**Colossians**

**Introduction**

The epistle to the Colossians is one of the four epistles written by the apostle Paul while he was under house arrest in Rome.

The others are Ephesians, Philippians, and Philemon. Paul was essentially imprisoned by the Jews for preaching the gospel to the Gentiles.

Israel understood that they would teach the Gentiles the gospel of the kingdom when Israel was ruling and reigning during its kingdom and not when Israel was in the fallen position that it found itself in after they had rejected their Messiah.

Paul was instructed that God was ushering in a new dispensation of grace during Israel's fall to reach the Gentiles in spite of Israel.

This did not set well with the traditional hardline Jew and was confusing to those Jewish believers still under the kingdom program.

**The epistle was written around 61 A.D**.

The four prison epistles reveal later revelations that the apostle of the Gentiles received which need to be understood in their context so that you can see the development of new doctrinal revelations for the body of Christ.

The truths found in these four epistles were not known to the twelve apostles until after Paul had revealed them to the body of Christ and they were never preached by the twelve to the nation of Israel.

**The City of Colosse**

Colosse was located in the region of Phrygia, Asia, modern day Turkey. During Paul's ministry Colosse was predominately Gentile, but there was a community of Jews living there. Colossians 2:13.

The churches in Laodicea, Hierapolis, and Colosse all got their start during the three years Paul was in Ephesus on his third missionary journey, (Acts 19:10).

Epaphras was the man who founded the church in Colosse (Colossians 1:5-7). The book of Acts never mentions Paul as ever having gone to Colosse.

Epaphras was a native of Colosse (Colossians 4:12) and was probably converted to Christ while visiting Ephesus during Paul's stay there. He then returned to his city and began the church.

Paul's letter to the Colossian church was a preventive letter to combat the mixture of Jewish legalism and Greek philosophy that was creeping its way into the church’s doctrine.

To many Greeks, Jesus was not enough, salvation must be Christ plus secret knowledge. This false teaching is prevalent today in many different forms adding to grace and rendering grace useless. It is all of grace and none of us.

**Chapter One**

**Having the Preeminence**

The book of Colossians is a thesis on the knowledge of who Christ is and what we should do with that knowledge, for it is in Christ alone that all fullness dwells and Christ should have preeminence in our lives.

**1 Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God, and Timotheus our brother, 2 To the saints and faithful brethren in Christ which are at Colosse: Grace be unto you, and peace, from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.**

**An apostle of Jesus Christ:** by the will of God and not of his own will nor of the will of man. Paul was called to be the apostle of the Gentiles while on the road to Damascus in Acts chapter nine.

He was not the replacement for Judas, Matthias was. Judas was an apostle to the nation of Israel along with the other eleven, while Paul was expressly distinguished as the apostle of the Gentiles.

The twelve apostles were promised to sit on twelve thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel, not the Gentiles. Matthew 19:28.

**The saints and faithful brethren in Christ:** Paul writes to the saints and faithful brethren in Christ at Colosse which should tell you right away that while all that are in Christ are saints, but not all saints are faithful brethren all of the time.

To be in Christ means primarily that we are in his body, the church, of which he is the head.

***Ephesians 4:15 But speaking the truth in love, may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ: 16 From whom the whole body fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love.***

**Grace be unto you, and peace:** The grace and peace is given unto those in Colosse, as well as unto all believers in this present dispensation not by Paul, but by God the Father, and his Son.

It is given to all who believe the gospel of the grace of God. Acts 20:24 & 1st Corinthians 15:1-4.

***Ephesians 3:2 If ye have heard of the dispensation of the grace of God which is given me to you-ward:***

***Colossians 1:25 Whereof I am made a minister, according to the dispensation of God which is given to me for you, to fulfil the word of God;***

Peace is also given by God to all who trust in Christ’s death, burial, and resurrection. Peace is now the situation the world finds itself in thanks to Christ making peace for us with God by his giving of himself on the cross on our behalf.

Had Christ not given himself for us there would be no peace between us and God, only enmity (war). Before a person is saved, they are at war with God. Ephesians 2:14-17.

**3 We give thanks to God and the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, praying always for you, 4 Since we heard of your faith in Christ Jesus, and of the love which ye have to all the saints,**

**The Father of our Lord Jesus Christ:**In verse two we learned that God is our Father if we believe the gospel of the grace of God. Here we read (not for the first time) that God is the Father of the Lord Jesus Christ.

It is that Father/Son relationship that we shall study beginning in verse twelve of this chapter to better understand about this relationship. Lord means master, and Christ means the anointed one. Acts 4:27 & 10:38.

It does not take long for lovers of Christ to start sharing that love with those around them but if knowledge does not accompany that love it will become twisted and misdirected.

**Your faith in Christ Jesus:**The Colossians faith in the death of Christ for their sins, his burial, and his resurrection (1st Corinthians 15:1-4). The faith of Christ which is totally different.

**The love which ye have to all the saints:**They heard that the saints of Colosse were busy trying to make all men see what is the fellowship of the mystery which is mentioned in Ephesians:

***Ephesians 3:9 And to make all men see what is the fellowship of the mystery, which from the beginning of the world hath been hid in God, who created all things by Jesus Christ:***

**5 For the hope which is laid up for you in heaven, whereof ye heard before in the word of the truth of the gospel;**

**The hope which is laid up for you in heaven:** We as the body of Christ have a heavenly hope, whereas Israel which was under the law had an earthly hope in the kingdom. Colossians 1:27.

***Job 19:25 For I know that my redeemer liveth, and that he shall stand at the latter day upon the earth: 26 And though after my skin worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God.***

**The word of truth:**Paul mentions that the Colossians had heard the word of the truth previously when they heard the gospel.

Now he is writing to these believers to establish them in the faith so that they might bring forth fruit in their own lives and ultimately bring forth new fruit.

***Ephesians 1:13 In whom ye also trusted, after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation: in whom also after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that holy Spirit of promise,***

There are other gospels in the bible, which are true, but they won’t save anyone today. For instance, the gospel of the kingdom (Matthew 4:17-23) will not save anyone today.

Today a person must believe that Christ died for their sins according to the scriptures, was buried, and rose again from the dead according to the scriptures in order to be saved.

**6 Which is come unto you, as it is in all the world; and bringeth forth fruit, as it doth also in you, since the day ye heard of it, and knew the grace of God in truth:**

**In all the world:** This is speaking about the gospel that Paul preached, and its going into all the world, not the gospel of the kingdom that will be preached in all the world in the tribulation period. Matthew 24:14.

The truth of the gospel of the grace of God (Acts 20:24) will produce fruits in a believer’s life and those around them.

**The grace of God in truth:** Acts 20:2 4 & Ephesians 3:2.

**7 As ye also learned of Epaphras our dear fellowservant, who is for you a faithful minister of Christ; 8 Who also declared unto us your love in the Spirit.**

**Epaphras our dear fellow servant:** It should be the desire of every minister of the gospel to want to see the fruit that God has given them to grow just as Paul, Timotheus and Epaphras all wanted for these believers in Colosse. Ephesians 3:7.

**A faithful minister of Christ:** The word minister is the Greek word “Diakonos,” which is where we get the word “deacon” transliterated from.

It means a servant. The deacon’s number one qualification is found in 1st Timothy:

***1st Timothy 3:9 Holding the mystery of the faith in a pure conscience.***

Deacons today have no idea what that qualification means, because their pastor has no idea what it means, because their denomination has no idea what that means.

They may take a stab at saying what they think it means, but if they do not understand the distinctive ministry of Paul, they do not have a clue as to its’ meaning.

**9 For this cause we also, since the day we heard it, do not cease to pray for you, and to desire that ye might be filled with the knowledge of his will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding;**

**Be filled with the knowledge of his will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding:** Wanting that for them was not enough, they prayed always that they might be filled with the knowledge of his will.

Do you pray the same for your converts or those you disciple? You should. It is one thing to be saved and it is another thing totally to be filled with the knowledge of his will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding.

