



BELIEVERS CHAPEL

6420 Churchill Way | Dallas, Texas | 75230 | t 972.239.5371 | believerschapeldallas.org

The Sermons of S. Lewis Johnson

Various

“Jesus: No Sweeter Sound than Thy Blest Name”

TRANSCRIPT

[Prayer] Father, we again thank Thee for our Lord Jesus Christ and for the blessings that are ours through him. We thank Thee for the word of God which gathers round the person and work of our Lord and we do pray that as we study tonight that our understanding of him may grow and increase. We pray, Lord, that the truths that we learn may minister to us in a very practical way that the things that we learn in our minds and in our hearts may be manifested in our lives. We ask especially for the message tonight and the ones that follow in the institute that they may contribute to our edification and growth in grace. Give us open minds and open hearts to Thy truth. We pray in Jesus' name. Amen.

[Message] Tonight is the first in our series of studies on Christology, and our subject is "Jesus: No Sweeter Sound than Thy Blest Name."

The modern challenge to the person of Christ does not come simply from the atheists and the agnostics and other skeptical rationalists. It comes from modern Judaism, as you might expect, the ancient form of which was the matrix from which Christianity came. There is, however, a great difference between modern Judaism and the Judaism of

the Old Testament. And so when we say that the truth of Christianity had its matrix in Judaism, we are thinking about biblical Judaism and not modern Judaism.

And the challenge to Christianity, not surprisingly, comes also from modern Christian scholars. We have seen that. We've made reference to it, several of us here in particular, using the recent volume published last year: "The Myth of God Incarnate" edited by John Hick, to which chapters are supplied by some of the better known of British theologians.

John Knox, an American theologian, and not the reformer as you will tell from this quotation, said a few years ago, "I for one simply cannot imagine a sane human being of any historical period or culture entertaining the thoughts about himself which the gospels as they stand often attribute to him, Jesus Christ."

Now this is a Christian theologian saying that he cannot imagine a sane man saying that the things that are attributed to Jesus Christ are really true of him. That, of course, is what our Lord claimed. He claimed that those things were true of him. And it is, therefore again, that from the Christian faith itself that there comes the challenge to the person of Christ.

The challenge of non-Christian Christologies is best met by a study of the biblical texts itself. It is good of course to study theology, and we don't want to discount that at all. I do think, however, that in the final analysis the best challenge that we can pose to modern views concerning Christ is to ask them to look at the text of holy Scripture. Error is best seen in the light of truth, just as dirt is best seen in the light.

And so in the series of studies in Christology, what I especially would like to do is to turn to various passages in the Bible and seek to exegete them and from the exegesis construct a doctrine of the person and work of our Lord Jesus.

When we speak about Christology, we are talking about the truth concerning Christ. And when we say the truth concerning Christ, we don't mean simply the truth concerning Christ's person, but we mean the truth concerning Christ's person and work.

Christology is the study of who he is and what he has done. And so we want to be studying these things. We will deal with the historical and the theological side of the issue, but what I would like to do, I say, is to turn primarily to the texts of the Bible, the principal Christological texts and seek to exegete them.

And we want to begin our study with some studies in the titles and names of our Lord Jesus. And the first one that we're going to look at is the name Jesus. That's the source of the title: "Jesus: No Sweeter Sound than Thy Blessed Name." So, I would like for you to turn with me to the first chapter of the Gospel of Matthew and we'll look at the term Jesus in Matthew's account of the birth of our Lord Jesus. Matthew chapter 1, verse 18 through verse 25.

Now from our studies in the Gospel of Matthew, which we concluded a few months ago, you, I hope, remember that it was in the days of Augustus Caesar, the man who hoped that he might become God that our Lord Jesus Christ was born. A man by the name of Jacob and another by the name of Heli, if we can believe that Luke's genealogy does have some reference to Mary, contracted marriage according to ancient custom. And from the carpenter, the son of Jacob and the pious maiden Mary, the son of Heli or at least of another member of the tribe of the line of David, there would come the God-man.

