

NO OTHER NAME

by Darryl Cope

The apostle Peter, very early in the churches beginning, in Acts 4:12 made it ever so clear. There is no other name given among men by which we must be saved. Names given among men, a very specific wording that could perhaps bear a little more scrutiny. The Lord formed every beast of the field and bird of the sky and brought them to the man to see what he would call them. Whatever he called them, that was their name. What is not said in this passage is pretty much assumed, and that is man named most every other and subsequent thing to come along. Names are so important to our very existence. Whatever the man called them that was their name. Genesis chapter 2:19. Interestingly, GOD gave man language and man used that tool to describe and categorize every person place and thing in our existence. We still name everything. It wasn't just the animals that needed naming, every last item on earth had to be called something. Now either GOD named everything else and included that in the language, or man named them based on what was seen or felt or tasted. Some stimulating factor determined the name of everything on this earth. Emotions and relationships were the source of many names of people in the beginnings. The names of the twelve patriarchs all bear some sign of the jealousies experienced by Jacob, Rachel, Leah, Zilpah and Bilhah. Then there is the name change given Jacob by the LORD, changing it from Jacob "supplanter" to Israel "struggled or wrestled with GOD". The name Israel I think had more to do with his descendants relationship with GOD than with his own struggles.

Names of men have reflected both past misdeeds and glories as well as future responsibilities or perhaps even destiny. The Lord Jesus gave Peter that name probably because of what He saw as personality or character traits unique to him. Petros is Greek for rock, not Gibraltar type rock, that would be Petra. Petros is what David went down to the river and picked up to use in his sling to kill Goliath. Petra is what the Lord Jesus said would be the foundation of His church, the truth that He is the Christ the Son of GOD. GOD was not going to build this all important church on a stone that a small child could kick across the yard, that is no foundation at all. A very good

example of the use of Petra is the city of Edom named that because the entire city was carved out of solid rock. Names are so important.

Another character in the early church was a man named Joseph, a Levite from Cypress, which is not really significant but the name the apostles gave him certainly is significant. Because of his character, they called him Barnabas, which translated means "son of encouragement" This mans birth name may have been forever left behind in favor of this nick name give him by the apostles that says everything about his character, perhaps the perfect defining moniker of his soul. After all it will forever be more important to be a son of encouragement than a son of Levi. The best and worst were sons of Levi. The name Levi testifies nothing concerning the soul, only physical lineage of which the Lord said God was able to raise up children of Abraham from these stones. Character though, like Barnabas, is another issue. This man will forever be known by his character name.

GODs friend, Abraham, was given the birth name Abram or "exalted father". At birth. Does that hint at any serious destiny issues with this man? GOD later changes his name to Abraham " father of multitudes".

Angels also have names that reflect their standing as well as their relationship to us.

The first we might mention is Satan, who, in the book of Job, is referred to as one of the sons of GOD. Now the name Satan means "adversary", as an adversary to both GOD and man. A very meaningful name if there ever was one. "And there was war in heaven, Michael and his angels waging war with the dragon (Satan), and the dragon and his angels waged war". Revelation 12:7 We might mention the most powerful of all the angels. His name is Michael, the only angel referred to as the archangel or ruling angel, the very one waging war against the devil and his angels. He is also, I believe, the one mentioned in Joshua 5:13 as the commander of the armies of the LORD. Michael has a very powerful meaning, "who is as GOD." Any time a person thought they saw GOD in the Bible, I am convinced it was this designated stand-in, also referred to as the angel of GODs presence in Isaiah 63:7ff. Michael, "Who is as GOD", what a name.

What a responsibility that name carries. In Daniel chapter 12 the writer refers to Michael as the "Great Prince who stands guard over the sons of your people".

The only other angel we know by name is Gabriel, the "man of GOD" or "GOD's warrior." He is known to carry extra sensitive messages such as to Daniel to inform him his prayer for the release of the people he'd been heard the decree had been issued. Also to Elizabeth about the birth of John the Baptist and then, without a doubt the most important announcement of all time the news to Mary about her being chosen to give birth to the messiah. He could be the ubiquitous angel of the LORD throughout much of the OT. Many of those cases might not fit but there is nothing to show that the angel of the LORD is always the same angel. But again, what a name, "GOD's warrior" or "man of GOD".

The most important names in the history of our existence though are the names and titles belonging to our LORD. The names Mary were given give an indication of just who this child she was carrying really was. "You shall call His name Jesus for it is He who will save His people from their sins". He was also referred to as Emmanuel "GOD with us". The apostle Paul, in Philippians chapter 2:5 writes "Have this attitude in yourselves which was also on Christ Jesus, who although He existed in the form of GOD, did not regard equality with GOD a thing to be grasped, but emptied Himself, taking the form of a bondservant and being found in appearance as a man He humbled Himself by becoming obedient to the point of death even death on a cross". Paul calls Him the Christ, Greek for Messiah or anointed one. Anointed both as king on the throne of David and also as High Priest. Paul also tells us He, before He was born as Jesus, existed in the form of God and voluntarily emptied Himself to take that baby human form. This agrees with what the apostle John wrote in his gospel chapter 1:1 "In the beginning was the Word". I don't know if that is a name or a title but whichever it is it an identity. He also reveals that the Word was with GOD and the Word was GOD. So I feel compelled at this point to ask, what's in a name? Would you ask that question?