

Circumcision

Under the New Covenant

Compiled by Rachel Cory-Kuehl, March 9, 2014

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Scripture is from New King James Version unless otherwise noted.

1 Corinthians 7:18-20 [The Apostle Paul wrote] “Was anyone called while uncircumcised? Let him not be circumcised. Circumcision is **nothing** and uncircumcision is **nothing**, but keeping the commandments of God is what matters. Let each one remain in the same calling in which he was called.”

Now that you know where I’m coming from . . .

THE SIGN OF THE COVENANT

When the LORD made a covenant with Abraham (*Gen. 17:11*), He commanded that Abraham and all the males of his household be circumcised. Four hundred thirty years later, in Egypt, the LORD commanded that only circumcised males were to eat of the Passover. The command to circumcise newborn males on the 8th day of life, was repeated more than once by the LORD to Moses (*Leviticus 12:2-3*). Abraham, Isaac, Jacob and the Children of Israel maintained a long history of circumcision for males.

NOTE: The circumcision commanded of Abraham was not the more drastic procedure done later, under the Pharisees. You can research that one for yourselves.

Exodus 12:48 “And when a stranger dwells with you and wants to keep the Passover to the LORD, let all his males be circumcised, and then let him come near and keep it; and he shall be as a native of the land. For no uncircumcised person shall eat it.”

PETER MEETS CORNELIUS (Acts Chapters 10 and 11)

Peter is praying on the roof of Simon's house at Joppa. He receives a vision from the LORD. A great sheet is lowered from heaven by its four corners, holding all sorts of "unclean" animals, birds and creeping things (*Lev. Cpt 11*). He hears a voice. "Get up, Peter." "Kill and eat." Peter objects strenuously, "Not so, Lord! For I have never eaten anything common or unclean."

The voice spoke to Peter again, "What God has cleansed you must not call common." This was repeated three times, before the sheet disappeared up into heaven. While Peter was wondering what the vision meant, the servants of Cornelius called out from the gate, asking for him. The Spirit said to him, "Behold, three men are seeking you. Arise therefore, go down and go with them, doubting nothing; for I have sent them."

The next day Peter with several brethren, accompanied the two servants and one soldier to Caesarea, to the home of Cornelius, a Roman Centurion of the Italian Regiment. Cornelius had been praying and searching to know the true God. Three days before Peter received his vision of the animals, Cornelius had himself seen an angel, who instructed him, "Send men to Joppa, and send for Simon whose surname is Peter." "He will tell you what you must do" (*Acts 10:3-7*).

Peter tells Cornelius, "You know how unlawful it is for a Jewish man to keep company with or go to one of another nation. **But God has shown me that I should not call any man common or unclean.**" So THAT was the gist of the vision with the sheet. It was NOT about food. It was about uncircumcised human beings, and God's invitation to make them part of His kingdom and His covenant.

Let's detour for just a moment to look at a few of those "laws" forbidding the association of Israelites with the uncircumcised.

Exodus 34:12 "Take heed to yourself, lest you make a covenant with the inhabitants of the land where you are going, lest it be a snare in your midst." (See also Exo 23:31-32.)

Exodus 23:32 "You shall make no covenant with them or with their gods." (NAS)

Deuteronomy 7:2 "You shall make no covenant with them and show no favor to them."

NOTE: There were also extensions of this command in the Mishna (the Oral Torah). I won't go into the Oral Torah, except to say that the Oral Torah contained many additions to, and extrapolations of the written Law. Jesus railed many times against what He called "your traditions."

In that ancient culture, to share a meal with another *implied* covenant. In the Ancient Middle East you would never share the salt with someone you did not trust. To do so meant that you could not henceforth seek to harm that person. It was called a “covenant of salt.”

Did you know that every sacrifice to Yahweh was to be “salted with salt.”

