

Names and Titles of Jesus

"Jesus"

How many of you know the original meaning of your name. It can be interesting or embarrassing to learn what the original meaning is.

- **Brian** = strength, or valor
- **Paula** = small
- **Steve** = (Greek) crown or garland
- **David** = (Hebrew) dearly loved
- **Angela** = Messenger from God
- **Peggy** = (Greek) pearl
- **Rebecca** = (Hebrew) captivating
- **Matthew** = gift of God
- **Luke** = light giving
- **John** = God has been gracious

Sometimes in the Bible God changes the name of someone in order to signify a new purpose in life.

- **Abram** (high father) to **Abraham** (father of a multitude)
- **Sarai** (my princess) to **Sarah** (mother of nations)
- **Jacob** (supplanter) to **Israel** (having power with God)
- **Simon** (God has heard) to **Peter** (rock)

In the 1st century world into which God came, names were chosen very carefully because parents chose a name which they felt communicated the character or hopefully the lofty future of that person. By carefully choosing a name, you were hopefully setting a bar high enough for them to hope to achieve.

Therefore in the first century Israel one of the most popular names given by parents of Hebrew boys was the name "**Jesus**". The Jewish historian, Josephus, identifies at least 20 different men with that name. Why was this name so popular. Likely because the name Jesus is a transliteration of the Hebrew name Joshua which means "**the Lord is our salvation.**" It reminded the people of the great military leader, Joshua, from the Old Testament who led the Jewish nation into the Promised Land. And in the 1st century in Israel, the people were really hoping that another leader, like Joshua, would arrive to deliver God's people from the bondage of Rome.

And with that background and hope of a people God appeared to both Mary and Joseph and told them that the baby that they would be parents to would be called "**Jesus**" (Lk 1:31; Mt 1:21)

Luke 1:31 (NIV) *You will conceive and give birth to a son, and you are to call him Jesus.*

Matthew 1:21 (NIV) *She will give birth to a son, and you are to give him the name Jesus, because he will save his people from their sins."*

In the angel's announcement to Joseph, God makes it clear what Jesus would be saving His people from. Through Jesus they would be saved, not from the Roman governments oppression, but far more importantly, they would be saved from their sins. They would be freed from the bondage and the barrier that prevented each and every person from having a restored relationship with God. Political independence was not nearly as important to God as having the possibility of having a relationship with His people, after all, that's what God created us for from the very beginning. God created us for relationship, but sin quickly entered into the scene and destroyed that. And ever since the beginning of the Bible, way back in the Garden of Eden, God set in place a glorious plan to bring His people back into that relationship God enjoyed initially with Adam and Eve.

While there are lots of names and titles for Jesus given in the Scriptures, none of them come close in usage to the number of times the name Jesus was used. In the New Testament, the name "**Jesus**" is used over 900 times. And that's understandable because this was Jesus' ordinary every day name.

Even in the book of Acts, where we see the title “**Lord**” used often, still the use of “**Jesus**” outnumbers “**Lord**” three to one.

And yet, even though this name was common you can bet that when they called Jesus by this name, it constantly rang a little bell of hope in their minds and hearts that this might finally be the one who rescues us from Roman oppression. This might finally be our deliverer that has come to “*save us*”.

In the very first sermon I preached in this series, I talked about what exactly it meant to pray in Jesus’ name. But I also mentioned the power that the name of Jesus held in both Jesus’ teaching and in the practice of the early church. Let me remind you of a couple of those.

- Jesus said that if we gather in His name, He will be there with us.
- The disciples were able to drive out demons in His name
- Jesus warned us that we would be persecuted in His name
- Jesus predicted that false messiahs would come in His name
- We are saved by believing in the name of Jesus
- And the goal of our life is that the name of Jesus be glorified in and through us.

Perhaps one of the most powerful statements in all of Scripture regarding the power of the name of Jesus is found in Philippians 2:9-11 where it says:

Philippians 2:9-11 (NIV) *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, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue acknowledge that **Jesus Christ is Lord**, to the glory of God the Father.*

That isn’t happening right now. But one day, when Christ returns, everyone will realize who Jesus is and at that moment there will be no one left standing. They will all bow in acknowledgment of who Jesus is: our deliverer or our salvation.

It’s in the name of Jesus Christ that Peter told the first believers to believe in and be baptized into.

Acts 2:38 (NIV) *Peter replied, “Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. And you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.”*

Returning to the Philippians passage notice who everyone will acknowledge Jesus is: **Jesus Christ is Lord.**

Christ is not Jesus’ last name. It’s actually a description of his office or role. Christ means the chosen or anointed one. It’s equal to the Hebrew word for Messiah and it signifies that Jesus was sent from God to be our deliverer, which pairs well with Jesus (meaning “The Lord is our salvation”)

But Paul doesn’t stop there in Philippians 2. He also adds “**Lord**”. Calling someone, “**Lord**”, recognizes them as master or someone who deserves my full allegiance.

- **Jesus** = His name
- **Christ** = his office (our deliverer)
- **Lord** = His title (as the one that we follow and live our lives for. The one that we voluntarily love and serve because he loved and served us by giving up his life for us on the cross).

This week in our daily devotions we’re going to continue to look at 5 additional titles of Jesus that convey how he saves us and continues to work on our behalf. We’re going to be looking at Jesus as our Redeemer, Savior, Great High Priest, Author of our Salvation and Mediator. Those devotional sheets are available in the back or I will continue to email them out every day.

As I close I want to ask one very simple question: **Who is Jesus to you?**

- Maybe you’re at a point where **He’s just Jesus**. Someone your interested in but not quite sure he’s more than that. And if you’re at that place I want to encourage you to continue on that faith journey. Continue to read about him in the gospel accounts and notice what made Jesus different from everyone else that also had that common name.
- Maybe he’s not just Jesus but **you’ve accepted him as Christ** – your deliverer from your sins.

- **But is He Lord?** That means that He is in charge of your life in every aspect. And for Jesus to be Lord requires more than just acknowledging his existence once a week for a couple of hours on a Sunday morning. Most of you are employees of someone. If so you have a boss. They are in charge when you're at work, but once you walk away from there, they are no longer in charge of your life. That's different than Lord. If Jesus is Lord of your life, that means you've allowed Him to be in charge 24/7. You live your life for Him every minute of every day.

Last two nights it was our pleasure to host our Live Nativity and welcome a few hundred people to experience in a sensory way the birth of Jesus. Many individuals I talked with say that they've made this an annual Christmas tradition and they've been coming for several years now. And my guess would be that most of those individuals and families have Jesus as both Christ and Lord of their lives. At least that's what I hope. But it's also possible that they could be individuals that believe in Jesus and maybe even have accepted Him as their Savior, but largely live their lives for themselves rather than let Jesus be Lord. To let Jesus be Lord means that you desire whatever He has planned for you no matter what it takes. Your deepest desire is to come to know Him deeper and deeper and to become more and more like Jesus as a result of whatever experiences He brings you through. Comfort and pleasure take a backseat to becoming more like Jesus in and through everything.

That step of becoming fully surrendered to Jesus can be a big challenge. Because Jesus might very well take us through some very difficult times in our lives where we're made uncomfortable and where we begin to question His goodness and intentions for our lives. We begin to think that if God really loved us then He wouldn't allow this to happen in our lives. And those who have made Jesus Lord say to God – "God I don't understand what you're doing right now. And I'm not wanting to go through this. But Lord, whatever you desire – not my will but yours be done."