



Week #9: There Is Power In The Name-Jesus' Mission

CONDENSED OVERVIEW:

Slide #1: PRAYER TAGS

I. INTRODUCTION-

WHAT'S THE ONE THING?

In the first week of this series, we learned:

FACT:

- ➔ WHEN A NAME FOR GOD or JESUS or the HOLY SPIRIT is LISTED in SCRIPTURE it SIGNIFIES
  - Knowing another's name was a special privilege that offered access to that person's thought and life. Hayford, J. W. 1995. *Hayford's Bible handbook*. Thomas Nelson Publishers: Nashville
- ➔ KNOWING GOD'S NAMES MAKES HIM PERSONAL.
  - Exodus 3:1-7
- ➔ KNOWING GOD'S NAMES KEEPS US FROM BELIEVING FALSEHOODS ABOUT HIM.
  - Romans 1:21-23
- ➔ KNOWING GOD'S NAMES INVITES US TO KNOW HIM.
  - *Romans 1:18-23 For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who suppress the truth in unrighteousness,<sup>19</sup> because what may be known of God is manifest in them, for God has shown it to them. <sup>20</sup>For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes are clearly seen,*
  - Psalm 19:1-4

Last week & this week, we're spending time focusing on Jesus.

In this week's session, we'll explore His MISSION.

A. DEITY:

1. READ THE NAMES THROUGH
2. WHY IS THIS IMPORTANT? [WHY DID JESUS NEED TO BE GOD?]
3. NAMES AND TITLES EMPHASIZING JESUS' DEITY--JESUS CHOSE TO OFFER ALL HIS "GODNESS" ON OUR BEHALF & STILL DOES.
4. HOW CAN I RELATE TO JESUS AS GOD?

B. HUMANITY:

1. READ THE NAMES THROUGH
2. WHY IS THIS IMPORTANT? [WHY DID JESUS NEED TO BE A HUMAN?]
3. NAMES AND TITLES OF JESUS EMPHASIZING HIS HUMANITY--JESUS CHOSE TO IDENTIFY COMPLETELY, PROFOUNDLY WITH US & STILL DOES.
4. HOW CAN I RELATE TO JESUS AS HUMAN?

Slide #2: TITLE PAGE

Slide #3: JESUS DEITY

Slide #4: JESUS HUMANITY

Slide #5: JESUS MISSION

THIS WEEK:

C. MISSION:

1. READ THE NAMES THROUGH-
  2. WHAT WAS HIS MISSION?-READ THE CHART
  3. JESUS MODELED HUMANITY ON A GOD MISSION
  4. WHAT OF JESUS' MISSION HAVE WE BEEN ASKED TO PARTICIPATE IN?
  5. CONCLUSION: OUR RESPONSE
- ➔ Jesus' love brought all His God nature to bear on only our behalf. [trust, solid foundation, unshakable]

<sup>1</sup> Larry Richards, *Every Name of God in the Bible*, Everything in the Bible Series (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, 2001), 141–194.



**Week #9: There Is Power In The Name-Jesus' Mission**

- ➔ Jesus' compassion caused Him to identify with us, embrace true Humanity—not theoretical identification, not external [which is observation from the outside], but subjectively, personally, completely, without end.
- ➔ Jesus' time, talent, treasure, ability, determination takes on a dual focus in His God nature & Human nature by loving & obeying the Father [love God], and allowing no distraction or deviation to His mission of saving us & reconciling us to the Father [love others.]

**Slide #5: JESUS MISSION**

**C. MISSION: NAMES AND TITLES OF JESUS**

Scripture assigns to Jesus names and titles that emphasize His deity and His humanity. But Jesus also bears names and titles that give us insight into His mission both here on earth and subsequently in heaven. As we consider these names and titles, we are impressed not simply with who Jesus is, but also with who Jesus is *for us*.

[these are outworkings of His love for us—what shape the fruit of the Spirit took in Jesus' life

**1. READ THE NAMES THROUGH**

Advocate • Apostle • Author • Bread • Chief Cornerstone • Christ • Deliverer • Door • Forerunner • Head • Savior • Lamb of God/Passover • Mediator • Messiah • Physician • Prophet • Resurrection & the Life • Teacher • Shepherd & Overseer/Good Shepherd/Great Shephard/Chief Shepherd • Way

**Highlight:**

- Bread

**It was Jesus who called Himself the “bread of life” (John 6:35), using what was a powerful metaphor in biblical times.** Long ago in Palestine, bread was the primary food. It was made from a variety of grains, often with ground beans or lentils mixed in the flour. Bread was typically baked flat. A loaf of dough was about a half-inch thick. It was slapped against the outside of a beehive-shaped clay oven to bake.

Bread has great significance in the Bible, for it literally and symbolically represented the maintenance of life. Thus, it should come as no surprise that Jesus taught His disciples to pray, “Give us this day our daily bread” (Matt. 6:11). This request reminds us of our constant dependence on God for all the necessities of life. But the most significant metaphorical reference to bread is found in John 6:35, where Jesus announced that He is the “bread of life.”

**The setting (John 6:1–27).** A large crowd had followed Jesus out into an isolated place. As the day wore on, Jesus asked Philip (and undoubtedly the rest of the disciples) where bread could be purchased to feed all the hungry people. The query was a test, one that Philip and the other disciples failed. Perhaps shocked, Philip objected that a great sum of money would be necessary to buy enough bread to feed the vast crowd.

Jesus then took the five barley loaves and two small fish a boy had brought and multiplied them. The crowd of thousands was fed, and there were twelve baskets of fragments left over. The miracle excited the crowd. They reasoned that not only must Jesus be the Messiah, but if

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**Week #9: There Is Power In The Name-Jesus' Mission**

He were to rule them, they would never go hungry again! Jesus sensed their intent to take Him by force and acclaim Him their king, so He quickly left the area.

The next day the crowds found Jesus again. It was then that He rebuked them for focusing on food for the body, rather than on “the food which endures to everlasting life” (John 6:27).

**The sermon on the bread of life (John 6:28–66).** What Jesus said on that occasion both puzzled and alienated many of His listeners. *The Teacher's Commentary* (1988, pp. 723, 724) traces the flow of Jesus' message to the people of His time, and explores the meaning of His identification of Himself as the Bread of Life.

***“I am the Bread of Life” (John 6:35–40).*** Each statement Jesus made stressed the continuing benefits of the life He brings. ***You will never be hungry. God will, in Jesus, keep on supplying that which sustains our new life. You will never be thirsty. A human being can go without food for weeks without dying, but he cannot go without water. Jesus promises to satisfy even that most intense of needs; He will see that we lack nothing we need. I will never drive [him] away... I shall lose none of all that He has given me. We can be sure Jesus will extend God's grace to us in a daily experience of eternal life as well as in a permanent relationship with God.***

*“I am the Bread that came down from heaven” (John 6:41–51).* The manna God provided for the Israelites during the Exodus is a picture of Jesus as “living bread.” When God's people traveled through the wilderness, they had to depend on God to provide their food supernaturally. God provided the food in a way that would also teach the people something about their relationship with Him. Every day God gave enough food for that day. No one could gather more than a day's supply. There had to be a continual, constant dependence on God; He was the only source of sustenance.

The Jews murmured against Christ's claim to be “Bread that came down from heaven.” They knew this Man and His family; how could He claim a heavenly origin? Jesus answered that it would be God who would draw men to Christ. And Jesus then went on to promise that anyone who believed in Him would have eternal life, and anyone who fed on the living Bread “will live forever.”

*“Eat the flesh of the Son of man” (John 6:52–59).* Many see in these words a reference to the Communion service. “This is My body, given for you,” Jesus would say as He instituted the memorial service. This is “My blood which is poured out for you.” But to “eat” and “drink” the body and blood of Jesus means far more than to participate in a shared memorial, as the rest of our passage suggests. “Whoever eats My flesh and drinks My blood remains in Me” (v. 56). “He who feeds on this bread will live forever” (v. 58). “The words I have spoken to you are spirit,” Jesus said (v. 63).

Jesus was using *body* and *blood* to represent everything needed to sustain and support life. Our lives will be supported so completely that we will never hunger or thirst. Our spiritual lives will be sustained so completely that they will endure until Jesus raises us up on the last day.

**When Jesus called Himself the Bread of Life, then, He was referring to His mission to give and sustain spiritual life. Christ fulfilled His mission to be our Bread of Life by dying on the cross and being resurrected. We complete the transaction when, by faith, we figuratively “eat” and “drink” (that is, spiritually appropriate) His body and blood.**

**How are we feasting on The Bread?**

<sup>1</sup> Larry Richards, [\*Every Name of God in the Bible\*](#), Everything in the Bible Series (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, 2001), 141–194.

**▪ Savior: past, present, & future**

Jesus is specifically called “Savior” twenty-two times in the Gospels, Acts, and Epistles. And the very name “Jesus” is a constant reminder of Christ’s work as Savior, for “Jesus” is the Greek form of the Hebrew name “Joshua,” which means “God is salvation.” In naming Mary’s yet unborn child “Jesus,” God was announcing that He would grow up to be the Savior (Matt. 1:21; Luke 1:31).

The Old Testament emphasis on salvation is explored in the article on the title, “God of My Salvation,” which begins on page 54. The full doctrine of salvation is developed in the New Testament. Only when we understand salvation itself can we grasp what it means to acknowledge Jesus and name Him as our Savior.

**Salvation in the New Testament.** The basic concept established so firmly in the Old Testament is the foundation of our New Testament’s teaching about salvation. Salvation is from God, who acts to deliver the spiritually helpless who trust in Him.

The primary Greek terms for salvation are *sozo* (a verb) and *soteria* (a noun). Numerous times “salvation” is used in the Old Testament sense of deliverance from some pressing physical danger (Matt. 24:13; Mark 13:13–20; Acts 27:20). Jesus’ healing miracles saved the sick in the sense of restoring lost health and wholeness to them (Matt. 9:21, 22; Mark 5:23, 28, 34; Luke 7:50). But in most contexts salvation focuses on what God has done in Christ to deliver human beings from the powers of death, sin, and Satan. In the New Testament, the greatest enemies of humankind are spiritual, not physical, for spiritual terrors threaten people with eternal loss.