This account that we're going to read right now is an account that is written in three parts. There is first the description of Joseph's realization of Mary's pregnant condition in verses 18 and 19. And then, the angel gives his remarkable revelation to Joseph in verse 20 through verse 23, Matthew adding at the end of that section a statement concerning his own understanding of what was fulfilled in this announcement of the angel. And then we read in the last two verses of the response of Joseph to the message that the angel gave him.

Let me read now beginning with verse 18 of Matthew chapter 1.

"Now the birth of Jesus Christ was as follows: when His mother Mary had been betrothed to Joseph, before they came together she was found to be with child by the Holy Spirit. And Joseph her husband, being a righteous man and not wanting to disgrace her, desired to put her away secretly. But when he had considered this, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream, saying, "Joseph, thou son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary as your wife; for that which has been conceived in her is of the Holy Spirit. And she will bear a Son; and you shall call His name Jesus, for it is He who will save His people from their sins." Now all this took place (Matthew adds) that what was spoken by the Lord through the prophet might be fulfilled saying, "Behold, the virgin shall be with child and shall bear a Son, and they shall call His name Immanuel," which translated means, "God with us." And Joseph arose from his sleep and did as the angel of the Lord commanded him, and took her as his wife, and kept her a virgin until she gave birth to a Son; and he called His name Jesus."

The text that we're looking at is verse 21, of course, where we read, "She will bear a Son; and you shall call His name Jesus, for it is He who will save His people from their sins."

Joseph had spent a very restless night. Sleep had been fitful. He was very much disturbed over what he had discovered that his betrothed was already pregnant. And so in answer to the trouble that Joseph was passing through, there comes the heavenly visitor. And he says essentially that it is the Spirit that is the vitalizing energy that has given life to the embryo that is in Mary's womb. A son is to be born. And with what a name! Look at it. "You shall call His name Jesus." And then the reason is given, "For He shall save His people from their sins."

Now we want to notice a few things about this text, and then I want to draw a few conclusions from it. But before we do, I think it's necessary to say just a word or two

about what the name Jesus really means, what it must have meant to Joseph as he heard the message from the angel.

The Greek term Jesus is an equivalent of the Old Testament name for Joshua. The name for Joshua in the older part of the Old Testament was the term *yehowshuwa`*, that was the pre-exilic term that was usually used for Joshua or anyone who had that name. In post-exilic times that name was shortened to *yeshuwa* and you can easily see how in Greek that might come to be simply *Iesous*.

The Hebrews, incidentally, in the Rabbinic writings almost always refer to Jesus Christ as simply *Yeshu*. And evidently the reason for that is that when the term *yehowshuwa*, the full name, is spelled out, the connection between the verb "to save" and the term for "Yahweh" is very explicit for *yehowshuwa* is a combination of *Yahweh* plus the Hebrew verb *yasha* which means "to save." So that, *yehowshuwa* is a name that is clearly built upon those two names or words. And the resultant meaning "Yahweh saves" or the "salvation of Yahweh" or "Jehovah salvation" is very plain. And evidently the Hebrews, at least later when the Christian faith came into existence and began to expand, the Rabbinic writers avoided the term *Iesous* or *yehowshuwa* for our Lord and settled upon a short term *Yeshu* where the connection with *Yahweh* is not quite as plain and clear.

Well now this name, *yehowshuwa* or *Iesous* the Greek name, is a term then that was common among the Jews and was the name of Joshua in the Old Testament. So our Lord's name was really Joshua. That was the name by which he was called, Joshua, which means the same thing: Jehovah saves or the salvation of Jehovah.

Now there is a very significant amount of truth contained in this. And that's what I want to spend a few moments on right now, because I think that this statement, "You shall call His name Jesus, for it is He who will save His people from their sins," is first of all an expression of the true humanity of the Lord Jesus. He's addressed by the name of

Jesus through the gospel records. You no doubt have seen many instances in the New Testament in which our Lord is referred to simply as Jesus. Let's look at some of them.

Turn over to chapter 21 and verse 1 of the Gospel of Matthew. Here we read, Matthew 21:1, "And when they had approached Jerusalem and had come to Bethphage, to the Mount of Olives, then Jesus sent two of his disciples." Notice the simple name Jesus.

Chapter 26 and verse 71, we read, "And when he had gone out to the gateway, another servant-girl saw him and said to those who were there, "This man was with Jesus of Nazareth." Now notice the addition, "Jesus of Nazareth." Now it is clear from this that our Lord is identified with a particular historical locale.

