

## **Jesus heart's desire that Christians are one worldwide.**

## **Part 1**

*NKJV (John 17: 20-23) 20 "I do not pray for these alone, but also for those who will believe in Me through their word; 21 that they all may be one, as You, Father, are in Me, and I in You; that they also may be one in Us, that the world may believe that You sent Me. 22 And the glory which You gave Me I have given them, that they may be one just as We are one; 23 I in them, and You in Me; that they may be made perfect in one, and that the world may know that You have sent Me, and have loved them as You have loved Me.*

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What Jesus wants for His disciples is, that all are together in unity in a worldwide Christian community, just as Jesus himself wants to be one with all His disciples.

Why are Christians worldwide no unity and is there so much diversity?

How is it that Christians around the world experience the Christian faith so differently and want to spread it that way? Is Christianity meant for so many different explanations?

For the answers to these, let's first read a part in the book of Revelation.

In the book of Revelation, Jesus gives messages to 7 Christian communities.

During the inspection of the 7 communities, 5 communities had serious problems.

Ephesus, Pergamos, Thyatira, Sardis and Laodicea were severely corrected by Jesus:

*Rev. 2: 1 the church of **Ephesus**... 4 ...that you have left your first love.*

*Rev. 2: 8 the church in **Smyrna**... 9 I know your works, tribulation, and poverty (but you are rich)*

*Rev. 2:12 the church in **Pergamos** ... 13 I know your works, and where you dwell, where Satan's throne is.... 14 But I have a few things against you, because you have there those who hold the doctrine of Balaam, who taught Balak to put a stumbling block before the children of Israel, to eat things sacrificed to idols, and to commit sexual immorality. 15 Thus you also have those who hold the doctrine of the Nicolaitans, which thing I hate.*

*Rev. 2:18 the church in **Thyatira** ... 20 Nevertheless I have a few things against you, because you allow that woman Jezebel, who calls herself a prophetess, to teach and seduce My servants.....*

*Rev. 3: 1 the church in **Sardis**, ... I know your works, that you have a name that you are alive, but you are dead.*

*Rev. 3: 7 the church in **Philadelphia**, ... 8 See, I have set before you an open door, and no one can shut it;...*

*Rev. 3:14 the church of the **Laodiceans**.... 15 I know your works, that you are neither cold nor hot. I could wish you were cold or hot. 16 ... I will vomit you out of My mouth.*

There were all sorts of reasons why the 5 Christian communities were not doing well, such as lukewarmness in the faith or being spiritually dead. But there was another reason that exceeded all others.

**The theme of this article is why Christian knowledge is needed, what the meaning is of freedom and truth and how the first Christians experienced their faith.**

The main reason that the 5 communities were corrected was the influence of idolatry in the world, the worship and deception of Satan and of the demons:

*NKJV (2 Corinthians 11:14) 14 And no wonder! For Satan himself transforms himself into an angel of light.*

It is Satan's ultimate goal to struggle against Christianity. Just as Satan did everything to persecute Jesus Christ and (letting Jesus) be killed (Luke 22: 3-5), he will do everything he can to persecute and eradicate worldwide Christianity, by means of working in the children of disobedience: (Eph. 2: 2)

*NKJV (John 15: 18-20) 18 "If the world hates you, you know that it hated Me before it hated you. 19 If you were of the world, the world would love its own. Yet because you are not of the world, but I chose you out of the world, therefore the world hates you. 20 Remember the word that I said to you, 'A servant is not greater than his master.' If they persecuted Me, they will also persecute you. If they kept My word, they will keep yours also.*

Persons who belong to Satan's children (Matthew 13:38) are thus called the children of disobedience and can be observed in various disciplines:

The secret societies with their dark power, politicians who are more interested in self-interest and the job carousel for their party members than the interest of the people, the press who regularly is giving misrepresentations or publishing lies, the central banks and financial parties who are behaving like a legalized 'den of thieves', the demonic attack on our Christian youth through sex-neutral education with role play and how concerned parents are sidelined by schools:

