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The Meaning and Missional Significance of “Call on the Name YHWH”

Abstract

Both Peter (Acts 2:21) and Paul (Rom. 10:13) cite Joel 2:32a, “and all who call on the name of the LORD will be saved.” Besides Joel 2, the expression “call on the name of the LORD” (literally “the name *YHWH*”) occurs in Genesis 4:26b; 12:8; 13:4; 21:33; 26:25; 1 Kings 18:24; 2 Kings 5:11; Psalm 116:4, 13, 17; and Zephaniah 3:9. In the Old Testament, only Joel promises salvation (actually “escape” [עֲצֻרָה]) as a consequence. Psalm 116:4 comes closest as a plea rather than a promise when the psalmist confesses: “then I called on the name *YHWH*: ‘*YHWH*, save [עֲצֻרָה] me!’” Psalm 116:10 is used in 2 Corinthians 4:13. Seth’s lineage is marked by the bold announcement that when his first son Enosh was born (4:26a), people began to “call on the name *YHWH*” (4:26b). This is an epochal point in the storyline (especially from the concern with salvation history). Who was calling and why? What connection if any is there to Joel? What is the salvation promised for calling to *YHWH*, and what significance do these Old Testament concerns have for modern missions theology? This paper will investigate the occurrences of “call on the name *YHWH*” and similar expressions in the Old Testament with a view towards clarifying the nature of this activity among people in the age of Seth and for Old Testament salvation or deliverance, with applications or implications for missions or evangelism. This exegesis of “call on the name *YHWH*” will conclude that (1) Enosh’s generation called on *YHWH* increasingly due to widespread violence; (2) in general this expression in the Old Testament refers to trust or reliance on *YHWH*; and (3) this expression does not support any magical use of God’s name, but it does have an application (per the Apostles’ interpretive examples) to the Christian calling to evangelism, which implies a missionary movement.

Keywords: Yahweh, name, call, missional, Seth/Sethites

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Introduction

Seth's lineage is marked by the bold announcement that when his first son Enosh was born (4:26a), a person or people began to "call on the name YHWH" (4:26b; cf. Bright, 1959:96).¹ This is an epochal point in the storyline (especially from the concern with salvation history). Who was calling and why? It appears to pertain to Sethites, but not Cainites. A Christian reader cannot but think immediately of the New Testament statements, "whoever calls upon the name of the Lord will be saved" (Acts 2:21; Rom 10:13), which actually are citations of Joel 2:32a. This option or offer of salvation is present in only one other Old Testament occurrence, Psalm 116:4, where David promises to call on God's name asking for deliverance from death (see the Appendix). The purpose of the following study is to clarify in general what it means to "call on the name YHWH," and more specifically how people called on YHWH in the days of the Sethite lineage, as well as what various ways of relating to the Name means for missions or evangelism.

"Call on the Name Yahweh" in the OT

The typical English translation of בְּשֵׁם יְהוָה as "on the name of the LORD" may be understood more precisely as "on the name [that is] YHWH." The translation "name of the LORD" makes the reader wonder what is the LORD's name upon which to call? But the statement in Hebrew is a construct of two nouns needing interpretation (since various meanings are possible based on context). Here the meaning may be appositional, "the name that is YHWH" (as opposed to possessive: "the name that belongs to YHWH"). Alternatively, if "name" means "reputation" the translation would be "rely on the reputation of YHWH" (possessive genitive). In the Old Testament "call on the name YHWH" is found in Gen 12:8; 13:4; 21:33; 26:25; 1 Kgs 18:24; 2 Kgs 5:11; Psa 116:4, 13, 17; Joel 2:32; and Zeph 3:9. Besides "call on the name of the Lord" the Name is accessed four other ways in the Old Testament: "fear" (Psa 102:15; Isa 59:19), "take oaths in" (Isa 48:1), "love" (Isa 56:6), and "praise" (Psa 122:4; cf. Deut 32:3; Job 1:21; Ps 7:17; 30:4; 102:21; 113:1–3; 122:4; 135:1; 145:21; 148:5, 13; Joel 2:26). In Deut 28:10, "All the peoples of the earth shall see that you are *called by the name of the LORD*, and they shall be afraid of you" (NRSV).² In Hebrew this reads, "that the name YHWH has been called upon you." The word "name" in Hebrew also at times can mean "reputation" (cf. Gen 11:4).

Calling as Sacrificial Worship

One could reduce “calling on the name YHWH” to just “call on YHWH” since the idea is reverence of, or reliance on, His character and reputation in contexts of worship or worry.

In Genesis

Calling on YHWH is found in Genesis in contexts of sacrificial worship by Abraham (12:8; 13:4) and Isaac (26:25); and once when Abraham planted a tree in Beersheba (21:33).

In Psalms

In Psalm 116, because God had rescued him from death (v. 8), David vowed to give an offering as a witness (v. 17) and also “call on the name YHWH” (vv. 13, 17). Often translations have the expression “thank offering” in v. 17. The word (תודה < ידה “to throw”), frequently and likely mistranslated as “thanksgiving” in the Old Testament may have nothing to do with saying “thank you” (a modern western custom), but with making a public witness or testimony about how the one testifying has been helped by God. As is often the case in the Psalms, a verse like v. 17 here is part of a section where the psalmist promises to give such testimony if God saves him from death or disease (cf. vv. 14, 18-19).

Psalm 22 is a rare example where both a lament and a praise psalm are combined. At the end of the lament he cries for help and vows to “thank” God (i.e. praise Him or give witness to His saving power) if he is delivered. He is rescued, and then comes a praise psalm, which represents the “praise” or public acknowledgment about God’s faithfulness. This is how God’s “name” (reputation) is made known. Gratitude is shown not by saying “thank you” but through verbal witness.

