

Colossians 1:12-14

9 For this reason also, since the day we heard *of it*, we have not ceased to pray for you and to ask that you may be filled with the knowledge of His will in all spiritual wisdom and understanding, 10 so that you will walk in a manner worthy of the Lord, to please *Him* in all respects, bearing fruit in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God; 11 strengthened with all power, according to His glorious might, for the attaining of all steadfastness and patience; joyously 11 strengthened with all power, according to His glorious might, for the attaining of all steadfastness and patience; **joyously 12 giving thanks to the Father, who has qualified us to share in the inheritance of the saints in Light. 13 For He rescued us from the domain of darkness, and transferred us to the kingdom of His beloved Son, 14 in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins.**

INTRODUCTION: What is a 'before and after' passage (me outside of Christ, me in Christ)? **Sin is a massive forfeiture** of the light, life, love, purpose, and glory which accompany a relationship with the Lord (**Rom 3:23**). The great question answered in the N.T. is this: *how is it possible for the unrighteous to be right with their righteous Creator?* Is it possible for a person to make him or herself eligible for God's favor? This second question drives all of the religions in the world.

Only the brilliant light of the good news in Christ Jesus proclaims that salvation is *off/from the Lord, not of man* (Jonah 2:9). When the Holy Spirit is sent by the Lord to begin convicting and drawing a sinner to Christ, what does the Spirit find? A person closer to salvation by sincerely doing his best? A guilty person doing religious things for real relief of conscience? Not according to Scripture. The Spirit finds a spiritually dead person who does not feel the weight of a lifetime of personal sin, and does not grasp the freeness and sufficiency of redemption in Christ.

Thus, the convicted sinner, spiritually dead in his sins, is bound to do the best he knows—he cuts back on some sins, as if his problem is the number of sinful deeds he commits, rather than the real problem, not just what he does, but who he is. Nothing will remedy his dilemma but the granting of a new nature, an entirely new heart. The sinner's predicament is that he has an evil heart, and is therefore a lover of darkness, alienated from God, and is a slave to sin. That disaster can only be answered in, and by Christ. For, our Savior—in Himself, who He is and what He has done, is the only solution to the sinner's hopelessness.

The false spiritualities of the world propose that it is an easy matter to gain divine favor. A thousand forms of 'will worship' (or, religious human inventions) exist in the world today. And all of them operate under the false optimism that in ourselves, we have the ability to qualify ourselves for God's acceptance. Thanks be

to God for the gospel, testify about the Son of God and shining into the thick darkness! The book of Colossians exhibits Christ in all of His supremacy and sufficiency, as merciful Redeemer for those broken by sin (He bridges the gap).

In these 3 verses, **1:12-14**, Paul summarizes the divine work of redemption which is coming to fruition in the lives of his readers. **From this he gives four reasons why the Father is worthy of our delight and overflowing thanksgiving. True believers joyously give thanks to the Father. . .:**

I. Because of our *inheritance*—being qualified ‘to be partakers of the inheritance’ (v.12). “joyously giving thanks to the Father, who has qualified us to share in the inheritance of the saints in Light.” Here Paul centered **thanksgiving** on the fact that God has **qualified believers** (“made them competent/adequate.”) “Not that we are adequate in ourselves to consider anything as *coming* from ourselves, but our adequacy is from God, who also made us adequate *as* servants of a new covenant” (2 Cor. 3:5-6a). ‘Adequate’ to share in the **inheritance** of the saints (i.e., the kingdom treasures that belong to believers). In short, though believers are unfit in themselves, God has fitted them to share in the **inheritance** of His holy people. This **inheritance** is **‘in the light’**, that is, “situated in the kingdom of light.”ⁱ

“He called you out of darkness into His marvelous light,” (1 Pet 2:9). “For God, who said, ‘Light shall shine out of darkness,’ is the One who has shone in our hearts to give the Light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Christ” (2 Cor 4:6). “Light” begins in the believer here, descending from “the Father of lights” by Jesus, “the true light” (Jn 8:12), and is perfected in the kingdom of light, which includes knowledge, purity, love, and joy. (Contrasted here with the “darkness” of the unconverted state (Col 1:13).

God has provided an **inheritance** through the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. It is the birthright of the Children of God: “and if children, heirs also, heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ” (Rom 8:17). This inheritance is “incorruptible and undefiled and reserved for us in heaven” (1 Pet 1:4). To be ‘partakers of the **inheritance** means that believers have an eternal portion of the riches of salvation. In Christ believers are granted to live eternally with God, who is light.

An **inheritance** was given by **sovereign grace** (who ‘triggered’ that grace?) to these Colossians who were taken from among the Gentiles. (Gentiles are described in **Eph 2:12-13**: “Remember that you were at that time separate from Christ, excluded from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers to the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world. But now in Christ Jesus you who formerly were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ.”)

