

New Morning Magical

Check yourself

Today we return to the Apostle Paul's letter to the Colossians. Historians believe that Colossians was written between 61 and 63 A.D., while Paul was under house arrest in Rome. His circuitous journey to Rome was around 3 years in the making and from Chapters 20-28 of Acts. *The Daily Bible* does a marvelous job of capturing not only the scriptural account, but F. Lagard Smith's additional narration adds so much to the picture of Paul's situation during this period. At one point, Paul testifies on his own behalf before three different Roman kings in Caesarea, just like the risen Lord told Ananias way back in Acts 9.

By the time we catch up to Paul's letter to the Colossians, he is already under house arrest in Rome. I'd really urge you to read the historical account in Acts, according to the Daily Bible, because it gives you so much more of a complete picture of when various events took place. With Paul's letter sprinkled throughout the historical account, you get a real feel for the times and places as Paul winds through all three of his missionary journeys before he was imprisoned in Rome.

Let's begin again in Colossians Chapter 1, verse 24:

24 I am now rejoicing in my sufferings for you, and am filling up in my flesh, in His stead, the deficiencies of the afflictions of Christ, for His body, which is the ecclesia

For the longest time, I misunderstood this passage to mean that Paul's sufferings made up for what Christ didn't suffer, and it always bothered me. Paul isn't saying that what Christ suffered was insufficient at all! Paul is referring to his own suffering, on Christ's behalf and on behalf of His body. It isn't as if Christ didn't suffer enough; but the body of Christ was entirely unknown at the time of Christ's death and resurrection, so Paul comes along with this revelation and realizes that his sufferings – Paul's, that is – are on behalf of Christ's body, which Christ could not have accomplished before the revelation of His body was even known. So, I hope this Scripture makes sense to you; because it didn't to me until today!

Now, let's put verse 24 back into its place and then read on from there:

24 I am now rejoicing in my sufferings for you, and am filling up in my flesh, in His stead, the deficiencies of the afflictions of Christ, for His body, which is the ecclesia
25 of which I became a dispenser, in accord with the administration of God, which is granted to me for you, **to complete the word of God** --

26 the secret which has been concealed from the eons and from the generations, yet now was made manifest to His saints,
27 to whom God wills to make known what are the glorious riches of this secret among the nations, which is: **Christ among you, the expectation of glory**

Two major points here:

1. Until Paul brought his revelation out in the open, the word of God was incomplete. That would throw some Christians into a frenzied panic, but that's what Paul says in verse 25: *"I became a dispenser, in accord with the administration of God, which is granted to me for you, **to complete the word of God.**"*
2. In verses 26 and 27, Paul reveals "the secret" which had been hidden from everyone throughout history until this time: *"**Christ among you [the Gentiles specifically], the expectation of [the] glory.**"*

I keep having to remind myself that you and I are in such a unique position to view all of Paul's letters together and in sequence; we get to watch the progression of his ministry, including the secrets he reveals and the truths that he makes known, often for the first time. And all this while the other apostles are ministering only to their Jewish brethren, with no greater revelation than that of the circumcision. I don't know about you, but I often marvel at how exclusive revelations can be from the Father and from the Lord. Revelation is obviously intended for certain audiences and not for others, and all to advance the Father's purpose of the eons. It's just like Isaiah declared:

Isaiah 55:

⁸For My designs are not your designs,
And your ways are not My ways, averring is Yahweh.

⁹ For as the heavens are loftier than the earth,
So are My ways loftier than your ways,
And My designs than your designs.

I'm just grateful that you and I get to share in the Father's designs and even His thoughts, at least to some extent, especially through the revelations that Paul alone was given.

Amen? Amen!

Now to the 2nd Chapter of Colossians:

4 Now I am saying this, that no one may be beguiling you with persuasive words.

5 For even if, in flesh, I am absent, nevertheless, in spirit, I am with you, rejoicing and observing your order and the stability of your faith in Christ.

These two verses contain both a statement and an odd benevolent threat of sorts. First, Paul sets up that what he's about to say is so that the Colossians, and by extension, you and I today, will not fall prey to fast-talkers and slicksters who may sound entirely persuasive, but who beguile, seduce, or otherwise deceive we who have accepted Christ and been privy to Paul's evangel, including the secrets he reveals. The pseudo threat is to conjure the picture of Paul standing over your shoulder wherever you go, reminding you of the substance of your faith, as if he were actually there with you.

