



**“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” St. Luke 2:21.**

On the eighth day following His birth, Jesus sheds His first blood as He begins His journey to the cross. The Name, **Jesus**, has already been assigned by the announcement of the angel, which means, “The Lord saves,” as spoken by the angel in **St. Matthew 1:21**. “In the incarnation, God reveals the fullness of His grace with a new personal name: Jesus, which means Yahweh saves” (2017 Catechism, pg.68). On January 1<sup>st</sup> within the church year, we celebrate the **“Feast of the Circumcision and the Name of Jesus.”**

When Jesus is circumcised, it is His fulfilling of the Law which confesses Christ's active and passive obedience of God's Law. In an active manner, Christ is Himself placed under the Law to fulfill it completely for us (all people). No human could ever do this, we all fall short, being unable to give perfect obedience to God's commands. In fulfilling all righteousness, Jesus lives as we were intended to live in perfect obedience to God our Creator in gratitude for His blessings given to us.

In a passive manner, the circumcision of Jesus points forward to His blood shed on the cross in His suffering and death to appease God's wrath against us for our sin, secure our salvation, purchase and win us back from sin, death and the devil forever. Jesus came to earth in order to die in our place. Jesus came to earth in order to shed His blood which is the covering that overcomes the sin of the world. The circumcision of Jesus also points to His passive obedience in going to the cross to suffer in our place, thus taking the punishment of our sin upon Himself which by God's grace brings us into His kingdom through our Baptism. For the Old Testament people, circumcision was a reminder that believers belonged to God by His grace. As New Testament believers, we are reminded by the sign of the cross made over our foreheads and hearts at our Baptisms, when God connects us to the cross, suffering, death, and resurrection of Christ, that we are made His own children who belong to Him: “we are redeemed by Christ the crucified.”

The sacred writer tells us in **1 John 1:7b** **“The blood of Jesus His Son cleanses us from all sin.”** In Baptism, we are clothed in the righteousness of Christ given to us by the shedding of His blood. Therefore, being covered with His righteousness through His precious, holy blood shed for us we are made heirs of eternal life. This is why the funeral pall covering the casket at the death of the believer is such a beautiful picture of how Christ's death and resurrection covers all of our sin and when death comes we enter into life eternal covered with the righteousness of Christ our Savior. Therefore, as we look to our Baptism throughout life, we know that Christ's righteousness and His fulfillment of the Law and the blessings of the cross are made our own in Holy Baptism as the blessings of Christ's life, suffering, death and resurrection are made our very own.

The church's commemoration and celebration of the circumcision and the Name of Jesus is always a good way to begin the New Year that the Lord has set in front of us as it reminds us of the sacrifice Jesus makes by shedding His blood and as He is Named “Jesus,” The Lord saves (**St. Matthew 1:21**). As we come together for The Divine Service on New Years' Day and every Sunday throughout the year, we give thanks for the great sacrifice made by our Savior that we would be called children of God by His grace given in Christ our Savior.

The hymn writer teaches us the Name of Jesus is the Name above all names as **Philippians 2:9-11** teaches; that at the Name Jesus every knee would bow and tongue confess that Jesus is Lord to the glory of the Father. Jesus is the Name of God's Wondrous Love for us as we praise Him alone for His mercy in Christ.

**Jesus! Name of wondrous love, Name all other names above,  
Unto which must every knee Bow in deep humility.**

**Jesus! Name of priceless worth To the fallen of the earth  
For the promise that it gave, “Jesus shall His people save.”**

**Jesus! Name of wondrous love, Human name of God above.  
Pleading only this, we flee Helpless, O Our God, to Thee.**

LSB 900 “Jesus! Name of Wondrous Love” stanzas 1, 3, 6

A Blessed New Year to all of you in Christ, our Savior!

Pastor Ahrendt