

KNOWING THE ALL-INCLUSIVE CHRIST

I. **It is a blessing that we can know and experience the all-inclusive Christ as revealed in Colossians:**

A. **CHRIST IS “THE HEAD OF THE BODY, THE CHURCH;...THAT HE HIMSELF MIGHT HAVE THE FIRST PLACE IN ALL THINGS”—Col.1:18:**

- In both the old creation and the new creation, Christ is the first and occupies the first place.
- Both in the universe and in the church, Christ is the preeminent One.

B. **“CHRIST IN YOU, THE HOPE OF GLORY”—Col. 1:27:**

- Christ, who dwells in our spirit to be our life and person, is our hope of glory.
- When He comes, we will be glorified in Him.
- This indicates that the indwelling Christ will saturate our entire being so that our physical body may be transfigured and conformed to the body of His glory.

C. In Colossians a number of important phrases point to our experience of Christ:

- “Christ in you”—Col. 1:27.
- “Full-grown in Christ”—Col. 1:28.
- “Walk in Him”—Col. 2:6.
- “According to Christ”—Col. 2:8.
- “Made alive together with Him”—Col. 2:13.
- “Died with Christ”—Col. 2:20.
- “Holding the Head”—Col. 2:19.
- “Out from whom”—Col. 2:19.
- “Grows with the growth of God”—Col. 2:19.
- These expressions give us a complete picture of the proper experience of Christ.
- **“THE MYSTERY OF GOD, CHRIST, IN WHOM ALL THE TREASURES OF WISDOM AND KNOWLEDGE ARE HIDDEN”—Col. 2:2-3:**
 - Colossians concerns the mystery of God, which is Christ the Head.
 - All the treasures of genuine wisdom and knowledge are hidden in Christ.
 - This is the spiritual wisdom and knowledge of the divine economy concerning Christ and the church.
 - Wisdom is related to our spirit, and knowledge is related to our mind—Eph. 1:8, 17.
- **“IN HIM DWELLS ALL THE FULLNESS OF THE GODHEAD BODILY, AND YOU HAVE BEEN MADE FULL IN HIM”—Col. 2:9-10:**
 - What dwells in Christ is not only the riches of the Godhead but the expression of the riches of what God is.
 - All the fullness of the Godhead dwells in Christ as One who has a human body.

D. **“IF THEREFORE YOU WERE RAISED TOGETHER WITH CHRIST, SEEK THE THINGS WHICH ARE ABOVE, where Christ is, sitting at the right hand of God”—Col. 3:1:**

- Verses 1 through 4 imply that **WITH CHRIST WE HAVE ONE POSITION, ONE LIFE, ONE LIVING, ONE DESTINY, AND ONE GLORY.**
- **GOD IN THE HEAVENS SHOULD BE THE SPHERE OF OUR LIVING; WITH CHRIST WE SHOULD LIVE IN GOD.**

