

# **The Epistle To The Colossians**



**A Study Guide With Introductory Comments,  
Summaries, Outlines, And Review Questions**

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# The Epistle To The Colossians

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This study guide was developed in preparation for teaching adult Bible classes.

- ♦ The objectives for each section are usually things I plan to emphasize during the class.
- ♦ I have found that summarizing and outlining helps me to better understand the Word of God. It is a practice I highly recommend to others.
- ♦ I generally delete the answers to the review questions before printing the material and giving it to the students. But that you might know what answers were intended by the questions, I have included them in these guides.

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The outlines were developed in the course of my ministry as a preacher of the gospel. Feel free to use them as they are, or adapt them to suit your own personal style. To God be the glory!

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# The Epistle To The Colossians

## Introduction

### AUTHOR

The apostle **Paul**, joined in his salutation by **Timothy (1:1)**, and signed by Paul himself at the end of the letter (**4:18**). Early sources in church history that attribute this letter to Paul include: Eusebius (300 A.D.), Origen (250 A.D.), Clement of Alexandria (200 A.D.), Tertullian (200 A.D.), Irenaeus (200 A.D.), and the Muratorian Fragment (180 A.D.).

### THE CITY OF COLOSSE

The city was located about 100 miles east of Ephesus in Asia Minor (modern day Turkey). Together with Hieropolis (**4:13**) and Laodicea (**2:1; 4:13-16; Re 3:14-22**), Colosse made up a tri-city area. Each city had its own distinction:

- ◆ **Hierapolis**, a place for health, pleasure, and relaxation
- ◆ **Laodicea**, known for its commercial trade and politics
- ◆ **Colosse**, known simply as a small town

Colosse was mostly a pagan city, with a strong intermingling of Jews (in 62 B.C., there were 11,000 Jewish freemen in the tri-city area). This may explain the nature of some of the problems that arose among the church in Colosse (problems with both pagan and Jewish origin).

### THE CHURCH AT COLOSSE

The establishment of the church is uncertain. At issue is whether Paul himself had ever been there. Some suggest that Paul may have done some work there during his third journey, on the way to Ephesus (cf. **Ac 18:23; 19:1**). Others point out that Paul's comments imply that he had not personally been in Colosse (cf. **2:1**). One possibility is that the church was established during Paul's extended stay at Ephesus, where the effect of his work spread throughout Asia Minor (cf. **Ac 19:8-10**). It may not have been Paul himself, but one of his coworkers who went out to Colosse. Paul's remarks in the epistle indicate that Epaphras was the one who preached the gospel there (**1:5-8**) and in Hierapolis and Laodicea (**4:12-13**). Though he was with Paul at the time the epistle was written, Epaphras is identified as "one of you" (**4:12**), suggesting that he may have originally been from Colosse.

Other members of the church at Colosse included Philemon, Apphia, and Archippus, who may have been father, mother, and son. By comparing the epistle to the Colossians with that written to Philemon, it is reasonable to suppose that the church at Colosse met in their home (cf. **4:17** with **Phile 1-2**, and the references to Archippus). If Philemon and his family were hosts of the church at Colosse, then

Onesimus (Philemon's slave) would have also been a member there upon his return (cf. **4:7-9** with **Phile 8-16**).

## TIME AND PLACE OF WRITING

Colossians is one of Paul's four "prison epistles" (**4:18**; cf. Ephesians, Philippians, and Philemon). The general consensus is that these epistles were written during Paul's imprisonment at Rome (cf. **Ac 28:16, 30-31**). If such is truly the case, then Paul wrote Colossians around **61-63 A.D.** from **Rome**. The indication is that the epistles to the Colossians, Philemon and the Ephesians were carried to their destination by Tychicus and Onesimus (cf. **4:7-9**; **Phile 10-12**; **Ep 6:21-22**).

## PURPOSE OF THE EPISTLE

Paul had received a report of the situation at Colosse by way of Epaphras (**1:7-8**). This report was for the most part favorable (**2:5**). But the subject matter in the epistle strongly suggests that the church was facing a twofold danger:

- ◆ The danger of relapse into paganism with its gross immorality (cf. **1:21-23**; **2:6**; **3:5-11**)
- ◆ The danger of accepting what has been come to known as "**The Colossian heresy**". This heresy was a syncretism involving four elements of both pagan and Jewish origin:
  - ✓ **Philosophies of men** - which denied the all sufficiency and preeminence of Christ (**2:8**)
  - ✓ **Judaistic ceremonialism** - which attached special significance to the rite of circumcision, food regulations, and observance of special days (**2:11,16-17**)
  - ✓ **Angel worship** - which detracted from the uniqueness of Christ (**2:18**)
  - ✓ **Asceticism** - which called for harsh treatment of the body as the means to control its lusts (**2:20-23**)

To guard against these dangers, Paul writes to:

- ◆ Warn the Colossians against relapse (**1:21-23**)
- ◆ Warn them against the "solution" being urged upon them by those denying the all-sufficiency of Christ (**2:8-23**)
- ◆ Direct their attention to the "Beloved Son", the "All-Sufficient and Preeminent Savior" (**1:13-18**; **2:8-10**)