In Psalm 116:13, there is the curious statement, “I will lift up the cup of salvation and call on the name of the LORD.” The verse seemingly does not make salvation a result of calling on God’s Name or reputation at first glance as directly as Joel 2:32 or even as the earlier v. 4 in the same psalm, where the psalmist calls on the Name and pleads for salvation. Whereas Joel promises escape for any who rely on God’s Name or reputation or power, Psalm 116:4 asks for a perhaps expected but not guaranteed rescue. Verse 13 links salvation and calling in a parallelism and v. 17 presents the psalmist’s promise to make a sacrificial offering as a sacrifice which the psalmist will augment with “calling” or prayer supposedly, unless the verse intends to make calling and sacrificing oppositional. But what does “lift up the cup of salvation” mean? The parallelism is suggestive of restatement:

A	[B]	C
The-cup-of salvation	[of- ⁷¹⁷⁷]	I-will-lift-up //
A	B	C'
And-on-the-name-that-is	⁷¹⁷⁷	I-will-call.

Why a “cup” of salvation? Isaiah 51:17 speaks of a cup of *YHWH*’s wrath, and Ezek 23:33 of a cup of ruin and the cup of Samaria. The cup of wrath is mentioned in the New Testament in Rev 14:10, which explains that any follower of the beast will “drink of the wine of God’s wrath” poured into the cup of God’s wrath. In Psalm 116 the 13th verse is preceded in v. 12 by the psalmist wondering how he can repay God for His goodness (defined earlier in v. 8 as deliverance from death). To lift up the Lord’s cup of salvation appears to be a way of vowing (cf. v. 14) he will engage in an activity of praise or worship or testimony combined with, or as an offering of, sacrifice (i.e. “calling on the Name”).³

Calling as Supplication

Calling on the name YHWH appears in the Old Testament in terms of prayer or petition or pleas for (1) God to display His power as a witness to His uniqueness; (2) healing from physical and emotional distress or disease; and (3) help or deliverance or rescue from physical death or destruction. The most pertinent passages are 1 Kings 18:24; 2 Kings 5:11; and Psalm 116:4; Joel 2:32; and Zephaniah 3:9.

For Heralding

In 1 Kings 18:24 Elijah challenges the prophets of *Ba’al* to call on the name *Ba’al* while he calls on the name YHWH to find out which God could answer. This implies that “calling on God’s name” is prayer with an expectation of some display of God’s presence, protection, or power. In this case the point of the contest was to prove or establish whether YHWH or *Ba’al* is truly God and worthy of worship. This verse reads best when “name” is understood as “reputation”: you put your trust in the reputation of your god (⁷¹⁷⁷ meaning “lord”) and I will put my trust in the reputation of YHWH (which does not mean “lord” but “Eternal One”). More exactly, Elijah tells the *Ba’al* prophets to call on the name of “your god” (i.e. that belongs to your responsible deity) and I will call on the name YHWH. Elijah most likely meant “*Ba’al*” by “your god.” Calling on the name YHWH in this instance was supplication but with a view towards unleashing a display of power from God with an apologetic purpose. The name is not magical, but Elijah needed

to exercise faith in God's reputation in order to elicit a powerful witness to His uniqueness.

In Hebrew the word for "god of" (transliterated) is **lohey* (the same root word as the Hebrew for "God," **Elohim*, showing that these are not names per se but titles, like a person is a "man" or "woman" but has a name like Bill or Suzy. YHWH is the name of the Hebrew God and it reflects his reputation as "I Am," meaning eternally existent and the Creator, not dependent on creation (separate and self-sufficient) or equal with it (pantheism). Consider Isaiah 48:12-13, "Listen to me, O Jacob, and Israel, whom I called: I am He; I am the first, and I am the last. My hand laid the foundation of the earth, and my right hand spread out the heavens; when I summon them, they stand at attention."

For Healing

In 2 Kings 5:11 a leper, Naaman, angrily complains that Elisha's method for curing him was something so "natural" as washing in a river (v. 10), when he expected something more spectacular and miraculous, like instantaneous healing by waving hands over him and calling "on the name of his God, YHWH." Naaman believed that such calling out to God was a means of supplication to secure supernatural service.

When the psalmist petitions the name (power or reputation) of YHWH in Psalm 116:4, he requests that YHWH "save me," again using the verb *שָׁמַרְתִּי*, although he interchanges it with *שָׁמַרְתָּ* (cf. v. 6). So he is looking for an escape or rescue from something painful or problematic. Within the psalm he identifies his problem as being near death physically (vv. 3, 8-9, 10b). But in v. 16 he describes his condition as being "in chains." He was seeking God for recovery from something that had a deadly grip on him. Perhaps he needed to be rescued from captivity by enemies, or alternatively from a serious war wound or illness.⁴

We cannot rule out that calling on YHWH was used or misused in a magical sense by people in Old Testament times, and some of the verses in this study may reflect such a misunderstanding on the part of the ancient Jews. But the fact that the improper use of God's name was prohibited in the 10 Commandments means that any magical appropriation of YHWH would have been generally avoided, even if certain individuals abused the regulation.⁵ Isaiah 48:1 parallels those who "take oaths in the name YHWH" with those who "invoke Israel's God," but not according to what is true (or faithful) or right (see Marlowe, 2010).⁶

For Help

Only in Joel 2:32 does it have the added claim of salvation. In that context God promises a coming time when His people will be prosperous and will "praise the name YHWH their God" (v. 26) and turn from idolatry (v. 27). God's "spirit" will cause many supernatural and geo- and astrophysical signs to occur on earth and in the heavens (vv. 28-31) and "all who call on the name YHWH will be saved" (v. 32a). Verse 32b clarifies this by explaining there will be deliverance in Jerusalem, some will escape and survive, who are called by YHWH. These are people who are spared physical death. This is help in terms of rescue from danger and death not from an illness.⁷ Notably the LXX here adds in the preaching of good news to define those who have been called.⁸ Calling on the "Lord" is equivalent to "God" as YHWH. So the name per se is not the issue but the power behind it.

