

Scripturalism vs Judaism XXI

Circumcision of the Heart

Fred R. Coulter—July 11, 1998

One of the important reasons why all of this is in the Scriptures concerning Judaism is to let us know that not only are we going to have the problems of paganism coming into the Church, but very few people realize the vitriolics that Judaism has toward Christianity.

We have been propagandized since WWII to accept no word against the Jews at all whatsoever, because that is anti-Semitism. Yet, at the same time, the Jews can tear down, destroy and go after Christianity. And their version of Christianity, by the way, is Catholicism. That's what they view as Christianity. They don't even recognize the Church of God as it exists as the way it is today. One of the biggest problems that we have in the Church of God today is bringing in the practices of Judaism into the Church to where they even have it today that they are using so-called sacred names—that's another whole issue—to where they even require circumcision of men who come into the Church because we're going to cover part of that today in Acts 15. That was a big problem back then.

We are going to also realize that many of the traditions that the Jews have—such as the Seder with the meal, all of those things—are not and never were part of true Christianity. This is why God first started by causing John the Baptist to be conceived; he was the son of priest so God used the son of priest to do it, because it couldn't be any other authority. Immediately, in *Scripturalism vs Judaism #1*, in Matt. 3 there was an immediate separation from Judaism and the way of God, where He told the scribes and Pharisees they were 'hypocrites, a generation of vipers' and they needed to repent and bring forth 'fruit, meat for repentance.'

Write for the Judah Pack—showing all the encroachments and the inroads that Judaism is trying to make within the Church. I've a got tape where one man explains how to keep the Passover Seder as a Christian. You can't keep the Passover Seder and call it Christian. You have follow what Jesus said: foot-washing, bread and wine; that's what Jesus taught us. They are bringing back *traditions of Judaism* into the Church under the guise that Judaism was the true religion of Moses. But Judaism is a 'religion' and Moses' way was not *a religion*. Yes, there was form and ceremony, that is true, but what Judaism did was make 'religion' out of what they were doing.

We also saw in Mark 7:1: "Then the Pharisees and some of the scribes from Jerusalem

came together to Him." So, they had these official *watch squads* coming around watching Jesus all the time. They came all the way down from Jerusalem.

Verse 2: "And when they saw some of His disciples eating with defiled hands (that is, unwashed *hands*)... [very few people realize that washing the hands actually came from Egypt—see *The Christian Passover* book] ...they found fault. For the Pharisees and all the Jews, holding fast to the tradition of the elders, do not eat unless they wash their hands thoroughly.... [vigorously with the fist. The tradition of the elders is Judaism, and today it is all codified in what is called *Code of Jewish Law*] ...Even *when coming* from the market, they do not eat unless they *first* wash themselves. 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" (vs 1-4). This is a 'religion.'

Verse 5: "For this reason, the Pharisees and the scribes questioned Him, *saying*, 'Why don't Your disciples walk according to the tradition of the elders, but eat bread with unwashed hands?'.... [He answered them with Scripture]: ...And He answered *and* said to them, 'Well did Isaiah prophesy concerning you hypocrites...'" (vs 5-6).

Judaism is a hypocritical 'religion.' Judaism is also a very anti-everyone else 'religion.' If you think anti-Semitism is bad, Judaism against the rest of the world is horrible to behold. All the rest of the people are animals. The Jews have the right to use and abuse and do anything. They can cheat, lie, steal and go to the temple on the Day of Atonement and have the 'kol nidre' pledge that they take on the Day of Atonement, which frees them from all obligations to Gentiles so they can, without conscience, lie, steal and rob. If you're hearing this for the first time and you don't believe me, well then you need to do some studying.

One of the first places to begin, if you have a computer, search *Jews for Judaism*. You will find the absolute hatred they have for Jesus Christ. Then get online and look up *Jesus Seminar* and see how they are excoriating and taking out all of the miracles of Jesus Christ, all of the book of John, all of the true teachings of Jesus Christ. The one who is the head of it is Julius Funk—a Jew. That's just an extension of Judaism. All that Judaism is trying to do today is to water-down and take away true Christianity and the Word of God so that they will look good. This is what happens when people come

into power—when your enemy comes into power—they change the written history.

If you want a good example of that, read *Josephus*. Josephus was a Pharisee. He was actually a priest of one of the orders there. He wrote the history of the Jews for the Romans. In it he mentions nothing about Christ. Now, someone put something in a little later—it's very well known that that was added in. He wrote nothing about the Church, nothing about the Apostle Paul, nothing about the Churches, wherever they were. He was commissioned to write the history. What do you do? *You never mention your enemy!* He preserved nothing concerning the Essenes, because they were considered the enemy, although they were Jews. He preserved nothing concerning the Sadducees; just a little bit where the Sadducees and the Pharisees had their fights and were killing one another.

Whenever you read these things, you have to be very careful. That's why you have to come back to the Bible for the pure Word of God to understand what was going on.

Jesus answered with Scripture, "...as it is written, 'This people honors Me with their lips...'” (v 6). They pay lip-service to God! This is what we have today: 98% of the people believe in God; 29% of them attend a church; then you weed out all of those who attend churches because of various reasons and then you get down to the very few who truly believe God and believe His Word.