Being saved without any knowledge of his will can be dangerous and being saved with only a little spiritual knowledge can lead to many problems.

Every cult and denomination today are built on large percentages of truth along with differing percentages of error.

That is because they are not filled with the knowledge of his will and they do not possess all wisdom and spiritual understanding largely because they were not prayed for as Paul did, nor were they properly discipled. Paul wanted to make sure that was not the case here.

The average Christian today is filled with a knowledge of this world but does not understand the plan of God for the ages which is clearly laid out for them in the Bible and especially in Paul's epistles.

Guess which epistles most people are ignorant of? Paul's! That is because Satan wants them to be ignorant of what will be the most helpful to them.

In Paul's epistles you have the most complete understanding of the will of God that you will ever find and that is the knowledge of his prophecy program concerning Israel, and his mystery program concerning the church.

God does not just want you to know about it, but he wants you to be filled with the knowledge of his will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding.

**Wisdom:**This is not the kind of wisdom found in Exodus 28:3 and 31:6 given to Bezaleel and Aholiab to work on the instruments in the Tabernacle. This is the wisdom found in Paul’s writings:

***1st Corinthians 2:7 But we speak the wisdom of God in a mystery, even the hidden wisdom, which God ordained before the world unto our glory:***

**Spiritual understanding:** *Ephesians 5:17.*

**10 That ye might walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing, being fruitful in every good work, and increasing in the knowledge of God;**

**Walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing:** If you are not filled with the knowledge of God's will, you will not be able to walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing, nor be fruitful in every good work.

For example, if I only knew half of God's plan for the ages and I was a teacher of God's word I would only be able to prepare people halfway to serve the Lord. I could not be as fruitful in every good work and therefore I could not fully please the Lord in all that I have taught.

Where do we find out how to walk worthy in the Lord today? This walk is described in detail in the whole second half of Ephesians, from Ephesians 4:1 all the way to the end of the epistle.

***Ephesians 4:1 I therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you that ye walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called,***

***1st Thessalonians 2:12 That ye would walk worthy of God, who hath called you unto his kingdom and glory.***

**Being fruitful in every good work:** 2nd Corinthians 9:8, Philippians 1:6, 2nd Thessalonians 2:17, 1st Timothy 3:1, 2nd Timothy 2:21 & Titus 3:1.

**Increasing in the knowledge of God:** If you have gotten to the point of not having learned anything new from the scriptures in a while it is not the fault of God or the scriptures.

The scriptures are an unending supply of knowledge about God, his plans for us and how he expects us to accomplish his plans.

When you start seeing stories about God's dealings with the nation of Israel or the body of Christ as just history and you can no longer see the practical and spiritual applications for us today.

You simply need to dig a little deeper and start searching for truths as a gold minor searches for gold because it’s there.

**11 Strengthened with all might, according to his glorious power, unto all patience and longsuffering with joyfulness;**

Please do not go on to the next verse in Colossians before you read the second half of the book of Ephesians, or else you will not remember how to walk worthy in the lord.

Our instructions from Paul on how to walk worthy are found in Ephesians 4-6.

**12 Giving thanks unto the Father, which hath made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light:**

**Giving thanks to the Father, which hath made us meet to be partakers:**Once again God the Father is mentioned by Paul in relationship to us believers. We should also be giving thanks to God the Father for making us meet (fit).

We were made fit because he became our Father when we by faith believed the gospel, and because we believed we have an inheritance from our Father.

When we believed the gospel, the holy Spirit baptized us into Christ, his Son, and we are now a part of the body of Christ, with Christ being the head of that body.

***1st Corinthians 12:13 For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit.***

**The inheritance of the saints in light:** The Colossians were some of the initial recipients of an inheritance given to them from God. We are now made partakers with them of that inheritance because we are in Christ (God’s Son) alongside them.

They have gone before us and are enjoying these things today in heaven places. This inheritance does not speak of any earthly promises that were promised to the nation of Israel. It refers to our spiritual blessings in heavenly places that will be enjoyed by us as the body of Christ.

***Ephesians 1:3 Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ:***

Eye hath not seen nor ear heard the glory that God has prepared for us when we are finally together with him and the most amazing part of that is that we are not worthy to receive these blessings, but he has made us fit to receive them.

**13 Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son:**

**Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness:** We as believers have been delivered from the power of darkness, which means we are delivered from Satan, from hell and from the flesh.

We unfortunately still have to battle until this corrupted body puts on incorruption at the rapture. Luke 22:53 & Acts 26:18

Satan is a power as defined in …. See Ephesians 2:2 where Satan is called the prince of the power of the air. 1 Corinthians 15:24.

***Ephesians 1:21 Far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come:***

***Ephesians 2:2 Wherein in time past ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience:*** Colossians 2:10.

***Ephesians 6:12 For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places.***

**And hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son:** When we were delivered from these things, we were also translated into something far better than we understand or enjoy at this present time. The kingdom of his dear Son.

We were translated out of Adam, our first ancestor, who was a living soul, and into Christ, the last Adam, who is a quickening spirit. 1st Corinthians 15:45.

***1st Corinthians 15:22 For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive.***

This is both a present, and a future translation, for while we cannot now presently see him, we shall one day when we put off this vile body.

We are translated into our section of the kingdom of God, the kingdom of his dear Son, into heavenly places.

Kingdom saints will be resurrected into their section of the kingdom of his dear Son when they reign with Christ on the earth for a thousand years.

We shall be translated into his presence as he rules and reigns in the heavenlies. This is not speaking about ruling and reigning with him on earth, for the earth is not our (the body of Christ) eternal destiny, it is Israel's. Psalm 37:11 & Matthew 5:5.

Israel that lived under the Law and those that live after the church age during the tribulation period will live under the law again and all of these saints have an earthly destiny during the kingdom, but we under grace have a heavenly destiny.

There is a difference. That is a part of understanding the knowledge of his will with all spiritual understanding that we just read about a few verses ago.

**14 In whom we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins:**

**In whom we have redemption:**We are bought back (redeemed) from our slavery to the sin nature that we received when we were conceived in our mother's womb as sinners.

This all came about because of the actions of our first parents in the garden when death passed upon all men. This redemption is not to be confused with the redemption of the body that occurs at the rapture:

***Romans 8:23 And not only they, but ourselves also, which have the firstfruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body.***

***Ephesians 1:14 Which is the earnest of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, unto the praise of his glory.***

***Ephesians 4:30 And grieve not the holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption.***

**The Blood of Christ**

**Through his blood:** The instrument that God used to redeem us was the only acceptable instrument that could be used.

It was the only thing that the righteousness of God would accept the sinless blood of a lamb without spot or blemish that flowed from Jesus veins there on Calvary. Jesus is the lamb of God, which took away the sins of the world.

***Romans 3:24 Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus: 25 Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God;***

***Romans 5:9 Much more then, being now justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him.***

In the sister book of Ephesians says the exact same thing to the saints in Ephesus, but he ends it with a few more important words that we should see here as well:

***Ephesians 1:7 In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace;***

The riches of his grace are obviously strongly connected to the word grace in the dispensation of grace. What are some of those riches?

