



Bible Student's Notebook™

The Herald of His Grace

Issue 139

In Christ

OR, OUR UNION WITH THE LORD

(Part 2 – Risen with Christ)

by – A.J. Gordon (1836-1895)

“... risen with Christ” (Colossians 3:1).

“... quickened us together with Christ ...” (Ephesians 3:4-6).

“... quickened together with Him ...” (Colossians 2:13).

RISEN WITH CHRIST

(Colossians 2:15).

Being one with Christ in His dying, we must be one with Him also in His resurrection, for the bands of our union are not dissolved or weakened while the Savior lies in the tomb. Joined to us, that He might carry us with Him through the pains and penalties of death, He now in the same gracious union of being brings us up again from the dead, and so He spreads the mighty power of His own regeneration from the dead along the whole line of history.

“And you, being dead in your sins and the uncircumcision of your flesh, hath He quickened together with Him, having forgiven you all trespasses” (Colossians 2:13).

That forgiveness was fully accomplished is signified when He had pronounced *“It is finished”* on the cross; for then had He blotted out the dark score that was against us, having nailed it to the cross. This truly was decisive and final – a nail fastened in a sure place; but the pardon thus written in His blood waited to be sealed and attested by His resurrection. For though He had spoiled principalities and powers by His death, only by bursting the bars of the grave could He *“make a show of them, openly triumphing over them in it”*

If He lies yet in that dark unopened grave, you lie there yet, in your sins, because you are in Him who went down into the tomb with those sins upon Him. Now while our Lord's sufferings in the flesh were completed when He yielded up the ghost, He was not disentangled from our sin so long as He lay in the tomb. How shall we break the bands of condemnation and cast away its cords from us, if it be possible for Him to be *“holden of death”*? And yet He is so held, if a single item of the debt of sin is left uncanceled. *“The wages of sin is death;”* and those wages must be paid to the full. *“Thou shalt by no means come out thence till thou hast paid the uttermost farthing”* says an inexorable law (Matthew 5:26); and if He is held, we are held with Him, because of that faith that has linked us into indissoluble union with His destiny. Such is the certain inference from that dreary hypothesis, *“If Christ be not raised.”*

“But now is Christ risen from the dead.” Since

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Bible Student's Notebook

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This weekly publication (52 times a year) is dedicated to:

- the proclamation of the riches of God's abundant, exceeding grace (Romans 5:20; 11:6; Ephesians 1:7)
- the affirmation of God's purpose to save all mankind through the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ (I Timothy 2:3, 4; 4:10; Titus 2:11)
- the "preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery, which was kept secret since the world began" (Romans 16:25)
- true freedom and liberty apart from the law (Galatians 5:1)
- the organic nature of the church, the body of Christ (I Corinthians 12)
- the distinct ministry of Paul, the apostle to the Gentiles (Romans 11:13)
- the importance of receiving all whom Christ has received (Romans 14-15)
- the recovery of rich Biblical truth that has too long remained hidden under the veils of traditionalism, prejudice, misunderstanding, and fear (Mark 7:7, 13).
- the completeness of the believer in Christ (Colossians 2:10), with ...
 - total forgiveness of sins (Colossians 1:14)
 - identity in His death, burial, and resurrection (Romans 6)
 - adult sonship position (Galatians 4)

This publication is a joint effort of a few members of the body of Christ. It is a product of our individual lives and ministries together. We do not claim infallibility for its contents. Our readers are asked to be as the Bereans and search the Scriptures (Acts 17:10-11; I Thessalonians 5:21).

This publication is not connected with any "church," "denomination," "movement," "organization," "mission," "creed," "meeting," "school," "conference" or "fellowship."

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Remember that it is our responsibility as husbands and fathers to take the truths we learn from God's Word, the truths that we hold dear, and impart them to our families.

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we are risen with Him, we are not in our sins. In His renewal from the dead, we were lifted forever from their dark enfolding condemnation. They cannot bind a single fetter on us now; they cannot remand us for a single instant to the prison-house of despair, because "*the God of peace [has] brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus.*" (Hebrews 13:20).