Reference: “The Salt Covenant,” by H. Clay Trumbull, Impact Christian Books, Inc. 1999

Back to our story of Peter and Cornelius:

As Peter told the Gospel story to the household of Cornelius, the Holy Spirit was poured out upon “all those who heard the word.” Peter and all of the Jews who had come with him “**were astonished**, as many as came with Peter, because the gift of the Holy Spirit had been poured out on the Gentiles also.” Peter commanded that they immediately be baptized in water, in the name of Yeshua Messiah. *Peter did NOT demand they should be circumcised.*

Now let’s detour, to talk about Paul’s experience.

Saul was a devout Pharisee (*Phil. 3:4-6*). He was almost breathing fire against the followers of Yeshua, so great was his righteous indignation. The ruling Sanhedrin gave him papers, allowing him to arrest and march back to Jerusalem, any Jewish followers of the new heresy (of the resurrection) for trial and possible execution. On his way to Damascus, Saul was stopped in his tracks by a face to face encounter with the risen Christ. The glory left him blind for three days, until a believer came to heal him. After recovering from his shock, he began to preach Christ in every synagogue. Then he had to flee for his own life. He disappeared into Arabia for 3 years. Then he visited Jerusalem for 15 days to meet with Peter and James. Then it was back to Syria and Cilicia for 14 more years. During all that time, he did not go up to Jerusalem for any Feast days, and he did not offer any sacrifices.

After the death of Stephen, many who believed in Jesus fled Jerusalem and Judea. Where ever they went, they told the good news of the risen Christ. When they came to Antioch, they were preaching the word only to Jews. Then some began preaching to the Hellenists (Greeks and Jews who had adopted Greek ways) “and the hand of the Lord was with them, and a great number believed and turned to the Lord” (*Acts 11:20-21*).

The Council at Jerusalem heard about this, and sent out Barnabas. Barnabas departed for Tarsus to find Saul. He brought Saul with him to Antioch to help in the work, building up the church there. It was at Antioch that Paul and Barnabas were “called” to their first missionary journey. And that is where the next part of our story begins.

NOTE: Paul is Greek for the Hebrew name Shaul (Saul). It is the SAME name.

Peter joined Paul and Barnabas at Antioch. They were preaching to new Gentile converts, but they were NOT circumcising them. Oh my!

The apostles and brethren in Judea heard about all of this and “certain men - believing Pharisees,” made it their business to set things straight. They came to Antioch saying, “It is necessary to circumcise them, and to command them to keep the [entire] law of Moses.”

Acts 15:1 “And certain men came down from Judea and taught the brethren, ‘Unless you are circumcised according to the custom of Moses, you cannot be saved.’”

NOTE: These men from Judea were NOT sent by James or by the Jerusalem council (Acts 15:24).

Peter was so afraid of these guys that he quit eating with the Gentile believers. Paul then rebuked him for being a flip-flopper (*Gal. 2:11-12*). Paul was right of course. Peter was treating the Gentile believers like unclean foreigners - not like “fellow citizens” of the commonwealth of Israel (*Gal. 2:11-14, Eph. 2:12*).

Paul and Peter had no small dispute with the visiting Pharisees. The issue of circumcision wasn’t going away without some official ruling, and so we read about the meeting of the Jerusalem Council (*Acts 15:1-2*).

Acts 15:5 [At the council meeting] “But some of **the sect of the Pharisees** who believed rose up saying, ‘It is necessary to circumcise them, and to command them to keep the law of Moses.’”

“When Peter came up to Jerusalem” for this Council meeting, “those of the circumcision contended with him.” You ate with them!!! - with uncircumcised men! That’s against the law!

So Peter told the whole story from the beginning, about his vision of the sheet, about Cornelius’ angel visit, and about those of his household being filled with the Holy Spirit (without benefit of circumcision). “Who was I that I could withstand God?” Peter asked.

From the evidence so far sited, I conclude that one may be filled with the Spirit, WITHOUT physical circumcision. And one may be baptized, also WITHOUT circumcision. Physical circumcision is therefore NOT a requirement for acceptance into full citizenship in God’s “Commonwealth of Israel.”

