The Book of Colossians

Colossae

The city of Colossae was located in Phrygia in Asia Minor approximately 10 miles southeast of Laodicea (see map). Due to Paul’s comments at Colossians 2:1, regarding the Colossians and Laodiceans not seeing his face, it is concluded that the apostle never actually visited the city. Apparently a church was established in Colossae (cf. Col. 4:12ff) by men such as Timothy and Epaphras (cf. Col. 1:1, 7). Colossians 4:7-9 reveals Philemon and Onesimus to be residents of Colossae as well as Epaphras (Col. 4:12). The city of Colossae was known for its manufacturing of “colossinus,” a wool fabric that was likely purple in color. There is little other details known about Colossae. During the 12th century AD the city dissolved and became a sight of ruins at the hands of the Turks.

Date of the Book of Colossians

There is evidence that the books of Colossians, Philemon, and Ephesians were all carried to their destinations by Tychicus and Onesimus (cf. Eph. 6:21-22; Col. 4:7-8; Philem. 10-12). The book of Philippians was written by Paul and delivered by Epaphroditus around this time too (cf. Phil. 2:25ff). These four epistles are known as Paul’s prison epistles. Paul wrote each one of these letters while in a Roman prison (~ 61-63 AD).

Purpose of Epistle

New converts were made in Colossae and no doubt Laodicea by the work of Epaphras. The problem these new converts faced was casting off their old religious ideology and accepting the gospel message as the ONLY way of life. Asceticism, Judaism, Gnosticism, worship of angels, and human traditions of all sorts were mingled with the gospel message so that truth lost its distinctiveness.
Outline of Colossians

Chapter 1

I. Paul’s Introduction to the Saints (1:1-2):
   A. “Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus through the will of God, and Timothy our brother,” (1:1).
      1. The word “apostle” (apostolos) = “a messenger, ambassador [a diplomatic officer appointed by one government as a representative to others], envoy... a sacred messenger, an Apostle...” (LS 107). The apostles were men appointed by God to represent His law to the people (see study # 1; The Apostles).
      2. Paul’s apostleship was not through the will of man (cf. Gal. 1:1) but through the “will of God” (Eph. 1:1; Col. 1:1). Paul had been hand picked by God to serve as an apostle from the time he was in his mother’s womb (cf. Gal. 1:15). Paul’s assigned objective as an apostle of Jesus Christ was to go unto the Gentiles, kings, and household of Israel to preach the gospel of Jesus Christ (cf. Acts 9:15) (see study # 2; The Apostle Paul).
      3. The fact that some letters of Paul’s begin with a stated fact about his apostleship (Romans; I and II Corinthians; Galatians; Ephesians, Colossians, I and II Timothy, and Titus) and others do not (cf. Philippians, I and II Thessalonians) indicates that this was either an issue with some or a statement that indicated the contents of the letter. There were times in Paul’s life where he found it necessary to defend his apostleship (especially among the Corinthians) (cf. I Cor. 9:1-2; II Cor. 11:4-5; 12:11-13).
      4. Timothy was Paul’s faithful and beloved traveling companion that he had met on his second tour of preaching in Lystra of Galatia (cf. Acts 16:1).
   B. “to the saints and faithful brethren in Christ that are at Colossae: Grace to you and peace from God our Father” (1:2).
      1. Those “in Christ” are those termed “saints and faithful.” To gain Christ is to be found in Him (cf. Phil. 3:8-9). One gets “in Christ” initially through the act of baptism (Gal. 3:27) and remains “in Christ” through faithful obedience to the truth (cf. I Jn. 2:5) (see study # 3; To be “in Christ”).
      2. Paul’s usual desire for those he writes is that “Grace” and “peace from God” would rest upon the souls of the saints. God’s grace is seen in His mercifully forgiving man of their sins (cf. Eph. 1:7) and there by bringing peace between sinful man and their creator.

II. Paul Praises the faith of the Colossians (1:3-8):
   A. “We give thanks to God the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, praying always for you” (1:3).
      1. A well known trait of Paul’s was that he was a praying man (cf. Eph. 1:16ff) (see study # 2).
      2. When Paul states that he “always” prays for the Colossians he meant it. The apostle’s thereby served as our examples in the area of prayer (see study # 4; Bible Authority in Example). Paul commands by inspiration, “Pray without ceasing; in everything give thanks: for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus to you-ward” (I Thess. 5:17-18).
   B. “having heard of your faith in Christ Jesus, and of the love which ye have toward all the saints” (1:4).
      1. Epaphras had communicated with Paul and Timothy regarding the faith of the Colossian brethren (cf. Col. 1:7-8). Paul rejoiced over the fact that he had heard that these brethren exercised Bible love “toward all the saints.”
      2. Though elementary, we must note that brethren did talk about the faithfulness of other brethren without incurring any guilt of sin. Facts were established and thereby communicated (cf. II Cor. 13:1) (see study # 5; Church Autonomy).
   C. “because of the hope which is laid up for you in the heavens, whereof ye heard before in the word of the truth of the gospel, which is come unto you; even as it is also in all the world bearing fruit and increasing, as it doth in you also, since the day ye heard and knew the grace of God in truth” (1:5-6).
      1. Paul knows that the reason for the Colossians great faith and love toward all the saints was their hope that was laid up in heaven. The hope of heaven is the true focal point of every Christian’s...
existence. Paul spoke of heaven as the Christian’s “prize, goal, and place of citizenship” (cf. Phil. 3:14, 20) (see study # 6; The Hope of Heaven).

2. No man knows of the hope of the eternal prize of heaven lest a teacher reveals these truths (the gospel message) (cf. Acts 8:30-31) (see study # 7; Personal Work). Note the equivalence between “truth” and “gospel” (as is pointed out in other passages; cf. Eph. 1:13; Jn. 17:17).

3. The day the Colossians “heard” the truth was the day they “knew the grace of God in truth.” God’s gracious gift to man is the forgiveness of sins (cf. Eph. 1:7). Man can have access to God’s grace (Rom. 5:1-2) through baptism (Acts 2:38) and thereby receive the forgiveness of their sins. The Colossians clearly heard, believed, repented, confessed Christ, baptized into Christ and now attempting to live as God has instructed.

D. “even as ye learned of Epaphras our beloved fellow-servant, who is a faithful minister of Christ on our behalf, who also declared unto us your love in the Spirit” (1:7-8).

1. The Colossians had “learned of Epaphras” what they needed to do to receive the grace of God (i.e., the forgiveness of their sins). The Colossians go down in history as a people of humility and willing to listen to God’s instructions (cf. Isa. 57:15). Though these things are true the church in Collosae was not without troubles as we shall soon see.

2. Jesus said that all such people (learners) will so be saved from the wrath of God against those who are ungodly and know not the truth (Jn. 6:44-45).

III. Paul prayerfully requests 5 things from the Colossians (1:9-12)

A. “For this cause we also, since the day we heard it, do not cease to pray and make request for you, that ye may be filled with the knowledge of his will in all spiritual wisdom and understanding” (1:9).

1. The day that Epaphras told Paul of the Colossians faith was a day that Paul began to pray without ceasing for these new brethren in the faith.

2. The first thing that Paul prayed for regarding these new Christians was that they would “be filled with the knowledge of his will...”

a. Consider the word “filled” (pleroo) = “to make full... to fill full of food... to make full or complete, to be completed” (LS 647). At Colossians 2:10 the Greek pleroo is translated complete.

b. Paul’s prayer is that the Colossians would come to know the gospel message of truth so that they would be thoroughly furnished to make it to heaven (cf. II Tim. 3:16-17).

B. “to walk worthily of the Lord unto all pleasing, bearing fruit in every good work, and increasing in the knowledge of God;” (1:10).

1. The second prayer request on the part of Paul toward the Colossians is that they “walk worthily of the Lord unto all pleasing.” Paul told the Ephesians that they are to “walk worthily of the calling wherewith ye were called” (Eph. 4:1). The word “walk” indicates a manner of life throughout the New Testament (NT). The word “worthily” (axios) = “a thinking worthy, a bring thought worthy, reputation... a demand or claim...” (LS 85). Christ “demands” that His saints would conduct themselves in accordance with truth (cf. Jn. 17:17; I Jn. 2:4ff). Those who meet the demand of Jesus will certainly be “pleasing” unto Him (cf. II Cor. 5:9).

2. Such a faithful and obedient manner of life will cause me to “bear fruit in every good work” (cf. Jn. 15:7-8; Gal. 5:22ff) (see study # 8; God Demands our Obedience).

3. While I am living faithfully I cannot help but “increase in the knowledge of God.”

C. “strengthened with all power, according to the might of his glory, unto all patience and longsuffering with joy;” (1:11).

1. At Ephesians 6:10-12 Paul encourages the Ephesians to “be strong in the Lord, and in the strength of his might.” “According to (this) might of his glory” the Christian is to be “strengthened with power” (Col. 1:11). Paul explains to the Philippians, “I can do all things in him that strengthens me” (Phil. 4:13). Paul further explains this strengthening process through Christ and His power at II Corinthians 12:7-10. Paul prayed to God that a thorn in his flesh may be taken away; however, God rejects the request and thereby helps Paul understand how God’s “power” and “strength” rest upon the Christian. Paul states, “Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my weaknesses, that the power of Christ may rest upon me. Wherefore I take pleasure in weaknesses, in injuries, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses, for Christ’s
sake: for when I am weak, then am I strong” (II Cor. 12:9b). It is during our bleakest moments
in life that we see our greatest need for Jesus and thereby we are at our spiritual strongest
during these times. The third prayer request for the Colossians is that they would be strong in
the Lord by learning to be totally dependant upon His Word.

2. The character trait of patience and longsuffering will be mine during difficult days for I know
that Christ is with me and His reward is mine if I would but with joy endure the present
distress.

D. “giving thanks unto the Father, who made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in
light;” (1:12).
1. The fourth prayer request of Paul for the Colossians is that they be thankful unto the heavenly
Father because of the heavenly home that He has provided for the faithful.

2. Verses 13-14 explain the Christian’s gratitude in relation to the “inheritance of the saints in
light.” The main idea is that God provides the chance to be forgiven of sins and for this we are
indeed thankful to Him.

E. “who delivered us out of the power of darkness, and translated us into the kingdom of the Son of his
love;” (1:13).
1. The antecedent of “who” is the Father of verse 12. The Father “delivers” man out of the power
of darkness. The word “delivers” (errusato / rhoumai) = “to draw to oneself, i.e. draw out of
danger, to rescue, save, deliver... to set free, redeem” (LS 720). Throughout the scriptures
“darkness” (skotia) and “light” are set in contrasts (cf. I Jn. 1:5. “Darkness” = “Moral
darkness” (Moulton 370). “Metaph. Used of ignorance of divine things, and its associated
wickedness, and the resultant misery” (Thayer 580). “Everything that is enmity with God”
(AG 757). Darkness represents the abode of the wicked (Isa. 13:9-11; Amos 5:18-20; Eph.
6:12; Col. 1:13) and the state of the un-repenting (cf. Matt. 6:22-24; Luke 11:34-36; Acts
26:18; Eph. 5:14). The power of sin and darkness is spiritual death (Jn. 8:32; 1 Cor. 15:56).
Light represents the state of God and His throne (Jn. 1:5; I Tim. 6:16); God’s word (Jn. 12:36;
II Cor. 4:3-6), God’s Son (Jn. 9:5); and God’s people (Col. 1:12; I Thess. 5:5).

2. Paul thereby explains that God delivers willing people from spiritual ignorance, moral
depravity, the resultant misery, and from dwelling in the abode of the wicked. God delivers
people from a state of darkness by “translating” them “into the kingdom of the Son of his
love.”

a. The word “translate” (methistemi) = “to change... of persons, to set free from disease... to
change or cease from... of things, to change, alter, sometimes for the better...” (LS 493).
Sin is recognized as a disease that defiles man so that he cannot be in the presence of God
(cf. I Jn. 1:5ff). The barrier in life that comes between man and God is sin (Isa. 59:1-2).
God provides the remedy for a change in man that will remove the disease of sin and cause
him to be acceptable.

b. The gospel message calls men and women out of this state of darkness (cf. II Thess. 2:13-
14; I Pet. 2:23).

c. Paul explains that when one heeds the gospel call that he is now added to the kingdom of
Jesus Christ (i.e. the church) (cf. Acts 2:41-42; I Thess. 2:12).

F. “in whom we have our redemption, the forgiveness of our sins;” (1:14).
1. Paul tells us that it is through Jesus that man receives “the forgiveness of our sins” which is
termed “redemption.” The word “redemption” (apolutrosis) = “a ransoming, redemption by
payment of ransom” (LS 102). “To dismiss for a ransom paid, redemption, a deliverance
procured by the payment of a ransom” (Moulton 45). Note the connection between the
“deliverance” (Col. 1:13), “translation” (Col. 1:13), and “redemption” (Col. 1:14).

2. Note that Paul states in Ephesians 1:7, “in whom we have our redemption through his blood,
the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of his grace,” (1:7). Let’s put Christ’s
sacrifice in perspective. Mankind has the opportunity to receive the forgiveness of their sins
through the blood of Christ that was spilled on the cross (cf. Matt. 26:26-28). Christ’s blood
was the payment for our ‘deliverance’ from the bondage of sin. When Paul spoke to the
Ephesian elders at Miletus he said, “Take heed unto yourselves, and to all the flock, in which
the Holy Spirit hath made you bishops, to feed the church of the Lord which he purchased with
“his own blood” (Acts 20:28). To redeem someone is to pay a price for their deliverance. Christ blood was the price for man’s deliverance from the bondage of sin (see study # 9; Bible Redemption).

3. Note the continuity of God’s word in relation to various doctrines such as redemption. Paul tells us that one’s redemption is equated to the forgiveness of sins and is thereby synonymous with God’s grace. I can clearly see thereby that God’s redemption (His gracious offer to forgive me of sins) is dependant upon my actions (cf. Acts 2:38). The Bible does not leave one in the dark as to how to tap into God’s gracious offer to redeem man of their sins... its through the act of baptism and faithful living (see study # 10; God’s Conditional offer of Salvation).

