sins of all mankind, to commission His disciples who were to carry His message to all nations. Christ came for many reasons — none of them to save the entire world *at that time!*

He was a Divine Messenger, sent from His Father in heaven, to teach and train His disciples. "Disciple" merely means "student," or "learner."

Notice then, Jesus "opened his mouth and *taught them* [His disciples, or His students] saying . . ."

So, you see, the "sermon" on the Mount was not a sermon at all, but a private, personal lesson Jesus gave to His disciples. He was sitting down.

"The Beatitudes"

The next few verses are among the best-known in the entire Bible. Perhaps many of you can say them by memory. That is exactly why I wanted to write this article. I wanted to analyze, carefully, every single one of them. I wanted to take the clear, best-known parts of Christ's teachings — and show you by them how utterly removed from true Christianity are most professing Christians today.

Christ said, "Blessed are the *poor in spirit*: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven" (verse 3).

What does it mean, to be "poor" in spirit? Certainly Christ didn't mean to be *lacking* in the Spirit of God, for He urges, through Peter, "Grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ" (II Peter 3:18), and inspired Paul to write, "Now if any man have not the *Spirit* of Christ, he is none of his" (Rom. 8:9). Jesus said, "If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children: how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him?" (Luke 11:13.)

No, Jesus doesn't mean to LACK the Spirit of God, as the foolish virgins (Matt. 25), but means blessed are those who are truly LOWLY, HUMBLE, YIELDING in attitude of heart and mind!

How many "Christians" are truly Christlike in spirit? Jesus was completely "poor in spirit"! He was completely humble! A greater man never lived. A man never lived who could exercise more gigantic, all-encompassing power than Christ. There never was a more dynamic, lively, energetic, personable, talented man. There never was a man with more reason to get all "puffed up" and proud — filled with human vanity. But yet, Jesus was humble! Paul wrote, "Be of the same mind one toward another. Mind not high things, but *condescend to men of low estate*. Be not wise in your own conceits" (Rom. 12:16).

Christ went about with publicans, sinners, harlots and the very lowest (in man's eyes) of the society of His day. For this He was constantly criticized by the haughty, proud, puffed-up denominational leaders of that time.

What about our time?

It just isn't too "popular" to comfort a diseased, afflicted person, to care for invalids, to give something of yourself to someone who is really in need, is it?

To be really poor in spirit is a great rarity today.

“Theirs Is the Kingdom of Heaven”

Here is the next diametric opposite!

Skipping ahead just two verses, Jesus said, “Blessed are the *meeek*, for they shall *inherit the earth*.” Does Christ mean to imply the “poor in spirit” are going to “heaven,” but the MEEK are going to remain on earth?

Look at it! What does it say? If Jesus promised heaven to the poor in spirit, then it is very clearly stated the meek are going to stay on earth!

But did Jesus promise “heaven” to the poor in spirit?

No! Nowhere in all the Bible is heaven promised as the reward of the saved. Here is another great opposite that is the very basis of “Christian” doctrine today — and it did not come out of the Bible!

Read it again carefully. Christ said, “Blessed are the poor in spirit: for theirs is the kingdom OF heaven” (verse 3). That little word “OF” qualifies the verse, makes it plain. It is a KINGDOM God promises His elect — a kingdom ruled by God, FROM HEAVEN! It is a kingdom of heaven — but not a kingdom IN heaven, and there is a great difference! Notice just a few of the hundreds of Biblical proofs.

Jesus is pictured in Luke 19 as a young nobleman who *went* into a FAR country to get for himself a kingdom — and to *return*! When He returns, he apports RULERSHIP to His faithful servants over cities, on this earth! Read Luke 19:12-27.

John was inspired to write, of the saints of God, “And hast made us unto our God kings and priests: and we shall reign ON THE EARTH!” (Rev. 5:10.) Jesus promises, “To him that overcome I will grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father in his throne” (Rev. 3:21). Christ came to inherit the “throne of His father David” (Luke 1:32) which is on this earth!

The Apostle Paul wrote of our *citizenship* which is *in* heaven. He likened the saints to foreigners, as did Peter, and as strangers, sojourning in a strange country. “For our conversation

[*citizenship*, margin] is in heaven; FROM whence [He is to return to the *earth*] also we look for the Saviour; the Lord Jesus Christ” (Phil. 3:20).

