

Doctrine of Circumcision

Romans 2:26-29 (KJV)

26 Therefore if the uncircumcision keep the righteousness of the law, shall not his uncircumcision be counted for circumcision? 27 And shall not uncircumcision which is by nature, if it fulfil the law, judge thee, who **by the letter** and **circumcision** dost transgress the law? 28 For he is **not** a Jew, which is one **outwardly**; neither is that circumcision, which is outward in the flesh: 29 But he **is** a Jew, which is one **inwardly**; and **circumcision is that of the heart, in the spirit, and not in the letter**; whose praise is not of men, but of God.

Colossians 2:9-13 (KJV)

9 For in him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily. 10 And **ye are complete in him**, which is the head of all principality and power: 11 **In whom also ye are circumcised with the circumcision made without hands, in putting off the body of the sins of the flesh by the circumcision of Christ**: 12 Buried with him in baptism, wherein also ye are risen with *him* through the faith of the operation of God, who hath raised him from the dead. 13 And you, **being dead in your sins and the uncircumcision of your flesh**, hath he quickened together with him, having forgiven you all trespasses;

Circumcision wasn't a covenant of the law. Circumcision was a covenant of faith. Faith both preceded and superseded the Law. Therefore, circumcision wasn't a result of the law. The Law was a result of circumcision.

Paul says that they were *not* circumcised in their flesh, yet they were quickened (made alive) and forgiven. How? By a process that began with a *different* circumcision - New Testament circumcision.

Again, circumcision was a part of the covenant of faith, not the Law. Scripture tells us that the law was "added". Why? Because of transgressions. Because Israel couldn't/wouldn't keep the covenant of circumcision *nor* of faith. It was added as a clear template to show them the sinfulness of their sins - when and where they went off track.

Galatians 3:19 (KJV)

19 **Wherefore then serveth the law?** It was **added because** of transgressions, **till** the seed should come to whom the promise was made; and it was ordained by angels in the hand of a mediator.

The Law *did* have a purpose and it served that purpose *until* the Anointed One came that was promised, whereupon, as Paul so eloquently tells us in Hebrews, were built **better** covenants. This included the covenant of circumcision.

This should have come as no surprise to the children of Israel nor the first-century church - it was foretold. Consider: What was the ultimate covenant of circumcision? It wasn't the simply severance of the foreskin, it was the circumcision of the HEART. The cutting away or circumcising was symbolic as much as it was literal. It was a 'putting away' of something that there was no going back from. Symbolically, it was the "cutting away" of those lusts and fleshly tendencies of the heart of man; his evil desires and inclinations. If Israel would have kept this then there would have been **no need** for the Law.

1 Timothy 1:9a (KJV)

9 Knowing this, that the law is **not** made for a righteous man, but for the **lawless** and **disobedient**, for the ungodly and for sinners, for unholy and profane,

Indeed, the law is virtually done away with by the "circumcision of the heart" in the Holy Ghost. As all understand, the moral law remains to keep God's people from falling into wickedness and idolatry, but if the people of God maintained their "first" covenant the law wouldn't be necessary. The fact that circumcision was more than physical cutting is even supported in the Old Testament.

Ezekiel 44:9 (KJV)

9 Thus saith the Lord GOD; No stranger, **uncircumcised in heart, nor uncircumcised in flesh**, shall enter into my sanctuary, of any stranger that *is* among the children of Israel.

Circumcision, as established, **was a statement of consecration and intent with the body**. Without going into details, it was a covenant about the morality of man. It was a permanent change to the *flesh* of a man as a **sign and reminder** that his body was dedicated to God and God's purpose. In the New Testament, we see the comparison, more than once, when it came to the purpose of the physical body as the temple of God against the sin of fornication - the various sexual sins of the flesh. Thus, the covenant of circumcision cannot be distinguished from the covenant of sexual and moral purity - in all or any forms.

1 Corinthians 6:13 & 18-20 (KJV)

13 Meats for the belly, and the belly for meats: but God shall destroy both it and them. **Now the body is not for fornication, but for the Lord; and the Lord for the body.**

18 Flee **fornication**. Every sin that a man doeth is without the body; **but he that committeth fornication sinneth against his own body**. 19 What? know ye not that your body is the **temple** of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own? 20 For ye are bought with a price: therefore **glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's**.

We could analyze this to make emphasis, but the Amplified Bible dissolves the need for scrutiny and just says it outright.

1 Corinthians 6:18 (AMP+)

18 Run away from sexual immorality [in any form, whether thought or behavior, whether visual or written]. Every other sin that a man commits is outside the body, but the one who is sexually immoral sins against his own body.

“...in any form, whether thought or behavior, whether visual or written...”

In other words, it was more than *just* about the body...it was also about the *inner man*! So, we see again that the covenant of circumcision wasn't about a person's permanent physical condition after the eighth day from birth, or should they be so unlucky, some other day beyond that. It was about the promise made to keep yourself [and your children] consecrated to the purposes of God.

Circumcision was a 'severance' alright, but it wasn't, nor was it intended to be, just a severance of a piece of skin. **That part was intended to be the 'sign' of the other.** The severance of the things of the heart of man. Those that misunderstood the true purpose of circumcision, either didn't fulfill its purpose or didn't consider it important.

This translates into any age and certainly to those that we deal with in trying to get people to Heaven. The people that give the most trouble in the church through the years are those that never “sever” their worldly ambitions, fleshly desires, and temporal lusts from their heart **not** the ones who lack a medical procedure. They never fully dedicate their *body* as the temple of God. They never do this because they are not truly circumcised in the heart.

Circumcision isn't a temporary condition or commitment. It is permanent. It is final.

~~~Never go back~~~

Fully committing to living for God is the only way to truly live for God. Yet, there are still those that go through the outward motions of commitment or repentance, but don't fully commit by a full consecration of the heart. This unbalanced emphasis is nothing new. The Pharisees, scribes, Sadducees, and lawyers of Jesus' day emphasized the outward, but left the inside unattended.

### **Matthew 23:25-28 (KJV)**

25 Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! **for ye make clean the outside of the cup and of the platter**, but **within** they are full of extortion and excess.

26 Thou blind Pharisee, **cleanse first that which is within the cup and platter, that the outside of them may be clean also.**

27 Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye are like unto whited sepulchres, which indeed appear beautiful outward, but are within full of dead men's bones, and of all uncleanness.

28 Even so ye also outwardly appear righteous unto men, but within ye are full of hypocrisy and iniquity.

He wasn't saying *not* to clean the outward, He was saying "cleanse *first* that which is within..." As most all have heard or preached, the process of cleaning the inside, spills over until the same soap used on the inside also cleans the outside.

Jesus confronted the outside versus the inside dichotomy everywhere He went with the professionally religious, trying to teach them that you couldn't have one right without the other sharing the same condition.

These types of people are with us yet today. Those that know how to look good on the outside, but never actually *change* on the inside. Compliance with the letter of the law is then how they have to live. They **HAVE TO** memorize the rules because they are not engraved upon their heart and the disobedient and sinful nature is not 'cut out' of them.

### **James 1:21 (KJV)**

21 Wherefore lay apart all filthiness and superfluity of naughtiness, and receive with meekness the **engrafted word**, which is able to save your souls.

As Elder Allen Picklesimer preached, "Something has to be cut off, so something can be grafted in..." The process of grafting is the removal of one aspect of a plant or biological matter and replacing it with **another** of the same sort for the purpose of **betterment**. It is *not* a mutilation or marring for mutilation's sake. It is an engineered improvement. Whether it is a skin graft, bone graft, or simply grafting in a vine or a tree - it is done for the express purpose of elevating to a better plane of existence or production. The simplest understanding is a plant. You cut off the branch in order to graft another one onto the tree.

God's way and my ways can't both fit in the same heart. God has to cut something out to graft something in. Some people will never let God cut things out of their heart, thus, they NEVER get the principles of the Word IN THEIR HEART!!! They, and sometimes we as frustrated preachers, are always trying to hang the teaching, precepts, principles of God's Word on the outside, because there is no place for it on the inside. They haven't allowed the Spirit of God to cut out what needs replaced first. (Much worse, the preaching wasn't sharp or pointed enough to do the job.)

These people are very likely not going to be saved, except by the sheer and abundant mercy of God, because they have missed the point of the "rules and regulations". It isn't keeping the standards of the church that saves them, it is letting God *change the standards of their heart* that saves them...Allowing God to change their "nature".

There is a second aspect to circumcision. It also represented something else that was *very* important and cannot be overlooked. Again, while trying to keep things proper, circumcision was just as much about what would come from the organ effected as much, perhaps more, as the individual who was circumcised. The evidence is clear on this matter.

God didn't just bless Abraham because *he* was a good man. God didn't *just* make a covenant with him, but with his *seed* after him. In other words, Abraham entered into a covenant of God that not only would *he* belong to God, but his **children** that followed after him, would also belong to God. The fruit that was born from his commitment and covenant to God.

