



TEACHING LETTER 48

The “Christmas Names” of Jesus

“ ‘And she will bring forth a Son, and you shall call His name Jesus, for He will save His people from their sins.’ So all this was done that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the Lord through the prophet, saying: ‘Behold, the virgin shall be with child, and bear a Son, and they shall call His name Immanuel,’ which is translated, ‘God with us.’ ”
(Matthew 1:21-23 NKJ).

From Genesis through Revelation we see how God named people and places. When God named someone, there was something significant depicted by the name. It usually pointed to that person’s calling or purpose. It was no different when God by an angel proclaimed the names of His only begotten Son, Jesus. Jesus’ names—recorded in both the Old and New Testaments—were prophetic of His purpose and His calling and also of His nature and character.

In this Teaching Letter, I will discuss the names of Jesus we most often lift up during the Christmas season. First, let’s look at probably the most well-known Old Testament passage which foretells the birth of Christ.

Jesus’ Name Recorded in Isaiah 9:6, 7

Hundreds of years before Christ’s birth, Isaiah wrote:

“For unto us a Child is born, unto us a Son is given; and the government will be upon His shoulder, and His name will be called Wonderful, Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. Of the increase of His government and peace there will be no end. Upon the throne of David and over His kingdom, to order it and establish it with judgment and justice from that time forward, even forever. The zeal of the Lord of hosts will perform this” (Isaiah 9:6, 7 NKJ).

This prophecy of God’s future Governor of Israel was written to people who were experiencing great distress and war. More was to

come because of their sins. Seventy years of Babylonian captivity was on the horizon. God, however—in the middle of a message of judgment—inserted a message of hope and of a good future.

Though judgment would come to a rebellious people; hope was never cast aside. A Child would one day be born who would grow up and reveal His position as Son. A Child would be born who was the given Son of God who would carry the weight of God’s Kingdom government. This Son-Governor would be like His Father—for indeed they are one. He would reveal God anew to the world as “Wonderful, Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.”

This Child, this Son, is given to us—all who are spiritual descendants of Abraham. Though you and I face difficulties, we have the promise that this Child-Son-Governor is our hope and help. God’s Kingdom is ordered and established with judgment and justice. Though the world’s system and governments experience shaking, we can have God’s peace. By faith in Jesus we know the Wonderful, Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, and Prince of Peace. The Apostle Paul wrote: “For in Him [Jesus] dwells all the fullness of the Godhead bodily; and you are complete in Him, who is the head of all principality and power” (Colossians 2:9, 10 NKJ).

Just a side note regarding the name of Christ mentioned in Isaiah 9:6: Some theologians point out that the child’s name would be called (in the Hebrew) Pele-joez-el-gibbor-Abi-ad-sar-shalom.

The point being, “Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace is *one* name, as the passage indicates (“His *name* will be called . . .”, my emphasis added—not *names*). The value of knowing this is in our understanding more about the cohesiveness of the nature and character of the foretold Child/Son. Although we often attempt to articulate the many facets of Christ’s nature and character by separating, studying and celebrating the individual parts of His name given in this passage, we may also benefit from meditating on the vastness of Christ’s nature and character in His one-ness. After all, He is ALL THAT and more in ONE.

Another name of Jesus, recorded in Isaiah 7:14

“Therefore the Lord Himself will give you a sign: Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a Son, and shall call His name Immanuel” (Isaiah 7:14 NKJ).

Matthew included this prophecy when he recorded the words an angel spoke to Joseph in a dream about the child Mary would birth. Matthew wrote:

“So all this was done that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the Lord through the prophet, saying: ‘Behold, the virgin shall be with child, and bear a Son, and they shall call His name Immanuel,’ which is translated, ‘God with us’ ” (Matthew 1:22, 23 NKJ).

Matthew clearly recognized Jesus’ birth as the fulfillment of Isaiah’s prophecy. As I mentioned, Isaiah prophesied in a time of distress for Israel. The message that Immanuel (God with us) was coming brought hope to a discouraged and disheartened people. Seven hundred years later, Jesus came into another time of discouragement and trouble for Israel. The Romans occupied and ruled Israel. Many may have lost hope, believing God had forsaken Israel. Yet many looked for the Messiah’s appearance. Matthew quickly connected the dots between the Isaiah prophecy and Jesus’ birth. God With Us, Immanuel had come.

Today the name Immanuel still symbolizes hope and help for a lost world and for all God’s people. God is with us no matter what we face. Though times of trouble continue, God is with us! Jesus promised never to leave us or forsake us (see Hebrews 13:5). Indeed, how could He forsake us? He is Immanuel!

The name Jesus, revealed in Matthew 1:21

“And she will bring forth a Son, and you shall call His name Jesus, for He will save His people from their sins” (Matthew 1:21 NKJ).

An angel appeared to Joseph in a dream and told him to give the baby that would be born to Mary the name “Jesus, for He will save His people from their sins.” What an astounding message! Many parents, no doubt, through the centuries had named their sons Jesus, keeping hope alive by reminding all who heard it. that *one day* Now the Child who could fulfill all that powerful name means, was here.

Jesus means “Yahweh saves.” For a few thousand years—even for eternity past, God had planned this. For 39 Old Testament books, He had revealed His plan to Israel. All the lambs offered before had merely covered the people’s sins. This Jesus would *save* the people from their sins. His blood would wash their sins away. Though Jesus has many names that truly are worthy of celebrating, the name Jesus is huge! It is a name of power, hope and help for lost humanity and for all of us.

May we truly celebrate Jesus this Christmas season! And may Jesus be real to you as you make Him and His name your focus this Christmas season! SH

GOD’S WORD FOR TODAY

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