

German postal service issue circumcision stamp amid heated debate

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The German postal service is set to issue a stamp reminding Germans that **2,000 years ago Jesus underwent circumcision as an eight-day-old baby**, a ritual religious practice that a German court has controversially banned in part of the country.

The stamp, marking the 200th anniversary of the German Bible Society on 11 September, shows a page from the New Testament that includes a description of Jesus being circumcised.

The Bible Society says the stamp's design was finalised well before the heated debate over circumcision began, but it does not intend to delay the date of issue.

The 85-cent stamp bears a passage from the Gospel of Saint Luke that includes the words, **"On the eighth day, when it was time to circumcise the child, he was named Jesus."**

A court in Cologne, ruling in the case of a Muslim boy taken to a doctor with bleeding after circumcision, said in June that the procedure should not be carried out on young boys, but could be practised on older males who gave consent.

The ruling, which applies only to the Cologne area, incensed Jews and Muslims and led to an emotional debate about the rights of children and families and about religious freedom in a country that is very sensitive to charges of intolerance because of its Nazi past.

Jewish religious practice requires boys to be circumcised from eight days old, while **for Muslims**, circumcision is required but the age at which it is carried out varies according to family, country and branch of Islam.

"We don't want to add fuel to the fire," said Stefan Wittig, a Lutheran pastor who works for the Bible Society.

Reuters