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DAVID BRIGHT MORNIN

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# The Name of God

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**Doug Batchelor**

*An Amazing Fact: A man stopped at a bar in the Los Angeles airport to relax a few minutes before catching his plane. But realizing he had lost track of time, he raced out of the bar and hastily asked directions for the departing gate to Oakland. After hurrying through a maze of terminals, he handed the flight attendant his ticket and scurried onto the plane just as it was about to depart. After storing his briefcase, the weary traveler slumped into his seat and drifted off to sleep. When he awoke two hours later and examined his watch, the man wondered why the one-hour flight was taking so long. To his horror, he discovered that instead of boarding the plane for Oakland, Calif., he was on his way to Auckland, New Zealand! Because someone had confused*

*Auckland with Oakland, that man had to endure a 22-hour round-trip flight.*

Humorous things have happened because someone mispronounced a name. I have a friend who was once trying to fly from Australia to Dulles airport in Washington, D.C. However, when booking the flight, he got confused and ended up in Dallas, Texas. I'm sure the look on the Dallas cabdriver's face was priceless when my friend gave him an address found only in Frederick, Maryland.

Most of us try to avoid this type of confusion, but others actually promote it! Perhaps you've heard of the "Lear Jet"? Well, the Lear family named their daughter Chandra Lear—think chandelier. I also had a friend named Jerry Mello who named his son Marshall. Can you imagine growing up with the name Marshall Mello? I have jokingly told my sons that they need to marry a girl named Mary Ann, because then her name would be Mary A. Batchelor.

### **A Holy Name**

While people's names can be very funny or even fascinating, the holy name of God should

never be addressed irreverently. “Hallowed be thy name,” Jesus proclaims in Matthew 6:9.

The Bible also teaches that the name of Jesus is to be respected far above every earthly name. “Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name: That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; And that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father” (Philippians 2:9–11).

Israel had great reverence for God’s name, perhaps because the Mosaic Law taught that those who disrespected God’s name must pay the ultimate price (Leviticus 24:16). The name of God was so sacred to the ancient Jewish scribes that they used a special pen to write the name of God as they reproduced the Scriptures. Each time they came to the name of God, they would set down the regular pen and pick up a holy pen that was used only for writing God’s name. After saying a prayer, they would write God’s name with the designated pen and then resume their work with the “regular” pen.

On the contrary, most of the secular world—and even many within the church—have no

concept of how offensive it is to heaven when we employ the name of God carelessly. One author put it this way: “Angels are displeased and disgusted with the irreverent manner in which the name of God, the great Jehovah, is sometimes used in prayer. They [angels] mention that name with the greatest awe, even veiling their faces when they speak the name of God; the name of Christ also is sacred, and is spoken with the greatest reverence. And those who in their prayers use the name of God in a common and flippant manner have no sense of the exalted character of God, of Christ, or of heavenly things.”<sup>1</sup>

### **Pray in What Name?**

Yet while God’s name is the holiest of names, He is also our friend.

Following a bloody Civil War battle, Jack kneeled by a mortally wounded soldier on the field. He could see that Bill, his best friend, was dying. Bill also knew he was dying, so with trembling fingers he reached into his blood-stained pocket and handed a letter to his comrade. “Jack,” Bill said in a raspy tone, “I didn’t have time to mail this letter. I know you don’t have

much family or money. If you live through this war, take this letter to my folks in Connecticut. I told them all about you and what close friends we are. They'll take good care of you, and anything that was mine is yours." Moments later, Bill breathed his last.

Jack did survive the war, but times were tough. For months, he and other war veterans would ride the trains looking for some farm work hoeing weeds in exchange for a hot meal. They came to be known as "hoe boys," later called "hobos."

In the course of his wanderings, Jack eventually found himself in Connecticut. He made his way to the address on the letter Bill had given him so many years before and found there a large New England home. Jack timidly walked up the steps and hesitated. He looked down at his torn, ragged clothes and dirty hands. He mustered the courage and knocked on the great oak door. When the door opened, there stood a dignified grey-haired gentleman and his wife. But before Jack could speak, the man said in sympathetic tones. "I'm sorry, young man. These are hard times, and we just can't feed and clothe every hoe boy who knocks."

