

Circumcision

These studies are designed for believers in Jesus Christ only. If you have exercised faith in Christ, then you are in the right place. If you have not, then you need to heed the words of our Lord, Who said, “For God so loved the world that He gave His only-begotten [or, uniquely-born] Son, so that every [one] believing [or, trusting] in Him shall not perish, but shall be have eternal life! For God did not send His Son into the world so that He should judge the world, but so that the world shall be saved through Him. The one believing [or, trusting] in Him is not judged, but the one not believing has already been judged, because he has not believed in the Name of the only-begotten [or, uniquely-born] Son of God.” (John 3:16–18). “I am the Way and the Truth and the Life! No one comes to the Father except through [or, by means of] Me!” (John 14:6).

Every study of the Word of God ought to be preceded by a naming of your sins to God. This restores you to fellowship with God (1John 1:8–10). If we acknowledge our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness (1John 1:9). If there are people around, you would name these sins silently. If there is no one around, then it does not matter if you name them silently or whether you speak aloud.

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Preface: *Circumcision* is the cutting away of some skin at the end of a male's phallus. *Regeneration* refers to the act of being born again. Circumcision represents the act of regeneration.

Author's Note: This was a doctrine which I worked on a long time ago (1995) when I first began to write. I left out 2 extremely important points, which are essential to this doctrine, neither of which I believe have been properly developed until now: (1) Circumcision is tied to regeneration; Abraham, in keeping with God's covenant, will allow himself to be circumcised; then God will regenerate Abraham sexually. This particular theme is followed out throughout the Bible. (2) Circumcision relates Abraham to God in a familial way. When God orders Abraham to be circumcised, the exact nature of this familial relationship is undefined, but, like many of the doctrines begun in seed form in Genesis (pun intended), it will be elaborated upon as we go through the Bible.

The circumcision incident, my interpretation of same, and Moses' understanding of circumcision at that time, are all taken from the **Basic Exegesis of Exodus** ([HTML](#)) ([PDF](#)) ([WPD](#)), lesson #40.

This study will be supplemented with doctrines related to circumcision which were developed in later years.

1. **Circumcision** was first required of Abram the first Jew, as a sign of the covenant between God and Abraham (Gen. 17:11). It was a command of such a high degree of importance as to threaten those who did not comply with this with excommunication (Gen. 17:14)
2. This covenant was that God would give Abraham an uncountable number of descendants and the father of a multitude of nations (Gen. 17:5–6).
3. Abraham was sexually dead at age 99, when God told him to circumcise himself (Gen. 17:1, 17 Rom. 4:19).
4. Circumcision is the cutting away of some of the foreskin from the male phallus (Gen. 17:14)
5. Why circumcision? One of my source materials, *Encyclopedia of Bible Difficulties*, reads *Genesis 17 does not furnish any clear rationale for the establishment of this rite [or circumcision] as mandatory for the family and descendants of Abraham*. This tells me immediately that *this* book is going to be a great deal of help to me.
 - a. For decades, God has promised Abraham that he would be a father of a multitude of nations and an uncountable number of people (Gen. 12:2 15:4–5 17:4–6).
 - b. Abraham was sexually dead (Gen. 18:12 Rom. 4:19a).
 - c. Sarai was sexually dead (Gen. 16:2 18:11 Rom. 4:19b).
 - d. God caused the union of two sexually dead people to raise up the Jewish people (with whom God would keep His covenant (Gen. 17:21).
 - e. The cutting away of the old flesh gave new life to Abraham.
 - f. God kept His promise to Abraham (Gen. 21:2–3)
 - g. Abraham circumcised Isaac as God had commanded him (Gen. 21:4)
 - h. Now, every time that Abraham urinates, he will see that God keeps His promises (Gen. 17:11).
 - i. Every time that a Jew urinates, he will see that God kept His promises to Abraham and He will keep His promises to the Jews (Gen. 17:12).
 - j. Furthermore, the sign of circumcision is a seal of the relationship between God and Abraham (and later his descendants) (Rom. 4:11). *Bible Difficulties* makes the analogy of the wedding ring given from a husband to a wife as a seal of their total, exclusive, lifelong commitment. God, in His many promises to Abraham, has certainly made a commitment to him; and being circumcised (and circumcising one's son) has the connotation of a return of commitment (Deut. 10:16 Jer. 4:4).
6. Circumcision is a one-time act which permanently changes the phallus of the male. Salvation is a one-time act which permanently changes the state of the individual. Salvation establishes a permanent relationship with God on the basis of Jesus Christ.
7. Since circumcision was a sign of the covenant between God and Abraham (and therefore, with all other Jews), men who joined with the Jews were also circumcised (Gen. 17:23, 27 43:13–24)
8. Circumcision and the Exodus generation:
 - a. Although the rite of circumcision continued for several generations, Moses had not circumcised his own children so God had his wife circumcise them, which ticked off his wife (Ex. 4:25–26).
 - b. Had Moses not done this, he would have been killed under the principle of the sin unto death (Ex. 4:24).
 - c. Under the Law, Israel had been commanded to circumcise their children (Lev. 12:3).
 - d. Because of the unbelief of the Exodus generation, they had not circumcised their own children who had been born in the desert (Josh. 5:5, 7).
 - e. That entire generation did die the sin unto death (Josh. 5:4, 6–7).
 - f. The two notable exceptions were Caleb and Joshua.
9. Other uses of the words *circumcision* and *uncircumcision*:
 - a. It represented obedience to God, therefore being *circumcised of heart* was obeying God (often unto salvation) (Deut. 10:16 30:6 Acts 7:51 Col. 2:11).

