

SEQUOYAH HILLS  
PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

**“Baby Names: Son of God”**

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*Praise the LORD! Praise the LORD from the heavens; praise him in the heights! Praise him, all his angels; praise him, all his host! Praise him, sun and moon; praise him, all you shining stars! Praise him, you highest heavens, and you waters above the heavens! Let them praise the name of the LORD, for he commanded and they were created. He established them forever and ever; he fixed their bounds, which cannot be passed. Praise the LORD from the earth, you sea monsters and all deeps, fire and hail, snow and frost, stormy wind fulfilling his command! Mountains and all hills, fruit trees and all cedars! Wild animals and all cattle, creeping things and flying birds! Kings of the earth and all peoples, princes and all rulers of the earth! Young men and women alike, old and young together! Let them praise the name of the LORD, for his name alone is exalted; his glory is above earth and heaven. He has raised up a horn for his people, praise for all his faithful, for the people of Israel who are close to him. Praise the LORD!*

*Psalm 148*

*He will be great, and will be called the Son of the Most High, and the Lord God will give to him the throne of his ancestor David. He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of his kingdom there will be no end.” Mary said to the angel, “How can this be, since I am a virgin?” The angel said to her, “The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; therefore the child to be born will be holy; he will be called Son of God.*

*Luke 1:32-35*

As many of you know, we’ve been in a sermon series about baby names. It is truly a mouthful of names when the Old Testament prophet, Isaiah, prophesied a forthcoming child who would be called *Wonderful Counselor, Might God, Everlasting Father, and Prince of Peace*.

Last Sunday, Pastor Jay focused on this last phrase in that list. He noted that PEACE is given by Jesus becoming powerless and wherever there are hardships, there He is to offer a different peace.

Those four names (or 1 long name, depending upon interpretation) from Isaiah chapter 9 are not the *only* names we use to refer to God’s son. In our Scot’s Confession (we’ve shared over the last month), we have confessed that Jesus also “was the ‘just seed of David,’ the ‘Angel of the great counsel of God,’ & Emmanuel.” A quick internet search told me there

are 198 names for Jesus in the NT. Next Sunday, we will share one last baby name in the series.

Today, we lift up a title/baby name, from Luke 1:32-35, that was given by the angel Gabriel to Mary in Nazareth. Gabriel has just said, "Give him the name of Jesus." Then says, *[Read Luke 1:32-35]*.

PRAYER: May the words of my mouth and meditations of our hearts, be acceptable and pleasing in your sight, O Lord, our Rock and our Redeemer.

In Luke 1:31 and 32, the text declares that God sent the angel Gabriel saying the child will be named Jesus, and he will be called Son of the Most High. Pastor Jay's Christmas Eve message invited us to think about what we would call this holy child. How would we relate to him?

Now, as we are only a few days after Christmas celebrations of his birth, the holy family, of Mary and Joseph, were facing the same question- what is he going to go by? If they lived today, what name would they post on Instagram or Facebook? Yeshuah? Joe Jr.? Joshua? Jesus?

This title, SON OF THE MOST HIGH, was what Gabriel said people would call him. It's more than a name; it indicates his true being, valuable function, key relationship. His identity clarifies God's indelible commitment and engagement with humanity, even from before Jesus comes out of the womb.

This title parallels the father-son relationship that was used to express divine care. The connectedness echoes what we find in other parts of the New Testament. Jesus said "I and the Father are one" "If you've seen me, you've seen the Father." Now, the text goes on to say, this child called Son of the Most High would match up with the prophetic expectations, so that it would be "the true line of the throne of his ancestor David."

The Jews were looking for a Messiah. They eagerly anticipated that he would be a part of an ongoing royal lineage. Joseph's heritage does trace back to David, son of Jesse, and note Isaiah 11 says, "a shoot shall come out from the stump of Jesse." This shoot was projected to be the Messiah.

Once, there was a man who wanted to link up his heritage, to be in-synch with expectations, to be in line with his family. His name was Charles G. Charles G. had a son that went by C.G. (You're not likely to know either man.) C.G. had a son who they called Charles Gordon III. After another generation rolled around, Charles Gordon III also had a son. They kept in line with the titles, naming him Charles Gordon IV. That's my older brother.

