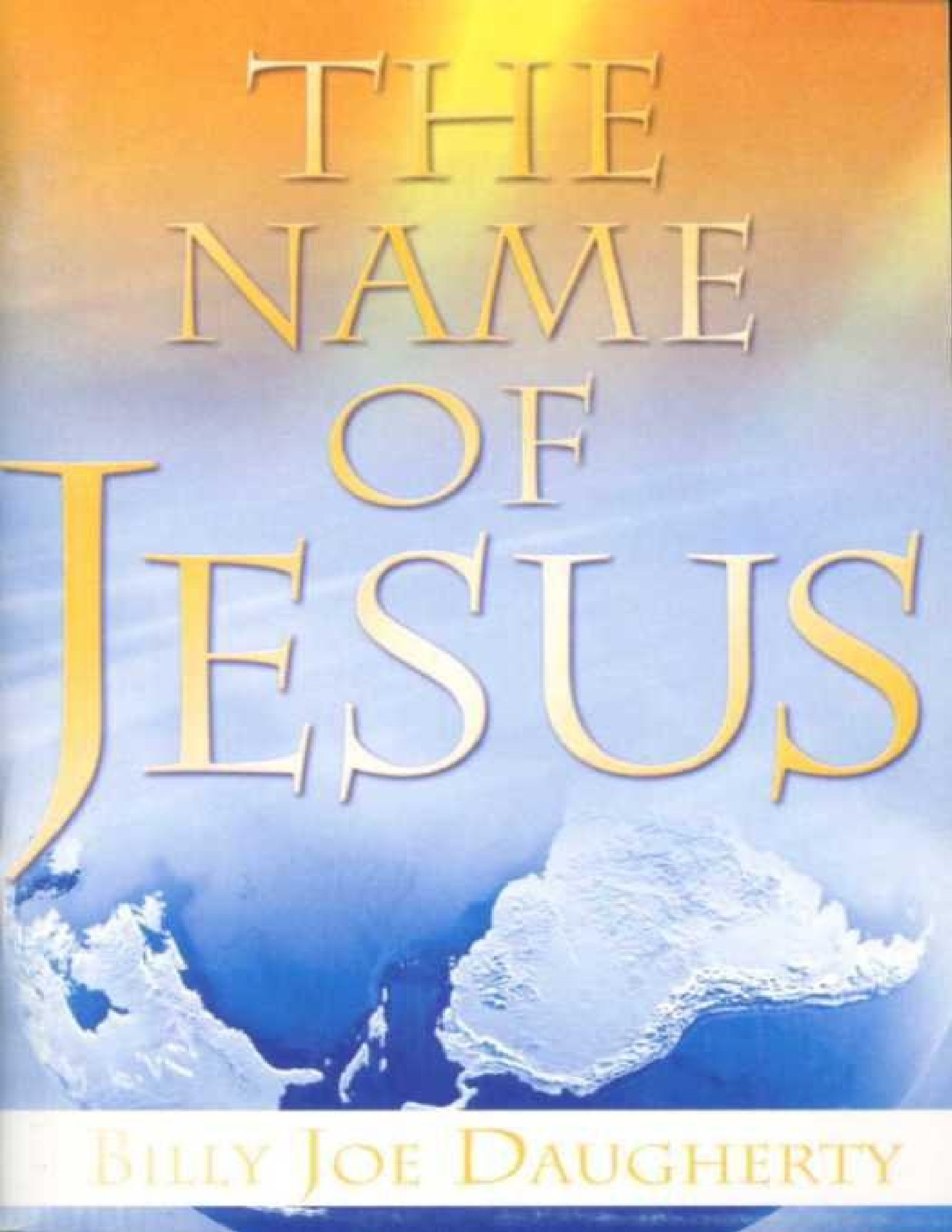
THE NAME OF JESUS



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"God raised him [Jesus] to the very highest place, and gave him the Name which stands above all other names, so that in adoration of the Name of Jesus every knee should bend, in Heaven, on earth, and under the earth, and that every tongue should acknowledge JESUS CHRIST as LORD...."

