

Colossians

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Translation

Col. 1:1 Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by the sovereign will of God [the Father], and Timothy our brother,

Col. 1:2 To the saints in Colossae, particularly to the faithful brethren [those continuing to be strong in doctrine] in Christ. Grace to you and prosperity from God our Father.

Col. 1:3 We keep on giving thanks to God Who is [even] the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ at all times concerning you, offering face-to-face prayer,

Col. 1:4 Having heard [the report] of your faith [application of doctrine] in Christ Jesus [experiential sanctification] and the virtue love which you have towards all the saints,

Col. 1:5 Because of the assurance which is reserved for you in the heavens [both eternal life & our inheritance from Christ], which you have heard before in the Word of Truth [doctrine], i.e., the gospel,

Col. 1:6 Which is in you [importance of doctrine in your soul], even as it is in all the world [by evangelistic proclamation], continually bearing fruit [correct application] and increasing [spiritual growth] even as it is in you [produced in you by the Spirit], from the day you heard [intake] and came to know fully [metabolization] the grace of God in Truth [Bible doctrine],

Col. 1:7 Just as you learned [previously] from Epaphras [functioning as your pastor-teacher], our beloved, fellow bondsman, who is a consistently faithful minister of Christ on your behalf,

Col. 1:8 Who has also reported to us [Paul's team in Rome] concerning your virtue love in the Spirit.

Col. 1:9 Because of this [positive report], we also from the day that we heard [from Epaphras], do not cease praying and constantly offering petitions [to the Father] on your behalf, so that you [the deficiency of your soul] might be filled to the point of overflowing with the full knowledge [from doctrine] of His sovereign will by means of all wisdom [consistently applied doctrine] and spiritual understanding [discernment between good & evil],

Col. 1:10 So that you might begin to walk [function in the sphere of divine power] worthy [with integrity, dignity, and character] of the Lord with the view of pleasing Him in all things [the supergrace life], being fruitful in every good work [divine production] and constantly receiving growth [spiritual prosperity] by means of the full knowledge from God [maximum doctrine in the soul],

Col. 1:11 Constantly being strengthened by means of every enabling power [delegated to believers when they are filled with the Spirit] according to the standard of the ruling power of His glory

[divine sovereignty and omnipotence] resulting in all patience [faith rest technique] and stability through suffering [provides spiritual momentum] associated with inner happiness [supergrace happiness as a result of passing tests],

Col. 1:12 Constantly giving thanks to the Father Who qualified you [by inheritance] for a share of the assigned portion [of escrow blessings] of the saints in the sphere of light [only attained by continued residence and function inside the sphere of light],

Col. 1:13 Who has delivered us [all believers] out from the dictatorship of the darkness [Satan's cosmic system] and transferred us into the kingdom [the realm of royal power during the Church Age] belonging to the Son of His love,

Col. 1:14 By means of Whom we keep on having and holding our redemption [by His paying a ransom and purchasing us out of the slave market of sin], the cancellation of our sins,

Col. 1:15 Who [Jesus Christ] is and always was the exact image [shares the same divine essence] of the unseen [invisible] God [deity of Christ], the privileged firstborn [humanity of Christ at the virgin birth] with reference to all creation [hypostatic union],

Col. 1:16 Because by means of Himself [Jesus Christ] all things in the heavens and upon the earth were created, the visible things [like man] and the invisible things [like the angelic host], whether they are human governments [thrones] or constituted authorities [dominions] or angelic rulers [principalities] or demon commissioned officers [potentates]; all things stand created through Him [Jesus Christ] and for Him [His divine purpose].

Col. 1:17 Furthermore, He [Jesus Christ] was before all things [eternal existence] and all things are held together by Him [divine omnipotence sustains the universe].

Col. 1:18 Furthermore, He [Jesus Christ] is now and always will be the Head over the Body [federal headship], the Church, Who was the beginning [eternal existence], the first [uniquely] born out from the dead [resurrection] so that He might become the One Who is pre-eminent [ultimate authority] in all things.

Col. 1:19 (Because He [God the Father] has determined with pleasure that all the fullness [blessings & happiness] should have permanent residence and function in Him [Jesus Christ],

Col. 1:20 And through Him [Jesus Christ] to reconcile all things [believers] to Himself [reconciliation as an accomplished fact, not a hypothetical], having concluded peace [again, an accomplished fact, not an hypothetical] through the blood [spiritual death] of His cross [definite atonement], through Him only [reconciliation is exclusively from Jesus Christ], whether things on earth [elect believers] or things in the heavens [elect angels].

Col. 1:21 And you [Christians] who were at one time [before the new birth] settled in a state of alienation [positional residence: total inability] and were hostile [enemies] in your thinking by means of your wicked works [experiential function: total depravity],

Col. 1:22 Yet now [at the cross] He has reconciled you by means of the body of His flesh [Jesus Christ as true humanity] through spiritual death), for the purpose of presenting you holy [positional sanctification] and blameless [ultimate sanctification] and irreproachable [experiential sanctification] in His sight,

Col. 1:23 If indeed [assuming that] you continue to persist [daily] in doctrine, having laid a strong foundation [in the basics], both stabilized [not controlled by your emotions] and not swerving [into reversionism] from the ultimate source of the confidence of the message which you have heard [grace as opposed to legalism or works], which was publicly proclaimed to all creatures who are under heaven, of which I, Paul, have become a minister.

Col. 1:24 I now keep on rejoicing [inner happiness] in my sufferings on behalf of you [pressures in the ministry which come from the sheep themselves], and am filling up [taking in more doctrine] the deficiency [Paul needed more truth on the launching pad of his soul] with reference to the pressures of Christ in my flesh on behalf of His Body [Paul is back in fellowship after some difficult times], which is the Church,

Col. 1:25 Concerning which [Body of Christ] I have become a minister according to the dispensation [stewardship] of God which was given to me [as revelator of Church Age doctrine] for your benefit for the purpose of fulfilling the Word of God [completing what was hidden in the Old Testament],

Col. 1:26 The mystery [of Church Age doctrine] having been concealed from the ages [theocratic dispensations] and from [prior] generations, but now [during the Church Age] has been revealed to His saints [Church Age believers],

Col. 1:27 To whom God decreed [in eternity past] to make known [through pastors & teachers] what is the wealth of this mystery [Church Age doctrines] among the Gentiles [in contrast to the exclusiveness of prior Jewish dispensations], which continues to be Christ in you [indwelling of the Shekinah glory], the confidence of glory [guarantee of eternal life],

Col. 1:28 Whom [Jesus Christ] we continue to solemnly proclaim [evangelism], repeatedly warning every man [those with negative volition] and repeatedly instructing every man [those with positive volition] in all wisdom [whole realm of doctrine], so that we might render every man fully mature in Christ,

Col. 1:29 To which [objective] I am constantly working even to the point of exhaustion, straining every muscle [like a gladiator or professional athlete], according to the standard of His [prototype] power which is supernaturally working in me on a continual basis in the sphere of [operational] power.

Col. 2:1 For I want you to know about the great combat [intercessory prayer struggles] I continually have on your behalf and for those in Laodicea and as many as have not seen me face-to-face in my flesh [other assemblies],

Col. 2:2 So that the mentality of your souls might be stabilized [during times of great pressure], while you are being taught inside the love complex, namely, every category of wealth [maximum doctrine in the soul] related to the full assurances which come from the source of technical knowledge [complete systematic theology], resulting in a full knowledge of the mystery of God, from the source of Christ,

Col. 2:3 In Whom [Jesus Christ] all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge are stored up [Bible doctrine is the mind of Christ].

Col. 2:4 I am telling you this so that no one may delude you with distorted doctrines by means of plausible but false discourse [subtle, persuasive speech].

Col. 2:5 For, as is the case, I am in fact absent [from you] in the flesh, nevertheless, I am continually with you by means of the Spirit [non-resident pastor-teacher], constantly filled with inner happiness [from doctrine] even while inspecting your steadiness in ranks [in the Christian life] and the solid front [fortification] of your doctrine in Christ [battle lines in the angelic conflict].

Col. 2:6 Therefore, in the same manner in which you received Christ Jesus the Lord [by the grace of God in the Spirit], keep on walking in it [the sphere of divine power],

Col. 2:7 Having been rooted [in spiritual self-esteem] and firmly anchored [in spiritual autonomy] and having been constantly built-up [construction of an edification complex in the soul] in it [spiritual maturity in the sphere of power], and having been continually established by means of doctrine [passing momentum & evidence testing], just as you were instructed [by a qualified pastor-teacher], keep on overflowing [abounding] with thanksgiving [part of ultra-supergrace life].

Col. 2:8 Constantly be on guard [beware] so that there is not anyone who can capture [by pseudo-love fanaticism] and enslave you [in reversionism] through human speculation [human viewpoint philosophy & psychology], even through empty deceit [inane fallacies] according to the rudimentary teachings [beggarly elements] from the cosmic system and not according to the standards of Christ.

Col. 2:9 For in Him dwells permanently [in hypostatic union] all the fullness [divine essence] of the Godhead [deity of Christ] bodily [humanity of Christ];

Col. 2:10 Furthermore, you are in Him [positional truth], being completely filled full [by the baptism of the Holy Spirit], Who [Jesus Christ] is the Head [sovereign ruler] over every principality [angelic realm] and authority [earthly sphere],

Col. 2:11 In Whom you were circumcised by means of a circumcision not made with hands [spiritual, not ritual circumcision], by the renunciation of the body of the flesh [essence of the old sin nature], by means of the circumcision of Christ [identification with Christ on the cross],

Col. 2:12 Having been buried with Him [union with Christ] by means of identification [baptism of the Holy Spirit], by means of which you have also been raised up with Him through faith [promise

of resurrection life] by means of the sovereign [operational] power of God, Who raised Him out from the deaths [both spiritual and physical].

Col. 2:13 And as for you, being dead in transgressions and the uncircumcision of your flesh [the old sin nature], He [God the Father], having graciously forgiven us all our transgressions, has given to you life together with Him [divine life imparted to the believer at the moment of regeneration],

Col. 2:14 Having cancelled the IOU written against us, which kept on being hostile to us [because of the old sin nature], and He [the Father] removed it [the IOU] permanently from our midst, by nailing it to the cross,

Col. 2:15 Having disarmed the archons [chief demon warmakers] and [demon] commissioned officers, displaying the [angelic] captives publicly, having celebrated a triumphal procession over them by means of Him [Jesus Christ],

Col. 2:16 Consequently, stop allowing anyone [self-righteous, legalistic believers] to sit in judgment over you in the act of eating or in drinking [adult beverages] or with respect to feasts or new moons [monthly festivals] or Sabbaths [worship days],

Col. 2:17 Which [three previously mentioned holy days] keep on being a shadow of those things which are about to come, but the substance [reality] is from Christ.

Col. 2:18 Let no one declare you ineligible for your reward, taking pleasure in self-effacement [the false humility of asceticism] and in the worship of angels [demon religion], taking a stand on those things he has seen [dreams, trances, hallucinations], being inflated with arrogance to no avail [without cause] under the influence of the thinking from the source of his flesh [old sin nature],

Col. 2:19 And not being occupied with the Head [authority of Jesus Christ], from Whom all the body [of believers] through joints and ligaments [daily doctrine builds strength], being provided gratuitously [doctrine should be free] and being continually taught [by well-trained pastors & teachers], keeps on growing with the growth from God.

Col. 2:20 If you have died together with Christ [retroactive positional truth] to the ultimate source of the basic principles [rudimentary elements] of the cosmic system, then why, as though living like a person in the cosmic system, are you submitting to legalism?

Col. 2:21 For instance [an example of three legalistic taboos]: You shall not have sex [celibacy], neither shall you eat certain foods [vegetarianism], nor shall you touch anything with hostility [pacifism],

Col. 2:22 All of which [taboos] are destructive to the adherent [ruins their spiritual life], according to the ordinances and teachings of men [not from God],

Col. 2:23 Which classification of things [taboos] currently exist, on the one hand, having a reputation [appearance] of wisdom by means of a self-made system of religion [superstition] and by

means of an emotionally subjective false humility [self-effacement] and by means of a severe non-indulgence of the body [extreme asceticism], but on the other hand, which are not of any value against gratification of the flesh [taboos are unable to control the old sin nature].

Col. 3:1 If therefore, you have been raised together with Christ [positional truth], then keep on endeavoring to obtain and possess the above things [Bible doctrine circulating in the soul brings us into the immediate presence of God], where the Christ is sitting [session] at the right hand of God [the Father].

Col. 3:2 Keep on thinking objectively about [concentrate on] the above things [Bible doctrine as divine viewpoint], not the things [human viewpoint] upon the earth [cosmic thinking],

Col. 3:3 For you have died [separated from your former life], and the function of your life has been hidden together with Christ by means of the God [the veil which now shrouds your higher life from others will one day be withdrawn].

Col. 3:4 On the occasion [at the rapture] when the Christ, our life, shall appear [when the Groom returns for His bride], at that time you also shall be made manifest with Him in the sphere of glory.

Col. 3:5 Start rendering impotent [put to death], therefore, the members [of the old sin nature], the things upon the earth [specifically]: heterosexual immorality [fornication], homosexuality [perverted sex], abnormal passion [pathos], evil [demonically inspired] lusts and the frantic search for happiness [avarice], which category of things keeps on being [a form of] idolatry,

Col. 3:6 Because of which things the wrath of God [divine discipline] comes upon the sons of disobedience [sexual reversionists],

Col. 3:7 In the sphere of which things [reversionism] you also walked as a pattern of life [modus operandi] when you once functioned in them [residence and function in Satan's cosmic system].

Col. 3:8 But now [as believers] you should also begin to lay aside all these [other categories of reversionism]: vicious anger, emotional tantrums, using an inconsequential person to hurt someone you love, slandering, and foul language from your mouth.

Col. 3:9 Stop lying to one another of the same kind [particularly to fellow Christians], having disarmed the old man [old sin nature] together with his modus operandi [cosmic activity],

Col. 3:10 And having put on the new in point of time [clothed the soul of the new man with an edifying doctrinal structure], being renewed [because the doctrine you once knew was destroyed by reversionistic lifestyle] by the full knowledge [metabolized Bible doctrine] which is according to the image of the One [Jesus Christ] Who created him [the believer],

Col. 3:11 In which place [union with Christ] there no longer exists Greek or Jew [no racial inferiority], circumcision or uncircumcision [rituals and religious background is irrelevant], Barbarian, Scythian [cultural background is irrelevant], slavery, state of freedom [social status is

irrelevant], but Christ is all things [the grace source of all we have] and the cause of all things [divine sovereignty and omnipotence].

Col. 3:12 Keep on clothing yourself [dressing your soul with doctrine], therefore, as chosen ones of God [elect in eternity past], (having been loved in the past with the result that you will be loved forever), with affections of grace compassion [capacity for love & life], a gracious disposition [inner happiness & kindness], a relaxed mental attitude [grace orientation], an inwrought meekness of the soul [genuine humility], longsuffering steadfastness [patience from mastery of the details of life],

Col. 3:13 Putting up with one another of the same kind [mental separation from obnoxious believers] and graciously forgiving others [unbelievers]. If anyone has a complaint against anyone else, even as the Lord graciously forgave you, in this way also you [forgive];

Col. 3:14 And upon [above & between] all these [floors of the edification complex], impersonal [virtue] love, which is the binding agent [cement] of maturity [leads to supergrace status].

Col. 3:15 And the [spiritual] prosperity from Christ, let that continually umpire [control] the mentality of your soul, into which [supergrace status] you were called [the purpose of your election] into one body [the corporate church]; therefore, keep on becoming thankful ones [gratitude: capacity for life].

Col. 3:16 Let the doctrine from Christ keep on dwelling inside you abundantly [doctrine must saturate your inner life] in the sphere of all wisdom [doctrine on the launching pad]. You [pastors & teachers], be teaching with authority and be applying doctrine to yourself and other believers [pastors aren't exempt from application] by means of psalms [David's experiential theology], hymns, odes [stories & poems], and [congregational] singing by means of grace in the mentality of your soul [songs that originate from thinking, not emotional subjectivity] to God,

Col. 3:17 And whatever you habitually do in the sphere of words [conversation] or deeds [behavior], do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus [self-motivation from occupation with Christ], continually giving thanks to God the Father [expression of gratitude in spiritual autonomy] through Him [Jesus Christ].

Col. 3:18 Wives, always submit to the authority of your husbands, as it should be protocol to do in the Lord.

Col. 3:19 Husbands, always love your wives [impersonal love as a problem solving device] and stop being bitter against them.

Col. 3:20 Children, always obey your parents in everything, for this [authority orientation] is pleasing to the Lord.

Col. 3:21 Fathers, do not embitter [provoke indignation] your children, so that they may not become discouraged [from too much system testing].

Col. 3:22 Labor, always obey management according to the flesh [excludes spiritual matters] in everything [on the job], not with eye service as men-pleasers [not as brown-nosing, patronizing politicians], but with a virtuous mentality of the soul [from doctrinal thinking], always respecting the Lord.

Col. 3:23 Whatever you do, keep functioning from your soul [in spiritual autonomy] as to the Lord and not to man,

Col. 3:24 Since you [growing Christians] know that you will receive the reward of your inheritance [wages for work done, not a free gift] from the Lord [your ultimate reward comes from the Lord, not the human organization you work for]: Always be serving the Lord Christ,

Col. 3:25 For anyone who habitually does wrong [injury or injustice] will receive the consequences of his wrongdoing [self-induced misery & divine discipline], since there is no partiality [under the law of volitional responsibility].

Col. 4:1 Management, always pay from your own resources just [fair] and equitable [no favoritism] wages to your employees, knowing that you also have management in heaven.

Col. 4:2 Be continually devoted to [vigilant in] prayer, constantly being alert by means of the same [prayer] in the sphere of thanksgiving [gratitude].

Col. 4:3 At the same time [simultaneously] be continually praying also for us [teamwork], so that God might open a door for doctrine to us, for the purpose of communicating the mystery [Church Age doctrine] of Christ, because of which I also have been chained [to soldiers of the Praetorian Guard],

Col. 4:4 In order that I might make known by teaching the same [Church Age doctrine] as it is necessary for me [my responsibility] to communicate.

Col. 4:5 Be continually walking in the sphere of wisdom towards the ones on the outside [unbelievers], continually purchasing [redeeming, logging] the time,

Col. 4:6 Your word always in the sphere of grace [divine viewpoint], having been seasoned with salt [mature application of doctrine], so that you may know [having studied beforehand] how each one [questions from every quarter] should be answered by you.

Col. 4:7 All things pertaining to me [my current circumstances] Tychicus shall declare unto you, a beloved brother and faithful minister and fellow servant in the Lord [Paul's 3-fold introduction and commendation],

Col. 4:8 Whom I have sent face-to-face to you for this same purpose, in order that you might come to know our situation [things concerning us], and that he might encourage the mentality of your soul [comfort your thinking],

Col. 4:9 Along with Onesimus, a faithful and beloved brother, who is from among you [from Colossae]; they will report to you the entire situation here.

Col. 4:10 Aristarchus, my fellow prisoner, salutes you, also Mark, the cousin of Barnabas (concerning whom you have already received orders: if he comes face-to-face to you, welcome him with open arms),

Col. 4:11 Also Jesus who is called the just [Paul's lawyer]; these who are out from the circumcision [Jews] are my only co-workers with reference to the Kingdom of God, who are of such a character [supergrace believers] as to have become a comfort [refreshment from friends] to me.

Col. 4:12 Epaphrus, who is from among you [from Colossae], a slave of Christ Jesus, salutes you, who is always struggling on your behalf by means of his prayers [he is their absent pastor-teacher who is visiting Paul in prison], in order that you mature ones [supergrace believers] may hold your ground [stand firm while he is away] and be completely filled up [saturated] with all things [every category of doctrine] in the will of God;

Col. 4:13 For I solemnly testify with reference to this same one [Epaphrus], that he keeps having great distress on your behalf and for those in Laodicea [who are constantly in trouble] and those in Hierapolis [the local hot springs medical center].

Col. 4:14 Luke, the [my] beloved physician, and Demas [who later becomes a reversionist], also salute you.

Col. 4:15 Salute the brethren in Laodicea, especially Nymphas and the assembly of believers which meets at her house [one of Paul's six non-resident congregations].

Col. 4:16 And when this letter [Epistle to the Colossians] has been read and taught in your presence, do it thoroughly [verse-by-verse exegesis] and make sure that it may also be read and taught in the church of the Laodiceans and that you [Colossian believers] likewise read and teach the one from the Laodiceans [Epistle to the Ephesians].

Col. 4:17 Also tell Archippus: Pay attention [see to it] to the ministry which you received from the Lord, in order that you might fulfill it [he was failing in his responsibility to discipline the wild members of his Laodicean congregation].

Col. 4:18 This salutation is by my hand: Paul. Keep remembering my chains. Grace be with you.

Introductory Remarks

The Epistle to the Colossians is essentially Christ centered. Faced with the spread of false teaching, Paul turns believers' minds and hearts to the Person and work of Christ, with Whose glory he himself is taken up. Since the epistle is by way of a polemic against the false teaching it

will be helpful to try and discover the type of error which was being propagated. The heresy appears as a blend of Jewish and Greek elements. In fact we seem to have a form of religious syncretism which was typical of the first century. In the mystery cults which flourished in the apostolic age the great promise which was held out was salvation through enlightenment. Those who were initiated partook of the knowledge which was reserved for the inmost fellowship, and which was the means of deliverance. The rites and ceremonies of the cult were but the pathway to this esoteric knowledge. This element is also seen in the Colossian heresy if we notice Paul's insistence on the universality of the gospel, and also his stress on the true understanding and knowledge which are freely available through Christ, Who is the Source of wisdom and knowledge. It is difficult to say how far these various errors had been developed and to what extent they had been integrated into a system. (H.M. Carson)

Since Paul's departure from Rome, the "grievous wolves" whom he foresaw in Miletus (Acts 20:29) had descended upon these churches and were playing havoc with many and leading them astray much as new cults today mislead the unwary. Epaphras did not come in vain, for Paul was tremendously stirred by the peril to Christianity from the Gnostics. He had won his fight for freedom in Christ against the Judaizers who tried to fasten Jewish sacramentarianism upon spiritual Christianity. Now there is an equal danger of the dissipation of vital Christianity in philosophic speculation. (A.T. Robertson) In a world where the older paganism had largely lost its hold on thinking men, Gnosticism seemed to offer something like a universal religion resting on a philosophical basis, and capable of endless adaptation. It is apparent that Gnostic thought at Colossae had a strongly Jewish tinge, and it was ready to "adopt" Christianity, and to find a place for Christ within its hierarchy of spiritual beings. Paul saw that this would mean that what was distinctive in Christianity would be swamped in a vague and unprofitable syncretism. It is thus that Paul takes up the challenge of the "new thought," by placing his teaching about salvation in Christ upon a more philosophical basis. (C. Dodd)

The heresy with which Paul is dealing with in Colossians, contains two elements that are fused into one system: Judaism and Gnosticism. From these philosophical speculations, two opposing codes of ethics emerged, a rigid asceticism and an unrestrained license. His mention of the observance of Sabbaths and new moons, his distinction between meats and drinks, and his reference to circumcision, all point to an element of Judaism in this system. His reference to a self-imposed humility and service of angels, the hard treatment of the body, and a superior wisdom, indicates he is dealing with a Gnostic element. The characteristic feature of Essenism was mystic speculation involving a rigid asceticism, secret doctrines known only by an exclusive few combined with a rigorous observance of the Mosaic ritual. These legalistic Gnostics made much of wisdom (*sophia*), intelligence (*sunesis*), and knowledge (*epignosis*). Paul takes up the language of the Gnostics and translates it to the higher spheres of Christian thought. Against the false wisdom of the Gnostics, the apostle sets the true wisdom of the gospel. Paul declares that the "pleroma," or plenitude of the divine essence, is permanently at home in the Lord Jesus. In Him resides the totality of the divine powers and attributes. (K. Wuest)

Lightfoot regarded the Colossian heresy as a form of Judaizing gnosis which he traced back to the Essenes. Dibelius argued that the Colossians, without abandoning their Christianity, joined with the non-Christian teachers in a cultic life given over to the powers and were initiated into a

cosmic mystery devoted to the elements. Bornkamm believed there was a syncretism of gnosticized Judaism and pagan elements. The apostle's criticism of the advocates of this philosophy, with their false notions and aberrant behavior, are trenchant, even devastating. Because of their false legalism the proponents failed to recognize God's good gifts and His purpose in giving them, namely, that all should be enjoyed and consumed through proper use. To place oneself under rules and regulations like those mentioned in 2:21 is to go back into slavery again – under the personal forces overthrown by Christ. Although prohibitions carry a reputation for wisdom in the spheres of voluntary worship, humility and severe treatment of the body, they were without any value whatsoever. Such energetic religious endeavors could not hold the flesh in check. Quite the reverse. These man-made regulations actually pandered to the flesh. Regarding the false teachers themselves the apostle's words are just as severe: anyone who laid claim to exalted heavenly experiences or visions as a prelude to fresh revelations was puffed up. Worst of all, the self-inflation and arrogance in these private religious experiences come from not maintaining contact with Christ, the Head. (P.T. O'Brien)

Far from being progressive, the Jewish elements in the heretical teachings were retrogressive, a return to the mere shadow, while the Gnostic elements were in direct opposition to the very fundamentals of the Christian faith. Certainly there is progress in the Christian experience, a maturity which Paul seeks for all these converts, and the fullness (pleroma) is to be found in Christ alone. (E. Ashby) The false teachers were Christians, as is clear from the words "not holding fast the Head;" but probably they did not assign to Christ His true place. (W.R. Nicoll) The epistle itself contains no hint that the Apostle has more than one set of antagonists in view. The superior wisdom, the speculative element which is characteristic of Gnosticism, and the ritual observance, the practical element which was supplied by Judaism, are regarded not only as springing from the same stem, but also as intertwined in their growth ... Only when we have grasped the nature of the doctrine which Paul is combating, do we perceive that every sentence is instinct with life and meaning. (J.B. Lightfoot) Listen to the complaint of the Talmudist: "The wines and the baths of Phrygia have separated the ten tribes from Israel." There was also the danger of relapse into paganism. There was first of all the cable of their evil past. Secondly, there was the current of a wicked environment. It is hard to row against such a current, and to oppose the opinion and the will of the majority. Thirdly, there was also the undertow of passion in the hearts not wholly consecrated. And finally, there was the lure of Satan, seeking by means of ever so many clever devices, to snatch the sheep out of the hand of the Shepherd. (W. Hendriksen)

Gnosticism is derived from the Greek word "gnosis," which means "knowledge," like "agnosticism," which means ignorance – not knowing. The knowledge to which they pretended was a mystical knowledge above that which was written, and it took the place of the written word. We occasionally meet them in the present time. They are very confident of everything, saying, "I know, I know, I know." "How do you know?" "Well, I just feel that it is so." "Can you prove it from the Bible?" "The Spirit moves men now as well as he did in Bible days." So he goes on Spirit knowledge, as he calls it, and places what he says above what is written. Another form was this: They would say, "The letter is nothing; the Spirit is everything. You must not interpret the Bible literally." Personally, I never did have much use for these vague, loose people. I believe that all real faith is susceptible of a clear statement, and that any doctrine which cannot be clearly derived from the plain passages in the Word of God is to be rejected. I believe

that the Word of God is more reliable than any mystic philosophy, and if a modern mystic wants me to accept his vagaries, let him give the signs of an apostle. Let him by miracle accredit his inspiration. Let him raise the dead and perform other miracles, and then I will be ready to accept what he says – provided it harmonizes with God’s written Word. (B.H. Carroll)

CHAPTER 1

LWB Col. 1:1 Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by the sovereign will of God [the Father], and Timothy our brother,

KW Col. 1:1 Paul, an ambassador of Christ Jesus through the will of God, and Timothy our brother,

KJV Colossians 1:1 Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God, and Timotheus *our* brother,

TRANSLATION HIGHLIGHTS

Paul introduces himself as an apostle, commissioned by the sovereign will of God, not by his own plan or decision. He writes this letter to the members of the royal family in Colossae. He is accompanied by Timothy, whom he calls “our brother.” Timothy did not co-author this epistle, but was probably with Paul when he wrote it.

RELEVANT OPINIONS

The only difference between Paul’s opening words in Ephesians and those in this letter is the inclusion of Timothy as Paul’s associate in the gospel at the time of the writing, and the fact that the words, “the Lord Jesus Christ,” do not appear in the Nestle or the Wescott & Hort texts. (K. Wuest) Paul reserves the designation “apostle” for himself. Neither Timothy nor Epaphras who first brought the gospel to Colossae, is accorded this title. Timothy and Epaphras along with other loved and honored fellow-servants were Paul’s lieutenants, commissioned to help in the task of proclaiming the gospel and planting churches. (P.T. O’Brien) Paul is an apostle, Timothy is still only the brother. (M. Carson)

Paul was personally unknown to the Colossians. Epaphras had been their evangelist, acting on Paul’s behalf (1:7) and doubtless the other churches in the vicinity. It is assumed Paul is writing from Rome. Introducing himself as an apostle by the will of God he acknowledges his call as an act of unmerited divine grace. (E. Ashby) Timothy may have transcribed the epistle. Neither he nor Paul, probably, had ever seen the Colossian church. (R. Jamieson) Paul writes that his apostleship is by the will of God. He was not dependent upon any ordination of man. (E. English)

Col. 1:1 Paul (Subj. Nom.), an apostle (Nom. Appos.) of Christ Jesus (Gen. Rel.) by the sovereign will (Abl. Means) of God (Poss. Gen.), and Timothy (Subj. Nom.) our (Gen. Rel.) brother (Nom. Appos.),

^{WHO} **Colossians 1:1** Παῦλος ἀπόστολος Χριστοῦ Ἰησοῦ διὰ θελήματος θεοῦ καὶ Τιμόθεος ὁ ἀδελφός

^{VUL} **Colossians 1:1** Paulus apostolus Christi Iesu per voluntatem Dei et Timotheus frater

^{LWB} **Col. 1:2** **To the saints in Colossae, particularly to the faithful brethren [those continuing to be strong in doctrine] in Christ. Grace to you and prosperity from God our Father.**

^{KW} **Col. 1:2** To the saints in Colossae, even the faithful brethren in Christ. [Sanctifying] grace to you and [tranquilizing] peace from God our Father.

^{KJV} **Colossians 1:2** To the saints and faithful brethren in Christ which are at Colosse: Grace *be* unto you, and peace, from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

TRANSLATION HIGHLIGHTS

Paul addresses this epistle to the saints in Colossae. Colossae was a city of Phrygia, now called Natolai. It should go without saying, that all believers in Jesus Christ are saints by their very calling. The restrictive interpretation of the word “saint” by Roman Catholicism is heretical, having absolutely no support from Scripture. Paul also adds an explicative which names a group of mature believers that are particularly dear to his heart. He sends special greetings to those believers who have continued to be strong in doctrine, and therefore have the same fellowship with Christ that he has. This is a greeting to those who are making forward momentum in the spiritual life, i.e., experiential sanctification. He sends his customary salutation of grace and prosperity to them, from God the Father.

RELEVANT OPINIONS

The phrase “faithful brethren in Christ” is an unusual addition that is full of meaning. Some members of the Colossian church were shaken in the allegiance, even if they had not fallen from it. The Apostle therefore wishes to be understood that, when he speaks of the saints, he means the true and steadfast members of the brotherhood. In this way he obliquely hints at the defection. Thus, the words “and faithful brethren” are a supplementary explanation of “to the saints.” He does not directly exclude any, but he indirectly warns all. The epithet “faithful” cannot mean simply “believing,” for then it would add nothing which is not already contained in “saints” and “brethren.” (J.B. Lightfoot) “Saints” is one of the most frequent designations of Christ’s people. And

mark, it is given to every believer in Christ, whether or not pre-eminent for practical holiness. (W. Nicholson)

Paul desires that the Colossians may apprehend more fully the grace of God in which they already stand ... a wish for spiritual prosperity. (P.T. O'Brien) The "charis" spoke of the favour of God, and of the blessedness of the life so favoured by the Lord. "Eirene" speaks of the healthy condition of the life experienced by the man who enjoys God's favour. (M. Carson) The joining of grace and peace in the greeting, which is also a characteristic of Paul, not only links the familiar Greek and Hebrew salutations, but invests both with a spiritual meaning. (D. Guthrie) Obviously it is possible for a believer who has experienced the saving grace of God not to enjoy it in his daily experience. The Colossians are in danger of this, and with this letter Paul explains in detail how they can live lives characterized by God's grace and peace. (S. Leach)

The word "saint" has come to connote, through the centuries, something other than its actual meaning. Those to whom the apostle was writing were not some few men who, by unusually holy living or by an act of miraculous nature, had been canonized by the church organization. No! They were men and women like ourselves – fathers and mothers, parents and children, husbands and wives, friends and sweethearts, people of everyday life, who were believers in the Lord Jesus Christ. They were men and women set apart and faithful brethren in Christ. You, if you are a true Christian, are a saint in God's sight, and so am I – though sometimes we do not act the part. But it is our position in Christ, none the less. (E. English)

Col. 1:2 To the saints (Dat. Ind. Obj.) in Colossae (Loc. Sph.), particularly (explicative conj.; namely) to the faithful brethren (Dat. Ind. Obj.; those continuing to be strong in doctrine) in Christ (Loc. Sph.; fellowship with Christ: experiential truth). Grace (Subj. Nom.) to you (Dat. Adv.) and (conective conj.) prosperity (Subj. Nom.) from God (Abl. Source) our (Gen. Rel.) Father (Adv. Gen. Ref.).

^{WHO} **Colossians 1:2** τοῖς ἐν Κολοσσαῖς ἀγίοις καὶ πιστοῖς ἀδελφοῖς ἐν Χριστῷ χάρις ὑμῖν καὶ εἰρήνη ἀπὸ θεοῦ πατρὸς ἡμῶν

^{VUL} **Colossians 1:2** his qui sunt Colossis sanctis et fidelibus fratribus in Christo Iesu gratia vobis et pax a Deo Patre nostro

^{LWB} **Col. 1:3** We keep on giving thanks to God *Who is* [even] the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ at all times concerning you, offering face-to-face prayer,

^{KW} **Col. 1:3** I am giving thanks to God the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ concerning you, constantly offering petitions,

^{KJV} **Colossians 1:3** We give thanks to God and the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, praying always for you,

TRANSLATION HIGHLIGHTS

Paul and his associates continue to give thanks (Iterative Present tense) to God the Father at all times on behalf of the Colossians. In this instance, God is addressed as the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. Their prayers are offered face-to-face (Iterative Present tense) to Him on a regular basis, meaning they are certain to have reached their intended recipient (the Father) and are therefore effective prayers. We should also offer continual prayer to the Father on behalf of ourselves and friends, because prayer is part of our priestly ministry.

RELEVANT OPINIONS

There is a textual problem and the more difficult reading is to be followed and rendered as “God *who is* the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.” (P. O’Brien) Paul’s thankfulness for great blessings glides into prayer for other blessings. Dissatisfied ever with his own attainments, he constantly reaches out to higher things, and so would incite the Colossians to progress. So he prays for increase of their knowledge and power and thankfulness. They must not be content to stand still. His prayer calls for progress. The constant cry is “forward,” “higher,” and “excelsior.” Not only so, but there is a close and necessary connection between increase of knowledge and increase of growth. On this point Spurgeon’s great sermon on 2 Peter 3:18, deserves careful study, since he stresses the thought that we grow in the grace by growing in the knowledge. We must know more to be more and to do more. (B.H. Carroll)

He praises the faith and love of the Colossians. By showing that he has a persuasion of this kind respecting them, he procures their friendly regards, that they may be the more favourably inclined and teachable for receiving his doctrine. “We give thanks to God, and we at the same time pray.” By this he intimates, that the condition of believers is never in this world perfect, so as not to have, invariably, something wanting. For even the man who has begun admirably well, may fall short in a hundred instances every day; and we must ever be making progress while we are as yet on the way. Let us therefore bear in mind that we must rejoice in the favours that we have already received, and give thanks to God for them in such a manner, as to seek at the same time from Him perseverance and advancement. (J. Calvin)

Col. 1:3 We keep on giving thanks (εὐχαριστέω, PAIIP, Iterative) to God (Dat. Ind. Obj.) Who is (ellipsis; ascensive: even) the Father (Dat. Ref.) of our (Gen. Rel.) Lord Jesus Christ (Obj. Gen.) at all times (Adv. Time) concerning you (Adv. Gen. Ref.), offering face-to-face prayer (προσεύχομαι, PMPtc.NPM, Iterative, Circumstantial, Deponent),

^{WHO} **Colossians 1:3** Εὐχαριστοῦμεν τῷ θεῷ πατρὶ τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ [Χριστοῦ] πάντοτε περὶ ὑμῶν προσευχόμενοι

^{VUL} **Colossians 1:3** gratias agimus Deo et Patri Domini nostri Iesu Christi semper pro vobis orantes

^{LWB} **Col. 1:4** Having heard [the report] of your faith [application of doctrine] in Christ Jesus [experiential sanctification] and the virtue love which you have towards all the saints,

^{KW} **Col. 1:4** Having heard of your faith in Christ Jesus and of the divine, self-sacrificial love which you constantly have for all the saints,

^{KJV} **Colossians 1:4** Since we heard of your faith in Christ Jesus, and of the love *which ye have* to all the saints,

TRANSLATION HIGHLIGHTS

Paul had previously heard (Constative Aorist tense) from a reliable source that there were Colossian believers who were quite capable of applying doctrine to their lives. They were successful in living experientially in Christ Jesus, even exhibiting impersonal love (Customary Present tense) towards fellow saints. Paul is not talking about their initial faith in Christ; he is referring to their continued love and application of faith (doctrine) after salvation. During times when false teachers were running rampant in the region, Paul no doubt appreciated this good report.

RELEVANT OPINIONS

What calls for thanksgiving is, in the first place, their faith. The phrase “in Christ Jesus” does not mean in this context that Christ is the object of their faith, though this is of course true, for in that case the prepositions “eis” or “epi” would be required. It is rather Paul’s familiar usage which we have seen already in verse 2. They are “in Christ” in the sense of drawing their life from Him. He is the sphere in which they move. All that they have, or hope to be, is due to their intimate relationship with Him. Thus the faith which they exhibit draws its vitality from their link with Christ. The exercise of that faith is controlled by their union with Him. Hence the whole Godward aspect of their life which is covered by the word “faith,” is dominated by Christ. (H.M. Carson)

This faith is “in Christ Jesus,” an expression which does not denote the object to which their faith is directed, but rather indicates the sphere in which “faith” lives and acts. (P. O’Brien) In the epistles of this period the Christian state appears chiefly as “life in Christ,” rather than, as in the earlier letters, as “salvation through Christ.” (G. Findlay) Having heard implies that he had only heard of, and not seen them ... a church which he had not at the time visited. (R. Jamieson)

Col. 1:4 Having heard (ἀκούω, AAPtc.NPM, Constative, Circumstantial; the report) of your (Poss. Gen.) faith (Acc. Dir. Obj.; application of doctrine) in Christ Jesus (Loc. Sph.; experiential truth) and (connective conj.) the virtue love (Acc. Dir. Obj.) which (Acc. Gen. Ref.) you have (ἔχω, PAI2P, Customary) towards all (Acc. Spec.) the saints (Acc. Dir. Obj.),

^{WHO} **Colossians 1:4** ἀκούσαντες τὴν πίστιν ὑμῶν ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ καὶ τὴν ἀγάπην [ἣν ἔχετε] εἰς πάντας τοὺς ἁγίους

^{VUL} **Colossians 1:4** audientes fidem vestram in Christo Iesu et dilectionem quam habetis in sanctos omnes

^{LWB} **Col. 1:5** **Because of the assurance which is reserved for you in the heavens [both eternal life & our inheritance from Christ], which you have heard before in the Word of Truth [doctrine], i.e., the gospel,**

^{KW} **Col. 1:5** Because of the hope which is laid aside for you in heaven, concerning which you heard before in the Word of Truth of the good news,

^{KJV} **Colossians 1:5** For the hope which is laid up for you in heaven, whereof ye heard before in the word of the truth of the gospel;

TRANSLATION HIGHLIGHTS

Every believer in the Lord Jesus Christ will receive eternal life and the prospect of obtaining an inheritance from Christ commensurate with his spiritual growth on earth. These rewards are on deposit in heaven (Gnomic Present tense) waiting to be distributed at the Judgment Seat of Christ. We have the opportunity of receiving temporal rewards while we are on earth, but we must wait for the rapture before we will receive our resurrection bodies and other benefits of our inheritance. The promise of eternal life and rewards is no surprise to the Colossians. They have heard it before (Gnomic Present tense) in the Word of Truth, the Scripture as they knew it then. Both uses of the Gnomic Present tense point to the absolute certainty of their assurance of eternal life and the infallibility of the Word of God.

RELEVANT OPINIONS

The “word of the gospel” means the declaration of the truth of God embodied in the apostolic message. The Colossians had heard the word beforehand, in the preaching of the apostolic message in its purity and integrity, before erroneous teachers had begun to substitute another gospel. (H.M. Carson) The hope laid up in heaven has the derivative sense of “reserved” or “awaiting,” as the crown. It means deposited, reserved, put in store out of the reach of all enemies and sorrows ... The “truth” is the contents of the “Word,” and the “gospel” defines the character of the truth. (M. Vincent) “Tou euangeliou” should

be taken as in apposition to “*logo tes alethias*,” the “word of truth, even the Gospel,” though it is often explained as the word of truth announced in the Gospel. (W.R. Nicoll) This passage is abused by Romanists, as if the hope of salvation depended upon works. (R. Jamieson)

Here hope is objective, the goal ahead. (A.T. Robertson) All who hear the word of the gospel ought to bring forth the fruit of the gospel, that is, be obedient to it, and have their principles and lives formed according to it. This was the doctrine first preached. (M. Henry) This hope is laid up in heaven, all of which means that the saints will enjoy it in the future life. There are treasures in heaven earned by the saints while on earth (Matt. 6:20), our citizenship is in heaven (Phil. 3:20), and we have an inheritance reserved for us (I Peter 1:4) in heaven. (K. Wuest) Christian hope is not mere wishing. It is a fervent yearning, confident expectation, and patient waiting for the fulfillment of God’s promises, a full Christ-centered assurance that these promises will indeed be realized. It is a living and sanctifying force. (W. Hendriksen)

Col. 1:5 Because of the assurance (Causal Acc.; prospect, basis for hope) which is reserved (ἀπόκειμαι, PMPTc.ASF, Gnostic, Attributive, Articular; deposited) for you (Dat. Adv.) in the heavens (Loc. Sph.; eternal life and our inheritance from Christ), which (Acc. Gen. Ref.) you have heard before (προακούω, AAI2P, Gnostic) in the Word (Loc. Sph.) of Truth (Adv. Gen. Ref.; doctrine), i.e. the gospel (Gen. Appos.),

^{WHO} **Colossians 1:5** διὰ τὴν ἐλπίδα τὴν ἀποκειμένην ὑμῖν ἐν τοῖς οὐρανοῖς ἦν προηκούσατε ἐν τῷ λόγῳ τῆς ἀληθείας τοῦ εὐαγγελίου

^{VUL} **Colossians 1:5** propter spem quae reposita est vobis in caelis quam audistis in verbo veritatis evangelii

^{LWB} **Col. 1:6** Which is in you [importance of doctrine in your soul], even as it is in all the world [by evangelistic proclamation], continually bearing fruit [correct application] and increasing [spiritual growth] even as it is in you [produced in you by the Spirit], from the day you heard [intake] and came to know fully [metabolization] the grace of God in Truth [Bible doctrine],

^{KW} **Col. 1:6** Which is present with you even as also it is in all the world constantly bearing fruit and increasing, just as it is also among you from the day when you heard it and came to know experientially the grace of God in the sphere of truth;

^{KJV} **Colossians 1:6** Which is come unto you, as *it is* in all the world; and bringeth forth fruit, as *it doth* also in you, since the day ye heard *of it*, and knew the grace of God in truth:

TRANSLATION HIGHLIGHTS

Bible doctrine is present in your soul (Descriptive Present tense) just like it is present in the souls of those in other geographical areas of the earth. There is no location on earth where doctrine cannot penetrate. The gospel has been and will continue to be preached in all the world (Gnomic Present tense) by evangelical proclamation. The Word of God continually bears fruit (Iterative Present tense) no matter where it is spoken. It brings forth new believers and enables them to grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. It increases (Progressive Present tense) spiritual growth wherever it is sown, bringing prosperity to those who listen. This fruit is produced by the Spirit in your soul, not by the energy of the flesh. It is initially positional, but thereafter experiential.

Fruit production began positionally the first time you heard the gospel message and believed in Christ. It began experientially the next time you listened to Bible doctrine from a qualified teacher (Ingressive Aorist tense) and it increased to full knowledge (Culminative Aorist tense) after you metabolized and applied it to life. Three Latin words in this verse beautifully describe this divine protocol for the Church Age believer. The intake (Latin: audio), metabolization (Latin: cognition) and application (Latin: fructification) of Bible doctrine is enabled by the grace of God through the filling of the Spirit. Hearing the Word of God is enabled by the grace apparatus for perception. Understanding what you have learned thoroughly enables you to build an edification structure of doctrine in your soul.

In other passages, the Greek word “gnosis” represents doctrine first heard and stored for future cogitation. The Greek word “epignosis” represents doctrine that is metabolized and is made ready for application to daily life. The Greek word “sophia” represents doctrine consistently applied with great success. This system of intake, metabolization and application of Bible doctrine is called GAP, or the grace apparatus for perception. It is available to all believers regardless of geographical location. It is free. It is a grace gift. As long as a believer is positive towards doctrine, the Spirit uses the raw material of the Word of God to bear continued fruit. Prosperous spiritual growth is progressive and has no end; there is no limit to how much we can learn, understand and apply.

RELEVANT OPINIONS

This Word, because it is God’s Word, is living, and so it has the inherent power of bearing fruit when it falls into the divinely-prepared soil of a receptive heart. This fruitfulness is seen in two directions: first in the reconciliation of a man to God, when he is justified by faith in the Christ Whom the gospel declares; and secondly in the actual transforming of his character by the Holy Spirit, Who uses the Word of God as the means of sanctification. The message of the grace of God came to the Colossians in true and undiluted form. They made it their own as they heard, and then grasped, with a spiritual apprehension, the significance of the facts preached to them. The reception of the gospel is never a mere emotional reaction, nor is it only intellectual assent. True, it begins with hearing the Word of truth; but allied to hearing there must be the understanding which comes as a result of the illumination of the Holy Spirit. Paul uses the word understanding, epignosis. It has the intensive meaning involved in the prefix “epi,” and

speaks of knowledge which is much deeper than mere mental grasp. The use of the cognate verb here (knew) implies an assimilation of the inner meaning of the gospel, so that truth is transformed into experience. Such a deepening grasp of the gospel is a prerequisite to knowing its fruitfulness and power. (H.M. Carson)

“Bearing fruit” (implying inherent energy) precedes “growing” – the first describing the inner working, the second the outward extension ... The apostle prefers the more precise and distinctive “epignosis,” meaning accurate or advanced knowledge, the full knowledge of which “in truth” would preserve the Colossians from knowledge (gnosis) falsely so called. (G. Findlay) The growing and the fruit-bearing go on simultaneously as inward growth and outward expression. The Colossians fully apprehended the grace of God and should be immune to the shallow vagaries of the Gnostics. (A.T. Robertson)

The external growth keeps pace with the reproductive energy. While “karpothoroumenon” describes the inner working, “auxanomenon” gives the outward extension ... The true Gospel as taught by Epaphras was an offer of free grace, a message from God; the false gospel, as superimposed by the heretical teachers, was a code of rigorous prohibitions, a system of human devising. For God’s power and goodness the false gospel substituted self-mortification and self-exaltation. (J.B. Lightfoot) The word for “world” here is “kosmos,” and it simply means the Roman Empire of that day. The gospel at that time had penetrated into the farthest reaches of the Roman Empire. It may have even crossed over to Great Britain. I tell you, my friend, those early apostles were on the move! (J. V. McGee)

Col. 1:6 Which is present (πάρεμι, PAPtc.GSN, Descriptive, Attributive) in you (Adv. Acc.; importance of Bible doctrine in your soul), even (ascensive conj.) as (comparative particle) it is (εἰμί, PAI3S, Gnostic; gospel doctrine) in all (Dat. Measure) the world (Loc. Sph.; evangelical proclamation), continually bearing fruit (καρποφορέω, PAPtc.NSN, Iterative, Circumstantial; divine good) and (connective conj.) increasing (αὐξάνω, PAPtc.NSN, Progressive, Circumstantial; prosperous spiritual growth) even (ascensive conj.) as (comparative particle) it is (ellipsis) in you (Loc. Sph.; fruit is produced in you by the Spirit, not in the energy of the flesh), from the day (Adv. Gen. Time) you heard (ἀκούω, AAI2P, Ingressive; GAP, gnosis) and (connective conj.) came to know fully (ἐπιγινώσκω, AAI2P, Culminative; Edification Complex of the Soul, epignosis) the grace (Acc. Dir. Obj.) of God (Poss. Gen.) in Truth (Loc. Sph.; doctrine),

WHO **Colossians 1:6** τοῦ παρόντος εἰς ὑμᾶς καθὼς καὶ ἐν παντὶ τῷ κόσμῳ ἐστὶν καρποφορούμενον καὶ αὐξανόμενον καθὼς καὶ ἐν ὑμῖν ἀφ’ ἧς ἡμέρας ἠκούσατε καὶ ἐπέγνωτε τὴν χάριν τοῦ θεοῦ ἐν ἀληθείᾳ·

^{VUL} **Colossians 1:6** quod pervenit ad vos sicut et in universo mundo est et fructificat et crescit sicut in vobis ex ea die qua audistis et cognovistis gratiam Dei in veritate

^{LWB} **Col. 1:7** Just as you learned [previously] from Epaphras [functioning as your pastor-teacher], our beloved, fellow bonds slave, who is a consistently faithful minister of Christ on your behalf,

^{KW} **Col. 1:7** Even as you learned from Epaphras, the beloved, our fellow bonds slave, who is faithful on your behalf as a servant of Christ,

^{KJV} **Colossians 1:7** As ye also learned of Epaphras our dear fellowservant, who is for you a faithful minister of Christ;

TRANSLATION HIGHLIGHTS

Paul pays a wonderful compliment to Epaphras, who was functioning as their pastor-teacher at that time. The Colossians had previously learned (Constative Aorist tense) the doctrines of the grace apparatus for perception (GAP) from Epaphras. He had taught them at least once the doctrines of grace, both positional and experiential categories. Repetition is the price of knowledge, and the Colossians were getting their fair share of repetitive teaching from a good instructor. They knew what the protocol plan of God was for the Church Age believer. Paul tells them in writing that Epaphras was indeed (Durative Present tense) a consistently faithful minister of Christ on their behalf. Imagine the inner happiness Epaphras received when he read this compliment from the Apostle Paul in writing! In Latin, he received the title “Fidelis,” faithful, much like the *Semper Fi* echoed by the Marines today.

RELEVANT OPINIONS

The apostle has nothing but praise for the labours of Epaphras; nothing but approval for the doctrine that he had taught, and the discipline that had been established in the church at Colossae. The apostle’s friend Philemon also resided at Colossae, where his house had become an important center of Christian influence. (G. Findlay) Do we ever find any trace of jealousy or bitterness or unkindness in Paul’s opinion of other servants of the Lord? No! He does not imply that Epaphras is fine, and a friend of his, but his teaching is on the shallow side. He does not say that Epaphras is rather heavy in his speech, or has a poor voice, or unpleasant platform appearance. No! To the apostle Paul Epaphras is our dear fellow servant and faithful minister of Christ. (E. English)

Col. 1:7 Just as (Comp. Adv.) you learned (μανθάνω, AAI2P, Constative) from Epaphras (Abl. Agency; functioning as your pastor-teacher, not from a multiplicity of “elders”), our (Gen. Rel.) beloved (Descr. Gen.), fellow bonds slave (Subj. Gen.), who (Subj. Nom.) is (εἰμί, PAI3S, Durative, Descriptive) a consistently faithful (Descr. Nom.) minister

(Nom. Appos.) **of Christ** (Poss. Gen. or Abl. Source - "from Christ") **on your behalf** (Gen. Adv.),

^{WHO} **Colossians 1:7** καθὼς ἐμάθετε ἀπὸ Ἐπαφρᾶ τοῦ ἀγαπητοῦ συνδούλου ἡμῶν ὅς ἐστιν πιστὸς ὑπὲρ ἡμῶν, διάκονος τοῦ Χριστοῦ

^{VUL} **Colossians 1:7** sicut didicistis ab Epaphra carissimo conservo nostro qui est fidelis pro vobis minister Christi Iesu

^{LWB} **Col. 1:8** Who has also reported to us [Paul's team in Rome] concerning your virtue love in the Spirit.

^{KW} **Col. 1:8** Who also declared to us your love in the sphere of the Spirit.

^{KJV} **Colossians 1:8** Who also declared unto us your love in the Spirit.

TRANSLATION HIGHLIGHTS

Epaphras also reported (Constative Aorist tense) back to Paul and his team in Rome about the virtue love in the Spirit that he saw (Latin: manifested) in many of the Colossian believers. Some of them had utilized basic impersonal love towards their fellow man on the road to spiritual self-esteem; others utilized advanced impersonal love as a problem-solving device in spiritual maturity. In short, Epaphras gave Paul a positive status report on the church at Colossae.

RELEVANT OPINIONS

Epaphras not only carried the gospel to Colossae, but also brought back to Paul a report of the way in which the message had borne fruit in human lives. There had been the growth of that characteristic Christian grace, "agape," or love. This love has a two fold aspect as it is directed first towards God and then towards men. It is not to be equated with ordinary human love, but is rather a supernatural grace bestowed and maintained by the Holy Spirit. (H.M. Carson)

Col. 1:8 **Who** (Subj. Nom.) **has also** (adjunctive) **reported** (δηλώω, AAPtc.NSM, Constative, Circumstantial, Articular; made manifest) **to us** (Dat. Ind. Obj.; Paul's team located at Rome) **concerning your** (Poss. Gen.) **virtue love** (Acc. Gen. Ref.) **in the Spirit** (Loc. Sph.; gates 2 and 7 of the divine dynasphere).

^{WHO} **Colossians 1:8** ὁ καὶ δηλώσας ἡμῖν τὴν ὑμῶν ἀγάπην ἐν πνεύματι

^{VUL} **Colossians 1:8** qui etiam manifestavit nobis dilectionem vestram in Spiritu

LWB Col. 1:9 Because of this [positive report], we also from the day that we heard [from Epaphras], do not cease praying and constantly offering petitions [to the Father] on your behalf, so that you [the deficiency of your soul] might be filled to the point of overflowing with the full knowledge [from doctrine] of His sovereign will by means of all wisdom [consistently applied doctrine] and spiritual understanding [discernment between good & evil],

KW Col. 1:9 Because of this, we also, from the day we heard, do not cease on behalf of you offering our petitions and presenting our definite requests, that you might be filled with the advanced and perfect experiential knowledge of His will in the sphere of every kind of wisdom and intelligence which is spiritual,

KJV Colossians 1:9 For this cause we also, since the day we heard *it*, do not cease to pray for you, and to desire that ye might be filled with the knowledge of his will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding;

TRANSLATION HIGHLIGHTS

Paul and his associates have not stopped praying (Iterative Present tense) and offering petitions (Iterative Present tense) to the Father on behalf of the Colossian believers because of the positive report they received from Epaphras. The main emphasis of Paul's prayers for the Colossians is that their souls might continually be filled to the point of overflowing (Potential Subjunctive mood) with Bible doctrine. Paul understands that many of them are making great progress in the Christian life, but he knows there is still a deficiency that needs to be filled with the Word of God. Is any one of our souls so filled with doctrine that there is no room for more? Of course not, so this is always a legitimate and needful prayer.

Paul's desire is for their souls to be enriched, fattened with the full knowledge of His Word. A meager gnosis understanding of the basics of the faith is not enough. Paul wants them to be fully possessed with all the categorical knowledge of the Lord, so His thoughts are their thoughts. He wants this knowledge to include God's sovereign will and purpose for their lives and the world in general. He understands that this full knowledge requires thousands of positive decisions to listen to the Word of God. These consistent decisions are part of the function of our priesthood. By means of this consistent priestly function, we may acquire wisdom and spiritual understanding.

Wisdom comes from doctrine applied to life, over and over again. Spiritual understanding (Latin: intellect) is the ability to discern the difference between divine and cosmic phenomenon. Satan's cosmic system is a powerful lure. The ingenious devices he has developed for centuries are subtly arrayed to entice the growing believer out of fellowship with the Lord and into a lifestyle of sin. There is something in the cosmic dynaspheres for everyone. It takes a doctrinally wise and spiritually discerning believer to stay out of sin's clutches and in the filling of the Spirit. Paul prays that the Colossian

believers might continue their forward momentum, especially with regards to their progressive love of doctrine and mutual love for others who also love doctrine.

RELEVANT OPINIONS

Knowledge of the growth in grace of our fellow Christians should never lead to any slackening of desire on our part that they might continue to progress. Indeed, by his introductory phrase “for this cause also,” Paul emphasizes that it is the very facts which have given such cause for thanksgiving which are also an incentive to continue in unceasing prayer for them. It is significant that knowledge of the will of God (epignosis) is looked on as preceding a life that is pleasing to Him. Hence the thought is that the imperfection and inadequacy of our knowledge of God’s will must be more and more corrected by our growth in a deeper understanding. Wisdom (Sophia) speaks of that settled condition of the mind whose thinking is not dependent merely on the unaided processes of the human intellect, but is controlled and enlightened by the Spirit of Truth. Understanding (sunesis) speaks of the application of this basic wisdom to the various problems which present themselves to us and require a clear analysis before a decision can be taken. (H.M. Carson)

The content of the petition is that God might fill the Colossian Christians with a perception of His will, which consists of an understanding of what is spiritually important. This would result in conduct that is pleasing to the Lord. The power that would enable them to act in such a manner exercising patience and long-suffering would be derived from God’s glorious might ... The motif of “fullness” recurs frequently in this epistle, and it seems that the false teachers boasted that they offered the fullness of truth and spiritual maturity, while Epaphras had only instructed the Colossians in the first steps ... Because the Colossians had “come to know” God’s grace when they were converted, they might now be expected to grow in knowledge or perception. Knowledge in these letters was due to its relationship to the “mystery.” Such knowledge involved every facet of the Christian’s life, hence the prayer that the Colossians might be “filled” with it. Paul saw the need for them to increase in the knowledge of God and His will, and with this God’s mystery, Christ ... Heretical “gnosis” was speculative and theoretical while the knowledge for which the apostle prayed concerned the will of God – it was comprehensive and demanded obedience. The perception of God’s will consisted “in wisdom and understanding of every sort” on a spiritual level. (P. O’Brien)

Clearly the apostle has no desire for elementary standards nor time for superficial knowledge. To him a knowledge of the will of God is the indispensable prerequisite of a life pleasing to Him. In the divine therapy a mental transformation is the means used to achieve an ethical reward. Using some of the catchwords of those seeking to lead them astray, he prays for their full development in knowledge and apprehension of the will of God. He prays for a mind instructed in spiritual truth which also grasps the application of principles of life, with a view to worthy daily conduct which shall please the Lord in every way. There is progressive thought here. (E. Ashby) Wisdom, in its highest sense, is the sum of personal excellence belonging to the mind; it implies a vital knowledge of

Divine Truth, forming the sentiments and determining the will as it possesses the reason. For the errors invading Colossae were of a Gnostic type, mystic at once and rationalistic; against which a clear and well-informed understanding was the best protection. (G. Findlay)

The cure for these Gnostic intellectual upstarts is not ignorance, not obscurantism, but more knowledge of the will of God. Paul faces Gnosticism with full front and wishes the freest use of all one's intellectual powers in interpreting Christianity. (A.T. Robertson) Observe what it is that he begs of God for them: that they might be knowing, intelligent Christians. A mere empty notion of the greatest truths is insignificant. Our knowledge of the will of God must be always practical: we must know it, in order to do it. Our knowledge is then a blessing indeed when it is in wisdom, when we know how to apply our general knowledge to our particular occasions, and to suit it to all emergencies. (M. Henry) The false teachers also offered a "sophia," but it had only a show of wisdom; it was an empty counterfeit calling itself philosophy; it was the offspring of vanity nurtured by the mind of the flesh. (J.B. Lightfoot) Their progress was the impelling cause to Paul's prayer. (R. Jamieson)

The word "epignosis" is an advance upon "gnosis" knowledge in that it denotes a larger and more thorough knowledge. It is a knowledge which grasps and penetrates into an object. It was a favorite word of the Gnostics who used it to designate the superior knowledge which they claimed as their exclusive possession. If the Gnostics had their superior knowledge, so did the Christian Church. The former was speculative and false, the latter positive and true. Paul prays that they not only might have it but that they might be filled with it. His petition is that the Colossian saints might be filled with a thorough knowledge of God's will ... Doctrines and ethics are for Paul inseparable. Right conduct must be founded on right thinking, but right thinking must also lead to right conduct. (K. Wuest) Only epignosis doctrine has spiritual value and can be applied to every circumstance of life. When epignosis enters the stream of consciousness in your right lobe, the application of doctrine can begin. (R.B. Thieme, Jr.)