In Acts 2:21 Peter interprets the "speaking in foreign tongues" event on Pentecost as what Joel prophesied. He then explains (vv. 22-36) that other Old Testament texts and recent events prove that Jesus of Nazareth is both Lord and the "Anointed One" (*Christ* < *χριστος*). The people ask what to do (v. 37) and he tells them to repent and be cleansed with water for forgiveness and they will receive a spirit of holiness (v. 38). Then he alludes to Joel 2:32b by saying the promise is for "all whom the Lord our God will call."

In Romans 10:13 Paul uses Joel 2:32a to illustrate his claim that both Jew and Gentile equally have access to God's salvation defined in vv. 9-10 as believing in the resurrection of Jesus and being justified and confessing Jesus is Lord. The word translated "save" in many English versions of Joel 2:32 is Hebrew *יָצַו* (meaning "escape") and not the more usual word *יָצַו*, ("rescue") from which comes the name Joshua (= *Ἰησους* [Jesus] in Greek).

In Zephaniah 3:9, the prophet speaks of God's promise to cleanse His people so they can call on the Name and also serve him. The context is that of God's revelation of a coming day when He will pour out His wrath on all nations (v. 8a). In fierce anger he will consume them in fire (v. 8b). True worshippers will come from foreign lands (v. 10). Proud people will be removed from Zion (v. 11) and a meek and humble remnant of Israel will remain, which will trust in the Name (v. 12). These people will be perfectly honest and ethical and fearless (v. 13). The punishment of exile is removed and the enemy defeated (v. 15). In other words YHWH will help or rescue His people after they call to Him so they can serve Him. But He purifies them *before* they call, to enable their calling on His Name (v. 9). Only the meek and humble, who trust in the Name, will be left (v. 12) because God will have removed all who are arrogant (v. 11). In these verses, serving (*עָבַד*) and trust (*יָצַו*) are intended results or parallel parts of calling on God's Name.

Calling as Service or Trust

Zephaniah 3:9 and 3:12 are to be read together although the first speaks of calling on YHWH and the latter of “trusting” in the Name. The context is about a coming time when God in wrath will consume the nations in fire (v. 8). The outcome will be purified people who can “call on the name YHWH and *serve* him” (v. 9). His people will bring offerings from distant lands (v. 10). Those in Jerusalem will be shameless because God will have removed all who are proud, leaving only those who are “meek and humble, who *trust* [תִּשְׁבָּר] in the name YHWH” (vv. 11-12).

Other Similar Old Testament Expressions

Several other expressions in the Old Testament are related to or similar to the idea of calling on the name YHWH. These are (1) called by the Name (Deut 28:10); (2) fear the Name (Psa 102:15; Isa 59:19); (3) take oaths in the Name (Isa 48:1); (4) love the Name (Isa 56:6); and (5) Praise the Name (Psa 122:4).

*Called by the Name***Deuteronomy 28:10**

God tells Israel he will establish the nation as “set apart” or distinguished from others, as he swore he would, *if* the people obey his commands (v. 9). If they do then the other nations will realize they are “*called by* the name YHWH” and will fear *them* (v. 10). They will prosper and be looked up to by all others (vv. 11-13). Chronologically this verse comes after Abraham and Isaac called on the name YHWH in worship through sacrifices and before all other Old Testament verses about calling on the Name. This is before Israel’s failure in Canaan as a nation to be a light of God’s revelation. To a small degree, Israel was identified with *Yahweh*’s powerful reputation and was feared at first, but it did not last very long.

Joel 2:32b

The last half of Joel 2:32 is interesting and of note here because it mentions the “survivors whom YHWH calls.” Of course this text does not fit chronologically with the Deuteronomy passage just described. The former has to do with the emerging nation of Israel in Canaan with the promise and potential of reflecting *Yahweh*’s reputation; the latter in Joel has to do with a time after Israel’s disobedience and dispersion as a nation when God will restore its fortunes (Joel 3:1) nationally and spiritually. Dispersion will be turned to deliverance (תִּשְׁבָּר) for those in Jerusalem, but only for the “called” survivors of some “dreadful day” (Joel 2:30-32).⁹

*Fear the Name***Psalm 102:15**

Psalm 102 has wording reflective of Joel 2. *Yahweh* will have compassion on Zion one day and rebuild it (vv. 13, 16). In verse 15 the nations will “fear [יִרְאוּ] the name YHWH,” which the following parallel line redefines as “[fear God’s] glory [i.e. his significance].” So this psalmist foresees a time when Gentiles will reverence YHWH for his qualities. Also the text goes on to say God will answer the prayers of the poor (v. 17), which is possibly another way to say that all classes of society can call on YHWH and be rescued from ruinous conditions. The psalmist says to record the following words for a later generation (v. 18a): a new “nation” (גוֹי) is being created (סִיְיָ) and it will praise (יְהַלֵּל) *Yah* (an abbreviation for YHWH; v. 18b).¹⁰ Praise and prayer are both emphasized and as seen are ways of calling on the Name.¹¹

Isaiah 59:19a

In line with Psalm 102:15, Isaiah speaks in 59:19a of a time when people from east and west will “fear” (יִרְאוּ), honor or reverence, the name YHWH.¹² As in Joel 2, YHWH will take revenge on his enemies (vv. 17-18) and “redeem” those in Jerusalem (Zion) who repent of disobedience (v. 20). This is also a time when God says his רוּחַ (spirit/breath/wind) will be an essential aspect of the covenant with these “believers” (v. 21a). In verse 21b there is a hint of evangelism and missions in the statement that God’s words must not be lost for all generations. In verse 19b, as with similar words in Joel 2 (see n. 2 above), the image of a coming Divine flood or river driven by *Yahweh*’s breath or spirit¹³ is not to be read in a destructive sense, because the immediate context is that of praise and repentance.¹⁴ Consider Isaiah 60:1-3,

Arise, shine; for your light has come,
 and the glory of the LORD has risen upon you.
 For darkness shall cover the earth,
 and thick darkness the peoples;
 but the LORD will arise upon you,
 and his glory will appear over you.
 Nations shall come to your light,
 and kings to the brightness of your dawn.

