

*The Gospel According to*

SAINT MATTHEW

SAINT MARK

SAINT LUKE

SAINT JOHN

CHAPTER 1, VERSE 25

NOTHING RECORDED

CHAPTER 2, VERSE 21

NOTHING RECORDED

1:25 - And knew<sup>1</sup> her not till she had brought forth her firstborn<sup>2</sup> son: and he called his name JESUS<sup>3</sup>.

2:21 - And when eight days<sup>4</sup> were accomplished for the circumcising<sup>5</sup> of the child, his name was called JESUS<sup>3</sup>; which was so named of the angel<sup>6</sup> before he was conceived in the womb.

**CHRONOLOGY:** April 14, 4BCE\*

\* The established year for this chapter is based on the year of Jesus' birth, which is highly debated. Below is a list of possible years for Jesus' birth. The chronology of Jesus' life in this book is based on the author's belief that Jesus was born in 4BCE. The most likely years for Jesus' birth are 1BCE, 4BCE and 5BCE. The other years are problematic.

- Year theories: 1 BCE - Supported by the Apostle James E. Talmage & Secular Biblical Scholars Pearson and Hug & the creator of Gregorian Calendar: Dionysius Exiguus.
- 2 BCE - Supported by Secular Biblical Scholar Scallinger.
- 2/3 BCE - Supported by early Christian writers and historians Irenaeus, Clement of Alexandria, Tertullian, Africanus, Hippolytus of Rome, Hippolytus of Thebes, Origen, Eusebius and Epiphanius.
- 3 BCE - Supported by Secular Biblical Scholars Baronius and Paulus.
- 4 BCE - Supported by Secular Biblical Scholars Bengel, Wieseler & Greswell. **Supported by this Author.**
- 5 BCE - Supported by the Apostle Bruce R. McConkie, the Apostle J. Rueben Clark, and Secular Biblical Scholars Usher and Petavius.
- 6 BCE - Supported by Secular Biblical Scholars Strong, Luvin and Clark.
- 7 BCE - Supported by Secular Biblical Scholars Ideler and Sanclemente.

**LOCATION:** Bethlehem

**COMMENTARY:** The circumcision and naming of a male child in the House of Israel was done at the same time. It was done during the ritual Circumcision eight days after birth. It was typically done at the home or the local synagogue. The presentation at the Temple was something totally different. Mary would have waited the required 33 days after a male circumcision, and then Journeyed to the Temple to make an offering, and submit to the process of ceremonial cleansing, as a woman is considered unclean after child birth. Mary would have gone to the temple on May 11, 1BCE. Since Nazareth was a 92 mile journey, taking at least 5 days, it is not reasonable to think that Mary could have made the journey immediately after delivery and made it to Nazareth in less than 8 days. Therefore, I would theorize that Mary, Joseph and Jesus remained in Bethlehem and circumcised Jesus in the local Synagogue or in the home of a relative or friend.

**FOOTNOTES:**

1- **knew** - The term "knew her" is a biblical expression meaning "sexual or marital relations". The Greek word "γινώσκω" or "ginōskō" means to know, perceive, understand, or gain knowledge. However, the word is used as a Jewish idiom for sexual relations between a man and a woman.

Matthew 1:25 maintains that Mary maintained her virginity throughout her pregnancy and the birth of Jesus. This fulfilled a prophecy uttered by Isaiah over 700 years prior to Jesus' birth. He said, "Therefore the Lord himself shall give you a sign; Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel." (Isaiah 7:14). Nephi bore testimony that Mary remained a virgin even after Jesus' birth. He wrote, "And it came to pass that I looked and beheld the great city of Jerusalem, and also other cities. And I beheld the city of Nazareth; and in the city of Nazareth I beheld a virgin, and she was exceedingly fair and white. And it came to pass that I saw the heavens open; and an angel came down and stood before me; and he said unto me: Nephi, what beholdest thou? And I said unto him: A virgin, most beautiful and fair above all other virgins. And he said unto me: Knowest thou the condescension of God? And I said unto him: I know that he loveth his children; nevertheless, I do not know the meaning of all things. And he said unto me: Behold, the virgin whom thou seest is the mother of the Son of God, after the manner of the flesh. And it came to pass that I beheld that she was carried away in the Spirit; and after she had been carried away in the Spirit for the space of a time the angel spake unto me, saying: Look! And I looked and beheld the virgin again, bearing a child in her arms." (1<sup>st</sup> Nephi 11:13-20). Some argue that the word virgin refers to a young maiden rather than a woman who has never been with a man. The fact that Matthew 1:25 says that Mary knew not a man until after Jesus birth dispels that argument.