Philippians 2:9-11 TCNT

1
Salvation: Available Through Jesus Alone

In Acts, chapter 2, Peter was preaching on the Day of Pentecost. The Holy Spirit had been poured out just like the prophet Joel had prophesied and like Jesus had revealed to His disciples. As they began to speak with other tongues, people wondered what it meant. Peter stood up and began to preach the word of the Lord. At the end of his message, Peter told the people about salvation through the name of Jesus: "And it shall come to pass that whoever calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved" (Acts 2:21).

To be saved, you must call on the name of the Lord. It is true that Christ's death, burial, and resurrection paid for salvation for every person in the world, but *no one receives salvation until they call on the name of Jesus in faith.* Each individual must believe. This is why Jesus commanded the disciples to go preach.

Paul talked about salvation in Romans, chapter 10:

How then shall they call on Him in whom they have not believed? And how shall they believe in Him of whom they have not heard? And how shall they hear without a preacher?

And how shall they preach unless they are sent?

As it is written: "How beautiful are the feet of those who preach the gospel of peace, who bring glad tidings of good things!"

Romans 10:14,15

The message of salvation must be proclaimed. People must hear it. After they hear it, they must believe. After they believe, they must call on the name of the Lord. It is a call that is in faith, in sincerity, and in repentance.

There are people who use the name of Jesus in cursing. Some use the name of Jesus as filler when they don't know what to say. And others use the name of Jesus when they are surprised, angered, or disappointed. It is called taking the Lord's name in vain.

Anytime someone uses the name of Jesus in a way other than to praise or to speak honorably of Him, it is breaking one of the Ten Commandments. Jesus' name is too precious to be spoken out when you hit your finger with a hammer or when someone pulls out in front of you in traffic, unless you are calling out His name in faith, saying, "Jesus, save me," or "Jesus, help me."

2

Jesus: Approved Through Signs, Wonders, and Miracles

After Peter told the Jewish people how to be saved, he spoke some very powerful words: "Men of Israel, hear these words: Jesus of Nazareth, a Man attested by God to you by miracles, wonders, and signs which God did through Him in your midst, as you yourselves also know" (Acts 2:22).

The word "attested" means approved, verified, or confirmed. God approved Jesus by signs, wonders, and miracles. The supernatural evidence that God had sent Jesus and that He had God's anointing upon His life was in the visible evidence of transformed lives.

Him [Jesus], being delivered by the determined purpose and foreknowledge of God, you have taken by lawless hands, have crucified, and put to death; whom God raised up, having loosed the pains of death, because it was not possible that He should be held by it.

Acts 2:23,24

Peter makes it very clear that Jesus was crucified, dead, buried, and then raised from the dead. Death could not hold Him. Romans 1:4 says Jesus was declared to be the Son of God by the resurrection from the dead. The resurrection was the undeniable acclamation of God, "This is My Son. He is alive forever more."

Peter continued preaching and explaining the life of Jesus. At the conclusion of his message, he said, "Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly that God has made this Jesus, whom you crucified, both Lord and Christ" (Acts 2:36).

"Lord" means Jesus is boss. He is the King of the universe. He is in charge. He is the King of kings and the Lord of lords. God made Him Lord and He made Him Christ, the Anointed One and His anointing. "Lord" means ruler of all, while "Christ" means anointed of all. He saves, heals, delivers, redeems, empowers, and liberates.

Now when they heard this, they were cut to the heart, and said to Peter and the rest of the apostles,

"Men and brethren, what shall we do?"

Then Peter said to them, "Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit."

Acts 2:37,38

To be baptized in the name of Jesus is to identify with His name. It is a visible demonstration of calling on the name of the Lord and declaring His lordship.

3
Identifying with Jesus' Name

But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, *to those who believe in His name.* **John 1:12**

When you believe in Jesus' name, your sins are remitted and you become a child of God. God puts His Spirit inside of you when you are born again.

