



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

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



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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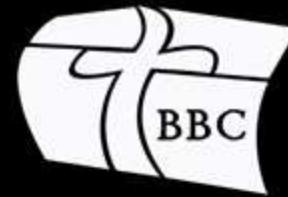
DeYoung's basic argument is fairly simple:



“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.”



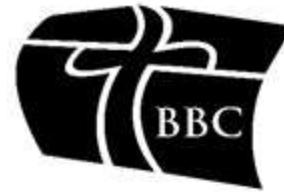
Colossians 2:11-12

• 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, ¹² 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 1st 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

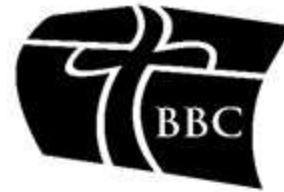
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#2

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.

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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.**

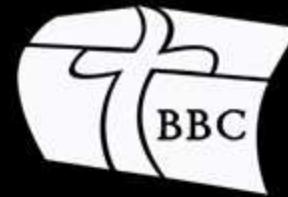
2 Peter 1:10

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



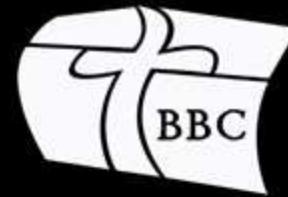
This is how it works:

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.



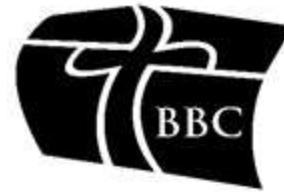
John 5:24

- 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.

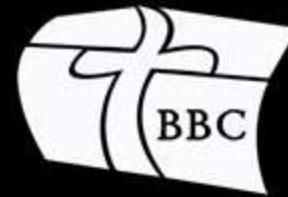


Galatians 5:6

- 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

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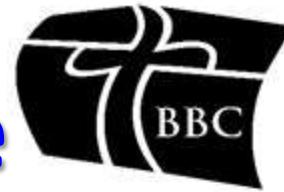
- **Love like lending a hand**
- **Love like being generous**
- **Love like abstaining from sinful behavior**
- **Love like being a friend**
- **Love like showing kindness**



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working through love.

Only Faith



Only faith working through love

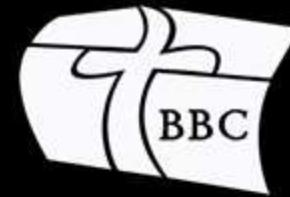
**Reminds us that Paul is not describing
intellectual assent**

**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 arrogant⁵ or rude. It does not insist on its own way; it is not irritable or resentful;⁶ it does not rejoice at wrongdoing, but rejoices with the truth.⁷ Love bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things.⁸ Love never ends.



Galatians 5:7

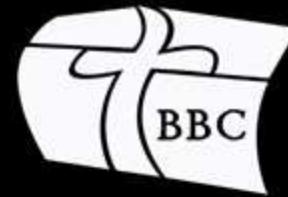
- You were running well.
- Who hindered you from obeying the truth?

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?

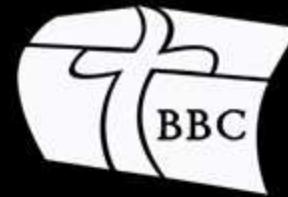


- 1) I get admonished to return to a life of obedience.**
- 2) And the longer I stay away from obeying my Lord and Savior the greater degree to which one may rightly question the present reality of my salvation.**



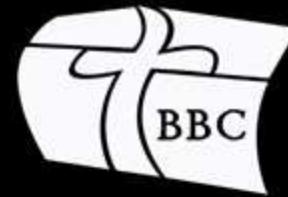
Acts 13:43

- 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, ²² **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**, ²³ **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!