“...but their hearts are far away from Me.... [Where are their hearts? *On themselves, their politics, their own religion and what they are doing!*] ...But in vain do they worship Me, teaching for doctrine the commandments of men.”” (vs 6-7). Worship here is *exterior* worship. If your heart is far from God, you're not going to worship Him with your heart—are you? *You're going to have an outside show and ceremony*—aren't you? That's what they had.

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’” (vs 8-9). Then He goes on from there.

This is what we need to understand that the battle that was going on with the New Testament Church. We also need to understand the same thing we have experienced. We have said, ‘You can get the people out of Worldwide, but you can't get Worldwide out of the people.’ You can get the Pharisees out of the Pharisaic synagogue, but you can't get Pharisaism out of the Pharisees. That's exactly what has happened here.

Also the thing concerning circumcision was really quite a situation, because it was commanded to be forever. We also have some prophecies of *circumcision of the heart*—we'll look at those. But we also need to understand something here that's very important when we come to it. That is when a Pharisee says ‘the Law of Moses’ he means *everything that the Pharisees believe in*, plus what's in the Bible. The Bible is surrounded by all of these laws and traditions, so it's very hard to get into the Bible.

As you will notice in the *Code of Jewish Law* they will read a Scripture and then create a whole field of their own understanding of it. When we read this, let's please understand their version of the Law of Moses and how we view the Law of Moses are two entirely different things. What do we view the Law of Moses as? *First five books of the Bible!* They view the Law of Moses as the first five books of the Bible, *all of their* ‘targems’—*teachings*—and then the Talmud surrounding that, *and have* ‘kabolism’ surrounding that. It's like a layer on an onion. You have ‘kabolism’; Talmudism; the Mishnah and then their commentaries. All of those things are considered the Law of Moses. If we understand that and come through here, then it's going to help us understand Acts 15 a little more, which was a defining point within the Church.

Acts 15:1: “Now, certain men who had come down from Judea...” We need to understand that by the time Acts 15 comes around, you have a Circumcision Party in Jerusalem. We'll see how James got snookered by the Circumcision Party and Paul went along with it in the political decision and the whole thing backfired. It's like when Worldwide was in its heyday. Someone would come from Pasadena. Very important! So, they came from Judea.

“...were teaching the brethren... [they had the problem of many teachers, too] ...*saying*, ‘Unless you are circumcised after the custom of Moses, you cannot be saved’” (v 1). The English does not really convey the Greek meaning here in its truest sense. The English does not convey the same strongness of the Greek, meaning *impossible*. ‘Cannot’ implies in English that you cannot do this, but *there may be another way*. In the Greek it means *it's impossible any other way*. There's a difference. The Greek here comes from the verb ‘*dunamao*’—which then is *power*. You could actually translate this: ‘unless you are circumcised after the custom of Moses, you have no power to be saved’ *or* ‘it is impossible to be saved.’ Meaning that there was *no other way* except by circumcision. So, this is a pretty stout doctrine; pretty strong language.

Verse 2: “Therefore, after a great deal of strife and arguing... [Remember when Paul went into the synagogues we saw many times that he

created small riots. Later the Jews would stir up the whole town against him.] ...with them by Paul and Barnabas... [they were arguing back and forth right in church] ...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. But there stood up certain of those who believed, who were of the sect of the Pharisees..." (vs 2-5)—which believed.

From this point forward you do not find any Pharisees active in the Church. This I believe created a division with the Pharisees from whence we get the Nazarenes. The Nazarenes were those who kept all the customs of the Jews who still believed in Jesus.

"...saying, 'It is obligatory... [the Greek is 'dei'] ...to circumcise them, and to command *them* to keep the Law of Moses'" (v 5). Jesus corrected them on the Law of Moses. He said, 'None of you keep the Law of Moses.' Let's make sure that we understand. One of the most effective ways to get rid of the Word of God is to *bury it in an avalanche of tradition*, or *bury it under an avalanche of human teachings*—which is all then buried under the avalanche of wrong interpretation to begin with; then you create your doctrines from there. This is very important because their view of keeping the Law of Moses was not Jesus' view of keeping the Law of Moses. Jesus' view of the Law of Moses is the same as ours—the first five books of the Bible.

John 7:14: "But then, about the middle of the Feast, Jesus went up into the temple and was teaching. And the Jews were amazed, saying, 'How does this man know letters, having never been schooled?'" (vs 14-15). This is a key verse to understand and keep in mind, because when we went through and did the series on *Who Was Jesus?* we went through things where publications came out and were saying that Jesus was a Pharisee, Jesus was taught by the Pharisees, Jesus was taught all the tradition of the Jews.

NO! He was not! He was taught of His Father! Jesus was not just an ordinary Jew. He was the Son of God! Do you think that the Father would have the lying hypocritical Pharisees teaching Jesus? *Spare me! No!* When He was 12-years-old He went up into the temple and taught them. Just the opposite way around. That's why it's important when you're studying anything that you do it thoroughly, that you really get all of the facts. If you come up with

something that's a little contradictory or a little difficult to understand, just set it aside and come back at it later. You don't have to prove everything this instant. You can come back and do it later.

Verse 16: "Jesus answered them and said, 'My doctrine [teaching] is not Mine, but His Who sent Me. If anyone desires to do His will... [the will of the Father] ...he shall know of the doctrine, whether it is from God, or *whether* I speak from My own self'" (vs 16-17). That's exactly what we need to do with everything that comes down the pike. Is it the will of God? And if you do it, you will know that it's from God. You won't have to doubt.

