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**Salvation
In
Colossians.**

(2019)

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Although I believe my aim is pure and God's will perfect this document is still the product of a human man, as to such I neither claim perfect knowledge or perfect understanding.

Salvation in Colossians.

INTRODUCTION: since the primary focus of this study is upon Scriptures (in most chapters in Colossians) that relate to salvation and are relevant to eternal life there are far too many different topics and titles to make a topics list, but I have faith that most who travel through each chapter will by the time they arrive at the end not only be enriched in their knowledge of salvation, but also enriched in God's love and God's grace in Christ.

COLOSSIANS 1:3-6

The Truth, the Gospel has come to the Whole World.

- **Colossians 1:3-6:** We (Paul and Timothy) always thank God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, when we pray for you, ⁴ since we heard of your faith in Christ Jesus and of the love that you have for all the saints, ⁵ because of the hope laid up for you in heaven. Of this you have heard before in the word of the truth, the gospel, ⁶ which has come to you, as indeed in the whole world it is bearing fruit and increasing—as it also does among you, since the day you heard it and understood the grace of God in truth,

This letter is addressed to the faithful (v2) brothers and sisters (Jews and Gentiles) at Colossae and by extension all the faithful in Christ of all ages. Paul and those with him are thrilled with the Colossians faith because they love others who have faith in Christ. This means that they are not only humble and forgiving, but also show each other kindness, compassion, grace and mercy contrasted to exalting themselves above others and causing divisions, strife and contention etc.

The hope laid up in heaven: refers to the Gentiles in Christ becoming partakers with Israel in all the promises God made to Abraham and the promise of eternal life with the Lord Jesus Christ and God the Father in everlasting glory. This hope includes the return of the Lord Jesus Christ, our mortal body putting on immortality, the resurrection to eternal glory and rulership of the world from Jerusalem with the Lord Jesus Christ as King of kings and Lord of lords establishing God's Kingdom of righteousness, justice, joy and peace over the earth. This promised majestic and glorious hope laid up in heaven is for all (Jews and Gentiles) who belong to the Lord Jesus Christ. It is called the grace of God in truth (v6) because it comes by faith and God's grace to all who belong to Christ

NOTE: when salvation to eternal life is spoken of as the hope of the faithful in Christ, it is not called hope because it might or might not happen, but because it is unseen and yet future. The hope itself is guaranteed because it is based on God's promise and he cannot lie. The apostle Paul wrote; "In hope of eternal life, which God, who never lies, promised before the ages began" (Titus 1:2). The Christian hopes to be resurrected from the grave to be raised up to eternal life and everlasting glory to be made perfectly free from sin; to be everlastingly happy, but it is faith that gives these things a mental reality in the mind and it is under this influence of faith that those in Christ allow these unseen and yet future events to control their mind as if they were a reality now.

Faith and hope: the difference between faith and hope is that by faith alone we are sure of eternal salvation it is certain and guaranteed by faith whereas by hope we look forward with confidence that we will be raised to eternal life. All Christian hope stands on faith since it is faith that secures and guarantees the promise of God. This means that faith and hope go together they are partners that complement each other since the same things that are the focus of our hope are the same things that our faith is trusting in. Faith secures while hope looks forward to what is secured by faith. The words, "The grace of God in truth" (v5-6) means that the hope laid up in heaven comes to everyone on the day they hear

it and understand the grace of God in truth and believe it. This does not refer to every doctrine of the Bible or of the New Testament, but to the truth concerning God's grace. The Colossians have clearly understood something about God's grace that others haven't (especially certain Jewish converts) and even today many who confess to believe in Christ still don't fully understand the truth about God's grace. This awe-inspiring and humbling truth is that we are not' saved by self-effort and by strictly adhering to ceremonial rites, holy days, or by keeping religious customs and traditions, but by God's grace. This is what Paul is referring to when he states that the Colossians have clearly understood the grace of God in truth.

The following words of Paul show the enormous importance of trusting in God's grace in Christ. Paul in his letters wrote:

- I do not nullify the grace of God, for if justification were through the law (or any form of religious self-effort), then Christ died for no purpose (Gal. 2:21).

This means, when a brother or sister in Christ begin to justify themselves through the law and self-effort, they nullify the grace of God and by their actions declare that Christ's death was of no value. Equally as horrific as this Paul states:

- When we forsake grace we separate ourselves from Christ because it was only by grace that God made us alive in Christ (Gal. 5:4) (Eph. 2:5).

Paul to highlight even more the majestic glory of grace wrote with absolute boldness that:

- It is only by grace that any brother or sister has been saved (Eph. 2:8).

Paul in these verses is shining a brilliant floodlight on the truth that every brother and sister in Christ is saved, solely by faith and by grace and it is not their own doing, but the gift of God". This means that without grace no-one can be united to Christ and whoever is without Christ is separated from God and without God no-one can be saved to eternal life. This means that in regards to eternal salvation, Christ, God, grace and faith are all on an equal par with each other since no-one can be saved to eternal life without any one of them. This is what the glorious words the grace of God in truth mean and the truth the Colossian brothers and sisters clearly understood.