Many prophecies illustrate the return of Christ to this earth and His rule over the earth. Daniel’s second and seventh chapters both illustrate Christ *ruling on earth*. “. . . And the stone [which is Christ] that smote the image became a great mountain [type of a kingdom — or a *government*], and filled the *whole earth*” (Dan. 2:35). “I saw in the night visions, and, behold, one like the Son of man came with the clouds of heaven . . . and there was given him dominion, and glory, and a *kingdom*, that all PEOPLE, NATIONS and LANGUAGES, should serve him: His dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and his kingdom that which shall not be destroyed” (Dan. 7:13-14). People, nations and languages are *on this earth*. “These great beasts, which are four, are four kings, which shall arise *out of the earth*. But the saints of the most High shall take the kingdom, and possess the kingdom for ever, even for ever and ever” (Dan. 7:17-18). The saints take away the rulership of the earth from carnal-minded men!

“And the kingdom and dominion, and the greatness of the kingdom UNDER THE WHOLE HEAVEN, shall be given to the people of the saints . . .” (Dan. 7:27). *Under* heaven is *on earth*!

Notice further. Isaiah prophesied of the setting up of the Kingdom of God on earth! “And it shall come to pass in the last days, that the mountain of the Lord’s house shall be established in the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills; and *all nations* shall flow unto it. And many *people* shall go and say, Come ye, and let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, to the house of the God of Jacob; and he will teach us his ways, and we will walk in his paths: for *out of Zion* [in Jerusalem! on earth!] shall go forth the law, and the word of the Lord *from Jerusalem*” (Isa. 2:2-3).

Notice Micah’s 4th chapter! Read all of it. “But in the *last days* it shall come to pass, that the mountain of the house of the Lord shall be established in the

top of the mountains . . . and people shall flow unto it . . . for the law shall go forth *of Zion*, and the word of the Lord *from Jerusalem*. And I will make her that halted a remnant, and her that was cast far off a strong nation: and the Lord shall reign over them *in mount Zion* from henceforth, even for ever” (Micah 4:1-2, 7).

“Behold the day of the Lord cometh . . . and his feet shall stand *in that day* upon the *mount of Olives*, which is before Jerusalem on the east . . .” (Zech. 14:1-4).

Read the entire 14th chapter of Zechariah. “And the Lord shall be king *over all the earth*” (verse 9). “And men shall *dwell* in it, and there shall be no more utter destruction, but Jerusalem shall be safely *inhabited*” (verse 11). The remainder of the chapter pictures nations being punished to force them to keep God’s annual feasts to keep them in mind of the plan He is working out here below.

Remember! The Bible does not contradict itself. The oft-quoted and well-loved scripture in I Thessalonians the 4th chapter means what it says. But you have not heard what it actually says!

And so now, after reading these many scriptural proofs that Christ is coming to this earth to remain here, ruling with His saints, let’s candidly read this often-quoted, completely misunderstood text.

“For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first. Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord” (I Thes. 4:16-17).

Notice there is not one single word about saints going to heaven!

What this passage does *not* say is clear! It does *not* say the saints are going to heaven!

What it *does* say is equally clear. It *does* say the saints will rise to meet the Lord *in the air*. Notice it! Jesus is going to “*descend from heaven*” and the resurrected and changed saints will be caught up “*in the clouds*, to meet the Lord *in the air*.”

Some time ago my father and I re-

turned from Rome to New York on a big Boeing 707 jet airliner. We were sped through the thinner upper atmosphere, high above the clouds at the flashing speed of about 600 miles an hour! We actually flew in a man-made airplane much higher than your Bible says the saints will rise when Christ returns! The Bible says *in the clouds* — *not up in heaven!* This earth is enveloped by layers of *air*, composed of physical substances. Air is composed of oxygen, carbon dioxide, and many types of gases. Clouds are merely formed of vapors and mists, the condensation of moisture when cold air masses meet warm air masses. As such, air and clouds are a *part of this earth*. They belong to earth, not to heaven, which is far beyond the outer reaches of man's telescopes which only begin to probe the vast, incomprehensible reaches of the universe.

Think for a moment!

If an intimate friend of yours were returning to stay with you after a long absence, and you went to the gate to *meet* the friend, wouldn't it be silly if you *left* your home, turned around and went back to his home with him? Christ is to *return* to earth, *from* heaven!

Paul wrote, "... and so shall we ever be with the Lord" (verse 17). Yes, we shall be *with* the Lord, where He will be! And where will He be? On the earth, as you have already seen proved from your own Bible.

Christ said, "... I will come again, and receive you unto myself, that *where I am, there ye may be also*" (John 14:3). Where will Christ be?

On the earth!

