

**In The
Name,
Power
or
Authority
of Jesus**



The *Reformation* sought, at least in some measure, to redirect the focus away from such legalistic ritualism, reintroducing the people to the joy of relationship with the Father by grace through faith, apart from such restrictive regulation. In 1647, for example, the Westminster Assembly completed and adopted the *Westminster Larger Catechism*, which was a rather lengthy list of 196 questions and responses helping to define the significant aspects of one's faith and practice. Question #180 "What is it to pray in the name of Christ?" In the response it is noted that our Lord's injunction is NOT complied with "by bare mentioning of His name, but by drawing our encouragement to pray, and our boldness, strength, and hope of acceptance in prayer, from Christ and His mediation."

Adapted from REFLECTIONS by Al Maxey Issue #405- July 27, 09

What comes to mind whenever we hear "in the name of?" Do we think something different if we hear "by the authority of?"

A casual observer would notice that this phrase is used at one's baptism. The one doing the baptizing states "in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit" or some similar phrase. Additionally most if not all prayers end with the phrase "in Jesus name, Amen." Must these words be uttered or recited for the baptism to be effective or the prayer to be heard? Are they just a ritual such as the sign of the cross used by the Catholics? In other words, is it the actual words or the action taken that is significant?

In the New Testament the Greek word *Onoma* translated 'name' occurs almost 300 times in the New Testament, most of the time it refers to some specific person such as Paul or Peter. Occasionally it is translated "in the name of." Why is that significant and what does it mean? If one were to think about it, they would realize we use that type expression even today. For example, when my younger sister was married our father was dead. So, when the minister asks, "who give this woman in marriage?" I replied "for her mother, I do." I had no power, authority or responsibility in the case but I represented someone who did. More recently I sold my mother's home. I did not own it or have any standing as far as the state was concerned to sell it, except that I represented her by her power to execute a power of attorney. Both actions were "in the name of."

In the Old Testament David and his men used these expressions.

1 Samuel 17:45-46

David said to the Philistine, "You come against me with sword and spear and javelin, but I come against you in the name of the LORD Almighty, the God of the armies of Israel, whom you have defied.

1 Samuel 25:9

When David's men arrived, they gave Nabal a message in David's name. Then they waited for his reply.

The following New Testament examples may assist in understanding the meaning "in the name of" and the significance of "in Jesus name." It could be *epí toó onómati* (on the basis of or by the authority of) as in Acts 2:38 or *eis to ónoma* (into the possession of) as in Matthew 28:18.

[See *ónoma* endnote] (adapted from The Distinctive Nature of the New Testament Church, Edward C. Wharton)

Ephesians 5:19-21

Speaking to one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody with your heart to the Lord; always giving thanks for all things in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ to God, even the Father; and be subject to one another in the fear of Christ. [Not as His representative but who He is and by His power and authority (rd).]

1 Corinthians 5:3-4

For I, on my part, though absent in body but present in spirit, have already judged him who has so committed this, as though I were present. In the name of our Lord Jesus, when you are assembled, and I with you in spirit, with the power of our Lord Jesus. [The Corinthian Christians and Paul are doing the will of the Father by the power and authority of Jesus (rd).]

1 John 5:13-15

I write these things to you who believe in the name of the Son of God so that you may know that you have eternal life. This is the confidence we have in approaching God: that if we ask anything according to his will, he hears us. And if we know that he hears us — whatever we ask — we know that we have what we asked of him. [a]. Here “in the name of the Son” appears to mean in His power to save by His atoning sacrifice – not the utterance of the name or phrase but the person. b). We are those IN CHRIST (rd)]

Acts 4:5-12

On the next day, their rulers and elders and scribes were gathered together in Jerusalem; and Annas the high priest *was there*, and Caiaphas and John and Alexander, and all who were of high-priestly descent. When they had placed them (Peter and John) in the center, they *began to* inquire, "**By what power, or in what name, have you done this?**" [Are “by what power” and “in what name” the same? Or, are they two different things? (rd)] Then Peter, filled with the Holy Spirit, said to them, " Rulers and elders of the people, if we are on trial today for a benefit done to a sick man, as to how this man has been made well, let it be known to all of you and to all the people of Israel, that by the name of Jesus Christ the Nazarene, [Of course, it is not some magical expression (as used by today’s “faith healers”) but the WHO represented by the name i.e. Christ.] whom you crucified, whom God raised from the dead — by this *name* [by the power of the person represented by the name (rd)] this man stands here before you in good health. "He [Christ] is the *STONE WHICH WAS REJECTED* by you, *THE BUILDERS*, but *WHICH BECAME THE CHIEF CORNER stone*. "And there is salvation in no one else; for there is no other name under heaven that has been given among men by which we must be saved. [This makes it very clear that it is the personage of Jesus, the Christ, in which salvation is found, not the spoken words (rd).]

