

INTRODUCTION.

TODAY, ~ WE BEGIN THE NEXT PARAGRAPH OF COLOSSIANS, ~ 3: ~ 12-17.

▶▶ Recall ~ in Col. ~ 3: ~ 5-11, ~ Paul instructed believers ~ to make ~ a ~ radical, ~ decisive, ~ and final ~ break ~ 77

▷▷ with all ~ of the sinful ~ characteristics, ~ thoughts, ~ speech, ~ attitudes, ~ and ~ patterns of behavior ~ of our sinful nature.

▶▶ Since ~ we are ~ new creations in Christ, ~ we are ~ to totally ~ eliminate these things ~ from our lives.

▷▷ What belongs to our ~ old nature ~ is not ~ compatible with ~ or suitable for ~ our new nature.

AND IN THIS NEXT ¶, ~ 3: ~ 12-17, ~ PAUL ~ TURNS HIS ATTENTION ~ to telling us ~ to replace the old ~ with what is ~ compatible with ~ and suitable for ~ our new nature.

▶▶ Basically, ~ in this paragraph, ~ Paul ~ exhorts believers ~ 77

▷▷ to replace ~ the things belonging to the old nature ~ with a whole new set of ~ characteristics, ~ thoughts, ~ speech, ~ attitudes, ~ and ~ patterns of behavior.

▶▶ New set = Godliness. ① ⇔⇔ Old set ~ i.e., ~ what belongs to sin nature = Ungodliness.

② ▷▷ And the new set ~ is to replace the old.

▶▶ And a simple reading ~ of this next paragraph, ~ and ~ a fuller reading ~ of the NT, ~ reveals ~ that ~ the new set ~ is ~ the polar opposite ~ of the old set. 77 1/16

▶▶ Perhaps we could simplify this ~ this way.

▷▷ In Col. ~ 3: ~ 12-17, ~ Paul ~ commands believers ~ to embrace and practice ~ godliness ~ in ~ every area of our lives ~ in place of ~ ungodliness.

▷▷ In contrast ~ to ungodliness, ~ which characterized our old nature, ~ ¶¶

▷▷ godliness ~ in every area of our lives ~ is ~ well-matched with ~ and appropriate for ~ our new nature.

▶▶ This ~ is Paul's overall point ~ in Col. ~ 3: ~ 12-17.

▶▶ We find ~ the command ~ presenting and governing ~ the topic of the ¶ ~ in verse 12a.

▷▷ "Put on therefore."

▷▷ And everything else ~ is an expansion ~ on this command.

AND IN HIS EXPANSION ~ PAUL DOES ~ TWO THINGS.

▶▶ 1<sup>st</sup>, ~ he gives us the reason ~ this replacement ~ must take place.

▷▷ Verse 12b. ⇔⇔ It is because ~ we are ~ "God's chosen ones, ~ holy and beloved."

▶▶ And 2<sup>nd</sup>, ~ in verses ~ 12c ~ 17, ~ Paul gives some examples ~ of what godliness ~ looks like.

NOW, ~ THERE'S ONE THING ~ WE SHOULD KEEP IN MIND ~ AS WE GO THROUGH THIS paragraph. ¶¶ 2/16

▶▶ While we are ~ to embrace and practice godliness ~ in private ~ and ~ in relation to unbelievers and believers alike, ~ ↴↴

▷▷ in this paragraph ~ Paul ~ is primarily talking about ~ our relationships ~ with other believers ~ in our local church.

NOW LET'S BEGIN ~ TO UNPACK THIS PARAGRAPH, ~~ COL. ~ 3: ~~ 12-17.

▶▶ Rather than start ~ with the command, ~ even though it appears first, ~ we'll start ~ with the reason ~ we are ~ to embrace and practice ~ godliness.

▶▶ My purpose here ~ is to focus and expand on ~ the reason ~ for doing so.

▷▷ So, ~ that's all we'll cover for today.