Turn to Mark chapter 10 and verse 47, Mark chapter 10 in verse 47. Here we read, "And when he heard that it was Jesus the Nazarene, he began to cry out and say, "Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me!" Notice the addition of the expression "the Nazarene," another expression very similar to "from Nazareth" which marks him out as a particular historical personage.

There are many other terms that we might look to. You remember that when he was hanging upon the cross, the words that hung over the cross if we put all of the superscriptions together were "This is Jesus of Nazareth, the King of the Jews."

So the expression Jesus is a term that refers to his humanity. It was the way that people ordinarily addressed him, just as people address me and say Lewis, so they said to him Jesus. It was the way by which he was addressed.

Furthermore, when two people discussed him, they would speak of him as Jesus. So they would say things about Jesus, just as two people might discuss me after the Sunday morning message, for example. And they might refer to me as Lewis. So it was then, first of all, the name that expressed his humanity, Jesus.

There are many other illustrations of this in the New Testament. Remember when our Lord was hanging upon the cross and the thief spoke to him. He did not say, Lord remember me when thou comest in Thy kingdom as the Authorized Version put it. But as

the more ancient manuscripts have it, "Jesus, remember me when you come in your kingdom." It was the natural way by which a man addressed our Lord. So it is a term then that suggests the humanity of the Lord Jesus.

We're inclined to think that it is only a human term, that is, that when our Lord was called Jesus, we should only think of his humanity. But that is not true. Just for a moment take a look at this text. It says, "And you shall call His name Jesus, for it is He who will save His people from their sins."

Now you could tell from the simple statement "His people" that he is more than a man. A man does not have people who are saved from sin. So the very fact that he says, "He will save, Jesus will save His people from their sins" is evidence of the fact that these people belonged to him. And so he is more than simply a man.

But there is a great deal more evidence for the deity of our Lord in this expression than simply that. It is said of him here that he saves. You call his name Jesus, for it is he who will save his people from their sins.

Now, if there is one thing that is taught in the Old Testament and taught also in the New Testament, it is that God alone saves people from their sins. So the very fact that it is said of our Lord that "He shall save his people from their sins," is evidence of the fact that he is God. And the name that is used is the name Jesus. His name is Jesus because he shall save his people from their sins. So the very fact that he is called Jesus and that he saves means that he does something that only God can do. Therefore, he possesses divine nature.

Over in Mark chapter 2 in verse 7, in one of the first of the miracles that our Lord performed, there is a recognition of this truth by those who were not necessarily believers in him. We read in the miracle of the paralytic in the 7th verse of Mark 2, "Why does this man speak that way?" so the enemies of our Lord were saying. "He is blaspheming; who can forgive sins but God alone?" So, the very fact then that he saves people from their

sins is evidence of the fact that he makes claim, or a claim is made for him, of deity. "He shall save His people from their sins."

Now the Old Testament also stresses this. And I want you to turn back to Isaiah chapter 43. We read a couple of texts because not only is the fact that he saves show that he is God, but the Old Testament supports the idea that it is only God who is a savior.

Isaiah chapter 43, and let me read verse 3, "For I am the Lord your God, The Holy One of Israel, your Savior; I have given Egypt as your ransom, Cush and Seba in your place." Notice that Yahweh in the Old Testament is said by himself to be the holy one of Israel and your savior. So to be a savior is the work of God.

Look at the 11th verse where we have something even stronger, "I, even I, am Yahweh, And there is no savior besides Me." In other words, he is an exclusive savior. It is he alone who saves.

Look at chapter 45 and verse 15, we read, "Truly, Thou art a God who hides Himself, O God of Israel, Savior!" Notice again, "savior." Look at verse 21. This is a rather lengthy verse, almost half a page. "Declare and set forth your case; Indeed, let them consult together. Who has announced this from of old? Who has long since declared it? Is it not I, the Lord? And there is no other God besides Me, A righteous God and a Savior; There is none except Me."

So you see, the Old Testament teaches us, I won't look at a number of other passages to confirm this; that's enough. The Old Testament teaches that it is God who saves and furthermore, that he is an exclusive savior, that only he saves.

