

Jesus of Nazareth

by David Guzik

David Guzik explores the profound significance of the title 'Jesus of Nazareth' and its implications for understanding Jesus' identity and mission.

Duration: 38:02

Scripture: Isaiah 11:1, Matthew 2:17, Matthew 3:3, Mark 1:24, Mark 16:6, Acts 2:22-24, Acts 10:38

Topics: "Nazareth"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker discusses the misconception that Christianity is cool and that becoming a Christian will make someone cool. He highlights a Christian conference that promoted a cool image, but emphasizes that Jesus did not prioritize popularity. The speaker then introduces the title of the sermon, 'Jesus of Nazareth,' which may seem unimpressive but holds significant meaning. Jesus chose to be associated with Nazareth, a place considered uncool and insignificant by society. The speaker concludes by reflecting on how Jesus was not concerned with popularity and was not easily embarrassed, contrasting this with our own tendencies to prioritize popularity and avoid embarrassment.

Transcript

What I want to talk to you about regarding Jesus today is a title that's given to Jesus You're aware of this right that the Bible in both the Old Testament and the New Testament is filled with wonderful with deep with important titles for Jesus, right I Mean if I would ask you to raise your hand and and call one out you probably could somebody probably say well lion of the tribe of Judah, right the Lamb of God the Alpha and the Omega The first and the last you could go down a list make quite a list of all these wonderful titles for Jesus now I want to talk to you this morning about a title for Jesus that you know But if you're anything like me You haven't really understood the title that well When I say this title for Jesus you can say oh, yeah sure big deal What's so big about that? And that's what I thought but a couple months ago I ran across this title and I started digging into it and I was amazed to find how important this title is and Then I it took me a couple months of thinking about it to sort of kind of Glean out the significance of this title now you can tell I'm sort of avoiding telling you what the title is, right? It's a it's a speaker's trick. I'm trying to build up suspense, right? so that when I when I name it if there's gonna be like a whoo, you know, but Look again. I think you're gonna be unimpressed here.

I'm gonna say it and you're gonna be like so All right, so turn to Matthew chapter 2 All right, Matthew chapter 2 and here's the title that I want to talk to you about. It's the simple title Jesus of Nazareth I See I

told you it would be flat right nothing there just another yeah, right Big deal you well stay with me with this now I came across the depth of this title Jesus of Nazareth as I was teaching through the Gospel of Matthew towards the end part of chapter 2 where it talks about he shall be called a Nazarene I'm gonna get into those verses in just a minute verses 22 and 23 But what I want you to notice now is I started digging into the town say, okay How is this title used in the New Testament? I found that that title Jesus of Nazareth is used about 17 times in the New Testament, but then I saw the tremendous variety and significance of the use of that title for example It was a title that was on the lips of other people Do you remember the little servant girl who tried to associate Peter with Jesus? Right when Peter denied Jesus three times. This is what the servant girl said She said this fellow also was with Jesus of Nazareth a little servant girl Not educated not important background But who does she know this man from Galilee by by that title Jesus of Nazareth? Then I saw another place mark chapter 1 demon Jesus is can is Confronting a demon-possessed man and the demon cries out out of the man and names Jesus.

How does he name him? You guessed it. Let us alone. What do we have to do with you? Jesus of Nazareth What kind of title could be on the lips of a little servant girl and a demon from hell I'll go more When Jesus rose from the dead and the women came to the tomb on Sunday morning and discovered the empty tomb The angel told the women.

Hey, he's not here. And what did she what did the angel say you seek? Jesus of Nazareth and he's not here. He's risen Angels demon servant girl His disciples knew him by this name The two disciples on the road to Emmaus remember that when they walked with Jesus on the way and after his resurrection They didn't know it was Jesus at first, but this is what they said about Jesus.

