

LESSON 6

Church Names

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What is the proper name of the true Church? The Church was not to be known, recognized or identified, in whole or in part, by any one denominational name. The voice of the angel, said, "Come hither; and I will show thee the Bride, the Lamb's Wife." Rev. 21:9. He did not say, come and I will show thee the name of the Bride, but the Bride herself. She was to be identified by her characteristic features.

The followers of Christ are, in the Scriptures called by a variety of names, indicating their relation to God, Christ, and each other, etc. They are called the "children of God," because of their relation to God as their Father. But children of God is not the proper name of the Church. They are called "children of the Kingdom," because of their relation to the Kingdom of God. But children of the Kingdom is not the proper name of the Church. They are called "heirs of God" because of their relation to God and their anticipated inheritance. But heirs of God is not the proper name of the Church. They are called "children of promise" but this is not the name of the Church. The true people of God are called "the children of Abraham," because of their figurative relation to Abraham as the "father of the faithful." But children of Abraham is certainly not the proper name of the Church of Christ. They are called "saints," and "the sanctified," frequently in the New

Testament, to indicate that they have been set apart from the service of the world to the service of God. Yet the term saints is not the proper name of the Church of Christ. The Mormons call themselves "Latter Day Saints," but this claim does not prove that they are real saints.

The Saviour describes His followers as sheep: "My sheep hear My voice." Yet it would sound a little odd for a new denomination to start up and call themselves the Sheep Church! The term sheep has reference to their relation to the Saviour as the Good Shepherd. The followers of Christ were called "disciples" with special reference to their relation to Him as the great Teacher, and they as His pupils. Yet Disciples is not the name of the Church. To appropriate the term disciples as the name of the Church, is absurd. They are called "Brethren", in regard to their relation to Christ as their elder brother, and to their being spiritually equal in the family of God. Yet to adopt the term Brethren as a Church name, would be unscriptural and absurd. The Disciples were evidently called Christians by their enemies, using it as a term of reproach.

The Saviour says, "Upon this rock I will build, My Church," Matt. 16:18. From this, some have come to the conclusion that "My Church" should be adopted as the proper name of this institution of Christ on earth. This is absurd, from the fact that "MY CHURCH" simply indicates the relation the Church sustains to Christ as its founder and head. A man may say, "this is

my son," but "my son" is not the proper name for the boy. It only indicates the relation which he sustains to the man.

Writing to the disciples in Rome, Paul says: "The Churches of Christ salute you." Rom. 16: 16. This does not indicate that Paul designed to establish the "Churches of Christ" as the proper name of Christ's organized people. It simply indicates the relation that these Churches sustain to Christ.

In the letter to the Corinthians, which is addressed, "Unto the Church of God which is at Corinth," he says, "For God is not the author of confusion, but of peace as in all the Churches of the saints." I Cor. 14: 33. It would hardly be proper to seize upon the words "Churches of the saints" and make them the denominational name for the organized disciples of Christ. The same may be said of Paul's address, in which he calls this Corinthian Church, "the Church of God." The Winebrennarians have seized upon this Scripture phrase, "church of God" and applied it to themselves and their denomination.

The phrase "Christian Church" is not found in the Bible, either in the Old, or New Testament, and even the term "Christians" was not adopted by the disciples of Christ, or given by divine authority, but was simply a name of derision which their enemies applied to them. However we have no objection to the name "Christian" when used in the sense of the followers of Christ.

The true Church is described by the apostle as "the house of God, which is the Church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth," I Tim. 3: 15. Here the term "the house of God" is not

intended to be the proper name of the Church, but it indicates the relation which the Church sustains to God as His house. As the ancient temple built under divine direction, was the "house of God" to the Jews, the spiritual temple, "the Church of the living God" is also "the house of God," in which He dwells by the Holy Spirit.

