

Colossians 3:1-9 – Christ Who is Our Life

False teachers were encouraging the Colossians to focus on Jewish ceremonial laws, human traditions, self improvement and angel worship. None of these things were Christ centered. In chapter 3, Paul continued his teaching on “with Christ” and how that applied to their lives. Christ was their life. Their life was not to be centered on dos and don’ts. Because they were raised with Christ, they were encouraged to pursue heavenly things and not earthly things. They were to put off the old self, the life they previously lived without Christ.

Read Colossians 3:1-4.

Based on verse 1, where is Christ now? Because the Colossians had been raised with Christ where did their pursuits need to be centered? (3:1)

What else did the Colossians need to do because they had been raised with Christ? What are some examples of “things that are above”? What are some examples of “things that are on earth”? Does this mean that we should not make out grocery lists, etc? (3:2)

They were buried with Christ and raised with Christ (2:12). They were made alive together with Christ (2:13). In verse 3:3 Paul stated the obvious conclusion of being buried, raised and made alive. They had died. What does it mean that the Colossians had died? See Galatians 2:20. What kinds of things do people hide and why do they hide them? What does it mean that the Colossians’ life was hidden with Christ? (3:3)

In verse 4 Paul mentioned “when Christ appears”. When will Christ appear? How is Christ described? What will happen to the Colossians when Christ appears? (3:4)

Read Colossians 3:5-9.

Because the Colossians had died and were raised with Christ and were seeking things above, what did they need to “put to death”? The list of “earthly things” contains some of the usual sins found in other lists in Paul’s letters. One that sticks out is covetousness “which is idolatry”. How is covetousness idolatry? See Ephesians 5:5 and Matthew 6:24. (3:5)

Based on verse 6, what is another reason why the Colossians should not be engaged in sexual immorality, impurity, etc? Some translations like the KJV have at the end of verse 6 “on the children/sons of disobedience”. Some early manuscripts do not have this phrase and so versions like ESV and NIV leave this phrase out. (3:6)

How did Paul characterize the Colossians’ former life? An implication from this is that the Gospel is not just for “good people”. The Gospel is for church people as well as the worst heathens. (3:7)

Paul switched from “put to death”, in verse 5, to “put away” or “put off”, in verse 8. This word was used of “putting off” a garment. It’s figurative meaning was to “rid oneself of” something (BDAG – a Greek lexicon). What did the Colossians need to “put away”? (3:8)

The list of sins in 3:5 and 3:8 remind us of the works of the flesh from Galatians 5:19-21. Is it possible to be angry without sinning? See Ephesians 4:26 and Deuteronomy 1:37. (3:8)

What effect do malice and slander have on a church? (3:8)

What effect does lying have on a church? Why shouldn’t we lie to one another? (3:9)

“Put off” in verse 9 was another word used for taking off a garment. What does it mean to “put off” the old self? The word for “self” is literally the word for “man” or “person”. Some translations like KJV have “old man”.

Of the sins listed in verses 5, 8 and 9, which have become acceptable in our society?