

# Sin and Condemnation: The World's need to get right with God

(64)

Pastor Eddie Ildefonso

[Romans 1:18-3:20](#)

(Continuation from 04/16/17)

## D. God's Case against the Religionist (Jew), [Romans 2:17-29](#)

[\(Romans 2:17-29\)](#) **Introduction— Religionist— Jew:** this passage is an excellent study of the Christian religionist or church member as well as of the Jew.

God's case against the Christian religionist **includes four points**.

1. **The religionist professes religion (v.17-20).**
2. **The religionist fails to live what he professes (v.21-24).**
3. **The religionist believes that a ritual (circumcision) is the way to secure God's approval (v.25-27).**
4. **The religionist misses the whole point: a true religionist is a man who is righteous inwardly (v.28-29).**

4. **[\(Romans 2:28-29\)](#) Religionists: the religionist misses the whole point—a true religionist is a man who is righteous inwardly.**

### **Romans 2:28-29 (NASB)**

<sup>28</sup> For he is not a Jew who is one outwardly, nor is circumcision that which is outward in the flesh.

<sup>29</sup> But he is a Jew who is one inwardly; and circumcision is that which is of the heart, by the Spirit, not by the letter; and his praise is not from men, but from God.

Proceeding to a type of false security (**circumcision**) in which many Jews placed their trust, Paul clarifies the true significance of that rite.

God had instituted **circumcision** as a mark of His covenant with Abraham and his descendants, declaring that **“every male among you who is eight days old shall be circumcised throughout your generations”** ([Genesis 17:10-12](#)).

### **Genesis 17:10-12 (NASB)**

<sup>10</sup> This is My covenant, which you shall keep, between Me and you and your descendants after you: every male among you shall be circumcised.

<sup>11</sup> And you shall be circumcised in the flesh of your foreskin, and it shall be the sign of the covenant between Me and you.

**12 And every male among you who is eight days old shall be circumcised throughout your generations, a servant who is born in the house or who is bought with money from any foreigner, who is not of your descendants.**

Centuries later, when for some reason, Moses failed to circumcise one of his sons, his wife, Zipporah, performed the rite herself, thereby protecting Moses from the Lord's wrath ([Exodus 4:24-26](#)).

**[Exodus 4:24-26 \(NASB\)](#)**

**24 Now it came about at the lodging place on the way that the LORD met him and sought to put him to death.**

**25 Then Zipporah took a flint and cut off her son's foreskin and threw it at Moses' feet, and she said, "You are indeed a bridegroom of blood to me."**

**26 So He let him alone. At that time she said, "You are a bridegroom of blood"—because of the circumcision.**

No doubt this surgery was symbolic of the sinfulness of man that was passed from generation to generation. The very procreative organ needed to be cleansed of a covering. So, man at the very center of his nature is sinful and needs cleansing of the heart. This graphic symbol of the need for removing sin became the sign of being a Jew.

**[Romans 2:25-29 \(NASB\)](#)**

**25 For indeed circumcision is of value if you practice the Law; but if you are a transgressor of the Law, your circumcision has become uncircumcision.**

**26 So if the uncircumcised man keeps the requirements of the Law, will not his uncircumcision be regarded as circumcision?**

**27 And he who is physically uncircumcised, if he keeps the Law, will he not judge you who though having the letter *of the Law* and circumcision are a transgressor of the Law?**

**28 For he is not a Jew who is one outwardly, nor is circumcision that which is outward in the flesh.**

**29 But he is a Jew who is one inwardly; and circumcision is that which is of the heart, by the Spirit, not by the letter; and his praise is not from men, but from God.**

But as important as circumcision was as an act of obedience to God and as a reminder to Jews of their covenant relation to Him, the rite had no spiritual power. **Circumcision is of value**, Paul explains, only **if you practice the Law**, that is, live in obedience to God's will. To the faithful, obedient Jew **circumcision** was a symbol of God's covenant, His blessings, His goodness, and His protection of His chosen people. **But if you are a transgressor of the Law**, Paul warned, **your circumcision has become uncircumcision**, that is, valueless. A Jew who continually transgressed God's law proved that he had no more saving relationship to God than a pagan Gentile, whom Jews often referred to as the uncircumcised.

Important as it was, **circumcision** was only an outward symbol. And rather than freeing Jews from God's law, **circumcision** made them even more responsible for obeying it, because that ritual testified to their greater knowledge of their sin, of God, and of His will in regard to them.

