

# "THE NAME"

## IN PREPOSITIONAL PHRASES IN THE NEW TESTAMENT

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The purpose of this article is to cite and classify all passages in the New Testament in which *to onoma* "the name" is used in the dative case, without preposition, and in phrases governed by the prepositions *en, eis, epi, huper, dia* (with accusative and genitive), and the improper preposition *heneka* (variously spelled: cf. Arndt & Gingrich).

There is no need to develop here the Biblical meaning and use of "the name of . . ." in terms of its relation to the bearer of the name. One need only consult articles on the subject, such as the ones in Richardson (ed.) *A Theological Word Book of the Bible*, J. J. Von Allman (ed.) *A Companion to the Bible*, or the recently published *The Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible* (vol. III, pp. 500-508). The name does not simply designate its bearer: in a very real sense the name stands for the revealed character of the person, so much so that it may be hypostatized and quasi-personified, assuming thereby authority and efficacy of its own.

The following classification is directed mainly toward the translator's needs. The differences posited are not always sharp and fast, and often a given passage is patient of two or more different interpretations. In every passage cited the exact Greek construction will be quoted, in transliterated form, to enable the translator the more easily to pursue the subject, if he so desires.

### I. Goal or object

In these passages "the name" is used as the direct goal or object of the action expressed by the verb.

1) Mt. 12:21 "the Gentiles will hope in his name" (simple dative *tô onomati*; LXX Is. 42:4 has *epi tô onomati*): the Servant himself is the object of the Gentiles' hope.

2) The same meaning is to be found in the expression "believe in his name" (*eis to onoma autou*) in Jn. 1:12, 2:23, 3:18, 1 Jn. 5:13; in 1 Jn. 3:23 the simple dative (*tô onomati*) is employed. Here it is Jesus, as the Word or the Son of God, who is the object of faith; notice the parallelism between "believe in him" and "believe in the name of the only Son of God" in Jn. 3:18 a, b. (Here attention should be called to Ac. 3:16 *kai epi tê pistei tou onomatou autou* "and by faith in his name," *tou onomatou* being objective genitive; it is usually assumed, though the passage itself does not explicitly state it, that the faith spoken of here was the healed cripple's faith; some interpret it, however, to mean the apostle's faith.)

3) In Rom. 15:9 "I will sing to your name" (simple dative *tô onomati sou*) is a quotation from Ps. 18:49 (LXX 17:50), where "the

name" is the object of the song, as the personal pronoun "you" is the object of the praise in the preceding parallel line; likewise Heb. 13:15 "lips that confess his name" (simple dative *tô onomati autou*).

4) Under this category may also be listed the passages in which the verb "to baptize" is followed by "the name" governed by three prepositions: by *epi*, Ac. 2:38 (where some witnesses have *en*); by *en*, Ac. 10:48; by *eis*, Mt. 28:19, Ac. 8:16, 19:5, 1 Cor. 1:13, 15. Some commentators establish a difference in meaning between the three, seeing in *en* the meaning 'on the authority of', in *epi* 'resting upon' or 'devoted to' (the person of Christ), and in *eis* 'with regard to' (cf. *IDB* vol. III, 507a). These distinctions have not been generally adopted by translators, however; cf. Silva New's valuable study "The Name, Baptism, and the Laying on of Hands" (in *The Beginnings of Christianity*, vol. V, *Additional Notes*, pp. 121-140) where it is stated that New Testament usage hardly affords sufficient ground for a difference of meaning between the three phrases (p. 123, n. 3). In the baptismal formula it would seem that "the name" represents the one to whom the one being baptized is being dedicated; he "becomes the possession of and comes under the protection of the one whose name he bears; he is under the control of the effective power of the name and the One who bears the name" (A & G *onoma* I.4.c.β; cf. Moulton & Milligan *Vocabulary*, *onoma* (5); Adolf Deissmann *Bible Studies*, p. 147). The meaning may be expressed by "into union with" or "to the service of" or something similar (notice the phrase *baptizein eis*: Christ, Gal. 3:27; Christ Jesus and his death, Rom. 6:3; Moses, 1 Cor. 10:2). So against those people in the church in Corinth who would claim "I am of Paul" Paul protests, "Were you baptized *eis to onoma* of Paul? . . . Let no one say he was baptized in my name (*eis to emon onoma*)" (1 Cor. 1:13, 15), with Paul, that is, as the object and goal of the rite of baptism. Christ, in whose name, or for whose name, we are baptized, is its only proper object or goal.

