

The Christian Onion

by Bill and Karen Bishop

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The word Christian is formed from the Greek root word "Christos" and a suffix (ian). From "Christos" comes our English word Christ. "Christ" is not a name, it is a descriptive title, which means "anointed". Throughout our New Testament, this term is used in conjunction with the only begotten son of God, (Y'shua / Jesus). He is THE anointed One the Bible references. It is Y'shua whom God uniquely anointed to live a perfect life - the One whom our Bible indicates is singularly worthy of the title Christ. What then does the suffix "ian" mean? "Ian" and "ean" are variants of the suffix "an", and (per <http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/-an>) it means: "of or relating to", "of or belonging to". There is also inference to "characteristic of" or "resembling".

The anatomy of the word Christian then is a banner to be worn by all who are "of" (relate to or belong to) THE Christ (Y'shua). To be true to the banner they claim, those who belong to Y'shua should therefore be striving to resemble Him in their walk, to conform to the characteristics He exemplified when He was here - those which the gospels portray.

Many today have begun to impart all types of guidelines to establish who is or is not "Christian". However, doing so may actually be trampling upon the anatomy of the word itself, as all who "belong" to Y'shua would (in the proper definition of the term) be Christians. When do we belong to Jesus?

Romans gives us the formula:

*That if thou shalt **confess** with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved.*  
**- Romans 10:9.**

Thus, all who confess Y'shua and believe upon His death and resurrection are "Christians", "relating to" or "belonging to" Christ. Any criteria other than this deviates from the actual anatomy of the term itself. Yet, theological views vary considerably within "Christianity" due to differences in Biblical interpretations. Our many diverse denominations attest to this!

To glimpse the effect these variances have had on the Body of Y'shua, we need to consider the term "heresy". What exactly does it mean? It stems

from the Greek word "haeresis" which means choosing and following the tenets derived by a group or sect. It is related to the English concept of "opinion" or a "party line". As long as there have been opinions, there have been differences in opinions. Accordingly, we might say that since the beginning of the Christian faith the communal beliefs of one region or group have deviated from those of another. Each group had their own version of "heresy" or belief system. We find this same thing occurring today, when the various denominations bring forth specific doctrinal variations or "heresies" of their own ilk. Each would say their own "heresy" was correct and those of their counterparts were errant. Due to these prejudices, the term "heresy" eventually came to exclude one's own belief system and became a derogatory reference to any belief system that differed from it. Quick to point the finger at anyone who had variations in belief, one would never acknowledge that their own belief system might be flawed in one respect or another. Granted, some divergent beliefs were more aberrant than others; but none-the-less, the criterion for considering what was heretic was subjective and blurred. There was no definitive standard.

The next step of supposed ecclesiastical authority was to say that those who stray too far from one's own views no longer deserve the banner of Christian. Actually, when we look back to our definition of the term Christian, any attempt to strip that banner from anyone who has confessed Jesus and believed upon His death and resurrection seems to be woefully inappropriate. Sadly, due to some of the baggage associated with some mainline Christian teachings today, others claim to dissociate themselves from this banner. However, they cannot entirely do so simply due to the anatomical meaning of the word. Simply through belief in Y'shua, they are (by default) Christians.

The warping of the term heresy from its original definition to the subjective and biased connotation it now holds has brought forth the unjustifiable and slanderous exclusion of some from the accepted body of Christ – all simply due to differences in textual interpretation of Scripture. In the balance of this writing we acknowledge that regardless of differing opinions regarding Biblical interpretations or the status of spiritual condition; all who have received Y'shua are "Christians". While their varying "heresies" (interpretations) or backslidden conditions may be problematic within the body of Christ and even present problems for them when they stand before the throne in judgment, these factors can in no way justify a verdict by man that someone is no longer considered to be a Christian. As Christians, those of differing interpretations and a fallen nature will answer for that to Y'shua, not to man.

So – yes, we “belong” to Y’shua when we confess our belief in Him, but how He will deal with us after we become His is another matter. There is much to be said about that in the Holy Writ that we may not want to acknowledge, as there is accountability to Him when we claim the banner of Christianity!

