1) THE TEST OF CIRCUMCISION

2) CIRCUMCISION WAS THE FIRST AND MAIN REQUIREMENT OF GOD FOR HIS OLD TESTAMENT PEOPLE:

And God said to Abraham: "As for you, you shall keep My covenant, you and your descendants after you throughout their generations. 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…. And the uncircumcised male child, who is not circumcised in the flesh of his foreskin, that person shall be cut off from his people; he has broken My covenant." – Gen.17:9-10 & 14

3) FROM THE BEGINNING OF GOD’S PROMISES TO ABRAHAM, CIRCUMCISION WAS THE SIGN THAT A PERSON WAS IN COVENANT RELATIONSHIP TO GOD.

4) Thus says the Lord GOD: "No foreigner, uncircumcised in heart or uncircumcised in flesh, shall enter My sanctuary, including any foreigner who is among the children of Israel.” -Ezek.44:9

And when a stranger dwells with you and wants to keep the Passover to the LORD, let all his males be circumcised, and then let him come near and keep it; and he shall be as a native of the land. For no uncircumcised person shall eat it. -Ex.12:48

5) - GOD SEVERELY WARNED MOSES ABOUT THE IMPORTANCE OF CIRCUMCISION WHEN HE WAS GOING DOWN TO EGYPT TO DELIVER THE ISRAELITES OUT OF EGYPT:

6) And it came to pass on the way, at the encampment, that the LORD met Moses and sought to kill him. Then Zipporah took a sharp stone and cut off the foreskin of her son and cast it at Moses' feet, and said, "Surely you are a husband of blood to me!" So God let Moses go. Ex.4:24-26

7) God obviously could have killed Moses if He wanted to, but he taught Moses the importance of circumcision: he would never have been able to lead the Israelites out of Egypt to the Promised Land if he did not practice circumcision! 1) It was the sign of God’s covenant people 2) we must practice what we preach!

8) THE FIRST THING THAT GOD COMMANDED JOSHUA WHEN THEY HAD CROSSED THE JORDAN RIVER WAS TO HAVE ALL THE ISRAELITE MEN BE CIRCUMCISED:

9) At that time the LORD said to Joshua, "Make flint knives for yourself, and circumcise the sons of Israel again the second time." …So it was, when they had finished circumcising all the people, that they stayed in their places in the camp till they were healed. Then the LORD said to Joshua, "This day I have rolled away the reproach of Egypt from you." Therefore the name of the place is called Gilgal to this day. -Josh.5:2 & 8-9

10) JOSHUA & THE ISRAELITES CONTINUED TO CAMP AT GILGAL FOR 7 YEARS UNTIL THEY FINISHED CONQUERING THE PROMISED LAND: 7 times the book of Joshua mentions that the Israelites lived in their camp at Gilgal all thru those 7 years they were conquering- IMPORTANT FOR US! If we want to conquer the promises of God for our lives, we have to spiritually live at Gilgal, or the place of circumcision! Stay there until we have conquered all!

11) FROM THE BEGINNING, THE JEWS RECOGNIZED THAT CIRCUMCISION HAD A SPIRITUAL MEANING:

“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.” -Deut.30:6

12) THE CUTTING AWAY OF FLESH IN THE SURGERY OF CIRCUMCISION SIGNIFIED THAT WE NEED TO HAVE OUR FLESHLY DESIRES AND LUSTS REMOVED FROM OUR LIVES!

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

13) “…putting off the body of the sins of the flesh, by the circumcision of Christ,” Col.2:11

14) It was just after the Israelites crossed the Jordan River that they were all circumcised. Crossing the Jordan spiritually signifies that we are crucified with Christ, and that will produce a circumcised heart!

EXAMPLE: HOW I WAS CIRCUMCISED FROM LOVING MONEY AS A BIBLE SCHOOL STUDENT:

15) In the Old Testament, every male Jew had to be circumcised to be one of God’s people

In the New Testament, every Christian needs to be spiritually circumcised!

-Romans 2:28-29 “For he is not a Jew who is one outwardly, nor is circumcision that which is outward in the flesh; but he is a Jew who is one inwardly; and circumcision is that of the heart, in the Spirit, not in the letter; whose praise is not from men but from God.”