THE LETTER FROM THE JERUSALEM COUNCIL

Acts 15:14 “Since we [the Jerusalem Council] have heard that some who went out from us have troubled you with words unsettling your souls saying, ‘You must be circumcised and keep the law’ – to whom we gave no such commandment ...” (Also Acts 15:24).

The whole dispute about circumcision was a dispute about HOW to induct Gentile converts into “the commonwealth of Israel” (Eph. 2:12).

The believing Pharisees were teaching that every Gentile convert must be circumcised and take a vow to keep ALL the commands of Moses, and all of the added laws (the “Oral Torah”).

It was NOT just about circumcision.

Most folks do not realize that a person of another nation *could* come under the Sinai Covenant. They simply had to be instructed for two years, then vow to keep the entire “Law” - both written and oral, and then be circumcised. It is the same today. The only difference is that there is no Temple at Jerusalem today, with a priesthood, so the Laws involving those things cannot yet be obeyed as originally written.

Under the First Covenant, it was unlawful for an Israelite to enter into any covenant with an uncircumcised man (Exo. 23:32, Deut. 7:2). From this had arisen the “law” that the circumcised were not to “eat with” the uncircumcised - because eating a meal together implied a covenant (especially if they shared the salt). Also an Israelite was not to give his daughter in marriage to an uncircumcised man (Gen. 34:14).

Paul and Barnabas (with Titus) traveled to Jerusalem for the Council meeting to debate THIS issue. **Should physical circumcision be required for the new converts from the Gentiles?** Obviously the believing Jews at Jerusalem still considered themselves Jews and Israelites. They did not regard themselves as something new. They had simply found the Messiah (of Israel) and wanted to tell everyone the news.

At the conclusion of the meeting, the council issued a letter, “to the Gentiles in Antioch, Syria, and Cilicia.” (These were areas, not individual congregations.) All were places where Paul had founded congregations. The letter from the Jerusalem Council did NOT require physical circumcision for new converts. Quite the contrary!

NOTE: The letter from the Jerusalem Council was sent only to congregations with large numbers of Gentile converts. It was not circulated throughout Judea, to congregations made up mostly of believing Jews. If this letter was primarily to tell Jews that the Law concerning circumcision was now to be considered non-binding for Jews who believed in Yeshua, why send it only to congregations of converted Gentiles?

Galatians 2:9 “and when James, Cephas, and John, who seemed to be pillars, perceived the grace that had been given to me, they gave me and Barnabas the right hand of fellowship, that we should go to the Gentiles and they to the circumcised.”

WHY DID PAUL CIRCUMCISE TIMOTHY?

Some confusion stems from the actions of Paul in circumcising Timothy (*Acts 16:3*). Why did Paul do that? Timothy’s father was a Greek. The relevant passage does not say that Paul circumcised Timothy because the LORD required it. No. Paul did it **to avoid lengthy confrontations with the Jews** who lived in the regions to which Paul and Barnabas were heading.

Acts 16:3 [Concerning Timothy] “Paul wanted to have him go on with him. And he took him and circumcised him because of the Jews who were in that region, for they all knew that his father was Greek.

Yes. They all knew that his father was Greek. But they also knew that his mother was a Jew (*Acts 16:1*). That meant they would regard Timothy as a Jew. They would want to know. If Timothy’s Greek father had prevented his son being circumcised at birth, then had Paul required his circumcision before taking him on as his pupil, trainee and traveling companion? **If they found out that Timothy was not circumcised, they would accuse Paul of teaching against the Law of Moses.** (In their thinking Paul should expect his own Jewish trainee to be circumcised.)

NOTE: This custom of maternal ancestry, had come about because of all the rape perpetrated by Babylonian, Greek and Roman conquerors.

