

**Notes on the Greek New Testament**  
**Week 117 – Colossians 1:24-2:15**

**Day 581: Colossians 1:24-29**

**Verse 24**

Νῦν χαίρω ἐν τοῖς παθήμασιν ὑπὲρ ὑμῶν,  
καὶ ἀνταναπληρῶ τὰ ὑστερήματα τῶν  
θλίψεων τοῦ Χριστοῦ ἐν τῇ σαρκί μου  
ὑπὲρ τοῦ σώματος αὐτοῦ, ὃ ἐστὶν ἡ  
ἐκκλησία,

χαίρω rejoice, be glad  
παθημα, τος n suffering, passion, desire

"Paul accepted suffering on behalf of others (ὑπὲρ ὑμῶν) – a reminder that the sufferings were not sought in anything like a masochistic spirit, but were accepted, indeed welcomed, as the unavoidable consequence of the all-important objective of preaching the gospel." Dunn. Cf. Rom 5:3; 8:18; 2 Cor 1:5-7; 4:17-18; 7:4.

ἀνταναπληρῶ complete  
ὑστερημα, τος n what is lacking, need,  
absence

θλιψις, εως f trouble, suffering  
σαρξ, σαρκος f flesh, physical body

Many mediaeval Catholic interpreters believed this text supported their view that the sufferings of the saints had atoning value.

Dunn writes, "The words have caused bewilderment to generations of translators and commentators. But in fact they are simply the extension of Paul's complete eschatological schema. It contains several elements:

- i) Christ's sufferings and death as the eschatological tribulation expected as the antecedent to the new age – Paul's adaptation, reflected particularly in Rom 8:18-23, of the older Jewish theme;
- ii) Participation in the death of Christ as itself the means of transition from old age to new (Rom 6:3-11; 8:18-23 prefaced by 8:17; 2 Cor 4:10-12 leading into 4:16-5:5; Phil 3:10-11; Heb 2:9-10 offers a different model with equivalent effect); and consequently,
- iii) Christian existence as a lifelong process in which dying with Christ leads to a share of his final resurrection (Rom 6:5; Gal 2:19; 6:14 – still nailed to the cross with Christ [note the perfect tenses]; Rom 6:5; 8:11, 23; Phil 3:11 – resurrection still future...

"But Paul here has also made a unique addition to the theme by adding the (implied) thought that Christ's afflictions lack something (ὑστερημα, 'lack, deficiency') and need to be completed in Paul's flesh (ἀνταναπληρῶ, literally, 'fill up in place of'; cf. the similar phrase in 1 Cor 16:17 and Phil 2:30...). This again is partly a reflection of the cosmic scope of the reconciliation envisaged and of Paul's awareness that it is not yet complete; therefore the decisive sufferings of the Christ cannot yet be complete... It was because Paul saw himself as a major actor in the final drama of God's reconciling purpose that he could also see his all too real sufferings as somehow bringing to completion what was still outstanding of the sufferings of Christ ('crucified with Christ') by which the world was redeemed and transformed."

There is perhaps also the thought that while Christ's atoning suffering is over and finished, he continues to suffer in and through the sufferings of his people, the body of which he is the head (cf Acts 9:4 and 2 Cor 1:5). "The apostle filled up what was wanting in the Saviour's sympathetic sorrows." Eadie

σωμα, τος n body  
ἐκκλησία, ας f congregation, church

**Verse 25**

ἦς ἐγενόμην ἐγὼ διάκονος κατὰ τὴν  
οἰκονομίαν τοῦ θεοῦ τὴν δοθεῖσάν μοι εἰς  
ὑμᾶς πληρῶσαι τὸν λόγον τοῦ θεοῦ,

διακονος, ου m & f servant, helper,  
minister

οἰκονομία, ας f management of a  
household, responsibility, (divine) plan  
δοθεῖσάν Verb, aor pass ptc, f acc s διδωμι  
πληρῶ fill, fulfill, accomplish

May here mean, 'make fully known', cf. Rom 15:19. "As in the only close parallel use, in Rom 15:19, there is an eschatological overtone: Paul's commission as apostle (to the Gentiles) was intended as a decisive factor in completing the inbringing of the Gentiles and so facilitating the final climax of God's purpose (Rom 11:13-15, 25-32; cf. 2 Tim 4:17)." Dunn

**Verse 26**

τὸ μυστήριον τὸ ἀποκεκρυμμένον ἀπὸ τῶν αἰώνων καὶ ἀπὸ τῶν γενεῶν – νῦν δὲ ἐφανερώθη τοῖς ἁγίοις αὐτοῦ,

μυστηριον, ου n **secret, mystery** (of something formerly unknown but now revealed)

ἀποκεκρυμμένον Verb, perf pass ptc, m acc & n nom/acc s ἀποκρυπτω **hide, keep secret**

ἀπο could indicate those from whom the mystery had been hidden, though here it probably indicates time span.

