

## **“I AM WHAT I AM”, #2**

### **INTRODUCTION**

I. In a previous lesson we looked at Paul’s statement, “I am what I am.”

A. We looked at Paul’s **past** life before he was converted to Christ.

1. He was one who consented to the death of Stephen for preaching the truth.
2. He was one who persecuted the Lord and His church.
3. He was one who was sincere in his opposition to the Lord.

B. Then, we looked at his **present** state after his conversion.

1. He was saved by the grace of God. (Tit. 3:7)
2. Paul considered himself the “chief of sinners” saved by grace, and a “pattern” for others who lived like him and would be saved by God’s grace. 1 Tim. 3:13-16
  - a. As a “pattern,” this means His salvation by grace would be an example of **how and only how** ANYONE else could be saved by grace from that time on.
  - b. God does not save Paul by grace in the first century, and save everyone else by grace in some other way from that time on.

C. Finally, we observed that by God’s grace Paul was an heir of eternal life—on his way to heaven. Tit. 3:7

II. Our lesson today will deal with one matter only, the **NAME** that Paul wore as a saved person, that **we also** should wear if we too are saved by the grace of God.

### **DISCUSSION**

#### **I. 1<sup>st</sup>, what name would Paul NOT WEAR IN HIS RELIGIOUS LIFE.**

A. He would **not** wear the name “Moslem”, or a “Roman Catholic,” any one of the 35,000 distinct ‘Protestant denominational names that people TODAY wear.

B. He would not have been known by these names for obvious reasons.

1. First, Paul would not have worn ANY of the names most people wear in religion today, as he **did not know** such names.
  - a. The Moslem name did not come into existence for almost a thousand years after Paul died.
  - b. The Roman Catholic Church was unknown by Paul in the first century.
  - c. The Protestant denominations in existence today did not begin until the 16<sup>th</sup> century, and were unknown by anyone when Paul was alive.
2. Second, Paul would have had **no authority** to belong to ANY or ALL of these religious bodies, for they foster division. 1 Cor. 1:10, 13

#### **II. 2<sup>nd</sup>, Paul wore the name CHRISTIAN IN HIS RELIGIOUS LIFE.**

A. Let’s look at the REASONS why He would only wear this name.

1. 1<sup>st</sup>, He could say, “**I AM** one who was baptized into Christ, and owe everything to Christ.” Gal. 2:20
2. 2<sup>nd</sup>, He would also say, “**I AM** in the kingdom of Christ, God’s dear Son.” Col. 1:13
3. 3<sup>rd</sup>, He would also say, “**I AM** in the church Jesus established on the day of Pentecost.”
4. 4<sup>th</sup>, He would say, “**I AM** a CHRISTIAN.”

B. **WHY** would Paul wear such a name, and ONLY that name?

1. God had foretold in the book of Isaiah, some 700 years before Christ, that HE (God) would give a new name. Isa. 62:1-2

2. The Gentiles began to enjoy salvation a few years after it was offered to Jews in Acts 2, and Peter promised that it would ALSO be offered to Gentiles. Acts 2:36-39; cf Eph. 2:11-13 (Gentiles were the “far off” people)
3. **THEN**, God, in His providence, brought Paul to the city of Antioch, to be a part of the events at which time the name “**CHRISTIAN**” was to be given. Acts 11:18, 22-26 (Read and explain).
  - a. Note that ALL in the church at Antioch were simply “**disciples**”. v. 26
  - b. Note also that they constituted the “**church**”. v. 26
  - c. Note also that they were divinely called “**CHRISTIANS**”, as the word for “called” is a word referring to something GOD calls, not something man might call, either in sincerity, or in derision. v. 26
    - 1) Being Christians, they were Christians and **ONLY** Christians, not wearing any other name religiously.
    - 2) They were not different **KINDS** of Christians, such as Moslem Christians, or Catholic Christians, or Lutheran Christians, or Mormon Christians, or Adventist Christians.
    - 3) Paul spent his life trying to persuade others to **BE** Christians— nothing more or nothing less. Acts 26:27-28 (Discuss fully)
      - a) Paul was **not** trying to persuade King Agrippa to become a good Jew, or join a denomination, for none existed then..
      - b) Anything more than being a Christian is too much, and anything less is not enough.
4. Often when we inquire with an acquaintance as to his religious affiliation, that one will reply by **naming his denomination**, and when we reply that we are simply Christians, and belong to NO denomination, that person will virtually always come back with the additional statement, “*Well, I am a Christian too,*” as if he belongs to two religious institutions, but the point is that he wants to modify his beliefs, though all the time putting his denomination first, before he attempts to say he is a Christian.

#### **CONCLUSION**

I. Being a Christian, IN the church of the Lord, is the **only way** to glorify God religiously.  
1 Pet. 4:16; Eph. 3:21

II. Are you a Christian?