



Joyful And Ardent Labor In The Scriptures

Studying the Bible with humility and reverence.
Studying to get to know God in truth, then live accordingly.

Questions about “Concerning the Nominal Christian”

Q. I listened to your “Nominal Christian” message [<https://www.jaalits.com/concerning-the-nominal-christian.html>] and have a handful of questions.

What happens to all the people who think they’re Christians, who want to be good Christians, but don’t know that it’s possible to be self-deceived about their standing with God? I think you said most people don’t know that.

A. Permit me to explain why I cannot answer your opening question as it stands.

First, if one were to tell me, “I think I’m a Christian,” I would ask, “Why do you think you’re a Christian?” Depending on the answer, it might be clear the person is not a Christian according to Scripture.

Second, if one were to tell me, “I want to be a good Christian,” I would ask, “What do you mean by that?” and “What is your motive?” Again, depending on the answers, it might be clear the person is not an actual Christian.

In order to answer your question correctly, I need those questions answered first.

But understand that it is not I but the Lord Jesus Christ who said implicitly that many who claim to have a saving attachment to Him are, in fact, self-deceived about the matter (Matt. 7:21–23; Luke 13:22–30).

It is crucial to get to know that no one has the ability to create, make, fashion, or manufacture a saving attachment to the Lord Jesus Christ. No one is able to make himself or herself a Christian [https://www.jaalits.com/becoming_a_christian.html]. It is as impossible as Lazarus making himself alive in his tomb. Just as it was Jesus who raised Lazarus from the dead (John 11:11–44), so it is God who makes one a Christian (Eph. 2:1–10; cf. 1 Cor. 1:30).

Q. Did God create most people to go to Hell?

A. Since God is God, He has the sovereign right to do as He wishes with His creation (Ps. 135:5–12; Jer. 27:5; Dan. 4:35), to do whatever He wishes to whomever He wishes for whatever reason He wishes (Romans 9:14–29). And since God is holy, set entirely apart from sin (Lev. 11:44; Rev. 4:8; cf. Heb. 7:26), He is never in the wrong, neither in what He does nor in what He refrains from preventing.

The LORD is good (Ps. 119:68), so He made the human race good (Gen. 1:31). The LORD, His word, and His ways are upright (Deut. 32:4; Ps. 33:4; Hosea 14:9), so He made humanity upright (Eccles. 7:29). But we humans, the crowning work of His own hands, we

have sought out many devices and schemes (Eccles. 7:29), and from the LORD's perspective (which is the only perspective that matters in this matter) there is now no one of us who does good, not even one (Ps. 14:2-3).

If we studiously compare John 5:40 to John 6:44, 65 in the light of the Scriptures referenced in the preceding two paragraphs, we encounter more profound truth pertinent to your question:

- It is the sinner who is responsible for his or her lack of desire to come to Jesus for eternal life.
- It is God the Father who is responsible for the sinner's ability to come to Jesus.
- The Godhead does not take responsibility for fallen humanity's lack of desire to come to Jesus.
- The fallen human cannot take responsibility for his or her ability to come to Jesus.

That is the pride-stripping truth of sovereign soteriological election. Sinners slump to their knees in helpless humility before God when they realize that God saves eternally only those whom He has chosen to save (Rom. 8:28-32; 2 Tim. 2:8-10).

Q. What about people in other countries (as well as the U.S.) who have no access to this info about self-deception?

A. Let's take your thought further. Suppose every soul on the face of the earth had more than just access to this information, suppose all were actually cognizant, conscious, or aware of what the Lord Jesus Christ said about self-deception in Matt. 7:21-23 and Luke 13:22-30. Would this ubiquitous knowledge lead to a world altogether free from self-deceit on the matter?

No.

Jesus said "many" will be self-deceived about their "relationship" with Him. So it shall be; any less than "many" would prove the Son of God a false prophet. Whether people's access to Jesus' words about self-deception is limited or unlimited, Jesus is going to tell "many" in the day of judgment that their "relationship" with Him was only and always one-sided. That moment will have had no equal in horror.

