

## **COLOSSIANS**

### **INTRODUCTION TO THE EPISTLE:**

#### **I WHAT CAUSED THE LETTER? Gnosticism**

The circumstances which prompted the writing of Colossians seemed to be the special heresy that arose there. This false teaching seemed to be the beginning of what later (in the second century) developed into Gnosticism. (BKC) This seedal Gnosticism was more a religious-philosophical attitude and tendency than a system, and it could adapt itself to Jewish, Christian, or pagan groups as the occasion required. Nevertheless, certain ideas appear to be generally characteristic of the Gnostic mind: metaphysical dualism, mediating beings, redemption through knowledge or *gnosis*. All religions, Gnostics believed, are manifestations of one hidden verity; seek to bring men to knowledge of the truth. This knowledge or *gnosis* is not intellectual apprehension but the enlightenment derived from mystical experience. Because man is bound in the world of evil matter, he can approach God only through mediating angelic beings. By the aid of these powers and through allegorical and mythical interpretations of the sacred writings, spiritual enlightenment can be achieved and one's redemption from the world of sin and matter is assured. (Wycl.)

The Gnosticism included several characteristics at Colosse. 1) It was Jewish, stressing the need for observing Old Testament laws, and ceremonies. 2) It was philosophical, laying emphasis on some special or deeper knowledge (*gnostis*). 3) It involved the worship of angels as mediators to God (2:18). 4) It was exclusivistic, stressing the special privilege and "perfection" of those select few who belonged to this philosophical elite group. 5) It was also Christological. But this seminal Gnosticism denied the deity of Christ. This led to one of the greatest declarations of Christ's deity found anywhere in Scripture in 1:15-16; 2:9. (BKC) Paul takes the terminology of the Gnostics to attack their teaching, and develops the doctrine of the "cosmic Christ". In Christ, the one mediator dwells all wisdom and knowledge; in his death and resurrection all powers of the cosmos are defeated and subjected to himself (2:3, 9, 10, 15). Any teaching which detracts from the centrality of Christ under the pretense of leading men to maturity and perfection is a perversion that threatens the very essence of the faith of Christianity. (Wycl.)

#### **II THE AUTHOR IS PAUL.**

Paul's authorship support is abundant in the letter itself, and outside testimony is very wide. The chief objections to Pauline authorship are: 1) the thought and emphasis of the letter do not conform to that of Romans, Corinthians, and Galatians This seems especially weak because Paul's co-workers mentioned in Philemon is paralleled in this book. And Paul is quite capable of a wide range of vocabulary with his education. And 2) the early appearance of Gnosticism is believed before its time.

The letter does claim Pauline authorship in three references 1:1, 1:23; 4:18.

#### **III THE ORIGIN AND DATE OF COLOSSIANS.**

Most scholars believe that Paul was in prison. It is one of the prison epistles, and it was delivered by the same man, Epaphras, as were Ephesians and Philemon. (Unger H.) Most scholars put the date between A.D. 60-63 which is based on the Roman imprisonment, Acts 28:30. Paul, however does makes mention of many imprisonments in 2 Corinthians 6:5 for the ministry sake.

## **INTRODUCTION OF THE EPISTLE: GREETING AND THANKGIVING 1:1-8**

### **i. GREETING 1:1-2**

**vv1-2** This is definitely Pauline style. See Romans 1:1, 7; 1 Cor. 1:1-3; 2 Cor. 1:1-2; and etc. Paul was an *apostle*. He was not one of the original twelve who were with Christ during his public ministry. The scripture is totally silent about Paul at that time period, but he is an unbeliever. And nothing is said of his exposure to Christ's ministry. But, he did see the risen Christ (1 Cor. 9:1; 15:8-9) and he did possess special miraculous powers given to authenticate apostles (2 Cor. 12:12; Hebrews 2:1-4). The Hebrew passage shows the apostles *confirmed to us by signs and wonders and by various miracles*.

Paul spoke with authority as an apostle, *by the will of God*. Timothy was a co-worker with Paul, but not an apostle. Paul spent much time discipling Timothy, and he will write his last letters to him. (Ibid.) The Christians were called *saints*, holy only because of their relation to Christ. Paul addresses the Corinthians as saints also, and their Christian living had little resemblance of "sainthood" as used by Catholics. As in any church there are *faithful brethren*. Even though *brethren* have masculine reference, it has the meaning of "believing" in Christ which puts all believers in a family relationship because God is our Father. John 1:12 says, *But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, even to those who believe in His name*.

The city of the church was *Colasse*. It was about 80 miles from Ephesus, and very near Laodicea (See map). *Grace and peace* was a common greeting of the early church. *Grace* shows unmerited favor of God through Christ's suffering for us, and *peace* which comes from knowing we have now a relationship to God of love. He is now our *Father* and as believers are now sisters and brothers in the Lord.

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### COLOSSIANS 1:3-9

**INTRODUCTION:** We started the introduction of the epistle last week. Paul uses his typical introduction greeting in verses 1-2, by identifying himself, apostleship, people the letter is directed, and pronounced of *grace and peace to readers*.

### **INTRODUCTION: GREETING AND THANKGIVING, 1:1-8**

i. **GREETING 1:1-2** Today we take up.

#### ii. **THANKGIVING 1:3-8**

**v3** God is to be thanked and praised for what God was doing in the life of his people, *when we prayed for you* (NIV).

**vv4-5** Paul speaks of three virtues; faith, love, and hope. These three were a favorite of Paul. 1 Cor. 13:13 says, *But now abide faith, hope, love, these three: but the greatest of these is love*. 1 Thess. 1:2-3 says: *We give thanks to God always for all of you, making mention of you in our prayers; 3) constantly bearing in mind your work of faith and labor of love and steadfastness of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ in the presence of our God and Father*. (BKC) So, let's examine these three: 1) *faith in Christ Jesus*. There is no salvation without faith in God's Son. 2) *The love which you have for all the saints*. For John the evidence of love for Christians is standard to judge a person who says that he is a Christian. 1 John 2:9-10 says, *The one who says he is in the light and yet hates his brother is in the darkness until now. 10) The one who loves his brother abides in the light and there is no cause for stumbling in him*. The 3) *because of the hope laid up for you in heaven*. This is not the usual way that some "Christians" use the term today meaning, "I think so; "I think it is possible". *Hope* as defined in Thayer's Greek Lexicon says, "always in the N.T., in a good sense: *expectation of good, hope*; and in the Christian sense, *joyful and confident expectation of eternal salvation*". This was made possible because of *the gospel*.

**v6** The Gospel was spreading over much of the known world. The gospel proclaimed will bear *fruit* today as it did then. If you have the KJV notice that *increasing* is omitted. The gospel is presented like a tree growing or *increasing* in size. (BKC) It changes the believer, *even as it has been doing in you also since the day you heard of it and understood the grace of God in truth*. The person must understand the gospel to receive it. They *knew* (KJV) the gospel, *the grace of God in truth*. It is unmerited favor of God by faith alone.

**v7** Epaphras apparently was the founder of the church at Colosse. (BKC, Nic.) Paul commends the man as *faithful servant of Christ*. The word for servant is *diakonos*. The word from which we get the word deacon. Here the word is best translated as it is because he was probably the *minister* (NIV) there.

**v8** This man had informed Paul, also as others, of their *love* (agapa) *in the Spirit*. God's Spirit produces love in the believer.

### **I. THE APOSTLE'S PRAYER FOR THE COLOSSIAN CHRISTIANS. 1:9-14**

**v9** This prayer is almost identical to Ephesians 1:8, 17. He prays for them to *be filled with the knowledge of His will*. The Gnostics pride themselves on knowledge. The word Paul uses (epignosis) means "full knowledge" of His will. 2

Timothy 3:16-17 says, *All scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness; 17) that the man of God may be adequate, equipped for every good work.* The Bible is the only sure reliable source of knowing God's will. The average church goer knows less about the Bible today than at any time previous to that records are known. Yet, we have more a proportion of the population as a member of a church than ever before. Something is wrong in our churches and in the American Christian family. Most churches have a 30-40 percent change of faces from one Sunday to the next. Few families have home devotions together. When are our young people being instructed from God's word? Many of our own people do not know the will of God, or they don't practice what they know by their inconsistent life of worshipping the Lord and Bible instruction for themselves and their children.

The Huntsville Times had an interesting article entitled, "Even humanist poll reveals Americans are deeply religious." What were the results? An overwhelming majority more than 90 percent - of Americans believes in God and has a religious affiliation. And near 90 percent believe in a personal God who can answer prayer...Forty-five percent with a high school education believe the Bible is the inspired word of God, as do 64 percent of college graduates and 62 percent with a graduate or professional degree." (7-21-96) This shows the more educated believe the Bible than the less educated. I have never heard that. Let me give you a fact to think on. 23,000,000 abortions have been performed since 1973 of legalizing it. This is 10 percent of the American population. How many women have had abortion? Each of us must bear our guilt for being Americans. If we are so Christian, why do we continue to allow it? 20 percent are married women. Only 1 percent were raped or incest. For the Christian young man, he must ask his prospective wife her view, because she can kill his son or daughter without any punishment.

The *Wisdom* is practical know-how. The vast majority of Americans know nothing of spiritual wisdom. The KJV translates *all wisdom and spiritual understanding* which is correct. We are talking about both *spiritual wisdom and understanding*.

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### COLOSSIANS 1:10-14

**INTRODUCTION:** We have looked at:

INTRODUCTION: 1:1-8

i. GREETING 1:1-2

ii. THANKSGIVING 1:3-8

#### I. THE APOSTLE'S PRAYER FOR THE COLOSSIANS CHRISTIANS 1:9-14

Paul prays that they may be *filled with the knowledge of His will in spiritual wisdom and understanding*. It is obvious that Paul is applying the *will* of God to each and every aspect of life. It is not enough to just know the Bible message, but it calls for obedience. This takes *wisdom* to apply the Bible knowledge to everyday situations. Last week we spent a few minutes showing how we Americans are very religious or church going, but we are weak of putting the Bible principles in real life situations. The lack of Bible knowledge is problem, but a much greater problem is using *wisdom* in applying it to everyday situations. Abortion is a show of lack of *spiritual wisdom*. The next verse shows the intent of Paul praying that they have *knowledge of His will in all spiritual wisdom and understanding*.

