



Communal Culture: Names and Naming

Notes

Names as Reputation

- Ecclesiastes 7:1a -- A good name
- Genesis 6:4 -- Men of the name/renown

Names have meaning

Birth circumstances

- Jacob/*Ya'acov* -- *akev* (heel)
- Simeon/*Shimon* -- *shema* (hear)
- Judah/*Yhudah* -- *yada* (praise)

Names that include part of God's name --"yah" or "iah/yahu" or the generic god name "el" (Yahwistic)

- **Daniel**
- Jerem**iah** (*Yiremeyahu*)
- **Elijah** (*Eliyahu*)

Names with other hints

- Adam -- *adamah* = dirt; made from the dirt (Genesis 2:7)
- Saul (*Sha'ul*) -- *sha'al* = asked; they asked for a king
- Daniel -- *dan* = judge

English translations of New Testament names hide their Hebrew connections

- Jacob/Simeon/Judah are translated into English from Hebrew
- James/Simon/Jude (or Judas) are the same names translated into English from Greek
- Mary's name would have been Miriam in Hebrew (like Moses' sister)

Naming or Renaming

- Giving a name = shows having authority/responsibility over the person (Genesis 2:19-20)
- New name or renaming = a change of identity (Genesis 17:5, Daniel 1)

Loss of name/blotted out = loss of existence

- Exodus 32:31-32
- Revelation 20:15

Genealogies

- “Whose are you?” was more important than “who are you?”
- 1 Samuel 9:1–2a -- Saul’s “genealogical address”

God’s Personal Name

- Exodus 3:15 “LORD” for YHVH – “Yahweh” (“Lord” = master, not specific to God)
- Exodus 20:7 Taking God’s name in vain

Discussion Questions

1. Identify the names which refer to God (e.g. “el”, “iah”, and “jah”) in some of the names in Nehemiah 10:1–10
2. Read Revelation 2:17b. What do we receive from Christ and what is its significance? (See also Isaiah 62:2)
3. Read John 8:39. What is Jesus implying about being a “son of Abraham?”
4. Since names carry a reputation, how does this relate to Jesus in Philippians 2:9-11? (See also Isaiah 45:23)
5. Since names carry power, authority, and honor, what does it mean:
 - a. To pray in “Jesus’ name”?
 - b. To call on “the name of Jesus?” (Romans 10:13)
 - c. To have life “in his name?” (John 20:31)
6. Read Genesis 16:11. Using the link below, what does “Ishmael” mean, who gave the name, and how does that relate to his story?

Recommended Resources

[Bible Dictionary](http://biblestudytools.com) (biblestudytools.com)

Use this to look biblical names



[Bearing God’s Name -- Why Sinai Still Matters by Carmen Imes](#)

Book that explores this theme that continues throughout scripture



[Binumarrien people find Bible true](#) (creation.com)

The referenced story about the missionaries



[Word study on YHWH](#) (YouTube)

Bible Project video on God’s name

