

THE EPISTLE TO THE COLOSSIANS

By: Bert W. Hallman

INTRODUCTION:

The book of Colossians contains much of the same material as the book of Ephesians. This shows the Divine Inspiration of the Holy Spirit because it emphasizes the new truth in Ephesians of the “Dispensation of the Mystery” which changes the future hope of mankind from an earthly Hope with Christ as the King to a Hope above the Heavens where Christ is the Head of the Body. It reveals a parenthesis set within the New Covenant Hope which God has promised to the nation of Israel and the consummation of that Hope. It also warns against some of the prevailing philosophy of the time such as Gnosticism and Angel Worship.

Gnosticism taught that truth emanated from the Divine Source and only Gnostics were capable of obtaining this truth. One can see the evolution of the Roman Catholic religion from such an idea. Angel worship was common among Judaism. Acts 7:53 says: “Who have received the Law by the disposition of angels and have not kept it.” Instead of allowing the Law to teach and bring them to Christ they were taking the liberty of worshiping Angels. “Wherefore the Law was our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ that we might be justified by faith.” (Galatians 3:24)

Colosse was a town of Phrygia in Asia Minor located a short distance from the Mediterranean Sea. It was eleven miles from Laodicea and thirteen miles from Hierapolis. It wasn't far from Ephesus. At the time of the writing of Colossians Paul had not visited them. “For I would that ye knew what great conflict I have for you and for them at Laodicea and for as many as have not seen my face in the flesh.” (Colossians 2:1) It is most likely that Epaphras had brought them the Gospel. “As ye also learned of Epaphras our dear fellow-servant who is for you a faithful minister of Christ. Who also declared unto us your love in the Spirit.”

The truths proclaimed in this book are so profound that I would not begin to say that I could bring one to a perfect knowledge of the truth therein. But hopefully someone who is interested in knowing more of our Savior will be able to glean some help.

CHAPTER ONE

VERSE 1: “Paul an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God and Timotheus our brother.”

1. Paul an Apostle

An Apostle is “one sent forth” from Apo which means “from” and Stello which means “to send”. Paul could rightfully claim that he was an Apostle. Acts 9:15-16 says: “But the Lord said unto him (Ananias) go thy way for he is a chosen vessel unto me to bear my name before the Gentiles and Kings and the children of Israel. For I will show him how great things he must suffer for my name's sake.”

2. Timothy an Apostle

We find that Timothy is called an Apostle by combining 1 Thessalonians 1:1 with 1 Thessalonians 2:6.

Ephesians 4:10-12 says this: “And He gave some Apostles and some Prophets and some Evangelists and some Pastors and Teachers for the perfecting of the Saints, for the work of the ministry for the edifying of the Body of Christ.” Paul and Timothy were Apostles of the Mystery as found in Ephesians and Colossians. This distinguishes them from the twelve Apostles chosen by Christ to lead in the Kingdom that is coming

from Heaven which is the Hope of The Nation of Israel and those saved while the New Covenant was being offered during the Book of Acts. The Mystery Apostles are given the job of proclaiming the Dispensation of the Grace of God. (Ephesians 3:2).

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

1. Saints

Many people feel that a saint is someone who has done a great work for Christ. But that is not the Bible’s definition of a saint. A saint in the Bible is someone whom Christ has done a great work for and they have accepted it. Ephesians 1:12-14 says: “That we should be to the praise of His glory who first trusted in Christ. In whom ye also trusted after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation: in whom also after that ye believed ye were sealed with that Holy Spirit of promise. Which is the earnest of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, unto the praise of His glory.” When we believed the Gospel we were made a saint by the Holy Spirit. A saint is someone “set apart” for Christ. It is someone who has passed from death unto life (2 Timothy 1:10). Christ has done the great work for us.

2. Faithful brethren

It is possible to be a saint and yet not be faithful. Ephesians 4:30 says: “And grieve not the Holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption.” Paul called the Corinthians saints in 1 Corinthians 1:2 and yet in 1 Corinthians 3:1-3 he calls them carnal. Paul therefore addresses the faithful brethren in Colossae.

3. Grace

This is a standard greeting by Paul. He has at least 2 things in mind in Colossians: John 1:17, the Grace that Christ brought when He died, was buried and arose from the dead and also the Dispensation which was given to Paul to reveal to mankind (Ephesians 3:2).

4. Peace

Ephesians 4:3: “Endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of Peace.” Peace with all men should be the goal of all who have tasted of the Grace of God. Every denomination has its own Doctrinal Statement and it has led to a disruption of the unity of the Spirit. The truth in the Dispensation of the Mystery should be a uniting force for all believers, but Satan has sown his seeds of hatred instead.

VERSE 3: “We give thanks to God and the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, praying always for you.”

Because there are Saints and Faithful brethren in Colosse, Paul thanks the Lord continually for them. It is always a heart warming experience to meet people who know and love the Lord. But we need to continually uphold one another in prayer because Satan is working to disrupt the unity and love that we should have. God the Father can be seen in the person of Christ according to John 1:14: “And the Word was made flesh and dwelt among us and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth.

VERSES 4 & 5: “Since we heard of your faith in Christ Jesus and of the love which ye have to all the saints. For the hope which is laid up for you in heaven, whereof ye heard before in the word of the truth of the gospel.”

Faith, Love and Hope: this same truth is expressed in Ephesians 1:15-18: “Wherefore I also after I heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus and love unto all the saints, cease not to give thanks for you making mention of you in my prayers; that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give unto you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Him: The eyes of your understanding being enlightened that ye may know what is the hope of His calling and what the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints.”

1. Faith in Christ

What is faith? Hebrews 11:1 defines it for us: “Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.” We were not present at the creation, at Christ’s birth or at His death or His resurrection. We were not present when the Bible was written. Therefore we must believe that these events happened without seeing them. We exercise faith every day when we turn on a water faucet or start our cars.

Hebrews 11:6 says this: “But without faith it is impossible to please Him; for he that cometh to God must believe that He is and that He is a rewarder of them that diligently seek Him.” 2 Timothy 1:9-10 gives us a clear picture of what we must have faith in: “Who hath saved us and called us with a holy calling, not according to his own purpose and grace which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began. But is now made manifest by the appearing of our Savior Jesus Christ who hath abolished death and hath brought life and immortality to light through the gospel.”

2. Love to all the Saints

To those that have accepted Christ this must manifest itself. Christ said in John 13:34-35: “A new commandment I give unto you, that ye love one another as I have loved you, that ye also love one another. By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another.” Ephesians 2:19-22: “Now therefore ye are no more strangers and foreigners but fellow citizens with the saints and of the household of God; And are built upon the foundation of the Apostles and Prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief corner stone; In whom all the building fitly framed together groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord: In whom ye also are builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit.” Ephesians 4:16: “From whom the whole body fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love.” Ephesians 5:25-27: “Husbands, love your wives even as Christ also loved the Church and gave Himself for it: That he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the Word, that He might present it to Himself a glorious church not have spot or wrinkle or any such thing but that it should be holy and without blemish.” Love for one another is a catalyst to allow the Word of God to wash us so that Christ may present us to Himself a glorious church without spot or wrinkle.

3. Hope laid up in Heaven

Our hope is where Christ is now which is Ephesians 1:20; “Which He wrought in Christ when he raised Him from the dead and set Him at His own right hand in the Heavenly places.” Ephesians 2:6: “And hath raised us up together and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus.” Our hope therefore is not on this earth but in the heavenly places as revealed in Colossians 3:1-4: “If ye then be risen with Christ seek those things which are above where Christ sitteth at the right hand of God; Set your affection on things above not on things on the earth. For ye are dead and your life is hid with Christ in God. When Christ who is our life shall appear, then shall ye also appear with Him in glory.” The book of Ephesians makes this Hope very clear and was no doubt circulated to the Colossian church. But if not, we can be sure that Epaphras taught them the good news (Colossians 1:7).

VERSE 6: “Which is come unto you as it is in all the world; and bringeth forth fruit as it doth also in you since the day ye heard of it and knew the grace of God in truth.”

Paul is writing from a prison in Rome and yet he can say that the gospel has been preached “in all the world”. Paul committed the gospel to faithful men who were to teach it to others. With the help of the Holy Spirit they were able to do that. Hebrews 4:12: “For the word of God is quick and powerful and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit and of the joints and marrow and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.” When we reflect on how the gospel reached us we know that faithful men and women have been proclaiming it since the time that Paul lived.

