

A Special Privilege

(Acts 11:19-26)

Introduction:

1. As our bulletin article teaches, many wonderful privileges are provided to members of the Lord's church.
2. In our lesson we are concentrating on "a special privilege" mentioned in these verses -- that privilege is wearing the name "Christian."
3. The first point we need to make is that . . .

Discussion:

I. THIS SPECIAL PRIVILEGE WAS PROPHESED IN THE OLD TESTAMENT

A. The name "Christian" was 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. Let us determine if these prophecies have 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. 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 HAS THE SPECIAL PRIVILEGE OF BEING A "CHRISTIAN"

- A. (Acts 11:26) To have this privilege one must be 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.
- B. To have this privilege one must have been added to the Lord.
1. (vs.24) The disciples in Antioch had been added to the Lord.
 2. The Bible teaches us very clearly in Galatians 3:26-27 how to get into Christ.
- C. To have this privilege one must be a member of the Lord's church.
1. (vs.26) The disciples in Antioch made up the church there.
 2. (Acts 2:47) The Lord adds those who are saved to the church (see vs.38).
- D. (1 Peter 4:16-17) To have this privilege one must:
1. be a member of "*the house of God*" [the church] (vs.17a; 1 Timothy 3:15)
 2. have obeyed the Gospel (vs.17b).
- E. 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.

Conclusion:

1. Wearing the name "*Christian*" is a special privilege - it honors and glorifies Christ, the founder of Christianity.
2. Have you become a Christian?
3. Don't be like Agrippa who said, "*Almost thou persuadest me to be a Christian*" (Acts 26:28).