16) -Col.2:11 “…putting off the body of the sins of the flesh by the circumcision of Christ”

CIRCUMCISION IS NOT JUST AN O.T. CONCEPT- HERE WE READ THAT CHRIST HAS A CIRCUMCISION TO WORK IN US- IT IS TO CUT AWAY THE SINS OF THE FLESH!

17) Does our carnal, adamic nature like to have the sins of the flesh cut away? -No more than a baby likes to have his flesh cut away in circumcision!

God sometimes points out sin in our life “YOU HAVE TO CHANGE THAT- DEAL WITH IT- CUT IT OUT!” “stop that wrong relationship- eating that junk food is defiling the temple of the Holy Spirit- watching that gay TV comedian is polluting your spirit- how do we react? Sometimes WAAAAAAAAHHHHH!!!

EX: WHEN I WAS A BABY CHRISTIAN, MY FRIENDS WERE MOSTLY BABY CHRISTIANS- “OTHERS MAY, YOU MAY NOT”-WAAAAAAHHHHHHHHH!!!!

18) Circumcision of the Heart- putting off the sins of the flesh- is not optional for the Christian: it is a requirement of Christ!

“…without holiness no one will see the Lord.” -Heb.12:14

“If you love Me, keep My commandments.” -Jn.14:15

“Be perfect, therefore, as your heavenly Father is perfect.” -Mat.5:48

19) CIRCUMCISION OF THE HEART BRINGS US FROM IMPUTED RIGHTEOUSNESS INTO IMPARTED RIGHTEOUSNESS

– God’s grace FOR us begins to work IN us when we become born again

- It transforms us step by step, from glory to glory as we learn how to carry our cross

And have the sins of the flesh crucified / circumcised out of our life!

-“And whoever does not bear his cross and come after Me cannot be My disciple”- Luke 14:27

**20) SLIDE #1 FOR THE PATH OF THE RIGHTEOUS CHART**

THE PATH OF THE RIGHTEOUS

(SHINES BRIGHTER AND BRIGHTER UNTIL THE FULL DAY, PROV.4:18)

RIGHTEOUSNESS: IMPUTED IMPARTED

CHRIST’S WORK: For Us (2 Cor.5:21) In Us (Gal.2:20)

DESCRIPTION: a Legal Gift Functioning in Experience

SOURCE: The Cross of Christ Carrying our Own Cross

TESTIFIED BY: Water Baptism A Sanctified Life

**21) SLIDE #2 FOR THE PATH OF THE RIGHTEOUS CHART**

BY FAITH: Without Works, Eph.2:8-9 Shown by our Works, Jam.2:18

PERFECTION: Progressing Maturity Mature, Full Perfection

“Be Perfect” -Mt.5:48 (…a “perfect” baby) (a perfect man, Eph.4:13)

IN D JOURNEY OF ISRAEL: At the Red Sea At the Jordan River

(ran away from enemy) (ran to attack the enemy!)

22) A “Perfect” new baby has no responsibilities- it just drinks & sleeps!

- Yet a growing young child will have to learn self-control, and how to handle growing responsibilities! Learn to crawl – then walk – control its bowels to not keep wearing a diaper!

23) …but if a grown man still lives like a baby, something is very wrong!

When I was a child, I spoke as a child, I thought as a child; but when I became

a man, I put away childish things” – 1 Cor.13:11

A perfect baby dirties his diapers- no training, no discipline! A baby Christian can still have many problems with sin! (ignorant of sin or no discipline)

But to spiritually grow up, we need to learn about righteousness, and how to discipline ourselves to live godly lives!

1 Jn.2:14 “I have written to you, young men, because you are strong, and the Word of God abides in you, and you have overcome the evil one.”

24) A young boy can be called a perfect scholar with limited knowledge, but if he stays on the same level when he is of college age, he will no longer be called a perfect scholar!

ALSO, DIFFERENT PEOPLE HAVE DIFFERENT LEVELS OF ABILITY: Rebecca “As” but Esther “Ds”

Some people have had their lives greatly damaged by sin- it will take more patience to see them healed & going on to higher levels in God

25) Our spiritual life should also be a progression of growth:

 - in 2 Cor.3:18 we are told, But we all, with open face beholding as in a mirror the glory of the

 Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory,” -progressive transformation!

