

DEEPER STUDY

NEWSLETTER Issue 007

Here is issue 007. Like James Bond, you must be courageous and open-minded when you go deeper in your Bible study. You must be willing to consider some things you may not have thought about before. You may have to drop some long-held beliefs when they are contradicted by context, hermeneutics, and solid arguments. As a teacher once told me, "Sacred cows make great hamburger."



Steve Singleton

I'm not cow-hunting, but I'm ready to shoot (and grind) if need be, and I promise not to be too protective of my own herd.

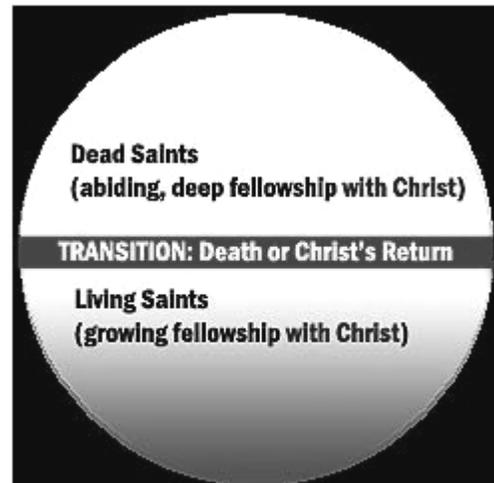
I sent a letter to about a third of my mailing list, asking how I can make DeeperStudy Newsletter better and what topics you would like to see. The feedback that I received, nearly entirely positive, was surprising and very encouraging. You will see some of your suggested topics in upcoming issues. Thanks very much!

It's All Greek to Me: "Together with Christ"

You may have read or heard of the significance of being 'in' Christ, but what is the meaning of being 'with' Christ?

In Greek, several prepositions express the idea of 'with.' the two most significant are *meta* with its object in genitive case (which we will abbreviate to +G) and *sun* with its object in the dative case (+D). Both of these prepositions can be translated 'with,' and they sometimes have equivalent meanings. When a difference does exist, *meta* (+G) means 'among' or 'accompanying,' while *sun* (+D) has the meaning of 'together with,' and seems to express a closer relationship that involves not only association, but also constant sharing.

The apostle Paul 12 times employs *sun* (+D) to express the believer's connection with Christ. In First Thessalonians, one of the earliest of Paul's letters, Paul says, "for if we believe that Jesus died and arose, so also (we believe that) God will bring *with him* those who have fallen asleep through Jesus" (4:14). Those who have died as faithful Christians presently experience a close fellowship with Christ. This sharing, this oneness is so close that these blessed dead will participate in his return.



In eternity, this close fellowship that the dead in Christ presently enjoy will expand to include those saints who are still living at the time of His return, according to 1 Thess. 4:17: "...we the living will be caught up in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, and so we will always be *with the Lord*. Don't be distracted by the where ('in the clouds' and 'in the air'); the truly significant idea in this verse is *Who*: 'with the Lord.' As long as we're with Him, the where doesn't matter.

This wonderful experience of sharing in the glories of the Lord--being raised as he was raised and joining with him in his return--has become possible because of the historical events of the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus. Paul makes this clear in 1 Thess. 5:10: "He died in our behalf in order that, whether we are awake or asleep, we might live *together with him*." This repeats the point Paul makes in 1 Thess. 4:14.

Paul returns to this connection between our resurrection and Christ's in 2 Cor. 4:14: "We know that the One who raised the Lord Jesus from the dead will also raise us *with Jesus* and present us with you in his presence." If we are one with Jesus, then his destiny becomes ours: He cannot be the eternally living One while we remain dead. Paul goes on in the same passage to describe how the Christians mortal, human body, which he calls an "earthly tent," will be replaced by "an eternal house" (2 Cor. 5:1-10).

This fuller fellowship "with Christ" that Paul anticipates after death spills over into this life in 2 Cor. 13:4: "For to be sure, He was crucified in weakness, yet He lives by God's power. Likewise, we are weak in Him, yet by God's power we live *with Him* to serve you."

What he describes for believers as a group in these earlier passages, Paul individualizes in Phil. 1:23. Describing the possibility of his own death, he expresses his longing to "depart and be *with Christ*." Of course Paul is aware of Christ's presence day by day in keeping with his promise, "I am with you always" (Matt. 28:20; see Acts 18:10; 2 Tim. 4:17). Yet he longs for that deeper, closer fellowship with the Lord that he will enjoy after death, a fellowship Paul compares to that experienced in this life as being "better by far."

