

The Name of JESUS, and Mary
Luke 1:26-38

Intro: For the month of December, and possibly through the first Sunday in February, I am turning aside from our studies in Romans to give a series of three messages on the Name of our Lord, J-E-S-U-S. Parents usually enjoy selecting a name for their children, but Mary, the mother of our Lord, did not have that privilege, and neither did Joseph, her husband. Both of them were told by an angel of the Lord that they were to name Mary's baby, JESUS. Cf. Luke 1:31 (and verse 26 where we are told that the angel's name was Gabriel). In Matt. 1:21 Joseph was told the same thing. The angel's name is not mentioned, but it is very likely that it was also Gabriel. But the point is that it was God Who named His Son. And that name from those days to this has held a place among people everywhere which no other name holds. I am sure that none of us would ever think of naming a son, Jesus. We may have considered many names, but Jesus was not one of them.

The meaning of the Name is something that probably most of you know. In the Greek it is the equivalent of the OT name, Joshua. Twice in the NT when Joshua was the one being referred to, the KJ translators translated it Jesus, when it should have been Joshua. Cf. Acts 7:45; Heb. 4:8. But we do not seem to be as hesitant about using the name Joshua as we are Jesus, and yet the meaning of the two names is the same.

Jesus, or Joshua, means Jehovah saves, or Jehovah is salvation. Thus, while our Lord's Name was given to Him as a Man, as a human being, yet the name was meant to convey both His Deity and the purpose for which He came into the world. The expression, "Jesus saves," is actually what His Name means. And so, as one writer has said, it is a name which carries with it great theological significance, or great Biblical significance.

Even though you and I would never use this sacred name for one of our sons, it is often used in Spanish speaking nations, and it was quite common in NT times. And so the writers of the Gospels would distinguish between our Lord and others by the name of Jesus by such expressions as "Jesus of Nazareth," or "Jesus Christ." Of course, as we read our Bibles, we have no trouble identifying our wonderful Lord.

This Name became official when the Lord was circumcised when He was eight days old. Cf. Luke 2:21. We do not know if anyone tried to name our Lord, Joseph, after his legal father, like they did with John the Baptist in wanting to name him Zacharias after his father. However, we know that both Joseph and Mary knew that the naming of their Son had been taken out of their hands, and it seems that our Lord was given that name without

any problem.

It seems that Mary was given the message first. And we have heard how this happened in the Scripture reading. Some time after, but before our Lord was born, Joseph was told. And we have the record of that in Matthew, chapter 1. I am going to take up Luke 1 today. The Lord willing, we will focus our attention next week on Matthew, chapter 1, where we learn that an angel told Joseph. On the Sunday just before Christmas, two weeks from today, I want to take up the Apostle's Paul's use of our Lord's Name, JESUS, in Phil. 2 -- that which is called the great kenosis passage.

And so we are going to looking at:

- 1) The Name of JESUS, and Mary.
- 2) The Name of JESUS, and Joseph.
- 3) The Name of JESUS, and Paul.

In each of these passages we have either an explanation, or an elaboration, of our Lord's Name. And although I know that the Name of JESUS is already very precious to most of you, I trust that you will love Him and His Name even more by the time we have concluded this brief series.

And so today we will consider, from Luke 1:26-38, The Name of JESUS, and Mary. I want to direct your attention especially to verses 30 through 33. (Read.)

You will notice that the angel told Mary three things about JESUS:

- 1) "He shall be great."
- 2) "He...shall be called the Son of the Highest."
- 3) "And the Lord God shall give unto him the throne of his father David. And then in verse 33 we are told two additional things about that throne.

The first point that the angel made was this:

I. "HE SHALL BE GREAT" (Luke 1:32a).

This meant that He would be a very important Person. It meant that He would exercise great power. It meant that He would have great authority. The NT in an overwhelming manner confirms all of these declarations about our Lord.

This word had also been used previously in this chapter when the angel appeared to Zacharias to tell him about the birth of his son, John the Baptist. And the angel said, "And he shall be great in the eyes of the Lord" (v. 15). The word "great" would certainly have this same significance with our Lord, and even moreso than with John. No man ever lived upon the earth

who was greater "in the eyes of the Lord," the Father, than was our Lord Jesus Christ. No birth was ever the occasion for greater joy than the birth of our Lord Jesus Christ. The angels told the shepherds, "Behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy..." (Luke 2:10). Mark 3:8 tells us that people came from everywhere when they "heard what great things He did." He healed the sick. He cleansed the lepers. He gave sight to the blind. He delivered those who were demon-possessed. He raised the dead. No one in human history performed the number of miracles and the variety of miracles which our Lord performed.

Sometimes when I am editing one of my messages on my computer, and use a word like this one, "great," my computer will ask me if the context justifies the use of such a word. It could ask me that question all day long when I am writing about the Lord Jesus Christ, and my answer would always be, "YES -- and a thousandfold more. Whatever language you may speak, you will run out of superlatives when you speak of the greatness of the Lord Jesus Christ. No one is greater than He is.

The woman of Samaria about whom we read in John 4 asked our Lord, "Art thou greater than our father Jacob?" And the answer is, "Yes, He is greater than Jacob -- as great as Jacob was!"

On one occasion unbelieving Jews asked Him, "Art thou greater than our father Abraham?," and then they asked Him if He were greater than the prophets. Again, the answer cannot be anything else but, Yes! Cf. John 8:53.