αἰώνων Noun, gen pl αἰών, αἰώνας m **age, world order, eternity**

γενεα, ας f **generation, contemporaries, age, family, posterity**

ἐφανερώθη Verb, aor pass indic, 3 s φανερω **make known, reveal**

An affirmation in line with Jewish apocalyptic thinking. "What has been 'revealed' to the apocalyptist is precisely the 'mystery' of how the cosmos functions and particularly of how God's purpose will achieve its predetermined end... The revelation to the saints took place particularly through Paul's preaching ... his gospel was itself an apocalypse (cf. Rom 16:25; Gal 1:12; Eph 3:3)." Dunn

ἅγιος, α, ον **holy**; οἱ ἅγιοι **God's people**

Cf. Eph 3:3,6

**Verse 27**

οἷς ἠθέλησεν ὁ θεὸς γνωρίσαι τί τὸ πλοῦτος τῆς δόξης τοῦ μυστηρίου τούτου ἐν τοῖς ἔθνεσιν, ὃ ἐστὶν Χριστὸς ἐν ὑμῖν, ἡ ἐλπίς τῆς δόξης·

θελω **wish, will**

γνωριζω **make known, disclose, know**

πλουτος, ου m & n **riches, wealth**

δοξα, ης f **glory**

ἔθνεσιν Noun, dat pl ἔθνος, ουσ n **nation, people**; τα ἑ. **Gentiles**

ἐλπις, ιδος f **hope, what is hoped for**

δοξα, ης f **glory**

"In other Pauline writings the 'mystery' of God's purpose is primarily his intention from the first to include at the last Gentiles together with Jews as his people. In Rom 11:25-26 it is the mystery of Israel's partial hardening till the full number of the Gentiles has come in, leading in turn to the salvation of all Israel. In the addendum of Rom 16:25-26 it is 'the mystery concealed for long ages, but now made manifest and ... made known for the obedience of faith for all the nations.' In Eph 1:9-10 it is the divine purpose in Christ 'to sum up all things in Christ, things in heaven and things on earth, in him.' And again in Eph 3:3-6 it is 'the mystery of Christ ... that the Gentiles should be joint heirs and joint members of the body and joint participants in the promise in Christ Jesus.' Here there is a further variation, whose closest parallel is Rom 16:25-26: that the mystery is to be made known 'among the Gentiles.' And only then the mystery is identified, in a phrase similar to that in Eph 3:4 ('the mystery of Christ'), as the mystery 'which is Christ in you, the hope of glory.'" Dunn Christ 'in you Gentiles' is therefore a manifestation of the glorious purpose of God to reconcile the world to himself. "The fact is that Paul saw the reconciliation of Gentile to Jew and both as one to God as an act of cosmic and eschatological significance. It was precisely this breaking down of one of the fundamental dividing lines in human society (between Jew and Gentile; see on 3:11) that Paul saw as the climax of the divine purpose for creation." Dunn. The Messiah in the Gentiles is therefore the manifestation and hope of the 'glory' yet to come in the consummation of God's purposes. While the phrase can be personalised, 'Christ in *me* is *my* hope of glory' we should not lose sight of the primarily corporate and cosmic dimensions. 'Christ in you' is to be made manifest not primarily in personal piety but in the corporate life of the people of God as the community of the age to come. It is this which makes future glory a present reality.

**Verse 28**

ὃν ἡμεῖς καταγγέλλομεν νουθετοῦντες πάντα ἄνθρωπον καὶ διδάσκοντες πάντα ἄνθρωπον ἐν πάσῃ σοφίᾳ, ἵνα παραστήσωμεν πάντα ἄνθρωπον τέλειον ἐν Χριστῷ·

καταγγελλω **proclaim, make known, preach**

Perhaps contains overtones that the time when the mystery was hidden is now past.

νουθετω **instruct, teach, warn**

διδασκω teach  
σοφια, ας f wisdom, insight  
παραστήσωμεν Verb, aor act subj, 1 pl  
παριστημι and παριστανω present,  
bring into one's presence

Cf. 1:22. Dunn argues that the threefold repetition of 'everyone' is wider than the Colossians. Paul saw his work as serving God's purpose in Christ of reconciling *the world* to himself.