***Romans 9:23 And that he might make known the riches of his glory on the vessels of mercy, which he had afore prepared unto glory,***

***Romans 11:12 Now if the fall of them be the riches of the world, and the diminishing of them the riches of the Gentiles; how much more their fulness?***

***Romans 11:33 O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out!***

***Ephesians 1:18 The eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that ye may know what is the hope of his calling, and what the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints,***

***Ephesians 2:7 That in the ages to come he might shew the exceeding riches of his grace in his kindness toward us through Christ Jesus.***

***Ephesians 3:8 Unto me, who am less than the least of all saints, is this grace given, that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ;***

***Ephesians 3:16 That he would grant you, according to the riches of his glory, to be strengthened with might by his Spirit in the inner man;***

***Philippians 4:19 But my God shall supply all your need according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus.***

***Colossians 1:27 To whom God would make known what is the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles; which is Christ in you, the hope of glory:***

***Colossians 2:2 That their hearts might be comforted, being knit together in love, and unto all riches of the full assurance of understanding, to the acknowledgement of the mystery of God, and of the Father, and of Christ;***

***Ephesians 2:13 But now in Christ Jesus ye who sometimes were far off are made nigh by the blood of Christ.***

***Colossians 1:20 And, having made peace through the blood of his cross, by him to reconcile all things unto himself; by him, I say, whether they be things in earth, or things in heaven.***

**The forgiveness of sins:**This is so much better than what Israel enjoyed under the law of Moses where they had the remission of sins. When cancer goes into remission, it can come back and kill someone.

Forgiveness is total and complete, while remission is only temporary. Israel had to come every year on the day of atonement and have their sins atoned for, for another year.

We have the total and complete forgiveness of sin the moment we trust the gospel.

***Ephesians 1:7 In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace;***

**15 Who is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of every creature:**

**The image of the invisible God:** What does God look like?

When God created Adam, he created him in his image, but Christ is the perfect image of God because we are not all powerful, or all knowing, so we cannot be a perfect image as Christ is. Genesis 1:26.

The first man Adam was created in the image of God, but he fell. We are created in the image of our earthly father Adam.

We need to get out of Adam as human beings, and get into Christ, the last Adam, so that we too will have God as our Father, because we are in Christ, his Son.

***Genesis 5:3 And Adam lived an hundred and thirty years, and begat a son in his own likeness, after his image; and called his name Seth:***

The phrase the invisible God is used five times in scripture and four of them are by the apostle Paul. Romans 1:20, 1st Timothy 1:17 & Hebrews 11:27. What does Jesus look like? He looks like his Father.

***John 1:18 No man hath seen God at any time; the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him.***

***John 14:7 If ye had known me, ye should have known my Father also: and from henceforth ye know him, and have seen him. 8 Philip saith unto him, Lord, shew us the Father, and it sufficeth us. 9 Jesus saith unto him, Have I been so long time with you, and yet hast thou not known me, Philip? he that hath seen me hath seen the Father; and how sayest thou then, Shew us the Father?***

***Hebrews 1:2 Hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds; 3 Who being the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person, and upholding all things by the word of his power, when he had by himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high;***

**The firstborn of every creature:** Since we could not go to God, he came to us in the person of his Son. He did not show all his glory, but he was fully God and fully man at the same time. As Christ said to Philip, he that hath seen me hath seen the Father John 14:9.

Paul also says in Romans that we are to be conformed to the image of his Son, and then he mentions something that is also related, which is his being the firstborn of every creature, or many brethren as he says in Romans:

***Romans 8:29 For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren.***

**That he might be the firstborn of every creature:** This does not mean that Jesus is the first being created by God the father, who then proceeded to create every other creature.

In order to understand what the first born of every creature means we must first learn what the bible teach us about “the firstborn”?

In Genesis 25:29-34 we have the story of Esau (the firstborn), and Jacob. Esau, if you remember, sold his birthright to Jacob, because for a bowl of pottage.

Jacob then tricked his father Isaac into giving Jacob the blessing that belonged to the firstborn, and that blessing was a double portion from what his other brother would inherit. Genesis 27:19-37.

Jacob’s firstborn lost the birthright of the firstborn by disqualifying himself in going in unto his Father Jacob’s concubine:

***Genesis 35:22 And it came to pass, when Israel dwelt in that land, that Reuben went and lay with Bilhah his father's concubine: and Israel heard it. Now the sons of Jacob were twelve:***

His right of the firstborn was then given to Joseph, who received a double portion, and he was blessed by God the Father as well.

Jacob blessed Joseph’s two sons and they would become two tribes in Israel instead of the just the one tribe of Joseph but not for a while yet. Genesis 48:1-22 & 49:1-4.

That was not the blessing of the firstborn being bestowed upon Reuben. Now listen to the blessing Jacob gave to Joseph, whose two sons had already been blessed by Jacob. Genesis 49:22-26.

The tribe of Joseph would become the tribe of Ephraim and the tribe of Manasseh would inherit Levi’s twelfth of the land as they would get the Lord as their inheritance.

Now that we understand better the right of the firstborn, we can begin to understand the phrase, the firstborn of every creature.

The bible records that Adam was the son of God by creation, just as angels are called sons of God because God brought them forth.

God gave Adam dominion over the earth, and he as a son of God lost it to another son of God, Lucifer who beguiled Eve, just like Jacob did to Isaac and “stole” his birthright.

Didn’t Adam actually willing give up his birthright by partaking of the forbidden fruit? He did, just like Esau, he sold his birthright for a bite of food. Genesis 3.

Both Esau and Rueben gave up their birthright as the firstborn of their father, and Adam did so as well when he sold dominion over earth to Satan for a taste of the forbidden fruit, and Satan became the god of this world. Matthew 4:8-9.

Jesus defeated Satan by the cross, and bought back what Adam lost in the fall when he rose from the dead, and became the last Adam, a quickening spirit, who won not only the earth back from Satan’s grasp, but the heavens as well.

**16 For by him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by him, and for him:**

**For by him were all things created:** Lucifer was created by the Son of God and Satan hates to be reminded of that.

Remember that scripture teaches that God created the heaven and earth and if Colossians is correct, which it is, then Jesus is God.

This is a truth that Satan does not want us to know. Those who believe that Satan is more powerful than Jesus Christ do not believe nor understand the divinity of Christ.

**That are in heaven, and that are in earth:**Jesus Christ is the Creator of everything, everywhere.

**Visible:**Our earthly magistrates, principalities and powers are ordained of God.

**Invisible:**The principalities and powers in high places are not visible to us.

**Thrones:**The seat of power. Christ is seated at the right hand of power. We are raised up, and hath mad us to sit together with him in heavenly places in Christ.

***Ephesians 1:20 Which he wrought in Christ, when he raised him from the dead, and set him at his own right hand in the heavenly places,***

***Ephesians 2:6 And hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus:***

**Dominions:**The word dominion means to rule over. Kings and Presidents here on the earth (the visible) and angels, Cherubim, and Seraphim etc. in the heavens (invisible).

**Principalities and powers:**Sometimes when we don’t know what something is, we can find out what it is not and go from there.

Notice from the below verses that the principalities are mentioned with powers, so that tells us they are not powers, and they are not angels:

***Romans 8:38 For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come,***

***Ephesians 3:10 To the intent that now unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places might be known by the church the manifold wisdom of God,***

We know that principalities and powers operate in heavenly places, they are also in high places:

***Ephesians 6:12 For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world,******against spiritual wickedness in high places.***

From this verse we know that both principalities and powers wrestle/oppose us here on this earth. We know also that they are associated with being rulers of the darkness of this world.

We are to wrestle with these principalities and powers in the supernatural realm with the weapons of our warfare found in Ephesians 6:

***Ephesians 6:10 Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might. 11 Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. 12 For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places. 13 Wherefore take unto you the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand. 14 Stand therefore, having your loins girt about with truth, and having on the breastplate of righteousness; 15 And your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace; 16 Above all, taking the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked. 17 And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God: 18 Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints;***

Gabriel (an angel) spoke with Daniel about giving him the answer concerning the questions he was seeking God’s word for.

It took him 21 days to get to Daniel with his answer because he was being withstood by principalities and powers in high places (spiritual wickedness, rulers of the darkness) who did not want the message to get through to Daniel.

We are not Israel fighting over a specific piece of real-estate that God has given us, we are the body of Christ, our citizenship is in heaven.

We are to contend with these forces of evil on our knees, and with our mouths sharing the mystery (the manifold wisdom of God. Prayer and Share is our battle cry! Ephesians 6.

