

The Incarnation Part 6 - 'The Origins of Messiah'

by Charles Alexander

The sermon explores the significance of the names Jesus and Emmanuel, emphasizing Christ's mission to save His people from their sins and the prophetic connections to the Old Testament figure of Joshua.

Scripture: Isaiah 53:10-11, Zechariah 3:1-3, Zechariah 3:7, Matthew 1:21, Matthew 26:28, Hebrews 4:14

Topics: "Christology", "Soteriology"

Description

Charles Alexander preaches about the significance of the names 'Jesus' and 'Emmanuel' in Matthew 1:21-23, emphasizing that 'Jesus' means 'Saviour' and 'Emmanuel' means 'God with us'. He explains that Jesus' mission was to save His people from their sins, not to establish an earthly kingdom for the Jews, highlighting that His kingdom is not of this world. Charles delves into the Old Testament figures of Joshua and the high priest Joshua, drawing parallels to Jesus as the ultimate Saviour and high priest who removes iniquities in one great act on the cross.

Transcript

Matthew 1:21-23 : And she shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt call his name JESUS: for he shall save his people from their sins. Now all this was done, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken of the Lord by the prophet, saying, 'Behold, a virgin shall be with child, and shall bring forth a son, and they shall call his name Emmanuel', which being interpreted is, 'God with us'.

We have two very significant names in these three verses, both of which belong to our Lord and Saviour; one name is "Jesus" and the other is "Emmanuel", the one name He never bore as a personal name, because it was a title. Men, both Jew and Gentile, have copied it since then, but nobody is entitled to it but One, because it means "God with us". The meaning of the name Jesus, as everyone should know, is "Saviour". The astonishing thing is this, that the name "Jesus" is a Greek form of the Hebrew name "Joshua". The Lord was born, as touching the flesh, a Jew, but He was given a Greek name. Do not think for one moment that this is just a translation for our convenience. He was never called Joshua; Joshua is the Hebrew equivalent, but there is not the slightest ground for supposing that the Lord was ever addressed other than by the name "Jesus".

This was the name put upon the cross: "This is Jesus, the king of the Jews." He always bore the Gentile equivalent of the Hebrew name, but we should not attach too much prophetic significance to that.

Nevertheless, it does indicate that His principal mission was to the Gentiles, not to the Jews; that is, it was a world-wide commission He brought with Him from eternity, not just for one of the smallest nations upon the face of the earth. As the Word says (Isaiah 60:2-3), For, behold, the darkness shall cover the earth, and gross darkness the people: but the Lord shall arise upon thee, and his glory shall be seen upon thee. And the Gentiles shall come to thy light, and kings to the brightness of thy rising.

We see this literally coming to pass when the wise men from the east, who were Gentiles and, in a sense, kings, came to the light and to the brightness of His rising. Although not an absolute fulfilment of Isaiah's prophecy, this was certainly a token fulfilment. Because His name was called Jesus, rather than Joshua (the Hebrew equivalent), a wonderful thing has happened, which Christians the world over take too much for granted. Happy are those who believe when the full and glorious significance of it begins to dawn upon their souls.

Thou shalt call his name Jesus, for he shall save his people from their sins; this expresses fully the purpose for which He came into the world. Did you think it was to set up a kingdom for the Jews? No, He never did that! We read in the sixth chapter of John's gospel that after He had fed the multitudes with five loaves and two fishes, a great number of people sought to make Him king, but He refused. He would not be an earthly king; He turned away from them, spurning all the political aspects of their false belief concerning the reason why He was there. He put it all aside and would not permit them to proceed with their policy of making Him a king. He did not come to be that kind of a king; His kingdom is not of this world, and has nothing whatever to do with national boundaries of any particular nation upon the earth. He came for one thing only: to save His people from their sins. He came in the cause of holiness, righteousness and truth. He did not come to exalt a particular nation or people, and give them privileges over all other people on earth. He saw all men as sinners, and He came to save His people from their sins.