What brings about this "together with Christ" fellowship that is so wonderful in anticipation and so empowering in the here and now? Paul provides the answer in Romans, chapters 5 through 8. In chapter 5, he explains how Christ, as the second Adam, the corporate representative of all humanity, was able, as "the result of one act of righteousness," to "bring life to all men" (Rom. 5:18). His obedience makes it possible for many to be made righteous (v. 20).

These wonderful results--life and justification--we appropriate when we come into union with Christ. That's what Paul turns to next, as he discusses the moral imperative that comes with the gospel (chapter 6). In other words, saying yes to Jesus means saying no to sin. This is true because sharing in the life, indeed the *being* of Christ, necessarily means sharing His attitude and His lifestyle regarding sin.

Here Paul draws on the common ground he shares with the Romans. He reminds them of the meaning of their baptism: they died to sin when they were baptized into Christ, because they were baptized into his death (Rom. 6:1-7). We will look at this passage in more detail later on.

But in the next verse, Paul says, "but if we die together with Christ, we believe that we will live with him" (v. 8). This is a repetition of what Paul said in his other letters. Each true believer shares in the death of Christ, benefiting from the virtue of this perfect sacrifice. This takes place when, by faith, we enter into union with our Lord in baptism. Then his history becomes our history and his destiny our destiny. Paul's conclusion from all of this is in verse 12: "Therefore, do not let sin reign in your mortal body in order to obey its lusts." Close association with Christ is incompatible with a life subservient to sin.

Paul makes an argument from greater to lesser when two chapters later he asks, "What then shall we say about these things? If God is for us, who can be against us?"



He who did not spare his own Son but in behalf of us all gave Him over, how will He not *with Him* freely give us all things?" (Rom. 8:32). The meaning of "with him" here seems to be that Christ is the greatest gift God could give us, and all of His gifts that are not nearly as precious (the "all things") come to us "together with Him."

We should not think of these lesser gifts (e.g., forgiveness, salvation, justification, resurrection, etc.) as a sequence but as a gathering together. It is as if Christ is the great magnet that attracts all of the other spiritual blessings God has for us. If we have an abiding fellowship with the Son, all other blessings becomes ours as well.

Four verses in Colossians sustain the same "together with Christ" themes that we have found in Paul's other letters. These are directly related to the defense Paul is making against the so-called Colossian heresy.

False teachers were apparently trying to take the Colossian Christians "captive through hollow and empty philosophy, according to human tradition, according to the basic principles of the world, and not according to Christ" (2:8). Based on the evidence within Colossians, this heresy seems to be a mix of Jewish ritualism and asceticism, Greek philosophy, and Eastern mystery religion (see especially 2:16-23). The heretics are apparently saying something like this: "This teaching about Jesus Christ is fine as far as it goes. But you must go beyond Jesus to the deeper wisdom." Such teaching is in danger of poisoning the spiritual life out of the Colossian congregation.

Paul's antidote is a fuller teaching about Jesus Christ and the believer's relationship to Him. Contrary to the concept that Christ is merely a stepping stone to a deeper wisdom, Paul says that in Christ "are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge" (2:3) and "in [Him] all the fullness of the godhead dwells bodily" (2:9). Instead of leaving Christ behind to advance in spirituality, Paul urges the Colossians, "As, therefore, you received Christ Jesus as Lord, walk in Him, rooted and grounded in Him and having been established in faith, just as you were taught, increase in thanksgiving." Spirituality is not a deed to accomplish but a journey to "walk," along with a divine traveling Companion, from whom we must never wander away.

Once more, the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ serves as the focal point in Paul's teaching in Colossians. Not only does the gospel bring salvation, including forgiveness of trespasses, but it also is the means by which Christ conquers the rulers and authorities (2:13-15). The triumph Christ accomplishes becomes the believer's triumph when the sinner meets the Savior in the faith-event of baptism: "When you were dead in the transgressions and the uncircumcision of your flesh, He [God] made you alive *together with Him*, having forgiven all your transgressions" (2:13).

The verse just before this one explains that this happens at baptism, when the believer trusts God to exert the same power that He did when He raised Christ from the dead. The Bible teaches that baptism is a work but not a work humans do for God; it is the work God does for them, connecting them with the Savior, so that God activates Christ's work at the cross in their behalf as they trust Him. As Paul explains more fully in Romans 6 (see above), the believer becomes united with Christ when he or she re-enacts His death, burial, and resurrection in baptism.



This gospel symbolism for baptism means that immersion is essential as the mode for biblical baptism; sprinkling or pouring does not fitly represent burial. On immersion as the only mode in the primitive church, see John 3:23 and Acts 8:38-39. In fact, the Greek word *baptizē* means "to immerse, to dip."