The Lord Himself claimed to be greater in wisdom than Solomon, and a greater preacher than Jonah was who saw the whole city of Nineveh repent and turn to the Lord. Cf. Luke 11:31, 32.

The book of Hebrews begins by telling us that our Lord is greater than angels. It follows by telling us that our Lord is greater than Moses. Then we learn that He is greater than the high priest, Aaron, Moses' brother. He is greater than Abraham.

According to Heb. 4:14 Jesus is "our great high priest." He is great because He has provided us with a "so great salvation" (Heb. 2:3).

John the Baptist felt that the Lord was so great that he was not worthy to take the Lord's sandals from His feet. Cf. John 1:27. And the Roman centurion, a Gentile himself of great authority, wanted the Lord to heal his servant. But when the Lord offered to go home with him to heal the servant, he said, "Lord, I am not worthy that thou shouldst come under my roof: but speak the word only, and my servant shall be healed" (Matt. 8:8). What a testimony to the greatness of our Lord Jesus Christ! There have been many men and women great in power and

authority, each one great in his own right, but all of them together could not match the greatness of our Lord Jesus Christ.

The Lord Jesus was great in His birth, great in His life, great in His death, and gloriously great in His resurrection.

Now at this Christmas time when the world is all taken up with tinsel and revelry and gifts, let us set aside time to meditate upon the greatness of our Lord Jesus Christ. Let this truth find its way into our hearts until we understand the greatness of our Lord as we have never understood it before.

He is great in all of His attributes -- great in His wisdom, great in His power, great in His love, great in His mercy, but let me also remind you that He is great in His wrath when it comes to His judgment upon sin. It is JESUS with Whom we have to do. How wonderful were those words spoken to Mary, "And He shall be great!"

The Father spoke from heaven saying what He never said, nor could He ever say it about any one but our Lord, "This is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased" (Matt. 3:17).

I hope He is "great" to you. In fact, He needs to be the greatest, because that is what He is.

But let us go on to the second thing that the angel said about JESUS:

II. "AND (HE) SHALL BE CALLED THE SON OF THE HIGHEST" (Luke 1:32).

He would be called "the Son of the Highest" because that is what He always has been, always will be, and when He became Mary's Son, that was not changed at all.

This is one of the pre-eminent reasons for His greatness. He was truly human and truly God. If He were the Son of the Highest, then He had the nature of the Highest. JESUS was God -- not God, the Father, but God, the Son.

Now if He is the Son of the Highest, then no one is greater than He.

We first find God referred to in this way in Genesis 14 where Melchizedek appeared as "the priest of the most high God." One way to distinguish between our God and the other gods of the world is to say that our God is "the most high God," and that JESUS is His Son.

And do you know what it means that God is "the most high God"?

Melchizedek said that it means that He is "the possessor of heaven and earth." The word "possessor" is meant to convey to us two things about God:

1) He made the heaven, and He made the earth. He is the Creator.

2) He owns both, the heaven and the earth. He made them, and they belong to Him. More than that He is sovereign over both and all that is in them. The nations with all of their pomp and power are like a drop in the bucket to Him, according to Isaiah. God rules in all of the affairs of men and of angels. There is no one who is outside of the boundary of His power because His power, His authority, has no boundaries.

This great and most high God sent His Son into the world as a Man. As God is without beginning and without ending, the same is true of the Lord Jesus Christ. If you think of our Lord as beginning His existence when He was conceived by the Holy Spirit in the womb of the virgin Mary, your thinking needs to be corrected. If He were the Son of the Most High God, His birth did not change that. It is impossible for God to change.

The Jews rightly understood the idea of Sonship because, when He claimed to be the Son of God, they took up stones to stone Him because they knew that He was claiming equality with God.

And let me tell you this: IT IS VERY IMPORTANT TO BELIEVE THAT "JESUS" CONTINUED TO BE "THE SON OF THE MOST HIGH." IF HE WERE JUST ANOTHER JEWISH BABY BOY, WITH MARY AS HIS MOTHER AND JOSEPH AS HIS FATHER, THEN HE WOULD HAVE BEEN DISQUALIFIED TO BECOME OUR SAVIOR. And so Mary by the angel's statement was assured that her Son was God's Son, and that He had been God's Son before He became her Son.

When we understand at least in part what God had sent the angel to tell Mary, we can see why one commentator has said that these verses are full of divine truth.

Our Lord was great, and essentially He was great because He was the Son of the Highest. It is impossible to be a greater son than the Son of the Highest.

God made every angel, every human being, every animal, every bird, every fish. He made this world on which we live. He made and controls the heavenly bodies as well as everything on the earth. And it all belongs to Him and to His Son. Let these thoughts fill our hearts as we remember again this year the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ.

But I still have another point, and the angel said more about

this third point than he did the first two. This does not mean that the third is the most important, but it means that as we consider the greatness of Mary's Son, and the fact that He was also the Son of the Highest, we must not overlook His ultimate glory when we learn about His lowly birth.

What is the statement that the angel made to introduce this third truth?

III. "AND THE LORD GOD SHALL GIVE UNTO HIM THE THRONE OF HIS FATHER DAVID" (Luke 1:32, 33).

Verse 31 says that JESUS was to be Mary's Son. Verse 32 tells us that He was "the Son of the Highest," the Son of God. And verse 32 also states that JESUS was David's Son. This means that He was the Heir to the throne of David.

