**The Letter to the Colossians**

**The Gospel in Heathen and Multi-Religious Society - #9**

**Evil’s Effect / Psalms in Worship / ‘in the Name of Jesus’**

**Colossians 3:8-19**

***(Also: Christ as Intercessor according to St. Augustine, pp. 8-11)***

**Colossians 3:8-9 – Behavior or Corruption?**

v8 - *Now, however, set aside all these things yourselves.*

Paul asked the church to let go of rage, anger, vice, slander, shameful talk from your mouth.

v9 - *Do not lie to one another.*

What can happen to us if we slip into that kind of what looks like a behavior?

First it is not just behavior, it is a manifestation of a hidden corruption of the soul.

**What Evil Does**

A letter from Philemon

Brother George,

May the Lord of life the Risen Lord be your life so that whenever you struggle in this life you receive your sustenance from Jesus who is with you and in you.

Evil can damage us and it creeps silently in us and we feel it after we are wounded.

Evil is mixed with our self-perception to the extent that we become the Law of Good and Evil not according to God but according to our lusts.

Lusts magnify the ego and make it the center of our life that is what our Lord told us to deny it as a source of life if we want to be his disciples.

Any form of evil behavior is like lying. This vice deprives us from true self knowledge. We allow our mind to be deceitful and thus two-faced. This becomes like a seed of insincerity.

Look at stealing or concealing things that we borrow from others. We have to tell a lie and by not telling what is true we depart from the Spirit of Truth, the Holy Spirit.

Evil enslaves us to our ego. Do you know that this enslavement goes back to our inflated ego, which we in ignorance embrace and thus we have a hard time to abandon it because we think it is our real life?

When young people come and ask me about chastity, I have one fact to say to them and let them work it out: “How do you love yourself and how do you love the Lord Jesus?” How we struggle with sexual thoughts and desires should tell us how we answer this question.

Those among us who don’t see beauty as God’s given grace but as something they like to possess will have a hard time if they seek the Lord and try to ask Jesus to purify their hearts so that it will be the resting place of the Lord and only the Lord.

May the Lord illuminate you to see damage and the mutilation of perception which evil can do to us.

Pray from me

Philemon, 1970

**The New Self**

**A Dialogue with Philemon**

**George:** How can I put on this *“new self”* that St. Paul mentioned (Col 3:9-10)?

**Philemon:** Do you remember the first day when you were appointed a teacher in a secondary school? You walked into the classroom as a teacher. This was in a sense a new self, but as soon as you left the building you recovered your old self. Am I right?

**George:** Yes, but how is this related to the Christian life?

**Philemon:** Not exactly, but St. Paul immediately said, *“putting on the new self, renewed in knowledge according to the image of its creator.”* So if you imitate God by knowing God as your loving, merciful and forgiving Father, it is by loving God that we know Him and without loving Him we can know Him according to our own image.

**George:** What do you mean by this?

**Philemon:** There are at least three gods in our life. The True God and Father who revealed Himself in His Son Our Lord; a false god whom we imagine according to our knowledge and misreading of the Bible and the common popular folklore belief; and a third one whom we created out of the two. This is a common kind of Christian paganism.

**George:** Can you provide me with examples of the three?

**Philemon:** Yes, the first is in the New Testament, which is the final revelation of God. All that has been said about Him in the Old Testament must be read and understood in the light of the New Testament. If you read anything, any account about Yahweh in the Old Testament, it was part of the Old Covenant which is now “obsolete” (Heb 8:13). The second god is the angry god who is waiting for the sinners to take his revenge on them; if not here, it will be on the Day of Judgment. The Third one is a mixture that is sometime kind if you are a good boy and hard and angry with you if you are not; and loves you if you love him first. Do you see what is wrong in the second and the third gods? Brother George, outside Jesus there is no knowledge of the True God. Just read John 17.

**George:** Thank you, but what about the new self?

**Philemon:** The new self is created after God. We realize that there is a new life illustrated or painted in the Sermon on the Mount: the peacemaker, the merciful, the forgiving and the rest. It is seeking its maker Jesus himself, and has three qualities, do you want to hear them?