In both Psalm 102 and Isaiah 59 “fearing the Name” is poetically parallel with “revere His glory.”¹⁵ The emphasis is on honoring *Yahweh*’s importance or value, his “glory” or weight. This has some connection in these contexts with some

Gentiles coming to honor the Name. While Zion is promised renewal, God will redeem or avenge only those who repent (ostensibly Jew or Gentile). So there is a missionary application.

Take oaths in the Name

Isaiah 48:1-2 addresses those “called by the name Israel,” who boast citizenship of Jerusalem (the “holy city”) and claim to rely on God, as those who “make oaths by the name YHWH” and “invoke *Elohim*,” whose name is expanded to be יהוה צבאות (YHWH of hosts”), although with faithless motives. Accessing God’s Name here (i.e. calling on God) is characterized as identification with and intercession on behalf of YHWH. That this appropriation of *Yahweh*’s powerful reputation is abused points to insincere vows and suggests a possible magical use of the Name for financial gain.¹⁶

Love the Name

In Isaiah 56:6 we read of foreigners who follow YHWH in order to “minister” (לְעֹבְדוֹתָי), “love” (לְאַהֲבֵהוּ) the Name, “serve” (לְעַבְדוֹתָי) him, keep the Sabbath, and observe the covenant stipulations. *Yahweh* declares in v. 7a that he will allow such faithful people to pray and offer sacrifices in or at his “house of prayer” in Jerusalem (his “holy hill”). As a result God’s temple will be known as a “house for prayer for all nations” (v. 7b). This passage perhaps colors our understanding of calling on the Name as devotion and dedication. Those who called upon YHWH and escaped destruction in Joel were not just crying out in desperation but trusting him and had already demonstrated their love and loyalty by deeds.¹⁷

Jeremiah 7:11 is thought to be behind Jesus’ accusation against the temple marketers of being robbers. The prophet quotes God as asking the Israelites: “Do you really have the gall to commit serious sins and follow false gods and still enter the house that bears His Name with a clear conscience thinking you are safe from His judgment, thinking you can just keep sinning with impunity?” (vv. 9-10). He then asks rhetorically in v. 11a: “Has this house, which is called by my name, become a den of robbers in your sight?” Jesus’ selective and creatively combined use of these Old Testament texts underlines that God’s Name is associated with his presence in the temple and, therefore, his nature or attributes. Coming to the temple of his Name involves prayer, foremost (i.e. calling on his Name, ostensibly), but the petitioner is expected to be lovingly devoted to YHWH and loyal to his laws. Otherwise the consequence is distance from God rather than salvation (vv. 14-15).

Praise the Name

Psalm 122:4 describes Jerusalem (because of the temple) as a place where the Israelite tribes belonging to YHWH go to “praise [יָדָה ‘cast forth’] the name of the LORD according to the statute given to Israel.”¹⁸ Many English versions have the verb “praise” as a translation of Hebrew יָדָה, but this may be made more exact. Other terms are more normal for “praise” in general. Possibly incorrect is the translation of this verb by “give thanks.” The texts, especially in the Psalms, where we read “thanks” have to do with testimony. The psalmist vows to give a public and vocal witness of what YHWH has done, how he has helped or healed him. So this term has more the usage of “confess” in the sense of witness or testimony.¹⁹

To publicly acknowledge God’s goodness or greatness is praise, but a specific kind. With this in mind we can envision such public and vocal testimony or witness as a kind of proclamation of good news about YHWH. No one stood up to sing a song or relate an experience in which the news was that God had failed him (at least we never see this in the psalms, which are basically about praise or public recognition of God’s deeds of deliverance).

Conclusion*Calling on the Name in Seth’s Day*

What can all this tell us about what was going on when people “began to call on the name YHWH” during the period of the birth of Seth’s son Enosh? By the way Gen 4:26b literally says, “then he began to call.” Probably in view is Seth or Enosh, as representative of the lineage expanded in Chapter 5, highlighting people with long, godly lives descended from Seth (see *The New Oxford Annotated Bible*, 2001: 17, and n. 4:17-26; Shuckford, 1819: 37; *HALOT*, s.v. קָרָא; and Newman, 1984:33).²⁰ The impression is (since YHWH was known before) that these righteous people increasingly cried out to YHWH for help and safety because life on earth was quickly becoming more dangerous and deadly. Amazingly violence came on the scene almost immediately with the emergence of the human race and quickly multiplied. The story (whatever its origin or literary genre) has the first child murdering his brother, the first sibling (Gen 4:8). When banished he was fearful for his own life (4:14). The emergence of cities hints at territorial disputes (4:17). The forging of “tools” could signify weapons (4:22). Lamech, a descendant of Cain, kills someone for a reason not worthy of death (4:23), and he like Cain was fearful, but even more, of reprisals (4:24). Right after this the reader is reminded of the murder of Abel and informed of the birth of Seth and his son Enosh, at which point the author or a later editor points out that calling on the name YHWH “began” or was reinstated or continued.²¹ Garlington has connected Gen 4:26 to prayer: “Akin to

the ‘word’ is the ‘name’ of Yahweh, by which the Israelite not only swears, but prays, blesses, takes refuge, and conquers (e.g., Gen 4:26; 13:4; 1 Sam 20:42; 2 Sam 6:18; 2 Kgs 2:24)” (Garlington, 1995: 146).