Growing with the Growth of God

- II. **“Holding the Head, out from whom all the Body, being richly supplied..., grows with the growth of God”**—Col. 2:19:
- A. **TO GROW IS TO HAVE CHRIST ADDED INTO US**—1 Cor. 3:6-7; Gal. 4:19.
- B. The growth of the Body depends on what comes out of Christ as the Head—Eph. 4:15-16:
- When the Body is supplied by holding the Head, the Body grows with the growth of God—Col. 2:19.
 - The Body grows out from the Head, for all the supply comes from the Head—Eph. 4:15.
- C. **THE GROWTH OF THE BODY DEPENDS ON THE GROWTH OF GOD, THE ADDITION OF GOD, THE INCREASE OF GOD, WITHIN US**—Col. 2:19:
- **GOD GIVES THE GROWTH BY GIVING HIMSELF TO US IN A SUBJECTIVE WAY.**
 - The more God is added into us, the more growth He gives to us; this is the way God gives the growth—1 Cor. 3:6-7.
 - **ONLY GOD CAN GIVE GROWTH; ONLY GOD CAN GIVE US HIMSELF, AND WITHOUT HIM, WE CANNOT HAVE GROWTH**—1 Cor. 3:6-7:
 - The addition of God into us is the growth He gives.
 - For God to give us growth actually means that He gives us Himself—Rom. 8:11.
- D. **THE GROWTH OF THE BODY IS THE BUILDING UP OF THE BODY**—Eph. 4:16; Col. 2:19:
- Ephesians 4:12-16 occupies a special place in the New Testament because it shows the mystery concerning the building up of the Body of Christ.
 - **THE GROWTH OF THE BODY OF CHRIST IS THE INCREASE OF CHRIST IN THE CHURCH, WHICH RESULTS IN THE BUILDING UP OF THE BODY BY THE BODY ITSELF**—Eph. 3:17a:
 - **WHEN CHRIST ENTERS INTO THE SAINTS AND LIVES WITHIN THEM, THE CHRIST WITHIN THE SAINTS BECOMES THE CHURCH**—Col. 3:10-11.
 - The Body of Christ grows by the growth of Christ within us and is built up this way—Col. 1:18; 2:19.
 - **THE LOVE IN WHICH THE BODY BUILDS ITSELF UP IS NOT OUR OWN LOVE BUT THE LOVE OF GOD IN CHRIST, WHICH BECOMES THE LOVE OF CHRIST IN US, BY WHICH WE LOVE CHRIST AND THE FELLOW MEMBERS OF HIS BODY**—1 John 4:7-8, 11, 16, 19; Rom. 5:5; 8:39:
 - Love is the inner substance of God; when we enter into God’s inner substance, we enjoy God as love and enjoy His presence in the sweetness of the divine love, and thereby love others as Christ did—Eph. 5:25.
 - **IT IS IN SUCH A LOVE THAT WE HOLD TO TRUTH, THAT IS, TO CHRIST WITH HIS BODY, AND ARE KEPT FROM BEING INFLUENCED BY THE WINDS OF TEACHING AND FROM BRINGING IN ELEMENTS THAT ARE FOREIGN TO THE BODY**—Eph. 4:14-15.

I. **It is a blessing that we can know and experience the all-inclusive Christ as revealed in Colossians:**

- Christ is “the Head of the Body, the church;...that He Himself might have the first place in all things”—Col. 1:18: Christ, the preeminent One is the Head of the Body, is the first and occupies the first place in both the old and the new creation; in the universe and in the church. [Col. 1:18] *And He is the Head of the Body, the church; He is the beginning, the Firstborn from the dead, that He Himself might have the first place in all things;*
- “Christ in you, the hope of glory”—Col. 1:27: the indwelling Christ in our spirit to be our life and person, is our hope of glory. He will saturate our entire being that we may be transfigured and conformed to the body of His glory when He comes. [Col. 1:27] *To whom God willed to make known what are the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles, which is Christ in you, the hope of glory,*
- In Colossians a number of important phrases portraying a complete picture of the proper experience of Christ: 1. “Christ in you”; 2. “Full-grown in Christ”; 3. “Walk in Him”; 4. “According to Christ”; 5. “Made alive together with Him”; 6. “Died with Christ”; 7. “Holding the Head”; 8. “Out from whom”; 9. “Grows with the growth of God”. [Col. 2:6-7] *As therefore you have received the Christ, Jesus the Lord, walk in Him, Having been rooted and being built up in Him, and being established in the faith even as you were taught, abounding in thanksgiving.*
- “The mystery of God, Christ, in whom all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge are hidden”—Col. 2:2-3: Colossians concerns the mystery of God, which is Christ the Head. In Him are hidden all the treasures of genuine, spiritual wisdom and knowledge of the divine economy concerning Christ and the church. Wisdom is related to our spirit, and knowledge is related to our mind. [Col. 2:2-3] *That their hearts may be comforted, they being knit together in love and unto all the riches of the full assurance of understanding, unto the full knowledge of the mystery of God, Christ, In whom all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge are hidden.*
- “In Him dwells all the fullness of the Godhead bodily, and you have been made full in Him”—Col. 2:9-10: all the fullness of the Godhead dwells in Christ as One who has a human body that expresses the riches of what God is. [Col. 2:9-10] *For in Him dwells all the fullness of the Godhead bodily, And you have been made full in Him, who is the Head of all rule and authority*
- “If therefore you were raised together with Christ, seek the things which are above, where Christ is, sitting at the right hand of God”—3:1-4 imply that with Christ we have one position, one life, one living, one destiny, and one glory. God in the heavens should be the sphere of our living; with Christ we should live in God. [Col. 3:1-4] *If therefore you were raised together with Christ, seek the things which are above, where Christ is, sitting at the right hand of God. Set your mind on the things which are above, not on the things which are on the earth. For you died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God. When Christ our life is manifested, then you also will be manifested with Him in glory.*

