

Jesus The Messiah: Nothing More, Nothing Less

Study 4: Colossians 3:1-17

Nothing Is The Way It Was Before

Read Colossians 3:1-17

1. This passage has lists of dos and don'ts. Itemise what Christians are to do and not do.

Do



Don't

2. Do you think people see Christianity as primarily teaching ethics, that is, how to behave, how to be good people? Explain your answer.
3. What do you think is the significance of 3:1 starting by saying, "Since, then, you have been raised with Christ"?

Note that the concept of dying and rising with Christ is also found in 2:11-13; 2:20; 3:1-4 and that it is closely linked with the concept of being circumcised by Christ. It is

also found in numerous other passages. There is further help in understanding these concepts in the appendix.

- a. **Given those various references in Colossians (2:11-13; 2:20; 3:1-4), what does dying and rising with Christ mean and how is it the foundation for how we then should live?**

- 4. Paul tells us to “put to death” whatever belongs to our earthly natures (3:5) and to rid ourselves of negative behaviours (3:8). How do we do that?**
 - a. **We are to “clothe ourselves” with compassion, etc.. How do we do that?**

- 5. What would the world be like if people did as Paul has said here?**

- 6. In this context, what does 3:11 mean?**

- 7. What would a church or family or workplace be like if everyone practiced 3:12-14? Describe what an observer would see.**

- 8. How would you define love as used in 3:14 and why is it said to bind all of the other characteristics together in perfect unity?**

- 9. What would a church or family or workplace be like if everyone practiced 3:15-17? Describe what an observer would see.**

- 10. What does it mean to do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus (3:17)? (Does the concept of an ambassador who acts in the name of his/her government help?)**

- 11. Dying and rising suggests a radical transformation. Paul describes how things were before having faith in Jesus and how they are afterwards, sometimes using the phrase "but now". Scan this letter again and note the things that have radically changed for the Colossians and for every Christian.**

For us

12. If you are a Christian, God says that you have died and have risen to live a new life. Do you understand how that happened?

13. Do you believe that it is true?

14. In practice, what does it mean that you are a new person, able to put off the old life and put on the new life?

15. Pray (If you are in a group, pray for each other) for the desire and ability to live that new life.

Appendix: Dying And Rising With Christ

The concept of dying and rising with Christ is found in various passages. You might be surprised how many. It is an important New Testament understanding but seems to be little known or understood today.

The following has been produced by AI, (specifically Claude-3 inside poe.com), but tweaked by me. AI can get things wrong. Read the passages and check if it has understood correctly.

The concept of dying and rising with Christ is a central teaching in the New Testament, particularly in the writings of the Apostle Paul. It is closely tied to the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus Christ, and it carries profound spiritual significance for believers. Here's an explanation of this concept, along with the key biblical passages where it is found:

Romans 6:1 – 7:6

This is one of the most detailed and explicit passages on the subject. It would pay to study the whole passage. In part it reads:

Romans 6:3-4 Or don't you know that all of us who were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? We were therefore buried with him through baptism into death in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, we too may live a new life (NIV).

Here, Paul draws a parallel between the believer's baptism and the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ. Just as Christ died and was buried, the believer symbolically dies to their old sinful nature through baptism, being incorporated into Christ's death. And just as Christ was raised to new life, the believer is raised to walk in newness of life, empowered by the Holy Spirit.

2 Corinthians 5:17 Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, the new creation has come: The old has gone, the new is here!" (NIV).

This verse summarizes the profound transformation that takes place when a person is united with Christ. The old sinful nature is replaced by a new creation, a new life in Christ.

Galatians 2:20 "I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me. The life I now live in the body, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me" (NIV).

In this verse, Paul speaks of being crucified with Christ, which is a metaphorical way of describing the believer's identification with Christ's death. The old self dies, and the believer now lives a new life empowered by Christ's indwelling presence.

Ephesians 2:1-7 As for you, you were dead in your transgressions and sins, in which you used to live when you followed the ways of this world and of the ruler of the kingdom of the air, the spirit who is now at work in those who are disobedient. All of us also lived among them at one time, gratifying the cravings of our flesh and following its desires and thoughts. Like the rest, we were by nature deserving of wrath. "But because of his great love for us, God, who is rich in mercy, made us alive with Christ even when we were dead in transgressions — it is by grace you have been saved. And God raised us up with Christ and seated us with him in the heavenly realms in Christ Jesus, in order that in the coming ages he might show the incomparable riches of his grace, expressed in his kindness to us in Christ Jesus.

In this passage, Paul speaks of believers being made alive with Christ, even though they were once dead in their sins. He also mentions that God raised them up with Christ and seated them with Him in the heavenly realms. This echoes the idea of dying and rising with Christ, being united with Him in His death and resurrection.

