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English 115

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1. **Power in Names**
   * 1. Names in the Bible hold power and are used to; secure an affiliation with God; they are used as indicators of a new beginning and as a way to declare one’s authority.
   1. **Discuss the evidence – the specific passages you used or references from *The Bible and Its Influence* which you used to support your claim**

**EVIDENCE**

1. An example of this is between Abram and Abraham. The two names belong to the same person. The reason for the name change is to name Abraham father of nations.

**PASSAGE**

In the Hebrew Bible it is written of Abram's name change dubbed by the God. During this time Abram is walking alongside the God when the God makes the proclamation, “‘ As for me, this is my covenant between me and you: You shall be the ancestor of a multitude of nations. No longer shall your name be Abram, but your name shall be Abraham, for I have made you the ancestor of a multitude of nations… I will establish my covenant between me and you...’”(Gen. 17:4-9)

**EXPLANATION**

When the God names Abraham the father of nations he gives him a promise and secures his affiliation to God. God had promised him a son and that Abraham would father nations. In the passage God himself dubs Abraham and creates the beginning of the covenant. Creating a bond between God and a name. This is emphasized by the way that God takes ceremony with giving Abraham his name, announcing it and explaining as to why. The name change in itself is incredibly important because God makes it known to all in this way that Abraham and God have a covenant and illustrates Abraham's fate.

1. Sarah was a woman who couldn’t have children, until the God made it so. This was a new beginning for her as a woman, wife and mother. To symbolize the change in her life. She is now to be the mother of nations with her own new title and new purpose in the eye of God and her name is Sarah.

**PASSAGE**

The God is speaking with Abraham about the place of his other sons and their mothers’ fate. Then he tells Abraham that Sarai too shall receive a new name.

“‘As for Sarai your wife you shall not calle her Sarai, but Sarah shall be her name… kings of people shall come from her’”(Gen 17:15-17)

**EXPLANATION**

In the passage the God does not tell Sarah directly of her new purpose, rather he tells Abraham the news. The God does not suggest that either of them **could** call each other new names but that they **shall** call each other by different names. The God creates a new name and life for Abraham and Sarai with new names to show a new beginning

**3)** Names have great power and authority amongst the people. For this purpose the God has names to all who he favored and decreed either King or promising a covenant. Though the true power of a name is shown with the use of the God’s name. There are many different ways to mention it according to the Hebrew Bible: Yahweh, the God, or the Lord. The name of the God himself is so sacred and powerful that its mere mention by Moses was enough for the Egyptians to follow.

**PASSAGE**

In the book of Exodus in the Hebrew Bible Moses does not know how to convince the people of Israel to follow him or even believe that he is following the word of the God. God tells him “‘’I AM WHO I AM… Thus you shall say to the Israelites, ‘I Am has sent me to you ’”

**EXPLANATION**

The authority that is created by this passage is incredible. The God does not tell Moses to use his name specifically rather the sheer reference of the God is deemed enough to bring the Israelites to listen to Moses. As proven by the phrase “I AM WHO I AM” the God has used this to marker a new name for himself. This emphasizes the overall power teh God has over his people. Here the God declares his authority over the people and gives Moses the power of authority as well since Moses is the one who speaks to the people of Israel

* 1. **Explain how the evidence and/or your review of the text expanded or clarified your understanding of the text**
     1. The evidence clarifies my comprehension of the text by viewing the names not just what to call characters but to look from a higher view as to what weight must be carried in a name. This also clarifies the reason for why the God changes the names of people as often as he does. Looking at just the weight names have in relation to the people and how they affect the stories in the Bible as a whole creates a better understanding for me of what the God's intentions are with these people. The promise to help the people of his covenant and his attachment to those he makes the promises to.
  2. **Share your conclusions**

The power in names is great. If there was no purpose in a name why change it? The Hebrew Bible clearly states each persons name and does a magnificent job at displaying the relevance or importance of a name. Araham, Sarah, and God are examples in the Bible when names played a role in affirming a relation to God, demonstrating a change in one’s life as well as authority and power found in a name. The importance of a name is found in its meaning and its usage amongst the people, the God and how the audience is told to interpret said names.

**REFERENCE**

The New Oxford Annotated Bible, Fourth Edition. Michael D. Coogan, ed.

New York: Oxford University Press, 2001.