Colossians - Commentaries by Arthur Copeland Brown

Kentucky Conference: 1964, Christ Is All

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Address—A.C. Brown

Address by AC Brown, Kentucky, September 6th, 1964. We love the pause and meditate. Upon such thoughts as our. Brother has just. Eden was found in that him, our souls. Delight. In this precious truth. Jesus. How much? Thy name unfolds. We have that verse. John 1. All his fullness have we all received. And grace upon grace. This afternoon one desires. To enlarge upon that verse in Colossians 3 verse 11. Christ is. All. It is also translated Christ is everything. Christ is everything. Adam. And his race? Have been dealt with. According to God. When the Lord Jesus Christ. Met the judgment, and it was a universal judgment. Now is the judgment of this world. Now we have a verse in. The end of First Corinthians, one Speaking of Jesus Christ. Whom God has made unto us. God has made him unto us. Wisdom. Righteousness. Sanctification or holiness? And redemption. But our hearts and our minds embrace the largeness of those thoughts. Well, those thoughts are full thoughts according to God. Has made him unto us wisdom. Righteousness. Sanctification and redemption. The Lord Jesus. And speaking to his own in that 14th chapter of John, who was read this morning in verse six says. I am the way. The truth. And the life. No one cometh unto the Father, but by me. Yes, he is the altogether. Lovely one. Now in Colossians, we may. Read other verses. But bearing in mind our starting place. That Christ is all. We will read verses that will bring out such truth as this.

And that Christ himself says, I am the resurrection and the life. We're going to see how everything of the old order and the old creation. Has passed out in the cross of Christ. And now the new creation. In a sense, is embraced in that one. Life. Who came out of death? Who came out of the grave? And he himself is the beginning of the new creation. And you and I, as we sit here this afternoon, who are Christians, do have an interest. In that we through grace. As the word says in 2nd Corinthians 517, if anyone be in Christ Jesus, he is. New creation. He is a part of that eternal new order that began with a blessed person of our Lord Jesus Christ. Throughout all of eternity. It'll be our delight, as Mr. Darby puts it. To be hidden back of him. In order that he should have all the glory. We are now hindered. There's no one that seeks to minister Christ. But what has a real battle and a real exercise? To get that self out of the way. Christ might get his due place. That's the desire in the bottom of the heart, that of every servant of Christ that seeks to stand up for him, such as this afternoon, and will be again this evening. And the hour we had before us I know that we enjoyed. The stirring truth that's so needful that we. With purpose of heart. Might cleave to the Lord. Now in this. Christ is all. Christ is everything. Let us. Look at chapter 2 and verse 9. Chapter 2, verse 9. The. The very end verse 8 is Christ. For in him. Dwelleth all the fullness of the Godhead. In him dwelleth all the fullness of the Godhead yet. In human form. Bodily. Now the next verse shows. God's grace in planting us in this new position in him. In Ephesians, we are accepted in the Beloved. We have been accepted in the Beloved 1. And here we get a little touch of that kind of truth in Colossians. In verse 10 for ye are complete. In him. Now Colossians is mostly occupied with what Christ is.

