

*A Study
on the
Epistle
to the
Colossians*

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Table of Contents

Preface	1	
Bible Study Guides for the New Testament		1
Introduction	8	
The Epistle of Paul the Apostle to the Colossians		8
Chapter 1	10	
Paul Thanks God For The Colossians' Faith		10
Chapter 2	13	
Let The Mind of Christ Be In You		13
Chapter 3	16	
Put Off the Old Man and Put On Christ		16
Chapter 4	18	
Walk Wisely and Continue in Prayer		18

Appendix A 20

A Dialogue on Intercession 20

Appendix B 34

Believing In or Into Christ? 34

APPENDIX C 51

Questions from the Book of Colossians 51

Links to Other Books Available 53

Bible Study Guides for the New Testament 54

Bible Study Guides for the New Testament

Writing a book was not on my mind when this effort was initiated some years ago. In fact, it began when a member of my Sunday School class commented that his son had talked about committing suicide the previous week. As a result, I felt an urge to see what the Bible had to say about hope, with a view toward helping his son cope with his suicidal feelings. The result of that effort was an article entitled: “Hope and the Miraculous Three Pound Computer,” located in Chapter 6 of the book [After the Big Bang](#). My next writing endeavor was a fallout from a Sunday School class discussion about temptations, or trials, and their purpose in our lives. An article entitled “The Trials of Job” located in Chapter 7 of the same book resulted from that effort. After this I began to feel a prodding from the Lord to continue studying and writing. The chapters in this book document what I subsequently learned about two of God’s greatest and most marvelous creations: earth and mankind, who He made to exercise dominion over it.

Some of the material presented in these New Testament Bible Study Guides conflicts with commonly held viewpoints, and differs as well on the definitions of some words used to explicate them. One thing I have learned through this effort is that the meaning of many of the words used in the Bible is not uniformly agreed to by expositors, and in many cases, not agreed to by the various versions of the Bible. For example, in the KJV of the old testament (OT), the word “soul” is used over 780 times. Vine’s Complete Expository Dictionary of Old and New Testament Words notes that in over 400 of these uses, the Hebrew word used is misinterpreted. I mention this not to heap criticism on the KJV, for it is my personal Bible, and I love it dearly, but to point out the importance of consulting Hebrew and Greek sources, and good conservative lexicons, when trying to understand difficult scripture. The meaning of some words is not absolutely clear even then. Nevertheless, this is the process I have followed in this effort.

I am a retired engineer: my education and work experience sparked a great interest in details. I found that to understand the technical difficulties and problems that arise in the operation of complex machines, a good understanding of the details of the design is absolutely necessary. What is

presented herein is an analysis of important details in God's creation of the earth and man: his habitat and milieu. However, no description is completely adequate to portray the unbelievable complexity and efficacy of tripartite man. Scientists and engineers have tried to duplicate the various subsystems in God's design of man for years, with limited success. Part of the problem is that we do not understand many of the operational details, but the greatest impediment is probably the fact that man is composed of three parts: spirit, soul, and body, two of which (spirit and soul) are immaterial, and are thus largely beyond the scope of scientific and medical analysis. The third part, the highly complex body, is strongly influenced by these two immaterial parts. God has given mankind a great challenge in trying to understand tripartite man. What better model could we find for our study than our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ: spirit, soul and body in perfect relationship. When Jesus came to earth He emptied Himself, and was formed in the likeness and fashion of a man. Like us, He was a tripartite being, but without a sin nature. Thus, He was the perfect man, the ideal for all to emulate.

I read a book several years ago by Watchman Nee in which he made the observation that one of the primary ways God speaks to us is through our

intuition. After that I began to try to follow the guidance I received in this manner, and what is presented herein is largely a result of that attempt. I hasten to add that all readers will not agree with my conclusions. I have learned much about God's creation, and His design of man through this effort: that may be the primary purpose He had in mind. My hope is that readers will find new ideas in these words that drive them to the absolute authority: God's Word - the Bible.

As references I have used the King James Version (KJV), the New International Version (NIV), the New Living Translation (NLT), the Revised Version (RV), and Recovery Versions of the bible, as well as the Interlinear NIV Hebrew - English Old Testament (OT), and the Interlinear Greek - English New Testament (GNT). I have also used Vine's Complete Expository Dictionary of Old and New Testament Words, Vincent's Word Studies in the New Testament, Moulton's Analytical Greek Lexicon, the Brown-Driver-Briggs Hebrew and English Lexicon, and Webster's New World Dictionary for word interpretation. Unless otherwise noted, scripture passages quoted are from the KJV.

The John A. Dickson New Analytical Bible and Dictionary, Authorized King James Version, Chicago 1950, was a primary reference source. This Bible was given to my wife and I in 1957, and is one of my dearest treasures. It has been rebound once, and is in need of a repair job at the present time. Thus, the reader can appreciate the usage it has had over these 62 years, most of which has been during the last 25 years. The book introductions have been generally quoted from this source, with changes (mostly grammatical) made only when considered necessary.

Finally, I want to recognize the lady that takes everything I have written, and makes the necessary changes for placing it on the internet. Ms. Sandra Crosnoe is the daughter of two of my, and my deceased wife's, dearest friends, Ted and Jimmie Crosnoe (also deceased). When God moved us (my wife and I), to a Methodist Church in Pasadena, Texas, in 1962, Ted, Jimmie, and their two daughters were among the group of several families in the church that were touched by God in a mighty way that led to a weekly Bible study, that resulted in many changed lives. As the years passed by, and the families went in different directions, we were not able to maintain the close relationship we had in Pasadena. We settled in Lubbock, Texas, in 1982, and I got the call to start

writing on the Bible. Sometime after that Sandra was in Lubbock and we got together for dinner. When she learned of my involvement in writing on the Bible she immediately volunteered to help in making it available by publishing it on the internet. She may not have known what she was getting into, for God has not ceased from giving me Bible subjects to study and write about. This series on the New Testament has been our greatest undertaking, and Sandra's help (as always) has been essential. She has corrected my grammar, argued with me on interpretation, prepared the pictorial cover pages, and generally polished the appearance of the various books in ways that I could never have accomplished on my own. Without her help, this (and other) documents would never have been made available to the general public. I do so appreciate all her work. I believe Ted and Jimmie will give her a "well done" when she joins them in heaven. Her personal website is [Finding Gems and Sharing Them](#).