<https://fee.org/articles/how-school-districts-weaponize-child-protection-services-against-uncooperative-parents/>

Christians - like Jesus - distance themselves from this wicked world and do not want to be part of it. What is in the world, is from Satan and is influenced by the teachings of demons:

*NKJV (Luke 4: 6) 6 And the devil said to Him, "All this authority I will give You, and their glory; for this has been delivered to me, and I give it to whomever I wish.*

*NKJV (1 Timothy 4: 1) 1 Now the Spirit expressly says that in latter times some will depart from the faith, giving heed to deceiving spirits and doctrines of demons, ....*

*NKJV (1 John 2:15) 15 Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him.*

Spectators outside the Christian community cannot understand the joy and love that Christians have for their Father (YHWH) and for each other, to them they seem to be fools.

But Scripture explains who are the real fools:

*NKJV (1 Corinthians 1:27) 27 But God has chosen the foolish things of the world to put to shame the wise, and God has chosen the weak things of the world to put to shame the things which are mighty;*

*NKJV (1 Corinthians 3:19) 19 For the wisdom of this world is foolishness with God. For it is written, "He catches the wise in their own craftiness";*

- **Christians want to be an example**

Christians, in imitation of Jesus, want to show that it is also possible that people can be faithful to their Heavenly Father, their Creator, and can be righteous.

But to be able to form a worldwide unity, we must first distinguish the basis of Christian principles and understand how these are meant.

Christian principles are a quest, but a quest of vital importance.

In this Christian quest the spiritual HEART forms our consciousness:

*HCSB (1 Corinthians 4: 4) 4 For I am not conscious of anything against myself, but I am not justified by this. The One who evaluates me is the Lord.*

How our heart is filled, with good or bad things, indicates where we are aware of:

*NKJV (Luke 6:45) 45 A good man out of the good treasure of his heart brings forth good; and an evil man out of the evil treasure of his heart brings forth evil. For out of the abundance of the heart his mouth speaks.*

For every Christian, the filling of the heart is different.

With a weak or lukewarm faith, there is a chance that the heart will be filled with an evil treasure:

*NKJV (Matthew 15: 18-19) 18 But those things which proceed out of the mouth come from the heart, and they defile a man. 19 For out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, blasphemies.*

*NKJV (Hebrews 3:12) 12 Beware, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief in departing from the living God;*

*NKJV (2 Timothy 4: 3-4) 3 For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine, but according to their own desires, because they have itching ears, they will heap up for themselves teachers; 4 and they will turn their ears away from the truth, and be turned aside to fables.*

Conscience will be cleansed and pure as the god-fearing filling of the heart increases.

Because the conscience, sometimes the gnawing conscience, is completely dependent on the spiritual heart:

*NKJV (1 Timothy 1: 5) 5 Now the purpose of the commandment is love from a pure heart, from a good conscience, and from sincere faith,*

*NKJV (Hebrews 10:22) 22 let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water.*

Christians are by no means always aware that they are the temple of God:

*NKJV (1 Corinthians 3:16) 16 Do you not know that you are the temple of God and that the Spirit of God dwells in you?*

*NKJV (2 Corinthians 6:16) 16 And what agreement has the temple of God with idols? For you are the temple of the living God. As God has said: "I will dwell in them And walk among them. I will be their God, And they shall be My people."*

That temple must therefore be clean, made suitable for receiving God's Spirit:

*NKJV (2 John 1: 9) 9 Whoever transgresses and does not abide in the doctrine of Christ does not have God. He who abides in the doctrine of Christ has both the Father and the Son.*

Only then will the love of God be observed and the oneness in Christ be perceived.

