

# Circumcision of the Flesh? *or* Heart? I

Fred R. Coulter—November 1, 2014

We haven't done anything on doctrine for quite a while, so we're going to cover some difficult Scriptures. What we're going to do is follow the way that the Bible shows us we should approach it.

I know this is a big heavy Bible (*The Holy Bible in Its Original Order*). I understand that. Many people have said, 'Why don't you put the commentary and the appendices in a separate volume and the Bible in a separate volume.' The answer is because unless you read and study the commentaries and the appendices you will not understand why the Bible is the way that it is and how it is translated. We're going to see.

You can just make a note of this: The very first appendix, Appendix A, is *Fourteen Rules for Bible Study*. The reason that is there is to help everyone know how to study the Bible. I've met a lot of Protestants. The first thing they quote is Galatians, or they go to Acts 15. So, we're going to look at Acts 15 today and find out: What does it really say?

Let's see that this was one of the great problems with the beginning of the New Testament Church. Here, indeed, is a very difficult set of Scriptures to understand. It also helps answer the question: Why do the Protestants say that we don't have to keep anything in the Old Testament? They say the Law is done away. Then they come along and say, 'Jesus fulfilled the Law. So, if He fulfilled it, there's nothing for us to do. All you have to do is believe in Jesus.'

Let's see what the problem is because this is one of the first places that people who get interested in the Bible go to.

Sidebar: Also remember this: '*The carnal mind is enmity against the Law of God and is not subject to it, neither indeed can it be.*' That adds fuel to the fire of getting rid of the Old Testament.

Acts 15:1: "Now certain men who had come down from Judea were teaching the brethren, *saying*, 'Unless you are circumcised after the custom of Moses, you cannot be saved.'" The Greek there for *cannot* means the impossibility of being saved.

Verse 2: "Therefore, after a great deal of strife and arguing with them by Paul and Barnabas... [Those who were the arguments come from.] ...the *brethren* appointed Paul and Barnabas, and certain others from among them, to go up to the apostles and elders in Jerusalem about this question. So then, after being sent on their way by the Church, they passed through Phoenicia and Samaria, *where* they reported the conversion of the Gentiles. And

they caused great joy to all the brethren. And when they came to Jerusalem, they were welcomed by the Church and the apostles and the elders, and they declared all the things that God had done with them" (vs 2-4). Verse 4 is a summary verse of what the whole chapter is about.

Verse 5: "But there stood up certain of those who believed, who were of the sect of the Pharisees, saying, 'It is obligatory to circumcise them... [in the flesh] ...and to command *them* to keep the Law of Moses.'"

Then they come over here to v 19: "Therefore, my judgment is *that* we do not trouble those of the Gentiles who have turned to God; but *that* we write to them to abstain from pollutions of idols, and *from* sexual immorality, and *from* what has been strangled and *from* blood" (vs 19-20). So, they say, 'That's all they required of the Gentiles.'

- Is that true?
- How do we know?
- How can we understand?

We have got to put all the Scriptures together, so let's start with just a few of them.

They also turn to the one that says that Jesus is the end of the Law, which shows that 'Jesus ended the law and no one has to keep anything anymore.'

One of the rules of Bible study is this. Begin with the simple-to-understand Scriptures. Don't go to the difficult ones and try and understand that first. You start with what you know. You start with what you can understand. How do you handle things like we just read when you first come across them? *If you have a question, you file it away!* There have been things that I have filed away as I was reading through, when I was first learning, that raised flags in my mind about: What does it really mean?

We have in the Bible (*Faithful Version*) Appendix Z, *Understanding Paul's Difficult Scriptures*. I had one man the other day send me an email and say, 'How can we find out where the Bible has been mistranslated in the *King James*?' I wrote him back and said, 'In the *Faithful Version* you might start with Appendix Z.' That's a long appendix because that covers all of Paul's difficult Scriptures to understand.

In Matt. 4 Jesus goes out into the wilderness 40 days and 40 nights and then came the tempter. When you fast, what is that called? *Afflicting your soul, humbling yourself!* Keep in mind *humble*.

Matthew 4:3: “And when the tempter came to Him, he said, ‘If You are the Son of God, command that these stones become bread.’” You would have a benefit if you did it and you had the power to do it. Just think how tempting that would be. Also, it shows that Satan likes to tempt you when you are the weakest, and Jesus was the weakest in the flesh that He could be.

What you want to do when you’re studying these things, is you want to get the context. Let’s see where this was quoted. Let’s see what is associated with this command that we will read in the next verse in Matt. when we get back there.

