

# Calvary's Cavalry

## THE WHY ALWAYS MATTERS

Every so often, I read or come across something that just absolutely astounds me to no end. A particular example came just the other day as I read a headline that asked the question: *How do we know Jesus had male genitalia?*

No, I did not read the article; the title is too ridiculous to give any measure of credibility or even sanity towards such an endeavor. However, the sheer silliness of that headline should be a clarion call to the body of believers that make up the Church Triumphant in the world today. That call should be heard as a reminder to always be about the business of being able to express the why of our faith and actions; and not simply the what.

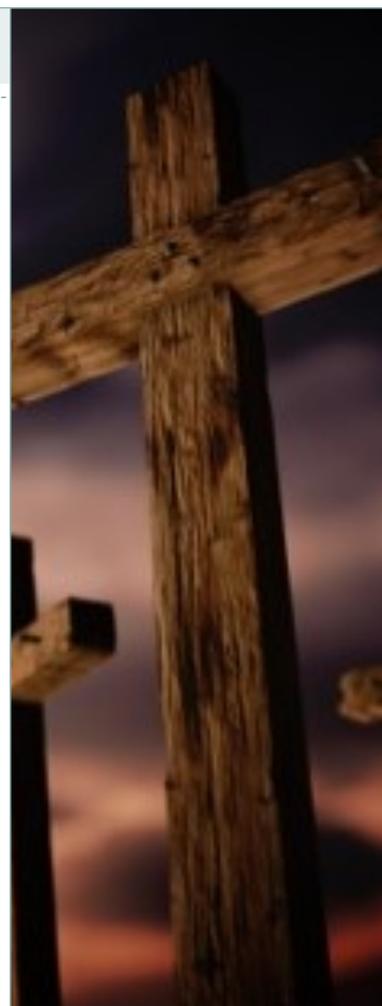
If you've been in church for any length of time you know the "apologetics verse" of the New Testament is 1 Peter 3:15—wherein we "give a defense/answer". But let us never forget the broader context of Christian living in a messed up, upside-down world that is present within that chapter (1 Peter 3:13—22). Our defense is not just so we can explain where we go when we die, but also; why we live the way that we do in the here and now.

Regardless of what lunacy is published in the world, we cannot miss the forest for the trees. The question of Jesus' anatomy is not one of biology, but it is rather one of authority. As Christians, our why is supposed to be based upon Biblical fidelity, which includes a proper hermeneutic and contextually sound exegetical understanding of the text. In other words: we read the Bible rightly in It's context and then we actually do what it says.

This is the working out of our faith in real time (Philippians 2:12—13). It is not optional, but required by Spirit-led believers in Christ (1 John 2:3—6). It is required, because in Christ we are redeemed (1 John 2:1—2), and made new by Him (2 Corinthians 5:17). Because we are made new, we are empowered for the work He has tasked us (1 Corinthians 12:4—11), and that tasking will bear fruit in the lives of God's people (Galatians 5:16—24).

Now, possibly more than ever before, we as Christians must do the hard work of Godly discipline in our daily lives. We live in a world that bombards our: hearts, minds, and very souls, with a message of ungodliness that wears down our defenses and weakens our resolve. That assault upon our senses will be successful if we are not diligent to prepare ourselves with the weapons and graces that God has mercifully given to us (Ephesians 6:10—17).

The beauty of Christian living and discipleship (as defined by Scripture) is that it will be successful. The God who has done all the things described above, has not forgotten us (John 14:18), and He has never failed His people.

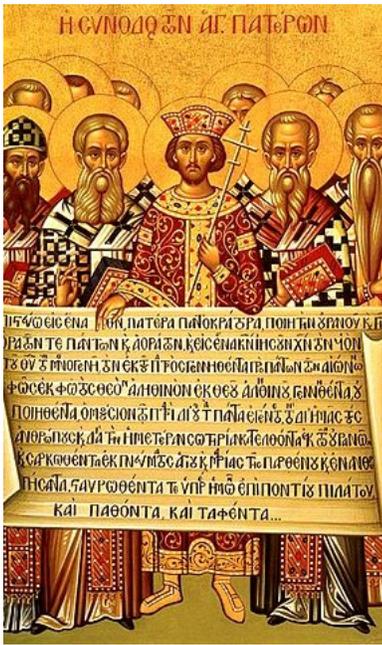


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### OUR HOPE

For All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness; so that the man of God may be adequate, equipped for every good work



## OUR FIRST GREAT COUNCIL NICEA

We deal with Nicea because it is counted as the first “ecumenical” council. That simply means that the Council of Nicea was the first worldwide council of the church. It was meant to deal with the issues of the day with representation from the entire Church Visible.

