

“Victory in Jesus!”

(1 John 5:1-5)

Introduction

➤ As we have seen throughout our study of “1 John”, the apostle John wrote this book (words inspired by the Holy Spirit of God; 2Tim.3:16; 2Pet.1:20-21) to exhort Christians to examine their lives to see if they are truly followers of Christ (as opposed to Christian’s in name only, “carnal Christians”, non-practicing Christians, which are all false believers).

The apostle’s purpose in writing this book was not to swing a fat-bat of condemnation, but to press Christians to examine the veracity of their profession against the reality of their lives. To be sure, this spiritual examination can bring conviction to those who are in (unrepentant) sin, and even condemnation to those who are false believers), but John’s hope was that his readers would emerge from this self-examination with a fortified assurance of their salvation (see 1Jn.5:13).

➤ Sometimes, when you preach on the Christian’s assurance of salvation there arises this objection or concern: “If you convince people they are saved, they will not even try to obey the commands of God.” This is simply not true – not of the true believer, that is. For those who are truly saved – i.e., those who are truly “in Christ” (truly children of God, disciples of Christ) – do not use Christ as their “get-out-of-hell-free card.” True Christians do not merely want to be saved, they love and follow Jesus as Lord and Savior.

✓ Illust: Years ago, I was in a friendly (but intense) debate with a relative of mine over the issue of whether or not baptism is required for salvation. *Can a person truly be saved if they are not baptized? Can a person go to heaven without being baptized by immersion?* They believed that no one can get to heaven without first being baptized (fully immersed). For some time, we discussed various Scriptures and biblical doctrine. When our time came to an end, however, I was surprised to hear her say: “You should teach that baptism is required for salvation, for if you don’t people won’t get baptized!”

First, that is no reason to misrepresent the truth of Scripture. We don’t apply that thinking to other important aspects of the Christian life: giving, church attendance, Bible reading/study, prayer, etc., and yet Christians do all of these things without thinking their salvation is in jeopardy if they do not. Furthermore, obeying God simply to get to heaven is a self-centered and self-righteous attempt to earn God’s salvific favor. Which is tantamount to promoting a false gospel (Gal.1:8, 9), in an attempt to manipulate people.

Second, it is simply not true. We believe and teach that a person is saved by God’s grace alone, through faith alone, in Christ alone. That baptism, like circumcision, is an act of obedience not a means of earning salvation (see Gal.5:1-6; Eph.2:8-10; Tit.3:5-7).

While baptism is not required for salvation, it is required for the believer. For we are commanded to be baptized in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit (Matt.28:19; cf. Matt.3:15; Lk.4:46; Acts 2:38; 22:16; Rom.6:3-4).

➤ The truth is, Scripture is neither silent nor obscure with regard to the believer’s security in Christ, and his/her assurance of that salvation. Here are just a (relative) few plain and powerful examples from God’s Word:

1 John 5:13 ~ “I write these things to you who believe in the name of the Son of God that you may know that you have eternal life.”

John 10:27-29 ~ “My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me. ²⁸I give them eternal life, and they will never perish, and no one will snatch them out of my hand. ²⁹My Father, who has given them to me, is greater than all, and no one is able to snatch them out of the Father’s hand.”

Rom 8:1, 37-39 ~ “There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus. ... ³⁷No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. ³⁸For I am sure that neither

death nor life, nor angels nor rulers, nor things present nor things to come, nor powers, ³⁹nor height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.”

Eph 1:13-14 ~ “In him you also, when you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation, and believed in him, were sealed with the promised Holy Spirit, ¹⁴who is the guarantee of our inheritance until we acquire possession of it, to the praise of his glory.”

1 Peter 1:3-6 ~ “Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! According to his great mercy, he has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, ⁴to an inheritance that is imperishable, undefiled, and unfading, kept in heaven for you, ⁵who by God’s power are being guarded through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.”

Jude 24-25 ~ “Now to him who is able to keep you from stumbling and to present you blameless before the presence of his glory with great joy, ²⁵to the only God, our Savior, through Jesus Christ our Lord, be glory, majesty, dominion, and authority, before all time and now and forever. Amen.”