**Past-tense salvation.** New Testament salvation has three distinct aspects, reflected in our past, present, and future tenses. Jesus died for us in the past and accomplished all that was necessary for our salvation. When we trust in Jesus, the Father considers us as having died with the Son and been raised again with Him to new life (Rom. 6:3–5). Christians have been saved, for in God’s sight the great transaction is complete. Thus, the Bible says, “according to His mercy He *saved us*” (Titus 3:5; italics mine) and He “*has saved us* and called us to a holy calling (2 Tim. 1:9; italics mine). Because of what Jesus has done, we who believe are saved and have already passed from death to life.

**Present-tense salvation.** It is also true that Jesus is currently saving us. Salvation has great impact on our present experience. We who have been reconciled to God by Christ’s death are being saved through Jesus’ life (Rom. 5:10). As 6:5–14 emphasizes, our union with Jesus in His death and resurrection brings release from our natural slavery to sin. We are freed to serve God and live righteous lives.

**Future-tense salvation.** Finally, the Bible assures us that we will be saved. In the Resurrection, Christians will be fully delivered from the last taint of sin, perfected at last, and made completely pure and holy. This certain future is beautifully described in Romans 8:18–39 and 1 Corinthians 15:12–58.

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Week #9: There Is Power In The Name-Jesus' Mission

Jesus as Savior. The New Testament presents Jesus as Savior, and teaches that salvation is available only through faith in Him. Jesus, the eternal Son of God, entered our world to bring us salvation (John 3:17; 1 Tim. 1:15). His death won us forgiveness and new life, gifts guaranteed by His resurrection (2 Tim. 4:18; Heb. 7:25). Jesus saves us from wrath (Rom. 5:9), adopts us into God's family (Eph. 1:5), and assures us of resurrection to an eternity to be spent in fellowship with Him (1 Cor. 15:20-23). In Jesus we see that God has acted. Salvation has been won for us. Now all that remains for us is to trust God, relying completely on Jesus and counting on the victory He already has won.

What then does it mean for us to name Jesus as Savior? First, it means that we confess our helplessness to combat sin and the spiritual forces that hold humanity captive. Second, it means that we trust in Jesus, who has acted in history to provide deliverance for us in His sacrificial death on the cross. Third, it means that we confess God's trustworthiness (especially as we abandon ourselves to Him) and rely on Him alone to bring us deliverance. It is no wonder that "Savior" is one of the most precious and surely one of the most significant names or titles of our Lord!

2. WHAT WAS HIS MISSION?

Passage	Mission
Rom. 1:1	To <b>represent</b> God as an apostle. [sent one]
Rom. 1:6	To <b>gather</b> a people belonging to Him
Rom. 2:16	To <b>be the standard</b> by which people's secrets are judged
Rom. 3:22	To <b>be the source</b> of righteousness to all who believe
Rom. 3:24	To <b>redeem</b> lost human beings
Rom. 5:1	To <b>bring believers</b> into a state of <b>peace</b> with God
Rom. 5:6	To <b>die</b> for the ungodly
Rom. 5:8	To <b>die</b> for us, showing God's unconditional love for humankind
Rom. 5:11	To <b>reconcile</b> us to God
Rom. 5:15	To bring us the gift of God's grace
Rom. 5:17	To provide the gift of righteousness
Rom. 5:21	To bring us eternal life
Rom. 6:3	To unite us spiritually to Himself in His death

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**Week #9: There Is Power In The Name-Jesus' Mission**

Rom. 6:4	To unite us spiritually to Himself in His resurrection
Rom. 6:23	To bring us the gift of eternal life
Rom. 7:4	To enable us to die to the Law so that we might bear fruit to God
Rom. 8:1	To release us from condemnation
Rom. 8:2	To set us free from the power of sin and death
Rom. 8:10	To make us spiritually alive
Rom. 8:17	To make us co-heirs with Him of God the Father
Rom. 8:35, 39	To secure us as His own forever
Rom. 10:4	To make the Law no longer necessary for those who become acceptable to God by faith
Rom. 10:17	To stimulate faith through His word
Rom. 12:5	To unite believers into a single spiritual body
Rom. 14:9	To become Lord of both the dead and the living
Rom. 15:6	To enable us to glorify God
Rom. 15:7	To welcome lost human beings
Rom. 15:8	To confirm the promises made to the patriarchs
Rom. 15:16	To sanctify the Gentiles, making them an offering acceptable to God
Rom. 16:27	To bring glory to God
1 Cor. 1:2	To sanctify and make holy those who call on His name
1 Cor. 1:3	To be the source of grace and peace for believers
1 Cor. 1:4	To be the agent through whom God gives believers His grace
1 Cor. 1:10	To lend His name to our prayers
1 Cor. 1:23	To be crucified

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**Week #9: There Is Power In The Name-Jesus' Mission**

1 Cor. 1:24	To display the power and wisdom of God
1 Cor. 2:16	To reveal God's mind; for example, to guide us in our lives
1 Cor. 3:11	To become the foundation of our faith
1 Cor. 5:7	To be sacrificed for us, as a Passover lamb
1 Cor. 8:6	To be the source of our new life with God
1 Cor. 8:11	To die for the strong and the weak Christian
1 Cor. 15:3	To die for our sins
1 Cor. 15:22	To make alive those who died in Adam
1 Cor. 15:23	To rise from the dead as the firstfruits of our salvation
1 Cor. 15:57	To give us victory over death
2 Cor. 1:20	To affirm and confirm the promises of God
2 Cor. 4:6	To give us knowledge of the glory of God
2 Cor. 5:17	To make us new creations
2 Cor. 5:19	To reconcile the world to God
2 Cor. 8:9	To become poor so that we might become rich
Gal. 3:13	To redeem us from the curse of the Law
Gal. 3:14	To make the promises given to Abraham available to believing Gentiles
Gal. 3:26	To make those who believe children of God
Gal. 3:28	To make irrelevant the differences that divide humankind
Gal. 5:1	To set us free
Eph. 1:3	To bless us with all spiritual blessings
Eph. 1:5	To be the agent of our adoption into God's family
Eph. 1:10	To bring all things together under His headship

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**Hello, My Name Is ...**  
**Week #9: There Is Power In The Name-Jesus' Mission**

Eph. 2:5	To make those who were dead in sins alive in Him
Eph. 2:6	To raise us up and seat us with Himself in the heavenly realms
Eph. 2:13	To bring us near to the Father through the Son's shed blood
Eph. 2:20	To become the chief cornerstone of God's redemptive plan
Eph. 3:11	To accomplish God's eternal saving purpose
Eph. 3:21	To bring God glory in the church
Eph. 4:32	To be an example of forgiveness that we are to follow
Eph. 5:2	To be an example of the life of love we are to demonstrate
Eph. 5:23	To be the Head and Savior of His church
Eph. 5:25	To be an example of self-sacrificial love to husbands
Phil. 1:11	To enable us to be filled with the fruit of righteousness
Phil. 2:5	To be an example of humility we are to follow
Phil. 2:11	To be Lord, to the glory of God the Father
Phil. 3:9	To be the source of a righteousness that is received through faith
Col. 1:27	To dwell within believers as our hope of glory
Col. 2:9	That the fullness of the Godhead might be expressed in bodily form
Col. 2:10	That He might be head over every authority and power
Col. 2:20	That we might die with Him to the elementary principles of this world and be freed from its rules
Col. 3:4	That when Christ returns, we might appear with Him in glory
1 Tim. 1:15	To save sinners
1 Tim. 2:5	To become the Mediator between God and humankind
2 Tim. 1:10	To bring life and immortality to light

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Week #9: There Is Power In The Name-Jesus' Mission

2 Tim. 4:1	To judge the living and the dead
Heb. 5:5	To become our High Priest
Heb. 9:14	To cleanse our consciences so that we may serve the living God
Heb. 9:15	To be the Mediator of the new covenant
Heb. 9:15	To die as a ransom to set us free from sins
Heb. 9:26	To once for all do away with sin by the sacrifice of Himself
Heb. 9:28	To appear a second time to bring salvation to those waiting for His return
Heb. 10:10	To make us sanctified, or holy, through His self-sacrifice
1 Pet. 1:19	To redeem us with His precious blood
1 Pet. 2:21	To suffer for us, leaving us an example to follow
1 Pet. 3:18	To die for sins once for all in order to bring us to God
2 Pet. 2:20	To enable us to escape the defilements of the world
1 John 3:16	To lay down His life for us

Slide #6:

3. JESUS MODELED HUMANITY ON A GOD MISSION

**John 5:19** Then Jesus answered and said to them, “Most assuredly, I say to you, the Son can do nothing of Himself, but what He sees the Father do; for whatever He does, the Son also does in like manner. NKJV

**John 14:31** But that the world may know that I love the Father, and as the Father gave Me commandment, so I do. Arise, let us go from here. NKJV

**Luke 2:49** And He said to them, “Why did you seek Me? Did you not know that I must be about My Father’s business?” NKJV

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## Slide #7:

## 4. WHAT OF JESUS' MISSION HAVE WE BEEN ASKED TO PARTICIPATE IN? [DO WE DO ALL THAT JESUS DID OR SOME OF IT OR SOMETHING DIFFERENT?]

- MATTHEW 28 The Great Commission

(Mark 16:14–18; Luke 24:36–49; John 20:19–23; Acts 1:6–8)

18 And Jesus came and spoke to them, saying, “All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. 19 Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, 20 teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age.” Amen. **Where are we going & Who are we discipling?**

## Slide #8:

- 2 Corinthians 5:

**14** *For the love of Christ compels us,* [be compelled by the love of Christ]

because we judge thus: that if One died for all, then all died; **15** and He died for all, **that those who live should live no longer for themselves,**

[because of what He did, we should no longer live for ourselves but others]

but for Him who died for them and rose again.