τελειος, α, ον complete, perfect, mature

Dunn writes, "In wider Greek usage this word could denote the quality of sacrificial victims, entire and without blemish ... and is so used of the Passover lamb in Exod 12:5. In view of the similar imagery in 1:22 such overtones are probably present here as well... By natural extension it can denote the equivalent quality of moral character, of which blameless Noah was a classic example (Gen 6:9)."

Of the phrase ἐν Χριστῷ Dunn adds, "Here again there may be a gentle reminder that any of the Colossian recipients tempted to look elsewhere for a 'fuller' experience and wisdom need to look, and should look, no further than Christ for their 'completion'."

### Verse 29

εἰς ὃ καὶ κοπιῶ ἀγωνιζόμενος κατὰ τὴν ἐνέργειαν αὐτοῦ τὴν ἐνεργουμένην ἐν ἐμοὶ ἐν δυνάμει.

κοπιαω work, work hard, labour  
ἀγωνιζομαι struggle, fight, compete  
ἐνεργεια, ας f (supernatural) working,  
power, activity

ἐνεργεω work, be at work (in)

ἐμοὶ Pronoun, dat s ἐγω

δυνάμει Noun, dat s δυναμις

The certainty of the hope of glory does not lessen the need for much work to be done in preparing Christians for it. "As in 1:10-11, however, the balance between human effort and divine enabling is clearly struck... As in 1:11 no room for doubt is left as to Paul's own utter dependence on God's enabling for the exhausting schedule that he followed, or as to its effectiveness." Dunn

### Day 582: Colossians 2:1-5

#### Verse 1

Θέλω γὰρ ὑμᾶς εἰδέναί ἡλίκον ἀγῶνα ἔχω ὑπὲρ ὑμῶν καὶ τῶν ἐν Λαοδικείᾳ καὶ ὅσοι οὐχ ἑώρακαν τὸ πρόσωπόν μου ἐν σαρκί,  
θελω wish, will

εἰδέναί Verb, perf act infin οἶδα (verb perf in form but with present meaning) know, understand

ἡλικος, η, ον how great, how large  
ἀγων, ωνος m struggle, fight

On ἀγῶνα see Phil 1:30; 1 Thess 2:2; 1 Tim 6:12; 2 Tim 4:7 also Heb 12:1. Eadie comments, "It points out that intense and powerful anxiety which preyed upon him, now in occasional terror, and now in reviving hope – that ceaseless conflict which filled his waking hours with effort and relieved with prayer the watches of the night."

ὅσος, η, ον correlative pronoun, as much as; pl. as many as,

ἑώρακαν Verb, perf act indic, 3 s ὅραω  
trans see, observe

προσωπον, ου n face, appearance

σαρξ, σαρκος f flesh, physical body

"Paul's depth of concern for his churches must have been well known. The ups and downs of his relations with the church at Corinth in particular would probably have been familiar to the churches of the Lycus valley, since so much of his time at Ephesus had been spent agonising over the problems of the Corinthian Christians and his relationships with them (1 Cor 4:17; 16:8, 10; 2 Cor 1:23-2:4; 7:8; 12:14). Lest it be inferred that Paul was concerned only for those churches founded by himself, the writer(s) hasten to assure the Colossians that Paul was equally concerned for those churches founded by his associates." Dunn

#### Verse 2

ἵνα παρακληθῶσιν αἱ καρδίαι αὐτῶν, συμβιβασθέντες ἐν ἀγάπῃ καὶ εἰς πᾶν πλοῦτος τῆς πληροφορίας τῆς συνέσεως, εἰς ἐπίγνωσιν τοῦ μυστηρίου τοῦ θεοῦ, Χριστοῦ,

παρακληθῶσιν Verb, aor pass subj, 3 pl

παρακαλεω exhort, encourage

συμβιβασθέντες Verb, aor pass ptc, m nom  
pl συμβιβαζω bring together, unite

Paul's concern is not simply for them as individuals but for them as a community. "Only a love which penetrates the heart and wells up from the heart can sustain the sort of unity that Paul sought (see also on 1:4)." Dunn

πλοῦτος, ου m & n riches, wealth

πληροφορια, ας f full assurance,  
conviction

συνεσις, εως f understanding, insight

Cf. 1:9. "The full assurance of understanding is the fixed persuasion that you comprehend the truth, and that it is the truth which you comprehend." Eadie

"The integration between (as we would say) mind and heart is an important feature of Paul's understanding of how the salvation process works out in the individual and the group." Dunn

ἐπιγνωσις, εως f knowledge,  
recognition, consciousness  
μυστηριον, ου n see 1:26

τοῦ θεοῦ, Χριστοῦ the abruptness has led to a large number of textual variants from the omission of Χριστου to a variety of smoothing additions such as τοῦ θεοῦ ὁ ἐστιν Χριστοῦ and many others. The reading given above is supported by early MSS and best explains the origins of the others.