That the remains of sin are still clinging to us we are only too painfully conscious. Walking with Him in the same resurrection, we are as yet like Lazarus bound hand and foot with the graveclothes – the habits of sin that still cling to us; and we wait in eager expectancy the last resurrection word that shall say, "*Loose him, and let him go*" (John 11:44). Thus not the less truly are we alive with Christ from the dead, and death, the penalty of sin, can have no more dominion over us.

This truth is most strikingly told again in those words of the apostle,

"Who was delivered for our offenses, and raised again for our justification" (Romans 4:25).

Literally, "*Who was delivered **because of** our offenses, and raised **because of** our justification.*" When the justification of those in Him had been accomplished, He could not be detained by death; and so, because justification was completed, He was raised again. What an affecting emphasis is here again laid upon the doctrine of our Lord's union with us!

Opener of the prison doors to them that are bound, He yet waits until the last demand of justice has been satisfied before He comes through the gate of the grave to lead them out. The members must be with their Head. They are His fullness, and without them He cannot be made perfect. He cannot accept deliverance while they are under condemnation; but when the full acquittal has been secured, the glorious promise is fulfilled, "*The third day I shall be perfected*" (Luke 13:32). Yes, Thou mighty Captain of our salvation, Thou first-begotten from the dead, because Thou wilt then have "*perfected for ever them that are sanctified*" (Hebrews 10:14).

In His *crucifixion*, He was: In His *resurrection*, He was:

“Delivered for our offenses.” “Raised again for our justification” (Romans 4: 25).

“Put to death in the flesh.” “Quickened in the Spirit” (I Peter 3:18).

“In that He died, He died unto sin once.” “In that He liveth, He liveth unto God” (Romans 6:10).

“He was crucified through weakness.” “Yet He liveth by the power of God” (II Corinthians 13:4).

Let it be marked that it is not *atoning justification* which is attributed to His resurrection, but *manifest justification*. Conscience needs this as well as the other. The wounded hands and feet, the dying cry that yields up the Spirit, and the lifeless body at last lying in the tomb are the tokens of the price paid. The empty tomb, the folded napkin and the linen clothes laid by themselves: these are the tokens of the price accepted, of the prisoner’s discharge and of the loosing of the pains of death. Thus to all questionings of a timid or doubting conscience, the answer now is,

“Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, **yea rather, that is risen again**, Who is even at the right hand of God, Who also maketh intercession for us” (Romans 8:34).

Not only does our resurrection in Christ raise us out of condemnation, it also lifts us into a new life in Him. In *Christ crucified* we put off the old man, in *Christ risen* we put on the new man. The cross was for the destruction of the body of sin; the resurrection was for imparting to us of divine life.

We that believe are already “*risen with Him, through the faith of the operation of God*” (Colossians 2:12). The old life, with its kindredship to Adam, with its heritage of his curse, with its clinging incubus of his death, is put off at his grave. In the second Adam we now live, and “*as He is, so are we in this world*” (I John 4:17). He is “*the firstfruits of them that slept*” (I Corinthians 15:20). “*If the firstfruit be holy, the lump is also holy*” (Romans 11:16). He is “*declared to be the Son of God with power by the resurrection from the dead*” (Romans 1:4).

What a place then does the sepulcher of Jesus occupy! It is the border line and meeting place of law and grace. It is the solemn pause, the *divine*

ellipsis in the work of redemption, whence we look back upon the old nature, the old sin, and the old curse, and forward upon the “*all things*” that “*are become new*” (II Corinthians 5:17). Standing here and looking either way, we see how Christ’s work divides itself into what He did as the Sin-bearer, and what He did as the Life-giver.

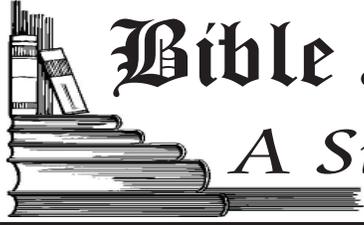
By His death, He became the “*end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth*” (Romans 10:4); by His resurrection He became “*the beginning, the firstborn from the dead*” (Colossians 1:18). *There* the root of the first Adam died. *Here* humanity springs up anew, and from a new and incorruptible seed.

