



SHOULD A NEW TESTAMENT BELIEVER BE

CIRCUMCISED?

A controversy is raging in and out of the assemblies. It is an age old controversy that was dealt with among the early believers. However, there are still many who seek to trouble the believers bringing them in bondage to the law of Moses. That controversy is the question of circumcision. What is the truth concerning circumcision? We must search the Scriptures in order to come to the true understanding.

By Jerry Healan

Should a New Testament believer be circumcised? This question plagued the assembly fairly early on with the entrance of Gentile (non-Jewish) converts into the ranks of the assembly.

At first, the newly founded congregation consisted only of Jewish (circumcised) converts. These early believers had the concept that the promise of the kingdom and salvation belonged only to the descendants of Israel. This concept is evidenced by the situation between Peter and Cornelius.

Cornelius was a centurion of the Italians (Acts 10). He was a devout man, fearing Yahweh with all of His house, giving many alms to the people and praying to Elohim always (v. 2).

He witnessed a vision while he was praying at about the ninth hour of the day when an angel of Yahweh appeared to him (v. 3). The angel told him that his prayers had been heard and that he should send to Joppa for Simon Peter who was lodging with one Simon a Tanner by the seaside (vv. 4-6).

Cornelius obediently did as commanded sending two of his household servants and a devout soldier to fetch Peter (v. 7-8).

The next day, Peter went up on the housetop to pray and while there became very hungry and would have gone to eat, but before he could do so, he fell into a trance (v. 9-10).

Heaven was opened to him and he saw what looked like a great sheet knit at the four corners which was being let down to the earth. The sheet contained all kinds of beasts, wild beasts and creeping things. Then a voice came which said, "Rise, Peter; kill and eat." Peter refused saying that he had never eaten any thing common or unclean. However, the vision was persistent. It was done three times and then received back into heaven (vv. 11-16).

While Peter was wondering what was going on concerning this vision, the **three men** arrived from Cornelius. The vision had occurred three times, one time for each man that had been sent. The Spirit informed Peter of their arrival and he was told to go down and to go with them doubting nothing for they had been sent by Yahweh (vv. 17-20).

The men informed Peter concerning Cornelius and the visit by the angel who had told him to send for Peter. Peter and six other brethren accompanied the men back to Joppa (vv. 23-24).

Peter reminded them that it was unlawful for a Jew to keep company or come unto one of another nation, but Yahweh had shown him that he should no longer call any man common or unclean (v. 28).

Peter asked why Cornelius had sent for him and Cornelius recounted the visit by the angel (vv. 29-33).

Then Peter opened his mouth, and said, 'Of a truth I perceive that Yahweh is no respecter of persons: but in every nation he that feareth Him, and worketh righteousness, is accepted with Him. The word which Yahweh sent unto the children of Israel, preaching peace by Yahshua the Messiah: (He is Sovereign of all:) that word, I say, ye know, which was published throughout all Judæa, began from Galilee, after the baptism which John preached; how Yahweh anointed Yahshua of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and with power: Who went about doing good, and healing all that were oppressed of the devil; for Yahweh was with Him. And we are witnesses of all things which He did both in the land of the Jews, and in Jerusalem; Whom they slew and hanged on a tree: Him Yahweh raised up the third day, and shewed Him openly; not to all the People, but unto witnesses chosen before of Yahweh, even to us, who did eat and drink with Him after He rose from the dead. And He commanded us to preach unto the People, and to testify that it is He Which was ordained of Yahweh to be the Judge of quick and dead. To Him give all the prophets witness that through His name whosoever believeth in Him shall receive remission of sins,' (vv. 34-43).

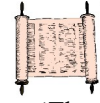
THE HOLY SPIRIT GIVEN

"While Peter yet spake these words the Holy Spirit fell on all them which heard the word. And they of the circumcision which believed were astonished, as many as came with Peter, because that on the Gentiles also was poured out the gift of the Holy Spirit." (vv. 34-45).

Notice it again. **They of the circumcision were aston-**



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ished because the Holy Spirit was poured out on the Gentiles (uncircumcised non-Jews).

Then Peter said, "Can any man forbid water, that these should not be baptized, which have received the Holy Spirit as well as we?" And He commanded them to be baptized in the name of the Sovereign. Then prayed they him to tarry certain days," vv. 47-48.

Peter commanded that they be baptized in the name of the Savior. He said nothing about them being circumcised!

