

# Circumcision, Baptism, and Christianity

2017 - Feast of the Circumcision - SBC

January 1, 2017

Holy Trinity Church, Fernandina Beach, FL

## Introduction:

This is the feast day that the Church celebrates the Circumcision of Christ. It is worth considering the act and what God intended for it to do and be for the Old Testament people of God. This lesson will discuss its (1) biblical origins, (2) function, and (3) fulfillment.

## Biblical Origins - the Righteous Seed

### (1) Genesis 3 - the Fall and the subsequent prophecy of Redemption

- (a) **14** *And the LORD God said unto the serpent, Because thou hast done this, thou art cursed above all cattle, and above every beast of the field; upon thy belly shalt thou go, and dust shalt thou eat all the days of thy life: 15* *And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and **between thy seed and her seed**; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel.*
- (b) “Seed” in Gen. 3 references offspring; a metaphor that makes sense to us even today. Seed is sown, crops grow, and bear fruit.
- (c) This idea of “fruitfulness” in reference to offspring is another one that is common to the modern mind. It appears in the Bible as early as Genesis **1:28** *And God blessed them, and God said unto them, Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it: and have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over every living thing that moveth upon the earth.*

- (d) Fruitfulness is even present before Genesis 1:28. God himself is fruitful when he creates the cosmos. Adam is God's offspring!
  - (i) St. Luke 3:23-38 (St. Mary)
  - (ii) St. Matthew 1:2-12 (St. Joseph)
- (e) "Righteous seed" - the faithful and godly seed.
  - (i) Cain & Abel (Gen. 4)
  - (ii) The birth of Seth restores the line of the righteous seed which had been lost with Abel's murder. Look where Jesus comes from!
- (f) Descendants of Cain
- (g) Noah (Gen. 5:28-9:28)
  - (i) Flood - the unrighteous seed is wiped out (so we thought)!
  - (ii) Shem, Ham, and Japheth
    - 1) Seed of the Woman = Shem (with Japheth)
    - 2) Seed of the Serpent = Ham
  - (iii) Out of these sons comes nations (Gen 10:6-20). Do you recognize any?
- (2) Genesis 17 - God's covenant with Abraham
  - (a) Blessings? Fruitfulness, Blessing of Nations
  - (b) Obligation? Circumcision of all males associated with Abraham and his descendants after him.
  - (c) "Seed" is mentioned here
- (3) Circumcision was further enshrined in the Mosaic Law in Leviticus 12:2-3

### **Function - the Cutting off of Sin**

- (4) Symbolic of the cutting off of sin; belonging to God and his covenant
  - (a) No mistake that the sign is affixed to the male reproductive organ
  - (b) The people of God are to propagate righteousness; this goes back to Genesis 1 in that the offspring of Adam is meant, not merely to increase the population, but to spread God's rule throughout the earth

- (c) Notice what God warns Abraham of in Gen. 17:14
- (d) For the nation of Israel was to be a priestly nation. Meant to fulfill Genesis 1 from before. To subdue the world to God's rule.
- (e) Circumcision is to cut off the unrighteous seed within all of us from entering into the people of God.
- (5) Moses' Son's Circumcision - Exodus 4:24
  - (a) Turning back the wrath of God
  - (b) Cutting off of sin is serious business!
  - (c) "Bridegroom of Blood" - foreshadowing?
- (6) Re-consecrating Israel - Joshua 5
- (7) Circumcision is Not Enough
  - (a) Circumcision was never enough, but it was a sign and seal of God's covenant promises and curses.
  - (b) Obedience was always expected from God; not merely outward signs!
  - (c) **Jeremiah 4:4** - *Circumcise yourselves to the LORD, and take away the foreskins of your heart, ye men of Judah and inhabitants of Jerusalem: lest my fury come forth like fire, and burn that none can quench it, because of the evil of your doings.*
  - (d) **Jeremiah 9:25** - *Behold, the days come, saith the LORD, that I will punish all them which are circumcised with the uncircumcised; 26 Egypt, and Judah, and Edom, and the children of Ammon, and Moab, and all that are in the utmost corners, that dwell in the wilderness: for all these nations are uncircumcised, and all the house of Israel are uncircumcised in the heart.*
  - (e) **Deuteronomy 10:16** - *Circumcise therefore the foreskin of your heart, and be no more stiffnecked.*
  - (f) **Deuteronomy 30:6** - *And the LORD thy God will circumcise thine heart, and the heart of thy seed, to love the LORD thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, that thou mayest live.*

## Fulfillment - the Church & Holy Baptism

- (8) **Galatians 3:13** - Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us: for it is written, Cursed *is* every one that hangeth on a tree: **14** that the blessing of Abraham might come on the Gentiles through Jesus Christ; that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith.
- (a) Hebrews 11 - Abraham was justified by faith in the promises of God.
  - (b) All the curses that were heaped upon mankind through disobedience were upon Christ, and died with him in such a way that whoever has the mark of Christ will not suffer those same curses at the end of days.
  - (c) The flesh is no avail when the problem of man is spiritual. Indeed, the physical indicates the spiritual problem (i.e., death)!
    - (i) **Gal. 3:3** Are ye so foolish? having begun in the Spirit, are ye now made perfect by the flesh? **4** Have ye suffered so many things in vain? if *it be* yet in vain.
    - (ii) **Gal. 5:2** Behold, I Paul say unto you, that if ye be circumcised, Christ shall profit you nothing. **3** For I testify again to every man that is circumcised, that he is a debtor to do the whole law. **4** Christ is become of no effect unto you, whosoever of you are justified by the law; ye are fallen from grace. **5** For we through the Spirit wait for the hope of righteousness by faith. **6** For in Jesus Christ neither circumcision availeth anything, nor uncircumcision; but faith which worketh by love.
- (9) Jesus bore our sins in his own body (2 Peter 2:24).
- (a) The Crucifixion was a circumcision in it's own right because Jesus was cut off for our sake and through his own death sin was conquered.

- (b) Through him being cut off, we find out very life because out of his own side came blood and water.
  - (c) Just like Eve was taken from Adam's side, so the Church was taken from Christ's own side.
- (10) The New Righteous Seed in Baptism
- (a) Romans 2:28-29
  - (b) Colossians 2:11-12
  - (c) Philippians 3:3
- (11) The Church receives a better sign and promises
- (a) Baptism: Physical sign, but a physical mark?
  - (b) Baptism: For all; children and adults, male and female.
  - (c) The power of the Holy Ghost working to circumcise hearts
  - (d) Same warnings apply to Christians as the Jews. Don't glory in your baptism, and live a life of impenitence and sin, and expect your Baptism to be of any use to you
  - (e) Jesus' parable of the Vinedresser.
  - (f) Church and Fruitfulness - Gen. 1, Matt. 28, Eph. 5 - Baptism and fruit