

Chapter 2

Notice the Names

Now, since you've studied and familiarized yourself with the text, you can start getting in-depth. One of the ways I like doing this is looking at the meaning of the names in the original language.

Look what Isaiah says.

Isaiah 43:1 "But now, thus says the LORD, who created you, O Jacob, and He who formed you, O Israel: 'Fear not, for I have redeemed you; I have called you by your name; you are Mine.'"

Isaiah 45:4 "For Jacob My servant's sake, and Israel My elect, I have even called you by your name; I have named you, though you have not known Me."

This means that before we were born God picked a name out for us and the name He has given us is for a reason. In Bible times the people would name their children based on what they would wish for their children or what they would want them to become. Many people named their children Jesus in New Testament times because they believed that the Messiah was going to come in their time, so they would name a lot of their sons Jesus because it means "Jehovah is salvation." Christ means anointed. So if you put His name together it means anointed Savior.

I'll prove to you that God speaks through the names. Let's look at some of the names from Adam to Noah and let's look at the meanings of their names. This series of names gives us insight to the future coming of the Messiah, Jesus the Christ.

Adam — a man
Seth — is appointed
Enosh — a natural man
Kenan — of sorrow
Mahalalel — The Blessed God
Jared — shall come down
Enoch — teaching
Methuselah — his death shall bring
Lamech — the grieving
Noah — rest

It's like Bible code. It's awesome. As a matter of fact, in all 70 to 80 names in the genealogy of Jesus you will see a whole story of the things that happened in the Old Testament and they all point to Jesus, just like the above chart from Adam to Noah all point to and prophesy about Jesus. Remember that when you want to pass all those names up in the Bible that you might say is boring. God has put

them there for a reason. And it's our job to study and investigate so we can get the fullness of the Scripture and also apply it to our teachings.

Now, since you see God uses names, it's time for you to notice the names when you're studying. I want to show you how you can use the names and their meanings in a sermon. Looking at John chapter 11, in the story of Lazarus Jesus went and helped him and his sisters. Look what their names mean:

Lazarus = whom God helps

Martha = she was rebellious

Mary = rebellious, rebellion, bitter, rebels

While you're preaching the sermon you can tell the congregation the meaning of their names and then say something like: "Sometimes in the midst of our problems we can get rebellious and bitter because of things that we feel have died or that we missed out on, but God helps His people! And He's telling you in your situation, roll the stone away (the stubbornness) because I want to raise up that dead situation and help you in your time of need!"

Let's look at another famous story in the Bible. Have you ever heard of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego? Well, those weren't their real names. Daniel 1:6-7 says, "Now from among those of the sons of Judah were Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah. To them the chief of the eunuchs gave names: he gave Daniel the name Belteshazzar; to Hananiah, Shadrach; to Mishael, Meshach; and to Azariah, Abed-Nego." When Israel was invaded by the Babylonians they took certain men from among the Hebrews and appointed them to serve in Babylon. Some of the men they used were the three famous men we know as Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego. Their real names, however, were Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah.

Hananiah = God has favored

Mishael = who is what God is, or who is like God

Azariah = Jehovah has helped

Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego were names given to them by the enemy. They all represent worldly wisdom and false religion to false gods. Now if you know the story, they were thrown in the fire for not bowing down to a false religion and a false god. Because of their obedience to God, they were protected by God and they came out without being harmed. They even got promoted and the king realized that no other god could deliver like the God of Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah (Daniel 3).

Remember what Hananiah's, Mishael's, and Azariah's names meant? Now look how I connected the definitions of their names to my preaching. I preached this sermon and I said something like this: "The enemy will try to label you, and the enemy will get others to label you, and people might call you garbage, no good, drug addict,

adulteress, and drunk—but no matter what they call you and no matter how much the enemy will tempt you, don't bow down to the enemy. The enemy tried to label and change the names of Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah, but it didn't work. They didn't bow down no matter what happened, they didn't give in, they didn't give up, and they didn't let go of the promises of God! And if you do the same like the three faithful Hebrew men and not bow to the things of the world, the enemy might label you but he can never change the character God has made you. When you apply God's Word people will see God's favor upon [Hananiah] you, they will see how God has helped you [Azariah], and they will see God in you [Mishael]."