So you can see that one who knew the Scriptures and heard the angelic being say, "And call his name Jesus for it is He who will save his people from their sins," would have recognized that in this name Jesus is the claim of deity. So we should not think of the term Jesus as being simply a reference to the humanity of our Lord. It is more than that. In other words, a great deal of stress rests upon that part of the name which refers to the Hebrew word in the Old Testament that means to save: Yasha, he saves.

Now when you turn back to Matthew chapter 1, you will see that the context also supports this because right after the angel makes the statement that she shall bear a son and you shall call his name Jesus, then the evangelist Matthew inserts something of his own. When he put the book together, he saw in this the fulfillment of a particular passage from the Old Testament. He was reminded of the passage in Isaiah in which it was said that a virgin should be with child and bring forth a son. And he saw no contradiction whatsoever between the Old Testament passage which says that the person who is going to come from the virgin is Immanuel or God with us and the statement of the angel that his name should be called Jesus.

Matthew says in verse 23, he says why the prophet's statement is fulfilled saying, "Behold the virgin shall be with child and shall bear a Son, and they shall call His name Immanuel," which means, "God with us."

Now to show you that there was also no contradiction between this in the mind of Matthew, further when events do come to pass, we read in verse 25, "And kept her a virgin until she gave birth to a Son; and he called His name Jesus." So he sees no contradiction between hearing the angel say, "His name shall be called Jesus," but he's going to be Immanuel, God with us.

You might think that after he heard, that if he had made the connection, he might want to name our Lord: "Immanuel," but no, "Jesus" is obedience to the angel's command and Jesus implies that he is the savior and the only savior, and therefore something that only Yahweh does.

There's one further thing that I think that we can see in the use of this term Iesus or Jesus, and that is that he is a historical figure. It is an expression of the fact that he is a historical figure. That means that he is no mythological figure. It is very common among certain contemporary New Testament scholars to suppose that our Lord Jesus never really lived, but that he was simply a mythological figure. Well, this name is another help in answering that kind of argumentation.

So let me sum up, then, what is said by Matthew in this account of the birth of our Lord. Our Lord Jesus Christ in his person is the human, historical, yet divine, man of Nazareth. In his work he is the antitype of Joshua of the Old Testament because he is the captain of their salvation and he is the one who will bring the chosen people into the promised land of eternal salvation.

There is one other figure in the Old Testament who was a type of Christ and who was also called Joshua. You'll remember in the latter part of the Old Testament in the Book of Zechariah, there was Joshua the high priest. And that figure in the Book of Zechariah is also a type of the Lord Jesus. Joshua the captain of the Lord's hosts in the Book of Joshua in the earlier history of the Old Testament and then Joshua the high priest in the later history of the Old Testament, both are figures of the Lord Jesus. And we are justified in saying that our Lord is the fulfillment of both of these types because he is the great king-priest, the great high priest, and he also is the one who corresponds to Joshua and brings victory to those for whom he dies and whom he saves.

Let's turn secondly over to the Lukan account of the birth of Christ and see what we find here. The term in Luke's account of his birth, chapter 1 of the Gospel of Luke and verse 26 through verse 38. Again let me read through the account.

You will notice, by the way, I probably should have looked at this text first, but you will notice that this account antedates in time the account in Matthew because when the angel Gabriel speaks to Mary, he says in verse 31, "And behold, you will conceive in your womb." Whereas the Matthean account is written from the standpoint of a conception that has already taken place. Now listen as we read beginning at verse 26,

"Now in the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent from God to a city in Galilee called Nazareth, to a virgin engaged to a man whose name was Joseph, of the descendants of David; and the virgin's name was Mary. And coming in, he said to her, "Hail, favored one! The Lord is with you." But she was greatly troubled at this statement, and kept

pondering what kind of salutation this might be. And the angel said to her, “Do not be afraid, Mary; for you have found favor with God. And behold, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you shall call His name Jesus. (Now, this time the words "For He shall save His people from their sins" are not added. Notice what is added.) He will be great and He will be called the Son of the Most High; and the Lord God will give Him the throne of His father David; and He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and His kingdom will have no end.”"

