

The Circumcision of Faith

Gal 3:29 — Abraham is the father of the faithful, Jews and Gentiles alike, who belong to Messiah. The only way that we, whether Jews or Gentiles by background, can follow in the footsteps of Father Abraham and do as he did is given us in Rom 4:9-12 (Jn 8:39) — that is, all who were justified not under the Law of Moses, but according to Father Abraham 430 years before the Law of Moses.

Gen 17:1 — Abraham was circumcised thirteen years after he was justified by his faith (Gen 15:1-6), which was before the command to be circumcised was given to him and his household. So since Abraham was justified thirteen years before his circumcision was commanded, we who belong to Messiah by faith, as Abraham, are to be circumcised sometime after our baptism into Messiah, when our faith has developed in full understanding from babyhood to adulthood discipleship, so as to be those who follow the commandment as Abraham did (1 Cor 7:18-19).

Certainly, circumcision without the developed faith of understanding is a useless ritual. How could anyone understand the reason for circumcision at or before baptism, as if it were an initiation ritual to enter the Body of Messiah? Gal 6:12-16 plainly exposes those in Acts 15:1,5 who compel one to be circumcised as being under the Law — “Judaizers” (Gal 3:10-14; 2:15-21; Rom 2:25 – 3:2,28-31).

We are the very (spiritual) seed of Abraham and have the very same faith, saved by faith and for observance of the Law of Moses. Our circumcision is no longer under the Law, but under grace, as was Abraham’s, and that was thirteen years later when God’s approval ordained Abraham as His son who would obey Him in everything He commanded (Gen 17:1-14). Giving him his name, *Father of a Multitude of Nations*, He foresaw the descendants of Abraham scattered in the western world that God has made into nations for the twelve tribes — not just the Jews (from Judah), but from the other eleven tribes. The Redeemed from among these nations will be circumcised as their

father Abraham was (Gen 17:10). The redeemed Jews and those redeemed from the eleven other tribes would be circumcised as Rom 4:9-12 gives us understanding.

All nations whom Abraham was the progenitor of would be circumcised as he was, after being saved into one of the twelve tribes of Isa 49:6, from one of the multitude of the nations in Gen 17:5-7. They are baptized into the one Body of Messiah, the one seed of Abraham, who is Messiah (Gal 3:16).

Gal 3:17 says the covenant of circumcision was made 430 years before the Law of Moses, so this covenant with Abraham and his seed was not and is not revoked by the Law of Moses, therefore the promise is still valid (Acts 26:6-8). Gal 3:18 — Do you understand? Circumcision is not of the Law (Jn 7:22), but is from Abraham 430 years before the Law, and circumcision is not required at one's initiation into Messiah's Body, but afterward when full revelation is acquired by faith.

So circumcision is by faith, not under the Law (Gal 3:10). So the Gentiles who were saved were not to be subjected to be circumcised as in Acts 15:1,5 or Gal 6:12. This forced ritual circumcision was the circumcision that Paul said was not necessary. He was not then speaking of the circumcision of Abraham, which is his topic in Rom 4:11-12. There he is not only speaking of the Jews who were circumcised under the Law but have been saved, but the Gentiles as well, if they are saved and then are circumcised later in faith as Rom 4:13-18. These Gentiles may also be Abraham's descendants, but don't know it (Isa 49:6).

So the Gentiles of the nations, whether or not they were of Abraham without knowing it, could now be admitted to the twelve tribes of Acts 26:7 and 1 Pet 2:9-10, without regard to circumcision as under the Law of Moses, as an initiation rite (Acts 15:1,5). The promise of salvation was made to Abraham — the blessing to all the nations and families of the earth was promised in his seed, that is, the Messiah (Gal 3:16). But the Jews had so glorified Moses' Law and the rite of circumcision that they unconsciously and erroneously identified both with Abraham.

So Paul was at great pains to explain that Law and circumcision had absolutely nothing to do with one another, since circumcision was from Abraham, in Messiah (the seed of Abraham). The believing Jews had mistakenly supposed it to be from themselves only in Acts 15:1,5. But Gal 3:16 says not seeds (plural) as the Jews, but Messiah the Seed (singular). Gal 3:17-19 — So then what value was the Law? The liberation from the Law did not nullify the Law as our instructions, but allows us to be as Abraham in Gen 26:5, as Paul said in Rom 8:4, doing as Abraham did (Jn 8:39; Rom 4:9-12; Jn 7:22; Gal 3:17,26-29).

Baptism comes long before even the knowledge of being circumcised, as it was for Abraham (Gen 15:6). He was not informed about circumcision until Gen 17, thirteen years later. The circumcised Jews and the uncircumcised Gentiles are one in Messiah through baptism (Gal 3:27). The Jews did not have to be uncircumcised nor did the Gentiles have to be circumcised before entry into the new Israel. But the Jews would now be saved by grace through faith just as the Gentiles are saved by grace through faith, and the Gentiles as Rom 4:9-12 would also walk in the steps of Abraham according to the commandment in Gen 17:10 in order to fulfill Gen 17:8 (Gen 15:18; 18:19; Mt 19:28; Acts 3:21).

So Jews and Gentiles are saved on the same basis — by faith, without the Law of Moses or the rite of circumcision, as Abraham was saved by faith without the Law (Rom 4:3; Gen 15:6), which could not have been by the Law 430 years before it was given, or even thirteen years before the commandment in Gen 17.