**16** Therefore, from now on, **we regard no one according to the flesh.** [we're not judging—all are equal needers of the love of God]

Even though we have known Christ according to the flesh, yet now we know **Him** **thus** no longer. **17** Therefore, if anyone **is** in Christ, **he is** a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new. **18** Now all things **are** of God, who has reconciled us to Himself through Jesus Christ, and **has given us the ministry of reconciliation,**

## Slide #9:

**19** that is, that God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself, not imputing their trespasses to them, **and has committed to us the word of reconciliation.** **20** Now then, we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God were pleading through us: **to whom are we pleading? What reconciliation to God & others are we working on?** we implore **you** on Christ's behalf, be reconciled to God. **21** For He made Him who knew no sin **to be** sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.

## Slide #10:

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## Week #9: There Is Power In The Name-Jesus' Mission

## 5. OUR RESPONSE-PERSONAL

- a. Jesus as Deity-100% God
- b. Jesus as Man-100% human

Slide #11:

- c. Jesus' Mission-what has He asked of us?

## Notes:

**ADVOCATE [HE ADVOCATES RIGHT NOW, WHO DOES HE ADVOCATE FOR? US**

John tells us that "if anyone sins, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous" (1 John 2:1). The Greek noun rendered "Advocate" is *parakletos*. It is used only by John in the New Testament, typically in references to the Holy Spirit. However, in this verse John uses *parakletos* in a legal sense, one that was well-established in the first century A.D.

In Bible times, the *parakletos* was a "helper in court," namely, someone who defended another person by offering evidence to support his or her innocence. In the above mentioned verse, John pictures Jesus as our "helper in court." When we sin, Jesus steps forward and pleads the efficacy of His own blood, which He offered as a sacrifice in payment for our sins. As verse 2 says, "He himself is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only but also for the whole world."

**Jesus' role as our Advocate is a present ministry. But it is also an essential element of His mission to make salvation available to all humankind. While not all people will respond to Him with faith and be saved, His sacrifice is sufficient to pay for the sins of all humankind.**

**APOSTLE-ONLY ONCE**

In Hebrews 3:1 Jesus is called the "Apostle and High Priest" whom Christians confess. This is the only place in Scripture where Jesus is called an apostle. Nevertheless, it is clear from the rest of the New Testament that Jesus was in fact the premier apostle.

The Greek noun rendered "apostle" is *apostolos*. By the first century A.D., it carried the idea of a personal representative of a dignitary or ruler. In philosophy, the word came to be used with a religious connotation. Thus, an apostle was someone who spoke as authorized by a deity.

In both senses Jesus is indeed the premier apostle. He is God the Father's personal representative. Also, Jesus is God the Son! Thus, everything He has taught bears the stamp of divine approval, for He as well as His statements are the Word of God.

The Father's commissioning of the Son to represent Him was indeed a central aspect of Jesus' mission to earth. As the Father's personal representative, Jesus came to reveal who God truly is. Also, Jesus came to reveal more fully God's saving plans and purposes. As the Apostle and High Priest whom Christians confess, Jesus is the One whose revelation of the Father's love and whose promise of forgiveness we believe implicitly.

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## BIBLE BACKGROUND:

### “APOSTLE” IN THE NEW TESTAMENT

The Gospels focus our attention on twelve men whom Jesus chose to be His apostles (Matt. 10:2–4; Luke 6:13–16). The Savior chose these men to be His representatives and authorized them to speak for Him when the church was established.

The title “apostle” was also given to other church leaders, such as the apostle Paul (1 Tim. 2:7). In a significant way, Paul ranks with the Twelve as a spokesperson of the risen Christ.

There is, however, another use of “apostle” in the New Testament. Individuals like Barnabas (Acts 14:14) and possibly Andronicus (Rom. 16:7) are referred to as “apostles,” and this role was clearly filled by several in the first-century church (1 Cor. 12:28). It is likely that these lesser apostles—lesser in comparison to the Twelve and Paul—**were what we today would call missionaries. They** traveled throughout the Roman Empire as Christ’s representatives and proclaimed the gospel to all who would listen.



## AUTHOR-3X

The Greek noun translated “author” appears three times in the New Testament in reference to Jesus, although the word is rendered “author” only once in the NKJV.

Jesus is called

- the author of our faith (Heb. 12:2 NKJV),
- the author of our salvation (2:10 NASB),
- and the author of eternal life (Acts 3:15 NIV).

The Greek noun is *archegos*, and it was frequently used when referring to a city’s founder or to the founder of a philosophic school. As used in reference to Jesus, the term **marks Him as the Pioneer who has opened the way for us to salvation and eternal life.** In fulfilling His redemptive mission by His sacrificial death and resurrection, Christ bridged the gap between humankind and God. Jesus also became the source of eternal life and salvation for us.

## BREAD

**It was Jesus who called Himself the “bread of life” (John 6:35), using what was a powerful metaphor in biblical times.** Long ago in Palestine, bread was the primary food. It was made

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**Week #9: There Is Power In The Name-Jesus' Mission**

from a variety of grains, often with ground beans or lentils mixed in the flour. Bread was typically baked flat. A loaf of dough was about a half-inch thick. It was slapped against the outside of a beehive-shaped clay oven to bake.

Bread has great significance in the Bible, for it literally and symbolically represented the maintenance of life. Thus, it should come as no surprise that Jesus taught His disciples to pray, "Give us this day our daily bread" (Matt. 6:11). This request reminds us of our constant dependence on God for all the necessities of life. But the most significant metaphorical reference to bread is found in John 6:35, where Jesus announced that He is the "bread of life."

**The setting (John 6:1–27).** A large crowd had followed Jesus out into an isolated place. As the day wore on, Jesus asked Philip (and undoubtedly the rest of the disciples) where bread could be purchased to feed all the hungry people. The query was a test, one that Philip and the other disciples failed. Perhaps shocked, Philip objected that a great sum of money would be necessary to buy enough bread to feed the vast crowd.

Jesus then took the five barley loaves and two small fish a boy had brought and multiplied them. The crowd of thousands was fed, and there were twelve baskets of fragments left over. The miracle excited the crowd. They reasoned that not only must Jesus be the Messiah, but if He were to rule them, they would never go hungry again! Jesus sensed their intent to take Him by force and acclaim Him their king, so He quickly left the area.

The next day the crowds found Jesus again. It was then that He rebuked them for focusing on food for the body, rather than on "the food which endures to everlasting life" (John 6:27).



Flat loaves of bread, like the pita bread available in grocery stores, were viewed in Israel as the staple that sustained life.



**The sermon on the bread of life (John 6:28–66).** What Jesus said on that occasion both puzzled and alienated many of His listeners. *The Teacher's Commentary* (1988, pp. 723, 724) traces the flow of Jesus' message to the people of His time, and explores the meaning of His identification of Himself as the Bread of Life.

**"I am the Bread of Life" (John 6:35–40).** Each statement Jesus made stressed the continuing benefits of the life He brings. *You will never be hungry. God will, in Jesus, keep on supplying that which sustains our new life. You will never be thirsty.* A human being can go without food for weeks without dying, but he cannot go without water. Jesus promises to satisfy even that most intense of needs; He will see that we lack nothing we need. *I will never drive [him] away... I shall lose none of all that He has given me. We can be sure Jesus will extend God's grace to us in a daily experience of eternal life as well as in a permanent relationship with God.*

*"I am the Bread that came down from heaven" (John 6:41–51).* The manna God provided for the Israelites during the Exodus is a picture of Jesus as "living bread." When God's people

<sup>1</sup> Larry Richards, *Every Name of God in the Bible*, Everything in the Bible Series (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, 2001), 141–194.

**Week #9: There Is Power In The Name-Jesus' Mission**

traveled through the wilderness, they had to depend on God to provide their food supernaturally. God provided the food in a way that would also teach the people something about their relationship with Him. Every day God gave enough food for that day. No one could gather more than a day's supply. There had to be a continual, constant dependence on God; He was the only source of sustenance.

The Jews murmured against Christ's claim to be "Bread that came down from heaven." They knew this Man and His family; how could He claim a heavenly origin? Jesus answered that it would be God who would draw men to Christ. And Jesus then went on to promise that anyone who believed in Him would have eternal life, and anyone who fed on the living Bread "will live forever."

*"Eat the flesh of the Son of man" (John 6:52–59).* Many see in these words a reference to the Communion service. "This is My body, given for you," Jesus would say as He instituted the memorial service. This is "My blood which is poured out for you." But to "eat" and "drink" the body and blood of Jesus means far more than to participate in a shared memorial, as the rest of our passage suggests. "Whoever eats My flesh and drinks My blood remains in Me" (v. 56). "He who feeds on this bread will live forever" (v. 58). "The words I have spoken to you are spirit," Jesus said (v. 63).

Jesus was using *body* and *blood* to represent everything needed to sustain and support life. Our lives will be supported so completely that we will never hunger or thirst. Our spiritual lives will be sustained so completely that they will endure until Jesus raises us up on the last day.

**When Jesus called Himself the Bread of Life, then, He was referring to His mission to give and sustain spiritual life. Christ fulfilled His mission to be our Bread of Life by dying on the cross and being resurrected. We complete the transaction when, by faith, we figuratively "eat" and "drink" (that is, spiritually appropriate) His body and blood.**

**How are we feasting on The Bread?**

## CHIEF CORNERSTONE

The Old Testament refers to Jesus as

- a precious cornerstone,
- as the stone the builders rejected,
- and as our sure foundation (see p. 159).

In Ephesians 2:20, Paul carries this theme further. The apostle views the church, the household of God, as being "built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief cornerstone."

Similar imagery is adopted by Peter, who calls Jesus a "living stone, rejected indeed by men, but chosen by God and precious" (1 Peter 2:4). The apostle goes on to quote several Old Testament passages in which the Messiah is identified as the chief cornerstone (vv. 6–8).

The point in each of these passages is that Christ came to be the key not only to our spiritual life but also our spiritual growth. As Paul says in 1 Corinthians 3:11, "No other foundation can anyone lay than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ."

<sup>1</sup> Larry Richards, [\*Every Name of God in the Bible\*](#), Everything in the Bible Series (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, 2001), 141–194.



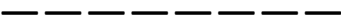
**CHRIST**

**Jesus is identified as the “Christ” no less than 530 times in the New Testament in some 499 verses. This title, the equivalent in Greek of the Hebrew “Messiah,” or “Anointed One,” is one of the most significant names of Jesus to be found in Scripture. (For more information on the title “Messiah,” see page 94.)**

In Old Testament times, anointing someone set that person apart. He or she was commissioned for a special mission. Thus, the name “Messiah,” or “the Anointed One,” emphasizes the fact that God set Jesus apart to accomplish a redemptive mission.

