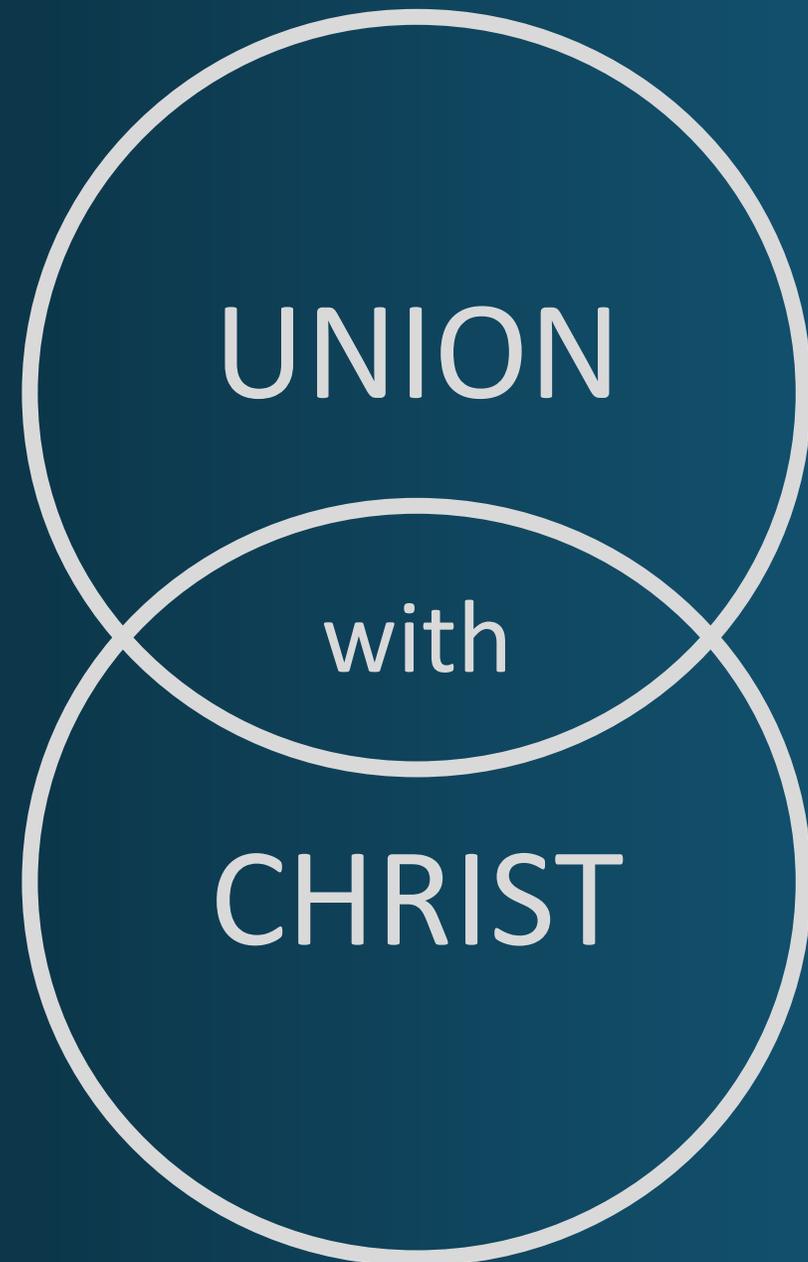


*Christ over All:
Paul's Letter to the Colossians*

“The Results of
Union with Christ,
Part 1”

Colossians 2:11–15



REVIEW: PAUL'S TIMELINE WITH THE COLOSSIAN CHURCH

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- AD 52 ● Paul passes by Colossae on his way to Ephesus (Acts 18:23; 19:1)
 - AD 52–54 ● The gospel reaches Colossae through Epaphras, who learned under Paul in Ephesus (Acts 19:9–10; Col 1:7–8)
 - AD 55 ● Paul leaves Ephesus (Acts 20:1)
 - AD 60 ● Paul arrives in Rome; under house arrest for two years (Acts 28:30–31)
 - AD 61 ● Epaphras visits Paul in Rome to report on the Colossian church (Col 4:12–13)
 - AD 61/62 ● Paul writes Colossians (Col 1:1–2; 2:1–3; 4:14–18)



