

What's in A Name?

“...And His name will be called Wonderful, Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace...” Isa. 9:6

Asking my co-worker years ago how she came to name her son, she caught me by surprise when she said, “*I made it up*”. I had expected her to say that it was a combination of two names or after a relative with the same or a similar name. But when I inquired further, she said she had made it up simply because it “*sounded nice*”.

With names in the Bible however, it is quite a different matter. In contrast, names are important and are not just given because they “*sound nice*”. They have meanings...and significant meanings at that. In Genesis 28, when Jacob awoke from his ladder dream, he named the place Bethel...the house of God. There was meaning to that name, for sure! It would come to represent the presence and activity of the Lord in the lives of His people – the work of our Great High Priest who encourages us to draw near in true heart in full assurance of faith (Heb. 9:21-22). When Enoch named Methuselah, it meant “*after death it shall be sent*”, a reference some say, to the judgment of the flood which did occur just after he died. The fact that Methuselah lived 969 years gives us foreshadows the longsuffering and mercy of God in holding back judgment, despite the sin of mankind. One of my favorite names in Scripture is Mahershalalhashbaz (Isa. 8:1). That name means “*Hasten the booty, hasten the spoil*”, a reference of the impending defeat that Israel would receive at the hands of the Assyrians. When it comes to names in the Bible, often there is much in a name!

When it comes to the Lord also, there is much in His Name. Think of all the names given to the Lord in Scripture: The Bread of Life, The Way, the Truth, and the Life, the First and the Last, the Bright and Morning Star. On and on we can go with each name carrying a volume of spiritual insight into the Person and work of our blessed Savior. But not many Bible verses have more to say about the work of our Lord than Isaiah's prophecy of the Child who would be born and a Son who would be given. It says a lot – the Child, a reference to His *Person*, His humanity and virgin birth. The Son given, a reference to His *purpose* in coming to give His life a ransom for many. Four names are given that declares who this Person is and what His work would entail, though many see the word “Wonderful” as a separate designation, citing Judges 13:18. But it seems however that each designation is qualified by the adjective that precedes it – thus highlighting His credentials.

First, He is the *Wonderful Counselor*. As a Counselor, He knows us by name and by need. He knows our hearts and He tests our minds. He knows how to handle our situations and circumstances, and sovereignly controls events in our lives that will ultimately work toward our good. It is for the expressed purpose of conforming us to His image, Rom. 8:28-29. Like David with Israel, He guides us with the skillfulness of His hands, Psalms 78:72. In that work, there is none better than He, the Author and Finisher of our faith. Remember – our Savior is a Wonderful Counselor, a merciful and faithful High Priest who we can call out to in our time of need.

Not only is He a Wonderful Counselor, but He is also the *Mighty God*. He is Elohim, the powerful God – the One who created the heavens and the earth, who “*made the stars also*”. He is the “*Great God*” (Titus 2:13), “*the blessed and only Potentate, the King of kings, and Lord of lords*” (1 Tim. 6:15). There is no one like Him, and when it comes to turning the rivers of water, He can turn it wherever He wishes (Prov. 21:1). He can save to the uttermost and as Charles Wesley put it “*His blood can make the foulest clean*”, *His blood availed for me!* Do not forget that our Savior is a Mighty God whose hand and arm are mighty to save.

He is also the *Everlasting Father*. This designation “*Father*” throws some people, thinking it refers to the first member of the Godhead. But it also accurately describes the Lord as the One who links the ages of time together. Harry Ironside termed it, “*The Father of Eternity*”, the Centerpiece of history and upon Whom the end of the ages have come (1 Cor. 10:11). Remember, our Savior is the Everlasting Father who will ultimately be acknowledged for who He truly is.

Finally, He is the “*Prince of Peace*”. He offers peace of God to those who come to Him by faith. He gives us the perfect peace we need when our minds are stayed on Him (Isa. 26:3). As such, He speaks peace to His people and provides the peace that passes all understanding, when we turn things over to Him in prayer (Phil. 4:6-7) Remember, He is the Prince of Peace who grants that peace to the heirs of salvation.

What's in a name? Much when it comes to the Lord! Let us rejoice in Him and for His work with us and for us to His glory.