Our response to this miracle of grace in Christ: is overflowing gratitude to the Father Who qualified us. This qualifying of believers is not by progressive growth in

holiness; but *once for all* qualifying us. Qualifying is the *Father's* work in granting us a new status before Him, by adoption, justification; a ***once for all***, new standing, as His *adopted children*.

The believers addressed here were in different stages of progressive sanctification; but in respect to the ***qualification*** specified here, they all alike had it from the Father—in Christ His Son, being “complete in Him” (**Col 2:10**) (**2 Pet 1:3**).

This once-for-all qualification contains in it the ***germ*** of sanctification, afterwards developed progressively in the life by the Spirit in the believer. God's 'seed' abides in the those begotten of God (1 Jn 3:9).

The Christian life is a life of preparation for heaven—believers walk with the Holy One. Is there an echo of God's holiness in your life (**1 Pet 1:16**)? There must, and will be, a *personal* qualification for heaven (progressive sanc.) where there is a *judicial* qualification for heaven (positional sanc., 'Christ our righteousness') (Sanc. **Col 3:5-7**). "But by His doing you are in Christ Jesus, who became to us wisdom from God, and righteousness and sanctification, and redemption" (1 Cor 1:30).

II. Because of our *deliverance*—being 'delivered ... from the power of darkness' (V. 13a). "For He rescued us from the domain of darkness." Believers were brought “out of the power of,” out of the sphere in which his power is exercised. **It was a sphere of darkness**—blindness, hatred, misery [BENGEL]. **Every true believer has been delivered from the dominion of darkness (Luke 22:53; Eph. 6:10-12)** ('usurped jurisdiction').ⁱⁱ From this dominion (*exousias*, “power, authority”) of darkness (**Jn 3:19–20—complicit**) (EX. 'Stockholm syndrome'—feelings of trust or affection felt toward the captor by a victim). Through Christ they were brought from a rebel kingdom and placed under the sovereignty of their rightful King.

Before the Colossians became believers, they were under the powerful rule of the devil; but now this power is broken by the Savior himself. "When He had disarmed the rulers and authorities, He made a public display of them, having triumphed over them through Him" (Col 2:15). Christ has **rescued, delivered** them and they are safe and protected from satanic tyranny (**Eph 6:12**). God rescued us out from (ἐκ [*ek*]) the power (ἐξουσίας [*exousias*]) of the kingdom of darkness (σκοτους [*skotous*]) in which we were held as slaves. Note **2 Tim 2:25**, and **Eph 2:2**.

III. Because of our *transference*—being 'conveyed ... into the kingdom of the Son of his love' (V.13b). "and transferred us to the kingdom of His beloved Son." We are to praise the Father because believers have been **rescued** personally **by Christ**, and positionally **in Christ** from the **domain** of darkness and from the kingdom of Satan, and have been **translated** into the kingdom of Christ.

Translated/transferred: this work of divine power changed us from dwelling

in the kingdom of darkness to the *kingdom of light*. This **light** is the spiritual sphere to which believers have been transferred.

Paul's testimony of Christ before king Agrippa, "[I am] rescuing you from the Jewish people and from the Gentiles, to whom I am sending you, to open their eyes so that they may turn from darkness to light and from the dominion of Satan to God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins and an inheritance among those who have been sanctified by faith in Me" (**Acts 26:17-18**).

Thus, believers have passed from death to life; from alienation to acceptance; from despair to hope; from danger to safety; from uncertainty to peace. Those thus translated as to spiritual state, are also transformed as to character.

Our new sphere; the kingdom of the Son of his love, the Son who is the object of the Father's love (beloved), "This is My beloved Son in whom I am well pleased" (**Mt 3:17**). The Son on whom His love rests (**Jn 17:26; Eph 1:6**). What a contrast this is with the "darkness" where all is hatred and hateful.

"For we also once were foolish ourselves, disobedient, deceived, enslaved to various lusts and pleasures, spending our life in malice and envy, hateful, hating one another" (**Titus 3:3**). It is Christ's Kingdom in which he is King. He has moral and spiritual sovereignty.ⁱⁱⁱ

By virtue of His conquest then, Christ has vindicated His authority to raid the domain of darkness and rescue those who had been bound fast under the control of its evil guardians/minions—demons. Therefore you Colossians, there is no need to pay some needed **homage to those spirits** of whom you were afraid, no need to bow and scrape, and seek to appease them as they controlled your destiny. You have been rescued from the sphere dominated by those principalities and you have been **translated** into the dominion of the victorious Son of God.^{iv}

The Father by Christ has brought believers out of the desolate realm of dismal and false ideas, and into the sun-drenched land of clear knowledge and realistic expectations—a deliverance from bewildering perverted cravings and into the blissful realm of holy yearnings and glorious self-denials. And out of the dungeon of bondage to sin and into a magnificent palace of glorious liberty and joyous songs.^v

These two clauses making up **verse 13**, further describe God the Father's redemptive work and mark the **transition** to the wonderful picture of the Person and work of Christ in the **Christ Hymn** in verses **14 to 20**. We will see over the next two weeks that the **Christ Hymn** is the full and final answer to the Gnostic depreciation of Jesus Christ by speculative philosophy. And the **Christ Hymn** is a decisive 'crushing' of all modern (postmodern) efforts to offer a "reduced" picture of Christ (whether from cultists, humanists, or skeptics).