The Jews considered the primary mission of the Messiah to be the reconciliation of God’s people to Himself, their purification from sin, and the elimination of sin and evil worldwide. There are Old Testament passages that emphasize other aspects of the Messiah’s mission, such as providing physical healing (Is. 35:1–3) and salvation from sin (chap. 53). Nevertheless, the mission of the Messiah that most captured the imagination of Israel was that of establishing the rule and justice of God on earth.

In the New Testament Epistles, “Christ” **becomes as much a name as a title.** Nevertheless, it remains clear that Jesus’ identification as the “Christ” implies that He too was anointed, or set apart, for a special mission. In one sense, the entire New Testament revelation is an unveiling of the redemptive mission for which God sent Jesus to earth. (In contrast, the Old Testament gives partial glimpses of what God commissioned Jesus to do.) Understandably, then, it is valuable to examine the New Testament Epistles where Jesus is called “the Christ” and discern what aspects of His redemptive mission are associated with this special name.



The fish was chosen as an early Christian symbol because the letters of its Greek name, ichthus, were the initial letters of the Christian confession, “Jesus Christ, Son of God, Savior.”



**BIBLE BACKGROUND:**

CHRIST’S MISSION

Passage	Mission
Rom. 1:1	To represent God as an apostle
Rom. 1:6	To gather a people belonging to Him
Rom. 2:16	To be the standard by which people’s secrets are judged

<sup>1</sup> Larry Richards, *Every Name of God in the Bible*, Everything in the Bible Series (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, 2001), 141–194.



**Week #9: There Is Power In The Name-Jesus' Mission**

Rom. 3:22	To be the source of righteousness to all who believe
Rom. 3:24	To redeem lost human beings
Rom. 5:1	To bring believers into a state of peace with God
Rom. 5:6	To die for the ungodly
Rom. 5:8	To die for us, showing God's unconditional love for humankind
Rom. 5:11	To reconcile us to God
Rom. 5:15	To bring us the gift of God's grace
Rom. 5:17	To provide the gift of righteousness
Rom. 5:21	To bring us eternal life
Rom. 6:3	To unite us spiritually to Himself in His death
Rom. 6:4	To unite us spiritually to Himself in His resurrection
Rom. 6:23	To bring us the gift of eternal life
Rom. 7:4	To enable us to die to the Law so that we might bear fruit to God
Rom. 8:1	To release us from condemnation
Rom. 8:2	To set us free from the power of sin and death
Rom. 8:10	To make us spiritually alive
Rom. 8:17	To make us co-heirs with Him of God the Father
Rom. 8:35, 39	To secure us as His own forever
Rom. 10:4	To make the Law no longer necessary for those who become acceptable to God by faith
Rom. 10:17	To stimulate faith through His word
Rom. 12:5	To unite believers into a single spiritual body
Rom. 14:9	To become Lord of both the dead and the living

<sup>1</sup> Larry Richards, [\*Every Name of God in the Bible\*](#), Everything in the Bible Series (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, 2001), 141–194.





## Week #9: There Is Power In The Name-Jesus' Mission

Rom. 15:6	To enable us to glorify God
Rom. 15:7	To welcome lost human beings
Rom. 15:8	To confirm the promises made to the patriarchs
Rom. 15:16	To sanctify the Gentiles, making them an offering acceptable to God
Rom. 16:27	To bring glory to God
1 Cor. 1:2	To sanctify and make holy those who call on His name
1 Cor. 1:3	To be the source of grace and peace for believers
1 Cor. 1:4	To be the agent through whom God gives believers His grace
1 Cor. 1:10	To lend His name to our prayers
1 Cor. 1:23	To be crucified
1 Cor. 1:24	To display the power and wisdom of God
1 Cor. 2:16	To reveal God's mind; for example, to guide us in our lives
1 Cor. 3:11	To become the foundation of our faith
1 Cor. 5:7	To be sacrificed for us, as a Passover lamb
1 Cor. 8:6	To be the source of our new life with God
1 Cor. 8:11	To die for the strong and the weak Christian
1 Cor. 15:3	To die for our sins
1 Cor. 15:22	To make alive those who died in Adam
1 Cor. 15:23	To rise from the dead as the firstfruits of our salvation
1 Cor. 15:57	To give us victory over death
2 Cor. 1:20	To affirm and confirm the promises of God
2 Cor. 4:6	To give us knowledge of the glory of God
2 Cor. 5:17	To make us new creations

<sup>1</sup> Larry Richards, [\*Every Name of God in the Bible\*](#), Everything in the Bible Series (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, 2001), 141–194.



**Week #9: There Is Power In The Name-Jesus' Mission**

2 Cor. 5:19	To reconcile the world to God
2 Cor. 8:9	To become poor so that we might become rich
Gal. 3:13	To redeem us from the curse of the Law
Gal. 3:14	To make the promises given to Abraham available to believing Gentiles
Gal. 3:26	To make those who believe children of God
Gal. 3:28	To make irrelevant the differences that divide humankind
Gal. 5:1	To set us free
Eph. 1:3	To bless us with all spiritual blessings
Eph. 1:5	To be the agent of our adoption into God's family
Eph. 1:10	To bring all things together under His headship
Eph. 2:5	To make those who were dead in sins alive in Him
Eph. 2:6	To raise us up and seat us with Himself in the heavenly realms
Eph. 2:13	To bring us near to the Father through the Son's shed blood
Eph. 2:20	To become the chief cornerstone of God's redemptive plan
Eph. 3:11	To accomplish God's eternal saving purpose
Eph. 3:21	To bring God glory in the church
Eph. 4:32	To be an example of forgiveness that we are to follow
Eph. 5:2	To be an example of the life of love we are to demonstrate
Eph. 5:23	To be the Head and Savior of His church
Eph. 5:25	To be an example of self-sacrificial love to husbands
Phil. 1:11	To enable us to be filled with the fruit of righteousness
Phil. 2:5	To be an example of humility we are to follow

<sup>1</sup> Larry Richards, [\*Every Name of God in the Bible\*](#), Everything in the Bible Series (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, 2001), 141–194.



**Week #9: There Is Power In The Name-Jesus' Mission**

Phil. 2:11	To be Lord, to the glory of God the Father
Phil. 3:9	To be the source of a righteousness that is received through faith
Col. 1:27	To dwell within believers as our hope of glory
Col. 2:9	That the fullness of the Godhead might be expressed in bodily form
Col. 2:10	That He might be head over every authority and power
Col. 2:20	That we might die with Him to the elementary principles of this world and be freed from its rules
Col. 3:4	That when Christ returns, we might appear with Him in glory
1 Tim. 1:15	To save sinners
1 Tim. 2:5	To become the Mediator between God and humankind
2 Tim. 1:10	To bring life and immortality to light
2 Tim. 4:1	To judge the living and the dead
Heb. 5:5	To become our High Priest
Heb. 9:14	To cleanse our consciences so that we may serve the living God
Heb. 9:15	To be the Mediator of the new covenant
Heb. 9:15	To die as a ransom to set us free from sins
Heb. 9:26	To once for all do away with sin by the sacrifice of Himself
Heb. 9:28	To appear a second time to bring salvation to those waiting for His return
Heb. 10:10	To make us sanctified, or holy, through His self-sacrifice
1 Pet. 1:19	To redeem us with His precious blood
1 Pet. 2:21	To suffer for us, leaving us an example to follow
1 Pet. 3:18	To die for sins once for all in order to bring us to God
2 Pet. 2:20	To enable us to escape the defilements of the world

<sup>1</sup> Larry Richards, [\*Every Name of God in the Bible\*](#), Everything in the Bible Series (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, 2001), 141–194.



Week #9: There Is Power In The Name-Jesus' Mission

1 John 3:16	To lay down His life for us
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**DELIVERER**

It is significant that Jesus is referred to as the “Deliverer” in Romans 11:26. In chapters 9 through 11, Paul reviews human history. He emphasizes God’s freedom to choose Israel and His right to open the door of faith to the Gentiles. Sadly, many first-century Jews viewed the gospel offer of salvation to all as an abandonment of Israel and a repudiation of the promises given to Israel by the prophets.

In chapter 11, Paul explains that God’s decision to graft believing Gentiles into the tree of faith, which clearly has Jewish roots, was not a rejection of Israel. First, many Jews have become Christians. Second, God intends one day to graft the Jews as a people back into the tree of faith. “And so,” Paul concludes, “all Israel will be saved, as it is written: ‘The Deliverer will come out of Zion, and He will turn away ungodliness from Jacob; for this is My covenant with them, when I take away their sins’ ” (Rom. 11:26, 27).

Thus, the title “Deliverer,” which holds out such promise in the Old Testament, is a reminder for us. Jesus came not only as our Savior, but also to fulfill the prophetic promises to Israel. (For further information, see the article on “God of my salvation,” p. 54.)



The image in Revelation 3 of Jesus standing at the door knocking reminds us that the latch which opens the door is within us. We must choose to respond to Jesus’ invitation.



**DOOR**

“Door” is a metaphor that Jesus applied to Himself in John 10:9. He said, “I am the door. If anyone enters by Me, he will be saved, and will go in and out and find pasture.”

There is an interesting story associated with this verse. In the early days of the Reformation, Luther of Germany and Zwengli of Switzerland met, intending to present a unified front and work out any theological differences. The sticking point was over the Eucharist.

Luther believed in consubstantiation. In other words, while the bread of the communion table did not literally become the body of Christ, in some way Christ was really present *with*

<sup>1</sup> Larry Richards, [Every Name of God in the Bible](#), Everything in the Bible Series (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, 2001), 141–194.

**Week #9: There Is Power In The Name-Jesus' Mission**

[con] the bread. In contrast, Zwengli held that the bread of the communion *represented* Christ, but that Christ's substance was not actually present with the substance of the bread.

