

## NAMES

The Psalmist wrote about God: **“He determines the number of the stars and calls them each by name. Great is the Lord and mighty in power; his understanding has no limit.”** (Ps. 147:4-5)

Everything written in the Bible, has a purpose. **“Everything written in the past was written to teach us, so that through endurance and the encouragement of the Scriptures we might have hope.”** (Rom. 15:4). For example, when the Law said: **Do not muzzle an ox while it is treading out the grain.”** (Deut. 25:4) it was not written for the benefit of oxen but to teach that Christian workers are deserving of pay (1 Cor. 9:7-12). So we need to ask why the Scriptures inform us that God numbers the stars and calls every star by name?

While Paul reminded the Corinthians that God cares more about people than oxen, we may also safely say that God cares more about people than he does about stars. The earth is only a tiny speck in our vast universe and yet God created the sun, moon, and stars to give light on the earth (Gen.1: 14-19). While the heavens declare the “glory of God” (Ps. 19:1), only man was created in the “image of God” (Gen. 1:27). Men are obviously more important to God than stars and apparently God numbered and named the stars for our benefit. The heavens will disappear (2 Pet. 3:10), but man will live forever!

While we can only see approximately 5,000 stars with the naked eye, but with the aid of modern telescopes astronomers now estimate that there are 400 billion stars in our own Milky Way, and an estimated two trillion galaxies in the visible universe. This, of course, is only a guess. Only God knows the exact number of stars, and he has given a name to every star. Obviously God considers every star individually. Obviously God also treats us as individuals! Yes! God knows our names and some day every one of us will appear before the judgment seat of Christ to give an account of what we have personally done in our human bodies (2 Cor. 5:10). We will not be judged as “groups,” but as “individuals”.

Just as every star differs from every other star (1 Cor. 15:41), every person also differs from every other person. For example, every person has his or her own fingerprints. In 1901, Scotland Yard established its first Fingerprint Bureau. The following year, fingerprints were presented as evidence for the first time in English courts. The fact that everyone has their own personal fingerprints has helped solve many crimes. In 2013 the iPhone 5S used fingerprints in “touch ID” to open the phone. In 2017, Apple released the iPhone X which features a recognition system called Face ID. Your face is also as different and unique as your fingerprints. God went to a lot of trouble to make you!

For centuries philosophers have seen society as “groups” or “classes” of people rather than individuals. Men like Thucydides, Aristotle, Socrates, and Plutarch classified men as rich or poor, oppressors and oppressed, upper class and lower class, etc. In the time of Jesus the upper class were called “patricians” and the lower class were called “plebes”. Jesus, by contrast, saw everyone as individuals. Jesus was able to call total strangers by name. Jesus also forbade his disciples to refer to people by labels. For example He said: **“You have heard that it was said to the people long ago, ‘You shall not murder, and anyone who murders will be subject to judgment.’ But I tell you that anyone who is angry with a brother or sister will be subject to judgment. Again, anyone who says to a brother or sister, ‘Raca,’ is answerable to the court. And anyone who says, ‘You fool!’ will be**

**in danger of the fire of hell.” (Matt. 5:21-22)** When you call a brother or a sister by a label you have, in a sense, dehumanized them.

Soldiers are trained to see “enemies” as a “group” rather than “individuals.” Enemies are all seen as one group of people that need to be destroyed. It is easier to kill an “enemy” than a “person” whose “name” you know. If you know the name of your enemy you may find it harder to pull the trigger.

#### EVERYONE IS IMPORTANT TO JESUS!

- The Jews saw the “Samaritans” as a group of people and had nothing to do with them. Jesus, however, singled out a Samaritan woman at Jacob’s well and offered “living water.” Jesus knew everything about her! He knew she had been married 5 times and was living with a man to whom she was not married. In spite of her sinful life she was still valuable to Jesus. This troubled woman brought a whole city out to hear Jesus saying: **“He told me everything I ever did!” (Jn. 1:39)**. Jesus stayed there for two days and because of his words many Samaritans became believers (Jn. 4:40 – 41).
- Most people hated tax collectors, but Jesus loved them. He even chose a tax collector named Matthew to be one of his apostles (Matt. 9:9).
- Zacchaeus was a chief tax collector and yet Jesus called him by name. Jesus invited himself and his apostles to the house of Zacchaeus and he also became a disciple (Lk. 19:1-10).
- Here are some “classes” of people that were shunned by society, but whom Jesus loved!
  - Lepers (Matt. 8:1-4).
  - Roman centurions (Matt. 8:5-13).
  - Prostitutes (Lk. 7:36-50).
  - Demon possessed people (Lk. 8:26-39).
  - Rulers of the Jews (Jn. 3:1-21).
  - Rich people (Mk. 10:21)..
  - The poor, the crippled, the lame, and the blind (Lk. 14:12-14).
  - Babies and little children (Lk. 18:15-17).
  - Old people (Lk. 2:25-38).
  - In fact, **“God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life. For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him.” (Jn. 3:16-17)**
  - Before ascending into heaven Jesus send out His apostles to make disciples of “all nations” (Matt. 28:18-20) and “all creation” (Mk. 16:15-16). Everyone is important to Jesus!
  - This means that you are important to Jesus too! He not only knows your name, but has even numbered the hairs of your head: **“Are not two sparrows sold for a penny? Yet not one of them will fall to the ground outside your Father’s care. And even the very hairs of your head are all numbered. So don’t be afraid; you are worth more than many sparrows.” (Matt. 10:29-31)**

