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Quick Links to the Study

I. [Context](#)

- a. [Historical](#)
- b. [Literary](#)

II. [Message](#)

- a. [Dying with Christ, 2:20-23; 3:5-11](#)
- b. [Rising with Christ, 3:1-4; 3:12-17](#)

In this final lesson under the series heading, "God with us: Ways to Keep Our Faith Strong," in the Smyth-Helwys Formations Sunday School series, the focus is on "Embracing New Life" in their study. In order to accurately analyze the scripture pericope, Col 2:20-23 needs to be added to the scripture text, as the section below on [Literary Structure](#) explains, and is highlighted in the [Block Diagram](#) of the Greek text, found in the larger internet version of this study. A much more detailed treatment of this material will appear later with the publication of my commentary on Colossians in the Smyth-Helwys [Bible Commentary](#) series.

For the apostle Paul, a major depiction of his spiritual experience was the metaphor of "dying and rising" with Christ. From his Damascus Road Experience ([Acts 9:1-19](#)) onward, Paul realized that acceptability before God was based on being in union with Jesus Christ. Not on one's personal spiritual achievements. The accomplishments of Christ in His sacrificial death and resurrection could be transferred to sinful humankind through faith commitment to Christ. In this transfer the believer not only becomes righteous before God, he/she also enters into a profound, mystical union with the living resurrected Christ by a personal dying and rising, parallel to that of Christ. Essentially this entails a dying to self and this sinful world. This is followed by a rising, the resurrection of new spiritual existence that is focused on the ways of God as exemplified by the life that Christ lived while on earth. This dying and rising, however, occurs in the same moment of faith commitment as "two sides of the same coin" of faith. Baptism signifies this commitment in profound symbolic ways. But life-style and behavior are the areas where the depths of this faith commitment surface in observable ways in the believer's life. One's spiritual compass now points unswerving toward Christ as the guiding light for living and serving. This scriptural passage zeros in on this central emphasis of Christian experience.

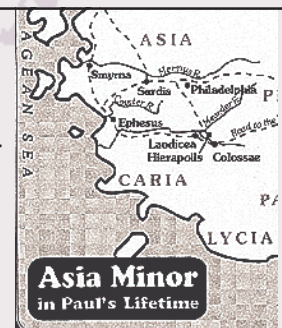
I Context

The contextual background of our passage, [2:20-3:17](#), provides crucial understanding to the interpretation of this passage in Colossians.

a. Historical

External History. The compositional history of Paul's Letter to the Colossians has traditional parameters that are sometimes modified by modern studies. Undeniable is the close connection of Colossians to Philemon and also to Ephesians. In the Conclusio sections of both Colossians (4:7-15) and Philemon (v. 23), the repetition of names of people

with Paul at the time of the writing of both letters draws the letters together. Tychius was accompanying the runaway slave Onesimus (in Philemon) back to Colossae where Onesimus' master, Philemon, lived (Col. 4:9). Tychius is also carrying



Paul's letter to the Ephesians to Ephesus for reading to the congregation there and elsewhere (Eph. 6:21-22). Additionally, the domestic code parallel passages between Colossians (3:18-4:1) and Ephesians (Eph. 5:22-6:9) link the two letters. Most likely this took place as a part of the same trip by Tychicus to the region where Colossae and Ephesus were located not too far apart from each other. Plus the major trade route that ran westward through Colossae terminated at Ephesus on the western coast of the Roman province of Asia Minor.

The primary variable in this understanding is the starting point for the trip by Tychicus to Ephesus and Colossae. Was Paul in Rome or in Caesarea on the eastern Mediterranean coast? If in Caesarea, then these letters were composed during the 2 1/2 year imprisonment of the apostle after his arrest in Jerusalem and before being taken to Rome for a trial before the Roman emperor (Acts 23:32-26:32). The older view is that the letter was written from Rome while the apostle was awaiting trial before Nero, the Roman Caesar (Acts 28:30-31). Most contemporary scholars who hold to Pauline authorship of Colossians will place the location in Caesarea, while the early Church Fathers tended to locate the letters in Rome.

The implication for dating is between the late 50s for Caesarea and the early 60s for Rome.

These three letters are a part of a group of letters traditionally labeled the Prison Letters of Paul. The fourth letter in this group is Philippians. The basis for this label is that internal references in all four documents indicate that Paul was in jail at the time of the writing of each of them. Much more likely is that Philippians was written while Paul was in Rome awaiting trial before Nero. But much less data exists to support the view that the other three were written from Rome. Very likely they were composed earlier

before Paul's trip to Rome.

Much of modern scholarship is divided not only over the place and date of composition inside the view that Paul wrote these letters. Some are not convinced that Paul had anything to do with their composition. Instead, one or more of these three documents were composed much later, after Paul's death, in his name in order to preserve a supposed Pauline tradition about the Christian faith that had its roots in the teachings of the apostle. Much of this approach is highly speculative and is built on very sparse information.

Much more important is to understand the details of the religious situation taking place in Colossae at the time of the arrival of the letter to the community of believers.

Internal History. The language of mystical religious experience that permeates the letter to the Colossians has raised many questions about the precise situation existing at Colossians. Interpretative conclusions from the scattered references have ranged from early forms of Christian Gnosticism to Jewish mystical speculation, coupled with the traditional Jewish legalistic approach to religious devotion. These have made inroads into the house churches at Colossae. My estimate is that the Jewish aspect has played a

dominate role in influencing the thinking of the Christians at Colossae. Ancient historical data strongly suggests a huge Jewish population in this region that reached back several centuries. It also had achieved considerable influence and power over society generally in the area of Colossae, Laodicea and Hierapolis. Tendencies toward mystical religious experience can be traced in certain segments of both the Jewish presence as well in some of the non-Jewish religious traditions in this same area. Thus the believing community, made up of both Jews and non-Jews, would have had a natural tendency to gravi-



tate toward understanding religion to highlight a relationship with God and/or gods based on ritual observance of secretive rites and ceremonies that could not be understood by people without such experiences. These ceremonies were designed to both connect to deity and to maintain that connection experientially. The non-Jewish side would not have linked patterns of moral conduct to such experiences, although the Jewish side would have to a certain extent. The influence of the Jewish Law most likely played a role on this view point. But in mystical experience, observance of the Law would have been a secondary priority with highly charged emotional

encounter with God in ritual observance as the central expression of devotion. The infiltration of either, or of both, these ways of “doing religion” into Christianity presented substantial distortions of a faith based commitment to the resurrected Christ.