Dejected, Jack turned away, but then he remembered the letter. “I have a letter from Bill.”

“You knew our son?” The woman asked.

“My name is Jack; we were best friends.” With that, Jack handed the blood-stained envelope to the surprised couple. With tears welling up in their eyes, the couple read the last letter from their beloved son. When they recovered their composure, they pulled Jack into the house, saying, “Anything that was his is now yours.”

What made the difference? The name of their beloved son opened the door. Jesus promises that when we come to the Father in His name, we will have the same reception. “Most assuredly, ... whatever you ask the Father in My name He will give you. ... Ask, and you will receive, that your joy may be full” (John 16:23, 24 NKJV).

However, always remember that “to pray in the name of Jesus is something more than a mere mention of that name at the beginning and the ending of a prayer. It is to pray in the mind and spirit of Jesus, while we believe His promises, rely upon His grace, and work His works.”<sup>2</sup>

## **Controversial Subject Matter**

The subject of God's name remains one of the most confusing and disputed issues in Christianity. This is partly because God has many names in Scripture. But each name that God reveals serves as an important key in disclosing His power, holiness, and desired relationship with His people. His names provide a composite picture revealing different facets of His awesome character.

A few examples of the names of God, as they appear in Hebrew, include:

- El-Shaddai (Genesis 17:1, 2), which means “the Almighty God”
- Jehovah-jireh (Genesis 22:14), which means “Jehovah will provide”
- Jehovah-Tsidkenu (Jeremiah 23:6), which means “the Lord Our Righteousness”
- Jehovah-Shalom (Judges 6:24), which means “the Lord our peace”
- Jehovah-Roi (Genesis 16:13), which means “the God who sees”
- El-Elyon (Numbers 24:16), which means “the Most High God” or “the Exalted One”

- El-Olam (Psalm 90:2; Isaiah 40:28), which means “God of eternity” or “God, the Everlasting One”
- El-Berith (2 Chronicles 34:32), which means “God of the covenant”
- El-Roi (Genesis 16:13), which means “God who sees me” or “God of vision”
- Elohim, a plural form for deity, is used in Genesis 1:26, where the Bible says, “God said, Let us make man in our image.” This name is frequently used to support the truth of the trinity.

If we would dare summarize who God is based only on this short list of names, these titles alone would provide a wonderful revelation of the greatest being—the almighty, peaceful, high, exalted, eternal, and righteous God. He knows and sees all His creatures and faithfully protects and provides for their needs.

### **And He Shall Be Called ...**

Moreover, in the New Testament, we can behold with greater focus the character of God as revealed through Jesus. This was one of His

prime objectives in coming to our world—to reveal through His life who the Father is. This is why Jesus said to Philip, “He who has seen Me has seen the Father” (John 14:9 NKJV).

Jesus also has many names in the Scriptures that enhance our understanding of His person and mission. I’ve listed just a few of these below:

1. Advocate	1 John 2:1
2. Lamb of God	John 1:29
3. The Resurrection & the Life	John 11:25
4. Shepherd & Bishop of Souls	1 Peter 2:25
5. Judge	Acts 10:42
6. Lord of lords	1 Timothy 6:15
7. Man of Sorrows	Isaiah 53:3
8. Head of the Church	Ephesians 5:23
9. Master	Matthew 8:19
10. Faithful & True Witness	Revelation 3:14
11. Rock	1 Corinthians 10:4
12. High Priest	Hebrews 6:20
13. The Door	John 10:9
14. Living Water	John 4:10

