

# YOU SHALL CALL HIS NAME JESUS

December 22, 2019 • Matthew 1:21

21 She will bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins.” (Matthew 1:21, ESV)

There is no sweeter name than Jesus. There is no dearer name than Jesus. There is no name used more often in the Scriptures for the Son of God. He is called Christ 498 times, and Lord 393 times, but Jesus more than 900 times.

Jesus is a plain name; in Hebrew it is Joshua, and there are a few Joshua's mentioned in the Old Testament; Joshua who led the Israelites into the Promised Land; and Joshua the high priest in Haggai and Zechariah. In the New Testament the Hebrew name Joshua is given as Jesus in the Greek text, and so we find Simon Bar-Jesus, or Son of Jesus, in Acts 13:6; and in Colossians 4:11 we come across Jesus who is named Justus. It's even possible that Barabbas, the murderer released at Jesus' trial, might also have been named Jesus; that is how a handful of manuscripts read, though not the most reliable ones.

There is nothing special about the name Jesus, yet it is the sweetest name there is. There is no dearer name than Jesus. It is the name used most often for the incarnate Son of God. He is called Christ about 500 times, and Lord about 400 times, but He is called Jesus more than 900 times.

TRANSITION: As the song says, there is something about that name. What is it?

## NAMED BY HIS FATHER

Well, first of all, Jesus is the name given to the Incarnate Son by God the Father. The Father sent His angel, Gabriel, to both Mary and Joseph to announce the conception and birth of His Son.

The angel said to Mary,

31 And behold, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus. (Luke 1:31, ESV)

Several months later the angel said to Joseph,

21 She will bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins.” (Matthew 1:21, ESV)

What’s more, the Father made sure to tell us exactly why His Son was to be named Jesus: because He will save His people from their sins.

**Jesus** means **Savior**; the Hebrew name is even more specific - it means **Yahweh My Savior**, or **Yahweh Is Salvation**.

Before creation ever took place the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit were all focused on a single purpose: to manifest their eternal glory as God. God decreed the creation of all things by His eternal power, and decreed the salvation of a specific people by His eternal grace. That salvation would be accomplished through the work of all Three Persons of the Godhead. The Father gave specific people to the Son. The Son would enter human history as a true man, and die as a substitute for those people. The Spirit would carry out the application of salvation to those people throughout history.

God spoke the entire creation into existence, but when it came time to create man, God formed man from the dust of the ground. When it came time to create woman, He took a rib from the man and made the rib into a woman. When Adam and Eve had sinned against Him, He came personally to the garden. And when the time came to save sinners, He again came personally, becoming a man Himself.

Think of some of the names the Father could have given His Son.

The Father could have named His Son, **Jehoshaphat**, God Will Judge.

He could have named His Son, **Raphah**, Healing.

He could have named His Son, **Tsidkenuh**, Righteousness.

He could have named Him, **Hammelech**, King.

He could have named Him, **Biri**, Creator.

All of these would have been true of the Son. But the Father named His Son Jesus, Savior, Yahweh-My-Savior.

TRANSITION: That name defined Jesus' earthly purpose and work, and even His ongoing ministry.

## NAMED FOR HIS PURPOSE

Why was the Son of God incarnated? Why did He come to earth as a man?

Jesus said in Luke 19:10,

For the Son of Man came to seek and to save the lost. (Luke 19:10, ESV)

Jesus said in John 10,

The thief [that's Satan] comes only to steal and kill and destroy. I came that they [His sheep] may have life and have it abundantly. I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep. (John 10:10-11, ESV)

**Jesus came to save sinners.** In fact, Paul puts it that bluntly in First Timothy 1:15,

15 The saying is trustworthy and deserving of full acceptance, that **Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners**, of whom I am the foremost. (1 Timothy 1:15, ESV)

I urge you to memorize this truth and confession: Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am the foremost.

TRANSITION: You know, I start out to do a lot of things, and get distracted, and never get the thing done that I set out to do. Jesus came to save sinners; He was named for His work.

## NAMED FOR HIS WORK

The Gospels show Jesus saving in small ways.

For instance, when Jesus and His disciples were caught out on the Sea of Galilee during a storm,

25 And they went and woke him, saying, "Save us, Lord; we are perishing." 26 And he said to them, "Why are you afraid, O you of little faith?" Then he rose and rebuked the winds and the sea, and there was a great calm. (Matthew 8:25–26, ESV)

That's really interesting. He didn't just say, "Oh, sure, you bet, that's why I'm here." He said, "Why are you afraid? Why don't you trust Me? This is why I have come."

In another example, a woman with a terrible affliction followed Him through a crowd,

21 for she said to herself, "If I only touch his garment, I will be saved." 22 Jesus turned, and seeing her he said, "Take heart, daughter; your faith has saved you." And instantly the woman was made well. (Matthew 9:21–22, ESV)

Most translations have something like "I will be made well" or "I will be healed," but she literally said, "I will be saved," and Jesus literally said, "your faith has save you." This wasn't being saved from hell, but from her physical affliction.

