

99-01-10b

But the fact that the issue is circumcision of the heart and not physical circumcision is why you have passages like Deuteronomy chapter 10 and verse 16, Deuteronomy 30 and verse 6. You find this in Jeremiah 4.4, Jeremiah 9.25 and 26. These are all Old Testament passages that talk about the fact that it's the heart that counts. We find it of course in the New Testament in Romans.

We've seen it in Romans chapter 2, chapter 3, chapter 4. Paul addresses this squarely. As I just mentioned, you have the contrast between Timothy and Titus that makes a big point of the fact that it's what goes on in our heart. In this age, physical circumcision is not even an issue.

That's why Paul says there is neither Jew nor Greek. There is neither bond nor free. In 1 Corinthians 7.18, if you are called and you're uncircumcised, remain uncircumcised.

If when you were called you were circumcised, then stay that way. The physical status is not the issue. What goes on in your heart in this age is.

You find the same thing in Galatians 6.15 and Philippians 3.3. So the issue, what does it mean to be circumcised in heart? It is separation from the flesh, separation from sin. As Moses points out to Israel, you may choose evil things, you may choose sinful things and God disciplines you for it. But if you recognize that and turn around and return to God and choose the things of God, you can once again experience the blessings of the covenant.

God will circumcise your hearts. You can once again recover. Unlike addiction that can permanently prevent you from experiencing the normal blessings of life, God in his power can restore the human soul.

The power of God can do something that can't take place in the fleshly realm. You can make decisions that permanently cut you off from a normal life, except when it comes to God. God has the power to free people from addiction.

God has the power to free people from the consequences of their bad decision. It doesn't mean the consequences are going to go away, but God can turn cursing into blessing. Romans 8.28, I was just reviewing the Greek grammar there yesterday and it's fascinating to see that the way that sentence is constructed, in English it says all things work together for good.

It sounds like they work themselves together. But the way the sentence is constructed, the verb is in the singular and all things is plural. So all things is not the subject of the verb.

A better way to translate that verse is, to those who love God, he works all things

together for good. God is the subject of the verb, works together. It's singular.

God works all things together for good to those who love him, to those who are the called according to his purpose. When we recognize our calling, when we circumcise our hearts, when we separate from those things that cause us to stumble, like Jesus talked about, that is when we can receive and experience the blessings that God wants to give us, that God has promised us to all those who are children of Abraham by faith. This is a good place to stop.

We'll resume and conclude our study of Genesis 17 next time and arrive at Genesis chapter 18, which is a fascinating, fascinating passage. One of the places where God himself walks the earth. He speaks.

He eats a meal. It's a fascinating episode. One of the most interesting passages to me in the whole book of Genesis is found at the beginning of chapter 18.

We will finish chapter 17 and hopefully get to start 18 next time. But let's close here in a word of prayer. Father, we thank you for the privilege of studying your word.

We thank you for our position in your plan through Christ, where we are the heirs of promise. We pray that through knowledge of these things and through the ministry of your spirit, we will find the strength and the motivation to pursue the walk of faith, to be those who walk before you and are blameless, and in so doing, not only fulfill your plan, but experience all the wonderful things that you have for us. We pray that we can be an encouragement to each other, that we can recognize our primary responsibility for ourselves as opposed to seeking to primarily try to be an influence on others at the expense of our own life with you.

We thank you for your sustaining grace and we pray that our lives will reflect your glory and the glory of our Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ. In whose name we pray, amen.