On the opposite side of the spectrum, there is another group that argues that Mary was not only a virgin at her conception and through to her delivery of Jesus, but that Mary was a virgin until her death.

**False Doctrine of the Apostasy - The Perpetual Virginity of Mary**

The doctrine of the perpetual virginity of Mary expresses the Virgin Mary's "real and perpetual virginity even in the act of giving birth to the Son of God made Man". According to the doctrine, Mary was ever-virgin (Greek: ἀειπαρθενός αειπαρthenos) for the whole of her life, making Jesus her only biological son, whose conception and birth are



held to be miraculous. By the fourth century, the doctrine was widely supported by the Church Fathers, and by the seventh century it had been affirmed in a number of ecumenical councils. The doctrine is part of the teaching of Catholicism and Anglo-Catholics, as well as Eastern and Oriental Orthodoxy, as expressed in their sacraments, in which they repeatedly refer to Mary as "ever virgin". Some early Protestant reformers such as Martin Luther supported the doctrine, and founding figures of Anglicanism such as Hugh Latimer and Thomas Cranmer "followed the tradition that they had inherited by accepting Mary as "ever virgin" However, later Reformed teaching largely abandoned it. The doctrine of perpetual virginity is, however, currently maintained by some Anglican and Lutheran theologians.

The doctrine of the perpetual virginity of Mary is false. Matthew 1:25 supports that Mary knew Joseph, but not "till she had brought forth her firstborn". The doctrine was created due to a desire to deify Mary. Many even pray to her. There is no doubt that Mary was a special and choice person, but she was still a mortal woman with imperfections and frailties. The Book of Mormon supports Mary's special nature, "And behold, he shall be born of Mary, at Jerusalem which is the land of our forefathers, she being a virgin, a precious and chosen vessel, who shall be overshadowed and conceive by the power of the Holy Ghost, and bring forth a son, yea, even the Son of God." (Alma 7:10). Mary was obviously an exceptional woman among all other women; however, "We do not worship Mary, but we do regard her very highly. She is among the most worthy and noble of women—the most privileged of all mothers. And while Mary is not typical, she is an example to all mothers." (Ensign, "Mary & Joseph", Robert J. Matthews, December 1974). Joseph eventually "knew" her, and she experiences the joy and companionship of marriage. See also the commentary for Chapter 3, footnote #37.

2- **firstborn** - The word "firstborn" is translated from the Greek word "πρωτότοκος" or "prōtotokos", which simply means firstborn. There are several Hebrew word that are used for the word firstborn. Unfortunately, this just makes things a little more confusing. Here are the Hebrew words;

Hebrew	Transliteration	Definition
בְּכוֹר	bēkowr	Firstborn, firstling of men and women and animals
בְּכוֹרָה	bēkowrah	birthright, primogeniture, right of the first-born
בְּכִירָה	bekiyrah	Firstborn daughter, always used of women
בָּר	bakar	To be born first

Since early Hebrew lacked vowels, it is easy to see the similarities in the consonants. The Semitic root B-K-R means "early" or "first" in Ancient Near East Semitic languages, which Hebrew is part of. Classical Hebrew contains various verbs from the B-K-R stem with the same association. The plural noun bikkurim (vegetable firstfruits) also derives from this same root. The masculine noun bēkowr, firstborn, is used of sons, as "Canaan begat Sidon his firstborn" (Genesis 10:15), whereas the feminine noun, and female equivalent, is bekiyrah, first-born daughter, such as Leah (Genesis 29:26). Derived from bēkowr is the qualitative noun bēkowrah "birthright", related to primogeniture, such as that which Esau sold to Jacob. In the plural, this qualitative noun "birthright" can also mean "firstlings", as when Abel brought out the "firstborn" of his flock to sacrifice (Genesis 4:4).

