Question:
Is it appropriate for God’s people to call others by animal names? For example, saying, “Hey hyena, come here,” like how Jesus referred to Herod as a “fox” in Luke 13:32.

Answer:
In the Bible, we see people being called by various animal names, such as “wolves” (Matthew 7:15), “sheep” (John 10:27), and “serpents” (Matthew 13:34). Other animal names used include “fox,” “dove,” “pig,” “lion,” and “goat.”

It’s important to understand the context and intent behind these names. These terms were not meant as insults, mockery, or disrespect. Rather, they were used to describe a person’s character or behavior accurately.

For example, when Jesus called Herod a “fox,” He did not intend to insult or demean him. Instead, He was pointing out Herod’s cunning and predatory nature—like a fox that sneaks around and preys on smaller animals. This was evident even at the time of Jesus’ birth when Herod sought to kill Him (Luke 13:32).

So, if someone is described in such a way because of their

behavior, it is not a curse or insult according to the Bible.

However, when people use animal names to insult, mock, or show disrespect driven by hatred or anger, that is forbidden in Scripture and is sinful.

For instance, saying, “Hey hyena, come here,” clearly reveals anger, disrespect, or hatred behind the words.

Consider these verses:

> *Ephesians 4:29 (NIV):*
> *“Do not let any unwholesome talk come out of your mouths, but only what is helpful for building others up according to their needs, that it may benefit those who listen.”*

> *Colossians 3:8 (ESV):*
> *“But now you must put them all away: anger, wrath, malice, slander, and obscene talk from your mouth.”*

Matthew 5:22 (ESV):
“But I say to you that everyone who is angry with his brother will be liable to judgment; whoever insults his brother will be liable to the council; and whoever says, ‘You fool!’ will be liable to the hell of fire.”

Therefore, guard your tongue. Always consider the intention behind every word you speak.

May the Lord bless you.

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