

## Sermon- What's in the **Name**?

Jan. 1, 2012

During World War II the Germans would constantly play the very popular song "Lilli Marlene" to POW's which at least for one particular American prisoner was a song of Hope and Love! When he was finally released, returned home and was married he **named** his first born daughter Marlene, which for him was a **name** of great significance. **Names** are like that. I was **named** after my father. My middle **name**, Tobias, was the first **name** of my grandfather and his father before him. Growing up I always took pleasure in that, being **named** after my great, great, grandfather. In Shakespeare's Romeo and Juliet, Juliet cry's out, "Romeo, Romeo! Wherefore art thou, Romeo? Deny thy father and refuse his **name**." To which Romeo replies, "What's in a **name**? That which is called a rose, by any other **name** would smell as sweet." Still, in most settings **names** are important, especially in the Bible. For example, Jacob means "supplanter". He was **named** so because later he took over his brother's position as first-born. Naomi's **name** means "Delightful One" but she later changed her **name** to Mara which means "Bitter". Why did she change her **name**? Because in Moab she suffered the bitter loss of her husband, 2 daughters, and her daughter in law. In the New Testament we find a man **named** Joseph who showed such care and was such an encourager to others that he received a new **name**, Barnabus which means, "Son of encouragement." Last week we heard the words of Matthew 1:21, "She will bring forth a Son, and you shall **name** him Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins." In today's Gospel reading we hear Luke say, "And at the end of 8 days he was circumcised, He was called Jesus."

The **name** Jesus literally means, "Jehovah our Savior". The Jews in the O.T. we're not even allowed to use the **name** for God. Now at the **name** of Jesus we can say, God is our Savior! It is the **name** by which we must be saved, there is no other. "Nor is there any Salvation in any other, for there is no **name** under heaven given among men by which we must be saved."(Acts 4:12) Everything we do as Christians is done in the **name** of Jesus. "Whatever you do in word or deed, do all in the **name** of Jesus!"(COL 3:17) The Apostle Paul writes that just in the hearing

of his **name**, one day, every knee shall bow! (PHIL 2:10) When George Frederick Handel wanted to describe the birth of Jesus in his oratorio he chose the **name** 'Messiah' which means Savior.

When Isaiah describes the coming of the Messiah he put it this way," Unto us a child is born, unto us a Son is given; and the government will be upon his shoulders. And His **name** will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting father, Prince of Peace." ISAIAH 9:6

What does the **name** 'Wonderful Counselor' mean? The word 'wonderful' in Hebrew indicates a phenomenon which outside the realm of human experience. Psalm 139:6 uses the same Hebrew word," Such knowledge is too wonderful for me, it is high, and I cannot attain it!" It's miraculous! It's a sense of wonder that goes beyond all human explanation. We all can **name** the wonderful successes of science and technology from I-Phones to 3D television, the wonderful come-from-behind victories by our favorite sport teams, and new wonder drugs that can fight cancer. All of these though can be explained! A real wonder goes beyond human explanation, and this is how Isaiah describes the birth of Christ, Wonderful Counselor! This describes who Jesus is. He, Himself, is the wonder.

The word Counselor gives us a picture of a King giving his people counsel. When the Jews were in captivity Micah put it this way," Now why do you cry aloud? Is there no King in your midst? Has your counselor perished?" Micah 4:9. Part of my calling as a Shepherd is to give counsel to brokenhearted people. Jesus comes into the world to give counsel to the brokenhearted people of the world, the gift that all people need the most, SALVATION. Paul, the Apostle, appeals for help from the One "who is the wisdom of God"! COR 1:30. In his public life people were amazed at the wisdom of Jesus. When Jesus, at the age of 12, was in the temple the rabbis were dumbfounded with his wisdom. When Jesus came into his hometown and taught in the synagogue people were so astonished they said, "Where did this man get his wisdom and these mighty works?" MATT 13:54. And what about us, are we astonished, are we captivated by the wonder and counsel of the Word? Paul writes to the Colossians, that in Jesus," are hidden all

the treasures of wisdom and knowledge.” How much time did you spend with Jesus in his Word this week?

So what’s the importance of the name “Wonderful Counselor” for us today? This ‘Wonderful Counselor’ is our creator and Savior today! Jesus is the fulfillment of Old Testament and New Testament Prophecy. His counsel is found in the pages of the Bible. The Old Testament is his story. The New Testament Gospels are the recording of His interaction with people of his day. The Letters of the rest of the New Testament are the teachings of Jesus that in my life have proven to be wise counsel with practical application. But most importantly the Holy Spirit through the word points me to Jesus the forgiver of all my sins and your sins and the author of Life. Jesus is able to give you direction in life!

(ILLUS- Jesus in Caesarea/Philippi-who do men say that I am?)