## THEME OF THE EPISTLE

With the focus on Jesus Christ as the answer to "The Colossian heresy", the theme of this letter is clearly:

**CHRIST - THE FULNESS OF GOD,  
AND THE PREEMINENT, ALL-SUFFICIENT SAVIOR**

## KEY VERSES: Colossians 2:9-10

*"For in Him dwells all the fullness of the Godhead bodily; and you are complete in Him, who is the head of all principality and power."*

## OUTLINE

### INTRODUCTION (1:1-14)

1. Salutation (1-2)
2. Thanksgiving and prayer (3-14)

### I. THE PREEMINENCE OF CHRIST (1:15-23)

#### A. IN CREATION (1:15-17)

1. The image of the invisible God (1:15a)
2. The first-born over all creation (1:15b-17)

#### B. IN REDEMPTION (1:18-23)

1. The head of the body, the church (1:18a)
2. The beginning, the first-born from the dead (1:18b)
3. That He might have preeminence in all things (1:18c)
  - a. In Whom all the fullness dwells (1:19)
  - b. In Whom all things are to be reconciled to God (1:20)
  - c. The Colossians as a case in point (1:21-23)

### II. THE APOSTLE OF CHRIST (1:24-2:7)

#### A. PAUL'S SERVICE (1:24-29)

1. His joy in suffering for them (1:24)
2. His ministry (1:25-29)
  - a. A stewardship to proclaim the mystery of God now revealed (1:25-27)
  - b. A labor to present every man perfect in Christ Jesus (1:28-29)

#### B. PAUL'S SOLICITUDE (2:1-7)

1. His great concern for them (2:1-3)
2. Reasons for this concern (2:4-5)
3. Exhortations to be firmly established in Christ (2:6-7)

### **III. WARNINGS AGAINST "THE COLOSSIAN HERESY" (2:8-23)**

#### **A. WARNING AGAINST PHILOSOPHY (2:8-10)**

1. Beware of being cheated by philosophy and empty deceit (2:8)
2. In Christ dwells the fullness of God, and you are complete in Him (2:9-10)

#### **B. WARNING AGAINST JUDAISTIC CEREMONIALISM (2:11-17)**

1. In Christ you have a circumcision made without hands (2:11-12)
2. You are made alive in Christ, and the handwriting of requirements that was against us has been taken away at the cross (2:13-15)
3. Therefore don't let anyone judge you in regards to food, festivals, or Sabbath days (2:16-17)

#### **C. WARNING AGAINST ANGEL WORSHIP (2:18-19)**

1. Don't let anyone defraud you of your reward by appealing to angel worship and imagined visions of a fleshly mind (2:18)
2. Such people do not hold fast to Christ as the Head, and from whom true divine nourishment comes (2:19)

#### **D. WARNING AGAINST ASCETICISM (2:20-23)**

1. Having died with Christ to the world, there is no need to submit to human ordinances (2:20-22)
2. While having appearances of wisdom, such practices have no value in controlling the indulgences of the flesh (2:23)

### **IV. THE CHRISTIAN SOLUTION (3:1-4:6)**

#### **A. SET YOUR MIND ON THINGS ABOVE (3:1-4)**

1. Since you were raised with Christ, seek those things above (3:1-2)
2. For you have died and your life is now hidden in Christ, to be revealed when He appears (3:3-4)

#### **B. PUT OFF THE OLD MAN (3:5-9)**

1. Put to death your members here on the earth, for the wrath of God is coming on the sons of disobedience (3:5-7)
2. Put off the old man with his deeds (3:8-9)

#### **C. PUT ON THE NEW MAN (3:10-17)**

1. Put on the new man, renewed in the image of our Creator (3:10-11)
2. As God's elect, put on Christ-like qualities (3:12-14)
3. Let God's peace rule in your hearts, and be thankful (3:15)
4. Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly, teaching and admonishing one another with song and singing with grace in your hearts (3:16)
5. Do all things in the name of the Lord Jesus, with thanksgiving (3:17)

#### **D. FAMILIAL RESPONSIBILITIES (3:18-4:1)**

1. Wives toward their husbands (**3:18**)
2. Husbands toward their wives (**3:19**)
3. Children toward their parents (**3:20**)
4. Fathers toward their children (**3:21**)
5. Servants toward their masters (**3:22-25**)
6. Masters toward their servants (**4:1**)

**E. EXHORTATIONS TO PRAYER AND PROPER CONDUCT (4:2-6)**

1. Devote yourselves to prayer (**4:2-4**)
2. Walk in wisdom and let your speech be with grace (**4:5-6**)

**V. PAUL'S COMPANIONS (4:7-14)**

**A. COMMENDATIONS OF HIS MESSENGERS (4:7-9)**

1. Tychicus, a faithful servant who will inform them of Paul's circumstances (**4:7-8**)
2. Onesimus, a faithful and beloved brother (**4:9**)

**B. GREETINGS FROM HIS FRIENDS (4:10-14)**

1. Aristarchus, Mark, and Justus, fellow workers for the kingdom of God (**4:10-11**)
2. Epaphras, one of them, and a servant of Christ (**4:12-13**)
3. Luke the beloved physician, and Demas (**4:14**)