These bible study guides are available at no charge to read, print, download and share on a platform called Scribd (no membership is required to read/download). They are all listed and linked as a group in [Bible Study Guides by Jesse C. Jones on Scribd](#). Upon completion, most of them will contain study

questions in the Appendix. Other works available are listed and linked with [Books for Believers and Seekers](#). If you hit a pop-up page on Scribd asking you to become a member to read free, simply click the 'x' in the upper right corner to remove the pop-up and continue to our links on Scribd. My personal website is [Revealed by Fire - Jesse's Studies](#) if you wish to see my latest articles and updates.

It is my sincere hope that these works will guide you to a personal ongoing relationship with Jesus and a life led and anointed by the Holy Spirit.

JESSE JONES

The Epistle of Paul the Apostle to the Colossians

From the John A. Dickson New Analytical Bible

The city of Colossae was in the Roman province of Asia, West of what is now Asiatic Turkey. It was about 15 km up the Lycus river valley from Laodicea. Five hundred years before Paul's time it was an important city, but after the road through Sardis to Pergamum was relocated further West through Laodicea, Colossae declined.

In this epistle Paul mentions that the Colossians did not know him, since this church was not founded by the apostle. Although Colossae was on the main road from Ephesus, and was located close to the path of the first and second missionary journeys, he had not visited this and other cities in the valley of the Lycus river. Epaphras, a citizen of Colossae, a fellow-servant with Paul, was probably the one who brought these people to the knowledge and acceptance of the Gospel while Paul was ministering in Ephesus. Epaphras had received his Christian training from the apostle, and it was from Epaphras that Paul learned of the dangers that threatened the spiritual life of this church. Another gospel had been brought to them by misguided teachers.

That these teachers were Jews seems logical from the fact that they taught that Mosaic ordinances should be observed. They also taught that angels had a part in the work of creation and redemption and, therefore, they should be worshipped. The question of main interest in the mind of this church was how to attain sanctification, and the solution proposed by these teachers was the use of ascetic (self-denial) practices and disregard of the body.

The design of this letter was to correct these false teachings, and to point out to this church the supreme headship of Christ, who is above all principalities and powers. This is one of the four “Prison Epistles,” the other three being Ephesians, Philippians, and Philemon (62-63 AD).

Paul Thanks God For The Colossians' Faith

Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ and Timothy, our brother, to the saints and faithful brethren in Christ which are at Colossae: grace be unto you, and peace, from God our Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ.

We give thanks to God the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, praying for you since we first heard of your faith in Christ, and the love which you have for all the saints, and for the hope which is laid up for you in heaven. The word of truth, which has come unto you, brings forth fruit in your life from the day you first heard it, and knew the grace of God. You learned about the word from Epaphras, our dear fellow-servant who is for you a faithful minister of Christ, who also told us about your love in the Spirit. We pray that you might be filled with the knowledge of His will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding, and that you may walk worthy of the Lord, being fruitful in every good work, increasing in the knowledge of God, and strengthened with might according to His glorious power, showing patience and longsuffering with joyfulness. Always give thanks to the Father, who has made us partakers in the inheritance of the saints, and delivered us from the power of darkness and made us citizens

of the kingdom of His dear Son, in whom we have redemption through His shed blood, including the forgiveness of sins. For by Him were all things created that are in heaven or earth, visible or invisible, whether they be thrones or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by Him and for Him. He is before all things and all things consist through Him. 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 preeminence. For it pleased the Father that in Him should all fulness dwell; and having made peace through the blood of His cross, by Him to reconcile all things in heaven and earth to himself. And you, that were sometimes alienated and enemies by wicked works, He has now reconciled in His body through death, to present you holy and unblameable and unreproveable in His sight, if indeed you continue in the faith, grounded and settled and not being moved away from the hope of the gospel which you have heard. I, Paul, was made a minister to the Gentiles, according to the dispensation of God, which was given to me for you, to fulfill the word of God; even the mystery which had been hidden for ages, and from generations, but is now revealed to His saints: which is Christ in you, the hope of glory.

The mystery Paul refers to here is further disclosed in Ephesians 3:6: "*That the Gentiles should be (or, **are**) fellow-heirs, and of the same body, and partakers of His promise in Christ by the gospel.*" 1 John 3:24 adds, "*And he that keepeth His commandments dwelleth in Him, and he in Him. And hereby we know that He abideth in us, by the Spirit which He hath given us.*" Romans 8:16 says, "*The Spirit itself beareth witness with our (human) spirit, that we are the children of God.*"

Let The Mind of Christ Be In You

I want you to know how great a struggle I have had concerning you and those in Laodicea, and for those who have not seen my face in the flesh. My desire is that their hearts might be comforted, being joined together in love and understanding regarding the mystery of God the Father, and His Son Jesus Christ, in whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge. I say this so that no one will fool you with plausible but specious arguments, for though I am away from you physically, yet I am with you spiritually, joyfully noting the firmness of your faith in Christ. Therefore, as you have received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk in Him, having been built up in Him, and having been confirmed in the faith, even as you were taught, abounding in it with thanksgiving.

Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, according to the principles of the world, and not of Christ. For in Him dwells all the fullness of the Godhead bodily. And you are complete in Him, which is the head of all principality and power. In whom also you are circumcised with the circumcision made without hands, in putting

off the body of the sins of the flesh by the circumcision of Christ: buried with Him in baptism, in Him also you were raised through faith in the One (the Holy Spirit) that raised Him from the dead. And you, being dead in your sins and the uncircumcision of your flesh he has quickened together with Him, by forgiving your trespasses. Blotting out the handwriting of the ordinances against us, and taking it away, nailing it to His cross. Having spoiled principalities and powers, He made a show of them openly, triumphing over them in it.