Phil 1:6 ~ “And I am sure of this, that he who began a good work in you will bring it to completion at the day of Jesus Christ.”

Heb 7:25 ~ “Consequently, he is able to save to the uttermost [*panteles*] those who draw near to God through him, since he always lives to make intercession for them.”

➤ As we have seen, specifically in the previous passage (1Jn.4:7-21), the believer’s security of salvation comes not from his/her own good works but from the atoning work of Christ. Our confidence is not in the fact that we are so good, or so godly, but in the fact that Jesus Christ fully and finally paid the penalty for our sin – through His sinless life, sacrificial death, and supernatural resurrection. It is not our faith that saves us, but our faith is in the One who saves us.

This is no self-righteous arrogance, but the bold assurance of knowing God’s promises to be true and the work of Christ to be sufficient (Christ did not just make salvation possible, but fully and eternally saves). The assurance of our salvation must only come from our confidence in God (His character, attributes, and promises), and in the substitutionary atonement of Jesus Christ (His life, death, and resurrection).

1 John 1:9 ~ “If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.”

Psa 103:12 ~ “as far as the east is from the west, so far does he remove our transgressions from us.”

Isa 44:22 ~ “I have blotted out your transgressions like a cloud and your sins like mist; return to me, for I have redeemed you.”

Isa 43:25 ~ “I, I am he who blots out your transgressions for my own sake, and I will not remember your sins.”

Eph 1:7 ~ “In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of his grace”

Col 1:13-14 ~ “He has delivered us from the domain of darkness and transferred us to the kingdom of his beloved Son, ¹⁴in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins.”

Col 2:13 ~ “And you, who were dead in your trespasses and the uncircumcision of your flesh, God made alive together with him, having forgiven us all our trespasses”

2 Cor 5:21 ~ “For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.”

➤ Still, upon hearing such great affirmations concerning the believer's security in Christ, some Christians are concerned that such teachings can lead people to live sinless, ungodly, worldly – disobedient – lives. While this may be a natural, and even rational, concern – specifically after reading 1 John 4:7-21 – we must remember to take in all of God's Word. Thankfully, as so often is the case, any confusion can be clarified as we keep reading.

1 John 5:1-5 ~ “Everyone who believes that Jesus is the Christ has been born of God, and everyone who loves the Father loves whoever has been born of him. ²By this we know that we love the children of God, when we love God and obey his commandments. ³For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments. And his commandments are not burdensome. ⁴For everyone who has been born of God overcomes the world. And this is the victory that has overcome the world – our faith. ⁵Who is it that overcomes the world except the one who believes that Jesus is the Son of God?”

➤ This passage can be divided into three main sections, each providing us with a unique aspect of true saving faith.

1. The **ESSENCE** of saving faith (vs.1) ~ *A person is saved by God's grace alone, through faith alone, in Christ alone.*

➤ John again reminds us that the essence of (true) saving faith is believing “*that Jesus is the Christ*” (vs.1; John mentioned “believing” seven times in chapter five: vs.1, 4, 5, 10^{3x}, 13). Notice that this is not merely believing that a man name Jesus existed (as a “good moral teacher”), but that Jesus is the “*Christ*” (*Christos*; anointed one) – that is, the Messiah of God. This title is loaded with meaning.

To believe that Jesus is the Christ is to believe that He is the one and only Son of God and one and only Savior from God; it is to believe in His virgin birth, His sinless life, His sacrificial/substitutionary death, His supernatural resurrection; it is to believe that He is King of kings and Lord of lords; and it is to believe that He is coming again to eternally glorify those who put their faith in Him and eternally condemn those who rejected Him.

➤ This is the crux of the Gospel – a person is saved by God's grace alone, through faith alone, in Christ alone.

Rom 5:1 ~ “Therefore, since we have been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.”

