

Wednesday in the Word

Digging Deeper

December 9, 2020

Colossians 2:11-12

Ritual Harmony

Our passage today relates two seemingly very different religious practices that are actually closely tied together. Circumcision effectively uses the cutting away (in the Greek 'cutting around ') of the flesh to symbolize our need to "cut away" the sin nature as the root to sinful desires. Likewise the submergence of baptism illustrates the death of self and sin. That part of the body addressed in circumcision is devoted to man's role in the procreation of new life. Similarly the emergence from the waters of baptism exemplifies new life in Christ. Circumcision on the eighth day fits the numerical identity of the number eight being the number of newness and of resurrection. Interesting note; Naturally forming chemicals in the newborn babies' body increase blood coagulation and enhance wound healing. This chemical compound reaches its peak eight days after birth, promoting healing at a rate and efficiency never again rivaled through life. Stem cells at their best! Did God give Abraham this ordinance of circumcision just when our bodies could best receive it? Yes! The death of sin yields to new life in the Spirit. Both of these practices existed outside of our faith but were enhanced in their meaning as God instructed our patriarchs. It is clear from scripture that these ordinances were intended as representative pictures. Actions with deeper meanings. Deuteronomy 10:16, 30:6, Jeremiah 4:4, Romans 6:3-4, 1 Peter 3:21. There are many such references. Jesus' use of parables was much the same. His gentle stories pleased the minds of the listeners but intrigued the minds of His disciples who would ask for explanation. Luke 8:4-18.

Why are there so many illustrative and symbolic references in God's Word? Sometimes they were used to clarify a confusing concept or to enhance a deeper point. Hosea 1:2. Consider Nathan's story told to King David to bring him to repentance. 2 Samuel 12. The biggest obstacle to our relationship with and understanding of God is our flesh. It has been said that we are not physical beings with spirit bodies but rather spirit beings with physical bodies. The difference is important because we were never meant to live in these bodies of death. Our original form was as Adam and Eve knew. The perfect eternal form. Sin brought destruction and decay to our existence. Paul referred to our body as a tent. Temporary. 2 Corinthians 5:1-5. Our future is one of perfection in body and soul. We will live in eternity. No pain. No loss. No shame. No sin. Revelation 21:4. Our minds will be perfect. We will know as we are known. 1 Corinthians 13:12. We will be pure and whole in knowledge, wisdom and understanding. We will have no need of parables, rituals, symbols or illustrations. Things like circumcision, baptism and the Lord's Supper will no longer be necessary to help us perceive the deeper meaning of God's intentions, though He indicates we may continue in certain practices. Revelation 21:24-26. We do these things now to look forward to heaven but some things may continue to help us look back in remembrance. The Lord's Supper currently looks back in remembrance to Jesus' sacrificial death; the giving of His body and blood. 1 Corinthians 11:23-26. It's meaning to us is only as effective as we allow it to be when we fellowship with Christ during the communion ceremony. Imagine though, the power of the reality of sharing the Marriage Supper of the Lamb and He serving us personally, bodily, face to face. John 14:2-3.

God's Word will endure forever because He is pure truth. Psalm 119:89. Our future is one of bliss. We see His Word being more clearly revealed as time moves ahead. One day, when our faith is sight, His Word will finally be exposed in all His Glory. The uncovering of His perfect will and original intentions will bring us joy unspeakable. We will have the greatest AhHa moment imaginable. Have faith in Him and believe that. Until then we have the Bible, fellowship with one another and His Indwelling Holy Spirit to carry us. We have ceremonial forms of worship to provide pictures for us to look back and forward to help us comprehend the depth and height of His enduring love for us. Ephesians 3:14-21