

## THE CIRCUMCISION AND THE NAME OF JESUS

Hymns: 87, 115, 114, 108

The INTROIT

(Ps.8:1,4; Is.63:16)

O Lord, our Lord, how excellent is Thy name in all the earth; who hast set Thy glory above the heavens. What is man that Thou art mindful of him; and the Son of Man that Thou visitest Him? Thou, O Lord, art our Father and our Redeemer; Thy name is from everlasting.

The COLLECT

O Lord God, who for our sakes hast made Thy blessed Son, our Savior, subject to the Law and caused Him to endure the circumcision of the flesh, grant us the true circumcision of the Spirit that our hearts may be pure from all sinful desires and lusts; through Jesus Christ, Thy Son, our Lord, who liveth and reigneth with Thee and the Holy Ghost, ever one God, world without end.

The FIRST LESSON

Isaiah 55:1-13

Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters, and he that hath no money; come ye, buy, and eat; yea, come, buy wine and milk without money and without price. Wherefore do ye spend money for *that which is* not bread? and your labour for *that which* satisfieth not? hearken diligently unto me, and eat ye *that which is* good, and let your soul delight itself in fatness. Incline your ear, and come unto me: hear, and your soul shall live; and I will make an everlasting covenant with you, *even* the sure mercies of David. Behold, I have given him *for* a witness to the people, a leader and commander to the people. Behold, thou shalt call a nation *that* thou knowest not, and nations *that* knew not thee shall run unto thee because of the LORD thy God, and for the Holy One of Israel; for he hath glorified thee.

Seek ye the LORD while he may be found, call ye upon him while he is near: Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts: and let him return unto the LORD, and he will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon.

For my thoughts *are* not your thoughts, neither *are* your ways my ways, saith the LORD. For *as* the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts.

For as the rain cometh down, and the snow from heaven, and returneth not thither, but watereth the earth, and maketh it bring forth and bud, that it may give seed to the sower, and bread to the eater:

So shall my word be that goeth forth out of my mouth: it shall not return unto me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper *in the thing* whereto I sent it.

For ye shall go out with joy, and be led forth with peace: the mountains and the hills shall break forth before you into singing, and all the trees of the field shall clap *their* hands. Instead of the thorn shall come up the fir tree, and instead of the brier shall come up the myrtle tree: and it shall be to the LORD for a name, for an everlasting sign *that* shall not be cut off.

The GRADUAL

(Ps.98:3,4,2; Heb.1,2)

*P:* All the ends of the earth have seen the salvation of our God:

**C:** make a joyful noise unto the Lord, all the earth.

*P:* The Lord hath made known His salvation:

**C:** His righteousness hath He openly showed in the sight of the heathen. Hallelujah!

**Hallelujah!**

*P: God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in times past unto the fathers by the prophets:*

**C: hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son. Hallelujah!**

**The EPISTLE**

**Galatians 3:23-29**

But before faith came, we were kept under the law, shut up unto the faith which should afterwards be revealed. Wherefore the law was our schoolmaster *to bring us* unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith. But after that faith is come, we are no longer under a schoolmaster. For ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus. For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus. And if ye *be* Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise.

**The HOLY GOSPEL**

**St. Luke 2:21**

And when eight days were accomplished for the circumcising of the child, his name was called JESUS, which was so named of the angel before he was conceived in the womb.

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Luke 2:21 — “His Name Was Called Jesus”

INTRODUCTION

I. WHEN EIGHT DAYS WERE ACCOMPLISHED FOR THE CIRCUMCISING

II. HIS NAME WAS CALLED JESUS

III. SO NAMED OF THE ANGEL BEFORE HE WAS CONCEIVED

CONCLUSION

Luke 2:21 — “His Name Was Called Jesus”

Grace, mercy, and peace to you all from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.  
Amen.

The Gospel reading appointed for the Circumcision and Name of Jesus is Luke 2:21:

**And when eight days were accomplished for the circumcising of the child, his name was called JESUS, which was so named of the angel before he was conceived in the womb.**

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

INTRODUCTION

Today we enter into a new year according to our secular calendar. Such a day serves for a time of reflection, a time for resolutions for both renewal of goals and for new goals. Self-examination is inevitable. Some try to avoid this or to minimize it through excesses of partying or of alcohol or eating. But today is more importantly the eighth day of our Lord’s birth as our brother who was born to save us from our sin and all that sin has pressed upon us. It is the day on which the name of salvation was placed upon Him in accord with His being placed under God’s sign of the Old Testament. All that this Testament was to accomplish would be fulfilled in the life and death of this very special baby. Luke recorded this for us in order that we would be sure of it.

