

A HARMONY OF THE GOSPELS
X. The Great Significance Of Christ's Circumcision
(Luke 2:21 et al.)

I. Introduction

- A. The circumcision of Jesus Christ on the eighth day after His birth is briefly mentioned in Luke 1:21, but in light of Old Testament revelation, it has enormous significance in His ministry that stretches on into eternity.
- B. We thus view that passage and related Old Testament passages for our insight, application and edification:

II. The Great Significance Of Christ's Circumcision, Luke 2:21 et al.

- A. Circumcision for Israel's people in Jesus' day was connected to **all the blessings** that God had for the **world**:
 - 1. In Genesis 12:1-3, God had made an unconditional covenant with Abraham to give him the Promised Land, to make of him a great nation, Israel, to make his name great and make him a blessing, to bless them that blessed him and to curse them that cursed him, and in Abraham to bless all of the families of the earth.
 - 2. Then, in Genesis 17:11-13, God instituted the rite of circumcision as a sign of this covenant, and it was to be administered on the eighth day after a boy's birth, to be practiced always by Abraham's descendants.
 - 3. If this rite was not practiced on any male among Abraham's household and descendants, that male was to be "cut off" from the people of Israel, implying capital punishment!
 - 4. Those who were part of the Abrahamic Covenant would be blessed only if they pleased God in living righteously, so God gave the Mosaic Law at Mount Sinai to stipulate what was needed for Abraham and his descendants to please God, J. Dwight Pentecost, The Words and Works of Jesus Christ, 1991, p. 62.
- B. However, the people of Israel failed to keep the Mosaic Law, and they along with the Gentile world left to themselves stand condemned before God as taught by passages like Romans 3:23 and Isaiah 64:6.
- C. Accordingly, in grace, "God promised to bless them through the Messiah" (Ibid.) by sending Him as "his Son, made of a woman [Mary], made under the law, to redeem them that were under the law . . ." Galatians 4:4-5:
 - 1. God sent His Son, Jesus Christ, through Mary who was of the seed of David, and who was married to Joseph who was of the royal lineage of David in qualifying Him to sit on David's throne in blessing.
 - 2. The physical lineage of Jesus Christ then needed to be coupled with His circumcision on the eighth day to make "Him eligible to fulfill the promises that God had pledged to Abraham," Ibid., p. 63.
 - 3. "Paul referred to this in Galatians 3:16 when he said, 'The promises were spoken to Abraham and to his seed . . . not . . . 'and to seeds,' meaning many . . . but ' . . . to your seed,' meaning one person . . ." (Ibid.)
 - 4. "The circumcision of the One . . . Matthew introduced as" Abraham's "Descendant . . . (Matt. 1:1) was recorded by Luke . . . to relate Him to Abraham, the father of circumcision in Israel (Luke 2:21,)" Ibid.
 - 5. Jesus Christ then perfectly kept the Mosaic Law in His life, thus qualifying Him to be the Source of God's blessings to Israel and all the families of the earth, cf. Hebrews 4:15.
 - 6. However, to spread this blessing to sinful men, God graciously had His Son die on the cross as a Substitutionary Atonement for the sins of the whole world that by faith in Him, anyone could have Christ's perfect righteousness applied to his account that he might be pronounced righteous by God, 2 Cor. 5:19.
 - 7. When one then believes in Christ for salvation from sin, God pronounces him righteous, and that person becomes a recipient of all the blessings God has in Christ by his identification with Christ, Rom. 3:24-28.
 - 8. One is thus blessed with eternal life in Christ by faith in Him, John 3:16, and he will participate in the blessings of the Abrahamic Covenant in eternity through Christ, be he Jew or Gentile, Galatians 3:13-14.
- D. Accordingly, Joseph and Mary had Jesus circumcised on the eighth day after His birth in full obedience to the Abrahamic Covenant and Mosaic Law, making him reckoned as a descendant of Abraham and thus eligible to fulfill the promises God had made to Abraham as the promised Messiah.
- E. In concert with His circumcision, and in keeping with Hebrew tradition, Jesus was given the name "JESUS" at His circumcision in fulfillment of the word of the angel Gabriel to Mary (Luke 1:31) and the word of the angel of the Lord to Joseph (Matthew 1:21).

Lesson: *To have Jesus reckoned to be of Abraham's line as a recipient of God's covenant blessings, He was circumcised the eighth day in accord with the Abrahamic Covenant and the Mosaic Law. This helped to qualify Him to be the Propitiation for the sins of the world that God's blessings might come on all who believe in Him.*

Application: *(1) May we praise God that Jesus was circumcised the eighth day after birth to qualify to be our Savior! (2) May we anticipate all the eternal blessings of the Abrahamic Covenant through Jesus Christ our Lord.*