

Who Is A Christian?

By *Ron Boatwright*

Christians are named after Christ who is their leader. This name brings honor and glory to Christ and denotes one as a follower of Christ by adhering and conforming to His doctrine.

God foretells that He will "Call his servants by another name" (Isaiah 65:15). And, "The Gentiles shall see your righteousness, and all kings your glory. You shall be called by a new name, which the mouth of the Lord will name" (Isaiah 62:2). Here God foretells that He will give His people a new name after both Jews and Gentiles are involved. Also notice the Lord would give the name. By Acts chapter eleven the gospel had been preached to both Jew and Gentile and the church in Antioch was composed of both. In fulfillment of this prophesy we read "And the disciples were first called Christians in Antioch" (Acts 11:26). "And in His name shall the Gentiles trust" (Matthew 12:21). It was the Lord who gave the name after the Gentiles began obeying the gospel.

After the apostle Paul had preached the gospel to King Agrippa , "Then Agrippa said to Paul, 'You almost persuade me to become a Christian'" (Acts 26:28). Almost is not good enough. When we wear the name Christian, we give glory and honor to our Lord. "Yet if anyone suffers as a Christian, let him not be ashamed, but let him glorify God in this manner"(1 Peter 4:16). We should never be ashamed to wear the name Christian. Jesus says, "For whoever is ashamed of Me and My words, of him the Son of Man will be ashamed when He comes in His own glory" (Luke 9:26).

But there are those who must be ashamed of Christ since they will not wear His name, the name Christian. They wear the names that glorify other men or things such as John the Baptist, Martin Luther, the apostles, the methodical way of doing things, the community, Rome, the Day of Pentecost, etc. Even by their names they don't even claim to belong to Christ. Why would anyone want to wear a name that does not have God's authority and approval? Denominations do not exist by the authority of God and are contrary to the doctrine of Christ (John 17:21).

The term Christian is used very loosely today. One is not a Christian just because he says he believes in Christ. "Even the devils believe and tremble" (James 2:19). Today every kind of church doctrine, tradition, and practice is

labeled as "Christian". Even the United States is called a Christian Nation. This is a misnomer.

Christians are only those who have been baptized for the forgiveness of their sins (Acts 2:38) so they can be saved (Mark 16:16). Then "The Lord added to the church daily those who were being saved" (Acts 2:47). Only Christians are in the Lord's church and have the promise of Heaven when this life is over (Ephesians 5:23). We should give glory and honor to Christ by wearing only the name Christian, which the Lord Himself gave for us to wear.