



## If parents have good reasons for the names they give their children, how much more does God? The Christmas narratives in Matthew and Luke reveal those names, and those names reveal the gospel!

**These questions are designed to extend the impact of the weekend message. Use them to go deeper in your personal study time, with your family and/or with a group.**

**1** Rick began by pointing out that we often give people titles that actually function like names. Share some examples of this from your life. Follow up: Rick also reminded us that “Christ” is not the last name of Jesus, but it is actually a title meaning “Messiah.” **Read Matthew 1:1, 18 and Luke 2:25-26.** Why was it so important to them?

**2 “MESSIAH” MEANS... God’s anointing is on Jesus.** *To accept Jesus is to declare that the search for Messiahs is over.* Why was the practice of anointing people with oil so significant in the OT? How does that help explain the excitement around Jesus at the beginning of his public ministry (see **John 1:41**)? What type of “Messiah” were most people in those days looking for? What should they have been looking for?

**3 ANOINTED AS... God affirms his teaching.** *Jesus has been anointed to deliver God’s truth.* **Read Hebrews 1:1-2.** Why is it important to acknowledge that Jesus is God’s voice? What practical implications does that have for us today (see **Matthew 7:24-25**)?

**4 ANOINTED AS... God accepts his sacrifice.** *The Hebrew people tended to favor priests over prophets.* Why do you think that is so? Follow up: *Hebrews dealt with the issue of Jewish converts being tempted to return to the old priesthood system they knew.* **Read Hebrews 7:23-27.**

What problems do these verses point out about the old system and how is the anointing of Jesus the remedy for these problems? Why is that so crucial?

**5** *The reason Jesus’ priesthood is anointed is because he offered the only perfect sacrifice for sin: himself.* **Read Hebrews 1:3 and 10:4-10.** What stands out to you the most from these verses? Follow up: How has acknowledging Jesus as “Christ” personally impacted your life? How is a “suffering” Messiah good news for the whole world?

**6 ANOINTED AS... God assigns his reign.** *One of the chief questions the gospel asks is, Who is the rightful king?* **Read Matthew 2:2-4.** Why was King Herod deeply disturbed by the birth of Jesus? Follow up: Rick said that “*We live in a world where the Herods seem to be winning, but Christmas forecasts the end of all illegitimate sovereignty.*” What are some specific ways Christmas calls on followers of the Messiah to live in reverent defiance of all pretend sovereigns? How have you experienced that tension?

**7 HIS ANOINTING is where fear ends and joy begins.** **Read Luke 2:10-11.** *Christmas calls us to live with hope, with courage, and with joy.* Share some examples of how the birth of Jesus has helped you live with hope, courage, and joy recently. Who is someone you can share that joy with today?