Titus 3:4-7 ~ “But when the goodness and loving kindness of God our Savior appeared, ⁵he saved us, not because of works done by us in righteousness, but according to his own mercy, by the washing of regeneration and renewal of the Holy Spirit, ⁶whom he poured out on us richly through Jesus Christ our Savior, ⁷so that being justified by his grace we might become heirs according to the hope of eternal life.” (see Eph.2:4-5, 8-9; 2Tim.1:9).

➤ This is further explained and reinforced by the analogous reference of the Christian being “*born of God*” (vs.1). This is not the first, nor the last, time John used this expression in the book of 1 John (2:29; 3:9-10; 4:7-8; 5:4, 18^{2x}). This is the biblical doctrine of “regeneration” which teaches that those who are truly saved in Christ have been “born again” – i.e., made spiritually alive by the Holy Spirit of God.

A person needs to be “*born of God*” (vs.1), or “born again”, in order to be saved because prior to conversion the sinner is spiritually “dead” – no spiritual life, unable to save himself, unable to live righteously. Regeneration represents a fundamental spiritual change, those who are “*children of the devil*” (1Jn.3:10), and “*children of [God's] wrath*” (Eph.2:3), become – by God's grace, mercy, and love – “*children of God*” (1Jn.3:1, 10).

Eph 2:4-5 ~ “But God, being rich in mercy, because of the great love with which he loved us, ⁵even when we were dead in our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ – by grace you have been saved” (see 1Cor.15:22; Rom.6:11; Col.2:13)

2 Cor 5:17 ~ “Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come.”

Gal 6:15 ~ “For neither circumcision counts for anything, nor uncircumcision, but a new creation.”

➤ This was the focal point of Jesus’ conversion with Nicodemus (a Pharisee and ruler of the Jews; Jn.3:10). When Nicodemus came to Jesus, Jesus immediately pressed him to understand the central truth of the Gospel:

John 3:3 ~ “Jesus answered him, ‘Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born again he cannot see the kingdom of God.’”

Jesus then explained the Gospel in no uncertain terms:

John 3:13-18 ~ “No one has ascended into heaven except he who descended from heaven, the Son of Man. ¹⁴And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, so must the Son of Man be lifted up, ¹⁵that whoever believes in him may have eternal life. ¹⁶For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life. ¹⁷For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through him.

¹⁸Whoever believes in him is not condemned, but whoever does not believe is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the only Son of God.”

➤ A person is not saved – indeed, cannot be saved – by their own goodness or good works, for apart from Christ there is no goodness or good works (see Is.64:6; Rom.3:10-12). To put it plainly (bluntly), every sinner is spiritual dead, and those who are dead cannot bring themselves to life. Therefore, to be spiritually alive one must be made alive by God. This is the supernatural work of conversion, or regeneration, where God awakens the dead sinner and gives them spiritual life in Christ.

Eph 2:1-6 ~ “And you were dead in the trespasses and sins ²in which you once walked, following the course of this world, following the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that is now at work in the sons of disobedience – ³among whom we all once lived in the passions of our flesh, carrying out the desires of the body and the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, like the rest of mankind. ⁴But God, being rich in mercy, because of the great love with which he loved us, ⁵even when we were dead in our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ – by grace you have been saved – ⁶and raised us up with him and seated us with him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus”

➤ As we will see, this regeneration is the beginning (not the end) of one’s relationship with God as those who are made alive in Christ continue to live for Christ. True conversion is not a one-time event or experience, but a lifelong transformation as the true believer is sanctified and continually being sanctified by the Holy Spirit of God (Heb.10:10, 14; Rom.8:29; 2Cor.3:18; Tit.3:5).

➤ Like a two-sided coin, faith in Christ is synonymous with a love for God: *“Everyone who believes that Jesus is the Christ has been born of God, and everyone who loves the Father loves whoever has been born of him”* (vs.1). A person cannot truly love God and not believe in Christ. Likewise, a person cannot truly believe in Christ and not love God. A faith in Christ and a belief in God go hand-in-hand; a person cannot have one without the other.