The Jews had accused Paul of teaching that Jews should no longer circumcise their infant sons (*Acts 21:21*). The charge was false, but Paul wanted to head off criticism based on this issue.

If you compare this action of Paul, with his earlier treatment of Titus (who accompanied Paul to Jerusalem for the Council meeting) - you can see that physical circumcision was NOT something Paul believed should be required of Gentile converts. Paul called Titus, “a true son in our common faith” (*Titus 1:4*), yet he had NOT compelled Titus to be circumcised.

Galatians 2:1,3 “Then after fourteen years I went up again to Jerusalem with Barnabas, and also took Titus with me.”

“Yet not even Titus who was with me, being a Greek, was compelled to be circumcised.”

THE LETTER TO THE GALATIANS

Galatians is the first letter we have, written by Paul to a congregation of Gentile believers that he founded. He used a lot of space in that letter to deal with the issue of circumcision. I will put the references from Paul's letters in the order that he is believed to have written them.

Galatians 5:2 "Indeed I, Paul, say to you that if you become circumcised, Christ will profit you nothing."

Remember: It wasn't just the physical procedure. It was the process whereby a Gentile became a Jew. Just the physical circumcision, without a Rabi's official blessing, didn't count for anything. Paul is saying, "If you become a Jew, and go into that system for your salvation, then you are leaving Christ." Christians should NOT seek to become Jews.

I recently read an article by a Hebrew Roots teacher, who called the believing Gentiles "proselytes" - meaning students of Judaism, preparing to become Jews. He believed that Paul was only telling the converts not to become circumcised right away, but rather later, after the traditional two years of instruction in the Torah of Moses. I totally DISAGREE!

Galatians 5:3 "And I testify again to every man who becomes circumcised that he is a debtor to keep the whole law."

The "whole law" included the Ten Commandments and all of the commands of Moses found in the Torah - the first five books of the Bible, and all of the Oral Law - the commands added by the Pharisees.

Every Gentile who became a Jew by circumcision, took an Oath of Obedience, to the entire Torah. A "vow" or an "oath" was regarded as "a debt." Until one had fulfilled the oath completely, the debt remained. Yeshua Messiah was the only one who fulfilled the Oath of Obedience perfectly. He paid that debt - for us.

*In the days of Paul, circumcision was only one step in the conversion of a Gentile to Judaism. **Circumcision** was performed after the man had received at least **two years of instruction**, and **had taken the vow** to keep ALL of the written Law as well as the Oral Law (traditions) added by the Pharisees. **Today the vow includes a disavowal of Yeshua of Nazareth as the Messiah.** I don't know how soon after the death of Christ, that disavowal was added.*

Galatians 5:6 "For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision nor uncircumcision avails anything, but faith working through love."

Galatians 5:11 “And I, brethren, if I still preach circumcision, why do I still suffer persecution? Then the offense of the cross has ceased.”

Again. When Paul says, “if I still preach circumcision,” he is using the word “circumcision” to represent the whole process of Judaism with its sacrificial system of justification and cleansing. To paraphrase Paul: “If I still preach Judaism - that nothing has changed in the way a man can come to God and be clean from his sins - then why am I persecuted by the Jews? Why do they want me dead?”

They wanted Him dead because he was preaching something new!

Galatians 6:12 “Those who want to impress people [other Jews] by means of the flesh [by circumcising their male children and servants, and by offering sacrifices at the Temple] are trying to compel you to be circumcised. The only reason they do this is to avoid being persecuted for the cross of Christ.” (NIV)

NOTE: It seems that virtue-signaling has been around for a long, long time. People are so afraid of losing their social standing. They were afraid of the “circumcision party” back in Paul’s day, so they pressured others to accept circumcision.

Galatians 6:15 “For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision nor uncircumcision avails anything, but a new creation.”

It doesn’t matter if you’re a circumcised Jew, or an uncircumcised Gentile. It only matters if you are “in Christ Jesus.” He must circumcise your heart. He is the only one who can!