Deuteronomy 8:1: “All the commandments which I command you this day shall you be diligent to observe *and to do* that you may live and multiply and go in and possess the land which the LORD swore to your fathers. And you shall remember all the way which the LORD your God led you these forty years in the wilderness **in order to humble you...**” (vs 1-2). Forty years for Israel; forty days for Jesus, to humble Him.

“...to prove you...” (v 2). That’s why we have difficult Scriptures, to prove if you want the Word of God or not!

“...to know what is in your heart...” (v 2). Isn’t that what God wants us to know? Are we not to become perfect as our Father in heaven is perfect? *Know what is in your heart!* Notice the context in which it is given:

“...whether you would keep His commandments or not.... [commandment-keeping is involved in it] ...And He humbled you and allowed you to hunger, and then He fed you with manna which you did not know, neither did your fathers know *it*, so that He might make you know that man does not live by bread alone; but by every *word* that proceeds out of the mouth of the LORD does man live” (vs 2-3).

Isn’t that interesting? They ate bread from heaven every day for 40 years. How do we understand the Word of God? *With the Spirit of God!* Where does that come from? *That comes from God the Father and Jesus Christ*, Who are in heaven. To understand the Word of God we need God’s help to tell us what to do. That’s the first lesson.

Matthew 4:4: “But He answered *and* said, ‘It is written...’” He went to the Word of God. We need to put a little caveat in here for you to think about. Note the book, *Judaism: A Revelation of God or a Religion of Men?* It’s important that you read it! I will tell you why a little later on.

Verse 4: “But He answered *and* said, ‘It is written, “Man...”’” He’s talking about God’s

requirement for every man and He was God manifested in the flesh, a human being, a man, so He was applying that to Himself, but also for everyone who is going to follow that.

“...shall not live by bread alone...” (v 4). It’s interesting. Here’s where knowing some of the original language helps. The sentence starts out ‘not’ in the Greek. The word for *not* is ‘ouk’—which means the *impossibility* of living by bread alone. You can extend your physical life, so what did Christ come to offer? *Eternal life!* The Word of God is layered—physical life, eternal life. We have physical life so we can learn how to overcome and change and prepare for eternal life. How do we do that? *By every Word of God!*

“...but by every word that proceeds out of the mouth of God” (v 4). It’s very interesting there. In the Greek it means *proceeds out through* the mouth of God.

Is there any Law in the Bible, in the first five books of the Law—which is called the Pentateuch—where Moses originated a single command himself? *No, God told him!* ‘**The Lord spoke** to Moses saying, Speak to the children of Israel and say...’ It’s all through those five books of the Bible.

Let’s go forward from here. Let’s look at something that is very important for us to realize concerning the Pharisees, also found in the book of Matthew Here’s one of those verses that is not translated correctly in the *King James Version*. This is why you also need to understand about the Old Testament. In the Old Testament there were judges. When there was a problem they were to come to the judge. The judge was to make decisions based on the Word of God. We have all the statutes and the judgments that are given in the book of the Law—what to do in case of murder, thievery, animal goring, etc; all of those are there.

All of the judges were obliged to follow the Word of God. All of those who had a judgment given were obliged to follow the judgment that was given out of the Scriptures.

Matthew 23:1: “Then Jesus spoke to the multitudes and to His disciples...” This is also a semi-difficult Scripture to understand, because some people say, ‘Whatever the Pharisees did we are also to do.’ They don’t understand how this really is. Here is the correct translation and you need to read it carefully:

Verse 2: “Saying, ‘The scribes and the Pharisees have sat down on Moses’ seat *as judges.*’” Moses’ seat was where the rabbi would sit when he was to make a judgment based upon the Word of God. They had a Moses’ seat in every synagogue.

He was to read only the Scriptures. That's important to understand.

Verse 3: "Therefore, every judgment..." Stop right here. The word judgment in the Greek means *judgment*, so that is why in order to clarify what's going on, I put *as judges* in italics so you would know what is going on.

"...that they tell you to observe, observe and do..." (v 3). All of those judgments had to be based on the Word of God. We will see next they had *traditions*. Traditions are what caused most of the problems in the New Testament.

"...But do not do according to their works..." (v 3). What are their works? *The works of their traditions!* He is saying here, 'Don't do *their* traditions.'

"...for they say and do not. For they bind heavy burdens and hard to bear, and lay *them* on the shoulders of men; but they will not move them with *one of their own fingers*" (vs 3-4).

Mark 7 is another difficult Scripture. I'll just summarize it. This has nothing to do with clean or unclean meats. It has to do with clean or unclean hands before you eat. Again the Pharisees—I want you to be alert to that.