Ephesians 4:22-24 You were taught, with regard to your former way of life, to put off your old self, which is being corrupted by its deceitful desires; to be made new in the attitude of your minds; and to put on the new self, created to be like God in true righteousness and holiness.

Here, Paul instructs the Ephesian believers to put off their old self, which is associated with their former sinful way of life, and to put on the new self, which is created in the likeness of God. This mirrors the concept of dying to the old nature and rising to new life in Christ.

These passages in Ephesians reinforce the idea that believers are united with Christ in His death and resurrection. Their old sinful nature is crucified with Christ, and they are raised to a new life, empowered by the Holy Spirit to live in righteousness and holiness.

Philippians 3:10-11 I want to know Christ—yes, to know the power of his resurrection and participation in his sufferings, becoming like him in his death, and so, somehow, attaining to the resurrection from the dead.

Here, Paul expresses his desire not only to know the power of Christ's resurrection but also to share in His sufferings and become like Him in His death, with the goal of attaining resurrection from the dead.

Colossians 2:11-15 ¹¹ In him you were also circumcised with a circumcision not performed by human hands. Your whole self ruled by the flesh was put off when you were circumcised by Christ, ¹² having been buried with him in baptism, in which you were also raised with him through your faith in the working of God, who raised him from the dead.

¹³ When you were dead in your sins and in the uncircumcision of your flesh, God made you alive with Christ. He forgave us all our sins, ¹⁴ having cancelled the charge of our legal indebtedness, which stood against us and condemned us; he has taken it away, nailing it to the cross. ¹⁵ And having disarmed the powers and authorities, he made a public spectacle of them, triumphing over them by the cross.

Again, Paul connects the believer's baptism with being buried and raised with Christ. This speaks of the spiritual reality that takes place when a person places their faith in Christ – they are united with Him in His death and resurrection.

Colossians 2:20 Since you died with Christ to the elemental spiritual forces of this world, why, as though you still belonged to the world, do you submit to its rules?

In this verse, Paul reminds the Colossian believers that through their union with Christ, they have died to the elemental spiritual forces that govern this world system. They are no longer enslaved to human rules, traditions, and philosophies.

Colossians 3:1-4 Since, then, you have been raised with Christ, set your hearts on things above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. Set your minds on things above, not on earthly things. For you died, and your life is now hidden with Christ in God. When Christ, who is your life, appears, then you also will appear with him in glory.

This passage beautifully captures the concept of dying and rising with Christ. Paul reminds them that since they have been raised with Christ, their mindset and priorities should be heavenly, not earthly. They have died to their old way of life, and their new life is hidden with Christ in God. When Christ returns, they too will appear with Him in glory.

*Colossians 3:5-11*⁵ Put to death, therefore, whatever belongs to your earthly nature: sexual immorality, impurity, lust, evil desires and greed, which is idolatry. ⁶ Because of these, the wrath of God is coming. ⁷ You used to walk in these ways, in the life you once lived. ⁸ But now you must also rid yourselves of all such things as these: anger, rage, malice, slander, and filthy language from your lips. ⁹ Do not lie to each other, since you have taken off your old self with its practices ¹⁰ and have put on the new self, which is being renewed in knowledge in

the image of its Creator. ¹¹ Here there is no Gentile or Jew, circumcised or uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave or free, but Christ is all, and is in all.

Paul then instructs them to put to death the deeds of the flesh (sexual immorality, impurity, evil desires, greed, etc.) which belong to their earthly nature. He says they have "taken off the old self with its practices" and have "put on the new self, which is being renewed in knowledge in the image of its Creator."

Colossians 3:12-14 Having put off the old self, Paul calls them to put on Christlike virtues - compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness, patience, forgiveness, and above all, love. This represents the new life in Christ they have put on.

So in this passage, Paul vividly portrays the believers' identification with Christ's death and resurrection. They have died to the old sinful ways, put off the old self, and have been raised to new life in Christ, putting on the new self that is being renewed in His image. Their mindset and behaviour should now reflect this spiritual reality.

2 Timothy 2:11-12 Here is a trustworthy saying: If we died with him, we will also live with him; if we endure, we will also reign with him...

This verse links the ideas of dying with Christ and living/reigning with Him, indicating the believer's participation in Christ's death leads to sharing in His resurrection life.

The concept of dying and rising with Christ speaks of the believer's spiritual union with Christ in His death and resurrection. It signifies the death of the old sinful nature and the beginning of a new life empowered by the Holy Spirit. This transformation is symbolized in baptism and is a continuous reality for the believer as they live out their faith in Christ.