



Blackfoot

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The Name of the Lord

By Kyle Pope

When the Lord brought the children of Israel out of the land of Egypt, among the laws He gave to the Israelites was the command recorded in Exodus 20:7, "You shall not take the name of the Lord your God in vain, for the Lord will not hold him guiltless who takes His name in vain" (NKJV). Jesus showed that this instruction is also a part of His new covenant in Matthew 6:9 when He began His model prayer with the words "Our father in heaven, hallowed be your name." Why is it so important how the name of the Lord is used?

It is difficult, if not impossible, even among human beings to separate our relationship to someone from our use of his or her name. Is there anyone we can call to mind without first calling to mind his or her name? If I think of my wife, I think of the name Toni. When I speak to my children, I call the names Torhi, Caleb, or Nathan. As a result, how we use people's names reflects how we feel about them and the nature of our relationship with them.

The same is true with respect to God's name. His being is inseparably tied to His name. Because of this the temple in Jerusalem was described as the place where God would "make His name abide" (Deut. 12:11). Those who are disobedient are said to despise God's name (Mal. 1:6), while those who are faithful are said to "remember the name of the Lord" (Ps. 20:7) and are described as those who love God's name (Ps. 5:11).

The name of Jesus should be held with the same reverence. Jesus is God in the flesh (John 20:28). Jesus told His disciples they would receive whatever they asked in His name (John 14:13). Philippians 2:9 describes Jesus' name as "The name which is above every name." His apostles, in teaching about Him, made the bold and decisive declaration "There is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved" (Acts 4:12).

Throughout the centuries among Jews and early Christians respect for Divine names was taken very seriously. To avoid ever saying the Lord's name in vain the Jews developed the custom of substituting the Hebrew word meaning "Lord" for the personal name of God, Yahweh (or Jehovah). Among the Dead Sea Scrolls many manuscripts of biblical books actually write the word for "God" or "Yahweh" in a different color and in an older script. This likely helped the one reading out-loud to make certain he did not read without due reverence. Early New Testament manuscripts often contain instances of what are called *nomina sacra* (lit. "holy names") the custom of abbreviating references to Deity. This was usually done by putting only the first and last letters of the word, with a line over both letters. For example, to illustrate this in English, "Spirit" would be written ST (with a line over it), or "Lord" would be written LD (with a line over it). In modern translations of the Bible some similar conventions are often used. Some capitalize all pronouns referring to Deity. Most indicate the translation of the Hebrew name Yahweh with the English word "LORD" (spelled with all capital letters), in contrast to the actual Hebrew word "Lord" (without full capitalization).

How is the name of God used in common speech today? Is it used with respect and reverence, or with casual disregard? For many people, it has become nothing more than a way to express surprise or dismay. Someone shocked by something exclaims, "Oh my G__!" Is this said as an appeal to God? No. Does the one using this expression truly feel that God is his or her God? Sometimes, but I have heard atheists say these words. If I appeal to the One I identify as "my God" should I not appeal to Him with respect? If I don't believe in Him, how could I speak of Him as "my God." If I am not making an appeal, in what sense am I using His name? As a meaningless exclamation? Yes. Remember the command "You shall not take the name of the Lord your God in vain, for the Lord will not hold him guiltless who takes His name in vain" (Exod. 20:7). That which is meaningless is that which is "in vain." Are we prepared to answer to God for this calloused use of His name?

Let's illustrate this in a personal way. My wife was very close to her grandmother. In fact, she was named after her. My wife's middle name is Marie. I could never imagine my wife, in a moment of shock, frustration, or even excitement crying out, "Oh my Marie!" That wouldn't reflect the love she feels for her. She would never use her name to call down a curse upon someone the relationship she treasured with her grandmother was far too special for that. Because of this, I would never use the name Marie in these ways. It would be disrespectful to my wife and to the memory of her

grandmother. So if we understand this when it comes to the names of humans we hold dear, how could we use God's name in that way?

I fear that modern man has lost sight of exactly how blasphemous it is to casually use the name of God or Jesus in cursing or expressions of amazement. Today, even among those who claim to be Christians, we may hear the Lord's name roll thoughtlessly, and irreverently off their lips. Sometimes, people imagine they can disguise this with euphemisms or abbreviations. A euphemism is a "mild or indirect word or expression substituted for one considered to be too harsh or blunt" (New Oxford Dictionary). When someone says "Gosh," or "Golly" what does he or she mean? If it is a substitute, what word is it a substitute the word "God." If it is not a substitute, it is meaningless. Have you ever heard someone use an exclamation, but you couldn't tell if he used a euphemism or the Lord's name? Why would we ever want people to be unsure of our use of the Lord's name? Jesus said, "But I say to you that for every idle word men may speak, they will give account of it in the day of judgment" (Matt. 12:36). Are we ready to answer for our words on the Day of Judgment?

With the rise of texting, Twitter, Facebook, and other social media the abbreviation "OMG" has become very common. Even Christians, sometimes type this with little thought. What does it abbreviate? the words "Oh my G__!" Is this a reverent allusion to the name of God? No. Does it communicate to those who read it the love and respect for the One I would call "my God?" No. Then we should not use such forms of expression. I pray that anyone who "names the name of Christ" (2 Tim. 2:19) will strive to glorify "that noble name by which you were called" (Jas. 2:7), avoiding any use of the Lord's name that fails to show the love and respect it is due.

Comments by Ross Ward

I find it interesting that the Jews modified the spelling of the names for God in an effort to prevent using God's name in vain. Seems a bit legalistic to me. After all, one is still referring to the same being. That being said, it is important to realize the reverence necessary when we reference our Creator and Savior. We would treat a judge of our court system with respect and I'm sure he would expect such. Use of the names of God has become quite common in our society. Unfortunately, they are usually used in vain. Using the names of God flippantly or irreverently does not show proper respect for our God. Using a euphuism should not be considered an exemption.

Prayer Requests & Announcements

- David and Catherine are traveling in Georgia
- Keep April in your prayers as she deals with health issues
- The Christians in the Philippines.
- Tammy Woodward is suffering from the effects of cancerous brain tumor.
- Scott Boucher (Sparks NV) starts cancer treatment this week.

For prayer requests or other announcements, call or text

Chad @ (208) 221-2587 or Ross @ (208) 680-6590

Assignments

<p><u>Today</u> Bible Study – Ross Ward Song Leader – Ben Palmer Lord’s Table – Ray Mitchell Sermon – Ross Ward</p>	<p><u>Wednesday</u> Bible Study – Chad Mitchell Song Leader – Ben Palmer Invitation – Ross Ward</p>
<p><u>Next Sunday</u> Bible Study – Ross Ward Song Leader – Tom Mitchell Lord’s Table – Chad Mitchell Sermon – Ross Ward</p>	<p><u>Next Wednesday</u> Bible Study – Chad Mitchell Song Leader – Tom Mitchell Invitation – Ross Ward</p>

Blackfoot Church of Christ
370 North Shilling Ave.
Blackfoot, Idaho 83221

Meeting Times:

Sunday Class 10:00AM
Sunday Worship 11:00AM
Wednesday Class 7:30PM



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