

COLOSSIANS

CHAPTER ONE

This is another of the “prison” letters and was written around 60 AD.

Paul did not start the church at Colossae but heard of the young church, and its problems, from Epaphrus. This church had many of the same problems as the churches at Galatia. That is, false teachers had come in and were perverting the gospel.

1 Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God, and Timotheus our brother,

Since the Colossians did not know Paul personally he identifies himself as an apostle called by Jesus himself. He also mentions Timotheus who is with him. This is the same person we know as Timothy. Timothy worked with Paul for several years and was with Paul when Paul wrote this letter. This is the same Timothy that the letters 1st and 2nd Timothy were written to a few years later.

2 To the saints and faithful brethren in Christ which are at Colosse: Grace be unto you, and peace, from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

I suppose everyone here knows that we are called saints, not because of our goodness but because we are sanctified, (made a saint), by his blood.

Grace is a gift that God gives. We do not deserve it and we cannot earn it.

3 We give thanks to God and the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, praying always for you,

4 Since we heard of your faith in Christ Jesus, and of the love which ye have to all the saints,

5 For the hope which is laid up for you in heaven, whereof ye heard before in the word of the truth of the gospel;

Hope looks toward the future and anticipates reward. When people believe Jesus and trust him their spirit becomes alive. This happens because the Holy Spirit lives in them. When they die, only their physical body dies but their spirit will live for ever with God.

6 Which is come unto you, as it is in all the world; and bringeth forth fruit, as it doth also in you, since the day ye heard of it, and knew the

grace of God in truth:

Fruit bearing can only come after belief. There were no secret believers here. All had heard the word from Epaphras and the believers were now spreading the gospel. The proof of the fruit bearing is the increase in the church.

7 As ye also learned of Epaphras our dear fellowservant, who is for you a faithful minister of Christ;

Epaphrus was probably the founder of the church at Colossae. He was Paul's friend and fellowservant.

8 Who also declared unto us your love in the Spirit.

Epaphras has told Paul of the faithfulness of the Colossians and of their deep commitment to their belief.

This is that supernatural thing expressed in John 3:16. It is produced by the Holy Spirit. We are bought with a price and therefore not our own. This is one of the reasons we can have assurance in our security.

9 For this cause we also, since the day we heard it, do not cease to pray for you, and to desire that ye might be filled with the knowledge of his will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding;

This is practical, good sense. It is the ability to use knowledge and spiritual understanding. Notice that Paul prays regularly for the Colossians as well as for other churches.

10 That ye might walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing, being fruitful in every good work, and increasing in the knowledge of God;

Christians learn wisdom from the Holy Spirit. Then they learn to behave in the right way. People who really know Christ start to behave like Christ. This is how Christians become mature. Notice that Paul says "being fruitful in every good work". He stresses "fruit" repeatedly in his letters and this is often misinterpreted as winning people to Christ. Paul has explained what fruit bearing is in Galatians. Fruit bearing is the "fruit of the Spirit" or in other words the process of growth whereby we become more like Christ as we mature spiritually. With proper spiritual growth the soul winning will come naturally.

11 Strengthened with all might, according to his glorious power, unto all patience and longsuffering with joyfulness;

12 Giving thanks unto the Father, which hath made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light:

We should be grateful to God and not forget to thank Him for all he does for

us. It is easy to slip into the bad prayer habit of asking and not thanking and praising.

13 Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son:

This deliverance was instantaneous and not a progressive process. In other words you were saved the instant you truly believed the gospel.

14 In whom we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins:

Most of the corrupt bibles remove the phrase "through his blood". This is ironic since this is the most important part of the verse. Redemption and forgiveness of sin is not possible without the blood of Jesus. "Through his blood" is a truth of God preserved for us for two thousand years. Remember the Passover. When God sees the blood of His son he will not remember your sins.

15 Who is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of every creature:

No one has seen God since God is Spirit. Jesus is the image we see and by His own statement if we have seen Him we have seen the Father. To put it another way, the image of God is Jesus Christ.

16 For by him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by him, and for him:

17 And he is before all things, and by him all things consist.

The key words there are "by" and "for". Don't ever overlook the reason for creation. That reason is "for Him". The corrupt bibles usually change the word "by" to "in" causing the reading to be "In Him". Obviously not everything is in Him. Think of things like Satan, fallen angels, demons etc. These things are certainly not "in Him".