What does he pray for in their behalf? That they may know God more fully; by which he indirectly intimates, that something is still wanting in them, that he may prepare the way for imparting instruction to them, and may secure their attention to a fuller statement of doctrine. For those who think that they have already attained everything that is worthy of being known, despise and disdain everything farther that is presented to them. Hence he removes from the Colossians an impression of this nature, lest it should be a hindrance in the way of their cheerfully making progress, and allowing what had been begun in them to receive an additional polish. (J. Calvin) Wisdom is knowledge applied, and spiritual understanding is subjection to the mind of God. If the Christian is to develop and fructify, he must have – yes, be filled with – this knowledge of God's will. This knowledge of God's will, understood and applied, is the root of the Apostle's prayer, the root of our Christian growth. (E. English) The concept of wisdom deals with what we should be and do, and the idea of understanding refers to how we can accomplish those goals ... Both

wisdom and understanding involve critical thinking about the complexities of life and a Spirit-guided solution that manifests biblical content. (R. Gromacki)

There are babes in Christ, and they need to grow. Even the young men in Christ have yet to be perfected in all the exercises of practical consecration. Nay, the very fathers in Christ have not yet attained to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ. As at every stage we need to be taught more and more, so we need to be evermore in prayer for each other. To be filled with such thorough knowledge of God's will is to have it pervading our thoughts, and affections, and purposes and plans. It is neither a smattering of the gospel nor such profound knowledge as is merely intellectual. At the same time the being filled brings enlargement, and so the being filled is an ever continuing process. Now, this implies the loving, diligent, persevering study of the Word, and thereunto the use of all means in our power. The study of it, not to become learned, but, in the becoming learned, to become filled with the heavenly power of such learning. (W. Nicholson) Paul's request is for progressive knowledge, progressive knowledge of God's will, and progressive knowledge of God's will within the spiritual sphere. It is also a request for progressive fruitfulness following this progressive knowledge. The more we get into our minds Divine truth, the fuller our knowledge of God, and the richer will be the fruit which we produce. (R. Finlayson)

This prayer of Paul that the Colossians might have increase of knowledge and spiritual power was most pertinent to their condition as reported by Epaphras. If they had known more, they would have been less at the mercy of the false teachers leading them astray with vain philosophy, and if they had attained greater spiritual power they would not have been in danger of falling through weakness. It is ignorant and undeveloped Christians who support imposters, freaks, and cranks. (B.H. Carroll) Believers in Christ may find it difficult to continually place before the Lord the needs of other Christians. When we do pray for others, often our requests have to do with physical or material issues rather than spiritual things. But here in this section, Paul and Timothy continue unceasingly to pray that the Colossian saints be fortified by knowing God's will and be filled with His wisdom and understanding ... It is not enough simply to pray for someone else. The petitioner must also ask God to accomplish specific goals in the life of that person. (R. Gromacki)

Those who think they know enough, and disdain instruction, are the very persons to be beguiled by ensnaring teachers ... We are not to content ourselves with a partial, hasty knowledge of doctrine; with general notions, or a few points; but to seek to be replenished and filled with it; not as a vessel which has merely a few drops at the bottom, but as one filled up to the brim with the heavenly doctrine; by considering and weighing every word of the Holy Spirit; by using all the means of arriving at a right interpretation; a thorough knowledge of the languages from which and into which the Bible is translated; the rules of the grammatical interpretation of human speech; stores of ecclesiastical history laid up in the memory; chronology, manners and customs of the times and people referred to in the Bible; the writings of ancient and modern divines and

commentators; a humble, enlightened, and cautious criticism, built up of all these materials. (D. Wilson)

It is as if Paul were saying: “The *clear knowledge* of God’s will which is our basic petition for you is incomparably richer and more satisfying than the *knowledge* or *gnosis* that is held out to you by the advocates of heresy.” The penetrating knowledge which is part of the Christian’s spiritual equipment consists in “all spiritual wisdom and understanding.” Such *wisdom* is the ability to use the best means in order to reach the highest goal, a life to God’s glory. It amounts to *understanding* that is at once spiritual and practical. (W. Hendriksen)

Col. 1:9 Because of this (Causal Acc.; positive report), we (Subj. Nom.) also (adjunctive), from the day (Adv. Gen. Time) that (Gen. Spec.) we heard (ἀκούω, AAI1P, Ingressive; the report from Epaphrus), do not (neg. adv.; “never”) cease (παύω, PMI1P, Gnostic; stop) praying (προσεύχομαι, PMPTc.NPM, Iterative, Predicative, Deponent) and (connective) constantly offering petitions (αἰτέω, PMPTc.NPM, Iterative, Circumstantial; to the Father) on your behalf (Gen. Adv.), so that (Purpose clause) you (the deficiency of your soul) might be filled to the point of overflowing (πληρώω, APSubj.2P, Futuristic, Potential with an element of Contingency; fully possessed, impregnated, enriched, fattened) with the full knowledge (Acc. Gen. Ref.; cycling of doctrine through GAP) of His (Poss. Gen.) sovereign will (Obj. Gen.; purpose) by means of all (Dat. Measure; internal data, function of our priesthood) wisdom (Instr. Means; doctrine applied) and (connective) spiritual (Loc. Sph.) understanding (Instr. Means; discernment between things pertaining to the divine and cosmic systems),

^{WHO} **Colossians 1:9** Διὰ τοῦτο καὶ ἡμεῖς ἀφ’ ἧς ἡμέρας ἠκούσαμεν οὐ παυόμεθα ὑπὲρ ὑμῶν προσευχόμενοι καὶ αἰτούμενοι ἵνα πληρωθῆτε τὴν ἐπίγνωσιν τοῦ θελήματος αὐτοῦ ἐν πάσῃ σοφίᾳ καὶ συνέσει πνευματικῇ

^{VUL} **Colossians 1:9** ideo et nos ex qua die audivimus non cessamus pro vobis orantes et postulantes ut impleamini agnitione voluntatis eius in omni sapientia et intellectu spirituali

^{LWB} **Col. 1:10** So that you might begin to walk [function in the sphere of divine power] worthy [with integrity, dignity, and character] of the Lord with the view of pleasing Him in all things [the supergrace life], being fruitful in every good work [divine production] and constantly receiving growth [spiritual prosperity] by means of the full knowledge from God [maximum doctrine in the soul],

^{KW} **Col. 1:10** So that you may order your behavior worthily of the Lord with a view to pleasing Him in everything, in every work which is good constantly bearing fruit and increasing by means of the advanced and perfect experiential knowledge of God,

^{KJV} **Colossians 1:10** That ye might walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing, being fruitful in every good work, and increasing in the knowledge of God;

TRANSLATION HIGHLIGHTS

Paul prays that the Colossian believers will be full of knowledge and wisdom about the Lord Jesus Christ so they might begin walking (Ingressive Aorist tense) in the sphere of divine power. The only way to live a life that is exhibited by integrity, dignity and character that is pleasing to the Lord is by living the supergrace life. The only way to be sure that you are walking worthy of Him “in all things” is to be continually filled with the Spirit and Bible doctrine. That is our function as priests on earth. Paul also wants the Colossian believers to be spiritually fruitful (Descriptive Present tense) in every good work. That is our function as ambassadors of Christ on earth. This is our daily application of Bible doctrine to the problems of life; this is divine production, not works of the flesh.

At the same time, Paul wants them to continually grow (Iterative present tense) in grace by means of “epignosis doctrine” from God. The only way to be spiritually prosperous is to have maximum doctrine in the soul, a reservoir from which to draw and apply when times are tough. Growing in the grace and knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ, and bearing fruit (spiritual production), is the responsibility of every believer. That is our only true purpose in life. “Epignosis” doctrine is biblical truth that has been heard repeatedly and fully understood. It is doctrine that is available for application to life, not mere words on a page. “Gnosis” doctrine is biblical truth that has been heard, but is not understood or is rejected. Gnosis doctrine is stored in the “nous” or left lobe of the brain; if it is not metabolized in the soul, it eventually disappears in the stream of consciousness.

Epignosis doctrine is stored in the “kardia” or right lobe of the brain; it is metabolized and is ready to go! The Greek word often translated “heart” is “kardia.” Epignosis doctrine is stored in the kardia. In this context, the kardia is NOT the heart, but part of the soul – a thinking part of the brain, not the organ that pumps blood. So whenever you hear some preacher talk about a believer “having head knowledge, but not heart knowledge,” he has no idea what he’s talking about and is teaching false doctrine. There is no such thing as “head knowledge” or “heart knowledge,” only knowledge that is in storage and knowledge that is ready for application. Those who deprecate a full knowledge of Scripture are usually holy-rollers; avoid their heresies at all cost.

RELEVANT OPINIONS

Bearing fruit and being strengthened are both dependent upon what you *know*, not what you *do*. (D. Wretlind) The addition of the epithet “all” qualifying “pleasing” suggests further that they

are not to be limited by consideration of their duty, but are to aim at complete, or whole-hearted, pleasing of God ... We are taking the two participles “being fruitful” and “increasing” as both referring to “every good work.” What sustains this increasing fruitfulness is the “knowledge of God.” We are to increase with regard to the knowledge of God. Knowledge of the will of God is basic to any spiritual or moral growth. (H.M. Carson) Here it is individual (internal) growth; in verse 6 collective (external) growth is implied. (G. Findlay) The fullness of the knowledge of God’s will is bound to encourage consistent Christian living, and consistent Christian living will promote an increase in the knowledge of Him. (E. English)

The right lobe is the key to divine viewpoint, discernment, application of doctrine to experience, and divine wisdom that preserves a nation. No believer can glorify God apart from Bible doctrine metabolized and resident in the right lobe of the soul. The will of God is contained in Bible doctrine, but the full knowledge of His will can only be realized through the daily function of Operation Z: where the pastor-teacher communicates spiritual truth to believers who transfer this spiritual phenomena from the left lobe (gnosis) into the right lobe (epignosis) by faith through the Holy Spirit. (R.B. Thieme, Jr.) The first thing for which Paul prayed was that they might be filled with knowledge. The Greek word is “epignosis” which means a super knowledge. The Gnostics, the heretics there in Colossae, boasted that they had a super knowledge. Paul says here, “I pray that you might be filled with knowledge, that you might have a super knowledge.” But Paul confines this knowledge to the knowledge of the will of God. A Christian should not be static but alive and growing in the Word of God. (J.V. McGee)

Although there is perhaps greater emphasis on knowledge and wisdom in this petitionary prayer than in any other of Paul’s letters – and this includes a strong intellectual element to enable them to combat error – in true Hebraic fashion it leads to right action and conduct. The knowledge for which Paul prayed was designed to lead to righteous behavior ... Some commentators consider the two participles “bearing fruit” and “increasing” are to be held together, and related to the source of progress in maturity. On this view, the bearing of fruit and increasing are affected through the knowledge of God and they become visible “in every good work.” (P. O’Brien) The simple instrumental dative represents the knowledge of God as the dew or rain which nurtures the growth of the plant. (J.B. Lightfoot) The major motivation in Paul’s life was to know Christ. All believers should have this same goal. This goal can be achieved only through a humble study of God’s self-revelation through the Scriptures and in the application of biblical truth to the various facets of life. (R. Gromacki)

By the phrase “increasing in the knowledge of God,” he again repeats, that they have not arrived at such perfection as not to stand in need of farther increase; by which admonition he prepares them, and as it were leads them by the hand, to an eagerness for proficiency, that they may show themselves ready to listen, and teachable. What is here said to the Colossians, let all believers take as said to themselves, and draw from this a common exhortation – that we must always make progress in doctrine until death. (J. Calvin) It is a grand thing to be rooted in the full knowledge of God’s will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding. But we should not stand still. There should be an ever-increasing knowledge of this kind. This is Christian growth. The better we know Him, the more holy our lives will be; the more holy our living is, the more we

shall seek to know the Lord. And this knowledge is gained through His Word, which is given us to reveal Himself, and by obedience to that Word. (E. English)

We must love doctrines in order to know them. So that wisdom, in the spiritual sphere of our being, is very much the same with a true spiritual taste. To be filled in all spiritual wisdom is to be pervaded by a thorough knowledge of God's will in the clearness and the power of our heart's sympathy with that will. A real relish for it, and, therefore, a clear appreciation for it. To be filled in all spiritual understanding is so to be pervaded by a thorough knowledge of God's will in all wisdom, that we are able to think in accordance with God's will with regard to particular things. The knowledge of God's will is at the foundation of all Christian growth and efficiency. Acts of worship and of doing good to others are not enough; we must be also learners of the Word. It is being filled with the thorough knowledge of God that causes a believer to increase; and the more he is filled, the more he enlarges. According as he takes in the truth, both understanding and heart are expanded, and his moral power is multiplied. At the same time, the bringing forth fruit in good works reacts upon us, helping to increase our spiritual wisdom and understanding; and this, in turn, increases ourselves personally. (W. Nicholson)

Christianity is not a speculation, a philosophical theory. All its discoveries, all its light, all its knowledge, are designed to lead to practice; and if they are not employed for this end, they soon degenerate into human vagaries of "will worship," or pure enthusiasm, or even into skepticism and secret unbelief ... How absurd, then, is it to raise objections against the truth of Christianity on the ground of the bad lives of some of those who bear its name without understanding its discoveries, believing its doctrines, or submitting to its precepts. (D. Wilson) When a person grows in the clear knowledge of God, his strength and courage increase. (W. Hendriksen) How can a person apply what he does not know? Hence the study of the Scriptures is vital for living the Christian life. Knowledge must be coupled with obedience. (S. Leach)

Col. 1:10 So that you might begin to walk (περιπατέω, AAIInf., Ingressive, Purpose; function in the sphere of divine power) worthy of the Lord (Descr. Gen.; with integrity, dignity, and character) (Adv. Gen. Ref.) with the view of pleasing (Adv. Acc.) Him (ellipsis, Indir. Obj. supplied) in all things (Compl. Acc.; living the supergrace life), being fruitful (καρποφορέω, PAPtc.NPM, Descriptive, Modal) in every (Dat. Measure) good (Instr. Manner; of intrinsic value) work (Instr. Means; external data, function of our ambassadorship, divine production) and (connective conj.) constantly receiving growth (αύξανω, PPpTc.NPM, Iterative, Circumstantial; thriving, prospering) by means of the full knowledge (Instr. Means; expert skill) from God (Abl. Source),

^{WHO} **Colossians 1:10** περιπατήσαι ἀξίως τοῦ κυρίου εἰς πᾶσαν ἀρεσκείαν ἐν παντὶ ἔργῳ ἀγαθῷ καρποφοροῦντες καὶ αὐξάνομενοι τῇ ἐπιγνώσει τοῦ θεοῦ

^{VUL} **Colossians 1:10** ut ambuletis digne Deo per omnia placentes in omni opere bono fructificantes et crescentes in scientia Dei

^{LWB} **Col. 1:11** Constantly being strengthened by means of every enabling power [delegated to believers when they are filled with the Spirit] according to the standard of the ruling power of His glory [divine sovereignty and omnipotence] resulting in all patience [faith rest technique] and stability through suffering [provides spiritual momentum] associated with inner happiness [supergrace happiness as a result of passing tests],

^{KW} **Col. 1:11** By every enabling power being constantly strengthened in proportion to the manifested power of His glory, resulting in every patience and forbearance,

^{KJV} **Colossians 1:11** Strengthened with all might, according to his glorious power, unto all patience and longsuffering with joyfulness;

TRANSLATION HIGHLIGHTS

Paul prays that the Colossian believers will be constantly and continuously strengthened (Iterative Present tense) by the enabling power of God. This “constant strengthening” is portrayed by Paul using a double “dunamis” in the Greek, which means “empowered by power.” This is a reference to delegated divine omnipotence to every believer who is filled with the Spirit, i.e., resides in the sphere of divine power (divine dynasphere). This strengthening is not a guarantee without qualifications, nor is it a one-time event. It is a potential condition which depends on a believer’s being filled with the Spirit every day. In other words, this is an experiential sanctification verse.

God has provided a spiritual system for us to live in, often called the love complex or the divine dynasphere. When a believer has faithfully acknowledged sin to the Lord (1 John 1:9), he is placed inside this sphere or complex. Everything we do when we are residing in this spiritual complex strengthens us. When we sin, we immediately exit the system and nothing we do while outside the system benefits us spiritually. Why? Because this enabling power system was designed according to the standard of the ruling power of His glory. Divine sovereignty and omnipotence are the basis of this delegated power, and the requirement for utilizing this power is fellowship with the Lord. Fellowship with the Lord requires us to acknowledge (confess) all sin as a function of our priesthood.

When we are inside the love complex or the power system, we are in fellowship with the Lord. When we sin and are removed from the power system, we are no longer in fellowship with the Lord. Confessing sin to the Lord as soon as possible is of paramount importance; it assures a continuous state of being in fellowship and being constantly strengthened by Him. There is a definite article “tes” in the Greek that emphasizes His glory being revealed to us when we are in the sphere of His enabling power. When we are in His sphere of power, we come to know Him better; when we are outside His sphere of power, we are alienated from His Person and His glory. Paul wants us to be constantly, continuously inside this sphere of delegated, enabling power.

We do not sit still when we are in the sphere of His enabling power. By applying the doctrine we have learned in the sphere of His power, we successfully exercise the faith rest technique and gradually acquire divine patience during difficult times. As we continue to learn doctrine and apply it to daily life, the Lord tests us by bringing several categories of suffering upon us. The goal is for us to utilize Bible doctrine in the filling of the Spirit to pass through this suffering, as Jesus passed through various categories of suffering during His earthly ministry. We must have a structure or complex of doctrine in our soul (Edification Complex of the Soul) before we can apply it. And we must have practice in applying this doctrine to daily life by passing momentum tests. We grow in the grace and knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ when we are able to endure suffering by utilizing our delegated spiritual assets.

This is often called “momentum in the sphere of divine power.” The word “momentum” itself denotes forward movement in the spiritual life. When we have forward momentum in the spiritual life we receive a gift of inner happiness. The more tests we pass, the greater our happiness becomes. The more time we are able to remain in the filling of the Spirit, the more spiritual momentum we experience. There are stages or levels of spiritual growth and happiness, all depending on how well we execute His divine protocol in the power system. What is this divine protocol? It is the intake, metabolization, and application of Bible doctrine in the filling of the Spirit. There is no other protocol for the Church Age believer; there are no substitutes or shortcuts. Paul wants all believers to be continually strengthened by this delegated, enabling power.

RELEVANT OPINIONS

There seems to be a parallel between “in every good work” and “with all might.” This suggests that for every requirement there is power available. No matter how wide the demand of Christian service may be, nor how difficult by human standards, there are always available divine resources to match it. Further, it is significant that this receiving of power is a continuous experience. “Strengthened” is continuous; the Christian does not receive an initial impetus which must serve him for the whole journey. He may confidently expect that the God who came to him in regenerating power will continue to strengthen him. The word used for power, *kratos*, is in the NT used only of God. This essential divine power, when manifested to us, becomes in us “*dunamis*,” here translated “strength,” which energizes us and enables us to live lives that will please Him. (H.M. Carson)

Patience is not so much a passive acceptance of the inevitable, as an active unrelenting endeavor even in spite of difficulty and trial. Longsuffering is that virtue which is seen in face of provocation. Whereas the natural instinct is to retaliate, whether by bitter word or by an act of revenge, the Christian is to aim rather at that quiet spirit which was exemplified by Him Who in the moment of supreme provocation prayed, “Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do.” (H.M. Carson) The power of God which indwells the Christian community enables them to walk in a way that is pleasing to Him. Nothing

less than God's indwelling power is required. His glorious might is more than adequate for the Colossians' needs. This strength will be provided as varying circumstances are confronted. (P. O'Brien) Whatever is the power of God Himself, that will be engaged in infusing, not one, but every degree of strength – all might – all kinds and measures of inward power and strength, as we need them. (D. Wilson)

The same word is repeated as noun and verb (dunamis, dunamao: power, empowered) with a strong Hebraistic sort of emphasis. (G. Findlay) Endurance and long-suffering: the difference of meaning is best seen in their opposites. While "hupomone" is the temper which does not easily succumb under suffering, "makrothumia" is the self-restraint which does not hastily retaliate a wrong. The one is opposed to cowardice or despondency, the other to wrath or revenge. (J.B. Lightfoot) When Paul adds "with joy," he clearly distinguishes the Christian from the Stoic in his attitude towards affliction. (D. Guthrie) The power which characterizes His glory is the measure of the strength to be imparted to the Colossians. (R. Jamieson) To be rejoicing in God is to be ready for whatever trials and toils. Joyfulness is the peculiar glory of the Gospel. And since it is of the essence of strength, all important it is to the efficiency of the Christian life. (W. Nicholson)

The Christian should be so filled with joy that he is able to meet all his trials with a buoyant sense of mastery. (W.R. Nicoll) It is true that the Christian experience may be a victorious experience in Christ – but the very fact that there is victory presupposes that there is conflict. And so the Apostle takes this into consideration in his petition, and pleads for all God's own that they may be strengthened with all might according to His glorious power. All the power of God is available for the believer in Christ. We are to be strengthened, not out of this power, that is, with a small portion of it, but according to it. All of it is available for the believer in Christ. (E. English) The term steadfastness points to circumstances sent by God, and the word patience refers to the endurance of things imposed by man. (R. Gromacki)

Col. 1:11 Constantly being strengthened (δυναμόω, PPPTc.NPM, Iterative, Circumstantial; double δύναμις, "empowered by power") by means of every (Dat. Measure) enabling power (Instr. Means; delegated power of the divine dynasphere; potential, ability) according to the standard of the ruling power (Adv. Acc.; Divine Grip) of His (Poss. Gen.) glory (Adv. Gen. Ref.; divine sovereignty and omnipotence; has a τῆς for emphasis on the revealing of Himself) resulting in all (Acc. Spec.) patience (Acc. Result; faith rest technique) and (connective conj.) stability through suffering (Acc. Result; momentum inside the divine dynasphere) associated with inner happiness (Gen. Assoc.; completed Edification of the Soul (ECS) or supergrace (SG) status from passing momentum testing),

^{WHO} **Colossians 1:11** ἐν πάσῃ δυνάμει δυναμούμενοι κατὰ τὸ κράτος τῆς δόξης αὐτοῦ εἰς πᾶσαν ὑπομονὴν καὶ μακροθυμίαν μετὰ χαρᾶς

^{VUL} **Colossians 1:11** in omni virtute confortati secundum potentiam claritatis eius in omni patientia et longanimitate cum gaudio

^{LWB} **Col. 1:12** **Constantly giving thanks to the Father Who qualified you [by inheritance] for a share of the assigned portion [of escrow blessings] of the saints in the sphere of light [only attained by continued residence and function inside the sphere of light],**

^{KW} **Col. 1:12** Constantly giving thanks to the Father who qualified you for the portion of the share of the inheritance of the saints in the sphere of the light;

^{KJV} **Colossians 1:12** Giving thanks unto the Father, which hath made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light:

TRANSLATION HIGHLIGHTS

Paul reminds us that we need to continually give thanks (Iterative Present tense) to the Father because He qualified each of us (Gnomic Present tense) to receive a share of escrow blessings with other saints. This opportunity comes to us by way of inheritance and we show our capacity for life by thanking the Source of these blessings. What are escrow blessings? They are blessings provided to those who continue to reside and function inside the sphere of divine power, i.e., the divine dynasphere. Paul parallels the love complex, also called the divine dynasphere, with the phrase “sphere of light.” They are all synonyms, each portraying God’s system and protocol with a slightly different emphasis. Receiving this category of blessings depends on our faithfulness to follow His precisely correct protocol plan for the Church Age believer.

RELEVANT OPINIONS

The believers meant here were in different stages of progressive sanctification, but in respect to the meetness specified, they all alike had it from the Father, in Christ. This once-for-all meetness contains the germ of sanctification, developed progressively in the life by the Father’s Spirit in the believer. The life of heavenliness is the first stage of heaven itself. The inheritance is a joint one, of which each saint has his portion. It begins in the believer here on earth, descending from the Father of lights by Jesus, the true light, and is perfected in the kingdom of light, in antithesis to darkness. (R. Jamieson) God has made available to us the exercise of divine omnipotence for the execution of His plan. Never before the Church Age did God extend this privilege to every believer. Only partial utilization of God’s omnipotence was made available to a few believers of previous dispensations. (R.B. Thieme, Jr.)

Fitness for heaven does not depend upon anything except Christ’s death on the cross for our sins. Of course, the Christian is to walk worthy of the Lord, to bear fruit, to grow. But for these things he receives reward; his is not made fit for heaven and his inheritance by them. The inheritance which we have, of which we have been made partakers, for which we should give thanks, is God Himself. Eternally we shall have fellowship with Light, and there will be no darkness – no sin,

no sorrow, no tears, no death; but only Light, the righteousness of God in Christ. (E. English)
The inheritance of Canaan, the allotment of the promised land, here presents an analogy to, and supplies a metaphor for, the higher hopes of the new dispensation. (J.B. Lightfoot)

Light is the emblem of truth, holiness, purity, perfection. God is Light. Christ is Light. The Word of God is Light. The inheritance in light, then, is such a condition of blessedness as is constituted of the truth as it is in Jesus, as reflects Christ Himself, as shines with the splendors of God. As saints, we are already in light and in the kingdom. We enjoy the inheritance even now; not the whole of it, indeed, but in part. So that not only have we heaven in prospect, but also an earnest of heaven, a very part of heaven already. (W. Nicholson) Verses 12-14 is a Qumran/Essene debate area; they believed it was inserted. (D. Wretling) The inheritance which is in light need not be limited to future glory. The children of God walk in light on earth. (M. Vincent) Maturity does not come overnight, so patience (toward adverse circumstances) and longsuffering (toward unpleasant people) will always be needed. (S. Leach)

The saint who uses faithfully his opportunities for being filled with the thorough knowledge of God's will, becomes constantly self-enlarged, and so is constantly gaining as regards his present share of the inheritance, and also as regards his future share in heaven; for while each one there shall receive the crown of life, yet some crowns will have more stars in them than will others. A meetness or fitness for it we do need to have. A sick man cannot partake of a sumptuous feast. (W. Nicholson) The unregenerate state is described as the kingdom of darkness. It is one of spiritual gloom in its government, essence, pursuits, and subjects. This principle is named "darkness" on account of its prevailing ethical element. Above it the heaven is shrouded in dismal eclipse, around it lies dense and impervious gloom, and before it stretches out the shadow of death. (J. Eadie)

The concept of darkness includes an opposition to the light as well as an absence of it. This is a realm of moral rebellion, insubordination, and creaturely independence. (R. Gromacki) Meetness is a very different thing from pardon and justification. This meetness is an internal change, gradually produced by the Holy Spirit by the renewing of the soul, which fits and prepares the fallen and corrupt heart of man for holy pleasures, holy duties, and holy society in the heavenly world. By nature we have no meetness, no preparation, no qualification, no congruity, no capacity, for partaking of the inheritance of the saints in light. There is a carnal mind in each of us, which is enmity against God. There is a will opposed to the divine will. There are affections full of impurity, disorder, perturbation, opposition to holiness. There is an understanding darkened, besotted, "alienated from the life of God through the ignorance that is in us, because of the hardness of our heart." There are false notions attached to the words of happiness, pleasure, satisfaction ... The business of heaven would afford us no delight. (D. Wilson)

Col. 1:12 Constantly giving thanks (εὐχαριστέω, PAptc.NPM, Iterative, Circumstantial) to the Father (Dat. Ind. Obj.; capacity for life) Who qualified (ικανόω, AApTc.DSM, Gnomic, Substantival; by inheritance) you (Acc. Adv.) for a share (Acc. Dir. Obj.) of the assigned portion (Adv. Gen. Ref.; of escrow blessings, inheritance) of the saints (Poss. Gen.) in

the sphere of light (Loc. Sph.; only attained by continued residence and function inside the divine dynasphere),

^{WHO} **Colossians 1:12** εὐχαριστοῦντες τῷ πατρὶ τῷ ἰκανώσαντι ὑμᾶς εἰς τὴν μερίδα τοῦ κλήρου τῶν ἁγίων ἐν τῷ φωτί·

^{VUL} **Colossians 1:12** gratias agentes Patri qui dignos nos fecit in partem sortis sanctorum in lumine

^{LWB} **Col. 1:13** Who has delivered us [all believers] out from the dictatorship of the darkness [Satan’s cosmic system] and transferred us into the kingdom [the realm of royal power during the Church Age] belonging to the Son of His love,

^{KW} **Col. 1:13** Who delivered us out of the tyrannical rule of the darkness and transferred us into the kingdom of the Son of His love,

^{KJV} **Colossians 1:13** Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated *us* into the kingdom of his dear Son:

TRANSLATION HIGHLIGHTS

God the Father has delivered (Dramatic Aorist tense) all believers out from the authority of the darkness of Satan’s cosmic system. He rescued us from the clutches of evil and transferred us (Culminative Aorist tense) into the kingdom of His Son, Jesus Christ. This kingdom is a realm of royal power (Gk: basilia) which we have been given to reside and function in during the Church Age; this realm of royal power is also known as the love complex or the divine dynasphere. It belongs to His Son because He resided in this love complex during His ministry on earth and functioned in it to absolute perfection. He then bequeathed this “prototype” realm of royal power to us as the “operational” sphere of divine power. It is our duty and pleasure to reside in this kingdom or royal power by being filled with the Spirit and Bible doctrine. Positionally, we have been removed from darkness and placed in the Light; experientially, we must follow divine protocol for the Church Age and reside and function in that sphere of Light.

RELEVANT OPINIONS

Negatively, God has delivered us from the tyranny of darkness and, positively, He has placed us under the rule of His beloved Son ... The inheritance for which the Colossians had been fitted was in the realm of light, a complete contrast to that tyranny under which they had once lived ... This change of dominion, so vividly described under the categories of “light” and “darkness” and which had taken place in the lives of the Colossians at their conversion, was absolutely determinative for the life of the believer. They are now “children of light” and are to behave accordingly. (P. O’Brien) The word “kingdom” also means “delegated power.” (J. Lightfoot) The word translated “kingdom” is used in the sense of “reign,” in an essentially personal sense. (D. Guthrie) The kingdom of the Son

here spoken of is a present spiritual power. We are not rescued from earth's governments, but from the powers of darkness which direct and dominate them. (A.E. Knoch) When anybody heard the Greek word "lutron," ransom, it was natural for him to think of the purchase money for manumitting slaves. (A. Deissmann)

There is no progress in this deliverance; it springs forth full-formed, and on the instant. Removed from a place is one thing; settlement in another place is quite another thing. He did translate us (aorist again) into the kingdom. The kingdom of Christ, therefore, exists now and here. The kingdom of Christ on earth is spoken of as though it were coterminous with the visible Church. But the very places where this is done do themselves show that the whole of the visible church is not the kingdom of Christ. Rather, the true kingdom of Christ here is within the visible church, a "wheel within a wheel." It consists of all those, and only those, who have been really delivered out of the power of darkness. Into this inner community within the visible Church the Father translates every one to whom He has given the new life, and who has received, by faith in Jesus Christ, the forgiveness of sins; and he becomes a member, not alone of the visible Church, but of the Church spiritual; of the kingdom which is righteousness, and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit. (W. Nicholson)

The word "delivered" is, literally, rescued. Who is the power of darkness? It is Satan, the ruler of this world's darkness. We were in his power. He held us captive in trespasses and sins, in sin itself. He is a tyrant whom the sinner must serve. But God "has rescued us" from Satan's power ... The reference here is not to a future earthly kingdom, but to the sphere in which Christ is Lord today – in Heaven, and on earth among those who trust in Him. He, the Son of God's love, is the center of all. It is the Kingdom of Light. We have been translated into it. This is no kingdom of angels or prophets or the like; it is the Kingdom of the Son of God's love, the Kingdom of Christ, the Saviour and Lord. No longer is Satan sovereign; no longer do we live in darkness – but Christ is King, and the sphere of our dwelling is Light. (E. English) To be in Christ is to experience the same enmity and opposition from Satan which he entertains toward Christ. There is no enmity on Satan's part toward the unsaved. They form a part of his world-system and are said to be under his power. (L. Chafer)

Before our deliverance we were under the power of darkness. Sin held sway over us. The word "exousia," power, is normally used in the NT in the straightforward sense of authority exercised over someone. It is because Christ has accepted the penalty of the broken law, having died to sin, that God may without injustice deliver us from the authority of sin. The realm in which we were slaves is described as darkness. This implies not only absence of light, but opposition to the light. It is not only a condition of being without God, but of being against God. Hence we have been delivered from a rebel kingdom, and brought under the sovereignty of our rightful King. (H. Carson) Demons function as communicators in the vacuum (mataiototes) or vanity of the mind and they transmit evil. Satan's sphere, the kingdom of darkness, is thus transferred into darkness in the soul of the believer. (R.B. Thieme, Jr.)

Col. 1:13 Who (Subj. Nom.) has delivered (ῥύομαι, AMI3S, Dramatic, Deponent; rescued) us (Acc. Dir. Obj.; all believers) out from the dictatorship (Abl. Separation; authority) of the darkness (Adv. Gen. Ref.; Satan's cosmic system) and (connective conj.) transferred (μεθίστημι, AAI3S, Culminative) us (ellipsis, Dir. Obj. supplied) into the kingdom (Acc. Spec.; the realm of royal power during the Church Age) belonging to the Son (Poss. Gen.) of His (Gen. Poss.) love (Adv. Gen. Ref.; into the divine dynasphere),

^{WHO} **Colossians 1:13** ὃς ἐρρύσατο ἡμᾶς ἐκ τῆς ἐξουσίας τοῦ σκούτου καὶ μετέστησεν εἰς τὴν βασιλείαν τοῦ υἱοῦ τῆς ἀγάπης αὐτοῦ

^{VUL} **Colossians 1:13** qui eripuit nos de potestate tenebrarum et transtulit in regnum Filii dilectionis suae

^{LWB} **Col. 1:14** **By means of Whom we keep on having and holding our redemption [by His paying a ransom and purchasing us out of the slave market of sin], the cancellation of our sins,**

^{KW} **Col. 1:14** In Whom we are having our liberation, procured by the payment of ransom, the putting away of our sins;

^{KJV} **Colossians 1:14** In whom we have redemption through his blood, *even* the forgiveness of sins:

TRANSLATION HIGHLIGHTS

Believers in the Lord Jesus Christ continue to possess redemption (Durative Present tense) by His payment of a ransom and purchasing us out of the slave market of sin. No person, angel or demon can ever take this redemption away from us. All those for whom He died (the elect) likewise had their sins cancelled. This redemption includes every one of His sheep, no more and no less. Christ did not die for hogs or dogs, only His sheep, i.e., only those Whom the Father had given Him. The word “redemption” is isagogically important because the Gnostics of that time denied the redemptive work of Christ. Paul teaches the redemption, reconciliation, deity, resurrection, incarnation and other important Christological doctrines in this next section in order to refute these Gnostics.

RELEVANT OPINIONS

We have omitted the phrase “through His blood,” you will observe; for it does not appear here in the oldest manuscripts. It comes over from Ephesians 1:7 where it belongs ... If you are counting on your self, your so-called righteousness, your works, your church membership, or any earthly thing – you are lost, in your sins. Our redemption, our forgiveness are free, through faith – but they cost God the Father His Son. (E. English) This next section (14-20) depends grammatically and practically on the previous verses.

The passage falls into two parts, closely corresponding both in form and sense, and governed, like other of the apostle's more fervid and elevated utterances, by a Hebraistic antithetical rhythm of expression, which should aid us in the difficulties of interpretation. There is a symmetrical structure exhibited. (G. Findlay) The blessed doctrine of justification by faith is not to be explained away by being confounded with the sanctification which is the product of the grace of the Holy Spirit within us, nor with the notion of a concrete faith justifying us, or faith and works combined, or faith implying and including works, which are all forms of self-righteousness. On these errors it is not necessary for me to dwell, as the capital and absorbing invention now, is justification through an inherent and infused righteousness. (D. Wilson)

There is, indeed, an infused righteousness, as well as an imputed one. There is a righteousness of sanctification, as well as a righteousness of justification: the two gifts are contemporaneous, and can never be separated the one from the other in the true penitent. The same God, who accounts him righteous before His bar for the only merits of Christ which are without him, begins at the same time to make him holy also by His blessed Spirit within him. But the two blessings differ in various respects, the one from the other. The one blessing is imputed, the other imparted: the one is external, the other internal; the one bestowed and reckoned as to its benefits merely, the other infused and inherent as to its actual nature and propensities; the one producing a change in the state of a sinner, the other in the dispositions and habits of his heart and conduct; the one perfect and entire at once, the other gradual and always imperfect in this world; the one entitling him to the inheritance of heaven, the other fitting him for that inheritance. (D. Wilson)

The erroneous thought of universal redemption repudiates every attribute of God: (1) It opposes His foreknowledge because it represents God as striving to do what He knows He will not do. (2) It rejects the love of God. What sort of love would be manifested in dying for all, when many of them will be punished with everlasting damnation? (3) It renounces the wisdom of God. What is wisdom that would form a redemption that fails of its intended purpose? (4) It opposes the justice of God. Where is justice that would demand two payments for the same crime? (5) It disclaims the power of God. If Christ died for all and all are not saved, it must be from want of power. (6) It rejects the immutability of God. It would intimate that He loves at one time, and then that love changes to hatred. (7) It repudiates the satisfaction of Jesus Christ. He said He will see His seed and be satisfied. (8) It denies the efficacy of Christ's death. If every one is not saved, Christ died in vain. (9) It renounces the work of Christ, because it separates His redemptive work from His work of intercession. However, He intercedes for all for whom He died. (10) It is a contradiction to those who commit the unpardonable sin. Since salvation of some is impossible, how could Christ die to render salvation possible for all men? The Lord Jesus Christ was wounded for the transgression of the elect and bruised for their iniquities. The chastisement of their peace was upon Him. They are healed with His stripes. That is the pure gospel penned by the prophet Isaiah. Anything taught to the contrary is another gospel. It is not the gospel of Christ. (W.E. Best)

Col. 1:14 By means of Whom (Instr. Means) we keep on having and holding (ἔχω, PAIIP, Durative) our (ellipsis) redemption (Acc. Dir. Obj.; by His paying a ransom and purchasing us out of the slave market), the cancellation (Adv. Acc.) of our sins (Adv. Gen. Ref.),

^{WHO} **Colossians 1:14** ἐν ᾧ ἔχομεν τὴν ἀπολύτρωσιν τὴν ἄφεσιν τῶν ἁμαρτιῶν·

^{VUL} **Colossians 1:14** in quo habemus redemptionem remissionem peccatorum

^{LWB} **Col. 1:15** **Who [Jesus Christ] is and always was the exact image [shares the same divine essence] of the unseen [invisible] God [deity of Christ], the privileged firstborn [humanity of Christ at the virgin birth] with reference to all creation [hypostatic union],**

^{KW} **Col. 1:15** Who is a derived reproduction and manifestation of absolute deity, the invisible deity, who [the Son] has priority and sovereignty over all creation,

^{KJV} **Colossians 1:15** Who is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of every creature:

TRANSLATION HIGHLIGHTS

Jesus Christ is now, always was, and always will be (Durative Present tense) the exact image (Gk: icon) of the invisible God. This is a clear reference to the deity of Christ, Who shares an identity of divine essence with the Father. He was also the privileged firstborn among creatures. The “privileged” qualifier is a reference to the humanity of Christ, particularly His virgin birth. The Greek word “prototokos” in this verse should be compared to “monogenes” in John 1:14, which was used to describe Jesus Christ as “the uniquely born one.” The emphasis is not on being the first born (Latin: primogeniture) as much as it is pointing to the uniqueness of His birth. There was only one virgin birth and only one hypostatic union; there will never be another. Jesus Christ was and is unique. The deity and humanity of Christ are combined in His Person, and in this verse it presents us with the doctrine of the hypostatic union.

RELEVANT OPINIONS

That Christ is the image of God means that He is essentially and absolutely the perfect expression and representation of God the Father. (J. MacArthur) Since the false teachers stressed an angelic cosmogony, it was essential for Paul to set forth the proper doctrine of creation. Christ is identified as the direct Creator-God in two ways: His title and His work. His title “first-born of all creation” connotes both priority and sovereignty ... All three Persons of the triune God actively participated in the work of creation (Gen. 1:1-2, John 1:3). If a distinction of work assignment can be discovered, then the Father was the source of creation, the Son its agent, and the Spirit its preserver. (R. Gromacki) “Firstborn” in Colossians 1:15 must refer back to its ancient meaning, expressing sovereignty, heirship, as primal head and Lord. (B. Carroll) This must not be twisted as it often has been, to mean that Christ stands at the apex of creation, but is

still a created being. The context rules this out completely. He is begotten of the Father, not created; and as firstborn, He is before all creation. (H. Carson)

The very nature and character of God have been perfectly revealed in Him; in Him the invisible has become visible. Both Old and New Testaments make it plain that no one has ever seen God. The 4th evangelist, however, adds that “the only begotten Son, Who is in the bosom of the Father, has made Him known” (John 1:18). The God whose creative Word in the beginning called light to shine forth from the darkness had now shone in his heart “to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ” (2 Cor. 4:4,6) ... Stripped from its context and from other Pauline statements about Christ the phrase “firstborn of all creation” might be understood to include Him among created things (as simply the “eldest” of the family); but the context makes it plain that the title cannot refer to Him as the first of all created beings since the immediately following words, which provide a commentary on the title, emphasize the point that He is the One by whom the whole creation came into being ... In most of the contexts where the Greek word “prototokos” is used, while priority of time is in view the notion of supremacy or priority of rank tends to dominate. As “prototokos” Christ is unique, being distinguished from all creation. He is both prior to and supreme over that creation since He is its Lord. (P. O’Brien)

It is this clause that has been taken by many modernists and cultists as authority for stating that our Lord Jesus Christ was a created being. As far back as the beginning of the 4th century there arose the doctrine called “Arianism,” fostered by Arius of Alexandria. Arianism was but an early expression of the dangerous heresies of Christian Science, Unitarianism, Russelism (known as Millennial Dawnism and various other aliases) and a host of other like false systems. For Arius held and taught that our blessed Lord was not God, but a created being, a creature higher than the angels, perhaps, but neither divine nor eternal. It did not take modern thinking to refute this error. It was branded heresy at the Council of Nicea in 325 A.D. This doctrine which seeks to deny the Deity of our Lord and rob Him of His glory, did not, however, wait for Arius to be its progenitor. Satan, the father of lies, brought it into being in the 1st century, as Gnosticism. (E. English)

The Father is origin and goal, while Christ is medium and agent. The main emphasis is on the glory of God and the supremacy of Christ over creation. To interpret “prototokos” as merely “being the eldest of the family among created things” would simply be inconsistent here – not only with the immediately following words about Christ’s agency in creation (implying His priority to it) and with similar references elsewhere, but also with the conception of Christ as the divine and pre-existent Wisdom, and with the Christian experience of redemption, which cannot be accounted for in terms of a Redeemer who is included among created things: it demands the postulate of divine action. (C.F.D. Moule) It is not mere likeness that is predicated of the First and Second Persons of the Godhead, but God is represented as the original, and Christ as the copy. At the same time, it may be employed in consistency with His divinity, if (admitting the mystery of the relationship, that one should be original or prototype, and another copy or impress) we think of Him as the Perfect Image of God. (R. Finlayson)

The Colossian error rested on a philosophical dualism. It assumed an absolute separation between the infinite God and the finite, material world, which was viewed as the work of lower and more or less evil powers. To counteract it, therefore, the apostle's argument must go down to the foundation of things, and seeks for a true conception of the universe on which to ground itself. Accordingly, in this and the following verses, he bases the redeeming work of "the Word made flesh Who dwelt among us," set forth in his previous Epistles, upon that of "the Word Who was with God in the beginning, Who was God, and through Whom all things were made." The Jewish theosophy of the day distributed the offices of representing God, and of mediating between Him and the creatures, amongst a variable and nebulous crowd of agencies – angels, words, powers – neither human nor strictly Divine. The apostle gathers all these mediatorial and administrative functions into one, and places them in the hands of "the Son of His love." Looking up to God, He is His image; looking down on creation, He is its primal Head and Lord. (G. Findlay)

The Lord Jesus is the image of God in the sense that as the Son to the Father He is derived by eternal generation in a birth that never took place because it always was. (K. Wuest) God revealed Himself in the Son, the Word, before all created existence. The Divine Word carries in Himself the archetypes of all existences, so that in Him all things in heaven and earth were created. "In Him" implies something prior to "by" and "for Him" presently after: the three prepositions mark in succession the beginning, the progress, and the end – the conditional, the mediating, and the final cause. (R. Jamieson) The word "image" implies a prototype, and embodies the essential verity of its prototype. (M. Vincent) In Chapter 1, Christ is the invisible image of God; in Chapter 3, we are to become the invisible image [heroes] of God. (D. Wretling) In Colossians 1:15 there is no hint that He became the Son when born of Mary. Rather His priority, pre-eminence, dignity, rank, and position as the Son of God are highlighted. (R. Lightner)

Col. 1:15 Who (Subj. Nom.; reference to Jesus Christ) is and always was (εἰμί, PAI3S, Durative & Futuristic) the exact image (Pred. Nom.; icon, archetype, copy) of the unseen (Descr. Gen.; invisible) God (Adv. Gen. Ref.; deity of Christ), the privileged firstborn (Pred. Nom.; virgin birth, humanity of Christ; compare primogeniture with the πρωτότοκος "uniquely born one" in John 1:14) with reference to all (Gen. Content) creation (Adv. Gen. Ref.; hypostatic union),

^{WHO} **Colossians 1:15** ὅς ἐστιν εἰκὼν τοῦ θεοῦ τοῦ ἀοράτου πρωτότοκος πάσης κτίσεως

^{VUL} **Colossians 1:15** qui est imago Dei invisibilis primogenitus omnis creaturae

^{LWB} **Col. 1:16** Because by means of Himself [Jesus Christ] all things in the heavens and upon the earth were created, the visible things [like man] and the invisible things [like the angelic host], whether they are human governments [thrones] or constituted authorities [dominions] or angelic rulers [principalities] or demon commissioned officers [potentates]; all things stand created through Him [Jesus Christ] and for Him [His divine purpose].

^{KW} **Col. 1:16** Because in Him were created all things in the heavens and upon the earth, the visible things and the invisible ones, whether they are thrones or lordships or principalities or authorities. All things through Him as intermediate agent and with a view to Him stand created.

^{KJV} **Colossians 1:16** For by him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether *they be* thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by him, and for him:

TRANSLATION HIGHLIGHTS

Jesus Christ created (Dramatic Aorist tense) all things in the heavens (Latin: universe) and upon the earth (Latin: terra) by means of His Own sovereign will and omnipotence. He created the visible things, like man, and the invisible things, like the angelic host. While heavens and earth is meant to be an all comprehensive statement, Paul elaborates on several large categories. An elliptical “they are” is supplied due to the unusual use of “eite” as a conjunction, rather than the usual “kai;” this use emphasizes an “either, or” translation, as opposed to a mere “and” translation. This use of “or” is meant to answer someone who might think he has an exception to the rule. There is no exception, however, for His creative works are complete.

He created human governments (thrones) and constituted authorities (laws of divine establishment). That covers the category of “visible things upon the earth.” He also created angelic rulers (dominions) and demon commissioned officers (potentates). That covers the category of “invisible things in the heavens.” [I also accept the view of some commentators that all four categories are angelic rulers.] Paul then reiterates the all-encompassing nature of the Lord’s creative act: All things stand created (Intensive Perfect tense) through Him and for His divine purpose. Even the most insignificant insect on earth was created by Him for some unknown purpose. Not only did He create all things as well as the means by which they govern themselves, but He did not turn His back and leave their subsequent operation up to men and angels. He is actively involved in daily operations.

This passage of Scripture effectively rebukes those cultists who take the prior verse out of context and try to make the Lord Jesus Christ a part of the creation (first born) rather than the Creator Himself. Not only was Jesus not created, He existed in eternity past and functioned as the Creator of heaven and earth. Because He was involved in creation, He obviously existed prior to Genesis 1 and 2. There are other Scriptures where Jesus Christ is involved in creation (John 1:3, 1 Cor. 8:4-6, Heb. 1:2, Rev. 3:14). Paul is presenting the doctrines of eternal sonship, the deity of Christ, His sovereignty and omnipotent control of history, and His creative works in heaven and on earth. It’s hard to find a more succinct and irrefutable statement of these doctrines in Scripture.

RELEVANT OPINIONS

The historical act of God “in Him” establishes that Christ is (and continues to be) the “firstborn of all creation” ... Heaven and invisible correspond as do earth and visible. (P. O’Brien) “En auto” is possibly both instrumental and local – “by means of Him and within Him.” (C.F.D. Moule) Our Lord was not a created Being, but He existed, One with the Father and with the Holy Spirit, through all eternity. Every thing was created by Him and for Him. Not only was He the Agent of creation, but creation was accomplished for Him, for His pleasure. (E. English) Christ is not a mere likeness of the Father, like the head of a sovereign stamped on a coin, or as a son bears the features of his father. He is an essential manifestation and embodiment of the Father. Thus the invisible God becomes visible to man. It implies His perfect equality with the Father in respect to substance, nature, and eternity. The Son is the Father’s Image except in respect that He is not the Father. (T. Croskery)

If all things were created by Him, that clears up the question of His being a creature or the Creator. He is the One who did the creating. (J.V. McGee) By their low and vague conceptions of the position of Christ, and by over-exalted notions of that of the angels, the Colossian errorists had all but, if not altogether, identified their powers with His. The apostle, therefore, declares that the invisible beings of the worlds above us, however lofty their names or mighty their powers, are His creatures as much as the lowliest objects within our sight ... The incarnation and resurrection of Christ, with the whole course of His miracles, assure us that natural law is, and must prove itself ultimately to be, subservient to spiritual law, the lower to the higher order, the material world to the moral being of man. (G. Findlay)

His authority is established in the Church as in the universe, His being Mediator in both spheres. There was dualism at the root of the doctrine of intermediate beings or angelic mediators. The apostle teaches the existence of one Mediator presiding over the two spheres – the universe and the Church. This is a cardinal point in the Christology of the NT. There are some who have mistakenly or confusedly held the idea that it is God in nature and Christ in the Church. It is really Christ in both, as the Mediator of God. He mediated in creation before He mediated in redemption. It belongs to the very idea of His being to be Mediator. This absolute pre-eminence of Christ implies a unity of meaning, a harmony of working, between the two spheres. (R. Finlayson) Whenever “exousia” occurs in the Pauline letters in the plural or in the plurally used singular with “pasa” (except for Titus 3:1) it clearly signifies invisible angelic powers ... The forces of tyranny that hold sway over men’s lives – and perhaps some of the Colossians were troubled by this – are, in fact, a part of creation and subject to Christ as Lord. (D.A. Carson)

The Gnostic errorists at Colossae taught that the gulf between the infinite God and finite man was bridged by subordinate angelic agencies. The apostle teaches that the gulf is bridged by Jesus Christ, Who, being both God and Man, touches both and is the Reconciler of God and man. He shows that Christ has a double sovereignty, a twofold mediatorial function – in relation to the universe and in relation to the Church. Thus we have a most pregnant statement concerning the doctrine of the person of Christ with the view of showing that there is a real mediation between God and creation. (T. Croskery)

In Him, within the sphere of His personality, resides the creative will and the creative energy, and in that sphere the creative act takes place. Thus creation was dependent upon Him. (M. Vincent)

Col. 1:16 Because (causal conj.) by means of Himself (Instr. Means) all things (Subj. Nom.) in the heavens (Loc. Place) and (connective conj.) upon the earth (Gen. Place) were created (κτίζω, API3P, Dramatic; barah: out of nothing), the visible things (Nom. Appos.; like man) and (connective conj.) the invisible things (Nom. Appos.; like the angelic host), whether (inferential conj., copula) they are (ellipsis, verb understood from the unusual use of εἶτε as a conj.) human governments (Pred. Nom.; thrones) or (copula) constituted authorities (Pred. Nom.; laws of divine establishment, dominions) or (copula) angelic rulers (Pred. Nom., principalities) or (copula) demon commissioned officers (Pred. Nom., potentates); all things (Subj. Nom.) stand created (κτίζω, Perf.PI3S, Intensive & Dramatic) through Him (Abl. Agency) and (connective conj.) for Him (Gen. Purpose; for His divine purpose);

^{WHO} **Colossians 1:16** ὅτι ἐν αὐτῷ ἐκτίσθη τὰ πάντα ἐν τοῖς οὐρανοῖς καὶ ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς τὰ ὄρατὰ καὶ τὰ ἀόρατα εἶτε θρόνοι εἶτε κυριότητες εἶτε ἀρχαὶ εἶτε ἐξουσίαι· τὰ πάντα δι' αὐτοῦ καὶ εἰς αὐτὸν ἔκτισται·

^{VUL} **Colossians 1:16** quia in ipso condita sunt universa in caelis et in terra visibilia et invisibilia sive throni sive dominationes sive principatus sive potestates omnia per ipsum et in ipso creata sunt

^{LWB} **Col. 1:17** Furthermore, He [Jesus Christ] was before all things [eternal existence] and all things are held together by Him [divine omnipotence sustains the universe].

^{KW} **Col. 1:17** And He Himself antedates all things, and all things in Him cohere.

^{KJV} **Colossians 1:17** And he is before all things, and by him all things consist.

TRANSLATION HIGHLIGHTS

Continuing his defense of the deity of Jesus Christ, Paul states that Jesus antedates all things (Historical Present tense), which means He existed in eternity past before the universe was created. Since Jesus Christ was the Creator of the heavens and the earth, then obviously He preceded them in time. And not only did he precede them in time, but by His divine omnipotence He holds the universe together (Dramatic Perfect tense). Even the observable divine laws of nature were created by Him and are sustained by Him (Latin: held constant). Jesus Christ can discontinue or interrupt the divine laws of nature any time He wants; that is the prerogative of Divine Omnipotence. So the laws of nature

(as man sees them) do not restrict the Lord, rather the Lord controls the divine laws of nature. Jesus Christ created time and controls history and everything in it by His sovereignty and omnipotence.

RELEVANT OPINIONS

Not only was the universe created in the Son as the sphere, by Him as the divine agent, and for Him as the goal; it was also established permanently “in Him” alone, as the second affirmation, “in Him all things are held together” asserts. He is the sustainer of the universe and the unifying principle of its life. Apart from His continuous sustaining activity all would disintegrate. (P. O’Brien) No created being in the universe is independent of Christ. All are “through Him and for Him” so that “He is before them,” and all of them have their continuous existence only “in connection with Him.” (R. Lenski) The philosopher may seek for a principle of coherence, a unity amid all the diversity of the world of sense; but in the Son the believer finds the true principle of coherence. It is His power alone which holds creation together. (H. Carson) He is the super glue of the universe. (J.V. McGee)

It is a sublime thought that everything in creation and in history was planned for the glory of our blessed Redeemer. This world with its mountains and lakes and cataracts, its flowers and fruits and birds, was made so beautiful because it was Christ’s world. Other worlds, peopled by the heavenly hosts, were created that His glory might be revealed to them and through them. Man was created and the ages of history were all arranged for Him. The eternal purposes of redemption and their fulfillment in time were all for Him. He is the Corner-stone of the universe no less than of the Church. Behind the laws of nature we see the mind of Christ. If He were to cease to uphold things, they could not hold together; their harmony, nay more, their very existence, would cease; for in Him all things live and move and have their being. (E. Prout)

Christ not only creates, but maintains in continuous stability and productiveness. Nothing is left empty of His presence, but to all things and through all, severally and collectively, He is the giver and sustainer of life ... He, the Wisdom of God, holds the universe in tune together. He it is who, binding all with each, and ordering all things by His will and pleasure, produces the perfect unity of nature and the harmonious reign of law. (M. Vincent) He impresses upon creation that unity and solidarity which makes it a cosmos instead of a chaos. Thus (to take one instance) the action of gravitation, which keeps in their places things fixed and regulates the motions of things moving, is an expression of His mind. (J. Lightfoot)

Each Church Age believer also has available to him the power of God the Father and God the Son. Each person of the Trinity exercises His absolute power on behalf of the Church Age believer. The omnipotence of God the Father is related to the portfolio of invisible assets. As the believer learns and obeys the Father’s plan, he begins to experience the “riches of His grace.” The omnipotence of God the Son preserves the universe and perpetuates the human race. The final two characteristics of the Church Age – concerning

prophecy and invisible heroes – explain how the Son’s power operates uniquely toward the Church. (R.B. Thieme, Jr.) Christ is outside creation, prior to it, distinct from it, and He is sovereign to it all, for it was created by Him and indeed for Him. In Him is its principle of coherence. (E. Ashby)

The point is that the providence of God lies behind the orderly world that we know. Remove the providence of God over nature, and – not only is all sense of security gone – the world is gone; meaningless change would soon replace its order ... Let all divine restraints be removed and man be left absolutely free, and all ethical distinctions would immediately disappear, the spirit of barbarism would prevail universally, and pandemonium would reign supreme. But that does not happen. And the reason it does not happen is that God does not leave His creatures to the exercise of an absolute autonomy. They are free, yet within limits. Moreover, God in His perfect freedom also intervenes directly, as He chooses, to order their wills and actions. (J. Boice) When He was hungry, Christ resisted the satanic temptation to turn stones into bread while His omnipotence held together the universe, including all the bread on earth. Even the scientific laws of nature are treatises on the faithfulness of the Lord Jesus Christ “in whom all things hold together.” (R.B. Thieme, Jr.)

Col. 1:17 **Furthermore** (continuative conj.) **He** (Subj. Nom.; reference to Jesus Christ) **was** (εἰμί, PAI3S, Historical) **before all things** (Adv. Gen. Time; eternal existence of Jesus Christ) **and** (connective conj.) **all things** (Subj. Nom.) **are held together** (συνίστημι, Perf.AI3S, Dramatic; fixed, stable, constant) **by Him** (Instr. Agency; Divine Omnipotence sustains the universe by means of the observable divine laws of nature).

^{WHO} **Colossians 1:17** καὶ αὐτός ἐστιν πρὸ πάντων καὶ τὰ πάντα ἐν αὐτῷ συνέστηκεν

^{VUL} **Colossians 1:17** et ipse est ante omnes et omnia in ipso constant

^{LWB} **Col. 1:18** **Furthermore, He [Jesus Christ] is now and always will be the Head over the Body [federal headship], the Church, Who was the beginning [eternal existence], the first [uniquely] born out from the dead [resurrection] so that He might become the One Who is pre-eminent [ultimate authority] in all things.**

^{KW} **Col. 1:18** And He Himself is the Head of His Body, the Church. He is the Originator [i.e., the Creator], the firstborn out from among the dead, in order that He might become in all things Himself the One Who is pre-eminent;

^{KJV} **Colossians 1:18** And he is the head of the body, the church: who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead; that in all *things* he might have the preeminence.

TRANSLATION HIGHLIGHTS

Jesus Christ is now and always will be (Durative Present tense) the Federal Head over His Body (Latin: corpus), the Church. He is the supreme authority, the spiritual leader of the Church, and as stated by Lightfoot, “the inspiring, ruling, guiding, combining, sustaining power, the mainspring of its activity, the center of its unity, and the seat of its life” – not a pope, not an apostle, not a prophet – only Jesus Christ as God. He was the beginning (Historical Present tense) of all created things as we know them, which points in the prior verse to His eternal existence. There is a contrast between two Greek words in this verse, “ginetai” and “estin.” The first is absolute being (Constative Aorist tense) and the second is historical manifestation (Historical Present).

He was also the first born (Latin: primogeniture), the uniquely born, the only Son of God in hypostatic union. This was accomplished when He was “born” out from the dead (Latin: mortis, Gk: nekros), a reference to His bodily resurrection. He was the first resurrection, the predecessor to our future resurrection. What was the purpose of His resurrection, you might ask? The purpose and eventually determined result is so that He might become (Constative Aorist tense) the pre-eminent One (Latin:primary, Gk: proteus) in all things. There is no element of contingency here; He already is the holder of the highest rank and authority in the universe due to His resurrection. This is not something that may happen in the future, it has already occurred and is the status of things now and forever.

RELEVANT OPINIONS

Using the OT concept of corporate personality and by referring to “body” and “head” as he does, he has made his own distinct contribution to NT Christology and ecclesiology. In the context headship over the body refers to Christ’s control over His people as well as the dependence of all the members on Him for life and power. As the body of Christ the church is vitalized by His abiding presence and His risen life. The Person who is head of the body, the church, is the risen Christ, for He is called the “beginning,” and “the firstborn from the dead” ... with reference to authority and sovereignty. The resurrection age has burst forth and as the first who has risen from among those who had fallen asleep, He is the first-fruits who guarantees the future resurrection of others. (P. O’Brien)

The will of Christ must prevail throughout all of God’s creation. That is God’s intention. God is moving forward today undeviatingly, unhesitatingly, uncompromisingly toward one goal. That goal is to put Jesus on the throne of this world which today is in rebellion against God. That is the objective of God. (J.V. McGee) The Church must own no other Head than Christ. The pope is not and cannot be the head of the Church in any sense. We can be in subjection to no other than Christ. (T. Croskery) The distinctiveness of the character of the Church as the Body of Christ is twofold. It is distinct because of who are included within that body (i.e., Jews and Gentiles), and it is distinct because of the new relationship of Christ indwelling the members of that body. Both of these distinctives are unique with the Church and were not known or experienced by God’s people in OT times. (C. Ryrie)

The word “head” implies not only sovereignty but rule, the source of the body’s life and growth through vital connection with it. In every sense of the word “church,” Christ is the head. He is the head of every particular church in which alone the institution expresses itself, and He is the head of the prospective church in glory, whose constituent elements, or component parts, will be the whole number of the elect saved by Him. (B. Carroll) Was the resurrection of Christ absolutely the first one in history? We must say, “Yes, absolutely.” It has been objected that Lazarus and others were raised from the dead. But all these were but restorations to life under the old conditions. The bodies were not glorified. They were yet subject to mortality, weakness, dishonor, and corruption. They all died again. In Christ’s case He rose to die no more. There was complete and final triumph over the grave. (ibid)

Col. 1:18 Furthermore (continuative conj.), He (Subj. Nom.; Jesus Christ) is now and always will be (εἰμί, PAI3S, Durative) the Head (Pred. Nom.; superior authority, leader) over the Body (Obj. Gen.), the Church (Gen. Appos.; federal headship), Who (Nom. Appos.; Jesus Christ) was (εἰμί, PAI3S, Historical) the beginning (Pred. Nom.; eternal existence of Christ), the first born (Pred. Nom.; uniquely born) out from the dead (Abl. Separation; resurrection), so that (purpose conj.) He might become (γίνομαι, AMSubj.3S, Constativ, Purpose & Result, Deponent; no element of contingency present here) the One (Pred. Nom.) Who is pre-eminent (πρωτεύω, PAPtc.NSM, Descriptive, Substantival; holder of the highest rank) in all things (Dat. Measure),

^{WHO} **Colossians 1:18** καὶ αὐτός ἐστιν ἡ κεφαλὴ τοῦ σώματος τῆς ἐκκλησίας· ὅς ἐστιν [ἡ] ἀρχὴ πρωτότοκος ἐκ τῶν νεκρῶν ἵνα γένηται ἐν πᾶσιν αὐτὸς πρωτεύων

^{VUL} **Colossians 1:18** et ipse est caput corporis ecclesiae qui est principium primogenitus ex mortuis ut sit in omnibus ipse primatum tenens

^{LWB} **Col. 1:19** (Because He [God the Father] has determined with pleasure that all the fullness [blessings & happiness] should have permanent residence and function in Him [Jesus Christ],

^{KW} **Col. 1:19** Because in Him [God] was well pleased that all the fullness be permanently at home.

^{KJV} **Colossians 1:19** For it pleased *the Father* that in him should all fulness dwell;

TRANSLATION HIGHLIGHTS

“Fullness” refers to the sum-total of divine attributes; Jesus had them all in full strength. “Pleroma” or fullness also represented the Shekinah glory “filling the sanctuary,” the

presence of God among His people. But in the NT, the Shekinah glory may “fill our sanctuary,” by the indwelling and filling of the Holy Spirit. The power of the Spirit was available to Jesus during His ministry and the power of the Spirit is available to us in our ministry. God the Father had great pleasure (Constative Aorist tense) in giving a magnificent spiritual gift to His Son, Jesus Christ. This gift contained the quintessence of spiritual blessings and happiness, what Paul calls “the fullness.”

