

# K-529 Circumcision as Separation

by Art Katz

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*The sermon emphasizes the importance of understanding the meaning of circumcision as a sign of the covenant between God and Abraham, and the need for obedience to God's commands.*

**Duration:** 57:44

**Scripture:** Genesis 17:1, Genesis 17:6, Deuteronomy 30:2-3, Deuteronomy 30:6, 1 Kings 19:12, Matthew 6:33

**Topics:** "Circumcision"

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## Description

In this sermon, the preacher emphasizes the importance of worshiping the living God. He highlights that no religion or human effort can substitute for a genuine relationship with God. The preacher shares his personal testimony of how he was once an atheist but was led to believe in God through a powerful experience in Jerusalem. He also references a biblical passage in which God confounded the enemies of his people when they worshiped and praised him. The sermon concludes with the preacher emphasizing the transformative power of worship and the need for a genuine heart connection with God.

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## Transcript

This tape is being recorded at the Full Gospel Businessmen's Fellowship International Meeting held in Raleigh, North Carolina, on Saturday evening, December the 11th, 1971. I can't tell you how I rejoice to be here. I think if I'd been in North Carolina when I was yet a history teacher, I would have taught the Civil War in an entirely different way.

I love this area. Where have you been all my life? Tremendous. I made a like statement last night at Winston-Salem and somebody thought, well, I'm just being diplomatic and ingratiating.

They don't know me. And God has done something in my heart for this area. I don't know why.

I've just come back from five months of living in Denmark. God has moved us. I'm not sure about the reason for that either.

When I came back after a five-month separation, I just was amazed at my reaction to the United States. I love this country far more than I realized. And so something is working in my heart.

I don't understand it all, but I'm just expressing it. I want to look to the Lord now because I don't know what you're expecting, and I'm not even quite sure what you're going to get, but I know you're going to be blessed. I know that.

It's got another thing to do with me. I was telling the men in the car, I feel so full of the Holy Spirit. Hallelujah.

So if I don't give you the testimony tonight, would you be disappointed? I guess we'll have a second meeting beginning at 10 o'clock. I just want to look to the Lord. I want him to have what he wants.

I want you to have what he wants you to have, the perfect expression of his mind and will. And frankly, I confess that after giving my testimony about 2,000 times, I much prefer to preach than to speak it. But if he wants me to give it, I'm his.

But let's see what he wants. I think he has perhaps another intention. So precious, God.

Hallelujah. We praise thee, great God, and just look to thee now and give over, in the hearing of this people, the possession of thy servant. Let thy resurrection life just put this on, Lord God.

Mind, mouth, utterance, speech, personality, and speak to thy people tonight. Let life go forth to every soul in this room, whatever the need, Lord God. Deep, calling unto deep.

For those who have not truly ever known thee, let them pass this night from death unto life. To those who are thy children and have faltered and somewhere along the line not been utterly and totally obedient to thy call, let them hear it this night. Fill with thy spirit and set every captive free.

Do a great work by thy enormous life-giving presence tonight. Have thy great way. In Jesus' wonderful name we ask it now, for your glory.

Amen. Hallelujah. Well, I hope you won't be disappointed, but I'm going to preach.

And perhaps it's only a Jewish believer who can speak the thing that I want to share with you tonight. It's about circumcision. And I guess we're kind of authorities.

And you know that I never really thought that much about it. How it is that so many things become automatic in the lives of modern men. They become happenstance and convenient circumstances and habit and routine until something happens to jar us and to make us see anew and afresh the thing which had all along been familiar and the thing in which we missed the profound meaning, like circumcision.

So my first son was born in Denmark. I have a Danish wife. God bless her precious Gentile soul.

Never thought I had a thing to do with those fair-complected, snub-nosed, freckly-faced people who seemed another space age away. But my, something happens when that middle wall of partition comes falling down. And our son was born in Denmark, and I automatically assumed that he would be circumcised as a matter of course.

And to my amazement, I learned that however progressive a nation Denmark is, and however advanced it is in many other aspects of its national life, that they did not, as a matter of course, practice circumcision and that we had to make a special request. I said, we, I made it. And my wife was wondering what all the commotion was about.

And I just explained why it's nothing, sweetie. It's just that I've arranged with the doctor to circumcise David. She said, what does that mean? I said, well, it's just, you know, just a little snipping of the foreskin, you know, and it's really nothing.

And it has all kinds of hygienic advantages and blah, blah, blah. And I never saw a wife have such a stricken, horrified expression on her face. Her eyes just grew as wide as saucers, and she had a look on her face that cried out, murderer, monster, a Frankenstein I've married.

What are you asking? I saw that woman change color. And I was staggered at her response. I hadn't thought that much about it.

Why, it's just a little thing. And great tears welled up out of her eyes and rolled down her face and bounced off the floor. She was so horrified at such a suggestion that anyone would dare think to bring a knife and cut the tender flesh of her newborn son.

Why, it was very much like cutting her own flesh. And she shrank from it. And I really began to ponder what her strange reaction.

And I saw another strange reaction. It was my mother. Some months later, when we came to New York with that same little son, and one day my mother bent over to change his diaper and opened it up and looked down, and she went, ah.

I saw the same stricken, horrified expression, same changing of color, but for the very opposite reason. A Gentile couldn't quite fathom why the foreskin of the flesh had to be cut. But a Jewish mother instinctively understood, and the absence of that cutting away was to her a horrible and utterly un-Jewish thing.