6 As, then, you accepted Christ Jesus, the Lord, be walking in Him,

7 having been rooted and being built up in Him, and being confirmed in the faith according as you were taught, superabounding in it with thanksgiving.

8 Beware that no one shall be despoiling you through philosophy and empty seduction, **in accord with human tradition**, in accord with the elements of the world, and not in accord with Christ,

9 for in Him the entire complement of the Deity is dwelling bodily.

“Beware” – everything following that word is possible to happen if you don't stay guarded, walled up in your faith in Christ while the rest of the world rages around you. Don't think for a second that your life in Christ is smooth sailing and that no one can get to you. Truth is, they can't IF – and if is a big word in Scripture – IF you are conscious in your spirit as much as in your mind. Your spirit, connected to the Father's, is an infallible guide, but its infallibility depends upon your awareness, your alertness. This awareness is like intuition or premonition, except it is more real than ethereal; more certain than questionable; and more reliable than doubtful. It may be a quiet voice inside you, but when you develop your inner, spiritual sense of hearing, you can recognize the voice of the spirit instantly and tune in to its cautions, insights, and directions.

In verse 9, Paul again uses the word complement – that which completes – to describe how all of the Father's nature and character dwells within the Son as in bodily form. You may recall that Yeshua told the disciples, *“He who has seen Me has seen the Father.”* Paul's statement in verse 9 explains to us how Yeshua could make such a bold statement. He was His Father's Son in every aspect of Himself, except for the part that could die; after His ascension, however, Christ became His Father's complement. Christ Himself is not, nor has ever been the Deity; divine, yes, but with respect to the Father– that is, the only Deity – Christ is His bodily completion. Almost

every expression I can make here seems to diminish the majesty of Paul's simple statement, so forgive me if I've only confused his intent.

Let me try it another way; see if this works better for you: Imagine that everything about the Father is in the Son, EXCEPT for the nature of the Father as Deity. But the Father cannot take on physical form; there is no physical form that could hope to contain Him. So the Son becomes His Father's complement bodily. Carry it one more step: you and I, as Christ's complement, are also recipients, however small, of the Deity, that is, of the Father Himself.

Verse 9 is, as are so many other statements, one of Paul's singular revelations that you and I can know about today because of Christ's choosing and impartation to Paul that is unlike any of his contemporaries.

Here's the support for everything I just said in verse 10:

10 And you are complete in Him, Who is the Head of every sovereignty and authority,

Follow me now all the way through verse 15:

11 in Whom you were circumcised also with a circumcision not made by hands, in the stripping off of the body of flesh in the circumcision of Christ.

12 Being entombed together with Him in baptism, in Whom you were roused together also through faith in the operation of God,

13 Who rouses Him [Christ] from among the dead, you also being dead to the offenses and the uncircumcision of your flesh, He vivifies us together jointly with Him, dealing graciously with all our offenses,

14 erasing the handwriting of the decrees against us, which was hostile to us, and has taken it away out of the midst, nailing it to the cross,

15 stripping off the sovereignties and authorities, with boldness He makes a show of them, triumphing over them in it.

Can you see not only how important Christ is, but how important you and I are to the Father, that we have been made alive with Christ, at least in spirit for now and in body later; and in the process, receiving of God's grace in dealing with our offenses with such finality that He has not just crossed them out, but erased them, eradicated them, bless His Name!

16 Let no one, then, be judging you in food or in drink or in the particulars of a festival, or

of a new moon, or of sabbaths,

17 which are a shadow of those things which are impending -- yet the body is the Christ's.

All the commentators seem to agree that verse 16 referred to Jewish festivals, new moons and Sabbaths; but the Colossian ecclesia was made up mostly – maybe even exclusively – of former pagans, much like the Corinthian ecclesia. It seems odd to me that Paul would refer directly to Jewish celebrations when the same Gentile pagans had their own similar observances, except for Sabbaths.

In any case the instruction stands to let no one be judging you in your observance of these celebrations.

Jump down to Colossians Chapter 3:

Chapter 3

1 If, then, you were roused together with Christ, be seeking that which is above, where Christ is, sitting at the right hand of God.