OK, ~ WHY ~ WE ARE ~ TO EMBRACE AND PRACTICE ~ GODLINESS.

VERSE 12b, ~~ BECAUSE ~ WE ARE ~ "GOD'S CHOSEN ONES, ~ HOLY AND BELOVED."

▶▶ Simply put, ~ Paul here ~ is stating ~ our ~ status ~ before God.

▷▷ Of course, ~ God ~ gave us this status.

▶▶ And what ~ a wonderful and encouraging status ~ it is, ~ chosen by God, ~ made holy by God, ~ and ~ dearly loved by God.

SO, ~ PAUL HERE ~ IS STATING ~ THE BELIEVER'S ~ WONDERFUL AND ENCOURAGING status ~ before God ~ as the reason ~ for his exhortation.

▶▶ The idea here ~ seems to be this. ↴↴ 3/16

▶▶ Because ~ we are ~ God's chosen people, ~ holy, ~ and dearly loved, ~ ¶¶

▷▷ we ~ are to embrace and practice ~ that ~ which is well-matched with ~ and appropriate for ~ such a status.

↳↳ And godliness, ~ in every area of our lives, ~ fits the bill.

WE SEE ~ A VERY SIMILAR EXHORTATION ELSEWHERE, ~ EPH. ~ 4: ~ 1 (NIV).

▶▶ Essentially ~ it means the same thing ~ as Col. ~ 3: ~ 12b.

▶▶ Paul writes, ~ As a prisoner for the Lord, ~ then, ~ I urge you ~ to live a life ~ worthy ~ of the calling ~ you have received.

▷▷ "the calling you have received" ~ points back ~ to what Paul said ~ about our status ~ in chapters 1-3 of Ephesians.

▶▶ Basically, ~ Paul is saying, ~ ¶¶

▷▷ "As a result ~ of all that God has ~ done for and given ~ you, ~ this great salvation ~ and its accompanying blessings ~ that I spelled out ~ in the first three chapters ~ of this letter, ~¶¶

↳↳ I, ~ a prisoner ~ of the Lord, ~ urge you ~ to apply ~ or display ~ this truth ~ in a way ~ that is ~ compatible with ~ and suitable for ~ this status."

NOW, ~ I WOULD LIKE US ~ TO GET A GOOD PICTURE ~ OF OUR STATUS BEFORE GOD.

I WANT TO DO THIS ~ FOR 2 REASONS.

▶▶ 1<sup>st</sup>, ~ to have a word of encouragement. ¶¶ 4/16

▶▶ And 2<sup>nd</sup>, ~ to help us realize ~ how incompatible ~ our old nature is ~ with ~ our new nature.

TO GET A GOOD PICTURE ~ OF OUR STANDING BEFORE GOD, ~ we're going over ~ to 1 Peter.

▶▶ And in particular, ~ 1 Pet. ~ 2: ~ 9a.

▷▷ Now, ~ Peter doesn't cover the beloved aspect of our status, ~ like Paul does, ~ so we'll take that up ~ after we examine what Peter says.

▶▶ Ok, ~ 1 Pet. ~ 2: ~ 9a.

▷▷ But you ~ are ~ a ~ chosen race, ~ a ~ royal priesthood, ~ a ~ holy nation, ~ a ~ people ~ for his own possession.

▷▷ Peter here ~ describes ~ our wonderful and encouraging status ~ four ways.

FIRST, ~ BELIEVERS HAVE ~ THE WONDERFUL AND ENCOURAGING STATUS ~ OF BEING ~ "a chosen race."

▶▶ The Greek word for "race," ~ characterizes ~ a group of people as having a common origin.

▷▷ And that's exactly what Christians have, ~ a common origin.

↪↪ Earlier in his first epistle, ~ Peter said ~ that ~ 17

→→ all those ~ who believe in Jesus ~ as Savior and Lord ~ "have been ~ born again," ~ "through ~ the living and abiding word of God."