In certain Buddhist and Moslem countries, if you commit and submit to the name of Jesus and become a child of God, you are disowned by your family and you are considered as dead. In some places, to be baptized in the name of Jesus is a death warrant. Persecution and possibly even execution often follow baptism in Jesus' name in certain places.

We need to understand that taking on the name of Jesus is similar to taking on the name of another in the marriage covenant. You commit your life to your mate. When you are born again, you take on Jesus' life and His name. You commit yourself to Him. To be baptized in the name of Jesus is to identify with His death, burial, and resurrection, and the benefits He provided for those who would *receive* Him as Lord and Savior and *obey* God's Word.

A few years ago I was invited to pray at a City Prayer Breakfast honoring police officers and officials in our city. Hundreds of people and many law enforcement officers were in attendance. It was a special time to honor and thank those who literally lay their lives down every day for the protection of those who live in our city.

When I arrived I was met by a designated city official and told, "We don't want you to use the name of Jesus in your prayer." I just looked at this person and said, "It's too late." With that, I went on stage and prayed in the name of Jesus.

What other people desire or what they dictate does not rule my life concerning the name of Jesus. What they want to do or not do is up to them, but when it comes to the name of Jesus, other people do not dictate how and when and where I should use that name!

Using Jesus' name is related to His commandments. In the Great Commission, every believer is told to preach the remission of sins and Jesus' resurrection from the dead and what it means to us today. We are to witness of His name in every area of influence, ultimately covering the entire earth.

This Commission to proclaim the name of Jesus was not given based upon people's acceptance or rejection of it. It was given on the basis of people's need to hear it.

4

The Name Above All Names

In Philippians, chapter 2, Paul tells us that because Jesus was obedient to the Father, even to the point of death, the Father gave Him a name which is *above all names:*

Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus, who, being in the form of God, did not consider it robbery to be equal with God, but made Himself of no reputation, taking the form of a bondservant, and coming in the likeness of men.

And being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself and became obedient to the point of death, even the death of the cross.

Philippians 2:5-8

In light of Jesus humbling Himself, of being obedient and dying on the cross, and of being raised from the dead, verses 9-11 say:

Therefore God also has highly exalted Him and given Him the name which is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of those in heaven, and of those on earth, and of those under the earth, and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

It pleased the Father to give Jesus the name that is above every name and that in Jesus and in Him alone is salvation. *The Weymouth Translation* says that God conferred on Jesus "the Name which is supreme to every other name." In eternity, every knee will bow and every tongue will acknowledge that Jesus is Lord. We have the choice to accept Jesus, and if we do, we will declare who He is *now* as well as in the world to come.

"And blessed be His glorious name forever!"

Psalm 72:19

5
Embracing or Rejecting that Name?

The name of Jesus has caused division, even in some churches. There are people who embrace religion, but not the name of Jesus. They like the singing, the prayers, the reading of scriptures, and being around people who have a morality base. But they don't want to claim the name of Jesus and lift it up in public. This division will separate the sheep and the goats. *It is a heaven or hell decision.*

In Matthew 10:32 Jesus said, "Therefore whoever confesses Me before men, him I will also confess before My Father who is in heaven." If you are ashamed of Jesus' name, He will be ashamed of your name.

All across our land there are Christian and Jesus bashers who have taken open season on degrading the name of Jesus and anyone identified with that name. In identifying with Jesus' name, you may be labeled and at times even ostracized and persecuted.

In the '90s there was an edict issued in Tulsa, Oklahoma, that the name of Jesus was not to be used in any public event related to the city of Tulsa. This edict was in place for ten years. Thank God, there were people of God who did not bow their knee to the edict. When they were called upon to speak, they boldly spoke and prayed in Jesus' name. The essence of this edict was that you could use the name of Jesus in your private life but not in any public official setting.

Some people have said that because we live in a pluralistic society with so many different beliefs and backgrounds—ethnic, racial, cultural, and religious—to speak in Jesus' name would be offensive to some people. I've got news for you! The name of Jesus has been, is, and will be offensive to those who choose not to believe in Him. Why? Jesus said, "I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me" (John 14:6). The fact that Jesus is the only way to heaven is what offends some people.

