

5/3/26

Colossians 1:15-29

Paul has greeted the Colossians, expressed his love for them telling them he has been praying for them since they entered the kingdom, specifically for their wisdom, walk, strengthen in Christ, in view of the present false teaching.

Paul then turned to give some of the most profound and clear teaching regarding the deity of Jesus Christ to combat the Gnostic heresy in seed form to dethrone Jesus.

* Keep in mind these truths about Jesus Paul is stating are only about thirty years after the death of Christ!

The attack on truth is ever-present and everactive against the truth of God's word.

1:15-20 The person of Christ.

1:15 The relation of Jesus to God.

* Some have seen a hymn to Christ for worship in the early church. vs. 15-20

1) Paul declared who Jesus is, "He is the image of the invisible God", to reveal God the Father as the Godman. vs. 15a

* Verse fifteen to seventeen focus on the divine nature of Jesus, eighteen to twenty focus on the human nature of Jesus!

a) Moses asked God to show him His glory. Ex. 33:18

b) God is Spirit. Jn. 4:24a; 1Tim. 1:17

c) The word image communicates two things.

1) The word implies derived likeness, used of the head stamped on a coin or a reflection in a mirror.

* Jesus was and is the image of God prior to the Incarnation and after His exaltation, they did not make Him the image of God.

2) But also the word image implies a manifested presence, physically.

c) Jesus is the only begotten Son, who is in the bosom of the Father and has made Him known. Jn. 1:18

d) Paul says that we have the light of the knowledge of God in the face of Jesus Christ. 2Cor. 4:4

* Leaving no room for eons or emanation!

e) Jesus is the full and ultimate revelation of God, the brightness of His glory and express image of His person, through whom He spoke and speaks today. Heb. 1:1-3; Jn. 1:1, 14

e) Jesus is the very nature and character of God in human form, Himself God, the visible expression of God. 1Tim. 3:16

* Jesus said, “If you have seen Me, you have seen the Father, I and the Father are one”. Jn. 10:30; 14:9

2) Paul declared the position of Jesus over Creation, “the firstborn over all creation.” vs. 15b

a) The word firstborn “prototokos”, can mean priority in time or supremacy the first in rank, the context will always help to determine the meaning, here the emphasis is on supremacy, yet it also presupposes His priority in time.

* The place of importance “over all creation” separates Jesus from creation, rather than placing Him subject to it or part of it! Phil. 2:9

b) Jehovah witnesses use this to prove Jesus is a created being, Michael the archangel, the old Arian controversy of 324 A. D.

c) Jesus is distinguished from creation, is prior to creation and above it.

d) Jesus is the Incarnate wisdom of God. Heb. 1:6

e) The Father is the source, the Son the channel and the Holy Spirit is the agent!

f) We are to be renewed in knowledge according to the image of Him who created Him. Col. 3:10

1:16 The relation of Jesus to creation.

3) Paul declared Jesus created everything that exists. vs. 16 “

a) Jesus was the sphere of power and influence of creation, “For by Him all things were created”. vs. 16a

* Past tense, aorist a historical fact. vs. 16a

1)) Genesis declared God created “bara” out of nothing and confirmed in Hebrews. Gen. 1:1; Heb. 11:3

2)) The article is “all things” created that is mentioned twice in verse 16, implying His Omnipotence, the entire universe, nothing is excluded, there is nothing that was created that was not created by Him. Jn. 1:3

b) Jesus and the particulars of creation, “That are in heaven and that are on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or principalities or powers.” vs. 16a-c

1)) Thrones, dominions, principalities or powers are four classes or ranks of angels. Col. 2:10, 15, 18

2)) Paul mentions both spirit and material together without making a distinction as the false teachers did, to teach that there is nothing in heaven or earth, visible or invisible that is greater, be it in spirits or angels, emanations or axons that are greater or above Jesus!

- c) Jesus is the mediator or agent of all creation, “All things were created through Him and for Him.” vs. 16d
- 1)) The word created is in the perfect tense focusing on the creation’s continuing existence.
* The work through whom it actually came to be.
 - 2)) Jesus was both the channel of everything created, “through Him”, and the reason or goal “for Him” to serve Him and His will.
 - a)) He is both the agent and the goal of creation!
 - b)) In fact all things are to be summed up and gathered to Jesus at the end of the age. Eph. 1:10
* Notice Paul gave two and a half verses on creation in order to clearly refute the false teaching once and for all regarding matter being evil and spirit good and that the one cannot be one with the other or the need of angel or emanations as mediators! vs. 15b-17

1:17 The relation of Jesus to sustain creation.

