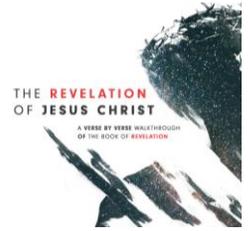


Title: Revelation, Part 31: Names Matter

Speaker: Charles Stone

Passage: Rev. 22.7-17

Big Idea: Biblical names for Jesus give us fundamental truths we must base our lives upon.



I'm going to put a statement on the screen and take a few moments to mull over it. [A person's name is important.](#) A name carries weight. Your name and my name are important for many reasons.

It can tie us to our origins when we get named after a relative. For example, my name is Charles Murray Stone, Jr. I am a junior because my dad's name is what... Charles Murray Stone, Sr. Our son Joshua's middle name is Charles, named after his grandfather and me, his dad.

Names can sometimes reflect qualities that reflect character a parent prays for their child.

Our oldest daughter's middle name is Cara, the Greek word for Grace. Tiffany, our youngest child, means the appearance of God.

Expectant parents will spend months mulling over names for their baby thinking about what it will be and what it will mean.

In a room full of people talking, although we can't hear all the conversations, room we can hear our name spoken. It's like in an airport when an official comes over the loudspeaker and says, "Would so and so please report to gate 7 to retrieve your lost article." I don't really listen to that unless they say, "Would Charles Stone please report to gate 7 to retrieve your lost article." Then I listen.

In biblical days, names could indicate purpose or circumstances or characteristics. A name could capture the aspirations of parents as they would name their children to reflect a virtue.

The young shepherd boy who became King of Israel and wrote many of the Psalms means beloved.

Names were sometimes changed to reflect new virtues or characteristics.

- The woman Naomi in the book of Ruth, whose name means pleasant, lost her husband and two sons and could not get beyond her grief so she told others to call her Mara, which means bitter.
- The first man to heed Jesus' call to discipleship was Simon which means to hear or obey. Jesus later changed his name to Peter which means rock and he became the rock, the core leader in Jerusalem.

And the names for Jesus reflected his very nature, character, and being. So, they are very important. Today as we continue our series in Revelation, next week we finish up, we will look at some important names of Jesus and their implications for us.

Big Idea:

Biblical names for Jesus give us fundamental truths we must base our lives upon.

We are going to look at several today and I want you to put on your thinking cap.

In a moment I'm going to read this chapter and I want you to listen for names of Jesus mentioned in this passage and see if you can get the right count. You can use your fingers to count if you want to. You might find it easier to just listen as I read, and not hold anything, so that you have all your fingers available to count. I still count with my fingers. Whatever works for you. And

personal pronouns don't count like I or me.

Let's stand as I read this chapter.

Rev. 22:7 "Behold, I am coming soon! Blessed is he who keeps the words of the prophecy in this book." ⁸I, John, am the one who heard and saw these things. And when I had heard and seen them, I fell down to worship at the feet of the angel who had been showing them to me. ⁹ But he said to me, "Do not do it! I am a fellow servant with you and with your brothers the prophets and of all who keep the words of this book. Worship God!" ¹⁰ Then he told me, "Do not seal up the words of the prophecy of this book, because the time is near. ¹¹ Let him who does wrong continue to do wrong; let him who is vile continue to be vile; let him who does right continue to do right; and let him who is holy continue to be holy." ¹² "Behold, I am coming soon! My reward is with me, and I will give to everyone according to what he has done. ¹³ I am the Alpha and the Omega, the First and the Last, the Beginning and the End. ¹⁴ "Blessed are those who wash their robes, that they may have the right to the tree of life and may go through the gates into the city. ¹⁵ Outside are the dogs, those who practice magic arts, the sexually immoral, the murderers, the idolaters and everyone who loves and practices falsehood. ¹⁶ "I, Jesus, have sent my angel to give you this testimony for the churches. I am the Root and the Offspring of David, and the bright Morning Star." ¹⁷ The Spirit and the bride say, "Come!" And let him who hears say, "Come!" Whoever is thirsty, let him come; and whoever wishes, let him take the free gift of the water of life.

Let's see how well you did. Got your number in mind? I recognize that counting was a bit tricky because it depended on how you counted the compound names like Beginning and the end, if you counted that as one or two. So, there are actually 3 correct answers.

Here is the first right answer.

- | | |
|--------------|---------------------------|
| 1. Alpha | 6. End |
| 2. Omega | 7. Jesus |
| 3. First | 8. Root (of David) |
| 4. Last | 9. Offspring (of David) |
| 5. Beginning | 10. Bright Morning Star |

So, that's 10. Now, if you counted the compound names, you would have come up with 7. Finally, if you counted root and offspring as 1, you would have come up with 6.

So 10, 7, and 6 would all be the right answers. How many got one of those numbers. All right. We have a good math audience. Let's look deeper.

Rev. 22:7 "Behold, I am coming soon! Blessed is he who keeps the words of the prophecy in this book."

John repeats this theme: Jesus is coming soon. He emphasizes this three times in this passage. He will greatly bless us for keeping the words of this book, that is, being faithful moment by moment. So we should be ready no matter when he comes.

