



What's in a name?

Throughout my life I've had both my Christian name and my surname misspelt & mispronounced 10's of 1000's if not 100's of 1000's of times. These have been on formal & informal documents & personalized items of all sorts. I really did not, nor do not mind. However, names & titles in the Bible are important as they are descriptive. So, for example, the Old Testament (O.T.) has 3 primary names for God (**Elohim, Jehovah & Adonai**), but there are many other compound names, each informing us of or describing to us, some other aspect of God and His relationship with us, such as El-Shaddai The Almighty God or Jehovah Rapha the LORD that heals.

Matthew 16:16 records Peter's declaration to Jesus, "**You are the Messiah / Christ, the Son of the living God**". It was seen as controversial by the Jewish religious hierarchy because in this name & with this title came the acknowledgement that Jesus was God incarnate, the Anointed One promised from O.T. writings, who would save His people. Peter had listened to Jesus preaching & teaching, and witnessed Jesus' power over the forces of nature, demons, diseases & even death. Peter concluded rightly Jesus was the Christ.

These same Jewish leaders manufactured false charges to put Jesus on trial & when He was handed over to be crucified, they complained to Pilate (John 19:19ff) because he had written a notice on the Cross that said, "**King of the Jews**". In 2012 an episode of an American family game show contestants were asked to guess how 100 people responded to the survey question, "When someone mentions 'the King', to whom might they be referring?" The top four answers were: (1) 81 people said, "*Elvis Presley.*" (2) 7 people said, "*God or Jesus.*" (3) 3 people said, "*Martin Luther King, Jr.*" (4) 2 people said, "*Burger King.*" The reality is that few people today recognize the power & authority of Jesus Christ. **As Christians we are rooted in Christ**, & in all He is. Keeping this simple I'm quoting here from Nicky Gumbel's "Bible in One Year", that focuses on just 7 names or title of Jesus. I have followed Gumbel's pattern & included a short prayer for us all after each name. I pray that these help us keep Jesus at the centre of our lives and remind us how we are rooted in Christ.

1/7 Jesus is the Wisdom of God

Many people today have no idea how to live, struggling in many areas of their lives. We all need wisdom in order to live well. Paul in 1 Corinthians 1:24 writes, "**Christ... the wisdom of God**". The 'wisdom of God' is one of Jesus' titles. Wisdom in the book of Proverbs is personified & female ('Lady Wisdom'; 'Madam Insight', Proverbs 8:1, MSG). She is contrasted with an adulterous woman who lurks at street corners when darkness falls & who speaks in secretive, seductive whispers (Prov.7:6ff). Wisdom openly competes against her 'right in the

city square where the traffic is thickest' (Prov. 8:2, MSG) & offers herself as a counter attraction – a pure bride rather than a fatal seductress. This shows us that wisdom is not just about knowledge, but that to be wise is to live well. The first step in living well is to set the right goals & ambitions. Seek wisdom, rather than the sensual pleasures represented by the adulteress. Wisdom is highly desirable & is better than silver, gold or jewels: 'Choose my instruction instead of silver, knowledge rather than choice gold, for wisdom is more precious than rubies, & nothing you desire can compare with her' (vv.10–11). If you want true wisdom, it starts with a relationship with Jesus Christ. That relationship is far more valuable than anything the world can offer and will have an effect on the way you live out your life.

Lord Jesus, thank you that true wisdom is found in a relationship with you. You are more precious than rubies & nothing I desire can compare with knowing you. Help me today to act wisely & to speak words of wisdom that bring blessing to others.

2/7 Jesus is the Bridegroom

The title of the 'bridegroom' is used in O.T. to refer to God himself, 'as a *bridegroom* rejoices over his bride, so will *your God* rejoice over you' (Isaiah 62:5). Jesus, in the use of this image (Luke 5:34), puts himself in the place of God. It was, for him, a perfectly natural substitution. The image of Jesus as the bridegroom & us as the bride is one of greatest possible intimacy (see Ephesians 5:23). It is also an image which points forward to the ultimate consummation

of our relationship with Jesus when He returns. We are called to prepare ourselves with the same care & love as a bride on her wedding day, particularly focusing on 'righteous' living (see Revelation 19:6–9).

Lord, thank you that you call me to an intimate relationship with you & rejoice over me as a bridegroom rejoices over his bride. I want to respond with my love & true worship.

3/7 Jesus is the Son of Man

This was Jesus' favourite way of referring to himself. Daniel 7:13 speaks of 'one like a son of man'. This is a messianic title that combines authority & power with humility & suffering. We are reminded both of Jesus' love for us & His authority over us. Some focus on the first without paying enough attention to the second. Submit to Jesus' authority, obeying his teaching & following where He leads you.

Lord, thank you that you are the Son of Man who suffered for me.

4/7 Jesus is Lord

Jesus reinterprets the O.T. when the Pharisees ask, 'Why are you doing what is unlawful on the Sabbath?', His reply in Luke 6:2 shows that the Pharisees' understanding of the Sabbath was far too narrow. Jesus heals a man on the Sabbath & asks, 'Which is lawful on the Sabbath: to do good or to do evil, to save life or to destroy it?' (v.9). In other words, Jesus looks behind the *letter* of the law to the *spirit* of the law & shows that as 'Lord of the Sabbath' (v.5). Jesus is radical in his reinterpretation of the O.T. & we need to read the O.T. through this lens.

Thank you, Lord, that you are the key that unlocks our understanding of the O.T.

5/7 Jesus is our Mediator

Passages such as Numbers 19ff about the blood of goats & bulls & the 'ashes of the heifer' foreshadow Jesus' death in our place on the cross. Hebrews 9:14-15a draws attention to these sacrifices, but then explains: 'How much more, then, will the



blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself unblemished to God, cleanse our consciences from acts that lead to death, so that we may serve the living God! For this reason, Christ is *the mediator*'.

Thank you, Lord, that there is 'one God & one Mediator between God & human beings, Jesus Christ... who gave Himself as a ransom for all' (1 Timothy 2:5–6).

6/7 Jesus is our Rock

In Numbers 20 God tells Moses to bring water out of the rock. Moses strikes the rock twice & water gushes out for everyone to drink. V.11 records that 'Water came out *abundantly*'. Paul also tells us how to interpret the water coming out of the rock. He says, 'They... drank the same spiritual drink; for they drank from the spiritual rock that accompanied them, & that *rock was Christ*' (1 Corinthians 10:3–4). He is the one who quenches our thirst. Material things alone do not satisfy. God is so generous to us. Water did not come out in a trickle – it came out *abundantly*. Jesus came to give you *abundant* life (John 10:10). He promises to satisfy your spiritual thirst with 'rivers of living water' (John 7:37–38).

Jesus my Rock, thank you that you satisfy my spiritual thirst. May I with the Holy Spirit in me, bring the water of life to others.

7/7 Jesus is our Great High Priest

Jesus is the 'great high priest' (Hebrews 4:14) who lives for ever to intercede for us, which contrasts with the Levitical priests like Aaron whose 'death prevented them from continuing in office' (Numbers 20). Jesus 'has a permanent priesthood & is therefore able to save completely those who come to God through him, because He *always lives* to intercede for them' (Hebrews 7:23ff). This reminds us of the certainty that we can have in our faith. We do not have to worry about whether we will be 'good enough'. We can be totally confident in the salvation that we have in Jesus.

Thank you, Jesus my Great High Priest, who lives for ever, that you are able to save me completely. Thank you that you rose from the dead & live to intercede for me. Thank you that you are interceding for me right now. AMEN