

The Apostle Paul – a disciple or a fraud?

Was the Apostle Paul a loyal and observant Jew who became a disciple of Yeshua the Messiah or a fraud and liar and progenitor of a new religion?

Part 1:

I was very recently challenged by a Jewish follower of Yeshua, who argues that Gentiles need to get circumcised and who believes the Apostle Paul was anti-Torah and a liar and should therefore be totally ignored.

I believe that the Apostle Paul was inspired and a committed follower of Yeshua and the God of Israel. However, I acknowledge that there are some serious corruptions of Paul's epistles, which I believe were deliberate and designed to separate the religion of Paul from the proto-Judaism¹ of his day.

CEB Cranfield is a scholar held in such high regard that his Commentary on Romans is part of the International Critical Commentary series, which is perhaps one of the best complete commentaries available today. While the world has as many opinions as people I find this quote from him worth some consideration:

"Having seriously engaged with the Epistle to the Romans for more than a quarter of a century, I still find it always fresh and cannot read it without delight. It is my earnest hope that more and more people may become seriously engaged with it, and, hearing what it has to say, may find in the faithful, merciful, almighty God, with whom it is concerned, joy and hope and strength even in these dark and threatening and – for many - anguish-laden days, through which we are having to live" 'Romans – A Shorter Commentary' by CEB Cranfield (p viii)

In this brief comment I will not spend much time on the corruptions, except to highlight one or two and the problems they introduce.

The Apostle Paul was a Pharisee of a Pharisee; a student of the great Gamaliel I. In training then, Paul was much like Yeshua who according to one of the greatest experts on Yeshua, the late Prof. David Flusser, was in essentially a Pharisee himself.

D Flusser in his seminal book "Jesus" (2001) p36 *"In the Pharisees, Jesus saw the contemporary heirs of Moses, and said that men should model their lives upon their teaching. This makes sense, for although Jesus was apparently indirectly influenced by Essenism, he was basically rooted in universal non-sectarian Judaism. The philosophy and practice of this Judaism was that of the Pharisees. **It would not be wrong to describe Jesus as a Pharisee in the broad sense**"*

Yeshua quotes the great Rabbis Hillel and Shammai as does the Apostle Paul. For example, Yeshua's statement in Matt 12:30 & Luke 11:23 "Whoever is not with me is against me, and whoever does not gather with me scatters."² is a direct quote and his statement, "So whatever you wish that others would do to you, do also to them, for this is the Law and the Prophets." (Matt 7:12) is also a modification of Hillel's "That which is hateful to you do not unto your fellow man."

Some have argued that the Apostle Paul was Hellenistic, though this appears to be based on their opinion that his epistles are anti-Torah. Paul though, like Yeshua quoted from many Jewish sources that were available to him as well as the Hebrew Bible. Two examples to help illustrate this are Paul's homily in Romans 12:9-13:7 is of Essene origin for example³.

Romans 10:5—13 is also based upon a Jewish midrash on Deut. 30:11 and Lev. 18:5.⁴

Paul was unquestionably zealous, both before his Damascus road experience and perhaps even more so after it. After Damascus, Paul no longer persecuted the followers of Yeshua but became one himself. While he clearly had an intimate experience with Yeshua and was awakened to a great many deeper truths, Paul remained a lover of Torah and an observant Jew.

¹ Prof. Flusser uses this term the religion that Yeshua practiced as this was before the establishment of Rabbinic Judaism.

² Judaism and the Origins of Christianity, Flusser p17

³ "A Jewish Source for the Approach of the Early Church to the State," Jewish Sources in Early Christianity, Sifriat Poalim, 1982, pp. 397-401 (in Hebrew).

⁴ Ibid p 309

The Apostle Paul after all had said:

- "Neither against the Jewish Torah, nor against the Temple, nor against Caesar have I offended in anything at all." (Acts 25:8)
- "I have done nothing against our people or the customs of our fathers." (Acts 28:17)
- "...the Torah is holy and the commandment is holy and just and good." (Rom. 7:12)
- "Do we then nullify the Torah through faith? May it never be! On the contrary, we maintain the Torah." (Rom. 3:31).

Paul was clearly an orthodox Jew as evidenced by the Acts 28:17 quote above; by the fact that his travels' were always planned around the Feasts and Holy Days including the Sabbath; by his frequent use of pharisaic and other Jewish literature that was available to him and by his appreciation and agreement with the Jewish understanding of human nature. That is, the evil inclination and the good inclination; the 'Yetzer haRa' vs 'Yetzer haTov' which is expanded in Romans 7.