Addressing "the Church of God" at Corinth, Paul says: "Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you?" I Cor. 3: 16. Though the apostle addressed these Corinthian saints as "the Church of God," he calls them "the temple of God." It is possible that some future reformer, so-called, will become the head and leader of a party who will call themselves "the temple of God," and then assume to force other people, to keep from insulting them, to also call them "the temple of God." While the Church is figuratively called "the temple of God," because it is to be the dwelling place of the Holy Spirit, it will not do to adopt this as a proper name of the Church.

His true disciples are mentioned by the Saviour as "the very elect." Also by the apostle they are called "God's elect." Yet these expressions indicating their relation to God as His chosen ones are not designed to be the proper name of His chosen Church.

THE BIBLE NAME

Finally, we deliberately remark that it is a part of divine wisdom that neither Jesus Christ nor the apostles enjoined any one

proper name by which His church should be called and known during the present dispensation.

If the terms "Christian Church," "Church of God," "Saints" or the "Elect" had been given as the proper name of the Church, the most heretical sects set up by men, without authority from God, would call themselves by the inspired name and make that an argument why they should be recognized as the true Church of God! In fact, those who base an argument for their church claims upon the name which they have assumed themselves, though that name may be the most sacred in the Bible, only weaken their claims. Being convinced of their inability to support their doctrines by Holy writ, they presume upon the supposed ignorance of the people by calling themselves by a Bible name.

Doubtless referring to such claimants to be the true Bride of Christ, Isaiah prophesied: "And in that day seven women shall take hold of one man, saying we will eat our own bread, and wear our own apparel; only let us be called by thy name, to take away our reproach." Is. 4: 1. This prophecy points, with unerring certainty, to the gospel dispensation. These "seven women" doubtless designate such religious societies as are fundamentally heretical in doctrine and practice, and yet make bold claims to be the Bride of Christ, though they themselves know that they were organized in recent times under the wisdom and labors of uninspired men. The "One Man" represents Christ as The God Man. He does not choose these women. They nominally lay hold upon Him, simply to take away their reproach. They are so independent that they can make their

own living. They wear their own apparel-the righteousness of their pretended good works-they eat their own bread, which means they have their own doctrines-salvation by baptism, church membership, or other works of pretended righteousness which they can do. They only desire to be called by the name of Christ to "take away their reproach," They evidently belong to the Babylon family whose maternal ancestor is described, in the seventeenth chapter of Revelation, as "the Mother of Harlots and abominations of the earth."

We are satisfied that all "State Churches" and such other societies as "Mormon Saints," "Material Adventists," "Christian Scientists," "Millennial Dawnists," with all such other sects and schisms as deny the divinity of Christ and His atonement, belong to this Babylon family, indicated by the "seven women" who use the name of Christ in the Scriptures to indicate many, without being confined to the literal number.

On the contrary, the true Church, chosen of God in her membership and work, is described by various Bible terms. She is called the "flock," "the house of God," and her members are called "sheep," "brethren," "saints," "elect," and many other significant Bible names. In Revelation, 21st chapter, she is described as the affianced Bride of Christ, and must be known and identified by her characteristics.

The voice of the angel, to John, said: "Come hither and I will show thee the Bride, the Lamb's wife." He did not say I will show you the name of the Bride, but the Bride herself. When John

saw her, she was the golden city. In addition to Christ being the great foundation stone underlying the whole superstructure, there were twelve leading foundation stones with the names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb written thereon, which indicates that the twelve apostles were organic members whom the Saviour selected and ordained, after He spent the night in prayer on the mountain. See Luke 6:13; Mark 3: 13-14; Matt. 5th chapter, including the whole Sermon on the Mount.

The foolish catch question we sometimes hear that the Bride "ought to go by the name of the Bridegroom," may be answered that for pity's sake not before the marriage, which is yet future. That kind of impudence is what is the matter with those seven women. However as the earthly old Jerusalem was the capital and chief city of the Jews, the New Jerusalem will be the chief capital and city of spiritual Israel, during the millennium and forever. See Rev. 21st chapter.