The council was convened by Emperor Constantine who in 313 had granted Christian’s within the Roman Empire a legal status through the issuing of the Edict of Milan. The council was recommended by a synod of Bishops and was primarily concerned with the teachings of Arius. The fun part about councils, is that they can be very useful, and they can be very wrong. As with any study of history, we do not impart any value to the Council of Nicea because of the attendees, or the antiquity of the meeting, or even because the church of the day agreed or disagreed with it. We give credence to a council simply because it rightly aligns with what God has declared in Scripture.

The ecumenical (worldwide) hope of this council was seen in the 1,800 invitations that were sent out. In reality, only 300ish actually showed up. We say 300ish because counts ranged from 250—318. so 300ish.

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The hope of 1,800 bishops attending would have been very grand. If they had all arrived safely, the council would easily have had more than 4,000 people in attendance when you factor in deacons, and secretaries and the like. As it stands, we had 300ish bishops (save for 2) agree with the outcome of the Council of Nicea.

What was the agreed upon outcome, that Arius and his teachings were heretical. So I guess the next great question is, what was Arius’ teaching anyway. The Arian heresy has to do with the nature of Christ; who, or perhaps better, what is He?

The Arians taught in keeping with the Gnostic (secret knowledge) tradition that the son proceeded from or emanated from the Father. In Arian teaching, the Son was the highest of the created beings, but was nonetheless; a created being. As the Greek language would put it Jesus was *ὁμοιουσος* (homoiouosios), or of a similar substance to the Father. The orthodox (correct) understanding as described by the Council, is that Jesus is *ὁμοουσιος* (homouosios), or of the same substance as the Father. This is the real birth of the orthodox understanding of God as Trinity.

Now I know your objection, it’s 325, we are just now getting around to defining the Trinity!?! Yes, yes we are; and that makes perfect sense if you understand the world we are dealing with. Christianity has only been legal at this point for 12 years. That’s it, 12. When the government is cracking down on your religion and killing people, the majority of your worry is on good discipleship and evangelism that does not end in you being boiled in oil. Hence the early problems within the church centered on the humanity of Jesus; refuting the Gnostic division of soul as good and body as evil (Dualism), the distinctions between the Father, Son, and Spirit (Sabellianism), or the whole-cloth rejection of Jesus’ physical body (Docetism) . The major heresies of the church spring up in the 4th and 5th centuries because that is when the church is able to legally and comfortably have these conversations.

Now we commend the Council’s work because they rightly declared the eternity of the Son of God, in the person of Jesus Christ, as is declared in Scripture. For further Bible reading you can see the deity of Jesus declared in.....

*Colossians 1:15—17*

*Hebrews 1:1—3*

*John 1:1—5 (truthfully—read the entire Gospel of John, as that is what John is attempting to prove—Jesus is God).*

### Famous Council Attendees Guys with a Wiki Page

- Eusebius of Caesarea
- Eusebius of Nicomedia
- Athanasius
- Arius  
(heretic of the council)
- Nicholas of Myra  
(source for Santa Claus)  
(who also apparently punched Arius during the Council)
- Alexander of Alexandria
- John of Persia
- Emperor Constantine  
(non-voting)

And that last part is very important. We noted in last month's article that Athanasius stood *contra-mundum* in regards to the Arian heresy. That is because in spite of the clear declarations of the Council of Nicea, Arianism took hold over the Christian church and nearly won the argument.

That darkness is due to the fact that human beings are fallen and we can make terrible decisions on a regular basis. Including rejecting the truth we have already fought tooth and nail for. It is our way and our very nature to drift away from God and toward our sin. That is why our authority must be Scripture. That is why our reasoning and understanding and action must be based upon Scripture.