To be in Christ the risen Man, then, is to no longer trace our genealogy back to Adam. That registry has been annulled. This is our risen life – we are in Him and He in us. It is a life as far removed from that of Adam as the Heaven is from the earth. *This* is our righteousness: not the name or the credit of holiness merely, but the righteousness of God perpetually upon us, because of our identification with Him who is made unto us righteousness.

The resurrection of our Lord, then, is not merely a pledge of our own; it is our own. All that it did for Him, we may boldly say it did for us. True, in experience much of its blessing is yet embryonic to us; but because of our perfect identity with Him – with Him to whom the possible and the actual are ever the same – all is counted as present to us. With Him we are “*not in the flesh, but in the Spirit*” (Romans 8:9). That same strenuous demand which the Scriptures lay upon us for realizing our death in Christ, “*Reckon ye yourselves to be dead indeed*” (Romans 6:11), they lay upon us for realizing our resurrection in Him: “*Seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God.*” (Colossians 3:1).

In Christ Jesus we work no longer *for* life, but *from* life. So the summons of the Gospel is not that we behold what is *possible* for us in Christ, and reach forth to it; but rather that we behold what is *accomplished* for us in Christ, and appropriate it and live in it.

Abridged from *In Christ*
Boston, 1872



Bible Student's Commentary™

A Survey of Paul's Epistles

#4

ROMANS 1:1 (continued)

"Paul, a servant of Jesus Christ, called to be an apostle, separated unto the gospel of God" (KJV)

"I, Paul, Jesus Christ's slave, a chosen messenger, appointed to God's good news" (BSV)¹

1:1 – Called

WORD MEANING

Strong's Greek Lexicon #2822 (*kletos*), meaning invited, i.e., appointed.

"This word 'called' means here not merely to be 'invited,' but has the sense of 'appointment.'" – Albert Barnes, *Barnes Notes*.

"In the writings of Paul, it is not used in the sense merely of invited, but always in the sense of efficient calling." – Lucius R. Paige, *A Commentary on the New Testament*, 1857, p. 7.

"The verb to call (*kaleo*), is used in this way of Divine sovereign action about forty times; and the cognate noun (*klesis*), eleven times: always in the sense of Romans 11:29: "For the gifts and calling of God are without repentance." – William R. Newell, *Romans Verse by Verse*.

TRANSLATION

"*Kletos*" is translated in the *King James Version* as "Called."

Commentary

Paul did not take up his work upon his own initiative.

1. **The Bible Student's Version.** This is our own "version" of the text to assist us in the accuracy, clarity, simplicity, and crystallization of the accompanying textual commentary.

"... He is a **chosen** vessel unto Me, to bear My name before the Gentiles, and kings, and the children of Israel" (Acts 9:15).

He was not an apostle by his own choosing. He was not self-appointed, nor man-appointed; he was God-appointed.

"Paul, an apostle, (not of men, neither by man, but by Jesus Christ, and God the Father, Who raised Him from the dead)" (Galatians 1:1).

"Paul never lost sight of the fact that his was a divine vocation." – C. Norman Bartlett, *Right in Romans*, p. 18.

1:1 – To Be

There are no Greek words for this phrase. "To be" was added by the *King James Version* translators.

"Many of the commentators, and even translators, break down here. Most of them have 'called to be.'" – William L. Pettingill, *The Gospel of God: Simple Studies in Romans*, page 7.

1:1 – An Apostle

WORD MEANING

ONE SENT, A MESSENGER, OR DELEGATE.

Strong's Greek Lexicon #652 (*apostolos*), meaning "a delegate."

"One sent to execute a commission" – Albert Barnes,

Barnes Notes.

“One sent with authority” – Robert C. Brock, *The Unveiling of Christianity: Romans*, p. 1.

