

Sacred Names are not Required for Salvation

Fred R. Coulter

We're going to take a quick look at sacred names, because some brethren are very confused about sacred names, some even insist on using sacred names. If there are sacred names, is there a sacred language? That's what you need to ask first.

Let's look at the society we're living in. Today we are living in more lies, more blatantly spoken than ever before in the realm of government and religion and everyone's personal lives. 2-Tim 3 shows us the source and all of these problems that we see in the world and also the source of some of the problems that we see in the Church. Here is the mindset that is in the world:

2-Timothy 3:1: "Know this also, that in *the* last days perilous times shall come; for men will be lovers of self, lovers of money, braggarts, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy" (vs 1-2). Sounds like a lot of people we know even in top offices.

Verse 3: "Without natural affection, implacable, slanderers, without self-control..." Is that not true for the financial problems that we have? They're unholy and know nothing about God.

"...savage, despisers of those who are good, betrayers, reckless, egotistical, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God; having an outward appearance of Godliness, but denying the power of *true* Godliness. But *as for you*, turn away from *all* these" (vs 3-5). Let's couple that with:

- How does it affect the Church?
- How does it affect the brethren?
- What problems does this cause within the fellowship groups?
- What problems does this cause in doctrinal understanding?

2-Timothy 4:1: I charge you, therefore, in the sight of God, even the Lord Jesus Christ, Who is ready to judge *the* living and *the* dead at His appearing and His kingdom: Preach the Word!...." (vs 1-2). That's what needs to be preached.

There are so many misinterpretations and false doctrines out there that it's almost like looking at a piece of Swiss cheese. It's full of so many holes because people get religious positions and political positions rather than seeking Truth. So, here's what Paul told Timothy to do:

Verse 2: "Preach the Word! Be urgent in season and out of season; convict, rebuke, encourage, with all patience and doctrine...."

[*teachings*] ...For there shall come a time when they will not tolerate sound doctrine; but according to their own lusts they shall accumulate to themselves *a great number of* teachers... [Internet] ...having ears itching *to hear what satisfies their cravings*... [here's what happens when that occurs]: ...and they shall turn away their own ears from the Truth; and they shall be turned aside unto myths" (vs 2-4).

One of the myths is that we need to use sacred names. Let's look at that. Let's go clear back to the beginning. After God created Adam, He put him in the garden and talked to him and gave him commands.

Genesis 2:15: And the LORD God took the man and put him into the Garden of Eden to dress it and keep it." This also means to guard it, which Adam failed to do.

Verse 16: "And the LORD God commanded the man, saying, 'You may freely eat of every tree in the garden, but you shall not eat of the Tree of *the* Knowledge of Good and Evil, for in the day that you eat of it in dying you shall surely die.'" (vs 16-17).

What happened with the rest of the account? *God brought all the animals that He formed and all the birds to Adam to see what he would call them!* Adam had a language programmed in his mind by God when God created him. Otherwise, Adam wouldn't have been able to converse with God.

If there was ever a *pure* language, can we not say that that was the pure language? *Yes!* A lot of people say that it's Hebrew. How do you know? *Maybe it was not Hebrew; you do not know!* Just because the Bible is written in Hebrew, the Old Testament, does not mean that this was Hebrew language.

- Did not Adam and Eve have the true knowledge of the true name of God? *Yes!*
- Was not God available to all of them, even after the sin of Adam by coming to the east entrance of the Garden of Eden, where the altar was and they could meet God and talk with Him? *Yes!*

We don't know what their knowledge was but we can surmise that it had to be the *true names of God*.

- Do you think God would have given them the false names of God? *No!*
- Did that knowledge stop Cain from sinning? *No!*

- Did that knowledge bring him closer to God? *No!*

When you're dealing with God, you're dealing with the heart and the mind. What is in the heart and mind is more important than a correct pronunciation of a name that is called *scared*.

