

## The Eighth Day- Jesus' Circumcision

We actually do not know the day of the year when Jesus of Nazareth was born of Mary. However, we do know from the historical record that it was sometime when Caesar Augustus issued a decree that a census should be taken of the entire Roman world. <sup>2</sup> (This was the first census that took place while Quirinius was governor of Syria. <sup>3</sup> And everyone went to their own town to register, including Joseph and Mary, who were of the lineage of king David.) So they found themselves in Bethlehem when Mary, who was 9 months pregnant, gave birth to her firstborn son and laid him in a manger. Whatever that day and date was we do know that 8 days after his birth Jesus was circumcised and named "Jesus," or in Hebrew, "**Yeshua**." Luke writes,

*And **when eight days were completed** so that he could be circumcised, he was named Jesus, his name that he was called by the angel before he was conceived in the womb.* Luke 2:21

Two things happened on the eighth day of the baby Jesus' life. As a Hebrew male he was circumcised in accordance with the Abrahamic covenant sign and the law given to Moses. At that time he was also given his name, "**Yeshua**," a divinely chosen name conveyed by the angel Gabriel, first to Mary at the announcement of her role as mother of Messiah (Luke 1:31), and later to Joseph when he was considering divorcing her.

To Mary

Luke 1:30-31

<sup>30</sup> But the angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary; you have found favor with God.<sup>31</sup> **You will conceive and give birth to a son, and you are to call him Jesus.**<sup>32</sup> He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High. The Lord God will give him the throne of his father David,<sup>33</sup> and he will reign over Jacob's descendants forever; his kingdom will never end."

To Joseph

We read in Matthew 1:20-21 when Joseph was considering divorcing Mary privately, "Behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream, saying, "Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary as your wife; for the Child who has been conceived in her is of the Holy Spirit. <sup>21</sup> **She will bear a Son; and you shall call His name Jesus, for He will save His people from their sins.**" All this took place to fulfill what the Lord had spoken by the prophet:

<sup>23</sup> "Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son,  
and they shall call *his name Immanuel*" (which means, **God with us**)

Therefore, on the day of his circumcision he was named Yeshua or Jesus and enrolled in tribe of Judah, in the lineage of Jesse and David. There is biblical significance to both of these actions.

**First** concerning the practice of circumcision or the cutting away of the foreskin on a male, we read in Genesis 17:9-13, God said to Abraham, "As for you, you shall keep my covenant, you and your offspring after you throughout their generations. <sup>10</sup> *This is my covenant, which you shall keep, between me and you and your offspring after you: Every male among you shall be circumcised.* <sup>11</sup> *You shall be circumcised in the flesh of your foreskins, and it shall be a sign of the covenant between me and you.* <sup>12</sup> *He who is eight days old among you shall be circumcised.* Every male throughout your generations, whether born in your house or bought with your money from any foreigner who is not of your offspring, <sup>13</sup> both he who is born in your house and he who is bought with your money, shall surely be circumcised. So shall my covenant be in your flesh an everlasting covenant.

Leviticus 12:2 "Tell the Israelites: When a woman becomes pregnant and ***gives birth to a male child***, she will be unclean seven days, as she is during the days of her menstrual impurity. <sup>3</sup> ***The flesh of his foreskin must be circumcised on the eighth day.***

### **What did Jesus' circumcision signify?**

Circumcision was given as the sign of the covenant God made with Abraham. It was given to all in his household in Genesis 17. So its primary meaning is connected to this covenant. But circumcision was also stipulated in the law of Moses. When a male child was born to Jewish parents he was to be circumcised on the eighth day. So it functions as a sign of ethnic belonging and of biological descent. The child by this act enters the covenant; the result of this ritual function as a permanent sign in the flesh of one who undertakes to live in covenant with God. Paul expresses this reality when he writes to the church in Roman. *I testify again to every man who receives circumcision that he is bound to keep the whole law.* Romans 2:3

But Jesus is more than simply a child in the line of Abraham through Isaac and Jacob. He is the one to whom the covenant points. In time after fulfilling all the requirements of God's law he would redeem his people.

*But when the fullness of time had come, God sent forth his Son, born of woman, born under the law, to redeem those who were under the law, so that we might receive adoption as sons.* Galatians 4:4-5

Hebrews 10:5 reads, That is why, when Christ came into the world, he said to God, "You did not want animal sacrifices or sin offerings. But you have given me a body to offer. NLT/

Therefore, when Christ enters into the world, He says, in Ps 40:6-8  
,"SACRIFICE AND OFFERING YOU HAVE NOT DESIRED, BUT [instead] YOU HAVE PREPARED A BODY FOR ME [to offer];  
Hebrews 10:5 AMP

The law of circumcision does not apply to Gentiles, i.e., to non-Jewish believers.

