
What Name Should be Used for a Saved Believer in Christ?

Those who consider themselves believers in Christ call themselves by a variety to names: “Catholic”, “Protestant”, “Mormon”, “Baptist”, “Methodist”, “Lutheran”, “Witness”, “Presbyterian”, “Adventist”, etc. Yet none of these names are used to describe saved believers in Christ in the New Testament. Despite what some Baptists may claim John the Baptist was not a member of the church. He lived and died a Jew under the Law of Moses. When John is called “the Baptist” it is not describing his relationship to Christ’s kingdom or church. It is used to describe what he did, John immersed people in the Jordan out of obedience to God in preparation for the coming of the Christ. It would be the same as if one referred to “Sam, the bricklayer.” Except John’s work was greater in that it was part of the scheme of redemption. Furthermore, John did not live long enough to be baptized into the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ (Rom. 6:2ff). He died before the church was established.

All the names given to the saved believers in the New Testament describe, identify or express their relationship to God and one another or give honor to the Father or the Son. The name “disciples” was used to describe the saved, because they are dedicated to learning and following the teaching of Christ (Jn. 15:8; Ac. 11:26). The saved are called “saints” because they *“are sanctified in Christ Jesus, called to be saints,”* (1 Cor. 1:2; cf. Rom. 1:7; Phil. 1:1; Col.

1:2). Saint, sanctify, sanctification, and holy are all derived from the same Greek root word meaning “to be set apart” unto God. Because the saved render service to God they are His “servants” (Rev. 1:1). They are “children” of God, because God is their Father (Gal. 3:26, I Jn. 3:1). The “children” of God and “sons of God” (Rom. 8:14) are also called “brethren”, because of their relationship to other children of God (Gal. 6:1). Having been made subjects to the King, they are citizens of His kingdom (Eph. 2:19; 3:6; I Cor. 15:6; Js. 1:2; 2 Pet. 1:10). The church is the body of Christ and the saved are members of this one body (I Cor. 12:20; cf. Eph. 1:22,23; 4:3f). Because they make up a priesthood in relationship to their High Priest, Jesus Christ (Heb. 4:13f), they are called “priests” (1 Pet. 2:5-9). Each priest can offer up his prayers to God through the Mediator and High Priest, Jesus Christ (1 Tim. 2:5). Each one of these saved souls can offer up *“living sacrifices”* in worship unto God (Rom. 12:1). Due to the fact they are a *“royal priesthood,”* the Bible not only refers to them as “priests” but also “kings” (Rev. 1:5,6). One is saved and is an *“heir of God”* (Rom. 8:17), because of their inheritance through the obedience to the Gospel. God counts all His saved children dear to Him and they are *“beloved of God”* (Rom. 1:7), God showed His love by the sacrifice of His only Son (Jn. 3:16). In reference to the spiritual warfare they engaged in, they are soldiers (Philemon 2; Eph. 6:10-18). Only three times in the New Testament are the saved called *“Christians”* (Acts 11:26; 26:28; I Pet. 4:16). Every time it is spelled or pronounced, it gives glory to Christ, and shows that its wearer belongs to Him. When the church at Corinth was divided in regard to who they followed, Paul let them know through three rhetorical questions which name they should

wear.

Paul wrote, *“now I plead with you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you, but that you be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment. For it has been declared to me concerning you, my brethren, by those of Chloe’s household, that there are contentions among you. Now I say this, that each of you says, ‘I am of Paul,’ or ‘I am of Apollos,’ or ‘I am of Cephas,’ or ‘I am of Christ.’ Is Christ divided? Was Paul crucified for you? Or were you baptized in the name of Paul?”* (1 Cor. 1:10-13).

Denominational leaders even recognize the unscriptural use of these human names. The Luthern church was founded by the followers of Martin Luther. When they were attempting to call themselves Lutherans while he was still alive, he referenced Paul’s argument in 1 Cor. 1:10-13 and pleaded with his followers: “I pray you to leave my name alone and call not yourself Lutherans, but Christians. who is Luther?...I have not been crucified for anyone. Paul would not let them call themselves after Paul,...but 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 clinging to these party names and distinctions; away with all; and let us call ourselves only Christians...” (Life Of Luther, Stork, p. 289). Charles Spurgeon a well-known Baptist preacher of the nineteenth century wrote, “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 last forever" (Spurgeon Memorial Library, Vol. 1, p. 168). John Wesley founded the Methodist church, but he was opposed to his followers using denominational designations. "Would to God that all party names and unscriptural phrases and forms which have divided the Christian world were forgotten; that we might all agree to sit down together, as humble, loving disciples at the feet of the common Master..." (Wesley's Notes on the N.T., Preface, p. 7).

Most denominational names do nothonor the Lord or Christ; instead they exalt some man, organizational arrangement, belief or practice. Adventists exalt the second coming over the Returning Savior. Seventh-Day Adventists promote the day of rest commanded in the Old Testament over the Lord's Day (Acts 20:7). Baptists exalt baptism above the One we are baptized into (Gal. 3:25f). Methodists exalt methods of holiness above the Holy One. A Nazarene is not one who lives in Nazareth, but this denominationalists exalts the earthly home of Jesus above the King residing at the right hand of God's throne in Heaven. Episcopalans and Presbyterians exalt a form of church government over the King of the Kingdom, the Overseer, and Chief Shepherd of the Flock (1 Pet. 5:4f; Acts 20:28). The Pentecostals exalt the miracles of Pentecost over the One in whose name these were performed. Protestants are called such because they protest the abuses of the Catholic church not because they wish to return to and glorify the true Gospel of Christ (Gal. 1:6-9). Catholics exalt the universal nature of the church over the Head of the Church.

Denominational names are given by men to each other, and the name of Christ is buried beneath the rubble. Jesus warned of this unreasonable respect for human names. He said,

"I have come in My Father's name, and you do not receive Me; if another comes in his own name, him you will receive. How can you believe, who receive honor from one another, and do not seek the honor that comes from the only God?" (Jn. 5:43,44). Wearing man-made names cannot glorify God or His Son. Man is commanded to glorify God in the name "Christian." *"If he suffers as a Christian he has nothing to be ashamed of and may glorify God in Christ's name"* (1 Pet. 4:16, J.B. Philips New Testament). Catholics are trying to glorify God in the name "Catholic." Therefore, Catholics are in disobedience to the command of God. Likewise, Baptists are not glorifying Christ by calling themselves "Baptists." Thus, they are not in agreement with the New Testament Scriptures.

The name we wear religiously shows where our allegiance is. Where is your allegiance? What does the name you wear signify and glorify? Bible things should be called by Bible names. Men cannot improve upon the perfect Will of God. Will you be content to be right with God and wear the names designated for the saved in the New Testament?

– Daniel R. Vess

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Service Times	
Sunday	Bible Study.....9:30 am Worship Service.....10:30 am Worship Service.....5:00 pm
Wednesday	Bible Study.....7:30 pm

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