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15. Bread of Life	John 6:35
16. Rose of Sharon	Song of Solomon 2:1
17. Alpha & Omega	Revelation 22:13
18. True Vine	John 15:1
19. Messiah	Daniel 9:25
20. Teacher	John 3:2
21. Holy One	Mark 1:24
22. Mediator	1 Timothy 2:5
23. The Beloved	Ephesians 1:6
24. The Branch	Isaiah 11:1
25. Carpenter	Mark 6:13
26. Good Shepherd	John 10:11
27. Light of the World	John 8:12
28. Image of the Invisible God	Colossians 1:15
29. The Word	John 1:1
30. Chief Cornerstone	Ephesians 2:20
31. Savior	John 4:42
32. Servant	Matthew 12:18
33. Author & Finisher of Our Faith	Hebrews 12:2
34. The Almighty	Revelation 1:8
35. Everlasting Father	Isaiah 9:6

36. Shiloh	Genesis 49:10
37. Lion of the Tribe of Judah	Revelation 5:5
38. I Am	John 8:58
39. King of kings	1 Timothy 6:15
40. Prince of Peace	Isaiah 9:6
41. Bridegroom	Matthew 9:15
42. Only Begotten Son	John 3:16
43. Wonderful, Counselor	Isaiah 9:6
44. Immanuel	Matthew 1:23
45. Son of Man	Matthew 20:28
46. Son of God	Mark 1:1
47. Dayspring	Luke 1:78
48. The Amen	Revelation 3:14
49. The First & Last	Revelation 1:17
50. King of Jews	Mark 15:26
51. Prophet	Matthew 21:11
52. Redeemer	Job 19:25
53. Anchor	Hebrews 6:19
54. The Root of David	Revelation 5:5
55. Bright & Morning Star	Revelation 22:16
56. The Way, the Truth, & the Life	John 14:6

In addition, Isaiah 9:6 says of the Messiah, “His name shall be called Wonderful, Counselor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace.”

### **What Is the “Correct” Name of God?**

On the Amazing Facts *Bible Answers Live* weekly radio program, we have received a number of calls regarding the correct pronunciation of God’s name. It seems that increasingly, people are burdened about this topic. The implication is that the proper pronunciation of God’s name is required to have prayers answered—or even is necessary for salvation.

Yet the word often translated as “LORD” in Scripture is a biblical enigma. Nobody seems exactly sure how to pronounce the combination of four Hebrew consonants, YHWH, which is known as the Tetragrammaton (a Greek word, meaning “four letters,” used to designate the consonants of the divine name Yahweh). Although the meaning of YHWH has been long discussed, it has two general meanings: “the eternally self-existent one” and “the ever near, redemptive one.” YHWH is found more than 6,000 times in the Old Testament.

Reverence for the divine name led to the practice of avoiding its use lest one should break the third commandment (Exodus 20:7). In time, it was thought that the divine name was too holy for a person to even pronounce at all. Thus the practice arose in the public reading of the Old Testament to substitute the word “Adonai,” which means “Lord.” Thus, in many English Bible translations, YHWH is substituted with the word “LORD” in capital letters.

Through the centuries, the correct pronunciation of YHWH was lost. Jewish scholars in the Middle Ages developed a system of symbols placed beneath and beside the consonants to indicate the missing vowels. Thus YHWH appeared with the vowels from “Adonai,” reminding them to say “Adonai” when reading the text aloud. A Latinized form was pronounced “Jehovah,” but it was actually not a real word. Most scholars today believe that YHWH was probably pronounced Yahweh.<sup>3</sup>

### **Native Tongue**

A major problem for anyone trying to pronounce God’s name is that few people speak Hebrew anymore. Furthermore, we’re not sure

what the spoken language of heaven will be. It might be the same language that Adam and Eve spoke in the garden. It might be something different. Therefore, it is certainly not a sin to say the divine name in your native tongue.

Can we really imagine a God that says, “Let Me see if you can say My name correctly,” or, “No! I’m not going to answer that prayer because you didn’t pronounce My name right”? What about, “Your thick accent makes it hard for me to understand if you are calling my name”?

Of course not! Earthly parents don’t become angry when their toddler says “Dada” instead of “Father.” A good father is excited that his child is starting to recognize him as an important person in the young one’s life. Likewise, our heavenly Father is primarily concerned with whether or not we know Him and have a strong relationship with Him—and not with whether we have the Edenic pronunciation of His name down pat.

