

A Study of Colossians 1

I. Outlines.

1. Greeting (Colossians 1.1-2).
2. Their Faith in Christ (Colossians 1.3-8).
3. Preeminence of Christ (Colossians 1.9-18).
4. Reconciled in Christ (Colossians 1.19-23).
5. Sacrificial Service for Christ (Colossians 1.24-29).

--NKJV Headings

1. Salutation (Col 1.1-2).
2. Thanksgiving for the Faith and Love of the Colossians (Col 1.3-8).
3. Prayer for the Colossians (Col 1.9-14).
4. Gratitude Expressed for our Deliverance (Col 1.12-14).
5. The Preeminence of Jesus Christ (Col 1.15-20).
 - 1) His Equality with God (Col 1.15).
 - 2) His Superiority to all Creation (Col 1.16-17).
 - 3) His Preeminence over the New Creation (Col 1.18-19).
 - 4) His Preeminence in Redemption (Col 1.20).
6. The Aims and Responsibilities of Redemption (Col 1.21-23).
7. The Aims and Goals of Paul's Stewardship (Col 1.24-29).

--Mark Dunagan, *Mark Dunagan's Commentaries*, 2011, an e-Sword Module

II. Summary.

"INTRODUCTION TO COLOSSIANS: Paul is writing this letter from prison in Rome. He says in the last verse of the book, "Remember my bonds" (Col 4.18). Colossae was located in the Roman province of Phrygia only twenty or so miles from its companion city of Laodicea. No doubt this accounts for the several times that Laodicea is mentioned in this book (Co 2.1; 4.13-15) and for the exchange of epistles between them. This letter was sent to the church in Colossae at the same time that Paul sent the letter to Philemon regarding Onesimus (Col 4.7-9). It is a companion letter to Ephesians, evidently written at the same time, and also sent by the hand of Tychicus (Col 4.7; Eph 6.21). It covers many of the same topics as Ephesians does and in much the same order. It was written in response to a report by Epaphras regarding the church there (Col 1.7-8). This report was mainly encouraging, but evidently (considering the topics covered in the epistle) also included news of some false teaching that might lead some astray."

--Darrell Conley, "Philippians and Colossians—A Summary," in *Studies in Philippians and Colossians*, Editor: Dub McClish, 2000 Annual Denton Lectures, p. 38.

"SUMMARY.--Greeting. Thanksgiving for the Faith of the Colossian Church. Prayer for Their Progress. Becoming Meet for the Inheritance of the Saints. In the Kingdom of the Son. The Glories of the Son. The Work of Christ on Reconciling Men to Himself. Joy in Sufferings. The Mystery Among the Gentiles."

--B.W. Johnson, *The People's New Testament*, an e-Sword Module

III. Chronology.

BIBLE PERIOD: The Period of the Church.

If you are not familiar with the **15 Bible Periods**, please click here:

<https://maplehillchurchofchrist.files.wordpress.com/2018/05/15bibleperiods.pdf>

“We learn in the Sixteenth Chapter of Acts that Paul, on his second missionary journey, passed from Cilicia through the pass in the great Taurus chain of mountains, which has always been the highway from the coast to the interior; paused a little while in Lydia; took Timothy in his train of attendants, and then passed through Phrygia and Galatia. And, a second time, after his European tour, he returned and “went over all the country of Phrygia and Galatia, strengthening the disciples” (Acts 18:23). Yet it is probable that he did not personally plant the gospel in Colosse, and possibly did not even pass through the valley of the Lycus. The words of Colossians 2:1, are understood to mean that he had never met with the church in person, and indeed there is a marked difference between the tone of this letter and the familiar personal appeals of letters addressed to churches that he had certainly planted, like those of Philippi and Galatia” [B.W. Johnson].

“Evangelization of Colosse probably took place during Paul’s three-year stay in Ephesus. Luke records in Acts 19:10 that people throughout the Asian region heard the gospel. Apparently Epaphras was converted in Ephesus, and after being instructed by Paul returned home to Colosse to proclaim the gospel. Evidently the church that emerged was largely composed of Gentiles, for Paul refers to their “**uncircumcision**,” a word employed by Paul to designate Gentiles (see Col 2:13; Rom. 2:24–27; Eph. 2:11)” [New King James Study Bible Notes].