"And the apostles and brethren that were in Judæa heard that the Gentiles had also received the word of Yahweh. And when Peter was come up to Jerusalem, they that were of the circumcision contended with him, saying, "**Thou wentest in to men uncircumcised**, and didst eat with them.' But Peter rehearsed the matter from the beginning, and expounded it by order unto them, saying, 'I was in the city of Joppa praying: and in a trance I saw a vision, A certain vessel descend, as it had been a great sheet, let down from heaven by four corners; and it came even to me: upon the which when I had fastened mine eyes, I considered, and saw fourfooted beasts of the earth, and wild beasts, and creeping things, and fowls of the air. And I heard a voice saying unto me, 'Rise, Peter; slay and eat.' But I said, 'Not so, Master: for nothing common or unclean hath at any time entered into my mouth.' But the voice answered me again from heaven, 'What Yahweh hath cleansed, *that* call not thou common.' And this was done three times: and all were drawn up again into heaven. And, behold, immediately there were three men already come unto the house where I was, sent from Caesarea unto me. And the Spirit bade me go with them, nothing doubting. Moreover these six brethren accompanied me, and we entered into the man's house: and he shewed us how he had seen an angel in his house, which stood and said unto him, 'Send men to Joppa, and call for Simon, whose surname is Peter; who shall tell thee words, whereby thou and all thy house shall be saved.' And as I began to speak, the Holy Spirit fell on them, as on us at the beginning. Then remembered I the word of the Master, how that he said, 'John indeed baptized with water; but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Spirit.' Forasmuch then as Yahweh gave them the like gift as *he did* unto us, who believed on the Master Yahshua the Messiah; **what was I, that I could withstand Yahweh?**" Acts. 11:1-17.

Notice it again, very carefully. The brethren at Jerusalem contended with Peter because he ate with the uncircumcised. Cornelius and his band were uncircumcised when Peter received the vision. Yahweh had already considered them clean even in their uncircumcision in the flesh. He also poured His Holy Spirit upon them even in their uncircumcision. Peter did not command that they then be circumcised, but he commanded that they be baptized.

Notice what the brethren in Jerusalem did when they heard these things, "When they heard these things, they

held their peace, and glorified Yahweh, saying, 'Then hath Yahweh also to the Gentiles granted repentance unto life,'" Acts 11:18.

ENTER THE PHARISEES

Sometime later, after Paul and Barnabas had been called and set aside as apostles, certain men of Judæa came to Antioch teaching that except they were circumcised after the manner of Moses, they could not be saved." Paul and Barnabas had no small disputation with these men insomuch that it was determined that they should go up to Jerusalem and present the matter to the apostles and elders there (Acts 15:1-2).

On the way to Jerusalem, they were declaring the conversion of the Gentiles with great joy, but upon their arrival there rose up certain ones of the sect of the Pharisees which believed, who were saying that they needed to be circumcised and to keep the law of Moses (vv. 3-5).

When the apostles and elders came together to discuss the matter there was a great deal of disputing (vv. 6-7). But Peter rose up and said unto them, "Men and brethren, ye know how that **a good while ago** Yahweh made choice among us, that the Gentiles by my mouth should hear the word of the evangel, and believe. And Yahweh, Which knoweth the hearts, bare them witness, giving them the Holy Spirit, even as He did unto us; **and put no difference between us and them, purifying their hearts by faith**. Now therefore why tempt ye Yahweh, to put a yoke upon the neck of the disciples, **which neither our fathers nor we were able to bear?** But we believe that through the grace of the Sovereign Yahshua the Messiah we shall be saved, even as then," Acts 15:7-11.

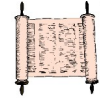
Here is the apostle Peter telling the truth of the matter. It is not through physical fleshly circumcision that we shall be saved, but it is through the faith in Yahshua the Messiah.

After Paul and Barnabas told everyone about the wonders and miracles that were being worked by them among the Gentiles, everyone kept silence (v. 12).

Then James declared, "Men and brethren, hearken unto me: Simeon hath declared how Yahweh at the first did visit the Gentiles, to take out of them a people for His name. And to this agree the words of the prophets; as it is written, 'After this I will return, and will build again the tabernacle of David, which is fallen down; and I will build again the ruins thereof, and I will set it up: that the residue of men might seek after Yahweh, and all the Gentiles, upon whom My name is called,' saith Yahweh, 'Who doeth all these things.' Known unto Yahweh are all His works from the beginning of the world. **Wherefore my sentence is, that we trouble not them, which from among the Gentiles are turned to Yahweh:** but that we write unto them, that they abstain from pollutions of idols, and from fornication, and from things strangled, and from blood. **For Moses of old time hath in every city them that preach him, being read in the synagogues every sabbath day.**' Then pleased the apostles and elders, with the whole assem-



