

Colossians 1.1-2

Col 1:1 “Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God, and Timotheus our brother, 2 To the saints and faithful brethren in Christ which are at Colosse: Grace be unto you, and peace, from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.”

The attention that we give to a letter is often dependent on who sent us the letter. If a total stranger whom we know nothing about sends us a letter, I dare say that most of the time that letter is quickly thrown in the trash as having no significance. However, if we know who sent us the letter and the reputation of the sender, we are much more likely to take heed to the contents of the letter. Paul in writing this letter to the members of the church at Colosse was most likely well known to them and they were likely to have known his experience of grace.

It would have been a well known fact to the churches of that time that Paul at one time was known as Saul of Tarsus. Moreover, it would have been known that he had been a great persecutor of the church. Saul was a Jew and a Pharisee who was steeped in legalism and had attained to great acclaim among the Pharisees of his day. He had taken it upon himself to persecute the disciples of the Lord Jesus Christ and to bring them to Jerusalem and give his testimony against them so that they might be punished, which often was to be put to death. He had letters of authority from the high priest to go to Damascus of Syria and bring bound to Jerusalem any that he found calling upon the name of the Lord. While on that journey, the Lord struck him down with a light brighter than the noon day sun and spoke to him saying, “Saul, Saul why persecutest thou me? The Lord revealed himself to Saul at that time and a great change was made in Saul. Saul’s name was later changed to Paul and he became the great defender of the faith of his time.

Paul, identified himself to the church at Colosse as “Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ...” The word, apostle, literally means “one sent forth.” By the meaning of the word, everyone that is a disciple and servant of the Lord and that goes forth by the leadership and direction of the Holy Spirit is an apostle. However, Paul was an apostle who had been called to that “office” by God. As an apostle and like those who were apostles before him, Paul had been given a revelation from God and had been given authority in establishing the early church and in laying the foundation on which the church was built. As an apostle Paul had the authority of God to write the letter to the church at Colosse and give them the instruction that he did.

Paul also made it plain that he was an apostle of “Jesus Christ.” Paul did not take this office upon himself, but was appointed to this office by Jesus Christ. In the scriptures all the names of God give us a description of certain aspects of the attributes and work of God. For instance, in the Old Testament the name “God” as first used was used in connection with the almighty power of God in creation. The name “LORD” in the Old Testament showed forth God as a covenant making, covenant keeping God. Likewise, the name “Jesus” means “Savior” and shows forth to us God’s purpose and work in saving his people from their sins.

The name Christ means “the anointed one.” In the Old Testament there were two classes of people that were anointed. These two classes were kings and priests. Thus, the name Christ refers to that work or office of God as both King of the kingdom of God and High Priest of the house of God. The King has the authority over the kingdom and gives the rules, laws, and ordinances of the kingdom. The High Priest had two primary

functions in that the High Priest offered the sacrifice unto God for the sins of the people and the High Priest made intercession on behalf of the people. Christ offered the sacrifice of himself (as the lamb of God) unto God and it was accepted of God. Christ now intercedes on behalf of his people.

Therefore, Paul has pointed out that his writing of that epistle is by the fact that he has been appointed an Apostle by the Savior, King and High Priest to the household of God. His authority derived by Jesus Christ.

“By the will of God...” Additionally Paul points out that his apostleship was not of his choosing, but of God’s choosing. This is true of any God called minister. God does the choosing and calling and the man chosen and called should respond to that call and serve the Lord under the direction and leadership of the Holy Spirit and according to God’s word.

“And Timotheus our brother...” Paul was not alone in the labor and work to the brethren and sisters at Colosse. Timothy was also a servant to the brethren and sisters in this work. For the most part, we find in the book of Acts that usually he had one or more brethren that were actively laboring with him. This sets a pattern for us in our labors that an effective witness usually involves two or more.

“To the saints and faithful brethren in Christ which are at Colosse...” When addressing a letter it is better to plainly identify to whom the letter is sent. When I get mail that is only going to a box number, I rarely even bother to open the envelope. Paul plainly identifies to whom this letter is intended. He was sending it to the “saints” at Colosse. The word, “saint,” does not mean a super good and super holy individual who had done great things in the service of God, but rather it means “holy” or “one set apart.” The people to whom Paul is writing had been set apart by God in at least three different ways:

1. They were set apart in election before the foundation of the world: Eph. 1:4 “According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love:”

2. They were set apart in the new or spiritual birth: Eph. 2:1 “And you hath he quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins:”

3. They were set apart from the condemnation of sin by the atoning sacrifice of Jesus Christ: Rom. 8:33 “Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth. 34 Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us.”

Moreover, they set themselves apart, when they repented, were baptized and pressed into the church kingdom on earth to become the disciples of the Lord: Matt. 28:19 “Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: 20 Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world. Amen.”

Those to whom Paul is writing are also called “faithful brethren...” We ask ourselves, “how did Paul know they were faithful brethren?” James said, “show me thy faith without they works, and I will show thee my faith by my works.” Truly the only way that we can manifest faithfulness is through our actions. Regardless of what our lips may utter, it is by our actions that we show our faithfulness. These to whom Paul was

writing had demonstrated their faithfulness by their actions. They had demonstrated they were faithful children of God through their actions. Plainly, we can see that Paul was writing to born-again children of God. They were “in Christ.”

“Grace be unto you, and peace, from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.” In every letter that Paul wrote to churches and to individuals, he began each epistle with the salutation of “grace and peace.” Moreover, he ended each of his epistles with the closing statement of God’s “grace.” This was a mark of Paul’s writings. He completely surrounded his writings with the mention of God’s grace. Grace means the unmerited favor of God. If any work or action is required on our part then it ceases to be grace: Rom. 11:6 “And if by grace, then is it no more of works: otherwise grace is no more grace. But if it be of works, then is it no more grace: otherwise work is no more work.” The following things are some of the things that are said to be by the grace of God and therefore our works or actions are not required:

1. Acts 18:27 “And when he was disposed to pass into Achaia, the brethren wrote, exhorting the disciples to receive him: who, when he was come, helped them much which had believed through grace:” Thus, our belief is by the grace of God.
2. Rom. 3:24 “Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus:” Justification from sin is by the grace of God.
3. Rom. 11:5 “Even so then at this present time also there is a remnant according to the election of grace.” Election is by grace.
4. Rom. 12:6 “Having then gifts differing according to the grace that is given to us, whether prophecy, let us prophesy according to the proportion of faith;” The spiritual gifts we possess are by the grace of God.
5. 2 Cor. 12:9 “And he said unto me, My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness. Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me.” God’s supplies in the midst of infirmities are by grace.
6. Gal. 1:15 “But when it pleased God, who separated me from my mother’s womb, and called me by his grace,” God’s calling is by grace.
7. Eph. 1:6 “To the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the beloved.” Being made accepted in Christ is by grace.
8. Eph. 1:7 “In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace;” Redemption and the forgiveness of sins is by grace.
9. Eph. 2:5 “Even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, (by grace ye are saved;). The spiritual birth is by grace.
10. Eph. 3:7 “Whereof I was made a minister, according to the gift of the grace of God given unto me by the effectual working of his power.” The calling to and the gift of the ministry is by the grace of God.
11. 2 Tim. 1:9 “Who hath saved us, and called us with an holy calling, not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began,” Our salvation and calling is by the grace of God.

Like grace, peace also comes from God. As individuals we need peace with God; we need peace in the courtroom of our heart and mind and we need peace in the midst of our trials and cares of this life. Peace with God came through the atoning sacrifice of Jesus Christ on behalf of our sins so that we now have peace with God. Peace in the

courtroom of our heart and mind comes through hearing and believing the gospel truth that Jesus in covenant died for our sins and redeemed us unto God. Peace in the midst of our trials and cares comes through believing the word of God and looking to the leadership and direction of the Holy Spirit in our lives.

“From God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.” Finally, the source of our grace and peace is from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. As the word “God” suggests He has almighty power and thus has the ability to deliver us. Next as “our Father” He has the care of a perfect Father for his children. As the “Lord” He is our Master who gives us as his servants our direction and the things we need to be able to serve him in an acceptable way. As “Jesus” he has saved us from our sins. As “Christ” He is our King who reins over us and gives us our government and has dominion over us, and our High Priest who offered the perfect sacrifice unto God for us and who now makes continual intercession for us.

Colossians 1.3-8

Col. 1:3 “We give thanks to God and the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, praying always for you, 4 Since we heard of your faith in Christ Jesus, and of the love which ye have to all the saints, 5 For the hope which is laid up for you in heaven, whereof ye heard before in the word of the truth of the gospel; 6 Which is come unto you, as it is in all the world; and bringeth forth fruit, as it doth also in you, since the day ye heard of it, and knew the grace of God in truth: 7 As ye also learned of Epaphras our dear fellowservant, who is for you a faithful minister of Christ; 8 Who also declared unto us your love in the Spirit.”

Frequently, when Paul wrote to a church or to an individual he began in his opening remarks to utter a prayer to God on their behalf. Those prayers began with Paul giving thanks to God for those to whom he was writing as the following passages show:

1. Rom. 1:8 “First, I thank my God through Jesus Christ for you all, that your faith is spoken of throughout the whole world.”
2. 1 Cor. 1:4 “I thank my God always on your behalf, for the grace of God which is given you by Jesus Christ;”
3. Eph. 1:15 “Wherefore I also, after I heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus, and love unto all the saints, 16 Cease not to give thanks for you, making mention of you in my prayers;”
4. Phil. 1:3 “I thank my God upon every remembrance of you,”
5. 2 Thes. 1:3 “We are bound to thank God always for you, brethren, as it is meet, because that your faith groweth exceedingly, and the charity of every one of you all toward each other aboundeth;”
6. 2 Tim. 1:3 “I thank God, whom I serve from my forefathers with pure conscience, that without ceasing I have remembrance of thee in my prayers night and day;”
7. Philemon 1:4 “I thank my God, making mention of thee always in my prayers,”

Paul has set an example for us in that prayers should generally start with thanksgiving unto God. Too often, I find myself guilty of going to God in prayer and

thinking mostly what I want to request from God. We have so much to be thankful for and we should thank God for those things. All of God's children should be thankful for the deliverance through the atoning blood of Christ from our sins. We should be thankful for the work of the Spirit upon our hearts that caused us to be born of the Spirit. We should be thankful for the hope that we have of heaven. We should be thankful for the scriptures; for the church; for the gospel; for the spiritual gifts given to each member of the church; for the leadership of the Spirit; for the providential blessings whereby God has delivered each of us in many ways.

Paul also said that he prayed always for the brothers and sisters at Colosse. This does not mean that he prayed 24 hours a day and 7 days a week for them. Rather, it means that he prayed for them on a regular basis without ceasing to pray for them.

Paul informs us that his prayers for the church at Colosse began when he heard some things about them: "Since we heard of your faith in Christ Jesus, and of the love which ye have to all the saints, For the hope which is laid up for you in heaven, whereof ye heard before in the word of the truth of the gospel." Most of Paul's prayers and most of the prayers we read about in the scriptures are not uttered in generalities. A prayer in generalities would be such as saying something like: "Lord bless everybody." Such a prayer is not specific as to whom we are interceding for and it is not specific as to what we are requesting. It is simply in generalities. Our prayers should be specific as to what we are thanking God for and specific as to what we are requesting and to whom we are making intercession.

The things which Paul heard about the brethren and sisters in Colosse were the three abiding principles laid out for us in 1 Cor. 13:13 "And now abideth faith, hope, charity, these three; but the greatest of these is charity."

Paul heard of their faith in Christ Jesus. How do we hear of someone's faith? James tells us the answer: James 2:18 "Yea, a man may say, Thou hast faith, and I have works: show me thy faith without thy works, and I will show thee my faith by my works." Apparently, Paul heard of the works of the members of the church at Colosse and concluded that they had faith in Christ Jesus.

Paul also heard of their love to all the saints. Words are important and have significance. There is a difference between "love **for** all the saints" and "love **to** all the saints." Love is more than a feeling, but rather is an action. We have love to the saints when we give of ourselves unselfishly for their benefit. The Lord said in John 15:13: "Greater love hath no man than this: that a man lay down his life for his friends." Sacrificially and unselfishly giving of ourselves for the benefit of another is to have love to that individual.

Paul also heard of the hope that they had that was laid up for them in heaven. Hope is not a wish or just a dream. Hope is something that is fully expected. Paul wrote in Romans 8:24 "For we are saved by hope: but hope that is seen is not hope: for what a man seeth, why doth he yet hope for? 25 But if we hope for that we see not, then do we with patience wait for it." Our hope of the resurrection and the eternal inheritance in heaven is based on a promise of God which we read about in Tit. 1:2: "In hope of eternal life, which God, that cannot lie, promised before the world began;" God promised all the elect family of God eternal life before the world began. Since God cannot lie, then that promise is just as sure as God is.

This hope becomes experiential to God's children when they hear and believe the gospel as Paul said above: "whereof ye heard before in the word of the truth of the gospel;" When we heard the word of truth in the gospel that salvation from sin and eternal life is by the grace of God through the atoning sacrifice of Jesus Christ and is given to us according to the covenant of redemption that God in covenant promise made before the world began and we believed this precious truth then our hope became experiential in our hearts. Many of God's children have not this experiential hope in their heart because they have either not heard the true gospel of grace or they have not believed the true gospel of the grace of Christ.

