

One little verse in Luke. Easily overlooked in Luke's narrative of Jesus' birth and infancy. Up until this verse, he does not refer to Jesus by name. In Bethlehem's manger he's simply a baby, swaddled newborn -no name. The shepherds don't ask "What's his name?" He didn't have a name a week ago, until today. Today He gets His name; with His name He gets the mark of God's people, fulfilling the old covenant of circumcision.

The rest of the world has moved on from Christmas, yet as true Christmas celebration takes place in the Church; we are now, 8th day of Christmas, to celebrate the Name and the Circumcision of Jesus.

Prescribed in the Levitical law, prescribed to Abraham, circumcision; all points to the Christ and promises God made. On the 8th day, every baby boy, received the sign of the covenant, became a son of the covenant. And gets a name.

The Name foretold. Jesus, **for He will save His people from their sins.** How will He accomplish this? Save His people from their sins? By first becoming obedient to the Law, keeping the Law perfectly, in your place, because you can't. By shedding His blood under the Law to redeem those, you who were under the Law, those held captive by sin and death.

Here is His first act of obedience. Think about that, Jesus doesn't first shed His blood in His passion, but holy blood spilled for you, for your salvation, by an 8-day old baby.

St. Paul writes, **In Him, all of you circumcised, the circumcision of Christ in baptism.** Marking you as His. Naming you, joining you to the Christ and all the promises of God. If only you would realize this all the more in your day, how you live each day as His baptized child, in His Name.

Always in Christ. Don't forget that. You are still in you, in this body of death, in this old Adam that needs to be disciplined, motivated to do the will and works of God. Always repentant.

Circumcision you have to admit, seems barbaric, foolishness to the world, but it is of grace, faith to receive the promise, receive Him, just as foolishness of the cross. Circumcision, cross tied to your baptism. It's all by grace, all by gift you are His. You remain His, will always be His.

The Tabernacle blessing. From Exodus 20: **Wherever I cause my name to be remembered there I will come among you and bless you.** My Name, remembered, I will come, bless you. Remembrance, that word only spoken by the priest at the Old Testament sacrifice; remembrance tied to

God's salvific works. Now in the New Covenant, He directs **do this in remembrance**; He comes, bless us with Himself. Do you see how everything ties into the Sacraments of our Lord? What He does for you, gives for you. Every. Single. Day.

The final instruction God gave to Moses about the building and service of the Tabernacle **put my name on them**. Put my name on them, that they never forget whose they are. Put my name on them, the last word ringing in their ears; sending them on their way, the Benediction. Put my name on them, for they are mine; my treasured possession.

Over 5000 year God's people have heard, still today. The OT reading, the Benediction; the last liturgical words ringing in your ears, you also hear, every week, as you leave this place, take on the world. **The Lord bless you and keep you; the Lord make his face to shine upon you and be gracious to you; the Lord lift up his countenance upon you, give you peace**. Why is one Lord mentioned 3 times, you can guess. Your God has a face, became flesh and tabernacled with us, that shines upon you as the light of the world. And this blessing and keeping, this face and grace, this peace, is your living reality. 8th day after Christmas. You just don't celebrate the beginning of a New Year; but you have new life; His life, forgiveness, each day you rise to new life, daily new beginning, celebrate!

As the Old Covenant, old creation, 7 days, now new creation, breaks forth in His resurrection on the 8th day. Do you think it's a coincidence our font has 8 sides like fountains throughout the ages of the Church. His Name, how we begin each Service, In the Name; how you are forgiven, In the Name, His name upon this place, His Word in the gifts. A new life strengthened by His Absolution, His Sacraments.

This coming year, will be a year overflowing with His grace and blessing for you. You can be sure. That doesn't mean there won't be hardship, trials, sadness; sin and evil will rear its ugly head in the world, in you and me. Enter the New Year, not uncertain, but trusting His promises and protection, His blessing, provisions, forgiveness. Always with you. The Tabernacle Blessing, yours in Christ – the *new* dwelling of God with man! You are marked in the New Covenant. You bear His name. An 8th day child. That you remember whose *you* are, and leave this place with His name and blessing, His peace ringing in your ears. For you are His treasured possession.