Paul had learned about this influence, perhaps from Epaphras, whom Paul describes as “one of you” (Ἐπαφρᾶς ὁ ἐξ ὑμῶν) in Col. 4:12. Thus the letter to the Colossians was intended to probe *authentic* Christian mystical experience. This appears to be the apostle’s writing strategy in order to counteract the distortions coming in from local influences.

b. Literary

Genre. The literary patterns found in 2:20-3:17 revolve around a close linking of foundational spiritual principle to moral demands. This is especially the case in the development of the dying/rising imagery in 2:20 and 3:1. These (Greek first class conditional protasa) “if” clauses lay a spiritual principle foundation for not only the main clause admonitions connected directly to them, but also for the larger sections. The dominate literary pattern of the larger section of 2:20-3:17 is that of paraenesis. That is, moral admonitions defining parameters of acceptable behavior. The development of ethical standards here is tightly linked to the spiritual experience of union with Christ. Thus, proper behavior arises from the inner spiritual relationship with Christ; not from sets of rules being externally imposed. Paul thus avoids the legalism of Jewish religious orientation, and he counters the pagan mystical experience of union with deity where ethical standards play little or no role at all. Authentic Christian experience thus charts a new course traveled by neither Judaism nor paganism.

Literary Setting. The [Body section](#) of the letter (1:13-4:9) mingles three types of material: personal ministry descriptions; deep spiritual principles; and paraenetical materials. Although one or more of these elements dominate individual pericopes (e.g., personal ministry in 1:24-2:5), all three elements are never separated out into unmixed focus where only one element is the exclusive subject. Thus the conceptual forward movement in the letter body is comparable to the strands of a rope where these strands are woven together from beginning to end of the “rope.” Sometimes we mostly see one or two of these strands rather than all of them, but all three are present in varying degrees. In 2:20-3:17, the last two strands, spiritual principle and paraenesis, are most visible, with paraenesis being the most dominant. Unlike Paul’s letter to the Romans where these three elements are separated out into very distinct sections of the body proper of that document, Colossians weaves them together in highlighting the inseparable linkage of personal experience, spiritual principle and behavioral demands.

II. Message

Literary Structure. The literary pattern of these verses is relatively clear. The apostle made use of parallel units of material built around the core structure of the first two sections. This can be charted as follows:

“Since you have died with Christ...” (2:20-23)

Εἰ ἀπεθάνετε σὺν Χριστῷ ...

“Therefore put to death...” (3:5-11)

Νεκρώσατε οὖν τὰ μέλη τὰ ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς...

“Since you have been raised with Christ...” (3:1-4)

Εἰ οὖν συνεγέρθητε τῷ Χριστῷ,...

“Therefore clothe yourselves...(3:12-17)

Ἐνδύσασθε οὖν,...

The core concept is the dying/rising with Christ motif (2:20-23 & 3:1-4). Implications of each are then drawn following the same “dying/rising” sequence. Because of this structure we will consider the two pairs of material in connection to one another.

a. Dying with Christ, 2:20-23; 3:5-11

Greek NT 2:20-23

2:20 Εἰ ἀπεθάνετε
σὺν Χριστῷ ἀπὸ τῶν
στοιχείων τοῦ κόσμου,
τί ὡς ζῶντες ἐν κόσμῳ
δογματίζεσθε· 2:21 Μὴ
ἄψη μηδὲ γεύση μηδὲ
θίγης, 2:22 ἃ ἐστὶν
πάντα εἰς φθορὰν τῇ
ἀποχρήσει, κατὰ τὰ
ἐντάλματα καὶ
διδασκαλίαις τῶν
ἀνθρώπων, 2:23 ἅτινά
ἐστὶν λόγον μὲν ἔχοντα
σοφίας ἐν
ἐθελοθρησκίᾳ καὶ
ταπεινοφροσύνῃ καὶ
ἀφειδία σώματος, οὐκ
ἐν τιμῇ τινι πρὸς
πλησμονὴν τῆς σαρκός.

NASB

2.20 If you have died
with Christ to the el-
ementary principles of
the world, why, as if you
were living in the world,
do you submit yourself
to decrees, such as, 21
"Do not handle, do not
taste, do not touch!" 22
(which all refer to things
destined to perish with
use)--in accordance
with the command-
ments and teachings of
men? 23 These are
matters which have, to
be sure, the appear-
ance of wisdom in self-
made religion and self-
abasement and severe
treatment of the body,
but are of no value
against fleshly indul-
gence.

NRSV

2.20 If with Christ you
died to the elemental
spirits of the universe,
why do you live as if you
still belonged to the
world? Why do you sub-
mit to regulations, 21
"Do not handle, Do not
taste, Do not touch"? 22
All these regulations re-
fer to things that perish
with use; they are sim-
ply human commands
and teachings. 23
These have indeed an
appearance of wisdom
in promoting self-im-
posed piety, humility,
and severe treatment of
the body, but they are of
no value in checking
self-indulgence.

NLT

20 You have died with
Christ, and he has set
you free from the evil
powers of this world. So
why do you keep on fol-
lowing rules of the
world, such as, 21
"Don't handle, don't eat,
don't touch." 22 Such
rules are mere human
teaching about things
that are gone as soon
as we use them. 23
These rules may seem
wise because they re-
quire strong devotion,
humility, and severe
bodily discipline. But
they have no effect
when it comes to con-
quering a person's evil
thoughts and desires.

Greek NT 3:5-11

3:5 Νεκρώσατε οὖν τὰ
μέλη τὰ ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς,
πορνείαν ἀκαθαρσίαν
πάθος ἐπιθυμίαν κακὴν,
καὶ τὴν πλεονεξίαν, ἣτις
ἐστὶν εἰδωλολατρία, 3:6
δι' ἃ ἔρχεται ἡ ὀργὴ τοῦ
θεοῦ ἐπὶ τοὺς υἱοὺς τῆς
ἀπειθείας. 3:7 ἐν οἷς καὶ
ὑμεῖς περιεπατήσατέ
ποτε, ὅτε ἐζῆτε ἐν
τούτοις· 3:8 νυνὶ δὲ
ἀπόθεσθε καὶ ὑμεῖς τὰ
πάντα, ὀργὴν, θυμόν,
κακίαν, βλασφημίαν,
αἰσχρολογίαν ἐκ τοῦ
στόματος ὑμῶν· 3:9 μὴ
ψεύδεσθε εἰς ἀλλήλους,
ἀπεκδυσάμενοι τὸν
παλαιὸν ἄνθρωπον σὺν

NASB

5 Therefore consider
the members of your
earthly body as dead to
immorality, impurity, pas-
sion, evil desire, and
greed, which amounts to
idolatry. 6 For it is be-
cause of these things
that the wrath of God will
come upon the sons of
disobedience, 7 and in
them you also once
walked, when you were
living in them. 8 But now
you also, put them all
aside: anger, wrath, mal-
ice, slander, and abusive
speech from your
mouth. 9 Do not lie to
one another, since you
laid aside the old self with

NRSV

5 Put to death, there-
fore, whatever in you is
earthly: fornication, im-
purity, passion, evil de-
sire, and greed (which is
idolatry). 6 On account
of these the wrath of God
is coming on those who
are disobedient. 7 These
are the ways you also
once followed, when you
were living that life. 8 But
now you must get rid of
all such things—anger,
wrath, malice, slander,
and abusive language
from your mouth. 9 Do
not lie to one another,
seeing that you have
stripped off the old self
with its practices 10 and