Let no man judge you in meat or in drink, or in respect to holy days, or of the new moon, or of the Sabbath days: which are but a shadow of things to come, but the reality is in Christ. Don't let anyone deny you your reward by insisting that you engage in self-mortification or angel worship: venturing into things they have not seen, and vainly puffed up by their fleshly mind. They do not hold fast to the Head, from whom the body receives supply and is held together, growing under the surveillance of God.

If you are dead to the world why are you under its decrees, as living in the world? These worldly prohibitions (touch not, taste not, and handle not), will all perish, for they are derived from man-made rules and teachings. They do indeed have the appearance of wisdom, with their self-imposed religious

observances, false humility and asceticism; but they have no value in restraining people from indulging their old nature.

Put Off the Old Man and Put On Christ

If you have joined Christ on the cross and no longer are a slave to your old Adamic nature seek the things which are above, where Christ sits at the right hand of God, acting as our Mediator, and Intercessor (see Appendix A on intercessory prayer). His intent is to insure that believers make it into heaven, and He does this using the process of sanctification (conforming believers to the image of Christ). Thus, we should mind the things from above, and not the things from below (earth), for you now receive guidance from Christ, through the Holy Spirit, and are free to choose between the heavenly and the worldly. We should mortify (control) physical desires such as fornication, uncleanness, passion, evil lust, and covetousness, which is idolatry. For which things the wrath of God comes on those that are disobedient. You walked in these things aforetime when you lived in them, but now you have put off all these: anger, wrath, malice, blasphemy, and filthy words from your mouth. Do not lie one to another, seeing that you have put off the old man with his deeds, and have put on the new man, which is being renewed in the knowledge of Christ; where there are no factions, neither Greek nor Jew, circumcision nor

uncircumcision, foreigner, Scythian, bond or free: but Christ is all in all.

Therefore, as elect of God, holy and beloved, cloth yourselves with compassion and kindness, humility, gentleness and patience. Forbearing one another, and forgiving one another just as Christ forgave you. And above all these things put on love, which is the bond of perfectness. And let the peace of God rule in your hearts by which you are called into one body. Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom; teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns, singing with grace in your heart to the Lord (see Appendix B on believing in or into Christ). Whatever you do in word or deed, do as unto the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to the Father by Him. But if you do wrong you will receive correction in kind, and God is no respecter of persons.

Chapter 4

Walk Wisely and Continue in Prayer

This chapter includes excerpted thoughts from Matthew Henry's Commentary on Colossians Chapter 4

No activity can be accomplished in a totally correct manner, unless we immediately turn to God and ask for His guidance and help. I learned this truth from a wise friend when, as a novice, I first began to try my hand at the skill of carpentry. I eliminated a lot of mistakes and shortcomings when I learned to begin every task with prayer. I believe we need to apply this same approach in all the challenges we encounter every typical day. After all, this type of prayer involves talking to God, telling Him about our concerns, recognizing our shortcomings, and asking for His input in the challenge ahead. Of course, there are other types of prayer that may call for different procedures, but all prayer involves a conversation with God, and my impression is that He greatly desires these conversations with His children.

In this chapter Paul reminds us that we should pray particularly for our ministers and elected leaders, for they are the ones that make decisions affecting our lives. We need them to make the best decisions possible, decisions that bless and do not curse. Believers are exhorted to right conduct

toward unbelievers by encouraging and guiding them in the direction God would have them go. A Christian worker efficient in managing time, commends Christianity to other workers, as well as to supervisors. On the other hand, what may be only carelessness can cause lasting prejudice against the truth. Though your speech may not always be about grace, it must always be delivered with grace, seasoned with salt, that you may know how you ought to answer every man. Though our discourse may be about some common problem of interest, yet it must be delivered in a Christian manner. Grace is the salt which seasons our discourse, and keeps it from corrupting. It is not enough to answer what is asked, unless we answer correctly, with helpful information.

The remaining verses in Chapter 4 concern salutations and encouragement to Paul's co-workers.

A Dialogue on Intercession

(I) A Dialog between my son Jeff and myself on Intercession

STANDING IN THE GAP

*“And I sought for a man among them, that should make up
the hedge, and stand in the gap before me for the land, that
I should not destroy it: but I found none” (Ezekiel 22:30)*

Note: This discussion followed a comment I made about reminding God about His promises. This comment drew immediate reactions from my son Jeff.

The Dialog

Jeff: Are you actually suggesting that we are to argue with God to convince Him that He is wrong, that we need to remind Him of His promises because He forgot them? Do you really think that Abraham changed God’s mind, or that Moses convinced God that He was wrong about destroying the Israelites? In every case God was looking for a man to stand in the gap. To intercede

does not mean to argue with God - to attempt to change the unchangeable. You cannot separate God's nature from His wisdom, knowledge and power. The Lord himself declares "*For I am the Lord, I change not ...*" (Malachi 3:6). James 1:17 says, " *... with whom there is no variableness, neither shadow of turning.*" If God changed His mind it would destroy Him. He would no longer be the omniscient One who knows the end from the beginning, for known unto God are all His works from the creation of the world. God does not experiment. God does not become stronger, mightier, or increase himself in any way. God cannot become more pure, holy, or righteous than He is. The eternal, unchangeable nature of God has no need to be tested, tried, or proven, for He has already been tried to the utmost, and proven beyond any question. He is not something today that He wasn't yesterday. He will not become something tomorrow that He is not today. He eternally is all that He is without any decrease or increase, or fluctuation whatsoever: He is the eternal God: unchangeable, and therefore unending!