The Nicene Creed (as originally written in 325 before the 381 Council of Constantinople emendation), was crystal clear in its affirmation of Trinitarian orthodoxy. Arius and his followers neither cared nor listened; and the world has not changed. We must be diligent as Christians to be grounded and built up in or knowledge of God as He has revealed and taught us. The wickedness of the world will not rest nor surrender, and we must be careful to not be lead astray by it.

Many of you who know the Creed will expect more, but below is the original printing without the later additions thanks to political maneuvering.

### The Creed of Nicea (as written in 325)

We believe in one God, the Father Almighty, Maker of all things visible and invisible.

And in one Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God, begotten of the Father [the only-begotten; that is, of the essence of the Father, God of God,] Light of Light, very God of very God, begotten, not made, being of one substance with the Father;

By whom all things were made [both in heaven and on earth];

Who for us men, and for our salvation, came down and was incarnate and was made man;

He suffered, and the third day he rose again, ascended into heaven;

From thence he shall come to judge the quick and the dead.

And in the Holy Ghost.

[But those who say:  
'There was a time when he was not;' and 'He was not before he was made;' and 'He was made out of nothing,' or 'He is of another substance' or 'essence,' or 'The Son of God is created,' or 'changeable,' or 'alterable'— they are condemned by the holy catholic and apostolic Church.]



## Bibliology Basics

- 66 Books
- 40+ Authors
- 1500+ years of writing
- 3 languages & continents
- Inspired by God
- Inerrant in composition
- Infallible in teaching
- Sufficient in practice
- Solitary rule of faith

## PRACTICAL THEOLOGY 101—INERRANCY

Now that we understand where Scripture comes from we can dive in (partially) to what Scripture contains. This month our initial dive will cover one side of the coin of the Bible's contents: that side is the idea of inerrancy (infallibility is the other side).

To proclaim that the Bible is inerrant is to state that Scripture is true in all that it teaches and asserts. I do not wish to use the word proclaim here because the Bible does contain falsehoods. We are told of Abraham lying to Pharaoh (Genesis 12). The Bible tells us that Rebekah and Jacob lied to Isaac (Genesis 27). The prostitute Rahab lied about her knowledge of the spies and Scripture tells us that (Joshua 2). The Bible contains, lies and falsehood (sin begins with one in Genesis 3). However, none of those things are asserted or taught by Scripture, therefore they are not objections or obstacles to the doctrine of inerrancy.

The modern mind hates the idea of an inerrant Bible because it goes against everything we think we know about ourselves, and our ability to run this universe the way we see fit. God is the sovereign ruler and His character demands our trust and allegiance. An inerrant Bible flows from a holy, faithful, righteous God (Numbers 23:19), and from our discussion from last month, inspiration\*.

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By definition an inspired text has its genesis in something or someone other than the physical author. An inspired painter paints because he has been moved by beauty or shape or whatever. An inspired chef cooks because he has been moved by flavors or colors or whatever. In Scripture, the inspired author writes because he has been moved by the Holy Spirit (2 Peter 1:20–21). If God is the original source of this information, then by definition the information communicated must be in alignment with who He is. And since God who is the righteous arbiter (Genesis 18:25), who is incapable of falsehood (Titus 1:2), is the one giving this information so His divine work would be known and followed (Psalm 1:1–6); Scripture must be incapable of erring in its affirmations and teaching.

Our hallmark verse for this understanding is obviously 2 Timothy 3:16–17. God, Himself has breathed into the Word of God so that it will accomplish what He has sent it out to do (Hebrews 4:12–13). I say breathed out, because the word translated as inspired in the NASB (and the KJV), is θεόπνευστος (theopneustos), literally God-breathed. Our Bibles were inspired by God, they are His word to us. That means the word given by Him is trustworthy and true.

