

What's in a Name?

Philippians 2:9-10a

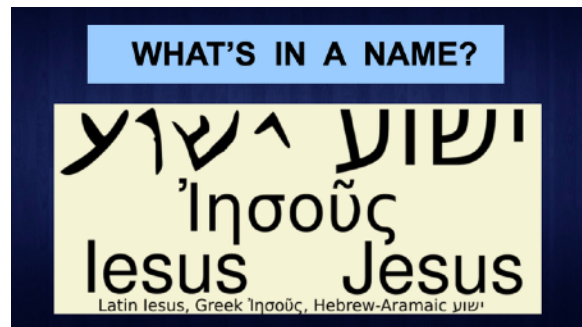
What's in a name? How wonderful to have a name that expresses a personality trait, or the parents' faith and hope for their child's future.

A person's name may be rather funny or unfortunate. Callum Murray, Ivor Brain. Is 'Art Painter' an actual artist? Does 'Les B. Frank' always tell the truth? Does 'Sandy Beech' live in Queensland? Do those named Patience, Grace or Faith display those spiritual gifts? Does Christopher bear Christ?

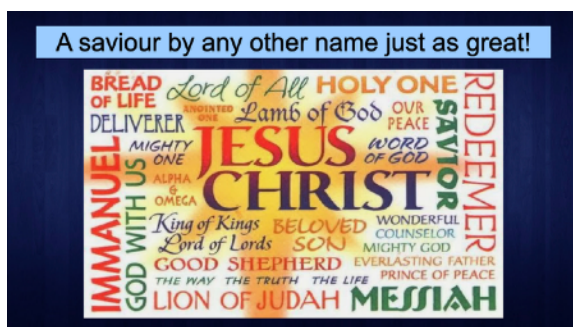
Now a common name in many parts of the world, we are told that Jesus (Hesus in Mexico) was given a *name like no other*: "Therefore God exalted him to the highest place and gave him the name that is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow..." *Philippians 2:9-10a (NIV)*

This name, which was given to him by his Heavenly Father at his conception, paints a word-picture for us about His work. Jesus is the Greek form of Joshua — 'Jahweh saves' ... 'the Lord saves'.

Mary was told by the Angel Gabriel that the name of her son, the child begotten of the Father, conceived by the Holy Spirit, would be Jesus. Matthew 1:21 tells us that Joseph was told with greater explanation why the child was to be named Jesus: 'for He will save His people from their sins'.



Elsewhere, the Bible refers to Jesus by many beautiful and descriptive names. Matthew reminds us that all this took place to fulfil what the Lord said through the prophet Isaiah: "The virgin will be with child and give birth to a son, and they will call him Immanuel — which means 'God with us'."



Similar to Shakespeare's assertion that a rose by any other name would smell as sweet, we could say our saviour Jesus called by any other name would be just as great. And we have many names that express his love and care, wisdom and power.

We may have a favourite, but we must acknowledge that God chose the name Jesus for a reason.

'Wonderful Counsellor' refers to his readiness to answer our prayers for guidance and wisdom.

'Mighty God' reminds us of Christ's power and

willingness to act on behalf of us. 'Everlasting Father' and 'Prince of Peace' comfort us with the assurance of His eternal love for us. Our hymns also attribute Him with other names like Morning Star, Love, and Shepherd. One name describes our Jesus beautifully — 'Saviour'. This name assures us that we have been rescued from the power of sin and death that we so deserve.

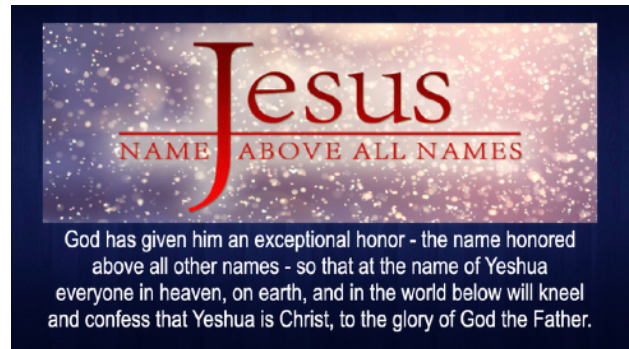
Jesus was indeed named on the eighth day, when it came time to circumcise him according to the law. By his birth in the flesh, Jesus became one of us, and lived under the law. In his circumcision, he was identified a member of the nation of Israel, of the house of David, of the tribe of Judah.

This ceremony would have been in Bethlehem, by a local priest. Later, Jesus was presented at the Temple again in conformance with the law of Moses which required every firstborn male to be consecrated to the Lord, and a sacrifice be made in keeping with the law: a pair of doves or two young pigeons.

By the Holy Spirit speaking through Simeon, we also find other names... God's Salvation, Light for revelation to the Gentiles, and Glory to your people Israel. The falling and rising of many... a sign that will be spoken against — and from the prophetess Anna: the Redemption of Jerusalem.

God has given Jesus the name honored above all other names — so that at the name of Yeshua, everyone in heaven, on earth, and in the world below will kneel and confess that Yeshua Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

(Philippians 2:9-10, adapted from the Name of God Bible version)



Live in this promise, and the blessings that the names of Jesus promise us in our lives. Whatever name you use, call upon him, look upon him, and give thanks. By the promise of God's word made flesh, you are redeemed through the blood of the one named Jesus. Praise be to our Saviour, Jesus!

Prayer: Loving Saviour, thank you for saving us from sin and forgiving us. As we enter into the year ahead, help us to give honour to your name, and to praise you for the gifts you give every day. Amen.