↪↪ "word of God" = the gospel. ⇔⇔ Notice ~ our common origin. ↵↵ 5/16

▷▷ We are one people, ~ having ~ a common origin.

▷▷ This means ~ that we ~ are a community, ~ a family.

▷▷ We ~ belong together ~ and need each other.

▶▶ But, ~ we're not just any kind of race. ~ Peter says ~ that we ~ "are ~ a ~ chosen ~ race."

▷▷ In Eph. ~ 1: ~ 4, ~ Paul tells us that ~ God "chose us," ~ i.e., ~ believers, ~ ¶¶

↳↳ God "chose us ~ in [Christ] ~ before the foundation of the world."

↳↳ Paul says ~ that ~ before ~ we were ever born, ~ ¶¶

→→ before ~ the creation of universe, ~ God the Father ~ "chose us ~ in [Christ]."

▷▷ Now, ~ it's very important that we grasp the meaning ~ of "chose" here.

↳↳ The form of the verb for "chose" ~ indicates ~ a personal interest ~ in the one chosen.

▷▷ God ~ did not just impersonally ~ pull names out of a hat.

↳↳ Dartboard . . . .

→→ No, ~ with great ~ personal interest, ~ He chose ~ each believer.

▶▶ One people, ~ a community, ~ a family, ~ personally chosen, ~ and ~ brought into existence by God. ¶¶ 6/16

NEXT IN VERSE 9a, ~ PETER TELLS US ~ THAT CHRISTIANS ~ HAVE THE WONDERFUL and encouraging status ~ of being ~ "a royal priesthood."

▶▶ This is the second time ~ in his 1<sup>st</sup> letter ~ that Peter called us ~ a priesthood.

▷▷ A priest ~ is ~ one who has access to God, ~ and whose task it is ~ to bring others to God, ~ and ~ to offer sacrifices to God.

▷▷ In OT times, ~ this access to God ~ was the privilege ~ of ~ the few, ~ i.e., ~ the Levitical priesthood, ~ and in particular ~ of ~ the High Priest.

↪↪ He alone ~ could enter ~ into ~ the Holy of Holies ~ and into ~ the presence of God.

▶▶ But through Jesus, ~ that access to God ~ is the privilege ~ of every believer.

▷▷ There is ~ no longer ~ any special class of priests, ~ made up ~ of a few ~ privileged people.

▷▷ All ~ who have come to Jesus for salvation ~ have become ~ priests ~ before God.

↪↪ "priests to serve our God."

▷▷ Every believer ~ has ~ immediate and direct access ~ to God ~ through Jesus.

↪↪ And serves God personally ~ by bringing others to Him ~ and ~ by offering ~ "spiritual sacrifices ~ acceptable to God ~ through Jesus Christ." (1 Pet. 2)

▶▶ But, ~ not ~ just ~ any priesthood.

▷▷ We ~ are ~ "a royal ~ priesthood." ↯ 7/16

▷▷ This most likely means ~ that ~ we are priests ~ in the service of the king.

▷▷ In this case, ~ we are priests ~ in the service ~ of the King of kings, ~ King Jesus.

▷▷ Just like Melchizedek, ~ believers ~ are priests ~ "of God Most High."

CONTINUING IN VERSE 9a, ~ PETER TELLS US ~ THAT BELIEVERS ~ have ~ the wonderful and encouraging status ~ of being ~ "a holy nation."

▶▶ "holy" ~ does not refer ~ to a state or a quality ~ of believers.

▷▷ It refers ~ to Christ's ~ setting us apart ~ for ~ God and His service, ~~ and therefore ~ setting us apart ~ from ~ the world.

▶▶ The church is a nation, ~ Peter says, ~ set apart ~ for ~ God and his service ~ and set apart ~ from ~ the world.

▶▶ And just as each nation ~ is a distinct entity ~ from other nations, ~~ so the church ~ is a distinct entity ~ from the world.

▶▶ This is perhaps why ~ Peter refers to the church ~ as a nation.

▷▷ In order to emphasize ~ that ~ we are distinct ~ from the world, ~ and ~ we are ~ to maintain that distinction ~ at all costs.

▷▷ Israel, ~ God's ancient people, ~ forgot ~ that she was a holy nation ~ and began ~ to break down ~ the walls of separation ~ that made her distinct.

↪↪ God commanded them ~ "to distinguish ~ between ~ the holy and the common, ~~ and between ~ the unclean and the clean." (Lev. 10)

→→ But ~ they ignored the differences ~ and disobeyed God. 📖 8/16



▷▷ We, ~ the church, ~ God's new covenant people, ~ must never do that.

↳↳ We must not follow ~ in Israel's ~ compromising footsteps.

▶▶ We, ~ my . . . , ~ are ~ a nation.

▷▷ Set apart ~ for ~ God and his service ~ and set apart ~ from ~ the world.

▷▷ Distinct ~ from the world, ~ and ~ we are ~ to maintain that distinction ~ at all costs.

LASTLY ~ IN VERSE 9a, ~ PETER TELLS US ~ THAT BELIEVERS HAVE ~ the wonderful and encouraging status ~ of being ~ "a people ~ for his own possession."

▶▶ In the context, ~ God ~ is the implied ~ possessor ~ or owner.

▶▶ Believers ~ are considered God's possession ~ by the very fact ~ that He ~ has ~ chosen, ~ redeemed, ~ and ~ adopted us.

▶▶ Twice ~ in 1 Corinthians, ~ Paul says that believers ~ "were bought with a price."

▷▷ "bought" means ~ "to purchase as one's own."

↳↳ God did not purchase us ~ in order ~ to give us away.

↳↳ He purchased us ~ to be ~ His own.

→→ That we would become ~ His people ~ exclusively, ~ solely ~ His children ~ and no one else's.

▷▷ Believers have been "bought with a price." ¶¶ 9/16

↪↪ And Peter tells us ~ exactly ~ what that price was. ⇨⇨ 1 Pet. ~ 1: ~ 18-19 (CSB).

↪↪ For you know ~ that you were redeemed ~ from your empty way of life ~ inherited from your fathers, ~~ not with perishable things ~ like silver or gold, ~~ but ~ with the precious blood of Christ, ~~ like that ~ of ~ an unblemished and spotless lamb.

↪↪ Jesus' blood ~ was the payment ~ through which ~ God has "bought" ~ believers for himself.

→→ A high price indeed ~ God has paid for believers.

CONTINUING TO TALK ABOUT ~ OUR WONDERFUL AND ENCOURAGING STATUS, ~ let's return ~ to Colossians, ~ chapter 3, ~ verse 12b.

BELIEVERS HAVE ~ THE WONDERFUL AND ENCOURAGING STATUS ~ OF ~ being dearly loved ~ by God.

▶▶ Believers ~ are the objects ~ of God's ~ special and abiding ~ love.

▶▶ He loved us ~ when we were ~ still sinners ~ and alienated from him.

▶▶ He loved us ~ when we were his enemies.

ONE OF THE REASONS ~ GOD ACTED ON OUR BEHALF ~ WHEN WE WERE UNSAVED ~ was ~ his great love ~ for us.

▶▶ As Paul tells us ~ in Eph. ~ 2: ~ 4-5.

▷▷<sup>4</sup> But God, ~ being rich in mercy, ~ because of the great love with which he loved us, <sup>5</sup> ~~ even ~ when we were dead ~ in our trespasses, ~~ made us alive ~ together with Christ ~~ by grace ~ you have been saved. ↴↴ 10/16

▶▶ Notice ~ that Paul uses the word love ~ twice.

▷▷ The repetition ~ emphasizes ~ God's great love for us.

▶▶ And Paul emphasizes it ~ even further ~ by the adjective ~ "great."

▶▶ The hymn ~ sums it up well.