"Which is come unto you, as it is in all the world; and bringeth forth fruit, as it doth also in you, since the day ye heard of it, and knew the grace of God in truth:" Paul speaks here of the gospel going into all the world. Most frequently people misapply the term "all the world" to mean every individual upon the planet earth. When Paul wrote the above there is no reason to believe that those people living in North or South American or those living in Australia or those living in most of Africa had heard the gospel of the grace of Christ at that time. Rather, the world in scriptural times consisted of Jews and Gentiles. The gospel not only went to the Jews, but also to the Gentiles beginning with Cornelius and his household. Thus the gospel had gone unto both some Jews and some Gentiles which is represented by the term above "all the world."

Moreover, the gospel brought forth fruit in those who heard and believed the gospel. When a person hears and believes the gospel, it begins to bring forth the fruit of the Spirit in the life of that believer. The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness and temperance.

"As ye also learned of Epaphras our dear fellowservant, who is for you a faithful minister of Christ." One of the lessons Paul teaches us here is that there are no hierarchal positions in the Lord's church. Paul did not consider his office as an apostle was greater than Epaphras office as a pastor and teacher. He referred to Epaphras as a dear fellowservant. A fellowservant indicates they were on the same level. Moreover, as gospel ministers in the church they were servants and not masters. All members of the Lord's churches are supposed to be servants to one another.

Epaphras was a faithful minister of Christ. That is he was ministering the words of God to the people of God. Faithfulness should be the goal of all disciples of Christ. God has not called us to be successful, but rather he has called us to be faithful. It is far, far better for us to be faithful than to be successful.

"Who also declared unto us your love in the Spirit." What would we like for others to say about us as members of a local church? Would we want them to say, "They were constantly bickering and fighting with one another; or they were backbiting and jealous, and unforgiving towards the faults of others?" Wouldn't we rather that they declare of us our love in the spirit? I don't know of any better thing that could be said of a local assembly than "they have love one to another in the Spirit."

Colossians 1.9-11

Col. 1:9 “For this cause we also, since the day we heard it, do not cease to pray for you, and to desire that ye might be filled with the knowledge of his will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding; 10 That ye might walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing, being fruitful in every good work, and increasing in the knowledge of God; 11 Strengthened with all might, according to his glorious power, unto all patience and longsuffering with joyfulness;”

“For this cause we also, since the day we heard it, do not cease to pray for you...” Paul tells the members of the church at Colosse that for the cause of their love in Christ and the brethren and for the cause of their faithfulness to Christ, that he did not cease to pray for them since the day he heard of their faith, love and hope. Now this is not to say that he was praying for them 24 hours a day and 7 days a week. Rather, it means that Paul prayed for them on a regular basis and did not cease praying for them after a few times. We should have the same attitude in prayer that Paul had towards the brethren at Colosse. We should pray for one another without ceasing on a regular basis and not cease praying for them after a few times.

“And to desire that ye might be filled with the knowledge of his will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding...” Paul is very specific in detailing what he was praying for on their behalf. I believe we make a mistake when we make much of our prayer life in generalities. We should be like Paul and be specific as to the things we pray for. When children ask their parents for something, they are most of the time very specific as to what they ask. We should remember that we are children of God and that he is our heavenly Father. As children, we should be specific in the things we ask for.

Often in our prayers we ask for God to bless someone’s health, or deliver them from sickness or disease, or poverty or from some specific troubling circumstance in their lives. These things are important, but that is not what Paul begins to ask on behalf of the brethren at Colosse. He begins his prayer on their behalf by asking for three specific things be granted to the brethren and sisters at Colosse:

1. He asks that God would fill them with knowledge of his will.
2. He asks that God would grant them wisdom.
3. He asks that God would give them spiritual understanding.

These are the three things in the book of proverbs that are spoken of as being great treasures or riches. In our worship and service to God we need knowledge, understanding and wisdom. Moreover, we cannot have understanding and wisdom without knowledge. Knowledge is the foundation for our understanding and for the acquisition of wisdom. Paul told Timothy: 1 Tim. 4:13 “Till I come, give attendance to reading, to exhortation, to doctrine.” Likewise, we should give attendance to reading so that we may acquire knowledge of God’s word. Paul desired that those at Colosse would be “filled” with the knowledge of God’s will. Likewise, we should pray for one another that we may be “filled” with the knowledge of God’s will. As we are blessed today with ready access to God’s word, we should avail ourselves and make a habit of reading in God’s word daily.

It is not enough that we only have knowledge of God’s word; we also need understanding of God’s word. Understanding comes through study. Paul told Timothy: 2 Tim. 2:15 “Study to show thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.” Since we have all been created in Christ Jesus unto good works, we are all workmen. A workman needs to know the tools of his

trade and how to apply those tools to the task at hand. Likewise, we need to be able to properly apply the scriptures to the task of worshipping God and serving his people and to being the best disciple that we can be. This comes through the knowledge we have gained and by prayer and the study of God's word.

In addition, we need more than knowledge and spiritual understanding, but also need wisdom. Wisdom is the application of God's word to the problems and circumstances of our lives. For wisdom, we begin by asking God for it: James 1:5 "If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him. 6 But let him ask in faith, nothing wavering. For he that wavereth is like a wave of the sea driven with the wind and tossed. 7 For let not that man think that he shall receive any thing of the Lord." Thus, we are to ask God for wisdom knowing that He gives to us liberally and upbraids us not. As we ask, we are to ask in faith and not waver. Next, with the knowledge and understanding that we have gained through reading God's word and studying God's word, we are to meditate on God's word: 1 Tim. 4:15 "Meditate upon these things; give thyself wholly to them; that thy profiting may appear to all." To meditate means to resolve in the mind. When we are faced with a problem or circumstance of life, we are to resolve in our minds how to apply the knowledge and understanding we have gained to apply to the solution of the problem or circumstance in our life.

"That ye might walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing, being fruitful in every good work, and increasing in the knowledge of God..." Next, Paul says that he is praying for three more things for the disciples at Colosse:

1. That the walk (manner of living) of the disciples may be worthy (as becometh) a disciple of Christ unto all pleasing.
2. That they may be fruitful in every good work.
3. That they may increase in the knowledge of the Lord.

Armed with the knowledge of God's word and the spiritual understanding that is needed to be a workman in the kingdom of God and with the wisdom to properly apply God's word to the circumstances and problems of life, we need to press on to live our lives in a manner that would be befitting a disciple of Jesus Christ. The Lord said: Matt. 5:16 "Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven." Thus, it is our privilege and duty to live our lives according to the teaching of God's word so that men will glorify the Father which is in heaven.

Being a good disciple of Christ is more than living a good moral life. It also is to be manifest by our being fruitful in every good work. A good work is a work that brings praise, honor and glory to God. Normally they involve those things that we do for others unselfishly and seeking no honor and glory for ourselves. The pattern of our lives is to be manifest through the multitude of good works.

When we live a life that is honoring and glorifying unto God and bring forth much good fruit, then we are not finished for as long as we live we should be striving to gain more knowledge of the Lord. I have known several older people who in the latter years of their lives were still reading, studying, and meditating on the word of God and still making every effort to hear the word preached, so that they could know more about God.

“Strengthened with all might, according to his glorious power, unto all patience and longsuffering with joyfulness;” The seventh thing that Paul prayed for on behalf of the disciples at Colosse was that they may be strengthened. The work and warfare of a disciple of Jesus Christ requires strength. However, this is not a strength that we have inherently in ourselves; rather it is a strength that can only come from God. Paul said: 2 Cor. 12:10 “Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses for Christ's sake: for when I am weak, then am I strong.” He also said: Phil. 4:13 “I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me.” The source of our strength comes from Christ.

Paul prayed that this strength they would receive from God would affect them in 3 ways:

1. Patience.
2. Longsuffering.
3. Joyfulness.

Patience simply means waiting upon the Lord. We live in a very impatient society. We live in a society that wants instant gratification. A disciple of the Lord must learn to wait upon the direction and moving of the Spirit of God. We get in trouble when we try to go ahead of the Lord. When we realize that the Lord is our strength and the one who answers and responds to our prayers, then we learn to wait upon him and realize the foolishness of going ahead of the Lord.

Longsuffering is to be a trait of the disciple of the Lord. We learn to be longsuffering when we realize how the Lord has been longsuffering towards us. It takes the knowledge of the Lord's longsuffering towards our sins and failures and the strength the Lord grants us to be longsuffering to the sins and failures of others.

Joyfulness comes through the peace and comfort of knowing that we are in the Lord's hand and that he is the strength of our lives and he is the one who has delivered us numerous times in our trials and troubles.

Colossians 1.12-14 part 1

Col. 1:12 “Giving thanks unto the Father, which hath made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light: 13 Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son: 14 In whom we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins:”

“Giving thanks unto the Father...” Often in our prayer life we are asking God to help us or to bless us or to help someone we know and to bless them. One of the most neglected aspects of most of us in our prayers lives is to give thanks unto God. We have much in which we should be thankful to God for his blessings upon us. In the above passage, Paul outlines four things that we should be especially thankful for and that we should express thanks to God for. These four things are as follows:

1. That he has made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light.
2. That he has delivered us from the power of darkness.
3. That he has translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son.

4. That in Christ we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins.

We will now deal with these four things in the order they are presented to us.

First, God has made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light. One of the grand and glorious themes of the bible and especially of the New Testament is that there are a people who have an inheritance awaiting them. Peter tells us about that inheritance in 1 Pet. 1:3, 4: “Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to his abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, To an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you...” From this there are several points that we can make about this inheritance:

1. This inheritance is a heavenly inheritance. It is not an earthly inheritance but one that awaits us in heaven.

2. This inheritance is incorruptible. All earthly inheritances are corruptible and do corrupt over time. We live in corrupt bodies that corrupt unto death over time. That will not be the case in heaven. Our bodies will be changed in the resurrection and be incorruptible. Nothing about the glory world will be corrupt or corruptible. There will be no decay brought about by sin or anything else.

3. This inheritance is undefiled. We live in a world that is defiled by sin brought about as a result of the sin of our father Adam and exacerbated by the uncountable multitudes of sin by mankind ever since. There will be no defilement with sin in heaven and no possibility of sin in heaven. That glory world is and will always remain undefiled.

4. Unlike earthly inheritances, that heavenly inheritance will not fade away over time. The joys and blessings of that glory world will be just as great after ten billion years as it was when we first arrive in the glory world.

5. That inheritance is reserved. There has been a reservation made for God’s people in that glory world. There will be no such thing as someone arriving and finding that there simply is no room for them. That reservation is a specific and not a general reservation. Sometimes reservations are made by businesses or churches or other organizations for a block of rooms. These are non-specific reservations. Our reservation in heaven is a specific reservation. It is reserved for “**YOU**.”

Since the reservation of that inheritance is made by God, there is a certainty to that reservation that could not be if the reservation was made by man. We are told in Eph. 1:11 “In whom also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestinated according to the purpose of him who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will:” Paul tells us that we have already obtained that inheritance by promise of God as he has “predestinated” us to it according to the purpose of him who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will. The word “predestinated” simply means that God fixed the final destination beforehand. The final destination of those that God purposed after the counsel of his own will was that they obtain an eternal inheritance.

Next, we ask ourselves “Who has the right of heirship of this inheritance?” There are four ways in which a person can be an heir. A person can be an heir by natural birth. A person can be an heir by adoption. A person can be an heir by marriage. A person can be an heir by being named in a will. God’s people are heirs by all four ways.

First, they are heirs by spiritual birth: 1 Pet. 1:23 “Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever.” Also, 1 John 3:9 Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin; for his seed remaineth in him: and he cannot sin, because he is born of God.”

Next, they are heirs by adoption. Adoption is the process whereby a person is taken out of one family and placed in another family. God’s children were in the family of Adam by natural birth. While they are given a new nature in the spiritual birth, they still have the Adamic nature in their bodies. We read in Eph. 1:5: “Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will...” There are three great requirements in adoption. First, the child to be adopted must be chosen. Note that the child never does the choosing, but the parents do the choosing. In this case, God does the choosing and not the person being chosen. According to Eph. 1:4 this choosing took place before the world began: “According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love:” The second great requirement in adoption is that the legal requirements must be met. All debts of the child must be satisfied. Each of those God chose had a great debt of sin and had not ability to pay the debt. However, Christ paid the debt for them as we read in 2 Cor. 5:21: “For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.” This payment of debts was made when Christ hang on the cross and suffered the wrathful judgment of God in their place and to satisfy God’s wrath against their sins. The third thing is that the child is removed from the original family and taken home to the adopting family. This will take place in the resurrection. The children of God are predestinated unto the adoption of children. Since God has determined and fixed their final destination beforehand, the outcome is just as certain as God is.

Third, God’s children are heirs of God as they have been made part of the bride of Christ. Those for whom Christ died are made to be his bride as we read in Eph. 5:25-27: “Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it; That he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word, That he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish.” In this passage, husbands are admonished to love their wives in the same manner as Christ loved his bride and gave himself for her and presented her to himself as a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing...

Fourth, God children are heirs of God by will or testament: Heb. 9:15 “And for this cause he is the mediator of the new testament, that by means of death, for the redemption of the transgressions that were under the first testament, they which are called might receive the promise of eternal inheritance. 16 For where a testament is, there must also of necessity be the death of the testator. 17 For a testament is of force after men are dead: otherwise it is of no strength at all while the testator liveth.” There are several conclusions that we make from the above passage:

1. Christ is the testator as well as the mediator of this testament.
2. A testator must die before the testament is in force.
3. Names cannot be added to a testament or changes made to the testament once the testament is in force.
4. When Christ died, the testament came into force.

5. Since the testament is already in force, there can be no changes made to the testament or names added to the testament.