The Father determined that this “fullness” would reside permanently in Jesus Christ during his earthly ministry, and it would function or sustain Him in daily life. It was the Father’s pleasure that this fullness would dwell in Christ, and His pleasure is synonymous with His sovereign plan. This gift is called by many names: the sphere of divine power, the love complex, the sphere of light, etc. Jesus lived in this sphere and essentially “test-drove” the prototype version. At the point of regeneration, every believer is given the fully-tested, operational version of the power sphere to sustain them in the Christian life. If we follow the simple operating instructions, we can live in it and the Holy Spirit will sustain us just like He sustained Christ on earth.

RELEVANT OPINIONS

“Pleroma” implies that a man is completely controlled and stamped by the powers which fill him. There is in this term a strong element of exclusiveness or totality. The joy, knowledge, etc. which fill the Christian shape his whole existence and imperiously claim his whole being ... In Ephesians 4:7-11 Christ is described as the One Who dispenses in fullness the gifts of grace. He is this because He has achieved dominion over all powers, both the lowest and the highest. With all the powers which go forth from Him Christ rules over and among all the forces which have become subject to Him, giving life to the whole Church ... You are brought to fullness in His sphere of life or through Him, or more probably: You are filled absolutely by Him as the Giver. There is a gift of perfect joy in this fellowship with Christ. The soul is wholly filled with virtues by disposition, learning and practice. Absolutely everything which is of spiritual origin may be found again in this pleroma. (TDNT: Vol. VI)

The members of the community which have attained the measure of adulthood, the full measure of Christ, are no longer children who can be easily influenced. The noun pleroma underlines the overflowing wealth of the blessing with which Christ accompanies His apostle. In Him the whole fullness of divine grace has become actively present. For this reason the relation of the believer to Him can be described as a continual receiving from the superabundance in whose historical manifestation God has more than fully made Himself known as the Saviour. The word “pleroma” emphasizes the fact that the divine fullness of love and power acts and rules in all its perfection through Christ ... In Colossians 1:18ff Christ, the historical bearer of the divine fullness in whom God reconciled His enemies, has become the Head of the Church. From the head vital powers flow into the body. It can thus be said that Christ has actively fulfilled this. (TDNT: Vol. VI)

“Pleroma” means to fill a vessel, so that the result can be described by fullness. It also refers to being “full of the Holy Spirit,” endowing the recipient with an enduring, miraculous power. To be filled with the power of the Spirit is to have the fullness of the gifts of grace flow through one as a member of the body of Christ. According to Colossians 2:9, “the whole fullness of deity dwells bodily in Christ.” This fullness which is described in Colossians 1:15-19 is entirely related to Christ’s cross, death, and resurrection. For this reason believers also have this fullness in Him. By His cross, death and resurrection they are reconciled through faith, renewed, and made to participate in His triumph. Ephesians 3:19 contains the prayer that the readers may “know the love of Christ which surpasses knowledge, that you may be filled with all the fullness of God.” This knowledge is not given automatically. It depends upon the building up of the church as the body of Christ ... so that Christ’s joy becomes their joy. (DNTT: R. Schippers)

Paul was not indebted to Gnostic thought for his understanding of “pleroma.” But it is possible that he is undermining a cardinal point in the Colossian heresy which considered supernatural powers to be intermediaries between God and the world ... He is the “place” in whom God in all His fullness was pleased to take up His residence. All the attributes and activities of God – His spirit, word, wisdom, and glory – are perfectly displayed in Christ. God in all His divine essence and power had taken up residence in Christ. (P. O’Brien) “Pleroma” is one of the most important words in this epistle. The pleroma, the full fullness of God, dwells in Him. When He was down here on earth, the “pleroma” was at home in Jesus. (J.V. McGee) “Eudokesen” refers to a definite decree of the Father, and the obvious meaning of the words is that it lay within the Father’s choice whether the “pleroma” (indwelling of the fullness) should dwell in the Son or not. (W.R. Nicoll)

He emptied Himself (Phil. 2:7) and again was pleased that “all the fullness” should be His. (G. Findlay) It is a reference to the “fullness” or merit and righteousness, of strength and grace. (M. Henry) Pleroma, “fullness,” is a Greek noun with an active meaning, “that which fills up,” and a passive meaning, “that which has been completed or made complete.” The NT uses pleroma to describe the execution of the unique spiritual life in history (Eph. 1:10, 22-23, 4:13) by means of the same power source that created the universe. In Ephesians 3:19 the “pleroma of God” describes the fullness of blessing from God. The pleroma believer, equivalent to the Jeshurun believer in the OT, fulfills the necessary divine objectives to become spiritually mature, receives optimum blessings, and glorifies God to the maximum. (R.B. Thieme, Jr.) Now he means a fullness of righteousness, wisdom, power, and every blessing. (J. Calvin)

The fullness is the indwelling of Deity. The Judaeo-Gnostics taught that the fullness of the Godhead was distributed or dispensed among several spiritual agencies – “thrones, dominations, principedoms, virtues, powers” – so as to introduce grades of angelic mediators between God and man. The apostle declares that the fullness of the Godhead rests, not in them, but in Christ as the Word of God. Thus He is no mere emanation from the Divine Being. The false teachers held that the fullness of the Godhead as dispersed among spiritual agencies was partial like a blurred image, and also temporary. The apostle teaches that the totality of Divine powers abides in Christ, that it abides in Him permanently and remains forever, and does not come and go like a transient phenomenon.

Therefore we have an inexhaustible supply for all the needs of the Church. There is fullness of wisdom to keep us from error, fullness of grace to subdue our sin, fullness of joy to keep us from despair, and fullness of mercy and pity to succour us in our distresses. (T. Croskery)

The pre-eminence of Christ is assured by the “fullness” that abides in Him. All the Divine perfections are His (Col. 2:9). We may take the term in its widest signification – a fullness of life and power and glory, of goodness and grace, without limit and without end. Thus the Man Christ Jesus, full of a Divine life was qualified to be the Agent by which the great reconciliation in the universe should be accomplished. (E. Prout) The eternal indwelling of the Godhead explains the headship of the Church, not less than the headship of the universe. (J. Lightfoot) “Pleroma” fullness was used by the Gnostic teachers in a technical sense, to express the sum-total of the divine powers and attributes. They were only partial and blurred images, often deceptive caricatures, of their original, broken lights of the great Central Light. Christ may have been ranked with these inferior images of the divine by the Colossian teachers. Hence the significance of the assertion that the totality of the divine dwells in Him. (M. Vincent)

As a demonstration of the love of God for the Son, God the Father invented the divine dynasphere to sustain the humanity of Christ who, from the virgin birth until His ascension to heaven, would face continuous opposition in the devil’s world. God combined certain divine principles into a unique system. He took impersonal love and personal love – patterned after His own divine attribute of love – and added the ministry of God the Holy Spirit as the power to support our Lord during His earthly ministry. Given at the virgin birth the divine dynasphere was the original Christmas present from the Father to Jesus Christ. Christ in His humanity lived perpetually inside the prototype of the same divine dynasphere in which we are commanded to live. (R.B. Thieme, Jr.) The word “pleroma” emphasizes the fact that the divine fullness of love and power acts and rules in all its perfection through Christ. (R. Earle)

Col. 1:19 (because (causal conj.) He (God the Father) has determined with pleasure that (εὐδοκέω, AAI3S, Constativ) all (Acc. Spec.) the fullness (Acc. Dir. Obj.; the quintessence of blessings and happiness) should have permanent residence and function (κατοικέω, AAInf., Culminative, Purpose & Result; dwell) in Him (Loc. Sph.; the prototype divine dynasphere as the original Christmas present from the Father to Jesus Christ),

^{WHO} **Colossians 1:19** ὅτι ἐν αὐτῷ εὐδόκησεν πᾶν τὸ πλήρωμα κατοικῆσαι

^{VUL} **Colossians 1:19** quia in ipso conplacuit omnem plenitudinem habitare

LWB Col. 1:20 And through Him [Jesus Christ] to reconcile all things [believers] to Himself [reconciliation as an accomplished fact, not a hypothetical], having concluded peace [again,

an accomplished fact, not an hypothetical] through the blood [spiritual death] of His cross [definite atonement], through Him only [reconciliation is exclusively from Jesus Christ], whether things on earth [elect believers] or things in the heavens [elect angels].

^{KW} **Col. 1:20** And [God was well pleased] through His agency to reconcile all things to Himself, having concluded peace through the blood of His Cross, through Him, whether the things upon the earth or the things in the heavens.

^{KJV} **Colossians 1:20** And, having made peace through the blood of his cross, by him to reconcile all things unto himself; by him, *I say*, whether *they be* things in earth, or things in heaven.

TRANSLATION HIGHLIGHTS

God the Father reconciled (Culminative Aorist tense) all believers to Himself through the agency of His Son, Jesus Christ. This reconciliation is an accomplished fact for a particular people; it is not a hypothetical possibility for an unknown people. Jesus Christ did not come to save an indiscriminate blob of humanity; He came to save the elect, His sheep, i.e., those that the Father had given to Him. The Culminative Aorist tense points to this reconciliation as an accomplished fact; it has already been accomplished on behalf of those whom it was meant for. It is not waiting for a “free will decision” of man to come to fruition. Reconciliation was accomplished for the members of the Church in verse 18 and nobody else. This was both the Purpose and the End Result (Infinitive) of His spiritual death on the cross. The word “all” refers to all believers. The philosophy that “all” means “all men” or “all things” is contradicted elsewhere in Scripture and is therefore an untenable theological position.

Paul uses a 2nd Culminative Aorist tense to point to the finished work of “concluding peace” between the Father and the elect through His spiritual death on the cross. “His blood” is a representative analogy for His spiritual death on the cross. Jesus Christ did not bleed to death on the cross; He voluntarily gave up His Spirit to the Father and accomplished salvation for His people before He died physically. He did not make peace a mere possibility if only men would believe in Him; He actually concluded peace for those the Father had given to Him. The Aorist tense points to a past event, and the Culminative Aorist points to a completed transaction. Referring to salvation, Jesus said: “It is finished,” not “it will be finished someday when man decides to believe.” A reconciliation that does not reconcile but leaves the final decision to fickle men is no reconciliation at all. A peace that does not conclude peace but leaves the final decision to fickle men is no peace at all.

The phrase “through Him only” is meant to restrict reconciliation to the work of Jesus Christ on the cross only. There is no other legitimate reconciliation, only that provided by Jesus Christ. There are no legitimate intermediaries, human or angelic, that apply reconciliation or peace to man. Reconciliation and peace (Latin: pacification) come through Jesus Christ only, whether elect believers (Latin: terra, on earth) or elect angels (Latin: celestial, in the heavens). We often forget that there was an angelic fall predating

the Fall of man. There are elect angels just as there are elect men, and there are non-elect angels just as there are non-elect men. Another important thing to remember is that reconciliation and peace can only be concluded upon rational and spiritual creatures, not animals or inanimate objects. Don't let the neuter "things" lead you to believe that there is such a thing as peace between God and animals or God and inanimate objects. Neuter particles in a general or collective sense are often used to represent persons.

RELEVANT OPINIONS

With the statement about God's good pleasure in reconciling all things through Christ, the conclusion of the final strophe occurs, and the "high point" of the hymn is reached ... Noting that the verb "to reconcile" properly applies to persons, some exegetes consider the objects of reconciliation to be that which is reconcilable. On this view "all things" are concretized and explained by the additional phrases "whether things upon the earth, or things in the heavens." The first category is usually understood to denote the world of men which is reconciled, the second the world of angels ... Lohse adds that the universe ("all") which suffered a considerable disturbance, has now been reconciled through the Christ-event ... The significant question is not, "Who or what is reconciled?" but "Who is the mediator of reconciliation?" and the answer given is "Christ alone." In the first strophe of the hymn the centrality of Christ is asserted and the "all" formula is employed so as to elicit praise for Christ as the Mediator and Lord of creation ... On the other hand, to assert that verse 20 points to a universal reconciliation is which every man will finally enjoy celestial bliss is an unwarranted assumption. (P. O'Brien)

To reconcile is properly a verb which relates exclusively to persons; and the idea of reconciling to God "everything" – the animate and the inanimate alike – is a difficult one for the modern reader (although verse 16 above seems to suggest that Paul readily resolved "ta panta" into personal beings). But Colossians includes the "cosmic" scene as well as the scene of man's salvation throughout this passage. Perhaps the best comment on this inclusive hope is Romans 8, with its promise of redemption for (apparently) nature as well as man. (C.F.D. Moule) These "all things" go beyond men and women – our reconciliation is spoken of in the next verse. This is a reconciliation whereby the curse is removed from the earth, and the heavens themselves will be purified ... These "all things" go beyond men and women – our reconciliation is spoken of in the next verse. This is a reconciliation whereby the curse is removed from the earth, and the heavens themselves will be purified. (E. English)

"Reconcile all things" – some people take this statement and get the foolish notion that everybody is going to be saved. To understand this we need to pay a little attention to the grammar that is here. What are the "all things?" We will see that it is limited to all things that are to be reconciled, those which are appointed for reconciliation. You will notice that Paul limits the "all things" that are appointed to reconciliation – he doesn't mention things UNDER the earth. Paul makes no mention of things under the earth being reconciled to God. My friend, don't listen to the deception, the siren song, that all is going to work out well. Don't think you can depend on God being nice and sweet and

pleasant like a little old lady. Things in heaven and on earth are reconciled to God, but not the things under the earth. The things under the earth will have to bow to Him, but they are not reconciled to Him at all. THIS is the place and this is the life in which we need to be reconciled to God. (J.V. McGee)

Christian reconciliation has two sides – objective and subjective. The satisfaction of God’s holy law is objective reconciliation. It is a reconciliation by which God has reconciled man to Himself. Subjective reconciliation is the operation of the Holy Spirit in removing the sinner’s enmity against God. It is subordinate to objective reconciliation. Objective reconciliation makes subjective reconciliation a reality. Mere subjective reconciliation would be psychological, and all would be based on feeling. Objective reconciliation is the propitiation of Jesus Christ by which He satisfied Divine justice and enabled the righteous God to look with favor upon the sinner. Objective reconciliation secures every person for whom Christ died. Objective reconciliation guarantees the subjective reconciliation of the elect in time. Its misunderstanding is evidenced in a popular work on systematic theology which states that there is a reconciliation which of itself reconciles no one, but which is the basis for the reconciliation of any and all who will believe. The idea that there is a reconciliation which of itself reconciles no one is erroneous. That is like saying the redemptive work of Jesus Christ did not really redeem anyone. No one is reconciled to God when he believes. Every chosen person was reconciled to God when Jesus Christ died at Calvary, and his reconciliation, which was objective before the Father at Calvary, guarantees his subjective reconciliation in time. (W.E. Best)

The question is, who, or what are the “all,” who are to be reconciled to God? This question must be answered by a reference to the nature of the things spoken of, and to the analogy of Scripture. It cannot mean absolutely “all things,” the whole universe, including sun, moon, and stars, for they are not susceptible of reconciliation to God. For the same reason it cannot mean all sensitive creatures, including irrational animals. Nor can it mean all fallen rational creatures, for it is expressly taught, Hebrews 2:16, that Christ did not come to redeem fallen angels. Nor can it mean all men, for the Bible teaches elsewhere that all men are not reconciled to God, and Scripture cannot contradict Scripture; for that would be for God to contradict Himself. The “all” intended is the “all” spoken of in the context, the whole body of the people of God, all the objects of redemption. As a matter of fact, in the immediate context of both of these passages the apostle deals unmistakably with the members of Christ’s church. (C. Hodge)

If however, it be objected, as likely it must, that Hodge’s argumentation is unsatisfactory in that it fails to do justice to the neuter “all things,” then it becomes no less certain that the passages under consideration do not teach the ultimate salvation of all men. The text tells us that the universe will be reconciled to God. But does that imply that every rational creature in the universe will be reconciled to God? The answer must be an unequivocal negative. Not only is Hodge correct in arguing that the plain teaching of Scripture elsewhere forbids the interpretation that the fallen angels and fallen men will share in the final reconciliation, but the Word of God teaches emphatically that the

reconciliation of the universe to God will be effected in part precisely by the banishment of God's enemies. The view that these passages teach the final restoration of all creatures, even of the fallen angels and the reprobate, is contradicted by the clear teaching of Scripture elsewhere. The universalism of those who teach that God designed by the atonement to save all men, but somehow does not effectively bring that design to complete fruition, is neither consistent nor Scriptural. (R. Kuiper)

Can it be true that God reconciled the non-elect, for whom His wrath will never be propitiated (satisfied or appeased) by virtue of Christ's death? Or that He has been reconciled by virtue of Christ's death to the non-elect upon whom His condemning wrath eternally abides (John 3:36)? Soteric reconciliation is a twofold change in the relationship between God and man as wrought objectively through the death of Christ, which results in God's relationship toward His people being changed from enmity to love and blessing, and as wrought subjectively in His people by divine bestowal, which results in man's relationship toward God being changed from enmity to love when the word of reconciliation is genuinely received as evidenced by repentance toward God and faith toward the Lord Jesus Christ. The end result of Christ's accomplished and applied soteric reconciliation is that peace is made between both God and man. (G. Long)

Sin somehow has put the universe out of joint. Christ will set it right. (A.T. Robertson) Here "cross" is a figure of speech, a metalepsis for His death, and His death is put for all its meritorious results. It is by forcing the word "cross" into a literal meaning in such passages as this that the church of Rome has appeared to have a sanction for its reverence for and adoration of "the cross." The reader may easily see where the word "cross" is used literally and historically and where it is used figuratively. If the latter be substituted for the former, not only shall we introduce much error, but we shall lose much of precious Scriptural truth and teaching. (E.W. Bullinger) How effective is Paul's reply to the Gnostic teachers that these angels needed reconciliation themselves! The peace here is between God on the one side and men and angels on the other; besides which the thought would have no relevance in this connection. (W.R. Nicoll)

It was necessary that angels also, should be made to be at peace with God, for being creatures they were not beyond the risk of falling, had they not been confirmed by the grace of Christ. We must conclude, that there is not on the part of angels so much of righteousness as would suffice for their being fully joined with God. They have, therefore, need of a peace-maker, through whose grace they may wholly cleave to God. Hence it is with propriety that Paul declares, that the grace of Christ does not reside among mankind alone, and on the other hand makes it common also to angels. Nor is there any injustice done to angels, in sending them to a Mediator, that they may, through His kindness, have a well-grounded peace with God. (J. Calvin)

Ultimate control is sometimes technically termed "categorical could-have-done-otherwise-ness." The common name for *categorical could-have-done-otherwise-ness*, is "free will." The above consideration prove that whether determinism, indeterminism, or some combination of the two constitutes the true account of human affairs, in any case,

the notion of ultimate control (i.e., free will or moral responsibility) is necessarily mistaken. Whether or not God determines “whatsoever comes to pass” (as affirmed in the illustrious Westminster Confession), is not the issue insofar as the question of whether or not free will is true is concerned. The point is that free will is false whether determinism is true or false; consequently, free will is false, whether God determines all events, some events, or no events. (A. Knoch)

Col. 1:20 And (connective conj.) through Him (Abl. Agency; Jesus Christ) to reconcile (ἀποκαταλλάσσω, AAIInf., Culminative, Purpose & Result) all (Acc. Spec.; believers) to Himself (Acc. Gen. Ref.; reconciliation as an accomplished fact, not a hypothetical), having concluded peace (εἰρηνοποιέω, AAPtc.NSM, Culminative, Circumstantial) through the blood (Abl. Means; spiritual death) of His (Poss. Gen.) cross (Adv. Gen. Ref.; definite atonement), through Him only (Abl. Agency), whether (copula conj.) things (Acc. Dir. Obj.) on earth (Gen. Place; elect believers) or (copula) things (Acc. Dir. Obj.) in the heavens (Loc. Place; elect angels).

^{WHO} **Colossians 1:20** καὶ δι αὐτοῦ ἀποκαταλλάξαι τὰ πάντα εἰς αὐτόν εἰρηνοποιήσας διὰ τοῦ αἵματος τοῦ σταυροῦ αὐτοῦ [δι αὐτοῦ] εἴτε τὰ ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς εἴτε τὰ ἐν τοῖς οὐρανοῖς

^{VUL} **Colossians 1:20** et per eum reconciliare omnia in ipsum pacificans per sanguinem crucis eius sive quae in terris sive quae in caelis sunt

^{LWB} **Col. 1:21** And you [Christians] who were at one time [before the new birth] settled in a state of alienation [positional residence: total inability] and were hostile [enemies] in your thinking by means of your wicked works [experiential function: total depravity],

^{KW} **Col. 1:21** And you who were at one time those who were in a settled state of alienation, and hostile with respect to your intents in the sphere of your works which were pernicious,

^{KJV} **Colossians 1:21** And you, that were sometime alienated and enemies in *your* mind by wicked works,

TRANSLATION HIGHLIGHTS

Before God intervened in our lives, we lived positionally in the sphere of Satan’s cosmic system. At the point of regeneration, we were transferred from his kingdom of darkness into the kingdom of Light. For at least a moment, we lived in the sphere of God’s divine system. The “new birth” changed everything. Positionally we switched from being slaves to Satan to being servants of Christ. Experientially, we switched from continual living in Satan’s cosmic system to the possibility of continual living in God’s divine system. In one sweeping sentence, Paul describes our prior position and condition before becoming

believers in Christ Jesus. We were (Descriptive & Historical Present tense) positionally and experientially under the control of Satan.

There are parallels and contrasts in this sentence. “Settled in a state of alienation” is a positional phrase that is often called “total inability.” Without the benefit of the ministry of the Holy Spirit, we were locked-into Satan’s domain and there was no power or desire on our part to get out. Our home, our residence, was in the sphere of his cosmic system. We had no other choice but to think and behave (Aoristic Perfect tense) in a manner according to where we lived – in perpetual sin, without God, and therefore without hope in this world. Experientially, we functioned in daily life with hostile thinking towards God and evil deeds. This pernicious thinking and acting was our experiential function in life, according to the dictates of our totally depraved nature. This is how the parallels and contrasts are presented in this verse:

Position	Residence	Total inability
Experience	Function	Total depravity

As unbelievers, we resided in the sphere of Satan’s cosmic system. “Residence” means we have built our home in his neighborhood and “inability” means we have no power or desire to leave his neighborhood. Only the indwelling of the Holy Spirit at regeneration could change our will and enable us to choose Christ and His sphere of power over our old neighborhood. A change in position, a change in residence, and a change in the ability to desire Christ is only possible by divine sovereignty. God saves sinners; man does not save himself. Once this change in residence has occurred, we then have the ability to choose where we live our daily life. The filling of the Spirit, made possible by the indwelling of the Spirit, enables us to function in a new power sphere, a new love complex. This is where our daily decisions come into the picture.

Instead of hostile thinking and wicked deeds, we now have the option of having divine viewpoint and intrinsically good deeds. Continual filling of the Spirit gives us the ability to overcome our total depravity in daily life. It gives us the power to function according to divine mandates rather than according to the dictates of our sin nature and the lures of Satan’s system. It is quite possible, however, to “reside” in the divine neighborhood of Jesus Christ, but to “function” in Satan’s cosmic neighborhood. Millions of believers have changed residence, but few are functioning properly in their new residence. Most believers wake up in the morning in their new home, but they immediately go back to their old neighborhood for the duration of their waking hours.

This is obviously a tragic state of being for believers who have been called to a higher purpose in life than to continually grovel in the gutter of their former neighborhood. Separation from God (Latin: alienation) is not the ultimate goal for His elect; God will take care of our positional, residential change by His sovereignty and omnipotence. However, the hostile thinking and behavior (Latin: malice) as the natural growth of our former position is the opposite of His purpose for our lives, now that we live in our new residence. We are commanded to take possession of our new home and to live and

function in it according to the filling of the Spirit and not the depravity of the lusts and trends of our old sin nature. This is the crux of the Christian way of life.

RELEVANT OPINIONS

A great many people think that men are lost because they have committed some terrible sin. The reason people are lost is that their minds are alienated from God. I think this explains the fierce antagonism toward God on the part of so-called intellectuals of our day. There is an open hatred and hostility toward God. (J. McGee) Sin is such a separating power that it not only cuts us off from God and from our fellow-man, but also from ourselves, so that we are divided and dissipated in the faculties and energies of our souls. Hence we find ourselves incurring, not only the Divine anger and the anger of our fellows, but we become angry with ourselves. (R. Edgar) “Alienate” means objectively banished from God through the barrier which God’s justice interposed against your sin, and subjectively estranged through the alienation of your own will from God. (R. Jamieson) This state of estrangement, moreover, was not due simply to ignorance or innocence. There are no innocent heathen! On the contrary, they were estranged and hostile in disposition. It was their own fault that they had been and had remained for a long time “far off,” for they had secretly hated God. (W. Hendriksen)

Paul speaks of men as alienated from God or as enemies of Christ. Such expressions do not mean that there is a slight coolness between God and sinners. They mean that they are in opposite camps. Sinners range themselves against God. They must expect nothing but hostility from the God whose enemies they have become. The language is vigorous. The meaning is not in doubt. (L. Morris) Doctrinal integrity is a sign of genuine reconciliation. Continuance in the faith is a necessary prerequisite to presentation in heaven. (R. Gromacki) The most satisfactory view is that Paul has in mind the false spiritualism which thought reconciliation could be accomplished by spiritual beings only, and hence attached little or no value to the work of Christ in a body composed of flesh. (K. Wuest) By God’s sovereign grace the prodigal returns to his home from which he had been estranged. That is the meaning of reconciliation. By Christ’s atoning death God is reconciled to the sinner, the sinner to God. (W. Hendriksen)

As Bible doctrine is excluded from the thought process, the mentality of the soul is thrown open to apostate doctrine, false criteria, perverted norms and standards. This massive breakdown in the spiritual life is described by the phrase “excluded from the life of God because of the ignorance.” The believer whose thinking has become darkened will inevitably be alienated from God. Used only three times in Scripture (Eph. 2:12, 4:18, Col.1:21), “apallotrioo” indicates that it is possible for a believer to live his entire life “excluded” from the will and plan of God. Just as the unbeliever is “excluded” from any hope or contact with God by rejecting Christ, the believer who rejects Bible doctrine is excluded from the marvelous supergrace life designed for him after salvation. The “zoe” of God, supergrace, denotes a concept of “life” related to Bible doctrine. Life is linked to spiritual growth that God provides for believers through doctrine. Notice that alienation from this spiritual life is not the consequence of any misbehavior or sin but the

result of “ignorance” of doctrine. “No knowledge” is the cause of failure in the Christian life. Ignorance of doctrine inevitably leads to sinful mental attitudes including: subjectivity, hypersensitivity, losing heart, frustration, unhappiness, a frantic search for happiness, and slavery to the details of life. (R.B. Thieme, Jr.)

Col. 1:21 And (continuative conj.) you (Acc. Gen. Ref.; believers) who were (εἰμί, PAPtc.APM, Descriptive & Historical, Substantival) at one time (Adv. Time; before the new birth) settled in a state of alienation (ἀπαλλοτριώω, Perf.PPtc.APM, Aoristic, Circumstantial; positional residence: total inability) and (connective conj.) were (ellipsis, repetition of εἰμί verb) hostile (Adv. Acc.; enemies) in your (Poss. Gen. supplied) thinking (Loc. Sph.; state of mind) by means of your (Poss. Gen.) wicked (Loc. Sph.) works (Instr. Means; experiential function: total depravity),

^{WHO} **Colossians 1:21** Καὶ ὑμᾶς ποτε ὄντας ἀπηλλοτριωμένους καὶ ἐχθροὺς τῇ διανοίᾳ ἐν τοῖς ἔργοις τοῖς πονηροῖς νυνὶ δὲ ἀποκατήλλαξεν

^{VUL} **Colossians 1:21** et vos cum essetis aliquando alienati et inimici sensu in operibus malis

^{LWB} **Col. 1:22** Yet now [at the cross] He has reconciled you by means of the body of His flesh [Jesus Christ as true humanity] through spiritual death), for the purpose of presenting you holy [positional sanctification] and blameless [ultimate sanctification] and irreprouchable [experiential sanctification] in His sight,

^{KW} **Col. 1:22** Yet now He reconciled in the body of His flesh through His death, in order that He might present you holy and without blemish and unchargeable before His searching and penetrating gaze;

^{KJV} **Colossians 1:22** Yet now hath he reconciled in the body of his flesh through death, to present you holy and unblameable and unreprouchable in his sight:

TRANSLATION HIGHLIGHTS

At the divinely appointed time in history, God the Father reconciled all believers (Culminative Aorist tense) to Himself by means of the body of Jesus Christ on the cross through His spiritual death. The “body of Christ” is a representation of His true humanity. His spiritual death on the cross is a representation of His true deity. Jesus Christ had to be both deity and humanity to accomplish this mediatorial role of reconciliation between God and man. No one else in history could accomplish this reconciliation. The uniqueness of the hypostatic union was required and provided to bring both parties together again. This reconciliation was accomplished at the cross; it is a finished work, not a potential or hypothetical work waiting for us to complete its efficacy by the function of our so-called “free will.”

Why the emphasis on spiritual death as opposed to physical death on the cross? Paul uses the Greek word “thanatos” instead of the word “nekros.” This deliberate choice of words points to spiritual death instead of physical death. His spiritual death completed our positional transfer from the residence of Satan to the residence of Jesus Christ. Our purchase from the slave market was complete at the cross; the only thing remaining was placing us in our new home and giving us our divine spiritual assets at the new birth. This culmination of our positional sanctification completes the parenthesis which began in verse 19. In the second half of this passage, Paul returns to our experiential walk in the Spirit, having laid the foundation of our position in Christ. He now outlines our past, present, and future phases of sanctification.

Some commentators take the next three words as synonyms; I don’t agree with that view at all. Paul is now teaching the doctrine of sanctification, and these three words are distinct phases of our sanctification. Holy (Latin: sanctos) refers to positional sanctification, blameless (Latin: immaculate) refers to our ultimate sanctification, and irreproachable (Latin: inreprehensible) refers to our experiential sanctification. “Hagios” (holy) means separated unto God, and is frequently used as a positional term to describe believers as distinct from unbelievers. Blameless has the concept of being completely free from the old sin nature, which happens when we get our resurrection body. Irreproachable is a courtroom term, which refers to our passing tests and being inspected in the Supreme Court of Heaven at the Judgment Seat of Christ.

RELEVANT OPINIONS

Between the prototype divine dynasphere in verse 19 and the operational divine dynasphere in verse 22 is a parenthesis teaching positional truth. (R.B. Thieme, Jr.) The key to Paul’s use of the metaphor “body of Christ” lies in this representative principle as it is applied to the literal body of Christ ... The representative efficacy of Christ’s death is emphasized ... Christians are one in Christ’s body; they are one body in Christ; they are a body of Christ; they are THE body of Christ. Again we see the necessity of exegesis in the interpretation of these metaphors. (D. Carson) Paul combines both “soma” and “sarx” to make plain the actual humanity of Jesus against incipient Docetic Gnostics who denied it. (A.T. Robertson) He meant by “in the body of His flesh” that the Son of God had put on the same nature with us, that He took upon Him this vile earthly body, subject to many infirmities, that He might be our Mediator. (J. Calvin)

It is true that the very act of reconciliation carried with it the beginning of the transformation which follows; but the perfecting of that work still lies ahead. They are to be presented to Him in the sense that they will be made fit to stand in His holy presence, and declare eternally the wonder of His grace through what He has accomplished in them. (H. Carson) Though reconciled, we are not yet presented to God. A process of preparation is necessary for this. The reconciled must be made holy. Forgiveness is the first step, but it is not the last. Without holiness no man can see God. The whole of life should be a cleansing and purifying and preparing for the unblemished condition in which only Christ can present us to God. But the reconciliation is a necessary preliminary, an important beginning, and a constraining motive for the perfect

purification. We must do our part to realize the future perfection. It depends on our continuing in the faith. (W. Adeney)

This is the second great blessing of our reconciliation and salvation – newness of life. For all the benefits of Christ consist of two main parts – remission of sins, and the sanctification of our natures. By the one we are justified and brought into a reconciled state; by the other, we are formed after the divine image, and made meet to walk with our reconciled God on earth, and to be “partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light” in heaven. The two are inseparable. Gratuitous righteousness in Christ received by faith is not conferred without regeneration and sanctification to the obedience of righteousness, being also wrought in us by the Holy Spirit. The second, however, is ever incomplete and ever mixed with original sin and daily infirmities in this life. (D. Wilson)

Col. 1:22 Yet (temporal conj.) now (Adv. Time; at the divinely appointed time) He has reconciled (ἀποκατάλλάσσω, AAI3S, Culminative; transferred) you (ellipsis, Dir. Obj. supplied) by means of the body (Instr. Means) of His flesh (Adv. Gen. Ref.; Jesus Christ as true humanity) through spiritual death (Abl. Means; thanatos instead of nekros), for the purpose of presenting (παρίστημι, AAInf., Culminative, Purpose) you (Acc. Dir. Obj.) holy (Compl. Acc.; positional sanctification) and (connective conj.) blameless (Compl. Acc.; ultimate sanctification) and (connective conj.) irreproachable (Compl. Acc.; having passed evidence testing in the court of heaven) in His (Poss. Gen.) presence (Gen. Rel.),

^{WHO} **Colossians 1:22** νυνὶ δὲ ἀποκατήλλαξεν ἐν τῷ σώματι τῆς σαρκὸς αὐτοῦ διὰ τοῦ θανάτου παραστήσαι ὑμᾶς ἁγίους καὶ ἀμώμους καὶ ἀνεγκλήτους κατενώπιον αὐτοῦ

^{VUL} **Colossians 1:22** nunc autem reconciliavit in corpore carnis eius per mortem exhibere vos sanctos et immaculatos et inreprehensibiles coram ipso

^{LWB} **Col. 1:23** **If indeed [assuming that] you continue to persist [daily] in doctrine, having laid a strong foundation [in the basics], both stabilized [not controlled by your emotions] and not swerving [into reversionism] from the ultimate source of the confidence of the message which you have heard [grace as opposed to legalism or works], which was publicly proclaimed to all creatures who are under heaven, of which I, Paul, have become a minister.**

^{KW} **Col. 1:23** Assuming indeed that you are adhering to the faith, having been placed upon a foundation with the present result that you are on that foundation, firmly established, and that you are not being shifted away from your hope held out by the good news which you heard, that good news which was proclaimed in all creation which is under heaven, of which I, Paul, became one who ministers.

^{KJV} **Colossians 1:23** If ye continue in the faith grounded and settled, and *be* not moved away from the hope of the gospel, which ye have heard, *and* which was preached to every creature which is under heaven; whereof I Paul am made a minister;

TRANSLATION HIGHLIGHTS

There was a reason in the prior verse why the word “irreproachable” was placed before “blameless” in the sentence. The natural progression would seem to be position, experience, then ultimate sanctification; but Paul places them in the order of position, ultimate, and experiential sanctification. Now we know why he did this: because the conditional clause in this verse (“if, assuming that”) refers back to experiential sanctification only. Our positional sanctification is a done deal; there are no further conditions. Our ultimate sanctification is also a done deal; it will happen some day regardless of any effort on our part. That is why these two are grouped first and second in verse 22, and the experiential sanctification which depends on our volition is saved for last: so Paul can refer back to the last category by his conditional statement here.

Every believer in Jesus Christ will go before the Judgment Seat of Christ for an accounting, review and evaluation of his life as a believer. Rewards and decorations will be given to those who lived a life of continued forward momentum in the Christian life; shame and embarrassment will be experienced by those who lived a life of moral and immoral degeneracy. There are conditions to be one of those believers that will be found “irreproachable” in His sight, and these qualifications must be met by continued filling of the Spirit and continued positive volition towards doctrine. If these qualifications are not met, the believer will retain his positional sanctification and ultimate sanctification, but the results of his experiential sanctification will not be classified as “irreproachable.”

This 1st class conditional clause makes the assumption that we will be found “irreproachable” in our experiential sanctification IF we fulfill certain qualifications during our walk on earth as Christians. In other words, the first third and the last third of our sanctification (roughly speaking, of course) are in the hands of our sovereign and omnipotent God. The middle third is in our hands. And that is where this verse starts. We will be found “irreproachable” in His sight IF we continue to persist, day after day (Iterative Present tense), in doctrine. The protasis assumes this will be true, a gracious and positive outlook on Paul’s part. The Potential Indicative mood provides the element of condition, meaning we are responsible for those daily positive decisions to intake, metabolize and apply Bible doctrine in the filling of the Spirit.

A related condition for being found “irreproachable” is that we have said “Yes” to doctrine enough times to have built a strong foundation of the basics (Consummative Perfect tense) in our soul. Being positive towards Bible teaching once a week is not enough; we need “daily bread,” not weekly bread. If all you do is hear a 30-minute sermon once a week on Sundays, you do not have a strong foundation (Latin: fundamentals) in basic doctrine. You must also have the ability to apply what you know

to an extent where you are stabilized and are not controlled by your emotions. Your intellect and its application of doctrine is supposed to control your emotions; your emotions are not designed to control your intellect. Emotions were created to be responders to your intellect and not the driving force in your spiritual life.

Another related qualification for being “irreproachable” in His sight is that we do not swerve (Pictorial Present tense) from our ultimate sense of confidence in the Word of God (Latin: immobile) into reversionism. The message which we have heard (Constative Aorist tense) is grace orientation, as opposed to works, legalism or antinomianism. This message (Bible doctrine) has been proclaimed in public (Dramatic Aorist tense) to every category of human under heaven. This phrase does not mean every single individual has heard the gospel. The Lord sends the message to every single one of His sheep, but He does not necessarily send it to hogs and dogs. The intent of this phrase is to contrast the open proclamation of the gospel in a public forum as opposed to the secret, closed door proclamation of false teachings from the Gnostics around Colossae.

Paul became a minister of the gospel of Jesus Christ (Culminative Aorist tense) by the grace of God, not by his own volition. He didn’t start his career by pursuing a life of Bible college, seminary, and professorship; God called him into that life. The word “diaconos” means “table waiter,” a picture of Paul waiting on others and meeting their daily needs. It is a word used to portray service, rather than authority. He has already emphasized his apostolic authority; now he emphasizes his service for believers in his ministerial sphere of operation. Paul not only brings the gospel message which God the Holy Spirit uses to regenerate new believers, he also brings the doctrinal messages which God the Holy Spirit uses to provide spiritual growth and fruit in positive believers.

RELEVANT OPINIONS

Paul, in his major letters, uses the word “diakonos” of himself, as well as his colleagues, particularly when he wishes to stress that both he and they are on the same footing as servants through whom God works. (P. O’Brien) In the NT “diakonos” is still a very general term, by no means limited to the technical sense of “deacon;” it is applied to those who are engaged in service of any sort. In Mark 10:45 it is applied to Christ Himself. (C. Moule) Notice the expression “the faith.” That is, the faith which is taught in the Gospel; the principles, the doctrines, the truths, which constitute the Gospel. In these they had been grounded. Hence the false teachers at Colossae had made, as yet, but little progress. (W. Nicholson) Those who insist that all true believers finish well with their doctrine and with their behavior fail to take into account the numerous scriptural warnings that such perseverance is never automatic. (S. Leach)

To proclaim the gospel “in the whole of creation” evidently meant not necessarily to reach every individual with the Good News, but to let it be heard in all the great centers of the Empire. (C. Moule) Verse 23 opens with the little word “if.” Here we see that there is a condition to the reconciliation of men to God and their consequent presentation before Him without blemish. These great promises are for us – IF we CONTINUE in the

faith. (E. English) An ungrounded Christian cannot be a growing Christian. It is well to be settled in the faith if we would make progress in Christian life. The apostle points to the danger of drifting. (G. Findlay) It is hyperbole, to be sure, but Paul does not say that all men are converted, but only that the message has been heralded abroad over the Roman Empire in a wider fashion than most people imagine. (A.T. Robertson) “Creatures” is a “synecdoche of the genus” where creature is used to represent man. (E.W. Bullinger)

The phrase “the faith” refers to that body of biblical truth that is essential to the doctrine of salvation, not to one’s personal faith (Jude 1:3). The issue is doctrinal accuracy, not gross sins such as immorality or murder ... The fact that the Colossians remained in the faith is seen in three ways. First, they were “established.” They had built a permanent spiritual foundation on the Person and work of Christ, as expounded by the apostles and prophets. Second, they were “steadfast.” This adjective denotes a strong superstructure strengthened by the ministry of the indwelling Holy Spirit. Third, the Colossians were not being “moved away from the hope of the gospel.” The heretics tried to weaken their doctrinal convictions about the Person and works of Jesus Christ, but the foundation and the walls of their faith did not develop any cracks. Spiritual growth and the production of godly fruit are the best safeguards against the attacks of false teachers. (R. Gromacki)

Arminians find support here for their teaching that salvation can be lost if the Christian fails to continue in the faith. Experimental predestinarians see this as proving that only those who persevere are truly Christians in the first place. The Partakers see the matter differently. The focus here is on being presented holy, blameless, and beyond reproach ... The Colossians are regenerate people who must “continue in the faith.” Nonbelievers do not have faith in which to continue. At issue here is not arrival in heaven, but whether or not we will arrive there holy, blameless, and beyond reproach. This is the goal toward which Paul labors. This is a goal of sanctification, not salvation. (J. Dillow) The word “if” presents the possibility of a future realization, not a hypothetical condition (subjunctive mood), but an assumption (indicative mood). It is not the retention of salvation that is in the apostle’s mind, but the possession of it that would be shown by their continuance in the gospel. “Settled” suggests inward strength which believers themselves possess. (K. Wuest)

Col. 1:23 **If** (protasis, 1st class condition, assumes this practice is true; provided that) **indeed** (enclitic particle) **you continue to persist** (ἐπιμένω, PAI2P, Iterative, Potential Ind. Expressing a Condition; day after day) **in doctrine** (Loc. Sph.), **having laid a strong foundation** (θεμελιόω, Perf.PPtc.NPM, Consummative, Circumstantial; in the basics), **both** (connective conj.) **stabilized** (Ind. Nom.; not controlled by your emotions) **and** (connective conj.) **not** (neg. adv.) **swerving** (μετακινέω, PPtc.NPM, Pictorial, Circumstantial; into reversionism or its equivalent) **from the ultimate source of the confidence** (Abl. Source) **of the**

message (Adv. Gen. Ref.; doctrines) which (Gen. Appos.) you have heard (ἀκούω, AAI2P, Constativē; grace orientation as opposed to works or legalism), which (Gen. Appos.) was publicly proclaimed (κηρύσσω, APptc.GSN, Dramatic, Circumstantial) to all (Dat. Measure) creatures (Dat. Adv.; men) who (Dat. Ref.) are (ellipsis, verb supplied) under heaven (Acc. Spec.), of which (Adv. Gen. Ref.) I (Subj. Nom.), Paul (Nom. Appos.), have become (γίνομαι, AMI1S, Culminative, Deponent) a minister (Pred. Nom.).

^{WHO} **Colossians 1:23** εἶ γε ἐπιμένετε τῇ πίστει τεθεμελιωμένοι καὶ ἑδραῖοι καὶ μὴ μετακινούμενοι ἀπὸ τῆς ἐλπίδος τοῦ εὐαγγελίου οὐ ἠκούσατε τοῦ κηρυχθέντος ἐν πάσῃ κτίσει τῇ ὑπὸ τὸν οὐρανὸν οὐ ἐγενόμην ἐγὼ Παῦλος διάκονος

^{VUL} **Colossians 1:23** si tamen permanetis in fide fundati et stabiles et immobiles ab spe evangelii quod audistis quod praedicatum est in universa creatura quae sub caelo est cuius factus sum ego Paulus minister

^{LWB} **Col. 1:24** I now keep on rejoicing [inner happiness] in my sufferings on behalf of you [pressures in the ministry which come from the sheep themselves], and am filling up [taking in more doctrine] the deficiency [Paul needed more truth on the launching pad of his soul] with reference to the pressures of Christ in my flesh on behalf of His Body [Paul is back in fellowship after some difficult times], which is the Church,

^{KW} **Col. 1:24** I am now rejoicing in my sufferings on your behalf, and on my part am filling up the things lacking of the afflictions of the Christ in my flesh for the sake of His Body which is the Church,

^{KJV} **Colossians 1:24** Who now rejoice in my sufferings for you, and fill up that which is behind of the afflictions of Christ in my flesh for his body's sake, which is the church:

TRANSLATION HIGHLIGHTS

Anybody who has been in a church long enough will encounter arguments and disagreements. Some will be resolved peacefully, others will be tragic. I've been in assemblies where the sin natures and egos of "laymen" and "laywomen" have caused so much grief to the pastor that he finally decided to move on. I've encountered church splits, seminary splits, peel-offs, firings, and new hirings. It is most embarrassing to see the political machinations of the world strangling a pastor and congregation. In churches that have a "plurality" of elders or pastors, a false teaching contradicted by many passages of Scripture as well as the etymology of the Greek word, the tendency is toward church splits and peel-offs. In denominational churches, the tendency is a continual string of firings and new hirings. There was no lack of conflict in the church in Paul's day either.

In contrast to many church conflicts today, Paul immediately confessed his mental attitude and verbal sins and re-entered fellowship. He was then able to maintain his inner happiness (Iterative Present tense) in spite of the suffering he experienced - which often came from the very sheep he was teaching. In other words, Paul encountered many pressures in the ministry from the sheep. In some cases, the situation got so ugly that he himself was pulled into reversionism by those around him. In this case, his solution was to get back into fellowship and to resume his intake, metabolism and application of Bible doctrine. "Filling up the deficiency" is Paul's way of saying I was out of fellowship for awhile and lacked the appropriate doctrine to resolve the conflict. Now I need to resume my studies (Iterative Present tense) so I may recover from my shipwreck.

Paul realized that after difficult times like these, where his own church members were at each other's throats, created doctrinal deficiencies in the souls of all those involved. He reminds the Colossians that after such unpleasant experiences, they should also re-enter the sphere of divine power and resume forward momentum in the spiritual life. Any time we allow the outside pressures of life to become inside stress in the soul, the solution is to acknowledge sin to the Lord and resume Bible study. The pressures we endure are usually related to our job and career, or family and friends, but they occasionally surface in the church itself as it did for Paul. His pressure at the time of his writing was due to his uncompromising preaching and teaching of the Word for the body of Christ, the Church. Paul re-entered the operational sphere of divine power and applied doctrine to his pressures, just like Jesus did in the prototype sphere of divine power.

The "trick" to this reversion recovery, in a manner of speaking, is a combination of realization and timing. The sooner we realize we are out of fellowship due to mental attitude sins, the quicker we acknowledge them to God and get back into fellowship. The sooner we realize that we have no doctrinal resources available to appropriately handle a situation, the quicker we resume our daily intake of doctrine so we are ready for the next round of pressure testing. This is the same procedure Jesus utilized during His earthly ministry, with one exception: He didn't have to acknowledge sin because He never sinned. He remained in the prototype sphere of divine power perpetually, and never ran out of doctrinal resources to handle a given situation. We will never reach this exalted state of existence on earth, but it is the goal we should pursue in order to represent Christ.

RELEVANT OPINIONS

"Thlipsis" refers to the distresses, oppression and affliction of life. (P. O'Brien) He rejoices in afflictions because they are within God's plan for the perfecting of His elect. (H. Carson) One thing is clear – that Paul, like the other NT writers, regarded the actual death of Jesus as efficacious and complete and once-for-all. Paul would have been the last to say that Christians bear their part in the atoning sacrifice of Christ. (C. Moule) The entity indwelt by Christ in this verse is identified as the body and the church. The enlarging revelation comprehends the church as the body of both Jew and Gentile believers in this age indwelt by Christ Himself. This, of course, has been predicted by

Christ in the Upper Room in John 14:20, and was part of His prayer in John 17:23. Here is amazing condescension – the Lord of glory dwelling in vessels of clay. (J. Walvoord)

May I say to you that if you are going to live for God, if you are going to take a stand for the right, you will find that you will be passed by. God's men are passed by today in the distribution of earthly honors. The world will damn the man of God with faint praise, and they will praise him with faint damns. That is the way the world treats God's men today. Athletes are lauded, people in the entertainment world are praised, politicians are praised, and professors are honored; but the man of God is not praised. If you stand for the things that are right in this world, you will suffer for righteousness' sake. The popularity of the Christian with the world is in inverse ratio to his popularity with Christ. There is one thing for certain: If the gospel is to go forward today, someone must suffer. (J. McGee)

Paul consistently fails to encourage Christians to form a pressure group and thereby win needed respect to improve their lot. Rather, the apostle gives the churches an example in his welcome of suffering, thereby filling up what is lacking in the sufferings of Christ. Afflictions in this life are not in any way comparable to the future weight of glory. Evaluating the injustice in the world as an unmitigated evil means that the interpreter has missed the fundamental biblical significance of faith as opposed to sight. (D. Carson) The afflictions of Christ here do not refer to His expiatory sufferings on the cross, but to His sufferings endured in His humiliation prior to that event. "Thlipsis" is never used of the vicarious suffering of the Lord Jesus. (K. Wuest) Persevering in one's faith is not easy, for if it were, every believer would do it. (S. Leach)

As, therefore, Christ has suffered once in His own person, so He suffers daily in His members, and in this way there are filled up those sufferings which the Father has appointed for His body by His decree. Here we have a second consideration, which ought to bear up our minds and comfort them in afflictions, that it is thus fixed and determined by the providence of God, that we must be conformed to Christ in the endurance of the cross, and that the fellowship that we have with Him extends to this also. (J. Calvin) Christ's suffering is for propitiation, our suffering is for propagation. (J. Piper) Paul does not claim to fill up the defects in Christ's earthly suffering or in the sufferings of the Church, but in the sufferings which he has to endure in his flesh, which are Christ's sufferings, because he and Christ are one. (W.R. Nicoll)

Col. 1:24 **I** (Subj. Nom.) **now** (Adv. Time) **keep on rejoicing** (χαίρω, PAIS, Iterative; inner happiness) **in my** (Poss. Gen.) **sufferings** (Loc. Sph.) **on behalf of you** (Obj. Gen.; pressures in the ministry which come from the sheep), **and** (connective conj.) **am filling up** (ἀναπληρώω, PAIS, Iterative; Paul is taking in more doctrine so he may recover from his reversionism) **the deficiency** (Acc. Dir. Obj.; lack of doctrine on Paul's launching pad) **with reference to the pressures** (Acc. Gen. Ref.; stress) **of Christ** (Adv. Gen. Ref.) **in my** (Poss. Gen.) **flesh** (Loc. Sph.) **on behalf of His**

(Poss. Gen.; Christ's) **body** (Obj. Gen.; Paul re-entered the operational sphere of divine power and is applying doctrine to his pressures, just like Jesus did in the prototype sphere of divine power), **which** (Nom. Appos.) **is** (είμί, PAI3S, Descriptive) **the Church** (Pred. Nom.),

^{WHO} **Colossians 1:24** Νῦν χαίρω ἐν τοῖς παθήμασιν ὑπὲρ ὑμῶν καὶ ἀνταναπληρῶ τὰ ὑστερήματα τῶν θλίψεων τοῦ Χριστοῦ ἐν τῇ σαρκί μου ὑπὲρ τοῦ σώματος αὐτοῦ ὃ ἐστὶν ἡ ἐκκλησία

^{VUL} **Colossians 1:24** qui nunc gaudeo in passionibus pro vobis et adimpleo ea quae desunt passionum Christi in carne mea pro corpore eius quod est ecclesia

^{LWB} **Col. 1:25** Concerning which [Body of Christ] I have become a minister according to the dispensation [stewardship] of God which was given to me [as revelator of Church Age doctrine] for your benefit for the purpose of fulfilling the Word of God [completing what was hidden in the Old Testament],

^{KW} **Col. 1:25** Of which I became a servant according to the stewardship of God which was given to me for you, to fulfill the Word of God,

^{KJV} **Colossians 1:25** Whereof I am made a minister, according to the dispensation of God which is given to me for you, to fulfil the word of God;

TRANSLATION HIGHLIGHTS

Paul became (Ingressive Aorist tense) a minister for the Body of Christ, the Church. He was given (Constative Aorist tense) a special dispensation or stewardship by God as the revelator of Church Age doctrine. As the “apostle to the Gentiles” Paul was given the responsibility of delineating Bible doctrine and therefore divine protocol for the Church Age dispensation. God’s purpose in appointing Paul to this position was to fulfill (Culminative Aorist tense) the Word of God. Does “fulfilling the Word of God” mean Paul was mentioned prophetically in the Old Testament? Perhaps he is mentioned in typology somewhere, but “fulfill” in this context means to complete or add to what was missing (deficiency) in OT truth.

The doctrines of the Church Age were not taught in detail in the OT, therefore Paul was brought in to reveal these doctrines when the Church Age began. This was the defining, divine purpose for Paul’s life - to bring the Word of God as we know it to completion (Purpose Infinitive). That doesn’t mean he wrote the last book or letter, but it does mean that New Testament doctrine is centered around his teachings. Church Age doctrine does not revolve around Peter, it revolves around Paul. Have you noticed how many epistles are written by Paul as compared to Peter? Did Peter make bold statements about being an apostle to the Gentiles and a revelator of the doctrines of the Church Age dispensation?

No, Paul's apostleship brought to fruition Church Age doctrine, and his ministry became the precursor to the teaching ministry of future pastors and teachers.

RELEVANT OPINIONS

Every minister is bound to fulfill the Word of God in his ministry, by preaching the whole counsel of God, by rightly dividing the Word of Truth, by the application of the promises of the Word, and by bringing men to fulfill it in gospel obedience. (T. Croskery) Pastors must not allow fear, public opinion, or pragmatic methodology to dissuade them from boldly preaching the Word. No aspect of church ministry is more vital than this. And the church that substitutes entertainment, moral lectures, motivational talks, or anything else in the place of preaching the Word has abdicated its high calling. (G. Johnson)

The word "dispensation" means economy – even by transliteration; it is a stewardship. We talk of political economy, domestic economy, business economy. God deals with the world on the basis of different economies or stewardships, but they have always been based on the redemption which is in Christ Jesus. We don't bring a little lamb for a sacrifice today because it is now an historical fact that Christ has already come. All we have to do today is trust Him. (J. McGee) A dispensation is a period of time during which man is tested in respect of obedience to some specific revelation of the will of God. (C. Scofield) In Colossians 1:25-27 Paul again presents the doctrine of dispensations by contrasting with all previous ages the special advantages, opportunities, and responsibilities of the Church Age. (R.B. Thieme, Jr.)

He was a steward and master-builder, and this was given to him: he did not usurp it, nor take it to himself; and he could not challenge it as a debt. He received it from God as a gift, and took it as a favor. (M. Henry) The Greek verb "pleroo," translated "be filled," conveys a wealth of related meanings. In Colossians 1:25, it means to "fill up a deficiency." Outside the divine dynasphere we possess no ability to learn or apply Bible doctrine or resist the influence of Satan. (R.B. Thieme, Jr.) "Oikonomia" has to do with God's gospel-plan or mystery, together with its divine administration. (P. O'Brien)

Col. 1:25 Concerning which (Adv. Gen. Ref.) I have become (γίνομαι, AMIS, Ingressive, Deponent) a minister (Pred. Nom.) according to the dispensation (Adv. Acc.; stewardship) of God (Gen. Rel.) which was given (δίδωμι, APPTc.ASF, Constatative, Attributive, Articular) to me (Dat. Ind. Obj.; reference to the Church Age) for your benefit (Acc. Spec.; spiritual gift of apostle and later pastor-teacher) for the purpose of fulfilling (πληρώω, AAInf., Culminative, Purpose; bringing to completion, finish, to give full development) the Word (Acc. Dir. Obj.) of God (Poss. Gen.),

^{WHO} **Colossians 1:25** ἡς ἐγενόμην ἐγὼ διάκονος κατὰ τὴν οἰκονομίαν τοῦ θεοῦ τὴν δοθεισάν μοι εἰς ὑμᾶς πληρῶσαι τὸν λόγον τοῦ θεοῦ

^{VUL} **Colossians 1:25** cuius factus sum ego minister secundum dispensationem Dei quae data est mihi in vos ut impleam verbum Dei

^{LWB} **Col. 1:26** The mystery [of Church Age doctrine] having been concealed from the ages [theocratic dispensations] and from [prior] generations, but now [during the Church Age] has been revealed to His saints [Church Age believers],

^{KW} **Col. 1:26** The mystery which has been kept hidden from the ages and from the generations, but now was made known to His saints,

^{KJV} **Colossians 1:26** *Even* the mystery which hath been hid from ages and from generations, but now is made manifest to his saints:

TRANSLATION HIGHLIGHTS

The mystery of Church Age doctrine was concealed (Gnomic Perfect tense) during the theocratic dispensations and generations of men. It was not concealed before the dispensations of men began, because in eternity past there were no men to conceal Church doctrine from! But now, during the Church Age dispensation, it has been revealed (Culminative Aorist tense) to His saints through the apostle Paul and his colleagues in Christ. The Church Age dispensation, beginning with the rejection of Christ by Israel and ending with the Rapture of the Church just prior to the Tribulation, is the “mystery.”

RELEVANT OPINIONS

He describes this mystery as what had always been hidden, and only recently revealed; as something, therefore, which till now had not formed a part of the Word of God. This he had a charge to make known. So that his “fulfilling” the Word of God was his completing that Word, supplementing it, making it a fuller Word of God than it had ever been before. It was given to Paul to fill out and perfect the Word of God in this particular. This was the special feature of that stewardship of God which had been committed to him. (W. Nicholson)

The veil which was over Moses’ face is done away in Christ. The meanest saint under the gospel understands more than the greatest prophets under the law. (M. Henry) There is no reason to suppose that Paul borrows the term “mystery” from the Greek mystery religions, but rather from the OT (Daniel 2:18 ff). A mystery is not something which must be kept secret, but rather a concealed truth which God is pleased to unveil when the time is ripe. Thus the mysteries (secrets) of the kingdom were revealed to the disciples in Matt. 13:11-17), but not to the prophets preceding them. (E. Ashby)

Throughout all these passages there run several key thoughts: (1) God works out His purpose in the gospel. (2) It was an eternal purpose, purposed before the ages began. (3)

It is hid from men, and nobody can know it except by way of revelation. (4) But Paul's big point is that now it has been made known. God has revealed it. The way of the cross is made plain and open, at least to the saints of God. And therein God brings salvation to Gentile as to Jew. (L. Morris) In Colossians 1:25-26 it is implied that another dispensation preceded the present one in which the mystery of Christ in the believer is revealed. (C. Ryrie)

Totally unannounced in OT prophecy, God inaugurated the Church Age with its mystery doctrine. During the Church Age He is creating, through the ministry of the Holy Spirit, a new spiritual species in union with Christ, a royal family to complement our Lord's new royal title ... Through the baptism of the Holy Spirit, we have been created a new spiritual species, capable of utilizing available divine omnipotence ... The noun "aion," usually translated "age," refers to dispensations as categories of human history, just as in the English we say Age of Israel or Church Age. At decisive junctures in His overall plan for mankind, God institutes changes in delegated authority, responsibility, procedure, and available assets. (R.B. Thieme, Jr.)

Col. 1:26 The mystery (Acc. Gen. Ref.; of Church Age doctrine) having been concealed (ἀποκρύπτω, Perf.PPtc.ASN, Gnostic, Circumstantial, Articular; hidden) from the ages (Adv. Gen. Time; theocratic dispensations) and (connective conj.) from (prior) generations (Adv. Gen. Time), but (contrast conj.) now (Adv. Time; in the Church Age) has been revealed (φανερώω, API3S, Culminative; made manifest) to His (Poss. Gen.) saints (Dat. Adv.),

^{WHO} **Colossians 1:26** τὸ μυστήριον τὸ ἀποκεκρυμμένον ἀπὸ τῶν αἰώνων καὶ ἀπὸ τῶν γενεῶν νῦν δὲ ἐφανερώθη τοῖς ἁγίοις αὐτοῦ

^{VUL} **Colossians 1:26** mysterium quod absconditum fuit a saeculis et generationibus nunc autem manifestatum est sanctis eius

^{LWB} **Col. 1:27** **To whom God decreed [in eternity past] to make known [through pastors & teachers] what is the wealth of this mystery [Church Age doctrines] among the Gentiles [in contrast to the exclusiveness of prior Jewish dispensations], which continues to be Christ in you [indwelling of the Shekinah glory], the confidence of glory [guarantee of eternal life],**

^{KW} **Col. 1:27** To whom God desired to make known in an experiential way what is the wealth of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles,

^{KJV} **Colossians 1:27** To whom God would make known what *is* the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles; which is Christ in you, the hope of glory:

TRANSLATION HIGHLIGHTS

God decreed in eternity past (Constative Aorist tense) to reveal (Culminative Aorist tense) to Church Age believers the wealth of the glory of the mystery doctrines of the Church Age. The “wealth” of the glory of this mystery is the edification structure of doctrine we can build in our souls by the intake, metabolization and application of Biblical Truth in the filling of the Spirit. Metabolized doctrine in the soul is spiritual wealth. Glory is a completed, systematic, theological structure that reflects the glory of Christ in our thoughts and actions. The mystery is the Church Age, hidden in OT times, but revealed in Paul’s day. The appointed communicators of this doctrine are pastors and/or teachers. This mystery is the protocol plan of God for our dispensation.

The indwelling and filling of the Spirit is not the only unique thing about the Church Age dispensation. Jesus Christ, the Shekinah glory, also indwells the believer. This indwelling of the Son continues (Iterative Present tense) to mark the beginning of the new dispensation every time a believer acknowledges his sin and resumes fellowship with the Lord. In OT times, God appeared to the nation Israel only. During the Church Age, He indwells believers. There is debate on whether (a) Jesus Christ indwells permanently, or whether (b) He indwells when a believer is in the sphere of divine power and departs when the believer sins. I have a hard time picturing the Lord coming and going on such a frequent basis!

However, some tie the believer residing “in Him” with Jesus Christ abiding “in us” and make one dependant upon the other. To me this parallels the filling of the Spirit rather than an indwelling. If an analogy can be made with the filling of the Spirit, then Jesus Christ permanently indwells all believers, but the Shekinah Glory “departs from the temple” when we sin. In OT times, the Shekinah Glory departed from Israel when the people sinned; perhaps it is true today. In any case, this indwelling of Christ provides us with the confident expectation (guarantee) that some day we will receive eternal life. Never before, in all of human history, did Jesus Christ permanently indwell a believer; that is why it is part of the Church Age doctrine here called a mystery.

