

Two Kinds of Circumcision (vv. 25-29)

VERSE 25 For indeed circumcision is of value if you practice the Law (περιτομή μὲν γὰρ ὠφελεῖ ἐὰν νόμον πράσσης· [noun nom.f.s. peritome circumcision + part. men on the one hand + conj. gar + pres.act.ind.3s. ophleo profit + part. ean if; 3rd class + noun acc.m.s. nomos law + pres.act.subj.2s. prasso practice]; **but if you are a transgressor of the Law, your circumcision has become uncircumcision** [ἐὰν δὲ παραβάτης νόμου ἦς, ἡ περιτομή σου ἀκροβυστία γέγονεν [part. ean if + conj de but + noun nom.m.s. parabates transgressor + noun gen.m.s. nomos law + pres.act.subj.2s. eimi + d.a.w/noun nom.f.s. peritome + pro.gen.m.s. su + noun nom.f.s. akobustia uncircumcision + pf.act.ind.3s. ginomai become]).

VERSE 26 So if the uncircumcised man keeps the requirements of the Law, will not his uncircumcision be regarded as circumcision (ἐὰν οὖν ἡ ἀκροβυστία τὰ δικαιώματα τοῦ νόμου φυλάσῃ, οὐχ ἡ ἀκροβυστία αὐτοῦ εἰς περιτομήν λογισθήσεται [part. ean if + conj oun so + d.a.w/noun nom.f.s. akrobustia uncircumcision + d.a.w/noun acc.nt.p. dikaioma requirement + d.a.w/noun gen.m.s. nomos + pres.act.subj.3s. phulasso keep, guard + neg. ouk + noun nom.f.s. akrobustia uncircumcision + pro.gen.m.s. autos + prep eis + noun acc.f.s. peritome + fut.pass.ind.3s. logizomai count, reckon])?

VERSE 27 And he who is physically uncircumcised, if he keeps the Law, will he not judge you who though having the letter of the Law and circumcision are a transgressor of the Law (καὶ κρινεῖ ἡ ἐκ φύσεως ἀκροβυστία τὸν νόμον τελοῦσα σὲ τὸν διὰ γράμματος καὶ περιτομῆς παραβάτην νόμου [conj kai + fut.act.ind.3s. krino judge + d.a.w/noun nom.f.s. akrobustia uncircumcision + noun gen.f.s. phusis nature; natural condition; “physically” + d.a.w/noun acc.m.s. nomos + pres.act.part.nom.f.s. teleo keep + pro.acc.s. su you + d.a.acc.m.s. “the one” or “he” + prep dia + noun gen.nt.s. gramma letter + conj. kai + noun gen.f.s. peritome + noun acc.m.s. parabates transgressor + noun gen.m.s. nomos])?

VERSE 28 For he is not a Jew who is one outwardly, nor is circumcision that

which is outward in the flesh (οὐ γὰρ ὁ ἐν τῷ φανερῷ Ἰουδαίος ἐστὶν οὐδὲ ἡ ἐν τῷ φανερῷ ἐν σαρκὶ περιτομή [*neg. ou + conj gar + def.art.nom.m.s. ho one + prep en + d.a.w/adj.gen.nt.s. phaneros evident; “outwardly” + adj.nom.m.s. Ioudaios Jew + pres.act.ind.3s. eimi + conj oude nor + prep en + d.a.w/adj.loc.nt.s phaneros “outward” + prep en + noun loc.f.s. sarx flesh + noun nom.f.s peristome*]).

VERSE 29 But he is a Jew who is one inwardly (ἀλλ’ ὁ ἐν τῷ κρυπτῷ Ἰουδαίος [*conj alla + d.a.w/nom.m.s. Jew + prep en + d.a.w/adj.loc.nt.s. kruptos hidden, inward*]); **and**

circumcision is that which is of the heart, by the Spirit, not by the letter [*καὶ περιτομή καρδίας ἐν πνεύματι οὐ γράμματι, [conj kai + noun nom.f.s. peritome + noun gen.f.s. kardia heart + prep en + noun loc.nt.s. pneuma spirit + neg ou + noun loc.nt.s. gramma letter]*]

and his praise is not from men, but from God [οὗ ὁ ἔπαινος οὐκ ἐξ ἀνθρώπων ἀλλ’ ἐκ τοῦ θεοῦ [*pro.gen.m.s. hos whose + d.a.w/noun nom.m.s. epainos praise + neg ouk + prep ek + noun abl.m.p. anthropos + conj alla + prep ek + d.a.w/abl.m.s. theos*]).