6. All those named in the testament are legal heirs of the testator and have the testator's inheritance.

Next, we ask ourselves, "When was this testament made and what were the terms of this testament?" The answer is found in Rom. 8:29, 30: "For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren. Moreover whom he did predestinate, them he also called: and whom he called, them he also justified: and whom he justified, them he also glorified." As we previously noted in Eph. 1:4 God's children were chosen in Christ before the foundation of the world. According to the passage above the final outcome of that testament is that those God foreknew will be conformed to the image of Christ and will be glorified.

Therefore we conclude that God's people are heirs by all four ways in which someone can be an heir.

In addition, we are told some more great things about this inheritance in Rom. 8:16 "The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God: 17 And if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together. 18 For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us. 19 For the earnest expectation of the creature waiteth for the manifestation of the sons of God." From this we make the following observations:

1. We have a two-fold witness that we are God's children. We have the spirit that God gave us in regeneration. We also have the Holy Spirit begin witness with the spirit that God gave us that we are the children of God.

2. Since we are children we are also heirs of God.

3. The nature of our inheritance is awesome! We are joint-heirs with Christ. This simple means that everything that is Christ's is also ours! In joint-heirship everything that is one's belongs jointly to everyone else as well! In other words, we share jointly everything that is Christ's! There is no such thing as one having more than another in heaven.

4. The glory of our inheritance is not said to be revealed to us, but is revealed **in us**. Again this is awesome, that those whose nature is corruptible and full of sin, should one day possess the glory that has been promised to us.

Moreover, there are times when an heir will not come into full possession of the inheritance until an appointed time. For instance a man may have a will in which he leaves his estate to his only son. However, the son cannot get full possession until he is 30 years old. In the meantime the father made arrangements that the son would draw an earnest of the inheritance until he reaches the age of 30. This could be something like a monthly stipend until that time he comes into full possession. This arrangement is called an "earnest" of the inheritance.

We read about how God's children can have an earnest of the inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession in Eph. 1:13 "In whom ye also trusted, after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation: in whom also after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that holy Spirit of promise, 14 Which is the earnest of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, unto the praise of his

glory.” Coming into possession of the earnest of the inheritance begins when someone hears the word of truth and trust in Christ for their eternal redemption rather than seeking to justify themselves before God by their works or actions. Once they believe that Christ has delivered them from their sins and heaven shall be theirs by the grace of God, they are then sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise. This seal is not like sealing a box with tape, but rather is like the king’s seal whereby the king had a ring that was peculiar to the king and in which he pressed on an ink pad and then upon a document to authenticate the document as being his document. When we believe that Christ died to redeem us from our sins and that by his grace alone, then the Holy Spirit impresses upon our hearts that we are one of his. This is the earnest of our inheritance until the redemption of our bodies. It brings great peace and rest and comfort to the believing child of grace to know that heaven and all its glory awaits him at the end of his journey on earth.

Colossians 1.13

Col. 1:13 “Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son:”

The “Who” refers to God and this tells us that God has delivered us from the power of darkness.” There are three questions that come to my mind as I study the first half of this verse:

1. What is “darkness” referring to?
2. Who has the power of darkness?
3. How were we delivered from the power of darkness?

Throughout the scriptures God has made a separation between light and darkness. For instance in the creation we read where God called the light day and the darkness he called night. Moreover, God is referred to as light: 1 John 1:5 “This then is the message which we have heard of him, and declare unto you, that God is light, and in him is no darkness at all.” Since God is light and in Him is no darkness, then darkness must refer to something that is contrary to the very nature of God. Things that are contrary to God include unrighteousness, sin and death. The following twelve verses connect together darkness and death: Job 3:5; 10:21; 10:22; 12:22; 28:3; 34:22; Ps. 107:10; 107:14; Isa. 9:2; Jer. 13:16; Matt. 4:16; and Luke 1:79. It is safe to conclude that darkness in the subject verse has reference to sin and death.

The following verses point us to Satan as the one who has the **power of darkness**:

1. James 1:13 “Let no man say when he is tempted, I am tempted of God: for God cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempteth he any man: 14 But every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed. 15 Then when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin: and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death.”
2. 3:1 “Now the serpent was more subtle than any beast of the field which the LORD God had made. And he said unto the woman, Yea, hath God said, Ye shall not eat of every tree of the garden? 2 And the woman said unto the serpent, We may eat of the fruit of the trees of the garden: 3 But of the fruit of the tree which is in the midst of

the garden, God hath said, Ye shall not eat of it, neither shall ye touch it, lest ye die. 4 And the serpent said unto the woman, Ye shall not surely die: 5 For God doth know that in the day ye eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil. 6 And when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree to be desired to make one wise, she took of the fruit thereof, and did eat, and gave also unto her husband with her; and he did eat.”

3. Heb. 2:14 “Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same; that through death he might destroy him that had the **power of death**, that is, the devil;

Satan uses deception to entice men to sin. When fleshly lust conceives with the enticement, it brings forth sin and when sin is finished it brings forth death. In the Garden when Satan enticed Eve to eat of the forbidden fruit and she gave unto Adam and he did eat, death followed for both Adam and Eve. According to Rom. 5:12: “Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned:” Thus, through the one enticement of Satan, death subsequently passed upon all mankind. This death is a three-fold death as it brought a condition known as being dead in trespasses and sins upon the nature of fallen man; it ultimately brings forth death of the body; and it brought man kind into a state of eternal damnation that is called in Revelation as the second death.

Being under the power of darkness, meant that we were dead in trespasses and sins. This condition is described for us in Rom. 3:9 “What then? are we better than they? No, in no wise: for we have before proved both Jews and Gentiles, that they are all under sin; 10 As it is written, There is none righteous, no, not one: 11 There is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God. 12 They are all gone out of the way, they are together become unprofitable; there is none that doeth good, no, not one. 13 Their throat is an open sepulchre; with their tongues they have used deceit; the poison of asps is under their lips: 14 Whose mouth is full of cursing and bitterness: 15 Their feet are swift to shed blood: 16 Destruction and misery are in their ways: 17 And the way of peace have they not known: 18 There is no fear of God before their eyes.” Being under sin, meant that we were under sins’ control. We were slaves to sin. We were altogether unrighteous (darkness-vj); we had absolutely no understanding of spiritual things; we could not seek after God; we could not do good nor did we want to do good; we were sinners by word and by practice; and we did not fear God.

When we under the power of darkness as described above, God delivered us from the power of darkness through covenant arrangement. This covenant is stated for us in Rom. 8:29, 30: “For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren. Moreover whom he did predestinate, them he also called: and whom he called, them he also justified: and whom he justified, them he also glorified.”

Being under sin we were under the bondage of sin and under the condemnation of sin and under the corruption of sin. By God’s covenant arrangement we are delivered from all three aspects of being under sin. First, God delivered us from the bondage of sin by His “effectual call” unto spiritual life:

1. Eph. 2:1 “And you hath he quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins:”

2. John 5:25 “Verily, verily, I say unto you, The hour is coming, and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God: and they that hear shall live.” As a result of the quickening of God through the voice of the Son of God we have been given a nature whereby we can seek after God; we can understand the things of the Spirit of God; we can do good; we can cease from sin; we do fear God. Sin no longer has us as slaves.

We are delivered from the condemnation of God through the justifying work of Jesus Christ for us at the cross: Rom. 3:24 “Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus:”

Moreover, we have the promise of eternal glorification which delivers us from the corruption of sin. The glorification of the body will take place in the resurrection when our vile bodies will be changed and made like unto Jesus glorious body. Heb. 2:14 “Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same; that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil; 15 And deliver them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage.” Jesus by means of his death on the cross has destroyed him that had the power of death (Satan no longer has the power of death over the children of God) and delivered them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage. By the death of Jesus which delivered us from the condemnation of sin and by his resurrection, he gained the ultimately victory over death and gave us hope that when He returns our bodies will be resurrected also just as God promised.

In the second part of the subject text we read, “and hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son:” Translation means to take from one state, condition, or language and bring to another state, condition, or language. For instance, if we speak English and an article is written in French and we don’t speak French, then for us to read the article it has to be translated from French to English.

Before, our translation we were in the kingdom of Satan, under the power of darkness. When God delivered us from the power of darkness, he also delivered us into the kingdom of his dear Son. In order for us to be delivered into the kingdom of his dear Son, we had to be translated. Before, we were under the condemnation of sin, the bondage of sin, and the corruption of sin. In order for us to be in the kingdom of His dear Son, we had to be justified, delivered from the bondage of sin and delivered from the corruption of sin. By the covenant work of Jesus Christ (Rom. 8:29, 30: “For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren. Moreover whom he did predestinate, them he also called: and whom he called, them he also justified: and whom he justified, them he also glorified.”) We are called by the Holy Spirit into spiritual life, which delivered from the bondage of sin; we are justified by the shed blood of Jesus Christ for the elect, which delivered us from the condemnation of sin; and we are glorified in the glorious morning of the resurrection, which delivers us from the corruption of sin. God has made us fit subjects and placed us in the kingdom of His dear Son. For this, we give him all the praise, honor and glory.

Colossians 1:14

Col. 1:14 “In whom we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins:”

In the United States, merchants often allow for customers to put things on layaway and come later and pay for the purchase. Payment for the previously selected item is called redeeming the item.

Redemption as taught in the scriptures requires three things. First, it requires a previous selection of the one to be redeemed. Second, it requires that the redemption price be paid. Third, it requires that the ones redeemed be taken home to the redeemer. Also, we note that the ones, who are purchased, belong to the one who purchased them. Prior to the redemption, the ones who are selected for redemption were the slaves of sin.

Back in the morning of time, when Adam was in the Garden of Eden, God made a covenant with him. The covenant read, “Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat: But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die.” When Adam ate of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, he sold himself under the curse of the law of sin and death. From that point he became the servant of sin. Moreover, under the laws of servitude, all that proceeded from the loins of Adam would also be the servants of sin and death.

Remember that under the laws of redemption a prior selection had to take place. This selection took place according to Eph. 1:4, 5: “According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love: Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will.” Here, we see that God selected a people with the purpose of redeeming them and making them his. We also see that this selection took place before the foundation of the world. In this passage, we see that redemption and adoption are tied together.

Next, after the selection has taken place, the payment for redemption had to take place. We note several verses of scripture that point to the payment of the redemption price for those selected:

1. Rom. 3:24 “Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus:”

2. Rom. 8:23 “And not only they, but ourselves also, which have the firstfruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body.”

3. Eph. 1:7 “In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace;”

4. Eph. 1:14 “Which is the earnest of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, unto the praise of his glory.”

5. Heb. 9:12 “Neither by the blood of goats and calves, but by his own blood he entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us.”

6. Heb. 9:15 “And for this cause he is the mediator of the new testament, that by means of death, for the redemption of the transgressions that were under the first testament, they which are called might receive the promise of eternal inheritance.”

We notice several things from the verses quoted above:

1. Redemption is free to us and by the grace of God through the atoning blood of Christ.

2. It is our body that is being redeemed.

3. Redemption and forgiveness of sins are tied together in the atoning sacrifice of Christ for us.

4. The eternal redemption price has already been paid. All that is left in redemption is for the ones purchased to be taken home.

5. The redemption took place by covenant arrangement.

6. Christ is the mediator of the covenant of redemption.

7. We, who were selected before the foundation of the world, have the promise of eternal inheritance as a result of the redemption having been paid for us.

Based on the covenant of redemption, outlined for us in Rom. 8:29, 30, the last of the five items in that covenant is glorification. When Christ comes again, in the morning of the resurrection, we will be glorified and taken home to our eternal inheritance in heaven where we will be joint heirs with Jesus Christ.

As we stated at the beginning, now that we have been redeemed, we cannot consider ourselves to be our own but that we are the servants of Jesus Christ: 1 Cor. 6:19 What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own? 20 For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's." What a glorious blessing it is to know that we are no longer the servants of sin, but we have been redeemed and now we are the servants of Jesus Christ who has bought us.

Colossians 1.15

Col. 1:15 "Who is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of every creature:"
"The image of the invisible God..." Two other verses of scripture point us to the fact that Christ is the image of the invisible God:

1. 2. Cor. 4:4 "In whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them."

2. Heb. 1:3 "Who being the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person, and upholding all things by the word of his power, when he had by himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high;"

The word, "image," means "likeness" or "representation." Notice from above that Christ is the express image of the person of God. He is God manifest in the flesh as an expression unto us of the nature of God. We have the statement of Christ unto the disciples and especially unto Philip: John 14:7 "If ye had known me, ye should have known my Father also: and from henceforth ye know him, and have seen him. 8 Philip saith unto him, Lord, show us the Father, and it sufficeth us. 9 Jesus saith unto him, Have I been so long time with you, and yet hast thou not known me, Philip? he that hath seen me hath seen the Father; and how sayest thou then, Show us the Father?"

When God created Adam in the Garden of Eden, he was created in the image of God: Gen. 1:26 "And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness: and let

them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth. 27 So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them.”

Based on the above we can conclude that when man was created he was in the image of God. When thinking upon this fact, my mind is drawn to two questions:

1. Is man still in the image of God?
2. How is man in the image of God?

Let us deal with the second question first. Of all of God's creation only man was created in the image of God. Further, God later forbid man to make any image of God. Thus, man is the only image and likeness of God that God has authorized. The scriptures do not say that God created man partially in the image and likeness of God. It says that he created God in his own image after his own likeness. Thus, man was the best representation and likeness of God that God created.

