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Colossians 1:1-14

Having the backdrop necessary to understand the false teaching at Colosse, we will be better able to understand the letter and the perspective of Paul. Why he says what he says and how he approaches the defense of this heresy which declared the insufficiency of Christ for salvation.

That there was need of greater knowledge, in particular secret mysterious initiatory insight by ascending up these emanations.

1:1-2 The Salutation and Greeting.

1:1 The writer of the salutation.

- 1) Paul is the author.
 - a) Paul formerly was called Saul, the persecutor of the church. Acts 8-9
 - b) Paul means little one, Saul means ask or request.
- 2) Paul is an apostle “apostolos” , which means one sent out.
 - a) The authority of Paul is by the will of God not man’s. 1Cor. 9:1; Gal. 1:11-12
 - b) Paul is using the term as one commissioned to act as a representative and ambassador of Christ. 2Cor. 5:20

- c) Such is the way it is applied to the twelve, Barnabas and Paul. Lk. 6:13; Acts 14:14
 - d) In a secondary way as a messenger. Jn. 13:16; 2Cor. 8:23; Phil. 2:25
 - e) O.T. Israel was centripetal, the nations were to come into the nation.
 - f) N.T. the church is to be centrifugal, the church goes out.
 - g) Not one of the twelve, but I believe unique as scripture reveals for Paul did not meet the requirements of one of the twelve apostles. Acts 1:20-22; Gal. 1:1, 15
- 3) Timothy is Paul’s companion.
- a) Timothy is identified as “our brother”
 - b) The word is “adelphos”, a believer of the same womb, the same family relation is the idea.
 - c) He joined Paul as a disciple in his second missionary journey, yet he acknowledges him as a brother. Acts 16

1:2 The greeting to the recipients.

- 1) The word saint “hagios” means set apart by God, not our own righteousness
- 2) The reference to faithful “postos” to the sphere of life at Colosse.
 - * They had dual citizenship, there and heaven. Phil. 3:20

- 3) They are brethren “adelphois” a term of affection for all Christians, describing the intimate fellowship with each other in the family of God.
- This is despite the social, economic of racial barrier.
 - The key to understand this is the phrase “in Christ”, due to Him and no one else.
 - It is the position of the believer in relation to God.
 - It is a term that Paul used more than 160 times in various forms in his letters to emphasize the believers spiritual position.
- 4) The source of everything is grace.
- The word “karis” is the common Greek greetings.
 - It denotes God’s unmerited favor.
 - It is used 155 times in the New Testament, most in Paul’s writings.
 - Though it is used as a greeting for Paul it was no mere polite cliché, nor should it for us.
- 5) The outcome is peace.
- The word peace “eirene” means to join something that was previously fractured or separated.
 - It is the usual Hebrew greeting “Shalom” which communicated a wholeness or soundness to all of life,

including prosperity, contentment and good relations.

- Paul uses the word peace in his greeting of the benefit the Colossians had entered into by believing in Christ.
- Having made peace with God through repentance by grace through faith, now they had the peace of God available to them for their needs in life.

1:3-8 Paul's prayer of thanksgiving.

* The entire section is one continuous sentence, even as in Ephesians. Eph. 1:3-23

1:3 The thanksgiving is to God for the Colossians.

- The prayer is by “we”, Paul and Timothy.
- The declaration is not that they are always praying but always giving thanks to God for them when they pray.
- Thanks is a chief characteristic of Paul and for the believer. Col. 1:12; 2:7; 3:15, 17; 4:2
 - Thanks is an expression of gratitude.
 - Thanks is also an expression of praise.
 - The thanks is to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the One Jesus revealed as our Father.

- 4) The word for praying “prosuckomai” means activity in prayer in general to God, never used for man, while giving thanks “ukaeisteo” a specific form of praying.
- 5) Praying always for them as others is Paul’s habit and it should be of the believer. Col. 1:9; 4:2
* The reference is to regularly and continuously at times of prayer not that he was praying at all times!
- 6) The word ask “aita” refers to specific requests. vs. 9

1:4 The inception of prayer for the Colossians.