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bly, to send chosen men of their own company to Antioch with Paul and Barnabas; namely, Judas surnamed Barsabas, and Silas, chief men among the brethren; and they wrote letters by them after this manner; ‘The apostles and elders and brethren send greeting unto the brethren which are of the Gentiles in Antioch and Syria and Cilicia: **forasmuch as we have heard that certain which went out from us have troubled you with words, subverting your souls, saying, ‘Ye must be circumcised, and keep the law:’ to whom we gave no such commandment:** it seemed good unto us, being assembled with one accord, to send chosen men unto you with our beloved Barnabas and Paul, men that have hazarded their lives for the name of our Sovereign Yahshua the Messiah. We have sent therefore Judas and Silas, who shall also tell you the same things by mouth. For it seemed good to the Holy Spirit and to us, to lay upon you no greater burden than these necessary things; that ye abstain from meats offered to idols, and from blood, and from things strangled, and from fornication: from which if ye keep yourselves, ye shall do well. Fare ye well.” Acts 15:13-29.

Herein is the ruling of the apostles and elders at Jerusalem. Why is it that many of those who call themselves believers today, and also call upon the true names of the Father and Son cannot accept this judgment?

Notice also that Moses had been read from old time on every Sabbath day! Since Moses demanded physical, fleshly circumcision, then why the controversy?

CIRCUMCISION CAN BE UNCIRCUMCISION

The apostle Paul writes, **“For circumcision verily profiteth, if thou keep the law: but if thou be a breaker of the law, thy circumcision is made uncircumcision.** Therefore if the uncircumcision keep the righteousness of the law, shall not his uncircumcision be counted for circumcision? And shall not uncircumcision which is by nature, if it fulfil the law, judge thee, who by the letter and circumcision dost transgress the law? For he is not a Jew, which is one outwardly; neither is that circumcision, which outward in the flesh: but he is a Jew, which is one inwardly; and **circumcision is that of the heart, in the spirit, and not in the letter;** whose praise is not of men, but of Yahweh,” Ro. 2:25-29.

Truly, if men could keep the law then circumcision would be profitable according to Paul in verse 25. However, in chapter 3 of this same book Paul writes that Jews and Gentiles are both under sin (v. 9) and that all have sinned (transgressed the law) and come short of the glory of Yahweh (v. 23). Therefore, what good will circumcision of the flesh do in achieving salvation? The only One Who was able to be circumcised and keep the law perfectly in **all points** was Yahshua the Messiah.

Paul continues to point out in Ro. 4 that Abraham became the father of the faithful even while he was yet uncircumcised. He received circumcision as a seal of his

righteousness of faith (v. 10-11), but he says that Abraham is the father of all them that believe even though they are not circumcised in order that righteousness might also be imputed to them (v. 11).

Paul also writes, “Is any man called being circumcised? Let him not become uncircumcised. Is any called in uncircumcision? Let him not be circumcised. **Circumcision is nothing, and uncircumcision is nothing, but the keeping of the commandments of Yahweh,**” 1 Cor. 7:18-19.

THE COMMANDMENTS

Notice again what Paul is saying here, “...circumcision is nothing, and uncircumcision is nothing, but the keeping of the commandments of Yahweh.”

Yahshua was asked, “Good Master, what good thing shall I do, that I may have eternal life?” And He said unto him, Why callest thou Me good? There is none good but One, that is, Elohim: but if thou wilt enter into life, keep the commandments.’ He saith unto Him, ‘Which?’” Mt. 19:16-18.

This young man was a Jew. He knew that there were commandments, statutes, judgments and ordinances. As a matter of fact, the Jews proclaim that there are 613 commandments in the Torah and that they should all be kept. The Pharisees had also laden the people with heavy burdens to bear. So the young man wanted to know which of these to observe.

Yahshua answered, “Thou shalt do no murder, Thou shalt not commit adultery, Thou shalt not steal, Thou shalt not bear false witness, Honour thy father and thy mother: and Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.’ The Young man saith unto Him, ‘All these things have I kept from my youth up: what lack I yet?’ Yahshua said unto him, ‘If thou wilt be perfect, go and sell that thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven: and come and follow Me.’ But when the young man heard that saying, he went away sorrowful: for he had great possessions,” vv. 18-22.