**v10** Bible knowledge is to be applied to everyday situations. *To walk worthy of the Lord*, Jesus being the Lord, means "to feel the solemn bond of redeeming blood, to enshrine the image of Him who shed it, to breathe His spirit and act in harmony with His example, to exhibit His temperament in its elements of purity, piety, and love." (Eadie) The aim of believers in all worthy conduct should be *to please Him in all respects or every way* (NIV). It is to anticipate and do His wishes in every aspect of life. Ephesians 5:7-11 says, *Therefore do not be partakers with them; 8) for you were formerly darkness, but now you are light in the Lord; walk as children of light 9) (for the fruit of the light consists in all goodness and righteousness and truth), 10) trying to learn what is pleasing to the Lord. 11) And do not participate in the unfruitful deeds of darkness, but instead even expose them*. Merely pleasing people is incompatible with being a servant of Christ. There is a strong comparison of pleasing God and blending into a worldly crowd and partaking with their *unfruitful deeds of darkness*. Galatians 1:10 Paul says, *For am I now seeking the favor of men, or of God? Or am I striving to please men? If I were still trying to please men, I would not be a bond-servant of Christ*. Even when one is a slave, he or she is to view their obedience as performing *the will of God from the heart* (Eph. 6:6; Col. 3:22), and not just *men-pleasers*. Paul made it the ambition of his life to please God. (BKC) 2 Cor. 5:8-9, 15 says, *we are of good courage, I say, and prefer rather to be absent from the body and to be at home with the Lord 9) Therefore also we have as our ambition, whether at home or absent, to be pleasing to Him, 15) and He died for all, that they who live should no longer live for themselves, but for Him who died and rose again on their behalf*. How do we please God? Let's notice our text.

Paul gives four ways of pleasing God in a worthy walk (BKC, Eadie, Alf.). The first is *bearing fruit in every good work*. Each tree bears some form of fruit from blossoms so that it may reproduce. It is as if one kind of fruit bearing is not

enough, *fruit in every good work*. (Eadie) Paul lists the fruit of the Spirit in Galatians 5:22-23, *But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law*. The second way of pleasing God is *increasing in the knowledge of God*. How could God not be pleased by a Christian wanting to have increased knowledge of Him? There are two ways of translating and the other is *increasing by the knowledge of God*. We grow by the means of the knowledge of God (Eadie, Alf.) The way that most translations rendered this dative form (without *ev* or *eis*) stressing acquiring more and more of the knowledge of God. More knowledge of God should not make us puffed up, but more fruitful.

**v11** The third element of a worthy walk. I would suggest writing *being* before *strengthened with all power*. It is a passive participle in the Greek, which stresses outside help which really inside of us through the Holy Spirit. Remember that Paul is praying this for them. God is *mighty*, but we are weak. We must receive spiritual power from the Holy Spirit. You would think that Paul prayed this so they could perform some great miracle, or sign, right? Wrong, *for the attaining of all steadfastness and patience*. The NIV translates, *great endurance and patience*. Satan wants to weaken us, and to make us give up on a productive Christian life. As we look around us in Christian fellowship, and friendship how many formerly professing Christians have for all practical purposes are defeated wounded soldiers of Christ. Our Christian testimony is hindered by not having *steadfastness*. *Patience* normally involves some suffering. God wants reliable soldiers, but not perfect ones.

**vv12-14** This is the fourth element of a worthy walk. *Joyously giving thanks to the Father*. (NIV supports NASB) The KJV connects *joy* with *patience and longsuffering*. (Eadie lists many others who support.) This is taught clearly in James 1:2-3, *Consider it all joy, my brethren, when you encounter various trials 3) knowing that the testing of your faith produces endurance*. Nevertheless, *joy* makes a good contrasting element into the fourth element of a worthy walk. *Light* and *darkness* is common Bible terms to describe through Christ they were brought from a rebel kingdom and placed under the sovereignty of their rightful King. (BKC) We are now *qualified to share in the inheritance*. We should be a *thankful* people as Christians because *we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins* through the *beloved Son*.

## COLOSSIANS

### COLOSSIANS 1:15-19

**INTRODUCTION:** In our handout of the themes of NT books we call this, "Jesus was pre-existent." The New Scofield Study Bible calls it, "Christ's preeminence". We are going to see the verses that influence scholars to consider this as the theme of this epistle.

INTRODUCTION: 1:1-8

i. GREETING 1:1-2

ii. THANKSGIVING 1:3-8

I. THE APOSTLE'S PRAYER FOR THE COLOSSIANS CHRISTIANS 1:9-14

## II. THE PRE-EMINENT GLORY OF CHRIST 1:15-23

### A. PAUL LISTS SEVEN SUPERIORITIES OF CHRIST TO SHOW THIS.

#### 1:15-19

**v15 The first is:** *He is the image of the invisible God.* Paul reflects upon the Adam-Christ typology. In Genesis 1:27 the Bible says, *And God created man in His own image, in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them.* Christ is the first true man who fulfills God's design in creation. (Wycl.) Hebrews 1:3 says, *And He is the radiance of His glory and the exact representation of His nature...* Jesus said in John 14:9, *anyone who has seen Me has seen the Father.* The verse cannot be disjointed from the previous verse where Paul shows that Christ has power to deliver us from the power of *darkness* or Satan through the *blood* and made forgiveness of sins possible.

**The second is:** *(He is) the first-born of all creation.* This is interpreted by the Arians in history to mean "first of a kind" or Christ was the first creature. This is continued by Jehovah Witnesses as they wrongly add the word "other" six times in this passage in their New World Translation. The context of this word *firstborn* makes this impossible for five reasons: 1) the whole point of the passage (and the book) is to show Christ's superiority over all things. 2) Other statements about Christ in this passage (such as Creator of all [1:16], upholder of Creation [v.17], clearly indicate His priority and superiority over Creation; 3) the *firstborn* cannot be part of the Creation if He created *all things*. One cannot create himself. John 1:1 says Christ was *in the beginning*. Christ could not have been created any more than God could have been created: *he was with God and was God.* 4) The *firstborn* received worship of all the angels (Heb. 1:6), but creatures should not be worshipped (Ex. 20:4-5). 5) Paul was capable of saying *first created* if that is what he wanted to show us. *Firstborn* shows Christ preceded the whole creation, and He is Sovereign over all creation. (Points taken from BKC)

**v16** Notice the word *for*. The Greek form is *oti* which means *because* (Marshall, & Alf), and so, this is an exposition by Paul on the term *first born of all creation*. (Alf. supports my observation). I suggest writing *for* for the word *because*. There is something else unusual about this passage. Notice the word *by* which is footnoted in the side margin of the Scofield Bible (*or, in*). Creation in its primitive idea, Christ "bears in Himself their reality" (Alf.) John 1:3 shows that Christ was the instrument of creation (*dia*) which translated also *by*. Which is

explained ... *apart from Him nothing came into being that has come into being.* Paul does not leave this idea out, *all things have been created by (dia) and for (eis) Him.* Christ created all things *in the heavens and on earth, both visible and invisible.* This shows that all of cosmic space is His creation. The *thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities* speak of the hierarchy of angelic beings of which the Colossians were beginning "to engage in the worship of angels." (BKC)

**v17 The third superiority is:** *he is before all things.* Nothing or nobody existed before Christ. This is related to one idea of the term in verse 15 of *firstborn of all creation.* He was in the *beginning.* (John 1:1) John 8:58 says, *Jesus said to them, "Truly, truly, I say to you, before Abraham was born, I am."* Jesus made Himself equal to Jehovah. 59) *Therefore they picked up stones to throw at Him; but Jesus hid Himself, and went out of the temple.*

**The fourth superiority is:** *in Him all things hold together.* (NIV also, Alf.) "The Son is the centre of unity for the universe. He keeps all its parts in their proper place and due relations and combines them into an ordered whole. Apart from Him it would go to pieces." (Nic.) It is amazing to me that two good commentaries, Wycliffe Bible Commentary, and Bible Knowledge Commentary eliminates any comment on this verse. There is a similar statement found in Hebrews 1:3 *he upholds all things by the word of His power.* There are fixed laws of science which makes it possible for man to propel a ship to the moon, but Christ could end that at any moment. The cosmos is at His command to continue at the present or fly apart into destruction. John Eadie, a noted Greek scholar says about this, "What a vast view of Christ's dignity! His arm upholds the universe, and if it were withdrawn, all things would fade into their original non-existence." (p. 57) We should praise our Lord Jesus.

**v18 The fifth superiority of Christ is:** *He is the head of the body, the church.* As the head of the human body is one with the body, so Christ is corporately one in life and destiny with His redeemed of this age. The Holy Spirit baptizes the believer into the Body 1 Cor. 12:13 says and at the same time into Christ (Ro. 6:3-4) of which baptizes symbolizes. As the head directs and controls all the activities of the human body, so Christ directs and controls all the activities of the Church, His spiritual Body as 1 Cor. 12:12 says.

**The sixth superiority of Christ is:** *He is the beginning, the first-born from the dead; so that He Himself might come to have first place in everything.* The *beginning* that Paul is speaking of here is not in the creation of the world, but the creation of a "new creation". 2 Cor. 5:17 says, *Therefore if any man is in Christ he is a new creature, the old things passed away; behold new things have come.* (Unger H.) Christ was the *first* one resurrected *from the dead.* The resurrection is connected to Christ supremacy, *the first-born from the dead; so that (iva) He Himself might come to have first place in everything.* For *first place* the KJV says *preeminence.* Christ is "supreme in the universe. He has to become supreme in relation to the church." (Nic.) Christ deserves to have first place in my life and in your life. Not second, third, or fourth. This church or any church is not going to be empowered until its members come to giving Christ first place in their life.

**v19 The seventh superiority of Christ is:** *For it was the Father's good pleasure for all the fullness to dwell in Him.* 2:9 says, *for in Him all the fullness of*

*Deity dwells in bodily form.* This is one of the most powerful descriptions of Christ's deity in the New Testament. (BKC) All of the *fullness* of God was pleased to dwell in Christ. This could not be accomplished in any other.

## COLOSSIANS

### COLOSSIANS 1:20-23

#### INTRODUCTION:

INTRODUCTION: 1:1-8

i. GREETING 1:1-2

ii. THANKSGIVING 1:3-8

I. THE APOSTLE'S PRAYER FOR THE COLOSSIANS CHRISTIANS 1:9-14

II. THE PRE-EMINENT GLORY OF CHRIST 1:15-23

A. PAUL LISTS SEVEN SUPERIORITIES OF CHRIST TO SHOW THIS.

1:25-19

1. HE IS THE IMAGE OF THE INVISIBLE GOD. (v.15)

2. HE IS THE FIRST-BORN OF ALL CREATION. (15b-16) Paul explains firstborn by his comments in verse 16. Firstborn is defined as antecedent or prior to all creation. (Unger H.) He is the perfect *image of the invisible God*. The first and second points could be united into one.

3. HE IS BEFORE ALL THINGS. (v.17)

4. IN HIM ALL THINGS HOLD TOGETHER. (v.17b)

5. HE IS THE HEAD OF THE BODY, THE CHURCH. (v.18)

6. HE IS THE BEGINNING, THE FIRST-BORN FROM THE DEAD; SO THAT HE HIMSELF MIGHT COME TO HAVE FIRST PLACE IN EVERYTHING. (18b)

7. FOR IT WAS THE FATHER'S GOOD PLEASURE FOR ALL THE FULLNESS TO DWELL IN HIM. (V19)

Maybe the seven points are a little too departmentalized, but we see clearly that Paul is speaking of Christ's superiority over all things.

