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*A summary of Christian belief and practices from the shot letter to the Colossians*

*Someone had said: "The epistles in New Testament are divine commentaries of the gospels"*

**P**aul, writing by divine inspiration, spent considerable time teaching about the responsibilities and actions we must do as followers of Christ. He also dedicated extensive information in most of his letters including Colossians about salvation. He always emphasized: "Salvation is a gift of God." "Jesus Christ died on the cross for sinners." "He paid the full price of our redemption." The Apostle wrote to the Colossians and to every Christian of every age, *"When you were dead in your sins and in the uncircumcision of your flesh, God made you alive with Christ. He forgave us all our sins, having canceled the charge of our legal indebtedness, which stood against us and condemned us; he has taken it away, nailing it to the cross. And having disarmed the powers and authorities, he made a public spectacle of them, triumphing over them by the cross."*<sup>1</sup>

In order to humanity figure out God's redemptive plan, he ensured that Christians could understand their spiritual conditions prior conversion: *"they were spiritually dead."* Our spirit died because, we are Adam's descendant. In the garden our earthly parents committed a spiritual suicide when they decided to believe in the devil and to discredit God's words. Paul pointed out that the only way to revive our spirit was through the work of Jesus Christ. How this could be possible? He wrote in the first chapter, answering this question, *"Once you were alienated from God and were enemies in your minds because of your evil behavior. But now he has reconciled you by Christ's physical body through death to present you holy in his sight, without blemish and free from accusation... and through him to reconcile to himself all things, whether things on earth or things in heaven, by making peace through his blood, shed on the cross."*<sup>2</sup>

Jesus, being the Son of God and the son of Adam was the only one who could save us. His divine and his human nature could make him the mediator between God and men. He made possible the reconciliation between the fallen humanity with its Creator for he was the only perfect being that ever lived on this world. Noah, Abraham, Moses, Elijah, John, the Baptist, Mary, Paul, neither you nor I could go to the cross. We were sinners. Therefore, the

Messiah fully covered all transgressions and paid the total price to rescue humanity from eternal damnation. He gave his own life as the ransom, *“having canceled the charge of our legal indebtedness, which stood against us and condemned us; he has taken it away, nailing it to the cross.”*<sup>1</sup>

Jesus dealt with our sins; and got our pardoned, *“In whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins.”* *“He forgave us all our sins,”*<sup>3</sup>

Jesus conquered our enemy, the one who had lied to Eve in the Garden of Eden. Scriptures call him Satan, the old serpent, the liar, the murderer, the adversary, the deceiver, among other adjectives. In this short epistle through the person of Paul, the Holy Spirit reveals to Christians Jesus’s victory over darkness and its satanic powers. On the cross, our Savior had destroyed the works of the devil, had neutralized his weapons as He shouted to the Father, to the angels, to humanity and to the devil and his demons: *“It is finished!”*<sup>4</sup> With this short statement Jesus made sure that every creature (even in hell<sup>5</sup>) would know that he had fulfilled his mission: he overcame the world, the devil and sin! Paul stated, *“And having disarmed the powers and authorities, he made a public spectacle of them, triumphing over them by the cross.”*<sup>6</sup>

The accuser lost his arguments against us. He, who denounces to God our sins and transgressions, lost all his allegations because Jesus bailed us out, *“by Christ’s physical body through death to present you holy in his sight, without blemish and free from accusation.”*<sup>7</sup> Christians are spotless and absolved since the righteousness of Jesus was credited to them. Hallelujah!

Christians were transferred from the cursed kingdom of Satan, with its lies, corruptions, spiritual bondage, destruction, hatred, to the blessing kingdom of peace, righteousness, joy, freedom, truth and victory, *“and giving joyful thanks to the Father, who has qualified you to share in the inheritance of his holy people in the kingdom of light. For he has rescued us from the dominion of darkness and brought us into the kingdom of the Son he loves.”*<sup>8</sup>

Salvation was a work of God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit, without any human assistance, as we were unable to help. Salvation is a gift of God (it is free!). It is available to anyone who humbly bows before the Lordship of Christ Jesus, leaving behind any religious works, receiving forgiveness and eternal salvation through the death and resurrection of Jesus, the Lamb of God that was slain on Calvary.

