

THE ALL-INCLUSIVE, EXTENSIVE CHRIST REPLACING CULTURE FOR THE ONE NEW MAN, Week 3

KEY STATEMENTS

The Christ who replaces our culture with Himself for the one new man is the all-inclusive, extensive Christ, the preeminent One, the centrality and universality of God's economy.

When we have the vision of the all-inclusive, extensive Christ, experience Him as our life and the constituent of our entire being, and live Him instead of our culture, the one new man will appear among us in a practical way, and we will realize the life of the new man.

We need to be renewed day by day with the fresh supply of the resurrection life to replace our culture and to become the one new man in reality by becoming as new as the New Jerusalem.

We need to live the life of the one new man instead of our culture by learning Christ as the reality is in Jesus;
the way the Lord Jesus lived on earth
is the way the one new man should live today.

The Constituent of the One New Man- the All-inclusive, Extensive Christ Replacing Culture

Scripture Reading: Col. 1:15-18, 27; 2:9-10, 16-18; 3:4, 10-11

- | | |
|-----------------|---|
| Colossians 1:15 | Who is the image of the invisible God , the Firstborn of all creation, |
| Colossians 1:16 | Because in Him all things were created , in the heavens and on the earth, the visible and the invisible, whether thrones or lordships or rulers or authorities; all things have been created through Him and unto Him . |
| Colossians 1:17 | And He is before all things, and all things cohere in Him ; |
| Colossians 1:18 | And He is the Head of the Body , the church; He is the beginning , the Firstborn from the dead , that He Himself might have the first place in all things ; |
| Colossians 1:27 | To whom God willed to make known what are the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles, which is Christ in you , the hope of glory , |
| Colossians 2:9 | For in Him dwells all the fullness of the Godhead bodily , |
| Colossians 2:10 | And you have been made full in Him , who is the Head of all rule and authority. |
| Colossians 2:16 | Let no one therefore judge you in eating and in drinking or in respect of a feast or of a new moon or of the Sabbath, |
| Colossians 2:17 | Which are a shadow of the things to come, but the body is of Christ . |
| Colossians 2:18 | Let no one defraud you by judging you unworthy of your prize, in self-chosen lowliness and the worship of the angels, dwelling on the things which he has seen, vainly puffed up by his mind set on the flesh, |
| Colossians 3:4 | When Christ our life is manifested, then you also will be manifested with Him in glory . |
| Colossians 3:10 | And have put on the new man , which is being renewed unto full knowledge according to the image of Him who created him, |
| Colossians 3:11 | Where there cannot be Greek and Jew, circumcision and uncircumcision, barbarian, Scythian, slave, free man, but Christ is all and in all . |

DEFRAUDED BY THE INFLUENCE OF CULTURE

If we get into the depths of the book of Colossians, we shall see that it deals not with sin or with the law, but with man's **culture**. Culture is the unconscious living of every human being. This is true both of primitive society and of advanced countries as well. The principle is the same everywhere. People throughout the world are under the **influence of their culture**. Those in the Far East may find it difficult to speak spontaneously in public meetings because they are unconsciously influenced by oriental culture. According to the book of Colossians, what **defrauds** us of the enjoyment of Christ and frustrates the church life is our culture.

CHRIST, OUR LIFE

The book of Colossians reveals that in God's economy **Christ is everything**. Christ is the portion of the saints, the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of creation, the mystery of God's economy, the firstborn from among the dead, the fullness of God, the mystery of God, the One in whom all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge are hidden, and the Body of all the shadows. Eventually, this preeminent, all-inclusive Christ is the **unique constituent of the new man**. Furthermore, as Paul declares in 3:4, this Christ is our life. The expression "our life" is a strong indication that we are to experience in our daily living the Christ revealed in this book. (Life-Study of Colossians, chapter 33, section 2)

Day 1

I. If we get into the depths of the book of Colossians, we will see that in this book Paul is dealing with the hidden matter of **human culture:**

- A. Paul's use of the word barbarian in Colossians 3:11 is a strong indication that this Epistle deals with **culture**.
- B. Culture is the systematic method that we have developed to exist and to maintain our being-Gen. 4:16-22:
 - 1. Culture is the unconscious living of every human being-Eph. 2:2-3; 4:17.
 - 2. People throughout the world are **under the influence of their culture**.
- C. Just as culture exerted a strong influence on the believers in Colossae, **culture today exerts a strong influence on us**-Col. 2:8-10, 16-18:
 - 1. Unconsciously, we are under the influence of the culture into which we were born; the elements of this culture are part of our being-Gal. 4:3, 9; Col. 2:8,20.
 - 2. When we came into the church life, we brought our culture with us, and this culture **undermines** our enjoyment of Christ and the church life.

