

Title: Concision or Circumcision?

Scripture: Philippians 3: 1-11

Date: 1-24-10

Place: PA

Philippians 1: 1: Finally, my brethren, rejoice in the Lord. To write the same things to you, to me indeed *is* not grievous, but for you *it is* safe. 2: Beware of dogs, beware of evil workers, beware of the concision. 2: Beware of dogs, beware of evil workers, beware of the concision. 3: For we are the circumcision,

Moved by the Holy Spirit, this apostle of Jesus Christ is about to tell us the difference between dogs, evil workers, those he calls mutilators and true believers. Then he will contrast the rejoicing of true brethren with his former confidence. This is God declaring for us these things through Paul.

Philippians 3: 3: For we are the circumcision, which worship God in the spirit, and rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh.

I. SINNER WHO ARE SAVED B Y GRACE

Worship God in the spirit

John 3: 3: Jesus answered and said unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God....5: Jesus answered, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and *of* the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God. 6: That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit.

Romans 8: 7: Because the carnal mind *is* enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be. 8: So then they that are in the flesh cannot please God. 9: But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you. Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his.10: And if Christ *be* in you, the body *is* dead because of sin; but the Spirit *is* life because of righteousness.

John 4:23: 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.

And Rejoice in Christ Jesus

Illustration: Puzzle with all missing pieces

Grace reveals in us that we are complete in Christ.

Colossians 2: 8: 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 Christ. 9: For in him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily. 10: And ye are complete in him, which is the head of all principality and power:

Fullness—completion—nothing missing: fullness of wisdom, fullness of righteousness, fullness of holiness, fullness of redemption, fullness of everything God requires to receive us right now ACCEPTED IN THE BELOVED. Believers worship God in spirit and rejoice in Christ Jesus.

And Have No Confidence in the Flesh

Do you know what it is to be under the law? It is to have confidence in the flesh. Adam came under law when he turned to self. Natural men can embrace the doctrine: “the believer is not under the law but under

grace” yet by one little act of the sinner in which he puts confidence--from the old testament scriptures or the new, from something Moses taught or something Christ taught, thou shalt or confidence in faith, in self-denial--then Christ shall profit you nothing, you are a debtor to keep the whole law of God.

Galatians 5: 2: Behold, I Paul say unto you, that if ye be circumcised, Christ shall profit you nothing.
3: For I testify again to every man that is circumcised, that he is a debtor to do the whole law.

Please do not think that because you do not circumcise your children in a religious service that you are clear from this. If we put anything in the place of circumcision, giving is some religious significance, to convey some sort of favor with God then Christ is vain to us.

II. CONTRAST BETWEEN TRUE FAITH AND FALSE RELIGION.

Philippians 3; 4: Though I might also have confidence in the flesh. If any other man thinketh that he hath whereof he might trust in the flesh, I more: 5: Circumcised the eighth day, of the stock of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, an Hebrew of the Hebrews; as touching the law, a Pharisee; 6: Concerning zeal, persecuting the church; touching the righteousness which is in the law, blameless.

This fits under thee headings. These three headings take in everything that the naturally, religious man puts his trust in: will of man, earthly kinship, and will of the flesh.

Believers Have No Confidence in The Will of Man

Philippians 3: 5: Circumcised the eighth day

Paul had nothing to do with this. This was done by his father and his mother. It was their will. But as Paul grew up, Paul put great confidence in what his father and mother had done to him when he was only 8 days old. God gave circumcision as a temporary, physical sign of everlasting spiritual blessings.

Romans 4: 9:...faith was reckoned to Abraham for righteousness. 10: How was it then reckoned? when he was in circumcision, or in uncircumcision? Not in circumcision, but in uncircumcision.

God had to teach Paul this in the heart by the Holy Spirit. It is the glory of God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit that Paul was trampling under foot. The LORD God circumcised Abraham's heart by the Holy Spirit. He was uncircumcised in his flesh and did not even know what circumcision was.

Romans 2:28: For he is not a Jew, which is one outwardly; neither is that circumcision, which is outward in the flesh: 29: 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 God. (Col 2: 11)

The triune God brought Abraham to spiritual life, he was given faith to believe that the triune God everlastingly entered into covenant to save Abraham from his sin in Christ Jesus. Christ said,

John 8:56: Your father Abraham rejoiced to see my day: and he saw *it*, and was glad.

Here is what Abraham saw by faith that made him glad.

Colossians 2: 11: In [Christ] 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.

God's purpose in physical circumcision was this: God would use Abraham's physical descendents, making temporary, physical promises to them and fulfilling them all, as a shadow to teach his spiritual, elect children, within that nation, and from among all the world, that salvation is by promise of God, not by works we have done. So he gave an outward, fleshly sign which symbolized how Abraham was brought into this everlasting covenant and Christ put off the body of his sins.

Romans 4: 11: And he received the sign of circumcision, a seal [reminder like a wedding ring] of the righteousness of the faith which *he had yet* being uncircumcised: that he might be the father of all them that believe, though they be not circumcised; that righteousness might be imputed unto them also: 12: And the father of circumcision to them who are not of the circumcision only, [not only of the remnant of true elect of God born under that temporary, shadowy covenant only] but [his elect] who also walk in the steps of that faith of our father Abraham, which *he had being* *yet* uncircumcised.

Paul, and all the spiritual true children under the Mosaic covenant, put confidence in something Abraham never put confidence in, physical circumcision until they were born of the Spirit--This served a purpose too—it showed that until the Spirit circumcises the heart to behold the circumcision made by Christ—spiritually dead sinners will put confidence in their own acts.

