

WHAT'S IN A NAME

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Christmas—If you are like me, at my house, Christmas is a very hectic time. We never seem to have time to do everything. The first part of our business comes from the gift giving. Finding the right gift can take a lot of time. Because what do you have to do—buy a gift for the person who has everything. “As a couple they both have great jobs. They have plenty of money so they can just buy whatever they want. But he is my brother or maybe for you, “She is my sister.” They will buy us something, so we really have to show up with a gift for them. Besides that I don’t want to be a scrooge. I do not want to be the party pooper. I don’t want to be the cynical one of the family who just sees Christmas as the exchange of money. You give me a gift. I give you a gift. So if you get down to the facts, you give me your money, and I give you my hard earned money. So the solution to this exchange of money is just to not give each other gifts. So then we all agree: I am not going to buy you anything, and you are not going to buy me anything, right? Great, so we agree. So we agree that we will not exchange gifts this year.

And then every year what happens? I show up with a gift. They show up with a gift. Both of us start feeling guilty. We get a gift, and both break the agreement. The very thing we said we would not do is what we do. And that kind of cynicism is not what I want to be about. I want to be a giving person who buys gifts, shares with others how special they are to me. So where does that leave me—on an endless Christmas treadmill of activity, stress, and guilt. This makes Christmas a very hectic time for us at our house. And you think “things have got to slow down after the holidays.”

Then there is the dilemma of how to handle the kids. We’ve got to stop spending so much. But Billy did say he wants a new Play Station 3. His friend down the street has one so he wants one. Sarah wants a razor phone. Her best friend has a razor phone, so she thinks she needs one. She feels left out. So I have to add that my list of things to get. I know she’s only ten years old but I’ll get it. But all of this stuff added up, it makes my schedule so busy.

Did I tell you that our family is coming into town? Yeah, I know. They come into town next week. So that means I have to get my house cleaned. I need to finish those decorations on the tree because if I don’t have everything perfect, his mother will point it out to me. You know how she is. Oh yeah, I have to do all of the shopping for his family and mine. I also have to take some cookies to5ge that party this Saturday night. And then there’s the office party right after that. Wow! We said we wouldn’t get this overscheduled this year, but again it just kind of happened. I can’t wait for Christmas to come and go so things will get back to normal. Things will slow down after the first of the year. Brian, you just can’t understand this but Christmas is such a busy time for my family. Maybe your Christmas is looking something like this.

If you are new with us today, we are in a four-part Christmas series: What's in a Name? We are looking deeply into the four names Jesus was given at His birth. As important as names are today, they were even more significant in ancient times. In Hebrew your name and existence were almost the same. Your name is who are you, your identity, and your reputation. In the Bible, names are crucial to grasping a person's significance. And today we are considering the name Christ.

In the midst of all of this kind of busyness in my life and yours, I spent some time the other day just thinking about the name of the holiday that occurs on December 25th each year. "Christmas". I took the word apart. Christ—Mas. Then I thought about the name Christ. How many people really know what the name Christ means? How many of us really know when we refer to Jesus as Jesus Christ what we are saying. Many of us have used the title "Jesus Christ" so much in our church culture and even in culture in general that we do not know the meaning of the word "Christ". Most of us probably think that the name "Christ" is just the last name of Jesus or at the very least that the name Christ is a tag line to the name Jesus. And does it really matter? It's just a religious term that someone made up sometime down through the ages. Or does it matter more than I know? I mean Christ is just a title for Jesus that makes up part of the name of the holiday—Christ--- mas.

My hope is that our time together this morning will begin to help all of us to think more deeply about this season of Christmas. In fact, I hope that when we leave we can say that we have started on the pathway to realizing that during the hectic season of Christmas, true worship is found in the name of Christ. True worship, if we take the time, if we stop our schedules, if we let ourselves focus for a bit of time—we will find that the true worship that God wants for us in our busy days is found in understanding the title of Jesus known as Christ.

This morning we are considering the title for Jesus "Christ". Before we jump into looking at the name of Christ, I need to clarify a couple of things. This title of "Christ" is a deep, rich title that spans the entire Bible. So you can trace this title Genesis to Revelation. I could preach for a year on the title "Christ", so our time together is not the be all on "Christ". Our goal this morning is to take the 50,000 foot fly over. I hope that through our time you discover the beauty and wonder of this title. And then my ultimate goal is that our time will spur you on toward your own study. I hope that we all grasp the significance of the title Christ and that our understanding of Jesus as Christ draws us into a deeper relationship with him. Maybe then some of you who are highly motivated Bible students will take this time during this Christmas season to study the appearances of Christ throughout the Bible.