And to the church and also what Christ is unto God. In Ephesians, it is more of what the Church is to Christ. But here we find in Colossians a purpose of giving us this truth in Christianity. That we begin with Christ. There is no gradual steps or attainment, but we are from the time we have been saved and indwelt by the Holy Spirit, we are complete in Him. I want to be more occupied with him than our portion with him, but we want a glance here of our identification with him. Inverse. 13. We are dead. Well, we get it in. Verse 20 of chapter 2 That we've died with Christ. Now there's our identification of the death. Christ. Is also our. End and that he died not only for us, but that we died with him. We have died with him. Not only so. We have been buried with him in verse 12. Buried with him. It's the work of God. We've been buried with him now in verse 13. We are quickened together with him. We're quickened together with Christ. And furthermore. In chapter 3, verse 4. Well, we we want to read verse one, we are risen with Christ. And now, verse four, Christ is our life. Christ is our life. Our life is hid with Christ in God, we're told here. And another step to complete this line is at the end of verse 4. Then shall ye also appear with him in glory. All this is a marvelous truth. Our identification with Christ all the way from that death, burial and the quickening, raising Him and His being, our life as He is in the glory, and that He is our hope. You get that in the end of chapter 21, verse 27. Notice the last half of verse 27. Among the Gentiles? Well, I think that's what we all were by nature, which is Christ in you. The hope of glory. All you see how Christ? Who is now living on high, And who says, because I live, ye shall live also? So he is our hope, first Timothy, one Christ, our hope. And you know, in Titus we have the blessed hope. He's the blessed hope. And we know we're persuaded that we're living in the very season. Of his. We may say immediate coming. He's just about to come. And we are made to realize this in these days. Now some verses in chapter one. Commence with verse 13.

Who hath delivered us this is. We're giving thanks to the Father in verse 12, verse 13, who hath delivered us from the power of darkness. Oh, that darkness that we were in. We ourselves were darkness. That power that we have no ability to deliver ourselves from, God has delivered us from the power of darkness and have translated us into the Kingdom of His dear Son. We are in it. In whom we have redemption. Now it's in Christ. We have redemption. Now in verse 15, Christ is the image of the invisible God. What does the world? The unsaved? What do they know as to God? All their dark, but we know that Christ is the image of the invisible God. And he is the first born of every creation creature that is creation. He's the creator. John One, He's the creator and here we have his title. As the first born in verse 16 explains it, for by him were all things created, and it ends with all things are created by him and for him. And in verse 17 he is before. All things, and by him all things sub consist or subsist. And in Hebrews one, we may read it shortly. He's the upholder of all things, A very similar thought. Now we get in verse 18. He is ahead of the body of the Church, who is the beginning, their first born, from the dead, that is, from among the dead. He is the first born. The first born a title. That belongs to him and the Scriptures, I believe all through and Speaking of the term first born. Which it speaks much. I believe it's pointing to Christ. I only know of 1 exception and that is Jeptha's daughter where a woman in this case was alluded to. I know of no other scripture, but what in God's mind I believe in using the term first born is pointing on to this one. That in all things he might have the preeminence. The little child. Asserts itself. A little boy and girl at school likes to assert itself, and as we grow up, we like to assert ourselves. We we like to have a little preeminence. We'll use any and every means to try to make something of self. Would even use friends as ladders, as it were. To, as it were, exalt one another. Well. God would have us. Recognize this truth, that in all things he might have

the preeminence. Now, you and I, we could turn this to a practical exhortation here. How much does he have in our lives and in our homes? Does he get the first place? Everyone that's a real Christian has somewhat of these desires that Christ might have the first place. May he have more in our lives. Now. We'll go on to verse 19 for it please the Father, that in him the Son should all fullness dwell.

Now I would turn to Hebrews 1. Hebrews one. God, I want to read verse 2 now God hath in these last days. Spoken unto us by or in his Son. Now no man hath seen God. Anytime but the only begotten son who is in the bosom of the Father. He hath declared him. He hath declared him. Now I know that in the 18th of Deuteronomy. Moses writes to the children of Israel that God is going to raise up a prophet like unto him, and him shall ye hear. Well, I believe this here is far more than that. I believe this here is that God has spoken in a way like He's never spoken before. And it is not only that we should hear the words of the Lord Jesus Christ. Oh, that's a altogether true but. Shall we not hear the wonderful way God has spoken in the person of His Son? I believe that's the great point here. God has spoken to us in His Son. Whom he hath appointed the heir of all things, by whom also he made the universe the world. Now we want to magnify the person, as this chapter does. It declares unto us the majesty of his person. That he is. The very creator, and he's the very heir. He's a very heir. Of all things, and you and I, by the way, through grace. Have been constituted Co heirs. We are Heirs of God, Romans 817, and Coheirs with Christ. Christ will not take that inheritance without you and me, and all is redeemed ones. In company with him, he'll take possession and we with him in due time of that wonderful inheritance. We don't know how rich we are, do we? We just apprehend a little bit. But we cannot comprehend this great truth. Now in verse three we see that he's the brightness of his glory, the express image of his person. And here we have it Upholding all things by the word of his power, I walk along. Downtown and the big cities. And we find that you have to walk out in the street with a boardwalk and a high fence, and you hear an elevator chattering away and carrying materials up to a skyscraper's. Well, for these years one has been saved. One likes to think of this verse as one walks along and knows that things could drop from above. Land on one. Here's a good verse. Yep, upholdeth all things by the word of his power, and one can walk along in confidence. When he had by himself. Purged made purgation of sins. Or you and I know that it includes our sins, but that's not the point here. This word, oh, you are know that word is left out in Mr. Darby's translation. The Holy Spirit here is making everything of Christ, and you and I have hearts that love to see that.