Calling on the Name in the Old Testament

Our survey of “call on the name YHWH” and similar statements in the Old Testament has shown that it can be summarized as trust in or reliance upon YHWH. One who calls out to YHWH petitions him for adoration, proof of his power, healing, or help in order to escape death or danger. The only promised result is escape from destruction (Joel 2:32). A prerequisite is purity (Zeph 3:9). In both Genesis and Psalms sacrificial worship involves calling to YHWH. Later in the time of the united kingdom of Israel, calling on the Name is focused on requests for supernatural witness and wellness. The main outcome of such prayer is service of or for God.

Regarding Old Testament expressions similar to “call on the Name” there are promises of receiving God’s favor and of renewal, along with acceptance and security. The results can be evidence of *Yahweh’s* presence and power (which has a ring of cross-cultural outreach, especially when we notice that some of these texts emphasize the fact that some Gentiles will also fear YHWH (cf. Deut 28:10; Joel 2:32b; Isa 48:1; 56:6; Psa 102:15).

Calling on the Name for Christians

First, moderns make a big mistake when they pray literally in a “name” like Jesus, assuming the use of the name itself invokes great power in an almost magical way. To pray in the name of God in Old Testament terms, or Jesus in New Testament terms, means to make petition trusting in what the name represents as to the person’s attributes. The “name” has no power only the person. To call on someone’s name in biblical terms means to rely on that person’s abilities.

Second, Peter once and Paul twice in the New Testament make use of an Old Testament text where “call on the name YHWH” appears. Peter and Paul both use Joel 2:32. For them the words had a spiritual application to Jesus as the Lord of salvation. The Greek text of the Old Testament, which had translated YHWH with “*κύριος*,” gave them the chance to make an apologetic appropriation of Joel as meaning whoever believes in Jesus as the Anointed One and Lord will have his sins forgiven (Acts 2:38a). Peter like the Old Testament prophets also made repentance a command, although this time “in the name Jesus Christ.” Unlike the Old Testament, *baptism* (*βαπτισθήτω*) was added. Paul taught the need to “confess that Jesus is Lord and believe in his resurrection from the grave” to become righteous and be saved

(Rom 10:9-10; cf. vv. 5-8). This is interesting in light of the earlier discussion about how the word "thanksgiving" (Hebrew תודה), related to Old Testament worship or praise settings, actually means "to confess" or "to give [public] witness" to how God had saved someone from death or damage or defeat, proving he is a God who hears prayers and cares to help. Such confession is related to public testimony and thus to missions. Significantly as well, Paul goes on in 10:11 (as already in 9:33) to remind his readers that another Old Testament text says, "No one who believes in him will be put to shame" (v. 11), and then stresses that this applies to Jew and Gentile (v. 12; cf. 10:1). Here he quotes from Isa 28:16 in the LXX because, unlike the Hebrew passage, it contains "in him" and the verb "trusts." Paul's approach reinforces our contention that calling on YHWH can essentially be understood as prayer or pleas for help by one believing in or relying upon God (see Cullmann, 1964: 17-18).²² That the Old Testament background offers a basis for missions or evangelism is shown when Paul next, and right after quoting Joel 2:32 (in 10:13), asks the believers in Rome, "But how are they to call on one in whom they have not believed? And how are they to believe in one of whom they have never heard? And how are they to hear without someone to proclaim him? And how are they to proclaim him unless they are sent?" (Rom 10:14-15a). He follows this immediately with a proof text from Isa 52:7 or Nahum 1:15, "How beautiful are the feet of those who bring good news!"²³ For Isaiah and Nahum the good news was God's promise to defeat Assyria, but for Paul these words were applicable to illustrate that Christian evangelists are essential and are to be esteemed.

Third, Paul also, in relation to calling on the Name, quotes Psalm 116:10 in 2 Cor 4:13a. Having said in Rom 10:9 one must believe *in his heart* the resurrection of Jesus to be saved, here he says (based on the words "believe" and "speak" in Psa 116:10) that "with that same spirit of faith we also believe and therefore speak" (2 Cor 4:13b). He follows this with an assurance that the knowledge of our own resurrection will have the benefit of more people being reached with God's grace (4:14-15). As a final thought, calling on the name YHWH, may be summarized nicely by Psalm 34:6,

A

B

This afflicted person called, and YHWH listened; //

A'

B'

And from all his distress

He [YHWH] delivered him.

Appendix: Accessing “The Name YHWH” in the Old Testament

The Name YHWH	Promise of name	Reference OT
Call on	(wanting)	Gen 4:26b
		Gen 12:8
		Gen 13:4
		Gen 26:25
		Psa 116:13
		Psa 116:17
		Gen 21:33
		1 Kgs 18:24
		2 Kgs 5:11 <i>(cf. Ps 116)</i>
		<i>purity</i> <i>[safety]</i>
	(wanting)	Psa 116:4 <i>(cf. vv. 6, 13)</i>
	<i>escape</i>	Joel 2:32
Other related or similar expressions		
Called by	<i>avored by God and feared</i>	Deut 28:10 (cf. Joel 2:32b)
	<i>Zion will be rebuilt</i>	Psa 102:15
Fear (= Honor)	<i>Zion to be avenged (redeemed?)</i>	Isa 59:19

Appendix: Accessing "The Name YHWH" in the Old Testament

Context/Content (parallelisms)	NT Use of OT
Sethite lineage	(Psa 116:10 in 2 Cor 4:13)
<u>Sacrificial worship</u> (lift up "cup of salvation" // call) (sacrifice // call)	
Request for <u>power display</u>	
Expectation of <u>healing</u>	
Promised purification to call on and <u>serve</u> <u>God</u> ; <i>preservation of those who trust in Name</i>	(wanting)
Plea to <i>escape</i> death (ישע/מלט) in face of deadly foe	(wanting)
Promise of <i>escape</i> (מלט) from death in a time of trouble	Acts 2:21; Rom 10:13
Other related or similar expressions	
Promise of blessings for obedience which is proof of YHWH's power and presence (<i>cf. Isa 48:1</i>)	(wanting)
David deathly ill and being ridiculed, cries to God for help and extols him as the One whom nations will fear (fear YHWH // revere His glory)	(102:25-27 in Heb 1:10-12)
(fear YHWH // revere His glory) No one works for justice so God will punish sinners causing fear of God and avenge (redeem?) Zion for those who repent of sin	(59:7-8 in Eph 6:14-17; 59:17 in 1 Thess 5:3; 59:20-21 in Rom 11:26-27)

The Name YHWH	Promise of name	Reference OT
Take oaths in (= rely upon)	<i>(wanting)</i>	Isa 48:1 <i>(cf. Dt 28:10)</i>
Love (= Devotion to)	<i>will be accepted</i>	Isa 56:6
Praise (= Proclaim)	<i>security</i>	Psa 122:4 et al.