Romans 4: 13: For the promise, that he should be the heir of the world, *was not to Abraham, or to his seed*, [his spiritual, true sons] through the law, but through the righteousness of faith. 14: For if they which are of the law *be* heirs, faith is made void, and the promise made of none effect:

CHRIST IS BECOME OF NO EFFECT UNTO YOU, WHOSOEVE HAVE CONFIDENCE IN THEIR FLESH. God fulfilled every earthly promise and now that shadow is done away. But only the Spirit of God could teach Paul, when the commandment came, the voice of God came into Paul's heart, Christ taught him that the temporary covenant was over and done. The glory belongs to the triune God, the shadow is gone, circumcision is by Christ who finished the work of circumcising his people through death.

Believers Have No Confidence in Earthly Kinship.

Who our mother and father are has absolutely no bearing on the grace of God—none!

Romans 9: 8: That is, They which are the children of the flesh, these *are not the children of God: but the children of the promise are counted for the seed.*

The glory does not go to earthly fathers, the glory goes to God the Father, to Christ the Everlasting Father because the children of God are determined by God, by grace, nothing else. God the Father chose his children in his Son before the world began by grace. The purpose of God according to election has no regard for a person, or a nation—good or bad.

The example is Christ Jesus and his earthly brethren

John 7: 3: His brethren therefore said unto him, Depart hence, and go into Judaea, that thy disciples also may see the works that thou doest. 4: For *there is no man that doeth any thing in secret, and he himself seeketh to be known openly. If thou do these things, shew thyself to the world.* 5: For neither did his brethren believe in him.

These were natural descendants of Abraham, even as the Lord Jesus according to the flesh. The males had all been circumcised. Yet they did not believe in him. Cousin John the Baptist believed, half-brother James believed, cousin Josès Barsabbas believed, cousin Simon believed, Jude believed. But these others, of the same family, God had no regard to. Question: Were they NOT children because they did not believe in him, OR did they not believe in him because they were not children? **“If ye were Abraham’s children,[chosen of God] ye would do the works of Abraham.”** Before time, those who shall be called were:

Ephesians 1:5:...predestinated...unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will,

Galatians 4:6: And because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father.

Aren’t you glad? Can you rejoice with Paul that: We worship in spirit, rejoice in Christ Jesus and have no confidence the flesh. So Paul was saved from confidence in the will of man, confidence in family relations.

Thirdly, Believers Do Not Trust In The Flesh

Philippians 3: 5: as touching the law, a Pharisee; 6: Concerning zeal, persecuting the church; touching the righteousness which is in the law, blameless.

To say he put confidence in the fact that he was a Pharisee is the same as someone in our day putting confidence in a denomination. Before God there are no Baptists, Presbyterians, Methodists, Pharisees, Sadducees, Herodian or otherwise. We are all maggots, WORMS, in need of mercy.

Concerning zeal, persecuting the church—those marching under the banner of Christ in the year 2010 who have confidence in their flesh are still persecuting the church, they would kill God’s saints if God allowed it.

Concerning outward obedience to the letter of the law, I was blameless. Again, as with every thing we see here, the glory belongs to God in his Son Christ Jesus. The end of the law--the fulfillment of every jot and tittle of God's word--the righteousness, full acceptance with God for his people.

Romans 3:21: But now the righteousness of God [whose?] without the law is manifested, being witnessed by the law and the prophets; 22: Even the righteousness of God [whose?] *which is* by faith of Jesus Christ [whose?] unto all and upon all them that believe: for there is no difference:

Romans 5: 1: Therefore being justified by faith [his] we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ: 2: By whom also we have access by faith [faith he gives to his redeemed] into this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God.

III. WHAT IS SOVEREIGN GRACE?

Do not imagine that when Paul was in religion that he is any different from those today who claim to believe on Christ and worship themselves. But God is sovereign in salvation. Here is what sovereign grace always does.

Abraham was in Ur in a land of idolatry worshipping his idols with his father. When God called him he told Abraham to leave it all behind and go out into a land Abraham did not know walking behind the Holy Spirit, following Christ--and Abraham irresistibly followed (Hebrews 11: 8.) So did Paul.

Philippians 3: 7: But what things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ. 8: Yea doubtless, and I count all things *but* loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them *but* dung, that I may win Christ, 9: And be found in him, not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith, 10: That I may know him, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, being made conformable unto his death; 11: If by any means I might attain unto the resurrection of the dead.

Be sure you understand: Paul was professing to believe on Jehovah just as men in our day profess to believe on Jehovah through Christ Jesus. When sovereign grace called him, he counted all his former confidence—the golden calf he called Jehovah--dung, rubbish, trash. In our day, sovereign grace makes men forsake the golden calf they call 'jesus.' This turning is called repentance unto God. Sovereign grace makes the believer rejoice in God and believe on Christ Jesus.

The power of his resurrection is the power formal religion denies. It is the power which demanded he die when he was made sin for those given him is the power that demanded he be raised from the dead. It is the power that raised him from the dead, and shall surely raise each, particular, redeemed, justified, child of God from spiritual death to newness of life. This power has been given to Christ Jesus the Mediator as his right by God the Father by inheritance.

Philippians 3: 20 For our conversation is in heaven; from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ: 21: Who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body, according to the working whereby he is able even to subdue all things unto himself.

Men will say if I preached that I would have no one in attendance. Why should they be there if you are not preaching Christ?

I have preached Christ and him crucified to you this hour. Before this angered Paul, why? Who is glorified here and who is abased? The same reason the gospel made Paul angry is the reason the children of God rejoice. Now Paul knew why God chose these things that stains the pride of natural man.

I Corinthians 1: 29: That no flesh should glory in his presence. 30: But of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption: 31: That, according as it is written, He that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord.

Let us ask, Do I fit with mutilators or am I the circumcision?

Philippians 3: 3: For we are the circumcision, which worship God in the spirit, and rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh.