

## **THURSDAY** *July 10* **The Circumcision**

John 6:30 flame

**Read Exodus 4:18-31. How do we understand this strange story, and what lesson can we take from it?**

Bible students are shocked when they read that, after Moses obeyed the Lord and started his journey back to Egypt, the Lord "was about to kill him" (Exod. 4:24, NIV). From the context of the story, it is evident that the issue was circumcision. His youngest son was not circumcised, as the Abrahamic covenant demanded (Gen. 17:10, 11).

1. Moses, as the leader of God's people, needed to show his perfect submission and obedience to God, in order to be qualified to lead other people to be obedient. He had to be a model of that total surrender to God.

2. MOSES HAD ALREADY MADE THE MISTAKE OF TRUSTING IN HIMSELF TO DELIVER HIS PEOPLE FROM BONDAGE (EXODUS 2:12). A SIMILAR MISTAKE THAT WE MAKE WHEN WE THINK THAT WE ARE STRONG ENOUGH, SMART ENOUGH, GOOD ENOUGH, OR "ANY OTHER ENOUGH" TO ACCOMPLISH ANYTHING GOOD IN THIS LIFE. WE HUMANS HAVE A TERRIBLE TIME WITH SURRENDERING TO GOD, ESPECIALLY IN THE LITTLE AS WELL AS THE BIG AREAS OF LIFE.

3. THE WHOLE OBJECT OF CIRCUMCISION WAS GOD RELIANCE  
INSTEAD OF FLESH RELIANCE. MOSES HAD SPENT 40 YEARS TENDING  
SHEEP IN ORDER TO UNLEARN THE WAY OF THE WORLD AND LEARN TRUST  
IN GOD. IT WAS A 40 YEAR SELF RELIANCE HIATAS, BUT NOW IT LOOKED  
LIKE THE ENTIRE TIME WAS WASTED.

4. CIRCUMCISION WAS GIVEN TO ABRAHAM AS A SIGN OF  
RIGHTEOUSNESS BY FAITH.

ROMANS 4:1-12 SAYS:

"WHAT SHALL WE SAY THEN THAT ABRAHAM OUR FATHER, AS  
PERTAINING TO THE FLESH, HATH FOUND? FOR IF ABRAHAM WERE  
JUSTIFIED BY WORKS, HE HATH WHEREOF TO GLORY; BUT NOT BEFORE  
GOD. FOR WHAT SAITH THE SCRIPTURE? ABRAHAM BELIEVED GOD, AND IT  
WAS COUNTED UNTO HIM FOR RIGHTEOUSNESS. NOW TO HIM THAT WORKETH  
IS THE REWARD NOT RECKONED OF GRACE, BUT OF DEBT.

BUT TO HIM THAT WORKETH NOT, BUT BELIEVETH ON HIM THAT  
JUSTIFIETH THE UNGODLY, HIS FAITH IS COUNTED FOR RIGHTEOUSNESS.  
EVEN AS DAVID ALSO DESCRIBETH THE BLESSEDNESS OF THE MAN, UNTO  
WHOM GOD IMPUTETH RIGHTEOUSNESS WITHOUT WORKS, SAYING, BLESSED  
ARE THEY WHOSE INIQUITIES ARE FORGIVEN, AND WHOSE SINS ARE  
COVERED. BLESSED IS THE MAN TO WHOM THE LORD WILL NOT IMPUTE  
SIN.

COMETH THIS BLESSEDNESS THEN UPON THE CIRCUMCISION ONLY, OR  
UPON THE UNCIRCUMCISION ALSO? FOR WE SAY THAT FAITH WAS RECKONED

TO ABRAHAM FOR RIGHTEOUSNESS. HOW WAS IT THEN RECKONED? WHEN HE WAS IN CIRCUMCISION, OR IN UNCIRCUMCISION? NOT IN CIRCUMCISION, BUT IN UNCIRCUMCISION. AND HE RECEIVED THE SIGN OF CIRCUMCISION, A SEAL OF THE RIGHTEOUSNESS OF THE FAITH WHICH HE HAD YET BEING UNCIRCUMCISED: THAT HE MIGHT BE THE FATHER OF ALL THEM THAT BELIEVE, THOUGH THEY BE NOT CIRCUMCISED; THAT RIGHTEOUSNESS MIGHT BE IMPUTED UNTO THEM ALSO: AND THE FATHER OF CIRCUMCISION TO THEM WHO ARE NOT OF THE CIRCUMCISION ONLY, BUT WHO ALSO WALK IN THE STEPS OF THAT FAITH OF OUR FATHER ABRAHAM, WHICH HE HAD BEING YET UNCIRCUMCISED."

