

## "Counting the days" Galatians 3:23-29 Circumcision of Jesus 2022

Dear brothers and sisters in Christ,

Today we celebrate a new year! In the secular calendar, it's the first day of the year 2022. In the church calendar it is the eighth day of Christmas, when we celebrate the circumcision and naming of Jesus. According to the Law of Moses, eight days after his birth, the son of Mary was circumcised and named Jesus, as the angel commanded. This conformed to the covenant God Had made with the people of Israel before Mount Sinai with Moses as His spokesman. God said to them, "If you obey my commands, my law, I will be your God and make a great nation of you. Now you are refugees from slavery in Egypt, but I'm going to make you a people worthy of receiving what I promised to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, the Savior of the world born among you. "

The Law of Moses was based on the moral law, the Ten Commandments, which still apply to all humans. However, this agreement also included various rules only for the people Israel, to prepare them for the coming of the Messiah. One was that a male child was to be circumcised eight days after birth. Circumcision was a seal of the covenant with Israel, a sign that the child was a member of the people of Israel and his family would be members of the people of Israel. In this way they fulfilled the Law of God.

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So, Joseph and Mary took the infant Jesus eight days after birth to be circumcised. So began the mission of Jesus to fulfill the Law of Moses, first in place of the people of Israel, for, in truth, in their history the people did not fulfill the covenant of Mount Sinai. In our reading of the Old Testament (Joshua 24: 14-24), the Israelites said to Joshua: "Far be it that we leave the LORD to serve other gods: For the Lord our God is He who brought them us and our parents out of the land of Egypt, from the house of bondage; who before our eyes did those great signs, and preserved us in all the way wherein we went, and among all the people through whom we passed. And the LORD drove out before us all the people, even the Amorites which dwelt in the land: therefore will we also serve the LORD, for he is our God." But in the years that followed, many times they failed to fulfill this covenant.

Jesus fulfilled the Law of Moses perfectly as the representative of the people Israel. He also fulfilled the moral law in our places. Too many times we fail in our obedience to the will of God. The moral law still applies to us, but we can not fulfill it perfectly.

Jesus, in our places, fulfilled the Law to satisfy the justice of God. Jesus came into this world as the son of the Virgin Mary, an Israelite woman, and began His mission with His circumcision and appointment as Jesus by the will of God.

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We are children of God and heirs of Abraham, not by circumcision, but by baptism. Paul says in our text from Galatians: "For all of you who were baptized into Christ, are clothed in Christ." We are clothed in the righteousness of Christ; we have no righteousness in ourselves. We are justified by faith in Christ in the sight of God.

We have the promise of eternal life, a new life. Now we begin a new year, and so many people think to start their lives anew. The new year is an opportunity to change their lives, to do things in a different way. We always have this opportunity because of baptism, the seal of the new covenant in Christ. The water and the Word of God are signs of the presence of the Holy Spirit in our lives. We always have the opportunity to start our lives again because God's Word never changes. We change many times, often deviating from the right path, but the promise of God never changes. That promise is if we believe in Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior, we have salvation, eternal life.

For us every day, every moment, is an opportunity to begin our lives anew. In the beginning of a new year is also the right time to repent of our sins of the old year and reaffirm our commitment to live as children of God. Therefore, we thank God for the gift of baptism, grace and peace that passes all understanding. Amen.