Day 2

- 3. To a large extent, Christ as the unique element in the church life has been **replaced** by culture-v. 8;3:11:
 - a. Subconsciously and unconsciously, we all treasure our culture and place a high value on our particular cultural background.
 - b. In the church life Christ is **replaced by culture more than by anything else**-v. 11.

II. The book of Colossians reveals that the all-inclusive, extensive Christ is **everything in God's economy-1:15-18, 27:**

- A. We need a **clear vision** of this wonderful Christ being everything to us.
- B. Such a vision will **terminate the influence of culture** on the experience of Christ and on the church life, and instead of being cultured people, we will be people **occupied with, possessed by, and saturated with Christ**-3:11b.

CHRIST—ALL AND IN ALL

In the book of Colossians Paul points out that Christ must be **all and in all**. In the new man there is no room for culture or personal practices. God's intention in His economy is for Christ to be everything. Christ should be our life, our living, our patience, our holiness, our kindness. Christ should be the way we deal with our wife or husband. Moment by moment in our daily living, **Christ should be everything we need**. Instead of living by certain practices, **we should simply live Christ**.

God's desire is that we **live Christ moment by moment** and **leave no room for culture and philosophy**. Our only practice should be the living Person of Christ Himself. Second, we should **lay aside our cultural standards**. Our standard should not be any form of culture; it should be the indwelling peace of Christ. Third, **we need to allow the word of Christ to fill our entire being**. We need to let our whole being be permeated and saturated with the word of Christ. If we do these three things, we shall experience Christ spontaneously. Not only shall we have a lofty revelation of Christ, but we shall also experience Him in a practical way in our daily life. (Life-Study of Colossians, chapter 32, section 3)

Day 3

III. The preeminent, all-inclusive, extensive Christ is our **life and the **unique constituent of the one new man**-vv. 4, 10-11:**

- A. The constituent of the church as the new man is **Christ and Christ alone**; the content of the church is nothing other than the all-inclusive, extensive Christ- 1:15-18; 2:9-10.
- B. As our life and the constituent of the one new man, the all-inclusive, extensive Christ **replaces our culture with Himself**-3:11.
- C. The issue of enjoying Christ as our portion is that we **experience Him** as the content and the constituent of the one new man, and ultimately, the Christ we enjoy becomes the **constituent of the new man**-1:12; 3:11.

The New Man

The book of Ephesians reveals that the church is the Body of Christ, the kingdom of God, the household of God, and the temple, the dwelling place of God. In 2:15 and 4:24 we see that the church is the **new man**. Ephesians 2:15 says, "Having abolished in His flesh the law of the commandments in ordinances, that He might create the two in Himself into one new man, making peace." Ephesians 4:24 says, "And have put on the new man, which according to God was created in righteousness and holiness of the truth." Furthermore, Colossians 3:10 says, "And having put on the new man, which is being renewed unto full knowledge according to the image of Him who created him." The Greek word for church, ekklesia, means those called out for a gathering; hence, an assembly. This is the initial aspect of the church. From this aspect we need to go on to the aspects of the house of God and the kingdom of God. These are higher than the initial aspect but not as high as the aspect of the church as the Body of Christ. Yet the new man is still higher than the Body of Christ. Thus, the church is not just an assembly of believers, a kingdom of heavenly citizens, a household of God's children, nor even a Body for Christ. In an even higher aspect, the church is the new man to accomplish God's eternal purpose. The emphasis on the church being the Body of Christ is on life, whereas the emphasis on the church being the new man is on the person. As the Body of Christ, the church needs Christ as its life. **As the new man, the church needs Christ as its person**. The body without life is not a body but a corpse. However, when the body makes a move, it is decided not by life but by the person. Hence, in the new man we need to take Christ as our person. **The new man as a corporate person should live a life as Jesus lived on earth**, that is, a **life of truth, expressing God and causing God to be realized as reality by man**. (The Conclusion of the New Testament (Msgs. 205-220), chapter 216, section 1)

Day 4

- D. According to Colossians 3:11, in the new man there is **no possibility for the various cultural distinctions to continue to exist**:
1. There are no cultural distinctions in the one new man, for **every part of the new man is constituted with Christ**-v. 11.
 2. In the church as the new man, there is **no room** for regional, cultural, or national distinctions and no place for any race, nationality, culture, or social status.
- E. Because Christ is the **unique constituent of the new man**, there should be no differences among the believers who are part of this new man, and there should be no differences among the churches-1 Cor. 4:17; Rev. 1:12, 20; 22:16.