Mark 7:3: "For the Pharisees and all the Jews, holding fast **to the tradition** of the elders..." *Tradition!*

As we go along here, we are going to find that the Jews put *their traditions* ahead of the Word of God. Today the Catholics and the Protestants do the same thing and they say they are obeying God.

Last night I'm glad we had a good rain-out on Halloween. Our doorbell did not ring one time. All those out there doing that think they are doing the will of God, because the church says it's okay to do. But it's a teaching of men and it's a teaching of *tradition*.

That's why we have the book, *Occult Holidays or God's Holy Days, Which?* As I've mentioned before, some people when they first see the skull there they think the book has occultism in it. If that happens to you, what you need to do is say, 'No, this just simply is on the cover showing two very simple things: ***the way of man is death and the way of God is life!*** That's the message for the cover. We just read that they washed their hands thoroughly before eating when they come from the marketplace, and so forth.

Verse 4: "Even *when coming* from the market, they do not eat unless they *first* wash themselves..." What if you're hungry on the way home?

There have been a couple of times I've gone over to Costco to get some things. I remember getting some hotdogs. We get turkey dogs to feed our dogs instead of getting canned dog food to feed the dogs and they live a long time and they are healthy because they are eating good food, rather than the leftover garbage that they put in the cans or the dry dog food.

"...And there are many other things that they have received to observe, *such as the* washing of cups and pots and brass utensils and tables. For this reason, the Pharisees and the scribes questioned Him, *saying...* [I wonder how they said this] ...'Why don't Your disciples walk according to the tradition of the elders... [bad boys, transgressing the elders] ...but eat bread with unwashed hands?'" (vs 4-5). My, what a high crime that was! You might get a speck of dirt in your food.

When I'd come back from Costco I'd be hungry so I'd just open up the plastic from the hot dogs and I'd eat a hot dog or two on the way home. I took my dirty hand from the steering wheel to do that. One time I had to wash the steering wheel because I got it dirty from the food.

Verse 6: "And He answered and said to them, 'Well did Isaiah prophesy concerning you hypocrites, as it is written, "This people honors Me with their lips, but their hearts are far away from Me."' Important—***God is interested in the heart***, not just the profession.

This becomes of paramount importance and answers the question: Can you worship the God of Truth with the traditions of men? **No!** That's why God has given His Word.

Verse 7: "But in vain do they worship Me, teaching *for* doctrine the commandments of men." How do they do that to make it sound authoritative? The same way they do with the traditions of Catholicism, Judaism and Protestantism today.

Verse 8: "For leaving the commandment of God, you hold fast the tradition of men, *such as* the washing of pots and cups; and you practice many other things like *this*. Then He said to them, **'Full well do you reject the commandment of God, so that you may observe your own tradition.** For Moses said..." (vs 8-10).

Remember Acts 15, we're talking about Moses and circumcision and what they told the Gentiles. So, here is Moses. Which Moses did Jesus quote? That may sound like a strange question. The reason is, because the Jews call *their traditions* 'the Law of Moses.' That's why you need to read the book: *Judaism, Revelation of Moses or Religion of Men?* Very important! I'm going to read a couple

things here out of the *Code of Jewish Law* which they say is the Law of Moses.

“...‘Full well do you reject the commandment of God, so that you may observe your *own* tradition. For Moses said, “Honor your father and your mother”; and, “The one who speaks evil of father or mother, let him be put to death.” But you say, “If a man say to *his* father or mother, ‘Whatever benefit you might receive from me is corban...’”” (vs 9-11).

‘Oh, I’m self-righteous, I’ve given this to the temple as a donation and I don’t have anything to give you.’

“...(That is, *set aside as a gift to God*), “he is not obligated to help his parents.” And you excuse him from doing anything for his father or his mother, **nullifying the authority of the Word of God by your tradition...**” (vs 11-13). Remember that: ***no teaching of man can supplant any teaching of God!*** Everything that Moses gave was the Word of God.

“...which you have passed down; and you practice many *traditions* such as this” (v 13).

(go to the next track)

Here’s a very interesting book, *Code of Jewish Law*. In the back of the book *Judaism: Revelation of Moses or Religion of Men?* we’ve quoted many of the laws that they have. One of the things that forced the Jews to put all their traditions down, was when the temple was destroyed.

- How were they going to worship God?
- How were they going to be accepted of God?

They couldn’t go offer sacrifices anymore because the temple was gone. God destroyed it! All of those were temporary anywhere. The Jews rejected Jesus so they didn’t understand any of the spiritual aspects of true Christianity based on the Word of God.