IV. Words/Phrases to Study

Book of Colossians... “We could accurately say that the theme of the book is ‘Christ’s Supremacy versus Heresy.’ We do need to know why some teachings are wrong, as well as why some are right. In our age with its emphasis upon ecumenicity, and its de-emphasis upon fixed beliefs, we need to look again at books like Colossians, to see what the apostles of Christ really taught, and to see if we have surrendered the true foundation of Christianity. To many people today such concepts as the authority of Christ and the finality of the Christian faith are myths. The book of Colossians is a powerful rebuttal to such an attitude” [Wilbur Fields, *Philippians-Colossians-Philemon*, Bible Study Textbook Series, p., 117].

Colossians 1.1-9... “In the first nine verses of the first chapter of Colossians we learn of the beauty of faith, hope, and love in the sojourn of a Christian. They truly loved one another in a life based upon genuine faith and bolstered by a living hope they took the gospel to the world of their day” [Johnny Ramsey, “The Hope of Glory,” in *Firm Foundation*, 10/23/1984, p. 584].

Colossians 1.7... **AS YE HAVE LEARNED OF EPAPHRAS**—“The Colossians had learned these Truths from Epaphras, whom Paul identifies as a fellow-slave with him in service to the Gospel. This preacher is also mentioned in Colossians 4.12 and Philemon 1.23. Paul mentioned in Colossians 2.1 that the Colossians and Laodiceans had not seen him personally. It is possible that Epaphras or other members of his evangelistic team evangelized these cities as they traveled about. Bruce believes that the cities of the Lycus Valley and Phrygia were evangelized during Paul’s lengthy Ephesian ministry, when ‘all they which dwelt in Asia heard the word of the Lord Jesus, both Jews and Greeks’ (Acts 19.10). Phrygian Jews were also present in Jerusalem on the

Day of Pentecost in Acts 2.10” [Ted Clarke, “Translated into the Kingdom of Christ,” in *Studies in Philippians and Colossians*, Editor: Dub McClish, 2000, p. 116].

Colossians 1:10... “In many ways the verse that serves as a catalyst is verse ten wherein a brilliant three point sermon is found: (1) Walk Worthy of the Lord; (2) Be Fruitful in Every Good Work; (3) Increase in the Knowledge of God” [Ramsey, p. 584]. ||||| “He also prayed their knowledge would be translated into a way of life which was worthy of their high calling (compare Eph 4:1). A Christian life will be shown by the fruit of good works (Galatians 5:22-25). We cannot produce another Christian in and of ourselves but must plant the seed of God's word, water it with the truth of the gospel and wait for God to give the increase (Luke 8:11; 1 Cor 3:6). The fruit of good works shows the positive impact of the gospel and readies us for judgment (Php 2:12-15; Rom 2:6-11; 2 Cor 5:10). The more good works we perform the more we will grow in the understanding of God's will (Heb 5:12-14).” [Gary C. Hampton, *The Sufficiency of Christ*, an e-Sword Module].

Colossians 1.12... NET Version: “...**giving thanks to the Father who has qualified you to share in the saints’ inheritance in the light.**” ||||| “Paul also prayed that the Colossian brethren might be thankful. Particularly, Christians should be grateful God qualified us to inherit the promised land of heaven, which is a land of light because the Son is there (Acts 26:17-18; Rev 21:22-23). We were qualified when God delivered us out of the bondage of sin, or the realm of moral darkness. Coffman says the word ‘translated’ was used to describe the transplanting of a race of people from one land to another. So, we are taken by God out of Satan's kingdom and placed in the Son's kingdom. This happens when one gets into Christ where he becomes a new creature dedicated in service to a new Lord, or king (2 Cor 5:17; Rom 6:3-4; Rom 6:16-18).” [Gary C. Hampton].

Colossians 1.13... “Paul, inspired by the Holy Spirit, made it clear in verse thirteen that there is a vast chasm between Satan’s domain and the kingdom of God’s dear Son. One realm features darkness and the other is the epitome of light. What a blessing it is to come out of the long, dark tunnel of sin and shame into the marvelous freedom and resplendent sunlight of the love of God found in Christ Jesus! The very next verse (1:14) informs us of the cleansing power in the redeeming blood of the Savior and verse twenty enriches our very souls by speaking of the peace made possible by the power of the Cross. Oh, how much we owe the Master” [Ramsey, p. 584].

