

Romans
Message 31
The Morality Cults 08, Jews and Gentiles02
Rom 2:28-3:3

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.

Chapter3

1 What advantage then hath the Jew? or what profit is there of circumcision?

2 Much every way: chiefly, because that unto them were committed the oracles of God.

3 For what if some did not believe? shall their unbelief make the faith of God without effect? KJV

Introduction:

It is very difficult for us to realize how important this principle is. We are forced to take notice that it was so important to Paul that he included it in his development of the case for the Gospel to a group of people who were presumed to be true believers yet seemingly were not at all clear on this matter.

We must know that there came a time when this discussion of Circumcision would no longer be the kind of issue that it was in the First Century. But there is a deeper principle also being addressed here for as long as the church has survived there has been profound deception that something more than Christ Alone would be required to truly be right with God and satisfactory to Him. This, I believe, is the real reason Paul dived so deep into the matter.

This text demonstrates to us an issue that seemingly is almost impossible for some people to resolve. Even though it seems very plain and easy for some, others have invented entire religions out of misunderstandings of the principles involved.

There are two versions of being a Jew, two versions of circumcision and two versions of Israel. How they play out in the message of the gospel is vital to the understanding of it and, thus, vital to a relationship with God.

This is not one of those indifferent matters about which Christians may safely take different positions, it is vital to actually being a Christian.

Notice that Paul differentiated the two positions by stating that one had the praise of God and one had the praise of men. In reality the correct understanding here shows us the difference between salvation by Grace and salvation by Works.

If ever a physical act might be thought of as securing the favor of God for a man, circumcision would be that act. We see even in the New Testament scriptures that the word ‘uncircumcision’ was deeply associated in the Jewish mind with the rejection of God and the lostness of the man.

Stephen identified the most profoundly religious Jews in his time as being profoundly fraudulent.

Acts 7:51-54

- 51 Ye stiffnecked and uncircumcised in heart and ears, ye do always resist the Holy Ghost: as your fathers did, so do ye.
- 52 Which of the prophets have not your fathers persecuted? and they have slain them which shewed before of the coming of the Just One; of whom ye have been now the betrayers and murderers:
- 53 Who have received the law by the disposition of angels, and have not kept it.
- 54 When they heard these things, they were cut to the heart, and they gnashed on him with their teeth. KJV

Acts 7:51

- 51 You stubborn and stiff-necked people, still heathen and uncircumcised in heart and ears, you are always actively resisting the Holy Spirit. As your forefathers [were], so you [are and so you do]! [Ex 33:3,5; Num 27:14; Isa 63:10; Jer 6:10; 9:26.] AMP

It demonstrates that their outward conformity to the True Religion of God was not only without value but rather was proof that they were some of the worst of sinners in the entire world. When the truth stirs a person to hatred of the one speaking truth his association with a false version with a false replica of the True Worship of God only confirms that he is one of the most profound forms of a pagan.

Acts 11:1-3

- 11 And the apostles and brethren that were in Judaea heard that the Gentiles had also received the word of God.
- 2 And when Peter was come up to Jerusalem, they that were of the circumcision contended with him,
- 3 Saying, Thou wentest in to men uncircumcised, and didst eat with them. KJV

Acts 11:2-3

- 2 So when Peter went up to Jerusalem, the circumcision party [certain Jewish Christians] found fault with him [separating themselves from him in a hostile spirit, opposing and disputing and contending with him],
- 3 Saying, Why did you go to uncircumcised men and [even] eat with them? AMP

This reveals the profound nature of the spiritual condition called “uncircumcised” as understood by the Jews. Even to associate with such a person was a profound sacrilege. But it is obvious that they were mistaken as to how the whole issue actually worked.

Think about this, it would have been OK for Peter to have associated with those who were physically ‘circumcised’ but lacking in faith while it was horrible for him to fellowship and eat with men of faith who were physically ‘uncircumcised.’

