

Come to Understanding

**They also that erred in spirit shall come to understanding,
and they that murmured shall learn doctrine. — Isaiah 29:24**

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The Disciples Were Called Christians

Words are tools, whether spoken or written, that we use to communicate the meaning of our thoughts to others. Some widely used words have unclear meanings because various people interpret them in different ways. One such word is “Christian.” It is only mentioned three times in the Bible (Acts 11:26, Acts 26:28, and 1 Peter 4:16), but it has come to be used throughout the world with various meanings to different people. Its first use was not in Jerusalem or in Rome, as many might assume, but in Antioch, Syria:

26 And when he had found him, he brought him to Antioch. And it came to pass, that a whole year they assembled themselves with the congregation, and taught many people. And the disciples were called Christians first in Antioch. -Acts 11

The word, “Christians,” was first used to describe the disciples that were assembled together and taught by Saul and Barnabas (Saul was later called Paul). Whether they called themselves “Christians” or whether others gave them that title is not clear. However, we do know that they were students that were being taught the teachings of Paul and Barnabas.

To learn what the first “Christians” were being taught, we can review the writings of Paul. In Thessalonica, he taught and reasoned out of the Scriptures how the Messiah (Christ) was Yahshua (Jesus), who suffered and died and then rose again from the dead:

2 And Paul, as his manner was, went in to them, and three sabbath days reasoned with them out of the scriptures,
3 Opening and alleging, that the Messiah must need to have suffered, and risen again from the dead; and that this Yahshua, whom I preach unto you, is the Messiah. -Acts 17

That teaching explains what happened, but it doesn’t make clear why Yahshua came as the Messiah to die and then live again. Paul explains that the reason Yahshua came into the world was to “save sinners:”

15 This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptance, that the Messiah Yahshua came into the world to save sinners; of whom I am chief. -1 Timothy 1

Calling himself the chief sinner, Paul could conclude that Yahshua came into the world to save him!

Many may think that Paul was righteous because of the great teaching and writing ministry that God gave to him. However, Paul declares that he was not righteous because there is no one that is. None of us, he says, really understand God and, in our natural condition, none of us seek after Him:

10 As it is written, There is none righteous, no, not one:
11 There is none that understands, there is none that seeks after God. -Romans 3

That natural condition is one that he calls being “dead in trespasses and sins.” Being in such a state, we are not walking according to the knowledge of God, seeking to do His will. Instead, Paul says we are walking according to the “course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air.” As such, Satan is our prince, instilling in us the spirit of disobedience:

1 And you *has he quickened*, who were dead in trespasses and sins;
2 Wherein in time past you walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now works in the children of disobedience:
3 Among whom also we all had our conversation in times past in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind; and were by nature the children of wrath, even as others. -Ephesians 2

That is the condition in which we, along with everyone else in this world, find ourselves. As such, we are in a state of condemnation. We will remain so unless we are miraculously rescued (saved) from that condition. Yahshua says we will continue to be condemned unless we believe in the “name of the only begotten Son of God:”

17 For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved.
18 He that believes on him is not condemned: but he that believes not is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God. -John 3

Peter also testifies that no other name has the power to save us from this condemnation:

12 Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is no other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved. -Acts 4

**So they read in the book in the law of God distinctly, and gave the sense,
and caused them to understand the reading. — Nehemiah 8:8**

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Why is His name the only name whereby we must be saved? This is a common question to those among us who know people throughout the world that believe in many different gods. It is also very difficult to answer this question unless we understand the meaning of His name.

Yahweh defines Himself as the one that exists:

14 And God said to Moses, I AM THAT I AM: and he said, Thus shall you say to the children of Israel, I AM has sent me to you. –Exodus 3

To exist is to have a state of being. One that exists is called a being. We are beings. Yahweh, however, declares in the Bible that He is THE Being. He says that He is the first and that He is also the last to exist:

6 Thus says Yahweh the King of Israel, and his redeemer Yahweh of hosts; I *am* the first, and I *am* the last; and besides me *there is* no God. –Isaiah 44

Not only does Yahweh say that He is the only God, but He also declares that He is the only Savior:

10 You *are* my witnesses, says Yahweh, and my servant whom I have chosen: that you may know and believe me, and understand that I *am* he: before me there was no God formed, neither shall there be after me.

