

The name of Jesus makes all things new.*Isaiah 60:17–22*

For brass I will bring gold, and for iron I will bring silver, and for wood brass, and for stones iron: I will also make thy officers peace, and thine governors righteousness. ¹⁸ Violence shall no more be heard in thy land, wasting nor destruction within thy borders; but thou shalt call thy walls Salvation, and thy gates Praise. ¹⁹ The sun shall be no more thy light by day; neither for brightness shall the moon give light unto thee: but the LORD shall be unto thee an everlasting light, and thy God thy glory. ²⁰ Thy sun shall no more go down; neither shall thy moon withdraw itself: for the LORD shall be thine everlasting light, and the days of thy mourning shall be ended. ²¹ Thy people also shall be all righteous: they shall inherit the land for ever, the branch of my planting, the work of my hands, that I may be glorified. ²² A little one shall become a thousand, and a small one a strong nation: I the LORD will hasten it in its time.

Dear Redeemed of the Lord,

On this day, we sing the hymn, “Now are the days fulfilled, God’s Son is manifested!” Eight days after Jesus was born, He submitted to His first public act as a child of Abraham. Christ, the Lord, was circumcised. The shortest Gospel lesson of the Church Year, a single verse, records the event. The people of Israel took no note of the event. All in all it would seem to be a minor detail, something that is simply taken for granted, for every boy child of eight days endured the same. Though but a single verse of God’s holy Word makes note of it, let no man think of this as a mere trifling detail. No part of God’s Word is given without reason, and the circumcision of Jesus is a monumental event in our own salvation. On this day the blood of Jesus was first shed. On this day, our Substitute took our place under the Law as a true son of Abraham, a son of the Law. On this day, the days of promise gave way to the days of fulfillment. In Jesus, all of God’s Laws and Promises are fulfilled. God’s Son is manifested. The light of the glory of God has come, not merely to show forth His glory among men, but to give that glory to men, to give to men God’s own everlasting righteousness. So greatly shall His glory be upon us, that we will have no more need for the sun or the moon. God Himself will be our light.

But not only is it His Circumcision, it is the day on which He was given His name. Yeshua (or Joshua) in Hebrew, Jesus in Greek. But no matter what the language in which His name is given, it always means Salvation. Therefore on this day, the word of the Angel Gabriel was fulfilled, and Jesus, the name of Salvation, was given to our Lord. This, His name, is our bulwark, our castle, our wall of defense. “God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble” (Ps. 46:1). So

also the Lord declares through the prophet, “Thou shalt call thy walls Salvation, and thy gates Praise.”

How fitting that this day is also the first day of the new year, for truly with the Name and Circumcision of Jesus came a new age for all men. They did not know it yet, nor is that surprising. The great events in the history of the world always begin in small and hidden ways. It was another twelve years before Jesus would first be noticed in any significant way by the people of Israel. Even then, the wise men and teachers of the temple did not know the remarkable nature of the boy Christ. No, it was over thirty years before this child would be noticed by all the nation. Then, it would be but a few years before the glory of God was poured forth in the greatest display of God’s power and might that the world will ever know.

Simeon declared that this child would be set for the fall and rising again of many in Israel, and for a sign that shall be spoken against. By the time He had fulfilled all the Law, even unto the death of the Cross, the whole nation would rise up and speak against Him. Nevertheless, it is a mere eight days after His birth, and not 33 years, when the Law of God began to be fulfilled. Christ the Lord was circumcised. His name was made His own. Therefore let us rejoice that God has given unto His Son, Jesus, a name which will rend the heavens wide, and brings the glory of God to men.

It is this glory that the prophet reveals in our sermon text today, and what a glorious picture it is! Everything is made new. The nature of our relationship with God. The nature of this world. The nature of God’s children. All are made new in the name of Jesus, for in Christ, God is our Salvation.

In Christ Jesus, the nature of this world is made new. The Lord declares that for brass, He will give us gold, for iron, silver, for wood, brass, for stones iron. Even the institutions of this world which are normally required to bring order will be gone. No more will we need police or military to enforce order, for peace itself will reign universally, and none shall enforce it. No longer will men be forced by governors and taskmasters to do what is right, for righteousness itself will be our ruler.

