

MALE CIRCUMCISION: Interpretation Debate on Judaism, The New Testament, and Health

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Abstract:

Male circumcision is often practiced across the world for a variety of reasons including health, medical necessity, beauty, tradition, or religion. Jews have practiced male circumcision since Abraham's time and continue until now. This practice is obligatory for Jewish males soon after they are born. In the New Testament, we read Paul talks about circumcision as the practice of Jewish belief, and for Christians, he said spiritual circumcision is the new law of the New Testament. Now, male circumcision is not only related to religion, and culture but connect to the health issue. The interpretation of religion, culture, and health become an interpretation debate over many years. There is Circumcision either improves or decreases male sexual function or satisfaction. It is critical to understand how male circumcision (MC), especially when performed in childhood, impacts men's sexual satisfaction and performance. The topic is also quite contentious. Our objective is to give a comprehensive study of the studies on the influence of male circumcision from Jewish, Christian, and health interpretations.

Keywords: Male circumcision, Judaism, New Testament, Health interpretation

INTRODUCTION

For millennia, opposing factions have been arguing whether the medical benefits of circumcision outweigh any potential psychological bad effects. Even though the topic of circumcising baby males at birth is well-known among Jews and Muslims, it is typically consigned to the realms of satire and humor, most notably in the context of medical ethics. While this problem may not be as divisive as end-of-life decisions and terminal care, it nonetheless impacts a sizable section of the world's population today. Male circumcision has been practiced for religious, cultural, and health reasons since around 4,500 BC. Authorities in health, culture, and religion have also raised reservations about it, particularly in terms of its relevance to modern society.¹

¹ David L Gollaher, *Circumcision: A History of the World's Most Controversial Surgery* (New York: Basic Books, 2000). 10.

Male circumcision eliminates 33-50% of penile skin as well as almost all penile fine touch neuroreceptors. There has been researched that has looked at whether circumcision impacts sexual feeling in the penis. Circumcision and sexual function research have largely been conducted on neonatally circumcised boys, with minimal difference in sexuality reported in these investigations. Two investigations on guys circumcised as adults for a variety of medical and religious reasons were inconclusive. Circumcision (from the Latin "*circumcidere*" meaning to cut around) is one of the most ancient and common surgical procedures worldwide.²

Circumcision is the oldest medical operation for which there is picture evidence, with paintings from the Paleolithic period depicting circumcised penises¹ and a relief from a 2182 BC Egyptian Tomb showing the surgery being done before joining priesthood (Sarcophagus of Anhk-ma-Hor in Saqqara, Egypt). Circumcision was not only practiced by religious leaders in Egypt, but also by the elite, nobility, and royalty as a purgative and sanitary practice. From this point in 400 BC, it was taken up by the Phoenicians and spread to other countries until the procedure was banned in Greece due to the belief that removing the foreskin was a flaw in the human body, so only slaves and their descendants participated in this practice.³

Wessel's article explains male circumcision in an Old Testament perspective.⁴ Paroschi examines the issue of circumcision in Galatians 5:2-6 in relation to faith and new life in Christ.⁵ Marco and Heil in a study entitled "Circumcision in childhood and male sexual function: a blessing or a curse?" explain that objectively evaluating the impact of circumcision on sexuality is still a challenge, because circumcision affects a wide variety of people who face sexuality differently due to their sociocultural and historical backgrounds. Therefore, individuals may view their circumcision status as a blessing or a curse, depending on the values and preferences of the various communities or social environments in which they find themselves. Based on this, the

² Dai Sik Kim and Myung-Geol Pang. The effect of male circumcision on sexuality. *Journal Compilation* 2006 BJU International. doi:10.1111/j.1464-410X.2006.06646.x.

³ El-Gohary, M. Circumcision: History, Philosophy and Facts. *Open Journal of Urology*, 5, (2015)114-117. doi: 10.4236/oju.2015.58018.

⁴ Ryan J Wessel. "Circumcision in the Old Testament." *Religious Studies Center* 20, no.3 (2019): 58-71. <https://rsc.byu.edu/vol-20-no-3-2019/circumcision-old-testament>.