Well we can stop at that point. This is the same Gabriel who gave the news of the first advent to Daniel in Daniel chapter 9, and it is the same Gabriel who gave the news of the advent of John the Baptist in the earlier part of Luke chapter 1. And the same Gabriel is the one who announces the birth of our Lord to Mary.

This must have been the fulfillment of a great deal of anticipation on the part of all who had in any contact whatsoever with what was happening in Israel. Messianic motherhood was, of course, the greatest hope for which any maiden in Israel could ever hope: that she might be the mother of the Messiah. And if it had been known that the forerunner has already come or that there is indication that the forerunner is soon coming, well then, there must have been some anticipation of who will be the mother elect, the one who will be the mother of the Messiah according to his human nature.

And it certainly is a surprising thing, even if we're not correct in thinking there may have been some anticipation, as we read the Bible, it certainly is a surprising thing to think that the Messiah should come from Nazareth. Of all the places from which the Messiah should come, this was probably the least likely. Nazareth, history, poetry, prophecy, leave Nazareth almost completely untouched in the Old Testament. As far as we know there is only one text that has a relationship to Nazareth and that's a debatable one. That's Isaiah chapter 11 and verse 1. Reference is made to Galilee, and of course,

reference is made to Bethlehem in Judea where our Lord was born, but the idea that our Lord would grow up in Nazareth was largely missing from the Old Testament.

So it must have been a surprise and particularly in the light of the reputation that Nazareth had. "Can any good thing come out of Nazareth?" And to think that that saying, which was common among the people, finds its greatest refutation in the greatest possible good that could ever come out of any place, our Lord Jesus Christ. "Can any good thing come out of Nazareth?" Yes, the greatest thing in all the world could come out of Nazareth, as our Lord did so far as his early life is concerned.

Well, the angelic commission and the angelic communication are given to us. Let's just notice the text in verse 31, "And behold, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you shall name Him Jesus." In verse 30 reference is made to blessing for Mary and then in verse 31 through verse 33, a blessing from Mary.

The sum of the announcement that Gabriel gives to Mary is simply this: He shall be great. He is great in his cognomen, Jesus. Call his name Jesus, because, you see, even though Luke or Gabriel does not make much of the name, does not say anything definitely about it as is found in the Gospel of Matthew, we're justified in finding something in it because, after all, his name was Jesus or Joshua. That in itself would have meant that he would be great if he were to be one whose name should be Joshua. But he is also great in his character or his divine personality for we read in verse 31, "You shall conceive and bear a son, and you shall call His name Jesus."

And he is great in his calling because he goes on to say, "He will be great and He will be called the Son of the Most High; and the Lord God will give Him the throne of His father David." You can see that the prominent thought here in the Gospel of Luke is that this son whose name is Jesus is going to have the Davidic throne. He's going to rule and reign.

Now turn over a page or two to chapter 2. I want you to see that this idea of savior and thus of deity is not totally absent from the Lukan account of our Lord's infancy.

In Luke chapter 2 in verse 10 we read, "And the angel said to the shepherds, "Do not be afraid; for behold, I bring you good news of a great joy which shall be for all the people; (verse 11) for today in the city of David there has been born for you a Savior, (and here again is that stress on the fact that he is a savior, therefore a God, because only God saves) a Savior who is Christ the Lord." So the term here in Luke is primarily linked with the Davidic rule, thus connecting with one of the titles that our Lord has Son of David.

Now I'd like to say just a few words about other significant usages of the term Jesus in the New Testament before I conclude. Let me for a few moments say a few words about the usage of the term Jesus in the Book of Acts. The simple term Jesus, Iesous, is a very common name for our Lord in the Book of Acts.

I'll give you some references if you're interested in putting them down. It's Acts chapter 1 in verse 1, verse 14, verse 16; chapter 4, verse 18; chapter 5, verse 40; chapter 17, verse 7, verse 18; chapter 19, verse 13 and verse 15. Well, since I've given you this many, I'll give you the last two: 25:19, and 26:9.

When Saul met our Lord on the Damascus road, I'm sure you remember that it is by this name that our Lord identifies himself to Paul, in Acts chapter 9 in verse 5. And then again in the account in chapter 22, verse 8 and in the account in chapter 26, verse 15 this is repeated. So it is by the name Jesus that our Lord identifies himself to Paul.