Matt 28:18-20

Then Jesus came to them and said, "**All authority** in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age." [It is in baptism one calls on God’s power and authority, not in the words “the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit.” The one being buried into Christ’s death is making an appeal to God for a cleansing or removal of sin through the resurrected Christ (rd).]

1 Corinthians 6:11

Such were some of you; but you were washed [made clean], but you were sanctified, but you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and in the Spirit of our God.

Romans 5:1; 8; 9-10

Therefore, since we have been justified through faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have gained access by faith into this grace in which we now stand. ... While we were still sinners, Christ died for us ... Since we have now been justified by his blood, how much more shall we be saved from God's wrath through him! For if, when we were God's enemies, we were reconciled to him through the death of his Son, how much more, having been reconciled, shall we be saved through his life!"

James 2:24

... a person is justified by what he does and not by faith alone.

Colossians 3:12-17

So, as those who have been chosen of God, holy and beloved, put on a heart of compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience; bearing with one another, and forgiving each other, whoever has a complaint against anyone; just as the Lord forgave you, so also should you. Beyond all these things *put on* love, which is the perfect bond of unity. Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to which indeed you were called in one body; and be thankful. Let the word of Christ richly dwell within you, with all wisdom teaching and admonishing one another with psalms *and* hymns *and* spiritual songs, singing with thankfulness in your hearts to God. Whatever you do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks through Him to God the Father. [It is not the name Lord Jesus but the person represented by the name (Jesus, the Christ) and his power and authority (rd).]

John 16:20-24

"Truly, truly, I say to you, that you will weep and lament, but the world will rejoice; you will grieve, but your grief will be turned into joy. Whenever a woman is in labor she has pain, because her hour has come; but when she gives birth to the child, she no longer remembers the anguish because of the joy that a child has been born into the world. Therefore you too have grief now; but I will see you again, and your heart will rejoice, and no one will take your joy away from you. In that day you will not question Me about anything. Truly, truly, I say to you, if you ask the Father for anything in My name, He will give it to you. "Until now you have asked for nothing in My name; ask and you will receive, so that your joy may be made full."

Romans 10:13-15

For, "Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved." How, then, can they call on the one they have not believed in? And how can they believe in the one of whom they have not heard? And how can they hear without someone preaching to them? And how can they preach unless they are sent?

Note: What does calling on the name of the Lord mean? If it is the phrase 'in Jesus name' then Jesus' atoning sacrifice was in vain or totally useless. Surely there must be something more. Is the calling a request for His power or authority to do something? His perfect life and sacrifice of Himself accepted by God as the only sacrifice for forgiveness of sins is the power and only through Him and His sacrifice can one ask God to forgive ones sins. "I am not ashamed of the gospel, because it is the power of God for the salvation of everyone who believes." (Romans 1:16)

Philippians 2:6-11

He existed in the form of God, did not regard equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied Himself, taking the form of a bond-servant, *and* being made in the likeness of men. Being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross. For this reason also, God highly exalted Him, and bestowed on Him the name which is above every name, so that at the name of Jesus EVERY KNEE WILL BOW, of those who are in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and that every tongue will confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

Matthew 18:15-20

If your brother sins, go and show him his fault in private; if he listens to you, you have won your brother. "But if he does not listen *to you*, take one or two more with you, so that *BY THE MOUTH OF TWO OR THREE WITNESSES EVERY FACT MAY BE CONFIRMED*. "If he refuses to listen to them, tell it to the church [his Christian brethren (rd)]; and if he refuses to listen even to the church, let him be to you as a Gentile and a tax collector. "Truly I say to you, whatever you bind on earth shall have been bound in heaven; and whatever you loose on earth shall have been loosed in heaven. Again I say to you, that if two of you agree on earth about anything that they may ask, it shall be done for them by My Father who is in heaven. "For where two or three have gathered together in My name, I am there in their midst."

What actions should Christians take in the name, power or authority of Jesus and why.

Action	Why
a. Teaching/preaching	- His Gospel saves
b. Praying	- We are not worthy - Christ is
c. Disciplining	- Who without sin will cast a stone
d. Cleansing	- His atoning sacrifice does this
e. Rejoicing	- Our debt of sin has been removed

In some situations one may be guilty of replacing Christ power and authority with some ritualistic phrase. In years past and perhaps even now people are condemned for parroting “in Jesus name, amen” even though their prayer was offered to God recognizing it is only possible through Christ to reach God’s throne.

