***The Sin Offering, No. 1

Colossians 1:25-29

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Tonight, our subject is "The Error of False Legalism," number 39, in Colossians 1:16-17.

The apostle Paul has been dealing with the subject of legalism – a deadly error in the spiritual life. And he actually calls the legalists "dogs," in order to convey his loathing of them. We read that in Philippians 3:2, where he tells the believers to: "Beware of the dogs," which is an expression of loathing disgust. He also warns the believers to beware of the evil workers, because they are innately corrupt people, and therefore, they are deceptive.

Paul warns the Christians also against false circumcision, which in the Greek, we saw, was a mutilation of the body with no spiritual significance, and the ritual (the mere procedure) is meaningless without the heart involvement, which is reflected by that as freeing oneself from control of the sin nature. Circumcision, as a spiritual symbol, began with Abraham. It was a sign of the fact that, from now on, Abraham and all of his descendants would have a very special relationship to God if they were to be His people. And circumcision was the way that a Jew entered the promises of blessing that are his, as a member of Israel. That included having the land of Israel to live in *forever*; having a descendant (seed) – a nation with a king ruling over the world *forever*; and, having the great blessing of personal regeneration through the coming Messiah Savior Jesus Christ, and that that, too, was *forever*. Any uncircumcised male in the community of Israel had no claim upon the covenant blessings of God in the Abrahamic Covenant.

So, the point is that it was not for salvation, but it was for associating one with the special people of God. This was fully explained to Abraham in Genesis 17:9-14, when God instituted this sign of His special relationship with the Jewish people. God said, further, to Abraham, "Now, as for you, you shall keep My covenant – you and your descendants, after you throughout their generations."

**The Abrahamic Covenant**

Now, I should remind you that this covenant, which promised this land; this nation; this kingdom; and, this spiritual blessing was unconditional. God did not say: "If you behave yourself, and if you are faithful to Me, then I will do this. He did say that when it came to the Mosaic Law. But this was not the case with the Abrahamic Covenant. God said: "This I'm going to do." This is the same thing as in salvation. If we are to depend upon what we could do, to qualify for salvation, and of what we could do, to hang on to it, we would never make it. We would be doomed every time. God's grace was very much in evidence, even in the Old Testament with the Jewish people.

So, God says to Abraham, "I'm going to make a deal with you, Abraham. I'm going to make a promise to you. And it will be not only with you, but all your descendants to the very day in which we live today. Now, this is My covenant, which you shall keep between Me and you, and your descendants after you. Every male among you shall be circumcised. That's the sign that you belong to the special earthly people of God." Is this for gentiles? No. Is this for Christians? No. It is not even a significant factor for Jews today, because their kingdom and the covenant is on hold, since they rejected the King – Jesus Christ.

Verse 11: "And you shall be circumcised in the flesh of your foreskin, and it shall be a sign of the covenant between Me and you." The Bible uses the word "flesh" in terms of what is sinful – the old sin nature. "Removal of the flesh" not only identified them as a special people of God, but the special spiritual people of God. And the removal of this physical element was a sign of the spiritual work that God was going to do through a descendant of Abraham – the Lord Jesus Christ.

Verse 12: "And every male among you, who is eight days old, shall be circumcised, throughout your generations. A servant who was born in the house, or who was brought with money, from any foreigner, who is not of your descendants. A servant who is born in your house, or who is bought with your money shall surely be circumcised. Thus, shall My covenant be in your flesh, for an everlasting covenant." It's going to be a mark, physically, in effect, upon every Jewish male – that He is God's special people.

"But an uncircumcised male who is not circumcised in the flesh of his foreskin – that person shall be cut off from his people. He has broken My covenant." So, all the promises of blessing, both material and spiritual, never came anywhere with a Jew who did not practice this special sign of association with God. To do this is to demonstrate obedience. That's it. To do this was to demonstrate willingness to listen to God, and to do things His way. If He is going to do anything with you in your life, then we have to listen to Him. We have to do it His way, and we have to obey this issue of not being dominated by the sin nature, and of not being dominated with all those things that the sin wants us to do, that only lead us away from our mission.