They said the things Concerning Jesus of Nazareth who was a prophet mighty and deed and word before God and all the people Another guy who just met Jesus his name was Philip He just met Jesus and then he ran off to tell his brother Nathanael about Jesus and when Philip Introduced Jesus to Nathanael spoke about him. This is what he said He said I have found him of whom Moses in the law and also all the prophets wrote Jesus of Nazareth And then I saw this is in John chapter 18 When the soldiers came on that night to arrest Jesus and take him off to be crucified When they came to the Garden of Gethsemane to arrest Jesus, who do you think they asked for they said? we are looking for Jesus of Nazareth and Then I saw Peter day of Pentecost Preaching to thousands for the first time He's confronting the Jewish people with the gospel of Jesus Christ in such a public amazing way the first time He mentions Jesus to that crowd He says Jesus of Nazareth and then later when Peter once again is preaching the gospel for the first time to the Gentiles he preaches it to the household of Cornelius and he's very careful to describe Jesus and that message as Jesus of Nazareth then The two ones that blew my mind the most these two uses When Jesus was crucified Pilate the Roman governor who sentenced him to death Commanded that his crime be written out above his head and nailed to the cross as was the custom in that day And this is what Pilate commanded be written over the protests of the Jews. He commanded that this be written It's written above his head Jesus of Nazareth king of the Jews and it was written in three languages That title was literally nailed to the cross Then this to me is the most amazing one Jesus ascends into heaven right many years after his ascension.

He's enthroned at the right hand of God the Father He's there in his glory in heaven and then one day he interrupts eternity to confront a man named Saul of Tarsus on the road to Damascus and When he confronts Saul of Tarsus Saul falls down to the ground. He cries out. Who are you Lord? And This is what Jesus says.

He says I am Jesus of Nazareth Whom you are persecuting Are you gonna feel for why this title interested me so much? Why I felt there's something here that I'm not getting. What is it? I mean, this is what I saw I saw that this was a title that was used by angels and it was used by demons This was a title for Jesus that was heard in the temple courts and on the common streets It was a title for Jesus used by hostile Romans and by sympathetic gospel writers It was a title for Jesus that was used by those who arrested him and by those who loved him It was used by those who just started following him and it was used by those who had followed him for years It was used by little servant girls and it was used by dignified Roman governors It was used by those who crucified him and it was used by those who preached him as the Savior of the world This title was used to describe him to the Jews It was used to describe him to the Gentiles. This title was used to describe him in Hebrew in Latin and in Greek and most importantly the risen glorified ascended enthroned Jesus used it to describe himself Is it too much of a stretch for me to say that Jesus in heaven right now considers himself Jesus of Nazareth Right.

That's how he introduced himself to Saul of Tarsus So two things I want to talk to you about number one How did Jesus ever become associated with such a title, right? What's the connection between Jesus and Nazareth and then number two? What possible significance does it have? What does it mean? Why is it so important? All right, first things first. How did Jesus become associated with Nazareth? Now chronologically the first mention of Nazareth in the Bible is found in Luke chapter 1 where it describes that the angel Gabriel came to Mary Remember that whole situation Mary and Joseph were from Nazareth Nazareth was where Mary and Joseph met. It's where they fell in love It's where they became engaged to marriage which actually in those days was something called betrothal It was more binding than an engagement in our day, right? It's a big thing to break an engagement in our day, right? Oh, you've sent out all the save-a-date cards.

You can't break the engagement or whatever And those days with a betrothal you needed a legal divorce to break a betrothal So they're got this very binding engagement. They've fallen in love They're gonna be married this all happened in Nazareth Then one day what happens in Nazareth the angel Gabriel appears to Mary and he says to Mary God's favor is with you. You have been chosen to be the woman The chosen woman across all ages to bear the Messiah.

He will be miraculously conceived in your womb Without you ever knowing a man sexually you are going to become pregnant by this miraculous Conception that happens in your womb and that's what happened. It was in Nazareth that the Holy Spirit again We're just given this one word in the New Testament Overshadowed Mary we don't know what that means He overshadowed Mary and as a virgin she conceived Jesus in her womb And then it was in Nazareth where Joseph found out that his engaged wife Fiancee, I guess you would say right Was pregnant Joseph knew that he didn't do it and Joseph felt look for propriety's sake. I got a divorcer.