#### DISCRIMINATION IS FORBIDDEN IN THE CHURCH

**“The body is a unit, though it is made up of many parts; and though all its parts are many, they form one body. So it is with Christ. For we were all baptized by one Spirit into one body –**

whether we be Jews or Greeks, slave or free – and we were all given the one Spirit to drink.” (1 Cor. 12:12-13)

“So in Christ Jesus you are all children of God through faith, for all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ. There is neither Jew nor Gentile, neither slave nor free, nor is there male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus. If you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham’s seed, and heirs according to the promise.” (Gal. 3:26-29)

“Remember that at that time you were separate from Christ, excluded from citizenship in Israel and foreigners to the covenants of the promise, without hope and without God in the world. But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far away have been brought near by the blood of Christ. For he himself is our peace, who has made the two groups one and has destroyed the barrier, the dividing wall of hostility, by setting aside in his flesh the law with its commands and regulations. His purpose was to create in himself one new humanity out of the two, thus making peace, and in one body to reconcile both of them to God through the cross, by which he put to death their hostility. He came and preached peace to you who were far away and peace to those who were near. For through him we both have access to the Father by one Spirit. Consequently, you are no longer foreigners and strangers, but fellow citizens with God’s people and also members of his household, built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, with Christ Jesus himself as the chief cornerstone. In him the whole building is joined together and rises to become a holy temple in the Lord. And in him you too are being built together to become a dwelling in which God lives by his Spirit.” (Eph. 2:12-22)

“Do not lie to each other, since you have taken off your old self with its practices and have put on the new self, which is being renewed in knowledge in the image of its Creator. Here there is no Gentile or Jew, circumcised or uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave or free, but Christ is all, and is in all.” (Col. 3:9-11)

Onesimus was a slave who ran away from his master to Rome. Paul was a prisoner in Rome at the time and led Onesimus to Christ. Paul wrote to his master, Philemon: “I am sending him—who is my very heart—back to you. I would have liked to keep him with me so that he could take your place in helping me while I am in chains for the gospel. But I did not want to do anything without your consent, so that any favor you do would not seem forced but would be voluntary. Perhaps the reason he was separated from you for a little while was that you might have him back forever—no longer as a slave, but better than a slave, as a dear brother. He is very dear to me but even dearer to you, both as a fellow man and as a brother in the Lord. So if you consider me a partner, welcome him as you would welcome me. If he has done you any wrong or owes you anything, charge it to me.” (Philemon 1:12-18)

Jesus deals with every one of us as individuals.

When we become followers of Jesus our names are written in heaven (Lk. 10:20).

Those who do not worship Jesus do not have their names written in the book of life (Rev. 13:8).

## NAMES ARE IMPORTANT TO GOD

- God told Adam to name all livestock, birds of the air, and beasts of the field (Gen. 2:20).
- Adam even named his wife (Gen. 3:20).
- Even rivers had names (Gen. 2:10-14).
- Cities also had names (Gen. 4:17).
- Every child is an individual and God knits them together in their mother's womb (Ps. 139:14). Every child is unique and like every star has its own name.
- The name "Abraham" means "father of multitudes". God gave him this name before he had even one child (Gen. 17:5).
- The name "John" means "God is gracious." God gave this name to John the Baptist before he was born (Lk. 1:13).
- The name "Jesus" means "God is salvation." God also gave Jesus this name before he was born (Matt. 1:21).
- The name "Peter" means "Rock". God gave Peter this name when he was yet vacillating and unstable man named Simon (Jn. 1:42).
- God gives new names to those who overcome their problems (Rev. 2:17).
- Names are important to God!
- God knows your name and you are important to him!

## OWNERSHIP OF PROPERTY

I Kings chapter 21 tells the story of a king named Ahab and a peasant named Naboth. Both were important to God. Naboth owned a vineyard that Ahab wanted. When Naboth refused to sell the vineyard, Jezebel, the evil wife of Ahab, had him killed. When Ahab went to take possession of the vineyard Elijah met him and said: **"This is what the Lord says: Have you not murdered a man and seized his property? . . . This is what the Lord says: In the place where the dogs licked up Naboth's blood, dogs will lick your blood – yes, yours."** (1 Ki. 21:19)

The ownership of property was so important that even king Ahab could not take the property that belonged to someone else. Here is how ownership was established by God.

