

It's a Wonderful life 5

What's your name ?

Luke 2:21-22

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Intro: Reviewing 2008 one of my most painful and frustrating experience was being locked out of Country Wide Mortgage online account-either I got the password wrong or some cosmic shift caused my password to no longer work to pay my mortgage. It seemed every day I had off for a month I was on line waiting for a hour, and then a half -hour trying to converse in Swahli or Spanish how I was dumb enough to lose my password. They assured me in broken English they would resit my password and gave me a temporary one-I would use the temporary one and be locked out again! Every go around with Country wide-was temptation to say words I had not voiced in a long time.

It Just make me want to say: Passwords. Passwords. And more Passwords. Anyone here tired of passwords? Anyone here have a good way of remembering your passwords? Passwords are the open sesames

to protected systems on the Internet.

Want to pay for on eBay with PayPal? Password.

Want to sign in to AOL, or Yahoo? Password.

Want to chat on Facebook? Password.

In fact, I can't even get anything to come up on my computer unless I first give it a password. Every time we sign into a protected system we must provide certain information so that the system knows we are who we say we are. If you don't know your personal "password," the system won't let you in. Geeks in the know caution us to use cryptic number-letter combinations that are totally random. Good luck with that. What real people actually use is the name of our first dog, or part of our Social Security number, or our mother's maiden name, or our oldest child's birthday.

Today it is almost as if we need our "secret name" to personalize us, to make some kind of sense to us, to identify something unique about us. Maybe a personal password, complete with secret meaning just for us, takes away some of the anonymity of the Internet.

The highest level security systems rely upon the biological secret names held by each one of us. Biological secret names? Try retinal scans, or fingerprint analysis, or even specific DNA matches. The

higher the level of security, the more biological and less numerical the passwords.

But the ultimate, unrepeatable identifier for each one of us has yet to be mapped out. The day man could see another persons' soul he would truly see the real person. Maybe, we will call them "soul scans." We do not have the ability to perform "soul scans" on people who come before us.

The secrets locked in the heart and mind, the honesty of our words and the authenticity of our deeds, the motivations behind all our actions these are locked deep in the recesses of our souls. The Greek word "psyche" is usually translated as "soul," but can also more extensively mean "life." It is our soul-life that still keeps its secrets. The Hebrews concept for Soul was heart. Our soul or heart even though it is our essence is a total mystery. Jeremiah the prophet said; ***"The heart is deceitful above all things and beyond cure. Who can understand it?"*** Jeremiah 17:9. The truth is if we can not know the depths of our own being-how can we know God? Non-Christians focus on knowing thyself-phrases like to thy own self be true. As Christians we seek to know ourselves-by first by knowing the maker of our soul-god. In the Bible God given names acts as passwords into the soul of the named. So today we are going to explore our God given password-our name.

## *Names of Jesus Luke 2:21*

Luke 2:21 says: *"On the eighth day, when it was time to circumcise him, he was named Jesus, the name the angel had given him before he had been conceived."*

This was the name revealed by Gabriel to Mary when the angel made his annunciation to her. The name "Jesus," Yehoshua in Hebrew, means "Yahweh saves." The Hebrew rendering is "Joshua." It is not an unusual name. It is, in fact, a quite common name. The most extraordinary birth in history comes wrapped in a very ordinary name. The One whose name is above every name (Phil.2:9) is given a common name. If Jesus was born today his name would have been Joe. An average Joe-in a tiny remote village.

Did you ever wonder why New Years occurs 8 days after Christmas? On the eighth day, the Jewish child was circumcised and received his name. The eighth day is the octave day of Christmas. So it came about, in the Western world at least, that the octave day of Christmas became the beginning of the New Year. It is a happy omen for the New Year to begin on this day when the child Jesus received his name, the only name by which we can be saved (Matt. 1:21; Acts 4:12). But Jesus is not this child's only name.

Immediately after Jesus' name is declared in the temple, Simeon reveals another name for this child:

*Simeon took him in his arms and praised God, saying:*

*"Sovereign Lord, as you have promised,*

*you now dismiss<sup>[a]</sup> your servant in peace.*

*For my eyes have seen your salvation,*

*which you have prepared in the sight of all people,*

*a light for revelation to the Gentiles*

*and for glory to your people Israel."*

Along with the Name Jesus and Lord There is a host of other names.

\*In Isaiah 9:6 this messianic child is given the names "Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace."

\*In Matthew's gospel Joseph is told the child will be known as "Emmanuel" ("God is with us") and "Savior."

\*Simeon also dubs the baby Jesus as the "Consolation of Israel" and as the "Revelation to the Gentiles."

\*John the Baptist names Jesus the "Lamb of God" (John 1:29).

\*At Jesus' baptism the heavenly voice declares him to be "My Beloved Son" (Mark 1:4; Matthew 3:17).

