

Readings from the Word of God

16 May 2021

John 13:34-35 (NKJV)

[Jesus said] ³⁴ “A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another; as I have loved you, that you also love one another. ³⁵ By this all will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another.”

Genesis 17:9-14 (NKJV)

⁹ And God said to Abraham: “As for you, you shall keep My covenant, you and your descendants after you throughout their generations. ¹⁰ This is My covenant which you shall keep, between Me and you and your descendants after you: Every male child among you shall be circumcised; ¹¹ and you shall be circumcised in the flesh of your foreskins, and it shall be a sign of the covenant between Me and you. ¹² He who is eight days old among you shall be circumcised, every male child in your generations, he who is born in your house or bought with money from any foreigner who is not your descendant. ¹³ He who is born in your house and he who is bought with your money must be circumcised, and My covenant shall be in your flesh for an everlasting covenant. ¹⁴ And the uncircumcised male child, who is not circumcised in the flesh of his foreskin, that person shall be cut off from his people; he has broken My covenant.”

Genesis 17:26-27 (NKJV)

²⁶ That very same day Abraham was circumcised, and his son Ishmael; ²⁷ and all the men of his house, born in the house or bought with money from a foreigner, were circumcised with him.

Matthew 28:19-20 (Kempton Project Translation, modified)

¹⁹ “Going forth, therefore, make disciples of all nations, baptising them into the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, ²⁰ teaching them to keep all things whatever I have commanded you....”

True Christianity §674

Baptism Was Instituted as a Replacement for Circumcision Because Circumcision of the Foreskin Symbolized Circumcision of the Heart; the Intent Was to Have an Internal Church Replace the External Church, Which as a Whole and in Every Detail Prefigured That Internal Church

If we examine the succession of churches over time from ancient times to our own, we see that the former churches were external in nature. Their worship consisted of external actions that symbolized the internal practices taught by the Christian church, whose foundation the Lord laid when he was in the world, and which he is now building for the first time.

Deuteronomy 10:16 (NKJV)

¹⁶ [C]ircumcise the foreskin of your heart, and be stiff-necked no longer.

Deuteronomy 30:5-6 (NKJV, modified)

⁵ Then Jehovah your God will bring you to the land which your fathers possessed, and you shall possess it. He will prosper you and multiply you more than your fathers. ⁶ And Jehovah your God will circumcise your heart and the heart of your descendants, to love Jehovah your God with all your heart and with all your soul, that you may live.

Secrets of Heaven §4462:3

[C]ircumcision meant the departure from filthy loves, namely self-love and love of the world, and the acceptance of heavenly loves, which are love to the Lord and love towards the neighbour, and so an acceptance of the Church.

Secrets of Heaven §7044

The use of knives made of flint to carry out circumcision meant the use of the truths of faith to carry out purification from filthy kinds of love.... The reason why purification is effected by means of the truths of faith is that these truths teach what good is and also what evil is, and so what ought to be done and what ought not to be done. And when a person knows those truths and wishes to act in accordance with them, they are being led by the Lord and purified by the Lord's Divine means.

True Christianity §674

Circumcision represented rejecting the cravings of the flesh, and therefore being purified from evils. Baptism means the same thing.

Clearly then, there are two reasons why baptism was commanded as a replacement for circumcision: (1) to differentiate the Christian church from the Jewish church; and (2) to make it more easily recognisable that the Christian church is internal in nature....

Matthew 18:8-9 (NKJV)

⁸ "If your hand or foot causes you to sin, cut it off and cast it from you. It is better for you to enter into life lame or maimed, rather than having two hands or two feet, to be cast into the everlasting

fire. ⁹ And if your eye causes you to sin, pluck it out and cast it from you. It is better for you to enter into life with one eye, rather than having two eyes, to be cast into hell fire.”

True Christianity §677

The First Function of Baptism Is to Bring People into the Christian Church and at the Same Time to Bring Them into the Company of Christians in the Spiritual World

[J]ust as circumcision was a sign that people belonged to the Israelite church, baptism is a sign that people belong to the Christian church.... This sign functions much like the ribbons of different colours tied to newborns of two mothers in order to tell them apart and not switch them by accident.

True Christianity §678:2

The preservation of the entire universe hinges on this precise arrangement.

This precision would not be possible unless all of us, after we were born, were given some sign that identified which religious community we belonged to.

True Christianity §681

The Second Function of Baptism Is to Allow Christians to Know and Acknowledge the Lord Jesus Christ as Redeemer and Saviour, and to Follow Him

True Christianity §684

The Third Function of Baptism, and Its Ultimate Purpose, Is to Lead Us to Be Regenerated