

THE CHRISTIAN

Ac.11:26; 26:28

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I. INTRODUCTION

1. When we speak of “The Christian” in this lesson we have reference to that person who is specifically identified in the N.T. Scriptures, that specific one who has a special spiritual relationship with the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit.
2. We will use the word and develop the lesson around the term as it is used in the N.T. Therefore, we will be discussing it in its limited biblical sense, not in the broad sense in which the world in general uses it. For there is no God-given authority to use it in the latter sense, or to even think of it in the latter sense.
3. Thus we will be speaking of that special group of people of which Peter speaks in 1Pet.1:3-5; 2:5-9 and identified as Christians in other N.T. texts.
4. Therefore we affirm on the basis of the N.T. Scriptures that the Christian:

II. DISCUSSION

A. IS THE BELIEVER SPOKEN OF IN THE N.T. WHO HAS TURNED TO THE LORD, Ac.11:19-26.

1. “The disciples of Christ were called Christians first in Antioch,” Ac.11:26. (an adherent of or follower of Jesus Christ)
 - a. Those in V.26 who are called “Christians” are in V.21 identified as the ones who had heard the word of God (the gospel of Jesus Christ, Ac.8:4; 11:19,21), and had “believed, and turned unto the Lord.”
 - b. The word “called” in Ac.11:26 is from the Gr. **GHREMATIZO**.
 - c. To see that this refers to a divine calling and not a name hurled at them in derision by their enemies take note of the words “warn,” “revealed,” “admonished,” in other passages and are translated from the same Greek word as the word “called” in Ac.11:26, and meaning as shown for example:
 - (1) In Heb.12:25, “For if they escaped not who refused him that spake on earth...” (R. V. “warned them”)
 - (a) “Spake” or “warned” means “to utter divine communication,” “to be divinely instructed, receive a revelation or warning from God,” The Analytical Greek Lexicon, Bagster, 438; Vine, I, 31.

- (b) Cf. Mt.2:12,22, "...being **warned** of God in a dream..."; lit. "divinely instructed in a dream"
 - (c) Lk.2:26, "And it was **revealed** unto him by the Holy Ghost..."; lit. "divinely communicated"
 - (d) Ac.10:22, "...was **warned** from God by an holy angel," lit. "divinely instructed" by a holy angel.
 - (e) Heb.8:5, "as Moses was **admonished** of God," lit. "was divinely instructed"
 - (f) Heb.11:7, "By faith Noah, being **warned** of God," lit. "being divinely instructed"
- (2) In Rom.7:3, "she **shall be called** an adulteress"
- (a) Vine, I., 31, "names were given to men from the nature of their business (see the same word in Ac.11:26; Rom.7:3); hence the idea of dealing with a person and receiving instruction."
 - (b) The Analytical Greek Lexicon, Bagster, 438: "to receive an appellation, be styled, Ac.11:26; Rom.7:3" ("Appellation"—formal a name or title)
- (3) Thayer, 671, says:
- (a) Of Mt.2:12,22; Ac.10:22; Heb.8:5; 11:7: pass, "to be divinely commanded, admonished, instructed, [R.V. warned of God]."
 - (b) Ac.11:26; Rom.7:3, univ., "to receive a name or title, be called."
- d. Since the word "called" in Ac.11:26 and Rom.7:3 is translated from the same word as "warn," "admonish," and "revealed," in the other passages cited, all of which refer to that which is divinely communicated, divinely instructed or divinely revealed, why would not "called" in Ac.11:26 and Rom.7:3 refer to what is divinely given? On what basis could one justly claim otherwise?
- e. "The disciples were called Christians **first** in Antioch."
- (1) "**First**", from PROTOS, "at the first; in order of time," cf. Mk.4:28; 1Cor.15:46; 1Th.4:16. – Thayer, 555.
 - (2) Moreover, this harmonizes with O.T. prophecy concerning the "new name" to be given, as well as the time it was to be given, Isa.62:1,2; 65:15; Rev.3:12; Ac.9:15,16,20-31; 11:25,26.
- f. Obviously, the name Christian is a name that is of divine origin.