- b. *Uncircumcised of lips* means that Moses felt he was not articulate enough to speak God's truth to Pharaoh (Ex. 6:12, 30).
 - c. *Uncircumcised of ears* also indicates negative volition toward God (Jer. 6:10).
 - d. *Uncircumcised of heart* refers to the unsaved (Jer. 9:26 Ezek. 44:7, 9 Acts 7:51) as does *uncircumcision of the flesh* (Col. 2:13).
 - e. God told Israel to circumcise themselves to the Lord; that is, they were to set themselves apart to God as believers and then as obedient (Jer. 4:4).
 - f. Jeremiah makes it clear that circumcision has a symbolic meaning in Jer. 9:25–26: “Behold, the days are coming, declares the LORD, when I will punish all those who are circumcised merely in the flesh—Egypt, Judah, Edom, the sons of Ammon, Moab, and all who dwell in the desert who cut the corners of their hair, for all these nations are uncircumcised, and all the house of Israel is uncircumcised in heart.”
 - g. Circumcision, since it is tied to the new birth and the new promise of one who is sexually dead, is therefore tied to the idea of a new birth by obedience to the gospel of God (“Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ and you will be saved”). Abraham believed God and it was credited to his account as righteousness (Rom. 4:3; from Gen. 15:6).
10. Circumcision is mentioned only briefly in the gospels:
- a. Luke mentions the circumcision of John the Baptizer and of Jesus (Luke 1:59 2:21).
 - b. Jesus sets up an analogy concerning circumcision in John 7:21–24. Jesus tells them that healing a man on the Sabbath is no more works than circumcising an infant on the Sabbath.
11. Circumcision and the early church:
- a. In some portions of Acts and the epistles, circumcision and uncircumcision is merely a way to differentiate between Jews and Gentiles (Acts 10:45 11:1–3 Gal. 2:7–9 Col. 4:11) or between legalistic Jews and saved Gentiles (Eph. 2:11). Sometimes it is used in a derogatory sense (Titus 1:10).
 - b. The rite of circumcision was an early issue of legalism in the church and it was decided early on that circumcision was not a necessary step in salvation (Acts 15:1–12 I Cor. 7:17–19).
 - c. Paul circumcised Timothy, not in order to obey the Mosaic law, but as a matter of expediency, being all things to all men so that he might save some (Acts 16:1–3). However, when circumcision was an issue and the legalists pressed for Titus to be circumcised, he was not (Gal. 2:1–5).
 - d. When explaining the purpose of the Law and contrasting being born as a Jew or as a Gentile, Paul uses circumcision as a portion of the Law which is a non-issue (Gal. 5:6 6:15 Col. 3:11).
 - i. Being circumcised is an insult when the rest of the Law is not obeyed (Rom. 2:14, 23–27 Gal. 5:1–3).
 - ii. True circumcision is the circumcision of the heart (Rom. 2:28–29).
 - iii. Abraham was justified by faith decades before he was circumcised (Rom. 4:9–10).
 - iv. Abraham was circumcised after salvation is a step of obedience and a sign (Gen. 17:10–14 Rom. 4:12–14).
 - e. The legalistic Jews were called the *party of the circumcision* (Gal. 2:12).
 - f. When we seek to be justified by law (represented by being circumcised) then we have fallen from grace (Gal. 5:1–4).
 - g. Some of the legalists tried to make it sound as though Paul was teaching circumcision, but Paul debunks that saying that these legalists would not be persecuting him if he did teach circumcision (Gal. 5:11).
 - h. Paul suggests that those who believe the circumcision is full obedience to God's will should go one step further and whack the whole thing off (Gal. 5:12).
 - i. Believers in Jesus Christ are the true circumcision (Phil. 3:3).
 - j. The believers which were primarily sent to the Jews (the writer of Hebrews, James, Peter and John) do not even mention circumcision in their writings (with the exception of John briefly in his gospel).

12. The shedding of blood, the cutting away of the old life are two themes found throughout Scripture; to which circumcision relates.
13. Circumcision is not exclusively Jewish; anthropologists have found tribes in America, Australia and Africa who practice circumcision.

This doctrine was taken from the exegesis of **Genesis 17** ([HTML](#)) ([PDF](#)) ([WPD](#)).

Circumcision is the cutting away of some skin at the end of a male's phallus. *Regeneration* refers to the act of being born again. Circumcision represents the act of regeneration.

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1. The circumcision of Abraham will establish new life in Abraham and new life in Sarah. At this point in time, Abraham is too old to have sex and Sarai is too old to conceive. God will change this. God will give them new life.
2. Circumcision is a one-time act. You do not get circumcised a second time. This parallels the concept of salvation; once you have established a relationship with God through faith in Christ, you have established a permanent—in fact, eternal—relationship.
3. When Abraham steps out in faith and has himself circumcised, God will revitalize him sexually. His sexual organ will be brought back to life. In this way, Abraham will be reborn.
4. Circumcision is therefore connected to rebirth or to regeneration.
5. Abraham was sexually dead; God will make him sexually alive and potent. This is a picture of Abraham moving not only from death to life, but this is the key to the fulfillment of all God's promises to him. As uncircumcised (sexually dead, unregenerated), none of God's promises can be fulfilled to Abraham. As circumcised, Abraham is sexually revitalized, which represents regeneration; and so all of God's promises to Abraham can be fulfilled.
6. So there is no misunderstanding, Abraham was spiritually regenerated many years ago. However, all of this is done to develop an analogy of rebirth, an analogy to rebirth that was set up 4000 years ago and still has meaning today.
7. Sarai had never given birth to a child, so we may reasonably assume that she was barren all of her life. Now, she is too old to have children. So, she is doubly-barren: barren throughout her life and now, simply too old to conceive.
8. As a result of God's covenant, which included the circumcision of Abraham, Sarai will be made fertile. Her reproductive system will be given new life.
9. Circumcision therefore means, that which is dead is made fully alive.
10. In our illustration, Abraham and Sarah, who have never before had children of their own, and, therefore, cannot see God's promises to them fulfilled, will be given life more abundantly than they ever had before.
11. Therefore, we need to understand that circumcision is taking that which was dead and giving it life again. Doctrinally, this is regeneration. Circumcision represents being born again.
12. Jesus explains the concept of regeneration (being born again) to Nicodemus. **There was a man from the Pharisees named Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews. This man came to Him at night and said, "Rabbi, we know that You have come from God as a teacher, for no one could perform these signs You do unless God were with him." Jesus replied, "I assure you: Unless someone is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God." "But how can anyone be born when he is old?" Nicodemus asked Him. "Can he enter his mother's womb a second time and be born?" Jesus answered, "I assure you: Unless someone is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God. Whatever is born of the flesh is flesh, and whatever is born of the Spirit is spirit. Do not be amazed that I told you that you must be born again. The wind blows where it pleases, and you hear its sound, but you don't know where it comes from or where it is going. So it is with everyone born of the Spirit."** (John 3:1–12).
13. Paul expresses this doctrinally, tying circumcision to regeneration: **And when you were dead in**

