

## “Life Through Death and Resurrection” Colossians 1:19-23

We celebrate Christ’s death and resurrection because He provides life for those who are dead in their sins who choose to believe on Him.

Blood to Atone  
Death to Life

Blood to Atone

Colossians 1:19-20, NKJV

*<sup>19</sup> For it pleased the Father that in Him all the fullness should dwell, <sup>20</sup> and by Him to reconcile all things to Himself, by Him, whether things on earth or things in heaven, having made peace through the blood of His cross.*

Colossians 1:19-23 is a great summation of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Apostle Paul briefly explains who Christ was, why He came, how He obeyed, and what He accomplished. These five verses consisting of two sentences containing words and phrases that God’s people need to know to comprehend, even in an elementary way, to grasp the significance of what is being proclaimed as they gather to partake of the Lord’s Supper.

Paul begins with the phrase, “...in Him all the fullness should dwell...” (Colossians 1:19, NKJV). In the verses preceding verse nineteen, Apostle Paul goes into great detail about the essence of Jesus as the Son of the living God.

*<sup>15</sup> He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation. <sup>16</sup> For by Him all things were created that are in heaven and that are on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or principalities or powers. All things were created through Him and for Him. <sup>17</sup> And He is before all things, and in Him all things consist.* (Colossians 1:15-17, NKJV)

John’s account reveals in his gospel,

*<sup>1</sup> In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. <sup>2</sup> He was in the beginning with God. <sup>3</sup> All things were made through Him, and without Him nothing was made that was made...<sup>10</sup> He was in the world, and the world was made through Him, and the world did not know Him...<sup>14</sup> And the Word became 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”* (John 1:1-3, 10, 14, NKJV).

Jesus said of Himself in speaking to the disciples during the last supper,

*<sup>7</sup> “If you had known Me, you would have known My Father also; and from now on you know Him and have seen Him.”*

*<sup>8</sup> Philip said to Him, “Lord, show us the Father, and it is sufficient for us.”*

<sup>9</sup> *Jesus said to him, "Have I been with you so long, and yet you have not known Me, Philip? He who has seen Me has seen the Father; so how can you say, 'Show us the Father'?"* (John 14:7-9, NKJV)

Isaiah prophesied about the Messiah of God saying,

<sup>5</sup> *Thus says God the Lord,  
Who created the heavens and stretched them out,  
Who spread forth the earth and that which comes from it,  
Who gives breath to the people on it,  
And spirit to those who walk on it:  
<sup>6</sup> "I, the Lord, have called You in righteousness,  
And will hold Your hand;  
I will keep You and give You as a covenant to the people,  
As a light to the Gentiles* (Isaiah 42:5-6, NKJV)

Jesus is the Incarnation of the living God, who took on flesh in order to reveal Himself to mankind which rebelled against Him. The fullness of the Father rather than a glimpse of Him is exposed in the person of Jesus. Saying, "<sup>20</sup> *...it pleased the Father that in Him all the fullness should dwell...*" proclaims that Jesus is God. This is significant in the fact that only God can provide the sacrifice needed for the propitiation of His righteous judgment.

The next important phrase is, "*and by Him to reconcile all things to Himself, by Him...*" (Colossians 1:20, NKJV). The purpose of the Incarnation is much more than God revealing His character and a demonstration of how He has called people to live, although they willfully rebelled against Him. God came into human history at the precise time He did in order to reconcile the broken relationship between mankind and Himself as their Creator.

The standard of God is holiness. The Lord has made it clear to the Israelites and reiterated this call to the Church through the Apostle Peter that He expects His people to be holy as He is holy. "<sup>1</sup> *And the Lord spoke to Moses, saying,* <sup>2</sup> *"Speak to all the congregation of the children of Israel, and say to them: 'You shall be holy, for I the Lord your God am holy'"* (Leviticus 19:1-2, NKJV). "<sup>13</sup> *Therefore gird up the loins of your mind, be sober, and rest your hope fully upon the grace that is to be brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ;* <sup>14</sup> *as obedient children, not conforming yourselves to the former lusts, as in your ignorance;* <sup>15</sup> *but as He who called you is holy, you also be holy in all your conduct,* <sup>16</sup> *because it is written, "Be holy, for I am holy"* (1 Peter 1:13-16, NKJV).

