

Romans Series

Lesson #28

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Dean Bible Ministries

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The Epistle to the ROMANS



Rom. 2:25, “For circumcision is indeed profitable if you keep the law; but if you are a breaker of the law, your circumcision has become uncircumcision.”

1. Circumcision is the removal of the foreskin of the male's genital organ.

מול (mûl) II, circumcise, let oneself be circumcised, be cut off

2. Circumcision was the sign of the Abrahamic Covenant.

Gen. 17:10, “This is My covenant which you shall keep, between Me and you and your descendants after you: every male child among you shall be circumcised;

Gen. 17:11, “and you shall be circumcised in the flesh of your foreskins, and it shall be a sign of the covenant between Me and you.”

3. Circumcision was already practiced as part of different cultures in the ancient Near East.

4. Circumcision in post Second Temple Judaism.

Ezek. 16:6, “And when I passed by you and saw you struggling in your own blood, I said to you in your blood, ‘Live!’ Yes, I said to you in your blood, ‘Live!’ ”

Rabbi Matia ben Cheresh used by saying, “Behold, it says, ‘I passed by you and looked at you and saw it was a time of love’ (Ezek. 16:8). This means the time had arrived for God’s vow to Abraham to be fulfilled, namely, that He would save his children. But as yet they had no commandments to perform, by virtue of which they might merit redemption... As it says, ‘Your breasts were fashioned and your hair had grown, but you were naked’ (Ezek. 16:8), meaning that they were naked of all commandments. God therefore assigned them two commandments: the sacrifice of the paschal lamb, and circumcision, which they were to perform so as to merit being saved, as it says: ‘I passed by you and saw you wallowing in your blood, and I said, “By your blood live... By your blood live” ’ (Ezek. 16:6).... One cannot obtain reward except by deeds.”

~Mekhilta Bo, Chap. 5

“As the Ezekiel exegesis demonstrates, the central symbol of the circumcision ritual was its blood. Regularly, therefore, we find reference not only to the salvific nature of the rite in general, but more specifically, to the saving merit of circumcision blood. Nowadays, a blessing accompanies the symbolic placing of wine on the lips of the baby boy just after the circumcision wound has been cauterized.”

~Jacob Neusner, *Encyclopedia of Judaism*

“At any rate, the symbolic value of circumcision as an act of salvation is evident throughout our second century sources. It is the sign of the covenant that saves. The blood drawn in the act is equivalent to the blood of the paschal lamb that Israelites smeared on their doorposts to warn off the angel of death on the night the firstborn Egyptians were slaughtered (Exod. 12:22–23). It is the paradigmatic salvific example of a good work, practiced in every generation from Abraham onward. As such, it has commanded the universal allegiance of Jews throughout history.”

Lev. 26:41, “and that I also have walked contrary to them and have brought them into the land of their enemies; if their uncircumcised hearts are humbled, and they accept their guilt—”

Deut. 10:16, “Therefore circumcise the foreskin of your heart, and be stiff-necked no longer.”

Deut. 30:6, “And the LORD your God will circumcise your heart and the heart of your descendants, to love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul, that you may live.”

Ezek. 36:25, “Then I will sprinkle clean water on you, and you shall be clean; I will cleanse you from all your filthiness and from all your idols.

Ezek. 36:26, “I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit within you; I will take the heart of stone out of your flesh and give you a heart of flesh.

Ezek. 36:27, “I will put My Spirit within you and cause you to walk in My statutes, and you will keep My judgments and do them.

Ezek. 36:28, “Then you shall dwell in the land that I gave to your fathers; you shall be My people, and I will be your God.”

Jer. 9:24, “ ‘But let him who glories glory in this, that he understands and knows Me, that I am the LORD, exercising lovingkindness, judgment, and righteousness in the earth. For in these I delight,’ says the LORD.

Jer. 9:25, “ ‘Behold, the days are coming,’ says the LORD, ‘that I will punish all who are circumcised with the uncircumcised’ ”

— Compare Acts 7:51

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מִן מִן בְּעֶרְלָה lit. circumcised with the foreskin, i.e., “circumcised yet uncircumcised”

Acts 7:51, “You stiff-necked and uncircumcised in heart and ears! You always resist the Holy Spirit; as your fathers did, so do you.

Acts 7:52, “Which of the prophets did your fathers not persecute? And they killed those who foretold the coming of the Just One, of whom you now have become the betrayers and murderers,

Acts 7:53, “who have received the law by the direction of angels and have not kept it.”

Gal. 5:6, “For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision nor uncircumcision avails anything, but faith working through love.”

Gal. 5:11, “And I, brethren, if I still preach circumcision, why do I still suffer persecution? Then the offense of the cross has ceased.”

Gal. 6:15, “For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision nor uncircumcision avails anything, but a new creation.”

Col. 2:11, “In Him you were also circumcised with the circumcision made without hands, by putting off the body of the sins of the flesh, by the circumcision of Christ,”

Col. 3:9, “Do not lie to one another, since you have put off the old man with his deeds,

Col. 3:10, “and have put on the new *man* who is renewed in knowledge according to the image of Him who created him,

Col. 3:11, “where there is neither Greek nor Jew, circumcised nor uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave *nor* free, but Christ *is* all and in all.”