▷▷ "O ~ the deep, ~ deep ~ love of Jesus, ~ vast, ~ unmeasured, ~ boundless, ~ free!"

THE GREEK WORD FOR LOVE ~ HERE ~ IN EPH. ~ 2: ~ 4-5, ~ is ~ ἀγάπη.

▶▶ It is ~ the selfless love that seeks the best ~ for others.

▶▶ While God could have simply ~ destroyed all people ~ because of their sin, ~ 77

▷▷ he chose instead ~ to show ~ mercy and love.

▶▶ The prophet Zephaniah ~ (3:15; NIV) ~ wrote, ~ 77

▷▷ "The LORD ~ has taken away your punishment, ~ he has turned back your enemy. ~  
The LORD, ~ the King of Israel, ~ is with you; ~ never again ~ will you fear any harm."

▶▶ Sinful people ~ cannot even approach ~ the one true and holy God.

▷▷ But God ~ extended his love to us, ~ knowing ~ that only he ~ could give salvation to us.

▶▶ Such love ~ is "great" ~ and beyond human understanding. 77 11/16

AND THE DEPTH ~ OF GOD'S LOVE FOR US ~ WAS DEMONSTRATED ~ IN HIM SENDING  
~ His Son ~ as the sacrifice ~ for our sins.

▶▶ In 1 Jn. ~ 4: ~ 10, ~ John writes, ~ "In this ~ is love, ~ not ~ that we have loved God ~ but  
~ that he loved us ~ and sent his Son ~ to be the propitiation ~ for our sins."

▶▶ John makes the point ~ that God sending His Son ~ was in no way ~ a response ~ to  
humanity's love for God.

▶▶ It was the exact opposite, ~ John says.

▷▷ He echoes Paul ~ and says ~ that ~ it was ~ because of God's love for us ~ that He sent  
Jesus.

▶▶ God sent his Son ~ as the sacrifice ~ for our sins.

▷▷ This ~ is how much God loved us.

↪↪ He allowed His Son ~ to die ~ a violent and excruciating death ~~ so that we ~  
might ~ escape His wrath ~~ and have ~ eternal life.

AND THAT LOVE ~ DOES NOT STOP AT CONVERSION. ⇨⇨ UNABATED

▶▶ In Eph. ~ 3: ~ 19, ~ Paul prays for believers ~ "to know ~ the love of Christ ~ that  
surpasses knowledge."

▶▶ Paul prays ~ that believers will know ~ Jesus' infinitely immense love ~ in a much greater  
measure.

▷▷ But ~ he employs ~ a paradoxical expression ~ to highlight ~ the unknowable extent ~  
of Jesus' love for us. ↴↴ 12/16

▶▶ In effect, ~ Paul is saying this.

▷▷ I want you to know ~ that ~ which ~ cannot be known.

↪↪ Now, ~ Paul is not playing ~ some kind of ~ trick or joke ~ on us.

▶▶ Undoubtedly, ~ Paul is saying ~ that there is ~ a real knowledge ~ of Christ's infinitely immense love ~ possible for us ~ to achieve.

▷▷ A knowledge ~ that is capable of increase.

▷▷ But ~ a complete knowledge ~ will always ~ remain ~ beyond ~ our capacity.

▶▶ Even in heaven ~ we will not gain an exhaustive knowledge ~ of Jesus' infinitely immense love for us.

▷▷ Because, ~ even though ~ we will be glorified, ~ we will still be ~ finite.

↪↪ And the depth ~ of Jesus' immense love for us ~ is ~ infinite.

▶▶ The infinite depth ~ of Jesus' immense love for us ~ should give us ~ great encouragement.

▶▶ The hymn writer ~ sums it up quite well.

▷▷ "Immortal Love ~~ forever full, ~~ forever flowing free, ~~ forever shared, ~~ forever whole, ~~ a never-ebbing sea" (#104).