As a Christian, I cannot emphasize enough to you – that's where it's all at. If you don't fulfill your mission, you might as well go to heaven, because you're not going to be of any earthly good now. It is the mission. And it is so easy, as we shall see in a moment with Moses, to do something that totally undermines your mission. And for Abraham and his descendants, this sign that they belonged to him, and that they were going to be loyal to him, by performing this ritual, was the first step in fulfilling the purpose of their lives.

Genesis 17:15: "Then God said to Abraham: "As for Sarai, your wife, you shall not call her Sarai, but Sarah shall be her name;" that is, her name is now going to be princess. Why? Because she's going to be the mother of a royal family, which will be descended from her: "And I will bless her, and, indeed, I will give you a son by her."

Now, to fully appreciate this, you must understand that Abraham is 75 years old, and Sarai is 65 years old. That's kind of getting up in years. And even though Abraham made it to 125, nevertheless, they're talking about opening a nursery? "I will bless her, and indeed, I'll give you a son by her. Then I will bless her, and she shall be mother of nations. Kings of people will come from her." Then Abraham fell on his face, and laughed, and said in his heart: "Will a child be born to a man 100 years old? And will Sarai, who is 90 years old, bear a child.

This incident to which God is referring, took place 45 years after he was first told that he would be the father of many nations. He was 75 then, and she was 65. Now he is 100 years old. His wife is 90 years old. They have repainted the nursery several times, and gotten more modern cribs – the latest thing that was coming off the assembly lines. And they're getting ready for the family arrival. This is faith: "If you do what I tell you, Abraham, and then you stand by. And when you learn to wait upon Me, great things will be done. If you go butting in there, taking over on your own, and spoil it, you are going to create real problems, which, of course, we know that he did. So, we have the Arab nations today.

Verse 18: "And Abraham said to God, 'O, that Ishmael might live before You." Now he already had this 13-year-old Ishmael. God said to him, "No. But Sarai, your wife, shall bear you a son. You should call his name 'Isaac,' which means laugh, because that's what Sarah did when she was told she was going to have a child at her age: "And I will establish My covenant with him, for an everlasting covenant for his descendants after him."

**Circumcision**

So, the promise is very great to Israel. And entering all these blessings of the Abrahamic covenant, the male Jew had to go through the practice (through the ritual) of circumcision. Christians today possess the spiritual reality behind the physical ritual of circumcision. We too have a spiritual circumcision in Christ. We are freed from being slaves of sin nature. We don't have to be slaves of the flesh. We can really walk a godly life. We are in fellowship, and we understand the principles of doctrine, which you're not going to find on television. The hotshots who are on television have a very narrow of instruction that they may give, if they're going to have the support and the audience. They're not going to go too deep into the full council of the Word of God. Don't run around out there looking for it, because God says that you're going to find it, as Isaiah said: "Here a little, there a little; line-upon-line; and, precept-upon-precept." That means verse-by-verse instruction of expository teaching.

So, picking up once more the rite of circumcision, and the background of what we have in our passage in Philippians – that we Christians are the true circumcision. And you should be aware of the false circumcision – the mutilation. Circumcision was important. It had a meaning.

Please turn to Exodus 4:24. Exodus is at the beginning of the Bible. The background is this: Moses, who has been out of Egypt for 40 years, fleeing for his life, because he killed one of the slave masters in a fit of rage. And the Pharaoh found out about it, and put out the order to bring Moses in to kill him. Now God has appeared to Moses in that burning bush, and He has announced to him: "You're the man. 400 years of slavery has passed. That's it. I'm going to bring My people out of Egypt. I'm going to free them. And you're going to do the job of leading them out." That was a very explicit mission. That's nice to know exactly what God wants you to do, and what He's planning to do with you – to be so focused that you know where you're going. That is even true for us. Open to Him, and He will burden your heart. Believe me. The Spirit of God just works in a marvelous way. He will place it upon your heart – that intuitive direction. Don't ignore it. Follow through on it, and He will lead us to whatever the mission is for this day, and tomorrow, step-by-step. For Moses, it was very clear: "You are going to lead this people out of their slavery.

So, things are ready to start rolling. Then in verses 24-26, we have a startling passage of Scripture that brings us up short, because here God steps into the picture, and suddenly, the mission of Moses and his very life is in jeopardy. He could lose his life. His mission is going to stop right there, because he was out of obedience to the will of God, at some critical point.

