

## OT-OV

### Lesson 44

1. Earlier I taught Gen 17:7-9; when time expired last week we were in the middle of reviewing the Doctrine of Circumcision by way of a series of charts which depicted how a believer gets capacity for blessing. Circumcision was a training aid to commemorate Abraham and Sarah's progress on their way toward spiritual maturity.

2. We need to look at a few things learned last week and then pick up with new material on page

#### The Doctrine of Circumcision

1. Circumcision is a training aid designed to teach.

2. The ritual of circumcision is related to:

2.1 a commemoration of Abraham's spiritual maturity,

2.2 a commemoration of God providing the heir of promise, Isaac

2.3 and the dedication of the phallus to only the right woman.

3. The meaning of circumcision must be learned from Gen 17:1-21 and its context.

3.1 Circumcision is related to the promise and the commemoration of the four unconditional covenants:

3.1.1 Abrahamic Covenant

3.1.2 Davidic Covenant

3.1.3 Palestinian Covenant

3.1.4 New Covenant

4. In Gen 17:1-11 God reaffirms the Abrahamic, Palestinian and Davidic Covenants with the ritual of Circumcision.

4.1 Promises of an heir, numerous descendants, extensive land, a descendent on the throne forever, a promise through the seed of Abraham to bless the world and a people who in the Millennium would show the rest of the world how to live can be found many places in both the Old and New Testament.

4.2 There were later many enhancements to the promises showing how the unconditional covenants extended to the heirs of Abraham.

4.3 Capacity for life comes from being positive to the Word of God.

4.4 Abraham and Sarah had grown in grace by repeated testing; they finally had capacity for their special blessing.

4.5 Circumcision was therefore a sign of Abraham finally getting enough doctrine to enjoy his special son Isaac his unique heir.

4.6 The circumcised phallus would from this point in time be an iterative memorial and sign to commemorate Abraham's maturity and the need to grow in the faith as a post salvation demand of God.

5. Circumcision is a memorial to spiritual growth and is only a ritual of remembrance; it was a poignant reminder of God's promise to Abraham as a mature believer.

6. That it does not commemorate Abraham's salvation but is rather a post salvation commemoration of maturity is made clear in Scripture.

6.1 He had already believed for salvation in Gen 12:1-3 and as recorded in Gen 15:6.

Gen 15:6 "And Abraham had believed (Kal perfect Aman) in the Lord and God counted it to him for righteousness."

7. Circumcision even when Israel was still under the conditional covenant of the Mosaic Law was not a product of the Law but a product of faith in Doctrine.

Rom 4:13 It was not through the law that Abraham and his offspring received the promise that he would be heir of the world, but through the righteousness that comes by faith.

8. This act on the part of Abraham is used by Paul to differentiate how Abraham obtained spirituality by means of faith and not by the Law. Rom 4:20-24

9. Today in the Church Age, thanks to the mystery Doctrines provided to us in grace, we know to call the sign of the commemoration - circumcision "temporal sanctification."

10. James provides a negative example showing how important it is to have an object of faith which can produce because of its inherent power.

10.1 James makes the point -- for salvation the object of the faith must be Jesus the Christ; for temporal salvation the object of faith must be God's Word.

Jam 2:19 Come now my friends, many of you are Deist believing in one God; you think you do well, don't you know that even the demons know there is one God and they tremble and shake in absolute terror."

11. Abraham in the Gen 17:1-11 account believed God and Circumcision was a commemorative of that point in time when the promise of God became more real than reality.

12. Moses almost died because he did not circumcise his youngest son.

Exo 4:24 At a lodging place on the way, the LORD met Moses and was about to kill him.  
Exo 4:25 But Zipporah took a flint knife, cut off her son's foreskin and touched Moses' feet with it. "Surely you are a bridegroom of blood to me," she said.  
Exo 4:26 So the LORD let him alone. (At that time she said "bridegroom of blood," referring to circumcision.)

12.1 This scenario tells us how important the commemoration of post salvation growth is in the eyes of God.

13. Another example of the importance: "Only circumcised males could take part in the Passover Celebration."

Exo 12:48 "An alien living among you who wants to celebrate the LORD'S Passover must have all the males in his household circumcised; then he may take part ' like one born in the land. No uncircumcised male may eat of it.  
Exo 12:49 The same law applies to the native-born and to the alien living among you."

