

LESSON XXIX—A SCRIPTURAL NAME

INTRODUCTION: In order to be built according to the Divine Pattern, the Church of God upon the earth must be called by a name designated by the God of Heaven and found upon the pages of His word.

I. Why the Names Given by Men Are Wrong:

1. Divisive in character, given to designate peculiar parties, sectarian in purpose and effect, separating some professed believers from others by peculiar name, thereby antagonistic to spirit of Christ (Jn. 17:20-21).
2. Condemned in New Testament Scriptures (I Cor. 1:10-15).
3. Given to honor some person such as "Lutheran," or exalt some ordinance, such as "Baptist" or to designate some peculiar manner of Church government as "Methodist" or "Presbyterian" thus diverting honor belonging only to Christ.
4. Acts as stumbling block to sinners, confusing, creates impression that God has many Churches and that any thing is all right in the name of Christianity and if anything is all right, then nothing is all right.

II. What Is the God-Given Name Worn In New Testament Days?

1. A new name to be designated by God, given by Divine Authority (Isa. 62:2):
 - a. To be borne by Paul (Acts 9:15).
 - b. Not to be given until the Gentiles had seen God's righteousness (Isa. 62:2).
 - c. Fulfilled at Antioch of Syria (Acts 11:26).
 1. "were called" — "Chrematidzo" means to speak as an oracle, to be divinely warned, to be called or named from a divine source. Then it could not have been given in derision.
 2. God's name called upon the Gentiles (Acts 15:17).
2. Accepted by Paul (Acts 26:28-29).
3. Glorify God in this name (I Pet. 4:14-16). A worthy name (Jas. 2:7).
4. Names applied to the Church in general — The Church of God (I Cor. 1:2). Churches of Christ (Rom. 16:16).
 - a. In its different phases it is called:
 1. Kingdom of God (Matt. 13:24, 31, 33, 44, 45, 47).
 2. Body of Christ (Eph. 1:22, 23; Col. 1:18).
 3. House of God (I Tim. 3:15, 16).
5. Names applied to individual members:

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| a. Christians (Acts 11:26). | b. Saints (Phil. 4:21). |
| c. Disciples (Acts 16:1; 20:7). | d. Brethren (Col. 1:2). |

These names are individual names and were never in scripture applied to the Church, hence the Church cannot scripturally be called "The Christian Church."

III. Why Only the Name God Has Given Should Be Worn:

1. The Church is the Bride of Christ and should wear His name (II Cor. 11:2).
2. The Church is God's Family, should wear His name (I Tim. 3:15; Eph. 3:14, 15).
3. Whatever we do must be done in the name of Christ (Col. 3:17).
4. It is the only name in which unity can exist. Among the man-made names, the plea that one name is as good as another is true, but there is no name as great as the name of Christ (Eph. 1:20, 21; Phil. 2:9, 11).
5. The plea of all religious leaders.
 - a. Luther — Do not call yourselves Lutherans.
 - b. Wesley — I would to God all party names were forgotten.
 - c. Campbell — Abandon all party names and take the name Christian.
6. It is the only name in which men can be saved (Acts 4:11, 12).
7. To the Name of Christ every knee must bow (Phil. 2:9, 11).

Conclusion: One who wishes to please the Lord must not wear a name unknown to the Word of God or belong to a Church the name of which cannot be found in the Bible.

Questions For Discussion

1. How may the Church be identified by name?
2. Give some reasons why the names given by men are sinful.
3. How do human names detract from "divine rights?"
4. Describe the God-given name as prophesied by Isaiah.
5. How and where was this prediction fulfilled?
6. Who was to bear Christ's name?
7. By whom, what writers, was the name endorsed?
8. Why should the name "Christian" be worn by the followers of Christ?
9. Give seven reasons for wearing the name Christian.
10. Show how the name of Christ is above all names.