NLT

5 So put to death the sin-
ful, earthly things lurking
within you. Have nothing to
do with sexual sin, impurity,
lust, and shameful desires.
Don't be greedy for the good
things of this life, for that is
idolatry. 6 God's terrible an-
ger will come upon those
who do such things. 7 You
used to do them when your
life was still part of this
world. 8 But now is the time
to get rid of anger, rage, ma-
licious behavior, slander,
and dirty language. 9 Don't
lie to each other, for you
have stripped off your old
evil nature and all its wicked
deeds. 10 In its place you
have clothed yourselves

ταῖς πράξεσιν αὐτοῦ
 3:10 καὶ ἐνδυσάμενοι
 τὸν νέον τὸν
 ἀνακαινούμενον εἰς
 ἐπίγνωσιν κατ' εἰκόνα
 τοῦ κτίσαντος αὐτόν,
 3:11 ὅπου οὐκ ἔστι
 Ἕλληνας καὶ Ἰουδαῖος,
 περιτομὴ καὶ
 ἀκροβυστία, βάρβαρος,
 Σκύθης, δοῦλος,
 ἐλεύθερος, ἀλλὰ τὰ
 πάντα καὶ ἐν πᾶσιν
 Χριστός.

its evil practices, 10 and
 have put on the new self
 who is being renewed to
 a true knowledge ac-
 cording to the image of
 the One who created him
 -- 11 a renewal in which
 there is no distinction be-
 tween Greek and Jew,
 circumcised and uncir-
 cumcised, barbarian,
 Scythian, slave and free-
 man, but Christ is all, and
 in all.

have clothed yourselves
 with the new self, which
 is being renewed in
 knowledge according to
 the image of its creator.
 11 In that renewal there
 is no longer Greek and
 Jew, circumcised and
 uncircumcised, barbarian,
 Scythian, slave and
 free; but Christ is all and
 in all!

with a brand-new nature that
 is continually being renewed
 as you learn more and more
 about Christ, who created
 this new nature within you.
 11 In this new life, it doesn't
 matter if you are a Jew or a
 Gentile, circumcised or un-
 circumcised, barbaric, un-
 civilized, slave, or free.
 Christ is all that matters, and
 he lives in all of us.

Notes:

The first segment, 2:20-23, underscores the dying with Christ motif. The “if” clause in which the phrase occurs (2:20a) expands the idea in two directions. The “death” assumed to have been experienced by the Colossians (1st class conditional protasis with Aorist tense verb), is both a dying “with Christ” (σὺν Χριστῷ) and a dying “from the elements of the world” (ἀπὸ τῶν στοιχείων τοῦ κόσμου). The first segment identifies the believer’s spiritual death with the physical death of Christ on the cross. Paul had earlier framed this idea in Gal. 2:19b-20: “I have been crucified with Christ; and it is no longer I who live, but it is Christ who lives in me. And the life I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me.” (NRSV). Just as physical death means separation from the physical world, spiritual death is intended to bring about much of the same. The exclusive way an individual can experience this authentically is through spiritual union with the crucified Christ. Christ placed his commitment to the Father’s will above physical survival. The believer makes the Father’s will his top priority as well. But this union is much deeper than shared priorities. A mystical spiritual union or bonding between Christ and the believer occurs in the moment of faith surrender. The presence of Christ through the Holy Spirit comes about in the life of the believer.

The believer’s death is “from the elements of the world.” This somewhat puzzling reference has a variety of possible meanings. The most common understandings are reflected in the above translations. Note the NASB: “the elementary principles of the world.” Conversely, note the NRSV and the NLT: “the elemental spirits of the universe” (NRSV) and “the evil powers of this world” (NLT). Our modern interpretative tendency is to force a choice among these very legitimate meanings of the Greek phrase; translation

necessity pretty much forces this choice. In the four uses of the term *stoicheia* (τὰ στοιχεῖα) in Paul’s writings (Gal. 4:3, 9 and Col. 2:8, 20), the *stoicheia* are a part of this evil world, and stand opposed to Christ. In one’s pre-Christian experience, they enslave and rob one of the blessings of God. Ultimately they are weak and beggarly (τὰ ἀσθενῆ καὶ πτωχὰ στοιχεῖα) in comparison to Christ. The idea of a believer returning to them after conversion is inconceivable to Paul (Gal. 4:9). In Gal. 4, they are identified with “observing special days, and months, and seasons, and years.” In Col. 2:8, the Colossians are warned: “See to it that no one takes you captive through philosophy and empty deceit, according to human tradition, according to the elemental spirits of the universe, and not according to Christ.” Human tradition is a synonym for *stoicheia*. Paul saw in *stoicheia* aspects of this evil world taking shape in religious expression contrary to Christ and His teachings. Additionally, elements of supernatural evil are associated with them as well.

His piercing question to the believers at Colossae was, Given your death to them and release from their enslaving power, why would you even consider moving back under their control? “Why do you live as if you still belonged to the world? Why do you submit to regulations, ‘Do not handle, Do not taste, Do not touch’?” These questions point toward religious teachings that seek acceptability before God through rigid rules and regulations that perhaps grow out of Jewish interpretation of the OT holiness code, in particular the dietary code, but may also have roots in non-Jewish religious traditions. Paul further characterizes them: “22 All these regulations refer to things that perish with use; they are simply human commands and teachings. 23 These have indeed an appearance of wisdom in promoting

self-imposed piety, humility, and severe treatment of the body, but they are of no value in checking self-indulgence.” (NRSV). This “self-help” religious orientation provided no spiritual resources for holy living. Being based on “human tradition” rather than divine revelation it focused on the externals rather than dealt with the deep spiritual issues of sinfulness. The result: a religion of false piety that was worthless. It looked good with its stress on severe self-restraint, but this was a deception.

Although the precise historical origin and a historical label for these teachings continue to elude Bible scholars, the essentials of this tradition as defined by 2:20-23 are clear. When God’s ways are mysterious and perhaps difficult to understand, human ingenuity can devise a counterfeit religion that is easier to define and that impresses others more readily. In Paul’s continued discussion, one comes to understand that severe bodily treatment replaces the strict demand for holy behavior and living. Thus “self-indulgence” (πλησομονήν σαρκός) now runs rampant under the guise of being true piety to God.

The challenge to those who are “dead with Christ” is instead to “Put to death, therefore, whatever in you is earthly” (3:5-11). This twisted version of Christianity being taught at Colossae is helpless to address the carnal side of human existence. In fact, it winds up promoting carnality. But authentic participation in the death of Christ becomes the way to address this issue. The mysterious spiritual union with Christ in the death experience lays the foundation for successfully saying no to the temptations of the flesh.

The “therefore” (οὖν) links 3:5-11 to 3:1-4, but especially to 2:20-23. The ability to turn one’s back on the pull of the carnal flesh grows out of this ‘dying/rising’ experience with Christ.

Paul lists some of these temptations: “fornication, impurity, passion, evil desire, and greed (which is idola-

try)” [πορνείαν ἀκαθαρσίαν πάθος ἐπιθυμίαν κακήν, καὶ τὴν πλεονεξίαν, ἥτις ἐστὶν εἰδωλολατρία]. These focus on destructive attitudes and treatment of other people. What is idolatry is not certain. It could be just greed or the entire list of vices.