"What does it mean to pray in Jesus' name?"¹

Prayer in Jesus’ name is taught in John 14:13-14, “And I will do whatever you ask in my name, so that the Son may bring glory to the Father. You may ask me for anything in my name, and I will do it.” Some mistakenly apply this verse by believing that saying “in Jesus’ name” at the end of a prayer results in God always granting what is asked for. This is essentially treating the words “in Jesus’ name” as a magic formula. This is absolutely unbiblical!

Praying in Jesus’ name means praying with His authority and asking God the Father to act upon our prayers because we come in the name of His Son, Jesus. Praying in Jesus' name means one approaches God through His Son. "This is the confidence we have in approaching God: that if we ask anything according to his will, he hears us. And if we know that he hears us-whatever we ask-we know that we have what we asked of him" (1 John 5:14-15). Praying in Jesus’ name is praying for things that will honor and glorify Jesus.

Saying “in Jesus’ name” at the end of a prayer is not a magic formula. If what you asked for or said in prayer was not for God’s glory and according to His will, saying “in Jesus’ name” is meaningless. Genuinely praying in Jesus' name and for His glory is what is important, not attaching certain words to the end of a prayer. It is not the words in the prayer that matter, but the purpose [the heart and attitude of the one offering the prayer (rd)] behind the prayer. Praying for things that are in agreement with God’s will is the essence of praying in Jesus’ name. (GotQuestions.org)

“In Jesus’ name, Amen”²

Do you close your prayers with something like, “in Jesus’ name, Amen?” You may word it a little differently. But many of you will use some formula to indicate that your prayer is in the name of Jesus. Where do we get this? Is it biblical? What does it mean to pray in Jesus name?

Let us establish that it is scriptural to pray in the name of Jesus. Consider the following verses:

- John 14:13 – And whatsoever ye shall ask in my name, that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son.
- John 14:14 – If ye shall ask any thing in my name, I will do it.
- John 15:16 – Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you, and ordained you, that ye should go and bring forth fruit, and that your fruit should remain: that whatsoever ye shall ask of the Father in my name, he may give it you.
- John 16:23 – And in that day ye shall ask me nothing. Verily, verily, I say unto you, Whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in my name, he will give it you.

¹ GotQuestions.org

² www.learnthebible.org/praying_in_jesus_name.htm

- John 16:24 – Hitherto have ye asked nothing in my name: ask, and ye shall receive, that your joy may be full.
- John 16:26 – At that day ye shall ask in my name: and I say not unto you, that I will pray the Father for you.

You will notice that in all of them Jesus tells His disciples to pray to the Father in His (Jesus') name. But is this just a formula or is there something more to it? In order to get to the bottom of praying in the name of Jesus, we need to consider three things:

- (1) the biblical concept of name,
- (2) the importance of God's name, and
- (3) what it means to act in someone else's name. Then, we will be ready to look at praying in Jesus' name.

The Biblical Concept of Name

We must first realize that the concept of name in scripture involves much more than a tag that identifies that person and distinguishes him or her from other people. Although it does do that, it also has a much deeper meaning. Name in scripture represents the very essence of the person. A person's personality, character, reputation and authority are all wrapped up in his name.

- Proverbs 22:1 – A good name is rather to be chosen than great riches, and loving favour rather than silver and gold.
- Ecclesiastes 7:1 – A good name is better than precious ointment; and the day of death than the day of one's birth.

Notice the extraordinary value of a good name. Besides a man's soul, this is the most important possession a man has. We should cherish a good name because it refers to virtue and integrity. It must be nurtured and respected as a most precious possession.

The Importance of God's Name

God's name is a declaration of the greatness of His person. Consider:

- Psalm 8:1 – O LORD our Lord, how excellent is thy name in all the earth! who hast set thy glory above the heavens.
- Psalm 103:1 – Bless the LORD, O my soul: and all that is within me, bless his holy name.
- Psalm 113:1-3 – Praise ye the LORD. Praise, O ye servants of the LORD, praise the name of the LORD. Blessed be the name of the LORD from this time forth and for evermore. From the rising of the sun unto the going down of the same the LORD'S name is to be praised.
- Psalm 148:13 – Let them praise the name of the LORD: for his name alone is excellent; his glory is above the earth and heaven.

Because God's name is excellent, we are to exalt it in our prayer and in our praise. Jesus taught His disciples to pray, "Hallowed, Holy, be thy name" (Matthew.6:9). One day every knee shall bow at the feet of Jesus (Romans 14:11). Why? "God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name" (Philippians 2:9). His exalted name brings worship and praise.

We now understand the importance of a name in scripture. We also know that God's name is exalted above all other names. Now, what does it mean to do something in the name of someone else?

