

# The Glorious Body of Christ, The Church

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## **PROLEGOMENON**

As we focus on the entity, the Church, note that according to Ephesians 3:10, God will in the future exhibit the most glorious of all His creation to all the principalities and powers that have opposed Him; in order to give testimony to His manifold wisdom and power. From this we ascertain that the greatest of all God's doings is exemplified in the Church, the glorious Body of Christ. The Apostle Paul in II Corinthians 5:17 states that those who are in Christ comprise this most glorious of all creation but unfortunately many of God's people don't know what the Church of God in this dispensation really is.

As we begin this discourse, we immediately draw a distinction between the spiritual and physical spheres and their connotations of the terminology "body". In the physical sphere, God has certainly created the human body with many component parts that perform a great number of varied functions yet it is kept alive by a common life source. The command center for each and every part, seen or unseen is located in its highest component, the head. The head is also the center of communication, as it is the originator of its manifested functions. The head silently communicates and thus controls all of its healthy members within and audibly reaches all those without.

It is to the wonder of God our creator that he created the human body to be a reflector of the pattern for His church, His Spiritual Body. As believers, we are members of local assemblies individually designated "churches" (Romans 16:1, 5, 23, 27; I Corinthians 1:2, 4:17). The title "church" cannot only be applied to the local neighborhood assembly but to other levels as well. This title can biblically be applied to all the neighborhood assemblies scattered throughout a village, town or city (I Corinthians 4:17; Colossians 4:16; I Thessalonians 1:1). Also it can be applied globally, including in its number, all the redeemed throughout the world who now look for His appearing (Romans 16:4, 16; I Corinthians 16:1, 19; II Timothy 4:8).

The terminology that pertains to the spiritual Body entails volumes of hidden truths that lay waiting to be discovered just behind the door of this poignant metaphor. There are many truths that are poised to be gleaned, understood and applied as those who are guided by the Holy Spirit cogitate what this important characterization reveals. Hence it is in this sense that the church is equipollence to the Body of Christ as it correlates the mystery of its functions and form.

There is a plethora of scriptural references to this revelation that serve to give strong support to this undeniable truth, i.e., the contents of I Corinthians 12:3-31; Galatians 2:26-29; Ephesians 4:12-16 and Colossians 1:18, where Christ is revealed as the Head of His Body, the Church. As the elect of God in the eternal sense and individual members of a local assembly in the manifested sense, we are members of His Body. In the documentation of scripture, the smallest unit considered and referred to

as a church; resided as the local house church or as some might have called it, the neighborhood assembly (Romans 16:5). On even a smaller level, the smallest of all church units, which could number as few as two or three members, is a church and are members of the universal Body of Christ.

The same spiritual principles, which are applicable to individual Body members, also apply to individual assemblies, cities or regions. In this light, the applications of the full value of the principles taught encompasses all (1 Corinthians 12; Ephesians 4:12-16), thus one unit or body part can not say to another, "I have no need of you" and if this is the attitude of some; they are misguided in thinking that their so-called accomplishments have made them self-sufficient with no need for external relationships. Those who are true members of Christ's Body are by design connected to other members of His Body. How else can we have life if we, as parts of one body, don't receive support from each other?

The most blessed of all God's people are those who comprehend the essence of **the Body of Christ**, which is the most glorious of all of God's created entities. Many references are made daily to "The Church" but very few have ascertained the correct composition of the bond that exists between God's elect and our Lord Jesus Christ. This bond of union to Christ is unique in its uniting nature in that it is more than a grace of union but also communion. The Body of Christ depicts the ultimate grace of love as the bond of union in a uniting conformation, structuring all the saints one with another in one unit knitted together and focused on Christ the head. This love or charity is designated "the bond of perfection (Colossians 2:2; 3:14). Its essentia comprises a spiritual organism rather than diver's physical organizations.

The visible manifestation of this bond is displayed by faith and love, as they exude undeniable evidence of the mystical union between Christ and the believer. Thus the truth of the matter is exemplified in Christ's love for the Body (Ephesians 5:21-33), which alone is the dependable bond of our union to Him. The fact that He loves the elect thus certifies the union and this conjunction then is the cause that such ones (we) are separated from depraved humanity and translated into Christ and His eternal presence, which is a sphere of grace, righteousness, peace, joy, life, salvation, and glory. This inseparable union and conjunction is through the faithfulness of Christ in effectuating one spiritual Body.

Accordingly, this relation could be described as an **election union**, depicting the virtual representation of that which the elect of God have in Christ before the creation of the world as the unit is formed in election. In this regard, membership in the Body is in essence the place of Sonship or son positioning as there can be no other plausible explanation of one so designated as a component of such a glorious entity. This indeed is a mystery that defies human imagination; as to how that which is of no value, could be linked to that which is of infinite worth thus forming in its union the most glorious of all creation, **The Body of Christ!**

## **PART I**

The exegesis of scriptural documentation yields the best testimony as we focus on the context of Galatians 3:26-29. We begin with the 26<sup>th</sup> verse from the King James Version, "For ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus." And from the Greek Text, "For you are all sons through the faith in Christ Jesus." Here the Apostle Paul is addressing the general body of believers including

both Jews and Gentiles as he designates them *ui`oi. qeou (yee•ee Theh•oo)* rendered “sons of God”, as expressed by the genitive case of possession. The conveyance is that all God’s people are in a Sonship relation to Him (Romans 4:6; 8:14). Note, the Greek verb *evste(ehs•teh)* rendered “you are”, is 2<sup>nd</sup> person plural, in the indicative mood and the present tense, thus denoting the present factual status of those whom he is addressing.

Observe that the active voice of this verb linked with the nominative case of the noun rendered “sons”, should not be construed to indicate that those so designated have in any way contributed to their son-relationship. This is borne out by the literal Greek reading of the latter phrase of the verse, *dia. th/j pi,stewj evn Cristw/ VThsou/ (thee•ah tees pees•teh•os ehn Khrees•to Ee•ee•soo)* rendered “through the faith in Christ Jesus.” This is stating that this relation to God was obtained “through”, *dia. (thee•ah)* the faithfulness of Jesus Christ as manifested by the fact that they **were caused** to exercise faith (belief, trust) in His faithfulness on their behalf. Note the definite article *th/j (tees)* “the”, before *pi,stewj (pees•teh•os)* “faithfulness”, as the emphasis is focused on the faithful redeemer as it expresses faith in the redeemer denoting that Jesus Christ is the **faithful redeemer!** Thus one’s position in the Body (sonship relation) rests upon the premise of faith in the One who was obedient unto death (Philippians 2:8).

Now we move to Galatians 3:27 from the King James Version, “For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ.” And from the Greek Text, “For as many of you as were baptized into Christ, did put on Christ.” This verse deals with the means and method of placement into the Body of Christ. Here we focus on the two verbs namely, baptized and did put on. First, the basic meaning of the word *bapti,so(vahp•tee•zo)* rendered “baptize”, is identification. In this context, it may be used in reference to spiritual as well as physical identification. The focus of the primary context in this verse is of a spiritual nature as there is no basis in the grace contract for any suggestion of physical water baptism. The only baptism or identification that is assignable in the Body is that which is produced by or through the Holy Spirit (I Corinthians 12:13).

According to the principle of election, identification is synonymous with son positioning or placement (in Christ) in eternity (Ephesians 1:4-5). Manifestation-wise, the moment one is caused to believe on Jesus Christ as ones saviour; that individual is identified with the Body of Christ and placement into the Church through baptism by the Spirit (I Corinthians 12:13; Ephesians 4:5; Colossians 2:12). Thus the Holy Spirit produces this baptism according to the sovereign will of God (I Corinthians 2:10-11) in the process of time, baptizing (identifying) those who were chosen in Him beforehand. Note, this baptism is a once-for-all transaction through which believers were made members of the Church, in which position they are sealed and secured unto the day of the redemption of their bodies (Romans 8:23; Ephesians 1:13-14; II Corinthians 1:22; 5:5).

Secondly, the determinate ones who were baptized, identified and placed into Christ did in fact put on Christ. In effect, this baptism spoken of here produced the spiritual result of *evnedu,sasqe (ehn•eh•thees•ahs•theh)* rendered “having (did) put on” or “having been clothed and enveloped in Him. This verb depicts the “putting on of” or “clothing of”, as baptism clothes believers with and in Christ. In Romans 13:14, Paul commands believers to “put on the Lord Jesus Christ -----.” As those who have put on Christ and have our lives hidden with Christ in God (Colossians 3:3), we are confident of what we are position-wise in Him. Since this baptism accomplishes a spiritual result, it cannot be of a physical nature (water); for such has no merit for members of the Body of Christ (I Corinthians 1:17; Ephesians 4:5).

Now we move to Galatians 3:28 from the King James Version, "There is neither Jews nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus." And from the Greek Text, "one is not a Jew nor Greek one is not a slave nor free, one is not a male and female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus." This verse must be viewed with the full understanding of what spiritual baptism connotes and that those who are in Christ lose their physical distinctions in the Body of Christ. Thus the composition of Body members is out of all races, regardless of physical identities as all are amalgamated as one in Christ (I Corinthians 12:13).

Paul expresses this thought in a more explicit manner in II Corinthians 5:16-17, wherein he states (from the Greek Text), "So that we from now (on or going forth) have known no one according to the flesh, even if we have known Christ according to the flesh, but now we know Him (as such) no longer. So then if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has passed away, behold the new has come."

Observe that in the spiritual Body of Christ no one is known according to the flesh, i.e., on the basis of anything concerning the flesh. Even Jesus **according to the flesh** is not the focal point of the Body its Head, which is spiritual. All those in Christ are components of a new and spiritual creation, where all physical distinctions are impugned. In this new spiritual state all believers; both Jews and Gentiles are one in Christ, who "has made both one and has destroyed the middle wall of partition", having made the two into one (Ephesians 2:14-15). In Galatians 3:28, the verbal-adverbial phrase *ouvk e;ni(ook eh•ee)* translated "there is not" or "one is not", delineates a litany of conveyances regarding ineffectual diversities in the Body that have absolutely no stimulation on the essence of its composition. All distinctions are relinquished as all have an equal dependency upon the Head.

The first variant of litany in this verse (28) is characterized by the Greek phrase *Vloudai/oj ouvde. {Ellhn (Ee•oo•theh•os oo•theh Ehl•leen)* translated "Jew neither (nor) Greek (Gentile)." In effect, ethnicity is irrelevant in the Body of Christ. All persons of all races, sects and other distinguishing constituents who have been placed in the Body, have been made one entity. All are on one level; all are saved in the same manner; all are entitled to the same privileges. In essence, there is no favoritism on account of birth or natural blood lineage as all are redeemed from the state of depravity and are thus acceptable in the Body solely on the merits of Christ. Note, the word *{Ellhn (Ehl•leen)* translated "Greek", is used to denote "Gentiles" in general as historically speaking, the Jews classified all outsiders. The specific message conveyed is that whatever is the birth, nationality, color, etc.; all are afforded the same status and endowed with the same relationship to the Head. This is true in spite of natural distinctions that are exemplified by diversities of rank, talents, previledges, wealth and religion, as none of these are contributors to the entrance therein.

The second variant of litany in the verse is characterized by the Greek phrase *dou/roj ouvde. evleu,qeroj (thoo•los oo•thehehl•ehf•thehr•os)* translated "slave neither (nor) free". Here special attention is drawn to the fact that in the Body, one's social status does not avail nor repel as neither are regarded as efficacious facilities for salvation. Thus there is no caste system in Christ in the sense of the bestowal of prestige in vastitude of one's birth or rank. It was in this light that Paul wrote in his epistle to Philemon during his first imprisonment in Rome; concerning his (Philemon's) slave Onesimus, who Paul had discerned to be profitable in the ministry. In verses 15 and 16, Paul states (GNT), "----- that you might receive him forever, no longer as a slave but above a slave, a beloved brother, especially to me, but how much more to you, both in the flesh and in the Lord." Also in Colossians 4:9, Paul refers to "the slave" Onesimus as being *tw| pistw| kai. avgaphtw| avdelfw|/( ofj evstin evx u`mw/n (to pees•to ahg•ahp•ee•to ahth•ehl•pho, os ehs•teen ehz ee•mon)* rendered "the faithful and beloved brother, who is one of you." Here in these communications, Paul documents that there are no distinctions in the Church according to neither social nor economic status or any other human gauge of ranking the worth and value of mankind.

The third and final variant of litany in the verse is characterized by the Greek phrase *a;rsen kai. qh/lu (ahr•sehn keh thee•lee)* translated “male and female.” Of the variants thus conveyed, this one seemed to be the most challenging of all as it cuts to the very core of men’s traditions; yet neither male nor female have any special advantages in the Body of Christ. Simply stated, there is no distinction of gender as both sexes are on the same level. All references to differences in gender fall outside of the realm of the Body of Christ. In the spiritual sphere, gender distinctions are nonexistent as contrasted with the physical purviews of the duties, obligations and responsibilities of domestic life and society in general.

This is an area of great conflict and debate as unfortunately, most of God’s people are not able to differentiate between spiritual and physical spheres. This must be truly understood especially in light of many seemingly discriminating instructions in Paul’s directives to the Church. Here we note specifically Paul’s instructions in his epistles to the Corinthians, Ephesians Colossians and both Timothy and Titus as he conveys segregated instructions along gender lines (I Corinthians 1-17, 24-40; 14:34-35; Ephesians 5:21-33; Colossians 3:18-19; I Timothy 5:1-16; 2:9-15; 3:1-13; Titus 1:6-9; 2:1-6). Now this is confusing to those who are not knowledgeable to the point of understanding the distinction between the composition of the invisible Church, the spiritual-organism, i.e., the Body of Christ, as compared to the visible Church, which is manifested in the physical organization and operation of the local congregations or assemblies.