Paul writes, "Look: I, Paul, say to you that if you accept circumcision, Christ will be of no advantage to you. <sup>3</sup> ***I testify again to every man who accepts circumcision that he is obligated to keep the whole law.*** <sup>4</sup> You are severed from Christ, you who would be justified by the law; you have fallen away from grace. <sup>5</sup> For through the Spirit, by faith, we ourselves eagerly wait for the hope of righteousness. <sup>6</sup> ***For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision nor uncircumcision counts for anything, but only faith working through love.*** (Galatians 5:2-6)

Jesus came under the law and lived a life of the perfect covenant keeper. And what he does he does for us and on our behalf. His perfect life as covenant party qualifies him to be our Redeemer. How is this accomplished? The penalty for one who would not take the sign of the covenant or who transgressed certain laws in Israel was to be cut off - cast out. On the cross, Messiah Jesus was cut off, his life was taken from him, in our behalf, in our place. We were joined with Christ in his physical suffering and death where he also bore the wrath, the judgment of God against us. The result of our being in union with Christ Jesus in God's purpose is that God accepts Christ's death which is the death we deserve for our sins.

Listen to these verses from Paul in Ephesians and Romans.

Cf. Ephesians 2:11-13

...you were dead in your trespasses and sins <sup>2</sup> in which you previously walked according to the ways of this world, ... and we were by nature children under wrath as the others were also. <sup>4</sup> But God, who is rich in mercy, because of His great love that He had for us, <sup>5</sup> made us alive with the Messiah even though we were dead in trespasses. You are saved by grace! <sup>6</sup> Together with Christ Jesus He also raised us up.

Romans 5:6: For while we were still weak, at the right time Christ died for the ungodly.

... God shows his love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us. <sup>9</sup> Since, therefore, we have now been justified by his blood, much more shall we be saved by him from the wrath of God. <sup>10</sup> For if while we were enemies we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, now that we are reconciled, shall we be saved by his life. Romans 5:6,8-10

Come with me in your mind to the 8<sup>th</sup> day in which Mary and Joseph present the infant for his circumcision. He is cut and his blood flows and his foreskin is cast away. This first shedding of Christ's blood foreshadows his actual future shedding of his blood on the cross for us underserving sinners. Paul calls this the circumcision of the Messiah in Colossians 2:11.

We ask, How do the deeds done by Christ in our behalf become a reality in our lives? The answer is found in Paul's teaching in Colossians 2:11-15:

***You were also circumcised in Him with a circumcision not done with hands, by putting off the body of flesh, in the circumcision of the Messiah.*** <sup>12</sup> *Having been buried with Him in baptism, you were also raised with Him through faith in the working of God, who raised Him from the dead.* <sup>13</sup> *And when you were dead in trespasses and in the uncircumcision of your flesh, He made you alive with Him and forgave us all our trespasses.* <sup>14</sup> *He erased the certificate of debt, with its obligations, that was against us and opposed to us, and has taken it out of the way by nailing it to the cross.* <sup>15</sup> *He disarmed the rulers and authorities and disgraced them publicly; He triumphed over them by Him.*  
Colossians 2:11-15 HCSB

Notice that the circumcision we undergo is not a physical act but a spiritual union with Messiah Jesus in his death on the cross. Baptism does not come in place of circumcision. If this were so then the Jerusalem council in Acts 15 would simply have asserted this and ended the early churches conflict over circumcision. Also this passage states that baptism is the outward visible identification the believer has with Jesus burial and his resurrection. This is a done through faith in the working of God who by the Holy Spirit makes us spiritually alive (regeneration) and he unites us with the Lord Jesus in his death, burial and resurrection. Colossians 2 speaks to both the meaning and the mode of baptism. It is a burial followed by a resurrection service. Because Christ took upon himself our judgment and was triumphant over death in all its forms we are forgiven of the trespasses and because of our union with Christ's resurrection life by the Holy Spirit we are empowered to live in newness of life. Believers are spiritually participants in Christ Jesus circumcision of being cut off and through their union with Christ brought to visible expression in the burial of immersion in water the flesh, the old manner of life is cut away; they rise from the water grave to life in Christ for God's glory. Hear Paul's affirmation to the Corinthians and we who believe: But you were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God. 1 Corinthians 6:11

1-

O happy day, when first was poured  
The blood of our redeeming Lord!  
O happy day, when first began  
His sufferings for sinful man!

Alt. O blessed day when first was poured  
The blood of our redeeming Lord!  
O blessed day when Christ began  
His saving work for sinful man!

2 While from His mother's bosom fed,  
His precious blood He wills to shed;  
A foretaste of His death He feels,  
An earnest of His love reveals.

4 In love our guilt He undertakes;  
Sinless, for sin atonement makes.  
The great Lawgiver for our aid  
Obedient to the Law is made.

Just entered on this world of woe,  
His blood already learned to flow;  
His future death was thus expressed,  
And thus His early love confessed.

3 Scarce come to earth, His Father's will  
With prompt obedience to fulfil,  
A victim even now He lies  
Before the day of sacrifice.

3

From Heaven descending to fulfill  
The mandates of His Father's will,  
E'en now behold the victim lie,  
The Lamb of God, prepared to die!

5-

Lord, circumcise our hearts, we pray,  
Our fleshly natures purge away;  
Your name, Your likeness may they bear:  
Yes, stamp your holy image there!

5 Lord, circumcise our heart, we pray,  
And take what is not Thine away.  
Write Thine own name upon our hearts,  
Thy Law within our inward parts.

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LM

This has been Bible Insights with Wayne Conrad

True circumcision is of the heart- by the Spirit not the letter. And we are the circumcision, who worship by the Spirit of God and glory in Christ Jesus and put no confidence in the flesh. Romans 2:29 and Philippians 3:3