### **Genesis 17:9-11 (KJV)**

9 And God said unto Abraham, Thou shalt keep my covenant therefore, thou, **and thy seed after thee** in their generations. 10 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. 11 And ye shall circumcise the flesh of your foreskin; and it shall be a token of the covenant betwixt me and you.

### **Genesis 17:19 (KJV)**

19 And God said, Sarah thy wife shall bear thee a son indeed; and thou shalt call his name Isaac: and **I will establish my covenant with him for an everlasting covenant, and with his seed after him.**

### **Genesis 18:19 (KJV)**

19 For I know him, that he will **command** his **children** and his household after him, and **they shall keep the way of the LORD**, to do justice and judgment; that the LORD may bring upon Abraham that which he hath spoken of him.

The word 'token' in Genesis 17:11 means numerous things not dissimilar, but each adds to the overall understanding: *sign, signal, a distinguishing mark, remembrance, warning, standard, proof, etc.* It also means: *evidence*. Evidence of what? Of a covenant made between two parties; God and man. But if we look even further back into ancient Hebrew the original writings were the symbols of an 'ox' and a 'cross', the meaning being 'plow mark' or as the dictionary explains:

*"Combined these pictures represent "an ox moving toward a mark". When plowing a field with oxen, the plowman drives the oxen toward a distant mark in order to keep the furrow straight."*

God *always* sets a mark on things that belong to Him.

Parallel to this is the fact that you have to aim at something to keep from wandering.

Wherefore we have Paul's admonition:

### **Philippians 3:14 (KJV)**

14 **I press toward the mark** for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.

We also understand that the literal definition of sin is '*missing the mark*'.

Thus, it is this covenant with God that we use to keep our lives straight; the covenant of moral purity and dedication of our body for God's purpose in every aspect. **That any deviation from God's commandments indicates something askew in our hearts and necessitates a course correction.** Again, it is the covenant with our children also. This is the 'mark' by which we see the direction of future generations.

So, circumcision is about the decisions of the heart.

Consider the following:

### **Numbers 14:3-4 (KJV)**

3 And wherefore hath the LORD brought us unto this land, to fall by the sword, that our wives and **our children should be a prey**? were it not better for us to return into Egypt? 4 And they said one to another, Let us make a captain, and let us return into Egypt.

### **Joshua 5:4-5 (KJV)**

4 And **this is the cause why Joshua did circumcise**: All the people that came out of Egypt, that were males, even all the men of war, died in the wilderness by the way, after they came out of Egypt. 5 Now all the people that came out were circumcised: but all the people that were born in the wilderness by the way as they came forth out of Egypt, them they had not circumcised.

### **Joshua 5:7 (KJV)**

7 And **their children**, whom he raised up in their stead, them Joshua circumcised: for they were uncircumcised, because they had not circumcised them by the way.

### **Deuteronomy 1:37 (KJV)**

37 Also the LORD was angry with me for your sakes, saying, Thou also shalt not go in thither. 39 Moreover **your little ones**, which ye said should be a prey, and your children, which in that day had no knowledge between good and evil, they shall go in thither, and unto them will I give it, and they shall possess it.

### **Hebrews 3:19 (KJV)**

19 So we see that they could not enter in because of unbelief.

Even a casual reader can see the connections made between:

- Israel's lack of faith and trust in God.
- Unbelief that God could actually perform His own word.
- Their continual backsliding into idolatry.

- Their feigned concern, or concern rooted in the same ugly fear and unbelief for their children. Ultimately, it was an accusation and insult to God.
- Their unwillingness, due to these unresolved HEART issues, **to enter their children into the covenant. (In other words, give God possession of their children. Why would you trust someone with your children that you don't trust yourself?)**

All these aspects, while seemingly separate, were not and worked together to produce the same unfortunate results. How do we know that they were unwilling to give God the possession of their children; that their kids became the bargaining chip on the table with God?

They did NOT circumcise them.

They did not enter into covenant with God, that they AND their children would belong to God forever. It was one thing to make a promise to God for themselves while they were in Egypt, but when they saw the actual requirements come to fruition in the giving of the Law, they refrained from circumcising their children.

It is easy to make promises to God when you are in Egypt (jail, the crackhouse, overdosing, caught in your sin, etc.), but once on your way to the Promise of God, people must beware that they don't suddenly change their mind now that full commitment is required of their children.

I.e. "God if you will get me out of this dreadful place, I will serve you and raise a family for your glory." Then when God does it, we see people fall by the wayside and not fulfill their promise from Egypt claiming their children are the prey (suffering) due to the path towards the Promise. How many times have we seen people withhold their children from God, the church and the preacher, to either only lose them to the world or they themselves never 'enter into the promise', but their children do? This multi-generational covenant is a BIG deal with people. They are often willing to commit themselves, but don't want to allow their children to fully belong to God.

