

The Names of Jesus
by T DeWitt Talmage

“A name which is above every name.”—Phil. 2:9.

1. A Good Name

This text was one of Paul’s rapturous and enthusiastic descriptions of the name of Jesus. By common proverb, we have come to believe that there is nothing in a name, and so parents sometimes name their children, not thinking that that particular title will be either a hindrance or a help.

Strange mistake. You have no right to give to your child a name that is lacking either in euphony or in moral meaning. It is a sin for you to call your child Jehoiakim or Tiglath-pileser. Because you yourself may have an exasperating name is no reason why you should give it to those who come after you.

But how often we have seen some name, filled with jargon, rattling down from generation to generation, simply because someone long ago happened to be afflicted with it. Institutions and enterprises have sometimes, without sufficient deliberation, taken their nomenclature. Mighty destinies have been decided by the significance of a name. There are men who all their life long toil and tussle to get over the influence of some unfortunate name. While we may, through right behavior and Christian demeanor, outlive the fact that we were named with the name of a despot or an infidel or a cheat, how much better it would have been if we all could have started life without any such encumbrance.

When I find the apostle, in my text and in other parts of his writing, breaking out in descriptions of admiration in regard to the name of Jesus, I want to inquire what are some of the characteristics of that appellation. Oh, that the Saviour Himself, while I speak, might fill me with His own presence, for we never can tell to others that which we have not ourselves felt.

2. An Easy Name

Also, this name of Jesus is an easy name. Sometimes we are introduced to people whose name is so long and unpronounceable that we have sharply to listen and to hear the name given to us two or three times before we venture to speak it. But within the first two years, the little child clasps its hands, looks up and says, “Jesus.”

Can it be, amid all the families represented here today, there is one household where the little ones speak of “father” and “mother” and “brother” and “sister” and not of the “name which is above every name”?

Sometimes we forget the titles of our best friends, and we have to pause and think before we can recall the name. But can you imagine any freak of intellect in which you could forget the Saviour’s designation?

The word “Jesus” seems to fit the tongue in every dialect. When the voice in old age gets feeble, tremulous and indistinct, still this regal word has potent utterance.

Jesus, I love Thy charming name;
 ’Tis music to my ear;
Fain would I sound it out so loud
 That Heaven and earth might hear.

3. A Beautiful Name

Still further, I remark it is a beautiful name. You have noticed that it is impossible to dissociate a name from the person who has the name. So there are names that are to me repulsive—I do not want to hear them at all—while those very names are attractive to you.

Why the difference? It is because I happen to know persons by those names who are cross, sour, snappish and unfriendly; while the persons you know by those names are pleasant and attractive.

As we cannot dissociate a name from the person who holds the name, that consideration makes Christ’s name so unspeakably beautiful.

No sooner is it pronounced in your presence than you think of Bethlehem and Gethsemane and Golgotha. You see the loving face, hear the tender voice, feel the gentle touch. You see Jesus, the One who, though banqueting with heavenly hierarchies, came down to breakfast on the fish that rough men had just hauled out of Gennesaret; Jesus, the One who, though the clouds are the dust of His feet, walked on the road to Emmaus.

Just as soon as that name is pronounced in your presence, you think of how the Shining One gave back the centurion’s daughter, how He helped the blind man to the sunlight, how He made the cripple’s crutches useless, how He looked down into the babe’s laughing eyes and, as the little one struggled to go to Him, flung out His arms around him, impressed a loving kiss on his brow and said, “Of such is the kingdom of heaven.”

What a beautiful name—Jesus! It stands for love, for patience, for kindness, for forbearance, for self-sacrifice, for magnanimity. It is aromatic with all odors and accordant with all harmonies.

4. A Sweet Name

Sometimes I see that name, and the letters seem to be made out of tears; then again they look like gleaming crowns.

Sometimes they seem to be as though twisted out of the straw on which He lay; then as though built out of the thrones on which His people shall reign.

Sometimes I sound that word “Jesus,” and I hear coming through the two syllables the sigh of Gethsemane and the groan of Calvary. Again I sound it, and it is all aripple with

gladness and aring with hosanna.

Take all the glories of book bindery and put them around the page where that name is printed. On Christmas morning wreath it on the wall. Let it drip from the harp's strings and thunder out in organ's diapason.