04-23-17

Series: The Book of Romans

**Circumcision** was, in fact, more a mark of judgment and obligation than of salvation and freedom. It was a constant reminder to Jews of their sinfulness and of their obligation to obey God's law. Speaking about the Judaizers, who were corrupting the church by teaching that Christians were obligated to keep the Mosaic law, Paul wrote, **"I testify again to every man who receives circumcision, that he is under obligation to keep the whole Law"** ([Galatians 5:3 NASB](#)).

#### **Circumcision was a mark of legal obligation.**

Long before Paul's day the rite of circumcision had become so shrouded in superstition that ancient rabbis formulated sayings such as **"No circumcised Jewish man will see hell"** and **"Circumcision saves us from hell."** The Midrash includes the statement **"God swore to Abraham that no one who was circumcised would be sent to hell. Abraham sits before the gate of hell and never allows any circumcised Israelite to enter."**

But the prophets had made clear that mere physical circumcision had no spiritual power or benefit.

#### **Jeremiah 9:25-26 (NASB)**

<sup>25</sup> **"Behold, the days are coming," declares the LORD, "that I will punish all who are circumcised and yet uncircumcised—**

<sup>26</sup> **Egypt and Judah, and Edom and the sons of Ammon, and Moab and all those inhabiting the desert who clip the hair on their temples; for all the nations are uncircumcised, and all the house of Israel are uncircumcised of heart."**

Disobedience to God put the circumcised Israelites in the same category of judgment as the uncircumcised Gentiles.

#### **4. ([Romans 2:28-29](#)) Religionists: the religionist misses the whole point—a true religionist is a man who is righteous inwardly.**

#### **Romans 2:28-29 (NASB)**

<sup>28</sup> **For he is not a Jew who is one outwardly, nor is circumcision that which is outward in the flesh.**

<sup>29</sup> **But he is a Jew who is one inwardly; and circumcision is that which is of the heart, by the Spirit, not by the letter; and his praise is not from men, but from God.**

This fact is so critical that everyone needs to give heed and do something about it. The point is that every man breaks or transgresses the law. Paul has just said:

#### **Romans 2:25 (NASB)**

<sup>25</sup> **For indeed circumcision is of value if you practice the Law; but if you are a transgressor of the Law, your circumcision has become uncircumcision or unbaptism.**

**Romans 2:25 (KJV)**

<sup>25</sup> For circumcision verily profiteth, if thou keep the law: but **if thou be a breaker of the law, thy circumcision is made uncircumcision or unbaptism.**

Paul will say very shortly:

**Romans 3:10 (NASB)**

<sup>10</sup> As it is written, "There is none righteous, not even one.

**Romans 3:23 (NASB)**

<sup>23</sup> For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.

No law and no ritual, whether circumcision or baptism (or any other ritual), is able to make man acceptable to God. **Being acceptable to God is not an outward thing.**

It is.....

1. **not** the keeping of any ritual or law (**Romans 2:21-27**).
2. **not** nationality or heritage.
3. **not** being born of any particular race or family, whether Jewish or Christian (**Romans 3:1-20; Romans 9:6-13**).

**True religion—being acceptable to God—is inward.** It is of the heart, of the spirit. It is of God. It is being born again of God's Spirit (**John 3:3-8**). It is not of man; therefore, God is to be praised, not man (**Romans 2:28-29**).

**John 3:3-8 (NASB)**

<sup>3</sup> Jesus answered and said to him, "Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born again he cannot see the kingdom of God."

<sup>4</sup> Nicodemus said\* to Him, "How can a man be born when he is old? He cannot enter a second time into his mother's womb and be born, can he?"

<sup>5</sup> Jesus answered, "Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.

<sup>6</sup> "That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit.

<sup>7</sup> "Do not be amazed that I said to you, 'You must be born again.'

<sup>8</sup> "The wind blows where it wishes and you hear the sound of it, but do not know where it comes from and where it is going; so is everyone who is born of the Spirit."

**Romans 2:28-29 (NASB)**

<sup>28</sup> For he is not a Jew who is one outwardly, nor is circumcision that which is outward in the flesh.

<sup>29</sup> But he is a Jew who is one inwardly; and circumcision is that which is of the heart, by the Spirit, not by the letter; and his praise is not from men, but from God.