At that moment freedom will be enjoyed and love can be spread out of someone's heart:

*NKJV (John 8: 31-32) 31 Then Jesus said to those Jews who believed Him, "If you abide in My word, you are My disciples indeed. 32 And you shall know the truth, and the truth shall*

*make you free."*

**NKJV** (2 Corinthians 3: 17) *17 Now the Lord is the Spirit; and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty.*

This freedom is for Jesus disciples the total independence of the judgment for sin on the last day. They are certain of a resurrection based on Jesus sacrifice. What Jesus has asked us, is to love God and to love our neighbors, even our enemies: (Matthew 22: 37, 39, Matthew 5:44)

**NKJV** (Galatians 5: 13-14) *13 For you, brethren, have been called to liberty; only do not use liberty as an opportunity for the flesh, but through love serve one another. 14 For all the law is fulfilled in one word, even in this: "You shall love your neighbor as yourself."*

Jesus, through his sacrifice, delivered us from the slavery of sin and granted us real freedom:

**NKJV** (John 8: 34-36) *34 Jesus answered them, "Most assuredly, I say to you, whoever commits sin is a slave of sin. 35 And a slave does not abide in the house forever, but a son abides forever. 36 Therefore if the Son makes you free, you shall be free indeed.*

**NKJV** (Romans 6: 20-23) *20 For when you were slaves of sin, you were free in regard to righteousness. 21 What fruit did you have then in the things of which you are now ashamed? For the end of those things is death. 22 But now having been set free from sin, and having become slaves of God, you have your fruit to holiness, and the end, everlasting life. 23 For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.*

The Scripture warns us, that we must not allow to be entangled again with a yoke of bondage:

**NKJV** (Galatians 5: 1) *1 Stand fast therefore in the liberty by which Christ has made us free, and do not be entangled again with a yoke of bondage.*

**NKJV** (2 Peter 2:19) *19 While they promise them liberty, they themselves are slaves of corruption; for by whom a person is overcome, by him also he is brought into bondage.*

Each one who is overcome by faith in Jesus Christ and loves his brother is freed from slavery. Each one who sins is - and remains - a slave to sin:

**NKJV** (John 8:34) *34 Jesus answered them, "Most assuredly, I say to you, whoever commits sin is a slave of sin.*

**NKJV** (1 John 3:14) *14 We know that we have passed from death to life, because we love the brethren. He who does not love his brother abides in death.*

In order to cleanse our own temple as a Christian and to receive freedom, we need knowledge and we must know the truth.

- **Searching the truth**

But what does truth mean?

**NKJV** (John 18: 37-38) *37 Pilate therefore said to Him, "Are You a king then?" Jesus answered, "You say rightly that I am a king. For this cause I was born, and for this cause I have come into the world, that I should bear witness to the truth. Everyone who is of the truth hears My voice." 38 Pilate said to Him, "What is truth?"....*

What was truth for the first Christians, the apostles and the saints?

God's word is truth. (John 17:17) And about Jesus is written in John as the Word that has become flesh. Jesus - as the word of God - therefore only speaks the truth:

*NKJV (John 1: 14, 17) 14 And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth....17 For the law was given through Moses, but grace and truth came through Jesus Christ.*

The Holy Spirit of God is called the Spirit of truth:

*NKJV (John 14:17) 17 the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees Him nor knows Him; but you know Him, for He dwells with you and will be in you.*

*NKJV (John 15:26) 26 "But when the Helper comes, whom I shall send to you from the Father, the Spirit of truth who proceeds from the Father, He will testify of Me.*

*NKJV (John 16:13) 13 However, when He, the Spirit of truth, has come, He will guide you into all truth; for He will not speak on His own authority, but whatever He hears He will speak; and He will tell you things to come.*

The truth, God's word, applies to all Christians:

*HCSB (2 Corinthians 4: 2) 2 Instead, we have renounced shameful secret things, not walking in deceit or distorting God's message, but in God's sight we commend ourselves to every person's conscience by an open display of the truth.*

*NKJV (Colossians 1: 5) 5 because of the hope which is laid up for you in heaven, of which you heard before in the word of the truth of the gospel,*

Christians worship God (YHWH) in spirit and in truth, in truth according to the gospel:

*NKJV (John 4: 23-24) 23 But the hour is coming, and now is, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth; for the Father is seeking such to worship Him. 24 God is Spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth."*

Only through Jesus, we can approach our Heavenly Father:

*NKJV (John 14: 6) 6 Jesus said to him, "I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me.*

*NKJV (1 Timothy 2: 4) 4 Who desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth.*

Christians rejoice when their children put faith in the Christ and thus in God's word:

*HCSB (3 John 1: 4) 4 I have no greater joy than this: to hear that my children are walking in the truth.*

How does the world deal with truth?

