***The Incarnation of Jesus Christ

Colossians 1:1-2

COL-101***

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Hebrews 4:12: "For the Word of God is living and active and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing as far as the division of the soul and spirit, of both joints and marrow, and able to judge the thoughts and intentions of the heart."

2 Timothy 3:16: "All Scripture is inspired by God, and profitable for teaching, for proof, for correction, for training in righteousness, that the man of God may be adequate, equipped for every good work."

2 Timothy 2:15: Be diligent to present yourself approved to God, as a workman who does not need to be ashamed, handling accurately the word of truth."

Romans 15:4: "For whatever was written in earlier times was written for our instruction, that through perseverance and the encouragement of the Scriptures, we might have hope."

1 Peter 1:23: "For you have been born again, not of seed, which is perishable, but imperishable; that is, through the living and abiding Word of God."

2 Timothy 4:2: Preach the word. Be ready in season and out of season. Reprove, rebuke, exhort with great patience and instruction. For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine, but wanting to have their ears tickled, they will accumulate for themselves teachers in accordance to their own desires, and will turn away their ears from the truth, and will turn aside to myths. But grow in the grace and the knowledge of our Lord and savior Jesus Christ. To Him be the glory both now and to the day of eternity. Amen."

Our subject is "Prayer for the Colossians," number 35 in Colossians 1:9-14.

Every day of a Christian's life is lived under the influence of God's spiritual light or Satan's spiritual darkness. That is a fundamental fact of life. There are some foolish Christians who think that when they are born again, and come into the spiritual light of the regenerated life, that that is a permanent position. It is permanent relative to your salvation, but the olden nature is there, ready to jerk you back out into spiritual darkness. And when we see Christians who suffer the consequences of spiritual darkness, and live in the spiritual darkness, our minds go into a whirl, and say, "How can that be? Why would anybody want to do that? Why would anybody want to be on that kind of a self-destructive course? But we can understand that in our youth, because they're young; they're inexperienced; and, they don't have information.

**Spiritual Darkness**

Somebody the other day said, "Well, I don't want to deal with this matter with my kid because I'm going to be interrupting the privacy of this child. And I had to say, "This child doesn't have any privacy. While that person is under your roof (under your authority), you're the only one that has the privacy – the parents. It is your business to know what the child is doing, and to keep your nose into that which pertains to their wellbeing. Otherwise, spiritual darkness is everywhere. That's what their peers have, and it's so easy to drift off into it, thinking that you're with the game, because everybody is doing things that way. But if you stand up for spiritual righteousness (for the light), then that will encourage them to grow up and say, "That's the way to go. Before salvation, the believer was in spiritual darkness.

That is true of each of us by nature. In Ephesians 5:8, the apostle says, "For you were formally darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. Walk as children of light." It is not simply that you were formerly in darkness. You *were* darkness. Everything that the new age tells you – look to yourself, and look within yourself for truth, is nonsense because there is nothing in you but darkness. But once you come into the Christian light, you not only come into light, because you have the Spirit of God indwelling you permanently, but you *are* light. And your job now is to focus that light through the knowledge of doctrine. Then you can do the last part – "to walk as children of light."

After salvation, the believer is in spiritual light, and the whole picture is dramatically changed in terms of his lifestyle. 1 Peter 2:9 points out that: "But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation of people for God's own possession, that you may proclaim the excellences of Him Who has called you out of darkness into His marvelous light." And it is a sorry picture when we see a Christian, young or old alike, who is called out of darkness spiritually into spiritual light, and then you'll revert back to living like you are one of the dogs of darkness.

This is the issue, of course, between being a spiritual Christian and being a carnal Christian. One of the most important verses for a person who is not a Christian is a verse like John 3:16 or Acts 16:31 that tells you how to be saved by doing one thing: "Believing in Jesus Christ as Savior." It is not inviting Him into your heart, or anything else – any of the pop-Christianity phrases. It's just the biblical phrase: believing (trusting) in Christ, that His death will cover your sin. But once you are a Christian, the most important verse is 1John 1:9, to stay in the light by confessing your known sins. That brings forgiveness in temporal relationships. And the believer who is light can walk in the light that he is.

