

MINISTRY BY MAIL
Lutheran Conference of Confessional Fellowship
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Sunday after New Year's Day, January 3, 2016

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(Hymns found in The Lutheran Hymnal, CPH, 1941)

Hymns: 114, 115:6, 115:1-5, 116:1-4, 116:5-6

Lessons: Ps. 90; Rom. 8:24-32; Lk. 4:16-21

Text: Luke 2:21

Sermon by Pastor M. H. Eibs

Fellow Redeemed In Christ Jesus our Lord,

What's in a name? Very much! From the beginning of creation names have been given a place of importance. *'Adam named his wife Eve, because she would become the mother of all the living,' Genesis 3:20.* People in the Old Testament times especially chose the names of their children with great care because of what those names meant.

The name of God, of course, is of highest importance. After God gave Adam and Eve another son in place of Abel who had been killed by Cain, the Bible says, *"At that time men began to call on the name of the LORD," Genesis 4:26.* People worshipped God by calling on his name in their prayers and songs of praise. The Bible also tells us repeatedly that God is very jealous of his name and does not want it to be profaned in any way. He does not want his name to be used in calling down curses on others. He does not want his name to be used uselessly or carelessly as when people exclaim, "O my God!" or in anger say, "Jesus Christ!" When God gave the Ten Commandments he specifically said, *"You shall not misuse the name of the LORD your God, for the LORD will not hold anyone guiltless who misuses his name," Exodus 20:7.* To be impressed with the importance of the name of God, we should remember the first Petition of the Lord's Prayer, *"Hallowed be Thy name," Matthew 6:9. (NKJV)*

Most important of all in all our worship and Christian life is the name of Jesus. That name stands out above all others. Let us begin the New Year in Jesus' name and meditate on that holy and precious name,

JESUS.

1. **What his name means;**
2. **How he was born under the Law when his name was given; and,**
3. **How we may honor the name of Jesus in this New Year.**

"On the eighth day, when it was time to circumcise him, he was named Jesus, the name the angel had given him before he had been conceived." The naming of a male child was done in connection with the circumcision on the 8th day after the birth. The naming of the Virgin's Son Jesus was not done by Mary and Joseph. God chose the name that his Son should have. God announced the name of his Son already before his conception and birth. He announced it by means of the angel Gabriel who said to Mary: *"You will be with child and give birth to a son, and you are to give him the name Jesus," Luke 1:31.* God also sent an angel to Joseph to tell him, *"Do not be afraid to take Mary home as your wife, because what is conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. She will give birth to a son, and you are to give him the name Jesus, because he will save his people from their sins," Matthew 1:20b- 21.* Matthew's Gospel also records that when Jesus was born, Joseph *"gave him the name Jesus," Matthew 1:25b.*

There are other names given in the Bible for God's Son. Isaiah prophesied of the coming Messiah, *"The virgin will be with child and will give birth to a son, and will called him Immanuel," Isaiah 7:14.* Immanuel means *"God with us," Matthew 1:23.* Isaiah also wrote *"He will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace," Isaiah 9:6b.* It is said of Paul after his conversion, *"At once he began to*

preach in the synagogues that Jesus is the Son of God,” Acts 9:20. When Jesus announced his suffering and death, he called himself *“Son of Man,” Luke 9:22.* John the Baptist called Jesus, *“Lamb of God,” John 1:29.* Jesus called himself *“Bread of Life,” John 6:35,* and *“Light of the world,” John 8:12.* The book of Revelation calls him, *“King of Kings and Lord of Lords,” Revelation 19:16.* Peter in his confession gives Jesus’ official name, *“You are the Christ, the Son of the living God,” Matthew 16:16.* Christ means the Anointed One. John calls him, *“Jesus Christ, the Righteous One.” 1 John 2:1.*

No matter what Bible name we use for Jesus, this one supreme truth should always be in our thoughts: God sent his one and only Son to save us from our sins. We all needed to be saved because we are Adam’s descendants, and the Bible says, *“Just as sin entered the world through one man, and death through sin, and in this way death came to all men, because all sinned,” Romans 5:12.* The Bible says, *“There is no difference, for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, and are justified freely by his grace through the redemption that came by Christ Jesus,” Romans 3:22-24.* We have salvation because Jesus *“is the atoning sacrifice for our sins, and not only for ours but also for the sins of the whole world,” 1 John 2:2.* Jesus has promised us eternal life. He says, *“I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in me will live, even though he dies,” John 11:25.*

These are the Bible truths the Lord wants us to believe, and in his Word we have this promise just as the prophets of old testified *“that everyone who believes in him receives forgiveness of sins through his name,” Acts 10:43.*

Now we want to learn from our text, **how Jesus was born under the Law when his name was given.**

2.