Here is a perfect example of how the Jews take a Scripture and then turn it into a tradition that is very hard to follow. There are hundreds and hundreds of laws to do with Judaism where we just read ‘you reject the Word of God with your tradition.’ There are four Volumes within this one book, and hundreds and hundreds of laws to do with Judaism. Or, as we just read, *you reject the Word of God with your traditions!*

from: *Code of Jewish Law*—Vol. 1:  
(emphasis is the speaker’s throughout)

Chapter 1: Rules of Conduct Upon Rising in the Morning

The whole purpose of the traditions was to be a fence around the Ten Commandments so you wouldn’t break the Ten Commandments. But what

happened, they made the fence so heavy and thick with their traditions that you couldn’t understand the Ten Commandments. , what you have with the Holy Spirit of God *within you*, you keep them from your heart, motivated by the Spirit, and then the external becomes acceptable. They’re trying to make the internal acceptable by doing external things. When you sin, you need to repent. That is a spiritual thing. So, you have to understand the difference between the spiritual and the physical.

1. “I have set the Lord always before me”  
(Psa. 16:8)

What does that mean to you? *That means you are going to always do the way of God! God’s way! His way!* Just like we are doing here. We are putting together different Scriptures in order to understand, just like with the *Fourteen Rules of Bible Study*. That’s where you need to begin with everything. There’s another one that you can learn from General Patton: *read the enemy’s book* so you know what they are thinking and doing.

Here, according to Jewish tradition, is what you need to do **if** you always set the Lord before you:

The aforesaid is a cardinal principle in the Torah...

What does Torah mean? *Law*. Remember, there is the Torah of Jewish law and there is the Torah of God, which are the laws of God. What I’m going to read here, you do not find in the Law of God.

...and a fundamental rule of life among the pious....

Who are the pious? *The ones who follow the traditions!*

...For the attitude and conversation of a man when he is in the presence of the king are not the same when he is in his own home among his family and his intimates.

Here you’re going to see logic where they present a hypothesis and you come to a conclusion. Understand this about logic: *All logic is not truth but all truth is logical!* We’ll see it.

In the presence of royalty a man takes special care of his speech and demeanor be refined and correct. How much more should a man be careful of his deeds and his words, realizing that the Great King, the Holy One, blessed be He, whose glory fills the whole universe, is always standing by him and observing all his doings as it is said in Scriptures: “‘Can a man hide himself in secret places that I cannot see him,’ says the Lord. ‘Do I not fill heaven and earth?’” (Jer. 23:24).

Bearing this in mind, he will acquire a feeling of reverence and humility and he will be ashamed and afraid to do anything wrong.

Based on *fear and negativism*. God wants you to keep the Sabbath *Holy*. All of these were so he could be devotedly serving God all day long.

Chapter 2: Hand Washing in the Morning

1. Since every man upon rising from his sleep in the morning is like a newborn creature, insofar as the worship of the Creator is concerned, he should prepare himself for worship by washing his hands out of vessel, just as the priests used to wash their hands daily out of the wash-basin before performing their service in the temple.

That sounds like a very pious thing to do. Are they priests? *No!* Are they at the temple? *No!*

This hand-washing is based on the biblical verse (Psalms 26:6-7): "I will wash my hands in innocency, and I will compass Thy altar, O Lord; that I may publish with a loud voice," etc. There is another reason given by the Kabbalists (Zohar, quoted in Beth Joseph)...

quoting tradition to prove tradition

...for this morning hand-washing: when a man is asleep, the Holy soul departs from his body, and an unclean spirit descends upon him.

Where is that in the Bible? *No!* So, they are taking the Word of God and adding all of these things to it, just exactly like Jesus said, 'You make void the commandments of God and worship Him in vain.' Here is what he is to do:

When rising from sleep, the unclean spirit departs from his entire body...

Did you know you're demon possessed all night?

...except from his fingers, and does not depart until one spills water upon them three times alternately....

Take your right hand, pour it on your left. Then you take your left hand and pour it on your right. You do this three times. Once is not enough, twice is not enough, three times is what is required. If you do it four times, you are really righteous.

One is not allowed to walk four cubits (six feet) without having one's hands washed, except in cases of extreme necessity.

Right after that:

2. The first garment which a male must put on, is the *tallit katan* (the small four-fringed garment...)

Have you ever seen an Orthodox Jew that he has this little apron and it has little taluses on it. I remember one time on Southwest Airlines to an airport in Chicago. As I got out here is this Jewish man with a 'kippah' over his head, with his prayer book reciting the prayers, with his two little sons, wondering what's going on. He was making them cite the prayer. This is supposed to make him righteous. That is called *a burden*. Keep that in mind.

