

Circumcision Instituted

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Circumcision Instituted
(*Genesis 17:10*)

Circumcision Condemned
(*Galatians 5:2*)

The shed blood of a sacrificed animal was meant to be a physical reminder of both the consequences and serious nature of sin (cf. 1Jn. 3:4; Heb. 9:22), while circumcision was the means through which an individual could become part of God's nation, Israel (Ex. 12:48). However the blood of circumcision and the blood of an animal was not enough to atone, or cover, for one's sins on a permanent basis. Instead, the shed blood of Jesus Christ would be necessary to remove all the sins that have ever been committed, once and for all (cf. Heb. 7:27; 9:12). However, Christ's shed blood can only be applied to those who repent of sin and begin living a new life of obedience to God (Mt. 3:8; 4:4; 19:17; Ac. 2:36-38; Rom. 6:4; Rev. 12:17).

For the law (of animal sacrifices and ordinances), having a shadow of the good things to come (symbolically picturing Christ's future sacrifice), and not the very image of the things, can never with these same sacrifices, which they (Levitical priesthood) offer continually year by year, make those who approach perfect. ²For then would they (animal sacrifices) not have ceased to be offered? For the worshipers, once purged (cleansed of their sin), would have had no more consciousness of sins. ³**But in those sacrifices there is a reminder of sins every year.** ⁴**For it is not possible that the blood of bulls and goats could take away sins** (Heb. 10:1-4; NKJV used throughout unless otherwise noted; Ed. notes in parentheses; emphasis added).

By Christ's own words, he came to fulfill what the law of circumcision and animal sacrifice pictured because they were temporary measures added progressively since the time of Adam's sin (cf. Gen. 3:21; 4:3-4).

What purpose then does **the law** (of animal sacrifices and ordinances) serve? It **was added because of transgressions, till the Seed** (Jesus Christ; cf. Gen. 3:15; Isa. 7:14; Lk. 1:31-35) **should come to whom the promise was made** ... (Gal. 3:19a; Ed. notes in parentheses; emphasis added).

Do not think that I (Christ) came to destroy the Law (including the law of circumcision and animal sacrifice) or the Prophets. I did not come to destroy but to fulfill (Mt. 5:17; Ed. note in parenthesis).

Even though Jesus Christ came to fulfill the physical aspects of the law regarding circumcision and animal sacrifice, these laws are first and foremost spiritual and, as a consequence, they are still in effect (cf. Rom. 7:14). Jesus Christ confirmed this truth in Matthew 5:17 mentioned above. Unfortunately, much of the Christian world prefers to teach that the laws regarding circumcision and sacrifice have no application today, but this is not true.

I (Paul) beseech (urge) you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you **present your bodies** (not those of sacrificial animals) **a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable** (rational) **service** (Rom. 12:1; Ed. notes in parentheses; emphasis added).

Therefore by him (through Christ's sacrifice) let us continually **offer the sacrifice of praise to** (Almighty) **God**, that is, the fruit of our lips, giving thanks to His name. ¹⁶**But do not forget**

to do good and to share, for with such sacrifices God is well pleased (Heb. 13:15-16; Ed. notes in parentheses; emphasis added).

But he is a Jew (one who claims to be a follower of Almighty God) who is one inwardly, and (therefore) **circumcision is that of the heart** (sincere inner desire to obey God; cf. Ac. 5:32b), in (through) the (Holy) Spirit, and not in the letter (regarding physical circumcision) ... (Rom. 2:29a; Ed. notes in parentheses; emphasis added).

Because the laws regarding circumcision and animal sacrifice are to be viewed spiritually, God would never condemn them. Instead, the spiritual intent of these laws should be considered today. First and foremost, the shed blood and sacrifice of Jesus Christ must be acknowledged as the means through which forgiveness of sins can be achieved, upon repentance (cf. Heb. 7:27; 9:12). Following repentance and baptism, an individual can begin to build a spiritual relationship with God. Becoming physically circumcised, and offering animal sacrifices on an ongoing basis, does not provide an individual with perpetual forgiveness for their sins, or hope of everlasting life. This is the point that Paul made in the next scripture and he did not use the word "condemned" in the context of circumcision, which some try to infer in their attempt to discredit God's word.

Indeed I, Paul, say to you that if you become circumcised, Christ (i.e. his shed blood) will profit you nothing (Gal. 5:2; Ed. note in parenthesis).

The blood associated with physical circumcision and animal sacrifice was superseded by Christ's shed blood which covers every sin that has been committed, providing sinners repent and begin living a new life of obedience to God's word (Mt. 4:4; Rom. 6:4). Anyone who does not have a

circumcised heart, or attitude, cannot genuinely repent and begin obeying God. Therefore, these same individuals cannot inherit everlasting life,

Blessed are those who do His (Almighty God's) commandments, that they may have the right to the tree of life (which is based on obedience to God's word), and may enter through the gates into the city (i.e. New Jerusalem; cf. Rev. 21:10). ¹⁵But outside are dogs (symbol of those who are spiritually unclean through sin) and sorcerers and sexually immoral and murderers and idolaters, and whoever loves and practices a lie (cf. Jn. 8:44) (Rev. 22:14-15; Ed. notes in parentheses).

Circumcision in the First Covenant period was an outward sign identifying members of the nation of Israel and if they continued to offer animal sacrifices when they sinned, they could remain in that fellowship and enjoy the physical blessings that God had promised. In contrast, circumcision of the heart is a metaphor that represents a person's inner desire and willingness to repent of sin, which is a prerequisite to receiving God's spiritual blessings. These spiritual blessings include receipt of God's Holy Spirit and membership in His household, which is a spiritual nation destined to inherit everlasting life providing its members continue to obey Him until the end of their physical lives (cf. 1Pet. 2:9-10).



INDEED I, PAUL, SAY TO YOU THAT IF YOU BECOME CIRCUMCISED, CHRIST (I.E. – HIS SHED BLOOD) WILL PROFIT YOU NOTHING.

Galatians 5:2; Ed. note in parenthesis

And you (Christ's true followers) will be hated by all for my name's sake. **But he who endures** (bears patiently) **to the end will be saved** (Mt.

10:22; Ed. note in parentheses; emphasis added).

In conclusion, there is no scripture stating that Almighty God condemns circumcision. Instead, there are a number of references proving that physical circumcision has been superseded by a circumcision of the heart, or inner attitude. This spiritual circumcision was made possible by Christ's shed blood that was necessary for the forgiveness of every sin that has ever been committed.

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