As the argument became more heated, Luther insisted that when Jesus said "this *is* My body," He literally meant what He said. Finally, Zwengli, who was furious because Luther would not admit that Jesus' calling His body "bread" was a metaphor, countered, "Jesus also said 'I am the door!' But no one remembers Him with splinters!"

In point of fact, Zwengli misunderstood Jesus' metaphor. In John 10:7, Christ was not speaking about the wooden door of a home. Rather, He was speaking about a sheepfold. Sheepfolds were often caves or, when constructed on open ground, areas enclosed by brambles and other bushes that would prove to be barriers to wild animals who were eager to carry away sheep.

**The "door" to such a sheepfold was an open space in the barrier, in which the shepherd himself slept at night. He slept there to provide protection for the sheep, for no wild animal could reach the sheep while the shepherd was there to ward it off. Also, no sheep could wander away into danger.**

**Thus, when Jesus said, "I am the door," He was reminding His listeners that He Himself was the One who guards and protects His own. It is no wonder that anyone who enters by Him "will be saved, and will go in and out and find pasture."**

**FORERUNNER**

Hebrews 6:20 refers to Jesus as "the forerunner." (The NIV refers to Jesus as the One "who went before us.") The writer of Hebrews is explaining why we who have come to Jesus for refuge can have total confidence in our salvation. First, the promise of salvation rests not only on the promise of God, but also on the fact that He confirmed His pledge with an oath. Verse 19 says, "This hope we have as an anchor of the soul, both sure and steadfast."

But as Christians we have even more! We have Jesus, who has entered the very presence of God as our High Priest. As the "forerunner" (v. 20), His presence before God the Father is a guarantee that we too will one day follow Him. Because Jesus is our Forerunner, we who follow Him will surely enter God's presence in eternity. [echoes of his being the first born Son, the one who goes before so all others may follow.]

**HEAD**

"Head" is an important theological term. In the Old Testament, the Hebrew noun rendered "head," *ro'sh*, was a word that conveyed a number of ideas. It might mean "the beginning" or "the source"; "the top of a mount or building"; and "the chief of a family or clan," whether living or ancestral. *Ro'sh* also suggested primacy or importance (Deut. 28:13), as well as a position at the top of a bureaucracy, nation, or hierarchy.

There are three theologically significant uses of "head" in the New Testament, each of which rests on the fact that Jesus Christ is the One who bears the title "Head."

<sup>1</sup> Larry Richards, [\*Every Name of God in the Bible\*](#), Everything in the Bible Series (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, 2001), 141–194.

**Week #9: There Is Power In The Name-Jesus' Mission**

**Christ as the head of the church.** The New Testament portrays the church as a living organism and Jesus as the living head of His spiritual body (Eph. 1:22; 4:15; 5:23; Col. 1:18; 2:10, 19). As head of His body, the church, Jesus sustains, protects, guides, and is the source of the church's life.

In presenting Christ as the living head of the church, the New Testament sets aside those Old Testament aspects of headship that implied a hierarchical structure. In fact, Jesus made it very plain that there was to be no form of rank or hierarchy in His church (Matt. 20:25–28; 23:8–12; Rom. 12:3–8). Christ's headship over the church is to be reflected in the guidance exercised by the leaders in His church.

**Christ as the head of every man (1 Cor. 11:3).** In a much misunderstood passage, Jesus is presented as the "head of every man," man as "the head of woman," and God as the "head of Christ." This passage is covered thoroughly in a companion volume in this series, *Every Woman in the Bible*. Nevertheless, one section from its discussion of this passage is worth reproducing here:

"The head of every man is Christ, the head of woman is man, and the head of Christ is God" (1 Cor. 11:3). Paul launched this teaching with a strong affirmation. Those who hold a hierarchical view of the relationship between the sexes view this as a statement about authority and subordination. They read it as if Paul had written, "Every man is under Christ's authority, woman is under man's authority, and Christ is under God's authority." **This, however, is not what Paul wrote.**

While "head" in Greek may mean "leader" or "boss," this meaning is unusual. Even in the Greek translation of the Old Testament, in nine out of the ten cases where *ro'sh* ("head") is used in the sense of "leader," a different Greek word than *kephale* ("head") is chosen to translate it. Thus, the argument that "head" here must mean "authority over" is hardly compelling.

Another problem exists with this interpretation. The second phrase in the Greek text is *de gunaikos ho aner kephale*. *Gunaikos* may mean either "woman" or "wife," and *aner* may mean either "man" or "husband." Here the definite article *ho* suggests that Paul means "the husband is head of the wife," rather than "man is the head of woman." If we take this phrase in the first sense, we see that Paul is making a distinct statement about three different relationships:

- Christ is the "head" of "every man."
- The husband is the "head" of the wife.
- God is the "head" of Christ.

"Head" in this passage cannot be used here to ascribe superiority or subordination; Christ is not inferior to God the Father. "Head" cannot mean that men are the "source" of women, for husbands are not the source of wives. In what metaphorical sense can "head" be used to fit all three applications?

In the next chapter (1 Cor. 12), Paul again uses "head" to refer to Christ. Paul describes the relationship Christ has to the church that is His body. In chapter 12, Paul uses "head" and "body" to indicate that a true, organic relationship exists between Jesus and Jesus' people. If

<sup>1</sup> Larry Richards, [\*Every Name of God in the Bible\*](#), Everything in the Bible Series (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, 2001), 141–194.

**Week #9: There Is Power In The Name-Jesus' Mission**

we take “head” to have a similar metaphorical meaning in 1 Corinthians 11 that it has in 1 Corinthians 12, what Paul says fits the rest of his argument beautifully. Every man has an organic relationship with Jesus—so that each man reflects glory or dishonor on Jesus (see 1 Cor. 11:7). Wives have an organic, one-flesh relationship with their husbands, so that what they do reflects glory or dishonor on their husbands. Jesus had an organic relationship with God the Father, and what He did reflected glory and honor on God.

Why then should women cover their heads when praying or prophesying in church? Because it is proper behavior, and when wives behave properly they reflect glory on their husbands. By behaving improperly, women would dishonor not only their husbands but also Christ (p. 222, 223).

The organic sense in which Christ is affirmed to be the head of the church is in most passages definitive of the use of “head” in Christian interpersonal relationships.

**Head in Ephesians 5:21–33.** This, too, is a passage in which Christ’s headship over the church is associated with Christian interpersonal relationships, this time also involving that of a husband to his wife. In this passage, Paul holds up Christ’s relationship with the church as a pattern to guide the relationship of a husband with his wife. Once again, it is important to remember that the New Testament replaces the hierarchical image of headship with an organic image of headship.

Furthermore, in Ephesians 5:21–33 the particular role of the “head” is carefully limited and defined. Husbands are the head of their wives as Christ is the head of the church. Christ, Paul tells us, exercised His headship by loving the church and giving Himself for her (v. 25) “that He might sanctify and cleanse her with the washing of water by the word, that He might present her to Himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing, but that she should be holy and without blemish” (vv. 26–27).

Paul then states that husbands are to love their wives just as Christ loved the church (v. 28). That is, in exercising their headship, husbands are to follow Christ’s example of self-giving, seeking always to facilitate the growth of the wife spiritually and as a person. This surely is a far cry from the kind of subordination that some teach the husband’s headship requires.

**Implications of Christ’s headship.** If we look at each New Testament reference to Jesus as head of the church, we develop the following picture from this important title.

**First Corinthians 11:3.** Jesus has an organic relationship with every believer. Because of this, what we do reflects on Jesus and has the potential to glorify Him.

**First Corinthians 12:12–31.** As head of a spiritual body that is composed of all types of believers, Christ unites and directs Christians. He blends their spiritual gifts and links them with other believers into a harmonious whole.

**Ephesians 1:22, 23.** As head of the church and as Lord of the universe, Jesus not only protects His body but also guides and directs each individual member.

<sup>1</sup> Larry Richards, [\*Every Name of God in the Bible\*](#), Everything in the Bible Series (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, 2001), 141–194.

**Week #9: There Is Power In The Name-Jesus' Mission**

**Ephesians 4:15.** As head of the church, Jesus provides spiritual leaders who will help us grow and mature as members of His body.

**Ephesians 5:22–24.** As head of the church, Jesus not only sacrificed Himself for her in the past, but also remains actively involved in purifying believers and in nurturing their spiritual growth.

**Colossians 2:19.** As head of the church, Christ maintains the connections between members of His spiritual body and causes both individuals and the body to grow and mature.

Christ's position as head of His church is indeed a significant one. To acknowledge Jesus as our living Head is to look to Him for guidance, to gladly respond to His will, and to honor Him as the source of our life each day.

## JESUS

### SAVIOR

**Jesus is specifically called "Savior" twenty-two times in the Gospels, Acts, and Epistles. And the very name "Jesus" is a constant reminder of Christ's work as Savior, for "Jesus" is the Greek form of the Hebrew name "Joshua," which means "God is salvation." In naming Mary's yet unborn child "Jesus," God was announcing that He would grow up to be the Savior (Matt. 1:21; Luke 1:31).**

The Old Testament emphasis on salvation is explored in the article on the title, "God of My Salvation," which begins on page 54. The full doctrine of salvation is developed in the New Testament. Only when we understand salvation itself can we grasp what it means to acknowledge Jesus and name Him as our Savior.

**Salvation in the New Testament.** The basic concept established so firmly in the Old Testament is the foundation of our New Testament's teaching about salvation. Salvation is from God, who acts to deliver the spiritually helpless who trust in Him.

The primary Greek terms for salvation are *sozo* (a verb) and *soteria* (a noun). Numerous times "salvation" is used in the Old Testament sense of deliverance from some pressing physical danger (Matt. 24:13; Mark 13:13–20; Acts 27:20). Jesus' healing miracles saved the sick in the sense of restoring lost health and wholeness to them (Matt. 9:21, 22; Mark 5:23, 28, 34; Luke 7:50). But in most contexts salvation focuses on what God has done in Christ to deliver human beings from the powers of death, sin, and Satan. In the New Testament, the greatest enemies of humankind are spiritual, not physical, for spiritual terrors threaten people with eternal loss.

