

**Notes on the Greek New Testament**  
**Week 118 – Colossians 2:16-3:14**

**Day 586: Colossians 2:16-19**

**Verse 16**

Μὴ οὖν τις ὑμᾶς κρινέτω ἐν βρωσει καὶ ἐν πόσει ἢ ἐν μέρει ἑορτῆς ἢ νεομηνίας ἢ σαββάτων,

"Clearly what is envisaged is a situation where the Colossian believers were being (or might be) criticised for their conduct in respect of dietary rules and festival days. Equally clearly the line of reply is that a proper understanding of the significance of Christ's death would render such criticism unnecessary, irrelevant, or wrong. By implication those who made such criticism were themselves failing to grasp the significance of the cross." Dunn

κρινω pass judgement on, condemn  
βρωσις, εως f food, eating  
ποσις, εως f drinking, a drink

Jews were concerned to eat only food that was from *clean* animals, that had properly been slaughtered so that the blood was drained, and that had not been offered to idols. The concern over drink probably relates primarily to this last point, cf. Rom 14 and particularly vv. 17,21.

ἢ or  
μερος, ους n part, piece, in part, partly

Eadie says μέρος here means 'particular matter'. "The phrase, ἐν μέρει, as in classic use, signifies not simply in respect of ... It gives a speciality to the theme or sphere of judgement, by individualizing the topic or occasion."

ἑορτη, ης f festival, feast  
νεομηνια, ας f new moon festival  
σαββατον, ου n (often in pl) the seventh day, Sabbath

For these three together cf. 1 Chron 23:31; 2 Chron 2:3; 31:3; Neh 10:33; Isa 1:13-14; Ezek 45:17 and Hos 2:11. "We must conclude, therefore, that all the elements in this verse bear a characteristically and distinctively Jewish colour, that those who cherished them so critically must have been the (or some) Jews at Colossae, and that their criticism arose from Jewish suspicion of Gentiles making what they would regard as unacceptable claims to the distinctive Jewish heritage without taking on all that was most distinctive of that heritage." Dunn

Eadie writes, "Sensations of spiritual joy are not to be restricted to holy days, for they thrill the spirit every moment, and need not wait for expression till there be a solemn gathering, for every instant awakes to the claims and raptures of religion."

**Verse 17**

ἃ ἐστὶν σκιά τῶν μελλόντων, τὸ δὲ σῶμα τοῦ Χριστοῦ.

σκια, ας f shadow, foreshadowing

Dunn writes, "The language is ultimately Platonic, but here is probably drawn from the Hellenistic Judaism which we find most clearly expressed in Philo." But the Platonic framework is subverted by:

- i) The phrase τῶν μελλοντων which is "a reflection of Jewish eschatology ... An essentially static Platonic dualism (between heaven and earth) has been transferred into an expression of Jewish eschatological hope." cf. Heb 1:10.
- ii) The christological focus. "In contrast to Platonic-Philonic thought, it is the Christ in all the concrete bloodiness of the cross who is the true reality. The amalgam thus echoes the christology of the earlier hymn (1:15-20): Christ embodies the heavenly reality which lies beyond and sustains the perceptible cosmos. But, as in Hebrews, it also confirms that Christ is the substance to the shadow of Jewish food laws and feasts: he is the reality which casts its shadow backward in time; they are the provisional, inferior copies whose inadequacy is now evident in the light of the real. The claim is again bold and, it should be noted, only makes sense as a response to and rebuttal of essentially Jewish claims. Only as a claim that Christ is the fulfilment of Jewish eschatological expectations, which provides a Jewish answer to a Jewish alternative, does the rebuttal make sense."

μελλω (ptc. without infin) coming, future  
σωμα, τος n body

**Verse 18**

μηδεις ὑμᾶς καταβραβευέτω θέλων ἐν ταπεινοφροσύνῃ καὶ θρησκείᾳ τῶν ἀγγέλων, ἃ ἐόρακεν ἐμβατεύων, εἰκὴ φυσιοῦμενος ὑπὸ τοῦ νοδὸς τῆς σαρκὸς αὐτοῦ,

μηδεις, μηδεμα, μηδεν no one, nothing

καταβραβευω cheat (lit. rule against)

"βραβευω has the primary meaning of 'award a prize (a βραβειον)' in a contest (see 3:15); hence καταβραβευω (only here in biblical Greek and not much attested elsewhere) means 'decide against' as an umpire, 'deprive of the prize' (BAGD), or simply 'disqualify'." Dunn

θελω wish, will

Eadie believes this should be understood as "wishing to do so by means of ..."