ALSO, ~ WE SHOULD CONSIDER THIS. ↴↴ 13/16

▶▶ In Eph. ~ 1: ~ 4b-5a, ~ Paul says that ~ "In love ~ he predestined us ~ for adoption to himself ~ as sons ~ through Jesus Christ."

▷▷ I.e., ~ because ~ of God's love for us, ~ he determined ~ before time began ~ to bring us ~ into His family ~ as ~ His full-fledged children.

▷▷ IOW, ~ God did not do this ~ out of some obligation.

↳↳ In no way ~ was He obligated ~ to adopt us ~ after He saved us.

↳↳ Neither ~ was this something ~ He did reluctantly.

▷▷ No, ~ He did it ~ because ~ He loves us.

↳↳ It was because ~ of God's infinite love for us ~ that He gave us membership ~ in His family.

▶▶ The apostle John, ~ in 1 Jn. ~ 3: ~ 1a, ~ talks about this as well.

▷▷ "See ~ what kind of love ~ the Father has given to us, ~ that we ~ should be called ~ children of God; ~ and so we are."

▷▷ It could be paraphrased this way: ~ ~ ↴↴

↳↳ See ~ how very much our Father loves us, ~ for ~ he calls us ~ his children, ~ and that ~ is what we are!

▷▷ John wants us ~ to stop ~ and think about, ~ really ~ think about, ~ just how much ~ the Father loves us.

▷▷ He loves us so much ~ that he adopted us ~ as ~ full-fledged children. ↴↴ 14/16

## AND WE SHOULD CONSIDER ~ ONE MORE THING ~ ABOUT GOD'S LOVE FOR US.

▶▶ Rom. 8:38-39 (LEB), ~ and I'll comment as we go through this.

▶▶ "For I am convinced.

▷▷ The verb ~ Paul uses ~ expresses certainty. ⇔⇔ And the form ~ of the verb ~ points ~ to a permanent state.

▷▷ This is no passing whim. ⇔⇔ Paul stands absolutely convinced once and for all time.

▶▶ that ~ neither death, ~ nor life, ~ nor angels, ~ nor rulers, ~ nor things present, ~ nor things to come. ⇔⇔ I.e., ~ neither present nor future ~ circumstances and events.

▶▶ nor powers. ⇔⇔ I.e., ~ the spiritual forces of evil.

▶▶ nor height, ~ nor depth.

▷▷ Perhaps in the sense ~ that space ~ cannot come ~ between us and our Savior's love.

▶▶ And lest ~ a picky reader thinks ~ that Paul ~ has omitted something ~ that could threaten ~ the believer's security in God's love, ~ ¶¶

▷▷ Paul concludes with this comprehensive statement. ⇔⇔ nor any other created thing.

▶▶ will be able ~ to separate us ~ from the love of God ~ [i.e., ~ God's love for us] ~ that is in ~ Christ Jesus our Lord.

▶▶ My . . . ~ we are assured ~ that our all-powerful God ~ will always ~ keep us secure ~ in his great love. ¶¶ 15/16

## CONCLUSION.

WHEN WE ADD ALL OF THIS UP, ~ I THINK WE CLEARLY SEE ~ THE WONDERFUL AND encouraging status ~ that we have ~ as believers.

▶▶ But ~ we also clearly see ~ something else.

▷▷ The type ~ of status we have.

↳↳ And i.e., ~ we have been given, ~ free of charge, ~ a highly privileged status ~ in the kingdom of God.

▶▶ When we realize this, ~ how could anyone ~ conclude, ~ that ungodliness ~ is ~ well-matched with ~ and appropriate for ~ this status.

▶▶ Rather, ~ the correct conclusion ~ is obvious.

▷▷ Because we have ~ this wonderful and encouraging status, ~ and ~ because ~ of the type of status that it is, ~ ¶¶

↳↳ we ~ are ~ to embrace and practice ~ godliness.

→→ For ~ only this ~ is ~ compatible with ~ and suitable for ~ such a status.

LET'S PRAY . . . . 16/16