Acting in the Name of Another

Doing something in someone else's name has two implications.

1. You come by the authority of the other person. You are not coming in your own authority but because someone else authorized you to take these actions. When David fought Goliath, he came unto him "in the name of the LORD of hosts, the God of the armies of Israel, whom thou hast defied" (1 Samuel

17:45). He was not coming in his own power or authority but in that which belonged to God alone. This gave David the authority and ability to fight against the giant Goliath...and win.

2. When you come in someone's name, you come in his stead. The person to whom you come is expected to react to you, not on the basis of who you are, but as if the person who sent you was there himself. They are to treat you as they would treat the one who authorized you to come. When David sent servants to Nabal to ask for food, "they spake to Nabal according to all those words in the name of David" (1 Samuel.25:9). Therefore, when Nabal insulted David's servants (who came in David's name), he insulted David just as directly as if he had spoken to him to his face.

APPLICATION: Praying in the Name of Jesus

Now, let's apply this to praying in the name of Jesus. What is the significance of this?

1. It means that when we come to the Father, we come because Jesus sent us. It is not simply our own idea to speak to the God of heaven and earth. We are sent to Him by His own Son. No wonder we walk into the throne of grace in boldness (Hebrews 4:16). If one of the angels were to ask us on the way in, "What are you doing here?"... We can reply, "The Son sent me." What a glorious commission! We are sent by the Son to seek help from the Father!
2. The Father is obligated to treat us as He would His own Son because we come in His stead. We represent the Son when we come to the Father. You don't believe this? You say that this is just too much? Read these verses.
 - Ephesians 1:5-6 – Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will. To the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the beloved.
 - Romans 8:17 – And if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together.

We are adopted into the family of God as children. We are accepted in the beloved. Since Christ is the beloved Son, that means that the Father accepts us as He would His own Son. Finally, we are joint heirs with Jesus Christ. We share in the same inheritance. The Father looks upon the redeemed as if He were looking on His Son, Jesus Christ. What a blessing that Christ has told us to approach the Father in His name! What a glorious heritage!

You see the benefit of coming to the Father in the Son's name. However, is this just referring to adding a phrase to the end of our prayers? No. It is much more than that. It means that you come to the Father with the knowledge that your only right in approaching Him is that Jesus died on the cross for your sins and that He Himself has sent you to the Father. It means that you know that you are totally unworthy of receiving anything from God and that the only reason God should grant your requests is that you come in Jesus' name. It is not a magic formula, but a heart attitude.

Often, in my times of serious prayer about a particular need, I will spell this out. I acknowledge that I am unworthy to receive anything from God. I affirm that I come only in the name of God's Son Jesus Christ. I remind God of what He said in Romans 8:32 ["He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things?"]. I remind Him that He did not withhold His own Son from me and that He promised not to withhold any good thing from me. I declare that I only ask for these things in the name of His Son.

In all my prayers, I try to say, "in Jesus' name." However, I know that the phrase means nothing without the heart attitude. I am nothing. Therefore, who I am makes no difference. But, when I come in the name of Jesus--that is authority and that is power!

Word of warning

This is not a secret mystery or magical way to get your way with God. This is simply a reminder that the right we have to approach God is through the shed blood of Jesus Christ. The authority we have to ask requests from God is in the favor of the risen Christ. Many have had the attitude of humility and trust without the formula: “in Jesus’ name.” My concern is that many use the right formula without having the right attitude. May God bless you in your time with Him. www.learnthebible.org/praying_in_jesus_name.htm

Conclusion

All our actions directed to God, the Father, whether praying, studying and meditating, singing or giving our time, money and efforts must go through our mediator, Jesus - the Christ, for “No one comes to the Father except through me.” Recall the words of Jesus when He told the Samaritan woman at the well that time and place were not important but the heart and mind of the individual, not some ritualistic act at a particular mountain but an expression of deep love and admiration.

onoma, onomatos, NT:3686 ([Thayer's Greek Lexicon](#))

name by which a person or a thing is called, and distinguished from others

1. universally: used of proper names, Mark 3:16
2. used for everything which the name covers, everything the thought or feeling of which is roused in the mind by mentioning, hearing, remembering, the name, Matthew 10:41
 - a. by the command and authority of Christ:
 - b. in the use of the name of Christ Mark 9:38
 - c. through the power of Christ's name, Mark 16:17
 - d. acknowledging, embracing, professing, the name of Christ: Acts 4:12
 - e. relying or resting on the name of Christ, rooted (so to speak) in his name; i. e., mindful of Christ: Colossians 3:17
 - f. for the name of Christ 1 Peter 4:14
3. persons reckoned up by name: Acts 1:15
4. the cause or reason named: 1 Peter 4:16