Let me add that actual Christian, nominal Christian, and open unbeliever alike, all deserve the dreaded dismissal of Matt. 7:23. Each one of us has failed to keep the moral law of the living God and, thus, earned banishment to the lake of fire for eternity, away from the presence of the Lord. And in the end, the one the Son consigns to this punishment will experience fully what he or she deserves: divine fairness (Jer. 17:9-10; Matt. 16:27; Rev. 20:11-15). But the one to whom the Son has given eternal life (John 10:27-28, 17:2), this one will experience fully what no one deserves: divine favor. The LORD is both just and merciful (Jer. 9:23-24; cf. Deut. 7:9-10). All who reject His Son He will rightfully damn; but He will mercifully save all who put their trust in His Son for the forgiveness of their sins (John 3:13-21), for the punishment they deserve for their sins the Son took upon Himself in their behalf (2 Cor. 5:14-15; 1 Tim. 2:6; Heb. 2:9; cf. Isa. 52:13-53:12).

Q. Are you afraid that after you die that you might learn that you didn't have it right? How sure are you?

A. I am sure there are things I believe right now which I'm wrong about to one degree or another, but I don't yet know enough to know that I'm wrong about those things. Being a

workman in “the word of truth” (2 Tim. 2:15) is lifelong labor; hence, growing in grace and knowledge of my Lord and Savior Jesus Christ (2 Pet. 3:18) is a lifelong process.

However, the basis of my assurance of salvation from my sins is not my surety of my doctrine but the person and finished work of the sinless Son of God, Jesus Christ. He loved sinners, and acting in their behalf He voluntarily gave Himself over to suffering, rejection, and a violently bloody death through which He bore the full weight of His Father’s wrath against their sins (Isa. 53:4–12; Matt. 16:21; Luke 22:52–23:46; John 10:11–15; Gal. 2:20; 1 John 4:10). And having fully satisfied the justice of God the Father by His perfect obedience and sacrificial death, Jesus was raised to life from the dead three days later (Mark 8:31; Luke 24:1–12; Acts 13:26–41; 1 Cor. 15:3–11, 17–19).

God’s wrath against sin is coming (2 Thess. 1:7–10; Heb. 12:25–27; Rev. 6:12–17), but the purpose He sent His one-of-a-kind Son into the world is to rescue everyone who turns back from their own way and comes to His Son in actual faith for the forgiveness of their sins (Prov. 28:13; John 3:16; Acts 10:43, 26:18; 1 Pet. 2:25). If no one alive is innocent in the estimation of the LORD (Ps. 143:2; cf. Rom. 3:23; James 3:2; 1 John 1:10), then that includes me. For that reason, I have abandoned any pretense that I can be or become good enough in God’s eyes to enter His kingdom and fled to His Son for refuge from the coming wrath (1 Thess. 1:10). In and upon the Lord Jesus rests my trust for salvation from the damnation I deserve because of my guiltiness. I am clinging to Jesus and clinging to Jesus *alone* for dear life, just as if I were clinging to the ledge of a cliff (John 14:6; Acts 4:12; 1 Tim. 2:5).

As for the areas of doctrine wherein I’m wrong, I shall be held accountable for such and suffer loss of rewards—but not loss of salvation—when I stand before the seat of judgment to be tried in the presence of God [<https://www.jaalits.com/judgment.html>] (Rom. 14:10–12; 1 Cor. 3:10–15; 2 Cor. 5:6–10). That is no light matter; I tremble at the thought.

Q. Many people interpret the Bible in many ways and think they have it right. My husband has a friend of sorts who thinks he knows a lot about the Bible—like women are below men. He’s currently in jail for domestic abuse; not for the first time. He nearly killed his last girlfriend. Why would a Christian man beat a woman?

A. Regeneration by God brings with it regenerated behavior (1 John 2:29, 4:7; cf. 5:1–5; Rom. 13:8–10). An *actual* Christian, therefore, would *not* have living habits that mark him as an abuser.

But that cannot be said of a *nominal* Christian [<https://www.jaalits.com/concerning-the-nominal-christian.html>].

If a man hits a woman repeatedly so as to inflict pain cruelly or oppressively, it is evidence the man is a nominal Christian, not an actual Christian. It is evidence the man is not regenerated by God; thus, not indwelt by God; thus, void of the fruit of the Spirit: “love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control” (Gal. 5:22–23).