Yes, here is another of the amazing, breathtaking opposites of your Bible from the commonly accepted and assumed teachings of the world. The ideas of men do not fit — even with the "Sermon on the Mount!"

The Kingdom OF Heaven is a kingdom ruled by heaven, which is to come down OUT of heaven — to this earth! Just as the house OF John is not IN John, so is the Kingdom of heaven *not* to be *in*, but *from* heaven!

"Blessed Are They That Mourn"

"... For they shall be comforted" (Matt. 5:4).

Surely you would believe there is no conflict here. Surely all professing "Christians" believe this scripture?

I suppose hundreds of thousands do believe these words of Christ — but how many really discern their meaning?

Jesus said, "... I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it *more abundantly*" (John 10:10). Christ wants us to have life brimful and running over with joy. One of the first attributes of God's Holy Spirit, the very mind and nature of God, is joy. (Gal. 5:22.) But Solomon wrote, "For in much wisdom is much grief: and he that increaseth knowledge increaseth sorrow" (Eccl. 1:18).

Christ was called a "... man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief..." (Isa. 53:3). But why? Because of the evil of man. Because of sin.

When all mankind went the wrong way after God had revealed the right way to him, God "... saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually. And it repented [made sorry] the Lord that he had made man on the earth, and it grieved him at his heart" (Gen. 6:5-6).

Yes, the One who became Christ was made *mournful*, and *sorry*, when He saw the wretchedness, the sickness, poverty, squalor, war and death man was bringing on himself! And so it is with a *true* Christian. Even though Christ wants us to have more abundant life, He also inspired Solomon to write, "To every thing there is a season, and a *time* to every purpose under the heaven... a time to weep, and a time to laugh; a time to mourn, and a time to dance..." (Eccl. 3:1-4).

Yes, blessed are they who mourn now. For they shall be comforted. They will experience great joy and happiness defying description in the Kingdom of God! Many mourn because of persecution! But do *most* modern Christians receive any persecution whatsoever for accepting the "modern" *popular* concepts of "Christianity"? Certainly not! But Jesus said, "... In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world" (John 16:33).

No, rather than suffering persecution, being given cause to MOURN, most professing Christians today have come to believe the exact opposite! They feel, instead, that "belonging to a Church" or "having some faith" will give them better standing in the community, result in better business relations, make them an accepted, integrated part of community life. This, too, is a direct opposite from the Bible teaching!

"Blessed Are the Meek..."

There is a difference between being meek and being *weak*! Jesus was MEEK but not weak! Even though He was weakened *physically* when suffering the terrible beatings and lashings prior to His crucifixion (Paul said, "For though he was crucified through weakness, yet he liveth by the power of God..." II Cor. 13:4), Jesus was physically strong and healthy throughout His earthly life.

Remember, Christ never sinned. He obeyed perfectly the physical laws of God which regulate health and strength, as well as the spiritual laws.

What does it mean to be really meek?

Look for examples in modern Christianity. Where do you find very much gentleness, kindness, yieldedness? To be meek means to yield rather than cause an argument or trouble. It means to be humble, to be lowly in spirit and attitude. A truly meek person will be Christlike in character.

Jesus said, "Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me, for I am meek and lowly in heart..." (Matt. 11:29). Paul was inspired to write, "I therefore... beseech you that ye walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called, with all lowliness and *meekness*, with longsuffering, forbearing one another in love..." (Eph. 4:1-2).

A truly meek person will not try to justify the self, to feel the self is "better" than others, to "get even" with others. Rather, a meek person will be *imitating* Christ.

It's shocking, but it's true! Most professing "Christians" today are not really practicing Christianity! Instead, hundreds of thousands are believing and practicing the same old pagan customs which Christ and the apostles vigor-

ously condemned — and all the while calling it “Christianity.”

Your Bible said this present generation would be almost totally deceived. Christ said, “Take heed that no man *deceive* you, for MANY shall come *in my name* [coming as if they were the servants of Christ], *saying*, I am Christ; and shall deceive MANY” (Matt. 24:4-5).

Christ said only a very few — the very elect of God, who were being kept from the clever deceptions of Satan — would not be deceived. “For there shall arise false Christs, and false prophets, and shall shew great signs and wonders, insomuch that, if it were possible, they shall deceive the very elect” (Matt. 24:24).

Satan has deceived the world — and God has warned repeatedly through the New Testament that this would be so — in this age, now! In Revelation the twelfth chapter, the devil is described as a great dragon “which deceiveth the whole world.”

