



## A Post Tenebras Lux Sunday Sermon...

### What We Are, We Are in Christ...

#### Colossians 3:1-4

<sup>NIV</sup> **Colossians 3:1**...Since, then, you have been raised with Christ, set your hearts on things above, where Christ is seated at the right hand of God. <sup>2</sup> Set your minds on things above, not on earthly things. <sup>3</sup> For you died, and your life is now hidden with Christ in God. <sup>4</sup> When Christ, who is your life, appears, then you also will appear with him in glory.

We tormented him. I guess there is no other way to say it. We tormented him because he was a strange little man. He was a strange little man and he lived four or five houses down from our house on the other side of the street. His house had a bright green front door and we tormented him. We tormented him with our pranks, our loudness and our mind-numbing stupidity.

Of course, we never did anything to him physically. We were cruel and heartless but we had the good sense to know what would happen if we went over the line. Besides what we did was always moderated by fear of the lash. So, we restrained ourselves and tormented him only moderately. Still, we tormented him just the same and we did so as often as our pea-sized brains thought about it.

We rang his doorbell and ran away before he could answer it. We played in the drainage ditch beside his house and we tore up his yard trying to get to the

crawdads that burrowed there. We stole his newspapers and sometimes when we were really bored we put frogs or even crawdads in his mailbox. At night when we were roaming the streets, we would hide in the bushes outside his house and sing out to the top of our lungs, **“Green door what’s that secret you’re keeping.”**

We thought we were so clever. But we weren’t really, you know. You see the man who lived behind the green door, just four or five houses down from us did have a secret...and when we finally found out what it was it caused us...it caused me to look at him in a completely different way.

One day, I was standing out in the front yard bouncing a baseball off the steps of our front porch when Mr. Green Door shuffled by on the other side of the street making his daily pilgrimage up to 7 Eleven. He shuffled by just about the same time everyday on his way to stock up on his daily ration of cigarettes and beer but this particular day, Mr. Green Door was moving mighty slow. Of course, he never really moved very fast. Mr. Green Door was pretty sickly. He was about 5’8” but he looked shorter than that because he kind of hunched over when he walked. His skin looked like old parchment. He looked like he was a hundred years old. I realize now he was probably in his forties. He was, as far as I can remember, the skinniest man I have ever seen in person.

Anyway, just about the time Mr. Green Door walked by and just about the time I was making it a point to gawk at him like an idiot my dad opened the front screen and came out and sat on the porch.

**“What are you doing?”** he asked.

**“Nuthin, just watchin Mr. Green Door on his way to 7-Eleven to get cigarettes and beer,” I replied.**

**“What did you call him?” my dad asked.**

**“Mr. Green Door, you know he’s got that green door and all.”**

**“You think Mr. Green Door is kind of strange don’t you?”**

**“Kind of strange...he’s about the weirdest bird I ever saw in my life.”**

**“Son,” my dad said slowing down his speech, “I want to tell about Mr....what was it you called him, Mr. Green Door? I want to tell you about him because if you ever mistreated him in anyway it would make me ashamed that you were my son.”**

That got my attention. I didn’t mind my dad yelling at me or beating me but I sure didn’t want him to be ashamed of me. So my dad and I sat there on the porch for the next thirty minutes and he told me the story about the Bataan Death March at the beginning of World War II and how thousands of Americans soldiers had been forced marched from one end of the Philippines to the other without food or water and how whenever a man fell out Japanese soldiers just killed them rather than leave them behind and how Mr. Green Door had been one of the few men strong enough to survive from start to finish.

There in the space of thirty minutes, my dad changed everything I thought I knew to be true.