18 And he is the head of the body, the church: who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead; that in all things he might have the preeminence.

'The church' means all the Christians in the world and the word church always refers to people. The 'local church' means all the Christians who live in a particular town or village. In the Bible, 'church' never refers to a building where Christians have meetings. Christ does not live in his physical body on earth any more but now lives in all Christians by means of his Holy Spirit. Christ lives on this earth in his church (the Christians). So he calls the

church his 'body'. He is spoken of as 'head' which means that Christ is the ruler of his church.

19 For it pleased the Father that in him should all fulness dwell;

Jesus Christ was not just a man but was God in human form. Since God the Father is a spirit we need the human body of Christ so we can relate better to God. No part of God was missing from Christ's life.

Jesus has all of God's character, holiness and power. We always need to keep in mind that the Trinity is also One. It is we who tend to separate them.

20 And, having made peace through the blood of his cross, by him to reconcile all things unto himself; by him, I say, whether they be things in earth, or things in heaven.

Adam's sin separates men and women from God. In fact, sin makes us the enemies of God until we are born again. Sin also affects the physical world. 2 Peter 3:13 says that there will be a new heaven and a new earth in the future. There will be no sin there. Consider this. During the millenium the earth will return to it's original, Edenic state and Jesus will again be with us on the earth and Satan will be bound. In spite of that, there will still be sin on the earth and people will still need to get saved or be tossed into the lake of fire at the Great White Throne Judgment. In other words, even without Satan's influence we will still be a sinful people.

21 And you, that were sometime alienated and enemies in your mind by wicked works, yet now hath he reconciled

22 In the body of his flesh through death, to present you holy and unblameable and unreprouvable in his sight:

This is to present you at the Judgment Seat of Christ.

“The best preparation for the Judgment Seat of Christ is a continual search in the pure word of God under the guidance of the Holy Ghost.” *The Common Man's Reference Bible*.

23 If ye continue in the faith grounded and settled, and be not moved away from the hope of the gospel, which ye have heard, and which was preached to every creature which is under heaven; whereof I Paul am made a minister;

The Christians at Colossae had heard the true message of the gospel and believed it. Then they began to listen to what the false teachers taught. So, Paul urged the Christians to continue to believe God's truth. Paul wrote his letter to them to explain more about the truth. Only the true gospel would

cause Christianity to grow and produce 'fruit' .We discussed the fruit in Galatians and in verse six here.

24 Who now rejoice in my sufferings for you, and fill up that which is behind of the afflictions of Christ in my flesh for his body's sake, which is the church:

this verse does not mean that Christ has to suffer again for our sin. This refers to the troubles that people have in their lives. Christ is in Christians so when Christians suffer, Christ suffers with them.

25 Whereof I am made a minister, according to the dispensation of God which is given to me for you, to fulfil the word of God;

26 Even the mystery which hath been hid from ages and from generations, but now is made manifest to his saints:

Paul emphasized that he had told the Colossians the complete message about the gospel. They did not need the secret information that the false teachers pretended to possess.

27 To whom God would make known what is the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles; which is Christ in you, the hope of glory:

This is the mystery spoken of here, the fact that we are indwelt by Christ in the person of the Holy Spirit and this is why we have assurance of our security. This is different from the way that Jesus showed up in the Old Testament. Then the holy Spirit came and went as necessary. When the Lord showed up then he was called "The Angel of The Lord or, if there was a war going on, The Captain of the Host. Does anyone know how many are in a "host"? I don't but it must be a lot of angels.

28 Whom we preach, warning every man, and teaching every man in all wisdom; that we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus:

29 Whereunto I also labour, striving according to his working, which worketh in me mightily.

Paul taught Christians how to become more mature. Paul did not want them to remain Christians who did not grow. He wants the same for us today. Paul did not have an easy job. He had to work hard but Christ's power made him strong.

CHAPTER TWO

**For I would that ye knew what great conflict I have for you, and for them at Laodicea, and for as many as have not seen my face in the flesh;
2 That their hearts might be comforted, being knit together in love, and unto all riches of the full assurance of understanding, to the acknowledgement of the mystery of God, and of the Father, and of Christ;**

I want to encourage all these people. I want them to unite with each other because they love each other. I want them to have full certainty and to understand completely God's secret plan. This secret plan is Christ himself. No one had this secret until the resurrection.