### Verse 3

ἐν ᾧ εἰσιν πάντες οἱ θησαυροὶ τῆς σοφίας καὶ γνωσης ἀπόκρυφοι.

ἐν ᾧ Most commentators take this as a reference to Christ. Eadie follows Bengel and others in understanding it to refer to the *mystery* – "in which mystery are hidden all ...". This would then refer to the Gospel which, in opposition to the false teaching being touted at Colossae, is the source of all that is worthy and precious.

πάντες Adjective, m nom pl πας  
θησαυρος, ου m treasure store  
σοφια, ας f wisdom, insight  
γνωσις, εως f knowledge, understanding  
ἀποκρυφος, ον secret, stored away

"It was this assurance that they, too, were 'in Christ,' together with *all* the treasures of divinely given insight into the mysteries of the cosmos and of human destiny (cf. Rom 11:33; 1 Cor 2:7: λαλοῦμεν θεου σοφίαν ἐν μυστηρίῳ τὴν ἀποκεκρυμμένην) and the riches of the experience of the wise in successful living, that was to give them the confidence they needed (see also 3:3)." Dunn

### Verse 4

Τοῦτο λέγω ἵνα μηδεὶς ὑμᾶς παραλογίζηται ἐν πιθανολογίᾳ.

τουτο λεγω "The abruptness of 'this I say' ... is a modest attempt to catch attention and to reinforce the importance of the point being made (cf. 1 Cor 1:12; 7:29; 15:50; Gal 3:17; 1 Thess 4:15), so much so that we might speak of 2:4 as a thematic statement of what follows, though the main thematic statement is more obviously 2:6-7." Dunn

μηδεις, μηδεμια, μηδεν no one, nothing  
παραλογιζομαι deceive, lead astray

Only here and Jas 1:22 in the NT.

πιθανολογια, ας f attractive (but false)  
argument

"This term and its cognates denote the persuasiveness and plausibility particularly of popular speakers... Thus the term easily gains, as here, the overtone of plausible (sounding) but actually 'specious arguments'." Dunn

"As the first clear allusion to an alternative religious system confronting the Colossian believers, the verse need imply no more than the sort of popular religious teaching which must have often been heard in the marketplaces of that region, much of which might have been beguilingly attractive to truth-seeking young converts (cf. Hooker). It will become clearer that Paul and Timothy had in mind teaching and praxis particularly of the Colossian synagogue(s) (see ... Introduction, and on 2:16 and 18), so the implication here is that the Colossian Jewish community was not lacking in skilled apologists, but was well able to express the appeal of their worship and code of behaviour in beguiling terms (see also 2:8)." Dunn

### Verse 5

εἰ γὰρ καὶ τῇ σαρκὶ ἄπειμι, ἀλλὰ τῷ πνεύματι σὺν ὑμῖν εἶμι, χαίρων καὶ βλέπων ὑμῶν τὴν τάξιν καὶ τὸ στερέωμα τῆς εἰς Χριστὸν πίστεως ὑμῶν.

σαρξ, σαρκος f flesh, physical body  
ἀπειμι be away, be absent, go  
χαίρω rejoice, be glad; imperat used as a greeting  
βλεπω see, look, be able to see, beware of  
τάξις, εως f order, division

Paul's union with them, implied in the phrase 'present in spirit', is maintained through contact with them and news of them. Though Dunn thinks the phrase is "intended more as an expression of what he would hope to see if it were possible."

στερεωμα, τος n **firmness, steadfastness**

Both this and the previous term "could be used in military contexts: ταξις = rank and file of soldiers, drawn up in battle order ...; στερεωμα = the solid part, the strength of an army." Dunn

πιστις, εως f **faith, trust, belief, the Christian faith**

"Thoroughly Pauline ... is the conviction that the whole Christian position (rank and solidity) stands or falls with faith in Christ, with the further implication, again characteristically Pauline, that anything which claims to be an advance upon that faith is in fact a retreat from it... This final recall to faith forms an inclusio with 1:4 and thus brackets the whole of the intervening thanksgiving and personal statement as an exposition of that faith (see also 2:6)." Dunn

### Day 583: Colossians 2:6-8

#### Verse 6

Ὡς οὖν παρελάβετε τὸν Χριστὸν Ἰησοῦν τὸν κύριον, ἐν αὐτῷ περιπατεῖτε,

παρελάβετε Verb, aor act ind, 2pl  
 παραλαμβάνω **receive, accept**

A term used of receiving a tradition or a body of teaching. "Paul refers his readers back to their experience of hearing and receiving the gospel (aorist tense), as he had in responding to the equivalent situation in Galatia (Gal 3:1-5). As in Galatians, this first decisive experience provides a norm and a starting point for what should follow: their ongoing life of faith should be in accord with the faith with which they began." Dunn

περιπατεω **walk, walk about, live**

The commencement of the Christian life is a once-for-all event which marks the beginning of a lifelong walk with Christ. Just as Christ is received *by faith*, so also, that daily walk with him must be marked and maintained by the same faith.