The real beauty of this understanding of Scripture is the comfort it provides. Christians are supposed to be grounded in the truth of God (Ephesians 4:14), growing in wisdom and strength through faith (Colossians 2:6–7). And we can do this work because God's Word powerfully provides the means by which it will be accomplished. This doctrine also invites challenge and scorn; both of which are good. Challenge provides us an opportunity to proclaim Christ (1 Peter 3:15), as well as see the testimony of: history, archeology, science, and the like consistently affirm the Bible's testimony. Scorn is also good; it gives us opportunity to be weak in this world (2 Corinthians 12:10), as well as chance to rejoice in God's pruning of us (Romans 5:3–5).

Our trusting in His Word proves our hearts and shows where our love and devotion truly lies (1 John 2:15–17). As we read, we can know the God behind the words and trust His teaching because He is good; and His word is good as well.

Next month we will look at the idea of infallible.

*\*note—last month's PT 101 was incorrectly labeled as Sufficiency instead of Inspiration. You are all smart people and figured it out as you read the column, but in the interest of self-disclosure we wish to acknowledge and apologize for the mistake. Those responsible have been flogged accordingly.*



## RECOVERY ROOM WITH DARRELL

The last two months we have talked about identifying the fact that addiction is not the problem; we are the problem. Because sin is in us, we are in the way of our righteousness.

This month I would like to share the cure; and it is simple. We must surrender our lives to Jesus Christ.

The Bible tells us that Christ is the sacrifice for sin that brings us back to God. Again, sin is disobedience to God and is the thing that separates us from Him. Christ is who, and His sacrifice is what, brings us back to God.

The Bible says in 2 Corinthians 5:17, *that if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation, the old things have passed away and behold, the new things have come.* This means that we were born spiritually dead, but the minute we surrender to Christ as our Lord and Savior; we are born again and are now spiritually alive.

At that exact moment; God indwells us with His Holy Spirit which empowers us to overcome addiction (sin) and that my friends is the cure for all addiction and sin.

See you next month.

Addiction = Dependence = Craving = Need = Habit = Weakness = Slavery

Salvation = Release = Life = Freedom = Joy = Completeness

1 John 1:8–10

If we say that we have no sin, we are deceiving ourselves and the truth is not in us. <sup>9</sup> If we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. <sup>10</sup> If we say that we have not sinned, we make Him a liar and His word is not in us.

### The Problem

Psalm 51:1–4

*Be gracious to me, O God, according to Your lovingkindness; According to the greatness of Your compassion blot out my transgressions. <sup>2</sup> Wash me thoroughly from my iniquity And cleanse me from my sin. <sup>3</sup> For I know my transgressions, And my sin is ever before me. <sup>4</sup> Against You, You only, I have sinned And done what is evil in Your sight, So that You are justified when You speak And blameless when You judge.*

### The Cure

2 Corinthians 5:20–21

*Therefore, we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God were making an appeal through us; we beg you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God. <sup>21</sup> He made Him who knew no sin to be sin on our behalf, so that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.*

### The Promise

John 10:27–30

*My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me; <sup>28</sup> and I give eternal life to them, and they will never perish; and no one will snatch them out of My hand. <sup>29</sup> My Father, who has given them to Me, is greater than all; and no one is able to snatch them out of the Father's hand. <sup>30</sup> I and the Father are one."*

## KAT'S KORNER

Biblical Womanhood examined part 2:

What exactly does it look like in everyday life to be a Biblical woman?

When searching the scriptures for text on womanhood one of the most common passages used is Proverbs 31:10-31, the Virtuous Woman. Continued look at the second half of these verses we continue to see not just what she does, but most importantly, her heart for doing these things.

*21 She is not afraid of the snow for her household, For all her household are clothed with scarlet.*

*22 She makes coverings for herself; Her clothing is fine linen and purple.*

*23 Her husband is known in the gates, When he sits among the elders of the land.*

*24 She makes linen garments and sells them, And supplies belts to the tradesmen.*

*25 Strength and dignity are her clothing, And she smiles at the future.*



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*God provides through His word and through His Spirit what we need for each and every day. When we focus on living a life of worship of God, the spirit, through Bible reading and prayer, over time, slowly changes our hearts more into the likeness of Christ.*

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Here we find that the virtuous woman is not worried about the future. She has worked to provide for her family with the resources she has and has made it a priority in life to care for her household first. We do not read of self-indulgence, days off to re-energize, or mini-vacations from her household. Sadly in today's society, we focus on right now enjoyment and living while forgoing the planning of years to come leading to anxiety and future stresses. We may not be fully prepared for everything life gives us, but we can take a few minutes to think of the future every now and again.