This principle is set forth in examining the physical characteristics of man and the things the scriptures say about God. The following is said in describing God in comparison to the physical characteristics of man:

1. Ps. 11:4 "The LORD is in his holy temple, the LORD'S throne is in heaven: **his eyes** behold, his eyelids try, the children of men."
2. Ps. 34:15 "The eyes of the LORD are upon the righteous, and **his ears** are open unto their cry."
3. Deu. 4:34 "Or hath God assayed to go and take him a nation from the midst of another nation, by temptations, by signs, and by wonders, and by war, and by a **mighty hand**, and by a **stretched out arm**, and by great terrors, according to all that the LORD your God did for you in Egypt before your eyes?"
4. Ex. 24:10 "And they saw the God of Israel: and there was under **his feet** as it were a paved work of a sapphire stone, and as it were the body of heaven in his clearness."
5. 1 Sam. 13:14 "But now thy kingdom shall not continue: the LORD hath sought him a man after **his own heart**, and the LORD hath commanded him to be captain over his people, because thou hast not kept that which the LORD commanded thee."
6. Ex. 31:18 "And he gave unto Moses, when he had made an end of communing with him upon mount Sinai, two tables of testimony, tables of stone, written with the **finger** of God."

In the above we note the description of God using the physical characteristics of man.

Likewise, other verses of scripture describe God using the senses of man: see, hear, smell, taste, and feel:

1. Gen. 11:5 "And the LORD came down to see the city and the tower, which the children of men builded."
2. Deu. 33:7 "And this is the blessing of Judah: and he said, Hear, LORD, the voice of Judah, and bring him unto his people: let his hands be sufficient for him; and be thou an help to him from his enemies."

3. Phil. 4:18 "But I have all, and abound: I am full, having received of Epaphroditus the things which were sent from you, an odour of a sweet smell, a sacrifice acceptable, wellpleasing to God."

4. Heb. 2:9 "But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honour; that he by the grace of God should taste death for every man."

5. Heb. 4:15 "For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin."

Moreover, we see verbs associated with man used to describe God such as God speaking; God denying; God working; God judging; God forgiving; God rewarding; etc.

Unlike the birds, fishes, mammals and other animals that God created, man was created with the ability to think logically, to reason, to rationalize, to deduce and draw conclusions. These are also things that are ascribed to God.

The phrase, "Let us," indicates a plurality in the Godhead. This is verified by several scriptures with 1 John 5:7 the most cited: "For there are three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost: and these three are one." The three, yet one, nature of the Godhead is also found in man's likeness and image to God. According to 1 Thes. 5:23 man is also three, yet one, in nature: "And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly; and I pray God your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ."

There are seven things that God made man in which he is different from the other creatures, yet are characteristic to God:

1. God made man upright. All the other mammals, birds, reptiles, insects, etc. are made to locomote parallel to the ground. Man is made so that he can readily look outward and upwards.

2. God made man with a reasoning, rational, logical mind. All of the other creatures are extremely limited in their ability to logically reason if at all.

3. God made man with the freedom of ability to choose his course. No other creature has the latitude to make such free choices.

4. God made man to have "dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth." God certainly has dominion over all his creation. God gave man to have dominion over a large portion of the creatures of the earth.

5. God made man in the image of the Godhead. The Godhead consists of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit and these three are one. God made man a threefold yet one nature: body, soul, and spirit.

6. God made man with the ability to assimilate language for communication. All other creatures are very limited in their ability to communicate and do not have the ability to assimilate language to any degree.

7. God gave man wisdom. This is the ability to take the knowledge and understanding that man has and to put it to good use.

The following two verses teach us that man is still in the image of God:

1. Gen. 9:6 "Whoso sheddeth man's blood, by man shall his blood be shed: for in the image of God made he man."

2. 1 Cor. 11:7 "For a man indeed ought not to cover his head, forasmuch as he is the image and glory of God: but the woman is the glory of the man."

However, due to the fall of man, man is no longer completely in the image of God for we find in the covenant of redemption that the elect of God are predestinated to be conformed to the image of the Son: Rom. 8:29, 30: "For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be **conformed to the image of his Son**, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren. Moreover whom he did predestinate, them he also called: and whom he called, them he also justified: and whom he justified, them he also glorified." If man were perfectly in the image of God then why would it be necessary that God predestinate the elect to be conformed to the image of the Son?

There are things about God that Adam and his genealogy lost in the fall of man. The read the following concerning Christ: Heb.7:26 "For such a high priest became us, who is holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and made higher than the heavens..." Furthermore, Christ is called the Sun of Righteousness: Mal. 4:2 "But unto you that fear my name shall the Sun of righteousness arise with healing in his wings; and ye shall go forth, and grow up as calves of the stall." In contrast it is said of fallen man in Rom. 3:10: "As it is written, There is none righteous, no, not one:" Ultimately in the resurrection through the atoning sacrifice of Christ we will once again be completely in the image of Christ as we will be holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and made higher than the heavens and we will be made altogether righteous.

Furthermore, Christ, being the expressed image of God, manifests the nature of God unto us through his life and his teachings and all his works. What we can understand about God Christ manifest unto us.

"Invisible God..." God cannot be seen with our natural eye. We are not capable of looking upon God with our natural eye:

1. 1 Tim. 1:17 "Now unto the King eternal, immortal, invisible, the only wise God, be honour and glory for ever and ever. Amen."

2. Heb. 11:27 "By faith he forsook Egypt, not fearing the wrath of the king: for he endured, as seeing him who is invisible." Moses did not literally see God, but he saw him through an eye of faith in his experiences. In this regard we read Rom. 1:20 "Rom. 1:20 "For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead; so that they are without excuse:" We do not literally see these invisible things (his eternal power and Godhead), but we get some understanding of them by looking at the things that God has made.

That we cannot look upon God and live is spelled out for us in Ex. 33:20 when God said unto Moses: "And he said, Thou canst not see my face: for there shall no man see me, and live."

"The firstborn of every creature." Obviously, this is not speaking about every living creature including all the animals and plants and microorganisms, etc. The word "creature" in this context is pointing us to a very specific creation. This creation is spelled out for us in the following scriptures:

1. 2 Cor. 5:17 "Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new."

2. Gal. 6:15 "For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision, but a new creature."

3. Eph. 2:10 “For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them.”

When we were born of the Spirit of God we became new creatures inwardly. It is to these who have been born of the Spirit of God that Christ is the “firstborn” of “every creature.” The firstborn was the representative of the entire family. When God destroyed the firstborn in Egypt, the Egyptians recognized that the firstborn was representative of the entire family as they said, “we be all dead men.” The firstborn had the birthright and received a double portion. He became the head of the family, when the father died. Moreover, he was the representative of the family in legal matters concerning his siblings. Thus, Christ, being the firstborn, represented the entire family of God at the cross.

Heb. 12:23 “To the general assembly and church of the firstborn, which are written in heaven, and to God the Judge of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect...” This shows that Christ is the firstborn of the entire elect family of God whose names are written in heaven. He is their elder brother and he is their representative in the fulfilling of the justice and righteousness of God.

Colossians 1.16-18

Col. 1:16 “For by him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by him, and for him: 17 And he is before all things, and by him all things consist. 18 And he is the head of the body, the church: who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead; that in all things he might have the preeminence.”

“For by him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by him, and for him:” That Christ is the creator of all things is plainly set forth in the above as well as the following scriptures:

1. John 1:1 “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. 2 The same was in the beginning with God. 3 All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made.”

2. Eph. 2:10 “For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them.”

3. Rev. 4:11 “Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honour and power: for thou hast created all things, and for thy pleasure they are and were created.”

The physical universe and all things in nature were created according to Genesis chapter 1 in 6 days and God rested on the 7th day as he had finished the work of natural creation. However, spiritual creation continues as the elect are created to be new spiritual creatures. This happens at Christ’s appointed time. The following verses show us both the sovereignty of God in bringing about the new birth in his own appointed time and the means by which he brings about the new birth making us new creatures:

1. John 3:8 “The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth: so is every one that is

born of the Spirit.” Just as the wind is sovereign to us in its going forth, so Christ is sovereign in the timing and action of causing the elect to be born again.

2. John 5:25 “Verily, verily, I say unto you, The hour is coming, and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God: and they that hear shall live.” The same voice that spoke the universe into being also spoke spiritual life into us when we were dead in trespasses and sins. Thus, before he spoke we had no spiritual life. Then when he spoke by his powerful voice he imparted spiritual life into us.

While we are not given much details of the creation of the angels, yet the scriptures tell us that he created all things and therefore we know that he created the angels. Further we read in Ezekiel 28:14 “Thou art the anointed cherub that covereth; and I have set thee so: thou wast upon the holy mountain of God; thou hast walked up and down in the midst of the stones of fire. 15 Thou wast perfect in thy ways from the day that thou wast created, till iniquity was found in thee.” Thus, even Satan was a created being. Like Adam, he fell from the state in which he was created.

“And he is before all things, and by him all things consist. 18 And he is the head of the body, the church:” Christ as the creator existed in eternity past and has no beginning. The things which he created all have a beginning due to his act of creating them. The church consists of people who have been born of the Spirit and thus are new creatures in Christ Jesus. As their creator he is also their head and they are described as the body of Christ. The church has only one head and that is Christ. The body is to respond to the directions and messages of the head. As a part of the body, each member should have a desire to worship and serve God according to the teaching the scriptures which our Head has given us.

“Who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead; that in all things he might have the preeminence.” Not only is Christ the creator of all things, but he is also the firstborn from the dead as he raised himself after 3 days and three nights in the grave. This is also our hope that our bodies will also be raised and fashioned like unto Christ’s glorious body, according to the promise of God. Thus in all things Christ is preeminent.

Colosians 1:19

Col. 1:19 “For it pleased the Father that in him should all fulness dwell;”

The following verses show us many things in Christ in which all fullness dwells:

1. Luke 4:1 “And Jesus being full of the Holy Ghost returned from Jordan, and was led by the Spirit into the wilderness,”
2. John 1:14 “And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth.”
3. John 1:16 “And of his fulness have all we received, and grace for grace.”
4. 1 Cor. 10:26 “For the earth is the Lord's, and the fulness thereof.”

5. Eph. 1:22 “And hath put all things under his feet, and gave him to be the head over all things to the church, 23 Which is his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all.”

6. Col. 2:9 “For in him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily.”

7. Psa. 16:11 “Thou wilt show me the path of life: in thy presence is fulness of joy; at thy right hand there are pleasures for evermore.”

8. Psa. 29:4 “The voice of the LORD is powerful; the voice of the LORD is full of majesty.”

9. Psa. 33:5 “He loveth righteousness and judgment: the earth is full of the goodness of the LORD.”

10. Psa. 48:10 “According to thy name, O God, so is thy praise unto the ends of the earth: thy right hand is full of righteousness.”

11. Psa. 78:38 “But he, being full of compassion, forgave their iniquity, and destroyed them not: yea, many a time turned he his anger away, and did not stir up all his wrath.”

12. Psa. 86:15 “But thou, O Lord, art a God full of compassion, and gracious, longsuffering, and plenteous in mercy and truth.”

13. Psa. 104:24 “O LORD, how manifold are thy works! in wisdom hast thou made them all: the earth is full of thy riches.”

14. Psa. 119:64 “The earth, O LORD, is full of thy mercy: teach me thy statutes.”

15. Isa. 6:3 “And one cried unto another, and said, Holy, holy, holy, is the LORD of hosts: the whole earth is full of his glory.”

16. Isa. 30:27 “Behold, the name of the LORD cometh from far, burning with his anger, and the burden thereof is heavy: his lips are full of indignation, and his tongue as a devouring fire:”

Colossians 1.20-22

Col. 1:20 “And, having made peace through the blood of his cross, by him to reconcile all things unto himself; by him, I say, whether they be things in earth, or things in heaven. 21 And you, that were sometime alienated and enemies in your mind by wicked works, yet now hath he reconciled 22 In the body of his flesh through death, to present you holy and unblameable and unreproveable in his sight:”

“And, having made peace through the blood of his cross.” To state that he has made peace points to the fact that beforehand we were not at peace with God, but were at enmity with God. The following verses bear this out:

1. Rom. 8:7 “Because the carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be.”

2. Rom. 5:10 “For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life.”

Enemies that are brought to a state of peace are reconciled. What brings them to that state of being at peace is called reconciliation. Before we were reconciled, we were at enmity with God because of our sins. God is just and every sin and disobedience must be judged and punished in the sight of our Just and Holy God: Heb. 2:2 “For if the word spoken by angels was steadfast, and every transgression and disobedience received a just recompense of reward;” We were judged guilty because of our sins and the execution of God’s wrath had to be carried out. Christ, according to the covenant of redemption, suffered the wrathful judgment of God for us as he suffered and died to atone for our sins. Having justified us before God through his atoning blood sacrifice we were reconciled unto God.

“By him to reconcile all things unto himself; by him, I say, whether they be things in earth, or things in heaven.” The all things has reference to God’s elect people. Before Christ suffered on the cross, there were a great number of the elect of God who had died leaving their bodies on earth and their soul in heaven. Moreover, Christ died for the elect not only from his day forward, but also all those who lived and died before his sacrifice. Their bodies are on earth and their souls are in heaven. Thus he reconciled both things in earth and things in heaven.