So I really sat down and began to try and understand, what does all this mean? And I began to search out the Scriptures about circumcision, and God spoke to my heart. And I want to share some of these things with you. And I don't know if you have a Bible tonight, but just listen attentively if you don't.

Because the whole thing began in Genesis with Abraham in the 17th chapter, when God really pronounced a very important covenant. He had been leading this child of faith from faith to faith, and he had come finally to a place, and every time that God had revealed himself in a new way, he spoke in a new way and enlarged his understanding of the covenant, and even gave Abraham a new name and a new expression of the infinite personality of God. And we read in the first verse of the 17th chapter, and when Abraham was 90 years old and nine, the Lord appeared to Abraham and said unto him, I am the almighty God.

Walk before me and be thou perfect, and I will make my covenant between me and thee, and will multiply thee exceedingly. And in the sixth verse, I will make thee exceedingly fruitful, and I will make nations of thee, and kings shall come out of thee. And we can go on about the terms of the covenant that God was revealing to Abraham that day.

But the one, the verse that I want to place in your heart, walk thou before me and be thou perfect. The thing that God is impressing upon me, that that was not just an injunction, an admonition to Abraham, but to every child of faith. Walk thou before me and be thou perfect.

And there was a time in my life when I couldn't really take God that seriously. I thought, well, he's just being approximate, that maybe God is something like the way we are. We use vague, approximate expressions, maybe, I guess, sort of, or as you say in this area, I reckon.

But God doesn't speak that way. He means every syllable that passes from his mouth. And you know what I'm learning? That as the world grows increasingly dark and fearful and foreboding, that perfection and the

cry to holiness, be thou holy as I am holy, is not merely a vague standard toward which we should aspire, but it's the only standard and the only place in which God's children are going to be able to stand in this last day.

Isn't that ironic that as the world grows increasingly berserk and violent and filthy and perverse, that perfection and holiness is going to be the place in which God's children ought to stand. And there are many scriptures that confirm this about, he's coming for a bride without spot and without blemish. And yet I used to cry out to God, Lord, what do you mean, perfection and holiness? How do we dare think that we can aspire to such a thing? I mean, can we strive and bite our lips and grit our teeth and resolve that today we're going to be perfect as you're perfect and holy as you're holy? But in the same admonition, in the same invitation, comes the expression of God's nature and name.

I am the almighty God. And he's not expecting that we're going to attain perfection and holiness, of course, by any feeble strength or human resolution on our part. He's made everything available.

He just is waiting for people who will set their faces as flint and dispose their hearts to be holy and to be perfect as he is perfect. And it's fantastic what's happening on this trip. And the numbers of men and even the numbers of ministers that are coming to me just a squirt and wet behind the ears, lacking the advantages of seminary and Bible school education, seven years old in the Lord, and confessing to me secrets of their lives that they've not shared with any man that have cast a shadow over their lives and over their ministry.

One single thing. But it's just that bit of leaven that leaveneth the whole lump. And it's just that shadow and that taint that discolors a soul.

And just that one thing that prevents us from the fullness of the authority and the power and the presence of God. Well, isn't it interesting? And, of course, we can go on preaching that the rest of the night, but it's in that same seventeenth chapter. How does God seal that covenant? Here's how he seals it.

We read in the ninth verse, and God said unto Abraham, Thou shalt keep my covenant, therefore, thou and thy seed after thee in their generations. And this is my covenant, which you shall keep between me and you, and thy seed after thee. Every male child among you shall be circumcised.

And you shall circumcise the flesh of your foreskin, and it shall be a sign of the covenant between me and you. And he that is eight days old shall be circumcised among you, every male child in your generations. He that is born in thy house or bought with money of any foreigner who is not of thy seed, and he that is born in thy house and he that is bought with money must needs be circumcised.

And my covenant shall be in your flesh for an everlasting covenant. And every child of God in this room who walks with the Lord knows that his way is not our way, and nor are his thoughts our thoughts. He's a God who always and in every circumstance chooses the foolish thing.

Have you noticed that? I'm so conscious of that as the world grows larger in its might and its prowess and the things that are formidable and imposing and elegant and refined and cultured and intellectual that God's still small voice sounds so utterly foolish the gospel of Jesus Christ that God lay aside his deity and took upon himself the form of man and even humbled himself to be a servant. And what man and what flesh but Jewish flesh when he told us that he chose the Jewish people not because they were great in numbers but because they were small. Because he always chooses the things which are foolish to

confound the things which are wise and the things which are mighty.

And I know what my Jewish people would have done to seal a covenant. Oh do I know my Jewish people. God bless you if you're here tonight.

I know you're going to agree with me and I pray you're here tonight. I think what we would have done was to make a quick long distance call to Hollywood and and get Sammy Davis down. Sammy Davis Jr. and maybe two or three bands and a kosher catered affair and we would have had a slam bang, razzle dazzle, big banquet that night with a quite a fling to seal the covenant.

And maybe we would have ended with a little Israel bon sale while we were at it. See there is a way that seemeth right unto a man. God's way is not our way.

He chose an utterly foolish and despicable thing to seal a most sacred solemn covenant. The cutting of the foreskin of the flesh. And I'll tell you why Abraham is called God's friend and a man of faith.