So, many in the early Jewish church were profoundly in error concerning the very nature of that which distinguished them from Gentiles. It is no wonder, then, that Paul took such pains to explain the issue both to believing Jews as well as believing Gentiles and no wonder that he condemned so vociferously those who worked to divide the church concerning those issues.

The confounding of this matter is one of the most profound heresies known to True Religion.

Rom 2:25-27

- 25 For circumcision verily profiteth, if thou keep the law: but if thou be a breaker of the law, thy circumcision is made uncircumcision.
- 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? KJV

Rom 2:25-27

- 25 Circumcision does indeed profit if you keep the Law; but if you habitually transgress the Law, your circumcision is made uncircumcision.
- 26 So if a man who is uncircumcised keeps the requirements of the Law, will not his uncircumcision be credited to him as [equivalent to] circumcision?
- 27 Then those who are physically uncircumcised but keep the Law will condemn you who, although you have the code in writing and have circumcision, break the Law. AMP

The most important element of the Law of God was clearly laid out by Jesus Christ.

Matt 22:35-38

- 35 Then one of them, which was a lawyer, asked him a question, tempting him, and saying,
- 36 Master, which is the great commandment in the law?
- 37 Jesus said unto him, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind.
- 38 This is the first and great commandment. KJV

He who is able to keep this principle has been renewed by the Spirit of God. No one can even approximate obedience here without a Regenerated spirit. He who has been Regenerated so as to be able to truly love God with his whole heart, soul and mind will not be content without keeping the rest of God's commands.

The refusal to love God in this way is evidence of a lack of regeneration. Such a person has no connection to God in any way and has no benefit from the promises to Abraham because of his unbelief.

People have often been mistaken across the centuries that a sinner may have some claim on God because of various things other than God's Grace in the Work of Jesus Christ. Some have read these verses to say that the unconverted Jew has some special connection or that a person can by

keeping the Law earn or gain some such relationship or that there is an association with Him because of being born into a Christian family or be converted by repeating a prayer without true obedience to the First and Greatest commandment.. None of this is true and in reality is a profound and grotesque lie which causes people to hold onto a false hope.

Paul often engaged with such propagandists and liars.

Gal 3:1-20

- 3 O foolish Galatians, who hath bewitched you, that ye should not obey the truth, before whose eyes Jesus Christ hath been evidently set forth, crucified among you?
- 2 This only would I learn of you, Received ye the Spirit by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith?
- 3 Are ye so foolish? having begun in the Spirit, are ye now made perfect by the flesh?
- 4 Have ye suffered so many things in vain? if it be yet in vain.
- 5 He therefore that ministereth to you the Spirit, and worketh miracles among you, doeth he it by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith?
- 6 Even as Abraham believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness.
- 7 Know ye therefore that they which are of faith, the same are the children of Abraham.
- 8 And the scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the heathen through faith, preached before the gospel unto Abraham, saying, In thee shall all nations be blessed.
- 9 So then they which be of faith are blessed with faithful Abraham.
- 10 For as many as are of the works of the law are under the curse: for it is written, Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them.
- 11 But that no man is justified by the law in the sight of God, it is evident: for, The just shall live by faith.
- 12 And the law is not of faith: but, The man that doeth them shall live in them.
- 13 Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us: for it is written, Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree:
- 14 That the blessing of Abraham might come on the Gentiles through Jesus Christ; that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith.
- 15 Brethren, I speak after the manner of men; Though it be but a man's covenant, yet if it be confirmed, no man disannulleth, or addeth thereto.
- 16 Now to Abraham and his seed were the promises made. He saith not, And to seeds, as of many; but as of one, And to thy seed, which is Christ.
- 17 And this I say, that the covenant, that was confirmed before of God in Christ, the law, which was four hundred and thirty years after, cannot disannul, that it should make the promise of none effect.
- 18 For if the inheritance be of the law, it is no more of promise: but God gave it to Abraham by promise.
- 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.

20 Now a mediator is not a mediator of one, but God is one. KJV

To be “of the Law” and “uncircumcised according to the flesh” were the same things in the mind and heart of Paul. Both meant that the individual was trusting in something other than Christ for his salvation.

