

Ephesians 2:11-13: The Nation of Uncircumcision

Points to Ponder

Jews

Circumcision was given to Abraham as a sign of God's covenant with Abraham and being set aside unto Him. It was used to help keep Israel distinct and separate from the Gentiles (Genesis 17:10-13). Medically speaking the human body is ready for circumcision on the 8th day¹.

Gentiles

Circumcision was used as a tactic by Jacob's sons Simeon & Levi to wipe out the gentile city of Shechem in Genesis 34.

The Church

Paul Circumcised Timothy (Acts 16:3) to reduce conflict with the Jews and enhance their ministry opportunities, but not Titus (Gal. 2:3). It was a problems in Acts 15:1 and Galatians 6:12-13 wherein some were teaching that circumcision was required for salvation. This is erroneous and is *not* required for the believer.

Aliens

Israel knew what it was like to be aliens in a land, but they were called to be the people of God in the Old Testament after God's covenant with Abraham, Isaac & Jacob.

Being People of God

What was the purpose of being God's people? How were the Jews to interact with the Gentiles?

Exposition

Gentiles in the Flesh

Adam & Noah were both gentiles, but the command of circumcision had not been given to them. They were not under the obligation as representatives of a covenant to be circumcised. Upon receiving the command to circumcise all of the men in his household in Genesis 17, the nation of Israel was given to the practice as *an outward sign of an inward relationship with God*.

Circumcision made by hands

Paul writes about the physical nature of circumcision in Romans 4:9-12. The circumcision is given by hands after faith made Abraham righteous. Circumcision in

¹ In most cases, exceptions do exist. On the 8th day vitamin k production for blood clotting and immune system levels are better for recovering from the circumcision.

adults was an outward sign of an inward relationship with God - but it was done by men to men and it was done in obedience, but not for salvation.

Separate from Christ, being aliens from Israel

The gentiles, having abandoned God to pursue pagan idolatry, had no righteousness, they had no formal relationship with God, and were strangers to God. Had the gentiles joined Israel there were provisions in the Law (Exodus 12:48) that would have joined the gentile to Israel and they would have abandoned their pagan ways and become part of God's chosen people.

Being strangers from the covenants of promise

The covenants of promise are the covenants God gave to Abraham, Isaac & Jacob in Genesis 12, 15, 17, 22, 26, 28. They gave Abraham & his descendants the promises of the land, the seed and the blessing. Being a Jew formerly represented a nation and a relationship with God. Even still: the seed promised to Eve (Gen. 3:15) was to be given through Abraham's line.

Having No Hope, Without God in the World

If there is ever a thing that gives humans a sense of peace about the end of our lives it is having hope that is eternal. Knowing that God has made provision, through faith, unto an eternal relationship gives hope. The gentile had no hope because he had abandoned faith, abandoned relationship with the God of Israel and instead had sought out other humanly created solutions which brought guilt, ritual, and fear of the eternal.

Result of the Blood: Closeness to God

God did away with the physical sign of a promise and instead crucified the system which could be circumcised by identifying us with Christ. By identifying us with His Son and baptizing us into Him we are made close. This also has the effect of doing away with the Jewish system of closeness as well. While the Jews may be a special people due to inherit the earthly blessings promised to Abraham, they are no longer representing the relationship with God by virtue of the new people, the Church.

Discussion

Why could physical, outward signs never save people?

Why do believers and unbelievers alike tend to look towards outward things to verify inward things?