

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

Although the circumstance was supernatural, Moses' question was quite natural. The Angel of the Lord, the preincarnate Second Person of the Holy Trinity, appeared to Moses. The Invisible God made Himself visible, transcending natural boundaries. Natural boundaries aren't limiting to God, for He Himself established them.

So the Lord of Heaven came to earth, and was seen in visible form. And as if that weren't a great enough miracle, God called to Moses audibly. The voice that declared "Let there be" and there was, called out Moses' name. And more importantly, He gave Moses His personal Name, the Name of God.

A prophetic lesser miracle was given to Moses as well. The theophany took the form of a flame of fire from the midst of a bush. The bush burned, but it wasn't consumed. But there was a problem. Moses could not draw nigh unto God, because God is Holy. So where God makes Himself visible is therefore a holy place. Moses wasn't holy, because he was born of human father, and had the flesh of Adam.

So God called Moses, but warned Him not to come close, for that would be sure destruction. Even from afar, Moses had to remove his sandals, because he stood on holy ground. God, in His mercy, gave Moses a new vocation – he would no longer tend flocks. He would shepherd God's chosen people. He would deliver them from captivity and bondage.

The theophany was supernatural, exceeding the limits by which earthly creatures are bound. But Moses' question was quite natural – he asked God's Name. To know someone's name is to know the person. But God's Name is not like the names of men. God's Name is an expression of who God is, of what God is.

In grace, God told Moses His personal Name – "I AM". He is, and He is the source of all being. He was before all things, from eternity, without beginning. And He is, and will be forever, without end. The God of heaven and earth is the great "I AM."

Jacob would ask the same question. As he prepared to meet his estranged brother, a Man appeared to Jacob. It was, of course, a theophany, an appearance of God in visible form. So Jacob would say "I have seen God face to face". Jacob wrestled with God in human form. Jacob prayed a blessing from the Man, and received it. God made manifest gave Jacob a new name, Israel. But when Jacob asked the same question that Moses would ask, God would not give answer. He would not tell Jacob His Name.

The God who spoke to Moses from that miraculous fiery bush, the God who wrestled with Jacob and let him win, would make Himself visible again. As the archangel promised, by the power of the Holy Spirit, the Virgin conceived and bore a Son. As the ground around the burning bush was holy, so was the manger made holy. And God speaking through the Prophet Isaiah foretold His Name: Immanuel, God with us.

Through Isaiah God revealed that the Name of the Virgin's Son would also be called Wonderful, Counselor, Mighty, God, Everlasting, Father, Prince of Peace, the Seven-Fold Name that reveals

His Divinity. For three is the number of God, four is the number of the creation, and seven is the covenant number.

But the Personal Name of God the Son, although the Prophets of Old called Him by many names, the Personal Name of God the Son was given by angelic revelation to Joseph in a dream. For an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream, as St. Matthew records, and said “Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take to you Mary your wife, for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Spirit. And she will bring forth a Son, and you shall call His name JESUS, for He will save His people from their sins.”

The God who spoke to Moses through the burning bush took on the flesh of the Virgin. And His Name, the Name Divinely given, tells you who He is, and what He does. He is the Second Person of the Holy Trinity, the Person that appeared visibly throughout the Old Testament.

But in His birth in Bethlehem God With Us is with us in a different way, a way by which He will save His people from their sins. As the first Blood of the Messiah was spilled, on the eighth day, so too was He given the Name Jesus.

So for you, you who wear the flesh of Adam, you who are plagued by sin and transgression, you who are scandalized by your trespasses, you who are imprisoned by doubt and death, for you there is great hope and comfort in the Name of Jesus. For it is He, and He alone, that saves you from your sins.

God became Man. He was in all ways tempted as you have been, yet was without sin. In that holiness Wonderful, Counselor, Mighty, God, Everlasting, Father, Prince of Peace went to the cross, to do what His Personal Name promises – to save you from your sins.

Just as the bush burned but was not consumed, because He is the Eternal God, Everlasting, He emptied that tomb on the third day. He is I AM, who was, who is, and who ever shall be. In Him the Name that Jacob could not know is made known to you, that you know the God that made you, the God that redeemed you, the God that is God With You, your Savior.

For there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved – not allah, not buddha, not a generic god, not spirit or angel or created being, but only by the Name of Jesus, Immanuel, who alone saves you from your sins.

In mercy, in love, in grace, the Name of God is scribed upon you. God’s Image and Inscription mark you, for in Holy Baptism the sign of the Holy Cross is made upon your forehead and your breast, to mark you as one redeemed of Christ the Crucified.

You are sealed with the Triune Name, the Name of God, as your sins are forgiven, and as you are filled with the same Spirit that descended upon the Christ and remained. So you are circumcised of heart as your heart is filled with faith in the Name of Jesus, in the Name of the God who became Flesh to redeem you.

You are redeemed by Christ, and so you bear His Name, as you are named Christian. His Name is Jesus, for He saves you from your sins. And His Name is Immanuel, God With Us, as He remains with us for our salvation. He is God With Us, God With You, as He is placed into your

mouth, and as you drink His Precious Blood from the Cup of Blessing. He does not wrestle with you, rather He comes to you for comfort and hope, and blesses you, for you are the True Israel, His chosen people by grace through faith in Him.

When eight days were completed for the circumcision of the Child, His Name was called Jesus, the Name given by the angel before He was conceived in the womb.

And for the last time this season, A blessed Christmas!

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