It isn't a question so much of what he's done for us here. It's what he's done to Godward. He has made purgation of sins to God's glory and satisfaction. And then, in the majesty and dignity, he himself sits himself down. On the right hand of the majesty on high, that's verse three. Well, in verse four we see that he has the most excellent name of which we've been singing. Now in verse 5. Begotten in humanity and in verse. Six, The object of worship. The end of verse Six. Let all the angels of God worship him well in verse 8. Under the sun he saith, Thy throne, O God, is forever and ever. A scepter of righteousness is a scepter of thy Kingdom. Of all the kingdoms. Of all the Thrones. Here is one who is unique. He himself. Soon to be manifested as the King of Kings and the Lord of Lords, our blessed Lord Jesus, who hung on the cross for us. Oh, how we will rejoice in that day when he comes forth. In displaying the glory of God, and we in company with him. We the Church as His bride. Well, let's see. We still have a thought in verse 10. Again referring to his creating all things in verse 10, Thou Lord in the beginning. Hast laid the foundation of the earth. Oh, could any other? Could that be said of any other man? No. Thou hast laid the foundation of the earth. Remember in the eighth of Proverbs, when he speaks about this, he could say. I was there, I was there, and so on. The heavens are the work, the works of thine hands. As you look at the starry heavens, and you see just a little portion of it, and you only see in the depth of it, or just the am I say the surface, as it were. Yet think of that. They're the works of his hands. The mind cannot comprehend it, as we said before, but faith vows with thankful heart that he is the one now in verse 12. As a vesture shalt thou fold them up. Think of it. That one is the one that will bring things to completion. He will also execute judgments and finally this whole order will be burned up. And we'll then have the fruit of the work of the cross in the new heaven and the new earth, the fruit of the work of our Lord Jesus Christ in that new heaven and new earth. Oh, how we ought to have our hearts. Enlarged by weighing such thoughts as to this one person of which whom we've been speaking. Well. Thought in verse three of the next chapter. How shall we escape if we neglect so great salvation? Should you and I be indifferent you, remember that verse in Lamentations 112 which says, Is it nothing to you all ye that passed by? Is it nothing to us, this wonderful savior we have? This wonderful salvation that he has rocked and that he has made it ours well.