- 1) Since they had heard of their faith in Christ Jesus, this is the very grounds for Paul’s prayer.
 - a) Rejoicing for their salvation and God’s grace!
* They had heard through Epaphras. vs. 7
 - b) Faith is the root, uniting man with God.
 - c) Faith “in Christ” does not mean in His name as the object but in the sphere which faith moves, commitment, trust and reliance, active faith. Linski
* As birds in the air and fish in water!

- 2) Since they heard of their love for all saints.
 - a) Rejoicing over the confirmation of their salvation. Col. 3:14
 - b) Love “agape” is the fruit of the Spirit, uniting man with man. Gal. 5:22
 - c) Love “agape” for one another is the mark of the believer. Jn. 13:35
 - d) Love “agape” for all saints, Jew or Gentile. Col. 3:11
 - e) Love “agape: that is sacrificial and indiscriminate.

1:5 The reason for their love is due to the common hope of all saints.

- 1) This hope is laid up for them in heaven, it is objective, eternal and incorruptible, it is certain in the future. 1Pet. 1:4; Phil 3:20
* The word laid up is made up of two words “keimai” to lie and “apo” off or away from, their hope is awaiting them in heaven, stored up or reserved, like the pound in the napkin. Lk. 19:20
- 2) They had heard about this hope by the content of the word of truth, the gospel, the glory of the mystery is Christ in them the hope of glory. Col. 1:27; Rom. 10:13-15, 17

- a) The message of reliability and trustworthiness, the gospel.
 - b) The gospel proclaimed by Epaphras was the true hope in contrast to the false hope of the false teaching at Colosse.
- 3) They were thanking God for the Colossian's hope in Christ who is also in heaven.
- * Faith, hope and love but the greatest of these is love! 1Cor. 13:13

1:6 The proclamation of the gospel.

- 1) It had come to the Colossians.
- 2) It has reached all the world, the known Roman world.
- 3) It is bringing forth fruit as it was in their case from the beginning.
 - a) The present middle indicative, emphasizing the continuity of the process. Robertson
 - b) Fruit and growth from within to transform the individual and growth from without to spread the gospel!
- 4) It was due to the hearing and knowing of the grace of God in truth by personal experience.
 - a) The Colossians heard and knew by full comprehension the grace of God in truth of the genuine gospel.

- b) Paul and Timothy heard that they had heard the gospel of grace, in truth and he reminded them, in contrast to the false heresy. vs. 4, 5, 6, 9
* Hearing to receive and hearing to rejoice!
 - c) Fruit is the result of new birth, the gospel has it's own inherent power to be fruitful!
 - d) One put it this way, "Faith is the soil from which the fruit of love springs, and hope is the sunshine which ripens this fruit of love". Linski
 - e) The implications are only obvious there was a point in time when they began to produce fruit, faith and love, due to the truth about God, called the gospel and the danger was that they might cease to give ear at the present to the very gospel of truth and embraced the false doctrine, this was the clear danger at hand! Col. 1:23, 2:8
- 1:7** The messenger of the gospel to the Colossians.
- 1) Epaphras was the instrument through whom the Colossians had learned the gospel, who was probably the pastor, a Colossian himself. Col. 4:12
 - a) His name is a shortened form of Epaphroditus and means lovely.

- b) The hope laid up in heaven, the grace of God in truth, are all the truth of the gospel opposed to religious untruth and works without hope! Col. 1:4-5
- 2) Epaphras is called a dear fellow servant, a valuable preacher and teacher of divine truth, the gospel.
 - a) The word servant “sundoulos” means a bond slave, like Paul.
 - b) A servant of Christ, a native Colossian. Col. 4:12
- 3) Epaphras is called a faithful minister of Christ on your behalf.
 - a) We get our word “deacon” from it, minister, a waiter on tables!
 - b) A trustworthy and reliable servant of the Lord, on their behalf, for their benefit and good, Paul’s representative and Pastor.
 - c) To no longer hear the gospel by and through Epaphras would be to say he was no longer a faithful servant as well as Paul and Timothy, for they preach and teach the same gospel. Col. 1:28

1:8 The report of Epaphras.