Verse 18: "'The one who speaks of himself is seeking his own glory...'" This is where many of the self-appointed teachers are today. They have enough Bible knowledge that they're dangerous and cause people to fall and stumble.

One man recently said that if you 'pray and God doesn't answer your prayer the first time, you pray the second time, and if He doesn't answer your prayer the second time, His answer is *no.*' That's ridiculous! What about Luke 18 where the widow woman kept coming and coming and coming, and Jesus used that as a parable to say that 'when you pray keep on praying; when you ask, keep on asking and God will hear and answer.' But that's just out of the figment of his own imagination, and he's seeking his own glory. That's the way it is with so many of these teachers. I'm just coming across them all the time. I tell you, it's going to be amazing, as Jesus asked if He will 'find faith on the earth' when the Son of man returns.

"...but He [Jesus] Who seeks the glory of Him Who [God the Father] sent Him [Jesus] is true, and there is no unrighteousness in Him. Did not Moses give you the Law, and not one of you is practicing the Law?... [No, they didn't keep the Law of Moses. Their version of keeping it was their *traditions*, their *interpretation*.] ...Why do you seek to kill Me?' The people answered and said, 'You have a demon....'" (vs 18-20). Isn't that always the way. They never examine the evidence, but they come back with an accusation. Strictly political! You can almost count on it.

The CNN program *Crossfire* is built on this—accusation to accusation! I've watched it enough to know that you never come to the truth of anything on that. It's not their desire to come to the truth, but just to create a furor and an argument. Some people like contemptuous arguments. They accused Him and said, 'You have a demon.'

"...Who is seeking to kill You?' [Almost every Pharisee that was walking up and down the street would want to kill Him.] ...Jesus answered and said to them, 'I did one work, and you were all

amazed. Now then, Moses gave you circumcision— not that it was from Moses, but from the fathers— and on *the Sabbath* you circumcise a man. If a man receives circumcision on *the Sabbath*, so that the law of Moses may not be broken, why are you angry with Me because I made a man entirely whole on *the Sabbath*? Judge not according to appearance, but judge righteous judgment” (vs 20-24). {see booklet/sermons on *Judge Righteous Judgment*} that spills over into studying the Bible, because too many false doctrines come because people do not have righteous judgment and they do not exercise the *14 Rules of Bible Study* on how to come to understand the Scriptures.

A lot of people now who are coming in contact with us, I don't think they realize they have a good two years minimum of study just to make up, to catch up. I talked to one man who has been in the Church 40 years and he received Care Package #s 1-2 and the Romans Series and he's overwhelmed! I said, 'That's just the start!' Too many people have done like the scribes and Pharisees, sitting back and played church and played their religion, and believed every propaganda that came down the line, and now they are disarmed. It's going to take them a good two years!

There are quite a few seniors. I talked to one man the other day and he said, 'My wife and I are retired and we have nothing else to do. We get up and we go through two or three sermons everyday, and we have learned more in the last year than we have in 25 years in the Church. Well, that's good, that's fine, because God is trying to perfect you. That's what God wants!

We get into all of these different controversies here. They did not keep the Law of Moses as Christ viewed the Law of Moses. Let's come back here to Acts 15 and let's read that again.

Acts 15:5: "But there stood up certain of those who believed, who were of the sect of the Pharisees... [notice that there were no apostles involved in this; there were no elders involved in this] ...saying, 'It is obligatory to circumcise them, and to command *them* to keep the Law of Moses.' Then the apostles and the elders gathered together to see about this matter" (vs 5-6). Who is missing? Who is excluded from this meeting? *The Pharisees!* They are excluded from this meeting. I don't know if it was voluntary or whether it was by invitation to not come.

Verse 6: "And after much discussion had taken place, Peter stood up and said to them, 'Men, brethren, you know that from *the* early days... [we covered this in Acts 10; how God gave the Holy Spirit to those who were uncircumcised.] ...God made *the* choice among us *that* by my mouth the

Gentiles should hear the Word of the Gospel, and believe. And God, **Who knows the heart...** [the *heart-knowing God*, because this is the what God is concerned with. God is not concerned with the outward ritual and form. **God is concerned with the heart!**] ...bore witness to them *by* giving them the Holy Spirit, even as *He did* to us, and made no difference between us and them, *and* has purified their hearts through the faith" (vs 6-9). That's what God wants done. How many times has it been said, concerning changing the heart?

Verse 10: "Now therefore, why do you tempt God by putting a yoke upon the necks of the disciples, which neither our fathers nor we were able **to bear?**... [Here the Greek is not 'dunamis' but it is 'ischuo'—*strength to bear it.*] ...But by the grace of *the Lord Jesus Christ* we believe we shall be saved in the same manner as they also" (vs 10-11).

Let's look at the heart here for just a minute and why it's so very important. **God looks to the heart and judges the heart!** Let me just refresh your memory. Remember when Simon Magus was baptized (Acts 8) and Peter and John came down to lay hands on all of those who had been baptized to receive the Holy Spirit. They came to Simon Magus and what did Peter say to him? *Your heart is not right with God; repent therefore, of this evil if perhaps God may forgive the thoughts of your heart. So, God is more concerned with the heart than with the exterior!*

Isaiah 57:15: "For thus says the high and lofty One Who inhabits eternity; Whose name is Holy; 'I dwell in the high and Holy place, even with the one who is of a contrite and humble spirit, to revive the spirit of the humble, and to revive the heart of the contrite ones.'" You can tie that in together with what Jesus said about loving God with all your heart, mind, soul and being. And how that all the laws and commandments hang on the commandment of loving God and loving your neighbor. We need to keep all of those things in mind as we go through this.