The sacrifice for sin must be of equal or greater value of the offender to be accepted by God. Therefore, Jesus needed to be completely human that He could die in the place of mankind as well as completely divine to be able to be holy as God Himself is holy. Comprehension of Jesus' dual nature without violating either of those natures will forever escape mankind in their limited human logic. Yet, God's people rejoice in the reality of Christ's complete humanity and divinity because through it the Father has demonstrated His omnipotence to do the impossible.

The rebellion of mankind in the beginning destroyed the intimate relationship God had intended, anticipated, and expected to have with all that He created. Evil was revealed to people in their willful disobedience in eating from the tree of the knowledge of

good and evil (Genesis 2:17). The reason for the need of reconciliation is recorded in Genesis 3:6-8,

*6 So when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree desirable to make one wise, she took of its fruit and ate. She also gave to her husband with her, and he ate. 7 Then the eyes of both of them were opened, and they knew that they were naked; and they sewed fig leaves together and made themselves coverings.*

*8 And they heard the sound of the Lord God walking in the garden in the cool of the day, and Adam and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the Lord God among the trees of the garden. (NKJV)*

Evil existed because it is the exact opposite of God's character. It is not surprising that people fell to the influence of evil when even some angels in heaven found it difficult to resist and fell themselves (Ezekiel 28:11-17). God protected mankind from the reality of the evil which was present even at the time of creation. The information which God held from His stewards who He called to care for and tend His creation was for their protection, but the devil presented it as something that would make them equal to God which he attempted and failed to do himself.

God described sin as, "*7 ...if you do not do well, sin lies at the door. And its desire is for you, but you should rule over it*" (Genesis 4:7, NKJV). Jesus has established His reign over sin that continually lurked at the door of His life by living a life that was holy as God the Father is holy. Jesus continually obeyed the Father in all things which allowed Him the privilege of being able to confidently tell His disciples, "*...In the world you will have tribulation; but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world*" (John 16:33, NKJV). Christ, as God in the flesh, chose to do what the fallen angels and mankind refused to do and submitted Himself to the Father in perfect holiness as He demands.

This brings us to the final phrase of importance in the first two verses of this portion of Scripture, "*...having made peace through the blood of His cross*" (Colossians 1:20, NKJV). Jesus' title of "*29 ...The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!*" (John 1:29, NKJV) and "*8 ...the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world*" (Revelation 13:8, NKJV) are accurate based on His fulfillment of the prophecy of Isaiah concerning the Suffering Servant,

*4 Surely He has borne our griefs  
And carried our sorrows;*

*Yet we esteemed Him stricken,  
Smitten by God, and afflicted.*

*5 But He was wounded for our transgressions,  
He was bruised for our iniquities;  
The chastisement for our peace was upon Him,  
And by His stripes we are healed.*

*6 All we like sheep have gone astray;  
We have turned, every one, to his own way;  
And the Lord has laid on Him the iniquity of us all. (Isaiah 53:4-6, NKJV)*

Christ has brought peace between God the Father and those who choose to believe on Him for the forgiveness of sins. The death of Christ upon the cross satisfied the justice of God; His life satisfied the holiness and righteous standards of God. Therefore, having lived up to the standards of God in complete innocence but dying condemned as a criminal, Christ has exchanged His wrongful death as substitution for the rightful death of all mankind due to their sin. This is what Paul was referring to when He was inspired to write, “<sup>21</sup> *For He [the Father] made Him [the Son] who knew no sin to be sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him [the Son]*” (2 Corinthians 5:21, NKJV).