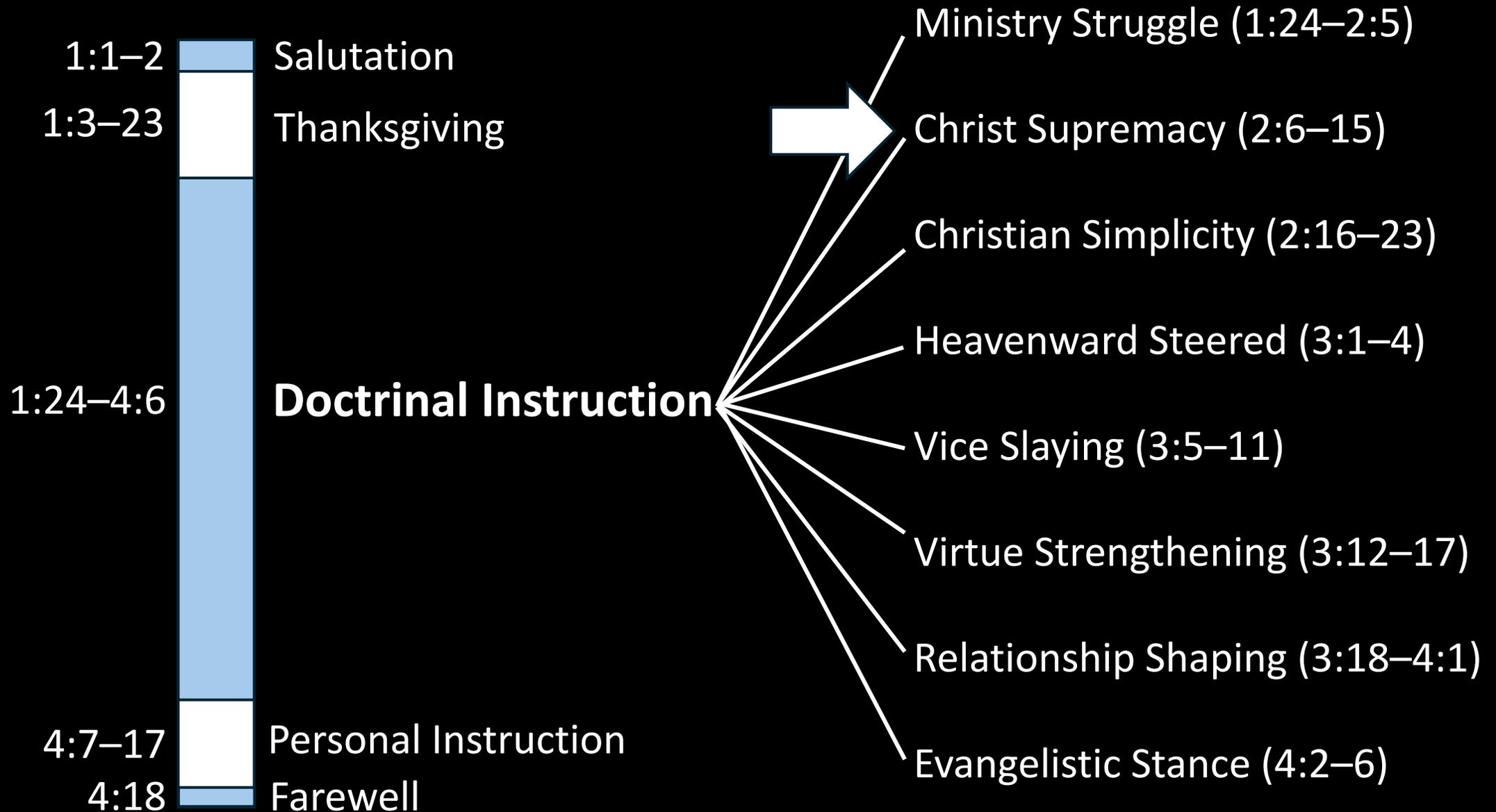
Rome



Colossae



THE OUTLINE OF COLOSSIANS



TEXT – COLOSSIANS 2:11–12

“and in Him you have been made complete . . .

and in Him you were also circumcised with a circumcision made without hands, in the removal of the body of the flesh by the circumcision of Christ; having been buried with Him in baptism,

in which [whom] you were also raised up with Him through faith in the working of God, who raised Him from the dead.”