**Christ defeated his enemies:**

***Colossians 2:15 And having spoiled principalities and powers, he made a shew of them openly, triumphing over them in it.***

From this verse we learn that these principalities and powers were spoiled (had their power taken away from them) by Christ. What about down here? What does Paul tell Titus to tell the people he is leading?

**We are to be good citizens:**

***Titus 3:1 Put them in mind to be subject to principalities and powers, to obey magistrates, to be ready to every good work, 2 To speak evil of no man, to be no brawlers, but gentle, shewing all meekness unto all men.***

**And for him:**All things were created for God’s Son, but most of those things were lost in the fall.

God will putall things under him in the kingdom, and he shall have all glory, and power and dominion, even in the government at that time. What about now? Romans 13:1-7.

**17 And he is before all things, and by him all things consist.**

***John 1:1 In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. 2 The same was in the beginning with God. 3 All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made.***

**He is before all things:** He did not have a beginning.

**And by him all things consist:** Since God has already established Christ's eternality he now moves on to a new subject, his sustaining power. He holds everything together by his might. You and I are literally held together by God.

**18 And he is the head of the body, the church: who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead; that in all things he might have the preeminence.**

**He is the head of the body, the church:** The body of Christ is not a reference to his physical body, but it is a reference to his spiritual body which is the collection of all the saved believers.

We are placed into his body upon our salvation experience. He is Israel's King, and our (the body of Christ's) Head.

**The beginning, the firstborn from the dead:**The firstborn from the dead means he was the first from the dead to be resurrected to eternal life, never to die again.

Every Jew understood the resurrection of the dead when all believers would be resurrected at the same time to enter into their kingdom of rest, to live forever. Jesus was resurrected from the dead, not with them at a future date.

**That in all things he might have the preeminence:**Who is to have preeminence? The firstborn who didn’t mar his inheritance.

Jesus was tempted in all points as we are yet without sin. Reuben, Esau, and Adam all sinned. Christ knew no sin and became sin for us.

**19 For it pleased the Father that in him should all fulness dwell;**

**In him should all fullness dwell:** Christ in his pre-incarnate state as the eternal Son of God and even now as a man his Father was pleased that in his past role as redeemer of mankind all fullness should also continue to dwell in him.

He did not give up any part of his deity to become a man; he was both fully man and fully God at the same time.

Prior to his incarnation (the taking on of human flesh) he was only fully God. Today Christ is a man, and he will continue to be a man, but he is also the Godman.

**20 And, having made peace through the blood of his cross, by him to reconcile all things unto himself; by him, I say, whether they be things in earth, or things in heaven.**

**Having made peace through the blood of his cross:**The righteousness of God could never make peace with the unrighteous works of our flesh because they are the exact opposite of all that God is (pure holiness).

The only way we could be reconciled to God was if God himself in the form of man became sin for us and then died in our place as our payment for sin.

So, when Christ shed his perfect blood for us imperfect beings, the eternal life that was in him could be applied to us. The life is in the blood.

Without our earthly blood we would die immediately and without Christ shedding his perfect blood we could never have eternal life.

We were at war with God because of our sin but Christ made peace between us and his Father by his perfect blood.

**By him to reconcile all things unto himself:**The “all things” here speak of the positions of authority in both realms.

**Things in earth:**All the powers on the earth at the beginning of the kingdom will be brought under the authority of Christ’s rule:

***Revelation 20:4 And I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and judgment was given unto them:***

***Revelation 20:6 Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection: on such the second death hath no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with him a thousand years.***

**Things in heaven:**All the powers in the heavens at the midpoint of the tribulation period will be brought under Christ’s rule:

***Revelation 12:7 And there was war in heaven: Michael and his angels fought against the dragon; and the dragon fought and his angels, 8 And prevailed not; neither was their place found any more in heaven. 9 And the great dragon was cast out, that old serpent, called the Devil, and Satan, which deceiveth the whole world: he was cast out into the earth, and his angels were cast out with him. 10 And I heard a loud voice saying in heaven, Now is come salvation, and strength, and the kingdom of our God, and the power of his Christ: for the accuser of our brethren is cast down, which accused them before our God day and night.***

**21 And you, that were sometime alienated and enemies in your mind by wicked works, yet now hath he reconciled 22 In the body of his flesh through death, to present you holy and unblameable and unreproveable in his sight:**

**You, that were sometime alienated and enemies in your mind by wicked works:** Here Paul first speaks of the physical body of Christ, and his crucifixion and then the spiritual body (the church) of which he is head.

It was for us he died to transfer his righteousness to us so that we might stand before his Father one day.

**Yet now hath he reconciled 22 In the body of his flesh through death:**

**To present you holy:**We are given the righteousness of Christ upon our faith in him. And when we are before him for eternity, we will be before him in holiness, that is not of us, but of him.

**Unblameable:**Since we have Christ’s righteousness no one can lay anything to our charge.

***Romans 8:33 Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth.***

**Unreproveable:**This word in English is used only once in Paul’s epistles, but the Greek word for it is used four other times and it is translated these times as the word blameless.

**In his sight:**He doesn’t see our past because we are a part of his body upon our belief in the gospel of our salvation.

**23 If ye continue in the faith grounded and settled, and be not moved away from the hope of the gospel, which ye have heard, and which was preached to every creature which is under heaven;****whereof I Paul am made a minister;**

**If ye continue in the faith grounded and settled, and be not moved away from the hope:** Paul is speaking collectively to the saints that are in Colosse and not to an individual about losing one's salvation. Notice Paul refers to them as enemies (plural) not an enemy (singular).

It is easy, and it happens all too often that a church does not continue in the faith and moves away from the hope that Paul has already mentioned and becomes unsettled in its teaching in its later years.

It is a spiritual impossibility for an individual who is saved by grace to have that salvation taken away by God or else it would not be called grace.

It is highly probable however that many churches will quit teaching that salvation is solely by grace through faith as it happens all the time.

**The hope of the Gospel:** Is heaven. Colossians 1:27.

**The gospel, which ye have heard, and which was preached to every creature which is under heaven:**Paul did not give the gospel personally to every human being under heaven, but he established churches, and trained men to go where he could not go, and they did.

**Whereof I Paul am made a minister:** Ephesians 3:6-7.

**24 Who now rejoice in my sufferings for you, and fill up that which is behind of the afflictions of Christ in my flesh for his body's sake, which is the church:**

**My sufferings for you:** Did Paul suffer for those in Colosse whom he had never met? Absolutely.

Paul suffered for every saint that is a part of the body of Christ for the past 2,000 years in the beatings, stoning’s shipwrecks and imprisonments associated with getting the gospel to the world so that we could become a part of Christ’s body.

***Philippians 3:7 But what things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ. 8 Yea doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ, 9 And be found in him, not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith: 10 That I may know him, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, being made conformable unto his death;***

**And fill up that which is behind of the afflictions of Christ:**This did not mean that there was any merit to be attained for you and me by Paul's suffering (i.e., we were not healed by Paul's stripes).

This is proven in the following verses that state it was all of Christ, and none of us.

**The afflictions of Christ:**Since we are his body, and he is our head, we to will suffer when we take a stand for the message delivered to us by Paul, that was first delivered to him by the risen Christ.

**For his body’s sake, which is the church:** This has to do with Paul's suffering that he faced for the church, which is Christ's body.

As Paul received an abundance of revelations for the Church he was often met with stiff opposition, even persecution from those without, and sadly from within the body of Christ because of these new teachings.

Paul suffered, and later even died for the truth, but it is only Christ's death for us that could have any redemptive power.

Paul is just speaking about suffering for the body of Christ. He was the first member of the body of Christ, and he suffered to bring others into that same body.

