

Col 2:11-15

11 In Him you were also circumcised with the circumcision made without hands, by putting off the body of the sins of the flesh, by the circumcision of Christ, 12 buried with Him in baptism, in which you also were raised with Him through faith in the working of God, who raised Him from the dead. 13 And you, being dead in your trespasses and the uncircumcision of your flesh, He has made alive together with Him, having forgiven you all trespasses, 14 having wiped out the handwriting of requirements that was against us, which was contrary to us. And He has taken it out of the way, having nailed it to the cross. 15 Having disarmed principalities and powers, He made a public spectacle of them, triumphing over them in it.

Sometimes Christians have the attitude that we are better than other Christians.

We have this sort of self-righteous attitude at times.

The section Paul's opens up here

- speaks of the Gnostics who insisted
- that the believers keep a certain code of ethics.

And if the Christians wanted to be part of that "elite" group,

- they'd have to follow the same rules.

Paul will now complete his argument of verses 9 & 10.

Col 2:9-10

9 For in Him dwells all the fullness of the Godhead bodily; 10 and you are complete in Him, who is the head of all principality and power.

Paul will now begin his explanation of fullness with complete salvation.

- And he uses two metaphors,
- circumcision and baptism.

He uses these metaphors

- to explain that we are saved totally and exclusively
- through the work of the Cross and not thru human activity.

Col 2:11

11 In Him you were also circumcised with the circumcision made without hands, by putting off the body of the sins of the flesh, by the circumcision of Christ,

Phil 3:3

3 For we are the circumcision, who worship God in the Spirit, rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh,

And Paul picks two familiar rituals that everyone back then

- would have been aware of,

The Jews were masters at ceremonial practices.

- Back in Gen 17 God instituted circumcision
- as a physical sign of the Abrahamic covenant.

Every male was to be circumcised as a testimony

- of his covenant relationship with God.

But the Jews began to mistakenly think

- that this physical ritual
- was sufficient all by itself.

When a male child was born to a Jewish family,

- They were obligated by God's law
- to have every male child circumcised

It was a sign of a covenant that God made with the Jews.

Other groups such as the Moabites, the Egyptians and the Gnostics viewed circumcision as the basis for righteousness.

But God warned in Deut 10:16 and several other places in the OT

- to circumcise the foreskin of their heart.

Paul was speaking of circumcision made without hands,

- the spiritual circumcision of all believers.

Rom 2:28-29

28 For you are not a true Jew just because you were born of Jewish parents or because you have gone through the ceremony of circumcision. 29 No, a true Jew is one whose heart is right with God. And true circumcision is not merely obeying the letter of the law; rather, it is a change of heart produced by God's Spirit. And a person with a changed heart seeks praise from God, not from people.

12 buried with Him in baptism, in which you also were raised with Him through faith in the working of God, who raised Him from the dead. 13 And you, being dead in your trespasses and the uncircumcision of your flesh, He has made alive together with Him, having forgiven you all trespasses,

In verse 11 Paul was speaking about

- putting off the sinful nature of the old man,
- the old person we were.

When we surrendered to Christ,

- He got rid of that old person for us.

Therefore, Paul says here in verse 12

- that we are spiritually baptized in Christ.

Baptism was to symbolize death, burial and resurrection.

It's as if passing thru death to life. That's what Paul said in Romans:

Rom 6:3-4

3 Or do you not know that as many of us as were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into His death? 4 Therefore we were buried with Him through baptism into death, that just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life.

Before coming to Christ, we are dead in our sins.

A time is coming when God will gather His people Israel back to their land and they're going to repent of their sin and trust their Messiah according to Zech 12-14.

Ezek 11:19-20

19 Then I will give them one heart, and I will put a new spirit within them, and take the stony heart out of their flesh, and give them a heart of flesh, 20 that they may walk in My statutes and keep My judgments and do them; and they shall be My people, and I will be their God.

Jeremiah also announced a "new covenant" for the people of Israel

Jer 31:33

33 But this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, says the Lord: I will put My law in their minds, and write it on their hearts; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people.

And since we've been buried with Him in baptism,

- and raised with Him through faith,
- we share in that same covenant promise
- According to 2 Cor 3 and Heb 9-10.

So, the moment you were saved

- you were baptized by the Spirit.

Is ceremonial baptism important? Yes! Jesus said, if you love me you'll keep my commandment. So we get baptized because we love Him.

And we're baptized because we're identifying with Him.

Notice now in verses 11-13 the times Paul mentions "Him," speaking of Jesus.

Verse 11 - in Him,

Verse 12 - Buried with Him, raised with Him, raised Him from the dead

Verse 13 - made alive together with Him,

- whatever happens to Him
- happens to you because
- you now belong to Him.

13 And you, being dead in your trespasses and the uncircumcision of your flesh, He has made alive together with Him, having forgiven you all trespasses,

That was once us, we were dead in our trespasses, in our sin.