Ancient Hebrew Right of the Firstborn in Matters of Inheritance

Each Hebrew family understood how inheritance worked. The firstborn son received a double portion, while he also received the responsibility to care for the parents until their eventual death. The firstborn also became the patriarch of the family. Even with this understanding, there were times when lines became cloudy. Moses provided case law that would assist families in situations that might cause conflict. One such passage records, "If a man have two wives, one beloved, and another hated, and they have born him children, both the beloved and the hated; and if the firstborn son be hers that was hated: Then it shall be, when he maketh his sons to inherit that which he hath, that he may not make the son of the beloved firstborn before the son of the hated, which is indeed the firstborn: But he shall acknowledge the son of the hated for the firstborn, by giving him a double portion of all that he hath: for he is the beginning of his strength; the right of the firstborn is his." (Deuteronomy 21:15-17). From a property and wealth standpoint, this is the benefit of being the firstborn. However, the concept of the firstborn goes far beyond the physical.

Ancient Hebrew Religious Law of the Firstborn

The religious law was probably established in the day of Adam. We see evidence of this as Abel offered the firstlings of his flock, but our understanding of such offerings is not disclosed to us with Abel. Obviously the righteous men had understanding of what this firstborn business was all about. Abraham taught, "It was conferred upon me from the fathers; it came down from the fathers, from the beginning of time, yea, even from the beginning, or before the foundation of the earth, down to the present time, even the right of the firstborn, or the first man, who is Adam, or first father, through the fathers unto me." (Abraham 1:3). The right of the firstborn appears to be something more than property or the slaying of animals.



The sacrificing of the first born animals was a symbol of something far greater. The Lord declared, "Sanctify unto me all the firstborn, whatsoever openeth the womb among the children of Israel, both of man and of beast: it is mine." (Exodus 13:2). The firstborn were to be sanctified unto the Lord. Meaning that they were acceptable and dedicated to the Lord. They were also of the House of Israel, which means that they were those that had entered into the Covenant of Abraham. The firstborn are His. We know that the salvation of the Lord comes to His people. Spiritually, we have learned the following about the first born;

1. To be the firstborn one must be acceptable and dedicated to the Lord.
2. To be the firstborn one must enter into the covenant of salvation.
3. The firstborn are children of the Lord, (The Law of Adoption).

Interestingly, though firstborns are typically associated with earthly families and worldly wealth, there is a spiritual firstborn, and it does not appear to be limited to age, rank, or status. In speaking to Moses, the Lord said, "And thou shalt say unto Pharaoh, Thus saith the Lord, Israel is my son, even my firstborn:" (Exodus 4:22). The Covenant of Abraham has an element of adoption. We become the House of Israel, and the firstborn of the Lord.

4. All who are of the House of Israel, are firstborn.

Another spiritual element of the firstborn is taught by the law of sacrifice. The Lord commanded the children of Israel as follows, "That thou shalt set apart unto the Lord all that openeth the matrix, and every firstling that cometh of a beast which thou hast; the males shall be the Lord's. And every firstling of an ass thou shalt redeem with a lamb; and if thou wilt not redeem it, then thou shalt break his neck: and all the firstborn of man among thy children shalt thou redeem. And it shall be when thy son asketh thee in time to come, saying, What is this? that thou shalt say unto him, By strength of hand the Lord brought us out from Egypt, from the house of bondage: And it came to pass, when Pharaoh would hardly let us go, that the Lord slew all the firstborn in the land of Egypt, both the firstborn of man, and the firstborn of beast:

therefore I sacrifice to the Lord all that openeth the matrix, being males; but all the firstborn of my children I redeem." (Exodus 13:12-15). It would appear that each firstborn was required to be redeemed of the Lord by offering a sacrificial Lamb. Redemption is usually used in reference to paying off a slaves debt. In this case, the firstborn is redeemed spiritually. The sacrificial lamb is a symbol of Jesus, and the killing of the lamb represents Jesus' atonement. The need for redemption lies in our debt of sin. A debt we cannot reconcile on our own. So, we have learned some more about this concept of being the firstborn spiritually;

5. The firstborn submit themselves to the sacrifices necessary to partake of the atonement of Jesus.
6. The firstborn are redeemed from sin.
7. The firstborn of the Lord are protected from the power of the destroyer.

