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See the MP3 for the lengthy circumcision/uncircumcision discussion.

## **Lesson 16**

A short review, **Vv. 21, 22.**

Paul lists 3 sins:

**1. Stealing.**

**2. Adultery.**

**3. Sacrilege,** or rob temples.

Since their Babylonian captivity, the Israelites, Jews avoided idols. However, though they professed hatred for the idols in obedience to their laws, they made a good income by supporting the pagan temple traffic.

It is like a Christian who says he hates drunkenness, yet owns a bar that promotes drunkenness, or works in the liquor industry.

### **Start, lesson 16**

**Paul accuses these Jews of being proud of their knowledge** and understanding of what the Law said. They taught it, and condemned others for not following the law. Yet they ignored the law in their own lives. Doing so, they dishonored God, and caused God to be blasphemed, or spoken evil of.

**Titus 2:1** *But speak thou the things which become sound doctrine: 2 That the aged men be sober, grave, temperate, sound in faith, in charity, in patience. 3 The aged women likewise, that they be in behaviour as becometh holiness, not false accusers, not given to much wine, teachers of good things; 4 That they may teach the young women to be sober, to love their husbands, to love their children, 5 **To be discreet, chaste, keepers at home, good, obedient to their own husbands, that the word of God be not blasphemed.***

Here we see pastors and Bible teachers who pride themselves in knowing and understanding the law. They know and understand what God's word says, and they will preach hard against theft adultery and sacrilege, yet they avoid **Titus 1** like the plague. By avoiding Titus 1 they teach young women to blaspheme God.

See, <http://www.biblicalexaminer.org/B-WomanYoung%20ladies.html#Teaching%20Daughters>

**Romans 2:24** *For the name of God is blasphemed among the Gentiles through you,*

*As it is written...* Though he does not quote the Old Testament law he refers to, there are several:

*Job 12:2 No doubt but ye are the people, and wisdom shall die with you. Now therefore, what have I here, saith the LORD, that my people is taken away for nought? they that rule over them make them to howl, saith the LORD; and my name continually every day is blasphemed.*

**Ezekiel 36:20** *And when they entered unto the heathen, whither they went, they profaned my holy name, when they said to them, These are the people of the LORD, and are gone forth out of his land. 21 But I had pity for mine holy name, which the house of Israel had profaned among the heathen, whither they went. 22 Therefore say unto the house of Israel, Thus saith the Lord GOD; I do not this for your sakes, O house of Israel, but for mine holy name's sake, which ye have profaned among the heathen, whither ye went. 23 And I will sanctify my great name, which was profaned among the heathen, which ye have profaned in the midst of them; and the heathen shall know that I am the LORD, saith the Lord GOD, when I shall be sanctified in you before their eyes.*

Though we might praise God with our lips, even lifting our hands toward heaven as we sing praises, if our actions do not line up with the word of God, we blaspheme his holy name.

The world says, "I know how he acts when he is not around other Christians, or his actions do not correspond to his words of praise."

**Vv. 25-29**

Paul is speaking in the context of his time. However, his words apply for all time. The true mark of God's people is the circumcised heart

“Paul then mentions circumcision. You can read about its establishment in #Ge 17. In the Old Testament, circumcision was the external sign that someone belonged to God’s people, Israel. So you might expect a circumcised person to respect God’s will, but if someone didn’t obey God, his circumcision would mean nothing. The external sign of circumcision was only valid if the desire in the heart was to behave like a member of God’s people. This desire found its expression in doing God’s will. This even meant that an uncircumcised person (someone who didn’t belong to Israel, but who respected the rights of the law) was owned by God as a member of His people. The result of this was eventual judgment on those who were only circumcised externally and not with the heart. The conclusion of this is seen in the last two verses. It deals with circumcision of the heart that leads us to the real meaning of circumcision. (de Koning)

Vv. 25-29 is self-explanatory:

The Israelites were proud of their physical circumcision, even believing it would save them from the wrath of God.