Part of the problem then is that the Apostle Paul needs to be understood from an Hebraic not Hellenistic perspective. Because the world has tended to see Paul as Hellenistic, he is certainly not popular amongst most orthodox Jewish Rabbis today. This is beginning to change, partly thanks to the 'New Perspective' on Paul – scholars like James Dunn; and also from some direct interaction with Christian scholars who have studied the Hebraic mindset. In this regard, I personally know of one orthodox Rabbi who now loves Paul, and who now considers him a fellow Rabbi.

The Apostle Paul was Hebrew, most of the NT was first written in Hebrew and can only be properly understood from a Hebrew perspective. Unfortunately, most scholars have not adopted this approach.

Regardless of his past sins before Damascus and regardless of the distortions that have occurred through the redacting of his epistles, Paul was clearly one of the greatest men who ever lived and certainly a great Rabbi as well. His words such as the Corinthians love chapter, his Ephesians exhortation on marriage and the brilliant description in Romans 9-11 of how Gentiles can be grafted into the cultivated olive tree of Israel are amongst the most beautiful words ever written and continue to be amongst the most quoted words in history. His summation of the commandments of God in Gal 5:14 is also brilliant, even though just a rewording of some of Leviticus 19.

Paul's life was incredibly sacrificial, that is, it was a life devoted to God, to His Feasts, His Sabbath and His new High Priest and Anointed One, Yeshua. Paul turned his back on much because of meeting the Prophet and Messiah that Moses had spoken of (see Deut 18 for example).

I believe that those of us who are Gentiles should feel incredibly indebted to Paul - I doubt that many Gentiles would have even known about the Creator of the Universe, the God of Israel, the One True God without his influence. Paul also warned us to turn from gentile ways in Eph 4:17: "Now this I say and testify in the Lord, that you must no longer walk as the Gentiles do, in the futility of their minds". This also is typically Hebraic, as the Rabbi's believed that one could only be wise if one knew and lived Torah. Thus, if Gentiles did not know Torah, then clearly they were not wise and could even be called foolish or having 'futile minds'.

Partly perhaps because of the pogroms, many Jewish people are still traumatised and unwilling to fully embrace the concept of being 'lights to the Nations' as they are called to be. This is very understandable, and was probably not too different in the first century of the Common Era. This makes Paul's efforts even more remarkable.

I suspect that much of the success and prosperity of the Western world can be traced to his influence in helping Gentiles turn to HaShem, the God of Israel. Only through being obedient to the Moral Code of the Universe (the 10 Words) can real prosperity grow - the desolation that follows Islam is to some degree a counter-example that proves this point.

I attended a significant Jewish/Christian conference in Jerusalem recently⁵ and met some Rabbi's and Jewish professors as well as some Christian theologians who also respect Paul, and respect him as pro-Torah. For some of them the real issues that divide Judaism and Christianity are not the Apostle Paul (and his supposedly anti-

⁵ See some of the blog posts of my time at the Conference at luke443.blogspot.com

Torah teaching) but the Trinity and the Sabbath.

Christianity has a great deal of error - an earnest effort to properly understand Paul and to remove where possible the obvious distortions of his words, would greatly help Christianity get closer to being the true graft that it should be.

To help with this improved understanding of Paul, I believe that the late Prof. Flusser's approach to the Synoptics would be most beneficial here. Flusser has, I believe, shown to a fair degree what is and isn't original in the Synoptics.

His approach: "... the key to understanding many of the difficult or even apparently unintelligible passages in the gospels is to be found not primarily in a better understanding of Greek, but in retroversion to and translation of the Hebrew behind the Greek (made possible by the often transparently literalistic translation methods of the Greek translators)."

When this is done the errors tend to be obvious – of course this is only to scholars with the incredible breadth of knowledge of the Qumran Scrolls, etc., that Flusser had.

Even without the wisdom of a Flusser though, there are still a number of corruptions that are fairly easily identified. I will briefly touch on a few:

Galatians 3:16

Now the promises were spoken to Abraham and to his seed. He doesn't say, "To seeds," as of many, but as of one, "To your seed," which is Christ. (ESV)

Genesis is being quoted and referred to here. In fact Genesis 17:7-9 *"I will establish my covenant between me and you and your seed after you throughout their generations for an everlasting covenant, to be a God to you and to your seed after you. I will give to you, and to your seed after you, the land where you are traveling, all the land of Canaan, for an everlasting possession. I will be their God."* God said to Abraham, *"As for you, you will keep my covenant, you and your seed after you throughout their generations."*

The word 'seed' in the original Hebrew is indeed a singular word (zarah) meaning seed and is not plural. However, in the context it is quite clear that a plural meaning is inferred in the same way that a farmer might say 'I am off to buy some more seed'.