**CONCLUSION (4:15-18)**

1. Greetings to those in Laodicea, and to Nymphas and the church in his house (**4:15**)
2. A command to read and exchange the epistles from Paul (**4:16**)
3. A personal exhortation to Archippus (**4:17**)
4. A personal signoff from the hand of Paul, with a request for remembrance and a prayer in their behalf (**4:18**)

**REVIEW QUESTIONS FOR THE INTRODUCTION**

- 1) **Who had taught the Colossians the truth concerning God's grace? (Co 1:6-7)**  
- Epaphras
- 2) **From where and when did Paul write Colossians?**  
- From Rome, sometime around 61-63 A.D.
- 3) **What three other epistles were written about this time? What are the four epistles sometimes called?**  
- Ephesians, Philippians, and Philemon  
- The "prison epistles"
- 3) **What two potential dangers prompted the writing of this epistle?**  
- The danger of relapse into paganism with its gross immorality  
- The danger of accepting the "Colossian heresy"

- 4) What four elements make up the "Colossian Heresy"?**
  - Philosophies of men
  - Judaistic ceremonialism
  - Angel worship
  - Asceticism
  
- 5) What is the "theme" of this epistle?**
  - "Christ - the fullness of God, and the preeminent, all-sufficient Savior"
  
- 6) What serves as the "key verses" of this epistle?**
  - Colossians 2:9-10
  
- 7) According to the outline above, what are the five main subject divisions in this epistle?**
  - The preeminence of Christ
  - The apostle of Christ
  - Warnings against the "Colossian Heresy"
  - The Christian solution
  - Paul's companions



# The Epistle To The Colossians

## Chapter One

### OBJECTIVES IN STUDYING THIS CHAPTER

- 1) To see the relationship between understanding the grace of God and bearing fruit
- 2) To examine Paul's prayer for the Colossians for the keys to successful Christian living
- 3) To appreciate the preeminence of Christ in creation and our redemption

### SUMMARY

Paul begins with his customary salutation followed by an expression of thanksgiving and prayer. Hearing of their condition from Epaphras, he is thankful for their faith, love, and hope (**1-8**). His prayer is that they be filled with the knowledge of God's will, walk in a manner worthy of the Lord, strengthened by God's glorious power, and ever thankful that the Father has qualified them to be partakers of the saints' inheritance. Especially since they were delivered from the power of darkness and translated into the kingdom of God's dear Son, where there is redemption and forgiveness of sins (**9-14**).

He then broaches the theme of this epistle, which is the preeminence and all-sufficiency of Jesus Christ our Savior. Paul first proclaims the preeminence of Christ in creation, and then His preeminence in redemption (**15-20**). The Colossians' own conversion is offered as a case in point in reference to the latter, and with a warning for them to remain steadfast (**21-23**).

The chapter ends with Paul's description of his ministry, in which he gladly suffered on behalf of Christ and His church. He views himself as a steward entrusted with a wonderful "mystery", which is being made known after having been hidden for ages. This "mystery" pertains to the Gentiles, and how Christ would be in them (**24-27**). Paul therefore worked diligently to preach Christ, with the goal of presenting every man perfect in Him (**28-29**).

### OUTLINE

#### I. INTRODUCTION (1-14)

##### A. SALUTATION (1-2)

1. From Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God (**1a**)
2. And Timothy, "our brother" (**1b**)
3. To the saints and faithful brethren in Christ, who are in Colosse (**2a**)
4. Grace and peace from God and Jesus Christ (**2b**)

##### B. PAUL'S THANKSGIVING AND PRAYER (3-14)

1. His thanksgiving for them (**3-8**)

- a. Given to God, with unceasing prayers in their behalf **(3)**
  - b. Given since he heard of:
    - 1) Their faith in Christ Jesus **(4a)**
    - 2) Their love for all the saints **(4b)**
  - c. Given because the hope laid up for them in heaven **(5)**
    - 1) Which they had heard by way of the gospel
      - a) Which had come to them as to all the world, bringing forth fruit **(6a)**
      - b) Even in them, since the day they heard and knew the grace of God **(6b)**
    - 2) Which they had heard by way of Epaphras
      - a) A dear fellow servant and faithful minister of Christ on their behalf **(7)**
      - b) Who declared to Paul their love in the Spirit **(8)**
2. His prayer for them **(9-14)**
- a. Offered unceasingly since he heard of their progress **(9a)**
  - b. Asking that they might...
    - 1) Be filled with the knowledge of God's will in wisdom and spiritual understanding **(9b)**
    - 2) Walk worthy of the Lord, fully pleasing Him **(10a)**
      - a) Being fruitful in every good work **(10b)**
      - b) Increasing in the knowledge of God **(10c)**
    - 3) Be strengthened with all might **(11a)**
      - a) According to His glorious power **(11b)**
      - b) For all patience and longsuffering with joy **(11c)**
    - 4) Give thanks to the Father **(12a)**
      - a) Who qualified us to be partakers of the saints' inheritance **(12b)**
      - b) Who has delivered us from the power of darkness **(13a)**
      - c) Who has translated us into the kingdom of His dear Son **(13b)**
        - 1/ In whom we have redemption through His blood **(14a)**
        - 2/ In whom we have forgiveness of sins **(14b)**