⁵ Keldie S. Paroschi. *Faith and New Life in Christ: The Problem of Circumcision in Galatians 5:2-6*. Master's Theses. Berrien Springs, MI: Andrews University, 2018. <https://dx.doi.org/10.32597/theses/120>.

purpose of this study is to examine the debate on male circumcision from the interpretations of Judaism, the New Testament, and Health.⁶

A literature study is done to assess how much is known about a certain subject. Researcher used to develop research agendas, find research gaps, and just to debate a certain topic. In this research, a literature review serves as the foundation for developing a fresh conceptual framework or theory, and it may be helpful when attempting to chart the evolution of a certain study area through time. Researcher using the semi-systematic or narrative review technique is made for subjects that have been understood differently, researched by numerous groups of researchers across several disciplines, and that obstruct a thorough systematic review process.⁷ Researchers summarize the research findings between Judaism outcomes, New Testament outcomes and Health debate in the area circumcision, and finally for people today outcomes.

DISCUSSION

History of Circumcision

Circumcision is a practice that is done by different groups of people. Some people believe that it is a religious ceremony, while others believe that it is a medical treatment. There is proof that it was a regular practice on the Arabian Peninsula, from whence two groups of people moved into what is now Iraq in the fourth millennium BCE. These were the Sumerians, who were the ancestors of the Hebrews, and then, a little later, the Semites. Some people chose to stay, while others traveled as far north as Assyria (the present-day Kurdish area of Northern Iraq and Southeast Turkey).⁸

The first group built a great city in Mesopotamia called Ur. Archaeologists are currently studying it in detail because it was a significant metropolis of the non-Semitic Sumerians, who had moved there from farther south between 3000 and 2500 BCE. It was in Mesopotamia, the rich region between the rivers Tigris and Euphrates, 220 miles from Baghdad and 120 miles north of Basra. At the time, Ur was a seaport well situated

⁶ Beatriz Bañuelos Marco and Jessica Leigh García Heil. "Circumcision in childhood and male sexual function: a blessing or a curse?" *International Journal of Impotence Research* 33 (2021): 139–148. <https://doi.org/10.1038/s41443-020-00354-y>.

⁷ Hannah Snyder, "Literature Review as a Research Methodology: An Overview and Guidelines," *Journal of Business Research* 104 (November 1, 2019): 333–39, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jbusres.2019.07.039>.

⁸ D. Doyle. Ritual Male Circumcision: A Brief History. Paper. Royal College of Physicians of Edinburgh. 2005; 35:279–285. https://www.rcpe.ac.uk/sites/default/files/doyle_circumcision.pdf

for commerce and immigration from Arabia and the Middle East. It was also considerably closer to the head of the Persian Gulf than it is now. In those days, Ur was located considerably closer to the head of the Persian Gulf than it is now and was 160 miles from Babylon, the capital city with an evolved and complex civilization. This made it an ideal harbor for trade and immigration from Arabia and the Far East. It is possible that the immigrants brought their practices and products with them, including circumcision.⁹

Some people contend that Abraham, and later the Jews, adopted a ritual of passage into manhood, complete with obligations. According to the Jewish practice of circumcision was originally a blood sacrifice like the Syrian practice of sacrificing hair as an offering. Even today, when Masai or Zulu boys in Kenya or Lemba or AmaXhosa boys in Southern Africa undergo circumcision, blood from the surgery is symbolically smeared on the young man's forehead. For the Jews, it evolved into a symbol of a covenant, a sacred connection, with their God rather than a rite of passage into adulthood. It was adjusted to be conducted on the eighth day of a boy's eighth month instead of when he was a teenager or right before marriage.¹⁰