But we in our spiritual life, are still being changed: "*But we all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory even as by the Spirit of the Lord*" (2 Corinthians 3:18). This occurs, in part, through temptation, through changing trials and afflictions. As we go through

the fire we are purified into His image. Yes, ultimately, we can get to the place Jesus was, and we can resist anything that Satan can bring against us. We will be as untemptable as God is untemptable, and unchangeable as God is unchangeable - beyond any need for further correction, proving, developing, or increasing in any way. Is not this what our soul hungers and thirsts after when with inexplicable longing we pray, "*Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil*" (Matthew 6:13)? We are asking for the final completion of all that has gone on before, the establishment of His kingdom within, His will accomplished in us as it is in heaven, the daily bread for our spiritual growth into His image, forgiveness of our missing the mark, all leading to the full stature in the incorruptibility of Himself.

Jesse: The arguments you make relate to the unchangeable "nature" of God, and not His mind. Vincent's Word Studies in the NT describe the soul as the principle of our individuality, the mediating element between the spirit and body. This says it pretty well: the soul is the source of the personal impression we make in the physical world with men, and in the spiritual world with heavenly beings. The mystery of life itself resides within the soul, for it is when God breathes into us (figuratively) in the womb that we become a living

person: we become “self-conscious.” Our soul manifests our personality, for it is our personality that identifies us. Since we are formed in the likeness of God we assume that His nature is in His soul, and His mind is the software of His brain. We are way out on a limb on this, but I believe His nature (like ours), is separate from His brain. The entire purpose of intercessory prayer is to get the mind of God about the situation for which you are praying, and if His mindset is different than yours, try to convince Him of your point-of-view. I believe that Webster’s Dictionary provides some insight on the meaning of intercession: it gives one of the definitions of the phrase inter- as “between,” and one of the definitions of -cede as “to grant, as a point in debate.” This seems to agree with the phrase often used for intercession, “standing in the gap.” The intercessor stands in the gap between God and the situation, and appeals to God to agree with his point-of-view. This is what Abraham was doing when he was arguing with the Lord about His plan to destroy Sodom and Gomorra, the first recorded intercessory prayer in the Bible (Genesis 18:16-33). Of course, if you are going to convince God of your point-of-view you must appeal to His unchangeable nature, and propose things that are in line with that nature. We previously discussed the nature of the relationship that God wants to have with His “friends” (believers into Christ). When God created

man He did not create a robot: He desired a relationship with man that could best be described as friendship (or sonship), based on mutual love, freely given. Thus, when a believer faces something like intercession, God will provide spiritual guidance. He works through the Holy Spirit to provide spiritual truth to the believer's soul, and to (hopefully) bring about a decision in accordance with His will (Philippians 2:13). This is a relationship based on absolute honesty: if I have something in my heart that I want God to act on I bring it to Him for discussion, just like I would with any other friend. Perhaps He will agree with me immediately because it is in line with His nature. If He already has an opinion about the subject, perhaps He will change his mind as He did in the case of Sodom and Gomorra. Perhaps He will disagree with me like He did with Paul about his "thorn in the side," and will change my mind like He did Paul's. Perhaps He will disagree with me as He did with Jonah, and if I refuse to accept His position (like Jonah), I am likely to get swallowed by a whale.

The Bible is replete with statements that attest to God's willingness to change His mind. 2 Kings 20, and Isaiah 38, record the story of God adding 15 years to Hezekiah's life after He heard Hezekiah's prayer and saw his tears. In Jeremiah 18 and 26, God says that He will change His mind about destroying Israel if it turns from its evil. Joel 2:13-14 also records God saying that He will

relent from doing harm if Israel will return to Him. 1 Chronicles 21:9-14 records an interesting event in the life of David. David had listened to Satan and taken a census of Israel, and God was displeased. David subsequently asked God to take away his guilt, and God gave him the choice of three options for punishment from which he was to choose. All three options entailed action against the entire nation of Israel, even though David was the one that sinned. David chose to fall into the “*hand of the Lord*” rather than “*fall into the hands of men*,” since he knew that God was merciful. As a result, God sent an angel to Jerusalem to destroy it. As the angel began his work, God relented and told the angel to restrain his hand. Several points in this narrative are worth noting:

1. The Bible clearly states that it was David’s decision as to which of the three methods of punishment would be applied. This was a free and unencumbered decision on the part of David, and God apparently did not know which option he would select. If God foreknew what option David would select there would have been no purpose in giving David the choice.
2. The fact that David was given a choice of three alternatives indicates that the particular method of destruction was not predetermined by

God. A logical assumption is that God was interested in knowing which of the three options David would select, and why.

3. God changed His mind after the angel began to spread the plague, and He told the angel to stop the destruction. God was willing to let David determine the particular punishment to be meted out, but after He saw the result of the devastation He changed His mind and decided not to go through with it. It may be that God was favorably influenced by the comment David made when he opted to *“fall into the hand of the Lord”*.

This does not sound like a story about a God that foreknows and predetermines every act of man. David knew that it was wrong to number his troops, and he was warned by the commander of his army, Joab, that it would bring guilt on Israel. David, acting out of pride, listened to Satan and gave the order. God was undoubtedly disappointed with David, but did not act against him until David confessed his guilt and asked to be forgiven. This is a great principle having to do with repentance: when we confess our guilt and turn away from our sin God will grant redemption and forgive us. If God is in control of our lives guilt that is confessed must be purged, and God gave David a choice as to the type of purging. David made the right choice and

recognized it would be best to trust God rather than man, so he asked to “*fall into the hand of the Lord.*” God reacted to David’s repentance and prudent choice and halted the destruction: prayer changes things!

Another clue about the self-limiting foreknowledge of God is recorded in Isaiah 5:1-5. God compares Israel to a vineyard that He has planted and provided tender care for, thus He expected a good crop of grapes. Instead His vineyard produced wild grapes, and in this passage of scripture He expresses his disappointment and asks what more He could have done? In verse 4, He reiterates that He looked forward to a crop of good grapes, and instead received a crop of wild grapes. If God really looked forward to a good crop, then He was certainly not exercising absolute foreknowledge in this instance. Gregory Boyd, in his book entitled: “Satan And The Problem Of Evil,” describes many such examples of God’s granting man real freedom in decisions he makes.