Incidentally, we often have people say that we should never call Jesus today Jesus. Now I confess that as far as I am concerned, I'm a little happier saying something like the Lord Jesus or the Lord Jesus Christ. I have a good friend; he's a professor in a theological school. He says that we should call, we should give our Lord his full name, the Lord Jesus Christ. Well, that's maybe good human reasoning, but it's just not true to Scripture.

Our Lord identifies himself as Jesus. Well someone might say, Well he has the privilege of doing that but we ought to call him the Lord Jesus Christ. But the facts are also that the writers of the New Testament refer to him by the simple term Jesus. In the

Book of Hebrews there are a number of places where he is referred to by that author as simply Jesus.

And when our Lord closes the Book of Revelation in the 22nd chapter, he says, "And I Jesus have spoken these things to you." So he, speaking from the standpoint of his glory after the resurrection, still speaks of himself as Jesus.

Now that's not strange because he is also referred to as the Lamb in his glorified state. So it's perfectly alright to refer to our Lord as Jesus. It's perfectly alright to refer to him as Jesus Christ. That was really, it came to be very much like a name, such as our names, Bob Smith, Jesus Christ. In the latter part of the New Testament and then afterwards, that came to be the name by which he was known and in the same sense in which we call people by their name.

So we should not be hung up on things like that. But nevertheless, if you always say the Lord Jesus or the Lord Jesus Christ, that'll be alright with me. I kind of like that. But the other is permissible.

In the Book of Acts you will find the simple name often used. The angels use it at the ascension in chapter 1, verse 11. Stephen, when he says he saw the Lord standing. He speaks of Jesus. He saw "Jesus standing." Acts chapter 7, verse 55.

At the same time, in the Book of Acts he is proclaimed as Lord and Messiah. We have that for example in chapter 2, verse 36 where Peter says, "Therefore let all the house of Israel know for certain that God hath made Him both Lord and Christ—this Jesus whom you have crucified." So the term Jesus in the mouth of the apostles is a term that refers to his Lordship and his Messiahship, that is, it is identified with them. He, the historical person, is also the Lord. And he is the Messiah.

In chapter 17 and in verse 18, when the Epicurean and Stoic philosophers were listening to the apostle, we read in verse 18 of Acts chapter 17, "And also some of the Epicurean and Stoic philosophers were conversing with him. And some were saying, "What would this idle babbler wish to say?" Others, "He seems to be a proclaimer of

strange deities,"—because he was preaching Jesus and the resurrection." Now notice that Paul was preaching Jesus and the resurrection.

Now over in verse 31 of this same section, Paul has something else to say and he says, "Because He has fixed a day in which He will judge the world in righteousness through a Man whom He has appointed, having furnished proof to all men by raising Him from the dead."

Now this is an interesting passage because Paul calls him "a Man" and yet at the same time he was preaching Jesus. But he was also referring to him as Jesus who has been raised from the dead, because he is appointed judge in the day of judgment. So here is an illustration of the preaching of Jesus, but comprehended in that name is the resurrection from the dead and his ultimate office as judge of all men. So the term Jesus then is not simply a term of the humanity of our Lord but is a term of the historical person who also is Lord and Christ.

In the epistles of the New Testament, it's astonishing that the term Jesus occurs so rarely. In fact, there're just a couple of passages in almost all. Well, half of Paul's uses of the term Jesus are found in two passages: 1 Thessalonians chapter 4, verse 14 and 2 Corinthians chapter 4, verse 11 through verse 14.

In Philippians chapter 2, verse 10 the Apostle Paul states, "That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow." So the name Jesus is the name of the person before whom all men shall ultimately bow. It is then a term that is very consonant with all of the deepest associations of deity and judgeship and Messiahship and all of the other dignity that belongs to him.

In the Book of Revelation, again, the death and resurrection are quite often in view when the term Jesus is referred to. And I'll just ask you to think about chapter 22 and verse 16, the passage we've referred to. Let me conclude with a few comments.

Jesus, then, is the name of the historical human Jesus. It is the name that marks him out as one of us, one of us in our trials, one with us in our tragedies, one with us in

our joys, one with us in our needs in the sense that he is always available for our needs. But he is more than a man. He is the savior of his people.