And remember, God is the one who created the kaleidoscope of different languages at the tower of Babel (Genesis 11). He will not punish us for speaking His name in whatever language we find most comfortable.

## **Baptize in What Name?**

There is also discussion regarding the precise declaration to utter during one's baptism. Do we baptize in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, as stated by Jesus in Matthew 28:19, or in the "name of Jesus Christ," as Peter notes in Acts 2:38?

Let's be careful to place the emphasis where God places it. Of the 70 references to baptism in the New Testament, only five make a reference to a specific name or title of God to proclaim. One time it says, "Baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost" (Matthew 28:19). Another time the Bible says, "Be baptized ... in the name of Jesus Christ" (Acts 2:38). It also says, "Be baptized in the name of the Lord" (Acts 10:48). And twice the Bible says, "Baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus" (Acts 8:16; 19:5).

The phrase "Lord Jesus" was a favorite title used mostly by Luke (21 times) and does not appear at all in the other Gospels. So to stay on the safe side and remove any possibility of leaving out a member of the Godhead, it is probably best to follow the clear statement given by Jesus Himself in the great gospel commission,

baptizing believers “in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.”

However, during a wedding ceremony, the couple can decide how formal to be in the wording of the official vows. The pastor could say, “Do you, William Spencer Peabody III, take Rebecca Marie Ann Hunter?” Or he might simply say, “Do you, Bill, take Becky?” As long as the parties involved and the witnesses understand who is being married, the wedding is legally binding. So it is with baptism.

### **Name Dropping**

Some people in Hollywood have built their careers around the practice of “name dropping.” They refer often to famous producers or actors, using their names freely as though they know them intimately in the hope that they will gain prestige by association. But in reality, they might have only met as a passing acquaintance or not even know the person at all.

Believe it or not, some professed Christians have used the name of God in the same manner. Acts 19:13–17 tells the story of the seven sons of Sceva, who decided to invoke the name of Christ to cast out demons. Apparently, these itinerate

Jewish exorcists saw Paul successfully evict devils using the name of Jesus. They evidently thought, “Hey, Paul’s really good at this! Maybe we should adjust our means of casting out devils by using the name he uses!” At their next opportunity, they threatened a demon that had possessed a man, “We adjure you by Jesus whom Paul preacheth.”

The Bible says that “the evil spirit answered and said, ‘Jesus I know, and Paul I know; but who are ye?’ And the man in whom the evil spirit was leaped on them, and overcame them, and prevailed against them, so that they fled out of that house naked and wounded.”

Those young Jewish exorcists tried “name dropping” with the devil. They knew the name of Jesus, and they even knew how to pronounce it. They just didn’t know Him as their Lord! And unfortunately for them, even devils can recognize this kind of shallowness.

Do you know God? His name, in whatever form—whether Elohim or El Shaddei, is not some enchanted word that must be pronounced correctly, as if casting a spell. His name is a revelation of His character. Paul understood God’s character and could cast out demons by the name of Jesus. The demons obeyed because

of Paul's faith and the authority and the power of Christ's name. "[Paul] turned and said to the spirit, 'I command you in the name of Jesus Christ to come out of her.' And he came out that very hour" (Acts 16:18 NKJV).

God might have even intentionally allowed the exact pronunciation of His name to be lost, because He doesn't want people to use it like some use the magic word "abracadabra." The Lord did not allow the children of Israel to see His form when He spoke the Ten Commandments lest they should seek to make an idol (Deuteronomy 4:15, 16). He also concealed the burial place of Moses to prevent people from making it a shrine (Deuteronomy 34:6). It is also possible that God does not want us to worship Him because He has a glorious form or a mystical name, but rather because of who He is: our Creator.

When Peter healed the beggar at the beautiful gate, he said, "Silver and gold have I none; but such as I have give I thee: In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth rise up and walk" (Acts 3:6). The miracle happened by virtue of the power, authority, and person of Jesus, not by the correct utterance of His name.

