

“Have you been raised yet?”

Colossians 3:1-4 NIV

Since, then, you have been raised with Christ, set your hearts on things above, where Christ is seated at the right hand of God.

(2) Set your minds on things above, not on earthly things. (3) For you died, and your life is now hidden with Christ in God. (4) When Christ, who is your life, appears, then you also will appear with him in glory.

Today’s text reveals a truth most Christians either reject or seem not to understand.

Scripture affirms it, but most folks, including many ministers, don’t pick up on it.

Possibly you know why some refuse to accept its truth:

Is the idea difficult to grasp?

Or do many Christians snub it because they align with British politician, Lord Hugh Molson:

“I will look at additional evidence to confirm the



opinion to which I have already come.”¹

Let’s reread the first phrases of verse 1 & 3:

(v-1) “Since, then, you have been raised with Christ . . .”

(v-3) “For you died . . .”

Did you catch what the text said?

Colossian believers died and were raised.

“What kind of strange idea is this Bob?”

“Where did you get this stuff?”

Last week we spoke of religious leaders who knew Jesus was genuine, but their jealousy led them to kill him.

The majority of “holy men” felt that way, but not all did.

One ruler named Nicodemus went to Jesus privately and said: “We know that you are a teacher come from God, for no one can do these signs that you do, unless God is with him.”²

Jesus wasted no time with small talk and didn’t say:

¹www.bing.com/search? Hugh Molson, Baron Molson (Arthur Hugh Elsdale Molson, Baron Molson, PC Former Member of Parliament for Doncaster).

² John 3: 2 World English Bible

“Nick, I wish everyone believed as your do.”

He went straight to the point.

“Jesus answered him, ‘Most certainly, I tell you, **unless one is born anew, he can’t see God’s Kingdom.**’

4 Nicodemus said to him, ‘How can a man be born when he is old? Can he enter a second time into his mother’s womb, and be born?’

5 Jesus answered, ‘Most certainly I tell you, **unless one is born of water and spirit, he can’t enter into God’s Kingdom.**’³

Jesus made it evident that he requires us to be born again.

Why would anyone need rebirth unless a death occurred?

This new birth is by water and the spirit.

The Bible consistently affirms the same idea.

When Paul wrote the church in Ephesus (about the same # of miles from Colossae as Sioux City is to Omaha), he told them:

“As for you, you were dead in your transgressions and sins, ² in which you

used to live when you followed the ways of this world and of the ruler of the kingdom of the air, the spirit who is now at work in those who are disobedient.”⁴

Some assess our society as being sick.

If you have a fatal disease, you might still blink your eyes and groan, but no one would bet on you to replace Tom Brady in New England.

Similarly, if we live by the world’s standards, we suffer a fatal disease and the Lord doesn’t have us booked to sing us in his choir.

We’re dead, and unless we change, we won’t be resting in peace.

Transgression and sin indicate that we’re goners.

The Colossians were in the same lost condition as those in Ephesus, but they repented, stopped rebelling against God’s will, changed, and became one with Christ: “Having been buried with him (Christ) in baptism, in which you were also raised with him through your faith in the working of God, who raised him from the dead. ¹³

³ Ibid, verses 3-5

⁴ Ephesians 2:1, 2NIV

When you were dead in your sins . . . , God made you alive with Christ. He forgave us all our sins, ¹⁴ having canceled the charge of our legal indebtedness, which stood against us and condemned us; he has taken it away, nailing it to the cross.”⁵

When we live according to the world’s standards we’re deceased, departed, lifeless, inert—gone with no future.

We’re not talking the condition of babies here. ⁶

Let me give you a nutshell explanation—not nutcase, nutshell as I see it.

- **The Bible tells us that we’re born innocent.**
- **Babies and little kids don’t have sin.**⁷
- **Jesus: Unless you repent and become like little children, you can’t enter his kingdom.**



⁵ Colossians 2:12-14 NIV The charge of legal indebtedness Jesus cancelled refers to the Law of Moses, including the Ten Commandments, which Jesus completely fulfilled for all through his righteous life and sacrificial death on the cross.