God’s wrath will come on those practicing these vices. The Colossians once lived this way. This language points to a non-Jewish orientation of the initial readers of this letter. But now in their Christian commitment such vices can no longer be tolerated.

But more expressions of the flesh are listed in vv. 8-9: “8 But now you must get rid of all such things—anger, wrath, malice, slander, and abusive language from your mouth. 9 Do not lie to one another, seeing that you have stripped off the old self with its practices” (NRSV).

“Put to death our earthly members” (v. 5; Νεκρώσατε τὰ μέλη τὰ ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς) now becomes “you must get rid of all such things” (v. 8; ἀπόθεσθε καὶ ὑμεῖς τὰ πάντα).

The language of getting undressed / getting dressed surfaces in vv. 9b-11 as the depiction of putting to death and being renewed. The dying / rising metaphor is now defined through this new metaphor. The use of the Greek Aorist tense participles for this clothing metaphor is significant. The NRSV handles this complex Greek structure well in its expression: “seeing that **you have stripped off** the old self with its practices and **have clothed yourselves** with the new self, which is being renewed in knowledge according to the image of its creator.”

The structure points the getting undressed / getting dressed experience back to the moment of dying / rising with Christ. That is, the moment of faith commitment to Christ, which is conversion. The getting undressed side means that “**dying with Christ**” equals “**stripping off the old self with its practices.**” The “old self with its practices” (v. 9b; τὸν παλαιὸν ἄνθρωπον σὺν ταῖς πράξεσιν αὐτοῦ) is “the earthly members” (v. 5; τὰ μέλη τὰ ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς). In



the faith commitment, a commitment was made to abandon the non-Christian way of living. This commitment must be followed by stripping out of our lives those things reflecting that old life style. But with the clothing metaphor, the thought is carried a step deeper. In conversion we not only abandoned that life-style. We died to the carnal, fleshly nature that the life-style was based on. How? By dying with Christ! In this wonderfully mysterious union with Christ on the cross a profound death took place. It reached to the very core of our being. Now Paul's admonitions of "putting to death" and "getting rid of" push us to live out daily the death we experienced in conversion.

The positive side of the clothing metaphor, getting dressed, surfaces in vv. 10-11, and stands as a transition into the final section of our passage, 3:12-17: "10 and have clothed yourselves with the new self, which is being renewed in knowledge according to the image of its creator. 11 In that renewal there is no longer Greek and Jew, circumcised and uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave and free; but Christ is all and in all!" (NRSV).

The 'rising with Christ' becomes now "getting dressed." The new self was born in conversion and represents a new existence. In Paul's language, the new self undergoes continuous renewal: "the new self, which is being renewed in knowledge according to the image of its creator" (v. 10b; τὸν νέον τὸν ἀνακαινούμενον εἰς ἐπίγνωσιν κατ' εἰκόνα τοῦ κτίσαντος αὐτόν). The key to renewal is deeper spiritual understanding, i.e., spiritual maturity. But this understanding is defined by the parameters of God who created this new self. The experiential side of understanding is stressed here. That is, we can't learn this from pure intellectual expansion. This understanding is gained through living out our faith commitment.

Just how radical this is Paul states in v. 11: "In

that renewal there is no longer Greek and Jew, circumcised and uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave and free; but Christ is all and in all!" (NRSV). The new person created in the "rising with Christ", which is "getting dressed," sets aside ethnic, racial, social barriers. The emerging person from the ashes of the old carnal self is saturated with Christ's presence. Everything is focused on Christ and flows through Christ.

For those Colossians with Jewish background, the idea that their Jewish heritage did not somehow give them advantage before God would have been challenging to accept. Jewish mystical streams in the ancient world depended on that Jewishness for its argument of credibility. The non-Jewish mystical streams, especially the mystic cults operating in this general region, argued the superiority of their access to patron deities inside their own ritual practices. Any influences originating from either or from both these backgrounds are rejected by the apostle. The mystical union with Christ is all that is needed to effect a radical transformation of human existence.

What is the connection of all this to us today? Enormous is the reply. We live in a world increasingly filled with supposed "spiritual" ways of religious expression. The impact of religious mysticism stemming from Hinduism and Buddhism and saturating the New Age movement over the past couple of decades has made "religion" popular in all levels of American life. Movie stars freely talk about

being "spiritual" although their life-style is immoral and corrupt. Politicians must project some kind of religious image to the voting public in order to be elected. Many see in a "civil religion" the key to social and moral renewal in our country. That is, an unhealthy mixing of elements of nationalism with elements of Christianity. Increasingly, differing



branches of Christianity define their religious experience largely as a set of rules governing public behavior. Of course, it's "my set of rules" that are correct, not necessarily yours.

The impact of all this? Authentic Christianity gradually disappears, and is replaced by these forgeries. Baptists are not immune to these tendencies. Our disposition is toward the Jewish legalistic side of distortion, the "Do not handle, Do not taste, Do not touch" side.

The solution to anemic Christianity in America is a rediscovery of Paul's insight into what constitutes authentic Christianity. We don't need to be able to rationally explain every facet of Christian experience. Mysticism has legitimacy inside our faith commitment. But the continuous renewal that Paul describes does mean that we gain spiritual maturity sufficient to detect the real from the counterfeit. This is "head knowledge" but even more it stems from our own deepening spiritual experience. We discover both the amazing perspective and the overwhelming emotional experience of what "dying with Christ" means. Our materialistic culture is negated. Our old carnal self-centered person is put to death. The

strangle hold of this world over our lives is broken. We have been striped completely naked before the God who sees us inside and out. Everything is laid bare before God in surrender of our very essence to Him. Only out of the ashes of this self death can the brand new person created in Christ emerge.

And all this has transpired through becoming one with Christ in His death on the cross. As Paul characterized it with his Greek expression in Gal. 2:20, "I have climbed up on the cross of Christ and have so merged myself with his suffering that I have died with Him." This is at least a part of what Paul said earlier in Colossians 1:24, when he declared that his sufferings were filling up what was lacking in the sufferings of Christ. Our suffering for Christ merges us with the suffering Savior in a profound bond. The element of dying becomes common to both Christ and us in a wonderful, yet mysterious manner.

Such mysticism stands unbelievably superior to the shallow, empty claims of spirituality and mystical religious experience found in our world today. Reclaiming this is the key to spiritual renewal among believers in our world.

b. Rising with Christ, 3:1-4; 3:12-17

Greek NT 3:1-4

3·1 Εἰ οὖν
συνηγέρθητε τῷ
Χριστῷ, τὰ ἄνω ζητεῖτε,
οὗ ὁ Χριστός ἐστιν ἐν
δεξιᾷ τοῦ θεοῦ
καθήμενος· 3·2 τὰ ἄνω
φρονεῖτε, μὴ τὰ ἐπὶ τῆς
γῆς. 3·3 ἀπεθάνετε γάρ
καὶ ἡ ζωὴ ὑμῶν
κέκρυπται σὺν τῷ
Χριστῷ ἐν τῷ θεῷ· 3·4
ὅταν ὁ Χριστός
φανερωθῇ, ἡ ζωὴ ὑμῶν,
τότε καὶ ὑμεῖς σὺν αὐτῷ
φανερωθήσεσθε ἐν δόξῃ

NASB

3.1 Therefore if you have been raised up with Christ, keep seeking the things above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. 2 Set your mind on the things above, not on the things that are on earth. 3 For you have died and your life is hidden with Christ in God. 4 When Christ, who is our life, is revealed, then you also will be revealed with

NRSV

3.1 So if you have been raised with Christ, seek the things that are above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. 2 Set your minds on things that are above, not on things that are on earth, 3 for you have died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God. 4 When Christ who is your life is revealed, then you also will be revealed with him in glory.