We also find that her husband is known by important, influential people. Think today's businessmen and town leaders. It shows that he too has shown wisdom in his life decisions and how his household is handled. This reflects his wife as well. They are reflective of each other.

*26 She opens her mouth in wisdom, And the teaching of kindness is on her tongue.*

*27 She looks well to the ways of her household, And does not eat the bread of idleness.*

These two verses reflect her heart. She is kind, teaching others to be so as well. She loves her household and shows that love by looking after it. Running a home takes work. Cleaning, cooking, laundry all take energy, but so does teaching right from wrong, explaining how God's way is best, and watching over all that comes into her home. She has no time for laziness or to be idle with her time and resources.

*28 Her children rise up and bless her; Her husband also, and he praises her, saying:*

*29 "Many daughters have done nobly, But you excel them all."*

*30 Charm is deceitful and beauty is vain, But a woman who fears the Lord, she shall be praised.*

*31 Give her the product of her hands, And let her works praise her in the gates.*

These last four verses are the earthly rewards for her hard work and diligence. We all want our husband and children to love us and praise us for our work as well as the people we know outside our homes. However, this may not always be the case and most times it is not. That is why verse thirty is our primary goal, "a woman who fears the Lord." The fear of the Lord is wisdom. That is how we can determine the best use of our time, money, talents, and resources. We want all the things we do in our life to be pleasing unto God. Loving and serving others throughout our lifetime as an act of worship to the God who saved us from our sins on the cross is how God is glorified through us. May our hearts forever be fixed on glorifying Him in all we do. May we keep walking with the Lord, Keep reading His Word. God is faithful and deserving of our praise and worship.

## KAT'S KORNER KONTINUED & KONCLUDED

The way the virtuous woman ties into womanhood isn't just a list of things we as women are to do, but how we do them. Through the working of the Holy Spirit within every believer, time in God's word give us wisdom as to what God wants us to do, but also how through the fruits of the spirit.

Galatians 5:22-23

*22 But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness,  
23 gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law.*

The details of everyday life are burdensome. When we focus on all the tasks the Virtuous Woman has shown she does, it becomes a checklist awaiting failure. God provides through His word and through His Spirit what we need for each and every day. When we focus on living a life of worship of God, the spirit, through Bible reading and prayer, over time, slowly changes our hearts more into the likeness of Christ. We cannot be a Biblical Woman if we are not in God's Word daily, trusting and leaning on Him. We must be faithful in the word, trusting God's promises, and having Grace for ourselves when we get it wrong.

Becoming a biblical woman takes a lifetime. That is why I believe Grandmothers are so important. As a child we see our parents growing with us, yet Grandma seems to have it figured out. Always calm, reassuring, patient, gentle, loving. What we didn't see growing up is our grandmothers growing as their children grew. How did my grandma keep 6 grandchildren under age 8 and not lose her mind? She had spent the first 50 years of her life in Bible reading and walking with God. Why is my mother more calm and gentle and understanding of my children then I thought she was with me? Same thing. She had just 30 years of Bible reading with me, she has now had over 50 years of Bible reading and walking with God with my children.



### CAREFUL COVENANTS

Sometimes life gets in the way, and this month life has gotten in the way for Lou. Both Lou and Darrell work actual jobs (as opposed to me—Michael).

With working from home, having kids and grandkids in the house and generally having to deal with all of the things going on in the world (as many of us are), this labor of love has had to be put on the back burner.

But fear not, Careful Covenants will return, and the blessing we all receive from the knowledge of God working in history will be rich and sweet; and well worth the wait.