Now you can see why so many in Israel were expecting the Messiah to set up His throne, and deliver them from Rome.

Mary didn't look like she was a member of the royal family of David, but she was! And Joseph also, her husband, was a descendant of King David. These truths might not have been clear to very many in Israel, but God had not lost sight of the royal family, nor had He forgotten His promise to His people.

But we know now that He did not come the first time to rule on the earth; He came the first time to die for the sins of His people. Why then did the angel ignore the purpose of the Lord's first coming, and speak of the purpose of the Lord's second coming?

It seems to me that there was one main reason: It is when we understand the goal, the purpose of God, then we can more easily bear all of the testings and trials in between.

We do not often speak of the sufferings of Mary. They were not vicarious, that is, substitutionary, like the Lord's would be. No one has ever been saved by Mary's sufferings, but let me tell you that her sufferings were terrible. Do you remember how they are described in Scripture?

After the days of Mary's purification were completed following the birth of the Lord, Joseph and Mary took the baby Jesus to the Temple. There was a prophet there to whom it had been revealed by the Holy Spirit that he would not die until he had seen the Lord's Christ. The account of Mary and Joseph's visit with Simeon is a very touching story. But one thing that he said to Mary was this: "Yea, a sword shall pierce through thine own soul also" (Luke 2:35). With the exception of our Lord, no one suffered at the Cross more than Mary did. She

knew that her Son had come to be a Savior. She recognized that in her Magnificat. But she needed the truth of her Son's coming glory to carry her through the hard days in between.

How would He get the throne? How could such a lowly Person ever expect to achieve such a place of honor and power? "The Lord God," meaning the Father, "shall give unto him the throne of his father David." The Lord is not going to get it by politics. It is not going to take a great revolution to upset and conquer the kingdoms of the earth. His Father is going to give it to Him!

As I thought about this statement my mind went back to what we have been reading in Daniel's prophecy. You will remember that Nebuchadnezzar had a dream, but he had forgotten what it was. He threatened to kill all of the wise men because they could not tell him his dream. David and his friends prayed that the Lord would reveal to them what the dream was, and the Lord answered their prayer. When Daniel thanked the Lord, one of the things he said was this, speaking of the Lord,

And he changeth the times and the seasons:

He removeth kings, and setteth up kings (Dan. 2:21).

In Daniel 4 we read of another dream that Nebuchadnezzar had. In this one he was told about a man's heart which was going to be changed into a beast's heart. And the reason for it was stated like this:

...to the intent that the living may know
that the most High (note the name)
ruleth in the kingdom of men,
and giveth it to whomsoever he will,
and setteth up over it the basest of men (Dan. 4:17).

"The basest of men" does not mean the worst of men, but it means the most humble among men. The most High God is the One Who determines who is going to reign, and when, and where. And He set up those who are the "basest," which means not the worst, but the lowliest, the most humble.

When we think of humble men, can anyone surpass the Lord Jesus in His humility? He came from the heights to go to the greatest depths. We will learn more about that two weeks from today, the Lord willing.

But now look at our text. The Lord God is going to give JESUS "the throne of his father David, AND HE SHALL REIGN OVER THE HOUSE OF JACOB FOR EVER: AND OF HIS KINGDOM THERE SHALL BE NO END."

And we know from Rev. 11:15 that His reign will be even more extensive than just the house of Jacob because that verse tells

us that "the Kingdoms of this world are become the kingdom of our Lord, and of his Christ; and he shall reign for ever and ever."

Concl: The black people in the early days of our country left a very rich heritage behind them. They had a way of expressing the truth that is hard to beat. One title they gave to the Lord Jesus Whom many of them knew and loved was "King Jesus." And you know, it seems from these verses that we have been looking at today justify that title for our Lord: He will be KING JESUS!

What a wonderful day that will be! He will rule in righteousness, and there will be peace throughout the world. He will make everything right. All of the sin which is running wild throughout the world today, will be brought under control, and then we will see the glory of our blessed Lord as never before.

Mary was given a brief glimpse of that day. It has not come, but it is coming. The Lord will give Him the throne, and He shall reign, and His kingdom will never come to an end.

Next Sunday, the Lord willing, we are going to find out the purpose of our Lord's first coming as it was expressed to Joseph. Most of you know what that was; He came to save His people from their sins -- from the penalty of their sins, and from the power of their sins, and, some day, from the the very presence of sin in their lives.

As I close, may I ask if you know this Savior. He is the only Savior. He will be a reigning King some day; He is the One we need to know as our Savior now. Mary, the mother of our Lord, said, "My soul doth magnify the Lord,

And my spirit hath rejoiced in God my Savior."

If you have not trusted the Lord as your Savior, let me urge you to do so now. Perhaps He brought you here for that very purpose. Seek His mercy. Seek His forgiveness. He is the only Savior, and if you are ever to find acceptance with God it can only be through Christ.

THE NAME OF JESUS, AND JOSEPH
Matthew 1:18-25

Intro: This morning I want to bring you the second of three messages in which we will consider the Name JESUS as it is used in three different passages of Scripture.

Last week the passage in Luke 1 where Mary was told that she was going to have a baby, and that His Name would be JESUS. We learned that His Name meant Jehovah saves, or Jehovah is salvation. His Name was not given to Him by His mother, but by God. It was announced to Mary before she was married by the angel Gabriel.

