

Introduction

Many years have passed since I sat with the saints at the Lord's Supper in Apsley Street Assembly, Belfast. That particular morning Mr. Stanley Mawhinney read in Genesis forty-one, then spoke for a few minutes on the name given to Joseph by Pharaoh, "Zaphnath-paaneah".

It is an intriguing descriptive name for it is, to my knowledge, the only name which can be applied to our Lord which begins with "Z". Furthermore, while the name is somewhat obscure, we can get some understandings of it from various sources:

- a) Hieronymus stated that "Zaphnath-pa'aneah" is Egyptian and means "Saviour of the world." It is a name we could understand since there was such a dearth of food, for it not only affected Egypt (Gen. 41:19), but also Canaan (Gen. 47:13), also "all lands" (Gen. 41:54). There was only bread in Egypt under Joseph (Gen. 41:54).
- b) The Aramaic translation translates "Zaphnath-pa'aneah" as "the man to whom secrets are revealed". Another very apt term, for God had given to Joseph the revelation of:
 - i) His brothers bowing to him (Gen. 37:7-8)
 - ii) That which would happen to the butler, baker, and Pharaoh (Gen. 40:12-13;18-19; 41:17-32)

Joseph As A Shadow Of The Lord

Before considering this name as a seed with developing truths, it is a well known fact that Joseph is one of the richest prefigures of Christ in the scriptures. Some of those features are listed in the following table:

Joseph and Christ	Reference for Joseph	Reference for Christ
Loved by the father	Gen. 37:3	Matt. 3:17
Manifested servant character becoming: . A servant first out of love . Then a servant under law	Gen. 37:12-13 Gen. 39:1	Phil. 2:6-7 1 Jn. 4:14 Gal. 4:4-5
Hated by his own	Gen. 37:4	Jn. 15:25
Conspired against	Gen. 37:18	Matt. 12:14
Was stripped	Gen. 37:23	Matt. 27:27-28
Was falsely accused, yet made no defense	Gen. 39:16-20	Matt. 26:59-60 Isa. 53:7
Was a shepherd	Gen. 37:2	Jn. 10:11
Was sold	Gen. 37:28	Matt. 26:15
Was sent by the Father	Gen. 37:12-13	1 Jn. 4:14
Was the Wonderful Counsellor	Gen. 41:33-37	Isa. 9:6

Joseph Was Called Zaphnath-paaneah, Translated As “The Saviour Of The World”

Zaphnath-paaneah is the meaning of which is given to the Lord on two occasions. (Jn. 4:42; 1 Jn. 4:14)

John 4:42

In the context of John’s gospel the Samaritans had not heard the Lord at Jerusalem or in a Jewish setting, but He was among the ones the Jews had no dealings with! (Jn. 4:9). These Gentiles who sat in darkness (Matt. 4:16) now realized this man was the promised Messiah, was the Saviour of the Gentiles as well as the Jews! Christ was to them “a revealer of secrets” for they understood Messiah was the Saviour of the world. They were not His people for whom He came to save “from their sins” (Matt. 1:21), they were those who were: “Without God, without hope in the world, aliens from the covenants of promise” (Eph. 2:12).

It is interesting but sad that the disciples went into the city to buy food, yet there is no record of them witnessing to the Samaritans. Were they racist, or conformists to culture, or thinking of themselves as a higher people? We do not know, but the Lord being the Saviour of the world discarded all racism and cultural boundaries to bring the gospel to the Samaritans. If His own would not receive Him, here were a people who would.

The Jews did not apply the term “Saviour” to the Messiah, it was restricted to God. This is stupendous for it means these Gentiles were given a revelation by the “revealer of secrets” that the Jews had not accepted. The Jewish nation had seen the evidences of the Lord’s deity, they had heard His claims, the witness of John and of the Father, yet they rejected Him. Indeed, it was on this very point He was mocked and nailed to the cross.

When these Samaritans made the statement “This is indeed the Saviour of the world”, by the clause “this is indeed”, they were indicating He was the unique unequaled Saviour of the world without peer from pagan deities or Roman emperors.