" Ἐν αὐτῷ περιπατεῖτε here, then, is equivalent to the πνευματι περιπατεῖτε of Gal 5:16... This combination of 'receiving tradition of Christ Jesus as Lord' and 'walking in him' is thus a neat summary of the mutual check and balance between outward guideline and inward motivation which was a feature of the Pauline ethic (as in Gal 5:25-6:2)." Dunn

#### Verse 7

ἐρριζωμένοι καὶ ἐποικοδομούμενοι ἐν αὐτῷ καὶ βεβαιούμενοι τῇ πίστει καθὼς ἐδιδάχθητε, περισσεύοντες ἐν εὐχαριστίᾳ.

ἐρριζωμένοι Verb, perf pass dep ptc, m  
 nom pl ῥιζοομαι **be firmly rooted**

Note the perfect participle, a once for all founding on this constant, unshakable ground. "The importance of deep roots was well understood in Jewish tradition (e.g. Jer 17:8; Ezek 31:7; Sir 40:15). Naturally the image is complementary to the 'fruit-bearing' metaphor of 1:10, which follows the same emphasis on a 'walk' determined by reference to 'the Lord'." Dunn

ἐποικοδομεω **build on, build up**

Note the present participle signifying a continuing activity. The prefix ἐπι emphasises the importance of the starting point: not only 'built up' but 'built upon'.

βεβαιω **confirm, strengthen**

"βεβαιος and βεβαιω were commonly used to denote the formal or legal guarantee required in the transfer of property or goods... This technical sense is probably also echoed in Paul's other uses of these words (Rom 4:16; 15:8; 1 Cor 1:6,8; 2 Cor 1:7,21). Here the guarantee or confirmation is τῇ πίστει, 'with reference to your faith'." Dunn

πίστει Noun, dat s πιστις, εως f **faith, trust, belief**

διδασκω **teach**

The teaching given to the new community of believers was foundational. They must grow on the basis of such teaching rather than growing out of it. They are not to depart from the apostolic instruction.

περισσευω **increase, abound**  
 εὐχαριστια, ας f **thanksgiving**

The result of this teaching and growth is thanksgiving. "The implication is that a characteristic and fundamental feature of their relation with Jesus as Christ and Lord should be gratitude for what God has done in and through him. As rootedness and foundation depends on the faith called forth by the gospel, so growing from the root and building up on the foundation can be successful only in an atmosphere of thankfulness to God (see also on 1:12)." Dunn

### Verse 8

βλέπετε μή τις ὑμᾶς ἔσται ὁ συλαγωγῶν διὰ τῆς φιλοσοφίας καὶ κενῆς ἀπάτης κατὰ τὴν παράδοσιν τῶν ἀνθρώπων, κατὰ τὰ στοιχεῖα τοῦ κόσμου καὶ οὐ κατὰ Χριστόν·

βλεπω see, look, beware of

τις "Paul regularly refers to known opponents in a somewhat diminishing allusion as 'some certain people' (Rom 3:8; 1 Cor 4:18; 15:12, 34; 2 Cor 3:1; 10:2; Gal 1:7; 2:12; Phil 1:15), but here the singular (τις), followed by the future tense (ἔσται), suggests in contrast that a possibility is being envisaged rather than a current state of affairs described: 'take heed! Perhaps there will be someone who ...'" Dunn

ἔσται Verb, fut indic, 2 s εἶμι  
συλαγωγέω make a captive of

Here alone in Biblical Greek. "The thought is of some popular rhetorician (2:4) or or philosopher captivating (so NJB; REB 'capture your minds') some in his audience by the power of his rhetoric or the impressiveness of his claims. The visual metaphor is of some marketplace preacher gathering together those impressed by his discourse and taking them off for a fuller exposition and induction." Dunn

φιλοσοφία, ας f philosophy (in a bad sense), human wisdom

Here alone in Biblical Greek. The thought behind these terms is *human* wisdom (cf. 1 Cor 1:18-31) – though the term itself is not derogatory.

κενος, η, ον empty, to no purpose, senseless

"without content, without any basis, without truth, without power" BAGD cf. 1 Cor 15:15; Jas 2:20.