***2nd Corinthians 11:23 Are they ministers of Christ? (I speak as a fool) I am more; in labours more abundant, in stripes above measure, in prisons more frequent, in deaths oft. 24 Of the Jews five times received I forty stripes save one. 25 Thrice was I beaten with rods, once was I stoned, thrice I suffered shipwreck, a night and a day I have been in the deep; 26 In journeyings often, in perils of waters, in perils of robbers, in perils by mine own countrymen, in perils by the heathen, in perils in the city, in perils in the wilderness, in perils in the sea, in perils among false brethren; 27 In weariness and painfulness, in watchings often, in hunger and thirst, in fastings often, in cold and nakedness.***

**25 Whereof I am made a minister, according to the dispensation of God which is given to me for you, to fulfil the word of God; 26 Even the mystery which hath been hid from ages and from generations, but now is made manifest to his saints:**

**Whereof I am made a minister:**Paul didn’t volunteer to be an Apostle, nor did he seek it. He was made a minister according to a whole new program of grace. 1st Corinthians 9:16-17.

**According to the dispensation of God which is given me for you:** If you are a bible believer, then you are a dispensationalist.

You may have heard the term used negatively in the past by some confused person but just ask yourself, "Does God require blood sacrifices today?" No, of course not! That was during a previous dispensation than what we live in today.

Paul tells us throughout his writings that it was through him (Paul) that God instructs us in the body of Christ as to the doctrines for this dispensation of grace.

This present dispensation was given to Paul to give to us! I did not write verse 25, God did.

**To fulfil the word of God:** God is not saying here that Paul was fulfilling scripture, but rather that he was to fulfil the word of God.

He was to fill it full or to complete the cannon of scripture by adding those revelations that God had given to him to give to us.

**Even the mystery which hath been hid from ages and from generations:**The main teaching that Paul instructs us about in his writings according to verse 26 is the mystery which had been hid from ages and from generations, but now is made manifest. Romans 16:25.

**But now is made manifest to his saints:**

***Romans 16:25 Now to him that is of power to stablish you according to my gospel, and the preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery, which was kept secret since the world began, 26 But now is made manifest,..,***

**27 To whom God would make known what is the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles; which is Christ in you, the hope of glory:**

**The riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles:** God first made known to Paul, the apostle of the Gentiles, the mystery and he in turn committed that to us and we have the same responsibility today to make it known to all men today.

**Christ in you:** To say "Christ in you" to a Gentile prior to the kingdom was something that many of the Jews could not and would not receive because that was to happen only after Israel had risen to the prominent spot among the nations.

God however had a mystery program that he had been keeping hidden from the devil since before the foundation of the world that was ushered in in spite of Israel and her rejection of her King and kingdom.

She will have another chance during the time of Jacob's trouble to receive her King.

**The hope of glory:**The hope is not something that we wish for, but it is something that is ours, and it is waiting for us to possess at the appropriate time.

**28 Whom we preach, warning every man, and teaching every man in all wisdom; that we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus: 29 Whereunto I also labour, striving according to his working, which worketh in me mightily.**

**Teaching every man in all wisdom:** In order to present someone perfect in Christ we must as Paul, preach Christ according to the revelation of the mystery and warn every one of the devil's attempts to keep the mystery a mystery.

We must do that with the wisdom of God and not the wisdom of this world. The wisdom of God is his mystery program which shows the world how smart he both is and was in defeating the wisdom of this world (Satan's wisdom).

Since Satan is the god of this world, the world's wisdom comes from him and it will fail the world in the end, but God's wisdom never will.

**I also labour, striving according to his working:** Paul was not being boastful in verse 29 but truthful when he stated that Christ was working in him mightily.

If we were to have the full understanding of the revelations that Christ had given to Paul, we would spend more of our time serving Christ properly and allowing him to work mightily through us as he did through Paul.

If we spend our whole life laboring for God but not understanding his mystery program for the church, we are not striving according to his working or how he would have us to labour.

If we build on Israel's prophecy program and not on the church's mystery program, we will have a lot of our works burn up as wood, hay, and stubble.

   I did this very thing for many years before I got ahold of how to rightly divide the word of truth and began to see the mystery program given to us by God through the apostle Paul.

**Chapter Two**

**The Hidden treasures**

**1 For I would that ye knew what great conflict I have for you, and for them at Laodicea, and for as many as have not seen my face in the flesh;**

**What great conflict I have for you:** The Greek word that Paul uses here is “Agone” which is where we get the word Agony and agonize.

Do you agonize for the salvation and edification of people you have never seen to be saved, and come unto a knowledge of the truth? Paul did.

Paul's desire was to see the believers of Colosse and Laodicea, especially those who had never seen him before.

It can only be compared to the love grandparents have for a faraway daughter and son in-law who have had new children, and something has kept them from being able to see their new grandchildren.

For Paul it was his incarceration that kept him from seeing his spiritual offspring that he cared for greatly.

Do you have any spiritual children to care for and if so, are you caring for them? Are you a cheerful giver to helping all men see what is fellowship of the mystery? You should be.

**2 That their hearts might be comforted, being knit together in love, and unto all riches of the full assurance of understanding, to the acknowledgement of the mystery of God, and of the Father, and of Christ; 3 In whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge.**

**Being knit together in love:** Paul was a tent maker, and here he uses a tent making illustration to connect a believer with the mystery.

If we love the same things God loves, then we will try to knit them together in love as a tent maker knits his fabric together to provide shelter from the storms that life throws their way.

The mystery truth is a shelter from the seducing spirits and doctrines of devils.

Again, and again the hidden wisdom that was kept hid in God and remained a mystery throughout the age of law is mentioned by Paul to the people of Colosse.

It is an act of love to want someone to be saved and come unto a knowledge of the truth. Paul accomplished so much for Christ because of his great love for people he has never seen.

Remember who Paul is and was for a second before you disqualify yourself by saying, “I could never be like Paul.” Paul just a few years ago despised Gentiles as a Jew.

This is the man who even persecuted Jews to death, and now he says in Romans 9:13 For I could wish that myself were accursed from Christ for my brethren, my kinsmen according to the flesh:

Paul wants the same thing that God wants for us and that is that we will all as believers come to the full assurance of understanding the mystery, which should produce in us love for others.

**To the acknowledgement of the mystery of God:** We also ought to be able to acknowledge the mystery of God to others because it is only then that our hearts can be fully comforted and truly enjoy all the spiritual riches that God has intended for us in the age of grace.

**In whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge:** They are found no place else but in Christ. The greatest treasures for us today are the mystery teachings that were revealed to the apostle Paul.

**4 And this I say, lest any man should beguile you with enticing words. 5 For though I be absent in the flesh, yet am I with you in the spirit, joying and beholding****your order, and the stedfastness of your faith in Christ.**

**Beguile you with enticing words:**The enticing words that Paul mentions here are one word in Greek not two, and the second word is “ology.” Which means “the study of.”

Watch out for those who explain away a word that is plain in English using the Greek or Hebrew to do it. Some just tear apart the English itself and require you trust their superior intelligence.

***1st Corinthians 2:4 And my speech and my preaching was not with enticing words of man's wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power:***

**Your order, and the stedfastness of your faith in Christ:**A person who is strong in the mystery can teach someone in an orderly fashion what they know and is not easily carried away from the truth.

**6 As ye have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk ye in him:**

**As ye have therefore received Christ  Jesus the Lord:** They received Christ Jesus the Lord by faith. They were expected by God now to live by faith.

They received from Paul the teachings of Christ according to the revelation of the mystery, and they are expected to walk in that new revelation as well.

**7 Rooted and built up in him, and stablished in the faith, as ye have been taught, abounding therein with thanksgiving.**

**Rooted and built up in him:**If the Pauline epistles represent the fruit for this dispensation of grace that we find ourselves in then what came before it we are to build off of as a foundation. Ephesians 2:19-22.

**Stablished in the faith, as ye have been taught:** Remembering that Colossians was written near the end of Paul's ministry, the members were admonished to follow what they have already been taught in Paul's earlier epistles and now they are to build on that with this epistle.

