

Col. 3:11, "Where there is neither Greek nor Jew, circumcision nor uncircumcision, barbarian, Scythian, bond nor free: but Christ is all, and in all"

INTRODUCTION

This scripture is in the context of a discussion of the two worlds and the two sorts of ^{persons} ~~manhood~~ -- the old and the new.

In the old world and the old ^{Jew} ~~man~~ there are many things that are not in the new world and the new ^{creation} ~~man~~, and in the new world and new ^{person} ~~man~~ there are many things that are not in the old world and old ~~man~~. They are radically different, and the church will never make a great impact on the modern world until these differences are recovered. One of the criticisms of the world today of Christians, is "I don't see any difference in the way the Christian lives from the way anyone else lives."

I. What there is NOT in the New Person in Christ, and in the new world of the Christian.)

A. There are no National Distinctions.

"Where there is neither Greek nor Jew."

Jesus is a man, indeed a Jewish man.

But in the broadest sense He is neither Jew nor Greek, or Gentile. We see in him no restrictive nationality; and our peculiar nationality sinks before union with Him.

From the standpoint of the Greeks, all others were barbarians. There were grades among the barbarians, and the Scythians came at the bottom of the ladder as barbarians of the lowest type. For example, the cultured and educated Egyptians were still barbarians to the Greeks.

Jews divided all the world into Jews and Greeks and divided the Romans like the Greeks into Greeks and barbarians, the privileged and the unprivileged classes. To the Jews, Greek in contrast with Jew means merely Gentile. The word "barbarian" probably originally meant one who spoke an inarticulate, unintelligible, stammering language.

Christians would do well to use "brother" instead of the slang, racial slurs referring to people of other languages and cultures.

(religious traditions)

B. There are no Ceremonial Distinctions: There is neither circumcision nor uncircumcision."

The typical ceremonial separation is removed.

Both Jewish Christian and Gentile Christian are united in one body by the cross.

C. There are no Social Distinctions: "There is neither bond nor free."

The Roman Empire had millions of slaves, how many no one knows for sure. Many of these slaves were captives taken in war and were more cultured and better educated than their masters. Yet they were treated as cattle and other property.

A few were set free for a price, and those set free were called "freedmen," meaning that they were once slaves. Some think that Luke in the N.T. might have been a former slave who had been set free.

But many early Christians were still slaves of some human masters, even though Christ had broken their spiritual bonds of sin, and his gospel had broken down all class distinctions. In the Christian church master and slave met, worshipped, and prayed together, and the church offices were open to slaves. Christ brought a ray of hope to slaves, to women, to foreigners, to the oppressed, and to all who had real Christian faith.

Today slavery has almost disappeared as an institution outside of certain Moslem and pagan lands, but we still see oppression and discrimination of various kinds, and it is all a disgrace when practiced or condoned by Christians whether inside or outside the church!

It might have been that in Colossae and Galatia the contempt of the Greek Christian for every race but his own was threatening to work havoc in the church. The church is one place in which the best educated and most polished thinker, the wealthiest and most cultured person, should have no pride of place, or dominating influence, over his sincere Christian brother or sister, who may be without much

~~this is true even though he be slave~~

~~formal education, or wealth, or social polish, but who has nevertheless developed the humble virtues and graces that are inherent in the Christian faith.~~

We are able through divine grace to see that:

These distinctions are transient;

They are superficial

They are of ~~small~~ value

They are non-existent in the spiritual realm.

D. In Gal. 3:28 Paul makes a similar list of non-existent distinctions in Christ, and there he adds that there are no sex distinctions in Christ:

"neither male nor female."

Paul had fought his battle for Gentile freedom against the Judaizers, and had won it. He glories in the breaking down of the middle wall of partition between Jew and Greek in Christ, as for example in Ephesians 2. He boldly proclaims to the world that both "Greek and Jew" and all classifications of people are one in Christ, and that all distinctions are invalid in the church.

II. What there IS in the New Man that is NOT in the OLD MAN:

"Christ is all" in many senses.

A. Christ is all our culture.

In Him we excell the best in previous cultures.