2 Be disposed to ***[care about and pay attention to]*** that which is above, not to that on the earth,

3 for **you died, and your life is hid together with Christ in God.**

Barbara taught me years ago, there is a place of walking with God where nothing can touch you and I might add, where no one can find you. She also taught me how to stay hidden. For a time – several months – I didn't answer the phone or reply to emails (in fact, I didn't even check emails). Of course, people who supposedly cared about me became quite upset, as if I owed them something for their interest; a quid pro quo. Now, years later, some of these same people know that I only pick up the phone when I am directed to do so, and I'm accountable only to move when and where the Father directs. Otherwise, the rule that I've developed is, if God's not showing, I'm not going. You can be as hidden as you choose to be simply by learning and then minding the Father's boundaries.

4 Whenever Christ, our Life, should be manifested, then you also shall be manifested together with Him in glory.

This verse is a snapshot of the Day of the Lord's return, when we will rise to meet Him in the air, in incorruptible bodies of glory, like His.

5 Deaden, then, your members that are on the earth: prostitution, uncleanness, passion,

evil desire and greed, which is idolatry,

6 because of which the indignation of God is coming on the sons of [the] stubbornness --

7 among whom you also once walked, when you lived in these things.

Verse 6 is another quick snapshot of the time of Jacob's trouble or distress, which we explored in an earlier MM. Notice that "*the indignation of God*" comes on "*the sons of [the] stubbornness,*" which is a specific term that refers to persistently unbelieving Jews. They were first stubborn in the wilderness, and these in verse 6 are their "sons." Unfortunately the sons of the stubbornness will include most of the children of Israel who are alive in the Day of the Lord.

8 Yet now you also be putting away all these: anger, fury, malice, calumny [blasphemy], obscenity out of your mouth.

9 Do not lie to one another, stripping off the old humanity together with its practices,
10 and putting on the young [*elsewhere called "the new humanity"*], which is being renewed into recognition, to accord with the Image of the One [*the Father*] Who creates it,

11 wherein there is no Greek and Jew, Circumcision and Uncircumcision, barbarian, Scythian, slave, freeman, but [the] all and in all is Christ.

12 Put on, then, as God's chosen ones, holy and beloved, pitiful compassions, kindness, humility, meekness, patience,

13 bearing with one another and dealing graciously among yourselves, if anyone should be having a complaint against any. According as the Lord also deals graciously with you, thus also you.

14 Now over all these put on love, which is the tie of maturity.

Remember: This is The Father's Agape love in verse 14, which stops at nothing short of accomplishing His purpose; so it makes sense that this love is, as Paul says, "*the tie of maturity.*"

15 And let the peace of Christ be arbitrating in your hearts, for which you were called also in one body; and become thankful.

Notice that it is up to you and me to "*become thankful*"; but how hard can that be, really when we "*let the peace of Christ be arbitrating in [our] hearts*"? Genuine, heartfelt gratitude can take you through a lot, but it starts with what's in your heart. This verse is also one of those great landmark verses, whereby you can determine how much of Christ's peace is "*arbitrating*" in your heart, by how thankful you can be and vice versa.

16 Let the word of Christ be making its home in you richly, in all wisdom, teaching and

admonishing yourselves; in psalms, in hymns, in spiritual songs, singing, with grace in your hearts to God.

One of the many aspects that I love about being married to Barbara is her singing. From the moment she gets up, she is singing hymns and sometimes, she even sings in tongues to a tune like “God Bless America,” “76 Trombones” from *The Music Man*, or even “Rudolph the Red-Nosed Reindeer.” I just love hearing her sing, which she isn’t even conscious of doing a lot of the time, and that makes it all the more endearing.

17 And everything, whatsoever you may be doing, in word or in act, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, giving thanks to God, the Father, through Him.

Verse 17, which is where we’ll end today, is all encompassing: *“Do all in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, giving thanks to God, the Father, through Him.”* This is another great landmark Scripture by which you can check yourself. Can it get any simpler or any more complete than this?

So until next time,

May Yahweh bless you and keep you;
May Yahweh light up His face toward you
and be gracious to you;
May Yahweh lift His face to you
and appoint peace for you.

AMEN