What's in a name? Do these titles and names of Jesus hold a

significance? In the days when the Bible was being written, the Israelites often chose names for their babies based on the child's character or appearance, i.e. Esau (hairy) and Korah (bald). Some babies were named because of an incident at their birth or their names were based on some hope or prayer of the parent, as in Zechariah's name (God has remembered). Sometimes babies received the name of an everyday object, like Tamar (palm tree), and Tabitha (gazelle). Parents often named their children by the time of day they were born. For example: Shaharaim (dawn), Hodesh (new moon). The condition of the mother also frequently inspired a name: Leah (exhausted) and Mahli (sick).

Because, Jesus was named prophetically. The names serve as a description of who Jesus is and how He works in the lives of individuals. To know our maker, we need to study the names of Jesus. To know our soul and our role the names of Jesus serve as a road map in our relationship to God.

### **Biblical Names**

**A good name is better than precious ointment, and the day of death than the day of one's birth. Ecclesiastes 7:1** In Bible times, names indicated an individual's character, career or calling. When someone names another, it is a token of command and authority. In the scripture, the father gives names to his children and to slaves. Adam

named his wife and all the animals and the name he gave them became their true name.

### ***Character***

For example Jacob means supplanter. Or one who takes you by the heel. We would say a arm twister today. In short you could say a manipulator or cheat. His name foretold the character he would have to fight against all of his life. If you know the story of Jacob you know how accurate his name is.

### ***Career***

Asa was the Hebrew word for physician. According to 1 Kings 15:8 ASA became King-his name suggests that he might have been a doctor before the throne. But his occupation as king certainly brought healing from evil in Israel. Sometimes a biblical name suggests a career.

### ***Calling***

Sometimes a person's name changed as God's calling for that person changes or perhaps became clear. For example, Jesus changed Simon's name to Peter, meaning "Rock" - referring to the foundational role Peter would play in the building of the church.

The Apostle Peter was usually the first to speak and the first to put his foot in his mouth. Peter was the first to act among the Twelve and the first to mess up. And yes He took his lumps for always jumping ahead. And he learned in the process to let the Lord Jesus do the

speaking and the leading. The process helped him grow into calling of his name.

Naming: "Name" is a very important word in Scripture. The "name" of God is a roundabout expression, for God himself. It stands for his character and nature and characteristic way of behaving. To call upon his name is to call upon him, but respectfully. The second commandment is about respecting God, not just respecting his moniker. "Name" is also very important when it comes to naming people. If God reveals a person's name or changes it, it signifies that person's character or nature or mission and, at the same time, reveals something of the "name" or character of God himself. Not every name in Scripture is divinely commanded. Sometimes a name merely describes an aspect of a person, like Laban, which means "white" or blonde," or Esau "red hair." Sometimes a name expresses the parents joy, like Saul and Samuel, both of which mean "asked for" or their faith, like Elijah, which means "Yahweh is my God."

It is only when God names a person that we have an indication of the person's character or nature or mission. Have you asked yourself: What is God's special name for you?

### **Your Name Revelation 2:17**

Someone has come up with the following "Rules For Choosing a Superhero Name":

- Don't call yourself by your real name. (e.g., Ms. Jenny Pinchuck, The Amazing Stevie Foster).
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- Don't call yourself by someone else's real name. (e.g., Mr. Teddy Kennedy, Captain Tom Cruise).
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- Choose a name that suggests power, heroism and prowess. (e.g., Captain Power, Thunderman, Mr. Invincible, Justiceman).
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- Don't be too modest. (e.g., Mr. Pretty Good, Captain So-So, Fairly Incredibleman).
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- But don't labor the point. (e.g., Mr. So-Powerful-Don't-Even-Think-About-It-Buddy).
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- Don't choose a name detrimental to your crime fighting image. (e.g., Captain Spongecake, Mr. Silly, Yellow Streak, Captain Evil).
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- Don't choose the name of an existing Superhero unless you have lots of money and enjoy fighting litigation instead of supervillains.
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- It's no use calling yourself Captain Invincible if your only power is control over Hostess Twinkies and you suffer from a congenital hole-in-the-heart condition. It's just asking for trouble.
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- Don't call yourself the Invisible Boy if you're not.
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- Don't give away important information in your name. (e.g. The Glass Jaw, Captain Vulnerable To Strontium 90).
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- Don't call yourself The Green Avenger if you wear an orange costume. You'll confuse people.
- But God isn't done - not by a long shot! God is STILL calling us -

calling each one of us by name. God has at least one ministry for every single person sitting in this church, and the church will only continue to grow and thrive as each one of us answers God's call.

What are your gifts? What has God blessed you with so that you might bless others? Perhaps it's the ability to listen and comfort others or to feed the hungry; perhaps it's a gift of organization or of teaching.