II. **“Holding the Head, out from whom all the Body, being richly supplied..., grows with the growth of God”**

- To grow is to have Christ added into us. All the supply of the Body comes out of Christ as the Head. When the Body is supplied by holding the Head, the Body grows with the growth of God. The growth of the Body depends on the growth, addition and increase of God within us. God gives the growth by giving Himself to us in a subjective way. We grow more as more God is added into us. For God to give us growth actually means that He gives us Himself. Only God can give us Himself; only God can give growth; and without Him, we cannot have growth. [1 Col. 3:6] *I planted, Apollos watered, but God caused the growth.* [Gal. 4:19] *My children, with whom I travail again in birth until Christ is formed in you,* [Col. 2:19] *... holding the Head, out from whom all the Body, being richly supplied and knit together by means of the joints and sinews, grows with the growth of God.* [Rom. 8:11] *And if the Spirit of the One who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, He who raised Christ from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through His Spirit who indwells you.*
- The growth of the Body is the building up of the Body. Ephesians 4:12-16 occupies a special place in the New Testament because it shows the mystery concerning the building up of the Body of Christ. The growth of the Body of Christ is the increase of Christ in the church, which results in the building up of the Body by the Body itself. When Christ enters into the saints and lives within them, the Christ within the saints becomes the church. The Body of Christ grows by the growth of Christ within us and is built up this way. The love in which the Body builds itself up is not our own love but the love of God in Christ, which becomes the love of Christ in us, by which we love Christ and the fellow members of His Body. When we enter into God’s inner substance, we enjoy God as love, His inner substance, enjoy His presence in the sweetness of the divine love, and thereby love others as Christ did. It is in such a love that we hold to truth, that is, to Christ with His Body, and are kept from being influenced by the winds of teaching and from bringing in elements that are foreign to the Body. [Eph 4:11-12] *And He Himself gave some as apostles and some as prophets and some as evangelists and some as shepherds and teachers, For the perfecting of the saints unto the work of the ministry, unto the building up of the Body of Christ,* [Eph 4:15] *But holding to truth in love, we may grow up into Him in all things, who is the Head, Christ,* [Eph 4:16] *Out from whom all the Body, ... causes the growth of the Body unto the building up of itself in love.*

The way to seek the things which are above is to turn to the spirit and call on the name of the Lord. There is a transmission taking place from Christ in heaven to us on earth by means of the all-inclusive Spirit in our spirit (Eph. 1:19, 22-23; 2:22). Our experience tells us clearly that we touch the heavens by turning to our spirit, for our spirit is the receiving end of the divine transmission, whereas the throne of God in heaven is the transmitting end. Thus, by turning to our spirit, we are lifted into heaven. Because of the transmission from the throne of God in heaven into our spirit, when we enjoy the Lord here on earth, we are simultaneously in heaven. Then in our experience we are in Christ, in the Father, and in heaven. Then in the spirit we are one in position with Christ, seeking the things which are above.

<Excerpts from "Conclusion of the New Testament, The (Msgs. 346-366)", "Experiencing and enjoying Christ in the Epistles (63)">

The church is the Body of Christ, and the growth of the Body is the building up of the Body. In simple terms, the growth is the building. The growth of the church is the building up of the church. While you are growing, you are being built up. If you would not grow but would stay in the old way, this would be a tearing down for the church. In a church, as long as some of the brothers and sisters would grow, the church in that locality would be built up. Hence, growth is the key to building. When we all grow, the growth becomes the building up of the church.

<Excerpts from "The Riches and Fullness of Christ and the Advanced Recovery of the Lord Today", Chapter 4, "The Fullness of Christ (2)">