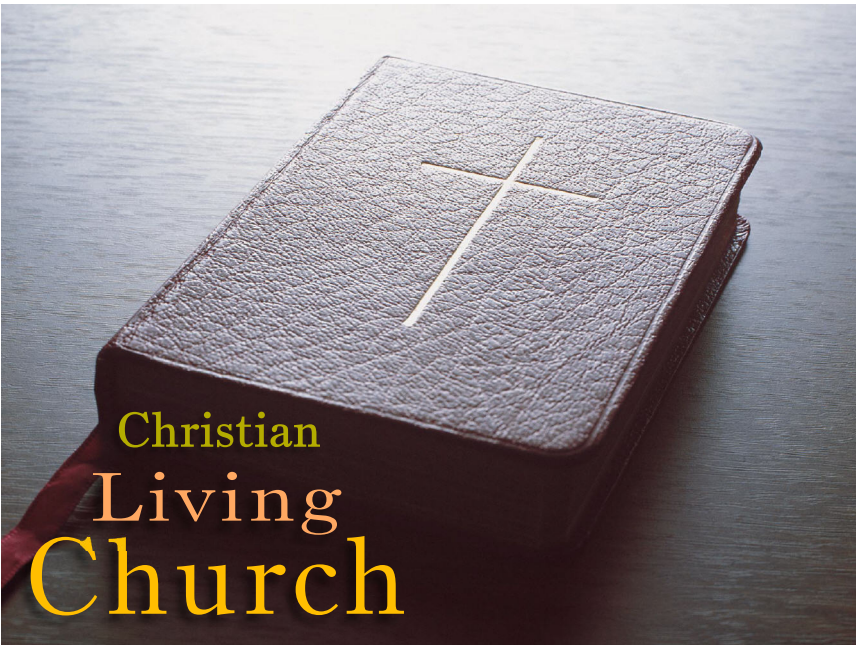


LESSON 12

# The Cultural Law

*“But he is a Jew, which is one inwardly; and circumcision is that of the heart, in the spirit, and not in the letter; whose praise is not of men, but of God.”*



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# The Cultural Law



This series of lessons has been designed for private study or classroom presentation. The purpose of this foreword is to explain certain conventions utilized throughout the program. The overall concept is to begin with the basic concepts necessary for the new convert to understand and progress toward more complex doctrine. The lessons are numbered in order to maintain the proper sequence of study.

When Scripture references are encountered in the text, various actions are recommended. When in parenthetical bold (**Genesis 1:1**) the verse is to be looked up and read right away. Frequently, the next textual statement will comment on that verse. Reading verse and text in proper order will enhance one's understanding of the verse. Direct quotes from Scripture will be "*bold italicized and contained in quotation marks*" and, unless otherwise noted, will be from the King James Bible. When the reference is in parenthetical non-bold (Genesis 1:1) it is to provide the Scriptural basis for the statement if confirmation is desired. References in blue [Genesis 1:1](#) will be listed in the lesson section entitled **FURTHER STUDY**.

**FURTHER STUDY** is the "homework" section. Its purpose is to encourage Bible study at home. The referenced verses have a short summation to assist the student desiring more knowledge about a subject to find what they are looking for.

The **DISCUSSION QUESTIONS** section is primarily for classroom use. Open discussion with the exchange of ideas produces growth for all involved. Most of the time the answer is contained in the referenced Scripture but sometimes the question is offered for open discussion. Even in private Bible study, analysis of the question and the search for its answer can be rewarding.

This work is offered to anyone with a desire to better understand God's Word. It is our hope and prayer that the person studying these lessons will come away with a better understanding of God's will and a closer walk with our Lord, Jesus Christ.

With Loving Concern for all those seeking God's Message  
The Church of God Rocky Mount  
Rocky Mount, Virginia

## Key Verse: Romans 2:29



*“But he is a Jew, which is one inwardly; and circumcision is that of the heart, in the spirit, and not in the letter; whose praise is not of men, but of God.”*

### Discussion Question:

What does this Key Verse mean to you?

The fourth type of law is the Cultural Law, developing with the growth of Earth's population and the expansion of civilization across the world. Cultural Law detailed the behavior, commonly practiced at the time, required to adhere to a principle. As society has changed and customs and mores varied in different countries and in different eras, the method of complying with cultural laws has changed, but the basic principle observed has remained the same. Today it is very rare to see younger individuals rise from their seat when an older person enters the room, but the principle of re-

specting one's elders is still required by God (**Leviticus 19:32**).

Today we do not live in an agrarian culture; most Americans live in a city. Even most of those who live in a rural environment don't farm for a living, so the practice of leaving the gleanings in the field for the poor is not observed (**Leviticus 19:9-10**). With automobiles being the general form of transport, it is unlikely that anyone would stop at a field they were passing in order to gather the gleanings of what's left after a crop harvest, and if they did, they would probably be arrested for trespassing. The principle involved is giving assistance to the poor, and we do that in many different ways today, but not by leaving food crops in our fields.