Colossians 1.14... **IN WHOM WE HAVE REDEMPTION THROUGH HIS BLOOD**—“As he so often did, Paul emphasizes the blessings Christians have in Christ. The word “redemption” tells of one gaining his freedom by the payment of a ransom. Christ's blood was shed to pay the price for man's release from sin and to justify God for pronouncing those who are in the church free from guilt (Acts 20:28; Eph 1:7). Weed says the word “forgiveness” describes release from or cancellation of sins (Col 1:12-14).” [Gary C. Hampton].

Colossians 1.15... **THE FIRSTBORN OF EVERY CREATURE**—“While the word FIRSTBORN can mean the first one born (Gen 27.19; Ex 11.5; Lk 2.7). From the context and other passages we are forced to conclude that the word FIRSTBORN in this context and others refers not to the origin of Jesus, but to the position of Jesus. The word FIRSTBORN is often used in the Scriptures with no reference to TIME, but rather to a position of preeminence (Ex 4.22; Heb 12.23). The context of Colossians 1.15-20 demands that the word FIRSTBORN refers to position and not to origin. For the word is used again in 1.18, THE FIRSTBORN FROM THE DEAD. But Jesus wasn’t the first

person raised from the dead. Rather, He is the most important one resurrected, the one resurrected to die no more, the resurrection that guarantees the resurrection of every person (1 Cor 15.22-23; Rev 1.5). Other Scriptures remove Jesus from the category of CREATED BEINGS (John 1.1, 3; Col 1.16). Even from the category of created beings in the spiritual realm (1.16; Heb 1.7-8). In addition, it is impossible for a created being fully to disclose God, for part of what makes God, God, is His eternal (uncreated) nature. The Jehovah Witnesses have made a big mistake. For in declaring that Jesus is a created being they only have succeeded in lowering the concept of God. For if a created being can be called ‘the very image of God’s substance’ (Heb 1.3), doesn’t that mean that the Father is very close to being a created being Himself? In reference to the creation, Jesus is before it, separate from it, and superior to it” [Mark Dunagan].

Colossians 1.21-23... “...we see a vivid contrast and a vibrant hope. Though these people had once been so vile as to be classed as aliens and enemies of God they now, by obedience to Truth, were reconciled, holy, and without blame. These devoted followers of the Redeemer were continuing in the pursuit of righteousness and were grounded and settled in the highway of holiness. Their light was shining brightly for things divine!” [Ramsey, p. 584].

Colossians 1.27... **CHRIST IN YOU, THE HOPE OF GLORY**—Christ IN YOU the HOPE OF GLORY, is a statement that should challenge every one of us until the day we die or the Lord returns, whichever comes first. The idea of living our lives with such a goal is the challenge Paul presents here. It is that which Paul continually taught wherever he travelled. The way to get Christ IN US is by following His example. We must open up His word and be guided by it. Having Christ in us is the only way that we have the hope of glory.

Colossians 1.28... **WARNING EVERY MAN**—“Paul is zealous lest the false teachers should seduce one single soul of Christ’s people at Colossae. So each individual among them should be zealous for himself and his neighbor. Even one soul is of incalculable value” [JFB].

V. Lessons & Applications.

Colossians 1.4... **SINCE WE HEARD OF YOUR FAITH IN CHRIST JESUS**—“Faith, if it be New Testament faith, faith in Jesus Christ, is a practical thing. It is something that can be manifested (James 2.14-18). It is something that can be heard about by others who live in distant lands (Rom 1.8). You will notice that the faith spoken of is faith in Christ. While faith in Christ includes belief of the teachings of Christ, yet the faith is not belief in the TEACHINGS but in the PERSON who did the teaching. It should be noticed also that Paul combines the two words ‘Christ’ and ‘Jesus’ as the name of the one person who was the object of their faith. Gnostics believed the Christ to be the heavenly being, and Jesus the historical or earthly being; that the Christ came upon Jesus at His baptism and left Him before His death. But Paul says that the faith of the Christian is in the person CHRIST JESUS” [Roy H. Lanier, Sr., *Teacher’s Annual Lesson Commentary*, 1956, pp., 145-46].