...for one is not allowed to walk even as much as four cubits without having a fringed garment on. But as his hands are still unwashed, he may not say the benediction on putting it on.

So, there's a special benediction for this and that and the other thing.

3. The ritual hand-washing in the morning is performed as follows: Take a cup of water with the right hand and put it in the left; pour some water upon the right hand. Take the cup back in the right hand and pour some water on the left. This performance is repeated three times. It is best to pour the water over the hands as far as the wrists, but in case of emergency it suffices if the water covers the hands up to the joints of the fingers.

Focusing all on physical things.

One must also wash his face in honor of the Creator, as it is said (Genesis 9:6): "For in the image of God He hath made the man." One must also rinse the mouth, because we must pronounce the Great Name in purity and cleanliness. Afterwards the hands are dried. Special care must be taken to dry the face thoroughly.

So, we can't even thank God for being alive in the morning unless you do all of this.

Do the Jews do it today? *Yes, the Orthodox do!* That's why you have the ultra-Orthodox, the Orthodox, the Conservative, and the liberal Jewish congregations. Even the liberal Jews will eat ham if it's blessed by a rabbi.

Let's see what else they have here. All of this is about becoming pure. They had so many benedictions they had to say, it was incredible. I'll read just a couple of these and I'll let you read it in the back of the Judaism book.

Chapter 6: Laws Relating to Benedictions

1. Before uttering any benediction, must make sure which one it is so that when we mention God's name, which is the most important part of the benediction, we shall know what we are thanking Him for. It is forbidden to do anything else while reciting a benediction; and it must not be uttered hurriedly; but attention must be paid to the meaning of the words. And this is what the "Book of the Pious" says:

"When we wash our hands, or utter a benediction over fruit or over a precept—benediction, which everybody knows, we must direct our attention to praise the name of our Creator, Who is wondrously kind to us in giving us the fruit of the bread of which we partake and in commanding us to perform this precept. We must not do it automatically out of sheer habit, spouting words thoughtlessly. On account of this, the anger of God was kindled..."

That's how they interpret all of these.

2. When we say a benediction our mouths must be free of saliva, nor should anything else be in our mouths; for it is said (Psa. 71:8): "My mouth should be filled with Thy praise."

If you have a crumb of something in your mouth, you're not praising God. This is the 'Law of Moses' that the Jews keep—their tradition. ***When the Bible talks about the Law of Moses, it's talking about what God gave to Moses!*** Let's see what Christ said concerning them. Notice how Christ condemned all of these things:

Matthew 23:13: "But woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you devour widows' houses, and as a pretext you offer prayers of great length. Because of this, you shall receive *the* greater judgment. Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you shut up the kingdom of heaven before men; for neither do you yourselves enter, nor do you allow those who are entering to enter. Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you travel the sea and the land to make one proselyte, and when he has become one, you make him twofold more a son of Gehenna than yourselves" (vs 13-15).

All of these things added off. This applies to all the traditions of Catholicism, Protestantism, Hinduism, Buddhism, whatever other kind of 'religion' there is.

Verse 16: "Woe to you, blind guides, who say, 'Whoever shall swear by the temple, it is not binding; but whoever shall swear by the gold of the

temple, he is obligated *to fulfill* his oath.'" Is the gold more valuable than the temple?

Verse 17: "*You* fools and blind! For which is greater, the gold, or the temple which sanctifies the gold? And *you say*, 'Whoever shall swear by the altar, it is not binding; but whoever shall swear by the gift that is upon it, he is obligated *to fulfill* his oath.' You fools and blind! For which is greater, the gift, or the altar which sanctifies the gift?" (vs 17-19).

He calls them fools and blind guides all the way, v 25: "Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you cleanse the outside of the cup and the dish, but within you are full of extortion and excess."

The whole lesson is this: true Christianity is *conversion from within*: the cleansing of the heart, the cleansing of the mind, with the Spirit of God, not the external physical things that they added to the laws of God. Here is what Jesus said to them. Who were the ones that brought up the problem of circumcision in Acts 15? *The Pharisees!*

Verse 26: "Blind Pharisees! First cleanse the inside of the cup and the dish, so that the outside may also become clean. Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you are like whited sepulchers, which indeed appear beautiful *on the* outside, but within are full of the bones of the dead, and of all uncleanness. Likewise, you also outwardly appear to men *to be* righteous, but within you are full of hypocrisy and lawlessness. Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you build the sepulchers of the prophets, and adorn the tombs of the righteous; and you say, 'If we had been in the days of our fathers, we would not have been partakers with them in the blood of the prophets.' So then, **you are testifying against yourselves**, that you are the sons of those who killed the prophets" (vs 26-31). You can read the rest of it.