Some people believe that Abraham instituted circumcision, while others think that it came with the Israelites when they were taken captive in Egypt around 1200 BCE. There is evidence that Egyptians were performing circumcision as early as 2300 BCE, and a painting from Ankhmahor, Saqqarah, Egypt (dated in the ninth Dynasty, 2345-2182 BCE)⁷ clearly shows that adults are being circumcised. In addition, a "coffin text" from the Intermediate Period (about 2400 BCE) or Middle Kingdom (2250-1580 BCE) describes a man who underwent circumcision alongside 120 other men. So far, there is no concrete evidence to support the Biblical story of the Israelites' stay in Egypt.¹¹

Some have emphasized its "external" significance as an ethnic identifier separating the Israelites from "other" people, while others have highlighted its "internal" role, such as during pregnancy and marriage ceremonies. However, circumcision was a widespread practice in the ancient Near East, and it is generally

⁹ D. Doyle. Ritual Male Circumcision.

¹⁰ Faust, A. The Bible, Archaeology, and the Practice of Circumcision in Israelite and Philistine Societies. *Journal of Biblical Literature*, 134(2), (2015).273–290.

<https://doi.org/10.15699/jbl.1342.2015.2936>

¹¹ D. Doyle. Ritual Male Circumcision.

agreed that if it was used as a racial identifier, it was mostly used against "foreign" Philistines who did not perform it. It is interesting to note that regardless of their age, source, or literary genre, every scripture that describes the Philistines as (uncircumcised) places this fact during the pre- (Iron First) era. No source, of any kind, uses this derogatory term to refer to the Philistines during the royal era (Iron II). Additional historical evidence supports this apparent dichotomy. Additional historical and archaeological evidence, direct and indirect, confirms this stark difference, which corresponds to previous transformations in the Palestinian civilization.¹²

Judaism

In Judaism, the Covenant of Circumcision—the *B'rit Milah* is one of the most universally observed commandments. The commandment to circumcise was a covenant made with Abraham and is recorded in Genesis 17:10–14, reading: 'And God spoke to Abraham saying: ... This is my covenant which you shall keep between me and you and thy seed after you — every male child among you shall be circumcised.' Circumcision serves as an external physical symbol of the eternal bond between God and the Jewish people, according to the biblical interpretation of this law. Whether or not a person has generally observed Judaism's precepts, the faith stipulates that being uncircumcised carries with it the punishment of spiritual excision or *kareit*. *B'rit milah*, (literally, "covenant of circumcision"), also called a *b'ris*, refers to a religious ritual through which male babies are formally welcomed into the Jewish people. According to Jewish tradition, a parent should circumcise a son and offer a threefold blessing for the child: a life enriched by Torah, the wedding canopy (*chuppah*), and good deeds.¹³

Children are typically circumcised on their eighth day of life, but this can only happen during the day. If the child's health is a concern, Jewish law stipulates that the circumcision can wait until seven days after the youngster is declared well enough to undergo the surgery. Circumcision may be performed on Jewish holy days, such as Shabbat and Yom Kippur, although it may not be delayed for any reason other than the child's health. *B'rit milah* is the oldest religious rite in Judaism, dating back almost four thousand years. It is first mentioned in Genesis 17 when God commands Abraham:

¹² Faust, A. The Bible, Archaeology, and the Practice of Circumcision.

¹³ Anwar, Mohammed Saqib et al. "Circumcision: a religious obligation or 'the cruellest of cuts'?" *The British journal of general practice: the journal of the Royal College of General Practitioners* vol. 60,570 (2010): 59-61. doi:10.3399/bjgp10X482194

“Every male among you shall be circumcised. You shall circumcise the flesh of your foreskin, and that shall be the sign of the covenant between Me and you.¹⁴

Circumcision is a way of showing that you belong to God and that you are doing what is right. If you didn't have circumcision, then God would not have shown himself to Abraham. Job says the same thing: "But if I could behold God from my flesh, I would see him without the veil." That is, I would see him without the symbol of his protection, the foreskin. Gen. 17:11, 14, 23, 24-25; Lev. 12:3.¹⁵

A Mohel, a devout, observant Jew trained in circumcision methods as well as in the pertinent Jewish law and tradition, must execute the actual circumcision. Regardless matter whether a rabbi is officiating, any other person's circumcision cannot be considered legal. This is since the removal of the foreskin is a religious ceremony that requires the participation of a competent religious person. The process of following this ceremony:¹⁶