RELEVANT OPINIONS

The universal indwelling of all believers is unique to the royal family, but it was prophesied by Jesus Christ before the Church Age began (John 7:37-39, 14:16-17). What is its purpose? The Holy Spirit indwells the body of every Church Age believer to make the Christian’s body a temple worthy for the indwelling of Christ, the Shekinah Glory. The believer himself is incapable of providing an acceptable dwelling place for Christ. The sin nature inherited from fallen Adam contaminates the body throughout the believer’s temporal life. Only the “renewing by the Holy Spirit” makes the “temple” fit for Christ to occupy. The existence of this inner sanctuary for Christ makes it possible for the believer to obey the command to “glorify God in your body.” We must keep in mind the difference between the indwelling of the Holy Spirit and the indwelling of Christ. The Spirit’s indwelling is to prepare our bodies as temples; Christ resides in our bodies to manifest His glory in our lives. In us Christ provides encouragement (John 14:18-21), motivation (Eph. 3:17), and confidence (Col. 1:27). (R.B. Thieme, Jr.)

There has been but little mention that the great features and properties of grace, which grow out of the fact that Christ is now the sphere of the believer's life, are not found, even to the slightest degree, in either the law of Moses or the kingdom teachings. These wonderful accomplishments in grace are what differentiate Christianity from Judaism. One is of the old creation with its earthly purpose and promise; the other is of the new creation with its heavenly glories. The child of God has been delivered from every aspect of the law. The code of rules contained in the law has been superceded by the injunctions and beseechings of grace. The legal necessity of becoming accepted of God by human merit, has been superceded by the divine accomplishment through grace wherein the Christian is already accepted and safe in Christ forever. And possessing the presence of God through the indwelling Spirit, the child of God is saved from that struggle and defeat of the flesh which characterized the law and because of which defeat, the law became a curse and an instrument of death. In place of the law there is grace. In place of condemnation there is salvation. In place of death there is life. In place of ruin in Adam there is resurrection in Christ. In place of bondage there is liberty. In place of defeat there is victory. In place of hell there is heaven. (L. Chafer)

The "you in Me" relationship is that of being in the Body of Christ of which He is the Head. The "I in you" relationship is that of His indwelling presence. The Body Church relationship was thus revealed by the Lord before His death, and it would be operative at the day when the Holy Spirit would come to be "in" them. When did this happen? It occurred on the day of Pentecost. (C. Ryrie) "Portfolio" is a term for the holdings of an investor, a synonym for his riches. God has lavished upon us the riches of His grace. Every Church Age believer is fabulously wealthy. Our portfolio is described in Ephesians 1:3 as including every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places ... Hope of glorifying Christ belongs only to those who are advancing in the plan of God. Thus, the hope in Colossians 1:27 is to develop the capacity that frees God to bless us; it is the imputation of blessings that glorifies the Lord Jesus Christ. (R.B. Thieme, Jr.)

The hypostatic union is personal. A new personality, a unique hypostasis, came into being at the virgin birth. Jesus as a man was not merely in harmony or sympathy with God. Nor did the second Person of the Trinity indwell or possess our Lord's humanity, as the deity of Christ indwells us, members of the royal family. Each Church Age believer is "in Christ," but our union with Christ is not a hypostatic union. (R.B. Thieme, Jr) Christ was "in them" not simply "among them" ... pointing to Christ's indwelling in them as Gentile believers. As members of His body they had His life within them. (P. O'Brien) Christ is the hope of glory. The ground of our hope is Christ in the Word, or the gospel revelation, declaring the nature and methods of obtaining it. The evidence of our hope is Christ in the heart, or the sanctification of the soul, and its preparation for the heavenly glory. (M. Henry)

God remains the same. The way of salvation remains unchanged. But against a background of immutability and continuity, the doctrines of the mystery reveal the strategic changes that make this new dispensation unique. Church Age believers are a

new spiritual species with a totally new position in Christ and a magnificent array of privileges, responsibilities, and opportunities never available to believers of earlier ages ... For the reversionist the indwelling of Christ has no effect. The reversionist is incapable of reflecting the virtue and integrity of the indwelling Shekinah Glory. While the indwelling Shekinah is invisible, His reflected glory is seen through the Church Age believer who advances to supergrace. (R.B. Thieme, Jr.)

The branch is in the vine and the vine by its life and vitality is in the branch. Thus the believer is in Christ and Christ is in the believer. The new imparted life is Christ, and is therefore eternal because He is eternal. The believer's place, or position, in Christ is neither attained, nor maintained, through abiding in Him. That position is instantly wrought by the power of God through grace for every one who believes. Nor is the possession of the divine life, which is the indwelling of Christ, secured by abiding in Him; it is the gift of God. However, the normal manifestation of that life does depend on abiding in Him. Abiding is simply the right adjustment between the Christian and his Lord. Therefore, eternal, divine life, is Christ indwelling the believer by His Spirit and that life is the present possession of all who believe. The victories, joys, and fruits of that life depend upon abiding in Him which abiding is accomplished only by doing His will. (L. Chafer)

The central feature of this mystery is described as the fact of the indwelling Christ. The OT, while speaking of the coming Messiah both in suffering and in glory, never once anticipates such a situation as "Christ in you." While some passages picture the Holy Spirit as indwelling the believer in the coming kingdom, the Second Person is never so presented. (J. Walvoord) The NT formulates the thought of divine foreordination by telling us that what motivates and determines God's actions in His world, is His own will, His good pleasure, and His own deliberate, prior resolve. (T. Nettles) There is a nature of the experience which gives a present foretaste of that which eye cannot see nor ear hear nor heart conceive. It is in a word the experience of the indwelling Christ. (C. Dodd)

When Bible doctrine becomes your first priority, you ultimately arrive at spiritual self-esteem, personal love for God, the happiness of God, and occupation with Christ. The Apostle Paul describes this pinnacle of the spiritual life in 2 Corinthians 5:14. Motivated by the person of Jesus Christ Who dwells in you, instead of the fear that inexorably intrudes on your daily life, you find blessing, encouragement, and strength from the inventory of doctrine in your soul. Self-pity arouses only weakness and discouragement. When disaster strikes, you must not seek solace from trouble through panhandling your self-pity; rather you must reflect the serenity of Jesus Christ with whom you are permanently united. Only then will you experience victory over fear. (R.B. Thieme, Jr.)

The believer's new sphere consists not only in his place in Christ with its positions, possessions, safekeeping, and associations; it consists as well, in the fact that Christ is in the believer. The Scriptures teach that God the Father (Eph. 4:6), that God the Son (Col. 1:27), and that God the Spirit (1 Cor. 6:19) indwell every child of God ... The divine

nature is evidently the indwelling presence of God – Father, Son, and Spirit. There is a body of truth which teaches that God, in the unity of the three Persons, dwells in the heart of the child of God. Likewise there is an even greater body of Scripture which emphasizes the indwelling of the believer by the individual Persons of the Godhead. When the full unity of God is in view, it is usually spoken of as the indwelling of Christ. It may be concluded, therefore, that the phrase “I in you” is to be received as referring to the whole divine Person – Father, Son, and Spirit. The result of this indwelling of Christ is threefold: (1) A new divine life, (2) A new enabling power, and (3) A new hope of glory. (L. Chafer)

Every member of the royal family is a new spiritual species permanently indwelt by Christ. The indwelling Christ never leaves the Church Age believer, unlike the Shekinah Glory’s poignant, reluctant departure from apostate Israel. This permanent status, along with the ministry of God the Holy Spirit, gives the Church Age believer unprecedented opportunity for spiritual impact. The indwelling of the Shekinah Glory within individual believers was a concept totally unknown to the Jews. Under the protocol plan for the Church, the Shekinah Glory indwells every believer’s body for the purpose of fellowship with the glorified Christ. The indwelling of God the Son in the body of the Church Age believer is the escutcheon or badge of the royal family. As the Church Age believer advances to spiritual maturity, he glorifies Christ in his body. (R.B. Thieme, Jr.)

Col. 1:27 To whom (Dat. Adv.; Church Age believers) God (Subj. Nom.) decreed (θέλω, AAI3S, Constative; in eternity past) to make known (γνωρίζω, AAInf., Culminative, Infin. as Dir. Obj. of Verb; by means of right pastors and teachers) what (Subj. Nom.) is (ellipsis, verb supplied) the wealth (Pred. Nom.; of doctrine) of the glory (Obj. Gen.; the completed ECS) of this mystery (Adv. Gen. Ref.; church age) among the Gentiles (Loc. Sph.), which (Nom. Appos.) continues to be (εἰμί, PAI3S, Iterative) Christ (Pred. Nom.) in you (Loc. Sph.; the indwelling of the Shekinah glory when we reside inside the sphere of divine power), the confidence (Nom. Appos.; anticipation, expectation) of glory (Adv. Gen. Ref.; guarantee of eternal life),

^{WHO} **Colossians 1:27** οἷς ἠθέλησεν ὁ θεὸς γνωρίσαι τί τὸ πλοῦτος τῆς δόξης τοῦ μυστηρίου τούτου ἐν τοῖς ἔθνεσιν ὃ ἐστὶν Χριστὸς ἐν ὑμῖν ἡ ἐλπὶς τῆς δόξης·

^{VUL} **Colossians 1:27** quibus voluit Deus notas facere divitias gloriae sacramenti huius in gentibus quod est Christus in vobis spes gloriae

LWB Col. 1:28 Whom [Jesus Christ] we continue to solemnly proclaim [evangelism], repeatedly warning every man [those with negative volition] and repeatedly instructing every man [those with positive volition] in all wisdom [whole realm of doctrine], so that we might render every man fully mature in Christ,

^{KW} **Col. 1:28** Whom we are constantly announcing, admonishing every man and instructing every man in every wisdom in order that we may present every man spiritually mature in Christ Jesus,

^{KJV} **Colossians 1:28** Whom we preach, warning every man, and teaching every man in all wisdom; that we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus:

TRANSLATION HIGHLIGHTS

Paul and his colleagues continue to proclaim (Iterative Present tense) Jesus Christ as part of their ambassadorship function: evangelism. Once new converts are made in a particular geographical location, Paul switches from evangelism to warning and teaching. He repeatedly warns (Iterative Present tense) reversionistic believers, because those who are not truly interested in the Word of God need immediate warning before divine discipline comes upon them. He repeatedly teaches doctrine to those who are interested in the Word of God, i.e., positive believers. The Iterative Present tense, translated “repeatedly,” emphasizes the need for repetition – whether for admonition or instruction. Repetition is the price of knowledge. Paul is not restrictive or exclusive about who he warns or teaches. He warns negative believers and teaches positive believers wherever he finds the need. This is a contrast with the Gnostics who restricted their teaching to a select few, a secretive group of initiates as opposed to an open invitation to all men.

Paul also teaches the entire realm of doctrine; he does not hold back “special” or secretive teachings for a “special” group of men. He freely teaches everything he knows without qualifications. The reason why Paul is so free with his teaching is so that he might put every man on exhibit (Constative Aorist tense) before Christ as a spiritually mature believer. What is a fully mature man in Christ? A spiritually mature believer (Latin: perfect) in Christ has a complete structure (edification complex) of Bible doctrine in his/her soul. This man not only has Christ indwelling Him, but he is also “in Christ,” meaning he is in fellowship with the Lord and his soul is permeated with the mind or thinking of Christ, i.e., Bible doctrine. This man has not reached “sinless perfection,” but has reached a stage of “completion” or spiritual maturity in his thinking. The emphasis is on attaining wisdom (Gk: sophia), an advanced stage of maturity that only comes after years of dedicated, daily study of the Word of God under qualified teachers.

RELEVANT OPINIONS

The expression “every man” occurs three times in verse 28, being repeated to emphasize, on the one hand, the universality of the gospel as taught by Paul and his coworkers, and to contrast the intellectual exclusiveness of the false teachers on the other. There is no part of Christian teaching that is to be reserved for a spiritual elite. All the truth of God is for the people of God. (P. O’Brien) The word for “mature” (teleios) means “complete, fully developed.” It was later used among Gnostics for those privileged to be initiated into the higher realms of knowledge, a sense alien to the conception of Paul. It is not impossible that at this stage some of the false teachers were setting themselves up as an elite clique. If so the threefold occurrence of “every man” in this verse would contain a

significant counterbalance. (D. Guthrie) “Whom” goes back to Christ. Paul preached, not a system of doctrine so much as a Person, the Lord Jesus. (K. Wuest)

This wisdom, which is the practical application of a divinely given knowledge, is, as it were, the sphere in which the apostolic instructor moves. The aim of the teaching is that each one who responds may be presented spiritually mature before God. (H. Carson)
“Perfect” designates the fully instructed as distinguished from the novices. (M. Vincent)
Although he is aware of the real progress in faith and love the readers have already made, as a true pastor Paul will not be satisfied with anything less than the full Christian maturity of every believer. (P. O’Brien) Most interpreters of the NT understand Paul’s use of “telios” to refer to maturity. Paul does not strive to produce perfect Christians. He knows that is impossible. But he does labor to produce mature Christians ... Those who are victorious in suffering, who persevere to the end will enjoy a joint participation with Christ in the future reign of the servant kings. (J. Dillow)

Thorough instruction must follow the general proclaiming of the gospel. Growth in grace depends largely on growth in knowledge. Neglect of this laborious, unexciting part of the preacher’s mission, careful teaching, is sure to be avenged by ultimate weakness, if not by disastrous lapses into practical errors. We are not to be satisfied with such abstract teaching as simply informs the minds of people. The great work is most practical. It is to mould lives, to develop characters, to perfect souls. It is to bring men into living union with Christ. We preach Christ in order that men may live Christ. The great result is the effecting of a vital union with Christ. (W. Adeney) When “all” and “every” are used as synecdoches of the genus, “all” is put for the greater part of the whole ... extending not to all the individuals, but to all kinds, or those that are specified or implied. (E.W. Bullinger) “Warning” leads to repentance, refers to conduct ... “teaching” leads to faith, refers to doctrine ... the two heads of evangelical teaching. (R. Jamieson)

Every man has need to be warned and taught, therefore let every man have his share. When we warn people of what they do amiss, we must each them to do better: warning and teaching must go together. Men must be warned and taught in all wisdom. We must choose the fittest seasons, and use the likeliest means, and accommodate ourselves to the different circumstances and capacities of those we have to do with, and teach them as they are able to bear. That which he aimed at was to present every man perfect in Christ Jesus, “teleios,” either perfect in the knowledge of the Christian doctrine, or else crowned with a glorious reward hereafter. (M Henry) Paul wanted the believers to be doctrinally and morally pure and correct at the time of the Rapture when Christ would summon them into His presence. Although in spiritual standing, all believers are as perfect or complete as they can be, they are not yet complete in their moral practice or doctrinal understanding. (R. Gromacki)

The expression “in all wisdom” is equivalent to his affirming that his doctrine is such as to conduct a man to a wisdom that is perfect, and has nothing wanting; and this is what he immediately adds, that all that show themselves to be true disciples will become perfect. (J. Calvin) Mystery doctrine reveals all the “politeuma” privileges of the Church Age

believer, which set the Church Age apart from other dispensations. The mandate to “keep holding the mystery” in 1 Timothy 3:9 identifies the most vital function of the royal family: to continually learn, retain, and apply the doctrines of the Church. Hearing doctrine, meditating on doctrine, living by doctrine – this is the highest form of worship. The royal family of God has a unique potential to worship God because of the unprecedented extent of divine revelation in the mystery doctrine. (R.B. Thieme, Jr.)

Col. 1:28 Whom (Acc. Gen. Ref.; Jesus Christ) we (Subj. Nom.) continue to solemnly proclaim (καταγγέλλω, PAI1P, Iterative; evangelism), repeatedly warning (νουθετέω, PAPtc.NPM, Iterative, Modal) every (Acc. Spec.) man (Acc. Dir. Obj.; no exclusiveness) and (connective conj.) repeatedly instructing (διδάσκω, PAPtc.NPM, Iterative, Modal) every (Acc. Spec.) man (Acc. Dir. Obj.; teaching is not restricted to a select few like with Gnosticism) in all (Dat. Measure) wisdom (Loc. Sph.; teaching the whole realm of Bible doctrine), so that (purpose conj.) we might render (παρίστημι, AASubj.1P, Constative, Purpose & Potential; present, exhibit) every (Acc. Spec.) man (Acc. Dir. Obj.) fully mature (Compl. Acc.; with a completed edification complex of the soul) in Christ (Loc. Sph.),

^{WHO} **Colossians 1:28** ὃν ἡμεῖς καταγγέλλομεν νουθετοῦντες πάντα ἄνθρωπον καὶ διδάσκοντες πάντα ἄνθρωπον ἐν πάσῃ σοφίᾳ ἵνα παραστήσωμεν πάντα ἄνθρωπον τέλειον ἐν Χριστῷ·

^{VUL} **Colossians 1:28** quem nos adnuntiamus corripientes omnem hominem et docentes omnem hominem in omni sapientia ut exhibeamus omnem hominem perfectum in Christo Iesu

^{LWB} **Col. 1:29** **To which [objective] I am constantly working even to the point of exhaustion, straining every muscle [like a gladiator or professional athlete], according to the standard of His [prototype] power which is supernaturally working in me on a continual basis in the sphere of [operational] power.**

^{KW} **Col. 1:29** To which end also I am constantly laboring to the point of exhaustion, engaging in a contest in which I am controlled by His energy which operates in me in power.

^{KJV} **Colossians 1:29** Whereunto I also labour, striving according to his working, which worketh in me mightily.

TRANSLATION HIGHLIGHTS

Paul is working to the point of physical and mental exhaustion (Durative Present tense) towards the objective of presenting as many men and women to the Lord as spiritually mature believers. He uses an athletic term (Gk: agonize) to point to his straining every muscle and fibre of his being (Iterative Present tense) to bring believers to this state of maturity in Christ. This is the divine standard that Paul strives for, the same standard set

by Jesus Christ during His ministry on earth. Jesus lived in the prototype sphere of divine power given to Him by the Father. We have the opportunity to live in the operational sphere of divine power given to us by Christ. This delegated, divine power from the Lord works supernaturally in every believer (Iterative Present tense) as long as he continues to acknowledge his sins to the Father through Jesus Christ (1 John 1:9).

RELEVANT OPINIONS

Amid the spiritual conflict Paul experiences the inner working of the Spirit of Christ. This activity within is accompanied by a power which far surpasses mere human endeavor. We do not need to take “mightily” here in a restricted sense as a reference to the ability to work miracles; but it certainly does point to a special enabling which is the result of the activity of God. (H. Carson) “Energeo” means energy, operative force, power in action, a supernatural power, and a working of God. (G. Findlay) The preacher will be expected, at the return of his Master, to present, as the fruit of his life’s work, not a crowd of raw converts, but a body of ripe Christians. The work is not finished in conversion. It only begins with that. Line upon line, and precept upon precept, often with sad iteration as old lessons unlearned need to be repeated, characterizes the necessary task of the Christian preacher. And it is not done till perfection is reached. (W. Adeney)

The apostle introduces a favorite metaphor of his. He painfully exercised himself in training for the conflict, and then he went down to the arena and engaged in the conflict. Thus he comes back to the sufferings with which he started. But in the midst of it all, he rejoiced because he was not left to his own strength, but was supernaturally supported. There was an unseen Master beside him, nerving him as he labored in training and strove in the lists. (R. Finlayson) If Paul had been content to preach an exclusive gospel, he might have saved himself from more than half the troubles of his life. But he spoke of an arena and a conflict in describing his apostolic labors. He wants us to understand the magnitude of the struggle, which his anxiety for us cost him. (J. Lightfoot) There is a constant combination of human and divine energy in the Christian ministry. (D. Guthrie) The struggle is carried on in proportion, not to his natural powers, but to the mightily working energy of Christ within him. (K. Wuest)

Col. 1:29 To which (Acc. Gen. Ref.; objective) I am constantly working even (ascensive conj.) to the point of exhaustion (κοπιᾶω, PAI1S, Iterative & Durative; toiling hard, painful effort), straining every muscle (ἀγωνίζομαι, PMPTc.NSM, Iterative, Circumstantial, Deponent; agonizing like a professional athlete, contending in the arena), according to the standard of His (Poss. Gen.) power (Adv. Acc.; prototype) which is supernaturally working (ἐνεργέω, PMPTc.ASF, Iterative, Attributive) in me (Loc. Sph.) on a continual basis in the sphere of power (Loc. Sph.; operational type).

^{WHO} **Colossians 1:29** εἰς ὃ καὶ κοπιῶ ἀγωνιζόμενος κατὰ τὴν ἐνέργειαν αὐτοῦ τὴν ἐνεργουμένην ἐν ἐμοὶ ἐν δυνάμει

^{VUL} **Colossians 1:29** in quo et laboro certando secundum operationem eius quam operatur in me in virtute

CHAPTER 2

^{LWB} **Col. 2:1** For I want you to know about the great combat [intercessory prayer struggles] I continually have on your behalf and for those in Laodicea and as many as have not seen me face-to-face in my flesh [other assemblies],

^{KW} **Col. 2:1** For I desire you to know how great a conflict I am having in your behalf and in behalf of those in Laodicea, and as many as have not seen my face in the flesh,

^{KJV} **Colossians 2:1** For I would that ye knew what great conflict I have for you, and *for* them at Laodicea, and *for* as many as have not seen my face in the flesh;

TRANSLATION HIGHLIGHTS

Paul wants (Pictorial Present tense) the Colossians to know (Gnomic Perfect tense) that he agonizes in intercessory prayer for them, just like he has also done for their Laodicean neighbors on many occasions (Iterative Present tense). He also makes it a habit to intercede in prayer for other assemblies that he has never visited and who have not met him (Dramatic Perfect tense) face-to-face. Paul struggles in prayer for both his resident and non-resident congregations. Needless to say, this is a practice we should imitate. We should pray for those in the mission field and for other churches in our vicinity whenever possible. Some of these congregations must have needed prayer badly, since Paul describes his intercession for them in pugilistic terms.

RELEVANT OPINIONS

The conflict could be either outward or inward, fightings without or fears within. Here it is the inward struggle, the wrestling in prayer for the Colossian saints. (K. Wuest) In the first 15 verses of this chapter we will see that Christ is the answer to philosophy. The remainder of the chapter will show that He is the answer to ritual. The answer to philosophy is for the head; the answer to ritual is for the heart. There were five errors that endangered the Colossian church which Paul will deal with in this chapter. They were: (1) enticing words in 4-7, philosophy in 8-13, legality in 14-17, mysticism in 18-19, and asceticism in 20-23. These are still dangers today. (J. McGee) Paul desires the full use of the intellect in grasping the great mystery of Christ and it calls for the full and balanced exercise of all one's mental powers. (A.T. Robertson)

We may keep up a communion by faith, hope, and holy love, even with those churches and fellow-Christians of whom we have no personal knowledge, and with whom we have no conversation. We can think, and pray, and be concerned for one another, at the greatest distance; and those we never saw in the flesh we may hope to meet in heaven. We may be present in spirit with those churches and Christians from whom we are absent in body, for the communion of saints is a spiritual thing. (M. Henry) Paul speaks slightly of the acquaintance that is contracted from sight, for there is among the servants of God a sight different from that of the flesh, which excites love. (J. Calvin)

Col. 2:1 For (Inferential conj.) I want (θέλω, PA1IS, Pictorial; wish, will, desire) you (Acc. Dir. Obj.) to know about (οἶδα, Perf.AInf., Gnostic, Inf. as Dir. Obj. of Verb) the great (Acc. Spec.) combat (Acc. Dir. Obj.; agony, disturbance, storm) I continually have (έχω, PA1IS, Iterative) on your behalf (Gen. Adv.; the Colossians) and (connective conj.) for those (Gen. Adv.) in Laodicea (Loc. Place) and (connective conj.) as many as (Subj. Nom.) have not (neg. adv.) seen (όράω, Perf.AI3P, Dramatic) me (Acc. Dir. Obj.) face to face (Adv. Acc.) in my (Poss. Gen.) flesh (Loc. Sph.; Paul struggles in intercessory prayer for both his resident and non-resident congregations),

^{WHO} **Colossians 2:1** θέλω γάρ ὑμᾶς εἰδέναί ἡλίκον ἀγῶνα ἔχω ὑπὲρ ὑμῶν καὶ τῶν ἐν Λαοδικείᾳ καὶ ὅσοι οὐχ ἑώρακαν τὸ πρόσωπόν μου ἐν σαρκί

^{VUL} **Colossians 2:1** volo enim vos scire qualem sollicitudinem habeam pro vobis et pro his qui sunt Laodiciae et quicumque non viderunt faciem meam in carne

^{LWB} **Col. 2:2** So that the mentality of your souls might be stabilized [during times of great pressure], while you are being taught inside the love complex, namely, every category of wealth [maximum doctrine in the soul] related to the full assurances which come from the source of technical knowledge [complete systematic theology], resulting in a full knowledge of the mystery of God, from the source of Christ,

^{KW} **Col. 2:2** In order that their hearts may be encouraged, having been knit together in the sphere of love and resulting in all the wealth of the full assurance of the understanding, resulting in an advanced and perfect experiential knowledge of the mystery of God, Christ,

^{KJV} **Colossians 2:2** That their hearts might be comforted, being knit together in love, and unto all riches of the full assurance of understanding, to the acknowledgement of the mystery of God, and of the Father, and of Christ;

TRANSLATION HIGHLIGHTS

Paul intercedes for the Colossians and other congregations because he wants the mentality of their souls to be stabilized (Latin: consolation) during the time of great pressure (Culminative Aorist tense). These outside pressures could be the result of momentum testing or divine discipline. In either case, Paul wants them to be stable while being tested for spiritual advance or recovering from reversionism. He wants their minds to be stable while they are being taught (Temporal Participle) Bible doctrine (Latin: instruction) inside the sphere of love, i.e., the love complex. What are they being taught? They are being taught every category of Bible doctrine available, a wealth of material for spiritual growth (Latin: intellect).

This wealth of spiritual resources comes from having a complete systematic theology in your soul. This means Paul wants every believer to learn the necessary technical knowledge required in order to have positive momentum in the spiritual life. Without this technical knowledge (Gk: epignosis), this complete systematic theology in the soul, you cannot know Christ intimately. You have to have maximum Bible doctrine in the soul in order to possess a full knowledge of the mystery of God. It doesn't drop down out of the sky into your frontal lobe. It isn't inserted into your mind by the Holy Spirit without consistent intake, metabolization and application. Paul is discussing experiential sanctification here, and that requires consistent, positive volition towards the Word of God on your part, day-in and day-out. There are no shortcuts or quick fixes.

RELEVANT OPINIONS

“Portfolio” is a term for the holdings of an investor, a synonym for his riches. God has lavished upon us the riches of His grace. Every Church Age believer is fabulously wealthy. This inventory includes “every spiritual blessing in Heavenly places” for both time and eternity: everything necessary for function in life, growing in grace, the execution and fulfillment of the plan of God, dying, and eternal rewards. (R.B. Thieme, Jr.) “Treasure” means “spiritual goods” which are “hidden,” not in the sense that they are “kept concealed,” but that they exist “deposited” or “stored up” in Christ. To search for other sources of knowledge apart from Him is a useless enterprise. Here Paul is encouraging the readers to look to Christ as the only “place” where the treasures of wisdom and knowledge are to be found. (P. O'Brien) Love as a mere sentiment may degenerate into a weak toleration of any error that disguises itself in the garb of love. (E. Prout)

The verb implies more than “comfort” and ought to be rendered “strengthen.” What made Paul concerned was the readers' danger of being carried away by the heretical teaching. Consequently their hearts need to be strengthened. “Heart” is employed in its customary OT sense denoting the inner life of the person, the center of his personality, understood as the source of will, emotion, thoughts, and affections. “Love” is called the “bond of perfection,” and from the union that results they would attain to full understanding and knowledge. There is an appeal to clear-sighted appreciation of theological truth. The object toward which Paul's instruction moves is a deeper understanding of the divine mystery, while the stress on the superabundance of such knowledge is signified through

the accumulation of synonyms. (P. O'Brien) The use of "epignosis" is Paul's reply to the Gnostics with their limited and perverted "gnosis." (A.T. Robertson)

The sense of "knowledge" (epignosis) is a thorough comprehension of what God is doing today and how that relates to His program for the ages. It implies a full theological, dispensational, and Christological approach to life. (R. Gromacki) The words, "of the Father" are not in the best manuscripts. The word "Christ" is in the same case as "mystery," placing it in apposition with it. The mystery is Christ. (K. Wuest) There is the wealth of "epignosis," that divinely given, super-knowledge of God and His will, which far transcends the human knowledge of the philosophers and mystics. It is the knowledge which accepts and reckons on "the mystery of God and of Christ" – it is the knowledge, then, which accepts as real that which Paul has been delineating – Christ in you, the hope of glory. (E. English) Love never compromises the truth. It is compassionate to the errorist, but gives no allowance to the error. (W. Nicholson)

The Colossians need not, must not, look for any source of happiness or of holiness outside of Christ. Do false teachers boast about their wisdom and their knowledge? Or about that of the angels? Neither man nor angel nor any other creature has anything at all to offer which cannot be found *in incomparably superior essence and in infinite degree* in Christ ... In Christ *knowledge* is never separated from *wisdom*, as it often is among men. Now wisdom is the ability, in concrete situations, to apply knowledge to the best advantage. (W. Hendriksen) When we "understand" a certain thing, we truly discern its meaning. "Wisdom" is the faculty by which we make the highest and best application of knowledge. Since all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge are concealed in God (Col.2:3), "the assurance of understanding" (Col.2:2) is that which we have when God makes our faith grow up (1 Cor.3:5-7). Until then, "it is the glory of Elohim to conceal a matter" (Prov.25:2). (A. Knoch)

While progress in the faith is by the grace of God alone, it is nonetheless through our own efforts, according to our strongest desires. Therefore we must recognize the vital place as well of self-discipline. Thus one who is wise will realize that "a man cannot get anything if it should not be given him out of heaven" (John 3:27), and that we must "become doers of the word, and not only listeners, beguiling [our]selves." (A. Knoch)

Col. 2:2 So that (purpose conj.) your (Poss. Gen.) mentality of the souls (Subj. Nom.; right lobes) might be stabilized (παρακαλέω, APSubj.3P, Culminative, Purpose Clause with an Element of Contingency; consoled through reversion recovery by means of the daily intake of Bible doctrine), while you are being taught (συμβιβάζω, APptc.NPM, Constative, Circumstantial, Temporal; instructed) inside the love complex (Loc. Sph.), namely (explicative conj.; concerning, that is), every category (Acc. Spec.) of wealth (Acc. Dir. Obj.; maximum doctrine in the soul) related to the full assurances (Adv. Gen. Ref.) which come (ellipsis, a verbal expansion on the concept of Source) from the source of

technical knowledge (Abl. Source; a complete systematic theology), resulting in a full knowledge (Acc. Result) of the mystery (Obj. Gen.) of God (Poss. Gen.), from the source of Christ (Abl. Source, in Apposition),

^{WHO} **Colossians 2:2** ἵνα παρακληθῶσιν αἱ καρδίαι αὐτῶν συμβιβασθέντες ἐν ἀγάπῃ καὶ εἰς πᾶν πλοῦτος τῆς πληροφορίας τῆς συνέσεως εἰς ἐπίγνωσιν τοῦ μυστηρίου τοῦ θεοῦ Χριστοῦ

^{VUL} **Colossians 2:2** ut consolentur corda ipsorum instructi in caritate et in omnes divitias plenitudinis intellectus in agnitionem mysterii Dei Patris Christi Iesu

^{LWB} **Col. 2:3** In Whom [Jesus Christ] all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge are stored up [Bible doctrine is the mind of Christ].

^{KW} **Col. 2:3** In whom are all the hidden treasures of the wisdom and knowledge.

^{KJV} **Colossians 2:3** In whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge.

TRANSLATION HIGHLIGHTS

All the treasures (Latin & Gk: thesaurus) of wisdom and knowledge are (Descriptive Present tense) stored up in Christ Jesus. The entire storehouse of Bible doctrine comes from the mind of Christ. “Knowledge” is doctrine in memory center waiting to be applied. “Wisdom” is doctrine that is consistently applied to life. “Stored up” means doctrine is on reserve, waiting for us to metabolize it and apply it. It is hidden in Jesus Christ as its source, so the only way to know God is through Jesus Christ. “Hidden” also implies that a cursory reading of the Bible will not reveal these treasures. They must be studied in earnest, as if you were a treasure hunter with a treasure map leading to untold riches. You will not discover them listening to a sermon once a week on Sunday. You will not discover them by being “baptized in water” or “partaking of the Lord’s Table.” You will only discover them by listening to a qualified pastor-teacher and reinforcing what you have heard by personal study and meditation on the Word.

RELEVANT OPINIONS

“Epignosis,” resulting in a full knowledge, means all, and not merely some of the treasures of wisdom and knowledge are contained in Christ; therefore the search for them outside of Him is doomed to failure. But not only are they in Christ, but they are contained in a hidden way. Therefore they do not lie on the surface, but must be sought for earnestly, as men seek for hidden treasure. They are not matters of external observances, such as the false teachers enjoined, but to be apprehended by deep and serious meditation. (K. Wuest) Christ does not merely give some truths which may be supplemented by those given by another religious teacher, for ALL the treasures, the sum total of the wealth, of wisdom and knowledge are found in Him. (H. Carson)

Wisdom is a treasure for the greatest treasury. Paul agrees with Solomon. Both exalt wisdom. It is a mistake to suppose that the gospel discourages knowledge and sets a premium on folly. It disregards worldly wisdom just because it brings a higher wisdom. Knowledge is good in itself. It is a treasure worth possessing for its own sake. The truly wise man would rather lose his money than his knowledge. Knowledge is good for the soul. The mind lives and grows upon ideas. The soul is nourished by the Word of God, which is the revelation of His wisdom. To know God is eternal life. Knowledge is power, just because it shows us how to use many things which are useless to ignorance. The knowledge of divine truth helps us to the use of Divine grace. (W. Adeney)

Col. 2:3 In Whom (Loc. Sph.; Jesus Christ) all (Nom. Spec.) the treasures (Subj. Nom.; thesaurus, storehouse) of wisdom (Adv. Gen. Ref.; doctrine on the launching pad) and (conective conj.) knowledge (Adv. Gen. Ref.; doctrine in the ECS) are (εἰμί, PAI3P, Descriptive) stored up (Pred. Nom.; concealed, on reserve; all Bible doctrine is stored in and comes from the mind of Christ).

^{WHO} **Colossians 2:3** ἐν ᾧ εἰσιν πάντες οἱ θησαυροὶ τῆς σοφίας καὶ γνώσεως ἀπόκρυφοι

^{VUL} **Colossians 2:3** in quo sunt omnes thesauri sapientiae et scientiae absconditi

^{LWB} **Col. 2:4** **I am telling you this so that no one may delude you with distorted doctrines by means of plausible but false discourse [subtle, persuasive speech].**

^{KW} **Col. 2:4** This I am saying in order that no one may be leading you astray by false reasoning in the sphere of specious discourse.

^{KJV} **Colossians 2:4** And this I say, lest any man should beguile you with enticing words.

TRANSLATION HIGHLIGHTS

Paul is communicating the Colossians (Static Present tense) these important concepts about Bible doctrine (coming from the source of the mind of Christ) so that none of the false teachers may delude (Tendential Present tense) them. The Potential Subjunctive mood points to this possibility of delusion being quite real. Some of these false teachers are quite eloquent and quite intelligent. They might grab some true doctrines and mix some of their homegrown error into them, confusing the true issues and persuading some weaker brethren to follow them. The prefix “para” in the Greek points to the false teachers as “coming in alongside of” believers, perhaps as friends and confidants, and once gaining their trust, persuading them to ignore Paul’s teaching in favor of their own brand. They present their false teachings in an elite, secretive, and attractively packaged manor. Paul hopes to prevent the Colossians from being deceived by encouraging them to have maximum Bible doctrine in the soul.

RELEVANT OPINIONS

False teachers persuade and delude – this is what a crafty salesman uses to convince a person to buy something that he or she really does not want. It is deceit carefully packaged and presented. Paul deplored such deceitful tactics. (R. Gromacki) Psychology and philosophy have been substituted for the Bible, and this is the thing that is enticing so many young preachers in our seminaries today. I am amazed to find that some of these men with a Ph.D degree from a seminary know so little about the Bible! They know all about Bultmann and Kant and Plato, but they don't seem to know very much about the Word of God. That is the great problem of our day. There was that same danger in Colossae and also in Laodicea. I think that is what actually killed the church in Colossae, and it made the church in Laodicea the weakest of the seven churches in Asia Minor. It was in the worst spiritual condition, and yet the people thought that they were well off. (J. McGee)

The philosophies and speculations of the world are enticing. They would not hold much weight in the world if they were not so. All of the false theories and religions have an appeal, else they would have no followers. They attract the intellect. They ignore sin and its judgment. They cause men to think that in themselves there is something good, a divine spark – and that if there is any after-life, it will be possible for them, by self-effort and intellectual apprehension, to attain it. Their doctrines are persuasive – to those who do not know the truth. So Paul declares where all truth and knowledge and wisdom may be found – in the Son of God, the Lord Jesus Christ. (E. English)

There are certain men who because they possess somewhat more learning than others, think, when they become converts to the gospel, that they are great acquisitions to the cause. They officiously extend the shield of their learning over their more unlearned brethren, and try to prove where others believe; but while they think they promote the cause, they generally spoil what they touch. Against such philosophers God's people in all ages require to be warned. (R. Edgar) The tendency of many now is to make light of doctrinal, definite teaching altogether, using the Greek term for doctrine (dogma) as a term of reproach – a course as childish as it is dangerous. Paul knew that doctrine had a moulding power on the characters of those who came under its influence. (E. Prout)

Col. 2:4 I am telling (λέγω, PA1S, Static) you (ellipsis, Indir. Obj. supplied) this (Acc. Dir. Obj.) so that (purpose conj.) no one (Subj. Nom.) may delude (παραλογίζομαι, PMSbj.3S, Tendential, Potential, Deponent) you (Acc. Dir. Obj.) with distorted doctrines by means of plausible but false discourse (Abl. Means; subtle, persuasive speech).

^{WHO} **Colossians 2:4** Τοῦτο λέγω ἵνα μηδεὶς ὑμᾶς παραλογίζηται ἐν πιθανολογίᾳ

^{VUL} **Colossians 2:4** hoc autem dico ut nemo vos decipiat in subtilitate sermonum

LWB Col. 2:5 For, as is the case, I am in fact absent [from you] in the flesh, nevertheless, I am continually with you by means of the Spirit [non-resident pastor-teacher], constantly filled with inner happiness [from doctrine] even while inspecting your steadiness in ranks [in the Christian life] and the solid front [fortification] of your doctrine in Christ [battle lines in the angelic conflict].

KW Col. 2:5 For if, as is the case, I am in fact absent in my flesh, yet I am with you in my spirit, rejoicing and beholding your orderly array and the solid front of your faith in Christ.

KJV Colossians 2:5 For though I be absent in the flesh, yet am I with you in the spirit, joying and beholding your order, and the stedfastness of your faith in Christ.

TRANSLATION HIGHLIGHTS

This is one of many verses that support Bible teaching from a pastor-teacher that is not in your geographical location. On many occasions, in fact on most occasions, Paul taught Bible doctrine to believers by epistles and word of mouth in congregations that were far from him. Even though he was absent from them in the flesh (Static Present tense), he was with them continually (Iterative Present tense) by means of the Spirit. There are occasions for many of us when we are living or traveling in regions where there are no qualified Bible teachers. In this case, Paul was in prison, so obviously they had to learn from him non-face-to-face! Especially for those in the military, this is a crucial doctrine for their spiritual growth; soldiers need doctrine perhaps more than anybody else, and they should locate a steady source of teaching by some means of written or verbal communication (tapes, books, internet, etc.).

Paul may have been thinking of men in the military when writing this passage, because he uses a military metaphor for a general inspecting the troops before battle. He states, in fact, that he is able to inspect (Pictorial Present tense) their steadiness in ranks in the Christian life from where he is being held prisoner! Their general may have been captured by the enemy, but he is still able to communicate with his troops by way of mouth and writing. His command center for the time being is in a jail cell, but from the reports he gets from couriers, he can picture the Colossians advancing in ranks (in a disciplined, orderly, military fashion) in the spiritual life in spite of the enemy. He reminds them that Bible doctrine is their fortification against the enemy, their solid front in Christ during the angelic conflict. And in spite of his imprisonment and their assault from false teachers, he maintains a state of inner happiness (Iterative Present tense) because of the doctrine in his own soul.

RELEVANT OPINIONS

“Order” is “taxis,” a military term speaking of an orderly array of soldiers. Paul wrote this from prison in Rome where he had constant contact with soldiers. “Steadfastness” is “steroma,” another military word which means “to make solid,” solidifying a battle by massing his lines. (K. Wuest) The apostle is with them as a field commander standing

before his troops and arranging the ranks for battle once more. He viewed with approval their steadfast intent to close ranks and stand firm, without yielding to erroneous propaganda from an intruding enemy. (P. O'Brien) Strictly speaking, the terms that Paul employs are military words. He was guarded in his prison cell by Roman praetorian guards, which perhaps brought to his mind these expressions. Your order is the orderly array of a company of soldiers. Steadfastness is translated from the term meaning a phalanx, and denotes a solid front. (E. English)

Paul's sense of being "spiritually present" with his fellow Christians at a distance was extremely strong and vivid. The clearest and most remarkable example is recorded at 1 Corinthians 5:3-5, where he speaks of himself as being present in spirit in the assembly at Corinth, while living at Ephesus, in order to take part in a disciplinary action. Here he gives the same assurance to a church he had not previously visited. In all reality and without hesitation he believed that he was capable of operating spiritually at a distance. Paul is present with the Corinthians and Colossians since both live with Christ. (P. O'Brien) Faith is represented as a host solidly drawn up, your solid front, close phalanx. (M. Vincent)

Col. 2:5 For (explanatory conj.), as is the case (protasis, 1st class condition, affirmative), I am in fact (emphatic particle) absent (ἀπειμι, PAI1S, Static; from you) in the flesh (Loc. Sph.), nevertheless (contrast conj.; apodosis), I am continually (εἰμί, PAI1S, Iterative) with you (Dat. Assoc.) by means of the Spirit (Instr. Means; non-resident P-T), constantly filled with inner happiness (χαίρω, PAptc.NSM, Descriptive & Iterative, Circumstantial; from doctrine) even (ascensive conj.) while inspecting (βλέπω, PAptc.NSM, Pictorial, Temporal) your (Poss. Gen.) steadiness in ranks (Acc. Dir. Obj.; command center; advancing in ranks in line in the Christian life) and (connective conj.) the solid front (Acc. Dir. Obj.; stability, fortification) of your (Poss. Gen.) doctrine (Adv. Gen. Ref.) in Christ (Loc. Sph.; battle lines of the angelic conflict).

^{WHO} **Colossians 2:5** εἰ γὰρ καὶ τῇ σαρκὶ ἀπειμι ἀλλὰ τῷ πνεύματι σὺν ὑμῖν εἰμι χαίρων καὶ βλέπων ὑμῶν τὴν τάξιν καὶ τὸ στερέωμα τῆς εἰς Χριστὸν πίστεως ὑμῶν

^{VUL} **Colossians 2:5** nam et si corpore absens sum sed spiritu vobiscum sum gaudens et videns ordinem vestrum et firmamentum eius quae in Christo est fidei vestrae

^{LWB} **Col. 2:6** **Therefore, in the same manner in which you received Christ Jesus the Lord [by the grace of God in the Spirit], keep on walking in it [the sphere of divine power],**

^{KW} **Col. 2:6** In the same manner, therefore, as you received the Christ, Jesus, the Lord, in Him be constantly ordering your behavior,

^{KJV} **Colossians 2:6** As ye have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord, *so* walk ye in him:

TRANSLATION HIGHLIGHTS

We all received (Culminative Aorist tense) Christ Jesus the Lord by the grace of God. This happened by the power of the Holy Spirit at regeneration. At the new birth, the Spirit came and indwelt us, and for a moment we were also filled with the Spirit and began a walk in the sphere of divine power. Soon afterward, we all sinned and lost the temporary filling of the Spirit. Whenever we learned to confess our sin to the Lord in 1 John 1:9, we learned how to be filled with the Spirit again. This was the beginning of our walk in the Spirit, in the sphere of divine power, i.e., the divine dynasphere. Paul commands us (Imperative mood) to keep on walking (Iterative Present tense) in it – it being the sphere of divine power. This is how we are supposed to live the Christian life.

RELEVANT OPINIONS

Paul is proving that the believer, who has not been able to be saved by Law, cannot live an acceptable life before God by seeking to keep the Law in his saved condition. (C. Feinberg) Paul is speaking of the doctrines regarding the Person and Work of the Lord Jesus, rather than of Him personally, for the former were involved in the Colossian heresy. They are to keep to the doctrines pertaining to Him in which they were first instructed by Paul. (K. Wuest) The present tense of the verb “peripateo” stresses the daily walk of spiritual development. (R. Gromacki) Many who hear the good news and believe are soon turned away by false doctrine, cults, rebellious lifestyles, immaturity, and so forth, never having been established in the faith with a firm foundation. (S. Leach)

There is a class of wishy-washy, milk and cider preachers who would rather say it does not make any difference what one believes if the heart is all right. That class of preachers raise up congregations to become the prey of any evangelical tramp or crank. Such an ill-trained congregation does not make even good militia, much less veteran soldiers. (B. Carroll) Walking speaks of the normal pattern of living. It suggests the steady progress of the one who is patiently going on in face of temptation to turn aside, or to be discouraged. But Paul, as often, is not confined to one metaphor. He moves quickly to the pictures of the growing plant, and the growing building, to give a full illustration of the developing Christian life. (H. Carson)

Col. 2:6 Therefore (explanatory conj.), in the same manner in which (comparative particle) you received (παραλαμβάνω, AAI2P, Culminative) Christ Jesus (Acc. Dir. Obj.) the Lord (Acc. Gen. Ref.; grace function), keep on walking (περιπατέω, PAImp.2P, Iterative, Command; ordering your behavior) in it (Loc. Sph.; the divine dynasphere),

^{WHO} **Colossians 2:6** Ὡς οὖν παρελάβετε τὸν Χριστὸν Ἰησοῦν τὸν κύριον ἐν αὐτῷ περιπατεῖτε

^{VUL} **Colossians 2:6** sicut ergo accepistis Christum Iesum Dominum in ipso ambulate

LWB Col. 2:7 Having been rooted [in spiritual self-esteem] and firmly anchored [in spiritual autonomy] and having been constantly built-up [construction of an edification complex in the soul] in it [spiritual maturity in the sphere of power], and having been continually established by means of doctrine [passing momentum & evidence testing], just as you were instructed [by a qualified pastor-teacher], keep on overflowing [abounding] with thanksgiving [part of ultra-supergrace life].

KW Col. 2:7 Having been rooted with the present result that you are firmly established, and constantly being built up in Him and constantly being established with reference to the Faith, even as you were instructed, abounding in it in the sphere of thanksgiving.

KJV Colossians 2:7 Rooted and built up in him, and stablished in the faith, as ye have been taught, abounding therein with thanksgiving.

TRANSLATION HIGHLIGHTS

This is a doctrinally loaded verse on experiential sanctification. The Intensive Perfect tense of “rizoo” points to a spiritual state having been accomplished in the past with the result that it has continued into the present (Latin: confirmed) and will continue to exist in the future ... under conditions. The spiritual state that was accomplished in the past (rooted in spiritual self-esteem) continues into the present (firmly anchored in spiritual autonomy) and is the springboard for future growth. The next stage of spiritual growth is to be constantly built up (Iterative present tense) in it, the sphere of divine power. This is a reference to the attainment of spiritual maturity, having completed the construction of a doctrinal super-structure in the soul. This doctrinal structure is called the edification complex of the soul, derived from the Latin “super-edifice.”

From the first stage to the very last stage of spiritual growth, you have to be continually established (Iterative Present tense) by means of Bible doctrine. This means you have to not only learn and metabolize doctrine, but you also have to apply it in life. The Lord brings outside pressures to bear on the believer with momentum, in order to test him and provide opportunity for future growth. Momentum testing propels a believer from supergrace stage A into supergrace stage B; evidence testing propels a believer from supergrace stage B into ultra-supergrace. Every step of the way requires further doctrinal instruction (Gk: didactic), often a review of the very same teachings you learned from your pastor-teacher (Constative Aorist tense) in your spiritual childhood. “Rooted” in the basics, “built up” in categorical theology, and “established” by passing tests that provide forward momentum – this is progressive increase in Him and in it.

The Intensive Perfect and Iterative Present tenses point to this intake, metabolization and application of doctrine as a continuous, non-stop process. There is no point of arrival until death or the rapture. There is no stage of spiritual growth in which you no longer need Bible doctrine. Paul commands us (Imperative Participle) to keep on walking, keep on growing, keep on overflowing (Iterative Present tense) with thanksgiving. “Perisseuo”

means to become spiritually rich, abounding in divine blessings. There are abundant spiritual blessings every step of the way in the Christian life, but this “overflowing” of blessings (Latin: abundance) follows the progressive outline of this entire passage. Therefore these blessings lead to increasing levels of thanksgiving (Gk: eucharist), with ultra-supergrace thanksgiving (Latin: gratitude) as the pinnacle. Your “gratitude gauge” should continue to increase as you grow in the grace and knowledge of the Lord Jesus.

RELEVANT OPINIONS

In Hebrews 3:14, “We are partakers (metachoi) of Christ if we hold firm (bebaios) the beginning of our assurance to the end,” this and similar contexts seem to suggest that “to hold firm” may be a similar idea to “make your calling and election sure.” In other words, to make our calling and election sure is simply another way of saying persevere to the end. It has the simple sense of “remain firm,” or “strengthen.” This is the meaning in Col. 2:7 where Paul exhorts them to be rooted and built up in Him and “strengthened” (bebaios) in the faith. We are to make our calling and election “sure” as a protection so that we will never stumble in our Christian lives. (J. Dillow) The tenses of the verbs are varied, and with reason. Here is the correct rendering: Having been rooted and being built up, and getting establishment (a continuous process) in the faith. (E. English) Rooted is perfect participle implying an abiding fact, while builded up is in the present tense of a continued process, implying growth and gain. (G. Findlay)

The readers have been firmly rooted in Christ and they are to conduct their lives according to this beginning. The images of being rooted and built up are linked with reference to buildings; the metaphors are joined so as to describe the solid foundation upon which believers’ lives are to be based. The words “being established” continue the notion of the readers’ consolidation in the faith. The whole phrase could be taken as a reference to the Colossians’ being progressively reinforced in the Christian conviction. It is better to understand “faith” as that which is the object of belief, the content of the teaching which Epaphras had faithfully passed on to them. They have been securely rooted in Him, they are progressively being built up in Christ as they are reinforced in the faith they had been taught. (P. O’Brien) Note the changing metaphor from the solidity of military array to walking, rooting of a tree, and then to building. In this and the Ephesian epistle, Christ is represented as the sphere within which the building goes on. (K. Wuest)

The whole upbuilding of the Church proceeds within the compass of Christ’s personality, life, and power. (M. Vincent) Many commentators translate “in aute” as “in Him,” but it can also be translated in the neuter, “in it” – a reference to the sphere of operational power that Christ bequeathed to us. Both are true experiential concepts. Some manuscripts do not contain the phrase at all. (LWB) Their faith has taken root in Christ; they are therefore being progressively built up in union with Him, and are progressively reinforced in the Christian conviction. (C. Moule) This rooting is equivalent to our having been put into Christ by means of the simplest fundamental principles of the gospel. Then there is the idea of increasing as the result of having been rooted, the thought of being built up in Christ, as the cementing element. And we are not only being

built up in Him, but also established in the faith as you were taught. Finally, we are not only established in the faith, but abounding in it in thanksgiving. (W. Nicholson)

The emphasis of regeneration is on the proper foundation; however, the focus of spiritual growth is on the superstructure. Believers have a choice to build spiritual lives of success to the glory of God or carnal lives of failure to the shame of self. It is not enough to place brick upon brick in a wall; such bricks must be properly anchored and cemented to each other to provide strength and stability. The phrase “in faith” includes the whole body of doctrinal truth that had been revealed through the apostles. Persons cannot obtain this stability through their own inner faith, experience, or feelings. Although God can teach believers directly from their own inductive Bible study, He normally instructs through gifted teachers. In fact, the pastor-teacher should have been taught by someone else. Instruction in biblical doctrine should produce inner joy and gratitude. The more believers learn about God and His redemptive program, the more they should love Him for what He has done for them. (R. Gromacki)

As the foundation upholds the house, so is the believer upheld by Christ. The building is progressive – being built up in Him. (T. Croskery) Rooted and builded up in Him: The change of tense is not brought out in the translation. It is literally, “Having been rooted and being builded up in Him.” They got a rooting in Christ at the beginning under Epaphras, who presented Christ plainly to them, giving them line upon line and precept upon precept, until they came to a clear conception of the truth. This rooting was effectual in the subsequent development. Every successive layer was to be in accordance with their grounding. The building was to rise up in, and to take form from, that Christ in whom they had been so well grounded. The early teaching enjoyed by the Colossians was proved to be good by the subsequent development. (R. Finlayson) The progress of life is here described. The three metaphors used, of a path, a tree, a structure, teach the same lesson of intimate and advancing union with Christ. Whether walking, or being rooted, or being built, it is all in Christ. (U. Thomas)

Growth in Christ consists in a continuous advance in the Christian life. We must be rooted. We must be built up. This is a gradual progress. It does not abolish the past in making the future, but, on the contrary, it erects the latter on the former. It produces a compact and harmonious structure. So the temple of the Christian life should be rising in solid strength and grace and beauty, based on Christ as the Foundation, to be finished with Christ as the chief Cornerstone, and consecrated for the indwelling of the Spirit of Christ. (W. Adeney) The more closely we walk with Christ the more we are rooted and established in the faith. If we walk in Him, we shall be rooted in Him; and the more firmly we are rooted in Him the more closely we shall walk in Him. (M. Henry) The “epi” in “epoikodomein” does not necessarily refer to the original foundation, but may point to the continued progress of the building by successive layers. (J. Lightfoot) Abounding means he would not have them simply remain immovable, but would have them grow every day more and more. (J. Calvin)

Col. 2:7 Having been rooted (in spiritual self-esteem) and firmly anchored (ρίζω, Perf.PPtc.NPM, Intensive, Circumstantial; in spiritual autonomy) and (connective conj.) having been constantly built-up (ἐποικοδομέω, PPpTc.NPM, Descriptive, Circumstantial; super-edification) in it (Loc. Sph.; completion of the ECS in SGA, spiritual maturity), and (continuative conj.) having been continually established (βεβαιόω, PPpTc.NPM, Iterative, Circumstantial; stabilized, confirmed) by means of doctrine (Instr. Means; by passing evidence testing in SGB) just as (comparative adv.) you were instructed (διδάσκω, API2P, Constative; by your right P-T), keep on overflowing (περισεύω, PApTc.NPM, Iterative, Imperative; abounding, excelling, being rich) with thanksgiving (Instr. Means; an expression of USG life).

^{WHO} **Colossians 2:7** ἐρριζωμένοι καὶ ἐποικοδομούμενοι ἐν αὐτῷ καὶ βεβαιούμενοι τῇ πίστει καθὼς ἐδιδάχθητε περισσεύοντες [ἐν αὐτῇ] ἐν εὐχαριστίᾳ

^{VUL} **Colossians 2:7** radicati et supraedificati in ipso et confirmati fide sicut et didicistis abundantes in gratiarum actione

^{LWB} **Col. 2:8** **Constantly be on guard [beware] so that there is not anyone who can capture [by pseudo-love fanaticism] and enslave you [in reversionism] through human speculation [human viewpoint philosophy & psychology], even through empty deceit [inane fallacies] according to the rudimentary teachings [beggarly elements] from the cosmic system and not according to the standards of Christ.**

^{KW} **Col. 2:8** Be ever on your guard lest there shall be someone who leads you astray through this philosophy, even futile deceit, which is according to the tradition of men, according to the rudimentary teachings of the world, and not according to Christ,

^{KJV} **Colossians 2:8** Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ.

TRANSLATION HIGHLIGHTS

After encouraging the Colossians to exhibit forward momentum through all the various stages of spiritual life by means of doctrine and the filling of the Spirit, he now warns them (Imperative of Command) to be constantly on guard against anyone who might steer them away from the Word of God towards the latest philosophy or psychological panacea. The false teachers around Colossae were able to draw a small crowd of adherents by their clever logic (Gk: philosophy) and winsome personalities. A certain category of weak believer is easily led astray by celebrities of one sort or another. They are consummate in engendering pseudo-love fanaticism for their latest psychological gimmick. Paul warns the Colossians not to allow themselves to be captured and enslaved (Tendential Present tense) by these charlatans.

Philosophical treatises and psychological theories, regardless of the celebrityship of the communicator, are human speculation (Latin: fallacies) as opposed to divine viewpoint. They are empty, inane, deceitful fallacies. The Word of God is true, and they are lies. They do not come from God as a source, but from the pseudo-traditions of men. There are a host of these “isms” around today; they are not new, but merely amalgamations of historical errors and blasphemies. They all have their source in Satan’s cosmic system. They enslave you to some rudimentary, beggarly element instead of to the standards of Christ. Some of these satanic teachings are legalism, liberalism, socialism, communism, environmentalism, welfare statism, and a host of hellish and damnable psychologies and New Age movements. Paul warns us all to be constantly (Iterative Present tense) on guard for these self-appointed, self-annointed teachers.

We know from other verses that most of the Colossians were not seduced by these psychological panaceas, but there was a group of ignorant believers in the area without doctrine who were led astray. I have personally seen more young believers destroyed by so-called “modern” psychology and mysticism than any two satanic traps currently in vogue. I have witnessed the “mataiotes” or vacuum of neophyte Christian minds opening wide and sucking-in every form of psychological nonsense imaginable. I have seen young believers so swallowed up in this phenomenon that they spend decades trying to merge Bible doctrine with satanic teaching and pass it off to other misguided believers. They daily destroy their spiritual lives and are not even aware of their reversionism; what a tragedy. Paul commands us to stay away from these futile “synergists.”