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trespasses and in the **uncircumcision** of your flesh, **He made you alive** with Him and forgave us all our trespasses. He erased the certificate of debt, with its obligations, that was against us and which was in opposition to us, and He has taken it out of the way by nailing it to the cross (Col. 2:13–14).

14. Understand that circumcision is a (visible) sign of God's relationship to Abraham. It is a visible sign of this covenant between Jehovah Elohim and Abraham.
15. However, in most situations, we cannot simply look at someone and say, "Yeah, he's circumcised." Unless you go to the gym with your buddies, and use the showers there, you do not know which of them are circumcised and which are not. That is, a person who is circumcised is unknown to the outside world; your family members know this, but the rest of the world, for the most part, does not know. Therefore, circumcision is a good representation of regeneration, which occurs in a number of people, but you cannot just look at a person and say, "Oh, you are regenerated." Circumcision is real but not something that we can readily see; regeneration is real, but not something that we can readily see.
16. Circumcision is a ritual, and, as a ritual, it must mean something. God does not have us go through meaningless rituals; all of the rituals in the plan of God have great meaning. Circumcision means that God will take that which is dead and make it alive. Abraham is sexually dead, and God is going to revive his sexual apparatus.
17. Note an additional piece of information concerning this ritual: God has come to Abraham right before he has been sexually revitalized. This represents regeneration. We are not regenerated on our own; God the Holy Spirit regenerates us.
18. All Jews must be regenerated (born again) in order to have a permanent relationship with the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob (Abraham's son and grandson).
19. Every male Jew views his phallus several times a day when urinating, and he recalls this portion of the Bible, where God will physically regenerate Abraham's sexual potency along with Sarai's womb, and this represents the spiritual regeneration which establishes a familial relationship between man and God. The family relationship must take place in order for God's promises to man to be fulfilled. Ideally speaking, all believers, several times a day, take note of their spiritual status and their relationship to God.
20. Every Jew, when he urinates, ought to recognize that he is related directly to God and that this ritual goes back in time 4000 years. It is God's desire for such a one to ask himself, "Just what does this mean? Am I circumcised for no reason? Why did God, 4000 years ago, determine that all Jews would be circumcised?"
21. All rituals have meaning, and if we do not know what they mean, then we are wasting our time participating in them. The only clearly required ritual for the Church Age is the Eucharist, where Jesus's death for our sins is represented by eating the bread and drinking the cup.
22. Regeneration means that, God takes that which is dead and He makes it alive again.
23. Our free will is a part of this decision process. I must admit, if I were Abraham, I may not have had the same faith to agree to circumcision. But Abraham, by an act of his free will, trusts God here; and he trusts that God will regenerate Abraham so that he is able to father children once again.
24. The act and affects of circumcision are real and last a lifetime; the act and affects of regeneration are real and last forever.
25. Even Moses later helped to interpret the concept of circumcision in Deut. 30:6 **And Jehovah your God will circumcise your heart and the heart of your seed, to love Jehovah your God with all your heart and with all your soul, so that you may live.** God will circumcise our hearts, with the purpose that, we will live. Since the ritual circumcision is performed upon living males, circumcision of the heart must therefore refer to an internal regeneration.
26. The physical act of circumcision is not the same as the spiritual act of regeneration; circumcision only represents regeneration.
27. The act and affects of circumcision are real and last a lifetime; the act and affects of regeneration are real and last forever. You cannot go from being circumcised to being uncircumcised, just as you cannot

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- go from having been regenerated back to being unregenerate.
28. God, through Ezekiel, describes this circumcision of the heart: “Then I will give them one heart, and I will put a new spirit within them, and take the stony heart out of their flesh, and give them a heart of flesh, that they may walk in My statutes and keep My judgments and do them; and they shall be My people, and I will be their God.” (Ezek. 11:19–20). “I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit within you; I will take the heart of stone out of your flesh and give you a heart of flesh. I will put My Spirit within you and cause you to walk in My statutes, and you will keep My judgments and do them.” (Ezek. 36:26–27). God gives those with *hearts of stone* a new heart; God takes that which is dead and makes it alive so that they may live unto Him.
 29. Paul teaches this in Rom. 2:28–29a **For he is not a Jew who is one outwardly, nor is circumcision that outwardly in flesh; but he is a Jew who is one inwardly, and circumcision is of the heart.** Salvation is regeneration; not being physically circumcised. It is the *circumcision of the heart* which God looks upon. Jews were not related to God because they were physically circumcised; they were related to God because they had been circumcised of heart; their heart had been regenerated.
 30. This is all related to the new covenant between God and Israel, which will come to pass in the Millennium: “Behold, the days are coming, says the LORD, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah—not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day that I took them by the hand to lead them out of the land of Egypt, My covenant which they broke, though I was a husband to them, says the LORD. But this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, says the LORD: I will put My law in their minds, and write it on their hearts; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people. No more shall every man teach his neighbor, and every man his brother, saying, 'Know the LORD,' for they will all know Me, from the least of them to the greatest of them, says the LORD. For I will forgive their iniquity, and their sin I will remember no more.” (Jer. 31:31–34).
 31. Because circumcision is a ritual, it is not the ritual that is important but what the ritual represents. Circumcision represents regeneration. **“You must be born again.”**
 32. We as believers in the Church Age are not called upon to be circumcised. Some of us are and some of us are not. God does not require us, when we are born again, to be circumcised. Paul explains that circumcision is a Jewish ritual, and that it has meaning, but it is not required of believers in the Church Age: **In Him you were also circumcised with a circumcision not done with hands, by putting off the body of flesh, in the circumcision of the Messiah. Having been buried with Him in baptism, you were also raised with Him through faith in the working of God, who raised Him from the dead. And when you were dead in trespasses and in the uncircumcision of your flesh, He made you alive with Him and forgave us all our trespasses** (Col. 2:11–13). God making us alive is regeneration. The key to our relationship with God is regeneration and not circumcision. Just as baptism represents being dead in our trespasses and sins, and then being raised up; so circumcision ultimately represents regeneration.
 33. There were legalists who came into Galatia and tried to convince the gentiles in the Galatian church to be circumcised. Paul writes to them, saying: **For both circumcision and uncircumcision mean nothing; what matters instead is a new creation** (Gal. 6:15). It is regeneration which is the key; not whether a person has been circumcised or not. In fact, Paul spends much of 2 chapters telling the Galatians that they do not need to be circumcised (Gal. 5–6). Since this was a problem in the early church, Paul reiterates this position in 1Cor. 7:18–19 **Was anyone already circumcised when he was called? He should not undo his circumcision. Was anyone called while uncircumcised? He should not get circumcised. Circumcision does not matter and uncircumcision does not matter, but keeping God's commandments does.**
 34. Therefore, circumcision is a ritual which God required of the Jews. This ritual both emphasized regeneration and His familial relationship with the Jews.