- a. The *kvatterin* (godmother) takes the baby from the mother and brings it to the *kvatter* (godfather).
- b. The *kvatter* then enters with the child and everyone stands and says *Baruch haba*, “Blessed be he who comes.” This constitutes a welcome to both the infant and the prophet Elijah.
- c. The father of the infant then recites a prescribed reading indicating his acceptance of the responsibility for bringing his son into the covenant, the *b'rit*.
- d. The *mohel* recites the following blessing: *Baruch atah Adonai, Eloheinu Melech haolam, asher kid'shanu b'mitzvotav v'tzivanu al hamilah*. “Blessed are You, *Adonai* our God, Ruler of the universe, who has sanctified us through Your mitzvot and ordained circumcision.”
- e. The *mohel* performs the circumcision in three steps: *milah*, the cutting of the foreskin; *p'riah*, the removal of the underlying membrane; *m'tzitzah*, drawing

¹⁴ Jacques Derrida, “Shibboleth,” in *Midrash and Literature*, ed. G. Hartman and S. Budick, New Haven, (Conn.: Yale University Press, 1986) 307-47.

¹⁵ A. Marmorstein, *The Doctrine of Merits in Old Rabbinical Literature* (New York: Ktav, 1968) 16

¹⁶ Elliot R. Wolfson, “Circumcision, Vision of God, and Textual Interpretation: From Midrashic Trope to Mystical Symbol.” *History of Religions* 27, no. 2 (1987): 189–215.
<http://www.jstor.org/stable/1062668>.

the blood from the wound. *Milah* is traditionally performed with a knife. Today, many *mohalim* use a special surgical clamp, which facilitates the operation.

- f. During the circumcision, the father recites the following blessing: *Baruch atah Adonai, Eloheinu Melech haolam asher kid'shanu b'mitzvotav v'tzivanu l'hachniso b'vrivot shel Avraham avinu*. "Blessed are You, *Adonai* our God, Ruler of the universe, who has sanctified us through Your mitzvot and has commanded us to bring our sons into the covenant of Abraham our father."
- g. All those present recite a prayer expressing the hope that the baby will grow up into a life of study, marriage, and good deeds.
- h. The *mohel* then chants the blessing for the wine and a prayer that gives the baby his Hebrew name. The godfather sips the wine, and a few drops are also placed on the baby's lips. This concludes the traditional ceremony, although it is quite common to add songs, readings, and poetry. A festive meal traditionally follows.

Circumcision is an inscription, a notation, a marker, not only an incision of the male sex organ.' This marking, in turn, serves as a semi-logical seal, representing the divine imprint on the human body.' The physical opening is therefore the seal, which corresponds to an ontological opening inside God in its symbolic valence. As a result, circumcision supplies the Zohar's author with a typology of writing/reading that is also a typology of mystical experience interpreted in a sexual vein. In the end, the opening of circumcision is converted in the Zohar into a metaphor for the labor of interpretation.¹⁷

The appropriateness of this symbolization stems from the fact that the visionary's relationship to the Shechinah is precisely the relationship of the critic or exegete to the text generated by the semi-logical seal. This relationship is both interpretive and imaginative. Through exegesis, what was buried, hidden, and closed—in other words, esoteric—becomes open, exposed, and manifest—in other words, exoteric.¹⁸ The scriptural command to circumcise a kid (Gen. 17:10-14, Lev. 12:3, cf. Exod. 12:48), and the customary practice that follows, is plainly and unmistakably

¹⁷ Elliot R. Wolfson, "*Sefer ha-Rimmon: Critical Edition and Introductory Study*," Ph.D. diss., (Brandeis University, 1986) 1-46.

