

Learn Your Bible

Lesson #7

In this lesson we will begin to build the church we read of in the Bible. One important realm we need to consider is the role of names in the service of God.

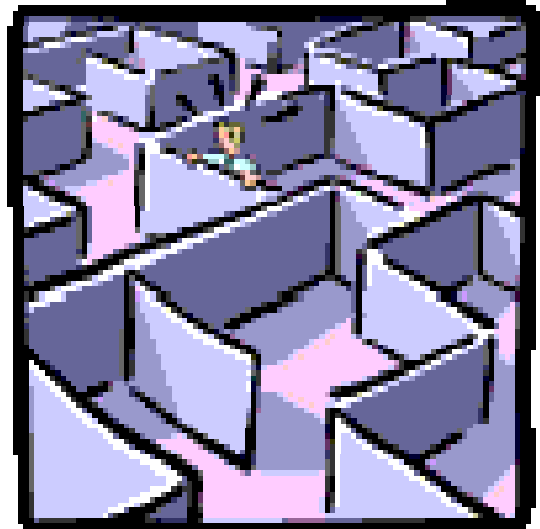
I am confident that our primary purpose for studying the word of God is in order for us to serve Him better. I have heard many times "there is nothing in a name," but let us lay our preconceived ideas aside and see what God says on the subject. We are well aware of what man says!

We will begin our study with Abraham, popularly known as the "Father of the faithful" (Genesis 17:4-6). As I'm sure you've also realized, the name of Abram was changed to Abraham for a special reason. God made a covenant with Abraham that he would be the father of many nations (verse 4). The name Abram (father) became inappropriate and had to be changed to Abraham (father of a great multitude).

Later, in the same passage, a similar thing happened concerning Sarah, Abraham's wife. She was going to have a child, therefore her name Sarai ("Princely") was no longer suitable... but "Sarah" ("Princess") more aptly described her relationship before God.

Jacob ("Supplanter") had a similar situation in his relationship to God (read Genesis 32:24-32). Jacob, fearing his brother Esau, was separated from his family to pray. While alone, he wrestled with an angel all night. The angel changed his name, in a blessing, to Israel (Prince of God).

These examples show the value of names in service to God in the Old Testament, but what of the New Testament?



Philippians 2:9-11 illustrates the royalty attached to Jesus' name. John 14:13 illustrates the relationship of Jesus' name to our prayers. Acts 5:41 teaches us to rejoice when we are counted worthy to suffer for His name.

Is there anything in a name? God throughout history has shown a special concern to the titles His children wear!

LOOK UP AND FILL IN

NAMES OF THE CHURCH

NAMES OF INDIVIDUALS WITHIN THE CHURCH

Matthew 16:18 _____
 Acts 8:1 _____
 Romans 16:16 _____
 I Corinthians 1:2 _____
 Ephesians 1:21-23 _____
 Ephesians 2:21 _____
 Colossians 1:13 _____
 I Timothy 3:15 _____
 Revelation 21:9 _____
 I Peter 2:5 _____

Acts 5:14 _____
 Acts 6:1 _____
 Acts 6:3 _____
 Acts 9:13 _____
 Acts 11:26 _____
 Romans 1:7 _____
 Romans 6:22 _____
 Romans 8:14 _____
 Romans 8:17 _____
 I Peter 2:5 _____
 Revelation 1:6 _____

1) Read Acts 4:10-12. What about men's labels? Are they still Christian? _____

2) Define "Christian" _____

3) Define "Lutheran" _____



We are going to pull the highlights out of a lengthy four chapter condemnation of what I like to call the "roots of Corinthian denominationalism."

4) Read I Corinthians 1:10-15. In verse 10, Paul condemns

5) He admonishes them by the name of Jesus Christ to be _____

6) Verse 13, is Christ divided? _____ Would "Pauline" be an acceptable religious title for a Christian? _____ How about the Church of Paul? _____ Explain: _____

7) Read 2:4-6 Paul reminds them his teaching is from where?



8) a) Read 2:9-16 Without a _____ from God, it is impossible to know how to please Him.

b) Explain what this teaches us about changing or ignoring any portion of what God said (vs. 16) _____

9) 2:14 Shows us spiritual wisdom is _____ to those not following God.

10) Read 3:1-6. What caused this mess? _____

11) Read 4:6. Being called after men's names is _____

12) Reread 4:6 closely. Were Paul and Apollos the actual mens names that were causing problems, or were they just used by Paul as examples? _____

13) Read 4:14. Why did Paul write to them? _____

14) Make a modern application: _____

Many will begin to ask, "if these things are so important, why has no one recognized it before?" The answer is of course that many have, but men cling to carnality much harder than they care to admit! Read the words of Martin Luther (see if you can recognize the passage he's alluding to) "I pray you leave my name alone, and call not yourselves Lutherans, but Christians. Who is Luther? My doctrine is not mine. I have not been crucified for anyone. St. Paul would not let any call themselves after Paul, nor of Peter, but only of Christ. How then, does it befit me, a miserable bag of dust and ashes, to give my name to the children of God? Cease, my dear friends, to cling to these party names and distinctions; away with all; and let us call ourselves Christians after Him from whom our doctrine comes." (The Life of Luther, by Stork p.289)

Isn't it amazing that people will not give up their party names to be "just" "Christians?" They will even use men's names against their will!