Later on in Colossians chapter 2 and into chapter 3, Paul draws conclusions based on these truths he has established. He says "If you died *together with Christ* from the basic principles of the world" (and he assumes that this is true--first-class condition), then why submit to the world's rules (2:20)? "If you have been raised with Christ, seek the things that are above" (3:1), just as Christ does. Paul adds for emphasis, "For you died, and your life has been hidden *together with Christ* in God" (3:3). Our union with Christ means that we share His history (the death, burial, and resurrection), as well as His destiny (His return in glory). But for now, we are "together with Christ."

We certainly don't leave him behind to advance toward a greater spirituality. Our union with Him is meant to be permanent, so that we die and are raised with him (in baptism), we are "hidden with him in God" throughout our life, and "when Christ, who is [our] life, appears," that we also "will appear *together with Him* in glory" (3:4). This continuity is meaningful and significant. Not for one moment can we be separated from Him. Not for an instant can He be even secondary, for His "is our life" (3:4).

Nouns and verbs compounded with *syn-*

When we add a number of nouns and verbs in Paul's letters that have *sun-* as a prepositional prefix, the significance of *sun* becomes multiplied. This same prepositional prefix occurs in English, in such words as 'syllable,' 'symbiotic,' 'symphony,' 'synergy' (the Greek 'u' being represented by 'y'). In issue #8, I will make comments on a few of the more significant passages listed below. Some of these relate the believer to the Savior. Others relate the saved to each other. Do your own investigation if you want to **dive deeper**.

1. **To die with** (verb: *sunapothnēschō*) – 2 Cor. 7:3; 2 Tim. 2:11 (compare Mark 14:31).
2. **To be co-crucified** (verb: *sustaurōō*) – Rom. 6:6; Gal. 2:20 (compare Matt. 27:44; Mark 15:32; John 19:32).
3. **To live together** (verb: *suzaō*) – Rom. 6:8; 2 Cor. 7:3; 2 Tim. 2:11.
4. **To reign together, co-reign** (verb: *sumbasileuō*) – 1 Cor. 4:8; 2 Tim. 2:12.
5. **Co-heirs, joint heirs** (noun: *sugklēronomos*) – Rom. 8:17; Eph. 3:6 (compare Heb. 11:9; 1 Peter 3:7).
6. **Citizens together, co-citizens** (noun: *sumpolitōs*) – Eph. 2:19.
7. **To be glorified together** (verb: *sundoxazomai*) – Rom. 8:17.
8. **To share, to have fellowship with, to participate with, to keep company with; sharers, partakers** (verbs: *sugkoinōneō, summerizomai, sunamignumi*; noun: *sugkoinōnos*) – Rom. 11:17; 1 Cor. 5:9, 11; 9:13, 23; Eph. 5:11; Phil. 1:7; 4:14; 2 Thess. 3:14 (compare Rev. 1:9; 18:4).
9. **To unite, to hold together, to instruct, to prove** (verb: *sumbibazō*) – 1 Cor. 2:16; Eph. 4:16; Col. 2:2, 19 (compare Acts 9:22; 16:10).
10. **United, of one accord, literally, "co-souls"** (noun: *sumpsuchos*) – Phil. 2:2.
11. **To gather together, to come together, to assemble** (verbs: *sunagō, sunerchomai*) – 1 Cor. 5:4 (compare Matt. 18:20; John 11:52; Acts 4:6; 11:26; 14:27; 15:6, 30; 20:7-8); 1 Cor. 7:5; 11:17, 18, 20, 33, 34; 14:23, 26 (compare Acts 1:6; 10:27).
12. **To fit together** (verb: *sunarmologeomai*) – Eph. 2:21; 4:16.
13. **To continue together, to remain together** (verb: *sumparamenō*) – Phil. 1:25.
14. **To cooperate with, to assist, to help** (verbs: *sunantilambanomai, sunupourgeō*) – Rom. 8:26 (compare Luke 10:40); 2 Cor. 1:11.
15. **To be refreshed with** (verb: *sunanapauomai*) – Rom. 15:32.

