

THE CHRISTMAS NAMES OF GOD

Part Two

December 29, 2013

Introduction

Last week we covered 6 names of God found (Isa 9:6-7) in the Christmas story:

1. A child born
2. A Son given
3. Wonderful Counselor
4. Mighty God
5. Everlasting Father
6. Prince of peace

From these names we were able to clearly see that the Messiah would be both God and man. This is articulated so well in the book "Every Name of God in the Bible" (by L Richards).

"Some have excused the failure of the religious leaders of the first century to recognize Jesus as the Messiah because He did not come as the conqueror predicted in the Old Testament Scriptures. Others have excused their fanatic opposition to His claims to be the Son of God and thus one with the Father (in other words, equal to Him in nature and essence; John 10:30). However, as we examine the names and titles of the Messiah found in the Old Testament, we discover that the reason for the religious leaders' rejection of Jesus cannot be explained simply as a lack of awareness of who the Messiah was to be.

The Scriptures make it plain that the Messiah was to be God enfleshed, and that He would serve God both as Priest and King. Some passages featuring the names or titles of the Messiah emphasize His deity, His priestly ministry, or His royal commission. Yet in many passages featuring the Messiah's names and titles, two or all three of these themes are interwoven."

This week we will examine five more of these titles.

1. Seed (Gen 3:15)
2. Root of Jesse (Isa 11:10; Rom 15:12)
3. Banner (Isa 11:10; 49:22; Jn 3:14-15; 12:32)
4. Branch (Jer 23:5-6; 33:15; Isa 4:2; 11:2-4; Zec 3:9; 6:12-13)
5. Immanuel (Isa 7:14)

1. SEED

Gen 3:15 And I will put enmity Between you and the woman, And between your seed and her Seed; He shall bruise your head, And you shall bruise His heel.

The Hebrew word rendered "seed" means "offspring" or "descendant." This name or title is found in Gen 3:15, which is the Bible's first prophecy concerning the Messiah. In Eden, God had warned Adam not to eat the fruit of one particular tree. After Adam and his wife Eve disobeyed the divine command, the Lord found the now fallen couple hiding in the garden. There God explained the consequences of their tragic choice. But first God spoke to Satan, who had acted through a serpent to deceive Eve and lead the first couple into sin. Eve understood this as a promise of restoration to the first couple's state of innocence. Thus, when she bore her firstborn, she said, "I have acquired a man [literally, "the man"] from the LORD" (4:1). Eve could hardly have been more wrong. For that son, Cain, grew up to murder his brother, Able.

Nevertheless, the divine promise remained of a descendant who would crush the head of Satan (Rom. 16:20). The Savior would destroy the devil's power, despite the fact that He Himself would be bruised (that is, crucified) in the cosmic battle (Col 2:14-15; Heb 2:14-15).

The messianic promise (Gen 3:15) was repeated to Abraham after he had entered the land of Canaan. God told Abraham, "To your descendants I will give this land" (12:7). While the Hebrew word here is appropriately translated "descendants," it is in fact a singular word that literally means "seed."

It is not unusual for a word to function both as a singular or a plural, depending on the context. For instance, we might say either "I saw a deer" or "I saw a herd of deer." Whether "deer" is to be understood as referring to one animal or many animals depends on the context in which the word is used. It is the same way with the Hebrew word rendered "seed." Paul, taking note of this dual meaning, argued that

there is a deep theological significance in God's choice of the Hebrew word, which could stand for many offspring or for one descendant. Gal 3:16 says the following about Gen 12:7,

This interpretation of the Old Testament text by the Holy Spirit affirms that in Christ, the promised Messiah of Israel, all God's promises find their fulfillment. Also through Christ-the Seed of the woman and the Seed of Abraham-humankind can find redemption.

(See also Ge 22:17-18; Ps 89:3-4; 105:5-9; Isa 7:13; Ac 3:24-26; Gal 3:16, 19; 1 Pe 1:23)

2. ROOT OF JESSE

Isa 11:10 Then in that day The nations will resort to the root of Jesse, Who will stand as a signal for the peoples; And His resting place will be glorious.

The root is the underground source of the trunk and branch. The root is present but hardly prominent. Thus, Jesse is the source of David's line, from which the Messiah will spring.

