

## Bride vs. Body

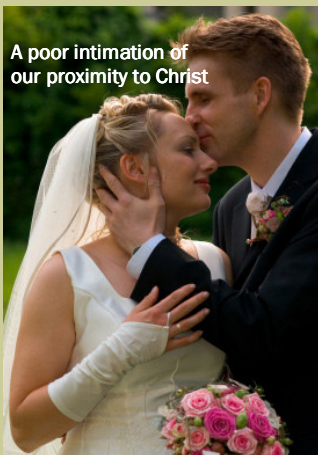
ISRAEL TERMED BRIDE OF THE LAMBKIN, BUT WE ARE THE BODY OF CHRIST

**He Who has the bride is the Bridegroom. Yet the friend of the Bridegroom, who stands and is hearing Him, is rejoicing with joy because of the Bridegroom's voice. This, my joy, then, has been fulfilled. —John. 3:29**

I used to think that the closest a person could get to Christ was to be His bride. After all, doesn't the bride stand only a foot away from the groom? Aren't they holding hands? Then I discovered I was a member of the *body* of Christ. I was not to be married to Him, I was *part* of Him.

**For no one at any time hates his own flesh, but is nurturing and cherishing it, according as Christ also the ecclesia, for we are members of His body.**

—Eph. 5:29-30



A poor intimation of our proximity to Christ

No one could ever explain to me how a person could be a bride and a groom simultaneously. Our relationship with Christ is far more intimate than Israel's. They stand a foot away from Him; that's great; who would say it isn't? But we are Him. ■

# Martin Zender's Clanging Gong News

"If I know all mysteries and all knowledge, but have no love, I am a clanging gong" --1 Cor. 13:1-2



Two out of three isn't bad.

## Key differences between Paul's gospel and that of the Circumcision

"I HAVE BEEN ENTRUSTED WITH THE EVANGEL OF THE UNCIRCUMCISION, ACCORDING AS PETER OF THE CIRCUMCISION."

—Paul, Galatians 2:7

God gave Abraham good news, that is, a gospel, concerning his descendants (Israel), who would one day reconcile the earth to Him; the apostle Peter became the caretaker of this gospel. Many centuries later, God gave different good news to another man concerning another people (non-Israelites), who would reconcile the heavens. The caretaker of this gospel was Paul. Let's look at some of the key differences between these two gospels.

**Salvation because of Israel, Acts 10:30-32—**

**And Cornelius averred, "Four days ago unto this hour was I fasting ... praying in my house, and lo! a man stood before me in splendid attire, and is averring, 'Cornelius, your prayer is hearkened to, and your alms are brought to remembrance in God's sight. Send, then, into Joppa, and call for Simon, who is surnamed Peter. He is lodging in the house of Simon, a tanner, beside the sea.'"**

Without Peter, Cornelius is sunk. Peter belonged to the nation that God called, "A royal priesthood." A priest is a go-between, a channel. On earth, Israel will always be the channel between God and the nations. Here's how it will work in the earthly kingdom:

MAN FROM NATIONS: I need saved!

BYSTANDER: Quick! Somebody fetch an Israelite.

Sound like a stretch? Read Zechariah 8:23—

**Thus says Yahweh of hosts: In those days, ten men from all the languages of the nations ... will take fast hold of the hem of a man, a Jew, saying, Let us go with you, for we hear that God is with you.**



**Salvation in spite of Israel, Rom. 11:15; Acts 13:6-12—**

Now, passing through the whole island up to Paphos, they found a certain man, a magician, a false prophet, a Jew, whose name was Bar-Jesus, who was with the proconsul Sergius Paul, an intelligent man. He, calling to him Barnabas and Saul, seeks to hear the word of God. Now Elymas, the "Magician" (for thus is his name construed), withstood them, seeking to pervert the proconsul from the faith. Now Saul, who is also Paul, being filled with holy spirit, looking intently at him, said ... "Will you not cease perverting the straight ways of the Lord?" ... Now instantly there falls on him a fog and darkness ... Then the proconsul, perceiving what has occurred, believes ...

