

Jesus' 8th Day- The Cutting

Christmas is really not a celebration of the actual birthday of Jesus the Christ. We actually do not know the date of Jesus' birth from Mary. With sheep being in the field it is more likely a day in the spring or fall of a year is when he was born. Instead, Christmas Day is a celebratory remembrance of the great truth of Jesus' incarnation, the Word became flesh for the salvation of people. In today's post Christianized cultural, especially in the West such as in the United States, we reach a crescendo of holiday expressions on Christmas Day, then we promptly forget what follows. However, what followed Jesus' birth is just as important as the actual birthing by Mary, as demonstrated in the nativity accounts of Matthew and Luke, chapters 1 and 2. Let's assume for the sake of argument that Jesus was born on December 25; then the 8th day would fall on January 1. Some very significant events happened on his 8th day of life. Luke records this for us: *And at the end of eight days, when he was circumcised, he was called Jesus, the name given by the angel before he was conceived in the womb.* Eight days after his birth, the child was circumcised and named **Yeshua**. [NOG].

Let's consider briefly the meaning of these two great events on Jesus' eighth (8th) day. First, on the 8th day of his life, Jesus, better rendered as Yeshua, was circumcised as commanded by the Law of Moses and as the sign of his being a participant in the Abrahamic covenant. Circumcision consists of the surgical removal of the skin that covers the tip of the penis, usually performed soon after birth. It is practiced as a religious sign by Jews and Muslims. Jesus' circumcision signified that he was a descendant of Abraham, and under the law that God added through Moses, a participant in the Abrahamic covenant.

The Law

On the eighth day, the flesh of the boy's foreskin shall be circumcised, Leviticus 12:3

Generation after generation, every male must be circumcised when he is eight days old, including those born in your household and those purchased from a foreigner--even those who are not your offspring. Genesis 17:12

Paul in Galatians 4:4-5 writes, *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.* (ESV)

⁴ But when the right time came, God sent his Son into the world. A woman gave birth to him, and he came under the control of the laws given to Moses. ⁵ God sent him to pay for the freedom of those who were controlled by these laws so that we would be adopted as his children. [NOG]

“The fullness of time” means the appointed time for the fulfillment of covenant promises, i.e., for their completion. This is the time when the shadows of the covenant were to yield to the full reality or substance in the person and work of the Messiah, the Promised Seed.

Jesus, that is, Yeshua, was born under the Law. He was subject to the Law, a son of the commandments. Thus his parents performed the required rituals of the Law. So, Yeshua, on the 8th day received a mark "in the flesh" of belonging to the covenant that God made with the people of Israel as Hebrews.

However, for Yeshua even more is signified by this ceremony. He was born to undergo the testing of temptation as presented to Adam in the garden and to Israel in the wilderness when they reached the border of the Promised Land (Kadesh Barnea). Where Adam fell as the first head of the human race by transgressing the command of God, Yeshua must render perfect obedience to all of God's commands. *For just as through one man's disobedience the many were made sinners, so also through the one man's obedience the many will be made righteous.* Romans 5:19

Also in contrast to Israel who failed to enter the Promised Land after God had brought them to its border and they did not enter through unbelief, so the Messiah must both have and demonstrate full belief in God and his word of promise.

By his perfect obedience to God's laws and full faith in the Father's word and promise, Yeshua would qualify to stand as representative head of the elect of humanity. His life as perfect sinless Man qualified him for the death he would die to redeem, to purchase back we who are captive under the law of sin and death and the preparatory laws of the old covenant. *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.* Colossians 2:14

⁵Therefore, as He was coming into the world, He (Yeshua)said:

You did not want sacrifice and offering,

but You prepared a body for Me.

⁶You did not delight
in whole burnt offerings and sin offerings.

⁷Then I said, "See—
it is written about Me
in the volume of the scroll—

I have come to do Your will, God!"

⁸After He says above, You did not want or delight in sacrifices and offerings, whole burnt offerings and sin offerings (which are offered according to the law), ⁹He then says, **See, I have come to do Your will. He takes away the first to establish the second.** ¹⁰By this will of God, we have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once and for all. Hebrews 10:5-10

Listen to the lyrics of this hymn expressing the biblical truth of Jesus' circumcision.

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

2 Just born into this world of woe,
His blood for man was made to flow;

His future death was thus expressed,
Thus, too, His early love confessed.

3 From heaven descending, to fulfil
The mandates of His Father's will,
E'en now behold the Victim lie,
The Lamb of God prepared to die.

4 Beneath the knife behold the Child,
The innocent, the undefiled:
For captives He the ransom pays,
For lawless man the Law obeys.

What is the relationship of Jesus' physical circumcision to his death on the cross and to those who are united to him by faith in his Name? This was a pressing question in the early days of the church as recorded in the New Testament Acts of the Apostles and the letters of Paul and Peter. What is the relationship of the rite of circumcision to Christians? Listen to these 3 translations of Colossians 2:11.

First with reference to Jesus, Paul informs us *"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.* Colossians 2:11 HCSB

In him you were also circumcised. It was not a circumcision performed by human hands. But it was a removal of the corrupt nature in the circumcision performed by Christ. (God's Word Translation)

11 Also in Christ you had a different kind of circumcision, a circumcision not done by hands. It was through Christ's circumcision, that is, his death, that you were made free from the power of your sinful self. Col. 2:11 New Century Translation

Interpreted this means that Jesus the Messiah was cut off on behalf of his people. His ultimate circumcision was his death on the cross under the curse and judgment of God for us, in our place so that we could be brought near to God, forgiven and adopted by God.

Jesus arose victorious from death on the third day and his death and resurrection is how we are reconciled to God by grace through faith in him. The passage states that we are circumcised not by hands; it is not a physical act or ritual but by Jesus spiritually. Accordingly, circumcision no longer carries its covenantal sign significance. In fact, for one to now submit to it as a covenant sign of union with God's people would contradict the work of Christ Jesus on our behalf. *Look: I, Paul, say to you that if you accept circumcision, Christ will be of no advantage to you.* Galatians 5:2

I testify again to every man who accepts circumcision that he is obligated to keep the whole law. You are severed from Christ, you who would be justified by the law; you have fallen away from grace. *For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision nor uncircumcision counts for anything, but only faith working through love.* Galatians 5:5-6

For no one is a Jew who is merely one outwardly, nor is circumcision outward and physical. But a Jew is one inwardly, and circumcision is a matter of the heart, by the Spirit, not by the letter. His praise is not from man but from God. Romans 2:28-29

Here is how Paul concludes his teaching on this matter, Galatians 6:13-15, For even the circumcised don't keep the law themselves; however, they want you to be circumcised in order to boast about your flesh. ¹⁴ But as for me, *I will never boast about anything except the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ. The world has been crucified to me through the cross, and I to the world.* ¹⁵ *For both circumcision and uncircumcision mean nothing; what matters instead is a new creation.*

Stated positively, people who are united to Jesus by faith in him and his redemptive actions for us are constituted the true worshippers of God. *For we are the circumcision, who worship by the Spirit of God and glory in Christ Jesus and put no confidence in the flesh—* Philippians 3:3

This has been Wayne Conrad with Bible Insights. Remember Jesus' 8th Day and what it means for us and our salvation!

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