NLT

3.1 Since you have been raised to new life with Christ, set your sights on the realities of heaven, where Christ sits at God's right hand in the place of honor and power. 2 Let heaven fill your thoughts. Do not think only about things down here on earth. 3 For you died when Christ died, and your real life is hidden with Christ in God. 4 And when Christ, who is your real life, is revealed to the whole world, you will share in all his glory.

Greek NT 3:12-17

3·12 Ἐνδύσασθε
οὖν, ὡς ἐκλεκτοὶ τοῦ
θεοῦ, ἅγιοι καὶ
ἠγαπημένοι, σπλάγχνα
οἰκτιρμοῦ χρηστότητα
ταπεινοφροσύνην

NASB

12 So, as those who have been chosen of God, holy and beloved, put on a heart of compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and

NRSV

12 As God's chosen ones, holy and beloved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, meekness, and patience. 13 Bear with

NLT

12 Since God chose you to be the holy people whom he loves, you must clothe yourselves with tenderhearted mercy, kindness, humility, gentleness, and

πραΰτητα μακροθυμίαν,
 3·13 ἀνεχόμενοι
 ἀλλήλων καὶ
 χαρίζομενοι ἑαυτοῖς ἐάν
 τις πρὸς τινα ἔχη μομφήν·
 καθὼς καὶ ὁ κύριος
 ἐχαρίσατο ὑμῖν, οὕτως
 καὶ ὑμεῖς· 3·14 ἐπὶ πᾶσιν
 δὲ τούτοις τὴν ἀγάπην, ὃ
 ἐστὶν σύνδεσμος τῆς
 τελειότητος. 3·15 καὶ ἡ
 εἰρήνη τοῦ Χριστοῦ
 βραβεύετω ἐν ταῖς
 καρδίαις ὑμῶν, εἰς ἣν καὶ
 ἐκλήθητε ἐν ἐνὶ σώματι·
 καὶ εὐχάριστοι γίνεσθε.
 3·16 ὁ λόγος τοῦ Χριστοῦ
 ἐνοικεῖτω ἐν ὑμῖν
 πλουσίως, ἐν πάσῃ σοφίᾳ
 διδάσκοντες καὶ
 νουθετοῦντες ἑαυτοὺς,
 ψαλμοῖς ὕμνοις ᾠδαῖς
 πνευματικαῖς ἐν τῇ χάριτι
 ᾄδοντες ἐν ταῖς καρδίαις
 ὑμῶν τῷ θεῷ· 3·17 καὶ
 πᾶν ὃ τι ἐὰν ποιῆτε ἐν
 λόγῳ ἢ ἐν ἔργῳ, πάντα ἐν
 ὀνόματι κυρίου Ἰησοῦ,
 εὐχαριστοῦντες τῷ θεῷ
 πατρὶ δι' αὐτοῦ.

patience; 13 bearing with
 one another, and forgiv-
 ing each other, whoever
 has a complaint against
 anyone; just as the Lord
 forgave you, so also
 should you. 14 Beyond all
 these things put on love,
 which is the perfect bond
 of unity. 15 Let the peace
 of Christ rule in your
 hearts, to which indeed
 you were called in one
 body; and be thankful. 16
 Let the word of Christ
 richly dwell within you,
 with all wisdom teaching
 and admonishing one
 another with psalms and
 hymns and spiritual
 songs, singing with
 thankfulness in your
 hearts to God. 17 What-
 ever you do in word or
 deed, do all in the name
 of the Lord Jesus, giving
 thanks through Him to
 God the Father.

one another and, if any-
 one has a complaint
 against another, forgive
 each other; just as the
 Lord has forgiven you, so
 you also must forgive. 14
 Above all, clothe your-
 selves with love, which
 binds everything together
 in perfect harmony. 15
 And let the peace of
 Christ rule in your hearts,
 to which indeed you were
 called in the one body.
 And be thankful. 16 Let
 the word of Christ dwell
 in you richly; teach and
 admonish one another in
 all wisdom; and with
 gratitude in your hearts
 sing psalms, hymns, and
 spiritual songs to God. 17
 And whatever you do, in
 word or deed, do every-
 thing in the name of the
 Lord Jesus, giving thanks
 to God the Father
 through him.

patience. 13 You must
 make allowance for each
 other's faults and forgive the
 person who offends you.
 Remember, the Lord forgave
 you, so you must forgive oth-
 ers. 14 And the most impor-
 tant piece of clothing you
 must wear is love. Love is
 what binds us all together
 in perfect harmony. 15 And
 let the peace that comes
 from Christ rule in your
 hearts. For as members of
 one body you are all called
 to live in peace. And always
 be thankful. 16 Let the
 words of Christ, in all their
 richness, live in your hearts
 and make you wise. Use his
 words to teach and counsel
 each other. Sing psalms and
 hymns and spiritual songs
 to God with thankful hearts.
 17 And whatever you do or
 say, let it be as a represen-
 tative of the Lord Jesus, all
 the while giving thanks
 through him to God the Fa-
 ther.

Notes:

This second set of passages emphasize the 'rising with Christ' motif. The first passage, 3:1-4, lays out the idea, and the second passage, 3:12-17, applies the idea to patterns of daily behavior.

The inferential conjunction "therefore" (οὖν) in verse one connects 3:1-4 to 2:20-23. Rising in Christ thus grows out of dying with Christ. One should not forget the basic reversal in this spiritual principle. In physical life we first live and then die. But in spiritual experience we must first die before we can live.

Paul's terminology links the resurrection of the believer, the first coming to life spiritually, to that of Christ on Easter Sunday. This sharing of resurrection experience is the language of Colossians and Ephesians. In addition to the use of *synegeiro* here (συνεγείρω), it is found in 2:12: "when you were buried with him in baptism, you were also raised with him through faith in the power of God, who raised him from the dead" (NRSV). The Greek verb also shows up in Eph. 2:6: "and [God] raised us up with him and seated us with him in

the heavenly places in Christ Jesus" (NRSV). Collectively, the concept stresses that we have **been** raised up with Christ. This is not something we accomplish; it is an action of God accomplished as a part of the faith commitment and signified by our baptism. The focal point of this metaphor is the realization of divine power in our lives accomplishing something that is clearly humanly impossible. Thus spiritual dying moves to coming to life spiritually in parallel to Christ's experience of crucifixion and resurrection. His experience was both physical and spiritual. In conversion our experience is just spiritual, but is life transforming, as Col. 2:12 clearly stresses.

