

ZIPPORAH – EXTRAS

CIRCUMCISION

The definition is “a cutting around” and is the cutting off the foreskin on the male reproductive organ. It is a custom that has prevailed among many peoples around the world (particularly Asia, Africa, America and Australia).

It was at first a religious act, instituted by God as the sign of the covenant between Him and Abraham, shortly after the latter’s sojourn in Egypt. God ordained that it be performed on Abraham and all his posterity and slaves and foreigners joining the Hebrews. (Gen. 17:2).

Every male child was to be circumcised eight days after birth. In Jewish orthodoxy the one who circumcised the child spoke these words: “Blessed be the Lord our God, who has sanctified us by His precepts and given us circumcision.” Then they would name the boy on that day, followed by a celebratory meal.

Circumcision reminded the Israelites of God’s promises to them and their responsibility to obey Him. It was the sign of the Abrahamic covenant to them (Gen. 17:10)

Jesus was circumcised on the eighth day and was named Jesus then (Luke 2:21)

In early church history, the Jewish Christians argued for the necessity of circumcision of the Gentiles who came to the church. Paul held that Christ made an end of all Jewish rites. The apostolic council took up the problem and decided against them (Acts 15).

There was spiritual significance to the word circumcision. In Col. 2:11 we are said to be circumcised in Christ. Colossians 4:11 and Titus 1:10 says we are circumcised in our hearts.

(Bibliography: Zondervan’s Pictorial Bible Dictionary; Manners and Customs of Bible Lands by Fred H. Wight)

MIDIANITES

ORIGIN: Descendants of Abraham by later wife Keturah (Gen. 25:1-6)

LOCATION: East of the Jordan River and the Dead Sea, south through the Akabah, and in the time of Moses, including the southern and eastern parts of the peninsula of Sinai.

HISTORY: Toward the end of Moses’ life, Midian had apparently become a confederate with Moab (Numbers 22:4)

Although nomads, they had in the time of Moses great wealth; not only 675,000 sheep, 72,000 beef (or oxen) and 61,000 donkeys but also gold, silver, brass, iron, tin and lead; all of which are numbered in the booty taken by the Israelites in Num. 31:22, 32-34.

Midianites have since disappeared from any records.

(Bibliography: Zondervan’s Pictorial Bible Dictionary)