I got to put her away and Then it was in Nazareth That the angel came to Joseph and say don't you put her away? Because she has never known a man sexually that which is conceived in her is by the Holy Spirit Now again, how would anybody know that right? How would Joseph know that unless the angel came to visit? none of the people in her youth group believed it right and it was in Nazareth that Joseph and Mary had the very quick the very rushed wedding, right? Didn't that wasn't supposed to happen that way, right? It was if you will a shotgun wedding, right? Whoa, all the sudden. Well, they got to get married and It was in Nazareth where the whispering tongues talked all the time. You know how these little towns are, right? I don't have to tell you about little town life, right? Everybody talks about everybody else's business, right? And I also don't have to tell you how long the memory is in these little towns, right? for the

rest of their lives Joseph and Mary would be known as that couple where she got unexpectedly pregnant and they got quickly married, right Everybody would know it the scandal would follow them for the rest of their lives That's our introduction to Nazareth now a lot of stuff having to do with our salvation happened in Nazareth, right and for all of that you might think Nazareth must be a very special place and it was indeed special.

You want to know what was special about Nazareth? It's absolute Unspecialness, I know that's not a word, but you know what I mean, right? It was completely unspecial You see it's in the general region of Galilee the beautiful Sea of Galilee. Have any of you seen the Sea of Galilee? Beautiful, right? It's 15 miles from the beautiful Sea of Galilee It's six miles from the closest major road It has no good water supply it only has one fairly weak well in the center of the village It was an unwalled town and you know what that means had no defense In other words, nothing valuable could ever really be there because if it was bandits would come and take it away It's not mentioned once in the Old Testament It's not mentioned once in the apocrypha that comes in between the Testament and it's not even mentioned once by the Jewish historian Josephus never There aren't even really any interesting archaeological finds in Nazareth about the only interesting archaeological thing that was found in Nazareth was a marble slab with writing on it that described very Interesting events from ancient history that happened somewhere else They didn't happen in Nazareth Again, this is what's remarkable about it as I said before the special thing about Nazareth was its Unspecialness, it wasn't a bad place. It wasn't Sodom or Gomorrah or Babylon, right? It's not a bad place It's not a good place.

It's no place Uninteresting Unamazing Insignificant and if anything it was something of a joke Now every region has a place like that, right? I've been if I question you guys I could figure out what it was Somebody suggested first service and again, I'm an outsider. I have no knowledge of this I'll just give you the name that somebody said first service. Somebody said Bulton versus I Don't know.

I'm I'm completely neutral on this But look even those of you from Bulton you've got a place that you make fun of the people from right Doesn't everybody have a place like that? Nazareth was that place Listen, do you remember the reaction of Daniel when Philip came to him and said hey, I found the Messiah Jesus of Nazareth, what did Nathaniel say? He said there's no way that guy can be the Messiah. He comes from Nazareth and Can any good thing come from Nazareth That place is such a joke. It's nowhere's ville No way the Messiah would come from there.

That's the idea Yet Jesus Identified himself with Nazareth Do you get the picture here? Okay, Mary Joseph angel Gabriel all that stuff happens in Nazareth the wedding that happens in a hurry Right all happens in Nazareth. Then what do they hear? They hear the news Caesar has decreed that the whole world to be taxed. Everybody has to go home to their ancestral hometown So Joseph takes Mary his young bride who's still pregnant and where do they go to they go to Bethlehem, right? They go to Bethlehem Jesus is born they stay there probably for a couple of years the wise men come and visit the wise men visit them They warn them.

Hey, we've been warned by God in a dream that Herod is going to kill this little child You guys have to flee to Egypt. They go to Egypt. We don't know for how long maybe a year Finally they hear from Egypt that Herod is dead and they feel like they can go back to Israel to Judea Because now Herod is dead and they start to go back and they would go to Judea Why not go back to Bethlehem, right? Why not go back to Jerusalem if you were the father or the mother of the Messiah? Wouldn't you raise that Messiah in Jerusalem? Shouldn't he be close to the temple? Shouldn't he be close to those institutions of Judaism

that are so important but no out of fear for the life of Jesus because Herod's son was even more psychotic than Herod was They take him being divinely worn in a dream to Galilee and out of all the villages they chose in Galilee They chose Nazareth to live in And part of that to me makes sense, right that's where their family is That's where the connections are part of it makes no sense to me whatsoever Because if you had a choice, would you move back to the city of whispering tongues? Would you move back to the place where your name and your family was associated with scandal Would you want your little boy to grow up in the village where everybody who's passed him by would say oh he's illegitimate He was conceived before they were married That's what they went back to and they went back to that voluntarily Now Matthew tells us this very interesting.