THE LETTERS TO THE CORINTHIANS

The first and second letters to the Corinthians are the 4th and 5th letters preserved for us, which were written by Paul to a congregation he had visited or founded.

1Corinthians 7:18-20 “Was anyone called while circumcised? Let him not become uncircumcised. Was anyone called while uncircumcised? Let him not be circumcised. Circumcision is nothing and uncircumcision is nothing, but keeping the commandments of God is what matters. Let each one remain in the same calling in which he was called.”

Paul could not have written more clearly. Physical circumcision is a non-issue, so far as the kingdom of God is concerned. He is telling Jews not to leave Judaism, and telling Gentile converts not to become Jews. Just keep the Ten Commandments of God, and look to Christ for the “new heart.”

NOTE: I don't want to get graphic here, but some Jews went through a stretching procedure to undo their circumcision, so they could participate nude, in the Roman games. The more drastic circumcision mandated by the Pharisees, made such reversal impossible.

THE LETTER TO THE ROMANS

Romans 2:26-29 “Therefore, if an uncircumcised man [a Gentile convert to the gospel] keeps the righteous requirements of the law, will not his uncircumcision be counted [in the sight of God] as circumcision?

And will not the physically uncircumcised, if he fulfills the law, judge you who, even with your written code and circumcision, are a transgressor of the law?”

In this passage, Paul is referring to the Ten Commandments, as “the law.” One can obey the Ten Commandments without being physically circumcised - if that Law is written on the heart (Romans 2:13-15).

Romans 2:25 “For circumcision is indeed profitable if you keep the law; but if you are a breaker of the law, your circumcision has become uncircumcision.”

No one kept “the law” perfectly (except Christ), so everyone would be regarded as uncircumcised in the eyes of God.

Romans 2:28-29 “For he is not a Jew who is one outwardly, nor is circumcision that which is outward in the flesh; but he is a Jew who is one inwardly; and circumcision is that of the heart, in the Spirit, not in the letter; whose praise is not from men but from God.

That is one bold statement! Paul went on to say that not everyone descended from Israel (Jacob) is an Israelite. Only those of faith were and are, “seed of Abraham” in the eyes of God.

No physical procedure could make one “a Jew” in the eyes of God. Only the “circumcision of the heart” by Christ Himself, counts with God. And if God gives the same Spirit to the Gentiles by faith, then they are “circumcised,” in the only manner that counts.

Romans 3:30 “There is one God who will justify the circumcised by faith, and the uncircumcised through faith.”

Both circumcised and uncircumcised are “justified” by faith.

Romans 4:11-12 “And he [Abraham] received the sign of circumcision, a seal (sign) of the righteousness of the faith which he had while still uncircumcised, that he might be the father of all those who believe, though they are uncircumcised, that righteousness might be imputed to them also, and the father of circumcision to those who not only are of the circumcision, but who also walk in the steps of the faith which our father Abraham had while still uncircumcised.”

Abraham is the “father” of all those who walk by faith, whether they are circumcised or not - Jew or Gentile.

NOTE: A baby’s physical circumcision (on the 8th day) was NOT a “sign” of his own righteousness by faith. It was a “sign” of his father’s faith.

Physical circumcision was called “**a seal**” or outward “**sign**” of Abraham’s righteousness by faith (his willingness to do whatever God asked, because He believed). The New Testament speaks of “the seal of God” (*Rev. 9:4*), and of the angels who “seal” the servants of God (*Rev 7:2-3*) before the trumpet judgments are released. This appears to be a mark that angels can see, so that the angels of Satan can leave such marked individuals unharmed.

THE LETTER TO THE COLOSSIANS

The letter to the Church at Colosse, was written by Paul after his arrest at Jerusalem.

Colossians 2:11 “In Him [in Christ] you were also circumcised with the circumcision made without hands, by putting off the body of the sins of the flesh, by the circumcision of Christ.”