We cannot see any way in which the nature of this world can ever be different. Though we know times of peace and prosperity, we are always reminded that we live in a fallen world. The natural state of men, and of this world is entirely subjugated to sin and death. The devil is called the “prince of this world” because there is not a part of the creation that does not bear the mark of the fall which he brought upon mankind when he tempted our first parents, Adam and Eve. Yet be assured, that though the world in which we live will never sub-

mit willingly to the rule of perfect peace and righteousness so long as sin and death are present, even now the glorious reign of Christ has begun. It is here, in His Holy Christian Church, in the heart of every child whom He has redeemed by His blood. We, who by birth are a part of that world, by Christ are made children of another kingdom. As part of that kingdom, we have an everlasting inheritance. The good things of God's kingdom are arrayed before us. The forgiveness of sins, life, and salvation are not some future promise, but our present certainty. And to secure it God has given us other wonderful gifts. His Word and His body and blood. These things are gold and silver, brass and iron, better gifts than all the treasures of the world. And they are but a foretaste of the much greater gifts to come. As it was with Jesus, so it is with us. The glory which has been given to us by our Lord is hidden. Our treasure is not on display. But soon it shall be before the eyes of all, when Christ comes in His glory and judges the world.

As this world and our treasure is made know in Jesus' name, so also is our relationship with our Father in heaven. It is transformed from enmity to compassion. It is in the name of Jesus that we are adopted as children of God, and are given a place in the Father's house. Without Christ we could hope for nothing from God but destruction. The violence which we suffer in this world would be His own judgement and punishment against us, and would be dwarfed by the terrible judgment which we would have to endure eternally when Jesus comes again in glory. But in exchange for the anger and hatred of God, and every punishment, in Jesus' name we are given His mercy, love, and almighty aid and comfort. "Violence shall no more be heard in thy land, wasting nor destruction within thy borders; but thou shalt call thy walls Salvation, and thy gates Praise." And when He shall create all things new through Christ on the last day, He will no longer use intermediate means to give us His gifts. He will not need preaching, nor sacraments. He will not even need sun and rain, moon and harvest to impart His gifts to us. He Himself shall be our everlasting light, and our glory.

This relationship with our Father has already begun in us, for in the name of Jesus, our very natures are also made new. In this world it is normal to need things like police and officials who enforce the law with the sword, that is with threats of punishment and imprisonment, sometimes even death. No society ever prospered without such authority, for men, by nature, are all anarchists. They love chaos and would gladly steal, hurt, kill, anything at all that would be to their benefit if only they could get away with it. As much as we look upon nature itself as being savage, there is nothing more savage than

the untamed heart of man. Therefore no civilized nation, no matter how much the law is enforced, ever eliminates crime.

But in Christ Jesus, we are born again, and given a new heart. Peace and righteousness are our officers and magistrates, because the children of God have been given the peace of the forgiveness of sins which God has brought to men through His Son. This new kingdom of Christ which reigns in our hearts, needs no enforcement, because every child of God is willing and obedient out of love for Him who redeemed them. Though we are still sinners, and experience constantly the draw of our old man of sin, yet no child of God every obeys out of fear. All the good that we do is moved by the very compassion which God has shown in Jesus. By his death, God has given us eternal Peace. By His resurrection, God has imputed unto us His own Righteousness. It is the joy and love for these things that now empowers the hearts of God's people to perform every good work. Therefore the Lord declares, "Thy people also shall be all righteous: they shall inherit the land for ever, the branch of my planting, the work of my hands, that I may be glorified."

As St. John declares, it does not yet appear before the eyes of men what we shall be. But we know this, that when Jesus shall appear, we shall be like unto Him, for we shall see Him as He is. (1 John 3:2). Our glory and righteousness is hidden for now, ready to be revealed on the last day. And because all the new things that we have in Jesus' Name are likewise hidden from human sight, we may well grow weary of this world, of its scoffing and persecution, its violence and wars. But look to the Word of God, and see how He operates among men. It was in a small Child, of humble birth, that our own Salvation was being worked out, yes, even when he was still but a babe. So we also are small, infants in the kingdom of heaven. But even as Jesus was gloriously revealed as our Salvation, so also our glory in Him shall be revealed. Though we are few and small in this world, we shall be a mighty multitude in the courts of heaven when all of the saints from every age are assembled together, to bask in the light of God Himself, and to give praise unto the Lamb who redeemed them. God declares, "I am the Lord, and I will hasten this in its time." The day of our new eternal year has been fixed on God's calendar, and He shall bring it to pass.

Praise God that His promises are sure! Glorify Him for The Name of His Son, Jesus Christ! Let us all rejoice together in anticipation of that great day! Amen.