Another element to the spiritual firstborn, is the concept of proxy. The literal firstborns in Israel belonged to the Lord. Like a slave with a debt that could not be paid, the firstborn would be required to live a life of servitude. The Lord taught us something else about the spiritually reborn. He commanded the Israelites to **"Take the Levites instead of all the firstborn among the children of Israel, and the cattle of the Levites instead of their cattle; and the Levites shall be mine: I am the Lord."** (Numbers 3:45). The tribe of Levi served in the stead of the firstborns. Those that are spiritually firstborn, help others meet their obligations. By doing such, we serve as proxy for the Lord, and bring salvation to the firstborn. We know that the Levites were given the power to act in that sacred position. The firstborns were given the priesthood.

8. The firstborn serve as Jesus served.
9. The firstborn receive the Priesthood of God.

**The Church of the Firstborn**

During the restoration, Jesus taught Joseph Smith. One of Joseph's many experiences with the Savior is recorded with the Savior saying, **"And now, verily I say unto you, I was in the beginning with the Father, and am the Firstborn; And all those who are begotten through me are partakers of the glory of the same, and are the church of the Firstborn."** (Doctrine & Covenants 93:21-22). When we are spiritually reborn, we become the sons and daughters of Jesus, who is the literal firstborn of the Father of Heaven. The church of the firstborn is His church, but it also has all the elements, just listed, necessary to make us "firstborns".

See also commentary for Chapter 10, footnote #4

- 3- **JESUS** - It should be noted that Matthew uses almost the same wording in the naming of Jesus as he did in Matthew 1:21 for the words that Gabriel spoke to Joseph directing him to name the child Jesus. It is felt that Matthew was carefully wording his account to illustrate the fulfillment of prophecy. So what is in a name? **"Be it known unto you all, and to all the people of Israel, that by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom ye crucified, whom God raised from the dead, even by him doth this man stand here before you whole. This is the stone which was set at nought of you builders, which is become the head of the corner. Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved."** (Acts 4:10-12).

See the commentary in Chapter 3, footnote #26 and Chapter 4, footnote #30. There are numerous explanations for the origin of the name 'Jesus', and even more explanations for the meaning of the name. The name is related to the Hebrew "יְהוֹשֻׁעַ" or "Joshua", which is a name related to Deity mentioned within the Biblical tradition in Exodus 17:9 as one of Moses' companions and successor. Breaking the name down, we see that there are two parts: "יהו" or "Yeho", a reference to YHWH or Jehovah plus the three letter root "שוע" or "shua". Due to disputes over how to render "שוע" or "Shua", there are a number of generally accepted phrases this combination can translate to:

- Yeho-shua**
- "Yhwh" saves
- "Yhwh" (is) salvation
- "Yhwh" (is) a saving-cry
- "Yhwh" (is) a cry-for-saving
- "Yhwh" (is) a cry-for-help
- "Yhwh" (is) my help



In Biblical Hebrew "יהושע" or "Yehoshua" underwent changes as the language evolved over time. Therein lies the problem, and the multiple meanings. Different eras have different renderings. Biblical Aramaic records the name as "ישוע" or "Yeshua". Late Biblical Hebrew usually shortened the traditional "יהו" or "Yeho" at the beginning of a name to "יו" or "Yo-" and at the end to "יה" or "-yah". This shortened Hebrew name was common.

By the time the New Testament was written, the Septuagint had already transliterated "ישוע" or "Yeshua" into Koine Greek as closely as possible in the 3rd-century BCE, the result being "Ἰησοῦς" or "Iēsous". Where Greek has no equivalent of the semitic letter "ש" or "shin" (pronounced sh), it was replaced with a "σ" or "sigma" (pronounced s), and a typical Greek ending of "-s" was added. Many scholars believe some dialects dropped the final letter "ע" or "ayin". The Greek writings of Philo of Alexandria and Josephus frequently mention this name.

