

Colossians Introduction

One Year Review & Survey

Introduction

We continue our study of the Prison Epistles . . .

The strength and value of expository Bible teaching is context; word by word, verse by verse, chapter by chapter, and, in this case, book by book.

We began our study in October of last year starting with Acts, following Paul on his journey to imprisonment in Rome, We then had 25 studies in the book of Ephesians and 15 studies in the book of Philippians, and now we arrive at the book of Colossians.

It is during his two-year imprisonment in Rome where Paul pens the Prison Epistles; Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians and Philemon. These Epistles will always be associated with each other and should be taught in context, while separate, they are inseparable.

I recently watched Chuck Missler's 'The Bible in 24 Hours', it was amazing how much content he was able to include in this series. I learned a lot and would sit through it again, because I am sure I missed something.

Before we jump right into Colossians, let's do a high-level review and survey of what we have studied over the last year, not the whole Bible in 24 hours, but one year in one night.

And much like my experience with Missler's study, you will be reminded of some important truths that you maybe always knew but have been reminded, and maybe experiencing a new truth like, 'I didn't know that . . .'

The review and survey is primarily the reading of Scripture with some commentary, so I encourage to relax and listen to the Scripture readings, because we will be going through quite a bit, allowing the Holy Spirit to be your teacher.

Paul's Imprisonment

We started with a survey of Acts 21-28, taking the journey that Paul experienced, from his arrest and to his imprisonment in Rome.

We wanted to get a sense of his journey to Rome, how he carried himself, how he got there and what led him to write the letters to the churches . . .

- Acts 21:17-26 – Paul arrives in Jerusalem
 - He is received yet accused of teaching to Jews to forsake Moses
- Acts 21:27-39 – Paul is arrested
 - Paul is attacked by the Jews, rescued and arrested by the Centurion
- Acts 21:40-22:23 – Paul's defense before the crowd
 - Paul, speaking in Hebrew, gives his testimony
- Acts 22:24-29 – Paul's defense before the Centurion
 - Paul plays the Roman citizen card . . .
- Acts 22:30-23:11 – Paul's defense before the Sanhedrin
 - Paul speaks to the resurrection, creating conflict between the Sadducees and the Pharisees
 - The final verse is the most compelling of all . . .
 - (v23:11) – But the following night the Lord stood by him and said, *"Be of good cheer, Paul; for as you have testified for Me in Jerusalem, so you must also bear witness at Rome."*
 - Because for all that Paul has gone through to this point and all that he will go through, he is going to because that is where God wants him . . .
 - And God will get him there . . .
- Acts 23:12-33 – Jew's Plan to Kill Paul and His Escape
 - Jews plan to kill Paul . . .
- Acts 23:34-24:1-27 - Paul is Tried Before Felix
 - (v24:14) – "But this I confess to you, that according to the Way which they call a sect, so I worship the God of my fathers, believing all things which are written in the Law and in the Prophets."
 - Paul declares allegiance to this sect called the Way . . .
- Acts 25:1-12 – Paul is Tried before Festus

- Festus asks Paul if he is willing to go back to Jerusalem to be tried.
- (v10-12) – “So Paul said, "I stand at Caesar's judgment seat, where I ought to be judged. To the Jews I have done no wrong, as you very well know. For if I am an offender, or have committed anything deserving of death, I do not object to dying; but if there is nothing in these things of which these men accuse me, no one can deliver me to them. I appeal to Caesar." Then Festus, when he had conferred with the council, answered, "You have appealed to Caesar? To Caesar you shall go!"
- Acts 25:13-26- 26:32 - Paul is Tried Before Agrippa
 - Paul is brought before Agrippa . . .
 - And Paul gives his testimony and preaches the Gospel . . .
 - (v24-32) –"This man is doing nothing deserving of death or chains." Then Agrippa said to Festus, "This man might have been set free if he had not appealed to Caesar."
 - Then Agrippa said to Paul, "You almost persuade me to become a Christian."
 - Paul is now on his way to Rome . . .
 - And by the way, he was always on his way to Rome . . .
- Acts 27-28:15 – Paul is Shipped to Rome
- Acts 28:16-31 – Paul in Rome
 - (v16) – “Now when we came to Rome, the centurion delivered the prisoners to the captain of the guard; but Paul was permitted to dwell by himself with the soldier who guarded him.”
 - (v30-31) – “Then Paul dwelt two whole years in his own rented house, and received all who came to him, preaching the kingdom of God and teaching the things which concern the Lord Jesus Christ with all confidence, no one forbidding him.”
- So Paul is incarcerated, more like house arrest, not terrible conditions, but for anyone that has ever known the loss of freedom, imprisonment, or similar circumstances, in whatever form, it is never easy . . .
- When you are incarcerated, the one thing you have a lot of, and that is time.