The last phrase of this verse (28) provides a succinct summation of its arrayed thought conveyance, as we focus on the literal Greek rendering *pa,ntej ga.r u`mei/j ei-j evste evn Cristw/| V\hsou/ (pahn•dehs gahr ee•mees ees ehs•teh ehn Khrees•to Ee•ee•soo)* translated “for you are all one in Christ Jesus.” In this spiritual state, all believers are one, in that all have been made one in Christ. In the first variant, both Jews and Gentiles are one in that both have been made one and the middle wall of partition has been destroyed, “that He might create the two in Him unto one new man making peace” (Ephesians 2:14-15). In the second variant, no social or economic classifications are present in the Body, as Christ is the only supplier of its bloodline (I Corinthians 15:50; Ephesians 1:7; Colossians 1:14, 20). In the final variant conveyance, the issue of gender is no issue in that there is no such peculiarity. In fact, in the Body of Christ, there is only one gender reference of its composition and it is **feminine**; denoting its submissiveness and subjection to the will of its masculine Head, Jesus Christ (Ephesians 5:32).

Here we observe that both the Greek adjective *pa,ntej (pahn•dehs)* rendered “all” and adjectival cardinal *ei- (ees)* rendered “one”, are in the nominative case, singular number and either masculine or neuter gender, as is the delineated variants, i.e., *V\oudai/oj (Ee•oo•theh•os)* (Jews), *{Ellhn(Ehl•leen)* (Greek or Gentiles), *dou/loj (thoo•los)* (slave), *evleu,qeroj (ehl•ehf•thehr•os)* (free), *a;rsen (ahr•sehn)* (male) and *qh/lu (thee•lee)* (female); signifying the relationship that these adjectives are modifying the nouns and thus the fact, “all are one” in Christ Jesus. It is in this sense that we recognize the liberty that is in Christ as we note the Greek word *evleu,qeria (ehl•ehf•thehr•ee•ah)* rendered “freedom.” Note, it expresses the fact that there are no restrictions or barriers giving any advantages to or impediments against any, as none are deserving of their positioning therein. Thus all are equally accepted through our Lord Jesus Christ as all are on the same level of depravity within themselves and in need of the same measure of redemption by His grace and mercy. All are equally positioned and entitled to the same privileges in the Body regardless of race, ethnicity, social and economic status, or gender as there is no rank in its membership. Everyone upon whom the image and blood of Christ is affixed; is equipollent in every aspect.

Now this is in stark contrast to the elect entity, “the Commonwealth of Israel”, wherein there are definite unmovable lines of distinction as the Jews bear the privilege of being favored and esteemed over the Gentile subjects that will receive their portion through Israel. Thus in the earthly reign, there is the system of rank and classes along the lines of birth and blood lineage as well as gender

classifications as defined by the law and prophetic writings (Isaiah 19:23-25; Zechariah 8:22-23). In this sense there will be the continuous implementation of many things that are physically manifested as numerous customs will be operated on that basis (Isaiah 56:1-12). There are diver's references to lords and servants in the Kingdom gospel and its economy depicting differences in every manner of the millennial age as well as their physical eternal existence on the earth. Such is the order of those so blessed under the auspices of the Abrahamic and subsequent New Covenants. There will be a multiplicity of observances and even customs and rituals according to the Kingdom –Law principles and stipulations as outlined in Old Testament prophecy and the teachings of Jesus and the Kingdom apostles (Isaiah 19:23-25; Zechariah 14:21; Luke 22:29-30).

These distinctions in the earthly realm have been the source of much confusion to those who do not understand the distinction between the heavenly-spiritual and earthly-physical elect entities. These points out the difficulties that ensue when the distinct promises and messages of the Gospel of the Kingdom and its constituents; are amalgamated with those designed for the Gospel of the Grace of God and its constituents. In light of the extreme variation of existence between the elect entities abiding in the earthly sphere (New Jerusalem) verses the heavenly sphere (in Christ); it is critical to those called in this dispensation to prioritize the message of the Mystery as conveyed by the Apostle Paul to the Body Of Christ, in that it is not available elsewhere in the Scriptures.

Now we move to Galatians 3:29 from the King James Version, "And if ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise." And from the Greek Text, "And if you belong to Christ, then you are the seed of Abraham, heirs according to promise." Now one must be careful not to misconstrue that the wordage of this verse assigns members of the Body of Christ, the promises God made to Abraham in the Abrahamic Covenant. Here it should be clearly understood that even though the Kingdom and Grace Gospels entail different placement plans, yet there is only one hope of salvation, which is through the sacrificial death of Jesus Christ. It is only in this view that one can comprehend that the cogitation expressed by the Greek phrase *eiv de. u`mei/j Cristou/ (ee theh ee•mees Khrees•too)* rendered "and if you belong to Christ," refers to all who receive salvation (the elect) regardless of their placement status. Thus it is in this sense only that Paul conveys the Greek phrase *a;ra tou/ VAbraa.m spe,rma evste,( katV evpaggeli,an klhrono,moi (ahr•ah too Ahv•rah•ahm spehr•mah ehs•teh, kaht ehp•ahy•yehl•ee•ahn klee•ron•om•ee)* rendered "then you are the seed of Abraham, heirs according to promise." Here the thought conveyance is that all those who belong to Christ are heirs of salvation according to the promise of justification by faith. The focal point of the context is that the principle of salvation entails justification by the faithfulness of Jesus Christ, which can be traced back to Abraham; even his limited knowledge did not afford to him the understanding that the *spe,rma (spehr•mah)* (seed) is Christ.

Accordingly, those who are members of the Body of Christ are not related to Abraham in the flesh or in the sense of the Messiah and the promises of the earthly Kingdom of Jesus Christ sitting on the throne of David in Jerusalem. There are those who utilize this passage of scripture as well as others in teaching that the Church is the spiritual descendant of Israel through Abraham. Here it must be amply stated that the promises made in the Abrahamic and New covenants are in no way germane to those in the Grace Covenant. The hopes and aspirations of the Kingdom economy, as prophesized in the Old Testament and taught in the Synoptic Gospels as well as John; are distinct from those that are delineated in the Mystery, that was revealed to the Apostle Paul for the Body of Christ, the Church in the dispensation of grace.

## **PART II**

The Body of Christ is a new entity or new creation that was not known until it is revealed to Paul in the Mystery. It is the most glorious of all God's creation as its composition is entirely spiritual as opposed to physical. This is thoroughly exemplified in II Corinthians 5:16-17 as we view verse 16 from the King

James Version, "Wherefore henceforth know we no man after the flesh: yea, though we have known Christ after the flesh, yet now henceforth know we him no more." And from the Greek Text, "Therefore from now on we know no one according to the flesh; even though we have known Christ according to the flesh, but now we know Him so no longer." For contextual purposes, we note that in the antecedent verses 14 & 15, Paul emphasizes the significance of the sacrificial death of Christ, how all are identified with Him in Death, as He died on behalf of all believers. The message of the Gospel of the Grace of God begins with the fact that our salvation is based on the debt of sin having been fully paid by His death and we are identified with Him through spiritual baptism (Romans 1:16; 6:1-11).

It is from this plateau that the Grace Gospel focuses into the Spiritual-Heavenly sphere in the essence of Christ. In II Corinthians 5:16, the Greek phrase *avpo. tou/ nu/n (ah•po ton neen)* translated "from now on", may also be rendered "from the now", "from this point" or "from this time on." Here the Apostle Paul uses the Greek adverb *nu/n (neen)* translated "now", to denote a transfer or change from one condition or situation to another. In light of **Mystery Truth**, it is conceivable that he is referencing the transition to the Dispensation of Grace. The thought conveyance is that the period when Christ was known in His fleshly body, as recorded in the Synoptic Gospels has past. Thus the present (now) period entails a spiritual (non-physical) relationship in the Body of Christ. This forms our total association in Him but unfortunately, many of God's people seek to relate with Him in the physical sphere.

While incarnate in the flesh on earth, Jesus proclaimed the Gospel of the Messianic Kingdom, which was offered and rejected as documented in the first seven chapters of Acts. Thus His earthly, in the flesh ministry was according to Old Testament prophecy. In contrast, His present heavenly ministry is based in the spiritual realm as it is revealed in both its salvation and mystery aspects. Now He is currently seated at the right hand of God in Heaven as Head over the Church (His Body). Hence the statement, "even though we have known Christ according to the flesh," actually speaks of those who viewed and interfaced with Him while He was on earth, but this is of very little benefit to the recipients of grace in this age. To emphasize this, Paul uses the strong adversative conjunction *avlla. (ahl•lah)* rendered "but", as he states, "now we know Him so (in this manner) no longer", even as He (Christ) relates to the Body of Christ by a new message in a spiritual sphere.

It is the spiritual domain that is referenced as we move to II Corinthians 5:17 from the King James Version, "Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new." And from the Greek Text, "Therefore if anyone (is) in Christ, (he is) a new creation; the old passed away, behold, the new has (and is) come." Note the coordinating conjunction *wste (os•teh)* rendered "therefore", "thus" or as a consequence and result of what has been previously been stated. Here Paul is true to his policy of never vouching for or against anyone's salvation status, as he uses the subordinating conjunction *ei (ee)* rendered "if", only in distinguishing those who are "in Christ."

Observe that the Greek phrase *evn Cristw/ (ehn Khrees•to)* (in Christ), as used in this verse (17) is in the locative case denoting, in the sphere of. Here it refers to ones **position** in the Body, as it is used numerous times in Paul's epistles to denote the place of occupation or position of believers "in Christ" (Romans 3:24; 8:1,2,10,39; Ephesians 1:1,3,5,12,20). He also used it once regarding the Jews, who prior to the establishment of the Body of Christ designated Church; references them as being "in Christ" before him, i.e., in Jesus the Messiah (Romans 16:7; I Timothy 1:16). Thus to be in Christ implies that those redeemed through the blood of Christ and called in the present dispensation now occupy a position in the Body of Christ (Ephesians 1:7; 2:13; 3:21).

Now in light of noting that those who are in Christ during this dispensation of grace are in the Body of Christ and are new creations, we focus on the next phrase. The Greek word *kri,sij(ktees•ees)* rendered "creation", is used generally in the New Testament Scriptures to depict God's work in creation. In this sense, *kainh. kri,sij (keh•nee ktees•ees)* translated "a new creation", indicates that God sovereignly designed certain designated ones (in Christ) in eternity

according to the predetermination of His glorious Body, to be manifested and exist in time. This new creation is not in essence comprised of the outward physical divulgence of reformed humanity but the inward spiritual composition of the nature of Christ.

In this vein, it denotes a more tender and close union between the Head (Christ) and His Body (the Church)! The implication is that all our support is from Him, all our strength is derived from Him and further conveys that we shall be partakers of His fullness and share in His felicity and glory. Thus the scope of Paul's cogitation in the usage of the conjunction *wste (os•teh)* rendered "therefore", infers that anyone is a new creation who is in Christ the redeemer, whose work has constituted such a change. The universal affirmation is that those "in Christ" entail a complete change of nature, which is exhibited in more than a change in views and feelings, as this is not what makes it proper to designate the Body of believers, a "new creation." As of ourselves we are not new, no matter what we have been before; whether moral or immoral, infidels or speculative believers, amiable or debased, sensual and polluted; these at best are only outward manifestations of the demonstrative contrast of individuals in their conduct rather than the constituent of the transition itself. In other words, these changes in views and attitude are bi-products but not the essence of the "new creation" itself.

Thus, the "new man" (Ephesians 4:24; Colossians 3:10) is conveyed as more than just the moral change of habits and behavior from the (old) human creature. The primary idea is not what one ought to live as nor is it limited to what ought to be (which is certainly correct and desirable), but it is in fact what one **is** continually in Christ. In essence, the new man possesses the nature of Christ, which serves as a motivator to conduct oneself according to what one is in Him. It is in this sense that we must differentiate spiritual from physical creation. When we generally think of creation, we mostly focus on its act in the natural application or capacity of the entire universe and mankind in the earthy sphere (Mark 10:6; 13:19; II Peter 3:4). Contrariwise, it is used in II Corinthians 5:17 in a moral sense as the phrase "new creation" is equipollent to the expression "the new man, who according to God has been created in righteous and holiness of the truth" (Ephesians 4:24). This depicts a substantive change in the vein of the spiritual nature, which is produced by the righteousness of Christ. Thus this change, so to speak, is indicative of one who has become totally new in nature, having no resemblance to the old.

In this view, the glorified body has no inferences of the fleshly body. In essence, a new creation denotes an eternal spiritual entity that has been extricated from depraved humanity. In this sense, one cannot view the new man in the pattern of the transformation of the flesh, but rather the resurrection of that which was dead. Now the mode and method in which it is done is not disclosed to human intellect, as the process conveyed is at best figurative in the languages of men. Accordingly, the phrase "new creation" in true evidence, delineates the following:

(1). That there is an exertion of divine power in the conversion of the depraved sinner as realistic as in the act of creating the world out of nothing and this is indispensable in the spiritual realm as contrasted to the physical.

(2). That a change is produced so great as to make it proper to say that one is indeed new, yet the inference is more than new views, motives, principles, objects and plans of this life. For instance, if the drunkard reforms or the licentious becomes virtuous, there is impropriety in saying that one is a new creation on this basis; even though such one may not be considered the same person that they previously represented.

(3). That in the conversion of a sinner, there is a complete change in nature from the abyss of depravity to the quintessence of righteousness (Romans 10:7; Ephesians 3:18). This transformation is a change so deep, entire and abiding that it is proper to classify such as an "hereunto before unrevealed creation" of God – a work of the divine power as determined and gloriously conceived in eternity before He created all things out of nothing. It is in this sense of His handiwork wherein the statement in Ephesians 2:10 documents that, "we are His doings (workmanship)." There is no other



change manifested on earth that is so impactful, radical and thorough as this transformation, as there is no other where there is so much propriety in ascribing it exclusively to the mighty and glorious power of the grace of God and its workings to bring about the desired end (Romans 1:16; I Corinthians 1:18-24; 2:5; II Corinthians 13:4; II Thessalonians 1:11; II Timothy 1:8). Hence the terminology “new creation” depicts much more than reformation of depraved humanity, as physical transitions are insufficient to explicate this phenomena.

Now as we continue our progression in the exegesis of II Corinthians 5:17, we focus on the Greek phrase *ta avrcai/a parh/lqen* (**tah ahr•kheh•ah pah•eel•thehn**) rendered “the old passed away”. Here this conveyance can be viewed as a metamorphous both in the spiritual sphere of the new nature as well as its manifesting effects in the physical sphere. In the latter sense, it denotes that the thinking and living associated with our former lifestyle have passed away. As important as this is in the vein of its testimony, it must be epistemologically internalized as development in maturity cascading to a crescendo of ones calling (I Corinthians 7:20; Ephesians 1:18; 4:4, 7; Philippians 3:14; II Thessalonians 1:11; II Timothy 1:9). Note the Greek word *parh/lqen* (**pah•eel•thehn**) rendered “passed away”, is in the aorist tense, denoting that which no longer exists and has departed.

In the spiritual sphere, everything associated with the natural man, i.e., living and working in the flesh; has ceased or “passed away” in that such has died with one’s new relation to (in) Christ (Romans 8:29; Philippians 3:9). In the physical sphere, the waning of such is in proportion to one’s progressive development of maturing to the image of Christ (Colossians 3:5-10). One of the subtlest yet most effective of operations of the Holy Spirit in the practical walk of the believer is one’s growth and development in Him. Indicative of this growth is the discipline that is exercised through the reduction of exhibiting former prejudices, opinions, habits, unhealthy attachments as well as selfishness, inordinate love of the world, sensuality, pride, vanity, levity and unspiritual ambitions. This progressive development is in essence the outward manifestation that a godly transformation has transpired.

We now conclude the last portion of II Corinthians 5:17 with the Greek phrase *ivdou. ge,gonen kaina* (**eeth•oo yeh•gon•een keh•nah**) rendered “behold, the new has (and is) come.” Here the Greek interjectional particle *ivdou. (eeth•oo)* (behold) calls attention to the fact of the statement that follows, i.e., “look and take note”----- *ge,gonen kaina (yeh•gon•een keh•nah)*(the new has (and is) come). The thought conveyance is that the old has vanished and new emerged.

In the spiritual sphere, that which had formally existed has now dematerialized and transitioned into a new composition, i.e., a transformation from fleshly to spiritual. In this sense, note the Greek verb *ge,gonen (yeh•gon•een)* (has (and is) come) is in the indicative mood, which factually certifies that the new creation is spiritual in essence as contrasted to physical or fleshly. This enthalls the nature of divine regeneration, which entails righteousness, holiness, goodness, pureness as well as all the attributes of godliness. There is limitation to the description of what God has accomplished in this regard, as all human languages are insufficiently equipped to depict the glory that has been assigned to the “new creation” entity, i.e., the Body of (in) Christ” (Ephesians 4:24).

In the physical sphere, this transformation is manifested by one’s change in lifestyle. In this sense, note the Greek verb *ge,gonen (yeh•gon•een)* (has (and is) come) is in the perfect tense, which infers that the basis for a new way of living has come and is in existence, as each believer builds upon this foundation (I Corinthians 3:11; Ephesians 4:22-24). This is exemplified in one’s revised comprehension of the true purpose of life and principles of all that occurs. This new cogitation structures all things in perfect view of this mindset as ones understanding is consecrated to new objectives. The result of such is that the earthy body is employed in new services to God as the heart forms new attachments. Nothing could be more exemplarily striking of the facts of conversion than this; nothing could more clearly document the feelings of the newborn’s soul, as all is new.

In the expression of the new life, there are new views of God, even Jesus Christ; new views of this world and “the world to come”; new views of truth and of vocation; as every aspect of existence is

seen in a new light. This is especially exhilarating to an informed convert, as one receives true revelation of the Word of God. In these instances, the Bible seems to be a new book, and though one may have often read it before, yet it had not been adequately perceived. With this knowledge in hand, the entire face of existence is renovated in one's mind as the total work of God and His Glory is exhibited in one's spirit. Even in this earthy sphere the heavenly view is filled with new wonders as all things now show forth the praise of the glory of God. Even the very countenances of life encounters engender renewed faith and hope as those things that are temporarily seen, are overshadowed by the eternal unseen.

As we observe one final inference of grammar in II Corinthians 5:17, we note that some of the Greek manuscripts, i.e., the Majority Text have editorially inserted the wording "all things," *ta. pa,nta (tah pahh•dah)* to this verse, translating the phrase, "all things have become new." In this conveyance the cogitation is that all the new things are exchanged for the old things. This view is limited, as it does not extend above the horizontal plane. A more effective statement in this view would be the emphasis that "all the new things replace the old things." The Apostle Paul's directive to the churches at Ephesus and Colosse conveys the unfolding of one's growth and development in proportion to God's graceful implantation of His word in one's heart. In Ephesians, Paul's statement encompasses strictly the vertical spiritual viewpoint; whereas his statement to the Colossians embroiders the positive influence that spiritual knowledge of the Body of Christ imparts to the horizontal physical workings thereof.

First we consider the statement of Ephesians 4:23-24 as we view verse 23 from the King James Version, "And be renewed in the spirit of your mind." And from the Greek Text, "and to be renewed in the spirit of your mind." In the antecedent verse (22), Paul had admonished them to put off the "old man"; denoting the humanly depraved one who is continuously corrupted by deceitful lusts. Here in this verse (23), his instructions are to be renewed in the spirit of ones mind. Observe that the Greek word *avnaneou/sqai(ahn•ahn•eh•oos•theh)* rendered "renewed", is derived from the Greek preposition *avna (ahn•ah)* prefixed to *neoj (neh•os)* as it literally means to "new up", hence to renew, make new again and to renovate. This infinitive is in the present tense, which means this renewing process exudes a continuous progression through ones lifespan. Also this infinitive is in the passive voice, denoting the fact that this is not a humanistic self produced renewal but it is the workings of the Holy Spirit (Romans 8:4-6; 12:2).

As we observe the Greek phrase *tw/ pneu,mati tou/ noo.j u`mw/n (to pnehv•mahr•tee too noos emon)* rendered "in the spirit of your mind", we utilize the genitive case of possession to expand the translation to convey the statement that one be renewed "in the spirit, which belongs to the mind, which belongs to you." Here one can envisage the spirit and mind in concert, as they are associated communication links. In this sense, the spirits of redeemed men receive information from the Holy Spirit and intellectually impress the Word of God upon their mind (Romans 8:16). This is manifested in terms one's adherence to the knowledge of what one is "in Christ" as a member of the Body. This transpires as the Spirit of God ceaselessly endeavors to renew the spirits/minds of His elect into His own likeness and image attribute-wise.

Now we examine Ephesians 4:24 from the King James Version, "And that you put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness." And from the Greek Text, "and put on the new man who according to God has been created in righteousness and holiness of the truth." The conveyance of this verse must be viewed strictly in the spiritual vein, in that all references to "the new man" are in the spiritual sphere. The opening coordinating conjunction of this verse basically states that even as the old man has identified with Christ in death and is to be put off; likewise the new man, who is a new creation, is to be put on (Galatians 6:15). Here the Greek infinitive *evndu,sasqa (ehn•thees•ahs•theh)* translated "put on", is derived from *evn (ehn)* and *du,o(thee•o)* and basically means to get into, hence to clothe or invest into. When the aorist tense is evoked, the conveyance is that the new man is to be (having been) put on, as this is a once-and-for-all transaction. The use of the middle voice indicates that this putting on is empowered by the Holy Spirit.

Upon close examination of the characteristics of the “new man”, we note that the Greek word *kaino.n* (**keh•non**) is used to depict such one in the sense of an individual believer in Christ. Granting that the new man and new creation are equipollent even to the extent of their signification, it logically follows that the putting on of the new man, spiritually speaking, is a single-past completed occurrence. Note, the manifestation of one practically adapting to the image of the new man positionally placed in Christ is a continuous process, however this does not negate the fact that those so designated in His Body are indeed new creations. This magnifies the work of grace in that even as the old man designates the Adamic nature and its deeds, likewise the new man designates the opposite, i.e., those who have been made the very righteousness of God in Christ with righteous fruit. Thus when an individual is manifestly saved, it is a testimony that the new man has been sovereignly placed in eternity and the believer is (outside of his doings), a new creation in Christ by the Holy Spirit (II Corinthians 5:17; Galatians 6:15; Titus 3:5).

The most precise definition of the new man that could be conveyed is documented by the Greek phrase *to.n kata. qeo.n ktisqe,nta evn dikaios,nh| kai. o`sio,thti th/j avlhqei,aj* (**ton kah•tah Theh•on kteesth•ehn•dah ehn theek•eh•o•see•nee keh os•ee•ot•ee•tee tees ahl•ee•thee•ahs**) rendered “who according to God has been created in righteousness and holiness of the truth,” as it may be looked at in apposition with the Greek phrase *to.n kaino.n a;nqrwpon* (**ton keh•non ahnth•ro•pon**) rendered “the new man.” This statement makes it clear that God exclusively has created the new man, i.e., the one who *kata. qeo.n ktisqe,nta* (**kah•tah Theh•on kteesth•ehn•dah**) rendered “according to God has been created.” Observe that the Greek preposition *kata. (kah•tah)*(according to) as used with the accusative case implies that this new man has been created in keeping with and conforming to God’s design, which means he has been created in accordance with God’s blueprint. Note, the Greek participle *ktisqe,nta (kteesth•ehn•dah)* (has been created) is in the aorist tense and passive voice; denoting that in eternity, the new man was instantaneously fashioned as potentially God’s greatest accomplishment in creation, which will ultimately be displayed before His enemies, the principalities and powers (Ephesians 3:10).

Now we note that this new man was created by God *evn dikaios,nh| kai. o`sio,thti th/j avlhqei,aj* (**ehn theek•eh•o•see•nee keh os•ee•ot•ee•tee tees ahl•ee•thee•ahs**) rendered “in righteousness and holiness of the truth.” Here the Greek nouns *dikaios,nh| (theek•eh•o•see•nee)* keh *o`sio,thti (os•ee•ot•ee•tee)* rendered “in righteousness and holiness are obviously in the locative case and as such, indicate that the new man was created in the sphere of righteousness and holiness, which denotes that these are intrinsic characteristics; thus placing its inception in eternity. In every way image-wise (spiritually speaking), the new man is absolutely righteous and holy in Christ before God. This does not mean, however, that this righteousness and holiness is going to be fully reflective in one’s lifestyle, as one’s good character and conduct could never fully exemplify a certified representation of the new man or the new creation itself. The fact that the new man is absolutely righteous and holy thus forms the premise and becomes the motivation for growth and development in progression to maturity. The process is ----- because one is righteous and holy in Christ (the new man); one is exhorted to exhibit such conduct in one’s lifestyle. In essence, the appeal is to display in character what one actually is “in Christ”, as it testifies to the earthy function of those “having been created in Christ Jesus for (on the basis of) good works” (Ephesians 2:10).

The final expression of Ephesians 4:24 identifies the actual source of this righteousness and holiness, i.e., *th/j avlhqei,aj*(**tees ahl•ee•thee•ahs**) rendered “of the truth.” This phrase is in the genitive case, which denotes possession and conveys the idea that these attributes (righteousness and holiness) all belong to the truth. The most common usage of the word “truth” *avlhqei,aj (ahl•ee•thee•ahs)* pertains to the Mystery (volume of truth), the message for the Body of Christ, the Church (Colossians 1:5-6; II Timothy 2:15, 25). Here we must be apprised that the righteousness and holiness intrinsic in the new man are according to the standard of the Truth of the Mystery, the truth that resides in the Grace Contract, the Gospel of the Grace of God (Acts 20:24; Galatians 1:6). It is in this view that the Apostle

Paul exhorts in the following verses, those characteristics that are conducive to the new man, who was positioned in the Body of Christ in eternity (Ephesians 4 25-32).

### **PART III**

Now we move to the contents of Paul's epistle to the church at Colosse as we focus on Colossians Chapter three. Here we reference the gleanings of verses one through four in the document titled "Our Eternal Relationship With God" as they are utilized as a basis of appeal for disciplined decorum and propriety; as such gives testimony to the intrinsic characteristics of the new creation in the Body of Christ (Colossians 3:5-9). Hence we survey the context of Colossians 3:10 from the King James Version, "And have put on the new man, which is renewed in knowledge after the image of him that created him." And from the Greek Text, "and having put on the new (man), which is being renewed unto a perfect knowledge corresponding to the image of Him who created him." In the previous verse (9) Paul caps off the delineation of inappropriate activities in the flesh with the statement "having put off the old man with his practices." This phrase emphasizes the fact that the old man has been put to death identification-wise in concert with the sacrifice of Christ. In this sense, all that is associated with the mortal body and the functions of its members (of the flesh) upon this earth are likewise counted to be dead (Romans 6:11). Here note that the Greek participle *avnakainou,menon* (**ahp•ehk•thees•ah•meh•nee**) rendered "having put off", is in the aorist tense denoting that which has previously occurred in those who have died with Christ.

This is the basis for Paul's plea for moral conduct, i.e., because the old man has died and has been crucified with Christ, as it is in this view that he refers to him as "having put off." The identity *to.n palaio.n a;nqrwpo* (**ton pahl•ee•on ahnth•ro•pon**) rendered "the old man", denotes the characteristics of human depravity in their expressions. Observe that the message is, as members of the Body of Christ, one should be disassociated from the old man *su.n taij pra,xesin auvtou* (**seen tees prahx•eh•seen ahf•too**) rendered "with his practices." Thus the clear example of reproach against immorality is the command to refrain based on the instructions that one has been identified with the death of Christ through faith.

Now as we focus on the conveyance of Colossians 3:10, we again note its Greek rendering "and having put on the new (man), which is being renewed unto a perfect knowledge corresponding to the image of Him who created him." Here we certify the fact that the new man is one who is delivered out of death unto life in Christ. Note that the Greek phrase *evndusa,menoi to.n ne,on* (**ehn•thees•ah•meh•nee ton neh•on**) rendered "having put on the new", in light of the context; obviously speak of the new man in contrast to the old man. In this view, believers have two natures: the old (depraved), which is synonymous with the flesh and the new, which is synonymous with the spirit. The Greek adjective **neh•on** rendered "new" is descriptive of ones identification with Christ in His death (Colossians 2:10-13). This is an "in Christ" existence that was actualized when it was determined in eternity, which depicts the true nature of regeneration.