So open up your Bibles to Luke Chapter 2. We'll be looking at Luke Chapter 2 verses 11-12. Luke 2 tells the familiar story of Joseph and Mary traveling from Nazareth where they lived to Bethlehem which was the place where Joseph and his family were from. It would be like the United States requiring everyone to return to the state where your family first came into this country. For me, I would have to return to Virginia. For

Joseph, the government, in this case, the Roman Empire was taking a census. The government wanted to know who lived where so they could tax them more. So while Mary and Joseph are traveling to Bethlehem where Jesus will be born, something else was going on in the field. You know the story. Shepherds were tending their flocks just minding their own business and an angel, a messenger from God, came to them to tell them some very good news. Look with me at verse 11. The angel speaking to the shepherds after the angel got the shepherds calmed down, “Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you; he is Christ the Lord. 12 This will be a sign to you: You will find a baby wrapped in cloths and lying in a manger.” As we are seeking to understand this title for Jesus “Christ” let’s look at some helpful things from these verses.

First, the Jews expected a coming deliverer.

What does the name Christ mean? When we refer to Jesus many times we say “Jesus Christ”. Or we say “I am a Christian”. When we say these things what exactly do we mean? The name Christ is Greek. It is a Greek name in the NT that has a counterpart name in the OT—Messiah. So the Greek name Christ in the NT and the Hebrew name Messiah in the OT are the same name just in different languages. The two names were revealed to different people at different times, but both names refer to the same person.

In the Old Testament, the Hebrew name Messiah or “Moshe” referred to an anointed one. In Old Testament times, when a person was chosen by God as a leader for a specific position, to symbolize that fact God would send a prophet or representative of His to anoint the person. Typically the Prophet would pronounce God’s choice blessing upon that person’s life and would as a sign pour oil on the person’s head. This was especially prevalent when God chose prophets or kings for the nation of Israel. So when Saul was chosen as king, when David was chosen as king, and when Solomon was chosen as King, God let his prophet or representative know his choice. The prophet then found the person and publicly anointed him with oil predicting his reign.

The ultimate anointed one in the history of Israel was to be the person known as Messiah—the ultimate anointed one. And this is the person that the Jews were expecting.

The nation of Israel in the Old Testament was looking for Christ to be a king who would deliver his people from oppression. The Jews have experienced oppression under foreign rule throughout their history. In the time of the Exodus, they were in Egypt under intense slavery to Pharaoh. What did God do for his people? God sent Moses to lead his people Israel out of Egypt across the Red Sea and toward the Promise Land. This deliverance by God became a milestone in Israel’s history. In later times, especially during the later portions of the Old Testament times when the Jews were under oppression-- whether they were in captivity to Babylon, Assyria, or Persia—what did they hope for? The Jews put their hope in this promised Messiah, this coming King who would be raised up in incredible military power with full army, might, authority, and rule would come onto the scene, overthrow the enemy forces and set up his final kingdom. Finally Israel would live in peace, justice, righteousness under complete submission to her king. So that is what the Old Testament prophets promised would happen. When God’s people are in

oppression, God will deliver. So when the angel came and said, "Today a savior has been born", what God was really saying to Israel is "Your waiting is over. You have waited for Your Messiah and now here he is. Your Christ has been born today."

But how did Israel know that her Messiah had come? She knew through the fulfillment of Old Testament prophecy. Jesus fulfills all Old Testament prophecies of Messiah.

In Luke 2:11, where is the Messiah, the Christ born? In the city of David. The Bible clearly identifies for us that the city of David is Bethlehem. God had told the Jewish people through the Old Testament prophet Micah in Micah 5:2 the exact place where the Christ was to be born. "But you, Bethlehem Ephrathah, though you are small among the clans of Judah, out of you will come for me, one who will be ruler over Israel, whose origins are from of old, from ancient times." We see Micah 5:2 explicitly states as a fulfilled prophecy over in Matthew 2 when the Magi or wise men come seeking the newborn king of the Jews.

But what is the true significance of the birth of Jesus fulfilling prophecy of the Old Testament? God's true divinity is demonstrated by His ability to reveal events in advance of their occurrence. God placed more than three hundred references to the Messiah in the Old Testament, and they were fulfilled by Jesus Christ in order to help the Jews recognize their Messiah when He came. Here are just a few of the most specific prophecies that Jesus fulfilled, therefore proving that he is the Christ.