*NKJV (Romans 1:25) 25 who exchanged the truth of God for the lie, and worshiped and served the creature rather than the Creator, who is blessed forever. Amen.*

*NKJV (Isaiah 5: 20-21) 20 Woe to those who call evil good, and good evil; Who put darkness*

*for light, and light for darkness; Who put bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter! 21 Woe to those who are wise in their own eyes, And prudent in their own sight!*

- **The first Christian community and how this was built up.**

The first congregations consisted of the apostles and, moreover, practically all saints:

*NKJV (1 Corinthians 14:33) 33 For God is not the author of confusion but of peace, as in all the churches of the saints.*

Disciples of Jesus were called Christians for the first time:

*NKJV (Acts 11:22, 26) 22 Then news of these things came to the ears of the church in Jerusalem, and they sent out Barnabas to go as far as Antioch....26 And when he had found him, he brought him to Antioch. So it was that for a whole year they assembled with the church and taught a great many people. And the disciples were first called Christians in Antioch.*

What did the truth or God's word mean for the first Christian communities?

The apostles and the saints had everything in common:

*NKJV (Acts 2:42, 44) 42 And they persevered in the doctrine of the apostles and in fellowship, in the breaking of bread and in prayers ....44 And all who believed were together and had all things in common....*

*NKJV (Acts 4:32) 32 Now the multitude of those who believed were of one heart and one soul; neither did anyone say that any of the things he possessed was his own, but they had all things in common.*

The apostles had received their commandments from Jesus:

*NKJV (Acts 1: 2) 2 until the day in which He was taken up, after He through the Holy Spirit had given commandments to the apostles whom He had chosen,*

*NKJV (John 20:21) 21 So Jesus said to them again, "Peace to you! As the Father has sent Me, I also send you."*

The Holy Spirit was poured out on the apostles and the first disciples:

*NKJV (Acts 1: 13-14) 13 And when they had entered, they went up into the upper room where they were staying: Peter, James, John, and Andrew; Philip and Thomas; Bartholomew and Matthew; James the son of Alphaeus and Simon the Zealot; and Judas the son of James. 14 These all continued with one accord in prayer and supplication, with the women and Mary the mother of Jesus, and with His brothers.*

*HCSB (Acts 2: 4) 4 Then they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in different languages, as the Spirit gave them ability for speech.*

They began to speak as the Spirit gave them, in different languages, against Jews from all peoples of the world, Parthians, Medes, Elamites, Mesopotamia, Judaea, Cappadocia, Pontus, Asia, Phrygia, Pamphylia, Egypt, regions of Libya, Romans, Cretans and Arabs: (Acts 2: 9-11)

*NKJV (Acts 2: 5) 5 And there were dwelling in Jerusalem Jews, devout men, from every nation under heaven.*

After pouring out the Holy Spirit, Peter gave a discourse:

*NKJV (Acts 2: 14-15, 38) 14 But Peter, standing up with the eleven, raised his voice and said to them, "Men of Judea and all who dwell in Jerusalem, let this be known to you, and heed my words.*

*15 For these are not drunk, as you suppose, since it is only the third hour of the day.... 38 Then Peter said to them, "Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.*

Approximately 3,000 Jews responded to Peter on that day:

*NKJV (Acts 2: 41-43) 41 Then those who gladly received his word were baptized; and that day about three thousand souls were added to them. 42 And they continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, in the breaking of bread, and in prayers. 43 Then fear came upon every soul, and many wonders and signs were done through the apostles.*

