



Outer Ritual or Inner Reality?

Romans 2:17-29

“For circumcision verily profiteth, if thou keep the law: but if thou be a breaker of the law, thy circumcision is made uncircumcision” (Rom. 2:25). The Jews rested comfortably in the fact that they were circumcised. They highly valued circumcision. (Their rabbinical writings state: "No circumcised man will be lost.") In the days of Paul there was a saying that Abraham stood at the gates of Hades to make sure that no circumcised man was ever cast into Hell.

Remember, circumcision was merely an **outward ritual** that was meant to be an outward sign or seal (Rom. 4:11) of an **inward reality**. The outward ritual profits a person only if it is accompanied by the inner reality. The outward rite is worthless, and of no benefit or advantage, apart from the inward reality. It is just a ritual with no reality, a symbol with no substance. Consider Romans 2:26 which refers to Gentiles who do not have the outward ritual of circumcision. It may help to think of water baptism. Believing on Christ and not being baptized is better than being *a baptized unbeliever*! If you must choose between the **ritual** and the **reality**, choose the **reality**! Of course, the **true believer** should be baptized in obedience to Christ's command, in order to picture what happened to him the moment he was saved.

The wedding ring is an outward sign and symbol of a commitment made before God to be faithful to one's spouse. Which is better--a husband that has a ring and is shamefully running around with five other women, or a husband who has no ring but who is faithful to his wife? The **symbol** (ring) without the **reality** (faithfulness) is worthless. It's one thing to be a racial Jew; far better to be a regenerated Jew. *The inside is what really counts!*

George Zeller, www.middletownbiblechurch.org



Outer Ritual or Inner Reality?

Romans 2:17-29

“For circumcision verily profiteth, if thou keep the law: but if thou be a breaker of the law, thy circumcision is made uncircumcision” (Rom. 2:25). The Jews rested comfortably in the fact that they were circumcised. They highly valued circumcision. (Their rabbinical writings state: "No circumcised man will be lost.") In the days of Paul there was a saying that Abraham stood at the gates of Hades to make sure that no circumcised man was ever cast into Hell.

Remember, circumcision was merely an **outward ritual** that was meant to be an outward sign or seal (Rom. 4:11) of an **inward reality**. The outward ritual profits a person only if it is accompanied by the inner reality. The outward rite is worthless, and of no benefit or advantage, apart from the inward reality. It is just a ritual with no reality, a symbol with no substance. Consider Romans 2:26 which refers to Gentiles who do not have the outward ritual of circumcision. It may help to think of water baptism. Believing on Christ and not being baptized is better than being *a baptized unbeliever*! If you must choose between the **ritual** and the **reality**, choose the **reality**! Of course, the **true believer** should be baptized in obedience to Christ's command, in order to picture what happened to him the moment he was saved.

The wedding ring is an outward sign and symbol of a commitment made before God to be faithful to one's spouse. Which is better--a husband that has a ring and is shamefully running around with five other women, or a husband who has no ring but who is faithful to his wife? The **symbol** (ring) without the **reality** (faithfulness) is worthless. It's one thing to be a racial Jew; far better to be a regenerated Jew. *The inside is what really counts!*

George Zeller, www.middletownbiblechurch.org