IV. Because of our *acceptance*—receiving our redemption, ‘the forgiveness of sins’ (V. 14). “in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins.” Christians are transferred from the domain of darkness at a **price**, but the cost is the precious blood of Christ. **Verse 20** tells us that Christ ‘made peace through the blood of his cross’, while the apostle Peter boasts that it is ‘the precious blood of Christ’ that redeems. “Knowing that you were not redeemed with perishable things like silver or gold from your futile way of life inherited from your forefathers, but with precious blood, as of a lamb unblemished and spotless, the blood of Christ” (**1 Pet 1:18–19**).

In whom (ἐν ᾧ [*en hōi*]). **We have our redemption.** This emancipation is enjoyed only because of the tremendous cost Christ paid on the cross (**Rom. 3:24–26**).^{vi} Redemption is release on *payment of a ransom* for slave or debtor (our debt, **Col 2:14**)(**Heb 9:15**). **The forgiveness of our sins** with ἀπολυτρωσιν [*apolutrōsin*] as in **Eph 1:7**. (**remission**, sending away in liberty and freedom, after the **redemption**, buying back). *Lutron, apolutrosis (redemption) Grk.* Purchase-money for releasing slaves—**redemption is the cost of remission of sins (Heb 9:22)!**^{vii}

Here in **1:14** we have ἁμαρτιων [*hamartiōn*] (sins, from ἁμαρτανω [*hamartanō*], wrong-doing, behavior contrary to the will of God, to ‘miss the mark’) while in **Eph 1:7** we find παραπτωμάτων [*paraptōmatōn*] (fallings aside, transgressing the will and law of God by false steps and failure, from παραπιπτω [*parapiptō*]) (EX. pipto and tiptoe).^{viii}

We have seen in our text this morning that Paul provides us with a SUMMARY of the doctrine of the gospel concerning the great work of our redemption by Christ. His description of the work of redemption is not the natural order of it; for then he would speak of Christ’s purchase first, and afterwards of the application of it. But here he inverts the order, because, in our sense and feeling of it, the application goes before the purchase. We first find the benefits of redemption in our hearts, and then are led by those streams to the knowledge of God’s eternal purpose in Christ (book, *Redemption accomplished and applied*, John Murray).

Our redemption is spoken of as the work of the Father, because the Father works in us by his Spirit. Since we have the comfort of it, He must have the glory of it (the believer’s lifestyle is one of joyously, habitually giving thanks to the Father).

We have seen what it means to be *translated into the kingdom of His dear Son*. It is to be brought into the gospel-state, made members of Christ’s Body; a state of light and purity.” *You were once darkness, but now are you light in the Lord,* (**Eph 5:8**). Those who are saved are made willing subjects of Christ, who once were formerly the slaves of Satan.

The conversion of a sinner is the translation of a soul into the kingdom of Christ out of the kingdom of the devil. The power of sin is shaken off, and the

power of Christ submitted to. The law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus makes them free from the law (operative principle) of sin and death (Rom 8:2).

By qualifying believers to partake of the inheritance of the saints in light, v. 12, the Father has prepared us for the eternal happiness of heaven. And, as the Israelites divided the promised land by lot; and God has given us the earnest and assurance of it (seal and down payment) (**Eph 1:11-14**).

God gives grace and glory, and we are here told what they both are. What that glory is: it is the **inheritance of the saints in light**. It belongs to them as children, which is the best security and the sweetest promise: *If children, then heirs, Rom 8:17*. And it is an inheritance of the saints—proper to sanctified souls. Those who are not saints on earth will never be saints in heaven. And it is an inheritance in light; the perfection of knowledge, holiness, and joy, by communion with God, who is light, and the Father of lights, Jas 1:17. That is what glory is, what of grace?

Grace is a qualification for the inheritance: *“He hath qualified us to be partakers,” v. 12*, that is, He has fitted us for the heavenly state by granting us a new nature with new holy desires—by the powerful influence of his Spirit.

Observe, All who are designed for reaching heaven hereafter are being prepared for heaven now. As those who live and die unsanctified go out of the world with their hell clinging to them, so those who are sanctified and renewed go out of the world with their heaven as fragrance upon them.