Quite an indictment! Why did I go to the length to do this? Remember, the book of Acts was written by Luke; he was under the supervision of the Apostle Paul.

Acts 15:4: "And when they... [Paul and Barnabas and those who came with them] ...came to Jerusalem, **they were welcomed by the Church and the apostles and the elders...**" *Pharisees didn't welcome them!* We'll see there is a reason. Remember what Jesus said to them and their conduct.

"...and they declared all the things that God had done with them. But there stood up certain of those who believed..." (vs 4-5). They didn't believe to the point of conversion. They didn't believe the

central doctrine concerning circumcision of the heart.

“...who were of the sect of the Pharisees, saying, ‘It is obligatory to circumcise them, and to command *them* to keep the Law of Moses’” (v 5). It sounds like they had to keep the Law of Moses for circumcision. What did God have to do to show them concerning circumcision? *Acts 10 is the vision that was given to the Apostle Peter!*

Acts 10:1: “Now *there* was in Caesarea a certain man named Cornelius, a centurion of a band that is called *the Italian band*. A devout man who also feared God with all his house, both in giving many alms to the people and *in* beseeching God continually *in prayer*” (vs 1-2).

According to the Pharisees he was not acceptable to even enter into the synagogue because he was not circumcised in the flesh. So, God is intervening and He is showing and telling us something very, very important. One of the things that had to be broken by God Himself was the grip of *the traditions* of the Pharisees and Judaism.

Peter had the dream: Unclean animals came down three times in a big sheet. He’s told to rise and eat and Peter said, ‘No, I’ve never eaten anything common or unclean.’ Then he went down and there were three men there who had been sent by Cornelius.

Verse 19: “Then, as Peter was pondering the vision, the Spirit said to him, ‘Behold, three men are seeking you; Now arise *and* go down, and go forth with them, doubting nothing, because I have sent them’” (vs 19-20).

God worked it out for them to go. They didn’t know that God had sent him because who was it that told him to go? *Cornelius!* Because an angel said to send them to Peter. Then they said, ‘Cornelius, a righteous man,’ and so forth, so then he went on down.

Verse 25: “And as Peter was coming in... [Because Cornelius had a large house and a lot of people there, all of his intimate friends and everything.] ...Cornelius met him *and* fell at *his* feet, worshiping *him*.” Peter said, ‘That’s a right smart thing for you to do to the first pope. You better worship me and kiss my ring.’ **NO!**

Verse 26: “But Peter raised him up, saying, ‘Stand up, for I myself am also a man.’ And as he was talking with him, he went in and found many gathered together. And he said to them... [the whole crowd] ...‘You know that it is unlawful for a man who is a Jew to associate with or come near to anyone of another race...’” (vs 26-28). That’s what you find in the *Code of Jewish Law* to this day.

God had to show it to them. It couldn’t be any teaching of any man: “...But God has shown me *that* no man should be called common or unclean. For this reason, I also came without objection when I was sent for. I ask therefore, for what purpose did you send for me?” (vs 28-29). Then Cornelius told him about it and everything that was going on.

Verse 34: “Then Peter opened *his* mouth *and* said, ‘Of a truth I perceive that God is not a respecter of persons, But in every nation the one who fears Him and works righteousness is acceptable to Him. The word that He sent to the children of Israel, preaching the gospel of peace through Jesus Christ (He is Lord of all), you have knowledge of; which declaration came throughout the whole of Judea, beginning from Galilee, after the baptism that John proclaimed, *concerning* Jesus, Who was from Nazareth: how God anointed Him with *the* Holy Spirit and with power, *and* He went about doing good and healing all who were oppressed by the devil, because God was with Him. And we are witnesses of all *the* things that He did both in the country of the Jews and in Jerusalem. They killed Him by hanging *Him* on a tree. *But* God raised Him up the third day, and showed Him openly, not to all the people, but to witnesses who had been chosen before by God, to *those of* us who did eat and drink with Him after He had risen from *the* dead. And He commanded us to preach to the people, and to fully testify that it is He Who has been appointed by God *to be* Judge of *the* living and *the* dead. To Him all the prophets bear witness...’” (vs 34-43)—and so forth.

I go through this to show why Peter was teaching them the things of God and Peter knew what was right. Notice what happened. The Italians, were they Gentile? *Yes!* Were they circumcised? *No!* That was a big problem for the Jews who still believed in the physical circumcision and especially the Pharisees who said it was obligatory. ‘They can’t be saved.’

