

Who is a Christian?

“Christian” – 3x in NT

1. Acts 11:26, Paul and Barnabas, Antioch
2. Acts 26:28, Agrippa
3. 1 Peter 4:16, Peter

Many who are devoted to religious titles of human origin contend that the name Christian was given in derision; they feel free to choose any other name they want.

Moffatt: ‘coined by the pagan slang of citizens of Antioch’

I. Was 'Christian' Coined by Lord's Opponents?

Prophecy: Isa.62:2

- Union of Gentiles and Jews under crown of Christ (2-3)
- God would give a new name to a new body
- Isa.56⁵ Even to them I will give in My house
And within My walls a place and a name
Better than that of sons and daughters; I will
give them an everlasting name that shall not be
cut off.

Isa.65:14-15

- Union of Gentiles and Jews under crown of Christ
- God would give a new name to a new body
- Isa.65¹⁴ Behold, My servants shall sing for joy of heart, But you shall cry for sorrow of heart, And wail for grief of spirit. ¹⁵ You shall leave your name as a curse to My chosen; for the Lord GOD will slay you, and call His servants by another name.
- Acts 10 – Gentiles. Ac.11:26 – new name

Acts 11:26, were called

Used exclusively in NT of divine calling

- “Impart a divine message; make known a divine injunction / warning” – BDAG
- Nine times in NT

Acts 11:26, were called [9x in NT]

- Mt.2:12, 22, warned of God in a dream
- Lk.2:26, revealed to Simeon by Spirit
- Ac.10:22, Cornelius warned by holy angel
- Ac.11:26, Divine call: people named according to their business

Acts 11:26, *were called* [9x in NT]

- Mt.2:12, 22, warned of God in a dream
- Lk.2:26, revealed to Simeon by Spirit
- Ac.10:22, Cornelius warned by holy angel
- Ac.11:26, used exclusively in NT of divine calling. Impart a divine message... – BDAG
- Ro.7:3, called adulteress
- Hb.8:5, Moses, admonished by God
- Hb.11:7, Noah, warned of God
- Hb.12:25, no escape for one who refused Him who spoke [warned] on earth...

Acts 11:26, *were called*

- Primary significance: to have business dealings with. “They were (publicly) called Christians because this was their chief business” – Vine, 87
- Lit., to call the disciples
- Three infinitives: 1) To assemble, 2) To teach, 3) To call...disciples Christians
[double accusative – direct objects]
 - Probably by Paul and Barnabas (context):
 - “They called the disciples Christians first in Antioch”

Acts 11:26, *were called*

- Bickerman: *The Name of Christians*: [called] “must mean ‘assume the name,’ ‘style oneself,’ and that it was therefore the disciples who first began to call themselves Christians, meaning thereby ‘servants of Christ’ ... just as the Caesariani were emperor’s servants” – Bruce
- Tacitus: “Nero blamed Christians for fire of Rome: Christus, from whom the name had its origin, suffered the extreme penalty during the reign of Tiberius at the hands of...Pontius Pilatus” – Annals, xv.44

1 Cor.1:12-13

- Corinth rebuked for wearing human names
 1. Men were not crucified for you
 2. Not immersed in their names
- Christ was crucified for them
- They were baptized into His name
 - Herod -ian, Mk.3:6
 - Caesar -ian
 - Kentuck -ian
 - Christ -ian

Grecian

Hamiltonian

Reptilian

James 2:7 [OT background]

- Dt.28¹⁰ Then all peoples of the earth shall see that you are called by the name of the LORD, and they shall be afraid of you.
- 2 Chr.7¹⁴ If my people ... who are called by My name will humble themselves, and pray and seek My face, and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin and heal their land.
- God's name called over a man: belongs to God
- Christians wear name of Christ: ... *His people*

1 Peter 4:16

- Is it dishonorable to be called 'Christian'?
- Would Peter encourage early saints to 'glorify God' with a pagan 'slang' term (as Ac.24:5, 14)?
- [Other terms: brothers, disciples, believers, saints, the Way...]
- Even IF 'Christian' originated with men, it received God's approval, 1 Pt.4:16
- Most modern religious names originated with men without His approval

I. Was 'Christian' Coined by Lord's Opponents?

II. False Views In
Identifying Christians

- American. “Christian nation”
- Good moral person
- One who believes in God. Jn.14:6
- One who practices faith alone. Jn.8:30...
- Member of a church
- Goes to church
- Baptized person. Ac.19:1-6
- One who believes NT

- A 'good Samaritan' – Lk.10
- One who is charitable...
- One who prays
- One who obeys laws
- One who helps people in crisis
- One who does not judge others
- One who makes us laugh (forget our troubles)
- One who makes us feel good about ourselves
 - 'Sally is not a Christian, but if she doesn't go to heaven, no one will'

I. Was 'Christian' Coined by Lord's Opponents?

II. False Views in Identifying Christians

III. How To Become A Christian

Mt.28:18-20

- All” (4 times)
 - All authority (Lord)
 - All nations (make disciples)
 - All things (observe)
 - All the days (until the end of the age)
- How to make disciples? Baptizing
 - Ac.2:37-38, 41, *taught, received, baptized, continued*
 - Ac.11:26, first called Christians...

1 Pt.4:16-17

A contrast

House of God	Obey not gospel
Us	Ungodly
Righteous	Sinner

- House of God – church, 1 Tim.3:15
- Jn.3:3-5, water . . . kingdom of God
- Col.1:13...delivered us from the power of darkness and conveyed us into the kingdom of the Son of His love

I. Was 'Christian' Coined by Lord's Opponents?

II. False Views in Identifying Christians

III. How to Become a Christian

IV. *Wearing the Name Faithfully*

First Century: sect called Augustiani

- “Christian” will follow Jesus wherever He leads
- What is involved in wearing His name loyally?
 - Ac.11:26, disciples: students, followers of Christ (29)
 - Ac.26:28, persuasion: what would Paul persuade people to do?
 - 1 Pt.4:16, total commitment: live for Him...
 - 1 Co.9:24-25
 - 1 Jn.4:19

Summary – the order

- Ac.26:28, becoming a Christian
- Ac.11:26, living as a Christian
(disciples...assembled... taught...)
- 1 Pt.4:16, suffering as a Christian