ἀπατη, ης f deception  
παραδοσις, εως f tradition

Eadie thinks that this may refer particularly to *Jewish* traditions. Cf. Mk 7:3-13/Matt 15:2-9.

στοιχεῖα, ὧν n elements (of which the world is made), basic principles

Dunn Comments, "It is particularly interesting that precisely the same phrase is used in Gal 4:3 and 9 (as again in Col 2:20). There it is clearly linked into the Jewish law, understood as itself a kind of power set in charge over Israel like a slave-custodian or guardian (Gal 3:23-25; 4:1-3, 9-10) and given 'through angels' (3:19). The close association of the thought here with talk of Jewish festivals (Col 2:16; cf. Gal 4:10) and 'worship of angels' (Col 2:18) strongly suggests that we are moving in the same realm of thought and association as with the same phrase in Galatians." He thinks that the reference is to essentially Jewish 'philosophy' which drew on astrological teaching as a way of commending their religious practices to their fellow citizens. He concludes, "The key test of such systems for the letter writer(s), however, was whether they accorded with Christ (κατὰ Χριστόν)... It was precisely the failure of such speculation to grasp the significance of Christ and of his death that demonstrated their emptiness and deceitfulness."

### Day 584: Colossians 2:9-12

#### Verses 9-15

Some have suggested that behind 2:9-15, or at least the latter part of these verses, there may lie a Christian hymn or hymnic confession. The suggestion has not gained much support.

#### Verse 9

ὅτι ἐν αὐτῷ κατοικεῖ πᾶν τὸ πλήρωμα τῆς θεότητος σωματικῶς,

"The force of κατὰ Χριστόν is explained (ὅτι) by a sequence of 'in him' clauses (2:9-12) which build into a powerful exposition of the cross. Initially, however, these clauses pick up the theme of the hymn in praise of Christ, recalling first the hymn's second strophe (1:19) in very similar words ('in him,' 'all the fullness,' 'dwells'), and then (2:10) the thought of the first strophe (1:18a – 'head'; 1:16 – 'rule and authority')." Dunn

κατοικέω live, inhabit  
πλήρωμα, τος n fullness, completeness  
θεότης, ητος f deity, godhead

Here alone in biblical Greek.

σωματικῶς adv in bodily form, in human form

Here alone in biblical Greek. "As the human *σωμα* is what enables a person to be in relationship with other persons, so the somatic character of this indwelling meant that God could be encountered directly in and through this particular human being, Christ." Dunn. But note the present tense which underscores the continuing humanity of Jesus Christ.

### Verse 10

καὶ ἐστὲ ἐν αὐτῷ πεπληρωμένοι, ὅς ἐστιν ἡ κεφαλὴ πάσης ἀρχῆς καὶ ἐξουσίας, πεπληρωμένοι Verb, perf pass ptc, m nom pl πληρωω fill, make full

"It is because that fulness [all the fulness of the Godhead] dwells in Christ that they are filled up in Him. Being in Him, they are brought into contact with what is in Him." Eadie "Any thought of seeking out higher or more fulfilling experiences is fanciful and self-delusive... The tense ('to be' + perfect passive participle) indicates a state of fulness accomplished in the past and sustained since then. The implication, therefore is that in receiving the tradition of Jesus as Christ and Lord and believing in(to) him (2:5-7), the Colossian Christians already had all that is necessary for fulness of life, unrestricted access to the divine power which will shape them, too, into the divine image (3:10)." Dunn

κεφαλή, ης f head  
ἀρχή, ης f beginning, origin, power  
ἐξουσία, ας f authority, power

The apostle seems to allude to false teaching being touted at Colossae which elevated angels or other heavenly beings.

### Verse 11

ἐν ᾧ καὶ περιετιμήθητε περιτομῇ ἀχειροποιήτῳ ἐν τῇ ἀπεκδύσει τοῦ σώματος τῆς σαρκός, ἐν τῇ περιτομῇ τοῦ Χριστοῦ,

"2:11-15 were probably intended as an elaborate attempt to describe the importance of what Christ accomplished on the cross and in his resurrection by means of a sequence of vivid metaphors (circumcision, burial and resurrection, death and giving life, forgiveness and cancellation of legal bond, public triumph)." Dunn

περιετιμήθητε Verb, aor pass indic, 2 pl  
περιτεμνω circumcise  
περιτομή, ης f circumcision  
ἀχειροποίητος, ον not made by human hands

Reinforces the suggestion that the threat was from *Jewish* teachers.

ἀπεκδύσεις, εως f putting off, setting (oneself) free from  
σωμα, τος n body  
σαρξ, σαρκος f flesh, human nature

Dunn thinks the reference is to death and hence, in the light of the last phrase, the death of Christ. Believers have shared in Christ's death.