RELEVANT OPINIONS

Satan is a brilliant chameleon, an ingenious counterfeiter, able to present himself as all things to all men. On one hand, he favors sweetness and light and prosperity for all – a chicken in every pot. Personally, he is the most beautiful creature ever created; he is eloquent, smart, entertaining, personable, persuasive – just the kind of company you would enjoy. His attacks often come in the guise of this calm, engaging, drawing-room type of attractiveness. He knows that life depends on how people think, and he sponsors “good” anti-God thought. Satan wants to use God, trying to force Him to discipline believers so severely that they will be distracted from doctrine. (R.B. Thieme, Jr.) “Sulagogeō” is used figuratively of carrying someone away from the truth into the slavery of error ... The term “philosophy” carried a wide range of meanings describing all sorts of groups, tendencies and viewpoints within the Greek and Jewish worlds, from the Greek pursuit of knowledge and wisdom to the sects of Hellenistic Judaism which sought to present themselves as “philosophies.” (P. O’Brien)

The system which Satan has constructed includes all the good which he can incorporate into it and be consistent with the thing he aims to accomplish. A serious question arises whether the presence of gross evil in the world is due to Satan’s intention to have it so, or whether it indicates Satan’s inability to execute all he has designed. The probability is great that Satan’s ambition has led him to undertake more than any creature could ever

administer. (L. Chafer) The empty seduction and rudiments, the circumcision, baptism, and shadows refer to the rites and ritual Jehovah gave His earthly people. Yet they are interspersed with references to the authority and teachings of men. Ritual is just as dangerous an enemy as rationalism. (A.E. Knoch) The rudiments of the world are the crude beginnings of truth, the childish faulty and imperfect religious conceptions and usages to which the world has attained apart from the revelation of Christ. (G. Findlay)

The force of the threat was not so much to rob Christians of something as to kidnap them. False teachers, therefore, were like slave traders. They wanted to steal believers away from their spiritual family and sell them as slaves into false doctrine. (R. Gromacki) To revert to a man-made religious system after knowing the liberating power of Christ would be nothing else but a return to bondage. Paul is not warning against a hypothetical possibility but against an actually impending danger ... Vain deceit is empty for it is void of real truth. It is empty of vital power, for the dynamic of the gospel is absent. It is empty of hope, for it leads away from the light of God's presence into the mists of man's speculation. It is deceitful because of its attractive presentation which seduces the minds of those who are drawn away by it, and which conceals its own utter barrenness. (H. Carson) Many false teachings abound today on how to become "spiritual," and the best remedy has always been to rely on God's Word alone to learn what is pleasing to God. (S. Leach)

When God's grace is removed, the Gospel is obscured. Victims of religion are either lulled into complacency concerning their eternal future or their hope for an eternal future is used to enslave them in the legalistic rituals and traditions of man. The Gospel frees man to serve the living God. The Bible condemns religion, and rightly so. (R.B. Thieme, Jr.) Competing messages, philosophies, and practices interpret and walk out life in ways that do not point to Jesus. Why must Paul warn his hearers? Any pretty theory can turn our heads, and truth slips from view. Other points of view can seem intuitively sensible, pleading their soundness according to the canons of current wisdom, tradition, science, and philosophy. So Paul reminds us that when a theory lacks Christ, it is empty. Falsehood always refers plausibly to human experience, conforming itself to how the world appears to work when unbelief has excised the God who speaks, judges, and redeems. The presence of lively error usually mirrors an absence of relevant, skillful truth. (Johnson & White)

Many commentators, both Christian and secular, have noted that the dominant remedial "gospel" within modern culture offers a "therapeutic" cure for the human condition, and that this therapeutic gospel has made significant inroads into professedly Bible-believing culture. The drama of human life is increasingly defined and treated as a "medical-scientific" problem, rather than as a religious-moral problem. The philosophy of our day – pop self-help psychologies, psychotherapies, and psychoactive medication – picks up the pieces for people who fail to find satisfaction in career, relationships, material consumption, recreation, entertainment, or religion. Troubles previously defined as moral – breakdowns in relationships, reactions to manifold suffering, confusion and despair about personal identity, the experience of meaninglessness, slavery to the vices, various

dysphoric emotions – have come under the intellectual and professional authority of the modern mental health professions. Such troubles are diagnosed without reference to sin and misery before the face of God, and they are purportedly cured without reference to Christ, repentance, faith, and obedience. (Johnson & White)

We can bewail the famine of truth in modern self-understandings and attempts at cure, but the weeds of error do not pose our major problem. The languishing of truth almost always involves a double problem: error thrives where truth is deficient. It is easy to criticize the mutant, cancerous fertility of the world's philosophies and counterfeit forms of ministry. It is harder to recognize and remedy barrenness in our own functional faith and practice. Do we know how the gospel works progressive renovation in lives, inworking into the heart and outworking into the walk? The Therapeutic is an infiltrator and corrupter of the faith. But error typically plays off weakness, gaps, and distorted emphases in the church's articulated faith and incarnated practice. Where truth is inarticulate and practice ineffective, other voices sound persuasive ... How do people actually change? We know the right answer from Romans 6-8 and 12-13: progressive sanctification. The front-line battles of today lie in practical theology, in a different set of questions and needs. For the first time in history the church faces powerful, organized and systematic secular competition for the cure of souls. No analogue to the mental health system and the modern psychologies has ever existed. If history is a guide, such challenges will draw part of the church into compromise, syncretism, and subordination to the world ... an inroad of the Therapeutic into evangelicalism. (Johnson & White)

The psychologies and psychotherapies use "science" to camouflage the fact that they are popular philosophies of life. In Colossians 2 Paul warned against captivating "philosophy." Particular first-century speculative and practical systems do not exist anymore, but what are the contemporary equivalents? What enticing arguments, philosophies, and human traditions exert the greatest direct effect on the content and practice of contemporary ministry? I believe the case can be made that the modern psychologies are doing as much as anything to sap the Bible's Christ from ministry. Part of the problem is that the psychologies employ the intellectual equivalent of "stealth technology" in order to hide their essential nature. The personality theories are not seen and evaluated as secular "discipleship" and "cure of souls." They hide under the aegis of "science" to obscure their true identity. By playing the science card, practitioners validate themselves as "objective," in contrast with matters of opinion and partisanship, such as religion! The many competing theories seeking to explain human nature are deviant theologies. The many competing therapies seeking to fix human nature are deviant pastoral ministries. The theoretical and therapeutic activities of psychologists are intrinsically "captivating philosophy." (Johnson & White)

It does not come as much of a surprise, then, that modern psychologies are explicitly committed to classic or modern philosophical positions. Cognitive psychology makes Stoic philosophy the basis of both theory and counseling, seeking to help rattled or despondent people become "more philosophical." Jungian psychology borrows extensively from Gnosticism and Hinduism. Humanistic psychology has strong

resemblances to Epicurianism, and borrows directly from Enlightenment rationalism and Liberal theology regarding the goodness and perfectibility of man. Behavioral psychology and biological psychiatry preach and practice radical materialistic reductionism. Existential psychologists disciple clients into the views and virtues of existentialism. Much mainstream, counseling-office-down-the-street psychotherapy affirms generic, New Age spirituality ... The human soul reengineers itself by human interventions, without need for an intervening Redeemer. This is not “the life that is life indeed.” It is what any philosophically minded Greek pursued two thousand years ago. It is the course of life against which Paul warned and from which he called for repentance in Acts 17, 1 Corinthians 1, and Colossians 2. (Johnson & White)

Secular and Christian psychologists and counselors borrow Bible verses, always consciously “taken out of context” and realigned to function within a new context, without the Bible’s God-centered, redemptive gaze. Biblical examples of such intentional “proof-texting” and co-opting of secularists occur in Acts 17:28, Titus 1:12, a number of Proverbs, and the structure of Deuteronomy; indirect examples occur wherever the biblical writers hijack religious, philosophical, and ethical terms from the cultural surroundings and inject new meanings. Our biggest need is to see through the disguise. It is just assumed that certain ideas – the cultural air – are true. It is just assumed that mental health professionals – the social givens – are appropriate and competent experts. We must debunk their pretensions to neutral truth and goodness, and set forth the wise alternative ... Many Christians who believe in the sufficiency of Scripture for preaching and teaching do not functionally believe in the sufficiency of Scripture for actually living life, changing people, and counseling. So “counseling” becomes an empty category into which anything can be poured, rather than a category permeated with God’s revealed will. It quickly comes to express standard psychotherapeutic fare, rather than something identifiably Christian. They deviate from Scripture, and from the truth about human psychological functioning, which God always gets straight, and which rebellious psychological theories always twist. The result is an ambiguous fix for a real problem. (Johnson & White)

Psychodynamic myth has mingled a significant illusion with elements of Christian truth. But any theory that claims to explain sin actually falls prey to sin’s intellectual effects, and wriggles away from both theological truth and psychological reality. Sin is the deepest explanation, not just one more problem begging for different and “deeper” reasons ... For instance, Larry Crabb’s “Inside Out” presents a core component in his motivational theory – the heart as essentially empty, needy, longing, wounded – which derives its structure from secular psycho-dynamic psychology, and runs counter to the Bible and reality ... It mingles the Therapeutic with Christianity into a syncretistic psychotherapy. Deceptive psychologies and psychotherapies cannot help but serve the varied desires and falsehoods congenial to the flesh. Psychotherapies in their “low” or “pop” forms pander to coarser lusts of flesh and ego. But whether high-brow or low-brow, the secular psychologies construct diagnoses of the human condition that suppress awareness of sin, and they offer cures that evade the necessity of Jesus Christ’s redeeming work. (Johnson & White)

Col. 2:8 Constantly be on guard (βλέπω, PAImp.2P, Iterative, Command; beware) so that (ellipsis, purpose conj.) there is (είμι, FAI3S, Predictive) not (neg. adv.) anyone (Acc. Dir. Obj.) who (Nom. Appos.) can capture (by means of pseudo-love fanaticism) and enslave (συλλαγωγέω, PAPtc.NSM, Tential, Substantival, Articular) you (ellipsis, Dir, Obj. supplied; in reversionism) through human speculation (Abl. Means; human viewpoint philosophy and psychology), even (ascensive conj.) through empty (Descr. Gen.; inane) deceit (Abl. Means; fallacies), according to the pseudo-traditions (Adv. Acc.; legalism and liberalism) of men (Poss. Gen.), according to the rudimentary teachings (Adv. Acc.; beggarly elements) from the cosmic system (Abl. Source) and (contrast conj.) not (neg. adv.) according to the standards of Christ (Adv. Acc.),

^{WHO} **Colossians 2:8** βλέπετε μή τις ὑμᾶς ἔσται ὁ συλλαγωγῶν διὰ τῆς φιλοσοφίας καὶ κενῆς ἀπάτης κατὰ τὴν παράδοσιν τῶν ἀνθρώπων κατὰ τὰ στοιχεῖα τοῦ κόσμου καὶ οὐ κατὰ Χριστόν·

^{VUL} **Colossians 2:8** videte ne quis vos decipiat per philosophiam et inanem fallaciam secundum traditionem hominum secundum elementa mundi et non secundum Christum

^{LWB} **Col. 2:9** For in Him dwells permanently [in hypostatic union] all the fullness [divine essence] of the Godhead [deity of Christ] bodily [humanity of Christ];

^{KW} **Col. 2:9** Because in Him there is continuously and permanently at home all the fullness of absolute deity in bodily fashion.

^{KJV} **Colossians 2:9** For in him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily.

TRANSLATION HIGHLIGHTS

Paul combines the deity of Christ and the humanity of Christ in hypostatic union in this passage. Both deity and humanity dwell (Latin: inhabit) in Him permanently (Durative Present tense). The “fullness” represents the totality of divine essence abiding in Christ. “Godhead” (Latin: divinity) refers to His deity and “bodily” (Latin: corpus) refers to His humanity. Jesus Christ is both God and man. He voluntarily laid aside His prerogatives of deity when He went to the cross (doctrine of kenosis), but He remained God and man.

RELEVANT OPINIONS

“All the fullness” is a synecdoche of the Whole, meaning the whole fullness of the Godhead in bodily part, every part of it. (E.W. Bullinger) The fullness of deity, which now dwells bodily in Jesus, already existed in personal form before the God-Man, Jesus

Christ, existed as a Jewish teacher on earth. This pushes us back further into the happiness of the triune God. The Son, in Whom God delights, is the eternal image and radiance of God and is thus Himself God ... It was Arius who began to teach that the Son of God was different in essence from the Father and that he was created by the Father rather than coeternal with the Father. (J. Piper)

Regeneration is a single act of God and is never repeated. Conversion is the beginning of a holy life, but there are many conversion experiences throughout one's earthly pilgrimage. The position of the believer in Jesus Christ, by virtue of regeneration, can be neither increased nor decreased by anything in the recipient. Condition of the Christian life, however, will vary according to one's conversion experiences. (W.E. Best) God exists in three separate and distinct personalities, each having identical divine attributes from eternity past: the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. The Godhead is one in essence, three in personality. When the essence of God is in view, God is said to be one; when the individual Members of the Godhead are in view, God is said to be three. (R.B. Thieme, Jr.)

The indwelling of the divine fullness in Him is characteristic of Him as Christ, from all ages and to all ages. The fullness of the Godhead currently dwells in His glorified humanity in heaven. All the fullness is defined as the totality of the divine powers and attributes. (J. Lightfoot) Paul is declaring that in the Son there dwells all the fullness of absolute Godhead; they were no mere rays of divine glory which gilded Him, lighting up His Person for a season and with splendor not His own; but He was, and is, absolute and perfect God; and the apostle uses "theotes" to express this essential and personal Godhead of the Son. Here the word "divinity" will not do, only the word "deity." (K. Wuest)

Christ is the Testator. He made the unilateral covenant between the Persons in the Godhead. He is the One in whom the whole Godhead abides bodily. He survived death, and He is the executor of His own will. A will names the heir. God named the heirs of this testament. The scroll is in His own mind, and the names are penned in the Lamb's book of life. The names are NOT written when each person believes and then erased when he sins. The names were recorded in the Lamb's book of life before the universe existed. Those names cannot be erased. What God has written is permanently written. A will describes the inheritance. A will must be probated by the court of heaven. A will is of no force until the death of the Testator. A will must provide for the executor. Provision was made for Jesus Christ to be the executor of His will. He did not remain in the grave. He came forth in victory to execute His own will. (W.E. Best)

At no time did Christ surrender any of His divine essence or "empty Himself" of His deity, as alleged by a false doctrine of kenosis. God can never become less than God. He did not divest Himself of His deity, because in Christ "all the fullness of deity dwells in bodily form." (R.B. Thieme, Jr.) The Greek "theotes" means "deity" – not the weaker word "divinity" the natural force of which may be evaded, or shaded down. The expression is even stronger than John's "The Word was God." (B. Carroll) Christ's

Godhead was not separated from His Manhood. The hypostatic union was not surrendered. His Divine and human natures are inseparable. (W.E. Best) Christ is the fountain-head of all spiritual life, whereas the false teachers tell you to seek it in communion with inferior creatures. (K. Wuest)

Col. 2:9 For (explanatory conj.) in Him (Loc. Sph.) dwells permanently (κατοικέω, ΠΑΙ3S, Durative) all (Nom. Spec.) the fullness (Subj. Nom.; divine essence) of the Godhead (Adv. Gen. Ref.; diety of Christ) bodily (Descr. Gen.; humanity of Christ; both hypostatic union and kenosis);

^{WHO} **Colossians 2:9** ὅτι ἐν αὐτῷ κατοικεῖ πᾶν τὸ πλήρωμα τῆς θεότητος σωματικῶς

^{VUL} **Colossians 2:9** quia in ipso inhabitat omnis plenitudo divinitatis corporaliter

^{LWB} **Col. 2:10** Furthermore, you are in Him [positional truth], being completely filled full [by the baptism of the Holy Spirit], Who [Jesus Christ] is the Head [sovereign ruler] over every principality [angelic realm] and authority [earthly sphere],

^{KW} **Col. 2:10** And you are in Him, having been completely filled full with the present result that you are in a state of fullness, in Him who is the Head of every principality and authority,

^{KJV} **Colossians 2:10** And ye are complete in him, which is the head of all principality and power:

TRANSLATION HIGHLIGHTS

Paul reminds the Colossian believers that they are (Descriptive Present tense) positionally in Christ, being completely filled full (Consummative Perfect tense) by the baptism of the Holy Spirit. All believers received the baptism of the Holy Spirit at the point of the new birth. “Filled full” is “replete” in Latin, a word which allows no insufficiency. Jesus Christ is (Descriptive Present tense) the Head, the sovereign ruler over the angelic realm (principalities) and the earthly sphere (human authorities).

RELEVANT OPINIONS

Christ completely fulfilled the law for the believer. This is another basis of eternal security. If Christ has already perfectly obeyed the law for us and if His obedience has been imputed to us, then our eternal destiny is secure. However, if we base our eternal security upon the degree of holiness or the perseverance in it in this life, we will be filled with the fear of uncertainty. Because Christ has already obeyed for us, we have a right to eternal life. Our own obedience secures reward but not life. Christ’s obedience secures our right to heaven, and our obedience determines the degree of our reward there. (J. Dillow) Your fullness comes from His fullness. His pleroma is transfused into you by virtue of your incorporation in Him. (J. Lightfoot)

The passive voice of the verb shows that God completed believers through the ministry of the Holy Spirit, Who applied the positional benefits of Christ’s redemptive work to them. (R. Gromacki) A complete Christ makes His people complete; His pleroma is our plerosis. Finding the whole fullness of God brought within our reach and engaged in our behalf in Him, we need not resort elsewhere to supply our spiritual needs. (G. Findlay) Paul uses the term “head” to describe the supremacy of Christ over all things and all ages. The “head” has primacy, origination, honour, authority, summation. (D. Carson)

Col. 2:10 Furthermore (continuative conj.), you are (εἰμί, PAI2P, Descriptive) in Him (Loc. Sph.; positional truth), being completely filled full (πληρώω, Perf.MPtc.NPM, Consummative, Circumstantial; by the baptism of the Holy Spirit), Who (Subj. Nom.; Jesus Christ) is (εἰμί, PAI3S, Descriptive) the head (Pred. Nom.; sovereign ruler) over every (Gen. Spec.) principality (Obj. Gen.; angelic realm) and (connective conj.) authority (Obj. Gen.; earthly sphere),

^{WHO} **Colossians 2:10** καὶ ἐστὲ ἐν αὐτῷ πεπληρωμένοι ὅς ἐστιν ἡ κεφαλὴ πάσης ἀρχῆς καὶ ἐξουσίας

^{VUL} **Colossians 2:10** et estis in illo repleti qui est caput omnis principatus et potestatis

^{LWB} **Col. 2:11** **In Whom you were circumcised by means of a circumcision not made with hands [spiritual, not ritual circumcision], by the renunciation of the body of the flesh [essence of the old sin nature], by means of the circumcision of Christ [identification with Christ on the cross],**

^{KW} **Col. 2:11** In whom you were circumcised by a circumcision not effected by hand, in the putting off and away from yourselves the body of the flesh in the circumcision of Christ,

^{KJV} **Colossians 2:11** 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:

TRANSLATION HIGHLIGHTS

Most commentators believe there was an ascetic group of Gnostics (related to the Essenes) infiltrating the Christian church in Colossae, and one of their requirements for membership was ritual circumcision. As mentioned in a prior verse, they “came in alongside of” believers in the local assembly and encouraged some to leave and join them in a new organization that would teach them how to become “full” Christians. In other words, they convinced some of the weaker brethren that they were living an inferior Christian life, because Paul could not teach them the secrets and mysteries that they possessed. Apparently ritual circumcision was one of the initiatory rites required by this growing apostate group.

Paul reminds the Colossian believers that they were circumcised (Constativ Aorist tense) in Christ Jesus by a spiritual circumcision, not a ritual, physical circumcision. This spiritual circumcision occurred by means of our identification with Christ on the cross, by the renunciation of the body of the flesh, i.e., our old sin nature. In other words, the ritual, physical circumcision was only a type or shadow of the spiritual circumcision which was our identification with Christ on the cross. When the “real” circumcision arrived on the scene (Jesus Christ), the “shadow” circumcision no longer served a purpose. The “real” circumcision replaced the temporary “shadow” circumcision. The ritual pointed to the coming Christ, and when Christ arrived, the ritual was no longer binding.

The “ritual” circumcision was a physical, surgical operation (Latin: manufactured) on the male phallus. It was grossly inferior to the spiritual circumcision Who was destined to arrive on earth and replace it. In the OT economy, a believer (primarily Jewish) identified himself with Christ by ritual circumcision. In the NT economy, a believer identifies himself with Christ by spiritual circumcision, i.e., believing in His deity, death, burial and resurrection. Spiritual circumcision (positional truth) is what is important, not physical circumcision. By bringing ritual circumcision forward, the ascetic Gnostics were not moving forward but rather backward in God’s plan. The “real” circumcision had arrived on the scene, and they rejected Him in favor of an abolished “ritual” circumcision.

RELEVANT OPINIONS

Spiritual circumcision occurs at conversion and removes the guilt, penalty, and pollution of the sin principle with its sinful thoughts and deeds ... Christ is the one who circumcises the inner person. (R. Gromacki) Our identification with Him rises above and beyond ceremonial rite. The vital relationship with Him does not consist in observing of forms and ceremonies, but it rests in faith in Him, in a union with Christ which results in new life, by which we are delivered from the lusts of the flesh and long to live according to the will of God. (E. English)

Gentile Christians have no need of the rite of circumcision, for they have received from Christ the spiritual circumcision of which that rite was a type. Thus true circumcision is not just a matter of the flesh, but of the heart, and a man may wear the outward badge and yet be treated as the uncircumcised Gentiles. This OT insistence on the inwardness of circumcision finds its fulfillment in Christ. His circumcision is essentially a spiritual act – it is made without hands, and it brings to the believer the blessings of which circumcision in the flesh spoke. (H. Carson)

This is intended to show that there was no need of a ritual circumcision, as the false teachers taught, inasmuch as they had the spiritual substance of it in Christ. In other words, so filled were they in Him, that they possessed all that was symbolized by that rite. (W. Nicholson) Paul is telling them to get rid of that which is outward. The real circumcision is the New Birth. It is so important to keep in mind that no outward

ceremony brings us to Christ. (J. McGee) Real circumcision is inward, that of the heart. So in the death of Christ, His real “circumcision,” as it was also a baptism (Mark 10:38), of which the literal circumcision had been a token anticipation the Christ, too, has a share. (D. Carson)

Col. 2:11 In Whom (Loc. Sph.; Jesus Christ) you were circumcised (περιτέμνω, API2P, Constativ) by means of a circumcision (Instr. Means) not made with hands (Instr. Manner; not manufactured - spiritual, not ritual circumcision), by the renunciation (Instr. Means) of the body (Obj. Gen.) of the flesh (Adv. Gen. Ref.; the essence of the old sin nature), by means of the circumcision (Instr. Means) of Christ (Adv. Gen. Rel.; identification with Christ on the cross),

^{WHO} **Colossians 2:11** ἐν ᾧ καὶ περιετέμθητε περιτομῇ ἀχειροποιήτῳ ἐν τῇ ἀπεκδύσει τοῦ σώματος τῆς σαρκός ἐν τῇ περιτομῇ τοῦ Χριστοῦ

^{VUL} **Colossians 2:11** in quo et circumcisi estis circumcissione non manufacta in expoliatione corporis carnis in circumcissione Christi

^{LWB} **Col. 2:12** Having been buried with Him [union with Christ] by means of identification [baptism of the Holy Spirit], by means of which you have also been raised up with Him through faith [promise of resurrection life] by means of the sovereign [operational] power of God, Who raised Him out from the deaths [both spiritual and physical].

^{KW} **Col. 2:12** Having been entombed with Him in the placing into [Christ by the Holy Spirit], in which act of placing into [Christ] you were also raised with Him through your faith in the effectual working energy of the God who raised Him out from among the dead.

^{KJV} **Colossians 2:12** Buried with him in baptism, wherein also ye are risen with *him* through the faith of the operation of God, who hath raised him from the dead.

TRANSLATION HIGHLIGHTS

As believers, we have been buried with Christ Jesus (Constativ Aorist tense) by means of identification. “Buried with Him” means we positionally died with Him on the cross and were buried with Him in a cave. Of course we weren’t there historically, but we were with Him by representative union. The word “baptizo” means to be identified with something or someone; baptized is a transliteration, not a translation of the Greek word. Nevertheless, we are identified with Christ by means of the baptism of the Holy Spirit. At the same time, believers have also been raised (Culminative Aorist tense) with Christ. This is a reference to our positional identification with the resurrection of Christ.

We are raised with Christ in representative union in the same manner that we were buried with Him. We were raised up with Him positionally by means of the sovereign, operational power of God through faith. God is the source of resurrection, His sovereign power is the means, and faith was the instrument. “Faith was effected, originated and produced by Almighty power.” (E.W. Bullinger) The sovereign, omnipotent, operational power of God resurrected Jesus Christ out from the deaths. “Deaths” is plural, a reference to His dying twice on the cross – first spiritually, then physically. The omnipotence of God the Father returned the human spirit from heaven and the soul from Hades to the body of Jesus Christ. (R.B. Thieme, Jr.) This accomplished resurrection from both deaths, spiritually (return of His human spirit) and physically (return of His soul).

RELEVANT OPINIONS

Some have allowed thoughts concerning baptism to dominate their exegesis of the passage: first, by interpreting the statements about circumcision in verse 11 as equivalent to or an explanation of baptism, and second, by wishing to interpret the baptismal motif as applying to both parts of verse 12. Instead it is the dying and rising with Christ theme that is central to the passage: dying with Him in His death is spelled out in verse 11 by means of circumcision terminology; being buried with Him in baptism is then asserted in verse 12, while being raised with Christ through faith receives the emphasis in the latter half of this verse. Baptismal statements are not developed in the passage. (P. O’Brien) Salvation is accomplished by the resurrection power of God. It’s not some philosophy; it’s not some gimmick; it’s not some little system; it’s not the taking of some course that will enable you to live for God. Salvation is not the improvement of the old nature; it is the impartation of a new nature. (J. McGee)

Many, never baptized with water, are now in Christ, in glory. It is the spiritual baptism alone in which we are buried and raised with Christ. The one great baptism of the NT is that of the Holy Spirit. Of that, baptism by water is a beautiful emblem. But in Paul’s epistles he generally speaks of that “one baptism” rather than of baptism with water. Here he speaks of a spiritual circumcision, a spiritual death and burial and resurrection, and a spiritual baptism. The baptism by the Holy Spirit is that purification of the soul from the love and domination of sin by which we are set apart, consecrated to a course like Christ’s, to a spiritual history of which our Lord’s earthly history was typical as well as causal. (E. Prout) As the circumcision is spiritual, so the baptism must be spiritual. The baptism by the Holy Spirit is the ruling baptism of the NT, and is always to be understood except where the language or context makes evident the contrary. (W. Nicholson)

Resurrection with Christ means that those who have been raised with Him have been raised through faith in God’s power; on the meaning of “energeia,” that same power which brought Christ back from the dead and which energizes them and maintains the new life within them. (P. O’Brien) In Christ’s burial the believer has been baptized. In His resurrection he has been raised from the dead. Faith in God’s operation is all the ceremony needed to place the believer beyond the tomb in full possession of every

privilege ever procured by the rites of religion. Christ, our Complement, makes full provision for our approach into the divine presence, just as the brazen altar and the laver provided for the approach of the priest in the tabernacle. (A. Knoch) Regeneration precedes faith. The Scriptures not only represent salvation as being “through faith,” but they ascribe faith itself to the operation of the Spirit of God. (T. Nettles)

Water baptism is only an outward sign of an inner work of divine grace. Unfortunately, many professing Christians have put their confidence in this external sign as the means of their salvation ... Since spiritual circumcision, without human hands, was just explained, this must be spiritual baptism, the one baptism that unites believers with one another in the body of Christ, the true church, and with Christ, the living Head. Ceremonies performed by people can never achieve eternal redemption. This is one of the reasons why Paul attacked the legalistic heresy. Although water baptism by immersion best pictures the procedure of death, burial, and resurrection, it is not the means to secure that form of identification with Christ. (R. Gromacki) The Gnostics and the Judaizers were sacramentalists, but not so Paul the champion of spiritual Christianity. (A.T. Robertson)

The figure of baptism is seen by Paul to be illustrative of death and resurrection, but has no meaning apart from the identification of the believer with Christ. (D. Guthrie) The believing sinner’s identification with Christ in His death broke the power of indwelling sin. The believing sinner’s identification with Him in His resurrection resulted in the impartation of the divine nature. The “baptism” (placing, introduction into) is that effected by the Holy Spirit. (K. Wuest) There is no water here. (K. Lamb) The Father gives and draws. The Son receives and casts not out. The Holy Spirit quickens. Believing is from the Father through the Son and through the Holy Spirit to the elect; and then in the power of the Spirit, through the Son back to the Father, completing the perfect circle. It is all of God. (W.E. Best) Faith is a divine gift, and not a creature work; it is wrought by the operation of God, and not by the sinner himself. (A. Pink)

Col. 2:12 Having been buried (συνθάπτω, APpTc.NPM, Constative, Circumstantial) with Him (Dat. Assoc.; union with Christ) by means of identification (Instr. Means; baptism of the H.S.), by means of which (Instr. Means) you have also (adjunctive) been raised up with Him (συνεγείρω, API2P, Culminative) through faith (Adv. Gen. Ref.; identification with the resurrection of Christ representing positional sanctification) by means of the sovereign power (Abl. Means; operational) of God (Abl. Source), Who raised (ἐγείρω, AAPtc.GSM, Constative, Substantival, Articular) Him (Acc. Dir. Obj.; Jesus Christ) out from the deaths (Abl. Separation; the omnipotence of God the Father returned the human spirit from heaven and the soul from Hades to the body of Jesus Christ, accomplishing resurrection from both deaths - spiritual and physical).

^{WHO} **Colossians 2:12** συνταφέντες αὐτῷ ἐν τῷ βαπτίσματι, ἐν ᾧ καὶ συνηγέρθητε διὰ τῆς πίστεως τῆς ἐνεργείας τοῦ θεοῦ τοῦ ἐγείραντος αὐτὸν ἐκ νεκρῶν·

^{VUL} **Colossians 2:12** consepulti ei in baptismo in quo et resurrexistis per fidem operationis Dei qui suscitavit illum a mortuis

^{LWB} **Col. 2:13** **And as for you, being dead in transgressions and the uncircumcision of your flesh [the old sin nature], He [God the Father], having graciously forgiven us all our transgressions, has given to you life together with Him [divine life imparted to the believer at the moment of regeneration],**

^{KW} **Col. 2:13** And you being dead with reference to your trespasses and the uncircumcision of your flesh, He gave life together with Him, having in grace forgiven you all your trespasses,

^{KJV} **Colossians 2:13** And you, being dead in your sins and the uncircumcision of your flesh, hath he quickened together with him, having forgiven you all trespasses;

TRANSLATION HIGHLIGHTS

All of us were once unbelievers (Descriptive Present tense), dead in transgressions and uncircumcised flesh. We were totally under the control of our old sin nature, with no spiritual life whatsoever. We were dead “in the sphere of transgressions and the uncircumcision of our flesh,” which means they were not the cause but the base of operations we lived from. The word “dead” portrays an important and accurate picture of our inability to do anything, even believe, without the elective power of God. God the Father graciously forgave all our transgressions (Culminative Aorist tense) at the cross. Then He imparted divine life (Latin: vivify) to each of us (Dramatic Aorist tense) in Christ Jesus at the point of salvation. We were made alive through the ministry of the Holy Spirit who brought us the power to believe. This divine life was not given to us to enjoy in isolation, but together with Jesus Christ our Lord.

RELEVANT OPINIONS

The Colossians have come to life with Christ, who was dead and rose again; their new life, then, is a sharing in the new life which He received when He rose from the dead. It is only in union with Him that death is vanquished and new life, an integral part of God’s new creation, is received. Further, the following words make plain that the giving of this life is an act of pure grace since it is related to the forgiveness of sins. (P. O’Brien) The contrast between spiritual death before Christ and resurrection life in Him reveals to us the depth of the meaning “dead in sins.” The one who is spiritually dead is separated from the only source of true life: the Creator. What does it mean to say that a spiritually dead person, while dead, can still “reach out and accept the lifeline?” How can that be? Dead men do not reach out for anything. (J. White)

There are all kinds of gimmicks and systems that are set before us today to enable us to live the Christian life. I know people who have been to Bible conferences where the Christian life is taught, and at home they have a drawer filled with notebooks. But they are not doing so well in living the Christian life. Why not? The error of legality is not the way to come into a personal relationship with Jesus Christ. (J. McGee) The deadness of fallen humanity indicates that we are devoid of life upon our entrance into the world. We have no inclination toward genuine righteousness or goodness. (T. Schreiner) The reason unregenerate man cannot possibly seek God or repent of his sins is that he is dead, and a dead man cannot do anything. The Bible pictures man as dead, not merely as sick. (G. Clark)

This is judicial forgiveness and means the removal of the grounds of condemnation forever. There is still parental forgiveness to be exercised toward the sinning child. It is not exercised in order to rescue the child from destruction and condemnation; but it is exercised in order to restore him from a state wherein he is out of fellowship, into the full blessing of communion with the Father and with His Son. It is wholly within the family circle and the restoration is unto the full enjoyment of those blessings. It is not restoration to sonship – of that the Bible knows nothing. It is restoration to fellowship. It is when we confess our sins that we are forgiven. (L. Chafer)

Col. 2:13 And (continuative conj.) as for you (Acc. Gen. Ref.), being (είμι, PAPtc.APM, Descriptive, Circumstantial) dead (Pred. Acc.) in transgressions (Loc. Sph.) and (connective conj.) the uncircumcision (Loc. Sph.) of your (Poss. Gen.) flesh (Adv. Gen. Ref.; old sin nature), He (Subj. Nom.; God the Father), having graciously forgiven (χαρίζομαι, AMPtc.NSM, Culminative, Circumstantial, Deponent) us (Dat. Adv.) all (Acc. Spec.) our (Poss. Gen.) transgressions (Acc. Dir. Obj.), has given to you (Dat. Adv.) life together (συζωποιέω, AAI3S, Dramatic) with Him (Instr. Assoc.; divine life imparted to the believer at the point of salvation),

^{WHO} **Colossians 2:13** καὶ ὑμᾶς νεκροὺς ὄντας τοῖς παραπτώμασιν καὶ τῇ ἀκροβυστίᾳ τῆς σαρκὸς ὑμῶν συνεζωποίησεν ὑμᾶς σὺν αὐτῷ χαρισάμενος ἡμῖν πάντα τὰ παραπτώματα

^{VUL} **Colossians 2:13** et vos cum mortui essetis in delictis et praeputio carnis vestrae convivificavit cum illo donans vobis omnia delicta

^{LWB} **Col. 2:14** Having cancelled the IOU written against us, which kept on being hostile to us [because of the old sin nature], and He [the Father] removed it [the IOU] permanently from our midst, by nailing it to the cross,

^{KW} **Col. 2:14** Having obliterated the hand-written document consisting of ordinances, the one [which was] against us, which was directly opposed to us, and He removed it out of the midst with the result that it is no longer there, having nailed it to the cross,

^{KJV} **Colossians 2:14** Blotting out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to his cross;

TRANSLATION HIGHLIGHTS

The IOU (debt) written against us was also cancelled (Culminative Aorist tense) because of the representative work of Christ on the cross. This IOU is constantly against us (Iterative Imperfect tense) because of our old sin nature. Our human good or dead works are contrary to the norms and standards of God. But God the Father removed the IOU (Dramatic Perfect tense) permanently from our midst by nailing it (Dramatic Aorist tense) to the cross. He white-washed it from the wall, removed it, wiped it away. Our gambling debt of sin, so to speak, was taken care of by Jesus Christ. Christ perfectly fulfilled the law on our behalf, as well as accepting our penalty for not keeping the law perfectly. Our victory is encapsulated in His victory. So Christianity is not a set of rules and regulations, it is a Person and our life in Him.

RELEVANT OPINIONS

God has not only removed the debt, He has also destroyed the document on which it was recorded. A common thought in Judaism was that of God keeping accounts of man's debt, calling in the debt through angels and imposing a just judgment based on the records kept in the ledger. (P. O'Brien) The ordinances or decrees are God's decrees, such as the ten commandments, the ceremonial law, and the law written in our moral nature. (W. Nicholson) The atonement thus appears as an effective propitiatory transaction that actually redeemed – that is, secured redemption for – those particular persons for whom Jesus on the cross became the God-appointed substitute. Since the Bible rules out all thought of universal salvation, yet depicts the cross as effective for the salvation of those for whom it was endured, “particular” or “definite” redemption must be the true concept. (T. Schreiner)

It is not the mere ceremonial law, though its ritual observances were symbols of deserved punishment or an acknowledgement of guilt. We cannot limit it to this law, though the outward observances of verse 20 were specially in view; for the apostle is not here distinguishing between Jews and Gentiles. It is the whole Law, moral and ceremonial, which fastens upon us the charge of guilt, and is the great barrier against forgiveness. It was immediately against the Jews, and mediately against the Gentiles. It was blotted out, so far as it was an accusing witness against us, by Christ wiping it out, taking it out of the way, and nailing it to His cross. Christ exchanged places with us, and thus was cancelled the bill of indictment which involved us in guilt and condemnation. (T. Croskery)

In Colossians 2:14, Paul refers to the accumulation of sin as a “certificate of debt.” In the ancient world when a prisoner was incarcerated, a certificate of debt was nailed to the door of his prison. On it the crime he had committed and the duration and nature of his punishment was written. Over a lifetime every man accumulates a massive certificate of

debt. When the weary prisoner had paid his debt, the prison guard came to his cell, tore down the certificate of debt, and wrote a Greek word across it, “tetelestai,” which means, paid in full. Then the cell door was opened and the man was free. Recall our Lord’s last words from the cross: It is finished. The Greek word is “tetelestai,” it is paid in full. This is forensic forgiveness. (J. Dillow)

He uses the metaphor of a bond, which Moule describes as an IOU, a statement of indebtedness which had to be signed by the debtor as an acknowledgement of his debt. The debt was impossible to pay. Moreover, it was backed by legal demands, since every trespass is a violation of the law of God. The only hope was for someone to cancel the debt. Paul imagines God taking the statement of debts and nailing it to the cross of Christ, a vivid way of saying that the death of Christ is the basis of God’s forgiveness of man’s sin. (D. Guthrie) Though previously dead, devoid of the principle of spiritual life through sin, and outside the covenant, believers are made spiritually alive, sharing Christ’s life and completely forgiven. This is possible because of His cross where Christ dealt with the IOU, the legal bond of ordinances to which the Jew had agreed and to which even the Gentile’s conscience had in some degree given assent. This bond Christ took and cancelled by His death. (D. Carson)

All those who still urge the observance of ceremonies, detract from the grace of Christ, as though absolution were not procured for us through Him; for they restore to the handwriting its freshness, so as to hold us still under obligation. (J. Calvin) The Mosaic Law does not define the Christian’s way of life. (R.B. Thieme, Jr.) Ritual and ceremony have no part in our salvation; it is all of Christ. (E. English) God wiped out their trespasses and nailed the signed document of their indebtedness, i.e., the IOU, to the cross when Christ died. (D. Carson) An autograph of any kind, is used almost exclusively for a note of hand, a bond or obligation, as having the sign-manual of the debtor or contractor. (J. Lightfoot)

Col. 2:14 **Having cancelled** (ἐξαλείφω, AAPtc.NSM, Culminative, Circumstantial, Articular; pressures of gambling indebtedness) **the IOU** (Dat. Adv.; certificate of debt, bond) **written** (Adv. Acc.; by hand) **against us** (Obj. Gen.; by means of the decrees), **which** (Subj. Nom.) **kept on being** (εἰμί, Imperf.AI3S, Iterative) **hostile** (Pred. Nom.; contrary to ordinary, directly antagonistic) **to us** (Dat. Ind. Obj.; because of our old sin nature), **and** (connective conj.) **He** (the Father) **removed** (αἶρω, Perf.AI3S, Dramatic) **it** (Acc. Dir. Obj.; the IOU) **permanently from our** (Gen. Rel.) **midst** (Abl. Separation), **by nailing** (προσηλώω, AAPtc.NSM, Dramatic, Modal) **it** (Acc. Dir. Obj.; the IOU) **to the cross** (Dat. Appar. Obj.),

^{WHO} **Colossians 2:14** ἐξαλείψας τὸ καθ’ ἡμῶν χειρόγραφον τοῖς δόγμασιν ὃ ἦν ὑπεναντίον ἡμῖν καὶ αὐτὸ ἤρκεν ἐκ τοῦ μέσου προσηλώσας αὐτὸ τῷ σταυρῷ

^{VUL} **Colossians 2:14** delens quod adversum nos erat chirografum decretis quod erat contrarium nobis et ipsum tulit de medio adfigens illud cruci

^{LWB} **Col. 2:15** Having disarmed the archons [chief demon warmakers] and [demon] commissioned officers, displaying the [angelic] captives publicly, having celebrated a triumphal procession over them by means of Him [Jesus Christ],

^{KW} **Col. 2:15** Having stripped off and away from himself the principalities and authorities, He boldly made an example of them, leading them in a triumphal procession in it.

^{KJV} **Colossians 2:15** *And* having spoiled principalities and powers, he made a shew of them openly, triumphing over them in it.

TRANSLATION HIGHLIGHTS

God the Father also disarmed (Culminative Aorist tense) the chief demon warmakers (Latin: principalities) as well as the demon commissioned officers. He put these angelic captives on public display (Culminative Aorist tense) after celebrating a triumphal procession over them (Temporal Participle). This procession or victor's parade had precedent in Rome, when military commanders brought their prisoners and booty down the main thoroughfare for the entire city to behold. This angelic procession was the beginning of operation footstool; all of God's enemies will be placed under the feet of Jesus Christ, the ultimate Victor in the angelic conflict. Their spiritual power to harm men was taken away from them, stripped from them like weapons taken from prisoners-of-war.

RELEVANT OPINIONS

Having divested the principalities and powers of their dignity and authority on the cross, God exposed to the universe their utter helplessness. This open manifestation of their being divested of dignity and authority only serves to demonstrate more clearly the infinite superiority of Christ ... The means these spiritual confidence tricksters would use to ensnare the community was their particular philosophy that was seductive and misleading. It gave all the appearance of having authority, dignity and revelation on its side, but was really a tool in the hands of the principalities and powers, those demonic personal forces which sought to tyrannize over the lives of men. Worst of all, it stood diametrically opposed to Christ. (P. O'Brien) If our liberty is the spoil which Christ has rescued us from the devil, what do others, who would bring us back again into bondage, do but restore to Satan the spoils of which he had been stripped bare? (J. Calvin)

The meaning is "having stripped" or "despoiled," as a triumphant warrior stripped his defeated foe of his arms. This word, therefore, as well as triumphing, is a military metaphor. (C. Dodd) Our Lord had to pass through the kingdoms of Satan in the air. The demons offered opposition. He, stripping them off and away from Himself, displayed them boldly, leading them in triumph in it. These are the captives taken by our Lord in

His ascension as He left the tomb. (K. Wuest) If evil spirits, they are stripped of their dominion; but if angels of the Law, they are despoiled of the dominion they exercise ... They are fallen potentates. There is no need to worship them, or to fear their vengeance, if their commands are disobeyed. (W.R. Nicoll) It is clear that, though Satan may have triumphed over the first Adam and thereby become the god and prince of this world, he himself was perfectly and finally triumphed over and judged by the Last Adam on the cross. (L. Chafer)

Christ took upon Himself our human nature with all its temptations. The powers of evil gathered about Him. Again and again they assailed Him; but each fresh assault ended in a new defeat. Then the last hour came. This was the great crisis of all, when the power of darkness made itself felt, when the prince of this world asserted his tyranny. The final act in the conflict began with the agony of Gethsemane; it ended with the cross of Calvary. The victory was complete. The enemy of man was defeated. The powers of evil, which had clung like a Nessus robe about His humanity, were torn off and cast aside forever. And the victory of mankind is involved in the victory of Christ. In His cross we too are divested of the poisonous clinging garments of temptation and sin and death. (J. Lightfoot)

Col. 2:15 Having disarmed (ἀπεκδύομαι, APMtc.NSM, Culminative, Circumstantial, Deponent; stripped, divested) the archons (Acc. Dir. Obj.; chief demon warmakers) and (connective conj.) commissioned officers (Acc. Dir. Obj.), displaying the (angelic) captives (Dat. Ind. Obj.) publicly (δειγματίζω, AAPtc.NSM, Culminative, Circumstantial), having celebrated a triumphal procession (θριαμβεύω, AAPtc.NSM, Culminative, Circumstantial or Temporal) over them (Acc. Spec.) by means of Him (Instr. Agency; reference to Jesus Christ, the beginning of operation footstool).

^{WHO} **Colossians 2:15** ἀπεκδυσάμενος τὰς ἀρχὰς καὶ τὰς ἐξουσίας ἔδειγματίσεν ἐν παρρησίᾳ θριαμβεύσας αὐτοὺς ἐν αὐτῷ

^{VUL} **Colossians 2:15** expolians principatus et potestates traduxit palam triumphans illos in semet ipso

^{LWB} **Col. 2:16** **Consequently, stop allowing anyone [self-righteous, legalistic believers] to sit in judgment over you in the act of eating or in drinking [adult beverages] or with respect to feasts or new moons [monthly festivals] or Sabbaths [worship days],**

^{KW} **Col. 2:16** Stop therefore allowing anyone to be sitting in judgment upon you in eating or drinking or in the matter of a feast day or a new moon, or a Sabbath day,

^{KJV} **Colossians 2:16** Let no man therefore judge you in meat, or in drink, or in respect of an holyday, or of the new moon, or of the sabbath *days*:

TRANSLATION HIGHLIGHTS

Because of all the things God the Father has done for His elect through Jesus Christ, Paul wants us to live and walk by grace and not legalism. Some of the Gnostic contingency were spreading various forms of legalism among new believers around Colossae. Paul commands them (Imperative of Prohibition) to stop allowing these self-righteous, arrogant, legalistic individuals to judge them (Gnomic Present tense) in various facets of their daily life. Whether these legalists were believers or unbelievers is not important; what is important is that the Colossian believers do not cease walking by grace nor be brow-beaten by arrogant, self-righteous individuals.

Some of these ascetics tried to bully grace-oriented believers in Colossae by dictating what they should eat and drink. These false teachers demanded that believers become vegetarians and quit drinking adult beverages. They also judged those in Colossae on which feast to celebrate and when, and the “proper” way to celebrate new moon festivals and sabbaths. “Sabbaths” is a reference to the day and frequency of their worship. There are “sabbatarians” around today, demanding that believers worship on Saturday or Sunday. These modern day sabbatarians (and other legalists) go to great length to judge their fellow believers on non-essentials, with the aim of placing them under a yoke of bondage. Their goal is to entangle believers in an endless round of rituals and ceremonies, music shows and group encounter sessions. It doesn’t matter how such activities are packaged, they are man-made and are not part of the Christian way of life.

Believers should continue to walk in the grace and knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ and ignore these arrogant, self-righteous believers. What you eat, what you drink, which holidays you celebrate, and which days you worship are the business of nobody but yourself. There is no dietary restriction on believers during the Church Age. Neither are there restrictions on the consumption of adult beverages, as long as you do not “get hammered.” If you want to attend church on Sunday, or if you worship seven days a week, that is your own prerogative. Do not allow legalists to judge your grace-oriented life. It doesn’t matter how popular the proponents of such practices may be; it doesn’t matter how many keen but clueless believers in the congregation seem to like them. They are not the hidden treasures of Christ, which is what we are commanded to search for when we meet in a local assembly.

RELEVANT OPINIONS

Bad theology leads to bad practice. The false notions about the person and work of Christ, which are corrected in the positive affirmations of chapter 2:8-15, have their inevitable corollary in these unusual aberrations on the practical side ... The Colossians are not to observe the following customs and rituals as obligatory for this would be to acknowledge the continuing authority of the powers through whom these regulations are mediated, the very powers which had been overthrown. The apostle lays down the principle of Christian liberty; don’t let anyone sit in judgment on you. The strong should go out of their way to avoid offending the tender consciences of the weak or scrupulous.

But at Colossae the scrupulous were threatening to impose their rigid principles on the rest of the congregation. Christian liberty needed to be asserted in the light of false attempts to undermine it. (P. O'Brien)

“Judge” explicitly denotes a self-appointed critic who intrudes on another believer’s privacy. The believer enslaved to legalism invariably judges the believer living under the freedom of grace. Here, the one involved in judging was guilty of the worst type of hypocritical legalism – meddling in the affairs of other believers, trying to control their lives, or attempting to squeeze them into his own mold of pseudospirituality. (R.B. Thieme, Jr.) A believer is not to observe ordinances that are only ritual and liturgical; they have no present value. The OT rituals were just pictures of Christ. Now that Christ has come, we have the reality. Why should we go back and look at a picture? (J. McGee) The main purpose of placing such stress on all such regulations was to convince that Colossians that strict observance was absolutely indispensable to salvation, or if not to salvation as such, at least to *fullness*, perfection in salvation. (W. Hendriksen)

There is a latent contradiction inherent in falsehood and error. It must needs be inconsistent and witnesses against itself. Its principles, when carried forward and pushed to their issues in logic and practice, become mutually destructive; and the system built from them and the party which has espoused them of themselves break up into contending fragments ... Every system of philosophy, every scheme of human life, which attempts to patronize and to pervert to its own purposes the Christian teaching, has, we may be sure, a like doom awaiting it. (G. Findlay) The “sabbath day” referred to the Jewish sabbath, which was always observed on the Saturday. But does the apostle not seem to strike at the obligation of maintaining the observance of one day in seven for the worship of God, and under the connection that exists between the Jewish sabbath and the Christian Sunday? Just as baptism is the Lord’s circumcision, the Lord’s day is the sabbath of Christian times. They were useful as shadows before the Substance came, but after it they were useless. (T. Croskery)

The false teachers brought a strong pressure to bear on the conscience of new converts who had received no such instructions from apostles or other Christian teachers who had “begotten them through the gospel.” It was no easy thing to resist such pressure exerted by men with all the sacred traditions of Judaism behind them; just as it must have been hard work for the early Reformers to resist the influence of the hostile opinions of all the leaders and fathers of the Christian world. Thus the Colossians were in danger of yielding to the censorious judgments of these teachers and conforming to their requirements. In so doing they might grasp at shadows which belonged to Moses and lose the substance which was Christ’s. False doctrines may be fatal when they have their roots in moral causes and bring forth “wild grapes.” (E. Prout)

It is not their imperfections that the Colossians are to deal gently with, but the interference of troublesome people who will not stumble less because they have their own way in unlawful tyranny. It is not a case of generous concession on the part of the more liberal, but one of tyrannical assumption on that of the more bigoted. It is our

positive duty to maintain the rights of liberty. We may be tempted to yield out of a love of peace, or from an unselfish feeling of generosity. But this is more than a mistake; it is a fault. Several reasons concur to forbid us to yield to the judgment of the more bigoted in these matters: (1) the claims of Truth, (2) the honor of Christ, (3) the performance of our own duty, and (4) the good of our fellow-men. We cannot serve God so well when our liberty is fettered by the interference of the narrow-minded. By permitting encroachments on the liberty of the gospel, we narrow the privileges which we should be offering to our fellow-men. We are put in trust of the gospel. Let us beware of traitorous efforts to rob it of its richest treasures. (W. Adeney)

The observance of sacred times was an integral part of the old dispensation. Under the new they have ceased to have any value, except as a means to an end. The great principle that “the Sabbath was made for man and not man for the Sabbath,” though underlying the Mosaic ordinances, was first distinctly pronounced by our Lord. The setting apart of special days for the service of God is a confession of our imperfect state, an avowal that we cannot or do not devote our whole time to Him. Sabbaths will then ultimately be superseded, when our life becomes one eternal Sabbath. Meanwhile the Apostle’s rebuke warns us against attributing to any holy days whatever a meaning and an importance which is alien to the spirit of the New Covenant. (J. Lightfoot) But someone will say, ‘We still keep up some observance of days.’ I answer, that we do not by any means observe days, as though there were any sacredness in holidays, or as though it were not lawful to labour upon them, but that respect is paid to government and order – not to days. (J. Calvin)

Col. 2:16 Consequently (inferential particle), stop (neg. adv.) allowing anyone (Subj. Nom.; legalistic, self-righteous believers) to sit in judgment (κρίνω, PAImp.3S, Gnostic, Prohibition) over you (Acc. Spec.) in the act of eating (Prep. Loc.) or (connective conj.) in drinking (Prep. loc.) or (connective conj.) with respect to feasts (Dat. Ref.) or (connective conj.) new moons (Dat. Ref.; first day of the month festivals) or (connective conj.) sabbaths (Dat. Ref.),

^{WHO} **Colossians 2:16** Μὴ οὖν τις ὑμᾶς κρινέτω ἐν βρώσει καὶ ἐν πόσει ἢ ἐν μέρει ἑορτῆς ἢ νεομηνίας ἢ σαββάτων·

^{VUL} **Colossians 2:16** nemo ergo vos iudicet in cibo aut in potu aut in parte diei festi aut neomeniae aut sabbatorum

^{LWB} **Col. 2:17** Which [three previously mentioned holy days] keep on being a shadow of those things which are about to come, but the substance [reality] is from Christ.

^{KW} **Col. 2:17** Which things are a shadow of those things about to come. But the body belongs to Christ.

^{KJV} **Colossians 2:17** Which are a shadow of things to come; but the body *is* of Christ.

TRANSLATION HIGHLIGHTS

The three previously mentioned holy days – feasts, new moon festivals, and sabbaths – were mere shadows (Iterative Present tense) of those spiritual realities which were about to come (Futuristic Present tense). The substance, the reality which they pointed to, is the spiritual verities from Christ. In the Church Age dispensation in which we live, all days are feast days, all days are festivals, and all days are sabbaths. There are no “special” days over any other; all days are alike in Christ Jesus. During the Jewish dispensations, these holy days were a means of pointing to Christ during His earthly ministry in hypostatic union. The word “soma” in the Greek means “substance” as opposed to “body” in this context. Christ is the substance, the holy days in prior dispensations were but shadows.

RELEVANT OPINIONS

Christ has arrived. The substance has already come. The regulations belonged to a transitory order, and have lost all binding force. (P. O’Brien) The Christian lives in the era of fulfillment. Hence the ordinances of the law must be viewed, not as abiding realities which are therefore still binding, but rather as types which have found their fulfillment in Christ. A shadow has no permanent reality apart from the body which projects it. Indeed when the body stands directly beneath the light the shadow disappears. Thus the law only had significance in relationship to Christ to whom it pointed. Christ indeed stands in the full blaze of revelation, and the shadow which in earlier stages pointed to His coming has now gone, and in its place is the reality of the gospel. (H. Carson)

A careful study of the cross is the great protection against improper emphasis being laid on ceremonials. (R. Edgar) Many of us need to get off the merry-go-round of attending seminars, adapting gimmicks, jumping through everybody’s little hoop, and taking a shortcut to the abundant life. Have we really arrived? Some think they have. Let’s stop carrying around a faded photograph when we have the reality – Christ in you, the hope of glory. (J. McGee) How about the ordinances of baptism and the Lord’s Supper? The answer is, that if either of these be regarded as having anything to do with procuring salvation, then it falls into the same category of the rudiments of the world, which have been condemned and rejected. (W. Nicholson) A type is a shadow that points ahead to another reality. A type is a form or prophecy. (R. Zuck) Paul placed a high priority on the right understanding of the gospel. He placed a low priority on the doctrine of the observance of days. (C. Ryrie)

The two main tendencies of the Colossian heresy are discernible in this warning. The first is the substitution of a shadow for the substance; the second is the preference of an inferior member (angel) to the Head. As the shadow belonged to Moses, so the substance

belongs to Christ. The reality, the antitype, in each case is found in the Christian dispensation. Thus the Passover typifies the atoning sacrifice; the unleavened bread, the purity and sincerity of the true believer; the Pentecostal feast, the ingathering of the first fruits; the Sabbath, the rest of God's people, etc. (J. Lightfoot) All that the most sanguine hoped to attain by asceticism and ceremonialism was possessed immediately in the possession of Christ. (W.R. Nicoll) Colossians 2:16-17 presents a stark example of legalistic reversionism. (R.B. Thieme, Jr.) I designate the way of life for citizens of Israel as the ritual plan of God, in contrast to the protocol plan of God for Church Age believers. The Church Age believer's way of life manifests the all-powerful reality rather than the shadow. (ibid)

Col. 2:17 which (Subj. Nom.; three previously mentioned holy days) keep on being (είμι, PAI3S, Iterative) a shadow (Pred. Nom.) of those things (Adv. Gen. Ref.) which are about to come (μέλλω, PAPtc.GPN, Futuristic, Attributive), but (adversative conj.) the substance (Subj. Nom.; reality, body) is (ellipsis, verb supplied) from Christ (Abl. Source).

^{WHO} **Colossians 2:17** ἃ ἐστὶν σκιά τῶν μελλόντων τὸ δὲ σῶμα τοῦ Χριστοῦ

^{VUL} **Colossians 2:17** quae sunt umbra futurorum corpus autem Christi

^{LWB} **Col. 2:18** Let no one declare you ineligible for your reward, taking pleasure in self-effacement [the false humility of asceticism] and in the worship of angels [demon religion], taking a stand on those things he has seen [dreams, trances, hallucinations], being inflated with arrogance to no avail [without cause] under the influence of the thinking from the source of his flesh [old sin nature],

^{KW} **Col. 2:18** Let no one as a judge declare you unworthy of a reward, taking delight in a self-imposed humility and worship of angels, scrutinizing minutely the things he has seen, being futilely puffed up by the mind of the flesh,

^{KJV} **Colossians 2:18** Let no man beguile you of your reward in a voluntary humility and worshipping of angels, intruding into those things which he hath not seen, vainly puffed up by his fleshly mind,

TRANSLATION HIGHLIGHTS

Paul also commands the Colossian believers not to allow anyone (Imperative of Entreaty) to nullify (Latin: seduce) their rewards (Gnomic Present tense) for living the grace life. The legalistic Gnostics were telling all the believers in Colossae that if they did not adhere to their ascetic rules and regulations, they were not going to receive any rewards in heaven. The irony is that only grace-oriented, Spirit filled production will receive a reward in heaven. All works done in the sphere of legalism and asceticism (Latin:

carnality) are human good and will be burned at the Judgment Seat of Christ as wood, hay, and stubble. Those believers who succumbed to Gnostic practices were the ones who were losing their future rewards; they were being cheated (robbed) of their spiritual life and Paul wanted this to stop.

Some of the false systems of worship taught by the Gnostics were a demonically inspired worship (Latin: religion) of angels, living a life of false humility (Latin: frustration) by ascetic practices, and creating other deviant forms of religion (Perfective Present tense) based on alleged dreams, trances, and visions. These self-righteous Gnostics were completely inflated by arrogance (Descriptive Present tense) due to these self-annointed dreams and visions. Their arrogance (Latin: inflated opinion of themselves) was completely groundless, because all their legalism and emotional religious practices were nothing but 'thinking from the source of their old sin natures.' Like members in the modern day charismatic movement, they lived their lives in the flesh instead of the Spirit. Rather than following divine protocol for spiritual growth in the Church Age, they created their own religion in the name of "true Christianity" and destroyed their spiritual lives.

Another false system of worship is that which worships angels, Mary, saints, relics, pomp, ritual and ceremonies that are not taught in Scripture. Those who follow this nonsense are paralyzed in the Christian life and are seeking to paralyze other believers. We have been freed from such bondage to external superstitions. They are a combination of doctrines of man and doctrines of demons. They have no spiritual benefit whatsoever.

RELEVANT OPINIONS

This attitude of pride is utterly without justification, for the supposed knowledge on which it rests is not true knowledge but mere human invention. The mind which manifests such conceit is not controlled by the Spirit of God, but by the flesh. (H. Carson) Concentration on the unadulterated teaching of Bible doctrine requires strict academic discipline. A large segment of society finds it far less taxing, even comforting, to ignorantly cling to religious ritual. This verse lists some of the phony virtues which have long been proclaimed from the pulpits of apostasy as part of the Christian way of life. (R.B. Thieme, Jr.) These pious superior types, these spiritual snobs, it has been my experience, are very ignorant of the Bible. (J. McGee)

When the inner consciousness, the spiritual reason, is regarded as in itself the primary source of revelation, then error begins and hallucination supervenes. The mind turns itself in upon its own self-generated phantasies, instead of fixing its gaze on the historical revelation of God and seeking to comprehend and mirror its glory. The Colossian errorist, walking in the light of his self-confident, self-contemplating reason, saw visions of angels as he imagined, and heard messages and teachings that were but the echo of his own speculations. With these deceived and deceiving subjective imaginings the apostle confronts the actual historic Person and work of Christ, as the supreme Object of contemplation and of trust. (G. Findlay) Those who attempt to put people back under the

Law logically rob believers of their hope of receiving a reward ... Taking small bits of truth from Scriptures and extrapolating false doctrines from them, these false teachers are no different than the ones Paul warned about in this letter. (S. Leach)

The false teachers of Colossae combined a love of ceremonialism and a devotion to the externals of worship. True worship is in Spirit and in truth. And this cannot well be maintained where an ornate ceremonialism overpowers the senses and fills the imagination with its external pomp. There may be a sincere zeal for worship in the anxious study of ecclesiastical dress and decoration, and under the sensuous impressiveness of a splendid and elaborate ritualism, but this is not what the Father seeks, and such aids to devotion often hinder His children from seeking Him. When the form is cultivated for its own sake, and the sensuous and the artistic predominate over and displace the spiritual, the end of worship is frustrated, and the service that professes to be rendered to the Most High becomes a mockery to Him, and a blind to His worshippers that effectually hides Him from them. Christian worship then sinks into a round of ritual performance and semi-idolatry, and becomes an imposture in itself and an aversion to thoughtful, truth-seeking men. (G. Findlay)

Two sets of false teachers so beguile men. The sentimentalist fosters among his adherents a pietism under the name of unworldliness. The sacerdotalist exercises over his followers a priestism that makes a man a slave of his institution. Those who guide their course by such men are as mariners who would direct their voyage rather by the clouds than by the stars. A right relationship with Christ gives independence because of the strength flowing from union with the Head, the Source of all power and control. (U. Thomas) It is the mock-humility of the Roman Catholic and Greek churches, for example, and is in its very nature insidiously attractive. (W. Nicholson) Once men admit the inferior powers to share invocation with the Supreme, the former gradually engross all serious worship, almost to the exclusion of the latter: thus the heathen beginning with adding the worship of other deities to the Supreme, ended with ceasing to worship Him at all. (R. Jamieson)

The Christian's career is the contest of the stadium. Christ is the umpire, the dispenser of the rewards; life eternal is the bay wreath, the victor's prize. The Colossians were in a fair way to win this prize; they had entered the lists duly; they were running bravely: but the false teachers, thrusting themselves in the way, attempted to trip them up or otherwise impede them in the race, and thus to rob them of their just reward. The false teachers at Colossae are not regarded as umpires nor as successful rivals, but simply as persons frustrating those who otherwise would have won the prize. There was an officious parade of humility in selecting lower beings as intercessors, rather than appealing to the throne of grace. Their profession of humility was a cloke for excessive pride. (J. Lightfoot) "Bands" are the sinews and nerves binding together limb and limb. (R. Jamieson) These false teachers made a religion out of asceticism. (R. Earle)

Col. 2:18 Let no one (Subj. Nom.) declare you (Acc. Dir. Obj.) ineligible for your reward (καταβραβεύω, PAImp.3S, Gnostic, Entreaty or Prohibition; cheat), taking pleasure

(θέλω, PAPtc.NSM, Descriptive, Circumstantial; being seduced by) in self-effacement (Loc. Sph.; asceticism, false humility) and (conective conj.) in the worship (Loc. Sph.; religion) of angels (Obj. Gen.; demon influence), taking a stand on (ἐμβατεύω, PAPtc.NSM, Perfective, Circumstantial) those things (Acc. Dir. Obj.) he has seen (ὀράω, Perf.AI3S, Iterative; dreams, trances, hallucinations, visions), being inflated with arrogance (φυσιώω, PPptc.NSM, Descriptive, Circumstantial; puffed up) to no avail (adv.; without cause, in vain, groundless) under the influence of the thinking (Adv. Gen. Ref.; left lobe thought processes) from the source of his (Poss. Gen.) flesh (Abl. Source; old sin nature),

^{WHO} **Colossians 2:18** μηδεὶς ὑμᾶς καταβραβεύετω θέλων ἐν ταπεινοφροσύνῃ καὶ θρησκείᾳ τῶν ἀγγέλων ἃ ἐόρακεν ἐμβατεύων εἰκῆ φυσιοῦμενος ὑπὸ τοῦ νοῦς τῆς σαρκὸς αὐτοῦ

^{VUL} **Colossians 2:18** nemo vos seducat volens in humilitate et religione angelorum quae non vidit ambulans frustra inflatus sensu carnis suae

^{LWB} **Col. 2:19** **And not being occupied with the Head [authority of Jesus Christ], from Whom all the body [of believers] through joints and ligaments [daily doctrine builds strength], being provided gratuitously [doctrine should be free] and being continually taught [by well-trained pastors & teachers], keeps on growing with the growth from God.**

^{KW} **Col. 2:19** And not holding fast the Head, out from whom all the body, through the instrumentality of the joints and ligaments being constantly supplied with nourishment and being constantly compacted together, increases with the increase wrought by God.

^{KJV} **Colossians 2:19** And not holding the Head, from which all the body by joints and bands having nourishment ministered, and knit together, increaseth with the increase of God.

TRANSLATION HIGHLIGHTS

The legalists Paul was contending with were not occupied with Jesus Christ, the Head and supreme spiritual authority, but rather themselves. In self-righteous arrogance, they were more interested in their own celebrityship (Attributive Participle) rather than in Christ's celebrityship. All true spiritual growth comes through the Head, Jesus Christ. The entire body, composed of all believers, continues to grow spiritually (Iterative Present tense) with the growth from God. There is no other way to grow spiritually; all human substitutes fail completely. If Christ is not the center of worship, there is no spiritual growth.

Paul continues with his physical metaphor by describing the intake, metabolization, and application of Bible doctrine as joints and ligaments. Joints and ligaments represent the spiritual strength a positive believer acquires by consistent, daily Bible study. Christ is

the Head, believers are the body, and the body of believers grows by strengthening their joints and ligaments through the Word of God. Paul then sets the precedence for the grace provision of Bible doctrine – Bible doctrine should be free (Descriptive Present tense) to all believers, regardless of the communication medium. Bible doctrine should be continually taught (Iterative Present tense) by qualified, prepared pastors and teachers.

Notice the polyptoton, a verb with a cognate noun, at the end of the verse, “keeps on growing with the growth.” This is a repetition of the same part of speech in a different inflection, which in this case refers to an abundant increase in the spiritual life.