The book of Romans was written to stablish believers in many ways. It appears first in the scriptures because of its importance in these very areas:

***Romans 16:25 Now to him that is of power to stablish you according to my gospel, and the preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery, which was kept secret since the world began,***

**8 Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ.**

**Beware lest any man spoil you:**The word spoil comes from the same root word as the word seduce. Your flesh can be seduced with sins of the flesh, and your mind can be seduced by doctrines of devils.

**Through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men:** The Greeks were the philosophers and were guilty of trying to mix their philosophy with the word of God.

The legalistic Jews were on the other side trying to add vain rules and regulations to merit one's salvation which was also deceitful.

The Jews were the ones who continued to place the traditions of their elders above the word of God as they continue to do today.

**The rudiments of the world:**The rudiments mentioned are principles of this world, which is governed by the god of this world, Satan.

**9 For in him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily. 10 And ye are complete in him, which is the head of all principality and power:**

**In him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily:** Verse nine will make a cult member fear. The word Godhead is mentioned three times in the new testament, and it is the word I use instead of the more popular word, trinity.

Trinity is used by the world more for convenience’s sake than anything else. The word trinity describes how many persons are in the Godhead.

If you want to see God, then look at Christ because that is the only way a person can ever hope to get a glimpse of God. God, who is Spirit, appeared bodily unto man in the person of Jesus Christ.

**Ye are complete in him:**If we believe in him, we are complete in him and in need of nothing else to save us and give us eternal life.

**The head of all principality and power:** He is not only the head of the church, but he is and will be head over all things including the powers and principalities that currently reign in high places.

**11 In whom also ye are circumcised with the circumcision made without hands, in putting off the body of the sins of the flesh by the circumcision of Christ:**

**The circumcision made without hands:** Christ can do for us what we cannot do for ourselves. He can circumcise our heart, and he has if you have believed in him.

No Rabbi or doctor could ever perform this type of circumcision because it comes from God alone. This circumcision, while spiritual in nature, severs the link between our flesh and our spirit so that they are no more connected.

So that when your flesh sins it is no more you (your spirit) that sin but your flesh alone. It is as if there are two people inside you battling for preeminence.

**Putting off the body of the sins of the flesh by the circumcision of Christ:**We put off the old man by walking in the Spirit.

**12 Buried with him in baptism, wherein also ye are risen with him through the faith of the operation of God, who hath raised him from the dead.**

**Buried with him in baptism:** Since the circumcision mentioned in the preceding verse is without hands because it is the circumcision of Christ then the baptism spoken about here is also without hands.

It is the same spiritual baptism mentioned in Romans 6:4 which is without hands or water I might add.

We (the old man) die with Christ when we get saved and are circumcised with the circumcision made without hands. We are to reckon ourselves dead to that old man and live as the new person that we are.

**Ye are risen with him through the faith of** **the operation of God:** Notice also that it is through the faith of the operation of God and not through your faith, nor the operation of the individual.

God does the operating on you, and it is his faith that is mentioned here not our own. That faith raised Christ from the dead, and it can do in your life whatever God has planned for you. Romans 6:1-23.

**13 And you, being dead in your sins and the uncircumcision of your flesh, hath he quickened together with him, having forgiven you all trespasses;**

All of our trespasses have been forgiven us as believers today, that includes the ones we have committed after our salvation as well as the ones we will commit in the future. Being quickened means to be made alive.

We were walking dead men walking around obeying the lust of the flesh but now we are made alive in Christ, and we are to reckon that old person dead and walk for God.

**14 Blotting out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to his cross;**

**Blotting out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us:**Christ blotted out the law to us and its penalty which was our enemy in a sense because it condemned us because of our sinful flesh.

It was contrary to us in that it demanded perfection and we were imperfect beings.

**Nailing it to the cross:** Christ took Satan's case against us and nailed it to the cross; meaning that what took place on the cross paid all the requirements of the law (the handwriting of ordinances) on our behalf.

**15 And having spoiled principalities and powers, he made a shew of them openly, triumphing over them in it.**

**Having spoiled principalities and powers:** He did this by the wisdom of God which Paul speaks about over and over again in his epistles. That wisdom of God was kept hidden from before the foundation of the world.

It was God's plan to deal with Satan's rebellion which he established before he ever created him as Lucifer.

When Satan crucified Jesus, he helped you and I by offering Christ as our sacrifice for our sins. Had Satan known the consequences of crucifying Christ he would have never crucified the Lord of Glory.

**16 Let no man therefore judge you in meat, or in drink, or in respect of an holyday, or of the new moon, or of the sabbath days: 17 Which are a shadow of things to come; but the body is of Christ.**

It is because of what Christ has done on our behalf at the cross that no one can hold anything against us from our past because it has been forgiven us through Christ and his work for us on the cross.

**A shadow of things to come:** We do not go to the old to straighten out the new. We do not need to use an old picture to correct the real thing.

The old testament sabbath days, holy days and new moons are a shadow of things to come not in the dispensation of grace, but in ages to come.

Such as the time of Jacob’s trouble mentioned in Jeremiah 30:7 and in the book of the Revelation, and they are a shadow of things to come in the kingdom to come.

**But the body is of Christ:**This is speaking about the Church, which is Christ’s body. These two verses form a great picture of the three main dispensations mentioned in Ephesians 2:

**In times past, but now, and ages to come.**

**18 Let no man beguile you of your reward in a voluntary humility and worshipping of angels, intruding into those things which he hath not seen, vainly puffed up by his fleshly mind,**

When a lost person intrudes into spiritual matters, he cannot help but have perverted doctrine. He will get into all kinds of false and strange doctrines because his mind is affected by pride and pride in a lost man can be more destructive than in a saved man.

**19 And not holding the Head, from which all the body by joints and bands having nourishment ministered, and knit together, increaseth with the increase of God.**

Those who do not understand the mystery will beguile you because he has not seen nor understood what you have.

He is not a part of the body of Christ as are you because he does not hold the Head (Christ) as the Head, so he does what comes natural to a lost man; he criticizes what he doesn't understand.

**Not holding the Head:**Notice the word head here is capitalized, because it is talking about Jesus Christ as the Head of the body of Christ, which is the church.

**20 Wherefore if ye be dead with Christ from the rudiments of the world, why, as though living in the world, are ye subject to ordinances,**

**Dead with Christ:** All who are saved are dead with Christ (we died with him as he died our death for sins).

**The rudiments of the world:**The word rudiments is the same word as the words’ elements and principles.

We are dead with Christ from these things, so why do we want to bring them into our churches and our lives to govern us contrary to what God wants for us today?

**Subject to ordinances:**The word ordinances is from the Greek word “Dogmatizo” where we get the words dogmas and dogmatic from. This means a strict set of rules (specifically the law) that do not change. Colossians 2:14. The rules are listed in the next verse.

**21 (Touch not; taste not; handle not; 22 Which all are to perish with the using;) after the commandments and doctrines of men?**

The very same people would lead someone into the false practices mentioned in verses eighteen and nineteen would also be the ones who would lead people into a long list of do's and don’ts that are not required by God.

**23 Which things have indeed a shew of wisdom in will worship, and humility, and neglecting of the body; not in any honour to the satisfying of the flesh.**

**A shew of wisdom in will worship:** The word shew is the Greek word Logos, meaning “word.” You can make long prayers at the “hour of prayer” but, we are not under the system of the Mosaic law, we are under grace.

We don’t pray at a prescribed time in a prescribed manner, we pray as we are led to pray. We don’t use incense and make a big to do about prayer, we just talk to God when we feel the need.

**Neglecting of the body:** Going without meat for lent for example. Man will look upon the outward appearance and will judge that if a man is doing certain things that are religious then in their minds, they are good or spiritual.

God says they are man-made exercises to appeal to the fleshly mind and do absolutely nothing to bring someone closer to God; in fact, they have the opposite effect.

**Chapter Three**

**Things which are above**

**1 If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. 2 Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth. 3 For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God.**

**Risen with Christ:** All saved people are risen with Christ, and because we are risen with him, we are to seek the things that are of eternal significance because we are seated with him already in the heavenlies.