Note, Paul makes a very important descriptive statement regarding the new man, i.e., he is renewed. It is critical to the context at this point to properly interpret the participle *avnakainou,menon* (**ahn•ahk•eh•noo•meh•non**), which some translations have rendered "is being renewed", while others have opted for "is renewed." The difference between these two renderings sets forth the explication of the state and status of the new man, as to: (1) whether he is fully matured or in the process of maturation, (2) whether he is a spiritual glorified entity eternally positioned in the Body of Christ or a combination spiritual/physical entity progressively being perfected while moving toward an eternal state of glory, and (3) whether he is exclusively in the invisible sphere totally disassociated from the depraved nature or some physical representation in the visible sphere;

evolutionarily matriculating in proportion to progression in conduct and attitude. As we review these contrasting premises, note that both are imposed yet they cannot possibly be antinomic (concurrently contrasting and consenting). Thus the new man is not eclectic, i.e., he is either one or the other but not both.

The surest method of determining what actually depicts the composition of the new man entails the consistency of the scriptures in describing Him. In this regard, note the exegetical context of Ephesians 2:13-15, as it obviously defines the composition, state and status of those who are positioned in the Body of Christ. Here we view verse 15 from the King James Version, "Having abolished in his flesh the enmity, even the law of the commandments contained in ordinances; for to make in himself of twain one new man, so making peace." And from the Greek Text, "the enmity, in His flesh, having abolished the law of commandments in decrees, that he might create in Himself the two into one new man, making peace." Here we have before us the entire makeup of the Body of Christ, the church in the dispensation of Grace, both Jews and Gentiles. This encompasses the complete composition of all those elected and placed in His Body.

Next, as we ascertain the new man's status, we note from the Greek Text the statement of verse 13, "but now in Christ Jesus you, those once being far off, have been made near by the blood of Christ." Here the Greek adverb *nuni* (**nee•nee**) rendered "now", documents the status of those who are in Christ Jesus as contrasted with those who are without Him (being far off). The phrase *evn Cristw/| Vhsou* (**ehn Khrees•to Ee•ee•soo**) rendered "in Christ Jesus", is in the locative case, which means that their spiritual position was now in the sphere, location and centered in Christ; thus it is an indissoluble identity (I Corinthians 1:2; II Corinthians 5:17; Galatians 3:28; Colossians 1:4). Observe that exclusively "the blood of Christ" has accomplished this.

In verse 14, the Greek phrase *Auvto.j ga,r evstin h` eivrh,nh h`mw/n* (**Ahf•tos gahr ehs•teen ee ee•ree•nee ee•mon**) rendered "for He Himself is our peace" conveys the fact that Christ *Auvto.j* (**Ahf•tos**) (Himself), as the sin-substitute is the basis for the new man's position in Christ. The statement that He Himself is "our peace" (**ee•mon ee•ree•nee**) emphasizes WHO HE IS, which determines the value of His Blood to effectuate peace. Here the plural possessive pronoun *Auvto.j* (**Ahf•tos**) (Himself), as used in this context, certifies that the new man owns and possesses Christ as His peace. Finally, as we ascertain the new man's status, we note from the Greek Text the statement "who has made both one." Here the Greek phrase *o` poihsaj* (**o pee•ee•sahs**) rendered "who has made" consists of an article combined with an aorist participle in the nominative case, as it may also be rendered "the one who has made." This denotes completed action in the past (in eternity) wherein Christ was the one who *poihsaj* (**pee•ee•sahs**)(made), thus produced, constituted, and created both Jews and Gentiles into the Body unto the end that they might be one.

Now we document the state of the new man as we in detail exegete Ephesians 2:15 from the Greek Text, "the enmity, in His flesh, having abolished the law of commandments in decrees, that he might create in Himself the two into one new man, making peace." From the antecedent verses, we have established the eternal workings of Jesus Christ, in "having abolished the law of commandments in decrees". Here it is very important to note the sphere in which this destruction occurred, i.e., "in His flesh" or "by means of His flesh", as the instrumental case would imply. Hence, Paul is affirming that Christ *katarghsaj* (**kaht•ahry•ee•sahs**) rendered "abolished", annulled, nullified and abrogated the Mosaic Law consisting of commandments, which were fulfilled through various ordinances or decrees. Thus we focus on the reason that this was done ----- in order "that He (Jesus Christ) might create in Himself the two into one new man." In effect, all was accomplished such that something new might be brought into existence, as He created the new man (both Jew and Gentile) in the sphere of Himself.

Note the Greek verb *ktesh* (**ktees•ee**) rendered "create, when used in the New Testament chiefly refers to the work of God (Matthew 19:4; Ephesians 3:9; I Timothy 4:3). In this context, it is used in reference to Jesus Christ, as the implication is that He is God (Colossians 1:16). Thus this created act by God (Jesus Christ) is situated *evn auvtw/* (**ehn ahf•to**) rendered "in Himself", as this phrase in the

locative case indicates that Jesus performed this creation in the sphere, location and essence of His nature. Accordingly the focus of the new man (creation) is “in Christ”, in His presence and in His purpose. Hence the Greek phrase, *eivj e[na kaino.n a;nqrwpon (ees ehn•ah keh•non ahnth•ro•pon)* rendered “into one new man” defines this purpose. The thought is that it was God’s purpose to join together both Jews and Gentiles into a single new creation. Here a more literal translation would be “unto the end of one new man”, as the preposition *eivj (ees)* utilized with the accusative case, focuses on the end or object of this creative function. The Greek adjective *kaino.n (keh•non)* denotes that which was previously unknown and has been now manifested into existence. The Greek word *a;nqrwpon(ahnth•ro•pon)* (man), as used in this context, with *kaino.n (keh•non)* (new) preceding it forms the metaphorical connotation “new man”, depicting the Body of Christ, the Church. Thus the terminologies “new man and “new creation” should be construed as congruent entities and are thus synonymous in the Scriptures.

The final Greek phrase in Ephesians 2:15, *poiw/n eivrh,nh(pee•on ee•ree•neen)* rendered “making peace”, consists of the present participle *poiw/n (pee•on)* (making), which may also be translated producing, establishing and executing; plus the noun *eivrh,nh (ee•ree•neen)* (peace), which depicts a state of tranquility, harmony and peace. In this light, the phrase clearly indicates that it is Christ alone who has produced and established the harmonious relationship of His elect for this dispensation, i.e., both Jews and Gentiles, positioned in the His Body, the Church. From this we affirm that it was necessary for the Law to be abolished in the process of the manifestation of Jesus Christ establishing this peace within the “new creation”, as it is limited to those who are in the sphere of “in Him”, namely those chosen and elected before the creation of the world (Acts 13:48; Ephesians 1:4; Colossians 3:12).

Now as we once again focus on Colossians 3:10 with the entity of the new man fully defined, it removes the stigma that many have attached in certifying the status of one’s salvation through the manifestations of outward actions. This is confusing to those who do not understand that the new man by God’s decree is complete in Christ but he is yet dwelling in a fleshly body on the earth. It is only in this sense that we view continuous spiritual maturation and development as it relates to the individual believer. The implication is that the new man is closely associated with the mind of the elect for there can be no other plausible conception of spiritual and intellectual growth apart from the mind. In this verse, the Greek participle *avnakainou,menon (ahn•ahk•eh•noo•meh•non)* rendered “is being renewed” or “is being restored”, is in regards to reflecting the identification of the new position. It is not the new man who is continually renewed but the mind of the believer through the knowledge of God’s word. Here the use of the present tense indicates that this is a continuous process that begins when believers are manifestly saved and continues throughout their lifetime.

In this sense, as we focus on the renewal process, note that it is the Holy Spirit who is producing this spiritual renewing as inferred by the passive voice. Thus the Spirit of God, through the use of His word, daily functions to mature the mind of believers. Observe that the passive voice also depicts exclusion of all self-efforts, which effectively cancels out the Doctrine of Asceticism, in that the development of the elect in every respect is totally the work of God. The Greek phrase *eivj evpi,gnwsin (ees ehp•eeg•no•seen)* rendered “unto a perfect knowledge”, describes the methodology employed in developing a spiritual mind in the believer as he matures (Ephesians 4:24).

Now we note the final Greek phrase in the verse, namely *eivj evpi,gnwsin katV eivko,na tou/ kti,santoj auvto,n (kaht ee•kon•ah too ktees•ahn•dos ahf•ton)* rendered “corresponding to the image of Him who created him.” This expression gives description to the essence of what the new man is liken unto, i.e., he is in essence created in the image or likeness of the one who brought into existence the new creation (Christ). Now contrary to what some teach, this statement couldn’t possibly be evincing a replica of Adam before his fall. Even in his state of innocence as the first man, there is no basis for this conferment, in that he is designated “out of the earth, earthy” (I Corinthians 15:47) and “as we have borne the image of the earthy” (I Corinthians 15:49). In stark contrast, the image of the new man or new creation, evinces a replica of the second man who is designated “the Lord out of heaven”(I

Corinthians 15:47) and “we shall bear the image of the heavenly” (I Corinthians 15:49). This is consistent with the conveyance of I Corinthians 15:48, “Such as the earthy, such also are those who are earthy, and such as the heavenly, such also are those who are heavenly.” God’s sovereign purpose engenders the new man (creation) confirmed in righteousness and holiness of the truth (Ephesians 4:24). This is not possible in the physical sphere in that “the first man Adam was made a living soul” (I Corinthians 15:45). Thus this is only accomplishable in the spiritual sphere wherein “The last man Adam was man a life giving spirit” (I Corinthians 15:45), as “the spiritual was not first but the natural, then the spiritual” (I Corinthians 15:46); speaking concerning the order of God’s decree.

The distinction of the physical (natural) man from the spiritual man gives testimony to the fact that the new creation is not accomplishable through conversion of the old but resurrection of the new. Thus “it is sown a natural body, it is raised a spiritual body,” (as) “There is a natural body, there is also a spiritual body” (I Corinthians 15: 44). Accordingly we view the two-fold workings of the Spirit of God on behalf of His elect:

(1) The new creation (man) confirmed in righteousness and holiness of the truth, fully positioned in the Body of Christ, which was and is an eternal occurrence!

(2) The new convert fully manifested and identified with the Body of Christ, yet presently tempted in the fleshly body physically, but progressively developing and maturing in the mind (spirit) in time, as such one identifies with the eternal occurrence!

Now as we progress in the discourse, we observe the contents of Colossians 3:11 from the King James Version, “Where there is neither Greek nor Jew, circumcision nor uncircumcision, Barbarian, Scythian, bond nor free: but Christ is all, and in all.” And from the Greek Text, “Where one is not a Greek and a Jew, circumcision and uncircumcision, a barbarian, a Scythian, a slave, a free man, but Christ is the all and in all.” In exegeting this verse, we note its similarity to Galatians 3:28 and I Corinthians 12:13, wherein it eliminates all physical distinctions, in that the Greek coordinating conjunction *οπου* (**op•oo**) rendered “where”, identifies the obvious situation wherein such is the order. Here it is noted that the Body of Christ is the only accommodation wherein all racial, national, social and economic distinctions are absolutely non-existent (Romans 1:14-16; 10:12-13; I Corinthians 12:13; Galatians 3:27-29). The basic focus of this verse is exemplified by the Greek phrase *avlla. İta.Đ pa,nta kai. evn pa/sin Cristo,j* (**ahl•lah tah pahn•dah keh ehn pahs•een Khees•tos**), which is literally rendered “but the all and in all, Christ.” Another rendering of this could be versed “the all and in all is Christ”, as the identity of all is *İta.Đ pa,nta (tah pahn•dah)* (the all), *Cristo,j (Khees•tos)* (Christ) *evn pa/sin (ehn pahs•een)* (in all), thus all members of the Body discard all other distinctions, and are known only as those “in Christ.” In this view, CHRIST IS ALL, as He is the essence of all prerogatives, blessings and absorbs in Himself all that comprise justification, sanctification and glorification (I Corinthians 1:30; 3:21-23; Galatians 3:28).

Thus the church is a spiritual domicile, as the earthly body is a natural one (II Corinthians 5:1-2). God utilizes the natural body, which we can see, feel and understand, to function as a spiritual mirror; revealing by reflection what we who are yet in the flesh would manifestly imitate. Using this physical metaphor, God is able to reveal to us the nature and operation of His spiritual habitation, the church. The view of the natural dwelling entails all parts of the body from eye to toe, lung to liver, heart to hamstring, functioning by the authority of the head. All body parts, seen or unseen, are kept functioning and are sustained by the will of the head. Each individual body part, small or great, is accountable to obey the head. The same holds true in the spiritual Body, the church; each member is accountable directly to Christ and each member's life is drawn from Him. There is no chain of command wherein one-member reports to another in a corporate mode, who in turn reports to other components etc., but in the Body of Christ, this does not hold true, as each member reports to the head.

What is true is that life is distributed throughout, member-to-member. If the flow of life is cut off to any member, it will perish but we must remember that we receive this life flow (blood) from the direct source, Christ (the Head). So then we receive life through the functions of the church, as our authority always comes to us directly from the head. In the natural body, the finger does not receive the command to move from the hand, it receives it from the head and the same is true for the hand or arm, etc. The finger of the hand is however dependent on the hand for its life flow. If we pinch off this life flow (blood), interrupting it between the hand and finger, the finger will die. Thus we, as the members of the Body of Christ are conjoined to each other and under the authority of the Head, which imparts to all parts ongoing spiritual life. The health and power of the Spiritual Body, the Church, is exclusively invested in its only reliable source from which it has been perfectly created, and it is void of any flaws and insusceptible to the interruption of the flow of life that could weaken the members. Thus, there is no sense or degree of efficiency that could be quantitatively expressed in terms of its bare necessities as its efficacy is invested in its creator and maker, Christ. In this view, we focus on the attributes of the Head, Jesus Christ and who He is, indeed. To correctly assess this, we note that He is God as testified to by the fact that “He (God) was pleased for all the fullness to dwell in Him” (Colossians 1:19).