Either this world is deceived, or your Bible is not true!

But the Bible is true — and this world is in the grips of a tremendous deception. A deceived person doesn't know he's deceived. He's sincere! But he's sincerely wrong!

And so it is that scores, hundreds and thousands of SINCERE, well-meaning people — believing themselves to be in a “saved” condition, believing they are “Christian” are actually in tacit disagreement with *real* Christianity!

Do You HUNGER for Righteousness?

Jesus said, in the next of the “beatitudes,” “Blessed are they which do HUNGER AND THIRST after righteousness, for they shall be filled” (Matt. 5:6). Just what is righteousness? It is to be *right* rather than wrong. It is to follow the *right* way, rather than the wrong way, which *seems* “right” to a man.

But more than that, what is the Bible definition of “righteousness”?

It's this! “ALL THY COMMANDMENTS ARE RIGHTEOUSNESS” (Psalm 119:172).

The perfect, holy, Ten Commandments of God are *righteousness*.

In this same fifth chapter of Matthew, Christ said, “Think *not* that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I am *not* come to destroy, but to fulfil” (verse 17). And yet, haven't you always heard the exact opposite? Haven't you always heard Jesus came to do away with the Law?

Why have you heard this? The Bible doesn't say so — rather, it says the exact opposite! Notice it. “Whosoever therefore shall break one of these *least* commandments, and shall teach men so, he shall be called the *least* in the kingdom of heaven: but whosoever shall *do and teach* them, the same shall be called *great* in the kingdom of heaven” (verse 19).

Christ was talking about the Law of God; and in the same breath, in the same thought, He explained He was talking about the way to be righteous! “For I say unto you, that except *your righteousness* [*doing and teaching God's Laws*] shall exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no case enter into the kingdom of heaven” (verse 20).

Christ said, “Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that *doeth the will* of my Father which is in heaven” (Matt. 7:21).

Jesus inspired Paul to write, “Circumcision is nothing, and uncircumcision is nothing, but [on the other hand, that which is important is] *the keeping of the commandments of God*” (I Cor. 7:19). This does not say some supposed “new commandment” of Jesus Christ. There is no way around it. There is no “spiritualizing” this plain statement away.

Later, we read in I Corinthians 13 that without God's love we are nothing! Unless we have real love in our hearts, we are not Christians! And it is love that will lead us to keep God's Ten Commandments — *all* of them! “Love worketh no ill to his neighbour: therefore love is the *fulfilling of the law*” (Rom. 13:10).

God inspired John to confirm this fact further, when he wrote, “For this is [here is the Bible definition of love] the love of God, that we *keep his commandments*: and his commandments are not grievous” (I John 5:3).

To hunger and thirst for righteousness is to yearn, to strive, to struggle fervently to be obedient to God. To keep His laws, which are given in love, for our good.

Those who are truly hungering and thirsting for righteousness will be studying constantly for new light, being willing to change when they see they've been wrong, admitting their wrong beliefs, their mistakes, their sins. “*Study* to shew thyself approved unto God” (II Tim. 2:15), wrote Paul to Timothy. “Prove all things” (I Thes. 5:21) Paul said to the Thessalonians.

Do modern Christians really *know* their Bibles? Are most professing Christians you know studying diligently, searching the scriptures daily, as the Bereans did (Acts 17:11), hungering and thirsting for God's righteousness? Are most professing Christians you know praying, fasting, getting closer to God daily by a constant contact with His word? “Thy word is *truth*” (John 17:17) said Jesus. But most “modern” Christians don't even know what His word says!

You would be amazed to realize a vast percentage of professing Christians can't even name the first four Gospels. They don't know the Bible — they aren't studying the Bible — because they don't really hunger and thirst for it!

Do you? If you really are “hungering and thirsting” for righteousness, you'll be doing as the ones Jesus described in Matthew's 13th chapter. You'll be like the merchant who sold all to gain the one pearl of great price. You'll be like the man who found the treasure in the field, and sold everything to buy that one field!

Are you like that? Most professing Christians today are not. If you want to really begin to understand your Bible better, to really see it made gripping, interesting — then write for the *Ambassador College Correspondence Course*. It's free of tuition — no charge whatever. You can have it free, if you really hunger for it!

Yes, here is another great opposite!

Instead of hungering and thirsting for God's word, most professing Christians hunger and thirst for physical things, for satisfaction of the physical

senses. Instead of understanding the truth about God's law — that His perfect law is the way to righteousness, most believe His holy law has been done away. Instead of believing the straightforward statement of Christ that He did not come to destroy the law, most believe the exact opposite, that He did come to destroy it!