From Greek, "Ἰησοῦς" or "Iēsous" moved into Latin at least by the time of the Vetus Latina. "Ἰησοῦς" or "Iēsous" was transliterated to Latin as "IESVS", where it stood for many centuries. The Latin name was pronounced "Jesu" or "Jesum". Lower case Latin letters were developed around 800CE and sometime later the "U" was invented to distinguish the vowel sound from the consonantal sound, replacing the V in the name changing it to "IESUS". Additionally, and the "J" was invented to distinguish the consonant from the vowel "I". Finally, we arrive at a familiar form of the name. The Latin name for the Hebrew "Yehoshua" is "Jesus".

What has not been discussed is the fact that the Joshua is consider to be derived from the same Hebrew word for Salvation. Again, there are issues with the evolution of the language of the Israelites. As you one can see from the different transliterations listed above, Joshua has something to do with salvation regardless of the evolution of the language. There is no coincidence that the Savior was named "Salvation". He is salvation. In fact, besides Him there is no salvation. **"And he also said unto him: If thou wilt turn unto me, and hearken unto my voice, and believe, and repent of all thy transgressions, and be baptized, even in water, in the name of mine Only Begotten Son, who is full of grace and truth, which is Jesus Christ, the only name which shall be given under heaven, whereby salvation shall come unto the children of men, ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost, asking all things in his name, and whatsoever ye shall ask, it shall be given you."** (Moses 6:52).



Since Jesus is the redeemer of all man, He has many titles associated with Salvation. Additionally, He is the Old Testament Jehovah, which gives Him a myriad of titles as the living God. Finally, He has titles as a result of His roles as Creator, Mediator, and Judge. Here is a list of titles found in scripture;

## Titles for Jesus the Son of Mary

Advocate (1 John 2:1)  
Almighty God (Isaiah 9:6, Rev. 1:8; Matthew 28:18)  
Alpha and Omega (Rev. 1:8; 22:13)  
Amen (Rev. 3:14)  
Anointed  
Anointed One  
Apostle of our Profession (Heb. 3:1)  
Atoning Sacrifice for our Sins (1 John 2:2)  
Author of Life (Acts 3:15)  
Author and Perfecter of our Faith (Heb. 12:2)  
Author of Salvation (Heb. 2:10)  
Beginning  
Beginning and End (Rev. 22:13)  
Begotten  
Beloved  
Beloved Son  
Beloved Son of God  
Blessed of God  
Blessed and only Ruler (1 Tim. 6:15)  
Bread of God (John 6:33)  
Bread of Life (John 6:35; 6:48)  
Bridegroom (Mt. 9:15)  
Bright & Morning Star  
Capstone (Acts 4:11; 1 Pet. 2:7)  
Captain of Man's Salvation  
Captain of Our Salvation  
Carpenter  
Carpenter's Son  
Chief Cornerstone (Eph. 2:20)  
Chief Shepherd (1 Pet. 5:4)  
Christ (1 John 2:22)  
Chosen  
Chosen of God  
Christ  
Christ Child  
Christ of God  
Christ the Lamb  
Comforter  
Consolation of Israel  
Cornerstone  
Creator (John 1:3)  
Creator of All Things  
Deliverer (Rom. 11:26)  
Divine Son  
Door of the Sheep  
Emmanuel  
End of the Law  
Endless  
Eternal  
Eternal Father (Isaiah 9:6)  
Eternal God  
Eternal Head  
Eternal Judge  
Eternal Life (1 John 1:2; 5:20)  
Everlasting Father  
Example  
Exemplar  
Faithful and True (Rev. 19:11)  
Faithful Witness (Rev. 1:5)  
Faithful and True Witness (Rev. 3:14)  
Father  
Father of Heaven and Earth  
Finisher  
Finisher of Faith  
First and Last (Rev. 1:17; 2:8; 22:13)  
Firstborn  
Firstborn From the Dead (Rev. 1:5)  
Firstborn over all creation (Col. 1:15)  
Firstfruits  
Forerunner  
Gate (John 10:9)  
God (John 1:1; 20:28; Heb. 1:8; Rom. 9:5; 2 Pet. 1:1; 1 John 5:20; etc.)  
God of Abraham