**Ezekiel 36:26 (NASB)**

<sup>26</sup> Moreover, I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit within you; and I will remove the heart of stone from your flesh and give you a heart of flesh.

**John 1:13 (NASB)**

<sup>13</sup> Who were born, not of blood nor of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man, but of God.

**John 3:3 (NASB)**

<sup>3</sup> Jesus answered and said to him, "Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born again he cannot see the kingdom of God."

**2 Corinthians 5:17 (NASB)**

<sup>17</sup> Therefore if anyone is in Christ, *he is* a new creature; the old things passed away; behold, new things have come.

**Titus 3:5 (NASB)**

<sup>5</sup> He saved us, not on the basis of deeds which we have done in righteousness, but according to His mercy, by the washing of regeneration and renewing by the Holy Spirit.

**1 Peter 1:23 (NASB)**

<sup>23</sup> For you have been born again not of seed which is perishable but imperishable, *that is*, through the living and enduring word of God.

**1 John 5:1 (NASB)**

<sup>1</sup> Whoever believes that Jesus is the Christ is born of God, and whoever loves the Father loves the *child* born of Him.

God's true people are the people who have been circumcised spiritually—in the heart. The real Jews, God's true people, are those who have had the skin of disease (sin) cut out of their heart. They are the people who have been spiritually converted.

**Colossians 2:11 (NASB)**

<sup>11</sup> And in Him you were also circumcised with a circumcision made without hands, in the removal of the body of the flesh by the circumcision [operation, cutting] of Christ.

**Colossians 3:11 (NASB)**

<sup>11</sup> *A renewal* in which there is no *distinction between* Greek and Jew, circumcised and uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave and freeman, but Christ is all, and in all.

**Philippians 3:3 (NASB)**

<sup>3</sup> For we are the *true* circumcision, who worship in the Spirit of God and glory in Christ Jesus and put no confidence in the flesh.

**Deuteronomy 30:6 (NASB)**

<sup>6</sup> Moreover 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, so that you may live.

**Jeremiah 4:4 (NASB)**

<sup>4</sup> "Circumcise yourselves to the Lord And remove the foreskins of your heart, Men of Judah and inhabitants of Jerusalem, Or else My wrath will go forth like fire And burn with none to quench it, Because of the evil of your deeds."

**Jeremiah 6:10 (NASB)**

<sup>10</sup> To whom shall I speak and give warning That they may hear? Behold, their ears are closed And they cannot listen. Behold, the word of the Lord has become a reproach to them; They have no delight in it.

**Isaiah 52:1 (NASB)**

<sup>1</sup> Awake, awake, Clothe yourself in your strength, O Zion; Clothe yourself in your beautiful garments, O Jerusalem, the holy city; For the uncircumcised and the unclean Will no longer come into you.

Moses confessed that he was a man of “uncircumcised lips” ([Exodus 6:12, 30](#)).

**Exodus 6:12 (NASB)**

<sup>12</sup> But Moses spoke before the Lord, saying, "Behold, the sons of Israel have not listened to me; how then will Pharaoh listen to me, for I am unskilled in speech?"

**Exodus 6:12 (KJV)**

<sup>12</sup> And Moses spake before the LORD, saying, Behold, the children of Israel have not hearkened unto me; how then shall Pharaoh hear me, who *am* of uncircumcised lips?

**Exodus 6:30 (NASB)**

<sup>30</sup> But Moses said before the Lord, "Behold, I am unskilled in speech; how then will Pharaoh listen to me?"

**Exodus 6:30 (KJV)**

<sup>30</sup> And Moses said before the LORD, Behold, I *am* of uncircumcised lips, and how shall Pharaoh hearken unto me?

Man’s “uncircumcised heart” must be humbled if he wishes God to remember His covenant and give man the promised land of heaven ([Leviticus 26:41-42](#)).

**Leviticus 26:41-42 (NASB)**

<sup>41</sup> I also was acting with hostility against them, to bring them into the land of their enemies—**or if their uncircumcised heart becomes humbled so that they then make amends for their iniquity,**

<sup>42</sup> **then I will remember My covenant** with Jacob, and I will remember also My covenant with Isaac, and My covenant with Abraham as well, and I will remember the land.

**CONCEPTS ABOUT CIRCUMCISION—[Romans 2:25-29](#)**

**Romans 2:25-29 (NASB)**

<sup>25</sup> For indeed circumcision is of value if you practice the Law; but if you are a transgressor of the Law, your circumcision has become uncircumcision.

