**VOLUME 2; CHAPTER 06 - THE PREACHING OF G. CAMPBELL MORGAN**

**THE NAME JESUS by G. CAMPBELL MORGAN**

*Thou shalt call His name Jesus; for it is He that shall save His people from their sins.*

*Matthew 1:21*

EVEN TODAY THE NAMING OF A NEW-BORN CHILD IS AN EVENT full of interest. The principles of choice are varied in these complex and somewhat superficial days. Children are given names because the names have been borne by their fathers before them. Sometimes names are still given to children as expressing a hope on the part of the parents, but as a rule they are simply given on the basis of preference.

The Hebrews meant far more by their names than we do. That will be discovered as the Old Testament history is read. They were often wrong in their naming of the children. The very first name, Cain, was a wrong name. Eve called her first-born Cain - Acquired. She was doomed to disappointment. She had hoped that the promised seed had already come. And the second name was also a mistake. She called her next boy Abel - Vanity. There was far more to satisfy the mother's heart in the coming years in Abel, even though he suffered death, than in Cain. Sometimes the names were tragic names. Hosea, that prophet of the wounded spirit and the broken heart, as children were born into his home named them, and in their naming is seen the terrible conditions of the chosen people. He called the first Jezreel, judgment threatened! He called the second Lo-ruham mah, mercy not obtained! He called the third Lo-ammi, not My people!

When Mary's Child was born, Joseph named Him Jesus. And this was by special instruction conveyed to him by the angel. That angel was the messenger of heaven's thought, and of God's will. The Babe was registered Jesus in heaven. And that name, given by Joseph in obedience to the instruction of the angel who had received his command in heaven's own high court, was a name which expressed heaven's confidence in the Child now born. Earth's salvation will come as earth shares heaven's faith in Jesus; and the giving of the name at the first was expressive of this confidence of God in the new-born Child.

This story of the giving of the name is one of supreme interest. Do not be angry with me for bringing to you a text you have known from childhood, but let us come back to this name, which every child here who has begun to read at all, can spell, and try to understand some of the things signified by the giving of this name. A few moments first, then, with the name given; and, second, a consideration of the reason for giving this name to this Child.

I would have you, first of all, remember the humanness of this name. It was a very common Hebrew name. Doubtless many a boy living in Judea in the days when the Babe was born was called Jesus. And doubtless it had been for long years, for centuries, a popular name in Jewish families; for of course you remember that Jesus is but the Greek form of the Hebrew name "Joshua." There were many boys called Joshua, and in the Greek dialect obtaining at the moment, many boys doubtless bore this name of Jesus. There is nothing startling in the name. When the neighbours heard that Mary had called the new-born Boy Jesus, they did not stop to ask what she meant. Many another Jesus was running about in Nazareth and Judea, and all through the countryside it was one of the most common names, almost as common as John is today.

Thus God took hold of a name perfectly familiar, which set the new-born Child among the children of men, rather than separated Him from them. He took hold of a name that men were using everywhere, "Thou shalt call His name Jesus," the name that the boy next door has, the name that men have been calling their boys by for centuries. "Thou shalt call His name Jesus."

But how came it that this name was so familiar? What were the associations of the name in the Old Testament history? It was a name associated with two men pre-eminently - the one who first received it, a leader; and, then, another who made it conspicuous, a priest.

The first man who bore the name was the great soldier who succeeded to the leadership of the people after the passing of Moses, the man to whom there was committed the stern, hard, fierce fight that was necessary to establish the people in the land. This man was born in Egypt, in slavery, lived there about forty years, and then followed Moses as he led the people out of Egypt; then spent the next forty years in the wilderness, passing through all its experiences. Finally, he led the people with the sword and terrific conflict into possession of the land. That is the man who first received this name. So far as the Bible is concerned, and in all probability so far as Jewish history is concerned, the name had never been known before. It was made for him by Moses. His name was originally Hosea or Hoshea: but Moses changed it and called him Joshua.

The next man who bore the name conspicuously was a priest in the days of restoration under Haggai and Zechariah.

Now this Child is born, and heaven, taking a name familiar in the homes of Judea, a name conspicuous in Hebrew history because of its connection with the soldier leader and the restoring priest, commands, "Thou shalt call His name Jesus; for it is He that shall save His people from their sins."

Let us examine the matter more closely. We have seen that the name was common among Hebrew boys. We have seen that the name was thus popular because of the historic association. Now, what does the name mean?

