

COLOSSIANS

Message Eleven

**The New Man**

(2)

**The Fellowship of the New Man,  
the Consciousness of the New Man,  
and the Believers' Equal Status in the New Man**

Scripture Reading: Col. 3:10-11; 4:7-17; Philem. 1-2, 10-22

**I. In Colossians 4:7-17 we have an illustration of the revelation of the new man given in 3:10-11 and a record of the fellowship of the new man:**

- A. Paul's purpose in 4:7-17 is to present an illustration, a detailed portrait, of the living of the new man:
  - 1. In spite of all the differences among nationalities, races, and classes, there was on earth in a practical way the living of the one new man created in Christ Jesus—Eph. 2:10, 15.
  - 2. There were not merely local churches in various cities—there was one new man in a real and practical way—Col. 3:10-11.
- B. The apostle's fellowship shows us that the new man as practiced at the apostle's time was an issue of the apostle's work, which encouraged the believers to seek after Christ, the constituent of the new man, as their enjoyment—1:12-13, 27; 3:4, 10-11.

**II. Within Paul there was the sense, the consciousness, of the new man—4:7-17:**

- A. Both the saints in Colossae and Paul and those with him were members of the new man in actuality and had the consciousness of the new man:
  - 1. The fact that Paul mentioned many names indicates that he had the consciousness of the new man—vv. 9-17.
  - 2. Because Paul had the consciousness of the new man, he charged Tychicus to make known to the Colossians all that concerned him—v. 7.
- B. Paul's word regarding the reading of letters proves that there was no difference between the church in Laodicea and the church in Colossae; his word implies fellowship, oneness, harmony, and intimate contact—v. 16.

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- C. We need to be conscious of the church, of the Body, and of the new man:
1. The record in the book of Acts regarding the church reveals that the believers were church-conscious—5:11; 8:1, 3; 9:31; 11:22, 26; 12:1, 5; 13:1; 14:23, 27; 15:3-4, 22, 41; 16:5; 18:22; 20:17, 28:
    - a. In their concept there was nothing of individualism; they did everything with a consciousness of the church—2:44; 4:23, 32.
    - b. Based upon the record in Acts, we have the principle that whatever we do and whenever and wherever we meet, we must be church-conscious.
  2. In the church life we should learn to have the consciousness of the Body, a Body-consciousness—1 Cor. 12:12-27:
    - a. In order to live and move with other members of the Body, we need to have the consciousness of the Body.
    - b. Wherever there is Body-consciousness, individual thought and action are ruled out—Acts 9:1-19.
  3. Like Paul, we should have the consciousness of the new man, realizing that all the saints in all the churches are the new man—Eph. 4:24; Col. 3:10-11:
    - a. Any church that isolates itself from other churches has a consciousness only of itself, not a consciousness of the totality of the new man.
    - b. If we are conscious of the new man, we will not think that the churches in our country have nothing to do with the churches in other nations; instead, we will realize that all the churches are the one new man today—Eph. 2:15; Rev. 1:11; 2:1a.
    - c. By means of the traffic among the churches, we experience in a practical way the living of the new man; such a living has Christ as its reality—Col. 1:12; 2:16-17; 3:4.

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#### **III. The subject of the book of Philemon is an illustration of the believers' equal status in the new man:**

- A. The case of Onesimus and Philemon illustrates that in the new man all the believers have an equal status.
- B. This Epistle serves the special purpose of showing us the equality in eternal life and divine love of all the members of the Body of Christ—vv. 1, 9.
- C. The equal status of the believers is a matter of love, which comes out of faith; in the new man the believers love one another in faith—v. 5; Titus 3:15.
- D. Because of the divine birth and living by the divine life, all the believers in Christ have an equal status in the new man; this is based on three facts:
  - 1. Christ's death has abolished the ordinances of the different ways of living for the creation of the one new man—Eph. 2:15.
  - 2. We have all been baptized into Christ and made one in Him—Gal. 3:27-28.
  - 3. In the new man Christ is all and in all—Col. 3:11.
- E. The Epistle to Philemon should be regarded as a continuation of Colossians 4 and considered an illustration of how in the new man all social rank is put aside—Philem. 1-2, 10-22:
  - 1. The distinction of social rank and status among the believers has been nullified because the believers have been constituted with the all-inclusive Christ, who is their life—Col. 3:4.
  - 2. In the Epistle to Philemon Paul gives the churches an illustration of how slaves and masters have been reconstituted with Christ; as a result, they are all part of the new man and have an equal status in the new man—vv. 10-11.
  - 3. In the practice of the economy of God, it is crucial that all social ranks and differences among races and nations be swallowed up—Col. 3:10-11:
    - a. In the new man distinctions on the basis of color have been nullified; Paul strongly taught this, and we must consider it part of the full

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knowledge of the truth—1 Tim. 2:4; 2 Tim. 2:25;  
Titus 1:1.

- b. If we see that the believers have an equal status in the new man, there will be no problems among us concerning social rank, nationality, or race—1 Cor. 12:13; Gal. 3:28; Col. 3:10-11.