- When the Israelites lived in Egypt they were slaves and owned nothing.
- When they possessed the Promised Land each tribe and each family was given territory to own.
- The land was divided by casting lots (Nu. 34:1-29).
- The Levites were given towns to live in (Nu. 34:1-5), but not land like the other tribes. Because the Levites devoted themselves to work in the Tabernacle God gave them the tithes of the Israelites as their inheritance (Nu. 18:20-21).
- To insure that their property remained in the family, on the year of Jubilee every piece of ground that had been sold during the last 50 years was returned to the family that originally owned it (Lev. 25:10).
- To also insure that the property could not be transferred by marriage, women were also given the right to own property (Nu. 36:1-13).
- According to Mosaic Law Naboth could not sell his property to Ahab: **"No inheritance in Israel is to pass from tribe to tribe, for every Israelite shall keep the tribal land inherited from his forefathers."** (Nu. 36:7)

- Naboth told Ahab: **“The Lord forbid that I should give you the inheritance of my fathers.” (1 Ki. 21:3)**
- Every person on earth is created in the image of God and has divine rights given to them by God Himself!
- In heaven everyone will have his own mansion (Jn. 14:1-4).

#### JESUS CALLS HIS SHEEP BY NAME

Jesus is the Good Shepherd who **“Calls his own sheep by name and leads them out.” (Jn. 10:3)** There are certain commandments given in the Bible that are for everyone. For example, Paul told the men of Athens: **“Therefore since we are God’s offspring, we should not think that the divine being is like gold or silver or stone—an image made by human design and skill. In the past God overlooked such ignorance, but now he commands all people everywhere to repent. For he has set a day when he will judge the world with justice by the man he has appointed. He has given proof of this to everyone by raising him from the dead.” (Acts 17:29-31)**

When Jesus gives individual assignments, however, he calls His sheep by name. For example, Jesus sent Peter out alone to catch a fish (Matt. 17:24-27). Sometimes the Lord speaks in an audible voice. For example, when the Lord called out the name of Samuel, he thought Eli the priest was calling him (1 Sam. 3:4-14). This is evidently the way God called a number of famous people in the Bible.

- **“God said to Noah ‘I am going to put an end to all people for the earth is filled with violence because of them.’ (Gen. 6:13)**
- God called out **“Moses! Moses! And Moses said ‘Here I am.’” (Ex. 3:4)**
- **“When the angel of the Lord appeared to Gideon, he said, “The Lord is with you, mighty warrior.” “Pardon me, my lord,” Gideon replied, “but if the Lord is with us, why has all this happened to us? Where are all his wonders that our ancestors told us about when they said, ‘Did not the Lord bring us up out of Egypt?’ But now the Lord has abandoned us and given us into the hand of Midian.” The Lord turned to him and said, “Go in the strength you have and save Israel out of Midian’s hand. Am I not sending you?” (Jud. 6:12-14)**
- The angel Gabriel appeared to Mary and said: **“Do not be afraid, Mary, you have found favor with God. You will be with child and give birth to a son, and you will give him the name Jesus.” (Lk. 1:30-31)**
- Saul of Tarsus heard a voice saying **“Saul, Saul, why do you persecute me?” (Acts 9:4)**
- Etc.

#### SOMETIMES NO ONE CAN HEAR GOD’S VOICE BUT YOU

When Elijah came to the mountain of God he went into a cave and spent the night. The next day the Lord told him to **“Go out and stand on the mountain in the presence of the Lord for the Lord is about to pass by.” Then a great and powerful wind tore the mountains apart and shattered the rocks before the Lord, but the Lord was not in the wind. After the wind there was an earthquake, but the Lord was not in the earthquake. After the earthquake came a fire, but the Lord was not in the fire. And after the fire came a gentle whisper. When Elijah heard it, he pulled his cloak over his face and went out and stood at the mouth of the cave.” (1 Ki. 19:11-13)**

When the Lord gently whispers in your ear, no one can hear him but you!

