

Word Warriors

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Calling on Jesus as Yahweh

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*“And it shall come to pass
that whoever calls on
the name of the LORD
shall be saved.”*

Joel 2:32

As Apostolic Christians we baptize invoking the name of Jesus (Acts 2:38). In doing so, we are calling on the name of the LORD (Acts 22:16). This tradition does not exist in a vacuum. In other words, the disciples did not just invent this tradition of calling on the name of Jesus at baptism. They believed Jesus to be more than a man indwelt by God’s Spirit. They believed that He Himself was the One True God of the Old Testament.

The following New Testament references speak about “calling on the name of the Lord.”

Acts 2:21; 9:14; 22:16

Romans 10:12-14

1 Corinthians 1:2

In the New Testament, the apostles of Jesus preached that “whoever calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved” (Acts 2:21; Romans 10:13). Peter does so while quoting Joel 2:32, in which the prophet Joel used the name Yahweh (YHWH, “the tetragrammaton,” the Old Testament name of God). YHWH was and is read as *adonai* in Hebrew and was translated as *kurios* in Greek by the Jews to avoid profaning the sacred name of God. Both *adonai* and *kurios* mean “Lord,” and in many English Bibles YHWH is translated as

“LORD” in all capital letters. This always refers to Yahweh God (incorrectly translated Jehovah in the past).

When Peter and the other New Testament authors preached about “calling on the name of the Lord,” it was the same as saying “calling on the name of the LORD,” capital L.O.R.D. or Yahweh, the one true God of Israel.

Compare those New Testament references with these Scriptures from the Old Testament:

Genesis 4:26; 12:8; 13:4; 21:33; 26:25

Exodus 34:5

1 Kings 18:24- 27

2 Kings 5:11

1 Chronicles 16:8-9

Psalms 79:6

Psalms 80:18; 99:5-6; 105:1; 116:4, 13, 17

Isaiah 12:4; 41:25; 64:7; 65:1

Jeremiah 10:25

Lamentations 3:55-56

Zephaniah 3:9

Zechariah 13:9

In all of these passages, the one called upon is believed to be God. They did not call on the name of an especially endowed man, or one they believed to just be a human being or a high-ranking angel.

Specifically, the Israelites believed that they were calling on the one true God, Yahweh.

The saving authority vested in calling on the name of the Lord is partially rooted in the fact that He has the power to save, a power that comes from Him being God. Now, when we call on the name of Jesus, in baptism, we are calling on the name of the LORD, capital L.O.R.D. because Jesus is, just as His name suggests, Yahweh who saves.