## PART IV

In the sense of this conveyance, we exegete the context of Colossians 1:15–20, as well as 2:9–13, as these verses of Scripture in great detail testify what the essence of Christ entails. Here we begin with Colossians 1:15 from the King James Version, “Who is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of every creature.” And from the Greek Text, “Who is the image of the invisible God, the first-born of all creation.” This verse gives us two important facts describing who Jesus Christ is. First, He is the image of God who is invisible to the eyes of men. Note the opening Greek phrase *ojj evstin eivkw.n tou/ qeou/ tou/ avora,tou* (**os ehs•teen ee•kon too Theh•oo too ah•or•aht•oo**) which is literally rendered, “who is the image of God the invisible”, conveys the fact that that He is not comprehensible in the physical or natural sense. Here the Greek noun *eivkw.n* (**ee•kon**) rendered “image”, is in the nominative case denoting it as the subject of the phrase, as it connotes the meaning to be like, i.e., the likeness, replica or the expression of.

Corroboration of this is found in John 1:18, wherein it is stated (GNT) that no one has ever seen God but that *monogenh.j qeo.j o, [ui`o,j]* (**mon•oy•ehn•ees Theh•os o [Yee•os]**) rendered “the only begotten God (Son),” *o` w`n eivj to.n ko,lpon tou/ patro.j* (**o on ees ton kol•pon too paht•ros**) rendered “who is on (in) the bosom of the Father,” *evkei/noj evxhgh,sato* (**ehk•ee•nos ehx•eey•ee•sah•to**) rendered “Him (He) manifested.” In II Corinthians 4:4, the Apostle Paul affirms that Christ is the image of God. Also in I Corinthians 11:7, the conveyance is that the elect, as a new creation in Christ, was created in God’s image and is renewed in the mind daily according to (dominated by) the knowledge of the image of such ones creator (Colossians 3:10). Thus God’s ultimate purpose for the believer’s walk is change unto the end that each one might mirror (in conduct) the perfect (mature) image of Christ, who is the very image of God (cf. II Corinthians 3:18; I Corinthians 15:49). Hence, Christ is the image and manifestation of the invisible God, the Father, as certified by the testimony of our Lord in John 14:9 wherein He states, “the one who has seen me has seen the Father.”

The second fact concerning Jesus Christ is that He is the *prwto,tokoj pa,shj kti,sewj* (**pro•tot•ok•os pahs•ees ktees•eh•os**) rendered “first-born of all creation.” In light of understanding that all things were created by means of and through the eternal Christ, this is affirmation that He pre-existed before anything else existed. Here we observe that the Greek word *prwto,tokoj* (**pro•tot•ok•os**) rendered “first-born”, may be used to speak of a child born first in a given family (Luke 2:7; Hebrew 11:28); however, the majority usage of this term in the New Testament (five times out of eight), is in reference to Jesus Christ. This is stated in terms of it being God’s purpose in establishing Him that He might be



first among believers conformed to the image of His Son (Romans 8:29). Note that “first-born” is used twice as a proper name, once of the eternal Christ (cf. Hebrews 1:6) and once of the believers (cf. Hebrew 12:23). Thus it is established that it emphasizes in the various usages that which is first or prioritized in eternity and in time respectively. Hence there can be no separation of the essence of the Godhead, in that Paul’s epistles consistently present Jesus Christ as God in His role of Sonship, as “first-born conveys the design of such (cf. Romans 1:4; Ephesians 3:19; Colossians 2:9; 3:3). Accordingly, the deity of Christ is cogently documented and the terminology “first-born” emphasizes the fact that Christ existed prior to the creation of the universe and all that is in it. This is in concert with the workings of God’s sovereign purpose prior to the creation of the universe, i.e., the existence of the eternal Christ (Ephesians 1:4-5).

Now we move to Colossians 1:16 from the King James Version, “For by him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether *they be* thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by him, and for him.” And from the Greek Text, “because all things were created by Him, in the heavens and upon the earth, visible and invisible things, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities; all things were created through Him and unto Him.” This verse begins with the phrase *ofti evn auytw/ evkti, sqh ta. pa,nta (ot•ee ehn ahf•to eh•kteesth•ee tah pahn•dah)* rendered “because all things were created by Him” utilizing the instrumental case denoting “by means of Him” or it could be interpreted “because all things were created in Him”, utilizing the locative case denoting “in the sphere of Him.”

The Greek verb *evkti, sqh (eh•kteesth•ee)* rendered “created”, conveys the connotation “to make” or “to form” something out of nothing (I John 1:3). Note that this is exclusively the description of the work of God. Here one can observe the fact that all things were created by means of Jesus Christ, the following expressions detail the extensiveness of what His creation entails, i.e., heavens, earth, including the visible and invisible things, engendering thrones, dominions, rulers and authorities. In light of this information, regardless of where there is existence in the universe, whether upon the earth or in outer space, all the surroundings were created by and in Jesus Christ. Hence, nothing exists in the universe apart from Christ having created it; whether it is so minute that it cannot be seen or so gargantuan that it cannot be comprehended (John 1:3).

The statement of the latter phrase of Colossians 1:16 *ta. pa,nta diV auytou/ kai. eivj auyto.n e;ktistai (tah pahn•dah thee ahf•too keh ees ahf•ton eh•ktees•teh)* is rendered “all things were created through Him and unto Him.” Here the preposition *dia (thee•ah)* rendered “through”, as used with the genitive, emphasizes the fact that all things were created through the agency of Jesus Christ, as He was the divine Agent in creation (Ephesians 3:9; Hebrews 1:2; 11:3; John 1:3). In other words, He was the active agent through whom all things were created in the sphere of the heavens and upon the earth. Accordingly, all things were created through Him (Christ) and unto Him. This is a reaffirmation of the entire gamut of the structure of creation, i.e., Christ was both the means by which and the agent through whom all things have been created. The preposition *dia (thee•ah)* rendered “through,” with the genitive case consistently expresses the idea of the personal agency of one (single) Godhead. The preposition *eivj (ees)* rendered “unto,” sets forth an exceedingly important truth, i.e., as it is used with the accusative case, expresses the fact that Christ is not only the agent in producing creation but He Himself is the end, object and reason for all of creation. Thus life has meaning and purpose only for those who are identified with Him through His gift of faith (II Corinthians 5:14-15; Galatians 2:20; Philippians 1:21).

Now we move to Colossians 1:17 from the King James Version, “And he is before all things, and by him all things consist.” And from the Greek text, “and He is before all things, and all things are held together by Him.” In surveying the opening phrase *auyto,j evstin pro. pa,ntwn (ahf•tos ehs•teen pro pahn•don)* rendered “He (Himself) is before all”; *auyto,j (ahf•tos)* meaning “He,” is an intensive pronoun giving the inference “Himself.” Here the Greek verb *(ehs•teen)* rendered “is”, is in the present tense; therefore it is translated “He is before all things.” In light of the preceding context, the inference supports the usage of the past tense, as the preposition *pro. (pro)* rendered “before”, means to be

before in sequence to, in advance of or prior to all things. In this sense, “and He Himself,” *aavto,j (ahf•tos)*, the great HE (implying His essential being), *evstin pro. pa,ntwn (ehs•teen pro pahn•don)* rendered “is before all things.” Therefore He is before even time, which is His creation from eternity (cf. Colossians 1:15). The contrast is between the things created in time and the Creator Himself, as the emphasis focuses on that which was created (the Body of Christ) “in He, Himself” before all time. Certification of the all-important focus on the Head (Christ) and His eternal existence is corroborated in John 1:1-2, which states that the Word (Christ) was with God in the beginning.

In light of this, the latter Greek phrase of Colossians 1:17 is *kai. ta. pa,nta evn aavtw| sune,sthken (keh tah pahn•dah ehn ahf•to seen•ehs•teek•ehh)* translated “all things are held together by Him.” Here we note that the Greek preposition (*ehh*) could be translated either “by” (instrumental case) or “in” (locative case). In the prior case, the conveyance would denote Christ as the means by which all things are held together. In the later case, the focus would be on Christ as the sphere in which all things are held together. Hence the question is whether God is a subjective part of or does He relate to creation in an objective mode? The answer lies in comprehending the fact that “all things” in creation are indeed “by Him” yet the locale of the new creation, “the Body of Christ” is “in Him.” Note the Greek verb

*sune,sthken (seen•ehs•teek•ehh)* rendered “held together” is derived from *sun (seen)* and *isthmi (ees•tee•mee)*, which literally means to “stand with” or “to place together.” The general use of this word in Paul’s epistles conveys the predominant meaning of “commend,” “recommend” or “to present as approved” hence it carries the inference of “formed,” “shaped together,” or “compacted,” thus the rendering “held together.” This Greek verb *sune,sthken (seen•ehs•teek•ehh)* is in the perfect tense and indicates that from the point of the new creation (in eternity), God has continuously effectuated.

Therefore, the Body of Christ resides “in Him” as both the causal element of its perpetual existence and the nature on its composition, as the unconditional element of its sustenance is based in the strength of Him “upholding all things by the word of His power” (Hebrews 1:3). In this light, we view this initiation and continuation process as a once-and-for all act in His decree, which certifies the usage of the perfect tense (completed action in the past with continuous effects) rather than the aorist tense (completed action in the past). The English words “held together” depict cohesion in addressing Christ role in sustaining that which He created in eternity. In this sense, the Body of Christ subsists as one integral harmonized system or whole that constitutes its completion in Him. Thus as we comprehend Christ as the Creator, we also understand that He did not create by delegation, or in any other way that required less than His Being consummating the requisite power to effectuate such, which essentially designates Him as God.

As all creation necessarily manifests its existence the sphere of in time and had a commencement, there was an infinite duration in which it did not exist. All that eternally existed in God before or prior to time, cannot be a part of creation and the Being who existed prior to creation and before all existence of every kind, must be the un-originated and eternal God. As this context documents the fact that Jesus Christ was before all things, it conceives Jesus Christ to be truly and essentially God. As every effect depends upon its cause, and cannot exist without it; so creation, which is an effect of the power and skill of the Creator, can only exist and be preserved by a continuance of that energy that first gave it being. God is the Preserver and is necessary to the continuance of the original production. Here this preserving or continuing power is ascribed to Christ, for the apostle states, that all things consist, was derived and caused, so all being must subsist by Him, as the effect subsists by and through its cause. This is authenticated proof that Jesus Christ is truly and properly God, as the preservation of all created things, which property of preservation belongs to God alone are attributed to Him. Accordingly, Jesus Christ is, according to the plain and obvious meaning of every expression in this context, properly, independently and essentially God.

Now we move to Colossians 1:18 from the King James Version, “And he is the head of the body, the church: who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead; that in all *things* he might have the

preeminence.” And from the Greek Text, “And He is the Head of the body, the church: who is the beginning, the first-born out from the dead, that He might be the first One in all things.” As we scrutinize the contents of this verse, its conveyance accomplices the information concerning Christ’s eternal existence and His dominate role in creation that is so prevalent to the identification of the Head over the Church. In the writings of the Old Testament prophecy, it speaks of one who will occupy the throne of David as King over the Earth (cf. Isaiah 9:6-7; Jeremiah 23:5-6; Daniel 2:44; Micah 4:1-5). The Synoptic Gospels document Him as the One who did come and will fulfill all Old Testament prophecy. The writings in this context as well as all of Paul’s epistles comprise the structure and nature of the spiritual blessings that are assigned to God’s elect in the dispensation of Grace. It is in this age that God has established the Body of Christ, the Church, of which Jesus Christ is its exclusive Head (Ephesians 1:22-23).

Observe the Greek phrase *kai. auvto,j evstin h` kefalh. tou/ sw,matoj th/j evkklhsi,aj* (**keh ahf•tos ehs•teen ee kehph•ahl•ee ton so•mah•tos tees ehk•klee•see•ahs**) rendered “and He is the Head of the body, the church.” Here the terms head, beginning and firstborn express the pre-eminence of Christ in the new creation, which has its origin in the decree of His redemption in the eternal realm (I Corinthians 15:22). They carry the general Old Testament meaning of “chief” or “origin” is the sense of the word here in this context. As the Body of Christ (not body of organizations) the Church does not mirror a society but is defined in terms of its relationship “in Christ.” This is the epitome of what grace is. It is a fashioning of the elect for the inheritance. Thus He designed designated ones as sons, suited and fitted in the heavenly state habitually by the powerful influence of His Spirit. It depicts the effectuation of the divine power to impose His nature upon selected ones. Observe, that all who were designed as such were eternally prepared before. This heavenly fitness is totally invested in the worth and value of the Head. It is solely in this sense that one can state that those who are sanctified shall be glorified (Romans 8:30) as such is forever indebted to the grace of God, which hath sanctified them; for it in this sense that He is distinguished as God and Mediator.

Note that the succeeding phrase is informatively annexed to the fact that Christ is the Head of the Body, the Church, i.e., *ofj evstin avrch,( prwto,tokoj evk tw/n nekrw/n* (**os ehs•teen ahr•khee pro•tot•ok•os ehk ton nehk•ron**) rendered “who is the beginning, the first-born out from the dead.” Here the Greek noun *avrch,( (ahr•khee)* rendered “the beginning,” denoting Christ as the essence of origination and initiation, as it defines, describes, and identifies Him as the first. In this view He (Christ) extends beyond even the furthest extremity of perceived existence where God alone dwelled, as John corroborates this fact with the statement “This One was in the beginning with God” (John 1: 1-2). According to the testimony of the Spirit as recorded in Hebrews 7:3 that states “He was from the beginning”, there can be no definition of existence that excluded Him. Thus Christ, the Head of the Church has eternally existed and is rightfully called and is “the beginning.”