16. **To imitate together** (verb: *summimētō*) – Phil. 3:17.
17. **To conform together; conformed together** (verb; *summorphomai, suschōmatizomai*; noun: *summorphos*) – Rom. 8:29; Phil. 3:10, 21; Rom. 12:2 (compare 1 Peter 1:14).
18. **To console together** (verb: *sumparakaleomai*) – Rom. 1:12.
19. **To rejoice together** (verb: *sugkairō*) – 1 Cor. 12:26; 13:6; Phil. 2:17, 18 (compare Luke 1:58; 15:6, 9).
20. **To suffer together** (verb: *sumpaschō*) – Rom. 8:17; 1 Cor. 12:26.
21. **To send together** (verbs: *sumpempō, sunapostellō*) – 2 Cor. 8:18, 22; 12:18
22. **To bear witness together, to co-testify** (verb: *summartureō*) – Rom. 2:15; 8:16; 9:1 (compare Rev. 22:18 and Heb. 2:4–*sunepimartureō*).
23. **To bring together, to be expedient, to be profitable** (verb: *sumpherō*) – 1 Cor. 6:12; 7:35; 10:23, 33; 12:7; 2 Cor. 8:10; 12:1 (compare Matt. 5:29, 30; 18:6; 19:10; John 11:50; 16:7; 18:14; 20:20; Heb. 12:1, 10).
24. **Agreement, concord; consent** (noun: *sumphōnōsis; sumphōnos*) – 1 Cor. 7:5.
25. **To strive together, to struggle together** (verbs: *sunagōnizomai, sunathleō*) – Rom. 15:30; Phil. 1:27; 4:3.
26. **Yokefellow (co-worker)** (noun: *suzugos*) – Phil. 4:3.
27. **Fellowprisoner** (noun: *sunaichmalōtos;*) – Rom. 16:7; Col. 4:10; Phile. 23.
28. **Relative, kinsman** (noun: *suggenēs*) – Rom. 9:3; 16:7, 11, 21.
29. **Bound together, bond** (noun: *sundesmos*) – Eph. 4:3; Col. 2:19; 3:14.
30. **Slave together, co-slave, fellowslave** (noun: *sundoulos*) – Col. 1:7; 4:7 (compare Matt. 18:28-29, 31, 33; 24:49; Rev. 6:11; 19:10; 22:9).
31. **To raise together; to co-raise** (verb: *sunegeirō*) – Eph. 2:6; Col. 2:12; 3:1.
32. **Traveling companion** (noun: *sunekdōmos*) – 2 Cor. 8:19.
33. **To work with; co-worker** (verb: *sunergeō*; noun: *sunergos*) – Rom. 8:28; 1 Cor. 16:16; 2 Cor. 6:1 (compare Mark 16:20; James 2:22); Rom. 16:3, 8, 21; 1 Cor. 3:9; 2 Cor. 1:24; 8:23; Phil. 2:25; 4:3; Col. 4:11; 1 Thess. 3:2; Phile. 1, 24 (compare 2 John 8).
34. **To eat together, to share a meal** (verb: *sunesthiō*) – 1 Cor. 5:11; Gal. 2:12 (compare Luke 15:2; Acts 10:41; 11:3).
35. **To be buried with** (verb: *sunthptomai*) – Rom. 6:4; Col. 2:12.

36. **To be built together** (verb: *sunoikodomeomai*) – Eph. 2:22.
37. **To travail together; to suffer birth pangs together** (verb: *sunōdinō*) – Rom. 8:22.
38. **Co-embodied, co-member of a body** (noun: *sussōma*) – Eph. 3:6.
39. **To groan together** (verb: *sustenazē*) – Rom. 8:22.
40. **To participate; partakers, partners** (noun: *summetochos*) – 1 Cor. 9:10, 12; 10:17, 21, 30; Eph. 3:6; 5:7 (compare Heb. 1:9; 2:14; 3:1, 14; 5:13; 6:4; 7:13; 12:8).
41. **Fellowsoldier** (noun: *sustratiōtēs*) – Phil. 2:25; Phile. 2.

Want to dive deeper?

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The Bible in the News: Defining when life begins

The abortion controversy often focuses on when life begins. Does it begin at conception or when the newborn takes its first breath? Turning to the Scriptures, some point out that when the first human being was created, "God breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and the man became a living being" (Gen. 2:7). They go

on to argue that just after a baby is born and takes its first breath, God is breathing the breath of life once more.

But if you think deeper about this, does the moment of the first breath really constitute a transition between non-life and life? For that matter, does it mark the transition between no oxygen and oxygen? You may have know people in the hospital who are unable to breathe on their own. If such persons receive machine-supplied oxygenated blood, they can survive indefinitely with this manner of respiration.

A fetus respirees in a similar way, receiving oxygen-enriched blood through the placenta from its mother. The first breath after birth does not represent a change from non-life to life, though it is an important new stage of the process of becoming independent from the mother.