<sup>26</sup> So if the uncircumcised man keeps the requirements of the Law, will not his uncircumcision be regarded as circumcision?

<sup>27</sup> And he who is physically uncircumcised, if he keeps the Law, will he not judge you who though having the letter *of the Law* and circumcision are a transgressor of the Law?

<sup>28</sup> For he is not a Jew who is one outwardly, nor is circumcision that which is outward in the flesh.

<sup>29</sup> But he is a Jew who is one inwardly; and circumcision is that which is of the heart, by the Spirit, not by the letter; and his praise is not from men, but from God.

04-23-17

Series: The Book of Romans

Outward rituals are no substitute for inward submission and surrender to the Lord. Paul illustrates this truth by using “**circumcision**” as an example.

Circumcision began with Abraham. It was a mark of a covenant relationship with God. The Jews were depending upon this outward mark to establish their relationship with God instead of understanding its true spiritual significance.

People make the same mistake today, claiming baptism or the Lord’s Supper are what make a person right with God. They fail to understand the spiritual significance of these ordinances.

**Baptism** is an outward picture of what has taken place in the *believer’s* heart.

**The Lord’s Supper** is a time of *examination*. We remember what the Lord has done for us in the past and present and look forward to His future return.

True circumcision is circumcision or the effect upon the heart.

**Deuteronomy 10:16 (NASB)**

<sup>16</sup> So circumcise your heart, and stiffen your neck no longer.

**Deuteronomy 10:16 (KJV)**

<sup>16</sup> Circumcise therefore the foreskin of your heart, and be no more stiffnecked.

God wants our hearts. Israel rebelled in doing this. Christians make the same mistake too.

**Isaiah 29:13 (NASB)**

<sup>13</sup> Then the Lord said, “Because this people draw near with their words And honor Me with their lip service, **But they remove their hearts far from Me, And their reverence for Me consists of tradition learned by rote.**”

**Isaiah 29:13 (KJV)**

<sup>13</sup> Wherefore the Lord said, Forasmuch as this people draw near *me* with their mouth, and with their lips do honour me, **but have removed their heart far from me,** and their fear toward me is taught by the precept of men.”

Does the Lord have your heart? Paul stresses that without obedience to God’s Word, their outward mark was of no value. The person who obeyed the Word of God, even though he was not circumcised, would be acceptable to God.

Circumcision was to be a spiritual mark of ownership. **Christians have spiritual marks of ownership too.**

1. The mark of the **Spirit of God.**

**Romans 8:16 (NASB)**

<sup>16</sup> The Spirit Himself testifies with our spirit that we are children of God,

**Romans 8:16 (KJV)**

<sup>16</sup> The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God:

04-23-17

Series: The Book of Romans

2. The mark of **Scripture** on our minds.

**1 Peter 1:23 (NASB)**

<sup>23</sup> For you have been born again not of seed which is perishable but imperishable, *that is*, **through the living and enduring word of God.**

**1 Peter 1:23 (KJV)**

<sup>23</sup> Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, **by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever.**

3. The mark of **Service** on our hands.

**James 1:22 (NASB)**

<sup>22</sup> **But prove yourselves doers of the word**, and not merely hearers who delude themselves.

**James 1:22 (KJV)**

<sup>22</sup> **But be ye doers of the word**, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves.

4. The mark of **Speech** on our lips.

**1 John 4:15 (NASB)**

<sup>15</sup> **Whoever confesses** that Jesus is the Son of God, God abides in him, and he in God.

**1 John 4:15 (KJV)**

<sup>15</sup> **Whosoever shall confess** that Jesus is the Son of God, God dwelleth in him, and he in God.

5. The mark of **Sincere love** on the heart.

**John 13:35 (NASB)**

<sup>35</sup> “By this all men will know that you are My disciples, **if you have love for one another.**”

**John 13:35 (KJV)**

<sup>35</sup> “By this shall all *men* know that ye are my disciples, **if ye have love one to another.**”

6. The mark of total **Surrender** of our lives.

**2 Corinthians 5:17 (NASB)**

<sup>17</sup> Therefore if anyone is in Christ, *he is* a new creature; **the old things passed away; behold, new things have come.**

**2 Corinthians 5:17 (KJV)**

<sup>17</sup> Therefore if any man *be* in Christ, *he is* a new creature: **old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new.**

Are these marks of ownership in your life? Do you practice what you preach?