In those days the apostles did many miracles and signs and, as a community, prayed together and in each house in turn, together the bread was broken as a meal:

*NKJV (Acts 2: 46-47) 46 So continuing daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, they ate their food with gladness and simplicity of heart, 47 praising God and having favor with all the people. And the Lord added to the church daily those who were being saved.*

The healing of the crippled man who was lame from birth:

*NKJV (Acts 3: 6-7) 6 Then Peter said, "Silver and gold I do not have, but what I do have I give you: In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, rise up and walk." 7 And he took him by the right hand and lifted him up, and immediately his feet and ankle bones received strength.*

Peter and John have to appear before the Sanhedrin because of the healing and may no longer speak or teach about Jesus:

*NKJV (Acts 4: 20-22) 20 For we cannot but speak the things which we have seen and heard." 21 So when they had further threatened them, they let them go, finding no way of punishing them, because of the people, since they all glorified God for what had been done. 22 For the man was over forty years old on whom this miracle of healing had been performed.*

After their release, the first Christians had voluntary community of all they had:

*NKJV (Acts 4: 31-32) 31 And when they had prayed, the place where they were assembled together was shaken; and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit, and they spoke the word of God with boldness. 32 Now the multitude of those who believed were of one heart and one soul; neither did anyone say that any of the things he possessed was his own, but they had all things in common.*

All Christian communities were autonomous, with leading men as elders.  
Only in Jerusalem the apostles resided who were leading the teaching work:

*NKJV (Acts 2:42) 42 And they continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, in the breaking of bread, and in prayers.*

*NKJV (Acts 6: 2, 4) 2 Then the twelve summoned the multitude of the disciples and said, .... 4 but we will give ourselves continually to prayer and to the ministry of the word."*

In those days also began the first irregularities in the Christian community.  
Ananias and his wife Sapphira told the Christian community that they would make available the entire proceeds of a plot of land:

*NKJV (Acts 5: 1-2, 4-5, 10-11) 1 But a certain man named Ananias, with Sapphira his wife, sold a possession. 2 And he kept back part of the proceeds, his wife also being aware of it, and brought a certain part and laid it at the apostles' feet.... 4 While it remained, was it not your own? And after it was sold, was it not in your own control? Why have you conceived this thing in your heart? You have not lied to men but to God." 5 Then Ananias, hearing these words, fell down and breathed his last.... 10 Then immediately she fell down at his feet and breathed her last..... 11 So great fear came upon all the church and upon all who heard these things.*

The apostles continued to do many powerful signs:

*HCSB (Acts 5:12) 12 Many signs and wonders were being done among the people through the hands of the apostles. By common consent they would all meet in Solomon's Colonnade.*

The apostles were put in prison by the jealous religious Jewish leaders:

*HCSB (Acts 5: 17-20) 17 Then the high priest took action. He and all his colleagues, those who belonged to the party of the Sadducees, were filled with jealousy. 18 So they arrested the apostles and put them in the city jail. 19 But an angel of the Lord opened the doors of the jail during the night, brought them out, and said, 20 "Go and stand in the temple complex, and tell the people all about this life."*

The apostles were seized again but were released by the arguments of the Pharisee Gamaliel:

*NKJV (Acts 5: 39-40) 39 but if it is of God, you cannot overthrow it--lest you even be found to fight against God." 40 And they agreed with him, and when they had called for the apostles and beaten them, they commanded that they should not speak in the name of Jesus, and let them go.*

The apostles went to teach daily in the temple or with the people in their homes:

*HCSB (Acts 5:42) 42 Every day in the temple complex, and in various homes, they continued teaching and proclaiming the good news that the Messiah is Jesus.*

There was grumbling of the Greek-speaking Christians against the Hebrew Christians about the support of the widows. The apostles gave the advice to appoint 7 men for this matter:



*NKJV (Acts 6: 2-6) 2 Then the twelve summoned the multitude of the disciples and said, "It is not desirable that we should leave the word of God and serve tables. 3 Therefore, brethren, seek out from among you seven men of good reputation, full of the Holy Spirit and wisdom, whom we may appoint over this business; 4 but we will give ourselves continually to prayer and to the ministry of the word." 5 And the saying pleased the whole multitude. And they chose Stephen, a man full of faith and the Holy Spirit, and Philip, Prochorus, Nicanor, Timon, Parmenas, and Nicolas, a proselyte from Antioch, 6 whom they set before the apostles; and when they had prayed, they laid hands on them.*

Stephen was brought before the High Council by false accusations - as if he has blasphemed Moses and God. Then Stephen began preaching and that made the Council angry:

*NKJV (Acts 6: 8, 12) 8 And Stephen, full of faith and power, did great wonders and signs among the people..... 12 And they stirred up the people, the elders, and the scribes; and they came upon him, seized him, and brought him to the council.*

*NKJV (Acts 7: 51-53) 51 You stiffnecked and uncircumcised in heart and ears! You always resist the Holy Spirit; as your fathers did, so do you. 52 Which of the prophets did your fathers not persecute? And they killed those who foretold the coming of the Just One, of whom you now have become the betrayers and murderers, 53 who have received the law by the direction of angels and have not kept it.*

The stoning of Stephen:

*HCSB (Acts 7: 58-59) 58 They threw him out of the city and began to stone him. And the witnesses laid their robes at the feet of a young man named Saul. 59 They were stoning Stephen as he called out: "Lord Jesus, receive my spirit!"*

After the death of Stephen, a great persecution of the Christians in Jerusalem followed:

*NKJV (Acts 8: 1, 3-4) 1 Now Saul was consenting to his death. At that time a great persecution arose against the church which was at Jerusalem; and they were all scattered throughout the regions of Judea and Samaria, except the apostles..... 3 As for Saul, he made havoc of the church, entering every house, and dragging off men and women, committing them to prison. 4 Therefore those who were scattered went everywhere preaching the word.*

The gospel preacher Philip preaches in the city of Samaria, which Jesus had formerly avoided:

*NKJV (Matthew 10: 5) 5 These twelve Jesus sent out and commanded them, saying: "Do not go into the way of the Gentiles, and do not enter a city of the Samaritans.*

*NKJV (Acts 8: 5, 12) 5 Then Philip went down to the city of Samaria and preached Christ to them..... 12 But when they believed Philip as he preached the things concerning the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ, both men and women were baptized.*

After the death of King Solomon, the Jewish nation was divided and two kingdoms emerged, the southern two-tribe kingdom of Judah and the northern ten-tribe kingdom of Israel. Samaria, the city, was the capital of the northern kingdom of Israel. It was also the name for the area or country around the capital, which, like Galilee, belonged to the kingdom of Israel. After the Assyrian siege of the city of Samaria, many were deported from the land of Samaria, and later on, new residents from other countries were sent to the cities of Samaria. These new residents brought with them their own religion and their own gods:

*NKJV (2 Kings 17:24) 24 Then the king of Assyria brought people from Babylon, Cuthah, Ava, Hamath, and from Sepharvaim, and placed them in the cities of Samaria instead of the children of Israel; and they took possession of Samaria and dwelt in its cities.*



*NKJV (Acts 8: 14-17, 25) 14 Now when the apostles who were at Jerusalem heard that Samaria had received the word of God, they sent Peter and John to them, 15 who, when they had come down, prayed for them that they might receive the Holy Spirit. 16 For as yet He had fallen upon none of them. They had only been baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. 17 Then they laid hands on them, and they received the Holy Spirit..... 25 So when they had testified and preached the word of the Lord, they returned to Jerusalem, preaching the gospel in many villages of the Samaritans.*

It was the first time, that also the Samaritan Jews received the Holy Spirit.