This title stands in contrast with the next title (Banner). The root is hidden vs. The banner is visible.

(See also Isa 11:1; Ro 15:12; Ac 13:22-23; Rev 22:16)

3. BANNER

Isa 11:10 Then in that day The nations will resort to the root of Jesse, Who will stand as a signal for the peoples; And His resting place will be glorious.

Isa 11:12 And He will lift up a standard for the nations And assemble the banished ones of Israel, And will gather the dispersed of Judah From the four corners of the earth.

(See also Isa 49:22; 62:10; Jn 3:14-15; 12:32)

A banner (an ensign or standard) is a highly visible rallying point for all. The Messiah coming from Jesse's line will indeed be prominent. The image of the Messiah as Banner reflects an incident that took place during Israel's wilderness wanderings. A plague of poisonous snakes caused terror in the Israelite camp. God told Moses to make a replica of a snake and attach it to the top of a pole. God promised in Num. 21:8 "and it shall be that everyone who is bitten, when he looks at it, shall live" (see Num. 21:6-9).

Later, Jesus compared His death to that event. He said, "And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have eternal life" (John 3:14-17). Jesus, from the root of Jesse, has been lifted up on the cross, and as such stands out, that all people everywhere may rally in faith to Him and be saved.

4. BRANCH

Isa 4:2-4 In that day the Branch of the LORD will be beautiful and glorious, and the fruit of the earth will be the pride and the adornment of the survivors of Israel.

The term "branch" is a common metaphor for family relationships. As a branch grows from a tree, so metaphorically the Messiah is said in Scripture to be David's "Branch of Righteousness" (in other words, a descendant of that king; Jer. 23:5). Similarly, Isaiah 11:1 predicts that "a shoot will come up from the stump of Jesse [David's father], and from his roots a Branch will bear fruit". Jeremiah 33:15 quotes the Lord as saying, "I will cause to grow up to David a Branch of righteousness."

But the Messiah is more than a descendant of David. He is also called the "Branch of the LORD" (Is. 4:2). Jeremiah is even more clear in giving the Messiah a divine title, "the Lord our righteousness" (Jer 23:6).

In passages where the Messiah is identified as the Branch, both His human nature and His deity are affirmed. There was no basis for the religious leaders of Jesus' time to be shocked that in presenting Himself as the Messiah, Jesus also affirmed His deity. For the fact that the Promised One was to be God Himself is clearly taught in the Old Testament!

But what aspect of the Messiah's ministry is in view where He is spoken of as the Branch? In Isaiah and Jeremiah, the Messiah's role as Conqueror and Ruler is emphasized (Jer 23:5; Isa 11:2-4). Zechariah, however, emphasizes the priestly ministry of the Branch. In Zec 3:9 we learn that the Lord, through His Servant the Branch, "will remove the iniquity of that land in one day." In Zec 6:12-13 we read

that “the Man whose name is the BRANCH” is to “sit and rule on His throne; so He shall be a priest on His throne.” In the Messiah, in Christ, the ministries of priest and king are united. In His death, Jesus our High Priest offered His own blood as a purifying sacrifice. And when Jesus returns, He will come to rule.

(See also Isa 4:2-4; 11:1; 60:21; Jer 23:5; 33:15; Zec 3:8; 6:12; Jn 15:1-6)

5. IMMANUEL

Isa 7:14 "Therefore the Lord Himself will give you a sign: Behold, a virgin will be with child and bear a son, and she will call His name Immanuel."

This name is associated with perhaps the most famous prophecy in the Bible. The prophet Isaiah, some seven hundred years before Christ, is sent to King Ahaz of Judah. The king is terrified because Rezin of Syria and Pekah of Israel are negotiating a treaty with a view to invade Judah. Isaiah bears good news: the conspiracy will fail.

However, when Isaiah tells Ahaz to ask for a sign (that is, a miracle, authenticating the message as being truly from God), the apostate king refuses. In response Isaiah declares, “the Lord Himself will give you a sign: Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a Son, and shall call His name Immanuel” (Is. 7:14). Isaiah continues and, referring to his own infant son Shear-Jashub, whom he is carrying, tells Ahaz that before the child is old enough to be weaned, the two kings Ahaz fears will no longer be a threat to Judah (vv. 15, 16).

