

Introduction

In these notes, we want to explore what a name consists of or what it means. There about 50 uses of the phrase “call[ed] his name” or “called the name of” in the KJV. Many of them are associated with a reason indicating why the particular name was given. We will start out by looking at these descriptive terms, and then look at a few other thoughts associated with names.

1. A Description

- A. Descriptive of the events surrounding the person's birth.
 - Gen. 4:25, Seth, substitute or compensation
 - Gen. 16:11, Ishmael, God will hear
 - Gen. 21:3, 6, Isaac, laughter
 - Gen. 29:32, Reuben, behold a son. See also Gen. 29:33, 35; 30:8, 11, 13, 18, 20; 35:18
 - Gen. 41:51, Manasseh, causing to forget
 - Exodus 2:10, Moses, drawn from the water
 - Exodus 2:22, Gershom, foreigner
 - 1 Sam. 1:20, Samuel, heard of God
 - 2 Sam. 12:25, Jedidiah (Solomon), beloved of the Lord
 - 1 Chron. 4:9, Jabez, sorrow
- B. Descriptive of what the person will do in the future or what will happen in the future.
 - Gen. 5:29, Noah, rest or comfort
 - Gen. 30:24, Joseph, Jehovah will add
 - Matt. 1:21, 25, Luke 1:31, Jesus, Jehovah saves
- C. Descriptive of some quality of the person.
 - Gen. 25:25, Esau, hairy
 - Isa. 7:14, Mat. 1:23, Immanuel, God with us

For little David Allan Postiff, the descriptive use of the name was the primary reason we selected “David.” David means “beloved” – and he is our beloved son.

2. A Warning

Rom. 15:4 and 1 Cor. 10:6, 11 teach us that the Old Testament is profitable to warn us how to avoid evil. There are several sinful events in King David's life that are warnings to little David Postiff, as well as to the rest of us.

- A. **2 Sam. 6:1-9.** Here David attempts to return the ark of the covenant on a cart. It was supposed to be carried by poles on the shoulders of the Kohathites (Num. 4:4-15, 7:9). Uzzah died as a result of David's sin. The warning here is to **avoid doing a right thing in a wrong way.** Doing something in a wrong manner cancels all the benefits of the deed. Consider 1 Cor. 13:1-3.
- B. **2 Sam. 11:1-12:23.** David's adultery with Bathsheba and murder resulted in three major consequences: 1) The “sword” would never depart from David's house (12:10-11); 2) the enemies of the Lord were given occasion to blaspheme God (12:4); 3) the child produced by the union would die (12:14). These all came to pass (and in fact, with #2, still does today.) The warning here is to **avoid the lust** (2 Tim. 2:22). It is deadly.

C. **2 Sam. 24:1-17.** David wanted a census so that he “may know the number of the people.” The “number” specifically indicates military might (24:9). The consequence of David's sin was that 70,000 people died. The lesson here is clearly to **avoid pride.**

You would expect that we thought of these incidents in King David's life before we named our son, and we did. After all, someone with a bad track record will not have many sons named after him (Ahab? Jeconiah? etc.) Little David must watch out for these same pitfalls in his own life.

3. A Model

The OT is also profitable as an example (1 Cor. 10:6, 11). King David in many ways is a great example for us all. Acts 13:22 says, “I have found David the son of Jesse, a man after mine own heart, which shall fulfill all my will.” This indicates at least two things:

- A. Internally. David's heart was rightly adjusted toward God. His inner desires were toward purity (Ps. 139:23-24) and he sought after God (63:1).
- B. Externally. David wanted to do what God wanted him to do (1 Chron. 14:10). God calls him “my servant” (Ezek. 34:24).

The OT is chock full of references to David's good ways. See 1 Sam. 13:14, 16:7; 1 Kings 3:14; 9:4; 11:4, 6, 33, 38; 14:8, 15:3. His life was a benchmark for later kings to be compared against; likewise for little David Postiff, and for the rest of us.

4. A Prayer

A name can also indicate a prayer—in this case, of the parents for their child. We pray that David Allan Postiff specifically will fit the description, heed the warning, and follow the model attached to the name David. Oh how critical for him to do these things to walk purely before the Lord.

We pray that you all will do likewise and be people after God's own heart and fulfill all of His will. There is no other thing better or more worthwhile thing to try to do.

Introduction

In Luke's gospel, 1:63 records for us a wonderful moment in the lives of Zechariah and Elizabeth. They had their first son and they were able to name him. Elizabeth said 'he shall be called John.' Zechariah, still unable to speak, wrote, 'His name is John.' With those same words I was privileged on January 28, 2006 at 6:43 am to name our second son John William Postiff (though he was not named specifically after John the Baptist).

Before we begin, you might be interested to know why we selected this name for our son. The middle name reflects our love for two people that have been very special people in our lives. One is my brother Scott, whose middle name is William. Another is William Smith, Jr., whose been a dear friend to Naomi and me (one who, let's say, along with his wife, "encouraged" our friendship before we were married!)

John's first name is intended to reflect the name of his grandfather, John Peter Kornilakis. In addition, he is named after the apostle John.

There is a connection with the name of our first son David. And that is that John was the "disciple whom Jesus loved." Our first son's name, David, means "beloved." So, we have two "beloved" sons!

The name John ("Jehovah is a gracious giver") appears in 128 verses in the NT. The closely related name Jonathan ("Jehovah has given") occurs in 105 verses in the OT.