## **II. THE PREEMINENCE OF CHRIST (15-23)**

### **A. IN CREATION (15-17)**

- 1. He is the image of the invisible God **(15a)**
- 2. He is the firstborn over all creation **(15b)**
- 3. All things were created by Him **(16)**
- 4. He is before all things **(17a)**
- 5. In Him all things consist **(17b)**

### **B. IN REDEMPTION (18-23)**

- 1. He is the head of the body, the church **(18a)**
- 2. He is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead **(18b)**
- 3. That He might have the preeminence in all things **(18c)**
- 4. It pleased the Father...
  - a. That in Him all the fullness should dwell **(19)**
  - b. That by Him all things were to be reconciled to Himself, making peace through the blood of the cross **(20)**

5. The Colossians as a case in point (**21-23**)
  - a. They were once alienated and enemies in mind, through wicked works (**21a**)
  - b. Yet now reconciled...
    - 1) In the body of His flesh through death (**21b-22a**)
    - 2) To be presented holy, blameless, and irreproachable in His sight (**22b**)
    - 3) If they continue in the faith...
      - a) Grounded and steadfast (**23a**)
      - b) Not moved away from the gospel
        - 1/ Which they heard (**23b**)
        - 2/ Which was preached to every creature under heaven (**23c**)
        - 3/ Of which Paul became a minister (**23d**)

### **III. THE APOSTLE OF CHRIST (24-29)**

#### **A. HIS JOY (24)**

1. In suffering for their sake (**24a**)
2. For in his flesh he fills up what is lacking in the afflictions of Christ (**24b**)
3. All is done for the sake of His body, the church (**24c**)

#### **B. HIS MINISTRY (25-29)**

1. Made a minister according to the stewardship from God (**25a**)
  - a. Given to him for them (**25b**)
  - b. To fulfill the word of God (**25c**)
    - 1) The mystery which has been hidden for ages and generations (**26a**)
    - 2) But now has been revealed to His saints (**26b**)
      - a) To whom God willed to make known the riches of the glorious mystery among the Gentiles (**27a**)
      - b) Which is Christ in them, the hope of glory (**27b**)
2. Proclaiming Christ (**28-29**)
  - a. By warning and teaching every man in all wisdom (**28a**)
  - b. That he might present every man perfect in Christ (**28b**)
    - 1) Laboring toward this end (**29a**)
    - 2) Striving according to His working which works in him mightily (**29b**)

## **REVIEW QUESTIONS FOR THE CHAPTER**

- 1) **What are the main points of this chapter?**
  - Introduction (1-14)
  - The Preeminence of Christ (15-23)
  - The Apostle Of Christ (24-29)
- 2) **Who joins Paul in the salutation of this epistle? (1)**
  - Timothy

**3) What three things had Paul heard about the Colossians, for which he gave thanks? (3-5)**

- Their faith in Christ Jesus; their love for all the saints; their hope laid for them in heaven

**4) How long had the gospel been bringing forth fruit in their lives? (6)**

- Since the day they heard and knew the grace of God in truth

**5) Who had informed Paul of their condition? (8)**

- Epaphras

**6) List four things for which Paul prayed concerning the Colossians (9-11)**

- To be filled with the knowledge of His will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding

- To have a walk worthy of the Lord, fully pleasing Him

- To be strengthened with all might, according to His glorious power

- To give thanks to the Father who has qualified us to be partakers of the inheritance

**7) Into what have we been translated? (13)**

- The kingdom of the Son of His love

**8) What does one enjoy in Christ? (14)**

- Redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins

**9) List five things which illustrate Christ's preeminence in creation (15-17)**

- He is the image of the invisible God (15a)

- He is before all things (17a)

- He is the firstborn over all creation (15b)

- In Him all things consist (17b)

- All things were created by Him (16)

**10) List four things which illustrate Christ's preeminence in redemption (18-20)**

- He is the head of the body, the church

- In Him all the fullness dwells

- He is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead

- By Him all things are to be reconciled

**11) What was the former condition of the Colossians? How were they changed? (21-22)**

- Alienated and enemies in their mind by wicked works

- Reconciled in the body of Christ's flesh through death

**12) Upon what condition would they be presented holy, blameless and irreproachable? (22-23)**

- If they continue in the faith, grounded and steadfast

- If they are not moved away from the hope of the gospel which they heard

**13) What is said about the "mystery" which has been hidden? (26)**

- It has now been revealed to His saints

**14) What is the glorious nature of this "mystery"? (27)**

- Christ in you (i.e., the Gentiles), the hope of glory

**15) What was Paul's goal in preaching Christ? (28)**

- To present every man perfect in Christ Jesus

# The Epistle To The Colossians

## Chapter Two

### OBJECTIVES IN STUDYING THIS CHAPTER

- 1) To see the relation between understanding the "mystery of God" and having a strong assurance of our salvation
- 2) To appreciate how baptism serves as our spiritual circumcision, and that it is a work of God which is performed, not a work of man
- 3) To understand how Christ brought an end to the Old Law by His death on the cross

### SUMMARY

Paul reveals his great concern for those at Colosse and others he has not seen, expressing his desire that their hearts be knit together in love, and that they may have the assurance that comes from an understanding of the mystery of God as revealed through Christ. He rejoices in their good order and steadfastness, and encourages them to be firmly established in Christ, abounding in thanksgiving (1-7).