As the Nicene creed puts it, "I believe in one Lord Jesus Christ, the only-begotten Son of God, begotten of his Father before all worlds, God of God, Light of Light, Very God of Very God, begotten, not made, being of one substance with the Father by whom all things were made; who for us men, and for our salvation, came down from heaven." That's a good exposition of what Jesus really means.

"Thou shall call his name Jesus for he shall save his people from their sins." That name Jesus, it is the divinely ordered and expounded name. You can make a good case for Jesus being the best name for our Lord, because it's one that the Father chose for him. When we plead the name of Jesus with the Father, we bring him back his own word. It's tantamount to pleading Immanuel as Matthew points out. He is God and therefore he's able, and he's God with us and therefore he's full of pity.

This is the name that was typically born by others but is now reserved for him alone. Why? Because while Joshua was able to slay Amalek and take Jericho and route the Canaanites, it is our Lord who does that spiritually for us. He is the greater than Joshua.

And the name of Jesus indicates his main work. If you don't know Jesus as Savior, you don't really know him. Wouldn't it be an ironic thing to live next to Jack Nicklaus, but never to have seen him play golf? You could say I know Jack Nicklaus, but you wouldn't know him in his best work. You wouldn't know him as a golfer. I have the greatest appreciation for Jack Nicklaus. I would have a greater appreciation than the fellow who lived next door to him, because I've seen him handle a golf club. Because I've tried to handle it myself. And I recognize the skill with which he does it.

If you had lived next to Milton, but you didn't know anything about his poetry or his literary work, you wouldn't know Milton. If you had lived by Plato and you didn't know anything about his philosophy, you'd never read any of that, you would have a

poor understanding of him. And so, if you know Jesus as Jesus, but you don't know what it is to be saved by him, you don't really know Jesus as he should be known.

This is the name that really marks him out and indicates his main work. He's a savior. And if ever was a name, if there ever was a name that was justified by the facts, this name is.

Now take just one minute, across the street from my study, I looked out at two little children, one is about seven years old, she seems six maybe. She has a little brother who's about three. And I looked out and they had two little puppies they'd brought home from the pet shop. I saw them arrive, two little poodles, little black poodles, really cute.

Well, the next day they yelled at me and I said, "I saw you got those dogs. Did you just get them?"

And they said, "Yes. Want to see them?" They brought the dogs over. They said, "You want to hold 'hem?"

And so I said, "What have you named them?"

"We haven't named them yet."

"You haven't named them yet?"

"No, we're goin' to wait and see what their characteristics are," the little girl said. "And then we're going to name them according to their characteristics."

Well really, that's a good way to name dogs, isn't it? I don't know what the characteristics are going to be. I'm kind of trying to guess what the names actually will be. Always runs when the door opens. [Laughter] That would be quite a lengthy name or something like that.

But our Lord's name is Savior and that name is one that is a perfect description of what he is, for that's what he is.

"Jesus: No Sweeter Sound than Thy Blest Name" by S. Lewis Johnson
Copyright © 2008 Believers Chapel, Dallas, Texas. All Rights Reserved.

Mr. Spurgeon somewhere says that he once went in to a cemetery. I didn't say seminary, that was what you were thinking about [Laughter] I will say this, both places do contain a lot of dead people. I will say that, I agree with that.

But Mr. Spurgeon said he once went in to a cemetery and he saw a grave. And the grave read, "Sacred to the memory of Methuselah Coney who died at the age of six months." Think of it, a name totally unjustified by the facts. Methuselah and lives only six months.

But our Lord is a savior and the name is one that perfectly describes him. He is a human savior, a historical Jesus. He is also the divine savior, Yahweh, who saves souls and he never fails when we come to him. Have you come? Do you know him as savior? If you know him as a great teacher, a great philosopher, lovely ethical reasoner, you don't Jesus. You don't really know him until you've been saved. Let's bow in prayer.

[Prayer] Father, we are grateful to Thee for the revelation concerning the Son. Enable us, Lord, to grow in our appreciation of him. Most of all enable us, O God, to know him every day in a deeper way as Savior. For his name's sake. Amen.