1 John 2:23 ~ “No one who denies the Son has the Father. Whoever confesses the Son has the Father also.”

1 John 5:12 ~ “Whoever has the Son has life; whoever does not have the Son of God does not have life.”

John 8:42 ~ “Jesus said to them, ‘If God were your Father, you would love me, for I came from God and I am here. I came not of my own accord, but he sent me.’”

John 14:6 ~ “Jesus said to him, ‘I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.’”

➤ Furthermore, as we have seen, a true love for God will manifest itself in a love for that which God loves: *“Everyone who believes that Jesus is the Christ has been born of God, and everyone who loves the Father loves whoever has been born of him”* (vs.1). Failing to love other Christians (i.e., hating a brother/sister in Christ) is evidence of a lack (or an absence) of love for God (an absence of true salvation):

1 John 4:20-21 ~ “If anyone says, ‘I love God,’ and hates his brother, he is a liar; for he who does not love his brother whom he has seen cannot love God whom he has not seen. ²¹And this commandment we have from him: whoever loves God must also love his brother.” (see 1Jn.2:9, 11; 3:15; 4:7-8).

➤ So here’s the point: a true saving faith in Christ comes to those who have been born of God which results in a true love for God and will manifest itself in a true love for who have also been born of God.

Gal 5:6 ~ “For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision nor uncircumcision counts for anything, but only faith working through love.”

2. The **EVIDENCE** of saving faith (vs.2-3) ~ *We are not saved by good works, but unto good works.*

➤ True saving faith is not only from God but finds its ultimate expression in loving God. But this love is no mere sentiment, nor fleeting emotion. As we have seen, this love (*agape*) is sacred, sacrificial, and selfless. Consequently, a true love for God will manifest itself in obedience to God. Obedience is not the means of our salvation but the result (evidence) of it – it is not the root but the fruit: *“By this we know that we love the children of God, when we love God and obey his commandments”* (vs.2).

In other words, loving *“the children of God”* is evidence that *“we love God and obey his commandments”* (vs.2). Or to put it another way, those who truly *“love God and obey his commandments”* will love *“the children of God”* (vs.2).

➤ It is always important to remember this truth: “We are not saved by good works, but saved unto good works” [not “grace + works = salvation”, but “grace = salvation + works”]. Genuine saving faith produces a love for God, which results in an obedience to God. Where there is no obedience (i.e., unrepentant sin) there is no true love for God.

➤ Scripture is replete with verses that teach us that love for God is the root of saving faith and obedience to God is the fruit of saving faith.

1 John 2:3-6 ~ “And by this we know that we have come to know him, if we keep his commandments. ⁴Whoever says ‘I know him’ but does not keep his commandments is a liar, and the truth is not in him, ⁵but whoever keeps his word, in him truly the love of God is perfected. By this we may know that we are in him: ⁶whoever says he abides in him ought to walk in the same way in which he walked.”

2 John 6 ~ “And this is love, that we walk according to his commandments; this is the commandment, just as you have heard from the beginning, so that you should walk in it.”

John 14:15 ~ “If you love me, you will keep my commandments.”

John 14:21-24 ~ “Whoever has my commandments and keeps them, he it is who loves me. And he who loves me will be loved by my Father, and I will love him and manifest myself to him.’ ²²Judas (not Iscariot) said to him, ‘Lord, how is it that you will manifest yourself to us, and not to the world?’

²³Jesus answered him, ‘If anyone loves me, he will keep my word, and my Father will love him, and we

will come to him and make our home with him. ²⁴Whoever does not love me does not keep my words. And the word that you hear is not mine but the Father's who sent me.”

John 15:14 ~ “You are my friends if you do what I command you.”

Luke 6:46-49 ~ “Why do you call me ‘Lord, Lord,’ and not do what I tell you? ⁴⁷Everyone who comes to me and hears my words and does them, I will show you what he is like: ⁴⁸he is like a man building a house, who dug deep and laid the foundation on the rock. And when a flood arose, the stream broke against that house and could not shake it, because it had been well built. ⁴⁹But the one who hears and does not do them is like a man who built a house on the ground without a foundation. When the stream broke against it, immediately it fell, and the ruin of that house was great.”