IV. The Preeminence of Christ (1:15-23):

A. “who is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation;” (1:15).

1. The author of Hebrews speaks of Jesus saying, “Who being the effulgence of his glory, and the very image of his substance, and upholding all things by the word of his power, when he had made purification of sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high” (1:3). The antecedent to “his glory” would be God in this context. Jesus then is the “effulgence” of the glory of God. The word “effulgence” (apaugasma) = “efflux (outward flow) of light” (LS 89). Jesus, as the Son of God, is the glory of God. Light flows outward from Christ. Consider the fact that “God is light” (I Jn. 1:5). Light in the scriptures represents purity, holiness, goodness, justice, righteousness, and a state of sinless perfection (cf. Prov. 6:23; Isa. 5:20; Eph. 5:8ff). This light is transferred to man through the gospel message (II Cor. 4:4-6). If the source of this just light is Jesus it stands that Jesus represents deity (see study # 11; The Deity of Christ).

a. As the source of the glory of God, Jesus is “the very image of his substance” (God). The word “image” (eikon) = “An image in a mirror” (LS 228), “The image corresponding to its original” (AG 222).

b. No wonder Jesus told his disciples that any man that had seen him had seen the Father (Jn. 14:9). The apostle Paul said, “For in him (Christ) dwelleth all the fullness of the Godhead bodily” (Col. 2:9). Jesus was deity (cf. Jn. 1:1ff).

2. Jesus was too the “firstborn of all creation.” Paul is not saying that Christ was a created being (cf. Jn. 1:1, 14; 8:58). Jesus left the glories of heaven to redeem man from their sin (cf. Phil. 2:6ff) and took the form of flesh (cf. Jn. 1:14). When Christ died for the redemption of man’s sins (Matt. 26:26ff) He was raised from the dead and so became the “firstborn of all creation” (cf. I Cor. 15:20-23).

a. Remember that those who are “firstborn” occupy a since of supremacy over others born (this is why Jacob and Esau both desired the blessing of the first born by their father Isaac / cf. Gen. 25:27ff).

b. Jesus is supreme over all others in creation due to the fact that he is the creator of all creation (cf. Jn. 1:3; Heb. 1:1-2).

B. “for in him were all things created, in the heavens and upon the earth, things visible and things invisible, whether thrones or dominions or principalities or powers; all things have been created through him, and unto him;” (1:16).

1. Paul further explains what being the “firstborn of all creation” involves. As the creator, Jesus occupies a place of preeminence among all things created.

2. The Lord’s sovereignty exists not only over the heavenly and earthly elements (cf. Matt. 8:27) but too he is over all governments and powers in the earthly and heavenly spheres. As there are ranks and authority in earthly governments so there are among the angels (cf. Eph. 6:12; Jude 6, 9). The “visible” Christ is over is thereby the physical universe and those invisible things Christ has sovereignty over is things like governmental rule and rank. The visible and invisible things are created by Christ and are subject to Him (cf. Rom. 13:1ff).

C. “and he is before all things, and in him all things consist” (1:17).

1. Jesus is the image of God, creator, and “before all things.” Before all things existed was Christ. Jesus is thereby pre-existent or better worded, eternal in being (cf. Jn. 1:1, 5; 8:58; Rev. 22:13). Though this fact is inferred in the previous two verses it is here clearly confirmed.
2. “In him all things consist.” The word “consist” (sunistao) = “to set together, combine, associate, unite, band together... to put together, organize, frame... to hold together, endure, continue” (LS 777). Consider the fact that the author of Hebrews said that Christ “upholds all things by the word of his power...” (Heb. 1:3). The word, “uphold” (phero) = “to bear, bear along, implying motion... to produce, bring forward, cite... to bring one word, to tell, announce....” (LS 857-858). The words of Jesus represent eternal life and thereby are the essence of power (Jn. 5:24). The power of the spoken word of Christ is seen in that even the elements of creation obey His voice (cf. Matt. 8:26-27).

3. Apparently by the very words of Jesus is not only the physical universe put together and held in place but too the visible and invisible ranks are held together. We know that the Lord simply spoke and the creation came into existence by the power of His great might (cf. Ps. 33:6-8). This verse appears to indicate that Jesus also controls the continuity of all things by His divine words. The church, civil government, and the hierarchy of angels are under consideration. Jesus is over all!

D. “And he is the head of the body, the church: who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead; that in all things he might have the preeminence” (1:18).

1. Jesus is the redeemer of mankind (Col. 1:14), the image of God (Col. 1:15), superior to all other created men and angels (Col. 1:15b), creator of all things (Col. 1:16), eternal (Col. 1:17), and in control of all elements (Col. 1:17). Additionally, Paul states that Jesus is the “head” of the church.

a. Paul makes a similar statement at Ephesians 1:19-23 to illustrate how God’s power operates through Jesus. The power of God is to remove man’s sins and this is made manifest through Jesus. The Greek word kephale (“head”) = “the head of man or beast... the crown” (LS 430), “The head, superior, chief, principal, one to whom others are subordinate” (Moulton 229).

b. Jesus is the superior chief and the one that others are subordinate to in the “church” (ekklesia) = “an assembly of the citizens regularly summoned, the legislative assembly... to call an assembly... an assembly is held... in the NT the church, either the body, or the place. Hence ekklesiazo (to hold an assembly, debate therein, to be a member of the assembly. Hence ekklesiastes (a member of the ekklesia)” (LS 239).

c. Those subordinate to Jesus are those who have been called to His assembly (i.e., the church). The gospel message calls people (II Thess. 2:13-14) out of a world of darkness and into His light (I Pet. 2:9-10) through the gracious offer to forgive man of their sins (Acts 2:38-41).

2. The idea of Jesus being the “beginning” and “the firstborn from the dead” goes hand in hand. Jesus left the glories of heaven to redeem man from their sin (cf. Phil. 2:6ff) and took the form of flesh (cf. Jn. 1:14). When Christ died for the redemption of man’s sins (Matt. 26:26ff) He was raised from the dead and so became the “firstborn of all creation” (cf. I Cor. 15:20-23). Jesus is the first to be resurrected from the dead and to die no more. Jesus is the “beginning” of all those who will be resurrected. This could also involve Christ being the first to raise from the dead to have many others spiritually follow Him (cf. II Cor. 5:16-17).

3. Jesus is head of the church and firstborn among many to come so that he might have the “preeminence” (proteuo) = “to be the first, hold the first place... to be first in a thing” (LS 706-707). “To be first, to hold the first rank or highest dignity, have the pre-eminence, be chief” (Moulton 341). Jesus is not only the source of the physical universe but the spiritual kingdom of God too. As the source of these things he holds the highest dignity and rank in all things that are known to the human mind (see study # 12; The Preeminence of Christ).

E. “For it was the good pleasure of the Father that in him should all the fullness dwell” (1:19).

1. The reason (“For”) Jesus is considered preeminent is because it was the pleasure of the Father that in him should “all the fullness dwell.” The fullness of Christ must take into consideration His preeminent place in the creation of the physical universe, the church, and among physical and spiritual host. Jesus was not just another created being like angels but was rather the source of all creation and man’s eternal salvation. There is none like Him!
2. The word “fullness” (*pleroma*) = “the sum total... fullness, full and perfect nature... a filling up, completing” (LS 647), “Full development, plentitude... Eph. 1:23; 3:19; 4:13; Col. 1:19; 2:9” (Moulton 329). It seems that Paul is saying that if one were to take the existing physical universe, existing authorities in both spirit and physical world, and the church and then summed these things up they would come up with Christ at the apex of their existence. Christ is the creator and originator of all these things for the purpose of saving man from the consequence of their sins (cf. Heb. 1:14).

F. “and through him to reconcile all things unto himself, having made peace through the blood of his cross; through him, I say, whether things upon the earth, or things in the heavens” (1:20).

1. To “reconcile” (*apokatallazai*) = “to reconcile again” (LS 99), “to transfer from a certain state to another which is quite different; hence, to reconcile, restore to favor” (Moulton 43). Not only did it please the Father to sum up all things in Christ (i.e., make him the source and authority over God’s creation, beings, and church) (cf. Col. 1:19) but now we see too that God’s good pleasure was to “reconcile all things unto himself (Jesus).” Man was restored to God’s favor when their sins were removed (the very purpose of the blood of Jesus being spilled on the cross [cf. Matt. 26:26ff]). The author of Hebrews clearly illustrates the role of blood in the remission of sins at Hebrews 9:18-28.

2. The Lord’s reconciliation through His blood is not limited to any one race but rather it is due to “all things... in heaven and on earth...” The meaning of this is not that those who have died may still attain reconciliation to God or that spiritual heavenly beings (angels) need reconciliation but rather it is through the blood of Christ that any and all of creation has ever and ever will attain reconciliation to God. No doubt the verse is difficult yet through time and study a better unveiling of its meaning is sure to come.

G. “And you, being in time past alienated and enemies in your mind in your evil works” (1:21).

1. Paul addresses the Colossian brethren in a personal way so that they gain the application of these verses. Paul pointedly reminds the Colossians that in “time past” they were “alienated and enemies” of Christ and God (the subject of their reconciliation). Before they were reconciled unto God through the blood of Christ their “minds” were bent on “evil works.”

2. Before reconciliation the Colossians were considered enemies of God.

H. “yet now hath he reconciled in the body of his flesh through death, to present you holy and without blemish and unreprovable before him” (1:22).

1. Man’s reconciliation to God was dependant upon the death of Jesus (His blood spilled). Here we see the love of God. Jesus gave up his own life so that sinful man may gain their eternal soul (see study # 13; The Love of God).

2. We now see the cause of reconciliation. Reconciliation has been defined as to “restore to favor.” That which causes man to loose favor with God is obviously sin (cf. Isa. 59:1-2). When the blood of Christ is applied to us we are viewed as “holy” (*hagios*) = “pure” (LS 5), “sanctification, moral purity, pure right, saints” (Moulton 3) and “without blemish and unreprovable before him.” The words “without blemish” (*amomos*) = “blameless” (Moulton 19), “without blame” (LS 50). The word “unreprovable” (*anegkletos*) = “not accused, without reproach, void of offence” (LS 66). These words indicate an individual who has no blame and cannot be accused of any violation in relation to God’s laws. The doctrine of reconciliation is thereby directly connected to the grace of God (Eph. 2:8) in that all men have sinned against God’s laws and are to be blamed and accused (cf. Rom. 3:23). One thereby is reconciled to God when taping into His gracious offer to forgive sins (Eph. 1:7) by the act of baptism (Acts 2:38) (see study # 14; Bible Reconciliation).

I. “if so be that ye continue in the faith, grounded and stedfast, and not moved away from the hope of the gospel which ye heard, which was preached in all creation under heaven; whereof I Paul was made a minister” (1:23).

1. One initially is made holy and without blemish through the act of baptism (Acts 2:38). One continues to remain holy and without blemish by “continuing in the faith.” To “continue” (*epimeno*) = “to stay on, tarry or abide still... to remain in place, continue as they are... to continue in a pursuit... to abide by... to wait” (LS 296). That which the saints of God are to
“abide” in is “the faith.” Paul defines “the faith” at Philippians 1:27 as the “gospel of Christ” (see also Romans 1:5) (see study # 15; The Nature of Truth). Jesus said, “if ye abide in me, and my words abide in you, ask whatsoever ye will, and it shall be done unto you” (Jn. 15:7; see also II Jn. 9). Note that Paul makes the connection between “the faith” and “the gospel” here too.

2. “Continuing in the faith” is equated to being “grounded and steadfast.” To be “grounded” (themelioo) = “to lay the foundation of, found firmly… to have the foundations laid” (LS 361). “To ground, establish, render firm and unwavering…” (Moulton 405). To be “steadfast” (hedraios) = “sitting, sedentary… sitting fast, steady, steadfast” (LS 225). “Sedentary; met. Settled, steady, firm, steadfast, constant” (Moulton 115). The bedrock of man’s faith is Jesus Christ and the gospel message reveals Him to be the redeemer of all mankind (cf. Matt. 16:16ff; Eph. 2:20).

3. Paul uses a third phrase to emphatically impress upon the minds of the Colossians the importance of continuing, being grounded, and steadfast in the faith. This third phrase is to “not be moved away from the hope of the gospel.” Note the equivalence between “the faith” and “the gospel.”

4. Faith in the gospel occurred as the Colossians “heard” the preaching of the message (cf. Rom. 10:17). People hear the gospel from “ministers” (servants) of Jesus and his gospel message.

V. Paul, the Lord’s faithful Servant (1:24-29):

A. “Now I rejoice in my sufferings for your sake, and fill up on my part that which is lacking of the afflictions of Christ in my flesh for his body’s sake, which is the church” (1:24).

1. Paul was the apostle to the Gentiles. His calling to preach the gospel of Jesus Christ was coupled with suffering (cf. Acts 9:15-16). All those who live and preach the gospel will likewise suffer (II Tim. 3:12). The word of God reveals that herein is the appointment of every faithful child of God (I Thess. 3:3). Paul tells the Philippians that said suffering has been “granted” to the Christian (Phil. 1:29). Jesus said it would be so (Jn. 7:7; 15) and that we are so blessed (cf. Matt. 5:10-12) (see study # 16; Bible Persecution). Paul considered this suffering an occasion to “rejoice” seeing that he learned that when he was weak then he was strong in Christ (cf. II Cor. 12:7-10). Paul suffered on behalf of the Colossians and was willing to die for the faith of the Philippians (cf. Phil. 2:17).

2. It seems that Paul’s desire to “fill up… that which is lacking” is in relationship to suffering for the church of Jesus Christ. Paul was willing to suffer anything for any member of the body of Christ. Where there was lacking in the area of suffering he was willing to fill that up himself. Paul had told the Philippians, “Christ shall be magnified in my body, whether by life, or by death” (Phil. 1:20) (see study # 2).

B. “whereof I was made a minister, according to the dispensation of God which was given me to youward, to fulfill the word of God,” (1:25).

1. Paul’s “ministry” is here defined. Paul’s duties as a minister of the gospel of Jesus Christ involved suffering on behalf of other Christians and the church as a whole through preaching.