Here's a prophecy of the Gentiles coming into the Church, Isaiah 65:1 "I revealed Myself to those who asked not for Me; I am found by those who did not seek Me. I said, "Behold Me, behold Me," to a nation not called by My name.... [referring to the Gentiles] ...I have spread out My hands all the day to a rebellious people... [Israel] ...who walk in the way that is not good, *even* after their own thoughts; a people who without ceasing provoke Me to My face; who sacrifice in gardens, and burn incense upon the bricks; *a people* who sit among the graves, and spend the night in the tombs, who eat swine's flesh, and broth of vile *things* in their vessels; who say, "Keep to yourself, do not come near me; for I am Holier than you.".... [That's the attitude of

Judaism.] ...These *are* a smoke in My nostrils, a fire that burns all the day.' Behold, *it is* written before Me; I will not be silent, except I will repay; yea, I will repay into their bosom your iniquities, and the iniquities of your fathers together,' says the LORD, '*they* that burned incense upon the mountains, and blasphemed Me upon the hills. And I will measure their former work into their bosom.'" (vs 1-7). That's what God did, and He rooted them out.

Let's see how the heart is the most important thing. You can have the outward form and ceremony, but that's not of God. Isaiah 66:1: "Thus says the LORD, 'The heaven *is* My throne, and the earth *is* My footstool. Where, then, *is* the house that you build for Me? And where *is* the place of My rest? For all these things My hand has made, and these things came to be,' says the LORD. 'But to this one I will look, to him who is of a poor and contrite spirit and who trembles at My Word'" (vs 1-2). That's compared to the one who is not.

Verse 3: "He who kills an ox *is as if* he killed a man; he who sacrifices a lamb *is as if* he broke a dog's neck; he who offers a grain offering *is as if* he offered swine's blood; he who burns incense *is as if* he blessed an idol. Yea, they have chosen their own ways, and their soul delights in their abominations. I also will choose their delusions, and I will bring their fears upon them because when I called, no one answered; when I spoke, they did not hear. But they did evil before My eyes and chose *that* in which I did not delight'" (vs 3-4). That is really the story of Judaism from the time of Christ until the destruction of the temple.

- Did not God choose their fears? *Yes!*
- Did He not destroy the temple? *Yes!*
- Did He not destroy everything about the whole society of Judaism? *Yes!*

He scattered them into the world because they rejected Christ and they did not heed the call when He called.

Mark 12 is the section here where it is 'love the Lord your God with all your heart.' We're going to go on beyond to show the rest of the story here. Mark 12:32: "Then the scribe said to Him, 'Right, Master. You have spoken according to truth that God is one, and there is not another besides Him; and to love Him with all the heart, and with all the understanding, and with all the soul, and with all the strength, and to love *one's* neighbor as oneself, is more than all burnt offerings and sacrifices'" (vs 32-33). Some did understand it. So, he answered correctly. God is concerned with the heart.

Let's answer the question concerning circumcision. We're going to see that circumcision is still required, but not in the flesh, but a higher standard of circumcision: the *circumcision of the*

heart! Let's go to the Scripture where circumcision was given. I'm sure they stood up and they read from the Scripture, read it aloud and argued back and forth, but there are some other Scriptures that they need to consider, too.

Genesis 17—this sure enough was made with Abraham. And remember what Jesus said, 'Circumcision was not of Moses but of the fathers'—correct? *It began with Abraham;* then Isaac and Jacob and all the way down.

Genesis 17:9: "And God said to Abraham, 'And you shall keep My covenant, you and your seed after you in their generations. This is My covenant, which you shall keep, between Me and you and your seed after you. Every male child among you shall be circumcised'" (vs 9-10). There it is; you turn to that Scripture and you say, 'yes, they've got to be circumcised. The Pharisees have to be right.' If you just use that alone and not consider the heart... That's why it's very important that you get all the Scriptures.

Verse 11: "And you shall circumcise the flesh of your foreskin. And it shall be a sign of the covenant between Me and you. And a son of eight days shall be circumcised among you, every male child in your generations; he that is born in the house, or bought with silver of any foreigner who *is* not of your seed. He that is born in your house, and he that is bought with your silver, must be circumcised.... [Kind of sounds like what the Pharisees were quoting—right?] ...And My covenant shall be in your flesh for an everlasting covenant. And the uncircumcised male child whose flesh of his foreskin is not circumcised, that soul shall be cut off from his people—*for* he has broken My covenant'" (vs 11-14). You can build a powerful case if you just do that—right? But that's not all that's considered there.

Is it wrong to have your children circumcised? *No!* But that doesn't save them. What happened here is that the Pharisees transferred that from the physical covenant over into the spiritual covenant saying that you have to circumcise the flesh. That's what they did. They did not understand the New Covenant. Let's see a prophecy of the kind of circumcision that God wanted. Again, it has to do with the heart.