B. A CHRISTIAN IS WHAT THE APOSTLES SOUGHT TO PERSUADE PEOPLE TO BECOME WHEN THEY PREACHED CHRIST, Ac.26:28,29.

1. By what means did they seek to so persuade people to become Christians or what does it mean to preach Christ?
 - a. They sought to do it by the message of the gospel of Christ which is the power of God unto salvation which they were divinely commissioned to preach, Mt.28:18-20; Mk.16:15,16; Jno.20:19-23; Ac.9:15,16; 26:16-20; Rom.1:1.
 - b. This message and this message only is what Paul always preached, 1Cor.2:1,2; 4:15-17; 15:1-3; Rom.1:14-17; Gal.1:11,12,23.
 - c. Therefore, this is the message Paul used in the case of King Agrippa, Ac.26:1-27.
 - d. Ac.26:28,29 confirm Paul's desire and purpose in seeking King Agrippa to act in response to what was preached.
 - e. Therefore, when they preached Christ to persuade men to become Christians they preached the word of God, the one gospel of Christ, the one faith of Jesus Christ.

C. THE CHRISTIAN SEEKS TO GLORIFY (PRAISE AND HONOR) GOD IN THIS HONORABLE NAME BY WHICH HE IS DIVINELY CALLED, AND IN WHICH HE MAY AND OFTEN DOES SUFFER, 1Pet.4:16; Jas.2:7.

1. Cf. Ac.5:40-42 for a classic example of the fact of this.
2. Suffering was and often is the portion of Christians, Mt.5:10-12; 2Tim.3:12; 1Pet.4:12-19.
3. But remember this: Not all suffering is blessed or shameless.
 - a. Therefore, the Christian must make sure that when and if he suffers he is not suffering for evil doing; such as: "a murderer, a thief, and evil doer or a busybody in other men's matters," V.15.
4. It is suffering for well-doing as a partaker of Christ's sufferings that is blessed, and for which one has reason to rejoice; or that is an occasion for which one may have joy, Vv.13,14,16.
5. If any man suffers as a Christian, it means he suffers "because he is a Christian" or "for righteousness sake" or "on account of being a follower of Christ."

D. THE CHRISTIAN IS ONE WHO BY GRACE THROUGH FAITH HAS BEEN SAVED BY THE BLOOD OF CHRIST, HAVING OBEYED THE GOSPEL OF CHRIST, AND HAVING BEEN ADDED TO THE CHURCH BELONGING TO CHRIST.

1. All who are saved are saved by grace through faith in Jesus Christ, Eph.2:8; Jno.3:16; Ac.15:11; 16:31; Rom.1:16,17; 3:23-28; 5:1; Tit.3:4-7.
2. All who are saved are saved or purchased or redeemed by the blood or the death of Jesus Christ, Ac.20:28; Rom.3:23-26; 5:8,9; Eph.1:6,7; Col.1:12-14; Heb.9:11-14, 22-28; Rev.1:5.
3. But all who are saved are saved by having heard, believed and obeyed the gospel of Christ, by which the sinner is called, and which is God's power unto salvation to obedient, baptized believers, and by which God makes them righteous in his sight, Mk.16:15,16; Rom.1:14-17; 3:21-28; Rom.10:1-4; 1Cor.1:21; 15:1,2; 2Th.2:13,14; 1Pet.4:17,18; 2Th.1:6-10; Ac.6:7; Heb.5:8,9; Mt.7:21-23.
4. All who are saved by grace through faith are those who must hear the truth of God's word and love that truth, Jno.8:32; Ac.10:5,6; 11:14; 1Tim.2:3,4; 2Th.2:10-12; 1Th.2:13-16a; Cf. Lk.8:11,12; Rom.10:9-17; Ac.2:21-41.
5. Each and everyone who is thus saved is by the Lord added to the church belonging to the Lord, Ac.2:47; 1Cor.12:12,3.

III. CONCLUSION

1. The Christian thus identified by the N.T. Scriptures is a child of God, and is one belonging to Christ by virtue of having been by faith baptized into Christ and become Abraham's seed, Gal.3:26-29; Rom.6:3-6.
2. There are no Christians, no children of God in the spiritual sense, no spiritual seed of Abraham, outside of Jesus Christ and the body of Christ, his church – they are all in Christ and in his church, where both the Father and the Son have placed them on the conditions specified herein.
3. Furthermore, these Christians are the redeemed, the justified, the sanctified, the purified, and the ones with hope of eternal salvation, as long as they maintain their faith and their fellowship with the Father and the Son while in their physical body here on earth.