Norman Grubb’s book entitled “Reese Howells, Intercessor,” has this to say about intercession: “Perhaps believers in general have regarded intercession as just some form of rather intensified prayer. It is, so long as there is great emphasis on the word “intensified,” for there are three things to be seen in an intercessor which are not found in ordinary prayer: identification, agony and

authority.” He says that our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ perfectly demonstrates identification, for He laid down His life for those the Father had given Him. To intercede you must be willing to lay down your life for those for whom you are praying. It is through the Holy Spirit that we see the agony of intercession: He makes intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered. Before He can lead the life in which He resides into a life of intercession He must deal with the natural inclinations within that life: lust of the eyes, lust of the flesh, and the pride of life. When these have been dealt with, the person is fully prepared for a life of intercession manifesting identification, agony, and authority.

Oswald Chambers gives a good description of intercession. In “My Utmost for His Highest” He says, “In intercession you bring the person or circumstance that impinges on you before God until you are moved by His attitude toward that person or circumstance. Intercession is really putting yourself between God and the situation and trying to bring about God’s will for that particular need.” This means that we must discover God’s will to intercede successfully. Now I have a good idea about what God’s will is generally. I know Him and His nature, and I have His written word that I can rely on. But many times I don’t know what God’s will is about a particular

situation. There are usually facts related to the need that I do not know. I cannot look into the heart of the one in need like God can, so if I feel the call to become an intercessor in a certain situation, I need to talk to God about it. Depending on the situation I may either:

1. Bring the situation to God's attention, feel that He has heard my plea, know that my request is in agreement with His Holy nature, and hope to see an answer. This is the type of prayer often given when praying in a group situation, not conducive to an intensive and focused interceding prayer.

2. Feel that I need to talk to God about the situation before I pray, to see if I can get His mind about the need. The Holy Spirit knows the mind of God in all situations and thus, this will be a discussion between my human spirit and the Holy Spirit. I think prayer associated with the 2000 election is an example of this. I recognized that our nation was on a downhill skid, and that we had rejected God and His protection. Like many others, I felt an urgent need to cry out and intercede. I was trying to get God to change events that were taking place. I cried out to Him admitting that we deserved His justice, but asking Him to instead show His mercy toward us. I did everything I could think of to convince Him

of this. The part of the body of Christ of which I am a member joined many others across the country in fasting and praying for God to place a man in the White House that could talk to Him, and hear His answers. I believe these prayers were answered in a miraculous way.

3. I may be so involved in the situation that I cannot carry on a conversation about it. I just cry out in fear and trembling, asking God to intervene, and I keep on asking, maybe even bawling and getting loud. This is the kind of prayer I lifted up when you were in the hospital in California, and things seemed to be going downhill. I was not so much interested in God's will in that situation, but more interested in having Him do my will. Therefore, I cried out, I begged, I yelled, I did whatever I thought I had to to get Him to respond favorably, and He did! Incidentally, I never blamed God, nor got mad at Him for what had happened to you. That would have been unthinkable.

4. I may not feel that I know God's will but am willing to accept it, whatever it is. Thus, I ask God to talk to me through His Holy Spirit. Usually, the answer comes in a unique way that I could never have imagined; but I have come to realize that God always acts uniquely.

5. I may feel that I need to just listen to God and let Him talk to me. He will usually open my eyes to some things that I need to understand.

It is interesting that Jesus' response to the disciples asking Him to teach them how to pray included the parable about the friend coming at midnight to ask for three loaves of bread. This parable is about the need to pray with importunity, to keep asking until you get a response. The message I get from this is:

- 1.** We must want an answer so much that we keep asking until we receive it.
- 2.** God loves for us to keep reminding Him of His natural desire to respond to our requests.
- 3.** In some way God seems to measure how bad we want something by how persistent (importune) we are in talking it to Him about it.

There are lots of other types of prayer but this covers some of the main ones. I don't have any problem discussing anything with God, from things that I need to bring to His attention, to things that He needs to bring to mine. God asks us to reason (confer, argue) with Him, and I sure want to do what He asks.

I believe that the church has missed the point in what little teaching we hear on intercessory prayer. Most members of the body of Christ seem to believe that intercessory prayer is praying for others, and their needs. It is of course that, but so much more. God's Holy Spirit places the burden of interceding on those He has prepared. These are the ones who will "stand in the gap" for a particular need, and will recognize and accept the burden for intercession. The intercessor responds to the burden by talking to God about how to pray, and what end-result to pray for. They "stand in the gap" between God and the need, and refuse to budge until they receive direction. This is a two-way conversation with God and the intercessor reasoning together until finally arriving at a decision about the end result of the prayer. The intercessor keeps praying for the need until he sees the answer, or until God tells him/her that He will respond to the request and the answer is forthcoming. I do not see that intercessory prayer is ever unanswered. If an understanding has been reached between God and the intercessor regarding the particular need, then the answer is sure to come, but not in accordance with our timetable, and not necessarily in the way we might have thought. We are always more impatient than God, and only He knows the appropriate time for the answer to be received, and the ideal solution to the problem.

The word intercession is used in the King James Version (KJV) of the Bible nine times, four in the Old Testament (OT), and five in the New Testament (NT). The important teaching from both the OT and the NT regarding intercession is that Christ is our intercessor. He is the one that acts as our advocate to the Father: He appeals to the Father on our behalf, for He has been tempted in all points as we, yet without sin. Romans 8:26 adds that the Holy Spirit also acts as our intercessor. When we do not know how to pray about the situation the Holy Spirit intercedes with groaning which cannot be uttered. I assume that this means the Holy Spirit actually petitions Christ on our behalf when we do not know how to pray.

Finally, I would like to remind you of two very good books on the subject of intercession. Dutch Sheets book entitled: “Intercessory Prayer” covers the fundamentals of intercessory prayer very thoroughly, and Norman Grubbs book: “Rees Howells, Intercessor” describes a man so surrendered to God in intercessory prayer that he “learned to love the unlovely, found the key to prevailing prayer, and became the channel of mighty revival”.

Believing In or Into Christ?