But Mary was also told that her Son would be both the Son of the Highest, meaning the Son of God, and that He would be the Son of David. This latter part meant that Mary herself was a descendant of David, and that our Lord would be born as the Heir to the throne of David.

Therefore, it is not surprising that the angel, Gabriel, went on to say,

He shall be great,
and shall be called the Son of the Highest:
and the Lord God shall give unto him
the throne of his father David:
And he shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever;
and of his kingdom there shall be no end.

We know that this prophecy from the angel has not yet been fulfilled, and that the angel completely passed over our Lord's first coming to speak of His second coming.

It was some time later that the events spoken of in our Scripture reading took place. Somehow Joseph discovered that Mary, to whom (as we would say today) he was engaged to be married, was pregnant. As difficult as it was for him to believe, he could only come to one conclusion: Mary had been unfaithful to him, and so he decided to break the engagement. However, because he loved her so much, he did not want to disgrace her publicly, and so he decided break his agreement with her privately..

This must have been the most difficult thing that Joseph had ever had to do. But it was while he was considering this that the angel of the Lord appeared to him and told him what is recorded for us in Matt. 1:20, 21. (Read.)

Matthew quoted from Isa. 7:14 to show that this was all in accord with OT prophecy, and then the chapter concludes by telling us that Joseph believed the angel's message. He married her, but did not actually become her husband until after

Mary's baby was born. And then Joseph agreed that Mary's baby should be called, JESUS. Both Mary and Joseph knew that this was the Name that God intended for Mary's baby to be called.

So it is clear that Joseph was not Jesus' father. The Lord Jesus was conceived by the Holy Spirit, and so this is why we know that He was not only a true human being, but also that He was the Son of God, God and man in one Person.

The part of this chapter which I want us to center our attention upon tonight is the middle and latter part of verse 21:

And thou shalt call His Name JESUS:
for he shall save his people from their sins.

Now supposedly, Christmas is the time set aside to remember the coming of God's Son into the world. But over the years we have seen that changing. There has been more and more of an emphasis upon Santa Claus, and less and less upon JESUS. Children know more today about Rudolph the red-nosed reindeer than they do about what the angel told Joseph about Jesus, that "he shall save his people from their sins." It used to be that the great carols of the church were sung over and over, but Jingle Bells seems to have won out over them.

I do not think that we can do anything to change the present trend. Only God can do that. But I would like to take this one verse, emphasize what it has to say, and hope that it will help us as the Lord's people to keep from being carried along with the way the world is going at Christmas time. No man ever received a greater message than the message which the angel gave to Joseph, and it will be well worthy our time to examine it closely today.

"Thou shalt call his name JESUS: for he shall save his people from their sins."

I want to point out to you from this text that there are four truths which ought to be in our thoughts and on our tongues whenever we remember the birth of JESUS. Let me give them to you, and then we will look at each of them in turn:

- I. HIS NAME, JESUS.
- II. THEIR SINS.
- III. HE SHALL SAVE.
- IV. HIS PEOPLE.

All right, let us begin with:

I. HIS NAME, JESUS.

You know, the Devil is very clever. He takes some of the greatest truths of Scripture, ~~overemphasizes them, or~~ changes their meaning, so that we the Lord's people are almost afraid

to use them at all. For example, there are those who believe that we are all the children of God, and that we are all going to be saved, so they see no need for a Savior. And they speak of the Fatherhood of God with this in mind.

For a long time I was very hesitant about speaking of the Fatherhood of God because of the way liberal theologians were using the term. But there is hardly a truth that is dearer to those who really know the Lord than that God is now our heavenly Father. He is not our Father by nature, but by the new birth. When we pray we can begin by saying, "Our Father." So let us not be afraid to acknowledge that God is our Father, although we must also say that He is not the Father of anyone who does not know the Lord Jesus Christ as Savior.

The same thing has happened with the Name, Jesus. When anyone always refers to our Lord only as JESUS, it is probably true that He does not believe that JESUS of Nazareth was God. He does not believe in the Deity of JESUS. You will never hear such a person speak of the Lord Jesus Christ because he does not believe that He is the Lord, nor do they believe that He is Christ, the Messiah. And so to avoid being branded as a liberal, we are inclined never to speak simply of JESUS. And yet the Bible does! And it is right that we should. It is perfectly Biblical to speak of our Lord as JESUS, but let us be careful to make it clear that we believe that He was, and is, more than a human being. We believe that He is the Son of God, the Lord Jesus Christ. One amusing thing about the liberals is that when they use the Name, JESUS, they are acknowledging both His Deity, and His work of salvation because the Name means, Jehovah saves!

So don't be afraid to speak of our Lord as JESUS. That is the Name the Father gave Him.

But we don't hear much about JESUS today, do we? We hear more about Santa Claus. He is more of a reality to people than Jesus is.

Lucille and I were out shopping this week, and we saw a long line of mothers with their little children waiting to have their pictures taken with Santa Claus. As I saw that, I wondered how many of those mothers were that anxious to bring their children to JESUS. It would be interesting to know, wouldn't it?

And do you remember the words of the song, Santa Claus Is Coming To Town? One part of it says,
He knows when you've been sleeping;
He knows when you're awake;
He knows when you've been bad or good

so be good for goodness' sake.

Let me ask you, are we to teach our children that they are to be good so as to please Santa Claus, and that the reward for being good is that we will receive presents? Is the mythical Santa Claus the one who determines what is bad and good? Don't you see that we are actually attributing divine attributes to Santa Claus? What is this but idolatry?