Sound it often, sound it well, until every star shall seem to shine it, every flower shall seem to breathe it, mountain and sea, day and night, earth and Heaven acclaim in full chant, "Blessed be his glorious name for ever," the "name which is above every name."

Jesus, the name high over all in Hell and earth and sky.

To the repenting soul, to the exhausted invalid, to the Sunday school girl, to the snow-white octogenarian, it is beautiful.

The old man comes in from a long walk, tremblingly opens the door, hangs his hat on the old nail, sets his cane in the usual corner, lies down on a couch and says to his children and grandchildren, "My dears, I am going to leave you."

They ask, "Why, where are you going, Grandfather?"

"I am going to Jesus." And so the old man faints away into Heaven.

The little child comes in from play and throws herself on your lap and says, "Mamma, I am so sick; I am so sick." You put her to bed. The fever grows worse and worse, until in some midnight she looks up into your face and says, "Mamma, kiss me good-bye. I am going away from you."

"My dear, where are you going?"

"I am going to Jesus." And the red cheeks, which you thought were the mark of the fever, only turn out to be the carnation bloom of Heaven.

Oh, yes, it is a sweet name spoken by the lips of childhood, spoken by the old man.

5. A Mighty Name

Still further, it is a mighty name. Rothschild is a potent name in the commercial world; Cuvier, in the scientific; Irving, a powerful name in the literary world; Washington, an influential name in the political world; Wellington, a mighty name in the military world. But tell me any name in all the earth so potent to awe and lift and thrill and rouse and agitate and bless as this name of Jesus.

That one word unhorsed Saul and flung Newton on his face on ship's deck and today holds millions of the race with omnipotent spell.

That name in England means more than Victoria; in Germany, more than Emperor William; in France, more than Carnot; in Italy, more than Humbert or Garibaldi.

I have seen a man bound hand and foot in sin; Satan, his hard taskmaster, in a bondage from which no human power could deliver him; yet at the pronounciation of that one word, he dashed down his chains and marched out forever free.

I have seen a man overwhelmed with disaster, the last hope fled, the last light gone out; yet when that name was pronounced in his hearing, the sea dropped, the clouds scattered, and a sunburst of eternal gladness poured into his soul.

I have seen a man hardened in infidelity, defiant of God, full of scoff and jeer, jocose of the judgment, reckless of an unending eternity, at the mere pronounciation of that name, blanch and cower and quake and pray and sob and moan and believe and rejoice. Oh, it is a mighty name!

6. An Enduring Name

Still further, it is an enduring name. You clamber over the fence of the graveyard, pull aside the weeds and see the faded inscription on the tombstone. That was the name of a man who once ruled all that town.

The mightiest names of the world have either perished or are perishing. Gregory VI, Sancho of Spain, Conrad I of Germany, Richard I of England, Louis XVI of France, Catharine of Russia—they are mighty names that once made the world tremble; but now, none so poor as to do them reverence. To the great mass of people, they mean absolutely nothing; they never heard of them.

But the name of Christ is to endure forever.

It will be perpetuated in art, for there will be other Bellinis to depict the Madonna; there will be other Ghirlandaios to represent Christ's baptism; there will be other Bronzinos to show us Christ's visiting the spirits in prison; other Giottos to appall our sight with the crucifixion.

The name will be preserved in song, for there will be other Handels to write Messiah; other Dr. Youngs to portray His triumph; other Cowpers to sing His love.

It will be preserved in costly and magnificent architecture, for Protestantism as well as Catholicism is yet to have its St. Marks and its St. Peters.

That name will be preserved in the literature of the world, for already it is embalmed in the best books. There will be other Dr. Paleys to write Evidences of Christianity, other Richard Baxters to describe the Saviour's coming to judgment.

But above all, and more than all, that name will be embalmed in the memory of all the good of earth and all the great ones of Heaven.

Will the delivered bondman of earth ever forget who freed him? Will the blind man of earth forget who gave him sight? Will the outcast of earth forget who brought him home? No! No!

To destroy the memory of that name of Christ, you would have to burn up all the Bibles and all the churches on earth, then, in a spirit of universal arson, go through the gate of Heaven, put a torch to the temples and the towers and the palaces; and after all that city was wrapped in awful conflagration, and the citizens came out and gazed on the ruin, even then they would hear that name in the thunder of falling tower and the crash of crumbling wall and see it wrought in the flying banners of flame; and the redeemed of the Lord on high would be happy yet and cry out, "Let the palaces and temples burn; we have Jesus left!"

