

Christian

GOD GIVEN NAME

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What name do you wear religiously? Is it a name which can be found in the Bible? Is it a name which the Lord or inspired men have given to his people? Is it a name which honors and glorifies God and his Son? All of this and more is true of the name Christian.

Barnabas "was a good man, and full of the Holy Spirit and of faith: and much people was added unto the Lord. And he went forth to Tarsus to seek for Saul; and when he had found him, he brought him unto Antioch. And it came to pass that even for a whole year they were gathered together with the church, and taught much people; and that the disciples were called Christians first in Antioch." (Acts 11:24-26).

This is the name which an apostle of the Lord and another man who was full of the Holy Spirit used to designate God's people. Some have tried to make men believe that this was a derisive nickname coined by the enemies of Christ and his people. In nearly every case of such an attempt the person is wearing some name that is not given to God's people in the Bible. Hence it shows that he had rather wear that name than the one which is given in the Bible. He is trying to make the Bible name of as little importance as the religious name he himself has chosen. There is nothing in the passage just quoted or in any place in the Bible to indicate that it was coined by the enemies of Christians. Every indication of this passage and of many others is that it was given by inspiration of God.

NEW NAME PROPHESED

The prophets of God many years before Christ came into the world said that his people would have a new name which would be given by the Lord: "For Zion's sake will I not hold my peace, and for Jerusalem's sake I will not rest, until her righteousness go forth as brightness, and her salvation as a lamp that burneth. And the nations shall see thy righteousness, and all kings thy glory; and thou shalt be called by a new name, which the mouth of Jehovah shall name." (Isa. 62:1, 2).

This is a new name and the only new name to be found in the New Testament for the Lord's people. The word Christ was not new at the time of Christ upon the earth; but the word Christian is not known to any human language in any kind of history before the time when the disciples were called CHRISTIANS in Antioch. There is another interesting feature in the prophecy quoted. When this new name is given the nations will see the righteousness of God's people. This word nations is frequently translated from the original languages Gentiles. At the time of the name in Antioch there were Gentile converts in other places; but this was the first instance of both Jew and Gentile in one congregation. That was the reason for Barnabas' being in Antioch.

GLORIFIES GOD

This name is God given, Spirit approved, planned, purposed and prophesied of. We should show no shame in wearing it, as does the majority of religious people; but we should be happy to wear it, giving glory to God therein. "But if a man suffer as a Christian, let him not be ashamed; but let him glorify God in this name." (1 Peter 4:16).

Men are wearing denominational names of which they are apparently proud. These names honor men, doctrines, organizational features, geographical locations, and such like. But when they do so they are refusing to wear the name in which God is glorified.

DENOTES POSSESSION

This name is derived from one of the titles of Jesus. It denotes that one is a follower of and is the possession of Christ. The word disciple means a follower and is used to describe those who follow Christ. But the name Christian denotes this and much more. His people are described as saints; but the name Christian involves our being holy as he is holy. - They are children; but to say that one is a Christian implies that he is a child of God even as Christ is God's Son.

IMPROPER USAGE

In the Bible the word Christian is always a noun, a proper noun, a name; and never an adjective. It denotes the personal relation of the individual to Christ. Many have dropped the scriptural usage and have begun using it as an adjective to describe the relative quality of some person, thing, practice or organization.

Men speak of "a Christian nation." It cannot be said to be a nation of Christians. So, they definitely are not

using the word in the same sense, just as they have changed the part of speech from noun to adjective, from name to comparative quality. They cannot mean that it is completely like Christ; they can only mean that it has more principles in harmony with Christ's teaching than other nations. The name belongs to Christians and not to nations.

It is applied to various institutions of charity and learning, to denominations to distinguish them from Judaism and Mohammedanism, and to a few specific churches as a part of their names. In each case it is used as an adjective to define the relative quality of the group. Its usage in this sense proposes to give honor to the institution for its good qualities. God never gave the name to the church in any sense. He gave it to individuals, disciples, and they are to glorify God in the name.

WHY BE A CHRISTIAN

One should be a Christian in order to share in the grace of God. Barnabas came to Antioch and saw the grace of God manifested (Acts 11:23) and it was these disciples who were called Christians.

One should be a Christian because they are baptized into the name of Christ: "Go ye therefore, and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them into the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. " (Matt. 28:19). And salvation is in his name: "And in none other is there salvation: for neither is there any other name under heaven, that is given among men, wherein we must be saved." } (Acts 4:12).

Therefore, one should be a Christian because they are in Christ, the only way to God (John 14:6); and it is in him as Christians that we are to labor for him so that our labor is not vain (I Cor. 15:58):

HOW TO BECOME A CHRISTIAN

"And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to the whole creation. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that disbelieveth shall be condemned." (Mark 16:15, 16).

"And that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name unto all the nations, " {Luke 24:47}.

"For ye are all sons of God, through faith, in Christ Jesus. For as many of you as were baptized into Christ did put on Christ." (Gal. 3:26, 27).

"And the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved. " (Acts 2:47; 11:24).