To the best of my knowledge, I do not believe that this relationship has been formally established in theology before. Gill mentions it as an aside in his exegesis of Col. 2:11, as does the Jamieson-Fausset-Brown Bible Commentary. The closest I saw to a completely developed doctrine was in some writings by Spurgeon.

However, there are several Christian individuals who have already recognized this relationship. And, unfortunately, this connection is posted on some legalistic websites and on, quite frankly, weird websites.¹ Personally, I put together this concept, and then searched the internet to see if this had been developed before by anyone of note. So this relationship has been previously noted, but not really developed into a complete doctrine.

One of the fascinating things is, in do-your-own-thing, degenerate San Francisco, there is a **movement to ban performing a circumcision** in the city limits. This is simply one of the movements to separate the United States from her Judeo-Christian roots.

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We studied just exactly how circumcision spoke of regeneration. After being circumcised, Abraham and Sarah would be both sexually revitalized, which represents the concept of new life. New life is regeneration.

Now all of this is representative. Abraham was not born again because he was circumcised. He had been made righteous in God's sight a very long time ago (Gen. 15:6). In this doctrine, we ran up against the expression *a new heart* and *a new spirit*. What are these things?

This doctrine was taken from the exegesis of **Genesis 17** ([HTML](#)) ([PDF](#)) ([WPD](#)).

There are things in the Doctrine of Circumcision and Regeneration which need clarifying.

What is this New Heart?

1. Let's go back to what is written in Ezekiel about the circumcision of the heart: "Then I will give them one heart, **and I will put a new spirit within them**, and take the stony heart out of their flesh, and give them a heart of flesh, that they may walk in My statutes and keep My judgments and do them; and they shall be My people, and I will be their God." (Ezek. 11:19–20). "**I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit within you**; I will take the heart of stone out of your flesh and give you a heart of flesh. I will put My Spirit within you and cause you to walk in My statutes, and you will keep My judgments and do them." (Ezek. 36:26–27).
2. God originally created man in His image, and this would include us being created with a body, soul and spirit. The soul allows us to interact with man and the spirit allows us to interact with God.
3. In fact, this is one of the ways that we are made in the shadow image of God; God is a Triune Being, 3 Persons with the same essence; and man was created with a body, soul and spirit, a triune being of sorts.
4. However, when Adam sinned, he lost the human spirit. He no longer was able to communicate with God. He was afraid of God and he hid from God when God called him.
5. When God came to Adam and Adam believed in Him, communication was restored, which means, Adam was spiritually regenerated. In other words, God created within him a new spirit; God restored his human spirit to him.
6. This is what regeneration is. We are given the human spirit; or our human spirit is revived so that we

¹ One place that I found this connection was at the *Global Oneness (co-creating a happy world)* website under the banner *Christian Dream Interpretation*.

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may have fellowship with God again. It is the human spirit which is the target for our trust in Bible doctrine. Without the human spirit, we have only a human soul, which is unable to properly process Bible doctrine. **But the soulish man does not receive the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him; neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned** (1Cor. 2:14). Furthermore, it is Bible doctrine which is the key to our spiritual growth. **Grow in grace and in knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ** (2Peter 3:18a).