2. When said preaching occurred so did suffering on the minister’s part. This was Paul’s appointment as a minister of the gospel and he gladly accepted it (cf. Acts 9:15-16; 26:16-18).

C. “even the mystery which hath been hid for ages and generations: but now hath it been manifested to his saints” (1:26).

1. The “word of God” (gospel or the faith) is now termed “the mystery which hath been hid for ages” (see study # 15). Ages and generations passed while God revealed His plan to redeem man from sin in parts and pieces. God had promised Abraham that through his seed all nations would be blessed; however, the patriarch was not given any real details. Enough information was given; however, to give the OT peoples hope (cf. Jn. 8:56). Through time, more and more was given by revelation to the prophets (cf. I Pet. 1:10ff).

2. “Now” the word of God is revealed by His apostles and prophets to the saints (see Eph. 3:1-5) (see study # 17; Revelation of Gospel Message)

D. “to whom God was pleased to make known what is the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles, which is Christ in you, the hope of glory:” (1:27).
1. The loving heavenly Father was “pleased to make known” the gospel message so that man might have the information needful to receive the forgiveness of sins (see the love of God). The gospel message was never intended to be for one race of people alone but to both Jew and Gentile. God loves all.

2. Note that Paul refers to the revelation (i.e., the faith, the gospel, the word of God) as being equated to “Christ in you, the hope of glory.” Clearly when one “hears” the gospel message, as did the Colossians (cf. Col. 1:23), and receives it they have Christ within. The indwelling of Christ is simply the hearing, accepting, believing, and abiding in the truth of the gospel (cf. Gal. 2:20; I Jn. 2:5) (see study # 18; Indwelling of Christ). Jesus is the foundation of the gospel message that Christians are instructed to continue in, remain grounded and steadfast in, and not be moved away from. Christ is not the gospel but rather the emphasis of the gospel. When one receives the gospel they are receiving Christ (the subject of the gospel). Therefore, if I have the gospel within I have Christ within (see study # 15).

E. “whom we proclaim, admonishing every man and teaching every man in all wisdom, that we may present every man perfect in Christ;” (1:28).

1. The connection between Christ and Truth continues. To proclaim Christ is to proclaim truth. Teaching Christ is teaching truth. True wisdom comes from the word of God. Since the word of God reveals Jesus then knowing Jesus is having wisdom.

2. Those who receive the gospel message as it is preached have the opportunity of being “perfect in Christ.” Perfection has various meanings in the word of God. One is seen as perfect if their mind is bent on making it to heaven (Phil. 3:15), gaining spiritual growth (Heb. 6:1), and receiving the forgiveness of sins (Col. 1:28; Heb. 7:18-19; 10:1) (see study # 19; Bible Perfection).

F. “whereunto I labor also, striving according to his working, which works in me mightily” (1:29).

1. Paul was a minister (servant) of Christ to distribute (labor in) the gospel message to build of the saint and convert the sinner.

2. The knowledge of the salvation of man was important to Paul and so he desired to preach it to others in all zeal. The word of God and his labor “works mightily” in Paul.

Synopsis of Chapter 1

The church at Colossae existed due to the preaching and teaching of Epaphras, “a faithful minister of Christ” (Col. 1:7) who was a citizen of the city (Col. 4:12). The apostle Paul had heard of the Colossians faith from Epaphras while in a Roman prison (Col. 1:8). Paul was filled with joy to know that a faithful church had been established in Colossae and so prayed for them regularly (Col. 1:9). Paul prayed for four things on behalf of the Colossian brethren. First, Paul prayed that these brethren would be filled with knowledge, wisdom, and understanding in the word of God (Col. 1:9). Secondly, Paul prayed that they would “walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing...” (Col. 1:10). Thirdly, Paul prayed that the Colossians would be “strengthened with all power” (Col. 1:11). Lastly, Paul prayed that they would be thankful to the heavenly Father for providing His gracious offer of salvation (Col. 1:12).

The Colossian’s and the world’s hope of salvation was made possible by the blood of Jesus Christ (Col. 1:20-22). Jesus is identified as being “preeminent” (i.e., the first in all things). The qualifying factors of the Lord’s preeminence is His being the image of God, firstborn of all creation, creator, being before all things, all things consists through Him, He is the head of the body, the church, and in Him all the fullness dwells (Col. 1:15-19). The redemption of mankind is made possible through the Lord Jesus Christ if the faithful will remain in truth as law abiding citizens of the kingdom of God (Col. 1:13-14, 23).

Paul’s work as an apostle of Jesus Christ was to produce faith and obedience in every soul he preached to (cf. Rom. 1:5). Long ago the gospel message remained a mystery; however, now God’s word has been made manifests to the apostles and prophets that all may receive the gracious promises of God (Col. 1:25-26). Those who receive the teachings of Christ have the indwelling of Christ (Col. 1:27). To have Christ dwell within is simply to hear, receive, study, walk, and obey His truths (cf. Gal. 2:20). Paul took this work serious (Col. 1:29). He was willing to be persecuted and even killed for the sake of teaching others the gospel message (Col. 1:24).
Chapter 2

I. Paul Admonishes the Colossian Brethren to remain Convicted and firm in the Truths they were Taught (2:1-7):

A. “For I would have you know how greatly I strive for you, and for them at Laodicea, and for as many as have not seen my face in the flesh;” (2:1).

1. To “strive” (agon) = “the contest for a prize at the games... to hold or propose a contest; to win one at or one... generally, any struggle, trial, or danger... a struggle for life and death...” (LS 10). Paul was willing to suffer (Col. 1:24) and even die (Phil. 2:17) if so be it meant souls would be saved (see study # 2) (cf. II Tim. 2:10). A great contest for the souls of men is at stake and Paul took his competition (i.e., the devil) very serious (cf. II Cor. 11:3) (see study # 20; The Contest for Souls).

2. Many Christians had never even seen Paul face to face. Physical association with the apostles was not a requirement for one’s salvation. Accepting the truth of the gospel message; however, was a prerequisite for salvation. The apostles wrote epistles and publicly preached the gospel message. Those who received the inspired writings were just as benefited as those who actually heard and saw the apostles and prophets speak. Paul’s “striving” in truth for the sake of men’s souls takes all of us into consideration. We too can read the apostles and prophet’s inspired epistles and gain salvation.

B. “that their hearts may be comforted, they being knit together in love, and unto all riches of the full assurance of understanding, that they may know the mystery of God, even Christ, in whom are all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge hidden” (2:2-3).

1. Paul struggled with the forces of darkness (i.e., the devil / cf. Acts 26:18) that the “hearts (of Christian men and women) may be comforted.” True Christian comfort is found in God’s gift of grace (the forgiveness of our sins) and a hope of heaven (cf. I Thess. 4:13-18; II Thess. 2:16-17 compared to Eph. 1:7; 2:8) (see study # 21; Bible Comfort).

2. God’s grace is revealed in the gospel message (Acts 13:26; Rom. 1:16; Eph. 1:13; II Thess. 2:13; II Tim. 3:15; Titus 2:11-12; Jude 1:3).

3. Paul’s point is that true Christian comfort is found in their hope of salvation that is revealed in truth (i.e., the gospel message).

a. Christian comfort is defined as individuals being “knit together in love” through truth. To be “knit together” (sumbibazo) = “to bring together: to be joined or knit together, framed... to bring together, reconcile... to put together, compare, examine... to teach, instruct” (LS 759). This Greek word is used six times in the NT (see Acts 9:22; 16:10; I Cor. 2:16; Eph. 4:16; Col. 2:2, 19). These verses reveal the word to mean proving a thing, instruction, and bonding together with truth. The unity of the saints in truth will occur when all have a love for truth and each other. The bond or adhesive to unity is my love for fellow Christians as revealed in truth. I will have comfort in my heart when I am at unity in truth with my brethren (see study # 22; Bible Unity).

b. Secondly, comfort in the Christian’s heart is defined as having “full assurance of understanding” in the truth that reveals God’s grace. To be “fully assured” (plerophoria) = “certainty” (LS 647); “full conviction, firm persuasion, assurance” (Moulton 329) (cf. I Thess. 1:5). The Christian’s “understanding” of truth must be convicted, firm, and sure if there is to be comfort. Those who do not understand truth cannot possibly be convicted, firm, and sure about things they are unsure of. Confusion always causes uncertainties and discomfort. Churches that are filled with uncertain people usually have internal unity problems and there is no peace and comfort. This thought necessarily infers that the truth can be understood.

c. Thirdly, knowledge of God’s word will bring comfort to one’s heart (i.e., mind). The “mystery of God” has already been identified as the “word of God” (truth/gospel) at Colossians 1:25-26. True treasures of comfort are found in the gospel message. When I gain wisdom and knowledge I will think more highly of others than my self (Phil. 2:3-4), I will endure suffering at the hands of evil men (Jn. 7:7; Acts 14:22; Phil. 1:29; I Thess. 3:3;
II Tim. 2:12), and my main objective in this life will be to make it to heaven (Phil. 3:12-15). What ever I face in this life I will endure with joy because I know that I can do all things through Him who strengthens me (Phil. 4:13). I know that this world is not my eternal abode but I rather await the great heaven of bliss.

C. “This I say, that no one may delude you with persuasiveness of speech” (2:4).
1. Paul tells the Colossians that true comfort comes from walking in unity among the saints of God, being fully convicted of truth, and having a clear knowledge and understanding of God’s word. The reason Paul reveals these facts about how to obtain Christian comfort is because there are many who are teaching false doctrines that have the capability of destroying said comfort.
2. Paul reveals the identity of comfort to weaken false teacher’s power to remove it from Christians. Paul warns the Colossians to not be “deluded” (paralogizomai) = “in keeping accounts, to misreckon, miscalculate... to cheat out of a thing, to defraud... to mislead by fallacious reasoning, to me misled” (LS 599).
3. Note that “persuasive speech” has the power to “mislead by fallacious reasoning.” What this says is that if I do not have true comfort in unity and knowledge of the one truth of God someone may be able to persuade me to be mislead by erroneous reasoning. Those who are not satisfied with God’s simple instructions are those generally prone to be misled. God’s simple salvation is there but the dissatisfied want something more on this earth. Paul told the Roman brethren, “Now I beseech you, brethren, mark them that are causing the divisions and occasions of stumbling, contrary to the doctrine which ye learned: and turn away from them. For they that are such serve not our Lord Christ, but their own belly; and by their smooth and fair speech they beguile the hearts of the innocent” (Rom. 16:17-18).
4. Note that this is a warning! Those who’s preaching and teaching carry with it no warning leave the people of God vulnerable to delusion (see study # 23; The Work of False Teachers).

D. “For though I am absent in the flesh, yet am I with you in the spirit, joying and beholding your order, and the steadfastness of your faith in Christ” (2:5).
1. Though Paul is not at Colossae personally to experience their “order and steadfastness” he is nonetheless with them “in the spirit.” Paul made a similar statement to the Corinthians regarding his instructions to deal with the unfaithful member of the body of Christ. Paul said, “For I verily, being absent in body but present in spirit, have already as though I were present judged him that hath so wrought this thing...” (I Cor. 5:3). It stands to reason that if Paul was with the Colossians and Corinthians “in spirit” while away from them that they to were with Paul “in spirit” at his location. What this says is that truth truly unites all Christians as one no matter our geographic location. The truth governs all men no matter where they are located. If the gospel of Jesus Christ was the Colossians faith in Colossae as it was for Paul in Rome then judgments remain the same no matter who or where it is being made. The one “spirit” of truth governs all the faithful and so we may say that my spirit is with all other faithful brethren as we continue in the one true gospel (see study # 5).
2. Paul had heard of the Colossians faith by Epaphras (Col. 1:7). No doubt Epaphras told Paul of the Colossians “order” (taxis) = “an arranging... a single rank or line of soldiers... generally, an arrangement, order... metaphorically: the post or position one holds” (LS 792). The “post or position” of the Colossians was faithfulness and so Paul rejoiced over this fact. Paul’s warning at Colossians 2:4 takes into consideration this post (that no man desert his post) (see study # 24; Stand your Post).
3. The Colossians were also “steadfast” (stereoma) = “a solid body, foundation” (LS 745); “what is solid and firm; met. Firmness, steadfastness, constancy” (Moulton 376). When one is fully persuaded of a truth they hold their post with a since of constancy. This defines what conviction is (see study # 25; Developing Conviction).

E. “As therefore ye received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk in him” (2:6).
1. Receiving Christ and the Holy Spirit is equivalent to having heard, believed, and walking by the truths of the gospel (cf. Gal. 3:2).
II. Paul warns the Colossian Brethren (2:8-15):

A. “Take heed lest there shall be any one that maketh spoil of you through his philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ” (2:8).

1. The idea of “take heed” (blepo) = “to see, have the power of sight... to look... to beware of” (LS 152). Paul warns the Colossian brethren that if they do not stay focused on the doctrine of Christ and fixed firmly in truth they risk having someone “make spoil of you...” (sulagoge) = “to carry off as booty, lead captive” (LS 757) (see study # 27; Bible Warnings).

2. At Colossians 2:4 Paul states that said carrying away can take place by another’s “persuasive speech” and now calls this persuasive speech a “philosophy and vain deceit.” “Philosophy” (philosophia) = “love of knowledge and wisdom, pursuit thereof, speculation, study... the systematic treatment of a subject, investigation... philosophy, the investigation fo truth and nature” (LS 865). Individuals are not “carried off as booty” by “investigation and knowledge” of the gospel truths. Apparently this philosophy had to do with “speculations” and “vain” (worthless) “deceit” (apate) = “a trick, fraud, deceit, guile, ... a stratagem” (LS 89).

B. “For in him dwelleth all the fullness of the Godhead bodily, and in him ye are made full, who is the head of all principality and power” (2:9-10).