There are four John's in the NT: John the Baptist, John the apostle, John Mark (Acts 12:12, 12:25, 13:5, 13:13, 15:37, whose mother was Mary), and a man on the Sanhedrin council (Acts 4:6). We want to look specifically at the apostle John and draw some lessons from this man's life and service for Christ.

Texts About the Apostle John

Matt. 4:21 (Mark 1:19) – James and John were sons of Zebedee and were fishermen.

Matt. 10:2 (Luke 6:14) – the list of the 12 apostles.

Matt. 17:1 (Mark 9:2, Luke 9:28) – one of the "inner three" privileged to see the Transfiguration.

Mark 1:29, 5:37, Luke 8:51 – viewed the miracle of the healing of Simon's mother-in-law and the resurrection of the synagogue ruler's daughter.

Mark 3:17 – Jesus surnamed them "Sons of thunder." He did the same with Peter in 3:16. Naming shows authority and an understanding of certain qualities of the person named. What does this name suggest about the character of John and his brother? Perhaps it was their impetuous, rash nature (see Luke 9:54)!

Mark 9:38 (Luke 9:49) – Though Peter often has the reputation of saying things quickly, John here rashly told a man to stop casting out demons in the name of Christ before asking the Lord what he should do.

Mark 10:35-40 – James and John both asked the Lord for a prominent place in the kingdom. This indicated a misplaced desire for authority and power, when instead they should have been happy to serve, for the servant will be the one who is great in God's arrangement of things (Mark 10:41-45). How opposite the world!

Mark 13:3 – privileged to hear private instruction from the Lord along with Peter, James, and Andrew in the Olivet Discourse.

Mark 14:33 – witnessed the agony of Christ in the garden of Gethsemane along with Peter and James.

Luke 5:10 – John and James were astonished and afraid when they saw the miracle of the huge catch of fish after working all night and getting nothing.

Luke 9:54 – Another "Peterism" here, where John and James asked if they should command fire from heaven to devour their opponents. Jesus did not advocate lethal force against those who rejected him. This ought to be a good reminder for those who think that killing is an acceptable means to deal with someone who disagrees with a religion.

Luke 22:8 – Peter and John were asked to go prepare the last supper.

John 13:23 – The disciple whom Jesus loved was the one who leaned on Jesus' bosom at the last supper. He is called by this appellation five times in the gospel of John. It is interesting that the apostle John's name does not appear whatsoever in his gospel, indicating that John is indeed the author. The only John who is named in John's gospel is John the Baptist.

John 19:26 – the "disciple whom Jesus loved" was instructed to take Jesus' mother under his care.

John 20:2-10 – The Bible here tells us of Peter and John's witnessing of the empty tomb. Again John is called the disciple whom Jesus loved.

John 21:7 – Again the disciple whom Jesus loved recognized the Lord at the first sign of the miracle of the catch of fish. John had remembered several years earlier that a similar miracle had occurred (Luke 5:10).

John 21:20 – The disciple whom Jesus loved was the subject of a conversation between Peter and the Lord to the effect that *if* the Lord wanted John to remain until Christ returned, that did not have anything to do with Peter. This passage tells us that the "disciple whom Jesus loved" was the one that leaned upon Jesus' bosom at the last supper.

Acts 1:13 – One of the company in the upper room after the ascension.

Acts 3:1 – With Peter, involved in the healing of the lame man.

Acts 4:13 – When detained by the priests and their crowd, they were recognized to be bold witnesses for Christ, these who were "unlearned" by Pharisaical standards, yet had been with Jesus.

Acts 4:19 – Found it necessary to affirm that they had to keep speaking what they had witnessed rather than listening to the threats of the Sanhedrin.

Acts 8:14 – Privileged to travel with Peter to Samaria to confirm the reception of the true gospel by those folks, and to be present at the giving of the Holy Spirit to these new believers.

Acts 12:2 – John's brother James was killed by Herod because he was a Christian.

Gal. 2:9 – John listed among the "pillars" of the church at Jerusalem in the late 40s A.D.

Rev. 1:1, 4, 9 (Rev. 21:2, 8) – John was eventually banished to the island of Patmos because of his faith. This was probably 50 years later in the 90s A.D. It was here that he was able to see the glorified Lord Jesus Christ once again and to receive the Revelation of what would happen at the end of the age.

Conclusion

I'm struck by the great privilege that it would be for one to see and do the things that John did. Look at this message through the eyes of John; imagine yourself in his privileged position from the beginning to the end of Christ's earthly ministry; in the work in the Jerusalem church and in surrounding parts; to his imprisonment on Patmos and his vision of the Apocalypse. Wow!

So what is in a name, anyway? For one thing, God provides us models for how to live (Paul, 1 Cor. 11:1; other mature believers, Phil. 3:17). In the apostle John we also find such a model of a mature believer. One who was humble, dedicated, faithful, a common worker at the beginning but an uncommon follower of Christ after all, a pillar in the church.

We also find in John that statement about the Lord's love for him—the beloved disciple. Who of us cannot say that we are a disciple whom Jesus loves? Do you suppose that Jesus loved John in a way that was partial, or somehow far better than he loved any other sinner? No! It is not first our love, or some inherent lovability, but rather the love that Christ pours out upon us that is the first and most important. Oh how wonderful to be loved by Christ (John 15:9, Rom. 8:35, 2 Cor. 5:14-15, Gal. 2:20, Eph. 3:19)!

May John William Postiff see these things in his own life—the privilege, following the model, and the love of Christ.