God of Isaac  
God of Israel  
God of Jacob  
God of Thy Father  
God of the Whole Earth  
God's Anointed  
God's Holy Child Jesus  
Good Shepherd (John 10:11,14)  
Governor  
Great God  
Great High Priest (Heb. 4:14)  
Great I AM  
Great Shepherd (Heb. 13:20)  
Head of the Church (Eph. 1:22; 4:15; 5:23)  
Head of Every Man  
Head of the Body  
Head of the Church  
Healer  
Heir of all things (Heb. 1:2)  
High Priest (Heb. 2:17)  
Holy and True (Rev. 3:7)  
Holy Child  
Holy Messiah  
Holy One (Acts 3:14)  
Holy One of Israel  
Holy One of Jacob  
Hope (1 Tim. 1:1)  
Hope of Glory (Col. 1:27)  
Hom of Salvation (Luke 1:69)  
I Am (John 8:58)  
Image of God (2 Cor. 4:4)  
Immanuel (Isaiah 7:14, Matthew 1:23)  
Jehovah  
Jesus  
Jesus Christ  
Jesus of Galilee  
Jesus of Nazareth  
Joseph's Son  
Judge  
Judge of the living and the dead (Acts 10:42)  
Just  
Just One  
King  
King Eternal (1 Tim. 1:17)  
King of Israel (John 1:49)  
King of the Jews (Mt. 27:11)  
King of kings (1 Tim 6:15; Rev. 19:16)  
King of Sion  
King of the Ages (Rev. 15:3)  
King of the Jews  
Lamb (Rev. 13:8)  
Lamb of God (John 1:29)  
Lamb Without Blemish (1 Pet. 1:19)  
Last Adam (1 Cor. 15:45)  
Life (John 14:6; Col. 3:4)  
Light  
Light of the World (John 8:12)  
Lion of the Tribe of Judah (Rev. 5:5)  
Living Bread  
Living One (Rev. 1:18)  
Living Stone (1 Pet. 2:4)  
Living Water  
Lord (2 Pet. 2:20)  
Lord from Heaven  
Lord God  
Lord God Almighty  
Lord God of Hosts  
Lord Jehovah  
Lord Jesus  
Lord of All (Acts 10:36)  
Lord of Dead  
Lord of Glory (1 Cor. 2:8)  
Lord of Hosts

Lord of Living  
Lord of lords (Rev. 19:16)  
Lord of the Sabbath  
Lord Omnipotent  
Lord our Righteousness  
Maker  
Man from Heaven (1 Cor. 15:48)  
Man of Counsel  
Man of Holiness  
Master  
Mediator  
Mediator of the New Covenant (Heb. 9:15)  
Meek and Lowly  
Messenger of the Covenant  
Messiah  
Messias  
Mighty God (Isa. 9:6)  
Mighty One  
Mighty One of Israel  
Mighty One of Jacob  
Minister  
Morning Star (Rev. 22:16)  
Most High God  
Nazarene  
Offspring of David (Rev. 22:16)  
One Body  
Only Begotten  
Only Begotten of the Father  
Only Begotten Son of God (John 1:18; 1 John 4:9)  
Our Great God and Savior (Titus 2:13)  
Our Holiness (1 Cor. 1:30)  
Our Husband (2 Cor. 11:2)  
Our Passover  
Our Protection (2 Thess. 3:3)  
Our Redemption (1 Cor. 1:30)  
Our Righteousness (1 Cor. 1:30)  
Our Sacrificed Passover Lamb (1 Cor. 5:7)  
Physician  
Power of God (1 Cor. 1:24)  
Precious Cornerstone (1 Pet. 2:6)  
Prince  
Prince of Life  
Prince of Peace (Isaiah 9:6)  
Prophet (Acts 3:22)  
Rabbi (Mt. 26:25)  
Redeemer  
Redeemer of Israel  
Redeemer of the World  
Resurrection and Life (John 11:25)  
Revealer  
Righteous Branch (Jer. 23:5)  
Righteous Judge  
Righteous Man  
Righteous One (Acts 7:52; 1 John 2:1)  
Rock (1 Cor. 10:4)  
Root of David (Rev. 5:5; 22:16)  
Root of Jesse  
Ruler of God's Creation (Rev. 3:14)  
Ruler of the Kings of the Earth (Rev. 1:5)  
Sacrifice  
Savior (Eph. 5:23; Titus 1:4; 3:6; 2 Pet. 2:20)  
Savior of Israel  
Savior of the World  
Second Comforter  
Seed of Abraham  
Seed of David  
Seed of the Woman  
Shepherd  
Son  
Son of Abraham  
Son of David (Lk. 18:39)  
Son of God (John 1:49; Heb. 4:14)  
Son of the Eternal Father