- 4) Jesus is the authority of all things, “And He is before all things.” vs. 17a
 - a) He stands separate and distinct from all of His creationm He created..

- * He had primacy and preeminent One over all the cosmos, the firstborn in rank of all creation! vs. 15b
- b) The word before “pro” refers to the point of time at creation. Prov. 8:22-31
 - 1)) This is emphatic in the Greek.
 - 2)) Jesus exited prior to creation.
 - 3)) He pre-existed and anticipated al of creation and is Lord of creation. Prov. 8:23; Jn. 1:1
 - 4)) Being God, the very photograph of the Father and Creator, He is eternal.
 - a)) Jesus said, “Most assuredly, I say to you, before Abraham was I Am.” Jn. 8:58
 - b)) “Your Father Abraham rejoiced to see My day: and he saw it and was glad.” Jn. 8:56
 - c)) “Whose goings forth are from of old, from everlasting”, form the vanishing point. Micah 5:2
 - 5) Jesus sustains all things, “And in Him all things consist.” vs. 17b
 - a) The word consist “synesteken” means to hold together, preservation or coherence, the unifying principle of life. Heb. 1:2-3
 - 1)) The word in “en” denotes a sphere, the fixed position in place and time or state, and is in the perfect tense with the sense of the present.

- 2)) He is the One who holds all things together, the sustainer of all things.
- b) The atom is made up of protons, electrons and neutrons and has positive charges that should repel each other, but don't.
 - 1)) This is exactly what happens when they split the atom and dropped it in the two cities of Japan in WWII.
 - 2)) They do this for nuclear energy.
 - 3)) That means that everything material has the potential of exploding.
 - 4)) Jesus upholds all things by the word of His power. Heb. 1:3
 - 5)) This is what makes our universe an orderly cosmos not a chaos of random chance.
 - 6)) The earth will melt with fervent heat after the Millennium to bring in the New heaven and earth. 2Pet. 3:10

1:18 The relationship of Jesus to the church.

- * Paul moves from the cosmological perspective to the Soteriological one of Christ!
- 6) Jesus is the One in authority over His church.
 - * Remember verse fifteen to seventeen focused on the divine nature of Jesus, now verse eighteen to twenty focus on the human nature of Jesus!

- a) The position of Jesus is the director of His church, "And He is the head of the body, the church." vs. 18a-b
 - 1)) The pronoun "He" is emphatic, no one else, but Jesus!
 - a)) The One who is the very image of God. vs. 15
 - b)) The One who is the firstborn in priority over all creation. vs. 16
 - c)) The One who is over every power and authority in heaven or earth, since He was the agent and the object for which all was created.
 - d)) Some attempt to say that "body" refers still to the cosmological created things, but the word "body" is not used in the book that way and very few times in the New Testament.
 - * Paul uses the word body for the member of the corporate church in the context and other times in his letter. Col. 2:19
 - 2)) The metaphor of "head", refer to Jesus who in control over His people, the body of the church, He has delivered and redeemed, His church. vs. 13-14
 - * Eph. 1:21-23; 5:23
 - 3)) The church "eklesia" identifies what the body is, which means to call out, the body called out of the world of

- darkness into the kingdom of the Son of His love. vs. 13
- a)) It is a living organism, not an organization.
 - b)) It is the extension of Christ to work through His members.
 - c)) It is a loving relation between the Redeemer and those redeemed.
 - d)) It is totally dependent on the head and can not exist apart from it, while the head Christ can exist without the body.
- * There are many members, but one head. Rom. 12; 1Cor. 12
- b) The credentials of Jesus to be head of His church, “who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead.” vs. 18c-d
- 1)) The word beginning “arkee” refers to the first and chief One.
 - 2)) The word firstborn “prototokos” is the same as verse fifteen, importance or rank, primacy based on His deity and now based on being the first to rise out from the dead in His humanity.
 - 3)) He is the authority and first of the new order and source that will rise up out from the dead like Him, He first and each in their own order, it is the sample of the greater harvest to come. 1Cor. 15:23

- c) The supremacy of Jesus, “that in all things He may have the preeminence.” vs. 18e
 - 1)) The purpose of the resurrection was that Jesus would have the preeminence, literally might become the first in rank and authority. exclusively, regarding all things by virtue of being Creator and redeemer through the resurrection.
 - 2)) In view of that the Creator condescended to unite Himself in a human body, died and resurrected, He is the only way and name given to men to be saved. Phil. 2:9-11
- 1:19** The reasons for the preeminence of Jesus.
- 7) Jesus is the fullness of deity, “For it pleased the Father that in Him all the fullness should dwell.”
 - a) The word fullness “plemora” means the sum total of all divine power and attributes. Col. 2:9
 - b) This was a favorite word of the heretics to express ultimate attainment with God by climbing up the emanations through secret knowledge.
 - 1)) The various emanations or aeons were spiritual and separate from the material world and though they came

from God, they were not considered part of God.

- 2)) Jesus is not one of these emanation, but distinct from them and in fact above these emanations,
- c) The fact is that it has pleased the Father, it has been His good pleasure to take up His residence in the a physical body, througuh the Incarnation, in the second person of the Trinity, Jesus.
 - 1)) The Father confirmed this at His baptism and the transfiguration. Matt. 3:17; 17:5
 - 2)) Everything God is, Jesus is!
- d) Jesus is the one mediator between God and man, the one in whom resides all the sum total of deity and they need not fear any supernatural power that be, be they emanations, aeons, angel or the like.
 - 1)) The word dwell “katoikesai” is in the present tense, stressing an ongoing reality.
 - 2)) Jesus is the work of the Father on behalf of Christians in the plan of salvation, the initiator of the plan. vs. 12-14

1:20 The plan of the Father.

- 8) Jesus is the reconcilor of all things.
 - a) The extent is stated, “and by Him to reconcile all things to Himself, by Him,

whether things on earth or things in heaven.” vs. 20a-c

- 1)) Jesus is Lord of creation and salvation. Rom. 8:19-21; Rom. 5:8
- 2)) The fall affected man and creation. Gen. 3:17; Rom 5:12-21
- 3)) The reconciliation of all things does not teach that the fallen angels will have an opportunity to repent, for that was only made for man, and Gehenna was made for Satan and his angels. Matt. 25:41
- 4)) The proper arrangement of the universe will be put under His submission after the Millennium and then even the Son will be subject to the Father and God will be all in all. 1Cor. 15:20-28
- 5)) The phrase “all thing” is repeated over and over, their are no force, power, angels, emanation, etc, that can harm a Christian, they have been defeated await their ultimate overthrow. Col. 2:15; Phil. 2:10-11
- b) The result of this reconciliation s also stated, “having made peace through the blood of His cross.” vs. 20d
 - 1)) His precious blood forgave and cleansed us of all our sins. vs. 14b; 1Pet. 1:19

- 2)) He was the propitiation for the world. 1Jn. 2:2
- 3)) Resulting in peace with God by the forgiveness of our sins. Rom. 5:1; 8:2-3
- c) The basis of the accomplished fact is the payment of His blood on the cross. vs. 14a; Col. 2:14
 - 1)) The implication is He had a body.
 - 2)) The second implication is that He died on behalf of others, vicariously a substitutionary atonement as prefigured by the Old Testament.
 - 3)) The payment “blood” after the Old Testament principal and pattern for atonement. Lev. 17:11
 - 4)) The motive was love for man and He was the initiator to reach others. 2Cor. 5:18

1:21-23 The work of Christ.

1:21 The specific application to the Colossians for the accomplished salvation history of mankind, in particular the Colossians who had repented of their sins and accepted Christ as their Lord and Savior.

- 1) Paul declared, “And you”, being emphatic in Greek.
- 2) Paul reminded the Colossians about their lost condition without Christ, “who once were

alienated and enemies in your mind by wicked works, yet now He has reconciled.” vs. 21b-c

* What a contrast, “And you He made alive, who were dead in trespasses and sins, in which you once walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit who now works in the sons of disobedience, among whom also we all once conducted ourselves in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, just as the others.”

Eph. 2:1-2

* “that at that time you 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. But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ.” Eph. 2:12-13

- a) The reason was due to their past hostility of mind “dianoia”, a word used in the LXX for the heart dealing with the act of the will and emotions, which were manifested in works against God and the things of God. Jer. 17:9
- b) The false teachers were teaching a person could live any way they wanted, it

mattered little as long as he or she cultivate their spirit!

1:22 The medium of the reconciliation.