What had Yahshua focused on? A portion of the 10 commandments. What portion did He leave off? Thou shalt not covet was one of them. The rich young man coveted the great wealth that he had. But Yahshua also left off (1) Thou shalt have no other elohim before Me. (2) Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image, or any likeness of any thing that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth: thou shalt not bow down thyself to them, nor serve them: for I Yahweh thy Elohim am a jealous El, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate Me; and shewing mercy unto thousands of



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them that love Me, and keep My commandments. (3) Thou shalt not take the name of Yahweh thy Elohim in vain; for Yahweh will not hold him guiltless that taketh His name in vain. (4) Remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy. And Thou shalt love Yahweh thy Elohim with all your heart, mind and soul.

Here was a young man who certainly was Jewish and circumcised in the flesh. Yet he went away sorrowful because he wasn't willing to give up his riches in order to apprehend the Messiah. Yahshua understood that he was breaking the commandment of covetousness, including the commandments which have to do with loving Yahweh (commandments 1-3 specifically). The young man was making an elohim and idol out of his riches. Thus, what good did his circumcision do him? As the Apostle Paul states, his circumcision had become uncircumcision.

Another thing to point out is that Yahshua never proclaimed the 613 commandments, which **the Jews admit that over half of them are impossible to keep!**

THE PROBLEM AT GALATIA

It is obvious that the Apostle Paul wrote the book of Galatians because the same situation was occurring there which occurred at Antioch. Some (probably Pharisees) were coming in and teaching the people that they should be circumcised. Again, Paul deals with the problem in a powerful way. He proclaims that the evangel of uncircumcision was committed to him as was the evangel of circumcision was to Peter (Gal. 2:7).

He states that when he, Barnabas and Titus journeyed to Jerusalem that Titus, being a Greek, was not compelled to be circumcised (Gal. 2:1-3).

In chapter 6 he writes, "As many as desire to make a fair shew in the flesh, they constrain you to be circumcised; only lest they should suffer persecution for the cross of the Messiah. For **neither they themselves who are circumcised keep the law**; but desire to have you circumcised, that they may glory in your flesh. But Yahweh forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Sovereign Yahshua the Messiah, by Whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world. For **in the Messiah neither circumcision availeth anything, nor uncircumcision, but a new creature**," (vv. 12-15).

Again, Paul warns the Galatians, "Stand fast therefore in the liberty wherewith the Messiah hath made us free, and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage. Behold, I Paul say unto you, that **if ye be circumcised, The Messiah shall profit you nothing. For I testify again to every man that is circumcised, that he is a debtor to do the whole law. The Messiah is become of no effect unto you, whosoever of you are justified by the law; ye are fallen from grace.** For we through

the Spirit wait for the hope of righteousness by faith. For **in Yahshua the Messiah neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision**; but faith which worketh by love. Ye did run well; who did hinder you that ye should not obey the truth? This persuasion cometh not of him that calleth you. A little leaven leaveneth the whole lump. I have confidence in you through the Sovereign, that ye will be none otherwise minded: but he that troubleth you shall bear his judgment, whosoever he be. And I, brethren, **if I yet preach circumcision, why do I yet suffer persecution?** then is the offence of the cross ceased. I would they were even cut off which trouble you. For, brethren, ye have been called unto liberty; only *use* not liberty for an occasion to the flesh, but by love serve one another. For all the law is fulfilled in one word, *even* in this; Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. But if ye bite and devour one another, take heed that ye be not consumed one of another," Gal. 5:1-15.

Again, Paul says a mouthful. He warns that if a man consents to circumcision (for religious purposes) then he is indebted to do the whole law. The Messiah and His grace is no longer in effect for that person.

What Paul is saying here is that if a man is circumcised according to the command in the Torah, then he has taken it upon himself to fulfill the whole law under his own strength. He has brought himself under the same covenant that Israel made with Yahweh when they promised, "All the words which Yahweh hath said will we do...All that Yahweh hath said will we do, and be obedient," Ex. 24:3, 7.

When confronted with the "circumcision controversy," the Apostle Peter put the whole thing in perspective with his statement, "Now therefore why tempt ye Elohim, to put a yoke upon the neck of the disciples, **which neither our fathers nor we were able to bear?**" Act. 15:10-11.

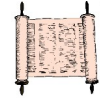
Israel couldn't bear the yoke of obedience to the Torah! That is why they eventually had to be removed from the land of promise! The Prophet Hosea proclaimed, "They like Adam have transgressed the covenant: there have they dealt treacherously against Me," 6:7. (NOTE: The KJV says, "They like **men**...", but the Hebrew Scriptures reveal that the name Adam should be utilized here rather than the word men. It was Adam who transgressed the original covenant with Yahweh and had to be cast out of the garden of Eden. Israel, like Adam, transgressed Yahweh's covenant and had to be cast out of the land.)

TRUE CIRCUMCISION

The Apostle Paul reveals that there is a circumcision which is so much better than the physical fleshly circumcision made by the hands of man. He writes,



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“Finally, my brethren, rejoice in the Sovereign. To write the same things to you, to me indeed is not grievous, but for you it is safe. Beware of dogs, beware of evil workers, beware of the concision. For **we are the circumcision which worship Yahweh in spirit, and rejoice in the Messiah Yahshua, and have no confidence in the flesh,**” Phil. 3:1-3.

We worship Yahweh in spirit through Yahshua the Messiah and not through the physical fleshly things that we can do with our own hands! In His conversation with the Samaritan woman at the well, Yahshua told her, “Woman, believe me, the hour cometh, when ye shall neither in this mountain, nor yet at Jerusalem, worship the Father. Ye worship ye know not what: we know what we worship: for salvation is of the Jews. But the hour cometh, and now is, when **the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth:** for the Father seeketh such to worship Him. Yahweh is Spirit: and **they that worship Him must worship in spirit and in truth,**” Jn. 4:21-24.

The Spirit is the Holy Spirit which was poured out on the apostles on the day of Pentecost (Acts 2:1-4) raising up the New Testament Assembly. Yahshua is the truth, “**I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by Me,**” Jn. 14:6.

It is through baptism in Yahshua’s name that we receive the Holy Spirit and the true circumcision which is now a spiritual circumcision as Paul writes, “For I would that ye knew what great conflict I have for you, and *for* them at Laodicea, and *for* as many as have not seen my face in the flesh; that their hearts might be comforted, being knit together in love, and unto all riches of the full assurance of understanding, to the acknowledgement of the mystery of Elohim, and of the Father, and of the Messiah; in whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge. And this I say, lest any man should beguile you with enticing words. For though I be absent in the flesh, yet am I with you in the spirit, joying and beholding your order, and the steadfastness of your faith in the Messiah. As ye have therefore received the Messiah Yahshua the Sovereign, *so* walk ye in him: rooted and built up in him, and stablished in the faith, as ye have been taught, abounding therein with thanksgiving. Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after the Messiah. For in him dwelleth all the fulness of Elohim physically. And ye are complete in him, which is the head of all principality and power: **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 the Messiah:** buried with him in baptism, wherein also ye are risen with *him* through the faith of the operation of Elohim, who hath raised him from the dead. **And you, being dead in your sins and the uncircumcision of your flesh,** hath he quickened

together with him, having forgiven you all trespasses; blotting out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to his cross; *and* having spoiled principalities and powers, he made a shew of them openly, triumphing over them in it,” Col. 2:1-15.

Herein is the true circumcision of the New Covenant. It is the circumcision made without the hands of man. Our faith in the Messiah Yahshua is what circumcises away the foreskin of the heart. Therefore, we must warn all to beware those who proclaim that you must be circumcised in the flesh. They are seeking to rejoice in an outward show in the flesh and not in the spirit.

ISRAEL’S COVENANT

When Yahweh delivered Israel out of the land of Egypt, He brought them into the wilderness of Sinai where He proposed a covenant to them, “In the third month, when the children of Israel were gone forth out of the land of Egypt, the same day came they *into* the wilderness of Sinai. For they were departed from Rephidim, and were come *to* the desert of Sinai, and had pitched in the wilderness; and there Israel camped before the mount. And Moses went up unto Elohim, and Yahweh called unto him out of the mountain, saying, ‘Thus shalt thou say to the house of Jacob, and tell the children of Israel; Ye have seen what I did unto the Egyptians, and *how* I bare you on eagles’ wings, and brought you unto myself. Now therefore, if ye will obey my voice indeed, and keep my covenant, then ye shall be a peculiar treasure unto me above all people: for all the earth *is* mine: And ye shall be unto me a kingdom of priests, and an holy nation. These *are* the words which thou shalt speak unto the children of Israel,’” Ex. 19:1-6.

The first one to hear of the proposal were the elders of Israel, “And Moses came and called for the elders of the People, and laid before their faces all these words which Yahweh commanded him. And all the People answered together, and said, ‘**All that Yahweh hath spoken we will do.**’ And Moses returned the words of the People unto Yahweh,” vv. 7-8.

Yahweh told Moses to prepare to meet Him on the third day giving them bounds through which they were not to pass. Moses prepared the people and on the third day Yahweh descended upon Mount Hor proclaiming His commandments, statutes, judgments and ordinances. When Yahweh finished speaking, “...Moses came and told the People all the words of Yahweh, and all the judgments: and all the People answered with one voice, and said, ‘**All the words which Yahweh hath said will we do.**’ And Moses wrote all the words of Yahweh, and rose up early in the morning, and builded an altar under the hill, and twelve pillars, according to the twelve tribes of Israel. And he sent young men of the



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children of Israel, which offered burnt offerings, and sacrificed peace offerings of oxen unto Yahweh. And Moses took half of the blood, and put it in basins; and half of the blood he sprinkled on the altar. And he took the book of the covenant, and read in the audience of the People: and they said, '**All that Yahweh hath said will we do, and be obedient.**' And Moses took the blood, and sprinkled it on the People, and said, 'Behold the blood of the covenant, which Yahweh hath made with you concerning all these words,'" Ex. 24:3-8.

Notice it carefully. The children of Israel promised three times that they would do and be obedient to Yahweh's words. This is the covenant that Yahweh made with Israel. It was a covenant based on promises made between Yahweh and Israel. Yahweh promised that if they would obey His laws, statutes, judgments and ordinances then they would be a very happy, prosperous and blessed people. However, there were consequences and curses if the people did not obey. The problem is that the people DID NOT OBEY! I will refer again to Acts 15:10 wherein it was declared, "Now therefore why tempt ye Yahweh, to put a yoke upon the neck of the disciples, which **neither our fathers nor we were able to bear?**" Also, look at the statement made in Heb. 8:7-8, "For if that first covenant had been faultless, then should no place have been sought for the second. **For finding fault with them,** He saith, 'Behold, the days come, saith Yahweh, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah'."

Israel came under the curse of the law because they trusted in themselves that they could fulfill the covenant, but they failed miserably and had to bear the judgment and curse of Yahweh by being destroyed and cast out of the land of promise.

THE NEW COVENANT

When Yahweh made His covenant with Israel He already knew that the first covenant would end in disaster for it is admitted, "**O that there were such an heart in them, that they would fear Me, and keep all My commandments always,** that it might be well with them, and with their children for ever!" Dt. 5:29.

Moses told Israel, "These are the words of the covenant, which Yahweh commanded Moses to make with the children of Israel in the land of Moab, beside the covenant which He made with them in Horeb. And Moses called unto all Israel, and said unto them, 'Ye have seen all that Yahweh did before your eyes in the land of Egypt unto Pharaoh, and unto all his servants, and unto all his land; the great temptations which thine eyes have seen, the signs, and those great miracles: **yet Yah-**

weh hath not given you an heart to perceive, and eyes to see, and ears to hear, unto this day,'" Dt. 29:1-4.

Yahweh looks on the heart, on the inside and not on the exterior. The apostle Peter admits, "And the apostles and elders came together for to consider of this matter. And when there had been much disputing, Peter rose up, and said unto them, 'Men and brethren, ye know how that a good while ago Yahweh made choice among us, that the Gentiles by my mouth should hear the word of the evangel, and believe. And Yahweh, WHICH KNOWETH THE HEARTS, bare them witness, giving them the Holy Spirit, even as He did unto us; and put no difference between us and them, PURIFYING THEIR HEARTS BY FAITH,'" Acts. 15:6-9.

In Dt. 32 we find a prophecy given by Moses under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit. Moses was inspired to proclaim that Israel would fall away to other elohim, practice abominations, sacrifice to devils, etc. Furthermore, he said, "Of the Rock That begat thee thou art unmindful, and hast forgotten El That formed thee. And when Yahweh saw it, He abhorred them, because of the provoking of His son, and His daughters. And He said, 'I will hide My face from them, I will see what their end shall be: for they are a very froward generation, children IN WHOM IS NO FAITH,'" Dt. 32:18-20.

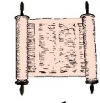
Isn't it amazing! Yahweh already knew that Israel would be unfaithful! When the New Covenant was instituted and sealed with the Holy Spirit, Yahweh began to look on the heart of non-Israelite, non-Jewish, non-Hebrew people. He didn't look at the flesh, but on the heart. Circumcision of the flesh didn't matter, it was what was on the heart!

Yahweh knew Israel's condition even when He called them out of Egypt. Yahweh gave Israel a tabernacle and its appurtenances made by the hands of man. He gave them an earthly priesthood. He gave them animal sacrifices to be performed by the hands of man. He gave them physical fleshly circumcision performed by the hands of man. He gave them phylacteries and fringes to remind them to keep His covenant. These all failed because they were administered by the hands of men who had circumcised flesh, but uncircumcised hearts!

The New Covenant is a covenant which is based on a tabernacle made by the hands of Yahweh and not the hands of man. It is based on a heavenly spiritual priesthood and not an earthly priesthood exercised by men with uncircumcised hearts. It is based on a better sacrifice than that of animals, for it is based on the sacrifice of the Son of Elohim, Yahshua the Messiah. It is based on a better promise for it is based on Yahweh's promise and not the promise of men. It is based on a better circumcision for it is based on the circumcision of the foreskin of the heart made without hands. It is based



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on a better faith, for it is based on faith in Yahweh, Who never fails, and not faith in man, who always fails.

The covenant of old was based on judgment. If they obeyed, they would be blessed. If they disobeyed, they would suffer the curses. They disobeyed and came under the curses.

The New Covenant is based on the favor/grace and promises of Yahweh. He promises to open the graves of Israel, restore them to life (Ez. 37:1-13), put His Spirit in them (v. 14), cleanse them of their sins (v. 23) and make an everlasting covenant with them (v. 26-28).

The promise of the New Covenant is not only found here in Ezekiel, it is found in Jeremiah 31:31-34, "Behold, the days come, saith Yahweh, that I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel, and with the house of Judah: not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day *that* I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt; which my covenant they brake, although I was an husband unto them, saith Yahweh: but this *shall be* the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel; after those days, saith Yahweh, I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts; and will be their Elohim, and they shall be my people. And they shall teach no more every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, 'Know Yahweh:' for they shall all know me, from the least of them unto the greatest of them, saith Yahweh: for I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more."

It is also found in Heb. 8:7-13. "For if that first *covenant* had been faultless, then should no place have been sought for the second. For finding fault with them, he saith, Behold, the days come, saith Yahweh, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah: not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day when I took them by the hand to lead them out of the land of Egypt; because they continued not in my covenant, and I regarded them not, saith Yahweh. For this *is* the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, saith Yahweh; I will put my laws into their mind, and write them in their hearts: and I will be to them a Elohim, and they shall be to me a people: and they shall not teach every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, Know Yahweh: for all shall know me, from the least to the greatest. For I will be merciful to their unrighteousness, and their sins and their iniquities will I remember no more. **In that he saith, A new covenant, he hath made the first old. Now that which decayeth and waxeth old is ready to vanish away.**"

YAHWEH'S CIRCUMCISION

Yahweh encouraged Israel to circumcise their hearts in Dt. 10:16, but Israel continued with a stiff neck and uncircumcised heart. Yahweh allowed these things to happen for many purposes, but the final analysis is that Yahweh will circumcise Israel's hearts, "And it shall

come to pass, when all these things are come upon thee, the blessing and the curse, which I have set before thee, and thou shalt call *them* to mind among all the nations, whither Yahweh thy Elohim hath driven thee, and shalt return unto Yahweh thy Elohim, and shalt obey his voice according to all that I command thee this day, thou and thy children, with all thine heart, and with all thy soul; that then Yahweh thy Elohim will turn thy captivity, and have compassion upon thee, and will return and gather thee from all the nations, whither Yahweh thy Elohim hath scattered thee. If *any* of thine be driven out unto the outmost *parts* of heaven, from thence will Yahweh thy Elohim gather thee, and from thence will he fetch thee: And Yahweh thy Elohim will bring thee into the land which thy fathers possessed, and thou shalt possess it; and he will do thee good, and multiply thee above thy fathers. And **Yahweh thy Elohim will circumcise thine heart, and the heart of thy seed, to love Yahweh thy Elohim with all thine heart**, and with all thy soul, that thou mayest live. And Yahweh thy Elohim will put all these curses upon thine enemies, and on them that hate thee, which persecuted thee. And thou shalt return and obey the voice of Yahweh, and do all his commandments which I command thee this day. And Yahweh thy Elohim will make thee plenteous in every work of thine hand, in the fruit of thy body, and in the fruit of thy cattle, and in the fruit of thy land, for good: for Yahweh will again rejoice over thee for good, as he rejoiced over thy fathers: if thou shalt hearken unto the voice of Yahweh thy Elohim, to keep his commandments and his statutes which are written in this book of the law, *and* if thou turn unto Yahweh thy Elohim with all thine heart, and with all thy soul. For this commandment which I command thee this day, it *is* not hidden from thee, neither *is* it far off," Dt. 30:1-11.

The clincher is found in verse 12, "It *is* not in heaven, that thou shouldest say, 'Who shall go up for us to heaven, and bring it unto us, that we may hear it, and do it?'"