Son of the Everlasting God  
 Son of the Highest  
 Son of the Living God  
 Son of the Most High God (Lk. 1:32)  
 Source of Eternal Salvation for all who obey him (Heb. 5:9)  
 Spiritual Rock  
 Stem of Jesse  
 Teacher come from God  
 The One Mediator (1 Tim. 2:5)  
 The Stone the builders rejected (Acts 4:11)  
 True Bread (John 6:32)  
 True Light (John 1:9)  
 True Vine (John 15:1)  
 Truth (John 1:14; 14:6)  
 Unchangeable One  
 Way (John 14:6)  
 Wisdom of God (1 Cor. 1:24)  
 Wonderful Counselor (Isaiah 9:6)  
 Word (John 1:1)  
 Word of God (Rev. 19:13)



- 4- **eight days** - In Genesis 17:12, God specifically directed Abraham to circumcise newborn males on the eighth day. Why the eighth day? In 1935, Professor H. Dam proposed the name "vitamin K" for the factor in foods that helped prevent hemorrhaging in baby chicks. We now know vitamin K is responsible for the production (by the liver) of the element known as prothrombin. If vitamin K is deficient, there will be a prothrombin deficiency and hemorrhaging may occur. Oddly, it is only on the fifth through the seventh days of the newborn male's life that vitamin K (produced by bacteria in the intestinal tract) is present in adequate quantities. Vitamin K, coupled with prothrombin, causes blood coagulation, which is important in any surgical procedure. Holt and McIntosh, in their classic work, *Holt Pediatrics*, observed that a newborn infant has "**peculiar susceptibility to bleeding between the second and fifth days of life... Hemorrhages at this time, though often inconsequential, are sometimes extensive; they may produce serious damage to internal organs, especially to the brain, and cause death from shock and exsanguination**" (*Holt Pediatrics*, Holt and McIntosh, 1953, pages 125-126). Obviously, then, if vitamin K is not produced in sufficient quantities until days five through seven, it would be wise to postpone any surgery until sometime after that. But why did God specify day eight?

On the eighth day, the amount of prothrombin present actually is elevated above one-hundred percent of normal—and is the only day in the male's life in which this will be the case under normal conditions. If surgery is to be performed, day eight is the perfect day to do it. Vitamin K and prothrombin levels are at their peak.

See also the commentary in Chapter 7, footnote #2.

- 5- **circumcising** - See the commentary in Chapter 7, footnote #4. The word circumcision comes from the Latin word "circumcidere". The Latin word means "to cut around". Male circumcision is the surgical removal of the foreskin, which is medically known as the prepuce, from the man genitalia. Anciently, this was done with a knife, or sharpened stone.

Several ancient cultures close to the Hebrews practiced circumcision. We know that the Egyptian priests were circumcised. We know that circumcision was practiced by the Sumerians and many of the Semite tribes. The first reference to the Hebrews practicing circumcision was with Father Abraham. Abraham was commanded by God to circumcise himself, his sons, and all male members of his household. He was to circumcise his descendants and even their slaves as an everlasting covenant with Jehovah. "**This is my covenant, which ye shall keep, between me and you and thy seed after thee; Every man child among you shall be circumcised. And ye shall circumcise the flesh of your foreskin; and it shall be a token of the covenant betwixt me and you. And he that is eight days old shall be circumcised among you, every man child in your generations, he that is born in the house, or bought with money of any stranger, which is not of thy seed.**" (Genesis 17:10-12). Under Jewish law, failure to follow the commandment given to Abraham incurs the penalty of karet. "Karet" is excommunication or being cut off from the rest of the community of God. The Torah, which is the source of the Law, says: "**And the uncircumcised man child whose flesh of his foreskin is not circumcised, that soul shall be cut off from his people; he hath broken my covenant.**" (Genesis 17:14).