- 1) The specific manner is declared, “in the body of His flesh through death.” vs. 22a
 - a) Jesus had a physical body and died, He was not a phantom as the Cerinthian Gnostics taught.
 - b) Jesus who was God therefore spirit had a body of matter by the Incarnation that was not evil as the Gnostics taught.
- 2) The purpose is declared, “to present you holy, and blameless, and above reproach in His sight.” vs. 22b-c
 - a) The word holy “hagios” means to set apart.
 - b) The word blameless “amomos” means or unblemished as the sacrifices of the Old Testament.
 - c) and above reproach “anegkletos” is a judicial word meaning without charge or stain, unaccused in His sight, acquitted. Heb. 9:14; 1Pet. 1:19
 - 1)) This implies the efficaciousness of the sacrifice of Jesus,
 - 2)) This implies also that man has been joined back with God through Jesus, not any other means or mediator.
 - 3)) Jesus was offered to bear the sins of many. Heb. 9:28

* Rom. 8:2-3; 2Cor. 5:21; Jude 24

1:23 The exhortation to the Colossians.

- 1) The danger of deception is real, not imaginary.
 - a) The grammar is the first class conditional, the indicative mood, which is often translated “since you continue in the faith”. vs. 23a
 - * So it is used by some to deny any element of condition in the context, but not all grammarians agree on this point of the indicative mood.
 - b) Paul is expressing his optimism and confidence in the Colossians. Col. 2:6-7
 - * But we certainly would not want to ignore the warning Jesus gave to His disciples to abide. Jn. 15:1-5
- 2) The need to continue in the faith is illustrated by the positive of abiding by two things, “grounded and steadfast.” vs. 23b
 - a) The word grounded speaks of a real experience having taken place in the past and now continues, “having been grounded”.
 - b) The word steadfast “hedraios” is an adjective describing an ongoing condition; which means to be settled, firm and immovable. 1Cor. 7:37; 15:58
 - * The word complements the first, having laid that foundation, then is

depending and leaning on it so as to be unmoved as you continue.

- 3) The negative affirms the need of abiding “and are not moved away from the hope of the gospel which you heard.” vs. 23c
 - a) The word move away “metakineo”, means to not move from a place in the present tense appearing only this time in the New Testament.
 - * This clarifies any doubt of the obvious real condition of abiding in the sphere of faith, the gospel by the negative.
 - b) To not move away from the hope of the gospel they had heard if they believed the false words of the Gnostics about Jesus.
 - * The blessed hope, the soon coming of Christ and the glorified body!
- 4) The gospel, “which was preached to every creature under heaven, of which I, Paul, became a minister.” vs. 23d-g
 - a) The word minister “diakonos”, means a servant of the gospel.
 - b) Jesus is:
 - 1)) The sphere of faith.
 - 2)) The object of hope.
 - 3)) The gospel message.
 - 4)) The commissioner of men is God.

1:24-29
Christ

The suffering service of Paul for

- * The chapter break is unfortunate for the entire unit runs from verse 24-25 and some even break it at verse seven of the second chapter, though they do have a natural break into two. Col. 1:24-29; 2:1-5, 7
- * Some break it at verse five.

1:24 The cost of Paul’s ministry.

- 1) Paul declared, “I now rejoice in my sufferings for you.” vs. 24a
 - a) He rejoiced in his sufferings for them, due to the fact that Christ is no longer on earth, therefore he as a representative is persecuted and attacked instead.
 - b) Paul does not tell the specific way he suffered for them, but he was in prison for preaching to the Gentiles. Col. 4:2
 - c) Paul in this context is speaking about his personal call to ministry. Acts 9:16
 - * 1Cor. 4:9-13; 2Cor. 1:3-11; 11:23-33; 12:9, 10; 13:4; Gal. 6:17
 - d) All Christians will suffer for their faith in one way of another, at one time or another. Acts 14:22
- 2) Paul explained his declaration, “and fill up in my flesh what is lacking in the afflictions of Christ, for the sake of His body, which is the church.” vs. 24b-d
 - a) He is not saying he is completing or adding to the work of redemption.
 - * The word for afflictions “thlipsis” is never used for Christ’s atoning death.

- b) He is not saying you have to do penance as the Catholic church teaches.
- c) Paul is saying that Christ continues to suffer through His members of the body, the church without any idea of completing or finalizing the atonement.
 - * Paul said, “that I may know Him and the power of His resurrection, and the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death, if, by any means, I may attain to the resurrection from the dead.” Phil. 3:10
- d) Sufferings play many roles in the believers life.
 - * To further the gospel, comfort others, keep humble, prepare us for future glory, a refining process for faith. 2Cor. 12:10; 1:4, 5; 12:10; 4:17; 1Pet. 1:6-7

1:25 The call of Paul to ministry to the church.