1. **Physical circumcision** only profited if one kept the law.
2. **Law breaking voided** any profit that might have been in physical circumcision.
3. **Law breaking counted** as uncircumcision before God.
4. **The Gentiles**, whom were despised by the Jews, were counted as circumcised before God if they fulfilled the law.
5. **The Gentiles** who were physically uncircumcised and kept the law would judge those who were physically circumcised, the Jews, for not keeping the law.

**V. 27, judge thee**—that is, the uncircumcised, non-Israelite will add to the Israelites’ condemnation because the Gentiles did by nature what the Jews refused to do by law.

**Matthew 12:41** *The men of Nineveh shall rise in judgment with this generation, and shall condemn it: because they repented at the preaching of Jonas; and, behold, a greater than Jonas is here.*

Thus, the men of Nineveh were counted as circumcised while apostate Israel was not. The men of Nineveh were the true Jews in that case.

**6. The message of Romans 2 and of Galatians 5** is clear. Even in the Old Testament law, the true circumcision was circumcision of the heart.

**Deuteronomy 30:6** *And the LORD thy God will circumcise thine heart, and the heart of thy seed, to love the LORD thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, that thou mayest live.*

**Colossians 2:11** *In whom also ye are circumcised with the circumcision made without hands, in putting off the body of the sins of the flesh by the circumcision of Christ: 12 Buried with him in baptism, wherein also ye are risen with him through the faith of the operation of God, who hath raised him from the dead.*

The context shows that true circumcision refers to Christ's death on the cross when He died under God's judgment for sin. Someone who believes this with his heart is "circumcised of the heart." He who is a real Jew speaks of one who praises God. Belonging to God's people only externally attracts human honor. Man likes the visible side of religion because it makes him more important, but God looks at the heart. The external has only value for Him if it is a sincere representation of the attitude of the heart. God praises those in whom He finds "truth in the inward parts." Ps 51:6 This is what counts with God. (de Koning)

**V. 29 is avoided** by those who want to baptize their babies. With no scriptural justification, they say that baptism replaced the Old Testament circumcision. That is not at all what Paul says here.

**Vv. 25-29** clearly establishes that circumcision has nothing to do with baptism. Rather, it refers to the heart.

**7. I will not take time** to document this statement, but from the very first, the true biblical Jew before God are those whose heart has been circumcised by the Spirit of God.

I have a book on the subject, if you want further information.

**Conclusion:**

Fair pretenses and a plausible profession may deceive men: but God cannot be so deceived; he sees through shows to realities. He is not a Christian who is one outwardly, nor is the true baptism outward in the flesh. Rather, he is a Christian who is one inwardly, and the true baptism is that of the heart. It is in the spirit, and not in the letter, whose praise is not of men but of God.

*Galatians 1:13 For ye have heard of my conversation in time past in the Jews' religion, how that beyond measure I persecuted the church of God, and wasted it: 14 And profited in the Jews' religion above many my equals in mine own nation, being more exceedingly zealous of the traditions of my fathers.*

Interesting note

While doing some research in the Jewish encyclopedia, I encountered this article.

Baptism: “A religious ablution signifying purification or consecration. The natural method of cleansing the body by washing and bathing in water was always customary in Israel (see Ablution, Bathing). The washing of their clothes was an important means of sanctification enjoined on the Israelites before the Revelation on Mt. Sinai (Ex. xix. 10). The Rabbis connect with this the duty of bathing by complete immersion ("ṭebilah," Yeb. 46b; Mek., Bahodesh, iii.); and since sprinkling with blood was always accompanied by immersion, tradition connects with this immersion the blood lustration mentioned as having also taken place immediately before the Revelation (Ex. xxiv. 8), these three acts being the initiatory rites always performed upon proselytes, "to bring them under the wings of the Shekinah" (Yeb. 1.c.).”

The article continues by pointing out that circumcision and immersion or bathing in water, was a sign of conversion to Judaism. It points out that Christianity dropped circumcision, but retained the bathing in water. “The original form of Baptism—frequent bathing in cold water—remained in use...” As bathing in water was seen as initiation into the Jewish religion, Christians used bathing in water as initiation into the Christian religion. <http://jewishencyclopedia.com/articles/2456-baptism>

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