Dunn follows Lightfoot and Bruce in taking the verb to refer to the person who is seeking to influence the Colossian Christians, he is the one who 'delights in ...'

ταπεινοφροσυνη, ης f humility; false humility

The verb is used in the LXX of self-mortification (Lev 16:29,31; 23:27,29,32) or more particularly of fasting (Ps 35:13; Isa 58:3,5 also Ps 69:10). "This suggests a fair degree of ascetic practice as part of the Colossian 'philosophy' (see also 2:21,23; cf. 1 Tim 4:3)." Dunn

θρησκεια, ας f religion, worship

The 'worship of angels' could indicate either that the false teachers worshipped or venerated angels or that they enthused about the worship offered by angels. Dunn says it reflects "a desire particularly within apocalyptic and mystical circles of first-century Judaism to join in with the worship of angels in heaven."

There is similar evidence from the Qumranic community. "It is possible, therefore, to envisage a Jewish (or Christian Jewish) synagogue in Colossae which was influenced by such ideas and which delighted in their worship sabbath by sabbath as a participation in the worship of the angels in heaven (cf. 1 Cor 11:10). In this case the 'humility' associated with this worship could very well denote the spiritual discipline and mortification (particularly, but not only, fasting; see above) regarded as essential to maintain the holiness required to participate with the holy ones and holy angels (see also 1:12)." Dunn adds, "It is not so much interest in angelic worship which Paul finds 'reprehensible' as the attitude of dismissive superiority which it evidently engendered among its practitioners (μηδεις υμας καταβραβευετω ...)."

εώρακεν Verb, perf act indic, 3 s  
trans see, observe

Textual sources are divided over whether or not to include μη before εώρακεν (compare AV and NIV). Either reading makes sense here.

εμβατευω (doubtful meaning) perhaps take one's stand on (what one has seen in a vision) or claim special powers because of (what one has seen in a vision)

Dunn says that the basic meaning of this term is 'to enter' and that it is used in the LXX of entry into possession of the promised land (Josh 19:49,51). He concludes, "When we add the echo of Josh 19:49,51 in Col 1:12, the inference becomes strong that there was a prominent strand among the Colossian Jews who thought of heaven either (or both) as a promised land into which they should aspire even now to enter, or particularly as the temple of God into which they could now enter by means of appropriate spiritual disciplines in order to share the worship of the angels in heaven. It was their delight thus to 'enter' sabbath by sabbath (note the present tense). This would also make the best sense of the other part of the phrase (ἀ έώρακεν) ... for it is precisely the characteristic of the apocalyptic and mystical Jewish traditions documented above to give prominence to 'the things seen'." Dunn links the reference back to the 'worship of angels' and translates 'which things he has seen on entering ...'

εικη adv. in vain, for nothing

φυσιω cause conceit/arrogance; pass be conceited/arrogant

νους, νοος, νοι, νουν m mind, thought

σαρξ, σαρκος f flesh, human nature

Here, as frequently the reference is to fallen human nature or to a merely human way of thinking.

"The most stinging part of the rebuke ... would have been the final phrase, 'by his mind of flesh.' For in a Hellenistic context, as Philo again well illustrates, it was precisely the 'mind' which would have been the medium by means of which the person could enter the higher realms, the *logos* of human rationality, itself part of the medium of the divine Logos that interpenetrated the cosmos... In such a scheme 'mind' and 'flesh' were quite antithetical since it was impossible for the divine substance to mingle with the material. To speak of the 'mind of flesh' was therefore in effect to deny that this Colossian worshiper with angels could ever have 'lifted off' from earth: even his mind was 'flesh', fast bound to earth." Dunn

**Verse 19**

καὶ οὐ κρατῶν τὴν κεφαλὴν, ἐξ οὗ πᾶν τὸ σῶμα διὰ τῶν ἁρῶν καὶ συνδέσμων ἐπιχορηγούμενον καὶ συμβιβαζόμενον αὐξεῖ τὴν αὐξησιν τοῦ θεοῦ.

