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Bible Study

“Almost Everything You Need to Know About ...”

The Book of



Tuesday, November 10, 2020

6:30 p.m. Online

Rev. Dr. Ho-Shing-Scott
Ministerial Chief of Staff

I. KEY FACTS ABOUT THE BOOK OF COLOSSIANS

- a. **Name of the book:** Colossians; also known as the Epistle of the Colossians.
- b. **Position in the Bible:** 51st Book in the Bible: 12th Book in the New Testament: 7th of 21 Epistle Books (Romans - Jude): 8th of Paul's 13 books: 4 chapters, 95 verses, and 1998 words
- c. **Author:** Paul. See 1:1; 3:1.
- d. **When written:** In A.D. 60-62 from Rome during Paul's 1st Roman imprisonment for teaching about Jesus.
- e. **Recipient:** The church at Colossae

COLOSSAE:



- i. was located about 100 miles east of Ephesus, in the region of the Seven Churches of Asia.
 - ii. was a populous commerce center, famous for its glossy black wool.
- f. **Why it was written:** To correct bad theology (misunderstandings about God) and to instruct the Colossians to live right.
 - g. **Key word:** Preeminence
 - h. **Key Verse:** And he is the head of the body, the church; he is the beginning and the firstborn from among the dead, so that in everything he might have the supremacy. (1:18 NIV).

II. *Words, words, words, in Colossians:*

He, Him, His - 30 times

Christ - 19 times

Lord - 8 times

Whom - 4 times

Christ Jesus - 3 times

Lord Jesus Christ - 2 times

Firstborn - 2 times

The head - 2 times

The Son - 1 times

Master - 1 time

III. **Nice to Know Information**

- a. The Book of Ephesians is one of four “Prison Epistles,” so titled because they were written by the apostle while he was a Roman prisoner in Rome at the time they were written.
 - i. The four “Prison Epistles are:
 - Ephesians • Colossians • Philippians • Philemon
- b. The church at Colosse was established by Epaphras who was saved in Ephesus and brought the gospel to Colossae, so he was a church planter.
- c. At the time of the Colossians letter, Paul had not visited Colosse. He was under house arrest. Epaphras went to visit Paul in Rome to tell him about some disturbing things going on in the church.
- d. The Colossian letter was sent from Paul in Rome to Colosse by Tychicus and the converted slave, Onesimus, because of Epaphras’ arrest.
- e. While the Book of Ephesians focuses on the Body (the Church), Colossians focuses on the Head (Christ).

IV. **Four Warnings**

- a. Do not be distracted from Christ (2:4)
- b. Do not be legalistic (2:20)
- c. Do not be tempted by the “old life” (3:5-7)
- d. Do not abuse relationships (4:5-6)

V. **Key verse for each chapter**

- a. Colossians 1:18 - And he is the head of the body, the church; he is the beginning and the firstborn from among the dead, so that in everything he might have the supremacy.

- b. Colossians 2:13 - When you were dead in your sins and in the uncircumcision of your flesh, God made you alive with Christ. He forgave us all our sins,
- c. Colossians 3:2 - Set your minds on things above, not on earthly things.
- d. Colossians 4:6 - Let your conversation be always full of grace, seasoned with salt, so that you may know how to answer everyone.

VI. Outline

- a. Doctrinal section: Christ's Preeminence and the Colossian Heresy (Col. 1:1-2:23).
 - i. Paul's prayer and praise (1:1-14)
 - ii. Christ's Exaltation (1:15-23)
 - iii. Wisdom (1:24-2:3)
 - iv. The Colossian Heresy (2:4-23)
- b. Ethical Section: Identification with Christ and Personal Remarks (Col. 3:1-4:18).
 - i. Living in two worlds (3:1-4:6)
 - ii. Conclusion (4:7-18)

a. Doctrinal section: Christ's Preeminence and the Colossian Heresy

i. Paul's Prayer and Praise (Colossians 1:1-14)

In these verses Paul begins with a greeting and then lets them know that he always thanks God for them when he prays for them.

