

# What's in a name?

“...protect them by the power of your name”

John 17:11 (NIV)

I remember when, as a young boy, I asked my mother where my given names of Gordon Bruce came from. She started to laugh and for a moment couldn't answer.

I knew she had a Scottish background and that my given names were Scottish, but since my surname was English, I was a bit puzzled about the whole thing.

What she told me horrified me at first, but then we had a good laugh about it. It seems that in Ontario, at the time I was born, parents had 30 days to send in the provincial form that indicated your child's chosen name.

During those 30 days, my parents argued back and forth about what to call me. My beloved father wanted me to named after *his* father, Percival Bamlet. Thankfully, my mother would have none of it. She could *not* see giving a child those names. Oh how grateful I was that my mother won the argument!

In Gentile society, we think mostly of a name as a method of distinguishing one person

from another. In Hebrew society, however, naming a child was vastly more than that. A name *defined* the person and represented all they were in life. Naming your child like this gave parents a certain hope that their child would *live up to* the name.

When we read in Proverbs 18:10 **“The name of the Lord is a strong tower; the righteous run to it and are safe.”** (NIV) it means that in running to the Lord you find shelter and protection because of His almighty power. The writer wasn't suggesting that we run to a “name” in the literal sense.

In the Old Testament, God is known by various names, including *the Lord our righteousness* in Jeremiah 23:5,6, *the Lord our healer* in Exodus 15:26 and so on. These various names of God are precious to His people, because they detail the various ways He intercedes on their behalf.

God is known for the many things He does to rescue and deliver His people from their enemies. In the New Testament God the Son is given

the name Jesus which means “*Jehovah saves*”.

When we're feeling the weight of our sin, we can cling to the name *Jehovah-tsidkenu*, which means **the Lord our righteousness**. When we're confused and at our wits end with our problems, we can look to *Jehovah-jireh*, which means **God sees and God will provide**.

So, we find help in knowing the various names of God and using the one we need at the time of crisis.

Do you know this God of all grace and comfort? Are you thankful He has opened your eyes to the truth of His great character?

If what I've written leaves you confused, pray and ask God to make himself known to you. By studying the life of Jesus, you'll see God in action. Look and see, look and live!

What's in a name? All you need if it's the name of God.

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