The lifestyle of light, based on Bible doctrine principles, is characterized by goodness and righteousness and truth. And that's the lifestyle that honors our royal family. Ephesians 5:9 points this out to us: "For the fruit of the light consists in all goodness and righteousness and truth." So, when you're walking in the light, it'll be divine goodness. There's a lot of nonsense as goodness. The codeword in our society is "compassion," but that is human good. It's part of the sin nature. And in God's eyes, that is evil. There is righteousness. It's the absolute righteousness of God that enables you to live up to the integrity that characterizes God – not the relative righteousness that you're just as good or better than other people. And then there is truth. This is not the truth of the wisdom of man, but the truth of the wisdom of God, which only comes from the Word of God.

That's why it's important that you get out of a church that is an entertainment center, and that is an inspiration center, and that is a glowing operation, that is a business operation, and that is a social country club top of operation, into one that simply and humbly does nothing else but tell you: "Thus saith the Lord."

Now, if you don't think you're going to pay in all eternity by what you will be shortchanged at the Judgment Seat of Christ in rewards and blessing, you're making a serious mistake, because nobody can have goodness and righteousness and truth who is not being exposed to the light in the regular pastor-teacher church service relationship. That is the lifestyle to which we've been called. Walking as children of light depends on learning from doctrine what is pleasing to the Lord Jesus Christ. Ephesians 5:10 says, "Trying to learn what is pleasing to the Lord." Where on earth are you going to learn what is pleasing to the Lord? Are you going to ask your friends and your associates in the world? Are you're going to listen to the public media? Are you're going to listen to the opinion-makers of our society? None of them know what is pleasing to the Lord. They only know what is pleasing to the sin nature. And you don't need to have them teach you that. The only way you are ever going to learn what is pleasing to the Lord is through the Word of God.

Now, you may be so foolish, once you have been exposed to the light, to say, "I don't like it. I'm going to have reservations on it. And the consequence will be that that light will become darkness for you. And nothing is more tragic than a Christian who's been exposed to the light of doctrine, but has mental reservations about it, and it turns into darkness for him. What grief and what lifelong misery people bring into their lives, only because they do not walk in the light. And the reason they don't walk in the light is because people who are responsible for teaching them what the light is, are not doing their job.

**Satan is the Ruler of the World**

Now, here in our study of the book of Colossians 1:13 has declared to us the Christian's deliverance from the authority of spiritual darkness: "For He delivered us from the domain of darkness." This refers to all that human viewpoint from the old sin nature, which is tyrannical, lawless, and enslaving. God has delivered us. And we showed you that the Greek word for that means "to be rescued" from spiritual darkness of Satan. Satan is the ruler of the world. He is its governing authority. In Matthew 4:8-9, Satan, while tempting Jesus in the wilderness, offered to make him the ruler of all nations. He would put Him over all the kingdoms of the world. That was not a false promise. He could really do that, because all the kingdoms (all the nations) of the world are under his authority. So, Satan is the ruler, he is the governing authority of this planet. Therefore, it is a place of darkness. And this i s what we Christians have to be rescued from.

Paul's divine mission was specifically to preach the gospel of the grace of God by which a lost sinner could be delivered from the dark domain of Satan in Satan's world system. Acts 26:18 indicates this, when Paul says that his mission (his specific calling by God) to the Gentiles was: "To open their eyes so that they may turn from darkness to light, and from the domination of Satan to God, in order that they may receive forgiveness of sins, and an inheritance among those who have been sanctified by faith in Me." It says exactly what we've been studying here in Colossians – the great inheritance of the Christian, and that inheritance is based upon the light of the Word of God: to turn from the dark, monstrous, ugly realm of spiritual evil to the believer's inheritance in the glory light of heaven. That is our privilege and duty.

The church-age believers rescued by God the Father from the realm of spiritual darkness, is now followed in Colossians 1:13 by another tremendous action on the part of God: he is transferred into the magnificent spiritual enlightenment in the kingdom of Jesus Christ. "For He delivered us from the domain of darkness, and transferred us into the kingdom of His Beloved Son. The word "transferred" in the Greek Bible looks like this. It's the Greek word "methistemi" (meth-is'-tay-mee), M E T H I S T E M i. "Methistemi" means "to transplant." This is the way a farmer would talk about his trees or some crops. He's transplanting them. It is a transplanting from one soil to another soil. This connotes a change in one situation – a change in one's place. It happens at the point of salvation. And it is in the Greek active voice, which means that it is a personal experience of relocation. You, as an individual, are personally relocated from a dark soil to a soil of light. It is a statement of fact.