Jesus’ name was given formally when he was circumcised on the eighth day after his birth. Jesus was circumcised because that is what the Old Testament law of God commanded, and Paul writes, *“When the time had fully come, God sent his Son, born of a woman, born under law to redeem those under the law, that we might receive the full rights of sons,” Galatians 4:4-5.* All of us are subject to the Law of God. God gave his holy Law to be kept perfectly, for nothing else would satisfy the holy God. He says, *“Be perfect, therefore, as your heavenly Father is perfect,” Matthew 5:48.* Now we know that no human being can possibly fulfill all the demands of the Law of God. Therefore, God sent his Son into this world as a true man to be *“born under law”* as our Divine Substitute.

Our Savior was perfectly obedient to his heavenly Father. In theology we speak of the active and passive obedience of Christ. His active obedience was that he fulfilled every demand of God’s Law. The Bible says, *“We have one who has been tempted in every way, just as we are – yet was without sin,” Hebrews 4:15.* God’s plan of salvation was that his Son also suffer and die and shed his blood for sinners. His suffering and death, even the shameful death by crucifixion, was Jesus’ passive obedience. He permitted these shameful things to be done to him for our sake, that we might be redeemed from all sin, from death, and from the power of the devil.

When Jesus, as our text tells us, was circumcised on the eighth day after his birth, he began both his active and his passive obedience to the Law. He kept the Law of God which says, *“For the generations to come every male among you who is eight days old must be circumcised,” Genesis 17:12.* That was his active obedience. On the same day, with the cutting of the foreskin in the act of circumcision, Jesus shed the first drop of blood for us, *“and the blood of Jesus, his Son, purifies us from every sin,” 1 John 1:7.* So it was that Jesus was actively and passively obedient to God’s Law as our Divine Substitute.

Now that we have heard what the name of Jesus means, and what Jesus did for our salvation, let us also give some thought to **how we may honor the name of Jesus in this New Year.**

3.

The first way in which we may honor the name of Jesus in this New Year is to acknowledge in true faith what Peter preached: *“Salvation is found in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given to men by which we must be saved,” Acts 4:12.* The name of Jesus is not one name among many in which there is hope of salvation. Jesus is not one Savior among many. There is no hope of salvation in the name of Mary the mother of Jesus. There is no hope of salvation in the name of Allah, the false God in the religion of Islam. There is hope of salvation in one name only and that is the name of Jesus, the one and only Son of God. In his missionary journeys Paul preached, *“I want you to know that through Jesus the forgiveness of sins is*

proclaimed to you. Through him everyone who believes is justified from everything you could not be justified from by the law of Moses,” Acts 13:38-39. There is no salvation by performing so-called good works, but “whoever believes in the son has eternal life,” John 3:36.

To acknowledge this means more than to say it with our mouth. It means to accept it as the truth of salvation. It means to believe it with our heart. It means to honor the name of our Savior and say with the poet,

“All hail the pow’r of Jesus’ name!

Let angels prostrate fall;

Bring forth the royal diadem

And crown Him Lord of all” (The Lutheran Hymnal: 339:1)

To honor Jesus’ name in this New Year means that we will cling to that precious name as our only hope and comfort as poor sinners, and say, ***“How sweet the name of Jesus sounds in a believer’s ear! It soothes his sorrows, heals his wounds, and drives away his fear.” (The Lutheran Hymnal: 364:1)***

To honor Jesus’ name in this New Year means that we will confess him as Lord and Savior before all men without any fear of what might happen to our life and reputation.

“Ashamed of Jesus, that dear Friend

On whom my hopes of heav’n depend?

No, when I blush, be this my shame,

That I no more revere His name.” (The Lutheran Hymnal: 346:4)

To honor Jesus’ name in this New Year means that in every time of need in our daily life we will come to our heavenly Father for help and pray for what we need and want in the name of our Savior who has promised, ***“I tell you the truth, my Father will give you whatever you ask in my name,” John 16:23.***

To honor Jesus’ name in this New Year means that we will gladly hear his Word preached and let nothing and no one lead us away from his Word of Truth. He has said, ***“If you hold to my teaching, you are really my disciples. Then you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free,” John 8:31- 32.***

Finally, to honor Jesus’ name in this New Year means that we will help spread the Gospel Word to our unenlightened fellowmen. So as we begin a New Year let us pray:

“My gracious Master and my God,

Assist me to proclaim,

To spread through all the earth abroad,

The honors of Thy name.” (The Lutheran Hymnal: 360:2) Amen.

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Edited by Robert Mehlretter)