

The Name of Christ

He who overcomes, I [Christ] . . . will write upon him the name of My God, and the name of the city of My God, the new Jerusalem, which comes down out of heaven from My God, and *My new name* (Revelation 3:12).

When we are in Christ, we operate in our *own* transformed new covenant identity and nature; but when we use the name of Christ, we are proclaiming *to others* the source of our new power and nature. In Christ, we are healed; through the name of Christ, we heal.

Through the name of Christ, we cast out demons, we call out to the Father in prayer, we do miracles which are observed by others. In each situation, we are bearing witness to others that we have power not out of our old nature but out of our new nature in Christ.

A person's name, before modern times, used to be a description more than just an identifying tag. A person's name used to be synonymous with his character, and a new name indicated a new character. Abraham, Jacob, Peter, and Paul had encounters with God, and their names were changed because their natures were permanently altered. When we enter into covenant with Jesus Christ, we receive His nature and therefore also His Name.

Attempts to use the name of Christ without receiving the new nature are doomed to failure. The seven sons of Sceva attempted to use the name of Jesus without allowing the nature and power of Christ to flow through them first. The result is described in Acts 19:13-16: "Some of the Jewish exorcists, who went from place to place, attempted to name over those who had the evil spirits the name of the Lord Jesus, saying, 'I adjure you by Jesus whom Paul preaches.' And seven sons of one Sceva, a Jewish chief priest, were doing this. And the evil spirit answered and said to them, 'I recognize Jesus, and I know about Paul, but who are you?' And the man, in whom was the evil spirit, leaped on them and subdued all of them and overpowered them, so that they fled out of that house naked and wounded."

On the other hand, Peter allowed the power of God to move through him. When he said to the lame man, "I do not possess silver and gold, but what I do have I give to you: in the name of Jesus Christ the Nazarene – walk (Acts 3:6)," he was declaring the source of the power that was operating within. He was no longer the simple fisherman they used to know. He now had a

new nature; Christ's power now operated through him.

When Peter saw that the people were impressed with what he had done, he responded, "Men of Israel, why do you marvel at this, or why do you gaze at us, as if by our own power or piety we had made him walk? . . . On the basis of faith in His name, it is the name of Jesus which has strengthened this man whom you see and know; and the faith which comes through Him has given him this perfect health in the presence of you all (Acts 3:12,16)." As soon as we attempt to take any of the glory for ourselves, we are no longer in Christ but in our old natures. When we return to our old nature, the power and glory God had shared with us while we were in Christ quickly disappears. We are either in Christ or in our old natures; to the degree we are in one we are not in the other. At the healing of the lame man, Peter proclaimed his identity with Christ rather than with an old nature which had three times denied even knowing Christ. For Peter to have then kept the glory to himself would have been to deny Christ again, for the fourth time, and would have required also that Peter retain all the shame for everything he had done before the cross.

It is then fitting that Peter would later be the one who would command us that "If any man speak, let him speak as the oracles of God; if any man minister, let him do it as of the ability which God giveth: that God in all things may be glorified through Jesus Christ, to whom be praise and dominion for ever and ever. Amen (1 Peter 4:11 KJV)."

Satan cares not at all if we accomplish great and even wonderful things in our power, or even initially with the power of God, but then take the credit for ourselves. In fact, Satan has plenty of room for such as these, in his army. Had Peter healed the man born lame and taken credit for it himself, not only would the Scribes and Pharisees probably not have minded, they would likely have welcomed Peter into their ranks. But when Peter gave the glory to Jesus Christ, they were indignant. When Peter continued to preach in the name of Christ, they cried in outrage, "We gave you strict orders not to continue teaching *in this name* (Acts 5:28)," whereupon they intended to kill him; though after they calmed down, they only had him beaten.

The enemy fears only those who live in Christ and operate in the name of Christ. These

have on their full spiritual armor (Ephesians 6) and devils tremble at their approach, for no longer do they see us coming (as we used to be), but the power of God.