“And you, that were sometime alienated and enemies in your mind by wicked works, yet now hath he reconciled In the body of his flesh through death, to present you holy and unblameable and unproveable in his sight:” Even the work of reconciliation has already been accomplished, yet there was a time that in our mind because of wicked works, that we viewed ourselves as being alienated from God and enemies to God. However, we learned through the gospel of what Christ accomplished for us on the cross and now we are able to see that he has presented us unto the father being holy, and unblameable, and unproveable in God’s sight. In Rom. 8:33 and 34 Paul asked the question: “Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth. Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us.” Thus, there is no charge that can be laid against us before our Just and Holy God because Christ has redeemed us and thus reconciled us unto the Father.

Colossians 1.23-29

Col. 1:23 “If ye continue in the faith grounded and settled, and be not moved away from the hope of the gospel, which ye have heard, and which was preached to every creature which is under heaven; whereof I Paul am made a minister; 24 Who now rejoice in my sufferings for you, and fill up that which is behind of the afflictions of Christ in my flesh for his body's sake, which is the church: 25 Whereof I am made a minister, according to the dispensation of God which is given to me for you, to fulfil the word of God; 26 Even the mystery which hath been hid from ages and from generations, but now is made manifest to his saints: 27 To whom God would make known what is the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles; which is Christ in you, the hope of glory: 28 Whom we preach, warning every man, and teaching every man in all wisdom; that we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus: 29 Whereunto I also labour, striving according to his working, which worketh in me mightily.”

“If ye continue in the faith grounded and settled, and be not moved away from the hope of the gospel, which ye have heard, and which was preached to every creature which is under heaven; whereof I Paul am made a minister;” The idea here is that we are to continue in the faith. The faith under consideration is the faith that was once delivered to the saints as Jude said: Jude 1:3 “Beloved, when I gave all diligence to write unto you of the common salvation, it was needful for me to write unto you, and exhort you that ye should earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints.” This faith is the doctrine and practice and government of the New Testament Church which the Lord establish and on which we are built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ being the chief corner stone (Eph. 2:20). Also, we are to be grounded and settled in this faith. This means that we are to have as a foundation the faith which was once delivered to the saints and to be immovable from that foundation.

Moreover, we are not to move away from the hope of the gospel. This hope we are told is an anchor of the soul: Heb. 6:19 “Which hope we have as an anchor of the soul, both sure and stedfast, and which entereth into that within the veil; 20 Whither the forerunner is for us entered, even Jesus, made an high priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec.” This hope is founded on the promise of God which we read in Tit. 1:2 “In hope of eternal life, which God, that cannot lie, promised before the world began;” God made this covenant promise which embraced his elect family before the world began. This covenant promise is the promise we read about in Rom. 8:29, 30: “For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren. Moreover whom he did predestinate, them he also called: and whom he called, them he also justified: and whom he justified, them he also glorified.”

Paul also said that this gospel was preached to every creature which is under heaven. I am sure that Paul was not saying that every elect child of God heard this gospel of the grace of Christ. Rather this seems that he is saying with the term “under heaven” that every one who was a part of the church “kingdom of heaven” had heard this gospel.

Moreover, Paul affirmed that he had been made a minister of this gospel. To be a minister of the gospel requires a calling from God to the work of the gospel ministry. Also, the person called must be led by the Spirit of God in learning the gospel of Jesus Christ. Finally, the man called to the ministry must apply himself in reading, studying, and meditating on the word of God and spend much time in prayer for the guidance of the Lord.

“Who now rejoice in my sufferings for you, and fill up that which is behind of the afflictions of Christ in my flesh for his body's sake, which is the church:” Paul stated that he rejoiced in his sufferings for the saints and faithful brethren to whom he was writing. Paul had suffered much by the persecutions of the Jews towards him. While we would not think of our pain and stress during the sufferings, yet the end result is what Paul was rejoicing in. For in his sufferings he was blessed to preach the gospel of the grace of Christ to God's elect family and see them rejoice in the good news and then to grow in their knowledge and labor for Christ's name's sake and as the disciples of the Lord. Paul said that this suffering was for Christ's body's sake. The body of Christ to which he was referring was the Lord's church. His church is often referred to as the body of Christ.

“Whereof I am made a minister, according to the dispensation of God which is given to me for you, to fulfil the word of God;” God made Paul a minister and revealed to

him the things which are included as a part of the canon of scripture by his writings. This was not self made up or just a few rational reasonings of man, but as Paul said in 2 Tim. 3:16, 17: "All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works." So Paul wrote by the inspiration of God and we are blessed to have these things today because of God's inspiring Paul to write. This took place on God's time table, not on man's time table.

"Even the mystery which hath been hid from ages and from generations, but now is made manifest to his saints:" There are several scriptures that teach us that the things we have in this New Testament age were hidden from God's people for many generations:

1. Matt. 13:17 "For verily I say unto you, That many prophets and righteous men have desired to see those things which ye see, and have not seen them; and to hear those things which ye hear, and have not heard them."

2. Luke 10:24 "For I tell you, that many prophets and kings have desired to see those things which ye see, and have not seen them; and to hear those things which ye hear, and have not heard them."

3. 1 Cor. 2:7, 8: "But we speak the wisdom of God in a mystery, even the hidden wisdom, which God ordained before the world unto our glory: Which none of the princes of this world knew: for had they known it, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory."

4. Dan. 12:8, 9: "And I heard, but I understood not: then said I, O my Lord, what shall be the end of these things? And he said, Go thy way, Daniel: for the words are closed up and sealed till the time of the end."

Moreover, there are people in this New Testament age that the mystery of the grace of Christ is still hidden:

1. Matt. 11:25 "At that time Jesus answered and said, I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes."

2. 2 Cor. 4:3 "But if our gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost:"

3. Matt. 13:10, 11 "And the disciples came, and said unto him, Why speakest thou unto them in parables? He answered and said unto them, Because it is given unto you to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it is not given."

"To whom God would make known what is the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles; which is Christ in you, the hope of glory:" We are indeed a blest people that God has made known to us in this day the mystery of the gospel of the grace of Christ. We are blessed to have Christ in us which is our hope of glory. God promised, but that promise does not mean that the promise was unto me. The reason I know it was unto me is the indwelling of Christ in me as a result of the spiritual birth.

"Whom we preach, warning every man, and teaching every man in all wisdom; that we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus:" The "every man" Paul is referring to are those who make up the elect family of God and have heard and believed the gospel of the grace of Christ. The warning and teaching of the word of God is designed to present the "every man" perfect in Christ Jesus. The word, perfect does not always mean without any fault or blemish as we are also sinners. However, sometimes it means mature and that is the meaning here. In preaching the gospel of the grace of Christ

and preaching the whole counsel of God, the design is to mature God's children in their worship and walk here as they live on earth. Again, we go back to 2 Tim. 3:16, 17: "All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works." Thus, the scripture and the teaching of the scriptures are designed to mature the man of God.

"Whereunto I also labour, striving according to his working, which worketh in me mightily." Paul knew and confessed that it is the Lord who begins the work of the ministry in a person with the phrase "according to his working." And Paul also recognized that that which the Lord had begin in him also worked mightily in him. Similarly all God called ministers should recognize the working of the Lord in them that has called them and worked in them to minister the gospel. Moreover, it should be our desire that He would work in us mightily as well.

Colossians 2.1-5

Col. 2:1 “For I would that ye knew what great conflict I have for you, and for them at Laodicea, and for as many as have not seen my face in the flesh; 2 That their hearts might be comforted, being knit together in love, and unto all riches of the full assurance of understanding, to the acknowledgment of the mystery of God, and of the Father, and of Christ; 3 In whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge. 4 And this I say, lest any man should beguile you with enticing words. 5 For though I be absent in the flesh, yet am I with you in the spirit, joying and beholding your order, and the stedfastness of your faith in Christ.”

“For I would that ye knew what great conflict I have for you, and for them at Laodicea, and for as many as have not seen my face in the flesh;” Paul speaks here of a conflict that he is personally having. There is a people in Colosse and at Laodicea whom he has heard about their faith and love toward the Lord and he has a desire to go visit them, but also realizing that he can only go by the Lord’s direction and enablement. This is a conflict that God’s ministers have when they have heard of the faith and love of the Lord’s people at a location where they have not preached the word and they have a desire to go, but also have other responsibilities or commitments that hinder them from going.

“That their hearts might be comforted, being knit together in love, and unto all riches of the full assurance of understanding, to the acknowledgment of the mystery of God, and of the Father, and of Christ;”

“That their hearts might be comforted...” The precious gospel of the grace of Christ is a great comfort for the Lord’s people. One of Paul’s desire was to come and preach the gospel of the grace of Christ to the brethren and sisters at the Colossian church in order to comfort their hearts with the message of God’s grace.

“Being knit together in love...” There is a rich binding in the Lord’s church. That binding is the love of the Lord Jesus Christ and the love that we have for one another and the love that we have for the gospel truth. These things bind our hearts together in love.

“Unto all riches of the full assurance of understanding...” There are many riches in the understanding of the grace of Christ and of the word of God. Moreover, the more that we understand the greater those treasures are to us. Paul desired to further the understanding of the saints at Colosse and impart unto them more of these rich treasures of understanding. Furthermore, the more we understand the more we are assured of God’s love and grace towards us.

“To the acknowledgment of the mystery of God, and of the Father, and of Christ;” Paul speaks of a “mystery of God.” A mystery is something that is hidden from some, but revealed unto others. There are several verses of scripture that speak to us of the mystery of God:

1. Mark 4:11 “And he said unto them, Unto you it is given to know the mystery of the kingdom of God: but unto them that are without, all these things are done in parables:”

2. Rom. 16:25 “Now to him that is of power to stablish you according to my gospel, and the preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery, which was kept secret since the world began,”

3. Eph. 1:9 “Having made known unto us the mystery of his will, according to his good pleasure which he hath purposed in himself:”

4. Eph. 3:3 “How that by revelation he made known unto me the mystery; as I wrote afore in few words,”

5. Eph. 3:4 “Whereby, when ye read, ye may understand my knowledge in the mystery of Christ)”

6. Eph. 3:9 “And to make all men see what is the fellowship of the mystery, which from the beginning of the world hath been hid in God, who created all things by Jesus Christ:”

7. Eph 6:19 “And for me, that utterance may be given unto me, that I may open my mouth boldly, to make known the mystery of the gospel,”

8. Col. 1:26 “Even the mystery which hath been hid from ages and from generations, but now is made manifest to his saints:”

9. Col. 4:3 “Withal praying also for us, that God would open unto us a door of utterance, to speak the mystery of Christ, for which I am also in bonds:”

There are several observations we can make about the above verses of scripture concerning “the mystery:”

1. The mystery is said to be “the mystery of the kingdom of God.”
2. The mystery is hidden from some and revealed unto others.
3. The understanding of the mystery came by revelation.
4. This mystery was kept secret from the beginning of the world, until the gospel age.
5. Our knowledge of the mystery is according to God’s good pleasure.
6. There is a fellowship in the mystery.
7. The mystery is also called the “mystery of the gospel.”
8. The mystery is made manifest to his saints.
9. Paul asked the saints to pray for a door of utterance that he might speak the mystery of Christ.

In studying the passage of scripture in Ephesians chapter 1 concerning the mystery of God’s will it should become clear to us that the mystery is God’s covenant grace in which He chose a people before the foundation of the world, and predestinated them to the adoption of children by Jesus Christ unto himself, and made them accepted in Christ, and redeemed them by the blood of Christ and predestinated them to an eternal inheritance.

“And this I say, lest any man should beguile you with enticing words.” Paul knew that there were men who would beguile the disciples with enticing words. Paul warned the elders at Ephesus: Acts 20:29-31 “For I know this, that after my departing shall grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock. Also of your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them. Therefore watch, and remember, that by the space of three years I ceased not to warn every one night and day with tears.” Likewise, Paul wrote in Eph. 4:14 “That we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and

cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive;” There are false prophets and false teachers who would make merchandise of the Lord’s people and through enticement deceive them into believing something other than the “mystery of the gospel of Christ.”

“For though I be absent in the flesh, yet am I with you in the spirit, joying and beholding your order, and the steadfastness of your faith in Christ.” This certainly teaches us that we should maintain good order in the house of God and be steadfast in our faith in Christ.

Colossians 2.6-10

Col. 2:6 “As ye have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk ye in him: 7 Rooted and built up in him, and stablished in the faith, as ye have been taught, abounding therein with thanksgiving. 8 Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ. 9 For in him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily. 10 And ye are complete in him, which is the head of all principality and power:”

“As ye have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk ye in him:” The activity of receiving something depends on the context in which it is written. Oftentimes the person receiving something is passive in their receipt. Receiving something is not to be confused with accepting something. I have a rural mailbox and it receives mail on most days. However, it has never had to accept the mail placed in it. The context of this passage is that the ones who received Christ Jesus the Lord received an understanding of who he is and what he has done for them. The context of the previous verses speaks of their understanding, wisdom and knowledge of the mystery of the gospel. Now Paul urges those who have received Christ Jesus the Lord to walk in him that is live their lives in accord with their belief.

“Rooted and built up in him, and stablished in the faith, as ye have been taught, abounding therein with thanksgiving.” In encouraging the disciples to be rooted and built up in Christ, Paul is using an analogy of a plant that has its root in the ground and derives its nourishment from the ground and as a result grows from the nourishment it receives from the ground. Likewise, the disciples of Christ are to be rooted in Christ deriving their nourishment from what Christ provides for them in His word. The parable of the sower is applicable here. The one “that received seed into the good ground is he that heareth the word, and understandeth it; which also beareth fruit, and bringeth forth, some an hundredfold, some sixty, some thirty (Matt. 13:23). Next, to be established in the faith is contingent upon having been taught. This certainly teaches us the importance of attending to the preaching and teaching of the word of God and applying ourselves in the study of God’s word. In addition, Paul exhorts the disciples to abound in the faith. Thus we are to be more than just bystanders. We

are to be actively involved in the faith. And while we are actively involved in the faith we should do so with thanksgiving.

“Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ.” Websters dictionary defines philosophy as all learning exclusive of technical precepts and practical arts. Paul issues a warning to the saints at Colosse to beware of being spoiled by worldly learning. The knowledge, understanding, and wisdom of God’s word is far preferable than the theories of worldly learning. Moreover, Paul warns the saints to beware of vain deceit. There are a multitude of deceivers in the world who for worldly gain or pride will seek to deceive the saints into believing and acting on things that are false. While there are good traditions set forth in the word of God, yet these are not to be confused with the traditions of men. The traditions of men should never come before the worship and service of God. The rudiments of the world refer to the orderly arrangements of the world. The order we need is set forth in the word of God and is not the orderly arrangements set forth by the wicked world in which we live.

“For in him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily.” The Godhead is defined for us in 1 John 5:7: “For there are three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost: and these three are one.” The Lord told Philip in John 14:8 “Philip saith unto him, Lord, show us the Father, and it sufficeth us. 9 Jesus saith unto him, Have I been so long time with you, and yet hast thou not known me, Philip? he that hath seen me hath seen the Father; and how sayest thou then, Show us the Father?” The Lord possesses all the attributes, characteristics and qualities of each person in the Godhead. All these things dwelleth in Christ bodily.

“And ye are complete in him, which is the head of all principality and power:” To be complete is to have no part lacking. In Christ we are complete both as individuals and as a local church body. In Christ we are not lacking for any necessary thing. Moreover, Christ is the head of all principality and power. All authority or ability ranks under Christ and is answerable to Christ. As an application to the local churches such as the church at Colosse Christ is the head over the church and the individuals who make up the church. This, likewise, applies to the local church bodies today and the members who make up the local churches.

Colossians 2.11-15

Col. 2:11 In whom also ye are circumcised with the circumcision made without hands, in putting off the body of the sins of the flesh by the circumcision of Christ: 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. 13 And you, being dead in your sins and the uncircumcision of your flesh, hath he quickened together with him, having forgiven you all trespasses; 14 Blotting out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to his cross; 15

And having spoiled principalities and powers, he made a show of them openly, triumphing over them in it.”

“In whom also ye are circumcised with the circumcision made without hands, in putting off the body of the sins of the flesh by the circumcision of Christ:” “In whom” is a positional statement. It positions the ones to whom Paul is addressing to be those who are “in Christ.” Ephesians 1:4 tells us how and when they got to be in Christ: “According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love:” Those in Christ got to be in Christ by God’s choosing and they were placed in Christ before the foundation of the world.

Next, Paul speaks of the people to whom he is addressing as being circumcised. Circumcision as an ordinance in the Old Testament was given to Abraham and his descendents in Genesis chapter 17:8-14: “And I will give unto thee, and to thy seed after thee, the land wherein thou art a stranger, all the land of Canaan, for an everlasting possession; and I will be their God. And God said unto Abraham, Thou shalt keep my covenant therefore, thou, and thy seed after thee in their generations. This is my covenant, which ye shall keep, between me and you and thy seed after thee; Every man child among you shall be circumcised. And ye shall circumcise the flesh of your foreskin; and it shall be a token of the covenant betwixt me and you. And he that is eight days old shall be circumcised among you, every man child in your generations, he that is born in the house, or bought with money of any stranger, which is not of thy seed. He that is born in thy house, and he that is bought with thy money, must needs be circumcised: and my covenant shall be in your flesh for an everlasting covenant. And the uncircumcised man child whose flesh of his foreskin is not circumcised, that soul shall be cut off from his people; he hath broken my covenant.”

We make the following observation concerning circumcision and its relationship to the covenant God made with Abraham and his seed:

1. Circumcision was a “token” of the covenant. Thus, it identified those who were circumcised with the covenant God made with Abraham and his seed after him.
2. Circumcision involves a cutting away of the foreskin of the flesh.
3. Each man child was to be circumcised when he was 8 days old.
4. Those not circumcised were cut off from the people.
5. The child was circumcised by someone else. He did not circumcise himself.

In contrast to natural circumcision we note the following things about the circumcision in our text:

1. The circumcision in our text is tied to a different covenant that God made concerning those that are in Christ.
2. The circumcision in our text was made without hands. No human hands were involved in the circumcision in our text.
3. The circumcision in our text was not the circumcision of the flesh but is a circumcision of the heart. According to Rom. 2:28, 29 “For he is not a Jew, which is one outwardly; neither is that circumcision, which is outward in the flesh: But he is a Jew, which is one inwardly; and circumcision is that of the heart, in the spirit, and not in the letter; whose praise is not of men, but of God.” Thus, the circumcision in our text is a spiritual circumcision of the heart.
4. Christ performed the spiritual circumcision of our heart.

5. The putting away by the circumcision of our text is the body of the sins of the flesh and not the foreskin in natural circumcision. In natural circumcision it is the administrator who removed the foreskin of the flesh. In this spiritual circumcision it is Christ who removed the body of the sins of the flesh.

6. Only those who are in Christ are circumcised by Christ.

7. This spiritual circumcision of the heart which takes place in the new or spiritual birth identifies us with the covenant of redemption as outlined in Romans 8:29, 30 and Ephesians 1:4-11.

“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.” While water baptism represents the death, burial and resurrection of Christ, the baptism in our text involves both the literal death of Christ and his literal resurrection from the dead. As we have noted before those embraced by our text are those who are “in Christ.” Thus, we are in Christ in his covenant work. Therefore, those chosen in Christ were also “in Christ” when he suffered and died for their sins. Moreover, they were buried in Christ when he was laid in the tomb for three days and three nights. Moreover, in covenant they arose in Christ when he arose from the dead.

“The faith of the operation of God...” The word translated to “operation” in this verse means “effectual working.” Therefore, the faith is referring to God’s faithful trusting that Christ would effectually perform the provisions of the covenant of redemption. Christ has effectually called us in regeneration and has effectually justified us on the cross and he will effectually glorify us in the resurrection of the dead.

“And you, being dead in your sins and the uncircumcision of your flesh, hath he quickened together with him, having forgiven you all trespasses;” The similar lesson is taught us in Ephesians 2:1-5: “And you hath he quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins: Wherein in time past ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience: Among whom also we all had our conversation in times past in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind; and were by nature the children of wrath, even as others. But God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us, Even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, (by grace ye are saved;)” This is a passage dealing with the work of Christ upon us when we were dead in trespasses and sins and detailing the quickening power of Christ in raising us up out of our depraved state into spiritual life by his grace alone. Moreover, as a result all of our trespasses have been forgiven.

“Blotting out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to his cross;” Again we see a parallel lesson being taught to us in the book of Ephesians: Eph. 2:13 “But now in Christ Jesus ye who sometimes were far off are made nigh by the blood of Christ. 14 For he is our peace, who hath made both one, and hath broken down the middle wall of partition between us; 15 Having abolished in his flesh the enmity, even the law of commandments contained in ordinances; for to make in himself of twain one new man, so making peace; 16 And that he might reconcile both unto God in one body by the cross, having slain the enmity thereby:” Likewise, we read in Gal. 3:10 “For as many as are of the works of the law are under the curse: for it is written, Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them. 11 But that no man is justified by the

law in the sight of God, it is evident: for, The just shall live by faith. 12 And the law is not of faith: but, The man that doeth them shall live in them. 13 Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us: for it is written, Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree:"

"And having spoiled principalities and powers, he made a show of them openly, triumphing over them in it." Christ wrought a victory for us over Satan, death, hell, sin and the grave and having arose after the victory he showed himself alive for 40 days among many witnesses before his ascension back to heaven.

Colossians 2.16-19

Col. 2:16 "Let no man therefore judge you in meat, or in drink, or in respect of an holyday, or of the new moon, or of the sabbath days: 17 Which are a shadow of things to come; but the body is of Christ. 18 Let no man beguile you of your reward in a voluntary humility and worshipping of angels, intruding into those things which he hath not seen, vainly puffed up by his fleshly mind, 19 And not holding the Head, from which all the body by joints and bands having nourishment ministered, and knit together, increaseth with the increase of God."

"Let no man therefore judge you in meat, or in drink, or in respect of an holyday, or of the new moon, or of the sabbath days:" The ordinances in the Old Testament often centered around meats forbidden or acceptable and meat and drink offerings. Also, there were observances of holydays and Sabbath days, etc. However, Paul addresses these things and the fulfillment of these things in the book of Hebrews showing us that Christ has fulfilled the Old Testament types and shadows. In this New Testament age we should not be judged in our religious observances by our dietary practices or of our observations of holy days or Sabbath days. While these things often are associated with certain denominations, it should not be associated with the Lord's church and its members. Some examples of groups who observe similar things today are those who associate their worship with dietary habits such as not eating meats, or having meatless Fridays or of not eating pork, etc. Others associate themselves by their observation of religious holidays as being special observances.

"Which are a shadow of things to come; but the body is of Christ." Two verses in the book of Hebrews speak to us about shadows:

1. Heb. 8:5 "Who serve unto the example and shadow of heavenly things, as Moses was admonished of God when he was about to make the tabernacle: for, See, saith he, that thou make all things according to the pattern showed to thee in the mount."

2. Heb. 10:1 "For the law having a shadow of good things to come, and not the very image of the things, can never with those sacrifices which they offered year by year continually make the comers thereunto perfect."

We note that shadows are only reflections of the body that is casting the shadow. The shadow is never as clear and important as the object casting the shadow. However, a shadow does give an image of the object casting the shadow. Thus those Old Testament shadows point us to Christ, the body is far more important than the shadow. The body is of Christ and he should be the central object of our worship and not the shadows. Today

we are not to worship under the Old Testament shadows, but we are to worship Christ in spirit and in truth. Therefore we should avoid associating ourselves with the observance of dietary practices or observations of holy days or Sabbath days in our religious exercises.

“Let no man beguile you of your reward in a voluntary humility and worshipping of angels, intruding into those things which he hath not seen, vainly puffed up by his fleshly mind,” The words “beguile” and “reward” are translated from the same Greek word and means to practice fraud, i.e., to defraud you. Therefore, we should be aware that there are men who for their own vain arrogance and pride defraud people of the true and acceptable worship of God through:

1. Voluntary humility – meaning they are not near as humble as they try to pass themselves off to others. Rather they are full of pride but believe through a voluntary humility they can get people to follow them in their false teachings.

2. Worshipping of angels – The word, angel, literally is defined as messenger. These false teachers often try to get people to worship writers or teachers of old who taught the false teachings or practices that they are espousing. We, of course, know that the bible teaches us that we are to worship the Lord only and no man or any other thing.

3. Intruding into those things which he hath not seen – The Lord said in John 3:11: “Verily, verily, I say unto thee, We speak that we do know, and testify that we have seen; and ye receive not our witness.” These false teaches often speak of God’s secret will or of having a private interpretation or revelation from God. If God has a secret will that is contrary to God’s revealed will, then how could these men know God’s secret will if it is secret? It is a good idea to reject the teachings of anyone who speaks of God’s secret will. God does not contradict himself.

“And not holding the Head, from which all the body by joints and bands having nourishment ministered, and knit together, increaseth with the increase of God.” Even in the natural body, the head is the source of nourishment of the rest of the body. Our head is Christ and we are spiritually nourished by His word alone and as a result we as individuals and as local church bodies increase with the increase of God.

Colossians 2.20-23

Col. 2:20 “Wherefore if ye be dead with Christ from the rudiments of the world, why, as though living in the world, are ye subject to ordinances, 21 (Touch not; taste not; handle not; 22 Which all are to perish with the using;) after the commandments and doctrines of men? 23 Which things have indeed a show of wisdom in will worship, and humility, and neglecting of the body; not in any honour to the satisfying of the flesh.”

The question arising from the above text is based on the principle that we are dead with Christ. Now we should indeed reckon and understand that when Christ died we died with him and when he arose we arose with him. As a result of Christ’s death and our being dead with him we are dead to the condemning affects of sin. Thus, the question arises as to what authority do we worship and serve God under? Do we worship under the authority of the world or of some religious system or even under a system that we have developed for ourselves? Is our worship under an internal conviction that we worship and serve God based on the teaching of his word, or do we worship under an

external authority after the commandments and doctrines of men such as previously stated?

If we don't have an internal conviction for how we worship and serve God, then we will attempt to worship under an external set of ordinances. An example of this might be that we follow a set of dietary rules such as eating no meat or eating no pork or following only a vegan diet or vegetarian diet as a part of our religious exercises and condemn others who do not follow that particular set of dietary rules. Or we may set up as ordinances that we must observe certain special days as Sabbath days or religious holidays that we must observe and condemn others who do not observe those days. Or else, we may set up a set of rules that we do not observe certain days and condemn others for observing those days.

“After the commandments and doctrines of men?” There are other scriptures that teach that we are not worship after the commandments and doctrines of men:

1. Matt. 15:9 “But in vain they do worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men.”

2. Mark 7:7 “Howbeit in vain do they worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men.”

3. Matt. 16:11 “How is it that ye do not understand that I spake it not to you concerning bread, that ye should beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and of the Sadducees? 12 Then understood they how that he bade them not beware of the leaven of bread, but of the doctrine of the Pharisees and of the Sadducees.”

