

What Is God's Name

What is God's Name? I propose to you that this simple question has a simple answer which is readily discernible by a logical examination of the scriptures. That a logical treatment of God's word is a valid approach to the study of the Bible is attested to by the Bible itself; consider:

Isaiah 1:18 Come now, and let us reason together, saith the Lord: though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool.

Logic is a tool that allows us to determine truths that are not explicitly stated, by using a process known as deduction. When He said, "Come now, and let us reason together", God was making the invitation for us to use the method of reasoning, or logic, as later refined by Aristotle some 500 years later, and again by Robinson in 1965. This technique of reason, or logic, is to be used to examine His own words. In order to make a deduction, one must have the facts at his disposal. This too is encouraged by the Bible itself:

2 Tim 2:15 Study to show thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.

There is irrefutable evidence that there is only one Lord, as is stated explicitly 5 times in the KJV:

Deut.: 6:4 Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God is one Lord:

Eph: 4:5 One Lord, one faith, one baptism,

I Cor.: 8:6 But to us there is but one God, the Father, of whom are all things, and we in him; and one Lord Jesus Christ, by whom are all things, and we by him.

Mark: 12:29 And Jesus answered him, The first of all the commandments is, Hear, O Israel; The Lord our God is one Lord:

Zech.: 14:9 And the Lord shall be king over all the earth: in that day shall there be one Lord, and his name one.

There is likewise irrefutable evidence that there is only one God:

Eph: 4:6 One God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all.

I Tim: 2:5 For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus;

James: 2:19 Thou believest that there is one God; thou doest well: the devils also believe, and tremble.

Mal: 2:10 Have we not all one father? hath not one God created us? why do we deal treacherously every man against his brother, by profaning the covenant of our fathers?

Mark: 12:32 And the scribe said unto him, Well, Master, thou hast said the truth: for there is one God; and there is none other but he:

Rom: 3:30 Seeing it is one God, which shall justify the circumcision by faith, and uncircumcision through faith.

Now, concerning God's name, consider the story of Paul's conversion on Damascus road:

Acts 9:3 And as he journeyed, he came near Damascus: and suddenly there shined round about him a light from heaven:

That the light came "from heaven" and not "from the heavens" describes its origin as divine rather than celestial. This light was from God.

Acts 9:4 And he fell to the earth, and heard a voice saying unto him, Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me?

By association, we may infer that the voice, like the light, was from God. Saul also knew that the light and voice were from God, for he knew none other could perform such a miracle. Saul was well educated in the scriptures, and seized the opportunity to ask the age old question that had been asked by Jacob before him:

Gen. 32:27 And he said unto him, What is thy name? And he said, Jacob.

32:28 And he said, Thy name shall be called no more Jacob, but Israel: for as a prince hast thou power with God and with men, and hast prevailed.

Having been asked of his own name, Jacob returned the question and asked the name of the questioner:

32:29 And Jacob asked him, and said, Tell me, I pray thee, thy name. And he said, Wherefore is it that thou dost ask after my name? And he blessed him there.

32:30 And Jacob called the name of the place Peniel: for I have seen God face to face, and my life is preserved.

Thus we know that this was God, for the scriptures declare it when Jacob says in verse 30, "I have seen God face to face". Moses also asked the same question of God:

Exod. 3:13 And Moses said unto God, Behold, when I come unto the children of Israel, and shall say unto them, The God of your fathers hath sent me unto you; and they shall say to me, What is his name? what shall I say unto them?

3:14 And God said unto Moses, I AM THAT I AM: and he said, Thus shalt thou say unto the children of Israel, I AM hath sent me unto you.

As if this were not enough, consider Jesus' response to the Jews:

John 8:56 Your father Abraham rejoiced to see my day: and he saw it, and was glad.

8:57 Then said the Jews unto him, Thou art not yet fifty years old, and hast thou seen Abraham?

8:58 Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Before Abraham was, I am.

