



# Christ or Circumcision: Not Both

## Galatians 5:2-12



# Galatians 5:2

- Look: I, Paul, say to you that **if you accept circumcision**, Christ will be of no advantage to you.

**What does Paul mean here?**



**Accepting the requirement of circumcision is the first step of obedience to the Mosaic law.**

**It symbolically communicates my acceptance of the law of Moses as my means of being found righteous before God.**

**The Galatians are subscribing to a hybrid of Jesus and good works that you do to show your obedience to a moral code beginning with circumcision.**



**To which Paul says it doesn't stop there. If your entrance into the kingdom of God is going to be based on anything other than faith in Christ—then you are obligated to keep the whole law.**



## Galatians 5:3

- I testify again to every man who accepts circumcision that he is obligated to keep the whole law.

**No hybrids of grace and law or faith and works.**



## Galatians 5:2

- Look: I, Paul, say to you that if you accept circumcision, **Christ will be of no advantage to you.**



**You don't get to spend your life promoting a gospel of works—that is doing good—or keeping the law and use Christ as a back up.**

**This is an all or nothing proposition.**

**If anyone could keep the law sufficiently there would be no need for a New Covenant of Grace through faith in Christ.**



# New Covenant of Grace through Faith in Christ



- **New Covenant** as opposed to the Mosaic
- **Of Grace** because participation is based on the goodness and mercy of God w/o merit
- **Through Faith** as opposed works of righteousness
- **In Christ** Jesus, the one and only Son of God, who died for the sins of all who believe in Him and rose again to validate the efficacy of His atoning death



<b>First and Old Covenant (Testament)</b>	<b>New, Eternal and Better Covenant (Testament)</b>
<b>Law of Moses (letter)</b>	<b>Law of Christ (Spirit)</b>
<b>Yoke of slavery (death)</b>	<b>Yoke of freedom (life)</b>
<b>Sabbath</b>	<b>First day of the week</b>
<b>Passover</b>	<b>Lord's Supper</b>
<b>Levitical Priesthood (Aaron)</b>	<b>Jesus our one and only Priest</b>
<b>Physical circumcision</b>	<b>Spiritual circumcision</b>
<b>Saved from Egypt</b>	<b>Saved from sin (forever forgiven)</b>
<b>Blood of bulls, lambs and goats (over and over again)</b>	<b>Innocent blood of the eternal son of God (once for all)</b>
<b>Not justified (declared righteous) by the works of the law</b>	<b>Justified (declared righteous) by faith, grace and Christ</b>
<b>Temporary Atonement</b>	<b>Eternal Redemption</b>



The early Jewish  
church really  
struggled with the  
issue of  
circumcision.

**Baptists and Presbyterians believe in the same God, Christ, Spirit, Gospel and Bible but we are totally divided over baptism.**



**Presbyterians baptize infants as token and sign of the covenant of grace directly linking it to circumcision primarily by way of Col 2:11-12.**

<https://www.thegospelcoalition.org/blogs/kevin-deyoung/a-brief-defense-of-infant-baptism/>

# A Brief Defense of Infant Baptism

KEVIN DEYOUNG — MARCH 12, 2015



It sounds like the beginning of a joke or a support group introduction, but it's true: some of my best friends are Baptists. I speak at conferences with and to Baptists. I read books by Baptists (both the dead and the living). I love the Baptist brothers I know

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**DeYoung's basic argument is fairly simple:**



**“We baptize infants because they are covenant children and should receive the sign of the covenant.”**

- 1. The Abrahamic covenant has not been annulled.**
- 2. The circumcision of the flesh corresponds to the circumcision of the heart.**

**“Admittedly, there is no text that says “Hear ye, hear ye, circumcision replaces baptism.” But we know from Colossians 2:11-12 that baptism and circumcision carried the same spiritual import.”**



## Colossians 2:11–12

- In him also you were circumcised with **a circumcision** made without hands, by putting off the body of the flesh, by the circumcision of Christ, <sup>12</sup> **having been buried with him in baptism**, in which you were also raised with him through faith in the powerful working of God, who raised him from the dead.





# #1

If (infant) baptism is  
the appropriate  
replacement for  
circumcision why  
didn't Paul say that.





**If the 1<sup>st</sup> century church was baptizing infants and young believers as a replacement for circumcision this is precisely where Paul should have set the Galatians straight:**

**You don't need to be circumcised  
baptism has replaced circumcision.**

# Do we baptize based on:



- 1) The anticipation of future faith in Christ?
- 2) The parents' faith in Christ?
- 3) Present personal faith in the Person and Work of Christ?

**Presbyterians talk about “covenant children” who are baptized as infants.**



**That is the offspring of parents who are believers and members of the church.**

**Presbyterians believe in the same way God worked through A, I, J God still works through generations of Christians.**



## Colossians 2:11–12

- In him also you were circumcised with a circumcision made without hands, by putting off the body of the flesh, by the circumcision of Christ, <sup>12</sup> having been buried with him in baptism, **in which you were also raised with him through faith** in the powerful working of God, who raised him from the dead.



# #2

What is the  
circumcision made w/o  
hands?

Regeneration/  
born again

# When is a person born again?



## John 3:14–15

And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, so must the Son of Man be lifted up, **that whoever believes in him may have eternal life.**



# #3

What kind of  
baptism looks like  
“having been  
buried”?







**It seems to me if Colossians 2 is helping us understand baptism then:**

- 1.The candidate needs to be the person who has faith in Christ not the parent.**
- 2.The method used in baptism needs to be one that pictures being buried in baptism.**



## Galatians 5:4

- You are severed from Christ,  
you who would be  
justified by the law; you  
have fallen away from grace.