⁶ These passages speak to adults who once made the decision to follow Christ, were baptized into His death but let the world pull them back to its standards please God.

⁷ Photo courtesy of our friend, Marsha

As we grow older, we become infected by lots of crud—selfishness, bitterness, rebellion, greed, anger, lust, and pride.

If you are thinking, “Not me. Bob, I’m a good person,” pride has you in the grave and you don’t even know it.

“And the devil did grin, for his darling sin is pride that apes humility.”⁸

Covetousness, power trips, and pride start to control us.

They affect our relationships with others, and destroy harmony with God.

The Bible defines as resisting God’s will in any manner.

Sin leads us to death. Paul said, “You were dead in the transgressions and sins in which you used to live,”

“Bob, you are overstating the case!”

But let me ask you, “If we aren’t dead, why would Jesus say” “You have to be born again.”?

⁸ *The Devil’s Thoughts* Samuel Taylor Coleridge

Jesus said this to a religious teacher who walked to Jesus’ house and just wanted to ask a question.

We must be born again, because we’re dead in the trespasses and sins in which we once lived.”



In New Testament times, when grown folks acknowledged that they were doing wrong, they renounced their sins, changed their lives, and accepted Christ in baptism. They were “born again.”

In the Bible, the word “baptize” meant immerse.

In fact the Greeks used the word baptize to describe shipwreck and drowning.

Immersion in water effectively displays and states our intention, to get rid of this old person in me who is stubborn, proud, consumed by sex, angry, hateful, selfish and rebellious.

Immersion “drowns”—gets rid of the old stubborn person.

That’s why Jesus said, “You must be born again; born of the water and the spirit.”

Every Christian in New Testament times was baptized because he or she realized that the selfish way of life goes nowhere—that only Christ provides a new and living way that leads to love and peace.

They died to the old in baptism and were raised to a new kind of life in Christ.

Earlier Paul reminded the Colossian Christians of their common experience: “Having been buried with him in baptism and raised with him through your faith in the power of God who raised him (Jesus) from the dead.”

Repentance and immersion for the remission of our sins constitute our first death, burial, and resurrection.

We go down into the water to get rid of the old proud stubborn person.

We come up out of the water united with Christ in his resurrection; raised from death caused by our sins.

We are joined to Christ and now belong to him. That’s our first resurrection.

Thus our text reads: **“Since, then, you have been raised with Christ, set your hearts on things above, where Christ is seated at the right hand of God.**

(2) Set your minds on things above, not on earthly things.

(3) For you died, and your life is now hidden with Christ in God.”

Paul connected immersion and resurrection also in Romans 6:2-5:

“Or don’t you know that all of us who were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? ⁴ We were therefore buried with him through baptism into death in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, we too may live a new life. ⁵ For if we have been united with him in a death like his, we will certainly also be united with him in a resurrection like his.”

In baptism, we’re raised—have our first resurrection and we’re reigning right now, “Where Christ is seated at the right hand of

God.”

We look to God, not to humans for our hope.

Christ can never die again,

We have this hope if we trust him.

Our present bodies become diseased, grow old and die, but just as Christ came out of the grave, so shall we.

- He’ll change these lowly bodies of ours to be like his glorious body.**
- That’ll happen in the second resurrection.**

The Apostle Peter explained how baptism saves us by comparing the water that saved Noah in the ark.

“In it only a few people, eight in all, were saved through water, ²¹ and this water symbolizes baptism that now saves you also—not the removal of dirt from the body but the pledge of a clear conscience toward God. It saves you by the resurrection of Jesus Christ, ²² who has gone into heaven and is at God’s right hand—with angels, authorities and powers in submission to him.”

Many regard baptism as an unnecessary, symbolic rite.

This scripture teaches otherwise.

The water that saved Noah symbolizes the water that now saves us.

Think of baptism as the final act of getting rid of the old person and fully submitting to Jesus’ management.

That old person doesn’t die easily, does it?

Any ball player who wants to play on a team must submit his/her will to the coach. As long as we think we know better than the coach, we shall never play on a winning team.

I pray that you believe in and trust Christ’s life-power and are ready to follow him and constantly tell others about him!



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