When we come to Gen. 6 and we see what happened. Did the knowledge of the correct name of God make the society righteous? *No!*

Genesis 6:5: "And the LORD saw that the wickedness of man *was* great on the earth, and every imagination of the thoughts of his heart *was* only evil continually. And the LORD repented that He had made man on the earth, and He *was* grieved in His heart. And the LORD said, 'I will destroy man whom I have created from the face of the earth, both man and beast, and the crawling thing, and the fowl of the air; for I repent that I have made them.' But Noah found grace in the eyes of the LORD" (vs 5-8).

- Does grace have anything to do with a correct name?

or

- Does it have to do with the heart of Noah toward God to receive grace?
- Are you more righteous if you have a so-called *sacred name*?
- Does a sacred name change your heart? *NO!*

Only having the laws of God written in your heart and mind brings you the change of heart and mind.

Verse 9: "These *are* the generations of Noah. Noah was a righteous man..." That means he kept the commandments of God. Someone will say, well it doesn't say that he kept the Sabbath. Doesn't have to. If you're righteous you will keep the Sabbath. Someone else will say, 'God didn't give His Law until He gave it to the children of Israel at Mt. Sinai, 3500 years later. That's insane, because where there is no law there is no sin. You see how people reason. When you get off on a twig, which should have already been pruned and not be there, then you end up with these kinds of conclusions. Here's what happened:

Verse 11: "Now the earth also was corrupt before God, and the earth was filled with violence." The Flood came and Noah and his family were saved. They came out on the other side and God gave them the covenant after the Flood. Noah certainly knew the correct name of God, but did it stop sin? *No!* Sin is a matter of choice, because God has given all human beings choice. Just like he did to Adam and Eve and Israel, 'I set before you life and death, blessing and cursing; choose life that you may live.'

In Gen. 11 we have something important to

understand concerning language. We saw that God created within Adam and Eve a wholly functioning language. They could talk, converse with God, choose between good and evil, know right and wrong.

Genesis 11:1: "And the whole earth was of one language and one speech." Let's follow this through very carefully so we understand what happened.

Verse 2: "And it came to pass, as they traveled from the east, they found a plain in the land of Shinar. And they settled there. And they said to one another, 'Come, let us make bricks and burn them thoroughly.' And they had brick for stone, and they had asphalt for mortar. And they said, 'Come, let us build us a city and a tower, *with* its top reaching into the heavens. And let us establish a name for ourselves, lest we be scattered upon the face of the whole earth'" (vs 2-4). They knew that God was going to give them their inheritance, and they didn't want to go.

Verse 5: "And the LORD came down to see the city and the tower, which the children of men had built. And the LORD said, 'Behold, the people *are* one and they all have one language....'" (vs 5-6). Did the proper name for God keep them from sinning here? *No, it did not!*

"...And this *is only the beginning* of what they will do—now nothing which they have imagined to do will be restrained from them. Come, **let Us go down and there confuse their language, so that they cannot understand one another's speech**" (vs 6-7).

What did God do in v 7 to all the people that are listed here in the table of nations as listed in Gen. 10? ***He changed their languages!*** Could you say that all the languages on earth, because God changed them, are thereby sacred? If you say that the one Adam and Eve were given was sacred, then why can you not say all the languages that God gave here—because He did it—are sacred? How can you argue against that?

Verse 8: "So, the LORD scattered them abroad from that place upon the face of all the earth..." Whatever the name of God was, when they all had one language, when God changed it the pronunciation for God in that language defined God.

Since He changed the languages here, we can't possibly know what the language was to begin with, because they all have new languages. They all refer to God with a different language, with a different name. If they're referring to the true God, that's what God intended them to do. *It doesn't say* that He changed their language except for the sacred name, that that remained the same.

I want you think with the Scriptures. Here is the

account of God appearing, in this case called the Angel of the LORD in this case, the flame of fire in the midst of the bush (Exo. 3:2). Moses said, “I’m going to go see this, and I don’t understand how it could be burning and not burn up.”