World is the Greek word Kosmos which means the orderly arrangement of things – thus the inhabitants. In Romans 7:4-6 Paul explains how fruit can be brought forth by believing the gospel: “Wherefore my brethren ye also are become dead to the Law by the body of Christ: that ye should be married to another even to Him who is raised from the dead that we should bring forth fruit unto God. For when we were in the flesh the motions of sins which were by the Law did work in our members to bring forth fruit unto death. But now we are delivered from the Law that being dead wherein we were held; that we should serve in newness of spirit and not in the oldness of the letter.” Romans is talking about those who have been saved under the New Covenant and have come out of the Old Covenant. Colossians 1:13 explains our situation in this Dispensation: “Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness and hath translated us into the kingdom of His dear Son.”

VERSES 7&8: “As ye also learned of Epaphras our dear fellow-servant, who is for you a faithful minister of Christ; who also declared unto us your love in the Spirit.

From Philemon 1:23 we learn that Epaphras was a fellow prisoner with Paul. The Gospel had been preached by him at Colossae prior to the time that Paul writes to the Colossians. But he had assured Paul that the faith, love and hope of the Colossian believers was real and that they had a true love for Christ. Epaphras had taught them Ephesians 1:13: “In Whom ye also trusted after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation: in Whom also after that ye believed ye were sealed with that Holy Spirit of promise.” The gospel is what Paul says in 1 Corinthians 15:1-4: “Moreover brethren, I declare unto you the gospel which I preached unto you, which also ye have received and wherein ye stand: by which also ye are saved, if ye keep in memory what I preached unto you first of all that which I also received how that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, and that He was buried and that He rose again the third day according to the Scriptures.”

Because the Colossians had received the gospel and were sealed by the Holy Spirit they were now free to love Christ and their fellow believers. Romans 8:16: “The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit that we are the children of God.” 1 Corinthians 2:14-15: “But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God for they are foolishness unto him neither can he know them because they are spiritually discerned. But he that is spiritual judgeth all things, yet he himself is judged of no man.” These are all things that Epaphras had taught the Colossians.

VERSE 9: “For this cause we also since the day we heard it do no cease to pray for you and to desire that ye might be filled with the knowledge of His will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding.”

Paul now tells the Colossians that he may be in a Roman prison, but that does not stop him from continually praying for them. He tells them what is on his heart when he goes to God in prayer for them. His prayer consists of these important things:

Filled with the full knowledge of the will of God for them. God does not put a premium on ignorance. He wants us to know the complete truth of His will.

Filled with wisdom: having a broad and full understanding of the wisdom of God. This would exclude the world’s wisdom.

Filled with spiritual understanding: This can only be found in the Word of God. In the case of the Colossians they would have had to receive this from the Apostles until Paul could write to them. We are fortunate today to have the complete word of God.

VERSES 10-12: “That ye might walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing, being fruitful in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God; Strengthened with all might according to His glorious power, unto all patience and longsuffering with joyfulness; Giving thanks unto the Father, which hath made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light.”

Paul is now going to give the reasons for the knowledge of the will of God in wisdom and spiritual understanding. It has to do with our daily walk for the Lord. We are to walk worthily of what the Lord has done for us:

1. In all pleasing: The idea is providing pleasure. We must provide pleasure as we walk with the Lord. It is so much more pleasant to be with a pleasant person than with an unpleasant one. As we strive to please the Lord we automatically provide a pleasing atmosphere.

2. Being fruitful in every good work: A fruit tree that has been cultivated brings an abundant crop. Our work for the Lord should be with the idea of good fruit coming from it. We therefore must go forth with the mind of God which we have gotten by rightfully dividing the word of truth. When we try to work with truth for another dispensation other than ours, good fruit can not come from it. But the truth found in the Bible for this dispensation can blossom forth into good fruit. Paul is writing to the Colossians with truth for this dispensation, in which we also live.

3. Increasing in the knowledge of God: The Greek word for knowledge (Epignosis) not only has the idea of knowing the truth of God, but it also has the idea of acknowledgement of the truth of God. We can know something but not acknowledge it. We can know that we were born into death and that Christ brought life and immortality to light through the gospel. But if we don't acknowledge it we won't pass from death to life. God's truth must be acknowledged as well as known. Colossians 2:2-3: “That their hearts might be comforted being knit together in love and unto all riches of the full assurance of understanding to the acknowledgement of the mystery of God and of the Father and of Christ. In whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge.” God has revealed that in this dispensation those that come to Christ receive a hope upon the heavens and that Christ is the Head of the body. This is different from Christ as the King reigning here upon the earth. If we don't acknowledge this it is impossible for us to bring forth the kind of fruit that God desires us to have to please Him.

4. Strengthened with all might according to His glorious power: We are made strong by the might that is manifested by Christ's power. Ephesians 1:19-23: “And what is the exceeding greatness of His power to un-ward who believe, according to the working of His mighty power, which He wrought in Christ when He raised Him from the dead and set Him at His own right hand in the heavenly places, far above all principality and power and might and dominion and every name that is named, not only in this world but also in that which is to come; and hath put all things under His feet and gave Him to be the Head over all things to the church, which is His body, the fulness of Him that filleth all in all.” When we realize the position that Christ has placed us into, our hearts and minds are strengthened.

5. Patience and long-suffering with joyfulness: We are to abide under and patiently wait with calm delight for the Hope that is ours – the manifestation in glory.

6. Giving thanks unto the Father: “Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above and cometh down from the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning” (James 1:17). “Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, Who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ” (Ephesians 1:3). Every good thing that a person in Christ has was bestowed by the will of our Heavenly Father.

7. Made us meet: This is a marvelous word which means to enable, qualify, or make us able. “Being justified freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus: Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in His blood, to declare His righteousness for the remission of sins that are past,

through the forbearance of God; to declare I say, at this time His righteousness, that He might be just and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus” (Romans 3:24-26). “Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness and hath translated us into the kingdom of His dear Son” (Colossians 1:13). “For in Him (Christ) dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily. And ye are complete in Him, which is the head of all principality and power; In Whom also ye are circumcised with the circumcision made without hands in putting off the body of the sins of the flesh by the circumcision of Christ: Buried with Him in baptism, wherein also ye are risen with Him through the faith of the operation of God Who hath raised Him from the dead. And you being dead in your sins and the Uncircumcision of your flesh, hath He quickened together with Him having forgiven you all trespasses; Blotting out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us and took it out of the way nailing it to His cross.” (Colossians 2:9-14).

8. To partake of the inheritance of the saints in light: A saint is one who has been set apart by God because they have put on the righteousness of Christ. Each one is promised an inheritance, (a share) with the set apart ones because they are now capable of understanding the truth of God.

“But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness unto him, neither can he know them because they are spiritually discerned. But he that is spiritual judgeth all things yet he himself is judged of no man, for who hath known the mind of the Lord that he may instruct Him? But we have the mind of Christ.” 1 Corinthians 2:14-16.

VERSE 13: “Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness and hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son.”

Satan won a victory in the Garden of Eden when he enticed Adam and Eve to sin. He knew that if he could get Adam and Eve to disobey God’s word they would die and he would win. From that point death and darkness were man’s fate and even today is what a person without Christ has to look forward to.

What Satan didn’t realize was Romans 5:12-19: “Wherefore as by one man sin entered into the world and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned: For until the law sin was in the world but sin is not imputed when there is no law. Nevertheless death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over them that had not sinned after the similitude of Adam’s transgression, who is the figure of him that was to come. But not as it was by one that sinned, so is the gift; for if through the offence of one many be dead, much more the grace of God and the gift by grace which is by one man Jesus Christ hath abounded unto many. And not as it was by one that sinned so is the gift; for the judgment was by one to condemnation but the free gift is of many offences unto justification. For if by one man’s offence death reigned by one; much more they which receive abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness shall reign in life by one, Jesus Christ. Therefore as by the offence of one judgment came upon all men to condemnation, even so by the righteousness of one the free gift came upon all men unto justification of life. For as by one man’s disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous.”

Christ’s work at the cross has enabled man to come from Satan’s kingdom of darkness into the kingdom of the Son of God. “Verily, verily, I say unto you, he that heareth my word and believeth on Him that sent me hath everlasting life and shall not come into condemnation, but is passed from death unto life” (John 5:24). “But God who is rich in mercy for His great love wherewith He loved us, even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, by grace ye are saved; and hath raised us up together and made us sit together in heavenly places is Christ Jesus; that in the ages to come He might show the exceeding riches of His grace in His kindness toward us through Christ Jesus. For by grace are ye saved through faith and that not of yourselves it is the gift of God, not of works lest any man should boast” (Ephesians 2:4-10).

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

The term redemption means to be purchased from the slave market of sin. Christ has purchased us from the kingdom of darkness and placed us in the kingdom of His dear Son. “Being justified freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus; whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in His blood, to declare His righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God; to declare I say at this time His righteousness that He might be just and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus” (Romans 3:24-26).