- Unrepented sin is like cancer to a person's body.
- What starts as something mild
- can turn into something deadly.

And it doesn't have to be as such, because we're made alive in Christ. Not only that, but we're forgiven of all of our trespasses.

Let me give you 5 facts about forgiveness:

- 1) God's forgiveness is complete: Paul says that all of our trespasses are forgiven.
- 2) God's forgiveness is gracious: Eph 2:8 tells us we have been saved by grace through faith, and in verse 9 he says not of works, lest anyone should boast.
- 3) Forgiveness is certain: Heb 6:18 says it's impossible for God to lie.

Ps 119:160

160 The sum of your word is truth, and every one of your righteous rules endures forever.

Num 23:18

19 God is not man, that he should lie,  
or a son of man, that he should change his mind.  
Has he said, and will he not do it?  
Or has he spoken, and will he not fulfill it?

- 4) His forgiveness is contagious:  
Eph 4:32  
And be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God in Christ forgave you.
- 5) Forgiveness is liberating: Col 2:14-15

14 having wiped out the handwriting of requirements (record of the charges) that was against us (was referring to the law of God), which was contrary to us. And He has taken it out of the way, having nailed it to the cross.

13 And you, being dead in your trespasses and the uncircumcision of your flesh, He has made alive together with Him, having forgiven you all trespasses,

Unfortunately, there are many who will not respond to the call of forgiveness. There are many who fail to recognize they are sinners in need of a Savior.

Numbers 14 is a great example of those that didn't believe, but when Moses interceded for them, the Lord refrained from judgment.

Num 14:11

11 Then the Lord said to Moses: "How long will these people reject Me? And how long will they not believe Me, with all the signs which I have performed among them?"

The Lord was going to strike them with pestilence and disinherit them.

That was once us, "How long will these people reject Me?" We too were dead in sin and the Lord forgave us.

Col 2:14

14 having wiped out the handwriting of requirements that was against us, which was contrary to us. And He has taken it out of the way, having nailed it to the cross.

In other words, Jesus wiped out the charges against us, that's speaking of our guilt, and He nailed that guilt, those charges to the cross.

Listen, the Jews had a contract with God to obey the Law of Moses.

Deut 30:15-20

15 "See, I have set before you today life and good, death and evil, 16 in that I command you today to love the Lord your God, to walk in His ways, and to keep His commandments, His statutes, and His judgments, that you may live and multiply; and the Lord your God will bless you in the land which you go to possess. 17 But if your heart turns away so that you do not hear, and are drawn away, and worship other gods and serve them, 18 I announce to you today that you shall surely perish; you shall not prolong your days in the land which you cross over the Jordan to go in and possess. 19 I call heaven and earth as witnesses today against you, that I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing; therefore choose life, that both you and your descendants may live; 20 that you may love the Lord your God, that you may obey His voice, and that you may cling to Him, for He is your life and the length of your days; and that you may dwell in the land which the Lord swore to your fathers, to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, to give them."

The Gentiles had counter-signed through their consciences to keep the moral Law as they understood it.

Rom 2:14-15

14 for when Gentiles, who do not have the law, by nature do the things in the law, these, although not having the law, are a law to themselves, 15 who show the work of the law written in their hearts, their conscience also bearing witness, and between themselves their thoughts accusing or else excusing them)

But neither Jew nor Gentile could keep the Law

- and the burden of guilt was immense.

We often recall our past sin.

Ps 51:3

3 For I acknowledge my transgressions,  
And my sin is always before me.

Solomon said in Eccl 7:10

10 Do not say,  
"Why were the former days better than these?"  
For you do not inquire wisely concerning this.

*Losing His Memory* (I read an illustration earlier this week of)

A man who was losing his memory and he went to his doctor for advice. He received this diagnosis: "Sir, we cannot help your memory without impairing your eyesight. The choice is yours. Would you rather be able to see or to remember?"

The man though for a moment then replied, "I would rather have my eyesight than my memory. I'd rather see where I am going than remember where I have been!"<sup>1</sup>

Phil 3:13

13 Brethren, I do not count myself to have apprehended; but one thing *I do*, forgetting those things which are behind and reaching forward to those things which are ahead,

Col 2:15

15 Having disarmed (to strip off clothes) principalities (spiritual rulers) and powers, He made a public spectacle of them, triumphing over them in it.

God will disarm Satan then He make a public spectacle

- or a public example of him and his demons,

When Joseph realized Mary was pregnant

- he didn't want to make a public example of her
- so he wanted to put her away secretly.

---

<sup>1</sup> "Memories" (2000) in *6,000 Plus Illustrations for Communicating Biblical Truths*. Christianity Today.

Same word with a different meaning.

- Joseph was wanting to guard Mary,
- Jesus will humiliate Satan.