TWO RESULTS OF UNION WITH CHRIST:

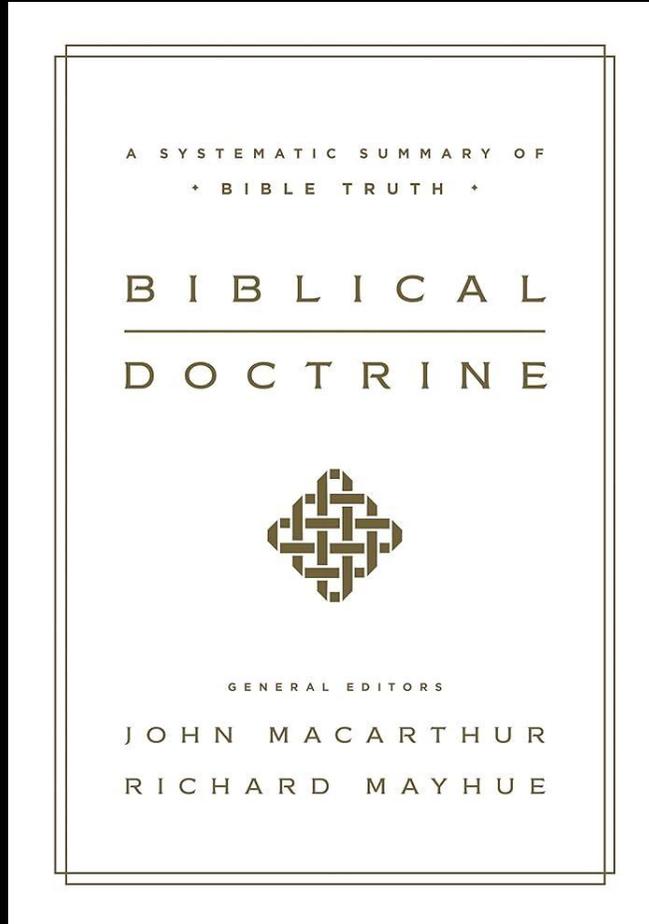
- I. **You Have Had Your Old Nature Removed (vv. 11–12a)**
- II. **You Have Been Connected to Christ’s Resurrection (v. 12b)**

I. You Have Had Your Old Nature Removed (2:11–12a)

“and **in Him** **you were also circumcised** with a circumcision **made without hands**, in the removal of the body of the flesh by the circumcision of Christ; having been buried with Him in baptism”

- “**In Him**” – describes the *sphere* in which the action of the verb was accomplished; the pronoun points back to “Christ” the end of v. 8.
- “**You were also circumcised**” – physical circumcision was instituted as a sign of participation in the Abrahamic covenant (Gen 17:1–14), but the sign came to be used as a synonym to describe *spiritual regeneration*.
- “**made without hands**” – i.e., it is done spiritually/supernaturally, by God and not man (see Col 2:13).

- **Deuteronomy 10:16** – “So circumcise your heart, and stiffen your neck no longer.”
- **Jeremiah 4:4** – “Circumcise yourselves to the LORD, and remove the foreskins of your heart, men of Judah and inhabitants of Jerusalem, or else My wrath will go forth like fire and burn with none to quench it, because of the evil of your deeds.”
- **Acts 7:51** – “You men who are stiff-necked and uncircumcised in heart and ears are always resisting the Holy Spirit; you are doing just as your fathers did.”
- ***Deuteronomy 30:6** – “Moreover the LORD your God will circumcise your heart and the heart of your descendants, to love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul, so that you may live.”



“Regeneration is the sovereign act of God, by the Holy Spirit and through the preached gospel, whereby he instantaneously imparts spiritual life to a sinner, bringing him out of spiritual death and into spiritual life.”

—John MacArthur & Richard Mayhue,
Biblical Doctrine, 585

REDEMPTION
ACCOMPLISHED
AND APPLIED
JOHN MURRAY

FOREWORD BY
CARL TRUEMAN

“A change which is radical and all-pervasive, a change which cannot be explained in terms of any combination, permutation, or accumulation of human resources, a change which is nothing less than a new creation by him who calls the things that be not as though they were, who spoke and it was done, who commanded and it stood fast. This, in a word, is regeneration.”

