

The Name of Jesus

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online: 25.03.2023

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*Precious, peerless Name of Jesus,
None can tell its worth;
Sweetest Name there is in heaven,
Or on earth.*

In Scripture, names are of considerable interest, and their meanings are often remarkable. For instance, after God had called Abram from Ur of the Chaldees into a land unknown to him, but which He promised should be his in the future, He changed his name to Abraham, which meant "The father of a great multitude," when as yet he was childless. His wife's name Sarai was altered to Sarah, meaning "Princess." He also promised him a son, to be called "Isaac," that is "Laughter," thus indicating the joy his birth would bring him. Later, his grandson Jacob also had his name changed to "Israel," which means "A prince of God." In due course Jacob had twelve sons, each of whose names had a specific meaning. Hebrew scholars give us the remarkable meanings of other Old Testament names, but these few will suffice us.

We will now return to our main subject — The Name of Jesus. When Adam and Eve were driven out of the garden of Eden through their disobedience, and were thus alienated from God, He in His infinite mercy yet promised them a Saviour. This promise remained as a strong hope in the hearts of God-fearing men, for we find Job saying: "I know that my Redeemer liveth, and that He shall stand at the latter day upon the earth" (Job 19:25).

In the books of Moses we find numerous types of the long-promised Saviour, such as Joseph, Moses and Joshua, beside the Passover lamb, the brazen serpent, and the different offerings, all of which speak of Christ. In the Psalms we find very many prophetic allusions to the coming Saviour; while the prophets speak continually of the suffering Messiah and the all-conquering Deliverer, who should reign for ever and ever. They could not understand this, but were told that their prophecies were not for themselves, but for a future generation (1. Peter 1:10-12).

God's time at last came round, as Galatians 4 tells us, "But when the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth His Son, made of a woman." Before the birth of this long-promised Deliverer, both Joseph and Mary were told by angels that He was to be called Jesus, that is Saviour; while Mary was further told that that Holy thing which should be born of her would be called Son of God. In the four Gospels we are given the history of His life on earth, the account of the daily walk of this perfect Man (the only perfect man that ever trod this earth).

His Godhead was veiled in Manhood from the multitudes that followed Him; they only knew Him as the son of the carpenter of Nazareth, and consequently despised Him. But His intimate disciples every now and then saw His divine power shining out, and marvelled. His grace, tenderness and patience were visible to all, and even the people wondered at the gracious words that proceeded out of His mouth (Luke 4:22). Yet, at the same time, His holiness provoked and rebuked the priests and rulers, so that time and again they took counsel together as to how they might destroy Him.

Towards the end of His public ministry He several times told His twelve disciples that He

would be taken of the Jews, delivered to the Gentiles, and be crucified, but would rise again the third day; but they were unable to understand His words, and were afraid to ask Him. And as He had told them, so it came to pass; He was betrayed by one of the twelve, and taken by His enemies. A short while before this He had said openly: "Therefore doth my Father love Me, because I lay down My life, that I might take it again." How much lies beneath these words, the depths of which we shall never understand, neither here nor in glory, namely, the unfathomable love of God, and of our blessed Lord. We can but bow our heads and worship!

After His resurrection, what grace and tenderness He shows to His poor sorrowing disciples, seeking to reassure them that He was still their own beloved Master, inviting them to handle Him, and even eating and drinking with them. But though risen from the dead, and now ascended into glory, He still bears that same blessed name, Jesus, as we learn from several passages of Scripture. On the day of His ascension, as His disciples watched Him being taken up, and stood gazing steadfastly into heaven, two men in white apparel stood by them and said, "Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven? this same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen Him go into heaven" (Acts 1:11).

A few years later, Stephen, being brought before the High Priest and the council, and having spoken his wonderful, so-called, Apology, looked up steadfastly into heaven, and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing on the right hand of God. And after that a little, Saul the persecutor, on his way to Damascus, was struck down by a great light from heaven, and heard a voice speaking to him and saying, "I am Jesus whom thou persecutest."

How about the Father's thoughts and purposes for His beloved Son? Let us turn to Philippians 2:5-11 and see. I shall only quote the last three verses, "Wherefore God also hath highly exalted Him, and given Him a name which is above every name; that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father."

We have now come to the end of our little meditation on the Name of Jesus, that blessed Man, Who is the "Brightness of the Eternal Glory." Oh! that our hearts might be led into a deeper, fuller and more personal love of His blessed Person. Once more He speaks to us from the glory, in Revelation 22, "I, Jesus, have sent mine angel to testify unto you these things in the churches, I am the root and the offspring of David, and the bright and morning star ... He which testifieth these things saith, Surely I come quickly. — Amen. Even so, come Lord Jesus."

From *An Outline of Sound Words*, vol. 31-40

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