Because we read in the 23rd verse that Abram took Ishmael his son and all that were born in his house and all that were bought with his money and every male among the men of Abram's house and circumcised the flesh of their foreskin in the very same day as God had said unto him. I love a God who speaks because he speaks now. He's a God who requires response now.

And I know his heart is thrilled and delighted for those who hear his voice and are utterly obedient now. No ifs, ands, buts, whys, hows. This is inconvenient.

Are you sure you haven't made a mistake? This is horrible. It contradicts my understanding. It's going to cause pain.

And discomfort. Abram that very day was obedient to the voice of the Lord. And I want you to know that my God is serious about the things that he speaks.

In the 14th verse you read, and the uncircumcised male child whose flesh of his foreskin is not circumcised, that soul shall be cut off from his people. He hath broken my covenant. And you can understand, I think, my mother's Jewish horror when she looked down at a little infant and saw that the seal and the sign of the covenant was missing.

Not that my mother is that utterly religious, but for centuries the tradition and the practice has so become interwoven in the very fabric of our life and experience and habit that we can't even conceive of the absence of circumcision. It's interesting to follow the theme as we go on in the scriptures when in Exodus, I think it's the fourth chapter, there's a little episode that takes place with Moses. God has called the man to be the redeemer of Israel and to bring them forth out of the bondage of Egypt after a 40-year exile in the wilderness where he was married and had himself children.

And we read in the 24th verse of the fourth chapter, and it came to pass by the way in the inn that the Lord met him and sought to kill him. You say, Art, you must have some typographical error in your Bible. Can these things be? You know, people, a lot of us have sloughed over the Word of God.

We've compromised the Word of God. We've read it and not read it. We've heard it and not heard it.

We believe it and we don't believe it. Oh my. When Jesus said, except ye all shall likewise repent, you shall perish.

Well, we don't think he really means that. And somehow the impact and the sharp two-edged sword of the Word of God doesn't penetrate our hearts as it ought. God means it.

And we're told that we should live by every word that proceeds out of his mouth. And it came to pass by the way in the inn that the Lord met him and sought to kill him. Then Zipporah, Moses' wife, took a sharp stone and cut off the foreskin of her son and cast it at his feet and said, surely a bloody husband art thou to me.

Isn't the Word of God beautiful? It's so lean. There's no schmaltz, whatever. There's no flab.

But in the most sparse way, we just get a suggestion of what this episode is. And if read it too hurriedly or too casually or too indifferently, we miss the profound content. Why did God seek to destroy the man whom he chose to be his instrument of redemption? Because he had failed to keep the covenant with his own son.

And Zipporah, the Gentile wife, actually did the work and cast the foreskin at the feet of her husband. Surely a bloody husband thou art to me. And I exactly know the expression she had on her face.

I've seen it. Gentiles just can't understand the necessity for the cutting of the flesh. So he let him go.

And then she said, a bloody husband thou art because of the circumcision. And as we go on, we come to another expression about it in the book of Joshua. Here's the successor of Moses.

And in the fifth chapter, just as the children of God, the children of Israel, are about to enter the land of promise, there is yet an unfinished piece of business which must be attended. And we read in the fifth chapter, in the second verse, at that time the Lord said unto Joshua, make these sharp knives and circumcise again the children of Israel. And Joshua made him sharp knives and circumcised the children of Israel at the hill of the foreskins.

You can imagine how many were circumcised that day. And this is the reason why Joshua did circumcise all the people who came out of Egypt, who were males. Even all the men of war had died in the wilderness, by the way, after they came out of Egypt.

And now all the people who came out were circumcised. But all the people who were born in the wilderness, by the way, as they came forth out of Egypt, them they had not circumcised. For the children of Israel walked forty years in the wilderness, till all the people who were men of war who came out of Egypt were consumed, because they obeyed not the voice of the Lord.

And then we read in the eighth verse, and it came to pass when they had done circumcising all the people, they abode in their places. And in the ninth verse, and the Lord said unto Joshua, this day have I rolled away the reproach of Egypt from off of you, wherefore the name of this place is called Gilgal, until this day. There are certain things that I think that we should understand about circumcision, which perhaps only a Jew can share with you.

This has become so an integral part of Jewish life, so profound a thing, that the only male child who's exempt from the right of circumcision is that son who's born into a family where two previous sons have died from hemophilia at the act. He's the only one that would be allowed to be exempt by rabbinical tradition. And a circumcision is not considered valid, except that there be at least one or two drops of blood drawn.

And we know that there's a special rabbi, a mohel he's called, who's practiced and expert in this right. It's interesting how we come to the references of circumcision again in the New Testaments. And I was introduced this afternoon at your school by saying that Art Katz is a former atheist, the former Marxist, something like that, and a former Jew who's converted to Christianity.

And when I heard that, I winced. And this is not so. And it's interesting how often in the university encounters and other places where I meet my Jewish people, they get very irritated, and often they'll put a question like this to me.

Now, come on, Art, out with it once and for all. Are you a Christian or are you a Jew? And I remember what happened in Kansas City when God sent us there to live for two years and to establish a pioneer work. I automatically received a subscription to the local community Jewish newspaper.

And one day I went there to place an ad in the paper, and they kind of were peculiar with me, and they wouldn't receive my ad to an open house to invite Jewish people to come and to visit with us that we might express to them what the burden of our heart and ministry was as one Jew to another. And about a week thereafter, all of a sudden, my newspaper ceased coming. And I called up and I got no satisfaction.