But here is the real issue both at Galatia and in our time. Those people were trusting in Jesus but they were also partially trusting in something else such as circumcision or the Law. To be partially trusting in something else as the cause of a right relationship with God is to be trusting in Christ but only falsely.

We have already mentioned that some trust in a flawed concept of God’s covenant with His people, that it also includes their children. Some trust in their praying a prayer, or in their believing or in their repenting or in their church membership or in the fact they are a nice person or a person who is better than others. None of this is a causative agent of salvation.... only the Grace of God causes Regeneration.

This means that a vast percentage of those identified as ‘Christian’ have a false faith. Only those who love God with the whole heart and trust the Work of Christ exclusively have any hope of heaven whatsoever.

Col 2:8-15

- 8 Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ.
- 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;
- 14 Blotting out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to his cross;
- 15 And having spoiled principalities and powers, he made a shew of them openly, triumphing over them in it. KJV

Col 2:13

- 13 And you who were dead in trespasses and in the uncircumcision of your flesh (your sensuality, your sinful carnal nature), [God] brought to life together with [Christ], having [freely] forgiven us all our transgressions, AMP

To be “uncircumcised” in this sense means also to be “dead in your sins.” The only cure for death is Resurrection and no one but Jesus Christ has ever raises himself from the dead. Unless God brings one from death to life he remains dead and doomed to an eternity of torment. There

is no other escape.

Does that mean that Christians should reject the whole concept of circumcision or that a believing Jew should abandon his heritage? Not at all.

1 Cor 7:17-20

- 17 But as God hath distributed to every man, as the Lord hath called every one, so let him walk. And so ordain I in all churches.
- 18 Is any man called being circumcised? let him not become uncircumcised. Is any called in uncircumcision? let him not be circumcised.
- 19 Circumcision is nothing, and uncircumcision is nothing, but the keeping of the commandments of God.
- 20 Let every man abide in the same calling wherein he was called. KJV

As pertains to spiritual matters, circumcision is nothing at all. There is neither benefit nor any disadvantage to it. But, making it into something that connects one with God in a special way creates not just an errant idea but a heresy.

The only thing which has any spiritual meaning is the possession of a New Life from God which motivates a person to be obedient to Him and His commands which although that obedience does not grant life it does supply evidence that the New Life exists.

Is then Circumcision for the believing Jew a worthless thing? Not at all, it is simply worthless as a device which creates Regeneration. There are some noteworthy benefits.

Chapter 3

- 1 What advantage then hath the Jew? or what profit is there of circumcision?
- 2 Much every way: chiefly, because that unto them were committed the oracles of God.
- 3 For what if some did not believe? shall their unbelief make the faith of God without effect? KJV

It grants to one the advantage of being closer to the “oracles of God,” the scriptures, the truths of God, and to the testimonies of the great heroes of the faith in the OT. Because the culture was, to a great degree, built upon the spiritual principles taught in the Jewish scriptures and because the scriptures were given, first-hand, in their own historical language, there is an advantage to the deciphering of spiritual truth.

But still the Gospel must be believed, New Life must be given by God and the willingness to Repent and Obey must prove that these things are true. There is nothing which frees a person from the requirement to hear and believe the Son of God.

We are, apart from the aid and help of God, so susceptible to deception that we can become one who relies on the Work of Christ PLUS some other thing. We may be just such a person right this moment and not even recognize it. Often other Christians do not notice or cannot see your problem because it is buried deeply in your mind and soul.

Truly, only God can reveal that to you, so you must regularly check what is your hope, your only

hope, of sins forgiven and New Life given.

It is good to believe the Bible... so did the "Circumcision"

It is good to believe on Jesus... so did the "Circumcision" at Rome and at Galatia

It is good to ask Jesus to save you... do did.....

It is good to be baptized....

It is good to join the church.....

It is good to faithfully attend....

BUT... if there is ANYTHING YOU ARE TRUSTING besides the Finished Work of Christ as your hope of salvation.... You may have a faith that will not ultimately save you.

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.*