- a. The word used here and translated *soulish* is *psuchikos* (ψυχικός) [pronounced *psoo-khee-KOSS*], which means, *soulish; natural; unregenerate*. Strong's #5591.
- b. This word is built upon the Greek word translated *soul*.
7. We are born physically alive, but spiritually dead. Rom 6:23a **The wages of sin is death. And Therefore, even as through one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin, and so death passed on all men inasmuch as all sinned** (Rom. 5:12). See also Gen. 2:17 Rom. 5:17 7:24
8. The soul and the spirit are different and the Bible differentiates between the two. Heb. 4:12
9. It is because of Jesus Christ that we can be regenerated. **It stands written, "The first man, Adam, became a living soul," the last Adam [= Jesus Christ] was a life-giving Spirit** (1Cor. 15:45).
10. It is because we exercise faith in Jesus Christ that we are regenerated. **"Truly, truly, I say to you, He who hears My Word and believes on Him who sent Me has everlasting life and shall not come into condemnation, but has passed from death to life."** (John 5:24).
11. David describes this regeneration in Psalm 51:10: **Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew [or, make anew, repair] a right spirit within me.** The clean heart means that we have been forgiven of our sins and made positionally righteous; and the spirit being renewed is the human spirit being activated or made alive.
12. Jesus Christ insisted to Nicodemus that he must be born again. John 3:1–16
13. Given Psalm 51:10 and John 3:1–16, we can conclude that regeneration occurs in both the Old and New Testaments.
14. Regenerated man has a body, soul and spirit. 1Sam. 1:15 Job 7:11 1Thess. 5:23
15. The believer has his soul, spirit and body preserved. **And may the God of peace Himself sanctify you, and may your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blamelessly at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ** (1Thess. 5:23).
16. Therefore, because we are born spiritually dead, we come into this world with just a body and a soul. When we are born again, our human spirit is made alive or activated. Before we are born again, we are soulish and unable to process spiritual information. After we are born again, we have a target for spiritual information: the human spirit. Before we were born again, we were estranged from God; we were unable to have fellowship with Him. After we are born again, we are able to know Him and to be in fellowship with Him, both of which are true potentials in the Christian life because we have a human spirit.
17. Jesus Christ, because He was born without sin (the sin nature is passed down genetically by means of the father, and Jesus did not have a human father), He therefore had from birth a body (John 1:14 Heb. 10:5), soul (Isa. 53:11 Matt. 26:38) and spirit (Luke 23:46 John 19:30). Jesus, therefore, did not have to be regenerated—He never lost fellowship with God.
18. One of the reasons the Jesus is called the Last Adam (1Cor. 15:45) is, both were born with a body, a soul and a spirit.
19. Adam sinned, so he had to be regenerated. Our Lord never sinned, so He did not have to be regenerated. 2Cor. 5:21 Heb. 4:15
20. Conclusion: being born again actually involves a change in our inner person; we are given a human spirit, which allows us to learn and understand God's Word and allows us to have fellowship with God.
21. To sum up, both Adam and Jesus (the last Adam) were born trichotomous, with a body, soul and spirit. We are born dichotomous, with only a body and soul. The spirit is what allows us to have fellowship with God and where doctrine is stored. When Adam sinned, he lost the human spirit and God had to come

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to him. Because Adam sinned, we are all born spiritually dead—i.e., without a human spirit. We are born with a sin nature, something that we acquire from our human fathers. However, when we believe in Jesus Christ, we are regenerated, which includes having our human spirit activated or revitalized.

This may help to explain this whole circumcision thing. Abraham was circumcised and all of the males of his household were circumcised because this represented new life. The new life is both physical (he was sexually revitalized) but it was also representative of having new life as a result of being born again.

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One more related doctrine:

This doctrine was taken from the exegesis of **Genesis 17** ([HTML](#)) ([PDF](#)) ([WPD](#)).

The key to the relationship between God and Abraham's seed is regeneration, which establishes a familial relationship between God and man.

The Familial Relationship between God and Abraham's Seed

1. The ritual of circumcision establishes a familial relationship between God and Abraham (and his seed). Circumcision is a ritual, so, by itself, it means nothing. However, what is important is what circumcision represents. Circumcision represents sexual regeneration which establishes this familial relationship between Abraham and God.
2. At this point in time, this familial relationship between God and Abraham is undefined.
3. In fact, at this point in time, in Gen. 17, Abraham does not even have any children by his wife Sarai.
4. It will be prophesied and then it will come to pass that Abraham and Sarai will have a son.
5. This familial relationship is part and parcel of being born again. In regeneration, we have the option of knowing God and having fellowship with God.
6. God is personally involved in this regeneration. God the Father planned the cross, Jesus Christ went to the cross, and God the Holy Spirit both reveals this to us and regenerates us. Therefore, we have 3 "men" who will come to Abraham in the next chapter. This is representative of the Trinity involvement in our regeneration and in our spiritual lives.
7. Abraham is already regenerated spiritually. When he believed in Y^ehowah Elohim, God imputed righteousness to him. Gen. 15:6
8. However, what is being established here is a familial relationship based upon circumcision which represents regeneration.
9. God will continue to maintain His covenant with Abraham through his son Isaac and through his son's son, Jacob, down through the ages.
10. The circumcision of Abraham will establish new life in Abraham and new life in Sarah.
11. At this point in time, Abraham is too old to have sex and Sarai is too old to conceive. God will change this. God will regenerate both of them sexually (which represents our spiritual regeneration to new life).
12. Abraham and Sarai do not have the ability to revitalize their own reproductive organs; only God can do this. Similarly, we have no innate ability to revitalize our human spirit. Only God can do that. Only God can regenerate us.
13. When Abraham steps out in faith and has himself circumcised, God will revitalize him sexually. He will become capable of fathering a child and Sarai will become capable of conceiving a child.
14. Circumcision is therefore connected to a rebirth or to regeneration.
15. God tells Abraham: **"I will keep My covenant between Me and you, and your descendants after you throughout their generations, as an everlasting covenant to be your God and the God of your offspring after you. And to you and your offspring after you I will give the land where you are residing--all the land**

