

## WHAT'S IN A NAME? (part 4)

Tanya Riches wrote “Jesus, what a beautiful name!” She goes on to write, Son of God, Son of Man, The Lamb, Joy, Peace, Strength, Hope, Grace, Truth, My Future, Healer, Love, Freedom, Life, Rescuer, Stronghold, Security, Power..” The name of Jesus is considered the name above all names, and these tags are just a small list of the names associated with the name of Jesus. Others will include Lord, Immanuel, Redeemer, Sovereign, Living Word (Logos), Saviour, the Christ.

Jesus was a fairly common name at the time of Christ’s coming. It was similar to the name Joshua (Yeshua) and meant, ‘The Lord God Saves’. Yet the name is called the name above all names, and the name at which every knee shall bow. So what is it about the name of Jesus that makes it so special? It has nothing to do with the utterance of the words, but the person and divinity behind the name. For those who come in His name, it is who this *specific* Jesus is and what He did (and does) that elevates the name of *this* Jesus above all other Jesus’. When we look at Scripture, we almost never see Jesus’ name used by the disciple’s or apostles without a clarifying title. That is to say, he is called *Christ* Jesus, *Lord* Jesus, Jesus Christ or Jesus of Nazareth. Where the name does appear on its own, it is usually after a short discourse, leaving no doubt as to whom this Jesus is.

So as we go out as ambassadors, (and we all do this, but as a music team, we do so quite visibly), it is essential that we know the one in whose name we go. That we are worshipping and representing the true Jesus, and that we establish a close relationship with Him through His word and in prayer, so that we can represent Him in the right light. Going out in Jesus’ name is not to be taken lightly. Let’s have a look at a couple of Scriptures that explain the need to represent a Jesus that we have a relationship with.

In Acts 19, we read that Paul had been doing miraculous things ‘in Jesus’ name’. Some Jews tried the same thing, but without knowing the one in whose name they came. The seven sons of Sceva tried to cast out demons in the name of the “Jesus whom Paul preaches.” The evil spirit tells them that he knows Jesus, knows *about* Paul, and then asks “but who are you?” He then gives all seven men such a beating that they ran out of the house naked and bleeding. **(see Acts 19:13-16)**

In this example, the sons of Sceva had no relationship with Jesus, and therefore had no authority over the evil spirit. They did not know *Him*, so they had no authority in *His* name when confronted with what appears to be a strong spirit. Also note that the demon says, I *KNOW* Jesus, but only knows *about* Paul. Yet just

knowing *about* the Sons of Sceva (ie who they represented) would have been enough for them to take authority over this demon. But they were coming in the name of someone they didn’t personally know, and therefore they were not acceptable ambassadors. The demon did not recognise them as such and therefore did not treat them as ambassadors.

Compare this story to Jesus’ words in Matthew **7:21-23**. Here Jesus opens up with the words, “Not everyone who says to me, ‘Lord, Lord’, will enter the Kingdom of Heaven.” He adds that these people will argue that they did cast out demons in His name, as well as prophesy and do the miraculous (or at least it seemed to them that they did these things). He says that he will then tell them plainly, “I never knew you. Away from me, you evildoers!”

In this example, these so-called disciples had the outward appearance of the power and experience of Jesus’ name. Somehow it appears that the miraculous was evident in their lives. Yet Jesus tells us that due to them not becoming ‘true disciples’ they were excluded. They had the appearance of being ‘Christian’, but did not act as such. Jesus points to their lack of obedience to God’s will as the root cause of this, calling them evildoers, and explaining that He never *knew* them.

In both examples, it is the relational aspect that is emphasised. Especially in the 2<sup>nd</sup> story, the people thought that they were ‘part of the group’. They believed themselves to have made Jesus Lord, but this was not evidenced in their life, not in the way they represented Christ, nor in their relationship with Him. They recognised Him, but Jesus did not recognise them. To represent Christ, we must know the message and works of Him that sends us, and faithfully follow His example. This comes about through spending time in prayer (listening as much as asking), and time in His word. ‘Feeding’ the Holy Spirit within you and then allowing Him to lead you into a right life.

These stories emphasise what we have been looking at in the previous few weeks – the need to be proper ambassadors for Christ and to come in His name. Jesus’ name, when represented by true disciples, has incredible consequences for the believer, and the world around them. Though we will look at the individual characteristics of both Jesus’ name and the names of God in coming weeks, lets finish this week’s study with a short list of what the bible says can happen ‘in His name’.

Firstly, only in the name of Jesus can anyone be saved. Paul writes “...Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.” **(Rom 10:13)** Peter, when speaking to the religious leaders after Jesus’ resurrection said,

“Salvation is found in no one else... no other name...by which we must be saved.”  
**(Acts 4:12)** It is then into this name that believer’s are baptised. “...in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit,” **(Matt 28:19b)**

Then for true disciples, come promises. Jesus said “...where two or three are come together in my name, there am I with them.” **(Matt 18:20)** “In my name they (believers) will drive out demons; they will speak in new tongues; they will pick up snakes with their hands; and they will drink deadly poison, it will not hurt them at all; they will place their hands on sick people, and they will get well.” **(Mark 16:17-18)** “I will do whatever you ask in my name” **(John 14:13a)**

So clearly, Scripture reveals great responsibility, power and authority for the believer in Jesus’ name. Before Jesus spoke the last of the above Scriptures, He told His disciples that they would do *greater* things in His name – greater miracles, greater wonders. True disciples or ambassadors *will* do great things in His name. However, immediately after this, Jesus begins to talk about the disciples’ love for Him and showing it by obeying His words. It would appear that Scripture is continually telling us that we have a responsibility to ‘do what Jesus does and to say what Jesus is saying’. Then we are true ambassadors, with all the benefits, power, authority and responsibility that the name of Jesus and the term Christian bears with it.

**Study 4 – questions**

1. Read the first few verses of Paul’s letters, from **Romans – Philemon**. What do you notice about Paul’s opening lines, and why do you think he begins this way, before instructing those that received the letters?

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2. What do you think the story of the seven sons of Sceva tells us about the difference between knowing *about* Jesus and knowing Him?

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3. Read **Matthew 7:15-23**. The people did miraculous things, yet Jesus rejects them. What fruit do you think Jesus *is* looking for?

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4. In what ways can we foster a close relationship with Jesus? What have you found seems to bring you closer, or hinders that relationship?

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5. The Great Commission is found in **Matthew 28:18-20**. What steps does Jesus say we should take to make disciples? What importance is there in following these commands?

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6. Read **Matthew 18:19-20** & **John 14:12-15**. What do you think it means to be gathered or to ask “in His name”.

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7. Read the first sentence of **Romans 10:14**. What light does this shed on the story of the sons of Sceva?

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8. St. Francis of Assisi said, “Preach the Gospel at all times, sometimes you may have to use words.” What do you think he was saying?

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9. Read **Colossians 3:12-17**. How does this Scripture teach us as a music team to approach not only the music, but all that we do?

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10. What has God revealed to you through this study?