## Death to Life

Colossians 1:21-23, NKJV

*<sup>21</sup> And you, who once were alienated and enemies in your mind by wicked works, yet now He has reconciled <sup>22</sup> in the body of His flesh through death, to present you holy, and blameless, and above reproach in His sight— <sup>23</sup> if indeed you continue in the faith, grounded and steadfast, and are not moved away from the hope of the gospel which you heard, which was preached to every creature under heaven, of which I, Paul, became a minister.*

In verses 21-23, Paul summarizes the results of Jesus’ life, death, and resurrection for those who believe on the name of Christ for the forgiveness of sins and the freedom from the wrath of God upon sin. The first phrase in this portion of Scripture is, “<sup>21</sup> *...once were alienated and enemies...yet now He has reconciled <sup>22</sup> in the body of His flesh through death ...*” (Colossians 1:21, NKJV).

Those who are in Christ have been freed from the condemnation of sin against God since their sin has been atoned for through the shed blood of Christ. Apostle Paul was inspired to write, “<sup>1</sup> *There is therefore now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus, who do not walk according to the flesh, but according to the Spirit*” (Romans 8:1, NKJV) and “<sup>9</sup> *For God did not appoint us to wrath, but to obtain salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ, <sup>10</sup> who died for us, that whether we wake or sleep, we should live together with Him*” (1 Thessalonians 5:9-10, NKJV). The writer of the letter to the Hebrews was inspired to write in this manner,

*<sup>19</sup> Therefore, brethren, having boldness to enter the Holiest by the blood of Jesus, <sup>20</sup> by a new and living way which He consecrated for us, through the veil, that is, His flesh, <sup>21</sup> and having a High Priest over the house of God, <sup>22</sup> let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water.* (Hebrews 10:19-22, NKJV)

The separation that once existed before coming to believe on the name of Jesus has now been bridged by the powerful blood of Christ that was shed to satisfy the judgment of God upon sin. Those who were aliens and enemies are now co-heirs with Christ and friends of God. Apostle Paul in his inspired writing to the believers in Ephesus explained this transition in this way,

*<sup>1</sup> And you He made alive, who were dead in trespasses and sins, <sup>2</sup> in which you once walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit who now works in the sons of disobedience, <sup>3</sup> among whom also we all once conducted ourselves in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, just as the others. (Ephesians 2:1-3, NKJV)*

Jesus accomplished the reconciliation between mankind and God the Father. However, Jesus did more than just repair the damaged relationship between the Father and people; He has brought miraculous transformation to those who believe upon Him.

The phrase, “<sup>22</sup> ...to present you holy, and blameless, and above reproach in His sight” (Colossians 1:22, NKJV). Sin had brought corruption into the lives of people which literally caused death to reign over the creation God intended to be eternal as He is eternal, “<sup>13</sup> For until the law sin was in the world, but sin is not imputed when there is no law. <sup>14</sup> Nevertheless death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over those who had not sinned according to the likeness of the transgression of Adam, who is a type of Him who was to come” (Romans 5:13-14, NKJV).

Christ provided the way of reconciliation, but also the means of transformation by the power and presence of His Spirit dwelling in all who believe upon His name. God is perfect and has no need to change; mankind has been corrupted by choice and must be changed back to what God intended when He created humanity. At the end of the sixth day of creation, “<sup>31</sup> ...God saw everything that He had made, and indeed it was very good...” (Genesis 1:31, NKJV). Mankind as well as everything met the holy righteous approval of God in the beginning.

Christ has restored those who have believed and trusted on the name of Jesus Christ, the Son of the living God, for the forgiveness of their sins. Apostle Paul identifies the extreme metamorphosis as, “<sup>17</sup> ...if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new” (2 Corinthians 5:17, NKJV). The one who has committed their life to Christ was once unholy before God, but not stands holy before Him as He is holy. Those who were condemned in their sins now are viewed as blameless before the Father. Where there was doubt and questioning concerning motives and actions now is above reproach all because of the work of Christ Jesus on behalf of mankind.

