

Wednesday Evening Bible Study

September 4, 2024

Series - The Life and Writings of the Apostle Paul

The Prison Epistles

The Letters to Colossians - Section One – Doctrinal - Chapter One

Text – Colossians 1

In this epistle we see Christ as the fullness of God. The word *fullness* is the Greek word *pleroma*, which means repletion or completion. He is full of God. He is God in all His completeness. (Colossians 1:19; 2:9) In Philippians the focus was on His humility. The word used in Philippians 2:7 is *keno*, which means to make empty. In Ephesians the emphasis was on His body, the church. Philemon deals with Christ in action. It is putting the principles of the Word of God into action.

As we have already seen in many of Paul's writings, this epistle is divided into two major sections. The first two chapters are doctrinal, and the last two are very practical.

I. The Preliminaries (vs. 1 – 8)

Paul commences this letter much the same way that he begins most of his other letters. He first identifies himself as "an apostle by the will of God". By doing so, he establishes his authority over this local congregation. He next identified the intended recipients of the letter, which is "the saints and faithful brethren" at Colosse. We learn later that this letter was also intended to be read by the church of the Laodiceans. (4:16) Notice the similarities in the greetings that Paul used in Ephesians, Philippians, and Colossians. In all three cases the letter is not addressed specifically to a church as it is in Corinth and Thessalonica.

It is apparent from these opening verses that Paul had not personally visited this church but was acquainted with them through the ministry of Epaphras. Epaphras may have been the pastor of the church. Regardless of whether he was the pastor or not, Epaphras served as a communicator both to the church at Colosse, and from the church back to Paul in Rome.

II. The Prayer (vs. 9 – 20)

A. Petition (vs. 9 – 11)

1. Filled with knowledge, wisdom, and understanding (v. 9)
2. Walk Worthy (v. 10)
 - a. fruitful in good works
 - b. increase in knowledge

- c. Strengthened (v. 11)
- d. Patience
- e. Longsuffering
- f. joy

B. Praise (vs. 12 – 20)

- 1. partakers of the inheritance (v. 12)
- 2. delivered from darkness to the Kingdom of Christ: (vs. 13 – 19)
 - a. He redeemed us through His blood (v. 14)
 - b. He is the Image of God (v. 15; Hebrews 1)
 - c. He is the Creator of all things (v. 16)
 - d. He is the Sustainer of all things (v. 17)
 - e. He is the Head of the Church (v. 18)
 - f. He is the firstborn from the dead (v. 18)
 - g. He is the Preeminent One (v. 18)
 - h. In Him dwells all fullness (v. 19)
 - i. reconciled us through His blood (v 20)

III. Plan for Reconciliation (vs. 21 – 29)

A. Includes a Presentation (vs. 21 – 23a)

- 1. Holy and Unblameable
- 2. Unreproveable – “if we continue...”

This is not a conditional statement. This is stating that we will continue if we have been reconciled to Him.

B. Involves a Preacher (vs. 23b – 29)

The word minister here is the word for deacon. It means that Paul was called to minister or serve. Notice the phrase, “according to the dispensation of God that was given to me”, which means that Paul was given a stewardship or an authority to preach the gospel to the Gentiles.

- 1. Problems
- 2. Proclaiming the truth
- 3. Perspiration