Verse 24: "Now it came about, at the lodging place on the way." Moses, with Zipporah, his wife, daughter of Jethro, are on their way, to returning to Egypt with their two sons: "Now it came about, at the lodging place on the way (they had stopped for an overnight lodging) that the Lord met him (Moses), and sought to put him to death." We don't know exactly how this came about, but perhaps, it was a physical condition or some kind that suddenly seized Moses. And it was clear that his life was in danger. Suddenly, his wife is amazed. She is startled by this sudden, obvious fact that there's something wrong with Moses – something seriously wrong. And Moses is now under the judgment of God – the very man that had the great mission before him.

Then, in some way, God directed his wife. It is nice to have a wife that God directs. Zipporah knew what the problem was. It doesn't explain to us how she knew what the problem was. But she knew, and she understood: "There's a judgment upon my husband. He has failed in the obedience to God at a critical point that now hazards his life and mission."

So, Zipporah took a flint, a sharp stone, acting as a knife, and cut off her son's foreskin. Apparently, Moses had not circumcised one of his sons – probably the younger one (the last one born). When the Jews came out of Egypt, all those males who came out had been circumcised. They were in the covenant blessings of God. But because of their disobedience at Kadeshbarnea, and refused to proceed with the mission, those who were 20 years and older, among the male population, were told: "You will not get into the Promised Land. I'm going to take you back out into the desert, and, and you will wander there for 40 years until all of you are dead."

So, the males who were going into the Promised Land now were all new. And most of them had never been circumcised. And the whole system became sloppy, of identifying who they were, in separation from the culture of Egypt. So, this son had not been circumcised. And Zipporah proceeds to perform that ceremony. Moses was about to carry out God's plan, to establish the Jewish nation as a leading nation of the world under the Abrahamic Covenant. But Moses had failed to respect the sign of nationhood in one son. And this was an insult to God, and it brought down on him the wrath of God.

Notice Genesis 17:14: "But an uncircumcised male, who is not circumcised in the flesh of his foreskin, that person shall be cut off from his people. He has broken my covenant. It is no small thing for us to walk through life, and for you and I to pretend that there's no purpose – for you and I to pretend that we are not very, very important in the body of Christ, and we're extremely important in using those spiritual gifts that we have: our time; our treasures; and, our talents. That is enormously important. All of that sums up in the mission.

So, Moses here begins to die. His wife understands what the reason is, because he, as a father, had failed to perform this act of obedience to God on this younger son, for whatever reason. She quickly circumcised the boy with this stone flint knife. And she may have even recoiled from it, but she knew that this was an act of God. So, she proceeded to do it. Moses had neglected his spiritual duty as a father. God could not ignore this failure in the leader of Israel, if he was to fulfill his mission. That's the point. To fail in obedience, and to act like you did know better, is to put yourself in a position where God says, "I can't let you carry the ball on this mission." And He brings somebody else in to do it, and you are removed.

She took the son's foreskin, and threw it at Moses feet. And she said, "You are indeed a bridegroom of blood to me." Moses was thus impressed with the seriousness of the rite of circumcision, and how it related Israel to the finest promises of God. It was a simple thing, but it had to be done, and it opened up, personally and nationally, the great and marvelous blessings that were upon Israel.

When they came out, as I said, of Egypt, most of this generation was not circumcised. Now, the 40 years are at an end. They had been fed by manna. Now God said: "The time has come. Moses, my last man of the old generation, is now dead. I personally buried him. And now, this time we're going into the Promised Land. And you will now proceed to enjoy the benefits of this land.

However, again, God says, "We have a problem here. You have not obeyed Me in what I told you to do in the circumcision to identify yourselves with Me. Joshua 5:2: "Now at that time." They are ready to cross the Jordan, almost symbolic as when they cross the Red Sea. Now, they're ready to cross the Jordan, into the Promised Land: "Now at that time, the Lord said to Joshua, 'Make for yourself flint knives, and circumcise again the sons of Israel, the second time.'" The old generation had this performed back in Egypt. The new generation had totally neglected it, out of the wilderness wanderings.

