

# *The Crystallization*

## The Allotted Portion in Colossians Fulfilling the Will of God

Colossians is a book concerning God's will. We need all spiritual wisdom and understanding in order to have the full knowledge of the will of God. The will of God mentioned in Colossians is the eternal will of God, the great will of God. It is related not to the things in our daily life but to God's purpose, God's intention. The will of God is in Christ, concentrated in Christ, and for Christ. Christ is everything in the will of God. We must realize this with spiritual wisdom and with our understanding in a clear, renewed mind.

Colossians speaks of the mystery of God in relation to the will of God. Christ is not only the expression, the image, of God but also the reality of God, the very embodiment of God. He is God Himself, and He is man. He is the Creator, and He is a creature. He accomplished redemption, and He is the Firstborn from the dead. He is the Head of the church, and He is even the Body. Christ is everything! God has given only Christ to us. All other things are simply shadows. Christ is life to us. He is very intimate, tender, subjective, and near. According to Colossians, the will of God is to make Christ everything to us, to give us Christ as our portion, our life, and our everything. By the mercy and grace of God, we have received Christ as the all-inclusive One. After we receive Him, we must walk in Him as our sphere and by Him as our means. We must learn to know Christ in this way. This is a matter of living in the kingdom.

The kingdom of God is the reign of God, the rule of God, a divine sphere for God to work out His plan, a realm where God can exercise His authority to accomplish His will and intentions. The kingdom of God revealed throughout the New Testament enables us to understand the apostle Paul's marvelous word in Colossians that God has delivered us out of the authority of darkness and transferred us into the kingdom of the Son of His love. To be delivered out of the authority of darkness is to be delivered from the devil, Satan, who has the might of death. We have been delivered from Satan and his kingdom by the death of Christ on the cross and by the life of Christ in resurrection. God has delivered us from Satan's authority over us by the victorious Christ. To be transferred into the kingdom of the Son of the Father's love is to be transferred into the Son, who is life to us. The Son in resurrection is now the life-giving Spirit, and He rules us in His resurrection life with

love. When we live by the Son as our life in resurrection, we are living in His kingdom, enjoying Him in the Father's love. The church life today is the kingdom of the Son of the Father's love, which is as delightful to God the Father as the Son of God is. God the Father loves the delightful part of the kingdom just as much as He loves His delightful pre-eminent Son.

In presenting the items of the Son's preeminence in Colossians, Paul begins by first referring to Christ as the allotted portion of the saints in the light. The allotted portion, signified by the promised good land in the Old Testament and Christ in the New Testament, subsumes all the items of His preeminence in Colossians and, thus, is rightfully positioned in the sequence of Paul's presentation. As the allotted portion, He should have the first place in all things. As the allotted portion, He is the mysterious embodiment of God. As the allotted portion, He is the Head and constituent of the church. As the allotted portion, He is the source of the life and hope of the saints both now and in the future. And as the allotted portion, He is the realization of all positive things.

The functioning of the members who have been allotted a portion of the land is for the building of the temple, a corporate manifestation of Christ on earth. The goal of the possession of the good land in the Old Testament was the building of a dwelling place for God on earth, fulfilling His desire in type for image and dominion as expressed in Genesis 1:26. In their enjoyment of the good land, the children of Israel realized and developed the unique features of their allotments. In the New Testament the realization and development of the unique features of the allotted portions of Christ, especially in the meetings of the church, build up the church as the dwelling place of God.

Paul concludes his Epistle to the Colossians by illustrating the living of his co-workers in the light according to their allotted portion of Christ as measured out by the God of measure. This reinforces the possibility of experiencing Christ as the allotted portion of the saints in the light, the One who solves the many problems presented in Colossians.

Paul waged a battle in Colossians against a mysticism composed

of both Gentile and Jewish elements in the form of Gnostic philosophy and Mosaic ordinances, which brought the saints in Colossae into various ascetic practices and the worship of angels and subjected them to regulations concerning circumcision, the Sabbath, various religious feasts, and what was acceptable to eat and drink. This influence of human culture displaced Christ as the preeminent One in the church and led the believers into living according to human traditions, keeping them under the authority of darkness in the earthly sphere of ritualistic Jewish religion and empty Greek philosophy. Paul's response was to open to them the highest revelation of Christ in the entire New Testament, unveiling item after item of His supremacy in order to ground the believers in the incomparable divine truths concerning the person and work of Christ as a safeguard against the encroaching deceptions of human philosophy and religion. Paul's struggle was not only for the saints to have a proper knowledge of the preeminent Christ but also for them to enter into a living in which the all-inclusive and extensive Christ replaced every element of culture.

Colossians illustrates this replacement by first speaking of Christ being the reality and fulfillment of the allotted portion of the promised land for the mutual, eternal satisfaction of God and man. Colossians then identifies the organic process by which the church is built up to express and represent Christ as the good land. Colossians correlates receiving Christ with walking in Him as the land and then juxtaposes a construction term, *built*, with an organic term, *rooted*. This implies that the building of the church is not a mere organizational effort; rather, it is an organic process that includes being established in the faith. God's people are planted in the soil, the good land, and through the life processes contained in Christ as the allotted portion, are reconstituted, shaped, coordinated, and built up to be a living, growing, and fruit-producing expression of the all-inclusive Christ as the allotted portion of the saints. **ATC**

by the Editors

### The Position of Colossians in the Heart of the Bible

Just as there is a heart in our physical body, so there is a heart in the Bible also. The heart of the Bible is not the book of Genesis or the book of Revelation, nor even the Gospels. It is a cluster of four books: Galatians, Ephesians, Philippians, and Colossians. These books were, of course, written according to the inspiration of the Holy Spirit. Furthermore, their sequence in the arrangement of the New Testament books is most significant. If you read the New Testament carefully, you will realize that these four books stand out. Before Galatians is the book of 2 Corinthians. There seems to be no connection between 2 Corinthians and Galatians. However, as we read through the New Testament, we sense that Galatians is the beginning of something new and that this book is connected to Ephesians, Philippians, and Colossians. In particular, Ephesians and Colossians are sister books. When we turn from Colossians to 1 Thessalonians, we also sense that there is no connection between these books. Hence, Galatians, Ephesians, Philippians, and Colossians are a cluster of books that make up the very heart of the Bible.

The essential subject of these four books is Christ and the church. We have seen that the church is composed of human beings who live in society. As such an entity, it is difficult for the church to stay away from the influence of culture. For this reason, in these books concerning Christ and the church, two of them, Galatians and Colossians, show the damage caused by the law, Jewish religion, and other substitutes for Christ such as asceticism, mysticism, and Gnosticism.

We have pointed out that in Colossians Christ is revealed to the uttermost, much more than in Galatians. In Galatians Paul speaks of Christ being revealed in us, of Christ living in us, and of Christ being formed in us. But in Colossians he uses a number of special terms for Christ: the portion of the saints, the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation. In this short book, one aspect of Christ after another is unfolded. Therefore, Colossians reveals that Christ is profound and all-inclusive. The all-inclusive Christ transcends our understanding. Our need is to be infused, saturated, and permeated with Him until in our experience Christ is everything to us: our food, our drink, our feasts, our holy days, our Sabbath, our new moon, our everything. We must not allow anything to replace Christ or to be a substitute for Him. This is the central point of Colossians. Whereas Galatians reveals that Christ is versus religion and the law, Colossians reveals that Christ is versus everything because He Himself is the reality of every positive thing.

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