Philip is then invited by an angel to preach to a courtier from Ethiopia, and this courtier, an eunuch and a pagan, is then baptized:

*NKJV (Acts 8: 26-28, 35-38) 26 Now an angel of the Lord spoke to Philip, saying, "Arise and go toward the south along the road which goes down from Jerusalem to Gaza." This is desert. 27 So he arose and went. And behold, a man of Ethiopia, a eunuch of great authority under Candace the queen of the Ethiopians, who had charge of all her treasury, and had come to Jerusalem to worship, 28 was returning. And sitting in his chariot, he was reading Isaiah the prophet.... 35 Then Philip opened his mouth, and beginning at this Scripture, preached Jesus to him. 36 Now as they went down the road, they came to some water. And the eunuch said, "See, here is water. What hinders me from being baptized?" 37 Then Philip said, "If you believe with all your heart, you may." And he answered and said, "I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God." 38 So he commanded the chariot to stand still. And both Philip and the eunuch went down into the water, and he baptized him.*

In those days, Saul went to Damascus (Syria) to find Christians and bring them to Jerusalem as prisoners:

*NKJV (Acts 9: 3-4) 3 As he journeyed he came near Damascus, and suddenly a light shone around him from heaven. 4 Then he fell to the ground, and heard a voice saying to him, "Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting Me?"*

Saul was blinded by the light and Jesus told him to go to Damascus:

*NKJV (Acts 9: 6-8) 6 So he, trembling and astonished, said, "Lord, what do You want me to do?" Then the Lord said to him, "Arise and go into the city, and you will be told what you must do." 7 And the men who journeyed with him stood speechless, hearing a voice but seeing no one. 8 Then Saul arose from the ground, and when his eyes were opened he saw no one. But they led him by the hand and brought him into Damascus.*

The disciple Ananias of Damascus is asked by Jesus to open Saul's eyes:

*NKJV (Acts 9: 13-15) 13 Then Ananias answered, "Lord, I have heard from many about this man, how much harm he has done to Your saints in Jerusalem. 14 And here he has authority from the chief priests to bind all who call on Your name." 15 But the Lord said to him, "Go, for he is a chosen vessel of Mine to bear My name before Gentiles, kings, and the children of Israel.*

After Saul (afterwards called Paul) could see again, he went to preach in Damascus:

*NKJV (Acts 9: 20-21) 20 Immediately he preached the Christ in the synagogues, that He is the Son of God. 21 Then all who heard were amazed, and said, "Is this not he who destroyed those who called on this name in Jerusalem, and has come here for that purpose, so that he might bring them bound to the chief priests?"*

The healing of the paralyzed Aeneas:

*NKJV (Acts 9: 32-34) 32 Now it came to pass, as Peter went through all parts of the country, that he also came down to the saints who dwelt in Lydda. 33 There he found a certain man named Aeneas, who had been bedridden eight years and was paralyzed. 34 And Peter said to him, "Aeneas, Jesus the Christ heals you. Arise and make your bed." Then he arose immediately.*

The resurrection of Tabitha:

*NKJV (Acts 9: 36-37, 40) 36 At Joppa there was a certain disciple named Tabitha, which is translated Dorcas. This woman was full of good works and charitable deeds which she did. 37 But it happened in those days that she became sick and died. When they had washed her, they laid her in an upper room.... 40 But Peter put them all out, and knelt down and prayed. And turning to the body he said, "Tabitha, arise." And she opened her eyes, and when she saw Peter she sat up.*

The special sanctification and baptism of the first Gentiles, the centurion Cornelius and his family:

*NKJV (Acts 10: 1-2) 1 There was a certain man in Caesarea called Cornelius, a centurion of what was called the Italian Regiment, 2 a devout man and one who feared God with all his household, who gave alms generously to the people, and prayed to God always.*

An angel visits Cornelius and asks him to go get Peter:

*NKJV (Acts 10: 5-8) 5 Now send men to Joppa, and send for Simon whose surname is Peter. 6 He is lodging with Simon, a tanner, whose house is by the sea. He will tell you what you must do." 7 And when the angel who spoke to him had departed, Cornelius called two of his household servants and a devout soldier from among those who waited on him continually. 8 So when he had explained all these things to them, he sent them to Joppa.*

The port city of Yafo from the Old Testament is Joppa in the New Testament. The city lies on the coast but is nowadays called Jaffa and is a suburb of Tel Aviv. Caesarea is also a coastal town and is located about 60 km north of Jaffa.