Colossians 1.6... **AND KNEW THE GRACE OF GOD IN TRUTH**—“Grace, as used in this passage, has reference to the reception of the gospel that was preached to the brethren at Colosse when they heard, believed, and obeyed the truth. It was in the preaching of the gospel that the Colossians learned of the grace of God. This was the message that was preached to all of the world. As a result, lives were changed. Paul’s prayer here is giving thanks to God through Jesus Christ” [Edward Myers, *Companion*, 1986-1987, p. 286].

Colossians 1.10... BEING FRUITFUL IN EVERY GOOD WORK—“This is one way to walk worthily of the Lord unto all pleasing. The individual is not to be simply a harmless person, doing nobody any injury, but is to be a positive character doing good in every way possible. The one talent man (Mt 25.26ff) was a harmless man so far as we know, but he refused to accept responsibility to do anything for his master. So the apostle suggests here that the individual who is filled with the knowledge of God’s will and walks worthily of the Lord so as to please God will bear fruit in every good work” [Roy H. Lanier, p. 147]. **INCREASING IN THE KNOWLEDGE OF GOD**—“This does not necessarily mean that we are to come to know more and more, although that is a truth, but that is the meaning of the statement in verse nine when Paul prayed that they would be filled with the knowledge of God’s will. But this statement INCREASING IN THE KNOWLEDGE OF GOD places the emphasis on the growth and development of the individual by means of the knowledge of which he is filled. A knowledge of the goodness of God will lead the individual to increase more and more in goodness. A knowledge of the love and patience, and kindness of God will lead the individual to grow and increase in these qualities. And so the apostle is praying that the individual who is already filled with the knowledge of God’s word may be active under the wisdom of that knowledge so as to walk worthily of the Lord and will show this filling of the knowledge by bearing fruit in every good work and by growing in all those qualities which go to make the individual like his Lord” [Roy H. Lanier, Jr., p. 147].

Colossians 1.13... TRANSLATED US INTO THE KINGDOM OF HIS DEAR SON—“The word TRANSLATED is often used in the sense of removing a people from one country to another. In this instance it means that the Colossians had been removed from the kingdom of Satan into the kingdom of Christ by transferring their allegiance from one to the other and by complying with the terms of naturalization necessary in order to become a citizen thereof. These terms were simply the conditions of salvation upon which the Lord adds to His church and saves. Verse 14 says ‘**IN WHOM WE HAVE REDEMPTION THROUGH HIS BLOOD, EVEN THE FORGIVENESS OF SINS.**’ In Christ, and in Him alone, are men redeemed and saved. We are baptized ‘**into Christ**’ (Galatians 3.27; Romans 6.3). Hence, without baptism men cannot have redemption and forgiveness. To be in Christ is to be in His body, but the body is the church (Ephesians 1.22-23). Thus, to be saved one must be in the church. This church is, of course, the church we read about in the New Testament, the one Jesus built and purchased with His own blood (Matthew 16.18; Acts 20.28). This passage establishes beyond doubt the fact that one must be a member of the church to be saved, not just any church, of course, but the church of Christ (Romans 16.16)” [Guy N. Woods, *Companion*, 1994-1995, p. 27].

Colossians 1.15... THE FIRSTBORN OF EVERY CREATURE—“Wuest, in commenting on this relationship says, ‘The word “firstborn” is *prototokos*. The Greek word implied two things, *priority* to all creation and *sovereignty* over all creation. In the first meaning we see the absolute pre-existence of the Logos. Since our Lord existed before all created things, He must be uncreated. Since He is uncreated He is eternal. Since He is eternal, He is God. Since He is God, He cannot be one of the emanations from deity of which the Gnostic speaks, even though He proceeds from God the Father as the Son. In the second meaning we see that He is the natural ruler, the acknowledged Head of God’s household. Thus again, He cannot be one of the emanations from deity in whom the divine essence is present but diffused. He is Lord of creation.’ Wuest renders verse 15 in these words: ‘Who is a derived reproduction and manifestation of the Deity, the

invisible One, the One who has priority to and sovereignty over all creation” [Leslie G. Thomas, *Teacher’s Annual Lesson Commentary*, 1970, p. 104].