1. Let us note a few things about Christ in the context of this letter. First, note that Paul associates the “word of God” with “the mystery,” “which is Christ in you, the hope of glory” (1:25-27; 2:2). The “faith in Christ” at 2:5 is thereby belief of the truths regarding Jesus. The Colossian Christian had Christ within them which is the “word of God.” Christ is thereby metonymically associated with the “word of God.” Jesus tells us that the word of God is “truth” at John 17:17 and Paul tells us that “truth” is the “gospel” at Ephesians 1:13. Such a connection finds the

F. “Rooted and built up in him, and established in your faith, even as ye were taught, abounding in thanksgiving” (2:7).

1. Again, to be “in him (Christ)” is equivalent to following God’s instructions (cf. I Jn. 2:5). That which I am to be “rooted and built up” in is the gospel message. To be “rooted” (rhizoo) = “root in the ground... firmly fixed” (LS 718). The Christian is to be firmly fixed in his faith (see study # 26; Spiritual Growth).

2. To be “built up” (epoikodomeo) = “to build up... to build upon... to rebuild” (LS 308). The Greek word epoikodomeo is present tense indicating ongoing action (cf. Friberg 614). The idea is therefore to be firmly fixed on the foundation of truth and to continue to build upon that foundation not with one’s own ideas but with divine revelation.

3. While fixing one’s self firmly upon the foundation of truth they are never to forget to give God thanks for His spiritual blessings of life (cf. Col. 1:12).
Christian walking in Christ by following His teachings (Col. 2:6). The name of “Christ” is used by metonymy for the truths of the gospel again at 2:8. “Christ” is compared to “the rudiments of the world” (see study # 15).

2. The statement, “in him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily” must thereby take into consideration the truth or gospel message.

a. The word “fulness” (pleroma) was defined at Colossians 1:19 as “the sum total... fulness, full and perfect nature... a filling up, completing” (LS 647), “Full development, plenitude... Eph. 1:23; 3:19; 4:13; Col. 1:19; 2:9” (Moulton 329).

b. Let us note the use of the Greek pleroma as it is associated with Christ in the NT. At John 1:16 pleroma is associated with Christ and His grace (i.e., the forgiveness of sins). Paul uses the Greek pleroma in association with Christ three times in Ephesians. Paul associates Christ with pleroma at Ephesians 1:23 in connection with the church and the Lord’s authority over all existing entities. At Ephesians 3:19 Paul associates the pleroma of Christ with individual Christians having “Christ dwell in your hearts through faith...” (Eph. 3:17). Lastly, Paul compares the mature completed Christian (made so by knowledge of the gospel message) with the “fullness of Christ” at Ephesians 4:13.

c. The “fullness of Christ” is thereby equated to “a filling up” of truth and a life directed by the authority of Christ and His teachings. To be filled with truth is to have Christ within because Christ stands in metonymy to truth (cf. Gal. 2:20).

d. The NT proves that Christ’s fullness is a filling up of truth. Jesus represents truth. Now Paul terms this fullness of Christ “the Godhead bodily.” The “Godhead bodily” is now connected with the fullness of Christ and thereby stands in metonymy of truth as well. The “Godhead” is found 5 times in the NT (i.e., Acts 17:29; Rom. 1:20; Col. 2:9; II Pet. 1:3, 4). The word “Godhead” (theios) = “divine, pertaining to God; the divine nature, divinity, deity, godhead, divine majesty” (Moulton 193). The scriptures reveal three divine beings that clearly make up the divine nature of God. Those three are the Father (Jn. 5:18), the Son (Jn. 5:20), and the Holy Spirit (Acts 5:3-4). Paul clearly states that all three are in complete unity and agreement as they equally stand in metonymy to truth (see study # 28; The Godhead).

3. Paul brings his audience to draw a conclusion. To have the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit dwell within is simply to be filled with the truth, gospel, word of God, or the faith. The indwelling of the Godhead is a life that is governed by the authority of Jesus Christ. These ideas are what is intended when one is “made full” in Christ.

4. The warning verses of verse 4 and 8 are meant to secure the Colossians (and all else) in the one truth that is in Christ. Teachings that do not represent truth naturally are not representative of the Godhead.

C. “in whom ye were also circumcised with a circumcision not made with hands, in the putting off of the body of the flesh, in the circumcision of Christ” (2:11).

1. Paul defines this “circumcision not made with hands” at Romans 2:28-29 saying, “neither is that circumcision which is outward in the flesh: but he is a Jew who is one inwardly; and circumcision is that of the heart, in the spirit not in the letter; whose praise is not of men, but of God.” The idea of circumcising the heart is to cut away the propensity to sin. This has ever been God’s request for His people (cf. Lev. 26:41; Deut. 10:16; Jer. 4:4; 9:26; Ezek. 44:7). When one is circumcised in the “circumcision of Christ” he or she purposes in the heart not to sin. This is often times referred to as repentance. When I repent of a wrong doing I am purposing in my heart not to do that sin again.

2. Contextually, the word of God reveals sin to me and thereby causes me to shun evil. Those acts or teachings that do not represent the truth should be cut out of my heart.

D. “having been buried with him in baptism, wherein ye were also raised with him through faith in the working of God, who raised him from the dead” (2:12).

1. Note the association between repentance (circumcising the heart / purposing not to sin) and “baptism.” One cannot be moved to be separate from sin without being baptized (cf. Acts 2:38).
2. The baptismal burial is depicted as a dying to sin at Romans 6:1ff. When raised out of the watery grave of baptism the soul is clean of sin and filled with purpose to not sin again (see study # 28; Baptism). The word of God defines sin as any act or teaching that violates the law of Christ (cf. I Jn. 3:4; II Jn. 9-10).

3. “Faith in the working of God” is none other than one’s conviction that God’s gracious offer to forgive man of their sins is real (cf. Eph. 3:7).

4. Paul is calling upon the Colossians to take note of the fact that their faith cannot be moved into another religious realm by false teachers that do not represent Christ and His teachings.

E. “And you, being dead through your trespasses and the un-circumcision of your flesh, you, I say, did he make alive together with him, having forgiven us all our trespasses;” (2:13).

1. The fact that Paul speaks of dead men being made alive helps us understand that the subject is the condition of the soul. One is spiritually dead while walking in sin and spiritually alive when in Christ (cf. Eph. 2:1ff).

2. When did the spiritually dead man receive the forgiveness of their sins? The answer is when said individual was made alive in Christ. When is an individual made alive in Christ? Paul tells us it is when one is baptized (Rom. 6:3, 8, 11).

3. Now we clearly see the purpose of baptism. Baptism is for the remission of sins (cf. Acts 2:38; 22:16; Col. 2:13) (see study # 28).

F. “having blotted out the bond written in ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us: and he hath taken it out of the way, nailing it to the cross;” (2:14).

1. The apostle Paul connected the Jew and Gentile together through the law of Christ and the abolishment of the Law of Moses at Ephesians 2:11-16. When the Jew sinned against the Mosaic Law in any form he or she was “cursed” (cf. Gal. 3:10) because there was no forgiveness found in the Mosaic Law (cf. Heb. 7:18-19; 10:1-4). The Gentile was excluded from the Law of Moses (cf. Rom. 3:1-2). Both Jew and Gentile were without true hope apart from Jesus Christ.

2. The Law of Moses was against man because it demanded perfection of life with no forgiveness for the one who failed (Gal. 3:10) and all did fail (Rom. 3:23).

3. Paul clearly tells us that at the point of Jesus Christ being crucified the Law of Moses was “taken out of the way” in that Jesus “nailed it to the cross.” The death of Christ thereby brought an end to the Law of Moses and the beginnings of the law of liberty and life (cf. Jer. 31:31ff).

4. Therefore Judaizing teachers who taught that a man must keep the Mosaic Law along with the Law of Christ were to be shunned and exposed as false teachers (cf. Acts 15:1ff).

G. “having despoiled the principalities and the powers, he made a show of them openly, triumphing over them in it” (2:15).

1. To “despoil” (apekduomai) = “to strip off oneself, to put off, as in preparing for single combat... to strip off for oneself, to despoil [to deprive of possessions or property by force; plunder]” (LS 91). When Christ was crucified on the cross he stripped “principalities and powers” of their ability to keep man in sin (see study # 29; The Work of Jesus).

2. Interestingly, Paul’s defense before king Agrippa, Festus, and Bernice reveals the principalities and powers that have the capacity to ruin men’s lives in sin to be that of the devil. Paul reveals his commission from Jesus saying that Jesus would “deliver thee from the people, and from the Gentiles, unto whom I send thee, to open their eyes, that they may turn from darkness to light and from the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive remission of sins and an inheritance among them that are sanctified by faith in me” (Acts 26:17-18).

3. Christ was triumphant over the devil and his demonic angels (cf. Matt. 25:41; Eph. 6:10-12; II Pet. 2:4; Jude 6 etc.). Their power was spiritual death; however, at the cross Christ stripped them of this power having nailed the Law of Moses to the cross and thereby afforded mankind to have the forgiveness of their sins (spiritual life).

III. Specific erroneous Practices in Colossae (2:16-23):

A. “Let no man therefore judge you in meat, or in drink, or in respect of a feast day or a new moon or a Sabbath day;” (2:16).
1. The judgment spoken of here would be a condemning judgment. Paul has explained that the Mosaic Law has been nailed to the cross and thereby no longer binding. Under the Mosaic Law the Jews were under strict dietary laws, they kept set feast through out the year, and set aside the Sabbath day as the holy day of convocation. These ordinances were “against and contrary to us...” (Col. 2:14) because not one sin could be forgiven by following such a law.

2. Why would Paul mention this to the Colossians? No doubt, the Colossians had false teachers in Colossae that were teaching that a man must be circumcised and keep the Mosaic Law if he or she expected to be saved (cf. Acts 15:1ff).

3. This is an interesting issue. We recall that Paul had instructed the Romans regarding matters of indifference at Romans 14. If a man wanted to continue to keep dietary laws as a matter of conscience and set aside days of worship all was well as long as this individual did not bind their conscientious decisions on others. The moment one begins to bind matters of indifference on others is the moment one teaches a false doctrine (cf. I Cor. 7:19; Gal. 2:3-5) (see study # 30; Making a Distinction between Matters of Faith and Indifference).

B. “which are a shadow of the things to come; but the body is Christ’s” (2:17).

1. The word “shadow” (skia) = “a shadow, like the shadow that is one’s double... the shade of one who is dead, a phantom” (LS 733). “A shadow, a shadowing forth, adumbration {to give a sketchy outline of... to prefigure indistinctly; foreshadow... to disclose partially or guardedly” (AHD 81)” (Moulton 369).

2. At Hebrews 8:5 the exact Greek word is used to illustrate the difference between the Mosaic System and the Law of Christ in relation to forgiving sins. The clear inference at Hebrews 8:5 is that it was God’s plan, even when giving Moses the Law on Sinai, to eventually replace the imperfect shadow with the perfect original (Jesus). To continue following a plan that God limited in its work was to fail in receiving the wonderful promises that God has ever intended for His people to have (i.e., forgiveness of sins and a heavenly home in full fellowship with Him). Therefore, those who would put their hope in the Mosaic tabernacle were placing their hope only in a ‘proposed imitation or shadow’ of the original (heavenly tabernacle).

3. “But the body is Christ’s.” The word “body” (soma) = “a body, i.e. any material substance... the whole body or mass of a thing” (LS 788). Clearly Paul is contrasting the immaterial shadow of the Mosaic Law to the ‘material substance’ of Christ. Jesus is not an imitation, shadow or sketch; He is the real thing that the Law of Moses pointed to.

C. “Let no man rob you of your prize by a voluntary humility and worshipping of the angels, dwelling in the things which he hath seen, vainly puffed up by his fleshly mind,” (2:18).

1. The “prize” of the Christian is the “high calling of God in Christ Jesus” (Phil. 3:14) which is defined as “citizenship in heaven” (Phil. 3:20). The English words “rob you of your prize” is all one word in Greek (katabrabeuo) = “to give judgment against one” (LS 404).

2. The saint of God is not to allow another to pass a condemning judgment in the name of “humility” and the “worship of angels.” “Humility” (tapeinoprosune) = “lowliness, humility” (LS 792). Note that the false teacher’s humility or lowliness of spirit is “voluntary or a wishing to do.” The word “voluntary” (thelo) = “a willing, will” (LS 361). These false teachers were conscientiously lowly in their adherence to various dietary laws, keeping of holy days, and now we find the “worship of angels.”

a. When the devil tempted Jesus to worship him, Jesus replied, “Get thee hence, Satan: for it is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve” (Matt. 4:10). The doctrine of Satan is to worship anything including God. Said service would recognize other things as worthy of worship and so cause a man to be eternally lost. Salvation comes through God alone!

b. These statements help us to see what was going on in Colossae. Men and women were practicing various erroneous religious methods that had no power to save them. Said practices were false Judaism, humility, and some even elevated and worshipped angels. Nowhere in the word of God do we find authority to worship said things (see study # 31; Bible Worship).
4. The individual who worships erroneously and attempts to convert you to their ways is one who “dwell in the things which he has seen, vainly puffed up by his fleshly mind.”
   a. Paul does not mean to say that these false teachers have actually seen angels and thereby concluded that they should worship them (if they had seen true angels the angel would instruct them not to worship them cf. Rev. 19:10).
   b. The “things which he has seen” thereby are the delusions of man’s “fleshly mind.” Paul thereby told the Corinthians that we “walk by faith, not by sight” (II Cor. 5:7). Again, Paul states, “For our glorying is this, the testimony of our conscience, that in holiness and sincerity of God, not in fleshly wisdom but in the grace of God, we behaved ourselves in the world, and more abundantly to you-ward” (II Cor. 1:12).
   c. The imaginations of man (i.e., his I think so(s)) are of complete and utter uselessness when it comes to true worship to God. Jesus said, “But the hour comes, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and truth: for such doth the Father seek to be his worshippers. God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship in spirit and truth” (Jn. 4:23-24).
   d. So Paul continues the contrast between the doctrine of Christ (as it relates to worship) and the doctrines or precepts of men (cf. Col. 2:8).