When Jesus was sentenced to be crucified and Peter was publicly identified as a follower of Jesus, Peter denied Jesus and abandoned Him. But after Jesus' crucifixion, Peter repented, accepted Jesus Christ as his Lord and Savior, and was filled with the Holy Spirit. On the Day of Pentecost, Peter stood up in front of the same group of people who only days earlier had sentenced Jesus to be

crucified, and proclaimed, "Jesus is the only way to be saved" (Acts 4:12 paraphrased). This means that Peter was no longer afraid to die for being identified with the name of Jesus.

Until you come to the point where you are not afraid to die for the name of Jesus, you will always be ashamed of it in one way or another. Peter settled it. He very pointedly said to the people, "You crucified Jesus, but God raised Him from the dead. If you will call on His name, He will save you because He is a God of mercy and forgiveness" (Acts 2:36-39 paraphrased).

When you embrace the name of Jesus, that name will release the power of heaven into your life and through your life, not only for you but also for your family members, loved ones, and those for whom you are praying. This happened with Peter and John.

6
There Is Power in Jesus' Name

Peter and John were going down to the temple to pray at the hour of prayer. A crippled man was brought to the temple gate every day to beg for alms. On this particular day, Peter and John stopped as they were ready to walk past the crippled man, and Peter said to him:

"Silver and gold I do not have, but what I do have
I give you: In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, rise up and walk." And he took him by the right hand and lifted him up, and immediately his feet and ankle bones received strength.

So he, leaping up, stood and walked and entered the temple with them—walking, leaping, and praising God.

Acts 3:6-8

What happened? The name of Jesus had power when spoken from Peter's lips because Peter had identified with that name. When you don't identify with Jesus' name and you face a challenge such as cancer, it won't work for you. When you need that name to drive out the devil, it won't work for you. Why? You have no relationship to Jesus or to His name. Jesus' name has power and is released in power to those who have committed their lives to Him. It is very important that you grasp this.

The people had watched the crippled man at the temple gate begging alms for years. When he stood up and walked, the people looked at Peter as someone great or holy. Acts 3:11-16 says:

Now as the lame man who was healed held on to Peter and John, all the people ran together to them in the porch which is called Solomon's, greatly amazed.

So when Peter saw it, he responded to the people:

"Men of Israel, why do you marvel at this? Or why look so intently at us, as though by our own power or godliness we had made this man walk?
"The God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, the God of our fathers, glorified His Servant Jesus, whom you delivered up and denied in the presence of Pilate, when he was determined to let Him go.
"But you denied the Holy One and the Just, and asked for a murderer to be granted to you, and killed the Prince of life, whom God raised from the dead, of which we are witnesses.
"And His name, through faith in His name, has made this man strong, whom you see and know. Yes, the faith which comes through Him has given him this perfect soundness in the presence of you all."

Faith in the name of Jesus can bring miracles, healing, and deliverance when you have a relationship to that name and you are not ashamed of that name.

Sharon and I had married and we were traveling in ministry. When we were back in my hometown in Magnolia, Arkansas, holding services, two men whom I knew very well had suffered heart attacks. They were side by side in the

Intensive Care Unit at the Magnolia Hospital.

Sharon and I went to the hospital to pray for these men. I prayed for them, then I asked Sharon to sing to them, "Jesus, Jesus, Jesus, There's Just Something About that Name."

The nurse in the Intensive Care Unit had been attending our services in Magnolia. As we walked out of ICU, she said, "These men have had serious heart attacks, but as you began to sing that song, the readings on their monitors went to normal."

Both of these men were released in two days. There is mighty power in that name!

7
Persecuted for Lifting Up Jesus' Name

"Now as they [the disciples] spoke to the people, the priests, the captain of the temple, and the Sadducees came upon them, *being greatly disturbed*

.. . " (Acts 4:1,2). Whenever you proclaim the name of Jesus, some people will be disturbed! "Being greatly disturbed that they taught the people and preached in Jesus the resurrection from the dead" (Acts 4:2).

