

Galatians 6:15

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision, but a new creature.

Analysis

For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision, but a new creature. Paul restates his central thesis (echoing 5:6). "For in Christ Jesus" (en gar Christō Iēsou, ἐν γὰρ Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ)—in the sphere of union with Christ. "Neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision" (oute peritomē ti estin oute akrobystia, οὐτε περιτομή τί ἔστιν οὐτε ἀκροβυστία)—neither circumcision is anything nor uncircumcision. External religious rituals are spiritually neutral, irrelevant for standing before God.

"But a new creature" (alla kainē ktisis, ἀλλὰ καινὴ κτίσις)—but new creation. Kainē (καινή) means new in quality, not merely recent. Ktisis (κτίσις) is creation, creature. What matters is being a new creation through union with Christ (2 Corinthians 5:17). This new creation transcends and supersedes all ethnic, religious, and social distinctions. The old categories (Jew/Gentile, circumcised/uncircumcised) belong to the old creation passing away. In Christ, believers are new creations—a whole new humanity where previous distinctions are irrelevant. This was Paul's fundamental argument throughout Galatians.

Historical Context

New creation theology appears throughout Paul (2 Corinthians 5:17, Ephesians 2:10, 4:24, Colossians 3:10). Union with Christ makes believers participants in the new creation inaugurated by Christ's resurrection. The old age (dominated by sin, law, death) is passing; the new age (characterized by Spirit, grace, life) has

dawned. Believers live in the overlap, already new creations though not yet fully transformed. This "already but not yet" requires faith to see spiritual reality (new creation status) that physical senses don't yet fully perceive. The Judaizers clung to old creation categories (circumcision); Paul proclaimed new creation reality (union with Christ).

Related Passages

Romans 1:17 — The righteous shall live by faith

James 2:17 — Faith and works

Matthew 25:31 — Final judgment

Revelation 20:12 — Judgment according to deeds

Study Questions

1. Paul declares circumcision and uncircumcision 'availeth nothing'—which religious practices or cultural markers are you wrongly treating as spiritually significant?
2. Being a 'new creature' (καινὴ κτίσις, new creation) is the only thing that matters—does this new-creation identity dominate your self-understanding?
3. Why does Paul's radical relativizing of all external religious distinctions still provoke controversy in churches today?

Interlinear Text

ἐν	γὰρ	Χριστῷ	Ἰησοῦ	οὐτε	περιτομῇ	τί	ἰσχύει,
in	For	Christ	Jesus	neither	circumcision	any thing	availeth
G1722	G1063	G5547	G2424	G3777	G4061	G5100	G2480

οὐτε	ἀκροβυστία	ἀλλὰ	καινὴ	κτίσις
neither	uncircumcision	but	a new	creature
G3777	G203	G235	G2537	G2937

Additional Cross-References

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.

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

Ephesians 2:10 (References Jesus): For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them.

Ephesians 4:24 (Parallel theme): And that ye put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness.

1 Corinthians 7:19 (Parallel theme): Circumcision is nothing, and uncircumcision is nothing, but the keeping of the commandments of God.

Romans 2:28 (Parallel theme): For he is not a Jew, which is one outwardly; neither is that circumcision, which is outward in the flesh:

Romans 8:1 (References Jesus): There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.

Revelation 21:5 (Parallel theme): And he that sat upon the throne said, Behold, I make all things new. And he said unto me, Write: for these words are true and faithful.