## II. Purpose

Although in some instances it may be that there is no significant difference between object and purpose, under this heading are included those passages in which "the name" represents the purpose of the action expressed by the verb, in terms of "in behalf of" or "for the sake of."

1) Under this category are included those passages which speak of suffering or dying *hyper tou onomatos*: Ac. 9:16 "I will show him how much he must suffer for the sake of my name"; Ac. 5:41 "... rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer dishonor for the name" (i.e. for Christ, or for the Gospel; some see in the use of "name" here a technical term for the Christian faith); in Ac. 15:26 Barnabas and Paul are described as "men who have risked their lives for the sake of the name of our Lord Jesus Christ"; and in Ac. 21:13 Paul declares

his willingness "to die in Jerusalem for the sake of the name of the Lord Jesus."

2) In 3 Jn. 7 the writer speaks of the Christian missionaries "who went out *huper tou onomatos*": unless this is a semi-technical use of "the name" for the Christian faith, it is certain, from the use of "the name" in the New Testament, that it is the name of Jesus Christ for whose sake the missionaries went forth in service (cf. NEB's paraphrase "It was on Christ's work that they went out"; Revised Segond *Car c'est pour le Nom (du Seigneur) qu'ils sont partis*); it is not God's name, as RSV has it ("for his sake" has as antecedent "God's service" of the preceding verse).

3) In Rom. 1:15 the phrase is related to Paul's call and commission as an apostle, whose purpose is "to bring about the obedience of faith among all nations *huper tou onomatos autou*." It would seem that the phrase here means that Paul's task as an apostle is carried out "for the sake of" or "in behalf of" the name of Christ (cf. A & G *onoma* I.4.c.ϑ "the activity of the apostle takes place to the honor of his name"). It does not seem, therefore, that the idea of representation, as expressed by NEB "in his name" is quite accurate (cf. also Revised Segond *pour amener, en son nom, à l'obéissance de la foi toutes les nations*).

4) In Mt. 18:20 Jesus speaks of those who "come together in my name" (*eis to emon onoma*). For two or three to gather together in the name of Christ means for them to come together for his sake, *i.e.* to call on him, or to pray to him, or to honor him, or to serve him—however the purpose be defined.

5) In like manner may be understood the phrase in 1 Cor. 5:4, if "*en tô onomati* of the Lord Jesus" is taken with the following "as you meet together" (*sunachthentôn humôn*): so NEB "you all being assembled in the name of our Lord Jesus" (cf. also A&G *onoma* I.4.c.γ "meet and call on the name of the Lord Jesus = as a Christian church"); some, however, take it with the preceding *kekrika* "I have judged" of verse 3, in which case the phrase "in the name of the Lord Jesus" means "by the authority of" (to be included under VI); so RSV "I have already pronounced judgment in the name of the Lord Jesus on the man who has done such a thing."

6) Perhaps under this category should be included Heb. 6:10, in which the author speaks of "the love which you showed *eis to onoma autou*," that is, "for his (God's) name." This may be (a) the love the readers demonstrated in their past and present service for the saints "for God's sake" (cf. RSV, NEB); or (b) it may be love shown for God himself, in which case the phrase would have "the name" as the object of the readers' love (category I) (cf. ASV; Revised Segond *l'amour que vous avez montré pour son nom*); A&G (*onoma* I.4.c.β) also mention the possibility, founded on a formula found in

Hellenistic legal and commercial language, that the phrase may be taken to mean "to the account (over which the name stands)" whereby the author indicates that his readers' "deeds of love, although shown to men, are dedicated to God." It is hard to make a final decision here. Moffatt (*Commentary ICC, in loc.*), who favors "for his sake," cites the use of *l'shem* in *Pirke Aboth* 2.16, as well as the formula "*eis onoma* of Jesus Christ" (with *dechomai* "to receive") in Ignatius *Romans* 9.3.