κρατεω hold, hold fast, seize

Suggests that the one seeking to lead the Colossians astray considered himself a part of the Christian community.

κεφαλη, ης f head

σωμα, τος n body

On the following, cf. Eph 4:16

ἄφη, ης f ligament

συνδεσμος, ου m that which binds together, ligament

ἐπιχορηγεω supply

συμβιβαζω bring together, unite, hold together

αὐξανω and αὐξω grow, increase, reach full growth

αὐξησις, εως f growth

"The church can enjoy neither life nor growth, if, misunderstanding Christ's person or undervaluing his work, it has no vital union with Him." Eadie

"It was presumably the failure of the individual who had let go of Christ that he had gone in for flights of individual mystical experience, glorying in the company of angels, without regard to the other members of the body. And his advocacy of such experiences, criticising and disqualifying those who saw their spirituality in more humdrum terms, must have been the very opposite of supportive of the Christian community." Dunn

**Day 587: Colossians 2:20-23****Verses 20-23**

"The reversion in a single compact sentence to talk of 'dying with Christ' (cf. 2:12), 'elemental forces' (cf. 2:8), regulations (cf. 2:14), food taboos (cf. 2:16), human traditions (cf. 2:8), and 'self-chosen worship and humility' (cf. 2:18) indicates both that the teaching in view in Colossae was an integrated 'package' and that this sentence functions as a conclusion to the section 2:6-23. The double emphasis of 2:12 ('buried with him ... and raised with him') is now divided into two sections (2:20 – 'if you died with Christ ...'; 3:1 – 'if you were raised with Christ ...'); this suggests that the intention is to round off the critique of the Colossian 'philosophy' by emphasising what the Colossians have been rescued from (2:20-23) before going on to spell out what is involved in their new way of life (3:1-4:6)." Dunn

**Verse 20**

Εἰ ἀπεθάνετε σὺν Χριστῷ ἀπὸ τῶν στοιχείων τοῦ κόσμου, τί ὡς ζῶντες ἐν κόσμῳ δογματίζεσθε,

ἀπεθάνετε Verb, aor act indic, 2 pl

ἀποθνησκω die, face death

Cf. Rom 6:8.

στοιχεια, ων n elements (of which the world is made), basic principles

Eadie thinks that this refers to Jewish law.

ζωω live, be alive

δογματιζομαι obey rules and regulations

Hooker suggests that the force is 'Why submit to regulations?' rather than 'Why do you submit to regulations?' – warning rather than rebuke.

**Verse 21**

Μὴ ἄψη μηδὲ γεύση μηδὲ θίγης,

ἄψη Verb, aor midd subj, 2 s ἅπτω light; midd. take hold of, touch

μηδε negative particle nor; μηδε ... μηδε neither ... nor

γεύση Verb, aor midd dep subj, 2 s γευομαι taste, eat, experience

θίγης Verb, aor act subj, 2 s θιγγανω touch

"These curt dogmas are not the apostle's own teaching, but the mottoes [sic], or prominent lessons, or watchwords of the false teachers." Eadie

There is considerable discussion concerning the distinction in meaning between the first and last of these terms. Some suggest the first refers to food and the latter to sexual relations. Eadie suggests that all refer to food, but the first is the handling necessary to eating (to feeding oneself), the last includes mere touching, casual contact. This is similar to Lightfoot's translation which has the sequence 'handle, taste, touch'. But Dunn thinks that 'touch' is more appropriate to ἀπτομαι and so prefers the sequence, 'touch, taste, handle.' The main concern however is clearly one of maintaining purity by not even coming into contact with what would defile. Cf. Isa 65:5.

### Verse 22

ἅ ἐστιν πάντα εἰς φθορὰν τῇ ἀποχρήσει, κατὰ τὰ ἐντάλματα καὶ διδασκαλίας τῶν ἀνθρώπων;

ἐστιν ... εἰς has the sense 'be destined for,' cf. Acts 8:20; 2 Peter 2:12.