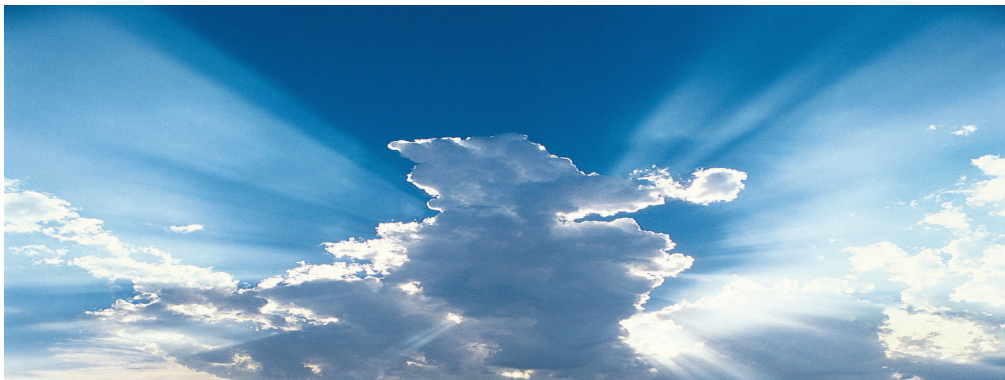
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Cultural adaptation of law has occurred in the Bible. Sarah was Abraham's sister (**Genesis 20:11-12**). When Moses codified the law after the Exodus, this practice was prohibited (**Leviticus 20:17**). Think about it; even Cain and Abel had to marry their sisters if they were going to fill the Earth. Why were Cain and Abel and Abraham allowed to marry their sister while the death penalty was assessed for it later? Once again, the principle has to be considered. Early in the history of mankind there simply wasn't anybody else to marry, and the gene pool was unpolluted until after the flood. By the time of Moses there

were viable choices and with all of the earlier intermarriage it is probable that the gene pool was developing the possibility of producing birth defects. In today's society, marriage of close relatives is not permitted for that very reason.

The matter addressed by the Key Verse is related in complete detail in the [fifteenth chapter of the Book of Acts](#). The newly converted Jews were insisting that the non-Jewish converts be circumcised, believing that it was necessary for salvation. The Jerusalem Conference concluded that the non-Jewish Christians had demonstrated a true faith and

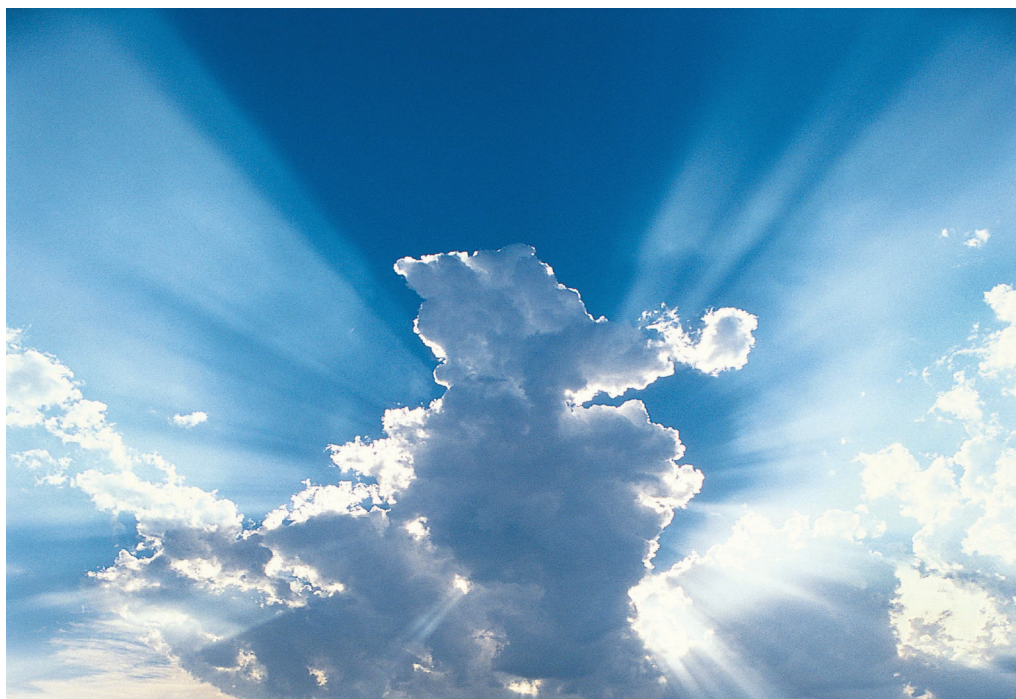


# The Cultural Law



belief and had received God's Holy Spirit (verse 8). These facts brought them to the conclusion that circumcision was not necessary for salvation and this cultural law, instituted with Abraham, was modified to be compatible with a later culture. The spiritual concept of circumcision was not new **(Deuteronomy 30:6)**.

Thus, the modification of certain laws to achieve compatibility with an existing culture is demonstrated in the Bible. Such changes are appropriate as long as the underlying principle is still observed and the new practice does not introduce alterations in behavior that violate any of God's laws.



# The Cultural Law



## Discussion Questions:

1. Moses said that if a man should die without leaving an heir, his brother was to marry his widow and produce an heir for him. Why isn't this custom still practiced? **Matthew 22:24**

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2. In the days before Christ, when Israel was a nation, a contractual agreement was confirmed by removing a shoe and giving it to the other party. How is this principle observed today?  
**Ruth 4:7**

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3. How was a contract confirmed in Abraham's day?  
**Genesis 15:8-10, 17-18**

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# The Cultural Law



## FURTHER STUDY:

**Deuteronomy 10:16** An example of circumcision in the spiritual concept.

**Jeremiah 4:4** Spiritual circumcision as a form of repentance.

**Acts 15** The Jerusalem Conference.

**Romans 2:26-29** The spiritual quality of circumcision explained.

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