The whole world: the expression, the whole world (v6) does not mean that the entire world of Paul's era was being saved, but that the hope laid up in heaven and the grace of God in truth (v6) is now available to the entire world, because the hope of salvation to eternal life and God's grace are in the Lord Jesus Christ and whoever (Jew or Gentile) accepts the Gospel and believes in Christ will be saved. Jesus himself said that he laid his life down for the whole world (John 3:16) so it is in this sense that the hope and God's grace has come to the whole world.

Love in the Spirit: the words, your love in the Spirit are not referring to some mystical gift or hidden spiritual secret, but rather to the brothers and sisters in the Colossian church love for the Lord Jesus Christ and their faithfulness in following him, meaning they live to honour God and the name of the Lord Jesus Christ. But the words, your love in the Spirit are not limited to loving Christ only, but also embrace the, fruit of the Spirit (i.e., showing love, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control toward each other) contrasted to being conceited, jealous and argumentive, envying one another and by quarrels provoking each other causing contention, strife and divisions (Gal. 5:19-26).

COLOSSIANS 1:13-14

Delivered from the Kingdom of Darkness to the Kingdom of God's Son.

- **Colossians 1:13-14:** He has delivered us from the domain of darkness and transferred us to the kingdom of his beloved Son, ¹⁴ in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins.

This means that God the Father has delivered Jews and Gentiles alike from being separated from God to being united with God and that God does not forgive our sins and redeem us because we legalistically adhere to certain ceremonial rites, holy days or because we strictly keep religious customs and traditions, but because of our faith in His beloved Son. It is by faith in Christ that God the heavenly Father is able to reach down to the lowliest child of Adam and lift them in Christ to the highest heights of eternal glory.

COLOSSIANS 1:15

Jesus is the Image of the Invisible God, the Firstborn of all Creation.

- **Colossians 1:15:** He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation (or the new creation).

Image: means a likeness, resemblance and representation it carries the idea of the faintness of a copy. The words Jesus is, the image of the invisible God, means that Jesus is the perfect reflection of his heavenly Father in the following two ways:

1. He not only manifested God's holy character, God's love, God's compassion, God's grace and God's mercy etc., while on earth, but also the miraculous power of God's spoken word, to heal, to control the weather (calming the storm) and to create from nothing (feeding the 5000) added to these he taught God's eternal plan of salvation, God's promises, God's will and God's desire without fault though Jesus is not God himself he was nevertheless in this sense the perfect mirror image and reflection of the invisible God manifested on earth in human form.
2. Jesus is the fullness of God's Spirit in that he was God's word perfectly and fully manifested in the flesh (a human body) teaching the wisdom, knowledge, plans, purposes and promises of the invisible God in heaven and God's entire eternal plan of salvation for all mankind (Jews and Gentiles) in this sense Jesus was the manifestation or perfect image of the invisible God on earth.

The firstborn of all creation: Paul's statement, Jesus was the firstborn of all creation (v15) means Jesus was the first to be born in that he was the first to be resurrected to eternal glory and everlasting life (see v18) (though others had been resurrected none had been resurrected to eternal life). Since Jesus death was in reality his birth into the eternal world of God the expression firstborn of all creation refers to his resurrection to eternal glory and everlasting life.

COLOSSIANS 1:18-20

Christ is the Head of the Body the Church.

- **Colossians 1:18-20:** And he is the head of the body, the church. He is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, that in everything he might be preeminent. ¹⁹ For in him all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell, ²⁰ and through him to reconcile to himself all things, whether on earth or in heaven, making peace by the blood of his cross.

The church is pictured as an eternal awe-inspiring body with Christ as its head. The glorious words Jesus is the beginning the firstborn from the dead shows us that God views death as a birth and a new beginning. Unfortunately some religious teachers use this verse to support the mistaken theory that certain faithful Old Testament fathers were raised to

heaven when they died, but that would contradict Paul statement that Jesus was the first to be resurrected from the dead, meaning he was the first to be resurrected to heaven and to immortality and eternal life, if the Old Testament fathers had been raised to heaven Paul would not be able to make this statement. For further information concerning this, see the titles:

- Heaven.
- Death (what happens when we die).
- Both titles are in, Death (ON WEBSITE MENU).

Before time began God planned and purposed in His eternal mind that Jesus would be first to be raised from the dead to eternal life and everlasting glory so that he would be pre-eminent (v18), meaning he would be the most high-ranking authority in God's Kingdom and stand out in majestic and royal glory amongst all others in all things regarding salvation, dominion and rule.

In Christ all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell: the words, "In him all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell" (v19) does not mean that Jesus is God, but that God's Spirit dwelt in him without limitation. John the Baptist said of Jesus:

- For he whom God has sent utters the words of God, for he gives the Spirit without measure, the Father loves the Son and has given all things into his hand (John 3:33-35)

This means that God gave Jesus His Spirit without any limitation or restraint. This is why Jesus was able to heal everyone who came to him regardless of whether their sickness was physical or mental, a virus or a disease and why he was able to create fish from nothing and calm the storm by a spoken word in contrast to the prophets of the Old Testament and apostles of the New Testament having a limited measure of God's Spirit and in contrast to every brother and sister in Christ even today having a limited portion of God's Spirit (also called the Holy Spirit) dwelling within them.