“Which things have indeed a show of wisdom in will worship, and humility, and neglecting of the body; not in any honour to the satisfying of the flesh.” We are not to make a show of religion. We are not to worship the will; we are to worship God. We are not to make a show of humility but we are to be truly humble. Also, there is no honor in satisfying the flesh, of which, worshipping the commandments and doctrines of men is designed to satisfy the flesh. All honor and glory belong to God.

Colossians 3.1-4

Col. 3:1 “If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. 2 Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth. 3 For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God. 4 When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with him in glory.

“If ye then be risen with Christ...” This statement is not raising a question as to whether you have been risen with Christ or not, but rather is a logic statement. It would be the same as saying, “since you are risen with Christ.” Thus, “since ye are risen with Christ, seek those things which are above.” Therefore, since we are risen with Christ we should seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God.

Next, what is the significance of “Christ sitting on the right hand of God?” Notice that in the previous chapter Paul had ascertained that we were buried with Christ and that we arose with Christ. These are statements concerning the covenant work of Christ in redemption. This corresponds with Rom. 8:29, 30: “For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren. Moreover whom he did predestinate, them he also called: and whom he called, them he also justified: and whom he justified, them he also glorified.” In Hebrews we read: 1:3 “Who being the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person, and upholding all things by the word of his power, when he had by himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high;” Thus, Christ sat down on the right hand of God because the work of redemption was completed. This sets the stage for the next statement in our passage: “Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth.” The reason for setting our affection on things above and not on things on the earth is because we are risen with Christ who has completed the work of redemption for us.

What are the things above that we are to set our affections upon and seek? The following verses show us several things that we should seek:

1. Matt. 6:33 “But **seek** ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you.”
2. Matt. 7:7 “Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you: 8 For every one that asketh receiveth; and he that seeketh findeth; and to him that knocketh it shall be opened.”
3. Acts 15:17 “That the residue of men might seek after the Lord, and all the Gentiles, upon whom my name is called, saith the Lord, who doeth all these things.”
4. Acts 17:27 “That they should seek the Lord, if haply they might feel after him, and find him, though he be not far from every one of us:”
5. 1 Cor. 14:12 “Even so ye, forasmuch as ye are zealous of spiritual gifts, seek that ye may excel to the edifying of the church.”
6. Heb. 11:6 “But without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him.”
7. 1 Pet. 3:11 “Let him eschew evil, and do good; let him seek peace, and ensue it.”

“For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God.” In what sense are the ones to whom Paul is writing dead at that time? Obviously they were not physically dead and they were not spiritually dead. Yet they were dead in the sense that they were dead

to the condemning effects of sin as we read in Rom. 6:2: “God forbid. How shall we, that are dead to sin, live any longer therein?” We are not dead to sinning as we are certainly capable of sinning. However, sin can no longer condemn us before a just and holy God as we read in Rom. 8:33 “Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth.”

Next, how is our life hid with Christ in God? Our eternal life is secured by the covenant work of Christ: John 10:28 “And I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand. 29 My Father, which gave them me, is greater than all; and no man is able to pluck them out of my Father's hand. 30 I and my Father are one.”

“When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with him in glory.” We need to keep our eyes on the final mark. Christ is coming again and when he comes we shall appear with him in glory. Amen. Even so, come Lord Jesus.

Colossians 3.5-9

Col. 4:5 Mortify therefore your members which are upon the earth; fornication, uncleanness, inordinate affection, evil concupiscence, and covetousness, which is idolatry: 6 For which things' sake the wrath of God cometh on the children of disobedience: 7 In the which ye also walked some time, when ye lived in them. 8 But now ye also put off all these; anger, wrath, malice, blasphemy, filthy communication out of your mouth. 9 Lie not one to another, seeing that ye have put off the old man with his deeds;”

In this passage, Paul has prefaced before the fact that we are dead with Christ and that we are risen with Christ and we shall appear with Christ in glory. Based on this, he exhorted us to seek and set our affections on things above. Now Paul gives us instructions on how to seek and set our affections on things above. He instructs us to mortify (put to death) some things and to put off some other things. Moreover, in this passage and in the next verse he uses the terms “old man” and “new man.” Plainly this has reference to the two-fold nature of a child of God. We have the “old man” nature of the flesh and we have the “new man” nature of the spiritual inner man.

“Mortify therefore your members which are upon the earth; fornication, uncleanness, inordinate affection, evil concupiscence, and covetousness, which is idolatry:” Paul speaks of our “members which are upon the earth.” He is not speaking of our body parts such as hands, arms, legs, etc. He is, however, speaking of our carnal sinful actions which are a part of the flesh and its desires. He tells us several things to mortify:

1. fornication – this is ungodly sexual relations contrary to God’s design which was set forth for us in the 2nd chapter of Genesis. Included under this category would be premarital sexual relations, homosexual relations, adultery against a spouse and spiritual adultery with false gods and false religious systems.

2. uncleanness – included in this category would be unclean thoughts, filthy language, dirty jokes, filthy communication, and unclean spirits.

3. inordinate affection and evil concupiscence – these speak to the lust or desires of the flesh. Thus it would refer to inordinate and evil desires of the flesh.

4. covetousness which is idolatry – Idolatry is the worship of something other than the true God of heaven. Covetousness speaks of greed. Often times idolatry takes the form of greed for money, greed for control, greed for things, greed for power, etc.

“For which things' sake the wrath of God cometh on the children of disobedience:” Paul plainly states there is a coming manifestation of God’s wrath that will be poured out upon the children of disobedience for the things listed above.

“In the which ye also walked some time, when ye lived in them.” The nature of a child of God before he is born of the Spirit, is the same as the nature of those who are never born of the Spirit. Before we are born of the Spirit and before we came to the knowledge of the truth, we went about living out our evil fleshly nature. Now, however, we are taught to mortify those actions in our bodies.

“But now ye also put off all these; anger, wrath, malice, blasphemy, filthy communication out of your mouth.” In a similar fashion in which we would put off dirty garments and put on clean garments, we are to put off the actions listed above in our Christian walk:

1. anger – violent passion of the mind.
2. wrath – fierce anger often manifest against others.
3. malice – wicked action taken against others.
4. blasphemy – evil speaking or railing especially against God.
5. filthy communication out of your mouth – vile conversation.

“Lie not one to another, seeing that ye have put off the old man with his deeds;” To lie is to utter an untruth or attempt to deceive by falsehood. This is probably one of the hardest things that we are to eliminate from our lives. Even though it may be difficult, yet we should make every effort to eliminate lying to others.

Colossians 3.10-14

Col. 3:10 “And have put on the new man, which is renewed in knowledge after the image of him that created him: 11 Where there is neither Greek nor Jew, circumcision nor uncircumcision, Barbarian, Scythian, bond nor free: but Christ is all, and in all. 12 Put on therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, longsuffering; 13 Forbearing one another, and forgiving one another, if any man have a quarrel against any: even as Christ forgave you, so also do ye. 14 And above all these things put on charity, which is the bond of perfectness.”

“And have put on the new man, which is renewed in knowledge after the image of him that created him:” From this verse we gather that the “new man” is a created being. This is consistent with what we read in Eph. 2:10: “For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them.” Christ is the creator as we read in Rev. 4:11 “Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honour and power: for thou hast created all things, and for thy pleasure they are and were created.” One of the things we read about in the covenant of redemption in Rom. 8:29, 30 is that we are “predestinated to be conformed to the image of His Son.” In the spiritual birth we are conformed to the image of His Son in the inner man. In the resurrection we will be conformed to the image of his Son in the outer man.

Again the analogy of a man taking off dirty garments and putting on clean garments is presented here. We are to put on the new man in the sense that we are to conform our lives to the teaching of God's word.

“Where there is neither Greek nor Jew, circumcision nor uncircumcision, Barbarian, Scythian, bond nor free: but Christ is all, and in all.” God's elect are not denominated by natural origin or position. Christ is all and in all. We are not denominated by man made criteria.

“Put on therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, longsuffering; Forbearing one another, and forgiving one another, if any man have a quarrel against any: even as Christ forgave you, so also do ye. And above all these things put on charity, which is the bond of perfectness.” As Paul admonishes the brethren and sisters of the church at Colosse he gives three statements concerning the people:

1. They are the elect of God. As Eph. 1:4 reads: “According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love:” Thus, this is one of the reasons that they should put on the characteristics that he lists in the passage.

2. They are holy. The word, holy, means to be separate. This holiness is the result of God having separated them in election and then separating them in the new birth. Also, they are holy in the respect that they separated themselves by uniting with the Lord's visible church on earth.

3. They are beloved. God loved them before they were ever born. He loved them from the time he chose them. Moreover, they cannot be separated from the love of God as taught in Romans chapter 8.

Next, Paul list eight things that they and we should put on:

1. We are to put on bowels of mercies. The word bowels refers to inward affections. Thus we should have inward affections of mercy towards the plight and circumstances of others.

2. We are to put on kindness. Kindness refers to being kind. We are to show consideration and helpfulness to the needs of others.

3. We are to put on humbleness of mind. I suppose Phil. 2:3-8 teaches us this lessons about as well as we can find anywhere: 3 “Let nothing be done through strife or vainglory; but in lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than themselves. 4 Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others. 5 Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus: 6 Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God: 7 But made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men: 8 And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.” Thus we are to make ourselves of no reputation, we are to consider ourselves servants and we are to be obedient and present ourselves a living sacrifice.

4. We are to put on meekness. Meekness can be defined as gentleness towards others. It rules out railing and bullying and acting high minded and being arrogant.

5. We are to put on longsuffering. This teaches us to be patient towards others and towards adverse circumstances in our lives.

6. We are to put on forbearance. This teaches us that we ought to put up with and endure the actions of others.

7. We are to be forgiving. Paul gives us the example of how we are to forgive others: “even as Christ forgave you, so also do ye.” Christ forgave us unconditionally and when we were totally unworthy of forgiveness.

8. Finally we are to put on “charity, which is the bond of perfectness.” Charity is love manifest. John 15:13 tells us to which we are to strive: “Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends.”

Colossians 3.15-17

Col. 3:15 “And let the peace of God rule in your hearts, to the which also ye are called in one body; and be ye thankful. 16 Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom; teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord. 17 And whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by him.”

“And let the peace of God rule in your hearts, to the which also ye are called in one body;” The word peace is found exactly 111 times in the New Testament. Peace is the opposite of turmoil or trouble or war. The peace to which Paul references in this passage comes from God. We are to let this God given peace rule in our hearts. This peace begins to rule in our hearts when we learn that God has made us to be at peace with him: Col. 1:20 “And, having made peace through the blood of his cross, by him to reconcile all things unto himself; by him, I say, whether they be things in earth, or things in heaven.”

The scriptures have a lot to say about peace through our Lord Jesus Christ:

1. John 14:27 “Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid.”

2. John 16:33 “These things I have spoken unto you, that in me ye might have peace. In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world.”

3. Rom. 5:1 “Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ:”

4. Eph. 2:14 “For he is our peace, who hath made both one, and hath broken down the middle wall of partition between us; 15 Having abolished in his flesh the enmity, even the law of commandments contained in ordinances; for to make in himself of twain one new man, so making peace;”

5. Phil. 4:7 “And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.”

6. Col. 1:20 “And, having made peace through the blood of his cross, by him to reconcile all things unto himself; by him, I say, whether they be things in earth, or things in heaven.”

Moreover, we have peace through the preaching and belief of the gospel and obedience to the word of God:

1. Rom. 10:15 “And how shall they preach, except they be sent? as it is written, How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the gospel of peace, and bring glad tidings of good things!”

2. Rom. 14:17 “For the kingdom of God is not meat and drink; but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost.”

3. Rom. 14:19 “Let us therefore follow after the things which make for peace, and things wherewith one may edify another.”

4. Rom. 15:13 “Now the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that ye may abound in hope, through the power of the Holy Ghost.”

5. 2 Cor. 13:11 “Finally, brethren, farewell. Be perfect, be of good comfort, be of one mind, live in peace; and the God of love and peace shall be with you.”

6. Eph. 2:17 “And came and preached peace to you which were afar off, and to them that were nigh.”

7. Eph. 6:15 “And your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace;”

Next, Paul instructs the brethren in Colosse “and be ye thankful.” There are many things that we need to be thankful for. In the context we should be especially thankful for the peace that God has given us through the Lord Jesus Christ and through the preaching of the gospel.

“Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom.” Notice that the word of Christ is to dwell in us. How can it dwell in us if we do not read it? Moreover, we must do more than just read it if it is to dwell in us richly. We will have to study it. We read to get knowledge. We study to get understanding. We meditate on it to get wisdom, i.e., the ability to apply our knowledge and understanding to the circumstances, trials, and problems of life. These principles are taught to us in the scriptures:

1. 2 Tim. 2:15 “Study to show thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.”

2. 1 Tim. 4:13 “Till I come, give attendance to reading, to exhortation, to doctrine.”

3. 1 Tim. 4:15 “Meditate upon these things; give thyself wholly to them; that thy profiting may appear to all.”

“Teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord.” Singing is one of the most powerful tools for teaching. The things we sing are more likely to remain in our memory longer than the things we hear or read, unless continually reinforced. When we learn a psalm or hymn or spiritual song these things will be strongly placed in our memory banks and will sometimes come to our minds when we have situations or problems or trials in our lives. Singing serves a dual purpose: singing the songs teaches us and through singing we are giving praise unto the Lord to whom our songs are chiefly directed. This principle is reinforced in Eph. 5:19 “Speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord;” Notice, we are to make melody in our hearts and not on a musical instrument. The purpose of congregational church singing is not to entertain ourselves, but to sing praises unto the Lord. While musical instruments may tickle our earthly pleasure, they in no way are capable of giving praise to God, which should be our chief desire in singing.

