Blessed be the name of our Lord Jesus. Welcome, let’s learn together from the Bible.

In the Bible, God did not change people’s names based on the meanings of their names. It is crucial to understand this, as failing to do so may lead the enemy to cause you distress over the meaning of your name. If you don’t understand how God works, you may be swayed by various teachings and ideologies that only bind people rather than set them free, burden them instead of relieving them.

> *John 8:36 says, “So if the Son sets you free, you will be free indeed.”*

Let’s now examine a few individuals in the Bible whose names were changed and look at the meanings of their names before and after the change. This will help us understand God’s character more clearly.

1. Abraham

Abraham’s original name was Abram, which means “Exalted

Father.” His new name, Abraham, means “Father of many nations.”

> *Genesis 17:5 says, “No longer will you be called Abram; your name will be Abraham, for I have made you a father of many nations.”*

God didn’t change Abraham’s name because the first name had a bad meaning no! The original name was actually good. Being called “Exalted Father” is not a bad name at all. However, when God made His covenant with Abraham, promising that he would be the father of many nations, God changed his name to Abraham. The name change was a result of the purpose and calling God had for his life.

2. Sarah

Sarah was Abraham’s wife and was initially called Sarai, meaning “Princess.” Her name was changed to Sarah, which means “Mother of Nations.”

> *Genesis 17:15 states, “God also said to Abraham, ‘As for Sarai your wife, you are no longer to call her Sarai; her name will be Sarah.’”*
> *Her name wasn’t changed because it had a bad meaning, but because of God’s promise. God promised that Abraham would be the father of many nations, and Sarah would be the mother of many nations and kings. Just as a child matures into a parent, her name change reflected her new role as the mother of nations.*

3. Jacob

Jacob, the son of Isaac, had his name changed from Jacob to Israel. The name “Jacob” means “Supplanter” or “Heel holder,” because when he was born, he was holding onto his brother’s heel (Genesis 25:26). The name Israel means “Struggles with God” or “Prevails with God.”

> *Genesis 32:28 says, “Then the man said, ‘Your name will no longer be Jacob, but Israel, because you have struggled with God and with humans and have overcome.’”*
> *Jacob’s name wasn’t changed because the meaning of his name was bad. It was changed after he wrestled with God and overcame. The change in his name reflected the new purpose*

> *and promise God had for him. If the meaning of the name was the issue, then the Apostle James (who was also called Jacob) would also have had his name changed. But his name remained the same, and he continued faithfully serving as an apostle of Jesus.*

4. Peter

Peter was originally called Simon.

> *In John 1:42, it says, “And he brought him to Jesus. Jesus looked at him and said, ‘You are Simon, the son of John; you will be called Cephas’ (which, when translated, is Peter).”*

The meaning of the name Simon is “He has heard,” while the meaning of Cephas/Peter is “a small stone to throw,” not “rock.”

> *Matthew 16:18 records Jesus saying, “And I tell you that you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of Hades will not overcome it.”*

Jesus didn’t change Simon’s name because it had a bad meaning. The name change was linked to the purpose and role Simon would play in the work ahead, where he would be used by God as a foundational part of the church. Jesus chose to call him “Peter,” which signifies the role Peter would play in the establishment of the church.

5. Saul (Paul)

Finally, let’s look at the Apostle Paul, who was originally called Saul. The meaning of “Saul” is “Asked for” or “Prayed for.” His name was changed to Paul, which means “Small.”

> *Acts 13:9 states, “Then Saul, who was also called Paul, filled with the Holy Spirit, looked straight at Elymas and said…”*

God didn’t change Saul’s name because the meaning was bad. In fact, in a worldly sense, “Saul” might sound like a better name than “Paul.” But the name change reflected the work God had planned for him, which would require Paul to humble himself and

become small in his own eyes for the service ahead.

> *In Ephesians 3:7-8, Paul says, “I became a servant of this gospel by the gift of God’s grace given me through the working of his power. Although I am less than the least of all the Lord’s people, this grace was given me: to preach to the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ.”*

The Importance of Our Names

The Bible clearly shows that God changed people’s names based on their purpose, calling, or the covenant God made with them, not because their original names were inherently bad. The name change often signified a new role or a promise from God. However, it’s important to note that the meaning of your name isn’t what determines your relationship with God. It is your faith and obedience that matter.

> *Revelation 20:12 says, “And I saw the dead, great and small, standing before the throne, and books were opened. Another book was opened, which is the book of life. The dead were judged according to what they had done as recorded in the*

> *books.”*

This passage reminds us that our actions, not the meaning of our names, are what matter in the end. God judges based on our deeds, faith, and obedience to His will, not on the names we carry.

In conclusion, changing your name after getting saved is not necessary. If you feel led by God to change your name, that’s fine, but remember that God does not look at the meaning of your name to decide your destiny. What matters is your relationship with Him and how you live out His calling in your life.

May we focus on living according to God’s will, just as those in the Bible did, and trust that He is with us in every step, regardless of our names.

Maranatha!

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