I'm not against fun songs, nor against having a good time. But when we teach our children more about Santa than we do about JESUS on the day that we are remembering the birth of JESUS, I suggest to you that there is something very wrong about the whole thing. Santa knows nothing because he doesn't even exist, but our Bibles tell us that "the eyes of the Lord are in every place beholding the evil and the good" (Prov. 15:3). If you want to pretend that there is a Santa Claus, like you do fairies, and make a game out of it, I see no harm in that. But don't be guilty of making a god out of Santa while you tell your children little or nothing about JESUS. Let's use this time of the year, and the rest of the year, too, to tell our children about JESUS.

If we are going to do that, we have to know for ourselves Who He is. This year make JESUS the center of your festivities, not Santa Claus. Children can know all about Santa Claus, and go to hell, but if they not only know about JESUS, but know Him personally, then we know that they will be in heaven.

But let us move on to the second point:

II. THEIR SINS.

The day that we remember the birth of Jesus Christ is a day of festivities and often hilarity, but the Bible teaches us that it ought to be a day which makes us think of our sins. Jesus came on a mission, not primarily to make us happy, but to make us holy. But sin is a word we have all but eliminated from our vocabulary. We don't say that people do wrong things and say wrong things and think wrong things because they are sinners. We start looking into their backgrounds or into their present circumstances to find reasons why we should excuse them for doing even the worst things that people can do. But we never call it sin.

Some refer to the OT prophets as God's emergency men because God raised them up in times of spiritual emergency. There never was a greater emergency man than JESUS! He came to meet a need which no one else could meet. If there had been any other way to deal with this cause of all other human curses, it would not have been necessary for Him to come. But He came because there was no other way.

So when we remember the birth of Jesus Christ, it ought to be a time of heart-searching, of repentance, of faith in JESUS, and whatever rejoicing there is, at the top of the list should be deep gratitude that God sent His Son into the world to meet the spiritual needs of sinners. When we realize why JESUS was born, it ought to cause great humiliation on our part, but great thanksgiving to God that He has not left us to die in our sins. The birth and death of JESUS have put a new definition on the word grace!

Why was He born? Our sins made it necessary for Him to come. If you don't think of yourself as a sinner, then you have no reason to rejoice in His coming. But whether you think of yourself as a sinner, or not, you are a sinner! So am I! All of us are sinners. We can't make things right with God; that is why Jesus came.

But let me call your attention to my third point:

III. HE SHALL SAVE.

This is another word that has all but been eliminated from our talk when we think about God. Most people don't think that they need to be saved from anything. If they consider God at all, they think of a loving grandfather who will put up with anything and excuse everything. They don't know that God is holy, and that He cannot tolerate sin. They don't know that the wages of sin is death. Really intelligent people today don't believe in hell, we are told. But you get a completely different picture of things when you read the Bible, which is the Word of God. It tells us that we are under divine judgment because of are sinners and because we have sinned. Sin is anything that is displeasing to God. The reason we don't talk about sin and salvation any more is because we have ruled the God of the Bible out of our lives. We treat God and JESUS as though They do not exist, and we treat Santa Claus as though he does exist. We have everything turned around.

What did the angel mean when he said, speaking of JESUS, "He shall save"?

He meant that through JESUS and His death on the Cross, He would deliver sinners from the wrath of God. He meant that JESUS would save those who trust Him from the awful power of their sins here and now in this life. He meant that JESUS would save us from going to hell where we deserve to go. He meant that JESUS would make us perfectly acceptable to God. He did not mean that JESUS would do part of what was necessary, but he meant that JESUS would do everything necessary for our salvation, and that it would be ours 100% free! Salvation is not a joint work accomplished by JESUS and any sinner who wants to be saved, but that Jesus alone is the Savior. When we trust

Him, He does it all! That is why we call Him the Savior.

And yet with many people, Christmases come, and Christmases go, and they never get the message. If you have never recognized that in God's sight you are a sinner and that you need a Savior, I hope that the message will get through to you this Christmas, and that you will trust JESUS, God's beloved Son, to save you.

But I have one more point before I close.

IV. HIS PEOPLE.

This is a wonderful expression, and it is rich in its meaning. And I want you to understand what it means before you leave today.

Who are "his people"? What did the angel mean by this. Let me mention at least two things.

In the first place, he meant that only those who are the people of God are going to be saved. And this means that you and I don't have even two choices for a Savior. This means that the religions of the world are worthless as far as helping us get things right with God. If you aren't trusting in JESUS for your salvation, you aren't saved from your sins. Buddha can't save you. The virgin Mary cannot save you. The Apostle cannot save you. Religion will not save you. Your good works cannot save you, neither can your money. It is always good to help the needy, but that doesn't buy your way to heaven. Your sins call for your eternal death, and no one but Christ can save you from that because He died on the Cross as a Substitute for sinners. And it is only those who trust in Christ who are going to be saved because only Christ has done enough to satisfy God. Only when you are trusting in Christ do you have any right to call yourself "His people."

But it also means this.

Most of us did not learn until after we were saved that we did not choose the Lord first, but He chose us for salvation. That makes our salvation even more wonderful and more amazing. Maybe you came to church today because you were seeking the Lord. That is wonderful. But the Bible teaches us that we seek Him because He has been seeking us, and that He seeks us because He chose us before there was any such thing as creation.