Exodus 3:4: “And the LORD saw that he had turned aside to see. God called to him out of the midst of the bush, and said, ‘Moses! Moses!’ And he said, ‘Here I *am*.’ And He said, ‘Do not come near here. Put off your sandals from your feet, for the place on which you stand *is* Holy ground.’” (vs 4-5). What made the ground Holy? *The presence of God!* If the presence of God is removed from there, it’s no longer Holy.

Verse 6: “And He said, ‘**I am the God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob.**’ And Moses hid his face, for he was afraid to look upon God.” Then God says that He’s going to use Moses to move ‘My people’ out of Egypt. You know all the excuses and all the problems that came up with it.

Verse 13: “And Moses said to God, ‘Behold, *when* I come to the children of Israel, and shall say to them, “The God of your fathers has sent me to you,” and they shall say to me, “What *is* His name?” What shall I say to them?’ And God said to Moses, ‘**I AM THAT I AM.**’ {see sermon *I AM That I AM* This is an expression of Jesus concerning Himself} What kind of name is this? This could also read, ‘I AM and will be what I will be.’

Verse 14: “And He said, ‘Thus you shall say to the children of Israel, “I AM has sent me to you.”’ And God said to Moses again, ‘You shall say this to the children of Israel, “The LORD God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, has sent me to you. This *is* My name forever, and this *is* My title from generation to generation.”’ Go, and gather the elders of Israel and say to them, “The LORD God of your fathers has appeared to me, the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, saying, ‘I have surely visited you and have observed what is done to you in Egypt’” (vs 14-16). Then He says that He will take them out from there.

Exodus 6:2: “And God spoke to Moses, and said to him, ‘I am the LORD.’ Remember His name *I AM That I AM*—it’s a name and title. It’s not quite a personal name as distinguished from:

Verse 3: “And I appeared to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob as God Almighty.... [El Shaddai] ...But I was not known to them *by* My name JEHOVAH [YHVH].”

Will Abraham, Isaac and Jacob be in the Kingdom of God? *Yes!* If pronouncing YHVH is necessary for salvation, they cannot possibly qualify for salvation, because God did not reveal Himself to

them under the name YHVH, Jehovah, Yahweh—however it’s pronounced. But please remember this: ***The true pronunciation of these Hebrew words have been lost!***

Why? *Because the Jews said that it is so sacred that we can’t pronounce it!* When they come the YHVH they say Adonai. They don’t know what YHVH is. We can conclude that Abraham, Isaac and Jacob are going to be in the Kingdom of God. Jesus said so in the New Testament! YHVH means *a covenant God*

Verse 4: “And I have also established My covenant with them, to give them the land of Canaan, the land of their pilgrimage, in which they were strangers. And **I have also heard** the groaning of the children of Israel...” (vs 4-5)—God’s promise!

Acts 17 is when the Gospel was beginning to go out to the Gentiles. I would like to call your attention to Appendix D: The New Testament was Originally Written in Greek (from *The Holy Bible in Its Original Order*). A lot of people say that it was written in Aramaic, or in Hebrew. Not so! It was written and canonized in Greek.

The names of God in the New Testament we see in Greek, in English and all languages has nothing to do with the Hebrew words of the Old Testament.

We know that the Apostle Paul was a Pharisee of Pharisees. We also know from the book of Acts that he could speak Hebrew, because he spoke to the mob that was ready to kill him in Hebrew. As soon as he mentioned the word *Gentiles* they had a riot and he had to be rescued by the Roman centurion.

The most logical question to ask, which refutes sacred names, is that if God intended that the sacred names from the Old Testament to be used in the New Testament, would He not have inspired the apostles—especially the Apostle Paul—to Gentiles, wherever He talks about the Lord Jesus Christ and God the Father, to put in there the Hebrew name, so-called sacred. Yes, He could have done it; no problem whatsoever!

Let’s see what Paul was saying here when he came to Mars Hill and Athens and began to speak.

Acts 17:16: “But while Paul was waiting for them... [Timothy and Silas] ...in Athens, he saw *that* the city was wholly given to idolatry, *and* his spirit was sorely moved within him. Because of this, he reasoned earnestly in the synagogue with the Jews and those who worshiped *there*...” (vs 16-17).