Did God give the Holy Spirit to them? *Yes*, He did. What is that? Is that not the beginning of salvation? Were they circumcised? *No!* Peter didn’t say—because he had about six others with him—‘All right, all you men go over here in this other room and we’re going to have a circumcision party here, and I’ll come back in three more days and I’ll tell you more about it.’ **NO!**

Verse 44: “While Peter was still speaking these words, the Holy Spirit came upon all those who were listening to the message.” God intervened to show that physical circumcision, even though proclaimed by Moses and the fathers, was not required for the Gentiles. The removal of a portion of flesh on the eighth day or even after that, does not change the heart. It is the Spirit of God that changes

the heart, not the physical act of something, especially with circumcision.

Verse 45: “And the believers from the circumcision were astonished...” What this did, this lowered in the eyes of God from the ways that the Jews thought. The Jews thought they were above everybody else, and to this very day many of them think the same thing. So, God was showing, ‘*Whom I choose, I choose and no one is above anybody else by a physical thing.*’

What did Paul write in Galatians? ‘*If you are Christ’s, then you are Abraham’s seed and heirs according to the promise, where there is neither male nor female, circumcision or uncircumcision, Scythian or Barbarian, Jew or Greek.*’

Why? Because ***conversion is of the mind of the heart.*** If you lost your hand, would that change your heart? *No*, it wouldn’t change your heart, but you would miss your hand. It’s not going to change your heart and mind.

“...were astonished, as many as had come with Peter, that upon the Gentiles also the gift of the Holy Spirit had been poured out; For they heard them speak in *other* languages and magnify God. Then Peter responded *by saying*, ‘Can anyone forbid water, that these should not be baptized...’” (vs 45-47). He didn’t say *circumcise*, he said ***baptism***. What does baptism do?

“...who have also received the Holy Spirit as we *did*?” And he commanded them to be baptized in the name of the Lord. Then they besought him to remain *for* a number of days” (vs 47-48). He stayed there with them.

If anyone wants to know some of the most mistranslated verses and assumptions, Col. 2 is it. Colossians 2:10: “And you are complete in Him...” That means:

- you don’t need prayer shawls
- women do not need to wear veils over their head
- men do not need to be circumcised
- you don’t have to have hand-washing in the morning, or the afternoon or the evening, as the Jews prescribe

***You are complete in Christ!*** That’s why we have to take the whole Bible and put the whole Bible together to know the full completeness of it.

Verse 11: “In Whom you have also been circumcised with *the* circumcision not made by hands, in putting off the body of the sins of the flesh by the circumcision of Christ.” There is ***a spiritual circumcision of the heart***, which is greater than the physical circumcision of the flesh.

Circumcision of the flesh was required with the Old Covenant, but that has been fulfilled with the ***spiritual circumcision of the Spirit of God*** through repentance and baptism.

Verse 12: “Having been buried with Him in baptism, by which you have also been raised with *Him* through the inner working of God, Who raised Him from the dead. For you, who were *once* dead in *your* sins and in the uncircumcision of your flesh, **He has now made alive with Him**, having forgiven all your trespasses” (vs 12-13). That is the ***circumcision of the Spirit, the circumcision of the heart.***

There’s more we could add to it, but we’ll just take care of it here. Paul is writing particularly to the Jews here. To this day the Jews say they’re the chosen people. That is not true. Who are the chosen people today? ***Called, chosen and faithful—true Christians!***

Romans 2:17: “Behold, you are called a Jew, and you yourself rest in the law, and boast in God.” They do. They say, ‘Judaism is the whole Old Testament. By the way, we’ve got it explained in this book, the *Code of Jewish Law.*’ But that’s not in the Bible. ‘*Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every Word of God!*’ Not the teachings of men so the Jews would exalt themselves.

Verse 18: “And know *His* will, and approve of the things that are more excellent, being instructed out of the law; And are persuaded *that* you yourself are a guide of the blind, a light for those in darkness. An instructor of *the* foolish, a teacher of babes, having the form of the knowledge and of the truth *contained* in the law” (vs 18-20)—which means they didn’t understand the law.

Verse 21: “You, then, who are teaching another, do you not teach yourself also?...” This is a great and tremendous principle for any who are going to be teaching. You are to teach yourself also. There is not the teacher up here and all of the people down here and those who are the teachers are to look down upon the people, rule the people. *No!* Those who are teachers are to learn, have God teach them, study the Word of God, rightly put it together so that the brethren can be taught. That all of us together can grow in grace and knowledge. It is not a caste system—we and they, the equal and more-equal—*NO!* This is what Paul was saying here.

