



Names of Jesus

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Lord

This is the first session in our series looking at the names of Jesus. We'll be focusing on one of the most common names we used to refer to Jesus – *Lord*.

The word *Lord* might seem simply like a title of respect for someone in authority. But, when we look further into the usage of the word in the Old Testament, we see a very bold claim regarding the identity of Jesus.

In the Old Testament, when we see the word LORD (written in all capital letters), this represents the personal name of God. This name, Yahweh, was considered so holy that the Israelites would not even pronounce it. Instead, they would use the word *Adonai*, meaning 'Lord'.

And he passed in front of Moses, proclaiming, "The LORD, the LORD, the compassionate and gracious God, slow to anger, abounding in love and faithfulness, maintaining love to thousands, and forgiving wickedness, rebellion and sin. Yet he does not leave the guilty unpunished; he punishes the children and their children for the sin of the parents to the third and fourth generation."

- Exodus 34:5-6

The personal name of God is intrinsically connected to his character. His covenant faithfulness, his compassion, his justice in punishing evil and his mercy to forgive those who seek him.

God is also referred to as *Adonai* in other parts of the Old Testament, describing him as Lord (without all capital letters.) Sometimes, this term is used in conjunction with LORD, giving a fuller picture of who God is. We see this, for example, in Psalm 8.

O LORD (Yahweh), our Lord (Adonai), how majestic is your name in all the earth!
- Psalm 8:1

The title represents his sovereign authority and his glorious majesty. He alone rules over creation, he sustains each breath of life and orders the steps of each creature. He stands far above all other 'gods' and reigns from his throne in indescribable glory.

How does this fit in with Jesus?

When Jesus is referred to as Lord in the New Testament, the Greek word used is *kurios*. This word can indeed be used as a term of respect towards someone in authority. However, its use in the New Testament often hints at something far greater.

Thomas said to him, "My Lord and my God!"
- John 20:28

That if you confess with your mouth, "Jesus is Lord," and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead you will be saved.
- Romans 10:9

The word *kurios* appears in the Septuagint (the Greek translation of the Old Testament) and is used to translate the Hebrew *Adonai*.

So, Jesus being called Lord identifies him as the same God of the Old Testament. It connects him with all the authority and majesty of God. The covenant faithfulness and mercy of the LORD. Every attribute we see of God in the Old Testament also belongs to Jesus!

What does this mean for us?

Calling Jesus Lord means he has authority over our lives. He has the right to determine the way we live, what we value and how we think of ourselves in relation to him. He is not only our Saviour, he is also our Lord. The way we live now, in response to his salvation, is of great importance. We are equipped to live with Jesus as Lord by studying the Word, as we are empowered by the Holy Spirit.

Son of Man

We continue our look at the Names of Jesus with *Son of Man*. This is an incredible title that connects both to Jesus' humble humanity and his majestic divinity.

In the Old Testament, the phrase 'son of man' was commonly used to refer to human beings in general. Referring to Jesus as the Son of Man is a reminder of his humanity. He was fully man, with all the same human characteristics as us except for sin. He shared in our weakness and human needs, in our emotions, our struggles and joys.

Yet, there is one use of Son of Man in the Old Testament that paints a radically different picture. In Daniel 7, Daniel has a heavenly vision which starts with the Ancient of Days – that is, God. This passage uses terms of imposing glory to describe God, clothing and hair as white as snow, a throne of flaming fire and thousands upon thousands serving him.

Then, the vision turns to 'one like a son of man' who approaches the Ancient of Days. This son of man is described as coming with the clouds of heaven – bringing to mind the divine glory we saw with the Ancient of Days. In Psalm 104:3, God is the one who makes the clouds his chariot.

How does God respond to the son of man approaching his throne? He gives him all glory and authority, an everlasting kingdom ruling over people of all nations and languages. This son of man is not merely a human being, but is connected to something far greater. So, in light of this, the name 'Son of Man' doesn't just emphasize Jesus' humanity. It also ascribes to him divine majesty, given to him by God himself.

This title is found 80 times in the gospels. In fact, Jesus referred to himself as Son of Man more than he did Son of God. The concept was, then, was an integral part of Jesus' understanding of his own identity.

For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.

- Mark 10:45

But I want you to know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins." So he said to the paralyzed man, "I tell you, get up, take your mat and go home."

- Luke 5:24

How does Jesus reflect the Son of Man in his earthly ministry?