Day 5

IV. As the constituent of the new man, Christ is all and in all; Christ is all the members, and He is in all the members-Col. 3:11:

- A. In the church as the new man, **Christ is everyone and He is also in everyone**- 1:27; 3:11.
- B. On the one hand, in the new man there is **no place for the natural person**, because Christ is all the members.
- C. On the other hand, the fact that Christ is in all indicates that the members continue to exist, not without Christ but as those indwelt by Christ-1:27.
- D. When we take Christ as our life and constitution, we have the sense deep within that **we are one with Christ and that Christ is us**, and simultaneously, we have an even deeper sense that Christ is in us-3:4.
- E. In the church as the new man, **Christ is everything**; this implies that **all the believers must be constituted with Christ**-1:15-18; 2:16-17; 3:4, 10-11:
 1. We must be **permeated** with Christ, **saturated** with Christ, and have Christ **organically wrought into our being**-Gal. 4:19; Eph. 3:17a.
 2. Eventually, we will be replaced by Christ, and then, in reality, Christ will be all and in all; **He will be every part of the new man**-Col. 3:11b.
- F. The new man is Christ in all the saints permeating us and replacing us until all natural distinctions have been eliminated, and **everyone is constituted with Christ**-Gal. 4:19; Eph. 3:17a; Col. 1:27.

CHRIST BEING EVERY MEMBER

In the new man **Christ is every member**. Concerning this, Paul says in 3:11, “*Where there cannot be Greek and Jew, circumcision and uncircumcision, barbarian, Scythian, slave, freeman, but Christ is all and in all.*” This means that in the new man there is no place, no room, for any natural person. There is no place for regional, cultural, or national distinctions. For example, in the new man there cannot be Chinese or Americans, Californians or Texans. Likewise, in the new man there is no room for Jew or Greek, for religious ones or nonreligious ones, for cultured ones or uncultured ones, for freemen or slaves. There is no room for any race, nationality, culture, or social status. **In the one new man there is room only for Christ**. Christ surely is all the members of the new man.

CHRIST IN EVERY MEMBER

In 3:11 Paul says not only that Christ is all, but also that **He is in all**. In other words, on the one hand, Christ is all the members, and on the other hand, **He is in all the members**. Since Paul says that Christ is all, why is there the need for him to say that Christ is in all? If Paul did not say that Christ is in all, only that He is all, then we may think that in the new man Christ is needed and that we are not needed. We should not think that, because Christ is all the members in the new man, we are nothing and are not needed. On the one hand, the Bible does say that in the new man there is no place for the natural person because Christ is all the members. Yet, on the other hand, Paul says that Christ is in the members. The fact that Christ is in the members of the new man indicates that the members still exist. (Life-Study of Colossians, chapter 60, section 4)

Day 6

- G. When we have the **vision of the all-inclusive, extensive Christ** with the adequate experience of Christ, the one new man will appear among us in a practical way, and we will realize the life of the new man-3:10-17; Philem. 10-16.
- H. If Christ is the **living of all the saints**, then only He will be in the new man, and all the saints, whatever their nationality, will live Christ; then in a real and practical way, Christ will be all the members of the new man-Col. 3:11; Phil. 1:21a.

V. The New Jerusalem will be the final consummation of the one new man- Eph. 2:15-16; 4:24; Col. 3:10-11; Rev. 21:2, 9-10:

- A. When we have become the New Jerusalem, we will enjoy the life of the **universal one new man**.
- B. Today we may have a foretaste of this enjoyment by **allowing** the all-inclusive, extensive Christ to **replace our culture**, to **constitute us with Himself**, and to make us **all part of the one new man** in reality and practicality-Col. 1:27; 2:10; 3:4, 10-11.

Colossians is definitely a book on the all-inclusive Christ. However, in this book Paul also speaks of the **new man**. The practical life of the new man comes out of the **revelation of Christ and the experience of Christ**. When we have the revelation of Christ with the adequate experience of Christ, the new man will appear among us in a practical way, and we shall realize the life of the new man. God's goal is to have this one new man, which ultimately will consummate in the New Jerusalem. Therefore, the New Jerusalem will be the final consummation of the one new man. When we are in the New Jerusalem, we shall enjoy the life of the universal one new man. Today we may have a foretaste of this enjoyment by setting **our mind on the things above and giving a free way for the new man in our spirit to spread into our whole being**. (Life-Study of Colossians, chapter 62, section 4)