¹⁸ ¹⁸ Elliot R. Wolfson, "*Sefer ha-Rimmon: Critical Edition and Introductory Study*."

oriented to the male infant. Strabo of Amaseia's works contains the documentary proof.¹⁹

Circumcision is mentioned in Genesis 17 as an infant ceremony and covenant mark; in Genesis 34 and Exodus 4.24-26, it is mentioned as an adult rite related to marriage and reproduction. This work tries a historical reconstruction of the ritual tradition's progression, from general West Semitic marriage rite de passage to particularly Jewish newborn ceremony of social integration, through an attempted literary history of the motif.²⁰ It appears logical to conclude that this is the meaning of the Midrashic statement: God appeared to Abraham because of his circumcision. The divine appearance necessitates some preceding deed, a *miswah*, which establishes a connection between man and God. After all, circumcision is the sign of God's covenant with the (male) offspring of Israel.' So, by circumcision, one merits to stand in the presence of God, or, to put it another way, the appearance of God is the recompense for the earlier act of following the divine decree.²¹

New Testament

Modern ecumenical talks and liturgical reform have renewed interest in Christian initiation practices. In the economy of salvation, the Reformed churches have long argued that baptism replaces circumcision. Circumcision interpretations in early Christian and patristic literature would imply a change, or at the very least a subtlety, to that perspective.²² Ambrose, as other writers cited below, gives separate interpretations of the baptisms (washings) in the old covenant and of circumcision: 'Just as many kinds of baptisms first took place because the true sacrament of baptism in spirit and water which would redeem the whole man was to follow, so circumcision of many first had to take place because the circumcision of the Lord's passion was to follow.'²³

¹⁹ G. W. E. Nickelsburg, "Stories of Biblical and Early Post-biblical Times," in *Jewish Writings of the Second Temple Period*, ed. M. E. Stone (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1984) 73

²⁰ Wyatt, N. Circumcision and Circumstance: Male Genital Mutilation in Ancient Israel and Ugarit. *Journal for the Study of the Old Testament*, 33(4), 2009.405-431.
<https://doi.org/10.1177/0309089209105687>

²¹ J. Neusner, *Genesis Rabbah: The Judaic Commentary to the Book of Genesis*, (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1985) 178-179

²² Ferguson, E. Spiritual Circumcision in Early Christianity. *Scottish Journal of Theology*, 41(4), 1988. 485-497. doi:10.1017/S0036930600031768

²³ Fathers of the Church 26 (Washington: Catholic Univ. of America, 1954) 90-100.

The passage continues, 'Anyone with even the slightest knowledge of sacred scripture knows that the sacrament of circumcision was a figure of baptism (Col. 2.10–13). The circumcision wrought by hand, given to Abraham, is a likeness of the circumcision not wrought by hand, which is now made in Christ.' At the same time, Paul minimized circumcision's covenantal importance, claiming that Abraham received the law of circumcision as a recompense for his righteousness (Rom: 4.11). From a purely Jewish perspective, this reading is fully defensible: the Torah is a gift that one must earn. Paul deduces from this that virtuous living individuals can claim Abraham as their ancestor without having to undergo circumcision. Paul stripped circumcision of its covenantal significance while making a relationship between it and Torah observance. He did not want rituals to be used to cement the bond with God. And he surely did not want his students to switch to Judaism, whose commandments were so minute that they could barely be observed Paul's circumcision equation.²⁴

We've previously seen that Paul was certain on this point: A Jew who fails to respect the smallest details of the Law is doomed. However, Paul desired that Christianity be liberated from the defined system of responsibilities that Jewish law symbolizes. Being a Jew, on the other hand, had value, particularly among Romans. How can that value be upheld when the judicial system it represents is dismissed? There appears to be at least one answer, which is to transplant the entire system of Jewish responsibilities to another dimension, which is inwardness/hiddenness in Paul's mental universe. Three concepts point to this dimension: heart (*kardia*), inwardness (*to krypton*), and spirit (*pneuma*).²⁵

In Colosse, Paul assured his gentile converts that they had been circumcised in Christ (Colossians 2:11). We have been granted completeness in him because he is our righteousness, and we are in him (verse 10). We can be considered righteous because he is righteous. As a result, if we are putting off our evil nature — if we have repented and begun to live holy lives — we are as good as circumcised. Our circumcision is thus performed by Christ, not by people. How so? By way of baptism (verse 12). That is how we publicly declare our confidence in Jesus as our Savior, that our old life has come to