Context/Content (parallelisms)	NT Use of OT
(called by name Israel // come from line of Judah—take oaths in the Name <i>YHWH</i> // invoke the God of Israel— call yourself citizen // rely on God—) Isaiah presents God as saying such people have rebelled as foretold	(wanting)
Foreigners who obey the covenant will be allowed to pray and sacrifice in Zion [house of prayer for all nations]	(56:7 in Matt 21:13; Mk 11:17; Lk 19:46)
Going o the temple to pray for the peace of Jerusalem	(wanting)

End Notes

¹ While most translations say something like “then men began to call,” the verb has 3ms subject. The only antecedent is Seth or Enosh. There is no “mankind” in the context to which the “he” can refer, unless one considers the line of Seth listed in 5:1f. 4:26b ends Chapter 4 but may or may not be directly linked to Enosh or Seth. Enosh is the most likely antecedent grammatically. John Bright’s history is typical of commentary that usually fails to mention this. Bright explains this verse as evidence of YHWH having been worshiped since the dawn of time. The name un-pointed (not vocalized) and unpronounced YHWH by Jewish tradition is best translated as “the Eternal One” (cf. *The Voice Bible*; www.hearthevoice.com; assuming the root is the verb הָיָה “to be/exist,” suggesting the sense of self existence and absolute independence from contamination by the material world in light of God’s “I am” statement to Moses in the Old Testament and Jesus’ “I am” claims to divinity in the New Testament [although *Yahweh* implies “he is” or “he will be”]).

² Unless otherwise noted, all quotations from the English Bible are from the NRSV (*New Revised Standard Version*), copyrighted, 1989 by the Division of Christian Education of the National Council of the Churches of Christ in the United States of America. Accordance Version 3.0.

³ Psalm 116:10a, also a difficult verse to translate, is used by the author of 2 Corinthians 4:13. Literal renderings like the KJV are unclear: “I believed, therefore I have spoken.” Paul uses this introductory phrase of the verse (*ἐπίστευσα, διὸ ἐλάλησα*) to capture the idea of speaking by faith. The NRSV I think captures the psalmist’s meaning: “I kept my faith, even when I said, ‘I am greatly afflicted.’” LXX (*New English Translation of the Septuagint*, NETS; 115:1b) has “I believed; therefore I spoke, but I, I was brought very low” (not taking the last phrase as what was spoken). Regardless it is clear Paul is not saying the psalm is predictive of his experience but illustrative of the need to live by faith and trust in God (call on his Name) in the midst of times of persecution, especially because for Paul the resurrection is a future certainty (v. 14). He may approach the concept of calling to God as an offering of praise or testimony when he says in v. 15, “Yes, everything is for your sake, so that grace, as it extends to more and more people, may increase thanksgiving, to the glory of God.”

⁴ In Acts 19:13 “Then some itinerant Jewish exorcists tried to use the name of the Lord Jesus over those who had evil spirits, saying, ‘I adjure you by the Jesus whom Paul proclaims.’” These expressions should be read as “the name ‘Jesus’ who is Lord” and “the name ‘Jesus.’” The verse tells of Jewish exorcists who tried to use Jesus’ name as magic to cast out “evil spirits.” In the first-century an illness like epilepsy would have been diagnosed as demon possession, and many illnesses were thought to be caused by “demons.” We even today speak of dealing with our “personal demons” metaphorical of psychological and emotional struggles. The point here, though, is that a name or reputation of power was being invoked for healing.

⁵ The prohibition of “taking God’s name in vain” (Exod 20:7a), meaning never to use it in a meaningless way or to abuse it, was never intended to stop the use of God’s name completely, as eventually developed in the Jewish world and then was copied by Christians (probably because of the absolute warning in 20:7b that whoever does misuse the Name will certainly be held guilty). The worst abuse would

be the total nonuse of a name given to his people that reminds them of his nature as the I Am (if that is the real basis for the name as many believe, but of course we cannot be sure because of the practice that developed of no longer speaking or fully spelling the name, leading to the loss of its pronunciation or vocalization and thus the loss of its etymology and lexicology). Related to this is the fact that the Name is YHWH not "God." God is WHAT He is, YHWH is WHO He is. So technically to misuse the name requires using YHWH not God. To make it impossible the Jews erased the memory of how to say the name. If we took the same approach to overeating we would all starve. YHWH appears to be based on the verb הָיָה or הָיָה , the verb "to be." The prefixed י in Hebrew is 3ms. But that makes it mean "He will be" or "He is" not "I am." Still God's revelation to Moses of Himself as the I Am, and Jesus' linking of himself to it suggests the Name has something to do with "existence," hence for God "eternal existence" or "self-existence," i.e. being the Creator making all else creation and dependent on him not vice versa. He is in no way limited by creation.

⁶ The Hebrew word אֱמֻנָה often rendered "truth" more precisely has to do with faithfulness, not "truth" in our modern sense of factuality.

