

## Jesus – Name Above All Names

December 24, 2023

### Matthew 1:18-21

### JESUS: Named for a Purpose

There are approximately 2,800 names in the Bible. But only one name in the Bible saves. That name is Jesus.

Focus on what the angel said in verse 21: **“Mary will give birth to a son, and you are to give him the name Jesus, because he will save his people from their sins.”** A stronger, better translation of that verse goes like this: **“You will give him the name Jesus.”** You see, Jesus’ name wasn’t an option because what he came to do wasn’t an option. Jesus purposely came to save his people from their sins. He didn’t come just to leave people with a few important lessons in life. He came to live out the meaning of his name. He came to suffer, to die, to sacrifice himself on a cross for the sins of the world. He came to be punished and crushed for those sins. He came to be buried with those sins. And yes, Jesus had to do these things because the meaning of his name insisted upon it.

When I held each of my children in my arms, I remember looking at them, saying their name, and then imagining what they’d be like, how they’d grow up, where they’d go in life. But when God gave his one and only Son and insisted his name be Jesus, there was no imagining any of that. It was predetermined. He would grow up to live a perfect life for sinners and die an innocent death for sinners in order to save sinners.

That word “save” in the Greek language always means “to rescue or deliver from danger,” and in this case “to rescue or deliver from mortal danger.” Friends, you know that in your life there is no worse danger than sin, death, and hell. You know it because you know how easily and how often you have given in to your sinful flesh and how your conscience has accused you and how your guilt has brought you to your knees with shame. You know what you deserve. You know the punishment you expect. That’s what sin does. But what does Jesus’ name proclaim? He Will Save His People from Their Sins, which is exactly why he came and exactly what he has done for you. Unlike anyone else in the world, the One born in a manger literally fulfilled the purpose of his name. And to think, you were that purpose. There’s the real wonder and joy of Christmas.

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### Luke 2:8-12

### CHRIST: He’s the One

- If you have a favorite sports team that hasn’t been doing well, and your team hires a new coach, you’re hoping he or she is the one to turn things around and win a championship.
- If you live in a community that seems it’s in decline, and the citizens elect a new mayor, you’re hoping he or she is the one to rescue your city from the dumps.
- If you are part of a company that is losing business and losing money, and the board of directors appoints a new CEO, you’re hoping he or she is the one to make the company profitable again.

Note the emphasis in those three examples: You're hoping he or she is THE ONE – the one to rescue, to deliver, to make everything better. That's exactly the thought behind the name or title Messiah, even in the Bible.

The prophet Isaiah often spoke of the One:

- The One who would bring justice to the nations (Isaiah 42:1) and salvation to the ends of the earth (Isaiah 49:6).
- The One who would bind up the brokenhearted and proclaim freedom for the captives (Isaiah 61:1).
- The One of whose government and peace there would be no end (Isaiah 9:7).

If you have any consciousness of what is going on in our society and world today, isn't that the One you would want to come to rescue, to deliver, and to make everything better? But wait a minute! As you think of the war, crime, hate, divide, wickedness, and evil in our society and world today:

- Where is the greater war: in the world or within you?
- Where is the greater crime: in the streets or within you?
- Where is the greater hate: in culture or within you?
- Where is the greater divide: in politics or within you?
- Where is the greater wickedness and evil: in the hearts of others or in your own heart?

Do you suddenly see the One you really need to rescue you, deliver you, and make things better? Do you see what he needs to rescue and deliver you from? Do you see what he needs to make better? This is exactly what Christ, the Messiah, came to do for you. He came to rescue from God's wrath for your sin; he came to deliver you from the damnation you deserve; and he came to make things right with God – which is exactly what he did. **“He was delivered over to death for our sins and was raised to life for our justification”** (Romans 4:25).

- He won the war over sin, death, and the devil by his death and resurrection for you.
- He didn't do the crime but received the punishment for your sinful crimes in your place on the cross.
- He countered the hate in your heart with the love of his heart, so that even while you were still a sinner Christ died for you.
- He repaired the divide by taking away your sins and uniting you with God.
- He overcame the wickedness and evil of your life with his grace and mercy.

This is specifically why you celebrate the Messiah's birth today, because he's the One, he's the real Savior you need.

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What do you think the most important, amazing message of Christmas is? It is this: The holy Son of God came down from heaven and became obedient to death, even death on a cross. This is why Mark, inspired by God himself, dedicated his entire Gospel to this single truth: **Jesus Christ is the Son of God**. Mark dedicates himself to this single truth because it is the only thing that gives value to who Jesus is and what he has done for us.

Jesus is the child's *name* who lies in a manger, and Christ is his *title*, but the Son of God is his *identity*, and that makes all the difference in the world. You see, anyone can be born in a manger or die on a cross. But Jesus isn't just anyone. He is the Son of God.

Yes, Jesus lived like everyone else. But he came to live a perfect life for you. He did this for you because he knew you couldn't live the perfect life God demands of you, and because he did, God credits you with Jesus' perfect life. But clearly understand this: His perfect life counts for you for this reason alone – Jesus is the Son of God. That's the value of his life, and the blessings of it are yours through faith in him.

Yes, Jesus died like everyone else. But he came to die on the cross for you. He did this for you because he knew you couldn't pay the price your sins deserve, and because he did, God forgives you all your sins. But clearly understand this: His death for your sin counts for you for this reason alone – Jesus is the Son of God. That's the value of his death, and the blessings of it are yours through faith in him.

When you know who that baby in the manger really is, when you know who really came for you, lived for you, died for you, then you know how invaluable your faith in him is. So invaluable, it affects how to prepare for his coming. **"Make straight paths for him"** (Mark 1:3). Amen.