Deuteronomy 10:12: "And now, Israel, what does the LORD your God require of you, but to fear the LORD your God, to walk in all His ways... [God was not creating a religion through Moses] ...and to love Him, and to serve the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul, to keep the commandments of the LORD, and His statutes which I command you today for your good?" (vs 12-13). This sounds an awful lot like John 14: *if you*

love Me, keep My commandments.

Verse 14: “Behold, the heaven and the heaven of heavens *belong* to the LORD your God, the earth also, with all that is in it. Only the LORD had a delight in your fathers to love them, and He chose their seed after them, you above all people, as *it is* today. Therefore, **circumcise the foreskin of your heart...**” (vs 14-16).

So, the circumcision in the flesh was only a physical type of a greater circumcision, which is the *circumcision of the heart*. That is more difficult, because that requires the Spirit of God and conversion. Anybody can be circumcised in the flesh. All their missing is some skin. That does not affect the mind; that does not convert the heart. That’s why God gave the Holy Spirit to Cornelius and those uncircumcised Gentiles before baptism, because I don’t believe Peter would have understood it any other way. So, God intervened to show it.

“...and be no longer stiff-necked, for the LORD your God *is* God of gods, and Lord of lords, a great God, the mighty and awesome God Who does not respect persons nor take a bribe. He executes justice for the fatherless and widow, and loves the stranger in giving him food and clothing. Therefore love the stranger... [This is coming even into a prophecy of the Church of loving all of those in the Church whether Jew or Gentile.] ...for you were strangers in the land of Egypt. You shall fear the LORD your God. You shall serve Him, and you shall hold fast to Him, and swear by His name. He *is* your praise, and He *is* your God, Who has done for you these great and awesome things which your eyes have seen. Your fathers went down into Egypt with seventy persons. And now the LORD your God has made you as the stars of the heavens for multitude” (vs 16-22).

Here’s the other part of the circumcision. There are two parts of the circumcision of the heart to take place:

1. you circumcise your heart
2. God circumcises your heart

(go to the next track)

Deuteronomy 30:6: “And **the LORD your God will circumcise your heart...**” Under what conditions?

Verse 1: “And it shall be **when all these things** have come on you, the blessing and the curse which I have set before you, and when you shall call *them* to mind among all the nations where the LORD your God has driven you, and **shall return to the LORD your God and shall obey His voice...** [What are we talking about? *We’re talking about repentance*—aren’t we? *Yes, we are!* That’s why it is repent and be baptized. It’s not baptize and then repent.] ...according to all that I command you

today, you and your children, **with all your heart and with all your soul**, then the LORD your God will turn *away* your captivity. And He will have compassion on you, and will return and gather you from all the nations where the LORD your God has scattered you” (vs 1-3). The fulfillment of this will be Rev. 7, the 144, 000 and the great innumerable multitude! They’re going to repent in captivity.

Verse 4: “If you are driven out into the outermost *parts* of the heavens... [sounds like a little space-travel there—doesn’t it? Are there bodies up there? *There are some up there!*] ...the LORD your God will gather you from there, and He will bring you from there. And the LORD your God will bring you into the land, which your fathers possessed, and you shall possess it. And He will do you good and multiply you above your fathers. And **the LORD your God will circumcise your heart...**” (vs 4-6). This is in the Millennium—isn’t it? But when God calls us—and we’ll look at the process of what happens there with *circumcision of the heart*, which is very important because we’re dealing with the *heart-knowing* God.

“...and the heart of your seed, to love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul, so that you may live. And the LORD your God will put all these curses upon your enemies, and upon those that hate you, who persecuted you. And you shall return and obey the voice of the LORD, and do all His commandments which I command you today” (vs 6-8). And the rest of it goes on into the Millennial setting. Quite a thing!

Let’s come to the book of Romans, the second chapter. As we studied this as we did in the series on the book of Romans, these were very profound words that Paul wrote. He really, I am sure, created a lot of enemies as well as friends.

This is very instructive, Romans 2:17 “Behold, you are called a Jew, and you yourself rest in the law, and boast in God... [which they did; they gave lip-service to God: ‘They honor Me with their lips’] ...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 17-20). They had all of that! That’s true, they did have that, but:

Verse 21: “You, then, who are teaching another, do you not teach yourself also? You who preach, ‘Do not steal,’ are you stealing?... [that’s why they were called *hypocrites* all the way through] ...You who say, ‘Do not commit adultery,’ are you committing adultery? You who abhor idols, are you committing sacrilege? 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. For on the one hand, circumcision profits if you are observing *the Law*; on the other hand, if you are a transgressor of *the Law*, your circumcision has become uncircumcision” (vs 21-25). Has no spiritual standing whatsoever!

Verse 26: “Therefore, if the uncircumcised is keeping the requirements of the Law... [from the heart] ...shall not his uncircumcision be reckoned for circumcision?... [Yes, because he has the greater circumcision of the heart!] ...And shall not the uncircumcised, who by nature... [in the flesh] ...is fulfilling the Law, judge you, who, with *the letter* and circumcision... [in the flesh] ...are a transgressor of *the law*?” (vs 26-27). Those are real fighting words to anyone who is a Jew or in Judaism. To say that Gentile is going to judge you! Furthermore, an uncircumcised Gentile is going to judge you!