In the story to which I have already made reference, in Numbers 13, it is told how men were sent to spy out the land: princes of the tribes. Among them was the prince of the tribe of Ephraim, Hoshea, which name means salvation, or deliverance. In the course of that story in Numbers we are told, as I think parenthetically, that Moses changed his name from Hoshea to Joshua, and the reason for it will be found presently when the spies returned. You know the story well, how the majority report was against going up to Canaan; but the minority report - and it is a very interesting thing to notice in human history how minority reports are almost always right - the minority report was, We can possess the land. Joshua was the spokesman, and what did he say? He declared that Jehovah was able to bring His people into possession in spite of all the difficulties. I think it was because of that word, and because of that fact and of that confidence that Moses with insight and foresight, seeing what this man meant to the nation, changed his name. It was a good name before: Hoshea: salvation. Yes, but this man was not depending on his own right arm. He had no dream in his heart that he could bring salvation to his people. He declared that it must be the work of Jehovah; and, consequently, Moses weaving the two names together, Jehovah and Hoshea, called him Joshua, for Joshua is the combination of the two words, Jehovah and Yawshah, which is Hoshea, and which as we have said means salvation. The name Joshua signifies Jehovah saves, or Jehovah will save, or Jehovah's salvation. Jehovah and salvation are thus woven into one name. It was high honour conferred on the new leader to bear such a name as that, and a wonderful revelation of the insight of the man who gave it to him. The original name, Hoshea, salvation, is a fine one, but this man knew that he could not lead the people in, even though his report be a true one; but he also knew that God could, and Moses said, Your name is changed, and into it is brought the name of the God Who can save. So the name was made. And Joshua led them in, but he never gave them rest.

The high priest of a later day, who had the name, came very near fulfilment of some of its significance as he bore the iniquity of the people, the filthy garments signifying this fact. Presently he was crowned. It was all prophetic and symbolic, but he failed, as the subsequent history of the people proves. The centuries have gone, and the high and noble thinking of the name has never been realized in actual life. There is a hush in the outer court of the inn, and a little Child has come into the world, and the world is quite careless, but heaven is not. Stars are shining, angels are singing, wise men are feeling the touch of the upper spaces, and are journeying toward the manger. Who is it? "Thou shalt call His name Joshua; for it is He that shall save His people from their sins."

God took hold of a common name of the boys playing about, and called His Son by that name. God took hold of the great historic name of the past, the name of the great leader and the name of the priest of the past, and gave it to His Son new born. Yes, but what is the deepest thing? Call Him Jehovah, Yawshah; Joshua, Jesus. Call Him by His own Father's name, Jehovah, and so indicate the truth about His nature. Call Him by the supreme passion of His Father's heart, salvation, and so indicate the meaning of His work in the world.

We pass it on from age to age in printed page, and from mouth to mouth in spoken word: Jesus! But in that name is wrapped up essential truth concerning Him. Jehovah, Yawshah. Call Him that. He is my Son. He is My Servant Who shares My nature. He comes to do My work. Now I understand Him when in the coming years I hear Him say, "I and My Father are One." Call Him Jesus, and I understand Him when I hear Him say, upon another occasion, "My Father worketh even until now, and I work." Call Him salvation, and link your two names together into the infinite music; whether it be Hebrew, Greek, or Anglo-Saxon, matters nothing. You cannot rob it of its music. Carry it into all languages and dialects, and in sweet tones it breaks upon the listening ear of humanity.

Jesus, the name high over all,

In hell, or earth, or sky,

Angels and men before it fall

And devils fear and fly.

That is the tone of His triumphant march to victory. But there is another tone.

Jesus, name of sweetness,

Jesus, sound of love;

Cheering exiles onward

To their home above.

Jesus, oh, the magic

Of the soft love sound,

How it thrills and trembles

To creation's bound.

This name has appealed to every generation, and to all classes of men because it is a great name. It is the name of the boy who plays in the street. It touches you. It is Jehovah, Yawshah. Call Him that, said the Father to the angel, and the Boy's name was registered in heaven, God's name linked with the great word that declares His mission in the world.

Second, the reason for giving this name. "Thou shalt call His name Jesus; for it is He that shall save His people from their sins." You notice that slight variation in translation, certainly a great gain. The real thought is that of a contrast. "Thou shalt call His name Jesus; for it is He that shall save His people." I repeat, the form of the sentence really suggests a contrast. A contrast with what? With all the aspiration of the past, which had never become achievement. With all the strong and strenuous attempt that had ended in defeat. Take the man who first bore the great name. Joshua is one of the greatest men upon the pages of the Old Testament in many ways. And yet in all full realization, he failed; and the writer of the letter to the Hebrews tells us, "For if Joshua had given them rest, he would not have spoken afterward of another day." So the great leader of the past failed. He led them in, he led them with great sternness and severity, and magnificent triumph against Jericho, and Ai, and on, but he certainly never gave them rest. And all the history of the coming years was the history of perpetual restlessness. Joshua never led them into rest. Well, call His name Joshua, for it is He that shall save His people from their sins.

And Joshua, the high priest in the days of the prophets Haggai and Zechariah, not much is said of him, but there he appears, the representative of religion, urging the people under Zerubbabel to their building, helping the office of the prophet with his priestly intercession. There he is seen in symbolic language, clothed with the filthy garments, representing defiled Israel. But he could not take away sin, and the filthy garments remained upon Israel, and Israel failed to fulfil the great function for which she had been created a nation, that of speaking the message of God; and Joshua the priest failed, as did Joshua the leader.

