**The Letter to the Colossians**

**The Gospel in Heathen and Multi-Religious Society - #4**

**Reconciliation, Holiness, Holy Life, Guilt**

**Colossians 1:19-23**

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[***19***](http://biblehub.com/colossians/1-19.htm) *For in him all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell,* [***20***](http://biblehub.com/colossians/1-20.htm) *and through him to reconcile to himself all things, whether on earth or in heaven, making peace by the blood of his cross.*

[***21***](http://biblehub.com/colossians/1-21.htm) *And you, who once were alienated and hostile in mind, doing evil deeds,*

[***22***](http://biblehub.com/colossians/1-22.htm) *he has now reconciled in his body of flesh by his death, in order to present you holy and blameless and above reproach before him,* [***23***](http://biblehub.com/colossians/1-23.htm) *if indeed you continue in the faith, stable and steadfast, not shifting from the hope of the gospel that you heard, which has been proclaimed in all creation under heaven, and of which I, Paul, became a minister.”*

**Notes and Studies**

1. God the Father was pleased to reconcile to himself – that is to God – all things through Christ. This rules out all ideas of The Father asking for a price or that the Father poured out his wrath on the Son when He was on the cross.

2. “All things” mean all creation that was created by the Son and for the Son. More important is the phrase, “*through the blood of his cross*.” Please notice that “*his cross*” makes the Cross-very personal. This blood is the word (logos) of the cross in (1 Cor 1:18) and is the word (logos) of reconciliation.

3. Logos means the message not just a work.

4. The old teaching of the universal church was able to say that Christ descended to hell to liberate those who were in bondage. (Origen *Hom on Leviticus 9:4*, see also Thomas Buchan, *Blessed is he Who has Brought Adam From Sheol*, and also Hilarion Alfeve, [*Christ the Conqueror of Hell: The Descent into Hades from an Orthodox Perspective*](https://www.amazon.com/Christ-Conqueror-Hell-Orthodox-Perspective/dp/0881410616/ref%3Dsr_1_2?s=books&ie=UTF8&qid=1485121655&sr=1-2&keywords=christ+descent+into+hell).)

**‘By the Blood of His cross’**

Blood is the life of the body (Lev 17:11). So what does the NT proclaim about the blood of Jesus?

1. The blood of Jesus remits sins (Matt. 26:28).

2. It gives life to those who consume it in the Cup of the new covenant (Luke 22:20John 6:53).

3. The blood of Jesus causes us to dwell in Christ and He in us (John 6:56).

4. The blood of Jesus is the means by which Jesus purchased the church (Acts 20:28).

5. The blood of Jesus is the means by which Jesus becomes our atonement through faith (Rom. 3:25).

6. The blood of Jesus justifies us and saves us from wrath (Rom. 5:9).

7.  The blood of Jesus redeems us (Eph. 1:7; 1 Pet. 1:18-19; Rev. 5:9).

8. The blood of Jesus brings those who were far away from God near to Him (Eph. 2:13), and remains the foundation of God’s peace.

9. The blood of Jesus grants us the forgiveness of sins (Col. 1:14).

10. The blood of Jesus brings peace and reconciliation to God (Col. 1:20).

11. The blood of Jesus has obtained eternal redemption for us (Heb. 9:12).

12. The blood of Jesus cleanses our conscience from dead works to serve the living God (Heb. 9:14).

13. The blood of Jesus is the means by which we enter the most holy place with boldness (Heb. 10:19).

14. The blood of Jesus speaks a better word than the blood of Abel (Heb. 12:24) as a witness to God’s love.

15. The blood of Jesus sanctifies us (Heb. 13:12).

16. The blood of Jesus makes us complete for every good work (Heb. 13:20-21).

17. The blood of Jesus cleanses us from all sin (1 John 1:7).

18. The blood of Jesus bears witness in the earth along with the Spirit and the water (1 John 5:8,).

19. The blood of his Jesus is the power of Jesus life that can clean us (Rev. 1:5; 7:14).

20. The blood of Jesus is the life of Jesus by which we overcome the accuser ‘Satan’ (Rev. 12:11).

**‘We were alienated’**

Literally verse 22 says, “Estranged” and also “*hostile in mind, doing evil deeds*.”

Hostility is a form of hatred, and that in what should otherwise be the best side of our life, the ***dianoia*** which is the perception, the conviction and also the feelings. This Greek word stands for the Hebrew word “Leb” heart.

So this means an open hostility in the inner life and in the conduct. How can this be true?

1. Paganism was and is the human self-projection of the self that has created the false gods. Man worshiped himself without knowing and thus his hatred to others was projected in the gods of wars in every nation.

2. So, the true God was not known. The mind and the behavior instead were directed to what is false. This created round the gods all human evil and made the gods steal, kill and commit adultery. So in searching for the true God, the image of the false gods were mixed with the true God.

**Reconciliation by the death of the body of Christ**

1. The cross is among the most clear historical events in the life of Jesus. As a historical fact we know that Jesus was crucified under Pontius Pilate. But that does not say very much to us. The cross of Jesus became the flag of Christianity and the seal of forgiveness.
2. Jesus died on the cross to put an end to the tyranny of death and thus his death changed the nature of death from an end to a means to a new transfigured life. So we are reconciled to life by His death.
3. The cross is a sign of a wounded love, as we are told in the old prophecy, “*I was wounded in the house of my beloveds.*” This wounded love will be healed only on the last day when the last sheep is secure in the fold.
4. We have many atonement theories; their numbers are different, maybe six or less. This number tells us that the cross is deeper than any theory and its many facets prove its divine face. One divine part of the cross that can defeat all atonement theories, and that is the wounded love, which pleads to reconcile all sinners.
5. Believing in the death of our Lord I learned that Jesus changed our condemnation to “condemnation of the condemnation.” This then is the meaning of peace and reconciling us.
6. His death changed many words, such as “worthiness,” for he came to reconcile the sinners and to shed blood for all the unworthy.
7. What does it mean that “Jesus died for me?” Any attempt to answer this question adequately says that we still want to change the death of our Lord into words while death is an action, which only those who go through it can explain it in silence.
8. “Jesus died for me” is the most costly way of saying “I love you” even to get into the tunnel of death to get you out at the cost of my life.

**‘Presented holy and blameless and above reproach before him.’**

These words of verse 22 are our cure from our “guilt.”

What does it mean to be holy? No human can say I am holy; but God in the OT is called Holy (Isa 6:1ff). What is the basic meaning?

1. The Semitic root Q-D-SH, which means “to cut off for a purpose.” Here are the Hebrew words:

 

***qqds, qodes, qados, qades, qedes***

This Hebrew word for “holiness” is a verb and all its derivatives have no synonyms. The word is used approximately 842 times in the OT. It is important to notice that, in the OT, it was used ….

152 times in Leviticus

105 times in Ezekiel

102 times in Exodus

80 times in Numbers

73 times in Isaiah

65 times in Psalms

1. Absoluteness and Majesty; the Creator is distinct from the creature. The "Godhead," and the adjective "holy" are almost synonymous with "Divine" in the OT (compare [Dan 4:8,9,18](http://www.biblestudytools.com/search/?q=da+4:8,9,18); [5:11](http://www.biblestudytools.com/search/?q=da+5:11)). Yahweh's "holy arm" ([Isa 52:10](http://www.biblestudytools.com/search/?q=isa+52:10); [Ps 98:1](http://www.biblestudytools.com/search/?q=ps+98:1)) is His Divine arm, and His "holy name" ([Lev 20:3](http://www.biblestudytools.com/search/?q=le+20:3), etc.) is His Divine name. When Hannah sings, "*There is none holy as Yahweh*" ([1 Sam 2:2](http://www.biblestudytools.com/search/?q=1sa+2:2)), the rest of the verse suggests that she is referring simply to His supreme Divinity.
2. “Holiness” means something consecrated and [the word] can’t be used at all except for what it was “consecrated for” as in Exodus 29:21, [describing] priests and their vestments, everything that comes into contact with the altar, the worship utensils, and any sacrificial material (Exod 29:37; 30:29; Lev 6:11), or any article used for the sanctuary (Deut 22:9).
3. “God is holy” means “shows himself to be holy” by manifesting his unique and unchangeable divine holiness before Israel (Exod 29:43) and the nations (Ezek 20:41; 28:22, 25; 36:23; 38:16; 39:27).
4. Something can be described as “holy according to the law of worship” such as the Sabbath (Gen 2:3; Exod 20:11).
5. The sense of “be made holy”; be holy/consecrated or “is sanctified” as someone is consecrated (Exod 19:22; Lev 11:44; 20:7). God “*shows himself to be holy*” (Ezek 38:23) because God consecrates himself to save Israel. Humans bring themselves into the condition of consecration or purity without any mention of the particular ritual (Num 11:18; Josh 3:5; 7:13; 1 Sam 16:5) or “is sanctified” (NRSV “keeping themselves holy,” 2 Chrn 31:l8).

7. “To make holy, consecrate, offer, surrender to God as a possession” (Josh 20:7; 1 Chron 23:13; 2 Chron 29:19; 30:17). God can declare something or someone to be consecrated to him (Num 3:13; 1 King 9:7). One can “view something/someone as holy” (Num 20:12; 27:14; Isa 29:23)

8. The noun ***qodes*** “holiness,” is the most frequently used word, referring to the sacrifices and the offering to God of Leviticus 19:8) and the “sanctuary” (Ezek 4 1:21) and for anything touched by holiness, including the sacrifice for sin “most holy” (Lev 6; 24 ft.; Num 4:4; Lev 21:22).

The moral quality of holiness that means “to be without sin” is not known in the OT.

**Holiness – The NT Background**

1. The Holiness of God in the NT rests on the OT foundation. Holiness is certainly God’s own life, the Father is the Holy One (John 17:11; 1 Pet 1:15). In the Lord’s Prayer, our petition is made that God’s name should be hallowed (Matthew 6:9; Luke. 11:12). The name stands for the Father who now reveals himself as Father, not just “Yahweh” Himself (Matt 28:19).

2. Jesus Christ is also Holy (see Mark 1:24; Luke 1:35; John 6:69; 1 John 2:20; Rev 3:7; Acts 3:14; 4:27, 30). In Luke, it is grounded upon His miraculous birth when the Holy One came on Mary who was overshadowed by the divine Shekinah like the OT temple (Luke 1:35).

3. We shall leave all the references to the Holy Spirit in the NT.

**The Holiness of the Church**

1. The letter to the Hebrews says that the church is just like the OT temple (Heb 8: 5), but here it is the people who enjoy God’s dwelling. It is remarkable that Jesus the “Anointed” one was crucified in the city where the Temple was (Acts 4:27-30), and in verse 30 the Holy Spirit filled not the place but the people. Jesus suffered outside the gates of Jerusalem “*in order to sanctify the people*” (Heb 13:12), and in vv.13-14 we have the holy people of God who offer up “*sacrifices of praise that is the fruit of lips that acknowledge his name.*”

2. The NT people are called just as those of the OT, “a kingdom of priests and a holy nation.” These words (Exod 19:6) are now applied to the church (1 Pet 2:9; 1:16).