"So, Joshua made himself flint knives, and circumcised the sons of Israel at Gibeath-haaraloth." This is the reason why Joshua circumcised: "And all the people who came out of Egypt, who were males, and all the men of war died in the wilderness, along the way, after they came out of Egypt, for all the people who came out were circumcised. But all the people who were born in the wilderness along the way, as they came out of Egypt, had not been circumcised. For the sons of Israel walked 40 years in the wilderness, until all the nation (that is, the men of war, who came out of Egypt) perished, because they did not listen to the voice of the Lord, to whom the Lord had sworn that He would not let them see the land which the Lord has sworn to their fathers – to give us a land flowing with milk and honey."

God had told them what to do. That old generation had obeyed, to identify themselves, with circumcision, with the living God. Now they were ready for the mission. Moses, because he had not obeyed as a father, toward his son, was not even ready to start the mission, let alone to do it. Consequently, here you have an interesting picture again, that these men who had been brought to this land had the circumcision, but they did not have, again, the obedience. They had obeyed on that, and they were under God's care, and His prosperity, and they were going to be winners in the battle. That old generation couldn't do it. They couldn't obey God, and realize that they were on a mission.

Verse 7: "And their children, whom he raised up in their place, Joshua circumcised. For they were uncircumcised, because they had not circumcised them along the way (during that 40 years of wandering). Now, it came about when they had finished circumcising all the nation that they remained in their places in the camp until they were healed. Then the Lord said to Joshua: 'Today, I have rolled away the reproach of Egypt from you. So, the name of this place is called Gilgal to this day.'" And the word "Gilgal" means "rolling."

So, God said, "Now we're ready for Me to bless you. You did not identify yourself with Me. You did not say. 'I am your soldier. What's the mission?' Got it. And the way you were to do that was by the rite of circumcision under the Mosaic Law code. With that act, you stood up and said, 'I'm with you. You may count on me. What are the orders, sir?' And because you did not do that, that generation is dying. I'm going to roll away all that reproach. I've been feeding you for 40 years now, in the wilderness. And now, because you have all now have obeyed Me with this act of circumcision, a religious ceremony that had great significance spiritually, we're ready to roll."

Notice the next verses, just out of interest: While the sons of Israel camped at Gilgal, they observed the Passover." They had only observed the Passover two other times. One was the first one, going out of Egypt. Then the second one was at Mount Sinai. And, here they're ready to observe the Passover, the evening of the 14th day of the month of Nissan, on the desert plains of Jericho. The next morning, they're going into the land. And now, what should they do, but observe the Passover. And what is that? It's the Lord's Supper reflected, telling them what God was going to do with the Messiah Savior. And why were they going to have that blessing? Because they performed the act of circumcision.

That was not just empty ritual. It was their taking a stand that: "I'm obedient and subject to God." And on the day after the Passover, on that very day, they eat some of the produce of the land: unleavened cakes; and, parched grain. They cross the Jordan just as their forefathers had once crossed the Red Sea. And they came into a land that was exactly what God said: prosperous with grain; with food galore; and, fruits of every kind. And all they had to do was flush out the Canaanites, and they were able to take over all this rich, fertile land.

**Manna**

Well, then notice what happens in verse 12: "And the manna ceased on the day after they had eaten some of the produce of the land. So, the sons of Israel no longer had manna. But they ate some of the yield of the land of Canaan during that year. At the end of that year, their own crops were in. They were no longer having to eat manna. Now, manna was wonderful. It was very nutritious. But you baked it; you stewed it; you boiled it; and, you fried it. You had manna souffle, and manna omelets. But it was still matter.

Now, what's the first thing God does? They said, "OK, we will perform the rite of circumcision. We will thereby take our stand with You. We will obey You under the Abrahamic Covenant. We will count on You and Your promises." And what do they do? They get the greatest menu that they've seen in 40 years. It was a great, great day when they crossed the Jordan into that land, and they never saw another speck of manna again. Why? Because they had obeyed, and said, "I'm the Lord's man. I'm the Lord's woman. What's my mission?" And when they did that, and signaled that they obeying the rite of circumcision, the showers of heaven were blessed upon them; their lives were enriched; and, it was a great and wonderful time.