Hence Christ, who is the beginning, is also herein declared to be *prwto,tokoj evk tw/n nekrw/* (**pro•tot•ok•os ehk ton nehk•ron**) rendered “the first-born out from the dead.” Here the noun *prwto,tokoj (pro•tot•ok•os)* (first-born) depicts Him as being the initiation in the new order of renewed beings, in essence the source of regeneration, i.e., a “new creation.” In this view, Christ is the initiation of the spiritual generation that is comprised of designated ones who were chosen in Him in the eternal sphere. This is in stark contrast to the physical generation that was brought into existence in Adam, as it is expressive of the entire human race. This is the very opposite of Jesus Christ, Which is in essence a spiritual generation representing spiritual beings in the spiritual realm. Note In I Corinthians 15:20, the Greek noun *avparch. (ahp•ahr•khee)* rendered “first-fruit”, as the general thought is conveyed in the statement, “and now Christ is raised out from the dead, the first-fruit of those who have been sleeping.” The basic cogitation is Christ’s resurrection in the origination of that which did not previously exist and the manifestation of such as revealed in the sphere of time in the resurrection of believers following the due course of that which was previously arranged (I Thessalonians 4:14).

Thus, the summarized confirmation of the above entails the following: 1). Christ is the image of the invisible God, 2). He always has, is and will forever eternally exist, i.e., He existed before anything else, 3). All things were created by Him, 4). Christ is the end, object and purpose of creation, 5). He continuously holds together all that He has created, 6). He is the exclusive Head over the Church, 7). He is in essence the beginning and 8). He is the progenitor of a new race of resurrected beings. Here the subordinating conjunction *ifna(een•ah)* rendered “that” or “in order that”, prefaces the statement “that He, Himself might be the first one in all things.” The assimilation of these facts is very important in that they form the basis of Jesus Christ abiding first and foremost position-wise in the lives of God’s people.

Such information explicates who He is and what He has done, as it is the formulation of the thorough knowledge of His eternal being and authority in the accomplishment of His purpose and will. Comprehension and acknowledgement of this will serves as the catalyst for true and perpetual commitment and devotion to Jesus Christ. Everything that can be gleaned about Him, even as corroborated from all sections of the Bible (Old Testament prophecy and Kingdom Gospel writings in the New Testament) depicting His incarnate life, death and resurrection; is very useful. The purpose of Paul’s writings in communicating the knowledge of Jesus Christ is that all might recognize Him as the essence of their lives (Colossians 3:4). Observe that the Greek participle *prwteu,wn(proteh•von)* is in the present tense as it emphasizes the fact that the eternal Christ is first in the sphere of time as the basic conveyance is both “first” in time and preeminence. In this sense, He is the first in rank, the preeminent and supreme one. This present participle is in the nominative case certifying that it is the subject of the clause, hence the rendering could be expressed, “first one that He might be (having been).”

Here, the emphasis is on the essence of Jesus Christ and the position that He occupies relationship-wise in the lives of all believers. Those who dwell in this vein are privileged to abide above humanistic religious wisdom, philosophy, traditions and legalistic requirements (c.f. Colossians 2:3-4, 8-10, 16-18, 20-23). These statements are expressing that members of the Body of Christ, the Church have Christ as their “first one” above everything and everyone else. This is true in the relationship of all of God’s elect as corroborated by John the Baptist’s statement in John 1:15, wherein He declares, “ the one coming after me has been before me, because He was first.” Also our Lord Jesus Christ definitively declares in Luke 14:26 that He should never be conceived in a second place position to anyone, as He states, “If anyone comes to me and does not hate his own father and mother and wife and children and brothers and sisters, and even his own life, it is not possible to be my disciples.” Here the Lord’s expressed directive is in regards to ones complaisance with divided allegiance, as it is impossible for anyone to be simultaneously loyal and dedicated to two or more on an equal basis. Thus regardless of the dispensational setting, whether it is Church or Kingdom, the requirements are that Jesus Christ is positioned as the first, supreme and preeminent one in the lives of all God’s elect (c.f. John 21:15-17; Galatians 2:20; Philippians 1:21; 3:8-10).

Now we move to Colossians 1:19 from the King James Version, “For it pleased *the Father* that in him should all fulness dwell.” And from the Greek Text, “For He was pleased for all the fullness to dwell in Him.” Note, the actual Greek reading is *ofti evn auvtw/ euvdo,khsen pa/n to. plh,rwma katoikh/sai (o•tee ehn ahf•to ehv•thok•ee•sehn pahn to plee•ro•mah kaht•ee•keeseh)* literally rendered “for (because) in Him (it) did please all the fulness to dwell (tabernacle).” Here the Greek conjunction *ofti (o•tee)* rendered “for” or “because”, expresses that this verse (19) is a continuation of the cogitation in the antecedent verses documenting the supremacy and eminence of Christ being the first one. This is basic to God’s purpose that Christ should be first and supreme in the lives of His people. Observe, the Greek verb *euvdo,khsen (ehv•thok•ee•sehn)* rendered “pleased”, is an indicative aorist (factual, past completed action) denoting that in eternity, God was delighted that “all the fullness” was fully occupied in the essence of Jesus Christ, which is the basis for His being the first one.

In this sense, all that has been previously stated about who Christ is and what He accomplished is summed up in the most significant phrase of the context, *pa/n to. plh,rwma (pahn to plee•ro•mah)* rendered “all the fulness.” The key word in this phrase is *plh,rwma (plee•ro•mah)* rendered “fulness”, which has the general connotation of being totally occupied, engulfed, complete and of full measure. The more important consideration is whether or not the conveyance of this word denotes a specific meaning. In Ephesians 1:23, the Church, which is Christ’s body, is referred to as the “fulness of Him who is filling the all in all.” In Ephesians 3:19, the Apostle Paul’s prayer is that all believers will be filled with all the “fulness of God.” In Ephesians 4:13, the expressed desire is that all believers might attain unto the “fulness of Christ.” In Colossians 2:9, it is stated that all the fulness of the Godhead (deity) dwells in Him bodily.” In this verse (Colossians 1:19) the focus is on the statement that all the “fulness” dwells in Christ.

It is striking that in all the above references of Scripture cited, the Greek noun *plh,rwma (plee•ro•mah)* rendered “fulness”, may be used as a common denominator in all these passages and as such implies an inscrutably amalgamated bond between all the operational and functional components of the Godhead, the Church and thus the believer as positioned in the Church. There is comforting assurance in the fact that those who are members of the Body of Christ are incorporated into the fulness of God, which involves the fullness of Christ, which entails the fullness of the Godhead, an intimate relationship that exceeds even ones wildest imagination. It is in this light that one can immensely appreciate this highly privileged relationship with Christ and are motivated in viewing Christ as first, supreme and preeminent in ones daily life (II Corinthians 4:6-7).

Now we move to Colossians 1:20 from the King James Version, “And, having made peace through the blood of his cross, by him to reconcile all things unto himself; by him, *I say*, whether *they be* things in earth, or things in heaven.” And from the Greek Text, “and through Him to reconcile all things unto Himself, having made peace through the blood of His cross, (through Him) whether things upon the earth or things in the heavens.” Note that the opening phrase of this verse, *kai. diV auytouw/ (keh thee ahf•ton)* rendered “and through Him”, is amply annexed to the ending phrase of the antecedent verse, thus completing the cycle of all the fullness properly dwelling in the sphere of and by the means of Christ initiating the reconciliation of all things unto Himself. Here the aorist infinitive *avpokatalla,xai (ahp•ok•aht•ahl•lahx•eh)* rendered “reconcile,” denotes a transfer from one state to another, in effect the reinstating of one to a position of harmony. The prefix *avpo (ahpo)* could conceivably convey perfection significance, which would in this sense exhibit the inference of to reconcile thoroughly, completely or perfectly. Observe that the genitive of possession in the preposition *dia(thee•ah)* “through” identifies Jesus Christ as the personal agency who has adequately made provision for the perfect reconciliation of all things unto Himself. The function of everything is manifested according to God’s eternal decrees as they are expressly designated to accommodate the pleasure of His will.

The arena of the seceding phase of this verse focuses on the earthly manifestation of the eternal workings of God in the sphere of time. Note the Greek phrase *eivrhnopoih,saj dia. tou/ ai[matoj tou/ staurou/ auytouw/( diV auytouw/)](ee•ree•nop•ee•ee•sahs thee•ah too eh•mah•tos too stahv•roo ahf•too [thee ahf•too])* rendered “having made peace through the blood of His cross (through Him).” In this view, sin produced a barrier of enmity between God and all that had been created through Christ. The cross, where Jesus shed His blood in death as a result of assuming the elect’s sin, is the basis for supplanting the animosity with peace. Man’s sin brought forth the wrath of God against him; however in assuming his sin with its wrath, Christ made provision for man to be reconciled to a peaceful relationship with God (Romans 5:1). In taking note of the fact that the participle *eivrhnopoih,saj (ee•ree•nop•ee•ee•sahs)* “having made peace” is in the aorist tense, it becomes apparently clear that the substitutionary death of Christ, which rectified the offence and resulted in peace thus occurred in a previous vein (eternity) (Romans 5:9-10).

Hence, manifestation-wise Christ’s blood, which was shed upon Calvary’s cross is sufficient to reconcile all things in the universe, as the last phrase of the verse (20) literally reads, *ei;te ta. evpi. th/j*

*gh/j ei;te ta. evn toi/j ouvranoi/j (ee•teh tah ehp•ee tees yees ee•teh tah ehn tees oo•rahn•ees)* rendered “whether things upon the earth or things in the heavens.” The bottom line is that all is reconciled to Him (Romans 8:19-22). Our union is with (in) Christ our Head, our righteousness wherein we are perfectly mortified, as having been planted in the fellowship of His death and embodied in His transformed (spiritual) nature. Thus we are complete (full) in Him, as the power and efficacy of His mighty workings in this mystical union comprise this virtue in our behalf. Thus the believer is party to a two-fold condition: one totally spiritual and the other, by association and identity.

## PART V

Next we turn to the exegesis of the context of Colossians 2:9–13, as these verses of Scripture in great detail also testify what the essence of Christ entails. Here we begin with Colossians 2:9 from the King James Version, “For in him dwelleth all the fullness of the Godhead bodily.” And from the Greek Text, “because in Him dwells all the fullness of the Godhead bodily.” The knowledge of who He is solidifies the prominence of Christ as Head of the Church. Here Paul begins this verse with the subordinating conjunction *of/ti(o•tee)*, which is in this case rendered “because.” Note that the Greek verb *katoikei (Kaht•ee•kee)* rendered “dwells” gives the meaning of to “live in” or “make a home in.” Thus the implied conveyance is “because all the fullness of the Godhead bodily dwells in “Him.” This is similar to the statement of Colossians 1:9, i.e., “because He was pleased for all the fullness to dwell in Him.”

The key transmutation of *pa/n to. plh,rwma (pahn to plee•ro•mah)* rendered “all the fullness,” in this as well as other references in Paul’s epistles, is in conjunction with God, Christ and believers. It is in this sense that *th/j qeo,thtoj swmatikw/j (tees Theh•ot•ee•tos so•maht•ee•kos)*, which is rendered “of the Godhead bodily,” implicationally describes the completeness of Christ in representation of the essence of God. The use of the adjective *pa/n (pahn)* rendered “all,” certifies the all-inclusiveness of this comprehension as it acknowledges that total deity resides in the resurrected Body of Christ. This truth is substantiated in the context that all the fullness of the Godhead authenticates the totality of the Deity and all believers have been made full (complete) in Him. Thus in Him dwells, as in the fullness of the Godhead, the essence and nature of the Godhead as well as the divine perfections and attributes of Divinity. Hence, Christ as man was not merely God-like but in the fullest sense God-bodily. It is strictly in this sense that the elect are now positioned in Him and by union with Him, partake of His fullness of the divine nature (Ephesians 3:19).

Now we move to the statement of Colossians 2:10 from the King James Version, “And ye are complete in him, which is the head of all principality and power.” And from the Greek Text, “and you have been made full in Him, who is the head of all rule and authority.” Here we note the relative pronoun *of/j (os)* rendered “who” as it introduces the clause (is the head of all rule and authority) that modifies the pronoun *auvtw/ (ahf•to)* rendered “Him.” The intended message so stated is that believers have been made full in Christ and He is the Head of all rule and authority. In the antecedent verse (9) we observed that *pa/n to. plh,rwma (pahn to plee•ro•mah)* rendered “all the fullness,” of Deity dwells in Him, thus certifying the fact that the completeness of God resides in Christ. This is very significant to members of the Body of Christ in that because Jesus Christ embodies the fullness of God, those who are positioned in Him have been made full.

The plenary impact of this is comprehended in juxtaposing the basic form of the Greek noun *plh,rwma (plee•ro•mah)* rendered “fullness,” in verse nine and the verb form *peplhrwme,noi (peh•plee•ro•mehn•ee)* rendered “have been made full” in verse ten. Here the arrangement of these successions explicates the continuity of linking conveyances of what is in Christ

and what believers obviously have in Him. The significance of this analyzation is expressed in the phrase *evste. evn auytw| peplhrwme,noi (ehs•teh ehn ahf•topeh•plee•ro•mehn•ee)* rendered “you have been made full.” Here we believe that this should be translated as such in concert with carrying the thought of being made complete, filled up and possessing everything necessary for perfection in Christ. Even as there is total fullness, completeness and perfection in God in Christ; likewise believers in Christ share in the same. Hence, the fullness of God resides in Christ and in light of the elect’s in–Christ position, such ones have been made full supplied to the point that it is ridiculous to think that anything could ever added to it.