**Past-tense salvation.** New Testament salvation has three distinct aspects, reflected in our past, present, and future tenses. Jesus died for us in the past and accomplished all that was necessary for our salvation. When we trust in Jesus, the Father considers us as having died with the Son and been raised again with Him to new life (Rom. 6:3–5). Christians have been saved,

<sup>1</sup> Larry Richards, [\*Every Name of God in the Bible\*](#), Everything in the Bible Series (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, 2001), 141–194.



**Week #9: There Is Power In The Name-Jesus' Mission**

for in God's sight the great transaction is complete. Thus, the Bible says, "according to His mercy He *saved us*" (Titus 3:5; italics mine) and He "*has saved us* and called us to a holy calling (2 Tim. 1:9; italics mine). Because of what Jesus has done, we who believe are saved and have already passed from death to life.

**Present-tense salvation.** It is also true that Jesus is currently saving us. Salvation has great impact on our present experience. We who have been reconciled to God by Christ's death are being saved through Jesus' life (Rom. 5:10). As 6:5–14 emphasizes, our union with Jesus in His death and resurrection brings release from our natural slavery to sin. We are freed to serve God and live righteous lives.



The title "lamb of God" recalled the sacrifice of lambs for the first Passover. Their blood on Jewish doorways signaled the death angel to pass over the homes of God's people.



**Future-tense salvation.** Finally, the Bible assures us that we will be saved. In the Resurrection, Christians will be fully delivered from the last taint of sin, perfected at last, and made completely pure and holy. This certain future is beautifully described in Romans 8:18–39 and 1 Corinthians 15:12–58.

**Jesus as Savior.** The New Testament presents Jesus as Savior, and teaches that salvation is available only through faith in Him. Jesus, the eternal Son of God, entered our world to bring us salvation (John 3:17; 1 Tim. 1:15). His death won us forgiveness and new life, gifts guaranteed by His resurrection (2 Tim. 4:18; Heb. 7:25). Jesus saves us from wrath (Rom. 5:9), adopts us into God's family (Eph. 1:5), and assures us of resurrection to an eternity to be spent in fellowship with Him (1 Cor. 15:20–23). In Jesus we see that God *has* acted. Salvation has been won for us. Now all that remains for us is to trust God, relying completely on Jesus and counting on the victory He already has won.

What then does it mean for us to name Jesus as Savior? First, it means that we confess our helplessness to combat sin and the spiritual forces that hold humanity captive. Second, it means that we trust in Jesus, who has acted in history to provide deliverance for us in His sacrificial death on the cross. Third, it means that we confess God's trustworthiness (especially as we abandon ourselves to Him) and rely on Him alone to bring us deliverance. It is no wonder that "Savior" is one of the most precious and surely one of the most significant names or titles of our Lord!

**LAMB OF GOD**

<sup>1</sup> Larry Richards, [\*Every Name of God in the Bible\*](#), Everything in the Bible Series (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, 2001), 141–194.



## PASSOVER

It was John the Baptist who, recognizing who Jesus was after baptizing Him, announced to some of his own followers, "Behold! The Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world!" (John 1:29). In 1 Corinthians 5:7, Paul expanded on the name "Lamb of God" by noting that "Christ, our Passover, was sacrificed for us."

The reference in each passage is to an historic event. The final plague God used to force the pharaoh of Egypt to release his Hebrew slaves was the death of the firstborn in every Egyptian family. Moses had been told to instruct the Hebrews how to avoid this disastrous plague. Each family was to take a lamb into its home. Then, the night before death was to strike the land, the lamb was to be sacrificed. The lamb's blood was to be sprinkled on the door posts and lintels, and the lamb was to be eaten by the family. When the death angel saw the blood on the doorway, he would *pass over* that home, and everyone inside would be safe (Ex. 12:1-13).



The animal sacrifices of the Old Testament foreshadowed Jesus' sacrifice of Himself to pay for our sins.



After that first Passover, which took place around 1450 B.C., the Hebrew people were to reenact the event annually. They were to take a lamb, kill it and eat it, and remember how the death angel had passed over Hebrew homes when he saw the blood of the lamb (vv. 21-28).

The titles "Lamb of God" and "Passover" speak of a security that can be found only in the shed blood of a sacrifice offered on our behalf. Jesus, who shed His blood on the cross, was the One foreshadowed in the Passover Lamb. He is the One whose sacrifice cleanses and protects all who believe in Him.



### BIBLE BACKGROUND:

#### BLOOD SACRIFICE

The idea of sacrifice isn't particularly popular with the critics of Christianity. Blood sacrifice has been dismissed as reflecting primitive superstition. But for Christians blood sacrifice is an honored concept.

<sup>1</sup> Larry Richards, [\*Every Name of God in the Bible\*](#), Everything in the Bible Series (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, 2001), 141-194.



**Week #9: There Is Power In The Name-Jesus' Mission**

Jesus is history's ultimate blood sacrifice. But the first sacrifice was offered in Eden, just after the Fall. There God killed animals to provide skin coverings for sinful Adam and Eve (Gen. 3:21).

The tradition of sacrifice is found in many ancient cultures whose people saw the flesh of the sacrificial animal as food for their idols. But in the Old Testament the blood is central. Leviticus 17:11 explains, "For the life of the flesh is in the blood, and I have given it to you upon the altar to make atonement for your souls; for it is the blood that makes atonement for the soul." The message of sacrifice in the Old Testament is that sin brings death, but that God will accept the death of a substitute in place of that of the sinner.

Noah, Abraham, and other ancient people of faith offered sacrifices. But it was not until the time of Moses that a thoroughgoing sacrificial system was established for God's people. Violations of the Law of Moses called for the making of sin offerings. Individuals who inadvertently committed sins brought sacrifices immediately. But there was also a central sacrifice, made once a year on the Day of Atonement, through which all the sins of God's entire people were covered. This sacrificial system provided a way in which God's sinning people could approach the Lord.

The Old Testament prophets often condemned their contemporaries for treating the sacrifices of their religion as mere ritual and for offering them to God while continuing their sinful ways. Sacrifice in the Old Testament was to be the expression of a repentant heart, and offerings were to express the worship of a morally pure people (Is. 1:13-17; Amos 5:21-27; Mic. 6:6-8).

Jesus, too, condemned a merely ritual faith. He challenged His critics to "go and learn what this means: 'I desire mercy and not sacrifice' " (Matt. 9:13; see 12:7). According to Jesus, love for God and neighbor is more important than all the burnt offerings and sacrifices we might offer, if for no other reason than that God calls us to live holy lives. Had Israel shown mercy, the people would not have committed the sins that required expiation by sacrifice.

The criticism of Israel's ritualistic faith was not a rejection of the principle of sacrifice. It was, instead, a rejection of Israel's misinterpretation of sacrifice. At the heart of the practice, sacrifice is an expression of faith, not a ritual. Sacrifices were to be offered by people who were not only aware of their sin but also confident that God was faithful to His promise and would accept them despite their failures. When Old Testament believers stood at the altar and watched a sacrificial animal die because of their sins, they acted out a reality ultimately expressed in Jesus' death on the cross. Sin brings death. But God will accept the life of a substitute and welcome the sinner into relationship with Him.

The New Testament interprets Christ's death on the cross as history's culminating sacrifice. "God presented him as a sacrifice of atonement, through faith in his blood" (Rom. 3:25 NIV). Jesus died for us and justified us by His blood (5:8, 9).

Three chapters of Hebrews explore the meaning of blood sacrifice (Heb. 8-10). The Old Testament sanctuary and sacrifices were "a copy and shadow of the heavenly things" (8:5), serving as illustrations for the present time (9:1-9). Christ, with His own blood, entered no earthly temple but rather entered heaven itself "once for all, having obtained eternal redemption" (9:12). Jesus' one sacrifice dealt fully and finally with sin and was enough to take away the sins of all who trust in Him (vv. 23-28).

Thus, the sacrifices of history were illustrations. They were God's way of instructing humanity so that the meaning of Jesus' death would be understood. The repeated

<sup>1</sup> Larry Richards, *Every Name of God in the Bible*, Everything in the Bible Series (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, 2001), 141-194.



**Week #9: There Is Power In The Name-Jesus' Mission**

sacrifices of the Old Testament were “only a shadow of the good things to come, and not the very image of the things” (10:1). Today repeated animal sacrifices are no longer necessary, for “we have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all” (v. 10).

Yes, Christians believe in blood sacrifice. We are convinced that only the shed blood of Christ—only His life exchanged for ours—could have won forgiveness for sinners. Blood sacrifice is not “primitive.” It is basic to the Christian faith.



**MEDIATOR**

The role of a mediator is described in Galatians 3:20. A mediator is a person who represents both parties in a transaction or dispute, not just one party. Israel viewed Moses as the mediator of the Law, with the angels (representing God) on one side and human beings on the other. Thus Paul states that the Law was “appointed through angels by the hand of a mediator” (namely, Moses; Gal. 3:19).

This statement makes Paul’s affirmation in 1 Timothy 2:5 particularly important: “For there is one God and one Mediator between God and men, the Man Christ Jesus.” The new covenant, unlike the old covenant, is administered by someone who is both God and man, while the old covenant (the Law of Moses) was administered by angels. (For a discussion of the role of angels in the Mosaic Law, see the companion volume *Every Angel in the Bible*.)

The writer of Hebrews focuses our attention on the fact that God Himself is the mediator of the new covenant. The writer maintains that the new covenant had to be superior to the old one and founded on better promises (Heb. 8:6). Because Christ died and rose again, the covenant He mediates ensures that we will receive the promised inheritance of eternal life (9:15). (For a thorough discussion of the all the biblical covenants and an exploration of the relationship between what the Bible calls the old covenant and the new covenant, see the companion volume in this series, *Every Promise in the Bible*.)

**MESSIAH**

See the discussion of “Anointed One” (p. 94) and “Christ” (p. 176).

**PHYSICIAN**

It was Christ who called Himself “Physician” in Luke 4:23. Of course, He was quoting others at the time. Nevertheless, Christ’s ministry of healing surely qualifies Him to be called the “great Physician.” Jesus not only healed those with ordinary fevers, such as Peter’s mother-in-

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**Week #9: There Is Power In The Name-Jesus' Mission**

law (Matt. 8:14, 15), but also miraculously restored sight to the blind (John 9) and strengthened withered limbs (Matt. 15:31). Most important of all, as the great Physician, Jesus is the Healer of souls. He restores life to those who are spiritually dead and transforms the corrupt, making them truly good.

