

Spc143 – What’s in a Name? – Matthew 1:21 (Christmas 2017)
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Open your Bibles. Title of the message, “What’s in a Name?” Our key verse is Matthew 1:21. But we will be in the Book of John, primarily.

Names mean something, don’t they? Have we not witnessed a war on words develop over the *name* of this holiday? Under whatever guise is acceptable, are there not forces at work to remove the name of Christ from Christmas?

I thank God that there are still so many in our culture who proudly proclaim “Merry Christmas” and maybe some would say... “Hey, it’s just a name.” But those who are waging this war on words know that the name is *everything*. Because of what the name *Christmas* means and they know that if they can eliminate the name they can eliminate the meaning. Because names *mean* something, don’t they? The name of Jesus means everything.

Let’s pray. *Lord Jesus, may you make your name grand in our lives. May you get bigger, and bigger, and bigger. Lord, every time we look to your name, may it be bigger and more powerful. May we understand more and more of it. May you reveal more and more of the power and the all encompassing meeting of every need that’s contained in your name. Lord, light your name on fire in our hearts, today, we pray, in your name, amen.*

How about your name? Have you ever looked into what your name means? Or maybe have someone buy you a little card or bookmark that has your name? Most of us have. Today it may be more of a curiosity to know what your name means.

But in the Bible it was a much more serious matter. In the Bible names are used to convey the character or nature of a person – including the *Person of God* and a name becomes an illustration (a description) of who that person is. God decided that the names that he uses for himself is one way that an infinite God can convey some of who he is to our very finite minds.

Studying the names of God is a fabulous way to get to know who God is and who God is to you. But it would be no short Bible study. Using just the original languages and using just the formal names and titles of the trinity, my very smart software lists exactly one hundred names and titles for the God-head. For Jesus Christ there are twenty-seven separate formal names and titles – all with deep and significant meaning and if you add descriptions of who Jesus Christ is, it goes way, way higher. And in every one of those names, titles and descriptions God is communicating himself to you and me. Every name

impacts our life and in every name we find something that God is giving us – in himself – as a gift.

I wonder if that’s why the spiritual forces behind the “war on Christmas” are so determined to remove the name? Because Christmas is still about Jesus Christ! And in the name of Jesus Christ is found all that we need for this life and for eternal life!

So as we approach the holiday that still bears the name of Christ. Let’s also consider a few of his other names. So on Christmas day we can remember the eternal depth and the meaning attached to the name of this holiday.

Let’s pick just a few names for Jesus that help convey some of who he is to us.

First, Jesus Christ came to us as (literally) “***God in Expression.***” In this form “***God in Expression***” the Gospel of John call Jesus – ***The Word.***

John 1:1–4 (ESV)

1 In the beginning was THE WORD (LOGOS, “God in Expression – or Communication”), and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.

2 He was in the beginning with God.

3 All things were made through him (all creation was made through him), and without him was not any thing made that was made.

4 In him was life (he is the source of life), and the life was the light of men.

(This word ***through*** is important because we say Jesus Christ is the *agent of creation*. He is the conduit through which all things have been created.)

Jesus Christ is God IN Expression – to man and what we celebrate at Christmas – is God in Expression taking on a tent of human flesh “**to dwell with us.**”

John 1:14 (ESV)

14 And the Word (God in Expression) became flesh and dwelt among us . . .

Let’s not be swayed by cultural correctness here. What we celebrate at Christmas is the fact that *God became a man and dwelt among us*. He came to the world that he created, clothed in flesh to live among us *in order to save us*.

But as we are all too aware,

John 1:10–11 (NLT)

10 He came into the very world he created, but the world didn't recognize him.

11 He came to his own people, and even they rejected him.

Same in the days the Bible was written – same today. But does that mean his purpose was NOT accomplished? Not a chance! Because the very next verse says,

John 1:12 (ESV)

12 But to all who did receive him, who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God,

Notice *to all who did receive him* – like receiving a gift at Christmas. The gift is there – but for you to “make it your own” you must receive it and to those who “receive the gift” *who believe in his name, he gives* (another gift) - *the right to become children of God.*

But for God to be able to adopt us as his own children for eternity, he couldn't send just “a good teacher.” He couldn't send even “a great prophet.” God had to come – *himself*. God had to be with us – *himself*. And that (which is one of the most incredible truths of the Bible) *that is what we celebrate at Christmas.*

In the famous Christmas verse of Matthew 1:23,

Matthew 1:23 (ESV)

23 “Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and they shall call his name IMMANUEL” (which means, God with us).