There is a circumcision of the flesh, and there is a circumcision of the heart - and we know which one counts with God. The point is that we are circumcised - by Christ, when we believe in Him. Physical circumcision was a TYPE. It was a *shadow prophecy* of what Jesus Christ would do for us and in us. Abraham cut off a little “flesh.” Believers today “put off the sins of the flesh.”

Colossians 3:11 [In Christ] “there is neither Greek nor Jew, circumcised nor uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave nor free, but Christ is all and in all.”

The circumstances in which you find your physical self - slave or free, male or female, Gentile or Jew, barbarian or Scythian - just do not matter, so far as salvation into the Kingdom of God. The only thing that matters is your faith in Jesus Christ as your savior, and your willingness to serve God His Father with your whole heart.

THE LETTER TO THE EPHESIANS

Ephesians 2:11-14 “Therefore remember that at one time you Gentiles in the flesh, called ‘the uncircumcision’ by what is called ‘the circumcision,’ which is made in the flesh by hands-- 12 remember that you were at that time separated from Christ, alienated from the commonwealth of Israel and strangers to the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world. 13 But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ.

Ephesians 2:11-14 [continued] For he himself is our peace, who has made us both one and has broken down in his flesh the dividing wall of hostility, 15 by abolishing the law of commandments expressed in ordinances, that he might create in himself one new man in place of the two, so making peace.” (ESV)

What “commandments” caused “enmity” (hatred) between Jew and Gentile? What commandments created a “dividing wall” between Hebrews and non-Hebrews?

Would the commandments not to steal, not to murder, not to dishonor parents, not to commit adultery, not to covet - would those commandments have caused hatred between Jew and Gentile? Not likely. Nine of the Ten are specifically repeated in the New Testament writings. The only one much debated is the 4th Commandment - to remember the Sabbath by resting on the 7th Day of the week. See our studies: “[LORD of the Sabbath](#)” and “[The Ten Commandments - Under the New Covenant](#).”

The commandments which would have caused enmity (hatred or division) between Jew and Gentile would be **those concerning national exclusivity**. Circumcision was certainly one such. It maintained a separation between the circumcised and the uncircumcised. Yes. The LORD had commanded that separation. It served to keep Israel separated from the idolatrous Canaanite nations until the precious prophesy could be fulfilled. But the Jews had carried it much further, forbidding even sharing a meal with anyone not circumcised. They looked down their noses at anyone “outside” their exclusive club, calling them “unclean.” They believed that all “Jews” would automatically go to “Abraham’s bosom” and everyone else would be excluded from the good afterlife. Such teaching would not exactly endear you to others.

The “commandments contained in ordinances”
which were “abolished in his flesh,”
are those which commanded the separation of Jews from Gentiles.

See our study: “[What Law was Abolished?](#)”

Did Paul want Jews to throw away the dietary laws, so they could eat with the Gentiles? No! The Jerusalem Council, in their letter, told the new converts to adjust their behaviors. “Abstain from food polluted by idols, from sexual immorality (as defined by the Torah), from the meat of strangled animals and from blood” (*Act 15:20 NIV*). These were the minimum necessary accommodations, so that believing Gentiles could begin to worship with believing Jews. For other things, the letter said, “Moses is read every week.” They would learn more.

NOTE: To “abolish” any commandment given by God, is to “change” the law. We discuss this “change” in our study “[A Change of the Law](#).”

THE LETTER TO THE PHILIPPIANS

Philippians 3:2-3 “Beware of dogs, beware of evil workers, beware of the mutilation! For we are the circumcision, who worship God in the Spirit, rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh . . .”