VERSE 15: “Who is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of every creature.”

1. Image – God is a Spirit and therefore is invisible to the human eye. Christ therefore is the visible representation and manifestation of God to created mankind. “For whom He did foreknow He also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the firstborn among many brethren” (Romans 8:29).

2. Firstborn – The truth here is that Christ’s position is superior to all others. He not only is superior to all creation, He is the creator of all things; the starter, the captain of all creation. The cults go astray here by claiming that Christ was created. The Godhead revealed itself to man by taking human form and walking among us. If God had not been willing to do this, no man could escape death. Christ is revealed in the Bible as Son of God and also Son of Man.

VERSE 16: “For by Him were all things created that are in heaven and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones or dominions or principalities or powers; all things were created by Him and for Him.”

The work of Christ as the creator of all things is watered down when we just say God created. It is perfectly true that God created, but we need to emphasize that “in Christ dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily” (Colossians 2:9). “For it pleased the Father that in Him should all fulness dwell” (Colossians 1:19).

1. Where did He create?
 - a. The things in the heavens. This would be the area below where God dwells, because when Christ ascended back to the Father it says: “He that descended is the same also that ascended up far above all heavens, that He might fill all things” (Ephesians 4:10).
 - b. The things in earth. This would be the planet upon which we live.
2. What did He create?
 - a. Visible – The things that man can see.
 - b. Invisible – The things that man cannot see with the eye.
 - c. Thrones – The idea is potentates or those in control, whether in heaven or on earth. For example, Nebuchadrezzar the king of Babylon is called God’s servant in Jeremiah 25:9.
 - d. Dominions – Lordships, whether human or angelic.
 - e. Principalities – Those that are first, or the ones in charge.
 - f. Powers – Ones who possess authority.

The Greek Interlinear is clearer: “for all things were created in Him, the things in the heavens and the things on the earth, the visible and the invisible; whether thrones or lordships or rulers or authorities; all things have been created through Him and for Him.” – J.P. Green Sr.

Christ created Lucifer and says that he was perfect in the day he was created until iniquity was found in him: (Ezekiel 28:15). God in his infinite wisdom has not chosen to save him: “Depart from Me ye cursed into everlasting fire prepared for the devil and his angels” (Matthew 25:41b).

Christ created mankind and he also failed, but God has chosen to redeem him: “Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, He also Himself likewise took part of the same; that through death He might destroy him that had the power of death, that is the devil; and deliver them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage. For verily He took not on Him the nature of angels, but He took on Him the seed of Abraham” (Hebrews 2:14-16).

According to the creation story in Genesis, all Christ had to do was speak and creation came forth. It is safe to say that for most people their God is too small. We all need to increase our knowledge concerning the God that we serve.

VERSE 17: “And He is before all things and by Him all things consist.”

1. Before – Prior to all things. God has always been in existence. If this wasn’t true then He wouldn’t be God. We must believe this by faith because we are not created with the ability to reason it out by plain human reasoning.

2. Consist – Subsist or hold together. Many scientific books have been written to show what man calls the laws of nature. These have all been instituted by our creator.

“In Whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge” (Colossians 2:3).

VERSE 18: “And He is the head of the body, the church, Who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead; that in all things He might have the preeminence.”

1. Head – The part most taken hold of. The mind controls all the functions of the body.

2. Body, the church – A calling out; a group of people called out for a special purpose. “To the intent that now unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places might be known by the church the manifold wisdom of God” (Ephesians 3:10).

3. Beginning – Christ is the origin of the church.

4. First born from the dead – Christ is the first one to have conquered death and stayed alive. There had been many resuscitations but they all died later.

5. Preeminence – First in rank and prominence.

God has decided that for all of creation Christ is to have the preeminence. Just think of the consternation when people find out that the person they have been using for a curse word is the one God wants everyone to worship and obey.

VERSE 19: “For it pleased the Father that in Him should all fulness dwell.”

Father is in italics and is not in the original although the same meaning is there. The Greek interlinear reads this way: Because all the fullness was pleased to dwell in Him (J.P. Green Sr).

The word fulness in the Greek is Pleroma. This means that everything that is complete and perfect will be found in Christ:

1. The believer is complete and perfect: “And ye are complete in Him which is the Head of all principality and power” (Colossians 2:10).

2. The believer’s redemption will be complete and perfect: “Which is the earnest of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, unto the praise of His glory” (Ephesians 1:14).

3. The believer’s future is complete and perfect: “That in the dispensation of the fulness of times He might gather together in one all things in Christ both which are in heaven and which are on earth, even in Him”(Ephesians 1:10).

4. The Church will be complete and perfect: “That He might present it to himself a glorious church not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish”(Ephesians 5:10).

5. Creation will be complete and perfect: “Looking for and hasting unto the coming of the day of God, wherein the heavens being on fire shall be dissolved and the elements shall melt with fervent heat; nevertheless we according to His promise look for new heavens and a new earth wherein dwelleth righteousness”(2 Peter 3:12-13).

VERSE 20: “And having made peace through the blood of His cross, by Him to reconcile all things unto Himself, by Him, I say, whether they be things in earth or things in heaven.”

1. Peace – The idea is making good any deficiency or making up a difference between 2 parties. God had warned Adam and Eve that if they ate of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil they would die. Because they ate, death was the result and now man’s fellowship with God was broken. The creator was not willing to let this happen because He loved His creation. By paying the penalty for sin at the cross, Christ made good on the deficiency, thus making up the difference between God and mankind. The holiness of God was satisfied by His love in sending perfection to pay for man’s sin. The blood of Christ was the only blood that would satisfy the holiness of God because man’s blood was imperfect. Because we were created with a free will, God does not force His love on anyone but allows each one of us to make our own decisions concerning Him. But the way is now perfectly open to fellowship and a future with God.

2. Reconcile – The idea is to reconnect again. 2 Timothy 1:9-10 explains this: “Who hath saved us and called us with an holy calling, not according to our works, but according to His own purpose and grace which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began; but is now made manifest by the appearing of our Saviour Jesus Christ, who hath abolished death and hath brought life and immortality to light through the gospel.”

Peace with God was destroyed when Adam and Eve sinned just as peace was destroyed when Lucifer sinned. In the future Satan will be destroyed in the Lake of Fire and reconciliation can take place then for all things in earth and things in heaven. In Christ dwells everything that is complete and perfect as verse 19 states. Therefore all imperfection has to be done away with before all things can be reconciled to God. Everyone who comes to the cross is washed in the blood of Christ and puts on Christ’s righteousness. Now they are acceptable to a Holy and Loving God.

VERSES 21-22: “And you that were sometime alienated and enemies in your mind by wicked works, yet now hath He reconciled in the body of His flesh through death to present you holy and unblameable and unreprouable in His sight.”

The person without Christ is hostile to Him and to His word. The death of Christ has made it possible for the hostile one to be reconciled to Christ and now they can be:

1. Holy – Separated from sin.
2. Unblameable – Without any blame before God for our sinful flesh.
3. Unreprouable – No charge of any kind can be levied against a person in Christ.

As Gentiles, when God pronounced the final judgment on Israel, (Acts 28:26-28) we were left without Christ, without any covenants, without any promises from God, and we had no hope in the world to look forward to. “That at that time ye were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world” (Ephesians 2:12). The text in Colossians says that:

1. We were Alienated – Rendered to be an alien. We had no protections to look forward. We were like a person with no citizenship.
2. We were Enemies – Opposed to Christ and hostile to Him.

3. We had Wicked Works – The nations were not seeking to work for God, but to do their own evil works.

The revelation of the Dispensation of the Mystery has provided reconciliation for everyone worldwide by just accepting Christ’s finished work at the Cross.

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

Once we understand that we are Holy in God’s sight, without any blame and that no charge can be placed upon us, we are now totally free to live our lives for Christ.

1. Grounded – This means understanding the foundation of the truth that has been laid down for us by Christ.
2. Settled – Immoveable, no wavering from the truth.
3. Moved away – We are not to be stirred away by any outside influence.

We are to remain steadfast in the hope the gospel provides. This gospel Paul says has been preached to all mankind on the earth. Not all of mankind embraced the truth, but we can be thankful that our forefathers that settled this country brought the gospel with them. Many of our relatives migrated to the U.S. and brought the gospel with them.

VERSE 24: “Who now rejoice in my sufferings for you and fill up that which is behind of the afflictions of Christ in my flesh for His body’s sake which is the church.”

The Lord had promised Paul that he would suffer for Him: “For I will show him how great things he must suffer for My name’s sake” (Acts 9:16). So Paul now tells the Colossians that he is rejoicing in the sufferings he is going through in the Roman prison for them at Colossae.