Not, that it didn't take me awhile to get used to thinking of Mr. Green Door as something other than a strange, skinny little man. It took a long time for me to think of him as a war hero. But from that very moment on I just couldn't stomach the idea of tormenting him. So, we left him pretty much to himself after that but I thought about him a lot. One day when I was out riding my bike up and down the street I noticed a newspaper in Mr. Green Door's front yard out by the curb. I pulled over, picked it up and ran up and dropped it on his front porch. I think that was my way of saying, **"Look it has taken me awhile to get it, but now I understand who and what you are."**

Now, I wanted to tell that story because in a way it reflects almost exactly the line of thought Paul uses to encourage the Colossian believers. You see Paul wrote to the Colossians because, in a way, they too were being tormented. Of course, the torment they faced was a different kind of torment. They were being tormented because of their faith. They were being lampooned and ridiculed by two groups: one made up of unbelieving Jews and one made up of unbelieving Gentiles. They were being pushed and pulled to conform the way they thought and the way they lived to a different standard than what they had learned from the missionaries and pastors that had taught them about Christ. You see the Colossians were surrounded by unbelievers who thought of them as a strange, goofy, small-minded, insignificant people. What they didn't understand, and for that matter what the Colossians themselves had a hard time believing, is that the Colossians were indeed truly significant. They were a secret, hidden treasure wrapped up in Christ, and tucked away in the heart of God. So what Paul does in his letter to them is to remind them who they are not so much so they could respond to the people that were tormenting them but so they would come at last

to a right understanding of who they really were and why who they were made them significant.

Now all of that was necessary, as I said, because the unbelievers who hounded the Colossians thought they alone had the inside scoop on life both in terms of what they thought they knew and how they lived. As a result, they were constantly hammering the Colossians to forsake Christ and come around to their way of thinking and to their way of living. They hammered them saying, **“Look here, if you expect to ever amount to anything in this life you need to think like us, to look like us, to live like us. This ‘Christ business’ is not going to get you anywhere. If you hang on to Him, life is just going to pass you by. Your lives will wind up being like the empty Cicada shells on trees, just empty husks.”**

Now, it is to that very issue that the great Apostle to the Gentiles directed his letter to the Colossians. You see Paul didn’t want the Colossians to be confused about what actually gave their lives meaning and he certainly didn’t want them to lose heart. So he wrote them this letter and his basic line of thought throughout the letter runs like this, **“Look, the world can get its significance from wherever it pleases; our significance comes from being in Christ.”**

Now to make Paul words to the Colossians clearer, let me try to flesh out for you what these two groups of tormentors were saying to the Colossians. Now, some of what I am going to say has been inferred from the text but you can look at the evidence with me and be the judge of whether I am right or wrong.

Here's what I think the first group, the Gentile know it alls, was telling them, **"We are the true keepers of knowledge. Unless you know what we know, unless you are privy to the great philosophical and metaphysical truths we alone hold, unless you come to us and let us teach you, let us fill you up, your lives will be empty."**

Now I think you can tell that was what they were saying because of Paul's repeated references to and emphasis upon the ideas of **"wisdom"** and **"knowledge"** and **"understanding"**. Look at a few verses with me...

<sup>NIV</sup> **Colossians 1:9**...For this reason, since the day we heard about you, we have not stopped praying for you and asking God to fill you with the knowledge of his will through all spiritual wisdom and understanding.

<sup>NIV</sup> **Colossians 1:28**...We proclaim him, admonishing and teaching everyone with all wisdom, so that we may present everyone perfect in Christ.

<sup>NIV</sup> **Colossians 2:2**...My purpose is that they may be encouraged in heart and united in love, so that they may have the full riches of complete understanding, in order that they may know the mystery of God, namely, Christ, <sup>3</sup> in whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge. <sup>4</sup> I tell you this so that no one may deceive you by fine-sounding arguments.

You see Paul was concerned about how these Gentile know it alls were trying to deceive the Colossians with false teaching, with their worldly wisdom. He knew they were arguing they had the deep stuff, the true truth and so he countered them by reminding the Colossians, **"Look, let me encourage you. I know they are telling you they "know it all." I know they say they have some sort of supernatural, higher understanding and they that know all kinds of mysteries but they don't really. Here's how I know that. Genuine wisdom and true**

**knowledge are only found in Christ. They don't know Him, so they don't know all that they don't know. You don't have to worry about them."**

But the Colossians weren't just getting hammered by this group of Gentile, "gnostic" know it alls. They were also getting hammered by a group of Jewish unbelievers telling them they had to wrap themselves in certain traditions in order to have significance. You can tell that Paul's admonition in chapter 2:8.

