

Jesus: What is in a Name?

Matthew 1:21

Pastor Michael Lynn / West Hampden Baptist Church

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Introduction: The coming birth of a child gives parents the opportunity to name the gift of life God has given to them. Suggestions come from relatives & friends, particularly the grandparents. Often books of baby names are consulted or Bible names are considered. As much time as we here in America spend in finding just the right name, we do not usually follow the custom of the Jews, in either the Old or New Testament. Names at times were given prophetically by God, & other times personally by the parents. But in either case, the meaning of the name was given careful consideration. The person so named was to fulfill or reflect his or her name's meaning, either by direct fulfillment of the previous prophecy of the name, or the fulfilled desire of the parents who in faith gave such a name. Consider the name "*Jacob*" meaning 'supplanter'. He unfortunately lived up to this name, & yet he had his name changed later to "*Israel*" meaning 'Prince with God' (or one who persists with God in prevailing prayer). The name "*Moses*" means 'one who draws out', referring to the circumstances of his birth (drawn out of the water by Pharaoh's daughter). Our Savior is given several names in Scripture, two of which are spoken of here in Matthew chapter one. He is to be called "*Jesus*" (Hebrew "*Joshua*") which means 'Jehovah is salvation.' Christ is also called "*Emmanuel*" (:23), which is interpreted by Matthew as meaning "*God with us*". It is to the first name that I call your attention this morning & ask you the question, "What is in a name?" Consider with me the meaning in each part of this name: "...*thou shall His name JESUS: for He shall save His people from their sins.*" Note here that we learn the Person, the Purpose, the People, the Power, & the Pardon, on the name *JESUS*.

I. The Person of Christ, "...for He..." > Who?

A. Who He is called:

1. "...*and thou shall His name JESUS...*" (Matthew 1:21).
2. "...*and they shall call His name Emmanuel...*" (Matthew 1:23).

B. How He is designated:

1. "*For unto you is born this day in the city of David, a Saviour...*" (Luke 2:11).
2. "...*which is Christ the Lord*" (Luke 2:11).

C. How He is described:

1. "*In the beginning was the Word, & the Word was with God, & the Word was God*" (John 1:1).
2. "*That was the true Light which lighteth every man that cometh into the world*" (John 1:8).

II. The Purpose of Christ, "...shall save..." > What?

A. Sending by God the Father >

1. "*Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us, & sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins*" (I John 4:10).
2. "*And we have seen & do testify that the Father sent the Son to be the to be the Saviour of the world*" (I John 4:14).

B. Seeking by God the Son >

1. "*For the Son of man is come to seek & to save that which was lost*" (Luke 19:10).
2. "*For the Son of man is come to save that which was lost*" (Matthew 18:11).

III. The People of Christ, "...His people..." > Whom?

A. Those chosen by God the Father >

1. "According as He hath chosen us to Him before the foundation of the world..." (Ephesians 1:4).
2. "Elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father..." (I Peter 1:2).

B. Those who choose God the Son >

1. "But as many as received Him, to them gave He power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on His name" (John 1:12).
2. "I am come a light into the world, that whosoever believeth on Me should not abide in darkness" (John 12:46).

IV. The Power of Christ, "...from their sins." > Why?

A. The convicting power of God's Spirit >

"No man can come to Me, except the Father which hath sent Me draw Him..." (John 6:44).

B. The cleansing power of God's blood >

"Come now, & let us reason together, saith the LORD; though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool" (Isaiah 1:18).

And compare: "But if we walk in the light, as He is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, & the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanseth us from all sin" (I John 1:7).

Conclusion: How is such salvation possible? Consider in closing, the Pardon from Christ. Why not take a walk through the Romans' Road? Romans 3:23 declares: "For all have sinned, & come short of the glory of God." And again, "For the wages of sin is death..." (6:23a). Yet that text continues, "but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord" (6:23b). We are reminded, "But God commendeth His love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us" (5:8). And therefore, "That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised Him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation. For the scripture saith, Whosoever believeth on Him shall not be ashamed. For there is no difference between the Jew and the Greek: for the same Lord over all is rich unto all that call upon Him. For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved" (10:9-13). This way of salvation is also made clear by the Apostle John, "And this is the record that God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in His Son. He that hath the Son hath life; & he that hath not the Son of God hath not life. These things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God; that ye may know that ye have eternal life, & that ye may believe on the name of the Son of God" (I John 5:11-13).

Consider again the name of our Savior: "And she shall bring forth a Son, & thou shalt call His name JESUS, for He shall save His people from their sins" (Mt. 1:21). Here we see (1) the who > the person of Christ – "for He"; (2) the what > the purpose of Christ – "shall save"; (3) the whom > the people of Christ – "His people"; & (4) the why > the power of Christ – "from their sins." We therefore can have the pardon from Christ. Is He your Savior this morning? If not, why not call upon Him today to save your soul? May then may we all be able to rejoice together in the singing of these beautiful Christmas carols!