

# THE NEW NAME

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In the eighth century B.C., Isaiah would not restrain himself from heralding the good news that would bring glory to God. He wrote, “For Zion's sake will I not hold my peace, and for Jerusalem's sake I will not rest, until the righteousness thereof go forth as brightness, and the salvation thereof as a lamp that burneth. And the Gentiles shall see thy righteousness, and all kings thy glory: and thou shalt be called by a new name, which the mouth of the LORD shall name” (Isa. 62:1-2). The new name would be given by the Lord himself when the Jews and the Gentiles were brought into the one body. God had promised Abraham at the dawn of time that he would bless “all families of the earth” through him (Gen. 12:3). In “the church, which is his body,” Jew and Gentile are brought into friendship with God. Paul said, “And that he might reconcile both unto God in one body by the cross, having slain the enmity thereby” (Eph. 2:16).

The first historical occasion for Jew and Gentile to enjoy the fellowship of the faith together in one congregation was at Antioch of Syria. The Holy Spirit had Luke record the wondrous event in Acts 11:26, “And when he had found him, he brought him unto Antioch. And it came to pass, that a whole year they assembled themselves with the church, and taught much people. And the disciples were called Christians first in Antioch.” This marks the first time anyone was called by the name “Christian.” The new name “Christian” was the name given to the disciples by God himself. It is in the disciples of Christ wearing this name that God is to be glorified. Isaiah wrote, “Thou shalt also be a crown of glory in the hand of the LORD, and a royal diadem in the hand of thy God” (Isa. 62:3).

Interestingly, Isaiah said all kings would see the glory of God, and Paul, the apostle to the Gentiles himself being a Jew, urged King Agrippa to become a Christian. Luke wrote, “Then Agrippa said unto Paul, Almost thou persuadest me to be a Christian” (Acts 26:28). This is the second time the scriptures make reference to the new name Isaiah foretold. And, as the glory of God was growing through the preaching of the gospel of Christ, it is noteworthy that the best efforts of inspired men were being exerted to urge people to become Christians.

The final time the new name is mentioned in the Bible it occurs in a context of suffering. Not suffering that comes by being a murderer, a thief, a busybody in

other men's matters, or generally as an evil doer (I Pet. 4:15). But, the joy of suffering for righteousness sake and thereby being partakers of Christ's suffering (I Pet. 3:14; 4:13). Peter wrote, "Yet if any man suffer as a Christian, let him not be ashamed; but let him glorify God on this behalf" (I Pet. 4:16). Isaiah had long years before said that God would be glorified through the new name, and the apostle Peter reiterated that truth and applied it to those who proudly wear the name "Christian."

All Christians are members of the house of God which is the church of the living God (I Pet. 4:17; I Tim. 3:15). All members of the house of God have obeyed the gospel of God (I Pet. 4:17). All who have obeyed the gospel of God are expected to be righteous (I Pet. 4:18). Again, Isaiah said, "The Gentiles shall see thy righteousness and all kings thy glory." The righteousness of God brightly goes forth when people are taught to obey the gospel, thereby becoming members of the church of Christ, and to live righteous lives.

The new name "Christian" appears three times in the Bible. And, it is in this name that God is to be glorified (I Pet. 4:16, ASV).