

*If **my people**, who are **called by my name**, shall humble themselves, and pray, and seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways; then will I hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin, and will heal their land. Now my eyes shall be open, and my ears attentive, to the prayer that is made in this place. (2 Chronicles 7:14-15)*

*I will walk among you, and will **be your God, and you will be my people**. I am Yahweh your God, **who brought you forth** out of the land of Egypt, **that you should not be their slaves**; and I have broken the bars of your yoke, and **made you go upright**. (Leviticus 26:12-13)*

The children of **Israel** were the **chosen people** of God as descendants of Abraham who first received the promise directly from God and entered into **covenant** with Him. It is **this covenant** that is being referred to here in **God's answer to Solomon** in response to his prayer of dedication of the temple built for God's honor. As we look at references throughout Scripture where God refers to those **called 'my people'**, there is often **linked another phrase** essential for appreciating the **kind of relationship** God has in mind for **His people**. It is **not a legal, obedience-dependent** relationship, but rather a **mutual commitment of love and trust** where **God takes the initiative** and invites His people into **perceiving their identity from His perspective**.

*Behold, the days come, says Yahweh, that I will **make a new covenant** with the house of Israel, and with the house of Judah: not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day that I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt; which my covenant they broke, although **I was a husband to them**, says Yahweh.*

*But **this is the covenant** that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, says Yahweh: **I will put my law in their inward parts**, and in their heart will I write it; and **I will be their God, and they shall be my people**: and they shall teach no more every man his neighbor, and every man his brother, saying, Know Yahweh; for **they shall all know me**, from the least of them to the greatest of them, says Yahweh: for I will forgive their iniquity, and their sin will I remember no more. (Jeremiah 31:31-34)*

*When they came to the nations, where they went, **they profaned my holy name**; in that **men said of them, These are the people of Yahweh**, and are gone forth out of his land. But **I had regard for my holy name**, which the house of Israel had profaned among the nations, where they went. Therefore tell the house of Israel, Thus says the Lord Yahweh: **I don't do this for your sake**, house of Israel, **but for my holy name, which you have profaned** among the nations, where you went. **I will sanctify my great name, which has been profaned** among the nations, which **you have profaned** in the midst of them; and the **nations shall know that I am Yahweh**, says the Lord Yahweh, **when I shall be sanctified in you** before their eyes.*

*For **I will take you** from among the nations, and **gather you out** of all the countries, and will **bring you into** your own land. I will **sprinkle clean water on you**, and **you shall be clean**: from all your filthiness, and from all your idols, will I **cleanse you**. A **new heart** also will I **give you**, and a **new spirit** will I **put within you**; and I will **take away the stony heart** out of your flesh, and I will **give you a heart of flesh**. I will **put my Spirit within you**, and **cause you to walk in my statutes**, and you shall keep my ordinances, and do them. **You shall dwell** in the land that I gave to your fathers; and **you shall be my people, and I will be your God**. (Ezekiel 36:20-28)*

*Thus says Yahweh of Armies: "Behold, **I will save my people** from the east country, and from the west*

country; and ***I will bring them, and they will dwell in the midst of Jerusalem; and they will be my people, and I will be their God, in truth and in righteousness.***" (Zechariah 8:7-8)

Far from being a legal relationship where identity is based on compliance to rigid expectations and regulations, God longs for us experience how much we are loved without lapse all the time. To be called by His name means we believe that Christ has already given us our identity, and that is a saved identity. To call on the name of God is to believe what God says about our identity, live and thrive in a consensual relationship of intimate love and trust as we consent for His Spirit to transform us into His likeness.

*Now the Lord is the Spirit and where the Spirit of the Lord is, **there is liberty.** But we all, with unveiled face **beholding** as in a mirror **the glory** of the Lord, **are transformed into the same image** from glory to glory, even as **from the Lord, the Spirit.*** (2 Corinthians 3:17-18)

Behold, how great a love the Father has bestowed on us, that we should be called children of God! For this cause the world doesn't know us, because it didn't know him. Beloved, now we are children of God, and it is not yet revealed what we will be. But we know that, when he is revealed, we will be like him; for we will see him just as he is. Everyone who has this hope set on him purifies himself, even as he is pure. (1 John 3:1-3)

*But now thus says Yahweh who created you, Jacob, and he who formed you, Israel: "Don't be afraid, for I have redeemed you. **I have called you by your name.** You are mine. When you pass through the waters, **I will be with you**; and through the rivers, they will not overflow you. When you walk through the fire, you will not be burned, and flame will not scorch you. **For I am Yahweh your God, the Holy One of Israel, your Savior.***

*I have given Egypt as your ransom, Ethiopia and Seba in your place. Since **you have been precious and honored in my sight, and I have loved you**; therefore I will give people in your place, and nations instead of your life. **Don't be afraid; for I am with you.** I will bring your seed from the east, and gather you from the west. I will tell the north, 'Give them up!' and tell the south, 'Don't hold them back! Bring my sons from far, and my daughters from the ends of the earth-- **everyone who is called by my name**, and whom I have created for my glory, whom I have formed, yes, whom I have made.'"* (Isaiah 43:1-7)