Look at here verse 22 But when he now the he there in verse 22 is Joseph, okay When he heard that Archelaus was reigning over Judea instead of his father Herod He was afraid to go there and being warned by God in a dream He turned aside to the region of Galilee and he came and dwelt in a city called Nazareth That it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophets. He shall be called a Nazarene. It's very interesting, right? Matthew says he moved to Nazareth He grew up there and this is in fulfillment of an Old Testament prophecy that says he shall be called a Nazarene Now I have to say Honestly speaking.

There's a little bit of a problem with that quotation that Matthew gives here Do you want to know what the quotation is? There is no Old Testament passage that says he shall be called a Nazarene Look all you want through the Old Testament. You're not going to find it. There's something that comes close in Isaiah 11 where it talks about the Messiah being the branch and the Hebrew word for branch is Nazir and I think maybe that's it but I want you to notice Matthew is deliberately showing us his cards here.

This is what I mean by this He's trying to tell us I'm not quoting the Old Testament like I normally do Now this is evident both in the English translation, but also in the Greek original Let me just point it out to you. Look here Matthew chapter 2 go back to verse 17 Then was fulfilled which was spoken by Jeremiah the prophet saying and then he quotes the passage Now look at chapter 3 verse 3 For this is he who was spoken of by the prophet Isaiah saying and then he lists the quotation You understand what he does here He doesn't Attribute this phrase. He shall be a Nazarene to any specific prophet.

He doesn't say it's Isaiah He doesn't say it's Jeremiah. He just says if you notice that in verse 23 again, which was spoken by the prophets He means it in a very generic sense. And this is what he's saying.

He's saying the generic Prophetic expectation was that the Messiah would come from an obscure place He would come from if I could use it nowheresville He would be a humble man coming from an obscure place. He would be the kind of guy who comes from Nazareth That's the significance of it And he was indeed Jesus grew up in Nazareth He matured into boyhood in Nazareth. He grew up into adulthood in Nazareth.

He fulfilled the Responsibilities expected of a youngest son in Nazareth At some time we don't know when and we don't know exactly why probably he died Joseph disappears from the scene and then Jesus became the man of the family. He worked his trade. He supported his family He loved his God.

He proved himself to be utterly faithful in a thousand small things in Nazareth that's where I ran his carpenter shop. That's where he did his business all in Nazareth Yet when you met him when you saw his business card, so to speak Hi, Jesus carpenter Jesus of Nazareth Do you realize you would never be intimidated to meet a guy from Nazareth never? You you would immediately think if when you met a guy from Nazareth, you'd think I'm probably a little better than that guy I come a better place than he does You

see there's a big difference. What if I were to introduce myself to you as David Guzik from Oxford you think oh, he must be smart, right? He comes from Oxford Or if I were to say David from Las Vegas, don't whether you think wow, you must be You know some kind of party from Las Vegas.

Don't you immediately have an association with the place? Well Listen wouldn't it be more powerful if Jesus could say Jesus from Bethlehem Wouldn't that be true? Couldn't he he could sue that right, but he didn't Jesus from Galilee. That's true It's just the region instead of the place but no, he deliberately chose to identify himself as Jesus of Nazareth it stands that title. He shall be called a Nazarene in the plan of God the Father Inspired by God the Spirit embraced by God the Son the Messiah grew up in a somewhat despised town And indeed not only would Jesus become known as Jesus of Nazareth His followers and I think I'm looking at a bunch of them right now, right? His followers would be called Nazarenes Now can I point something out to be called a Nazarene wasn't a compliment It wasn't It was a term of derision.

It was a way of at least gently putting somebody down You're from Nowheresville or you follow the man from Nowheresville. You must be nothing yourself In Acts chapter 24 verse 5 the prosecutors of Paul said this to the judge They said we have found this man Paul to be a pestilent fellow a mover of sedition among all the Jews throughout the world and a ring leader of the sect of the Nazarenes, that's what they called Christians in the first century Nazarenes And he's been called that way today. Did you know that it comes to the present day? Did you know that it stands this way today that today Nazareth is still a somewhat despised City Many of you probably taken tours to Israel.