<sup>NIV</sup> **Colossians 2:8**...See to it that no one takes you captive through hollow and deceptive philosophy, which depends on human tradition and the basic principles of this world rather than on Christ.

Do you get the full import of his warning? He's saying, **"They are trying to make you a prisoner of their tradition. Don't let them. It's not about their tradition. Their tradition is just a shadow of what we have in Christ. If you go from Christ back to their tradition you are actually going backwards."**

Now, I get the idea that this group was made up of Jewish unbelievers from the verses that follow 2:8 where Paul talks about the Colossians' baptism being a circumcision made without hands. Right after that he also talks there about human tradition and the written code and regulations and religious festivals and special Sabbaths. Those were things that enthralled the Jews that had rejected Jesus as their Messiah.

I think that Paul's assessment of these two groups fits very well with what he had said earlier in 1 Corinthians:

<sup>NIV</sup> **1 Corinthians 1:22**...Jews demand miraculous signs and Greeks look for wisdom, <sup>23</sup> but we preach Christ crucified: a stumbling block to Jews and foolishness to Gentiles, <sup>24</sup> but to those whom God has called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God.

Now whether I am right about one group being Gentile and one group being Jewish doesn't really matter. What does matter is that the Colossians were being pressured to find their own significance in the wisdom of some new mystical knowledge or in the power or practice of some old valuable tradition and Paul was not going to put up with it. So he wrote this letter and reminded them once again, **"Look, the world can get its significance from wherever it pleases; our significance comes from being in Christ."**

To prove his point, Paul starts off by reminding the Colossians what Christ had already accomplished for them. He does that in 2:13.

<sup>NIV</sup> **Colossians 2:13**...When you were dead in your sins and in the uncircumcision of your sinful nature, God made you alive with Christ. He forgave us all our sins, <sup>14</sup> having canceled the written code, with its regulations, that was against us and that stood opposed to us; he took it away, nailing it to the cross....

Now Paul's conclusion was that if Christ had forgiven their sins and cancelled out their debt, it was pointless to look for the good stuff somewhere else. You can see that I think especially in verse 16.

<sup>NIV</sup> **Colossians 2:16**...Therefore do not let anyone judge you by what you eat or drink, or with regard to a religious festival, a New Moon celebration or a Sabbath day. <sup>17</sup> These are a shadow of the things that were to come; the reality, however, is found in Christ.

But you can really see it in verse 20.

<sup>NIV</sup> **Colossians 2:20**...Since you died with Christ to the basic principles of this world, why, as though you still belonged to it, do you submit to its rules: <sup>21</sup> "**Do not handle! Do not taste! Do not touch!**"? <sup>22</sup> These are all destined to perish with use, because they are based on human commands and teachings. <sup>23</sup> Such regulations indeed have an appearance of wisdom, with their self-imposed worship, their false humility and their harsh treatment of the body, but they lack any value in restraining sensual indulgence.

Do you get what Paul is saying? He is saying, "Look, you are dead to all that. It doesn't matter that they have a list of traditions or rules for successful living or that they have a long list of the most important things you ought to know. You won't find any significance there and you certainly won't find any help to holiness there. All you will find there is death."

It is at that point that Paul penned the verses I started off with this morning.

<sup>NIV</sup> **Colossians 3:1**...Since, then<sup>1</sup>, you have been raised with Christ, set your hearts on things above<sup>2</sup>, where Christ is seated at the right hand of God. <sup>2</sup> Set your minds<sup>34</sup> on things above<sup>56</sup>, not on earthly things<sup>7</sup>. <sup>3</sup> For you died, and your life is now hidden<sup>8</sup> with Christ in God<sup>9</sup>. <sup>4</sup> When Christ, who is your life<sup>10</sup>, appears, then you<sup>11</sup> also will appear with him in glory<sup>12</sup>.