The Familial Relationship between God and Abraham's Seed

- of Canaan--as an eternal possession, and I will be their God." (Gen. 17:7–8).
16. Further, God tells Abraham: "This is My covenant, which you are to keep, between Me and you and your offspring after you: Every one of your males must be circumcised. You must circumcise the flesh of your foreskin to serve as a sign of the covenant between Me and you. Throughout your generations, every male among you at eight days old is to be circumcised. This includes a slave born in your house and one purchased with money from any foreigner. The one who is not your descendant, a slave born in your house, as well as one purchased with money, must be circumcised. My covenant will be in your flesh as an everlasting covenant." (Gen. 17:10–13). Therefore, every male child associated with the Jews is to be circumcised. The circumcision is a sign of their rebirth as well.
 17. God has attached great importance to Abraham's posterity and this covenant. They are related to Abraham and, somehow, they are related to God.
 18. Every time a male Jew urinates, he looks down, and he is reminded of this familial relationship which is established, beginning with Abraham and going down through Isaac and Jacob. This is the visible sign between God and the Jews throughout all their generations.
 19. Even very secular Jews today must wonder, now and again, what is my relationship with God all about? What is this circumcision all about?
 20. Think about this for a moment—how would man come up with a concept like circumcision? What man, who knows nothing about circumcision, would look down on his phallus and say, "I've got a great idea: I think I should cut some of the skin away from this"? We have no idea how exactly circumcision originated; but God, in Gen. 17, uses it to establish a relationship between Him and Abraham.
 21. Throughout history (until the Church Age), Jews will all be circumcised; Gentiles will not (although now, many gentiles are circumcised, particularly in countries where there are a lot of Christians). Therefore, every man who is circumcised is genetically (or in a familial way) related to Abraham (I am speaking in principle here; obviously, those coming from the outside and becoming Jews are not genetically related to Abraham; however, either their children or their grandchildren will be through intermarriage).
 22. This is important because Jesus Christ, the Lord of the Universe, will be genetically related to Abraham, even though He existed in eternity before Abraham ("**Before Abraham, I existed eternally**" John 8:58).
 23. From the very beginning, God has been establishing this familial relationship between Himself and regenerated man.
 - a. God said to the serpent after the fall: "I will put hostility between you and the woman, and between your seed and her seed. He will strike your head, and you will strike his heel." (Gen. 3:15). So there is a promise to be fulfilled in the Seed of the Woman, and the Seed of the Woman would crush the head of the serpent (Satan).
 - b. The woman later recognizes that God has given her a new seed in Seth, after Cain murdered Abel (Gen. 4:25).
 - c. God's covenant would then be with Noah and his seed after him (Gen. 9:9).
 - d. God establishes his covenant with Abraham and his seed in Gen. 12:7 13:15 15:18 17:7–8 24:7; and continues this covenant with Isaac and his seed (Gen. 26:3–4). Isaac transfers this covenant to his son Jacob in Gen. 28:4, which God confirms in Gen. 28:13 35:12.
 - e. Jehovah God later promised: "The Lord Himself shall give you a sign. Behold, the virgin will conceive and shall bring forth a son, and they shall call His name Immanuel [which means, *God with us*]." (Isa. 7:14). This is expanded in Isa. 9:6 "For to us a Child is born, to us a Son is given; and the government shall be on His shoulder; and His name shall be called Wonderful, Counselor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace."
 24. Through the virgin Mary, all of this would be fulfilled. Jesus would be born to her, a virgin, so that He is genetically related to Mary and therefore, to all Jews. Luke 1:35 2:11 Matt. 1:23 28:18 John 1:1–2, 14 Heb. 1:8 1John 4:14
 25. Therefore, Abraham, the father of the Jews, is genetically related to Jesus Christ.
 26. In fact, when a few of the genealogies of Scripture are strung together, we have a straight line between

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Abraham and Jesus.

27. In the book of Genesis are the seeds of many of the doctrines which would later be expounded upon as time went on. This is known as progressive revelation. We learn more and more about a doctrine as time goes on; God the Holy Spirit reveals more and more about a doctrine as time goes on.
28. Believers in the Church Age are sons by adoption. Rom. 8:15 Gal. 4:5 Eph. 1:5
29. Adoption in the ancient world is somewhat different than we think of it. A king or a rich man may look among his own sons and see no one worthy of taking his place or inheriting his fortune. However, he may have an adult slave who is hardworking, intelligent and moral. So, the king or rich man will "adopt" this slave as his son—even though he may be fully an adult—in order to inherit what belongs to the king or to the rich man. A familial relationship is established by means of adoption. This describes our relationship to God.
30. However, God does not look at us and think, "Yes, yes, yes, this person is worthy to be My son." He looks at Jesus Christ, and He alone is worthy; but we are sons of God because we are in Him and we share His Sonship. **But when the fullness of the time came, God sent forth His Son, coming into being out of a woman, having come under Law, that He might purchase those under Law, so that we might receive the adoption of sons. And because you are sons, God has sent forth the Spirit of His Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father** (Gal. 4:4–6).
31. The is established through faith in Jesus Christ. **For you are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus** (Gal. 3:26). See also John 1:12 1John 3:2

In conclusion, Jews are actually genetically related to Jesus Christ through the Virgin Mary. However, they must exercise faith in Jehovah Elohim in order to be regenerated (Gen. 15:6 2Kings 18:5 Psalm 2:12 5:4 9:10 13:5 Ezek. 36:26–27). In the Church Age, we are sons of God by means of adoption. We believe in Jesus Christ and we are adopted as God's sons in the Beloved.

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Addendum

Exodus 4:24–26 **At a lodging place on the way the LORD met him and sought to put him to death. Then Zipporah took a flint and cut off her son's foreskin and touched Moses' feet with it and said, "Surely you are a bridegroom of blood to me!" So He let him alone. It was then that she said, "A bridegroom of blood," because of the circumcision.** (ESV; capitalized)

For many people, this very short passage is quite confusing. Moses and taking Zipporah, his wife, and his two sons to Egypt, where Moses will lead the people of Israel out of Egypt. However, they are stopped by God. What is going on here?

I would like to separate what we actually know from logical speculation.

What Do We Know About the Circumcision Incident?

1. *Son* is in the singular, so it appears that only one son had been circumcised and the other was not. Exodus 4:25
2. As the father, Moses would have been aware of this from the very beginning. It would be virtually impossible for a father to have a son and not know whether or not he was circumcised.
3. Zipporah does the circumcision on the second son. Exodus 4:25
4. Moses does not say anything (or, whatever he says is not recorded); but the one comment is made by Zipporah, which is said in v. 25 and partially repeated in v. 26. **"Surely you are a husband of blood to me!"** It is possible that she repeats this phrase herself. Exodus 4:25–26

What Do We Know About the Circumcision Incident?

5. This remark seems to indicate that Zipporah is upset by this incident, and particularly about having to circumcise her son.
6. She says this as she throws the foreskin at Moses' feet. This is the sort of thing a person would do who is making a statement, like, "So, this is what you want? This is what I had to do?" Zipporah seems very angry over what she had to do.
7. The circumcision of the child appears to be directly related to Moses' illness (or his being put under the sin unto death).
8. It appears that Moses' life is in danger from God (v. 24), but that after the circumcision, God lets up on Moses (v. 26).
9. The believer's life, when in danger directly from God, is known as the threat of the sin unto death. We have incidents in the Bible where a believer appears to be dying the sin unto death and others where they die the sin unto death.

