

10/22/80

COLOSSIANS

Outline:

- I. 1:1-8
- II. 1:9-2:23
- III. 3:1-4
- IV. 3:5-4:6
- V. 4:7-18

Names and titles of our Lord:

- Jesus Christ (1:1)
- Christ (1:2, 7, 24, 27; 2:2, 5, 8, 11, 17, 20; 3:1 (2x), 3, 4, 11, 13; 4:3, 12).
- Lord Jesus Christ (1:2, 3).
- Christ Jesus (1:4, 28).
- The Lord (1:10; 3:16, 18, 20, 23, 24; 4:17).
- His dear Son (1:13).
- The image of the invisible God (1:15).
- The firstborn of every creature (1:15).
(See above means), Creator - cf. 1:16)
- Before all things - pre-existent (1:17).
- By him all things consist - sustainer of creation (1:17).
- The head of the body (1:18, [24], 2:19).
- The beginning (1:18).
- The first of the dead (1:18).
- The One in whom all fulness dwells (1:19), the fullness of the Godhead (2:9).
- The peace-maker (1:20).
- The crucified one (1:20, 22, 24; 2:14)
- The reconciler (1:20, 21).
- The hope of glory (1:27).
- The One in whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge (2:3).
- Christ Jesus the Lord (2:6).
- The head of all principality and power (2:10, [15]).
- The resurrected one (2:12, 13) The ascended One (3:1)
Our life (3:4).

- Lord Jesus (3:17).
- Lord Christ (3:24).
- Master (4:1).

The will of God - 1:1, 9; 4:12

Hope - 1:5, 23, 27; cf also 3:4.

Key verse: 1:18 b

Soon after the Colossian church was established, ~~they~~ entered in with false teaching to turn the points from CHRIST.

Chapter 1 - His authority

The Gospel and what it had done.

The Person of Christ & His work

Chapter 2 - His love and prayers for them.

Again He points to Christ and at the close exposes the errors of Greek philosophy

Jewish legalism

and pagan mysticism

Chapter 3 - Begins with Christ enthroned and shows our hope

Out of his ~~good~~ he gives various exhortations

1) Of a general nature.

2) Of a particular nature - to wives, etc. - to 4:1

Chapter 4 3) Concluding with 4:2-6, thinking of bear witness

The book ends with greetings and concl.

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COLOSSIANS 1:1-17.

The message of the book gradually becomes apparent.

There are three parts to this passage:

- I. Identification (vv. 1, 2).
- II. Commendation (vv. 3-8), in the sense of praise.
- III. Intercession (vv. 9-17). Actually the message of the book begins in v. 12, but it is so intimately connected with Paul's prayer that we are taught how prayer and instruction go together.

I. Identification (Col. 1:1-2).

- A. Paul identifies himself.
- B. He identifies those who receive this letter.
- C. He identifies his prayer for them.

He establishes his authority, and that of Timothy - an indication of the importance of this Epistle. The greatest authority stands behind it: THE AUTHORITY OF A MAN COMMISSIONED BY GOD!

II. Commendation -- for God (Col. 1:3-8).

He praises God for:

- A. God's work in the Colossian believers (vv. 3-6).
- B. The Gospel (vv. 5, 6).
- C. Epaphras (vv. 7, 8).

Concerning God's work in the Colossians, obviously "faith" and "love" as well as "hope" are from God, or there would be no point in praising God for them!

Calvin (Vol. XXI, 137) says that "the entire sum of our excellence consists" in these: "faith" and "love." They are inseparable; if one is there, the other will be there, too!

What about the Gospel?

He glories in:

- 1) Its message: CHRIST, "faith," "love," "hope."
- 2) Its truth
- 3) Its fruitfulness
- 4) Its nature: "the grace of God"
- 5) Its faithful messenger, Epaphras.

Concerning Epaphras:

- 1) He was "dear" to Paul.
- 2) He was "faithful" to the Colossians, esp. regarding the Gospel.

III. Intercession (Col. 1:9-17).

All that Paul had mentioned in vv. 3-8 encouraged him to pray for the Colossians. This should always be true where there is true evidence of spiritual life.

On desiring and praying, cf. Mark 11:24.

The basic request is in v. 9.

Note: With all that is said in a commendatory way, there was more to be achieved - daily!

To know God's will we will also come to know Him - and this knowledge comes only from the Word of God! This is full knowledge, a larger, fuller, perfect knowledge, and so much more than mere knowledge. The same word is in v. 10 where we have further evidence that we as believers never stop learning!