### Verse 12

συνταφέντες αὐτῷ ἐν τῷ βαπτισμῷ, ἐν ᾧ καὶ συνηγέρθητε διὰ τῆς πίστεως τῆς ἐνεργείας τοῦ θεοῦ τοῦ ἐγγείραντος αὐτὸν ἐκ νεκρῶν·

The sequence of *συν* compounds is characteristically Pauline.

συνταφέντες Verb, 2 aor pass ptc, m nom pl  
συνθαπτομαι be buried together with

Cf. Rom 6:4-6. "The imagery is forceful, of sinking below the waters of baptism as a kind of burial. Baptism, presumably by immersion, represented mimetically the commitment to enter the tomb with Jesus after he had been taken down from the cross. Since burial was understood as the conclusion of the event of dying, this commitment meant the enacted willingness to identify oneself with the complete event of Jesus' death." Dunn

βαπτισμος, ου n baptism

The less common term is replaced by the more usual *βαπτισμα* (*βαπτισματι*) in many MSS.

συνηγέρθητε Verb, aor pass indic, 2 pl  
συνεγειρω raise together with

Dunn thinks this marks a development in Paul's theology and that previously he saw sharing in Christ's resurrection as belonging to the future, part of the 'eschatological not-yet'.

ἐνεργεια, ας f (supernatural) working, power

ἐγγείραντος Verb, aor act ptc, m gen s  
ἐγειρω raise  
νεκρος, α, ον dead

"'God who raised him from the dead' is a piece of confessional formula regularly echoed in Paul (Rom 4:24; 8:11; 10:9; 1 Cor 6:14; 15:15; 2 Cor 4:14; Gal 1:1; 1 Thess 1:10; Eph 1:20...). As such it reminds us how fundamental belief in the resurrection of Christ was to the first Christians." Dunn

Verses 11 & 12 deserve detailed comment, but here note simply the way in which circumcision is linked with Christ's death (his death was his circumcision?) and that this is the Christian's circumcision. All of this is set forth in Christian baptism.

### Day 585: Colossians 2:13-15

#### Verse 13

καὶ ὑμᾶς νεκροὺς ὄντας [ἐν] τοῖς παραπτώμασιν καὶ τῇ ἀκροβυστίᾳ τῆς σαρκὸς ὑμῶν, συνεζωοποίησεν ὑμᾶς σὺν αὐτῷ, χαρισάμενος ἡμῖν πάντα τὰ παραπτώματα,

On this verse, compare Ephesians 2:1,5

νεκρός, α, ον dead

The ὑμᾶς refers to Gentiles and their 'being dead' refers to their status outside the covenant made by God with Israel (cf. Eph 2:12), as the following phrase shows.

παραπτῶμα, τος n sin, wrongdoing  
ἀκροβυστία, ας f uncircumcision  
σαρξ, σαρκος f see v.11

The phrase simply refers to their Gentile status, cf. Gen 17:11-14.

συνζωοποιεῖω make alive together (with)

A number of MSS read ἡμᾶς rather than ὑμᾶς conforming the person to the following ἡμῖν. One or two MSS, followed by the TR change the latter to ὑμῖν.

χαρίζομαι be gracious to, forgive

"The awkward transition to 'us' ... is characteristically Pauline, betraying here (as in Eph 2:5) an element of self-correction: it constitutes not a denial that such transgressions are to be attributed to Gentiles but rather a recognition that all, Jews as well, are equally guilty of such transgressions and equally in need of forgiveness. The point is not developed here, but behind it we can see the fuller argument of Rom 1:18-3:20; 5:12-21 (where 'transgression' occurs six times); 7:7-12." Dunn

#### Verse 14

ἐξαλείψας τὸ καθ' ἡμῶν χειρόγραφον τοῖς δόγμασιν ὃ ἦν ὑπεναντίον ἡμῖν, καὶ αὐτὸ ἦρκεν ἐκ τοῦ μέσου προσηλωσας αὐτὸ τῷ σταυρῷ·

ἐξαλείψας Verb, aor act ptc, m nom s

ἐξαιλεῖω wipe away or out, remove, cancel

Denotes erasure of an entry in a book, cf. Ex 32:32-33; Ps 69:28; Rev 3:5.