D. “and not holding fast the head, from whom all the body, being supplied and knit together through the joints and bands, increaseth with the increase of God” (2:19).
   1. “Not holding fast” (krateo) = “to be strong, mighty, powerful... to rule, hold sway, be sovereign... to conquer, prevail, get the upper hand... to conquer, master, outdo, surpass... to become master of, get possession of... to seize, hold fast” (LS 448). The idea of seizing, possessing, and holding fast to the “head” (Eph. 1:22; 5:23) is to “gain Christ” (cf. Phil. 3:8-11). Those who practice Judaism, angelic worship, or any other form of false worship have not and are currently not seizing possession of Christ. Said individuals are out to satisfy their own wants and desires (Phil. 2:3) (see study # 32; Respecting Bible Authority).
   2. The name of Christ (the head of the church) carries with it the authoritative teachings of divine revelation (cf. Col. 1:25-27, 2:2, 8). When one is in Christ such a one is filled with the knowledge of the gospel message (Gal. 2:20; Col. 1:27). With the words of Christ dwelling within the child of God there is great increase.

E. “If ye died with Christ from the rudiments of the world, why, as though living in the world, do ye subject yourselves to ordinances,” (2:20).
   1. When does one “die with Christ?” Again, this occurs at baptism when I conscientiously put away sin out of my life. The Christian dies to the desires of the flesh when raised in newness of life in Christ Jesus (cf. Rom. 6:1ff). Note again Paul associates the “rudiments of the world” with living in sin and thereby contrast it with the teachings of Jesus Christ that leads to righteousness and spiritual life (cf. Col. 2:8).
   2. Paul thereby asks the rhetorical question: If you were baptized for the remission of sins and purpose not to sin any longer, “why, as though living in the world, do ye subject yourselves to ordinances?” What ordinances is Paul speaking of? Clearly it is the ordinances of the world (i.e., the rudiments of the world that stand in contrast and opposition to the truths of divine revelation delivered by Jesus, the apostles, and prophets).
   3. Paul is accusing some of the Colossian Christians of living and enjoying sin. Sometimes it takes others to convict of sin (Eph. 5:11) because the individual’s spiritual knowledge is so weak that it neither accuses or excuses (cf. Rom. 2:15) (see study #; The Christian’s Responsibility to Expose Sin).
   4. Some of the Colossians had not learned to put their faith in Jesus Christ alone.

F. “Handle not, nor taste, nor touch (all which things are to perish with the using), after the precepts and doctrines of men?” (2:21-22).
   1. Paul now gives an example of the fleshly wisdom, rudiments of the world, precepts and doctrines of men. The example is ascetic in nature; i.e., “A person who renounces the comforts of society and leads a life of austere self-discipline, esp. as an act of religious devotion... Pertaining to or characteristic of an ascetic; self-denying” (AHD 132).
2. Apparently Paul has in mind individuals who are seeking their salvation through these modes of worshipping. Said individual has clearly reached an erroneous conclusion and remains condemned as long as they are without Christ.

G. “Which things have indeed a show of wisdom in will-worship, and humility, and severity to the body; but are not of any value against the indulgence of the flesh” (2:23).

1. If the standard by which one is judged is the rudiments of the world or the precepts and doctrines of men then the ascetic one is indeed wise by his standards. Unfortunately for those of the world the Word of God is the standard by which all men are to be judged (see study # 15).

2. The term “will-worship” is now added to the list of contradictory teachings of men. The word “will-worship” (ethelothreskeia) = “self-devised worship, supererogatory (to do more than is required, ordered, or expected) worship, will-worship” (Moulton 115). It is “will-worship” because it is done by the will of man rather than the will of God (see study # 31).

3. Paul’s point is that no matter how much unauthorized worship, no matter how humble one may be, and no matter how severe one is to his body by withholding self from the comforts of life there remains the desires of the flesh. Works of self imposed regulations will not save one from the consequences of sin.

Synopsis of Chapter 2

A contrast between “Christ” (Col. 2:8) and the “rudiments of the world” (Col. 2:8, 20), “philosophy” (Col. 2:8), “tradition of men” (Col. 2:8), “the precepts and doctrines of men” (Col. 2:22), and the “fleshy mind” (Col. 2:18) is continued in Colossians chapter 2. The name of Christ stands in metonymy to the word of God in chapter two as it did in chapter one. When Paul uses the name of Christ in these chapters we see that he intends for us to understand that he is speaking about truth, the gospel, or the word of God (cf. Col. 1:25-27; 2:2, 5, 8).

Christians are to occupy an “order” (post or position) in relation to truth (i.e., “faith in Christ”) (cf. Col. 2:5). Paul warns the Colossians that certain false teachers have the capacity to lead astray from one’s post or position in truth saying, “This I say, that no one may delude you with persuasiveness of speech” (Col. 2:4; cf. 2:8 too). Christ alone (His sacrifice and teaching) provides the ability for sinful man to be “forgiven of all our trespasses” (Col. 2:13). Paul’s conclusion is that Mosaic Law keeping (Col. 2:16), willful humility or severity to the body (a form of asceticism) (Col. 2:18, 23), worshipping of angels (Col. 2:18), and will-worship (Col. 2:23) will help no one to heaven. The Colossians were not to allow those who hold to these positions to sway them from that firm post or position in Christ Jesus.

Chapter 3

I. The Christian’s Spiritual Priority (3:1-4):

A. “If then ye were raised together with Christ, seek the things that are above, where Christ is, seated on the right hand of God” (3:1).


2. Paul is speaking to Christians who have been buried and raised with Christ through baptism (cf. Col. 2:12). Admonitions to “seek the things that are above” must thereby take into consideration the gospel message. The gospel reveals the means by which man is saved from the consequences of sin. Christ is in the “above” place (i.e., realm of the eternally spiritually alive) (cf. Acts 1:9).

3. The objective of every Christian thereby should be to “seek” such an eternal abode through truth. To “seek” (zeteo) = “to search after… strive for… to endeavor…” (Moulton 182). My objective, as a Christian, should be to search after the things of Christ that will enable me to spend eternity in heaven (see study # 34; Bible Study).

B. “Set your mind on the things that are above, not on the things that are upon the earth” (3:2).
1. Again, the contrast between Christ and the world’s fleshly teaching continues. Here, Paul compares the teachings of Christ (i.e., “things that are above”) with “the things that are upon the earth” (i.e., the rudiments of the world / cf. Col. 2:8, 20, 22). Paul reveals that the Mosaic Law cannot save one from sins at Romans 3-4 and here affirms that the teachings of the world in spiritual matters can save no one from the consequences of sin (see study # 15).

2. Christians are to “set your mind” (phroneo) = “to think, to have understanding, to be sage, wise, prudent… to be minded in a certain way, to mean, intend, purpose… to have a thing in one’s mind, mind, take heed to a thing” (LS 872).

3. The Christian is to thereby “seek” (i.e., search after and strive for) and “set their minds” (i.e., to be minded a certain way, to have a thing in one’s mind) in Christ (i.e., the gospel truth). Let us all be on guard against perversions and pollutions that corrupt the word of God (cf. II Cor. 2:17) (see study # 34).

C. “For ye died, and your life is hid with Christ in God” (3:3).

1. The dieing of self is purposing within not to sin any longer. Paul said, “even so reckon ye also yourselves to be dead unto sin, but alive unto God in Christ Jesus” (Rom. 6:11) (see study # 35; Bible Repentance).

2. The Christian died to the religious errors of the world when introduced to truth and obeying that truth in baptism. My relationship to sin is compared to a death. I die to sin when I reject it totally (read Rom. 6:1-6). The one who conscientiously seeks and sets his mind on truth will have a life “hid with Christ in God” (i.e., there will be a beautiful spiritual fellowship that exist between the Christian and Christ because they share the same love for truth and hatred for sin) (cf. Gal. 2:20; Phil. 1:21).

D. “When Christ, who is our life, shall be manifested, then shall ye also with him be manifested in glory” (3:4).

1. Those who seek and set their minds in truth opposing sin and the lust thereof will be “with him in glory.”

2. When Christ comes again in glory to take home the saints to heaven we shall be as He (cf. I Jn. 3:2) (see study # 36; The Glorified Saint).

II. Paul calls upon Christians to put Sin out of their Lives (3:5-11):

A. “Put to death therefore your members which are upon the earth: fornication, uncleanness, passion, evil desire, and covetousness, which is idolatry;” (3:5).

1. If dieing to sin is equated to life in Christ then the Christian is to “put to death” sinful things and desires.

2. Paul gives a list of sinful activities:

   a. “Fornication” (porneia) = “fornication; prostitution” (LS 662; Moulton 337). “Sexual intercourse between a man and woman not married to each other” (AHD 526).

   b. “Uncleanness” (akatharsia) = “impure” (LS 25). “Uncleanness; lewdness (preoccupied with sex and sexual desire; lustful... obscene; indecent... wicked [AHD 726]); impurity of motive” (Moulton 11).

   c. “Passion” (pathos) = “anything that befalls one, an incident, accident… of the soul, a passion, emotion, such as love, hate, etc.” (LS 584).

   d. “Evil desire” (kakos) = “bad, mean, ugly… base, in a moral sense, bad, evil, wicked” (LS 394).

   e. “Covetousness” (pleonexia) = “the character and conduct of greed, grasping, assumption, arrogance… gain advantage, with a view to one’s own advantage… larger share of a thing…” (LS 645).

3. Paul terms the fulfillment of all evil desires “idolatry” (eidololatreia) = “Idolatry” (LS 227). The root word (eido) is defined as “to see, perceive, behold… to look at… to see mentally… visible” (LS 226-227). The apostle Paul tells the Corinthians, “for we walk by faith, not by sight” (II Cor. 5:7). The word “sight” (eidos) is “that which is seen, form, shape, figure” (LS 226). It is used in other passages of the NT. The apostle John said, “My little children, guard yourselves from idols” (5:21) (see study # 37; NT Idolatry).
a. The word “idols” (eidolon) is from the root word *eido* and Latin *Video*. It is defined as “a form, shape, figure; image or statue; hence, an idol, image of a god” (Moulton 117). The act of worshipping an image based upon human perception is idolatry. The Christian does not worship based upon “sight (eido)” but upon “faith” (divine revelation). Many today are looking for a feel-good, see-something religion. The word of God, however, is a system of instructions for Godly living (II Cor. 4:18). Those who reject the teachings of Christ and use their own human perception are practicing idolatry. Humanism is therefore idolatry defined.

b. Idolatry comes in a variety of forms other than worshipping false gods. One may exclaim with vigor that he would not participate in idolatry yet have no problem with worshiping God in unauthorized ways. Consider Isaiah 46:12 in its context of idolatry. Those idolaters of Judah were “stouthearted, that are far from righteousness.” I Samuel 15:23 states the nature of idolatry as well. “For rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft, and stubbornness is as idolatry and teraphim. Because thou has rejected the word of Jehovah, he hath also rejected thee from being king.” The rebellious are stouthearted and stubborn as is evidenced by their rejection of the authority of God. Saul did what he thought was best rather than what God commanded, and so it was with Judah in the days of Isaiah. Many today want to do what they think best rather than following God’s divine standard. Children’s church, theatrics, food fest, lock-ins, and games, to name a few, are ways some churches are attempting to raise attendance.

B. “for which thing’s sake comes the wrath of God upon the sons of disobedience” (3:6).
1. God is certainly a God of peace (cf. Phil. 3:9), love (I Jn. 4:8), and patience (Rom. 15:5); however, His patience eventually runs out (cf. Rom. 2:5ff).
2. God’s wrath will be poured out upon the “sons of disobedience.” Paul defined these “sons” at Ephesians 2:2 and 5:6 as those who are guided by fleshly wisdom and are easily led astray by the doctrines of men. These sons are due God’s wrath while the “sons of God” are “heirs according to promise” (Gal. 3:26-29).

C. “Wherein ye also once walked, when ye lived in these things;” (3:7).
1. At one time the Colossians “walked” by the rudiments of the world and “lived” in sin. Paul said the same of the Ephesians, “And you did he make alive, when ye were dead through your trespasses and sins, wherein ye once walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the powers of the air, of the spirit that now works in the sons of disobedience” (Eph. 2:1-2).
2. After listing a group of terrible sins against God and explaining that those who practice such things will not inherit the kingdom of God, Paul tells the Corinthians, “And such were some of you: but ye were washed, but ye were sanctified, but ye were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, and in the Spirit of our God” (I Cor. 6:11).
3. All of us at one time governed by a law of the flesh (seeking to gratify self desires in all areas of life). We changed due to hearing, believing, confessing Christ, repenting of sins, being baptized, and faithful living.

D. “But now do ye also put them all away: anger, wrath, malice, railing, shameful speaking out of your mouth:” (3:8).
1. “Anger” (*orge*) = “mental bent, impulse; anger, indignation, wrath” (Moulton 291).
2. “Wrath” (*thumos*) = “the heart as the seat of anger” (LS 371).
3. “Malice” (*kakia*) = “badness in quality… defects… cowardice, sloth… moral badness, wickedness, vice” (LS 393).
5. “Shameful speaking” (*aischrologia*) = “
6. Said activity is to be “put them all away” (*apotithemi*) = “to lay off, lay down or aside, as garments… metaphorically to lay aside, put off, renounce” (Moulton 48).

E. “lie not one to another; seeing that ye have put off the old man with his doings, an have put on the new man, that is being renewed unto knowledge after the image of him that created him:” (3:9-10).
1. The Lord reveals His passionate hatred for liars throughout the scriptures (cf. I Jn. 2:4). Man is not to lie to God or to his fellow man. The purpose of a lie is to lead someone in a different direction than truth. The people of God should be honest and true with all.

2. Lying, bad language, anger, and general wicked behavior are practices to be renounced by the Christian. Said wickedness belongs to the old man of sin (i.e., one’s former manner of life as guided by the flesh) (cf. Rom. 6:6; Eph. 4:22).

3. The “new man” is to be put on like a garment. Paul tells the Galatian Christians that when they were baptized into Christ they put on Christ (Gal. 3:27). The putting off of sinful ways and putting on of truthful ways is termed a “renewal” (cf. Eph. 4:23) (anakainoo) = “renew, restore” (LS 56).

