

Salvation in No Other Name

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In Shakespeare's play *Romeo and Juliet* the question is asked, "What is in a name? That which we call a rose, by any other name would smell as sweet." I whole-heartedly agree with Shakespeare's sentiment here. It really matters little what we call a rose. Call it whatever you will and it will still look beautiful and smell beautiful. But when it comes to spiritual matters the question "What is in a name?" begs a totally different answer. The name means everything especially when it comes to the name by which we are saved! Concerning the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, the apostle Peter proclaims that,

... there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved (Acts 4:12, all verses are from the NKJV).

The name and titles of our Lord Jesus Christ are all God given, and they reveal to us much about who Jesus is and what he has accomplished. In fact God declares what His Son's name is to be even before he is born. An angel is sent to Joseph and says to him,

Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take to you Mary your wife, for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Spirit. And she will bring forth a Son, and you shall call His name JESUS, for He will save His people from their sins (Matthew 1:20-21).

Jesus, the name of our Lord, is the Greek equivalent of the Hebrew Joshua, meaning "Yahweh is salvation" or "Yahweh saves." The very name "Jesus" stamps our Lord as our Savior. Jesus is God's divinely sent and appointed Rescuer, whose job it was to deliver us from the power and penalty of our sins. He came to die on a cross as the payment for our sins, sins that alienated us from God. Now, through him we have peace with God and victory over the power of sin. It was no accident that our Lord was called "Jesus."

Nor was it an accident that he was called "Christ." At one point in his ministry Jesus asks his disciples,

"Who do men say that I, the Son of Man am?" Peter replies, "You are the Christ, the Son of the Living God" (Matthew 16: 13, 16).

"Christ" is not Jesus' last name, it is a title. It is from the Greek equivalent of the Hebrew word for "Messiah" which means "the anointed one." In the Old Testament the practice of anointing someone set him apart for a special job or office. The anointing was connected with the role of the prophet, priest and king.

Elijah was instructed to anoint Elisha as prophet in his place (1 Kings 19:16). The prophet was anointed with oil symbolizing that God's Spirit was upon him and that he spoke for God. Jesus Christ is God's ultimate prophet. A prophecy in Isaiah concerning Christ says,

"The Spirit of the LORD GOD is upon Me, Because the LORD has anointed Me To preach good tidings to the poor; He has sent Me to heal the broken hearted, To proclaim liberty to the captives, And the opening of the prison to those who are bound; To proclaim the acceptable year of the LORD..." (Isaiah 61:1, 2).

This is exactly what Jesus Christ did (Luke 4:16-21). The writer to the Hebrews said,

God, who at various times and in various ways spoke in time past to the fathers by the prophets, has in these last days spoken to us by His Son ... (Hebrews 1: 1, 2).

Jesus is God's ultimate prophet who brings to us the good news of salvation.

The anointing was also connected to the office of the priest. God commanded that the priests should be anointed and consecrated, and sanctified so that they should minister to Him (Exodus 28:41). Jesus Christ is God's final High Priest. Hebrews 9:11 says,

But Christ came as High Priest of the good things to come...

As our High Priest Jesus Christ brought us eternal redemption. As High Priest he not only offered up a sacrifice to God for sins, he was the sacrifice (Hebrews 9:12-14)! And even now he constantly intercedes for you and me.

But He, because he continues forever, has an unchangeable priesthood. Therefore He is also able to save to the uttermost those who come to God through Him, since he always lives to make intercession for them (Hebrews 7:24, 25).

Jesus Christ is always interceding for you! What a comforting and encouraging truth.

Above all else, the anointing was connected with the office of the king. When the prophet Samuel saw young David, God told him, "Arise, anoint him; for this is the one!" (1 Samuel 16:12). Our Lord Jesus Christ is "King of Kings and Lord of Lords" (Revelation 19:16). When the angel went to Mary he said of Jesus,

"He will be great, and will be called the Son of the Highest; and the Lord God will give Him the throne of his father David ... and of His kingdom there will be no end." (Luke 1:32, 33)

Our Lord Jesus Christ is God's ultimate prophet, priest and king. He makes known the way of salvation. He opens it up to all by his sacrifice on the cross. And he will return again in glory to set up the kingdom of God forever!

All of the names and titles of Jesus of Nazareth reveal to us his person and work and accomplishments. Jesus is "the Lamb of God." He is "the bread of life." He is "the light of the world," and the "resurrection and the life." Jesus is the "Prince of life," the "Judge of the living and the dead." Our Lord is the "Apostle" and "forerunner" of our faith. Christ is the "Beloved" and the "Head." Jesus Christ is the "Mediator" between God and men. He is the "Bright and Morning star," and so much more!"¹ But most of all Jesus Christ is "Lord."

Therefore God also has highly exalted Him and given Him the name which is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of those in heaven, and of those on the earth, and that every tongue should confess that Jesus is Lord, to the glory of God the Father (Philippians 2:9-11).

What is in a name? The answer is that in the name and titles of our Lord Jesus Christ there is the knowledge of forgiveness of sins, true love, joy and the hope of eternal life for all who put their trust in him for salvation. As the song says,

Jesus, Jesus, Jesus, sweetest name I know,

Fills my every longing, keeps me singing as I go.

¹John 1:29; 6:35; 8:25; 11:25; Acts 3:15; 10:42; Hebrews 3:1; 6:20; Ephesians 1:6; Colossians 2:19; I Timothy 2:5; Revelation 22:16.