How might all of this relate to the onion plant? In this metaphor, we are going to consider the Christian to be an onion plant. The onion is an interesting plant with a vast leaf system. We think of leaves as being green and above the ground, but that is not always the case. The bulbous onion plant actually has two types of leaves, the green leaves above the ground and the fleshy leaves that nourish the plant in the bulb itself. That's right, the layers of the onion bulb that we consume are actually leaves.

This interesting plant begins from the bulbous state which produces the shoot for the new plant. As the plant matures, the fleshy leaves form the meaty layers of the fruit we will consume. Figuratively speaking, each layer overlies the layer beneath it, but in reality, the layers do not surround a core at the center of the onion bulb. Rather the growth of each layer stems from the base of the bulb. It is the base of the bulb that provides the basis for the formation of and the maturing of the meaty leaves. The layers of the onion flesh can ONLY mature around a viable base root system.

This is a critical point in our metaphor. The Christian onion MUST gain its nutrition (understanding) from a VIABLE base root system. This base root system MUST BE the core foundation of Torah principle as established by the Father and proclaimed by Y’shua Himself:

Matthew 5:17

(17) Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil.

The word “fulfil” here is Strong’s G4137 (pleroo) – *to be obeyed as it should be; to bring to pass; to ratify; to accomplish; to carry out; to render perfectly.*

He didn’t keep the Divine Law of His Father perfectly so we don’t have to keep it today. He kept it perfectly to prove His worthiness as our sacrificial Lamb. In keeping it, He actually ratified (confirmed, approved, and provided formal sanction of) the Law of His Father, providing an example for us to follow it as well.

He did not speak or act on His own, but only as He was directed by the Father, and He proclaimed that those who believe on Him should do

likewise:

John 14:10-12

(10) Believest thou not that I am in the Father, and the Father in me? the words that I speak unto you I speak not of myself: but the Father that dwelleth in me, he doeth the works.

(11) Believe me that I am in the Father, and the Father in me: or else believe me for the very works' sake.

(12) Verily, verily, I say unto you, **He that believeth on me, the works that I do shall he do also**; and greater works than these shall he do; because I go unto my Father.

John 12:49-50

(49) For I have not spoken of myself; but the Father which sent me, he gave me a commandment, what I should say, and what I should speak.

(50) And I know that **his commandment is life everlasting**: whatsoever I speak therefore, even as the Father said unto me, so I speak.

Y'shua is explaining here that His words and actions were given to Him directly by the Father to provide the foundation for our walk – our very path to eternal life.

The base of the plant derives its nutrition from the soil. This soil is that which was given to Y'shua by the Father for our instruction - Torah – our path to eternal life. Y'shua warns of this in the gospel of Matthew:

Matthew 7:13-14

(13) Enter ye in at the strait gate: for wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat:

(14) Because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which **leadeth unto life**, and few there be that find it.

Simply put, the straight gate is the undistorted (straight) instruction of Torah principles, and the narrow way is the way that is bordered by the boundaries that Torah provides. It leads to Life. Conversely, the wide gate is the teaching that Torah is no longer valid, and the broad way is the path that no longer has the boundaries that Torah provides. This path leads to destruction.

Y'shua not only exemplifies the fulfillment of the very Divine Law the Father had established in His Word, He then asks the Father to make it real to us as well:

John 17:16-26

- (16) They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world.
- (17) **Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth.**
- (18) As thou hast sent me into the world, even so have I also sent them into the world.
- (19) And for their sakes **I sanctify myself, that they also might be sanctified through the truth.**
- (20) Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word;
- (21) That they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, **that they also may be one in us:** that the world may believe that thou hast sent me.

This shows that sanctification is not granted to us, but is a process that is walked out. Verse 19 says that even Y'shua was not sanctified from the start. He said that He sanctified Himself in order that we too could be sanctified THROUGH the Father's Truth (His Words of Torah instruction). While justification is instantaneous upon belief of Y'shua, sanctification is not. It is the process of integrating Torah instruction to the heart and mind, and the walking out of that conviction in life. Paul clarifies this a bit more in his instructions to us in the book of Ephesians:

Ephesians 4:1-16

- (1) I therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you that ye **walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called,**
- (2) With all lowliness and meekness, with longsuffering, forbearing one another in love;
- (3) Endeavouring to keep the **unity of the Spirit** in the bond of peace.
- (4) There is one body, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling;
- (5) **One Lord**, one faith, one baptism,
- (6) **One God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all.**

He tells us here that the unity of the Spirit that inhabits us is of the FATHER OF ALL – that it is actually the Father that is in us.