RELEVANT OPINIONS

Any attempt to improve our position before God by physical means, whether it be an appeal to the senses or a curbing of its normal needs, denies our completeness in Christ. (A. Knoch) May we multiply and elaborate ceremonies at our pleasure, provided only we do not regard them necessary to salvation? By no means, for a complicated and elaborate ceremonial, although free at the beginning from such perversion as this, necessarily though gradually dims the soul’s direct view of Christ, and ends at length in an idolatry of observances. Submitting yourself to ordinances practically contradicts your true citizenship. (W. Nicholson)

Paul proceeds to point out that so far from securing spiritual growth of a higher order, the false teaching, by loosening the hold on Christ, prevented any growth at all, since it obstructed or severed the very channel of spiritual life ... Nutriment has been diffused and structural unity has been attained, but these are not the ultimate result; they are only intermediate processes; the end is growth. (K. Wuest) It is clear from this that the false teachers were Christians. They did not profess to have no hold upon Christ, but their hold was not firm. All the supplies of life and energy flow from the Head, so that loose connection with it involves serious loss and not progress in the spiritual life. It is significant that here each member is recognized as having an immediate relation to the Head. (W.R. Nicoll)

Col. 2:19 And (connective conj.) not (neg. adv.) being occupied with (κρατέω, PAPtc.NSM, Descriptive, Attributive) the Head (Acc. Dir. Obj.; authority and celebrityship of Jesus Christ), from Whom (Abl. Source) all (Nom. Spec.) the body (Auvj. Nom.; of believers), through joints (Abl. Means) and (connective conj.) ligaments (Abl. Means; daily intake of Bible doctrine develops strength, symmetry), being provided gratuitously (ἐπιχορηγέω, PPpTc.NSN, Descriptive, Circumstantial; give, grant, administer; doctrine should be free) and (connective conj.) being continually taught (συμβιβάζω, PPpTc.NSN, Iterative, Circumstantial; advised, instructed through pastor-teachers), keeps on growing (αὐξάνω, PAI3S, Iterative) with the growth (Cognate Acc.) from God (Abl. Source).

^{WHO} **Colossians 2:19** καὶ οὐ κρατῶν τὴν κεφαλὴν ἐξ οὗ πᾶν τὸ σῶμα διὰ τῶν ἀφῶν καὶ συνδέσμων ἐπιχορηγούμενον καὶ συμβιβαζόμενον αὖξει τὴν αὖξησιν τοῦ θεοῦ

^{VUL} **Colossians 2:19** et non tenens caput ex quo totum corpus per nexus et coniunctiones subministratum et constructum crescit in augmentum Dei

^{LWB} **Col. 2:20** **If you have died together with Christ [retroactive positional truth] to the ultimate source of the basic principles [rudimentary elements] of the cosmic system, then why, as though living like a person in the cosmic system, are you submitting to legalism?**

^{KW} **Col. 2:20** In view of the fact that you died with Christ from the rudimentary things of the world, why, as living in the world, are you subjecting yourselves to ordinances [such as],

^{KJV} **Colossians 2:20** Wherefore if ye be dead with Christ from the rudiments of the world, why, as though living in the world, are ye subject to ordinances,

TRANSLATION HIGHLIGHTS

Paul asks a pointed question that he knows the answer to. It is true that believers have died (Culminative Aorist tense) together with Christ to the rudimentary elements of the cosmic system. This is a statement of retroactive positional truth. We might not behave as if this is true, functioning all too often in the cosmic system, but positionally we are dead to this system and to this life because of our relationship to Christ. So Paul takes this affirmative statement about our position in Christ and asks why the Colossian believers would want to continue living (Iterative Present tense) as if we were still slaves to the cosmic system.

By submitting to legalism, we continue to enter reversionism through ascetic rules and regulations and we destroy our spiritual life. Paul asks (Interrogative Indicative mood): Why would you want to do that? Now that you are in Christ, free to walk in the freedom of the Spirit, why would you want to toss such a privilege aside and live instead by legalistic rules and regulations? The protocol plan of God for Church Age believers is to live in the sphere of the Spirit and not by the dictates of the law, whether man-made or those given to the nation Israel in a prior dispensation.

RELEVANT OPINIONS

The evil powers which are seen to be behind the false practices and regulations have been defeated and publicly disgraced in Christ. The Colossians are not to be impressed by those who boast of their own experiences and arrogantly pass disparaging judgments on the readers in connection with various ordinances ... The Colossians were in danger of falling victim to the false teaching and of voluntarily placing themselves under the regulations imposed by these powers. This was tantamount to reverting to the slavery previously experienced in their pagan past. (P. O'Brien) Accepting the death of Christ as

supplying the means of his redemption, and the law of his future life, the Christian breaks with and becomes dead (to and) from all other, former religious principles – which appear to him now but childish, tentative gropings after and preparations for what is given him in Christ ... rudiments of the world, intrinsically false and empty, mean and worthless substitutes for “the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus.” To adopt the rules of the new teachers is to return to the worldly, pre-Christian type of religion which the Christian had once for all abandoned. (G. Findlay)

Asceticism and legalism are partners. Legalistic regulations originate within the world of lost humanity and represent their attempt to gain favor before God. They are powerless to provide redemption, and they cannot supply a spiritual inheritance ... Legalists and ascetics always emphasize the negative. They assert that spirituality is measured by an absence of prescribed sins rather than by the presence of positive virtues ... Legalists look on asceticism as a spiritual discipline and strength, but actually it is a weakness and an obstacle to true Christian living. Asceticism originates with humans. Christ never imposed asceticism on believers. It functions in “self-made religion” that originated within the human will and not from divine revelation ... Asceticism cannot overcome the power of the sin nature. Asceticism actually becomes an enemy to the Spirit-controlled life. The more legalistic one becomes, the more powerful is the grip of the sin nature. Regulations cannot restrain sensual indulgence. The cure for the sins of the flesh is submission to the Holy Spirit, not conformity to a list of man-made laws. (R. Gromacki)

There is an inconsistency between true fellowship and this mere ritualistic religion. Such a religion is rudimentary, disciplinary, designed for the infancy of the Church, not for its period of adult experience and privilege. Christ by His death wiped out these rudiments which have their sphere in the visible life of the world. They are but weak and beggarly elements, from which we are for ever separated by the death of Christ ... This will-worship, superstition, ritualistic observances and false piety is the origin of penances and pilgrimages and festivals in Romanism. The monastic life, while it seems hostile to self-indulgence, made way, as by a sort of back door, to all sorts of sensual extravagances. (T. Croskery) All ordinances are impertinent and an infringement of the efficacy of His work. By His death He secured the creating of a new life in the believer by the Holy Spirit, by which He is brought into fellowship with God, so that no ordinances of any kind whatsoever, whether of treatment of the body, or the worship of angels, or any other thing, are needed to bridge over the distance between God and him. The new life is Christ’s life, and in it we are one with God incarnate. (W. Nicholson)

Men are religious. And by their own reasoning – in disregard of the Word of God – they have built up a system of works whereby God can be appeased – by asceticism, by subjecting the body to certain restraints or torturous practices, by starvation, by acts of penance, and so on. But all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags in God’s sight. It is the root of the tree which needs to be got at, that is, sin itself; and not the fruit of the tree, certain acts and habits. The old man is dead – therefore why carry on with those elementary things which the world thinks the old man should do? He is dead, says Paul. You have a new life in Christ; you have been raised with Him – therefore, why be subject

to these ordinances and commandments, devised by men? These are men's ordinances – a form of asceticism which still exists. Abstinence from certain pleasures and normalities does not fit one for the presence of God, does not take care of the sin question. (E. English) The apostle teaches that asceticism, no less than the worship of the angels, does more harm than good. Instead of being a remedy against fleshly indulgence, it fosters and promotes the latter. (W. Hendriksen)

You died with Christ to your old life. All mundane relations have ceased for you. Why then do you – you who have attained your spiritual manhood – submit still to the rudimentary discipline of children? Why do you – you who are citizens of heaven – bow your necks afresh to the tyranny of material ordinances, as though you were still living in the world? It is the same old story again, the same round of hard, meaningless, vexatious prohibitions. Handle not. Taste not. Touch not. What folly! When all these things – these meats and drinks and the like – are earthly, perishable, wholly trivial and unimportant! They are used, and there is an end to them. What is this, but to draw down upon yourselves the denunciations uttered by the prophet of old? What is this but to abandon God's Word for precepts which are issued by human authority and inculcated by human teachers? It is a denial of Christianity to subject yourself again to their tyranny, to return once more to the dominion of the world. (J. Lightfoot)

Col. 2:20 If (protasis, 1st class condition, "and it is true") you have died (ἀποθνήσκω, AAI2P, Culminative) together with Christ (Dat. Assoc.; retroactive positional truth) to the ultimate source of the basic principles (Obj. Gen.; rudimentary elements) of the cosmic system (Poss. Gen.; and you have), then (apodosis) why (Acc. Gen. Ref.; interrogative pronoun), as though living (ζάω, PAptc.NPM, Iterative, Circumstantial) like a person (relative pronoun) in the cosmic system (Loc. Sph.), are you submitting to legalism (δογματίζω, PPI2P, Iterative, Interrogative Ind.; entering into reversionism thru ascetic rules and regulations)?

^{WHO} **Colossians 2:20** Εἰ ἀπεθάνετε σὺν Χριστῷ ἀπὸ τῶν στοιχείων τοῦ κόσμου τί ὡς ζῶντες ἐν κόσμῳ δογματίζεσθε

^{VUL} **Colossians 2:20** si mortui estis cum Christo ab elementis mundi quid adhuc tamquam viventes in mundo decernitis

^{LWB} **Col. 2:21** For instance [an example of three legalistic taboos]: You shall not have sex [celibacy], neither shall you eat certain foods [vegetarianism], nor shall you touch anything with hostility [pacifism],

^{KW} **Col. 2:21** Do not begin to touch, neither begin to taste, nor begin to handle,

^{KJV} **Colossians 2:21** (Touch not; taste not; handle not;

TRANSLATION HIGHLIGHTS

Paul cites three categories of legalistic taboos as examples of the type of legalism the Gnostics were trying to spread among the Colossian believers. These ascetics told the Colossian believers: You shall not have sex (Imperative of Prohibition). They were pushing celibacy - even as a preference to legitimate sex in marriage – definitely not part of God’s plan. This is a command by legalists for husbands and wives not to have legitimate sex. This is blatant heresy, as the exact opposite commands are given elsewhere in Scripture. Husbands and wives are warned not to go too long without having sexual relations, because one or the other might be tempted to seek intimacy outside of their marriage and destroy the sanctity of their marriage.

They also told the Colossian believers: You shall not eat certain foods. This is also heresy, since Church Age believers are allowed to eat anything as long as they first thank God for it in prayer. Vegetarians are called “weak” in Scripture, not strong – in spite of the pseudo-spiritual claims of many veggies. The Gnostic legalists also told the Colossian believers: You shall not touch anything. This is a heresy that is today called pacifism – refusal to fight for your country or to defend yourself. It was a command to take a non-violent philosophy to a ridiculous extreme. In truth, we are commanded by God to defend ourselves and fight for our country. Refusing to do so is not honorable, but is an act of shameful cowardice.

RELEVANT OPINIONS

Asceticism fails in its professed object. Not only can it be accused of setting up a false ideal, it does not even attain that ideal. Even from its own point of view it must be regarded as a monstrous failure. History gives horrible proofs of this fearful fact. The monasteries of the Middle Ages were hotbeds of vice. No more immoral men could be found among the libertines of gay society than the celibate priests, bishops, and popes of the great age of professed asceticism. Literature confirms the testimony of history. Asceticism is unnatural. Outraged nature avenges herself on the insult that is put upon her in the distortion of her life. Asceticism is opposed to the sympathies of Christ. (W. Adeney)

The Christian is not living in the world, but if he submits himself to such ordinances, he is acting as if he were in the world. In other words, he gives the lie to his profession as a Christian. His true citizenship is in the new creation, and if he appreciates it, he would not be dealing with the rudiments of the world. Furthermore, in submitting to the ordinances, the Christian is ascribing an inherent value of salvation to things which are fleeting and perishable. Behold then the monstrous inconsistency of a Christian using these things in any sense as necessary to salvation, when he has already died with Christ from them, and become a part of the eternal new creation of God. (W. Nicholson)

True self-denial regards the spirit, not the forms of self-mortification. (R. Jamieson) At length they make it criminal even to touch. In short, when persons have once taken upon them to tyrannize over men's souls, there is no end of new laws being daily added to old ones, and new enactments starting up from time to time. How bright a mirror there is as to this in Popery! Hence Paul acts admirably well in admonishing us that human traditions are a labyrinth, in which consciences are more and more entangled; nay, more, are snares, which from the beginning bind in such a way that in course of time they strangle in the end. (J. Calvin)

The legalist distorted the ban on murder to exclude any form of killing, but according to Scripture, killing is legitimate and is absolutely necessary in such cases as capital punishment for violent crimes (Rom. 13:4) or the military defense of a nation (Neh. 4:7-18). Those who follow these misconceptions slide toward reversionism, and undermine the laws of establishment that protect a nation from within and without. (R.B. Thieme, Jr.) He says, as it were, Why submit to a series of Don't's, as if by adding enough negatives you would ever obtain a positive, or as if victory over sin and progress in sanctification would ever be achieved by basing all your confidence in sheer *avoidance*. (W. Hendriksen)

Col. 2:21 For instance (ellipsis, an example of three categories of legalistic taboos), you shall not have sex (ἄπτω, AMSubj.2S, Constative, Prohibition; intercourse), neither (neg. adv.) shall you eat certain foods (γεύομαι, AMSubj.2S, Constative, Prohibition, Deponent; taste, enjoy), nor (neg. adv.) shall you touch anything with hostility (θιγγάνω, AASubj.2S, Constative, Prohibition; kill),

^{WHO} **Colossians 2:21** Μὴ ἄψη μηδὲ γεύση μηδὲ θίγης

^{VUL} **Colossians 2:21** ne tetigeris neque gustaveris neque contrectaveris

^{LWB} **Col. 2:22** All of which [taboos] are destructive to the adherent [ruins their spiritual life], according to the ordinances and teachings of men [not from God],

^{KW} **Col. 2:22** Which things all are destined for corruption in their consumption; [ordinances] which are according to the precepts and teachings of men,

^{KJV} **Colossians 2:22** Which all are to perish with the using;) after the commandments and doctrines of men?

TRANSLATION HIGHLIGHTS

All legalistic taboos are destructive to those who adhere to them. They do not assist a believer in the spiritual life at all; instead, they ruin it. Taboos dry-up the spiritual life,

because they are antithetical to the grace-oriented life given to us by God. Taboos destroy your spiritual life because by adhering to them you enter into legalistic reversionism. Taboos are not from God. Taboos have their source in the ordinances (Latin: precepts) and teachings (Latin: doctrines) invented by men who are slaves to Satan's cosmic system. Legalists are constantly out of fellowship and therefore do not have a legitimate spiritual life and do not know Christ. They have invented their own form of religion rather than the spiritual life prescribed by God.

RELEVANT OPINIONS

All such teaching is worthless. It may make an officious parade of religious service; it may vaunt its humility; it may treat the body with merciless rigour; but it entirely fails in its chief aim. Not only these particular precepts, but all precepts falling under the same category are condemned. (J. Lightfoot) The point of all this teaching, both in Isaiah and in the words of Jesus, is not only to show that such man-made ordinances and the doctrines from which they spring are *worthless*, but also and emphatically that they are worse than worthless, that is, actually harmful. Hence, according to the Isaiah passage a woe is pronounced upon those who substitute the commandment of men for the heart-centered fear of Jehovah. (W. Hendriksen)

Matters of food and drink are of no consequence as far as godliness is concerned, particularly when a test case is made of their abstinence or enjoyment; for Paul overindulgence that leads to gluttony and drunkenness is another question. (P. O'Brien) Why should one food matter over another when they are both soon eliminated? While God has limited the diets of various people throughout Scripture, the limitations were never given to help one mature spiritually. Either they served as a protection from various diseases prevalent at the time, or they helped set apart a person from the rest of the world. The regulations the Colossians were under did neither of these. (S. Leach)

Enactments are of no value in reference to those things which tend to excite scruples of conscience. But in Popery you would scarcely find any other holiness, than what consists in little observances of corruptible things. (J. Calvin) The trap laid by the evil one is very subtle. He would direct our attention away from Christ to ourselves, and then, seeing our own failures, lead us to seek to help our spiritual life by means of ordinances and observances. (C. Welch) These restrictions the Colossians were embracing were not from God and could not help in their Christian growth ... The fleshly nature, not the eating of certain foods, is the believer's problem. (S. Leach)

Col. 2:22 All (Nom. Spec.) of which (Subj. Nom.) are (εἰμί, PAI3S, Descriptive) destructive (Adv. Acc.; ruinous, dry-up) to the adherent (Dat. Ind. Obj.; consumer, proponent; they are meant to destroy you by your entering into legalistic reversionism), according to the ordinances (Adv. Acc.; precepts) and (connective conj.) teachings (Adv. Acc.; doctrines) of men (Poss. Gen.; not from God),

^{WHO} **Colossians 2:22** ἃ ἔστιν πάντα εἰς φθορὰν τῇ ἀποχρήσει κατὰ τὰ ἐντάλματα καὶ διδασκαλίας τῶν ἀνθρώπων

^{VUL} **Colossians 2:22** quae sunt omnia in interitu ipso usu secundum praecepta et doctrinas hominum

^{LWB} **Col. 2:23** Which classification of things [taboos] currently exist, on the one hand, having a reputation [appearance] of wisdom by means of a self-made system of religion [superstition] and by means of an emotionally subjective false humility [self-effacement] and by means of a severe non-indulgence of the body [extreme asceticism], but on the other hand, which are not of any value against gratification of the flesh [taboos are unable to control the old sin nature].

^{KW} **Col. 2:23** Which things as a class have a reputation for wisdom in a self-made, self-imposed worship and [an affected, hypocritical] humility and an unsparing and severe treatment of the body, [ordinances which are] not of any value as a remedy against the indulgence of the flesh?

^{KJV} **Colossians 2:23** Which things have indeed a shew of wisdom in will worship, and humility, and neglecting of the body; not in any honour to the satisfying of the flesh.

TRANSLATION HIGHLIGHTS

Paul recognized that many classifications or categories of legalistic taboos currently existed (Static Present tense) in Colossae and other cities. Using a correlative conjunction, he compares the “two faces” of legalistic taboos – what they pretend to be and what they really are. On the one hand, taboos present themselves as having (Descriptive Present tense) a show of wisdom, but they are merely incorporated by their adherents into a self-made system of religion (Latin: superstition). Ignorant individuals observe the rigors of legalists and believe the adherents are wise, even though Christianity rejects legalism outright. Their efforts are rejected by God because they have been excluded from divine protocol for the Church Age.

Those who teach and practice taboos are also self-effacing, which again tends to impress the unlearned. Their self-effacement has no spiritual value in God’s plan; it is nothing more than emotional subjectivity. It is not genuine, objective humility but rather false, subjective humility. There are other legalists who go to great extremes by practicing a severe form of non-indulgence of the body. These extreme ascetics also present themselves as spiritually superior individuals because of their radical efforts to subdue the lusts of the flesh. All of their efforts, however, are inconsequential in God’s eyes; their practices are not part of His protocol plan and are therefore out of bounds in the spiritual life. In our modern vernacular, this means the entire organization and practices of monks and nuns is illegitimate and a complete waste of time spiritually.

Paul says all categories of taboos, every classification of legalism you want to exhibit, is completely useless against the gratification of the flesh. They pretend to strengthen the

adherent against gratification of the flesh, but they fall apart when the old sin nature rises up and demands gratification. The only way to combat the lusts of the flesh is through the grace mechanics provided to us by God, not a self-made system of legalistic taboos. Your average Christian who walks in the Spirit is way ahead spiritually over the monks and nuns who retreat from society and execute a life of legalism that is rejected by God. And it should go without saying that any system of taboos instituted by Protestants is likewise useless for the Christian life.

RELEVANT OPINIONS

This wisdom is only a façade, a pretense ... from self-made religion. The aim and goal of all their efforts – the observance of the strict regulations, the reverence and respect paid to the principalities and powers – was satisfaction. But all that was satisfied was “the flesh.” Their energetic religious endeavors could not hold the flesh in check. Quite the reverse. These man-made regulations actually pandered to the flesh ... Worst of all, those who took the Christians at Colossae to task, using their own private religious experiences as the basis of their authority, were in fact rejecting Christ as their Head, the One who is the source of life and nourishment by which his body lives, and the source of unity through which it becomes an organic whole. (P. O’Brien) The first part of the predicate explains the intellectual attractiveness of the Colossian error, the clause next following accounts for its religious fascination, and the third part of the verse strikes at the root of its ethical and practical applications. (G. Findlay)

The Colossians ought not to be taken to task by the adherents of the philosophy over matters of food, drink, or holy days. Their stringent regulations of an ascetic nature which follow from the demand for severe treatment of the body are a shadow of the things that were to come. Christ and His new order are the perfect reality to which these earlier ordinances pointed forward. The rigorous prescriptions of the false teachers have no binding force. The reality has already come and the things of the shadow no longer constitute a norm for judgment. (P. O’Brien) Paul is denying these man-made doctrines any real value. To a superficial observer a body of doctrines which shows itself in a form of worship, in an apparent humility, and in asceticism, might seem to be the doctrines of wise men, but this religious devotion is self-imposed. By pandering to human pride, it only tends to the indulgence of the old sinful nature. (H. Carson)

There is a love of worship for mere worship’s sake which is a perversion of the religious instinct, and tends to multiply both the forms and the objects of devotion. This spurious religiousness took the form, in the Colossian errorists, of worship paid to the angels ... They heap upon the body invented and misdirected severities, while they are governed by “the mind of the flesh.” They aggrandize themselves, while they destroy the Church of God. (G. Findlay) Passing health fads are not the answer to fitness. But God wants us to look the best that we can. Even when we have little to work with, we ought to do the best we can with it. (J. McGee) The principal holiness of the Papacy, at the present day, consists in monkhood, and of what nature that is, I am ashamed and grieved to make mention, lest I should stir up so abominable an odour. Farther, it is of importance to

consider here, how prone, nay, how forward the mind of man is to artificial modes of worship. The zeal of men for superstition is surpassingly mad, which could not be restrained by so plain a declaration of God from breaking forth, as historical records testify. (J. Calvin)

At first glance, all these privations of the body might appear to have some merit; if not for the unsaved, in the life of the believer in Christ they might seem to work toward holiness. As the will of self is held under, and one humbles himself, and denies the appetites of the body, it would seem that he would grow. But there is no honor rendered to God in all this. There is really no value in this method of subduing the flesh. Why? Because the flesh, in the believer in Christ, is no better than the flesh in the unbeliever. It must be crucified, in a practical way, as it has been crucified positionally with Christ. Either self has a dying life, or a living death. The way to holiness is the same as the way to salvation – not through self-effort, but by virtue and in the power of Christ. The approach to holy living is not through submitting the body to privations and torment, but by submitting the heart to the Lord in yieldedness. But the world's wisdom is intent on substituting its own way of salvation for that which God has provided. (E. English)

Religion is any system whereby man by his own efforts and merits presumptuously tries to gain salvation or the approbation of God. Religion promotes human good as the replacement for grace. Religion was designed by Satan to obscure the plan of God and deceive the human race. (R.B. Thieme, Jr.) Many Christians today still overlook dispensational distinctions and, like the disciples, keep occupying themselves with issues that are not central to their spiritual growth and relationship with God. Believers who confuse the dispensations cannot clearly understand God's purpose for their lives in the current age. Understanding dispensations also helps protect the Christian from blurring biblical distinctions, from distorting a true doctrinal sense of proportion, and from misapplying divine commands. The doctrine of dispensations teaches what the Christian way of life is – and what it is not. (ibid)

Col. 2:23 Which classification of things (Subj. Nom., relative pronoun) currently exist (εἰμί, PAI3S, Static; are present), on the one hand (correlative), having (ἔχω, PAptc.NPN, Descriptive, Circumstantial) a reputation (Acc. Dir. Obj.; appearance, show, excessive readiness, officious zeal) of wisdom (Adv. Gen. Ref.) by means of a self-made system of religion (Instr. Means; superstition) and (connective conj.) by means of an emotionally subjective false humility (Instr. Means; self-effacement) and (connective conj.) by means of a severe non-indulgence (Instr. Means) of the body (Adv. Gen. Ref.; extreme asceticism), but on the other hand (comparative), which (Dat. Ref.) are (ellipsis, verb supplied) not (neg. adv.) of any value (Prep. Loc.) against gratification (Acc. Rel.) of the flesh (Adv. Gen. Ref.; when the OSN rises up and demands gratification, all these taboos fall apart anyway).

^{WHO} **Colossians 2:23** ἄτινά ἐστιν λόγον μὲν ἔχοντα σοφίας ἐν ἐθελοθρησκία καὶ ταπεινοφροσύνη [καὶ] ἀφειδία σώματος οὐκ ἐν τιμῇ τινι πρὸς πλησμονὴν τῆς σαρκός

^{VUL} **Colossians 2:23** quae sunt rationem quidem habentia sapientiae in superstitione et humilitate et ad non parcendum corpori non in honore aliquo ad saturitatem carnis

CHAPTER 3

^{LWB} **Col. 3:1** If therefore, you have been raised together with Christ [positional truth], then keep on endeavoring to obtain and possess the above things [Bible doctrine circulating in the soul brings us into the immediate presence of God], where the Christ is sitting [session] at the right hand of God [the Father].

^{KW} **Col. 3:1** In view of the fact, therefore, that you were raised with Christ, the things above be constantly seeking, where Christ is, on the right hand of God, seated.

^{KJV} **Colossians 3:1** If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God.

TRANSLATION HIGHLIGHTS

Paul uses a protasis of a 1st class condition, an affirmative conclusion meaning “if you have been raised together with Christ (Latin: resurrection), and yes, indeed you have.” All believers were positionally raised (Gnomic Present tense) with Christ when He was resurrected. Since we are together with Him positionally, we should be continually zealous (Iterative Present tense) to be with Him experientially. How do we do that? The only way to be with Christ experientially is to have His mind, Bible doctrine, in our souls. That is our primary goal in the Christian life – to have maximum doctrine in the soul. This is not an option; Paul commands us (Imperative mood) to do this.

What is meant by “the above” things? Since Bible doctrine comes from above, and since the Word of God is the mind of Christ, “the above things” are Bible doctrines. The only way we can be with Christ where He is seated (Durative Present tense) in heaven is by having His mind, His thinking, in our thoughts. The humanity of Christ is sitting at the right hand of the Father, what is called the “session” of Christ. The descriptive “right hand” of the Father is an anthropomorphism for being in His immediate presence. When maximum Bible doctrine is circulating in our frontal lobes by means of the Holy Spirit, we join the Father and the Son in heaven. Because the Trinity possesses the divine attribute of omnipresence, each member of the Godhead resides in heaven and simultaneously indwells the believer.

RELEVANT OPINIONS

The Colossian Christians have already participated in the world to come, the powers of the new age have broken in upon them, they already participate in the resurrection life of Christ. Thus their aims, ambitions, indeed their whole orientation to life is to be directed to this sphere. (P. O'Brien) It is typical of Paul that having laid a doctrinal foundation he proceeds to erect an ethical superstructure. Hence we have the transition here from theological statement to practical precept. The Christian, he says, has experienced a radical change of spiritual environment and this should affect his whole mode of life. Having been raised with Christ he now moves in a new sphere. This should mean that he has a new aim in life. Normal human ambition is in terms of this world. But the one who has been raised with Christ sees things from an eternal perspective, and so should aim that his life on earth should be dominated by the pattern of life seen in the glorified Christ. (H. Carson)

The apostles were aware that they were using figurative language when they spoke of Christ's exaltation to the right hand of God. They no more thought of a literal throne at the literal right hand of God than we do. Ancient Jews and Gentiles alike commonly regarded the right side and a position at the right hand as symbolic of honor or good fortune. When the psalm was employed by early Christian writers it was to articulate the glory, the divine transcendence, of Jesus through whom salvation was mediated. The phrase alluded to in the psalm points to the centrality and supremacy of Christ in the heavenly realm. (P. O'Brien) The horizon of spiritual attainment grows broader as believers advance higher and further into the will of God. (R. Gromacki) What is the use of the beautiful wings of the moth if it continues to crawl over the garbage on which the caterpillar fed? (W. Adeney)

From above only can we be raised. There is no salvation in mere antipathy. Disgust at the vanities of life, repulsion from earthly things, will of itself never lift us beyond them; it needs the superior influence of heavenly things to do that. This the Colossian errorists did not rightly understand; or they could not have made ceremonial purifications and bodily austerities the way of holiness, the means of reaching spiritual perfection. The physical life was their great aversion, and to reduce and harass it was the leading object of their moral endeavors. In the last two sections of his letter the apostle has denounced their system as false and mischievous, to be rejected by Christian believers, since it is not according to Christ. (G. Findlay) A right hand is attributed to God to denote the highest power and most Divine authority. (E.W. Bullinger)

Col. 3:1 **If** (protasis, 1st class condition, "and you have") **therefore** (inferential conj.), **you have been raised together** (συνεγείρω, API2P, Gnostic) **with Christ** (Instr. Assoc; positional truth), **then** (apodosis) **keep on endeavoring to obtain and possess** (ζητέω, PAImp., Iterative, Command; be zealous) **the above** (Adv. Place) **things** (Acc. Dir. Obj.; Bible doctrine), **where** (Adv. Place) **the Christ** (Subj. Nom.)

is (εἶμί, PAI3S, Static), **sitting** (κάθηναι, PMPTc.NSM, Durative, Predicative, Deponent; seated) **at the right hand** (Loc. Place; anthropomorphism) **of God** (Poss. Gen.; reference to the Father; session).

^{WHO} **Colossians 3:1** Εἰ οὖν συνηγέρθητε τῷ Χριστῷ τὰ ἄνω ζητεῖτε οὐ ὁ Χριστός ἐστιν ἐν δεξιᾷ τοῦ θεοῦ καθήμενος:

^{VUL} **Colossians 3:1** igitur si conresurrexistis Christo quae sursum sunt quaerite ubi Christus est in dextera Dei sedens

^{LWB} **Col. 3:2** **Keep on thinking objectively about [concentrate on] the above things [Bible doctrine as divine viewpoint], not the things [human viewpoint] upon the earth [cosmic thinking],**

^{KW} **Col. 3:2** The things above be constantly setting your mind upon, not the things on earth;

^{KJV} **Colossians 3:2** Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth.

TRANSLATION HIGHLIGHTS

Paul now issues a reinforcing command (Imperative mood) to concentrate on Bible doctrine because it encapsulates divine thinking from heaven. The Iterative Present tense means we are to do this on a daily basis, not once a week on Sunday. You do want to have fellowship with God on a daily basis, correct? Then you must circulate His thinking, Bible doctrine, in your soul every day. What is the alternative? Paul contrasts his command to study the Word of God with having human viewpoint controlling our thoughts every day.

If we concentrate on nothing but the things on earth, our thoughts are cosmic thinking. The world, the flesh and the devil work as a team to prevent you from having divine viewpoint every day. When they succeed in their endeavors, that is called cosmic thinking. If all you do is attend Sunday service, and you ignore the Word of God Monday through Saturday, it stands to reason that you have divine viewpoint one day and human viewpoint six days. Does that sound like God's intended plan for your life?

The Greek word "phroneo" means intense concentration on a technical subject. It means your thoughts should be under the control of the subject you are thinking about, agreeing with its principles and precepts as a matter of daily living. If you concentrate on a good Sunday morning sermon, and perhaps read a couple of Bible verses during the weekday before breakfast, does this qualify as intense concentration on a technical subject? Don't kid yourself. "Phroneo" means strict academic discipline. Paul commands us to study a portion of Scripture every day as if we were preparing for a physics exam.

Is it possible that the “above things” and the “things on earth” mean we should think about heaven and ignore the earth? They are not references to a geographical location per se, but are metaphors for a type of thinking, spiritual versus cosmic, heavenly versus earthy. Does this mean we “visualize heaven” and cease from thinking about earthly matters? Not exactly. Rather we must tend to our ambassadorship function on earth by thinking divine viewpoint. The context for these different things is to be found in 2:22-23, where Paul is contrasting true and false teachings – true teachings coming from Jesus Christ Who is in heaven, and false teachings from men on earth. It would probably do us all good to think about heaven more and the earth less, but the emphasis is much wider in scope in this passage.

RELEVANT OPINIONS

Several of the Pauline contexts make it plain that the way one thinks is intimately related to the way one lives (whether as a Christian in the Spirit and by faith, or in the flesh, in sin and in spiritual death). A man’s thinking and striving cannot be seen in isolation from the overall direction of his life; the latter will be reflected in the aims which he sets himself. The “above” and “on the earth” are not properly topographical definitions, but rather signify spheres in which a person may live. The believer who obeys the apostolic injunction to aim at the things above will be involved in an ongoing spiritual warfare here below as he or she puts to death sinful propensities and pursuits, and allows the new nature to find outward expression in a godly life. Because they are new persons in Christ they are to live like new persons. (P. O’Brien)

Those things which are above are the things of Christ. I want you to note that Paul is not saying that we should seek such courses as are offered today that are a mixture of pseudo-psychology with a smattering of Bible. This kind of teaching is handed out in a few night classes, and then some poor crippled Christians think they have the answers to the problems of life – all the way from a neurotic mother-in-law to a boss who is a dirty old man. They think some little course will teach them how to treat everybody and every problem. They consider it a do-it-yourself kit, a kind of an open sesame to a new life. Now I say to you, and I say it very carefully, you will only experience the new life as you “seek those things which are above, where Christ sits on the right hand of God.” That’s why I have a ministry of teaching through the Bible. There is no short-cut. Some have suggested that I cut it down to a one-year program, but that certainly is not adequate. And, really, five years is not adequate. Even if we took ten, or even twenty years, we would not know it all. Real study of the Word of God will get you through to the living Christ. (J. McGee)

Texts like this explain why Benjamin Warfield reacted with dismay to those who elevated prayer for divine illumination above rigorous observation of God’s written Word and serious intellectual reflection on what it says. Warfield taught at Princeton Seminary for 34-years until his death in 1921. In 1911 he gave an address to students with this exhortation: “Sometimes we hear it said that ten minutes on your knees will give you a truer, deeper, more operative knowledge of God than ten hours over your

books. ‘What! Is the appropriate response, ‘than ten hours over your books, on your knees?’ (J. Piper) The change from “seek” to “set your minds” in this verse emphasizes even more vividly the mental re-orientation which new life in Christ necessitates. The verb is a favorite one with Paul, denoting the whole mental activity, not simply an occasional thought. (D. Guthrie)

Col. 3:2 Keep on thinking objectively about (φρονέω, PAImp.2P, Iterative, Command; concentrate on) the above (Adv. Place) things (Acc. Dir. Obj.; Bible doctrine in the soul), not (neg. adv.) the things (Acc. Gen. Ref.) upon the earth (Abl. Source; human viewpoint),

^{WHO} **Colossians 3:2** τὰ ἄνω φρονεῖτε μὴ τὰ ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς

^{VUL} **Colossians 3:2** quae sursum sunt sapite non quae supra terram

^{LWB} **Col. 3:3** **For you have died [separated from your former life], and the function of your life has been hidden together with Christ by means of the God [the veil which now shrouds your higher life from others will one day be withdrawn].**

^{KW} **Col. 3:3** For you died, and your life has been hidden with Christ in God.

^{KJV} **Colossians 3:3** For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God.

TRANSLATION HIGHLIGHTS

As a believer, you have died (Culminative Aorist tense) to your former life, which was controlled by the world, the flesh and the devil. This is positional, of course, since many believers still live a life controlled by these foreign elements instead of spiritual elements. For those believers who are living according to divine protocol, the function of their life has been hidden (Consummative Perfect tense) from others together with Christ by means of the God. The passive voice means the elect did not have anything to do with it; it is all of grace.

It also means there is a veil over your spiritual life today which shrouds it from the view of others. It has been absconded (Latin) from the view of fellow believers and men of the world. You cannot see Bible doctrine in the soul of another person. You can perhaps see an application of it now and then, but the spiritual life in Christ is invisible. Our spiritual life is hidden in Christ today, but one day the shroud or veil will be removed and everyone will see what we have done with Christ experientially.

RELEVANT OPINIONS

It is true, to be sure, that this new life is hidden from view. The world does not see this new life which the believer has experienced, and, as a result, misunderstanding, enmity, and scorn are the believer’s lot. But this hidden life will be vindicated. (H. Carson)

Because the Holy Spirit, Who is the essence of the age to come, has been given to us as the first installment of our inheritance, we have in a very real sense been transported to heaven and sit there with Christ. (M. Silva)

It is a hidden life, its meaning half frustrated at present by the intractability of our material environment; but it is real, and one day, when all that is material has passed away, it will be revealed – manifested – as the only real life there is. Meanwhile, we live most truly our own life when we refer everything to motives which are centered in Christ. For in the deepest sense He is our life. (C. Dodd) The Christian's secret communion with God now at times makes itself seen without his intending it, but his full manifestation is at Christ's return; his manifested life will be the natural development of his present inner life. (R. Jamieson)

Col. 3:3 **For** (explanatory conj.) **you have died** (ἀποθνήσκω, AAI2P, Culminative; separated from your former life), **and** (connective conj.) **the function of your** (Poss. Gen.) **life** (Subj. Nom.) **has been hidden** (κρύπτω, Perf.PI3S, Consummative; absconded) **together with Christ** (Instr. Assoc.) **by means of the God** (Instr. Means; the veil which now shrouds your higher life from others will one day be withdrawn).

^{WHO} **Colossians 3:3** ἀπεθάνετε γὰρ καὶ ἡ ζωὴ ὑμῶν κέκρυπται σὺν τῷ Χριστῷ ἐν τῷ θεῷ.

^{VUL} **Colossians 3:3** mortui enim estis et vita vestra abscondita est cum Christo in Deo

^{LWB} **Col. 3:4** **On the occasion [at the rapture] when the Christ, our life, shall appear [when the Groom returns for His bride], at that time you also shall be made manifest with Him in the sphere of glory.**

^{KW} **Col. 3:4** Whenever the Christ is made visible, our life, then also you with Him shall be manifested in glory.

^{KJV} **Colossians 3:4** When Christ, *who is* our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with him in glory.

TRANSLATION HIGHLIGHTS

Jesus Christ, our life, shall appear (Futuristic Aorist tense) at the rapture (Temporal Subjunctive mood). At that time, the Groom will manifest Himself to His bride, the Church. Since we share in His glory, we also will be revealed (Predictive Future tense) with Him in glory. Since we are going to be revealed with Him in the sphere of glory positionally, and the things we have done on earth (spiritual production) will also be revealed to others, we should be conscientious to live the spiritual life now. As his bride, do we want His introduction of us to be: (a) “Here’s my bride, carnal and pathetic as she

is, but still My bride,” or (b) “Here’s my bride, spiritual and adorned with divine production, I’m so proud of her.”

RELEVANT OPINIONS

It is not simply that the life is said to be shared with Christ: the life IS Christ. (P. O’Brien) The Christian life is nothing less than a Divine friendship. There is a supernatural something that defies analysis and measurement in the experience of every Christian – a Divine life as distinct from the natural soul-life, as that is from mere animal vitality. (G. Findlay) The veil which now shrouds your higher life from others, will then be withdrawn. The world which now persecutes, despises, ignores now, will then be blinded with the dazzling glory of the revelation. (K. Wuest) The Spirit-imparted life our souls have now in Him shall be extended to our bodies. (R. Jamieson)

Col. 3:4 On the occasion when (Adv. Time) the Christ (Subj. Nom.), our (Poss. Gen.) Life (Nom. Appos.; our right man), shall appear (φανερῶ, APObj.3S, Futuristic, Temporal Clause; manifestation of the groom to the bride at the rapture), at that time (Adv. Time) you also (adjunctive) shall be made manifest (φανερῶ, FPI2P, Predictive) with Him (Instr. Assoc.) in the sphere of glory (Loc. Sphere).

^{WHO} **Colossians 3:4** ὅταν ὁ Χριστὸς φανερωθῆ ἡ ζωὴ ἡμῶν τότε καὶ ὑμεῖς σὺν αὐτῷ φανερωθήσεσθε ἐν δόξῃ

^{VUL} **Colossians 3:4** cum Christus apparuerit vita vestra tunc et vos apparebitis cum ipso in gloria

^{LWB} **Col. 3:5** Start rendering impotent [put to death], therefore, the members [of the old sin nature], the things upon the earth [specifically]: heterosexual immorality [fornication], homosexuality [perverted sex], abnormal passion [pathos], evil [demonically inspired] lusts and the frantic search for happiness [avarice], which category of things keeps on being [a form of] idolatry,

^{KW} **Col. 3:5** By a once-for-all act, and at once, put to death your members which are upon the earth: fornication, impurity, depraved passion, wicked craving, and avarice which is of such a nature as to be idolatry;

^{KJV} **Colossians 3:5** Mortify therefore your members which are upon the earth; fornication, uncleanness, inordinate affection, evil concupiscence, and covetousness, which is idolatry:

TRANSLATION HIGHLIGHTS

Since we are going to be presented with Jesus Christ in glory positionally, and our lives revealed to every one experientially, Paul orders us (Imperative of Command) to start putting to death (Ingressive Aorist tense) the old sin nature’s control of our body. The first category of things he mentions can be classified as recovery from (Latin:

mortification of) phallic or sexual reversionism. He lists a few sexual sins which we should eliminate from our lives asap. A bride which is about to be presented by her Groom should not be engaging in any form of sexual sin!

These sexual sins include (a) heterosexual immorality, or illegitimate sex (Gk: porno) with a member of the opposite sex outside of marriage, (b) homosexuality, which is unclean, perverted sex, (c) abnormal passion, which is geared toward pathological gratification (Gk: pathos) such as bestiality, pederasty and necromancy, (d) evil lusts, which is sexual activity related to cults and witchcraft, and (e) the frantic search for happiness, which is all other attempts to satisfy the lusts (Latin: libido) of the flesh. Many commentators regard the last category as involving money and other material objects. I see the last category as part of the other sexual sins.

The last category of sexual sin is meant to be a generalization, an umbrella group of sins not mentioned specifically by Paul, but which share a common pursuit of temporary happiness or gratification, however fleeting. Sexual lust “gone mad” seeks any partner(s) in order to gratify its frantic search for happiness. The entire category of sexual sins is a form of idolatry (Durative Present tense), in which you end up worshipping the dictates and commands of the flesh. This outlook on life is nothing new; it was practiced in Paul’s day in various phallic cults, which today have donned a more respectable front as the Playboy lifestyle.

RELEVANT OPINIONS

“Pathos” was used by the Stoics to describe the person who allowed himself to be dominated by his emotions, and therefore could not attain tranquility. It also denotes shameful passions which lead to excesses, such as the vices of homosexuality. (P. O’Brien) Covetousness is idolatry. It is, obviously and directly, worshipping and serving the creature. While it appears to be self-love, it is really the sacrifice of self to the world, offered at the shrine of wealth, or fame, or pleasure. The man seeks to gain power over other men or things; but if this becomes his supreme desire, or if he seeks to attain it by evil means, then from that moment the object of his guilty pursuit gains power over him, and begins to entangle and enslave him. His passion becomes his tyrant, his ambition an insanity, his pursuit of pleasure an infatuation. (G. Findlay)

For Christians involved in the ministry of God’s Word there is a particular danger of covetousness. The temptation to abuse one’s position and to exploit the preaching of God’s Word for personal gain was a danger from which the early church did not escape. The false teachers also exploited the congregation, being motivated by their greed for material gain. (P. O’Brien) God in salvation has broken the power of the evil nature over the believer’s physical body. Now, the believer is charged with the responsibility of maintaining in his experience that state of liberation. (K. Wuest) The covetous man sets up another object of worship beside God. There is a sort of religious purpose, a devotion of the soul, to greed, which makes the sin of the miser so hateful ... the idea of avarice as

a religion. (J. Lightfoot) Sexual reversionism is degeneracy through licentious and lascivious behavior. (R.B. Thieme, Jr.)

Col. 3:5 Start rendering impotent (νεκρώω, AAImp.2P, Ingressive, Command; put to death, mortify; recovery from phallic reversionism), therefore (inferential conj.), the members (Acc. Dir. Obj.; of the old sin nature), the things (Acc. Dir. Obj.) upon the earth (Adv. Gen. Ref.; specifically): heterosexual immorality (Acc. Gen. Ref.; fornication), homosexuality (Acc. Gen. Ref.; perverted, unclean), abnormal passion (Acc. Dir. Obj.; pathos, libido), evil (Acc. Spec.) lusts (Acc. Dir. Obj.; of the phallic cult), and (conective conj.) the frantic search for happiness (Acc. Dir. Obj.; covetousness, avarice), which category of things (Subj. Nom.) keeps on being (είμι, PAI3S, Durative) idolatry (Nom. Appos.),

^{WHO} **Colossians 3:5** Νεκρώσατε οὖν τὰ μέλη τὰ ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς πορνείαν ἀκαθαρσίαν πάθος ἐπιθυμίαν κακὴν καὶ τὴν πλεονεξίαν ἣτις ἐστὶν εἰδωλολατρία

^{VUL} **Colossians 3:5** mortificate ergo membra vestra quae sunt super terram fornicationem inmunditiam libidinem concupiscentiam malam et avaritiam quae est simulacrorum servitus

^{LWB} **Col. 3:6** **Because of which things the wrath of God [divine discipline] comes upon the sons of disobedience [sexual reversionists],**

^{KW} **Col. 3:6** Because of which things there comes the wrath of God;

^{KJV} **Colossians 3:6** For which things' sake the wrath of God cometh on the children of disobedience:

TRANSLATION HIGHLIGHTS

The wrath of God is coming (Gnomic Present tense) because of these sexual sins. The wrath of God is an anthropopathism for divine discipline. Some manuscripts have an additional phrase “upon the sons of disobedience,” while other manuscripts do not. If you leave this phrase in, it would be a reference to divine discipline upon sexual reversionists. There is a “special” brand of divine discipline on those who engage in sexual sins. There is an allusion in this phrase to the “sons of disobedience” in ancient times, which were fallen angels who had sexual relations with women. These sons or disobedient angels bred a super-race of half-angel, half- human beings, which some theologians believe were the foundation of the gods and goddesses of ancient mythology. This attempted perversion of humanity by fallen angels was one of the reasons for the Great Flood, which destroyed all but Noah and his immediate family. The fallen angels, or “sons of disobedience,” are in chains waiting for the Lake of Fire.

RELEVANT OPINIONS

It is so often asserted that if God is truly love, He cannot be angry. But wrath and love are not mutually exclusive. A holy God does not stand idly by when men act unrighteously, transgress the law, show disdain to Him as their creator or spurn His love and mercy. He acts in a righteous manner punishing sin in the present and especially on the final day. (P. O'Brien) When God sees sin in action, He is repulsed by it and is constrained to judge it. He cannot be indifferent nor eternally long-suffering. (R. Gromacki)

Col. 3:6 Because (causal conj.) of which things (Acc. Gen. Ref.) the wrath (Subj. Nom.) of God (Poss. Gen.) comes (ἔρχομαι, PM13S, Gnostic; divine discipline in the form of an anthropopathism) upon the sons (Acc. Dir. Obj.) of disobedience (Adv. Gen. Ref.; reversionists),

^{WHO} **Colossians 3:6** δι ἃ ἔρχεται ἡ ὀργή τοῦ θεοῦ [ἐπὶ τοὺς υἱοὺς τῆς ἀπειθείας].

^{VUL} **Colossians 3:6** propter quae venit ira Dei super filios incredulitatis

^{LWB} **Col. 3:7** **In the sphere of which things [reversionism] you also walked as a pattern of life [modus operandi] when you once functioned in them [residence and function in Satan's cosmic system].**

^{KW} **Col. 3:7** In the sphere of which things also you ordered your behavior at one time when you were living in them.

^{KJV} **Colossians 3:7** In the which ye also walked some time, when ye lived in them.

TRANSLATION HIGHLIGHTS

If the phrase “sons of disobedience” is included in the prior verse, and if there is indeed an allusion to ancient times to the fallen angels cohabiting with the daughters of men, then Paul is now taking that reference and applying it to mankind. He may be referring to our ancestors at Sodom and Gomorrah, he may be referring to a specific problem in Colossae, or he may be generalizing it to be any form of reversionism that is involved in a frantic search for happiness. I believe Paul is saying, “You Colossians may not be engaged in the exact sexual sins I just mentioned, but you all have been in a state of reversionism at one time or another, frantically searching for happiness where it could not be found.”

If you agree with me on this possibility, then all of us walked as a pattern of life (Constatative Aorist tense) in Satan's cosmic system. All of us once resided and functioned (Descriptive Imperfect tense) in a satanic sphere of operation, as opposed to the divine sphere of operation we have the ability to reside and function in now. “Living” means

conducting your life in a certain manner according to certain principles. Each of us chooses on a daily (even hourly) basis whether we are going to reside in the sphere of God's power or in the sphere of Satan's power. Paul is reminding us that before we were Christians, we lived a continual life of reversionism. As believers, we now have a choice as to which sphere or base of operations we reside and function in.

RELEVANT OPINIONS

The Colossians at one time ordered their behavior, conducted themselves in the sphere of these evil things. That is, their entire lives were circumscribed by these sins. Not a ray of light from God, not a single good thing in the sight of God, penetrated that circle. That is total depravity. (K. Wuest) The two expressions "zen en" and "peripatein" involve two distinct ideas, denoting the condition of their life and the character of their practice respectively. Their conduct was conformable to their circumstances. (J. Lightfoot) *Living* and *walking* are almost identical. Nevertheless, in certain contexts, as here, there is a difference. *Walking* here indicates behavior: *living*, disposition. (W. Hendriksen)

Col. 3:7 In the sphere of which things (Loc. Sphere; relative pronoun; reversionism) you (Subj. Nom.) also (adjunctive) walked as a pattern of life (περιπατέω, AAI2P, Constativ; cosmic system modus operandi) when (Adv. Time) you once (Adv. Time) functioned (ζάω, Imperf.AI2P, Descriptive; conducted your life) in them (Loc. Sphere; continual residence and function in Satan's cosmic system).

^{WHO} **Colossians 3:7** ἐν οἷς καὶ ὑμεῖς περιπατήσατέ ποτε ὅτε ἐζήτε ἐν τούτοις·

^{VUL} **Colossians 3:7** in quibus et vos ambulastis aliquando cum viveretis in illis

^{LWB} **Col. 3:8** But now [as believers] you should also begin to lay aside all these [other categories of reversionism]: vicious anger, emotional tantrums, using an inconsequential person to hurt someone you love, slandering, and foul language from your mouth.

^{KW} **Col. 3:8** But now put away once for all, and at once, also all these things: a habitual, revengeful anger, violent fits of anger, malignity, slander, obscene speech out of your mouth.

^{KJV} **Colossians 3:8** But now ye also put off all these; anger, wrath, malice, blasphemy, filthy communication out of your mouth.

TRANSLATION HIGHLIGHTS

Undoubtedly there were many Colossians who patted themselves on the back and said, "I've never engaged in any sexual sins, so everything must be right between me and my Maker." But Paul opens the door to other forms of reversionism, pleading with them (Imperative of Entreaty) to likewise start laying aside (Ingressive Aorist tense) these heinous sins. The next category of sins Paul covers is mental attitude sins combined with

verbal sins. As believers in Jesus Christ, there is no excuse for engaging in these sins either.

They are (a) vicious anger, which is wrath expressed toward someone who used to be your friend, (b) emotional tantrums, or violent fits of rage exhibited because you are not getting your own way in a given situation, (c) using an inconsequential person to hurt someone you love, which is a wicked exhibition of depravity, (d) slandering someone, which includes gossiping, maligning and blaspheming someone who is not present to defend themselves, and finally (e) using foul and obscene language.

The phrase “from your mouth” is how Paul includes the verbal sin as being in partnership with the mental attitude sin. It’s one sin to think these terrible things, it’s a compound sin when they issue forth from your mouth verbally. In other words, if you think these terrible things, at least don’t speak them. You will be disciplined for your depraved mental activity, but if you can keep your mouth shut, maybe you can avoid the next set of divine discipline by not verbally sinning.

RELEVANT OPINIONS

The sins to be put off are anger, quick temper, malice and the language which accompanies these things, slander and foul talk. Wrath (orge) and anger (thumos) go together, although Stoic thinkers distinguished the two, the one denoting a more or less settled feeling of hatred, the other a tumultuous outburst of passion. “Aiskronologia” occurs only here in the NT, but outside the Bible covers the ideas of obscene speech or abusive language. (P. O’Brien) “Aiskronologia” also includes every license of the ungoverned tongue employing itself in the abuse of others. (R. Earle) Anger is kept in, whereas wrath is let out. (R. Gromacki)

Col. 3:8 But (contrast conj.) now (Adv. Time) you should also (adjunctive) begin to lay aside (ἀποτίθημι, AMImp.2P, Ingressive, Entreaty; please do this) all (Acc. Spec.) these (Acc. Dir. Obj.; other categories of reversionism): vicious anger (Acc. Gen. Ref.; wrath from reverse process reversionism), emotional tantrums (Acc. Dir. Obj.; fits of rage), using an inconsequential person to hurt someone you love (Adv. Acc.; wicked depravity), slandering (Adv. Acc.; maligning, blaspheming), and (ellipsis, inserted) foul (low, obscene) language (Acc. Dir. Obj.; swearing, sexual inuendo) from your (Poss. Gen.) mouth (Abl. Source).

^{WHO} **Colossians 3:8** νυνὶ δὲ ἀπόθεσθε καὶ ὑμεῖς τὰ πάντα ὀργὴν θυμὸν κακίαν βλασφημίαν αἰσχρολογίαν ἐκ τοῦ στόματος ὑμῶν

^{VUL} **Colossians 3:8** nunc autem deponite et vos omnia iram indignationem malitiam blasphemiam turpem sermonem de ore vestro

LWB Col. 3:9 Stop lying to one another of the same kind [particularly to fellow Christians], having disarmed the old man [old sin nature] together with his modus operandi [cosmic activity],

KW Col. 3:9 Stop lying to one another, having stripped off and away from yourselves and for your own advantage the old, antiquated, outworn, decrepit, useless man [that person you were before you were saved] with his evil practices,

KJV Colossians 3:9 Lie not one to another, seeing that ye have put off the old man with his deeds;

TRANSLATION HIGHLIGHTS

Paul now commands the Colossians (Imperative mood) to stop lying to each other, particularly to those in their Christian community. The Iterative Present tense points to lying as a recurring problem in Colossae. He bases this command on the fact that their old man with his sinful nature had been previously disarmed (Culminative Aorist tense), along with his cosmic thinking and activities. Once again, Paul appeals to them to discontinue a bad behavior that was keeping them out of fellowship, and he based his appeal on their positional status as Christians. The sphere of divine power has been made available to them, so they should abandon their activity in various gates of Satan's cosmic system.

RELEVANT OPINIONS

We are still moving in the sphere of sins of the tongue, as lying is forbidden. Whether it be a deliberate untruth, or the half truth which conveys a wrong impression, or the exaggeration which distorts the facts, all these savour of the old unregenerate nature rather than of the new. (H. Carson) Many men who would resist the temptation to utter a lie in so many words, will silently act it; especially in a continued course of action, where the deception lies not in any single definite act, but in the general construction which they lead others to put on their proceedings. Such deception is no less culpable in itself, and as a rule still more disastrous in its effects, than a palpable lie. (G. Findlay)

We must recognize that the sin nature is not endemic to the soul but resides in the cell structure of the human body. That is why this inherent corrupter of mankind is called the "flesh," the "body of sin," and the "sin" that "reigns in your mortal body." Reflecting its ancient origin, it is also known as the "old man" or, as we like to call it, the "sin nature." While not part of the soul, Adam's sinful trend, from its command post in the body, contaminates the soul. It sponsors mental attitude sins and causes the heart or right lobe of the mentality of the soul to become the area of motivation for evil. (R.B. Thieme, Jr.) Positionally, the old man has been put off forever. Experimentally, the old man remains an active force in the life which can be controlled only by the power of God. (L. Chafer)

Col. 3:9 **Stop** (neg. adv.) **lying** (ψεύδομαι, PMImp. 2P, Iterative, Command or Prohibition, Entreaty, Deponent; please) **to one another of the same kind** (Acc. Dir. Obj.;

particularly to fellow Christians), having disarmed (ἀπεκδύομαι, AMPtc.NPM, Culminative, Circumstantial, Deponent; stripped off) the old (Acc. Spec.; veteran) man (Acc. Dir. Obj.; the old sin nature) together with his (Poss. Gen.) modus operandi (Instr. Means; activities; all the interlocking gates of the cosmic system),

^{WHO} **Colossians 3:9** μὴ ψεύδεσθε εἰς ἀλλήλους ἀπεκδυσάμενοι τὸν παλαιὸν ἄνθρωπον σὺν ταῖς πράξεσιν αὐτοῦ

^{VUL} **Colossians 3:9** nolite mentiri invicem expoliantes vos veterem hominem cum actibus eius

^{LWB} **Col. 3:10** And having put on the new in point of time [clothed the soul of the new man with an edifying doctrinal structure], being renewed [because the doctrine you once knew was destroyed by reversionistic lifestyle] by the full knowledge [metabolized Bible doctrine] which is according to the image of the One [Jesus Christ] Who created him [the believer],

^{KW} **Col. 3:10** And having clothed yourself with the new man [the person you are after you are saved] who is constantly being renewed, with a resulting advanced and perfect experiential knowledge which is according to the image of the One who created him;

^{KJV} **Colossians 3:10** And have put on the new *man*, which is renewed in knowledge after the image of him that created him:

TRANSLATION HIGHLIGHTS

Paul reminds the Colossians that they had once clothed themselves with a doctrinal structure in the soul (Culminative Aorist tense), and were therefore making progress in the spiritual life. They reverted back to their sinful lifestyle, however, and had destroyed most of this doctrinal structure in the soul. How do I know this? Because Paul then says they had been renewed (Descriptive Present tense) by the full knowledge which comes from metabolized Bible doctrine in the soul. If the Greek word was to “make new,” then I would agree with many commentators that Paul is contrasting their former life as an unbeliever (old man) with their new life as a believer (new man).

But rather than seeing this verse as putting off the old man and putting on the new man, the Greek word “anakaino” points to renewing the new man after he had stumbled. In other words, this is an appeal to a believer for reversion recovery, not an appeal to an unbeliever to become a believer. How does a believer recover from a sinful lifestyle in reversionism? The only way to recover is by acknowledging our sins to the Father through the Son by means of the Spirit, and then resuming our intake, metabolization and application of Bible doctrine. This full knowledge (Gk: epignosis) is according to the express image of Jesus Christ, the One who created (Dramatic Aorist tense) the believer “new” in the first place.

According to the prior verse, the old man is “discarded,” not made new (Latin: renovated). The word is “renew,” not to “make new,” which implies fixing or clothing something that was stripped bare. The new man is not something we “fix” or renovate by “putting new clothes” on him. The new man is created by God at the new birth; the new man is only renovated if he has fallen into a lifestyle of unconfessed sin. Also, the Greek word “neon” means “new in point of time,” not “new in quality.” If Paul was talking about putting on the new man for the first time, he would have used the Greek word “kainos,” which means “new in quality.”

RELEVANT OPINIONS

The mature believer approaches life from the divine viewpoint, which is manifested in discernment, thoughtfulness toward people, and the ability to astutely interpret current trends of history. Stabilized by his love for truth, he is distinguished by his spiritual common sense. He maintains his poise in all circumstances, sustained by the unseen reality of his love for God. In the strength of the sphere of divine power, the mature believer has constructed an edifice in his soul (1 Cor. 3:9-17; Eph. 4:12), an inner structure I call the “edification complex,” with a penthouse that represents the happiness of God. The ECS is composed of six levels, from bottom to top: filling of the Holy Spirit, Bible doctrine, Genuine Humility, Motivational Virtue, Functional Virtue, and Sharing the Happiness of God. Movement from the bottom to the top is called “progressive sanctification” in most theological seminaries. (R.B. Thieme, Jr.) Sanctification or growing in Christ-likeness requires the knowledge found in the Word of God, the knowledge given by Jesus Christ Himself. (S. Leach)

Renewed denotes the process of progressive sanctification whereby the Holy Spirit is transforming the believer into Christlikeness. The believer does not renew himself, but the Holy Spirit does it as He works within him daily. The goal of renewal is knowledge. It indicates a full, comprehensive, personal knowledge. Like Paul, we should want to know Christ in a deeper, more intimate way. Thus, to know Him is to become like Him. (R. Gromacki) The notions are combined of a new birth taking place once for all, and a new character in course of formation. (G. Findlay) It is a nature constantly renewed unto full knowledge. It is not at once complete, but in a state of constant development by the Holy Spirit. Knowledge is a principal part of the new grace of the believer. It is the beginning of eternal life. It has transforming power. It is necessary to our understanding the wiles of the devil and resisting the temptations of the world. Its renewal is after a Divine pattern. (T. Croskery)

The great need of our nature is to be renewed, and Christ fully meets that need. He gives the whole contents and form to our renewal. United to Christ by faith, we become receptacles of Christ. The pleroma dwells in Him, and that pleroma floods our being with light, with strength, with purity, with all things. Renewed only from Christ, our life manifests itself only in Christian forms. (R. Finlayson) The new man is said to be renewed in knowledge, because an ignorant soul cannot be a good soul. Without knowledge the heart cannot be good (Prov. 19:2). The grace of God works upon the will and affections by renewing the understanding. (M. Henry) The Edification Complex (ECS) clothes the soul and covers the nakedness of reversionism. Just as there is humiliation for the person who is made to appear unclothed in public, so the

reversionistic believer without an ECS becomes a source of shame or discredit to himself. (R.B. Thieme, Jr.)

Col. 3:10 And (continuative conj.) having put on (ἐνδύω, AMPtc.NMP, Culminative, Circumstantial, Articular; clothed) the new in point of time (Acc. Dir. Obj.; construction of the Edification Complex of the Soul), being renewed (ἀνακαινώνω, PPpTc.ASM, Descriptive, Circumstantial; because the Edification Complex of the Soul had once been destroyed by reversionism) by the full knowledge (Prep. Acc., Means; metabolized Bible doctrine) which is (ellipsis, supplied) according to the image (Adv. Acc.) of the One (Adv. Gen. Ref.; Jesus Christ) who created (κτίζω, AAPtc.GSM, Dramatic, Substantival, Articular) him (Acc. Dir. Obj.; the believer),

^{WHO} **Colossians 3:10** καὶ ἐνδυσάμενοι τὸν νέον τὸν ἀνακαινούμενον εἰς ἐπίγνωσιν κατ εἰκόνα τοῦ κτίσαντος αὐτόν

^{VUL} **Colossians 3:10** et induentes novum eum qui renovatur in agnitionem secundum imaginem eius qui creavit eum

^{LWB} **Col. 3:11** In which place [union with Christ] there no longer exists Greek or Jew [no racial inferiority], circumcision or uncircumcision [rituals and religious background is irrelevant], Barbarian, Scythian [cultural background is irrelevant], slavery, state of freedom [social status is irrelevant], but Christ is all things [the grace source of all we have] and the cause of all things [divine sovereignty and omnipotence].

^{KW} **Col. 3:11** In which state there cannot be Greek or Jew, circumcision or uncircumcision, Barbarian, Scythian, slave or free man, but Christ is all things and in all things.

^{KJV} **Colossians 3:11** Where there is neither Greek nor Jew, circumcision nor uncircumcision, Barbarian, Scythian, bond *nor* free: but Christ *is* all, and in all.