Can we really grasp what it means that GOD is *with us*? So often, don't we just want what God can *give us*? When what we truly need is *God with us* – Immanuel. Jesus Christ came to be “God With Us” and not just for his earthly life, but so God could be with us – today! *Every moment – of every day – “God With Us”*

And the number one reason that God has to come to be with us – himself - is revealed in the name of Jesus spoken by John the Baptist. On the first day of the public announcement (from God) about *who* Jesus Christ was, as Jesus approached the Jordan River where John was baptizing, John 1:29 says,

John 1:29 (ESV)

29 (John the Baptist says) . . . “Behold, THE LAMB OF GOD, who takes away the sin of the world!”

His name is The Lamb of God... because Jesus came to be the perfect, innocent sacrifice to pay the full penalty for our sin.

1 Peter 1:18–19(NLT)

18 For you know that God paid a ransom to save you . . . And the ransom he paid was not mere gold or silver.

19 It was the precious blood of Christ, the sinless, spotless Lamb of God.

Jesus came – *as God in the flesh* – to pay a price that we could never pay. So we could receive the gift of eternal life that we could never earn.

And the price he paid rescued us from the kingdom of darkness and transferred us into his own eternal Kingdom.

Colossians 1:13-14 says,

Colossians 1:13–14 (NLT)

13 For [God] has rescued us from the kingdom of darkness and transferred us into the Kingdom of his dear Son,

14 who purchased our freedom and forgave our sins.

Some day we will know for sure – that is everything – that we have been rescued from the kingdom of darkness and transferred into the eternal Kingdom of Jesus Christ.

And there is so much more in the name of Jesus Christ. It was Jesus himself who revealed his ultimate name and when Jesus applied this name to himself it so infuriated the Jews that they committed to kill him.

John 8:58, speaking to the Jews,

John 8:58 (ESV)

58 Jesus said to them, “Truly, truly, I say to you, before Abraham was, I AM.”

The name in English is simply – I AM. This is the name God used of himself speaking to Moses at the burning bush in Exodus Chapter 3.

This name means:

“THE SELF EXISTING ONE”-

“THE ALL EXISTING ONE”

“THE ALL-IN-ALL” . . . IT MEANS - I EXIST “AS”

And when Jesus applied this name to himself, the Jews knew he was saying that he *was fully God*.

Seven times Jesus used the I AM name to reveal a specific truth about *who* he is.

John 6:35 (ESV)

35 Jesus said to them, “I AM THE BREAD OF LIFE; whoever comes to me shall not hunger, and whoever believes in me shall never thirst.

Jesus is saying only he can meet the true hunger and true thirst that each of us have in our lives. He alone is our true source of life.

Again, in John 8:12,

John 8:12 (ESV)

12 . . . Jesus spoke to them, saying, “I AM THE LIGHT OF THE WORLD. Whoever follows me will not walk in darkness, but will have the light of life.”

Jesus Christ exists as ***The Light of the World***. Don't fool yourselves into thinking that your intellect or your money or your power are forms of light. Jesus Christ IS ***The Light of the World*** and without him we are only walking in various forms of darkness.

In John 10:9 Jesus said,

John 10:9 (ESV)

9 I AM THE DOOR. If anyone enters by me, he will be saved and will go in and out and find pasture.

And not only does Jesus say *I am the Door* in verse 9, but in verse 11 he says,

John 10:11 (ESV)

11 I AM THE GOOD SHEPHERD. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep.

You see, when a “good shepherd” in Bible times would gather his sheep into a pen at night, the shepherd himself would lay down in the opening of that pen. He himself would become the door to protect the sheep from any enemy. Our Good Shepherd lays down his life for his sheep.

In John Chapter 14 when Thomas told Jesus he didn't know the way to heaven.

John 14:6 (ESV)

6 Jesus said to him, “I AM THE WAY, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.

Jesus Christ did not leave room for us to insert our own opinions or ideas on *how* to get to *heaven*, no other religious idea or concept could ever do that.

But the life Jesus came to give us is not just for heaven. Speaking of this life here, Jesus said in John 15:1,

John 15:1 (ESV)

1 “I am the true vine (the true source of life) . . .

And then in verse 5,

John 15:5 (ESV)

5 . . . Whoever abides in me and I in him, he it is that bears much fruit, for apart from me you can do nothing.

And still speaking of this life here, Jesus is not only your true source of life, but he is also our High Priest.

Hebrews 4:15–16 (NLT)

15 This HIGH PRIEST of ours understands our weaknesses, for he faced all of the same testings we do, yet he did not sin.

16 So let us come boldly to the throne of our gracious God. There we will receive his mercy, and we will find grace to help us when we need it most.

This is for *this life – here*. Our Great High Priest, our Advocate, our Mediator, understands our weaknesses because he has faced the *same testings we face* and so we can come with confidence to him and we can find the mercy and grace we need, when we need it.

Now that is an incredible mountain of good news that brings great joy to the world. But I want to jump ahead to an appointment each of us has. I told you there were seven “I AM” names for Christ, but I’ve only shared six with you.

In John Chapter 11 when a friend challenged Jesus about life and death.

