

REVISITING THE BELIEVER'S POSITIONAL RICHES IN CHRIST
Part XVII: Applying The Truth That Believers Are Circumcised In Christ
(Colossians 2:11 et al.)

I. Introduction

- A. Paul taught that when a believer lives by means of his sin nature, he experiences a type of "death" in his spiritual walk, a life marked by internal unrest, Romans 8:6 implied. Indeed, the sin nature produces sexual immorality, impurity, sensuality, idolatry, sorcery, enmity, strife, jealousy, fits of anger, rivalries, dissensions, divisions, envy, drunkenness, orgies and the like, Galatians 5:19-21a ESV.
- B. One of the 33 positional truths the believer possesses the instant he trusts in Christ is that he is "circumcised with the circumcision made without hands," a truth that if applied, gives him full relief from the bad influence of his sinful nature. (Lewis S. Chafer, Systematic Theology, vol. III, "Soteriology," p. 250-251)

II. Applying The Truth That Believers Are Circumcised In Christ, Colossians 2:11 et al.

- A. To explain Paul's claim that the believer is circumcised in Christ in Colossians 2:11, we note he countered an error at Colossae that mixed Hebrew legalism with Oriental mysticism and Grecian philosophy. (Ryrie Study Bible, KJV, 1978, p. 1690, "Introduction To The Letter Of Paul To The Colossians: The Colossian Heresy.")
- B. Paul thus wrote here of **spiritual** circumcision, countering Judaistic parties who tried to make **physical** circumcision required either for salvation or for holy Christian living. (cf. Acts 15:1-2; Galatians 5:1-4)
- C. In thus countering errant Judaism, Paul wrote that the believer was "circumcised with the circumcision **made without hands**," that once one trusted in Christ, he was circumcised with a **SPIRITUAL** circumcision that **bypassed** and **surpassed** in quality the mere **PHYSICAL** circumcision touted by Judaism, Colossians 2:11a.
- D. Paul then explained what this **SPIRITUAL** circumcision entailed (as follows), Colossians 2:11b:
 - 1. In place of removing the foreskin as in **physical** circumcision, **spiritual** circumcision involved **God's** removing of the "body of the sins of the flesh," removing the **sin nature's dominion** over the believer, *Ibid.*, fn. to Colossians 2:11-12; *Ibid.*, Chafer, p. 250.
 - 2. The believer's sin nature was thus so judged at the cross of Christ that every believer has a way of deliverance available to him from the sinful nature's **control** over his thinking and behavior, *Ibid.*, p. 251.
- E. This deliverance is more fully explained in other passages in the New Testament (as follows):
 - 1. Apart from God's help, every believer is wretchedly so controlled by his sin nature that the evil he does not want to do, that he performs, and the good he desires to do he cannot perform, Romans 7:15-24.
 - 2. However, Christ's work at the cross so completely judged the believer's sin nature that, if the believer relies on the Holy Spirit of God Who comes to indwell him permanently at salvation (Romans 8:9b; Ephesians 1:13-14), he **WILL** live a **righteous** life that pleases the Lord, Romans 7:25; 8:1a, 2-4!
 - 3. The indwelling Holy Spirit and the believer's sin nature are at **war** with each other, so the believer **EITHER totally** functions by his sin nature **OR** he **totally** functions by means of the Holy Spirit, Gal. 5:17.
 - 4. If the believer then chooses to live by his sinful nature, he performs destructive fruits of that nature such as sexual immorality, impurity, sensuality, idolatry, sorcery, enmity, strife, jealousy, fits of anger, rivalries, dissensions, divisions, envy, drunkenness, orgies and the like, Galatians 5:19-21a ESV.
 - 5. Conversely, if the believer chooses to rely on the Holy Spirit, the Spirit through him boycotts the sinful nature's control, leading the believer to think and act in righteousness, Galatians 5:16; 2:20. The believer thus produces the "fruit" of the Holy Spirit in the form of love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control, Galatians 5:22-23 ESV.
- F. Thus, **any** believer with **any background** of **sin** can live **victorious** over his former evil way of life as follows:
 - 1. If a believer realizes he is living by his sin nature, he must confess it to God for His cleansing, 1 John 1:9.
 - 2. Following this step, the believer is controlled by the Holy Spirit, so he merely needs to **rely** in a lifestyle of **trusting** the Holy Spirit's divine power to obey Scripture, and he will then exhibit the blessed qualities of Galatians 5:22-23 instead of the wretched behavior of his sin nature as describe in Galatians 5:19-21a!
 - 3. Note: regardless how evil or how dysfunctional was one's former life, since the Holy Spirit is **God** (Acts 5:3-4), the **Lord ALMIGHTY** Who indwells the believer will overcome the depravity of the believer's sin nature and its debilitating effects from his past so that the believer **WILL** live **righteously!**

Lesson: *Christ has defeated the dominion of the sin nature, so by the Holy Spirit's power, we can live righteously.*

Application: *Having been positionally circumcised in Christ, may we walk by the Spirit to live in righteousness!*