In the meantime Peter gets a vision:

*NKJV (Acts 10: 9-16) 9 The next day, as they went on their journey and drew near the city, Peter went up on the housetop to pray, about the sixth hour. 10 Then he became very hungry and wanted to eat; but while they made ready, he fell into a trance 11 and saw heaven opened and an object like a great sheet bound at the four corners, descending to him and let down to the earth. 12 In it were all kinds of four-footed animals of the earth, wild beasts, creeping things, and birds of the air. 13 And a voice came to him, "Rise, Peter; kill and eat." 14 But Peter said, "Not so, Lord! For I have never eaten anything common or unclean." 15 And a voice spoke to him again the second time, "What God has cleansed you must not call common." 16 This was done three times. And the object was taken up into heaven again.*

The Jewish people had to abide to the Law of Moses:

*NKJV (Leviticus 11: 46-47) 46 'This is the law of the animals and the birds and every living creature that moves in the waters, and of every creature that creeps on the earth, 47 to distinguish between the unclean and the clean, and between the animal that may be eaten and the animal that may not be eaten.'*

With the New Covenant that Jesus spoke of (Matthew 26:28), was the Law of Moses no longer valid.

According to the New Covenant, cleanliness is no longer dependent on which animals you eat.

This was made clear to Peter 'three times', which means 'it is certain'.

Peter was also no longer allowed to regard the Gentiles as unclean and was urged by the Spirit to go along with the three men:

*NKJV (Acts 10: 19-20) 19 While Peter thought about the vision, the Spirit said to him, "Behold, three men are seeking you. 20 Arise therefore, go down and go with them, doubting nothing; for I have sent them."*

Peter goes with the three men to Caesarea, to Cornelius:

*NKJV (Acts 10: 27-28, 34-35, 43-44) 27 And as he talked with him, he went in and found many who had come together. 28 Then he said to them, "You know how unlawful it is for a Jewish man to keep company with or go to one of another nation. But God has shown me that I should not call any man common or unclean.... 34 Then Peter opened his mouth and said: "In truth I perceive that God shows no partiality. 35 But in every nation whoever fears Him*

*and works righteousness is accepted by Him.... 43 To Him all the prophets witness that, through His name, whoever believes in Him will receive remission of sins." 44 While Peter was still speaking these words, the Holy Spirit fell upon all those who heard the word.*

While Peter was still speaking, all were sanctified, God showed that these people were accepted.

For Peter it was an unusual sequence that all were sanctified and only afterwards baptized:

*NKJV (Acts 10: 47-48) 47 "Can anyone forbid water, that these should not be baptized who have received the Holy Spirit just as we have?" 48 And he commanded them to be baptized in the name of the Lord. Then they asked him to stay a few days.*

**Finally:**

Christianity is based on freedom, it is not a new slave yoke.

But many Christian groups disagree about the basic doctrines, like what it means to be a Christian:

*NKJV (1 Corinthians 8: 6) 6 yet for us there is one God, the Father, of whom are all things, and we for Him; and one Lord Jesus Christ, through whom are all things, and through whom we live.*

From the very beginning that the Christian communities existed they came together as small communities in their homes or in public spaces and buildings such as the temple or the squares.

Through all ages, true Christians can be recognized by their fruits:

*NKJV (Matthew 12:33) 33 "Either make the tree good and its fruit good, or else make the tree bad and its fruit bad; for a tree is known by its fruit.*

**In the next article we will discuss the organization of the first communities, the problems that arose and how they have experienced and have strengthened the faith as a community.**

P.S. On the site [Disciples of Jesus Christ](#) there are more substantive Christian articles.