3 In whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge.

4 And this I say, lest any man should beguile you with enticing words.

5 For though I be absent in the flesh, yet am I with you in the spirit, joying and beholding your order, and the stedfastness of your faith in Christ.

I am not present with you in my body, but my spirit is with you. I am pleased that you have discipline in your lives. I am pleased that you remain trusting and believing in Christ.

6 As ye have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk ye in him:

7 Rooted and built up in him, and stablished in the faith, as ye have been taught, abounding therein with thanksgiving.

You have accepted Jesus Christ as your Lord. Now you must continue to live with him in your lives. Build your life on Christ. Someone taught you the truth about him. So be strong, as you believe the truth. Continue to thank God for what he has done for you by Christ.

8 Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ.

Here he is on the false teachers again. He continues to stress this because it is so important.

9 For in him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily.

10 And ye are complete in him, which is the head of all principality and power:

Do not let anyone lead you away from the truth about Christ. They teach

false things and do not depend on Christ.

11 In whom also ye are circumcised with the circumcision made without hands, in putting off the body of the sins of the flesh by the circumcision of Christ:

This circumcision made without hands is the spiritual cutting away of the spirit from the body when we are saved. Your spirit and soul are stuck to your body when you are born. It takes an act of the Holy Spirit to separate them. Another way to look at this is, you have been set free.

12 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.

This is the baptism of the Holy Spirit and has nothing to do with water baptism. When you are saved you are instantly baptized into Christ by an action of the Holy Spirit. This, along with the spiritual circumcision happens instantaneously.

13 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;

Five things happen when we are saved.

Our soul is cut loose from our body.

Our soul is saved because it is loosed from its cage.

Our Spirit is born again and joined to God's Holy Spirit.

We are justified and adopted by an act of God.

We are baptized into Christ's spiritual Body by the Holy Spirit.

And that is why you can not get out of it.

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

Evil powers and authorities' refers to Satan and all his demons and fallen angels. Christ never obeyed Satan and so never sinned. He completely obeyed God and he lived a holy life.

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.

The Old Testament Law showed the Jews how to live a holy life but gave them no power to do so. Every Christian in the world can live a holy life because Christ lives in us and gives us the power to do so. However, we do not, and that really worries me about present day Christians.

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.

Here we are cautioned against worshipping angels and I would say that this also includes Mary and the other saints. After all, we are all saints, sanctified by the blood of Christ, and I can't see myself worshipping Earl!

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,

21 (Touch not; taste not; handle not;

The phrase "subject to ordinances", implies that a man is trying to stay saved or get sanctified by submitting to rules and regulations. These ordinances have nothing to do with the memorial of the Lord's Supper or the figure of Baptism.

22 Which all are to perish with the using;) after the commandments and doctrines of men?

Christians are not given ordinances of men. Instead we are given God's Word and, if we allow it, leadership by the Holy Spirit.

23 Which things have indeed a shew of wisdom in will worship, and humility, and neglecting of the body: not in any honour to the satisfying of the flesh.

This is Paul's rather convoluted way of dealing with the sin of self will. If you deny yourself sinful pleasures of the world and believe that this makes you more holy, or more in God's grace, then you are doing it for the wrong reason. If you are maintaining your separation by willpower instead of by the help and power of the Holy Spirit you are wrong and you will fail in the long run.

CHAPTER THREE

If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God.

This entire chapter deals with practical living. Paul is explaining what has happened to the Christian and how he/or she/should go forward. Christ is sitting in a place of honor at the right hand of God.

2 Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth.

We should have our affections centered on Christ and not on the things of the world.

Things above;

New Jerusalem is above.

The throne of God is above.

The departed saints are above.

The Lord Jesus Christ is above.

Many of our loved ones are above.

So, where is above? It is straight north beyond the galaxies and there is a lot of scripture to support this. Isa 14:13 says **For thou hast said in thine heart, I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God: I will sit also upon the mount of the congregation, in the sides of the north:** Psa 48:2 says **Beautiful for situation, the joy of the whole earth, [is] mount Zion, [on] the sides of the north, the city of the great King.**

So, we know it is north and we know it is up because John said in Revelation 4:1 **After this I looked, and, behold, a door [was]**

opened in heaven: and the first voice which I heard [was] as it were of a trumpet talking with me; which said, Come up hither, and I will shew thee things which must be hereafter.