I bet more than a few most tours through Israel don't go to Nazareth or If they do they just drive the bus through town It's still a somewhat despised place Today in modern Hebrew Jesus is sometimes called ha not three which means the Nazarite They call them the Nazarite today today in modern Hebrew the common word for Christians is not three Nazarenes and today in modern Hebrew Christianity is usually called not three Nazarite ism Today we're still associated with this despised title So what does it mean? What's the significance of this? Well, look, I mean I thought about this for a couple of months. I turned it over over again in my head What does it mean? And I came up with several ideas. I saved what I thought was the most powerful ones for last So, let me move through I think I got six or seven of these We'll just move through them quickly until we get to the last couple ones number one This shows us That what is important to man is often not important to God If I would have planned the coming of the Messiah, I would have never had him come from Nazareth I would have had him come from a place either more dramatically Glorious like Jerusalem or a place more dramatically wicked like Babylon, right? Because man those places are powerful.

They say something about a man What does Nazareth say about somebody? Loser, that's about all it says you're nobody. I Wouldn't have picked Nazareth, but God did I would have chosen a place that said something instead of nothing But again, what's important to man what's important to us is often not so important to God secondly We or maybe I'll just say myself But I guess I can include we We are more concerned with popularity than Jesus was Introducing yourself as Jesus of Nazareth is not the way to become popular It it was somewhat of a stain on his reputation if Being popular was his great concern, but being popular wasn't his great concern. And so he didn't regard it as a stain Number three Jesus is not easily embarrassed.

I Simply to avoiding embarrassment, it's a fairly high priority in my life, right? Doesn't seem to be much of a high priority to Jesus Look, it's just you and me and everybody else all around us. So I'll tell you this. I Grew up in a despised place You know, I grew up from about the time.

I was 2 to about the time. I was 15. I grew up in Rialto, California, I don't know if anybody here knows Rialto.

It's pretty much the armpit of Southern, California It's not a pleasant place Smoggy Dirty now, it's gang and crime infested Wasn't so much that when I was a kid, but man, it was just a smoggy dirty place then when I was 15 My family moved to Ventura Now that's nice right especially compared to Rialto So for about the first 15 years of my life I lived in Ventura and then for about the next 15 years of my life, excuse me first 15 years of my life I lived in Rialto Second 15 years of my life. I lived in Ventura Where do you think I say I'm from? Right. Where do I think of myself as being from? I don't think of myself as being from Rialto.

No way man I mean, it's not like it's a secret I'll tell people if it's in conversation or something, but I don't even think of myself as being from Rialto It's kind of like I got a choice between what I would call my hometown, right? I Don't pick Nazareth. I Pick a better place But not Jesus Jesus says I am happy to be Jesus of Nazareth Number four this shows us that God brings many great things From unexpected places and he likes doing this again. Let me stress to you.

Nobody expected a Messiah from Nazareth nobody Not in the Old Testament not the Apocrypha not even in Josephus. Nobody was looking from Nazareth Number five and this is just a brief point. We could say that running away Rarely gives God glory Joseph and Mary could have run away right from the whispering tongues from the scandalous reputation.

They didn't running away rarely gives God glory and Now for my last two, these are the ones I think are more weighty. So I saved him for last number six Jesus is happy to Identify himself with the weak the despised the unimportant and the obscure Now look, I bet one of those four applies to everybody here. I'll say it again Jesus is happy to identify himself with the weak with the despised with the unimportant and with the obscure I Bet one of those four fits you and maybe there's some lucky people all four of them fits you here Now listen, wouldn't you say that that it was true of Nazareth every one of those four things yet Jesus gladly Identified himself with Nazareth wouldn't you think that once he ascended up into heaven? He could stop identifying himself with Nazareth.