Those who have the inheritance of sons have the disposition of sons: they have the *Spirit of adoption, whereby they cry, Abba, Father (Rom 8:15)*. And, because you are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father, (Gal 4:6).

The golden chain of God’s sovereign grace: those whom He predestined, called, justified, and glorified (Rom 8:30). The saints will be forever indebted to the grace of God, which hath sanctified all true believers.^{ix}

“But we should always give thanks to God for you, brethren beloved by the Lord, because God has chosen you from the beginning for salvation through sanctification by the Spirit and faith in the truth. It was for this He called you through our gospel, that you may gain the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ” (2 Thess 2:13-14).

In these **four reasons** which make up our outline (*inheritance, deliverance, transference, and forgiveness*, we have seen supplied in **vv. 12-14** ample incentive to praise God in prayer. Delight and praise before God in the holy place of His grace is as manna to the redeemed soul and is evidenced by regular prayers of gladness and joy.^x

Addendum from A. A. Bonar, *The Person of Christ*.

Christ is the very essence of the gospel. We are not dealing with abstract truth or cold statements but, with a Person who is full of grace and truth. We must not let the gospel be reduced to a salvation plan (pp. 8-9).

Redemption is *in Christ*, we are accepted *in the beloved*, for it is *in Him* that we have this redemption. The believer has release, remission and freedom because these are found *in Christ*. He is the sphere in which our salvation was accomplished (pp. 28-29).

Christ gives Himself as the food of our souls. The believer is unified with Him who has given us His blood to ratify the new covenant. We must not separate Christ's Person from His work. The Holy Spirit's intent is to glorify the Person of Christ (Jn 16:14). When we dwell on the benefits of His saving work for us, these benefits ought to be considered proofs of our Benefactor's heart. Don't turn the benefits of salvation into commodities for spiritual consumers (pp. 30-1).

We do not know what a terrible and mysterious thing sin is. In order for even one sin to be forgiven, and for you to be received into divine favor, the Godhead must be moved. God the Son must rise from His place on the Father's bosom and hasten to your rescue. Anything less than this would be insufficient and entirely useless. For the abyss into which sin plunges the unsaved sinner is bottomless. The burden of wrath due to your one sin is a settled anger (wrath) so great, no mighty angel could endure the trial of interposing as your substitute (pp. 36-37).

Sin is a mysteriously tremendous evil. In order for even one of your sins to be removed, the work of God the Son in our nature required that He occupy the sinner's Law-room so that Almighty God's love would shed the blood of the beloved Son. Our Savior who came, was Creator of all creatures and therefore, He is able to fulfill all the conditions of our salvation and to pay the last mite that we owed. Because our Savior is divine, He has the ability to pay the price (pp. 38-39).

In our thoughts of Jesus Christ, we ought to conceive of Him as God and the Judge of the living and dead. We must cherish high thoughts of Him so that His deity becomes the ground of all your confidence. It is for the lack of this kind of meditation upon His Person that we hope for so little from His hand (pp. 40-41).

It is the Father's love that made the Son of God your Redeemer. It is God's love that sent Christ as God incarnate (pp. 50-51).

Our consideration and devotion to Christ keeps doctrine warm and alive. The Lord wants us to think upon Whom this divine Person is to whom we are united. Even the consideration of great spiritual ideas without contact with Christ leave us dry (pp. 76-77).

Not only did He once for all blot out our sins, but He is employed in seeing that the writing against us never reappears. Once He has put on us a robe of

righteousness, He continues every hour to keep it on us in spite of blasts from earth and hell. In such a manner we ought to think upon Christ's unfinished priestly work of interceding for us. As we consider Him in this way, we feel our acceptance and the communication of blessing to us fresh each day, through Him who is our life. And as a result, nothing in our religion grows old, none of the reasons for close dependence on Him are past or out of date. In this way, our everyday life is a daily repetition of our first conversion. And by this view of our Lord, we are given a consistent impulse to walk with God and to continue in progress like plants of grace whose roots are regularly watered (pp. 84-85).

End Notes:

ⁱ Robertson, A. T. (1933). [*Word Pictures in the New Testament*](#) (Col 1:12). Nashville, TN: Broadman Press.

ⁱⁱ Hendricksen, William, Colossians, NTC, p. 63.

ⁱⁱⁱ Ibid.

^{iv} Bruce, F. F., NICNT, p. 51.

^v Hendricksen, Colossians, NTC, p. 63.

^{vi} Ibid.

^{vii} Hendricksen, p. 65.

^{viii} Robertson, A. T.

^{ix} Henry, M. (1994). [*Matthew Henry's commentary on the whole Bible: complete and unabridged in one volume*](#) (pp. 2330–2331). Peabody: Hendrickson.

^x McNaughton, I. S. (2006). [*Opening up Colossians and Philemon*](#) (pp. 24–25). Leominster: Day One Publications.