God lifts the Spirit off Moses: the following verses show that God is able to take a portion of His Spirit from one person and place it onto others:

- Moses went out and told the people the words of the LORD and he gathered seventy men of the elders and placed them around the tent then the LORD came down in the cloud and took some of the Spirit that was on Moses and put it on the seventy elders as soon as the Spirit rested on them, they prophesied. But they did not continue doing it and Eldad and Medad remained in the camp and the Spirit rested on them and so they prophesied (Numbers 11:24-26).

This clearly shows that God is able to pour out His Spirit in varying portions on whoever he chooses.

To reconcile to Himself all things, whether on earth or in heaven: the heavenly and glorious words through Christ God is reconciling to himself all things making peace by the blood of his cross (v20) shows us the following two things:

1. It is God's desire that mankind would be saved.
2. Why God was so thrilled with His Son, if Jesus had not been prepared at the Garden of Gethsemane to say those famous words, "Father not my will but yours be done" (knowing in that moment he was surrendering his life to brutal torture and a cruel death) God's eternal plan of salvation would have failed, is it any wonder God has exalted Christ above all principalities, authorities, dominions and powers and why Christians make the Lord their best thought and the most treasured possession of their hearts.

The Mystery Hidden for Ages and Generations but now Revealed.

- **Colossians 1:26-27:** the mystery hidden for ages and generations but now revealed to his saints. ²⁷ To them God chose to make known how great among the Gentiles are the riches of the glory of this mystery, which is Christ in you, the hope of glory.

The word mystery in this refers to the belief that the people of Israel believed that all the eternal promises God had made to Abraham, Isaac, Jacob and David regarding the coming Messiah the Christ and all that the Old Testament prophets had spoken about concerning the promised seed to come who would bless and rule the nations where restricted solely to the nation of Israel. The Jews clearly believed that God's promises and the coming Messiah the Christ were for their nation and their nation only which means that the mystery of Christ that was hidden in the Old Testament was not only that all the promises God made to Israel would also apply to the Gentiles, (because all God's promises are in Christ), but also that the Messiah the Christ would embrace the Gentile nations as well as the Jews.

The mystery of Christ that was hidden in the Old Testament was that:

- Both Jews and Gentiles would be saved by faith in Jesus Christ.
- The plans, purposes and promises of God would be revealed in Jesus and would all be obtained through faith in Christ.
- Everything that is needed for salvation for Jews and Gentiles would be in Christ.
- The character nature and power of God and God's love, grace and mercy would be revealed in Christ to both Jews and Gentiles alike.

Christ in you: the riches and glory of this mystery is that; Christ the hope of glory is now in believers from all nations and not just the Jews (v27). There are three common teachings regarding the majestic and awe-inspiring words Christ in you.

1. The word, (*in*) from Strong's Concordance means, in, by, with, among, at, on, through and together with which means that the words, Christ in you can mean together with therefore the following statement of Paul:
 - To them God chose to make known how great among the Gentiles are the riches of the glory of this mystery which is Christ in you the hope of glory (v27).

This verse could read:

- To them God chose to make known how great among the Gentiles are the riches of the glory of this mystery, which is Christ among you or together with you the hope of glory.

Based on these facts some teach that the verse should actually read, "Christ amongst you" meaning that Christ by his SPIRIT is amongst the church and those who gather in his name. Though this is certainly a true statement since the Lord himself said, "For where two or three are gathered in my name, there am I among them" (Matt. 18:20) it does not mean that the verse is wrong in saying, "Christ in you" since Christ by his Spirit and through faith and love dwells in the heart and mind of every brother and sister who is devoted to him.

2. Jesus said, "Greater love has no one than this, that someone lays down his life for his friends" (John 15:13). When a person's eyes are opened to their fallen condition before God and perceive what it cost the Lord Jesus Christ to save them their heart is filled with love for him, it is in this sense that Christ dwells in the human heart.

The following is a true story and a good example of a person being in the heart of another. An eight-year old disabled girl, whose best friend was her mother was doing her first live stage show at her school. The mother loved her daughter but could not be at the opening show as she was in hospital with terminal cancer. A television reporter asked the young girl if she would be sad and miss her mother at the opening of the show. The small girl with tears in her eyes said, "Yes I will miss her, but she will be in my heart where she belongs." Love for a person creates the reality and presence of that person in the human heart. This presence is in direct proportion to the love (i.e., the greater the love the greater the presence). Every Christian, by looking at the bloodstained cross knows that God and Jesus love them.

3. Christ is the head of a new race and those outside this new race enter into it by faith in belonging to Christ. Adam was the head of the old race that believers were in prior to being in Christ's new race therefore the words, "Christ in you" in this context means:

- Fully belonging to Christ.
- Being together and in union with Christ.
- Agreeing with and sharing in the divine nature of Christ.
- Having the same mind as Christ (i.e., desiring to honour his heavenly Father).

With these three in mind the riches and the glory of the mystery not only refers to the truth that we are all (Jews and Gentiles) saved through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ and in him we have the glorious promise of eternal life in everlasting glory, but also includes the majestic glory that in this present age Christ dwells within the heart and mind of all who are devoted to him by his Spirit and by love.