Our knowledge of God and of His will is basic to everything else in our lives. Only with such knowledge can we "walk

worthy of the Lord," pleasing Him in all things).

This leads to fruitful work. Cf. Josh. 1:8.

And then the special, continuing needs of believers. - the need for strength, meaning that believers are weak.

- the need for patience and longsuffering, meaning believers are impatient, unwilling to wait on God in trying circumstances. There will always be trials.
- the need for joy - instead of unbelief and discouragement.
- and the need to be thankful (v. 12)

AND IT IS HERE THAT THE MESSAGE OF THE BOOK ACTUALLY BEGINS.

Note: Thanksgiving

To the Father, for what He has done
for Christ

- for His work (v. 14)
- for His Person (v. 15)
- for His work in creation (v. 16)
- for His place in the universe (v. 17)

Calvin has an excellent statement regarding what Paul is beginning to do in v. 12:

Again he returns to thanksgiving, that he may take this opportunity of enumerating the blessings which had been conferred upon them through Christ, and thus he enters upon a full delineation of Christ (italics mine). For this was the only remedy for fortifying the Colossians against all the snares, by which the false Apostles endeavoured to entrap them -- to understand accurately what Christ was. For how comes it that we are carried about with so many strange doctrines, (Heb. xiii. 9,) but because the excellence of Christ is not perceived by us? For Christ alone makes all other things suddenly vanish. Hence there is nothing that Satan so much endeavours to accomplish as to bring on mists with the view of obscuring Christ, because he knows that by this means the way is opened up for every kind of falsehood. This, therefore, is the only means of retaining, as well as restoring pure doctrine -- to place Christ before the view such as he with all his blessings, that his excellence may be truly perceived.

Thus he calls this

the main article of this first chapter; for his grand object here is that we may know that Christ is the beginning, the middle, and end -- that it is from him that all things must be sought -- that nothing is, or can be found, apart from him.

Written
more than
400 years ago.

11/5/80

COLOSSIANS - Reading Notes

The will of God - 1:1, 9, 27 (NASB)

Steadfastness - faithful brother (1:2)
a faithful servant (1:7; 4:7, 9
1:11, 23; 2:5, 7; 4:12, 17)

Thanksgiving - 1:3-ff., 12; 2:7; 3:15, 16 (NASB), 17;
4:2

Fruitfulness - 1:6, 10

Power - 1:11 "unto all patience and long-
suffering with joyfulness." 1:29

Forgiveness - 1:14; 2:13; 3:13

Christ, the Head - 1:18; 2:10, 19

Comfort, encouragement - 2:2; 4:8, 11

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Colossians 1:18-29

A key to the passage:

- 1) Kai αὐτός in v. 18, emphatically referring to Christ.
- 2) Kai ὑμᾶς in v. 21, emphatically referring to believers).

Thus we have two sections designated.

This is followed by a third:

- 3) ἐγώ Ταῦτα in v. 23, followed by ἐγώ in v. 25, both of which are emphatic.

Thus we have our outline:

- I. The preeminence of Christ (vv. 18-20).
- II. The reconciliation of believers (vv. 21-23a).
- III. The ministry of Paul - considered in the light of what God is doing and has done in Christ (vv. 23b-29).

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COLOSSIANS 2:1-15

(Answer the questions.)

Note: a poor place for a chapter division
because 2:1-15 really belongs to ch. 1
- esp. vv. 1-3.

Paul is doing three things here:

- 1) Showing his great concern.
- 2) ~~Showing~~ giving a warning
- 3) Giving an explanation. The gist of it
is that there is no reason to go beyond
Christ because:
 - a) He is fully God.
 - b) He is greater than all angelic beings
 - c) He has settled ^{for believers} the problem of sin by
His death, burial, and resurrection.
 - d) He has satisfied the Law
 - e) He has conquered "principalities and
powers."

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COLOSSIAN 2:16-3:4

Two divisions:

- 1) Negative - exposing error (2:16-23).
- 2) Positive - re-stating and emphasizing the truth, actually surveying the whole scope of salvation: past, present, future (3:1-4).

His attack against error is threefold:

- 1) Against legalism - which made the Law a merit system (which it never was) (vv. 16, 17).
- 2) Against mysticism - which corrupted the truth, and then went beyond it (vv. 18, 19).
- 3) Against asceticism - which sought to solve the problem of sin by imposing outward rules and penalties on the body.

Mysticism - the attaining of spiritual knowledge by other than normal means.

Divine revelation is true mysticism, but Paul was combating false mysticism.

