

2. Acts 10:13-15 Modern views about food hygiene and food safety simply did not exist in ancient times and do not explain the shibboleth. How does Peter's obedience to the food laws help him to see himself?
3. Mark 7:17-19 What did Jesus say about this shibboleth?
4. Colossians 2:16 How does this change apply to us now?

IV. New Covenant Shibboleths

Remember, a shibboleth is a habit, or a manner of doing something that identifies you either as someone who belongs or who does not belong. With that in mind, how is it possible to understand the following as shibboleths?

A. The Sacraments

1. Matthew 28:19 What does baptism do as a witness to others even as it is a blessing to the person being baptized?
2. 1 Corinthians 10:16-17 What is the effect of going to the Lord's Supper when it comes to your self-identification and how you are identified by others?
3. Romans 10:9-10 How does a confession of faith function as a shibboleth?
4. 1 Peter 2:12 How does a holy life lived in gratitude for salvation act as a shibboleth?

IV The Circumcision Shibboleth

This shibboleth is arguably the most important shibboleth in the entire Old Testament. It is so pervasive that it is difficult to understand even the modern attitude toward it outside of its shibboleth context. To put it another way, just like Old Testament food laws were not about modern concepts of hygiene and health safety, the concept of health and hygiene did not compute in the Old Testament mindset when it came to circumcision.

A. The Old Testament role

1. Genesis 17:11 What was the actual role of circumcision?
2. Genesis 34:13-23 What was the social and political benefit of submission to this shibboleth?
3. Ezekiel 44:9 What was the entry pass for entering the Temple?
4. Exodus 4:24-26 What was the reason for what Zipporah did

and why do you think this was necessary?

5. Joshua 5:4-6 Why do you think this was necessary at this particular time and place?
6. Judges 12:4-6 The Ephraimites were also children of Abraham and also submitted to circumcision as a matter of course. When the Gileadites could not use this mark as a way of distinguishing the two groups from one another, what did they do instead?

B. The New Testament perspective

1. Acts 15:5-6 Why do you think that the Jewish Christians demanded this of the Gentile Christians?
2. Acts 15:10-11 What did the Apostles and the Elders identify as the problem with the ancient shibboleth?
3. Acts 15:19-20 What was the decision that was made in the end?
4. Romans 4:11 What is the logical problem in associating circumcision with a person's identity before God?
5. Galatians 6:12-13 What was the reason why some Jewish Christians insisted on continuing with the old Shibboleth, anyway?
6. Galatians 6:15 How does this end circumcision as a shibboleth when it comes to religion?

VI. Modern Shibboleths

Can you describe how these are shibboleths today?

1. tattoos (Leviticus 19:28)
2. accent (Matthew 26:73)
3. clothing
4. body hair
5. flags (Jeremiah 51:27)
6. circumcision
7. language (Acts 22:1-2)
8. citizenship (Acts 22:27-29)

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The LORD does not look at the things people look at. People look at the outward appearance, but the Lord looks at the heart." (1 Samuel 16:7)