The Bible says that Jesus had commissioned all of the disciples to go and proclaim Him crucified, buried, and raised from the dead, the Son of the living God. This Commission wasn't just to these twelve. It is to all believers in our day too.

Acts 4:3 says, "And they laid hands on them, and put them in custody [in jail] until the next day, for it was already evening."

Peter and John were jailed for lifting up the name of Jesus. Today you may lose your job for using the name of Jesus. People in your office, in the classroom, in your neighborhood, or in your sales office may say, "This is not the place to use the name of Jesus. Do not use it publicly. Keep quiet about the name of Jesus and everything will be all right."

Peter and John proclaimed the name of Jesus publicly and they went to jail for it!

"However, many of those who heard the word believed; and the number of the men came to be about five thousand" (Acts 4:4). Although Peter and John were jailed, five thousand people were saved because they had lifted up the name of Jesus. A little persecution, but a lot of salvation!

And it came to pass, on the next day, that their rulers, elders, and scribes, as well as Annas the high priest, Caiaphas, John, and Alexander, and as many as were of the family of the high priest, were gathered together at Jerusalem.

And when they had set them in the midst, they asked, "By what power or by what name have you done this?"

Then Peter, filled with the Holy Spirit, said to them, "Rulers of the people and elders of Israel: If we this day are judged for a good deed done to a helpless man, by what means he has been made well,

"Let it be known to you all, and to all the people of Israel, that by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom you crucified, whom God raised from the dead, *by Him this man stands here before you whole.*

"This is the 'stone which was rejected by you builders, which has become the chief cornerstone.'"
Acts 4:5-11

In verse 12, Peter said, "Nor is there salvation is any other, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved."

If you are brought before the authorities, or if you are ridiculed for using

the name of Jesus, it is an opportunity to witness that there are not nineteen roads to heaven. There is only one way and His name is Jesus!

Some people say, "That's offensive." It's not offensive to someone who wants to be saved. The name of Jesus is the Rock of Salvation. That's why it must be proclaimed, because without proclaiming it, there will be people who will be lost and go to hell. This is precisely why we have been given the Commission to proclaim Jesus' name throughout all the earth.

It is decision time. What are you going to do when someone tells you, "Do not speak the name of Jesus"? When the decree comes, "This is a professional office and you are a professional. Remember your retirement. You are up for a promotion. You are the provider of your home. You don't want to do anything rash"? Many believers will face the restriction not to speak in the name of Jesus in the days ahead if they haven't faced it already.

Today in Saudi Arabia if you are caught propagating the gospel or baptizing someone in the name of Jesus, you could be jailed or executed. In some countries, whether a person is an adult or a child, they will be dismembered for using the name of Jesus. In America the present threat seems to be, "We will cut your job off."

There are people in churches, supposedly Christians, who have bowed their knee to the world system. They say, "This is a public place and the name of Jesus is not allowed here." Wait a minute! I thought we had a command to go everywhere and proclaim Jesus' name.

Peter didn't say, "I'm sorry, guys. We should have done this privately in the upper room. We shouldn't have come out here in the streets. I'm sorry for disturbing you. I realize it was offensive." No! He didn't back up. Instead he came on even stronger. He said, "Not only was it by Jesus' name that this man was healed, but this is the only name whereby anyone can be saved."

8
Threatened for Using Jesus' Name

If you have denied Jesus' name when challenged not to use it publicly, this is your day to repent. In this hour, the heat is being turned up not to use the name of Jesus publicly.

Look at Acts 4:13: "Now when they saw the boldness of Peter and John, and perceived that they were uneducated and untrained men, they marveled. And they realized that they had been with Jesus." What's going to encourage you to speak the name of Jesus? *You have been with Him!* We're talking about relationship!