- Paul was seemingly a prolific writer and probably wrote a multitude of letters, and he certainly had a lot of time on his hands, two years in this case . . .
- It is in these two years that Paul will pen the letters to the believers in Ephesus, Philippi, Colossae and his to friend Philemon that would become Canon, that is God breathed Scripture.

Ephesians

On Paul's second missionary tour, he visited Ephesus after leaving Corinth, and many believe planted the church there. It may have been planted by Aquila and Priscilla, who were leaders at the church of Ephesus, they even disciplined Apollos in Ephesus. On the third missionary journey, Paul spent between two and three years teaching in the city, spending his time dealing with false doctrines and pagan practices. About a decade after the church had been started, Paul wrote the epistle to the Ephesians from his imprisonment in Rome, commending their faith and love.

Ephesians is typically broken up into two sections;

- Chapters 1-3 speaking to the position of the believer
- Chapters 4-6 speak to the response (responsibilities) of the believer.

It is appropriate to give the same amount of time for each when we teach.

- We should not teach obedience without teaching who we are in Christ, which is the sole enabler of obedience, that is being in Christ . . .
- We should not teach who we are in Christ without exhorting and expecting the appropriate response from the believer, which is obedience . . .
- Ephesians does both of these, presenting the Position of the Believer and the Response of the Believer . . .

The Triune God In Salvation

- The Father – “He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love.”
- The Son – “In Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of His grace.”
- The Spirit – “You were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise, who is the guarantee of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession.”

Identity In Christ

- In Him, we have redemption through His blood . . .
- In Him, we have forgiveness of sins . . .
- In Him, He made known the mystery of His will . . .
- In Him, we have obtained an inheritance . . .
- In Him, we were predestined according to the purpose of Him . . .
- In Him, we are seated in the heavenly places . . .
- In Him, we are His workmanship created for good works

Our identity in Christ is one of the greatest truths for the Believer. In this the Believer needs to see ourselves as God sees us; redeemed, perfected and seated with Him. We are no longer to regard anything, including ourselves, according to the flesh.

Saved by Grace

- “For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, not of works, lest anyone should boast. For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them.”

Mysteries

- Jews and Gentile Become One – “And He came and preached peace to you who were afar off and to those who were near. For through Him we both have access by one Spirit to the Father. Now, therefore, you are no longer strangers and foreigners, but fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God.”
- The Bride of Christ – “For no one ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it, just as the Lord does the church. For we are members of His body, of His flesh and of His bones. "For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh." This is a great mystery, but I speak concerning Christ and the church.”

The Prayers

Revelation – The we would know God

- “The eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that you may know what is the hope of His calling, what are the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints, and what is the exceeding greatness of His power toward us who believe, according to the working of His mighty power which He worked in Christ when He raised Him from the dead and seated Him at His right hand in the heavenly places . . .”

Realization – That we would know the love of God

- “That Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith; that you, being rooted and grounded in love, may be able to comprehend with all the saints what is the width and length and depth and height--to know the love of Christ which passes knowledge; that you may be filled with all the fullness of God.”

The Church

One With God, One With Each Other

- “There is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called in one hope of your calling; one Lord, one faith, one baptism; one God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all.

Gifts for Leaders

- “And He Himself gave some to be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers, for the equipping of the saints for the work of ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ.”

The Bride

- “Christ also loved the church and gave Himself for her, that He might sanctify and cleanse her with the washing of water by the word, that He might present her to Himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing, but that she should be holy and without blemish.”

Off With the Old, On With the New

The Old Man

- “You put off, concerning your former conduct, the old man which grows corrupt according to the deceitful lusts.”

The New Man

- “You put on the new man which was created according to God, in true righteousness and holiness.”

Walking

In Love

- And walk in love, as Christ also has loved us and given Himself for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet-smelling aroma.

In Light

- For you were once darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. Walk as children of light

In Wisdom

- See then that you walk circumspectly, not as fools but as wise, redeeming the time, because the days are evil.

The Family

Husbands

- Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself for her.

Wives

- Wives, submit to your own husbands, as to the Lord.

Both

- Nevertheless let each one of you in particular so love his own wife as himself, and let the wife see that she respects her husband.

Children

- Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right. "Honor your father and mother," which is the first commandment with promise: "that it may be well with you and you may live long on the earth."

Parents

- And you, fathers, do not provoke your children to wrath, but bring them up in the training and admonition of the Lord.

The Workplace

Bondservants

- Bondservants, be obedient to those who are your masters according to the flesh, with fear and trembling, in sincerity of heart, as to Christ;

Masters

- And you, masters, do the same things to them, giving up threatening, knowing that your own Master also is in heaven, and there is no partiality with Him.

