

## PREFACE

For one more time let's read through our paragraph to get the whole context.

**Read Colossians 1:9-14.**

[refer to outline]

So far, as Paul has detailed to the Colossians the content of his ongoing prayers for their well-being and continued maturing in the faith, we have discussed his desire that they

- be filled with the knowledge of His will;
- that this knowledge would be based not on earthly, but spiritual wisdom and understanding;
- that their daily walk of faith would be in accord with the Lord, pleasing Him by being productive and maturing within the sphere of *His* knowledge;
- so that they might attain steadfastness, or endurance in every situation placed before them, and patience with everyone around them.

Now Paul places the capstone on this list with v12.

## v12

Last week I pointed out how some translations place the "joy" with v11, and others use it to modify v12. It is a fair toss-up, but to my ears it seems to flow with greater ease with v12. But one way to have the best of both is to combine the thoughts in vs11-12:

*The Lord strengthens us with a power based on the incredible might of His glory so that in every trial we would not just endure patiently, but even be filled with joyful thanksgiving to the Father.*

Isn't this what James speaks of at the beginning of his letter?

**Read James 1:2-4.**

*joyously giving thanks to the Father*

Few things set apart believers from the rest of the world more than this characteristic. To be honest, it often remains a sporadically attained goal in the individual, but just the fact that we *want* to live this way—*joyously* giving thanks when faced with trials and trying times—and believe that it is possible, marks believers as dwelling outside the philosophies of this world. Indeed, what better way to demonstrate that we are living by "spiritual wisdom and understanding," walking "in a manner worthy of the Lord" (vs9-10) than to rejoice in circumstances that require patience and endurance and give thanks for them.

In v12 Paul turns a corner. Note the pronouns earlier in this passage:

- v9: that **you** may be filled
- v10: so that **you** will walk

From v9 through the beginning of v12 Paul has been itemizing his desire for the Colossians. I don't want to put too fine a point on this, since manuscripts and translations differ, but but look at the pronouns now.

- v12: who has qualified **us** [exception: **ESV** ("you")]
- v13: He rescued **us** and transferred **us**
- v14: in whom **we** have redemption

Why the change in pronouns? V12 is a transition from how Paul wants the Colossians to live (future expectation) to what God the Father has already done for them (past, present, and ongoing). So, of course, Paul includes himself, because what the Lord has done for the Colossians He has also done for the apostle.

*...who has qualified us...*

We give thanks to the Father because He is the one making all this possible. He has *qualified* us:

**qualified** = *hikanosanti* = from <G2425> (*hikanos*); to **enable**, i.e. *qualify* :- **make able** (meet); make sufficient or competent.

The tense of this verb means that it was accomplished once, in the past; it is done, finished—i.e., at conversion. And now we need not read between the lines; Paul is explicit that the Father did this for us—*because we could not do it for ourselves*. To what purpose?

*to share in the inheritance of the saints in Light.*

My parents were of modest means to begin with, and by the time Mom died, after five years in a nursing home, there was nothing monetary left to inherit. But I of course did inherit *some* things:

- from my dad a disinterest (to say the least) in hunting and fishing—and a thinning pate;
- from Mom a certain rotundity;
- not salvation, but a love for the Lord and His church;
- not least, life itself.

None of these things are necessarily mine by choice, and I did nothing to merit them. But they have been my portion—my inheritance—from the union of their lives.

We have no sufficiency of our own before God. We cannot earn, we cannot buy our way into His family. To put a fine point on it, we cannot even *believe* our way into His family: It is not our belief that saves us; it is the work of God and the sacrifice of Christ Jesus that brings us into His family. *He* is responsible for our birth—our rebirth in Christ. Once there, we have a share in our heavenly Father's inheritance. We join with, and have a share in the inheritance enjoyed by the "saints [holy ones] in Light."

The Greek word translated "inheritance" hearkens back to the bits of wood or stone used to cast lots—to determine the will of the gods (in secular Greek) or God in the Bible. Remember, the settlement of Israel's tribes in the Promised Land—their "inheritance"—was determined by casting lots. We hear this echoed in one of David's psalms.

**Read Psalm 16:5-6.**

So this is ancient, yet meaningful imagery employed by Paul in v12.

And by the way, don't let the word "inheritance" throw this into the future for you. He—God the Father—has done this already. The actions, the benefits accrued to us are already in place. This is not a matter of waiting, of hope; this is a matter of living *right now*.

## Light

Out of all the translations, only the *Updated* NASB—but not the original NASB—capitalizes “Light.” I could find no explanation for this, but we might conjecture that

- the translators did this to suggest that Paul was using “in Light” as he would “in Christ”—i.e., in the sphere or realm of; or
- since the “the” before light is in the text, but optional, perhaps the NASB scholars, interpreting “the light” to be a reference to Christ, left out “the” but covered it by capitalizing—i.e., [the one and only] “Light.”

However, the NIV insertion of “kingdom” is *not* in the text, and has been added by its editors.

The reason the *apostle Paul* used the word “light,” however, is obviously to set up and contrast it to his mention of “darkness” in v13—which, with v14 is a preface to one of the most eloquent and other-worldly descriptions of “His beloved Son” in all Scripture.

## vs13-14

### Read Colossians 1:13-14.

In writing this passage, Paul could have had in mind Israel's exodus—their deliverance from the dark bondage of Egypt to the light of the promised land. (Several key words here in vs12-14 are the same used in God's promise to the Israelites in the Septuagint [[Greek translation of OT](#)]). Or he could have had in mind the Jew's return to the light of Jerusalem from the darkness of Babylon.