Colossians 1.23... IF YE CONTINUE IN THE FAITH GROUNDED AND SETTLED—“God’s purposes for the human race can be realized only through the submission of the human will to the divine will; *which in this age of the world is expressed only through Christ*. The salvation is of the Lord, but man is held responsible for his attitude toward it. God makes the offer of salvation, but man must accept it, if he is to be eternally blessed (cf., Eph 2.8-10)” [Leslie G. Thomas, p. 105].

Colossians 1.27... TO WHOM GOD WOULD MAKE KNOWN WHAT IS THE RICHES OF THE GLORY OF THIS MYSTERY—“A ‘mystery’ is something which has not been made known; and inasmuch as the gospel had only recently been revealed, when Paul wrote the letter we are now considering, it was still spoken of as a mystery. The heretics, as we have already seen, were fond of mysteries, but Paul wanted the Colossian brethren to know that they were the beneficiaries of the greatest mystery of all, namely, **CHRIST IN YOU, THE HOPE OF GLORY**. This is another way of speaking of the mystery of the gospel of Christ. It was a mystery, because it was a hitherto unknown and unrevealed truth, a way of life in Christ which, in previous ages, all the ingenuity of men had never been able to discover (cf., 1 Cor 2.9-10). It was the true way of salvation, in contrast with the spurious speculations of the mystery religions of the world; and, in spite of all of the wisdom and knowledge of men, it is still beyond the comprehension of the human race, except as men are willing to allow the Divine author to teach its truths unto them (cf., Mt 11.25-27; 1 Cor 1.20-25)” [Leslie G. Thomas, p. 106].

VI. Questions.

True or False

01. ____ The hope of these saints came after hearing the truth of the gospel.
02. ____ Epaphras was a faithful minister at Colosse.
03. ____ Jesus is the firstborn from the dead.
04. ____ It is not possible to be moved away from the hope of the gospel.
05. ____ They MYSTERY mentioned in this chapter has now been revealed.

I Found it in Verse(s)

06. ____ Paul speaks of his work of WARNING.
07. ____ The gospel was preached to every creature.
08. ____ Redemption through the blood of Christ.
09. ____ Walking worthy of the Lord.
10. ____ Tells by whose will Paul was an apostle of Jesus Christ

Short Answer

11. What had Paul heard about these saints?

12. Circle the word(s) that most nearly conveys the correct meaning of the words MADE US MEET in verse 12: QUALIFIED, BE INTRODUCED.
13. Circle the word that most nearly conveys the correct meaning of the word TRANSLATED in verse 13: MOVED, RE-WORDED.
14. About what does Paul say "IT PLEASED THE FATHER"?

15. Complete this statement: CHRIST IN YOU...

Each Question is worth 7 Points

My Score is: _____

Answers will be found on next week's handout

VII. Seek-A-Word Puzzle. The words may be backwards, diagonal, upside down, etc. See if you can find them all. The more you use the words of the Bible, the greater blessed you will be! You might be surprised at how much this little exercise will help you retain important truths. THANK YOU for the good effort you are putting forth in Bible study. -DRL

I C G H O P E G B T H R A
 A F I B T O P O J H D O L
 C E V O C W M S A I N T S
 C P E A C E I P P N V H O
 O R I P H R N E L G W A G
 R E C O N C I L E S O N L
 D A J E S U S L A V R K P
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 N H E O W H E R E O F F U
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 A H E A R D F R U I T L V
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ACCORDING	ALSO	BODY	CHRIST	EVERY
FAITH	FATHER	FILL	FRUIT	GIVE
GOSPEL	GRACE	HEARD	HEAVEN	HOPE
JESUS	LORD	LOVE	MADE	MINISTER
PAUL	PEACE	PLEASED	POWER	PRAY
PREACH	RECONCILE	SAINTS	THANKS	THINGS
TRUTH	WHEREOF	WORD		

IX. EXTRA CREDIT FOR “SUPER” Bible Students...

Will you please consider answering these three SIMPLE questions based on the Bible text of this chapter? I will try to make use of your answers. Bring them with you next week. Tear out this last sheet from the Study Guide and be prepared to put it in a basket. I think it will be a great help to all of those in the class if you will do so. Thank you in advance for your marvelous cooperation!

W O R D: What word would you like to know more about in this chapter?

W O N D E R: I wonder what this phrase, verse, or series of verses means...

W I S H: I wish myself—or others whom I know or even don’t know—would understand this fact, principle, or concept from this chapter...