

In the name of the Father and of the + Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

The Old Testament ceremonial law is referred to as a shadow of the things to come but their substance is something or rather someone else. St. Paul writes in Colossians 2:16–17, “Therefore let no one pass judgment on you in questions of food and drink, or with regard to a festival or a new moon or a Sabbath. These are a shadow of the things to come, but the substance belongs to Christ.” In Hebrews 10 a similar thing is said, “For since the law has but a shadow of the good things to come instead of the true form of these realities, it can never, by the same sacrifices that are continually offered every year, make perfect those who draw near.” This continues on in the chapter and finally comes to a head, both figuratively and literally, when it says, “But when Christ had offered for all time a single sacrifice for sins, he sat down at the right hand of God, waiting from that time until his enemies should be made a footstool for his feet. For by a single offering he has perfected for all time those who are being sanctified.”

Hebrews 8 really hits this all home and sums it up well when it writes concerning Christ, “Now the point in what we are saying is this: we have such a high priest, one who is seated at the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in heaven, a minister in the holy places, in the true tent that the Lord set up, not man. For every high priest is appointed to offer gifts and sacrifices; thus it is necessary for this priest also to have something to offer. Now if he were on earth, he would not be a priest at all, since there are priests who offer gifts according to the law. They serve a copy and shadow of the heavenly things. For when Moses was about to erect the tent, he was instructed by God, saying, ‘See that you make everything according to the pattern that was shown you on the mountain.’ But as it is, Christ has obtained a ministry that is as much more excellent than the old as the covenant he mediates is better, since it is enacted on better promises. For if that first covenant had been faultless, there would have been no occasion to look for a second.”

That brings you to today in the church year with the Circumcision and Name of Jesus. You see, then, when Jesus is circumcised, the substance of the law has come and he fulfills all that it was, as a shadow, pointing to and anticipating. Listen again to the Gospel reading. St. Luke wrote, “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.” When Mary and Joseph brought Jesus to be circumcised, they were doing what good parents do, they were following God’s word in their lives. On the eighth day a boy was to be circumcised as God commanded for this temporary thing which would point to a future thing. They were following God’s law and Jesus was born under the law even though he himself is without sin.

Just as a Jesus fulfilled the ceremonial law, he also fulfilled the political law, which is also a part of the Old Covenant, and the eternal moral law. The obedience of Jesus is total, and it is both active and passive. The Lord entered his creation and fulfilled the same law which was given to man, his creation, and the law which condemns man who has sinned against God and fallen short of what God requires and commands. He did this all in his whole person as God and man. He was perfectly obedient to God’s law even as he is perfect himself. He did this all, as well, knowing the price that must be paid and the pain which must be endured even as an eight-day old infant. Yet he went forth and did as he was commanded by the Father and was cut off and marked with that visible mark which reminded God’s people who they were and of the sin passed down from an earthly father to his children. Jesus the Son who had no earthly father and no sin but came to his own so that they would be sons of God, sons of their Father in heaven.

Circumcision, dietary laws, sabbaths, and other ceremonies of the Old Testament are no longer applied to you. So too, the political law, that is the laws of the Old Testament people regarding their rule and life in this world have been fulfilled. All those things point to the fact that they and you are to be different and set aside from the world you live in here and now. The moral law, which is eternal and reflects God’s righteousness and holiness does this as you hear it and see what God requires of you and guides you in this life. You are called away from sin. You stand condemned in your old man that seeks a life which is not set apart and holy rather it is

## Circumcision and Name of Jesus—January 1, 2023

conformed to this world, to the ways and works of the devil, and is held in bondage to sin and death. The law condemns you in all of this as God lays this all before you and exposes that you have fallen and deserve the righteous, unwavering judgment due sin, death and hell.

The curse of sin is real, and Jesus takes that on as he is the Lord who has saved you from sin, death, and the devil. He is the substance of all that was to come, and he alone is the fulfiller of all God requires. The infant Jesus here in this reading shed his blood as his faithful parents brought him to be circumcised. Faithfulness is painful at times, it was painful for Jesus, still the benefit for you is eternal as Jesus would go through this world and he who neither slumbers nor sleeps walked this earth and did grow tired and slept. He knows what all these things are only he faced them all without sin or even entertaining the notion to sin or had a desire to either.

The thing that's important for you as you hear this today is to set before our eyes Christ as the fulfiller of the law. In a day and age where accountability and or truth seems to be thrown aside Jesus shows you that in his life even though he is fully God and man he subjects himself to live out what is required of man and what man cannot do. In the case of circumcision, this law was pointing forward to himself who be the new covenant and would institute a new a greater circumcision of the heart whereby man is called out this world and marked with the name of God himself, holy baptism.