3. More vivid is the powerful historical identification of Paul of the people of God, the Church of Christ, with the body of Christ of the Holy One. The new people of God are now the new branches from the Gentile world have been engrafted (Rom 11:17), and the stump sanctifies them. The stump is obviously Christ (Rom 15:12) ordained to rule over the Gentiles. He has given Himself for the church that he might sanctify her and cleanse her by the washing of water with the word (Eph 5:26). His church is sanctified not merely as the people of the OT but it is now a state of being (1 Cor 1:2) by the Holy Spirit (1 Cor 6:11; Rom 15:16). Jesus by his death and resurrection extended the “commonwealth” of the blessing and the promises to the Gentiles (Eph 2:12) is extended by Christ to the whole Christian world, so that now Gentile Christians are no longer strangers but fellow citizens with the saints (Eph 2:19), built on the cornerstone of Christ over the foundation of the apostles and prophets. Here the saints are citizens who have the “right” to be in communion with God the Father.

4. This will help us: read carefully in Ephesians 5:27 why the members of the church are holy and without blemish. There is no distinction in Paul between the holiness of the church and that of the members because the church – and that is the community – receives holiness from Christ. This is why Paul addresses the communities as that of the saints (Rom 1:7; 1 Cor 1:2), because where the Spirit of the Lord is there is holiness.

5. The “holy” or the saints are members of the worshipping community grounded in the sacrifice of Christ because they are “*God’s chosen ones, holy and beloved and as the Lord has forgiven them so they must forgive*” (Col 3:12). Ephesians 1:18 speaks of the glorious inheritance in the saints, whose glorious riches are to be known by Christians. Inseparably related is the verse in Colossians that must be quoted in full, “*giving thanks to the Father, who has qualified us to share in the inheritance of the saints in light. He has delivered us from the dominion of darkness and transferred us to the kingdom of his beloved Son. This transformation is the divine act that makes the church live its inheritance*” (Col 1:12- 13).

**The Holy Life of Christians**

### 1. As the Church is a holy temple of God (1 Cor 3:17; Eph 2:21), so the life of Christians should be a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship (Rom 12:10) so that the Christian life is an offering acceptable, sanctified by the Holy Spirit (Rom 15:16).

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2. In fact, grace – the charismata, adoption, salvation, and eternal glory; in a word, all the manifestations of the divine life – are referred some times to Christ, sometimes to the Spirit. Thus “*we live by the Spirit*” and nevertheless “*Christ is our life*’’ (Gal 5:25; Col 3:4; Phil 1:21). The Holy Spirit is the dispenser of all the charismata, and yet these are conferred “according to the measure of the gift of Christ.”(1 Cor 12:11; Eph 4:9) It is by Jesus Christ that we received the adoption of sons; nevertheless, the Holy Spirit is the Spirit of adoption and “*all those who are moved by the Spirit of God are sons of God*.” (Eph 1:4; Gal 4:5-6 and Rom 8:15) The dead will rise from the dead “*by a man*,” Jesus Christ, and yet God will raise us “*because of the Spirit*” or “*by the Spirit that dwells*” (Rom 8:11; 1 Cor 6:11) in us.

***-- (‘in Christ’ and’ in the Holy Spiri’t) --***

3. Let us add still another fact often pointed out: the equivalence of the two formulas “in Christ” and “in the Spirit.” This equivalence does not go so far as is usually supposed, far from it; but it is nevertheless suggestive. Some examples show this:

a. Justified in the Spirit = justified in the Lord.

b. Sanctified in the Holy Spirit = sanctified in Christ Jesus.

c. Holy temple in the Spirit = holy temple in the Lord.

d. To be sealed in the Spirit = to be sealed in Christ.’

e. Joy in the Holy Spirit = joy in the Lord.

f. Peace in the Holy Spirit = peace in the Lord.

To explain this phenomenon, we must say that Christ operates in the Holy Spirit. For the identity of operation on the part of Christ and the Spirit in the lives of the believers there exists a much deeper cause. Jesus is called Christ because as man He possessed the fullness of the Spirit and was to cause it to be poured out upon us as soon as he had accomplished his redemptive work. Then, at the moment of the resurrection, he becomes actually for himself and for us a “life giving spirit” for himself, since the grace with which he abounds fills his body and renders it spiritual, and for us, because he communicates to us lavishly all the gifts of the Holy Spirit and the Holy Spirit himself. Henceforth, Jesus is the head of the new humanity who brings the Holy Spirit to our life.

