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*As follows in Jesus' name:*

And at the end of eight days, when He was circumcised, He was called "Jesus," the name given by the angel before He was conceived in the womb. <sup>(ESV)</sup>

*This is Your Word, heavenly Father; sanctify us in the truth, Your Word is Truth. Amen.* (John 17:17)

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In Jesus' name. **Amen.**

Dear Fellow Redeemed,

Names are important... even our children recognize this.

It hurts when someone slanders or gossips with your name, or gives you an unwanted nickname, or makes fun of your real name.

On the other hand, when someone speaks your name to honor you, or your teammates give you a nickname of respect or admiration, it is appreciated and welcome.

But as important as each one's name is to children and adult alike, names are important to God.

From the beginning, the names He gives are more than just a name. It tells us a truth about them.

To the first man, formed out of the ground (the "adamah" in Hebrew), He gave the name, Adam.

To Abram, "the exalted father", the Lord gave the new name "Abraham," (father of a multitude).

When Isaac's birth was announced, and Sarah and Abraham had laughed at the thought, the Lord named him, "Laughter."

After a life of deceit, Jacob the Heal Grabber, wrestled with God and was given the name, Israel, "struggles with God."

But today, we did not come to hear about these names, but about the name of Jesus.

As it was with the patriarchs, the ancestors of the Christ, so it is the same with His own Son, His God-given name tells us about Him.

It tells us exactly who Jesus is and what He came to do.

The name "Jesus" is the Greek form of the Hebrew name, Joshua, which means, "Yahweh Saves."

The 8 day old Child is Yahweh, the same God who showed Himself to Adam, and Abraham, and Jacob.

As He had walked with man before, so the Lord would walk with man again in His own flesh.

He would be as His nickname "**Immanuel**" said, "**God with us.**"

And with His flesh, He would do as the angel had announce to Joseph saying,

**"you shall call His name Jesus, for He will save His people from their sins."**

I love how in that announcement, the angel expresses the kingship and authority of Jesus,

**"He will save His people."**

But notice that Jesus' name was not given to Him until His circumcision on the 8th day.

Remember that this was also when Isaac received His name, as did John the Baptist.

This tradition started with Abram.

In Genesis 17, where we read the account of the Lord giving Abram the covenant of circumcision, this is also the place where God changes his name to Abraham,

promising him, yet again, that he would be the "**father of a multitude**" of nations. <sup>Gen. 17:5</sup>

And what an appropriate time to name their sons... as they were brought into the family of God.

For with the sacrament of circumcision, God was adopting them into His family.

And just as a child adopted into a certain family today receives the name of his new family,

so the Lord put His name upon them, and claimed them as His own.

...

Now, in truth, Jesus was a little different.

His circumcision was not an adoption, since He already was the Son of God by nature.

But with Jesus, having been born a man, He was born under the Law, and so obligated to fulfill it.

And since He was living, not only for Himself, but as the substitute for all people,

His circumcision is counted by the Father as the circumcision of all human flesh.

Therefore, those who are in Christ, united to Him through their baptism, are counted as circumcised.

But Jesus' name is more than just a source of information about who He is and what He came to do.

It is a powerful name... a name full of power.

The Evangelists record for us how the disciples cast out demons in His name, <sup>Matthew 7:22</sup>

how they healed people in His name, <sup>Acts 3:6</sup> or even raised people from the dead in His name.

Jesus Himself told us that His name grants us access to His heavenly Father's throne, saying,

**Truly, truly, I say to you, whatever you ask of the Father in My name, He will give it to you.** <sup>John 16:23</sup>

But through Jesus' name, we do not come before the Father's throne merely as servants, but as sons

as St. John taught, **"to all who did receive Him [that is, Jesus], who believed in His name,**

**He gave the right to become children of God."** <sup>John 1:12</sup>

No wonder then, that the Lord protects His name with the 2nd of the 10 Commandments:

***You shall not take the name of the Lord your God in vain,*** and adds this threat,

**for the LORD will not hold him guiltless who takes His name in vain.** <sup>Exodus 20:7</sup>

If Jesus' name is the only way to God as St. Peter preached in Act 4[:12] saying,

**"there is salvation in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved,"**

then what care we must take to not use His name to *curse, swear [falsely], practice witchcraft, lie or deceive by His name.*

In fact, Jesus warns us, that there will be many that misuse His name to their own harm and to the harm of those who listen to them, saying,

**Many will come in My name, saying, 'I am he!' and they will lead many astray.** <sup>Mark 13:6</sup>

So not only ought we to be diligent ourselves not to misuse His name,

but we are to be diligent to **mark** and **avoid** those who do, <sup>Rom. 16:17</sup>

so that we are not led astray either, nor are those in our care.

Jesus' name is to be holy in our minds and words, separated from sin and all evil, but not from our daily lives.

And so it is appropriate that Jesus also taught us to pray, ***Hallowed be Thy name.***

This does not mean that we should not use His name, as some have thought,

*but instead call upon [His name] in every trouble, pray, praise, and give thanks,*

to use His name often and regularly in appropriate ways and circumstances.

...

As the world celebrates the passing of 2023 and the coming of a new year,

it often looks to forget the bad and strive for a better in the new year,

to put off old bad habits and take up new good habits and resolutions to improve their lives.

My dear baptized Children of God, you have something infinitely better and more powerful.

You have the name of Jesus... and not just His name, but the power of the Gospel to salvation that is bound up in His name.

You have the ability to drown your past sins in repentance

and to hear **the forgiveness of your sins proclaimed in His name.** Luke 24:47

...After listing many and various sins common to mankind living in a pagan world, sins that defiled their hearts and lives, St. Paul goes on to say in 1 Corinthians 6:11,

**And such were some of you. But you were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God.**

So completely does God forgive you for Jesus' name's sake,

so completely does your baptism in Jesus' name wash away your sins,

that God no longer recognizes you as a sinner, but as pure and holy as His own Son, Jesus Christ.

But not only is His name something for your past sins, it is for your present and future life as well.

This powerful name was given to you at your Baptism and can never be taken away from you.

You bear His name wherever you go, dear Christian, and in whatever circumstances you are.

His name, His presence with you as your Immanuel, strengthens you to flee temptations

and repels the devil and his minions, for they cannot stand the name of Jesus,

as Martin Luther poetically put it, "*One little word, can fell him,*" ELH #250:3 and that little word is Jesus.

Only let it be readily upon your lips, easy to speak in prayer and supplications and thanksgivings.

And not only is it powerful to keep you from sin, but also to strengthen you for godly service.

St. Paul admonishes, **And whatever you do, in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through Him.** Col. 3:17

And Jesus promises that **whoever receives one such child in His name receives Him.** Matthew 18:5

With such promises and eternal rewards, why would we not piously use His name in all circumstances to forgive and receive and bless those around us for their good and salvation?

Names are important to Jesus.

Your name is important to Jesus.

You know, even when Jesus' disciples returned after healing people and casting out demons in His name, Jesus focused their attention, not on these great powers available to them,

but to their own salvation, saying, **Nevertheless, do not rejoice in this,**

**that the spirits are subject to you, but rejoice that your names are written in heaven.** "Luke 10:20

So it is also to be with us.

Rejoice in Jesus' name, because in Him, **Yahweh has saved you from your sins.**

He has completed the whole Law of God perfectly in your place.

He has suffered the curse of the law and the wrath of God by His death.

And He has washed away your sins in Holy Baptism and named you His brother and God's own child.

*Glory to God in the highest and on earth peace, goodwill toward men.* Luke 2:14

In Jesus' name. **Amen.**

*Soli Deo Gloria*