

CO-RAISED WITH CHRIST  
A STUDY OF COLOSSIANS 3:1

by  
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The main intent of this paper was to determine the meaning of Paul's statement in Colossians 3:1 in which he proclaimed that the believer has already been raised with Christ. The use of the main verb, *συνήρθε*, and its ramifications are explored. It is discovered that this word only appears three times in the New Testament. Two of these appearances are in the epistle of Colossians itself and the other appears in Ephesians 2:6. The meaning and theological implications are the same in all three occurrences.

The environment created by the heretical sect present at Colosse provided the initiative and background for the Apostle Paul to teach the great Christological truths of the epistle of Colossians culminating in Colossians 3:1. The sect at Colosse taught outward, tangible observance of regulations while Christ's circumcision and our baptism into Him were taught, by Paul, as being actual. Parallel study of Romans 6:4ff. and the instrumental significance of *ἐν* in Colossians 2:12 confirm such a conclusion in relation to Spirit Baptism.

The resurrection referred to in this passage as well as Colossians 2:12 and Ephesians 2:6 is the resurrection of Christ. The significance of *σύν* and *τῷ Χριστῷ* make this clear grammatically. The aorist passive tense demonstrates that this resurrection has occurred in past time. Nowhere else in the Scriptures is the believer's resurrection taught as being in past time. Only Christ's resurrection is designated as such. The obvious conclusion is that the resurrection of Colossians 3:1 is that of Christ's own, historical resurrection from the dead.

The believer's association or identification with Christ by the baptism of the Holy Spirit is what the Apostle had in mind in Colossians 3:1. This participation with Christ (*σύν*) in all of the benefits of the resurrection is seen as the work of Christ alone and not because of any merit or effort on our part as believers.

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## INTRODUCTION

Controversial is not a word which would describe the verse which this paper considers. There are no heated debates as to its authenticity or as to textual variants within the text. In fact, it is not the most popular subject among the list of religious periodical articles available today.

It nonetheless stands at the pivotal point in the book of Colossians. At this point it provides valuable instruction as to the believer's relation with Christ and how that relationship affects his life in this world. It is here that this great theological truth is portrayed as being immensely practical.

This paper was an attempt to arrive at a clear statement as to the meaning of the phrase "you have been raised with Christ" and also to note how the Apostle Paul then related this truth to the recipients of the letter.

Even though its authenticity and textual status is not debated there are almost as many varying opinions as to the exact meaning of this text as there are commentaries. The intent of this paper is to extract the clear meaning of the Biblical text. This clear meaning can too easily be clouded with mystical and philosophical notions which do not express the intention of the author at all. Examination of the context of the passage and related Biblical data will prove to be the best argumentation

against such unwarranted speculations.

## CHAPTER I

### THE CONTEXT OF COLOSSIANS 3:1

In order to understand the full significance of Colossians 3:1, a thorough appraisal of the context is necessary. This section, divided into two parts, takes into consideration the introductory material to the book as well as analyzing the passage in the letter surrounding Colossians 3:1.

#### In General: An Introductory Examination of Colossians

#### The Origin of Colossians

##### The author

The Pauline authorship is without question. Paul identifies himself two times in this small epistle (1:1; 4:18).

The early Church represented by such men as Irenaeus, Origen, Cyprian, Tertullian and Chrysostom either alludes or refers to Paul as the author of Colossians. Origen, in quoting Colossians 3:3, says, "and what else does Paul mean when he says, "your life is hid with Christ in God."<sup>1</sup> The Muratorian Canon,

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<sup>1</sup>Origen De Principatibus, quoted in Roberts, Donaldson, ed., The Ante-Nicene Fathers, Volume IV (Buffalo: Christian Literature Publishing Co., 1885), p. 284.

dated near the end of the second century, notes Colossians as the fourth epistle of the Apostle Paul.<sup>2</sup>

### The date

Paul's use of language in a few places in Colossians indicates this epistle was written during an imprisonment (1:24; 4:3, 10, 18).

The mention of Tychicus (4:7) and Onesimus (4:9) in the letter strongly suggests the origin of Colossians to be in conjunction with that of Ephesians and Philemon. Tychicus is mentioned in Ephesians 6:21 and Onesimus in Philemon, verse 10.

The imprisonment which best fits the chronology of Paul's life and the language of the three epistles is the first Roman imprisonment (Acts 28:30-31). The date is around A.D. 60-61.

### The place

In the days of Herodotus (485-430 B.C.) Colosse was known as a "great city in Phrygia."<sup>3</sup> Colosse was situated on the river of Lycus near the ancient cities of Laodicea and Hierapolis. By the time Paul penned this letter to the Church

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<sup>2</sup>A Muratorian Fragment quoted in Henry Bettenson, ed., Documents Of The Christian Church (London: Oxford University Press, 1963), p. 41.

<sup>3</sup>Herodotus, Book VII, 30, Volume 3 (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1922), p. 345.

at Colosse the greatness which it once knew seems to have diminished. One writer even concluded that Colosse was the most unimportant city to which Paul ever wrote.<sup>4</sup>

### The Occasion of Colossians

The primary motivation for Paul's writing to the Church at Colosse was the threat of a particular heretical group at that location. It contained both pagan and Jewish traits and is described more in Colossians 2 than any other portion of the epistle. Paul uses the word *φιλοσοφίας* in 2:8. This is the only occurrence of *φιλοσοφίας* in the New Testament. Thayer's Lexicon describes this word as the

theology or theosophy of certain Jewish Christian ascetics, which busied itself with refined and speculative inquiries into the nature and classes of angels, into the ritual of the Mosaic law and regulations of Jewish tradition respecting practical life.<sup>5</sup>

A further description of the "philosophy" is supplied by the words *κενης ἀπάτης*. This is argued on the basis of the absence of the preposition and article in the second clause. The translation would then be as the New International Version renders it, "deceptive philosophy." The heresy is then described by two prepositional phrases (*κατὰ τὴν παραδοσιν τῶν ἀνθρώπων* and *κατὰ τὰ στοιχεῖα τοῦ κόσμου* ).

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<sup>4</sup>Gene Lacoste Munn, "Introduction To Colossians," Southwestern Journal Of Theology, Volume 16, Fall '73; p. 10.

<sup>5</sup>Thayer's Greek-English Lexicon (Delaware: The National Foundation For Christian Education), p. 655.

