

More About Jesus

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Centuries ago an angel announced to Joseph concerning Mary, his wife, "...that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Spirit. And she shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt call his name Jesus: for he shall save his people from their sins...and he called his name Jesus" (Matthew 1:20-21, 25).

Jesus - a name above all names, a familiar name, a common name, an easily recognized name, yet it's more than just well-known. Other names among men are certainly significant, perhaps quite endearing, but His name is the dearest of all for it was divinely given, it was heavenly sent. Thus, to a believer, His name is honored, adored, and exalted; it is a great name, a wonderful name, a revered name, incomparable and unequalled, for "there is no other name under heaven, given among men whereby we must be saved" (Acts 4:12).

In the book of Acts the good news of Jesus Christ bringing salvation to all men was heralded far and wide. From Jerusalem, throughout all Judea, Samaria, and to the uttermost part of the earth (Acts 1:8; 8:1) His name was declared to vast audiences of people including philosophers, scribes, disputers of this world, and men of great civil authority. Procurators, sorcerers, jailors, silversmiths, tent makers and others had heard His name declared; it was heralded from synagogues to dungeons, from politicians to paupers, from palaces to villages, from mountain tops to riversides, from barren deserts to fruitful plains, from Jerusalem to Rome, and beyond.

While the apostles, preachers, and teachers who spread the good news varied, and the audiences diversified, the message of the gospel of Jesus Christ was always the same. Every sermon that was preached, whether to open and receptive hearts like those on the day of Pentecost who "gladly received" the Word (Acts 2:41), or to the closed and rejected hearts like those who, at the preaching of Stephen, "gnashed on him with their teeth... stopped their ears... and with one accord cast him out of the city and stoned him" (Acts 7:54-58), "Jesus" was preached (Acts 8:35 et al).

The wonderful letter to the Ephesians affirms that the fulfillment of God's eternal purpose is accomplished in Christ and reveals the beauty and value of the church as His bride. The book emphasizes that all spiritual blessings are "in Christ... in whom we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace" (Ephesians 1:3-7). Furthermore, it is through His church that God's multi-splendor

wisdom is revealed (Ephesians 3:10). It quickly becomes apparent from this book that one cannot separate the name of Christ from the church anymore than one can separate His name from salvation. To preach Jesus is to preach about the church or the kingdom of Christ. To preach Jesus is to preach what He authorizes in His divine will or covenant. To preach Jesus is to preach what He requires of men and women in order for them to be saved. To preach Jesus means to preach His Word so that people can understand what the will of the Lord is (Ephesians 5:17). To preach Jesus is to preach the whole counsel of God as a means to prevent people from being led astray through their own ignorance and blindness of heart (Ephesians 4:18). To preach Jesus is to preach how to stand against the wiles of the Devil and be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might (Ephesians 6:10-11).

The theme in the book of Colossians is "Preeminence of Christ". The emphasis is upon Jesus who, as the anointed, is all sufficient! He is sufficient because He is king (Colossians 1:13), redeemer (1:14), the image of the invisible God (1:15), firstborn of all creation (1:15), creator (1:16), sustainer (1:17), He is firstborn from the dead, head of the church, preeminent in all things (1:18), reconciler (1:20), God manifested in the flesh (1:22); He is the container of all wisdom and knowledge (2:3), in Him dwells all the fullness of the Godhead bodily (2:9), and the head of all principality and power (2:10).

The writer of the book of Hebrews describes the superiority of Christ and how that He is worthy of more glory than Moses (Hebrews 3:3); that He is the mediator of a better covenant which was established upon better promises (Hebrews 8:6); that His priesthood is superior to that of the Levitical priesthood (Hebrews 7:24) for it was unchangeable and not made after the "law of carnal commandments but after the power of an endless life" (Hebrews 7:16). "Therefore, by Him let us continually offer the sacrifice of praise to God, that is, the fruit of our lips, giving thanks to His name" (Hebrews 13:15).

The above references to the books of the New Testament are but a fraction of all the passages concerning the mission and message of Jesus, the Son of God. There is always much more to know about Jesus. We can get a glimpse from other scriptures as they describe Him as "the Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the ending...which is, which was, and which is to come, the Almighty" (Revelation 1:8). He is "the blessed and only Potentate, the King of kings, and Lord of lords" (1 Timothy 6:15). He is "the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the Root of David", the "Bread of Life", the "Chief Shepherd", the "Consolation of Israel", the "Chief Corner Stone", "Wonderful Counselor, the Mighty God, the everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace", the "Rose of Sharon" and the "Prince of the kings" (John

6:35; 1 Peter 5:4; Luke 2:25; Ephesians 2:20; Isaiah 9:6; Song of Solomon 2:1; Revelation 1:5). While Jesus is all of this, He's more...

He is our soothing peace during the tempestuous winds of life. He is our enduring strength when we are weakened by the cares of life. He is our mountaintop when we experience the valleys of despair. He is our navigating guide when we've lost our way in this world. He is our Lighthouse in a world of darkness. He is our hope when everything seems hopeless. All too often in our journey in life we faint from our purpose for living, we lose focus on the one whom we are to emulate and demonstrate in our lives. As a result, Jesus is not always magnified in our bodies (Philippians 1:20); the spiritual is overshadowed by the carnal, and we allow the fleeting pleasures of sin and the insatiable desires of the flesh to impair our understandings, judgments, and decisions. Some people are led astray because they fail to "lay aside every weight and sin which does so easily beset them and look unto Jesus who is the author and finisher of their faith" (Hebrews 12:1, 2).

We know that our life pales in comparison to the example of our Lord; and though our light sometimes diminishes greatly, His never does. All too often the light of our life is shaded by inconsistency, instability, and change, but His always retains a brilliance of constancy, faithfulness, and harmony. And while we have a tendency to vacillate at times, He is unwavering and transcends to unparalleled consistency. Even at the most challenging periods in His life when suffering and persecution would send their seemingly devastating and pernicious blows, Heaven's splendor shined through, "leaving us an example that we should follow His steps" (1 Peter 2:21-23). Indeed the impeccable character of our Lord and the power of His word penetrate deeply within us and remarkably transform us. Our heart, soul, and mind, day by day are all fashioned to His, and with a longing to be more like Jesus we seek to be adorned with the beauty of His holiness. Having a desire for Him to be the Lord and King in our lives we become clothed with the royal garment of His Word as it pierces our hearts to form a life that would redound to His glory.

It would certainly do us tremendous good to ever learn more about Jesus - His life, His death, His resurrection, His church, His blood, His teachings, His miracles, His parables, His mercy, His love, His covenant., and so much more! But to only learn about Jesus is not sufficient; we need to learn more of what He taught, and teach it; to learn more of what He did, and do it; to learn more of how He lived, and live it; and since He came to do the Father's will, the Father's will is what has to be done in us!