8:59 Then took they up stones to cast at him: but Jesus hid himself, and went out of the temple, going through the midst of them, and so passed by.

Note the deliberate parallel between **John 8:58** and **Exodus 3:14**. Not only is Jesus claiming to be older than Abraham, and to have seen him, but Jesus is also as much as saying that he is God, a statement for which the Jews tried to stone him. This would be the correct response, were he not really God, for were anyone other than God to make such a statement, it would constitute the highest form of blasphemy, but for Jesus to make it was absolute truth.

How did God answer Saul?

Acts 9:5 And he said, Who art thou, Lord? And the Lord said, I am Jesus whom thou persecutest: it is hard for thee to kick against the pricks.

This time, God answered Saul directly, and he said, "I am Jesus"! Consider also the Christmas story, as prophesied by Isaiah. Here we are told some very definite information about the Messiah that is to come:

Isaiah 7:14 Therefore the Lord himself shall give you a sign; Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel.

This prophecy is fulfilled in the new testament by the birth of Jesus:

Matthew 1:18 Now the birth of Jesus Christ was on this wise: When as his mother Mary was espoused to Joseph, before they came together, she was found with child of the Holy Ghost.
1:19 Then Joseph her husband, being a just man, and not willing to make her a public example, was minded to put her away privily.

1:20 But while he thought on these things, behold, the angel of the Lord appeared unto him in a dream, saying, Joseph, thou son of David, fear not to take unto thee Mary thy wife: for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Ghost.

1:21 And she shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt call his name JESUS: for he shall save his people from their sins.

1:22 Now all this was done, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken of the Lord by the prophet, saying,

1:23 Behold, a virgin shall be with child, and shall bring forth a son, and they shall call his name Emmanuel, which being interpreted is, God with us.

1:24 Then Joseph being raised from sleep did as the angel of the Lord had bidden him, and took unto him his wife:

1:25 And knew her not till she had brought forth her firstborn son: and he called his name JESUS.

The parallel between **Isaiah 7:14** and **Matthew 1:23** is explicitly pointed out in **Matthew 1:22**.

Matthew 1:23 makes it even more clear by telling us that this Emmanuel is "God with us". Thus we have certainly established who Isaiah was talking about. Now, consider what else Isaiah has to say about Him:

Isaiah 9:6 For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counselor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace.

Who is Isaiah talking about? We have already established that it is Jesus, as is again evidenced by the reference to the child being born, but this child has a name, which we find in the new testament is "Jesus". Why is it then that the prophet says, "his name shall be called...The mighty God, The everlasting Father"? It is because Jesus IS God, and hence God's name is Jesus!

We can easily amplify this by reference to the book of John.

John 14:6 Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me.

14:7 If ye had known me, ye should have known my Father also: and from henceforth ye know him, and have seen him.

14:8 Philip saith unto him, Lord, show us the Father, and it sufficeth us.

14:9 Jesus saith unto him, Have I been so long time with you, and yet hast thou not known me, Philip? he that hath seen me hath seen the Father; and how sayest thou then, Show us the Father?

14:10 Believest thou not that I am in the Father, and the Father in me? the words that I speak unto you I speak not of myself: but the Father that dwelleth in me, he doeth the works.

14:11 Believe me that I am in the Father, and the Father in me: or else believe me for the very works' sake.

So **John 14:6** says there is only one way, echoing:

Eph: 4:5 One Lord, one faith, one baptism,

But it goes farther, saying that one way is Jesus, hence He is that "One Lord". But is this Lord the Father or the Son? Verse 7 quotes Jesus Himself saying, "from henceforth ye know him, and have seen him." Jesus is telling the eleven remaining disciples that He is God the Father, as Isaiah said over 700 years earlier.

The passage in verse 10 tells us that Jesus is in the Father. This is set containment. It means that Jesus is contained by the Father, that every part of him is a part of the father. It also tells us that the Father is in him. This is set containment in the other direction.