*Παράδοσιν* has reference to "tradition" or "what is delivered, the substance of teaching."<sup>6</sup> Of the 13 times this word appears in the New Testament, it is used 10 times in a bad sense and 3 times in a good sense. Christ used the same phrase as Paul uses in Colossians 2:8 in Mark 7:8. In the passage in Mark Christ is also ascribing evil connotations to the word. Christ is comparing the "tradition of men" with its opposite, "the commandment of God." In Colossians 2:8 Paul also emphasizes that these traditions are not of God but rather "of men." Arndt and Gingrich remind us that Antiochus described the Jewish religion as a *φλυαρος φιλοσοφία* in Maccabees 5:11.<sup>7</sup>

*τὰ στοιχεῖα τοῦ κόσμου* is defined as the "basic materials" of which everything in the cosmos, including man, is composed."<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>6</sup>Ibid., p. 481.

<sup>7</sup>W.F. Arndt and F.W. Gingrich, A Greek-English Lexicon Of The New Testament (Chicago: University Of Chicago Press, 1957) p. 869

<sup>8</sup>Kittel, Theological Dictionary Of The New Testament, Volume VII (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1971) p. 684.

In his commentary on Galatians E.D. Burton gives 4 possible definitions for στοιχεῖα . These 4 possible explanations are:

1. The physical elements of the universe.
2. The heavenly bodies (physical).
3. Angels or spirits in general.
4. Elements of religious knowledge possessed by both Jew and Gentile man.<sup>9</sup>

The teaching emphases of Colossians 2:8 make the elements of religious knowledge more probable. This word is used in a favorable way in Hebrews 5:12.

It is not difficult to see in this heresy a combination of pagan and Jewish beliefs and practices. Below are listed some of the basic traits of the heresy at Colosse.

1. It laid stress on tradition as opposed to revelation.
2. It stressed physical circumcision.
3. It was ritual oriented.
4. The observance of special days.
5. Religious regulations in regard to foods.
6. The worship of angels.
7. Asceticism.
8. Intellectual pride.

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<sup>9</sup>E.D. Burton, Galatians in The International Critical Commentary (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1948) p. 513.



One author observed that this religious sect had both Jewish and gnostic elements.<sup>10</sup> Lenski also concludes that the large number of Jewish inhabitants "seem to have compromised to a considerable extent with Lyco-Phrygian paganism."<sup>11</sup>

The particular aspect of the Jewish element within this heresy seems to be that of strict legalism. Paul issues a command in Colossians 2:16 based upon a previous acknowledgement that Christ has cancelled the *Χειρογραφον τοις δόγμασιν*.

*δόγμασιν* has reference to the Mosaic law economy. There was an obvious misappropriation by the false teachers at Colosse.

The commandment of Colossians 2:18 along with the list which follows indicates a legalistic emphasis present within the sect at Colosse. The word *κρινέτω* is used to express an unfavorable criticism or condemnation.<sup>12</sup>

Phrases which denote this legalistic element are found in Colossians 2:8 and 2:16. In 2:8 Paul warns of the "tradition of men" and in 2:16 he calls attention to the dietary regulations as well as the observance of special days. Among these special days the sabbath is specifically noted.

Two subjects appear in Colossians 2:11-12 which are among the three initiation rites required for proselytes entering into

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<sup>10</sup>Gene Munn, "Introduction To Colossians," Southwestern Journal Of Theology, Volume 16, Fall '73, p. 20

<sup>11</sup>Lenski, The Interpretation Of Saint Paul's Epistle To The Colossians, To The Thessalonians, To Timothy, To Titus, And To Philippians (Columbus: The Wartburg Press, 1946) pp. 7-8.

<sup>12</sup>Arndt-Gingrich, Greek-English Lexicon, p. 453.

Judaism. These two subjects are circumcision and baptism. The third initiation rite is sacrifice.<sup>13</sup>

R. Hiyya Abba stated in the Talmud that "a man can never become a proselyte unless he has been circumcised and has also performed the prescribed ritual ablution."<sup>14</sup>

It is generally agreed that the false religious sect at Colosse insisted upon circumcision. Paul called this particular circumcision a circumcision which was "performed in the flesh by human hands" (2:11).

In view of the fact that baptism is used in 2:12 to describe how this circumcision takes place for the Christian, it does seem that Paul may be making comparison between true Spirit baptism and baptism as a initiation rite into this false Colossian sect.

As well as being in the requirement for proselytes entering Judaism, baptism had a place among the pagan cults as well. It is noted as being in existence among the Hellenistic "mystery cults."<sup>15</sup>

Our understanding of Colossians 2:11-12 has much bearing on our interpretation of the primary text of Colossians 3:1. The significance along with a more thorough analysis of these verses will be considered later.

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<sup>13</sup> \_\_\_\_\_, The Jewish Encyclopedia, Volume 2, (New York: Funk & Wagnalis Co., 1902) p. 499.

<sup>14</sup> R. Hiyya Abba, Talmud, Yeb. 46b, p. 304.

<sup>15</sup> Robin Scroggs, Kent Groff, "Baptism In Mark: Dying And Rising With Christ," Journal Of Biblical Literature, Volume 92, Dec. '73, pp. 531-542.

### The Outline of Colossians

This brief consideration of the outline of the book of Colossians helps the student see the relationship the 3:1 passage has with reference to the rest of the epistle.

The dominant theme of the whole epistle is the superiority of Christ. Christology is the primary theological topic. The main body of Colossians seems to be best divided into three primary sections. These sections are as follows:

- I. True Teaching About Christ (1:9-29).
- II. False Teaching At Colosse (2:1-3:4).
- III. The Practice Of The Believer (3:4-4:6).

The immediate context of Colossians 3:1 may be divided as follows:

- II. False Teaching At Colosse (2:1-3:4).
  - A. False teaching and Paul's concern (2:1-5).
  - B. False teaching and the believer's response (2:6-8).
  - C. False teaching and the believer's position (2:9-15).
  - D. False teaching and the believer's priorities (2:16-3:4).
- III. The Practice Of The Believer (3:5-4:6).
  - A. The basis for the believer's practice (3:5-11).
  - B. The description of the believer's practice (3:12-4:6).

1. A changed life and inter-personal relationships  
(3:12-17).
2. A changed life and domestic relationships  
(3:18-4:1).
3. A changed life in relation to the unsaved  
(4:2-6).

