

#  “The Statutes of Liberty!”

 **ACTS Chapter 15**

***> STATUTE #1 - (v1-5) Conversion Not Circumcision!***

***> STATUTE #2 - (v6-11) Grace Not Law!***

 ***> STATUTE #3 - (v12-35) Liberty Not Slavery!***

 ***> STATUTE #4 - (v36-41) Compromise Not Contention!***

***> STATUTE #1 - (v1-5) Conversion Not Circumcision!***

**- Observation: Conversion brings great joy! Whereas circumcision brings great stress & pain.**

**- *What is CONVERSION?***

**Christian conversion is the initial change of attitude and will that brings a person into right relationship with God. The word conversion appears as a noun only once in the New Testament, referring to the conversion of the Gentiles (Acts 15:3). But the Bible is filled with examples of persons who experienced conversion.**

**The fullest description of conversion occurs in the words spoken to Saul of Tarsus at his own conversion: "To open their eyes, and to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan to God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins and an inheritance among those who are sanctified by faith in me" (Acts 26:18).**

**Conversion involves turning away from evil deeds and false worship and turning toward serving and worshiping the Lord. Conversion marks a person's entrance into a new relationship with God, forgiveness of sins, and his new life as a part of the fellowship of the people of God.**

**Closely related to conversion are repentance and faith. Repentance is turning from sin; faith is turning to God. Thus, conversion is more than the exchange of one set of beliefs for another; it is a wholehearted turning to God.**

**The inward experience of conversion is sometimes referred to as the new birth (John 3:3-8). This phrase was used by Jesus in His conversation with Nicodemus. New birth refers to a change so radical that it can be described only by the figure of birth into a new life. As an infant enters the physical world with a totally new existence, so conversion is a new spiritual beginning in a person's relationship to God.**

**The experience of conversion may differ with various individuals. The apostle Paul's conversion was sudden and radical, while the conversion of Lydia (Acts 16:14-15) was apparently gradual and gentle. But the results of conversion are always a clear change of attitude and a new direction for life. (from Nelson's Illustrated Bible Dictionary)**

**- What about Circumcision? – Galatians 5:1-6 - *Stand fast therefore in the liberty by which Christ has made us free, and do not be entangled again with a yoke of bondage. Indeed I, Paul, say to you that if you become circumcised, Christ will profit you nothing. And I testify again to every man who becomes circumcised that he is a debtor to keep the whole law. You have become estranged from Christ, you who attempt to be justified by law; you have fallen from grace. For we through the Spirit eagerly wait for the hope of righteousness by faith. For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision nor uncircumcision avails anything, but faith working through love.***

**- In Galatians 6:12-15- *As many as desire to make a good showing in the flesh, these would compel you to be circumcised, only that they may not suffer persecution for the cross of Christ. For not even those who are circumcised keep the law, but they desire to have you circumcised that they may boast in your flesh. But God forbid that I should boast except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world. For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision nor uncircumcision avails anything, but a new creation.***

***> STATUTE #2 - (v6-11) Grace Not Law!***

**-Warren Wiersbe writes regarding the law and the gospel: “Many false teachers do not understand the content or the purpose of God’s Law. They were leading believers out of the liberty of grace into the bondage of legalism, a tragedy that still occurs today. The flesh (our old nature) loves religious legalism because rules and regulations enable a person to appear holy without really having to change his heart. It is the “glorious Gospel” that saves lost sinners.”**

 **- The purpose of the Law - Romans 3:19-26- *Now we know that whatever the law says, it says to those who are under the law, that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God. Therefore by the deeds of the law no flesh will be justified in His sight, for by the law is the knowledge of sin. But now the righteousness of God apart from the law is revealed, being witnessed by the Law and the Prophets, even the righteousness of God, through faith in Jesus Christ, to all and on all who believe. For there is no difference; for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, being justified freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, whom God set forth as a propitiation by His blood, through faith, to demonstrate His righteousness, because in His forbearance God had passed over the sins that were previously committed, to demonstrate at the present time His righteousness, that He might be just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus.***

**- Paul explains the law & Christ - Galatians 2:15-16- *We who are Jews by nature, and not sinners of the Gentiles, knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law but by faith in Jesus Christ, even we have believed in Christ Jesus, that we might be justified by faith in Christ and not by the works of the law; for by the works of the law no flesh shall be justified.* Also in Gal 2:20-21*- I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me. I do not set aside the grace of God; for if righteousness comes through the law, then Christ died in vain."***

***> STATUTE #3 - (v12-35) Liberty Not Slavery!***

***- Abstain from:***

**(1) *things offered to idols* - Food offered to pagan gods and then sold in temple butcher shops. Because idolatry was so repulsive to Jews and forbidden by God (cf. Ex. 20:3; 34:17; Deut. 5:7), they would avoid anything to do with idols, including meat offered to idols (cf. 1 Cor. 8:1–13)**

**(2)  *things strangled, and from blood-* Dietary restrictions (Gen. 9:4; Lev. 3:17; 7:26; 17:12–14; 19:26; Deut. 12:16, 23; 15:23; 1 Sam. 14:34; Ezek. 33:25).**

**(3) *sexual immorality -* 1Corinthians 6:9-20; Rev. 21:8- *But the cowardly, unbelieving, abominable, murderers, sexually immoral, sorcerers, idolaters, and all liars shall have their part in the lake which burns with fire and brimstone, which is the second death."***

***- Idolatry in Hawaii -* “THE CAT”- “MANEKI NEKO” or *beckoning cat* is an extremely popular Japanese folklore mascot and is believed to bring good fortune. (“NEKO”- means cat) - LEFT PAW- Brings customers, welcomes guests into your home. - RIGHT PAW- Brings personal good fortune, money, and other liquid assets. - BLACK “MANEKI NEKO” - Brings good health and wellbeing. -GOLD “MANEKI NEKO”- Brings wealth and prosperity.)**

**- True liberty- Gal 5:13-14 - *For you, brethren, have been called to liberty; only do not use liberty as an opportunity for the flesh, but through love serve one another. For all the law is fulfilled in one word, even in this: "You shall love your neighbor as yourself."***

***> STATUTE #4 - (v36-41) Compromise Not Contention!***

**(v36) Always inspect what you expect. Our discipleship of others ends when we reach heaven.**

**(v37-40) How do you resolve a conflict? Compromise (not doctrine) issues in life and commend it to the “grace of God.” James teaches us to use Christian wisdom in the difficult matters, *“But the wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, willing to yield, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality and without hypocrisy. Now the fruit of righteousness is sown in peace by those who make peace.” -* James 3:17-18**

**(v41) Let us pray that Calvary Chapel Pearl Harbor will be used to strengthen other churches.**