

Review: Circumcision: the two-fold meaning:

1. Necessity of absolute purity in coming before God.
2. God covenanting to provide this purity: Sacrifice of Christ: Operation of God. The question is not whether or not the work needs to be done, but who is to do the work.

Parallel passage in Ephesians 2:1-end. which we read a moment ago.

I. Believers have been quickened together with Christ.

A. Deadness in Sins.

1. Deadness is manifested in two ways: in their sins: Both nature and actions: Does not say that they were dead because their nature was corrupt and their actions evil; but their nature was corrupt and their actions were evil because of their deadness. The cause of deadness: alienation from God: this was because of Adam's sin. No life. Cut off from the vine; alienated from the life of God.
2. Eph. 4:17, 18. "Alienated from the life of God through the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness of their hearts...." Paul keeps saying the same thing over and over to the churches!!!
3. Uncircumcision was just a badge of their bondage to the flesh and the sins of the flesh. It was a badge of their deadness: a symbol of their actual spiritual condition of alienation from the life of God.

B. But that condition had changed: they were united to Christ by the work of the Spirit and the operation of God. They had believed the gospel and were baptized into Christ: into union with Him, and they were therefore no longer dead in trespasses and in sins.

1. Their union with Christ brings several tremendous results: God is doing great things: He is the one who is doing these things.
2. Forgiveness of sins. "Grace" is the word here. To bestow without merit. Free forgiveness of sins. All sins: past, present, future. All sins, period. They were all future when Christ died for me. God will not impute sins to me, or to any Christian forever, because of the Death of Jesus Christ.
  - a) Handwriting: statement of debt. A deed of trust.
  - b) Ordinances: the law is contrary to us: this means not only the ceremonies: for they were not contrary to us, but the law as a rule of life.
  - c) My debt is not to the ceremonies, but to the law itself. The Holy Spirit is speaking here of the law in all its glory, as a rule of life, as a measure of my approval by God.
  - d) Consider a man laboring under a huge debt. He cannot pay the debt. His creditors call every few days. He cannot sleep at night. He cannot get rest. His mind is constantly occupied with the debt. He knows that the debt is legal; he knows that the debt is just; he know that the debt is moral. He has no doubt about any of these things. He knows that he owes the money and that he is obligated to pay. He had signed the notes. His signature in on the instruments. If he is dragged into court, he will have to acknowledge that the instruments are legal, valid, and binding upon him. He also knows certainly that he cannot pay the debt.
  - e) Though, legal, binding, moral, and binding, those instruments are his enemies. The law is on the side of his creditors.

3. But these debts have been cancelled and removed by the blood of Jesus Christ. The papers are cancelled; the debts are taken away. Two figures here reinforce this idea: they are erased, and taken away. vs. 14. The tense is perfect: something done once and for all. Not something that is being done, or will be done; but cancelled, finished, done. "Nailed once and for all" aorist tense: Once for all to the cross of Christ.
  - a) This is not the ceremonial law only. It is the law which condemns me. The entire law: everything is nailed to the cross of Christ. Not the law of Moses, for that would leave me yet under the law of sacrifice and circumcision which was before the law of Moses. The whole requirement of God as a means of life, is what is nailed to the cross of Christ.
  - b) The law no longer has any power to condemn the Christian: this is the sense. The law as an instrument of death has been removed.
4. Conquest of all the powers of evil. vs. 15. Satan derives his power as the executioner of the wrath of God's law. No uglier executioner and slavemaster has ever been seen upon this earth.
  - a) Those who are condemned by the law of God are under the power of the devil, and do his will. See Hebrews 2:14,15. "Power of death" means all the evil results of sin. Satan is God's executioner and slavemaster to hold in bondage all those who are alienated from the life of God. 2Tim. 2:25,26. Only God can deliver from the power of the devil. He does this through the Gospel of Christ, through faith in Christ.
  - b) "Spoiled" means stripping off, as stripping off the garments of the slain in battle. He repulsed all the powers of the devil. It makes no difference if you see this as God doing this in Christ, or Christ doing it himself. Christ threw off all the powers of evil that would have destroyed him: for when he was made sin for us, all the powers of hell converged upon him as upon their lawful spoil; but he made a spoil of them, throwing them off and gaining the victory over them.
  - c) Spiritual warfare is accomplished and completely in Jesus Christ. We need not exorcism, anointings, or other spells and ceremonies: Christ has overcome the power of the devil, and has triumphed over him. The less we know about such things, the better we are. We are to live in faith and in trust, for Christ has taken all authority, and dominion, and power to Himself. We have no fear, for Christ is all in all.

### **Summary**

#### I. Considered as to the Person of Christ.

You were once dead, because you did not know Jesus Christ; but now you have been united to Him by faith in the Gospel. His life now works in you through the Gospel, and you are new creatures in Jesus Christ. Old things have passed away, behold all things are become new.

#### II. The level of spiritual reality.

You were once dead, under the condemnation of the law. You were in bondage to the devil, and under the wrath and curse of God. You did evil things because you were dead; you were not dead because you did evil things. Because of Adam's guilt, you were born spiritually dead, alienated from the life of God, without God and without hope in the world.

#### III. The level of sacraments.

You were once uncircumcised. Your uncircumcision was a badge of your deadness. But now you wear baptism as a badge, a badge of newness of life in Christ. Hence, you do not need to be circumcised, or keep any of the ordinances of the old law; all are done away, and they are forbidden to you, as denying Christ.

**Finally:** Live in the life of Christ. Christ threw off the powers of darkness on that evil day at Calvary, when he was made sin for us. He threw off the powers of darkness, so that you might throw off the powers of darkness and live in newness of life.

Just as you were not dead because you did evil things; So you are not alive because you do good things. The evil things were the result, not the cause, of your deadness; and good deeds are the result of newness of life in Christ; for it cannot be that the life of Christ would work in you to corruption and sin. Rather, the life of Christ works in you the fruit of righteousness which is pleasing to God: the spiritual fruit which is His work in you, manifested by the work of faith and love: love toward God, and love toward His people: not love in word only, but in deed and in truth.

May God bless you.