The indifferent ones may prove that they never had anything, they never had the root of the matter in them, but even for those that are real. We should hang our heads in shame and blush for how little we respond to the person of Christ and that great salvation He's made ours. Should we neglect it. Our tendency is our brother said this afternoon, Is maybe to pick up this, that and the other thing and almost anything but. To prefer. That which is for the glory of Christ in our lives. Well, another thought or so right here. In verse 8, the last part of chapter 2, verse eight I believe looks on to the millennial scene to the day of his Kingdom and glory. It says we see not yet all things put under him. God is going to have him head up all things both in the heavens. And the earth, and also ourselves as the Church. He's going to be the head over all, and all will be under full subjection to our blessed Lord Jesus. Now he right now let's read verse 9. But we see Jesus, who has made a little Lord and the angels for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honor. This is not yet his royal crown, his reigning crown for the Kingdom, no. This is. The glory that God has placed upon him now. He is crowned with glory. He is crowned with glory, and he is crowned with honor. And he by the grace of God, should taste death for every man. And now, in verse 10, the middle of it, he is now bringing many sons to glory, dear ones that include you and me. All of us that are saved, he is bringing us. To glory, to share it with us. He died for us and he rose again that he might have us with him. All his love so obvious that he wanted to have us with him. You know some you love, and you love to have them with you. Well, how weak. Does that thought compared to his now in verse 12? I will declare thy name. None other could declare it as he did. You're not in fullness unto my brethren. In the midst. Of the assembly. Well, I sing praise. Unto thee. Now this is what is going on in this age now and as you and I this morning were gathered to his precious name, for where two or three are gathered together unto my name, there am I in the midst of them, that is they that are thus gathered. Well, here it is. In the midst of the assembly will I sing praise unto thee. Now we must. Pause and consider the privilege. The special privilege that God has given by working in our hearts and attracting us to the Lord Jesus Christ and His precious name and I want nothing else. As a center, as a gathering center then Christ and his precious name. So we have been gathered by the Spirit of God outside the camp. On Earth. And if we are gathered in the power of the Holy Spirit. In the unity of the Spirit, we are gathered outside of division. I learned that from Brother Fleck over 40 years ago.

Oh, I'm so happy and it stuck with me all these years, Brother Flex said. If we are gathered in the power of the Holy Spirit. In the unity of the Holy Spirit, we are outside of division. I see some nodding and approving. I can recognize in the faces, some here that know that's the truth. But there are many Saints that are not any too well established in just such truth. And what is our object here this afternoon? We trust it is to build up one another in our most holy faith. Well, now we're not only outside the camp, gathered to his name. But also by the grace of God, and when virtue of the blood of the Lord Jesus, we by faith enter in boldly into God's very presence, into the holiest. It is our portion all the time. It seems like we especially enjoy it on the Lord's Day Morning. But there isn't a Christian on earth, but has the right in virtue of that blood, to enter into the holiest. He has the right. That's his proper place. Every Christian on earth. Or whether how much he knows it, realizes

and enters into it and enjoys it, that's a different question. Another thought. In Ephesians 218, we're told it's by the One Spirit. That. We have access. We have access into the very presence of the Father. We have access to the Father. Ephesians 218. Now I mention it's by faith. I mentioned it's in virtue of the blood. Now I mention it, it's in the power of the Holy Spirit that we have access into God's presence under the Father. Now. One has in mind. Before closing. To take up another. Line that this connects with, let us turn to Psalm 65. Verse 4. All beloved. Brethren, you and I we all need. To have our minds, our thoughts, revived as to the high privilege that God has given us. Oh, in so many, many ways. Exemplary by those who a century and 1/3 of gold were gathered to the precious name of the Lord Jesus Christ, we have the examples of these godly ones who have gone before. We have, by the grace of God, nothing to plume ourselves in. We have no business to lift our heads up in pride. In fact, we should be ashamed of how little we take advantage of that precious ministry. That God has given us and we neglect it. Oh, how we spend our money for all sorts of things it may be, And once in a while we'll add a book or a pamphlet or something to our little library. Would that we found Ways and Means to. Occupy ourselves with these better things, you know God has shown you and me. Where the vein of gold lies, the miner that can find out where that vein of gold is. My he's a happy miner. Should we not appreciate these things that God has given us? God has given us the finest translation on earth.