Therefore, and this is very significant, that the scripture we have in Galatians is **wrong!** Moses does say "to seeds" in the sense that he is referring to many NOT just one seed or one person. This is not to say that one person can not be a secondary meaning in this passage, but it is clearly not the primary meaning and ALL the versions we have of Galatians 3:16 have accepted this clear error. This error is used to argue for a significant Christian doctrine. Apparently, this error is not in the earliest Greek versions.

Romans 3:10-18 and especially v10-11:

"As it is written, 'There is no one righteous; no, not one. There is no one who understands. There is no one who seeks after God'."

I will only touch briefly on this vital passage, as its impact is very significant and deserves a lot more time and space⁶.

Briefly then, when we look to see what scripture is being quoted here, it appears to be a number of different passages. Verse 10 though, (see above) either comes from Psalm 14:1-2: *"The fool says in his heart, There is no God. They are corrupt, they do abominable deeds, there is none who does good.* *The LORD looks down from heaven on the children of man, to see if there are any who understand, who seek after God."* or Psalm 143:2 *"Enter not into judgment with your servant, for no one living is righteous before you."*

If you look closely at Ps 14 you should note that David is speaking here about Gentiles, about those who do not know the God of Israel and this is further accented in v5 where he says *"There they are in great terror, for God is*

⁶ Frank Selch is preparing a proper analysis of the huge error here, so I will leave it to him to expand upon it.

with the generation of the righteous.” where we learn that there are indeed a whole generation of righteous and in Habukuk 2:4 where it states that: “...but the just (or righteous) shall live by his faith (better perhaps is ‘faithfulness’, as it implies an action, not just a belief/thought) ... “.

The Ps 143 reference should also, on closer inspection, show that our righteousness is being compared with the Almighty’s and in that sense we fall far short. Also we see further down that the Psalmist anticipates that he can be righteous before the Almighty when he states: “*Teach me to do your will, for you are my God! Let your good Spirit lead me on level ground!*” (v10).

The whole tenor of the TaNaK, through to the very words of Yeshua, when he states ‘*repent, for the Kingdom of God is near*’, and his statement that Zaccheus and his family had received salvation because of Zaccheus’ repentance, indicate that it is possible to do good and be righteous before the Almighty. Clearly there is some serious misuse and distortion occurring here.

The issue of the misuse of the Apostles Paul’s writings are not just with clear corruptions of the text but also with clearly false interpretations that have been generally accepted by many. A good example of this problem in the use of Col 2:16-17 to argue against observing the Biblical Feasts and the Sabbath. The context indicates that such a conclusion is diagrammatically the opposite of Paul’s intention (see my article on ‘Colossians 2 and the Sabbath’ for details on this⁷).

Of course the problem of NT textual corruption extends beyond the letters of the Apostle Paul. To cite just one example for now, let us consider Heb 10:5-7. In the middle of the quote from the TaNaK are the words “... *Sacrifices and offerings you have not desired, but a body have you prepared for me;*” (v5).

However, the correct words here are : “*Sacrifices and grain offerings you don't want; burnt offerings and sin offerings you don't demand. Instead, you have given me open ears;*” .(see JPS Tanakh, 1917 edition. Check this out in your favourite version of the Bible – in most, if not all, you will find the corrupted version in Hebrews and something very similar to the Tanakh (taken from the Masoretic Hebrew text) version above in your ‘Old Testament’ section⁸ .

So in summary, the conclusion that the Apostle Paul was Hellenistic comes from both corrupt translations and the failure to view Paul from an Hebraic perspective. The very opposite conclusion that Paul was a liar and not an Apostle, is in a sense an alternative derivation from the same approach, but by those who clearly appreciate that the Almighty has never abolished His Torah or His call to repentance and obedience that this entails.

Instead, it is our contention that the Apostle Paul was indeed one of the greatest men of God who ever lived and was a most faithful and effective follower of Yeshua. We instead accept the many brilliant Torah based instructions he gave, but seek always to see that they are consistent with the clear message of the TaNaK. If not, we then look for textual corruption or for some Hebraic perspective that may not be obvious to our gentile (read Greek) trained minds.