**“Fallen away from grace”**



**is the strongest statement Paul can use to warn the Galatians of the peril of the decisions they are making.**

**“Fallen away from grace”** is the strongest statement Paul can use to warn the Galatians of the peril of the decisions they are making.



No one who is **“severed from Christ”** is saved. **You can argue they never had it or they lost it, but the end is the same.**



## John 16:1

“I have said all these things to you **to keep you from falling away.**

## Hebrews 3:12

Take care, brothers, lest there be in any of you an evil, unbelieving heart, **leading you to fall away** from the living God.

## Hebrews 4:11

Let us therefore strive to enter that rest, **so that no one may fall** by the same sort of disobedience.

## Hebrews 6:6

and **then have fallen away**, to restore them again to repentance, since they are crucifying once again the Son of God to their own harm and holding him up to contempt.

## 2 Peter 1:10

Therefore, brothers, be all the more diligent to confirm your calling and election, for if you practice these qualities **you will never fall.**



# This is how it works:



If I believe in

“once saved, always saved”  
then I only show you verses  
that support that perspective;  
if I believe you can fall away I  
show you those verses.



## John 5:24

- Truly, truly, I say to you, whoever hears my word and believes him who sent me has eternal life. He does not come into judgment, but has passed from death to life.



## John 10:28

- I give them eternal life, and they will never perish, and no one will snatch them out of my hand.



**If there were not verses like  
Gal 5:4 we would not have “Freewill”  
Baptists.**

**These Baptists believe in the same  
Bible you believe in with the same level  
of commitment.**



## **The End Result is the Same**

**For all these kind of situations you can say they must not have ever been authentically saved or you can say they fell from the grace of God.**

**But the end result is the same—we have no confidence that the person in question will inherit eternal life.**



## Galatians 5:5

- For through the Spirit, by faith, we ourselves eagerly wait for the hope of righteousness.

# The Hope of Righteousness



**Is the final and complete imputation of righteousness such that we never sin again.**

**The declared righteousness that comes from God for all who believe the gospel.**





# Galatians 5:6

- For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision nor uncircumcision counts for anything, **but only faith working through love.**



# This Faith is Alive

# It is Working



## James 2:14

- What good is it, my brothers, **if someone says he has faith but does not have works?**
- Can that faith save him?

# **Authentic faith manifests itself through**



- **Love like asking for forgiveness**
  - This could be asking
  - This could be accepting
- **Love like speaking truth into someone's life**
  - Everyone doesn't have to make this their mission
  - But sometimes it is your responsibility

# **Authentic faith manifests itself through**



- **Love like lending a hand**
- **Love like being generous**
- **Love like abstaining from sinful behavior**
- **Love like being a friend**
- **Love like showing kindness**



# Galatians 5:6

- For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision nor uncircumcision counts for anything, **but only faith working through love.**

**Only Faith**

# Only faith working through love



**Reminds us that Paul is not describing intellectual assent**

**I believe George Washington was the first President of the US, but I don't have a living, working, abiding, faith in him.**





# Paul's most famous passage on Love

## 1 Corinthians 13:4-8



# 1 Corinthians 13:4–8

- Love is patient and kind; love does not envy or boast; it is not arrogant <sup>5</sup> or rude. It does not insist on its own way; it is not irritable or resentful; <sup>6</sup> it does not rejoice at wrongdoing, but rejoices with the truth. <sup>7</sup> Love bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things. <sup>8</sup> Love never ends.



## Galatians 5:7

- You were running well.
- Who hindered you from obeying the truth?

**You were running so well.**



**The fact that they were running so well is of little comfort to Paul.**

**Paul expects them to continue to obey the truth.**



## John 3:36

- Whoever believes in the Son has eternal life; **whoever does not obey the Son shall not see life**, but the wrath of God remains on him.



## Acts 5:32

- And we are witnesses to these things, and so is the Holy Spirit, whom God has given to those who obey him.”

# What happens when I no longer obey him?



- 1) I get admonished to return to a life of obedience.
- 2) And the longer I stay away from obeying my Lord and Savior the greater degree to which one may rightly question the present reality of my salvation.





## Acts 13:43

- And after the meeting of the synagogue broke up, many Jews and devout converts to Judaism followed Paul and Barnabas, who, as they spoke with them, urged them to continue in the grace of God.



## Acts 14:22

- strengthening the souls of the disciples, encouraging them to continue in the faith, and saying that through many tribulations we must enter the kingdom of God.



# Colossians 1:21–23

- And you, who once were alienated and hostile in mind, doing evil deeds, <sup>22</sup> **he has now reconciled** in his body of flesh by his death, in order **to present you holy and blameless and above reproach before him,** <sup>23</sup> **if indeed you continue in the faith,** stable and steadfast, not shifting from the hope of the gospel that you heard, which has been proclaimed in all creation under heaven, and of which I, Paul, became a minister.



## Galatians 5:8

- This persuasion is not from him who calls you.



## Galatians 5:9

- A little leaven leavens the whole lump.



## Galatians 5:10

- I have confidence in the Lord that **you will take no other view,** and the one who is troubling you will bear the penalty, whoever he is.

# The No Other View



**Paul is leaving no room for an alternative understanding of faith, grace, and their relationship to works.**





# Galatians 5:11

- But if I, brothers, still preach circumcision, why am I still being persecuted? In that case the offense of the cross has been removed.



# Galatians 5:12

- I wish those who unsettle you would emasculate themselves!