The second prophecy was fulfilled, as both of the hostile nations Ahaz feared were overrun by Assyria. This was a “near term” prophecy, fulfilled within a short span of time and thus authenticating the prophet’s message as being from God. That fulfilled prophecy not only demonstrated that Isaiah was God’s spokesman, but also guaranteed the “long term” prophecy of a virgin birth, and more!

The promised child was not simply to be miraculously conceived, but also was given a name that in Hebrew means “God with us.” In fact, the way the name is constructed gives it a slightly different emphasis: “WITH US is God!” God is not just to be “with us” in the traditional sense, but is to be WITH US in a unique sense. The One who is to be born of a virgin is God, come to earth as a true human being! He is to be with us in our humanity, born into the world as an infant as we are, and yet at the same time fully God.

The promise of "God with us" is given to:

Abraham - Gen 26:24

Jacob - Ge 28:15; 31:3 "

Moses - Ex 3:12

Israel - Dt 31:6; 1 Sa 12:22

Joshua - Jos 1:5, 9

Solomon - 1 Ch 28:20

Jeremiah - Jer 1:8

David declares that God is with us wherever we go (Ps 139:7-8, 18)

Prophetic promise in Christ through Isaiah (Isa 41:10; 43:2, 5)

Promise to the church (Heb 13:5)

Application

A. I am born of His seed, I have the life of God in me.

Gen 3:15 And I will put enmity between your seed and her Seed; He shall bruise your head, And you shall bruise His heel.

Gal 3:16 Now to Abraham and his Seed were the promises made. He does not say, “And to seeds,” as of many, but as of one. “And to your Seed,” who is Christ.

1 Pe 1:23 for you have been born again not of seed which is perishable but imperishable, that is, through the living and enduring word of God. (1 Pe 1:3; Jn 1:13; 1 Jn 3:9; 4:13, 15; Col 1:27)

I renounce every lie and claim of the devil over my life. Jesus has redeemed me and broken every curse over my life.

I receive the truth that I am in Christ and blessed by God. His Seed (Jesus) has destroyed all the power of the enemy and now lives in me. I am blessed of God.

B. Jesus is the root of Jesse and I am a partaker of the root.

Ro 11:17-18 But if some of the branches were broken off, and you, being a wild olive, were grafted in among them and became partaker with them of the rich root of the olive tree, do not be arrogant toward the branches; but if you are arrogant, remember that it is not you who supports the root, but the root supports you.

Col 2:6-7 Therefore as you have received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk in Him, having been firmly rooted and now being built up in Him and established in your faith,

I renounce every religious lie that leads to self works, every lie that inspires me to prove my worth.

I receive the truth that Jesus supports me and empowers me to before me in my faith.

C. Jesus is the banner. I am blessed and no longer under a curse.

Gal 3:13-14 Christ redeemed us from the curse of the Law, having become a curse for us - for it is written, "CURSED IS EVERYONE WHO HANGS ON A TREE" - in order that in Christ Jesus the blessing of Abraham might come to the Gentiles... (2 Cor 5:21; 1 Pt 3:18)

I renounce the lie that I am cursed. I break every curse over my life.

I receive the truth that God is blessing me even when I can't see it.

D. Jesus is the branch of the Lord. Through Him I am righteous.

2 Co 5:21 He made Him who knew no sin to be sin on our behalf, so that we might become the righteousness of God in Him. (1 Cor 1:30; Eph 4:24; Rom 1:16-17)

I renounce the lie that I am a helpless sinner.

I receive the truth that I am righteous. I am a man of God, living by faith-righteousness.

E. God is with me, He will never leave nor forsake me.

Mt 28:20 ... "I am with you always, even to the end of the age."

Heb 13:5 ...for He Himself has said, " I WILL NEVER DESERT YOU, NOR WILL I EVER FORSAKE YOU,"

(See also Ps 139:7-8, 18; Isa 41:10; 43:2, 5)

I renounce the lie that I am all alone, that God has forsaken me.

I receive the truth that God is with me, working in ways that I cannot see.

The following References were used in this study:

Every Name of God in the Bible, by L Richards
Strong's Greek/Hebrew Definitions
Englishman's Concordance
Vines Expository Dictionary of Old Testament Words