## **Taking the Lord's Name in Vain**

Using God's name without a real knowledge of Him is part of the sin pointed out in the third commandment. "Thou shalt not take the name of the LORD thy God in vain; for the LORD will not hold him guiltless that taketh his name in vain" (Exodus 20:7). We often think of this commandment as primarily condemning profanity, and it surely does, but that is the least of its meanings. To take the name of the Lord in vain means to take His name unto yourself and say that you are a child of God—but then live like the world.

A newspaper ad once read: "Lost—one dog. Brown, scruffy hair with several bald spots. Right front leg broken from auto accident. Right eye missing. Left ear bitten off in a dog fight. Answers to the name 'Lucky.'" Obviously, that unfortunate little dog was "Lucky" in name only. Some Christians are like that!

When we become Christians, we take the name of Jesus. Sadly, some people merely become "nominal" Christians, meaning "in name only." These people are essentially taking the name of the Lord in vain.

Speaking of the great judgment to come, Jesus said, "Not everyone who says to Me, 'Lord,

Lord,' shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father in heaven. Many will say to Me in that day, 'Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in Your name, cast out demons in Your name, and done many wonders in Your name?' And then I will declare to them, 'I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness!' ” (Matthew 7:21–23 NKJV).

Jesus makes it very clear that echoing His name can never be a substitute for true submission and obedience.

### **A Good Name**

“A good name is to be chosen rather than great riches, Loving favor rather than silver and gold” (Proverbs 22:1 NKJV). I was raised in an environment in which tremendous emphasis was placed on conducting yourself with integrity and honor, that you might build a good name.

Likewise, protecting your witness and maintaining sterling integrity is especially important for a Christian. Any bad behavior or questionable conduct will not only be damaging to our personal reputations and that of our family's, it will also ultimately bring reproach on the name of Christ.

History tells us that Alexander the Great had a soldier in his army who developed a bad reputation. When the fighting became severe, the young man would start to retreat while everyone around him fought on. The general summoned this soldier, whose first name was also Alexander, and said, “I hear how you’re behaving in battle. Young man, you either need to change your behavior or change your good name! I don’t want the name Alexander to be associated with cowardice.”

When you say you’re a Christian, you have a responsibility to uplift the name of God in word and deed. Jesus began the Lord’s Prayer by saying, “Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed [holy] be thy name” (Matthew 6:9). If we take the name of the Lord in vain, we are making our Father’s good name look bad.

### **Name Brand**

Successful athletes often make a fortune selling their popular names to endorse various products. When bikers see the triumphant name of Lance Armstrong branded on some bicycle product, it instantly adds credibility and value.

What name could possibly add more value to victorious living than the name of Jesus? He is the only champion Satan could never induce to sin.

In vision, John sees that the 144,000 are “branded” with God’s name in their foreheads. “I looked, and, lo, a Lamb stood on the mount Sion, and with him an hundred forty and four thousand, having his Father’s name written in their foreheads” (Revelation 14:1).

At the end of time, everybody will be associated with a certain name. One group receives the mark of the beast’s name on their “forehead” (Revelation 14:9, 11). The other group is going to have their heavenly Father’s name written in their foreheads. Names do mean something, and they have eternal implications!

Contemplate what having God’s signature, His sacred name, on our foreheads means! First, John describes those people as those who “follow the Lamb [Jesus] whithersoever he goeth. ... In their mouth was found no guile: for they are without fault before the throne of God” (Revelation 14:4, 5).

We are even told when this signature is written, especially on those living in the last days.

In Revelation 7:1–4, we are given inside information regarding the closing drama in the end time just before the seven last plagues are unleashed.

### **The Seal of God**

John graphically describes this unparalleled time in earth's history. He opens by describing his vision of four angels holding back the four winds of the earth, that no wind might blow on land or sea. And then John hears why: Another angel appears with the seal of God, calling to the four angels holding the winds, "Do not harm the earth, the sea, or the trees, till we have sealed the servants of our God on their foreheads." That seal is the name of Jesus and the Father "written on their foreheads" (14:1).

