

IF YE THEN BE RISEN WITH CHRIST

By Jerry L. Henderson

The apostle Paul in Col. 3:1 prefaces his instructions to the “saints and faithful brethren in Christ which are at Colosse” (1:2) with these words: “If then you were raised with Christ (NKJV),” which suggest the possibility that there are some who have not been “raised with Christ.” I am persuaded that there are many people in this world who think they are in Christ, that is, have been raised with him who have, in fact, not been. In Col. 3:1-5 Paul gives us a means of testing ourselves to see whether we have truly been raised with Christ. Let's notice the things contained in these verses and see if we meet these requirements of being raised with Christ.

The statement “If then you were raised with Christ” refers to a definite act not a state of being. That being the case, just what act then is referred to? I suggest that it refers to the act in Col. 2:12 “buried with him in baptism” as Paul referred to in Rom. 6:3-4 being buried in baptism like Christ was buried and then arose from the dead. We, like Christ are raised from the dead through baptism, to walk in newness of life. In Christ, one is a new creature, old things have passed away and all things have become new 2Cor. 5:17. So Paul implies here in Col. 3:1 that there is a possibility that a person may not have been raised with Christ, when they were baptized, they may have just gotten wet.

Now let's look at some of the qualifying statements made by Paul to the Colossians that will help us to understand whether we were indeed raised together with Christ. Paul says IF you have been raised together with Christ you will set your affections (NKJV says “mind”) on things above not on things on the earth. Affections involve our thinking, moral interest or what we reflect upon in our mind. The word “set” means to place, it indicates something we have to do with our minds. This does not refer to something that just happens to us, but rather a conscious, deliberate act, something we do. So, what are the things above? Paul mentions some in this chapter: “Therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, put on tender mercies, kindness, humility, meekness, longsuffering; bearing with one another, and forgiving one another, if anyone has a complaint against another; even as Christ forgave you, so you also must do. But above all these things put on love, which is the bond of perfection (NKJV) Col. 3:12-14. Also in Gal. 5:22-24 Paul list the fruit of the Spirit: love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control. We are to set our minds on such things as Paul mentions in Phil. 4:8: Truth, honesty, justice, Purity, things lovely (pleasing, agreeable), of good report, virtue and praise. These things are the attributes of God and if we have been raised together with Christ they will all be a part of our life.

Paul then gives the reason we set our minds on things above and not on the things on the earth: “for ye died”. The reason we do not love earthly things is because the old man is crucified Rom. 6:6; we are dead to sin and cannot live any longer therein Rom. 6:2 and because we are dead to the world we do not love the world 1Jhn. 2:15,16. We are dead, but alive; our life is hidden with Christ in God. Paul in Gal. 2:20 said: I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless, I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me. You see, we are still in the flesh, but we do not live after the flesh, if we have been raised with Christ.

If we have truly been raised with Christ then old things have passed away and all things have indeed become new 2Cor. 5:17. We will be seeking the things which are above and not concerning ourselves with the former things, nor will we be overly concerned with the things of this life, for our primary interest will be the things of God. Have you been raised together with Christ?