ANALYSIS: VERSES 25-29

1. Having established that the self-righteous teacher of the Law falls into the same category as the Gentile—the ones whom the Jew berates, Paul advances the indictment of the Jew by informing him as to whom the real Jew is, indeed.
2. Circumcision as a ritual was instituted as the sign of the Abrahamic Covenant, and Abraham was the first Hebrew to undergo this procedure (Gen. 17:10-14; 23-27; 21:4).
3. Moses influenced by his first wife, failed to circumcise his second son in a timely fashion and came near to the sin unto death (Ex. 4:24-26).
4. Another episode of interest is the fact that the rebellious Exodus Generation failed to circumcise sons born to them during the forty years.
5. The adult males of Israel were circumcised in mass just after crossing the Jordan into Canaan (Josh. 5:2-9).
6. Uncircumcised foreigners were prohibited from observing Passover unless they were first circumcised (Ex. 12:48).
7. Israelites that refused to be circumcised were to be excommunicated from the nation (Gen. 17:14).
8. Jesus, born under the Law was circumcised (Lk. 2:21), as was John the Baptist (Lk. 1:59).

9. Circumcision was null and void if the individual circumcised did not meet the spiritual requirements of the Law.
10. First and foremost was the requirement to make the salvation adjustment.
11. So Paul's words to the reader ("you" is singular as in the preceding verses) is that "circumcision is of value if you practice the Law" (v. 25a).
12. Only by practicing the Law was circumcision of any significance.
13. Failure to practice the Law nullified the ritual for the individual.
14. A "transgressor" of the Law was anyone who failed to comply with the most essential aspect which was saving faith.
15. A religious Jew who misused the Law was one who was trying to gain eternal salvation by the works of the Law.
16. The Law was never intended to be the pathway to salvation.
17. The Law was designed to point out the fact that all are sinners.
18. The Law specified the means of salvation through the Levitical codes with its animal sacrifices.
19. So merely being circumcised and trying to keep the commandments prohibiting sinful behavior was a dead-end.
20. To any Jewish instructor of the Law who failed to meet this essential Paul says, "your circumcision has become uncircumcision."
21. Any Jewish person for that matter who was into salvation by the works of Law was a "transgressor of the Law" at the most extreme level.
22. A circumcised infant (8th day) was not saved, but merely had in his flesh the sign of the Abrahamic Covenant.
23. The Abrahamic Covenant took precedence over the Mosaic Covenant.
24. The Abrahamic Covenant promised salvation to the seed of Abraham for those who believed in the promise of the coming One in whom all nations could be blessed.
25. Circumcision as a ritual was incorporated as one of the commandments of the Law.
26. In verse 26 Paul takes this subject to another level—a level that the legalistic Jew never entertained.
27. "If the uncircumcised man keeps the Law" points to a Gentile who made the salvation adjustment, and the rebound adjustment, and even the maturity adjustment.
28. So, circumcision is not essential to making these three adjustments as it was not instituted as a ritual until the time of Abraham.
29. All those believers of the pre-Abraham times were able to gain salvation and all that follows not having the ritual.
30. Oh, and how about females?
31. "The requirements of the Law" begin with the commandment to believe in the promised Savior and include those requirements to necessary to make the maturity adjustment.
32. The Law given at Sinai was not given to the Gentiles to be observed in the exact manner it was for national Israel in their dispensation.
33. Note how Paul juxtaposes "your circumcision has become uncircumcision" (v. 25b) with "will not his uncircumcision be regarded/counted as circumcision."
34. Again, where the essential spiritual conditions are absent (especially the salvation adjustment) then the dispensational advantage of the ritual lapses for the unbelieving Jew.
35. Paul has up to this point in dealing with circumcision, pulled down the Jewish house of cards, demonstrating that they are no better than Gentiles when it comes to achieving +R.