Spiritual Warfare

The Foe

- Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil.

His Minions

- For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places.

The Armor of God

- Therefore take up the whole armor of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand.
 - The Belt of Truth
 - The Breastplate of Righteousness
 - The Feet Shod with The Gospel of Peace
 - The Shield of Faith
 - The Helmet of Salvation
 - The Sword of the Spirit, the Word of God

Paul ends the spiritual war dissertation with this . . .

- "Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit."
 - Because spiritual battles are won on our knees . . .

Philippians

While in Troas on his second missionary journey, Paul was called by God in a vision to go to Macedonia.

Paul's custom was to go to the synagogue whenever he first arrived in a new city, but in Philippi, apparently, there was no synagogue, so he went to the river where he knew that Jews would be worshipping. There Paul met Lydia, a Gentile who became the first Christian convert in Europe.

Lydia's conversion was the first of three significant events associated with the beginning of the church in Philippi. The second was the exorcism of demons from a slave girl, which resulted in Paul and Silas being thrown into prison. The third important event was the conversion of the Philippian jailer and his family.

Paul visited the church at Philippi again on his third missionary journey, and the believers there gave generously to support Paul's ministry as well as the church in Jerusalem.

Thanksgiving and Prayer for the Philippians

- "Being confident of this very thing, that He who has begun a good work in you will complete it until the day of Jesus Christ."

Paul's Circumstances

- "But I want you to know, brethren, that the things which happened to me have actually turned out for the furtherance of the gospel, so that it has become evident to the whole palace guard, and to all the rest, that my chains are in Christ."
- "For to me, to live is Christ, and to die is gain. But if I live on in the flesh, this will mean fruit from my labor; yet what I shall choose I cannot tell. For I am hard pressed between the two, having a desire to depart and be with Christ, which is far better. Nevertheless to remain in the flesh is more needful for you."

The Humility of Christ

- (2:6-11) – “Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus, who, being in the form of God, did not consider it robbery to be equal with God, but made Himself of no reputation, taking the form of a bondservant, and coming in the likeness of men. And being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself and became obedient to the point of death, even the death of the cross. Therefore God also has highly exalted Him and given Him the name which is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of those in heaven, and of those on earth, and of those under the earth, and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.”

Paul's Associates in the Gospel

- Timothy ([2:19-24](#)) – His spiritual son . . .
- Epaphroditus ([2:25-30](#)) – His faithful servant, deliverer of the letter to the Philippians . . .
 - Hold these men like these in high esteem . . .

Warnings against Judaizers and Antinomians

- (3:2-3) – “Beware of dogs, beware of evil workers, beware of the mutilation! For we are the circumcision, who worship God in the Spirit, rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh.”
- (3:8-10) – “Yet indeed I also count all things loss for the excellence of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them as rubbish, that I may gain Christ and be found in Him, not having my own righteousness, which is from the law, but that which is through faith in Christ, the righteousness which is from God by faith; that I may know Him and the power of His resurrection, and the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death.”
- (3:18-20) – “For many walk, of whom I have told you often, and now tell you even weeping, that they are the enemies of the cross of Christ: whose end is destruction, whose god is their belly, and whose glory is in their

shame--who set their mind on earthly things. For our citizenship is in heaven, from which we also eagerly wait for the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ.”

Resolve Division

- (4:3-5) – “And I urge you also, true companion, help these women who labored with me in the gospel, with Clement also, and the rest of my fellow workers, whose names are in the Book of Life. Rejoice in the Lord always. Again I will say, rejoice! Let your gentleness be known to all men. The Lord is at hand.”

Battle for the Mind

- (4:6-7) – “Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God; and the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.”
- (4:8) – “Finally, brethren, whatever things are true, whatever things are noble, whatever things are just, whatever things are pure, whatever things are lovely, whatever things are of good report, if there is any virtue and if there is anything praiseworthy--meditate on these things.”

I Can Do All Things

- (V12-13) – “I know how to be abased, and I know how to abound. Everywhere and in all things I have learned both to be full and to be hungry, both to abound and to suffer need. I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me.”

Giving

- (V15) – “Now you Philippians know also that in the beginning of the gospel, when I departed from Macedonia, no church shared with me concerning giving and receiving but you only.”

Jehovah Jireh – The Lord Shall Provide

- (V19) – “And my God shall supply all your need according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus.”

We have had a review of Acts, Paul's journey to imprisonment, and two of the letters Paul wrote while imprisoned, Ephesians and Philippians. Take a moment to dwell on plethora of subject matter presented up to this point; The Trinity, Salvation, Grace, Division/Unity, Spiritual Warfare, Giving, False Teaching, the Body of Christ, Knowing and Being Loved by God, the Work and Nature of Christ, Our Thought Life, Our Identity in Christ and how we are to walk and live the Christian life in our relationships with others and God.