7. A Glorious Name

"Blessed be his glorious name for ever."—Ps. 72:19.

"A name which is above every name."—Phil. 2:9.

Have you ever made up your mind by what name you will call Christ when you meet Him in Heaven? You know He has many names. Will you call Him Jesus or the Anointed One or the Messiah? Or will you take some of the symbolic names which on earth you learned from your Bible?

Wandering someday in the garden of God on high, the place abloom with eternal springtide, infinite luxuriance of rose and lily and amaranth, you may look up into His face and say, "My Lord, Thou art the Rose of Sharon and the Lily of the Valley."

Someday, as a soul comes up from earth to take its place in the firmament and shine as a star forever and ever, and the luster of a useful life shall beam forth tremulous and beautiful, you may look up into the face of Christ and say, "My Lord, Thou art a brighter star—the Morning Star—a star forever."

Wandering someday amid the fountains of life that toss in the sunlight and fall in crash of pearl and amethyst in golden and crystalline urn, when you wander up the round banked river to where it first tingles its silver on the rock, where out of the chalices of love you drink to honor and everlasting joy, you may look up into the face of Christ and say, "My Lord, Thou art the Fountain of living water."

Someday, wandering amid the lambs and sheep in the heavenly pastures, feeding by the rock, rejoicing in the presence of Him who brought you out of the wolfish wilderness to the sheepfold above, you may look up into His loving and watchful eye and say, "My Lord, Thou art the Shepherd of the everlasting hills."

But there is another name you may select. I will imagine that Heaven is done. Every throne has its king. Every harp has its harper. Heaven has gathered up everything that is worth having. The treasures of the whole universe have poured into it—the song full, the ranks full, the mansions full, Heaven full. The sun shall set afire with splendor the domes of the temples and burnish the golden streets into a blaze and be reflected back from the solid pearl of the twelve gates; and it shall be noon in Heaven, noon on the river, noon on the hills, noon in all the valleys—high noon. Then the soul may look up, gradually accustoming itself to the vision, shading the eyes as from the almost insufferable splendor of the noonday light until the vision can endure it, then cry out, “Thou art the Sun that never sets!”

At this point I am staggered with the thought that, notwithstanding all the charm in the name of Jesus and the fact that it is so easy a name and so beautiful a name and so sweet a name and so potent a name and so enduring a name and so glorious a name, there are people who find no charm in those two syllables.

Oh, Come This Day to Christ

Oh, come this day and see whether there is anything in Jesus. I challenge those of you who are farther from God to come at the close of this service and test with me whether God is good and Christ is gracious and the Holy Spirit is omnipotent.

I challenge you to come and kneel down with me at the altar of mercy. I will kneel on one side of the altar, and you kneel on the other side of it, and neither of us will rise until our sins are forgiven and we ascribe, in the words of the text, all honor to the name of Jesus—your pronouncing it, my pronouncing it—the name that is above every name. His worth, if all the nations knew,

Sure the whole earth would love Him too.

Oh, that God today, by the power of His Holy Spirit, would roll over you a vision of that blessed Christ and you would begin to weep and pray and believe and rejoice!

You have heard of the warrior who went out to fight against Christ. He knew he was in the wrong. While waging the war against the kingdom of Christ, an arrow struck him, and he fell. It pierced him in the heart. Lying there, his face to the sun, his lifeblood running away, he caught a handful of the blood that was rushing out in his right hand, held it up before the sun and cried out, “O Jesus, Thou hast conquered!”

And today with the arrow of God’s Spirit piercing your soul, you feel the truth of what I have been trying to proclaim. Will you surrender now and forever to the Lord who bought you?

Glorious name! I know not whether you will accept it or not, but I will tell you one thing here and now: in the presence of angels and men, I own Him to be my Lord, my God, my pardon, my peace, my life, my joy, my salvation, my Heaven.

“Blessed be his glorious name for ever.”—Ps. 72:19.

“A name which is above every name.”—Phil. 2:9.

Hallelujah! “Unto him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb for ever and ever”
(Rev. 5:13). Amen and amen and amen!