Rejecting, therefore, the first breath as the moment life begins, we must go back further. We cannot find, however, any definite place to identify the non-life/life threshold. A continuum exists from conception until birth, and the organism at any point along that continuum is alive and human. Viability is not acceptable, and as medical technology advances, the moment of viability shifts earlier and earlier toward conception. The time the mother first feels movement (called "quickening") is not the critical moment. That would assume that bodies that can't move aren't really human beings. We are forced to move back inexorably toward conception as the moment life begins.



And yet, even beyond conception, the continuum remains unbroken, from child back to parents, to grandparents, great-grandparents, and on and on reaching back to that first human being "formed from the dust of the ground." If at any point that continuum is broken, all life that would follow becomes impossible. Of course, this means that there is no essential difference between the end of a human life shortly after conception and ending it just before birth, or just after for that matter.

The Bible confirms this conclusion that no distinction should be made between the pre-born and the newly born child. In both the Old Testament and the New Testament, passages occur in which the same word is applied to a child still in the womb and a newborn. In Luke 1:41, 44, for instance, which uses the term 'baby' (Greek: *brephos*) to identify John while he was still inside of Elizabeth. The same term (*brephos*) occurs in the next chapter to describe baby Jesus (Luke 2:12, 16; see also Luke 18:15; Acts 17:9). For an Old Testament example, see Gen. 25:22, where "babies," literally 'sons' (Hebrew: *banim*, plural of *ben*), is used of the unborn twins, Esau and Jacob.

The Holy Spirit is not singing Rock 'n' Roll when He describes the human before birth and the human newly born as "baby...baby."

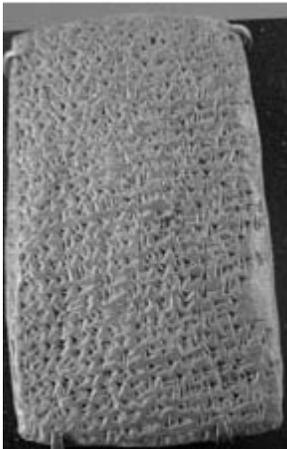
The conclusion from all of this seems inescapable: We cannot justify abortion by arguing that a human life is not being ended. It is human from conception, and it is definitely alive.

Qualify for free e-document: Genesis graphical outline

To expand our list of DeeperStudy Newsletter subscribers more rapidly, we offer in each issue some Bible study e-document in exchange for the e-mail addresses of five people you know that could benefit from DeeperStudy Newsletter. I will add their addresses to the list of free subscribers, and then send you this issue's featured e-document, a graphical outline of Genesis.

This Adobe Acrobat document shows at a glance the major divisions of the first book of the Bible, with divisions based on the insights of P. J. Wiseman. In his book, *Ancient Records and the Structure of Genesis: A Case for Literary Unity* (Nashville:

Thomas Nelson, 1985), Wiseman argues that the phrase, "this is the story of..." (Hebrew: *toledoth*) which recurs throughout Genesis, closely corresponds to the colophons or postscripts found at the end of many cuneiform tablets discovered in Mesopotamia.

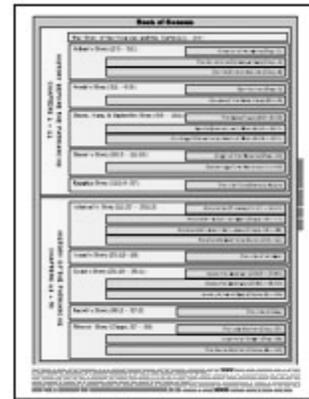


Many cuneiform tablets feature a colophon (postscript) that summarizes the contents.

Wiseman argues in favor of translating the *toledoth* as "Such is the story of..." and using these to mark off the text of Genesis according to which part of the record each family member wrote (Adam, Noah, Noah's sons, Ishmael, Isaac, Esau, and Jacob).

According to Wiseman, then, Genesis constitutes a family diary telling the history of God's dealing with Abraham's ancestors, with Abraham, and with his descendants. Wiseman believes that Moses added the concluding section about Joseph and

his brothers. **Want to go deeper?** Read Wiseman's book, or at least a summary of it by others, e.g., R. K. Harrison, *Introduction to the Old Testament* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1969), 543-553.



All of this was under the inspiration and guidance of the Holy Spirit (see 2 Tim. 3:16-17; 2 Peter 1:20-21).

This variety of authorship explains the stylistic and vocabulary differences from section to section without resorting to the Documentary Hypothesis, which claims that Genesis is a composite document of earlier, independent accounts edited close to a millennium later than Moses.

You will be fascinated with this graphical outline of Genesis and delighted with how easy it is to see how the various sections of the First Book of Moses fit together. Claim your **Genesis Graphical Outline** today.

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