We live by the Son and also by the Spirit; or, more exactly, we live by the Spirit sent by the Son. It is an identity of operations without confusion of Persons. Let us take, for example, the gift of adoption. This gift comes to us from the Son who has adopted us and causes us to be accepted as brothers; God “predestines us for it by Jesus Christ” and confers it upon us by faith and baptism; that is to say, by the act and rite which put us “into fellowship with the Son of God.”

The Holy Spirit is nonetheless called the “Spirit of adoption,” and all those whom he leads are truly “sons of God.” This is because God adopts us as sons by giving us his Spirit, and Christ adopts us as brothers by sending us his Spirit: “*for if any man hath not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his*.” The proof that “*you are sons is that God hath sent the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, where he cries: Abba, Father! Therefore now he is not a slave but a son; and if a son, an heir also through God.*”

The Holy Spirit is the witness, the messenger, the agent, and the pledge of our adoption.

**‘Blameless and above reproach before him.’**

This is God’s gift rather than our human achievement.

Let us look at one major problem in our life that is Guilt

**Dealing with Guilt: Notes from Dr. F Lake Seminar**

1. Needless to say that accumulated sense of guilt has its root in self-debased attitude a person who was told that she or he is not good at all.

2. We all must face this when we were young as our parents shout at us and use abusive names. George told us last week that the common abusive name is donkey and a better one is “dog”.

3. As we grow up and master something our self-worth grows. When we do well at our schools and even later, we enjoy our success. So lets be clear, remind our clients with their success. This is not a remedy but works like a painkiller.

4. So, is there a remedy or a cure? Yes there are many available on the human side and on God’s side.

5. On the human side, those who have a real and true love in their life can’t be defeated by guilt. The creative power of love, of mothers, wives, husbands, friends’ works like magic for two reasons:

a. Love makes us feel life is worthy living; it calms our hidden fear of mortality.

b. Love inspires us to be good and to care, and that removes the thorn of the self-abased which may have been resting somewhere in our sub-consciousness.

6. On the divine side, we have to explore the vitality of God’s Justification by grace and receiving this from Christ’s life, death, resurrection and his divine presence in each human person.

**This hits on the three branches of guilt:**

1. The lack of self-worth, for we are loved by our Creator for no achievement.
2. Our sense of being nothing, which is not at all humility, is cured, for to be loved by God we must be something, and that is his children.
3. We are not asked to be morally correct for our morality is no more than our self-protection from evil, but it does not increase God’s love.

Now did I sound like a preacher? I hope not, but do remember that the most distructive power in all of us is guilt. Carl Jung was right when he said it is a form of self-hate. This has led me to speak briefly on the great remedy called love.

Dr. Lake thanked Dr. Tom for taking these notes.

10 Jan 1968

**On Guilt**

**Dialogues with Abba Philemon**

**I**

**George**: Father you have told me that humility is the antidote that can cure our guilt. We never expanded this, I am sure that you have more to say on this particular subject.

**Philemon**: May the Lord Jesus put the word of life on my lips. We all have something to hide and have something shameful. Shame and guilt are not in any sense the root of true humility. Humility is our perception that our life is not better or higher than other people. Some say that we should regard ourselves as the least humans but this is not good because it creates a sense of self-despising that filters into our love for God.

**George:** There is a common saying among the Ascetics to say always: “I am a sinner” and you yourself speak to me saying “Philemon is a sinner.” What is the true meaning of that?