John 11:25–26 (ESV)

25 Jesus said to her, “I AM THE RESURRECTION and the life. Whoever believes in me, though he die, yet shall he live,

26 and everyone who lives and believes in me shall never die. Do you believe this?”

Do you believe, fully believe, that Jesus Christ exists as the Resurrection and the Life.

Because there is a day coming when Jesus won’t *tell* the world *who* he is, he will *show* the world *who* he is and when that day comes you will want to be on his side.

Jesus' favorite name for himself while he was on this earth was Son of Man. And in Matthew 24:30-31 Jesus says of himself,

Matthew 24:30-31 (ESV)

30 Then will appear in heaven the sign of THE SON OF MAN, and then all the tribes of the earth will mourn, and they will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of heaven with power and great glory.

31 And he will send out his angels with a loud trumpet call, and they will gather his elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other.

I promise you – you will want to be part of this “gathering together” when Jesus returns.

Because you do not want to *miss* being *with* Jesus the moment where he is named King of Kings and Lord of Lords.

Revelation 19:11-16(ESV)

11 Then I saw heaven opened, and behold, a white horse! The one sitting on it is called Faithful and True . . .

12 His eyes are like a flame of fire, and on his head are many [crowns] . . .

13 He is clothed in a robe dipped in blood, and the name by which he is called is The Word of God.

14 And the armies of heaven, arrayed in fine linen, white and pure, were following him on white horses.

...

*16 On his robe and on his thigh he has a name written,
KING OF KINGS AND LORD OF LORDS.*

Jesus Christ IS King of Kings and Lord of Lords and he IS coming back again – soon and I assure you – you will want to be with him.

And that is why Luke 2:11 says,

Luke 2:11 (ESV)

11 For unto you is born this day in the city of David a SAVIOR, who is Christ the Lord.

What's in a name? When that name is Savior – everything is in that name. Jesus Christ came to the manger in order to be your Savior *on the cross*. Everything he has done for you he had done as your Savior and if you will put your full faith and trust in him, then he will become your (personal) Savior.

For unto YOU (personally) is born this day in the city of David a (personal) SAVIOR, who is Christ the Lord.

He was born;

To **SAVE** you from your *sin*

To **REDEEM** you *back to God*

To **TRANSFER** you into his own *eternal Kingdom*.

What's in a name? When that name is Jesus... EVERYTHING.

AND –what about - THAT Name

The Name that's ABOVE every other Name

The Name at which every KNEE will bow and every TONGUE confess

That he is LORD.

WHAT does the Name – JESUS Mean?

The name JESUS means - Jehovah (God) is Salvation.

Joseph had a dream in Matthew Chapter 1 and he's given the name that *explains it all*.

Matthew 1:20–21 (NLT)

20 . . . an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream. “Joseph, son of David,” the angel said, “do not be afraid to take Mary as your wife. For the child within her was conceived by the Holy Spirit.

21 And she will have a son, and you are to name him JESUS, for he will save his people from their sins.”

The name Jesus means **God IS Salvation** and that name means *everything*.

But the *final question* is – what does that name mean to you *personally*? His most wonderful name is Jesus because it means ***God IS Your Salvation***.

And as we read at the beginning, John 1:12 says,

John 1:12 (ESV)

12 But to all who did receive him, who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God,

Jesus came AS the *gift of eternal life*. But we still must *receive him*. We receive him by believing IN his name by believing Jesus IS *who his name claims he IS*. And when we do that, we receive the greatest gift of all eternity ***the right to become children of God***.

What's in a name?

The Angel said to Joseph

“ . . . you are to name him JESUS, for he will save his people from their sins.”

I pray you would receive the greatest gift of all eternity, *Jesus – your Salvation.*

Let's pray. *Lord Jesus, what a name! The name above every other name. The Alpha, the Omega, the First and the Last, the Beginning and the End. Our Savior. Our King. Our Soon and Coming King. Our Lord, our Prince of Peace, our Wonderful Counselor. The Rock of our Lives. The Savior of our Soul. Our Healer. Our Restorer, our Redeemer. It's about you, Jesus. It's about you.*

I just wonder if you're here today, if you haven't gone all in, and said, "*Lord, you have my all. I'm not holding anything back. Lord I don't want something from you, I need you. I need the I AM. I need the God Who Exists As in my life.*"

If you've never said that, say it now. Say, "*Lord, come into my life. Fill me with your life. Replace mine with yours. Forgive me of my sin, Lord. I believe you are who your names say you are. Thank you for paying for my sins and offering me your righteousness and a place in your Kingdom. I receive that eternal gift today. Please make it real in my life. Thank you.*"

Just say his name. "*Jesus. Jesus. We love you Lord. Be glorified in our lives. Be glorified in this holiday season. Be glorified in Christ's mass. May we gather around at Christmas and acknowledge you for who you are. In your name we pray, Jesus, amen.*"