### III. Attendant circumstances

Under this category are included those passages in which the phrase plays the role, rather vaguely, to be sure, of some sort of accompanying circumstance, not to be identified precisely with goal, or purpose, or agency. As Moule (*Idiom Book*, 57) remarks, the dividing line between "accompaniment" and "instrumentality" is thin, so that differences of opinion here, as elsewhere, are inevitable.

1) In Phil. 2:10 "to bend the knee *en tō onomati* of Jesus" means to render due homage when Jesus' name is sounded; presumably this is the sense intended by the English "that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow" (RSV, NEB) (cf. A&G *onoma* I.4.c.γ).

2) In a similar fashion may be understood the phrase in Jas. 5:14 "anoint with oil *en tō onomati* of the Lord"—to anoint while calling on the name of the Lord (cf. A&G *los. cit.*); or this passage might be taken to indicate means (category IV), since the action is in the nature of a healing, effected "by means of" the name.

3) Eph. 5:20 "to give thanks to God the Father *en onomati* of our Lord Jesus Christ". Here, too, means might be understood.

4) In this category may be included the passages in John 14-16 where Christ speaks to the disciples about their requests (*aiteō*) to the Father *en tō onomati mou* "in my name": Jn. 14:13, 14, 15:16, 16:24, 26. In all instances the request is made to the Father, except in 14:14 where the better attested reading is "If you ask me anything in my name I will do it" (*me* as object of the verb is included by P66 (P75 has lacuna here),  $\aleph$ , B, W,  $\vartheta$ , and others; Nestle and TT include it; W&H have it in brackets; RSV and NEB (on the strength of D, *it*, Koiné mss.) omit it; cf. Barrett *Commentary in loc.*). To make a request "in the name of Jesus is, of course, to do it in the quality, or status, of his disciples. On these passages R. Abba (article in IDB, vol. III, 507b) remarks: "Here it is associated with the mystical faith-union concept of the Fourth Gospel . . . and has the meaning of being rooted in Christ. Hence prayer in his name is prayer that is prompted by the mind of Christ and in accordance with his character."

### IV. Agency or instrumentality

Under this more precise category "in the name of" represents the means by which an action is performed.

1) Here are included exorcisms, cures, miracles and "works" per-

formed "in the name", which means they are performed by means of the power, or authority, conferred by him whose name is used. In the case of exorcisms, the demons are expelled *en tō onomati* of Jesus: Mk. 9:38//Lk. 9:49; Mk. 16:17; in Lk. 10:17 the seventy return with joy to Jesus, saying, "The demons are subject to us *en tō onomati sou*"; in Mt. 7:22b many will report to the Lord on Judgment Day, "by your name (simple dative *tō sō onomati*) we cast out demons"; Paul also exorcises the evil spirit *en onomati* of Jesus Christ, Ac. 16:18 (cf. also Ac. 19:13: the peripatetic Jewish exorcists attempted to exorcise demons by "naming the name (*onomazein to onoma*) of the Lord Jesus over those possessed by evil spirits, saying, 'I adjure you by the Jesus whom Paul preaches!'").

Peter commands the lame man at the Temple to walk "*en tō onomati* of Jesus Christ the Nazarene" (Ac. 3:6); when questioned by the Sanhedrin "By what power, or by what name (*en poiō onomati*) did you do this?" (4:7), he replies that the cure was performed "*en tō onomati* of Jesus Christ the Nazarene" (4:10). (Perhaps Jas. 5:14 should be added here: cf. III.2 above.)

On Judgment Day many will report to the Lord, "by your name (simple dative *tō sō onomati*) we performed many miracles" (Mt. 7:22c); in Mk. 9:39 Jesus refers to any one "who does a miracle in my name (*epi tō onomati mou*)." In Jn. 10:25 Jesus explains to the unbelieving Jews, "The works I do *en tō onomati* of my Father, these bear witness to me."

2) In Col. 3:17 Paul exhorts his readers to "do everything *en onomati* of the Lord Jesus."