We are to die to ourselves, because we were hid with Christ in God at our salvation. We were not hid with Christ in God at our baptism into Christ’s body. Christ’s death, which he did not deserve, became the death that we deserve for our sins.

**4 When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with him in glory.**

**Christ, who is our life, shall appear:** Christ will appear to us at the catching away (the rapture) when we meet him in the clouds,

**Then shall ye also appear with him in glory:** Then we will appear with him in heaven before the Father to begin our ministries in the heavenly places.

Christ will also appear at the end of the time of Jacob’s trouble just before beginning to rule in the kingdom here on the earth.

Notice how Paul interjects the phrase, "who is our life", in reference to Christ. He ought to be our life because he is our life. We ought to be about his business.

He will exalt his Son in both heaven and in the earth. We are a part of his heavenly plan as members of the body of Christ and Israel is a part of his earthly plan.

**5 Mortify therefore your members which are upon the earth; fornication, uncleanness, inordinate affection, evil concupiscence, and covetousness, which is idolatry: 6 For which things' sake the wrath of God cometh on the children of disobedience: 7 In the which ye also walked some time, when ye lived in them.**

**Mortify therefore your members which are upon the earth:** The wrath of God punished all those sins that are mentioned in the person of Christ on the cross.

Christ was delivered (killed) for our sins so we ought to kill (mortify) the very things that Christ died to pay for.

**For which things’ sake the wrath of God cometh on the children of disobedience:**The disobedient are the lost. We as believers today are not appointed unto wrath. 1st Thessalonians 5:9.

**8 But now ye also put off all these; anger, wrath, malice, blasphemy, filthy communication out of your mouth. 9 Lie not one to another, seeing that ye have put off the old man with his deeds; 10 And have put on the new man, which is renewed in knowledge after the image of him that created him:**

**Ye have put off the old man:** Since the old man is dead, we are to quit living like he is alive. Sure, the flesh is very real, but we no longer have to live under its power since there is a new power that is stronger living inside us.

**Put on the new man:** We have to spend time with the new man and feed him as we used to feed the flesh, but with things that edify the spirit. The new man has a heavenly destiny instead of an earthly one.

**Renewed in knowledge:**See Ephesians 4 about walking worthy, and 2nd Corinthians 4:16-18.

**11 Where there is neither Greek nor Jew, circumcision nor uncircumcision, Barbarian, Scythian, bond nor free: but Christ is all, and in all.**

**Where:**In the new man (the church which is his body). Put off the world and put on the Church, the body of Christ.

**12 Put on therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, longsuffering;**

**Put on therefore:**We are to practice being merciful, kind, humble, meek, and longsuffering with the lost as well as with other believers.

**The elect of God:** Jesus Christ and Israel are exclusively referred to as the elect in all the old testament, but twice the body of Christ is given that title and it is important that we don’t mix the two together. We are the elect of God because we are in Christ who is God’s elect. Titus 1:1.

***Isaiah 42:1 Behold my servant, whom I uphold; mine elect, in whom my soul delighteth; I have put my spirit upon him: he shall bring forth judgment to the Gentiles.***

***Isaiah 45:4 For Jacob my servant's sake, and Israel mine elect, I have even called thee by thy name: I have surnamed thee, though thou hast not known me.*** Isaiah 65:9 & 22.

Election has to do with our service. There are only four verses mentioning the word elect in the whole old testament and they all have the word servant found in them.

We as the body of Christ were elected before the foundation of the world to be conformed into his image by the renewing of our mind. Israel on the other hand was elected to become a nation of kings and priests.

We as the body of Christ are to act like Christ our head that we may draw men unto him by displaying mercy and kindness to one another.

We are to be meek and longsuffering not wanting our way over others. We are in the body of Christ, and we are elected to carry out his will for the world today, and that is to make all men see what is the fellowship of the mystery. Ephesians 3:8-9.

***Galatians 3:27 For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ.*** Romans 13:14.

**13 Forbearing one another, and forgiving one another, if any man have a quarrel against any: even as Christ forgave you, so also do ye.**

**Even as Christ forgave you, so also do ye:**This is 180 degrees opposite of what Christ told the little flock of believing Israel while he walked with them preaching the kingdom:

***Matthew 6:12 And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors.***

**14 And above all these things put on charity, which is the bond of perfectness. 15 And let the peace of God rule in your hearts, to the which also ye are called in one body; and be ye thankful.**

**Put on charity:** God has given us peace and has called us to be peace makers, this can only come through the love that Christ alone gives. We are to be charitable to those that have not and tell them that it is Christ in you that provided the charity through you.

**16 Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom; teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord.**

**Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom:** This cannot happen without you knowing the manifold wisdom of God, which concerns the hidden mysteries only revealed to the apostle Paul. 1st Corinthians 2:1-10.

**Admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs:** This is not just a call to sing hymns and spiritual songs, but it is also a call to let Christ's words dwell in us richly.

**17 And whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by him. 18 Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as it is fit in the Lord. 19 Husbands, love your wives, and be not bitter against them. 20 Children, obey your parents in all things: for this is well pleasing unto the Lord. 21 Fathers, provoke not your children to anger, lest they be discouraged. 22 Servants, obey in all things your masters according to the flesh; not with eyeservice, as menpleasers; but in singleness of heart, fearing God: 23 And whatsoever ye do, do it heartily, as to the Lord, and not unto men; 24 Knowing that of the Lord ye shall receive the reward of the inheritance: for ye serve the Lord Christ. 25 But he that doeth wrong shall receive for the wrong which he hath done: and there is no respect of persons.**

**Ye shall receive the reward of the inheritance:**This speaks of those employed in secular work, who treat it as a holy calling and do what they do as to the Lord, not to men.

Those who do will influence others to become a part of Christ’s body and they will receive a reward.

Those who give to the Lord’s work, the fruit of their secular work will also receive a reward. This has nothing to do with inheriting something that was promised to Israel under the law.

**He that doeth wrong shall receive for the wrong which he hath done:**Those who do not will receive wood, hay and stubble which will burn up at the last day.

**Chapter Four**

**The mystery of Christ**

Chapter four is actually a continuation from chapter three where Paul was admonishing servants about their relationships to their masters, and now he changes pace and deals with the believing masters and their relationship to their servants.

**1 Masters, give unto your servants that which is just and equal; knowing that ye also have a Master in heaven.**

**Give unto your servants that which is just and equal:**Bosses should treat their employees as they would like to be treated because one day, they will be rewarded by God for how they treated their employees.

**Continual prayer**

**2 Continue in prayer, and watch in the same with thanksgiving; 3 Withal praying also for us, that God would open unto us a door of utterance, to speak the mystery of Christ, for which I am also in bonds: 4 That I may make it manifest, as I ought to speak.**

**Continue in prayer:** This has the same thing as praying without ceasing. No one can pray 24/7 everyday, but Paul is telling all to never get out of the discipline of prayer.

**Praying also for us, that God would open unto us a door of utterance, to speak the mystery of Christ:**The verse doesn’t end with the word praying, it goes on to tell believers what Paul desired the Colossians to pray for in regards to him personally.

Paul desired that a door would be opened that was right in front of him in his house arrest, so that he may go farther, and reach more people than he could chained to a Guard.

He wanted to make all men see what is the fellowship of the mystery, and we should want the same for ourselves and others. Titus 1:9 & Ephesians 3:8-12.

**For which I am also in bonds:**Paul was a prisoner for making the mystery of Christ manifest to the Gentiles.

The mystery of Christ is yet another mention of the mystery that through Christ God was making one new man that would dwell together with God in the heavens.

Paul is praying for more doors to be opened so that he could continue to speak of the mystery of Christ, the very same thing that got him arrested in the first place.

We are to be about reconciling people unto God. 2nd Corinthians 5:18-21.