You see, our sin has blinded us to our true condition before God, and if the Lord did not seek us, and show us our sinful condition before God, we would never seek Him. We would never believe that we need a Savior. But He seeks us, and causes us

to seek Him, and that is how He brings us to Himself so that we will trust Him to be our Savior. And that is why we give all of the glory to our Lord for our salvation.

Why was JESUS, God's Son, born in Bethlehem almost 2,000 years ago? He came from heaven, was born of the virgin Mary, and His Name was JESUS, "for He shall save His people from their sins."

Concl: This is why we remember the birth of JESUS. Or let me say it this way: why we remember the birth of our Lord JESUS Christ. He came to save all of those who would put their trust in Him. He came to give us a salvation which we do not deserve in order to save us from a judgment which we did deserve.

Those of you who know JESUS as your Savior have every reason to rejoice because He came to earth as He did, and why He did. If you do not know the Lord as your Savior, may this be the day when the Lord in His grace will save you. Trust Him now, right where you are. We have His promise that the one who comes to Him will never be cast out or turned away.

THE NAME OF JESUS, AND PAUL
Philippians 2:5-11

Intro: For the past two Sundays, and leading up to this Sunday before Christmas we have been thinking together about the Name which was given to our Lord just before He was born of the virgin Mary. In Luke 1 we learn that Mary was the first to be told that she would bear a Son Whose Name was to be JESUS. Then we learn from Matthew 1 that some time afterwards, when Joseph to whom she was engaged to be married, became aware that she was to have a child. Thinking that she had been unfaithful to him, but loving her too much to disgrace her publicly, he planned to break the engagement privately. At this time an angel appeared to him in a dream telling him that Mary's child had been conceived by the Holy Spirit, and that he should not change his marriage plans. And then the angel went on to tell Joseph what Gabriel had told Mary, and that was that she would have a Son, and that they were to name Him JESUS.

From that day to this, that Name has been a most sacred name because it is the Name by which the Son of God was known here on earth. I mentioned last week that those of us who believe in the absolute Deity of Jesus Christ, as well as His perfect humanity, have been hesitant to use the Name JESUS by itself because those who do not believe that He was the Son of God have used it to express their belief that He was only a man. I hope that this series will cure all of us of any such hesitation about the Name JESUS. We are certainly justified by Scripture to refer to our Lord simply as JESUS, but we do it knowing that He was and is "the Son of the Highest," that someday He will reign over all of the earth, and that He was given that Name because He came to "save his people from their sins" (Matt. 1:21). It is a good and great Name, so great, in fact, that none of us would ever think of giving that Name to any of our sons. It belongs uniquely to our Lord JESUS Christ!

This Name has been honored in many of our hymns. There are 37 hymns in our hymnal which begin with the Name JESUS, and there are others that could have been included. We teach our children the hymn, "Jesus bids us shine with a clear, pure light." And who doesn't love that hymn, "Jesus, I am resting, resting in the joy of what Thou art." How many times have we sung, "Jesus is all the world to me," and "Jesus, keep me near the cross"? And who doesn't know Charles Wesley's hymn, "Jesus, Lover of my soul, let me to Thy bosom fly"? And then there is that other children's hymn, "Jesus loves me this I know." The coming of the Lord delights us as we sing, "Jesus may come today." And what about, "Jesus paid it all." And "Jesus, Saviour, pilot me, over life's tempestuous sea"? And then there is that other hymn, "Jesus, the very thought of Thee, with sweetness fills my breast..." And don't you remember, "Jesus,

thou Joy of loving hearts, Thou Fount of life, thou Light of men, from the best bliss that earth imparts we turn unfilled to Thee again." If you used to listen to Dr. Donald Grey Barnhouse's programs, you will remember the hymn which even to this day reminds me of that great Bible teacher, the hymn, "Jesus, thy blood and righteousness my beauty are, my glorious dress; midst flaming worlds, in these arrayed, with joy shall I lift up my head."

Perhaps one hymn which exalts the Name of JESUS as much as any other is the hymn with these words:

The name of Jesus is so sweet,
I love its music to repeat;
It makes my joys full and complete,
The precious name of Jesus.

And then the chorus goes like this:

"Jesus," oh how sweet the Name!
"Jesus," ev'ry day the same;
"Jesus," let all saints proclaim
Its worthy praise for ever.

So we have all been using that blessed Name more than we realize, and let's not let anyone take it from us. It is the Name God gave to our Saviour, and it will forever be precious to all of us Who belong to Him. The writer of Hebrews said that we are to live our lives, "Looking unto Jesus..." (Heb. 12:2).

We have seen in our past two messages that when Gabriel told Mary that her Son was to be called "JESUS" that he went on to speak to her about her Son's second coming when He would sit upon the throne of his father David. When the angel, maybe the same angel, gave the good news to Joseph, he spoke to Joseph about our Lord's first coming. The angel told Joseph, "And thou shalt call his name JESUS: for he shall save his people from their sins." Today I want to take up a passage, written by the Apostle Paul, under the direction of the Holy Spirit, in which we see the name of JESUS exalted even more as the Apostle combined our Lord's first coming with His second coming. Most of you are familiar with my text because it is one of the greatest passages in the Bible on both the Person and the Work of the Lord Jesus Christ. And from these truths Paul makes a special application which applies to all of our lives.

