

## Lutheran Confessions

### Luther on Circumcision

And so circumcision is not a taking away of sin, but **a sign of such taking away, which takes place solely through faith**, as happened with Abraham. Circumcision demands, as in Abraham, so also in all men, faith, in order that it remove the nature of sin and make the person righteous and acceptable. If now Abraham's faith had not been mentioned before his circumcision, it would have been a sure sign of original sin in him, as it is in children whose faith is not mentioned before; Scripture has so arranged it that **Abraham first believed and was circumcised later, and that the others were first circumcised and believed afterward, in order that both truths would be established**, first, that circumcision is only a sign of justification and that nobody is made righteous through it; second, that faith alone, without collaboration of circumcision, justifies and that, consequently, faith and its sign must be clearly differentiated and that any justification is opposed that is presumed to be resting on works.

In addition, the eighth day is perhaps appointed for physical reasons, that the infant should first become a little stronger so that it should not appear that it had died from circumcision if it were circumcised soon after birth and should die from weakness. Yet the spiritual meaning is of greater import. Seven days signify the time of this world up to the Last Day, because these times are measured by weeks or seven days (described in Genesis 1). The eighth day is the Last Day after this time, when weeks, months, and years shall cease and when there will be one eternal day. On that same day this circumcision will be fulfilled, when not only the soul, but also the body, shall be freed from sin, death, and all impurity, and will shine like the sun. In the meantime **the soul is circumcised through faith from sin and a bad conscience**. Thus we see, how Scripture everywhere insists on faith, but only on faith in Christ. For this reason, too, circumcision was given through the law of Moses not to the fathers before Abraham, but to Abraham, to whom Christ, his seed, was promised as a blessing, so that bodily circumcision everywhere might agree with the spiritual circumcision (Luther's Works, Vol. 52 - Sermons II, p.153).

## Put it into Practice

*These questions have been put together to help you as you extend and apply tonight's Scripture to your life.*

### Prayer

O merciful and eternal God, heavenly Father, who didst cause Thy Son to endure circumcision and to be made subject to the Law, that we might be redeemed from the curse of the Law: We beseech Thee, grant us grace to become partakers of this redemption and thus obtain eternal salvation, through the same, Thy Beloved Son Jesus Christ, our Lord, who liveth and reigneth with Thee and the Holy Ghose, one true God, world without end. Amen.

**AMEN** (*Collect for The Circumcision and Name of Jesus*)

### Word of God: St Luke 2:21 (on back)

### Questions to Ponder in Prayer

1. Why did they wait until the 8th day to circumcise Jesus? Gen 17:12, Lev 12:3
2. When Jesus was circumcised, he was legally put under the law (Gal 4:4-5) and placed into the covenant relationship with the Father. We who are under the law, have not kept the law (Acts 15:10). Why would Jesus want to be placed under the law? Rom 5:19
3. St. Luke does not explicitly say Jesus was circumcised, though he was. St. Luke does not explicitly say who named Jesus (Mary Lk 1:31, Joseph Mt 1:21). St. Luke chooses to emphasize Jesus' name itself, and further that the Name was given by Whom? Luke 1:30-33.
4. When instituted, circumcision was a seal of the righteousness Abraham had by faith. "Paul teaches the same thing about works when he says that Abraham did not receive circumcision in order to be justified (Rom. 4:9-22). By faith his justification was already accomplished, but circumcision was added to give him a sign written in his body by which he might be reminded and grow in faith, and through his witness testify to his faith before others and induce them to believe"(Ap IV, 201) Look at Romans 4:11.
5. Old Testament believers looked forward to Jesus' coming. Now that Jesus has come, the sign of circumcision has been fulfilled and is no longer required. "Paul is here speaking of circumcision, which at that time was a matter of indifference and which in his Christian liberty he employed in other instances (Acts 16:3). But when false prophets demanded circumcision and abused it to confirm their false doctrine that the works of the law are necessary for righteousness and salvation, Paul said that he would not yield, not even for a moment, so that the truth of the Gospel might be preserved. To what are New Testament believers directed? Colossians 2:11-12

