

2 Corinthians 5:16

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Wherefore henceforth know we no man after the flesh: yea, though we have known Christ after the flesh, yet now henceforth know we him no more.

Analysis

Wherefore henceforth know we no man after the flesh—Hōste hēmeis apo tou nyn oudena oidamen kata sarka (ὥστε ἡμεῖς ἀπὸ τοῦ νῦν οὐδένα οἶδαμεν κατὰ σάρκα). Apo tou nyn (ἀπὸ τοῦ νῦν, "from now on") marks decisive turning point. Kata sarka (κατὰ σάρκα, "according to the flesh") means evaluating by external criteria—ethnicity, status, appearance, credentials. Christ's death/resurrection revolutionizes epistemology: we no longer assess people by worldly standards.

Yea, though we have known Christ after the flesh, yet now henceforth know we him no more—Ei kai egnōkamen kata sarka Christon, alla nyn ouketi ginōskomen (εἰ καὶ ἐγνώκαμεν κατὰ σάρκα Χριστόν, ἀλλὰ νῦν οὐκέτι γινώσκουμεν). Did Paul know Jesus physically? Possibly (Acts 22:3 suggests Jerusalem presence). More likely: Paul once evaluated Jesus by fleshly standards—condemned Him as cursed false messiah (Galatians 3:13). Post-Damascus, Paul knows Christ as risen Lord. The point: crucifixion-resurrection transforms how we know everyone, especially Christ. Fleshly assessment saw weakness and defeat; resurrection reveals glory and victory. This new epistemology shatters cultural hierarchies: race, class, gender become secondary (Galatians 3:28).

Historical Context

Greco-Roman society was rigidly stratified: free/slave, citizen/foreigner, elite/common, male/female. Judaism maintained ethnic distinction: Jew/Gentile. Paul's

gospel obliterated these categories' ultimate significance. In Christ, former enemies became siblings. This social revolution threatened existing power structures, contributing to Christian persecution.

Related Passages

1 Corinthians 13:4 — Characteristics of love

1 John 4:8 — God is love

Study Questions

1. How do you still evaluate people "according to the flesh"—by wealth, education, race, appearance—rather than by their identity in Christ?
2. Has your knowledge of Christ moved beyond historical facts to personal, transforming encounter with the Risen Lord?
3. What practical steps can you take to see all people through the lens of Christ's death and resurrection rather than worldly categories?

Interlinear Text

Ὡστε	ἡμεῖς	ἀπὸ	τοῦ	νῦν	οὐδένα	οἶδαμεν	κατὰ
Wherefore	we	henceforth	G3588	now	no man	know	after
G5620	G2249	G575		G3568	G3762	G1492	G2596
σάρκα	εἰ	δὲ	καὶ	γινώσκουμεν	κατὰ	σάρκα	Χριστόν
the flesh	G1487	yea	G2532	know we	after	the flesh	Christ
G4561		G1161		G1097	G2596	G4561	G5547
ἀλλὰ	νῦν	οὐκέτι	γινώσκουμεν				
yet	now	him no more	know we				
G235	G3568	G3765	G1097				

Additional Cross-References

Colossians 3:11 (References Christ): Where there is neither Greek nor Jew, circumcision nor uncircumcision, Barbarian, Scythian, bond nor free: but Christ is all, and in all.

John 6:63 (Parallel theme): It is the spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing: the words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life.

James 3:17 (Parallel theme): But the wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, and easy to be intreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality, and without hypocrisy.

Galatians 5:6 (References Christ): For in Jesus Christ neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision; but faith which worketh by love.

John 15:14 (Parallel theme): Ye are my friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you.