The word "Beware" in verse eight summarizes the rest of the chapter, in which Paul warns them of the dangers of "The Colossian Heresy". These dangers include being cheated through philosophy and vain deceit, and defrauded of their reward by those who appeal to false humility, the worship of angels, false visions, and strict regulations according to the commandments and doctrines of men which really have no value against the indulgence of the flesh. In Christ they are made complete, having undergone a circumcision not made with hands, in which God made them alive together with Christ. Since Christ has also nailed to the cross the "handwriting of requirements" that was against them and taken it out of the way, none can judge them regarding religious observances that were only a shadow pointing to the true substance of Christ (8-23).

### OUTLINE

#### I. PAUL'S SOLICITUDE (1-7)

##### A. HIS GREAT CONCERN FOR THEM (1-3)

1. He has a great conflict for those...
  - a. In Colosse and Laodicea (1a)
  - b. Who have not seen his face in the flesh (1b)
2. His desire is that...
  - a. Their hearts be encouraged, knit together in love (2a)
  - b. They attain to all the riches of:
    - 1) The full assurance of understanding (2b)
    - 2) The knowledge of the mystery of God (2c)

- a) Both of the Father and of Christ (**2d**)
- b) In whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge (**3**)

**B. REASONS FOR THIS CONCERN (4-5)**

- 1. Lest anyone deceive them with persuasive words (**4**)
- 2. Though absent in the flesh, he is present with them in spirit (**5a**)
- 3. He rejoices to see...
  - a. Their good order (**5b**)
  - b. The steadfastness of their faith (**5c**)

**C. EXHORTATIONS TO BE FIRMLY ESTABLISHED IN CHRIST (6-7)**

- 1. As they have received Christ, so they should walk in Him (**6**)
  - a. Rooted and built up in Him (**7a**)
  - b. Established in the faith (**7b**)
    - As they were taught (**7c**)
- 2. Abounding with thanksgiving (**7d**)

**II. WARNINGS AGAINST "THE COLOSSIAN HERESY" (8-23)**

**A. WARNING AGAINST PHILOSOPHY (8-10)**

- 1. Beware of being cheated by philosophy and empty deceit (**8a**)
  - a. According to the traditions of men (**8b**)
  - b. According to the basic principles of the world (**8c**)
    - And not according to Christ (**8d**)
- 2. In Christ dwells the fullness of God, and you are complete in Him (**9-10**)
  - a. All the fullness of the Godhead dwells bodily in Christ (**9**)
  - b. You are complete in Him, who is head over all principality and power (**10**)

**B. WARNING AGAINST JUDAISTIC CEREMONIALISM (11-17)**

- 1. In Christ you have a circumcision made without hands (**11-12**)
  - a. A putting off of the body of the sins of the flesh (**11**)
  - b. Having been buried with Christ in baptism (**12**)
    - 1) In which you were also raised with Him (**12a**)
    - 2) Through faith in the working of God, who raised Jesus from the dead (**12b**)
- 2. You are made alive in Christ, and the handwriting of requirements that was against us has been taken away at the cross (**13-15**)
  - a. Dead in sins and the uncircumcision of your flesh, God has made you alive (**13a**)
  - b. He has forgiven you all trespasses (**13b**)
  - c. He has wiped out the handwriting of requirements that was against us (**14**)
    - 1) That which was contrary to us (**14a**)
    - 2) He has taken it out of the way, having nailed it to the cross (**14b**)
  - d. He has disarmed principalities and powers (**15**)
    - 1) Having made a public spectacle of them (**15a**)
    - 2) Triumphant over them in it (**15b**)
- 3. Therefore don't let anyone judge you in regards to food, festivals, or Sabbath days (**16**)
  - a. They are only a shadow of things to come (**17a**)

- b. The substance is of Christ (17b)
- C. WARNING AGAINST ANGEL WORSHIP (18-19)**
- 1. Don't let anyone defraud you of your reward (18a)
    - a. By taking delight in false humility and worship of angels (18b)
    - b. By intruding into things not seen, vainly puffed by fleshly minds (18c)
  - 2. Such people do not hold fast to Christ as the Head (19a)
    - a. From whom all the body grows (19b)
    - b. Nourished and knit together by various elements, with increase from God (19c)
- D. WARNING AGAINST ASCETICISM (2:20-23)**
- 1. There is no need to submit to human ordinances (2:20-22)
    - a. For you have died with Christ from basic principles of the world (20a)
    - b. Therefore do not subject yourselves to ascetic regulations (20b)
      - 1) Such as "Do not touch, do not taste, do not handle" (21)
      - 2) They only concern things which perish with the using (22a)
      - 3) Which are according to commandments and doctrines of men (23)
  - 2. Such practices are of no value (23)
    - a. They may have an appearance of wisdom in their...
      - 1) Self-imposed religion (23a)
      - 2) False humility (23b)
      - 3) Neglect of the body (23c)
    - b. But they are no value against the indulgence of the flesh (23d)