In holy baptism, God has covered you with Christ and you have all that he has done. It's a constant in your life when everything else seems to be changing all around you. Beginning 2023 or any year for that matter seems a either a bit daunting or just lackluster and humdrum. Regardless, only God knows what's in store for you next. But to see Jesus as the fulfiller of the law and the one whose righteous life is counted to you defines your new year as only God can do. It gives you a clear conscience to see God's name and righteousness placed upon you and to look at the world as one who isn't and won't be overcome by the burdens of this world. The substance of your 2023 is Jesus, your Redeemer.

People of God the words of the Gradual speak to you this New Year's Day, "This is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, declares the Lord: I will put my laws into their minds, and write them on their hearts. I will be their God, and they shall be my people. I will remember their sins and their lawless deeds no more."

Take this all to heart, then, as you look at Jesus and know what it means that you are baptized into Christ. Each day the Lord grants to you this 2023 will be defined and lived in that faith which trusts in those promises of God. When you always remember that you are baptized into Christ you can face each day as one who has been forgiven, rescued from death and the devil, and has eternal salvation. It may seem so simple but it's so profound and powerful.

The righteous life of Jesus is yours and no one is going to tear him. You bear God's name and all that goes with it, dear people of God. The circumcision reminds of you that, to be sure, but look also at the name of Jesus himself. His name means "YHWH" saves and that proclaims to you the salvation you have in him. God's nature and how he acts toward you is seen in Christ as you behold him in your God given faith. Calling upon Jesus you call upon your substitute who atoned for your sin and the one who intercedes for you constantly at the right hand of the Father. Following his word, you see the path of new life he has given to you and freed you to live as walk through this world with eyes fixed on the life to come.

Knowing Jesus is knowing who he is as God's word reveals him to you. It's seeing him as the one who fulfilled God's law and shed his blood for your sake. You see the cost the Lord paid in order that you would be with him even the suffering required of him as an eight-day year old baby boy. God, the eternal almighty God, subjected himself to be put under a knife of sinful men as a helpless little infant for the sake of his people. Face this new

### Circumcision and Name of Jesus—January 1, 2023

year as one who bears that name. Even if you must suffer and endure hardships the Lord's name has been placed upon you and you don't go through this life as those who have no hope. Bearing the name of God, the name of Jesus, you bear the hope and promise of eternal life. With this comes the confidences and right to call upon God's name. This is something God has given to you in Christ that you call upon him. In the Large Catechism Luther writes some helpful words for you to consider. He said, "For that is the true honor of His name, to look to it and call upon it for all consolation [Psalm 66:2; 105:1]."

God preaches to you today and places his name upon you again and again in this place and throughout this whole divine service. God is for you and that means everything. Rejoice loudly dear Christians and greet this new year in the name of the Lord. Your Lord has saved you and his name is Jesus. Psalm 113 says, "Blessed be the name of the Lord from this time forth and forevermore! From the rising of the sun to its setting, the name of the Lord is to be praised!" What a name to praise indeed because he is for you. He is your Redeemer, the word made flesh and you are his own dear child. Your name has been written in the Book of Life on account of him and what he has done, and you are his own. Rejoice today in this baby who shed his blood for you and was obedient to the law on your behalf. Behold your Lord who was adored by the shepherds and angels and yet is your brother in the flesh only without sin. All his faithfulness, righteousness, forgiveness, life, and salvation cover you and reckoned to you in faith. His name is yours as you are baptized into Christ. When you consider this new year and each day in it. Get up every morning and go to bed every night calling upon the saving name of Jesus. Rejoice and be glad in Jesus and confess continually, "Great is Lord! I am baptized." That's the wonderful thing God has given you and the promise you have as you think about the circumcision and name of Jesus.

Know in all this too what your future will bring as you see Jesus crucified and risen for you and the promise that he is with you always. He has fulfilled all things for you and has called you, set you apart, and cleansed you in holy baptism which clothes you in the substance, Christ, of what circumcision was a shadow of pointing to him to come. Find consolation in your baptism which is the same as saying find consolation in your baptism. Rejoice that Jesus is faithful and gives you his righteousness even as he has taken all your sin upon himself and paid the price you owe. His obedience to the law is credited to you. His suffering the punishment for your sin has satisfied the righteous wrath of God against you. He has shed his blood on the cross and that blood has cleansed you from all sin. He pours out his blood and gives it to you forgiving your sins even this very day as you eat and drink his body and blood in the Lord's Supper. This is who your Lord is and what he has done and still does for you, and you bear this holy name of God which has saved you. Know with certainty that you are an heir of eternal life and whatever comes your way the Lord is with you, and he will not let you stumble or fall but instead will guard and keep you to the day when all tears, sorrow, sin, and death are long forgotten. Call upon his righteous name has placed upon you and still places upon you today. Your Lord who has fulfilled all things, says to you "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 and give you peace."

In the name of the Father and of the + Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.