Now, let's consider and talk about these things that we know:

If I were to make an educated guess, Zipporah was the one who refused to circumcise their second son in the first place, after witnessing (or doing) the circumcision of their first son. Moses very likely did not exert his God-given authority as her husband but simply let her have her way regarding the second son. Therefore, God would strike Moses with an illness so that he cannot do this for her. Since Moses did not exert his authority as husband, God does it for him.

We need to be flexible in the nonessentials, and inflexible in the essentials, as R. B. Thieme, Jr. said many times. Moses, as the husband, is not a drill sergeant. He was not to tell his wife what to do in each and every instance of their lives. However, when it comes to the essentials—which includes circumcision for their sons—Moses was to be inflexible. This was a requirement of God for Moses as a Hebrew father. Here, he failed.

Moses is given divine authority from God. He must know how to wield this authority. If he is unable to assert his authority with his own wife, how can he possibly stand before Pharaoh and lay down the law? How can he stand before Israel and tell them what must be done?

Zipporah seems to be a rather difficult woman, the few times that we encounter her in the Word of God. Moses' 40+ year marriage to her was probably preparation for him to lead the people of Israel. At a much later time, in the desert, after the people of Israel have committed another round of sins indicating their negative volition, God comes to Moses and says, "I am ready to start all over again. I will kill every single Israelite and start over again with your sons."

You or I, had we put up with some of the nonsense that Moses did, might have responded, "That sounds like a great plan, God. I like that idea." But Moses won't do this; he will intercede for the people of Israel (just as Jesus has done on our behalf). I have little doubt that being married to a woman as difficult as Zipporah helped to prepare Moses to respond appropriately (or, to put this another way, killing your wife is *not* the solution to any of your marriage problems).

So there is no misunderstanding, circumcision was performed in the Hebrew economy because it represented regeneration, bringing life out of death. It has no spiritual meaning today. It is not wrong or right to have your children circumcised today. Circumcision does appear to be common in western society particularly of Christian cultures. Again, it is not wrong or right for a Christian to choose to circumcise his sons.

I will try to take all that we know and weave it into a logical, reasonable narrative, which is consistent with the narrative before us.

Kukis' Full Interpretation of the Circumcision Incident

1. Zipporah had two sons of Moses, one who is circumcised and named in Scripture and the other son, whose birth is not mentioned (Exodus 2:22 18:3). This second son was not circumcised (Exodus 4:25). Being uncircumcised, he is not recognized by God; and so he is not mentioned in Scripture until this point.
2. The fact that one child is circumcised suggests that Moses knew enough about his history as a Hebrew man to require his son to be circumcised.
3. I would guess that Zipporah put her foot down with the second child and said, "We will not circumcise this boy! That is a bloody ceremony which I refuse to allow our son to go through. Nor will I ever take part in doing such a thing!"
4. In the alternative, she puts her foot down and tells Moses that he will not circumcise the second son. We do not have this quote in Scripture and we have no idea who performed the first circumcision. I have simply made an educated guess at this point.
5. Given that circumstances for Zipporah to perform the circumcision in this chapter, that would certainly suggest that she is the one at fault for the second son not being circumcised.
6. Moses, when Zipporah originally indicated that she did not want their second son circumcised, decided that this is a battle that he does not really want to have; and he backed off. He was flexible with regards to an essential. Circumcising his child is not an optional matter for any Old Testament Hebrew father.
7. The Midian family which has adopted Moses apparently did not circumcise their young. They are believers but they are not Hebrews. Also, Moses' father-in-law appears to have only had daughters. Baby girls are not circumcised. *That* is a heathen ritual.
8. Then God speaks to Moses and, as a result, Moses and his wife and his sons then travel toward Egypt.
9. Early on, God stops this procession, and Moses is placed under the sin unto death, because the one son is not circumcised. God will not allow incomplete obedience from Moses. We do not know the nature of what was happening to Moses, but let me suggest a deadly illness which appeared certain to kill him.
10. I would suggest an illness which has knocked Moses on his back, making him unable to do much of anything except talk.
11. Moses was probably so ill as to not have a full and complete memory of this incident; and that he himself was too weak to perform the circumcision. He only had enough strength to tell his wife that she must circumcise the second son or he, Moses, would die. Whether he said this once or several times, we do not know. That he said this at all is also an educated guess.
12. Moses, being too weak from the illness, cannot circumcise the boy. Zipporah must do it. My guess here is, God is making her circumcise the boy because she is the one who refused the procedure earlier. All that we know for certain, at this point, is that Zipporah performs the circumcision.
13. Moses being weak with sickness, suffering the sin unto death, would have been responsible for this narrative, which is threadbare. What is recorded is almost less than what is needed to understand what is going on.
14. Zipporah is angry about all of this, but she still does the circumcision. She throws the foreskin at the feet of her sickly husband, remarking, "**You are a bloody bridegroom, you are!**" I suspect that Moses is lying there sick before her (he is not standing).
15. God removes the discipline from Moses, and he recovers. Had the son not been circumcised, Moses would have died the sin unto death.
16. They continue on their journey. Son #2 is now officially a part of their regenerated family and will be later named in Exodus 18:3.

The overall interpretation is accurate. Some of the individual details spoken of here, but not found in Scripture, are simply reasonable guesses which logically fit in with the text that is given. Those additional thoughts are reasonable speculation.

Zipporah, even though she married Moses, was not his biggest supporter.

Moses and his own personal knowledge about circumcision: There is one more related topic which is ignored, regarding what I have read so far, and that is, Moses' *knowledge* of circumcision. This knowledge has to come from *somewhere*. Recall that, he, as a Hebrew infant, would have been circumcised; and that his adoptive mother, when she saw him in the ark, recognized immediately that he was a Hebrew child, which would also indicate that he was circumcised. However, it takes more than having been circumcised to cause a father to circumcise his own sons. At some point, through whatever means, Moses had to find out about the importance of circumcision.