But granting that Jesus Christ did establish His Church while on earth, is it not a fact that it fell away and apostatized? This falling away was not the falling away of the Church of Christ, but the falling away and departure of false members from the Church. Of these, John says: "Little children it is the last time: as ye have heard that antichrist shall come, even now are there many antichrists; whereby we know that it is the last time. They went out from us but they were not of us; for if they had been of us; they would no doubt have continued with us; but they went out, that

they might be made manifest that they were not all of us." 1 John 2:18-19.

These false members were "antichrists," They did not carry the Church into apostasy, but went out from the Church. These false ministers and false members, called "antichrists," went out and organized false churches, which gradually grew into an hierarchy and finally became the Roman Catholic Church. "The mystery of iniquity," which afterwards produced popery, had begun its deadly work in the time of Paul. A part of this work was to attempt to engraft Judaism into Christianity. Some of these false teachers went down from Judea to Antioch and taught the brethren and said: "Except ye be circumcised after the manner of Moses, ye cannot be saved." Acts 15: 1.

We give the rise and establishment of the Roman Catholic Church as follows:

First: "The mystery of iniquity," which finally produced popery, began its work in the time of Paul, about A.D. 54.

Second: Baptismal salvation, "the mother heresy," which is the fundamental heresy of Romanism, was propagated by some as early as A.D. 150.

Third: Infant baptism began in the third century as a result of baptismal salvation.

Fourth: The supremacy of some pastors, called bishops, in the great city churches, also began to be manifested about the close of the third century.

Fifth: The true Churches throughout the Empire declared non-fellowship with the false churches and false members in the year 251.

Sixth: The union of the false churches with the state occurred under Constantine the Great, A.D. 312. This was the birth of the hierarchy, which, centuries after, became the Roman Catholic Church.

Seventh: The first general council of this hierarchy was called by Constantine and met at Nice, A.D. 325.

Eighth: By the decree of the emperor, Phocas, Boniface III. Was declared universal bishop over all churches in 606 A.D. (corrected chronology 610).

Thus, the Roman Catholic Church, with the Pope, claiming universal authority over all Christians, was first established 606 years after Christ, by the instigation of Satan through the tyrant Emperor Phocas, who murdered his predecessor. The temporal power of the pope was established A.D. 754, by the authority of Pepin, father of Charles the Great. Thus was established by satanic wisdom, through wicked men, the great ecclesiastical hierarchy, known as the Roman Catholic Church. It was born and officially recognized A.D. 312. Constantine, the emperor, and sponsor of this hierarchy, called the first general council which met at Nice, A.D. 325. This hierarchy came to its maturity and became the Roman Catholic Church, with the Pope as its head, A.D. 606. The Pope obtained the reigns of temporal power in 754, from which time the downward course to infamy and shame was still more rapid until

the tenth century, when the papal chair was filled by the most bloodthirsty monsters of iniquity that ever disgraced the name of humanity.

Finally the intolerable blasphemy and iniquity of the Roman Church came to its full under Pius IX., who established the dogma of the Immaculate Conception of Mary in A.D. 1854, and his own infallibility in 1870.

If it was proper for the Saviour to designate those hypocritical Pharisees as the children of the devil, surely it is proper to call that frightful ecclesiastical hierarchy which has polluted the earth with fraud and slaughter, for so many centuries, the offspring of satan.

Satan, the Prince of the power of the air, the great Enemy of God and man, was the founder of the Roman Catholic Church. The Pope is evidently that "Man of Sin," "The Son of Perdition" who "opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped; so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God." "Even him whose coming is after the working of satan with all power and signs and lying wonders, and with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish." This is proof positive that popery was established by the working of satan. The miracles of the Roman Church consist in "signs and lying wonders." It would be just as legitimate to call satan the Saviour, as to call the Church of Rome the Church of Christ.

The Roman Catholic Church is not the true Church of Christ, because of her lack of apostolicity. It began as an hierarchy nearly three hundred years after the establishment of the Church of Christ, and became the Roman Church nearly six hundred years too late to be the apostolic Church. The true Church of Christ began under His personal ministry, and has continued to the present time, independent of Rome. Jesus said: "Upon this rock I will build My Church and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it." Matt, 16: 18.