

## #6 Colossians Chapter 2b

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**Verse 11:** 'In Him 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,'

Paul teaches that God performs on us, a 'spiritual circumcision.' He takes away our old heart and replaces it with a new heart, a spiritual heart that follows after Him. Circumcision was the one physical thing that set Israelites apart from the Gentiles around them. Our new, spiritual heart is what sets us apart from those in the World around us.

'I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit within you; I will take the heart of stone out of your flesh and give you a heart of flesh.' Ezek 36:26

This is in response to another of the false teachings which plagued the Colossians: beside the Gnostics, there were also the Judaizers who taught that it was necessary for Christians to adopt Jewish customs and practices and all that is found in the Law of Moses, especially circumcision, in order to be saved. This is why Paul wrote, earlier, 'in Him you are complete!' Nothing else is needed... only faith in Jesus Christ. He replaces the life of the flesh with the life of the Spirit.

The Jews and the Judaizers were trusting in the physical act instead of the spiritual reality which the physical act represents: physical circumcision represents the spiritual circumcision that comes through faith in Christ. Physical baptism represents the spiritual reality at which we'll look, shortly.

We have our own version of Judaizers today who teach that salvation requires baptism in a certain name(s) or baptism in the Holy Spirit or Church on Saturday or not eating meat or living a holy life etc.

About circumcision: did you ever wonder what and why God commanded Abraham to begin doing that? In the past, we've learned that the Old Testament, the Old Covenant all pointed to the life, death, resurrection and work of the coming Messiah, the Lord Jesus Christ.

The Bible tells us that all humans were 'in Adam,' in that when he sinned and when he died spiritually, all humanity sinned and died spiritually in, or with, him.

Paul writes: 'Therefore, just as through one man (Adam) sin entered the world, and death through sin, and thus death spread to all men, because all sinned...' Rom 5:12 Our 'original sin' was from Adam but our own sin, that we freely accomplished without any help from anyone.

*'For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ all (the Elect) shall be made alive.'* 1 Cor 15:22

*'And Adam was not deceived, but the woman being deceived, fell into transgression. 1 Tim 2:14*

Eve was deceived by the serpent. Adam freely chose to sin; he knew exactly what he was doing.

Although the Bible does not specifically say that our sin nature was passed down to us through our male ancestors, all the way back to Adam, it is certainly implied, especially in that the Lord Jesus Christ, Who had no human father also had no sin nature.

From the very beginning, Adam and Eve as well as their sons, Abel and Seth, God's Salvation has always been by faith in His promises and in His work; and not by works we have ever done.

When God called Abraham, He gave him 3 promises: an **heir**, a **land** and a **blessing**, that He would bless Abraham who would then be a blessing to all the families of the Earth through his descendant, his Seed, the coming Messiah. The Bible says that Abraham believed God and that his belief was counted to him as righteousness. God's promises were not contingent on anything. He would fulfill His promises and Abraham would receive those promises. Then, God gave Abraham a sign of that Abrahamic Covenant... circumcision; every male descendant would be circumcised. And remember, what happens in the Old Testament always points to the person and work of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Adam was our federal head; we all sinned, in him, and our sinful nature was passed down through his male descendants, our male ancestors so our spirits were dead; our flesh is what is sinful and our souls were enslaved to our flesh's sinful nature. What better way to signify God's future work of removing our sin and

replacing it with His Righteousness than to then, cut away that part of a man, which only males have, which is used in the process of passing on the sin nature.

So, let's look at verse 11 again: 'In Him (Christ) you were also circumcised with the circumcision ***made without hands***, (God's work) by putting off the body of the sins of the flesh, by the circumcision of Christ,'

We see, again, that our righteousness is all God's work... in the Old Testament, righteousness was according to ***faith in the coming Messiah***; now, our righteousness is according to faith in the Messiah who *already came*.

**Verse 12:** 'buried with Him in baptism, in which you also were raised with Him ***through faith in the working of God***, who raised Him from the dead.

Like circumcision, baptism is also a physical act which represents the spiritual reality. Baptism does not save or cleanse a person but, rather, it points to the truth that if we have put our faith and trust in the Lord Jesus Christ and His finished work on the Cross, then we were crucified with Him, we were buried with Him and we were raised to eternal life with Him. That is the truth we are acknowledging and identifying with when we are baptized or, at least, that is what we should have been taught; many are not taught that truth.

Our having been buried and raised with Jesus Christ is not accomplished by baptism, any more than Abraham's righteousness was accomplished through circumcision; both of them simply signify God's work and our obedience. Both are outward obediences which signify the inner work of God. Every righteousness, from Adam through the Millennium, is only accomplished through faith in the working of God. Our salvation is all God's work, from His election of us before the foundation of the World, through His keeping us saved, throughout our entire lives, until He takes us to Heaven, for 7 years, in the Rapture; it is all God's work from before its beginning until eternity and beyond.

**Verse 13:** 'And you, being dead in your trespasses and the uncircumcision of your flesh, He has made alive together with Him, having forgiven you all trespasses,'

Adam died, spiritually, the moment he sinned; every one of us were spiritually dead, because of Adam's sin and our own, until God woke us up, allowing us to hear His Spirit's call, enabling us to come to Him in faith.