Whenever set A is contained by, or a subset of, set B, and at the same time, set B is a subset of set A, we may infer, or deduce, that set A is equivalent to set B, that they are the same set. Thus Jesus is the Father.

It is important to observe that this discussion between Jesus and the disciples is taking place after Judas has left the group:

John 13:21 When Jesus had thus said, he was troubled in spirit, and testified, and said, Verily, verily, I say unto you, that one of you shall betray me.

13:22 Then the disciples looked one on another, doubting of whom he spake.

13:23 Now there was leaning on Jesus' bosom one of his disciples, whom Jesus loved.

13:24 Simon Peter therefore beckoned to him, that he should ask who it should be of whom he spake.

13:25 He then lying on Jesus' breast saith unto him, Lord, who is it?

13:26 Jesus answered, He it is, to whom I shall give a sop, when I have dipped it. And when he had dipped the sop, he gave it to Judas Iscariot, the son of Simon.

13:27 And after the sop Satan entered into him. Then said Jesus unto him, That thou doest, do quickly.

13:28 Now no man at the table knew for what intent he spake this unto him.

13:29 For some of them thought, because Judas had the bag, that Jesus had said unto him, Buy those things that we have need of against the feast; or, that he should give something to the poor.

13:30 He then having received the sop went immediately out: and it was night.

13:31 Therefore, when he was gone out, Jesus said, Now is the Son of man glorified, and God is glorified in him.

So what Jesus is telling the remaining eleven, who are to become the first of the apostles, is the answer to the question asked by Jacob and Moses, among others. He is revealing the answer to the age old question, the mystery of the Godhead, the name of God. He is telling them that He is God. His name is Jesus; therefore, God's name is Jesus.

So what's in a name? Why is this name so important? The church is compared in her relationship with Christ to the bride and He the groom. The wedding metaphor is predominant in old and new testaments alike. A study of ancient and conservative Jewish wedding traditions reveals some interesting parallels.

When a man and a woman become engaged, there is an exchange of gifts. The woman gives something of her own handiwork, and the man gives a gift of great value. The man also pays a price, or dowry, to the woman's father, for the privilege of the woman's hand in marriage. The gift of great value survives in our customs today as the engagement ring. At the time of the engagement, a contract, or covenant, is entered into by the two parties.

Unlike our courtship customs, the Jew of old times would then leave his fiancée and go establish a household and livelihood for them. The time of his return was only known approximately. When the appointed time was approaching, the bride would prepare herself by first submitting herself to a ritual cleansing by total immersion in a bath of water. Following this, she would adorn herself in a wedding garment of white linen.

She could tell when the loved one was approaching, because the watchmen would announce his approach. At this time, she would hasten to the path through the garden that led to the gate through which he would come. It was customary for the groom to meet her suddenly somewhere along this path. When this occurred, he would carry her away to a wedding feast that lasted seven days.

Consider the ritual of Christian baptism. Observe how it parallels the ritual cleansing of the Jewish wedding tradition. Consider the surprise meeting on the garden path. Observe how it parallels the meeting between Jesus and Mary on the first Easter Sunday morning:

John 20:14 And when she had thus said, she turned herself back, and saw Jesus standing, and knew not that it was Jesus.

20:15 Jesus saith unto her, Woman, why weepest thou? whom seekest thou? She, supposing him to be the gardener, saith unto him, Sir, if thou have borne him hence, tell me where thou hast laid him, and I will take him away.

20:16 Jesus saith unto her, Mary. She turned herself, and saith unto him, Rabboni; which is to say, Master.

They were obviously in a garden, since she supposed him to be the gardener, so the path to the tomb was a garden path. The meeting was certainly a surprise for Mary, as she did not even recognize Jesus at first, for she certainly did not expect to see living the one whose dead body she had come to see. But when Jesus called her name, she recognized him. He will recognize us when we call his name too.

Given that our relationship with Jesus is that of espoused wife to husband, consider what happens when a woman marries a man. She takes on his name. Miss Jones becomes Mrs. Smith. This means a lot:

Gen. 2:24 Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh.