²⁴ Ralph Bisschops. *Metaphor in Religious Transformation: 'Circumcision of the Heart' in Paul of Tarsus, Religion, and the Human Mind* Chapter: 12, (Oxford University Press. 2017)
DOI:10.1093/oso/9780190636647.003.0012

²⁵ Ralph Bisschops. *Metaphor in Religious Transformation*.

an end, and that we — now circumcised in the heart — plan to live in his service from now on.²⁶

Galatians 5:2-6 shows that Paul's theology is broader than just circumcision. The conditionality in verses 2-4 shows that the consequences of circumcision are spelled out in terms of how damaging it can be to the Galatians' present experience with God (through Jesus), instead of how they enter God's people. This supports the findings from the literary analysis. Paul also emphasizes the importance of sanctification in verses 5-6. He argues that circumcision would be a way for the Galatians to grow in righteousness through means other than faith - which would threaten their status as already legitimate sons of God. Instead, believers wait for faith and the sanctifying work of the Spirit in the present to give them evidence of the reality of the cross and assurance of the realization of the eschatological promise of final redemption.²⁷

Health Interpretation Debate

The use of circumcision for medical or health purposes is still a subject of discussion. Nowadays, many parents circumcise their sons for religious or nonreligious reasons. "Circumcision does not affect penile sensitivity." "Study reveals no difference in sensitivity between circumcised and non-circumcised males. The study found that the average foreskin of a small, non-representative sample of Canadian males was more sensitive to gentle touch and moderate warmth, but somewhat less responsive to outright pain than other sections of the penis."²⁸

The current study aimed to examine the hypothesis that increased sexual dysfunction occurs in circumcised boys utilizing a comprehensive evaluation of the literature to inform patients, parents, and decision-makers regarding male circumcision. The researchers wanted to see if circumcision affected male sexual function, which was defined as perceived and self-reported erectile dysfunction, discomfort during sexual activity, early ejaculation, difficulty attaining orgasm, sexual drive, penile sensitivity, or

²⁶ Circumcision "the sign of the Abrahamic promise", https://www.apttoteach.org/Theology/Salvation/pdf/721_Circumcision.pdf

²⁷ Paroschi, Keldie S. "Faith and New Life in Christ: The Problem of Circumcision in Galatians 5:2-6," Master's Theses. 2018. <https://digitalcommons.andrews.edu/theses/120>

²⁸ Brian D. Earp. Circumcision-and-sexual-function-bad-science-reporting-misleads-parents. 2016. <https://blogs.bmj.com/medical-ethics/2016/04/22/circumcision-and-sexual-function-bad-science-reporting-misleads-parents/>

sexual satisfaction. The second purpose was to determine if medical circumcision or age at circumcision influenced perceived male sexual function.²⁹

American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) says the benefits of circumcision outweigh the risks. However, the AAP doesn't recommend routine circumcision for all male newborns. The AAP leaves the circumcision decision up to parents and supports the use of anesthetics for infants who have the procedure. The risks of not being circumcised, however, are not only rare but avoidable with proper care of the penis. Circumcision might not be an option if certain blood-clotting disorders are present. Also, circumcision might not be appropriate for premature babies who still require medical care in the hospital nursery or for babies born with abnormalities of the penis. Circumcision doesn't affect fertility, nor is circumcision generally thought to enhance or detract from sexual pleasure for men or their partners.³⁰

On the side, Krueger found the results of the study do back up this committee's recommendations. Investigation into the link between cleanliness and penile cancer was not possible, but it was discovered that maintaining good hygiene with foreskin retraction considerably reduced the incidence of phimosis, adhesions, smegma buildup, and inflammation.³¹ In terms of medicine, the foreskin serves three primary purposes: protection, immunity, and erection. The foreskin, which is essential for a normal erection, is more than simply penile skin; it is a specialized tissue that is densely packed with blood vessels, intensely innervated, and specially equipped with stretch receptors. The intact male's sexual reaction depends heavily on the foreskin. Additionally, it offers a natural lubricant that, among other things, prevents STDs, viral infections, and bacterial invasion. The foreskin serves a crucial purpose in protecting the glans in newborns who are incontinent. Contrarily, having a circumcised male can also have advantages including a lower incidence of penile cancer, HIV/AIDS, and urinary tract infections. On one hand, circumcision can result in the issues mentioned above, as well

