



# Sunday Reflection

## Season of Christmas

in the Charges of St Margarets, Renfrew  
& St Johns, Johnstone



For Sunday 3 January 2021

# The Naming of Jesus

## Christmas 2

When asked the Israelites bore the name of God, so God's people continued to bear his name. In the worship of our lives, we are called to live up to that name, and to know its blessing, so that our worship bears witness to God's presence and promise amongst us and in the world he created. Let us worship the one who is with us and has called us to be his.

### Reflection for this week's Gospel

**"...and he was called Jesus, the name given by the angel before he was conceived in the womb." *Luke 2.21***

#### An Illustration to set the scene

New parents know the responsibility and joy of choosing a name for their baby, delight in discovering the ancient meanings of names and take care in the significance of names.

Parents might choose a traditional family name, or honour of friend or relative by giving that person's name to a child.

Some names can take on meanings by association with good or bad memories and characters known to us.

School children can invent hurtful nicknames, and people can "earn a good (or bad) name" for themselves in life.

It has been a traditional to take on a husband's name at marriage for women, though to choose to include the maiden

and married surname together reflects an authentic view of marriage too.

To “live up to a name”, to “give a bad name” and to “seek a name for oneself” are common phrases in our culture.

We know the importance of a name.

Our name gives us identity.

## **Looking at the teaching of the Gospel**

The shepherds, on seeing the baby Jesus, were able to return to their work glorifying and praising God, the beginning of all worship, because they had found the angels’ message to be true.

The central reason to praise God is the coming of Jesus as saviour, and praising God reflects the heavenly activity of the angels. Hymn singing, enthusiastic evangelistic joy-sharing, and quiet awe-struck contemplation, are all forms of authentic worship which glorify God and give him his name.

The angels’ hymn of tribute to the finished work of Christ in their birth announcement to the shepherds, the wonder and excitement seen in the shepherds’ response to their encounter with the child, and the quiet retention and meditation on the events of Jesus’ life seen in Mary as she “pondered” - all these responses of the worship of different hearts who witnessed the life of Jesus and have cause to respond.

The shepherds’ praise of God echoes the praise of the angels, and reminds us of the communal praise of God’s people at collective worship. But the quiet meditation of Mary, the mother of Jesus, points us to the worship of our normal daily lives, living out our lives with our promise-keeping God, and remembering who we are in his love.

Whatever the form of worship, it is always a response to God in the naming of Christ, his Son. We can learn to let that name lead the worship of his people’s lives, just like the

shepherds did on the hillside. Their worship took them back into their daily lives, back to their sheep, to continue in their witness to the people there with new meaning and understanding.

They didn't remain gazing at the holy child, but their experience resourced them and gave them strength and encouragement in their daily lives.

So too we can expect to spend our whole lives caught up in a rapturous experience of worship, but we will find that those experiences can resource us through the dryer times.

As the angels' worship bore testimony to God's glory to the shepherds, so too the shepherds bore testimony to the people they knew, as they told their story.

Mary's heart bore silent but powerful testimony to the child she held.

To recognise Jesus is to give him his name, and to worship him with our whole lives.

### **How can we reflect on the application to our lives?**

To bear the name of "God's people" is to lead lives of worship and witness to the presence of God in his Son and by the power of his indwelling Spirit.

We are called to live to the name which we bear, the name of the one who has in turn named us.

Imagine that your true name is now

"loved of God",

"child of God" or

"beloved", and wonder whether it would affect how you lived and thought about yourself and others.

Let yourself ponder these names, given to you by the Son of God, and let your meditation move you on towards a worship and dedication to Christ, as real as the circumcision and naming of baby Jews which mark them out forever and give them hope and identity through any joy and pain as people of God. The

worship of our daily lives is our rightful response to this gracious God and it is our witness of hope for the world.

Praise his name forever!

**“...and he was called Jesus, the name given by the angel before he was conceived in the womb.”** *Luke 2.21*

Please share your response to this reflection to [Rector@SECStJohnStMargaret.org.uk](mailto:Rector@SECStJohnStMargaret.org.uk) – did anything speak to you? Did you feel challenged, angered, consoled by something in the words? How did God’ spirit move you as you read it? Have you shared the words with someone else? Is this a worthwhile thing to make available to folk whilst we cannot meet for corporate worship to share in word and sacrament? What are your thoughts?

**[www.SECStJohnStMargaret.org.uk](http://www.SECStJohnStMargaret.org.uk)**