None equal the translation that you and I know about in English, German and French. God has specially blessed the little remnant gathered to the name of the Lord Jesus Christ by a multitude of rich things. Should we not enjoy it more? Well, in verse four of Psalm 65 blessed is the one or the man whom thou chooses and causes to approach unto thee. Now this is not the gospel truth. Well, it isn't gospel truth to know that we're elect and chosen, and that we were chosen in Christ and before the foundation of the world. I I grant you this, not gospel truth. But this is a special. Work just as much as our salvation was to be truly gathered to the name of the Lord Jesus Christ by the Holy Spirit, now I grant it, dear ones, that many young people may have the privileges the privilege of nominally being gathered all they've been brought up in their home. So that they hardly know anything else, and they go along with the family, and they ask for the place of the March table. Thank the Lord. But all how much better when that soul awakens and gets exercised in the word of God and finds out first handed by faith. That this is God's mind of gathering and that God does not approve. Of the confusion. The divisions. They're ruined and all that. No, God is not the author of confusion. But to find out what is written. For your soul's sake. Not just your head's sake. Because we not only must find out God's mind and truth, but we must also have our hearts going on in a condition of having Christ before us. We're living in Laodicean Times Now. Laodicea is having everything. Or I might be going to all the meetings. I might have Bibles in my home. I might have a library. I might. All get into all kinds of religious activities, and yet if I don't have a heart for Christ, that is Laodicea. We need to be. Awake to this awful, serious thing of what Laodicea is. It is all around us, It is affecting us, so I don't believe there's one sitting here. But what should feel the influence? That bad influence have let us in. But Philadelphia? Once was a people whose lives, whose homes, whose hours, whose possessions, who are buying up every opportunity to make Christ known and their lives, Mr. Darby says. My own enjoyment of Christ will be my testimony to others if our lives are living in the good of these things. All. We'll be happy Christians. We won't have to hang our heads So much in shame. Well, here we have blessed is the one that thou chooses and causes to approach unto thee, that he may dwell in thy courts all to just dwell in his courts. Now we turn to our last portion, Ezekiel Chapter 44. I want to read just the. Maybe 6 or 8 verses in this chapter.

And. I'd like to have you notice. Now the similarity in thought to that which we have in the end of Luke 10 regarding. Martha and Mary. You know how busy Martha was. Oh. Martha thought that what she was doing was everything. She just thought that she was doing all the work and that Mary was. Well, Mary was just idle in her thoughts. And it fretted her. She didn't think that was fair, that Martha, you know, should do all this work and prepare this wonderful meal. And then Mary just simply sits there with the guest. That's Martha's thought. But dear ones. Do any of you know what it is in your own experience to get so occupied in service? Your soul is beginning to wither up when there's a lack of communion. A lack of living in the good of the precious truth. I know what it is by my own experience. Are being so occupied in service. I believe the Lord. Set me aside. From a little work. For that very reason. That I was. Giving the service. The first place and the Lord Jesus the second or last place, if you please. Well, Mary. Sat quietly. With her heart occupied with the one before her, and she was filled with joy as she heard the words of grace pour out of his blessed lips. And we know the remark, the Lord said. He gave a mild rebuke to Martha. Gave a word of approval to Mary. Mary hath chosen that good part. Well, let us read now in verse 11. If you notice in verse 10, it's the Levites. Now the Levites as we generally believe we're the ones. That tried for the service. Service is the great note here. This is the Martha character we're going to first look at, and in verse 11. These Levites who had gone astray from the Lord in verse 10. They shall be ministers, yes, they shall be ministers in my sanctuary, having charge at the gates. Of the house and ministering to the house. They shall slay the burnt offering and the sacrifice for the people. And they shall stand before them to minister unto them. You notice it's service, It's service, but it's we sometimes say that the spokes of a wheel point which direction. Well, here are the spokes to the wheel are pointing outward. Ministering to the people, Ministering to the house. And in verse 13 they shall not come near unto me. To do the office of a priest. Unto me nor to come near to any of my holy things in the most holy place. Verse 14. But I will make them keepers of the charge of the house for all the service thereof. Now is that not enough to call your attention to these Levites who had been careless? Verse 10 shows and God still used them in service, but it's an outward service in contrast to what we're now going to read it commencing with verse 15.