**5 Walk in wisdom toward them that are without, redeeming the time. 6 Let your speech be alway with grace, seasoned with salt, that ye may know how ye ought to answer every man.**

**Walk in wisdom toward them that are without:** This admonition is not a general one to give us some good advice on daily conversations, but it will work for them as well.

It is however an admonition to the believer about the proper attitude one should use when witnessing to another person (one that is without the body of Christ i.e., church).

The best way one can redeem the time is to spend it either a lost person sharing the gospel with them or else teaching a saved person the revelation of the mystery that God revealed to Paul.

The mystery is the manifold wisdom of God as Paul taught the Corinthians. 1st Corinthians 2:1-8.

**That ye may know how ye ought to answer every man:**Everyone has different life experiences and different verses will work better than other verses with them.

John 3:16 won’t solve their problem today if they are lost, 1st Corinthians 15:1-4. Fear comes when we are not prepared to face our enemy.

**7 All my state shall Tychicus declare unto you, who is a beloved brother, and a faithful minister and fellowservant in the Lord: 8 Whom I have sent unto you for the same purpose, that he might know your estate, and comfort your hearts; 9 With Onesimus, a faithful and beloved brother, who is one of you. They shall make known unto you all things which are done here.**

Tychicus helps Paul write this epistle along with Onesimus who is the slave that Paul mentions in his epistle to Philemon.

Paul most likely had a vision problem that prohibited him from personally penning his later epistles, which I believe is supported by scripture as the Galatians were willing to pluck out their own eyes and give them to Paul. Galatians 4:15.

Tychicus would inform the saints in Colosse of Paul’s state as he suffered for his faith in a Roman Prison, but remember, God had Paul in prison. It was a part of his plan to give him time to write these epistles for the body of Christ.

**10 Aristarchus my fellowprisoner saluteth you, and Marcus, sister's son to Barnabas, (touching whom ye received commandments: if he come unto you, receive him;) 11 And Jesus, which is called Justus, who are of the circumcision. These only are my fellowworkers unto the kingdom of God, which have been a comfort unto me.**

**Marcus, sister’s son to Barnabas:**John Mark (Marcus) is mentioned by Paul, the very same person who left the work on one of Paul’s early missionary journeys.

Barnabas, after arguing with Paul on John’s behalf, ended up taking John Mark (Marcus) with him because he was his uncle.

**Who are of the circumcision:**When Paul mentions that Justus, Marcus, and Aristarchus were his fellowworkers unto the kingdom of God here he is not saying that he and they were preaching the gospel of the kingdom.

People who understand how to rightly divide the word of truth get confused by this passage because it mentions that they were of the circumcision, and that they labored unto the kingdom of God.

As regarding Paul’s statement about the kingdom of God Paul is referring to the kingdom of God in each individual's heart and the work of the church in this age.

With regard to them being of the circumcision, it was John Mark who was with Paul on his first missionary journey as he and Barnabas preached the gospel of the grace of God to the Gentile world.

Justus and Marcus were from the Jerusalem assembly, and they were working alongside Paul, but that does not mean that they were forcing Israel's program on these Gentile hearers.

Paul helped the Jerusalem church often and did not expect them to practice what the Gentile churches were practicing, and the same was the truth even more so the other way around.

**12 Epaphras, who is one of you, a servant of Christ, saluteth you, always labouring fervently for you in prayers,****that ye may stand perfect and complete in all the will of God. 13 For I bear him record, that he hath a great zeal for you, and them that are in Laodicea, and them in Hierapolis.**

Epaphras was Paul’s friend and companion, and he had a lot of himself invested in the people of these places and it was evidenced in his prayer life once he had left their presence.

**That ye may stand perfect and complete in all the will of God**: We can only stand perfect and complete in him if we both understand and obey all of the will of God for us.

Someone who does not know how to rightly divide the word of God can never stand complete or perfect, so it behooves us to tell people how to rightly divide the word of truth.

**14 Luke, the beloved physician, and Demas, greet you. 15 Salute the brethren which are in Laodicea, and Nymphas, and the church which is in his house. 16 And when this epistle is read among you, cause that it be read also in the church of the Laodiceans; and that ye likewise read the epistle from Laodicea.**

**Demas:**He is the one who departed from the apostle Paul unto Thessalonica having loved this present world as mentioned in 2nd Timothy 4:10 & Philemon 1:24.

**The epistle from Laodicea:** Here we have an epistle written by Paul that is not found in the scriptures, why not?

Because it was not meant to be in the scriptures because God preserves his word and whatever is meant to be in the scriptures is in it.

**17 And say to Archippus, Take heed to the ministry which thou hast received in the Lord, that thou fulfil it.**

**Take heed to the ministry which thou hast received in the Lord, that thou fulfil it:** Archippus was to preach the mystery of Christ and make it known to all men.

**18 The salutation by the hand of me Paul. Remember my bonds. Grace be with you. Amen. Written from Rome to Colossians by Tychicus and Onesimus.**

**The salutation by the hand of me Paul:** Paul has Tychicus and Onesimus actually pen the words he has received from God.

**Remember my bonds:** Paul leaves the people of Colosse with a request that has mostly been overlooked by the body of Christ today. Paul was the prisoner of Jesus Christ for us Gentiles according to Ephesians 3:1 & Philemon 1:9.

The apostle of the Gentiles (our apostle) went to jail for trying to reach us with the gospel, and he wants us to remember that. Thank God for saving people which are willing to suffer so that others may hear the precious truth of God’s word. Are you willing?

**The End**

**Colossians Tests**

**Chapter One**

1. When was Colossians written and from where?

2. What other books did Paul write from there?

3. What does Paul mean when he says Grace unto you and Peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ?

4. Where is the Colossians hope laid up for them?

5. Who was Epaphras?

6. What are we to pray for ourselves and others as Paul did for Colosse?

7. What does that mean?

8. What is the knowledge of God that we are to be increasing in?

9. How can we ensure that we will walk worthy and be fruitful in our ministry?

10. What is the inheritance in the saints of light all about?

11. Where is Israel's destiny during the Kingdom and where is the

Church's destiny at the same time?

12. What does the word redeemed literally mean and by what means were we redeemed?

13. Who is the image of the invisible God?

14. What is meant by the firstborn of every creature?

15. Who is the Creator and sustainer of all things? Be specific

16. Who is the head of the body, the Church?

17. How did Christ make peace between us and God and reconcile us?

18. Can a person who is saved by Grace ever lose their salvation?

19. Explain who verses 22 and 23 are referring to:

20. Who was given the teachings for this present dispensation to give to us?

21. What did Paul mean when he said that he had to fulfill the word of God?

22. How long had the Mystery Program been hid in God?

23. What is the mystery of the Gentiles?

24. How can we labour according to God's working in this present age?

**Chapter Two:**

1. Paul wanted all believers to be able to acknowledge what?

2. What do the Greeks use to deceive people?

3. What do the Religious Jews us to deceive people?

4. What word does Paul use instead of Trinity?

5. Where does all the fullness of the Trinity dwell?

6. What does Paul mean about our circumcision made without hands?

7. What does it mean when it says we are buried with Christ in baptism?

8. What does it mean to be quickened?

9. Where did Christ blot out the Law at?

10. What did Christ do to the principalities and powers after the cross?

11. Are we required to keep the Sabbath Day according to verses 16-17?

**Chapter Three**

1. Since we are risen with Christ, where should our affections be set?

2. Where will we appear with Christ one day?

3. Name four members that we ought to mortify as a believer?

4. When we put off the old man and his deeds what are four things that we to put on as the new man?

5. What does God expect from:

     A. Wives:

     B. Husbands:

     C. Children:

     D. Servants:

E. Fathers:

F. Masters:

**Chapter Four**

1. What did Paul ask the Colossians to pray for concerning the mystery?

2. How are we to walk in wisdom towards them that are without?

3. Does Paul mean the Kingdom when he says the kingdom of God?

4. Why was Paul working with "the Circumcision"?

5. How can we stand perfect and complete in all the will of God?