3) On Judgment Day many will report to the Lord, "by your name (simple dative *tō sō onomati*) we prophesied" (Mt. 7:22a).

4) In Ac. 9:27, 28 Barnabas reports to the apostles in Jerusalem how Paul had spoken boldly (*eparrēsiastos*) in Damascus "*en tō onomati* of Jesus," and in Jerusalem Paul continued his bold speaking (*parrēsiazomenos*) "*en tō onomati* of the Lord."

5) In Jn. 17:11, 12 Jesus prays the Father to keep his disciples *en tō onomati sou*; for he himself, while with them, had kept them *en tō onomati* of the Father; cf. NEB "protect them by the power of thy name . . ."

6) The name of Jesus is the only name on earth by which (*en hō*) we can be saved (Ac. 4:12); it is *en tō onomati* of Jesus that we may have life (Jn. 20:31); it is *en tō onomati* of the Lord Jesus Christ that we have been washed, sanctified and justified (1 Cor. 6:11).

7) The same meaning of instrumentality, or means, is expressed by *dia tou onomatos*: signs and wonders are accomplished through the name of God's holy servant Jesus (Ac. 4:30); forgiveness of sins is received through the name of Jesus (Ac. 10:43); Paul exhorts his Corinthian readers through the name of our Lord Jesus Christ (1 Cor. 1:10).

## V. Cause

The preposition *dia* followed by the accusative normally indicates the cause, or reason, for the action expressed by the verb. It is normally assumed that the cause is prior to the action of the verb; this assumption, however, is by no means axiomatic, and only the context of the passage will determine whether the cause, or reason, lies in the past or future.

1) Jesus warns his disciples that they will be hated *dia to onoma mou* "because of my name" (Mt. 10:22, 24:9. Mk. 13:13, Lk. 21:17), by which is meant that men will hate them because they are his disciples, or follow his teachings, or preach his message—however the reason be stated. Again in Jn. 15:21 Jesus tells his disciples that the world will persecute them *dia to onoma mou* "on account of me." The Christians at Ephesus are commended for their patient endurance *dia to onoma mou* "on my account" (Rev. 2:3; cf. Revised Segond *à cause de mon nom*; RSV and NEB have "for my sake," normally expressed in Greek by *huper tou onomatou mou*—see examples under II.1, above).

2) In like manner the improper preposition *heneka* expresses cause: Jesus speaks of those who may leave family or possessions *heneken tou emou onomatou* "because of my name," "on my account" (Mt. 19:29; notice parallel Mk. 10:29 has *heneken emou* "on account of me"), which is to say because of their dedication to him as Master; the disciples are warned that they will be persecuted and brought to trial *heneken tou onomatou mou* "on account of me" (Lk. 21:12), again because of their being his disciples.

3) Sins are forgiven *dia to onoma auto* "because of his (*i.e.* Jesus') name" (1 Jn. 2:12; RSV, NEB "for his sake"). Who Jesus is and what he has done is the reason for God forgiving us our sins.

4) In Mk. 9:41 the construction is slightly different: "Whoever gives you a cup of water to drink *en onomati hoti Christou este*," which is generally understood to mean "because you are Christ's" (cf. A&G *onoma* II, and commentary in *Mark Translator's Handbook in loc.*). The same meaning is expressed in the similar Mt. 10:42, "Whoever gives one of these little ones even a cup of cold water *eis onoma mathêtou*" "because he is a disciple"—that is, the little one to whom the cup of cold water is given.

5) The same construction *eis onoma tinos* occurs twice in Mt. 10:41, "Whoever receives a prophet because he is a prophet (*eis onoma prophêtou*) . . . whoever receives a righteous man because he is a righteous man (*eis onoma dikaiou*) . . ."; cf. Moulton and Milligan *Vocabulary, onoma* (5).

6) Mt. 18:5//Mk. 9:37//Lk. 9:48 speak of receiving a child *epi to onomati mou* "on account of my name," *i.e.* "because of me." Here the meaning is that the welcome is extended the child because of the re-

lation that exists between the one who welcomes and Jesus; he does it in his capacity as a disciple of Christ.