COLOSSIANS 2:1-3

The Riches of the Mystery in Christ.

- **Colossians 2:2-3:** that their hearts may be encouraged, being knit together in love, to reach all the riches of full assurance of understanding and the knowledge of God's mystery, which is Christ, ³ in whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge.

Paul addresses this letter to those who know him and to those who have never seen him which means that what he is saying applies to Christians of all generations (v1). The riches of the mystery in Christ that was planned and purposed in God's eternal mind before the foundation of the world began is that salvation would not be limited to God's chosen people the Jews only, but would also embrace people from all nations (i.e. the Gentiles) through faith in God's Son the Lord Jesus Christ.

The mystery that is now revealed is that the Gentiles would become eternal partakers with Israel in all the promises God made to Abraham, Isaac, Jacob and David. This is the first part of the knowledge Paul desired that every brother and sister in Christ would understand. The second part is that those in Christ would be fully convinced that they cannot be saved by good works and self-effort or by strictly adhering to ceremonial rites and holy days or by keeping religious customs and traditions because even though some of these maybe good in themselves and may bring eternal rewards not one of them has any power to save a person to eternal life. Paul's concern was that those in Christ (of all generations) would not fully understand and arrive at these abundantly rich humbling and awe-inspiring truths and therefore never have the full assurance and confidence that they are saved to eternal life solely by their faith in Christ and by God's grace and not by works of the law.

The riches of God's mystery in Christ that are now revealed are:

- Jesus is the seed of the woman promised in (Genesis 3:15).
- Jesus is the prophet and deliver Moses said would come like him.
- Jesus is the promised seed of Abraham and of David.
- Jesus is the promised Messiah and Christ of Israel.
- Jesus is the only way to God the Father and eternal life.
- In Jesus are all the promises God made to Abraham, David and Israel.
- Jesus is the ultimate King of kings and Lord of lords who will return to establish God's Kingdom of righteousness, justice, joy and peace on earth.

Paul knowing the abundant richness of the love of Christ dwelling in him earnestly desired that every brother and sister in Christ would know the Lord in the same intimate way, but was fully aware that without a full understanding of faith in Christ and God's abundant and boundless grace a brother or sisters relationship to Christ to some degree would be hindered not only from attaining full mental peace free from condemnation of the law, but would also be hindered from attaining to spiritual and heavenly places in their spiritual relationship with Christ.

COLOSSIANS 2:9

In Him the Whole Fullness of Deity Dwells Bodily.

The English Standard Bible says:

- **Colossians 2:9:** For in him the whole fullness of deity dwells bodily,

The King James Bible says:

- **Colossians 2:9:** For in him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily.

Godhead: from Strong's Concordance means, deity and divinity and can refer to any of the following, an immortal or divine being (i.e., to God or to a goddess or an idol) that people worship as a divine being. The words in him the whole fullness of deity dwells bodily means that all the heavenly treasures and spiritual riches of God needed for salvation and eternal life are in Christ and that all the following spiritual blessings are in Jesus and in him alone:

- Forgiveness of sins and redemption to eternal life.
- The inheritance and eternal promises made to Abraham, David and Israel.
- Entry into the Kingdom of God, eternal life and everlasting glory.
- Full assurance of salvation and all the wisdom and knowledge of God.

When Paul said in Jesus the whole fullness of deity dwells bodily, he was not mystically or secretly saying as some religious ministers teach that Jesus the Son is actually God the Father (if that was the case Paul would simply say so) rather Paul was saying that God gave Jesus:

- All authority, dominion, power and a name above every name.
- The highest authority to rule and judge and the power to give eternal life.

Every power and authority that God has, He gave to Jesus His Son it is in this sense that Paul is saying that in Jesus the whole fullness of deity dwells bodily. It means that Jesus is the perfect mirror reflection and image of God the Father's character, power, promises and Spirit, because Jesus was filled with God's Spirit without limitation. Paul's was not implying that Jesus is God, but that he has the Spirit of God and all the power of God dwelling in him without any limitations.

In Christ dwells the fullness of God also carries the following two ideas:

1. Jesus Christ was the fullness of God and the perfect image of God in that he was God's word manifested in the flesh (human body) displaying the wisdom knowledge love, kindness, compassion, grace and mercy of the invisible God in heaven in absolute perfection while here on earth and the majestic miracles he did revealed God the Father's love for a lost and dying sinful world
2. Jesus was the complete fulfilment of the eternal plan of redemption and salvation for all mankind that God had purpose in His eternal mind and foreknowledge. It is in this sense that Christ is spoken of as having, the whole fullness of deity dwelling in him." Paul is saying that Jesus Christ is not just another human man or great prophet, but the only begotten Son of God the Father, in who is the entire plan of God's eternal salvation.

It means that in Christ alone is salvation in contrast to all other great prophets of the Bible who only had the power to lead people to Israel's Messiah, the Christ and Saviour of the world, whereas in Christ alone is forgiveness of sins and eternal life, he is the final Lamb of God without blemish to be sacrificed for man's sin and in him God's complete plan of eternal salvation for Jews and Gentiles alike is fulfilled and in this sense the whole fullness of God dwells in him.