Perhaps if God's people would have FIRST circumcised their children, entering into that covenant with God, then they might have entered into the Promised Land. Since faith is where they failed time and again, it seems to follow that they weren't really prepared to enter into a covenant of faith, thus, they didn't circumcise. Circumcision is of faith and its absence indicates a lack of faith. **A lack of faith is the very reason they couldn't take the Promised Land.**



So, with their children, we see it wasn't until 43 years later that they were circumcised. What a waste of time and effort!!! This covers those born before and *after* Kadesh-Barnea, further indicating their attitude towards God. They were unwilling to dedicate their children to a God whom they distrusted, were angry and bitter at, and whom had judged them for their unbelief. They didn't believe God could take them in and therefore they didn't believe that God was going to take their children in either.

It is significant that the male children were circumcised on the eighth day after birth. Certainly long before they were aware of many things. So, it was the *parents* that were making the commitment, not the children. Obviously, every adult has to make their own life decisions, but this destroys the notion that we don't make any decisions for them while raising them up and leave it all up to them.

It also shows us a principle that people need to enter into a covenant with God as soon as they come out of the world, BEFORE the law is even made known. Then they will by "nature" keep the law. Holiness will be an action resulting from the circumcision of the heart, not just the literate education of the mind in lawful compliance. If we try to train people on the Law before they are circumcised in heart, they will be as those who died in the wilderness or those that Jesus' confronted. Just outwardly educated, but not inwardly changed.

There were other problems with Israel, but ultimately the facts cannot be changed: **They were uncircumcised and they did not enter in.**

What did God require of the next generation before they could fully go into the Promised Land?

### **Joshua 5:2 (KJV)**

2 At that time the LORD said unto Joshua, Make thee sharp knives, and circumcise again the children of Israel the second time.

They saw a few miracles and won a few victories, but God said, 'Before I fulfill my promise, you are going to be circumcised.'

Why? They were entering into the covenant of circumcision. Theoretically, they were ALREADY KEEPING THE LAW, but it wasn't good enough. They had been keeping the law for 40 years! The true test was whether they would allow God to cut away their foreskin, to mark them with a constant reminder **that they, their body, their desires and their offspring BELONGED TO GOD!** Without that all we have is a group of people trying to read the fine print of the law and became lawyers, scribes & Pharisees...

**Thus, the covenant of faith and fidelity (circumcision) is NOT A PART OF THE LAW, it is of a covenant of faith in God.** Not faith that we can keep the letter of the law, but that GOD can keep us IN HIS LAW. When we put our confidence in God to CHANGE us then it removes the boasting of the flesh and the element of hypocrisy, which is what the scribes, lawyers & Pharisees ultimately became. Jesus knew this, not just by knowing their heart, but because God understood the purpose of the law wasn't to bring people into perfection, but to bring them unto that eternal covenant and anyone that pretended to be keeping the law without that change of nature was a hypocrite. Paul said, "The law hath concluded all under sin..." That was purpose of the law, to reveal sin in sinners, not to make them righteous. There is only one way for us to be made righteous - that is by GOD CHANGING OUR NATURE!! WE MUST SUBMIT to the process. Sinners that can't endure the pain of spiritual circumcision, that won't sign the surgery release form, won't be around for long. It's the people that say, "God, you have given me this blessed promise and I don't care what it takes to keep it. You do whatever you have to do to me...I want to be saved." These people make saints in our churches!

The Sword of the Word, MUST be allowed to cut on our INSIDE. It was never meant to cut on the outside. Hebrews 4:12 (KJV) "For the word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discernor of the thoughts and intents of the heart." These are all INTERNAL cuttings...surgery. Sure, we must get people to line up with the standards, etc. But eventually they will have to have an internal surgery or they won't make it. How much of my preaching is dealing with the externals and NOT dealing with the internals? God help me! If God can't change people, I sure can't save them by the recitation of rules and requirements. They MUST BE CHANGED!!

### **Acts 7:51 (KJV)**

51 Ye stiffnecked and uncircumcised in heart and ears, ye do always resist the Holy Ghost: as your fathers did, so do ye.

The challenge of the righteous, the prophets, and the church has always been getting people to be circumcised in heart. The 'putting off' of the things of the flesh (Colossians 2:11) from the heart permanently.

### **2 Corinthians 7:9-10 (BBE)**

9 Now I am glad, not that you had sorrow, but that **your sorrow was the cause of a change of heart**; for yours was a holy sorrow so that you might undergo no loss by us in anything. 10 For the sorrow which God gives **is the cause of salvation through a change of heart, in which there is no reason for grief**: but the sorrow of the world is a cause of death.

It must happen in the heart!

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