

Jesus

Jehovah the Saviour

Before the Saviour's advent into the world, the angel Gabriel was sent to announce His coming to the virgin Mary with these words, ***"Fear not, Mary: for thou hast found favour with God. And, behold, thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and bring forth a son, and thou shalt call His name JESUS"*** (Luke 1:30,31). Then later in the same Gospel we read, ***"And when eight days were accomplished for the circumcising of the child, His name was called JESUS, which was so named of the angel before He was conceived in the womb"*** (Luke 2:21).

In the Gospel according to Matthew it is recorded that the angel of the Lord appeared unto Joseph saying, ***"Joseph, thou son of David, fear not to take unto thee Mary thy wife: for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Ghost. And she shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt call His name JESUS: for He shall save His people from their sins"*** (Matt. 1:20,21). Then shortly after these words follow, ***"And he called His name JESUS"*** (Matt. 1:25).

So we have two separate records of angels visiting both Mary and Joseph and giving clear instructions as to the name the child should bear. See Isaiah 49:1. Likewise we have two separate records that these instructions were obeyed and the child was given the name of God's appointment.

These facts give great emphasis to the Saviour's name, both to the matter of it being a name given by God Himself, and to the matter of His actual bearing of it.

What is so special in the name, and what is so important in the child actually being given it?

It may come as a surprise to those who regularly read a translation of the Scriptures in their own language that this is no new name, and that many in Old Testament times had borne it before the birth of this child. English readers may object, 'But I have read the Old Testament many times and have never come across the name Jesus in it!' This is because the Old Testament is written in Hebrew and Chaldea, whereas the New Testament is written in Greek. Jesus is simply the Greek form of the Old Testament name Joshua, which has many slight variations, Jeshua, Jehoshua, Hosea, Hoshea etc. If any would wish to confirm this, they have but to look at Hebrews Ch. 4 where the same name Jesus designates Joshua, the great Israelitish leader who succeeded Moses, in v8, and the Saviour Himself in v14. It is the same name and, in fact, numerous others bore it, as recorded in Old Testament Scriptures.

Why then, was it so important in the sight of God that this child should bear this familiar name?

The answer is that although many others had borne the name before, so that it was not a unique name, this child who came into the world in a unique manner, and who was given this name by God in a unique way, was to bear it in a unique sense, a sense in which none other had borne it, and none other could bear it.

The two common meanings which the name had borne hitherto were "Jehovah is a Saviour" and "Salvation of Jehovah". So the name was given (whenever it was given intelligently and meaningfully) as a gesture of praise, to celebrate the saving grace and power of Jehovah, perhaps in gratitude for some deliverance enjoyed, or else as an expression of hope, that Jehovah would take up the one who bore the name and use him as an instrument in His own hands to work deliverance for His people. In this latter sense we read of "saviours" in the Old Testament (Neh. 9:27; 2Kings 13:5, for example), i.e. men whom God employed to accomplish His salvation for Israel.

When we look at the Gospel records of the birth of Jesus Christ, we see that both these meanings are possible; for we read on the one hand how Mary commences her glorious song of praise with these words, "**My soul doth magnify the Lord, and my Spirit hath rejoiced in GOD MY SAVIOUR**" (Luke 1:46,47), and on the other hand that Simeon, when he took the babe in his arms, said, "**Lord, now lettest Thou Thy servant depart in peace according to Thy word: for mine eyes have seen THY SALVATION**" (Luke 2:29,30).

But when we consider the reason which the angel gives to Joseph for the child being given this name, we see at once the complete inadequacy of these meanings to spell out the whole truth. For the well known words of the angel are, "**Thou shalt call His name Jesus: for HE SHALL SAVE HIS PEOPLE FROM THEIR SINS**". So the

name does not merely signify that Jehovah is a Saviour, inasmuch as He has given this child, for it says, "**He** (which is emphatic in the Greek, and refers here to the child) **shall save**". And it does not merely mean that the child is the salvation of Jehovah, an instrument chosen to bring deliverance to Israel, for it says, "**He shall save His people FROM THEIR SINS**", and this is something no created being could ever do. Even the Pharisees knew that none could forgive sins but God only. To pay sin's infinite price required a sacrifice of infinite merit; and a sacrifice of infinite merit could be provided only by the offering of One of infinite glory. Salvation in the sense of deliverance from earthly foes is possible to an able man, but salvation in the highest sense, which is both spiritual and eternal, can be accomplished only by God Himself (See Isaiah 43:11; 45:21,22; Hosea 13:4-14).

This child who is by His own power, and out of His own resources to save His people from their sins, is Jehovah manifest in flesh, For the first time in human history the name Joshua or Jesus is to be borne in the sense "**Jehovah the Saviour**".