This passage neatly can be divided into three parts:

- I. JESUS' HUMILIATION (Phil. 2:6-8).
- II. JESUS' EXALTATION (Phil. 2:9-11).
- III. THE APPLICATION (Phil. 2:5).

We can put the angel's message to Joseph into verses 6 through 8. And then we can put the angel's message to Mary into verse 9 through 11. And then we will see the application that Paul made

to all believers in verse 5. Even though that comes first, I am leaving that until the last.

No Bible School teacher or Seminary professor who teaches the doctrine of Christ, could afford to omit this passage in the otherwise very simple letter which Paul wrote to the church at Philippi. It would be impossible to know how many words have been written on this passage, or how much discussion it has provoked. It has not only been the source of much instruction for the people of God, but it has been the battleground upon which there has been much conflict. This is one of the clearest passages on the Person of Christ as well as a summation of His life from eternity to eternity. Paul tells us here Who and what He was before He became a man, what was involved in His becoming a man, and then the ultimate glory which still awaits Him. If you have never memorized this passage, you ought to start on it today so you will be able to say it over and over again until its truth really finds its way into your heart.

Let us begin by speaking of:

I. OUR LORD'S HUMILIATION (Phil. 2:6-8).

In order to appreciate in even a small way our Lord's humiliation, we must see where He started from, and that is found in the words at the beginning of verse 6, "Who being in the form of God."

Paul here was making a clear statement of the Deity of the Lord Jesus Christ. And he stated it so that we will know that this is what our Lord always has been. He has never been anything else, and never will be. And just as we cannot mark any time when God did not exist, and therefore, no time when He began to be, the same can be declared about our Lord Jesus Christ. Being in the form of God means that inwardly and by His very nature, He had the same nature as God. Paul was not talking about His outward appearance, but about His nature. All that you could say about God, you can say about JESUS even before He was born. He is eternal. He is righteous and holy, completely without sin, all-powerful, infinitely wise, and even omnipresent. There was absolutely no difference between God the Father and His Son, our Lord Jesus Christ.

This expression also means that our Lord would always continue to be what He always has been. You have to start with this or you will never have a true appreciation and understanding of the humiliation of our Lord. For Nebuchadnezzar to be made to live and act like an animal, was truly humiliating for him, but it should not even be mentioned in the same breath to compare what happened to him to be anything like what happened to our Lord Jesus Christ.

Be sure that you have that clear in your thinking about the Lord Jesus before He became a Man.

What did Paul say next about Him?

- He "thought it not robbery to be equal with God." Notice that the words "equal with God" confirm what I have been saying about the Lord before He became a man. He was "equal with God" in every sense of the words.

"Thought it not robbery" is not as clear a translation as it might be. Perhaps you have a different reading in the margin of your Bible like I do. It tells me that this statement could be translated, "Counted it not equality with God a thing to be grasped at." Maybe that also needs to be explained.

History has given us many illustrations of kings, or people who have been very prominent and very powerful who have lost their position, not because they wanted to, but because they had it taken from them. With men we always want to move higher in this world, or at least maintain whatever position we might have.

- I have mentioned before a man in my home church who at one time was very well-to-do, a believer, who through some very unusual circumstances, over which he had no control, had lost everything, and was reduced to being on welfare. During the Great Depression there were many men who lost their fortunes, and rather than face the humiliation, they took their lives. Haman in the book of Esther is a good illustration of a man who was humiliated, and who did not like it. When he was asked what should be done for a man whom the king wanted to honor, he thought he was the man. But it was Mordecai, the man he hated more than anyone else. It is hard for our Presidents, or presidential candidates, to be defeated. We want to hang on to what we have, and, if possible, get more and go higher.

Our Lord was not like that. He did not feel that He had to stay like He always had been as far as His position was concerned, and be the object of the worship of angels, and share the glory with His Father and with the Holy Spirit. He was willing for all of that to change so that He could become like one of His creatures. If you or I were to become a dog, or even a flea on the back of a dog, such humiliation would not begin to compare with what our Lord experienced.

However, the humiliation of our Lord was in stages.

- First of all, He "made himself of no reputation." Literally, this means that He emptied Himself! This is the statement over which there have been so many arguments. Some say that this means that our Lord gave up His Deity when He became a Man.

But we know from the Gospels that He did not do this. He was still the Son of God after He became a man, but He voluntarily gave up the use of many of His divine attributes as a part of His humiliation. His glory was veiled by His flesh. People could look at Him and see no more than a man, never believing that they were in the presence of the almighty, eternal, holy Son of God.

But He willingly took upon Himself "the form of a servant" -- the same word for "form" that Paul used in verse 6. This means that the service He came to render was inward and real. He was not forced to do what He came to do, but He did it willingly. And you and I need to remember this as we read about His life on earth. He knew what He would experience when He came, but He willingly and joyfully came anyway, knowing fully what it would mean to Him.

To do this He was "made in the likeness of men." This means that He became what He had not been, and in doing so He not only took upon Himself the appearance and nature of man (without sin), but He put Himself on the same level with man. He became equal with man, and in doing so, He left behind the position He had before of equality with God.

Now remember: We are not talking about the Lord giving up any part of His divine nature. Nor are we talking about the Lord becoming a man in sin. He became a man without sin, and yet never for one moment ceased to be God. However, from what people could see, He was only a man.

But we are not finished with His humiliation yet. What we have see so far is bad enough, but it is to get worse.

In His humanity He humbled Himself even more, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.