**v20 The eighth superiority of Christ is:** *through Him to reconcile all things to Himself*. This thought is developed through verse 23. This verse is a completion of the thought of the verb *it was the Father's good pleasure*. (Eadie supports also) This is a good example of the problem of trying to outline too extensively thoughts of the scripture when we have here a clear compound direct object of the verb. All the *fullness* of God was pleased to dwell in Christ. This could not be accomplished in any other because of His creation shows Him superior and His reconciling was superior. Some go to extreme interpretation of this verse to mean that everybody will be saved. But, this is contrary to other clear teaching about the judgment of God. The Mormons, Jehovah Witnesses, and Seventh Day Adventist hold to elements of this view. Two are considered cults, and one is not in the mainstream of evangelical thought. There are others in some denominations. Jesus spoke more on hell than any other person in the NT, and He warned of eternal punishment with no reconciliation at the end for those rejected by God. I will give two key passages, but there are at least a hundred. Matthew 7:13-14 say, *Enter by the narrow gate; for the gate is wide, and the way is broad that leads to destruction, and many are those who enter by it. 14) For the gate is small, and the way is narrow that leads to life, and few are*

*those who find it.* Some people would have us to believe that at the end of the *broad way* that leads to destruction is actually reconciliation. And, the clearest passage of scripture to reveal to us the end of the non-reconcilable ones which include Satan, angels, and humans and therefore go to Hell is Revelation 20:10, 15. It says, *And the devil who deceived them was thrown into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast and the false prophet are also; and they will be tormented day and night forever and forever. 15) And if anyone's name was not found written in the book of life, he was thrown into the lake of fire.*

So, it is evident the phrase *all things* is limited to good angels and redeemed people since only *things on earth or things in heaven* are mentioned. The things *under the earth* are not reconciled. (BKC) Philippians 2:9-11 says, *Therefore also God highly exalted Him, and bestowed on Him the name which is above every name, 10) that at the name of Jesus EVERY KNEE SHOULD BOW, of those who are in heaven, and on earth, and under the earth. 11) and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.*

*Peace with God is only through the blood of His cross.*

**v21** Man is reconciled to God, not the reverse. Romans 5:10 says that the unsaved are *enemies* of God. Sinfulness, called *evil deeds* is an outward display of a person's inward heart. This attitude of the heart must be changed. Many politicians get down right nasty toward conservative Christians who hold to basic morals, and would like the community to somewhat reflect those values for our children. Sinfulness is hostility toward God. It involves attitude.

**v22** Reconciliation is *now* possible in *His fleshly body*. Paul is stressing that Jesus was a true human in the flesh. The Greeks had a hard time believing in Christ's humanity as well as His divinity. Christ's flesh was the atonement. He was what the blood sacrifices symbolized. The end result is seen, *to present you before Him holy and blameless and beyond reproach.* It involves a purpose clause (iva).

**v23** The Bible does teach some deny their faith. John Eadie a noted Greek scholar and a Presbyterian minister says, "Continuance in the faith is essential to salvation: loss of faith would be forfeiture of life. The blessings of Christianity are given without interruption only to continuous belief". Many Baptist are not in the faith. Continuance of unconcern for spiritual matters show many non-resident members of Baptist churches and others are not saved, and never were. Peter warns professing Christians in 1 Peter 1:10, *Therefore, brethren, be all the more diligent to make certain about His calling and choosing you; for as long as you practice these things, you will never stumble.* Look back at his prayer to "be steadfast" 1:11.

## COLOSSIANS

### COLOSSIANS 1:23

**INTRODUCTION:** This verse and a few others lead to the greatest controversy in Christianity: salvation is by faith alone; vs. salvation by faith plus works. Many times the faith alone groups: Baptists, Presbyterians, Lutherans, Bible churches, and many fundamental independent churches ignore the clear warning of stressing a permanent faith. Because of the importance of this teaching in scripture and the extreme emotion and controversy, we want to think more about verse 23. I want to restate what was said in verse 23, and continue on.

**v23** The Bible does teach some deny their faith. John Eadie a noted Greek scholar and a Presbyterian minister says, "Continuance in the faith is essential to salvation: loss of faith would be forfeiture of life. The blessings of Christianity are given without interruption only to continuous belief". Many Baptist are not in the faith. Continuance of unconcern for spiritual matters shows many non-resident members of Baptist churches and others are not saved, and never were. Peter warns professing Christians in 1 Peter 1:10, *Therefore, brethren, be all the more diligent to make certain about His calling and choosing you; for as long as you practice these things, you will never stumble.* Look back at his prayer to "be steadfast" 1:11.

They were to remain in the faith, or saving belief of the truth. (Eadie, p. 82) This is a first class conditional sentence (ei plus indicative in if clause). In the first class condition the speaker assumes that the condition stated in the protasis (the if clause) is a reality. (Brooks, Syntax of New Testament, p. 163) Put in your Bible by *if* ("Paul assumes this is true."). Why would Paul assume this? Because they said that they had faith in Christ, so Christ *has now reconciled you in His fleshly body through death, in order to present you before Him holy and blameless and beyond reproach* (v.22).

You were *established* (*tethemeliomenoi*, perf. participle) when you were saved. This tense also supports continuing condition. I prefer the KJV translation for the word, *grounded*. It has the ideal of a building on a strong foundation (BKC). 1 Corinthians 3:11 says, *for no man can lay a foundation other than the one which is laid, which is Jesus Christ.* If you look at the context of that verse Paul was speaking about ministry and service to God. The scriptures abundantly proclaim that the basis of salvation is faith in Christ apart from good works. But, the scriptures also expect some proof of salvation experience through lifestyle changes. Let me state clearly and pay attention to this: Paul is not suggesting or implying that one could lose their salvation by a particular sin which the believer might fall into.

There is another term Paul uses that need our attention and that is *stedfast*. This word (Hedraios) is found only three times in the NT. The Thayer's Greek Lexicon defines the word as: "1) sitting, sedentary. 2) firm, immovable, steadfast; in the NT metaph., of those who are fixed in purpose". The word is found two other times in the New Testament, but some other terms of similar meaning is found (1:11) which means "endurance". Now listen that term (*hupomova*) is

found 32 times in NT. It is translated by NASB as *steadfastness*. But, let's look at the other two places that the term is found in scripture. In each case Paul is the author as here. Turn to 1 Corinthians 15:58, *Therefore, my beloved brethren, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that your toil is not in vain in the Lord.* In the context of scripture Paul was teaching on the doctrine of the resurrection of Christ and ours. The other scripture where the term *steadfast* (*hedraios*) occurs is in 1 Corinthians 7:37. It is translated in KJV *steadfast*, but translated *firm* in NASB. Notice the context of how it is used. Paul is referring the parental permission of marriage in KJV, and NASB; but is translated to refer to unbecoming behavior toward a virgin women. There the term refers to a settled (*firm*) decision of mind to remain unmarried. *Steadfast* in our text probably refers to the stability of the building, which is sit on a good foundation.

The result is what Paul is looking for, *not moved away from the hope of the gospel that you have heard...* The Scofield Bible refers back to 1:5, *because of the hope laid up for you in heaven of which you previously heard in the word of truth, the gospel.* One man says, "There is a way to hell even from the gate of heaven" (Eadie, quotes someone). I don't think so. It is obvious to us that many have exited a life of faith. "As rational beings are wrought upon by motives, so warnings and appeals are addressed to them, and these appliances form a special feature of God's plan of preserving them. The apostle thus shows them how much is suspended on their perseverance." (Ibid.)

The person who is unsaved, not truly *born again* by the Spirit of God cannot continue a good Christian life. This person could be baptized and a member of a church. Jesus spoke of it clearly in Matthew 13, called the Sower and the Soils. He explains 13:20-21, *And the one on whom seed was sown on the rocky places, this is the man who hears the word, and immediately receives it with joy; 21) yet he has no firm root in himself, but is only temporary, and when affliction or persecution arises because of the word, immediately he falls away.* The seed that appears to have life is unbearing of any life. It is important to notice that Jesus is speaking of the seed as the Word of God sown everywhere. Profession had been made, *immediately receives it with joy.* The difference of those who believe in falling from salvation or losing your salvation and the Bible correct Baptist or salvation by grace alone believer is not as great as we sometimes suppose if both are trusting Christ for their salvation. Hell will be full of unregenerate, unsaved, and unjustified Baptist. I believe that some of our former members are not born-again.

What are some evidences of a truly born-again believer. 1) Profession of faith, Romans 10:9; 2) a changed life (1 Cor. 6:9); and the witness of the Spirit (Romans 8:9).

## COLOSSIANS

### COLOSSIANS 1:24-29

**INTRODUCTION:** Lets review the major points only, because we are going into the third major point.

INTRODUCTION: 1:1-8

i. GREETING 1:1-2

ii. THANKSGIVING 1:3-8

I. THE APOSTLE'S PRAYER FOR THE COLOSSIANS CHRISTIANS 1:9-14

II THE PRE-EMINENT GLORY OF CHRIST 1:15-23

### III. THE APOSTLE'S CONCERN FOR THE CHURCH AT COLOSSE, 1:24-

2:23

#### A. PAUL'S SUFFERING FOR THE CAUSE OF THE GOSPEL. 1:24-25

**v24** *For your sake* shows what the subject is about. Paul will show his concern for the people there through 2:23. His concern for them is stated again in 2:1, *For I want you to know how great a struggle I have on your behalf, and for those who are at Laodicea.* What Paul suffered was for the body of Christ. The church is the Body of Christ. To persecute a Christian is to hurt Christ. Jesus said to Paul, then Saul in Acts 9:4, *Why do you persecute me?* To afflict the church is to afflict Christ. Paul parallels the Spirit which makes us heirs, also makes us suffer for Christ. Romans 8:16-17 says, *The Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God, 17) and if children, heirs also, heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ, if indeed we suffer with Him in order that we may also be glorified with Him.*

**v25** *This church* is not in the Greek text so, the NASB puts it in italicized letters to show this, but the conjunction *of* immediately follows the word *church* Greek word construction. I like the KJV here, *whereof I am made a minister, according to the dispensation of God which is given to me for you, to fulfill the word of God.* The word in the Greek for *minister* is *diakonos* from which we get deacon. The word *dispensation* (oikonomian) translated by NASB as *stewardship* (Marshall also). Another word could be to define it, *administration* (Kubo). As dispensational premillennialist I like the term. There are certain periods of time when God has related to man differently. Paul helped fulfill one of those periods by giving the Word of God. For anyone to speak with the same authority, or resist the authority of Paul, finds himself at odds with God's Word. Ephesians 3:2-4 says, *if indeed you have heard of the stewardship of God's grace which was given to me for you; 3) that by revelation there was made known to me the mystery, as I wrote before in brief. 4) And by referring to this, when you read you can understand my insight into the mystery of Christ.*

#### B. THE CHURCH A MYSTERY HIDDEN FROM PAST AGES. 1:26-29

**v26** The Gnostic boasted of a fullness of knowledge possible only through their mystical experience and limited to a few. But, Paul says the gospel is *manifested to His saints.* It was unknown from OT saints.