Editor's Note: This Appendix is Chapter 1 of the book "The Path to Holiness" by Jesse Jones. It was published in 2011 by PublishAmerica in Baltimore. It is reprinted here for easy reference.

I have encountered a lot of confusion among Christians about the difference between believing **in** Jesus Christ, and believing **into** Him. In many versions of the Bible the Greek word *eis*, which means "into," or "one," is often interpreted incorrectly by the word "in" (Greek word *en*), meaning within, or among. The comment from the Recovery Version of the NT on John 3:16 is helpful in understanding the difference between these two prepositions.

"Believing into the Lord is not the same as believing (in) Him. To believe (in) Him is to believe that He is true and real, but to believe into Him is to receive Him and be united with him as one. The former is to acknowledge a fact objectively, the latter is to receive a life subjectively" (parenthetical words added). Many of today's Christians never get beyond believing "in" Him. To believe into Christ means that a spiritual relationship has been established much like the physical and spiritual bond between husband and wife in a godly

marriage: they *know* each other intimately. Matthew 19:5-6 KJV describes this relationship in this way, “*For this cause shall a man leave father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife: and they twain shall be one flesh? Wherefore they are no more twain, but one flesh. What God hath joined together, let no man put asunder.*” We must *know* Christ for Him to guide, direct, and use our lives for His purposes on earth. Believing in Jesus Christ involves recognizing Him as the Son of God and believing that He came to forgive our sins, but it fails to recognize the real purpose of His coming to claim us as his own: to make us holy so that we can do His works on earth (Matthew 25:34-36). Vincent’s Word Studies in the New Testament says, “Into, (*eis*) denotes *inward union, participation; not in order to bring about* the union, for that has been effected. Compare 1 Corinthians 12:12, 13, 27.” “Baptizing into the name of the Holy Trinity implies a spiritual and mystic union with him. *Eis, into*, is the proposition commonly used with *baptize*. See Acts 8:16; 29:3,5; 1 Corinthians 1:13, 15; Galatians 3:27.” Compare John 3:16 GNT to that given in many English versions of the Bible: “*For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that everyone believing into Him should not perish, but have everlasting life.*” The significant difference is in the phrase “*everyone believing into Him*” in the Greek, versus “*whosoever believeth in*

him” in the KJV. I think the difference is clear and important to our understanding of this vital scripture.

In talking to Christian acquaintances I have found that most believers seem to initially start their walk with belief in Christ, rather than belief into Him.. This was my own experience when I first believed. I knew Jesus as the Son of God, and knew that He had forgiven my sins, but I had no personal relationship with Him, nor did I know that such a thing was even possible. I knew who God the Father and Jesus were, but I had little, or no knowledge about the Holy Spirit, or about His relationship to man. This seemed to be enough in the early part of my life, when I was under the influence of my parents, friends, and teachers, but when I left the safety and comfort of home I was no longer protected in this way, and the glitter and glamour of the world were very enticing. It took many years for God to get me to the place that He could trust me with more of Himself. Like Paul, it took a Damascus Road encounter to make me realize that Jesus Christ was an actual person, interested in me personally, and who wanted to share my life. The men who were with me also shared this encounter as Christ entered the room where we were praying. The effect on my life was dramatic: I knew for the first time He wanted me to believe *into* Him, to realize that He had given me a new nature, and that I was

to be “one” with Him. Later, I realized that I had received the Holy Spirit, for I had the witness within that I was a child of God (Romans 8:16).

Believing is from the heart, thus Romans 10:9 says, “*That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus {Jesus as Lord}, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved.*” This says that if we believe in our hearts and confess with our mouths (both parts of the body), we will receive salvation, but how does this belief come about? The answer to this is given in Hebrews 4:2, which describes some that heard the gospel preached but did not believe for lack of (saving) faith from God (Ephesians 2:8). The essential Word did not result in belief within their hearts due to a lack of faith. Faith is the power unto belief, much like electricity is the power for household appliance operation.

When we believe into Jesus Christ and join Him in death and resurrection we begin to see change in our lives. Our human spirit is *quicken*ed (made alive), and we receive God’s Holy Spirit to guide, comfort, and teach us. Thus, it is by joining in His death and resurrection that we begin to *know* Christ. *Knowing* (in the biblical sense) comes through the spirit, and when we *know* Christ in this way our spirit begins to witness that we are sons of God.

What does it mean to be *in Christ*?

Being *in Christ* is a biblical term that seems to be little understood by believers in today's world. I wonder if the reason for this is, at least in part, due to the dearth of teaching on the resurrection, righteousness, renewing of the mind, sanctification, the body of Christ, and conforming us to Christ's image. In his book entitled "The Normal Christian Life" Watchman Nee describes what being *in Christ* means by using the description of man's condition of being dead to sin, but still alive to the law. He bases his argument on Romans Chapter 7, which explains that we are not under law, but under grace. To quote from pgs. 155-56 in this book: "Grace means that God does something for me; law means that I do something for God. God has certain holy and righteous demands He places upon me: that is the law. Now if Law means that God requires something of me for their fulfillment, then deliverance from Law means that he no longer requires that from me, but himself provides it. Law implies that God requires me to do something for him; deliverance from Law implies that he exempts me from doing it, and that in grace he does it himself. I (where *I* is the *carnal* man of Chapter 7:14) need to do nothing for God: that is deliverance from Law. The trouble in Romans 7 is that man in the flesh tried to do something for God. As soon as you try to

please God in that way, then you place yourself under Law, and the experience of Romans 7 begins to be yours”. Nee goes on to point out that there is nothing wrong with the Law, the problem lies with the unrighteousness of the person upon which the law places demands. “The trouble is not that the Law’s demands are unjust, but that I am unable to meet them.” In his interpretation of this scripture Watchman Nee illustrates how our deliverance from the law is like the woman and the two husbands in Romans 7:1-4. The first husband is the law, and the second husband is Christ. The woman has a dilemma: she cannot be married to both husbands and, unfortunately, she is married to the less desirable one, the Law. Since the first husband is never going to die, the only solution is for the woman to die. Romans 7:4 says, “*Wherefore, my brethren, ye are also become dead to the law by the body of Christ, that ye should be married to another, even to him who is raised from the dead, that we should bring forth fruit unto God.*” In dying we are freed from the Law and united with Christ in resurrection. If we are not *in Christ* we are still under the Law. This is how we are *in Christ*: by accepting the death of our old life and joining Christ in His death on the cross. In the power of Christ’s resurrection our lives become fruitful, and we become empowered for all the claims that God’s holiness will

make upon us. It is by being *in Christ* that His righteousness becomes our own, and our sins are washed away by His precious blood.