“A delegate, messenger, one sent forth with orders” – Thayer, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament*.

“One chosen and sent with a special mission as the fully authorized representative of the sender.” – D. Martyn Lloyd-Jones, *Romans*.

“A delegate, one sent with full power of attorney to act in the place of another.” Finis Dake, *Dake’s Annotated Reference Bible*.

“Special messenger” – Newman & Nida.²

“A person deputed to execute some important business ...” Noah Webster, *The American Dictionary of the English Language* (1828).

Translation

“Apostolos” is found transliterated in the *King James Version* as “apostle.” It is actually translated in II Corinthians 8:23 and Philippians 2:25 as “messenger.” It is also translated by the phrase “he that is sent” in John 13:16.

It is translated “messenger” by the *J.B. Phillips New Testament*.

Commentary

Paul was given a special and distinct “apostleship.” Paul’s was an apostleship of grace to the Nations. It was international in its authority and scope. God demonstrated, in a great way, His grace by saving and calling His greatest human enemy at that time, to be His greatest apostle.

“Our Lord, while he dwelt in the flesh, disclaimed teaching and acting by His personal independent authority; He appealed to a greater than Himself, Whose right both to instruct and to govern could not be disputed. (John 5:19, 30; 6:38, 39; 7:16). In like

2. Barclay M. Newman, Eugene A. Nida, *Help for Translators: A Translator’s Handbook on Paul’s Letter to the Romans*, United Bible Societies, 1971, p. 7.

manner, Paul bespeaks attention to his instructions, and asserts his right to speak with authority, by declaring himself to be a called or appointed apostle, divinely commissioned by the great Head of the church.” – Lucius R. Paige, *A Commentary on the New Testament*, 1857, p. 7.

“The word apostle means ‘a sent one,’ but in its New Testament sense it stands for one who is sent clothed with full authority to speak and act for the divine Sender.” – William L. Pettingill, *The Gospel of God: Simple Studies in Romans*, p. 8.

“Our Lord Jesus said: ‘He that receiveth whomsoever I send receiveth Me; and he that receiveth Me receiveth Him that sent Me’ (John 13:20). And Paul was especially sent to us Gentiles... Throughout church history, to depart from Paul has been heresy.” – William R. Newell, *Romans Verse by Verse*.

“Paul, before-time a persecutor, was suddenly made an apostle by special calling.” – Johann Albrecht Bengel (1687-1752)³

“The word apostle means ‘a sent one,’ but in its New Testament sense it stands for one who is sent clothed with full authority to speak and act for the divine Sender.” – William L. Pettingill, *The Gospel of God: Simple Studies in Romans*, p. 8.

1:1 SEPARATED

WORD MEANING

Strong’s Greek Lexicon #873 (aphorize), meaning “to set off by boundary, i.e., figuratively limit, exclude, appoint.

“to separate, sever from the rest ... selected” – George Wigram, *Analytical Greek Lexicon*

“to set off by bounds, to limit off” – E.W. Bullinger, *Critical Lexicon*.

“to appoint, set apart for some purpose” – Thayer, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament*.

“singled out” – Arthur S. Way, *The Letters of Saint Paul*, p. 97.

3. Cited by William L. Pettingill, *The Gospel of God: Simple Studies in Romans*, p. 8.

“to mark off by bounds ... the divine action in setting men apart for the work of the gospel” – W.E. Vine, *Vines’ Expository Dictionary*

“Designated, or set apart from the common masses.” – Lucius R. Paige, *A Commentary on the New Testament*, 1857, p. 7.

“The Greek word for ‘separated’ in this passage contains the thought of “the horizon.” Paul’s whole horizon was dominated by Christ. All his boundaries in life were determined by Him.” – John Phillips, *Exploring Romans*, Moody (1969), p. 13.

“‘Aphorizo’ – ‘to separate,’ is confined to the Acts or Epistles of Paul. This word is composed of ‘apo’ – ‘away from’ and ‘horizo’ – ‘to define or set bounds.’ The English reader will recognize the origin of the word ‘horizon.’” – *The Berean Expositor*, Volume 37, p. 91.