TRANSLATION HIGHLIGHTS

A lot of things changed when we became Christians, in the sphere of Christ. Paul compares and contrasts several examples to explain this profound difference. In the sphere or union with Christ, there no longer exists (Durative Present tense) any form of racial inferiority (Greek or Jew). There no longer exists any relevant ritual or religious background (circumcision or uncircumcision). There no longer exists any relevant cultural background (Barbarian or Scythian). There no longer exists any relevant social status (slavery or freedom). Jesus Christ is the grace Source for all that we have, which means we do not create things for our own benefit – we may work hard, but He provides them as the Ultimate Source. He is also the cause of all things that eventually happen, which is a way of emphasizing His divine sovereignty and omnipotence.

RELEVANT OPINIONS

The Scythian represents the lowest kind of barbarian who was probably also a slave; the term was applied to tribes around the Black Sea from which was drawn a wretched slave class. They were little better than wild beasts. (P. O'Brien) There is no absorption of personality as in the conception of an Absolute which embraces all being in itself, for the Christ who is all dwells in all who retain their distinctiveness, yet find a unity in Him. In a world still bitterly divided by race, colour and social status, and in which the Church all too easily succumbs to conventional attitudes, here is a truth which needs to be constantly recalled. (H. Carson)

Hippocrates describes the Scythians as widely different from the rest of mankind, and like to nothing but themselves. Herodotus describes them as living in wagons, offering human sacrifices, scalping and sometimes flaying slain enemies, drinking their blood, and using their skulls for drinking-cups. When a king dies, one of his concubines is strangled and buried with him, and, at the close of a year, fifty of his attendants are strangled, disemboweled, mounted on dead horses, and left in a circle around his tomb. (M. Vincent)

Col. 3:11 In which place (Adv. Place or Sphere; union with Jesus Christ) there no longer (neg. adv.) exists (ἔνι, ΠΑΙ3S, Durative) Greek (Pred. Nom.) or (connective conj.) Jew (Pred. Nom.; no racial inferiority), circumcision (Pred. Nom.) or (connective conj.) uncircumcision (Pred. Nom.; rituals and religious background irrelevant), Barbarian (Pred. Nom.), Scythian (Pred. Nom.; cultural background irrelevant), slavery (Pred. Nom.), state of freedom (Pred. Nom.; social status irrelevant), but (adversative conj.) Christ (Subj. Nom.) is (ellipsis, verb supplied) all (Nom. Spec.) things (Pred. Nom.; the grace source of all we have) and (connective conj.) the cause of all things (Instr. Agency; divine sovereignty and omnipotence).

^{WHO} **Colossians 3:11** ὅπου οὐκ ἔνι Ἑλλήν καὶ Ἰουδαῖος περιτομὴ καὶ ἀκροβυστία βάρβαρος Σκύθης δούλος ἐλεύθερος ἀλλὰ πάντα καὶ ἐν πᾶσιν Χριστός

^{VUL} **Colossians 3:11** ubi non est gentilis et Iudaeus circumcisio et praeputium barbarus et Scytha servus et liber sed omnia et in omnibus Christus

^{LWB} **Col. 3:12** **Keep on clothing yourself [dressing your soul with doctrine], therefore, as chosen ones of God [elect in eternity past], (having been loved in the past with the result that you will be loved forever), with affections of grace compassion [capacity for love & life], a gracious disposition [inner happiness & kindness], a relaxed mental attitude [grace orientation], an inwrought meekness of the soul [genuine humility], longsuffering steadfastness [patience from mastery of the details of life],**

^{KW} **Col. 3:12** Put on therefore your spiritual apparel, as chosen-out ones of God, saints and beloved ones, a heart of compassion, kindness, humility, considerateness, longsuffering,

^{KJV} **Colossians 3:12** Put on therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, longsuffering;

TRANSLATION HIGHLIGHTS

Paul switches from the negative to the positive, from telling the Colossians what not to do to commanding them what to do. He commands them (Imperative mood) to keep on clothing themselves (Iterative Present tense) with a doctrinal structure in the soul. The way to “clothe yourself” in the spiritual life is not by works of the flesh, what some believe is concentrated self-effort and self-attainment. Clothing yourself in the invisible, spiritual life is dressing your soul with the thinking of Christ. How do you do that? Do you read about His divine attributes and try to exhibit them in daily life as best as you can? That may sound noble, but that is mere morality and morality is not the Christian way of life. You do not dress yourself in morality. You dress your soul with Bible doctrine and allow the Holy Spirit to take that doctrine and graciously create the spiritual life within. Write that down.

We should also keep a few things in mind while clothing ourselves with doctrine. Paul reminds the Colossians that they are chosen ones of God. One of the things we should never forget is that we were elect in eternity past. Another thing we should remember is that we are all saints, separated ones to God. Paul even digresses for a moment to remind the Colossians that we were loved in the past and that this divine love will continue to be there forever (Intensive Perfect tense). In other words, God’s love will never fail us, so we are eternally secure and eternally special in His eyes. The knowledge of these positional truths should provide us with positive momentum in the spiritual life. They should be the foundation with which we build our own edification complex of the soul.

Every believer should be in the process of building a doctrinal super-structure in the soul. This “clothing of the soul” with doctrine is what R.B. Thieme, Jr. calls building an “edification complex of the soul.” Allow me to briefly explain this teaching tool using its original framework – since it is a teaching device, the terminology is occasionally updated. Each of the things in this verse that we are to “clothe ourselves with” are part of a doctrinal structure we are building in the soul. The Christian way of life is not practicing morality, but building a spiritual edifice in our soul that automatically exhibits these qualities of life by grace mechanics, not works of the flesh. Initially, what you think is more important than what you do, because eventually what you think will determine what you do. This doctrinal structure has five floors or layers, one built on top of the other.

The first floor of the edification complex of the soul (ECS) is a relaxed mental attitude, also called grace orientation. Grace mechanics demand Bible doctrine, the thinking of Christ, as its building material. If all you do is try to live a moral life, ignoring the

requirement of doctrine as spiritual building material, you do not have a spiritual life - no matter how nice and sweet everyone thinks you are. So the main floor, the foundation of the spiritual life is grace orientation. The legalistic teachers that are plaguing the Colossian community have no grace orientation and therefore no spiritual life. The second floor of the edification complex of the soul is a combination of longsuffering and steadfastness, also known as patience developed by mastery of the details of life.

The third floor of the edification complex is an inwrought meekness of the soul, also called genuine humility. The word “genuine” points to the fact that there is a lot of “fake” humility exhibited in the world; we are not to be fooled by the false humility expressed by arrogant, legalistic believers. The fourth floor of the edification complex is affections of grace compassion, which comes from having capacity for love and life. The fifth floor of the edification complex is a kind, gracious disposition which comes from having inner happiness in the soul due to doctrinal saturation. Part of this fifth floor, or penthouse, is continued in the first part of the next verse. All of the floors, layers, or qualities of the spiritual life are built on Bible doctrine in the soul - not human self-effort, not works of the flesh, not adherence to legalistic precepts. If they are mere exhibitions of morality, they are not truly part of the spiritual life as designed by divine protocol.

RELEVANT OPINIONS

The “kaleo” group of words emphasizes the gracious initiative of God in drawing men and women to Himself. “Makrothumia” denotes that longsuffering which endures wrong and puts up with the exasperating conduct of others rather than flying into a rage or desiring vengeance. (P. O’Brien) The covenant love of God is not only a response to our faith, but a resurrecting power of grace that made us alive when we were dead and could not yet exert faith. (J. Piper)

Colossian believers are “elect” in virtue of an antecedent choice of them to salvation on the part of God, as those who would believe on His Son. Their whole Christian standing springs from and witnesses to God’s eternal election of them. To address the Colossian Christians as elect is to remind them of all that they owe to God’s grace. Love dictated their election and set at work the means by which it should be secured. (G. Findlay)

Col. 3:12 Keep on clothing yourself (ἐνδύω, AMImp.2P, Iterative, Command; dress your soul with an Edification Complex of the Soul), therefore (inferential conj.), as (comparative particle) chosen ones (Pred. Nom.) of God (Abl. Source; elect in eternity past), saints (Pred. Nom.; separated ones), [having been loved in the past with the result that you will be loved forever (ἀγαπάω, Perf.PPtc.PM, Intensive, Circumstantial)], with affections (Compl. Acc.) of grace compassion (Acc. Gen. Ref.; 4th floor of the ECS, capacity for love and life), a gracious disposition (Compl. Acc.; 5th floor of the ECS, inner happiness, kindness), a relaxed mental attitude (Pred. Nom.; 1st floor of the ECS,

grace orientation), **an inwrought meekness of the soul** (Pred. nom.; 3rd floor of the ECS, genuine humility), **longsuffering steadfastness** (Pred. Nom.; 2nd floor of ECS, mastery of the details of life, patience),

^{WHO} **Colossians 3:12** Ἐνδύσασθε οὖν ὡς ἐκλεκτοὶ τοῦ θεοῦ ἅγιοι καὶ ἠγαπημένοι σπλάγχνα οἰκτιρμοῦ χρηστότητα ταπεινοφροσύνην πραύτητα μακροθυμίαν

^{VUL} **Colossians 3:12** induite vos ergo sicut electi Dei sancti et dilecti viscera misericordiae benignitatem humilitatem modestiam patientiam

^{LWB} **Col. 3:13** **Putting up with one another of the same kind [mental separation from obnoxious believers] and graciously forgiving others [unbelievers]. If anyone has a complaint against anyone else, even as the Lord graciously forgave you, in this way also you [forgive];**

^{KW} **Col. 3:13** Bearing with one another and forgiving one another if anyone has a matter of complaint against anyone. Even as and in the degree that the Lord forgave you, in the same manner also you forgive.

^{KJV} **Colossians 3:13** Forbearing one another, and forgiving one another, if any man have a quarrel against any: even as Christ forgave you, so also *do ye*.

TRANSLATION HIGHLIGHTS

Paul completes the thought of patience and longsuffering by the command to put up with obnoxious believers (Iterative Present tense) by separating from them mentally. Yes, even fellow believers can get on our nerves and push us to the edge emotionally and spiritually. In the case of believers, we are to endure them by mental separation; in the case of unbelievers, we are to graciously forgive them (Iterative Present tense), because after all, they do not even know there is a spiritual life. These are two examples of the longsuffering and steadfastness (power under control) of the second floor of the edification complex in the prior verse.

Another example of grace orientation and having a relaxed mental attitude is when there are complaints and differences of opinion that divide us. If anyone has a complaint (Static Present tense) against someone else, legitimate or not, we are to forgive those on both sides of the equation. The Lord graciously forgave us (Culminative Aorist tense) when we behaved in this manner, so we are to forgive others in the same manner. Paul uses a protasis of a 3rd class condition, which means maybe someone around you will have a complaint or disagreement and maybe they won't. Unless you live in relative isolation, I guarantee you will either irritate others or someone in your periphery will irritate you.

RELEVANT OPINIONS

This forgiveness is to be unceasing, even unwearied – a point which Jesus Himself taught when instructing His disciples that forgiveness ought to be until seventy times seven. (P. O'Brien) Impersonal love, derived from divine virtue, takes precedence over the faults and flaws of people. When personal love for God and impersonal love unite to form virtue love, you will not be encumbered by cruel intolerance, smoldering anger, judging, hatred, or other mental attitude sins, and you will not be distracted by stress, pressure, persecution. You will obey and imitate the Lord by repaying insults and antagonism with compassion, kindness, patience, and humility. (R.B. Thieme, Jr.)

Col. 3:13 Putting up with (ἀνέχω, PMPTc.NPM, Iterative, Circumstantial; endure) one another of the same kind (Abl. Separation; mental separation from obnoxious believers) and (connective conj.) graciously forgiving (χαρίζομαι, PMPTc.NPM, Iterative, Circumstantial) others (Dat. Ind. Obj.; non-believers); if (protasis, 3rd class condition, "maybe they will and maybe they won't") anyone (Subj. Nom.) has (ἔχω, PASubj.3S, Static, Conditional Clause) a complaint (Acc. Dir. Obj.) against anyone else (Acc. Rel.), even (ascensive conj.) as (comparative adv.) the Lord (Subj. Nom.) graciously forgave (χαρίζομαι, AMI3S, Culminative) you (Dat. Adv.), in this way (comparative particle), also (adjunctive particle) you (Subj. Nom.; forgive);

^{WHO} **Colossians 3:13** ἀνεχόμενοι ἀλλήλων καὶ χαριζόμενοι ἑαυτοῖς ἐάν τις πρὸς τινα ἔχη μομφήν· καθὼς καὶ ὁ κύριος ἐχαρίσατο ὑμῖν οὕτως καὶ ὑμεῖς·

^{VUL} **Colossians 3:13** subportantes invicem et donantes vobis ipsis si quis adversus aliquem habet querellam sicut et Dominus donavit vobis ita et vos

^{LWB} **Col. 3:14** And upon [above & between] all these [floors of the edification complex], impersonal [virtue] love, which is the binding agent [cement] of maturity [leads to supergrace status].

^{KW} **Col. 3:14** And upon all these, put on divine and self-sacrificial love which is a binding factor of completeness.

^{KJV} **Colossians 3:14** And above all these things *put on* charity, which is the bond of perfectness.

TRANSLATION HIGHLIGHTS

Impersonal or virtue love is the binding agent, the spiritual cement (Descriptive Present tense) which holds each floor of the edification complex of the soul together. Virtue love brings harmony to each of the other floors and hold them together. Virtue love is also the roof or pinnacle of the spiritual life; it leads ultimately to supergrace status in mature believers. Basic impersonal love holds the doctrinal structure together like rebar, while

advanced impersonal love is the cement and mortar that completes (Latin: perfects) the spiritual project. Some translators bring the “dress yourself” command from verse 12 and insert it here as an ellipsis.

RELEVANT OPINIONS

Impersonal love emphasizes the subject; personal love emphasizes the object. Impersonal love depends on the honor and integrity of the one who loves; personal love depends on the attractiveness, capacity, and response of the one who is loved. Impersonal love is simply the consistent function of your own integrity toward other people. Impersonal love is unconditional, requires no personal acquaintance, is strong, depends on Bible doctrine, solves problems, and is mandated by God for all believers. (R.B. Thieme, Jr.) The idea seems to be that love will bind all the other graces fast together, and render the whole system complete. (A. Barnes)

Love among the believers is so important, and I do not mean this sentimental stuff that you hear so much about today. For instance, if you are a minister, you evidence your love for your congregation if you give them the Word of God, and you show your love for your pastor as a member of the church if you support his Bible teaching ministry. My friend, love is very practical – it gets right down where the rubber meets the road. If it doesn't, it's no good at all. (J. McGee)

Col. 3:14 And (continuative conj.) upon (between, above) all (Dat. Measure) these (Dat. Ind. Obj.; floors of the ECS), [dress yourself with (ellipsis, inserted from verse 12)] impersonal love (Acc. Dir. Obj.), which (Subj. Nom.) is (εἰμί, PAI3S, Descriptive) the binding agent (Pred. Nom.; cement) of maturity (Adv. Gen. Ref.; leads to SG status).

^{WHO} **Colossians 3:14** ἐπὶ πάντων δὲ τούτοις τὴν ἀγάπην ὃ ἐστὶν σύνδεσμος τῆς τελειότητος

^{VUL} **Colossians 3:14** super omnia autem haec caritatem quod est vinculum perfectionis

^{LWB} **Col. 3:15** And the [spiritual] prosperity from Christ, let that continually umpire [control] the mentality of your soul, into which [supergrace status] you were called [the purpose of your election] into one body [the corporate church]; therefore, keep on becoming thankful ones [gratitude: capacity for life].

^{KW} **Col. 3:15** And the peace of Christ, let it be acting as umpire in your hearts, into which also you were called in one body. And be constantly thankful persons.

^{KJV} **Colossians 3:15** And let the peace of God rule in your hearts, to the which also ye are called in one body; and be ye thankful.

TRANSLATION HIGHLIGHTS

Paul implores (Imperative of Entreaty) the Colossians to let the peace and spiritual prosperity from Christ to continually umpire (Iterative Present tense) the mentality of their souls. If anything is going to rule the mind of the Colossians, Paul wants it to be spiritual prosperity rather than the world, the flesh and the devil. After all, the purpose for each of us individually and the body of the church corporately (metaphor) is to grow experientially into supergrace status. We were not called in eternity past (Culminative Aorist tense) to become part of the body of Christ, so that we just kick back and rest content (doing nothing) until death or the rapture. Supergrace capacity for life does not happen automatically.

There is a spiritual life that we were called to live after we become part of the body of Christ. Therefore, Paul commands us (Imperative mood) to keep on becoming (Iterative Present tense) thankful to God for who we are, where He has placed us, and what purpose we have to fulfill in this life. True capacity for life comes with the attainment of supergrace status. Supergrace status comes after years of intake, metabolism and application of Bible doctrine. If the opportunity to pursue this goal in life according to divine protocol does not excite you, does not make your “gratitude gauge” pass the red line, then it is high time to recover from the state of reversionism you are likely living in.

RELEVANT OPINIONS

Thanksgiving towards God will beget humility, for it develops awareness that every gift is from Him, and so it deals a blow at the self-opinionated attitude which breeds scorn of others. Similarly, by turning the thoughts away towards God, it kills self-pity which is the parent of resentment and bitterness. (H. Carson)

Col. 3:15 And (continuative conj.) the prosperity (Subj. Nom.; spiritual) from Christ (Abl. Source), let that continually umpire (βραβεύω, PAImp.3S, Iterative, Entreaty; control, rule) the mentality of your (Poss. Gen.) soul (Dat. Adv.), into which (Loc. Sphere; SG status) you were called (καλέω, API2P, Culminative, Purpose Clause; purpose of your election) into one (Dat. Measure) body (Loc. Sphere; the corporate church); therefore (inferential conj.), keep on becoming (γίνομαι, PMImp.2P, Iterative, Command, Entreaty, Deponent; please) thankful ones (Pred. Nom.; gratitude gauge, capacity for life from SG status).

^{WHO} **Colossians 3:15** καὶ ἡ εἰρήνη τοῦ Χριστοῦ βραβεύετω ἐν ταῖς καρδίαις ὑμῶν εἰς ἣν καὶ ἐκλήθητε ἐν [ἐν] σώματι· καὶ εὐχάριστοι γίνεσθε

^{VUL} **Colossians 3:15** et pax Christi exultet in cordibus vestris in qua et vocati estis in uno corpore et grati estote

LWB Col. 3:16 Let the doctrine from Christ keep on dwelling inside you abundantly [doctrine must saturate your inner life] in the sphere of all wisdom [doctrine on the launching pad]. You [pastors & teachers], be teaching with authority and be applying doctrine to yourself and other believers [pastors aren't exempt from application] by means of psalms [David's experiential theology], hymns, odes [stories & poems], and [congregational] singing by means of grace in the mentality of your soul [songs that originate from thinking, not emotional subjectivity] to God,

KW Col. 3:16 The word of Christ, let it be continually at home in you with abundance; with every wisdom teaching and admonishing each other by means of psalms, hymns, spiritual songs, with the grace singing in your hearts to God.

KJV Colossians 3:16 Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom; teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord.

TRANSLATION HIGHLIGHTS

Paul implores (Imperative of Entreaty) the Colossians to let Bible doctrine from Christ keep on living (Iterative Present tense) inside them abundantly. Abundantly means doctrine must saturate the inner life, not just a scattered verse memorized here and there. It must dwell abundantly in your soul in the sphere of all wisdom, which means it must be on the launching pad ready for application to daily life. Paul then changes direction by addressing his next command to pastors and teachers. The vocative is supplied from the Imperative participle. Paul commands them to keep teaching with authority (Iterative Present tense). Only qualified and well-trained pastors and teachers can teach with the authority inherent in their spiritual gift.

Pastors and teachers are not exempt from the need to apply doctrinal rationales to themselves and other believers. The best way to do this is by having maximum doctrine on the launching pad of the soul. Teaching and preaching is the most important way for this to occur, but it can also be supplemented by psalms, hymns, spiritual things, and grace singing. Psalms are primarily David's experiential theology based on his daily life. He sang them with various stringed instruments. Hymns are supergrace love songs directed towards God; they only have meaning if you are in fellowship and have forward momentum in the spiritual life. Odes are doctrinal prose and poems. Some psalms and odes are sung, others are read out loud. I guarantee you'd rather hear me read them than sing them!

Congregational singing (Static Present tense) to God that originates from thinking and not emotional subjectivity is another means of teaching. The phrase "in the mentality of the soul" restricts singing to songs with doctrinal content, songs that make you think, not emote. That doesn't mean you don't have an emotional response to the songs you sing, but it does not include the trance-like, emotional claptrap that passes for "spiritual singing" in many churches today. If you are a gifted song writer, please, please put some

meaty doctrinal thoughts from Scripture into your songs! Don't pen some mindless, repetitive phrase to a good tune. Songs should be doctrinal, not mantric.

Let's review this verse, because all kinds of nonsensical ideas have come from bundling different words into one large "musical worship service." If you attend a church that has a 15-minute teaching and 1-hour of singing, that worship service is completely out of balance by divine standards. Count the number of times doctrinal teaching and learning is commanded in the NT and compare it with the number of times singing is mentioned. I have no doubt that it is about 50 to 1 in favor of teaching. Paul mentions teaching first, and then application of that teaching by means of psalms, hymns, odes (Latin: canticles), and congregational grace singing. Not all of these application devices or teaching aids are songs!

Some people forget what they have learned, but a poem, ode, hymn or song helps them apply some simple doctrinal concept to a problem. If there is any teaching aid, whether mnemonic device or clever tune, charts or graphs, outlines or diagrams, Paul would put his stamp of approval on it. The idea is to recall doctrinal precepts and principles and apply them to daily life by any means possible. Doctrinal abbreviations, acrostics, poems, stories about Bible characters and how they passed or failed a momentum test, anything that gets the job done is fodder for this verse. Whatever is used, however, must meet the requirement of thought (Gk: kardia) and doctrine (Gk: logos), not emotionalism.

RELEVANT OPINIONS

It is one thing for believers to be in the Word; it is another for the Word to be in them, to have free access to all parts of their lives. The Word must dwell richly to be totally effective. It must be highly prized and appreciated. Believers must recognize that they are spiritual paupers apart from it. (R. Gromacki) The Word is indeed Christ Himself. He is the uttered thought, the expressed love from God to our soul. He must dwell in us. (U. Thomas) To exert its power, doctrine must not be a transient visitor, but a resident in the soul, and that richly. We must welcome it impartially – its doctrines, precepts, and promises. We must receive it with joy as a treasure we prize. (E. Prout)

Such singing will not be a mere form of release, but will be a means of instruction. This singing must be rooted in the Word. True hymnody must be doctrinal in content. It must be rendered with grace. The truths implicit in such spiritual songs will require an inner reflection and assent. (H. Carson) The "word of Christ" is the Christian doctrine, the gospel in the widest sense of the term as proceeding from Christ ... Christ's Word inspires. It is to dwell in the heart richly – to be the welcome visitant and constant inhabitant of the mind; to be listened to and diligently learned; to be cherished and pondered in inward meditation as the soul's daily nutriment – the bread of God. (G. Findlay) The best Saturday night bath that you can take is to study the Word of God. Be familiar with the Word of Christ; study it and know what He's saying to you. That is where He is going to speak to you today, my friend – in His Word. (J. McGee)

The secret of consistent living is to feed upon, yes, and be saturated with the Word of God. Whether that Word be the spoken words of the Lord Jesus, as recorded in the Gospels, or that which He has caused to be written for our instruction, correction, and admonition in other portions of the Word, by His Spirit, it does not matter. It is all to dwell in us. Of old the Lord said to Joshua to mediate in the then written Word, the Law, day and night. You will observe a very clear similarity between the result of letting the Word of Christ dwell in us richly, as told here. (E. English) Study the Scriptures, get your ideas of Christ from them, keep your soul full of them, is the thought he would set before us in these words. He had previously indicated the same truth, but now he is more explicit. Acquaintance with and realization of the scriptural ideas of Christ will insure both the truthfulness and thoroughness of service to God. (W. Nicholson)

Col. 3:16 Let the doctrine (Subj. Nom.) from Christ (Abl. Source) keep on dwelling (ἐνοικέω, PAImp.3S, Iterative, Entreaty; living) inside you (Loc. Sph.) abundantly (doctrine must saturate your inner life) in the sphere of all (Dat. Measure) wisdom (Loc. Sph.; doctrine on the launching pad). You (ellipsis, Vocative supplied from participles; pastors), be teaching with authority (διδάσκω, PAPtc.NPM, Iterative, Imperative) and (connective conj.) be applying doctrine (νουθετέω, PAPtc.NPM, Iterative, Imperative) to yourself (ellipsis; it should be understood that the teacher isn't exempt from application himself) and other believers (Acc. Dir. Obj.) by means of psalms (Instr. Means; primarily David's experiential theology based on his daily life), hymns (Instr. Means; supergrace love songs directed towards God), odes (Instr. Means; doctrinal prose & poems), and singing (ᾄδω, PAPtc.NPM, Static, Circumstantial) by means of grace (Instr. Means; congregational, not choir) in the mentality of your (Poss. Gen.) soul (Loc. Sph.; songs which originate from thinking, not emotional subjectivity) to God (Dat. Ind. Obj.),

^{WHO} **Colossians 3:16** ὁ λόγος τοῦ Χριστοῦ ἐνοικεῖτω ἐν ὑμῖν πλουσίως ἐν πάσῃ σοφίᾳ διδάσκοντες καὶ νουθετοῦντες ἑαυτοὺς ψαλμοῖς ὕμνοις ᾠδαῖς πνευματικαῖς ἐν χάριτι ᾄδοντες ἐν ταῖς καρδίαις ὑμῶν τῷ θεῷ.

^{VUL} **Colossians 3:16** verbum Christi habitat in vobis abundanter in omni sapientia docentes et commonentes vosmet ipsos psalmis hymnis canticis spiritalibus in gratia cantantes in cordibus vestris Deo

LWB Col. 3:17 And whatever you habitually do in the sphere of words [conversation] or deeds [behavior], do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus [self-motivation from occupation with Christ], continually giving thanks to God the Father [expression of gratitude in spiritual autonomy] through Him [Jesus Christ].

^{KW} **Col. 3:17** And all, whatever you do in the sphere of word or deed, do all in the Name of the Lord Jesus, constantly giving thanks to God the Father through Him.

^{KJV} **Colossians 3:17** And whatsoever ye do in word or deed, *do* all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by him.

TRANSLATION HIGHLIGHTS

Paul adds a blanket statement in that he asks the Colossians to give continual thanks (Iterative Present tense) to the Father through Jesus Christ for everything they regularly speak (Latin: verbal) or do (Latin: operation). The Potential Subjunctive mood adds to the blanket statement, leaving the door open to any legitimate activity – from work to social life. If you are occupied with Christ, you will do virtually everything from an inner, spiritual self-motivation in His Name. When you reach the stage of spiritual autonomy, your expression of personal love for God the Father will be noticed by continual gratitude and thanksgiving to Him. The combination of relative and interrogative pronouns creates an idiom translated as “whatever,” which is a blanket category for everything we say or do throughout the day. Spiritual growth does not occur only when we are in Bible class; if we are in fellowship, spiritual growth never ceases.

RELEVANT OPINIONS

The paragraph with its injunctions is summed up in an exhortation that is universal in scope, covering every aspect of life. Every activity is to be done in obedience to the Lord Jesus and accompanied by the giving of thanks to God through Him. (P. O’Brien) Mature Christians do not need codes of rules, merely this basic principle applied to various relationships. (D. Carson) Not only must the saint be yielded to the Word, but he must have a good knowledge of it. The Holy Spirit uses the Word of God that we know as He talks to us and guides our lives. He can efficiently talk to us to the extent to which we know the Word. That is the language He uses. (K. Wuest)

Col. 3:17 And (continuative conj.) whatever (Acc. Dir. Obj.; idiom combining relative and interrogative pronouns) you habitually do (ποιέω, PASubj.2P, Iterative, Potential; protasis) in the sphere of words (Loc. Sph.; your conversation) or (connective conj.) deeds (loc. Sph.; your behavior), do it (ellipsis, verbal apodosis supplied from protasis) all (Acc. Spec.) in the name (Loc. Sph.) of the Lord Jesus (Poss. Gen.; self-motivation derived from occupation with Christ), continually giving thanks (εὐχαριστέω, PAPtc.NPM, Iterative, Circumstantial) to God (Dat. Ind. Obj.) the Father (Dat. Ref.; expression of personal love for God in spiritual autonomy) through Him (Instr. Agency; Jesus Christ).

^{WHO} **Colossians 3:17** καὶ πᾶν ὃ τι ἐὰν ποιῆτε ἐν λόγῳ ἢ ἐν ἔργῳ πάντα ἐν ὀνόματι κυρίου Ἰησοῦ εὐχαριστοῦντες τῷ θεῷ πατρὶ δι' αὐτοῦ

^{VUL} **Colossians 3:17** omne quodcumque facitis in verbo aut in opere omnia in nomine Domini Iesu gratias agentes Deo et Patri per ipsum

^{LWB} **Col. 3:18** **Wives, always submit to the authority of your husbands, as it should be protocol to do in the Lord.**

^{KW} **Col. 3:18** Wives, be constantly subjecting yourselves with implicit obedience to your husbands as you ought to do in the Lord.

^{KJV} **Colossians 3:18** Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as it is fit in the Lord.

TRANSLATION HIGHLIGHTS

Paul now commands wives (Imperative mood) to always submit to the authority of their husbands (Gnomic Present tense). Most wives today need to be convinced that this “setup” is advantageous to them; the majority do not believe it. In this scenario, the Gnomic (always) should be translated as Iterative (make it a practice to submit), since wives today apparently need to take small steps in this direction. Paul adds that it should be (regretably it often is not) part of their protocol towards their own husbands. If they believe their marriage was legitimate in the sight of the Lord, they should be willing and able (Voluntative Imperfect tense) to do so. Is this going to be easy to do? I doubt it.

The Imperfect tense points back to the Fall, in which Eve in a state of innocence and perfection failed in this matter. I suppose there is consolation in this for wives, since Eve also failed to obey this divine mandate when she listened to Satan and ate the fruit. But just because Eve failed does not mean the Lord has revoked the protocol in marriage where the husband has authority over his wife and the wife is to submit to his authority. The Passive Voice in the first verb means the wife is to passively submit to her husband’s authority, while the Active Voice in the second verb means the wife is to actively decide it is fitting and proper to do so. Also notice that Paul did not say “when you feel like it.”

RELEVANT OPINIONS

Luther called this next scheme of household duties a Haustefel, which means a list of rules for the household, but it is usually translated into English as house-table. Each party is named, a command is given, and a motivating statement for the behavior is supplied. The Haustefel schema was based on the Stoic concept of duty which in turn was an adaptation of unwritten laws. There was no essential difference among Stoic, Hellenistic Jewish and Christian forms of these tables. But rather than living in conformity with the order of nature the reader is to regulate his life under the lordship of Christ and in conformity with His will. The phrase “in the Lord” provides the motivation. (P. O’Brien)

Paul is not suggesting here that the woman is naturally or spiritually inferior to the man, or the wife to the husband. But he does mention that there is a divinely instituted hierarchy in the order of creation, and in this order the wife follows that of her husband. (P. O'Brien) The headship of the man is based on the order of creation (1 Tim. 2:13) and the judgment imposed on the woman for her deception in the temptation (Gen. 3:16, 1 Tim. 2:14). Until the establishment of the eternal state, this order must be observed on earth in the family and in the church. It is not a cultural anomaly that can be altered in different countries and ages. (R. Gromacki) While men have, as a rule, a stronger sense of the right, women better understand the fitting. (G. Findlay)

As there is nothing derogatory to Christ in His submission so there is nothing derogatory to the woman in her submission. It is no "robbery" of God that Christ is equal to God, and yet the Son is submissive to the Father; so it is no robbery to the husband that the wife is equal to him, and she is his equal though her sphere be different, and yet she is submissive to him. The question of woman's position and duties is not of modern origin, since it was agitated in the apostle's own day among the women of the church at Corinth, and so far as the modern relation is concerned, that question is here authoritatively settled. It is fit in the Lord. That means fit in Christ that the wife should submit to her husband. (W. Nicholson)

Emotional activity is designed to operate in subordination to the absolutes of Bible doctrine that reside in the mentality of the right lobe of the soul. Just as God created the man as the authority over the woman in Category Two Love, so He has designed the mentality of the right lobe of the soul to govern emotion. Doctrine in the right lobe is analogous to the husband, while emotion is analogous to the wife. The wife was created to respond to her husband, just as emotion is intended to respond to the content of the right lobe. If the right lobe contains doctrine, the emotional response is appreciation for truth and divine viewpoint. The result is capacity for life, love, happiness. (R.B. Thieme, Jr.)

Col. 3:18 Wives (Voc. Address), always submit to the authority of (ὑποτάσσω, PPImp.2P, Gnostic, Command; be in subjection to) your (Gen. Rel.) husbands (Dat. Adv.; maybe wives need to be convinced that this setup is actually an advantage to them), as (comparative adv.) it should be protocol to do (ἀνήκω, Imperf.AI3S, Voluntative; fitting; this is the next best thing, because the Imperf. refers back to pre-fall days) in the Lord (Loc. Sph.).

^{WHO} **Colossians 3:18** Αἱ γυναῖκες ὑποτάσσεσθε τοῖς ἀνδράσιν ὡς ἀνήκεν ἐν κυρίῳ

^{VUL} **Colossians 3:18** mulieres subditae estote viris sicut oportet in Domino

LWB Col. 3:19 **Husbands, always love your wives [impersonal love as a problem solving device] and stop being bitter against them.**

^{KW} **Col. 3:19** Husbands, be loving your wives with a divine love which impels you to deny yourselves for their benefit,

^{KJV} **Colossians 3:19** Husbands, love *your* wives, and be not bitter against them.

TRANSLATION HIGHLIGHTS

Paul now commands husbands (Imperative mood) to always love (Gnomic Present tense) their wives. This is the exercise of impersonal love as a problem solving device. Once the stars (phileo) and fireworks (eros) have subsided from a new marriage, something more substantial and long-term must take over in order for a marriage relationship to thrive. By stars, I'm referring to the often heard phrase "I've met my soul mate and my best friend for life." In a sense, this is referred to by the Greek word "phileo," a close-knit relationship based on compatible norms and standards. By fireworks, I'm referring to the aspect of sexual compatibility in marriage, referred to by the Greek word "eros."

These two types of "love" often wear down, as the pressures of daily life and family/work conflicts begin. Another type of love must be exercised regularly in order for a marriage relationship to continue growing. It doesn't seem long after the marriage ceremony when the first thing that happens is that the new wife is not "obeying" the husband as stated in her marriage vows. This angers most husbands, as they feel betrayed, and this feeling of betrayal often leads to bitterness. Paul also commands husbands to stop being bitter (Imperative mood) against their wives. The only real way to do this is by exercising "agapao" or impersonal love towards their wives. What is "agapao" love as compared to "phileo" love and "eros" love?

There is a lot of misinformation in the Christian marketplace on this subject, especially in "marriage seminars" led by my untrained and unqualified "counselors." A good working definition by R.B. Thieme, Jr. is: "Impersonal love emphasizes the subject; personal love emphasizes the object. Impersonal love depends on the honor and integrity of the one who loves; personal love depends on the attractiveness, capacity, and response of the one who is loved. Impersonal love is simply the consistent function of your own integrity toward other people. Impersonal love is unconditional, requires no personal acquaintance, is strong, depends on Bible doctrine, solves problems, and is mandated by God for all believers."

"Agapao" or impersonal love is sometimes called "virtue love." An alternate or complimentary definition is: "The believer must possess virtue, honor, and integrity (from having maximum Bible doctrine in his soul and being able to apply that doctrine to experience) before he has the capacity to love God or man. The only way to manufacture virtue love is inside God's protocol plan for the Christian way of life. You do not "practice love," but you start with learning doctrine, which builds virtue and the capacity for true love by means of the Holy Spirit." Paul was not content to leave marriage in the spheres of phileo and eros. A Christian marriage, in

particular, requires far more from a believer – agapao love. Both partners in the marriage are to consistently exhibit this kind of love, but Paul especially singles out husbands here.

RELEVANT OPINIONS

This is not simply a matter of affectionate feeling or sexual attraction; rather it involves his unceasing care and loving service for her entire well-being. (P. O'Brien)

Col. 3:19 Husbands (Vocative), always love (ἀγαπάω, PAImp.2P, Gnostic, Command) your (Gen. Rel.) wives (Acc. Dir. Obj.; impersonal love as a problem solving device) and (connective conj.) stop (neg. adv.) being bitter (πικραίνω, PPImp.2P, Descriptive, Command) against them (Acc. Dir. Obj.).

^{WHO} **Colossians 3:19** Οἱ ἄνδρες ἀγαπάτε τὰς γυναῖκας καὶ μὴ πικραίνεσθε πρὸς αὐτάς

^{VUL} **Colossians 3:19** viri diligite uxores et nolite amari esse ad illas

^{LWB} **Col. 3:20** Children, always obey your parents in everything, for this [authority orientation] is pleasing to the Lord.

^{KW} **Col. 3:20** Children, be obeying your parents in all things, for this is commendable in the Lord.

^{KJV} **Colossians 3:20** Children, obey *your* parents in all things: for this is well pleasing unto the Lord.

TRANSLATION HIGHLIGHTS

Paul now commands children (Imperative mood) to always obey their parents (Gnostic Present tense) in everything. Authority orientation is crucial in the spiritual life, and it starts in the home. You cannot grow in the Christian life without proper authority orientation, with its lifestyle of structure and discipline. Our God is a God of order and discipline, not chaos and rebellion. Everything in the created universe shows divine purpose and structure. From macrocosm to microcosm, this is a ruling principle. Just as we show deference to the authority of military officers, policemen, firemen, judges, pastors, teachers and executives, there is authority in the home.

Children observe their parents' orientation to authority. A wife who rebels against her husband negatively affects the upbringing of her children by setting a bad example. A husband who is antagonistic towards the military or police force negatively affects the upbringing of his children by setting a bad example. There is authority everywhere. As previously mandated, wives are subordinate to their husbands; the next level is children are subordinate to their parents. Children who obey their parents please the Lord.

RELEVANT OPINIONS

The injunction to children, like that to slaves, is put rather more strongly than the one to wives. While the latter was expressed in the middle voice, suggesting voluntary submission, the admonitions to children and slaves are in the active imperative denoting absolute obedience. The absoluteness of the command is strengthened by the phrase “in all things.” Also the verb “to obey” is employed rather than “be subordinate” which may only sometimes imply obedience. Since Paul has a Christian family in view, he does not envisage the situation where parental orders might be contrary to the law of Christ. Clearly at that point the law of Christ must take precedence and children would have to obey God rather than men. (P. O’Brien) It is a sign of the last days that children no longer heed this injunction. (A.E. Knoch)

If a father and mother give contradictory commands, it is impossible for the child to comply with the divine imperative. Each parent can give a separate charge, but he or she must do so with the full support of the other. (R. Gromacki) If the child be allowed, through passion or persistence, once successfully to rebel, a mischief is done not easily to be repaired. His own self-mastery, and the sense of law and of duty which are to attend him through the whole of life, largely rest on this basis of ingrained obedience. For this purpose, children should be in their earliest years as much as possible under the direct influence of their parents’ presence and authority. The parental office cannot be discharged by proxy. And there must be unity of parental administration, as well as harmony between precept and practice, if a true and reverent obedience is to be possible. (G. Findlay)

Hopefully, parents are more discerning, prudent, and disciplined than their minor children, but this head start quickly disappears as the child approaches adulthood. In the child’s early, formative years, the father and mother must exploit these advantages to establish an environment of authority in which their children can grow and mature. Certainly love is not excluded from the training process, but parents properly express their love and instill a true sense of adventure, self-esteem, and personal destiny in their children only when the family organization establishes, enforces, and maintains high standards of thought and action. Within the structure of stability and discipline, the parents treat the child as a person, not as an achiever who must constantly prove himself, earn his parents’ love and approbation, and uphold the family name. When excessive pressure to justify himself is removed, the child has maximum opportunity to live his own life and develop capacity for happiness and freedom as an adult. (R.B. Thieme, Jr.)

Col. 3:20 Children (Vocative), always obey (ὕπακούω, PAImp.2P, Gnostic, Command) your (Gen. Rel.) parents (Dat. Adv.) in everything (Prep. Acc.), for (explanatory conj.) this (Subj. Nom.) is (εἰμί, PAI3S, Descriptive) pleasing (Pred. Nom.) to the Lord (Dat. Ind. Obj.).

^{WHO} **Colossians 3:20** Τὰ τέκνα ὑπακούετε τοῖς γονεῦσιν κατὰ πάντα τοῦτο γὰρ εὐάρεστόν ἐστιν ἐν κυρίῳ

^{VUL} **Colossians 3:20** filii oboedite parentibus per omnia hoc enim placitum est in Domino

^{LWB} **Col. 3:21** Fathers, do not embitter [provoke indignation] your children, so that they may not become discouraged [from too much system testing].

^{KW} **Col. 3:21** Fathers, stop irritating your children, lest they become disheartened.

^{KJV} **Colossians 3:21** Fathers, provoke not your children *to anger*, lest they be discouraged.

TRANSLATION HIGHLIGHTS

Paul now commands fathers (Imperative of Prohibition) to stop exasperating (Dramatic Present tense) their children. Because fathers are the divinely designated head of the household, there is a tendency on the part of some to overdo it. A home with too little structure and discipline turns out lazy, whining and complaining (Latin: pusillo animo) children. A home with too much structure and discipline turns out hypersensitive, cowering (disheartened) children. Children of different age and different personalities need different levels of authority orientation. Fathers are warned not to overdo it to the point where their children become indignant and resentful. Where is the dividing line?

Paul draws the line at the point where they may become discouraged (Potential Subjunctive mood) in life. This is a long-term philosophy, not a short-term one. Nobody I know truly loved structure and discipline as children. As a matter of fact, the crowd I once ran with didn't like structure, discipline or authority at all. Does any child like spankings or being grounded? I don't think so. So this verse should not be used to justify the liberal, heinous childrearing philosophies offered by psychologists today; their philosophies are straight from the pit of hell. Paul is not dealing with that aberration here; he is dealing with those fathers who push too much system testing upon their children.

Unfair and inconsistent parenting is a scourge on society. Punishment that is too harsh for the correction of disobedient behavior, and standards that are inconsistent and hard to understand, eventually discourage children. There has to be coherent explanations for all household standards and fair treatment when those standards are crossed. Children want understandable standards, structure and discipline in the home. Without it, they become unstable and unable to solve problems on their own. They also need doctrinal training, so they have inner resources to draw from when they are given certain freedoms along the way. The household "ship" should be neither too tight nor too loose.

RELEVANT OPINIONS

In Hellenistic Judaism severe punishment could be meted out for disobedient children. (P. O'Brien) Incorrigible children were to be stoned to death in the OT economy. (LWB) Fathers are to obey the injunction so that their children do not become discouraged or think that it is useless trying to please them within the common life of the home. There should be firm guidance, not servitude. (P. O'Brien) Over-severity can so crush the spirit

that the child loses heart in the unequal struggle. (H. Carson) It implies a use of parental authority which, by continual exactions and complaints, teaches the child to look on the father as his enemy rather than his friend. (G. Findlay)

It is an interesting thing that here, as in Ephesians, the word for “fathers” is really “parents.” It is the same word used in Hebrews 11:23, which speaks of the parents of Moses. (E. English) By perpetual fault-finding children are disheartened, seeing the parents so hard to please. A broken-down spirit is fatal to youth. (R. Jamieson) The objectivity of enforced humility, implemented by his parents, gives the child a stable, external support on which to grow and learn. The child himself is unstable enough without having to contend with weakness, permissiveness, vacillation, and continual inconsistency from his parents. (R.B. Thieme, Jr.)

Col. 3:21 Fathers (Vocative), do not (neg. adv.) embitter (ἐρεθίζω, PAImp.2P, Dramatic, Prohibition; provoke indignation, exasperate, resentful) your (Poss. Gen.) children (Acc. Dir. Obj.), so that (Result clause) they may not (neg. adv.) become discouraged (ἀθυμέω, PASubj.3P, Descriptive, Potential; pusillanimous, cowering children, lacking inner resources, are adversely affected by too much system testing from unfair, inconsistent parents).

^{WHO} **Colossians 3:21** Οἱ πατέρες μὴ ἐρεθίζετε τὰ τέκνα ὑμῶν ἵνα μὴ ἀθυμώσιν

^{VUL} **Colossians 3:21** patres nolite ad indignationem provocare filios vestros ut non pusillo animo fiant

^{LWB} **Col. 3:22** Labor, always obey management according to the flesh [excludes spiritual matters] in everything [on the job], not with eye service as men-pleasers [not as brown-nosing, patronizing politicians], but with a virtuous mentality of the soul [from doctrinal thinking], always respecting the Lord.

^{KW} **Col. 3:22** Slaves, be constantly obedient in all things to your human masters, not with eyeservice as men-pleasers, but with an undivided heart, fearing the Lord.

^{KJV} **Colossians 3:22** Servants, obey in all things *your* masters according to the flesh; not with eyeservice, as menpleasers; but in singleness of heart, fearing God:

TRANSLATION HIGHLIGHTS

Paul now commands labor (Imperative mood) to always obey (Gnomic Present tense) management in everything related to their job. According to the time in which it was written, the Greek words “doulos” and “kurios” referred to slaves and masters, respectively. These words can be translated other ways, and since slavery has been abolished in this country, the closest parallel we have today is labor and management.

The idea of slaves is one of workers, while the idea of masters is one of executives or management. The master-slave agricultural economy has all but disappeared and has been replaced to a great extent by the management-labor economy of business. The idea behind the command is once again authority.

Whether it's an agricultural or other business concern, there must be authority and a chain of command in order for the enterprise to succeed. Even if the business executives that have been elected to run the company are buffoons, Christians are called to work for them under strict allegiance. There are restrictions to this command, of course, related to the sphere in which this relationship exists. This obedience to management in your company is restricted to your job. Outside of your job, management has no legitimate authority over your life. So the phrase "in everything" means during the time you are on the job. The phrase "according to the flesh" also restricts their authority to the work dimension of your life; management has no authority of any kind over your spiritual life.

As in Ephesians, Paul also tells us in what manner we should obey those in the chain of command above us at work. We are not to obey management with eye service as men-pleasers. This is a prohibition from Paul, telling us not to become brown-nosing, patronizing politicians. It refers to those who merely act to please those above them, abandoning entirely the command to work at your job as if you were doing it for the Lord (which you ultimately are anyway). If there are things that you learn during your job that require correction or another possible direction that might help the company, you have a responsibility to communicate those up the chain of command. If you keep them to yourself and instead flatter and kiss the rear-end of your boss, you are a pathetic employee and are detrimental to the organization in which you work.

On the other hand, if you rebel and conspire to undermine those above you at work, you are also a pathetic employee and you should be fired. So how are we to think on the job? Paul tells us to maintain a virtuous mentality of the soul while on the job. How do we do this? The only way to have a virtuous mentality of the soul at work is by having doctrinal thinking (as Christians) or establishment thinking (as non-Christians) while at the office. And as for Christians, he adds the command to always respect the Lord (Gnomic Present tense) while at work. The Christian way of life is 24-hours a day. It does not end when we arrive at work and begin again when we leave the office. For most of us, our mission field, our sphere of doctrinal application in life, is primarily at work.

On a personal note, the sphere of operations in which I work is full of patronizing politicians and brown-nosers. Butt-kissers are rampant in our corporation, so much so that after each reorganization, these same pathetic individuals always seem to survive while valuable employees are sent packing. This is one of the most discouraging and demotivating occupational hazards I find in my workplace. During these occasions, most of my fellow employees are engaged in continual gossiping, maligning and backstabbing. Verbal sins virtually paralyze daily operations for weeks at a time. Sometimes it is management's fault, sometimes it is labor's fault. As Christians, Paul reminds us that we

should remain virtuous in our thinking because we have ultimately been placed in our job by the Lord and He is our supreme Boss while we remain there.

RELEVANT OPINIONS

The expression “your masters according to the flesh” is not to be understood negatively or disparagingly, but rather shows that they are only lords within an earthly realm, within the sphere of human relations, in contrast to the Lord who is in heaven ... “Eyeservice” is that type of service which does not issue from a sincere heart, but is content in mere external appearance. (P. O’Brien) The lazy and lethargic are repulsive, the enthusiastic are noble. (U. Thomas) Our employer may be hard to please, or unjust, or harsh, not giving proper compensation, but if we become the slave of Christ our work will be sincerely done and we will look to Him for appreciation and due deserts. (A.E. Knoch)

This relationship is one which we may be sure will continue to exist, however varied the forms it may take, so long as the world stands. Even when our lower classes shall have become so far raised in intelligence and independence that co-operation in industrial labor will become the rule instead of the exception, still there must be some to command, others to obey. Indeed, the more extended and complicated the operations of trade and manufacture become, the more thoroughly labor needs to be organized and authority graduated, and the more entirely success depends on management and discipline. The man who does his work in God’s sight cannot scamp any part of it. He is serving, not a man like himself, but a heavenly Lord, whose searching eye is always on him, who understands and can judge every man’s work, and who has promised infinite rewards for faithfulness in the “few things” of our earthly probation. (G. Findlay)

The injunctions to servants and masters can be applied to employees and employers. The former, those who are employed, are to be faithful workers – not men-pleasers, not clock-watchers, but in obedience to the divine command, and as servants of the Lord, they are to do all, whether it be reasonable or unreasonable, interesting or drudgery, hard or easy – all things are to be done heartily as unto Him. Even if our employers do not appreciate us, of Christ we shall receive the reward, if we are faithful. The Christian employee should be the best employee, and this is not always true, sad to say! And Christian employers should be the best employers – thoughtful, kind, considerate, as our Master in Heaven is gracious to us. (E. English)

Col. 3:22 Labor (Vocative; servants), always obey (ὑπακούω, PAImp.2P, Gnostic, Command) management (Dat. Adv.; masters, lords) according to the flesh (Acc. Gen. Ref.; your spiritual life is not included here) in everything (Prep. Acc.; on the job), not (neg. adv.) with eye service (Instr. Means) as (comparative conj.) men-pleasers (Nom. Gen. Ref.; ass-kissers, patronizing politicians), but (contrast conj.) with a virtuous (Instr. Means) mentality of the soul (Obj. Gen.; doctrinal thinking in the right lobe), always

respecting (φοβέομαι, PMPTc.NPM, Gnostic, Circumstantial, Deponent) **the Lord** (Acc. Dir. Obj.).

^{WHO} **Colossians 3:22** Οἱ δοῦλοι ὑπακούετε κατὰ πάντα τοῖς κατὰ σάρκα κυρίοις μὴ ἐν ὀφθαλμοδουλίαις ὡς ἀνθρωπάρεσκοι ἀλλ' ἐν ἀπλότῃ καρδίᾳ φοβούμενοι τὸν κύριον

^{VUL} **Colossians 3:22** servi oboedite per omnia dominis carnalibus non ad oculum servientes quasi hominibus placentes sed in simplicitate cordis timentes Dominum

^{LWB} **Col. 3:23** **Whatever you do, keep functioning from your soul [in spiritual autonomy] as to the Lord and not to man,**

^{KW} **Col. 3:23** Whatever you are doing, from your soul do it diligently as to the Lord and not to men,

^{KJV} **Colossians 3:23** And whatsoever ye do, do *it* heartily, as to the Lord, and not unto men;

TRANSLATION HIGHLIGHTS

Paul commands each of us (Imperative mood) to keep functioning (Iterative Present tense) from our soul as to the Lord and not to man. It doesn't matter what sphere of activity we are engaged in, we are to do it (Static Present tense) to the Lord and not to man. The Subjunctive mood in this phrase is an indefinite local clause where the action is expected to take place in the future. There is a Gnostic Present element in this pericope, the idea that we should always have proper authority orientation and correct divine perspective no matter what activity we are engaged in. This is one of the results of attaining the stage of "spiritual autonomy" in the Christian life.

There is an Iterative Present element as well, in which Paul recognizes that sometimes we succeed and sometimes we fail, but we "keep on keeping on" (Latin: operating) under all circumstances. Functioning from our soul as though the Lord was our immediate boss is to our advantage (Dative), while functioning from our soul as though a man is our immediate boss and there is no God is to our disadvantage (Dative). Paul contrasts the two perspectives, divine and human, and reminds us that we are Christians and should maintain divine viewpoint on the job as well as in other spheres of daily activity. If we keep functioning as though our immediate supervisor is the Lord, our motivation at work will remain positive no matter what crisis or conspiracy is brewing around us.

RELEVANT OPINIONS

Whatever is assigned to you, you should do with your whole heart, with a wholehearted endeavor. The apostle purposes to lift the slave's tasks above the level of compulsive necessity to that of joyful service ... The whole of life, both thought and conduct, is to be submitted to the Lord Jesus Christ. No area of life stands outside His control; so there is no final distinction between the sacred and the secular. (P. O'Brien) The commonest

work must be done with the zeal and thoroughness that his service demands. (G. Findlay)
A member of my congregation once remarked that all too often young Christians interpret a difficulty in their work or schooling as an indication that what they are doing is not God's will for them when, actually, it is probably God's indication that they should work harder at it. (J. Boice)

Col. 3:23 Whatever (protasis, Acc. Gen. Ref.) you do (ποιέω, PASubj.2P, Static, Indefinite Local Clause Where the Action is Expected to Take Place in the Future), keep functioning (ἐργάζομαι, PMImp.2P, Iterative, Command, Deponent; apodosis) from (your own) soul (Abl. Source) as (comparative particle) to the Lord (Dat. Adv.; spiritual autonomy) and (connective conj.) not (neg. adv.) to man (Dat. Disadv.),

^{WHO} **Colossians 3:23** ὃ ἐὰν ποιῆτε ἐκ ψυχῆς ἐργάζεσθε ὡς τῷ κυρίῳ καὶ οὐκ ἀνθρώποις

^{VUL} **Colossians 3:23** quodcumque facitis ex animo operamini sicut Domino et non hominibus

^{LWB} **Col. 3:24** Since you [growing Christians] know that you will receive the reward of your inheritance [wages for work done, not a free gift] from the Lord [your ultimate reward comes from the Lord, not the human organization you work for]: Always be serving the Lord Christ,

^{KW} **Col. 3:24** Knowing that from the Lord you will receive back the just recompense which consists of the inheritance. The [heavenly] Master, Christ, you are serving.

^{KJV} **Colossians 3:24** Knowing that of the Lord ye shall receive the reward of the inheritance: for ye serve the Lord Christ.

TRANSLATION HIGHLIGHTS

Paul reminds us that as growing, maturing Christians we know (Intensive Perfect tense) that we will ultimately receive (Predictive Future tense) the reward of our inheritance from the Lord. This is not a gift; this is a reward for a job well done. Loser believers will not receive a reward; they end up forfeiting theirs. But as winner believers, no matter how many times you are passed over for promotion, no matter how many times you see good employees fired and useless employees moving up the organization, no matter how many times you feel like telling your boss to shove it ... as believers you should remember that your focus should extend beyond the human objectives of the company you work for. Your ultimate reward, if you perform your job as if you are working for Christ, comes from the Lord.

No matter what happens to you at work, always (Gnomic Present tense) serve the Lord Christ. This is a command (Imperative mood) from Paul. When that misfit of a boss asks you to do something that makes no sense at all, as long as it isn't illegal, do it. Even

though you don't understand why, the Lord placed that person over you in the sphere of work. Even if that boss doesn't like you, doesn't promote you, doesn't recognize your value to the company and doesn't give you a raise, submit to his authority on the job as if you were working for the Lord. You will get your reward for doing so at the Judgment Seat of Christ. If you follow through on this, you might be surprised to see this boss removed by the Supreme Court of Heaven and replaced by another.

RELEVANT OPINIONS

However you may be treated by your earthly masters, you still have a Master who will recompense you, and who can be trusted to give His reward at the end of the day. (P. O'Brien) The point is that we shall receive our heavenly inheritance as a full reward or recompense for all that we have relinquished down here. We shall be paid in full. (R. Earle) God was glorified by irrevocably giving escrow blessings to each believer before the foundation of the world. God is glorified to the maximum by the distribution of these escrow blessings to the spiritual winner in time and eternity. (R.B. Thieme, Jr.)

The inheritance is a reward which is received as "wages" for work done. Nothing could be plainer. The context is speaking of the return a man should receive because of his work, as in an employer-employee relationship. The inheritance is received as a result of work; it does not come as a gift. The Greek "antapodosis" means repayment or reward. The verb "antapodidomi" never means to receive as a gift; it is always used in the NT of a repayment due to an obligation ... All are appointed to this at spiritual birth, but only those who persevere in faith will obtain the intended goal ... Consistent with its usage throughout the Bible the word "inherit" is once again a reward for faithful service. (J. Dillow)

Col. 3:24 Since you (growing believers) know (οἶδα, Perf.APtc.NPM, Intensive, Temporal) that (inferential particle) you will receive (ἀπολαμβάνω, FMI2P, Predictive) the reward (Acc. Dir. Obj.; wages earned, not a gift) of your (Poss. Gen.) inheritance (Adv. Gen. Ref.; your focus extends beyond the objectives of any human organization) from the Lord (Abl. Source): Always be serving (δουλεύω, PAImp.2P, Gnostic, Command) the Lord Christ (Dat. Adv.),

^{WHO} **Colossians 3:24** εἰδότες ὅτι ἀπὸ κυρίου ἀπολήψεσθε τὴν ἀνταπόδοσιν τῆς κληρονομίας τῷ κυρίῳ Χριστῷ δουλεύετε·

^{VUL} **Colossians 3:24** scientes quod a Domino accipietis retributionem hereditatis Domino Christo servite

^{LWB} **Col. 3:25** For anyone who habitually does wrong [injury or injustice] will receive the consequences of his wrongdoing [self-induced misery & divine discipline], since there is no partiality [under the law of volitional responsibility].

^{KW} **Col. 3:25** For the one who is doing wrong will get back that which he did which is wrong. And there is no showing of partiality.

^{KJV} **Colossians 3:25** But he that doeth wrong shall receive for the wrong which he hath done: and there is no respect of persons.

TRANSLATION HIGHLIGHTS

Paul comforts those of us who would be classified as “labor” by reminding us that any boss or employer who continually pursues a policy that is unjust and injurious to others (Iterative Present tense) will ultimately receive the consequences (Predictive Future tense) of his wrongdoing. The boss who continues to treat an employee unfairly will be disciplined by God and will also stew in his own self-induced misery because of his bad decisions. The law of volitional responsibility in the sphere of experiential life ensures that justice will ultimately be served. Everyone is accountable for his own decisions at work. There are no exceptions because there is no partiality (Gnomic Present tense) with the Lord.

If you are the victim of unfair treatment at work, this might not seem that comforting. After all, you were just passed over for another promotion, or you didn’t get that year-end bonus you deserved, therefore your discouragement is central in your thoughts at the moment. Knowing that “the boss will get his in the end” doesn’t exactly ease the pain you are experiencing at the moment. But as believers we are nevertheless called upon to switch from such human viewpoint to divine viewpoint. God knows what He is doing and He is running the show, even if it appears otherwise. The important thing is to make sure that as an employee that you don’t do something wrong so that you receive the self-induced misery and divine discipline Paul mentions here.

RELEVANT OPINIONS

The words are not only a reminder that all injustice will be accountable at the divine court, but also an encouragement to the slave to regard himself as the servant of Christ and therefore not to be disheartened by unjust treatment. Righteous behavior is required of slaves and masters alike. (P. O’Brien) The impartial justice which avenges every wrong guarantees the reward of the faithful servant of Christ. So the OT saints rightly argued that the punishment of the evil-doer affords hope to the righteous man. (G. Findlay)

The wrongdoer will be paid back for his wrongdoing. (R. Earle) Who is this unrighteous person? The slave who defrauds his master of his service, or the master who defrauds his slave of his reward? Some interpreters confine it exclusively to the former; others to the latter. It seems best to suppose that both are included. There must be a reciprocity. (J. Lightfoot) If you have been hurt by another, God will vindicate you if you leave it to Him alone. (R. Kendall)

Col. 3:25 **For** (explanatory conj.) **anyone** (Subj. Nom.) **who habitually does wrong** (ἀδικέω, PAPtc.NSM, Iterative, Substantial; injury) **will receive the consequences of** (κομίζω, FMI3S, Predictive) **his wrongdoing** (ἀδικέω, AAI3S, Constativ; iniquity, self-induced misery and divine discipline), **since** (explanatory conj.) **there is** (εἰμί, PAI3S, Gnostic) **no** (neg. adv.) **partiality** (Pred. Nom.; under the law of volitional responsibility; respecter of persons).

^{WHO} **Colossians 3:25** ὁ γὰρ ἀδικῶν κομίζεται ὃ ἠδίκησεν καὶ οὐκ ἔστιν προσωποληψία

^{VUL} **Colossians 3:25** qui enim iniuriam facit recipiet id quod inique gessit et non est personarum acceptio

CHAPTER 4

^{LWB} **Col. 4:1** Management, always pay from your own resources just [fair] and equitable [no favoritism] wages to your employees, knowing that you also have management in heaven.

^{KW} **Col. 4:1** Masters, that which is just and equitable be rendering on your part to your slaves, knowing that you also have a Master in heaven.

^{KJV} **Colossians 4:1** Masters, give unto *your* servants that which is just and equal; knowing that ye also have a Master in heaven.

TRANSLATION HIGHLIGHTS

Paul now switches his commands (Imperative mood) from employees to employers. He commands employers (management) to pay a fair day's wage for a fair day's work. If you want your business to be a going concern, you must always (Gnostic Present tense) treat and pay your employees fair. "Just" means an equivalent amount of payment for a job done. Don't order your employees to work 14-hour days and pay them a trifle sum for their overtime efforts. If the job is demanding, physically or mentally, pay accordingly. If the job is simple, pay according to the level of the job. Supply and demand, concepts from free enterprise capitalism, are encapsulated in this command. Paul also advises them to pay equitable wages. This term dovetails with "just," but emphasizes appropriate salaries for the skill sets involved.

When college professors make the same wage as auto mechanics, the concept of "equitable wages" has been turned on its head. When you hire friends or family and you

pay them a higher wage than others who are performing the same job, you are playing favorites and are also violating the divine concept of equity. Paul reminds management that they also (Gnomic Present tense) have Management over them in heaven. Jesus Christ controls management just like He controls labor. He is able at any time to remove an employer from the scene and return him to a lower status if he doesn't operate on sound business principles. This is something all power-mad employers should know (Gnomic Perfect tense) without being reminded.