“And whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by him.” If we would put this statement to practice it would be a great deterrent to ungodliness in our lives. For instance it would be hard to deceive others in the name of the Lord Jesus or to give thanks to God and the Father by him. When we followed the principle stated then our behavior will be according to the

teaching of God's word and we will be giving thanks to God for his sustaining blessings in our lives.

Colossians 3.18-25

Col. 3:18 "Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as it is fit in the Lord. 19 Husbands, love your wives, and be not bitter against them. 20 Children, obey your parents in all things: for this is well pleasing unto the Lord. 21 Fathers, provoke not your children to anger, lest they be discouraged. 22 Servants, obey in all things your masters according to the flesh; not with eyeservice, as menpleasers; but in singleness of heart, fearing God: 23 And whatsoever ye do, do it heartily, as to the Lord, and not unto men; 24 Knowing that of the Lord ye shall receive the reward of the inheritance: for ye serve the Lord Christ. 25 But he that doeth wrong shall receive for the wrong which he hath done: and there is no respect of persons."

Paul in this passage gives us lessons in personal discipleship. We all serve different positions in life and have a need to know how to conduct ourselves in the positions that we serve. As far as serving different positions, I can speak personally. I have been a child, and a husband and a father. Moreover, I have worked in the workplace as both a servant and a master (supervisor). Being on all those positions in life, I have needed to know how to conduct myself as a disciple of Christ in those positions in life. Regardless of the position we are currently serving in we have to humble ourselves to properly serve.

"Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as it is fit in the Lord." Submission speaks of rank or authority. It has nothing to do with personal worth in the family. For a husband to think he has more personal worth to the family than his wife is likely practicing self deception. The Lord has given an authority structure to the family and it mirrors the authority structure of the church. Christ is the head of the church and the church acts under the authority of Christ.

"Husbands, love your wives, and be not bitter against them." In Eph 5:25 we read "Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it;" Husbands love for their wives is mirror Christ's love for the church. Christ love for the church is a devoted, unselfish, and sacrificial love. Our love for our wives should conform to John 15:13: "Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends."

The word, bitter, means to make sour. The husband has the ability to sour a relationship. However, the verse teaches us that as husbands we should do everything we can not to sour the relationship.

"Children, obey your parents in all things: for this is well pleasing unto the Lord." One of the biggest problems for children is rebellion. Samuel told King Saul in 1 Sam. 15:23 "For rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft, and stubbornness is as iniquity and idolatry." The Lord is well pleased when children are obedient to their parents but he looks upon rebellion as being equivalent to the sin of witchcraft.

"Fathers, provoke not your children to anger, lest they be discouraged." Probably the most common way that fathers can provoke their children to anger and discourage them is through ridicule and derision. While it is necessary at times to chasten and

admonish our children, we should avoid belittling them, ridiculing and deriding them. Chastening and admonish should be through love for them.

“Servants, obey in all things your masters according to the flesh; not with eyeservice, as menpleasers; but in singleness of heart, fearing God:” Most of us know of individuals who will make a show of working hard and doing good when the boss is around, but when the boss is out of sight will slack off. This is called eyeservice or men pleasing. Our service to our masters should be in singleness of heart, fearing God. We read in Eph. 5:5 “Servants, be obedient to them that are your masters according to the flesh, with fear and trembling, in singleness of your heart, as unto Christ; 6 Not with eyeservice, as menpleasers; but as the servants of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart; 7 With good will doing service, as to the Lord, and not to men:”

“Knowing that of the Lord ye shall receive the reward of the inheritance: for ye serve the Lord Christ.” When our behavior mirrors that which is set forth in the subject passage, we receive a reward or blessing from the Lord as we are in doing as instructed we serve the Lord Christ.

“But he that doeth wrong shall receive for the wrong which he hath done: and there is no respect of persons.” When we do not heed the admonishment set forth by Paul in the passage then we will be chastened of the Lord. It doesn't matter what our position may be because the Lord does not respect or favor us based on our position in life.

Colossians 4.1-4

Col. 4:1 “Masters, give unto your servants that which is just and equal; knowing that ye also have a Master in heaven. 2 Continue in prayer, and watch in the same with thanksgiving; 3 Withal praying also for us, that God would open unto us a door of utterance, to speak the mystery of Christ, for which I am also in bonds: 4 That I may make it manifest, as I ought to speak.”

“Masters, give unto your servants that which is just and equal; knowing that ye also have a Master in heaven.” This is a continuation of the behavior we are support to adopt as disciples of Christ based on the different positions we occupy in life. Those who are masters are to be fair in their dealings with those who serve them. To give that which is just can be illustrated by the following example: If a servant does \$100 worth of work then he should be paid \$100. To give that which is equal can be illustrated by the following example: If two servants each do \$100 worth of work then both servants should receive \$100 for the work that they did. A master in this world should consider that he has a master in heaven who gives that which is just and equal and therefore, his behavior should mirror the behavior of his heavenly master who gives him what is just and equal.

“Continue in prayer, and watch in the same with thanksgiving;” Prayer should be a continuous thing for the disciple of Christ. Daily prayers should be a part of our daily behavior. The word watch here means to be vigilant. Thus we should be vigilant in our prayers and always we should remember to be thankful to God for all the blessings and answered prayers we experience in this life.

“Withal praying also for us, that God would open unto us a door of utterance, to speak the mystery of Christ, for which I am also in bonds: That I may make it manifest, as I ought to speak.” Paul recognized that the Lord is the one who opens the door for the ministry. We, ministers often fail to realize that we cannot open doors of utterance, only the Lord can open those doors. The following verses show us this principle:

1. Acts 14:27 “And when they were come, and had gathered the church together, they rehearsed all that God had done with them, and how he had opened the door of faith unto the Gentiles.”

2. 1 Cor. 16:8 “But I will tarry at Ephesus until Pentecost. 9 For a great door and effectual is opened unto me, and there are many adversaries.”

3. 2 Cor. 2:12 “Furthermore, when I came to Troas to preach Christ's gospel, and a door was opened unto me of the Lord,”

4. Rev. 3:7 “And to the angel of the church in Philadelphia write; These things saith he that is holy, he that is true, he that hath the key of David, he that openeth, and no man shutteth; and shutteth, and no man openeth; 8 I know thy works: behold, I have set before thee an open door, and no man can shut it: for thou hast a little strength, and hast kept my word, and hast not denied my name.”

From the above we can conclude that it is the Lord who opens the door of utterance and it is a responsibility for the church to pray that the Lord would open the door of utterance so that the ministry can speak the mystery of Christ to those children of God outside the church kingdom of God.

“For which I am also in bonds.” At this time Paul was literally a prisoner in Rome. But the bonds of Christ were greater bonds than the bonds of men. Paul was a willing bondsman of the Lord. As the Lord's bondsman he felt it a duty and

responsibility and privilege to speak the mystery of Christ to the Lord's people. Every true minister of Christ should feel to be a bondsman of the Lord.

"That I may make it manifest, as I ought to speak." Paul desired that the mystery of Christ be made manifest to the children of God. In order to make it manifest the minister should speak plainly using simple words that the children of God may hear and understand the mystery of Christ.

Colossians 4.5-6

Col. 4:5 "Walk in wisdom toward them that are without, redeeming the time. 6 Let your speech be always with grace, seasoned with salt, that ye may know how ye ought to answer every man."

According to James 1:5 "If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him. 6 But let him ask in faith, nothing wavering. For he that wavereth is like a wave of the sea driven with the wind and tossed." We need the wisdom that God giveth so that we can "walk." Walk refers to the way we live our lives. We should live our lives according to the teachings of the scriptures. Those that are outside the bounds of the Lord's church often watch the way that the disciples live and form opinions based on what they see. If our walk is evil then they will be turned off by our walk and discount what we say and teach. If we walk uprightly then they are much more likely to listen to what we say and teach.

Moreover, we are to redeem the time, i.e., spend our time wisely. The more time we spend on foolishness and foolish things the less time we have for reading, studying, and meditating on the things of God and His word. The less time we spend in God's word leads to us spending less time applying the word of God to our lives and the less influence we will have on those that are without.

"Let your speech be always with grace..." this would rule out being derogatory or abusive in our speech to others. If our speech is always with grace we going to avoid to the extent we can negativity and argumentative speech. Our speech should serve to build up and encourage others in the walk of faith.

"Seasoned with salt..." Salt on food is designed to give food a good and pleasant flavor. Likewise, our speech should be seasoned to leave a good and pleasant taste to the hearers.

"That ye may know how ye ought to answer every man." Peter wrote in 1 Pet.3:15 "But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts: and be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear:" One of the problems with nominal disciples is that when confronted with the questions of others they don't know how to answer those questions. Knowing how to answer the questions of others requires much reading and study and meditation on our part.

Colossians 4.7-9

Col. 4:7 “All my state shall Tychicus declare unto you, who is a beloved brother, and a faithful minister and fellowservant in the Lord: 8 Whom I have sent unto you for the same purpose, that he might know your estate, and comfort your hearts; 9 With Onesimus, a faithful and beloved brother, who is one of you. They shall make known unto you all things which are done here.”

In this passage we are led to understand that there is a mutual desire both by the members of the church at Colosse and Paul to know the state of being of one another. This is a common desire and bond that forms between ministers and those they serve. It is born out of love for one another and the common bond of belief and walk of faith that they share. To this end Paul sent Tychicus to declare to the brethren and sisters at Colosse his estate and to learn and communicate their estate to him.

Paul refers to Tychicus as a beloved brother and a faithful minister and fellow servant in the Lord. Here we see the bonds that often form between gospel ministers. I have been blessed to have some brethren in the ministry that I love greatly for Christ sake. I also find them to be faithful ministers of the Lord to His people. Moreover, I consider them to be fellow servants in the Lord.

Next, we are introduced to Onesimus whom Paul declares to be “a faithful and beloved brother. Also, Onesimus is a brother whom the church of Colosse is familiar with as he is one of them.

Additionally, Paul said that together Tychicus and Onesimus would make known to the church at Colosse all things which are done at Rome. There would, of course, be an interest in the church at Colosse to know about the furtherance of the gospel labors being made by the gospel ministers at Rome.

Colossians 4.10-18

Col. 4:10 “Aristarchus my fellowprisoner saluteth you, and Marcus, sister's son to Barnabas, (touching whom ye received commandments: if he come unto you, receive him;) 11 And Jesus, which is called Justus, who are of the circumcision. These only are my fellowworkers unto the kingdom of God, which have been a comfort unto me. 12 Epaphras, who is one of you, a servant of Christ, saluteth you, always labouring fervently for you in prayers, that ye may stand perfect and complete in all the will of God. 13 For I bear him record, that he hath a great zeal for you, and them that are in Laodicea and them in Hierapolis. 14 Luke, the beloved physician, and Demas, greet you. 15 Salute the brethren which are in Laodicea, and Nymphas, and the church which is in his house. 16 And when this epistle is read among you, cause that it be read also in the church of the Laodiceans; and that ye likewise read the epistle from Laodicea. 17 And say to Archippus, Take heed to the ministry which thou hast received in the Lord, that thou fulfil it. 18 The salutation by the hand of me Paul. Remember my bonds. Grace be with you. Amen.”

This passage of scripture is a sending of greetings from Paul’s fellow servants at Rome to the church at Colosse.

Paul refers to Aristarchus as a fellow prisoner. Paul was a prisoner of the Roman government at the time he wrote to Colosse, even though he had been given much liberty at that time. Aristarchus apparently was a prisoner with Paul.

Marcus, sister's son to Barnabas had previously been to Colosse and given commandments to them. Apparently he was considering returning there and they were to receive him if he came.

Jesus, which is called Justus, along with those previously mentioned are said to be of the circumcision (natural Jews) and are declared to be fellow workers unto the kingdom of God, all of whom had been a comfort to Paul.

Epaphras is said to be a prayer warrior toward the church at Colosse as he prayed fervently that they may stand perfect and complete in all the will of God. Moreover, Paul declared that Epaphras had a great zeal for the members of the church at Colosse and for them at Laodicea and them at Hierapolis.

Luke, the beloved physician, who wrote the books of Luke and Acts sent greetings to the members of the church at Colosse along with Demas who later departed from the faith.

Paul asked the church at Colosse to send salutations to the church at Laodicea and to Nymphas and the church in his house. This is one of three churches that met in someone's house. The other two are listed below:

1. Rom. 16:3 "Greet Priscilla and Aquila my helpers in Christ Jesus: 4 Who have for my life laid down their own necks: unto whom not only I give thanks, but also all the churches of the Gentiles. 5 Likewise greet the church that is in their house. Salute my wellbeloved Epaenetus, who is the firstfruits of Achaia unto Christ."

2. Phile. 1:2 "And to our beloved Apphia, and Archippus our fellowsoldier, and to the church in thy house:"

Paul through the church at Colosse admonishes Archippus to take heed to the ministry which he had received in the Lord and fulfill it. It would appear from this that he had been neglecting the ministry. This should serve as an admonishment of all the Lord's gospel ministers to take heed to the ministry which we have received in the Lord and to fulfill it.

Paul requests that his letter be read among the members and that the letter be read in the church of the Laodiceans and the letter to the Laodiceans be read in Colosse.

Paul closes this letter by once again referring to the grace of God which was the pattern in all of his letters.