4. Paul said, “For whom he foreknew, he also foreordained to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren:” (Rom. 8:29). The Christian’s “knowledge” is moved from a state of the “fleshly mind” (Col. 2:18) to “Christ” (Col. 2:8). Paul defined this earlier as being “translated” (Col. 1:13)

5. These verses indicate a life of purpose. I purpose to put off the old man of sin, I purpose to change through repentance, I purpose to let the word of God govern my life. I am now a man of purpose in Christ Jesus.

F. “Where there cannot be Greek and Jew, circumcision and un-circumcision, barbarian, Scythian, bondman, freeman: but Christ is all, and in all” (3:11).

1. Said state of renewed mind places one on an equal plain with all others who have so done.

2. One’s race, circumcision, education, language spoke, state of freedom or slave does not add or take away from the hope of heaven. All those who are in Christ Jesus are one no matter these things (cf. Gal. 3:28-29).

3. What is a “Scythian?” The word “Scythian” (Skuthes) = “a Scythian, a native of Scythia, the modern Mongolia and Tartary” (Moulton 370). “A Scythian: proverb., ‘skuthon eremia’ (i.e., Scythian place of solitude or desert) as we might say ‘the desert of Africa… at Athens, a policeman, one of the city-guard, which was mostly composed of Scythian slaves” (LS 735).

III. Paul calls upon the Colossian Christians to live by the authority of Jesus Christ (3:12-17):

A. “Put on therefore, as God’s elect, holy and beloved, a heart of compassion, kindness, lowliness, meekness, longsuffering” (3:12).

1. First Paul list earthly or worldly things that must be put out of the Christian’s life at Colossians 3:5-11 and now he tells them what they must “put on.” Note that Christians are considered “God’s elect.” The word “elect” (eklektos) = “picked out, select” (LS 240). Who are God’s “select and picked out” people? The apostle Peter states, “But ye are an elect race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for God’s own possession, that ye may show forth the excellencies of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light:” (I Pet. 2:9). The elect of God are thereby those who have been called out of darkness to light. Note that Paul tells the Thessalonians that it is the gospel that does such calling to any and all who would obey (cf. II Thess. 2:13-14) (see study # 38; The Elect of God).

2. Paul’s address to the Colossians as “holy and beloved” seems to demand the attributes.

3. The phrase “put on” (enduo) = “metaphorically to put on, assume the person of” (LS 261). The character the Colossians were to “assume” was:
   a. “A heart” (splanchnon) = “the chief intestines, viscera; the entrails, bowels… metaphorically the heart, the affections of the heart, the tender affections” (Moulton 373). “Of compassion” (oiktirmos) = “to compassionate, have compassion on, exercise grace or favor toward… kindness, in relieving sorrow and want” (Moulton 285).
   b. “Kindness” (chrestotes) = “goodness, kindness, gentleness” (Moulton 438).
   c. “Lownliness” (tapeinophrosune) = “humble minded… lownliness or humility of mind and deportment, modesty” (Moulton 397).
   d. “Meekness” (praotes) = “mildness, gentleness” (LS 667)... “mild, gentle, kind” (Moulton 339).
e. “Longsuffering” (makrothumia) = “longsuffering, forbearance” (LS 485). “Patience; patient enduring of evil, fortitude… slowness of avenging injuries, long-suffering, forbearance, clemency” (Moulton 256).

B. “forbearing one another, and forgiving each other, if any man have a complaint against any; even as the Lord forgave you, so also do ye:” (3:13).
1. “Forbearing” (anechomai) = “to hold back, to hold on, keep doing, to cease from suffering, get rest from pain” (LS 69). It seems that the idea is to bear with people… hold back outburst of anger, retaliation, or wrath.
2. Christians are to “forgive each other” as one requests. When we are wronged it would be easy to hold a grudge against the one who wronged us yet such a spirit is not the mark of a Christian. No matter what the crime against us, if one asks our forgiveness may the Lord grant us a forgiving spirit to forgive. Paul reminds us… “even as the Lord forgave you.” Those who need and request the forgiveness of God by the blood of Christ expect to receive that upon repentance and prayer (cf. Acts 8:22). Going further back Christians were baptized for the purpose of receiving the remission of their sins (Acts 2:38). Though we expect God to forgive us there are times when we are slow to forgive others (see study # 39; Forgiving and being Forgiven).

C. “and above all these things put on love, which is the bond of perfectness” (3:14).
1. That virtue of character among Christians that sits atop of all is love. Love takes into consideration self (Eph. 5:28-29; Rom. 13:9), other’s spiritual welfare (Rom. 12:9; I Jn. 4:8-11), and others physical well being (Rom. 13:10; I Jn. 3:16-17) (see study # 40; Bible Love).
2. Having such a care and concern for my soul and the soul of others is “the bond of perfectness.”
   a. A “bond” (sundesmos) = “a bond of union, bond, fastening… metaphorically, the bond that keeps the state together” (LS 770).
   b. “Perfectness” (teleiotes) = “of persons: absolute, complete, accomplished, perfect in his or its kind” (LS 797).
   c. Paul used this idea at Philippians 3:13-15 to describe the mindset of a man or woman who’s bent it is to make it to heaven. Heaven is the prime objective of the one who is perfect (see study # 19). Said individual not only wants heaven for self but for all others. This mind is a mind of Bible love and so sits at the top of all Christian virtues because all else grows out of this love.

D. “And let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to the which also ye were called in one body: and be ye thankful” (3:15).
1. Paul had earlier spoke of Jesus saying, “and through him to reconcile all things unto himself, having made peace through the blood of his cross; through him, I say, whether things upon the earth, or things in the heavens” (Col. 1:20). Sin was the very thing that separated man from God. Jesus’ propitiation and blood enabled mankind to have the forgiveness of sins, reconciliation with God, and thereby peace. Said peace should cause the hearts of Christians to be content in all areas of life. When I am scornfully treated, sad, hungry, lonely, and in despair I can find comfort in the peace that is offered through the blood of Jesus Christ (see study # 21).
2. The gospel of Jesus Christ “calls” individuals to take part in reconciliation and peace through the blood of Christ (II Thess. 2:13-14). When a man or woman obeys that call they are added to the “one body” that is, the church of Jesus Christ (cf. Eph. 1:22-23; 4:4) (see study # 41; The Church).

E. “Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly; in all wisdom teaching and admonishing one another with psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts unto God” (3:16).
1. There was a deluge of “philosophy, traditions of men, rudiments of the world, fleshly minds, and precepts and doctrines of men” (Col. 2:8, 18, 20, 22) that was being taught in Colossae. Paul calls upon the Christians to make a distinction between the doctrines of men and “the word of Christ.”
a. The “word of Christ” in context must be equated with the “things that are above” (Col. 3:2), teachings of “Christ” (Col. 2:8), the “mystery” (Col. 1:26), and “the word of God” (Col. 1:25) (see study # 15).

b. When the word of Christ is dwelling in me then I have “Christ in you, the hope of glory” (Col. 2:27). The indwelling of Christ is simply a mind that is filled with the fullness of the gospel of Jesus Christ (see study # 18).

2. I am not to seal up my knowledge of Christ but rather “teach and admonish” others not only in preaching but in song. Paul made a very similar statement in Ephesians 5:19 saying, “speaking one to another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody with your heart to the Lord” (5:19) (see study # 42; Are Musical Instruments Authorized in NT Worship?).

   a. The word “speaking” (lalountes) = “to talk, chat, prattle, babble... generally, to talk, say... to speak” (LS 463). The Greek lalountes is a verb in the present tense and active (Friberg 598). The command is to therefore continue to actively speak to each other in the various songs mentioned below.

   b. The words “one to another” is translated “yourselves” by NM 771. The Greek word is eautois = “of himself, herself, itself...” (LS 219).

   c. The Christian is to speak to others in “psalms” (psalmos) = “a twitching or twanging with the fingers, of a bow... mostly of musical strings: to sound of the harp... later, a song sung to the harp, a psalm” (LS 900). “Impulse, touch, of the chords of a stringed instrument; in NT a sacred song, psalm” (Moulton 441). This word is found at I Corinthians 14:26 in relation to the first day of the week worship service (see study # 43; NT Worship). Interestingly, the Greek Septuigent translates the Hebrew word mizmor to the Greek psalmos and is the title for the Book of Psalms “meaning either ‘song’ or ‘instrumental music.’”

   d. Christians are to speak to each other in “hymns” (humnos) as well. Humnos = “a hymn, festive song or ode, in praise of gods or heroes” (LS 829). “A song; a hymn, song of praise to God” (Moulton 413). “Christian hymns are reflexive and expressive of gratitude to God for all that He has done for the world’s reconciliation.”

   e. Christians are to speak to each other in “spiritual songs” (pneumatikos odes) = “of spirit, spiritual” (LS 649). Odes = “a song, lay, ode, lyric poetry... song, singing” (LS 904). “An ode (a poem intended to be sung by a chorus at a public festival or as part of a drama), song, hymn” (Moulton 443). Once again, the Greek word odes is a noun (Friberg 598). The “thing” under consideration is the song or ode.

3. The command is to speak to one another in one of three kinds of songs (i.e., a psalm, hymn, or song (ode). The Christian is to speak to other Christians by these songs. The inference as to the understandable nature, teaching, and admonishing qualities of these songs can be seen by looking to Colossians 3:16 recorded above.

4. The Christian is to speak to others through these three modes of songs by means of “singing” (ado) = “to sing... then of any sound, to twang, of the bowstring... to whistle... to sing, chant...

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songs to be sung... to sing, praise” (LS 14). The Greek word *ado* is a verb in the active voice and present tense (same as my “*speaking*”) (Friberg 598). At this point, we see that the Christian’s speaking to others in understandable words for teaching and admonishing through songs is to be done by actively singing one of three types of songs (i.e., a psalm, hymn, or ode). I am to speak by singing these types of songs by “making melody in my heart to the Lord.” The word “*melody*” (*psallo*) = “to touch sharply, to pluck, pull, twitch... to twang the bow-string, to send a shaft twanging from the bow... a carpenter’s red line, which is twitched and then suddenly let go, so as to leave a mark... to play a stringed instrument with the fingers, not with the plectron... to sing to a harp, sing” (LS 899). “To move by a touch, to twitch; to touch, strike the strings or chords of an instrument; to play on a stringed instrument; to sing to music; in NT to sing praises” (Moulton 441). Again, this Greek word is a present tense active verb just as the word “*speaking*” and “*singing*” above are (Friberg 598).

a. Note the connection between *psalamos* (psalms) and *psallo* (melody). Both of these words have to do with plucking strings and singing. Whether that plucking be a musical instrument, carpenters red line, or singing songs the words have to do with plucking strings. As noted above the psalms, hymns, and odes may be sung with the instrument or voice. So the Greek word *psallo* (melody) can mean to play the instrument or use the voice to sing. The “*melody*” of one of the three types of songs is accomplished by either singing or playing an instrument.

b. The question to answer is whether or not singing in worship is to be done with the voice alone, singing with an instrument alone, or singing with the instrument and voice. Paul tells us that it is the strings of the “*heart*” (i.e., the mind, will, and spirit of man) that is under consideration. The plucking of the strings is done “with the heart (mind).” A physical instrument is not under discussion here. The only instrument that we are commanded to sing with is the heart. I can only sing songs of psalms, hymns, or odes with the heart using my voice.

F. “And whatsoever ye do, in word or in deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him” (3:17).

1. Paul has warned the Colossians against false teachings of men (Col. 2:4,8, 18, 20). He has challenged the Colossians to live a life of purpose found in Jesus Christ (3:1ff). He has commanded that brethren put to death sin (Col. 3:5) and put on virtues of love (Col. 3:12ff). Paul now commands that Christians do all things (whether by word or deeds) “*in the name of the Lord Jesus*.”

2. The words, in “*the name*” (*onoma*) = “the name of the author of a commission, delegated authority, or religious profession” (Moulton 289). To perform words or deeds in another’s name is to work by their authority or permission. Jesus used the Greek word *onoma* at Matthew 7:21-23; 10:21-22; 12:21; 18:5, 20; 19:29; 21:9; 28:19-20 etc. to indicate His divinely appointed authority.

3. Let us examine any one of the above verses in light of Colossians 2:8. Jesus said, “And ye shall be hated of all men for my name’s sake: but he that endurs to the end, the same shall be saved” (Matt. 10:22). Why would the Lord’s disciples be hated for His “name’s sake?” They would be hated for no other reason than what Christ’s name represented. Jesus taught the “gospel of the kingdom” (Matt. 4:23) and this teaching irritated the Jews (cf. Jn. 8:31ff). We thereby mention Colossians 2:8 because this verse helps us understand the relationship between Jesus’ teachings and His name. Therefore to speak or perform deeds in the name of Christ is to do so by His authoritative teachings.

4. Finally, one may recall that when Goliath was challenging the armies of God and no one would stand up to him there was a young man named David that did. David came to the giant and professed, “Thou comest to me with a sword, and with a spear, and with a javelin: but I come to thee in the name of Jehovah of hosts, the God of the armies of Israel, whom thou hast defiled...” (1 Sam. 17:45). David was a representative of God in this battle and represented righteousness, holiness, and spirituality. When the one who represents righteousness wins the battle then “all the earth may know that there is a God in Israel and that all this assembly may
know that Jehovah saves not with sword and spear: for the battle is Jehovah’s, and he will give you into our hand” (I Sam. 17:46-47). David was thereby a representative, envoy, delegate, and ambassador of God. This is what the apostles of Jesus Christ were; i.e., ambassadors of Jesus Christ (cf. Eph. 6:20).

5. The apostles were men sent out into the world to teach in the name of Christ (Acts 5:40; 9:27; 16:18). Note that the word apostle means “ambassador” (cf. LS 107); i.e., “an authorized messenger or representative… a diplomatic official of the highest rank appointed and accredited as representative in residence by one government to another” (AHD 100). The apostles were thereby men sent by God to represent the teachings of Jesus Christ in this world. Those who received the authorized teachings of Christ were baptized into His name (Acts 2:38) and are bound by duty to continue in His authorized teachings (cf. Col. 1:22-23). Colossians 3:17 stands at the forefront of any debate that calls for man to perform deeds of obedience that evidence their great faith in Jesus Christ (cf. Heb. 11:1ff) (see study # 4).