And seeing the man who had been healed standing with them, they could say nothing against it. But when they had commanded them to go aside out of the council, they conferred among themselves,

Saying, "What shall we do to these men? For, indeed, that a *notable miracle* **has been done through them is evident to all who dwell in Jerusalem, and we cannot deny it.**

"But so that it spreads no further among the people, let us severely threaten them, that from now on they speak to no man in this name." *So they called them and commanded them not to speak at all nor teach in the name o f Jesus.*

Here is what some people in positions of authority have said: "You can teach Math and Science, but don't mention the name of Jesus."

"You can teach English or History, but don't mention the name of Jesus." "You can work here, but don't mention the name of Jesus." "You can serve here, but don't mention the name of Jesus."

Some people have already blazed this trail.

But Peter and John answered and said to them, "Whether it is right in the sight of God to listen to you more than to God, you judge. For we cannot but speak the things which we have seen and heard."

Acts 4:19,20

If you haven't heard of Jesus, then you probably won't speak of Him. You can have religion—go to church, have a good Bible, give occasionally, and sing the songs—but if you have ever met Jesus, if you have ever heard His voice, then you will speak of Him. The rulers, elders, and scribes demanded that the disciples not speak or teach or proclaim Jesus' name to any person. Peter and John responded, "We must obey God."

9
Obeying God Rather Than Men

In Acts, chapter 5, the disciples continued to speak the name of Jesus and miracles followed. The sick were brought to them and they were healed. Those with unclean spirits were delivered and healed (Acts 5:15,16). As a result, the high priest and his followers rose up against the disciples and jailed them.

Acts 5:19,20 says, "But at night an angel of the Lord opened the prison doors and brought them out, and said, 'Go, stand in the temple and speak to the people all the words of this life.'" The disciples, without hesitation, began to talk about Jesus again!

When the high priest sent the elders to the prison to get the disciples, the jail was empty! The officers' report to the high priest was, "Indeed we found the prison shut securely, and the guards standing outside before the doors; but when we opened them, we found no one inside!" (Acts 5:23).

When the officers went and got the apostles, here is what happened:

And when they had brought them, they set them before the council. And the high priest asked them, saying, "Did we not strictly command you not to teach in this name? And look, you have filled Jerusalem with your doctrine [the doctrine was of the name of Jesus and His resurrection], and intend to bring this Man's blood on us!"

But Peter and the other apostles answered and said: "We ought to obey God rather than men."

Acts 5:27-29

This is a critical issue. Some people say, "I am under authority and the Bible says we are to obey those in authority over us." With one exception: *When the authorities contradict the known will of God [His Word] then you always obey the higher authority, God's authority.* Peter said:

"The God of our fathers raised up Jesus whom you murdered by hanging on a tree. Him God has exalted to His right hand to be Prince and Savior, to give repentance to Israel and forgiveness of sins.

"And we are His witnesses to these things, and so also is the Holy Spirit whom God has given to those who obey Him."

Acts 5:30-32

Gamaliel, a council member and a Pharisee, talked to the council and encouraged them to let the disciples go. He said, "If this plan or this work is of men, it will come to nothing; but if it is of God, you cannot overthrow it—lest you even be found to fight against God" (Acts 5:38,39).

Verse 40 indicates that the council members agreed with Gamaliel, but they beat the apostles and "commanded that they should not speak in the name of Jesus, and let them go."

After the apostles were let go, "They departed from the presence of the

council, rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer shame for His name" (Acts 5:41).

The spirit of antichrist was already at work in the world in the day of the disciples. This same spirit is at work today which threatens people who speak in the name of Jesus. To deny the use of the name of Jesus may be disguised as professionalism or political correctness, but it is the spirit of antichrist. It is against Jesus.

10
Three Hebrew Boys Refuse To Bow

The severe persecution the apostles received for using the name of Jesus is very similar to what happened to Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego when they were commanded to bow to worship the golden image and the gods of King Nebuchadnezzar. They refused to bow and the king told them they would be thrown into the midst of a burning fiery furnace. They answered, "If that is the case, our God whom we serve is able to deliver us from the burning fiery furnace, and He will deliver us from your hand, O king. But if not, let it be known to you, O king, that we do not serve your gods, nor will we worship the gold image which you have set up" (Daniel 3:17,18).