Fill up – The Body of Christ is subject to suffering by the world system. Paul says he is happy to partake in the sufferings that he is going through in the Roman prison. The Colossians would be strengthened to know that Paul was willing to suffer for them as well as for Christ. 2 Corinthians 11:23-31 gives the extent of the suffering that Paul went through during his entire ministry.

No one has suffered more than Christ did at His Passion. Paul shows that he was willing to take whatever man could do to him, in order to advance the knowledge of Christ. When we proclaim the Dispensation of the Mystery we must be prepared to take some abuse and like Paul we should rejoice that we are having the opportunity to do so for Christ.

VERSE 25: Whereof I am made a minister according to the dispensation of God which is given to me for you, to fulfill the word of God.”

Paul now explains what The Lord has given to him to reveal:

1. A ministry – The word minister means a Deacon, a Servant, or a Steward. Paul was to reveal a stewardship, given to him for all mankind.
2. A dispensation – The word is made up of two words in the Greek: oikos meaning House and nomos meaning Law. Paul was made a steward over God’s program for today.

3. A completeness – This dispensation, given to Paul, completes and fulfills the Word of God.

Each age has had its own direction by God as to how He governs mankind. Paul was given the final plan needed to complete the Word of God. No knowledge of a Hope upon the Heavens was ever known to mankind before it was revealed to Paul. This is explained by the next verse.

VERSE 26: “Even the mystery which hath been hid from ages and from generations, but now is made manifest to His saints.”

The secret revealed here was hid in God until He now chose to reveal it to Paul and thus to all mankind:

1. Mystery – Truth hid in God until He chooses to reveal it by Divine revelation.
2. Hid from ages – An eon is an indefinite period of time. The Mystery was hidden from God’s creation of man until revealed to Paul.
3. Generations – Races of people.
4. But now – The immediate present. (After Acts 28:26-28.)

Prior to this dispensation the nations had to come to God through Israel’s hope and would find their place on this earth with Israel. But now, all nations including Israel find their hope upon the Heavens. “For this cause I Paul the prisoner of Jesus Christ for you Gentiles; If ye have heard of the dispensation of the grace of God which is given me to you-ward: How that by revelation He made known unto me the mystery, as I wrote afore in few words, Whereby when ye read ye may understand my knowledge in the mystery of Christ, which in other ages was not made known unto the sons of men as it is now revealed unto His holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit: Whereof I was made a minister according to the gift of the grace of God given unto me by the effectual working of His power, unto me who am less than the least of all saints is this grace given, that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ; and to make all men see what is the fellowship of the mystery, which from the beginning of the world hath been hid in God Who created all things by Jesus Christ: to the intent that now unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places might be known by the church the manifold wisdom of God” (Ephesians 3:1-10).

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

Christ came the first time to the nation of Israel: “He came unto His own and His own received Him not” (John 1:11). But after Acts 28:26-28 a part of the Secret is that now Christ is sent to the nations. From the Greek this verse can be translated “Christ among you, the hope of glory”. This is a marvelous truth because prior to the final rejection of Israel the nations did not have their own hope but relied on Israel’s hope which is earthly. It is a marvelous truth that all mankind can come directly to Christ for salvation and a Hope upon the Heavens is the glory that awaits us.

Christ dwells in our hearts by faith: “That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith; that ye being rooted and grounded in love; may be able to comprehend with all saints what is the breadth and length and depth and height; and to know the love of Christ which passeth knowledge, that ye might be filled with all the fullness of God” (Ephesians 3:17-19).

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

The idea of perfect here is that which has reached its goal: “And having made peace through the blood of His cross, by Him to reconcile all things unto Himself; by Him I say, whether they be things in earth or things in heaven. And you that were sometime alienated and enemies in your mind by wicked works, yet now hath He reconciled in the body of His flesh through death, to present you holy and unblameable and unproveable in His sight” (Colossians 1:20-22).

1. Preach – To proclaim firmly and accurately.
2. Warning – To put in mind or admonish.
3. Teaching – To cause to learn.
4. Wisdom – Broad and full intelligence.
5. Perfect – Full grown, complete, and therefore perfect. (Colossians 2:10)

VERSE 29: “Whereunto I also labor, striving according to His working which worketh in me mightily.”

Paul is still in prison in Rome, but he is striving to get all to see their completeness in Christ and their hope upon the Heavens. He is doing this by writing to the churches and sending out laborers who also know the truth of the Mystery. “For the word of God is quick and powerful and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit and of the joints and marrow and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart; neither is there any creature that is not manifest in His sight, but all things are naked and opened unto the eyes of His with Whom we have to do” (Hebrews 4:12-13).

When we contemplate that a new dispensation has been committed to Paul to give to the world, and he is sitting in a Roman prison, we have to stand in awe of the task that God committed to him. And he did it!

CHAPTER 2

VERSE 1: “For I would that ye knew what great conflict I have for you and for them at Laodicea and for as many as have not seen my face in the flesh.”

Even though Paul has never seen the Colossians or the Laodiceans he knows that Satan is working to keep them from knowing the new revealed truth. The word conflict means to struggle, so Paul tells them he is struggling with the knowledge that they may be enticed away from the truth.

“Whereof I am made a minister according to the dispensation of God which is given to me for you to fulfill the word of God; even the mystery which hath been hid from ages and from generations but now is made manifest to His saints, to whom God would make known what is the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles, which is Christ in you the hope of glory” (Colossians 1:25-27). Paul continues now to explain to them his struggle.

VERSE 2: “That their hearts might be comforted, being knit together in love and unto all riches of the full assurance of understanding, to the acknowledgement of the mystery of God and of the Father and of Christ.”

Paul continues in his anxiety for them by hoping that the truth will bring comfort and knit them in association with one another in love as they not only understand the mystery that has now been revealed, but that they may acknowledge the truth presented. The riches that they receive from the assurance of the mystery will be so wonderful, Paul says, that he is begging them not to miss it. Paul now emphasizes that they must not only know about the truth but they must acknowledge it. Truth has to be imparted or it is useless.

1. Riches – Spiritual riches possessed by God and exercised toward men. “Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, Who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ” (Ephesians 1:3).

2. Full assurance – The freedom of mind and confidence resulting from an understanding of the mystery (secret) from God given to them and to us as well.

Our hearts should be comforted to know that we are knit together as one with all believers and have been given the riches of Christ in the heavenly realms. The many denominations that have sprung up have put a damper on being knit together.

VERSE 3: “In Whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge.”

1. Treasures – A deposit; a place of safekeeping.
2. Wisdom – All wisdom is known by God.
3. Knowledge – All knowledge is known by God.

If anyone wants to know true wisdom and knowledge they must come to God. God is the only one who knows everything. Therefore the Word of God is the most important thing in a person’s life. Without it men will always walk in darkness no matter how much education they have.

“But without faith it is impossible to please Him; for he that cometh to God must believe that He is and that He is a rewarder of them that diligently seek Him” (Hebrews 11:6). Job found that out in Job chapters 38 & 39.

VERSE 4: “And this I say, lest any man should beguile you with enticing words”

Paul knew that both the Gnostics and the Judaizers would be trying to entice the Christians away from the truth of God’s word. This thought was continually troubling to him and he prays continually for them that this will not happen.

VERSE 5: “For though I be 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.”

Paul’s spirit is encouraged because at this point he knows he can:

1. Rejoice in their order, which was the good condition of their church.
2. Rejoice in the firmness of their faith.

They were standing for Christ.

VERSE 6: “As ye have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk ye in Him.”

They had been taught the truth by Epaphras and Paul admonishes them to live and walk in the truth. He will go on to explain this to them.

VERSE 7: “Rooted and built up in Him and established in the faith as ye have been taught, abounding therein with thanksgiving.”

1. Rooted – To cause to take root.

2. Established – To make firm or secure.
3. Abounding – To super-abound or excel.
4. Thanksgiving – Grateful acknowledgement.

Paul says to be thankful for the opportunity to be able to excel in the knowledge that Christ has given us concerning salvation and a future hope. When we know the truth as found in Christ we can set aside all of the world's philosophies. In Christ dwells all of the treasures of wisdom and knowledge.

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

Paul now shows what is the opposite of the treasures that are in Christ:

1. Philosophy – Man's wisdom such as Jewish sophistry or Gnostic reasoning. In Paul's day certain ascetics busied themselves with refined and speculative enquiries into the nature and classes of Angels and the rituals of the Mosaic Law and regulations of Jewish traditions.
2. Vain deceit – Emptiness and that which gives a false impression. A good example is infant water baptism. This is nowhere taught in the Bible but an impression is given that it saves them.
3. Tradition of men – Something handed down by men but nowhere taught by God.
4. Rudiments of the world – An element that has been concocted by the world system.