### OLD TESTAMENT COVENANTS

- The Covenant with Creation
- Noahic Covenant
- Abrahamic Covenant
- Mosaic Covenant
- Davidic Covenant
- New Covenant

A Good reminder at a time like this

#### Psalm 46:1—11

- 1 God is our refuge and strength, A very present help in trouble.  
2 Therefore we will not fear, though the earth should change And though the mountains slip into the heart of the sea;  
3 Though its waters roar and foam, Though the mountains quake at its swelling pride. Selah.  
4 There is a river whose streams make glad the city of God, The holy dwelling places of the Most High.  
5 God is in the midst of her, she will not be moved; God will help her when morning dawns.  
6 The nations made an uproar, the kingdoms tottered; He raised His voice, the earth melted.  
7 The Lord of hosts is with us; The God of Jacob is our stronghold. Selah.  
8 Come, behold the works of the Lord, Who has wrought desolations in the earth.  
9 He makes wars to cease to the end of the earth; He breaks the bow and cuts the spear in two; He burns the chariots with fire.  
10 "Cease striving and know that I am God; I will be exalted among the nations, I will be exalted in the earth."  
11 The Lord of hosts is with us; The God of Jacob is our stronghold. Selah.*

## FUN WITH LEARNING—PARENTS ZONE

### FAMOUS CATECHISMS

- Martin Luther's Small (1529)
- Geneva (1541)
- Book of Common Prayer (1549)
- Heidelberg (1563)
- Westminster (1647)

Catechism is not just a dirty word that Roman Catholics use to scare children. It is a valid method of teaching that we use in other areas of life. Based partially on the Socratic method (question & answer), the fundamental goal of a catechism is to communicate timeless, Biblical truth in such a manner that it “sticks” into a child’s mind (Proverbs 22:6).

The goal of this section is not to make you feel like a bad parent if you have not done this. It isn’t even to make you feel guilty if you do not use it. The goal of this section is to give you another tool in the toolbox to combat the secularization of your brain, my brain, and our children’s brains.

The more we recognize the need for discipleship in our homes, the more we will want solid tools that aid us in that task. Each month we’ll give you some new questions, and blank the answers to last months as a way to test. If this works for your family, awesome, if it does not; find something that does. Then tell us about it so we can include it for other families.

### Last Month's Questions

Run through them & see how you did.....  
Even if you don't get them all correct—Celebrate the things you have learned

Question 1: Who made you?  
Answer:

Question 2: What else did God make?  
Answer:

Question 3: Why did God make you and all things?  
Answer:

Question 4: How can you glorify God?  
Answer:

Question 5: Why are you to glorify God?  
Answer:

Question 6: Is there more than one God?  
Answer:

Question 7: In how many persons doe this one God Exist?  
Answer:

Question 8: Name these three persons.  
Answer:

Question 9: What is God?  
Answer:

Question 10: Where is God?  
Answer:

### This Month's Questions

Question 1: Who made you?  
Answer: God

Question 2: What else did God make?  
Answer: God made all things

Question 3: Why did God make you and all things?  
Answer: For His own glory

Question 4: How can you glorify God?  
Answer: By loving Him and doing what He commands

Question 5: Why are you to glorify God?  
Answer: Because He made me and takes care of me

Question 6: Is there more than one God?  
Answer: No. There is only one true God

Question 7: In how many persons doe this one God Exist?  
Answer: In three persons

Question 8: Name these three persons.  
Answer: The Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit

Question 9: What is God?  
Answer: God is a Spirit and does not have a body

Question 10: Where is God?  
Answer: God is everywhere

FUN WITH FUN—KIDS ZONE

Poetry and Prophets Books

H J E R E M I A H S M O B E S  
A A A B S B J J B I B O C J O  
I H I V O S W R C A J C X O N  
A A J N M S E A D C L T O N G  
S I H J A V H I S E F J L A O  
I R C A O H A O S D W Z W H F  
T A S R B H P I H C A L A M S  
U H P M L A A E D F E V E R O  
L C O Q L S K P Z I V V E D L  
O E U S T A H K N V C O Z P O  
R Z O E E R S A U X K U E U M  
K Z S J J A D P Q K O T K T O  
H A G G A I M U H A N M I Y N  
S N O I T A T N E M A L E Z C  
T Q N N M W A B B R B R L E K

