

In the Name of the Father, and of the ✠ Son, and of the Holy Ghost.

God began speaking with Abraham, the father of the faithful, by revealing who He is: Almighty God, the Great I AM. Everything that followed in His speaking to Abraham was predicated on who God is. He is Holy. He is blameless. So those who walk before Him must be holy and blameless.

It is not just that God is arbitrary or capricious in requiring all who walk before Him to be holy and blameless. It is rather that sin cannot stand in the presence of Holiness, and transgression cannot stand in the presence of blamelessness. What God is in His being, He requires of those who would be His. And if you would be His, it must be true of you. You must be holy.

Because of who He is, God alone could institute the Covenant with Abraham. He alone can grant blessings. He alone can multiply one exceedingly. He alone can pardon transgression. He alone can make one fruitful. So He alone can establish a Covenant. To Abraham and to his descendants God promised the great land as an everlasting possession. And because God established the Testament, they would receive what He promised, and He would be their God.

The sign of the Covenant, the external symbol that testified to the faith of Abraham, the faith by which he was counted as holy and blameless in God's sight, that sign was a bloody one. For there is no remission of sins without the shedding of blood. So Abraham would be circumcised, and all his descendants. Every male child was to be circumcised on the eighth day. And the one who would not be circumcised would be cut off from his people.

Circumcision did not bring holiness or blamelessness. Only faith in the Promised Seed, the Seed of the woman, the faith that Abraham held before he was circumcised, could do that.

Circumcision was an external mark of faith held internally, a visible external symbol of an invisible faith held internally. Circumcision marked the flesh in an indelible way. It marked the flesh, because with the flesh comes sin to you, and to every man born of human father.

It marked the flesh by the cutting off and casting away of dead flesh. It marked the flesh by shedding blood, a sanguine promise of a future Blood Sacrifice that would free men from sin and death. And circumcision stood as a sign and a testimony of a Better Flesh, a Better Blood, a Better Death, and a better Covenant, all of which would bring holiness and blamelessness, a life that cannot be taken away, and a better Promised Land.

So there, in Bethlehem, was Abraham's Descendant placed under the Law. There, outside of Jerusalem, was the Son of Judah's daughter circumcised. There, on the eighth day, was the sinless Flesh of the Son of God marked with the ancient sign given to scribe into sinful flesh by flint knife.

The only One who is truly Holy and Blameless was placed into the Covenant that He was already party to—as the One who initiated the Covenant, and now as a child bound by it. The cutting He commanded scored His Flesh. There, 2000 years after God spoke to Abraham, did God come as Abraham's Son and suffer Himself to be cut. On the eighth day did God's Son

allow His Holy and Precious Blood to be spilled, and His sinless Flesh to be cast away, the Flesh that the eternal Logos received from Mary.

He needed no circumcision. He was already holy and blameless, for He is the Great I AM, the Divine Child. His circumcision was not for Him. He was circumcised for you. For when Holiness and Blamelessness are placed under the Law, the Law is fulfilled. When the Object of Abraham's faith, the Seed in whom Abraham trusted, is placed under the Law, then the Law can accuse no one that holds that faith, faith in the Promised Seed, faith in the Promised Savior.

So on the eighth day, the Babe of Bethlehem began His Messianic work as His Blood was shed. The typical instrument for circumcision was the flint knife – sharp, unforgiving, crafted of stone like the two tablets of the Law, a chip off of those tablets doing the work of the Law on the sinner – for every circumcision was a taste of death, as dead flesh was cast away.

But when Holiness is circumcised, circumcision is fulfilled. When the God Man is circumcised, the Covenant between God and Man is satisfied. When the Flesh cut is without sin, the status of flesh before God is changed. The Blood of Christ would be spilled again, not by flint knife, but by scourge and spike and spear. He is the giver of circumcision, and the fulfillment of circumcision, as He became the lifeless Flesh cut off and cast away, cast into the garden tomb.

He is the fulfillment of the eighth day, for not on the Sabbath, the seventh day, but on the eighth day, the Day of Resurrection, the first day of eternity, did He take up His life again. In His death is the remission of sins for all men of all time. In His rising to new life is the justification of all men, the forensic declaration of holiness and blamelessness, that is made yours as you receive the faith of Abraham, faith in Christ.

What the Christ suffered, He suffered for you, for you who were not holy or blameless, that covered in His shed blood you be reconciled to God. Believing, you are circumcised with a better circumcision, for he is not a Jew who is one outwardly, nor is circumcision that which is outward in the flesh; but he is a Jew who is one inwardly; and circumcision is that of the heart, in the Spirit, not in the letter; whose praise is not from men but from God.

Christ fulfilled the Law for you. His Holiness and His blamelessness are imputed to you when you are filled with the Spirit, when you are baptized, when you are given the faith of Abraham. So it is you, O Redeemed of Christ, that live in the eternal day, the Day of Salvation. And it is to you, you who are made Christ's brothers and sisters by His taking on Flesh, it is to you that the new and better Promised Land is opened – eternal life in heaven with God.

You who believe in Him are heirs of the New and Better Testament, the Testament in His Blood, the Blood shed for the remission of your sins. The Lord Himself bids you drink that Blood this day. He bids you eat His Body this day, as you are made a partaker of His New, Eternal Testament, His Testament of forgiveness, salvation, and everlasting life.

At that time, when eight days were completed for the circumcision of the Child, He fulfilled the Covenant for you. His Flesh was circumcised that your flesh be redeemed. He bled that you live. Thanks be to God, even as an Infant in Bethlehem, He has done all things well.

St. Luke 2:21

The Circumcision of our Lord, January 1, 2020 A.✠ D.

A Blessed Christmas! And may Christ's richest blessings be upon you as you enter a new year of His grace!

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