

WE ARE TRANSLATED

There are only two verses in Scripture in which you will find the English word *“translated.”* It is the Greek word *“methistemi.”* Thayer and Strong translate this word, *“to transfer, carry away, put out or remove, depose or figuratively exchange or remove from one place to another.”* There are only two verses in the Bible where you will find this English word. Colossians 1:13: *“Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son:”* and in Hebrews 11:5: *“By faith Enoch was translated that he should not see death; and was not found, because God had translated him: for before his translation he had this testimony, that he pleased God.”* Although the word is translated in a few other places in the Bible differently, it bears the same meaning such as in Acts 13:22, *“And when he had removed him....”* The word *“removed”* is again *“methistemi”* which means King Saul has been put away from the throne, meaning he would never come back and in the latter part of this verse God declares David was his replacement. I cannot resist making the application that David’s lineage will never be removed from this eternal dynasty for Jeremiah 33:17 says, *“For thus saith the LORD; David shall never want a man to sit upon the throne of the house of Israel.”* Rejoice with me at these opening words of the New Testament: *“The book of the generation of Jesus Christ, the son of David...”* (Matthew 1:1). In examining Hebrews 11:5 see that the transference of godly Enoch from earth to heaven reminds us that we, through salvation in our Lord Jesus Christ, have now been translated to a heavenly existence. The Bible says that God has *“...raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus”* (Ephesians 2:6).

Today we would like to begin a Bible study in Colossians. Allow me to bring six characteristics of the translated life to your attention.

I. Influence of God’s Will

In Colossians 1:1, Paul describes himself, *“Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God....”* Six times in the New Testament Paul refers to himself as serving Christ *“...by the will of God.”* Paul knew he did not deserve to be one of God’s leading servants; quite frankly, Paul marveled for the rest of his life that God had even reached down to save him. He said, *“This is a faithful saying, and*

worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners; of whom I am chief" (I Timothy 1:15). Not only did he want you to know, he needed desperately to remind himself that he was where he was by the mandate and order of Almighty God.

A man or woman convinced they are in the will of God will overcome all obstacles. Every boon is a blessing from God and every perceived setback is a set-up. Never underestimate the influence of the knowledge of God's will for your life.

II. Interworking of the Body of Christ

In the latter part of Colossians 1, verse 1 Paul says, "...and Timotheus our brother...." Please observe other places Paul refers to Timothy and even more especially how he refers to him: "...Timotheus, who is my beloved son..." (I Timothy 4:17); "Paul and Timotheus, the servants of Jesus Christ..." (Philippians 1:1); "...Timotheus, our brother, and minister of God, and our fellowlabourer in the gospel of Christ..." (I Thessalonians 3:2); "But I trust in the Lord Jesus to send Timotheus shortly unto you, that I also may be of good comfort, when I know your state. For I have no man likeminded, who will naturally care for your state" (Philippians 2:19, 20).

God has designed us to serve him together. John Donne wrote, "No man is an island, Entire of itself, Every man is a piece of the continent, A part of the main." Even more importantly, God said through Paul, "So we, being many, are one body in Christ, and every one members one of another" (Romans 12:5).

III. Intercessory Importance

Colossians 1:3 says, "We give thanks to God and the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, praying always for you." Prayer is vital. We see in Colossians 1:9-12 and Colossians 4:2-4 that Paul prays perpetually, specifically and effectually. We will never see the work of God advance unless we pray. John Bunyan said, "You can do more than pray after you have prayed, but you cannot do more than pray until you have prayed." "...The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much" (James 5:16).

IV. Interplay of Heaven and Earth

Colossians 1:4, 5, 18-20, 27 displays the interworking of heaven and earth. In the model prayer our Lord taught us to pray, "...*Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven*" (Matthew 6:10). Luke records it like this, "...*Thy will be done, as in heaven, so in earth*" (Luke 11:2). I often quote this partially, but allow me to give you the full quote by Elizabeth Barrett Browning: "Earth's crammed with heaven, And every common bush afire with God, But only he who sees takes off his shoes; The rest sit round and pluck blackberries." I agree with Mrs. Browning's conclusion; for those who are not looking for the interplay between earth and heaven, life will become as insignificant as merely "picking blackberries." For those dedicated souls, there is but a thin veil between earth and heaven.

V. Investigation of God's Servant

As we examine Colossians 1:7,8; 4:12 and Philemon, verse 23 we see that the pastor of the church at Colossae was Epaphras. Upon a closer examination of this man we see that he was loving: "...*a dear fellow servant...*" (Colossians 1:7b), he was faithful: "...*a faithful minister of Christ*" (Colossians 1:7c), he was a bridge builder: "...*declared unto us your love in the Spirit*" (Colossians 1:8), he was a prayer warrior: "...*always laboring fervently for you in prayers...*" (Colossians 4:12), and he was willing to go anywhere and do anything for his Master, the Lord Jesus: "...*Epaphras, my fellowprisoner in Christ Jesus*" (Philemon, verse 23).

VI. Intimacy with Christ

To take in Colossians 1:13-18 is like trying to take a drink from a fire hydrant! We are inextricably linked to Jesus Christ and our life must be always operating from this vantage point. We are to love Him fully, completely, and always. To operate in this intimacy we need to make sure:

A. The interference of the world must be broken.

God has, "...*delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son*" (Colossians 1:13). Billy Sunday said, "You can't love flowers unless you hate weeds and you can't love Jesus unless you hate sin."

B. There is appreciation of Christ's blood.

"In whom we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins" (Colossians 1:14). This is the price that our Savior paid to save us. *"Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain conversation received by tradition from your fathers; But with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot"* (I Peter 1:18,19). This is where we find cleansing from sin (I John 1:7, 9).

C. Honor should be given to Jesus as Lord and Creator.

Jesus is described as Firstborn, meaning He has the right to rule as Sovereign over the universe and our lives. Colossians 1:16,17 tell us that Jesus created everything that we see and even those things we do not see. Colossians 1:18 demands that in all things Christ is to have the preeminence. The word preeminence is from the Greek word *"proteuo"* which means to be first in rank or influence. If I may take it a step further, Jesus is to be number one in our lives in both rank and influence! Is Jesus Lord of your life?

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Johnny Pope". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "J" and a long horizontal flourish at the end.