By the way, the Jews that were there were

Greek-speaking, and most of them were using in the synagogue the Septuagint version of the Bible.

“...and daily in the marketplace with those who met with *him*. Then some philosophers of the Epicureans and the Stoics encountered him. And some of *them* said, ‘What will this babbler have to say?’ And some *said*, ‘He seems to be a preacher of foreign gods,’ because he was preaching to them the Gospel of Jesus and the resurrection. And they took him and brought *him* to Mars Hill, saying, ‘May we know what this new teaching *is* that is spoken by you? For you are bringing certain strange things to our ears. So then, we desire to know what these things mean.’ (Now, all *the* Athenians and the strangers sojourning *among them* spent their leisure in nothing other than to tell and to hear something new.) Then Paul stood in *the* center of Mars Hill and said, ‘Men, Athenians, I perceive *that* in all things you are very reverent to deities’” (vs 17-22).

The Greek is that you are reverent to demons and the *King James* translates that you are very ‘religious’ or superstitious. Those would all fit.

Verse 23: “For *as* I was passing through and observing the objects of your veneration, I also found an altar on which was inscribed, ‘To an unknown God.’...”

Being superstitious, don’t you think they would be looking for a clue such as a *sacred name*? Think of that, because those who believe in sacred names are really superstitious, because they’re trusting in the sound and the spelling of the name, rather than your heart and mind and worshiping God.

Remember, God created all the languages. Satan did not come down and confuse the languages, **God did!** Languages since then have evolved. Now we’re here some 2,000 years later with the Greeks:

“...So then, He Whom you worship in ignorance *is* the One *that* I proclaim to you. He *is* the God Who made the world and all things that *are* in it. Being *the* Lord... [Greek: ‘kurios’] of heaven and earth, He does not dwell in temples made by hands; nor is He served by the hands of men, as *though* He needs anything, *for* He gives to all life and breath and all things. And He made of one blood all the nations of men to dwell upon all the face of the earth, having determined beforehand *their* appointed times and the boundaries of their dwelling” (vs 23-26). That goes clear back to Gen. 11 when they were scattered. Here’s why:

Verse 27: “In order that they might seek the Lord, if perhaps they might feel after Him and might find Him; though truly, He is not far from each one of us.” How are they going to search after God and

find Him? What would they have to begin with? *Their own language, which God created!*

So, whatever the name of God is in those different languages, God intended that so they would know that it referred to Him.

Verse 28: “For in Him we live and move and have our being; as some of the poets among you also have said, ‘For we are His offspring.’” Then He goes on saying you need to repent.

Let’s look at one thing more, and understand how God works. If you’re Hebrew and speak Hebrew, then you use the names of God in Hebrew. If you’re English and speak English, then you use the names of God in English. Or Dutch, German, Chinese, Japanese—whatever it may be.

Revelation 7:9—we have the sealing of the 144,000, and: “After these things I looked, and behold, a great multitude...”—millions and millions of people up this point in the Tribulation they had time to sit down and had someone come and teach them and say, ‘You need to use this sacred name and that sacred name.’ Do you suppose that happened?

If the sacred name is necessary for salvation, why are these people saved without having been taught about the sacred names? *Because the so-called sacred names are not necessary!*

Verse 9: “After these things I looked, and behold, a great multitude, which no one was able to number, out of **every nation and tribe and people and language**, was standing before the throne and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes and *holding* palms in their hands.” Crying out to God with a repentant heart.

So, for us in English and also the equivalent in any other language, **the sacred names for us in the New Testament are:**

- God the Father
- Jesus Christ our Lord

I want to read you something from:

The Five Books of Moses by Robert Alter;
Preface, pgs xlv-vi:

III. On Translating the Names of GOD

The God of Israel is referred to through a variety of names in these texts, and it is by no means self-evident how to render the names in English. The most difficult of them is the Tetragrammaton, YHWH. Modern biblical scholarship has agreed to represent this as “Yahweh”...