B. Christ is all our Revelation.

We glory in Him even as the Jew gloried in receiving the oracles of God, and for greater reasons. In the inspired scriptures as God's *Bible* revelation for us we have the mightiest, the loveliest, the best of all books, to guide us in our glooms, to prompt us in our perplexities, to help us in our hazards, to direct us in our doubts, to be "a lamp unto our feet and a light unto our path." It is the pilgrim's staff, the pilot's compass, the soldier's sword!

And much more besides!

Nevertheless, we do not claim that the Bible in the current translations in our language is a perfect or infallible book. Any book touched by human hands, and copied and translated by human beings so many times cannot be absolutely perfect or infallible. Even if we had the original manuscripts, which we do not,

we ~~would~~ still have the problem of different interpretations.

We do not worship a Holy Book;

we worship the Living God.

He alone is absolutely perfect and infallible.

We DO have a perfect Savior, and as one statement of faith says it, "The criterion by which the Bible is to be interpreted is Jesus Christ.

The Bible is the written Word about the living Word.

Therefore, any interpretation of a given passage in the Bible must be made in the light of God's revelation in Jesus Christ and his teachings."

- (C. Christ is all our natural traditions.
He is more to us than the freshest and
brightest ideal which cross the mind of the
"Barbarian.")

D. Christ is all our unconquerableness and liberty
No one has such boundless
independence as we find in Him.

Christ is indeed the kind of a Savior which the
underdeveloped nations need:

"He is a path, if any be misled;

He is a robe, of any naked be;

If any chance to hunger, He is bread;

If any be a bondman, He is free;

If any be but weak, how strong is He!

To dead men life He is, to sick men health,

To blind men sight, and to the needy wealth;

A pleasure without loss,

a treasure without stealth."

[-- Giles Fletcher,]

contemporary of Shakespeare and the King James
Bible translators, [and author of Christ's Victory
and Triumph.]

E. Paul sums up his argument with the packed
phrase that "Christ is all, and in all."

1. Christ compasses everything and is to be
allowed his place everywhere and in everything.

2. Lightfoot, in his study of St. Paul's Epistles to the Colossians and to Philemon says "Christ occupies the whole sphere of human life and permeates all its developments."

3. There are no reservations or national boundaries or corners of life from which Christ is excluded. There is no room here for intellectual pride, or condescension of the wealthy, or social arrogance. The Christ who can make freemen out of slaves, and gentlemen out of pagans, and saints out of murderers and criminals, can completely transform anyone, anyone at all, and make him or her a new person, worthy of the most responsible position in any church or denomination or nation.

In the simplest terms the expression "Christ is all in all" means that Christ must be absolutely preeminent. The relationship between believers and Christ transcends all earthly relationships and annihilates all barriers between human beings.

CHRIST IS ALL

I ENTERED ONCE A HOME OF CARE
WHERE AGE AND POVERTY WERE THERE,
YET PEACE AND JOY WITHAL.

I ASKED A LONELY WIDOW WHENCE
HER HELPLESS WIDOWHOOD'S DEFENSE;
SHE TOLD ME, "CHRIST IS ALL;
CHRIST IS ALL, ALL IN ALL;
YES, CHRIST IS ALL IN ALL."

I STOOD BESIDE A DYING BED
WHERE LAY A CHILD WITH ACHING HEAD,
WAITING FOR JESUS' CALL.

I MARKED HIS SMILE; 'T WAS SWEET AS MAY;
AND AS HIS SPIRIT PASSED AWAY,
HE WHISPERED, "CHRIST IS ALL."

I DREAMPT THAT HOARY TIME HAD FLED,
THAT EARTH AND SEA GAVE UP THEIR DEAD,
AND FIRE CONSUMED THIS BALL.

THEY SAW THE CHURCH'S RANSOMED THROG
AND HEARD THE BURDEN OF THEIR SONG;
'T WAS, "CHRIST IS ALL IN ALL,
YES, CHRIST IS ALL IN ALL."

CHRIST IS ALL

I entered once a home of care
 Where age and poverty were there,
 Yet peace and joy withal.

I asked a lonely widow whence
 Her helpless widowhood's defense;

She told me, "Christ is all;
 Christ is all, all in all;
 Yes, Christ is all in all."