Paul wrote to the Corinthians: **“The man without the Spirit does not accept the things that come from the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him, and he cannot understand them, because they are spiritually discerned. The spiritual man makes judgments about all things, but he himself is not subject to any man’s judgment.”** (1 Cor. 2:14-15)

The following verses will be a test! If you are not willing to take the time to carefully consider how God guides you with His Spirit, it may be an indication that you do not have His Spirit. Please prayerfully consider these following words: **“Those who live according to the flesh have their minds set on what the flesh desires; but those who live in accordance with the Spirit have their minds set on what the Spirit desires. The mind governed by the flesh is death, but the mind governed by the Spirit is life and peace. The mind governed by the flesh is hostile to God; it does not submit to God’s law, nor can it do so. Those who are in the realm of the flesh cannot please God. You, however, are not in the realm of the flesh but are in the realm of the Spirit, if indeed the Spirit of God lives in you. And if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, they do not belong to Christ. But if Christ is in you, then even though your body is subject to death because of sin, the Spirit gives life because of righteousness. And if the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead is living in you, he who raised Christ from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies because of his Spirit who lives in you. Therefore, brothers and sisters, we have an obligation—but it is not to the flesh, to live according to it. For if you live according to the flesh, you will die; but if by the Spirit you put to death the misdeeds of the body, you will live. For those who are led by the Spirit of God are the children of God. The Spirit you received does not make you slaves, so that you live in fear again; rather, the Spirit you received brought about your adoption to sonship. And by him we cry, “Abba, Father.” The Spirit himself testifies with our spirit that we are God’s children. Now if we are children, then we are heirs—heirs of God and co-heirs with Christ, if indeed we share in his sufferings in order that we may also share in his glory.”** (Romans 8:5-17)

It is dangerous to engage in spiritual warfare if you do not have the Spirit of Jesus! Please consider: **“Some Jews who went around driving out evil spirits tried to invoke the name of the Lord Jesus over those who were demon-possessed. They would say, “In the name of the Jesus whom Paul preaches, I command you to come out.” Seven sons of Sceva, a Jewish chief priest, were doing this. One day the evil spirit answered them, “Jesus I know, and Paul I know about, but who are you?” Then the man who had the evil spirit jumped on them and overpowered them all. He gave them such a beating that they ran out of the house naked and bleeding.”** (Acts 19:13-16)

## THE NAME OF JESUS

- **“She will bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins.”** (Matt. 1:21)
- **“Therefore God has highly exalted him and bestowed on him the name that is above every name, so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.”** (Phil. 2:9-11)

- “The seventy-two returned with joy, saying, “Lord, even the demons are subject to us in your name!” (Lk. 10:17)
- “Whatever you ask in my name, this I will do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son. If you ask me anything in my name, I will do it.” (Jn. 14:13-14)
- And Peter said to them, “Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins, and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.” (Acts 2:38)
- “But Peter said, “I have no silver and gold, but what I do have I give to you. In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, rise up and walk!” (Acts 3:6)
- “And his name—by faith in his name—has made this man strong whom you see and know, and the faith that is through Jesus has given the man this perfect health in the presence of you all.” (Acts 3:16)
- “And there is salvation in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved.” (Acts 4:12)
- While you stretch out your hand to heal, and signs and wonders are performed through the name of your holy servant Jesus.” (Acts 4:30)
- “But when they believed Philip as he preached good news about the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ, they were baptized, both men and women.” (Acts 8:12)
- “And now why do you wait? Rise and be baptized and wash away your sins, calling on his name.” (Acts 22:16)
- “And whatever you do, in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.” (Col. 3:17)
- “But God's firm foundation stands, bearing this seal: “The Lord knows those who are his,” and, “Let everyone who names the name of the Lord depart from iniquity.” (2 Tim. 2:19)
- “Now we command you, brothers, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you keep away from any brother who is walking in idleness and not in accord with the tradition that you received from us.” (2 Thess. 3:6)
- “everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.” (Rom. 10:13)
- “And this is the confidence that we have toward him, that if we ask anything according to his will he hears us.” (1 Jn. 5:14)
- The Scriptures are clear that there is power in the name of Jesus!

**TODAY – “IF YOU CONFESS WITH YOUR MOUTH THAT JESUS IS LORD AND BELIEVE IN YOUR HEART THAT GOD RAISED HIM FROM THE DEAD YOU WILL BE SAVED! FOR IT IS WITH YOUR HEART THAT YOU BELIEVE AND ARE JUSTIFIED, AND IT IS WITH YOUR MOUTH THAT YOU CONFESS AND ARE SAVED”! (ROM. 10:9-10)**

**SOME DAY - “AT THE NAME OF JESUS EVERY KNEE SHOULD BOW, IN HEAVEN AND ON EARTH AND UNDER THE EARTH, AND EVERY TONGUE CONFESS THAT JESUS CHRIST IS LORD TO THE GLORY OF GOD THE FATHER!” (PHIL. 2:9-11)**

**THAT'S WHY YOU NEED TO CONFESS JESUS CHRST AS LORD TODAY!  
"SALVATION IS FOUND IN NO ONE ELSE, FOR THERE IS NO OTHER NAME GIVEN TO  
MEN BY WHICH WE MUST BE SAVED." (ACTS 4:12)**