Now let me take just a moment and explain for you I think Paul means here.

First he says...

*Since, then, you have been raised with Christ...*

What he means by that is, "If you have really been made alive spiritually...if the Spirit of God has turned your heart to trust in what Jesus has accomplished for you, then..."

*...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.*

The Gnostics and the Jews both made a point that their systems taught the higher life. They loved to say things like, **"Our ideas and our ethics come from a higher place."** So Paul here just blasts right on past them up to the very throne of God. **"Look,"** he says, **"they think you ought to think about higher things...I agree. So set your wills and your mind to think about the things where Jesus is, seated high above everything else at the right hand of God and here's why you ought to do that."**

*...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.*

I think by that Paul means, **"Because Christ has redeemed you and made you His own you are to live for him now. That may mean that for a time you may seem unimportant. But that is not the case at all. It's just that what you are, what you truly are...is obscured by the fact that your life is hidden securely away with Christ in God. When Christ is revealed in all His glory...you too will shine forth in glory and your genuine importance...your genuine significance will be just about as clear as the noonday sun."**

You see what Paul was saying one final time...

**"Look, the world can get its significance from wherever it pleases; our significance comes from being in Christ."**

As I meditated on these truths this week my hear was struck again by just how important it is that we as Christians should understand our lives, our future, our identity, our significance is tied to our Savior. I thought of that this week as we said goodbye to our beloved brother, Rod Herman. You know he was a good and godly man but it was what he was in Christ that endeared him so to our hearts. In his life, we saw glimpses of what it meant to be a man absolutely devoid of any desire to exalt himself. He was perfectly content to drift in and out of the shadows. He never coveted the spotlight and at the same time, he seemed to have an innate ability to see the value of others. Have you ever wondered how a man could be at peace with so many people? It was because he had absolutely no desire for the upper hand. He was willing to step back in the shadows and let have a go at things and if you faltered he was there to pick you up to encourage you. He was a man that lived to bolster others. And as I thought about Him and I thought about the way he was it reminded me of a wonderful story I once heard Chuck Swindoll tell that went something like this:

**“When I was in seminary, there was a student there with a bright red birthmark across the side of his face. Now it wasn’t a small thing. In was a huge, something like a giant red scar that stretched down across his forehead, across his nose and down across a large section of his mouth and neck. It was the kin of thing you have to be careful about or you will find yourself staring at it. Anyway, I marveled to myself, ‘You know this guy doesn’t even seem to be aware that he even has a birthmark on his face. If he does know about it, it doesn’t seem very self-conscious about it. Somebody probably ought to tell him that a birthmark like that might be a hindrance to a public ministry.’”**

Swindoll went on, **“However, as I got to know him, it seemed that the prominence of the birthmark began to fade away. I got to where I didn’t think much about it and it irritated me when I saw other people gawking at him.”**

One day I worked up the courage to ask him about it. **“Brother, you do know that you have a huge birthmark on you face, don’t you?”**

He just laughed, **“Yes, I do know that I have a huge birthmark on my face.”**

Because he laughed I decided to go ahead and ask him how he could be so nonchalant about it and how it seemed to have absolutely no effect on his ability to minister to others.

**“That’s because of my dad,”** he said. **“My dad taught me, as far back as I can remember, that this part of my face was where God Himself marked me before I was born. Every night when he put me to bed he used to kiss me right here and say, ‘You know Son, this mark on your face was really put there for my benefit. You see all my life I dreamed of having a son like you and when you came along I was so scared that I might lose you that God put this mark on you to give me peace of mind. That way no matter how far away you are I can pick you out and remind myself that you’re my son and a gift from God.’”**

**“To tell you the truth,”** he told me, **“I got to where I felt sorry for people who didn’t have birthmarks across the sides of their faces. I guess my dad just convinced me somehow along the way that who I was in him meant a lot more than what I looked like.”**

Let us pray...