IV. Various Duties and Roles in the Home (3:18-21):
A. “Wives, be in subjection to your husbands, as is fitting in the Lord” (3:18).
1. The idea of wives in submission to their husbands was an important Bible doctrine else the Holy Spirit would not have spoke so often through the apostle Paul and others (I Cor. 11:3; Eph. 5:22; Col. 3:18; 1 Tim. 2:11; 1 Pet. 3:1, 5) (see study # 43; Bible Homes).
2. The word “subjection” (hupotasso) = “To place or arrange under… to post under, to subject… to be obedient” (LS 848). Moulton defines the word hupotasso as, “To place or arrange under; to subordinate” (419). By the authority of God we find that it is the woman’s place to be “under… subject… obedient… subordinate” to the husband in the home. Said instruction gives order to the home. There is one in charge and that is the man. The man’s role in the home is to be “head” (cf. Eph. 5:23).
3. Note that Paul says such relationship is “fitting” (aneko) = “what is fit and proper” (LS 69). That which is “fit and proper” is found “in the Lord.” The phrase, “in the Lord” can mean nothing more or less than actions done in accordance with the teachings of Christ or by the authority of Christ.
B. “Husbands, love your wives, and be not bitter against them” (3:19).
1. Paul had told the Ephesians, “Husbands love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself up for it” (Eph. 5:25). While the wife is commanded to submit herself to her husband’s headship in the home the husband is commanded to “love” his wife. The word “love” (agapao) means “to treat with affection, to caress, love be fond of…. To be well pleased or contented at or with a thing” (LS 4). The husband thereby is to be content with his wife and not look to other women. Solomon wrote, “Let thy fountain be blessed; and rejoice in the wife of thy youth. As a loving hind and a pleasant doe, Let her breasts satisfy thee at all times; and be thou ravished always with her love” (Prov. 5:18-19). The husband will thereby love his wife and care for her emotional (I Pet. 3:7), spiritual (Eph. 5:2), and physical (I Jn. 3:17-18; James 2:15-16) well being (see study # 40).
2. Secondly, husbands are not to be “bitter” against their wives. The word “bitter” (pikraino) = “metaphorically… to be exasperated, foster bitter feelings” (LS 639). Let not the husband allow this emotional response to his wife and let not the wife contribute to such a disposition. How can such a state come into being?
   a. Wife has a continual angry disposition and does not appear to be happy with the man she married.
   b. Husband is easily irritated by little things the wife does (leaves lights on throughout the house etc.).
   c. Hearts filled with pride are likely to not to apologize when an apology is really needed. Both man and wife are going to be the guilty party at times during arguments. The guilty must swallow their pride and admit their mistake to keep the marriage healthy.
   d. The husband and wife, with a healthy (i.e., godly) relationship, will have “fights” yet it is the couple that is driven with a godly purpose that come through better after each conflict. Conflicts can strengthen a couple and they can (in the case of the immature) destroy. Make
sure you make up quickly after an argument and learn from the ordeal. Gain a greater
incite into your spouses likes, dislikes, and hot buttons.

e. Those who enter into marriage with a godly purpose are ready to work out any problem
that comes their way. Divorce is not in their vocabulary and is never an option. Those
who do not share this purpose; however, will allow themselves to become bitter against
their spouse and eventually the bitterness comes to a point of no return (i.e., bitterness
moves to hatred and hatred to all out rejection of the mate). May the married never let it be
so (cf. Matt. 19:1ff).

C. “Children, obey your parents in all things, for this is well-pleasing in the Lord” (3:20).

1. Paul tells the Ephesians, “Children, obey your parents in the Lord: for this is right” (Eph. 6:1).
The command to obey parents is a commandment to children which infers that children are
reading and knowing God’s Word. Let us as parents encourage them to read their Bibles.

a. “Children” (teknon) = “the young” (LS 797).

b. The young are to obey their parents “in the Lord.” Doing something “in the Lord” is
equated to doing something that is “right” as opposed to wrong (Prov. 1:8-9; 6:20-22 etc.).

2. When the Child obeys his parents “in all things” he or she is acting in a well pleasing manner
“in the Lord.” At Colossians 3:18 we are told, “Wives, be in subjection to your husbands, as is
fitting in the Lord.” Again at I Thess. 3:8 we are told, “for now we live, if ye stand fast in the
Lord.” John writes, “And I heard a voice from heaven saying, Write, Blessed are the dead who
die in the Lord from henceforth:” (Rev. 14:13). The phrase “in the Lord,” as used in these
verses, indicates one’s willingness to obey God’s instructions; i.e., live faithfully to all God’s
commandments.

3. There are other usages of the phrase “in the Lord” in the NT such as indicating spiritual
fellowship with God (I Cor. 9:2; Php. 1:14; Plm. 1:16), receiving another due to their being “in
the Lord” (i.e., a faithful Christian) (Rom. 16:2, 8, 11, 22; I Cor. 16:19; Php. 2:29), and
speaking by the authority of Christ (Acts 14:3; Eph. 4:17). Other uses of the phrase, “in the
Lord” include spiritual labor (Rom. 16:12; I Cor. 9:2; 15:58; Eph. 6:21; Col. 4:7), having
spiritual understanding (Eph. 5:8), having one over you in spiritual matters (i.e., elders) (I
Thess. 5:12), being faithful (I Cor. 4:17), called (I Cor. 7:22), and married (I Cor. 7:39). Out of
all the usages of the phrase, “in the Lord” it seems apparent that the thrust of the concept is that
an individual is being compliant with the instructions of God (truth or gospel) (see study # Are
you, “In the Lord?”).

4. These thoughts help us conclude that being “well-pleasing” in the Lord is equated to that which
is “right” (Eph. 6:1).

D. “Fathers, provoke not your children, that they be not discouraged” (3:21).

1. Again, the apostle Paul states, “And, ye fathers, provoke not your children to wrath: but nurture
them in the chastening and admonition of the Lord” (Ephesians 6:4). To “provoke” (parorgizo) = “to provoke to anger, irritate, exasperate” (Moulton 310). Here in the book of Colossians
Paul admonishes fathers not to “discourage” the children. To “discourage” (athumeo) = “to be
disheartened, lose heart at or for a thing…” (LS 18). The father who irritates, exasperates, and
provokes his child to anger will have a discouraged child; i.e., one who is disheartened.

2. Rather than exasperating our children with unreasonable demands that only discourage them
we fathers are to “nurture” the child. The word “nurture” (paideia) = “the rearing of a child...
training and teaching, education” (LS 584). The father is commanded to teach, train, and
educate his child in the Lord’s teachings (i.e., truth).

V. The Master and Servant Relationship (3:22-4:1):

A. “Servants, obey in all things them that are your masters according to the flesh; not with eye-service,
as men-pleasers, but in singleness of heart, fearing the Lord” (3:22).

1. Paul tells the Ephesians, “Servants, be obedient unto them that according to the flesh are your
masters, with fear and trembling, in singleness of your heart, as unto Christ” (6:5). A
“servant” (doulos) = “a born bondman or slave, opp. To one made a slave; then, generally, a
bondman, slave” (LS 210).
2. To the surprise of many the only slavery that the NT condemns is slavery to sin (cf. Jn. 8:31ff). NT does not state that being a master over another (slave) is sinful. To the contrary, Paul simply gives regulations to both slave and master that they both may be pleasing to the Lord. One such NT example is the relationship between Philemon (the master) and his slave (Onesimus) (cf. book of Philemon). Before escaping from Philemon, Onesimus was a “do nothing” slave (cf. Philemon 1:10-11). Paul sent Onesimus back to Philemon a changed man; i.e., not only did he obey the gospel but he was now profitable to Philemon. Clearly, having obeyed the gospel did not change the fact that Onesimus was a slave that belonged to Philemon.

3. During the NT days there were those of means who had slaves (such as Philemon). Paul gives instructions to both these classes as to how they are to walk in love toward each other. The servant was to be obedient to the master in comparison to being obedient to Christ’s laws or teachings.

4. This is not a call to return slavery to areas of the world that no longer participate in slavery it is simply rules to govern those in said situation. Neither is this verse a call to abolish slavery but rather simple regulations that when followed all may be pleasing to the Lord. There are principles laid down in these verses, as well as Ephesians 6, that may be applied to modern day work environments.

5. This verse gets to the attitude of the servant while working for his master. The servant is to work hard “not with eyeservice” (ophthalmodouleia) = “service rendered only while under inspection” (Moulton 296). Such service would be to conduct oneself as a “men-pleaser” (anthropareskos) = “desirous of pleasing men” (Moulton 30). The slave that rendered services to the master only when he was looking was working only to please men rather than God. The slave that works when the master is looking and when he is not works to please God. Honesty of work and a solid work ethic is God’s desire for His people (cf. II Thess. 3:7-13) (see study # 45; Bible Work Ethic).

3. The servant ought to follow the master’s instructions as though he were following the Lord’s instructions. Such labor will thereby be in “singleness of heart” rather than because someone is looking. Sometimes we say that one’s heart is not in their work... If I view my work as following out the instructions of God my heart will always be in my work. Such a relationship between the slave and master is authorized by God due to the servant’s duties being performed in “the fear of the Lord.”

C. “Whatsoever ye do, work heartily, as unto the Lord, and not unto men: knowing that from the Lord ye shall receive the recompense of the inheritance: ye serve the Lord Christ” (3:23-24).

1. The servant’s attitude while working is under consideration. The slave is not to work only when the master is looking and slouch at all other times because God would not have him do so. The Christian is to have a work ethic that takes into consideration the fact that God desires that we work rather than hide and try to get out of doing things (see study # 45).

2. Such a work ethic is termed working “heartily” (psuche) = “breath, sign of life... of things dear as life... with all the heart” (LS 903). Have you ever seen someone or been someone who was assigned a job that they really didn’t have interest in? They may do the work but it is not something they are excited about... they seem to have no sign of life while working... it seems to take every ounce of energy to perform a given task. A supervisor may have to ride such an individual continuously to get the job done. Note that the true Christian ought not find themselves with such a lazy heart.

   a. Herein is the reason young people ought to seek out a career that they are interested in doing rather than being forced into labor that they do not care for.

   b. Those who attend college and learn a specific discipline are likely to enjoy their work like more than those who simply float through life with no goals (see study # 45).

3. Such a work ethic is defined as working “with good will” (eunoia) = “good-will, favor, kindness... out of kindness or good-will... feelings of kindness” (LS 329) at Ephesians 6:7. According to this definition it would be unkind and not of good will to work in a lazy, hiding, or slothful kind of way. When I work hard as though I were obeying Jesus’ commandments then I am being kind to my master (or employer). The same principle certainly applies to
today’s work ethic. There are business owners and there are employees. The employee should work hard at all times knowing that his labor is as unto the Lord and that in doing so he is being kind to the employer (a character trait that God so desires in His people).

4. The servant’s work takes into consideration duty and obligation to the Lord rather than an employer or supervisor. Said Christian works hard not to please the boss man but to please the Lord (see study # 45).

D. “For he that doeth wrong shall receive again for the wrong that he hath done: and there is no respect of persons” (3:25).

1. What is it that measures right or wrong? Is it not the word of God? If one does “wrong” they have violated the law of Jesus Christ, faith, liberty, etc. The consequence of un-repented of sins is the wrath of God (cf. Rom. 2:4-5; 6:23).

2. Whether Jew or Gentile, rich or poor, and male or female all stand before God on equal footing when it comes to giving account of the deeds done in the body (cf. Acts 10:34; Eph. 6:9 etc.).

E. “Masters, render unto your servants that which is just and equal; knowing that ye also have a Master in heaven” (4:1).

1. The apostle Paul told the Ephesians, “And, ye masters, do the same things unto them, and forbear threatening: knowing that he who is both their Master and yours is in heaven, and there is no respect of persons with him” (6:9). The master/employer has commandments to follow as do the servant/employee in the working arrangement.

2. As the servant is commanded to be kind and fair to the master even so the master is to be kind and fair to the servant. Cheating one of a day’s wages or exercising partiality toward others due to gender or race would be sinful.

3. Note that God is no respecter of persons and thereby we are not to be (cf. Acts 10:34; James 2:1, 9). The master must keep in mind that Christians are on equal footing in the spiritual realm of the kingdom of God (cf. Gal. 3:28).

Synopsis of chapter 3

The apostle Paul reminds the Colossian Christians who they are in chapter three. They had died to the old man of sin and are now alive in Christ (Col. 3:3). This being the case, they needed to “put to death” sinful passions of the flesh (Col. 3:5ff). Furthermore, the Colossians are encouraged to put on the “new man” (Col. 3:10) which is further identified at Colossians 3:12ff. Every word or action of the Christian is to be dictated by the authority of Christ (Col. 3:17). The Christian’s life is found not only in the church and home but in the work place as well (cf. Col. 3:18 – 4:1). In all aspects of life the Christian is to be Godly.

Chapter 4

I. Admonitions to live Godly (4:2-6):

A. “Continue steadfastly in prayer, watching therein with thanksgiving;” (4:2)

1. To “continue steadfastly” (proskartereo) = “to persist obstinately in… to adhere firmly to a man, be faithful to him” (LS 692). The Christian is to persistently adhere to God in prayer (cf. I Thess. 5:17). We pray to God on behalf of ours and other’s health, emotional wellbeing, sustenance, shelter, spirituality, forgiveness and so forth (see study # 46; Prayer).

2. The object of prayer is to “watch” (“to lie awake, be wakeful, to pass a sleepless night… metaphor. To be watchful” (LS 9)) and be “thankful.” Christians are observant of their surroundings. Prayer will help one maintain truth as opposed to being lead astray in error. Prayer will cause one to observe the blessings of life and be thankful to God through whom all blessings flow.

B. “Withal praying for us also, that God may open unto us a door for the word, to speak the mystery of Christ, for which I am also in bonds; that I may make it manifest, as I ought to speak” (4:3-4).