8 ...And when I had heard and seen them, I fell down to worship at the feet of the angel who had been showing them to me.

This is the second time this has happened to John, that in the heat of the moment in these grand visions that he starts to worship an angel. This is a reminder that none of us is immune to temptation to unintentionally give ultimate worth to someone or something that only God should receive.

As an illustration, sometimes church people can subtly do this toward pastors. People don't intend to put pastors on an unhealthy high pedestal, giving them more reverence than they should, but it happens. And when they revere pastors

too much, when that pastor retires or moves to another church or gets sick and can't continue, it's an incredible let-down because those people elevated the pastor to an unhealthy place.

For me, in a couple of years I will have been here 10 years and I will turn 49 plus 20. Our board is talking now looking how we can create a succession plan for the future that is best for WP. So, keep your view of me at a healthy level, not disrespect on the one end but also not putting me on an unhealthy pedestal on the other end. I'm sure when the board lands on the transition plan, you can rest assured that they will take care of me a lifetime supply of Cheetos. They are such a good board.

The angel reminded John to stop it and only worship God, which is the ultimate aim of the book of Revelation, that we worship Him more fully. He reminds him again that the time is getting close. Then, there is the puzzling statement.

11 Let him who does wrong continue to do wrong; let him who is vile continue to be vile;

Is he suggesting that those in their sin should continue in their sin? No. He's saying that if you continue in your sin and don't repent, it will define your character and determine your eternal destiny. It reminds us that people make their own decisions with their lives. While they are alive, repentance is not off the table for he says in verse 17, **whoever wishes, let him take the free gift of the water of life.**

Jesus is implying that he will not force anyone to come to him. In one sense, we can't stem the tide of increasing evil because **we** can't change people's hearts. We may plead, exhort, and admonish others to turn from their sin which is destroying them. Yet, no matter what you say or do, they just continue on their destructive path. He's reminding us that at some point, as hard as it may be, we have to let them go and allow the consequences to play out, still praying for them, but realizing that no matter what you say or do, they may never change.

On the other side of the coin he says,

let him who does right continue to do right; and let him who is holy continue to be holy." (11)

In other words, again, you be faithful to the Lord because...

12 "...I am coming soon! My reward is with me, and I will give to everyone according to what he has done.

He is coming again soon (third time) and will reward his faithful followers. Was John thinking that Jesus was going to return in his lifetime by mentioning *soon*, as Christians throughout the ages have believed that Jesus was coming in their lifetime?

One helpful way to deal with this perplexing question is to realize that God views time differently than we do. His time is on a totally different scale than ours. Centuries to us is like a second to God. So, from God's perspective, Jesus is coming in the next second.

The implication is that since we don't know when he will come again, and that he will come unexpectedly, we must be found faithful when he does come. The question we have to ask ourselves is this.

Am I ready for Jesus' return?

Now we get into these names.

13 I am the Alpha and the Omega, the First and the Last, the Beginning and the End.

In a prior chapter, these terms were applied to God the Father and now they are applied to Jesus the son. As a short review...

Alpha and omega are the first and last letters of the Greek alphabet, the language the NT was first written in. The word for beginning means not only first in point of time but first in the sense that God, Jesus, is the source of all things. End not only means end in point of time but the goal as well, a sense of completion or purpose.

These names emphasize God the Father and now Jesus, has absolute control over the world, its history, and its creation. The trinity was before anything else came to be. In the ancient languages using the first and last letters to describe something implied the totality of it, like we use it in a similar way. “Yep, it’s covered from a to z or zed).”

John is saying that all life begins in God the Father, the Son, and the Spirit and ends in God the Father, God the Son, and God the Spirit. In this chapter Jesus originates and completes all things. Jesus has been in control since before time began and these names for Jesus remind us of that. we can be assured that in this topsy turvey world, He is in control.

So, these names reinforce for us that Jesus is fully God. These names convey completeness. Jesus has everything within himself that he needs. He is eternal. He has ultimate sovereign authority over history, the beginning the end and the time between.

They highlight Jesus’ deity. Jesus is present at and sovereign over the creation, the end times, and everything in between. He is omnipotent and omnipresent. I know that the [trinity](#) is a concept hard to get our minds around. It is a term we use to describe that God is one, yet three persons, all co-equal and co-eternal, all three persons are fully God. Maybe a way to understand the trinity a bit is to understand what the trinity is not. In the first 3 centuries the early church leaders dealt with heresies about the trinity and by the fourth century they had dealt with them.

The Trinity does not mean...

The Trinity does **not** mean...

1. Tritheism
2. Modalism
3. A hierarchy that rejects equality

1. [Tritheism](#), that the trinity is like a pie cut up into three equal pieces, that there are 3 separate gods.
2. [Modalism](#)—Modalism is a heresy that says these three switched back and forth, one mode at a time. God was the father then the son and then the spirit. The trinity means that the three persons of the God head co-exist together.
3. [A hierarchy that rejects equality](#). For example, Jehovah’s Witnesses believe that the Father alone is God and Jesus is A God and the first creature made and that the HS is not a person but a force which undermines the equality of the divine persons.