It might be the gift of cleaning and making things shine anew; or maybe it's the gift of prayer or vision or prophecy or the gift of wonder - the ability to see the world with joy and delight. Perhaps you are gifted with the sight to recognize Christ where the rest of us fail to see him - and you are called to invite Christ into our midst.

It's so tempting to think - "We're fine. We have enough to do church on Sunday morning. We don't need to do anything else. It's so tempting to think, "God has called who God needs so God doesn't need anything

else from me."

But that's just not how *God* works. As soon as you think you've gotten everything all taken care of, *God* starts up again. There's always more to be done. And *God* needs every single one of us - to listen, to hear our name when it is called, to be open to the possibility that *God's* call for us may have changed, to be open to the movement of the Spirit within ourselves that challenges us to reach out again and again and yet again in service to *God's* people in our communities and throughout the world..

*God* created each one of us with those gifts which *God* most needs to bring *God's* kingdom here on earth as it is in heaven. *God* is calling me and *God* is calling you. Shh... Listen... Can you hear your name being called?

That is why we are having a special Sunday: called Team Sunday.

January 11\_Potluck Sunday we will hold the first "Team Sunday". I am encouraging everyone to wear their favorite Team apparel, you're even allowed to wear Big Red stuff. After the potluck, those who are serving the church in some way are asked to set up a little information about what they do for the church. While we are setting up the ministry fair, we have an inspirational speaker, Jeanne Tiffany who will be speaking on how to find your calling on *God's* Team. This is

a step you can easily take to discover god's secret name for you.

You can simply show up-if you are not currently involved. If you are involved you can help others be involved by simply writing down what you do-and how others can be involved.

Revelation 2:17 there is a reference to yet another name, a secret name. *To the one who conquers I will give some of the hidden manna, and I will give him a white stone, with<sup>(AP)</sup> a new name written on the stone that no one knows except the one who receives it.* ' Rev 2:17 ESV Do you know you're the secret name, God has for you?

We all have the name given to us by our parents or by our friends. A family name with roots can help us grown new branches. A derogatory name, given by cruel kids, can keep us trapped in one place all our life. A name tagged on by one event or one experience can shape our lives, for good or ill. Are you a "Junior"? Are you a "Doofus" or a "Geek"? Are you a "Screw-Up?" Are you "Trailer Trash?"

Our public names are public knowledge. But each one of us also has a "secret name," a "soul name," a name that God has given us as a guard and guide through our lives. We don't just discover our secret name. Our secret name is the name we grow into, the name we learn to

inhabit, the name that awakens in us as our soul grows and as we live our lives.

What if this year your #1 resolution was to find out what your secret name might be? How do you find out what your secret name is? Know you must get off the bench and into the game.

Once in the game. . .

1) First of all, you don't find out your secret name by going inward, by navel-gazing and being focused and fixed on yourself. Throw yourself into the needs of the world. Let loose your compassion.

Think of all the astounding events surrounding Jesus' birth, all the prophets and wise men and seers like Simeon and Anna. Yet Joseph and Mary did not tuck-in to a temple lifestyle. Instead they trudged home to their ordinary life in their very ordinary town. It was living and growing up in Nazareth, learning a trade at Joseph's side, being part of a growing family that struggled to stay fed and clothed, that allowed Jesus to grow "strong" and to be "filled with wisdom" and to find the "favor of God" resting upon him.

2) As you throw yourself into the needs of the world, throw yourself into your passion. it is your passion connected to your compassion that will most likely reveal your "secret name."

Malcolm Gladwell has a new book out. The author of *The Tipping Point* and *Blink* has now authored *Outliers: The Story of Success* (2008). His

major discovery is this: If you want to be a success in your passion, whatever your passion is, you must be willing to invest 10,000 hours of practice to take your passion from pastime to success.

Ever clock how much time you spend watching TV, or playing video games, or texting? 10,000 hours spent on these pursuits aren't going to reveal our secret names. What if we all started the New Year by beginning to stockpile 10,000 hours of compassion and passion on our soul search to discover our secret name. We can only begin to know our secret name gradually, as life unfolds. And we can not be sure what our secret name is until we see ourselves reflected in God, in whose image we are made.

**Conclusion:** But we do have some clues: Here are my "secret names" for some of you. I may not have them exactly right, but at least they're in the right ballpark. Do you know your name? Your secret name?

Joy's secret name is: "Her real name Joy-she is a joy to work with-Joy to be around.."

Buddy, your secret name is: "Joker ." You make me laugh, but often there is a point of truth.

Praise Team would you come up front. . .

Would you find a person you know well enough you can do this-find one person and tell them the secret name you have for them and why-when the music starts it is time to return to your seats.