"Who shall go up for us to heaven" appears in the Hebrew as: מִן יַעֲלֶה-לָנוּ הַשָּׁמַיִם . The first letter of each word combines to make the Hebrew word מילה. According to the *Encyclopedia of Freemasonry and A Dictionary Of The Targumim, The Talmud Babli And Yerushalmi, And The Midrashic Literature* by Marcus Jastrov, this Hebrew word means "circumcise" and or "circumcision."

Taking the last Hebrew letter of each word in this statement we get יהוה (Yahweh)! Again, in this instance, the question is "Who shall go up for us to heaven?" The answer is, first and foremost, Yahweh, and secondly, those circumcised by Him.

FOREVER

One other thing that many have stumbled on is the use of the term "forever" in the English version of Scripture. This term is translated from the Hebrew word "olam" which is defined in *Strong's Exhaustive Concordance*



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as; from 5956; prop. *concealed*, i.e. the *vanishing* point; gen. time *out of mind* (past or fut.) i.e. (practically) *eternity*; freq. adv. (espec. with prep. pref.) *always* and is variously translated as; always (-s), ancient (time), any more, continuance, eternal, (for, [n-] ever (-lasting, -more, of old), lasting, long (time), (of) old (time), perpetual, at any time, (beginning of the) world (+ without end).

Since Strong's says that it is from 5956, let's also take a look at that word. It is the Hebrew word "alam" which is defined as; a prim. root; to veil from sight, i.e. conceal (lit. or fig.).

Now let's take a look at 2 Sam. 7:12-16 which utilizes this word *olam*, "And when thy days be fulfilled, and thou shalt sleep with thy fathers, I will set up thy seed after thee, which shall proceed out of thy bowels, and I will establish his kingdom. He shall build an house for my name, and I will stablish the throne of his kingdom for ever (*ad-olam*). 14 I will be his father, and he shall be my son. If he commit iniquity, I will chasten him with the rod of men, and with the stripes of the children of men: 15 But my mercy shall not depart away from him, as I took *it* from Saul, whom I put away before thee. 16 And thine house and thy kingdom shall be established for ever (*ad-olam*) before thee: thy throne shall be established for ever (*ad-olam*)."

Solomon was of David's seed. He built an house for Yahweh's name and Yahweh established the kingdom through His dynasty. But how long did it last? The kingdom of Judah, ruled by the descendants, the dynasty of David and Solomon ended in 585 BCE when King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon overthrew the dynasty and destroyed Jerusalem and the house that was built for Yahweh's name. *Olam* had come.

Thus, in this instance, when dealing with the flesh, *olam* has to do with an age, not for ever. *Olam* can seem like for ever to the physical fleshly person because the promise is made to a generation who perishes or dies without having seen the end of the matter. Other subsequent generations can also come and go before the end of a thing comes to pass. But there will be a generation that will come when the end of the age, *olam* occurs.

Of course, what Yahweh was talking about was the institution of the kingdom under the power of Yahshua which will continue for ever. However, he had to deal

with the flesh first. Flesh is physical and temporary.

The principal pattern established by Scripture is that first there must be flesh, the physical, the natural and then comes the spirit. The flesh is temporary. It doesn't continue for eternity because of the law of sin, corruption and death contained therein, which was introduced by our forefather Adam (Ro. 5:12-19; 7:13-25).

The end of the terms of the original covenant made between Yahweh and Israel came with the destruction of both Israel and Judah and their removal from the land of promise. However, Yahweh promised that since they failed, He, through His enduring mercy of all ages, would make a New Covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah. This New Covenant would also include the non-Israelite, non-Jew. It is this New Covenant that will continue forever, until all eternity, because it is a covenant made by the power of the eternal Spirit. It is a covenant made by the Word of Yahweh, based on His promises and not man's HALLELUYAH!!!! Praise Yahweh for all eternity all His creation!

CONCLUSION

Should a New Testament believer be circumcised? The answer is a resounding YES!!! However, not by his own hands nor by the hands of man in the flesh. We must be circumcised by Yahweh, through Yahshua the Messiah, a circumcision of the foreskin of the heart not made with hands. Remember that Paul said, "Flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of Elohim" (1 Cor. 15:50). A person must be called, chosen, repent of his sins, be baptized in the name of Yahshua the Messiah for the remission of his sins and Yahweh, Himself, will circumcise his heart and give him the Holy Spirit by the laying on of the hands of the ministry. (Please request our booklet entitled *The Seven Steps to the Kingdom*.) This is the circumcision of the New Covenant. It is an everlasting circumcision made by Yahweh whose Word NEVER FAILS! HALLELUYAH!!!

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