Another issue that this all raises then is the ‘sensitive’ issue of circumcision. Circumcision is an everlasting covenantal sign.

Genesis 17: 7-14

*“And I will establish my covenant between me and you and your offspring after you throughout their generations for an everlasting covenant, to be God to you and to your offspring after you.
... Every male among you shall be circumcised. ... You shall be circumcised in the flesh of your foreskins, **and it shall be a sign of the covenant between me and you. ... So shall my covenant be in your flesh an everlasting covenant. Any uncircumcised male who is not circumcised in the flesh of his foreskin shall be cut off from his people; he has broken my covenant.”***

Thus, a very valid question is, how can followers of Yeshua who are not Jewish and not circumcised be part of the

⁷ Available at www.circumcisedheart.info

⁸ You might ask, where did the text ‘but a body you prepared for me’ come from? It appears that some versions of the Septuagint have this rendition. Here perhaps, you may start to see part of the problem that scholars like Prof. Flusser have so effectively illustrated. The Septuagint we have today has seen some serious redacting as well, and it appears that these changes have been made to support doctrinal positions of mostly Christian theologians. In fact, Flusser argues that the Septuagint was NOT the primary version of the Tanakh used in the NT – many other scholars are now coming to a similar conclusion.

everlasting Abrahamic Covenant? Most orthodox Rabbi's today would argue that they can't be (If they are males that is. This covenantal sign is only required of the males). The Apostle Paul on the other-hand seems quite emphatic that physical circumcision is not necessary. If the Apostle Paul has been correctly understood on this issue, does this mean he is therefore anti-Torah?

Firstly, it is important to recognize that even the great Rabbi's of yesteryear such as Maimonides (Rambam) were not certain what the purposes of circumcision were, but clearly it marked the males who were circumcised, as part of a family/group.

Circumcision also involves removing a covering. I agree with Jewish scholars that every human being was born with the heart of God. When God breathed His breath into Adam, he not only put His spirit, but also his heart (heart, in Hebrew, meaning the centre of our being, our mind, soul, strength, emotions, etc) into Adam. Since that day every single human being has the heart of God placed within him/her.

But at some point in our youth we cover this heart with our own ego, our needs, and our selfish desires. By covering our hearts we separate ourselves from our Father and the balance in our lives that a relationship with Him entails.

So when God choose Abraham, I think he instituted male circumcision as an outward sign and act of obedience to demonstrate the inward 'uncovering' that Abraham had and that his descendants were called to have.

Was circumcision just physical according to the Tanakh?

No, consider:

Deuteronomy 10:16 *"Therefore, circumcise the foreskin of your heart; and don't be stiffnecked any longer!"*

Deuteronomy 30:6 *"Then ADONAI your God will circumcise your hearts and the hearts of your children, so that you will love ADONAI your God with all your heart and all your being, and thus you will live."*

Jeremiah 4:4 *"People of Judah and inhabitants of Jerusalem, circumcise yourselves for ADONAI, remove the foreskins of your heart!..."*

Lev 26:41 *"...humble their uncircumcised hearts."*

This is consistent of course with the Shema and Jeremiah's new covenant prophecy:

'And you shall love the LORD your God with all your HEART and with all your life and with all your might. And these things, which I am commanding you today shall be on your HEART...' " Deut. 6.:4-6

'But this is the new covenant which I will make with the house of Israel; after those days', declares the LORD, 'I will put my Torah within them, and on THEIR HEARTS I will write it; and I will be their God and they shall be My People.' Jer 31:31-33

So it is important, I think to see that physical circumcision is most significantly a sign that should help those circumcised and their families (and this means everyone living in the community, and therefore it includes the servants, as per Abraham) to have circumcised hearts. It is also significant that physical circumcision is only and can only, be applied to males, whereas, circumcision of the heart is for both male and female. This point alone should be cause for some serious reflection.

We then see in Acts that Gentiles joining 'the Way' were called to be circumcised by some of the Pharisees who followed Yeshua (Acts 15:5). Some of these Pharisees were then amazed to see the gift of Holy Spirit poured out on the gentiles of Cornelius' house. This demonstrated their acceptance into the family of God and Yeshua without physical circumcision. (Acts 10:45). Just as Abraham was accepted by the Almighty before he and the male members of his family were circumcised, so Cornelius and his family were clearly accepted (as evidenced by the power of the Spirit of God coming upon them), before any circumcision (or baptism for that matter).

