

THE BOOK OF COLOSSIANS
“That I May Know Him” -- As Sanctifier
Philippians 3:10; Colossians 1:21, 22

Introduction

1. There are ways leading to “that I may know Him.” These include taking a warning, taking a position, taking an inventory, and taking an accounting.
2. The ways to know Him lead to a total loss of every gain and by counting your assets as garbage. At that point, you can win Christ, be found in Christ, and genuinely know Christ.
3. Having come to know Christ, it is instructive for you to look back and review where you were before the holy God, what the holy God did to change things, and the ultimate purpose the holy God had in allowing you to KNOW Christ.

4. To help you think about this, here are three incredible statements.

1. There is human CONDEMNATION v. 4

Admittedly, this is not a popular concept, but it is just where the Bible starts. The word “sometime” really means “once.” It refers to all the life time before being reconciled to God, before getting to know Christ. No matter what progress is made in culture, education, or circumstances, the bottom line is “once.” There never was an interruption. It is described in four dreadful terms:

a. Alienated. The perfect passive participle in the original Greek text indicates a continuing condition of alienation. It is a vivid picture that the whole of humanity belonged to “another” rather than to God. Humanity, hence each one of us, has fallen away from God (Eccles. 7:29; Ro. 5:12). It is true that we do not want to acknowledge this condition of alienation from God, but that doesn’t change the verdict of the Bible (cf. Eph. 2:3).

b. Opposed. This is the term “enemy.” It expresses the estrangement from God as a matter of hostility and antagonism. A stand against God is conveyed by this word. There is no friendship with God.

c. Warped. Since the enmity is specifically defined as being “in the mind,” there is a bitter conflict with the will of God. Therefore, not only are the desires of nature involved, but the very modes of thinking and feeling. Certain features of society, as culture and education, may contribute to the decencies in behavior, but all the while there is a fierce antagonism in the mind. God is condemned and self is emulated. The entire thinking faculty is indicated by the Greek term for mind here. Disposition is also included. The hostility pervades all the thoughts and the feelings of anyone who does not know Christ (Ps. 12:4; Ro. 8:7).

d. Wicked. This is how the alienated, opposed, warped humanity expresses itself -- by wicked works. Both inward and outward deeds come from this dreadful condition just described. Think of it -- whoever is in the world and does not know Christ is this!

2. There is divine SUBSTITUTION v. 21, 22

How could anyone as just described ever get to know Christ? Here is the answer in a

pithy phrase. The “but now” expresses a sharpened contrast to explain the present order of things. What did the infinite God do in the face of such hostility (really war!)? This is what He did in the Person of His Son, Jesus Christ. Read it.

a. Provided reconciliation. The double compound verb employed here expresses complete and perfect reconciliation once and for all. The aorist tense shows that it is a done thing. For the war of men, God offers peace!

b. Provided submission. Jesus Christ gave up His body to effect the reconciliation. That Jesus was real flesh and bones is clear from the words “body” and “flesh” (Heb. 2:14; 10:5, 10; 1 Tim. 3:16).

c. Provided expiration. The incarnation of Jesus Christ was not enough. Punishment for the antagonism and alienation had to be meted out. This meant the blood, the cross, the death of our blessed Lord (cf. v. 20). By the way, if blood is the same as death, the distinction drawn in this text should be omitted. It must not!

3. There is eternal EXPECTATION v. 22

To know Christ as Saviour is really not the bottom line. The line extends beyond that fundamental truth. It is important to understand what you were and how God effected a change. This has just been reviewed. Now what? The obvious is -- what is the purpose or goal for getting to know Christ. Regretfully for many to know Christ is merely an escape from eternal condemnation. Noble as that may be, there is more. Look at what the Bible says:

a. The purpose is Stated. The aorist active infinitive expresses God’s purpose for rebellious antagonistic enemies who, by the substitutionary death of Christ, have gotten to know Him. That purpose is to set at hand or present the true believer in the very face of the Lord Jesus Christ. The ultimate goal to know Christ is to be in the presence of Christ.

b. The purpose is Detailed. There are three issues:

1) Holiness. This is the highest goal possible for it is commensurate with God Himself Who is absolutely holy (cf. 1 Pet. 1:14-16). In the maze of compromising belief, this separateness to God has virtually been buried. But this is the purpose of God in getting to know His Son Jesus -- holiness!

2) Spotlessness. To be without blemish is the significance of the Greek term. It is used of the sinlessness of the Lord Jesus (Heb. 2:14). To be faultless is no mean level of ethical standard, but it is God’s goal for one who knows His Son -- faultlessness.

3) Changelessness. Non-liability to punishment is the thrust of this word. It means that one will not be accused or called to account (cf. Ro. 8:1).

Conclusion True it is that without one’s relationship to Christ, these goals are unattainable. But, this must not be the excuse for those who know Him to live as if no change has taken place (1 Pet. 2:11, 12; 4:1-4). To know Christ as Saviour also means to know Him as Sanctifier. Live that way!