Cf. 1 Cor. 2:9, 10.

Asceticism - the doctrine that through self-denial, self-torture or punishment, a person can achieve a high spiritual and intellectual state.

These three errors, all having some connection with the Law, were spreading the following errors:

- 1) Legalism - that a person's godliness was to be determined by his observance of Jewish ceremonies and feast days.

The answer: v. 17.

Eddie (p. 180) has an excellent comment on this point:

Regarding v. 17 -- "The shadow is the intended likeness of the substance. In other words, Christianity was not fashioned to resemble Judaism, but Judaism was fashioned to resemble Christianity. The antitype is not constructed to bear a likeness to the type, but the type is constructed to bear a likeness to the antitype. It is, in short, because of the antitype that the type exists. The Mosaic economy being a rude draught of Christianity, presupposed its future existence."

- 2) mysticism. This was focusing in on the worship of angels. Why? Probably because of the truth found in Acts 7:53; Gal. 3:19; Heb. 2:2.

Since Jesus Christ was a man, angels were greater (they argued, ignoring His Deity), and so they taught that a revelation given by angels would be superior to the revelation given through Christ and the Apostles.

The answer: v. 19.

- 3) Asceticism. They began with Scripture, but went beyond Scripture to "the commandments and doctrines of men."

The purpose: To settle the question of sin.

This came from "will worship" - i.e., from man, "unauthorized devotion" (Eadie, p. 205).

"The whole process was a cardinal mistake, for it was a system of externals, both in ceremonial and ethics. The body might be reduced, but the evil bias might remain unchecked. A man might whip and fast himself into a walking skeleton, and yet the spirit within him might have all its lusts unconquered; for all it had lost was only the ability to gratify them" (Eadie, p. 206).

THE POSITIVE STATEMENT OF TRUTH - the one and only answer in Christ (3:1-4) - stated with reference to the past (v. 1a),
 the present (vv. 1b-3),
 the future (v. 4).

Two things are designed of God to keep us

from error:

- 1) The Word of God.
- 2) The knowledge of Christ

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COLOSSIANS 3:5-17.

There are three parts to this passage:

- 1) Things to "mortify," or "put off." Vv. 5-11.

Vv. 9&-11 give us the basis on which this can be done.

- 2) Things to "put on" (vv. 12-14).

Paul is describing in these verses what is involved in obeying Col. 2:2.

The continuation of the seeing is carried on according to vv. 15-17.

Comparing this with the parallel passage in Ephesians, we could call the third point

- 3) The heavenly walk maintained (Col. 3:15-17).

God has provided for this by

a) The peace of God (or, of Christ) (v. 15).

b) A thankful attitude (v. 15b).

c) The word of Christ (v. 16), and music.

d) The constant purpose of our lives (v. 17).

Paul emphasizes four points; having to do with four points in time (actually five, if we consider his expression, "the elect of God":)

What we were by nature (Col. 2:13)	What happened at the Cross (Col. 2:13, 20; 3:1)	What took place when we were saved (Col. 3:9&, 10) Cf. Gal. 5:24.	What we are to do now (Col. 3:5, 8, 12, 14). And then vv. 15-17
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Paul uses the following expressions with regard to the flesh and sin:

- 1) "mortify" - Νεκρώσατε, which Robertson translates, "to treat as dead" (IV, 501).

- 2) "Put off" - ἀπόθεσθε, from ἀποτίθημι, which could be translated to lay them aside, get rid of them, take them off (like clothing), lay them down.

Cf. also Gal. 5:16, "Walk in the Spirit..."

The two groups of sins which Paul mentions are essentially:

- 1) Sexual sins (3:5). See vv. 6, 7 as to the past experience of the Colossians.
- 2) Sins involving the tongue (3:8).

If the distinctions mentioned in v. 11, two need explanation:

- 1) "Barbarian" - Βάρβαρος, one who does not speak Greek, or one who in any country speaks a foreign language but does not speak the language of that country.
- 2) "Scythian" - Σκύθιος, people who lived in what is now southern Russia, "the barbarian or savage 'par excellence'" (A & F, p. 765).

Other words that need explaining:

(3:5) "Uncleanness" - ἀκαθαρτία, unnatural vices, viciously immoral.

"Inordinate affection" - πάθος, one who persists in sinful passion.

"Evil concupiscence" - ἐπιθυμία κακήν.

This and the one before are general and speak of attitudes, impulses. Those before, of actual acts.

(3:8) "Anger, wrath" - the first in an outburst, the second an inner seething!

"Malice" - κακία, appearing in this list would appear to be vicious speech.