7) In 1 Pe. 4:14 the writer pronounces a blessing on those who are reviled *en onomati Christou*. This may be understood as cause, "because of Christ's name," i.e. because they are Christians; or it may be understood as purpose, "for Christ's sake, "on Christ's behalf" (category II). Selwyn (*Commentary, in loc.*) favors the former, pointing to the obvious similarity between this and the saying of Christ reported in Mk. 13:13 and parallels (see 1 above).

8) The meaning of the phrase in 1 Pe. 4:16 is not quite so obvious: "If any one suffers as a Christian, he is not to be ashamed, but he is to glorify God *en tô onomati toutô*." Moule (*Idiom Book, 78*) supports Selwyn's interpretation, "by virtue of bearing this name, i.e. the name of Christian," the preposition *en* denoting "the sphere in which" (as in 1:2, 3:16). RSV's "under that name let him glorify God" probably is intended to mean "let him glorify God in his capacity as a Christian"; cf. Revised Segond *qu'il glorifie plutôt Dieu à cause de ce nom*; Jerusalem Bible *qu'il glorifie Dieu de porter ce nom*; A&G *onoma* II "let him glorify God in this capacity" (i.e. as a Christian).

9) There is a textual problem in Jn. 16:23, whose solution will determine how the phrase *en tô onomati mou* is to be understood. Nestle (and Westcott & Hort, TT, RSV), on the basis of the older manuscripts, reads, "If you ask anything of the Father, he will give it in my name"; the later manuscripts have changed this unusual statement by placing "in my name" before "he will give it to you," so that it falls in line with the other statements in this Gospel about "asking the Father in my name" (cf. III.4 above). Although clearly secondary, this transposition of the clause has been adopted by NEB; Bernhard (*ICC in loc.*), while conceding the priority of the more unusual order of clauses, argues that "in my name" goes with "ask" and not with "send." His argument is rather unconvincing, and the translator must attempt to understand what is meant by the statement that "the Father will give it to you in my name." A&G (*onoma* I.4.c.  $\gamma$ ) suggest "(the Father) will give you, when you mention my name." Ordinarily the quality, or relation, denoted by the phrase "in my name" attaches to the subject of the verb, not its object; there are instances, however, where it is the object of the action of the verb to which "in my name" applies (cf. Mk. 9:41, Mt. 10:41, 42 in V.4,5 above). Here, then, the meaning would be "The Father will give it to you because you are my disciples"; or (in line with "ask in my name"), "the Father will give it to you because you have asked for it in my name".

## VI. Representation

In this category are included those passages in which the phrase denotes more than attendant circumstances, or purpose, in terms of

"on behalf of," "for the sake of." The meaning "as a representative of" is not required by the meaning of the prepositional phrase itself, but by the context of the action expressed in the passage.

1) Here are to be classified the passages based on Ps. 117(118):26, "Blessed is he who comes in the name (*en onomati*) of the Lord" (Mt. 21:9, 23:39, Mk. 11:9, Lk. 13:35, Jn. 12:13; a bit differently in Lk. 19:38, "Blessed is the king who comes in the name of the Lord"). "To come in the name of the Lord" is to come as his representative, or his messenger, to proclaim his message or do his work.

2) The same meaning is expressed in Jn. 5:43, "I have come *en tō onomati* of my Father, and you did not receive me; if another comes in his own name (*en tō onomati tō idiō*), you will receive him." Jesus here claims to have come under his Father's authority, with his commission, as his representative, in contrast with those who come on their own.

3) Here also is to be included Jesus' warning against the impostors who will come *epi tō onomati mou* saying, "I am he" (Mk. 13:6//Mt. 24:5//Lk. 21:8). It is clear that they lie, but they will claim to come speaking as Christ's messengers and, in fact, claim that they themselves are the awaited Messiah.

4) The prophets who spoke *en tō onomati* of the Lord (Jas. 5:10), spoke as his accredited messengers, with his authority and commission; Peter and John (Ac. 4:17, 18) and later on all the apostles (Ac. 5:28, 40) are ordered by the Sanhedrin not to speak or teach *epi tō onomati* of Jesus. The Sanhedrin, of course, had no way of knowing whether or not the apostles truly spoke as the representatives of Jesus; but they were determined to prevent them from claiming that role, or authority.