Here we have a Gentile man seeking salvation, and an Israelite waiting in the wings. Sound like the perfect set-up? Not this time. With Paul's gospel, the presence of a law-loving nation (Israel) hinders a message of grace. The Gentile proconsul Sergius Paul isn't saved *because* of an Israelite, but rather in spite of one.

Can you say: "God just made a point"?

**For if their casting away is the conciliation of the world, what will the taking back be if not life from among the dead? —Rom. 11:15**

**... Salvation in spite of Israel**

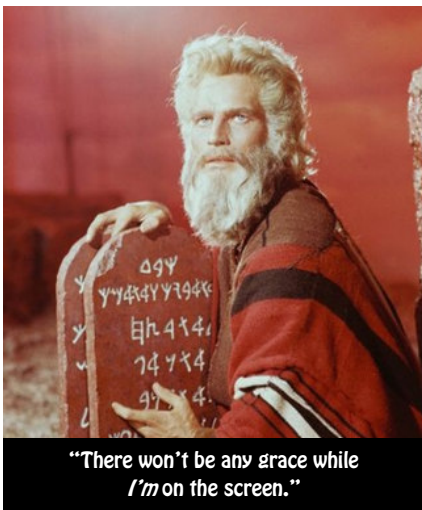
*(Continued from pg. 1)*

Before Paul, the mere mention of the phrase, “the casting away of Israel,” would have dashed the hopes of Jew and Gentile alike. Remarkably, Paul presents Israel’s casting away as beneficial for everyone. God withholds full-orbed grace until law leaves the stage. Another way of saying it: Until God hardens Israel and temporarily sets her aside, the depths of His grace wait in the wings. The two aspects of Israel hindering grace’s full manifestation are:

- ▶ FLESH
- ▶ LAW

If fleshly distinctions matter—as they do in the Circumcision gospel—then where is grace? If one has to obey law or else, then where is grace?

God will fulfill what He began with Israel, but only after He calls the last member of the body of Christ and closes this Era of the Nations. ■



**Called vs. Chosen**

**CIRCUMCISION**

**Believers called first, then chosen, Matthew 22:14—**

**For many are the called, yet few are the chosen.**

The gospel of the Circumcision is presented as an “if/then” proposition. That is, “If you answer My call, then I will choose You.” This is why Jesus says in Revelation 3:20—

**Lo! I stand at the door and am knocking. If ever anyone should be hearing My voice and opening the door, I will also be coming in to him and dining with him, and he with Me.**

**UNCIRCUMCISION**

**Believers chosen first, then called, Romans 8:30—**

**Now whom He designates beforehand, these He calls also, and whom He calls, these He justifies also; now whom He justifies, these He glorifies also.**

Having temporarily set Israel aside (Romans, chapter 11), God launches an evangel of total grace. This is why Paul’s language is so radical. With Paul, salvation is presented as a done deal—a fact—rather than an “if/then” proposition. It is not something you *accept* for it to be true; it is something *true* that you accept. Look at it this way:

**Circumcision:** THIS CAN BE YOURS—IF THE PRICE IS RIGHT.

**Uncircumcision:** THE PRICE WAS RIGHT; LOOK WHAT YOU NOW HAVE.

**JAMES VS. PAUL**

**NOT MEANT TO BE RECONCILED**

**Must have works, or faith is dead, James 2:20—**

*Now are you wanting to know, O empty man, that faith apart from works is dead?*

It is so entertaining to watch Christians and theologians trying to reconcile James and Paul. I once watched a chimp at a zoo trying to put a square peg into a round hole, and was similarly amused.