In Particular: An Examination  
of Colossians 2:9-3:4

The Believer's Position (2:9-15)

Believers are reminded in Colossians 2:10 of the sufficiency which they possess in Christ. The phrase ἐν αὐτῷ describes the position which every believer enjoys. Dana and Mantey call this the "local dative."<sup>16</sup> The preposition ἐν with the dative of the person of Christ appears almost exclusively in Paul's writings.<sup>17</sup> Prior to this verse in Colossians, Paul uses the phrase in 1:2, 4 and 28.

According to the Apostle Paul, the believer has no lack of anything because of his union with Christ. In connecting πληρωμα (2:9) with πεπληρωμένοι (2:10), Paul makes this emphatically clear.<sup>18</sup>

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<sup>16</sup>Dana & Mantey, A Manual Of The Greek New Testament (New York: The Macmillan Co., 1927) p. 87.

<sup>17</sup>Kittel, Theological Dictionary Of The New Testament, p. 541.

<sup>18</sup>J.B. Lightfoot, Saint Paul's Epistles To The Colossians And To Philemon (London: Macmillan And Co., 1886) p. 182.

Paul then further describes the position of the believer by comparison of the circumcision "by hands" (cf. Ephesians 2:11) with the "circumcision of Christ." Lenski comments that this circumcision is a "removal of the whole body of the sinful flesh. A body dominated by sinful flesh."<sup>19</sup>

The ritual circumcision which the false teachers tried to impose upon the professing Christians at Colosse is contrasted because this ritual circumcision was ineffective against the real problem. The real problem is deliverance from the domination of sin. This domination is described as the "body of the flesh" in Colossians 2:11.

It is obvious, from Paul's other usages of *σώματος*, that he is not stating that the physical body is sinful in itself (i.e. I Corinthians 6:13, 18). To imply this would be to accomodate a notion held by gnostics concerning the sinfulness of material substance. The beginnings of such a belief may have been present at Colosse at this time. What, then, does the Apostle mean to imply by this phrase in 2:11? A.T. Robertson simply comments that this is a reference not to the physical body but, rather to the "unregenerate personality."<sup>20</sup>

The believer no longer has to be under the rule of tendencies which dominant and characterize the unregenerate.

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<sup>19</sup>Lenski, The Interpretation Of Saint Paul's Epistle To The Colossians, p. 104.

<sup>20</sup>A.T. Robertson, Paul And The Intellectuals (New York: Doubleday, Doran And Co., 1928) p. 142.

In the light of this truth Paul could, in another epistle, command a Christian not to allow sin to "reign" in his life (Romans 6:12).

The believer is complete "in Christ" because of who Christ is. Paul describes Him in Colossians 2:10 as ἡ κεφαλὴ πάσης ἀρχῆς καὶ ἐξουσίας. Arndt and Gingrich inform us that here Paul is referring to "angelic and demonic powers, since they were thought of as having a political organization."<sup>21</sup> Paul has already before, in this epistle, revealed that Christ created (1:16) the "powers," "rulers" and "authorities" and that He is the κεφαλὴ (1:18) of the "body," which is a reference to the universal Church (cf. Ephesians 4:15-16).

The believer is placed into this position by the baptism of the Holy Spirit. This baptism is described in 2:12.

The term συνταφέντες is only used 2 times in the New Testament and the other reference is found in Romans 6:4. This word along with συνηέρθετε indicates the believer's union with Christ. The passive voice in both of these forms notifies us as to God's involvement in bringing about this relationship with Christ. This actual union cannot come about through ritual baptism at all. This βαπτισμῷ is then a reference to the baptism of the Holy Spirit which is accomplished at the time of the conversion of a believer (cf. Romans 6:4; Ephesians 4:5).

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<sup>21</sup>Arndt and Gingrich, A Greek-English Lexicon Of The New Testament, p. 112.

Lewis Chafer comments with regard to Ephesians 4:5:

The transformations which are here indicated, as they were also in Romans 6:1-10, could never be produced by any ritual baptism and to read ritual baptism into this passage is to ignore the limitless realities for which Christ died, was buried, and rose again.<sup>22</sup>

It is interesting to note that the ceremonial washings in the Old Testament (i.e. Leviticus 14:6-7, 8-9) were linked with removal of "ritual impurity."<sup>23</sup>

In commenting on the union expressed by the term, *συνήρθετε*, Cremer states:

The *συν* in *συνερίδω* expresses not merely the similarity of the deliverance, of the divine work of salvation, but it affirms that it is an effect not specifically and newly appearing, but connected with Christ's resurrection, taking place and included in it, and proceeding from it, cf. Rom. 6:6; 4:25. An effect brought about on God's part through the medium of baptism, Rom. 4:4; on man's part by the faith which avails itself of the facts of redemption; i.e. of Christ's resurrection; Col. 2:12; Col. 3:1.<sup>24</sup>

The word *συνήρθετε* appears only 3 times in the New Testament. Two times it appears in this epistle and its other occurrence is located in Ephesians 2:6. The passage in Ephesians 2:6 also speaks of the believer's union with Christ. It is stated that we are "made alive" with Christ (*συνεζωοποιήτεν*). This being made alive is a reference to our salvation (*χάριτι ἔστε σελωσμένοι*).

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<sup>22</sup>Lewis Chafer, Systematic Theology, Volume VI, (Dallas: Dallas Seminary Press, 1948) p. 146.

<sup>23</sup>New Catholic Encyclopedia, Volume 2 (Washington D.C: Catholic University Press, 1967) p. 54.

<sup>24</sup>Herman Cremer, Biblico-Theological Lexicon Of The New Testament Greek (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1895) p. 226.

### The Believer's Priorities 2:16-3:4

In this section there is a negative aspect to be considered as well as a positive one. Paul called attention to the negative aspect of the believer's priorities by the use of three negative imperative commands. The three imperatives are found in 2:8, 16, 18 and they are; **ΒΛΕΠΕΤΕ** ; **ΚΡΙΝΕΤΩ** ; and **ΚΑΤΑΒΡΑΒΕΥΕΤΩ**.

The first imperative (**ΒΛΕΠΕΤΕ**, 2:8) is a warning against being taken "captive." The Lexicon observes that this word is here used figuratively and denotes "carrying someone from the truth into the slavery of error."<sup>25</sup> Vincent also tells us that this is the only occurrence of **συλαγωγῶν** in the New Testament and it is a "very strong expression for the work of the false teachers."<sup>26</sup>

The second imperative negative command is found in Colossians 2:16, **ΚΡΙΝΕΤΩ** . **ἐν** is rendered "on the basis of" according to A.S. Peake.<sup>27</sup> Paul is insisting that the Christians at Colosse are not to be regulated with an imposition of rules and requirements to be followed which have no merit before God.