In the same way that the Son of Man in Daniel 7 was given dominion and authority by God, Jesus demonstrates divine authority throughout his ministry. He exercises authority over the natural world, as he commands the wind and the waves. Authority to heal and forgive sins, shown when he made the paralytic man walk. Authority over the powers of evil, in the casting out of many demons.

The ultimate demonstration of Jesus' majestic authority is seen in his death and resurrection. He sacrificed his life for our salvation and showed his authority over death as he was raised to life again. This is what makes him worthy of all glory and honour.

Although we see Jesus' dominion now, we are still waiting for the greatest revelation of the Son of Man. We hope in the day when Jesus will return, and the imagery used in the New Testament for this borrows heavily from Daniel 7.

“You have said so,” Jesus replied. “But I say to all of you: From now on you will see the Son of Man sitting at the right hand of the Mighty One and coming on the clouds of heaven.”

- Matthew 26:64

“Look, he is coming with the clouds,”

*and “every eye will see him,
even those who pierced him”;*

and all peoples on earth “will mourn because of him.”

So shall it be! Amen.

- Revelation 1:7

The ultimate fulfilment of the Son of Man

In his second coming, Jesus is described as coming on the clouds of heaven, just as the Son of Man was in Daniel 7. He will come in power, with God-given authority to judge the world. He will have ultimate victory over his enemies of sin, evil and death. Every knee will bow before him. More than that, people from every nation and language will serve and worship him –

a people chosen and redeemed for himself. He will reign over his people in an eternal kingdom, that will never fade or pass away.

Why is this important?

The title of Son of Man reminds us that Jesus is both fully human and fully divine. He became human like us, able to understand our weakness and the realities of messy, human life. He was humble and unassuming in his appearance. Yet, he also rightfully possesses all the glory and authority of God. He has defeated our greatest enemies. Although we still live with the reality of sin, evil and death, their power has been limited and we know that one day they will be fully destroyed. We can look forward in hope to that day when the Son of Man will come again on the clouds of heaven to dwell with us as our perfect king.

Emmanuel

Over the last few weeks, we've been looking at the names of Jesus, particularly how they connect back to the Old Testament and what they reveal about Jesus' character and identity. Today, we're continuing with the name *Emmanuel*.

When the angel appeared to Joseph in Matthew I, he told him the baby Mary was carrying was from God and his name would be 'Emmanuel'. This was not his personal name in the same way that Jesus was. Rather, this title made a powerful declaration about the reality of his ministry. The name Emmanuel means 'God with us'. Through Jesus, the fullness of God walked among people in real flesh and blood. God the Son sat and talked with his disciples, he shared meals with the outcasts of society.

An Old Testament understanding

Let's think about how the people of the Old Testament understood the concept of 'God with us'. God's heart has always been to dwell with his people. However, the distance between us and God – both because of the sinful nature and human weakness – means this dwelling occurred in a limited, regulated measure.

At first, this took the form of the tabernacle, a tent that travelled with the Israelites through the wilderness and was later established in Jerusalem. In this tabernacle, the priests made sacrifices for sin, allowing the people to

be in fellowship with God. It was also the place where God's glory dwelt on earth. After the tabernacle was constructed, we have this description:

Then the cloud covered the tent of meeting, and the glory of the Lord filled the tabernacle. Moses could not enter the tent of meeting because the cloud had settled on it, and the glory of the Lord filled the tabernacle.

- Exodus 40:34-35

In the reign of King Solomon, the tabernacle was replaced by the temple – a lavishly ornate building with the same purpose of covering sin and containing God's glory. These physical buildings, though, were only temporary dwelling places. They were symbolic, not really containing the fullness of God and his glory. They were an imperfect way for people to have fellowship with God, always pointing towards the perfect that was still to come.

In John I, we read about Jesus coming into the world. The language used is very significant as we consider God's dwelling place in the Old Testament.

The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the one and only Son, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth.

- John 1:14

The Greek word for 'made his dwelling' can also be translated as 'tabernacled'. When he came to earth, Jesus fulfilled the role of the tabernacle and the temple. He was the way that people could have fellowship with God. He represented God's glory to the world. But,

unlike the Old Testament tabernacle, this glory was not merely symbolic. In Jesus, all of God's glory was present in a very real and tangible way. He was God physically with us!

Immanuel in Isaiah

Jesus being called Emmanuel also connects back to a passage in Isaiah 7. During the reign of King Ahaz of Judah, God's people were under the threat of foreign invasion. It was in this context that Isaiah spoke a message of hope, encouraging them not to fear and reminding them of God's trustworthiness.

Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign: The virgin will conceive and give birth to a son, and will call him Immanuel.
- Isaiah 7:14

God promised to send someone to bring deliverance and his presence to the people. The immediate fulfilment of this promise could be found in Ahaz's son Hezekiah. During his reign, he did right in the eyes of God, returning Judah to true worship. He fought against the threat of the Assyrians even as the northern tribes were taken away. However, Hezekiah did not fulfil this promise completely. After him, the kings of Judah continued to do evil. Even though he saved Judah from their enemies, they would eventually be invaded by Babylon and taken into exile. The fulfilment of this promise was waiting, as with all those Old Testament promises, for someone greater – Jesus.

What does this mean for us?

It's through Jesus that God's promise of Emmanuel is ultimately fulfilled. He is the one born of a virgin who brought God's presence to the people. He was the full glory of God walking among us, sharing in our weakness and our joys. And now that he has ascended to heaven, Jesus is still 'God with us' through the indwelling presence of the Holy Spirit.

Lamb of God

In this session, we're continuing our series looking at the Names of Jesus, with the name *Lamb of God*. This one might seem strange at first glance, but when you look at the Old Testament it makes a very powerful statement about who Jesus is and what he does for us.

In John I, at the beginning of Jesus' ministry, John the Baptist saw him and said:

"Here is the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world."
- John 1:29

When John called him the Lamb of God, he was connecting into a rich Old Testament background.

A perfect sacrifice provided by God

The imagery of a sacrificial animal is seen in the story of Abraham. God commanded Abraham to take Isaac, the son given to him as the fulfilment of the promise, and offer him as a sacrifice. However, God provided a ram for Abraham to sacrifice instead. Here we have an echo of Jesus – a substitutionary sacrifice provided by God himself.

One of the biggest connections to the Lamb of God imagery is found in the Passover. On the night God brought the final judgement on Egypt, the Israelites were instructed to paint the blood of a lamb on their doorframe, in a sign of trust towards God – when God saw this, he would spare them. The blood of a sacrificial lamb turning away judgement. According to God's instruction, the lamb needed to be free of any blemish or defect. A perfect sacrifice.

This side of the cross, we can see the Passover clearly pointing towards Jesus. He is our perfect Lamb, free from the blemish and defect of sin, completely spotless and righteous. When we put our faith in his blood shed for us on the cross, God overlooks our sins and spares us from the judgement that is rightfully ours.

The sacrificial system

After being delivered from slavery, the Israelites were given the Law of Moses – a way that they could live as God's people. A big part of this Law was the sacrificial system. This allowed a sinful people to be in fellowship with their holy God. The daily and yearly rhythm of Israelite life was characterised by the shedding of blood, these animal sacrifices covering their sins and taking the death that they rightfully deserved.

The Law provided very detailed instructions on how these sacrifices were to take place. As with the Passover, sacrificial animals had to be pure, without blemish or defect. However, the sacrifices needed to be offered continually. The high priest would offer a sacrifice for the sins of the people once a year on the Day of Atonement. Lambs were sacrificed daily as an offering to the Lord. These sacrifices, although an act of obedience

towards God, did not ultimately deal with the problem of sin. They were merely foreshadowing a greater substitutionary, atoning sacrifice.

Isaiah 53 speaks of a Servant of the Lord, suffering for the sake of his people. Here again, we see the image of a lamb – weak, vulnerable and defenseless.

*He was oppressed and afflicted,
yet he did not open his mouth;
he was led like a lamb to the slaughter,
and as a sheep before its shearers is silent,
so he did not open his mouth.*

- Isaiah 53:7

On the cross, Jesus fulfilled his role as the Lamb of God. He offered up his life as a sacrifice for our sins, taking the punishment that we deserved. He was the lamb led to the slaughter, oppressed and afflicted for our sake. He achieved what the Old Testament sacrifices could not – he covered our sins once and for all.

Interestingly, Revelation 5 gives us a picture of Jesus in his post-resurrection state, worthy of all glory and honour (we looked at this verse in our Son of Man post). Even in this highly exalted position, Jesus is still referred to as the Lamb.

*In a loud voice they were saying:
“Worthy is the Lamb, who was slain,
to receive power and wealth and wisdom and strength*

and honor and glory and praise!”

- Revelation 5:12

Far from making him weak and powerless, his role as the sacrificial Lamb is tied eternally to his majesty, his worthiness and his immeasurable glory.