First, there is the prophecy we looked at last week that Jesus will be born of a virgin – Isa. 7:14 "Therefore the Lord Himself will give you a sign: the virgin will be with child and will give birth to a son, and will call him Immanuel (means God with us)."

ii. Fulfilled in Matthew 1:18, 24, 25 "She was found with child of the Holy Spirit... Then Joseph did not know her till she had brought forth her firstborn Son. And he called His name Jesus."

Will be born from the Seed of Abraham - Prophecy

i. Genesis 22:18 " In your seed all the nations of the earth shall be blessed, because you have obeyed my voice."

ii. Fulfilled Matthew 1:1 "The book of the genealogy of Jesus Christ, the Son of David, the Son of Abraham."

Will come from the House of David - Prophecy

i. Jeremiah 23:5 " Behold, the days are coming,' says the Lord, ' That I will raise to David a Branch of righteousness; a king shall reign and prosper, and execute judgment and righteousness in the land."

Fulfilled Luke 3:23, 31 "Jesus, the Son of David" many others.

Will be born in Bethlehem – Prophecy

Micah 5:2 " But you, Bethlehem Ephrathah, though you are little among the thousands of Judah, Yet out of you shall come forth to me the one ruler in Israel, whose going forth are from of old, from everlasting."

Fulfilled in Matthew 2:1 "Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea."

He would be presented with gifts - Prophecy

i. Psalm 72:10 " The kings of Tarshish and of the Isles will bring presents; the kings of Sheba and Seba will offer gifts." (Also Isa. 60:6)

ii. Fulfilled Matthew 2: 1,11 " Wise men from the East came to Jerusalem...and fell down and worshipped Him. And when they had opened their treasures, they presented gifts to Him."

Law of Compound Probabilities - Dr Stoner calculated what the percentage would be for Christ to fulfill just 48 prophecies with his birth and life and came up with the following statistic it ended up 1×10^{157} (157th power). This figure is beyond human comprehension; yet Christ fulfilled over 300 distinct prophecies. If Jesus had fulfilled just eight prophecies, the likelihood of that would be mathematically equivalent to covering the entire state of Texas 2 feet deep in silver dollars, specially marking one of them, and instructing me to pick the right silver dollar on the first try. I'm on call if anyone wants to give this a try!

So how did Israel know their expectations of the coming Messiah were met in Christ? The prophecies he fulfilled. How do we know that He is our true Christ? From the same prophecies.

So certainly the nation of Israel expected a coming king. And definitely we see in this verse that Jesus, the second member of the trinity, the one and only son of the Father, He is the only one who fits the bill. He is the one who fulfills all of the Old Testament prophecies about the coming Messiah. Now let's look at two specifics about the person of Messiah in these verses.

We learn here two key things about Jesus' title as Christ. First, look with me in the next phrase of the verse. The text says, "a savior has been born to you." The Greek word for Savior is the same word that we get the idea of deliverance. So we could phrase this "a deliverer has been born to you."

Here is the point. As we will see, in his first coming, Jesus Christ is the suffering servant who brings spiritual deliverance from sin. In the Old Testament, one role of the coming Christ is that of suffering servant. Isaiah 53:5-7 tells us,

5 - But he was pierced for our transgressions, he was crushed for our iniquities; the punishment that brought us peace was upon him, and by his wounds we are healed.

6 - We all, like sheep, have gone astray, each of us has turned to his own way; and the LORD has laid on him the iniquity of us all.

7 - He was oppressed and afflicted, yet he did not open his mouth; he was led like a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is silent, so he did not open his mouth.

Now we run into something that the Jews did not expect from their Messiah. This baby born Christ would die. Here in Isaiah 53 we clearly see that He will be pierced and die. But the Jews could not reconcile their image of a coming king, a ruler with armies,

weapons, political aspirations to return Israel to the glory days. They could not reconcile that this king would also be a suffering servant who would be led like a lamb to the slaughter.

John the Baptist understood that Jesus had come as a lamb to suffer. In John chapter 1 John the Baptist is with two of his disciples when Jesus comes walking by them. Do you remember what John says to the two men—"Look, the Lamb of God!" And then after spending some time with Jesus what did Andrew, Simon Peter's brother do? The text says that the first thing Andrew did was tell his brother Peter, "'We have found the Messiah' (that is, the Christ). 42 And he brought him to Jesus.

But here in Luke 2, the angel even tells the shepherds about a sign. Look at verse 12. "This will be a sign to you: You will find a baby wrapped in cloths and lying in a manger."