15) Which passage (already studied) is Martin Luther alluding to in the quote mentioned above? _____

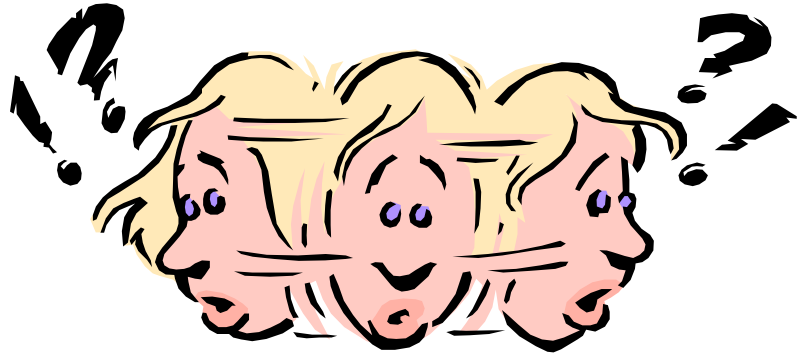
The Lutheran's are not the only ones guilty of this polygamy. (Remember the Church is the bride of Christ and a bride is known by her husband's name, see Ephesians 5:23-27). Let's consider the words of perhaps the best-known Baptist preacher that ever lived (before Billy Graham), Charles Spurgeon:

"I say of the Baptist name, let it perish, but let Christ's name last forever. I look forward with pleasure to the day when there will not be a "Baptist" living. I hope they will soon be gone. I hope the Baptist name will soon perish; but let Christ's name endure forever." (Spurgeon Memorial Library, Vol. 1, p.168)

While we may admire his courage in condemning a party name, he still didn't leave it! As long as people are content to worship under party names, they will continue to be used.

"HYPHENATED CHRISTIANS

I am sure that method and system should be used in the Lord's work, but I am not a Methodist; that we should have bishops (the Greek word being episcopos) to oversee the work in a congregation, but I am not an Episcopalian; that we should have elders (the Greek word being presbuteros) who are bishops to rule and oversee in the congregation, but I am not a Presbyterian; that each congregation is independent, but I am not a Congregationalist; that it takes immersion to constitute the act of baptism, but I am not a Baptist; that Christians should be holy but I am not a Holiness; that Christ will come again, but I am not an Adventist; that the church is universal or catholic, but I am not a Catholic. According to some good folk--since I believe in the above facts, I should call myself a 'Methodist-Episcopalian-Presbyterian-Congregationalist-Baptist-Holiness-Catholic-Christian'! A monstrous hyphenation, and a rather long name! It is quite unnecessary, too. We find in the Bible that the disciples were called Christians, but we never read of any person being called some hyphenated -Christian.' (Brownlow, Why I Am A Member of The Church of Christ, p32).



If we are prone to rationalize this away, the best way I can think of to prove its importance would be to walk up to a person on the street and ask, "What are you religiously?" His answer is almost certain to be something other than CHRISTIAN! Any response other than "Christian" gives glory to something other than Christ. To a division, to a man, etc. can only be the glory. Am I an Apoloist, Paulinian, Petrolic, Johnness (oh yes, I'd better add Christian, in case you're a heathen!)"? NO! I am a Christian! Why? We have already studied Paul's specific rebuke to this affect.

Let's be content with what the Bible teaches or be honest and name ourselves Satanists, because ultimately, all division comes from him. Be open about whom we give glory to! "but if {anyone suffers}

as a Christian, he is not to be ashamed, but is to glorify God in this name.” (I Peter 4:16).

16) Give a brief resume of God's view of the names his subjects wear and its importance to us: _____



17) Referring to the chart you first made, what does the name "saint" refer to? _____

Are you one? _____ What large religious body has perverted the use of this name? _____

18) a) Read Matthew 23:1-12. Relate this to a religious group's use of "Father" _____

b) Can a Christian (preacher or otherwise) wear this name religiously? _____



19) Who and who ALONE has the right to wear this type of a title? Psalms 111:9 _____

20) Compare the principle (calling "Rabbi") in Matthew 23:8-10 and relate this to the denominational title of "Reverend"... _____

20) How many groups do you know that violate this teaching? _____

22) What does it matter? _____



23) How does this affect YOU? _____

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