<sup>NIV</sup> **Luke 22:19...** And he took bread, gave thanks and broke it, and gave it to them, saying, "**This is my body given for you; do this in remembrance of me.**" <sup>20</sup> In the same way, after the supper he took the cup, saying, "**This cup is the new covenant in my blood, which is poured out for you.**

What we are... We are in Christ.

Because we know our lives are hidden in Christ we long each week for this time when we can commune with Him afresh. For us, this is not just a memorial service. Oh, it is at least that. We are reminded again of His great love for us but this is more than that to us. You see our souls are refreshed for another week because in the bread and in the cup the Lord Jesus speaks peace to our souls through the visible gospel. He speaks to our hearts and says, "**You know you are my brothers and my sisters, you are the adopted children of the Father, and I have given you my Spirit to watch out over you and protect you and sanctify you until the time I see you face to face.**"

You see when we do this we are communing with our Savior but more than that we are communing with all the saints of all the ages as they commune with Him too. We are joining into the worship of just men made perfect and now this week that holds all that much more meaning for us. We cannot imagine how that could ever become ritualistic or commonplace. If you are a believer I expect that you know what I mean. That's why if you are a Christian trusting in Christ as your redeemer we want you to come and join us. If you have been baptized in the name of the Father, Son and Spirit and are visibly attached to a body of believers where the gospel is faithfully preached, this is for you. Come and welcome.

But if you are not a believer, you ought not to take this bread or cup. Instead, you ought to use this time to consider the truth of what has been said this morning. Perhaps, you ought to ask yourself, **“What is the source of my significance? When I stand before God, will I stand with those that have been hidden in Christ?”** As you think through these things, ask yourself this question, **“What is it that prevents me from receiving this kindness God is offering me in Christ? What is it that keeps me from placing my hope in Him? What is it that keeps me from pleading the righteousness of Christ?”** My prayer is that God will give you

a holy resolve to seek no rest until you rest in Christ. I know if you put your faith in Him you will never be disappointed.

Now as the brothers distribute the bread and cup I want to meditate on this thought, perhaps even say it to yourself as you take the elements. My sins, even mine, are hidden in Christ with God. My life, even mine, is hidden in Christ with God.

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<sup>1</sup> Daniel B. Wallace, *Greek Grammar Beyond the Basics* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing, 1996), 692. Wallace cites this very example on page 694.

<sup>2</sup> Heinrich Greeven, “ζητέω” in the *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament Vol. 2.*, Gerhard Kittel Ed., (Grand Rapids, William B. Eerdmans, 1980), 893. In most cases the subject of *zhte,w* is man. If we restrict our enquiry to passages with a religious reference, we find that in these instances the term denotes man’s general philosophical search or quest. The root of this concept is to be found in the frequent LXX use of *ζητεῖν φορ’θβ* and also in the use of the term in secular literature, where it is a technical term for philosophical investigation. There is a hint of the latter in the saying concerning the Greek search after wisdom in IC. 1:22. In Ac. 17:27 too, Paul uses an almost completely Greek mode of expression. The OT tradition emerges at R. 10:20 in a quotation from Isaiah: *εὑρεθην τοις ἐμοὶ μὴ ζητούσιν* *zhtein* here denotes the total attitude towards God (cf. v, 20b and on this\_ 687). Also based on the OT *ζητεῖν το προσωπον του θεου* ψ 23:6 26:8; cf. 39:16) are passages in which *ζητεω* is used in the absolute in relation to the hearing of prayer, For prayer is

seeking God if it is to be successful prayer, to open the door and to give access to God. Thus ζητεῖν covers the seeking of man and the orientation of his will in the widest sense. If the heathen are primarily concerned about food and clothes, Christians are to seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness (Mt. 6:32 f.; cf. Lk. 13:24). They are to seek those things, which are above (Col. 3:1). This kind of life will be directed towards the attainment of δοξά τιμή αφθαπσια (R. 2:7). As the merchant in his search for fine pearls (Mt. 13:45) one day finds a jewel for which he will sell all the rest, so man is to direct everything towards the one great goal. In Pauline terms, he is to seek to be justified (Gl. 2:17), Seeking after God can be perverted in the demand for a sign with which a morally corrupt generation hopes to find an easier way to God than that indicated by the call to repentance (Mk. 8:11 F. and par.).

