

Q & A—MUST I CIRCUMCISE MY SON?

Thanks for the question. It is a decision any expecting parent will have to make upon the birth of their newborn son. So, it is good to know you are conscientious enough about this decision to see if God's Word provides an answer.

Circumcision was a requirement under Old Testament law. However, the old law was abrogated in favor of the new after the death of Christ (Colossians 2:14; Hebrews 8:13). Some commandments are found in both the Old and New Testament. So, we must search the Scriptures to see if the command to circumcise is one of them.

As strange as this subject might seem to our ears, this was a very hot topic in the early days of Christianity. In the New Testament, the topic is discussed in at least 10 of the 26 New Testament books. It was a major issue that divided Jew and Gentile converts and was the focus of early debates.

Because of the popularity of this topic in the first-century church the question is easy to research and to answer. Acts 15:1-2 says, "...certain men came down from Judea and taught the brethren, "Unless you are circumcised according to the custom of Moses, you cannot be saved." 2 Therefore, when Paul and Barnabas had no small dissension and dispute with them, they determined that Paul and Barnabas and certain others of them should go up to Jerusalem, to the apostles and elders, about this question."

Since this question was discussed among the Jerusalem church, we need only look to their answer given in Acts 15:24-29, "...we have heard that some who went out from us have troubled you with words, unsettling your souls, saying, "You must be circumcised and keep the law" — to whom we gave no such commandment — ...28 For it seemed good to the Holy Spirit, and to

us, to lay upon you no greater burden than these necessary things: 29 that you abstain from things offered to idols, from blood, from things strangled, and from sexual immorality. If you keep yourselves from these, you will do well."

Paul wrote later in Galatians 5:6, "For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision nor uncircumcision avails anything, but faith working through love." Based on this passage, it no longer makes any difference to God whether one is circumcised or not.

With this in mind, the question is left up to the individual family to decide since God's Word does not mandate a decision either way.

Thanks for the question.

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