Returning to our metaphor, this unity of the Father through His Spirit within us provides the power and instruction of His Torah principles to His children. This then is the base of the plant from which the nutrition is derived for the growth of the plant. The Father within us will expect our obedience to His mandates, and these were spelled out by the Father in Torah, lived out by Y'shua, and written on our hearts by His Spirit. It is Divine Truth by all standards The Father (John 17:17), the Son (John 14:5), and the Spirit (1 John 5:6). This Divine Truth is decreed by the Father in Torah,

commissioned by Y'shua in the gospel accounts, and directed by the Spirit in our hearts (2 Corinthians 3:3).

Divine Truth is foundational to the Christian onion. The basis of this Divine Truth is spelled out in Torah. It is the soil in which the onion plant is to grow. Torah Truth is disseminated through the entirety of Scripture, being called the Word. This Word is equated to water in Ephesians 5:26. Likewise, the water is referenced as the "living water" and implies the Holy Spirit in John 7:38-39. So – in our metaphor, even the water that sustains the onion plant provides further exposition of the Divine substance of Torah Truth by the Holy Spirit and the Word. In our correlation, the Holy Spirit forms the base of the onion plant, and it feeds the Divine Truth of the Torah soil to nourish the plant as the fleshy leaves of the plant's fruit are formed. Our Christian onion plant is continually fed the soil's Torah Truth by the base of the plant, the indwelling Holy Spirit.

If we choose to ignore the validity of the Torah precepts that we are shown, we do so at our own peril. The growth is stunted, and the fleshy leaves fail to properly develop. In a healthy plant, the fleshy leaves mature in layers, one covering another. As we mature in the faith, our increasing understanding and wisdom from above form these fleshy leaf layers, and our plant becomes healthy and fruitful.

No two onion plants are identical. The leaf structure will vary. The leaves will be formed by the nutrition provided by the soil through the base of the plant. For the Christian onion plant, the soil is Torah. However, when the nutrition (instruction) the plant receives from the base of the plant, deviates from the Divine Truth of the Torah soil, the spirit that forms the base of the plant is from the spirit of this world rather than from the Holy Spirit. The spirit of this world does not draw forth adequate nutrition from the Torah soil to properly nourish the plant. It will be deficient through denial of various aspects of this Truth. The Holy Spirit that proceeds directly from the Father Himself (John 15:26) shares the Divine essence OF the Father, and cannot deviate from the Torah instruction that the Father spelled out. Only the spirit of this world will deviate from these instructions.

Ephesians 2:2

(2) Wherein in time past ye walked according to the course of **this world**, according to the prince of the power of the air, the **spirit** that now worketh in the children of disobedience:

Obviously, a plant doesn't think, but the human counterpart we are pointing to in this metaphor can think and determine action. By desiring independence from the boundaries of Torah instruction we reject the

guidance of the True Holy Spirit that is commissioned to bring us to Father's entire Torah Truth (John 16:13).

Ephesians 4:30

(30) And **grieve not the holy Spirit of God**, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption.

By so doing, we invite the counterfeit spirit into our hearts and minds, and deception follows. Deformities in our spiritual maturity and our ability to form fruitful fleshy leaves that will nourish others quickly results.

Metaphorically, the fleshy leaf structures will vary, depending on the type of nutrition provided from the base of the plant. Considering the heresy factor presented earlier, the inconsistencies of Biblical interpretation produce differing belief systems, and the plants grow in accordance. Some produce fibrous growths around the first fleshy leaves because the nutrition is deficient. The leaves of one part of the onion may be malformed, while another part grows perfectly. This would be when incongruent beliefs are formed through deception. Sometimes the inner core may become moldy or slimy, beginning a process that will destroy the whole plant from within. We would liken this to perverse messaging from the base of the plant. At other times the outer layers will begin to rot because of corruption, typological of the Believer backsliding into the sin nature. When the spirit of this world inhabits the base of the plant, backsliding is prevalent.