You can even connect it like this:

Hananiah = "God has favored." God promoted them and showed them favor with the king after they got out of the fiery furnace.

Mishael = "who is like God?" When the king looked in the furnace he said, "I thought we threw in three, but now there are four, and one looks like the son of God." God wants people to see Jesus in the midst of your fiery trials.

Azariah = "Jehovah has helped." God helped them and took them out of harm's way. And He wants to do the same for you.

One of my favorite sermons to preach is found in 2 Samuel 6. The scene in the story is King David bringing back the Ark of the Covenant to the city of Jerusalem. As David was bringing back the Ark of the Covenant he placed it on a new cart and brought it from the house of a man by the name of Abinadab. Something happened. As they were dancing and playing music the oxen that were pulling the cart that was carrying the Ark stumbled and the Ark almost tipped over, so a man by the name of Uzzah leaned in to grab the Ark and as soon as he touched it he died. So the music stopped as well as the rejoicing. Then David went home angry and discouraged, and the Ark went to the house of a man by the name of Obed-Edom, and the Bible says God blessed him.

Why would this happen?

1. The Ark was supposed to be carried by priests, not on a cart. Sometimes we try to bring God's presence the easy way.
2. No one was ever supposed to touch the Ark. You can't touch God's glory.
3. Obed-Edom knew both of these things.

Let's look at their names and see if we can connect them to get an understanding:

Abinadab = the father is willing

Uzzah = strength

Obed-Edom = servant or worshipper

The way you can connect it in a sermon is something like this: our Father in heaven is willing to bless us with His presence, but sometimes we try to cut corners to get it. We lean on our own strength and when we do this we will die spiritually no

matter how much you dance and sing. The only way you will be blessed with the fullness of God's presence is when you are a true servant that worships God in spirit and in truth.

One more quick example. 1 Chronicles 4:10: "And Jabez called on the God of Israel saying, 'Oh, that You would bless me indeed, and enlarge my territory, that Your hand would be with me, and that You would keep me from evil, that I may not cause pain!' So God granted him what he requested." Jabez = sorrow. Basically, you have a guy whose name means sorrow. But he starts asking, confessing, blessing, and proclaiming instead of complaining, and he receives God's blessing. You can connect it like this: When we pray we should pray like Jabez prayed. He basically said, "Bless me not just to get through but bless me so I can get through and help others get through. Help me go more places and spread the Gospel than I ever have. May your hedge of protection be upon me and that you would keep me from falling into evil temptations and that I would not hurt or hinder anyone." When you pray like that with all your heart God will answer you and your sorrow will turn into joy!

Speaking of joy, I'll give you a personal story about the seriousness of God using names. When my daughter Madison Abigail Lee was born on May 6th, I was reading a book about interpreting dreams and visions. In one of the chapters the author mentions a man named Agabus, a prophet who prophesied a famine. Because of this the disciples were prepared (see Acts 11). After I read my book I sat down to read my daily reading of my Bible. Well, to my surprise my daily reading was Acts 11. So again I'm reading about this prophet named Agabus. Confirmation, I said. Then I began to ask God, what are you trying to show me? As soon as I was saying this my wife sent me a picture of our daughter to my phone. I saw the picture and the Spirit of God spoke to me and said Agabus and Abigail mean the same thing. So I checked it out. Their names both mean "the father's joy." Praise God, He confirmed my daughter's name through a book, the Bible, and the Spirit of God all on the day she was born. What you have to understand is I was discouraged because at this time I had four girls and one boy and I was hoping for another boy. But I said since I'm having another girl I always wanted to name a girl after King David's faithful wife Abigail. God encouraged me and said, "I'm going to use Abigail for my glory and she's going to bring joy to me and you."

Start noticing the names and it will help unlock the Word for God's glory. To find out how to search the names in the Bible check the resource page in the back of this book.