

## In the Name of “God Saves”

How felicitous it is that the secular holiday New Year’s Day is also the day of the church year dedicated to the Name of Jesus! Beginning the year in the name of Jesus is quite appropriate.

On the seventh day after His birth (really eight days after Christmas, not seven), the baby Jesus was circumcised—entering into the covenant of God’s people, an action parallel in the church to infant baptism—whereupon He was officially given His name.

The angel was very specific when he told Mary what that name must be (Luke 1:31), and he told Joseph why: “You shall call his name Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins” (Matthew 1:21). Goes on

The name “Jesus” means “God saves.” His very name is a confession of His deity and what He has accomplished for us.

This was pointed out to me by Rev. Dr. Lucas V. Woodford, now district President of the Minnesota South district, who was an associate pastor at First Immanuel Lutheran Church in Cedarburg, Wisconsin, when we were members there. He preached about the Name of Jesus in a New Year’s service that I have always remembered.

He then went through the different references in the church and in the Scriptures to the things that we are to do “in Jesus’s name,” giving the translation “God saves.”

We pray in Jesus’s name. That is, we pray in the name “God saves.” That God has saved us through Jesus affects how we can approach God in prayer.

We are absolved of our sins “in Jesus’ name.” That is, we are forgiven because “God saves.”

“For where two or three are gathered in my name [God saves], there am I among them” (Matthew 18:20). That “God saves” means that He is present with us.

“At the name of Jesus [God saves] every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth” (Philippians 2:10). That “God saves” means that everyone should honor Him! (What a mystery that so many people hate the God who wants to save them!)

“Whatever you do, in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus [God saves], giving thanks to God the Father through him” (Colossians 3:17). We can do *everything* in light of “God saves,” and that “God saves” can fill us with gratitude.

There is a New Year’s resolution for you! Not a burdensome law that you can never fulfill, but a reflection of the Gospel promise that you can bring to mind all through the year when you need it: “Do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus.” That is, do everything in the conviction that God has saved you!

Acts 4:10 “No other name under heaven by which we must be saved.”

All Hail the power of Jesus name, nomen omen. The name is magical, an omen of what you will be and do. Astrology the religion of the ancient world. Change of Peter's name. implicitly was to be rock, not just the name but the thing. Same as changing Jacob to Israel. OT is full of changing names. Names having significance. A poetic word. Not worried about dictionary. There are powers and charms.

*Illustration: The IHS monogram [The Greek letters for "JESus"] by AnonMoos (changes by Rabanus Flavus – File:JHS-IHS-Monogram-Name-Jesus.svg, CC0,*