- 1) He declared their love in the Spirit.
- 2) He was a loving shepherd, like the Good Shepherd by and through the Holy Spirit. Zach. 4:6; Jn. 10

* Epaphras was a faithful witness!

1:9-14 **Paul's intercessory prayer.**

* This is the main purpose of the letter for the situation at Colosse by the words of Epaphras, that they abide in Christ, containing 218 words in the Greek, from verse nine to twenty!

1:9 Prayer for spiritual discernment.

- 1) The apostle and Timothy prayed since the day they heard of their faith by the words of Epaphras and also of their love in the Spirit. vs. 4
- 2) They prayed that they be filled with the knowledge of God’s will.
 - a) The word pray “proseuchomai” is used for prayer in general.
 - b) The word ask “aiteo” is in the middle voice and refers to something to be given, not done, giving prominence to the thing asked for, rather than the person and it denotes an asking to which one is entitled to. Robertson & Linski
 - c) The word filled “pleeroo is key to the epistle referring to the ongoing process of their salvation and the completion of it. Phil. 1:6
 - d) The word knowledge “epignosis” means full knowledge, a mark of

ongoing maturity, in order to see through the deception, as well as oppose it. Eph. 1:17

* The false teachers were using this term to identify the special knowledge to be lifted above the evil matter of this world, Paul says all believers can obtain it in Christ, through the word of God.

e) The will of God is what they are to be filled with, not their own regarding salvation, received by asking not by secret knowledge.

* The treasures of wisdom and knowledge are hidden in Christ, no one else! Col. 2:3

3) They prayed that they be filled in all wisdom and spiritual understanding, identifying the full capacities in Christ to know the things of God clearly. 1Cor. 2:12-16

a) The word wisdom “sohpie” is the general principle and goal, while spiritual understanding “sunesis” is the process and faculty of deciding in particular cases by insight .

* The spiritual apprehension, comprehension and application of God’s word to one’s life in contrast to fleshly wisdom. Eph. 1:8

b) The Gnostics depended on mere intellectual and specially revealed knowledge.

c) Their understanding of the things of God were based on speculation and opinion, therefore distorted and twisted.

d) The problem was not knowing the will of God but having the right relationship to God, through Christ, who reveals the will of God. Rom. 12:1-2

1:10 Prayer for spiritual conduct, the will of God. 2:6, 3:17, 3:23

1) That you may walk worthy of the Lord, this is the purpose. Eph. 4:1, 1Thess. 2:12

* This is the reason and goal of the spiritual knowledge and wisdom!

a) The word to walk “paripateo” means to order one's behavior. Eph. 4:1; 5:15

b) The tense is the aorist, it is not descriptive but a decisively final, “so as to walk: once and for all, corresponding to the previous aorist “to be filled”, the former is the result of the latter.

c) The word worthy “axios” speaks of being proportioned in weight, we equal to the Lord’s character, Christ-

like, being fully pleasing to the Lord.
1Thess. 2:12

- 1)) The phrase “fully pleasing” appears only this one time in the New Testament and in classical Greek it meant pleasing others before yourself.
 * This is the only time it appears in the new Testament.
 - 2)) Doing those things that are the direct will of God in order to please Him.
 - 3)) Doctrine and ethics are inseparable and right thinking results in right conduct!
- 2) Being fruitful in every good work.
 - a) The gospel bears fruit of itself.
 - b) The gospel bears it’s own kind, good works.
 - c) The gospel bears fruit continuously, present tense.
 - d) The gospel calls men and women to service, this is His will.
 - 3) Increasing in the knowledge of God, a sphere in which spiritual growth takes place, in quantity and quality, this is God’s will.
 - a) Living things grow.
 - b) Living things develop.
 - c) Living things mature.

1:11 Prayer for spiritual enablement.