<sup>3</sup> Georg Bertram, “φρονέω” in the *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament Vol. 9.*, Gerhard Kittel and Gerhard Friedrich Eds., (Grand Rapids, William B. Eerdmans, 1981), 232. φρονημα (R. 8:6; \_ 11, 414, 10ff.) occurs in the NT only in connection with φρονέω ,B. 8:5) and it means the same as the inf., (to) φρονεῖν used as a noun. The τα επιγεια φρονοῦτες (Phil. 3:19), cf. εν σαρκι πεποιθοτες (3:3) are entangled in a superstition and their thinking is governed by earthly powers even though they belong to the Christian community. Paul presses toward the mark, his upward calling by God in Christ Jesus, as the prize of victory, Phil. 3:14. This saying about himself gives the teleioi (\_ VIII, 76. 12ff.) in the congregation their basic orientation. With the indicative φρονουμεν we also find the cohortative φρονωμεν as a vl. at Phil. 3:15; since the orientation is finally a gift of Gods Spirit, the variant is of no material significance. With τα ανα ζητετε and τα ανα φροειτε (Col. 3:1 F.) we have the Pauline imperative, obeying which is not left to the will of man, for the basis here is the uniting of the believer in baptism with the Christ event and its eschatological reference. τα φρονημα του πνευματος (\_ VI, 430, 23ff.), the gift which determines man, is finally God Himself, B. 8:27.

<sup>4</sup> A.S. Peake, *Epistle of Paul to the Colossians from Expositor's Greek New Testament*, W. Robertson Nicoll Ed. (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans, 1980), 537. “Ver. 2. τὰ ἄνω φρονεῖτε ‘Set your mind on the things above. φρονεῖτε is wider in its sense than ζητέω. It embraces, as Meyer says, “the whole practical bent of thought and disposition.””

<sup>5</sup> A.T. Robertson, *Word Pictures in the New Testament Vol. 4* (Nashville: Broadman Press, 1931), 500. “It does matter what we think and we are responsible for our thoughts. *Not on the things that are upon the earth (mi ta epi tis gis)*. Paul does not mean that we should never think the things upon the earth, but that these should not be our aim, our goal, our master. The Christian has to keep his feet upon the earth, but his head in the heavens. He must be heavenly-minded here on earth and so help to make earth like heaven.”

<sup>6</sup> John MacArthur, *Colossians and Philemon* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1992), 128. “The things above refers to the heavenly realm and hones in on the spiritual values that characterize Christ, such as tenderness, kindness, meekness, patience, wisdom, forgiveness, strength, purity, and love.”

<sup>7</sup> F.F Bruce, *The Epistles to the Colossians, Philemon and Ephesians* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans, 1993), 134. What, then, are the practical implications of being raised with Christ? In the first place, believers have now no private life of their own. Their life is the life of Christ, maintained in being by him at God's right hand and shared by him with all his people. Their

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interests must therefore be his interests. Instead of waiting until the last day to receive the resurrection life, those who have been raised with Christ possess it here and now. The new creation—the “regeneration”—has already begun in them. Spiritually—that is to say, in Christ—they belong already to the age to come and enjoy its life. Aim then at what is above, says Paul; set your minds on that and let it give character to your outlook on everything. The Gnostics also believed in aiming at what was above. They were seriously concerned with living on a higher plane than this mundane one. But Paul has in mind a higher plane than theirs. Go in for the higher things (he says)—higher things than the principalities and powers which dominate the planetary spheres, for Christ has ascended far above these. Don’t let your ambitions be earthbound, set on transitory and inferior objects. Don’t look at life and the universe from the standpoint of these lower planes; look at them from Christ’s exalted standpoint. Judge everything by the standards of that new creation to which you now belong, not by those of the old order to which you have said a final farewell.

