

## BAPTISM: THE CHRISTIAN'S "CIRCUMCISION"

In [Genesis chapter 17](#), we read of God making a covenant (agreement) with Abraham that the Holy Land, the land of Canaan, would always belong to Abraham's descendants as long as they obeyed him. The ***"sign of the covenant"*** would be the circumcision in the flesh of every male at least eight days old ([Gen. 17:10-14](#)). Abraham immediately made sure that he and his entire family were circumcised that same day ([Gen. 17:22-27](#)). This was the basis for the law which required that all Jews be circumcised ([Lev. 12:3](#)).

Thousands of years later during the early days of the church, Jewish Christians who had converted out of Judaism were trying to bring tenets of Judaism into Christianity. Circumcision was one of these tenets ([Acts 15; Gal. 1-6](#)). Paul made it clear that physical circumcision was not required to be a Christian like it was in order to be a Jew. However, the Holy Spirit inspired him to use the Jews' mindset of circumcision being a sign that they had a covenant with God to teach a very important lesson about baptism in the book of Colossians.

Much of Colossians dealt with Paul reassuring Gentile Christians that they did not have to obey all the laws of Judaism in order to be Christians. While doing so, he told them that they, like all Christians, had been filled in Christ, who is the head of all rule and authority ([Col. 2:10](#)). Notice what he said next in [Colossians 2:11-12](#): ***"In him also you were circumcised with a circumcision made without hands, by putting off the body of the flesh, by the circumcision of Christ, having been buried with him in baptism, in which you were also raised with him through faith in the powerful working of God, who raised him from the dead."***

Think about this for a second. We are not under the covenant God made with Israel. That was taken out of the way at the cross ([Col. 2:14](#)), and we are under a new covenant ([Heb. 8:6-13](#)), Christ's covenant. But just like physical circumcision was required as a sign of the old covenant, God still requires "circumcision" of a sort as a sign in the new covenant. But this is not a literal, fleshly, physical circumcision. No, Paul says that it is a spiritual circumcision, ***"made without hands."*** He then clarifies it has having occurred when one was baptized – literally "immersed" in the Greek – in water.

From Abraham to the church, God and everyone else would know whether or not one was a Jew if they were physically circumcised. Does God and everyone else recognize you to be a Christian? Baptism preceded by repentance ([Acts 2:38](#)) which was brought on by faith ([Mark 16:16](#)) is the key, the key to salvation and forgiveness of sins. It is only through baptism that one is spiritually buried with Christ to rise again to a new life ([Col. 2:12; Rom. 6:3-4](#)). It is only through baptism that one puts on Christ and becomes a child of God ([Gal. 3:26-27](#)). It is only through baptism that the Holy Spirit adds you to Christ's body ([1 Cor. 12:13](#)), that body being his church ([Eph. 1:22-23](#)), of which there is only one in the sight of God ([Eph. 4:4-6](#)), not the many found in the numerous sects and denominations of Christendom today.

Have you been spiritually circumcised? Are you truly a Christian in the sight of God?  
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