

# Numbers 13

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[ 0 : 00 ] I want to preach just a couple of sermons in Advent. Tonight looking at naming, next week! we're going to waiting and then we're into the carol services and to try and preach a! little bit shorter. Let's pray. Our Father, you are generous to us in every way and part of that generosity is that you've given us the Bible, your word.

And so we pray that you would feed us by your word as we come to hear and prepare us as we come to your table. In the name of the Lord Jesus. Amen.

My favourite article on the internet was written in 2009 and it's called The Most Unfortunate Names Revealed. If ever you're feeling a little bit low, this is a great article to look up.

And so what do you call some of the most unlucky people in Britain? Barb Dwyer, Stan Still, Barry Cade, Carrie Oakey, Pretty Manic, and Tim Burr. Rob Me.

And there are some amazing, amazing names which will cheer you up at no end if you read that article. And somebody very profoundly said, I'm a spokesman for the baby website, said when the parents of some of these people mentioned named their children, many probably didn't even realise the implications at the time. Parents really do need to think carefully through when choosing names for their children. Their name will be with them for life. And what may be quirky and fun for a toddler may be regretted terribly when that person becomes older, for even their grandparents. Our names are pretty random, aren't they? There's a randomness to how we got our names. Our names in the old days, you had just one name. Paul. But then there's a growth of populations. Our surname is our names. And if you were John's son, you would become Paul Johnson.

[ 2 : 21 ] And if you were Tom's son, you became Paul Thompson. If you were the son of a blacksmith, you would take the name Smith. Or the name of a cock, you would take the name cock. Or the son of a baker, you would take the name of a baker. And then adding to that, there's some kind of physical attribute, isn't it? I'm long, I'm short, white, brown. How did you get your name? I'm told in Chinese culture, it's a grandparent that gives the name. And it's a deliberate choice. It's some kind of aspiration for that child, for their personality, for their character. But names in the Bible are given deliberately. And they're given prophetically. So come back with me just in Numbers chapter 13. It's a long list of names. And notice, 12 spies. One spy from each of the tribes of Israel. And we see, don't we, in verse 8, that from the tribe of Ephraim was Hosea. But then if you look down at verse 16, Moses, who is the greatest prophet of the

Old Testament, takes this man Hosea, the son of Nun, the son of Ephraim, from the tribe of Ephraim, and he renames him, doesn't he? He changes his name in verse 16. He changes his name to Joshua. I remember there were two faithful spies. Ten were bad, two were good.

And you have Caleb from Judah in verse 6, and you have Joshua from Ephraim in verse 8. And so today, isn't it, there are many people we know called Joshua or Caleb, but you do not meet people. I've never met a Shemuash, or a Shaphat, or an Egal, or a Hosea, or a Colti, Gadiel, and these sort of names you don't see, those unfaithful spies. But here is Joshua.

And who was Hosea, the son of Nun from the tribe of Ephraim, and Caleb. Now come with me to Matthew chapter 1. And we are introduced to the birth of Lord Jesus Christ, and the Messiah.

He is the Hebrew Messiah. Christ is the Greek designation. Mary is pledged, isn't she, in Matthew chapter 1 verse 18. His Mary has been betrothed. She is pledged, we're told to be married to Joseph. And there were three stages in a marriage in Judaism. First of all, there was the engagement, that was a private matter, it was worked out between the two families. And then there was the public announcement of the engagement. And that is called the betrothal, that is where it got serious. They really did, at that point, belong to one another. Publicly, they were a couple, but they did not live with one another. And so, it was such a serious thing, betrothal, that if you wanted to break a betrothal, you needed a divorce. The final stage was that there was a marriage

ceremony, in which the couple come together and they bear children. So, note the problem in verse 18. It says, Mary has been betrothed, but she was found to be with child before they came together. [ 5 : 58 ] Mary is pregnant in the betrothal stage, and before they should have come together with her husband. And it says that she is pregnant, doesn't it, verse 18, by the Holy Spirit, which means she is a virgin and she is pregnant.

And so, verse 19, her husband, Joseph, he has got every right to expose her. So, every right for her to be stoned as an adulteress.

That, verse 19, he is a just man, and he is a righteous man. And he determines, he resolves to divorce her quietly.

But in his sleep, verse 20, an angel comes to him in a dream and says, Joseph, son of David, of the lineage of David, I want you to know that what is in Mary is of the Holy Spirit, your betrothed one.

And so, we confessed this morning, didn't we? I believe in Jesus Christ, our Lord, who was born of the Virgin Mary. And verse 21, we're told that she will give birth, and she will have a son, and you shall call his name Jesus.

[ 7 : 13 ] Notice, she will bear a son, not your son, to Joseph, and you are to give him the name Jesus. It's not an accidental name.

It's a clear command that God has chosen this name. Jesus is the Greek name of the Hebrew equivalent Joshua. And Joshua means God saves.

And Joshua leads the people, doesn't he, in the Old Testament, into the land of Canaan. And therefore, Joshua, as we'll see at some point, he is seen as a saviour figure.