11 I, *even* I, *am* Yahweh; and besides me *there is* no savior. –Isaiah 43

There is a well-known prophecy of a Savior that will come in the name of Yahweh:

25 Save now, I beseech you, O Yahweh: O Yahweh, I beseech you, send now prosperity.

26 Blessed *is* he that comes in the name of Yahweh: we have blessed you out of the house of Yahweh. –Psalms 118

Those that welcomed Yahshua (Jesus) into Jerusalem during His triumphal entry believed that He was that promised Savior. They quoted the Psalms Scripture, declaring, “Save now!,” as they shouted “Hosanna.”

9 And they that went before, and they that followed, cried, saying, Hosanna; Blessed *is* he that comes in the name of the Lord *Yahweh*: –Mark 11

The name in Hebrew is יהוה (YHWH). Many believe it to be vocalized as “Yahweh,” while others think, if it is to be spoken at all, it should be as “Jehovah.” The ך (yod) in

ancient Hebrew has a “y” sound, which the Greeks and Romans changed to “i.” The English eventually replaced the “i” with a “j,” adopted from the French. (see John C. Nesfield, *Historical English and Derivation*, London: Macmillan & Co., Ltd., 1898, pp. 46-47.) While the ך (vav) has a “v” sound in modern Hebrew, in ancient Hebrew, which some still retain, the ך (waw) has the “w” sound:

The Yemenite Jews of Arabia who retain an ancient, correct and pure pronunciation of Hebrew still pronounce the ך as “w” (see Edward Horowitz, *How the Hebrew Language Grew*, New York: Jewish Educational Committee Press, 1960, p. 30).

The name of Yahweh in the Bible is sometimes used interchangeably with the name Yah:

1 Praise you Yah. Praise, O you servants of Yahweh, praise the name of Yahweh.

2 Blessed be the name of Yahweh from this time forth and forevermore. –Psalms 113

The name “Yahshua” means Yah is the Savior. This was the name given to Yahshua (Jesus) before His birth because He saves us from our sins:

21 And she shall bring forth a son, and you shall call his name YAHSHUA: for he shall save his people from their sins. –Matthew 1

The same name is also translated into English as both “Joshua” and as “Jesus.” Before the people of Judah adopted the Aramaic language while being captive in polytheistic Babylon, the Hebrew name of Joshua, the son of Nun, contained the name of God as “Yah.” However, during their stay among the Babylonians, Joshua’s name, meaning “Yah is the Savior,” became Jeshua, meaning “He is the savior.”

17 And all the congregation of them that had come again out of the captivity made booths, and sat under the booths: for since the days of Jeshua the son of Nun to that day had not the children of Israel done so. And there was very great gladness. –Nehemiah 8

Thus, in Aramaic this name is Yeshua. It became Iesus in Greek and Jesus in Latin, the Roman language, as well as in Middle English. Once the French “j” replaced the “i” in Iesus, the English name became Jesus. The English form of the Hebrew name, retaining the “y” instead of the “j,” is spoken as Yahshua. As Yah the Savior, He came to call sinners to repentance:

32 I came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance. –Luke 5

As the Prince and Savior, He came as the power of God (with His right hand), inviting us to repent of our sins and accept His forgiveness:

31 Him has God exalted with his right hand to be a Prince and a Savior, for to give repentance to Israel, and forgiveness of sins. –Acts 5

Such are “Christians” in the sense by which they were first called. They are the repentant sinners that accept by faith the forgiveness of their sins, for His name’s sake!

12 I write unto you, little children, because your sins are forgiven you for his name’s sake. –1 John 2

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