AMOS  
JONAH  
NAHUM  
PSALMS  
HOSEA

JOEL  
ZEPHANIAH  
EZEKIEL  
MICAH  
OBADIAH  
JEREMIAH

ZECHAIAH  
DANIEL  
MALACHI  
HAGGAI  
ISAIAH  
SONG OF SOLOMON

ECCLESIASTES  
LAMENTATIONS  
JOB  
HABAKKUK  
PROVERBS

# WALKING THROUGH THE WORD BIBLE STUDY

## COLOSSIANS 1:9–14

### AUTHORSHIP & DATE

- Written by Paul
- Between 60–62 A.D.
- Prison Epistle

### COLOSSAE

- In modern day Turkey
- Founded by Epaphras
- Encountering Gnosticism
- Not visited by Paul

Obviously Paul would have intended for his letter to be read in one sitting. And you should read it through at least once; as well as read each entire chapter before reading this page each month. For our benefit however, we will continue to walk through this passage one section at a time; according to our outline on page 11.



So let's pick up our journey with verse 9 wherein Paul already begins his reminder of the reason for his work. In verses 3–5 Paul lays out that he prays for these Christians because they are precisely that, Christians; here he reiterates, before beginning the meat of this section which is the what that he prays for them.

That what, the knowledge of His will in all spiritual wisdom and understanding can be summed up in one theological term: sanctification. He will go on about this topic in a future section (Colossians 2:6–7), and it is something that Paul has laid out in other letters to different churches (Romans 12:1–2 for example).

A quick needed note however, is that sanctification is not an idea that is unique to Paul. Living out our faith in an active way is something the New Testament is very familiar with (Luke 6:46).

As are the other authors of New Testament epistles (1 Peter 2:4–5 & James 4:4–7). Growing up in maturity in Christ is the charge of the Christian believer and a necessity as a demonstration of salvation and faithful living out of the inward change that has been wrought by God in Christ by saving His people.

So now we can get into the specifics of Paul's prayers which are contained in verses 10–12. He asks that they walk in a worthy manner. This is, as we've already stated, an essential to Christian living (1 John 2:3–6), and a proof of the work of the Holy Spirit. You cannot rightly claim to love God and follow Him, while simultaneously rejecting what He tells you and walking your own way. That is worldliness and not Christianity. That is why verse 10 continues with the idea of pleasing God and bearing fruit in good works.

Our faith is the starting point of this walk (Hebrews 11:6), therefore; never let it be said we are teaching anything other than the Biblical doctrine of salvation (by faith, through grace) (Ephesians 2:8–10). This is not works righteousness, but righteous works only because of the redeeming work of Christ, as anything other than that would be blasphemous heresy (later I'll tell you how I really feel about orthodoxy). That saving work creates a people of God (1 Peter 2:9–10), and that people should be walking a common path (Philippians 1:27). And that common path can only be found through the work of Christ (Ephesians 2:8–10), leading to our leaning upon the Holy Spirit (Galatians 5:22–23), and being transformed by God through His provided means (1 Peter 2:1–3). Anything else is anathema (Galatians 1:6–9).

Fortunately for us, Paul's hope for this people is not done yet. He prays that they be strengthened, which is a work that can only be successfully done by God (Ephesians 3:14–19). And that provision will only be fruitful as it is dependent upon God for its success (Philippians 4:10–13). Furthermore, that provision will again lead to the idea of bearing of fruit. It has to, because God will not forsake His people (Hebrews 1:5–6); but rather will carry them unto completion as His covenant people within His Kingdom (Luke 3:7–9).

Our job is to walk hand in hand with God, by the means of grace He has provided (prayer, Scripture, community); so that the work of the Holy Spirit will be evident within us day by day, proving His salvation and our security in Him (James 2:14–17).

We now conclude Paul's prayer outline with the credit. If modern culture has taught us anything is that someone must get credit for everything. Here Paul does rightly ascribe credit: to God. We give thanks because that is our charge as Christians (1 Thessalonians 5:16–18), and the entire purpose of human existence. Take some time and read through the conclusion of the Book of Psalms (146–150), see if you can pick up the common thread.

Paul grounds this praise in the salvific work of God. He has rescued us (Ephesians 1:3–6), even though we did not deserve it. He has assembled us as His people (Revelation 1:4–6), despite our disparate backgrounds. And He has made us blameless (Jude 24–25), in spite of our sinful hearts and souls.