But this idea is stupendous! Is it credible? Is there perhaps some other way of explaining the words? Can the lowly Jesus of Nazareth, born of the humble maid, brought up in reduced circumstances, and above all, dying that shameful and cruel death upon the cross of Calvary, can He conceivable be Jehovah, the Eternal, Self-existing, Immutable, Absolute Sovereign of the universe? Does faith really need to stretch to such infinitudes?

Let it be said at once, and without any prevarication; it does! If this is not simple, literal, absolute truth, there is no hope of salvation for us, or for any one of Adam's ruined race. How significant it is that those who deny the absolute Godhood of our Lord Jesus Christ, also deny the reality of hell. Limited thoughts of the glory of Christ go hand in hand with limited thoughts of the gravity of sin, and of the holiness of God.

There are two simple ways in which we can confirm that we have understood the words of the angel to Joseph rightly, and that we are correct in understanding the name Jesus, when given to the Saviour, to signify "**Jehovah the Saviour**". One is to read the following verses in Matthew's Gospel (Ch. 1) which confirm that the birth of the Child is an advent of Deity. For the Holy Spirit's comment through Matthew is, "**Now all this was done, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken of the Lord by the prophet, saying, 'Behold, a virgin shall be with child, and shall bring forth a son, and they shall call His name Emmanuel', which being interpreted is, 'God with us'**" (vv. 22,23; see also Isaiah 7:14). So the child is, in fact, an incarnation of God.

Another means of confirmation is to look at the number of Old Testament Scriptures which refer to Jehovah, which are quoted or alluded to in the New Testament in reference to our Lord Jesus Christ.

In Psalm 102, the eternity and immutability of Jehovah is taught, and yet these verses are referred to "the Son" in Hebrews 1:10-12, "**And Thou, Lord, in the beginning hast laid the foundation of the earth; and the heavens are the works of Thine hands; They shall perish; but Thou remainest; and they all shall wax old as doth a garment: And as a vesture shalt Thou fold them up, and they shall be changed: but Thou art the same, and Thy years shall not fail**". This is the Son "**by whom also He made the words**" (v2), whose "**throne is for ever and ever**" (v8). Hebrews chapter 1 is a clear and powerful statement of the Godhood of Christ.

Isaiah chapter 6 brings before us the essential glory of "**Jehovah of hosts**", adored by the holy seraphim, and yet John seems clearly to state that this vision was of the pre-incarnate glory of Christ, the Brightness of the Father's glory, in whom men would not believe (John 12:41). Nor need this surprise us, for John commences his Gospel by presenting the Eternal Word, in Whom God has always been revealed to men.

All four evangelists quote the words of Isaiah 40:3, which predict the ministry of John the Baptist, the forerunner of the Lord Jesus: "**The voice of him that crieth in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the LORD (Jehovah)**". See Matthew 3:3; Mark 1:3; Luke 3:3-6; John 1:23. The words of Isaiah clearly indicate that what is meant is a way in which "Jehovah" or "our God" is to travel, and Mark shows that this is accomplished in "the Son of God", Himself Jehovah, One with the Father in the mysterious Plurality yet Unity which exists in the Godhead. See his adaption of Malachi 3:1 in Mark 1:1-3, a rendering which the Lord Himself had authorised (Matt. 11:10). Malachi had written, "**Behold, I will send My messenger, and he shall prepare the way before Me**", but the Spirit of God expands this in the New Testament, "**Behold, I send My messenger before Thy face, which shall prepare Thy way before Thee**". This points to two divine Persons within one divine Essence, and in the New Testament phraseology is fulfilled by the Father sending the Son. So it is Jehovah who sends, and at the same time Jehovah who comes, and John the Baptist is the forerunner who prepares the way of the Lord. No wonder he could say of Jesus who was born after him, "**He it is, who coming after me is preferred before me, whose shoe's latchet I am not worthy to unloose ... This is He of whom I said, 'After me cometh a man which is preferred before me: for He was before me.'**" (John 1:23,27,30).

In Isaiah 45:20-25, the unique Lordship of Jehovah is asserted. Yet Paul quotes part of this passage in Romans 14:11 with reference to the judgment of the believer. He says, "**For it is written, As I live saith the Lord, every knee shall bow to Me, and every tongue shall confess to God**". This is in connection with v9, where he has said, "**For to this end Christ both died, and rose, and revived, that He might be Lord both of the dead and living**". For the Father

has committed all judgment unto the Son, judging no man Himself (John 5:22). So to bow the knee to Jehovah and to confess to God is to recognise the Son who judges as both Lord (Jehovah) and God at His judgment seat. That is why the Bema may be described as the judgment seat of God or as the judgment seat of Christ (2Cor. 5:10).