Their answer was simple: "If you do throw us in, our God will deliver us. If you don't throw us in, we will not bow or serve your gods." These Hebrew boys were thrown into a furnace, which was made seven times hotter than usual, for refusing to bow to false gods and to worship the golden image that King Nebuchadnezzar had set up. The men who threw Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego into the furnace literally couldn't stand the heat! They were killed by the flames of the fire. But the good news about these three Hebrew boys is, because they would not compromise their allegiance to God Almighty, the Fourth Man showed up in the fire with them!

Daniel 3:27 says that the fire had no power on the bodies of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, the hair of their heads was not burned, their garments were not affected, and they didn't even smell of fire!

Verses 28-30 reveal the powerful results of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego's refusal to bow to the dictates of the world system:

Nebuchadnezzar spoke, saying, "Blessed be the God of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, who sent His Angel and delivered His servants who trusted in Him, and they have frustrated the king's word, and yielded their bodies, that they should not serve nor worship any god except their own God!

"Therefore I make a decree that any people, nation, or language which speaks anything amiss against the God of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego shall be cut in pieces, and their houses shall be made an ash heap; because there is no other God who can deliver like this."

Then the king *promoted* **Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego in the province of Babylon.**

You Can Refuse To Bow Too!

If you lift up the name of Jesus, people will be saved, delivered, and healed. Why? Jesus said, "And I, if I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all peoples to Myself (John 12:32).

Some people have said, "People will be drawn to Jesus by watching my lifestyle." We are to preach salvation and repentance *in Jesus' name.* Now, it is important to live a life that will be a testimony to what you are saying, but no one will get saved through the example of your life. They will be saved through Jesus' life. That's why we must proclaim His name.

In response to the council's edict to speak no more in Jesus' name, Acts 5:42 says, "And daily in the temple, and in every house, they [the apostles] did not cease teaching and preaching Jesus as the Christ."

In the Columbine school shootings that took place on April 20, 1999, two young ladies—Rachel Joy Scott and Cassie Bernall, and others—were taunted and questioned about their faith in God. Rachel [and Cassie's] last words were a confirmation of the faith they lived and were willing to die for.[1]

Prior to April 20, Rachel had shared publicly, "I am not going to apologize for speaking the name of Jesus, I am not going to justify my faith . . . and I am not going to hide the light that God has put into me. If I have to sacrifice everything . . . I will."[2]

To keep silent about the name of Jesus is to deny Him. If Peter and John had remained silent, they would not have been thrown in jail, threatened, or beaten. Are you willing to stand up for Jesus' name regardless of the consequences?

"We will walk in the name of the Lord our God forever and ever."

Micah 4:5

Personal Prayer of Commitment

Father God, I acknowledge Jesus Christ as Your Son. I believe He was crucified, buried, and resurrected to pay the price to exchange the filth of my life for the innocence, righteousness, and abundance of His life.

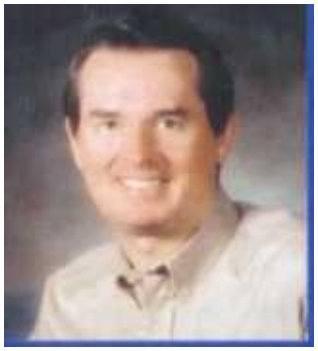
I renounce every work of darkness, and this day I make a decision to step into Your light, Jesus, by accepting You as my personal Lord and Savior. I accept You now, Jesus, and I totally submit my life to God's will for me.

Thank You for empowering me with Your Spirit, Lord, so I will be a bold witness of You to others, and so I will be fearless to use Your name regardless of the threats or persecution. I will not compromise my lifestyle, which I am now imitating after Your example, Jesus, for worldly gain or fame. I will share You every day in my area of influence.

Thank You that today is the beginning of new life for me!

(Signature) _____

(Date) _____



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1 _ Http://www.columbineredemption.com accessed March 17, 2003.

2 _ Http://www.geocities.com/rachelioyscott accessed March 12, 2003.