So, here, back in Exodus 5:25: "Then Zipporah took a flint; cut off the son's foreskin; and, threw it at Moses feet. She said, 'You are indeed a bloody bridegroom to me." And what she was saying was that she had purchased her husband back from death by an act of blood. And the symbolism surely does not elude you there – the symbolism of the blood of Christ, that brings life where there is potential death.

Verse 25 says, "So, He (God) let him (Moses alone)." At that time, she said, "You are a bridegroom of blood," because of the circumcision. This act of blood involved in this ritual symbolized the covering that God was going to bring, as was symbolized by the Passover meal, and this killing of the lamb. It was an amazing experience.

Now, Moses knew that God was for real, and all he had to do was to be obedient; to identify himself; to be His most servant; and, to use the means that God would give him, and enable him to execute a hugely demanding mission of taking these people into a land that they had to conquer, and to form them into a nation.

Zipporah did her job, and Moses' life was saved. And the result was that Moses went on, and is revered to this very day because of that obedience.

There is another point. The sign of circumcision was later on, then, incorporated into the Law of Moses. That's why it is it was imposed upon the Jews. It was required of them, because it became part of the Jewish Law. We have that in Leviticus 12:3. And in John 7:22-23, Jesus refers to this circumcision, which is in the Law: "On this account, Moses has given you circumcision, not because it is from Moses, but because from the fathers and on the Sabbath, you circumcise a man. If a man receives circumcision on the Sabbath, that the Law of Moses may not be broken, are you angry with Me, because I made an entire man well on the Sabbath Day?"

He's pointing out that, even if it were the Sabbath Day (that was the eighth day of the child's life), they did this work. They did this act. And these people were getting angry, because Jesus had healed this poor woman on the Sabbath Day. He said, "That act of circumcision brought that child into the blessings of God. And you are angry at me because I give this woman her life back? What a great blessing of God that is!" That was the madness of the Pharisees, who did not understand the spiritual significance.

Circumcision also became a point of pride with the Jews, who viewed with contempt all those who did not have it. For example, in Judges 14:3, we note this: "That his father (speaking of Samson) and his mother said to him, "Is there no woman among the daughters of your relatives, or among all your people, that you should take a wife from the uncircumcised Philistines?" Samson said to his father, "Get her for me, for she looks good to me."

What's the background? Samson goes down to Timnah. Samson was not the most obedient son. Samson was not the most godly person. And He moved in some bad circles. And this woman in Timnah, in the territory of the Philistines, catches his eye, and he goes his father and said, "I want to marry her." You didn't talk to the lady. You've got your parents to talk to her parents, and you made a deal. And the father said, "What? You don't want to marry a Philistine?" And the Father uses a term of contempt: "the uncircumcised (a Philistine)?" That means that here's woman who is out of the family, that has no contact with God, and is not under the blessing of God. In the New Testament, is this principle still there? You betcha. As a Christian, you are not to marry a person who is not a Christian. And it is out of the will of God for you to do that.

Now, if you get yourself too involved with a person, and too close to a person who is not a Christian, you'll lose track of that. And pretty soon, you'll be making excuses. And how many times people have married unsaved people, and then, when the party is over initially, the grief comes in. So, to call somebody uncircumcised in the Old Testament was an expression of real contempt. You have this also in Judges 15:18, and 1 Samuel 14:6, used in contempt.

**Imputed Righteousness**

The there is another point. Circumcision was strictly a sign of faith in God unto salvation. It was never the means *to* salvation. It symbolizes the reception of imputed righteousness. Circumcision was not an act of salvation. When the Reformers didn't understand that, they had to bring something in to substitute for circumcision. So, they brought in infant baptism. And they say that that is what saves. They are very confused.

I can remember how often I have been at funerals, in the Lutheran Church. And I know, inevitably, that the bulletin will say: "Sam Jones was born on such-and-such a day, and eight days later, he was baptized, and he became a Christian." There are always those words: "And he became a Christian." In Lutheranism, the people rally around the cry of justification by faith apart from words. And here's a human work? The confusion is enormous. And you should be appreciative of the fact that the Word here is rightly divided. We don't impose the legalism of the Old Testament on you. We don't undermine your grace privilege. We don't try to get around your priesthood responsibility of dealing with God directly by yourself, in your purpose in your mission. And we don't play games with you emotionally. But circumcision symbolized the reception of what God could do for them: imputed righteousness.