⁷ The conditions are not described as necessarily dangerous as is typically taught. The pouring out of the "spirit" (causing dreams and visions) is seemingly parallel with the awesome signs in the heavens and on earth. These are not necessarily "dreadful" as the *New International Version* (NIV) translates "fearful day" in v. 31. This day comes after the signs and the signs or "wonders" (v. 30) seem to go along with the work of God's S/spirit leading to visions. The blood, fire, smoke, and color changes in the sun and moon (v. 30b-31a) are not necessarily dreadful and deadly, since or if they are part of this time of spiritual outpouring. Even the later "fearful day" may be awesome in a positive sense, at least for those who trust in YHWH, in that they will escape while the other nations (those that scattered Israel) will be judged by God (vv. 2:32-3:2). Cf. Psalm 102.

⁸ This appears to be a Christianization of the text since εὐαγγελίζομενοι is introduced by the translator or editor, meaning "the good news is being preached." This is in the Greek text instead of "among the survivors" in the MT. What is 2:32 in English versions is 3:5 in the MT (Masoretic Text) and LXX (Septuagint).

⁹ See note 2 above. The "fearful [אֲדִמָּה] day" (v. 31) is preceded by the "wonders" (מוֹפְתֵי) God displays above and on the earth, but by how long is not stated. So it could be soon or very long after these signs. These wonders are related to the pouring out of "my spirit" (v. 28a) on young and old, man and woman. People will have visions and dreams (v. 28b), so the "signs" may occur only psychologically.

¹⁰ The word *hallelujah* is a transliteration, not a translation, of the Hebrew command, "praise Yahl! [הַלְלוּ-יְהוָה]" *Hosanna* (often confused as an expression of praise) means "Save us now!"

¹¹ Verses 25-27 of this psalm are used by the author of the Book of Hebrews in the New Testament (Heb 1:10-12). In this chapter the author of Hebrews sets forth God's son, Jesus, as the creator and heir of all things. He cites Old Testament texts to support his superiority over "angels" (1:4-14; Greek ἄγγελος means "messenger"). In this section he quotes the Greek Old Testament version of Psa 102:25-27. In the Hebrew text the afflicted psalmist cries out to

YHWH to help him (vv. 1-11) in a time of great distress physically and emotionally (being taunted by enemies who “use my name as a curse”; v. 8). In vv. 12-22 he extols YHWH as one who is widely feared and will restore Zion, where his name will be proclaimed (לְפָאֵר) with praise (הִלֵּל < הִדְלִיף). Here we have an anticipation or foreshadowing of the proclamation or preaching of news about *Yahweh*’s character and conduct with a cross-cultural or international concern. In 23-28 the psalm ends with the psalmist’s request not to cut his life short since *Yahweh*’s existence is perpetual (with his hands he established the land and worked out the skies, which will change and perish while he remains unchanging always; vv. 25-27). The author of Hebrews chooses the Greek version because, unlike the Hebrew, it includes the expression “O Lord” in v. 25, which he can apply to the Lord Jesus Christ. The son of God (although the psalm attributes this creation to YHWH, the Father God).

¹² Some Hebrew manuscripts read, “they will see” (רָאוּ instead of רָא). Cf. also Psa 102:15.

¹³ A God-breathed river is perhaps a useful imagery to help explain the God-breathed (θεόπνευστος) writings in 2 Tim 3:16. The Greek of Isa 59:19 speaks of God’s anger as the interpretation of His רוּחַ (“spirit,” “breath”). θυμῶν (“anger; soul; spirit; sorrow; mind”) is used to translate Hebrew רוּחַ (“spirit”; “breath”; “wind”).

¹⁴ Isaiah 59:7-8 is used in Rom 3:15-17; 59:17 in Ephesians 6: 14, 17 (cf. 1 Thess 5:8); and 59:20-21a in Romans 11:26b-27. Paul, in Rom 3, speaks of both Jews and Gentiles equally as sinners and uses citations of phrases from Psalms as well to illustrate his point. In Isa 59 the prophet describes how seriously sinful Israel had become, which had separated her from God (vv. 2-8), but he is still able and willing to hear prayer and rescue and restore the nation (v. 1), despite its loss of justice and truth (vv. 9-15). He will intervene to punish evil nations and come to Zion as a Redeemer of all who repent, who will come from east and west not just Israel (vv. 16-20). In Eph 6 Paul picks up on the imagery of military armor in v. 17 and uses it to illustrate how a believer can stand strong against demonic temptation. In Isa 59, YHWH wears this armor to bring deliverance to Israel. He wears a breastplate of righteousness, helmet of salvation, garments of vengeance, and a cloak of zeal. Paul tells believers to wear a belt of truth, breastplate of righteousness (v. 14), shoes for the good news of peace (v. 15), shield of faith (v. 16), helmet of salvation, and sword of the Spirit (which is the word of God). “Word of God” cannot be interpreted as the Bible since there was not even a New Testament in Paul’s day, but it might refer to the Old Testament. More likely it refers to any direct command from or guidance of God. Note he calls it a sword “of the S/spirit.” This “spirit” may be the Holy Spirit or the believers’ attitude towards obedience to God’s laws. We see also in Paul’s use of Isa 59 an added emphasis on peace which comes from spreading good news or the Gospel of Christ, whereas in Isa 59 YHWH takes zealous vengeance against the nations. In Rom 11:26b-27, Paul focuses on the verses in the Greek psalm (LXX) where YHWH says he will come to bring judgment and justice (vv. 16-20 + v. 21a) to support his claim that “all Israel will be saved” (11:26a). He uses only vv. 20-21a and freely paraphrases v. 21. He uses the Old Testament text to explain that Israel will have its sins “taken away” (a phrase he adds, found in neither MT nor LXX), but the verses in Isaiah 59 (20-21) speak of Israel repenting of sins and *Yahweh*’s covenant to maintain spirituality and revelation. The covenant for Paul in Rom 11:27 is the removal of Israel’s sins.