 - “Grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ” -2 Pet.3:18

 - 1 Sam.2:8 tells us about this process of transformation when it says, “He raises up the poor

 out of the dust; He lifts up the beggars from the dunghill and sets them among princes to

 inherit the throne of glory.”

26) Paul taught about this progressive perfection in Phil.3:12-15. In verse 12 he said he was not yet perfected in full spiritual maturity, but in verses 13-14 he told how to have a progressive perfection. This is because Paul said in verse 15 that “as many of us as are mature, let us have this mind (to leave behind the past and press on).” This word “mature” in v.15 is also translated as “perfect” and is the same word Christ used when He said “Be perfect” in Matthew 5:48. (teleios) (the v.12 perfected is teleioo, a variation of the word “perfect” used by Jesus)

27) THERE IS AN UNBALANCED AND DANGEROUS DOCTRINE BEING SPREAD, THAT WE CAN CONTINUE TO REPEATEDLY SIN, BECAUSE GOD’S GRACE WILL ALWAYS FORGIVE US.

Rom 6:15-16 “What then? Shall we sin because we are not under law but under grace? Certainly not! Do you not know that to whom you present yourselves slaves to obey, you are that one's slaves whom you obey, whether of sin leading to death, or of obedience leading to righteousness?” (Yes, God is Love, God is Patient, God is Forgiving… God is also Holy!)

28) Many Jews in the time of Christ were deceived that they were God’s children because they were circumcised. The Jews said to Jesus in John 8:39-41, “We are Abraham’s children…God is our father” -They were basically telling Jesus, “we are saved, we are going to heaven!”

-They trusted in their natural circumcision, that because they were Abraham’s descendants and had the sign of the covenant, that they would go to heaven!

BUT Jesus replied to them: “You are of your father the devil, because you do the works of the devil,” v.44

The Jews were naturally circumcised, but they were not spiritually circumcised!

When Jesus told them that their sinful lives proved that the devil was their father, do you think He would invite them into heaven? THEY WERE DECEIVED TO THINK THEIR LIVES WERE RIGHT WITH GOD!

29) In a similar way, many people today are deceived that they are saved because they are religious, or had a former spiritual life. They have a form of godliness, but deny the power of true godliness, as Paul warned about in 2 Tim.3:5.

Jesus warned that many who thought they should enter heaven will not be allowed in: Christ said in Mt.7:21-23 "Not everyone who says to Me, 'Lord, Lord,' shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father in heaven. Many will say to Me in that day, 'Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in Your name, cast out demons in Your name, and done many wonders in Your name?' And then I will declare to them, 'I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness!'”

30) Many people look like good Christians when they are around other Christians, but then they live for sin & corruption when they are alone, or are with sinful friends. Like a chameleon, a type of lizard who changes his color to blend in with the things that are around it!

31) Some people quote scriptures like they are a magic formula- the word of God IS powerful, but only when we rightly divide the word of truth! – Only when we use the Word of God in proper balance!

-Can a professional thief claim Eph.2:8-9? If he also goes to church, and gives 10% of all the money he steals to his church, does that mean he is going to heaven?

“Do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived. Neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor homosexuals, nor sodomites, nor thieves… will inherit the kingdom of God.” -1 Cor.9-10

32) BUT WITH A CIRCUMCISED HEART, WE WILL FULLY LOVE THE LORD AND WILL LEARN
HOW TO LIVE A FULLY RIGHTEOUS LIFE!

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… Deut. 30:6

33) With a circumcised heart, we will gain victory over sin!

“…putting off the body of the sins of the flesh by the circumcision of Christ” – Col.2:11

34) With a circumcised heart, we will seek God’s praise, not man’s praise! “…and circumcision is that of the heart…whose praise is not from men but from God.” -Rom.2:29

-Singers & Musicians, do you sing & play to be admired by people, or praised by God?

-Are you entertaining the people, or are your heart & mind always focused on God?

35) WITH A CIRCUMCISED HEART, WE WILL PRACTICE WHAT WE PREACH!

- Leaders, do we do things in secret that we teach other people not to do?

Jesus said in Mt.5:19, “Whoever therefore breaks one of the least of these commandments, and teaches men so, shall be called least in the kingdom of heaven; but whoever does and teaches them, he shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven.”