“...You who preach, ‘Do not steal,’ are you stealing? You who say, ‘Do not commit adultery,’ are you committing adultery? You who abhor idols, are you committing sacrilege?” (vs 21-22). *Yes, they are with their traditions!*

Verse 23: “You who boast in law, are you dishonoring God through your transgression of the

law? For through you the name of God is blasphemed among the Gentiles, exactly as it is written” (vs 23-24).

There was a tremendous hatred for the Jews. Have you ever read the book, *From Sabbath to Sunday*—about *the hatred of the Jews*—by Samuele Bacchiocchi? That’s something! That’s why the Catholics and the Protestants don’t want anything to do with the laws of God, because they think that you are cursed if you do, because of the way the Jews were. That was passed down through the Catholic Church.

Verse 25, for the Jew: “For on the one hand, circumcision profits if you are observing *the* law... [What is the opposite of it? If you are not observing the law, the circumcision profits nothing.] ...on the other hand, **if you are a transgressor of the law, your circumcision has become uncircumcision.**”

I don’t think that many people really understand what a fiery thing that Paul wrote here concerning the Jews that their circumcision becomes uncircumcision. That’s why some of the rabbis have said, ‘Jesus we understand; Paul we’ll never forgive.’

Verse 26, here is a great lesson: “Therefore, if the uncircumcised is keeping the requirements of the law, shall not his uncircumcision be reckoned for circumcision? And shall not the uncircumcised, who by nature is fulfilling the law, judge you, who, with *the* letter and circumcision, *are* a transgressor of the law?” (vs 26-27). That is an unthinkable, blasphemous statement to those who are traditional Jews.

Verse 28: “For he is not a Jew who *is one* outwardly, neither *is* that circumcision which is external in *the* flesh; rather, **he is a Jew who is one inwardly, and circumcision is of the heart, in the spirit and not in *the* letter; whose praise *is* not from men but from God” (vs 28-29).**

Romans 3:1: “What then *is* the advantage of the Jew, or what *is* the profit of circumcision?” That was true only until the destruction of the temple. There is no advantage or profit to being a Jew today in rejecting the New Testament, even though you have the Old Testament. Most of the Messianic Jews today cling to so many of their traditions, that their version of Christianity is warped and formed by too many traditions. I know of only one Jew who has completely forsaken all *traditions* of the Jews, and that is Michael Heiss.

There is no profit, v 2: “Much in every way. Primarily, in that they were entrusted with the oracles of God.” But they rejected the oracles of Christ.

We have some more Scriptures to fulfill. To require physical circumcision of Gentiles, as the Pharisees wanted, was so that they would come under their jurisdiction so they could compel them to keep the code of Jewish law.

Does this include Pharisees in the Church? *Yes, it does!* Who was the one who showed that circumcision was not required? *God did!* Gave the Holy Spirit. God in the One Who did that. So therefore, to require all men to be circumcised in order to be saved ***has nothing to do with the circumcision of the heart and mind!***

In the case of Timothy because his father was a Greek and his mother was a Jew, Paul had him circumcised because of the problems that it would cause without him being circumcised. The Jews would not understand it otherwise, the ones that he would be coming to. I suppose that was the last one that Paul was associated with the physical circumcision.

But here it makes it clear: Circumcision of the heart is what God wants. He wants purification of the mind and the heart, not purification of the flesh. Obviously we are to be clean, not unclean.

***We are to keep the commandments of God in the Spirit and in Truth, have them written in our hearts and in our minds. That’s what the circumcision of the heart is all about!***

#### Scriptural References:

- 1) Acts 15:1-5, 19-20
- 2) Matthew 4:3
- 3) Deuteronomy 8:1-3
- 4) Matthew 4:4
- 5) Matthew 23:1-4
- 6) Mark 7:3-13
- 7) Matthew 23:13-19, 25-31
- 8) Acts 15:4-5
- 9) Acts 10:1-2, 19, 25-29, 34-48
- 10) Colossians 2:10-13
- 11) Romans 2:17-29
- 12) Romans 3:1-2

#### Also referenced:

#### From the *Holy Bible in Its Original Order*:

- Appendix A: *Fourteen Rules for Bible Study*
- Appendix Z: *Understanding Paul’s Difficult Scriptures*

#### Books:

- *Judaism: Revelation of Moses or Religion of Men?* by Philip Neal
- *Occult Holidays or God’s Holy Days, Which?* by Fred R. Coulter
- *Code of Jewish Law* by Ganzfried and Goldin
- *From Sabbath to Sunday* by Samuele Bacchiocchi

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