Clearly then, circumcision in a similar way to baptism, is not required for entry into the family of God, that is, for salvation. For a start, having a circumcised heart is not a once only and momentary action, but requires a journey of faithfulness to acquire.

The question then, is better clarified perhaps as, "is physical circumcision an act of obedience in the same way that baptism clearly⁹ is?" (Baptism - from the Hebrew word, 'mikvah' which is a full immersion in water, generally

⁹ Note that John the Baptist (the Immerser) saw baptism as a step of repentance, and did not wish to baptize any who were not already

to regain or establish ritual purity).

How did the Apostle Paul deal with this – brilliantly in my opinion. He said those already physically circumcised should remain so and those who weren't did not need to. They did however, need to strive for circumcised hearts just as Moses and Jeremiah had called for.

1 Cor 7:18-19,24 *“Was someone already circumcised when he was called? Then he should not try to remove the marks of his circumcision. Was someone uncircumcised when he was called? He shouldn't undergo circumcision. For neither circumcision counts for anything nor uncircumcision, but keeping the commandments of God. Each one should remain in the condition in which he was called So, brothers, in whatever condition each was called, there let him remain with God.”*

When our heart is circumcised we will act with humility and obedience such that we uphold the intent of Torah.

Some argue that Paul circumcised Timothy because of a fear of the Jews – this is not what the scripture states in Acts 16:1-3: *“Paul came also to Derbe and to Lystra. A disciple was there, named Timothy, the son of a Jewish woman who was a believer, but his father was a Greek. He was well spoken of by the brothers at Lystra and Iconium. Paul wanted Timothy to accompany him, and he took him and circumcised him because of the Jews who were in those places, for they all knew that his father was a Greek.”*

Paul clearly wanted to avoid unnecessary contention as Timothy had a Jewish mother. According to 'halakha' (the Way), the oldest normative definition used by Jews for self-identification is that a person is a Jew if his/her mother was Jewish. It is quite likely that Timothy's family had been Hellenized and this might explain why Timothy had not been circumcised at 8 days.

So, if circumcision was a sign and a call to have a circumcised heart, what did Paul say on this issue?

Romans 2:28-29 *A man is not a Jew if he is only one outwardly, nor is circumcision merely outward and physical. No, a man is a Jew if he is one inwardly; and **circumcision is circumcision of the heart**, by the Spirit, not by the written code. Such a man's praise is not from men, but from God.*

Also in Ephesians he states, *“Therefore, remember your former state: you Gentiles by birth - called the Uncircumcised by those who, merely because of an operation on their flesh, are called the Circumcised - at that time had no Messiah. You were estranged from the national life of Israel. You were foreigners to the covenants embodying God's promise. You were in this world without hope and without God. But now, you who were once far off have been brought near through the shedding of the Messiah's blood. For he himself is our shalom - he has made us both one and has broken down the partition which divided us by destroying in his own body the enmity occasioned by the Torah, with its commands set forth in the form of ordinances. He did this in order to create in union with himself from the two groups a single new humanity and thus make shalom, and in order to reconcile to God both in a single body by being executed on a stake as a criminal and thus in himself killing that enmity. Also, when he came, he announced as Good News shalom to you far off and shalom to those nearby, news that through him we both have access in one Spirit to the Father. (Eph. 2:11-18, CJB).*

The partition/enmity or hostility/separation spoken of here is that between Jew and Gentile and is present because of the flesh (circumcision vs uncircumcision – the physical difference) and Torah (obedience to God's commands versus ignorance of God's commands – the difference in actions - that is, that Gentiles did not know Torah).

While we may not fully understand it, I believe that both Yeshua and Paul showed a way forward, a way in which Gentiles could become part of the Commonwealth of Israel without needing to become Jewish.

What about Ezek 44 especially verse 9 though? Doesn't this scripture make it explicit that both physical and spiritual circumcision is necessary?

“And the LORD said to me, Son of man, mark well, see with your eyes, and hear with your ears all that I shall tell you concerning all the statutes of the temple of the LORD and all its laws. And mark well the entrance to the temple and all the exits from the sanctuary.

showing signs of this repentance: *“Bear fruit in keeping with repentance... I baptize you with water for repentance, ...”* (Matt 3:7-8,11)

And say to the rebellious house, to the house of Israel, Thus says the Lord GOD: O house of Israel, enough of all your abominations, in admitting foreigners, uncircumcised in heart and flesh, to be in my sanctuary, profaning my temple, when you offer to me my food, the fat and the blood. You have broken my covenant, in addition to all your abominations. And you have not kept charge of my holy things, but you have set others to keep my charge for you in my sanctuary.