We have justification apart from rituals. Romans 4:9-11: "In this blessing, then, upon the circumcised, or upon the uncircumcised also? For we say, 'Faith was reckoned to Abraham as righteousness." That's how you were saved – by faith in the coming Messiah: "How, then, was it reckoned: while He was circumcised, or uncircumcised?" What was the condition of Abraham when he was saved? The Jews are telling Paul: "If you're not circumcised, you can't be saved." So, Paul says, "Well, how about Abraham, our father – the father of our nation? Was he circumcised when he was saved back there in Ur of the Chaldees? No, he was not. How, then, was it reckoned – while he was circumcised, or uncircumcised? Not while circumcised, but while uncircumcised. And he received the sign of circumcision, a seal of the righteousness of faith, which he had while uncircumcised, that he might be the father of all who believe, without being circumcised, that righteousness might be reckoned to them."

Is water baptism a means of salvation? No, it is a sign that you have related yourself to Jesus Christ by faith in Him. You have died with Him, you have gone down into the tomb. You've risen with newness of life.

Circumcision was the same thing. And Paul says, "Abraham was saved without it. So, how say you that you must be circumcised in order to be saved?" But it did symbolize the reception of God's righteousness. It symbolized regeneration, just as water baptism does in this age. We've already seen that in Colossians 2:11-13: "And in Him (Christ), you were also circumcised (Christians), with a circumcision made without hands, in the removal of the body of flesh by the circumcision of Christ." It is Christ who has circumcised us – removing the body of flesh. What's that? The sin nature – removing its power, not its presence: "Having been buried with Him in baptism (symbolized by immersion), in which you were also raised up with Him through faith in the work of God, Who raised Him from the dead. And when you were dead in your transgressions, and the circumcision of your flesh, He made you alive together with Him, having forgiven us all our transgressions. Apart from circumcision, He made you spiritually alive.

Even if you could keep all 613 laws of Moses in the Mosaic Law, you could never be saved. Galatians 2:16 makes that very clear, when Paul says, "Nevertheless, knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the Law, but through faith in Christ Jesus. Even we have believed in Christ Jesus that we may be justified (declared absolute righteousness) by faith in Christ, and not by the works of the Law, since, by the works of the Law, shall no flesh be justified." Nobody will receive absolute righteousness by keeping the works and rituals of the Mosaic Law. What do the Jews today depend upon for salvation? Exactly that – that they're keeping the rules as much as they can, and doing everything they can to get their temple pulled together, so they can do the animal sacrifices.

So, under the Law, the principle of circumcision of the heart was the important thing. It was never intended that this ritual had any saving power. And it was clear in the Old Testament, in Deuteronomy 10:16: "Circumcised, then, your heart, and stiffen your neck no more." Here, Moses is rebuking the people: "Get your heart free of the sin nature. Be in subjection to God.

Deuteronomy 30:6: "Moreover, the Lord your God will circumcise your heart (the mentality of the soul – the spiritual circumcision) and the heart of your descendants: to love the Lord your God with all your heart, and all your soul, in order that you may live.

Jeremiah 4:4 says the same thing. That circumcision of the heart, and of the soul, is the real thing.

There's a great difference between circumcision, which is of the heart, and circumcision that takes place within the flesh. Ezekiel 44:7 points out: "When you brought in foreigners, uncircumcised in heart (mentally not saved by subjection to Christ), and uncircumcised in the flesh." They were not subject to God in their minds, and they did not have the symbol in the flesh: "To be in My sanctuary to profane it, even My house. When you offered my food, the fat and the blood, for they made my covenant void. This, in addition to all your abominations." Here, God is rebuking the Jews for how they had degraded the very temple itself, and how they had degraded the very priests themselves, before the altars of God: "They brought into that temple, and they brought in, as associates, foreigners. They were not circumcised in heart;" that is, they were not saved by mental faith: "And they uncircumcised in the flesh." They did not have the mark identifying them as part of the community of Israel: "And you bring them into My house, when you offered My food, the fat and the blood, for they made My covenant void. All My covenant (the New Covenant) was neutralized by them.

