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Because of these things the wrath of God is coming upon the sons of disobedience,
Colossians 3:6

Paul wrote of the wrath of God in Romans 1, explaining what brings it about. The things he mentions in verse 2 are a part of that process. It is because of participating in these things that the world is judged. And this judgment follows two distinct lines. The first is judgment in this world through diseases, conflicts which lead to physical harm or death, and the like. The second judgment is that of being cast for all eternity away from the presence of God. The Lake of Fire is the ultimate end for all “the sons of disobedience.”

As an apostle, Paul is showing us the importance of setting our minds on things above, living lives that are holy, and leading others who have not yet called on Christ to do so. Without Him, there is but one ultimate end for the souls of man. We can either be a Son of God through adoption, or remain a son of disobedience and be eternally separated from Him. The warnings of Scripture, to include the apostolic warnings (which are now recorded in the Bible), are given to direct us away from that which is harmful, and which brings about the wrath of God, and toward that which is pleasing to Him.

Life application: To ignore the warnings of Scripture can only lead to a sad end. There will be trials and pains in this life, and there will be either judgment and condemnation for non-believers, or a loss of rewards for believers. Stand firm on the word, and do not be deceived by vain things which are contrary to the word of God.

...in which you yourselves once walked when you lived in them. Colossians 3:7

The words “in which” are referring to “these things” of verse 6. That in turn is referring to the list of things from verse 5 – “fornication, uncleanness, passion, evil desire, and covetousness, which is idolatry.” Paul notes that his readers (and certainly any who have come to Christ since his letter) “once walked” in them. It was their very conduct of life, and it was this for which the wrath of God would have come upon them.

ἐν ᾧ ἔχομεν τὴν ἀπολύτρωσιν διὰ τοῦ αἵματος αὐτοῦ, τὴν ἄφεσιν τῶν ἁμαρτιῶν·

He then finishes up the verse with “when you lived in them.” The verb is in the imperfect tense, and thus it more accurately reads, “when you were living in them.” Their walk in these things literally surrounded them. It was as if these sins were the very air they breathed. However, they had moved to Christ and so Paul exhorted them to put these things to death, rather than living in them. As Christ died for our sins, we are to die to sin and live for Christ.

Life application: Though there are many trials in this life, and temptations abound around us, we should endeavor to live holy lives. Let us stand firm in the fellowship of believers, stay close to the word of God, and not give the devil an inch. It is tough, but through Christ we can prevail over these things.

But now you yourselves are to put off all these: anger, wrath, malice, blasphemy, filthy language out of your mouth. Colossians 3:8

We have been told in verse 3:2 that we are to set our minds on things above, not on things of the earth. In order to accomplish this, Paul now gives exhortations which will help make this possible. The list is very similar to that given in Ephesians 4:31. He first says, “But now you yourselves are to put off all these.” As we are in Christ, God looks at us and sees Him. We are adorned with His garments of righteousness. Because of this, we are to “put off” things which are unbecoming of this most favorable garment of honor.

He begins with “anger.” It comes from a word indicating “to swell.” It “proceeds from an internal *disposition* which *steadfastly* opposes someone or something based on extended personal exposure, i.e. solidifying what the beholder considers *wrong* (unjust, evil)” (HELPS Word Studies).

Next he says “wrath.” This is a word which signifies “getting heated up” or “breathing violently.” It is a “passion-driven behavior, i.e. actions emerging out of strong impulses (intense emotion)” (HELPS Word Studies).

He then notes “malice.” This describes the underlying attitude of evil. It is inherent evil which is present, even if it is not seen in an outward expression. Those evil things which we harbor, even inside, need to be quenched as we walk in newness of life in the Spirit.

Following that is “blasphemy.” This is the Greek word *blasphémia*. It indicates abusive language, and thus blasphemy. It “‘switches’ right for wrong (wrong for right), i.e. calls what God *disapproves*, ‘right’ which ‘exchanges the truth of God for a lie’” (HELPS Word Studies).

Paul then warns against “filthy language.” The word he uses is unique to Scripture. It is more than filthy speech, and vile communication, but it includes foul-mouthed abuse. Such speech is to be put out of our mouths.

ἐν ᾧ ἔχομεν τὴν ἀπολύτρωσιν διὰ τοῦ αἵματος αὐτοῦ, τὴν ἄφεσιν τῶν ἁμαρτιῶν·

Life application: It is unbecoming of one clothed in Christ to wear garments of indecency. Let us strive to emulate the Lord, and not be likened to the fallen, depraved world around us.

Do not lie to one another, since you have put off the old man with his deeds, Colossians 3:9

These words here are also close to Paul's thoughts from Ephesians 4:22-25 -

“...that you put off, concerning your former conduct, the old man which grows corrupt according to the deceitful lusts, ²³ and be renewed in the spirit of your mind, ²⁴ and that you put on the new man which was created according to God, in true righteousness and holiness.

²⁵ Therefore, putting away lying, 'Let each one of you speak truth with his neighbor,' for we are members of one another.”

Paul is consistent in his words to his readers. Though the law is annulled in Christ, there are precepts which are repeated from the law which we are asked to comply with. This is because committing such offenses is contrary to our new life in Christ. One of God's attributes is that of truthfulness. As we are to emulate Him, we are to be truthful in all we say; the old man has been put off. In the Greek it is an aorist verb. There is a set time when this occurred. As the old man is gone, and we are in Christ, it logically follows that we are saved one-time-for-all-time. This will continue to be seen in the next verses.

Therefore, going back and doing things which are past cannot result in a lack of salvation, but they can affect us negatively nonetheless. We can lose friendships, we can lose fellowship, and we can be imprisoned or even killed for doing wrong. And further, we will certainly lose eternal rewards for such things. Therefore, let us strive to emulate the Lord in all ways, and to be pleasing to God as we live out this life in Christ.

Life application: If we think lying will somehow get us ahead in life, or get us out of some type of fix we are in, we are making a wrong judgment about the action. Instead, we should consider what we say from the heavenly, not the earthly, perspective. In doing so, we will benefit from that which is truly of value.