

### What's In A Name?

#### read

Matthew 1:18-25

#### think

We all have been given a name. And for each of us, our name has a reason and a meaning. My parents chose my name as a way to maintain our family heritage. I was named after my father, who was named after his father before him. My grandfather's name was Walter Mueller. That means that my dad was Walter Mueller Jr. When I came along, I was named Walter Mueller III, and like my father and grandfather, I have no middle name. My first name is a German name which means "ruler of the army."

In ancient times, names were carefully chosen and given because of their meaning. That was certainly the case when the angel sent from God visited Joseph to tell him that he and Mary were going to have a son. The angel went a step further and delivered a message from God, telling Joseph what he was to name that son. And rather than randomly choose just any old name, the angel communicated a name that had more reason and meaning than any other name given to someone before or since. The name *Jesus* is rooted in a word that means "to rescue and deliver." It means that "Jehovah is salvation." The angel tells Joseph that this son "will save his people from their sins." What an amazing reason and meaning for this name!

Matthew tells us that the angel's visit and message took place to fulfill the prophecy recorded in Isaiah 7:14, where Jesus is also given the name *Immanuel*, which means that Jesus is "God with us" . . . God Himself come to rescue us from our sins! In 1 John 4:10 we are told that God's sending of His Son Jesus into the world is the greatest act of love: "This is love: not that we loved God, but that he loved us and sent his Son as an atoning sacrifice for our sins." What a beautiful truth! What a beautiful message! What a beautiful name!

#### apply

- What is the reason you were given your name? What does your name mean?
- What are some of the other names the Bible lists for Jesus? List as many as you can. Then, do an Internet search to see how many more names there are for Jesus, thinking about each of those names and what they signify regarding who he is and what he's done on our behalf.
- The Bible helps us understand more about the name of Jesus by telling us that he is "an atoning sacrifice for our sins." What is an "atoning sacrifice"? Use an online Bible Dictionary to research the meaning of that phrase.

#### pray

Jesus, what a beautiful name you have been given! Give us quiet spaces during the course of our day to sit and ponder your name and all that it means regarding God's love for us. Help us to increase in our understanding of the depth of our own sin and brokenness, along with the reality of our inability to save ourselves. Thank you for being our salvation. Amen.

#### by Walt Mueller

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