<sup>8</sup> Albrecht Oepke, “κρυπτῶ” in the *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament Vol. 3.*, Gerhard Kittel Ed., (Grand Rapids, William B. Eerdmans, 1981), 976. In Christ all the hidden treasures of wisdom and knowledge are present, Col, 2:3; cf. Is. 45:3; Pm. 2:3 f. Hence those who preach the Gospel, even though their message be offence and folly to the natural man, proclaim God’s wisdom in a mystery, the hidden wisdom which God ordained before all eternity for the glorifying of believers. None of the rulers of this world recognized it. There applies to them the saying which Is written ( 988) that no eye has seen nor ear heard, nor has it entered the heart of man, what God has prepared for those who love Him, IC. 2:7 ff. It is no accident that such lines of thought are always found in Paul when he gets to grips with vaunting ideas of wisdom and *gnosis*. What he wants to say is that in so far as the concern of this frame of mind is justifiable it finds its fulfillment in Christ. One may thus understand why the mode of expression is colored by the reference Paul’s view, however, is primarily rooted in the OT. There is steep line of ascent from the sayings of the Prophets, the Psalms, and the WI; literature (— 969) to what the apostle says about the hidden wisdom of Above all, his view is Christian. The spiritual knowledge of hidden depends upon the divine plan of salvation historically fulfilled in Christ.

<sup>9</sup> Robertson, 500. “No hellish burglar can break that combination.”

<sup>10</sup> Murray J. Harris, *Colossians and Philemon* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans, 1991), 141. “The phrase ἡ ζωὴ ὑμῶν is in exegetical apposition to οὐκ ἔστιν ἡ ζωὴ ὑμῶν, and ζωὴ is nominative in agreement with ἡ ζωὴ ὑμῶν. Generally appositional nouns are in the same case (which may be any case) but there is a gen. of apposition where the two subst. are different cases (cf. BDF §§ 268, 271; R 398- 400; T 206). ζωὴ has the because a noun followed by a dependent pers. pron. (here ὑμῶν) is normally art. (although an appos. noun is in any case often art.). Tr.: “when Christ, who is your life, appears...” (NIV), or “when Christ is revealed—and he is life—you too...” (JB). The life of Christians is Christ, as well as being “hidden with Christ” (v. 3). It “is” Christ, not in the sense that Christ’s life in heaven can be equated with believers’ spiritual life on earth or that Church is the resurrection body of Christ, but in the sense that Christ is source, center, and goal of the individual and corporate lives of believers (cf. 1 Cor. 8:6; Gal. 2:2(1); Phil. 1:21; Cal. 1:16).”

<sup>11</sup> J.B. Lightfoot, *St. Paul’s Epistles to the Colossians and to Philemon* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1959), 210. “The veil which now shrouds your higher life from others, and even partly from

yourselves, will then be withdrawn. The world which persecutes, despises, ignores now, will then be blinded with the dazzling glory of the revelation." (Quoted by MacArthur)

<sup>12</sup> Harris, 141. "evn might denote accompanying circumstances ("attended by glory"), or it could be instrumental ("[clothed] with glory," *Zervick, Analysis* 452) or locative ("in glory" = "glorified" or "in glorified bodies"; cf. I Cor. 15:43; Phil. 3:21). It is not certain whether what is referred to is God's glory (cf. Rom. 5:2), Christ's glory ("and share his glory," GNB, taking evn as equivalent to *ecbatic eij*; cf. 2 Thess. 2:14), or that of believers ("in all your glory," JB; cf. 2 Tim. 2:10), but the context favors the second alternative, *su.n auvtw/l* means "along with him" at his appearance (cf. Rom. 8:17), or "in his train" since he lives in heaven in a "body of glory" (Phil. 3:20-21) as the paradigm for believers' resurrection transformation (1 Cor. 15:20, 23, 49)."