

Title: HOW GOD NAMES HIS PEOPLE

Text: I Peter 2:10; Acts 15:14

Intro: In the NT record of the Holy Bible we don't read of Christians called by such names as: Catholics, Baptists, or Pentecostals. We don't read of them called: Charismatics, Methodists, Wesleyans, Lutherans, Calvinists, Presbyterians, Jehovah's Witnesses, Seventh Day Adventists, Mormons, etc.

Instead, we read in the pages of the NT these seven vital words: Believers, Brethren, Disciples, Christians, Saints, Church of God, and Sons of God. These titles and aliases by which God calls His people are all very plain in meaning and universal in scope. They are intended to emphasize great NT truths. All who have truly repented of their sins, exercised faith in Christ, and been spiritually born-again belong to God Who redeemed them and made them His own people. This is a truth worth remembering, especially when we find so many religious sects all claiming to be the one true church.

1. BELIEVERS (Acts 5:14; I Tim. 4:12). A believer is one whose belief is rooted and grounded upon the authority and standard of God's word. A believer is a principled man who takes God and His will seriously. He lives out what he believes. He practices what he has learned from God's word. He is a man likened to a wise house builder (**Matt. 7:24-27**). Can you honestly say that you are a believer in Christ?

2. BRETHREN (I Cor. 1:26; I Thess. 5:12). God's people are spiritual brethren because they have the same Heavenly Father. Unlike all earthly relationships which end at death, this special spiritual relationship among brethren in Christ will continue in perfect bliss throughout eternity.

3. DISCIPLES (Acts 6:7; 13:52). The English word "disciple" is akin to "discipline." A disciple is a committed believer and servant of Christ. He has decided to turn his back on worldly lusts to closely follow his Master. A disciple of Christ is willing to take up His cross daily (**Luke 14:27; 9:23**). Cross-bearing does not just mean having a nagging wife, or bossy mom-in-law. A cross is not just having a

disability or an incurable disease. To take up one's cross is simply to be willing to endure any hardship for Christ's sake. It is the readiness to suffer any shame, reproach, rejection, persecution, and even martyrdom for His glory and honor!

4. **CHRISTIANS** (Acts 11:26c; I Pet. 4:16). Within the word "**Christian**" is "**Christ.**" This simply means that a Christian is someone who is Christ-like in his thought, words and deeds. A Christian is a "replica" of Christ. He is the nearest portrait of Christ that the world could see. He lives a new and resurrected life. That is why a Christian should be careful to live IN Christ, FOR Christ, LIKE Christ, and WITH Christ! He no longer lives a worldly, selfish, sinful lifestyle.

5. **SAINTS** (Col 1:2; II Cor. 13:13). A believer of the Lord Jesus Christ is granted a new unique position by God. Even though he is still yet in the flesh and awaits future glorification with Christ, God already sees a Christian as a living saint – not because of his own good works but by the good and finished work Christ did for him at Calvary. Friend, you cannot enter heaven without first becoming a saint on earth! You can be a saint by genuine repentance of your sins and putting your whole trust in the Lord Jesus Christ ALONE!

6. **CHURCH OF GOD** (I Cor. 10:32; Eph. 1:22-23; II Cor. 1:1). The Church is not the building where believers gather. It is the assembly of blood-washed and redeemed people of God whose main purpose on earth is to exalt the Saviour by evangelizing sinners and edifying fellow believers.

7. **SONS OF GOD** (Rom. 8:14,19; I John 3:1-2). This describes their adoption into the family of God not only as God's sons but as joint-heirs with Christ (Gal. 4:6-7). What a blessedness, what a privilege to be called a son of God!

Conclusion: The universal idea that only super holy men and women can become saints is plainly unscriptural! The word "**saint**" is used in the NT to describe all repentant sinners who have truly put their trust in Christ ALONE. Friend, today you can become a SAINT and a SON of God!