So, set your affections on things above; you are an astronaut.

3 For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God.

Part of us is still dead. That part is the body which remains flesh until we get our glorified body. Therefore our affections should be located with Christ and not with our dead bodies. I know that we have trouble with that concept but think about it and meditate on it.

4 When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with him in glory.

This world and our physical lives are temporary and will disappear when Christ returns. The things in Heaven are real and will last for eternity.

5 Mortify therefore your members which are upon the earth; fornication, uncleanness, inordinate affection, evil concupiscence, and covetousness, which is idolatry:

6 For which things' sake the wrath of God cometh on the children of disobedience:

7 In the which ye also walked some time, when ye lived in them.

This means put to death quickly these things which he mentions here. Fornication leads the list and inordinate affection (depraved passion) covers a lot of sin such as homosexuality, and child molestation and does not necessarily mean the practice of these things but the thinking on these things is the same as the act and will often lead to the act. Do you think that Catholic priest, or anyone else, gets up one morning and says to himself, "I think I will molest a child today"? No. It starts with a single thought, then more thoughts and so on until it progresses to the act.

8 But now ye also put off all these; anger, wrath, malice, blasphemy, filthy communication out of your mouth.

Clean up your speech. I think this is one a lot of us have to watch and keep under control.

9 Lie not one to another, seeing that ye have put off the old man with his deeds;

There is no "little white lie". All of them are big and black. Do notice that there is a command there.

10 And have put on the new man, which is renewed in knowledge after the image of him that created him:

The "new man" is renewed daily by prayer and by action of the Holy Spirit.

11 Where there is neither Greek nor Jew, circumcision nor uncircumcision, Barbarian, Scythian, bond nor free: but Christ is all, and in all.

Jews and Greek people represent people from different nations. People in a different society have a different way of life but all are saved in the same way. None of these differences matters to God. Everyone is equal as a Christian. Christ died to save us all.

12 Put on therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, longsuffering;

13 Forbearing one another, and forgiving one another, if any man have a quarrel against any: even as Christ forgave you, so also do ye.

14 And above all these things put on charity, which is the bond of perfectness.

God has made you his holy people. He loves you so put on these qualities: Be kind, be humble, be gentle and patient with people. Forgive anyone who does something wrong to you. Christ forgave you, so you must forgive other people. But the most important quality is love.

15 And let the peace of God rule in your hearts, to the which also ye are called in one body; and be ye thankful.

Notice that we are called to peace. That second part, "be ye thankful" means to be thankful for the peace God has given us. You are part of the body of Christ, so you should have peace.

16 Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom; teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord.

The message about Christ is so powerful that it changes people's lives. 'Fill your spirit' means that it should affect every part of our lives. We Christians sing because we are happy.

17 And whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by him.

When a person becomes a Christian, his or her whole life changes. Christ is now at the center of that person's life. Christ gives us strength to live in the right way.

These next four verses are direct commandments and not suggestions.

18 Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as it is fit in the Lord.

19 Husbands, love your wives, and be not bitter against them.

20 Children, obey your parents in all things: for this is well pleasing unto the Lord.

21 Fathers, provoke not your children to anger, lest they be discouraged.

Fathers, do not be too severe with your children. They may be come discouraged and stop trying. This does not mean not to punish them when they misbehave.

22 Servants, obey in all things your masters according to the flesh; not with eyeservice, as menpleasers; but in singleness of heart, fearing God;

Obey even when they are not watching you. Serve them honestly, because you respect the Lord. In other words, if you are a Christian then serve as a Christian even though you are a slave.

23 And whatsoever ye do, do it heartily, as to the Lord, and not unto men;

24 Knowing that of the Lord ye shall receive the reward of the inheritance: for ye serve the Lord Christ.

He is still speaking to the slave but this also applies to us. I remember from before I retired that the construction superintendents always preferred to hire Mennonite carpenters because they had a reputation for being honest and doing excellent work. This is what these verses are talking about.

25 But he that doeth wrong shall receive for the wrong which he hath done: and there is no respect of persons.

God will punish Christians who do wrong. God does not favour any Christian above any other Christian.

CHAPTER FOUR

Masters, give unto your servants that which is just and equal; knowing that ye also have a Master in heaven.

Slaves and masters are equal as Christians and Christ is master of us all.

