

THE BIBLE NAME
FOR
THE CHURCH



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God has had a people, called out from the world in every age, who have ever been in the minority, and have, at different periods, suffered persecution and even death. Before the flood the history of man is exceptionally brief and the name of the people of God is not mentioned, only that Noah (meaning rest) was a preacher of righteousness, and that he and his household alone were saved, at the time of the flood.

After Noah's posterity had wandered away in wickedness, and the world had again become careless and "knew not God," being diligent in spiritual matters was called out, and his name changed from Abram to Abraham (meaning father of a multitude). (Gen. 17:5) In his old age, Isaac was born to him, and then later came Isaac's son Jacob. The word means, "supplanter," and because of his wrestling all night with the angel until the break of day, and prevailing, God said, "Thy name shall be called "no more Jacob, but Israel." (Gen. 32:28) Israel means "a prince of God," and to Israel or Jacob were born twelve sons, the descendants of whom were ever afterwards known as the children of Israel. They were God's chosen people, and during this age were named "Israel." Notice, this name originated from a spiritual experience and not from fleshly descent.

The Significance of Other Names

A study of the etymology of the words and names used in the Bible reveals equal to anything else, the unsearchable depth of the wisdom of God. The names of individuals whom God has used in disseminating His truth to the world have not only

corresponded to the lives of those individuals, but in some cases have, with astonishing accuracy, displayed the character and work of their posterity following after for generations. Isaiah means, "salvation of Jehovah;" Ezekiel, "God will strengthen;" Hezekiah, "Jehovah has strengthened;" and Jeremiah, "Jehovah has appointed."

A New Name Promised

During the period when God's people were known by the name "Israel," the Holy Spirit told us of a time coming when they would be known by another name. In Isaiah 62:2, we read, "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." This has reference to the gospel dispensation, when the Gentiles would behold His righteousness, and seek the path of salvation. We are now living in this time, and the name of the followers of Christ and those seeking the paths of righteousness collectively is not mentioned once in the New Testament Scriptures as "Israel," therefore we are in that period spoken of by the prophet, when the people of God would have a new name which "the mouth of the Lord should name."

Isaiah prophesies further of the name, saying, "And ye shall leave your name for a curse unto my chosen: for the Lord God shall slay thee, and call his servants by another name." (Isa. 65:15)

During the Gentile age, when people of all nationalities were to accept the plan of salvation, the name "Israel" was not to remain, but was to be left for a curse. How true this has been and the name "Israel" has been a reproach. There must be, however, a new name for God's people, which comes from the

mouth of the Lord, says Isaiah, so let us investigate a little further and find this new name.

In the prayer of Jesus recorded in John 17, He said, "Holy Father, keep through thine own name those whom thou hast given me, that they may be one, as we are." (Verse 11) See also verses 6, 12 and 26, wherein Jesus declares the Father's name to be the one after whom His followers should be called.

Again in Ephesians we read, "For this cause I bow my knees unto the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, Of whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named." (Ch. 3:14-15)

A letter once came to the postmaster in an Alabama village, addressed to the minister of the Church of God. Pastors of different churches coming to the post office were presented the letter, but each one refused to accept it, stating that it was not intended for them, for they were ministers of other churches, and so it went its rounds. The Catholic priest also refused the letter, but finally a minister of the Church of God called, and when the postmaster presented the letter to him it was quickly claimed and received.

Reader, the name is significant and it is important with God. We should come out squarely and show our colors, having the Bible form or organization, and all other doctrines just as pure and true.

In the New Testament Scriptures, the Lord has frequently addressed His people collectively, and has ascribed to them this new name.

1. We read in Acts 20:28 that it was the "Church of God," Christ purchased with His own blood.

2. The Corinthian letter (I Cor. 1:2) is addressed, "Unto the church of God which is at Corinth." All of the churches in Judea during Paul's ministry were called by this name.
3. In I Thess. 2:14, we read, "For ye, brethren became followers of the churches of God which in Judea are in Christ Jesus." Before Paul was converted he was a persecutor of the Church of God.
4. He says in I Cor. 15:9, "I am the least of the apostles, --- because I persecuted the church of God.
5. He also says (Gal. 1:13), "How that beyond measure I persecuted the church of God, and wasted it. "Afterward he became a member of this church.
6. II Thess. 1:4, "So that we ourselves glory in you in the churches of God for your patience and faith in all your persecutions and tribulations that ye endure."

Besides these texts given, the new name of the church applied to those called out by God, in this age, is also mentioned in I Cor. 10:32; 11:16 and 22; I Tim. 3:5 and 15, and II Cor. 1:1.

The New Testament name given by God himself to His people is the "Church of God." This is a statement displaying a truth, the integrity of which the world cannot question or disapprove and why should people basing their religion on the Bible willingly be known by another name? Why should anyone reject the name given by God, and manufacture a substitute for the genuine, or take a human name for one divine, and to this extent place the human standard above the divine standard?

God, in the first place, considers the name of much importance or He would not have changed Abram's name to Abraham, Jacob's name to Israel, and Saul's name to Paul, after they had undergone a spiritual change. He considers names important, or He would never have selected a name for His people in the different dispensations of our history, and carefully through His Holy Spirit revealed these names to them.

Knowing the significance of Bible names, let us advance and with much care consider our every step. It is God and His words we are following, relying on His power for a life beyond. Let us follow in every particular, and keep our eyes upon Jesus and our feet in His path. God expects more of us in this age of light.

A Third New Name

The saved and ransomed of God from all ages of the world are each to be given a new name, after the resurrection, according as they have pleased God. This new name His choosing the name for His people. This time it is to be individually instead of one name for them collectively. In Rev. 2:17, it reads, "To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the hidden manna, and will give him a white stone, and in the stone a new name written, which no man knoweth saving he that receiveth it."

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Pass Me On.
THE CHURCH OF GOD
7th Day