And although for the first six months you get the check for six bucks, and I got the check back in the mail. And now I really got a little irritated, and I called up and I finally got a hold of the editor, and I said, what is this that I'm not receiving my newspaper? I said, I'm a Jewish man who's come to the community, and I understand that we automatically receive it the first six months, and all of a sudden it ceased, and I've sent you a check, and it's been returned. Well, there was much hemming and hawing and coughing and sputtering, and then finally this man said to me, well, Mr. Catsey said, we determined that by community definition you're no longer a Jew.

And my heart just sank at those words. I said, are you determined by community definition that I'm not a Jew? Yes, he said, we just determined that if any Jew accepted Jesus Christ, that he's no longer Jewish. I said, no brother, it's rather tragic that only one generation after six million of us went up the smokestack by community definition that we're exercising community definitions of our own, but I want you to know that I'm in no way personally offended, because I don't go by the definitions of communities or of men.

I only go by the definitions of God, and God gives us a definition of what a Jew is in the second chapter of the book of Romans, the 28th and 29th verses. For he is not a Jew who is one outwardly, neither is that circumcision which is outward in the flesh, but he is a Jew who is one inwardly, and circumcision is that of the heart and in the spirit and not in the letter, whose praise is not of men, but of God. Hallelujah.

There's a circumcision which God makes available to Jew and Gentile alike, which is all the difference between death and life. And you know, the second great burden I have next to my Jewish people are for those countless numbers who sit in churches across the land in every denomination who have been utterly incapable of praising and worshiping God, because I want you to know, people, that you can take a Dale Carnegie course and you can stretch yourself out on a bed of nails and you can do spiritual sit-ups and push-ups and every kind of contortion and self-exertion and exercise and you'll never be able to praise the living God. And I tell you that seven years ago, I'm going to give you a little piece of my testimony anyway, praise God for a Jewish bargain that you're getting tonight, that this hardened atheist, this embittered man who had staggered the earth for 34 years, this high school dropout, this pain contorted personality, this Brooklyn boy trying to understand the meaning of life and its perplexities and condemned to an atheism because I had never had represented to me a God in whom I could believe and give my Jewish heart and

allegiance and loyalty, was led one day in Jerusalem, of all places, having stayed at the Hebrew University at the culmination of 14 months of a hitchhiking experience with a pack on my back, looking for philosophical answers to be put on a bus by a young man who was training to be a rabbi and he was going to send me to a Hasidic Jewish community, a community of very religious Jews, I never got there.

I found that I was on the wrong bus and I was so perplexed because I'd taken that bus downtown many times and I couldn't understand and I still don't understand to this day how I got on the wrong bus. But lost I was, as lost as I had been for the then 35 years of my life. When I found out how lost I was, I think I made a rather sensible decision, I got off the bus and there's a God who's waiting for a great multitude to get out of their buses and cars and places and coming and going and having and getting and spending and recognize that they're lost and they're spinning their wheels and going nowhere.

I walked into the very first store that I could find and the woman was so gracious, she made me a map and I was just about to leave and I took a look and I recognized I was in a bookstore. I'll tell you the kind of Jewish kid I was. See, we people are called the people of the book.

Well, I had never read this book in 35 years but every other book, you name it, Karl Marx, Sigmund Freud, Erich Fromm, Henry Miller, every kind of harebrained, wild, obscene thing, Katz had read it. In fact, I was the high school dropout who automatically every month six books out of the library. I was a glutton for the printed word and I was the kid with the flashlight under sheets at night and the kid who carried heavy tomes of Schopenhauer and Nietzsche not understanding one word out of ten but drooling and if my mother didn't let me bring a book to the dinner table, I counted that meal wasted and I would read the cornflakes box and the ketchup label and the trademarks.

So, of course, I wasn't going to just walk through a bookstore and not look at the titles and I took a look and I stopped dead in my tracks. It said Bibles and New Testaments and Christian commentaries and I turned and looked at that woman's very Jewish face. I said, say, excuse me, what is this place anyway? Oh, she said, we're just a congregation of Jewish believers in the Messiah Jesus and this is our bookstore adjoining our chapel.

Click. Something went click in my heart and I heard a still small voice. I want you to know that the God who is always spoken by a still small voice speaks still.

He's just waiting for us to come to the end of our clatter and our commotion and our hot shot idiocy and all the things that pour out of our mouths and be still and know that he's God. It took him 35 years to do it in me until I ran out of words and ideologies and phrases and humanistic expressions and all the things that I was going to do to change the world and make it humane when I was incapable of even ordering my own life and controlling my own passions. I heard a still small voice that said, Art, you're not to leave.

Fantastic how that still small voice knows our name. And I'll tell you the kind of Jew that I began to be that day. I obeyed the still small voice.

That's the essence of being Jewish. And I stayed four days and nights with these Jewish believers. You'll never hear me call a Jewish believer a Christian or a Gentile believer a Christian.

I'll always use the word believer because every one of us knows the terrible distortion that that word has suffered through the centuries. You see, my mother was so pained when she thought that I became a Christian that she would have said what this kid said today that he's no longer a Jew and got converted.

No, I was merely a Jew who got circumcised.