φθορα, ας f **decay, corruption, depravity**  
ἀποχρησις, εως f **process of being used**

Eadie thinks the phrase implies that these rules and regulations focus on things which perish with use (food destroyed by eating) and which can therefore have little connection with true spirituality. "The echo is of Mark 7:19/Matt 15:7: unclean food should not be a matter of great concern because it goes into the stomach only to be thence expelled into the latrine (cf. 1 Cor 6:13)." Dunn

ἐντάλμα, τος n **commandment, rule**  
διδασκαλία, ας f **what is taught, teaching, doctrine**

This latter phrase completes the thought of verse 20, particularly focussing on the added minutiae of Jewish interpretation. There is a close parallel with Mk 7:7/Matt 15:9 in which Jesus quotes from Isa 29:13. Given the unusual wording Dunn concludes, "Almost certainly, then, Paul and Timothy here were deliberately alluding to the rebuke of Isaiah. This at once provides a further confirmation of the essentially Jewish character of the threat to the Colossian Christians: the allusion to a rebuke to Israel would only be effective if it came as a rebuke to those who understood themselves as the people of Israel."

### Verse 23

ἅτινά ἐστιν λόγον μὲν ἔχοντα σοφίας ἐν ἐθελοθησκίᾳ καὶ ταπεινοφροσύνῃ [καὶ] ἀφειδίᾳ σωματος, οὐκ ἐν τιμῇ τινὶ πρὸς πλησμονὴν τῆς σαρκός.

The verse is made difficult by a sequence of unusual and obscure terms and by awkward syntax. Most assume that the terms and phrases used in the Colossian 'philosophy' are being cited. The difficulties have led to a number of textual variants.

ἅτινά pronoun, n nom & acc pl ὅστις, ἥτις, ὅ τι **who, which**  
σοφία, ας f **wisdom, insight**

λόγον μὲν ἔχοντα σοφίας 'have the appearance of wisdom' Dunn follows Lightfoot in thinking the sense is 'have a *reputation* of wisdom.'

ἐθελοθησκία, ας f **self imposed piety or religion**

A term not found anywhere else. Dunn says it could refer to 'delight in worship' cf. 2:18, or could mean 'wished-for-worship,' "implying that participation in angel worship was a figment of an overimaginative desire."

ταπεινοφροσυνή, ης f **humility; false humility**

Cf. v.18

ἀφειδία, ας f **severe discipline**

Not found elsewhere in the biblical writings. The sense is 'unsparing discipline.'

σώμα, τος n **body**

τιμή, ης f **honour, price, value**

πλησμονή, ης f **satisfaction, gratification**

σαρξ, σαρκος f **flesh, physical body, human nature**

οὐκ ἐν τιμῇ τινὶ πρὸς π. τῆς σαρκος either 'of no value in controlling physical passions' or 'of no value, except for gratifying physical passions.'

Dunn suggests that 'gratification of the flesh' could be taken "as referring to satisfaction felt by the Colossian Jews in their ethnic (fleshly, κατὰ σάρκα) identification as Jews, the people chosen by the one God to be his own elect... What is being critiqued here is an assumption on the part of (many of) the Colossian Jews that rules for living and worship practices were ways of expressing (maintaining and marking out) their distinctiveness as Jews.

"In short, the line of criticism at this point is probably to acknowledge much that appears admirable in the religious praxis of the Colossian Jews here in view, but with the added final reminder that severity to the body can be just another form of pandering to the flesh (cf. 1 Cor 13:3)... Such a concern for Jewish identity and Jewish privilege as Jewish is at the end of the day just another form of self-indulgence or national indulgence."

### Day 588: Colossians 3:1-4

#### Verse 1

Εἰ οὖν συνηγέρθητε τῷ Χριστῷ, τὰ ἄνω ζητεῖτε, οὗ ὁ Χριστός ἐστιν ἐν δεξιᾷ τοῦ θεοῦ καθημένος·

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

Cf. 2:20 and the note on 2:20-23. Those who have died with Christ have also been raised with him. Identification with him brings the believer into a new sphere of existence – a new life, a new perspective. The language remains, however, in one sense metaphorical in that literal resurrection belongs still to the future.

ἄνω from above

I.e. heavenly things.

ζητεω seek, search for, look for, attempt, ask, investigate

Dunn thinks that the sense here is "'keep looking for' that which is of Christ or from heaven in the situations of daily living (cf. Matt 6:33; Rom 2:7; 1 Cor 10:24; Heb 11:4; 13:14; NIV's 'set your hearts on' is not quite right). What is in view is a complete reorientation of existence."