We do not rightly estimate the purpose of Christ's coming unless we are sure upon that vitally important point, and we see at a glance this glorious light which has come. Thou shalt call his name Jesus, for he shall save his people from their sins. This is an expression of absolute certainty which leaves no room for doubt: "He shall save his people from their sins." We cannot escape the conclusion that His people are His elect. Solemnly and seriously and earnestly, we should appreciate that there was never any question about the outcome of Christ's work. Consider the following quotations:

Isaiah 53:10:

The pleasure of the Lord shall prosper in his hand.

Isaiah 53:11

By his knowledge shall my righteous servant justify many: for he shall bear their iniquities.

Matthew 26:28 :

This is my blood of the new testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins.

Matthew 1:21:

He shall save his people from their sins.

Do these quotations from God's word exclude anyone? Only the impenitent are excluded, who refuse to relinquish their sins. We may wonder about the backslider, but we should not pry too far into the mystery of divine grace. Let us, rather, rejoice that, to our soul's comfort and confidence, He shall save His people from their sins.

Having sought to establish that His name denotes His office and His intention, who and what He is, we now come to the Hebrew equivalent, Joshua, and note that there are three Joshuas in the Bible. There may be more, but there are three significant Joshuas: two in the Old Testament and one in the New. The first was Joshua the son of Nun, who, after Moses' death, took over the leadership of the twelve tribes and brought them across the Jordan, into the promised land. Under his leadership the people conquered the territory which had been allotted to them, and wrought God's judgment upon the wicked people who, for four centuries, had lived under the warning of the divine judgment for their sins. Some people think it was a terrible thing that so many lost their lives in the land of Canaan, a land flowing with milk and honey, when the Israelite tribes came under the leadership of Joshua.

Many can scarcely believe in a God like that, and hence do not believe the construction the Old Testament puts upon these things, but we must remember that there was a witness for centuries to these people, generation after generation. Abraham had come and lived amongst them, and the word of God living in him had impressed whole generations. They knew he was a prophet and had come from God, but did they repent? The Lord sent Abraham's near relative, Lot, into Sodom. Anyone who thinks that Lot went down into Sodom on his own account, and with false motives, had better think again. God sent him because He had determined the destruction of that wicked people, as an example of the judgment of God which ultimately would come upon the whole world, and in part upon that very land. He judged a portion of it which was the worst part of all, but first of all sent Lot, a man of righteousness, as the scripture testifies, to kindle a light in their midst. They sought to slay Lot also, because he was righteous, until finally they caused the clouds of God's wrath to close over that city (see 2 Peter 2 : 6-8). That great and terrible morning, fire and brimstone came down from heaven. For verification of that we only have to look at the Dead Sea into which the Jordan flows. Although the mighty Jordan pours millions of tons of water every day into the Dead Sea, its level never rises. The water is lost by evaporation, because it is so low down, well below sea level. It is the lowest spot on the earth's surface, and that is where Sodom and Gomorrah are, at the bottom of that abyss. When the earth gave way under them, and the fire and brimstone came down from Heaven, the cavity was filled by the waters of the Jordan and that is how things stand today.

Did that arrest the progress of sin amongst these people? Unfortunately not; they soon forgot about it. When Joshua entered the land of Canaan, the first considerable place to be reduced by his army was the city of Jericho. We all know what happened there; it was put to the sword, except for one family alone. He delivered the family of Rahab the harlot who received the spies, and informed them that the people of Jericho knew what God had done to the Egyptians. She also realised that nothing could save that city and that land from the judgment of God. Rahab, the biggest sinner of them all, knew this and repented, as those spies brought the Word of God and the light of everlasting truth into that poor woman's life, and she became an ancestress of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. She married into an Israelite family, and became an ancestress of King David, from whose family the Lord Himself sprang. Now the significance of Rahab is just this: great was God's grace and mercy to her, and she was a witness against the people who fell under the avenging sword of God's army that day. What she knew they knew, that the Israelites were the people of God, yet they continued in their sin and unbelief.

There is a witness raised in the world today, and what will those people who question the slaughter of the Amalekites and the Canaanites say when the whole world is summoned to judgment, and mankind is without excuse? Those who set at nought and sold Him, Pierced and nailed Him to the tree, Deeply wailing, shall the true Messiah see.