And now Jesus comes. Jesus, which is Joshua in Hebrew, Jesus in Greek, and his name means that God saves. Verse 21.

And you shall call his name Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins. So there's a little pun there, isn't there? You shall call his name God saves.

[ 8 : 15 ] And he will save. He will save his people from their sins. But we know, don't we, from the Old Testament, that it is God who saves. It is Yahweh who is the saviour.

I am the Lord your God who brought you on the land of Egypt. He himself, he says, will redeem his people from all their sins. But now we're told that God has come down into the womb of the Virgin Mary.

In this little baby. This anointed one. And he is going to bring salvation to all people. To his people. The child is the anointed of God to save his people.

I told you before, I've had a complaint that I heard about a preacher. And the complaint was that this preacher, he preached Easter sermons at Christmas.

The church didn't like it. That he preached about the death and resurrection at Christmas. When he should have been preaching about the baby in Bethlehem. But notice, that's nonsense isn't it according to verse 21.

[ 9 : 19 ] Because we're told that this babe of Bethlehem has come in order to do what? He's come in order to die and to be raised. To save his people from their sins.

And that is what God determined that Jesus would do. What does that mean in verse 21? He will save. I was trying to figure out the cruise control button in my car.

I still can't find it. Because somebody told me that if you're on the motorway and you're taking a long journey. And you press the cruise control button. You will save petrol.

And we shop in Lidl. Why do people shop in Lidl? Is it because of the shopping experience? Why do we shop in Lidl? We shop in Lidl because Lidl saves you money.

Lidl saves. Cruise control saves. If you drive to Lidl, there's a nice new bridge. But if you go over at Old Bridge, Britain Ferry, Swansea City used to have a goalkeeper in the 1970s.

[ 10 : 33 ] In the 1970s, called Guy Davis. He was an awful goalkeeper. And on a rock, just as you drove over the bridge, on a big rock, somebody roached in graffiti, Jesus saves, Guy Davis doesn't.

I think it's still there. It's been there for years. What does it mean? Jesus saves. Lidl saves. Cruise control saves.

What does it mean? What was it that he saves from? Well, was it the Roman rulers? Political saviour? Is it that Jesus saves from poverty? He's in economic liberation?

It's really clear, isn't it? It's very simple tonight. He will save his people from their sins. He'll save his people from their biggest problem.

And my biggest problem, my biggest problem is my sin. I must face a God who is both just and holy, and I have a record of sin which stands against me.

[ 11 : 36 ] And verse 21 tells me that Jesus can rescue me from that. How does Jesus rescue you from your sins? I think if we ask people who came to Cal State in this country, the vast majority of people would say something like this.

Jesus rescues us from our sins by showing us how we can live. In other words, Jesus shows us the best way to live. That if you live the right way, you will save and rescue yourself.

That if you live in a certain way, you'll make it. Is that what we believe? Do we believe that Jesus came to save, and the way he saves me is by showing me how I can live in order to please God and make it to heaven?

The problem is, isn't it, I can't live the way that Jesus lives. It's no good even me trying. I simply cannot save myself. I can't save myself by living in a particular way.

And if that is the case, then Jesus didn't have to go to the cross in order to die, did he? There is no power in seeking to live morally.

[ 12 : 46 ] I cannot save myself that way. He will save his people from their sins. That's what he is about. He will set me in a right relationship with God. He can transform my marriage.

He can set me in a right relationship with my children. He can set me in a right relationship with you. All through his work on the cross. How does he do it? How does he rescue me from that which drags me down, my sinful record?

Well, this passage doesn't tell me, but the Gospel of Matthew does. So flick over with me to Matthew chapter 20 and verse 28. Just come with me to this really wonderful verse.

Because Jesus tells us in this verse how he saves. Chapter 20 and verse 28. The Son of Man is the words, the phrase that Jesus used to describe himself.

It's taken from Daniel chapter 7, that magnificent figure. And in Matthew chapter 20 and verse 28, Jesus says, Even as the Son of Man came not to be served, but to serve and to give his life as a ransom for many.

[ 13 : 53 ] In other words, you and I are in bondage to sin. Jesus lays down his life to set me free from sin.

In other words, God offers, Jesus offers to God a perfect life at every point where I'm disobedient. Jesus is obedient. And as he gives up his perfect life to God the Father on the cross.

And he dies a death which he didn't deserve. Because he had never sinned. Because he dies a death as my substitute. And he offers to God a perfect life on my behalf.

And by living that perfect life and dying that death for me, Jesus offers to God a ransom. A ransom to set me free from sin.

And does God accept that ransom? What's he writing to us? He raises, doesn't he, three days after Jesus is crucified, he raises Jesus from the dead. Which is his guarantee. It is his warranty.

[ 14 : 56 ] That God the Father has accepted the life and death of Jesus as being redemptive. A redemptive life and death.

He gives his life for me, the innocent for the undeserved. Flip over a couple more pages. Let's go to Matthew chapter 26. There are words which we know well. There are words we know well from the Lord's Supper.