χειρογραφον, ου n record of one's debts

Here alone in the NT. "The metaphor is probably adapted to the earlier Jewish idea of a heavenly book of the living (Exod 32:32-33; Ps 69:28; Dan 12:1; Rev 3:5) as developed in apocalyptic circles into that of books wherein deeds of good and evil were recorded with a view to the final judgment (Dan 7:10?; 1 Enoch 89:61-64, 70-71; 108:7; Apocalypse of Zephaniah 7:1-8; Testament of Abraham (A) 12:7-18; 13:9-14; (B) 10:7-11:2; 2 Enoch 53:2-3; Rev 20:12)... This is most obviously the background of thought here, with καθ' ἡμῶν ('against us') confirming that the document in question was one of condemnation, that is, presumably the record of their 'transgressions' (repeated for emphasis in the following relative clause), 'which was opposed, hostile (ὑπεναντιον, another Pauline hapax) to us.'" Dunn

δογμα, τος n rule, law, decree

The decrees of the law giving the χειρογραφον its condemnatory force, cf. Eph 2:15.

ὑπεναντιος, α, ον against, opposed to  
ἦρκεν Verb, perf act indic, 3 s αἰρω take, take away

μεσος, η, ον middle

προσηλωσας Verb, aor act ptc, m nom s

προσηλω nail to

σταυρος, ου m cross

"There may be a play on the practice of attaching a crucified man's indictment to his cross to indicate to onlookers what his crime was (cf. Mark 15:26...). But that would hardly be described as 'removing' the indictment. The thought is rather of the indictment itself being destroyed by means of crucifixion, as though it was the indictment which was itself nailed to the cross in execution. The play, then, is rather with the thought of Christ as himself the condemnatory bond and his death as its destruction. The metaphor is convoluted, but presumably reflects again the idea of Christ's death as a sin offering and thus of Christ as embodying the sins of the offerer and destroying them in his death." Dunn

**Verse 15**

ἀπεκδυόμενος τὰς ἀρχὰς καὶ τὰς  
ἐξουσίας ἐδειγμάτισεν ἐν παρρησίᾳ,  
θριαμβεύσας αὐτοὺς ἐν αὐτῷ.

"The fifth and final metaphor to describe the significance of the cross is a complete reversal of the imagery of the cross in the preceding verse. From the idea of the cross as a symbol of destruction, the thought is transformed into the image of public triumph." Dunn

ἀπεκδυομαι **disarm**

Dunn says that the sense 'disarm' or 'despoil' for this verb is not attested until the fourth century. The basic meaning of the verb is 'strip off'. He suggests that the picture may be of the elemental powers which once clothed the cosmos being stripped away. He concludes, "Perhaps we should not press the detail and simply allow the powerful imagery of old and wasted garments being discarded to work its effect. For the Colossians at any rate the point would be clear: the spiritual powers, including the elemental forces (2:8), should be counted as of no greater value and significance than a bunch of old rags." Dunn

ἀρχῆ, ἐξουσία see v.10

Eadie, and most other commentators, see here a reference to hostile spiritual powers.

δειγματιζω **disgrace** (δ. ἐν παρρησίᾳ  
**make a public spectacle of**)

Cf. Matt 1:19.

παρρησία, ας f **openness**  
θριαμβευω **lead** (someone) **in a victory**  
**procession** (either as prisoner or as a  
victorious soldier), **triumph over**

Cf. 2 Cor 2:14. The picture is that of the victorious general leading behind him his chained and defeated enemies. "The cross on which Christ died is compared to the chariot in which the victor rode in triumph" Scott

"It is clear ... that Paul and Timothy wanted to end the sequence of metaphors on a note of triumph and to build up to this climax as a way of preparing the ground for the practical advice to follow. The force of the sequence of images of what happened on the cross is powerful: a spiritual circumcision achieved and body of flesh stripped off, a burial with Christ and resurrection with Christ, a being made alive with Christ from a state of death and a wiping out of the record of transgression and destruction of that record. But the final one is boldest of all: a stripping off of the rulers and authorities as discarded rags, putting them to public shame and triumphing over them in him. This is a piece of theological audacity of the same order as deuterо-Isaiah's proclamation of the God of a small, devastated nation as the one and only God.

"To treat the cross as a moment of triumph was about as huge a reversal of normal values as could be imagined, since crucifixion was itself regarded as the most shameful of deaths... But in this letter it is simply of a piece with the theological audacity of seeing in a man, Jesus the Christ, the sum and embodiment of the divine wisdom by which the world was created and is sustained (1:15-20). The key can only be to recognise that for Paul, as for the first Christians generally, the cross and resurrection of Christ itself constituted such a turning upside down of all that had previously determined or been thought to determine life that only such imagery could suffice to express its significance. The unseen powers and invisible forces that dominated and determined so much of life need no longer be feared. A greater power and force was at work, which could rule and determine their lives more effectively – in a word 'Christ.' Triumph indeed!" Dunn