

IS THERE ANYTHING IN A NAME?

Ed Dye

I. INTRODUCTION

1. The idea that there is nothing in a name is a prevalent and popular doctrine in denominational circles, even though it is in keeping with neither scripture nor reason.
2. The claim is often made that there is nothing in a name, or it makes no difference what name one wears in religion, or what the church of which one is a member is called.
 - a. This is often their claim when we are trying to get them to see that the church of which they are a member is not mentioned in the Bible by name; therefore can't be the church belonging to Christ, or the N.T. church.
 - b. Example: Baptist Church, Methodist Church, Presbyterian Church, Lutheran Church, Nazarene Church, Pentecostal Church, Adventist Church, or Catholic Church.
 - c. These are all human names given and worn by human authority.
 - d. Not one of them is divinely authorized; not one of them is from heaven, but of men. Cf. Mt.21:25.
 - e. In spite of this, those of these churches still claim that wearing these names is justified on the basis of the principle that there is nothing in a name.
3. Bible evidence is plentiful and plain, proving there really is something in a name.

II. DISCUSSION

A. THE FOLLOWING BIBLE EVIDENCE CITED PROVES BEYOND DOUBT THERE IS SOMETHING A NAME.

1. There is so much in a name that God named Adam and Eve, Gen.5:1,2.
 - a. Question: Did God so name them because that is how he wanted them identified? The name they should wear? What he wanted us to call them?
 - b. Cf. Gen.3:20 for the reason she is called Eve.

- c. What if we decided to call them by some other name? Do you think God would care? Be pleased? Approve?
- 2. There is so much in a name that God changed Abram's name to Abraham and for a specific reason, Gen.17:1-5.
 - a. The name he was to wear made a difference to God!
 - b. Should it make a difference to us?
 - c. Suppose Abram had argued, "There is nothing in a name; therefore, I want to wear the name Abram, not Abraham." Would God have granted him the privilege to do so?
- 3. There is so much in a name that God, himself, changed Jacob's name to Israel and for a specific reason, Gen.32:24-28.
 - a. KJV marg. "Israel," that is, "A prince of God."
 - b. If there is nothing in a name, why do you think God considered it necessary to change Jacob's name to Israel?
 - c. Note what V.28 says: "Thy name shall be called no more Jacob, but Israel: for (because; for this reason) as a prince hast thou power with God and with men, and hast prevailed."
- 4. There is so much in a name that Jesus Christ, by means of the Holy Spirit, through the Apostle Paul, condemned religious division, such as that of Denominational churches, as well as the wearing of human names, such as those worn by Denominational churches. See 1Cor.1:10-13.
- 5. There is so much in a name:
 - a. That people name their dogs "Fido" and even "Satan"; their donkeys "Rebel" or "Lucifer," but wouldn't dare so name their sons.
 - b. That parents will name their daughters "June" or "Jessica," but wouldn't think about naming them "Jezebel."
 - c. That none of us would think about calling a good American citizen by the name "Hitler," "Mussolini," or "Stalin," or "Khrushchev;" nor call a truthful man a "liar".
 - d. That if a man forgot to sign his name to his personal check given to you, you would just get your neighbor to sign it for you rather than going to the trouble of going back to him to get his signature!

B. THE SCRIPTURAL DESIGNATIONS OF THE N.T. CHURCH, THE ONE REVEALED IN AND IDENTIFIED BY THE N.T., THE CHURCH BELONGING TO CHRIST, PROVE THERE IS SOMETHING IN A NAME.

1. It's called "My church," Mt.16:18, explain.
2. "The church," Ac.8:1; Eph.5:23.
3. "The church of God," or "of the Lord," Ac.20:28; 1Cor.1:2.
4. "The church of Christ" (singular), Rom.16:16.
5. All of these scriptural designations honor the name of Christ.
6. Denominational churches violate this scriptural principal by wearing human names that do not honor the name of Christ, but men or feast days or some Bible command.
7. Those who are members of the church belonging to Christ are married to Christ, who is the bridegroom, and therefore wear his name, either as a body and/or as individuals. Rom.7:4; Jno.3: 28-30.
8. Since the church is the bride of Christ it wears his name, Rom.16:16.
9. Men who are true believers in Jesus Christ expect their bride to wear their name, why, then, would they not expect to wear the name of Christ if they claim to be a part of the bride of Christ, the church belonging to Christ, instead of some human name while trying to justify it on the basis of the false claim that there is nothing in a name in religion?

D. FINALLY, CONSIDER THE MATTER OF WEARING RELIGIOUS TITLES WHICH ALSO PROVE THERE IS SOMETHING IN A NAME.

1. The wearing of religious titles is condemned in both the O.T. and the N.T., Job 32:21,22; Mt.23:5-11.
2. In spite of this, the term "Reverend" is often worn by men as a religious title; such as: "Reverend," "Rt. Reverend," "Most Rt. Reverend."
3. The Bible term "reverend" is found only one time in the English translation of the Bible; that's in Psa.111:9, where it refers to God Almighty: "He sent redemption unto his people: he hath commanded his covenant forever: ***holy and reverend is his name.***" (emp. mine, ejd)

- a. We do not read of the Apostles of Christ or any of the N.T. preachers being called Rev. Paul; Rt. Rev. Peter; or Rev. Timothy or Titus, or Most Rt. Rev. James.
 - b. They looked upon themselves as weak and humble creatures of God, servants of the Lord, needing help from God, and refused “to glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ,” Gal.6:14.
 - c. But some preachers of today speak of Paul and Peter as plain Paul or plain Peter, or maybe saint Paul or saint Peter, and yet take religious title for themselves.
4. Even the Bible terms “brother,” “elder,” “pastor,” “bishop,” “evangelist,” or “father,” are not used as religious titles, but are nouns like “rancher,” “teacher,” “farmer,” or “preacher,” which describe a work, an office or a scriptural relationship ordained by God.
 5. We, like Timothy, are commanded to “Hold fast the pattern of sound words, which thou hast heard of me, in faith and love which is in Christ Jesus,” 2Tim.1:13 (ASV).
 - a. This we can’t do while giving or approving the giving of religious titles to men.
 - b. Remember Job 32:21,22; Mt.23:8-12.

III. CONCLUSION

1. Without a doubt the Bible teaches there is something in a name!
2. All men who know and understand Bible teaching accept this truth without a doubt!
3. Only those who do not know what the Bible teaches or who do not care what it says teach there is nothing in a name in religion.
4. Even these people recognize that in secular and business matters there is something in a name.
5. Why they refuse to recognize it in religion, which is much more important than secular and business matters, because it involves the soul of man, is beyond me!