How about churches who hire people to come in and perform their vocal sacred music, because they are good singers? Very often these people are unsaved. They have nothing but the fact that they are there, in the presence of the assembly of God, and they are uncircumcised in heart.

I was at St. Louis Cathedral in New Orleans, visiting there one Sunday morning. And the place was full. So, I went upstairs. I saw the balcony where the organ was. And when I got up there, there was the choir. They were seated in chairs, and while the priest was down below, going through his rigmarole, at certain points, the choir had to stand and sing with the responses of the liturgy. What was the choir? It was hired. It was performers that they had brought in to do the singing – into the cathedral. And what were they doing? They were reading the Sunday morning newspaper. And I was looking at these people, and they're sitting there reading the newspaper. And all of a sudden, the choir gets their attention, because he's listening to the priest. And they put the papers away, and they stand up, and boy, do they sing! It is very moving to the soul. And it just resonates in the place – their wonderful voices. And then, when they finished, they sat down, and they picked up their newspapers, and started reading. The uncircumcised were in the temple. And it didn't matter, because Roman Catholicism is all by the numbers. It is doing the ritual. It's doing the nonsense.

Well, for us as Christians, there is a real circumcision. And without it, we are not complete. Spiritually, we have no place to go. In Colossians 2:10, Paul says, "And in Him (Christ), you were also circumcised with the circumcision made without hands, in the removal of the body of the flesh (the dominating power of the sin nature) by the circumcision of Christ." How was Christ circumcised? In His death on the cross. That was the circumcision that was significant to us. That was the circumcision that has brought us into the family of God. And as the circumcision upon the Jew opened all the blessings of the Abrahamic Covenant to Israel (the earthly people), circumcision in Christ opens the door to all the blessings of heaven to this day, what is it you would like to have? What is it you would like to see in your life? It is the circumcision that we have in Christ – that spiritual circumcision, because of our faith in Him, that has opened the door to you, to great, and enormous, and wonderful experience.

At Gilgal, in Joshua 5 that we read, circumcision restored the restoration to temporal fellowship, after 40 years of wandering in the wilderness, out of the will of God. This is our 1 John 1:9 in the church-ages. When they took on them that circumcision, they were saying, "I confess. I am your child. I believe in you. I trust in you. And the result was that circumcision had a reality. Today, the Jews treat circumcision as a means to salvation, and the result is they will die, and they will spend eternity in the lake of fire.

Under the church age, circumcision is not required. Acts 15:1; Acts 15:5; Acts 23:24; and, 1 Corinthians 7:18-19, all make it clear that Christians, while they may circumcise their male children for medical reasons and for sanitation reason, they do not do it religiously. Jewish Christians in the New Testament are really referred to as the circumcision, in contrast to the circumcision – those who are lost (Acts 10:45, Acts 11:2-3, Colossians 4:11).

We have one final point. Some Jewish Christians wanted to force the gentile Christians to observe the Law of Moses as a way of life. It was called "the Jews religion" in Galatians 1:13-14. And they wanted to impose this legalism upon the Christians. These are the people who were Judaizers, and these are the people who were under the severe condemnation of the apostle Paul. They were taking circumcision and the other rituals, and perverting them out of their spiritual meaning.

Galatians 2:12 says, "When prior to the coming of certain men from James, he used to eat with the gentiles. But when they came, he began to withdraw, and hold himself aloof, fearing the party of the circumcision. These were Christians were still promoting circumcision. And James, the number one spiritual leader in Jerusalem, is associating with gentile Christians. These people (these Judaizers), who are Christians, said, "You shouldn't have anything to do with those people. They're the uncircumcision. And James goes along with it. And the apostle Paul has to condemn that conduct. They were Judaizers.

Titus 1:10: "For there are many rebellious men – empty talkers and deceivers, especially those of the circumcision." These were Christians, circumcised, and from a Jewish background, and their empty talkers. Judaism became mere legalism to those Jews who sought salvation and spirituality through it, and because of that, they've ended up in the lake of fire. And because of that, Christians who still try to operate on the legalism of the Mosaic Law never have the showers of blessing of heaven upon them. They cut themselves off from all the magnificent lifestyle that the grace of God is ready to give you as His agent (His representative), and His servant, and above all, His steward.

Dr. John E. Danish, 1995

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