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<sup>25</sup>Arndt and Gingrich, A Greek-English Lexicon Of The New Testament, p. 784.

<sup>26</sup>Marvin Vincent, Word Studies In The New Testament, Volume III (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1906) p. 485.

<sup>27</sup>W. Robertson Nicoll, ed., The Expositor's Greek Testament, Volume III (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1974) p. 530.



With regard to the "food and drink" mentioned in 2:16, Peake suggests this refers to ascetic practices and not lawful and unlawful foods.<sup>28</sup>

The Apostle Paul compares Christ to the rigid regulations in that Christ is called the *σῶμα* and the regulations are referred to as the *σκιά* cast by the real *σῶμα*. A shadow is empty and ineffective while a real body, which cast it, has substance and is effective.

The word "feast" used in 2:16, *ἑορτῆς*, is used many times in the New Testament with regard to Jewish feasts. We are also told that the *νομηνία* celebrated on the first of the month was observed by both Jews and Gentiles.<sup>29</sup>

The third negative imperative command is identified in Colossians 2:18 (*καταβαβεύτω*). Here is another warning with respect to the heretical threat at Colosse. The etymology of this word suggests an umpire who decides against someone.<sup>30</sup> Evidently there were believers (*ὑμῶς*) at Colosse who were already being deprived of possible rewards (cf. I Corinthians 9:24-27) because of their entanglement with the practices of the false religious sect.

The high priority for the believer at Colosse was not giving heed to the practices of ritualistic, empty regulations, but rather their priority was to have the person of Christ as

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<sup>28</sup>Ibid., p. 530.

<sup>29</sup>Arndt & Gingrich, A Greek-English Lexicon Of The New Testament, p. 537.

<sup>30</sup>Ibid., p. 410.

The supreme authority of their lives.

Paul refers to Him in Colossians 2:19 as the κεφαλήν. Vincent observes that this word would be in "contrast with the angelic mediators" which were worshipped by some in this sect.<sup>31</sup>

The two positive admonitions in this section will be dealt with only briefly since they will be referred to again in this paper. The two positive imperatives are ζητεῖτε and φρονεῖτε (3:1-2). Both words are present, active and therefore imply continuous, durative action. Both words have as their object τὰ ἔνω .

#### The Believer's Practice 3:4-4:6

What follows the polemical section of this letter is an exhortation to the believer at Colosse to live according to his position. The resurrection of Jesus Christ is the basis for this "new life." Note the word οὖν in 3:5. This small particle shows result or inference from what has preceded it.

Concerning evil practices, the Apostle Paul instructs that the believer is to "put them aside" (3:8), but concerning practices which should characterize the Christian, Paul instructs that these should be "put on" (i.e. 3:12).

In this practical passage Paul gives instruction to the whole Christian family:

Wives (3:18)

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<sup>31</sup>Vincent, Word Studies In The New Testament, Volume III, p. 497.

Husbands (3:19).

Children (3:20).

Fathers (3:21).

Slaves (3:22).

Masters (4:1).

## CHAPTER II

### THE CONTENT OF COLOSSIANS 3:1

In this chapter an attempt is made to discern the meaning of Colossians 3:1 in the light of its context and in the light of the other New Testament data dealing with the same subject.

At this point it may be well to note some of the varying translations of this particular verse from a few major versions.

If then you have been raised up with Christ, keep seeking the things above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God.

-N.A.S.B.

Since, then, you have been raised with Christ, set your hearts on things above, where Christ is seated at the right hand of God.

-N.I.V.

Were you not raised to life with Christ? Then aspire to the realm above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God.

-N.E.B.

Since then you have been raised with Christ, aim at what is above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God.

-Moffatt

This chapter is divided into three major parts; the Assumption; the Association; and the Appeal.

The Assumption, "If"

The *οὖν* of Colossians 3:1 is an inferential conjunction. This conjunction is used "to draw a conclusion from a truth just stated."<sup>32</sup> Colossians 3:1 then is a pause for a look backwards in order to draw conclusions from the data already given.

Lightfoot believes *εἰ οὖν* of 3:1 is a resumption of 2:20 (*εἰ*).<sup>33</sup>

Since *εἰ* is here used with an indicative as in 2:20, it therefore can be taken argumentatively. Colossians 3:1 is identified as a first class conditional sentence. The indicative mode is used in the protasis (*συνηγέρθετε*).

According to Chamberlain, the protasis "assumes the condition to be true and so states it by using the indicative mode." He cites Matthew 12:27 as an example.<sup>34</sup>

The emphasis in the first class conditional sentence is that the protasis is assumed to be true. Certainly Christ was not saying that He actually cast out demons by Beelzebul, but, for the sake of argument, He assumed this to be true. Matthew 12:27 could not be translated properly as "since I by Beelzebul cast out demons." Paul is assuming, for the sake of argument in 3:1, that the ones he is addressing have been raised with Christ. It seems, however, that, in this case, the addressees were

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<sup>32</sup>William D. Chamberlain, *An Exegetical Grammar Of The Greek New Testament* (New York: The Macmillan Co., 1941) p. 152. Although it does not always draw a conclusion.

<sup>33</sup>Lightfoot, *St. Paul's Epistle To The Colossians And To Philemon*, p. 206.

<sup>34</sup>Op. Cit., Chamberlain, p. 195.

actually as Paul assumed them to be (i.e. 1:2). The rendering postulated by the New International Version is therefore understandable but, strictly speaking, "if" is a safer translation.

### The Association, "With Christ"

What does Paul mean by the phrase, συνηέρθετε τῷ Χριστῷ? There are many and varied suggestions as to what is referred to in this passage. One writer suggests that by baptism we are "symbolically" buried and raised with Christ.<sup>35</sup> Another states that this refers to the "moral and spiritual revolution which takes place in the heart and soul of every believer, of everyone born of God."<sup>36</sup>

The word συνηέρθετε means "to raise up together in conjunction with" and is used in Colossians 2:12; 3:1 and Ephesians 2:6.<sup>37</sup> In all three occurrences it is used of the believer's participation in the resurrection of Christ.

The phrase τῷ Χριστῷ carries with it the idea of association.<sup>38</sup>

<sup>35</sup>Briggs, Driver, Plummer, ed., International Critical Commentary Of The Holy Scriptures Of The Old And New Testaments (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1908) p. 278.

