

Dr. Don Stelting
NBC Chapel – 09/13/06

Text: Matt. 1:12 (NASB)

Deuteronomy 34:9

Now Joshua the son of Nun was filled with the spirit of wisdom, for Moses had laid his hands on him; and the sons of Israel listened to him and did as the Lord had commanded Moses.

Matthew 1:21 [The angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream, and said], “And she will bear a Son; and you shall call His name Jesus, for it is He who will save His people from their sins.”

Theme: What’s In a Name?

Introduction:

There is a puzzle here – a puzzle having to do with names. [Here give an idea puzzle about names.]

I like names. Names are important. I have typically asked new students their names, and they ask me mine. [Then tell story underscoring the importance of names.]

American society has, generally, lost the meanings of names. My wife is Pamela. That is from a Greek word meaning “Honey.” My name is Donald. I have been waiting all day to tell someone this! Donald is a Celtic name meaning “World Conqueror” or Mighty Chief.

Bill and Tom, Betty and Mary are labels to distinguish individuals. In other societies, and especially in biblical societies, names had meaning. Names were given to anticipate the character or the deeds of the person. Sometimes, names were changed to note significant events in the life of a person: Abram to Abraham; Jacob to Israel, etc.

Did you know that the name Jesus is the Anglicized form of the Latin form of the Greek form of the Aramaic form of the Hebrew name Joshua?

So, what is in a name? Why would God the Father choose this name to be borne by His only begotten son? Why this name to become the “name above all names?”

1. The linguistic meaning of the name is the most direct and obvious reason.

The original name given in Exodus for this man was Hoshea which meant “Saved” or “Savior” as a direct affirmation. Firmly: Saved! With conviction: Savior! Not satisfied, Moses renamed him Joshua: “God’s Salvation” or “God, the Savior!”

In Philippians, He is the one to whom “every knee will bow, and every tongue confess.” In Acts, He is the one whose “name is the only name given among men by which we must be saved.”

2. Joshua could, justifiably be thought to be a type of the Savior, Jesus. [Read below]

Joshua as a type for Jesus Christ, these points [from the Pulpit Commentary]:

1. Joshua began his life by sharing the sufferings of his brethren in Egypt; so Jesus took upon Him the form of a servant, and shared the lot of His brethren.
2. The imperfect work of Moses was taken up and completed by Joshua; in a far higher sense it was taken up and completed by Christ; the Law was perfected in the Gospel.
3. In accordance with their common name, both saved the people given them by the Father from their enemies.
4. Both “went forth conquering, and to conquer;” and both conquered after being at first apparently defeated through the sins of others.
5. Joshua brought the Chosen People into the Promised Land, and gave them rest and a home in it. Jesus brings the elect into the kingdom prepared for them, and gives them rest and an eternal home in the “many mansions” of the Father.

The writer goes on with other, more metaphorical points:

6. Both entered on their ministry on the banks of Jordan,
7. Under Joshua the passage of Jordan as the road to the Land of Promise was freed from difficulty and danger. The river of death by which we must enter into our rest has been robbed of its terrors by Christ.
8. The twelve stones taken from the bed of Jordan and set up as witnesses to the people of their deliverance may represent the twelve living “witnesses of His resurrection,” and of our deliverance through His resurrection appointed by Christ.
9. Joshua, when he had completed his work, ascended the mountain of Ephraim, and dwelt in security from his enemies. Jesus, having finished the work which the Father gave Him to do, ascended up on high and sat down on the right hand of God; from henceforth expecting till His enemies be made His footstool.

God did not choose an historical person to share the name of the Christ so that dis-harmony would confuse the message. He chose a name that would bring recognition and affirmation of the life and gospel of Jesus Christ.

3. The content of the name Joshua was “filled out” by the man.

4.

Here **we** must ask, “Whose name do I wear?” I am always looking for myself in the sacred text. Surely the Holy Spirit had **me** in mind when He inspired the history of the biblical content.

Joshua was a **leader** who knew how to be a servant, and a servant who knew how to be a leader. Moses, the Word tells us, was God’s servant; and Joshua was Moses’ servant. Remember – “We begins with me!” (a reference to Chaplain Lyke’s sermon to begin the chapel year). One person, serving God and God’s people, will suddenly discover that he or she is a leader.

Joshua was a **hearer**, who heard the voice of God and, with quiet strength, earned the right to be the voice of God to the people.

Joshua was **ordained** to have the spirit of wisdom.

Joshua was a man of **singular purpose**, whose first commitment was to accomplish the task God set before him. Too many want to take what the job gives but are not willing to give what the job takes.

Joshua was **persuasive**. He depended upon a godly, obedient life to lead others to follow the Lord. His argument was faithfulness, strength of character, moral courage, and the eloquence of undivided allegiance to God who called and commissioned him.

We, who share the name of Jesus, obligate ourselves, through love, to His very likeness. And though He and He alone, is Savior, we who are saved by Him now will be His servants.

Dare we think that we may “fill out the content of His name?”

Dare we think, on the other hand, that we have liberty to empty His name to those who watch? For if any are to know the name of Jesus, they will know it through His Holy Spirit, through His Holy Word, and through His Holy People.