¹⁵ "Fear the name YHWH" is very similar to the expression in Proverbs 1:7, "the fear of YHWH." In both cases *Yahweh's* reputation character is the object of such honor. In some wisdom contexts this fear is parallel with divine ordinances or teachings or closely related to wisdom or we could say "revelation." See Job 28:28; Psa 19:9; 111:10; Prov 1:7; 2:5; 9:10; 15:33. If "fear the Name" is made too distinct from "fear YHWH" then the use of the Name could be interpreted to have magical powers.

¹⁶ See above in relation to Acts 19:13 and Isa 48:1.

¹⁷ Isaiah 56:7bii is used in Matthew 21:13 (cf. Mk 11:17; Lk 19:46). After overturning the tables of marketers in the temple, whom he called thieves (cf. Jer 7:11), Jesus quoted the first part of the last phrase of Isa 56:7 (which matches the Greek OT text), "my house will be called a house of prayer." In Isaiah 56 the statement is in the context of YHWH announcing the imperative of justice, rightness, and Sabbath keeping because His salvation (שׁוּבָה) and righteousness (used in parallel) are soon to be revealed (vv. 1-2). Foreigners and eunuchs need not feel excluded or useless if they have devoted themselves to YHWH (v. 3). If they are obedient to God's commands, especially Sabbath observance, including love for what YHWH signifies (i.e. devotion to His name), they will be rewarded with access to the temple sacrifices and its prayer life (vv. 4-7a).

¹⁸ The "regulation given" could be Deut 12:5-6 and/or Psa 81:3-5.

¹⁹ See Lev 5:5; 16:21; 26:40; I Kings 8:33; Ps 6:6; 7:18; 9:2; 18:50; 28:7; 30:5, 10, 13; 32:5; 33:2; 35:18; 42:6, 12; 43:4-5; 44:9; 45:18; 49:19; 52:11; 54:8; 57:10; 67:4, 6; 71:22; 75:2; 76:11; 79:13; 86:12; 88:11; 89:6; 92:2; 97:12; 99:3; 100:4; 105:1; 106:1, 47; 107:1, 8, 15, 21, 31; 108:4; 109:30; 111:1; 118:1, 19, 21, 28-29; 119:7, 62; 122:4; 136:1-3, 26; 138:1-2, 4; 139:14; 140:14; 142:8; 145:10.

²⁰ The standard critical approach is to explain this as a non-Priestly tradition about the beginning of the use of the name YHWH. The Priestly tradition locates the start of using this divine Name in the time of Moses (cf. Ex 6:2-6). See, e.g., the commentary in the notes of *The New Oxford Annotated Bible*. Although never taken too seriously, some have suggested the word translated "began" (הָלַל) could rather be a homograph meaning "profane" or "despise." The 3ms pronoun, however, if attached to a Sethite would not work, since that line was faithful to *Yahweh*. If somehow related to some "people" (per most translations for some reason) then it could read that some despised calling on *Yahweh* in contrast to Seth and his line (but since the Sethite line is what immediately follows in Chapter 5, the odds are that this godly line is meant to illustrate how Seth's lineage trusted in God's reputation as the Eternal One [YHWH]). On this note, one might also observe how the root הָלַל also is a word for "play the flute." So an unusual proposal, in light of a worship or prayer motif for 4:26b, and the invention (?) of the flute in 4:21, is "then he played the flute and called on the name *Yahweh*." Either way the point is that the line of Seth trusted in *Yahweh* in contrast to the line of Cain (which earlier in Chapter 4 is not given long lives and is characterized as polygamous, polytheistic, and violent, as the "followers of the gods" and the "fallen ones" in Chapter 6, who are a contrast to righteous Noah in the following passages, who like the Sethite Enoch, "walked with God" (6:9; cf. 5:24). The view that "sons of God" in Gen 6:2 are "sons of Seth" is based on coupling this verse with 5:24 and John 1:12.

²¹ The Hebrew text says, “he began [לְהוֹדוֹת < לְהַלִּיף] to call” although versions tend to translate “people began to call.” Cf. LXX οὐτος ἤλπισεν ἐπικαλεῖσθαι τὸ ὄνομα κυρίου τοῦ θεοῦ (“this one hoped to call on the name of [the?]Lord, of the God”; Vulgate: “iste coepit invocare [‘that one began to call’]”). It could be that the “caller” is Enosh and the point being made is that he as the patriarch of one branch of Adam’s lineage was one who decided to trust in YHWH (perhaps a subtle clue that Cain had taken another route religiously). Notably this comment is followed immediately by an account of Adam’s lineage (5:1-32, with examples of godly people, indicated by long lives), culminating with Noah (who was favored by YHWH and a most righteous and blameless man in his generation; 6:8-9). And by great contrast 6:1-7 describes how wicked the world had become and underlines crimes of violence (rape and warfare; cf. 6:11). The word translated “began” is a *bophal* of the root לָהַל I, which can mean “begin” or “profane.” But that the comment is meant to describe Seth and not the population in general (either as followers or enemies of YHWH) is proven by the 3ms form of the verb which has Seth as its antecedent. Only in the *hiphil* and *bophal* does this root mean “begin” (see *HALOT*, s.v. לָהַל). Perhaps one could say Enosh “started” or “continued” to call on YHWH since ostensibly his ancestors had been following YHWH (unless there is the suggestion such worship had stopped but he reinstated it).

²² Cullmann supports this emphasis on prayer in relation to asking in Jesus’ name (cf. John 14:13; 15:16; 16:24).

²³ The good news in Isaiah 52:7 was that YHWH is King and will rescue Israel from bondage in Assyria which mocks *Yahweh’s* name or reputation because his people seem helpless. But a time is coming when YHWH will roll up his sleeves and make his people understand his “name” (i.e. recognize his true nature) by returning to Zion, delivering his people (as he did from Egypt), and punishing the nations (52:4-10). God’s servant, Israel, will astonish the nations when so exalted since it is so unexpected (52:13-15). The good news in Nahum 1:15 was that Judah’s affliction would end and Nineveh’s yoke would be broken, never again to invade Judea (1:12-15).

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