

Conversions in Acts

"Christian"

Introduction:

1. In Acts 1:8, Jesus gave the apostles a specific plan for carrying out the Great Commission (Matthew 28:19-20; Mark 16:15-16).
2. As Luke showed how this plan was implemented in Acts, he also wrote about a number of conversions that occurred.
3. Studying these conversions helps us understand how we are saved from sin today.
4. In Acts, Luke also wrote about a number of important subjects that relate to those who have been saved, including the name that God's people are to wear.
5. We learn from Acts 11:19-26 that the Lord's followers are to be called "*Christians*."

Discussion:

- I. THIS NAME HAD BEEN IN GOD'S MIND FOR MANY YEARS
 - A. About 700 BC, God revealed through Isaiah that a time would come when God would call His people by a new name.
 1. (Isaiah 65:15) God would "*call his servants by another name*."
 - a. At one time God's people were called by the name of "*Israel*" (Genesis 32:24-32).
 - b. In the future, however, God would call His people by a different name.
 2. (Isaiah 56:5) God said He would give His people:
 - a. "*a name better than of sons and of daughters*"
 - b. "*an everlasting name, that shall not be cut off*."
 3. (Isaiah 62:1-2) The prophet showed when God would give this new name.
 - a. (vs.1) Righteousness and salvation would go forth from Jerusalem.
 - b. (vs.2) The Gentiles would see God's righteousness.
 - c. Following these special events, God would call His people by a new name.
 - B. These prophecies have been fulfilled.
 1. (Acts 8:1-4) Righteousness and salvation were going forth from Jerusalem.
 2. (Acts 10) The Gospel was taken to Cornelius and his household.
 3. (Acts 11:18) The apostles and others in Jerusalem acknowledged that God had "*to the Gentiles granted repentance unto life*."
 - C. When the conditions revealed by Isaiah were met, God gave the name He wants His people to be called (Acts 11:26).
 - D. Under the new covenant, God's people are referred to as "*disciples*," "*saints*," and "*brethren*;" however, "*Christian*" is the only name that the Lord has authorized His followers to wear.
- II. LUKE SHOWS WHO IS ABLE TO WEAR THE NAME "CHRISTIAN"
 - A. (Acts 11:26) A Christian is a "disciple" [a learner or follower].
 1. Christians are learners or followers of Christ.
 2. A Christian must be a disciple, but there is much more to being a Christian than just being a disciple (John 8:31-32).
 - B. A Christian is "one who has been added to the Lord."
 1. (Acts 11:24) The people in Antioch who were the first to be called Christians had been "*added unto the Lord*."
 2. We are shown in Galatians 3:26-27 how a person gets into Christ.
 - C. A Christian is "a member of the Lord's church."
 1. (Acts 11:26) The people in Antioch who were the first to be called Christians made up the church there.
 2. We are shown in Acts 2:47 that the Lord adds those who are saved to the church.
 - D. 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.
- III. ADDITIONAL PASSAGES
 - A. Paul's exchange with Agrippa shows that a Christian is a changed person (Acts 26:28).
 - B. Peter showed that a Christian is committed to doing the Lord's will (1 Peter 4:14-16).