Not in my flesh, that was done when I was eight days old, but in my heart that I might live not for the esteem and praises of men, but for the esteem and praise of God. And I tell you, that's really living. You haven't lived until you've stopped living for men and living for your reputation and living out of your fear and your trembling and your insecurity and your hang-ups and start living unto him only.

Glory. And I saw my assemblies of God pastor in Oregon where he'd moved to a new church. And I asked if I could borrow his directory.

I wanted to look up a Russian church on the west coast. He said, Art, why don't you keep it? I've got two. I said, I don't want it.

He said, what? Don't you want it? He said, don't you want to send out letters to these pastors and get invitations to speak? I said, no. I don't write out letters. I don't seek for invitations.

I haven't lifted a finger in seven years since God saved me. I've been enjoying a most wonderful rest. And without any striving out of my flesh, I've been in Japan and Mexico and Russia and Israel.

I've been all over this country, and doors have opened through which I've walked. I've never sought to come to a single university. I never sought to be on Kathryn Kuhlman's TV show or any other such thing because when that circumcision cut away our cats, there was just no flesh to serve.

My life was no longer my own and as a tremendous thing to be free in Christ. I said to Kathryn Kuhlman on whose television show I've been five times and 12 radio broadcasts, I said, supposing I had written you a letter to tell you that I'm a Jewish believer with an interesting testimony that would be a blessing for your TV program, what would you have done? Oh, she said it would have gone right into the waste paper basket. I stayed four days and nights with these Jewish believers, and I heard a quality of prayer of such power that I had never before heard nor seen anywhere.

These weren't Jews who were just mechanically reading out of a sinner, out of a prayer book. They were praying out of their hearts with such authority as if they really knew God, and they expected answer. It wasn't just something ceremonial and wrote.

And when I saw them worship God, this is it guys, got your seatbelts on? When I saw them worship God with their hands above their heads, with beaming countenances and joyous expressions and tears breaking forth, however stupid I was, I recognized no man can learn to do that. You can't feign that. You can't fabricate that.

It's either spontaneous and authentic and real or nothing. And I want you to add this P.S. Worshiping God is not just a little piece of icing on the cake. Worshiping God is all.

It's everything. Isn't it interesting in that conversation that Jesus had with the woman at the well that he said to her that God the Father is seeking those who will worship Him in the Spirit and in truth. And Jesus is saying the same thing now.

Why didn't he say to serve God or to do for God or to be for God or this, that or other, but the one thing that he singled out was that God the Father is seeking those who will worship Him in the Spirit and in the truth. Do you ever think about that? You think it's a jealous God who demands your worship? You think

he's egotistical and he just wants to see that you recognize him? For our sakes has he ordained worship? I tell you that if you've never experienced it, something happens when you find your hands going up above your head. Something happens when you open your mouth and out of your heart comes rolling streams of life-giving praise that brings a refreshing and a renewing in your mind and heart and being.

And I'll never forget the first time that that happened to me. You don't mind if I ramble on like this, do you? It came in the midst of a group of Gentiles who were more Jewish than I am. They were studying Hebrew.

They knew more Yiddish, Chitin, Jewish culture than me. They loved the Jews. They loved Israel.

They had a ministry of praise and prayer for the house of Israel. They were making plans to go to Israel and everything centered in the scriptures that has to do with Israel and the Jews and the last days and the land. And God brought me to such a family of believers.

And I was a rather young and self-conscious believer at that time, only about a year old in the Lord. I was a high school teacher who had returned after this 14-month hitchhiking odyssey of which my book describes, and I'd come back as a bludgeoned man, knocked over the head wondering, what happened? What happened? Who hit me? Why did the God whom I had long rejected and of whom I knew nothing and was a blasphemer and an enemy, how was it that he sought to save me? And the experiences that took place in that first year, I lost every friend I had. That very first night when I came back to California broke.

I was put up at the home of Jewish radical left-wing friends, just like me or just as I had been, and they invited all of our colleagues over that night. And what happens when you bring a house full of people like that together? I mean, the fur was flying, the spittle, the arguments, the invective, the passion. And they were discussing some esoteric question.

I wonder what they were getting so excited about. I was sitting there like a lump, completely out of it. And about midnight, some woman turned to me.

She said, Archie said, you've been strangely silent all night. Well, what is it with you? You used to be in the thick of these discussions. And God was making me to say how utterly irrelevant these things are, and I had never seen it before.

How ceremonial, how empty, how pathetic. And I said, I'm sorry, but I just find this conversation completely irrelevant to life. Oh, she said, what do you? Can I get this? What do you think is relevant? And I went dum-da-dum-dum.

Because I had prayed that night coming in a Greyhound bus, Lord, this experience is yet too new for me. I don't want to muff it for you. I'm going to keep my mouth shut.

God has never allowed me to enjoy the experience of keeping my mouth shut. From the very first, he's opened it, and he's never allowed it to be silenced since. And she said, what do you consider to be relevant? And with that question, all of the conversation ceased.

I think they had caught wind that something peculiar had happened to Art in Jerusalem. And they turned to face me, and I began to relate to them how through 14 months of hitchhiking, how I was being met of a God of whom I had known nothing, and how Gentiles of a new kind that I had never before seen in so-called Christian America had picked me up in a car, and I saw something in their faces, and they spoke

to me in such a way as to penetrate my heart, and they spoke to me of a Jesus, and how I met a teenage girl whose one expression burst my heart asunder when she told me that she knew that God lived because he lived in her, and how I had obtained a New Testament on the board a deck of a tram steamer on my way to Greece. And in the very first reading of the Scriptures, in one utterance out of the mouth of Jesus, wham-o, came a supernatural revelation from God.