**George:** Yes, please.

**Philemon:** First: the new self-traces its being to the Father, just like Jesus.

Second, the new self trusts the wisdom of the gospel more than the wisdom of the world

Third, love is its food; it lives by love and for love.

God of all created us in the beginning, and stamped on us more precisely the features of the divine image which sin destroyed. He said this also in the letter to the Romans, “*Whom he foreknew and predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son*” Then St. Paul added that the new self has no ethnic origin (Colossians 3:11 “*Where there is no Greek and Jew, circumcision and uncircumcision, barbarian, Scythian, slave, free; instead, Christ is all and in all”*). Christ is all and in all the members of his body the church.

1964

**Colossians 3:12-13 - The New Self is the image of Christ**

*As God’s elect, then, holy and beloved, put on the feelings of compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness, longsuffering, bearing with one another and forgiving one another if anyone has a complaint against another.*

.

To be like Jesus, as the Lord also has forgiven us so likewise do we. Let us regard the Lord’s loving-kindness, of how many sins he has granted us forgiveness. So let us imitate the Lord, and let each one make allowances for the faults committed against them by their brother.

**Colossians 3:14 – The Bond of Love and its Perfection**

*And above all have love, which is the bond of perfection.*

1. The only bond is Christ himself which was indicated in (Col 2:18-19) “*Let no one disqualify you, insisting on asceticism and worship of angels, going on in detail about visions, puffed up without reason by his sensuous mind, and not holding fast to the Head, from whom the whole body, nourished and knit together through its joints and ligaments, grows with a growth that is from God.*”
2. Perfection has two meanings:

a. The end result of the bond of love is the life of peace and joy.

b. The maturity of the congregation which unites them around the eternal goal of life, God himself. This is made clear in (Col 3:15): “*Let the peace of Christ preside in your hearts: to it you were also called in one body.”* Having called us, God made of us all one body; therefore do not divide it. Instead, if someone experiences trouble at another’s hands, let them have peace in their heart, for it will judge in their favor and award the prize and bring about the harmony that is dear to God. And be thankful: give thanks to the Lord even in whatever happens.

**Colossians 3:16 – Worshipping together**

*Let the word of God dwell in you in abundance. In all wisdom teach and admonish one another, with psalms and hymns and spiritual canticles singing with gratitude in your hearts to the Lord*.

**A Historical note on the use of the Psalms**

In the time of our Lord Jesus and according to Alfred Edersheim, Psalm singing in the Second Temple services followed the morning sacrifice:

"The Levites, accompanied by instrumental music, began the Psalm of the day. It was sustained by no less than twelve voices, with which mingled the delicious treble from selected voices of young sons of the Levites, who, standing by their fathers, might take part in this service alone.

The psalm of the day was always sung in three sections. At the close of each the priests drew three blasts from their silver trumpets and the people bowed down and worshipped. This closed the morning service.

Special psalms were prepared for the new month, and other occasions, the Hallel during major Jewish holidays, and psalms for special sacrifices such as the "Psalm for the Thanksgiving Offering" (Psalm 100).

(Alfred Edersheim, *The Temple: Its Ministry and Services As They Were at the Time of Christ* (Eerdmans, reprinted 1960, from the original facsimile published in 1874), p. 172. And Edersheim, *Temple*, p. 172, footnote 2, cites *Tamid*, sec. 7, and Maimonides in *Tamid*)

**Psalms in the Synagogue**

Though evidence is scant, scholars believe that the institution of the Jewish synagogue developed during the exile, when worship at the temple was no longer possible. Even after the temple was built following the exile -- and rebuilt by Herod -- synagogues flourished, even in Jerusalem, the city of the temple itself (Acts 6:9). At the destruction of Jerusalem, some 400 to 500 synagogues were found in the city. The synagogue was the local house of worship. Jesus attended the synagogue regularly (Luke 4:16) and taught in synagogues up and down Galilee.

