

Circumcision & Name of Jesus 12/31/23
Luke 2:21 B

AT THE END OF EIGHT DAYS, WHEN HE WAS CIRCUMCISED, HE WAS CALLED JESUS, THE NAME GIVEN BY THE ANGEL BEFORE HE WAS CONCEIVED IN THE WOMB.

When a couple finds out they are going to be parents, there are a lot of things they need to do. You have to pick the right doctor, the right hospital. You have to get the nursery all set up. The crib needs to be put together. And, then you have to get all the little outfits for the little one – the onesies, the Green Bay Packers sleepers. And, don't forget the diapers.

Perhaps, the most difficult task of all is choosing the right name for their child. But have no fear, our friends at the thetot.com are here to help. This is a website that gives you expert advice on how to pick out a name for your child. Chief among their expert advice is to avoid trends. Ask yourself: 10 years from now, will the name you have given your child sound absolutely ridiculous? Will the name we give to our child cause other children to taunt and tease them on the playground and come up with silly rhymes about their name. Will their name be of such a nature that for the entire rest of their lives, they will have to spell their name and explain the origin of it and why mom and dad chose that name for them? Thetot.com says if the answer to any of those questions is "yes," pass on that name.

Then, thetot.com offers this wise wisdom that says look to your family tree. Perhaps, there's a name in your family tree that strikes your fancy. You like the way it looks, so you take that name and say it out loud – first name, middle name, last name – and, if it hits a chord with you, you might want to go with that name, because thetot.com says there's something

really cool and really wonderful about perpetuating a name from generation to generation.

The one final bit of advice that thetot.com gives for picking out a name for your child is this: Don't stress about it.

I'm here to tell you Mary and Joseph did not stress one single bit about what to name their child. They did no research whatsoever. They did not consider what it would sound like 10 years from now. They didn't even look to the family tree. They just simply gave the child the name that the angel Gabriel gave them when he came and told Mary that she would conceive in her womb. And, that name is Jesus.

Back in those days, names were much more than just one way to tell one person from another person. Names carried a lot of meaning. Names revealed the true character, the true nature, of an individual. And so the name Jesus does that, for the name Jesus means "He will save His people from their sins."

People need that. You need that. That's made evident in Holy Scripture. The Bible tells us that we are all born sinful and unclean. The Psalmist says, *I was brought forth in iniquity and in sin did my mother conceive me* (Ps 51:5). And the Bible gives you the reason why you were born and conceived in sin. It's because of the sin of Adam in the Garden of Eden. The book of Romans says, *sin came into the world through one man and death through sin, and so death spread to all men because all sinned* (Ro 5:12).

And this inherited inborn sin in your life is manifest in your actual sins. The law of God says you are to love Him with all your heart, soul, mind, and strength. Your sinfulness says "I'm going to love my money, my stuff.

I'm going to love my leisure activities. I'm going to love everything else except God with all my heart, soul, mind, and strength."

The law also instructs you to love your neighbor as yourself. But your sinfulness says I will love myself as myself – above all this. And I'll treat my neighbor with contempt, with disrespect, hatred, anger, lust, adultery. I will lie about my neighbor and spread rumor and gossip about my neighbor. And I'll be more than happy to listen to that about my neighbor. I'll desire what my neighbor has and I will do everything in my power to obtain it.

So your sinfulness, both inborn and actual, is made manifest in your thoughts, words, and deeds every day. That's why every Sunday, you come to worship and confess to God what it is you deserve from your sins – temporal and eternal punishment.

But to save you from God's temporal and eternal punishment, to save you from your sins, Jesus was born of Mary in the Bethlehem stable. He came as the one who would save His people from their sins. And on the 8th day after He was born, He was given that name Jesus and He was also circumcised.

To the Hebrew people, circumcision was a really big deal. It marked you as one brought in under the covenant that God had made with Abraham to be a great nation. It took place on the 8th day of your life. And when you were circumcised it also signified that you were being placed under the obedience of the law of God and that you would live in obedience to the law of God. And yes, when you were circumcised, there was the shedding of blood.

Putting this all together now? Are you starting to see why we celebrate this day, the 8th day of our Savior's earthly life? Jesus will save His people from their sins – that's what His name means. And in His

circumcision, we get understanding how it is He's going to save you from your sins. He's going to be obedient to the law of God for you and He's going to shed His blood for you.

Jesus perfectly obeyed the law of God. He always loved the Lord His God with all His heart, soul, mind, and strength.

And He did it for you, standing in your place. You can see this when He's out in the wilderness being tempted by the devil. The devil shows Jesus all the kingdoms of the world, all their power, all their glory and He says all this I'll give to you if you only bow down and worship me. But Jesus loves the Lord His God with all His heart, soul, mind, and strength for you, in your place. He says to the devil, *"It is written: 'Worship the Lord your God and serve Him only' (Mt 4:10)."*

Jesus even went on to love His neighbor as Himself. That can be seen in Him casting out demons, making the lame walk, the blind to see, the deaf to hear, the mute to speak, raising the dead and all the other miracles He did expressed His love to His neighbor.

But chiefly the love of Jesus for you can be seen in His passion. Jesus takes upon Himself all our transgressions against God's law and makes them His own. And then He goes on to suffer the present and eternal punishment of God for you, in your place. This is what happens as He's betrayed, abandoned, and denied by His friends. This is what happens as He stands trial before His own people and they reject Him. This is what happens as He's crowned with thorns, as He's spat upon, mocked, hit, flogged, as He carries His cross to Golgotha and there, He's nailed upon the cross. There, hanging upon that cross, clothed in your transgressions against God's law, He bleeds and all of God's anger against your sin is poured out upon Him. Jesus dies upon that cross shedding His

blood. And the writer to the Hebrews informs us, *Indeed, under the law almost everything is purified by blood, and without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness of sins (9:22)*. And so by blood and with His obedience your sins have been washed away. And Jesus' resurrection the 3rd day are proof that all of your sins are forgiven.

So put this day all together. On this day our Lord was given the name Jesus. It means He will save His people from their sins. And in His circumcision, we get the understanding how that's going to happen. He is placed under obedience to the law to live in obedience to law for you, on your behalf, and He sheds His blood, both on the 8th day and on His last day when He dies upon the cross. And through all this He lives up to the true nature of His name and His true character. By His obedience and the shedding of His blood, He lives up to the name Jesus, for He has indeed saved you from your sins.

In the Name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.