And I knew in that instant that there was a living God, and I was reading his book, and Jesus was who he claimed to be, and how I wrestled against him. I didn't want that revelation. I didn't want to become a Christian.

I didn't want to become one with the Ku Klux Klan and the reactionaries, and that's what I thought every Christian was, and what was God trying to do? He asked me to forsake my Jewishness, and how he subsequently brought me to Jerusalem, and how by the taking of that bus one day, I came to this congregation of Jewish believers, and then ultimately, in the fifth morning, received the book. We didn't get home till four o'clock that morning, and you know what they told me, everyone? Cats, it was one thing when you were a Marxist. It was another thing when you were a pragmatist and an existentialist and a leading faculty radical, but this time, you really got off the deep end.

You better go see your psychiatrist, and I was the one man sitting in that crowded room, enjoying the peace of the living God, and I knew the lives of every one of those people intimately and well. Treachery, fornications, adulteries, ambitions, lusts, every life broken and disfigured and marred, everyone without exception having been or going to psychiatrists, and this one guy sitting in the peace of God, and they're telling me that I got off the deep end. I lost all my friends that night, but one, and the one Jewish friend who remained, who thought, well, this too shall pass.

Anybody ever tell you that? They're still waiting, aren't they? My wife used to say to me, Art, she said, let up on it. What are you doing keeping Art Goldman up till three, four in the morning? I said, I don't know what it is, sweetie. I just can't help myself.

I feel such a constraint, such compulsion to share with him, and sure enough, he died in a swimming pool accident, but not before he had found his Messiah on his face on his living room carpet, and the last remark that he had made to his wife on a honeymoon coming back at a hotel where she was teaching him to swim, and he was in the habit of reading the scriptures every night, he turned and he said, I can't understand how any Jew could not see in these scriptures that Jesus is our Messiah. That was the one friend who didn't forsake me, and I tell you, I was groaning as a young believer and as a teacher, and those kids coming into my room every day, five times a day, 35 kids in a class who didn't want to be there. They had such problems, I tell you, forced out on the street to prostitute their bodies, to obtain drugs for their fathers, forced into incest, and I, oh, you can't begin to believe the horror that's going on in the world and the death, and I don't know how to reach them, and I didn't have the strength and the power and the compassion and the depth of love that I should, and I was crying out for the fullness of God, and one night in Northern California with these Jewish Gentile believers, we had had a wonderful time together, it was time to go home, and we all stood up to our feet, and somebody said, okay, Bob, the host, you pray, and if anybody feels inclined to follow, let them do so, so Bob prayed a very lovely prayer, and I sure wasn't going to follow him because I was one of those self-conscious believers, you know, very quiet, and somebody asked me to say grace at the table, I kind of slinked in my seat.

I wasn't going to follow him, but nobody else did either, and Bob prayed, and nobody stirred, and we began to sense a presence filling that room, and Bob began praying again in a strange tongue. I couldn't understand it, and one by one, they all followed, and I found that my eyes were closed, and I was beginning to weep, and when I heard the crescendo of their voices rising up to God, praise, God inhabits the praises of His people, it sounded like Jews wailing in some ancient synagogue, and despite myself, I found my hands going up above my head, and I was beginning to weep, and I want you to understand that I was such a rock. I had been such a hard man.

I had been battered from pillar to post. I had been betrayed by women. I had known everything that can cut and hurt a man's heart, and I wasn't given to crying.

I was one of those stoic guys who grits his teeth and will never show pain. Big hot shot. God says, upon this man I'll look, who he was of a contrite and broken spirit, who trembleth at my word.

Was I ever trembling that night, and I was beginning to weep, and the prayer subsided, and someone said, I believe that Jaffa ought to lay hands on you, and she was a Jewish believer from Israel who had just received this baptism in the Holy Spirit, and I thought, God of all people, she's the one with whom I'm in secret competition. I resent her, but I went right down on my hands and knees. I was so hungry for God and so desperate that except that He blessed me, I was ready to perish, and she laid hands on me, and they commenced praying, and the moment she touched me, crack, something burst from around my chest.

It felt like bands loosing, and I began to suck air as if I had never breathed, and I was bawling, and the tears are running down my face, and in that same instant something collapsed from around my heart. It was a wall, and I had not even known that it existed, just as I did not even know that I was not breathing fully, just as there are people in this room tonight who haven't even suspected that you're not living fully until something supernatural happens that's a cutting away of the foreskin of the flesh from your heart, and something collapsed. That wall collapsed, and God showed me this was the coagulation, the residue that had hardened of resentment, and heartache, and disappointment, and all the things that my head had forgotten, but had filtered down around my heart and grew up like a wall to stand between my heart, and the heart of God, and the heart of men, and He touched me, and I went, class, and oh, I was heaving and sobbing with gratitude.

Oh, the emancipating experience, and this stuff was just breaking up and granulating with every great, deep, convulsive heave and sob. Out was coming the filth, the dirt, the taint, the resentment. He flushed me out, and I stood one gorgeous moment with my hands raised above my head, praising the God of all this world, and delighting in the immaculate sense of what had happened in my life, and in that moment something welled up from within or without.