As I look back on a lifetime of church attendance I recall very little teaching on the meaning of the resurrection, and none on the meaning of being *in Christ*. 1 John 5:18 NLT says: “*We know that those who have become part of God’s family do not make a practice of sinning, for God’s Son holds them securely, and the evil one cannot get his hands on them.*” This does not mean that we no longer commit sins, but that we now have a choice **not** to commit them: we are no longer slaves to sin. This means that when we are regenerated in resurrection we will not **practice**, or **live** in sin. And when we abide *in Christ* the evil one cannot touch us. 1 John 3:5-6 says, “*And ye know that he was manifested to take away our sins; and in him is no sin. Whosoever abideth in him sinneth not: whosoever sinneth hath not seen him, neither known [knoweth] him.*”

Ephesians 1:1-20, uses the term “*in Christ*” twelve times, so we know that this phrase is important. This passage of scripture refers to the riches given to those that are *in Christ*:

Faithfulness
Spiritual blessing
Being holy and without blame
Foreordained to be chosen
Redemption
Remission of offenses
Knowing the mystery of His will
Grace
Wisdom and prudence
Restoration to perfect unity
Inheritance
Sealed by the Spirit of promise
Hope
Power

This list includes most, if not all, of the blessings that believers inherit through being *in Christ*. Still, this does not translate into a working knowledge of what it means to be *in Christ* to me. Possibly one key to personal realization of what being *in Christ* means is related to discernment of the body of Christ. If we are

where the Lord wants us to be in His body (the church), and are seeing His gift(s) manifested through us unto the edifying of the body members, we are certainly *in Christ*. Jesus Christ spoke the church into being to create a special relationship with those that believe *into* Him. He identified them as His body, as described in Ephesians 5:22-33. This passage makes several important points:

- 1) We are to submit ourselves to Christ for He is the head of the church. Just as the brain controls the functions of all the cells and organs of the human body, Christ is to control the actions of the church.
- 2) Christ loves the church and gave Himself for it so that He could sanctify and cleanse it with washing of water by the Word. If the church is hearing and following Christ's directions He will provide teaching that will cleanse the body.
- 3) Christ's shepherding of the church will result in a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep, and if one goes astray, he finds it and gathers it up in his arms and returns to the flock.

- 4) Christ nourishes and cherishes the church. Christ feeds and protects the church just as the Robin feeds and protects her chicks.
- 5) We are members of Christ's body, of His flesh, and of His bones. In the same way that we protect the members of our body, Christ protects the members of His body.
- 6) We will become one (spirit) with Christ in the same manner that a husband and wife become one flesh (see 1 Corinthians 6:17). If we are on God's track for our lives our human spirit becomes one (over time) with the Holy Spirit in the same way that a godly couple begin to act alike, and function as a unit, over time.

Ephesians 5:22-32 describes the relationship we have with Christ after we have believed into him, for comparison is made to a man and woman after they have been married, and the union has been consummated. Christ gathers us together into His mystical body and begins the process of sanctification, the renewing of our minds, so that we can think and act like Christ. This is referred to in the Bible as *conforming us to the image of Christ*. The analogy of the union between a man and woman in marriage is perfect. When a man and woman come together as one flesh each one must undergo some

reprogramming (renewing) of the mind so that they can come together in agreement on issues that initially were divisive. In the same way, the Holy Spirit shows us God's will in the situations and decisions we face, and if we accept His guidance, gradually we become more Christlike. John 16:14 says that the Holy Spirit receives from Christ and declares it unto us. The decision to follow God's guidance, or not, is a question of the will, which resides in our soul. Ephesians 6:6 GNT says that we do the will of God from our soul. Most English versions of the NT incorrectly substitute the word heart for soul in this passage.

Possibly the most difficult scripture to grapple with in regard to being *in Christ* is Ephesians 2:5-6, which says: "*Even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, and hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus.*" Our inclination may be to think that this refers to the period after rapture and resurrection, but I can find no support for this view. A quote on this scripture from Vincent's Word Studies in the NT says this, "Even now we sit there in Him, and shall sit with Him in the end." I think there is little doubt that this scripture means just what it says. Just as we are in Christ's body on earth (the church), in some mysterious way there is a part of us that resides in the heavenlies *in Christ* at this very moment.

Let's summarize what we have discussed above about being *in Christ*.

- 1) Christ has gathered us into His mystical body where we reside (abide) under his protection, safe from unwarranted attacks of the evil one.
- 2) The purpose that Christ tries to fulfill in the members of His body is that of conforming us to His image: making us like Him in every thought and deed. He does this through the renewing of our mind (biblical heart).
- 3.) When Christ's body is functioning as it should He can nourish and teach us through the gifts that are in operation. Spiritual gifts are given specifically to buildup and temper the body. The fruit of the Spirit is plentiful in this environment. Agape love is the principal fruit that should be manifested by the body. It is God's love that identifies us as being *in Christ*.
- 4) When we are *in Christ* and Christ is *in us* we are living proof of the answer to Jesus' prayer in John 17:21-23.
- 5) One who abides *in Christ* does not sin habitually, for he is in fellowship with God and thus cannot live in fellowship with sin.

Do I Have Anything Inside Of Me That Says I Am *In Christ*?