"They shall be one flesh" means they have the same body. We are the body of Christ. We take the name of Jesus in water baptism. We receive the thing of great value, the gift of the Holy Ghost.

To try and get these great privileges without taking on the name of the groom is to try to be the concubine, rather than the wife, of Him. He tells us that these kinds of people are not His own:

1 Cor 6:9 Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Be not deceived: neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind,

So the concubine approach will not work; we must be a true wife. This means we must take on the name of the husband. This is really to our benefit, as the husband has great wealth and authority, and we are given power of attorney to use His name to do things that our own name could never do:

Mark 16:17 *And these signs shall follow them that believe; In my name shall they cast out devils; they shall speak with new tongues;*
16:18 *They shall take up serpents; and if they drink any deadly thing, it shall not hurt them; they shall lay hands on the sick, and they shall recover.*

So how do we know that the name is given in water baptism?

Matthew 28:18 *And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth.*
28:19 *Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost:*
28:20 *Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world. Amen.*

So verse 18 establishes that "All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth." If we have power of attorney, we have access to this power. He tells the disciples what to do; He tells them to baptize "in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost". But in typical form, He does not give the name to use explicitly. This is because the disciples already knew it. They were there when He told them who he was in the book of John. Furthermore, note that although three descriptive titles are given, "(1) of the Father, (2) and of the Son, (3) and of the Holy Ghost", that the number of the noun "name" is singular, not plural. Thus Jesus is giving us a word problem to solve, using logic. What is the one name that satisfies all three descriptive titles?

You may argue that you don't know the name of the Father, and you don't know the name of the Holy Ghost, but you will have a very hard time defending the position that you don't know the name of the Son! His name is Jesus. Can we substitute this name into the formula for baptism and get a scripturally verifiable result? How did the apostles baptize? Consider the record:

Acts 2:38 *Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost.*

Acts 8:16 *(For as yet he was fallen upon none of them: only they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus.)*

Acts 19:5 *When they heard this, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus.*

Rom: 6:3 *Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death?*

Furthermore, it is not recorded anywhere in the Bible that anyone was ever baptized "in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost". Why then do so many Protestant denominations baptize this way? Because of their heritage. Protestant denominations arose by taking exception to other denominations, beginning with the Roman Catholic Church. The Catholic church, in turn, was created by men in

326 A. D. at the convening of the Nycian Council. It was at this time that the Catholic religion was invented. Because of the pervasive influence of the Roman Empire, this religion rapidly became widespread; death was the penalty for not professing it.

Prior to 326 A. D., the Apostolic Church was the only church. It is called "apostolic" because it was founded upon the doctrine of the apostles:

Acts 2:42 And they continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers.

This doctrine was perverted by the political forces that shaped the Catholic church. Martin Luther was able to recognize that something was wrong, and he had the courage to stand up to the Catholic church, but he could only protest against those things that he saw as wrong. Other Protestant religions protested against Lutheranism, or each other, as well as directly against the Catholic church.

This business of contradicting aspects of a logical system (in this case the Catholic church, or some other church derived from it by a similar process of contradiction) is not able to properly reconstruct the elusive original entity after which it is seeking. Only a return to first principles is able to do that:

Rev 2:4 Nevertheless I have somewhat against thee, because thou hast left thy first love.

2:5 Remember therefore from whence thou art fallen, and repent, and do the first works; or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will remove thy candlestick out of his place, except thou repent.

We must therefore examine once again the Word of God to determine what is valid doctrine and what is the invention of man's mind:

Col.: 2:8 Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ.

Do you know who Jesus is? Do you know what God's name is? Do you know the power that is in that wonderful name? Are you authorized to exercise that power by having duly taken on that name in water baptism? Are you in possession of that gift of great value, the Holy Ghost? If you have answered any of these questions in the negative, I urge you to take definite actions to be able to answer them in the positive; your very soul is at stake!

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