—John Murray,
Redemption Accomplished & Applied, 100

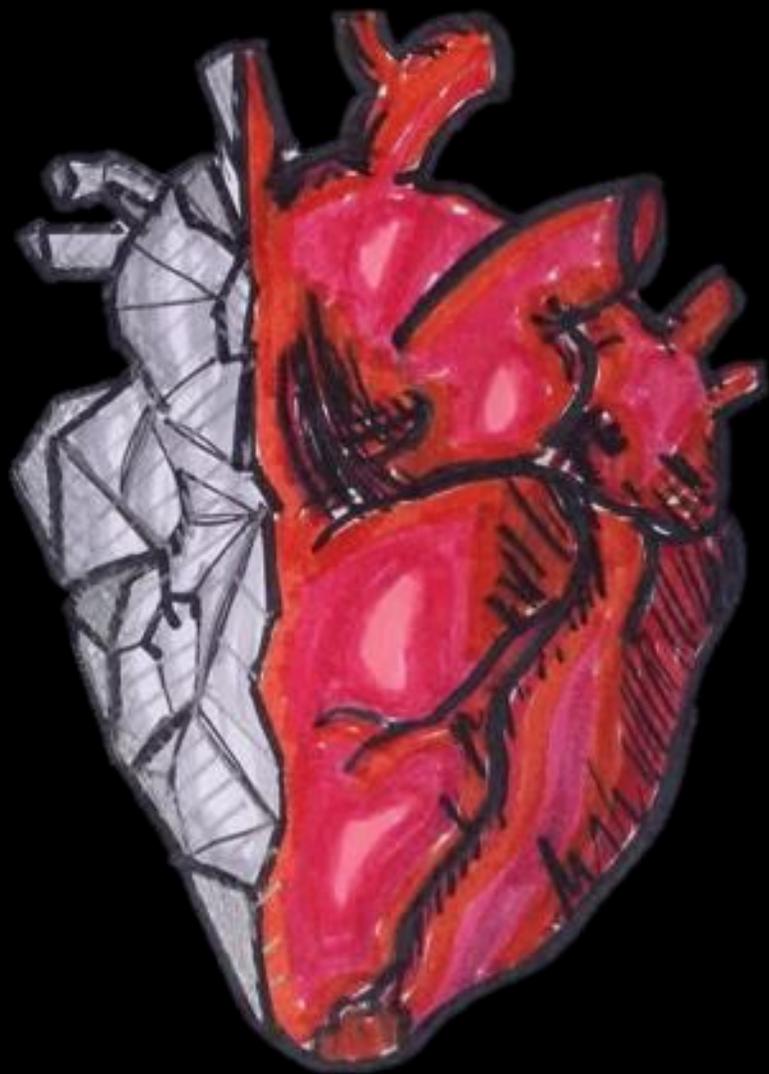
“and in Him you were also circumcised with a circumcision made without hands, in the removal of the body of the flesh by the circumcision of Christ; having been buried with Him in baptism”

- Regeneration is a *profound, supernatural act* that involves two aspects:
 - 1) something done to remove the sinner’s *existing sin nature*;
 - 2) something done to impart a *new, spiritual nature* to the sinner.
- **“In the removal of the body of the flesh”** – Paul uses a very rare term (*lit.*, “the stripping off”) to emphasize the *removal* aspect of regeneration (see Ezek 11:19–20; *36:26).
- This emphasis of *removal* is synonymous with the language of *crucifixion* (see *Rom 6:6; Gal 2:20; 5:24; 6:14).



“Knowing this, that our old self was crucified with *Him*, in order that our body of sin might be done away with, so that we would no longer be slaves to sin.”

—Romans 6:6



“Therefore if anyone is in Christ,
he is a new creature; the old
things passed away; behold, new
things have come.”