<sup>36</sup>Nicoll, Stoddart, Moffat, ed., The Expositor's Dictionary Of Texts, Volume 2 (New York: Stroughton & Doran Co.)

<sup>37</sup>A.T. Robertson, A Short Grammar Of The New Testament (New York: Hodder & Stoughton, 1908) p. 108.

<sup>38</sup>Chamberlain, Grammar, p. 36.

With the dative also is the idea of means or grounds. Christ is then the means or basis of our participation in this resurrection.

*συνηέρθετε* is a first aorist indicative passive and, as such, is expressing action in past time. The passive voice indicates the resurrection as being the work of God rather than through the efforts of the believer.

We are not left guessing as to the identity of this resurrection. This resurrection is specified as being the resurrection of Christ (*τῷ Χριστῷ*). This is the historical resurrection as recorded in the four Gospels (i.e. Matthew 28:6).

Christ's own, personal, resurrection is distinguished from a "symbolical" or "spiritual" resurrection. It is specified at a place in time by Christ Himself in John 2:19. John adds that this was a reference to His "body" in 2:21. Paul distinguishes Christ's resurrection from a figurative type of resurrection in I Corinthians 15:4 ff. In this passage he asserts the historical day of Christ's resurrection and the eyewitnesses to this great event.

The means of appropriating the benefits of Christ's resurrection to the believer is given in Colossians 2:12 (*πίστεως*).

How then is the believer associated and united with Christ? Everyone who places his faith (1:4; 2:12) in Christ

is joined to Him and is given His life (cf. 2:13). In John 5:24 the beloved Apostle reinforces this conclusion by stating that the believing one has (<sup>ἔχει</sup> present condition) eternal life. He goes on to indicate that the believer has passed from death to life. The perfect tense verb, *μεταβέβηκεν*, is used to express a completed action.<sup>39</sup>

The word translated "made alive" is *συνεζωοποίησεν*. Kittel informs us that, in the Septuagint, *ζωοποιεῖν* almost always has God as the subject.<sup>40</sup> The preposition *σύν* with the dative in Colossians 2:13 is used to show "accompaniment and association."<sup>41</sup> The person with whom the believer has association is Christ (*αὐτῷ*).

The life referred to in Colossians 2:13 is imparted on the basis of what Christ accomplished for us on the cross. Paul clearly demonstrates this relationship in Romans 6:3-4. Verse 4 reveals that the purpose of our participation with Christ into His death is to (*ἵνα*) "walk" in this "new life."

This life given to the believer is again related to the death and resurrection of Christ in Romans 6:10-11. *οὕτως* in Romans 6:11 demonstrates this relationship. The believer is

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<sup>39</sup>Dana & Mantey, A Manual Grammar Of The Greek New Testament, p. 200.

<sup>40</sup>Kittel, Theological Dictionary Of The New Testament, Volume VII, p. 874.

<sup>41</sup>Arndt-Gingrich, A Greek-English Lexicon Of The New Testament, p. 789.



told to "reckon" (λογίζεσθε) or "consider," in view of Christ's death and its benefits appropriated to the believer, himself as "dead to sin" but "alive to God" (ζῶντας δὲ τῷ Θεῷ). The present tense of ζῶντας notifies the reader that the believer currently possesses this life.

When we become Christians then Christ's resurrection becomes ours in that we are given "new life" because of it (cf. Romans 6:4). Chafer comments:

To be in Christ, which is the portion of all who are saved, is to partake of all that Christ has done, all that He is, and all that He will ever be. It is to have been buried in His burial, to have been raised in His resurrection.<sup>42</sup>

This is not a mystical or symbolical representation but rather there is a actual impartation of life from God and a judicial change of position. We should be reminded again that the baptism described in Colossians 2:12 is not a ritual, water type baptism but, on the contrary, it refers to the actual baptism of the Holy Spirit which places every believer, in this age, into the Body of Christ. I Corinthians 12:13 does not limit this baptism to only a elite few. This baptism is experienced by all (πάντες). The "all" is a reference to every believer in this age (I Corinthians 1:2). Only those who propagate baptismal regeneration would insist that water baptism does what I Corinthians 12:13 attributes to this baptism. The preposition ἐν can denote means or instrument. The New American Standard Bible seems to interpret I Corinthians 12:13 in this way.

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<sup>42</sup> Chafer, Systematic Theology, IV, p. 97.

The resurrection of Colossians 3:1 is to be distinguished from the future resurrection of believers' actual bodies which will be discussed later in this paper.

The related passages in Romans, Ephesians, and Colossians correlate this resurrection with the life which is to characterize the Christian. The word used to express this Christian conduct in Romans 6:4 and Ephesians 2:10 is the word ΠΕΡΙ ΠΑΤΗΣΩΜΕΝ translated "walk." This is a figurative expression which denotes conduct or the "walk of life."<sup>43</sup> A first century Greek philosopher used the word in this manner when he wrote "for the future put your confidence in these doctrines and walk about erect, free."<sup>44</sup>

The New Testament writers themselves used this expression frequently to denote the conduct both of the Christian and also, in a negative way, to denote the conduct of the unregenerate man. Most of these usages are to be found in the writings of John and Paul (i.e. John 8:12; 3 John 4; I Corinthians 7:17; Ephesians 5:2). The preposition ἐν as used in Colossians 3:7 expresses the "state in which one lives or ought to live."<sup>45</sup>

The Christian is now enabled to live this life because of regeneration.

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<sup>43</sup>op. cit., p. 655.

<sup>44</sup>Epictetus, Book I, 18, 20, translated by W.A. Oldfather, Capps, Page, Rouse, ed., (New York: G.P. Putnam's Sons, 1926) p. 127.

<sup>45</sup>op. cit., p. 655.

The Appeal, "Keep Seeking"

Paul is appealing to those who are assumed to have been raised with Christ or, in other words, to Christians. As it is used in this passage, Thayer defines the word *ἠντεῖτε* as "to seek after, seek for, aim at, strive after."<sup>46</sup> The imperative form intensifies it and makes it have greater force. The present tense indicates that this is to be continuous, habitual practice on the part of the believer. In fact, only a believer has the ability to fulfill this command because this ability is produced by the impartation of life from God. The assumption Paul makes in Colossians 3:1, "If then you have been raised up with Christ," is the basis upon which the command is issued. This continual seeking is then based on the accomplished work of Christ in our behalf and our participation or sharing, through faith, in that work.