**v27** The great *glory* of the gospel is that Christ who has died is resurrected, and He indwells believers. He indwells *Gentiles* also. Since the Holy Spirit seals the true believer, we have the *hope of glory.* We will one day have part in His

glory in heaven. Surely this is *riches* unspeakable, and hard to comprehend.

**v28** Paul did not want believers to remain spiritual babies. 1 Cor. 3:1-2 says, *And I, brethren, could not speak to you as to spiritual men, but as to men of flesh, as to babies in Christ. 2) I gave you milk to drink, not solid food; for you were not yet able to receive it. Indeed, even now you are not yet able. 3) for you are still fleshly. For since there is jealousy and strife among you, are you not fleshly, and are you not walking like mere men?* There is nothing wrong with being a young Christian and needing the basic *milk* of the Word of God. Listen; if you do not respond to the word by desiring it, and responding trying to obey it, you will not mature.

To exceed some Christians in maturity is not hard. When I come out of sales school I began selling, and quickly I was told not to look at what others were doing, and to not copy them. Strive to be the best I could. I pray that we are not as some of the Corinthians. Paul wants every *man*, which means men and women, *complete in Christ*. The KJV says *perfect*. To come close to perfect most of us must change a lot.

**v29** The progress of maturing is not without struggle for the one who desires it, even Paul.

## COLOSSIANS

### COLOSSIANS 2:1-7

#### INTRODUCTION:

Let's review the major points only, because we are going into the third major point.

INTRODUCTION: 1:1-8

i. GREETING 1:1-2

ii. THANKSGIVING 1:3-8

I. THE APOSTLE'S PRAYER FOR THE COLOSSIANS CHRISTIANS 1:9-14

II. THE PRE-EMINENT GLORY OF CHRIST 1:15-23

III. THE APOSTLE'S CONCERN FOR THE CHURCH AT COLOSSE, 1:24-2:23

A. PAUL'S SUFFERING FOR THE CAUSE OF THE GOSPEL. 1:24-25

B. THE CHURCH A MYSTERY HIDDEN FROM PAST AGES. 1:26-29

#### C. CHRIST THE TRESURES OF WISDOM AND KNOWLEDGE. 2:1-3

**v1** Paul shows his sincere concern for them. He had endured some affliction or persecution to minister to the people there. Paul had *great struggle* (*agona*) for them. The KJV says it was a *conflict*. Paul was in prison and unable to face off against the false teachers. So, it probably refers to his struggle in prayer for them. The word in the Greek translated *struggle* (*agona*) is the from root word which we get the word "agony". The word shows the *concern* (Kubo, also *care, struggle, trial*) which Paul had for them. It describes a spiritual warfare in prayer against principalities and powers as Ephesians 6:12. Dr. Merrill Unger is explicit that demonic forces are at work, and it is directed against God's truth. The Bible teaches clearly that demonic forces are at work in perverted "Christian" doctrine. 1 Tim. 4:1-4 says, *But the Spirit explicitly says that in later times some will fall away from the faith, paying attention to deceitful spirits and doctrines of demons. 2) by means of the hypocrisy of liars seared in their own conscience as with a branding iron, 3) men who forbid marriage and advocate abstaining from foods, which God has created to be gratefully shared in by those who believe and know the truth. 4) For everything created by is good, and nothing is to be rejected, if it is received with gratitude.* There are two denominations that practice and teach one of these doctrines which Paul says is inspired by *deceitful spirits and doctrines of demons*. Paul was greatly concerned over them, and strained his eager spirit to the utmost, fearing possibly desolation which might come upon them. They were in danger, and he could not be with them (Eadie, p. 105).

Paul mentions *Laodicea* which was very near Colossae. Both towns were threatened with the same heresy. (Wycl.) We hear of Laodiceans' lukewarm condition in Revelation 3:14-19.

**v2** *That* (*iva*) is a purpose or result clause, *that their heart* which is the entire inner man may be *encouraged*. It has the meaning of strengthening or *confirming*. Paul is talking about being shaken from the faith, not persecution (Alf.). They were to be *united in love*. They could wonder if his neighbor is infected, and how far, and a man is made "an offender for a word." (Eadie, p. 107) Paul hoped to encourage them to *all the wealth that comes from the full assurance of understanding...the mystery, that is, Christ Himself*. To have a

confident assurance of salvation is the greatest *wealth* or *riches* (KJV) in the world. If there is a great secret or *mystery*, it is Christ. See 1:26.

**v3** The Gnostic stressed a knowledge of God through angels. In Christ are *hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge*. *Knowledge* is divine science, and *wisdom* (sophia) is the enlightenment that springs from it.

#### **D. THE DANGER FROM ENTICING WORDS. 2:4-7**

**v4** A Christian is not a human with a half brain, or a pea brain. Paul is not against learning. A good sermon to some is unbiblical preaching. Speech which is with *enticing words* (KJV) can persuade others. Paul is dealing with education (BKC). James Vernon McGee says, "Philosophy and psychology have been substituted for the Bible, and this is the thing that is enticing to so many young preachers in our seminaries today. I am amazed to find that some of these men with a PhD degree from a seminary know so little about the Bible. They know all about Bultmann and Kant and Plato, but they don't seem to know very much about the Word of God. That is the great problem of our day." (Phil. & Col.) An educated person may persuade by *fine-sounding arguments*, but error can persuade. Some of my professors confessed that some students gifted in writing could deceive them about their true knowledge of a subject in essays. The focus of this ministry will always be to exalt Christ through the written Word of God.

**v5** Paul had taken a great interest in these people, and so he felt as though he were among them *in Spirit*. Paul desired to see their *good discipline* or order of obeying Christ, and their stability of faith.

**vv6-7** Paul calls them back to how they received Christ. The gospel was preached in a way that they fully knew about whom he was and what He did for them. Based on that knowledge, Paul encouraged them to live for Christ. As believers are "built up" in Christ, they become more grateful.

## COLOSSIANS

### COLOSSIANS 2:8-17

#### INTRODUCTION:

INTRODUCTION: 1:1-8

i. GREETING 1:1-2

ii. THANKSGIVING 1:3-8

I. THE APOSTLE'S PRAYER FOR THE COLOSSIANS CHRISTIANS 1:9-14

II THE PRE-EMINENT GLORY OF CHRIST 1:15-23

III. THE APOSTLE'S CONCERN FOR THE CHURCH AT COLOSSE, 1:24-2:23

A. PAUL'S SUFFERING FOR THE CAUSE OF THE GOSPEL. 1:24-25

B. THE CHURCH A MYSTERY HIDDEN FROM PAST AGES. 1:26-29

C. CHRIST THE TREASURE OF WISDOM AND KNOWLEDGE. 2:1-3

D. THE DANGER FROM ENTICING WORDS. 2:4-7

#### E. THE DANGER OF FALSE PHILOSOPHY. 2:8-10

**v8** The NASB renders the Greek word, rather well; (*See to it*) *that no one takes you captive through philosophy*. It is a warning, *beware* (KJV). They were to use the sight to exercise caution. *Philosophy* (*philosophias*) means "love of wisdom". It is any system of religious thought that does not place the person and work of Christ central. Unless the believer is extremely wary, he will be "despoiled," victimized by imposture, carried off as the prey of such empty delusion. Such vain systems of thought are built on that which has been handed down by learned but unbelieving men, framed according to the elementary principles of the Satanic world system *and are not after Christ*.

Supreme Court member, Dr. Scalia recently made a scolding speech about the false intellectualism in our country about morals: abortion, and family values. He has excelled in academics above most, but he recognizes that much of America does not understand a Christian philosophy. (Liberty Journal) I am very cautious to send Jae to a public education school where there and many universities, evolution is accepted as fact. This is a philosophy which takes the centrality of Christ out of the creation. I look to the time that we as a church can seek out educators in fields of science to come in give a defense of the creation story.

**v9** The remedy is given. *For (oti)* means *because*. Christian philosophy must center in the fulness deity of Christ in a human body.

**v10** We are complete because of Christ's fullness. It does not mean that we become God, but simply that we share in Him. This is "where we say that Christ is the answer." (J. V. McGee) Christ is over the church and all created beings.

#### F. LEGALISM IS WRONG 2:11-17

**v11** Paul now turns to the false teacher's practical errors-legalism. The Gentile Christians in Colosse had no need to conform to Jewish rules and regulations, such as *circumcision*. Christ has performed a circumcision of the heart, *made without hands*. So, Paul is telling them to get rid of the outward circumcision, they have the inward circumcision, *removal of the body of flesh*. The removal of *sins* (KJV) is implied through sanctification. The NIV also

translates similar to KJV by saying *in putting of the body of the sins of the flesh by the circumcision of Christ*. The human body of flesh is corrupt. The "whole flesh which is the seat and habitation of sin is cast away and laid aside." (Eadie) The false teachers were encouraging circumcision among believers which they taught produced a higher sanctity for them. Paul says *you were also circumcised* (aor. pass.) *with a circumcision made without hands*. A definite historical fact is referred to, as is shown by the aorist (past tense). The outward sign of this is baptism, with which Paul connects it in the next verse. But it cannot be identified with it, for it is not made with hands. The circumcision of the heart is a prophetic idea. Deut. 10:16-21 says, *Circumcise then your heart, and stiffen your neck no more. 17) For the LORD your God is the God of gods and the Lord of lords, the great, the mighty, and the awesome God who does not show partiality, nor take a bride. He executes justice for the orphan and the widow, and shows His love for the alien by giving him food and clothing. 19) So show your love for the alien, for you were aliens in the land of Egypt. 20) You shall fear the LORD your God; you shall serve Him and cling to Him, and you shall swear by His name. 21) He is your praise and He is your God, who has done these great and awesome things for you which your eyes have seen*. Circumcision of the heart is found in many others places in a prophetic idea; Deut. 30:6; Jere. 4:25 says, *Behold, the days are coming," declares the LORD, "that I will punish all who are circumcised and yet uncircumcised;* 9:25. It occurs in Paul's other writings in Ro. 2:28, 29; Phil. 3:3. (Nic. good, and extensive on subject) "The mark in the foreskin was the token of being a Jew, but the off-thrown body of the flesh was the index of one's being a Christian...The Hebrew statue was for the man-child eight days old, but the Christian privilege has no distinction of age, or sex, or nation; for it belongs to every one in Christ. It is the possession of a new nature. The flesh is thrown off, and the spirit assumes the predominance. (Eadie) Christ has performed a circumcision in the heart of the believer. "Surely if they had received the signified, they need not now degrade themselves by submitting to a sign, which was in itself only a painful and bloody symbol of the Hebrew nationality and covenant. For a new sign has been appointed" (Eadie) described in the next verse.

**v12** "This putting off of the old life occurs at the moment of salvation, when a believer is *buried with Christ in baptism* by the Spirit (1 Cor. 12:13) and is *raised with Him* to a new life. This co-burial and co-resurrection is pictured in baptism. In water baptism, immersion portrays burial with Christ, and coming out of the water depicts the resurrection" (BKC) by the *working of God*, who raised Christ from the dead.