36. In these verses Paul strips the Jew of his reliance on the ritual of circumcision.
37. Judaism, then, as now, is a colossal failure in terms of eternal salvation.
38. Ritual minus the essential reality results in voiding the ritual; while absent the ritual plus the essential reality is to regard the uncircumcision as circumcision.
39. Saving faith is the primary and prerequisite condition for blessing under the covenants given to the Chosen people and the New Covenant to the Church.
40. The unsaved Jew, no matter his personal morality, was a major transgressor of law.
41. In verse 27 Paul takes the subject to yet another level.
42. Guess who has the upper hand?
43. The “physically uncircumcised” person “who keeps the Law” (seeing his need, he believes) is in a position to rightly judge the Jewish transgressor as spiritually bankrupt.
44. With the advent of the Church Age, and the conversion of so many Gentiles, the Jewish legalistic is open to righteous condemnation (they of all people should have known better!).
45. All the legalistic Jew has is “the letter of *the Law*” and a ritual that is devoid of any significance before God.
46. Later on in this epistle Paul will demonstrate that the founder of the Jewish race had the reality long before he had the ritual.
47. The Law demanded +R for salvation (e.g., perfection) through the moral commandments (defining STA activity) or else.
48. No human is capable of maintaining sinless perfection.
49. The way out of this dilemma was the shadow soteriology and Christology embodied in the Levitical code.
50. Circumcision and possession of the legal code is of no value absent compliance with the very thing that circumcision was designed to signify.
51. If circumcision is non-circumcision for the Jewish transgressor of law, then what does the say about the racial aspect?
52. That brings us to verse 28a where Paul asserts that the racial aspect is overturned as well!!
53. In what sense, as a Jew is a Jew, whether born again or not?
54. A genuine Jew is one who is like his ancient ancestor Abraham.
55. Minimally, he must be a believer in his Messiah.
56. Otherwise, his racial identity has no permanent meaning.
57. Verse 28b introduces the question was to what is the reality behind external circumcision?
58. As with water baptism there is a reality behind the act of immersion in water.
59. Verse 29 answers that question.
60. The genuine Jew is one who has experienced an “inward” circumcision.
61. The object of spiritual circumcision is “the heart” (syn. the soul), where in physical circumcision, it is the male phallus.
62. The corresponding surgical knife is “by the Spirit.”
63. “Not by the letter”, indicates it (spirit circumscion) is not based on the commandment given to Abraham and Moses to practice this ritual throughout there generations.
64. Those, and those alone, who undergo spiritual circumcision will garner praise from God.
65. Praise from men apart from this procedure is worthless.
66. Spiritual circumcision is taught in the Law (Deut. 10:16; 30:6; Jer. 4:4).
67. Deut. 10:16 “So circumcise your heart, and stiffen your neck no longer” (neck represents volition).

68. Deut. 30:6 “Moreover the LORD your God will circumcise your heart and the heart of you descendants, to love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul, so that you might live.”
69. What does the physical foreskin signify?
70. It signifies the rulership of the ISTA/OSN.
71. When removed it signifies that the soul/heart is not being ruled by the flesh (syn.).
72. Note Jer. 4:4 “Circumcise yourself to the LORD (here for rebound), and remove the foreskins of your heart, men of Jerusalem and inhabitants of Jerusalem...”
73. A verse from the NT (Phil. 3:3 “for we are true circumcision, who worship in the Spirit of God and glory in Christ Jesus and put no confidence in the flesh.”).
74. Col. 2:11 firmly establishes that fact that the salvation and rebound adjustments constitute the isolation of the STA (“and in Him you were also circumcised with a circumcision not made with hands, in the removal of the body of the flesh by the circumcision of Christ;”).

END: Romans Chapter Two
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