What implication does this rising with Christ poses? The core admonition answers this question: "seek the things that are above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God" (NRSV). The new priority central to this new life is Heaven. The things associated with God's dwelling place where Christ is seated at the right hand of God's power should govern our life

now. The spiritual power demonstrated in the resurrection of Christ is now channeled into the life of the believer effecting a spiritual resurrection. The believer, Paul urges, should now focus on those spiritual resources. The second pair of admonitions essentially repeats the first using different language: “Set your minds on things that are above, not on things that are on earth” (NRSV). Both Greek verbs, “seek” (τὰ ἄνω ζητεῖτε) and “set your minds on” (τὰ ἄνω φρονεῖτε, μὴ τὰ ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς) stress prioritizing our life and giving commitment to the heavenly things.

A rationale for this stance is provided in verses three and four: “3 for you have died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God. 4 When Christ who is your life is revealed, then you also will be revealed with him in glory” (NRSV). In the dying with Christ, the true life we possess is not overtly visible. The impact of it is through our life-style, but the spiritual life we possess is not itself visible to others. But a day is coming when it becomes visible. At the second coming of Christ we will share in the divine glory in open manifestation. Again, Paul touches on a mystical aspect of Christian experience. Christian existence is only visible indirectly through its impact on our living. Our actual spiritual existence is invisible and can’t be examined or made visible for others to observe. While the mystical traditions coming into the community of believers at Colossae claimed to offer genuine spiritual existence, those who possess it authentically will be revealed at the second coming of Christ. Paul’s contention is that this comes only through participation in the resurrection of Christ both now and at the close of time.

What implications for Christian living does such a reality possess? 3:12-17 provides Paul’s answer to this question. His answer revolves around the application of the clothing metaphor first set forth in vv. 10-11. To rise with Christ is to put on a new existence revolving around Christ. This has powerful implications about virtues we are to incorporate into our living. Three long, rather complex Greek sentences in vv. 12-17 set forth these implications:

First is vv. 12-14:

12 As God’s chosen ones, holy and beloved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, meekness, and patience. 13 Bear with one another and, if anyone has a complaint against another, forgive each other; just as the Lord has forgiven you, so you also must forgive.

This new life first reaches out to others in uplifting and edifying ways. The clothing of Christ, his qualities, are incorporated into our relationships with others.

Second comes v. 15:

And let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to which indeed you were called in the one body. And be thankful.

Inside the body of believers the unifying peace of Christ draws believers together in harmony and thankfulness.

Third is vv. 16-17:

16 Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly; teach and admonish one another in all wisdom; and with gratitude in your hearts sing psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs to God. 17 And whatever you do, in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.

In the community of faith, mutual encouragement and teaching is to take place as a part of this new life experience. Christ’s words are to find lodging in the hearts of believers. Believers are to inform and exhort one another out of deep spiritual insight. Interestingly, a key way of communicating these words of Christ is through musical expression. This includes the OT psalms along with contemporary musical expressions developed in the Christian community. Some traces of this exist in poems preserved in part by Paul in Phil. 2:6-11 and 1 Tim. 3:16. The last term, “spiritual songs” (ᾠδαὶς πνευματικαῖς), hints at the use of “secular” musical material in the first century Greco-Roman world as the foundation for Christian music. Taken together the three references to musical compositions become inclusive of every appropriate musical expression as a means of communicating the truths of Christ inside the community of believers. Many Christian leaders down through the centuries have recognized and utilized the power of music to express their Christian beliefs. Namely, Martin Luther and John and Charles Wesley.

In the final analysis Paul concludes with the all encompassing “whatever you do, in word or deed.” Everything spoken and done is to be in the authority, the name, of Christ. His indwelling presence infuses our words and actions with His resurrection power, thus making them effective and influential. All this is to be carried out in the context of thankfulness to God through Christ.

The connection to us? Obvious! Only in spiritual union with Christ where His spiritual presence and power infuses what we say and do can we live as new people anticipating the final revelation at the coming of our Lord. This spiritual presence is not a private matter. To the contrary, it is a corporate experience to be lived out in a community of believers who reinforce one another’s commitment to Christ. Who would want to trade this for a forgery?

Greek NT

2:20 Εἰ ἀπεθάνετε σὺν Χριστῷ ἀπὸ τῶν στοιχείων τοῦ κόσμου, τί ὡς ζῶντες ἐν κόσμῳ δογματίζεσθε· 2:21 Μὴ ἄψη μηδὲ γεύση μηδὲ θίγης, 2:22 ἃ ἐστὶν πάντα εἰς φθορὰν τῇ ἀποχρήσει, κατὰ τὰ ἐντάλματα καὶ διδασκαλίας τῶν ἀνθρώπων, 2:23 ἃτινά ἐστὶν λόγον μὲν ἔχοντα σοφίας ἐν ἐθελοθρησκίᾳ καὶ ταπεινοφροσύνῃ καὶ ἀφειδίᾳ σώματος, οὐκ ἐν τιμῇ τινὶ πρὸς πλησμονὴν τῆς σαρκός.

3:1 Εἰ οὖν συνηγέρθητε τῷ Χριστῷ, τὰ ἄνω ζητεῖτε, οὗ ὁ Χριστὸς ἐστὶν ἐν δεξιᾷ τοῦ θεοῦ καθημένος· 3:2 τὰ ἄνω φρονεῖτε, μὴ τὰ ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς. 3:3 ἀπεθάνετε γὰρ καὶ ἡ ζωὴ ὑμῶν κέκρυπται σὺν τῷ Χριστῷ ἐν τῷ θεῷ· 3:4 ὅταν ὁ Χριστὸς φανερωθῇ, ἡ ζωὴ ὑμῶν, τότε καὶ ὑμεῖς σὺν αὐτῷ φανερωθήσεσθε ἐν δόξῃ.

3:5 Νεκρώσατε οὖν τὰ μέλη τὰ ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς, πορνείαν ἀκαθαρσίαν πάθος ἐπιθυμίαν κακὴν, καὶ τὴν πλεονεξίαν, ἣτις ἐστὶν εἰδωλολατρία, 3:6 δι' ἃ ἔρχεται ἡ ὀργὴ τοῦ θεοῦ ἐπὶ τοὺς υἱοὺς τῆς ἀπειθείας. 3:7 ἐν οἷς καὶ ὑμεῖς περιεπατήσατέ ποτε, ὅτε ἐζῆτε ἐν τούτοις· 3:8 νυνὶ δὲ ἀπόθεσθε καὶ ὑμεῖς τὰ πάντα, ὀργὴν, θυμόν, κακίαν, βλασφημίαν, αἰσχρολογίαν ἐκ τοῦ στόματος ὑμῶν· 3:9 μὴ ψεύδεσθε εἰς ἀλλήλους, ἀπεκδυσάμενοι τὸν

NASB

2.20 If you have died with Christ to the elementary principles of the world, why, as if you were living in the world, do you submit yourself to decrees, such as, 21 "Do not handle, do not taste, do not touch!" 22 (which all refer to things destined to perish with use)--in accordance with the commandments and teachings of men? 23 These are matters which have, to be sure, the appearance of wisdom in self-made religion and self-abasement and severe treatment of the body, but are of no value against fleshly indulgence.