5) In Lk. 24:47 the resurrected Christ tells his disciples that "repentance leading to the forgiveness of sins is to be preached *epi tō onomati* of the Christ to all nations." This preaching is to be done by those who speak for, or with the authority of, the Messiah.

6) In 2 Th. 3:6 Paul commands his readers *en onomati* of the Lord Jesus Christ, that is, as an authorized spokesman for the Lord.

7) Christ promises his disciples that the Father will send the Holy Spirit *en tō onomati mou* (Jn. 14:26). In the very nature of the case the meaning here would not be that the Father would do this under the authority or commission of Jesus, but that the Holy Spirit, the "other Paraclete" (*allos paraklētōs*, 14:16), would be sent to do the work of Christ, to carry on his ministry. Barrett comments: "perhaps, 'because I ask', or 'to act in relation to me, in my place, with my authority'."

Attention may be called here to Ac. 15:14, 17: James refers to Peter's report on how God had visited the Gentiles "to take from them a people *tō onomati autou*," which would mean "a people for himself," or, as NEB has it, "a people to bear his name" (cf. Revised Second *un peuple (consacré) à son nom*); this, James continues, happened in



accordance with what Amos had said about "all the Gentiles upon whom my name is called" (*eph' hous epikeklêtai to onoma mou ep' autous*, from LXX Amos 9:12); cf. also Jas. 2:7 "... the good name which is called upon you" (*to kalon onoma to epiklêthen eph' humas*). The phrase indicates possession.

## NEW TESTAMENT PASSAGES CITED

<i>Matthew</i>		19:38	VI.1	4:17f	VI.4	<i>Philippians</i>	
7:22a	IV.3	21: 8	VI.3	4:30	IV.7	2:10	III.1
7:22b, c	IV.1	21:12	V.2	5:28	VI.4	<i>Colossians</i>	
10:22	V.1	21:17	V.1	5:40	VI.4	3:17	IV.2
10:41	V.5	24:47	VI.5	5:41	II.1	<i>2 Thessalonians</i>	
10:42	V.4	<i>John</i>		8:16	I.4	3: 6	VI.6
12:21	I.1	1:12	I.2	9:16	II.1	<i>Hebrews</i>	
18: 5	V.6	2:23	I.2	9:27f	IV.4	6:10	II.6
18:20	II.4	3:18	I.2	10:43	IV.7	13:15	I.3
19:29	V.2	5:43	VI.2	10:48	I.4	<i>James</i>	
21: 9	VI.1	10:25	IV.1	15:14, 17	p. 80	5:10	VI.4
23:39	VI.1	12:13	VI.1	15:26	II.1	5:14	III.2
24: 5	VI.3	14:13	III.4	16:18	IV.1	<i>1 Peter</i>	
24: 9	V.1	14:14	III.4	19: 5	I.4	4:14	V.7
28:19	I.4	14:26	VI.7	19:13	IV.1	4:16	V.8
<i>Mark</i>		15:16	III.4	21:13	II.1	<i>1 John</i>	
9:37	V.6	15:21	V.1	<i>Romans</i>		2:12	V.3
9:38	IV.1	16:23	V.9	1: 5	II.3	3:23	I.2
9:39	IV.1	16:24	III.4	15: 9	I.3	5:13	I.2
9:41	V.4	16:26	III.4	<i>1 Corinthians</i>		<i>3 John</i>	
11: 9	VI.1	17:11f	IV.5	1:10	IV.7	7	II.2
13: 6	VI.3	20:31	IV.6	1:13	I.4	<i>Revelation</i>	
13:13	V.1	<i>Acts</i>		1:15	I.4	2: 3	V.1
16:17	IV.1	2:38	I.4	5: 4	II.5		
<i>Luke</i>		3: 6	IV.1	6:11	IV.6		
9:48	V.6	3:16	I.2	<i>Ephesians</i>			
9:49	IV.1	4: 7	IV.1	5:20	III.3		
10:17	IV.1	4:10	IV.1				
13:35	VI.1	4:12	IV.6				