

# The Name of the Church

Matthew 16:18

## INTRODUCTION:

- A. **Matthew 16:18** – “And I also say to you that you are Peter, and on this rock I will build My church, and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it.” The church was indeed established in the city of Jerusalem as recorded in Acts 2.
- B. If the church is to be scriptural, then it must have a scriptural name.
1. However, there are many man-made churches with many man-made names and titles. How did these come about?
    - a. Some of them were given to honor their founders . . . Such as “Lutheran.”
    - b. Some of them exalt a doctrine such as Baptist or a method of doing the Lord’s work.
    - c. Some of them glorify a day such as the day of Pentecost or the Sabbath Day.
    - d. Still others place emphasis on the form of government by underlining the work of the presbyters of the church.
  2. But all of these, and any others that might be mentioned, take all of the glory, praise, and honor that belong to Christ, and give it those names, titles, and descriptions that have originated with men.

## MAN-MADE NAMES AND TITLES ARE WRONG FOR AT LEAST FIVE REASONS.

- A. **They make distinctions where God did not intend distinctions to be.**
1. They separate people rather than bring people together.
  2. They oppose the very prayer of Christ as recorded in John 17 when He prayed that we might all be one.
- B. **They are condemned in the Scriptures.**
1. In 1 Corinthians 1:10-17 the apostle Paul showed his brethren the error of wearing the names of men, thus dividing into parties and sects.
  2. Religious division has always come when some refuse to follow God’s will and obey it in God’s way.
- C. **The names of men are substituted for the Lord’s name.**
1. **Acts 4:12** – “Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved.”
  2. The names of men lack the power of the name of Christ.
- D. **Man-made names and titles are misleading, confusing, and create the wrong impression among unbelievers.** They cause unbelief.
- E. **They will cause all who wear them, and all of those who are turned from Christ because of them, to be lost.**

Note: For these reasons they are wrong!

**DESIGNATING THE LORD'S CHURCH.**

- A. As to the church, Christ promised to build it. Matthew 16:18
1. Christ purchased it with His own blood. Acts 20:28
  2. Christ is the Savior of it. Ephesians 5:23
  3. Christ is the head of it. Colossians 1:18
  4. It is only natural that the church would wear His name to honor its founder, builder, Savior, and head.
  5. Consider what the apostle Paul has written.
    - a. So when the apostle Paul wrote to the church at Rome, and sent along the greetings of the congregations in his area, he said in **Romans 16:16** – “The churches of Christ greet you.”
    - b. In speaking to the church at Corinth, he said in **1 Corinthians 12:27** - “Now you are the body of Christ, and members individually.”
    - c. But since the body is the church (Ephesians 1:22-23), he was simply talking about the church of Christ.
- B. Other designations of the church in the New Testament.
1. “The church of God.” 1 Corinthians 1:2; Acts 20:28
  2. “The kingdom of God.” 1 Corinthians 6:9
  3. “The kingdom of Christ.” Ephesians 5:5
  4. “The kingdom of His dear Son.” Colossians 1:13
  5. “The church of the living God.” 1 Timothy 3:15
  6. “The church of the firstborn.” Hebrews 12:23
- C. Therefore, the church is not called by any one exclusive name or descriptive phrase.
1. At the same time, it should be remembered that that which belonged to Christ belonged to God, and that which belonged to God belonged to Christ.
  2. The eight names mentioned earlier all refer to the church that Christ built.
  3. If it is not the church of Christ then whose church would it be.
  4. During the 1<sup>st</sup> century, and before denominationalism, the people had no trouble knowing that it was Christ's church being referenced by these terms . . . It was the only church they had ever heard about or had ever seen.
  5. Furthermore, with all these name and descriptive phrases of it, it would seem that one would really be desirous of getting away from the Scriptures to have to choose another name for the Lord's church.
  6. Let us stay with the Bible and call the church what the Bible calls it.

**THE BIBLE TEACHES THAT THE MEMBERS OF THE CHURCH ARE CALLED CHRISTIANS.**

- A. **Isaiah 62:2** – “The Gentiles shall see your righteousness, And all kings your glory. You shall be called by a new name, which the mouth of the Lord will name.”

- B. That named was not given until the Gentiles had an opportunity to obey God. **Acts 11:26** – “. . . And the disciples were first called Christians in Antioch.”  
This took place in Antioch of Syria.
- C. in **Acts 26:28**, King Agrippa said to Paul, “. . . Paul, ‘You almost persuade me to become a Christian.’”
- D. Followers of Christ in New Testament times were Christians . . . And Christians only. The name Christian distinguishes one from the rest of the world and that is all the Lord requires.

### **CONCLUSION:**

- A. In both the name of the church and its members, the name of Christ is to be Exalted . . . Why?
1. Because it is the family name of God’s family. Ephesians 3:14-15
  2. Because it is a name that is above all names. Philippians 2:9
  3. Because it is the only name in which salvation is to be found. Acts 4:12
- B. With all this in mind . . .
1. We are to believe in the name of Christ. 1 John 5:13
  2. We are to confess that name before others. 2 Timothy 2:19; Matthew 10:32-33
  3. We are to repent and be baptized in that name. Acts 2:38
  4. We are to meet for worship in that name. Matthew 19:20
  5. We are to do all in His name (Colossians 3:17) that we might have eternal life through His name. John 20:30-31
- C. With all of this revealed in the Bible, how can anyone say there is nothing in a name?
1. There is certainly no salvation in the names and titles of men.
  2. Why would anyone desirous of being a Christian, avoid the Biblical name and instead wear the names and titles of men?
  3. Salvation is in one name and one name only . . . The name of Christ. Acts 4:12
- D. **God’s Plan for Man’s Salvation**