*For I will pour water on him who is thirsty, and streams on the dry ground. I will pour my Spirit on your seed, and my blessing on your offspring: and they will spring up among the grass, as willows by the watercourses. One will say, '**I am Yahweh's**;' and another will be **called by the name of Jacob**; and another will write with his hand '**to Yahweh**,' and honor the name of Israel."*

*This is what Yahweh, the King of Israel, and his Redeemer, Yahweh of Armies, says: "I am the first, and I am the last; and besides me there is no God. **Who is like me?** Who will call, and will declare it, and set it in order for me, since I established the ancient people? Let them declare the things that are coming, and that will happen. **Don't fear, neither be afraid.** Haven't I declared it to you long ago, and shown it? **You are my witnesses.** Is there a God besides me? Indeed, there is not. I don't know any other Rock." (Isaiah 44:3-8)*

Thus says Yahweh to his anointed, to Cyrus, whose right hand I have held, to subdue nations before

*him, and **I will loosen the armor** of kings; to open the doors before him, and the gates shall not be shut: **I will go before you**, and make the rough places smooth; **I will break in pieces the doors** of brass, and **cut in sunder the bars** of iron; and **I will give you the treasures** of darkness, and **hidden riches** of secret places, **that you may know that it is I, Yahweh, who call you by your name**, even the God of Israel. For Jacob my servant's sake, and Israel my chosen, I have called you by your name: I have surnamed you, though you have not known me. I am Yahweh, and there is none else; besides me there is no God. I will gird you, though you have not known me; that they may know from the rising of the sun, and from the west, that there is none besides me: I am Yahweh, and there is no one else. (Isaiah 45:1-6)*

It is vital to keep in mind **this context** before attempting to decipher the **following passages** that cause **consternation** and false fears about God. The following verses are primarily **addressed** to people who would **question** that **God was behind** the activities of **Cyrus** in his overthrow of Babylon. Cyrus was a **pagan**, and people loyal to God often **take issue** with any idea that **God might view** those we consider **godless** and enemies of God and relate to them as **also one of His chosen** people.

***I form the light, and create darkness; I make peace, and create evil.** I am Yahweh, who does all these things. Distill, you heavens, from above, and let the skies **pour down righteousness**: let the earth open, that it may **bring forth salvation**, and let it **cause righteousness to spring up** together; I, Yahweh, have created it. **Woe** to him who **strives with his Maker** – a potsherd among the potsherds of the earth! Shall the clay ask him who fashions it, "**What are you making?**" or your work, "**He has no hands?**" Woe to him who says to a father, "**What have you become the father of?**" or to a woman, "**With what do you travail?**" (Isaiah 45:7-10)*

I form the light – I mold light for my purpose. (Form – to mold, squeeze into shape for a purpose.)

I create darkness – I fill in the void of light called darkness. (Create is not the best translation of the Hebrew word here. The ancient meaning for this word for 'create' meant to separate or fatten or to fill in a void. The word can also mean to 'cut down' or dispatch. This parallels Genesis 1:3-6 and relays that the important thing happening is the separating of truth from lies, light from darkness, good from evil. Jesus in John 3:19 defines judgment as simply bringing light to darkness.)

I make peace – I advance peace. (This word to make means to bear, to bring forth, advance, fulfill.)

I create evil – my light exposes and separates evil. (The same Hebrew word used in relation to darkness above is used here and has the same implications. God's light of truth exposes and segregates evil from what is true and good and right. God is never the author of evil, for His light is what causes it to be seen for what it actually is.)

*Thus says the LORD, the Holy One of Israel, and its Maker: **Will you question me about my children, or command me concerning the work of my hands?** I made the earth, and created humankind upon it; it was my hands that stretched out the heavens, and I commanded all their host. **I have aroused Cyrus in righteousness, and I will make all his paths straight**; he shall build my city and set my exiles free, **not for price or reward**, says the LORD of hosts. (Isaiah 45:11-13 NRSV)*

'After these things I will return. I will again build the tent of David, which has fallen. I will again build

*its ruins. I will set it up, That the rest of men may seek after the Lord; **All the Gentiles who are called by my name**, Says the Lord, **who does all these things**. (Acts 15:16-17)*

However God's firm foundation stands, having this seal, "The Lord knows those who are his," and, "Let every one who names the name of the Lord depart from unrighteousness." (2 Timothy 2:19)

*He who overcomes, I will make him a pillar in the temple of my God, and he will go out from there no more. I will **write on him the name of my God**, and the name of the city of my God, the new Jerusalem, which comes down out of heaven from my God, and **my own new name**. (Revelation 3:12)*

*I saw, and behold, the Lamb standing on Mount Zion, and **with him** a number, one hundred forty-four thousand, **having his name**, and the **name of his Father**, written on **their foreheads**. (Revelation 14:1)*