

What's in a Name?

Scripture Reading — Matthew 1:18-25

She will give birth to a son, and you are to give him the name Jesus, because he will save his people from their sins. — Matthew 1:21

Before each of our four children was born, my wife and I spent some time thinking about what we would like to name them. Sometimes we looked through books of names, hoping one would grab our attention. Other times we heard a name that we liked. We also thought about relatives' names. Each time we found a name, we would rehearse it with our last name to make sure it sounded good.

Joseph and Mary didn't choose Jesus' name. It was given to them by an angel of God. The angel said, "Give him the name Jesus, because he will save his people from their sins." The name Jesus means "Savior." It reflects the mission Jesus came to accomplish. There was no doubt, from the very beginning of his life, what he would do. The Father sent Jesus to "save his people from their sins." This was his life's goal. Everything in his life was about preparing for and completing that task. Suffering, rejection, and the cross were always before him.

I wonder if Joseph and Mary ever thought about naming Jesus something else. Maybe they did, but they followed the angel's instructions: they named him Jesus. And just as his name describes, Jesus went on to become the Savior. There's no other name like Jesus.

Prayer

Thank you, Jesus, for saving us from our sins. In your name we pray. Amen.

Written by Tom Groelsema — <https://today.reframemedia.com/authors/tom-groelsema>

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