How utterly different is the real truth of your Bible!

“Blessed Are the Merciful . . .”

Surely you know what it means to be merciful. But *when* do you ever really show mercy? It's one thing to agree tacitly with scripture, and another thing to put it into practice!

James said, “But be ye *doers* of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves” (James 1:22). He also wrote, “For whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all” (James 2:10).

God says His mercies endure forever! But when do you ever have an opportunity to show mercy?

It is merciful to *give* instead of get. It is merciful to say nothing at all about someone, if you can't say something good about them. It is merciful to forgive a debt or obligation, rather than take a brother into court over it. It is merciful to treat all others as you want them to treat you.

Are most Christians merciful today? Is it showing mercy to an enemy to send a bullet plunging into his vitals? Is it showing mercy to envy, to hate, to kill?

Christ meant what He said! “*Blessed* are the merciful: for they shall *obtain* mercy” (Matt. 5:7). He shows further what He means when He gives an outline for prayer in the “Lord's prayer.” “And forgive us our debts, AS [*and only as — in the same measure as*] we forgive our debtors” (Matt. 6:12).

“Blessed Are the Pure in Heart . . .”

But there aren't many of those around today! Paul wrote, “Unto the pure *all things* are pure: but unto them that are defiled and unbelieving is nothing pure; but even their mind and conscience is defiled” (Titus 1:15).

Nowhere, it seems, is there more debate, envy, ridicule, argument, deceit, hypocrisy and disagreement than among some who make a profession of religion. More *wars* have been fought in the name of *religion* than for any other reason. More people have been butchered, hanged, burned, wantonly slaughtered in the name of religion than for any other reason.

Jeremiah reveals that “The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked: who can know it?” (Jer. 17:9.) An individual with the natural, physical, carnal mind has a defiled mind. He sees evil motives rather than good ones, he sees wrong implications behind every action, he sees suggestive or shabby meanings behind others' words. Paul said, “Because the carnal mind is *enmity* against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be” (Rom. 8:7). The carnal mind is a resentful, defiant mind — a mind which is hostile to God and His perfect laws, and a mind with defiled conscience!

It's about time we began to wake up and quit “kidding” ourselves we're converted when many who sincerely believe they're “Christians” have never even begun on the road to real Christianity!

Paul wrote, “Charity . . . doth not behave itself unseemly, seeketh not her own, *is not easily provoked, thinketh no evil . . .*” (I Cor. 13:4-5). Yet it seems there are no more easily provoked people than those in various religious fields. A paradox? Or another exact opposite between the plain teachings of your Lord and Saviour and the common practices and habits of most professing “Christians” today?

“Blessed Are the Peacemakers”

“Western” fans are familiar with the famous six-shooter produced by Colt in the “wild West” days, called the “peacemaker.” Presumably, the name was taken from the Bible.

And herein is the philosophy of a “Christian” world. The way to peace, it believes, is through war! If you go to war, you will have peace!

But think for a moment. The world has always known war. The world recently fought “the war to end all wars.” But has war ended? Has man's

way been practical? Has man's way worked? Are all wars over?

Think! Man has irrevocably marched, step by step, along the route he has chosen, to stand on the brink of cosmocide! Man now stands, in his superior, “enlightened” state, on the verge of world suicide!

Answer honestly! Has man been able to solve his problems through war?

Jokingly, some westerners in the United States began to call a gun the “peacemaker.” But have guns brought peace?

Jesus said, “*Love* your enemies, bless them that curse you, *do good* to them that hate you, and *pray* for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you” (Matt. 5:44).

Do most “Christian” people believe this scripture? Certainly!

But do they practice it?

Isn't it about time we quit “kidding” ourselves? You know the professing “Christians” of today do not practice these things! When a REAL Christian gives this teaching of Christ as a reason for his belief that he should not kill, some who are church members will ridicule him. It seems ridiculous to most “Christians” today to really follow the teachings of Christ. And yet, they will appropriate His name!

“What Is a Real Christian?”

During World War II, German mothers and fathers flocked to their churches and cathedrals to pray for their boys at the front. In England, France, or here in the United States, other parents went to *their* churches to pray for *their* boys at the *same* front.