We're now going to notice how these folks, the spokes of the wheel, point inward to one center. But the priests, the Levites, the sons of Zadok, the kept in charge of My sanctuary. When the children of Israel went astray for me, they shall come near to me. To minister unto me. And they shall stand before me to offer unto me the fat and the blood, saith the Lord God. They shall enter into my sanctuary, and they shall come near to my table to minister unto me. What a contrast. Here we get God's mind. I'm afraid we get pretty far away from God's mind at times. When we want to go on with service and maybe be neglecting. This other side of the truth, which I believe God gives the first place. And you saw it in the end of Luke 10 when you said that Mary hath chosen that good part. She had chosen the better part of the two Mary had. And so we have it here. I jot it down here the other day, something I read in a home. Extra copy. I didn't even ask for it, but I wrote down some remarks to Mr. Darby. Take me only a couple of minutes to read it. Our Calling? Our Calling? Characteristically is ecclesiastical. Rather than evangelical. I do not say we are not to evangelize. Far from it. We do not want to discourage but encourage. That going out of the gospel. And our own faithfulness in every opportunity to speak to souls at the gas station, at the grocery store, in business, and at school. Yes, and to give out gospel tracts and to do anything and everything to make Christ the Savior known to sinners, all the gospel is important. But you know that in Christendom today, the evangelical Christians, real Christians, their tendency is to get about as far as the gospel and to make that activity everything, give it a first place. They are strong for sending out missionaries. And also the Sunday schools may swell in numbers. And they'll do everything to drum up all they can to come to the Gospel meetings. Well, may the Lord use His precious word. He's sovereign, yes, But you and I, who have been gathered to the precious name of the Lord Jesus Christ, must not neglect the most important thing God has given to Christians on earth, the truth as to the one body. Every member of Christ on earth is a member of that one body. And united by the Holy Spirit. Please, as our brother said to the Lord with purpose of heart, he also quoted, we should fire the truth and sell it not. And I have

two other scriptures I want to quote in connection that and that is Paul Wright, Second Timothy 314. Continue in the things which thou hast learned, continuing them not in mere form, but continue in them.

With all your heart now the other verse is the one. Most solemn. Note to Philadelphia Just one solemn note in all of that portion, I think the most solemn. And what is that? Hold fast that which thou hast. Now that includes, I believe, the glorious person of the Lord Jesus Christ, as we know him and God has revealed him to it and all the truth related to Christ. Let we value it, Jude says Contend earnestly for the faith once delivered to the Saints. So that is our desire this afternoon. And speaking on this subject, well, I just touch on two more verses in closing verse 17. It it will come to pass that when they enter in at the gates of the Inner Court, they shall be clothed with linen garments. And no wool shall come upon them whilst they minister in the gates of the Inner Court and within. They shall have linen bonnets upon their heads, and shall have linen breeches. Upon their loins they shall not gird themselves. With anything that causes sweat. Mirror natural energy. There's an awful lot of it in the religious world today. Activity making a big show numbers great men, talented personalities, education, and they'll have every device to attract the public and make their religious meetings popular as they possibly can. Activity natural. Energy. God wants us to be careful that what we are doing is done in the energy of the Holy Spirit. Now there's an awful lot of surface. Religion. Going on surface, we might call it veneer. Might call it veneer. The surface, you know, it puts up a nice exterior. But when you get down under the surface, you find that it isn't all. The genuine thing, the word of God, has much to say on that subject of of. Imitation. And such things. You take the strange fire. You take the voluntary humility of Colossians, chapter 2, the end of the chapter. Voluntary humility, all the spiritual. One can, as a rule, recognize a put on humility that is not genuine, as we say to the core. Well. This is about all we have in mind. This afternoon, and that is. To have our thoughts enlarged as to the blessed person of the Lord Jesus and the importance of our hearts to be. Affectionately. Devoted to Christ, you and I, I believe, desire this. The speaker certainly desires, and I believe you do too, that our hearts be attached to Christ, and then we continue until he comes. Might we sing number? 278.

I pray. I love you. Really high.

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