

Christian
(Acts 11:19-26)

Introduction:

1. The theme of the book of Acts is given in 1:8.
2. The remainder of Acts shows how the Lord's plan for evangelizing the world was carried out.
3. We learn from ch.11 that the Gospel was preached in Antioch, and a congregation was established there.
4. (vs.26b) A very important matter relating to the church in Antioch is addressed -- for the first time the Lord's followers were called "Christians."
5. By carefully studying a few key passages we can know what God wants us to know about this very special name.
6. We must use the name "Christian" as the Bible uses it, and we must avoid using it in any unscriptural way.
7. The first point we need to make is that . . .

Discussion:

- I. "CHRISTIAN" IS THE NAME THAT GOD HAS AUTHORIZED HIS CHILDREN TO WEAR
 - A. This name had been in God's mind a long time before He gave it.
 1. About 700 BC, God revealed through Isaiah that a time would come when His people would be called by a new name.
 - a. (Isaiah 65:15) God would *"call His servants by another name."*
 - 1) Under the old covenant, God's people were called by the name of "Israel" [children of Israel, Israelites].
 - 2) However, a time would come when God would call His people by a name other than "Israel."
 - b. (Isaiah 56:5) God said that He would give His people:
 - 1) *"a name better than of sons and of daughters"*
 - 2) *"an everlasting name, that shall not be cut off."*
 - c. We learn from Isaiah 62:1-2 when God would give this new name to His people -- 2 special events would occur.
 - 1) (vs.1) Righteousness and salvation would go forth from Jerusalem.
 - 2) (vs.2) The Gentiles would see God's righteousness.
 - 3) Following these special events, God would call His people by a new name.
 2. Have these prophecies been fulfilled?
 - a. (Acts 8:1-4) Righteousness and salvation were going forth from Jerusalem.
 - b. The Gospel was taken to the Gentiles (Acts 10; 11:18).
 - c. When the conditions revealed by Isaiah were met, God gave the name that He wants His people to be called.
 - B. Under the new covenant, God's people are sometimes referred to as "disciples," "saints," and "brethren;" however, *"Christian"* is the only name that we are authorized to wear.
 - C. Now, let us determine . . .
- II. WHO IS ABLE TO WEAR THIS NAME
 - A. (Acts 11:26) A Christian is a *disciple* [a learner or follower].
 1. A Christian is a learner or follower of Christ.
 2. A Christian must be a disciple, but there is much more to being a Christian than being a disciple.
 3. It is quite popular to refer to anyone who believes in Jesus as a Christian, but the Bible shows that much more is involved.
 - B. A Christian is *one who has been added to the Lord*.
 1. (vs.24) The disciples in Antioch who were called Christians had been added to the Lord.
 2. The Bible teaches us very clearly in Galatians 3:26-27 how to get into Christ.

- C. A Christian is *a member of the Lord's church*.
 - 1. (vs.26) The disciples in Antioch who were called Christians made up the church there.
 - 2. (Acts 2:47) The Lord adds those who are saved to the church (see vs.38).
 - D. Who is a Christian? A Christian is a disciple of the Lord who has obeyed the Gospel, been saved from his sins, and added to the Lord's church.
 - E. Let us avoid man's ideas about who is a Christian and follow the teachings of the Bible.
- III. ADDITIONAL INFORMATION
- A. We learn from Acts 26:28 that a Christian is a changed person.
 - 1. Paul was speaking before King Agrippa.
 - 2. Agrippa understood that Paul was trying to convince him to become a Christian; however, he was not persuaded because he was not willing to change his life.
 - 3. Agrippa was a sinner, and he knew that he would have to undergo a change to become a Christian.
 - 4. He was not willing to change, and he did not become a Christian.
 - 5. A Christian is a changed or *converted* person.
 - B. We learn from 1 Peter 4:14-16 that a Christian is committed to doing the Lord's will.
 - 1. (vs.15) Christians are not to suffer because of committing sin.
 - 2. Rather, Christians are to devote themselves to doing the Lord's will, even if we have to suffer as a result of doing it.

Conclusion:

- 1. Wearing the name "Christian" is a special privilege -- it honors and glorifies Christ, the founder of Christianity.
- 2. Being a Christian will be especially meaningful at the judgment (1 Peter 4:17-18).
 - a. It will be difficult for Christians to be saved.
 - b. Those who are not Christians will have no hope at the judgment.
- 3. Have you become a Christian?