Now then, he comes to the whole spiritual matter of it here, v 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). Now you know why they had that big controversy in Acts 15.

Colossians 2:6: “Therefore, as you have received Christ Jesus the Lord, be walking in Him; being rooted and built up in Him... [Notice where the emphasis is: *Christ!*] ...and being confirmed in the faith, exactly as you were taught, abounding in it with thanksgiving. Be on guard so that no one takes you captive through philosophy and vain deceit, according to the traditions of men... [whether they be Jewish traditions, pagan traditions, whatever] ...according to the elements of the world, and not according to Christ. For in Him dwells all the fullness of the Godhead bodily; and you are complete in Him, Who is the Head of all principality and power in Whom you have also been circumcised with *the* circumcision not made by hands... [**Circumcision of the heart!**] ...in putting off the body of the sins of the flesh by the circumcision of Christ” (vs 6-11).

How is this circumcision of Christ accomplished? *The circumcision of Christ now includes the other half of the population!* Circumcision of the flesh only includes the male population. Circumcision of the heart now includes male and female. Here’s how it’s accomplished:

Verse 12: “Having been **buried with Him in baptism...**” When you repent of your sins and are baptized and receive the Holy Spirit, your mind has been circumcised; or your heart has been circumcised, because you receive the Holy Spirit of

God! That is the *circumcision of the heart*, and then you can really love God and serve Him in Truth, in love, in dedication—not just an outward form of ceremony or ritual. It’s completely different.

“...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... [Here Paul is saying that they can be circumcised in heart, or uncircumcised in the flesh. Very clear!] ...He has *now* made alive with Him, having forgiven all your trespasses” (vs 12-13). That is circumcision of the heart.

When they were talking about circumcision and obeying the Law of Moses, that meant that they were to keep all the traditions of the elders, which then became a yolk that Peter said, ‘Neither we nor our fathers were able to bear.’ That yolk of Judaism God removed through Christ. That’s why we should not bring in Judaism into the Church.

There’s one man—Dean Weelock—who goes around teaching people how to have a Seder, which is completely contrary to the Word of God; teaching people many of the traditions of the Jews, and in some places it’s just going like wildfire. I mean, it is unreal! Even many of the professing Christian churches of the world are bringing Judaism into what they do. Pentecostals are getting into *praise dancing*. That’s another one that he teaches. That’s just another form of Pentecostalism, that’s all. That’s what all of that means.

Acts 15:11: “But **by the grace** of *the* Lord Jesus Christ we believe we shall be saved...” That is so important to understand about grace {see sermon series on *Grace*.} Very important to understand that! Let’s understand that *grace is a gift of God; grace comes from God!*

Whereas, all of these other things—circumcision of the flesh—are done physically. Doing physical ritual is something that you do physically. That’s why you can’t be saved by your works. **You must be saved by grace!** Then when you are saved by grace, then you can do the good works of God. We’ll see all of that here:

Ephesians 2:4: “But God, Who is rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us.” Brethren, I don’t think we comprehend the love of God the way that we ought to. I just hope we can grow in that more and more, not only toward God and each other, but to really, really understand how much God loves us, and what He did, what fantastic thing that He did, especially in giving us all of His Word! I’m struck more and more how the Word of God is so absolutely profound and just marvelous for us to have. What a great gift of that.

Just consider: How would you like to live in a country, way off someplace up in the hills in some

God-forbidden, demon-infested country and not have the Word of God and know nothing? I tell you, try Tibet! How's that? Look at that Tibetan religion. They sit there and hum and babble and bang symbols and blow whistles and toot on horns. They write out prayers and put them on prayer wheels. One of the righteous things that they do is go along and have a whole series of prayer wheels along the sidewalks and streets. Along the side of the streets they have these spinning wheels with prayers written on them. You go along and you run your hand along it and every time you run your hand along it a prayer wafts off into heaven.

There's no heart in those things! It's all mechanical! For God to call us out and give us His Word and give us His Spirit and offer us eternal life is a magnificent and a marvelous thing!

Verse 5: "Even when we were dead in *our* trespasses, has made *us* alive together with Christ. (*For* you have been saved by grace.)... [God began dealing with us when we were sinners.] ...And He has raised *us* up together and has caused *us* to sit together in the heavenly *places* in Christ Jesus... [We're not there yet, but God speaks of things as though they are, because they're going to happen.] ...so that in **the ages that are coming** He might show the exceeding riches of His grace in *His* kindness toward us in Christ Jesus. For **by grace you have been saved through faith**... [You must believe with the heart! That's why God is called *the heart-knowing God!*] ...and this *especially* is not of your own selves; **it is the gift of God**... [gift and grace are almost synonymous words] ...not of works..." (vs 5-9)—which circumcision in the flesh is; that's why circumcision of the heart is not a work.