Matthew chapter 26. That as we take the sacrament of communion, which we will later. Jesus takes the cup. And he says, in verse 27 of Matthew 26.

He says, drink of it all of you. For this is my blood of the covenant. Which is poured out for many. That's a technical term for all those who have trusted in Christ.

Poured out for many. For the forgiveness of sins. And so Jesus says tonight, doesn't he?

[ 16 : 00 ] He says, forgiveness is freely available. Forgiveness is freely available. It's free to me tonight. But it's very costly to God. Because it involves the blood of his son.

You see, Jesus offers a perfect life to God. A substitutionary death. Accepted by God. Shown by the resurrection from the dead. He stands in my place at the cross.

It's the cross that I deserve. Which he didn't. He died on that cross for me. And so one last reference. Look at Matthew chapter 11. Just flick back to Matthew 11, 28.

This is where we are up to in Matthew's Gospel. And we're going to spend a few weeks in just the end of Matthew 11. And the new year. But they are wonderful, wonderful words. Matthew 11, 28.

They're words from the one who came from heaven. The one who is called Jesus. God saves. He says to you and me tonight.

[17:03] He says, come to me. All who labour and are heavy laden. And I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me.

For I am gentle and lowly in heart. And you will find rest for yourselves. For my yoke is easy. And my burden is light.

You shall give him the name Jesus. For he will save his people from their sins. And his resurrection is in the end. Is it? He ascends back to God.

And from there. He pours out his Holy Spirit on his people. And the Holy Spirit now lives in us. And it leads us in the battle against the sin nature.

And the Holy Spirit brings forth in us. The fruit of the Spirit. So our characters are transformed. But you notice the order.

[17:58] It's no Holy Spirit without the work of Jesus. No fruit of the Holy Spirit. Walking in honesty and patience and love. Without the Holy Spirit. So without the work of the Lord Jesus.

There is no Holy Spirit in our life. Without the Holy Spirit. There is no fruit of the Holy Spirit in our lives. And therefore we must have the work of Jesus as basic.

And trust in that work. And it is through that work that I am forgiven. And it's through Jesus' work on the cross. That I receive the Holy Spirit.

Who leads me. Leads me in the battle against sin. Not to trifle and play around with sin. David Brainhardt was the first missionary to the American Indians.

In North America. And he was once asked this question. He said when you go to those savages. Do you preach to them morality?

[19:01] He says I never preach morality. I preach Jesus Christ and him crucified. And transformed morality follows that. As the sure and inevitable fruit one of the other.

But just to preach morality. You are preaching an impossibility. Which will only frustrate people. Jesus came this Advent to bring salvation.

You come to him. And you will be saved. And you will be forgiven. And your life will be transformed. And the Holy Spirit will come into you. And lead you into a battle with the sin nature.

And so let me ask you. At the beginning of this Advent season. Are you one of his people? Have you come to him? Is your trust really simply tonight.

As we come to the Lord's table. In him. And not in yourself. To earn your way somehow. Because God has sent him to be the saviour. Call him Joshua.

[20:02] Call him Jesus. Because he will save his people from their sins. And the second question. As his person is. Is the Holy Spirit leading you not to dabble and play away with sin.

But to continually turn away from it. Give him the name Joshua Jesus. For he is the Christ. The Messiah. And he's come to save his people from their sins.

When I was in Sunday school. 30 years ago. The 70s and 80s produced some pretty awful worship songs.

Didn't they? But there was one. That I learnt as a child. And we used to sing it seemingly incessantly in Sunday school. And it was this. Jesus. Name above all names. Beautiful saviour. Glorious Lord. Emmanuel. Emmanuel. God is with us. Blessed Redeemer. Living Word. It's a very, very good chorus.

[21:02] We should probably start singing it with our children. Jesus you call him. For he's come to save. We're going to sing in a minute.

To prepare ourselves for the Lord's table. The hymn that's on your seat. You want to just look at it with me. For a moment. It's written by John Newton. Oh.

That's great. Just notice in verse 3. Not verse 3. Verse 2. There are I think 10 descriptions.

Of the Lord Jesus. Jesus. My husband. Saviour. Friend. My prophet.

Priest. And king. My Lord. My life. My way. My end. Accept the praise I bring.

[22:04] Just look at the first verse. I sweet the name of Jesus sounds. In a believer's ear. It soothes his sorrows. Heals his wounds.

And drives away his fear. It's my privilege tonight. To tell you that Jesus. Can soothe your sorrows. Has he done that?

You've got sorrows. Haven't you? We all have. Some of us maybe are hiding. Better at hiding those sorrows than others. You've got disappointment.

In your life. And so have you come to him. And has he soothed those sorrows? What about the wounds? The wounds in your life.

That are deep and hurtful. Some of them go back a very very long while. Don't they? And so have you come to him. And he's healed them. And what about those anxieties.

[ 23 : 09 ] That you live with every day. What about those fears. That you have maybe even about this week. Have you let Jesus drive them away? You shall call his name Jesus.

Joshua. Not Hosea. For he will save his people. From their sins. Let's pray.