οὗ adv where

δεξιός, α, ον right, δεξια right hand;

δεξιας ἔδωκαν they shook hands

καθημαι sit, sit down, live

Cf. Ps 110:1, the OT text most often alluded to in the New. The right hand of God is the position of power and authority. "The consequences for the Christian perspective are thus ... clear. If Jesus, the Christ, is so highly favoured and acknowledged to be God's 'right-hand man,' with all the power and authority to effect God's will and to protect his own which is implicit in that claim, then Christian life should be entirely oriented to this Christ."

Dunn

#### Verse 2

τὰ ἄνω φρονεῖτε, μὴ τὰ ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς·

φρονεω think, have in mind

The present tense has the force 'keep your minds fixed.'

γη, γης f earth

The Christian is called to a practical heavenly mindedness. "What is commended is not an apocalyptic or mystical preoccupation with the future of heaven, as 3:1 could be taken to imply (that might have conceded the ground already contested in 2:18 and 23), but a cast of mind, a settled way of looking at things, a sustained devotion to and enactment of a life cause." Dunn. The key is union with the risen Christ and a life which centres in him. "It is this Christ-perspective which should mark out the Colossian Christians' heavenly spirituality and enable them to see through the alternative spirituality of the Colossian philosophy."

Dunn

#### Verse 3

ἄπεθάνετε γάρ, καὶ ἡ ζωὴ ὑμῶν κέκρυπται σὺν τῷ Χριστῷ ἐν τῷ θεῷ.

ἄπεθάνετε See 2:20

The aorist indicates "that the change of perspective marked by conversion-initiation is final and fixed. Nevertheless, throughout this section the balance between past act, ongoing outworking, and future completion is maintained." Dunn

ζωη, ης f life

κέκρυπται Verb, perf pass indic, 3 s

κρυπτω hide, conceal, cover

The true source of the Christian's life is hidden at present: it is in Christ and is from Christ. The imagery is apocalyptic: of something currently hidden in heaven which will be revealed (cf. v.4). "Paul and Timothy were evidently wholly confident that this perspective, this hidden resource, would provide all the wisdom needed to cope with the challenges and problems of daily living." Dunn. Cf. 2:2-3.

#### Verse 4

ὅταν ὁ Χριστὸς φανερωθῇ, ἡ ζωὴ ὑμῶν, τότε καὶ ὑμεῖς σὺν αὐτῷ φανερωθήσεσθε ἐν δόξῃ.

ὅταν when, whenever, as often as

φανερωθῇ Verb, aor pass subj, 3 s

φανερωω make known, reveal

ζωη, ης f life

Some MSS read ἡμῶν, a reading preferred by Dunn, despite ὑμῶν being more strongly attested, on the grounds that the text was more likely to have been altered from ἡμῶν to ὑμῶν to conform with the consistent second person plural of the paragraph. Translators and commentators are fairly evenly divided.

τοτε then, at that time

φανερωθήσεσθε Verb, fut pass indic, 2 pl  
φανερω

He is our life in the sense that what he is we shall be. "The underlying motif ... is the thought of restoration of the divine image, as intended in the initial creation of humanity, and of the risen Christ as the 'firstborn' who gives the family image to the rest of the new humanity (see on 1:18 and 3:10)." Dunn

### Day 589: Colossians 3:5-11

#### Verse 5

Νεκρωσατε οὖν τὰ μέλη τὰ ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς, πορνείαν, ἀκαθαρσίαν, πάθος, ἐπιθυμίαν κακῆν, καὶ τὴν πλεονεξίαν ἣτις ἐστὶν εἰδωλολατρία,

νεκρω put to death

Cf. Rom 8:13. The call is to "forceful self-discipline," says Dunn who continues, "Paul and Timothy clearly did not harbour any illusions regarding their converts. They did not attempt to promote a Christian perspective which was unrelated to the hard realities of daily life. On the contrary, they were all too aware of the pressures which shaped people like the Colossian Christians and which still held a seductive attraction for them. They were concerned that the Colossian believers' death with Christ, the atrophy of old habits of evil, had not yet worked through the full extent of their bodily relationships."

μέλη Noun, nom/acc pl μέλος, οὐς n  
member, bodily part

γῆ, γῆς f earth

πορνεία, ας f sexual immorality

Often linked with idolatry.