This word, and its idea of transplanting, is illustrated on historical occasions by the wholesale transportation by a people from one place to another. For example, we may illustrate this in the book of 2 Kings 15:29: "In the days of Pekah, king of Israel, Tiglath-pileser, king of Assyria, came, and captured Ijon, and Kedesh, and Hazor, and Gilead, and Galilee, and all the Naphtali, and he carried them captive to Assyria." Here is exactly the idea behind this Greek word: transporting (transplanting) whole groups of peoples. You move it from one place to another.

In 2 Kings 17:6, we have the same idea again: "In the ninth year of Hoshea, the king of Assyria captured Samaria, and carried Israel away into exile to Assyria, and settled them in Halah and Habor, and on the river Gozan, and in the city of the Medes." This is exactly what happened to the 10 northern tribes. Assyria came down; conquered them; and, just picked the whole population up and transplanted them (wholesale) back to Assyria. The same idea as the Greek word "methistemi" – to take you out of one situation (one location), and put you into another one. That's an actual, personal experience. It is not just something in a way of an idea inspirationally or emotionally. You are actually transported,

We also have 2 kings 24:14-16: "Then he led a way into exile, and all Jerusalem, and all the captains, and all the mighty men of valor." Here it is speaking about the action of Nebuchadnezzar: "Then he led a way into exile all Jerusalem, and all the captains, and all the mighty men of valor – 10,000 captives, and all the craftsmen, and the smiths. None remained except the poorest people of the land. So, he led Jehoiachin away into exile to Babylon; also the king's mother, the king's wives, and his officials, and the leading men of the land, he led into exile from Jerusalem to Babylon. And all the men of valor, 7,000, and the craftsmen and the smiths, 1,000, all strong and fit for war. And these the king of Babylon brought into exile in Babylon." Now, here you have detailed description of all the kinds of people that were involved in this transportation – taking one group of people out of one place, Jerusalem, God's city of illumination, and taking them into Babylon, a city of darkness.

So, the idea here in Colossians is this kind of a picking up and removing people from one place to another. And here it is used specifically in terms of our spiritual transportation – from darkness (a place of darkness) to a place of light.

In the New Testament, this word again is used in Acts 13:22, showing us this same idea: "And after he had removed him (that is, Saul), he raised up David to be their king, concerning whom he also testified and said, 'I have found David, the son of Jesse, a man after My own heart, who will do all My will.'" After he had removed (there's the word again), or transported, Saul from what? Here he transported Saul from life into death, and replaced him with David.

This is a great reality that every human being must go through. He must literally be transported from an environment of spiritual darkness to an environment of spiritual light, or his whole life will be meaningless, pointless, and a great agony. And when you are a Christian, your progress in the Christian life is constantly out of this realm of darkness into the realm of light.

Now, the apostle Paul, I remind you, was very pleased with the Colossian Christians. The reports were good. These people were into the Word of God, and they were positive to the Word of God, and they were not readily accepting the heresies that were creeping in already (this early) into the Christian community. And Paul said that that's because you have full knowledge of the Word of God. You have that "epignosis" knowledge. You don't have just information. You have said "Amen" to it. Now what was knowledge suddenly becomes full knowledge, and it is stored in your human spirit, and God the Holy Spirit uses that to guide you. Paul says, "Don't ever let that go. You are a people who are growing in the light." And why are they growing in the light? A little later he tells then why. It is because you have a man like Epaphras. Here's a pastor-teacher who knows what his job is; who knows the Word of God; who takes his time to learn it; and, he can explain it to you. He has a special gift. And those of you who are sitting there saying "Amen" are blossoming out by leaps and bounds, beyond your fondest dreams.

He delivered us from this domain of darkness. He transported us to the kingdom of His Beloved Son. The word "kingdom" here refers to a royal realm. Here it refers to the sphere of those who are regenerated by their faith of Jesus Christ as Savior – they who are related to Christ by the new birth. They are the redeemed – the spiritual realm in the church-age, which is made up of saints, and ruled over by Jesus Christ. The great kingdom of God that will come upon this earth is in the future. It follows a tribulation era. It's in the millennium. But the kingdom of God is here, in our day, present in what Matthew 13 calls its "mystery forms." It is in certain features that are true of this time between Pentecost and the rapture of the church. The kingdom has certain distinct qualities. They're the qualities that are pertinent to this church-age, which is different from the Jewish age which is to follow in the tribulation.