Very well, then, call His name Joshua, for He shall save His people from their sins. And so, brethren, that emphasis of contrast leads us to see that this name indicated, or the declaration associated with the name indicated, not merely a mission, but a method. The angel did not say to Joseph, "Thou shalt call His name Joshua," for He shall lead the people in. He did not say to Joseph, "Thou shalt call His name Joshua," for He shall bear away the filthy garments, and enable the people to bear their testimony. He might have said these things, but what He said was deeper. "He shall save His people from their sins." My brethren, this is a revelation of the assured success. Joshua failed to lead the people into rest, why? Because of the people's sin, with which he could not deal. Joshua the priest failed to realize in Israel God's purpose, that which should be his message to the nations, why? Because of his people's sin, which he could not carry. So that instead of dealing merely with the surface of things, or speaking of issues, the angel's message goes down to the depths and says, "Thou shalt call His name Joshua," for He will lead His people into rest, and to the fulfilment of their vocation by saving them from the sins which prevent rest, and which give the adversary power.

Call this new-born Child Jesus, "for He shall save His people" from these things and from the consequent ruin. If His people are saved from sins, they will find rest; if His people are saved from sins, they will fulfil their vocation, and be and do all that God means they shall be and do.

"Thou shalt call His name Jesus; for it is He that shall save His people from their sins." I pray you remember that the phrase, "His people," is significant at this point. It marks limits, and indicates limitlessness. What are the limits it marks? His people. No, brethren, I will begin with the other word. How does it indicate limitlessness? It does not say, He shall save the people of His own nation. It does not say, as has often been pointed out, He shall save God's people, but His own people. "His people." He is coming to make a position, to create a people to be a Kingdom, and to set up the Kingdom; and the people who are His He will save from their sins. There is your limit, but there is your limitlessness. How may a man become one of His people? Simply by believing on Him and crowning Him. It is a statement that overlaps the boundary line of Judaism. It is a statement that includes the wise men who come from afar to Him, as well as shepherds singing on Bethlehem's plains. This is the story of the first naming of the Child.

But as you take the story you will find this Child grows up, and He stands amongst multitudes of men, and He comes out of the border line of Judea, and touches Tyre and Sidon, and Phoenicia. He goes to Samaritans finally, and at the last commissions His disciples to go everywhere. Standing amongst men, He says, "Come unto Me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." "Him that cometh to Me I will in no wise cast out." It is a universal invitation that He utters. Will you come? Are you coming? I am addressing in imagination the whole nation, and from here and there they come, they crowd. Who are those that come? His people. What will He do? Save them from their sins. Unless you make yourself His by birth, He cannot save you from your sins. Unless you yield to Him, you cannot be His. It is the call of Christ which constitutes human opportunity. That opportunity taken, and men yielding to it, what then? Then they become His, and He saves such from their sins. So that He brings men into rest, who come to Him, and that Joshua could never do. So that He enables a man to fulfil the Divine vocation who comes to Him, and that the high priest, Joshua, could not do. But our Jesus does it by saving us from our sins.

Brothers, when this name was given to Joseph by the angel it was, so far as man was concerned, a prophecy. So far as God was concerned it was an affirmation of faith, of absolute assurance and certainty. Thou, Joseph, shalt call His name Jehovah - Salvation, for He shall save His people from their sins. So spake heaven; and as men heard it, it was a prophecy, it was an indication, it was a hope. There is a sense in which it is true that He did not receive that name finally until He went back into heaven, and Paul tells us all the gracious story when he writes, "Who, being in the form of God, counted it not a prize to be on an equality with God, but emptied Himself, taking the form of a servant, being made in the likeness of men; and being found in fashion as a man, He humbled Himself, becoming obedient even unto death, yea, the death of the Cross. Wherefore, also God highly exalted Him, and gave unto Him the name which is above every name." What name? "That in the name of Jesus every knee should bow."

The angel uttered it, heaven's confidence, a prophecy of hope to men; and the Babe bore it, and carried it through the simplicity of childhood, one Boy among the many who bore it in those Judean villages; and the Boy passed out into youth, and bore the same name, Joshua, Jesus, in purity, and in resistance to all evil. And He bore it on through the years of public ministry, and He bore it on the Cross, and never so universally as there. Who is this upon the Cross? The Babe Whose name is Jesus. But Who is He? Joshua, Jehovah, Salvation.

Can He do it? Can He take sins away, and bring rest? Can He take sins away, and enable me to fulfil my vocation? I do not know. He is dead. They have buried Him. I do not know. I am one of the disciples, I am afraid. I do not know. I hoped, but I am not sure. What is this the women say? He is risen? He has appeared first to them, and then to the eleven, and then to Peter all alone, and then to others, and to five hundred at once. He gathered them about Him on Olivet, the risen One, and He went up, bearing with Him the same sweet human name that boys bore at their play in Judea, bearing up the name the leader of the past bore, who failed to bring into rest, bore it up triumphant into heaven itself; and He received it there anew, no longer a prophecy for men, but an evangel!

And there at the centre of God's universe at this moment of human time is the Man Who bore the name, glorified, our Joshua, Hallelujah! He is able to lead us into rest. He is our High Priest, clothed no longer with the filthy garments, for He bore them away on the Cross; but with the mitre on His head, and many diadems upon His brow, Jesus, the enthroned One. May God help us to hear the evangel of the name, and to know assuredly that what the name prophesied He has perfectly accomplished.