I stood beside a dying bed
 Where lay a child with aching head,
 Waiting for Jesus' call;
 I marked his smile; 'Twas sweet as May;
 And as his spirit passed away,
 He whispered, "Christ is all."

I dreamt that hoary time had fled,
 That earth and sea gave up their dead,
 And fire consumed this ball;
 They saw the church's ransomed throng
 And heard the burden of their song;
 'Twas, "Christ is all in all,
 Yes, Christ is all in all."

CHRIST IS ALL IN ALL
 SHE TOLD ME "CHRIST IS ALL;
 HER HELPLESS WIDOWHOOD'S DEFENSE;
 I ASKED A LONELY WIDOW WHENCE
 YEACE AND JOY WITHAL
 WHERE AGE AND POVERTY WERE THERE
 I ENTERED ONCE A HOME OF CARE

CHRIST IS ALL

CONCLUSION - See Rev. Cy 6-27-93

- (What a mighty span of steel and concrete now links the southern tip of the Pinellas county peninsula with the northern tip of Manatee county. This span is the costliest and most modern and beautiful of its type in the country, and possibly, (over) for a time, in the world. But--at what costlier sacrifice did God span a mightier gulf at Calvary! And "Mercy there was great." Through this mercy and grace the gulf was spanned over all kinds of differences between all kinds of people over all time. What a wonderful Savior!)

In view of all this let us ask: Is any distance too great to go--for Him--who went to the Cross for us? Is any burden too heavy to bear--for Him--who bore the heavy weight of the world's sins on His heart? Is any obligation too heavy to assume--for Him--who spanned the gap of the centuries and of all eternity for us? Isn't it time now to say: "I count all things but loss--that I may know him and the power of his resurrection and the fellowship of his suffering? Make this commitment while we sing.

1-11-87, Pasadena B.C., D# 48 "CHRIST. ALL"
9-6-87, Max. Pt. B.C., St. Pete
3-20-87 (w/captured by Christ) Max. Hts. B.C.
6-27-93 HCC St. Pete

The Sunshine Skyway Bridge, which I can see from where I LIVE is Florida's first suspension bridge.

It spans Tampa Bay and connects Pinellas and Manatee counties. It was modeled after the Brotonne Bridge over the Seine River in France.

It is over four miles long and rises 183 feet above Tampa Bay. ITS CABLES ARE PAINTED YELLOW AND ARE beautifully illuminated at night.

CONCLUSION

The Sunshine skyway Bridge, which I can see from where I live, is Florida's first suspension bridge. It is the costliest and most modern and beautiful bridge of its type in the country. It was modeled after the Brotonne Bridge over the Seine River in France. It is over four miles long and rises 183 feet above Tampa Bay where great ships come and go to and from the Gulf of Mexico, the Caribbean and beyond. Its yellow cables are beautifully illuminated at night.

Many have had their breath taken away and their thoughts shaken at the first sight of this great bridge towering so majestically over the water. What a mighty span of steel and concrete links the southern tip of the city of St. Petersburg with the northern tip of Manatee county and other points south in the Sunshine State! Great genius was required in the mind of the architect who drew the plan and specifications for this great bridge which spans such a great gulf of water. But greater far was the love of God who conceived his great plan of salvation for lost people, as the hymn writer said:

"Oh, the love that drew salvation's plan!

Oh, the grace that brought it down to man!

Oh, the mighty gulf that God did span At Calvary!"

And "mercy there was great, and grace was free."

With the sacrifice of the Blood of Jesus Christ, the costliest sacrifice in the universe,

and through God's grace and mercy,

did the Lord of Glory span the great gulf over all kinds of differences between all kinds of people

over all the world over all time!

Hallelujah! What a Savior!

In view of all this let us ask: Is any distance too great to go—for Him—who went to the Cross for us? Is any burden too heavy to bear—for Him—who bore the heavy weight of the world's sins on his heart? Is any obligation too heavy to assume—for Him—who spanned the gulf of the centuries and of all eternity for us? Isn't it time now to say: I count all things but loss—that I may know him and the power of his resurrection and the fellowship of his suffering, and make him all in all in my life. Make this commitment now while we stand and sing.