But I favor the connection with a scene that would have been fresher in Paul's mind, one in which he narrated for King Agrippa his moment of conversion on the Damascus road. [Please turn to Acts 26](#). V13 in Colossians reads,

He rescued us from the domain of darkness, and transferred us to the kingdom of His beloved Son.

### Read Acts 26:13-18.

...at midday, O King, I saw on the way a light from heaven, brighter than the sun, shining all around me and those who were journeying with me. "And when we had all fallen to the ground, I heard a voice saying to me in the Hebrew dialect, 'Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting Me? It is hard for you to kick against the goads.'

"And I said, 'Who are You, Lord?' And the Lord said, 'I am Jesus whom you are persecuting. But get up and stand on your feet; for this purpose I have appeared to you, to appoint you a minister and a witness not only to the things which you have seen, but also to the things in which I will appear to you; rescuing you from the Jewish people and from the Gentiles, to whom I am sending you, to open their eyes so that they may turn from darkness to light and from the dominion of Satan to God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins and an inheritance among those who have been sanctified by faith in Me.'

And we will benefit by digging a little deeper, beneath the print on the page of this sentence, for there is some strong imagery buried there.

rescued<sup>nasb,niv</sup>, delivered<sup>kjvs,esv</sup> = *rhyomai* (rho'o'-om-ahee) = middle of an obsolete verb, akin to <G4482> (rheo) (through **the idea of a current**; compare <G4511> (rhusis)); **to rush or draw** (for oneself), i.e. *rescue* :- deliver (-er).

And from what did He rescue us?

**domain**<sup>nasb,esv</sup>, **power**<sup>kjvs</sup>, **dominion**<sup>niv</sup> = *exousia* = from <G1832> (exesti) (in the sense of **ability**); *privilege*, i.e. (subject) **force**, *capacity*, *competency*, *freedom*, or (object) *mastery* (concrete *magistrate*, *superhuman*, *potentate*, *token of control*), *delegated influence* :- **authority**, jurisdiction, liberty, **power**, right, **strength**.

I think for most people the word “domain” conjures the idea of a space, an area, real estate. That can be true in this context—although, don’t we, in fact, physically remain in the domain of darkness even though we have been redeemed?

- This word was used by Matthew, in stating that Jesus “was teaching as one having **authority**, and not as their scribes” (Matthew 7:29).
- In John’s vision of the end times he writes, “Blessed and holy is the one who has a part in the first resurrection; over these the second death has no **power**...”
- In the KJV it is more often than not translated “power”; in the NASB, “authority” or “authorities.”

And here, explicitly, it is the domain of

**darkness** = *skotos* = from the base of <G4639> (skia); **shadiness**, i.e. **obscurity** (literal or figurative) :- darkness.

Throughout the Bible—both OT and NT—darkness represents evil and/or sin, while light represents righteousness, purity, holiness.

Even though we physically remain in Satan’s “domain” (i.e., sphere of influence), his influence over us has been if not neutered, greatly diminished. John writes, **You are from God, little children, and have overcome them; because greater is He who is in you than he who is in the world.** (1 John 4:4)

Believers are no longer under Satan’s authority, under his power, because we have been delivered from it. This thought in v13 is expanded in Chapter Two, using the same word.

**Read Colossians 2:13-15.** [“authorities”]

Then God the Father transferred us to the kingdom of His Son.

**transferred**<sup>nasb,esv</sup>, **conveyed**<sup>nkjv</sup>, **translated**<sup>kjv</sup>, **brought**<sup>niv</sup> = *methistemi* = or (L [Cor. 13:2](#)) **methistano**, meth-is-tan'-o; from <G3326> (meta) and <G2476> (histemi); **to transfer**, i.e. **carry away**, *depose* or (figurative) *exchange*, *seduce* :- put out, remove, translate, turn away.

The translation “transferred” is helpful (as is the KJV “translated” for the same reason) because it emphasizes that we were previously under a *different* authority, and God moved us from there to *His* authority. Whether we realized it or not, before our conversion we were under the thumb of Satan.

And the Lord God reached down into the rushing river of Satan’s horrible might, snatched us by the collar and pulled us up out of that torrent of certain death, lifted us up and graciously set us down in the kingdom of light and life—the kingdom of, literally, “the Son of His love.”

And it doesn’t stop there.

We were not just moved from one place to another, from one kingdom to another. We were moved into a kingdom like no other.

*...in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins.*

In this kingdom we have been ransomed in full. When a firstborn male child was born in Israel, that child belonged to the Lord. But so that the temple would not be bursting at the seams with firstborns, the parents would “redeem” the child—make an offering, a sacrifice on his behalf.

...you shall devote to the Lord the first offspring of every womb, and the first offspring of every beast that you own; the males belong to the Lord. But every first offspring of a donkey you shall redeem with a lamb, but if you do not redeem it, then you shall break its neck; and every firstborn of man among your sons you shall redeem. (Exodus 13:12-14)

We have been redeemed by that once and final sacrifice of Christ on the cross. When God the Father lifts us from Satan’s authority and places us into the kingdom of His beloved Son, our redemption is immediately covered by the blood of Christ.

And, Paul goes on to say, we also receive forgiveness of sins.

**forgiveness** = *aphesis* = from <G863> (aphiemi); **freedom**; (figurative) **pardon** :- **deliverance**, forgiveness, **liberty**, remission.

“Rescue” indeed.