Now, we see the reality of what circumcision pointed to: that God now circumcises us spiritually, freeing us from our enslavement to our flesh, allowing us to obey the Holy Spirit's leading.

**Verse 14:** 'having wiped out the handwriting of requirements that was against us, which was contrary to us. And He has taken it out of the way, having nailed it to the cross.'

The Law was the list of requirements which was against us because we, no one, could ever keep the Law perfectly except for the Lord Jesus Christ who did it for us. Paul uses the picture of wiping dried ink off a parchment page. It can't be done; only Jesus could do it by obeying all the Law completely.

When Jesus cried out, 'It is finished!' before He gave up His Spirit and died, this is what He meant; He had completed all the requirements of the Law and He had borne all our punishment.

Our righteousness has nothing to do with what we do or do not do; it is all, and only, according to our faith in Him, according to what He has done for us.

But, as James makes clear, our works will follow our faith; our actions will be in accordance with our faith. If we say we have faith but our actions mimic anyone in the World, then there's a good chance we don't really have saving faith. And, if we do have faith but it is faith in our own actions, our own works, then, again, ours is not saving faith at all.

'For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to everyone who believes.' Rom 10:4

I am not saved because I read the Bible or pray or give to the poor, etc. ... I do those things because those are the actions that grow out of true faith.

Jesus Christ put an end to the Law; He nailed it to the Cross. Now, when we or anyone else demands that we walk according to the Law... we simply look to the Cross and see that the Law was nailed to it; it remains on the Cross in our place; we are free in Christ.

**Verse 15:** 'Having disarmed principalities and powers, He made a public spectacle of them, triumphing over them in it.

Immediately after Adam and Eve sinned, God pronounced curses upon the serpent and upon Adam and Eve but in His curse on the serpent He also gave the first promise of a deliverer, the coming Messiah who would eventually conquer the serpent (Satan) and destroy his power and works:

'So the LORD God said to the serpent: "Because you have done this, you *are* cursed more than all cattle, and more than every beast of the field; on your belly you shall go, and you shall eat dust all the days of your life. <sup>15</sup> And I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your seed and her Seed; **He shall bruise your head**, and you shall bruise His heel." Gen 3:14

Satan believed that he had defeated the Son of God, that God's plans were thwarted and that he could finally bring about his own Antichrist; the thing which he thought would destroy God's plans, killing Jesus Christ, and scattering and defeating His people, ended up just 'bruising Jesus' heel,' a minor injury and instead was the thing that bruised Satan's own head... the thing that completely defeated him when Jesus Christ rose from the dead and God Glorified Him and then began to build the Church with the Lord Jesus Christ living and reigning in the hearts of everyone who would ever come to Him in faith.

What Satan thought would be the open display of his ultimate victory over God and His people became instead, the open display of his own complete defeat... pictured in Esther.

**Verse 16:** 'So let no one judge you in food or in drink, or regarding a festival or a new moon or sabbaths, which are a shadow of things to come, but the substance is of Christ.

These are all things having to do with the Law, with Judaism. They couldn't eat certain foods, they were required to observe certain feasts and holy days, they had to strictly observe the Sabbath, Friday sunset through Saturday sunset. These were all signs and symbols which were intended to point to the coming Messiah. He is the substance of these things which are mere shadows of the reality which is Christ. The Jews had been in bondage to the Law; freedom came in the Lord Jesus Christ. He is the Sabbath rest for all who trust and rest in Him.

These works are things which no longer apply to Christians; we are free from the Law, completely free.

'Therefore if the Son makes you free, you shall be free indeed.' John 8:36

**Verse 18:** 'Let no one cheat you of your reward, taking delight in *false* humility and worship of angels, intruding into those things which he has not seen, vainly puffed up by his fleshly mind,'

False '*christian denominations*,' things like the Mormons, the Jehovah's Witnesses, Catholics, they might come knocking on your door with the goal of snaring you, of cheating you out of your reward. Joseph Smith supposedly got his religion, Mormonism, which is, in fact, nothing more than a cheap plagiarized knockoff of the Masonic teachings he had learned as a younger man, by seeing and hearing an angel, named Maroni, which no one else ever saw, who then told him where to find buried golden plates, which no one else ever saw, which would lead to a false religious system, by which no one was ever saved, which would be responsible for sending millions of souls to hell.

Catholics are taught to worship and pray to various saints and angels, especially to Mary, as the queen of heaven.

These, along with J.W.s and others keep people trapped for generations because they are terrified of death; they believe that only through many lifelong works can they escape hell. Seventh Day Adventists should also be included here because of their works based salvation. No one is ever saved by works.

**Verse 19:** 'and not holding fast to the Head, from whom all the body, nourished and knit together by joints and ligaments, grows with the increase *that is* from God.

Only by holding fast to our Head, the Lord Jesus Christ, and knowing His Word, can we be protected from false teachers and false teaching. The increase, in the Body of Jesus Christ, comes only through hearing and faith in His Word.