

22nd Week After Pentecost – MONDAY

TODAY'S READINGS, FOLLOWED BY A FEW PASTORAL & PERSONAL THOUGHTS.

A note to the reader: It is my fervent hope that all readers of these small meditations (among whom, I fervently also hope will be all of my precious flock, who receive them as they are written), will be inspired to meditate upon the scriptures often, reading them daily. I hope that these explanations will help you along your way to deeper understanding of the scriptures, which contain the words of life. The study of the scriptures can be frustrating, because they are a deep well, and often every word has a deep meaning. We cannot understand what we are not ready for, but we will never understand if we do not try! Please, struggle in your Christian life – prayer, fasting, the struggle to follow the commandments, and the reading of the Scriptures and other edifying writings. God will enlighten you and help you if you are consistent, and do everything with effort.

Colossians 2:13-20 And you, being dead in your sins and the uncircumcision of your flesh, hath he quickened together with him, having forgiven you all trespasses; ¹⁴ Blotting out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to his cross; ¹⁵ And having spoiled principalities and powers, he made a shew of them openly, triumphing over them in it. ¹⁶ Let no man therefore judge you in meat, or in drink, or in respect of an holyday, or of the new moon, or of the sabbath days: ¹⁷ Which are a shadow of things to come; but the body is of Christ. ¹⁸ Let no man beguile you of your reward in a voluntary humility and worshipping of angels, intruding into those things which he hath not seen, vainly puffed up by his fleshly mind, ¹⁹ And not holding the Head, from which all the body by joints and bands having nourishment ministered, and knit together, increaseth with the increase of God. ²⁰ Wherefore if ye be dead with Christ from the rudiments of the world, why, as though living in the world, are ye subject to ordinances,

Luke 9:18-22 And it came to pass, as he was alone praying, his disciples were with him: and he asked them, saying, Whom say the people that I am? ¹⁹ They answering said, John the Baptist; but some say, Elias; and others say, that one of the old prophets is risen again. ²⁰ He said unto them, But whom say ye that I am? Peter answering said, The Christ of God. ²¹ And he straitly charged them, and commanded them to tell no man that thing; ²² Saying, The Son of man must suffer many things, and be rejected of the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be slain, and be raised the third day.

Colossians 2:13-20 And you, being dead in your sins and the uncircumcision of your flesh, hath he quickened together with him, having forgiven you all trespasses;

The “flesh” referred to here is not our body. The word “flesh” not only refers to our bodies, but also to our whole person, our human nature, body and soul. St Paul goes to great lengths to teach his Gentile brethren that physical circumcision is not necessary. It was a “type” or foreshadowing of baptism, and when the actual is present, the type is not needed. “For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision, but a new creature.” (Gal 6:15, see also Gal 2:3-5).

Although the Jews were very proud of circumcision as the physical sign that they were the chosen people, it was always intended to refer to an inner, spiritual change in a person:

“Circumcise therefore the foreskin of your heart, and be no more stiffnecked.” (Deu 10:16)

“And the LORD thy God will circumcise thine heart, and the heart of thy seed, to love the LORD thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, that thou mayest live.” (Deu 30:6)

“For he is not a Jew, which is one outwardly; neither is that circumcision, which is outward in the flesh:” (Rom 2:28)

Although circumcision and baptism both refer to a spiritual change, only baptism enables a man to accomplish this change. The Apostle has already just taught this:

“Buried with him in baptism, wherein also ye are risen with him through the faith of the operation of God, who hath raised him from the dead.” (Col 2:12)

and reiterates the point here, when he tells the Colossians that they had been “you, being dead in their sins”, (to which he adds, “and the uncircumcision of your flesh”, which always must be the case for the sinner – his flesh (human nature) has not been completely purified), were “quickened together with him”, that is, enabled to become righteous by Jesus Christ.

Colossians 2:14 Blotting out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to his cross;

The “handwriting of ordinances” is the law, and our transgression of it. The Jews could not

fulfil the law, but we can, because of Jesus Christ.

Colossians 2:15 And having spoiled principalities and powers, he made a shew of them openly, triumphing over them in it.

The Apostle here mentions two of the nine known ranks of Angels. Of course, the angels here mentioned are demons. There are ranks of good and bad angels, among whom are "principalities and powers". The know angelic ranks are Cherubim, Seraphim, Thrones, Dominions, Powers, Authorities, Principalities, Archangels and Angels.

Colossians 2:18 Let no man beguile you of your reward in a voluntary humility and worshipping of angels, intruding into those things which he hath not seen, vainly puffed up by his fleshly mind, ¹⁹ And not holding the Head, from which all the body by joints and bands having nourishment ministered, and knit together, increaseth with the increase of God.

The Apostle is addressing a heresy, described by St John Chrysostom: "There are some who maintain that we must be brought near by Angels, not by Christ, that were too great a thing for us" (Homily VI, on Colossians ii. 6, 7, <http://www.ccel.org/ccel/schaff/npnf113.iv.iv.vi.html>)

The sectarians of our age use verses like this to falsely label asking for the intercession of angels and saints as idolatrous. We only worship God, and God has sent forth His angels to help us. We each have a guardian angel which was mentioned by Christ: "Take heed that ye despise not one of these little ones; for I say unto you, That in heaven their angels do always behold the face of my Father which is in heaven." (Mat 18:10) Since scripture is replete with examples of the help of angels, and we each have a guardian angel, it makes no sense whatsoever that we would be unable to, or forbidden to ask for their help.

Sectarians truly get the scripture wrong, over and over, because they do not read it with the mind of Christ, which is only in the church.

Dear reader, you may gain this mind by cleaving to the church, with fasting and prayer, and effort. Wisdom will come to you if you struggle. Without struggle in spirit and truth, all the sayings of the scripture are closed to the mind of man.

Bibliography

St John Chrysostom, Homily VI, on Colossians ii. 6, 7,
<http://www.ccel.org/ccel/schaff/npnf113.iv.iv.vi.html>

The Explanation of the Holy Gospel according to St Luke, by Blessed Theophylact, published by Chrysostom Press - <http://www.chrysostompress.org/>. ALL FOUR BOOKS ARE HIGHLY RECOMMENDED!

Priest Seraphim Oct 28/Nov 10 2008.

[St Nicholas Russian Orthodox Church, McKinney, Texas](http://www.orthodox.net/scripture/22nd-week-after-pentecost_monday_colossians2:13-20+luke9:18-22.rtf)

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