- God the Father *calls you*
- God the Father *leads you* to repentance through His grace
- God the Father *grants you* repentance so then you are baptized and buried in the watery grave
- God the Father then *gives you* the Holy Spirit with the laying on of hands

That's all by grace; that's all the work of God. Up to that point you've done nothing! You've just come to the conclusion of your sins and God led you to repentance. That is a greater thing than anything else you can do in your life. But it's still not a work of your own. You can't walk up and say to God, 'I repented, I was baptized.' That's required! Same way with the Sabbath! You can't go to God and say, 'I've kept the Sabbath all my life.' *That's required!*

"...so that no one may boast. For **we are His workmanship**..." (vs 9-10). Understand what God is doing through the process of conversion. He

is molding you! You are *His* workmanship! That's what's so important and why you need to understand about the grace of God. God is doing something

- *in* you
- *for* you
- *to* you
- *through* you

—so you can become a son or daughter of God. That's why God hates religion {see sermon series: *Why God Hates Religion*}, because religion sets up all of these artificial things. Even in the Church of God these things are set up. God is preparing a people. I don't know exactly how it's going to be done, but God is preparing a people, because even in the Christian-professing churches, they're sick and tired of hierarchy, they're sick and tired of all the outward form and ceremony. God has to be preparing the way for something. That's why it's important for us to understand that God doesn't want that kind of hierarchy. If God can't have your heart, what good are you to God? Even though you're perfect like Job!

I'll say it again, when I first read the book of Job, right after I was converted, I really thought God was wrong! That's how much lacking in understanding I was. I really thought God was wrong. I look at my life and see all my sins and mistakes and foolishness, and here's Job, perfect and upright. But he wasn't circumcised in the heart.

"...**created in Christ Jesus unto the good works**... [Of love, joy, peace, temperance, faith and longsuffering—all of that—of keeping the Sabbath, obeying His voice, keeping His commandments—those are the good works of God.] ...that God ordained beforehand in order that we might walk in them." (vs 9-10). Showing a *way of life!* That's why it's important that we understand that by grace we are saved.

So, you see there's a whole lot more having to do with Acts 15, a fulcrum chapter in the whole history of the Church. From that time on the history of the Church changed radically. That's why it follows along with Paul's ministry.

Acts 15:12: "Then all the multitude kept silence and heard Barnabas and Paul relate what signs and wonders God had done among the Gentiles through them. And after they were silent, James answered *and* said, 'Men, brethren, listen to me. Simeon has related how God first visited *the* Gentiles to take out a people for His name. And with this the words of the prophets agree, as it is written, "After these things, I will return and will build again the tabernacle of David which has fallen..."'" (vs 12-16).

{See sermons: *Tabernacle of David #s 1-2*}

That's showing that David had a close relationship with God, a personal relationship with God. That's why it's referred to, because the whole Church is built around that relationship between you and God. The Church exists for no other reason. When we come together, we come together because we have the Spirit of God. We come together to worship God and learn of His way.

“...and its ruins I will build again, and will set it up; so that the residue of men may seek the Lord, and all the Gentiles upon whom My name is called, says the Lord, Who does all these things.”... [God is putting His name upon the Gentiles] ...Known to God are all His works from the beginning of the world. 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... [Is that not in the true Law of Moses? Yes, it is!] ...and from sexual immorality, and from what has been strangled and from blood.” (vs 16-20).

Let's look at this. We know that you're not to drink the blood, because in the blood is the life thereof. It was to be poured out onto the ground. One of the things that the Gentiles would do is drink the blood. I saw an excerpt of *Red Dawn* and those teenaged kids were out there and had their weapons out and finally shot an elk. One of them said, 'My dad performed this every time he killed an elk. He would cut it's throat and drink the blood.' So, all of them drank the blood. There were rituals that the Gentiles had in their countries where they would drink the blood. You've got blood pudding in England and Germany and all of that. That is also contained in the Law of Moses—isn't it?

What he's saying here in this is He's comparing the true keeping of the Law of Moses with the false interpretations of the Pharisees. Things that have been strangled should be bled properly. There would be two forms of eating blood: drink it raw or eat it cooked. If you strangle it then all the blood remains in the meat and then they would eat it.

Verse 21: “For from the generations of old, **Moses has had in every city those who proclaim him in the synagogues, being read every Sabbath Day.**” What is this telling us? *You have the right interpretation of Moses*—don't we? In the synagogue they would read the Scriptures. Outside the synagogue it would be the Mishnah, the Talmud, the Kabala. What are we talking about here 'every Sabbath'? *People acquainted with Sabbath-keeping!* Then you would have to have people acquainted with Holy Day-keeping. When someone turns to the verse which says, 'and command them to keep the Law of Moses' and James says, 'My sentence is that we trouble them not.' People will say 'we don't have

to do anything of the Law of Moses and we don't have to keep the Sabbath and Holy Days.' They don't understand what they're reading! They have come to the Scriptures with a pre-conceived notion and they're drawing out of it what they desire. Here he's talking about reading the Scriptures—isn't he?

- Where are they being read? *In the synagogue!*
- When was the synagogue open for worship? Sunday morning? *NO! The Sabbath!*
- Where did they keep the Holy Days? *In the synagogue!*
- When they went up to Jerusalem—correct?

This does not in any way do away with any of the laws of Moses.

I'll just give you a little guidance here for Bible study with this: Go back through the book of Leviticus and study all of the laws that are there: the clean and the unclean laws. We know that we're not to eat the unclean meats. 1-Tim. 4 makes that very clear. So does Acts 10 when you really understand it. You apply the spiritual principle of the circumcision of heart to every one of these laws.

Let's just take the law of childbirth: for a woman it was 40 days for her purification. You can take the ritual of that law today and you can see why women ruin their health and the lives of their children by going back to work a week after childbirth. They need that time with the baby. The baby needs the time with the mother. Why it's double for the girls, I don't know. I don't think it's a discriminatory thing that God has against them. I think it was for the purpose that perhaps maybe the young little girl needs the extra time with her mother, more than the young little boy.

