

A Believer's Most Powerful Weapon AND HOW TO USE IT

Praising the Name of Jesus

Name and Titles of Jesus

A. Introduction

In Hebrew thought, a name describes the character of the individual. For example, the name Jacob means “cheater,” and we find Jacob cheating his brother out of his birthright and blessing. But when Jacob meets God and wrestles with Him in Gen 32:28, his name is changed to “he who strives with God,” or Israel. So, names are not random. They are intentional.

According to Derek Kidner in his commentary on Psalm 20, “The divine name is not regarded in Israel as magically potent (as in some heathen systems) but as a token of God’s self-revelation.” He continues the thought saying it is also God “readiness to be invoked as in Ps 20:7” which reads “Some trust in chariot and some in horses, but we trust in the name of the Lord our God.” God also “let his name be ‘put...upon the people of Israel,’ as if marking them as his possession. And to this idea was added that of their acting on his behalf...All these aspects are carried over into the New Testament: e.g. John 14:14; Acts 3:6; Rev 3:12.” So we can summarize this as follows:

God’s Name:

1. It is the way in which God reveals Himself, His true character – Ex 3:13; Ex 34:5-7.
2. God’s name is not meant to be used as a heathen would use a magic incantation.
3. God’s name is given to us so that we may call upon Him, to invoke His presence and authority. For example, David calls out the name in 1 Sam 17:45. It is not an incantation or magic; it is a statement of truth and a prayer, understanding that God will be with him in the battle he is about to fight.
4. God’s name over us identifies us as his possession, which of course we are. We are His in that He created us, and we are again His because He bought us back out of slavery. We can think of Hosea’s wife who was his by marriage and also his again when he bought her back from her slavery into which she had fallen (Hosea 3).

5. Under God's name we can act on His behalf, as His representative. This is what Paul teaches in 2 Cor 5:18 where he speaks of us as ministers of reconciliation. We bring God to others who need reconciliation to him.
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B. The Names of Jesus

Jesus is given two personal names and many titles. The two personal names are **Jesus** and **Immanuel**. In Luke 1:31, the angel says that Mary is to give the baby the name "Jesus." When an angel visits Joseph about Mary's impending pregnancy and the means by which she came to be pregnant, the angel gives the baby two names. In Mt 1:21 he is named Jesus, while in Mt 1:23 he is named Immanuel following the prophecy of Isaiah in Isa 7:14.

1. Jesus

The name of Jesus in Hebrew is the same as Joshua who was to lead the people into the promised land. The root of the word has the meaning "one who saves." And we can all see the vivid and many ways in which Jesus' name worked itself out not only in his life but in ours as well. Jesus continues to save now as He has always done. And Jesus doesn't just save from sin; He brings us back into the communion and full fellowship that God has always desired for us.

2. Immanuel

The name Immanuel has the meaning "God with us" as Matthew explains to his readers in Mt 1:23. John give us this wonderful picture of God coming to earth to live (tabernacle) with us in John 1:1-14. And one of Jesus' final promises to his disciples, and to us by extension as the disciples of the disciples, is as Jesus says, "And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age" (Mt 28:20).

The other ways Jesus is addressed are not actually His personal name, instead they are titles by which He is addressed by others or by which He addresses himself. There are many and all show some aspect of who he is and what he came to be and due.

C. Titles Jesus gives Himself connected to His "I am" Statements

1. Titles with "I am" Statement in John

The use of **I am** by Jesus has a clear connection to God's personal name given to Moses in Ex 3:14. Jesus uses this wording intentionally as a statement that He is divine as God the Father is divine. He then goes on to give 7 statements about himself that relate to who he is and what he offers to us.

- a. I am the bread of life – Jn. 6:35
 - b. I am the light of the world – Jn. 8:12
 - c. I am the door – Jn. 10:7, 9
 - d. I am the good shepherd – Jn. 10:11, 14
 - e. I am the resurrection and the life – Jn. 11:25
 - f. I am the way, the truth, and the life – Jn. 11:25
 - g. I am the true vine – Jn. 14:6
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Taken together, these are nine different aspects of who Jesus is. Careful thought on each one (in context) reveals insight into what it means to have God Himself and/or God's salvation with us in that aspect. For example, Jesus is the bread of life for a soul that is hungry and starving for something to satisfy. Each aspect is important to consider, but I will leave that for your own reflection.

