



COLOSSIANS

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...buried with Him in baptism, in which you also were raised with *Him* through faith in the working of God, who raised Him from the dead. Colossians 2:12

This verse partly resembles Romans 6:4 -

“Therefore we were buried with Him through baptism into death, that just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life.”

Paul, ensuring that those in Colossae understand this crucial point of doctrine, states it again while giving it more force than that which he wrote in the epistle to Rome. He says, “...buried with Him in baptism.” There is an article in front of “baptism.” Therefore, it reads either “the baptism,” or “your baptism.” Further, this is in the aorist tense, and so it makes this act of burial contemporary with the circumcision noted in the previous verse. In essence, when you were circumcised with the circumcision of Christ, you were also buried with Him in baptism.

This then is a spiritual, not a physical, baptism which is being spoken of. It is the baptism of the Holy Spirit – the total immersion of the old man into Christ’s death, being completely covered by His righteousness and thus resulting in us being “in” Christ. The sealing of the Spirit *is* the baptism of the Spirit; it is a one-time act which moves us from Adam to Christ. Water baptism then is only an outward sign of the inward change which takes place in us. This is another reason why sprinkling of infants is of no value. It is show without substance.

Paul continues with, “...in which you were also raised with Him.” Again, this is a spiritual raising, not our final conversion when we shall be made like Him at the resurrection. This raising is a moral conversion. When we were circumcised (made right in our heart, and acceptable to God), we were buried (where our sin and the old man was covered over), and we were also raised (putting on the new man who is morally covered in Christ’s righteousness, and deemed acceptable to God). The entire process occurs when one receives Jesus Christ through faith. As Paul says, “...through faith in the working of God.”

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This faith is speaking of God's working in Christ on our behalf. Christ died for our sins, and God raised Him to life. It is the constant theme of Paul where the focus is on the resurrection. Faith in this is the heart of the gospel. If the wages of sin is death, and if death could not hold Christ Jesus, then Christ obviously had no sin of His own. If this is so, then those who die in Him have had their sins removed in His death, and are thus deemed as sinless before God. Therefore, they too will be raised. Nothing can thwart this from taking place. All of this happens to us spiritually the moment we trust in the gospel message, and therefore the physical aspect of what occurs must logically follow. It is also another, of countless verses, which clearly show us the truth of eternal salvation. If we are deemed as sinless, then we are saved – once and forever.

It is God "who raised Him from the dead." God looked upon the work of Christ, declared it acceptable, and therefore Christ was raised. When we trust in Christ, God looks upon our faith, and declares it acceptable. His merits are imputed to us, and we are granted the circumcision, the removing of the old man, and the moral conversion to a new and acceptable being.

It must be remembered why Paul is saying these things. There were those who claimed that something more was necessary to be perfected, even as a follower of Christ. Here is how Paul stated it in verse 8 –

"Beware lest anyone cheat you through philosophy and empty deceit, according to the tradition of men, according to the basic principles of the world, and not according to Christ."

Paul is showing that the gospel transcends the traditions of men, and is not according to the basic principles of this world. What He offers is so far above those things that they are utterly useless. It would make no sense at all to fall back on Greek or Jewish practices which could not possibly have any bearing at all on what has occurred in the believer in Christ. Paul will perfectly and clearly explain this in the verses ahead.

Life application: If you have received Jesus Christ, the law is dead to you. Why on earth would you go back and adhere to principles of a law which is obsolete and nullified through the work of Christ? You have died with Him, you have been buried with Him, and you have been raised to newness of life because of Him. Now live for God in the New Covenant; put away the old!

And you, being dead in your trespasses and the uncircumcision of your flesh, He has made alive together with Him, having forgiven you all trespasses, Colossians 2:13

Paul now expands upon what he said in the previous two verses. "And you" is speaking of those Gentiles at Colossae, and thus to any who receive and read his letter afterwards. Speaking to the Gentiles, he says that you "being dead in your trespasses and the

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uncircumcision of your flesh.” This deadness is a spiritual state. Of course those who read his words are physically alive, but he is referring to a spiritual matter. This dead state comes from the power of sin (trespasses) as well as from their state of alienation from God because of their uncircumcised state.

The uncircumcision looks to the carnal state of the flesh, and of the deadness which resulted from original sin. That original sin then is only magnified through continued trespasses which visibly demonstrate the “uncircumcision of the flesh” in the person. But through Christ, God has done something marvelous. Paul continues with, “He has made alive together with Him.” This is speaking of God the Father who raised Christ Jesus from the dead. The resurrection proved that Jesus was sinless, and it also proved that the sin-debt which was laid upon Him had been removed; He was delivered from it.

In that act, we were “made alive together with Him.” Our sin debt, having been laid upon the Lord Jesus, and now having been removed, thus removed the death which resulted from our sin. In this act, we have been spiritually quickened to life. As Christ fulfilled the law, then there is no law by which sin can again be imputed to us. Our quickening is thus an eternal one. Spiritual life is restored, once and for all time. This is realized in the words “having forgiven you all trespasses. The stain of original sin is removed, and the stain of all sins committed in life are likewise removed. Through Christ’s death, we have died to sin; through Christ’s resurrection, we live to God in Christ.

As a point of theology, Calvinists will use this verse to deny free will in man. They say that if we are dead, then it is impossible for us to raise ourselves to life. Therefore, we must first be “regenerated in order to believe.” When that happens, we are then brought to life. That is both a category mistake, and it is nonsense.

First, we are spiritually dead, not physically dead. Just because we are not morally good beings, it does not mean that we cannot see the good in God and desire it. We see the good in many things before coming to Christ, and we act upon that knowledge, moving toward the good. How much more, when we realize the surpassing goodness of God, will we then want to receive Him?

Secondly, if we were “regenerated in order to believe,” but it is belief that makes us alive, then we would still be dead until we believed. As we would still be dead until we believed, the regeneration would not mean anything. It is a convoluted and unnecessary stretch of what God has done for us in Christ. Please, don’t listen to convoluted theology. The bible teaches free-will in man; you are encouraged to freely believe that what the Bible teaches is correct.

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Life application: Take time today to thank God for what He has done in Jesus Christ our Lord. When we were dead in trespasses, He made us alive together with Him. All credit, honor, and glory belongs to God! Be sure to let Him know how you feel.

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