The object of their seeking is *τὸ ὅλνω*. Moule suggests that Paul is using Greek eschatological metaphors in this passage. The "above" refers to the "new life" while "below" is speaking of the "old life."<sup>47</sup> The eschatological implications of this verse, however, have been answered in part and will be dealt with in more detail in the last chapter of this paper.

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<sup>46</sup>Thayer's Greek-English Lexicon, p. 272.

<sup>47</sup>C.F.D. Moule, "The New Life In Colossians 3:1-17" Review And Expositor, Volume 70, No. 4, Fall '73, p. 481.

Delling explains that  $\alpha\upsilon\omega$  in Colossians 3:1 is in antithesis with  $\epsilon\nu\ \kappa\omicron\tau\mu\omega$  in 2:20.<sup>48</sup> The word  $\alpha\upsilon\omega$  is used in the Septuagint (i.e. Exodus 20:4; Deuteronomy 4:39; 5:8) in describing the location of heaven which is the abode of God. Jesus identified Himself as being from above in John 8:23 and many other references. The new birth is also described as being "from above" according to John 3:3.

In commenting on Colossians 2:20, Robertson notes the difference between "earth" and "world" and states that this reference is not to the physical earth but "world" as compared in opposition to the "kingdom of God." He cites John 17:4 as an example, "not of the world."<sup>49</sup>

The  $\tau\alpha$  of Colossians 3:1 may refer to the practices coming from the "new self" which is a result of life from above.

$\epsilon\nu\ \delta\epsilon\ \xi\epsilon\iota\alpha\ \tau\omicron\upsilon\ \theta\epsilon\omicron\upsilon$  is a place of great honor and is also the location of the Messiah according to Psalm 110:1. Paul may be contrasting the exalted position of Christ to the angelic powers worshipped by the members of the religious sect at Colosse. The "right hand of God" was Christ's destination from the Mount of Olives. Christ will also return to the Mount of Olives from the "right hand of God" and put down all of His enemies (cf. Zechariah 14:4; Acts 2:34-35). The

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<sup>48</sup>Kittel, ed., Theological Dictionary Of The New Testament, Volume VII, p. 686.

<sup>49</sup>A.T. Robertson, Paul And The Intellectuals, p. 138.

fact that Christ is described as *καθήμενος* may also be a reminder that the work of Christ, as a basis for our "seeking things above," is completed (Hebrews 10:12).

### CHAPTER III

#### THE CONCLUSIONS DRAWN FROM COLOSSIANS 3:1

$\epsilon\acute{\iota}$  is a conditional particle. We are also informed that  $\epsilon\acute{\iota}$ , with an indicative, expresses a "condition thought of as real or to denote assumptions relating to what has already happened."<sup>50</sup>

Related to the subject matter under discussion in this section, we should be reminded that  $\alpha\upsilon\tau\acute{\omicron}\nu$  indicates material based upon the data which has gone before it.<sup>51</sup> Grammatically, the data referred back to in Colossians 3:1 is Colossians 2:20. Lightfoot says that the  $\epsilon\acute{\iota} \alpha\upsilon\tau\acute{\omicron}\nu$  of 3:1 is a resumption of the  $\epsilon\acute{\iota}$  in 2:20.<sup>52</sup> Ultimately, as Lightfoot states, the truth of Colossians 3:1 refers to their baptism, which is first mentioned in 2:12.<sup>53</sup>

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<sup>50</sup>Arndt-Gingrich, A Greek-English Lexicon Of The New Testament, p. 217.

<sup>51</sup>Ibid., p. 597.

<sup>52</sup>Lightfoot, Saint Paul's Epistles To The Colossians And To Philemon, p. 206.

<sup>53</sup>Ibid., p. 206.

The focus of our attention goes, at first, to Colossians 2:11-12. In Colossians 2:12 the word *συνήρθετε* makes its first appearance.

We conclude that the resurrection referred to in Colossians 3:1 is an event which has already occurred in the past. The root of *συνήρθετε* is *συνερίψω* and carries with it the idea of participation in the resurrection of Christ. In other words, believers are sharers in the benefits of the resurrection of Jesus Christ. The passive voice of the verb used in 3:1 reinforces the truth that this participation is the work of God.

The assumption that this resurrection has occurred in the past will be crucial as we consider the theological and practical implications of our key passage.

If, then, the resurrection alluded to in Colossians 3:1 has already happened, then to what resurrection is it referring to? How does this resurrection affect believers? These and other questions will be considered as the truth of this Biblical passage is related to the doctrine of Soteriology and to the doctrine of Eschatology.

#### As It Relates To Soteriology

Colossians 3:1 is strongly related to the doctrine of Soteriology. In Ephesians 2:6 *συνήρθετε* is used in another form. In Ephesians it is a aorist indicative active and is

translated "raised up with Him" (NASB). In this Ephesian passage the same idea is intended as it is found in our Colossians passage. The subject is salvation and the Apostle Paul makes it clear, in this passage, that being "saved" is equivalent to "being raised up with Him." Another reference to regeneration is expressed in the phrase, "made us alive together with Christ." Vincent quotes Ellicott in referring to this verse when he said "what God wrought in Christ He wrought, ipso facto, in all who are united with Him."<sup>54</sup>

A detailed analysis of what takes place and when is given in the preceding material of Colossians 3:1. This material is located in 2:11. The "circumcision of Christ," described in this verse, is referred to as the removal of "the body of the flesh." This phrase is used by Paul to describe the unregenerate personality. A comparison may be made between this "body of the flesh" and the new body over which Christ is head. This body is identified as the Church in Colossians 1:18. In Colossians 2:11 we have a metaphor depicting what transpires in conversion. This "circumcision" is accomplished by the "baptism" of 2:12.<sup>55</sup> The instrumental significance of τῷ ὕδατι in regard to τῷ ΒΑΠΤΙΣΜῳ may be observed here.<sup>56</sup>

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<sup>54</sup>Vincent, Word Studies In The New Testament, Volume III, p. 376.

<sup>55</sup>Lukyn Williams, ed., The Epistles Of Paul The Apostle To Colossians And To Philemon (Cambridge: University Press, 1928) p. 93.

<sup>56</sup>Friedrich, ed., Theological Dictionary Of The New Testament, Volume VII, p. 785.