James 2:17 ~ “So also faith by itself, if it does not have works, is dead.” (see Jms.2:26; Eph.2:8-10)

➤ In verse three, John wrote the same thing in a different way: *“For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments”* (vs.3). But then he added this important truth (reminder): *“And his commandments are not burdensome”* (vs.3). When we get the “cart ahead of the horse” and make obedience the means/merit of our salvation (instead of the expression/evidence of it) it becomes heartless religion or mindless ritual.

The Greek word translated *“burdensome”* (*barys*) literally refers to that which is heavy, but has a wide range of figurative translations. Of its six occurrences in the New Testament, the ESV has translated it with six different English words:

Matt 23:4 ~ “They tie up heavy [*baréa*] burdens, hard to bear, and lay them on people's shoulders, but they themselves are not willing to move them with their finger.

Matt 23:23 ~ “Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you tithe mint and dill and cumin, and have neglected the weightier [*barútera*] matters of the law: justice and mercy and faithfulness. These you ought to have done, without neglecting the others.”

Acts 20:29 ~ “I know that after my departure fierce [*bareís*] wolves will come in among you, not sparing the flock”

Acts 25:7 ~ “When he had arrived, the Jews who had come down from Jerusalem stood around him, bringing many and serious [*baréa*] charges against him that they could not prove.

2 Cor 10:10 ~ “For they say, ‘His letters are weighty [*bareíai*] and strong, but his bodily presence is weak, and his speech of no account.’”

1 John 5:3 ~ “For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments. And his commandments are not burdensome [*bareíai*].”

➤ The truth is, obedience can sometimes feel like a burden – a tedious, relentless, and inadequate attempt at a law-abiding and pleasure-denying existence. Certainly, Satan wants everyone to think that God's commands are oppressive and joyless (i.e., a laundry list of “have to's” and “can't do's”). However, this need not – in fact, should not – be the case.

Psa 100:2 ~ “Serve the Lord with gladness! ...”

➤ God is not an oppressive tyrant, harsh taskmaster, or cosmic killjoy. As John Piper has stated, “God is not a killjoy; He just opposes what kills joy.” God's commands are not a burden for the Christian, but his/her delight and desire. It is not as though God is keeping us from all the happiness and pleasure found in this world (this is a lie from Satan), but that He (as a loving Father) is protecting us from all the sorrow and pain found in this world.

➤ Remember, the Christian's obedience to God is born out of his/her love for God. Obedience is the expression/evidence of love, not the means/merit of it. Love is not a byproduct of obedience, obedience is a byproduct of love.

3. The **CONSEQUENCE** of saving faith (vs.4-5) ~ *Those who are truly saved are eternally saved.*

➤ A third aspect of true saving faith, as presented in this passage in 1 John, is the consequence of saving faith. *“For everyone who has been born of God overcomes the world. And this is the victory that has overcome the world – our faith”* (vs.4). The words *“overcomes”* (vb., *nikaō*), *“victory”* (n., *nikē*), and *“overcome”* (vb., *nikaō*) all come from the same root Greek word (*nikē*). As the translations indicate, the word refers to being victorious, overcoming (conquering, triumphing over) many different obstacles and opponents.

This verse effectively asked and answered three important questions:

- 1) Who are those who overcome? Those who have truly *“been born of God”* (vs.4; i.e., those who truly believe Jesus is the Christ and truly love God, vs.1).
- 2) What do they overcome? They overcome *“the world”* (vs.4). That is, true Christians will not be defeated by the satanic forces and deceptions that rule this sinful world. True believers will not ultimately relent to the world’s loves, the world’s pleasures, the world’s hatred, or the world’s hostility toward and rejection of God. Those who are truly in Christ will persevere in Christ.
- 3) How do they overcome? True believers overcome this world by their faith in Jesus Christ – *“this is the victory that has overcome the world – our faith”* (vs.4). Not by their own spiritual wisdom and strength; not by their own goodness or good works; not by their own righteousness or holiness. This we see more clearly with John’s rhetorical question in the next verse: *“Who is it that overcomes the world except the one who believes that Jesus is the Son of God?”* (vs.5). God has given His children a faith in Him, in Christ, that ultimately never fail. They will overcome because He has overcome.

