

The Peace of Christ, Part One (Colossians 3:15)

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Introduction

1. Colossians 3:1-17 reflects Paul's understanding of the reconciliation theme begun in Genesis 3.
Support for this observation is seen in his use of several terms: "glory" (v. 4), "knowledge" and "image" (v. 10), "put on" (v. 11), "blame" (v. 13), "harmony" (v. 14), and "peace" (v. 15).
2. Paul uses the metaphor of changing apparel, a figure found in Genesis 3.
3. Jewish and early Christian commentators believed Adam and Eve were clothed with a kind of glory-light.
 - a. When they sinned, the glory-light was gone, and they tried to hide the fact.
 - b. The Lord's giving them coats of skin began the reconciliation process that continues until Christ returns and all His saints again appear with Him in glory (Col. 3:4).
4. Changing apparel is a function brought about by the *new* creation.
 - a. Christians are to lay aside the garments of the old Adam in which no one can enter God's presence.
 - b. Conversely, believers are to exchange old habits for virtues of the new man created in the likeness of the last Adam (Christ).
 - c. In reality, they are already clothed with the New Man in whom they have been "renewed."
5. The restoration theme of Genesis 3 is God's plan to restore the creation.
 - a. God established His kingdom on earth through human representatives.
 - b. The governing indicator of the relationship between the Creator Father and the image-son was *shalom* (peace).
 - c. Sadly, until Christ, this process has involved spiral-like cycles, each ending in failure and judgment.
6. This theme is taken up in our text: "*Let the shalom of Christ rule in you hearts.*"

I. Peace Defined

1. *Peace* in this verse is not a reference to inward tranquility or the resolution of hostility between enemies.
 - a. Peace, here, carries the meaning of the OT word, *shalom*, which means *wholeness, integrity, and harmony*.

- b. Shalom has to do with God's kingdom in its integrity and harmony as God is present – sacred space.
2. *Shalom*-peace is not the *restraint* of conflict by opposing interests but the *absence* of conflict due to unity and harmony.
- Shalom* defines the relationship between God and the administrators of His kingdom.
3. Adam's fall disrupted the harmony of the whole created order.
- a. The creation is first described in Genesis 1:2 as "*without form and void*" – without *shalom*, wholeness, completeness, and harmony.
 - b. God's creative work over the next six days established *shalom* as seen in the divine verdict "*very good.*" This fact is confirmed by God's resting (*Shabbat*) on the seventh day.
 - c. Adam's sin destroyed creation *shalom* as he was estranged from God and developed enmity and hostility toward God.
4. With Genesis 3:15 God began the process of restoring His creation to the state of *shalom* by reestablishing harmony between the divine Father and His image-son.
- a. The kingdom established in Israel (Ex. 20; Ezek. 20; Ezek. 13:10, 13)
 - b. The kingdom's king established in David (2 Sam. 7)
 - c. The new kingdom established in the last Adam (the church)
 - 1) Christ is the true Israel (Hosea 11:1; Matt. 3:17) – the church being the Israel of God as it is in union with Christ (Gal. 6:16).
 - 2) Christ is the true David (Isa. 9; Acts 15:16, 17; Luke 1:67-79)—the church administers His rule through this union.
 - 3) Christ is the true Man (John 5:19-24; 14:9) – the church is to reflect the harmony of Christ His Father. Thus Paul admonishes the Colossians: "Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts."

II. What Paul Exhorted

1. You are in Christ – in His kingdom. Behave like kingdom saints; put on love, which binds everything in the harmonious (*shalomic*) whole, and "*let the shalom of Christ rule in your hearts.*"

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