The "circumcision of Christ" in 2:11 is accomplished by the "baptism" through ( *διὰ* ) the believer's faith ( *πίστιν ὑμῶν* ) in Christ. It should be noted that this is the means also by which they are saved in Ephesians 2:8. Those referred to in Colossians 2:12 had already placed their faith in Christ (cf. Colossians 2:6).

There are many scholars (liberal and conservative) who postulate that the "baptism" of Colossians 2:12 is a ritual baptism. Many of these scholars would not advocate baptismal regeneration. However, by advocating a ritual baptism in this passage it seems to this writer that the proponents of baptismal regeneration are aided considerably. One who takes the baptism of Colossians 2:12 as ritual baptism stated:

All who have had anything to do with instruction on non-Christians know that it is only when they dare to confess Christ publicly by baptism that any assurance can be felt as to the reality of their faith.<sup>57</sup>

Positively stated, what is the relation of Colossians 3:1 to soteriology? Paul's assumption in 3:1 is that these believers have already been raised with Christ. The believers at Colosse are said to have experienced this resurrection in the baptism of Colossians 2:12. What is the baptism of 2:12? Is it merely water baptism which typifies regeneration or is it actual baptism whereby the recipient actually experiences the results mentioned in the text? It is the contention of this writer that the baptism in Colossians 2:12 is Holy Spirit

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<sup>57</sup>Williams, The Epistles Of Paul The Apostle To Colossians And To Philemon, p. 792

baptism. How could ritual baptism ever accomplish what is described in the text? How can water baptism actually take away sin? The circumcision mentioned in 2:11 (cf. Romans 6:6), because of the aorist tense, is described by Vincent as transpiring "contemporaneous" with the burial of verse 12.<sup>58</sup> It is also stated by another that the believer is buried and raised simultaneously through baptism.<sup>59</sup>

Since the "circumcision of Christ" is set in opposition to a physical and ritualistic circumcision imposed by the religious sect at Colosse, it does not seem consistent that Paul would offer another ritualistic formula through which the circumcision "of Christ" is accomplished.

The heresy at Colosse may well have had some theological notions resembling Jewish teachings of a later period on the subject of proselyte baptism. According to Jewish teaching, The proselyte is changed tremendously after baptism. This new proselyte is described as having "the past done away altogether; the baptized proselyte is a new man entering a new sphere of life altogether in which he begins again from the very start, as a child one day old."<sup>60</sup>

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<sup>58</sup>Vincent, Word Studies In The New Testament, p. 489.

<sup>59</sup>Friedrich, ed., Theological Dictionary Of The New Testament, p. 792.

<sup>60</sup>The Jewish Encyclopedia, Volume 2, (New York: Funk & Wagnalis Co., 1902) p. 499.

In describing Jewish proselyte baptism, another source stated that "baptism made man a new creature."<sup>61</sup>

Certainly Paul did not teach that water baptism could accomplish any change such as described in 2:11. This would be inconsistent with statements made by Paul elsewhere (i.e. I Corinthians 1:14) and also inconsistent with the rest of New Testament revelation as to what ritual baptism can and cannot bring about for the believer. Whether one teaches ritual baptism in Colossians 2:12 or not, he ultimately must admit that it does not accomplish what is found in 2:12. He must ultimately admit this unless he is an advocate of baptismal regeneration. We should also admit here that neither could water baptism be referred to in Romans 6:4 (*διὰ τοῦ* genitive showing means or instrument).

Chafer concluded the following concerning all who may hold to ritual baptism in the Colossian passage: "to read ritual baptism into this passage is again to ignore the limitless realities for which Christ died, was buried, and rose again."<sup>62</sup>

When compared to water baptism the baptism of the Holy Spirit should be labelled "actual" baptism. The believer, in actual baptism, is placed into the Body of Christ (cf. I Corinthians 12:13) at the time of his conversion.

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<sup>61</sup>The Jewish Encyclopedia, Volume 2, (New York: Funk & Wagnalis Co., 1902) p. 499.

<sup>62</sup>Chafer, Systematic Theology, Volume VI, p. 146.

At no time in the believer's past has he been raised in a resurrection. The resurrection referred to in Colossians 3:1 is Christ's own historical resurrection from the dead (cf. 2:12 "raised Him from the dead"). Arndt and Gingrich declares that this word is used "figuratively, of participating in the resurrection of Jesus; the believer, in mystic union with Him."<sup>63</sup> This is the resurrection which occurred three days after Christ's death (cf. Matthew 28:6).

σύν , as it is used in Colossians 3:1, can mean to "do or experience something with someone."<sup>64</sup> Cremer described σύν as expressing "an effect . . . connected with Christ's resurrection, taking place and included in it, and also proceeding from it."<sup>65</sup>

When a person receives Christ, what Christ accomplished by His death and resurrection is appropriated to him. The believer is united with Christ by the new birth and shares all of the benefits often specified in the Scriptures. Paul's use of the "body" as an analogy of the Church in both Colossians and Ephesians portray this union vividly. Christ is the "head" of

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<sup>63</sup>Arndt-Gingrich, A Greek-English Lexicon, p. 793.

<sup>64</sup>Ibid., p. 789.

<sup>65</sup>Cremer, Biblio-Theological Lexicon Of The New Testament, p. 226.

this "body." Lewis Johnson describes this union still further:

Christ surrounds the believer with His own life in God (Col. 3:3)...He separates the believer from false influences (2:16-23)...He protects the believer in Himself from all foes, and supplies in Himself everything that is needful (cf. 2:9-10). The result is that the weakest saint is "complete in Him" (2:10).<sup>66</sup>

### As It Relates To Eschatology

Some scholars seem to make the resurrection of 3:1 very mysterious. One has concluded that this resurrection referred to the "transference into the eschatological life with Christ."<sup>67</sup> Speaking of the *σὺν Χριστῷ* passages, another said, "in these passages in Colossians *σὺν Χριστῷ* denotes the present, hidden, eschatological being of Christians."<sup>68</sup>

The grammatical and contextual structure of Colossians 3:1 leads this writer to the conclusion that it is best not to consider this passage as eschatological. The cloud of mystery can be removed as one carefully considers some basic truths revealed in this passage and other relevant passages on the subject of the future resurrection of the believer.

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<sup>66</sup>Lewis Johnson, "Studies In The Epistle To The Colossians," Bibliotheca Sacra, Volume 118, July '61 (Dallas: Dallas Seminary Press) p. 248.