What was worship like in the synagogues of this era? They were devoted to prayer and the reading of the scripture. We have a number of indications that the Jews used psalms regularly on feast days as well as in their synagogue worship. George Foot Moore noticed, “It would seem natural that with other features of the temple worship, the songs of the Levites at the morning and evening sacrifices should be imitated in the synagogue. The first group of psalms to be so employed was Psalms 145-150; but it appears that in the middle of the second century AD, the daily repetition of the psalms was a pious practice of individuals rather than a regular observance of the congregation."

The Passover ritual, too, drew heavily on the Psalms. The "hymn" sung by Jesus and the apostles at the conclusion of the Lord's Supper (Matthew 26:30) on the night of Passover was doubtless one the psalms prescribed for the occasion -- the second half of the Hallel (Psalms 114-118 or 115). George Foot Moore, *Judaism in the First Centuries of the Christian Era: The Age of Tannaim* (Hendrickson Publishers; reprinted 1997 from Harvard University Press edition, 1927), vol. 1, p. 296.).

**From Synagogue to House Church**

Early Christianity was practiced in the temple and in the homes of believers (Acts 2:46). When the Apostle Paul would take the Gospel to a new city, he would typically begin by attending the local synagogue and teaching there about Jesus. Eventually, the Christians would be driven out of the synagogues and formed their own congregations, which were essentially Christian synagogues governed by elders (Acts 14:23). We have several passages of scripture which indicate that psalms were part of the worship in these early house churches:

“*When you come together, everyone has a hymn, or a word of instruction, a revelation, a tongue or an interpretation. All of these must be done for the strengthening of the church."* (1 Cor 14:26)

*"Be filled with the Spirit. Speak to one another with psalms, hymns and spiritual songs."* (Eph 5:18-19)

*"Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly as you teach and admonish one another with all wisdom, and as you sing psalms, hymns and spiritual songs with gratitude in your hearts to God."* (Col 3:16)

*"Is any one of you in trouble? He should pray. Is anyone happy? Let him sing songs of praise."* (James 5:13)

**The Post-Apostolic Church**

After the original apostles died, psalms continued as part of the worship of the church. Tertullian (c.160-225 AD) mentions singing songs from the scripture as part of the Lord's Supper celebration.

In the church of Rome nothing except the Psalms and New Testament hymns were, as a rule, sung in public worship before the fourth century." These included the:

- *Gloria in Excelsis “Glory be to God in the high and on earth peace*,”

- *Magnificat “My soul does magnify the Lord*,” and

- *Nunc Dimittis “Now Lord let your servant depart in peace,”* etc.

St. Jerome (c. 348-420 AD) shares something of the primitive monastic life that was beginning to develop within Christianity:

"In the cottage of Christ [the monastery] all is simple and rustic: and except for the chanting of psalms there is complete silence. Wherever one turns the laborer at his plow sings Alleluia, the toiling mower cheers himself with psalms, and the vine-dresser while he prunes his vine sings one of the songs of David."

**The Impact of Monastic Life**

While psalms were used in worship services in churches, in the growing monastic movement the practice of reciting the Psalter formed the core of the devotional practice of the community. St. Benedict (c. 480-543) developed a widely copied rule for monasteries known as The Rule of St. Benedict (c. 530-540 AD). Among other practices it outlined the, the Divine Office of prayers and psalms. This liturgy consisted of gatherings of the community at eight times during the day and night with the purpose to "sanctify" the day with prayer. At these various times they would say or chant together the set of prayers and psalms designated for that day and time. In time, the Divine Office involved reciting the entire Psalter through in a single week and would require several hours each day to complete. Clergy and most religious orders in both the Roman Catholic Church as well as Eastern Orthodox were -- and are -- required to recite the Divine Office. The best-known example of this is the beautiful Gregorian Chant practiced in certain orders going back perhaps as far as Pope Gregory (c. 540-604 AD), for which it was named.

At Vatican II in the 1960s, the Roman Church revised the Liturgy of the Hours so that it now goes through the entire Psalter in one month rather than in one week, and reduced the number of required times of prayer each day. Those in the Roman Church that practice this discipline use the Breviary, a set of four volumes that contain the one-month Psalter plus the prayers for each day and each feast day. Those living as part of a community, such as in a monastery or convent, recite their psalms and prayers together ("in choir") for at least some of their services, such as morning and evening prayer.