In many cases the boys at the front, though of different races and speaking different languages, were of the same religion! If in the same community — they would have gone to the same church! “Christians” everywhere use the same book. They use, preach from, write about, and read — once in a while — the Bible. And regardless of in which land you find it, or in which language, the Bible says the same thing. Jesus said, love your enemies! How many “Christians” believe they should love their enemies? Let's stop “kidding” ourselves! You don't show *love* to someone by sending a bullet ripping,

tearing, gouging its way through his vitals, leaving him to die retching out his life's blood! You don't show "love" to your enemy by vaporizing him!

Yes, Jesus said, "*Blessed* are the *peacemakers*." And He didn't mean blessed are those who take up guns and then deceive themselves they're making peace!

Listen! If guns make peace, where — yes, where, oh where on the face of this earth today — is the peace they have brought us?

Yes, we call ourselves "Christian" but it would embarrass us to tears to profess openly to really follow, to live by, the words of the One whose name we appropriate!

Yes, blessed are the real peacemakers, they shall be called the children of God. God is producing CHILDREN. John wrote, "Behold what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God: Therefore the *world* [the society, the age, the people around us] knoweth us not, because it knew him not. Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear [not immediately at our death], we shall be *like him*; for we shall see him as he is" (I John 3:1-2).

To be *born* of God is to become *like* God, to become a member of the *God family*!

Paul wrote, "For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are *not worthy* to be *compared* with the *glory* which shall be revealed in us" (Rom. 8:18). Jesus is called the *firstborn* of *many brethren*. (I Cor. 15:20, 23; Col. 1:15, 18; Rom. 8:29.)

Those who *make peace* are promised inheritance of the very *family of God*!

Are YOU Being Persecuted?

Jesus said, "Blessed are they which are *persecuted for righteousness*' sake: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven" (Matt. 5:10).

Remember, He said, "In the world, ye *shall* have tribulation . . ." and also prayed to His Father, saying, "I have given them thy word; and the world

hath *hated* them, because they are not of the world, even as I am not of the world" (John 17:14). Christ told His disciples to *separate* themselves from the society around them — to come out of the world, and to do, believe and practice *different* things!

Notice the strong language about this in God's word!

"You adulterers and adulteresses, know ye not that the friendship of the world is enmity with God? Whosoever therefore will be a friend of the world is the enemy of God" (James 4:4).

John commands true Christians, "Love *not* the world, neither the things that are *in* the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world. And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof: but he that *doeth the will of God* [which will is expressed in His Word] abideth for ever" (I John 2:15-17).

Do most "Christians" today really COME OUT of the world, separating themselves from its customs, its habits and its ways? Do most really become so strikingly *different* that their former business associates, their relatives, neighbors and friends are actually startled by the great change in their lives?

Paul says, "I beseech you . . . that ye present your bodies a *living sacrifice* . . . and *be not conformed to this world*: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God" (Rom. 12:1-2).

God thunders His warning through John, "*Come out of her*, my people, that ye be *not* partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues" (Rev. 18:4).

If you really come out of the world — you will suffer persecution!

Jesus said so!

Notice it! "Think *not* that I am come to send peace on earth: I came not to send peace, but a sword. For I am come to set a man at variance against his

father, and the daughter against her mother, and the daughter in law against her mother in law. And a man's foes shall be those of his own household" (Matt. 10:34-36).

If you really begin to change — if you really surrender your life to God — if you really begin to do as Christ did, to *live as He lived* — you will be persecuted!

And if you're not being persecuted, the chances are, you are not a Christian!

"BLESSED Are Ye"

Jesus goes on to describe how really converted ones will REJOICE when they receive this persecution that comes from living righteously, godly, in this present evil world.

He says, "*Great* is your reward in heaven, for so persecuted they the prophets which were before you!"

Yes, great, and incomprehensible is the reward of God's true saints, reserved for them in heaven, which is to come down out of heaven, to this earth!

Jesus tells us to pray, "*Thy kingdom come* [not that we'll go to it]. "*Thy will be done in earth*, as it is in heaven" (Matt. 6:10).

How plain are the true teachings of Christ!

And how different from what you've grown up believing and assuming!

Yes, right here in the beatitudes, the "Sermon on the Mount" you can see clearly the majority of professing Christians just do not believe or practice what Christ said!

Do you see how different the real Christianity of the Bible is from today's professing brands? May God help you to really see, and *change*, before it's too late! □

If you are not yet a subscriber to TOMORROW'S WORLD, a magazine of Biblical understanding published by the Ambassador College Graduate School of Theology, be sure to request a free subscription.

Also Ambassador College has published two other reprints discussing subjects directly related to real Christianity. They are "What Is Real Repentance?" and "Should You Be Baptized?" Both are sent free of charge upon personal request.