I. WHEN EIGHT DAYS WERE ACCOMPLISHED FOR THE CIRCUMCISING

**And when eight days were accomplished for the circumcising of the child, his name was called JESUS, which was so named of the angel before he was conceived in the womb.**

Is this the way that people record things ordinarily? Is Luke drawing our attention to something important, something that ordinarily is not treated with such attention? Consider how Luke begins his accounting:

**Forasmuch as many have taken in hand to set forth in order a declaration of those things which are most surely believed among us, Even as they delivered them unto us, which from the beginning were eyewitnesses, and ministers of the word; It seemed good to me also, having had perfect understanding of all things from the very first, to write unto thee in order, most excellent Theophilus, That thou mightest know the certainty of those things, wherein thou hast been instructed. (Luke 1:1-4)**

Luke begins with a reference to the many others who have written regarding the matters of the faith shared by all who are in Christ. In the Bible we have four accounts of the life and ministry of Jesus, and of these, Luke is the only one who gives such attention to these details of

the Lord's birth. He tells Theophilus that his intention is to provide an accounting that affirms the certainty of those things wherein he has been instructed.

Luke is writing especially for the predominately Gentile churches. His particular concern is that they have an accounting that clearly demonstrates that Jesus is the fulfillment of the promises made in connection with the covenant made many centuries before and that the old requirements of the Old Testament regulations are filled up completely through this Jesus. Since the Gentile churches did not have the many centuries of instruction that the Jewish synagogues had, much confusion was generated by those of the circumcision who insisted on mingling the old things with the new as still being necessary. Luke wants to insure that the saints know beyond any doubt that the purpose for these old requirements was to direct sinners to rely upon the merits of Jesus and not upon their own merits. He wants the saints to know that Jesus is the fulfillment.

Thus Luke begins with the account of the fulfillment of the Lord's forerunner, John the Baptizer. Luke tells of the angelic message given to Zachariah concerning both John and of the LORD. Luke tells of the message of the angel Gabriel to Mary concerning the fact that she was chosen to be the one to bear the promised one into the world, this Jesus, the Son of God. Luke tells of the Savior's birth in Bethlehem, as was foretold. He tells of the angelic announcement to the shepherds and how they found everything just as they had been told. Next Luke tells of the circumcision and naming of Jesus.

In this accounting Luke gives very specific information regarding the requirements of the Old Testament, requirements that were being filled up to completion in the life of this Jesus. The bloody sacrament of Circumcision, with the cutting off and casting away of the flesh of the foreskin, was given by the LORD to Abraham as a means of binding the saints to the promises concerning what this Jesus would be and do. The blood that this testament shed was the blood of Jesus, blood which was already of the people of the promise, blood which began with Jesus in the creation and now would be shed in His own flesh. The cutting off of the flesh separated the saints from the Gentile unbelievers, those who remained unclean in their unbelief. God placed His seal upon them in their flesh of procreation, serving to keep them ever mindful of the one who would come through this bearing of the promised Seed of Woman. Jesus was this flesh that would be cut off from the people of God, carrying their judgment of uncleanness and being cast away in judgment for the sake of all sinners. This Jesus would ordain the new circumcision, which would cleanse the entire person once and for all through water and Spirit.

Luke makes certain to record that in Jesus the very letter of the Law of the Testament was fulfilled. The code called for the eighth day, the first day following the first week. In Jesus, all has been fulfilled.

## II. HIS NAME WAS CALLED JESUS

**And when eight days were accomplished for the circumcising of the child, his name was called JESUS.**

Jesus, Yehoshua, Yahweh saves, this is the name given to this child born of the virgin of the house and lineage of David in connection with His circumcision on the eighth day. Jesus, the LORD's salvation, was cut in His most private part, the part that Adam tried to hide, so as to bleed for us. His flesh was exposed and broken and His blood was shed for our salvation on the eighth day. He was wounded for our transgressions. Our sorrow was made to be His as this

baby cried out in pain. His blood was poured out for the many for the remission of sins, just as He proclaimed on the night of His betrayal in connection with the cup of the New Testament in His blood.

