

**YOU ARE
COMPLETE
in
HIM.**
COLOSSIANS 2:10, NIV

A new creation focus through Colossians ...

Raised up with Christ

One of the great challenges for Christians is to see themselves as Christ sees them. The god of this world — Satan — is doing everything he can to have the saints of God think lowly of themselves; if he can keep their picture of themselves in the gutter, he can keep stomping on them. But Jesus has called His sheep out of this world, and those who hear His voice truly learn to walk by faith rather than by sight. They learn to see themselves in light of the gospel. They are disciplined by the word to understand where they really are in the realm of faith. They are step by step

counseled by God's sacred script to focus on Jesus in glory, and to experience the transformation of character from the inside out.

- **If then ...** — The Holy Spirit, through the apostle Paul, is willing to place a bit of a challenge before those making the claim of being followers of Christ. "If then you have been raised up with Christ," comes the friendly provocation, "keep seeking the things above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God" (Colossians 3:1). The challenge here is not "if then you have been buried with Christ," although that would be plausible. The direction here is focused on being "raised up with Christ." The teaching of the scripture is that the sinful man is buried with Christ in immersion, but more importantly, that the new self is raised up with Christ, resurrected to walk in newness of life. The apostle Paul words his statement in such a manner as to provoke thought on the significance of new self in Christ. "If then ..." makes the thoughtful individual question himself, saying, "Was I really raised up with Christ when I was immersed? Is this my thought process, or am I still locked into thinking I am still of this earth, that I still am 'from below'?"

- **Raised up** — As important as it is for the old sinful self to be buried with Christ in the waters of immersion, it is more important that it be recognized that the new self has been raised up with Christ. It is worth reaffirming that "as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, so we too might walk in newness of life" (Romans 6:4). It is of note that "if we have become united with Him in the likeness of His death, certainly we

shall be also in the likeness of His resurrection," that likeness of His resurrection being the new life in Christ (Romans 6:5). As Christ is now in His glorified state "dead to sin and alive to God," saints are to "even so consider yourselves to be dead to sin and alive to God in Christ Jesus" — Christians are to picture themselves by faith as Christ is in His glorified state (Romans 6:11). God, affirmed Paul in his epistle to the Ephesians, "raised us up with Him, and seated us with Him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus" (Ephesians 2:6). By faith, then, the disciple of Christ is seated on the throne in heaven with Christ, being a part of the "royal priesthood"!!!

- **Things above** — Where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God, there are no problems. Jesus is beyond the trials and temptations of earth. He is not going to be assassinated, or bribed, or pressured. His position is secure, and His word is sure. The saint, then, is exhorted to make this Christ in glory his focus, to "keep seeking the things above." Every day, so long as his body treads on the surface of earth, the disciple of Christ needs to keep looking to the things above!

Spiritually speaking, the faithful follower of Christ is already living in heaven. Earthly speaking, he is occupying space on the surface of planet earth. But in the realm of the unseen, in the realm that the scripture reveals, the saint is ushered into the very holy of holies, into heaven itself, seated with Christ on the throne, in the awesome presence of the Father. Hence, if he walks by faith rather than by sight, he fixes his attention on the things above where Christ is!

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JAY WILSON