- 1) Strengthened “dynamoo” the potential available by virtue of it’s own nature and inherent power, with all might, namely the Holy Spirit by a continuous empowerment enabling the believer.
 - a) All might “kratos” the power to rule or control is available to us for all things pertaining to life and conduct, the manifested strength. 2Pet. 1:3-4
 * Col. 1:29; 2:12
 - b) All failure is due not to the Holy Spirit but to us, failing to trust and depend on Him. Eph. 6:10
- 2) According to His glorious power, God’s not ours for the things He calls us to do. Phil. 4:13
 * In proportion to our need and in proportion to God’s abundant supply, the might of His glory! Eph. 3:20-21
- 3) Resulting in all patience, long-suffering with joy, the outcome of knowledge and power combined!
 - a) All patience “hupomone” is in respect to trials and situations is more than enduring, it is the opposite of cowardice and despondency, contending with the obstacles in perseverance bravely and seeing things through, learning and growing without succumbing.

- b) All long-suffering “makrothumia”, is in respect to people and means to hold out long against provocation, a decisive action, opposite of wrath, a spirit that bears up under injury and insult without retaliation.
- c) Joy is the first manifestation of Agape love, the fruit of the Spirit and the evidence of fellowship with God, not the circumstances. Gal. 5:22; 1Jn. 1:3-4
* Paul clearly reveals this in his epistle to the Philippians, called the epistle of joy! Phil 1:18; 2:17; 3:1

1:12 Prayer for spiritual response.

- 1) Giving thanks to the Father for being the One who qualified us “hikanoo”, which means to make us sufficient, fit or competent to be partakers of the inheritance in the saints in the light.
 - a) Only found two times in the New Testament, to make able ministers. 2Cor. 3:6
 - b) It is an illusion to the casting of lots for the inheritance of the promise land!
- 2) Giving thanks to the Father for having qualified us to be in the sphere of light. 1Jn. 1:7; 2:10

- 3) Giving thanks to the Father for being was the initiator regarding our salvation.
 - a) He calls by His grace, convicts by his Holy Spirit and word and saves by and through His Son!
 - b) The tense is aorist, pointing to the time of the Colossians’ conversion.
 - * All four participle, bearing fruit, growing, being strengthened and giving thanks are the things that are pleasing to the Lord because they reveal a walk worthy of the Lord!

1:13 The specific details.

- 1) He delivered “ruomai” meaning to liberate, save or rescue us out from “ek”, the power “exousia” the authority of darkness.
- 2) He conveyed “methistemi” meaning transferred or reestablished us into the kingdom or rule of the Son of His love, focusing on “the Son”.
 - a) The word “conveyed” was used in secular literature in reference to removing people from one country and settling them as colonist and citizens in another country.
 - b) The implication being that there are no spirit, powers, aeons or angel that are

above the power of Jesus like the false teaching was declaring!

- 1)) It appears five times in the New Testament? Lk. 16:4; Acts 13:22; 19:26; 1Cor. 13:2; Col. 1:13
- 2)) Even as God transferred Israel from Egypt to the promise land!
- c) The phrase emphasizes His deity not “His love”, words spoken from heaven at the baptism of Jesus and the mount of transfiguration.
 - 1)) It is called the kingdom of God.
 - 2)) It is called the kingdom of heaven.
 - 3)) It is called the kingdom of Christ.
 - 4)) The kingdom is spiritual, present and yet to come. Rom. 14:17; 1Cor. 4:20
 - 5)) The kingdom is among us as the corporate church and within us as individual saints.
 - a)) The believer in Christ is in the kingdom through Christ and has no need of special knowledge!
 - b)) The kingdom of God is present and yet to come! Ps. 2:7-8; Heb. 1:3-9

1:14 The special offering.

- 1) He redeeming us by the Son of His love, through His blood resulting in the forgiveness of our sins.

- a) He redeemed “apolutrosis” released, the ransomed paid for us, as a slave from bondage or a captive in war. Heb. 9:15; 1Jn. 2:2
- b) The Gnostics use the word for their initiation into certain mysteries.
- 2) The payment was His blood on the cross. Lev. 17:11, Col.1:20, Eph. 1:7, 1Pet. 1:18-19
 - a) The word forgiveness “aphesis” literally means “ascending away” or “to bid to go away” like the idea of the scapegoat of the Old Testament, on the Day of Atonement.
 - b) The sins of the repentant person are send away forever. Ps. 103:12; Mic. 7:19b
 - c) All the participles take place in this life, here and now!
 - d) We are to thank God for those who come to Christ. 2Thes. 2:13