- 1) Paul qualified his call, “of which I became a minister according to the stewardship from God.” vs. 25a
 - a) The word minister “diakonos” means a waiter on table of the church to serve them.
 - b) The word stewardship “oikonomia” means management of a household, oversight, administration or dispensation

- from God. 1Cor. 4:1; 9:17; Eph. 1:10; 3:2, 9-10
- 2) Paul applied his call to service to them at this time, “which was given to me for you”. vs. 25a
 - * Revealing his commitment to be involved only with what God told and directed him.
- 3) Paul confirmed his call, “to fulfill the word of God.”
 - a) The word fulfill “pleroo” means to cram or level up the word of God regarding his call and make it complete as the fulfillment of prophecy of the Old Testament Scriptures. Acts 9:16
 - b) Rom. 15:19; 2Tim. 4:17

1:26 The identification of the fulfilled mystery.

- 1) This mystery was hidden in the Old Testament, “the mystery which has been hidden from ages and from generations.” vs. 26a
 - a) The word mystery “mysterion” was used in the pagan cults to indicate secret teaching hidden from the rest, the initiates were called “mystes”.
 - b) The word in its root means to shut the mouth and found in Paul’s letters 21 times, 27 in the New Testament.

- d) At times it has to do with future events yet to be manifested.
* There are many mysteries in the Scriptures that are yet to be manifested in the future.
- e) This mystery was hidden from people and time.
- 2) This mystery is revealed in the New Testament, “but now has been revealed to His saints.” vs. 26b
 - a) The mystery is about the Jew and Gentile in one body, in types and shadows.
 - b) In our context it refers to what has been manifest and revealed, namely the gospel of grace to the saints, Jew and Gentile one in Christ Jesus.

1:27 The revealing of the mystery by God.

- 1) To the saints God chose to make known this mystery among the Gentiles, “To them God willed to make known”. Eph. 3:6
 - a) The instruments were the few believing Jews, the twelve, Paul, etc.
 - b) The spiritual wealth of this mystery is stated, “what are the riches of the glory of the mystery among the Gentiles.”, to oppose and put down the false teaching of further mysteries apart from Christ. Rom. 2:4; 9:23; 10:12; Phil. 4:19; Col. 2:3

- 2) The key person of this mystery is identified, “which is Christ in you, the hope of glory.” vs. 27b
 - a) To be just like Him and with Him. Eph. 2:11-22; 3:2-12
 - b) A veiled hope of glory, God’s glory, not ours.
 - c) By the new birth through repentance of their sins.

1:28 The person of the mystery made known is Christ.

- 1) The preeminent person, “Him we preach.” vs. 28a
 - a) The word preach “kataggello” means to announce or proclaim publically in the present tense.
 - b) This is done by preaching the good news of Jesus Christ, the Messiah and Savior of the world to escape the wrath of God and eternal death.
 - c) This is the act of warning about God’s wrath to come and the offer of salvation by grace. Acts 20:31; 1Thess. 5:14
- 2) The priority for believers, “warning every man and teaching every man in all wisdom.” vs. 28b
 - a) The word warning “nouthountes” means to correct or admonish to put a person’s mind in proper order, a term used for

training, disciplining and warning children! Rom. 15:14; 1Thess. 5:12, 14

- b) The word teaching “didaskos” means to instruct every saint in the word of God, which is the act of educating the saint and the purpose of the church. Eph. 4:11; 1Tim. 4:16
 - c) Take note of the word “every man”, it is mentioned three times in this verse, no exception or elite persons.
 - d) Notice the phrase “all wisdom” once again, Christ is sufficient enough and there is no need of anything else.
- 3) The goal for believers, “that we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus.” vs. 28c
- a) Paul says, “we”, he is accompanied by others, he is not the only one, in this case he is referring to Epaphras and Timothy.
 - b) The word perfect “teleios” means unblemished and used for the animal sacrifices. Col. 4:12; Rom. 12:1-2

1:29 The commitment of Paul to the ministry of the gospel.

- 1) Paul was sold out to the gospel, “To this end I also labor, striving.” vs. 29a-b
 - a) The word labor “kopiao” means toil to point of weariness and exhaustion. Phil. 2:16
 - b) The word striving “agonizomai” we get our word agony, it is an athletic word.

1Cor. 9:25-27; 1Tim. 6:12; 2Tim. 4:7; Col. 2:1 “agon”

- 3) Paul was enabled by Jesus, “To this end I also labor, striving according to His working which works in me mightily.” vs. 29b
 - a) The working “energeia” working efficiently and effectively, indicating Divine proficiency to do the work of God, not human ability.
 - * We get our word “energy” from it.
 - b) The word mightily “dunamis” means inherent power or power through Christ by the Holy Spirit.
 - * Acts 1:8; Eph. 5:18; Phil. 4:13