One must go to the Holy Scriptures to find truth and beware of anything that has come out of the world system and is not one of the treasures hid in God.

VERSE 9: “For in Him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily.”

The unsaved Colossians were looking to Angels and other outside beings for their knowledge. All of the knowledge that there is in the Godhead can be found in Christ. To look elsewhere then without including Christ will only lead to folly. All who are in Christ today are members of Christ's Body so that in Him the fullness is ours.

VERSE 10: “And ye are complete in Him Which is the head of all principality and power;”

We are made full in Christ. Our salvation is complete. Our knowledge is complete. We are complete without philosophy (Colossians 2:8). We are complete in Him without ceremonies (Colossians 2:14, 16-17). We are complete in Him without any human merit (Ephesians 2:8-9).

Finished are the types and shadows of the ceremonial Law. Completeness in Christ does away with the ordinances of past dispensations. Our salvation is in Christ plus nothing.

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

Circumcision means literally a cutting around. For Israel it was a sign that they belonged to God through His covenant with Abraham. When we come to Christ we are automatically placed into Christ through His death, burial and resurrection. The “circumcision of Christ” is a metaphor that means to transfer over: “Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness and hath translated us into the kingdom of His dear Son” (Colossians 1:13).

When Israel was circumcised, they went from no relationship with God to one with God. When we accept Christ we go from no relationship with God to a perfect relationship with Christ.

VERSE 12: “Buried with Him in baptism wherein also ye are risen with Him through the faith of the operation of God Who hath raised Him from the dead.”

Ephesians 4:5 tells us that there is “one baptism”. Christ was circumcised when He went to the cross and the grave. This is the baptism that the Holy Spirit is talking about here. It is Romans 6:4-6: “Therefore we are buried with Him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life. For if we have been planted together in the likeness of His death, we shall be also in the likeness of His resurrection: knowing this that our old man is crucified with Him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin.” Everyone that has put their faith in the Gospel has been reckoned by God to have been with Christ when He completed His passion. What a marvelous aspect of our completeness in Christ.

VERSE 13: “And you being dead in your sins and the Uncircumcision of your flesh hath He quickened together with Him, having forgiven you all trespasses.”

Until one comes to Christ they are dead. They have no life: (1) either in eternity: “Verily, verily I say unto you, he that heareth my word and believeth my word and believeth on Him that sent me hath everlasting life and shall not come into condemnation, but is passed from death unto life” (John 5:24): (2) or in this life because works are meaningless to God: “But we are as an unclean thing and all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags; and we all do fade as a leaf and our iniquities like the wind have taken us away” (Isaiah 64:6).

When we accept the Gospel we are “quickened” (made alive) and all our deviations have been forgiven.

VERSE 14: “Blotting out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us and took it out of the way, nailing it to His cross.”

1. Blotting out – Wiping away or obliterating.
2. Handwriting - A document or manuscript.
3. Ordinances - Dogma, a law, ecclesiastical decree that showed us to be sinful.
4. Contrary – An adversary of ours. All this was nailed to the cross at Christ’s death. It had revealed our sinful selves.

Romans 7:9-15 “For I was alive without the law once but when the commandment came, sin revived and I died. And the commandment which was ordained to life, I found to be unto death. For sin taking occasion by the commandment deceived me and by it slew me. Wherefore the law is holy and the commandment holy and just and good. Was then that which is good made death unto me? God forbid, but sin that it might appear sin, working death in me by that which is good; that sin by the commandment might become exceeding sinful. For we know that the law is spiritual but I am carnal sold under sin. For that which I do I allow not; for what I would that do I not but what I hate that do I.”

What a blessing it was when Christ nailed the Law to the cross and provided the new and living way to be saved. The Law could not save anyone, but covered man’s sin until such time that Christ could provide the way that God could accept.

Romans 8:1-8 “There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh but after the Spirit. For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from

the law of sin and death. For what the law could not do in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh and for sin condemned sin in the flesh. That the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us who walk not after the flesh but after the Spirit. For they that are after the flesh do mind the things of the flesh but they that are after the Spirit the things of the Spirit. For to be carnally minded is death, but to be spiritually minded is life and peace. Because the carnal mind is enmity against God, for it is not subject to the law of God neither indeed can be. So then they that are in the flesh cannot please God.”

VERSE 15: “And having spoiled principalities and powers He made a show of them openly, triumphing over them in it.”

1. Spoiled – Stripped the principalities and powers of their hold on us.
2. Principalities – Rulers
3. Powers – Authorities or those who possess authority.
4. Show – Make an exhibit.
5. Openly – In public

When did this marvelous thing happen for us? Colossians 1:13-14 “Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness and hath translated us into the kingdom of His dear Son; in Whom we have redemption through His blood, even the forgiveness of sins.”

Before a person comes to Christ he is under the control of Satan and his rulers. Death is a victory for Satan but Christ’s death and resurrection frees a person from Satan’s grasp because Christ conquered death. We obtain life and immortality by believing the gospel.

VERSE 16: “Let no man therefore judge you in meat or in drink, or in respect of an holyday, or of the new moon or of the Sabbath days.”

Because Christ was the “end of the Law for righteousness” (Romans 10:4) no man can be judged in the following categories:

1. Meat – Meat that was considered unclean under the Mosaic Law or offered to idols is alright to eat now even if it might not be considered to be very healthy to eat.
2. Drink – A person must not be judged today by what they are seen drinking. This is not a criterion of their spiritual standing in Christ.
3. Holyday – The Jewish feast days do not have to be kept in this dispensation.
4. New Moon – There are no special holidays that have to be observed.
5. Sabbath days – The Sabbath had been given to Israel as a day of rest. The Jewish leaders had so systematized the regulations that the Sabbath was more of a burden on Israel than a day of rest.

Christ lifted all of these burdens off of Israel when he nailed the “law of commandments” to His cross. Christ became the one to relax in because of His finished work at the cross. Paul is showing in Colossians that this has carried over into the dispensation of the grace of God.

VERSE 17: “Which are a shadow of things to come but the body is of Christ.”

The types and shadows were a picture of things to come. The things to come were Christ and His work on the Cross. The Holy Spirit is saying that now that Christ has come the shadows are gone. Our bodies belong to Christ and we have been freed from the Mosaic Law.

VERSE 18: “Let no man beguile you of your reward in a voluntary humility and worshipping of angels, intruding into those things which he hath not see, vainly puffed up by his fleshly mind.”

The Holy Spirit now attacks the Gnosticism of the Greeks and the Angel worship of the Jews.

1. Beguile – to defraud.
2. Reward – Not in the original.
3. Humility – Lowliness of mind.

The Greek Interlinear clears this verse up: “Let no one condemn you, delighting in humility and worship of Angels, pushing into things which he has not see being puffed up by the mind of his flesh without cause.”

The Holy Spirit is saying; don’t let anyone take you away from the tremendous position that is in Christ. We are “complete in Christ Who is the head of the body.” Looking to any other being than Christ will only lead to disaster. In Christ we have the highest position that it is possible to obtain.

Angels are ministering spirits to the nation of Israel. It is for this reason that they are not mentioned much in Paul’s prison epistles. They are also mentioned twice in 1 Timothy and there they are spoken of in connection with Christ and the heavenly realm.

VERSE 19: “And not holding the Head from which all the body by joints and bands having nourishment ministered and knit together increaseth with the increase of God.”

1. Head – The Head is Christ which is in control of the body.
2. Body – Those who have believed the Gospel and are sealed by the Holy Spirit until the day of redemption.
3. Joints – Ligaments which join muscle to bone. A metaphor used of the believers in the body.
4. Bands – That which binds together, a joint tie. This is also a metaphor used of believers in the body.
5. Knit together – All working together in unison.
6. Increaseth – As the joints and bands bring spiritual nourishment to the body it grows in the knowledge of the Lord. New members are also added to the body and need spiritual nourishment.

Christ as the head of the body brings nourishment to the body and makes it a perfectly working organism. This body is different from the body in Corinthians. That body is made up of many parts and is an organization. The body in Corinthians is operating under the New Covenant whereas this body in Colossians is operating under the dispensation of the Mystery. All members of this body are equal. No member is higher or lower than any other member. All will be presented without spot or wrinkle when they appear with the Lord in glory.

VERSE 20: “Wherefore if ye be dead with Christ from the rudiments of the world, why as though living in the world are ye subject to ordinances.”

When we believed the gospel Colossians 2:12 pertained to us: “Buried with Him in baptism, wherein also ye are risen with Him through the faith of the operation of God, Who hath raised Him from the dead.” In Christ we were freed from the rudiments of the world.