**The Deity of Christ**

So, there is this kingdom, which is the kingdom of Jesus Christ, and it is the realm of spiritual light. This kingdom someday is going to be handed over to God the Father by God the Son (1 Corinthians 15:24). This kingdom is the kingdom of His Beloved Son. This refers to Jesus Christ. Literally, in the Greek, it says "The Son of His love." And the fact that He is called the Son indicates for us the deity of Jesus Christ.

This is the challenge which we are facing today, as you well know, from the instruction you've received and the materials we have sent you – the evangelical challenge to the deity of Christ. And if you have not been alerted to that, then you're out of touch with where Satan is working in these final days of the church age. It is to undermine the deity of Jesus Christ. If he is not God, then He is no different than any other man. Then He is not the supreme way to salvation. Then the other religions of the world have a basis of coming to God.

If Mother Teresa really understood the deity of Jesus Christ, she would not talk about the foolishness of God's acceptance of all those who seek Him. That is not true. They are not going to find God just because they're seeking Him. As a matter of fact, what the Bible tells us is that: "There is none that seeks after God – no, not one." Now people seek after religion. They seek after religion made in the image of man. That's true. But they do not seek the God, the real God, the Creator God, the Savior God. Therefore, to be delivered from that darkness into the realm of the light requires something very special as an act of God. It requires a relationship to Jesus Christ. And this Beloved Son is a God-Man, and therefore, He is qualified to be our savior. He is God's Beloved Son. He is not just a Man. He is God's divine, Beloved Son.

Matthew 3:17, "And behold a voice out of the heavens." This is at the baptism of Jesus: "A voice out of heaven saying, "This is My Beloved Son, in Whom I am well-pleased." Jesus Christ, the Son, is the object of the Father's love. To this Beloved One, the Father is going to give all the kingdoms of the millennial world. Psalm 2:7-8 and Hebrews 1:3-9 point that out. It is the Beloved Son of God (He Who is deity Himself) Who will reign over the nations of this earth: "The kingdom of His Beloved Son."

**The Millennial Kingdom**

One day, this mystery phase of the kingdom (during the church age) will be over. And when it comes to an end, then Christ will actually be on this earth, and this mystery phase of the kingdom will be replaced by the actual phase of His reigning over the whole earth during the millennium.

Aren't political elections going to be a lot of fun then? One of the reasons they're going to be fun is because you people are going to be running them. You are going to be the associates of the King of King, the Lord of Lords, Jesus Christ. You should use your life to live by the principles of the doctrines you have been taught, and to live your life fulfilling the mission to which you have been called. And like any good soldier, the mission comes first. You're going to be given, commensurate with your service, authority in that kingdom – more or less. It's a reality. And that authority under Christ will enable you to run a righteous world. Yes, life will go on in its political way. Life will go on as it is now, but the corruption, the deceit, and all the maneuverings of men at the expense of other people will come to an end. And anybody who resists the King will be given his appropriate discipline and warning. And if he will not listen, you'll pass the word on up: this person deserves to die. And if the great tribunal of God confirms that, that persons will be taken out of the Millennial Kingdom. Those who obey; those who subject themselves to the authority of the King; and, those who are in obedience to the authority of those who rule under Christ – they will live for hundreds of years. Death will become a rarity for them.

"The Son of His Love" will be given authority by the Father to rule over this whole earth. This dramatic change for the believer, from darkness to light, takes place at the point of salvation in his being delivered from the domain of Satan's authority into the authority of Jesus Christ. There are two spiritual realms in which every person on earth resides. One is characterized by divine viewpoint light; and, the other by human viewpoint darkness. Everyone is physically born into the realm of darkness. And unless he is born against spiritually, he never enters the realm of light. He always stays in darkness. Those who are in the realm of Satan's darkness usually view themselves as very enlightened people. We call that "humanism." Man makes himself his own God, and he thinks he's very enlightened, but he's totally in the dark. This is the deception of the human wisdom that comes upon the lost. That's why you must be careful when you deal with unbelievers, and take them to your bosom. They are in darkness. They know not God. They do not think like God. They don't act like God. They don't have the feelings and emotions of God. They're completely disoriented to reality.

