

Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to which indeed you were called in one body; and be thankful. Let the word of Christ richly dwell within you, with all wisdom teaching and admonishing one another with psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with thankfulness in your hearts to God. Whatever you do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks through Him to God the Father.

Colossians 3:15-17

His Name

Reasons for
our Thanksgiving

MY FAMILY NAME MADE ITS WAY to the United States from Europe on August 30, 1904. On that date, a nineteen-year-old Louis Lampel walked down the gangway of the *Bremen* at Ellis Island in the New York harbor.

His voyage across the Atlantic had started ten days earlier in Bremen, Germany, but his journey toward a new life in the United States began from his home in Czartkin, Austria.

My grandfather was a Jew: The ship's manifest, filled out prior to departure in Germany, lists his ethnicity as "Hebrew." It is safe to assume that Louis probably was not a "practicing" Jew, but one by blood, since my father, born twelve years later in Wellsburg, Iowa, never mentioned this heritage. Indeed, he may never have been sure of it himself. And from before 1945, my family has been Protestant Christian.

Nevertheless, the name "Lampel" is closely associated with German Jewry. A sampling of other Lampels in the Ellis Island records reveals first names such as Abram, Baruch, Franz, Hersch, Ignatz, Isaac, Isaak, Isidor, Izsak, Jacob, Jakob, Josef, Jsaak, Michel, Moritz, Moses, Oscar,

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Salomon, Simon, Wasil, Yosef, and Ziskind. Most came from the same area: Austria, Germany, or Hungary.

THE LIST

This history recently became all the more poignant to me when I heard our family name uttered in the movie *Schindler's List*. Though I had watched the film several times before, this was the first time I heard the name. During the last third of the film, Schindler has paid off the Commandant and "his people" are being transferred to his factory—instead of being shipped off to the death camps. As the family groups approach a small table before boarding a train, they declare their names to the officer, who then checks them against the list. At the table one man declares his family name of "Lampel" to the officer. Hearing this, I was stunned. But, not trusting either my ears or the Spielberg movie script, I located a database of the names on Schindler's list at a web site. There I discovered three Lampels listed: a mother and daughter, and an older man probably of a separate family unit.

The places, names and dates of these associations suggest no immediate connection between my family in the United States and these three European Jews saved by Oskar Schindler. Still, the realization caused a visceral reaction in me. Whether far distant or close, here was evidence that people of my blood had passed through the hideous persecution of the Nazis, but ultimately had survived

through the mercies of a Gentile stranger.

BORN AGAIN

"I ask on their behalf; I do not ask on behalf of the world, but of those whom You have given Me; for they are Yours; and all things that are Mine are Yours, and Yours are Mine; and I have been glorified in them. I am no longer in the world; and yet they themselves are in the world, and I come to You. Holy Father, keep them in Your name, the name which You have given Me, that they may be one even as We are."

John 17:9-11

No matter their temporal ethnicity, all believers share a family name. They are "of Christ," they are "in Christ," they are "*Christ-ians*"—meaning, "followers of Christ." More than just adherents to a philosophy or creed, Christians are actual members of His family.



But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, even to those who believe in His name, who were born, not of blood nor of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man, but of God.

John 1:12-13

This is what it means to be “born again.” Believers have been reborn into the family of God through Christ. Because of this, they obtain full rights as sons and daughters of our heavenly Father. They have set aside as ancient history their original birth of the flesh, and have been birthed anew of the Spirit. Christians, because of this rebirth, become brothers and sisters of Christ Jesus. Not just adherents, not just disciples or followers; believers are kin.

We share the name of Christ.

EVERYTHING HE IS

Shortly after Pentecost, the apostle Peter came upon a man congenitally lame who was begging outside the temple gate. The man put out his hand, asking for alms. But Peter told the beggar that he possessed something better.

“I do not possess silver and gold, but what I do have I give to you: In the name of Jesus Christ the Nazarene—walk!”

Acts 3:6

Immediately the man’s legs were strengthened and he began dancing around, giddy

with the joy of being able to walk for the first time in his life. The people around them were amazed at the miracle, so Peter took the opportunity to preach a sermonette, making it clear from whence the miracle had come—that the one responsible for the healing was none other than the Jesus they had just had crucified. More specifically, it was the powerful name of Jesus that did it.

“And on the basis of faith in His name, it is the name of Jesus which has strengthened this man whom you see and know; and the faith which comes through Him has given him this perfect health in the presence of you all.”

Acts 3:16

Today, in the Western world, a person’s name is little more than a convenient label. It is assigned as a way to mark one person out from another—to denote one family from another, and one person from another within each family. It can be used as a term of endearment, but more often it is alphabetized in a phone book, printed on invoices and bills, used as the means to receive one’s appropriate mail. It is not meant to say anything about the character or personality of the individual. It is just a label.

But in Jesus’ time a person’s name represented who that person was. And in God’s economy, the name of “Jesus” represents everything of His personality, His goodness and strength, His purity and grace—His deity. Placing one’s faith and trust in the name of Jesus is the same as placing that faith and

trust in the *person* of Jesus.

But the relationship does not end there. Those who believe in the name of Jesus actually acquire that name. It becomes their family name from that point on, as they are now in Christ. And what a name it is—a name before which every knee will bow.

For this reason also, God highly exalted Him, and bestowed on Him the name which is above every name, so that at the name of Jesus every knee will bow, of those who are in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and that every tongue will confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

Philippians 2:9-11

And for the privilege and honor of sharing this most holy, powerful name, we give humble thanks.

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