

You Put off The Old Man With its Practices and Have Put on The New Man Where Christ is All and in All

The apostle Paul used a Greek word “anthrōpos” in Colossians 3 when he speaks of what many translators call “the old man”. Paul says believers have already put off the old man with its evil practices (immorality, impurity, passion, evil desire, and greed, which amounts to idolatry) we once walked in when we were sons of disobedience. He also says believers need to continue to put off anger, wrath, malice, slander, abusive speech, and lying. He uses the same Greek word for “the new man” who is being renewed to a true knowledge according to the image of Him who created Him. Furthermore, Paul tells us in this new man there is no Greek, Jew, circumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave and freeman, but Christ is all, and in all.

Parallel passages in Paul’s letter to the Ephesians (see Ephesians 2:14 and 4:24) also use anthrōpos.

The meaning of this Greek word, which is also translated “self” by many translators (New International Version, English Standard Version, New American Standard Version, Amplified Bible, Christian Standard Bible, Holman Christian Standard Bible, Good News Translation, New Heart English Bible, Majority Standard Version, and New American Version) but not always consistently. Other translations use “person” (Contemporary English Version) and “nature” (New Living Translation).

When I read concordances that list where anthrōpos is used in the New Testament and what concordance writers understood it to mean (see https://biblehub.com/greek/strongs_444.htm) , I think “nooo!” when I see “self” used. I think even “man” misses the richness of what Paul is talking about. In fact “human”, “human being”, or “human race” might convey the meaning of anthrōpos better when one considers that anthropology (the study of human societies and cultures and their development) is derived from the same Greek word plus what scripture reveals concerning Adam and Eve, Christ and the church.

Jesus Christ is the last Adam (Hebrew word that has the same meaning as anthrōpos) who died to put an end to the fallen adamic race and was raised from the dead to be the life-giving spirit that raises his followers from the dead (1 Corinthians 15:45). Jesus Christ is also the heavenly one who tore down the walls of partition on the cross and makes Jews and gentiles one in Christ and one new anthrōpos regardless of their earthly race, social status, and gender (Galatians 3:26-29, Ephesians 4:24). People who are wives, husbands, children, parents, slaves, and masters were instructed to serve their Lord in this new humanity, so it was happening among normal people on earth with their minds set on the things above where Christ is.

Paul and John unveil the parallels between the first man, Adam (see Genesis 1-3), and Jesus Christ, the last Adam, in a way that also deepens and enriches our understanding of who Christ is and how we, the church, come forth from His wounded side through His death, resurrection and work from heaven, consummating as the bride of Christ, the New Jerusalem that comes

down out of heaven to the new earth. (See Romans 5:17, Romans 7:1-4, John 3:29 and 19:34, Ephesians 5:28-32, and Revelation 19 & 22.)

These matters probably demand much more explanation, but for this chapter I leave you with the challenge to let the fact of what God and Christ have done and are doing to make Christ be our all and be in all within this new humanity sink in, and challenge us to truly put off the evil things of the old humanity as Christ sanctifies us and we eagerly await His glorious return. A return that will include the resurrection of the dead in Christ and raising of those believers who are still living to meet Him in the air, His renewing of the earth, our ruling and reigning with Him, the wedding feast, the final judgement, and God making all things new in The New Jerusalem.