RELEVANT OPINIONS

We are in the section of this epistle which is dealing with holiness on the job, at the place of employment. Chapter 3 concluded with exhortations to servants or to employees. Chapter 4 will continue with exhortations to masters or employers. Paul has something to say not only to the servant but also to the masters, to the bosses. (J. McGee) The motivation for this just and fair treatment is basically the same as the slave's motive for obeying his master. Masters also, like their slaves, are answerable to a greater Master in heaven. This one Lord and Judge will decide whether these earthly masters have done what is truly just and fair. His will is the assessment that really counts. Therefore, any harsh measures of repression or victimization of those in a helpless position by masters are clearly ruled out. (P. O'Brien)

The Christian master is dealing with human beings, not machines. The laws of political economy are not to be his only guide. The nexus of cash payments can never be the sole link that associates any two men together. Woe be to him if he says, with Cain, "Am I my brother's keeper?" He will not take a hard advantage of his servant's necessity; or allow, if he can help it, his dealings with him to degenerate into a mere struggle between capital and labor for every inch of vantage. The cruel greed that grasps at immediate gain at whatever cost of toil and poverty to others, and that grinds the faces of the poor, may enrich the individual, but in the long run is fatal to the class or the trade which practices it. Political economy itself teaches that ill-paid labor is the most expensive and wasteful. The man who has want and fear gnawing at his heart cannot be a good workman, even if, in spite of extreme temptation, he be an honest one. Injustice and over-reaching on the part of the rich and governing classes, political and social institutions that favor "the fat and the strong" at the expense of the weak and poor, are sure of God's heavy judgment. (G. Findlay)

Masters have not their servants bound to them in such a manner as not to owe something to them in their turn, as analogical right to be in force among all ranks. There is a mutual right, regulated according to a consideration of the office and calling of each individual, which right ought to have a place among all ranks. (J. Calvin) This address to masters is significant because it recognizes that obligation does not rest only with servants. (D. Guthrie) Here the idea is reciprocity, the master's duty as corresponding to the slave's. (J. Lightfoot) A wholesome reminder to the effect that He keeps His eye on the conduct of masters of men here towards their employees. (A.T. Robertson)

Be faithful to your promises to them, and perform your agreements, not defrauding them of their dues, nor keeping back by fraud the hire of the laborers. Require no more of them than they are able to perform, and do not lay unreasonable burdens upon them, and beyond their strength. Provide for them what is fit, supply proper food and physic, and allow them such liberties as may fit them the better for cheerful service and make it the easier to them, and this though they may be employed in the meanest and lowest offices, and of another country and a different religion from yourselves. (M. Henry) Masters should render what is just. If a master refuses to do this, he does wrong and will be judged by God for this sin. (R. Gromacki)

Col. 4:1 Management (Vocative; masters), always pay from your own resources (παρέχω, PMImp.2P, Gnostic, Command; present, give) just (Compl. Acc.; honest, proper) and (connective conj.) equitable (Compl. Acc.; no favoritism, fairness) wages (ellipsis, payment: monetary concept understood) to your (Gen. Rel.) employees (Dat. Adv.; slaves), knowing (οἶδα, Perf.APtc.NPM, Gnostic, Circumstantial) that (inferential conj.) you (Subj. Nom.) also (adjunctive) have (ἔχω, PAI2P, Gnostic) management (Acc. Dir. Obj.; masters) in heaven (Loc. Place).

^{WHO} **Colossians 4:1** Οἱ κύριοι τὸ δίκαιον καὶ τὴν ἰσότητα τοῖς δούλοις παρέχετε εἰδότες ὅτι καὶ ὑμεῖς ἔχετε κύριον ἐν οὐρανῶ

^{VUL} **Colossians 4:1** domini quod iustum est et aequum servis praestate scientes quoniam et vos Dominum habetis in caelo

^{LWB} **Col. 4:2** **Be continually devoted to [vigilant in] prayer, constantly being alert by means of the same [prayer] in the sphere of thanksgiving [gratitude].**

^{KW} **Col. 4:2** Be giving constant attention to prayer, constantly vigilant in it with thanksgiving,

^{KJV} **Colossians 4:2** Continue in prayer, and watch in the same with thanksgiving;

TRANSLATION HIGHLIGHTS

Paul now commands (Imperative mood) the Colossians to be continually devoted to (Latin: vigilant) prayer (Iterative Present tense) – ready, willing and able to pray any time, any place - when the need arises. This is true not only with relation to the workplace, as Paul just covered in prior verses, but in all occasions. He recommends that all of us be awake and watchful at all times (Durative Present tense) during our prayers. The flesh, the world and the devil never take a holiday; they are always on the offensive and we must be constantly alert to confess our sins and petition the throne of grace for divine assistance. We should also function in the prayer life with thanksgiving (Latin: gratitude) to God, Who hears us and meets our needs every day.

RELEVANT OPINIONS

When a farmer prays for a corn crop, God expects him to say “Amen” with a hoe ... If you are praying about a certain matter, get busy with it. This is like breathing: inhale by prayer, exhale by thanksgiving. (J. McGee) How unseemly it is to come to God with urgent petitions for new blessings, when we have made no due acknowledgement of those already bestowed! We dare not act thus towards any earthly benefactor. And this thoughtless ingratitude deprives us of those strong arguments and cheering encouragements which are afforded by the remembrance of past mercies. (G. Findlay) God speaks to us in His Word; we speak to Him and hear His voice in the quiet place of prayer. (E. English) We ought not to be so importunate as to murmur, and feel offended if God does not immediately gratify our wishes, but must receive contentedly whatever He gives. (J. Calvin)

Prayer for ourselves, while keeping in view God’s providential blessings, mainly is concerned with the Holy Spirit’s help to enable us to apprehend Christ more and more fully, to realize our risen life in Him, and thus, in the power of clear convictions and conscious blessedness, to live a holy life. (W. Nicholson) “To be awake” is to be alive in the fullest sense, to have all the powers of perception and action in readiness. The activity of the soul in prayer is to be both energetic and incessant. (G. Findlay) It is a fatal mistake to confound long prayers with steadfast prayers, and to suppose that spending more time in saying prayers will strengthen our enfeebled spirit of prayer. It will have the opposite effect. Nothing hinders true prayer so much as continuing the form of devotion without the power. (W. Adeney)

Col. 4:2 Be continually devoted (προσκατερέω, PAImp.2P, Iterative, Command; vigilant; ready, willing and able) to prayer (Dat. Adv.), constantly being alert (γρηγορέω, PAPtc.NPM, Durative, Circumstantial; awake & watchful) by means of the same (Instr. Means; function of prayer) in the sphere of thanksgiving (Loc. Sph.).

^{WHO} **Colossians 4:2** Τῇ προσευχῇ προσκατερεῖτε γρηγοροῦντες ἐν αὐτῇ ἐν εὐχαριστίᾳ

^{VUL} **Colossians 4:2** orationi instate vigilantes in ea in gratiarum actione

^{LWB} **Col. 4:3** **At the same time [simultaneously] be continually praying also for us [teamwork], so that God might open a door for doctrine to us, for the purpose of communicating the mystery [Church Age doctrine] of Christ, because of which I also have been chained [to soldiers of the Praetorian Guard],**

^{KW} **Col. 4:3** Praying at the same time also for us, that God would open for us a door for the Word, that we may speak the mystery of the Christ, because of which [mystery] also I have been bound,

^{KJV} **Colossians 4:3** Withal praying also for us, that God would open unto us a door of utterance, to speak the mystery of Christ, for which I am also in bonds:

TRANSLATION HIGHLIGHTS

Paul then asks the Colossians (Imperative of Entreaty) to remember his missionary team (Latin: simultaneously) during their personal prayers. The ministry of Jesus Christ is a joint effort, the ultimate form of teamwork. It takes a variety of resources and prayer to keep an evangelistic and teaching ministry afloat. So Paul asks them to remember him and his associates in their prayers. Specifically, Paul wants them to pray that an open door will be provided for (Culminative Aorist tense) for the gospel. This open door must first provide an opportunity for the presentation of the gospel message (Potential Subjunctive mood), and then an opportunity to teach additional doctrine to new believers.

The purpose for this prayer request is so Paul and company might effectively communicate (Constative Aorist tense) the mystery of Christ, a technical phrase for preaching and teaching (Latin: sermon) Church Age doctrine. New believers must be taught that they are now members of the royal family of God and that there is a divine protocol plan for the Church Age that they should start living in order to grow in the grace and knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ. This is what Paul had dedicated his life to, and the reason why he had been chained (Dramatic Perfect tense) to members of the Praetorian Guard. He had been arrested for teaching doctrines that the legalistic Jews did not want to hear.

RELEVANT OPINIONS

The apostle did not regard imprisonment as a serious interruption of his missionary work. (P. O'Brien) Prayer does not open doors, but God who answers prayers does. When He opens a door for service, no one can shut it; when He closes a door, no one can open it. Paul's spiritual depth can be seen in the fact that he desired an opportunity for witness rather than release from his imprisonment. He was more concerned for others than for himself. (R. Gromacki) Paul is in the strange position of an ambassador in chains. (G. Findlay)

Prayer is the walkie-talkie on the battlefield of the world. It calls on God for courage. It calls in for troop deployment and target location. It calls in for protection and air cover. It calls in for firepower to blast open a way for the Word. It calls in for the healing of wounded soldiers. It calls in for supplies for the forces. And it calls in for needed reinforcements. This is the place of prayer – on the battlefield of the world. It is a wartime walkie-talkie for spiritual warfare, not a domestic intercom to increase the comforts of the saints. And one of the reasons it malfunctions in the hands of so many Christian soldiers is that they have gone AWOL. (J. Piper)

Observe that Paul does not ask prayer for his own personal need here. He does not say: “Pray for us, that the doors of the Roman prison may be opened;” but instead, “Pray for us, that God would open unto us a door of utterance to speak the mystery of Christ.” For he had learned in whatsoever state he found himself, therewith to be content. Paul cared little about prison bars and chains, except as they might prevent him from proclaiming the gospel. But how the wisdom of God over-rules and overcomes the might and wisdom of men! For in the prison cell the great apostle was able to minister to his own generation – and yet, how much more, through his prison epistles, has he ministered to succeeding generations and in them, countless numbers! (E. English)

Col. 4:3 At the same time (Adv. Time; simultaneously) be continually praying (προσεύχομαι, PMPtC.NPM, Iterative, Imperatival, Deponent) also (adjunctive) for us (Gen. Adv.; teamwork), so that (purpose clause) God (Subj. Nom.) might open (ἀνοίγω, AASubj.3S, Culminative, Potential) a door (Acc. Dir. Obj.) for doctrine (Obj. Gen.) to us (Dat. Adv.), for the purpose of communicating (λαλέω, AAInf., Constative, Purpose) the mystery (Acc. Dir. Obj.) of (which is) Christ (Gen. Appos.; church age doctrine - royal family), because (causal particle) of which (Acc. Gen. Ref.; mystery) I also (adjunctive) have been chained (δέω, Perf.PIIS, Dramatic; to members of the Praetorian guard),

^{WHO} **Colossians 4:3** προσευχόμενοι ἅμα καὶ περὶ ἡμῶν ἵνα ὁ θεὸς ἀνοίξῃ ἡμῖν θύραν τοῦ λόγου λαλήσαι τὸ μυστήριον τοῦ Χριστοῦ δι ὃ καὶ δέδεμαι

^{VUL} **Colossians 4:3** orantes simul et pro nobis ut Deus aperiat nobis ostium sermonis ad loquendum mysterium Christi propter quod etiam vincus sum

^{LWB} **Col. 4:4** **In order that I might make known by teaching the same [Church Age doctrine] as it is necessary for me [my responsibility] to communicate.**

^{KW} **Col. 4:4** In order that I may make it plain as it is necessary in the nature of the case for me to speak.

^{KJV} **Colossians 4:4** That I may make it manifest, as I ought to speak.

TRANSLATION HIGHLIGHTS

Paul needs their prayers so that his preaching and teaching about Christ might be (Potential Subjunctive mood) effective. Their prayers are for the benefit of his ministry in particular (Culminative Aorist tense) and that of his associates in general. He adds that it is absolutely necessary for him to preach the gospel (Dramatic Present tense). He must do this; he is bound to do it. And he needs their prayer support in order to fulfill this teaching responsibility (Constative Aorist tense).

RELEVANT OPINIONS

It is one thing for God to open a door; it is another for a believer to enter it. God had manifested the hidden mystery to Paul shortly after his conversion, but now he had the privilege and responsibility to make it clear to both sinners and believers. He had no options; he was under obligation to preach. (R. Gromacki) If the apostle had been free he would probably have proclaimed Christ's universal dignities by word of mouth. Being bound, he committed his message to writing, a method which has been immeasurably more effective. (A.E. Knoch) God expects us to work – after we pray. (E. English) It is necessary that we should continue in prayer, that the Lord may not leave us destitute of the spirit of confidence. (J. Calvin)

Col. 4:4 In order that (purpose conj.) I might make known by teaching (φανερῶω, AASubj.1S, Culminative, Potential; manifest) the same (Acc. Dir. Obj.; doctrine) as (comparative particle) it is necessary (δεῖ, PAI3S, Dramatic; when I get the opportunity) for me (Acc. Gen. Ref.) to communicate (λαλέω, AAInf., Constative, Dir. Obj. of Verb; Paul's responsibility to teach).

^{WHO} **Colossians 4:4** ἵνα φανερώσω αὐτὸ ὡς δεῖ με λαλῆσαι

^{VUL} **Colossians 4:4** ut manifestem illud ita ut oportet me loqui

^{LWB} **Col. 4:5** Be continually walking in the sphere of wisdom towards the ones on the outside [unbelievers], continually purchasing [redeeming, logging] the time,

^{KW} **Col. 4:5** In wisdom be ordering your behavior towards those on the outside, buying up for yourselves the strategic, opportune time.

^{KJV} **Colossians 4:5** Walk in wisdom toward them that are without, redeeming the time.

TRANSLATION HIGHLIGHTS

Paul commands (Imperative mood) the Colossian believers to keep on walking (Iterative Present tense) in the sphere of wisdom. Walking (Latin: ambulate), of course, means how you conduct yourself in daily life. The sphere of wisdom, in Christian terms, is a life lived in perpetual fellowship with the Lord by the intake, metabolization and application of Bible doctrine. It is synonymous with living in the sphere of divine power (divine dynasphere) as opposed to living in one of Satan's cosmic spheres of power (arrogance and hatred). It is easier, usually, to live in the sphere of divine power and wisdom when around fellow believers. It is more difficult to remain in the divine plan when socializing with unbelievers.

The siren song of an unbeliever's lifestyle is extremely powerful and many Christians are pulled into the sphere of arrogance or hatred with them. It takes a strong, growing

believer to work and socialize with unbelievers on a continual basis while remaining in the sphere of divine wisdom. Our goal in life is to log as much time in the sphere of wisdom as possible. Our temporal and eternal rewards are strategically tied to the amount of time we remain in fellowship, what Paul calls “purchasing the time” in this verse. Each minute or hour we walk in the sphere of divine power and wisdom as opposed to arrogance or hatred is time purchased to the honor of God. Paul commands us to continually redeem (Iterative Present tense) the time we spend on earth by walking in the sphere of wisdom.

At the Judgment Seat of Christ all believers will stand before the throne of grace to receive an accounting of how we lived life on earth and to obtain rewards and responsibilities commensurate with that spiritual life. The course of our life on earth will be summarized in two columns, so to speak, with the number of hours, minutes and seconds (TT = Total Time) in each category: TT lived in the sphere of divine power and TT lived in the sphere of satanic power and wasted human effort. We will receive gold, silver and precious stones for the time we redeemed in the sphere of divine power and wisdom; we will receive wood, hay and stubble for the time we lived in the sphere of satan’s cosmic system.

Paul’s command to walk in the sphere of wisdom is a command to follow the precise plan of protocol designed by God for the believer so that he may glorify the victorious Christ to the maximum while on earth. Great responsibility is placed upon each believer to think and apply doctrine in the privacy of his own priesthood. Purchasing or redeeming time is the continual daily decisions we make to think and apply this doctrine to the events of our life. Believers who continue to log hours in the sphere of divine wisdom have the opportunity to attain supergrace status on earth. These winner believers will reign in the millennium and throughout eternity based on these spiritual attainments on earth.

RELEVANT OPINIONS

When you see an opportunity, pray that the Lord will lead you. Let Him open the door – before you make the mistake of putting your foot in your mouth. (J. McGee) Redeeming may be used in the sense of “make the most of.” (H. Carson) Wisdom is gospel knowledge applied in gospel common sense. It includes the uprightness of the Christian’s daily life, and consistency with his profession. (W. Nicholson) In the time you spend with men, buy up the time and make the best use of it for themselves and for you. No squandering of anything so precious as their time and yours is to be permitted in your intercourse with men. (U. Thomas)

Yes, do them all the good you can, and by all the fittest means and in proper seasons recommend religion to them. Walk cautiously and with circumspection, to give them no advantage against you, nor expose yourselves to their malice and ill-will. (M. Henry) In the days of the early church believers were often slandered by these outsiders. For example, they were called atheists because they served no visible gods, unpatriotic

because they did not burn incense before the image of the emperor, and immoral because, of necessity, they would often meet behind locked doors. (W. Hendriksen)

Not even the cruelest tyranny can remove your freedom to think doctrine, nor can any extenuation relieve you of your responsibility for redeeming the time inside the divine dynasphere. (R.B. Thieme, Jr.) Religious enthusiasm is not a substitute for common sense. Buying up the opportunity rightly renders an expression borrowed from commercial language, where the verb means to “make a corner” in a commodity. Because all the powers of evil are abroad, mustered for the last fight, every effort must be made to turn every opportunity to the best account in the good cause. (C. Dodd) Be careful in all your converse with them, to get no hurt by them, or contract any of their customs; for evil communications corrupt good manners; and to do no hurt to them, or increase their prejudices against religion, and give them an occasion of dislike. (M. Henry)

The opportunity is the fit time for each step of a well-conducted walk, the precise juncture of circumstances which must be seized at once or it is gone. This wary promptitude is always needful in dealing with men of the world, both to avoid harm from them and in seeking to do them good. Nowhere is Christian wisdom more needed, and nowhere is it seen to greater advantage, than in dealing with worldly men. The Christian should not be inferior to any man in his own walk of life in the knowledge of his business and of the duties of his secular position. Indeed, his earnestness and diligence, his calmness of temper, and fairness of judgment, and soundness of conscience, and finer sympathies, will usually give him an advantage amongst his fellows. (G. Findlay)

Col. 4:5 Be continually walking (περιπατέω, PAImp.2P, Iterative, Command; conducting yourself) in the sphere of wisdom (Loc. Sph.; inside the D.D.) towards the ones (Acc. Dir. Obj.) on the outside (Adv. Place; unbelievers), continually purchasing (ἐξαγοράζω, PMPtC.NPM, Iterative, Circumstantial; redeeming) the time (Acc. Dir. Obj.; logging time inside the D.D.),

^{WHO} **Colossians 4:5** Ἐν σοφίᾳ περιπατεῖτε πρὸς τοὺς ἔξω τὸν καιρὸν ἐξαγοραζόμενοι

^{VUL} **Colossians 4:5** in sapientia ambulate ad eos qui foris sunt tempus redimentes

^{LWB} **Col. 4:6** Your word always in the sphere of grace [divine viewpoint], having been seasoned with salt [mature application of doctrine], so that you may know [having studied beforehand] how each one [questions from every quarter] should be answered by you.

^{KW} **Col. 4:6** Your word, let it always be with graciousness, with salt thoroughly seasoned, to the end that you know how it is necessary in the nature of the case to answer everyone.

^{KJV} **Colossians 4:6** Let your speech *be* always with grace, seasoned with salt, that ye may know how ye ought to answer every man.

TRANSLATION HIGHLIGHTS

Paul continues his command to log time in the sphere of wisdom by pointing out that our words should always be according to divine viewpoint. “In the sphere of grace” means we should be agreeable without laying aside our doctrinal principles. It also means we can disagree with unbelievers and reversionistic believers on a matter at hand without being argumentative. On many occasions, I have learned some doctrinal principles only to throw them in the face of an unbeliever or carnal believer who did not have the vocabulary or frame of reference to understand what I was trying to communicate. Sometimes my friend or acquaintance would just smile and we did not enter into an argument, but on other occasions they felt judged and the war of words began.

This type of thing occurred quite often in Colossae, especially in the case of adolescent believers who were keen on some particular doctrine, but were still clueless on how to apply it correctly. So Paul adds that their words should be “seasoned with salt.” This means we have to be discriminate on how we speak about some topics, so we do not completely alienate our listeners. The reference to salt means we say something in a manner that allows a person to easily taste what we have to say. In other words, when we give doctrinal advice, it should be palatable to the hearer as opposed to dropping it on them with a loud kaboom! This takes a lot of practice and a lot of prayer in order to do it right; believers will be given many opportunities to do this as they grow to maturity.

This preparation, both studying and speaking, is for the purpose of answering any questions (Latin: responding) that come our way effectively. First, we obviously must know what we are talking about (Intensive Perfect tense), and this comes by one method only: intense study of the subject matter. This requires preparation. The only way we can effectively answer (Tendential Present tense) each question that comes our way is by studying the topic beforehand. This is true of witnessing just as it is true of teaching the Word of God. Paul’s second use of the perfect tense means a cursory (basic) understanding of the subject matter is not enough. Paul’s first use of the perfect tense means we also have to practice on our delivery.

RELEVANT OPINIONS

The thought of the verse suggests the mixture of tact and zeal – be wise, but do not let opportunities get away. Sometimes there is zeal without wisdom. Yet we must recognize that too often the fault is the other way – sagacity without zeal. To speak with grace does not mean, necessarily, that our speech will always be agreeable. To make our words pleasing to all may be a good maxim in the world. But in the spiritual realm it becomes necessary to call sin sin, to speak that which is not always agreeable. However, what must be said can be said graciously, in Christ constrained love, under the Spirit’s

tutelage. (E. English) Salt denotes here, as commonly in Greek, an intellectual rather than a moral quality of speech. (G. Findlay)

We must have a proper understanding of the work assigned to us, a sense of our individual calling in life, a recognition of the particular will of God respecting ourselves as from time to time it may be indicated. We must acquaint ourselves with the conditions of our time and of our work, so that each may be fitted to the other, and that we may not waste our strength by misdirection or fight as one that beats the air, but may be able to serve the counsel of God for our own generation. We shall turn every moment and every opportunity and every endowment of our nature to the best account. (G. Findlay) Paul employs a culinary metaphor. Tastes differ, and so the seasoning must differ. A form of address that would be acceptable to one person might offend another. Speech is with grace when it is considerate of the person addressed. Courtesy is thoughtfulness. (C. Dodd)

The person is salted first; the salt is found in his words and deeds afterwards. (T. Croskery) Silence may at times be more golden than speech. (E. Prout) Divine grace, inwrought and imparted by the indwelling Spirit, results in a manifestation of the very graciousness of God in and through the heart of the believer. It is in no sense an imitation of God's graciousness; it is a reproduction by the indwelling Spirit of that graciousness in the life and service of the believer. This truth is one of the most extensive doctrines of the NT. (L. Chafer) Not only must your conversation be opportune as regards the time, it must also be appropriate as regards the person. (J. Lightfoot) Plutarch uses salt of speech, the wit which flavours speech. (A.T. Robertson)

Col. 4:6 Your (Poss. Gen.) word (Subj. Nom.) always (Adv. Time) in the sphere of grace (Loc. Sph.; divine viewpoint; disagree without being disagreeable, not argumentative), having been seasoned (ἀρτύω, Perf.PPtc.NSM, Consummative, Circumstantial) with salt (Instr. Means; pivot of mature believers; easy for a person to taste what you have to say, palatable), so that you may know (οἶδα, Perf.AInf., Intensive, Purpose; know what you are talking about: study first) how (Dat. Ind. Obj.) each one (Dat. Ind. Obj.) should (δεῖ, PAI3S, Tendentia) be answered (ἀποκρίνομαι, PMInf., Tendentia, Dir. Obj. of Verb, Deponent; variety in methods of witnessing, answering questions effectively) by you (Compl. Acc.).

^{WHO} **Colossians 4:6** ὁ λόγος ὑμῶν πάντοτε ἐν χάριτι ἅλατι ἡρτυμένος εἰδέναι πῶς δεῖ ὑμᾶς ἐν ἑκάστῳ ἀποκρίνεσθαι

^{VUL} **Colossians 4:6** sermo vester semper in gratia sale sit conditus ut sciatis quomodo oporteat vos unicuique respondere

LWB **Col. 4:7** All things pertaining to me [my current circumstances] Tychicus shall declare unto you, a beloved brother and faithful minister and fellow servant in the Lord [Paul's 3-fold introduction and commendation],

KW **Col. 4:7** All the things that relate to me, Tychicus will make known to you, the beloved brother and faithful servant and my fellow bondsman in the Lord,

KJV **Colossians 4:7** All my state shall Tychicus declare unto you, *who is* a beloved brother, and a faithful minister and fellowservant in the Lord:

TRANSLATION HIGHLIGHTS

Paul now begins the closing of this epistle by introducing the Colossian believers to Tychicus, the bearer of his letter. Tychicus has been a friend to him during his imprisonment and he knows all the details about Paul's current circumstances and how to administer his affairs. Any questions the Colossians might have about Paul will be answered (Predictive Future tense) by Tychicus when he arrives in Colossae. Paul emphasizes three important things about Tychicus, each of which serves as both an introduction and a commentary on his character. He is loved by Paul as a close friend and confidant, he is a faithful minister of the gospel, and he is a fellow servant in the Lord.

RELEVANT OPINIONS

At the time when this epistle was written Paul had a considerable band about him. Though a prisoner in Rome, he has gathered round him a troop of friends. The time has not come when he has to say, "Only Luke is with me." (R. Edgar) It is no small matter that, while he is held prisoner, and is in the most imminent danger on account of the gospel, he, nevertheless, does not cease to employ himself in advancing the gospel, and takes care of all the churches. (J. Calvin) The letter ends with personal matters. No detailed news is given, because Tychicus, the bearer of the letter, will be able to tell all that is necessary. (C. Dodd)

Col. 4:7 All (Acc. Spec.) things (Acc. Dir. Obj.; my current circumstances, affairs) pertaining to me (Acc. Gen. Ref.) Tychicus (Subj. Nom.) shall declare (γνωρίζω, FAI3S, Predictive; make known) unto you (Dat. Ind. Obj.), a beloved (Descr. Nom.) brother (Nom. Appos.; beloved is not to be confused with a superficial, sweetness and life personality) and (connective conj.) faithful (Descr. Nom.) minister (Nom. Appos.) and (connective conj.) fellow servant (Nom. Appos.) in the Lord (Loc. Sph.),

WHO **Colossians 4:7** Τὰ κατ' ἐμὲ πάντα γνωρίσει ὑμῖν Τυχικὸς ὁ ἀγαπητὸς ἀδελφὸς καὶ πιστὸς διάκονος καὶ σύνδουλος ἐν κυρίῳ

^{VUL} **Colossians 4:7** quae circa me sunt omnia vobis nota faciet Tychicus carissimus frater et fidelis minister et conservus in Domino

^{LWB} **Col. 4:8** Whom I have sent face-to-face to you for this same purpose, in order that you might come to know our situation [things concerning us], and that he might encourage the mentality of your soul [comfort your thinking],

^{KW} **Col. 4:8** Whom I am sending to you for this purpose, in order that you may come to know the things concerning us and in order that he may encourage your hearts;

^{KJV} **Colossians 4:8** Whom I have sent unto you for the same purpose, that he might know your estate, and comfort your hearts;

TRANSLATION HIGHLIGHTS

Paul had already sent Tychicus (Epistolary Aorist tense) to Colossae for the very purpose of informing them (Latin: cognizant) of his situation. The phrase “things concerning us” is an idiom for the situation at hand, which Paul wants the Colossian believers to learn (Ingressive Aorist tense) from his messenger. The word “our” points to the distinct possibility that Paul was not the only minister of the gospel who had been imprisoned. Other members of his team suffered the same privation. Paul also commissioned Tychicus to do his best to comfort and encourage the Colossians (Potential Subjunctive mood) about his imprisonment.

Paul uses the Greek word “kardia” to show that this encouragement (Latin: consolation) is directed to their thinking, not their emotions. “Kardia” is the right lobe of the soul, where doctrinal precepts and principles are stored, recalled during difficult and trying times, and applied for comfort and encouragement. True encouragement is not a pat on the head or a shoulder to cry on while you fall apart emotionally. True encouragement is reminding them that God has a divine plan for everything and He is in control of the seemingly hopeless situation. True encouragement is designed to comfort your thinking by the application of Bible doctrine, not an appeal to your emotions.

Paul did not want the Colossian believers to fall apart on him in emotional subjectivity. He knew that under the circumstances, many of the younger believers might become discouraged and depressed that the apostle had been thrown in prison. He knew that they might shift from applying objective doctrinal principles to wallowing in sorrow and self-pity. He sent Tychicus to give them objective facts, divine viewpoint, and encouragement to continue the good fight. True encouragement restores proper perspective, which should, of course, be divine viewpoint – in this case, that God is sovereign and omnipotent and everything is proceeding in accordance with His divine plan.

RELEVANT OPINIONS

Those who may not have great gifts for public usefulness may serve Christ most effectually oftentimes by serving his servants, by their private friendship and aid, cheering the hearts and strengthening the hands of those on whom fall the heavier responsibilities of the Church's care and strife, and who but for such timely help might haply sink beneath their burdens. (G. Findlay) Tychicus and Onesimus are being sent to tighten the bonds between the churches in Asia and the apostle at Rome. Others remain to aid and cheer him. (E. Prout)

Col. 4:8 Whom (Acc. Gen. Ref.) I have sent (πέμπω, AAI1S, Epistolary) face to face to you (Acc. Dir. Obj.) for this same (Acc. Spec.) purpose (Acc. Purpose), in order that (Purpose & Result) you might come to know (γινώσκω, AASubj.2P, Ingressive, Potential) our (Poss. Gen.) situation (Acc. Dir. Obj.; idiom: things concerning us), and (continuative) that (continuing the Purpose & Result clause) he might encourage (παρακαλέω, PASubj.3S, Static, Potential) the mentality of your (Poss. Gen.) soul (Acc. Dir. Obj.; comfort your thinking, not an appeal to your emotions),

^{WHO} **Colossians 4:8** ὃν ἔπεμψα πρὸς ὑμᾶς εἰς αὐτὸ τοῦτο ἵνα γινώτε τὰ περὶ ἡμῶν καὶ παρακαλέση τὰς καρδίας ὑμῶν

^{VUL} **Colossians 4:8** quem misi ad vos ad hoc ipsum ut cognoscat quae circa vos sunt et consoletur corda vestra

^{LWB} **Col. 4:9** Along with Onesimus, a faithful and beloved brother, who is from among you [from Colossae]; they will report to you the entire situation here.

^{KW} **Col. 4:9** [sending him] with Onesimus he faithful and beloved brother who is one of you. All things to you they will make known, the things here.

^{KJV} **Colossians 4:9** With Onesimus, a faithful and beloved brother, who is *one* of you. They shall make known unto you all things which *are done* here.

TRANSLATION HIGHLIGHTS

Paul did not send Tychicus alone to Colossae. He was accompanied by a fellow Colossian, Onesimus, whom Paul also calls a faithful and beloved brother. Between the two of them, the Colossians will receive a complete report (Predictive Future tense) on all the intricate details about Paul's imprisonment. Paul is sending Tychicus as the troubleshooter in his place, and Onesimus to back him up and give additional testimony concerning Paul. "All the things" is an idiom for the entire situation surrounding Paul's condition and circumstances.

RELEVANT OPINIONS

Tychicus and Onesimus will convey Paul's personal news to the Colossians who would naturally be keenly interested to learn how the apostle and Epaphras, the founder of their congregation, were getting on in prison. Much was done in the ancient world by word of mouth so that although a letter would contain the more urgent and doctrinal matters, the ordinary remarks would be passed on orally. (P. O'Brien)

It is a striking comment on how the apostle's thought has leapt across the barriers of social distinction, that he can describe the runaway slave as "one of you," a phrase which he will use presently of the highly honored Epaphras. (H. Carson) Onesimus was Philemon's runaway slave, who was rescued by Paul and converted to Christianity. Paul sent him back to his master, with the exquisite epistle to Philemon dispatched at the same time as this letter. He speaks of him in the most affectionate terms, to secure a welcome for him at Colossae. (W.R. Nicoll)

Col. 4:9 Along with Onesimus (Dat. Accompaniment), a faithful (Dat. Ref.; plodder) and (connective conj.) beloved (Dat. Ref.) brother (Dat. Ind. Obj.), who (Nom. Appos.) is (εἰμί, PAI3S, Descriptive) from among you (Abl. Source; from Colossae); they will report (γνωρίζω, FAI3P, Predictive; make known) to you (Dat. Ind. Obj.) the entire (Acc. Spec.) situation (Acc. Dir. Obj.; idiom: all the things) here (Adv. Place; Tychicus as troubleshooter and Onesimus giving his testimony).

^{WHO} **Colossians 4:9** σὺν Ὀνησίμῳ τῷ πιστῷ καὶ ἀγαπητῷ ἀδελφῷ ὅς ἐστιν ἐξ ὑμῶν· πάντα ὑμῖν γνωρίσουσιν τὰ ὧδε

^{VUL} **Colossians 4:9** cum Onesimo carissimo et fideli fratre qui est ex vobis omnia quae hic aguntur nota facient vobis

^{LWB} **Col. 4:10** Aristarchus, my fellow prisoner, salutes you, also Mark, the cousin of Barnabas (concerning whom you have already received orders: if he comes face-to-face to you, welcome him with open arms),

^{KW} **Col. 4:10** There greet you Aristarchus, my fellow prisoner, and Mark, the cousin of Barnabas, concerning whom you received orders; if he comes to you, receive him,

^{KJV} **Colossians 4:10** Aristarchus my fellowprisoner saluteth you, and Marcus, sister's son to Barnabas, (touching whom ye received commandments: if he come unto you, receive him;)

TRANSLATION HIGHLIGHTS

Paul sends greetings to the Colossians on behalf of Aristarchus, who was imprisoned with Paul (Latin: captive). This greeting is in the form of a military salute (Pictorial Present tense), which was quite appropriate because there was a spiritual battle going on and they were POWs on behalf of Christ. Mark also sends his greetings to the Colossians,

and we know that this is John Mark because of the added parenthetical. Mark is the cousin of Barnabas, whom Paul had already given orders about (Latin: mandates) in another letter (Constative Aorist tense). Paul wanted to correct any misgivings he might have had about Mark publicly, so he did so in a previous circular letter that was copied and distributed throughout the region.

Paul and Mark had some difficulty with each other in times past, but Paul now admits that he was wrong about Mark and asks them to welcome him (Culminative Aorist tense) with open arms if he is able to travel to Colossae (Potential Subjunctive mood) with Tychicus and Onesimus. While Paul and Aristarchus send their greetings from afar, Paul adds the preposition “face-to-face” to inform us that Mark may come in person. Since Paul is in prison, he can’t say for sure whether Mark will be able to travel; this is alluded to by the protasis of a 3rd class condition: maybe he will, maybe he won’t. Paul commands the cautious Colossians (Imperative mood) to welcome his emissaries with open arms, while asking the less anxious Colossians (Entreaty) to do likewise.

RELEVANT OPINIONS

“Marcus” is John Mark, the nephew of Barnabas – the son of his sister. He is the writer of the Gospel of Mark. You will remember that Mark left Paul and Barnabas on their first missionary journey, and because of this Paul didn’t want to take him along on the second missionary journey. Paul was wrong in his judgment of John Mark. The boy made good, and Paul acknowledges that here. (J. McGee) You who have failed the Lord in past days (like Mark) – your service need not be ended. It may be that He has yet a great task for you, that you were called to be His own for just such a time as this. (E. English)

One false step or unworthy act in a Christian life need not be absolutely fatal. Mark, like Peter, rashly generous and apt to over-estimate his strength at first, when chastened and corrected by experience, becomes the trusted and honored friend of the two chief apostles, as well as of his only less illustrious kinsman Barnabas. And to him was given to write the priceless second gospel. Some men will never trust again a friend or servant who once, under any circumstances, has failed them. But the apostle shows a more Christian and wiser disposition. (G. Findlay)

Let us observe that they were careful in furnishing attestations, that they might distinguish good men from false brethren – from pretenders, from impostors, and multitudes of vagrants. The same care is more than simply necessary at the present day, both because good teachers are coldly received, and because credulous and foolish men lay themselves too open to be deceived by impostors. (J. Calvin) Barnabas was more ready than Paul to condone Mark’s earlier defection. The Pauline Churches, which were aware of the estrangement, might not be very ready to give a hearty welcome to Mark. So Paul is urging: Give him a hearty welcome. (R. Earle)

Col. 4:10 Aristarchus (Subj. Nom.), my (Gen. Rel.) fellow prisoner (Nom. Appos.; captive), salutes (ἀσπάζομαι, PMI3S,

Pictorial, Deponent) you (Acc. Dir. Obj.), also (adjunctive particle) Mark (Subj. Nom.), the cousin (Nom. Appos.) of Barnabas (Gen. Rel.) [concerning whom (Adv. Gen. Ref.) you have already received (λαμβάνω, AAI2P, Constative) orders (Acc. Dir. Obj.; Paul's circular letter admitting he was wrong about John Mark): if (protasis, 3rd class condition, "maybe he will, maybe he won't") he comes (έρχομαι, AASubj.3S, Constative, Potential, Deponent) face to face to you (Acc. Dir. Obj.; in person), welcome (δέχομαι, AMImp.2P, Culminative, Command & Entreaty, Deponent, apodosis) him (Acc. Dir. Obj.) with open arms],

^{WHO} **Colossians 4:10** Ἀσπάζεται ὑμᾶς Ἀρίσταρχος ὁ συναιχμάλωτός μου καὶ Μάρκος ὁ ἀνεψιὸς Βαρναβᾶ περὶ οὗ ἐλάβετε ἐντολὰς ἐὰν ἔλθῃ πρὸς ὑμᾶς δέξασθε αὐτόν

^{VUL} **Colossians 4:10** salutat vos Aristarchus concaptivus meus et Marcus consobrinus Barnabae de quo accepistis mandata si venerit ad vos excipite illum

^{LWB} **Col. 4:11** Also Jesus who is called the just [Paul's lawyer]; these who are out from the circumcision [Jews] are my only co-workers with reference to the Kingdom of God, who are of such a character [supergrace believers] as to have become a comfort [refreshment from friends] to me.

^{KW} **Col. 4:11** And Joshua, the one called Justus, who are of the circumcision. These are my only fellow workers with respect to the kingdom of God, who are of such a character as to have become a solace to me.

^{KJV} **Colossians 4:11** And Jesus, which is called Justus, who are of the circumcision. These only are my fellowworkers unto the kingdom of God, which have been a comfort unto me.

TRANSLATION HIGHLIGHTS

Paul also sends greetings to the Colossians from his lawyer, Jesus, who is called "the just." Some believe this is a surname or cognomen, Justus; others think it is an adjective describing his character. This is not a commentary on his integrity as much as it is a title, such as what we might call today a defense attorney. Paul did not have a lot of support from the Jewish community when he was imprisoned. However, these three Jewish individuals were among his seven companions: Aristarchus a fellow prisoner, Mark whom he once had a serious disagreement with, and Jesus his attorney. He knew none of them before this crisis, but it brought them together in the end.

All three were Jews, as attested by the phrase "out from the circumcision." The phrase "Kingdom of God" is a reference to the power and protocol of the Church Age dispensation, as opposed to the earthly inheritance (Kingdom of Heaven) promised to Israel. All three became good friends (Culminative Aorist tense) of Paul, and all three had the character and integrity of supergrace believers. They put their lives on the line to

bring comfort and refreshment (Latin: solace) to Paul in any manner they could. The “gift of refreshment” is crucially important to pastors and teachers today, who often minister for the Lord without seeing the fruits of their labor and who are therefore susceptible to a feeling of hopelessness and loneliness.

RELEVANT OPINIONS

Paul obviously does not mean by “these only” that the Gentile believers, whose names will follow, were not also fellow-workers. He is rather singling out these Jewish Christians from the rest of the circumcision party from whom he always met opposition. (H. Carson) “Justus” was frequently adopted by individual Jews, or conferred on them, as a Gentile (Latin) surname; it implied devotion to the law. (G. Findlay) Such a reference is undoubtedly related to the eternal kingdom and emphasize the believer’s part in it. (C. Ryrie) The surname Justus is the Latin Justus for the Greek Dikaios and the Hebrew Zadok and very common as a surname among the Jews. (A.T. Robertson)

Col. 4:11 Also (adjunctive particle) Jesus (Subj. Nom.) who is called (λέγω, PPpTc.NSM, Descriptive, Substantival, Articular) the just (Pred. Nom.; Paul's lawyer); these (Nom. Appos.; three) who are (εἰμί, PAPtC.NPM, Descriptive, Substantival) out from the circumcision (Abl. Source; Jews), are my (ellipsis, verb and Poss. pronoun supplied) only (Nom. Spec.) co-workers (Nom. Appos.) with reference to the Kingdom (Acc. Gen. Ref.) of God (Descr. Gen.; everyone else abandoned Paul when he was arrested), who (Nom. Appos.) are of such a character (Qualitative Relative Pronoun; SG believers) as to have become (γίνομαι, AMI3P, Culminative, Deponent) a comfort (Nom. Appos.; solace) to me (Dat. Adv.; ministry of refreshment from category 2 friends).

^{WHO} **Colossians 4:11** καὶ Ἰησοῦς ὁ λεγόμενος Ἰουστὸς οἱ ὄντες ἐκ περιτομῆς οὗτοι μόνοι συνεργοὶ εἰς τὴν βασιλείαν τοῦ θεοῦ οἵτινες ἐγενήθησάν μοι παρηγορία

^{VUL} **Colossians 4:11** et Iesus qui dicitur Iustus qui sunt ex circumcissione hii soli sunt adiutores in regno Dei qui mihi fuerunt solacio

^{LWB} **Col. 4:12** Epaphrus, who is from among you [from Colossae], a slave of Christ Jesus, salutes you, who is always struggling on your behalf by means of his prayers [he is their absent pastor-teacher who is visiting Paul in prison], in order that you mature ones [supergrace believers] may hold your ground [stand firm while he is away] and be completely filled up [saturated] with all things [every category of doctrine] in the will of God;

^{KW} **Col. 4:12** There greets you Epaphras, the one who is one of your number, a bondslave of Christ Jesus, always contending on your behalf in his prayers, to the effect that you may stand

fast, spiritually mature ones, and those who have been brought to the place of full assurance in everything willed by God;

^{KJV} **Colossians 4:12** Epaphras, who is *one* of you, a servant of Christ, saluteth you, always labouring fervently for you in prayers, that ye may stand perfect and complete in all the will of God.

TRANSLATION HIGHLIGHTS

Paul also sends greetings to the Colossians from their now absent pastor-teacher, Epaphrus. Epaphrus is from Colossae, is a slave of Christ Jesus, and is visiting Paul in prison. He salutes his congregation back in Colossae (Pictorial Present tense), and Paul tells them that he continues to fight for them (Iterative Present tense) in his prayers. Epaphrus prays in particular for those supergrace believers that he has taught doctrine to. Like most teachers, he had his brightest and most dedicated students in the Word. He prays that his supergrace students might hold their ground in the spiritual battle before them (Potential Subjunctive mood) while he is away. He also prays that they might be completely filled up with every category of Bible doctrine (Consummative Perfect tense) in the will of God. Whoever he left in charge of teaching his congregation, he hopes every one benefits from his ministry and grows by leaps and bounds while he is away.

RELEVANT OPINIONS

The participle here reminds us of the teaching on “fullness” which runs through the heresy as well as Paul’s corrective. The readers have already been filled in Christ. Epaphrus now prays earnestly that they will attain to that eschatological perfection and fullness in Him on the final day, as they make progress here and now. (P. O’Brien) Is there an implied reference to Onesimus, who was a bondman after the flesh, but the Lord’s freedman, while Epaphras, the freeman, is Christ’s bondman? (G. Findlay)

On “perfect,” the word bears a primary reference to “knowledge,” and implies a fully instructed and enlightened condition, attended with corresponding spiritual advancement. From the tenor of the letter it appears that the Colossians needed a deeper Christian insight and more intelligent and well-grounded convictions respecting the truth “as in Jesus.” (G. Findlay) Here we have an example of a good pastor, whom distance of place cannot induce to forget the Church, so as to prevent him from taking the care of it with him beyond the sea. (J. Calvin)

Col. 4:12 Epaphrus (Subj. Nom.), who (Nom. Appos.) is (ellipsis, verb supplied) from among you (Abl. Source; from your city), a slave (Nom. Appos.) of Christ Jesus (Poss. Gen.; pointing to the exceptional labor of Epaphrus, their temporarily absent P-T, who regularly teaches them doctrine), salutes (ἀσπάζομαι, PMI3S, Pictorial, Deponent) you (Acc. Dir. Obj.), who is always (Adv. Time) struggling (ἀγωνίζομαι, PMPTc.NSM, Iterative, Substantival, Deponent;

wrestling, fighting) on your behalf (Obj. Gen.) by means of his (Poss. Gen.) prayers (Instr. Means), in order that (Purpose conj.) you mature ones (Subj. Nom.; supergrace believers) may hold your ground (ἵστημι, APSubj.2P, Constativē, Potential; stand firm while he is away) and (connective conj.) be completely filled up (πληροφορέω, Perf.PPtc.NPM, Consummative, Predicative; completed Edification Complex of the Soul) with all things (Dat. Measure; reference to Bible doctrine) in the will (Loc. Sph.) of God (Poss. Gen.);

^{WHO} **Colossians 4:12** ἀσπάζεται ὑμᾶς Ἐπαφράς ὁ ἐξ ὑμῶν δοῦλος Χριστοῦ Ἰησοῦ πάντοτε ἀγωνιζόμενος ὑπὲρ ὑμῶν ἐν ταῖς προσευχαῖς ἵνα σταθῆτε τέλειοι καὶ πεπληροφορημένοι ἐν παντὶ θελήματι τοῦ θεοῦ

^{VUL} **Colossians 4:12** salutatus vos Epaphras qui ex vobis est servus Christi Iesu semper sollicitus pro vobis in orationibus ut stetis perfecti et pleni in omni voluntate Dei

^{LWB} **Col. 4:13** For I solemnly testify with reference to this same one [Epaphrus], that he keeps having great distress on your behalf and for those in Laodicea [who are constantly in trouble] and those in Hierapolis [the local hot springs medical center].

^{KW} **Col. 4:13** For I bear witness to him that he has much toil on your behalf and on behalf of those in Laodicea, and those in Hierapolis.

^{KJV} **Colossians 4:13** For I bear him record, that he hath a great zeal for you, and them *that are* in Laodicea, and them in Hierapolis.

TRANSLATION HIGHLIGHTS

Paul solemnly testifies (Static Present tense) that Epaphrus continues to have great distress (Iterative Present tense) on behalf of the Colossians, the Laodiceans, and the Hierapolians. The Colossians are his current congregation, but it appears that he has invested teaching time with both the Laodiceans, who are always in some trouble or another, and the Hierapolians, who operated the local hot springs medical center. Epaphrus was truly concerned for his own church and the sister assemblies near his home town. Paul testifies to his struggles in prayer, so this was not just a polite remark.

RELEVANT OPINIONS

The anxiety of Epaphras for these churches was probably due to his connection with them, either as founder or teacher. (W.R. Nicoll) The third of the three cities in the Lycus Valley which had not seen Paul's face was Hierapolis. It was across the valley from Laodicea. Probably Epaphras had evangelized all three cities and all were in peril from the Gnostics. (A.T. Robertson)

Col. 4:13 For (explanatory conj.) I solemnly testify (μαρτυρέω, PAI1S, Static) with reference to this same one (Dat. Ref; Epaphrus), that (explanatory conj.) he keeps having (ἔχω, PAI3S, Iterative) great (Acc. Spec.) distress (Acc. Dir. Obj.; much pain) on your behalf (Obj. Gen.) and (connective conj.) for those (Obj. Gen.) in Laodicea (Loc. Place; who are in constant trouble) and (connective conj.) those (Obj. Gen.) in Hierapolis (Loc. Place; at the local hot springs medical center).

^{WHO} **Colossians 4:13** μαρτυρῶ γὰρ αὐτῷ ὅτι ἔχει πολλὸν πόνον ὑπὲρ ὑμῶν καὶ τῶν ἐν Λαοδικείᾳ καὶ τῶν ἐν Ἱεραπόλει

^{VUL} **Colossians 4:13** testimonium enim illi perhibeo quod habet multum laborem pro vobis et pro his qui sunt Laodiciae et qui Hierapoli

^{LWB} **Col. 4:14** Luke, the [my] beloved physician, and Demas [who later becomes a reversionist], also salute you.

^{KW} **Col. 4:14** There greet you Luke, the physician, the beloved one, and Demas.

^{KJV} **Colossians 4:14** Luke, the beloved physician, and Demas, greet you.

TRANSLATION HIGHLIGHTS

Paul's physician (Latin: medical), Luke, salutes the Colossians (Pictorial Present tense), as well as Demas, who later abandoned Paul and became a reversionist.

RELEVANT OPINIONS

His being called “the physician” suggests that he ministered to the apostle in this capacity, especially as his first appearance in Paul’s company synchronizes with an attack of Paul’s constitutional malady. (G. Findlay) The article here (repeated) may mean “my beloved physician.” (A.T. Robertson) Though Demas forsook Paul, yet he did not forsake Christ; or he forsook him but for a time, and recovered himself again, and Paul forgave him and owned him as a brother. (M. Henry)

Col. 4:14 Luke (Subj. Nom.), the beloved (Descr. Nom.) physician (Nom. Appos.), and (connective conj.) Demas (Subj. Nom.; who later becomes a reversionist), also (adjunctive particle) salute (ἀσπάζομαι, PMI3S, Pictorial, Deponent) you (Acc. Dir. Obj.).

^{WHO} **Colossians 4:14** ἀσπάζεταιται ὑμᾶς Λουκᾶς ὁ ἰατρός ὁ ἀγαπητὸς καὶ Δημᾶς

^{VUL} **Colossians 4:14** salutat vos Lucas medicus carissimus et Demas

LWB **Col. 4:15** Salute the brethren in Laodicea, especially Nymphas and the assembly of believers which meets at her house [one of Paul's six non-resident congregations].

KW **Col. 4:15** Greet the brethren in Laodicea, and Nymphas, and the [local] assembly [which meets] in her home.

KJV **Colossians 4:15** Salute the brethren which are in Laodicea, and Nymphas, and the church which is in his house.

TRANSLATION HIGHLIGHTS

Paul commands the Colossians (Imperative mood) to salute their fellow believers in Laodicea, especially Nymphas and the group of Christians which met in her house. The home church at Nymphas' house was one of Paul's six non-resident congregations. He taught them primarily by letter and word of mouth, since he was rarely in their geographical location. Paul singles out Nymphas for her extraordinary support of fellow believers by allowing them to use her own home for worship services.

RELEVANT OPINIONS

In other places house-churches appear to have been smaller circles of fellowship within the larger group ... It was not until about the middle of the third century that early Christianity owned property for purposes of worship. (P. O'Brien) In cities where there were many Christians, several houses were used as meeting places for smaller groups of the larger congregation. (R. Gromacki) Nymphas was a noblewoman who opened her home in Laodicea to one of John's six nonresident congregations. John recognized Nymphas's magnificent work in rearing her children in 2 John. (R.B. Thieme, Jr.)

The number of these churches in one city is a disproof of the now current theory that in apostolic times all Christians of a metropolis were in one church organization, presided over by a leading bishop, with subordinate bishops supplying the various subcongregations, assembling in different parts of the city. (B. Carroll) As a rule, there would be little gatherings from evening to evening, in private houses, of Christians in the immediate neighborhood. These at times would grow into large gatherings. (R. Finlayson)

Col. 4:15 Salute (ἀσπάζομαι, AMImp.2P, Constative, Command, Deponent) the brethren (Acc. Dir. Obj.) in Laodicea (Loc. Place), especially (explicative conj.) Nymphas (Compl. Acc.; the elect lady) and (connective conj.) the assembly of believers (Acc. Dir. Obj.; church) which meets (ellipsis, understood by the context) at her (Poss. Gen.) house (Prep. Acc.; one of Paul's six non-resident congregations).

^{WHO} **Colossians 4:15** Ἀσπάσασθε τοὺς ἐν Λαοδικείᾳ ἀδελφοὺς καὶ Νύμφαν καὶ τὴν κατ οἶκον αὐτῆς ἐκκλησίαν

^{VUL} **Colossians 4:15** salutate fratres qui sunt Laodiciae et Nympham et quae in domo eius est ecclesiam

^{LWB} **Col. 4:16** **And when this letter [Epistle to the Colossians] has been read and taught in your presence, do it thoroughly [verse-by-verse exegesis] and make sure that it may also be read and taught in the church of the Laodiceans and that you [Colossian believers] likewise read and teach the one from the Laodiceans [Epistle to the Ephesians].**

^{KW} **Col. 4:16** And when this letter is read in your presence, see to it that also it is read in the assembly of the Laodiceans, and the letter from Laodicea, see to it that you also read it.

^{KJV} **Colossians 4:16** And when this epistle is read among you, cause that it be read also in the church of the Laodiceans; and that ye likewise read the *epistle* from Laodicea.

TRANSLATION HIGHLIGHTS

Paul knows that his letters to the Colossians and Ephesians compliment each other, since both cities are having similar problems in spreading the gospel and teaching Bible doctrine. There are many overlaps in the content of the two letters, so Paul wants to make sure that the Colossians read the letter to the Ephesians and that the Laodiceans (some evidence that this was a reference to the Ephesians) read the letter to the Colossians. He wants the reading and teaching of these two letters to be reciprocal (Potential Subjunctive mood) between the believers in both cities. Scholars have believed that the Epistle to the Ephesians was a circular letter for some time; if that is true, this verse would point to the Epistle to the Colossians as also being a circular letter.

Some commentators take a diminished view of the verb “anaginosko” by translating it as “public reading.” But the attached preposition “ana” adds an element of thoroughness and repetition to the concept of “making something known.” When these letters are communicated publicly (Temporal Participle), Paul wants them to be read and taught word-for-word (Culminative Aorist tense), over-and-over again so that the doctrinal contents are thoroughly metabolized by the listeners. For those who were conversant in Greek, that was a much simpler task. But for those who were not conversant in the trade language of the day - such as many Jewish citizens and slaves from conquered countries all over the newly formed Roman Empire – each sentence was to be taught exegetically by someone trained in languages.

Paul adds a qualifying Greek verb “poieo” which means he expects this reading and teaching of the epistle(s) to be thorough. The Dramatic Aorist here combined with the Culminative Aorist in the verb “anaginosko” helps bring out the idea of completeness and thoroughness, not leaving any word or phrase with an element of uncertainty. The Greek word “poieo” also fulfills Paul’s command (Imperative mood) to make sure that

both assemblies share the contents of their letters with each other. Translators are somewhat divided over whether “poieo” is referring to the thoroughness of the teaching itself or the thoroughness of making sure the Laodiceans also have the advantage of studying it. Because it is placed (perhaps strategically) between these two connected thoughts, I believe Paul meant it to convey both concepts.

RELEVANT OPINIONS

It is likely that the Laodicean epistle here referred to is the same as that now called the epistle to the Ephesians. It has the character of a circular letter, copies of which were sent to various ecclesias. (A.E. Knoch)

Col. 4:16 And (continuative conj.) when (Temporal particle) this (Descr. Nom.) letter (Subj. Nom.; Epistle to the Colossians) has been read and taught (ἀναγινώσκω, APSubj.3S, Culminative, Temporal clause; exegetically) in your presence (Dat. Adv.), do it thoroughly (ποιέω, AAImp.2P, Dramatic, Command, perform, accomplish) and make sure that (Purpose & Result, continuing the thought behind the verb ποιέω) it may also be (adjunctive particle) read and taught (ἀναγινώσκω, APSubj.3S, Culminative, Potential; exegetically) in the church (Loc. Sph.) of the Laodiceans (Adv. Gen. Ref.) and (connective conj.) that (Purpose & Result) you likewise (adjunctive particle) read and teach (ἀναγινώσκω, AASubj.2P, Culminative, Potential; exegetically) the one (Acc. Dir. Obj.) from the Laodiceans (Abl. Source; actually the circular letter now called Ephesians).

^{WHO} **Colossians 4:16** καὶ ὅταν ἀναγνωσθῆ παρ ὑμῖν ἡ ἐπιστολή ποιήσατε ἵνα καὶ ἐν τῇ Λαοδικέων ἐκκλησίᾳ ἀναγνωσθῆ καὶ τὴν ἐκ Λαοδικείας ἵνα καὶ ὑμεῖς ἀναγνῶτε

^{VUL} **Colossians 4:16** et cum lecta fuerit apud vos epistula facite ut et in Laodicensium ecclesia legatur et eam quae Laodicensium est vos legatis

^{LWB} **Col. 4:17** **Also tell Archippus: Pay attention [see to it] to the ministry which you received from the Lord, in order that you might fulfill it [he was failing in his responsibility to discipline the wild members of his Laodicean congregation].**

^{KW} **Col. 4:17** And say to Archippus, Be ever keeping a watchful eye upon the ministry which you received in the Lord, that you discharge it fully.

^{KJV} **Colossians 4:17** And say to Archippus, Take heed to the ministry which thou hast received in the Lord, that thou fulfil it.

TRANSLATION HIGHLIGHTS

Paul's final message is one that he commands to be communicated (Imperative mood) to Archippus, the pastor of the Laodicean church. Paul has a stinging rebuke for Archippus: Pay attention (Imperative of Command) to the ministry which you have received from the Lord. The Durative Present tense points to the constant, never-ceasing concentration on every aspect of his responsibility as pastor. He received this teaching ministry from the Lord and he is to never (Gnomic Aorist tense) forget Who gave it to him. The Laodicean congregation was full of carnal Christians, many of whom should have been disciplined by Archippus because they were infecting other believers in the congregation. It is commonly believed that Archippus was a mild-mannered pastor who was neglecting his responsibility to discipline reversionistic members of his congregation. He was a poor disciplinarian and was being run over by more aggressive members of his church.

Timothy also received commands such as these from Paul. Both men were apparently lacking in intestinal fortitude (guts) to meet recalcitrant believers head-on. Paul even told Timothy to have a glass of wine if that would help him overcome his timidity so he could "kick some butt." Paul has heard reports of the unruly and sinful behavior of members of the Laodicean church, and he believes Archippus is not paying attention to the corrective responsibility of his God-given ministry. The pastoral and teaching gift was given to Archippus by God, so he should not shrug his shoulders at some of the more unpleasant duties required by that grace gift. Paul does not want him to do a halfway job; he wants him to fulfill it (Potential Subjunctive mood) completely as it should be. He wants him to start concentrating on this neglected part of his ministry immediately and never let up (Durative Present tense), continuing his execution of disciplinary action until such time as it is no longer needed (Futuristic Present tense).

This is something that is grossly overlooked by pastors today, as many of them are "thrown out of office and sent packing" at the whim of the "Board of Deacons" in many denominations. The high frequency of such actions points to (a) the failure of the departing pastors to exert their God-given authority and (b) the colossal arrogance of those who eject them from their assembly for no just cause. I have been in several churches that treated their pastors like dogs. They fed them one week at a time, and they held continued employment over their head if they did not "step and fetch" in the manner they had grown accustomed to. If the pastor is not fulfilling his responsibility to teach the Word of God verse-by-verse and discipline members of his congregation when appropriate, I pray that the Supreme Court of Heaven might correct the situation. When an arrogant, reversionistic, doctrinally clueless bunch of congregational members eject a good pastor, I pray that God spans each and every one of them within an inch of their life.

RELEVANT OPINIONS

The task of ministering in the church is to be discharged fully, without shirking any of the demands and without slacking. (H. Carson) This individual warning would not have been sent in an Epistle designed for the whole church if there had not been some failure of effort or duty on the part of Archippus. (T. Croskery)

Col. 4:17 **Also** (adjunctive particle) **tell** (λέγω, AAImp.2P, Constativē, Command) **Archippus** (Dat. Adv.): **Pay attention** (βλέπω, PAImp.2S, Durative, Command) **to the ministry** (Acc. Dir. Obj.) **which** (Acc. Gen. Ref.) **you received** (παραλαμβάνω, AA2S, Gnostic) **from the Lord** (Instr. Agency), **in order that** (Purpose conj.) **you might fulfill** (πληρώω, PASubj.2S, Durative & Futuristic, Potential) **it** (Acc. Dir. Obj.; he was failing in his responsibilities as pastor as was seen by the members of his wild Laodicean congregation).

^{WHO} **Colossians 4:17** καὶ εἶπατε Ἀρχίππῳ· Βλέπε τὴν διακονίαν ἣν παρέλαβες ἐν κυρίῳ ἵνα αὐτὴν πληροῖς

^{VUL} **Colossians 4:17** et dicite Archippo vide ministerium quod accepisti in Domino ut illud impleas

^{LWB} **Col. 4:18** **This salutation is by my hand: Paul. Keep remembering my chains. Grace be with you.**

^{KW} **Col. 4:18** The greeting by my hand, the hand of Paul. Be remembering my bonds. The grace be with you.

^{KJV} **Colossians 4:18** The salutation by the hand of me Paul. Remember my bonds. Grace *be* with you. Amen. <Written from Rome to Colossians by Tychicus and Onesimus.>

TRANSLATION HIGHLIGHTS

It is generally accepted that Tychicus and Onesimus both served as an amanuensis (secretary) for Paul while he was imprisoned in Rome. Paul dictated and they wrote down verbatim what he said; then he signed the letter with his name at the end. Paul closes this letter by placing his signature on it and asking the Colossians to continue remembering him (Iterative Present tense) while he is in prison. They aren't likely to forget him! He then sends his traditional "Grace be with you" salutation.

RELEVANT OPINIONS

The letter was evidently written by an amanuensis. The final salutation alone, with the accompanying sentence, was in the Apostle's own handwriting. (J. Lightfoot) Paul has dictated the letter, as was his practice, but now he adds a greeting in his own hand. Such autographs at the end of dictated letters are known to us in many papyri of the period. (C. Dodd)

Col. 4:18 **This** (Descr. Nom.) **salutation** (Subj. Nom.) **is** (ellipsis, verb supplied) **by my** (Poss. Dat.) **hand** (Instr. Means): **Paul** (Gen. Appos.). **Keep remembering** (μνημονεύω,

PAImp.2P, Iterative, Command) my (Gen. Poss.) chains (Obj. Gen.). Grace (Subj. Nom.) be (ellipsis, verb supplied) with you (Gen. Rel.).

^{WHO} **Colossians 4:18** Ὁ ἀσπασμὸς τῆ ἐμῆ χειρὶ Παύλου μνημονεύετέ μου τῶν δεσμῶν ἢ χάρις μεθ ὑμῶν

^{VUL} **Colossians 4:18** salutatio mea manu Pauli memores estote vinculorum meorum gratia vobiscum amen

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