Who determined how to pronounce it today? God? *Modern scholarship!* If you use it, you use it according to what the scholars agree.

...but there are problems with using that form in translation. The original Hebrew texts of the Bible were entirely consonantal, vowel-points having been added well over a millennium after the original composition of the texts. Because by then the Tetragrammaton was deemed ineffable by Jewish tradition, it was revocalized to be pronounced as though it read 'Adonai, LORD. The confidence of Biblical scholarship that the original pronunciation was in fact Yahweh may not be entirely warranted. (See the comment on Exodus 3:14). In any case, "Yahweh" would have given the English version a certain academic archeological coloration that I preferred to avoid...

I've had some people say, 'Why didn't you put Jehovah in the *Faithful Version Bible* all the way through? or Why isn't it YHWH all the way through? *Because this is English!* It's not a transliteration of the word.

...and it would also have introduced a certain discomfort at least for some Jewish readers of the translation. I rejected the option of using "YHWH" because it cannot be pronounced whereas the dimension of sound seemed to me vital to the translation. I have therefore followed the precedent of the King James Version in representing YHWH as the LORD, in small uppercase letters to indicate that, like *adonai*, it is an anomaly, a substitution for another name.

The other most common designation of the deity is *elohim*, a word that is plural in form (perhaps, though this is far from certain, a plural of "majesty") but that is generally treated grammatically as a singular. "God" is the natural English equivalent, but in some contexts, where the generic character of the name seems prominent, I have rendered it with the lowercase *g* as "god"...

Referring to pagan gods, of course.

...and when the name is treated as a plural, especially when the narrative context involves polytheism, I have translated it as "gods." Three other names for the deity, all borrowed from the Canaanite pantheon...

That's not true, but that's what he says.

...occur in these books—El, Elyon, and Shaddai. Especially in poetry and at narrative moments of high solemnity, the writers appear to play on the archaic resonances of these names, and so for the most part I have given them in their Hebrew form, for in the particular contexts in which they typically appear a touch of linguistic archeology seemed to me entirely appropriate.

Admittedly, any of the choices I have described may be debatable, but in all of them my aim has been to name the deity in English in ways that would be in keeping with the overall concert of literary effects that the translation strives to create.

Rather than transliteration.

So, in summary: the names of God in the Old Testament: Lord and Lord God are just fine. In the New Testament: God the Father, Lord Jesus Christ are just fine. If you speak Greek, pronounce it in Greek; if you speak Danish, pronounce it in Danish; if you speak German, pronounce it in German—whatever they are and the translation. If God wanted the sacred names—so-called—inserted in all of the different translations of the Bible, He would have inspired it to be done in the New Testament, and He did not do it. Therefore, ***sacred names are not to be used in the New Testament.***

If you want to use them personally, in your own personal prayer, that's up to you. But it's not going to make your prayer any more effective, because your prayer is only as effective as your heart. And they need not be used in services, like in opening or closing prayers and discussions with each other concerning God. That is entirely unnecessary and becomes a point of fetish, which then leads to other myths and difficulties that come along, which I've seen come down through the years take place.

That's a short study on sacred names; and one last thing: the pronunciation of Yahweh actually comes from a Canaanite and Amorite origin.

All Scriptures from *The Holy Bible in Its Original Order, A Faithful Version* by Fred R. Coulter

Scriptural References:

- 1) 2 Timothy 3:1-5
- 2) 2 Timothy 4:1-4
- 3) Genesis 2:15-17
- 4) Genesis 6:5-9, 11
- 5) Genesis 11:1-8
- 6) Exodus 3:4-6, 13-16
- 7) Exodus 6:2-5
- 8) Acts 17:16-28
- 9) Revelation 7:9

Scriptures referenced, not quoted:

- Genesis 10
- Exodus 3:2

Also referenced:

Sermon *I AM That I AM*
Book: *he Five Books of Moses* by Robert Alter

Appendix D: *The New Testament was Originally
Written in Greek* (from *The Holy Bible in Its Original Order*)

FRC:bo
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