## REVIEW QUESTIONS FOR THE CHAPTER

- 1) **What are the main points of this chapter?**
  - Paul's solicitude (1-7)
  - Warnings against "the Colossian Heresy" (8-23)
- 2) **What was Paul's strong desire for those he had not seen? (1-2)**
  - That their hearts may be encouraged, knit together in love
  - That they may be richly blessed by the assurance that comes from an understanding and knowledge of the mystery of God
- 3) **What is "hidden" in Christ? (3)**
  - All the treasures of wisdom and knowledge
- 4) **What had Paul seen in the Colossians that caused him to rejoice? (5)**
  - Their good order and steadfastness of faith in Christ
- 5) **How were the Colossians to walk in Christ? (6-7)**
  - Rooted and built up in Him
  - Established in the faith
  - Abounding with thanksgiving

- 6) What three things might be used to "cheat" us? (8)**
- Philosophy and empty deceit
  - Tradition of men
  - Basic principles of the world
- 7) What is said about Jesus in relation to the Godhead? (9)**
- In Him dwells all the fullness of the Godhead bodily
- 8) What is our condition in Christ? (10)**
- We are complete in Him
- 9) What sort of "circumcision" have we had in Christ? (11)**
- One made without hands
  - A putting off the body of the sins of the flesh
- 10) What takes place in baptism? Who is the one at work in baptism? (12-13)**
- We are buried with Christ, raised with Christ, made alive together with Christ
  - God, who raised Jesus from the dead
- 11) What did Christ take out of the way, having nailed it to the cross? (14)**
- The "handwriting of requirements"
- 12) In what things should we not let others judge us? (16-17)**
- In food or drink
  - Regarding religious festivals, a new moon or Sabbaths
- 13) In what ways might people seek to defraud us? (18)**
- Through false humility, worship of angels, appeals to things not really seen
- 14) What sort of "basic principles of the world" might others try to regulate upon us? (21)**
- "Do not touch, do not taste, do not handle"
- 15) What is the truth about such traditions of men? (22-23)**
- They have an appearance of wisdom, but are of no value against the indulgence of the flesh



# The Epistle To The Colossians

## Chapter Three

### OBJECTIVES IN STUDYING THIS CHAPTER

- 1) To see what Paul offers as the Christian solution in dealing with the problem of sin
- 2) To understand what our responsibilities are as "the elect of God, holy and beloved"

### SUMMARY

Having warned the brethren of "the Colossian Heresy", and the need to be established in the faith of Jesus Christ, Paul now offers a detailed description of "the Christian Solution" to the problem of sin in their lives. Rather than being deceived or swayed by false alternatives, they need to seek those things above, where Christ is, to set their minds on things above and not on the earth. This is because they have been raised with Christ (cf. **Co 2:12**) and their life is now hidden in Christ, awaiting the day of His coming in which they will appear with Him in glory (**1-4**).

With minds set on Christ, they need to "put to death" those sins in which their earthly members engaged, and upon which the wrath of God is coming. This is done by "putting off" the old man with his deeds, and "putting on" the new man who is being renewed in knowledge after the image of Christ. The deeds of the old man and the characteristics of the new man are defined by Paul, followed with exhortations to allow the "peace of God" to rule in their hearts and to let the "word of Christ" dwell in them richly. He also charges them to do all things in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father (**5-17**).

As so much of their daily lives revolve around the home, Paul also addresses the responsibilities of various family members as they serve the Lord (**18-4:1**).

### OUTLINE

#### I. THE CHRISTIAN SOLUTION (1-17)

##### A. SET YOUR MIND ON THINGS ABOVE (1-4)

1. Since you were raised with Christ, seek those things above (**1-2**)
  - a. Where Christ is, seated at God's right hand (**1**)
  - b. Not on the things on the earth (**2**)
2. For you have died, one day to appear with Christ in glory (**3-4**)
  - a. Your life is now hidden with Christ in God (**3**)
  - b. When Christ appears, you will also appear with Him in glory (**4**)

##### B. PUT OFF THE OLD MAN (5-9)

1. Put to death the members of your body (**5**)
  - a. Fornication

- b. Uncleaness
- c. Passion
- d. Evil desire
- e. Covetousness, which is idolatry
- For the wrath of God is coming upon the sons of disobedience, and you also once walked in such things **(6-7)**
- 2. Put off the old man with his deeds **(8-9)**
  - a. Anger
  - b. Wrath
  - c. Malice
  - d. Blasphemy
  - e. Filthy language
  - f. Lying to one another

### **C. PUT ON THE NEW MAN (10-17)**

- 1. In which you are renewed in the image of our Creator, where there is neither:
  - a. Greek nor Jew
  - b. Circumcised nor uncircumcised
  - c. Barbarian, Scythian
  - d. Slave nor free
  - But Christ, who is all and in all **(10-11)**
- 2. As God's elect, put on Christ-like qualities **(12-14)**
  - a. Tender mercies
  - b. Kindness
  - c. Humbleness of mind
  - d. Meekness
  - e. Longsuffering
  - f. Bearing with one another
  - g. Forgiving one another, even as Christ forgave you
  - h. Above all these things, put on love, the perfect tie that binds
- 3. In addition...
  - a. Let God's peace rule in your heart, and be thankful **(15)**
  - b. Let Christ's word dwell in you richly, teaching and admonishing one another with song, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord **(16)**
  - c. Do all things in the name of the Lord Jesus, with thanksgiving to God **(17)**