I don't know, but I could just feel like something being filled, and when it reached my head, my English language parted, and out came a language which I had never before learned. I became God's fool from that night on. God has always used Gentiles to minister to me, picking me up off the side of the road, distributing those New Testaments on the waterfront in New York that some Jewish man got it that could give it to me, underwriting the cost of ministries in Jerusalem, and when I came back to California months, some months after my return in a church service where God was leading me to give a testimony, some ladies and people came up to me after the service, and among them was a roly-poly Gentile.

God bless you roly-poly Gentiles. I love you to pieces. I want you to pray for my mother because I know you've got power, and this woman said to me, Brother Katsy said, isn't that wonderful when a roly-poly Gentile can say, Brother Katsy? Brother Katsy said, you don't know me, but you had my daughter at the high school, and she knew that you were a radical and an atheist and came home from school every afternoon weeping over you, and since that day, both my daughter and I have been praying for you.

I didn't say a word. I grabbed roly-poly up. The tears were rolling down my face, and I kissed her, and I slobbered all over her, and when I got my voice, I said, so you're the woman, just like a needle stuck on a record, so you're the woman, so you're the woman, so you're the woman, so you're the woman whose prayers have entered me into the kingdom of God, for I didn't know one soul who knew what the word prayer meant.

I bowed my knee that day in Jerusalem seven years ago after four days and nights of the most intense Bible study that any Jew had ever been given, and I went to bed that fourth night rattled out of my skull trying by the power of intellect to put it all together, and I couldn't. My brain was failing me, and I had no other instrument, and this is the thing I'd been shaping for 35 years, and it wasn't going to save me. I tell you, that's a revelation for any Jew and any modern man, and in my sleep that night, God did it all.

Hallelujah. Peace is felled into my heart, and I woke up the next morning with the most wonderful sense of peace and calm, and I said to this Jewish woman when I went to the breakfast table, Rina, I believe I understand, and the woman heard understand and fell right out of a seat on the floor, knocked her chair over, and she had her hands above her head, worshiping God, tears rolling down her face, praising God, because her prayer that night was, Lord, we've done everything for this stubborn man. You make him to understand, and he did in my sleep, showed me, take me by the hand as a child, and step by step led me from experience to experience to this place in Jerusalem from which I could not turn.

We need to worship the living God. When my people worshiped and praised the beauty of God's holiness, do you know what happened? God confounded their enemies, and their enemies slew one another, and my people were three days in taking the spoil. Worship is the distinctive hallmark of the true believer.

Something happens when a man worships God, when he raises his hands above God, and something comes forth out of the depths and inmost being of his life, and out through his mouth to flush out, and to cleanse, and to purge, and to renew, and to revive. We're dying from buying, and spending, and having, and getting, and going. We need something that comes from the knowledge of the living God, and I tell you that the first commandment says that we should love the Lord our God with all our heart, and all our soul, and all our mind, and all our strength, and I ask every man and woman in this room tonight, Jew or Gentile, can you say in your integrity and honesty that by an exercise of your effort, and your well-meaning intention, that you can possibly fulfill that commandment? You cannot.

No course that you can take, and no exercise that you can perform is going to enable you to worship and love God. Something has got to happen in your heart, and in your life, and I'm in the 30th chapter. God speaks about a time when his Jewish people are going to return to him, and I just want to enlarge that tonight, for a Gentile people who will return to him, who have 19 centuries after the coming of the Messiah, performed the exact same blunder that we Jews had performed 19 centuries earlier.

You've taken the sacred oracles of God, and the revelation of God, and you've made of it only mere religion, but he says that if we'll return and shall obey his voice, and you'll have an opportunity tonight to obey that which you're hearing, that then the Lord God will turn thy captivity, and have compassion upon

thee, and will return and gather thee, and in the sixth verse of the 30th chapter we read these words, and the Lord thy God will circumcise thine hearts, of thy seed to love the Lord thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, that thou mayest live. You've been brought to a meeting tonight, not by any flesh and blood, but by the living God who wants to speak something very clearly, and tell you like it is, that no religion, no matter how hallowed by tradition, no matter how respectable, no matter how esteemed, no matter how dainty, how polite, how moral, how ethical, can substitute for the reality of the living God. Can you praise God tonight, and worship him in the spirit and in truth? Can you raise hands above your head, and worship a God with all your heart and all your soul? Because God said that the only way that that's possible, that when we return he'll circumcise our hearts, that we might be able to love the Lord our God with all our hearts and souls, that thou mayest live.

To worship God in spirit and truth is to live. It's no longer to be subject to the slavery of living unto men, living for the praise and the esteem of men. But your circumcision is not in the flesh, but of the heart, and your praise and esteem is not of men, but of God, who live not by the letter, but by the spirit.

And you know that there's a circumcision that was made without hands that's described in the book of Colossians, where we read in the second chapter, and you are complete in him in the tenth verse, who is the head of all principality and power, in whom also you are circumcised with the circumcision made without hands, in putting off the body of the sins of the flesh by the circumcision of Christ. You say, Art, what circumcision was that? Was that the circumcision that Jesus received when he was eight days old as a Jewish boy? No. It's the circumcision which he received on the hill of the foreskins, Calvary.