John 16:33 ~ “I have said these things to you, that in me you may have peace [*eirēnē*]. In the world you will have tribulation [*thlipsis*]. But take heart; I have overcome [*nikaō*] the world.”

- Keep in mind, the very definition of the word tells us that there will be things in our lives that we will need to overcome (obstacles, trials, doubts, enemies, temptations, etc.). Not everything is going to be easy or painless. The Christian life is not filled with unicorns and rainbows. The Christian is destined to suffering – even persecution or martyrdom – for the name and glory of Christ (see Acts 14:22; Rom.5:3-5; 8:17; 2Tim.3:12; 1Pet.4:12-16). Thankfully, the faithful Christian will persevere because Christ has overcome the world. *Those who are truly saved are eternally saved.*
- Yet, as we saw in 1 John 5:2-3, we cannot passively wait on God to make us live righteously or force us (against our wills) to live a holy life. The saying, “Let go and let God” sounds religious and pious, but is in actuality a false spirituality. Walking by the Spirit does not release us from the responsibility we have to strive for godliness. While we cannot walk by the Spirit apart from God’s enabling power, we also cannot walk by the Spirit without deliberate and conscious effort on our part. Remember, “You can drift into sin, but not into righteousness” (Leon Morris).
- ✓ **Illust:** “It is time for us Christians to face up to our responsibility for holiness. Too often we say we are ‘defeated’ by this or that sin. No, we are not defeated; we are simply disobedient! It might be good if we stopped using the terms ‘victory’ and ‘defeat’ to describe our progress in holiness. Rather we should use the terms ‘obedience’ and ‘disobedience.’ When I say I am defeated by some sin, I am unconsciously slipping out from under my responsibility. I am saying something outside of me has defeated me. But when I say I am disobedient, that places the responsibility for my sin squarely on me. We may, in fact, be defeated, but the reason we are defeated is because we have chosen to disobey. We have chosen to entertain lustful thoughts, or to harbor resentment, or to shade the truth a little.

We need to brace ourselves up and to realize that we are responsible for our thoughts, attitudes, and actions. We need to reckon on the fact that we died to sin's reign, that it no longer has any dominion over us, that God has united us with the risen Christ in all His power, and has given us the Holy Spirit to work in us. Only as we accept our responsibility and appropriate God's provisions will we make any progress in our pursuit of holiness” (Jerry Bridges; *The Pursuit of Holiness*, ch.8).

- The Christian's faith in Christ is not stagnant or dead. Rather, it is living and active. The true Christian does not merely believe in Jesus, but seeks to live for Jesus. Although not perfect, their love for God supplants their love for this world; their desire for obedience triumphs their desire for sin; their devotion to Christ conquers every lesser devotion; their faith in Christ anchors them victoriously to God. Christians know that they will overcome, because they know that Christ has overcome for them.

Conclusion

- I feel obligated, with the title I have used for this sermon, to include the hymn "Victory in Jesus." This well-known, well-loved, song was written by Eugene Bartlett in 1939. Bartlett was born on December 24, 1885. He grew up loving music – both writing and signing. Over the course of his life, Bartlett wrote more than 800 songs. In 1939, at the age of 54, he suffered a stroke that left him partially paralyzed and virtually bed ridden. It was during this difficult time in his life, that Bartlett wrote "Victory in Jesus." He died less than two years after writing this song (January 25, 1941):

I heard an old, old story, how a Savior came from glory,
How He gave His life on Calvary, to save a wretch like me;
I heard about His groaning, of His precious blood's atoning,
Then I repented of my sins, and won the victory.

Chorus

O victory in Jesus, My Savior, forever.
He sought me and bought me, with His redeeming blood;
He loved me ere I knew Him, and all my love is due Him,
He plunged me to victory, beneath the cleansing flood.

("Victory in Jesus" by Eugene Bartlett; 1939)

- This is the hope and reality for all true Christians.