**vv13-14** Without Christ a person is considered *dead..in transgressions*. In that state God loved us, and He performed a circumcision of the fleshly nature, giving us life with Him. Before making us *alive* (v.13b) *transgressions* must be forgiven, and the law, called *decrees against us and which was hostile to us*, must be *canceled out*. God says we owe a debt which is pictured in the law. Christ canceled this out by paying the debt, nailed to the cross.

**v15** The Satanic powers, called often *rulers and authorities*, were *disarmed* and publicly displayed as conquered because Christ completed the work of God in salvation for us on the cross. Demonic powers inspire legalist rules about food

and festivals.

**vv16-17** The Mosaic law did not dwell much on drinks as meats, but it did some. Hebrew 9:10 makes mention of drinks regulations of the law. Many kinds of food were considered unclean. As a young boy I determined that I would not touch alcoholic beverages because of the enslavement of many of my friends to it. To become drunk, shows how easily Satanic influence can be involved as many have traveled that road. Other matters of the law such as festivals and special days, the Christian can participate or not participate. The rituals of the law were *mere shadow of what is to come*, but *reality (NIV)* of what this meant is Christ. The law was the picture: Christ is the real thing.

## COLOSSIANS

### COLOSSIANS 2:18-23

**INTRODUCTION:** Let's review the major subjects or points covered to this point.

INTRODUCTION: 1:1-8

i. GREETING 1:1-2

ii. THANKSGIVING 1:3-8

I. THE APOSTLE'S PRAYER FOR THE COLOSSIANS CHRISTIANS 1:9-14

II THE PRE-EMINENT GLORY OF CHRIST 1:15-23

III. THE APOSTLE'S CONCERN FOR THE CHURCH AT COLOSSE, 1:24-2:23

A. PAUL'S SUFFERING FOR THE CAUSE OF THE GOSPEL. 1:24-25

B. THE CHURCH A MYSTERY HIDDEN FROM PAST AGES. 1:26-29

C. CHRIST THE TREASURE OF WISDOM AND KNOWLEDGE. 2:1-3

D. THE DANGER FROM ENTICING WORDS. 2:4-7

E. THE DANGER OF FALSE PHILOSOPHY. 2:8-10

F. LEGALISM IS WRONG. 2:11-17

#### **G. MYSTICISM IS WRONG. 2:11-12**

**v18** Paul warns of losing your spiritual rewards by letting those who turn them from the reality of Christ to the shadow of the Law (BKC), *by defrauding you of your prize*. Paul gives another characteristic of these false teachers, *delighting in self-abasement*. The KJV says *voluntary humility*. The NIV says *false humility*. The Gnostics made a pretense of wisdom. James Vernon McGee says, "And we have today in our church circles a great many folk who assume a pious superiority - they are what I call "spiritual snobs". It has been my experience that these people generally are very ignorant of the Bible." (p.161)

The Gnostics were involved with *the worship of the angels* which Scripture forbids. Ex. 20:3-4 says, *You shall have no other gods before Me. 4) You shall not make for yourself an idol, or any likeness of what is in heaven above or on the earth beneath or in the water under the earth*. In fact, legalism is a teaching inspired by fallen angels (1 Tim. 4:1) who as *elemental spirits* (Gal. 4:3) would bring men into slavery by their mystical meditations. (BKC) I like the NIV in this verse, *Do not let anyone who delight in false humility and worship of angels disqualify you for the prize. Such a person goes into great detail about what he has seen, and his unspiritual mind puffs him up with idle notions*. They had evidently seen some *vision* (NASB), but inspired by demonic forces. A vision from God will not lead astray from the Scripture as Mormonism, and cultism. We have a sure Word from God, the Bible. In the NT day of the apostles they did see visions inspired by God as revealed in Acts in several passages, but this was not. The Wycliffe Bible Commentary makes a parallel to Catholics who give devotion to "the Virgin Mary, displaced the centrality of Christ." It is a dangerous thing to worship anyone, or anything except Christ.

**v19** The KJV and NIV both put a capital letter, *Head*. Otherwise, you might think Paul was saying, their head is not screwed on as it should be. (McGee, believes, but head relates to Christ) There are many scriptures which speak of Christ as the Head of the church (Eph. 1:22; 4:15;) and Paul has used the term in

the context of scripture in verse 10, *He is the head over all rule and authority.* 'While believing that his mysticism brings him in touch with some "higher" reality, a legal mystic has actually *lost connection with the Head (Christ) who alone supplies life for it to grow as God causes it to grow.*' (BKC) The thought is spoken by Christ in John 15:5, *I am the vine, you are the branches; he who abides in Me, and I in him, he bears much fruit; for apart from Me you can do nothing.* As the case with the head of the human body directs all the other functions of the body, so it is with Christ and His church.

In a day when the Bible is translated in very readable English, there should be less a tendency to be lead astray by some false mystic vision.

#### **H. WARNING AGAINST ASCETICISM. 2:20-23**

**vv20-22** Ascetic is defined by Webster as, "1) a person who leads a life of contemplation (religious meditation) and rigorous self-denial for religious purposes." It is "rules of physical self-denial." (BKC) These prohibitions increase from not handling to not even *touching*. Asceticism is a man-made system of rules (often taken out of context from God's Law) *based on human commands and teachings*. The persistent example of legalism in the New Testament was the Old Testament command of circumcision which God intended for the Jews as a *sign* of faith (Ro. 4:11) but which the legalists wanted to make a condition of grace (Gal. 2:21).

**v23** Denying the body its desires merely arouses them, as is well known by many who have tried to lose weight by sticking to rigid diets. (BKC) It has recently be found that when a person diets the body goes into starvation status, and the metabolism slows making it harder to lose weight. Crash diets are not an effective way to love weight.

## **COLOSSIANS 2**

INTRODUCTION: 1:1-8

i. GREETING 1:1-2

ii. THANKSGIVING 1:3-8

I. THE APOSTLE'S PRAYER FOR THE COLOSSIANS CHRISTIANS 1:9-14

II THE PRE-EMINENT GLORY OF CHRIST 1:15-23

III. THE APOSTLE'S CONCERN FOR THE CHURCH AT COLOSSE, 1:24-2:23

A. PAUL'S SUFFERING FOR THE CAUSE OF THE GOSPEL. 1:24-25

B. THE CHURCH A MYSTERY HIDDEN FROM PAST AGES. 1:26-29

C. CHRIST THE TREASURE OF WISDOM AND KNOWLEDGE. 2:1-3

D. THE DANGER FROM ENTICING WORDS. 2:4-7

E. THE DANGER OF FALSE PHILOSOPHY. 2:8-10

F. LEGALISM IS WRONG. 2:11-17

G. FALSE MYSTICISM

H. ASCETICISM

IV. SOME CHARACTERISTICS OF THE ABUNDANT LIFE OF THE CHRISTIAN

3:1-4:6

A. SEEK SPIRITUAL VALUES. 3:1-4

B. LIVE THE CHRISTIAN LIFE AS SAINTS BECAUSE WE ARE SAINTS.

3:5-17

## COLOSSIANS

### COLOSSIANS 3:1-2

INTRODUCTION: 1:1-8

i. GREETING 1:1-2

ii. THANKSGIVING 1:3-8

I. THE APOSTLE'S PRAYER FOR THE COLOSSIANS CHRISTIANS 1:9-14

II. THE PRE-EMINENT GLORY OF CHRIST 1:15-23

III. THE APOSTLE'S CONCERN FOR THE CHURCH AT COLOSSE, 1:24-2:23

A. PAUL'S SUFFERING FOR THE CAUSE OF THE GOSPEL. 1:24-25

B. THE CHURCH A MYSTERY HIDDEN FROM PAST AGES. 1:26-29

C. CHRIST THE TREASURE OF WISDOM AND KNOWLEDGE. 2:1-3

D. THE DANGER FROM ENTICING WORDS. 2:4-7

E. THE DANGER OF FALSE PHILOSOPHY. 2:8-10

F. LEGALISM IS WRONG. 2:11-17

G. FALSE MYSTICISM

H. ASCETICISM

Legalism is living by the law, especially the rite of circumcision.

#### IV. SOME CHARACTERISTICS OF THE ABUNDANT LIFE OF THE CHRISTIAN. 3:1-4:6

In the Pauline pattern (Ro. 12:1; Eph. 4:1), he moves from the doctrinal teaching to the ethical or practical application. If Paul is saying anything by this literary style, it is that doctrine is the basis for ethics: What a man believes does determine in substantial measure how he acts.

##### A. SEEK SPIRITUAL VALUES. 3:1-4

**v1** *If then* is assuming that a person is resurrected with Christ. Our union with Christ is heavenly (position as a saint); therefore, our walk or manner of life (experience) is also to be heavenly. It should bring heavenly direction to their earthly duties. (BKC) Notice the words, *keep seeking the things above*. It should become our lifestyle, or life ambition. It involves the "will" of the person. "Those who have risen with Christ must realize ascension with him" (Nic.), *where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God*. Paul is speaking "idealistic" (Nic.), knowing that many Christians do not strive to *walk in Him* (Col. 2:6), but they should. We have been raised in union with Christ's resurrection and ascension into heaven to the highest position there, *at the right hand of hand*.

**v2** The thought is very similar to verse one. The first suggests striving; the second verse suggests concentrating. (BKC) The Greek form literally means, *keep thinking (phoveite) on the things above*. That's why the translation says, *set your mind on the things above*. Paul is very personal he uses a singular form, *your mind*, not *your minds* (NIV). It is as if Paul is pointing to you and me, but not in a nasty way, but of encouragement to *please Him (Christ) in all respects*. "The things on the earth are not in themselves sinful, but become so if sought and thought on in preference to the things above." Jesus said in Matthew 6:21, *for where your treasure is, there will your heart be also*.

Many Christians have a long way to go in our "attempts" at living out our faith. Our "concentration" on spiritual things is lacking when?

- 1) We fall asleep at church?
- 2) Take a job where we cannot take our children and ourselves to church?
- 3) When we cannot be depended on to attend church regularly, and therefore the pastor could feel hesitant to give a church position of teaching, or etc? Party? Football? Anything else? Hebrews 10:25 says, *not forsaking our own assembling together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another; and all the more, as you see the day drawing near.*
- 5) Can this church function as a normal church if we have a hundred people just like us? Teachers? Other workers?
- 6) Will not become a member to be Christian worker?
- 7) I do not have some Bible devotion daily?

## COLOSSIANS

### COLOSSIANS 3:3-7

**INTRODUCTION:** We are looking at SOME CHARACTERISTICS OF THE ABUNDANT LIFE OF THE CHRISTIAN (3:1-4:6). We now are encouraged to: A. SEEK SPIRITUAL VALUES. 3:1-4. In verse one we are to *keep seeking*; verse two, we are to *set your mind on the things above*. The first suggest striving for the things above; the second is concentrating on them.