ἀκαθαρσία, ας f impurity, immorality,  
uncleanness

πάθος, οὐς n lust, passion

ἐπιθυμία, ας f desire, longing, lust

κακός, η, ον evil, bad, wrong, harm

πλεονεξία, ας f greed, covetousness

ὅστις, ἣτις, ὅ τι who, which

εἰδωλολατρία, ας f idol worship, idolatry

Cf. Eph 5:5.

#### Verse 6

δι• ἃ ἔρχεται ἡ ὀργὴ τοῦ θεοῦ [ἐπὶ τοὺς υἱοὺς τῆς ἀπειθείας]•

ὀργη, ης f wrath, anger

Cf. Rom 1:32; 1 Cor 5:9-13; 6:9-10; Gal 5:19-21; 1 Thess 4:3-6. "The verb (ἔρχεται) could denote a wrath already in operation – that is, presumably, as in Rom 1:18-32, in the consequences which follow from failure to acknowledge and worship God as God... In that case the wrath takes the form of God giving or allowing his human creatures what they want, leaving them to their own devices – the continuing avarice and abuse of sexual relations being its own reward. But the concept as taken over by the first Christians is more typically future oriented; so predominantly in Paul (Rom 2:5, 8; 3:5; 5:9; 9:22; 1 Thess 5:9). And the closest parallel (1 Thess 1:10: τῆς ὀργῆς τῆ ἐρχομένης; cf. Matt 3:7/Luke 3:7: 'the coming wrath') suggests that this is what is in view here – 'is going to come, is about to come.'" Dunn

The latter half of the verse is omitted by p<sup>46</sup> B and some versions. The phrase could have been added as an (unconscious) echo of Eph 5:6, but the opening of the following verse seems to require its inclusion. Translations and commentators are divided over whether to include the phrase.

ἀπειθεια, ας f disobedience

#### Verse 7

ἐν οἷς καὶ ὑμεῖς περιπατήσατέ ποτε ὅτε ἐζήτε ἐν τούτοις.

περιπατεω walk, walk about, live

ποτέ enclitic particle once, formerly, at  
one time

ὅτε conj when, at which time

ζωω live, be alive

"The point is that such behaviour used to characterise the Colossian Christians' way of life... Probably it was revulsion against such an ethos which attracted many Gentiles to the stronger morality of Judaism. But the pressures of the wider society were such that the temptation for Gentile Christians to relapse must have been fairly constant (cf. 1 Corinthians 5-6)." Dunn

#### Verse 8

νυνὶ δὲ ἀπόθεσθε καὶ ὑμεῖς τὰ πάντα, ὀργὴν, θυμόν, κακίαν, βλασφημίαν, αἰσχρολογίαν ἐκ τοῦ στόματος ὑμῶν•

νυνὶ (originally an emphatic form of νυν)

now

Cf. 1:22. The emphasis is upon the radical change which has occurred – ὅτε ... νυνι δε – a change in standing which calls for a corresponding change in behaviour.

ἀπόθεσθε Verb, 2 aor midd imperat, 2 pl  
ἀποτιθημι throw off, be done with,  
take off (clothes)  
ὄργη, ης f see v.6

"What is in view is such a powerful emotion that only God can be trusted to exercise it fairly. Hence such warnings as Rom 12:19." Dunn

θυμος, ου m anger, rage, fury  
κακια, ας evil, wickedness

Here may mean 'ill-will.'

βλασφημια, ας f slander, blasphemy  
αἰσχρολογία, ας f obscene speech  
στομα, τος n mouth, utterance

### Verse 9

μη̄ ψεύδεσθε εἰς ἀλλήλους, ἀπεκδυσάμενοι τὸν παλαιὸν ἄνθρωπον σὺν ταῖς πράξεσιν αὐτοῦ,

ψευδομαι lie, speak untruth, deceive  
ἀλληλων, οἰς, οὖς reciprocal pronoun one another

Cf. Eph 4:25.