Rudiments – Elements of the legal system and the world system.

Therefore we are not to live under these elements anymore. Colossians 2:14-15: “Blotting out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us and took it out of the way, nailing it to His cross; and having spoiled principalities and powers He made a show of them openly, triumphing over them in it.” We are free from the world system and any religious system – what a tremendous joy!

VERSE 21: “Touch not, taste not, handle not.”

Touch not – Leviticus 5:2-3: “Or if a soul touch any unclean thing whether it be a carcass of an unclean beast, or a carcass of unclean cattle or the carcass of unclean creeping things and if it be hidden from him he also shall be unclean and guilty. Or if he touch the uncleanness of man whatsoever uncleanness it be that a man shall be defiled withal and it be hid from him; when he knoweth of it then he shall be guilty.”

Taste not – Leviticus 11 gives the animals that Israel was not allowed to eat.

Handle not – Leviticus 10:1-2: “And Nadab and Abihu, the sons of Aaron took either of them his censer and put fire therein and put incense thereon and offered strange fire before the Lord which He commanded them not. And there went out fire from the Lord and devoured them and they died before the Lord.”

VERSE 22: “Which all are to perish with the using, after the commandments and doctrines of men?”

The commandments in verse 21 have perished at the cross along with all of the commandments of men. The Greek interlinear reads this way: “These things are all for corruption in the using according to the injunctions and teachings of men.”

VERSE 23: “Which things have indeed a show of wisdom in will worship and humility and neglecting of the body, not in any honor to the satisfying of the flesh.”

Wisdom – The world’s wisdom, not the wisdom of the Bible.

Will worship – Self-imposed, or sanctimonious worship.

Humility – Lowliness of mind, not realizing what one has in Christ.

Neglecting the body – Self-imposed abuse of the body, trying to curtail the lusts of the flesh.

Honor – Attempts at asceticism which have no value.

Satisfying of the flesh – The human body as seen by Ascetics which is opposed to the Pauline view of the body as an instrument of righteousness.

The Ascetics tried to retire from the world and live an austere and rigid life thinking God would approve of this devotion to the mortification of the flesh. When we came to Christ we put on His righteousness. Trying to mortify His righteousness cannot be done. Just think of the freedom we have in Christ because He nailed the ordinances to His cross. Truly we live in the Dispensation of the Grace of God.

CHAPTER 3

VERSE 1: “If ye then be risen with Christ seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God.”

Paul is now thinking back to Colossians 2:12 where he has said: “Buried with Him in baptism, wherein also ye are risen with Him through the faith of the operation of God who hath raised Him from the dead.” We are now to seek those things which God has prepared for us in Christ Who is seated at the right hand of God. “Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessing in heavenly places in Christ; according as he hath chosen us in Him before the foundation of the world that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love. To the praise of the glory of His grace

wherein He hath made us accepted in the beloved” (Ephesians 1:3-6). “And what is the exceeding greatness of His power to us-ward who believe, according to the working of His mighty power. Which He wrought in Christ when He raised Him from the dead and set Him at His own right hand in the heavenly places; far above all principality and power and might and dominion and every name that is named not only in this world but also in that which is to come. And hath put all things under His feet and gave Him to be the head over all things to the church, which is His body, the fulness of Him that filleth all in all” (Ephesians 1:19-23). “And hath raise us up together and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus” (Ephesians 2:6).

VERSE 2: “Set your affection on things above not on things on the earth.”

Israel has been offered earthly blessings, but the church which is Christ’s body has been offered blessings that are in the heavenlies. Green’s Interlinear reads this way: “Mind the things above, not the things on the earth.” “Set your affection” means to be in love with the heavenly blessings. These blessings are spiritual not physical: “Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ” (Ephesians 1:3). The promise of a “prosperity gospel” is not found in Paul’s Prison Epistles. Our home, our hope and our calling are all found with Christ in the Heavenly Places.

VERSE 3: “For ye are dead and your life is hid with Christ in God.”

In Christ we have been freed from the world system and made alive in Him. This concept is explained in Romans 6:6-11: “Knowing this that our old man is crucified with Him that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin. For he that is dead is freed from sin. Now if we be dead with Christ we believe that we shall also live with him, knowing that Christ being raised from the dead dieth no more: death hath no more dominion over him. For in that he died, he died unto sin once, but in that he liveth he liveth unto God. Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord.”

VERSE 4: “When Christ who is our life shall appear, then shall ye also appear with Him in glory.”

The Greek Interlinear by Green reads this way: “Whenever Christ our life is revealed then also you will be revealed with Him in glory.” Christ is going to make Himself and His body of saints manifest in the future with all of His glory. This will take place in the heavenlies: “And hath raised us up together and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus” (Ephesians 2:6). “For our conversation (citizenship) is in heaven from whence also we look for the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ” (Philippians 3:20). That is why Paul has admonished us to: “Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth” (Colossians 3:2). Christ’s appearing with His church can take place at any time because nothing else has to happen. When Christ comes in the air to set up his kingdom the following has to take place first: “Now we beseech you brethren by the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ and by our gathering together unto Him, that ye be not soon shaken in mind, or be troubled neither by spirit nor by word nor by letter as from us, as that the day of Christ (Lord) is at hand. Let no man deceive you by any means for that day shall not come except there come a falling away first and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition; who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God or that is worshipped, so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God.” (2 Thessalonians 2:1-4).

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

1. Mortify – The word in the Greek is Nekroo and means to put to death.
2. Members – The parts of the body which would succumb to the following:
3. Fornication – The word in the Greek is porneia and has to do with harlotry, adultery and incest. A believer must fight the urge to view pornography which can lead to fornication.

4. Uncleaness – This has to do with impurity: Romans 1:24-“Wherefore God also gave them up to uncleanness through the lusts of their own hearts, to dishonor their own bodies between themselves.” Impure thought which are acted upon would be classified as uncleanness.

5. Inordinate affection – A passion of the mind that leads away from Christ. Romans 1:26 – “For this cause God gave them up unto vile affections: for even their women did change the natural use into that which is against nature.”

6. Evil concupiscence – This has to do with wicked desires and lusts. Romans 6:12 – “Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body that ye should obey it in the lusts thereof.”

7. Covetousness which is idolatry – Cruel and grasping desires that take the place of Christ in our worship. Ephesians 5:5 – “For this ye know that no whoremonger nor unclean person, nor covetous man who is an idolater hath any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and of God.” God does not allow any idolatry.

Christ’s kingdom includes everything that He has created which includes the Heavenly Places.

VERSE 6: “For which things’ sake the wrath of God cometh on the children of disobedience.”

Romans 6:23: “For the wages of sin is death but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.”

VERSE 7: “In the which ye also walked some time when ye lived in them.”

We walked in disobedience until such time as: Colossians 1:13 – Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness and hath translated us into the kingdom of His dear Son.” It is such a wonderful thing when a young person can come to Christ and escape much of verse 5.

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

After we have been “risen with Christ” there are still parts of our old nature that we must guard against:

1. Anger – The Greek word “thumos” has the idea of hot anger, passion, longing for revenge. These are not good traits to keep. Ephesians 4:26 – “Be ye angry and sin not: let not the sun go down upon your wrath.”

2. Wrath – The Greek word “orge” has the idea of violent passion, or excitement of the mind.

3. Malice – The Greek word “kakia” means badness in quality, an evil mindset, shrewd and deceitful calculations to do harm or ill-will.

4. Blasphemy – The Greek word is “blasphemia” and means vilification especially against God or speech defamatory of the Divine Majesty.

5. Filthy communication – The Greek word is “aischrologia” and means foul mouthed abusiveness or a loveless spirit.

The best way to overcome these traits is to fill our minds with the Word of God.

VERSE 9: “Lie not one to another seeing that ye have put off the old man with his deeds.”

Telling one lie usually leads to many more to cover up the first lie. It is a terrible way to live and was a part of our old nature. When a lie is found out a person’s credibility is ruined. We must embrace Romans 6:11: “Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord.” It is easy now to not lie because of Colossians 3:3: “For ye are dead and your life is hid with Christ in God.” We have put on Christ’s righteousness and are dead to the world system which is controlled by the father of lying Satan. Christ said that Satan is a liar and the father of it (John 8:44).

VERSE 10: “And have put on the new man which is renewed in knowledge after the image of Him that created him.”

The new man has come to Christ and their life is: “Hid with Christ in God” (Colossians 3:3). The new man is one who has put on the righteousness of Christ: “Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in His blood, to declare His righteousness for the remission of sins that are past through the forbearance of God” (Romans 3:25). The new man is: “Strengthened with might by His Spirit in the inner man” (Ephesians 3:16). Therefore the new man is:

1. Renewed – Anakainoo in the Greek means to renovate. We are now ready to accept the true knowledge of God, which the unregenerate man could not.
2. Knowledge – Epignosis in the Greek. We not only can come to a full knowledge of the truth, but we are able to acknowledge it which is most necessary.
3. Image – Eikon in the Greek. We were created in God’s image and now by putting on Christ we can become a moral representation of Him.