**vv3-4** The KJV says, *you are dead*. Paul uses the aorist tense, past tense. NIV translates as the common usage, *for you died*. At the moment of his salvation, a Christian died to the evil of the "flesh", the sin nature (Rom. 6:3-8), and his life *is now hidden with Christ in God*. *Hidden* implies both concealment and safely. (BKC) Christ is our *life*. Christ is the center of a Christian's life, if we have a Christian philosophy. (2:8) When he appears at the Rapture (1 Thess. 4:16-18), he will soon be revealed to all. At that public revealing we will be there in all that *glory* also. We have been hidden for seven years during the tribulation. When we come back in will be with like Him. 1 John 3:2 says, *Beloved, now we are children of God, and it has not appeared as yet what we shall be. We know that, when He appears, we shall be like Him because we shall see Him just as He is*.

### B. LIVE THE CHRISTIAN LIFE AS SAINTS BECAUSE WE ARE SAINTS. 3:5-17

#### 1. PUT OFF THE SINS OF THE OLD LIFE. 3:5-11

**v5** The first part of this verse is footnoted in marginal note in the New Scofield Bible, *put to death the members which are upon the earth*. We are to pronounce the death sentence upon any organ or part of the body which may be yielded to sin before the redeemed body has been glorified. Paul uses this idea also in Ro. 8:13, and Gal. 5:24. The *members of your earthly body* pull us from Christ honoring things. Therefore, we must make a decisive decision to consider ourselves dead to these fleshly desires. Paul lists several sins: *immorality*, better as KJV because many have their own standard of morality. *Fornication* is a good translation. *Impurity* or *uncleanness* (KJV) is lewdness (Eadie). It is amazing to me that many commentaries exclude an explanation of what Paul is saying.

*Impurity* translated *uncleanness* in KJV refers to all forms of sexual sins which would include sex with animals. (Gal. 5:17 study notes)

*Passion* (pathos) translated by the KJV as *inordinate affection*. One scholar considers this as bestiality, or sex with animals.(Clarke). Dr. Unger says, "any perverted or unnatural lust indulged in (Ro. 1:26)." (Handbook)

The word *evil desire* (epithumian kakan) is the insatiable craving or burning desire generated by such indulgence.

*Greed* is the desire for more and more because it puts God to a secondary place or may exclude Him altogether. (Ibid.)

**v6** We must acknowledge God is not pleased with this behavior. Paul makes a similar statement in Ro. 1:18; Eph. 5:6. I think that a person must realize that those who practices self-indulging in sexual activity with no regard to Biblical

instruction could easily become involved in rape, child pornography, child molestation, incest, and other sex games which are criminal and would be jail sentencing. If the law punishes these extremes, why would not a Holy God.

v7 The influence of pagan morality was such as today, probably worst. Much was legal, and practiced in the name of religion. It is hard for a Christian to live separated in such a society, and the unconverted has only his own desires with Satanic help to do these things. They "lived" and thought happiness was found in them at one time. (Eadie) But, a change has taken place in their life. Their heart is not in them no more. The Christian must enjoy sex in the restrictions of marriage.

## COLOSSIANS

### COLOSSIANS 3:8-11

**INTRODUCTION:** We are looking at SOME CHARACTERISTICS OF THE ABUNDANT LIFE OF THE CHRISTIAN (3:1-4:6). We now are encouraged to:

A. SEEK SPIRITUAL VALUES. 3:1-4. In verse one we are to *keep seeking*; verse two, we are to set our *mind on the things above*. The first suggest striving for the things above; the second is concentrating on them.

B. LIVE THE CHRISTIAN LIFE AS SAINTS BECAUSE WE ARE SAINTS. 3:5-17

1. PUT OFF THE SINS OF THE OLD LIFE. 5:5-11 They *lived* (v.7) and thought happiness was found in them at one time (Eadie). But, a change has taken place in their life. Their heart is not in them no more.

**v8** Though the Colossians Christians *used to walk in these* evil ways, before they came to know Christ, Paul commanded that they do so no more. Pollution by them will result in severe chastening of believers. 1 Cor. 3:12-17, 5:1-5. It is obvious that chapter 5:5 results in death of the believer (Unger H.) God is longsuffering toward believers, but his patience with us can be push to the limit.

*Now you also, put them all aside.* The word *put aside* (*apothesthe*) means put aside like a suit of clothes. In its ethical use here it means "throw it off like a dirty shirt". Romans 13:12 says, *The night is almost gone, and the day is at hand. Let us therefore lay aside the deeds of darkness and put on the armor of light.* This thought is found in many other passages in the Bible (See BKC)

*Anger (orgen)* is a chronic attitude of smoldering hatred, whereas *wrath (thymon)* is an acute outburst. *Thymos* is elsewhere rendered *outbursts of anger* (Gal. 5:20) The NIV translates *fits of rage*. *Malice (kakian)*, the vice that lies below anger and rage as their root, is forbidden. *Slander (blasphemian)* is railing or evil speaking against others. And, *abusive speech* could be rendered *filthy language* (NIV, KJV). It can be "shameful or abrasive speech" (BKC).

**v9** Paul concludes his list by listing *lying*. The *old self* or *old man* that Paul is speaking of is not a old person, but the unregenerate man with his corrupt human nature (Ro. 6:6; Eph. 4:22). God sees the believer as crucified and dead in Christ. Therefore, the *old man* was crucified. The believer is exhorted to make this good in his experience by reckoning or counting it so. (Unger H.) We are to lay it aside as a garment. But, we know the *old man* will not stay dead. Paul has a practical advise to make so.

**v10** The *new self* or *new man* (KJV) is a new way of life or disposition. (BKC). The change has already taking place (aorist), but *is being renewed* (present tense). This means "that believers not merely *put on* new attributes, but are undergoing a psychological transformation which, at Christ's *parousia*, his second coming, will be seen in its radical and comprehensive character (Ro. 12:2; 1 Cor. 15:53)

**v11** There is no distinction between Jew and Gentile. If you are not a Jew, you are a Gentile according to New Testament usage. This is especially seen in *circumcision* of males. The *barbarian* is a foreigner who is uncivilized, primitive,

uncultured, and often cruel and savage. (Webs.) The *Scythian* was a wild savage nomad (BKC). No difference between *slave and freeman* shows social distinctions have changed. Paul is showing how God sees things, but distinctions of customs are different in many countries.

## COLOSSIANS

### COLOSSIANS 3:12-17

**INTRODUCTION:** We are looking at SOME CHARACTERISTICS OF THE ABUNDANT LIFE OF THE CHRISTIAN (3:1-4:6). We now are encouraged to:

A. SEEK SPIRITUAL VALUES. 3:1-4. In verse one we are to *keep seeking*; verse two, we are to *set your mind on the things above*. The first suggest striving for the things above; the second is concentrating on them.

B. LIVE THE CHRISTIAN LIFE AS SAINTS BECAUSE WE ARE SAINTS. 3:5-17

1. PUT OFF THE SINS OF THE OLD LIFE. 5:5-11 They *lived* (v.7) and thought happiness was found in them at one time (Eadie). But, a change has taken place in their life. Their heart is not in them no more. They are to lay them aside as an old garment. He deals with sexual sins first (v.5), and then emotional sins (v.8). The mind must be renewed in knowledge of God (vv.10-11).

#### 2. PUTTING ON THE VIRTUES OF THE NEW LIFE (3:12-17)

**v12** To the Church, the true Israel, belong the titles given to the OT Israel: *chosen of God, holy, and beloved*. See Ro. 2:29; 9:6; Gal. 3:29. (Wycl.) The NIV translates *put on* as *clothe yourselves*. Because they have put on the *new self* or new man, they should live accordingly, with appropriate attributes and attitudes. Paul will contrast the emotional sins (v.8) with virtues for Christians.

1) Put on a *heart of compassion* (*splagxna oiktipuou*). The KJV translates *bowels of mercies*. It is the seat of "sympathetic feelings" (Alf.) This world is pretty heartless. The virtues that Paul is dealing with will make many to want to become a Christian.

2) Put on *kindness* (*chrastotata*). It has the ideal of being helpful to others. (McGee) Many people become so self-centered that nothing about others can be thought of.

3) Put on *humility* (*tapeivophrosunan*). 1 Peter 5:5-6 uses both in reference to God and man in the context. (Eadie) *You younger men, likewise, be subject to your elders; and all of you, clothe yourselves with humility toward one another, for GOD IS OPPOSED TO THE PROUD, BUT GIVES GRACE TO THE HUMBLE. 6) Humble yourselves, therefore, under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you at the proper time.*

4) Put on *gentleness* (*Gk. prautata*). The KJV translates *meekness*. Here it is primarily towards one another, but not excluding meekness towards God. (Alf.) It is a lowly attitude towards others. (BKC) It is the lack of "arrogance" in reference to our fellow-man. (Eadie)

5) Put on *patience* (*Gk. makrothumian*). The KJV says *longsuffering*. It is a steady response in the face of provocation. It is the opposite of a person with a short temper. All the terms of the text receive further illustration in the following verses. (Eadie) To develop this Christian character there must be a conscious effort to cooperate with the Holy Spirit, as shown by the term *put on*..

**v13** Believers are to *bear with each other* (NIV, which means to put up with

each other) with the attitudes just mentioned in verse 12. Also they are to forgive grievances (complaints) they may have against others. How? By forgiving as *the Lord forgave* them, graciously and freely (Eph. 4:32). Grudges have no place in a Christian's life for they may lead to the sins mentioned in Colossians 3:8-9. (BKC) The virtues listed here which emphasize the relations of Christians in a situation filled with friction, reflect the character of Christ. Jesus instructed his disciples to pray in Matthew 6:12, *And forgive us our debts as we also have forgiven our debtors.*

**v14** Paul wrote in 1 Cor. 13:13 that the "greatest of these is love". John Calvin says that *love* is the proper, that is, you cannot exhibit these graces unless you have love. "There are always going to be some with whom cannot work out things-we must realize that. When our Lord denounced the Pharisees, there was no mention of forgiveness-He just denounced them. They did not seek His forgiveness, of course. Paul's thought here is that Christ has forgiven us so much that it won't hurt us to forgive somebody who has stepped on our toes." (McGee)

**v15** Notice the words *rule in your hearts* (*Gk. bpabeueto*). The New Scofield NASB has a marginal note, "or *act as arbiter*". *Peace* should decide every debate (BKC also). Even if the person is wrong in a doctrinal debate, peace must decide the issue. We can help be the arbiter in a difference of a brother or sister in the Lord. This is made clear by the use of *body*, which refers to the Body of Christ, the church. An attitude of thankfulness contributes to an enjoyment of spiritual contentment. Thankfulness will destroy most grumbling.

**v16** The new life that Christians must "put on" is one in which *the Word of Christ dwells richly*. Christ's words are recorded by Spirit-guided apostles. The words of the Bible, God's written Word, are to  *dwell in* believers. We should be familiar with the Word of God. The Bible should not be a strange book to you as it is to so many people today. It dwells by study, meditation, and application of the Word. It becomes a permanent abiding part of one's life. "It is no exaggeration to say that *songs* have taught more theology to new converts than textbooks." (Wycl.) *Psalms* is songs from the Book of Psalms. *Hymns* are others songs of praise. *Spiritual songs* are song of spiritual nature.