NOTE: Paul prayed that the Ephesian brothers and sisters would know the love of Christ that surpasses knowledge and that they might be filled with all the fullness of God (Ephes. 3:19). No one reading this today believes that a brother or sister who is filled with the fullness of God actually becomes God, rather we all know that Paul is saying that we can be filled with God's Spirit. So why is it when Paul said, in Christ all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell (Col. 1:19) that certain religious teachers based on these words of Paul's proclaim that Jesus the Son became God the Father? Rather than accept that God by His Spirit dwelt in Christ without any limitations in the same way that God's Spirit (with limitations) dwelt in the prophets and apostles and in all who faithfully trust in and follow Christ.

Both the Father and the Son are the Saviour: throughout the Bible both the Father and the Son are referred to as the Saviour this is because God the Father in His eternal mind planned and purposed salvation before time began and Christ fulfilled that plan in his ministry, death and resurrection which means that the words, "For in him dwells all the fullness of the Godhead bodily" means that in Christ alone is the fullness of God the Father's plan of salvation for all or mankind. There is nothing a believer can add to the Gospel of salvation of Christ to make themselves more saved. Those who belong to Christ are complete (for eternal salvation), meaning they are totally justified and redeemed in Christ and in him alone because in him is the fullness of God's eternal plan of salvation. This is what the Bible means when it says "For in the Son dwells all the fullness of the Godhead bodily" and "You are complete in Christ" both expressions simply mean that in Christ is God's full plan of salvation. Jesus the Son of God is the fullness of the complete and entire eternal plan of God's salvation for all mankind which God purposed before time, began. There is no other plan or way for man to be redeemed. Jesus is God's promise of eternal life and it is through faith in him all believers are made complete, meaning they are fully forgiven, justified and redeemed and counted worthy of eternal life. For further information see the title:

- Trinity (The Doctrine of the Trinity) in Various Topics (ON WEBSITE MENU).

COLOSSIANS 2:12

Buried with Christ in Baptism, and Raised with Him through Faith.

- **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.

The resurrection of Lord Jesus Christ is every brother and sisters guarantee that God will raise them to eternal life as He raised Christ from the grave to die no more, so likewise all who belong to the family of Christ will be raised from the grave to eternal life and everlasting glory instead of being condemned by the law and judged guilty because of sin and sentence to death. Paul's words, "Buried with him in baptism" is alluding to the immersions practiced in the case of adults, wherein the person being baptized appears to be buried under the water. This is because water baptism is identification with Christ who died for our sins, was laid in the grave, where he continued for a while and then rose on the third day to eternal life and everlasting glory. Likewise when a repentant sinner is baptized they are covered with water as if they were buried in it, because water baptism is a representation of the burial of Christ and a representation of our burial with him, as being dead to sin, to the law, and to the world by our faith in Christ and a testimony of a total change of life as a marriage is to a relationship of love.

In regards to water baptism three things should be noted:

1. The words, "Buried with him in baptism and raised with him" shows that water baptism was performed by covering the whole body in water because no other form of administration of baptism, as sprinkling, or pouring water on the face, can represent a burial and a resurrection in such majestic fashion as going down into the water and being under it, represents Christ's descending into the state of the dead and his continuance in it, so the emersion, or coming up out of the water, represents his rising from the dead and that of his people in him in order to walk in newness of life.
2. There is nothing spiritual in the sign or ceremony of water baptism itself since without repentance before God and faith in Christ and his death and resurrection water baptism will be of no use.

The person being baptized is simply being dunked in water, but when a person has a right heart toward God and the Lord Jesus Christ and enters the waters of baptism in faith, God by His Spirit responds accordingly.

3. In climates where total immersion is safe the normal method of biblical water baptism and the one most in accordance with Scripture is full immersion, but where total immersion would be inconvenient (i.e., a third world country where there is not even enough clean water to drink) or where it could be dangerous to a person's health or life (i.e., sickness).

To insist on total immersion in such cases is not only enforcing legalistic ceremonialism that is devoid of the Spirit of God and ignoring the faith of the one being baptized, but is also placing unnecessary hardship on the repentant believer since in these circumstances God who sees the honesty of the heart and responds to faith accordingly will accept any form of sprinkling or dipping in water that is administered in faith. For further information on Water Baptism see the title:

- Water Baptism (ON WEBSITE MENU).

COLOSSIANS 2:13-15

God Nailed to the Cross the Legal Demands of the Law.

- **Colossians 2:13-15:** And you, who were dead in your trespasses and the uncircumcision of your flesh, God made alive together with him, having forgiven us all our trespasses, ¹⁴ by canceling the record of debt that stood against us with its legal demands (KJV adds, which was contrary to us).. This he set aside, nailing it to the cross. ¹⁵ He disarmed the rulers and authorities and put them to open shame, by triumphing over them in him.

Dead in trespasses: means that without Christ the law has every right to condemn us to death. This is because the universal law of sin and death that has power over all mankind states, "The wages of sin is death" (Rom. 6:23) meaning if a person sins they are judged and sentenced by the law to death.