All this was God’s original intention for mankind: “According as He hath chosen us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love; having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the good pleasure of His will” (Ephesians 1:4-5).

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

In this dispensation there is neither:

1. Greek – The word is “Hellen” therefore a Greek speaking person.
2. Jew – The word is “Ioudaios” or one belonging to the Jewish race by birth.
3. Circumcision – The sign given to Abraham and his seed that they had been given the promise of a land and blessings by God.
4. Uncircumcision – Those not living under the promises given to Abraham but are saved under the New Covenant or as in this dispensation under the Mystery given to those saved after Acts 28:28.
5. Barbarian – The word is “Barbaros” or someone not speaking Hebrew or Greek.
6. Scythian – The word is “Skuthes” meaning savage.
7. Bond – The word is “Doulas” meaning a servant.
8. Free – The word is “Eleutheros” meaning the freedom to go wherever one likes.

Paul has here named all of the possibilities that one can be born into. Therefore there is no one who can’t come to Christ in this dispensation.

VERSE 12: “Put on therefore as the elect of God holy and beloved, bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, longsuffering.”

1. Put on – The word is “Enduo” and means we are to array ourselves in the following as:
2. Elect of God – We are chosen, or favorite because we have accepted Jesus Christ and He has clothed us in His righteousness, given us life and immortality, and a special place upon the heavens.
3. Holy – The word is “hagios” and means separated from sin and therefore consecrated to God.
4. Beloved – We are “God loved”

These things have been done for us by God; now we are to put on:

1. Bowels of mercies – Our viscera is the seat of our emotions. Mercies are compassion for the misery of others.
2. Kindness – Is that virtue that is gentle, charming and calm, suited to the company of all good people, attracting their friendship, delightful in encouragement and moderate in manners.

3. Humbleness of mind – Humility of mind, or lowliness of mind. We realize that in our flesh we are worthy of death. Only because of Christ are we worth anything. “Let nothing be done through strife or vainglory, but in lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than themselves” Philippians 2:8.

4. Meekness – “Praiotes” in the Greek. Wholly relying on God and not in our own strength. We are trusting in God’s goodness and control over the situation. It takes strength not to insert our own self interest into a situation.

5. Longsuffering – “Makrothumia” in the Greek, or one who has the power to avenge but refrains from doing so.

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

1. Forbearing one another – We are to put up with one another, thus to hold up against or endure.
2. Forgiving one another – We are to bestow a favor unconditionally.

Christ is our great example of both of these: “And when He was accused of the chief priests and elders He answered nothing. Then said Pilate unto Him, hearest thou not how many things they witness against thee? And He answered him to never a word, insomuch that the governor marveled greatly” (Matthew 27:12-14). We might have been the most awful God cursing person, but if we have accepted the Gospel, all is forgiven: “And be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ’s sake hath forgiven you” (Ephesians 4:32).

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

“Charity suffereth long and is kind; charity envieth not; charity vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up, doth not behave itself unseemly, seeketh not her own, is not easily provoked, thinketh no evil” (1 Corinthians 13:4-5). The Holy Spirit is treating in these verses how we should treat one another and love is the thing that makes it possible. Love is:

1. A bond – A joint tie or ligament; that which binds together.
2. Perfectness - The Greek word is “teleiotes” or the state of completeness; the accomplishment of the goal.

The love of Christ sent Him to the cross. We are to walk in the same love toward our fellow man. This is part of our completeness in Christ. “And walk in love as Christ also hath loved us and hath given himself for us an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet-smelling savor” (Ephesians 5:2). “That their hearts might be comforted being knit together in love and unto all riches of the full assurance of understanding to the acknowledgement of the mystery of God, and of the Father and of Christ.” (Colossians 2:2).

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

1. Peace of God – The work of the Lord Jesus Christ has provided complete peace for a believer. As we live in harmonious relationship with God we are to do so with one another.
2. Rule – Arbitrate or act as an umpire in our hearts and lives.
3. Ye are called in one body – “And have put on the new man which is renewed in knowledge after the image of Him that created him: where there is neither Greek nor Jew, circumcision not uncircumcision, barbarian, Scythian bond not free but Christ is all and in all” (Colossians 3:10-11).

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

What people need the most which is the Word of God is what most people get in the least. In our churches today programs have taken the place of the Word of God.

1. Word of Christ – Christ is the Word: “In the beginning was the Word and the Word was with God and the Word was God” (John 1:1). Our Bible is about Christ from cover to cover.
2. Dwell – The Word of God is to inhabit us. This can only happen if we are continually studying it.
3. Richly – The Greek word for richly means abundantly. This can only happen if we are continually studying it.
4. Wisdom – The word in the Greek means a broad and full intelligence. Thus the Word must be rightly divided – 2 Timothy 2:15.
5. Teaching – The Greek word “didasko” means to cause to learn, to effect learning. This takes hard work on our part.
6. Admonishing – The Greek word “noutheteo” means to put in mind, to reprove gently.

As we praise the Lord in songs and hymns it must be done with songs that are spiritual. This can only happen if the songs are packed with the rightly divided word of God. To sing of Beulah Land from Isaiah 62:4 is not the home of the Body of Christ today and leads someone who doesn’t know the Dispensation of the Mystery into a wrong hope. “And hath raised us up together and made us sit together in heavenly place in Christ Jesus” (Ephesians 2:6). This is our hope!

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

It is Christ that we are to magnify. We are to honor the Father and the Holy Spirit but the emphasis is on the Lord Jesus Christ. “And everything whatever you do in word or in work do all things in the name of the Lord Jesus giving thanks to God and the Father through Him” (Ephesians 5:20 Greek Interlinear). “Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth is come, he will guide you into all truth; for He shall not speak of himself but whatsoever He shall hear that shall He speak and He will show you things to come” (John 16:13).

“Till we all come in the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ” (Ephesians 4:13).

VERSE 18: “Wives submit yourselves unto your own husbands as it is fit in the Lord.”

The idea from the Greek is to be subject to or a voluntary attitude of giving in, cooperating with your husband. “Therefore as the church is subject unto Christ, so let the wives be to their own husbands in every thing” (Ephesians 5:24). The example comes from Eve who submitted herself to Satan instead of her husband. “And Adam was not deceived, but the woman being deceived was in the transgression” (1 Timothy 2:14). If Eve had asked her husband first before she ate of the fruit of the tree of good and evil, he would have no doubt reminded her of what God told them would happen. Two bosses in one house doesn’t work.

“As it is fit” – What is befitting in the Lord. The wife isn’t required to follow in a husband’s sins.

VERSE 19: “Husbands love your wives and be not bitter against them.”

Just as Christ loved the church so are husbands to love their wives. “Husbands love your wives even as Christ also loved the church and gave himself for it” (Ephesians 5:25). Husbands are not to get embittered or irritated with their wives. When a wife knows that her husband will give his life for her it is easy for her to submit herself unto him. The two are one flesh and therefore should live as one.

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

Paul is writing to saints here and therefore can ask the children to obey in all things. (See Colossians 1:2) “Children obey your parents in the Lord for this is right. Honor thy father and mother (which is the first commandment with promise) that it may be well with thee and thou mayest live long on the earth” Ephesians 6:1-3). Paul quotes here from the fifth of the Ten Commandments but it is the first commandment that gives a promise. What a blessing it is to see a family where the children respect the parents. It is the Lord in the hearts of the family that allows this obedience.

VERSE 21: “Fathers provoke not your children to anger lest they be discouraged.”

Fathers are not to cause their children to become spiritless, disheartened or dispirited. When a child feels that they cannot please their parents no matter what they do it is much harder to get them to live for the Lord. A child can be disciplined without causing continued anger by explaining why there is a need for discipline and then showing love to them.

VERSE 22: “Servants obey in all things your masters according to the flesh, not with eye-service as men-pleasers, but in singleness of heart fearing God.”

When we agree to work for someone we must do the task as expected by the one in authority. The task should be done to please the Lord and not for the praise of men. Following this advice will always keep one in good stead with the owner. What is involved here is a testimony for the Lord.

VERSE 23: “And whatsoever ye do, do it heartily as to the Lord and not unto men.”

Paul has addressed this book to Saints and is dealing with people who have accepted the Lord. When we remember the Lord in all that we do our blessings come from the Lord. It will always cause us to live a satisfied life. The Lord has not promised us material blessing in this dispensation because we already have all spiritual blessings in Christ. This satisfies all of our needs.

