

What's In A Name?

In Isaiah 62, we find a prophecy pertaining to the Lord's church that was to come, built by Jesus and established on the Day of Pentecost. Is. 62:2-4 records the words of the prophet of God to the Jews saying, "The Gentiles shall see your righteousness, and all the kings your glory. You shall be called by a **new name**, which the mouth of the Lord will name. You shall also be a crown of glory in the hand of the Lord, and a royal diadem in the hand of your God. You shall no longer be termed Forsaken, nor shall your land any more be termed Desolate; but you shall be called Hephzibah, and your land Beulah; for the Lord delights in you, and your land shall be married."

Notice the number of the personal pronoun "you." It is used 5 times and the possessive pronoun "your" is used 6 times. What is the subject? The Jewish nation, the chosen people of God (Deut. 7:6-8). God tells the Jews through Isaiah, that they will come to possess a "new name," and name which the Lord, Himself will name them. This excludes names then which the people would create themselves, or a name which the Gentiles possibly referred to the Jews by, all other names and titles of God's people are excluded and only His given name will stand. Again, God makes it clear to those who were rebellious saying, "You shall leave your name as a curse to My chosen; for the Lord God will slay you, and call His servants by another name." (Is. 65:15) This pointed to the coming Messiah which would give Himself for the church.

Many may ask, "Why is it so important to cling to the name, church of Christ or Christian?" Because it is of God Himself. As the chosen generation and His own special people (1 Pet. 2:9), what name are we to hold to? A name that we create ourselves? Possibly a name that others in the world refer to us by? Using logic here, based upon Scripture, Christ bought the church with His own blood (Acts. 20:28), the church is then the purified special people whom He possesses (Tit. 2:14), God gave the church (Christ's Body) to be under Jesus, with Him as the head (Eph. 1:22-23), and the Apostles and disciples of our Lord in the New Testament church understood that their God given name was and is "Christians," (Acts 11:26). As for the collective name they held to at different locations, we see given by inspiration of the Holy Spirit in Rom. 16:16, "the church of Christ." The name universal then is possessive in nature of Christ, "the church of Christ."

Let us never lose sight of the importance in our name for it has been given by God through His rightful ownership of His own special people, bought and purchased with the blood of the Lamb.

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