The trinity is a term to describe the unique, unified three persons of God, 1 God, three persons.

Back to our big idea: [Biblical names for Jesus give us fundamental truths we must base our lives upon.](#)

Truth #1 about Jesus names (Alpha, Omega, First, Last, Beginning, End)

Jesus is **fully** God in **every way**. Therefore, you can trust His nature.

He is good for He is God and God is good. His nature is that he wants the very best for us.

14 “Blessed are those who wash their robes, that they may have the right to the tree of life and may go through the gates into the city.

Our lives are like a robe woven with our attitudes and actions and beliefs and behaviors that we take with us everywhere. It’s our character. Jesus says that blessed are those who weave a life of righteous, humility, and holy living. To *wash our robes* means that we have already trusted the work of Christ to cleanse us and give us the grace we need for daily living. This image reminds us that we don’t earn our salvation by works, but that our standing before God is totally based on the righteousness of Jesus and his shed blood on the cross. And because of his work, we have the blessings of salvation represented by the tree of life and the promise of heaven represented by entry into the gates of the city.

¹⁵ Outside are the dogs, those who practice magic arts, the sexually immoral, the murderers, the idolaters and everyone who loves and practices falsehood.

What is the dogs idea? To us dog lovers, this may seem harsh. But here it helps to understand the cultural meaning of dogs. They were a despised animal by most and seen as only concerned for their own self-interest. They were seen as savage scavengers, unclean, and represented everything that was disgusting and immoral. It was a term also used for the wicked and unrighteousness.

So, John takes their understanding of dogs and applies it to vile people who persist in their despicable sins. They will not be in heaven because they have refused to repent and turn to Christ.

Remember, though, that no sin lies beyond the grace of God for those who repent and turn to Jesus.

Here we see some more names of Jesus

16 "... I am the Root and the Offspring of David,

This title, root and offspring, combines two OT prophecies, Numbers 24.17 and Is 11.1,10. Jesus uses those to describe that he has already begun to fulfil those prophecies. Jesus was in the lineage of King David, the second king of ancient Israel. And, he was the source of David as well since he created all things. He is both a descendant and the origin of David. The bottom line is that this title of Jesus fulfills the prophecy that the Messiah would be one of David's descendants. At least 300 prophecies were fulfilled in Jesus.

Truth # 2 about Jesus' names (root, offspring of David)

Jesus fulfills the prophecies of the Old Testament. Therefore, you can trust His word.

It is true and affirms itself and our faith through these fulfilled prophecies.

I love this next one.

"I am... the bright Morning Star."

Many scholars believe this is a reference to Venus, one of the most recognizable planets in the sky visible to the human eye. It typically appears around 4 am just prior to sunrise. Seafarers have counted on the stars and these celestial lights to guide them for centuries because they are reliable points of references to guide their journey. Magi were led by a star.

Truth # 3 about Jesus names (bright morning star)

Jesus is THE reliable fixed point of reference for life. Therefore, you can trust his direction.

Jesus is not merely a point of reference for us in a dark world. He is *the* point of reference around which to navigate your life. The morning star was seen as chasing away the darkness of night as Jesus has taken away the darkness of sin and death. He is called the light of the world. He has conquered spiritual darkness. You can trust how he directs your life because he doesn't lead us into darkness.

2 Corinthians 4:6 ESV For God, who said, 'Let light shine out of darkness,' has shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.

When Jesus spoke again to the people, he said, "I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness but will have the light of life." John 8.12

This section finishes with...

17 The Spirit and the bride say, "Come!" And let him who hears say, "Come!" Whoever is thirsty, let him come; and whoever wishes, let him take the free gift of the water of life.

This is a three-fold appeal to come to Christ. The Spirit woos the hungry heart. The church is to be a missional organization inviting people to Christ. Believers are to share their faith. And finally, he describes a call to thirsty souls.

I actually skipped over one name, the name Jesus in v 16. The name Jesus means Savior. When Mary conceived Jesus through the Holy Spirit, an angel appeared to Joseph and told him in a dream to name this child Jesus because, "he will save the people from their sins," recorded in Matt. 1.18-21.

Truth # 4 about Jesus' names (Jesus)

Jesus (Savior) is the only way to have your sins forgiven. Therefore, you can trust Him for your eternity.

It's not trying to clean up your life, atone for your sins, be a better person. It's Jesus and Jesus alone. Only he can satisfy the thirsty soul.

John 6:35...he who believes in me will never be thirsty.

So, what's in a name, a lot, especially when you talk about the name of Jesus.

The image shows the Greek letters Alpha (Α) and Omega (Ω) in a white serif font against a black background.

Truth #1: Alpha and Omega, First and the Last, Beginning and the End Persist in prayer

Jesus is **fully** God in **every way**.
Therefore, you can trust His nature.



Truth #2: root and offspring of David.

Jesus **fulfills the prophecies** of the Old Testament. Therefore, you can trust His Word.



Truth #3: bright morning star

Jesus is **THE** reliable fixed point of reference for life. Therefore, you can trust His direction.



Truth #4: Jesus

Jesus (*Saviour*) is the only way to have your sins forgiven. Therefore, you can trust Him for your eternity.