The uncircumcision of your flesh: refers to those who remain held captive to the law of sin and death in contrast to those who by faith in Christ have been set free from the laws power to condemn to death.

The record of debt that stood against us with its legal demands: refers firstly to all our past sins and secondly to the laws demand that it must be kept in every aspect, because whoever breaks one part of the law is held guilty before the law and judged and condemnation to death. It does not matter that we might only break small parts of the law we are still held guilty. It is like someone who steals \$5 dollars, it's not much in the grand scheme of crime, and drugs, bank robberies, rape and murder nevertheless they are still guilty of stealing.

The Law, you shall not covet: it is futile to attempt to attain to righteousness by keeping the law for the following two reasons: -

1. The law states; "You shall not covet your neighbour's house; you shall not covet your neighbour's wife, or his male servant, or his female servant, or his ox, or his donkey, or anything that is your neighbour's." In modern language this means, "You shall not covet any other person's house, their wife or husband, or anyone's very successful business, their riches and wealth, their new car, their beautiful boat or anything that belongs to any other person" (Exod. 20:17).
2. The royal law states, "You shall love your neighbour as yourself" (Rom. 13:9).

Jesus said all the commandments regarding mankind are summed up in the words of the royal law (James 2:8) because the spirit underpinning the royal law, desires the best for others contrasted to the spirit underlying coveting which is craving and seeking the best for self.

COVET: (covetousness) means; to set the heart upon, to desire, long for or lust after (rightfully or otherwise) it carries the idea of holding onto or desiring more than one has or needs (the practice of greediness) and embraces those who live a lifestyle of unlawful sex, orgies adulteries and sexual immorality to fulfil their own lust and to anyone whose heart is craving after and worshipping and exalting another person as a god (an Idolater).

By implication covet: can refer to those who are not honest and true and who use pressure or coercion to force or entice others to fulfil their own selfish need or ambition and to anyone who intentionally deprives somebody of money or property by dishonest means because they are greedy and eager for gain. The commandment, "You shall not covet" exposes human selfishness, pride, ego, lust, and greed etc. It reveals the dysfunctions and aberrations that are imbedded within our fallen corrupted human nature that hinder us from attaining to the perfection of God's Holy law. It exposes our self-centeredness in our desires for more than we need, our excessive avariciousness toward materialism, our overeating of tasty foods the craving to be important or esteemed, our sensual and lustful thoughts, the desire to be rich and have abundantly more than we need etc. The commandments, "You shall not covet" and "Love your neighbour as yourself," shines a spotlight on our self-interest,

they highlight our lack of willingness to give to those less fortunate and those in need, they expose our degrading, resentful, bitter and jealous thoughts of others and the list goes on. In summary the command, "You shall not covet" embraces all those attitudes and thoughts that dwell within our members that are contrary to the law of love and the Holiness of God which means the entire human race is held guilty before the law and therefore it legally has the right and the power to condemn us all to death which it does without hesitation, compassion or mercy the law shows no mercy or compassion its demand on those that are under it is strictly official, formal and legal and enforced without compassion or any sense of sorrow toward its condemned victims.

The universal demand of the law states: "For the wages of sin is death" (Rom. 6:23) meaning if anyone fails to keep the law in any aspect, they are guilty of breaking the law. It then without mercy rightfully and legally judges and sentences its guilty victims (all mankind) to death. The law is splendid as a guide to an understanding of God's will, but as a means of reunion with God, the God we have sinned against, it is a hopeless failure, but God always knew it would be, not because of a fault in the law but because a flaw in us. The royal majesty, the wonder and the glory of the Good News of the Gospel not only proclaims that, "God through Christ has cancelled the record of debt that stood against us with its legal demands" (the debt being all our trespasses and sins) (Col. 2:13-14), but also tells us that God set aside the laws legal demands, nailing it to the cross, this of course refers to the fact that Christ fulfilled all the legal demands of the law throughout his life on earth and to his brutal, bloody and cruel death on the cross. Jesus, before the eyes of men went to the cross as a common criminal, but before the eyes of God he was innocent and without sin and therefore through his life and his death all the legal demands of the law were fulfilled. Christ took all the legal demands of the law to the grave with him and because he was without sin the law had no power to hold him in the grave and therefore God had full and legal right not only to raise him from the grave, but to raise him to eternal life and everlasting glory. Jesus through his death and resurrection has become the royal robe of grace and the majestic crown of righteousness that God clothes all who by faith trust in the Lord for their righteousness and eternal salvation and in this manner, "The legal demands of the law have been nailed to the cross" (Col. 2:14)) since Christ through his death broke the power of the universal law that states, "The wages of sin is death" (Rom. 6:23) and superseded and overruled it with a far higher law that proclaims, "The free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord. (Rom. 6:23). This is the humbling, awe-inspiring Good News of the Gospel.