In addition to this, we note the importance of the fact that the Greek participle *peplhrwme,noi (peh•plee•ro•mehn•ee)* (have been made full) is in the passive voice and the perfect tense. Note, the passive voice structures believers as the recipients of the action, thus such have not made themselves full in Christ but it is God, in His sovereignty, who has performed the act of placement in Christ; making believers full and complete in Him. Here the clear message is that God provided both the fullness and the obtaining of it. Also the use of the perfect tense amply documents the security of this full and complete positioning Christ. Grammatically speaking, the perfect tense infers completed action in the past with continuous results, thus at a given interval in the past, God in eternity sovereignly performed this act with its resulting manifestation continued in full effect in the sphere of time. This is the exclusive basis for the perpetuation of those who were previously placed in the state of fullness, as none could ever alter or eradicate that which the infinite sovereign God has planned, willed and implemented in the eternal realm.

The final phrase of this verse *ofj evstin h` kefalh. pa,shj avrch/j kai. evxousi,aj (os ehs•teen ee kehph•ahl•ee pahs•ees ahr•khees keh ehx•oo•see•ahs)* rendered “who is the head of all rule and authority” gives testimony to the extent of the omnipotence and authority of the Head, thus solidifying the security of both the fullness and placement of members of the Body of Christ in son-positions. It is of Note that He who is the Head of the Body, the Church, is also the head of all rule and authority. Here we note that the adjective *pa,shj (pahs•ees)* rendered “all” is applicable to every *avrch/j kai. evxousi,aj (ahr•khees keh ehx•oo•see•ahs)* rendered “rule and authority,” denoting that Christ is also in addition to being head of the Church; head of every rule and authority. Thus He is superior to every power, privilege and all things whether good or evil. Believers are identified with Christ through faith and are thus more than conquerors in the power of God’s placement in Christ (Romans 8:37).

Now we move to Colossians 2:11 from the King James Version, “In whom also ye are circumcised with the circumcision made without hands, in putting off the body of the sins of the flesh by the circumcision of Christ. “ And from the Greek Text, “In whom also ye were circumcised with a circumcision not made with hands, in the putting off of the body of the flesh, in the circumcision of Christ.” This verse begins with the phrase *evn w-| kai. perietmh,qhte peritomh| avceiropoih,tw| (ehn o keh pehr•ee•eht•mee•thee•teh pehr•eet•om•ee ahk•ee•rop•ee•ee•to)* rendered “in whom also you were circumcised with a circumcision not made with hands.” Note, *evn w-| kai. (ehn o keh)* rendered “in whom also”, gives inference to believers’ position in Christ or the locale wherein such have been circumcised. Here the Greek noun *peritomh| (pehr•eet•om•ee)* rendered “circumcision”, basically infers identification and does not denote human activity but spiritual, as it references a spiritual cutting off of sin in the flesh (cf. Romans 8:3). The Greek verb *perietmh,qhte (pehr•ee•eht•mee•thee•teh)* rendered “circumcised”, is in the indicative mood, aorist tense and passive voice, thus certifying the fact that the sins of God’s elect were spiritually identified with Christ’s death at a previous point (Romans 6:4; Galatians 5:24).

Hence spiritual circumcision speaks of the cutting off of the sinful flesh (Romans 7:18-20). This is analogous to the reference of baptism in Romans 6:3-4, namely, the death of the flesh through its identification with the death of Christ. As the passive voice conveys, this occurrence was an exclusive, sovereign work of the Holy Spirit, as it was determined and implemented by decree before the creation of the world. The earthly effectuation of this is manifested in time as believers are called to a faith-relationship in Jesus Christ (Romans 8:30). The Greek adjective *avceiropoih,tw|*

**(ahk•ee•rop•ee•ee•to)** rendered “not made with hands,” is a convincing statement certifying that spiritual circumcision: 1). Has no reference to any activity of mankind and 2). Does not refer to anything physical or natural. This conclusively rules out all significations to the ordinances and rites in the Old Testament Covenants.

The next phrase of verse 11, *evn th/ avpekdu,sei tou/ sw,matoj th/j sarko,j* (**ehn tee ahp•ehk•thee•see too so•mah•tos tees sahrk•os**) rendered “in the putting off of the body of the flesh,” is underlined by the older manuscripts (critical text), which implies the non-necessity of the outward rite of circumcision, as distinguished from that taught by the Judaizers and alluded to by the Covenant theologians of today but it distinctly identifies the inward spiritual reality of it. Thus spiritual circumcision is traced beyond earthly manifestations, conversions, and ritual baptisms (Romans 2:28-29; Philippians 3:3). In this context, the reference to “not made with hands”, militates against any form of circumcision or identification of the flesh (Ephesians 2:11). Hence “the putting off of the body of the flesh” denotes its total exclusion, as it is Christ's own body by which the believer is sanctified (Ephesians 4:22) ----- not the putting off of the foreskin in circumcision or identification by rite or ordinance.

The Textus Receptus and Majority Text manuscripts underline the statement, “the body of the sins of the flesh,” inserting “of the sins,” of “the body,” in which the prominent feature is fleshiness (Romans 8:13), where “flesh” and “the body” mutually correspond. In this view, the fleshly body, in its sinful aspect, is put off in baptism as the seal of regeneration that is received by or through ones repentance and exercise of faith. Such doctrinal cogitation foist in Christian regeneration, that the body of the flesh “is spiritually put off,” at least in its ideal conception. However when informed believers acknowledge their imperfections; they immediately realize that this spiritual circumcision is realized exclusively in or by union with Christ, whose “circumcision,” is imputed to believers for justification and righteousness. Thus this union “in Him” is based upon His vicarious obedience, as the essence of His righteousness is the only source of sanctification, wherein this indeed is the “spiritual” circumcision brought about by ones union with Christ.”

The earthly manifestation of viewing His eternal workings from the vantage point of time is in accord with Colossians 2:12; 3:1, 3, 4, which conveyances depict the believer in spiritual union with Christ. Therein is outlaid the display of personal fellowship in Christ, namely, His death, resurrection, and appearing in glory. Hence nothing was done or suffered by Him as Mediator for such, except that which was represented in behalf of His elect. In this sense, Jesus is the author of the true circumcision, which is therefore certified by the final phrase of verse 11, *evn th/ peritomh/ tou/ Cristou/* (**ehn tee pehr•eet•om•ee too Khrees•too**) rendered “in the circumcision of Christ.” Here the Greek noun *tou/ Cristou/* (**too Khrees•too**) literally rendered “the Christ,” is in the genitive case denoting that “the circumcision of Christ” (Romans 2:29) was a circumcision that belonged to Christ. Such is manifestly conveyed to believers as they are identified with His death by it. Hence the flesh bodies of spiritually circumcised believers have been excluded in the circumcision of Christ. It is in this sense that the Apostle in his epistle to the church at Rome refers to Jesus as, “minister of the circumcision on behalf of the truth of God” (Romans 15:8). The Greek preposition *evn* (**ehn**) rendered “in,” is in the locative case denoting the locale of Christ, which distinctly places this entire operation in the category of the invisible non-material sphere of the eternal realm.

Now we move to Colossians 2:12 from the King James Version, “Buried with him in baptism, wherein also ye are risen with *him* through the faith of the operation of God, who hath raised him from the dead.” And from the Greek Text, “Having been buried with Him in baptism, in whom also you were raised with Him through the faithful energizing of God, who raised Him out from the dead.” This verse carries forth the general cogitation of the antecedent verse, i.e., since the circumcision previously mentioned was not physical, then it logically follows that the baptism herein the same immediate context is likewise not physical but spiritual.

In this sense, we note that the opening phrase, *suntafe,ntej auvtw/ evn tw/ baptismw/* (**seen•dahph•ehn•dehs ahf•to ehn to vahp•tees•mo**) rendered “having been buried with



Him in baptism,” references the identification of the believer with the death of Christ. Observe that the Greek aorist, passive participle *suntafe,ntej* (**seen•dahph•ehn•dehs**) rendered “having been buried with,” is identical in grammatical characteristics to *perietmh,qhte* (**pehr•ee•eht•mee•thee•teh**), which is verse 11’s verb use for “circumcised”; in voice, tense and number (aorist, passive and plural). Note that the passive voice indicates that it was an external agent, namely the Holy Spirit, who performed the spiritual baptism into the death of Christ and the aorist tense certifies that it was implemented in a prior point. Thus this perfect work of God was planned and completed in the eternal realm (Romans 6:3-4; I Corinthians 12:13).

Next we note the ramifications of *suntafe,ntej* (**seen•dahph•ehn•dehs**) rendered “having been buried with,” in that it is the participle form of the Greek word *sunqapto* (**seen•thahp•to**), as it is derived from *sun* (**seen**) and *qapto* (**thahp•to**), which literally means “to bury with” or as it in this context, “to be identified with” someone in burial. The major component is identification between two entities, namely Christ and those who belong to Him, as the relationship resides in the sphere of His death and subsequent burial. This identification is the product of God in that it is a sovereign act of God based upon His body in regard to sin, which was put to death with the accomplishment of Christ and permanently buried. This coincides with the teachings of Romans 6:3-5 as these concomitant passages of scriptures mutually reinforce the truth in corroborating the message of identification in the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. Therefore those who recognize that they have been spiritually identified with Christ’s death can benefit in the comfort of knowing that such are no longer under the confines of sin. This is the significance of baptism as it is clarified in its spiritual nature.

The basic Greek word *qa,ptw* (**thahp•to**) rendered “bury,” refers to the interment of the dead as it does not depict covering something or someone with soil or water, even though the English has been broadened to express these conceptions. Note the Greek word *sunqa,ptw* (**seen•thahp•to**) is comprised of *sun* (**seen**) prefixed to *qa,ptw* (**thahp•to**) in cosigning the meaning “with.” Accordingly, the inference that can be drawn by association is that believers were buried with Jesus Christ in His physical death-burial in the sense that they were identified with His death and burial. Thus it is very important for one to understand that one’s apperception with Jesus Christ’s burial implies an earlier predetermined identification with His death in the eternal realm (cf. Romans 6:3-4; Ephesians 1:4-5). It is also in this view that believers identify with the manifestation of Jesus Christ’s death and burial in the sphere of time (estimated to be approximately 29 A.D). This is all traced back to the fact that in eternity; God had sovereignly chosen an elect people for His own name (Romans 8:28-30; 9:11-18).

In this comprehension, we observe the association of *baptismw/* (**vahp•tees•mo**) rendered “baptism,” as it flows back to the root word *bapts* (**vahp•to**), which literally means “to dip or dye,” e.g., to place something in something else; hence the identification of one thing with another. This is corroborated in the older Greek manuscripts’ (Critical Text) usage of *baptismw/* (**vahp•tees•mo**) in this form, as it refers to various washings (Mark 7:4; Hebrews 6:2; 9:10). In this context, it should be an indisputable fact that these terms, as expressed also in Romans 6:3-4, are all in reference to “identification” or more specifically, “spiritual identification” with Jesus Christ’s death and burial. Thus, true spirituality is displayed in recognition of the fact that all members of His body have been spiritually identified with Christ’s death and burial, as this is the implication of the statement that all believers have died with Christ to sin.

The following phrase of verse 12 is *evn w-| kai. sunhge,rqhte dia. th/j pi,stewj th/j evnergei,aj tou/ qeou/* (**ehn o keh seen•eey•ehr•thee•teh thee•ah tees pees•teh•os tees ehn•ehry•ee•ahs too Theh•oo**) rendered “in whom also you were raised with Him through the faithful energizing of God,” as it basically draws the conclusion that those who have been identified with Jesus Christ in death and burial; have likewise been identified with Him in spiritual resurrection. Note that the Greek verb *sunhge,rqhte* (**seen•eey•ehr•thee•teh**) rendered “have been raised,” is in the passive voice and aorist tense, denoting that God had effectuated the resurrection of the elect in a prior point, namely in eternity. Special attention is now drawn to the fact that this was all accomplished *dia. th/j pi,stewj th/j evnergei,aj tou/ qeou/* (**thee•ah tees pees•teh•os tees ehn•ehry•ee•ahs too Theh•oo**), which is

rendered “through the faithful energizing of God.” Here it is important to observe that the Greek nouns *pi,stewj* (**pees•teh•os**) and *evnergei,aj* (**ehn•ehry•ee•ahs**) are both genitive, feminine, singular and are structurally co-joined, thus we have translated them as a composite unit rendering them “faithful energizing” or “faithful working.”

The Greek noun *pi,stewj* (**pees•teh•os**) as used in this context is most accurately translated “faithfulness,” as it frequently conveys this connotation in numerous instances (Romans 3:3; Galatians 2:16; 3:22; Ephesians 3:12; Philemon 5). Thus the same God who raised Christ out from the dead and thereby displayed His efficacy in this regard, is the one who faithfully *evnergei,aj* (**ehn•ehry•ee•ahs**) “worked” or “energized” to produced the spiritual resurrection of all believers. According to the cogitation that is gleaned from this verse, those who comprehend these facts through identification demonstrate true spirituality, in that such recognize the old man as having been crucified and buried with Christ (Romans 6:6) and though association with His death, believers have been raised with Christ to a new life in Christ unto God (Romans 6:4, 10). This truth, which identifies God’s elect with the accomplishments of Christ (His death and resurrection), is an imperative ingredient for motivating such one to imitate the life and character of His nature!

Note the final phrase of Colossians 2:12, *tou/ evgei,rantoj auvto.n evk tw/n nekrw/n\* (**too ehry•ee•rahn•dos ahf•ton ehk tov vehk•ron**) rendered “who raised Him out from the dead,” speaks to the power and efficacy of the only one who is capacitated to produce such actions. This phrase basically shows in what respect the faithfulness of Christ, which is God's work, has him for as its object. Thus He has made full provisions, in having raised Christ from the dead, who was delivered for offences, but has been raised again through the power of God for justification. Accordingly, by His decrees those whom he has elected are saved in the eternal realm. The revelations in manifestation is devised to partly show that the same power is exerted in working true faith in the heart as was put forth in raising Christ from the dead.