**v17** "To live *in the name of the Lord Jesus* does away with the necessity of rules; inward motivation replaces external. Thus Christ's Lordship of the whole of life is expressed. His Lordship implies not only a mode of conduct but an attitude toward life; in conscious reflection upon the will of Christ, one's actions become an act of thanksgiving to Christ. External rules, even when good, are not adequate for every situation; the "rule" of the indwelling Christ is the only sufficient guide.

## COLOSSIANS

### COLOSSIANS 3:18-4:1

**INTRODUCTION:** We are looking at SOME CHARACTERISTICS OF THE ABUNDANT LIFE OF THE CHRISTIAN (3:1-4:6). We now are encouraged to:

A. SEEK SPIRITUAL VALUES. 3:1-4. In verse one we are to *keep seeking*; verse two, we are to *set your mind on the things above*. The first suggest striving for the things above; the second is concentrating on them.

B. LIVE THE CHRISTIAN LIFE AS SAINTS BECAUSE WE ARE SAINTS. 3:5-17

1. PUT OFF THE SINS OF THE OLD LIFE. 5:5-11 They *lived* (v.7) and thought happiness was found in them at one time (Eadie). But, a change has taken place in their life. Their heart is not in them no more. They are to lay them aside as an old garment. He deals with sexual sins first (v.5), and then emotional sins (v.8). The mind must be renewed in knowledge of God (vv.10-11).
2. PUTTING ON THE VIRTUES OF THE NEW LIFE (3:12-17)

### 3. HOW THE PRINCIPLES OF 'LIFE IN CHRIST' MAY BE EXPRESSED IN EVERYDAY AFFAIRS. 3:18-4:1

#### a. IN CHRISTIAN FAMILY RELATIONSHIPS. 3:18-21

**v18** Wives, *be subject* (hupatassethe) *to your husbands*. This is also found in Ephesians 5:22-24. The NIV translates the word *submit* as the KJV. "This command was not limited to Paul's day, as is obvious from two reasons he have elsewhere: 1) the order of creation (man was created first, then woman; 1 Tim. 2:13)" this is Paul's argument for a woman not teaching men in the church; "2) the order within the Godhead (Christ submits to the Father; 1 Cor. 11:3). Submission or subordination does not mean inferiority; it simply means that the husband, not the wife, is head of the home. If he may be thought of as the "president," she is the "vice-president."

"Of course there are moral limits to this submission; it is only *as is fitting in the Lord*. Just as obedience to government takes its place under God (Ex.1; Dan.3; 6), even so a wife's submission to her husband is only "in the Lord." That is, she is not obligated to follow her husband's leadership if it conflicts with specific scriptural commands.' (BKC) I saw a man recently whose wife had left him for a "Christian man"; and they were having an adulterous relationship. She is using religion, and God to approve of something which can not be justified before God as not sinful. The difficulty is common when a Christian woman marries a non-Christian man. The problem is serious in the country of men who do not take responsibility to be the head of the house, especially in spiritual matters.\_

**v19** Husbands should love their wives. In Eph. 5:28-29 Paul tells us how much the husband is to love his wife. The NIV translates *do not be harsh with them*. "Perhaps husbands need this reminder to be tender and loving as much or more than wives need the reminder not to usurp authority over their husbands. Assuming absolute authority will only embitter one's wife, not endear her." (BKC) Wives, like tender and sensitive flowers may wilt under authoritarian dominance

but blossom with tender loving care. 1 Peter 3:7 says, *You husbands likewise, live with your wives in an understanding way, as with a weaker vessel, since she is a woman; and grant her honor as a fellow heir of the grace of life, so that your prayers may not be hindered.* In Eph. 5:28-29 Paul says how much a man should love his wife. Paul then simply summarizes his point which he started in verse 29. Paul simply summarizes his point which he started. The man is to *love his own wife even as himself.* A man should speak to his wife with love and concern. If he loves her, he will not treat her as a door mat. He will not abuse her. The wife can get most of what she wants because of *love* from the husband. Christ said, *you have not because you ask not.* If the husband *loves* his wife as Christ loves his Church; the wife can ask and get almost anything she desires from the husband.

Paul concludes in the Ephesians' passage 5:33b, *let the wife see to it that she respect her husband.* Anita, has a friend who is always speaking disrespectful toward her husband. I have hear her myself many times. I do not think the man is as bad as this woman tells. She is seems to me to have an attitude problem at too many different times. Most marriages are in trouble where these two factors are missing: lack of respect from wife, or lack of love from the husband.

## COLOSSIANS

### COLOSSIANS 3:18-4:1

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2. PUTTING ON THE VIRTUES OF THE NEW LIFE (3:12-17)
3. HOW THE PRINCIPLES OF 'LIFE IN CHRIST' MAY BE EXPRESSED IN EVERYDAY AFFAIRS. 3:18-4:1
  - a. IN THE CHRISTIAN FAMILY RELATIONSHIPS. 3:18-21  
Wives, v.18. Husbands v.19.

**v20** Children (*tekva*) are to obey their parents in all things. This is address to Christians and their family. The assumption is that the Christian parent does what is right, and therefore no exception is given for not obeying. (Eadie) Disobedience to parents is designated in the Old Testament as rebellion against God and was severely punished. Exodus 21:17 says, *And he who curses his father or his mother shall surely be put to death*. Eph. 6:1 *Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right. 2) HONOR YOUR FATHER AND MOTHER (which is the first commandment with a promise), 3) THAT IT MAY BE WELL WITH YOU, AND THAT YOU MAY LIVE LONG ON THE EARTH*. It is not the first commandment with a promise, but it is probably means that it is the most important for children to learn. Rebellion against parents is a quicker way to shorten your life. (BKC) *This is pleasing in the Lord*, although in an extreme case a young person may have to choose Christ's will in opposition to that of non-Christian parents. For example, Jesus said in Luke 14:26-27, *If anyone comes to Me, and does not hate his own father and mother and wife and children and brothers and sisters, yes, and even his own life, he cannot be My disciple. 27) Whoever does not carry his own cross and come after Me cannot be My disciple*. It is obvious Jesus was not teaching us to *hate* our parents, but to put God first in our lives.

**v21** The KJV says, *Fathers, do not provoke your children to anger*. Do not continue to agitate or irritate your child. It is obvious that a good Christian parent will try to encourage their children with positive suggestions, rather than constant criticism. Paul adds in the Ephesians' letter, *bring them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord*.

### C. SERVANTS AND MASTERS (EMPLOYEE\EMPLOYER)

**vv22-5:1** Many questions would inevitably arise with regard to the duties of masters and servants in a state of society in which slavery prevailed and had the sanction of ancient and undisputed use. Here, as elsewhere in the NT, slavery is accepted as an existing institution, which is neither formally condemned nor formally approved. The Christian principle of the equality of men in the sight of God made a gradual change in society. Paul makes it clear that a spiritual master is over even masters as with the slaves. The master is over them only *according to the flesh*.

**vv6-8** Paul repeatedly reminds slaves that they served Christ vv5 and 6, and the Lord vv. 7 and 8. If the slave does his job well as service to Christ, he can be assured that God will reward. God does not care if you are a *slave or a free man*. (v.11) The Christian slave is to be a very conscientious slave, not serving with *eyeservice (ophthalmodoulia)*. If this were true of them, it means they were serving their masters only when they were watching. Paul reinforces the need of a proper attitude of the slaves toward their masters by including *good will (peaceable spirit, BKC)* as the *rendered service* to the Lord, but it is directed toward their masters. Another application is possible which is the relationship between employee and employer.

**v9** The word used for *master* is *kurios* which is normally translated Lord. If you think the Bible does not address the inhuman ways that some have done to their slaves, you are wrong. Notice carefully the phrase, *and masters, do the same things to them*. The point was that the masters "had a service to render to the *douloi* as these had a service to render to them...the masters were to act to their servants in the same Christian way as the servants were called to act to them - in the same spirit of consideration and goodwill." (Nic.)

Notice Paul's advice to the masters, *give up threatening*. The KJV seems a little confusing as it seems to suggest that the master is to *forbear threatening* from the slaves. It was a well-known habit of the masters to threaten the slaves. (The article *tan* shows this habit, Nic.) To treat a slave as inhuman as some masters have done is against biblical principles. Paul reminds the masters that their master *is in heaven*, and He has *no partiality*. All of these practical relationships flow from the filling of the Holy Spirit.

## COLOSSIANS

### COLOSSIANS 4:2-6

**INTRODUCTION:** We are looking at SOME CHARACTERISTICS OF THE ABUNDANT LIFE OF THE CHRISTIAN (3:1-4:6). We now are encouraged to:

A. SEEK SPIRITUAL VALUES. 3:1-4. In verse one we are to *keep seeking*; verse two, we are to *set your mind on the things above*. The first suggest striving for the things above; the second is concentrating on them.

B. LIVE THE CHRISTIAN LIFE AS SAINTS BECAUSE WE ARE SAINTS. 3:5-17

1. PUT OFF THE SINS OF THE OLD LIFE. 5:5-11 They *lived* (v.7) and thought happiness was found in them at one time (Eadie). But, a change has taken place in their life. Their heart is not in them no more. They are to lay them aside as an old garment. He deals with sexual sins first (v.5), and then emotional sins (v.8). The mind must be renewed in knowledge of God (vv.10-11).

2. PUTTING ON THE VIRTUES OF THE NEW LIFE (3:12-17)

B. HOW THE PRINCIPLES OF 'LIFE IN CHRIST' MAY BE EXPRESSED IN EVERYDAY AFFAIRS. 3:18-4:1

1. IN THE CHRISTIAN FAMILY RELATIONSHIPS. 3:18-21

Wives, v.18. Husbands v.19. Children v.20. Fathers v.21.

2. SERVANTS AND MASTERS vv.22-4:1

### 3. IN OUR PRAYER LIFE. 4:2-6

**v2** The KJV says, *Continue in prayer*. The Greek word has the meaning of (proskaptepeo) "busy oneself with, or busily engaged in" (Kubo) prayer. Most of us do not seek to busy ourselves in prayer. Wednesday evening is a service set aside for prayer. Our children need to sense a genuine desire of us to call on God to strengthen us.

Paul warns of formality and unbelief (Eadie) in prayer, *keeping alert in it with an attitude of thanksgiving*. They were to be aware of spiritual drowsiness in their devotions (Ibid.) caused by attention to the world. Jesus said in Matthew 24:38-42, *For as in those days which were before the flood they were eating and drinking, they were marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noah entered the ark. 39) and they did not understand until the flood came and took them all away; so shall the coming of the Son of Man be*. Prayer is as vital to one's spiritual health as breathing is to one's physical health. Being *thankful* should always accompany prayer (Phil. 4:6; Col. 1:12; 3:16-17; 1 Thess. 5:18), for it places a believer in the proper attitude before God.

**v3** Paul often asks his readers to pray for him (Rom 15:30; Eph. 6:19; 1 Thess. 5:25; 2 Thess. 3:1). It was not a selfish prayer. The *door* is often used in scripture for an opportunity to share the gospel, *the word*. Paul longed for some freedom for the result to preach the gospel. Imprisonment hampered that.