Thin membranes develop between the layers of the plant as the growth proceeds. These membranes are like the guidance of the Holy Spirit within. As we endeavor to allow the Spirit to lead us, we are given layers of protection in our lives so the outside world cannot destroy our walk of faith. Only as we allow the enemy to penetrate does the defilement of the fleshy leaves occur.

As each layer of fleshy leaf production develops, it builds upon that which underlies it. As we allow the proper nutrition to supply the plant and we yield to the power of the Spirit to bring growth, the wisdom of Elohim will apply one concept, principle, and revelation upon another providing layer after layer of fleshy leaves until the plant is matured.

The Torah is manifold in its ability to nourish us. The initial instructions are the Word of the Father found in our Old Testament text. The prophets brought amplification to His Word as they were revealed in the prophecies of old. As the living Torah, the Son brought the Words of the Father into human form for our example. As the glorification of the Father's Word, the Holy Spirit imprints it upon our lives as we walk with Him. Each application

of the Word emanating from the base of the plant produces more life – life built upon life – until the plant is fully matured. As one fleshy leaf supports the growth of the next, each progressively applied layer of the plant growth is precious in the Father’s sight.

Going back to our initial premise that everyone who confesses Y’shua and believes in His death and resurrection is a Christian, we see that each one in the body of Christ is significant. In our onion metaphor, even a moldy onion, a perverse onion that is partially withered, or one that divides itself into multiple factions within are still a part of the body. The malformation through back-sliding, ignoring portions of the Father’s Divine Law, or allowing deception to take hold will all be sorted out at the Throne when we stand before the Son. We have claimed His name and His banner of Christianity, but if we fail to be conformed to His image, we have somewhat to answer for when we stand before Him.

Romans 14:10

(10) But why dost thou judge thy brother? or why dost thou set at nought thy brother? for **we shall all stand before the judgment seat of Christ.**

We are accountable for iniquity. Y’shua, Himself said:

Matthew 7:21-23

(21) **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.

(22) Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works?

(23) And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: **depart from me, ye that work iniquity.**

The primary definition for iniquity is “lawlessness” (or Torahlessness). If we allow mankind (even our pastors) to alter and distort the foundation of the Torah message, it can bring us into deception and cause the base of our plant to become moldy. For this too we must give account before the Throne.

Hebrews 2:1-3

(1) Therefore we ought to give the more earnest heed to the things which we have heard, lest at any time we should let them slip.

(2) For if the word spoken by angels was stedfast, and **every transgression and disobedience received a just recompence of reward;**

(3) How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation; which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed unto us by them that heard him;

Y'shua said He was the **WAY**, the **TRUTH**, and the **LIFE** (John 14:6). He also said He was the **DOOR** (John 10:9). As the **DOOR**, He has opened up to us the **WAY** to return to our Father. He has provided for us the **TRUTH** (the whole TRUTH, and nothing but the TRUTH) through the reinforcing of Torah Principle. This enables us to be sanctified by the Word of the Father in our walk of faith and enter into Eternal **LIFE**. Sanctification through the Word in our walk of faith involves obedience to the precepts of Torah laid out for us from the beginning.

1 Peter 1:2

(2) Elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through **sanctification** of the Spirit, **unto obedience** and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ: Grace unto you, and peace, be multiplied.

It is at the end of our sanctification – our walk of faith – that we find that the process of our salvation is complete:

1 Peter 1:9

(9) Receiving the end of your faith, even the **salvation of your souls**.

May we draw our nourishment from the uncorrupted instruction that is derived directly from the foundation of Torah principle. May we then allow the example of the Son and the power and direction of the Holy Spirit within to enable us to abide by them in our walk of faith. As a result, may we produce good fruit for the Father and His Kingdom work.

Psalms 111:7-8

(7) The works of his hands are verity and judgment; **all his commandments are sure**.

(8) **They stand fast for ever and ever**, and are done in truth and uprightness.

Psalms 112:1

(1) Praise ye the LORD. Blessed is the man that feareth the LORD, that delighteth greatly in his commandments.

Revelation 22:14

(14) Blessed are they that do his commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city.