3.1 Therefore if you have been raised up with Christ, keep seeking the things above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. 2 Set your mind on the things above, not on the things that are on earth. 3 For you have died and your life is hidden with Christ in God. 4 When Christ, who is our life, is revealed, then you also will be revealed with Him in glory.

5 Therefore consider the members of your earthly body as dead to immorality, impurity, passion, evil desire, and greed, which amounts to idolatry. 6 For it is because of these things that the wrath of God will come upon the sons of disobedience, 7 and in them you also once walked, when you were living in them. 8 But now

NRSV

2.20 If with Christ you died to the elemental spirits of the universe, why do you live as if you still belonged to the world? Why do you submit to regulations, 21 "Do not handle, Do not taste, Do not touch"? 22 All these regulations refer to things that perish with use; they are simply human commands and teachings. 23 These have indeed an appearance of wisdom in promoting self-imposed piety, humility, and severe treatment of the body, but they are of no value in checking self-indulgence.

3.1 So if you have been raised with Christ, seek the things that are above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. 2 Set your minds on things that are above, not on things that are on earth, 3 for you have died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God. 4 When Christ who is your life is revealed, then you also will be revealed with him in glory.

5 Put to death, therefore, whatever in you is earthly: fornication, impurity, passion, evil desire, and greed (which is idolatry). 6 On account of these the wrath of God is coming on those who are disobedient. 7 These are the ways you also once followed, when you were living that life. 8 But now you must get rid of all such things—anger, wrath, malice, slander, and abusive language

NLT

20 You have died with Christ, and he has set you free from the evil powers of this world. So why do you keep on following rules of the world, such as, 21 "Don't handle, don't eat, don't touch." 22 Such rules are mere human teaching about things that are gone as soon as we use them. 23 These rules may seem wise because they require strong devotion, humility, and severe bodily discipline. But they have no effect when it comes to conquering a person's evil thoughts and desires.

3.1 Since you have been raised to new life with Christ, set your sights on the realities of heaven, where Christ sits at God's right hand in the place of honor and power. 2 Let heaven fill your thoughts. Do not think only about things down here on earth. 3 For you died when Christ died, and your real life is hidden with Christ in God. 4 And when Christ, who is your real life, is revealed to the whole world, you will share in all his glory.

5 So put to death the sinful, earthly things lurking within you. Have nothing to do with sexual sin, impurity, lust, and shameful desires. Don't be greedy for the good things of this life, for that is idolatry. 6 God's terrible anger will come upon those who do such things. 7 You used to do them when your life was still part of this world. 8 But now is the time to get rid of anger, rage, malicious behavior, slander, and dirty language. 9 Don't lie to each other, for you have stripped

παλαιὸν ἄνθρωπον σὺν ταῖς πράξεσιν αὐτοῦ 3·10 καὶ ἐνδυσάμενοι τὸν νέον τὸν ἀνακαινούμενον εἰς ἐπίγνωσιν κατ' εἰκόνα τοῦ κτίσαντος αὐτόν, 3·11 ὅπου οὐκ ἔνι Ἑλληναὶ καὶ Ἰουδαῖος, περιτομὴ καὶ ἀκροβυστία, βάρβαρος, Σκύθης, δοῦλος, ἐλεύθερος, ἀλλὰ τὰ πάντα καὶ ἐν πᾶσιν Χριστός.

3·12 Ἐνδύσασθε οὖν, ὡς ἐκλεκτοὶ τοῦ θεοῦ, ἅγιοι καὶ ἠγαπημένοι, σπλάγχνα οἰκτιρμοῦ χρηστότητα ταπεινοφροσύνην πραῦτητα μακροθυμίαν, 3·13 ἀνεχόμενοι ἀλλήλων καὶ χαριζόμενοι ἑαυτοῖς ἕαντις πρὸς τινα ἔχη μομφήν· καθὼς καὶ ὁ κύριος ἐχαρίσατο ὑμῖν, οὕτως καὶ ὑμεῖς 3·14 ἐπὶ πᾶσιν δὲ τούτοις τὴν ἀγάπην, ἧ ἔστιν σύνδεσμος τῆς τελειότητος. 3·15 καὶ ἡ εἰρήνη τοῦ Χριστοῦ βραβεύετω ἐν ταῖς καρδίαις ὑμῶν, εἰς ἣν καὶ ἐκλήθητε ἐν ἐνὶ σώματι· καὶ εὐχάριστοι γίνεσθε. 3·16 ὁ λόγος τοῦ Χριστοῦ ἐνοικεῖτω ἐν ὑμῖν πλουσίως, ἐν πάσῃ σοφίᾳ διδάσκοντες καὶ νουθετοῦντες ἑαυτοὺς, ψαλμοῖς ὕμνοις ᾠδαῖς πνευματικαῖς ἐν τῇ χάριτι ἄδοντες ἐν ταῖς καρδίαις ὑμῶν τῷ θεῷ 3·17 καὶ πᾶν ὅ τι ἔαν ποιῆτε ἐν λόγῳ ἢ ἐν ἔργῳ, πάντα ἐν ὀνόματι κυρίου Ἰησοῦ, εὐχαριστοῦντες τῷ θεῷ πατρὶ δι' αὐτοῦ.

you also, put them all aside: anger, wrath, malice, slander, and abusive speech from your mouth. 9 Do not lie to one another, since you laid aside the old self with its evil practices, 10 and have put on the new self who is being renewed to a true knowledge according to the image of the One who created him -- 11 a renewal in which there is no distinction between Greek and Jew, circumcised and uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave and free man, but Christ is all, and in all.

12 So, as those who have been chosen of God, holy and beloved, put on a heart of compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience; 13 bearing with one another, and forgiving each other, whoever has a complaint against anyone; just as the Lord forgave you, so also should you. 14 Beyond all these things put on love, which is the perfect bond of unity. 15 Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to which indeed you were called in one body; and be thankful. 16 Let the word of Christ richly dwell within you, with all wisdom teaching and admonishing one another with psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with thankfulness in your hearts to God. 17 Whatever you do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks through Him to God the Father.

from your mouth. 9 Do not lie to one another, seeing that you have stripped off the old self with its practices 10 and have clothed yourselves with the new self, which is being renewed in knowledge according to the image of its creator. 11 In that renewal there is no longer Greek and Jew, circumcised and uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave and free; but Christ is all and in all!