When Charles G. heard about this delightful news of his great grandson being named “Charles Gordon,” he had mixed emotions. He was conflicted in his heart and mind. Charles G.’s name wasn’t exactly in step with the subsequent generations’ names. My dad and grand-dad thought that the G in their name matched up with their forefather, when in reality, the G stood for *Grover*, not *Gordon*. Therefore, my brother was named Charles Gordon IV, but this was not legitimate according to genealogical traditions. The one who started this name-calling was Charles *Grover*, not *Gordon*.

So, to the surprise of many, Charles Grover, my great grandfather, at nearly 80 years old, redeemed the family line. He went to the court house in their small town of eastern North Carolina and changed his middle name from *Grover* to *Gordon* so it matched up, so that it was in-synch with the expectations, so that it was the true line.

Like Charles G. redeemed the family, God did the same with the awaited Messiah. God redeemed back to David, but also much further back, even back to Adam. While Adam’s reign of righteousness didn’t last past the Garden of Eden, Jesus’ righteousness reign reached back to encompass even the first humans created AND to redeem us now, AND to redeem those after us!

His redemption is for humanity, as well as all of creation! The Psalm Andrew read addresses this good news. It refers to our Redeemer as a “horn.” Psalm 148 says, “God has raised up a horn for his people.” A horn of salvation. What do you do with horns? They’re for blowing, proclaiming worthwhile news! Think “Go Tell it on the Mountain” kind- of- joy! News for all people, everywhere, and for everything in creation!

The text, in Luke 1:33, goes on to say the Son of the Most High “would reign over the house of Jacob.” And, he shall reign over all. He is the supreme One! The utmost! The God of gods! King of kings! Lord of lords! And He shall reign forever and ever! Although his reigning role would be fulfilled and come to an end while in the flesh on this earth, the kingdom of the heavenly Father and Son will have no end.

This gives us hope, facing all kinds of troubles of this world. It helps us remember that He, who has gone before us, will reign over everything! Stressors, like the shifting sands of different political leaders, threats of bombs in RVs like our neighboring Nashville, or discovery of new strands of coronavirus on top of the virus we’re facing. They will not get us off track. We will not be shaken! Our God reigns!

Finally, the text, in verse 35, says, “the power of the Most High overshadowed.” This word “overshadowing” may confuse us. These days, we could say our older sibling “overshadows” us, meaning something not so pleasant. While it may bring up negative connotations now, it used to mean just the opposite. The word “overshadow,” in the original language of Scripture, is used twice in the New Testament. At the Mount of

Transfiguration and here. It positively speaks of a mysterious haze or cloud of God's brilliancy that casts a protective shadow upon something or someone.

I suspect you might want that gracious goodness of overshadowing. I know I would. I believe our whole world could use this type shielding these days. Psalm 91 starts out, "Those who dwell in the shelter of the Most High will rest in the **shadow** of his wings." I need to rest under God's care, as I face some of my grief during 2020. I need his overarching protection to cope.

Since March, we've all been grieving losses of reunions, graduations, celebrations, anniversaries, and maybe a loved one. When I earnestly ponder about the losses, I think it's longing for certainty, confidence that the relationship will remain good/ strong/ upheld. It's easy to question, during losses, if a connection will be able to weather things. In the tenuousness time of unknown, we long for *relationship* to be validated.

God sending the Son of the Most High is all about relationship! You can't cast a shadow without something there to begin with. God is both with us and covering us like with wings because he longs for a relationship with His creation. The incarnation of Christ is all about deepening our understanding of this relationship. So, if we are grieving, feel abandoned, alone, or have Christmas blues, we can be assured that he humbly came to earth to show his depth of love, by dying on the cross to redeem us!

In our weakness, He is made strong and lifted up. Sharing this where God has redeemed us- this is our daily joy and task, for God's glory.

I'm curious, where in your life do you need the power of the Son of the Most High to overshadow your problems, disappointments, and pain?

Where do you need His protective wings to cover you?