In 1 Corinthians 2:6-8, Paul says, "Yet we do speak wisdom among those who are mature; a wisdom, however, not of this age, nor of the rulers of this age who are passing away. But we speak God's wisdom (doctrinal truth) in a mystery: the hidden wisdom which God predestined before the ages to our glory; the wisdom which none of the rulers of this age has understood. For if they had understood it, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory." And if the rulers of our age today understood this wisdom of God, they would not be rejecting Jesus Christ; denigrating Him; belittling Him; pushing Him out as the authority to Whom we must all be subject.

In the gospel of John 9:39, we have the deception of human wisdom: "And Jesus said, 'For judgment I came into this world; that those who do not see, may see; and, that those who see may become blind.' Those of the Pharisees who were with Him heard these things and said to Him, 'We're not blind too are we?' Jesus said to them, 'If you were blind, you would have no sin. But since you say, 'We see,' your sin remains.'"

On another occasion, Jesus told these pompous religious leaders, "It would be better if you didn't come to My services, because if you come to My instruction, I'm going to teach you about the wisdom of the light of God. And once you hear about that, your punishment is going to be multiplied tremendously someday in the lake of fire. Whereas, if you don't know these things, the punishment will be less." They thought that they were in the know, and that Jesus was the clown who was out of touch. He was the light, and they were the darkness, and they had it all reversed.

So, don't be impressed by the people of our world. Don't be impressed by the glamor that surrounds them, or the authorities that they possess. And don't be impressed by their religious talk: "Those who know not God" – those who are ignorant of the Word of God, are in darkness. And if you attach yourself to those people, and if you permit their leadership to guide you, they will lead you into personal self-destruction in their darkness.

Let's look at one more example, in Matthew 15:14: "'Let them alone,' Jesus said. 'They are blind guides of the blind. If a blind man guides a blind man, both will fall into a pit.'" Jesus, diagnosing the heart of man, says that they go through their pretenses, and they go through their externals like the Pharisees did, and they think that they are in the know. But the Pharisees were spiritually in darkness. And Jesus said, "They want to be there." This is as later John said, "Let them who will be ignorant be ignorant still."

That's the difference between positive and negative volition. That's the difference between coming out to be instructed in the Word of God, or if you're here, being instructed to say "Amen," or "No, I don't like what I'm hearing." And you have mental reservations about it, and you lose it all. Jesus told them: "These blind people (spiritually blind people) are determined to be blind, and anybody who listens to them, who follows them, is going to go in the ditch with them."

The two divine actions for the believer here in Colossians 1:13 are sequential. Both follow one after another. You are taken out of the domain of darkness. You remember that the word "delivered" means "rescued." You're rescued from the domain of darkness, and you are immediately transplanted into the kingdom of the Son of His love. You are immediately transplanted into the area of enlightenment. You can't have one without the other. And that's good to know. You don't have to be spiritually blind. You don't have to walk in spiritual darkness. You don't have to be ignorant like the rest of the world, and like most of the Christian community is because they don't have access to instruction in the Word.

The believer, then, is transferred from the arbitrary, tyrannical rule of Satan to the righteous, loving kingdom of Jesus Christ. This is the same idea that we have in the book of Acts 26:15-18, where Paul describing his conversion on the road to Damascus says, "And I said (after he heard the voice from heaven), 'Who are You, Lord?' And the Lord said, 'I am Jesus whom you are persecuting.'" He knew God was speaking to him. That's why he used the word "Lord." He looked up and said, "Who are you Lord? Who is this speaking to me?" "He said, 'I am Jesus, the one that you're going around persecuting, killing, and murdering people for. But arise and stand on your feet. For this purpose I have appeared to you, to appoint you a minister and a witness, not only to the things which you have seen, but also to the things in which I will appear to you; delivering you from the Jewish people and from the Gentiles to whom I'm sending you to open their eyes so that they may turn from darkness to light, from the dominion of Satan to God, in order that they may receive forgiveness of sins and an inheritance among those who have been sanctified by faith in Me.'"