CROSSING THE JORDAN - WITH JOSHUA

Joshua 3:15-17 “and as those who bore the ark came to the Jordan, and the feet of the priests who bore the ark dipped in the edge of the water (for the Jordan overflows all its banks during the whole time of harvest), that the waters which came down from upstream stood still, and rose in a heap . . . and the people crossed over opposite Jericho. Then the priests who bore the ark of the covenant of the LORD stood firm on dry ground in the midst of the Jordan; and all Israel crossed over on dry ground,”

Joshua 5:2-10 “At that time the LORD said to Joshua, ‘Make flint knives for yourself, and **circumcise the sons of Israel again the second time.**’ So Joshua made flint knives for himself, and circumcised the sons of Israel at the hill of the foreskins.

Joshua 5:2-10 [continued] And this is the reason why Joshua circumcised them: All the people who came out of Egypt who were males, all the men of war, had died in the wilderness on the way, after they had come out of Egypt. For all the people who came out had been circumcised, but all the people born in the wilderness, on the way as they came out of Egypt, had not been circumcised.

Then Joshua circumcised their sons whom He raised up in their place; for they were uncircumcised, because they had not been circumcised on the way. So it was, when they had finished circumcising all the people, that they stayed in their places in the camp till they were healed.

Joshua 5:2-10 [continued] “Then the LORD said to Joshua, ‘This day I have rolled away the reproach of Egypt from you.’”

Now the children of Israel camped in Gilgal, and kept the Passover on the fourteenth day of the month at twilight on the plains of Jericho.”

This story is a prophecy. It is TYPE.

*The name Joshua is the same as Yeshua (in Hebrew) or Jesus (in the Greek). We will cross the sky with our Joshua. The sky will be “rolled up like a scroll” just as the Jordan River was rolled back (Isa. 34:4, Rev. 6:14). **Our Yeshua will circumcise our flesh.** We will be “changed in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye.” The old mortal flesh will be gone, and we will receive new spiritual bodies (1Cor. 15:44). Then we will eat the Passover with Him, in the kingdom of God, just as the prophecy said, “No uncircumcised person shall eat of it.”*

NOTE: At the last supper, Jesus said, “With fervent desire I have desired to eat this Passover with you before I suffer; for I say to you, I will no longer eat of it UNTIL it is fulfilled in the kingdom of God” (Luke 22:15-16).

We MUST grasp this concept. Every command given to Israel was a prophecy of Messiah - of what He will do for us and in us. Yes - even the Ten Commandments are a prophecy of the Law that He will write on our hearts (Jer. 31:31, Ezek. 36:26). Everything that happened to Israel is a prophetic TYPE, a lesson for us in these last days (1Cor. 10:4).

Deuteronomy 30:6 “And the LORD your God will circumcise your heart and the heart of your descendants, to love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul, that you may live.”

This is the promise to Israel. It is His promise to us.

ONLY THE CIRCUMCISED - MAY ENTER

Ezekiel 44:9 “Thus says the Lord GOD: ‘**No foreigner, uncircumcised in heart or uncircumcised in flesh, shall enter My sanctuary, including any foreigner who is among the children of Israel.’”**

This verse is found in Ezekiel’s account of a vision given to him during the Babylonian captivity. For many reasons, I believe the Temple seen by Ezekiel, will be the Temple of Messiah’s reign on the earth, during the 8th millennium.

Why would God say this to the Prophet Ezekiel? Why require circumcision of the flesh for entry into the future millennial Temple, if such circumcision doesn't matter? Are we going back to separating Hebrews from non-Hebrews? Are we going back to physical circumcision?

NOTE: This is THE verse that was used by the Jews, to exclude any Gentiles from the Court of their rebuilt Temple, right up to it's destruction by the Romans in 70AD.

*Answer: **Christ would circumcise BOTH flesh and heart.** He will circumcise the "flesh" of those already circumcised "in heart," when we cross the sky to "meet Him in the air." He will give us new "spiritual bodies." The old mortal "flesh" will be gone.*

*The LORD said the same thing to Zechariah, using different words. "**There will no longer be a Canaanite (an uncircumcised foreigner) in the house of the Lord of hosts**" (Zech. 14:21).*

*We pray this study will prove a blessing.
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