**BIBLE BACKGROUND:**

## HEALING

Christians believe that God wants us to have eternal life forever and an abundant life now. To some Christians it seems that abundant life must include health. They are convinced that when Isaiah writes, “by [Christ’s] stripes we are healed” (Is. 53:5), he promises physical healing *now* for believers. These Christians teach that all a believer has to do is to claim the promise of healing by faith, and then healing will surely come.

Other Christians disagree. They point out that all believers surely will be healed of every physical infirmity, but that such healing is only assured in our resurrection. Also, they argue that the “abundant life” cannot be summed up in one’s physical condition or economic state. Abundant life is found in intimate relationship with Jesus. Moreover, the sick may have an especially close relationship with the Lord.

While these views differ significantly, they also hold common ground. Christians all believe in a God who is able to heal. We may differ in our understanding of when and how He chooses to act, but none of us doubts that Jesus can act in our here and now. We all pray about our needs, sure that the Lord who hears us really does care.

Given the common ground, what does the Bible say about healing? In the Old Testament, sickness and disease are often used as pictures of sin (Is. 1:4–6). Healing is thus related to forgiveness and to relationship with the Lord (2 Chron. 7:14; Hos. 6:1). It is true, too, that sickness at times is a punishment for sin, so that healing comes with forgiveness (Ex. 15:26).

Still, sickness is not always a punishment, and while physical health comes from God, His Old Testament people saw nothing inappropriate in the use of medication (Is. 1:6; 38:21; Jer. 51:8). What the Old Testament does criticize is King Asa (for example), who sought help only from physicians and not from the Lord (2 Chron. 16:12).

Healing was a very significant part of Jesus’ ministry, and it also played a part in the early ministry of the apostles. In the Gospels, healing is often associated with the sick person’s faith (Matt. 8:1–3; 9:20–22; Acts 5:16; 14:9). Yet other miracles of healing never mention faith (Matt. 9:23–26; Mark 6:5; Acts 3:1–10; 8:7; 28:8).

Surprisingly, we find very little about healing in the New Testament Epistles. Nevertheless, Hebrews 12:13 speaks about healing in an inner, spiritual sense. Also, James calls on the sick to let the elders pray over them (James 5:14, 15). Moreover, in 1 Corinthians 12:28–30, Paul lists healing as one of the spiritual gifts. But the idea that Christians can claim physical healing as a right is never taught explicitly in the New Testament.

<sup>1</sup> Larry Richards, [\*Every Name of God in the Bible\*](#), Everything in the Bible Series (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, 2001), 141–194.



**Week #9: There Is Power In The Name-Jesus' Mission**

Isaiah 53:4 and 5 speak of healing by Jesus' wounds, and Matthew 8:17 says this was fulfilled in Jesus' acts of healing while on earth. While the primary focus in Isaiah is clearly on spiritual healing, the Matthew reference does indicate that physical and spiritual healing are linked. Does this pair of verses, then, indicate that physical healing is promised to God's people today as a right won by the shed blood of Jesus? If so, it is hard to explain what happened when New Testament believers became ill.

Paul suffered from a serious disease (probably affecting his eyes). He pleaded with the Lord to take it away (2 Cor. 12:8). But God did not. Instead, Paul was given grace to enable him to live with his malady. Timothy had chronic stomach trouble. Paul advised him to drink a little wine in addition to water (1 Tim. 5:23). Epaphroditus, after coming to Paul from Philippi, became severely ill and almost died. After the recovery of Epaphroditus, Paul wrote, "For indeed he was sick almost to death; but God had mercy on him, and not only on him but on me also, lest I should have sorrow upon sorrow" (Phil. 2:27).

What can we conclude from the above? We see Jesus as the great Physician, and we depend on the Lord when we become ill. We bring this need to the Lord and pray with confidence. We know that God hears and that, in His love, He will do what is best for us. Nevertheless, we pray realizing that we have no guarantee of healing in this world. All that Jesus guarantees is that there is healing in eternity, and that in this world God will act in our lives for our good.



Many physicians in biblical times were skilled in surgery, as indicated by this sample of the equipment used by Egyptian physicians.



**PROPHET**

In Deuteronomy 18:18 and 19, God told Moses,

I will raise up for [Israel] a Prophet like you from among their brethren, and will put My words in His mouth, and He shall speak to them all that I command Him. And it shall be that whoever will not hear My words, which He speaks in My name, I will require it of him.

This is one of those passages that is filled with special significance. It is a prophetic passage, indicating what God will do. Also, it shares with other prophetic passages what theologians call the "law of double reference." In other words, the prophecy has multiple application.

On the one hand, this passage was partially fulfilled in the many prophets that God raised up in Old Testament times to communicate His message to His people. On the other hand, this passage from the beginning was properly understood to indicate that one day God would send a premier Prophet, who would be like Moses. As Moses set history on a new course, not only freeing Israel from slavery in Egypt but also giving the nation a Law to live by, so also the

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**Week #9: There Is Power In The Name-Jesus' Mission**

promised Prophet would set a new direction for faith. He would make redemption available to all humankind, and He would replace law with grace as a way of relating to and living for God.

**JESUS AS “THE PROPHET”**

While the full significance of the ministry of the promised Prophet was not understood in Old Testament times, many Jews in the first century A.D. were aware that God would one day send His people *the* Prophet. This truth is very clear from a challenge issued by the religious leaders to John the Baptist in which they demanded that he identify himself (John 1:19–24). John made it clear that he laid no claims to being the Christ (Messiah).

John then was asked whether he was the forerunner, Elijah. Again John said, “I am not.” Finally the delegation of religious leaders demanded, “Are you the Prophet?” And again John said, “No.” Clearly, “the Prophet” was someone whom the Pharisees and other religious leaders *expected to appear*.

Later, after seeing one of Jesus’ miracles, the observers said, “This is truly the Prophet who is to come into the world” (6:14). In fact, one of the many rumors about who Jesus was (after He had begun His healing and teaching ministry) focused on this identity. It was assumed that Jesus was Elijah (the forerunner of the Messiah) or “the Prophet” (Mark 6:15). In fact, Jesus fulfilled all three lines of Old Testament prophecy. He was the Prophet (like Moses); He was the Priest (after the order of Melchizedek; Ps. 110:4); and He was the King from David’s line, the Messiah (Luke 1:31–33).

**JESUS’ MISSION AS “THE PROPHET”**

There are a number of parallels between the ministries of Moses and Jesus.

**Each was appointed to be God’s spokesperson.** Moses spoke for God to Pharaoh and to Israel. Similarly, Jesus spoke to Israel.

**Each was authenticated by miracles.** The miraculous judgments that Moses announced against Pharaoh and Egypt made it clear that he represented the Lord. Likewise, the miraculous healings and exorcisms that Jesus performed made it clear that He also represented God. Even the Jewish Sanhedrin, according to Nicodemus (one of the supreme council’s members), admitted, “Rabbi, we know that You are a teacher come from God; for no one can do these signs that You do unless God is with him” (John 3:2).

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<sup>1</sup> Larry Richards, [\*Every Name of God in the Bible\*](#), Everything in the Bible Series (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, 2001), 141–194.



**Week #9: There Is Power In The Name-Jesus' Mission**

Elijah, who confronted four hundred prophets of Baal at Mount Carmel, is one of the Old Testament's premier prophets.



**Each introduced a new revelation of God.** Through Moses, God showed Himself to be a God of power, who would keep His ancient covenant with Abraham and his descendants. Through Moses, too, the name "Yahweh" was revealed to the Israelites. And through Jesus, God showed Himself to be a God of love. Also, through the name "Immanuel" (which means "with us is God"), God the Son showed that He took on flesh to provide redemption for sinful humanity.

**Each was mediator of a covenant.** Moses was the mediator of the old covenant, which taught Israel how to live in fellowship with God. Similarly, Jesus is the Mediator of the new covenant, which establishes a new relationship with God for believing Jew and Gentile alike. This covenant replaces the lifestyle of legalism with one of grace (see Romans 6 and 7).

Having noted these similarities, it is important to recognize that the ministry of Jesus was far superior to that of Moses. Hebrews 3:2–6 points out:

Moses... was faithful in all [God's] house. For this One has been counted worthy of more glory than Moses, inasmuch as He who built the house has more honor than the house. For every house is built by someone, but He who built all things is God. And Moses was indeed faithful in all His house as a servant, for a testimony of those things which would be spoken afterward, but Christ as a Son over His own house, whose house we are.



**BIBLE BACKGROUND:**

**PROPHETS AND PROPHECY IN THE BIBLE**

The basic Hebrew word for prophet means "spokesperson" or "speaker." A prophet essentially is a person authorized to speak for another, as Moses and the Old Testament prophets were authorized to speak in the name of the Lord (Ex. 7:1, 2; Num. 12:1–8). Prophets are also called "messengers," "seers," and "people of God" in the Old Testament. Their messages are called "prophecy," "visions," "oracles," "burdens," or simply "the word of the Lord."

The men and women who served as God's spokespersons had the primary task of providing supernatural guidance to God's people. These prophets came from every walk of life. Their ministries took them to kings and priests, to foreign lands, and to the common people. Most often the prophet's message was moral in nature; it confronted Israel with sin and called her back to the holy ways revealed in God's Law. In addition, prophets gave military advice, made promises to Israel about her future, and warned the people against various courses of political action.

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**Week #9: There Is Power In The Name-Jesus' Mission**

The prophet's mission was, first of all, to the people of his or her own time. The predictive gift exercised by many prophets was focused primarily on near events. By identifying correctly what would happen in the near future, the prophet's claim to be God's spokesperson was authenticated. God alone can make known the "end from the beginning" (Is. 46:10) and bring about what He has planned. Foretelling future events without mistake was compelling evidence of the prophet's call to be God's spokesperson. And, when the events predicted were distant in time, the fulfillment of nearer events guaranteed that the distant forecasts would also be fulfilled.

