

What's in a Name?

Scripture Reading — Matthew 1:21-23

*“She will give birth to a son, and you are to give him the name Jesus ...”
Matthew 1:21 —*

Do you think Joseph and Mary might have talked about the names of their future children before the angel came? Had they perhaps shared their hopes for a family, Joseph’s plans for a trade, Mary’s vision of their life together? If so, their plans were changed with the angel’s announcement. They would have a son, and he would not be called Joseph Junior. His name would be Jesus— like the ancient Joshua, which means “the Lord saves.”

Why does God specify a name? Does one’s name really shape one’s life? In 1958 a man named Robert Lane named his baby boy Winner. He named his next son Loser. When the boys grew up, Winner developed a criminal record, while Loser got a college scholarship and joined the New York Police Department. So what’s in a name?

In Jesus’ case there’s a mission in his name. He would save his people from their sins! He would also be called Immanuel (“God with us”) and “Son of the Most High” (Luke 1:32) and “the Son of God” (Luke 1:35). So he is Immanuel-who-saves.

Do you know what your name means? My last name apparently means “beloved rooster.” Impressive, huh? Jesus’ name means exactly what it says: “the Lord saves.” And I am received by God because when Jesus got older, he lived up to that name.

Prayer

Dear Jesus, thank you for living up to your name. Thank you for coming to live among us and to be our Savior from sin and death. We praise your name, O Lord! Amen.

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