We all know the significance of a seal. Many products can't be sold without a seal of approval—the seal that tells us that a product has passed all the necessary tests. We see one seal on the bottom of our electrical appliances: the Underwriter's Laboratory Seal of Approval. And every gasoline pump has a seal, as well as every elevator. Yes, seals are very important: No seal, no service!

Remember those TV ads for Hanes clothing, when that determined female inspector on the assembly line, with all of her flinty cheer, looked over each item and said, “The quality goes in before the name goes on”? Here on earth, God is telling the universe when He writes His name in the foreheads of His faithful: “Listen to them.” He says, “You can trust them and what they say. I am proud to give them my seal of approval. *The quality goes in before the name goes on!*”

I emphasize this because knowing the name of God is more than a question in some classroom. His name has everything to do with where we spend eternity. Later in Revelation 22:4, John nails down the future for the sealed people: “They shall see His face, and His name shall be in their foreheads.”

### **Ultimate Meaning**

Let’s look again at what God’s name means, for today and for eternity. Jesus holds back the seven last plagues, decade after decade, for this name. It is why He is still waiting to return as promised. It is the name upon which the last-day battle will be fought between Jesus and Satan. Satan knows it. But do you?

When the sealing of God's people, with His name, is complete, the angels will release their hold on Satan's fury as he tries to take the world over by storm. The end will come when God's name is written on every one who chooses to be loyal to Him.

This seal makes Satan angry, like a roaring lion. But what is it about the name of God that uncorks his wrath? "Just as soon as the people of God are sealed in their foreheads—it is not any seal or mark that can be seen, but a settling into the truth, both intellectually and spiritually, so they cannot be moved—just as soon as God's people are sealed and prepared, ... it will come."<sup>4</sup>

When people are "[settled] into the truth," both intellectually and spiritually," faith has reached its goal. Genuine faith joins the head with the heart, not just information alone and not just emotional feeling. These last-day Christians have discovered the validating assurance of the Holy Spirit in their lives, and they live in accordance with His guidance. Their intellectual grasp of the truth has reached its transforming purpose; these are men and women who have developed characters that will vindicate God's

wisdom and patience, contradicting Satan's lies that God's will is impossible for humanity.

### **His Name in Our Hearts**

Does this mean that people in earth's final generation will have a word tattooed between their eyes? No. In the Bible, the forehead represents the mind. In Deuteronomy 6:6–8, God tells the Israelites, "These words, which I command thee this day, shall be in thine heart: ... And thou shalt bind them for a sign upon thine hand, and they shall be as frontlets between thine eyes." The "frontlets between [the] eyes" were to symbolize that God's commands were "in thine heart," or in the mind.

The book of Hebrews quotes a prophecy from the book of Isaiah: "This is the covenant that I will make with them after those days, saith the Lord, I will put my laws into their hearts, and in their minds will I write them" (Hebrews 10:16). The results of this promise will be the "settling into the truth, both intellectually and spiritually, so they cannot be moved." To have God's name means having His law—not just the written words of the Ten Commandments, but its spirit—written in our hearts.

## **A Name We Can Trust**

I get a number of checks in the mail throughout the year. One said in big letters that I had won \$2 million. But the fine print read, “If you are selected, you may get a check that says just that!” I never get excited when I see these kind of checks.

But whenever I see a check in the mail from the U.S. Treasury, I get excited because I know the check is associated with a name that has yet to send me a bad check.

Likewise, God wants us to learn to recognize the true value of His name. Sure, this world offers us riches, pleasures, and even a name for ourselves. In the end, though, all it leads to is worthless self-satisfaction, shame, and death.

By contrast, the promises of God can be trusted. His name comes with a good reputation. Jesus told us that “whatsoever ye shall ask in my name, that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son. If ye shall ask any thing in my name, I will do it” (John 14:13, 14).

## **The Eternal Name**

Jesus says, “I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the ending” (Revelation 1:8). Only

a few things are declared to be eternal. These include His existence (Psalm 90:2), His Word (Mark 13:31), His gift of life for the redeemed (Romans 6:23), and His name (Exodus 3:15).