Translation

“Aphorize” is translated in the *King James Version* as “divide,” “separate,” and “sever.”

It is translated “appointed” in the *J.B. Phillips New Testament*.

Commentary

“The sovereignty of God is thus seen at the very beginning of this great Epistle. How well Paul carried out his separation to this high calling, the gospel, the good news about Christ! Yet there are those today, even today, who in ignorance and pride affect to despise the words of this great apostle, as Peter warns, “to their own destruction” (II Peter 3:16). William R. Newell, *Romans Verse by Verse*.

“Paul had no difficulty in classifying himself; he knew where he belonged, and to Whom. He was the Lord’s slave, and his particular business was in connection with ‘the gospel of God’ – God’s good news. He was ‘a chosen vessel,’ dedicated to a particular use (Acts 9:15). His work was marked out for him even from his birth (Galatians 1:15), though it took a long time for him to discover that fact.” – William L. Pettingill, *The Gospel of God: Simple Studies in Romans*, p. 8.

Paul’s separation was twofold.

(1) “But when it pleased God, Who **separated me** from my mother’s womb, and called me by His grace” (Galatians 1:15)

“The meaning is that God, who foreknows all things, did set him apart, chose, selected him for the work of the gospel, even from the earliest period of his life ... God knows all persons and events before they exist or take place, and He has a definite object in view which He intends to accomplish by them.” – Lucius R. Paige, *A Commentary on the New Testament*, 1857, p. 8.

(2) “As they ministered to the Lord, and fasted, the Holy Ghost said, **Separate me** Barnabas and Saul for the work whereunto I have called them” (Acts 13:2).

“This setting apart did not keep Paul from making tents to support himself and his companions (Acts 20:34; I Thessalonians 2:9; II Thessalonians 3:8) nor from mingling freely with all levels of pagan society. It was a setting apart to something ... not from things in isolation like the Pharisees.” – John F. Walvoord, Roy B. Zuck, *The Bible Knowledge Commentary*, p. 440.

“Aphorizo” is a Greek compound word made up of “apo” (off) and ‘horizo’ (horizon). Paul is literally telling us that he had been *horizoned-off* by and for God.

Noah Webster defines “horizon” as:

“The line that terminates the view, when extended on the surface of the earth; or a great circle of the sphere, dividing the world into two parts or hemispheres; the upper hemisphere which is visible, and the lower which is hid ... The visible horizon is a lesser circle of the sphere, which divides the visible part of the sphere from the invisible. It is eastern or western; the eastern is that wherein the sun and stars rise; the western, that wherein they set ...”⁴

Paul was cut off from his earlier *horizon*, from his sphere of life – from his former **hemisphere**. God *separated* him out from his former life and positioned him in the *circumference* of a new life – the circumference of Almighty God and His concerns.

4. Noah Webster, *American Dictionary of the English Language*, 1828.

Following Webster's definition of the word horizon (which is the root of "aphorizo" that is used to translate "separate") many rich truths can be brought to light.

1. "dividing the world into two parts or hemispheres"

The word separate has to do with *division*. Thus the *King James Version* also translates "aphorizo" as *divide* and *sever*. Paul was divided, or severed from Israel – its law, its ceremony, its religion, counting them manure.

*"But what things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ. Yea doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: **for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ**" (Philippians 3:7-8).*

2. "the upper hemisphere which is visible, and the lower which is hid"

Paul had his eyes moved from the *horizon* of the visible by divine revelation. He saw the hidden things of God and was commissioned to be the spokesman of them.

*"Unto me, who am less than the least of all saints, is this grace given, that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ; And to make all men see what is the fellowship of the mystery, **which from the beginning of the world hath been hid in God, who created all things by Jesus Christ**" (Ephesians 3:8-9).*

3. "which divides the visible part of the sphere from the invisible"

Paul also had his eyes opened by God to the invisible. His sights were set on the heavenly realm of his calling – "things above."

*"While we look not at the things which are seen, but at **the things which are not seen**: for the things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen*

are eternal." (II Corinthians 4:18).