The same passage from Isaiah is applied to Christ in Philippians 2:9-10, ***“Wherefore God also hath highly exalted Him, and given Him a (or, the) name which is above every name: That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; And that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father”***. This is the recognition of the true Godhood of the One who was in the form of God, thinking it not robbery to be on equality with God, but who humbled Himself to come to earth in a servant form, as a perfect man.

In Zechariah 12:10 (cp. Psalm 22:16) it is Jehovah who declares of Himself that, ***“they shall look upon ME whom they have pierced”***. John refers to this prophecy in his detail of Christ’s death in relation to the soldier piercing His side with the spear: ***“they shall look on Him whom they pierced”*** (John 19:34-37) and obviously refers to the same Person who will be seen coming in glory in a future day, as recorded in Revelation 1:7: ***“Behold, He cometh with clouds; and every eye shall see Him, and they also which pierced Him: and all kindreds of the earth shall wail because of Him. Even so, Amen.”***

Peter refers to Isaiah 8:14, which speaks of ***“Jehovah of hosts”, “And He shall be ... for a stone of stumbling and for a rock of offence to both the houses of Israel”***, and applies it to Christ in 1Peter 2:8, as Paul does also in Romans 9:33.

Where Peter says in 1Peter 2:3 of the Lord Jesus Christ, ***“If so be ye have tasted that the Lord is gracious”***, he is alluding to Psalm 34:8, ***“O taste and see that the LORD (Jehovah) is good (or gracious)”***.

The well known verse in Joel 2:32, ***“Whosoever shall call upon the name of the LORD (Jehovah) shall be delivered (saved)”***, is quoted in Romans 10:13 of ***“the Lord Jesus”***. He is the foundation stone upon whom men believe (v11), and the Lord upon whom they call (v13), for ***“How then shall they call on Him in whom they have not believed?”*** (v14), Here certainly Jesus is brought before us as Jehovah the Saviour.

We notice too that James speaks in chapter 5 of his epistle of ***“the Lord of Sabaoth”*** (which is the Greek equivalent of “Jehovah of hosts”) in v4, then in v10 of ***“the prophets, who have spoken in the name of the Lord”***, and in v11 of ***“the end of the Lord”*** in connection with Job’s afflictions. ***“Lord”*** in all these instances carries the Old Testament sense of “Jehovah”. Yet twice in

between we read of ***“the coming of the Lord”*** (vs. 7,8) which can only refer to the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ. Yet no distinctions are drawn, or are even felt to be necessary. Some feel that the expression James uses in 2:1, ***“Have not the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Glory (lit.)”*** is a reference to the Shekinah glory of Jehovah which sanctified His house.

The reference to the Lord’s coming in Jude v14 from the prophecy of Enoch envisages a coming of Jehovah of hosts, yet we cannot doubt that in New Testament terms it refers to the second advent of Christ.

The Old Testament speaks in a number of places of a coming of the Lord (Jehovah), and the New Testament refers to some of these passages, or details from them, to the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ, especially to His second advent. Paul’s graphic description of Christ’s second advent in 2Thess. Ch. 1 refers to Isaiah 66:14-16. Compare also Psalms 50:3,4; 97:1-6. In verse 9 of 2Thess. Ch. 1, Paul uses the language of a Greek rendering of Isaiah 2:10,19,21. John in Revelation 22:12 applies Isaiah 40:10 to Christ in the most pointed and emphatic fashion, ascribing to Him the glory which belongs to Jehovah, the one true God. The passage in Zechariah 14:1 etc. which speaks of a coming of Jehovah, in which ***“His feet shall stand in that day upon the Mount of Olives”***, is clearly the same event as the second advent of Christ as He Himself describes in Matthew 24 etc.

He also speaks of the judgment of the living nations (ch. 25:31 etc.): ***“When the Son of Man shall come in His glory, and all the holy angels with Him, THEN SHALL HE SIT UPON THE THRONE of His glory: and BEFORE HIM SHALL BE GATHERED ALL NATIONS: and He shall separate them one from another”***. The reference is to the prophecy of Joel, already alluded to (Matt. 24:29,30; Joel 2:10,30,31; 3:15). In Joel 3:2, the Lord Jehovah says, ***“I WILL ALSO GATHER ALL NATIONS, and will bring them down into the valley of Jehoshaphat (Jehovah judgeth), and will plead with them there”***. Then in verse 12 again, ***“Let the heathen (nations) be wakened, and come up to the valley of Jehoshaphat: for THERE WILL I SIT TO JUDGE ALL THE HEATHEN (nations) ROUND ABOUT”***. Jehovah of the prophecy of Joel is clearly ***“the King”***, the Lord Jesus Christ, of Matthew chapter 25.

We can safely say that all the New Testament writers regarded Jesus as Jehovah, speaking of Him as such, or applying to Him without qualification Old Testament Scriptures which refer to Jehovah.

The constant witness of the Holy Scriptures is that Jesus is none other than ***“Jehovah the Saviour”***.