Jesus saved people in these minor ways every single day, healing them, casting out demons, feeding them, teaching them truth.

TRANSITION: As wonderful as Jesus' healings were, every person He healed eventually died of something. Every person He raised from the dead eventually died all over against. He did not come to earth to provide short-term, temporary solutions. Those healings and miracles were proof of His power to do something far greater and eternal.

Jesus did not come to simply relieve temporary suffering, but to bring eternal life to those condemned to eternal death. He did that by giving His own life on the cross as a substitute for sinners. Jesus was not surprised by the cross, shocked by it, horrified that His life had gone so wrong. He set His sights on Jerusalem, and told His disciples many times that He would be crucified and die and then rise from the dead.

At the Passover celebration with His disciples, just hours before His crucifixion,

26 Now as they were eating, Jesus took bread, and after blessing it broke it and gave it to the disciples, and said, "Take, eat; this is my body." 27 And he took a cup, and when he had given thanks he gave it to them, saying, "Drink of it, all of you, 28 for **this is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins.** (Matthew 26:26–28, ESV)

He knew exactly what was coming, and why. Jesus was crucified and satisfied the wrath of God, bearing the awful weight of sin, and announced It is finished! Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners for all eternity!

You know, it's fascinating that during His earthly ministry Jesus pronounced people forgiven. One time He was eating lunch in the house of Pharisee when a woman with a bad reputation came in, and washed His feet with her tears, and dried them with her hair. Jesus said to her, **Your sins are forgiven.** (Luke 7:48). Another time some men brought a paralyzed friend to Jesus to be healed; Jesus said to Him, **Take heart, your sins are forgiven,** and then healed him to prove that He had the authority to forgive sin (Matthew 9:1-8).

Jesus did not say to them, "Your sins are forgiven up to this point, but boy, don't you get out of line again!" He told them that they were forgiven. He had not yet taken those sins on Himself, but just as with the sins of Adam and Abraham and David and Isaiah, God's forgiveness is always based on the work of Jesus on His cross. Yes, it had not yet happened in history, but it would happen, without question, because God had decreed it. From God's point of view it was already accomplished.

TRANSITION: But salvation was not just a legal declaration, like marking an invoice "Paid In Full." There is an ongoing aspect to salvation.

## NAMED FOR HIS ONGOING MINISTRY

23 The former priests were many in number, because they were prevented by death from continuing in office, 24 but He holds His priesthood permanently, because He continues forever. 25 Consequently, He is able to save to the uttermost those who draw near to God through Him, since He always lives to make intercession for them. (Hebrews 7:23–25, ESV)

From the moment Jesus ascended to heaven and took His place at the right hand of the Father, He has been interceding for His people. He always lives to make intercession for them. What has Jesus been doing in heaven since His resurrection? The Bible tells us. He has been interceding for His people. His intercession is personal; He isn't praying for the group, regardless of who is in the group. He is praying for each and every one of His children.

His intercession is **personal**, because He is Jesus, Savior.

His intercession is **perfect**, because He is Jesus, Savior.

His intercession is **present**, going on right now, because He is Jesus, Savior.

Romans 8:31-39 says that because God is for us, and Jesus is interceding for us, nothing can be against us, no one can condemn us, and nothing will ever separate us from the love of God in Jesus Christ. What about sin? Can sin eternally separate Christians from the Father and the Son? No, because our sins were utterly and completely washed away the moment Jesus died.

TRANSITION: Let's bring the Scripture home to our own lives.

## BRINGING IT HOME

Jesus is still Jesus. That might sound like an odd thing to say; of course He is still Jesus. But when you think about all of His titles and attributes, you might start to think that His Saviorhood will give way to His Lordship or Kingliness. Well, in the last chapter of the last book of the Bible, the Lord speaks to His entire church from the viewpoint of His relationship to us, and says,

16 "I, Jesus, have sent My angel to testify to you about these things for the churches. I am the root and the descendant of David, the bright morning star." (Revelation 22:16, ESV)

He is still Jesus. He is still Savior. He will always be Jesus. He will always be Savior. Jesus will not cease His saving work until salvation has been brought to fulness. He has saved us already from the penalty of sin. He is now saving us from the power of sin. He will ultimately save us from the presence of sin. And throughout eternity He will be Jesus, our Savior, the One who took our sins upon Himself, gave us His own righteousness, brought us safely home to the Father, and lives with us for all eternity. He is always Jesus.

How do we bring this truth home today, with Christmas bearing down on us?

We remind ourselves that Jesus must always be Jesus to us. That probably sounds strange. How about this: Jesus must always be Savior to us. He must always be the One to whom we pray, the One on whom we call, the One in whom we trust.

Is your faith truly in Jesus the Savior? Then He knew you as He died in your place, He knew you as He rose in victory, and He has prayed for you personally without ceasing ever since. You should have absolute confidence in Him to be Savior, because He is eternally Jesus.