13.1 The Passover celebrated the national blessing of Israel and since national blessing is dependent on a pivot of mature believers in a nation, God chose to make circumcision a requisite for Passover participation.

14. True circumcision comes from a renewing of the mind and not by the cutting away of useless flesh.

14.1 Circumcision for the Jewish legalist had become one of many rituals distorted by the Scribes.

Acts 15:1 And certain men which came down from Judaea taught the brethren, and said, 'Except ye be circumcised after the manner of Moses, ye cannot be saved.  
Acts 15:2 When therefore Paul and Barnabas had no small dissension and disputation with them, they determined that Paul and Barnabas, and certain other of them, should go up to Jerusalem unto the apostles and elders about this question.

14.2 Some made circumcision a requisite for salvation and for others it became a requisite for spirituality.

14.3 They failed to remember it was only a sign to teach and to commemorate Abraham's maturity.

Jer 6:10 To whom shall I speak, and give warning, that they may hear? behold, their ear is uncircumcised, and they cannot hearken: behold, the word of the LORD is unto them a reproach; they have no delight in it.

14.4 In the early days of the Church Age circumcision became very divisive and a party of Jewish legalist headquartered in Jerusalem became known as the Circumcision Party. These were legalists who infiltrated the new Gentile converts in the southern Province of Galatia and prompted Paul's letter to the church at Galatia. A brief introduction to this book in which grace versus legalism is contrasted might be in order:

### **Occasion of the Writing**

1. The Galatian churches had come into being as a result of Paul's missionary labors.

2. Therefore the apostle was especially exercised in spirit when he learned that Jewish Christian agitators had circulated among these Gentile converts seeking to impose circumcision, and the burden of the Mosaic law upon them as necessary for salvation.

Gal 1:6 I am astonished that you are so quickly deserting the one who called you by the grace of Christ and are turning to a different gospel--

Gal 1:7 which is really no gospel at all. Evidently some people are throwing you into confusion and are trying to pervert the gospel of Christ.

Gal 4:16 Have I now become your enemy by telling you the truth?

Gal 4:17 Those people are zealous to win you over, but for no good. What they want is to alienate you from us, so that you may be zealous for them.

Gal 5:10 I am confident in the Lord that you will take no other view. The one who is throwing you into confusion will pay the penalty, whoever he may be.

3. The great expositor (Dr. Warren Wiersbe) and former pastor of The Moody Church in Chicago has written of the book of Galatians:

“READER BEWARE

Galatians is a dangerous book.

It exposes the most popular substitute for spiritual living that we have in our churches today--legalism. I didn't say "among false cults." I said "in our churches" because that is where much legalism is today.

Millions of believers think they are "spiritual" because of what they don't do--or because of the leader they follow--or because of the group they belong to. The Lord shows us in Galatians how wrong we are--and how right we can be if only we would let the Holy Spirit take over.

### A BATTLE FOR TRUTH

As you begin to read Paul's letter to the Galatian Christians, you can tell immediately that something is radically wrong, because he does not open his letter with his usual elaborate praise to God and prayer for the saints. He has no time! Paul is about to engage in a battle for the truth of the gospel and the liberty of the Christian life. False teachers are spreading a false "gospel," which is a mixture of law and grace, and Paul is not going to stand by and do nothing.

### RISK AND REWARD

So, I say Galatians is a dangerous book. It was dangerous for Paul to write it. It was dangerous for the Galatians to read it. Perhaps my writing this will prove to have been a dangerous thing. (I might lose some friends and some invitations to preach!)

So be it. All I pray is that you and I will appreciate and experience the liberty we have in Christ, lest He had died in vain.

My friend--*Be Free!*"

4. WRITING UNDER GREAT STRESS (AS IS SUGGESTED BY THE OMISSION OF THE USUAL THANKSGIVING), PAUL MET THE ISSUE SQUARELY, AND THUS, IN THE EPISTLE TO THE GALATIANS, GAVE TO THE CHURCH A MIGHTY POLEMIC AGAINST THE JUDAIZING ERROR AND THEIR REACHING ON CIRCUMCISION.

End Lesson