It's the circumcision that was made without hands in the place of shame. Have you received that circumcision not made without hands? Have you so identified with him to receive that cutting away of the foreskin of your heart? Can you say with the body of believers from time immemorial, right till this moment, Jews and Gentiles alike, in the book of Philippians, in the third chapter, in the third verse, not that you're a Methodist, not that you're a Presbyterian, not that you're a Baptist, not that you're an orthodox Jew or a conservative Jew, here's the definition. For we are the circumcision who worship God in the spirit and rejoice in Christ Jesus and have no confidence in the flesh.

Have you been enrolled in that fellowship? We are the circumcision. We have experienced the cutting away of the foreskins of our hearts in that circumcision made without hands that enables us to love the Lord our God with all our hearts and all our souls, to rejoice in Christ Jesus, to worship him in the spirit and have no confidence in the flesh. Tonight is a circumcision wedding for those who have never experienced it and for those of us who have been stumbling around in the wilderness ready to enter the land of promise and God wants to roll away from your lives tonight the reproach of Egypt on the hill of the foreskins, Calvary.

You think I'm putting you on? You think this is some poetic license and some kind of rhetoric or some kind of flourish? You're mistaken. It's the deepest act of faith and commitment available to you right now supernaturally if you'll acknowledge the need to have the foreskin of your hearts cut away. If you'll acknowledge, I'm religious, I'm well-meaning, I'm moral, I'm nice but I can't worship God.

I've never worshipped him as you've described him tonight. I've never raised my hands before God. I've never heard a torrent of praise pass forth out of my heart and through my mouth.

It's a mighty baptism in the Holy Spirit but there's a baptism also unto death that are cutting away of the fleshly foreskins of our hearts and I'm going to ask you to bow your heads with me tonight and transact

some very real supernatural and eternal work with God. He's done it all. Every Jew knows that no eight-day-old infant is capable of circumcising themselves.

It's got to be done by another and it has been. 19 centuries ago when the Messiah of Israel, obedient unto death, became the foreskin of the world, the offscouring and shame and reproach of the world and allowed himself to be cut off but not for himself but for the sins of the people. He's only wanting for you to receive that cutting away that you might be with the body of the believers, that circumcision that rejoices in Christ Jesus and has no confidence in the flesh and worships God in the Spirit.

This is more than being a mere Baptist, a mere Methodist, a mere Presbyterian, a mere Jew. He's not a Jew who's one outwardly. He's not a Baptist who's Methodist, Presbyterian, who's one outwardly but he's a Jew who's one inwardly, whose circumcision is not of the flesh but of the heart, who goes not by the letter but by the Spirit and whose esteem and praise is not of men but of God.

Have you heard a still small voice tonight calling you to an obedience to a cross of a cutting away of the flesh, the self and the devil? Precious God, look on us tonight in Jesus' name. You've spoken in an unusual way, Lord, and we pray, Lord God, that you'll give us ears to hear what thy Spirit has spoken. O gracious God, show us that you've not called us to mere mechanics of religion but that you've called us to life that thou mayest live and give us the courage and the honesty right now to see that it's us to whom you've been speaking.

And I pray for every uncircumcised heart in this room that they'll know that you've been addressing yourself to them, that you're calling them not to religion but to life, to true and unfeigned worship and love of you with all their hearts and souls, and that right now what you performed 19 centuries ago at that cross, that circumcision made without hands is available right now if they'll but receive it. And while our head's about, I want to ask you, are you ready? Are you willing? Are you going to react like a Gentile who flinches and shrinks at the idea of cutting? You don't want to die, you don't want your flesh to be cut. But God says, except that you submit to that circumcision, you're cut off from the household of Israel.

I want to ask you tonight while your head's about, as a messenger of the living God, not for my sake but for yours and for his, that if you want to raise up your heart tonight to God that he might circumcise it supernaturally in that circumcision made without hands, would you raise your hand right where you sit? Raise your hand right where you sit. Oh God, look. Oh God, look at those who want the fleshly foreskin cut away.

Look at those, Lord God, who want the reproach of Egypt, of carnality and flesh and self-gratification cut away and rolled away that they might enter the land of promise. And oh precious God, right now in the I ask that supernaturally and by your spirit you transact with every heart that has been offered up to you by the raising of a hand, the cutting away of which your spirit has been speaking. Right now, circumcise every heart that those who have raised their hands might from this night on and from this moment on be worshipers of the living God in the spirit and in truth.

Isn't there something prodding you, brother and sister, to raise your hand and you've not yet done it? Abraham was obedient that very day. Will you hear and obey God and respond to him tonight? Oh, it's a foolish thing to raise your hand. It's a foolish thing of which we've spoken.

The gospel is described as a foolish thing. It's foolish to them that perish, but to those who believe it's the power of God unto salvation. Why will you die when God has called you to life? Return unto me, says our

God, and I'll circumcise the flesh of thy heart that you might love the Lord thy God with all thy heart that thou mayest live.

We've got a moment left in this service. Will you raise your hand before God? Precious God, seal in heaven for time and eternity the vow made of every heart in life now who's heard thy voice and has been obedient unto you. Let there be such a volume of worship go forth from this community of believers in which our God shall inhabit and his power go forth to set the captives free, to defeat the enemy, to win his battle that we might see our entire communities turned to the knowledge of the living God.

Thank you for speaking to us tonight, Lord God. Bless this people. Seal what you've done.

Thank you.

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