No He still Identifies himself with the weak the despised the unimportant and the obscure and that makes me very happy because that's me. I Want him to identify himself with me and that Jesus would put his arm around Nazareth tells me he'll put his arm around me But it also tells me this I should put my arm around other people who are weak and despised and unimportant and obscure That should be my heart my heart of Jesus towards other people You know what this tells us It tells us That we can be who we really are. I They are if they want to be somebody else then they'll just live a lie or they'll live a fantasy They'll go on the computer right and they'll live out their life through some blogger Anonymous name where they can be a lion behind the keyboard, right? But in real life, they're a little tiny mouse Or they'll they'll play some role-playing game where they can be this or that some simulated life people love to do that, right? Because they don't like their real life They don't like who they really are Then they'll go on the dating site, right? And they love the dating matchmaking site because they can shape their own profile to be a better person than they are in real life right That profile picture that they put up there on the dating site, you know, they stretched it out with Photoshop, right? Knocked off 10 or 15 pounds, right? That's what we do You know someone very close to me my daughter's a matter of fact She just had this this friendship with a girl and she found out this this deep Friendship that she had with a girl and she found out that the girl was a compulsive liar Lied about everything in her life lied about her family lied about her education lied about her job lied about her future lied about her past And on the one hand you're angry on the other hand.

You just think poor girl So unhappy with who she really is That she feels she has to be somebody else now Let me say on some level we do the same thing right here in church Don't we you walk into church and you say man, I cannot be who I really am here. I better put on the mask the good Christian mask This is what I'm afraid of. I Think if you come to church and just put on the mask and be the phony That the real you never hears and responds to the gospel You know, it's the real you that needs to be saved it's the real you that needs to get right with God and Jesus of Nazareth tells us that can happen Jesus of Nazareth tells us you can be who you really are and Jesus will accept that he'll wrap your arms around now I'm not trying to say that who you are is really sweetness and light and beauty and all that No, no, no, the real you has to repent like crazy and get right with God But listen, it's got to be the real you doing it, right? Look Being the part-time Christian with the phony thing.

The problem with that is that the real you may never get saved The real you is certainly never gonna have joy You need to be set free from that you you can have the real you come to the real Jesus because Jesus of Nazareth means That Jesus was who he really was. He could have said Jesus of Bethlehem, but he didn't he could have said Jesus of Galilee He could look I'm from Nazareth. That's who I am.

That's why I grew up This is the real me and because Jesus was who he was we can be who we are. It's okay but you need to come and be real about yourself first and Then the real you has to repent and believe and get right with God Finally number seven Jesus of Nazareth tells us that it's okay Not to be cool This isn't if there's anything that would just strip away all the coolness from your life It would be introducing yourself as Jesus of Nazareth, right? Nothing cool came from Nazareth. No trends ever started there.

No, you know beautiful things No, it was an uncool place And Jesus of Nazareth shows us that Jesus loves and died for and saves and blesses The cool people as well as the uncool people You see many people think that the best way to present Christianity is to show how really cool it is to be a Christian and then if you become a Christian Jesus will make you really cool right, I Saw this on a website again. I don't mean them Mark this conference. I saw a conference that was held on the West Coast this Christian just a general one It wasn't a denominational conference versus general Christian conference.

They were promoting it on their website I looked at it and man those guys were so cool You know their hair the music the layout of the website the links the design man They were so forget live blogging the conference. They were doing a constant Twitter feed from the conference I'm unbelievably cool. And I tell you my first reaction to that was I don't know if I'd fit in there really, I Look at all these uber cool things and I think man, that's not me because I I'm not cool If you doubt that just ask my kids.

They'll tell you that You see I I often feel awkward I often feel out of place I'm not the right look. I don't have enough of the right hair anymore I'm definitely not in the right shape to be really cool. I certainly don't have the right kind of fashion sense And sometimes I see these uber cool Christian guys and I don't despise them.

I go man. That's great. God bless them That's great for them What about me? I've been walking with Jesus for a long time and if being a Christian is supposed to make you cool it's not working for me and then I realized this it's Jesus of Nazareth You see in some way, I don't mean categorically but in some way He wasn't cool.

He deliberately chose not to be cool. He loves me. He died for me.

He saves me He's my Lord now look if you are cool He loves you, too just just make sure that being cool isn't your idol and Please make sure that you bring the real you to the real Jesus Jesus of Nazareth

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