*Stop being frustrated. It's two different gospels, numb-nuts.*



**Simple fact:** In the Circumcision gospel, faith is not enough. It *must* be accompanied by works, or death ensues. On the other hand:

**Must not be working, only having faith, Romans 4:5—**

*Yet to him who is not working, yet is believing on Him Who is justifying the irreverent, his faith is reckoned for righteousness.*

In the gospel of the Uncircumcision, works actually insult faith. This is because the faith that we have is a gift (Romans 12:3), which acquaints us with the complete work of Christ. We believe in Jesus, therefore, and have no confidence in flesh (Phil. 3:3). The Circumcision believe in Jesus *and* in themselves, having all sorts of confidence in flesh.

The salvation of the Circumcision, therefore, is a co-operative salvation. ■

**Irreverent under the Circumcision gospel? Duck!**

**CIRCUMCISION**

**Irreverent condemned, 2 Pet. 2:4-6—**

*For if God spares not sinning messengers ... and spares not the ancient world, but guards Noah ... bringing a deluge on the world of the irreverent; and condemns the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah ... having placed them as an example for those about to be irreverent ...*

**UNCIRCUMCISION**

**Irreverent justified, Rom. 4:5—**

*Yet to him who is not working, yet is believing on Him Who is justifying the irreverent, his faith is reckoned for righteousness.*

# Rants & Stuff

The Apostle Paul says we should not murmur (Philippians 2:14). Therefore, I shall rant.

## Excuse me while I put on my hat.

### CIRCUMCISION

**Must be an overcomer to avoid second death, Rev. 2:11—**

**He who overcometh shall not be hurt by the second death.**

There are many ministries today based on “Overcoming.” In fact, this is a buzz-word in many Israel-wanna-be camps. Everyone wants to “Overcome.” Those who overcome

become, of all things, “Overcomers.” According to the book of Revelation, only Overcomers avoid the second death. Not only this, but only

Overcomers eat from the tree of life. Revelation 2:7—

**To him who overcometh will I give to eat of the tree of life.**

This call to overcome excites those of every religious stripe, whether Jew or Christian. Over-

coming makes the Overcomer feel superior to those poor people who *are* overcome. Since Israel is all about fleshly superiority—unless you can trace your genealogy to Abraham, via Isaac, you’re literally cooked—reveling in one’s distinction gels nicely with this gospel.

The mistake of these Christians and Jews is the assumption that theirs is the ultimate call. They point to this book of Revelation—which to them contains the latest, greatest Words of God—and condemn you with it. Revelation is *a* Word of God, but neither the latest nor the greatest. That’s Paul’s department:

### UNCIRCUMCISION

**Saved from second death by grace alone, Eph. 2:8-9—**

**For in grace, through faith, are you saved, and this is not out of you; it is God’s approach present, not of works, lest anyone should be boasting.**

Salvation by total grace disgusts and discourages both Christian and Jew alike. Salvation by total grace eliminates all fleshly advantage, ruining many a holy day and church picnic. Salvation by total grace does away with one person Overcoming while another person gets cast into the lake of fire in jammie pants and Crocs.



Salvation by total grace isn’t much fun. It is much more fun and satisfying to wear a T-shirt that says, “Overcomer,” rather than one that says, “Saved from the second death through no merit whatsoever on my part.”

Remember that scene from *Raiders of the Lost Ark*, when Harrison Ford encounters that freak with the samurai sword? The guy spins the sword in figure-eights, trying to intimidate Indy. Indy tolerates the show for awhile, then just shrugs and shoots the guy.

This is how I deal with Overcomers who try to lord it over me. I put up with it for awhile, but then I pull out Ephesians 2:8-9 and just kind of shoot them with it.

Yes, I wear the hat. ■



## Does an *expectation* of grace sound good? *Standing* in it is better.

### CIRCUMCISION

**Expecting grace, 1 Peter 1:13—**

*Wherefore, girding up the loins of your comprehension, being sober, expect perfectly the grace which is being brought to you at the unveiling of Jesus Christ.*

### UNCIRCUMCISION

**Standing in grace, Romans 5:1-2—**

*Being, then, justified by faith, we may be having peace toward God, through our Lord, Jesus Christ, through Whom we have the access also, by faith, into this grace in which we stand, and we may be glorying in expectation of the glory of God.*