*"If ye then be risen with Christ, **seek those things which are above**, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God" (Colossians 3:1).*

*"Set your affection on **things above**, not on things on the earth" (Colossians 3:2).*

4. "the eastern is that wherein the sun and stars rise; the western, that wherein they set"

The *horizon* is also associated with the contrasts of day and night, light and darkness. Paul was *separated* from the darkness of the sin of this world and brought into the glorious light of God's full revelation of righteousness.

*"For God, who commanded the **light to shine out of darkness**, hath shined in our hearts, to give the **light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ**" (II Corinthians 4:6).*

*"Ye are all the **children of light**, and the **children of the day**: we are **not of the night, nor of darkness** (I Thessalonians 5:5).*

By the revelation from God, Paul opened up new horizons for mankind. We like Paul have been cut off from our former *horizon*, from our former sphere – or hemisphere. God has *horizoned* us out from our former identity and *horizoned* us into full identity in Christ – in a *circumference* of a new life – in the *circumference* of a loving Father and His concerns.

1:1 – Unto

WORD MEANING

Strong's Greek Lexicon #1519 (eis), "a primary preposition; to or into, of place, time, or purpose ..."

Translation

Eis is translated in the *King James Version* in such ways as: abundant, abundantly, against, among, as,

at, before, by, concerning, for, in, to the intent that, of, unto, upon, on, that, therefore, throughout, till, to, wherefore, with.

1:1 – The Gospel

WORD MEANING

THE WORD GOSPEL MEANS “GOOD NEWS.”

Strong’s Greek Lexicon #2098 (euaggelion), meaning “a good message.”

“glad tidings” – George Wigram, *Analytical Greek Lexicon*.

“good news, and always in a special sense” – E.W. Bullinger, *Critical Lexicon*.

Our English word has its roots in the Old English “God’s spell.” “Spell” was the Saxon word for story.

Translation

“*Euaggelion*” is translated in the *King James Version* as “*gospel*.”

It is translated “good news” in some versions (e.g. *Concordant Literal New Testament, World English Bible, Young’s Literal Translation, Goodspeed New Testament*).

Commentary

There are a number of different messages of “good news” (gospel) in the Bible:

Gospel of God (Romans 1:1; 15:16; II Corinthians 11:7; I Thessalonians 2:2, 8, 9; I Peter 4:17)

Paul’s “My Gospel” (Romans 2:16; 16:25; II Timothy 2:8)

Gospel of the Grace of God (Acts 20:24)

Gospel of Christ (Romans 15:19, 29; I Corinthians 9:12, 18; II Corinthians 2:12; 9:13; 10:14; Galatians 1:7; Philippians 1:27; I Thessalonians 3:2)

Gospel of Peace (Romans 10:15; Ephesians 6:15)

Gospel of the Circumcision (Galatians 2:7)

Gospel of the Uncircumcision (Galatians 2:7)

Gospel of the Kingdom (Matthew 4:23; 9:35; 24:14; Mark 1:14)

The Everlasting Gospel (Revelation 14:6)

Most of the references of the word gospel in the Bible are without any qualifying phrase. Therefore, to be properly defined we must identify the dispensation and context in which we find them.

“He [Paul] is commissioned to hand over to men something quite new and unprecedented, joyful and good ...” – Karl Barth, *The Epistle to the Romans*, p. 28.

1:1 – Of God

WORD MEANING

Strong’s Greek Lexicon #2316 (Theos).

Translation

“*Theos*” is translated in the *King James Version* as “*God*”

COMMENTARY

“IT IS CALLED THE GOSPEL of God because it is His appointment; it has been originated by Him, and has His authority.” Albert Barnes, *Barnes Notes*.

“It is God’s good news. Mark this well! It was God who loved the world; it was God who sent His Son ... It is absolutely necessary that we keep fast in mind, as we read in Romans the awful facts about ourselves, that it is God who is leading us up to His own good news for bad sinners!” – William R. Newell, *Romans Verse by Verse*.

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