<sup>67</sup>Eduard Schweizer, "Dying And Rising With Christ," New Testament Studies, Volume 14, Oct., '67, pp. 1-14.

<sup>68</sup>Friedrich, ed., Theological Dictionary Of The New Testament, Volume VII, p. 785.

The resurrection of Colossians 3:1 has occurred in the past. There is no Scriptural data to indicate that the resurrection of believers occurred in the past. Hymenaeus and Philetus taught that the resurrection was past in the early Church and they were regarded as heretics by the Apostle Paul (2 Timothy 2:18).

The language of key resurrection passages in the Scriptures makes it clear that this is an event which will take place in the future for the believer. Paul uses the future tense to describe the resurrection of the believer in I Corinthians 15:51 and also in I Thessalonians 4:17.

There is a relationship, however, between Christ's own resurrection, which did occur in the past and is the subject of Colossians 3:1, and the future resurrection of the believer (note Col. 3:4). The future resurrection and our participation in it is the confirmation of the benefits given to the regenerate in Christ's resurrection. The believer's vital union with Christ now (Col. 3:3) will culminate in the believer's actual presence with Christ throughout eternity.

Christ's own resurrection is said to be the "first-fruits" of the believer's future resurrection (I Corinthians 15:20, 24). Findlay describes this phrase as meaning, "The first ripe sheaf is an earnest and sample of the harvest, consecrated to God and laid up with Him (cf. Rom. 6:10ff.) in anticipation of the rest."<sup>69</sup>

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<sup>69</sup>W. Robertson Nicoll, ed., The Expositor's Greek Testament, Volume 2, p. 925.

The word ἀπαρχή as used in this reference has lost much of its original meaning and can almost be translated πρῶτος ("first").<sup>70</sup>

In the Corinthian passage, the Apostle distinguishes Christ's resurrection, already accomplished, and the resurrection of believers, which will occur at a later date ( I Cor. 15:23).

It is interesting to note that the greek word used in the New Testament for "resurrection" is ἀνάστασις. This word appears 42 times in the New Testament and is translated "resurrection" 39 times. It seems to this writer that every occurrence is speaking of a literal resurrection related to dead bodies.

#### As It Relates To The Christian Life

We now approach the question of the relevance of Colossians 3:1 to the Christian life. In what way does the truth found in this passage of Scripture actually affect one's Christian life? The imperative commands of Colossians 3:1-2 are based on the believer's conversion. The γάρ of Colossians 3:3 ties the commands of 3:1 into the believer's salvation. The ones referred to in verse three had recieved Christ and, as a result, the benefits of the death and resurrection of Christ in behalf of their sins.

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<sup>70</sup>Arndt-Gingrich, A Greek-English Lexicon Of The New Testament, p. 81.

The *οὖν* of Colossians 3:5 notifies us of a new division in this epistle. The exhortations about to be given are based on the doctrinal foundation just previously laid by the author. We are now leaving the polemical section of this book and are about to enter the area of its practical outworking in the Christian's life. *οὖν* is characterized as gathering up "the logical result of 2:20-3:4, with probably special reference to verse 4, the glorious future."<sup>71</sup>

The whole basis for the kind of exhortation found in 3:5 ff. is the salvation procured for the believer by the death and resurrection of Christ. The passive voice of *νεκρώ* in 3:5 indicates that something is "worn out" or "is good as dead."<sup>72</sup> The passive voice also alerts us to the truth that they were made this way by the work of God.

The new life given to the believer will exhibit itself in practice. John describes the possessor of this life as one who does not "practice sin" (I John 3:9) but one who does "practice righteousness" (I John 2:29).

In Colossians 3:7 Paul reminded these believers that they "once walked" in the things described in 3:5. Things of the earth should not characterize the believer. Those who continually practice these things will be the recipients of

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<sup>71</sup>A. Nairne, ed., The Epistles Of Paul The Apostle To The Colossians And To Philemon, p. 125.

<sup>72</sup>Arndt-Gingrich, Lexicon, p. 537.



the "wrath of God" (3:6). A description of these activities is given below:<sup>73</sup>

Immorality (πορνείαν). Denotes prostitution and every kind of unlawful sexual intercourse.

Impurity (ακαθαρσία). This word describes immorality, viciousness especially related to sexual sins.

Passion (πάθος). Passions of sexual character.

Evil desire (επιθυμία κακή). This expression depicts a desire for something forbidden.

Greed (πλεονεξία). From the word πλεονεξία which means greediness, insatiableness, avarice or covetousness. Literally meaning a desire to have more.

Idolatry (εἰδωλολατρία). This trait evidences itself in the life of the unsaved (cf. I Peter 4:3).

These along with the practices mentioned in Colossians 3:8 obviously are not to have their place in the believer's life. The practices which are to be evident are enumerated in Colossians 3:12 ff.

The word translated "walked" as referring to the practices of believers and non-believers has already been discussed. It is the manner or conduct of our lives as we live them out in this world. This conduct for the Christian distinguishes him, in a definite way, from the unregenerate. Philippians 3:20 helps us understand why there is a

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<sup>73</sup>Arndt-Gingrich, Lexicon.

distinguishable difference. We are reminded in Colossians 3:9 that this "condition" produced in a believer's life is because of the operation of God toward man in regeneration. This refers to the impartation of new life to the believer.

## CONCLUSION

The climactic point of the entire book of Colossians seems to have been reached in Colossians 3:1. The Apostle amazes us with the superiority of Christ in chapter one and then delights us with the truth of our relationship with Him in chapter two and following.

Paul also puts to death the notion that a "man who is heavenly minded is no earthly good." In fact, he turns that around and demonstrates that the heavenly minded man is indeed the man of most value to the world.

The Colossians 3:1 passage reminds the Christian that his position is accomplished wholly as a work of God and not through any merit or strength of his own. This work is appropriated by God's grace through faith.

In this passage the real beauty of Paul's great Christological theme reaches a marvelous crescendo. It is here that we, as believers, are seen as having vital union with this great Lord. We need not any longer be subject to dogma which binds and corrupts. This dogma keeps men earthy while Christ elevates man to the heavens.

The life bestowed because of faith in Christ is life which is subject to Jesus Christ alone, who is the superior Lord of all. In Colossians 1:18 Paul calls Him the "head

of the body, the church." The Christian then is to concentrate on pleasing Christ in his activities and is not subject to regulations and ritualistic practices of the word. The new life will, more and more, have the characteristics of Christ Himself as the Christian experiences growth.

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