You take the law that they had when they were out in the wilderness. If you relieve yourself, you dig a hole and you cover it; that's sanitary. That would still be something that we would do today. As a matter of fact, our whole sewer system is setup on that—isn't it? That you get rid of it out of your house and send it off and purify it? *Yes!*

How about for those who have been sick? If you have temperature, something like that, or if you have a sickness, it says that after you're well you hold back seven days. That's true. Sometimes you can come along with the flu and you pretty well feel over it, but you still have coughing and hacking and so forth, and you can still spread it.

You can take the spirit of any one of those laws. Same way when they have a cut. If you have a cut and there's an issue, then you wait until it's scabbed over and it's healed. All of those are good laws. You go back and you take any of the physical

laws and you can derive something good out of all of them, that in principle we can follow today. That's why Jesus said, 'Think not that I've come to destroy the Law or the Prophets, I have come to fulfill. Verily, I say to you not one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the Law until *all* is fulfilled!' Part of what was fulfilled, which is now being continuously fulfilled today, is the *circumcision of the heart*. That is going to be fulfilled in the Millennium (Deut. 30). So, when Jesus says that 'all be fulfilled' please understand that means going clear to the end of Rev. 22 when everything is done. That's what it means.

Verse 22: "Then it pleased the apostles and the elders, together with the whole Church, to send chosen men from among them to Antioch with Paul and Barnabas; *and they chose* leading men from among the brethren: Judas, *who was* surnamed Barsabas, and Silas.... [that's an interesting thing, there are to be *leading men* among them brethren] ...*And they wrote letters* by their hand, as follows: 'The apostles and the elders and the brethren, to those brethren *who are of the* Gentiles in Antioch and Syria and Cilicia... [notice there are no Pharisees] ...Greetings! Inasmuch as we have heard that certain *ones* among us who went *to you* have troubled your souls with words, saying, "*You are obligated* to be circumcised and to keep the law" (to whom we gave no such command)'" (vs 22-24). These are renegade preachers, like we're coming across today.

Verse 25: "It seemed good to us, being assembled with one accord, to send to you chosen men with our beloved Barnabas and Paul, men who have dedicated their lives to *proclaim* the name of our Lord Jesus Christ. Therefore, we have sent Judas and Silas... [to confirm what they were doing] ...who shall themselves also tell *you* by word of *mouth* the same things *that we have written*. For it seemed good to the Holy Spirit and to us, to lay no further burden upon you than these necessary things: To abstain from things sacrificed to idols, and from blood, and from what has been strangled, and from sexual immorality; if you keep yourselves from these, you will do well. Farewell.' Therefore, after being dispatched, they went to Antioch; and when they had gathered the multitude together, they delivered the epistle. And after reading *it*, they rejoiced at the consolation" (vs 25-31).

I imagine all the men out there were wondering if they were going to have to be circumcised, so they rejoiced greatly. I'm sure that this is summary of the epistle; I'm sure it wasn't just that. I'm sure that this is a summary of it, that there was more to it.

Verse 32: "Then Judas and Silas, who were themselves also prophets... [inspired speakers]

...exhorted the brethren with many words, and established *them*.... [I'm sure they covered some of the same Scriptures we just covered. I could not see how they would not do otherwise.] ...And after they had been *there* for a time, they were let go in peace from the brethren to the apostles; but it seemed good to Silas to remain there. Now, Paul and Barnabas were staying in Antioch with many others, teaching and preaching the Gospel—the Word of the Lord. And after certain days, Paul said to Barnabas, 'Let us go back to see how our brethren are doing in every city where we have preached the Word of the Lord.' And Barnabas was determined to take with *them* John *who was* called Mark; but Paul did not think *it* good to take him *because* he had departed from them at Pamphylia, and did not go with them to the work" (vs 32-38).

Later Mark became profitable. Needless to say, this is how God separated Barnabas and Paul and they both continued to do their work. They had a great heated argument over it and Paul went his way, Barnabas went his way.

All Scriptures from *The Holy Bible in Its Original Order, A Faithful Version* by Fred R. Coulter

Scriptural References:

- 1) Mark 7:1-9
- 2) Acts 15:1-5
- 3) John 7:14-24
- 4) Acts 15:5-11
- 5) Isaiah 57:15
- 6) Isaiah 65:1-7
- 7) Isaiah 66:1-4
- 8) Mark 12:32-33
- 9) Genesis 17:9-14
- 10) Deuteronomy 10:12-22
- 11) Deuteronomy 30:6, 1-8
- 12) Romans 2:17-29
- 13) Colossians 2:6-13
- 14) Acts 15:11
- 15) Ephesians 2:4-10
- 16) Acts 15:12-38

Scriptures referenced, not quoted:

- Matthew 3
- Luke 18
- Acts 10; 8
- John 14
- Revelation 7
- Leviticus
- 1 Timothy 4
- Revelation 22

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- *The Christian Passover* by Fred R. Coulter
- *Code of Jewish Law* by Ganzfried & Goldin
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- *Romans*
- *Grace*
- *Why God Hates Religion*
- *Tabernacle of David #s 1-2*

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Articles: *14 Rules of Bible Study*

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