

Deuteronomy 10:16

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Circumcise therefore the foreskin of your heart, and be no more stiffnecked.

Analysis

Circumcise therefore the foreskin of your heart—The Hebrew phrase orlat levavkem (foreskin of your heart) transforms the covenant sign into a metaphor for spiritual renewal. Physical circumcision marked covenant membership (Genesis 17:10-14), but Moses demands heart transformation—the removal of obstinacy and receptivity to God's word. **Be no more stiffnecked** (qesheh-oref, hard of neck) recalls the golden calf rebellion (9:6, 13).

Jeremiah 4:4 and Ezekiel 36:26 expand this call, promising that God Himself will circumcise hearts—spiritual regeneration as divine work. Paul contrasts outward circumcision with circumcision 'of the heart, in the spirit' (Romans 2:28-29), fulfilled through Christ. Colossians 2:11 declares believers receive 'the circumcision of Christ'—the new birth that removes the sinful nature. Moses anticipates the New Covenant's transformation.

Historical Context

Moses preached this to the exodus generation's children (1406 BC) who witnessed their parents' unbelief and 40 years of wilderness wandering. The call to heart circumcision addressed the persistent rebellion Moses knew characterized Israel's history.

Related Passages

James 2:17 — Faith and works

Romans 1:17 — The righteous shall live by faith

Study Questions

1. What 'stiffnecked' areas of your life resist God's authority, and how does Ezekiel 36:26 address this?
2. How does Paul's identification of Christ's death as 'circumcision of the heart' (Colossians 2:11) give confidence in sanctification?

Interlinear Text

וּמְלִיתָ ׀	אֵת	עֶרְלָת	לְבַבְךָ ׀	וְשֵׁי רִפְּךָ ׀
Circumcise	H853	therefore the foreskin	of your heart	and be no more stiffnecked
H4135		H6190	H3824	H6203

אֵל	תִּקַּשׁ וְ	עוֹד:
H3808	H7185	H5750

Additional Cross-References

Jeremiah 4:4 (Parallel theme): Circumcise yourselves to the LORD, and take away the foreskins of your heart, ye men of Judah and inhabitants of Jerusalem: lest my fury come forth like fire, and burn that none can quench it, because of the evil of your doings.

Deuteronomy 30:6 (Parallel theme): And the LORD thy God will circumcise thine heart, and the heart of thy seed, to love the LORD thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, that thou mayest live.

Leviticus 26:41 (Parallel theme): And that I also have walked contrary unto them, and have brought them into the land of their enemies; if then their uncircumcised hearts be humbled, and they then accept of the punishment of their iniquity:

Colossians 2:11 (Parallel theme): In whom also ye are circumcised with the circumcision made without hands, in putting off the body of the sins of the flesh by the circumcision of Christ:

Deuteronomy 9:6 (Parallel theme): Understand therefore, that the LORD thy God giveth thee not this good land to possess it for thy righteousness; for thou art a stiffnecked people.

Jeremiah 4:14 (Parallel theme): O Jerusalem, wash thine heart from wickedness, that thou mayest be saved. How long shall thy vain thoughts lodge within thee?

Deuteronomy 31:27 (Parallel theme): For I know thy rebellion, and thy stiff neck: behold, while I am yet alive with you this day, ye have been rebellious against the LORD; and how much more after my death?

Deuteronomy 9:13 (Parallel theme): Furthermore the LORD spake unto me, saying, I have seen this people, and, behold, it is a stiffnecked people: