

10.18

The Name of Jesus in the Book of Acts

In Acts the name of Jesus continues to convey the power and presence of the person who bore it.

First, people do things in the name of Jesus that Jesus himself would do were he still physically present on earth.

- They speak and teach in the name of Jesus (4:17–18; 5:28, 40; 9:27–28).
- They perform signs and wonders in the name of Jesus (4:30).
- They exorcize demons in the name of Jesus (16:18; cf. 19:13–17).
- They heal the sick in the name of Jesus (3:6, 16; 4:10).

The reader is expected to realize that it is actually Jesus doing these things: there is no real difference between Peter saying that someone is healed “in the name of Jesus Christ” (3:6) and his telling a person, “Jesus Christ heals you” (9:34).

Second, people receive divine benefits through the name of Jesus.

- Salvation is in the name of Jesus (4:12).
- Forgiveness of sins is received through the name of Jesus (10:43; 22:16).

These benefits are received by

- calling on the name of Jesus (22:16; cf. 2:21)
- having faith in the name of Jesus (3:16)
- being baptized in the name of Jesus (2:38; 8:16; 10:48; 19:5; 22:16).

Third, the name of Jesus stands for him who bore it and makes him present.

- The “good news about . . . the name of Jesus” is the good news of Jesus (8:12).
- To invoke the name of Jesus is to invoke Jesus (9:14, 21).
- To praise the name of Jesus is to praise Jesus (19:17).
- To oppose the name is to oppose Jesus (26:9).
- To suffer for the name is to suffer for Jesus (5:41; 9:16).

The one essential difference is that the name of Jesus remains present and accessible in a way that Jesus himself does not (cf. 1:11; 3:20–21).