D. Other Titles

1. **Christ/Messiah** – Mt 16:16 – Jesus was the “anointed one.” Recall the anointings of Saul and David as examples. These were people chosen by God but anointed by other people. Jesus was anointed by God himself. Recall: The Spirit descended upon Jesus in the form of a dove and God says, “You are my beloved Son; with whom I am well pleased.” Mk 1:11

2. **Lord** – Jn 6:68 – (Strong's) *kurios* = supreme in authority, i.e. (as noun) controller; by implication, Master (as a respectful title): God, Lord, master, Sir (determined from context).

3. **Master** – Lk 8:24 – a sort of superintendent or overseer; (Strong's) *epistates*, an appointee over, i.e. commander (teacher)

4. **The Word** – *logos* – Jn 1:1 – BLB – John denotes the essential Word of God, Jesus Christ, the personal wisdom and power in union with God; his minister in creation and government of the universe; the cause of all the world's life both physical and ethical, which for the procurement of man's salvation put on human nature in the person of Jesus the Messiah; the second person of the Godhead, and shown forth conspicuously from His words and deeds.

*A Greek philosopher name Heraclitus first used the term *logos* around 600 BC to designate the divine reason or plan which coordinates a changing universe. John likely picks this work to draw in his Greek audience so that they can see who Jesus really is.

5. **Son of God** – Jn 5:18-29 – A concept considered to be blasphemous by those who believed God was and only could be “one being.” Jesus' use of this term puts him on equal footing with the Father, a fact which is recognized and called out by the Jews in John 5:18.

6. **Son of Man** – Mt 11:19 – There is a double reference in the term. For the Jews in Jesus day, the name of God was not allowed to be spoken. Which makes references to one's self awkward since God's name is "I am." Jesus would (sometimes) use this method to avoid the direct use of God's holy name. But there is a second sense in which the use of the Son of Man is directly linked to the heavenly being seen to be given the authority and dominion that Jesus was given upon his resurrection. This is played out in vision of Daniel spoken of in Daniel 7:13-14.

7. **Son of David** – Mk 10:48 – A certain link to the promise of an everlasting ruler, the one to come, the Messiah given in 2 Sam 7:12-13; 16-17.

8. **Lamb of God** – Jn 1:29 – God's final sacrifice classically identified John the Baptist in his statement, "Behold, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world."

9. **Adam** (New, Second, Last) – A man who is the unique one, as the first Adam was unique.

10. **King of the Jews** – Lk 23:38 – Clearly ties into the 2 Sam passage, which is loaded up with cultural misunderstanding in Jesus' day. Zachariah's prophecy contains both an expectation of a wonderful king and also someone who was to release the Jews from their bondage and slavery. Jesus himself does identify himself as a king, but not one of this world in Jn 18:33-38.

11. **Rabbi** – Jn 3:2 – (Strong's) my master, i.e. Rabbi, as an official title of honor. BLB – my great one, my honorable sir. Rabbi was a title used by the Jews to address their teachers.

12. **Prophet; Priest; King** – This threefold title brings out the 3 aspects of what the Jews and likewise Christians are to look for in Jesus. He is all these, as outlined by various prophecies in the Old Testament. And He is spoke of in all three aspects in the New Testament as well.

13. **King of Kings & Lord of Lords** – Rev 19:16 – The context of this title makes very clear what it is and what it means.

14. **Alpha and Omega** – Rev 1:8 – Alpha is the first letter of the Greek alphabet and Omega is the last letter. So, this title emphasis that Jesus is both the beginning and the end, as is evident Rev 1:8. This is repeated in Rev 1:1-19 & 2:8.

Sources:

1. Derek Kidner, *Commentary on Psalms 1-72*
2. Leon Morris, *The Gospel According to John*

3. ESV Bible - references
 4. Wikipedia, *The Names of Jesus*
 5. The Blue Letter Bible (online). BLB quotes Strong's Concordance as noted above.
 6. Greg Laughery, *Sermon on the Gospel of Matthew*
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