This is exactly what Paul was talking about in Colossians. And on that road to Damascus, the Lord said to him, "Stand up. I'm now transferring you out of the kingdom of darkness into the kingdom of light – not only what you have personally experienced and seen here, but I'm going to take you out into the Arabian desert, and for three years, you and I are going to run class every day. I'm going to sit at one end of the log, and you're going to sit at the other end of the log, and I'm going to teach you things that Peter doesn't know, and that all the other disciples know only in a glimmering, very elementary way – the great doctrines relating to the church age. Judaism is being put on hold, and the final seven years of Israel's history will not be executed now at this point. It is now held off. It will come after I have brought to Me a people for My Own of a different kind, from among the Gentiles. And you are the apostle who is going to get all the in-depth truth of how the church age works, and what it is like for a human being not only to come into the light of the Word of God, but to have the person of enlightenment in the form of God the Holy Spirit permanently forever living in you."

So, the next time you want to do some dirty thing that's characteristic of the darkness, just remember that the person of light, not only Jesus Christ, but God the Holy Spirit, is telling you not to do that, and is pleading with you to do what is right. He's right there observing what you're doing. So, whether you're young or old alike, remember that Christ dwells in you as a hope of your glory in heaven, but so does the Holy Spirit, as your source of enlightenment now in your daily life. And you can turn your back upon it. He has a gentle hand. Or you can open your heart to it. You can open your mind, and say, "Speak on, Spirit of God. I'm going to do it your way."

Paul was called to tell people the full counsel of the Word of God, relative to the enlightened church age, to which all the privileges that appertain to those of us who are now the royal family of God. The Jews are not the royal family of God. They have royalty over them, but we *are* the royal family of God, and that's why we're going to reign with Him in the Millennial Kingdom. God the Father rescued us by the act of sending His Son to the earth in human form. He is the God-Man. And I stress that again because this is what is being challenged in our society today: Jesus Christ is just a Man. He is not God."

That's why I told you a few weeks ago that George Burns was being interviewed before he died, and someone referred to Jesus Christ. George says, "Well, He was one of our boys," which tells you what he thought about the God-Man. Well, George Burns is living up to his name now, I'm afraid. And he is learning indeed that Jesus Christ could not be redefined from what He is. He is the Son of God. He is deity. Colossians 1:22: "Yet He has now reconciled you in His fleshly body through death, in order to present you before Him, holy, and blameless, and beyond reproach." Jesus Christ took on a human form so that He could die. He had to have that fleshly body to pay for sins.

Colossians 2:9: "For in Him all fullness of deity dwells in bodily form." You can't say it any clearer than that. In Him, all deity dwells in bodily form – the fullness of deity in bodily form. The Greek word for the ~Godhead is "theotes" (theh-ot'-ace). Jesus Christ is indeed the God-Man. And He cannot be dismissed to something other than that.

We have one more in the book of Galatians 4:4-5: "But when the fullness of time came, God sent forth His Son, the Divine One, born of a woman, born under the Law, in order that he might redeem those who are under the Law, that we might receive the adoption of sons" – we might receive the full privileges of adult sons in the family of God.

**The Purpose of the Incarnation of Jesus Christ**

1. **To Die as our Sacrifice**

First of all, the purpose of the incarnation of Christ was to die on the cross as a human being, and sacrifice for the moral guilt of all mankind. Colossians 2:14: "Having canceled out the certificate of debt (the debt of sin) consisting of decrees against us, and which was hostile to us, and He has taken it out of the way, having nailed it to the cross." It's like the old-time grocery store people used to have a spindle (a spike) that they would have there by the counter. It was on a little stand. And if you happened to put your hand on it, you could get stabbed by it. But when a bill was paid, they would put it on that. And when they saw the hole in the receipt, they knew that that bill had been paid. It was their method. That little spindle was there; you put that down; and, the bill was paid. Jesus Christ here has the same picture. He took all of our document of sin; moral guilt; and, all that certificate that the justice of God has against us, and he put a hole in it by nailing it through the cross. That hole indicates "Paid in Full."

Galatians 2:20: "I have been crucified with Christ, and it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me. And the life which I now live in the flesh, I live by faith in the Son of God, Who loved me and delivered Himself up for me." Here's the concept expanded. The purpose of the incarnation has been expanded to include the great reality that when He died on the cross, He was dying vicariously in our place. Therefore, we, in the sight of God, were hanging on the cross with Him. We were there. We paid the penalty. We died with Him – the penalty of sin. And through Him, we paid the price. We were crucified with Christ. You don't have to run around figuring out how you're going to self-crucify yourself again. There are people who like to do that. That has already been done.