What does this mean for us?

Through faith in Jesus' work on the cross, we can have complete assurance that our sins are forgiven. We can have confidence to enter God's presence. We do not have to work for our salvation or make further offerings to keep God's blessing upon us. God himself has provided our sacrifice. All we need to do is have faith in his blood shed for us.

Messiah

We've come to the final week in our series on the Names of Jesus. This time, we're looking at the name *Messiah* – a name grounded in the Davidic covenant and God's promise of deliverance.

The name Messiah means 'anointed one'. In Greek, this word is translated as 'Christ'. So, when we call Jesus Christ, we are declaring him to be the special anointed one of God.

An Old Testament hope

This is concept that has a rich history in the Old Testament. Traditionally, kings of Israel were anointed with oil at the beginning of their reign, in order to consecrate them for their special role. A similar thing occurred with the Old Testament priests. These were people chosen by God for a special task; the anointing with oil symbolised this setting apart.

The concept of one specific chosen Messiah was hinted at right from the beginning. After Adam and Eve sinned, God cursed the snake and by doing so, included the first glimmer of Messianic deliverance.

*And I will put enmity
between you and the woman,
and between your offspring and hers;*

*he will crush your head,
and you will strike his heel.*
- Genesis 3:15

Someone descended from the line of Eve, who would come and defeat the powers of evil once and for all. Throughout the Old Testament, we gradually gain more insight into who this chosen Messiah would be. In Genesis 49, for example, Jacob prophesies about a ruler who would come from the line of Judah – the tribe that Jesus came from.

The pivotal moment of Messianic prophecy comes in 2 Samuel 7, with a promise made to King David. David had expressed a desire to build a temple for God but in response, God switches it around. God will be the one to build a house for David. In this context, ‘house’ doesn’t mean a physical structure but a dynasty, a family legacy.

The Lord declares to you that the Lord himself will establish a house for you: When your days are over and you rest with your ancestors, I will raise up your offspring to succeed you, your own flesh and blood, and I will establish his kingdom. He is the one who will build a house for my Name, and I will establish the throne of his kingdom forever.
- 2 Samuel 7:11-13

An eternal ruler descended from David’s line. Reigning over God’s people with justice, bringing deliverance from their enemies. Bringing God’s kingdom to the world.

As Israel’s history continued, prophecy upon prophecy added detail to

who this chosen person would be. Micah 5:2 says that he would be from Bethlehem.

*But you, Bethlehem Ephrathah,
though you are small among the clans of Judah,
out of you will come for me
one who will be ruler over Israel,
whose origins are from of old,
from ancient times.
- Micah 5:2*

Isaiah 7:14 says that he would be born of a virgin. Zechariah 9 speaks of the Messiah riding into Jerusalem on a donkey.

The hope of the Messiah became such a central point of Israel's identity. Especially in light of the exile and being ruled over by subsequent foreign powers, the Messiah was anticipated as a mighty deliverer, someone who would free them from their oppressors and establish God's perfect kingdom. Yet, when Jesus arrived on the scene, he painted a very different picture of what God's chosen Messiah would look like.

A different Messiah

Jesus didn't set himself up as a military or political leader, seeking to overthrow Roman rule and lead his people to freedom. Instead, he healed the sick, cast out demons and taught people about the kingdom of God. Right from the start, the deliverance that Jesus would bring was different. This Messiah had been chosen by God to deliver the people from bondage to their greatest enemies – sin, death and the evil one.

This deliverance was realised in Jesus' crucifixion and his resurrection. By winning victory over our spiritual enemies, Jesus now reigns as God's eternal king, fulfilling the promise made to King David.

What does this mean for us?

When we acknowledge Jesus as Messiah, we can know true freedom. Free from the condemnation of sin, from the accusations of the enemy, from the sting of death. Jesus is our deliverer and our eternal king, who will rule over us with justice and mercy. While we enjoy the blessings of being in his kingdom now, we can look forward to the day when he will return and establish fully his perfect rule on earth.

About the author

Bella Easterbrook lives in Sydney, Australia with her husband Daniel and their three little boys.

She first discovered her passion for theology and Biblical studies in the Christian group at uni. She then went on to study a Bachelor of Theology, where this passion blossomed further.

Bella loves strong cups of tea, walking through gardens and finding Jesus on the pages of the Old Testament. Her blog Over the Teacups encourages people to grow in their knowledge and love for God through his Word.

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