- Do we allow compromise & mixture so we can gain more money, or approval, or control?

(a pastor, when told that d church secre & a Sunday school teacher were in a homo relationship: “I can’t confront the problem, it would split the church & we need everybody’s finances!)

- Do our lives inspire others to be more like Christ, or motivate them to leave the church?

(All too often people leave a church because the leaders in the Church are bad examples!)

-But a church with godly leaders will have people joining the church, who want to become like the leaders! Paul: “Follow me as I follow Christ”

36) HOW CAN WE GAIN A CIRCUMCISED HEART?

By carrying our cross daily, dying to sin daily, we progressively enter into being crucified with Christ- so that His life, and His heart, will live in us!

Jesus said to them, "If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow Me.” –Lk.9:23

“And whoever does not bear his cross and come after Me cannot be My disciple.” -Lk.14:27

37) We need to let the sword of the Spirit, the anointed Word of God, cut and expose the sin in our hearts- when we see our sins as God sees them, we can best cry out for cleansing!

Heb.4:12 – “For the word of God is living and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the division of soul and spirit, and of joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.”

38) EX: The Old Testament priests had to cut up the animal sacrifices -separate the joints- so that each piece could be placed on the altar and consumed by fire!

Lev.1:7-9 tells us how the sacrifice needed to be cut up- spiritually, how the different areas of our fleshly carnal lives need to be separated and exposed

Put the Head on the altar- let the Word of God expose our wrong thoughts, so we will cry out for the fire of God to burn away our fleshly, carnal patterns of thinking.

“Set your mind on things above, not on the things of the earth, for you have died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God.”- Col.3:2-3

Put the fat on the altar- our strength, our prosperity- the things we can carnally trust in, instead of trusting in God!

The entrails- inner parts- our secret desires & affections – do we have any wrong loves, or idols in our heart? EX: “SO THESE ARE YOUR IDOLS”

Put the legs on the altar- our walk- do we walk according to the flesh, or walk in the Spirit? “Walk in the Spirit, and you will not fulfill the desires of the flesh” – Gal.5:16

For the Israelites, the knife of the priest was to cut open the sacrifice and prepare the flesh to be burned

- this signified the same work of the knife of circumcision, which was to cut away flesh

For the Christian, the sword of the Spirit cuts open our flesh, cuts away our sins, so that the circumcision of Christ removes the sins of the flesh

39) Always walk in the Light- and any remaining darkness is only shadows behind us!

(God does not instantly deal with everything wrong in the life of a baby Christian- even a 20- year old Christian will still be led onwards! Paul was a mature apostle when he wrote Philippians 3:13-15. He was still going on!

BUT if we respond to everything He shows us, when He shines the light on an area of our life, then 1 Jn.1:7 tells us, If we walk in the light as He is in the light the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanses us from all sin.

40) DO YOU PASS THE TEST OF CIRCUMCISION?

-Are you gaining a life of victory & holiness?

-Are you loving God more, and hating every sin?

-Do you sing or play music only for God’s approval & praise? (or is our heart seeking popularity…

-Do you practice what you preach? CHRIST CAN CIRCUMCISE OUR HEART!

GOD CAN BRING US INTO HAVING RIGHTEOUS, SANCTIFIED LIVES!
NOT JUST LEGALLY RIGHTEOUS BY WHAT CHRIST HAS DONE FOR US,

BUT MADE INTERNALLY RIGHTEOUS IN OUR THOUGHTS, OUR MOTIVES, AND OUR WORKS!

41) AT THE SECOND COMING OF CHRIST THE CHURCH, THE BRIDE OF CHRIST, IS TO BE CLOTHED IN FINE LINEN, WHICH IS THE RIGHTEOUS ACTS OF THE SAINTS (REV.19:8) -THE GLORIOUS WEDDING GOWN THAT THE BRIDE OF CHRIST WILL BE WEARING WILL BE “THE RIGHTEOUS ACTS OF THE SAINTS.”

- IN REV. 19:7 WE ARE TOLD, “AND HIS WIFE HAS MADE HERSELF READY” (Are we preparing?)

42) May Your Path in Life Shine Brighter and Brighter, Abiding in More & More of His Love, and Grace, and Holiness!