Now we take a look at the Epistle to the Colossians, where we will see some familiar topics, i.e. false teaching, and some new subject matter, especially in reference to the person of Jesus Christ . . .

Colossians

A little background on Colossae . . .

Colossae was located on the Lycus River and on the great east-west trade route leading from Ephesus on the Aegean Sea to the Euphrates River, about 100 miles east of Ephesus. By the first century, Colossae was diminished to a second-rate market town, which had been surpassed long before in power and importance by the neighboring towns of Laodicea and Hierapolis. What gave Colossae NT importance, however, was the fact that, during Paul's three-year ministry in Ephesus, Epaphras had been converted and had carried the gospel to Colossae.

The recipients of the letter were the congregates of Christian church Epaphras had planted in Colossae. Assigned by Paul to preach to the Gentiles in the Lycus Valley, the church he founded at Colossae was well known. Thus, the Christians there were mostly Gentiles. Paul never actually visited the church in Colossae.

The church at Colossae was under attack from false teachers who were denying the deity of Jesus; they were teaching that He was not actually God. Paul addressed these issues directly as the nature of Jesus Christ as Creator and Redeemer is nonnegotiable, probably the most essential of Christian doctrines.

Colossians presents the all-supremacy, the all-sufficiency, the uniqueness, and the fullness of the person and work of Jesus Christ as the God-man Savior, the Creator and Sustainer of the universe and the total solution for man's needs both for time and eternity.

Similar to Ephesians, Colossians is divided primarily into two sections; Chapters 1 & 2, the Supremacy of Christ, and Chapters 3 & 4, our Submission to Christ.

Tonight we finish by taking a high level survey of the Book of Colossians . . .

The Redeemer

(1:9-14) – “For this reason we also, since the day we heard it, do not cease to pray for you, and to ask that you may be filled with the knowledge of His will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding; that you may walk worthy of the Lord, fully pleasing Him, being fruitful in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God; strengthened with all might, according to His glorious power, for all patience and longsuffering with joy; giving thanks to the Father who has qualified us to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in the light. He has delivered us from the power of darkness and conveyed us into the kingdom of the Son of His love, in whom we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins.”

The Creator

(1:9-14) – “For this reason we also, since the day we heard it, do not cease to pray for you, and to ask that you may be filled with the knowledge of His will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding; that you may walk worthy of the Lord, fully pleasing Him, being fruitful in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God; strengthened with all might, according to His glorious power, for all patience and longsuffering with joy; giving thanks to the Father who has qualified us to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in the light. He has delivered us from the power of darkness and conveyed us into the kingdom of the Son of His love, in whom we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins.”

The Head of the Body

(1:18-20) – “And He is the head of the body, the church, who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, that in all things He may have the preeminence. For it pleased the Father that in Him all the fullness should dwell, and by Him to reconcile all things to Himself, by Him, whether things on earth or things in heaven, having made peace through the blood of His cross.”

In Him

(2:9-15) – “For in Him dwells all the fullness of the Godhead bodily; and you are complete in Him, who is the head of all principality and power. In Him you were also circumcised with the circumcision made without hands, by putting off the body of the sins of the flesh, by the circumcision of Christ, buried with Him in baptism, in which you also were raised with Him through faith in the working of God, who raised Him from the dead. And you, being dead in your trespasses and the uncircumcision of your flesh, He has made alive together with Him, having forgiven you all trespasses, having wiped out the handwriting of requirements that was against us, which was contrary to us. And He has taken it out of the way, having nailed it to the cross. Having disarmed principalities and powers, He made a public spectacle of them, triumphing over them in it.”

Raised With Christ

(3:1-4) – “If then you were raised with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ is, sitting at the right hand of God. Set your mind on things above, not on things on the earth. For you died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God. When Christ who is our life appears, then you also will appear with Him in glory.”

Put On Love

(3:12-15) – “Therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, put on tender mercies, kindness, humility, meekness, longsuffering; bearing with one another, and forgiving one another, if anyone has a complaint against another; even as Christ forgave you, so you also must do. But above all these things put on love,

which is the bond of perfection. And let the peace of God rule in your hearts, to which also you were called in one body; and be thankful.”

I know this was a bit lengthy, but I hope we can get a sense of how Colossians gives us a presentation of Christ very much different from that of Ephesians and Philippians, but at the same time, very much in context, continuing, as the Epistles do, to build on each other.

The Word of God has a way of doing that . . .

It is also very possible that these Believers may have had access and read the letters to the other churches, as Paul’s letters were intended to be circulated among the churches in region.

We are blessed that God has given us access to all three . . .

Next week we take a closer look at the Epistle to the Colossians . . .