For Moses, at some point in his life, circumcision has to have some sort of spiritual meaning to him. If it has no meaning—if it was just some act that occurred at birth, then Moses would not have circumcised either son.

A topic about which we have speculated previously—Moses' knowledge of the Scriptures and of his own spiritual/racial background—is once again revealed. Moses saw to it that his first son was circumcised. Now, *why* would he do that? He would have to know more about his background as a Hebrew—as a son of Israel—than simply his genealogy to insist that his son be circumcised.

Circumcision was not a part of his original adoptive Egyptian family (otherwise, how did his adoptive mother know immediately that he was a Hebrew child?). Circumcision was apparently not a part of the tradition of his Midianite family, given his wife's disgust with the bloody ritual.

This actually helps us to narrow down where Moses learned his spiritual/racial traditions (or, more accurately, the requirements by God of the Hebrew people). He likely did not learn them from his father-in-law, or else his father-in-law would have logically backed him up on the circumcision of his sons. So, logically, there is nowhere else that Moses could have learned these things apart from the time that he was in the royal palace in Egypt. I believe that Moses learned spiritual lessons from his father-in-law, a priest; but specific lessons about his spiritual heritage as a son of Jacob had to come from elsewhere.

I previously speculated that Moses had a Hebrew teacher or teachers (perhaps hired by the royal palace to teach a young Moses language and/or history); and this teacher taught Moses the Hebrew Scriptures (that is, the final $\frac{3}{4}$ ^{ths} of the book of Genesis—which I believe was preserved orally by the Hebrew people). When this teacher walked into the royal Egyptian palace to give young Moses an education, no one realized that he carried the textbook *The History of Man and God* in his head (that is, the book of Genesis). From this textbook, this teacher presumably taught Moses all about his past and his relationship with the God of the Hebrews (which history would have included the ritual of circumcision).

The fact that Moses would choose to circumcise his first son suggests that Moses knew far more about his people, the Hebrews, than simply his genealogical line. The fact that Moses was willing to allow his wife to overrule him and not circumcise the second child suggests that this information was from Moses' past and not something which he recently learned from his father-in-law.

Now, speculating further—and forgive me for this, but I am following out these clues logically—the spiritual life of Moses' father-in-law was probably the pre-Hebrew spiritual life which we find in the post-flood, pre-Abrahamic era. This spiritual life would have included animal sacrifices (which is practiced by Noah and his sons immediately upon exiting the ark) but not circumcision (which is specific to the Hebrew people). We studied this particular spiritual life back in lesson #166 of Genesis.

I am unaware of any commentary which has followed out this information with this specificity. In fact, I don't know if any commentary recognizes the importance of Moses having his first son circumcised. That choice reveals that Moses, raised in the royal palace of Egypt, knew a great many things about the Hebrew faith. This also helps to explain why Moses, at age 40, decided to walk out of the royal palace and to walk among his brothers, the Hebrew slaves.

This might be seen as an abbreviated doctrine of circumcision. This is taken from Acts 16 ([HTML](#)) ([PDF](#)) ([WPD](#)).

A Few Points on Circumcision

1. Circumcision is an extremely important topic to the Jews. Circumcision and uncircumcision are mentioned in 59 verses in the Old Testament.
2. God required this of Abraham not at salvation but at age 99. Many theologians understand Abraham to be a Sumer-Akkadian prior to circumcision; but a Hebrew after circumcision. Genesis 17:24
3. Prior to Abraham being circumcised, God told Abraham about it and what He required, which included the circumcision of every male of his house (including Ishmael) and every male child from that point forward at eight days old. Genesis 17
4. God said that this would be a sign of the covenant between Himself and Abraham. Genesis 17:12–14
5. Circumcision was so important that, when Moses moved forward to return to Egypt on the calling of God, God stopped him and did not allow him to move forward until his second son was circumcised. Exodus 4:24–26
6. Circumcision was so important, that Joshua and his encampment of Israelites was not to move forward until every male had been circumcised. Joshua 5
7. The key in Exodus and Joshua is, the Hebrew males had a covenant with God and the circumcised phallus indicated who they were—they are the race with whom God has a covenant.
8. Both God and Hebrew believers often referred to those outside of His covenant as the uncircumcised. Judges 14:3 15:18 1Samuel 17:26 2Samuel 1:20
9. Paul said, if one is circumcised, but violates some other portion of the Law, he is no different from the uncircumcised; and if one who is uncircumcised follows the Law from his own conscience, is that not the same as being circumcised? Romans 2:25–29
10. Paul also wrote that, if someone is called while circumcised, let him remain circumcised (as if you could undo this); and if someone is called while uncircumcised, let him remain uncircumcised. In this new economy, circumcision and uncircumcision mean nothing. 1Corinthians 7:18–19
11. Paul recognizes that his ministry is primarily to the uncircumcised (the gentiles) while Peter's ministry is focused upon the circumcised (the Jews). Galatians 2:6–7
12. Paul concludes that it is not circumcision or uncircumcision which means anything, but the new birth (being born again, regeneration). Galatians 6:15
13. In fact, in Christ, there is no circumcision or uncircumcision. Philippians 3:11

The believer is in Christ, so we share His circumcision. Therefore, there is no requirement for the uncircumcised to become circumcised.

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Although I developed this doctrine independently, the sources below should be accurate and informative.

Other Doctrinal Sources on this Topic

Circumcision from the [Bible Doctrine Library](#) (also called Grace Notes) ([HTML](#)) ([DOC](#)) (many of these doctrines are notes from R. B. Thieme, Jr.)

Doctrine of Circumcision from the [West Bank Bible Church](#)

Circumcision from [Grace Bible Church](#) of Baytown, Texas

I believe that the latter two pastors who put together these doctrines were students of R. B. Thieme, Jr..

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I need an abbreviated Doctrine of Circumcision; and I need an OT Doctrine of Circumcision.