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*Our faith is the starting point of this walk therefore; never let it be said we are teaching anything other than the Biblical doctrine of salvation. This is not works righteousness, but righteous works only because of the redeeming work of Christ, as anything other than that would be blasphemous heresy.*

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And just in case you did not already know all of that, Paul tells you in verses 13 and 14. We, in Christ, are rescued from darkness. Not just a condition in which we cannot see, but a domain (kingdom) of darkness. This is what Jesus has come to do (John 1:1–5), because God cannot dwell in that darkness (James 1:17), and He therefore could not allow His people to continue to dwell there either (Ephesians 2:1–3).

I think this is the understanding of sin and our corruption that we so easily forget. Lost humanity is not stuck within some cosmic whoopsie; we are dead in our trespasses and sins and hopelessly lost without God's merciful work (Romans 5:6–8). And that merciful work is realized in the redemption brought by Christ (1 John 1:5–10), when we follow the instructions and rightly turn away from our sin and our very selves and trust in His amazing work and provision.

Because in God we are now in the right Kingdom (Colossians 1:13), and we have been granted forgiveness (1 John 2:1–2). That forgiveness is not based on the things of this world, as if the created things could provide for the creator (Acts 17:25). Instead that provision is based upon the precious Savior and His atoning work upon the cross of Calvary (1 Peter 1:17–19).

No other sacrifice could have accomplished that (Hebrews 10:11); because no other sacrifice had enough: majesty, eternity, or power. But Christ's did and therefore His entrance into the court of God is our entrance. His righteous living and perfect presentation before the Father is ours. And His faithful service to God and reliance upon the Holy Spirit is ours as well (Hebrews 9:11–14).

That is the walk of sanctification, and that is the hope and dream and desire of every Christian who has beheld the perfect Savior who was pierced for our transgressions (Isaiah 53). Let it also be the drum beat of our lives and the faithful march of our feet day in and day out; until He returns or calls us home.

## OUTLINE

- Paul's greeting (1:1–2)
- Thanksgiving (1:3–8)
- Prayer for the Church (1:9–14)
- Exaltation of Christ (1:15–23)
- Sacrifice for Christ (1:24–29)
- Unity with Believers (2:1–5)
- Grounding in Christ (2:6–15)
- Freedom in Christ (2:16–23)
- Sanctification by Focus (3:1–4)
- Sanctification in Living (3:5–11)
- Born-again Living (3:12–17)
- Relationships (3:18–4:1)
- Testimonial Living (4:2–6)
- Commendations & Greetings (4:7–18)

## PRACTICAL THEOLOGY MINISTRIES

A ministry of Calvary Baptist Church in Rockford, IL; we are a teaching ministry with the goal of making Biblical Theology make sense to the everyday Christian.

We are Pastors and laymen, formally educated in theology and trained in the school of life. We have had success and failure, joy and heart-break, faith and doubt. And through all these things we have had a secure salvation in Christ Jesus, our Lord.

## MOP-UP WORDS FOR MARCH

I'm certain if you examine the tone of the first page with the tone of this one you will see a marked difference. The: mood, outlook, and tenor of the two pages are starkly different because they were written from two different worlds. Page one being written in late February and this page being written in late March.

Those of you reading know that our world is changing, and possibly changed. Maybe for the better, maybe for the worse; only time will tell the true outcome. Our goal as Christians however, should be to live the page one truth; regardless of the world around us.

When I was a baseball coach, the thing I was most terrible at was the pregame speech. A group of kids looking to you for encouragement and motivation. Baseball is a funny game, it really requires more skill than athletic ability. Being a great athlete helps; but give me highly skilled players over great athletes every single time. The play of my kids in that game would have nothing to do with what I said 10 minutes before we took the field, but instead with the weeks of practice and training we had already undertaken.

The same is true for Christianity, my pregame speech always ended the same way; "Remember what you've practiced, and everyone do your job.". That is true for a baseball field and the Christian walk. Regardless of what the world is after, we follow Christ; faithfully, totally, unapologetically. That is our job.

### Practical Theology Ministries

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