When Ptolemy decided to build the Pharos Lighthouse in the second century, he chose Sostratus to design the mammoth structure, which later became one of the seven wonders of the ancient world. Ptolemy insisted that the building should bear his inscription as a personal memorial; however, Sostratus didn't think the king should get all the credit for his work.

So Sostratus put the title of Ptolemy on the front of the lighthouse in a thick plaster, which would be eye-catching at first, but later would be worn away by the elements. Secretly, he had cut his own name in the granite underneath. For decades, the sea dashed against the inscription and gradually eroded the plaster facade. Though it lasted the lifetime of Ptolemy, it was finally obliterated, leaving the name "Sostratus" for all to witness.

In like manner, worldly fame often disappears before the relentless waves of time, but "His name shall endure forever: his name shall be continued as long as the sun" (Psalm 72:17).

And where does His name endure forever? In the redeemed, who have shown the whole universe what God envisioned when He devised His salvation plan.

### **Your New Name**

In the Bible, most every name had an important meaning. Some names described a person's character, as in the story of Nabal, a name that means "fool." (See 1 Samuel 25:25.) Some names were memorials of events that happened at the time of the child's birth; one example is Ichabod (1 Samuel 4:21). Others were prophetic, pointing to a future event in the person's life—as it was with Jesus (Matthew 1:21).

Sometimes God would change someone's name because of a change in the person's heart. For example, Jacob's name means "supplanter" or "con artist." Sure enough, he tricked his twin brother Esau out of his birthright and his blessing. But after Jacob wrestled with an angel and confessed his sin, God changed his name to Israel, meaning "Prince with God" (Genesis 32:29).

Saul's name was changed to Paul. Jesus changed Simon's name to Peter. God wants to

do the same for us. He wants to take the bad name we've made for ourselves and give us a good new name provided by His Son. Jesus tells us that everyone who is saved will have a new name. "To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the hidden manna, and will give him a white stone, and in the stone a new name written, which no man knoweth saving he that receiveth it" (Revelation 2:17).

The apostle John says, "God is love" (1 John 4:8). This is one of God's names! It is also the best definition of who God is. This is the name God wants to give us, as He did for Jacob. We, like Jacob, sometimes get a bad reputation because of our behavior. God says that we can get a new eternal name and a new reputation based on our repentance and God's mercy.

### **No Other Name**

A blind man once stood on a corner at a busy city intersection reading aloud from a Braille Bible to those who passed by. The portion of Scripture he read came from Acts 4:12: "Nor is there salvation in any other, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved" (NKJV).

A gentleman on his way home stopped to listen at the edge of the crowd that had gathered. At that very moment, the sightless man lost his place on the Braille pages. While trying to find it, he kept repeating the last three words he had just read: “No other name ... no other name ... no other name ...” Many smiled, but the inquisitive bystander went away deeply impressed. He had wandered from Christ in his youth and had been searching for inner peace through various world religions. But these few words, “no other name,” spoken in season made a profound impact on his heart. He had heard the verse before, but that one phrase haunted him. Before the next morning, he surrendered to the Holy Spirit and accepted the Savior.

The name “Jesus” is the Greek form of Joshua meaning “God is Savior.” This is why the angel said, “She will bring forth a Son, and you shall call His name Jesus, for He will save His people from their sins” (Matthew 1:21 NKJV).

Do you know Him by this name: Savior? You can now. Come to the Father just as you are in the name that is above every name. He will receive you and give you a new heart, a new reputation, and some day a new name.

## End Notes

1. Ellen G. White, "The Value of Prayer," *The Signs of the Times*, Nov. 18, 1886.
2. Ellen G. White, *Steps to Christ*, pp. 100, 101
3. Mark Fountain, entry entitled "YHWH," *Holman Bible Dictionary*, edited by Trent C. Butler (Nashville, Tenn.: Holman Bible Publishers), 1991, pp. 1429, 1430.
4. Ellen G. White, *Last Day Events*, pp. 219, 220.



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