**Philemon:** Truly I am a sinner and a sinner is the only one who is qualified for grace. This I say knowing two things: I am nothing without Christ and at the same time I am the center of Christ’s love and that He came for me and died for me and lives in my poor dirty and filthy heart just as he lived in the manger when He was born and enjoyed the company of animals so He comes to enjoy not my company but to dwell in the manger of my heart. The feast and the fast before we celebrate the Incarnation of our Lord is a time for dancing: Jesus came for me and that gives me joy and at the same time drive His humility deep into my heart because I was not able to save myself and He came to save me. Humility is to accept the Incarnation of the Son of God as the foundation of our helplessness and inability to come to the “throne of grace.” This is one of my favorite names of God the Father, because throne means kingdom and ruling by grace.

**George:** Are you saying that we step towards humility when we believe that Jesus came to us save us as sinners?

**Philemon:** Yes, the beginning of faith is our acceptance that we are unable to have any kind of communion without Christ. This means that we have no privileges or achievements that qualify us for grace. This means that all humans are equal. So no one is better or higher than the others.

**George:** What is the root of guilt if we are loved by God and given grace in Christ Jesus our Lord?

**Philemon:** Pride.

**George:** Can you explain?

**Philemon:** Explain what? Pride is the source of all our sins. Pride brings excessive fear, distorts our perception, make us think highly of ourselves and then feel ashamed of what we have done; it is the horror of being reminded of something evil that we have committed. Pride magnifies an insult, hardens the heart and makes us unable to forgive. It is the only cause for rejecting divine love for sinners because those who like to put others in hell are those who have never accepted the humility of Jesus and his love for sinners. Is this enough?

**George:** Yes,

**Philemon:** If you my dear brother have done anything wrong and have been ashamed and feel guilty about it, if you truly believe that Christ died to free you from this, so why do you still agonize over your past? Say to yourself that you have done this and that and these deeds, which are sinful, are the reason for Christ’s love and care. Jesus is our Physician and He said that He came for the sick not for the healthy. The more you think about grace and truly embrace your littleness the more humility, which is the acceptance of the love of God for all sinners, takes its root into your heart.

**II**

**George:** Abba what do you say to our brothers and sisters who say that Christ came to save us from hell, sin and condemnation?

**Philemon:** What to say about someone who loves you because you are ill? What kind of love is this?

**George:** He does not love me as a person but loves me because of my needs.

**Philemon:** Such love lacks three qualities; do you want to know them?

**George:** Yes, Please.

**Philemon:** 1) It is love that is directed to solve problems but not to promote growth; 2) It is love that shows only the quality of the physician or the healer but once the problems are solved would be anything more to do?; and 3) It is a love conditioned by our problems and like an emergency solution but the real and true love was not revealed.

**George:** Thank you this is illuminating. How do you understand the title “Savior”?

**Philemon:** This is not the Only Title but one among others, like Lord, God, First-born, Good Shepherd and more. Why do people think only of Jesus as Savior from sins? This is because of guilt and fear. Are these words of God not enough, *“For I will forgive their wickedness and will remember their sins no more”* (Heb 8:12)?

**George:** Why do you think we ask about the final state of Moslems and like to send them to hell?

**Philemon:** It is obvious we don’t love them, we hate them and this we wish evil, and eternal punishment.

Brother George, the God of Hell, who has created it with Heaven and Earth, is certainly not the God who is love. He created us and prepared a place of torment as part of the Cosmos, such a creator needs healing. I went into solitude last month to think on my own and read the Bible account of both the old and the new creation and as you said there was no account of the creation of hell.

**George:** Yes, Sheol is hades and Christ destroyed it; it was created by our fear.

**Philemon:** Let our faith defeat our fear.

**III**

**George:** Abba should we think of what may happen to non-believers if they did not believe in Christ?

**Philemon:** No we should not, but do you? Why?

**George:** No, but I would love to know.

**Philemon:** First you did not create them, and God is their only Creator. He is the One who cares more than you about his creation. Second God deals with each nation and every individual according to his plan of salvation. He knows the future of each but his knowledge does not change us for we have to come to him freely. Those who don’t believe in Christ (still have) their god and he may be different from our Father but share at least one common ground that He is a kind of creator, so these people will judged by their faith and according to their faith.

***Pope’s Notes***

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