Clergy living alone recite these psalms and prayers by themselves privately.

Other churches with a liturgical tradition, such as Anglican, Episcopal, Lutheran, Presbyterian, Methodist, often have in their prayer book or book of discipline a calendar to guide the faithful in Morning Prayer and Evening Prayer (Vespers).

The effect of those practicing a discipline of the Liturgy of the Hours has been an immersion in the psalms and regular prayer. While it can be seen as a burden, for those who have entered into it wholeheartedly, it can be a lifetime of blessing.

**Singing the Psalter in the Reformed Churches**

Protestant Churches, too, have a strong tradition of singing the Psalms. The Church of England, under heavy Puritan influence, sought to bring about reform by publishing a metrical psalmody that could be sung by a congregation. In 1562 John Day printed the Book of Psalms with psalm text translated by Thomas Sternhold, John Hopkins, and others. Standard metrical patterns were developed that could adapt each of the psalms to a common metrical pattern -- which would then allow the psalm to be sung to one of several standard tunes. Patterns included: Common Meter (8.6.8.6), Short Meter (6.6.8.6), and Long Meter (8.8.8.8). Various adaptations were made in Scotland, New England, etc., but the psalms were the primary focus of singing in many Protestant congregations for hundreds of years.

Isaac Watts (1674-1748) set a new direction for independent or congregational churches when he published his *Psalms of David* in 1719. Instead of close fitting translations, these hymns were poetic paraphrases of the biblical psalms. The best known of these today are probably "Our God, Our Help in Ages Past" (Psalm 90) and "Joy to the World, the Lord Is Come" (Psalm 98).

The nineteenth and twentieth centuries saw a near eclipse (end) of psalm singing in most Protestant churches in North America, replaced by devotional lyrics and gospel songs with a more emotional and subjective bent.

**Late Twentieth Century Psalm Singing**

A liturgical renewal following World War II saw a revival of psalm singing in some churches. Vatican II (1962-65) encouraged the use of psalms in worship and fostered a wealth of "responsorial psalms."

The Charismatic Renewal also brought about a huge surge of Christian music. During the 1970s and 1980s especially, singing the scriptures was common in some groups, though contemporary Christian music seems to have moved past that as a whole by the turn of the twenty-first century.

Throughout history the Psalms have often been central in both corporate worship and personal devotional practice. As the psalms have remained strong, the church has been revived and personal spiritual life has been enriched. Isn't it about time to renew the ancient practice of the Psalms in your congregation and in your life?

**Colossians 3:17 – In the name of Jesus**

*And whatever you do, in word or deed, do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to the God and Father through him.*

1. In the Bible, the name means person, i.e. here, “the Person of Jesus.” The Psalms and the other books of the OT speak of the “name of the Lord” as the Lord himself (Ps 8:1,103:1-, 148:13)
2. In the NT, the name of Jesus is the name of the revelation of salvation for this is the meaning of the name Jesus - YHWH savior,
3. *“For our benefit God made Christ to be our Meditator and so we can be confident that he will listen to us whenever we ask him for anything in line with his will. And if we know he is listening when we make our requests, we can be sure that he will give us what we ask for*" ([1 John 5:14-15](http://ebible.com/query?utf=8%E2%9C%93&query=1%20John%205%3A14-15&translation=ESV&redirect_iframe=http://www.allaboutprayer.org/bible.htm)).
4. Praying in Jesus’ name is praying for things that will honor and glorify Jesus*.*

*- “You can ask for anything in my name, and I will do it, because the work of the Son brings glory to the Father. Yes, ask anything in my name, and I will do it!”* ([John 14:13-14](http://ebible.com/query?utf=8%E2%9C%93&query=John%2014%3A13-14&translation=ESV&redirect_iframe=http://www.allaboutprayer.org/bible.htm)).

*- “I am praying not only for these disciples but also for all who will ever believe in me because of their testimony”* ([John 17:20](http://ebible.com/query?utf=8%E2%9C%93&query=John%2017%3A20&translation=ESV&redirect_iframe=http://www.allaboutprayer.org/bible.htm)).

