

Circumcision of Jesus

April 8, 5 B.C.

Luke 2:21

Circumcision of Jesus

Text:

Luke 2:21, On the eighth day, when it was time to circumcise him, he was named Jesus, the name the angel had given him before he had been conceived.

Commentary:

- I. Jesus was born under the law and observed all its provisions perfectly.
- II. Circumcision was a major sign of the covenant between the Israelites and Jehovah.
 - A. Without circumcision Jesus would have been excluded from synagogue worship and all other facets of Jewish life.
 - B. Formal naming of a child occurred at the time of circumcision.
 - C. The early life of John and Jesus parallel each other: (1) circumcised on the eighth day, (2) named at the time of circumcision, (3) given a name before conception by an angel.
 - D. The world to the first century Jews was divided into two parts, the circumcised and the uncircumcised.
- III. History of circumcision:
 - A. Circumcision was widely practiced in the ancient world including by the Egyptians, Canaanites and Israelites.

- B. In several of these cultures the rite was performed at the beginning of puberty, or at about 12 years of age, for hygienic reasons or as a sort of initiation rite into manhood.
- C. Israelites administered circumcision during infancy and signified by this rite their responsibility to serve as God's holy people in the midst of a pagan world.
- D. The first mention of circumcision in the Bible is Genesis 17:11 in which God commanded Abraham to circumcise everyone in his household including servants.
- E. Circumcision of the Jewish male was required as a visible, physical sign of the covenant between the Lord and his people.
- F. To refuse circumcision was to be regarded as a covenant breaker.

IV. Circumcision is not a Christian ordinance.

- A. **Acts 15:1-2, 28-29, Some men came down from Judea to Antioch and were teaching the brothers: "Unless you are circumcised, according to the custom taught by Moses, you cannot be saved." This brought Paul and Barnabas into sharp dispute and debate with them. So Paul and Barnabas were appointed, along with some other believers, to go up to Jerusalem to see the apostles and elders about this question. It seemed good to the Holy Spirit and to us not to burden you with anything beyond the following requirements: You are to abstain from food sacrificed to idols, from blood, from the meat of strangled animals and from sexual immorality. You will do well to avoid these things.**

- B. Romans 2:28-29, A man is not a Jew if he is only one outwardly, nor is circumcision merely outward and physical. No, a man is a Jew if he is one inwardly; and circumcision is circumcision of the heart, by the Spirit, not by the written code. Such a man's praise is not from men, but from God.**
- C. Galatians 5:6, For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision nor uncircumcision has any value. The only thing that counts is faith expressing itself through love.**
- D. Ephesians 2:14-18, For he himself is our peace, who has made the two one and has destroyed the barrier, the dividing wall of hostility, by abolishing in his flesh the law with its commandments and regulations. His purpose was to create in himself one new man out of the two, thus making peace, and in this one body to reconcile both of them to God through the cross, by which he put to death their hostility. He came and preached peace to you who were far away and peace to those who were near. For through him we both have access to the Father by one Spirit.**

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Questions

1. Jesus was _____ when he was _____ days old. The name Jesus was given him by the _____ before he was _____.

2. _____ was a major sign of the _____ between the _____ and _____.

3. Had he not been circumcised Jesus would have been excluded from _____ and all other _____ of _____.

4. Formal _____ of a _____ occurred at the time of _____.

5. Three ways in which the early life of John and Jesus were parallel to each other are: (1) _____

(2) _____

(3) _____

6. _____ was widely practiced in the ancient world by _____, _____ and _____.

7. The first mention of circumcision in the Bible is in _____: _____ in which _____ commanded _____ to circumcise everyone in his _____ including _____.

8. Circumcision at the _____ was required as a _____, _____ sign of the _____ between the _____ and his _____. To refuse circumcision was to be regarded as a _____.

9. Circumcision is _____ a _____.

10. In Christ Jesus neither _____ nor _____ has any value. The thing that really counts is _____ itself in _____.