The New Testament likewise contains predictions about the future. In addition, it describes prophets and prophecy in the early church. People who were moved by the Holy Spirit gave special, inspired messages to local congregations (Acts 11:27–30; 21:10, 11).

Prophecy is named as a spiritual gift in 1 Corinthians 12:10. But what is the prophetic gift? Some Christians believe this indicates a continuation of the Old Testament prophetic ministry, and that today some believers can give special, inspired guidance from God to congregations and individuals.

Other Christians take the New Testament reference to prophets in a slightly different sense. They believe that prophets are still God's spokespersons, but that they now speak for Him by teaching and preaching what has been already been revealed in the Old and New Testaments. Thus these prophets are not channels through which God provides new revelation. Both they and their audiences are guided internally by the Holy Spirit.

Still others believe that, like the Old Testament prophets, some believers today are specially called to confront their fellow Christians and unbelievers in society at large. In their confrontational role, these prophets among us are God's spokespersons, calling us to live by His standards of justice and mercy.



## **RESURRECTION AND THE LIFE**

It was Jesus who said, "I am the resurrection and the life" (John 11:25). The New Testament mentions resurrection some 40 times, and develops a theology of resurrection in 1 Corinthians 15. Yet the context in which Jesus identified Himself as "the resurrection and the life" is especially significant.

Jesus' enemies were actively seeking Him. This prompted Him to leave the area around Jerusalem. In the small town of Bethany, just about two miles from Jerusalem, there lived three of Christ's closest friends—Lazarus and his two sisters, Mary and Martha.

When Lazarus became seriously ill, the two sisters sent immediately for Jesus. The messengers found Jesus, but curiously He decided not to hurry back to Bethany with them. Instead, Jesus waited. Only after Lazarus had died did Jesus go to Bethany with His disciples.

Lazarus had been dead for four days when Jesus arrived and was met by one of the tearful sisters. The period of time was important. Jewish custom required the immediate burial of a person who died. Then for four days relatives visited the tomb, on the unlikely possibility that

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**Week #9: There Is Power In The Name-Jesus' Mission**

the person had fallen into a coma rather than died. After four days, all were sure that Lazarus was dead.

When Jesus came to Bethany, Martha met Him and expressed her conviction that if He had arrived sooner, He could have prevented Lazarus' death. It was at this point that Jesus identified Himself as "the resurrection and the life." Jesus then went to the tomb and there restored Lazarus to life. Jesus did not resurrect Lazarus; rather, the Son of God resuscitated Lazarus. We know this because the resurrected do not die again. In contrast, those called back to this earthly life will die again biologically.



The empty tomb of Jesus reminds us that Christ was "declared to be the Son of God with power" by His resurrection from the dead (Romans 1:4).



Interestingly, Jesus linked the two titles, "the resurrection and the life." As "the life," Jesus is the One who gives and sustains biological life. And as "the resurrection," Jesus can take a fallen human being and so transform him or her through resurrection that every mark of sin is lost. Consequently, that person will exist in an absolutely perfect state for all eternity.

The resuscitation of Lazarus—his recall by Jesus to earthly life—was proof of Jesus' power over death and of His right to be called "the resurrection." It was, of course, Christ's own resurrection after three days in a borrowed tomb that, in the words of Romans 1:4, "declared [Him] to be the Son of God with power." It is this same power that He will exercise when He resurrects all His saints.



**BIBLE BACKGROUND:**

**RESURRECTION**

**Resurrection in the Old Testament.** Although resurrection is suggested in the Old Testament, it does not seem to be a major element in Old Testament faith. Old Testament saints looked beyond this life, but for the most part they trusted in God without clear information about His ultimate plan for them. Thirteen hundred years after Abraham, Isaiah revealed that God would "swallow up death forever" (Is. 25:8). Also, in the future, "your dead shall live;... [their bodies] shall rise" (26:19). The clearest statement about resurrection is found in Daniel 12:2,

And many of those who sleep

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**Week #9: There Is Power In The Name-Jesus' Mission**

in the dust shall awake,  
Some to everlasting life,  
Some to shame and everlasting contempt.

Thus, death was not thought of as an end. Nevertheless, the doctrine of the resurrection, while taught, is not developed fully in the Old Testament.

**The resurrection of Jesus.** It was only with Jesus' resurrection that we catch a glimpse of the glory awaiting us. The fact of Jesus' resurrection is central to our faith. Every claim Jesus made during His life is confirmed by His resurrection. Jesus is also called the "firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep" (1 Cor. 15:20). His resurrection is the guarantee that death has been conquered and that eternal life is now our destiny.

**The resurrection of the believer.** All the dead will one day appear before God to be judged (Rev. 20:11–15). This recall, though, is not what the Bible means by resurrection. Resurrection is a transformation to a new state of being, and it is reserved for believers. We find more details in 1 Corinthians 15. Our resurrected bodies will correspond to our present bodies but will be imperishable, glorious, and infused with power. They will be spiritual rather than natural in makeup (1 Cor. 15:42–44). Those bodies will be "in the likeness of the man from heaven" (v. 49 NIV).

It is fascinating to learn that our resurrected bodies will be like Jesus' own glorified body. For instance, Jesus' raised body was "flesh and bones" (Luke 24:39) rather than flesh and blood (Lev. 17:11). Jesus could appear at will among the disciples despite the fact that they were in a locked room (John 20:19, 26). This suggests that when we are resurrected, unimaginable powers will be ours!



**TEACHER**

See the article entitled "Rabbi" on page 171.

**SHEPHERD AND OVERSEER**

**GOOD SHEPHERD**

**GREAT SHEPHERD**

**CHIEF SHEPHERD**

The New Testament frequently portrays Jesus as our Shepherd, adding either an adjective or another title to that name. While from the Old Testament we understand the basic ministry of

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**Week #9: There Is Power In The Name-Jesus' Mission**

God as the Shepherd of His people (see p. 85), the fact that Christ's ministries are further defined in this way is significant.

**Jesus as the Good Shepherd (John 10:1–18).** In this passage, Jesus draws a contrast between a hired man who is employed to look after the sheep and a good shepherd. The hired man is working, not **because he loves the sheep**, but rather because he wants to get paid. When the sheep are endangered by the appearance of a wild animal, the hired man flees. But the good shepherd, who genuinely cares for the sheep, **is willing to lay down his life for them**. It was as the Good Shepherd that Jesus died for us, His sheep, proving once and for all that the Lord falls into the category of "good Shepherd" (v. 11).

**Jesus as the Great Shepherd (Heb. 13:20, 21).** Jesus is the "great Shepherd" in view of what His death for us has accomplished. He did more than just die so that His sheep might continue to have earthly life. More importantly, "through the blood of the everlasting covenant," Jesus has made us "complete in every good work to do His will, working in you what is well pleasing in His sight." Thus, as the "great Shepherd," Jesus has enabled us to live in harmony with God here and now, and also to do His will daily.

**Jesus as the Chief Shepherd (1 Pet. 5:4).** In verses 2 and three, Peter encouraged human leaders of Christ's church to minister eagerly and to be servants and examples to God's flock. Then in verse 4, the apostle reminds these leaders that "when the Chief Shepherd appears, you will receive the crown of glory that does not fade away." The context makes it clear that while God gives human leaders to shepherd His people, Jesus is the Chief Shepherd. He is actively involved in caring for us. It is because of His active involvement that He will reward His under-shepherds appropriately. Jesus not only is involved with us, but also He actively supervises, guides, and works through the men and women assigned to lead us.

**Jesus as the Shepherd and Overseer (1 Pet. 2:24, 25).** Peter reminds us that Christ bore our sins in His own body on the cross for a specific purpose. It was God's intent that we, "having died to sins, might live for righteousness" (v. 24). This is the reason that believers can return to "the Shepherd and Overseer of [their] souls" (v. 25). What an exciting message of hope this is! We know that Jesus personally shepherds us. He does so by leading us to green pastures, enabling us to rest beside the still waters, and protecting us from the enemies of our souls. Because Jesus is our Shepherd and Overseer, we need not fear these dangers. All we should do is remain attuned and responsive to His guidance. We can be sure that wherever He leads us, He will be there for us, night and day.

## WAY

Christians in the early church were often called "followers of the Way." This reminds us that Christianity is an exclusive faith. Unlike many mere religions, Christians take seriously Jesus'

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**Week #9: There Is Power In The Name-Jesus' Mission**

claim to be the only way—the only highway or road—to God. When Jesus said “I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me” (John 14:6), He made it clear that only through faith in Him can anyone establish a personal relationship with God.

Thus the many names and titles of God that refer to Jesus' mission here on earth are summed up in this last title. Christ is the only One through whom we can come to God. Jesus is the one Advocate, the one Mediator between God and humankind. Jesus is the person whom God anointed to make salvation available to all who believe. Jesus is the Door to heaven, the Head of the church, and our one and only Shepherd. Yes, the work that Jesus did here on earth—and the work that He now does in human lives—is utterly necessary if any human being is to find forgiveness and establish a family relationship with God.<sup>1</sup>

## NOTES:

**Diety:** Almighty • Alpha & Omega • Amen • Blessed & Only Potentate • Bright & Morning Star • Brightness of God's Glory • Dayspring • Emmanuel/Immanuel • Express Image of God's Person • Faithful & True • Firstborn • Lord of Glory • God • Heir of All Things • Holy One of God • I Am • Judge • Just One • King • Light • Life • LORD • Lord of the Sabbath • Only Begotten/One & Only • Prince • Righteous One • Rock • Ruler • Son of God • Star • Stone • Truth • Word

**Humanity:** The Last Adam • Bridegroom • The Carpenter • Child • Firstfruits • High Priest • Jesus of Nazareth/Nazarene • Man/Son of Man • Master • Son of David • Rabbi

**Mission:** Advocate • Apostle • Author • Bread • Chief Cornerstone • Christ • Deliverer • Door • Forerunner • Head • Savior • Lamb of God/Passover • Mediator • Messiah • Physician • Prophet • Resurrection & the Life • Teacher • Shepherd & Overseer/Good Shepherd/Great Shephard/Chief Shepherd • Way

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<sup>1</sup> Larry Richards, [\*Every Name of God in the Bible\*](#), Everything in the Bible Series (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, 2001), 141–194.

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