The presence of the foreskin was regarded as a blemish, and perfection was to be attained by its removal. There are no sources that describe the exact protocol of an ancient Jewish circumcision. Most probably, the rite changed as the culture evolved and time passed. It is believed that in biblical times it was the mother who performed the ceremony on the newborn. The image of Mary circumcising Jesus is probably a difficult concept due to traditions surrounding Mary. However, it may have just been Mary performing the rite. Though, one might argue that there are several examples of men performing the act.

It is also believed that ancient Hebrew fathers spoke at his sons circumcision and pronounced blessings upon his son.

We might look to the present Jewish circumcision rite to understand the past a little better.

Today, the Jews still practice religious circumcision. The rite of circumcision is called a "Bris". The "Bris" is an important family celebration for Jewish people. It is required that at least the newborn male, the newborn's father and a Mohel be present at a Bris, but it is normal for other family members to attend. A Mohel is a professional circumciser, but not necessarily a medical doctor. A mohel is required to have studied the religious laws and have the surgical skills essential for what would be considered a minor operation. Not just anyone can perform circumcision. In the United Kingdom, the Initiation Society of Great Britain and the London Beth Din (Jewish Ecclesiastical Court) oversee the training and examination of student Mohels.



There are no special rules about where the ritual should take place. Most often it is held at the family's home but some people prefer it to be done in a synagogue.

The duty of circumcising the child is the responsibility of the father. In his absence, or if the father fails to meet his obligation, the religious authorities are bound to see that it is performed. (New York & Oxford, Oxford University Press 1997). The only exception permitted to the otherwise universal requirement of circumcision is if two previous children of the family have died as a result of the operation: that is, in cases of hereditary hemophilia.

The ritual of circumcision is performed on the eighth day after birth, as it has been for thousands of years, unless there are temporary medical reasons that delay the rite. Otherwise, it is performed on the eighth day even if that day falls on a Sabbath or Yom Kippur. There are few exceptions to the Sabbath, but circumcision is an absolute exception.



If circumcision has been postponed for medical reasons, the ceremony may not take place on a Sabbath or major festival, as the eighth day has already been missed. The Hebrew word for circumcision is "milah". The act was a covenant, or in Hebrew a "berit". Hence, it is often referred to as "berit milah", or "the covenant of circumcision". It is regarded as the supreme obligatory sign of loyalty and adherence to Judaism. The covenant is considered to be "sealed in the flesh".

The child may be brought into the room where the circumcision is to take place by the mother and other female family members. Traditionally, an empty chair is set aside in the room for the prophet Elijah, who oversees the proceedings and ensures the continuation of the ritual. During the circumcision, the child is held on the lap of a person who has been chosen to act as "sandek". The grandfather of the child or the family rabbi often takes this role and it is considered an honor to do this.

The Mohel performs the surgical act of circumcision in ceremonial fashion. There are many acts performed during the process that are symbolic in nature; however due to the intimate nature of the act it will not be discussed here.

At the close of the rite, blessings are recited and a drop or two of wine is placed in the child's mouth. The child is then given his official Hebrew name. The family then celebrates with a festive meal.

- 6 - **angel** - See also Chapter 2, Footnote #21, Chapter 3, footnote #3, Chapter 4, footnote #22 and Chapter 11, footnote #7. The reference to an angel in this verse in Luke, is mentioning Gabriel who appeared to both Joseph and Mary, and named the Messiah "Jesus". Gabriel is Noah. He is Elias. He knew Abraham and through his son Shem taught Abraham the Gospel of Jesus Christ. It makes perfect sense that Gabriel prepared the way of Jesus' birth. He guided all the characters, assuring that the Savior entered the world under the right conditions and circumstances. He was guided by Heaven. Mary and Joseph followed Gabriel's counsel with obedience and great faith.