BIBLE TALK

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Question: When was the name "Christian" first used?"

Answer: The first Christians came into being in the first congregation of the Lord's church on the day of Pentecost at the first preaching of the New Testament gospel by Peter. This was the *first day* it was possible for anyone to become a Christian! This was the day on which the Holy Spirit first delivered the gospel message to the apostles (Acts 2:1-47). The Holy Spirit brought *"the keys of the kingdom"* to Peter as Christ had promised (Matt. 16:18-20), and men heard for the first time how to be *"born again"* of water and Spirit (Jn. 3:3-5; Acts 2:41). Those responding in faith and obedience to the gospel plan of salvation (Mk. 16:15-16), were saved from their past sins (Eph. 1:3-14) and were added to the New Testament church (Acts 2:41, 47). This constituted the first congregation of the Lord's church on earth. It began in Jerusalem just as it was prophesied and promised to begin (Isa. 2:1-3; Dan. 2:44; Acts 1:8).

Although the word "Christian" does not appear in Acts 2, the name soon afterwards was used. It means "one who follows Christ; having Christ-likeness; showing a relationship or belonging to Christ." God promised that He would give a new name to His people (Isa. 62:1-2) which began to be used in Acts 11:26 at Antioch. Their new name bore a new relationship under the new covenant (Col. 2:14; Rom. 10:4). It showed that one belonged to Christ and followed Him. The nearest earthly similarity would be that of a new wife bearing the name of her new husband. It recognizes a contractual relationship and should be an honorable thing for her to wear his name to show that she is his.