THE SIGN OF SEAL OF RIGHTEOUSNESS BY FAITH WAS CIRCUMCISION. IT WAS GIVEN AFTER ABRAHAM EXPERIENCED RIGHTEOUSNESS BY FAITH, NOT AS A MEANS OF RIGHTEOUSNESS BY FAITH.

5. NUMBER FIVE BUILDS ON NUMBER FOUR. RIGHTEOUSNESS BY FAITH AT ITS CORE OR CENTER IS ENTIRE DEPENDENCE ON GOD AND ZERO DEPENDENCE ON THE FLESH. IT TOOK ABRAHAM AND SARAH 25 YEARS TO EMBRACE THIS EXPERIENCE. IT WASN'T UNTIL ABRAHAM WAS 99 AND HE COULD NO LONGER HAVE CHILDREN (EXCEPT BY GOD) THAT HE GAVE UP ON HIMSELF, THAT IS, HIS FLESH, AND FULLY EMBRACED THE PROMISE OF GOD. ROMANS 4 DESCRIBES ABRAHAM'S EXPERIENCE OF RIGHTEOUSNESS BY FAITH IN DETAIL:

"THEREFORE IT IS OF FAITH, THAT IT MIGHT BE BY GRACE; TO THE END THE PROMISE MIGHT BE SURE TO ALL THE SEED; NOT TO THAT ONLY WHICH IS OF THE LAW, BUT TO THAT ALSO WHICH IS OF THE FAITH OF ABRAHAM; WHO IS THE FATHER OF US ALL, (AS IT IS WRITTEN, I HAVE MADE THEE A FATHER OF MANY NATIONS,) BEFORE HIM WHOM HE BELIEVED, EVEN GOD, WHO QUICKENETH THE DEAD, AND CALLETH THOSE THINGS WHICH BE NOT AS THOUGH THEY WERE. WHO AGAINST HOPE BELIEVED IN HOPE, THAT HE MIGHT BECOME THE FATHER OF MANY NATIONS, ACCORDING TO THAT WHICH WAS SPOKEN, SO SHALL THY SEED BE. AND BEING NOT WEAK IN FAITH, HE CONSIDERED NOT HIS OWN BODY NOW DEAD, WHEN HE WAS ABOUT AN HUNDRED YEARS OLD, NEITHER YET THE DEADNESS OF SARA'S WOMB: HE STAGGERED NOT AT THE PROMISE OF GOD THROUGH UNBELIEF; BUT WAS STRONG IN FAITH, GIVING GLORY TO GOD; AND BEING FULLY PERSUADED THAT, WHAT HE HAD PROMISED, HE WAS ABLE ALSO TO PERFORM. AND THEREFORE IT WAS IMPUTED TO HIM FOR RIGHTEOUSNESS.

HERE THEN WE FIND THE IMPORTANCE OF THE CIRCUMCISION FOR MOSES WHO WAS AND WOULD EVER BE INCLINED TO TRUST TO HIMSELF INSTEAD OF GOD. AND LIKE US, TO TAKE GLORY TO HIMSELF INSTEAD OF GOD.

His wife Zipporah was a woman of action and circumcised her son in order to save the life of her husband. She touched Moses

with the "bloody foreskin," and this blood represents atonement, life, and the sealing of the covenant. The fact that it was done so quickly added to the drama of the situation.

An important lesson can be learned from this episode: never fail to do what we know is right.

"On the way from Midian, Moses received a startling and terrible warning of the Lord's displeasure. An angel appeared to him in a threatening manner, as if he would immediately destroy him. No explanation was given; but Moses remembered that he had disregarded one of God's requirements . . . he had neglected to perform the rite of circumcision upon their youngest son. He had failed to comply with the condition by which his child could be entitled to the blessings of God's covenant with Israel; and such a neglect on the part of their chosen leader could not but lessen the force of the divine precepts upon the people.

Zipporah, fearing that her husband would be slain, performed the rite herself, and the angel then permitted Moses to pursue his journey. In his mission to Pharaoh, Moses was to be placed in a position of great peril; his life could be preserved only through the protection of holy angels. But while living in neglect of a known duty, he would not be secure; for he could not be shielded by the angels of God."—Ellen G. White, *Patriarchs and Prophets*, pp. 255, 256.

What should this story say to you if you are indeed guilty  
of neglecting TO RELY 100 PERCENT ON GOD RATHER THAN ON what you  
know you should be doing? What changes do you need to make, even  
right now, SO THAT LIKE MOSES AND ABRAHAM WORKS OF OBEDIENCE ARE  
SEEN IN YOUR LIFE AS THE FRUIT OF RIGHTEOUSNESS AND NOT THE  
MEANS?