1 John 4:14-16

The context in John’s first epistle is different from that of his gospel. John does not ask for a date, a place and a time how one is saved. He is not concerned about the “apparent” but the real, and gives seven tests to determine if one has eternal life. In the section where the Lord is called “the Saviour of the world”, John is speaking about love (1 Jn. 4:7-21). It is written in a series of parallels. Twice he will write of:

- a) The evidences of God’s love (v. 9, 20)
- b) The priority of God’s love (v. 10, 19). This is followed by:
- c) Love perfected and the individual perfected in love (v. 11-12, 18)
- d) “Hereby” and “herein” (v. 13-14, 17)

It is so easy to say “we love all the saints” and John knows this for he writes: “Let us not love in word, neither in tongue” (1 Jn. 3:18). Lip service can be meaningless words. Obviously these saints did not know or practice the love that Paul wrote of in his Ephesian prayer: “That ye may be able to comprehend with all saints, what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height, and know the love of Christ” (Eph. 3:18-19). Had this been practiced John would not have written ‘Beloved let us love one another (1 Jn. 4:7). Love for a segmented group of the saints is not divine love, love which ignores, cuts off, sees other saints as second rate is not the love of Christ. Note the words of the Holy Spirit which manifest the love of God and Christ and is expected to be in the believers:

- a) “In this was manifested the love of God toward us, because that God sent His only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through Him” (1 Jn. 4:9)
- b) “He loved us, and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins” (1 Jn. 4:10)
- c) “If (better, since, there is no doubt about His love) God so loved us, (note not ‘God loved us’ but ‘God so loved us’) we ought also to love one another” (1 Jn. 4:11).

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What are the characteristics of the love of God? While a number are brought before us in this section, the main point is that the love of God is not bias and separating. All the saints were alike before salvation, guilty and hell deserving. Christ is the Saviour of the world, not just a particular group but totally irrespective of color, clime, class, and creed! Then, since saints all belong to the same Lord, have the same Saviour, and in the words of the Holy Spirit: "One Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all" (Eph. 4:5-6), does it not speak volumes of carnality when there is the ignoring of one another or belittling other saints? Such behavior raises the question of salvation. While I may not agree with how other saints meet, it may not be to my liking yet I have no option but to love them for such is the command of the Lord. Anything less is not the love of the Saviour of the world.

The Revealer of Secrets

The secrets the Lord revealed, that is truths about Him, men would never have known had He not told them. The following table gives a few of them but there could be added His revelation of things to come prophetically (Matt. 24:1-31); of true defilement (Matt. 17:17-20).

Christ revealed the secret of:	Reference	Christ revealed the secret of:	Reference
His intimacy with the Father	Jn. 10:30	Believing in Him results in everlasting life	Jn. 6:47
His relationship with the Father "My Father", "Abba Father"	Matt. 18:19 Mk. 14:36	He exposes their desire to kill Him	Jn. 7:19
His knowledge of men	Jn. 2:24; 6:64	Why the man was born blind	Jn. 9:2-3
What the people were spiritually, sheep having no shepherd	Matt. 9:36	Why Lazarus died	Jn. 11:4
Who He was pictorially, the Door, the Bread	Jn. 10:9; 6:41	The relationship of man to sin	Jn. 8:34
Who he was in reality, the Shepherd, the Resurrection and the Life	Jn. 10:11; 11:25	The relationship of man to Satan	Jn. 8:38, 44
Why the people followed Him	Jn. 6:26	Who would betray Him	Jn. 6:64, 70
He will raise people from the dead	Jn. 6:40	The purpose of God	Jn. 10:18

Concluding Thoughts

When we consider our Lord as the "Saviour of the World" and "Revealer of Secrets", our eyes, minds, and hearts are lifted to realms of the rarified atmosphere of musing on an individual whose:

- a) Saving abilities are beyond comprehension
- b) Keeping power is understanding
- c) Knowledge is unfathomable
- d) Glories must be summed up in the words of the Queen of Sheba:

"The half was not told me"
(1 Kgs. 10:7)

. . . . Rowan Jennings