Then there's Galatians 6:14: "But may it never be that I should boast, except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, through which the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world." We were crucified with Christ. The first purpose of the incarnation was to die on the cross, and for us to be crucified with Him.

1. **To Rise from the Dead and Ascend back to Heaven**

The second purpose was to rise from the dead physically and ascend back to heaven, from whence He sent the Holy Spirit to live in our bodies. That was the second reason for the incarnation. He would leave, and the Spirit of God would come to replace Him. Ephesians 1:20: "Which He brought about in Christ when He raised Him from the dead, and seated Him at His right hand in the heavenly places." The Lord Jesus Christ is in heaven. The Spirit of God resides in us. That's why I remind you that the life you live is done in the presence of the observation of the very Godhead Itself, in the form of God the Holy Spirit. Mark 16:19: "So then, when the Lord Jesus had spoken to them, He was received up into heaven, and sat down at the right hand of God."

I remember the Episcopalian Bishop Pike, who was quite a high official in the Episcopalian church. After his son died by suicide, he sought to get in touch with his son – to speak to him on the other side. And, of course, the spirits of the demonic world were quite willing to oblige as he made his approach into the spirit world, and even found the spirit who finally spoke to him in the voice of his son. And this spirit told him how wonderful things were, and how all was well with him, and how they live over there on the other side, and so on. And someone asked him, "Well, do you really consider this part of the Bible? Do you really believe the Bible?" He said, "Well, yes, I believe the Bible. But, of course, I don't believe things such as Jesus Christ is sitting in heaven at the right hand of God the Father."

What an act of blasphemy! What a horrendous remark: "I believe the Bible, but I don't believe that most important truth: that He is raised. And because He is in heaven (there's a Man in heaven), I can be in heaven. If he were not there, confirming that a human being can live in heaven, I couldn't go to heaven." Or to say, "No, He's not at the right hand of God the Father." Isn't it odd that he should jump into his little vehicle, when he was doing some archeological studies in Israel, and go down a road that everybody else is going down? And then he pulls the little Jeep off the road to go around the hills to view something that he's looking for. And then he gets lost, and cannot find his way back to the road. And he was desperate, in that hot territory, with no water. So, a few days later, they go looking, and they find him dead. It's terrible to find the hard way how true the Word of God is. That's the difference between being in the light and being in darkness – being positive to the light, if you're fortunate enough to have somebody teaching you the light, or to be negative to it, than to never be taught it at all.

There's one more verse. 1 Corinthians 6:19, which talks about Christ being raised physically from the dead: "Or do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit Who is in you, Whom you have from God, and that you are not your own." Because Christ is in heaven, the Spirit of God was sent here to replace Him on earth. And He indwells us permanently. We are His Holy Temple.

This is the great message of Colossians 1:13: "He delivered us (He rescued us) from the domain (the authority) of darkness (Satan's world); and He transported us into the kingdom of the Son of His love" (into the kingdom of God's light).

Jesus Christ in this way has delivered each of you from the authority of Satan's spiritual darkness into the authority of the spiritual light of God, as that is expressed in the Word of God. Why would you live according to the principles of darkness? Why would you act as children of the night when you are all sons and daughters of the light? That is the question.

The apostle then goes on and wraps up, in Colossians 1:14, the end of our section, with the two most amazing things that just finally clench it, to understand what has happened to us. We have been redeemed, and we have been forgiven of our sin. Can you begin to comprehend what those two words mean? He put those two words in there because they explain what it means to be in the light. And the depth of those two words should reverberate through your soul for a long time. We shall look at them next time.

Dear God, our Father, we thank You for this, Your Word, for all that You have taught us. We pray that'll help us to understand that we are children of light. Therefore, we should seek the light, and we should live according to the light. We ask You to help us to be able to illuminate all the world about us, which is in terrible spiritual confusion, and not the least of which, in the Christian community. We pray, oh, Father, that You will help us to realize that our eternity as Christians is being affected by our positive knowledge of the Word of God, and our relationship of receiving it as the truth of God. We pray that You will protect us from the subtlety of negative volition, because we don't want to be discomforted from the fact that we are in religious systems that are a circus instead of the reality of God.

Dr. John E. Danish, 1995

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