

Colossians 2:11

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

In whom also ye are circumcised with the circumcision made without hands, in putting off the body of the sins of the flesh by the circumcision of Christ:

Analysis

In whom also ye are circumcised with the circumcision made without hands, in putting off the body of the sins of the flesh by the circumcision of Christ. Paul addresses Jewish legalism requiring physical circumcision. Believers possess superior circumcision: "made without hands" (*acheiropoiētō*, *ἀχειροποιήτω*), divine rather than human work. This "circumcision of Christ" means either circumcision provided by Christ or participating in Christ's death (preferable interpretation given v. 12).

"Putting off the body of the sins of the flesh" (*apekdysei tou sōmatos tōn hamartiōn tēs sarkos, ἀπεκδύσει τοῦ σώματος τῶν ἀμαρτιῶν τῆς σαρκός*) uses clothing imagery: removing like a garment. Physical circumcision removed flesh symbolically; spiritual circumcision removes sin's power actually. This occurred at conversion through union with Christ's death, accomplishing what Old Testament ritual prefigured.

Historical Context

Circumcision debate nearly split early Christianity (Acts 15; Galatians). Judaizers insisted Gentile converts needed circumcision for full covenant membership. Paul argues that Christ fulfilled circumcision's meaning, making physical ritual obsolete. The real issue wasn't foreskin but sin nature; Christ's death dealt

decisively with the substance (sin) that circumcision symbolized, rendering the shadow unnecessary.

Related Passages

Psalm 19:1 — Heavens declare God's glory

Genesis 1:1 — Creation of heavens and earth

Study Questions

1. What religious rituals do you emphasize that may have become form without substance?
2. How does your baptism (v. 12 next) serve as reminder of dying and rising with Christ?
3. Where might you rely on external religious performance instead of internal transformation through Christ?

Interlinear Text

ἐν ὃ καὶ περιετμήθητε περιτομῆ ἀχειροποιήτω ἐν
In whom also ye are circumcised the circumcision made without hands In
G1722 G3739 G2532 G4059 G4061 G886 G1722

τῇ ἀπεκδύσει τοῦ σώματος τῶν ἀμαρτιῶν τῆς σαρκός
G3588 putting off G3588 the body G3588 of the sins G3588 of the flesh
G555 G4983 G266 G4561

ἐν τῇ περιτομῇ τοῦ Χριστοῦ
In the circumcision G3588 of Christ G3588
G1722 G4061 G5547

Additional Cross-References

Romans 2:29 (Parallel theme): 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.

Philippians 3:3 (References Christ): For we are the circumcision, which worship God in the spirit, and rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh.

Ephesians 4:22 (Parallel theme): That ye put off concerning the former conversation the old man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts;

Romans 6:6 (Sin): Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin.

Galatians 5:24 (References Christ): And they that are Christ's have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts.

2 Corinthians 5:17 (References Christ): Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new.

Hebrews 9:24 (Creation): For Christ is not entered into the holy places made with hands, which are the figures of the true; but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us:

Deuteronomy 30:6 (Parallel theme): And the LORD thy God will circumcise thine heart, and the heart of thy seed, to love the LORD thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, that thou mayest live.

Galatians 2:20 (References Christ): I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me.

Deuteronomy 10:16 (Parallel theme): Circumcise therefore the foreskin of your heart, and be no more stiffnecked.