

# **The Name Christian**

*By Ron Boatwright*

The name Christian brings honor and glory to Christ and shows that one is a follower of Him and His word. Why are followers of Christ called Christians, and from where did this name come? Seven hundred years before it was given, God promised He would one day call His people by another name. God told the children of Israel, "You shall leave your name as a curse to My chosen. For the Lord God will slay you, and call His servants by another name" (Isaiah 65:15). This new name was to be given by the Lord Himself. "The Gentiles shall see your righteous, and all the kings your glory. You shall be called by a new name which the mouth of the Lord will name" (Isaiah 62:2). Notice that this new name was to be given by the Lord after "the Gentiles shall see your righteousness".

By Acts chapter 10 the gospel had been taught to both Jew and Gentile and the church was composed of both. Then we read in Acts 11:26, "And the disciples were first called Christians in Antioch." The name "Christian" was the new name the Lord gave after the Gentiles were included in His church as was prophesied. This is the worthy name by which we glorify God and Christ. Even king Agrippa recognized this. "Then Agrippa said to Paul, 'You almost persuade me to become a Christian'" (Acts 26:28). This was not a name, which Christians assumed for themselves. It was not given in derision by enemies of Christ and was not worn in shame, but was the new name, which the Lord gave.

God's word says, "Yet if anyone suffers as a Christian, let him not be ashamed, but let him glorify God in this matter" (1 Peter 4:16). We glorify God when we wear the name Christian. Why should anyone wear a name that does not glorify God and meet His approval? Why would anyone, who "claims" to be a follower of Christ, want to give glory and honor to Martin Luther, John the Baptist, the Day of Pentecost, the apostles, the methodical way of doing things, the community, Rome, the Greek words EPISKOPOS (meaning overseer) and PRESBUTEROS (meaning elder), the seventh day of the week, Antioch, Nazareth, the Greeks, the Russians, the free will, being primitive, southern, missionary, general, science, catholic which means universal, the advent, and the list goes on and on. Why can't we give glory and honor to God and Christ where the honor belongs? Even by their names they do not claim to belong to the Lord. They want to wear their denominational names by calling themselves by other names rather than only a Christian. They seem to be ashamed of the name, Christian. Jesus says,

"For whoever is ashamed of Me and my words in this adulterous and sinful generation, of him the Son of Man will also be ashamed when He comes in the glory of His Father with the holy angels" (Mark 8:38). We must never be ashamed of being a Christian. It is an honor to wear the name.

According to the New Testament, not everyone who is referred to as a Christian is a Christian. One is not a Christian because he believes Jesus Christ is the Son of God because the Bible says, "Even the devils believe and tremble" (James 2:19). The name Christian is used loosely today which brings shame and reproach on the Lord and His name. Even though many may "claim" to be Christians, they are not because they do not accept the Lord's authority. They want to do things their way and not the Lord's. By this they, "blaspheme that noble name by which you are called" (James 2:7). The many differing denominations do not exist by the authority of the Lord, and their existence is contrary to the doctrine of Christ by wearing their different religious names (1 Corinthians 1:10-13).

We should simply be a Christian, a member of the Lord's one true church as revealed in the New Testament. We must speak where the Bible speaks and be silent where the Bible is silent. We must call things by Bible names and do things in Bible ways, if we expect to go to Heaven.