—2 Corinthians 5:17

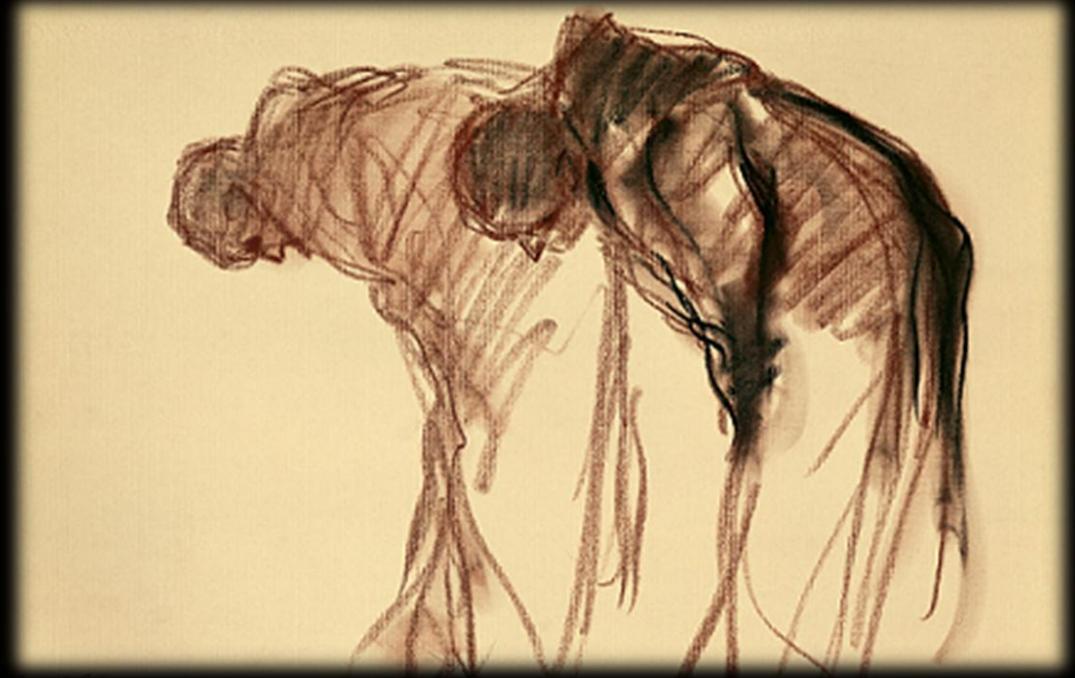
“and in Him you were also circumcised with a circumcision made without hands, **in the removal of the body of the flesh** by the circumcision of Christ; having been buried with Him in baptism”

- Thus, regeneration cannot be understood as the mere *addition* of a new nature to an remaining old one, to create a man with *two natures*—the old sin nature and the new spiritual nature.
 - ✗ **Error:** Growth in the Christian life can be compared to two dogs; the dog you feed more becomes the more dominant one.
 - ✓ **Truth:** Your old identity has been removed; you are no longer defined by that old self.
- In regeneration a new identity is created, and it is this reality that serves as the basis for Paul’s subsequent imperatives (see Col 3:5, 9–10).

- In fact, this reality serves as the basis for Paul’s response to the legalism of the false teachers (see Col 2:16–23).

“Against the false teachers’ advocacy of rules and ascetic practices as the means of subduing the flesh (2:16, 18, 20–21), Paul asserts that Christians have already experienced ‘the stripping off of the body of flesh’ . . . in their union with Christ. No other practice or obedience to a rule is needed.”

—Douglas Moo, *Colossians*, 197



“and in Him you were also circumcised with a circumcision made without hands, in the removal of the body of the flesh by the circumcision of Christ; having been buried with Him in baptism”

- **“By the circumcision of Christ”** – the circumcision which Christ effects; if you are “in Him,” this *must* have happened.
- **“Having been buried with Him”** – explains the *means by which* this spiritual circumcision has been accomplished, through co-burial—being treated as if we were “buried together with Christ.”
- **“In baptism”** – the *sphere* of the spiritual burying—not *physical* baptism, but *spiritual* immersion into Christ.
- Paul uses terms figuratively throughout to describe spiritual realities; it is unlikely that he would throw in a single material reference.

“Or do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus have been baptized into His death? Therefore we have been buried with Him through baptism into death, so that as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, so we too might walk in newness of life.”

—Romans 6:3–4

“For by one Spirit we were all baptized into one body, whether Jews or Greeks, whether slaves or free, and we were all made to drink of one Spirit.”

—1 Corinthians 12:13

Application

- ✓ Christian, your old life is not your present identity.
- ✓ Christian, all that was needed to release you from slavery to sin was accomplished the moment you were born again.