Jesus, Yahweh Saves, is the name given to this child. Both parents were children of this blood, though Joseph was not the blood father of this child. Nevertheless, according to the code, both parents were of the blood. Both by the Seed of Woman and by fatherly adoption, this child was the son of David, born in the city of David, because of Joseph the husband of Mary. Every little piece, every jot and tittle, comes together for fulfilment in this one given the name of Jesus.

This connection of the tribulation on account of sin was declared already to the woman in Genesis 3:16.

**Unto the woman he said, I will greatly multiply thy sorrow and thy conception; in sorrow thou shalt bring forth children; and thy desire *shall be* to thy husband, and he shall rule over thee.**

This often has been interpreted as the curse. But the curse is the curse of sin. What is declared to the woman is promise. Here the LORD gives a sign for all future generations, a sign that serves to remind all who come into this world that the curse of sin is real and terrible, but that through childbearing women serve as the means through which the one who takes the sin of the world comes into the world. Here the LORD promises the woman that even though she has chosen the way of deception and death, that she and her daughters would be preserved in their desire for their husband, that they would be given in marriage unto childbearing until Jesus would be born of the virgin. To be sure that this connection would not be forgotten, the burden of menstruation would be established and parturition would become a frighteningly painful experience. All of this would perpetually point to the promised Jesus.

Adam certainly understood this, when he then turns to his wife and gives her the name Life, or Eve. Today we live in the fulfillment of these wonderful promises. The babe born of Mary is Jesus, Yahweh Saves.

### III. SO NAMED OF THE ANGEL BEFORE HE WAS CONCEIVED

**And when eight days were accomplished for the circumcising of the child, his name was called JESUS, which was so named of the angel before he was conceived in the womb.**

Luke makes certain that we understand that neither Mary nor Joseph acted in accord with their own interpretation or reasoning in the giving of this name. This name is from eternity. This is the name that the LORD Himself declared from eternity, repeatedly promising that His salvation would be through this child. He sent the angel Gabriel to Mary to prepare her for the mighty work that God was about to fulfill through her. Gabriel proclaimed this name to her. This name was also announced to Joseph, as Matthew reports. And so, when the time came to name this child, the name that had been proclaimed to them was the name that they named, Jesus.

Luke wants us to understand why St. Peter boldly declared in Acts 4:12: **“there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved.”** Luke wants us to know the interconnectedness of all that we have been taught concerning Jesus. This name is not

just a name chosen to represent what zealous and desperate men desired. This name is not invented by men to give a sense of hope. This name is given by God Himself concerning who He declares this child to be. This name is given by God Himself concerning what He promises to do through this child. This name is announced by an angel sent by God to proclaim that this child is Himself God incarnate, Yahweh Saves. This is the one who is called Wonderful, Counselor, the Mighty God, The Everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace. This is the Redeemer and Savior through whom and in whom Man is reconciled to God and all things are made new and right and good, just as the eighth day demonstrates.

All of this was established before He was conceived in the womb. All of this was proclaimed before He was conceived in the womb. Mary had nothing to do with this. Joseph had nothing to do with this. Later followers of Jesus had nothing to do with this. They simply proclaimed what had been proclaimed to them. Today we hear it and rejoice in it with them. Today we gladly receive this name and what it says. This child IS Jesus, Yahweh Saves!

#### CONCLUSION

Today is the eighth day of Christmas, the day of the circumcision and naming of Jesus. Yes, it is also the first day of the new calendar year. While we indeed may look to the new year as an opportunity to resolve to do various intended good things, even before we begin we know that we will fail to fulfill completely what we resolve to do. But with the circumcision and naming of Jesus we behold the One who fulfills all that has been promised. His name declares the LORD's salvation as being completely fulfilled. His name promises this salvation to us as His free gift administered through water and Spirit and renewed again and again through bread and wine. His flesh and blood, sacrificed already on this day and again on Good Friday, these will be broken for us and poured out again for us this day. All that we have been instructed concerning these is confirmed for us in this blessed account of the circumcision and naming of Jesus. In the Name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

The peace of God that surpasses all understanding will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus forever. Amen.