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Christ Jesus has set us free from the bondage of sin. This could not happen by trying to keep the Law in our own power because our flesh wants nothing to do with obeying God. (*“For the mind set on the flesh is enmity against God because it is not subject to the Law of God, nor can it be” - Romans 8:7*). Our flesh ruled over us and because of this, we could not fulfill the righteousness demanded by God’s Law. But God made it possible for righteousness to be fulfilled in us. He sent His Son from heaven in the likeness of sinful flesh in order to condemn sin in the flesh. He did this not just to deliver us from the penalty of sin which is hell. His purpose was that actual righteousness would be produced in His people. With sin being condemned, His born again people are free to walk according to the Spirit. They are no longer hopelessly bound to follow the dictates of their flesh with its sinful desires. (*“Walk in the Spirit and you will not fulfill the lusts of the flesh” – Galatians 5:15*). Christians put to death the misdeeds of the body through the Spirit. (See Romans 8:13.) Only those who do this will enjoy eternal life. These are those who are born again. They are “In Christ Jesus.”

Only those who truly believe the gospel of Jesus Christ receive remission of sins and this new, everlasting “Jesus-life.” They are the only ones who can achieve the righteousness that God requires. Any person who claims to be a Christian but does not live a righteous life is a liar. He has not been born again. Any person who insists on following Islam or Judaism will not receive the promise of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Their sins will not be remitted and they will

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not have the power to live the submitted life that God requires.

Are you willing to examine your innermost being and acknowledge that you fail to truly submit to God? Are you tired of trying to pretend righteousness for your friends, family and religious leaders? If so, listen to Jesus invitation to you:

“Come to me all you who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For My yoke is easy and My burden is light” (Matthew 11:28-30).

Jesus promises to give you the power to live a holy, righteous life but you must submit to His way. You must acknowledge that you need Him to save you. You must put your trust in His sacrificial death for you and believe the gospel promise that all who trust in His death to pay for their sins receive remission of sins and eternal life.

But be forewarned of these words of Jesus: ***“Unless a person is willing to die for me, he cannot be My disciple.”*** (Becoming a follower of Jesus is not to be taken lightly.)

Footnote: Three days after He died, **Jesus rose from the dead as conqueror!**

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Muslims can’t be “muslim”

Many Muslims have told me that the word “Muslim” means “submitted to God.” Muslims think that if they abide by the teachings of Islam that they are submitted to God but this is not the case. There are millions of religious people in the world. Some call themselves Christian. Some call themselves Muslim. Some call themselves Jews. According to the Bible, none of these people are able to submit to God in their own power in the way God wants them to submit to Him.

The Bible teaches that all human beings come into the world as sinners. This teaching is demonstrated by every human being as they grow up. Every single one of them is selfish by nature and definitely not submitted to God. One who is truly submitted to God obeys Him! God considers each and every act of disobedience idolatry, the most serious of sins. Idolatry is devotion to any god who is not the true God. All human beings naturally act as if they have the right to disobey God. People rationalize this behavior by comparing themselves to the many people in the world who seem to behave worse. Muslims call their acts of disobedience “mistakes.” Thus, they downplay their acts of disobedience. It never occurs to them that whenever they disobey God, they commit idolatry. Each act of disobedience is blatant rebellion. By the sin, the human acts as if he is God over his life. He does not have the right to decide to disobey God. Each time he does so, he is not submitted to God and God considers it a

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flagrant act of idolatry and it is highly insulting to Him!

Whether they call themselves, Christian, Muslim or Jew, there are millions of religious people on earth who think they are submitted to God even though they disobey Him often. These people have a basic understanding of what God considers right and what God considers wrong. Outwardly, many of these people seem to do right things and try to avoid doing wrong things. Their friends and neighbors may have high respect for them because it seems like they live righteously. By this, I mean that they seem to live in a way that God considers acceptable and honorable.

In Jesus' day, there were certain religious people called Pharisees. Most of them had a reputation for being very serious in their religion that is known now as Judaism. Some of these men memorized the entire Torah. (The Torah contains all of the writings of Moses.) These people lived in such a way that the Bible calls "blameless." This means that if they were taken into court, nobody could convict them of breaking the Law given through Moses. Sounds pretty righteous, doesn't it? Yet, Jesus taught that unless a man's righteousness exceeds that of the Pharisees, he will NOT make it to heaven! God requires a much greater level of righteousness! The Bible teaches that God requires a level of righteousness that human beings cannot achieve in their own power. This is why the Bible says, "*There is none good, no not one!*" (Psalm 14:3).

The Bible explains why human beings do not have the power to produce the righteousness God requires. "*The mind set*

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on the flesh is enmity against God; for it is not subject to the Law of God, it is not able to do so." Those who are in the flesh (not born again) cannot please God" (Romans 8:7-8). According to the Bible, all human beings, no matter how religious, naturally have their minds set on the flesh. (They care more about their own life. They seek out their own comfort, etc.) Because of this tendency, they fail often to submit to God's Law. Their own desires get in the way because true submission to God's Law goes against the desires of the flesh for comfort, recognition, respect, etc. Because of these things, the Bible teaches that by trying to keep God's Law, no person will be justified in God's sight. (See Romans 3:19-20.) In other words, God will not consider them righteous, no matter how many good works they do. (They are not fit for heaven.)

God has made a way for people to live in a way that He considers righteous. On their own, people cannot and will not live sufficiently righteous lives. But God has made a way for them to live righteous lives through the power of His Spirit living inside them. (These are the only true "Christians.")

Most people who call themselves Christian are merely religious people. But some of these people have been "born again." This is a supernatural act of God that makes spiritually dead people suddenly alive to Him. But none of this could be accomplished without the sacrifice of His Son, Jesus Christ. This was necessary because in reality, each and every sin must be punished by God in order to fulfill His absolute justice. Though He is merciful in nature, He cannot excuse a single sin. So,

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He sent His Son to take the punishment for us. All those who believe that Jesus took their punishment this way receive remission of sins. (Remission means that God has taken our sins completely away from us.) BUT they also receive new, everlasting life from God. It is not merely an extension of natural life. It is Jesus' life inside them that produces true righteousness in the way they live. Only these people can live truly submitted lives. They obey for a different reason than mere religious people. The true Christian does not obey as a means to gain heaven. They obey because God has put in them a new heart. They obey Him because they truly love Him and enjoy doing the things that please God. This is their food! They are willing to die for Jesus. Below is a short Bible passage that explains this:

"There is now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus, who walk not according to the flesh but according to the Spirit. For the law of the spirit of life in Christ Jesus has set me free from the law of sin and death. For what the law could not do, weak as it was through the flesh, God Himself did by sending His Son in the likeness of sinful flesh and for sin; He condemned sin in the flesh that the righteousness of the law would be fulfilled in us who walk not according to the flesh but according to the Spirit" (Romans 8:1-4).

This passage contains several concepts so let us break it down a bit. First, there is now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus. Those who are in Christ Jesus (the people who have been "born again") do not walk according to the flesh. They walk according to the Spirit. The Spirit of life in