## **II. FAMILIAL RESPONSIBILITIES (18-4:1)**

### **A. WIVES TOWARD THEIR HUSBANDS (18)**

- 1. Submit to your own husbands
- 2. As is fitting in the Lord

### **B. HUSBANDS TOWARDS THEIR WIVES (19)**

- 1. Love your wives
- 2. Do not be bitter toward them

**C. CHILDREN TOWARD THEIR PARENTS (20)**

1. Obey your parents in all things
2. This is well pleasing to the Lord

**D. FATHERS TOWARD THEIR CHILDREN (21)**

1. Do not provoke your children
2. Or they may become discouraged

**E. SERVANTS TOWARD THEIR MASTERS (22-25)**

1. Obey your earthly masters in all things (22)
  - a. Not with eye-service, seeking only to please men
  - b. But with sincerity of heart, fearing God
2. Do your work heartily (23-24)
  - a. As to the Lord and not to men (23)
  - b. Knowing that from the Lord you will receive the inheritance (24)
3. He who does wrong... (25)
  - a. Will be repaid for the wrong he does
  - b. There will be no partiality

**F. MASTERS TOWARD THEIR SERVANTS (4:1)**

1. Give your servants what is just and fair
2. Knowing that you also have a Master in heaven

**REVIEW QUESTIONS FOR THE CHAPTER**

**1) What are the main points of this chapter?**

- The Christian solution (1-17)
- Familial responsibilities (18-4:1)

**2) What twofold charge is given to those who have been raised with Christ? (1-2)**

- Seek those things which are above, where Christ is
- Set your mind on things above, not on things on the earth

**3) Where is our "life" at the present? When shall it appear? (3-4)**

- Hidden with Christ in God
- When Christ appears (i.e., His Second Coming)

**4) What sins are we to "put to death"? (5)**

- Fornication, uncleanness, passion, evil desire, and covetousness (which is idolatry)

**5) Why must we put them to death? (6)**

- Because the wrath of God is coming upon the sons of disobedience

**6) What other sins must we "put off"? (8,9)**

- Anger, wrath, malice, blasphemy, filthy language, lying to one another

- 7) What have we "put off", and what have we "put on"? (9-10)**  
- We have "put off the old man with his deeds"  
- We have "put on the new man who is renewed in knowledge according to the image of Him who created him" (i.e., Christ)
- 8) As God's elect (chosen), holy and beloved, what are we to "put on"? (12-14)**  
- Tender mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, longsuffering, bearing with one another, forgiving one another as Christ forgave us, and love
- 9) What must we allow the "peace of God" do? (15)**  
- Rule in our hearts
- 10) What must we allow the "word of Christ" do? (16)**  
- Dwell in our hearts richly
- 11) How are we to teach and admonish one another? (16)**  
- In psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs, singing with grace in our hearts to the Lord
- 12) How are we to do all things, whether in word or deed? (17)**  
- In the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through Him
- 13) What is the duty of wives? (18)**  
- To submit to their own husbands
- 14) What is the duty of husbands? (19)**  
- To love their wives and not be bitter toward them
- 15) What is the duty of children? (20)**  
- To obey their parents in all things
- 16) What is the duty of fathers? (21)**  
- Not to provoke their children
- 17) What is the duty of servants? (22-23)**  
- To obey their masters in all things  
- Not with eye-service, as pleasing men, but in sincerity of heart, fearing God  
- To do all things heartily, as to the Lord
- 18) What positive motivation is there for a servant to so act? What negative motivation? (24-25)**  
- Serving the Lord Christ, they will receive the reward of the inheritance  
- Those who do wrong will be repaid, with no partiality being shown
- 19) What is the duty of masters? What motivation is offered to do this? (4:1)**  
- To give their servants what is just and fair  
- They too have a Master, one who is heaven

# The Epistle To The Colossians

## Chapter Four

### OBJECTIVES IN STUDYING THIS CHAPTER

- 1) To consider the importance of prayer, and proper conduct toward those who are not Christians
- 2) To appreciate the value of God's "second string", those workers in the kingdom who assisted key players like Paul and contributed so much to the spread of the gospel

### SUMMARY

Paul concludes his section on "the Christian Solution" as an alternative to the heresies being proposed at Colosse with exhortations to prayer and proper conduct. His desire is that they devote themselves to prayer with vigilance and thanksgiving. A special request for prayer in his behalf is made, that God might give him an open door for the word of God, and that he might make the mystery of Christ known. Their own conduct is to be with wisdom toward outsiders, making good use of their time. This includes speaking with grace, knowing how one ought to answer others (**1-6**).

Paul then mentions several companions, starting with Tychicus and Onesimus who were evidently the bearers of this epistle, and who would inform them of Paul's circumstances. Special greetings are also sent from brethren with Paul. These included three Jewish brethren (Aristarchus, Mark, Jesus called Justus), a brother who was from Colosse (Epaphras), a beloved physician (Luke), and one we know from another epistle (Demas, cf. **2 Ti 4:9**) who later forsook Paul (**7-14**).