9 *“Thus says the Lord GOD: **No foreigner, uncircumcised in heart and flesh**, of all the foreigners who are among the people of Israel, **shall enter my sanctuary.**” - Ezek 44:5-9*

Context of course is crucial. The Almighty is speaking through Ezekiel here to those in the priesthood who had failed in their commission. HaShem is making it clear that the foreigners such as the Gibeonites whose impiety (seen through their uncircumcised flesh and hearts) made them unworthy to enter the sanctuary and perform the priestly duties there.

Thus, while it is not always possible to tell if someone has a circumcised heart, it is often easy to tell those that clearly don't. Those whose behaviour is unrighteous, who fail to show the proper reverence for the Almighty, demonstrate by their immoral actions that they do not have circumcised hearts (and some, because they were foreigners, did not have circumcised foreskins either).

Also, the reference to entering the sanctuary, is a reference to attending to priestly duties there, not to the status of someone's salvation. For example, while Ezekiel may be clearly indicating certain strict requirements for priestly service in the sanctuary, we see from passages such as Isaiah 56:6-7 that these requirements do not also apply to salvation.

Isaiah 56:6-7 *“And the foreigners who join themselves to the LORD, to minister to him, to love the name of the LORD, and to be his servants, everyone who keeps the Sabbath and does not profane it, and holds fast my covenant—these I will bring to my holy mountain, and make them joyful in my house of prayer; their burnt offerings and their sacrifices will be accepted on my altar; for my house shall be called a house of prayer for all peoples.”*

Ask most orthodox Rabbi's and they will say that Gentiles can have a place in the Coming Age without becoming Jewish and in fact, to some degree have greater power and name. In fact, Isaiah 56, a part of which has been quoted above, is a great declaration of this.

Thus, it would seem that physical circumcision is not a barrier to entry into the community of faith; the Commonwealth of Israel, but that, for men, it is

either a necessary act of obedience at some later stage in their walk,
or the physical act is replaced by the 'spiritual', that is, that the sign is seen through the reality it points to namely, the circumcision of the heart.

It is also instructive to read the Talmudic (circa 200 – 500 CE) discussions regarding Jewish proselytes and whether they needed to be circumcised and immersed. While the majority opinion was clearly that circumcision was necessary, it was far from unanimous. For example, this comment *“For according to R. Eliezer circumcision suffices for a proselyte but R. Joshua holds that immersion is all that is needed.”* ('Jews, Judaism And The Classical World' by Gedalyahu Alon p187), is part of an argument over this issue, and indicates the issue is not 'cut and dried'.

It is also argued by some that physical circumcision may still be desirable to show a unity of spirit, that is, that those of the 'graft' demonstrate their unity and humility in being grafted into the cultivated olive tree through this action. This may indeed be the most appropriate course of action, though personally I see this as unlikely for the practical reason, that few would ever know if a gentile male has been circumcised as an adult, to show his loyalty and support to the Commonwealth of Israel.

Thus, at this stage of my study, (and I do not feel fully convicted toward any answer) I believe the evidence points most strongly to the fact that the circumcision of the heart is a valid way in which the covenant can be fulfilled and a means by which Gentiles, both male and female, can in fact enter into the Abrahamic covenant.

Therefore, I also believe that the Apostle Paul has not demonstrated apostasy through his position on this issue,

but that his 'midrashic' comments have shown the true intention of circumcision as Moses, Jeremiah and other prophets had before him.

I believe it is therefore appropriate to give the last word here to the Apostle Paul himself:

"Let love be genuine. Abhor what is evil; hold fast to what is good. Love one another with brotherly affection.

Outdo one another in showing honor.

... serve the Lord. Rejoice in hope, be patient in tribulation, be constant in prayer.

*... Rejoice with those who rejoice, weep with those who weep. **Live in harmony with one another.***

*...Repay no one evil for evil, but give thought to do what is honorable in the sight of all. **If possible, so far as it depends on you, live peaceably with all.***

*... Do not be overcome by evil, but **overcome evil with good.** (Romans 12: 9-21)*

Are these the words of a liar or a man of God? You be the judge!

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