*-“*For *‘Anyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved’”* ([Rom 10:13](http://ebible.com/query?utf=8%E2%9C%93&query=Romans%2010%3A13&translation=ESV&redirect_iframe=http://www.allaboutprayer.org/bible.htm)).

**Christ Jesus our Intercessor**

**According to St. Augustine**

**The One Man**

“What is the church?  She is the body of Christ.  Join to it the Head, and you have one man: the head and the body make up one man. Who is the Head?   He was born of the Virgin Mary.  What is his body?  It is his spouse that is the church.  The Father willed that these two, the God Christ, and the church, should be one man.

“All the humans are one man, and all humans are this man; for all are one since Christ is one.” (Augustine’s sermon on Ps 127, Pl 37:1686)

“When by faith Christ begins to abide in the inner man and when by prayer He takes possession of the faithful soul, He became the whole Christ, the Head and the body, and from many he becomes one.” (Sermon on Ps 74, Pl 36:948)

“Our Lord Jesus Christ, like a whole and perfect man, is head and body.  His body is the church, not simply the church that is in this particular place, but both the church that is here and the church which extends over the whole earth; not simply the church that is living today, but the church which has the whole race of saints from Abel down to all those who will ever be born and will believe in Christ until the end of the world, for all belong to one city.  This city is the body of Christ.  This is the whole Christ; Christ united with the church” (Sermon on Ps 90, Pl 37:1159)

**We become Christ**

“Let us rejoice and give thanks.  Not only are we become Christians, but we are become Christ.  My brothers, do you understand the grace of God that is given to us?  Wonder, rejoice, for we are made Christ.  If He is the head, and we are the members, then together He and we are whole man.”

“This would be foolish pride on our part, were it not a gift of his bounty.”

“But this is what He promised by the mouth of the apostle: ‘*You are the body of Christ, and severally His members.’”* (1 Cor 12:27), (On the Gospel of John 21, Pl 35:1568)

**One body and understanding the NT**

“In order to understand the Scriptures, it is absolutely necessary to know the whole, complete Christ that is the Head and the members.  For sometimes Christ speaks in the name of the Head alone, sometime in the name of his body, which is the holy church spread over the entire earth.  We are his body and we hear ourselves speaking in it, for the apostle tells us, *“We are members of his body”* (Eph 5:30).  In many places does the apostle tell us this. (Sermon on Ps 37, PL, 36:399)

“Christ Himself has said: *‘They are no longer two, but they are one flesh*’ (Matt 19:6).  It is strange then, if they are one flesh, they should have one tongue, and should say the same words, since they are one flesh, head and body?  Let us therefore hear them as one. But let us listen to the head speaking as head, and to the body speaking as the body.   We don’t separate the two realities, but two different dignities; for the Head saves the body and the body is saved.

“The Head is there to purify the body from sin, and the body to confess its sins.  Yet there is only one voice, and we are not told whether it is the head that speaks, or the body.  We make distinction when we hear, but He speaks as one.

“Nevertheless, when you hear the body speak do not separate it from the head; and when you hear the voice of the head, do not take away the body.  For they are no longer two, but are one flesh.” (Ibid, PL 36:400)

“What has the church done to you that you should wish to decapitate her?  You would take away her Head, and believe in the Head alone, despising the body.  Vain is your service, and false your devotion to the Head, for to sever it from the body is an injury to both Head and body.” (Sermon 138, PL 37:1797)

**Our language and talks should not introduce division**

“Though absent from our eyes, Christ our Head is bound to us by love.  Since the whole Christ is the Head and body, let us so listen to the voice of the Head that we may also hear the body speak.

“He no more wished to speak alone than He wished to exist alone, since He says: ‘Behold I am with you, unto the end of the world’ (Matt 28; 20).  If He is with us, then He speaks in us, He speaks of us, He speaks through us, and we too speak in Him.” (Sermon on Ps 56, PL 36:662)

“Jesus did not disdain to assume us unto Himself when He became human, did not disdain to take our place and speak our words, in order that we might speak His words.”

Sermon on Ps 30 part 2, PL 36:230)

“Christ speaks for us when He said, ‘My God, I shall cry by day and you did not hear.’” (Ps 21:3)

Augustine commented: “Certainly He says this for me and for you, for this ‘you’ is this man He bears in Himself, His body, the church.  Unless you imagine that when He said, ‘My Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass away from me’ (Matt 26:39), it was the Lord that feared to die.  But Paul longed to die, that he might be with Christ.  What is this?  The apostle desires to die, and Christ Himself should fear death?  What can this mean, except that He bore our infirmity in Himself, and uttered these words for those who are in His body and still fear death?  It is from these that the voice came; it was the voice of His members, not the voice of Head alone.”  (Sermon on Ps 21, part 2 PL 36:172)

“Christ’s whole body groans in pain.  Until the end of the world when pain will pass away, this man (Jesus) groans and cries to God.  And each one of us has part in the cry of that whole body.  You cried out “Jesus!” in your day, and [when] your days have passed away another day took place and another person took your place this day.  You are here, and he and we are here.  The body of Christ ceases not to cry out all the day, one member replacing the other whose voice is hushed.

“Thus there is but one man who reaches the end of time and those that cry are always His members.” (Sermon on Ps 85, PL 37:1085)

**Christ is one with His Body**

“He is the cause of the unity of his body.  If one member suffers, all the members suffer with the member.

“If the members are troubled it is I that am troubled.  Until the end of time, whenever anyone in my body is in in tribulation, it is I that am in tribulation.” (Sermon on Ps 101, PL 37:1296)

“When the Head and the Members are despised, then the whole Christ is despised, for the whole Christ, Head and body, is that one, just man upon whom deceitful lips speak inequity.” (Sermon on Ps 30, PL 36:250)

**Christ Confess with us**

“Why does he say ‘the words of my sin’?  Is it not because he himself is praying for our sins, and because he has made our sins His sins, that He might make His justice our justice?” (Sermon on Ps 21part 2, PL 35: 1769)

**More emphatic words**

“Why, Lord, do you ask pardon for your sins?  Why are you praying in this way? What sin have you to expiate?” And He replies: “Each time that one of my members prays, thus it is I who pray.” Has He not said, *“Inasmuch as you did it to one of the least of these my brothers, you did it to me”*? (Matt 25:40) (Sermon on Ps 140, PL 37:1082)

“Therefore as soon as our Head begins to pray, let us understand that we are in Him, that we may unite our prayers with His as we share in His tribulation.” (Sermon on Ps 54, PL 36:630)

“No greater gift could God bestow on humans than to give them as their Head His Logos, by whom He made all things, and to unite them as members to that Head. Thus the Logos became both Son of God and Son of man: one God with the Father, one Man with humans.

“Hence, when we offer our petitions to God. Let us not separate ourselves from the Son; and when the body of the Son prays, let it not detach itself from its Head.  Let it be He, the Sole Savior of his body, our Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God, who prays for us, who prays in us and who is prayed to by us.

Then Augustine continues:

“He prays for us as our Priest;

He prays in us as our Head;

He is prayed to by us as our God.

Let us therefore hear both our words in Him and His words in us.”

“We pray to Him for He is God, he prays in us for he took the form of a slave.  He is the Creator; but He is also in the Creation.  He changes not, but takes the creatures and transforms it into himself, making us one man, head and body, with Himself.

We pray therefore to Him, he with us; we recite this prayer of the Psalm in him, and He recites it in us.” Sermon on Ps 30, part 2 PL 36:230)

**Calling Jesus**

**A Note from Philemon**

When we call Jesus Lord it is because He serves us as the Good Shepherd.

When we call Jesus God it is he is our Creator who sacrificed his life to restore us.

When we call Him Savior it is because of his love for sinners and his ministry for salvation.”

***Pope’s Notes***

**Class Contacts**

George & May Bebawi Bob & Pam Walters

403 Shoemaker Dr. 12281 Blue Springs Lane

Carmel, IN 46032 Fishers, IN 46037

317-818-1487 317-694-4141 / 317-727-7917

*Audio at GeorgeBebawi.com* rlwcom@aol.com