### 6:30 PM "Learn by Heart"

*Through simple repetition those present will inwardly digest...*

Hymn "**To The Name of Our Salvation**"

Holy Baptism, Part Three  
Galatians 3:26

### 7:00 PM "Catechesis"

+ Opening Verses

"O Lord, open my lips..." p.224

+ Ascription of Praise

"Praise to you, O Christ,  
King who comes to save us." p.225

Reading

St. John 1:1-18 (back)

Hymn

"**To The Name of Our Salvation**"  
(Augustana Service #7, insert)

Catechesis on... (back)

St. Luke 2:21  
Liturgy  
Catechism

+ Prayers p.231-235

Kyrie  
Lord's Prayer  
Salutation  
Collect of the Day  
Other Prayers  
Prayers  
At Vespers  
In the Evening  
For Peace  
Benedicamus  
Benediction

## **Catechesis on St. Luke 2:21**

And when eight days were completed for the circumcision of the Child, His name was called Jesus, the name given by the angel before He was conceived in the womb.

### **Galatians 3:23-29**

23But before faith came, we were kept under guard by the law, kept for the faith which would afterward be revealed. 24Therefore the law was our tutor to bring us to Christ, that we might be justified by faith. 25But after faith has come, we are no longer under a tutor.

26For you are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus. 27For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ. 28There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus. 29And if you are Christ's, then you are Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise.

### **Colossians 2:11-12**

11In Him you were also circumcised with the circumcision made without hands, by putting off the body of the sins of the flesh, by the circumcision of Christ, 12buried with Him in baptism, in which you also were raised with Him through faith in the working of God, who raised Him from the dead.

### **OT Circumcision: NT Baptism**

We may compare circumcision to Christian baptism. By means of the latter a man enters the New Covenant and becomes a Christian. Our Lord submitted to circumcision because He wanted to be subject to the ordinances of the Law. This was part of His abasement and obedience to the will of His Father and the price of the redemption.

### **Prayer from The Lutheran Liturgy**

O Lord Jesus Christ, Thou Savior of the world, who, being made man for our sakes, didst endure the circumcision of the flesh to satisfy the demands of the Law and the eternal justice of God by Thy perfect obedience, that we might obtain the forgiveness of sins in Thy name, we praise Thee for Thy goodness and glorify Thy marvelous works for our salvation. And we beseech Thee to count Thy perfect merit unto our faith for righteousness and to plead our cause when our misdeeds rise up to testify against us. Teach us to reverence and faithfully to use Thy Word and the blessed Sacraments, cleanse us daily from our sins with Thy precious blood, and grant us the true circumcision of the heart, in the spirit, that we may by faith be consecrated, as instruments of righteousness, to Thy service. Give us grace to withstand all temptations and with pure hearts and minds to follow Thee, loving the thing which Thou commandest and desiring only what Thou hast promised, that among the manifold changes of this present world our hearts may surely there be fixed where true joys are to be found. Sustain us in our trials, keep us in the path in which we should go, and hereafter receive us into the kingdom of Thy glory. (page 337).

### **Prayer from Wilhelm Loehe**

Lord Jesus Christ, Redeemer of the World, we give thanks to You with our whole hearts that for us You have so humbled Yourself as to clothe Yourself in our flesh and blood, being subject to the law; and even in tenderest youth did submit Yourself unto pain that You might be called our Jesus, Our Redeemer. O Lord Jesus, as Your Name even so has Your glory gone out unto the ends of the earth. Great are Your works and the thoughts which You have revealed unto us. In these we rejoice and speak of Your truth and salvation, praying You to reckon the merit of Your circumcision unto our faith for righteousness, and grant us Your holy Spirit that we may humbly yield our hearts circumcised unto You. You, O Lord, will create in us new hearts and renew a right spirit within us, that we may henceforth serve You in a new life, rejoicing before You for Your mercies, which are new before us every morning; ever praising You, and finally, through Your merit, be made worthy to celebrate the eternal New Year with You in the heavenly Jerusalem. Grant this, most heartily beloved Redeemer, for Your most blessed and holy Name-- Jesus. Amen. (Loehe, 270)

## **Catechesis On St. Luke 2:21**



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