ἀπεκδυσάμενοι Verb, aor midd dep ptc, m nom pl ἀπεκδυομαι disarm; put off, discard

παλαιος, α, ον old, former  
πραξις, εως f what one does, deed, action, practice

Paul's reference to the 'old man' and 'new' is linked with his understanding of Adam and of Christ, the 'first man' and the 'last'. In his death, Jesus stood in Adam's place and bore the penalty for his sin. By his resurrection he has become the head of a new humanity (see v.11). Those who are in Christ have died to, or put off the old man, the life that was theirs in Adam. Note the force of the aorist, this putting off is a once for all past act effected through union in Christ (and perhaps set forth in baptism). This being so, they are to demonstrate the reality of new life in Christ.

### Verse 10

καὶ ἐνδυσάμενοι τὸν νέον τὸν ἀνακαινούμενον εἰς ἐπίγνωσιν κατ' εἰκόνα τοῦ κτίσαντος αὐτόν,  
ἐνδύω dress, clothe; midd put on, wear

"The complementary action to discarding old clothes is putting on new ones. Conversion was not simply a turning from an old way of life; it was also a positive embracing of a new way of life." Dunn

νεος, α, ον new, fresh, young

"Not simply individual virtues and graces are in view, but once again a whole personality and the social world and way of life that that implied (cf. the 'new creation' in 2 Cor 5:17 and Gal 6:15). The thought is equivalent to 'putting on Christ' in Rom 13:14, as Col 3:3-4 also implies. At its simplest, this means that the manner of Christ's living, as attested in the Jesus tradition, provided the pattern for this new self life (2:6-7), as the enabling of the risen Christ provided its means (1:9-11)." Dunn

ἀνακαινούμενον Verb, pres pass ptc, m acc & n nom/acc s ἀνακαινωω renew, remake

Cf. 2 Cor 4:16 and Rom 12:2 for the cognate noun.

ἐπίγνωσις, εως f knowledge  
εἰκων, ονος f likeness, image, form  
κτίσαντος Verb, aor act ptc, m gen s κτιζω create, make

There are echoes here of Gen 1:26f. It is in Christ that the image of God possessed at first by Adam, but lost or spoiled through sin, is now restored. "This has the effect of reminding the readers that Christian ethics is not a matter merely of individual resolve, but involves a corporate dimension; Adam christology leads directly into a theology of the body of Christ." Dunn. The new creation is corporate – a whole new world.

### Verse 11

ὅπου οὐκ ἔνι Ἕλληνας καὶ Ἰουδαίους, περιτομὴ καὶ ἀκροβυστία, βάρβαρος, Σκύθης, δούλος, ἐλεύθερος, ἀλλὰ [τὰ] πάντα καὶ ἐν πάσιν Χριστός.

Cf. 1 Cor 12:13; Gal 3:28.

ὅπου adv. where

The sphere in which that new life is to be lived out is the body of Christ, the church.

ἐνι there is (equivalent to ἐνεστιν)

Bears the sense 'it is possible' hence the negated form here, 'it is impossible for there to be ...' "Not simply particular ethnic distinctions have been abolished, but the very possibility of such distinctions having any continuing meaning has ceased to exist." Dunn

Ἕλληνας, ηνος m a Greek, non-Jew

Ἰουδαῖος, α, ον a Jew, Jewish, Judean

"Jew' ( Ἰουδαῖος) was originally used by foreigners for a person belonging to Judea ( Ἰουδαία). But increasingly from the Maccabean period it had come to be accepted and used by Jews themselves as a self-designation, as a way of identifying themselves in relation to and in distinction from other nationalities... That this also involved a sense of distinctive religious identity is implied in the fact that the word became the basis of the new name for the religion of the Jews, 'Judaism' ( Ἰουδαισμός), which also emerged at this time." Dunn

περιτομή, ης f circumcision, those circumcised, Jews

ἀκροβυστία, ας f uncircumcision, non-Jews

βαρβαρος, ον non-Greek, uncivilized, foreigner, native

Σκυθης, ου Scythian (regarded by the Roman world as the absolute example of paganism)

There is no room for any sense of ethnic superiority.