However, there is an important conditional statement in the same letter with particular actions and disciplines that Christians must do:

a) We must continue in the faith and hope that we have on the gospel:

*"if you continue in your faith, established and firm, and do not move from the hope held out in the gospel. This is the gospel that you heard and that has been proclaimed to every creature under heaven, and of which I, Paul, have become a servant."*<sup>9</sup>

b) We are required to pursue holiness and get rid of sinful passions and desires:

*"Put to death, therefore, whatever belongs to your earthly nature: sexual immorality, impurity, lust, evil desires and greed, which is idolatry. Because of these, the wrath of God is coming. You used to walk in these ways, in the life you once lived. But now you must also rid yourselves of all such things as these: anger, rage, malice, slander, and filthy language from your lips. Do not lie to each other, since you have taken off your old self with its practices and have put on the new self, which is being renewed in knowledge in the image of its Creator. Here there is no Gentile or Jew, circumcised or uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave or free, but Christ is all, and is in all."*<sup>10</sup>

c) We are commanded to take hold of the available divine gifts to live a godly life:

*"Therefore, as God's chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience. 13 Bear with each other and forgive one another if any of you has a grievance against someone. Forgive as the Lord forgave you. And over all these virtues put on love, which binds them all together in perfect unity. Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, since as members of one body you were called to peace."*<sup>11</sup>

d) We are required to study God's word, praising with a grateful heart and be part of a Christian assembly:

*"And be thankful. Let the message of Christ dwell among you richly as you teach and admonish one another with all wisdom through psalms, hymns, and songs from the Spirit, singing to God with gratitude in your hearts."*<sup>12</sup>

e) We are called to serve and glorify Jesus in whatever action or deeds we do among our family, working place, school and ministry:

*"And whatever you do, whether in word or deed, do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him."*<sup>13</sup>

f) We are requested to pray. To love, worship and develop our relationship with God through prayer. To intercede for God's people who are proclaiming the gospel into the world:

*“Devote yourselves to prayer, being watchful and thankful. And pray for us, too, that God may open a door for our message, so that we may proclaim the mystery of Christ, for which I am in chains. Pray that I may proclaim it clearly, as I should.”<sup>14</sup>*

g) We have to remember that God had called other believers to pray for ourselves. In the midst of our crises, difficulties, skepticism, illness, or any other spiritual battles that we face, someone is interceding on our behalf:

*“Epaphras, who is one of you and a servant of Christ Jesus, sends greetings. He is always wrestling in prayer for you, that you may stand firm in all the will of God, mature and fully assured.”<sup>15</sup>*

h) When is possible we should proclaim the message to outsiders with love and wisdom:

*“Be wise in the way you act toward outsiders; make the most of every opportunity. 6 Let your conversation be always full of grace, seasoned with salt, so that you may know how to answer everyone.”<sup>16</sup>*

May the Lord bless you all.

To Him be the glory!

1. Colossians 2: 13-15
2. Colossians 1: 21-22-20
3. Colossians: 1:14 Colossians 2: 13
4. John 19: 30
5. *“For Christ also suffered once for sins, the just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh but made alive by the Spirit, by whom also He went and preached to the spirits in prison, who formerly were disobedient, when once the Divine longsuffering waited in the days of Noah.” I Peter 3: 19-20 “For if God did not spare angels when they sinned, but sent them to hell, putting them in chains of darkness to be held for judgment.” II Peter 2: 4 “And the angels who did not keep their positions of authority but abandoned their proper dwelling—these he has kept in darkness, bound with everlasting chains for judgment on the great Day.” Jude 6*
6. Colossians 2: 15
7. Colossians 1: 22
8. Colossians 1: 12-13
9. Colossians 1: 23
10. Colossians 3: 5-11
11. Colossians 3: 12-15
12. Colossians 3: 15-16
13. Colossians 3: 17
14. Colossians 4: 2-4
15. Colossians 4: 12
16. Colossians 4: 5-6

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