They shall see Him there upon the throne of judgment, and all who ratify and consent to the evil deed of the rejection of Christ, and attempt to put Him out of the world, because they themselves are sinners and are determined to go on with their sins and unbelief, shall perish. What will they have, but that eternal judgment of which the fires of Sodom and the destruction of Jericho were only a token, not only of the coming judgment of God, but of His long forbearance in history.

We in the lands of the Western World have suffered, and continue to suffer, as a result of rejecting the Word of God. As a people we have turned back to heathenism, as everyone knows, and all the laws of decency and godliness are overturned, denied and scoffed at, even by people in the highest places of the land. Thank God for some who do not do this, but as a nation and as a people we have thrown off the knowledge of God, and all the advantages and blessings which have come to us as a consequence of the preaching of the Word of God amongst us. Do we expect that we will be spared? Let us think again!

The first Joshua, who brought the people of God in to the promised land, was a type of the heavenly Joshua, whose name was called "Jesus", for He was to save His people from their sins; a type of that heavenly Joshua, who brings His people in to the heavenly Kingdom. Is it not said in the book of Revelation (7:17), The Lamb which is in the midst of the throne shall feed them, and shall lead them unto living fountains of waters: and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes. Still He goes before His people; He goes before us, to lead us out, to bring us in, and to break up the way before the onward march of the host of His redeemed, who must at last come to Zion, with songs and everlasting joy upon their heads.

The first Joshua foreshadows the all-conquering work of Christ, in His judgment upon the wicked, and the salvation of the tribes of His people; bringing them in, at the last, to their promised reign. The second Joshua was a high priest of Israel. He came right at the close of their Old Testament history, and is mentioned by Haggai and Zechariah, the two prophets who, after the captivity and exile in Babylon, returned with the people, back to their own land, and laboured in prophecy and preaching for the rebuilding of the Temple. Joshua was the son of Josedech the high priest of Israel who came back from exile, and had no temple in which to minister, until these two prophets together exhorted the people, and got the work under way.

Finally the temple was raised and consecrated from the ruins of that which had originally been built by King Solomon, and this was a token of the heavenly temple. Joshua the son of Josedech came in, and he is mentioned in Zechariah 3:1: He showed me Joshua the high priest standing before the angel of the Lord, and Satan standing at his right hand to resist him. What a remarkable picture! Here we have a glimpse of the heavenly Joshua, of whom Joshua the son of Josedech is a type. It is only, as with Joshua, the successor of Moses, a foreshadowing of Christ at work, in all His kingly supremacy and power, for the deliverance of His people. So this second Joshua, the high priest, foreshadows the work of our Lord and Saviour in the confrontation of the evil one, in the eradication of our sin, the passing away of our condemnation, the redemption of our souls.

"We have a great high priest, that is passed into the Heavens," says Paul in Hebrews 4:14: "Jesus the Son of God." The name Joshua (Zechariah 3:1) is mentioned in prophetic significance, alluding to the destruction and rebuke of the evil one who seeks to thwart and stand in the way of Christ's work and the salvation of His people. The Lord points to him from the throne, and says (Zechariah 3:2), The Lord rebuke thee, O Satan; even the Lord that hath chosen Jerusalem rebuke thee: is not this a brand plucked out of the fire? Let us rejoice and say with the hymn writer, "A brand from the burning, he rescued me."

Zechariah goes on to say (3:3-4), Now Joshua was clothed with filthy garments, and stood before the angel. And he answered and spake unto those that stood before him, saying, 'Take away the filthy garments from him.' And unto him he said, 'Behold, I have caused thine iniquity to pass from thee, and I will clothe thee with change of raiment'. This is the change of the priesthood. Here is the Old Testament, with its priesthood composed of sinful men, who offered sacrifice for their own sins and for the sins of the people. Therefore Joshua the son of Josedech was clothed prophetically, in the vision of the prophet with filthy garments, because his ministrations in the temple could not take away sin. The blood of bulls and goats, and an earthly priesthood, were insufficient to take away the filthy garments, so a change of raiment was necessary. In that change of raiment we see the passing of the old order, and the coming in of the new. And the high priest reappeared in the beautiful and glorious garments of heaven; and as the prophet Zechariah, in his vision, sees Christ, the true Joshua, coming in for the purging and deliverance of His people, he is moved to praise in his soul, and in prophetic ecstasy he cries out (3:5), on your behalf and mine, Let them set a fair mitre upon his head. So they set the crown of glory upon the head of our Joshua, and clothed Him with garments of glory, and the angel of the Lord protested (3:7-9), Thus saith the Lord of hosts, 'Hear now, O Joshua the high priest, thou, and thy fellows that sit before thee: for they are men wondered at: for, behold, I will bring forth my servant, the BRANCH (that is, the Branch of David's line). For behold the stone that I have laid before Joshua; upon one stone shall be seven eyes: behold I will engrave the graving thereof,' saith the Lord of hosts, 'and I will remove the iniquity of that land in one day'.