God disarmed the rulers and authorities and put them to open shame, by triumphing over them: (v15) the rulers and authorities in this context refers to the Roman authorities and soldiers who crucified Christ and the Jewish religious leaders, the chief priests, Pharisees and scribes who held all the religious authority over the Kingdom of God and over the nation of Israel up until Christ's death and resurrection. Jesus death and resurrection totally crushed and destroyed their power and the control they had over the people since his death and resurrection not only did away with the need for a human high priest, but for any human priest to stand between God and man and also totally abolished the Levitical priesthood and all the Sabbaths, feasts, holy days and ceremonial rites and customs of Moses Law and also every religious Jewish custom and tradition, none of these things are needed for a person to be united to God and saved to eternal life. In this way Christ triumphed over the chief priests, Pharisees, scribes (the rulers and authorities) who plotted his murder, and in his resurrection put them to open shame, since it proved he was who he claimed to be (i.e., Israel's Messiah the Christ and Son of God).

It should be noted: it is not only the religious leaders of Jesus era that Jesus has triumphed over, but every religious leader of all generations who would attempt to have power and control over their followers, since no-one needs another man to intercede for them or to unite them to God other than the Lord Jesus Christ, he is the only high priest anyone ever

needs to have union and fellowship with God the Father and be saved to eternal life. It is in this way that Jesus has disarmed every religious ruler and authority of all ages. No brother or sister in Christ should ever be held under the BONDAGE (as the lost sheep of Israel were to the religious leaders of their era) of another man no-matter how talented or gifted he maybe.

NOTE: this does not mean that we should not have religious leaders or listen to teachers of the Bible since they are God's gift to the global body of Christ and we are called to honour those who are faithful, but it does mean that we should not depend on them for our fellowship with God and the Lord or for our eternal salvation nor should we allow them to take mental control over our minds or spiritual power over us.

COLOSSIANS 3:3-4

Your Life is Hidden with Christ in God.

- **Colossians 3:3-4:** For you have died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God. ⁴ When Christ who is your life appears, then you also will appear with him in glory.

The life of those who have died to the world and have been made alive to Christ is hidden with Christ in God not only carries the idea of secrecy, but also denotes security because Jesus himself said, "Because I live you also will live" (John. 14:19). Christ is at present a hidden Christ, and one whom we have not seen, but this is our comfort, that our life is hid with him, and laid up safely with him (another reason those in Christ love him whom they have not seen) (1 Peter 1:8), so in this sense our comfort of happiness is out of sight since the one who fills the redeemed with such inexpressible joy is sitting at the right hand side of God in heaven unseen and hidden from unbelieving human eyes and seen only by the redeemed through spiritual eyes of faith in the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ.

The language, "Your life is hidden with Christ in God" (v3) is most likely taken from treasure which is hidden or concealed in a place of security with the idea being that eternal life is an invaluable jewel or treasure which is laid up with Christ in heaven where God is. There it is safely deposited. It has this security that it is with the redeemer and that he is in the presence of God and therefore nothing can reach this invaluable jewel or take it away. it is now laid up far out of our sight, and far from the reach of all our enemies, and with one who can, "Keep that which we have committed to him against that day" (2 Tim. 1:12) Our eternal life therefore, is as secure as it could possibly be made. The true condition of the redeemed is that though they are dead to this world they have immortal life and that life is secure in the holy keeping of their redeemer who is now in the presence of God. It is from understanding this majestic and awe-inspiring glory that God's eternal inheritance is being kept in heaven for every faithful brother and sister in Christ that they are called to set their affections on the things above and regard themselves as living for heaven.

Christ is the Treasure of those who Are Redeemed: Jesus himself said, "Where your treasure is, there your heart will be also" (Matt 6:21). Christ by his Spirit and by love lives in the heart and mind of those who faithfully follow him, and in this sense, they are seated in heavenly places with the Lord. He is not only the passion of their hearts, but also their best thought and in this sense their life is hidden in him. The union of love between the Lord Jesus and the redeemed is so close that it might be said that the one lived in the other.

Christ who is your life (v4) these words carry the following two ideas:

1. Though every brother and sister in Christ now lives on earth surrounded and affected by the trials, cares and anxieties of this life and their own inward life is full of sinful dysfunctions and aberrations their true and authentic life is the Spirit of Christ dwelling within. It is

from this hidden life that they are motivated to behave according to the principles Jesus has taught meaning they aim to do-good, what is right and honour God it means they live to reflect the hidden life of Christ dwelling within.

2. Those in Christ do not trust in their natural life (i.e., their own self-effort in adhering to ceremonial rites, holy days or keeping religious customs and traditions to be justified, but rather they trust in their spiritual life of faith and on the righteousness of Christ. They know that in Christ they are dead to the law in the sense that it has no power over them to condemn them to death so they walk in the newness of life that they have in the Lord fully trusting in him for salvation to eternal life in contrast to trusting in their own self-efforts to attain to it. Jesus said, "God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life." (John 3:16), faith fastens upon this love, "Christ gave himself for me" and those who have true faith live by this love and by this faith.