The sign that Messiah God had indeed come to save the people would be the baby that the shepherds would find wrapped in cloths lying in a manger. This was an unusual place for any baby to lie but especially the divine Messiah. The term "swaddling clothes" (AV) translates the Greek word *spargano* meaning "to swathe" or "wrap." The Jews also wrapped their dead in strips of cloth, as they did their infants. Thus a birth was a reminder of the death that would inevitably follow one day.

Some of us here today need to come to a place where we allow the announcement of the angels to ring deeply in our souls. "A Savior has been born to you." A savior has been born not to everyone else, not to the person to your right and left. Not to anyone else but you. So for you today, the call from God is to receive Jesus Christ as your personal savior. The Bible says that all have sinned. All of us in our thoughts, our actions, and our relationships have done what is contrary to what God wants. The penalty for that sin is spiritual separation from God. That is why Jesus came to suffer and die when he came the first time. He came to offer a personal relationship to everyone who would believe in him. Trust in Jesus Christ alone for eternal life and be forgiven of your sin. So let him become your personal deliverer from sin today.

There are others of you here today who need to allow the truth that the angels proclaimed sink into your hearts and souls in another way. I know you've heard it many, many times before. You've been shaking your head during this whole sermon, but the real question is what will you do now? What will you do with the truth that "Today in the city of David A savior has been born"?

Here's a suggestion-- Invite a new acquaintance to share Christmas with you and your family. You just look for someone who does not have someone else to celebrate with. But you may say, "Brian, my home is my castle. My home is my domain for just me and my family on the holidays. I work very hard. Do you know how hard I work during the week many times 60-80 hours a week. When I get home I want to be home." Maybe it's time to share your home with others.

Have you thought about asking a new acquaintance to join you for Christmas? If a family just moved here this fall, probably those people can't go home for Christmas. So where does that put them? They are alone. They have no friends. They just spent all of their money on moving to the area, so they don't have money for a plane ticket or other travel expenses. Chances are that their family can't or won't come here for Christmas. What about those people? Do you have some of those people in your life whose life could be radically changed by your invitation to them to join your family for Christmas? I'm praying that God will give me his eyes. Could you imagine what would happen in our relationships with people who do not know Jesus Christ or are not walking daily with him if we kept our eyes open for these people? Maybe it's a parent of one of your kid's friends from school or a teammate's family of your son?

What if all of us at McKinney Fellowship invited someone new to spend Christmas with us? God could take your invitation, your interest, and your act of love and multiply it into a life changing moment for that person.

My wife Kristy is doing something this upcoming week that I am very excited about. Not that we in my household always do what is right, but this time my wife is onto something awesome. Kristy is partnering with one of her friends to do a cookie exchange at our house. Each of them is inviting some unsaved friends and neighbors. The event becomes an environment for relationships to be built. Cease opportunities now to build relationships with people who do not know Christ. Then one opportunity leads to another relational opportunity. That is how relationships are made.

My question to you is this: Are you going to allow apathy to take over again? Are you going to let another Christmas come and go without reaching out to your neighbors? Or will you really let the truth that "a savior has been born" really sink down into your heart and soul so much so that it propels you into action on behalf of those who do not know him?

So, we learn that in his first coming, Jesus Christ is the suffering servant who brings spiritual deliverance from sin. But that wasn't all Jesus Christ as Messiah brings us.

So first of all we see that as "the Christ" Jesus came the first time to deliver or save people from their sins. Then look a little bit further at a second key thing about the person of Jesus. The other thing we learn about Jesus is that not only is he the Messiah, but he is also "Christ the Lord." "Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you; he is Christ the Lord." "He is Christ what? "Christ the Lord. He is our master. The words "Christ the Lord" here can be translated "Messiah God". Here Luke is emphasizing the deity of Jesus the Christ. He is not only our savior but he is our Lord. Messiahship and lordship go together. And the lordship of Christ for us brings hope to our future.

The point is that in his second coming, Jesus Christ is the righteous king who brings hope to our lives. He brings this hope in two ways.

First, Christ our Lord requires obedience in our personal lives. When we understand that Jesus as Christ means that he is our lord all we do is say “Lord, I want you to be the master and ruler of my life. God I open my hands to you and say I’ll do anything you want me to do. I’ll be the person you want me to be. I’ll go anywhere you want me to go.” That is what it means to be under the personal rule of Christ. In Matthew chapter 2 the Magi from the East (better known as the three wise men) came to worship Jesus. What did they do? Here you have these three wise powerful men and they knelt before this little baby. Why? Because they knew that this little baby was born “King of the Jews”. And that recognition of Jesus as Christ left them no choice. All they could do is to humble themselves, submit themselves to this king.