He noted that Epaphras planted the church and the gospel which was bearing fruit all over the world (1:6). This fruit was faith (1:4), hope (1:5), and love (1:8). Paul prays for the Colossians to have "knowledge of His [God's] will" (1:9). Next, Paul prays for the Colossians to be "strengthened with all power according to His glorious might" (1:11).

ii. Christ's Exaltation (Colossians 1:15-23)

Paul cites an early Christian Hymn in his exaltation of Christ. The first verse exalts Christ for his **preeminence** in creating all things, asserts Christ's equality with the Father and declares that Christ created thrones, dominions, and authorities (1:15-17, 19). The second verse exalts Christ for his **redemption** (1:18-20). You are a case study of what God does through Jesus, reconciliation through the redemptive blood of Christ, so do not be distracted, but stay rooted and grounded in Christ (1:21-23)

iii. Wisdom (Colossians 1:24-2:3)

Paul states that he rejoices in suffering for proclaiming the good news of Christ. He explains that wisdom comes understanding the mystery that is now revealed: Christ in you the hope of glory (1:26-27). When you have Christ you are filled with wisdom and knowledge (2:2-3)

iv. The Colossian Heresy (Colossians 2:4-23).

The heresy of the Colossians was grounded in **gnosis** – unknowable wisdom and mystery. Paul sums this up in: philosophy and empty deceit based on human tradition, on the forces of the world (2:8). They emphasized **Jewish rites** of circumcision (2:11), laws of purification (2:14), kosher food, Sabbath keeping (2:16). Second heresy involved worship of angels (2:18). The third is asceticism (2:23).

b. Ethical Section: Identification with Christ and Personal Remarks

i. Living in two worlds (Colossians 3:1-4:6)

Paul reminded them of the earthly walk which is to put to death what belongs to the worldly nature (3:5-9). He also focused on their heavenly standing (3:1-2). He acknowledges the struggles within believers (3:9). The antidote: Positive admonitions by Paul 3:12-4:6). We are ambassadors for Christ (3:17). Have good relationships (3:18-4:1), with an emphasis on prayer (4:3).

ii. Conclusion (4:7-18)

Paul writes to the Colossians on behalf of Timothy on receiving a report from Epaphras. He sends the letter by Tychicus and Onesimus, and praises Epaphras.

Towns, E. L. & Gutierrez, B: The Essence of the New Testament: A Survey (2nd Ed.). Academic Press

Summary Milestones

Exalted Messiah

Jesus is the true image and firstborn of creator God. At the cross, he reconciled man and now dwells among us as the body's head.

The Suffering Apostle

Paul's suffering is not a sign of defeat. It is his way of participating in Jesus' own suffering done as an act of love for us.

Pressure to Turn Away

The book of Colossians encourages Christians to not compromise or turn from Jesus. They must grasp who Jesus is and what He did for them.

The Resurrection Life

Because of Jesus' resurrection, believers become part of a new humanity that's joined to Him, and their lives are changed and transformed here on earth.

New Humanity

As part of the new humanity, Christians serve and please Jesus alone. Their devotion to the exalted Messiah transforms their lives, households and every relationship.

<https://bibleproject.com/explore/colossians/>

Video

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pTXIDxQsvc&feature=emb_logo

In Conclusion

- Paul prays that the Colossians may have clearer knowledge and spiritual discernment.
- He uses an early hymn to give Christ Lofty praise.
- He has reconciled all things to Himself through His death on the cross, making believers alive to God.
- This proper view of Christ served as the antidote for the Colossian heresy as well as a building block for Christian life and doctrine both then and now.
- Paul wants them to walk in Christ setting them on the path to right living.

How do we apply this?

- Our view of Jesus Christ will impact every area of our life.
- When we have a clear understanding of who Jesus is, it changes how we relate to him.
- As Christian believers we have died with Christ; therefore, we need to die to our sins.
- We have also been raised with Christ; therefore, we must live well in Him have the character of Christ which is love.
- And because He is Lord over us all, we must submit to him.
- We are given practical instructions for living as a Christian in a culture that does not celebrate Jesus as the authority of all things.
- Are you following Jesus as you should? Our faith in Jesus Christ should transform the relationships we have in every area of our lives.