As 1 Cor 7:19 says, Gen 15:6 was a faith to obey God, as Gen 12:1-3 and 17:10. God called Abraham to leave Ur. Abraham believed God and obeyed Him (Heb 11:8). Gen 12:6-8; 13:3-4; 14:14-24 — All of these things showed that Abraham's faith was an obedient faith, which is the only kind of faith that can save.

The circumcision of the Jews did not keep them from crucifying Messiah, since it was not of faith (Gen 17:14?) in obedience to the commandments — an obedient faith.

1 Cor 7:19 is all Paul is saying, even as Jn 14:15,21 — the obedience of faith. Rom 1:5 — Even the obedience of the gospel takes faith, for faith comes by hearing. As it came to Abraham, so it comes to his descendants (Gal 3:26-29). For the Jew, Rom 2:25-29 applies, as was Abraham before he was circumcised (Rom 4:11).

The first Jews were saved in Acts 2:36-41 by being baptized into Messiah as Gal 3:27 (1 Cor 12:13; Acts 2:38). Gal 5:2 is saying that the motive in Acts 15:1,5 and Gal 6:12 makes circumcision of no value whatsoever. That circumcision is under the Law and not as in the footsteps of their father Abraham (Jn 8:39). Circumcision is not the inauguration into the New Covenant for Gentiles (people from among the nations), since the Jews who were being saved had already been circumcised on the eighth day and could not be uncircumcised. Even many Gentiles today in America are also circumcised as infants, which amounts to as much as the Jews' circumcision, who were apostate from Abraham's faith.

Circumcision as in Gal 5:2 would be under the Law and a curse to them (Gal 3:10), since our Master's sacrifice (verses 13-14) brought us back, even as Gentiles, to the place of Abraham 430 years before the Law (verse 19). But in Gal 5:2 the Judaizers tried to impose it upon the Gentiles as it was used in old Israel to inaugurate a newcomer into the covenant, which was even contrary to the way Abraham himself was brought into the covenants (Rom 4:12).

Gentiles now are saved by the same kind of faith Abraham had received from God — by hearing — thirteen years before circumcision and 430 years before the Law. This proved that the faith he received by hearing was the faith Paul was chosen to administer to others (Rom 1:5) — an obedient faith, the faith that causes obedience to do all that God requires of His people (Jn 8:39), lest we also be as verses 44-47, not doing as Abraham did when he heard our Father call him out of Ur (Gen 12:1-2).

So let's walk in the faith of Abraham if we are his true descendants, which have been found from all the nations of which he was the progenitor (Gen 17:5; Lk 19:10; Jn 10:16; 11:52; Isa 49:6).

The foundation of the Gospel is the calling of Abraham to *come*, as it still is today (Rev 22:17; Gen 12:1-2). These are the steps of Abraham we must emulate to have his faith. First Jn 18:37 — do you or can you hear His voice? Jn 10:27 — All who are of the truth can and will walk in his steps (Gen 18:19). Rev 22:17 says *come*, which means to leave something and to enter something and then to become something.

These same essential steps must be followed today if one is to be as Gal 3:26-29. Gen 12:1 — *Leave!* — What emotion swept over him as he turned his back for the last time on his family and native land, as he kissed his loved ones goodbye forever? He placed his life in the hands of the One who spoke to his heart to get out of his land, and He would show him the land of promise, a place where God could dwell with a people after His own heart. So Abraham left and placed his life in the care of God, and set his face toward an unknown destination (Heb 11:8).

Abraham did not shrink from leaving all behind. He obeyed God. If he had not gotten out of Ur and left to go to the place He would show him, God would have chosen someone else, if He could find anyone to do His will (Gen 18:19). It is the same for all who walk in the steps of their father Abraham (Lk 14:26,33; Mt 10:37; Mk 3:31-35; Mk 10:17-21,28-30), to follow Messiah even unto death. Mk 10:28 — It is the same for us today; we proclaim the same Good News of Salvation — to forsake one's life in this world (Jn 12:25) in order to go where He is and serve Him there (verse 26).

The gospel's requirement for all is the same: leaving and forsaking their dead past and all their yesterdays to follow Yahshua. Those who never leave anything and never intend to leave anything don't leave their sins behind either. They remain in the world and keep conforming to the world's culture and standard for their lives, having the same value judgments, wallowing in the mire of this world's filth and excesses, fully identified

with the world (2 Tim 2:4). Still they also presume they have the same faith as Father Abraham, proving they are blind indeed (Jn 9:39-41; 1 Jn 2:4-6).

So we must leave something and enter something (1 Cor 12:13), as God spoke to Abraham — “a land I will show you.” Did he obey the call of the gospel? Heb 11:8 is faith. Did he enter the land (Gen 12:5)? But what if Abraham had demurred?¹ What if he had decided that he could “only believe” without obeying, and never left home, family and friends, and occupation (2 Tim 2:4)?

How fond and tender must have been the farewells of Abraham as he kissed his loved ones goodbye forever and placed his life in the care of the One whose voice he heard (Jn 18:37; 10:14,27; Rev 2:10; Mt 10:37; 16:24)?

Leave something,

Enter something,

Become something.

You can never be what He wants you to be until you follow in the steps of Father Abraham.

Jn 3:5; Rom 6:3; Gal 3:27; Mt 28:20; Acts 2:40

¹ Demur — to raise doubts or objections; to show reluctance; to delay in responding.