"Blasphemy" - an attack ^{in speech} upon a person's character

"Filthy communication" - "foul or abusive language" (Eddie, p. 226).

(3:12) "Put on" - Ενδύσασθε, from ἔνδυν, to dress or clothe one's self.

"Bowels of mercies" - σπλαγχνα ὄικτιπποῦ. Not hard, but merciful, compassionate.

(3:13) "Forbearing" - ἀνέξημον, enduring or putting up with someone

(3:14) "Above all" = upon all these things, i. e., the garment which goes over everything else - perhaps, the Christian's topcoat!

"The bond of perfectness" - σύνδεσμος τῆς τελειότητος. Perfection (cf. 1:28) means that all of the graces of the Christian. Since "God is love" it is fitting that, since we are "renewed in knowledge after the image of him," that we, too, should be characterized by love.

(3:15) Cf. Eph. 4:1-3.

"Rule" - βασιλεύειν, to judge, decide, control. Robertson says, to act as ~~an~~ umpire.

(IV, 505). "The doctrine of Christ, or the truth which Christ has for his subject" (Eadie, 250).

(3:16) On "the word of Christ," "Paul is extolling Christ in this Epistle" (Robertson, IV, 505).

"Dwell" - ενοικεῖν, actually to indwell, or to live in. See "in" is emphatic. Cf. 3:4, "Christ, Who is our life."

"Richly" - πλούσιως, with "the soul fully under its influence ... a large and liberal occupancy" (Eadie, 250).

Be rich in the Word like some are with money!

This produces an understanding and a singing heart!

And in song we are to teach and admonish (or warn - Gary Adams' nouthetic counseling) each other.

The more we have of the Word, the more we know, and the more we know, the more we minister to others.

Our knowledge of the Word is going to affect us in the songs we will enjoy.

This
is what
means
be filled
with the
spirit

How do we cause the Word to indwell us
abide in us?

- 1) By reading.
- 2) By meditation.
- 3) By talking about it, i.e., teaching.
- 4) By memory.

"Grace" = thanksgiving.

(3:17) To speak and to act in His Name is to do so:

- 1) With His approval, i.e., doing His will which follows from letting the Word dwell richly in us.
- 2) For His glory

NOTE: vv. 15, 16, 17 all end with thanksgiving.

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COLOSSIANS 3:18-4:1;

This passage is built on the foundation of Col. 1:1-3:17.

It gives the most vital relationships that any Christian has - and in their order of importance!

It specifies the main responsibility of each person in their relationship. Failure in these will result in chaos in the home,
in the church,
in the world.

Note that the one less responsible is always mentioned first.

Here in Colossians) the greatest emphasis is given to "servants."

COLOSSIANS 4:2-6

emphasis. Paul was writing
in the passage about things
which were "going on continuously".

- (4:2) Praying is important, but the effectiveness
of praying is often determined by our
continuance in prayer. Cf. 1:3 "praying always"
"Watch" against losing heart, formality,
unbelief. See Christian is to stand guard
over his praying. The same word is used
in Acts 20:31.

1 Pet. 5:8

"With thanksgiving" - 1:3, 12, 24;

2:5, 7;

3:15, 17

4:2.

(4:3)

The prayer request: "that God would open
unto me a door of utterance, or preaching."
Cf. Rev. 3:7, 8

2 Cor. 2:12

1 Cor. 16:9

See message: "the mystery of Christ."
Cf. Eph. 6:19, 20. Also 1 Cor. 1:17-21.

(4:4) Paul wanted to be understood.

(4:5)

"Walk" in Col. 1:10; 2:6; 4:5. Cf. 3:7.
"Genuinely one wisdom" - also in 1 Cor. 5:12;

1 Peter. 4:12
"In wisdom" - It is interesting to relate
this to Col. 1:9, 10. Paul is not even remotely
suggesting compromise. Instead he is thinking
of a walk which:

1) Is according to the Word.

2) Manifests what has been done in our
hearts through the gospel of Christ.
(In "wisdom," cf also 1:28; 2:3; 3:16.)

"Redeeming the time" has to be related to the open door above. This refers to "the undefined times or circumstances out of which, in each particular case, the Kairos was to be bought" (Eadie, p. 279).

(4.6) Here Paul returns to the use of the tongue. Cf. v. 3, 4. "Death and life are in the power of the tongue" (Prov. 18:21).

See of our Lord's gracious words when He was ~~in the synagogue~~ - Luke 4:22.