Now we move to Colossians 2:13 from the King James Version, “And you, being dead in your sins and the uncircumcision of your flesh, hath he quickened together with him, having forgiven you all trespasses.” And from the Greek Text, “And you being dead in trespasses and the uncircumcision of your flesh, He (God) made you alive together with Him, having forgiven us all the trespasses.” The opening statement of this verse provides documentation that the root of the former status of all inhabitants in Christ can be traced to the fact that such were dead in trespasses and the uncircumcision of their flesh (Ephesians 2:1). Here the present participle *o;ntaj* (**on•dahs**) defines the state of being, i.e., spiritual death or separation of all that exists outside of Christ. This inherent state of separation is exhibited in the universal display of human depravity as manifested by the fact that all mankind abides *paraptw,masin* (**pahr•ahp•to•mah•seen**) rendered “in trespasses,” which literally denotes “falling or stumbling beside”, hence “falling below” the standard of God (Romans 1:19-21; 2:12-15). This is expressive of basic human nature as the plural connotation “in trespasses,” depicts the inherent tendencies of all men.

This is all resident in the “uncircumcision of the flesh,” i.e., the sin of or in the flesh (Colossians 2:11). Note that the Greek word *avkrobusti,a* (**ahk•rov•ees•tee•ah**) rendered “uncircumcision,” is in the singular number denoting sinfulness in the human nature. Thus as sinners by nature, all such could ever inherently produce would be sinful acts of trespass against the righteousness of God. Thus the statement, “and the uncircumcision of your flesh,” is to be taken not literally for the prepuce or foreskin of the flesh, which was a sign and token of the corruption of nature but figuratively as being what is called the viscosity (resistive trait) of humanity, evil imagination or corruption, denoting the pollution, loathsomeness, and abominableness of the flesh. Here we view the hopeless dilemma of spiritual death, rendering men unable to extricate themselves. When one views the plight of mankind from an etiological point, the only plausible explanation resides in God’s decree in the implementation of His purpose and will. In this regard, all are not categorized corporeally, though sin had subjected all to a corporeal death. Thus, all human bodies were in reality mortal and in a specified time interval must die, as this is due to the morality of God’s decrees that sin had brought a death penalty upon mankind

in a moral sense. The sentence entailed separation from God and as physical death is defined as the body separated from the soul, such were alienated from the life of God and consequently must be spiritually dead.

Those designated ones who are positioned in the Body of Christ are new creations, fashioned in the image of Christ, which consisted in knowledge, righteousness, and holiness. Yet all who are of the depraved human nature within themselves, were from the beginning dead as to the understanding of what was good, as to their affections for it or will and capacity to do it and like dead men were insensible of their state. Hence the inevitable consequence was sin and misery; rendering such altogether inactive and helpless in spiritual things, being destitute of spiritual life, strength and motion; were moreover deserving of eternal death. This is corroborated by all who are judged according to the law of works, under the sentence of it and thus are so liable and exposed unto it; as there must be an account for their sins. The difference between those who were made alive in Christ and the dead is that which has separated the latter from God, imaged and hardened in their hearts, having no true sight and sense of themselves; thus accounting for the corruption of their nature.

Now as we move to the next phrase of verse 13, *sunezwopoi,hsen u`ma/j su.n auvtw/|* (**seen•eh•zo•op•ee•ees•ehn ee•mahs seen ahf•to**) rendered "He (God) made you alive together with Him," note that it is void of any self input of mankind. Here the Greek verb *sunezwopoi,hsen* (**seen•eh•zo•op•ee•ees•ehn**) rendered "made alive together with," is comprised of a combination of three words, namely *sun* (**seen**), *zwoj* (**zo•os**) and *poi,ew*(**pee•eho**) and in the third person singular basically denotes God as the exclusive one who has made the recipients of His grace to be alive with Him (Ephesians 2:5). Here the aorist tense un-mistakenly documents that in a once-for-all transaction, God joined designated ones to the living Christ for all eternity. This was totally the perfect, sovereign work of God, which He immutably effectuated and transmitted to believers. This life in Christ has been given solely based on His faithful expiatory sacrifice in eternity.

Hence, the statement, "hath he quickened together with him", that is with Christ, may be understood either of the conversion and sanctification of those who were dead in sin in a moral sense in that conversion as a principle of life was implanted in them. In this view, life as a living principle was wrought by the Spirit of life from Christ as the glory of His righteousness and the fullness and suitableness of His grace. This was God's act alone owing to His rich mercy and great love and this may be said to be done "with Christ", only in the sense that this is in consequence of one being identified with Him being raised from the dead and made partakers of the life of Christ, becoming one in Him. Thus it is not so much that the elect lives, but Christ lives in them. Here it must be thoroughly understood that designated ones were quickened in order to manifestly live a life of grace and communion with Him in the sphere of time but more importantly in eternal glory everlastingly.

Also the quickening may be interpreted in the manifestation of ones justification as it is when a sinner is illuminated by God that such one is dead in every sense and the gift of faith is wrought for the individual to behold pardon and righteousness in Christ. Thus enlightened ones comprehend that the Spirit of God seals, which is inclusive of the pardon of sins, imputing the righteousness of Christ as it enables one to embrace it as ones own. It is only in this view that one is pronounced as justified and may well be termed justification of life, as such is then alive in a legal sense, in that Christ is the head and representative of all His people. It is this definition of identification that associates ones resurrection from the dead with the certification of justification, as this seems to be the true sense of this phrase.

The last phrase of Colossians 2:13 is *carisa,menoj h`mi/n pa,nta ta. paraptw,mata* (**khahr•ee•sah•mehn•os ee•meen pan•dah tah pahr•ahp•to•mah•tah**) rendered "having forgiven us all the trespasses." Note that this statement does not infer any exculpatory evidence on the part of the depraved nation in the accomplishment of this task. This is amply demonstrated by the aorist tense of the Greek participle *carisa,menoj* (**khahr•ee•sah•mehn•os**) rendered "having forgiven," as it refers to action prior to the leading verb, *sunezwopoi,hsen* (**seen•eh•zo•op•ee•ees•ehn**) rendered "made alive together

with.” Thus before God could make those who were dead in trespasses and sins alive, forgiveness was required. Hence there had to be the removal of sin through forgiveness before there could be the implanting of life with Christ.

Accordingly, it is plausible to assess that the statement, “having forgiven us all the trespasses” was a past completed act in eternity, not being done and over as some view it from the earthly vantage-point. In this sense, the ultimate act is not defined by the numerous manifestations of the initiation of conversion; when a discovery by the recipient of it was made but at the death of Christ, whose blood was shed for the remission of sin, even as early as when Christ became a surety; when the sins of His people were not imputed to them but to Him. Note this was a single act, done and complete at once, as the forgiveness of sin is not done by piecemeal or at different times or by divers acts but all at once and it includes sin past, present and future. It accommodates the appeasement of sin for all so designated, original and actual, before and after conversion. This entails sins of thought, word and action as only God can forgive sin; in that it is the peculiar prerogative owing to His abundant mercy and free grace.

## **Summary**

Those who are comprehensive in the knowledge of His essence are privileged to abide in the reality of eternal union in Christ. This election-union is a representative one, which the elect have in Christ before the foundation of the world. As in the womb, head and members are not conceived apart but together as having relation to each other. Such were the Church and Christ (as making up one mystical body unto God) formed together in the eternal womb of election. In this view, those so chosen in Christ by God were never purposed other than in Christ. One's subsistence in Christ evinces the fact that there was never the casting of a thought upon such one outside of Him, as there was never reckoned of no other being but that which is in Christ. God's plan of reckoning was not of honor or greatness neither in whole or parts out of the boundaries of His own. This accounting of what one was or would possess was from the beginning reckoned exclusively in Him before this world ever existed.

All spiritual blessings wherewith He then blessed His elect and likewise of what all are now in him by an actual union, are representative of the declaration of His eternal decree. In effect, believers were one in Christ before the world was, as there is only one mode of union. Manifestation-wise, Jesus Christ in the form of humanity descended and represented chosen ones thus negating all notions of what may be required for such to effectuate a relationship. Hence there is no other means of union, as this is the only reason one is in Christ; by His undertaking for the beloved from everlasting. Thus who are in Him, abide exclusively by His active representation manifestly on earth but originally in the eternal sphere in the Heavenlies (Ephesians 1:3).

There is descriptively a threefold union with Christ of which the first is relative, whereby members of the Body are said to be His and He theirs. In this arrangement, He is likened to the husband as the church is to His wife and thus the union is a relation in the mode of marriage. This is where the similarity ends for in a natural union, the husband may be in one place and the wife another, so as to disrupt the communions between them, even though they are man and wife. The union between Christ and the Church is absolutely cohesive in that it transcends the manifestation of the perceived earthly relation in that it depicts Christ as sitting at the right hand of God in the heavenly sphere while members of His body are yet abiding in the earthly sphere with Christ in them, as though such were in heaven with Him. In essence the union in Christ is foremost in the heavenly, spiritual, eternal realm, as it is the fundamental composition of justification, sanctification, and every other entity of the new creation.

It is in this view that some of God's people misunderstand and thus misapply the Doctrine of Regeneration. The reason is chiefly because they have assigned its enactment to the manifestation of occurrences in time. Their doctrinal thinking is that Christ first apprehends believers and then sends His Spirit to change their nature. In this analysis, it is the status of ones regenerated state that qualifies such to possess a right of all of the privileges of salvation. But it is Christ's nature by which the elect was fashioned in the new creation thus engendering His Spirit, faith, holiness, etc. It is through union with Christ and the perfect holiness of His nature to whom believers are united and partake of the privileges of the covenant of grace. Hence, it is by the following principles that the elect are placed in Christ:

- 1). The eternal decree of God.
- 2). The union of the eternal compact, in which Christ was constituted as Head of all those who were chosen in Him.
- 3). A true union in which every member is only passive, thus those united in Him are amalgamated and infused within the new creation.

Moreover, since these are all eternal workings in eternity, all corresponding manifestations of acts flow from principles of spiritual life, as it may be said in a sound sense that an elect may be truly and really united in Christ before the actual "exercise of faith." It is evident that every union in Christ has its origin in God's eternal purpose, as He is the federal union of the elect with Him from eternity. Therefore, it must indeed be granted that God from eternity decreed the justification of elect sinners through Christ so all that were decreed for justification are certainly justified. It must also be granted that God from eternity entered into a covenant of grace through Christ as the Head of elect sinners.

Thus in eternity, Christ as the surety, undertook for the justification of all that He determined to place as sons positioned in Him. It must likewise be accepted that the gift of all grace was made in Christ for elect sinners, as he was their Head and surety from eternity (II Timothy 1:9)). It must be farther accepted that all elect sinners had a representative union with Christ from eternity. When Christ was chosen as their Head, they were chosen together in Him as His members. In this light, believers can with the greatest delight and comfort, take a realistic survey of their justification in the different gradations and proper steps of it. In effect, God decreed their justification and as the result they had a representative union with Christ as their Head and Surety, from eternity.

This alone establishes such a sure foundation for the believer's justification, which cannot be overturned by the joint powers of depraved mankind nor even Satan and demons. From the beginning, the elect had a legal union in Christ and were federally justified in Him through His resurrection. This is the exclusive and fundamental right to justification for those who are actually united to Christ in the eternal realm as this is the point of its conferment. All who fully internalize this concept will not abhor eternal union as an immoral conceit or plead for a real and actual union on the basis of their perceived exercise of faith; as it cannot be denied that there is a definite assertion of this union before faith, even an eternal union in designated ones. There are those who deny this doctrinal concept as heresy and have reproached it without any exception or explanation. Such would do well to properly scrutinize the scriptures and explain their position utilizing the proper methodology of Bible exegesis. Those who have been enlightened in this respect should exercise great care to be gracious in reckoning such enthusiastic descent to ignorance of this precious truth and yet in a safe and sound sense, insist upon the Doctrine of Eternal Union in the Body of Christ.

Now for centuries, there has been and undoubtedly will continue to be divers' sentiments concerning the doctrine of union in the Body of Christ, i.e., how such is effectuated, etc. In this we are prayerful that at least God's people are persuaded not to differ about the individuals who are united in Christ; that these are God's elect and it is only them who receive the nature of the union itself. In essence, it is a union of God's people unto the fullness of Christ; a personal union, such as the union of the divine

and human natures in Christ that it is real, solid, substantial, and not imaginary, for it is complete and perfect, not gradual or brought about by degrees but it is all accomplished in one setting, as justification is.

The comprehension of the eternal workings in the new creation or new man brings into clear focus the exceeding closeness of union in Christ in the sense of His nearness and indissolubility of which there can be no separation. What we are most likely to differ about is, **when** God's elect are united to Christ and **what** is the bond of their union to Him. It is generally taught that God's people are not united to Christ until they believe and that the bond of union is the Spirit on Christ's part and faith on the part of the believer. The prayer of the Grace Gospel Ministry is that these phrases will be juxtaposed with the doctrinal contents of the gospel of the Grace of God as revealed to the Apostle Paul, i.e. the message for the Grace Church today. Without a thorough consideration of them, it is well indeed that Christ is allowed any part or share in effecting the eternal union with Him; though one should think the whole of it ought to be ascribed to Him since it is such an instance of immanent love and grace, as there cannot be thought to be a greater. If the supreme praise is to be offered, why must this union be laden up with faith on the believer's part? To those who are true proponents of the Grace Doctrine, this mode of thinking is so engrossed in the projection of self that one may justly suspect that something rotten and nauseous is the motive of it. Thus it would be of great benefit to God's people to ascertain the systematic documentation of the bond of union of God's elect to Christ as it is proved to be 100% attributable to God and 0% to the believer, excluding even the perceived exercise of faith on their part.

The eternal mission of the Holy Spirit is evident in that God's elect in the original design of the Body, has from the beginning enveloped His purpose, which was established by decree to regenerate, quicken, sanctify, apply the blessings of His grace and seal such chosen ones up unto the day of redemption. Finally, the bestowing of His several gifts and graces upon His beloved are in consequence and by virtue of a previous and antecedent union of them in the essence of Christ. The bottom line is, believers do not first receive the Spirit of Christ and then by the Spirit are united to Him but they are first united in Him and by virtue of this union, receive the blessings of His glorious nature. The most accurate description of such precious eternal and glorious blessings is defined as **THE GLORIOUS BODY OF CHRIST, THE CHURCH.**