1. Paul had made a similar statement to the Ephesians (Eph. 6:18-20) and Corinthians (I Cor. 16:9).
2. Paul’s desire for the Christian brethren is that they would remember him in their prayers as he goes about preaching and teaching the gospel message.

3. Note that “the word” is equated to “the mystery of Christ” and at Colossians 1:25-27 is identified as the “word of God.”

4. Like many of us, we know what we should say to the lost; however, we don’t always do so. Paul asks the Colossians to pray that he would boldly speak the things he “ought to speak” for the sake of man’s soul (see study # 7).

C. “Walk in wisdom toward them that are without, redeeming the time” (4:5).
   1. The idea of a “walk” is identified as a peculiar way of acting in the NT as identified by truth (cf. Eph. 4:1f). The Christian should conduct himself in “wisdom toward them that are without.” Who are those that are “without?” To be “without” (exo) = “outer, external, foreign; met. Not belonging to one’s community... those who are without the Christian community” (Moulton 148). Clearly those “without” are individuals who are not Christians (cf. I Cor. 5:12-13; I Tim. 3:7).

   2. Why would I need to conduct myself in wisdom when around non-Christians?
      a. First, note that we are never commanded to avoid or ignore those in the world else how would we ever teach or influence them to do good (cf. Matt. 28:19-20; I Cor. 5:9-11).
      b. I should be careful not to let them influence me to do evil (I Cor. 15:33; Phil. 3:17-18).
      c. I should be careful not to allow their doctrines to pollute me (Col. 2:8).
      d. I should take care to present the truth to them with a spirit of boldness (Eph. 6:18-20).

3. My manner of conduct around those of the world is to take into consideration the passing of time. Let us not waist time having a good time with the world with no teaching but rather let us help them out of their plight of sinfulness. We are to redeem the precious time that we have with them (see study # 7).

D. “Let your speech be always with grace, seasoned with salt, that ye may know how ye ought to answer each one” (4:6).
   1. What is “grace?” Many will rightly answer, “Grace is unmerited favor.” By the rich favor of God man is saved from the consequences of his sin (cf. Eph. 1:7). Bible grace is directly associated with the law of Christ throughout the NT. Grace is the process whereby man is justified of sins (cf. Rom. 5:1-2). Man is justified when righteous and righteous when obedient to the truth (cf. Rom. 6:16-18). I aver that God’s “grace” is God’s way of saving man and is revealed to man through divine revelation. Paul told Titus, “For the grace of God hath appeared, bringing salvation to all men, instructing us, to the intent that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly and righteously and godly in this present world” (Titus 2:11-12). If grace instructs it must be a form of teaching (cf. Rom. 6:17, Col. 2:8; II Jn. 9). Paul is thereby saying that the Christian’s speech is to always be filled with truth (the grace of God; cf. Rom. 1:16-18) (see study # 15).

   2. A speech that is conducted in accordance with God’s grace is “seasoned with salt” (i.e., receptive for its good taste).

   3. A speech that is conducted in accordance with God’s grace comes from a mind that “knows how to answer each person.” Without God’s grace, I cannot know what to teach others regarding spiritual salvation (cf. I Pet. 3:15ff).
      a. The man who tempts me to do evil will be given a Bible answer.
      b. The man who teaches me false doctrine is rejected and exposed.
      c. The world can expect me to love it with a Bible love. I will thereby expose their dark deeds (Eph. 5:11) and never give place to their false doctrines (II Jn. 9-11).

II. Final instructions to the Colossians (4:7-18):
   A. “All my affairs shall Tychicus make known unto you, the beloved brother and faithful minister and fellow-servant in the Lord: whom I have sent unto you for this very purpose, that ye may know our state, and that he may comfort your hearts; together with Onesimus, the faithful and beloved brother, who is one of you. They shall make known unto you all things that are done here” (4:7-9).
   1. As stated in the introduction of these notes, there is evidence that the books of Colossians, Philemon, and Ephesians were all carried to their destinations by Tychicus and Onesimus (cf.
Eph. 6:21-22; Col. 4:7-8; Philem. 10-12). Tychicus is mentioned in Acts 20:1ff as being one of the traveling companions of the apostle Paul. He is mentioned again at Titus 3:12 and II Tim. 4:12 as being associated with Paul. Here, Paul refers to him as “the beloved brother and faithful minister and fellow-servant in the Lord.” Tychicus was thereby a man involved in the preaching and teaching of the gospel of Jesus Christ. He, along with Onesimus, was given the responsibility to carry this letter to the Colossians. In addition to giving the Colossians this epistle, the two men were to inform all of Paul’s condition and progress in Rome.

2. The book of Philemon reveals Onesimus to be an escaped slave that belonged to Philemon. While away from his master, Onesimus meets Paul and is baptized. Apparently Onesimus is from Colossae and is now coming home with this letter.

B. “Aristarchus my fellow-prisoner saluteth you, and Mark, the cousin of Barnabas (touching whom ye received commandments; if he come unto you, receive him)” (4:10).

1. Aristarchus was a man from Thessalonica of Macedonia (cf. Acts 19:29; 27:2). Aristarchus accompanied Paul during his third and fourth tours of preaching (cf. Acts 20:4; 27:2). During Paul’s fourth tour he has been placed in prison and apparently Aristarchus has found himself in jail too. Paul and Aristarchus are able to communicate while in prison and so he asks Paul to tell the brethren that he “salutes” them. To “salute” (aspazomai) one in the faith is to “to welcome kindly, bid welcome, greet... as the common form on meeting... to embrace, kiss, caress...” (LS 124).

2. Mark, the cousin of Barnabas, is given recommendation by the apostle Paul even though at one time they were not on the same page. When Paul took his first tour of preaching it was John Mark who quit on him due to some sort of fear (cf. Acts 13:13; 15:36ff). Apparently Mark has straitened himself out and is back on good terms with Paul. Paul speaks well of Mark at II Tim. 4:11 too.

3. Note that this epistle has a secondary purpose: i.e., to “receive” Mark in the faith. A similar letter was given to those at Achaia on behalf of Apollos (cf. Acts 18:27). Apparently such a letter was a common practice among NT Christians (cf. II Cor. 3:1) (see study # 47; Should Christians who move to new areas bring a Letter of Commendation?).

C. “And Jesus that is called Justus, who are of the circumcision: these only are my fellow-workers unto the kingdom of God, men that have been a comfort unto me” (4:11).

1. Nothing more is known about Jesus called Justus than he was at Paul’s side during this Roman imprisonment.

2. Note that Jesus called Justus, Aristarchus, and Mark are apparently Jewish converts of the “circumcision.” This seems to indicate the indifferent nature of circumcision (cf. I Cor. 7:19). Some made a faith issue of circumcision (cf. Acts 15:1ff; Gal. 2:3) but for those who saw it as a matter of indifference Paul certainly could fellowship. These three men may have continued to hold to circumcision; however, they did not make an issue of it (cf. Rom. 14:1ff) (see study # 30).

D. “Epaphras, who is one of you, a servant of Christ Jesus, salutes you, always striving for you in his prayers, that ye may stand perfect and fully assured in all the will of God. For I bear him witness, that he hath much labor for you, and for them in Laodicea, and for them in Hierapolis” (4:12-13).

1. Apparently Epaphras was an elder or evangelists of the church in Colossae. He had come to Paul and revealed the faith of the Colossians (cf. Col. 1:7-8). Paul knows him by his hard labor in the kingdom of God for the sake of those in Colossae, Laodicea, and Hierapolis.

2. Epaphras tells Paul of the challenges from men who preach “persuasive” words of error (Col. 2:4), philosophy, vain deceit, traditions of men, after the rudiments of the world (Col. 2:8, 20), and the precepts and doctrines of men (Col. 2:22).

3. Epaphras had a genuine concern for his brethren, travels to meet Paul, receives this epistle, and brings it back to Colossae by the hands of the above mentioned names (apparently Epaphras has remained in Rome to be with Paul).

E. “Luke, the beloved physician, and Demas salute you” (4:14).

2. Demas is mentioned here as one with Paul in Rome who sends his greetings as well. Many have noted that nothing positive like, "beloved" or any other thing that would cause us to think that Paul cared for him dearly like the others is mentioned. The conclusion is that Demas was already showing forth his true side at this point. At Paul’s second imprisonment, Paul writes, "Demas forsook me, having loved this present world, and went to Thessalonica…" (II Tim. 4:9).

F. “Salute the brethren that are in Laodicea, and Nymphas, and the church that is in their house” (4:15).
1. Paul commands the Colossian brethren to send their greetings to the brethren that are in Laodicea (apparently a church was established and thriving there).
2. Secondly, the Colossians are told to greet the church and brethren at “Nymphas.” Nymphas and his family met in their home forming a faithful church. Nothing more is known of this family.

G. “And when this epistle hath been read among you, cause that it be read also in the church of the Laodiceans; and that ye also read the epistle from Laodicea” (4:16).
1. The same inspired gospel truths that benefited the Colossians would certainly benefit the Laodiceans. Truth is thereby not bound (cf. II Tim. 2:9). The same truth applies to all peoples of all places (cf. I Cor. 4:17). Paul thereby addresses II Corinthians primarily to the church in Corinth yet adds “with all the saints that are in the whole of Achaia” (II Cor. 1:1).
2. The “epistle from Laodicea” is likely the letter to the Ephesians. These epistles were to be shared with all that the gospel may be fully exposed.

H. “And say to Archippus, take heed to the ministry which thou hast received in the Lord, that thou fulfill it” (4:17).
1. At Philemon 2 Archippus is recognized as a fellow soldier of Jesus Christ with Paul. Apparently he is a member of the church in Colossae or one of the surrounding towns.
2. The wording of the sentence infers that Archippus had been sent to this geographic region with a divine purpose and Paul wants to make sure that he has not failed to keep his charge.

I. “The salutation of me Paul with mine own hand. Remember my bonds. Grace be with you” (4:18).
1. The practice of writing the “salutation” of his epistles was “the token in every epistle; so I write”(cf. II Thess. 3:17) that its origins were from Paul (i.e., it was not a false epistle). Paul had another write the epistles for him and then he would physically write the salutation.
2. Paul asks the brethren to remember his bonds in their prayers. Secondly, the apostle’s request was that God’s grace would be with them (i.e., the justification that leads unto glorification / cf. Rom. 8:30).

Overview of Colossians

The apostle Paul had never been to Colossae (cf. Col. 2:1) yet he had “heard of their faith in Christ Jesus” (Col. 1:4) from a preacher named Epaphras (cf. Col. 1:7). The text infers that Epaphras contacts Paul (Col. 4:12), while in a Roman prison (Col. 4:8), and tells the apostle of the great faith of the Colossians and challenges that they face (Col. 1:8). The challenges of the Colossians came in the form of false teaching and practices. There were men teaching error in very “persuasive” manners and apparently beguiling the hearts of some saints (cf. Col. 2:4). Paul identifies the error as man’s philosophy, vain deceit, traditions of men, rudiments of the world, and precepts and doctrines of men (Col. 2:8, 20, 22). There were Jews that held to dietary laws and ascetics that denied self of various bodily needs in the name of religious service (Col. 2:20-23). These men would have been fine except they were binding their opinions upon other Christians (cf. Gal. 2:3ff).

With the facts before him, Paul first prays for the Colossians. Paul prayed that the Colossians would be “filled with knowledge of God’s will” (Col. 1:9), “walk worthily of the Lord unto all pleasing” (Col. 1:10), “strengthened with all power” (Col. 1:11), and that they would “give thanks unto the Father” for the opportunity of salvation (Col. 1:12-14).
Paul brings the Colossians back to square one of their receiving justification from sins through the blood sacrifice of Jesus (Col. 1:14, 20-22; 2:13-14; 3:1-3). Jesus is identified as being “preeminent” (i.e., the first in all things). The qualifying factors of the Lord’s preeminence is His being the image of God, firstborn of all creation, creator, being before all things, all things consists through Him, He is the head of the body, the church, and in Him all the fullness dwells (Col. 1:15-19). The redemption of mankind is made possible through the Lord Jesus Christ if the faithful will remain in truth as law abiding citizens of the kingdom of God (Col. 1:13-14, 23).

A contrast between “Christ” (Col. 2:8) and the “rudiments of the world” (Col. 2:8, 20), “philosophy” (Col. 2:8), “tradition of men” (Col. 2:8), “the precepts and doctrines of men” (Col. 2:22), and the “fleshly mind” (Col. 2:18) is continued in Colossians chapter 2. The name of Christ stands in metonymy to the word of God in chapter two as it did in chapter one (cf. 1:25-27). When Paul uses the name of Christ in these chapters we see that he intends for us to understand that he is speaking about truth, the gospel, or the word of God (cf. Col. 1:25-27; 2:2, 5, 8). Christians are to occupy an “order” (post or position) in relation to truth (i.e., “faith in Christ”) (cf. Col. 2:5). Paul warns the Colossians that certain false teachers have the capacity to lead astray from one’s post or position in truth saying, “This I say, that no one may delude you with persuasiveness of speech” (Col. 2:4; cf. 2:8 too). Christ alone (His sacrifice and teaching) provides the ability for sinful man to be “forgiven of all our trespasses” (Col. 2:13). Paul’s conclusion is that Mosaic Law keeping (Col. 2:16), willful humility or severity to the body (a form of asceticism) (Col. 2:18, 23), worshipping of angels (Col. 2:18), and will-worship (Col. 2:23) will help no one to heaven. The Colossians were not to allow those who hold to these positions to sway them from that firm post or position in Christ Jesus.

The apostle Paul reminds the Colossian Christians who they are in chapter three. They had died to the old man of sin and are now alive in Christ (Col. 3:3). This being the case, they needed to “put to death” sinful passions of the flesh (Col. 3:5ff). Furthermore, the Colossians are encouraged to put on the “new man” (Col. 3:10) which is further identified at Colossians 3:12ff. Every word or action of the Christian is to be dictated by the authority of Christ (Col. 3:17). The Christian’s life is found not only in the church and home but in the work place as well (cf. Col. 3:18 – 4:1). In all aspects of life the Christian is to be Godly. The book of Colossians helps us understand that Christ demands that we put our faith into practice.