So our great Joshua mounted the throne which was the cross, and in one day removed our iniquities. Now you know the meaning of the word in Matthew 1:21 which came directly from God through the angel: Thou shalt call his name JESUS, for he shall save his people from their sins. That is to say that He will remove the iniquity of His people, in one day, in one great act upon the cross. Here we go back to the Hebrew from the Greek "Jesus", to find out the meaning of the name Jesus; and we find its true meaning in the Hebrew 'Joshua', although He was never called by that name. The significance of it is that the name Joshua means more than simply "a saviour". Joshua means "Jehovah, my Saviour", and so our heavenly Joshua, the high priest, is none other than the Lord God Almighty. And again we see how beautifully Matthew brings it out (1:23) : "They shall call his name Emmanuel, which being interpreted is, 'God with us'." So our Saviour, the Lord Jesus, is none other than the Lord of Glory. He is not just "Jesus a Saviour", but he is "Joshua Jesus": "Jehovah is our Saviour"; "Jehovah is our deliverer"; one through whom our iniquities are taken away in one day.

But why "Joshua the son of Josedech the high priest"? The name Josedech has affinity to another familiar name, the name "Melchizedek". The last two syllables of Josedech and Melchizedek are the Hebrew word for righteousness, and Josedech means "Jehovah is my righteousness". He is our great Melchizedek; He is the King of righteousness. As Jeremiah tells us (23:6), "This is his name whereby he shall be called,

THE LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS."

You see how the inspired Matthew has brought everything together, to convince us and satisfy us that all prophecy is concentrated upon that one person, our glorious Saviour Jesus, who received His name to indicate that He is God and man, that He is "God with us", that He is "The Lord our righteousness", that He is Jehovah our salvation and redeemer. It is all wrapped up as we explore the meaning of that name, so familiar at Christmas, so seldom explained, so lightly passed over, so hard for many people to understand. But there is great depth in His name which can only be understood as the converging light of Old Testament scripture focuses upon the One who is the captain of our salvation, like Joshua the son of Nun. He is the Lord our righteousness who expunges our sins in one day, and takes away our iniquities. Joshua the son of Josedech focuses upon our Saviour the Lord Jesus Christ. And in the simplicity of that glorious name, we worship Him and believe in Him. Some will say in their hearts, "I never saw it quite like this before. Is it true that those who trust in Him have their iniquities taken away? In one day, just like that?" Whether you are old or young, male or female, whoever you are, all have equal dealings with the Saviour. Yes it is true!

We come of a sinful race and there is nothing we can say to justify ourselves before Him; but He who removed iniquities in that one great day of His crucifixion is our high priest who will remove our sins by His intercession. He is the great captain of our salvation, and at the last, when His work is ended, He will lead us in to that promised Canaan, that heavenly country, where we shall be for ever and for ever. The Lamb in the midst of the throne will lead us to living fountains of water, and God shall wipe away all tears from our eyes.

Amen

Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/charles-alexander/the-incarnation-part-6-the-origins-of-messiah/>

Grow in Your Walk with Christ

Listen and read messages that will stir your heart for Christ and point you to deeper repentance and devotion.

- 50,000+ Sermons from speakers past and present
- 3,900+ Classic Christian Books freely readable online
- 1,200+ Bible Translations and Commentaries
- Over 450k forum posts — Join our vibrant online Christian forum

www.sermonindex.net