This is a more difficult question to answer than the inverse: What do we have inside of us that says we have Christ in us? Romans 8:16 says that the Spirit bears witness with our spirit that we are the children of God, and verse 9 identifies the Spirit as being both the Spirit of God and Spirit of Christ. Some believers I have talked to seem doubtful about having this witness, but my personal experience was that very shortly after I received the Holy Spirit I realized that I was a child of God. This witness within was a key principle in John Wesley's ministry: it was the proof to him that a penitent was a true believer (from "John Wesley", by Basil Miller, pg. 63). However, understanding the phrase *in Christ* is more elusive, and identifying what it is within us that confirms this seems even more difficult. There are many scriptures that mention the feelings and beliefs we have when we believe into Christ. 1 John 3:14 says, "*We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren.*" 1 John 5:1 states that "*Whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ is born of God.*" 1 John 5:10 says, "*He that believeth on the Son of God hath the witness in himself.*" 1 John 2:29 says "*If ye know that he is righteous, ye know that every one that doeth righteousness is born of him.*" We know from 1 John 3:14, that if we have God's agape love for the members of Christ's body, we have part in the

resurrection. Also, if we live righteously, we know that we are born of Him. Being born of Him certainly implies that we are part of, or *in Christ*, just as we are part of, or “in,” our own earthly parents. *Knowing*, or sensing this fact as a reality in my nature, seems to be more elusive, however.

Before we *know* Jesus Christ as Lord of our lives we can do wrong and our conscience seems to excuse us. Hebrews 10:22, indicates that our conscience is in our heart, and we have noted above that God gives us a new heart when we believe *into* Christ. As a result of receiving this new heart, things begin to change in our lives: when we do something wrong it bothers us, and we do not want to repeat the same offense. Our goals and ambitions begin to change as well, and we find that our priorities get rearranged. All this happens over time, and with some of us it takes a considerable period of time before we begin to recognize these changes. Commenting on 2 Corinthians 5:17, Oswald Chambers says, “When we are born again, the Holy Spirit begins to work His new creation in us, and there will come a time when there is not a bit of the old order left. . . How are we going to get the life that has no lust, no self-interest, no sensitivity to pokes, the love that is not provoked, that thinketh no evil, that is always kind? The only way is by allowing not a bit of the old life to

be left; but only simple, perfect trust in God, such trust that we no longer want God's blessings, but only want Himself."

As noted above, Christ has placed us into His mystical body, and He describes this as being like a marriage, when a husband and wife become one flesh after being together for some time. As Christ renews our mind, a process that takes time, we begin to act and think like Him. 1 Corinthians 6:17 says when we are joined to the Lord we become one spirit, just like husband and wife become one flesh. In the same way that we sense the development of this relationship in marriage, I believe we can sense becoming one spirit with Christ. I recognize this as I become aware of Christ guiding my thoughts, words, and actions. I begin to ask myself what Christ would have me do, or what He may be trying to do, in all the situations that I encounter. Sometimes I feel like an impartial observer as I see Him manifesting some aspect of His nature through my body without me consciously doing anything at all.

Some time ago I encountered an estranged member of my church body who nurtured a lot of hurt feelings and ill will toward those with which I fellowship. As I approached her she seemed to stiffen, and I was not sure that she would respond to my reaching out to her. At first she was very cold and accusatory, but all at once I felt God loving her through me, and I began to see

an immediate melting of her iciness. I did nothing to cause this, nor was it in my nature to love her in that way; it was totally God showing her the agape love that He had for her, using my body: I was as overwhelmed as she was. I was blessed to see the power of God's love in action, which no obstacle can withstand. I wish this happened a lot more often. This is another way that I become aware of the fact that I am *in Christ*: I am in Him and He can use my abode (body) any way that He sees fit.

Another way that I think we can sense being in Him is through the confidence we have that He has our life under His control. I think that most regenerated believers have the sense that God has a plan for their lives, and that Christ (through the Holy Spirit) is working to bring it to fruition. In one sense all of us receive a *call* from God to do something with our lives. Many that enter the ministry or become missionaries say that they were *called*, but all true believers should know what God has *called* them to do in their lives while on earth.

I believe we get a strong signal that we are *in Christ* when we begin to bear the fruit of the Spirit. John 15:4 says "*Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; no more can ye, except ye abide in me.*" The branches (believers) can only bear fruit when they are connected to

the vine (Christ), and are continually being fed by life-giving nourishment (wisdom from the Holy Spirit). Galatians 5:22-23 lists the fruit of the Spirit as love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness and temperance. Love is the principal fruit; I do not believe there is any power on earth that can stand against an outpouring of God's agape love.

Believers know that they belong to God, and that they are going to meet Him one day to join Him forever. When we are *in Christ* we begin to know His will and desire to follow his direction in our daily living. We begin to recognize a number of things that we can no longer do, and the number of these things increases as we mature *in Christ*. We begin to have an emotional love for Christ, and to enjoy expressing it in worshipping Him. As our prayer life develops we find ourselves turning more often to Him for our own, and other's, needs. We finally get to the place where we go to Him just to talk about things; in short we begin to develop a close relationship with Jesus Christ, the creator of everything that exists in heaven and on earth. More and more we begin to think and act like Christ: we begin to be conformed to His image, we have believed *into Christ* and we are now *in Christ*. If that isn't enough to boggle your mind I don't know what is!

APPENDIX C

Questions from the Book of Colossians

Chapter 1

1. Explain verse 17. Does this apply to evil as well.
2. What does it mean to have Christ in you?

Chapter 2

1. Describe the message in verses 11 - 14 in your own words.
2. Explain the meaning of verse 16.
3. Explain verse 20.

Chapter 3

1. Describe your success (or lack thereof) in mortifying your members (verse 5).
2. Describe your success (or lack thereof) in putting on the things listed in verses 14 - 22.

Chapter 4

1. How do you season your speech with salt (verse 6)?

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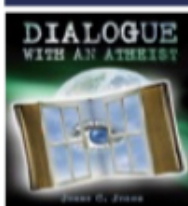


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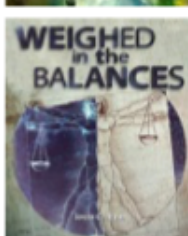
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