

Luke 1:5-17

The Name of the Promise

The giving of a name is often in scripture a declaration of nature, the Greeks called the idea of name; "onima". It is the idea that a name is a powerful thing that is very closely associated with the bearer of the name and discloses his (or its) nature. There is much pagan thought associated with the concept so we will not go into it too deeply here, but suffice it to say that the name given is more than a set of sounds. The ancient people of the world understood that names have power, to name a thing or person is to understand them, to remember what has been revealed and to in some ways to evoke that named one...

there are many examples of God changing a name to reflect something about a person that needs to be understood, or will be revealed, or marks a change...

Abram (exalted father) --> Abraham (father of a multitude)

Jacob (supplanter, deceitful, one who takes the heel)--> Israel (Prince of God)

Saul (desired) --> Paul (small, little) reminding him that he was nothing, and Christ was everything

Places are given names to indicate significant events

Abraham found a ram to replace Isaac as sacrifice and called the name of the place "YHWH Yirah" the Lord will provide.

Jacob dreamt of Jesus as a ladder or stair, and called the place Bethel - "the house of God"

Jacob wrestled with the angel and called the place Peniel - "the face of God" - Genesis 32.29-30

As God revealed His nature to His people they gave names to reflect what He had taught them about Himself. YHWH Jirah is not just the name of a place that Abraham was, it was powerful lesson about the God whom he served.

Hagar called God, Atta El Roi; "the God who sees" and the well became Beer-lahai-roi "well of the Living One seeing me"

Moses built an altar and called it YHWH Nissi, the Lord is my banner, as a reminder that God was the God who would fight for them and grant the victory...

but there are only 7 places in all scripture where it is recorded that God Himself gave a name to someone not yet born. John is the penultimate promised man, he is the last before the Christ and is the forerunner who makes the way. These seven names given display a powerful message of hope and promise that is fulfilled in the capstone, Jesus.

I. THE SEVEN GIVEN NAMES

a. **Genesis 16.11-12** - Ishmael --> "God Hears"

b. **Genesis 17.19** - Isaac --> "he laughs"

c. **1Chronicles 22.6-10** - Solomon --> "peaceful",

2 Samuel 12.24-25 - Jedediah --> "Beloved of the Lord"

d. **1Kings 13.1-3** - Josiah --> "whom YHWH heals"

e. **Isaiah 44.24 - 45.7** - Cyrus --> "possess thou the furnace"

f. **Luke 1.13-17** - John --> "YHWH is a gracious giver"

g. **Matthew 1.18-21** - Jesus --> "savior, YHWH saves"

II. THE CIRCUMSTANCES OF THIS GIVING

a. The names of the participants - both names are mentioned by the angel, and gives us insight into the promises in play here.

- i. Zacharias --> the Lord Remembers
- ii. Elizabeth --> God of the Oath, God of the Covenant

b. That which is denied is essential for the giving

c. The giving cannot take place without the denial

d. The darkness must be present for the light to be understood

e. Prayer is heard, though it may not always be immediately answered

f. What seems a punishment or judgment is often just a needful preparation.

III. THE PROMISE PRONOUNCED

a. A child of miraculous birth - there had been many over the history of scripture. Isaac, Samson, Samuel... but none as richly anticipated as this one. For he is the forerunner to the promised Messiah

b. Will bring joy and gladness and many will rejoice at his birth

- i. Rejoice in the time for the love of his parents
- ii. Rejoice in his life for the work that he does
- iii. Rejoice in history for the message he proclaimed and the way he prepared

c. He will be great in the sight of the Lord

Jesus declared that none greater than John had ever lived before -

Matthew 11.11-15

- d. A Nazarite - although he is not declared to be a Nazarite, the restrictions placed on him indicate it to be so. And to be a Nazarite from birth was a rare thing. The only other one recorded is Samson.
- e. Filled with the Holy Spirit even from the womb. - this is unheard of, and particularly noteworthy. This is a life that will be used of God in mighty ways. In the OT the filling of the Spirit was a temporary thing that came on people and then went away after the task was accomplished.
- f. Turn many of Israel back to God - His life and testimony will be powerful. They are a marked changed from the soft speech and self-aggrandizement of the Pharisees.

Matthew 11.7-10

Malachi 3.1-3

g. Will be in the spirit and power of Elijah

i. Turn hearts of fathers to their children –

Malachi 4.5-6

ii. Disobedient to the wisdom of the just

Malachi 3.4-5

iii. Make a people prepared for the coming of the Lord

h. He announces the Messiah

IV. THE COMING OF THE PROMISED FULLFILLMENT

a. Jesus would be born according to promise

i. Born of a virgin - **Isaiah 7.14**

ii. Born of the house of David - **Isaiah 11.1-10**

iii. Born to be God among us and to reign in righteousness - **Isaiah 9.1-7**

iv. Born in Bethlehem - **Micah 5.2-5**

- v. Born to bring light to the Gentiles - **Isaiah 9**
- vi. Grow up in Galilee - **Isaiah 9**
- vii. The slaughter of the innocents - **Jeremiah 31.15**
- viii. Flee to Egypt - **Hosea 11.1**

b. He would live out the law of God fully, without any spot or wrinkle

Isaiah 42.1

c. He would be slaughtered by the hand of God using Rome as the instrument

d. This sacrifice would be applied to the sin of the chosen of God

Isaiah 53

e. His righteousness would be applied to them, in legal terms and in changed natures –

Ezekiel 36.22-32

Romans 3.21-24

Romans 4.24-25
Romans 5.1-2,9,18-19
1 Corinthians 6.11
Titus 3.4-7

f. This is the ONLY way to know peace with God. He Himself has ordained, ordered and prepared and provided the sacrifice and He Himself has both slain and accepted that sacrifice, raising Jesus from the dead to give assurance of the truth of His promises.

Consider once more the names that have been given to promised children,

Ishmael --> "God Hears" – God heard the cry of the outcast and hated woman, who knew her sin and despaired of life.

Isaac --> "he laughs" – this one was given in the midst of God's judgment on Sodom and Gomorrah... He laughs at sinners who think they will escape His justice, and His joy in delivering His own also brings laughter and celebration

Solomon --> "peaceful"

Jedediah --> "Beloved of the Lord"

2 names for the same man, God is at peace with those whom He sets His love upon.

Josiah --> "whom YHWH heals" – those who He loves, He heals

Cyrus --> "possess thou the furnace" – in judgment iniquity is atoned for...

John --> "YHWH is a gracious giver" – God is the giver of all that we need

Jesus --> "savior, YHWH saves"... what more need we say?