You will appear with Christ in glory: the magnificent, wonderful and awe-inspiring words, "When Christ appears, then you also will appear with him in glory (v4) refer to the following words Paul wrote: -

- We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised imperishable, and we shall be changed, because this perishable (corruptible in KJV) body must put on the imperishable (incorruption in KJV), and this mortal body must put on immortality. When the perishable (corruptible in KJV) puts on the imperishable (incorruption in KJV), and the mortal puts on immortality, then shall come to pass the saying that is written: "Death is swallowed up in victory" (1 Cor. 15:51-54)
- The Lord himself will descend from heaven with a cry of command, with the voice of an archangel, and with the sound of the trumpet of God and the dead in Christ will rise first then we who are alive, who are left, will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, and so we will always be with the Lord" (1 Thessalonians 4:15-18).

It is when this breathtaking and world changing event takes place that those whose life is hidden in Christ will appear with him in glory.

- **Colossians 3:3:** For you have died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God.

COLOSSIANS 3:13-17

Let the Word of Christ Dwell in you Richly.

- **Colossians 3:16-17:** Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly, teaching and admonishing one another in all wisdom, singing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, with thankfulness in your hearts to God.¹⁷ And whatever you do, in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.

Paul's words, "Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly teaching and admonishing one another in all wisdom," (v16) primarily refers to behaviour not legalistic dogmatic doctrine we know this because Paul goes on to say, whatever you do in word or deed do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus meaning live and speak as though Christ is alongside you. Following are four reasons God calls us to live in this manner:

- So that whatever is said or done will honour God and the name of the Lord Jesus Christ.
- Living in this way will hold the body of Christ together in unity and harmony.
- It will keep us from physical, sexual, verbal, emotional and spiritual harm and from getting into trouble.
- Living this way will encourage those with a right heart attitude to seek after God.

Conduct yourselves Wisely Toward Outsiders.

- **Colossians 4:5-6:** Walk in wisdom toward outsiders, making the best use of the time.
⁶ Let your speech always be gracious, seasoned with salt, so that you may know how you ought to answer each person.

There is perhaps no other more important instruction in the New Testament than this regarding Christian speech and behaviour. The following are some of the reasons Paul is making this statement.

- People of the world judge Christianity not from preaching, or from books, or from the conduct of its founder and his apostles, but from what they see in the lives and hear in the conversations of those who confess to believe in Christ.
- Those outside the Kingdom of God understand the nature of Christianity so well that they know when its members are not consistent with it.
- Those who do not know Christ set a much higher value on honesty and integrity than they do on the doctrines and duties of religion; and if the professed friends of religion are destitute of the principles of Christ and honesty, they think they have nothing of any value. Though Christians may be very devout on the Sabbath; very regular at prayer-meetings; very strict in the observance of rites and ceremonies, they are of little worth in the estimation of the world, unless accompanied with a life of integrity and honesty.
- If a person confessing Christ cheats someone (no matter how small), it is vain for them to endeavour to introduce that person to be a Christian because they will feel, (even though they may not say it) that they want nothing to do with a religion that does not make a person honest.
- The honour of Christianity is dependent on its adherents and their interaction with others and the lives they lead.

For all these reasons Paul calls all those in Christ to walk wisely toward outsiders (v5) so that they will have no occasion to reproach the name of Christ or the Christian faith.

NOTE: this does not mean that a brother or sister in Christ should stop witnessing until they have obtained to the perfect standard the law demands or to the perfect Holiness of God (something that is impossible), since then no-one would be able to testify, rather the idea underlying the words conduct yourselves wisely toward outsiders is that those in the Kingdom of God should live a life of integrity and treat those outside the Kingdom of God with respect and decency.

**SUMMARY
SALVATION IN COLOSSIANS**

The Gospel that has come to the entire world proclaims Jesus was the perfect image and reflection of God on earth, and the firstborn man to be raised to eternal life. Through water baptism and honest heartfelt repentance before God and faith in the Lord Jesus Christ sinners are delivered from the dominion of darkness and transferred in to the Kingdom of God's beloved Son. All their sins are forgiven and they have redemption and the forgiveness of all trespasses. Providing they remain in the faith they will be raised to eternal life and everlasting glory and be presented holy and blameless and above reproach before God. The

mystery of Christ in you the hope of glory that had been hidden for ages and generations is the truth that the fullness of God's Spirit was dwelling in Christ reconciling the world (Jews and Gentiles) to God. Through the death of the Lord Jesus Christ on the cross all who are separated from God can now be reconciled to God through faith in the death and resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ. At this present time the life of Christ is hidden in the heart and mind of every faithful brother and sister since their Saviour is seated at the right-hand side of God and their eternal inheritance is being kept in heaven for them. Everyone who belongs to the family of the Lord Jesus Christ should come to a full assurance and understanding of the Lord and of God's grace and seek after heavenly things (i.e., the things concerning God). They should put off the old self (self, ego, pride, greed, anger, jealousies, envy, coveting etc.), and put on the new self (love, compassion, kindness, mercy, grace, forgiveness and such like things) and live in the same Spirit of compassion kindness, grace, mercy forgiveness as Christ did and endeavour to live a life that honours God and brings a good testimony to the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and the Christian faith.

As the founder of Bible House of Grace, I would like to thank the many Christian scholars, commentators and theologians who have gone before me, and the many today, who have freely made available their works to enhance the knowledge of the Bible to all people worldwide. It is only with the help of these faithful writers that much of Bible House of Grace exists as it does today.

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