Look at that word "obedient." To whom was the Lord being obedient? It was not to the Jews. It was not to the Romans. It was obedience to God!

You see, Paul was pointing out to the Philippian believers what the main issue was in the coming of Christ into the world. Our Lord's first priority was not our salvation, but it was His own obedience to the Father. He came to do the Father's will. The Father's will was our salvation, but we must see that we had the second place in our Lord's heart, not the first.

So the Cross marked the depth of our Lord's humiliation. All that He experienced before His death would have been far more than we would ever think that the Son of God would ever have to experience, but the Cross was the very depth of an already great

humiliation. It would be impossible for the Lord to go any lower than He did at Calvary. Never forget the Cross when you think of the Lord. It showed how much He loved the Father, and then it showed how much He loved us to die the death that He died on the Cross. The Lord Jesus was born to die!

But now let us move from His first coming to the glory that followed.

II. HIS EXALTATION (Phil. 2:9-11).

In verses 6-8 we read about what the Lord did with Himself; in verses 9-11 we read about what God has done, and will yet do for His Son.

Think of all that is included in those words, "Wherefore God also hath highly exalted Him." What has He done for His Son?

- 1) He raised Him from the dead -- the first Who would never die again.
- 2) He brought Him back to heaven. This was His ascension.
- 3) He seated His Son at His own right hand.

Many expositors of Isaiah's prophecy believe that this is what Isaiah had in mind when he wrote, "He shall be exalted, and extolled, and be very high" (Isa. 52:13).

Before He was "despised and rejected of men: a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief" (Isa. 53:3). When people saw Him they saw nothing that would make them want Him. They put no value on Him at all.

And it is still the same way on earth. People can get very sentimental about a little baby being born in a manger, and about angels singing, and shepherd leaving their sheep to go find the baby Jesus, but that is about as far as most people are willing to go with the Lord.

But I will tell you that it is different in heaven! There never has been a celebration on earth like that which has been on in heaven since the Lord got back there. And even greater honors are yet to come!

Verse 9 tells us that God has given His Son A NAME WHICH IS ABOVE EVERY NAME.

Hebrews 1:4 tells that that the Lord has a more excellent Name than angels have, and Paul wrote at the end of Ephesians 1 that after God raised our Lord from the dead, and had seated Him at His own right hand, that he was "far above," not just above, but "far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this

world (age), but also in that which is to come."

Now some feel that at that time our Lord is going to be given a name different from what He had here on earth. That may be true, but I don't think so. It seems that the name which is going to make every knee bow, and every tongue confess that "Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father," is that same precious, that same wonderful Name which He had here on earth, the name JESUS!

So let me give you an illustration in the book of Daniel, a wicked situation, but one which illustrates what I believe the Apostle Paul was teaching us here.

Nebuchadnezzar was a very proud king, so proud that he made a golden image and then decreed that when the people heard "the sound of the cornet, flute, harp, sackbut, psaltery, and dulcimer, and all kinds of musick," everybody was to fall down and worship the golden image. And Daniel chapter 3 tells us of three young Jews who refused to do it. And so they went to the fiery furnace.

I believe that this verse tells us that some day, as our Lord returns, there is going to be the shout of a Name throughout this world. Whether it will be the voice of God Himself, or a chorus of angels, or of angels and the saints who are already in glory, I do not know. But it will be a signal far greater than the musical instruments which Nebuchadnezzar used. And no previous notice will be given. At the sound of the name, JESUS, "every knee shall bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; and that every tongue shall confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father."

What a day that will be! And it is surely coming!

III. THE APPLICATION (Phil. 2:5).

When you and I think of JESUS, and we read that we are to have His mind, His attitude in life, the attitude He had toward Himself, and the attitude He had toward God, let us remember that He commends two things to us:

- 1) Humility.
- 2) Obedience to God for His glory.

You know, pride is our big problem. And even Christians think that we need to have more pride than we do. Why, if this is not the case, do we talk about feeling good about ourselves? That is our problem; we think too highly of ourselves already. That is what gets us into so much trouble.

That is why we get so upset when what we do is not recognized, or when we suffer a setback of some kind. Regardless of how much we may be humbled, we can never match the terrible humiliation which our Lord experienced. His love for the Father, and His desire to see the Father glorified, so filled His heart that He delighted in doing what had to be done for our salvation.

Let us have the mind of Christ, and manifest it, humbling ourselves, and leaving whatever exaltation that might come our way, or no exaltation at all, in the Lord's hands.

Cf. Jas. 4:10; 1 Pet. 5:6, 7.

Hail, thou once despised Jesus,
Hail, thou Galilean King!
Thou didst suffer to release us:
Thou didst free salvation bring.
Hail, thou agonizing Saviour,
Bearer of our sin and shame!
By thy merits we find favor;
Life is given through thy Name.

*Also
Jesus shall
Reign # 374.*

Jesus, hail! enthroned in glory,
There for ever to abide;
All the heavenly hosts adore thee,
Seated at thy Father's side:
There for sinners thou art pleading;
There thou dost our place prepare;
Ever for us interceding,
Till in glory we appear.

Worship, honor, pow'r, and blessing
Thou art worthy to receive:
Loudest praises without ceasing,
Meet it is for us to give.
Help, ye bright angelic spirits,
Bring your sweetest, noblest lays;
Help to sing our Saviour's merits,
Help to chant Immanuel's praise.