2 Continue in prayer, and watch in the same with thanksgiving;

Continue to pray and be aware of what you should pray for. Always remember to thank God. Prayer is a very important part of every Christian's life.

3 Withal praying also for us, that God would open unto us a door of utterance, to speak the mystery of Christ, for which I am also in bonds:

4 That I may make it manifest, as I ought to speak.

Paul asks prayer for himself and his group. He also asks prayer that he will have more opportunities to witness and that he will choose the right words when these opportunities arise.

5 Walk in wisdom toward them that are without, redeeming the time. Let your speech be always with grace, seasoned with salt, that ye may know how ye ought to answer every man.

Christians live and work among a lost world. You can be sure that you are

being watched wherever you go. People should be able to see how Christ has changed your life. Then, when Christians speak about Christ, other people will be more ready to listen. Speak about Christ in an interesting way. People often ask Christians questions about God. So, Christians should always be ready to explain about Christ. Do this in a kind way and save the “you are going to Hell” speech as a last resort.

The phrase “redeeming the time” is loaded. It can, and does, mean stop wasting your time on foolish things which will perish. Spend it spreading the word of God. It has a deeper meaning in that you can “add” time by leading others to Christ.

Paul has finished what he wanted to teach his readers and he ends his letter with various personal greetings.

7 All my state shall Tychicus declare unto you, who is a beloved brother, and a faithful minister and fellowservant in the Lord:

Tychicus is a messenger to the Colossians. He tells them how things are going with Paul. It is Tychicus who carried this letter to the Colossian church.

8 Whom I have sent unto you for the same purpose, that he might know your estate, and comfort your hearts;

9 With Onesimus, a faithful and beloved brother, who is one of you. They shall make known unto you all things which are done here.

Onesimus will accompany Tychicus as a helper. This is probably the same Onesimus, the runaway slave from the book of Philemon. Now he is saved and a brother in Christ.

10 Aristarchus my fellowprisoner saluteth you, and Marcus, sister's son to Barnabas, (touching whom ye received commandments: if he come unto you, receive him;)

There is a nice nugget here. In addition to Aristarchus, who accompanied Paul to Jerusalem, and apparently is in prison with Paul, there is Marcus, Barnabus sister's son. This is John Mark who we now know is Barnabas nephew and who wrote the gospel of Mark. This is also likely the naked man in the garden. (Mark 14:51-52)

11 And Jesus, which is called Justus, who are of the circumcision. These only are my fellowworkers unto the kingdom of God, which have been a

comfort unto me.

Jesus, Justus and Joshua were common names at the time.

12 Epaphras, who is one of you, a servant of Christ, saluteth you, always labouring fervently for you in prayers, that ye may stand perfect and complete in all the will of God.

This is likely the one who started the church at Collossae and the one who has notified Paul of the condition of the church there..

13 For I bear him record, that he hath a great zeal for you, and them that are in Laodicea, and them in Hierapolis.

14 Luke, the beloved physician, and Demas, greet you.

There is another nugget here. Luke we know as Paul's trusted friend and companion. Demas is another matter. This is the Demas mentioned in 2nd Timothy 4:10-11 as deserting Paul for the world.

15 Salute the brethren which are in Laodicea, and Nymphas, and the church which is in his house.

All the bible changers have a great time discussing whether Nymphas was a man or a woman. Apparently the name could be used for either sex. Since my King James Bible says "in his house" I'm betting he was a man. The word church here is just for the assembly since Christians did not have church buildings until the third century.

16 And when this epistle is read among you, cause that it be read also in the church of the Laodiceans; and that ye likewise read the epistle from Laodicea.

These two church groups were to share their letters so both groups had the benefit of both letters. We do not have a book of Laodicea and the reason we don't is that God decided not to include it with our scriptures.

17 And say to Archippus, Take heed to the ministry which thou hast received in the Lord, that thou fulfil it.

Now this one is interesting since it refers to Acts 18:24-28 where Aquila and Priscilla, members of the laity, instruct a member of the clergy, Apollos. This is the reverse of the way instruction usually flows. I believe this is a warning to Archippus to be careful with his ministry. Archippus is mentioned in Philemon as a member of that household, probably a son.

18 The salutation by the hand of me Paul. Remember my bonds. Grace

be with you. Amen.

This is Paul's call for prayer for himself and is an indirect appeal to pray for his release.