**v4** Paul's purpose of requesting this was to proclaim the Gospel in a *clear* way. Some might think that Paul would change his message some because it resulted in his imprisonment. Paul would not change or lower his fervor for the gospel to reach others.

**v5** Those who are not saved, and are outside the church, we should make every effort to induce them to come in. No barrier should be thrown in their way, but the attractive nature of Christianity should be wisely exhibited to them. The life and practice of those within the church is what they especially look at and learn from. And as the life and practice of those within the church is what they (unsaved) especially look at and learn from, so the apostle says, "walk in wisdom - *pros*, in reference to them. (Eadie) The KJV is very literal, *walk in wisdom toward them that are without*. We need *wisdom (sophia)* in this. If you are trying to hire someone for your company, you normally want to make the positive points of that company. This verse is sometimes the hardest principle to apply. "It means that while Christians are to abstain from such sins as disgrace their profession, and are to preserve a holy consistency, adorning the doctrine of God their Saviour; they are also to exhibit, at the same time, not only the purity of the gospel, but its amiability," (Eadie) which means having "pleasant and friendly disposition; good natured" (Webs.). Paul makes this clear in verse 6. This is the greatest concern of mine in the Christian life. The next verse connects the thought.

Before going on to the next verse, notice the last phrase, *making the most of the opportunity*. The NIV translates similar. The KJV says, *redeeming the time*. 'The general meaning is "purchasing, or seizing on the opportunity"' (Eadie) It must be kept in mind that it is referring to the context of our *wisdom* toward outsiders (unsaved). As we come in contact with people there are opportunities to witness for Christ.

**v6** Having a mean-spirited attitude is not Christian. I get angry if I don't watch myself when I talk about abortion, partial birth abortion, drugs, and crime. I think that our government could restrain or almost eliminate these if they took different direction in punishment. But, getting into a shouting contest will not solve the issues in life. I need your prayers about this in my own life. Paul does not put a condition on speaking *with grace*. Remember he is still referring primarily with the unsaved (Eadie, BKC), but maybe not completely, *to every man* (KJV). Food without salt has no taste. "Therefore, in life, and *speech* the Christian witness should be appetizing" to the unsaved". (Wycl.) Christ gave a strong warning in witnessing in Matthew 7:7, *Do not give what is holy to dogs, and do not throw your pearls before swine, lest they trample them under their feet, and turn and tear you to pieces*. There are some things about the Christian faith that the unsaved do not appreciate or respect. We must restrain our tongue in speaking of things they do understand anyway. Paul says it in a similar manner in 1 Corinthians 2:14, *But a natural man does not accept the things of the Spirit of God; for they are foolishness to him, and he cannot understand them, because they are spiritually appraised*.

## COLOSSIANS

### COLOSSIANS 4:7-18

**INTRODUCTION:** Paul now moves to his conclusion in which he gives personal exhortation or encouragement to those whom he has known.

### CONCLUSION

**vv7-8** *Tychicus* was a leader in the church and carried the letter with Onesimus (v.9). He was a *faithful servant* with Paul in the ministry. He was from the province of Asia. Acts 20:4 says he accompanied Paul in Macedonia as he preached. He was mentioned by Paul in 2 Timothy 4:12, *but Tychicus I have sent to Ephesus.* (BKC) Ephesians 6:21-22 says, *But that you also may know about my circumstances, how I am doing, Tychicus, the beloved brother and faithful minister in the Lord, will make everything known to you. 22) And I have sent him to you for this very purpose, so that you may know about us, and that he may comfort your hearts.*

The Greek text here has a variant - as the KJV, based on the Textus Receptus Greek manuscript, has *that he might know your estate* or affairs. Most scholars preferred the way the NASB and NIV has it. It seems more natural and parallels the words found in Ephesus letter. The Colossians were in distress at the apostle's condition, and in sorrow for his imprisonment; but when Tychicus would tell them how he was and that his mind was not discouraged about his imprisonment (Eadie), he would comfort the hearts of the Colossians and the Ephesians. This thought is brought out in the next verse.

**v9** *Onesimus* was a converted runaway slave of Philemon. He was a *faithful and beloved brother* of Paul and the Colossians. Onesimus was converted by the apostle Paul in his exile. The apostle's high remarks of this man seem to initiate social reform or certainly a change of attitudes toward slavery.

**v10** *Aristarchus* was a Thessalonian who accompanied Paul on his third missionary journey. Acts 19:26-30 says, *And you see and hear that not only in Ephesus, but in almost all of Asia, this Paul has persuaded and turned away a considerable number of people, saying that gods made with hands are no gods at all. 27) And not only is there danger that this trade of ours fall into disrepute, but also that the temple of the great goddess Artemis be regarded as worthless and that she whom all of Asia and the world worship should even be dethroned from her magnificence. 28) And when they heard this and were filled with rage, they began crying out, saying, "Great is Artemis of the Ephesians! 29) And the city was filled with the confusion, and they rushed with one accord into the theater, dragging along Gaius and Aristarchus, Paul's traveling companions from Macedonia. 30) And when Paul wanted to go into the assembly, the disciples would not let him.* Evidently the two men escaped with little or no injury. They are found mentioned in Acts 20:4 with Paul in Macedonia.

*My fellow prisoner* means Arsitarchus was incarcerated with Paul (probably also for preaching the gospel). Paul called him a fellow worker in Philemon 24. (BKC) This is probably not the first he is in jail.

*Mark, the cousin of Barnabas, was a companion on Paul's first missionary journey* (Acts 12:25). *Mark* early was immature, and timid. In Acts 15:36-39

Barnabas, the cousin of Mark, separates with Paul because Paul did not think that Mark was mature enough to go alone. It says, *And after some days Paul said to Barnabas, Let us return and visit the brethren in every city in which we proclaimed the word of the Lord, and see how they are. 37) And Barnabas was desirous of taking John, called Mark, along with them also. 38) But Paul kept insisting that they should not take him along who had deserted them in Pamphylia and had not gone with them to the work. 39) And there arose such a sharp disagreement that they separated from one another, and Barnabas took Mark with him and sailed away to Cyprus. He was later Peter's associate (my son), 1 Peter 5:13. Though Mark deserted Paul on the first missionary journey (Acts 15:37-39), Paul here commended him. Philemon 23-24 says, *Epaphras, my fellow prisoner in Christ Jesus, greets you, 24) as do Mark, Aristarchus, Demas, Luke, my fellow workers.* He is mentioned in 2 Timothy 4:11, *Only Luke is with me. Pick up Mark and bring him with you, for he is useful to me for service.**

## COLOSSIANS

### COLOSSIANS 4:11-18

**INTRODUCTION:** Paul has begun concluding by personal exhortations or encouragement. *Tychicus* was our fellow bondservant who carried the letter (v.7). *Onesimus* was a converted slave of Philemon (v.9). And, Aristarchus was frequent worker with Paul who had experienced imprisonment for the gospel (v.10). Mark was immature or timid and turned back for the work with Paul on a missionary journey, but now Paul has high regards for Mark. He also wrote the gospel of Mark.

**v11** Jesus was a common Jewish name, and Justus was a common Jewish name which means "righteous." (BKC) These three men, Aristarchus, Mark, and Jesus who is also named Justus were the men of Jewish tradition who helped Paul, but more importantly *for the kingdom of God*. This is the church. They had helped to promote the spread of the gospel and to bring others in. The *kingdom of God* is the true converted, born-again believers, but the *kingdom of heaven* used often by Christ in Matthew is those who profess faith like true believers, but are unsaved. Christ will one day at the end of the world (age) command his angels to separate them. (Matt. 13:24-30; 36-43)

**v12** *Epaphras* was from Colosse, as was *Onesimus*. He sent them *greetings*. Paul informs them of his concern for them by *wrestling in prayer* (NIV, *agonizomenos*) for them. The Colossians were in danger of falling into error which would rob them of their spiritual blessing and growth. *Perfect (teleioi)* or *mature* (NIV) and *fully assured (peplapophopamenoï, NASB, NIV, Marshall)* in all the will of God. This is clearly a reference to the Gnosticism influence in the church, where dreams and visions were taking divine authority. (Eadie) Romans 4:20-21 says, *yet, with respect to the promise of God, he did not waver in unbelief, but grew strong in faith, giving glory to God. 21) and being fully assured that what He had promised, He was able also to perform.*

**v13** Paul knew the concern of this man for them and for the believers in Laodicea and Hierapolis. Each city was near Colosse.

**v14** *Luke* was Paul's dear friend. He had stood firm not only in this earlier imprisonment but also in Paul's latter imprisonment, but which time Demas who was here with Paul, had forsaken him (2 Tim. 4:10). *Luke* wrote the gospel of *Luke*, and must have been a Gentile since he is not listed among the circumcision.

**v15** Paul asked that his greetings be given to *brethren who are in Laodicea*. There were also women, but it is especially directed toward the brethren who are leaders in the church offices. The house-church was widespread both in the Pauline congregations and in general. See Acts 12:12; 16:15, 40; Rom.16; 5, 23; 1 Cor. 16:19; Philemon 2 (Wycl.). *Nympha* may be feminine or masculine. The KJV translates, *in his house*; the NASB and NIV translate, *in her house*. The *Epositor's Greek Testament* Commentary says, "a scribe might alter the feminine, assuming that a woman could not have been mentioned in this way."

**v16** Paul urged an exchange of epistles; once they had read Colossians they should send it to Laodicea and *read the letter from Laodicea*. This "Laodicean

letter" may be the letter to the Ephesians, which was written about that time, and sent to the same general vicinity. Marcion refers to the Ephesians' letter as the Epistle to the Laodiceans. Ephesians has no salutations in the letter, which shows some intent on circulation of the letter to other churches. (Expositor's GNT)

**v17** *Archippus* was probably the son of Philemon (BKC, and Wycl.), and he was ministering in Colosse. This is a similar statement that Paul gave to Timothy. In 2 Tim. 1:5-6 says, *For I am mindful of the sincere faith within you, which first dwelt in your grandmother Lois, and your mother Eunice, and I am sure that it is in you as well. 6) And for this reason I remind you to kindle afresh the gift of God which is in you through the laying on of my hands.* It is found in 2 Tim. 4:5, *but you, be sober in all things endure hardship, do the work of an evangelist, fulfill your ministry.*

Some commentators take this as a rebuke for some problem in the life of Archippus (BKC, Alf. quotes Meter): others see no rebuke in these words (Wycl. Eadie, Expositor's GNT) He could be a pastor or deacon in the church. The word for *ministry* (*deakonian*) was used in many ways Some think he was a deacon while his father Philemon was pastor. Others think he was the pastor in the absence of Epaphras. (BKC, Eadie mentions). He was "to discharge all the duties which such an office laid upon him, and to fill up with holy activity that sphere which the Lord had marked out for him." (Eadie)

**v18** As was Paul's custom and sign of authenticity, he signed a *greeting* with his *own hand* as he did in four other epistles for he had it dictated. His signature was to confirm its genuineness.