Finally, greetings are sent to those in Laodicea and the church meeting in the home of Nymphas, along with a charge to exchange epistles with the church in Laodicea. With a final exhortation for Archippus to fulfill his ministry, Paul signs off using his personal signature, asking that they remember his chains, and praying for grace on their behalf (**15-18**).

### OUTLINE

#### I. EXHORTATIONS TO PRAYER AND PROPER CONDUCT (2-6)

##### A. DEVOTE YOURSELVES TO PRAYER (2-4)

1. Continue earnestly in prayer, being vigilant with thanksgiving (**2**)
2. Pray for ministers of God, like Paul (**3-4**)
  - a. That God would open a door for the Word (**3a**)
  - b. That Paul would make the mystery of Christ manifest (**3b-4**)

##### B. CONDUCT YOURSELVES PROPERLY (5-6)

1. Walk in wisdom toward outsiders, making the most of your time (**5**)
2. Speak with grace, properly answering each one (**6**)

## **II. PAUL'S COMPANIONS (7-14)**

### **A. COMMENDATION OF HIS MESSENGERS (7-9)**

1. Tychicus (7-8)
  - a. A beloved brother, faithful minister, and fellow servant in the Lord (8a)
  - b. Sent by Paul to inform them of his circumstances, and to comfort their hearts (8b-9)
2. Onesimus (9)
  - a. A faithful and beloved brother, from Colosse (9a)
  - b. He also will inform them of Paul's circumstances (9b)

### **B. GREETINGS FROM HIS FRIENDS (10-14)**

1. From Aristarchus, a fellow prisoner (10a)
2. From Mark, a cousin of Barnabas, whom they are to welcome if he comes (10b)
3. From Jesus, called Justus, who together with Aristarchus and Mark are Paul's only fellow workers for the kingdom of God who are of the circumcision (11)
4. From Epaphras (12-13)
  - a. One of their number at Colosse (12a)
  - b. A servant of Christ in their behalf (12b)
    - 1) Laboring fervently for them in prayers
    - 2) Praying that they may stand perfect and complete in all the will of God
  - c. Paul bears witness of his great zeal (13)
    - 1) For those at Colosse (13a)
    - 2) For those in Laodicea and Hierapolis (13b)
5. From Luke, the beloved physician (14a)
6. From Demas (14b)

## **III. CONCLUDING REMARKS (15-18)**

### **A. PERSONAL MESSAGES (15-17)**

1. Greet the brethren (15)
  - a. Those who are in Laodicea (15a)
  - b. Nymphas and the church in his house (15b)
2. Exchange epistles (16)
  - a. Once this epistle is read, see that it is read in the church of the Laodiceans (16a)
  - b. You also read the epistle from the church in Laodicea (16b)
3. A charge to Archippus, that he take heed to his ministry received from the Lord, and to fulfill it (17)

### **B. A PERSONAL SIGNOFF (18)**

1. Salutation written by his own hands (18a)
2. A plea to remember his chains (18b)
3. A prayer that grace be with them (18c)

## REVIEW QUESTIONS FOR THE CHAPTER

- 1) What are the main points of this chapter?**
  - Exhortations to prayer and proper conduct (2-6)
  - Paul's companions (7-14)
  - Concluding remarks (15-18)
  
- 2) In calling them to earnest prayer, what four things does Paul ask of them? (2-4)**
  - That they pray with vigilance
  - That they pray with thanksgiving
  - That they pray for God to provide an open door for the word
  - That they pray for him to be able to make the mystery of Christ manifest
  
- 3) How were they to walk? (5)**
  - In wisdom toward outsiders, making good use of their time
  
- 4) How were they to speak? (6)**
  - With grace, knowing how to answer each one
  
- 5) How is Tychicus described? Why was Paul sending him? (7-8)**
  - A beloved brother, faithful minister, and fellow servant in the Lord
  - To inform them of Paul's circumstances and comfort their hearts
  
- 6) How is Onesimus describe? What was Paul sending him? (9)**
  - A faithful and beloved brother, one of them
  - To make known the things happening in Rome
  
- 7) What three men were Paul's only fellow workers for the kingdom of God who were of the circumcision, i.e. Jews? (10-11)**
  - Aristarchus, Mark, Justus
  
- 8) What is said about Epaphras in relation to the churches in Colosse, Laodicea, and Hierapolis? (12-13)**
  - Labors fervently for them in prayer, that they might stand perfect and complete in all the will of God
  - Has a great zeal for them
  
- 9) Who else sends greetings? (14)**
  - Luke, the beloved physician, and Demas
  
- 10) To what two groups does Paul send greetings? (15)**
  - To the brethren in Laodicea
  - To Nymphas and the church in his house

**11) What was to be done with the epistle after it had been read to the church? (16)**

- It was to be read to the church of the Laodiceans

**12) What was to be done with an epistle coming from Laodicea? (16)**

- They were to read it

**13) What special charge does Paul tell them to give to Archippus? (17)**

- Take heed to fulfill the ministry received from the Lord

**14) How does Paul confirm that this epistle was from him? (18)**

- By writing his name in his own hand

**15) What final request does Paul ask of the Colossians? (18)**

- Remember my chains

**16) What final prayer does Paul offer in behalf of the brethren? (18)**

- Grace be with you