

# The Old Paths

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## “As His Name Is, So Is He”

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In Bible days, parents did not merely give their children names based upon whether or not it “sounded good” as is often the case in our culture. Rather, the names people were given in Bible times carried meaning. When a child was named a certain thing, it held a certain meaning for them and the family. For example, Cain was named “Cain” for a reason (Gen. 4:1)! Moving forward in history, we see that each of the patriarchs named in Genesis 5 had names which carried a certain meaning. Seth (v. 3) meant “appointed one”. Do we remember why? (Gen. 4:25) Enos (Gen. 4:26, 5:7) meant “mortal frailty.” Cainan (v. 9) meant “smith”. Mahalaleel (v. 12) meant “God be praised”. Jared (v. 15) meant “descent, or descending”. Enoch (v. 18) meant “dedication”. Methuselah (v. 21) meant “When he dies, judgment”. Lamech (v. 25) meant “conqueror”. Noah (v. 28-29) meant “rest or comfort”.

Even a cursory study of the names of Bible characters reveals much! God named Isaac “Isaac” for a reason; Isaac means “laughter” (Gen. 17:17-19). The name Jacob means “supplanter” (Gen. 25:26, 27:36); and his new name of “Israel”, given by the angel, means “prince of God” (Gen. 32:28). Bear in mind that Pharaoh’s daughter named the baby she found “Moses” for a reason, too (Ex. 2:10). Upon the Israel-

ites’ entrance into Canaan, a man by the name of Achan is mentioned. Achan’s name meant “troubler,” and we know what kind of trouble he made for Israel after they had destroyed Jericho (Josh. 7)! Many other examples can be mentioned, but I think the point is made.

### Nabal And Abigail

In thinking about Bible names and their meaning, please look again to our title. Our title was first spoken by Abigail in I Samuel 25:25. Abigail, whose name means, “joy” was married to a man named Nabal, whose name means, “folly or foolish”. After David’s servants had protected Nabal’s livestock for a time, Nabal was ungrateful and repaid their kindness with wicked and foolish words (I Sam. 25:10-12, 21). Upon hearing the report of what Nabal said, David was ready to kill him, and returned to do just that (I Sam. 25:13, 33)! Only Abigail, in her wisdom, diligence, and humility, could spare her foolish husband as well as their property, and did so (I Sam. 25:23-35). In pleading for David’s mercy upon her husband, she admits, “... *as his name is, so is he; Nabal is his name and folly is with him.*” (I Sam. 25:25). What a stunning statement by Abigail as she tried her best to protect her husband from David’s sword! She truly was a good woman, a woman of faithfulness, virtue, and commitment to the vows she made to her husband. Though Nabal was a foolish man, she was committed to him as a

wife, and she begged David to spare him. Something tells me that this is not the first foolish thing he had ever done; nor was it the last, as we see this man later getting “*very drunken*” (I Sam. 25:36). More foolishness from Nabal!! (Prov. 20:1, 21:17, 23:29-35) Still, we see Abigail, a true “joy”, who did not wish Nabal harm. She did not divorce him or leave him for another, in spite of his foolishness!! Her marriage to David came AFTER Nabal’s death, not before (I Sam. 25:39-42; Rom. 7:2). Yet, after reading I Samuel 25, we can agree with Abigail when she said, “... *as his name is, so is he; Nabal is his name and folly is with him.*”

### Your Reputation

When we consider Abigail’s statement, perhaps we can also see that even in a culture where we do not necessarily place a meaning on our specific names as they did, we do recognize the importance of having a “good name” among others! When someone is known for being righteous, just, fair, godly, etc., we make note of such a person, for they have that “good name” that ought to be desired by all. That statement, “*As his name is, so is he*” can be applied in a positive way to us if we have a “good name” among men (Prov. 22:1; Ecc. 7:1).

Friend, ask yourself what kind of name you have among brethren and in this community. Your “name” can do much to help, or to hinder, the Lord’s cause. Friend, what name (reputation) do you have among others? Remember, as your name is, so are you!

### The Name “Christian”

In this study, I can’t help but think about the greatest name any man can wear — the name “Christian”! This name was prophesied by Isaiah on three separate occasions (Isa. 56:5, 62:2, 65:15). Acts 11:26 then records the ful-

fillment of this prophecy when Luke wrote, "...the disciples were called Christians first in Antioch." God had promised "a new name" for His people in Isaiah 62:2; and in Antioch, God's people saw that prophecy fulfilled. Ever since that time, God's people, those who believe on Christ, repent of sin, and are baptized (Mk. 16:16; Acts 2:38; etc.), have been called Christians; not because it was some derisive name given by men, but because it was a prophetic name given by God!

The name Christian carries meaning, for this name gives glory and honor to Christ! Even worldly people recognize significant meaning in the name "Christian." When Christians have been known to sin and are caught in wrong activities, invariably, someone will say, "This person calls himself a Christian, and he committed \_\_\_\_\_." Why did this person voice his complaint that way? Because the name "Christian" carries great weight and meaning with it. One who is a Christian is one who should display great morality, virtue, and be caring for others. In other words, he acts like Christ! Therefore, when someone acts in ways that are opposed to what the name "Christian" stands for, even people in the world sit up and take notice.

At the same time, when someone lives as a Christian is supposed to, people will notice this, too! I think of times when certain Christians pass away and even the worldly people take notice of his/her passing because this person lived what the name "Christian" implies.

Being a Christian is something special. If you're not sure about how "special" it is to be a Christian, begin by observing the spelling of the name. Did you

notice that you cannot spell "Christian" without first spelling "Christ"? One who is a Christian is simply a disciple (follower, learner) of Christ (Acts 11:26b). Another aspect of being a Christian means that we live according to the authority of Christ (Col. 3:17). We must not do anything that we cannot find authorized within God's word (II Tim. 3:16-17; I Pet. 4:11). Why do this? Because this is what Christ did (Jn. 12:48; Heb. 10:7, 9; I Pet. 2:21)!

### Conclusion

When Abigail said, "As his name is, so is he" she made a powerful statement! Her words ring in my ears: "... as his name is, so is he; Nabal is his name and folly is with him" (I Sam. 25:25). Think about it: Hasn't God given each saved person a "new name" (Isa. 62:2)? Yes, He has!! Are you wearing it?

If one is claiming the name Christian, having believed on Christ, repented of sin, and been baptized (Acts 2:22-38, 8:35-39, 16:31-35, 22:16; etc.), the question must then be asked, "Are you living up to your name?" Remember that being a Christian places us within the family of God, being "heirs of God and joint-heirs with Jesus Christ" (Rom. 8:17). It is high time that folks look at those of us who are Christians, and say the words of Abigail in a positive way — "as his name is, so is he" — he is a Christian!

## An Eye-Opening Appeal ...

The following is an excerpt from an address by the cardinals in the Roman Church to Pope Pius III.

Note: Pius III lived in 1503.

*"Of all the advice that we can offer, Your Holiness, we must open your eyes well and use all possible force in the matter, namely, to permit the reading of the gospel as little as possible in all the countries under your jurisdiction. Let the very little part of the gospel suffice which is usually read in mass, and let no one be permitted to read more. So long as people will be content with the small amount, your interest will prosper; but as soon as the people want to read more, your interest will fail. The Bible is the book, which more than any other, has raised against us the tumults and tempests by which we have almost perished. In fact, if one compares the teachings of the Bible with what takes place in our churches, he will soon find discord, and will realize that our teachings are often different from the Bible, and of tenebrous still, contrary to it."*

Speaks volumes, doesn't it!?

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