If we really understood this title Christ and all it represents, we would live life for Jesus. In all of the Bible, this title “Christ” from Genesis to Revelation is the most significant title for Jesus. If we understand that He is the promised deliverer from the fall in Genesis 3 forward, suffered on the cross for us, and will rule, then he compels my love, service, and complete obedience. This Christmas season, ask yourself, “Am I really following Christ with all that I am? With my heart, my soul, my mind, everything?” Are you really following him fullout?

Not only do we see in these verses that “Christ the Lord means personal obedience for us, but second, He is “Christ the Lord” in His second coming. We see in Revelation 19 the complete fulfillment of Jesus Christ as the final Davidic King. 11 I saw heaven standing open and there before me was a white horse, whose rider is called Faithful and True. with justice he judges and makes war. 12 His eyes are like blazing fire, and on his head are many crowns. He has a name written on him that no one knows but he himself. 13 He is dressed in a robe dipped in blood, and his name is the Word of God. 14 The armies of heaven were following him, riding on white horses and dressed in fine linen, white and clean. 15 Out of his mouth comes a sharp sword with which to strike down the nations. "He will rule them with an iron scepter." He treads the winepress of the fury of the wrath of God Almighty.

16 On his robe and on his thigh he has this name written:
KING OF KINGS AND LORD OF LORDS.

There is no neutrality. You are either under his lordship or you are not. If you are not under his rule and feel threatened by him, then you do not understand him. Once you get the fact that he is our deliverer, than you understand that he brings hope. The Jews were living in expectation of the coming Messiah. They could endure the slavery of Pharoah why? Because Messiah is coming. And when Messiah comes what will he bring us? He will bring us peace and justice for our lives. His rule in our lives would make things right.

As believers in Jesus Christ, we have hope because our Christ has won the victory. At his first coming he won the victory at the cross and the grave. He conquered the enemy of sin and death by giving his own life and then being raised from the dead three days later so that we can live. But he’s not done. We hope because he is coming a second

time. So we eagerly hope and expect our Messiah just like Israel did before He came the first time. But now we hope and expect him because we await his return.

In his first coming he came as the sacrificial lamb. In his second coming He will come as the victorious lion.

At his first coming he came as the lamb who takes away the sins of the world, but at his second coming he comes as the roaring lion who will take his rightful place as the final Davidic king. He came as the suffering servant, the sinless lamb in his first coming. But we eagerly anticipate his second coming. And at his second coming he will come with the roar of the lion of Judah. The once savior of the world will at his next coming be the judge of all mankind whose reign will reign forever and ever. The fact that this same Messiah, this same Christ will always have a relationship into eternity for those of us who believe should bring an incredible sense of hope for today and tomorrow.

So some of you are dreading Christmas this year. You feel alone, that no one cares about you. Let the promise of a coming king encourage your heart. You are not alone. Things are not as bad as they seem. In the midst of your circumstances whether they are financial disaster, relational problems, depression, or an addiction, recognize that God offers you hope in Jesus Christ. He loves you and one day all of these wrongs and injustices will be turned right.

Terrorism is a big deal in our world today. I just heard on the news the other day that some today wonder if terrorists will try to carry out a massive terror attack on American soil on Christmas since it is such a significant day for our country. So while the children of this world are possibly plotting terroristic attacks and running around killing people, I have hope. Though there are crazy unregenerate people in this world powered by the forces of Satan, I have hope. 'While we live in a world of war and destruction, I have hope. I do not just have hope for hope sake. I have hope because I know that Jesus the Christ came one time and he is coming again. And just as the Jews who were oppressed and terrorized under Roman, Babylonian, Egyptian, and other country terrorization, they looked for a coming deliverer. So we also look for our coming king. We await the one who will right the wrong, turn injustice to justice and godlessness to righteousness.

One of the favorite hymns of the Advent season is the hymn entitled "What Child is This"

What child is this, who lays to rest,
On Mary's lap is sleeping?
Whom angels greet with anthems sweet
While shepherds watch are keeping?
This, this is Christ the king
Whom shepherds guard and angels sing.
Haste, haste to bring him praise,
The babe, the son of Mary.

Christ the King is the child who we worship during this season of Advent and Christmas.

Come Lord Jesus come. And in the meantime may we be encouraged that Jesus is our Christ. Let's pray together.

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