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

Our reward for serving the Lord is our inheritance or Heirship. “And hath raised us up together and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus” (Ephesians 2:6). “To the intent that now unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places might be known by the church the manifold wisdom of God” (Ephesians 3:10). We should be working for this hope and reckon ourselves dead to the world system. “But my God shall supply all your need according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus” (Philippians 4:19).

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

God will not show partiality or favoritism but will make all things right for a wronged person. Therefore we should not worry about retribution for being wronged because the Lord will take care of it. “As we have therefore opportunity let us do good unto all men especially unto them who are of the household of faith” (Galatians 6:10). God’s goal for us is: “That He might present it to himself a glorious church not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing but that it should be holy and without blemish” (Ephesians 5:27).

CHAPTER 4

VERSE 1: “Masters give unto your servants that which is just and equal, knowing that ye also have a Master in Heaven.”

1. Just – Means the state of being right or righteous; doing the best possible for the worker.
2. Equal – Proportioned by equity; don’t shortchange anyone.

Just as the Lord will never be inequitable, so should an owner be here upon the earth. The Greek Interlinear reads this way: “Lords, give the just thing and supply equality to the slaves, knowing that you have a Lord in Heaven also.”

If everyone would follow the guidelines given here and in Ephesians it would be a much better place to live and work. Above all it would be pleasing to the Lord.

VERSE 2: “Continue in prayer and watch in the same with thanksgiving.”

1. Continue – Be earnest toward; be constantly diligent.
2. Watching – Have vigilance and expectancy, not laxity and indifference.
3. Thanksgiving – Giving gratitude to God for what He has done.

Prayer is the access to God that we have continually at our hand. By using it we will make it difficult to do wrong because we are in constant fellowship with our heavenly Father. “Be careful for nothing; but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God. And the peace of God which passeth all understanding shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus” (Philippians 4:6-7).

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

Paul asks the Colossians to pray especially for a door of utterance to be open for him so that he can proclaim the dispensation of the mystery. God has committed the dispensation to him to proclaim and here he is sitting in a Roman prison. We know that Paul was in prison in Rome because the legalistic Jews had charged him with blasphemy against their law. Paul had been let out of prison, but now he says he is bound again for speaking the mystery of Christ. He had told the Colossians in 1:25-27 “Whereof I am made a minister according to the dispensation of God which is given to me for you to fulfill the word of God; even the mystery which hath been hid from ages and from generations but now is made manifest to his saints; to whom God would make known what is the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles, which is Christ in (among) you the hope of glory.” “When Christ who is our life shall appear, then shall ye also appear with him in glory” (Colossians 3:4). This is a prayer that is so necessary today because so many believers are placing themselves in God’s covenant program with Israel instead of the true program for today which is our seating with Christ in the heavenlies with Christ as the Head of the Body.

VERSE 4: “That I may make it manifest as I ought to speak.”

Paul is asking the Colossians to pray that he may make the mystery of Christ clear as he speaks it to everyone. Here he is in prison and yet he has been given the responsibility by God to get out the dispensation of the mystery which had never been known before. “Whereby when ye read ye may understand my knowledge in the mystery of Christ which was not made known unto the sons of men as it is now revealed unto his holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit” (Ephesians 3:4-5).

VERSE 5: “Walk in wisdom toward them that are without, redeeming the time.”

1. Without – Those who are outside or away from the salvation of God or a knowledge of the dispensation of the mystery.

2. Redeeming – The idea is to ransom, buy up, or rescue from the loss that anyone has who doesn’t know Christ and the present dispensation of the mystery.

“See then that ye walk circumspectly, not as fools but as wise, redeeming the time because the days are evil” (Ephesians 5:15-16).

Paul is giving good instruction to any who want to witness for Christ.

VERSE 6: “Let your speech be always with grace seasoned with salt that ye may know how ye ought to answer every man.”

1. Speech – Our expression of thought; expressing a concept or idea.

2. Grace – Graciousness or in a gracious manner.

3. Seasoned with salt – To season is to prepare; Make our speech taste good before we say it. Don’t sound like we want to pick a fight.

When we speak we must be armed with the word of God. That is the only way that one can adequately answer every man. We must show that a person must answer to God and not to humans.

VERSE 7: “All my state shall Tychicus declare unto you who is a beloved brother and a faithful minister and fellow-servant in the Lord.”

The name Tychicus means fortuitous or fortunate. We find Tychicus in Acts 20:4 where he is accompanying Paul into Asia. In Ephesians 6:21 Paul is sending Tychicus to the Ephesians. He is mentioned in 2 Timothy 4:12 and Titus 3:12. Tychicus is:

1. Beloved – Dearly loved.

2. Faithful – Trustworthy.

3. Fellow servant – A co-slave of the same master; in this case Christ.

VERSE 8: “Whom I have sent unto you for the same purpose that he might know your estate and comfort your hearts.”

Tychicus was sent by Paul to Colossae for two reasons: (1) Paul wanted to know how they were doing; how their estate, or things concerning them were going, and (2) To comfort their hearts concerning him. He is in prison but is being treated alright and can still proclaim the Mystery. “Withal praying also for us that God would open unto us a door of utterance to speak the mystery of Christ for which I am also in bonds” (Colossians 4:3).

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

The book of Philemon will give the information concerning the salvation of Philemon.

VERSE 10: “Aristarchus my fellow prisoner saluteth you and Marcus sister’s son to Barnabas, touching whom ye received commandments; if he come unto you receive him.”

The Colossians must have heard about the division between Paul and Barnabas concerning Mark, but now this had been straightened out.

1. Aristarchus can be found in Acts 19:29; 20:4; 27:2 and Philemon 24.
2. Marcus can be found in Acts 12:12; 12:25; 15:37-39; 2 Timothy 4:11; Philemon 24 and 1 Peter 5:13.

VERSE 11: “And Jesus which is called Justus, who are of the circumcision. These only are my fellow workers unto the kingdom of God which have been a comfort unto me.”

We find Justus in Acts 18:7 who was a Jew in Corinth who lived next to the Synagogue and had befriended Paul. Justus was no doubt saved under the New Covenant but because he is found here in Colossians we can assume that he had been adjusted into the dispensation of the mystery.

The kingdom of God is the total of all that Christ has created. To the nation of Israel Christ is their King. To the church which is Christ’s body Christ is the Head.

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

Epaphras was from Colossae (Colossians 1:7) and was in prison with Paul (Philemon 23). Paul tells the Colossians that he is praying while in prison that they might stand:

1. Perfect – means “full grown” the “one new man” of Ephesians 1:5 and Ephesians 2:15.
2. Complete – (Colossians 2:10) This is explained in 2:11-12: “In whom also ye are circumcised with the circumcision made without hands in putting off the body of the sins of the flesh by the circumcision of Christ; buried with Him in baptism wherein also ye are raised with Him through the faith of the operation of God who hath raised Him from the dead.”

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

Epaphras was no doubt the one who had evangelized Colossae, and possibly Laodicea and Hierapolis. His heart would always be in prayer for them even though he was in prison.

VERSE 14: “Luke the beloved physician and Demas greet you.”

Luke was the writer of both Luke and Acts. He never names himself in Acts but by using the word “us” and “we” we can know that he traveled with Paul:

Acts 16:10-17; 20:5-15; 21:1-18; 27:1-28; and he is mentioned in Colossians 4:14; 2 Timothy 4:11; and Philemon 24.

Demas is found in Colossians 4:14; Philemon 24; and in 2 Timothy 4:11 Paul says that Demas left him to go to Thessalonica, maybe on some business he was interested in.

VERSE 15: “Salute the brethren which are in Laodicea and Nymphas and the church which is in his house.”

Laodicea is close to Colossae and the group there apparently met in the home of Nymphas.

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

The title of the Ephesian letter is not found in some manuscripts and was probably an encyclical letter to be passed to the churches in Asia. This could be the letter that Paul says the Colossian church should also read. Ephesians and Colossians contain the most information about the dispensation of the mystery which Paul was commissioned to present to the world.

VERSE 17: “And say to Archippus, take heed to the ministry which thou hast received in the Lord that thou fulfill it.”

Archippus is mentioned in Philemon 2. It is possible that Archippus was the Elder that taught the group in Philemon’s house. In any event Paul is encouraging him to carry on the work that the Lord had given him.

VERSE 18: “The salutation by the hand of me Paul. Remember my bonds; grace be with you, amen.”

It may be that be this time Paul’s eyesight was failing him and he had dictated the letter to someone else. Here he says that the signature on the letter is his. Paul requests their prayer for his imprisonment that the Lord will work in spite of it.

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