12 As God's chosen ones, holy and beloved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, meekness, and patience. 13 Bear with one another and, if anyone has a complaint against another, forgive each other; just as the Lord has forgiven you, so you also must forgive. 14 Above all, clothe yourselves with love, which binds everything together in perfect harmony. 15 And let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to which indeed you were called in the one body. And be thankful. 16 Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly; teach and admonish one another in all wisdom; and with gratitude in your hearts singing psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs to God. 17 And whatever you do, in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.

off your old evil nature and all its wicked deeds. 10 In its place you have clothed yourselves with a brand-new nature that is continually being renewed as you learn more and more about Christ, who created this new nature within you. 11 In this new life, it doesn't matter if you are a Jew or a Gentile, circumcised or uncircumcised, barbaric, uncivilized, slave, or free. Christ is all that matters, and he lives in all of us.

12 Since God chose you to be the holy people whom he loves, you must clothe yourselves with tender-hearted mercy, kindness, humility, gentleness, and patience. 13 You must make allowance for each other's faults and forgive the person who offends you. Remember, the Lord forgave you, so you must forgive others. 14 And the most important piece of clothing you must wear is love. Love is what binds us all together in perfect harmony. 15 And let the peace that comes from Christ rule in your hearts. For as members of one body you are all called to live in peace. And always be thankful. 16 Let the words of Christ, in all their richness, live in your hearts and make you wise. Use his words to teach and counsel each other. Sing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs to God with thankful hearts. 17 And whatever you do or say, let it be as a representative of the Lord Jesus, all the while giving thanks through him to God the Father.

Greek Text Diagram

20	2:20	Εἰ ἀπεθάνετε σὺν Χριστῷ	ἀπὸ τῶν στοιχείων τοῦ κόσμου, ὡς ζῶντες ἐν κόσμῳ
21		<i>τί...δογματίζεσθε;</i>	
22	2:21	<i>Μὴ ἄνη</i>	
23		μηδὲ <i>γεύση</i>	
24		μηδὲ <i>θίγης,</i>	
	2:22	ἅ ἐστιν πάντα	εἰς φθορὰν τῇ ἀποχρήσει, κατὰ τὰ ἐντάλματα καὶ διδασκαλίας τῶν ἀνθρώπων,
	2:23	ἅτινά ἐστιν λόγον μὲν	ἔχοντα σοφίας ἐν ἐθελοθρησκίᾳ καὶ ταπεινοφροσύνη καὶ ἀφειδία σώματος, οὐκ ἐν τιμῇ τινι πρὸς πλησμονὴν τῆς σαρκός.

25	3:1	οὖν	Εἰ συνηγέρθητε τῷ Χριστῷ,	τὰ ἄνω ζητεῖτε, οὗ ὁ Χριστός ἐστιν ἐν δεξιᾷ τοῦ θεοῦ καθήμενος·
26	3:2	<i>τὰ ἄνω φρονεῖτε,</i>		
27		<i>μὴ ----- τὰ ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς.</i>		
28	3:3	γάρ <i>ἀπεθάνετε</i>		
29		καὶ <i>ἡ ζωὴ ὑμῶν κέκρυπται</i>	σὺν τῷ Χριστῷ ἐν τῷ θεῷ·	
30	3:4	<i>ἡ ζωὴ ὑμῶν...καὶ ὑμεῖς...φανερωθήσεσθε</i>	ὅταν ὁ Χριστὸς φανερωθῇ, τότε σὺν αὐτῷ ἐν δόξῃ.	

3:5

οὖν

31

Νεκρώσατε τὰ μέλη

τὰ ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς,
πορνείαν
ἀκαθαρσίαν
πάθος
ἐπιθυμίαν κακὴν,
καὶ
τὴν πλεονεξίαν,
ἣτις ἐστὶν εἰδωλολατρία,
3:6 δι' ἧ ἔρχεται ἡ ὀργὴ τοῦ θεοῦ
ἐπὶ τοὺς υἱοὺς τῆς ἀπειθείας.

3:7

ἐν οἷς
καὶ
ὑμεῖς περιεπατήσατέ
ποτε,
3:8 ὅτε ἐζῆτε ἐν τούτοις·

3:8

δὲ
νυνὶ

32

ἀπόθεσθε καὶ ὑμεῖς τὰ πάντα,

ὀργὴν,
θυμὸν,
κακίαν,
βλασφημίαν,
αἰσχρολογίαν ἐκ τοῦ στόματος ὑμῶν·

33

3:9

μὴ ψεύδεσθε

εἰς ἀλλήλους,
ἀπεκδυσάμενοι τὸν παλαιὸν ἄνθρωπον
σὺν ταῖς πράξεσιν αὐτοῦ

3:10

καὶ
ἐνδυσάμενοι τὸν νέον

τὸν ἀνακαινούμενον
εἰς ἐπίγνωσιν
κατ' εἰκόνα τοῦ κτίσαντος αὐτόν,
3:11 ὅπου οὐκ ἔστι Ἕλλην καὶ Ἰουδαῖος,
περιτομὴ καὶ ἀκροβυστία,
βάρβαρος, Σκύθης,
δοῦλος, ἐλεύθερος,

3:11

ἀλλὰ
(ἐστὶν) τὰ πάντα... Χριστός.
καὶ

ἐν πᾶσιν

3:12

οὖν,

34

Ἐνδύσασθε

ὡς ἐκλεκτοὶ τοῦ θεοῦ,
ἅγιοι
καὶ

ἠγαπημένοι
σπλάγχνα οἰκτιρμοῦ
χρηστότητα
ταπεινοφροσύνην
πραΰτητα
μακροθυμίαν,
3:13 ἀνεχόμενοι ἀλλήλων
καὶ
χαριζόμενοι ἑαυτοῖς
ἐάν τις πρὸς τινα ἔχη μομφήν·

καθὼς καὶ ὁ κύριος ἐχαρίσατο ὑμῖν,
οὕτως καὶ
35 *ὕμεῖς (ἐχαρίσασθε)*·
3:14 δὲ
36 *(Ἐνδύσασθε)*
ἐπὶ πᾶσιν τούτοις
τὴν ἀγάπην,
ὃ ἐστὶν σύνδεσμος τῆς τελειότητος.

3:15 καὶ
37 *ἡ εἰρήνη τοῦ Χριστοῦ βραβευέτω*
ἐν ταῖς καρδίαις ὑμῶν,
εἰς ἣν καὶ ἐκλήθητε
ἐν ἐνὶ σώματι·
καὶ
38 *εὐχάριστοι γίνεσθε.*

3:16 *ὁ λόγος τοῦ Χριστοῦ ἐνοικεῖτω*
ἐν ὑμῖν πλουσίως,
ἐν πάσῃ σοφίᾳ
διδάσκοντες
καὶ
νουθετοῦντες ἑαυτοὺς,
ψαλμοῖς
ὑμνοῖς
ᾠδαῖς πνευματικαῖς
ἐν [τῇ] χάριτι
ᾄδοντες... τῷ θεῷ·
ἐν ταῖς καρδίαις ὑμῶν

3:17 καὶ
πᾶν ὃ τι ἐὰν ποιῆτε
ἐν λόγῳ
ἢ
ἐν ἔργῳ,
40 *πάντα (ποιεῖτε)*
ἐν ὀνόματι κυρίου Ἰησοῦ,
εὐχαριστοῦντες τῷ θεῷ
πατρὶ
δι' αὐτοῦ.