δουλος, ου m slave, servant

ἐλευθερος, α, ον free, free person

"Apart from ethnic differences (and gender differences in Gal 3:28), the difference between slave and free was the other most fundamental division in society. Up to a third of those living in a city like Colossae may have been slaves... It was simply the means of providing labour at the bottom end of the economic spectrum (originally from the ranks of defeated enemies, but now mainly through birth to slaves). To sell oneself as a slave was a device of last resort for someone in debt, and slaves of important masters could exercise significant influence themselves... Christ has relativised all such distinctions, however fundamental to society, its structure, and its ongoing existence." Dunn

### Day 590: Colossians 3:12-14

#### Verse 12

Ἐνδύσασθε οὖν ὡς ἐκλεκτοὶ τοῦ θεοῦ, ἅγιοι καὶ ἠγαπημένοι, σπλάγχνα οἰκτιροῦ, χρηστότητα, ταπεινοφροσύνην, πραΐτητα, μακροθυμίαν,

ἐνδύσασθε Verb, aor midd imperat, 2 pl  
ἐνδύω see v.10

The call of v.10 is repeated but is now detailed in terms of particular characteristics.

ἐκλεκτος, η, ον chosen

ἅγιος, α, ον holy, consecrated, set apart to/by God

ἠγαπημένοι Verb, perf pass ptc, m nom pl  
ἀγαπάω love, show love for

These three terms have their background in OT descriptions of Israel.

σπλάγχνον, ου n one's inmost self, affections, heart

οἰκτιρισμός, ου m compassion, mercy

'heartfelt compassion' cf. Phil 2:1, also of God's mercies in Rom 12:1 and 2 Cor 1:3.

χρηστοτης, ητος f kindness, goodness, mercy

A reflection of God's goodness, cf. Rom 2:4.

ταπεινοφροσύνη, ης f humility

Cf. Phil 2:3; Eph 4:2; 1 Peter 5:5.

πραυτης, ητος f gentleness, humility

Cf. 2 Cor 10:1.

μακροθυμία, ας f longsuffering, patience

"Such virtues (or graces), particularly as in the combination here, can appear to encourage a 'milk-sop' weakness as in people whose calling in life is to be a doormat for others – at least as those caught up in the cut and thrust of the rat race count strength. But in fact to live out such a character calls for a strength which is rarely seen in the marketplace (as Jesus demonstrated). And without such an attitude towards others no group of individuals can become and grow as a community, with a proper care for others and willingness to submerge one's own personal interests." Dunn

#### Verse 13

ἀνεχόμενοι ἀλλήλων καὶ χαριζόμενοι ἑαυτοῖς ἂν τις πρὸς τινα ἔχη μομφήν· καθὼς καὶ ὁ κύριος ἔχαρίσατο ὑμῖν οὕτως καὶ ὑμεῖς·

ἀνεχομαι endure, be patient with

Cf. Mk 9:19; 2 Cor 11:1, 19; Eph 4:2.

ἀλλήλων, ος, ους reciprocal pronoun one another

χαρίζομαι grant, give

ἑαυτος, ἑαυτη, ἑαυτον reflexive pronoun, himself, herself, itself

Used here with the same sense as the reciprocal pronoun.

ἂν if, even if

μομφη, ης f cause for complaint, complaint

Here only in biblical Greek. The meaning is 'ground of offence' or 'complaint'

"Only such mutual respect and support, such recognition of mutual vulnerability, such valuing of each other beyond individual hurts and faults, it is also implied, would retain weaker or wavering members who otherwise might find the old way of life or the more traditional Jewish alternative too attractive." Dunn. The life of the Christian community should be marked by an incomparable attractiveness.

οὕτως and οὕτω thus, in this way

Cf. Eph 4:32; 5:2,25,29; also Rom 15:7. On the interdependence between forgiveness and being forgiven cf. Matt 6:12, 14-15; 18:23-35.

#### Verse 14

ἐπὶ πᾶσιν δὲ τούτοις τὴν ἀγάπην, ὃ ἐστὶν σύνδεσμος τῆς τελειότητος.

σύνδεσμος, ου m that which binds together, bond  
 τελειοτης, ητος f completeness; maturity

σύνδεσμος της τ. bond which unites everything in complete harmony.  
 "love is indeed like a 'fastening,' a σύνδεσμος, which holds them together in a single coherent package (cf. *1 Clement* 49:2: τον δεσμον της ἀγαπης του θεου). Nor is it accidental that σύνδεσμος was used already in 2:19 in the more technical sense of 'sinews, ligaments' of the body (see on 2:19). For the point is the same, that at the end of the day it is this love (and only this love) which is strong enough to hold together a congregation of disparate individuals." Dunn. Cf. Matt 5:43-48.