

## Message Three

### **The Constituent of the One New Man— the All-inclusive, Extensive Christ Replacing Culture**

Scripture Reading: Col. 1:15-18, 27; 2:9-10, 16-18; 3:4, 10-11

#### **I. If we get into the depths of the book of Colossians, we will see that in this book Paul is dealing with the hidden matter of human culture:**

- A. Paul's use of the word *barbarian* in Colossians 3:11 is a strong indication that this Epistle deals with culture.
- B. Culture is the systematic method that we have developed to exist and to maintain our being—Gen. 4:16-22:
  - 1. Culture is the unconscious living of every human being—Eph. 2:2-3; 4:17.
  - 2. People throughout the world are under the influence of their culture.
- C. Just as culture exerted a strong influence on the believers in Colossae, culture today exerts a strong influence on us—Col. 2:8-10, 16-18:
  - 1. Unconsciously, we are under the influence of the culture into which we were born; the elements of this culture are part of our being—Gal. 4:3, 9; Col. 2:8, 20.
  - 2. When we came into the church life, we brought our culture with us, and this culture undermines our enjoyment of Christ and the church life.
  - 3. To a large extent, Christ as the unique element in the church life has been replaced by culture—v. 8; 3:11:
    - a. Subconsciously and unconsciously, we all treasure our culture and place a high value on our particular cultural background.
    - b. In the church life Christ is replaced by culture more than by anything else—v. 11.

#### **II. The book of Colossians reveals that the all-inclusive, extensive Christ is everything in God's economy—1:15-18, 27:**

- A. We need a clear vision of this wonderful Christ being everything to us.
- B. Such a vision will terminate the influence of culture on the experience of Christ and on the church life, and instead of being cultured people, we will be people occupied with, possessed by, and saturated with Christ—3:11b.

#### **III. The preeminent, all-inclusive, extensive Christ is our life and the unique constituent of the one new man—vv. 4, 10-11:**

- A. The constituent of the church as the new man is Christ and Christ alone; the content of the church is nothing other than the all-inclusive, extensive Christ—1:15-18; 2:9-10.
- B. As our life and the constituent of the one new man, the all-inclusive, extensive Christ replaces our culture with Himself—3:11.
- C. The issue of enjoying Christ as our portion is that we experience Him as the content and the constituent of the one new man, and ultimately, the Christ we enjoy becomes the constituent of the new man—1:12; 3:11.
- D. According to Colossians 3:11, in the new man there is no possibility for the various cultural distinctions to continue to exist:
  - 1. There are no cultural distinctions in the one new man, for every part of the new man is constituted with Christ—v. 11.

2. In the church as the new man, there is no room for regional, cultural, or national distinctions and no place for any race, nationality, culture, or social status.

E. Because Christ is the unique constituent of the new man, there should be no differences among the believers who are part of this new man, and there should be no differences among the churches—1 Cor. 4:17; Rev. 1:12, 20; 22:16.

**IV. As the constituent of the new man, Christ is all and in all; Christ is all the members, and He is in all the members—Col. 3:11:**

A. In the church as the new man, Christ is everyone and He is also in everyone—1:27; 3:11.

B. On the one hand, in the new man there is no place for the natural person, because Christ is all the members.

C. On the other hand, the fact that Christ is in all indicates that the members continue to exist, not without Christ but as those indwelt by Christ—1:27.

D. When we take Christ as our life and constitution, we have the sense deep within that we are one with Christ and that Christ is us, and simultaneously, we have an even deeper sense that Christ is in us—3:4.

E. In the church as the new man, Christ is everything; this implies that all the believers must be constituted with Christ—1:15-18; 2:16-17; 3:4, 10-11:

1. We must be permeated with Christ, saturated with Christ, and have Christ organically wrought into our being—Gal. 4:19; Eph. 3:17a.

2. Eventually, we will be replaced by Christ, and then, in reality, Christ will be all and in all; He will be every part of the new man—Col. 3:11b.

F. The new man is Christ in all the saints permeating us and replacing us until all natural distinctions have been eliminated, and everyone is constituted with Christ—Gal. 4:19; Eph. 3:17a; Col. 1:27.

G. When we have the vision of the all-inclusive, extensive Christ with the adequate experience of Christ, the one new man will appear among us in a practical way, and we will realize the life of the new man—3:10-17; Philem. 10-16.

H. If Christ is the living of all the saints, then only He will be in the new man, and all the saints, whatever their nationality, will live Christ; then in a real and practical way, Christ will be all the members of the new man—Col. 3:11; Phil. 1:21a.

**V. The New Jerusalem will be the final consummation of the one new man—Eph. 2:15-16; 4:24; Col. 3:10-11; Rev. 21:2, 9-10:**

A. When we have become the New Jerusalem, we will enjoy the life of the universal one new man.

B. Today we may have a foretaste of this enjoyment by allowing the all-inclusive, extensive Christ to replace our culture, to constitute us with Himself, and to make us all part of the one new man in reality and practicality—Col. 1:27; 2:10; 3:4, 10-11.