The enemies of God would prefer the children of God remain trapped into thinking nothing has changed in them since they still struggle with sin and obedience before the Father. The reality of standing before the Father justified through the blood of Christ is difficult to fathom whenever God’s child approaches His throne acknowledging sin they have fallen into yet again. The greatest defense against the attempts of the enemies of God to blind believers of their new nature in Christ is when God’s children remember they, “<sup>18</sup> ...were not redeemed with corruptible things, like silver or gold, from your aimless conduct received by tradition from your fathers, <sup>19</sup> but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot (1 Peter 1:18-19, NKJV).

It is the perfection of Christ’s sacrifice that has made atonement for sin, not the conduct and purity of the one who Christ made atonement for on the cross. Christ within a person identifies who they are rather than the sin they still struggle with in life. A person who struggles with sin is resisting and fighting against the rule of sin in their life. The person who does not struggle against sin submits to its rule over them. Therefore,

rejoice in the struggle with sin and the victory of its defeat in life rather than bemoaning the fact it is still present.

The next phrase that needs to be examined is, “<sup>23</sup> ...continue in the faith, grounded and steadfast, and are not moved away from the hope of the gospel...” (Colossians 1:23, NKJV). There are many temptations in each day that cause the children of God to be challenged in their walk with Christ. The evidence of salvation or the visible production of spiritual fruit in a person’s life consistent with the character of God reveals a person who is grounded and steadfast in their trust in the Lord.

The presence of the Spirit of God within the believer is who identifies the children of God through their submission to His guidance and direction. There is much encouragement and instruction from God in His Word about how His people are to remain grounded and steadfast in faith. Apostle Paul was inspired to write, “<sup>12</sup> ...let him who thinks he stands take heed lest he fall. <sup>13</sup> No temptation has overtaken you except such as is common to man; but God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation will also make the way of escape, that you may be able to bear it” (1 Corinthians 10:12-13, NKJV).

Apostle Paul also was inspired to encourage the Church, “<sup>12</sup> ...my beloved, as you have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling; <sup>13</sup> for it is God who works in you both to will and to do for His good pleasure” (Philippians 2:12-13, NKJV). There is never a time for the people of God to sit back, relax, and let others engage in promoting the kingdom of God. The Lord is working in all of His people to bring about His perfect and pleasing will. The will of God is far from mysterious and vague, but is available for all of God’s children to know and comprehend; it all begins with love for and obedience to God.

*<sup>1</sup> I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service. <sup>2</sup> And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God. (Romans 12:1-2, NKJV)*

*<sup>16</sup> Rejoice always, <sup>17</sup> pray without ceasing, <sup>18</sup> in everything give thanks; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you. (1 Thessalonians 5:16-18, NKJV)*

*<sup>13</sup> ...submit yourselves to every ordinance of man for the Lord’s sake, whether to the king as supreme, <sup>14</sup> or to governors, as to those who are sent by him for the punishment of evildoers and for the praise of those who do good. <sup>15</sup> For this is the will of God, that by doing good you may put to silence the ignorance of foolish men— <sup>16</sup> as free, yet not using liberty as a cloak for vice, but as bondservants of God. <sup>17</sup> Honor all people. Love the brotherhood. Fear God. Honor the king. (1 Peter 2:13-17, NKJV)*

The people of God look much like they did before coming to believe on the name of Jesus, but that is where the similarity ends. The child of God is going to be revealed in the continual change in attitude, speech, priorities, and actions in life that will reject what is not in accordance with the character of God to resemble the image of Christ more and more with each passing day. One of the greatest reminders of this and of who Christ

is and what He has done to make this possible is when the children of God gather around the table of the Lord and share in the body and blood of Christ. Therefore, let the Church celebrate the life they have received through the death and resurrection of the Son of the living God.