²⁹ Daniel Mønsted Shabanzadeh, Signe Düring, Cai Frimodt-Møller. Male circumcision does not result in inferior perceived male sexual function – a systematic review. *Danish medical JOURNAL*. Dan Med J 63/7 July 2016. <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/27399981/>

³⁰ Circumcision Male. <https://www.mayoclinic.org/tests-procedures/circumcision/about/pac-20393550>

³¹ Heather Krueger, Lucy Osborn. Effects of Hygiene Among the Uncircumcised. *the Journal of Family Practice*, vol. 22, no. 4. 1986, 353-355, https://cdn.mdedge.com/files/s3fs-public/jfp-archived-issues/1986-volume_22-23/JFP_1986-04_v22_i4_effects-of-hygiene-among-the-uncircumcis.pdf

as lacerations, skin loss, skin bridges, chordee, meatitis, stenosis, urinary retention, glans necrosis, penile loss, hemorrhage, sepsis, gangrene, meningitis, and even death.³²

Clark explains that there is conflicting medical data about the benefits and risks of neonatal circumcision for newborn men. The legal question of hospitals' and doctors' possible responsibility is still open. But since people are looking for moral clarity, the ethical aspect of the debate has become more urgent. The surgery should be postponed until the child is an adult and able to make his own informed decision because it is not therapeutic and is not backed by strong medical evidence.³³ Child abuse refers to bodily harm that is done to a child by another person other than accidentally. It would seem that [male] circumcision is properly included in the definition of child abuse since it is not medically necessary, has no discernible physiological benefits, is painful because it is done without anesthesia, leaves a wound in which urinary salts burn, carries a high risk of surgical complications, including death, and deforms the penis.³⁴

CONCLUSION

Male circumcised is the oldest surgery in human history, even come along side with female circumcised. For Jewish, male circumcised is the part agreement they have as chosen people and a sign of living for God. Circumcised is a symbolic act and metaphor covenant for what God did to Jewish people. Symbols of covenant through circumcision can't be separated from Jewish life. While New Testament as Paul talks much about being circumcised, he is not against Jewish belief, but he seems to speak about relationships God likes to work with faith for a man not by works. He uses the metaphor circumcised not physically but spiritually (heart); this issue is not a matter of eschatology and salvation. Nowadays, it's more probable that people will choose to have their children circumcised emotionally than logically. The motivation for the process appears to be a combination of religion, tradition, societal pressures, cultural views, and aesthetics. One might argue that the justification of male circumcision for

³² M. Milos. "Circumcision: Male—Effects on Human Sexuality," in V. L. Bullough and B. Bullough, eds., *Human Sexuality: An Encyclopedia*, (New York City: Garland Publishing, 1994) 119-121.

³³ Fr. Peter A. Clark. To circumcise or not to circumcise? Health Progress. 2006
https://www.chausa.org/docs/default-source/health-progress/to-circumcise-or-not-to-circumcise-pdf.pdf?sfvrsn=11e53af2_0

³⁴ Peter W. Adler, Robert Van Howe, Travis Wisdom & Felix Daase. (2020) Is circumcision a fraud? *Cornell journal of law and public policy* [Vol. 30:45. <https://community.lawschool.cornell.edu/wp-content/uploads/2020/12/Adler-et-al-final.pdf>

cultural reasons serves as a model for the rationale of female circumcision. It's easy to start down the slippery path of defending one of these activities as socially acceptable by citing its cultural acceptability. As the debate continues for ages, the importance of promoting the dignity and respect of every human person is a social responsibility; it is a moral imperative as well.

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