

In the Name of the Father, and of the ✠ Son, and of the Holy Ghost.

Time has a beginning. Time was instituted by God. Before the creation, there was only eternity. But then, on the first day, God spoke all things into being. He created Light, and the Light was divided from the darkness. It was evening, and it was morning, one day. On the second day God created the heavens, by dividing the waters above from the waters below and placing a firmament between them. On the third day He gathered the waters to create dry ground, and spoke seed bearing plants and trees into being, which bear seed according to their kind.

On the fourth day God made the heavenly luminaries, and designated the sun to rule the day and the moon the night. On the fifth day God made the sea creatures to fill the seas. And on the sixth day God made the living creatures of the land, and then as the pinnacle of His creation He made man. Only then was the creation very good. And on the seventh day God rested.

From that day forward the creation was bound to a seven-day cycle. The first day, Sunday, led through the week to the seventh day, Saturday. And then the counting started again, one through seven, every week, throughout the ages, throughout the millennia. But now, as He reveals Himself to Abram, God speaks for the first time of a new day, the eighth day. And to that day, and to the bloody external sign that marks the faith held internally, God binds His Covenant with Abram and his descendants.

A strange sign provides the external mark for God's Covenant blessing – the cutting of the flesh. By that cutting would God's chosen people be distinguished from all other men on earth. By that cutting would every baby boy be placed under the Law, and marked as bound by the Covenant, on the eighth day.

By that cutting would the sinful flesh be excised and cast away. And to that cutting God attached His Promise – Abram would receive a new name, and be the father of many nations. It was a new beginning, a new Covenant, a proleptic, concrete sign and Promise of an eighth day miracle to come.

So it was that the promised Seed of the Father of Many Nations was born, as the Prophets foretold, to a Virgin in Bethlehem. And like all the sons of Abraham, He too was placed under the Law by the cutting of his Flesh. But those first drops of Blood shed by the long-awaited Messiah were different. In His Flesh was no sin.

He was not like Abraham, whose father was Terah. He was not like Isaac, who was circumcised on the eighth day, whose father was Abraham. He was not like any man every born, for while the Virgin bore Him, His Father is God. The curse of Eden did not apply to the Christ Child. And yet to redeem all men, to redeem you, He who needed no circumcision was circumcised. He was placed under the Law on the eighth day. His Holy, Precious Infant Blood was shed. But it would not be the last time.

He needed no Law, since the Law was given to Moses through Him. It was His fiery finger that scribed that Decalogue into the tablets of stone. He is the Right Hand from whom that fiery Law came. Abraham saw His day and was glad. He was without sin. But for you, He was

circumcised. He was placed under the Law to fulfill it. He was placed under the Law, as a Man, to keep the Law, and the Covenant, no man born of human father could keep.

He was placed under the Law that He institute a New and Better Testament, a Testament of forgiveness and life, a Testament of salvation. But to win your salvation, He would have to endure the Week we call Holy, the Friday we call Good. For the New Testament is the Testament in His Blood.

For on the sixth day, the day on which man was created, on the sixth day of Holy Week did the God Man die. Counted as sinful flesh, He was cut off and cast away. And on the seventh day God rested, as the Christ, circumcised of Flesh, lay lifeless in the tomb, a perfect keeping of the Sabbath.

And then, for the first time in history, the counting did not end at seven and start again at one. The sign of circumcision was fulfilled when on the eighth day, the Day of promise, the Day of life, Christ rose from the dead. By His defeat of sin and death, He ushered in a New Day, an Eternal Day. In Christ, just as God and Man are made One, so time and eternity are made one.

It was the Day that every circumcision pointed to, the eternal day that breaks the pattern. And for you that is Good News. For the mark of the flesh God gave Abram marked the flesh ruined by sin. And all men of human father, with their flesh, receive by imputation the sin of the first man. You have been no different, you too have given in to the lusts and desires of the flesh. And for those who do, for those who sin, death is the just wage. And that death is an unending death, an eternal separation from God.

But that you live, that you be spared, that your sin be forgiven, the Flesh of the Sinless One was cut. On the eighth day He was circumcised. But that shedding of His Blood did not institute the New Testament. It was His Blood shed on Calvary that brings you life.

In the shedding of His Precious Blood, you are forgiven. In Him, the Law is fulfilled for you. In His perfect rest in the tomb the Sabbath is kept for you, and for all men of all times. And in His resurrection on the eighth day, you have justification before God, and eternal life.

In Christ, believing in Him, you live out this present age, as the Apostle teaches, in faith, believing in the Promise, looking for the blessed hope and appearing of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ, who gave Himself for us, that He might redeem us from every lawless deed and purify for Himself His own special people.

The sun and moon and stars, the water, the dry ground, the herb of the field, the tree bearing fruit according to its kind, the creatures of the sea and of the land, all will be consumed in the fire of the Last Day. So too will every man who does not believe in Christ. But their fire will never be quenched.

You who are in Christ, however, you who are baptized into forgiveness and eternal life, you born from above by Water and the Spirit, you circumcised not of the flesh but of the heart in the Spirit, you who are the true children of Abraham by faith in Jesus Christ, you live now in that

Eternal Day. So for you, the Day of Judgment is your Day of Resurrection, not a gateway to eternal condemnation but a portal to eternity with God.

It has pleased the Lord that created time to grant us another year. The world numbers the years, the Church simply counts another year of God's grace, another year in which He sustains and feeds and blesses and keeps us safe, waiting for His coming.

Until that Day, the Lord of Life gives you His Body to eat and His Blood to drink. He places the Divine under creaturely elements, that you who are human partake of His Divine Nature by His Sacramental Presence. You eat and drink Christ, and eternity is yours now.

May God bless you richly in the new year.

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