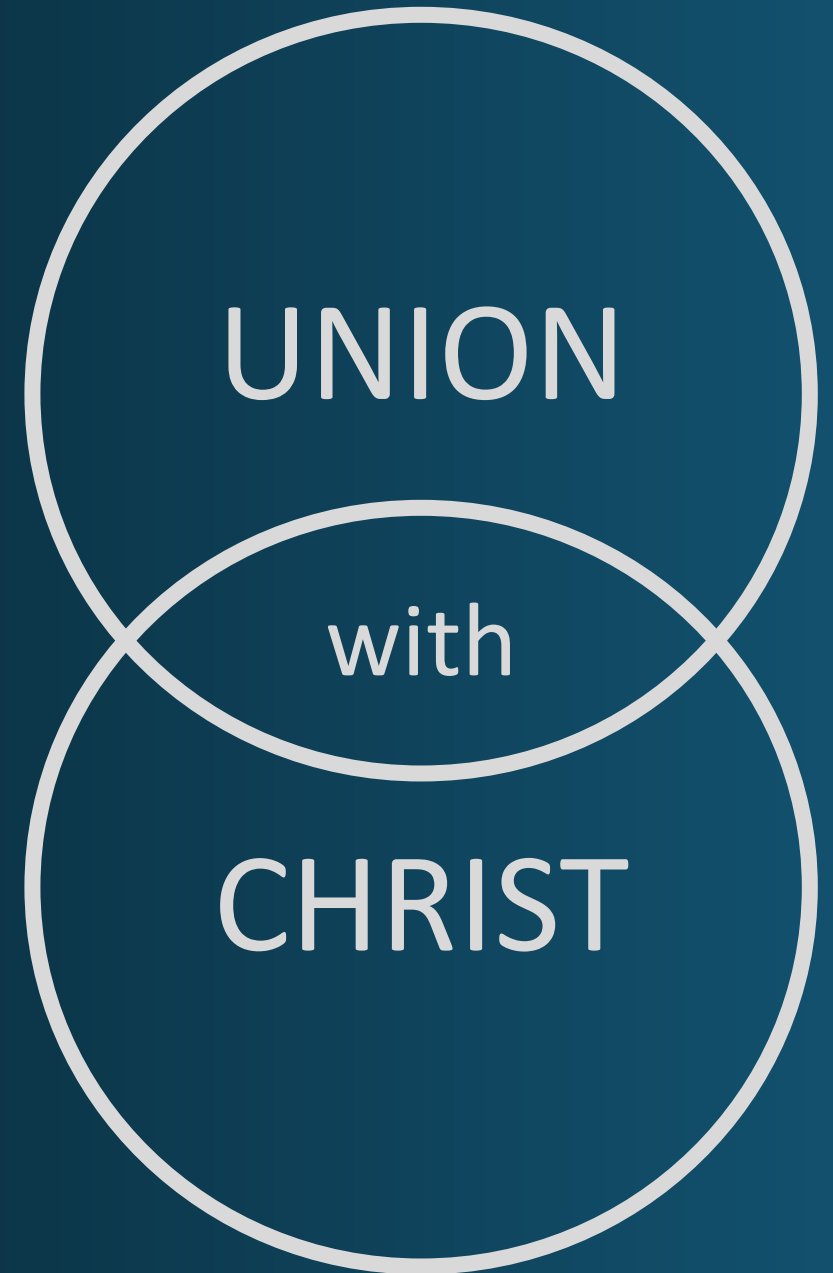


*Christ over All:
Paul's Letter to the Colossians*

“The Results of
Union with Christ,
Part 2”

Colossians 2:11–15



TEXT – COLOSSIANS 2:11–15

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

FOUR RESULTS OF UNION WITH CHRIST:

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,

I. **You Have Had Your Old
Nature Removed (vv. 11–12a)**

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

II. **You Have Been Connected to
Christ’s Resurrection (v. 12b)**

“When you were dead in your transgressions and the uncircumcision of your flesh, He made you alive together with Him, having forgiven us all our transgressions, having canceled out the certificate of debt consisting of decrees against us, which was hostile to us; and He has taken it out of the way, having nailed it to the cross.

III. You Have Been Given an Unassailable Life (vv. 13–14)

When He had disarmed the rulers and authorities, He made a public display of them, having triumphed over them through Him.”

IV. You Have Had Your Enemies Defeated (v. 15)

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”

- “**Circumcision**” – a metaphor for *spiritual regeneration*, emphasizing the “removal” of the *sin nature*—“the body of the flesh” (Deut 30:6; Rom 6:6; 2 Cor 5:17).
- “**Baptism**” – the *means* of this circumcision; a metaphor for *spiritual immersion* into Christ—uniting the believer with Christ’s death and its accomplishments (Rom 6:3–4; 1 Cor 12:13).

II. You Have Been Connected to Christ's Resurrection (v. 12b)

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

- **“In which”** – it could point back to the preceding term “baptism”; or (more likely) it parallels the previous main clause in v. 11, pointing to “Christ” in v. 8, and therefore is translated as **“in whom.”**
 - **2:11a** – “and in Him [Christ] you were also circumcised ...”
 - **2:12b** – “in ~~which~~ whom [Christ] you were also raised up with Him ...”
- **“You were also raised up with Him”** – since believers have been united with Christ, His resurrection is their resurrection; they have not remained in the grave.

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

- Through union with Christ, Paul can speak of resurrection from the grave as an *accomplished fact* for believers, since their identity is wrapped up in Christ (see Col 3:1; Eph 2:6).



- But Paul can also speak of resurrection as a *future reality* for believers, since it has been guaranteed by their union with Christ (see Rom 6:5).
- Ultimately, all that Christ has accomplished is true of us already in a *spiritual sense* but is also guaranteed of us in a *physical sense* in the future.

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

- **“Through faith”** – the *means by which* the action of the “raising up with” is accomplished.
- **“In the working of God”** – the *object* of the faith; such faith not only believes that God has made promises, but that He has the power to fulfill them—and will do so (see Heb 11:1).
- **“Who raised Him from the dead”** – the proof that God has the power to fulfill all the promises He has made in the gospel.
- **“I believe in the resurrection of Jesus”** is the creed of all true believers (see Rom 4:23–25; *10:9; 1 Corinthians 15:1–19).

III. You Have Been Given an Unassailable Life (vv. 13–14)

“When you were dead in your transgressions and the uncircumcision of your flesh, **He made you alive together with Him**, having forgiven us all our transgressions, having canceled out the certificate of debt consisting of decrees against us, which was hostile to us; and He has taken it out of the way, having nailed it to the cross.”

- “**He made you alive together**” – the third main verb highlighting how believers “have been made complete” in Christ (v. 10); see Ephesians 2:5.
 - **2:11a** – “and in Him you were also circumcised ...”
 - **2:12b** – “in whom you were also raised up with Him ...”
 - **2:13b** – “He made you alive together with Him ...”
- “**With Him**” – the exclusive sphere in which this *life* is given.

A. Despite Your Radical Unworthiness (v. 13a)

“When **you were dead in your transgressions**
and **the uncircumcision of your flesh** . . .”

- The state in which God *made us alive* together with Christ.
- “**You**” – emphatic by its position at the beginning and repetition with the verb (“You, being dead in your transgressions . . . He made you alive”).
- “**Were dead**” – not “sick” but “dead”—spiritual death (Eph 2:5; Rom 5:12; 6:23); an absolute state of *inability* to act and *unawareness* of one’s condition and its consequences.
- “**In transgressions and uncircumcision**” – the coffin (sphere) of this death; “transgressions” = “acts of disobedience”; “uncircumcision” = “sin nature” (see 2:11).



B. Because of His Inexhaustible Graciousness (v. 13c)

“having forgiven **us** all our transgressions”

- The cause by which God *made us alive* together with Christ.



- “**Having forgiven**” – not the usual word for forgive; the root of this verb is the word “grace” (χάρις, *charis*), “to give freely and undeservedly”; thus, “to forgive, pardon.”
- “**Us**” – notice the change from “you” (Colossian Gentiles) to “us” (all believers without distinction, including Paul).
- “**All our transgressions**” – the same word used in v. 13a to describe the sphere of our deadness; “all” as in “all,” not “some.”

C. Through His Unilateral Absolution (v. 14a)

“having canceled out the certificate of debt consisting of decrees against us, which was hostile to us”

- The means by which God *made us alive* together with Christ.
- **“Having canceled out”** – “to remove so as to leave no trace” (see Acts 3:19; Rev 21:4).
- **“Certificate of debt”** – an IOU; a well-understood metaphor in Paul’s day.
- **“of decrees against us . . . hostile to us”** – not a financial debt, but the debt caused *by failure to fulfill the obligation to obey God’s will*, which carried with it the penalty: *damnation* (see Deut 27:26; James 2:10).



I owe God
complete
obedience
to His will.

—Me, signed
under penalty
of death