"One kind of answer will not suffice for all, but each one is to be answered as he should" (Eadie, p. 282). This is a warning against canned answers.

It is interesting to contemplate questions coming from those who are "without." It might have to do with:

Cf. 1 Pet. 3:15

1) Doctrine.

2) A question of right and wrong.

3) A personal problem.

Eadie (pp. 283, 284) quotes Elton (1620) who, in his ~~commenting~~ of Colossians, wrote this:

*Continued
with
Vincent
Norman
answer
Replies
the man who
asked about
a future life.*

"Wouldest thou then be able to speake fitly, and to good purpose on every occasion, as in one particular case, in time of distress, in time of trouble, and vexation of body or mind, wouldest thou be able to speak a word of comfort, and as the Prophet saith, Isa. 50:4, know to minister a word in time to him that is weary? Oh then let thy tongue be ever powdered with the salt of grace, have in thy mouth at all other times (italics mine) gracious speeches, and certainly then thou shalt not be to seek of sweet and comfortable words in time of need. Many come to their friends whom they love well, and wish well unto, in time of their trouble, haply lying on their sick beds, and are not able to afford them one word of spiritual comfort, only they can use a common form of speech, ask them how they do, and say, they are sorry to see them so, and then they have done: here is one special cause of it (italics mine), their mouths are not seasoned with gracious speeches at other times (italics mine); and so it comes to pass that when they should, and (it may be) would use gracious and comfortable words, they cannot frame themselves to them, but even then also, they are out of season with them; learn thou therefore to acquaint thy self with holy and religious speeches, let thy mouth at other times (italics mine) be exercised in speaking graciously, and then (doubtless) though thou canst not speak so eloquently, as some that foam out nothing but goodly speeches, yet thou shalt be able to speak to better purpose, because (indeed) it is not man's wit, but God's grace, that seasons speech, and makes it profitable and comfortable."

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COLOSSIANS 4:7-18.

This conclusion to the Epistle has to do with:

- 1) The two men Paul was sending to them (vv. 7-9).
- 2) The six men who were with him in Rome (vv. 10-14). Timothy (1:1) would make 7.
- 3) The special ~~salutations~~ from Paul (vv. 15-18).

In these three sections Paul is concerned with four vital ingredients in the Lord's work:

- 1) A work report and personal report
The fellowship of the saints (vv. 7-11).

The word "comfort" is used 2x - different words. The first in v. 8 means encouragement; the second in v. 11 means assay or alleviating pain (a medical term).

Paul was concerned lest the Colossians be suddenly concerned about him. How important it is to keep people reformed - note the alternate reading in v. 8 - "that ye might know our estate."

v. 11, "These only are my fellowworkers...
i.e., who were Jews, and who were with him at the time.

- 2) Prayer - the prayer of Epaphras for them (vv. 12, 13). Cf. also 1:7.

He agonized that they might "stand." Cf. Eph. 6:11, 13, 14. Cf. 1 Cor. 16:13. He was praying that they would be spiritually mature and fully assured - which seems to speak of their understanding - not left in infancy or deluded by error!

- 3) The Word - There is some evidence for believing that Paul is referring to the Ephesian Epistle when he writes of "the

Cf. 2:1;
Rom. 15:30

"epistle from Laodicea." Cf. 4:16.

On reading, cf. 1 Tim. 4:13; Rev. 1:3; Neh. 8:8
1 Th. 5:27; Eph. 3:4.

4) The ministry - Τὴν Σιακοβίαν. Cf. 2 Cor. 4:1;
Rom. 11:13; 2 Tim. 4:5, 11; Eph. 4:12.

This is not something vague, but is a specific work, a definite assignment.

What a tragedy that we have lost sight of what the NT ministry is.

Note Paul's word in 2 Tim. 4:7.

Paul's concluding word (v. 18):

Why - "Remember my bonds"?

Perhaps:

- 1) So they would pray for him.
- 2) So they would be encouraged in their own lives.
- 3) But mainly indicated by his other references: ^{Col 4:3;} Eph. 3:1; 4:1; 6:20; Philemon 13.

Bishop Lightfoot:

These passages seem to show that the appeal here is not for himself, but for his teaching -- not for sympathy with his sufferings, but for obedience to the Gospel. His bonds were not his own; they were τὰ σφράγια τοῦ εὐαγγελίου (Philem. 13).

Oh, that the keeping of the Word,
understanding the Word,
obeying the Word,
witnessing to the Word

were as important to us as it was to the Apostle Paul! This is the only way to be preserved from error, to please the Lord, and to have a growing, vital Church!