

ONE TORAH FOR ALL

Zerubbabel ben Emunah
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Shedding Blood

Some thoughts on circumcision - a short essay

In many circles today, the shedding of blood is seen as something to be avoided. It was not long ago, even in countries now considered first-world countries, that the majority of people did their own butchering. However, in today's world, especially in first-world and even in second-world countries, the majority of people do not do their own butchering any longer. In fact, most people do not even raise their own meat animals. There are even those who do not actually realize where store-bought meat comes from.

This has resulted in a particular mindset, a mindset that is against the shedding of blood for any reason, whether that blood is from a man or an animal. Since this mindset has settled upon much of society, it has also colored the way one understands the shedding of blood as found recorded in Scripture. There are two particular aspects of the shedding of blood the people of YHWH are commanded to do. One is in regards to sacrifices and the other is in regards to circumcision. It is the latter one that has captured our interest for this essay. However, both types are intimately connected. Therefore, one cannot actually understand one type without understanding them both.

From the very beginning of man's existence, when he rebelled against the word of YHWH and ate the fruit of the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil, there has been the shedding of blood. Then, at the time of Avraham, one finds the giving of the covenant to him by YHWH, in which YHWH asks him to shed the blood of all his male children. This was to be done on the eighth day of the boy's life. With almost no thought, one can easily see that a child of such a young age has no choice in the matter. Therefore, how does circumcision help him to enter into the covenant with YHWH? The truth is that it does not!

This seems to be one of Shaul's main points concerning circumcision. Circumcision is nothing to the one who is circumcised, but rather to the parents of the child who is to be circumcised. That is, both the father and the mother. Circumcision is not a male only club. The rite of circumcision is not about the child entering into the covenant with YHWH; rather, it is about the parents entering into that covenant -- both the father and the mother. It is both the father and the mother who are supposed to make the decision to circumcise their son(s).

When Yitzchaq (Isaac) was much older, YHWH tested Avraham and asked him to offer up his son as a burnt offering. Avraham had already shed the blood of his son on the eighth day of his life, but now YHWH was asking for all of his son's blood as a sign of Avraham's complete devotion to YHWH. Avraham passed this test without YHWH requiring the death of Yitzchaq.

When one goes back to an earlier time in the life of Avraham, one finds that YHWH asked him to shed the blood of three heifers, three she-goats, three rams, a turtle dove and a pigeon (see Genesis 15:9). The shedding of blood is a very important part of "cutting a covenant." In fact, Scripture teaches us that without the shedding of blood there can be no remission of sin. The sad thing is that so very many people today think that the shedding of the Blood of Mashiach Yeshua ended all the need to shed any more blood. However, this is simply not the case.

There is a great debate these days about whether circumcision is still for today. The truth is, that when YHWH gave this rite to His people, Israel, He clearly stated that this rite was to be part of the eternal covenant. Now then, either this is true and it is still in effect for today, or else YHWH did not tell the truth on this particular point. If YHWH did not tell the truth, then He is not trustworthy on any point, particularly on those things pertaining to eternity! However, He did tell the truth and circumcision is still for today. There is no other logical conclusion!

When one begins to understand that circumcision is more about the parents, both the father and the mother, obeying the Voice of YHWH and willingly shedding a token amount of their son's blood, then one can begin to see and understand what it is Shaul was getting at in all the things he wrote concerning circumcision.

Will you willingly choose to shed the blood of your male offspring in obedience to YHWH? It is your choice and no one else's. Please know that YHWH is watching to see what you will do!

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