

# *The Epistle to the Colossians*

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A Weekend in God's Word



Pa Bible Teaching Fellowship

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

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## Chapter 1: 1 - 12 – Shawn Weir

### The City (small town) of Colosse

- Colosse (or Colossae) was an ancient city in the Lycus River Valley in the center of the region of Phrygia and part of the Roman province of Asia, which is contained in modern day Turkey.
  - The city was a location where the cultures and religions of the East met the West being “situated near the great Persian Royal Road that ran from Ephesus and Sardis in the West to the Euphrates and on to Persia in the East.”<sup>1</sup>
  - It was nearly 100 miles east of the great, capital city of Ephesus.
  - The river valley is rich and fertile for pasturing. Colosse was anciently known for its flourishing textile industry and high-quality dark red wool, known as “Colossian wool.”
  - Laodicea (12 miles west) was a wealthy city and served as the political and financial center for the region.
  - Hierapolis (15 miles northwest) was considered a sacred city and health resort. Thousands flocked to Hierapolis to bathe and drink from its natural hot springs and great baths, which were touted to have spiritual and medicinal qualities.
- By the time of the writing of the Epistle to the Colossians, Colosse was the smallest of the three sister cities in the Lycus River Valley.
  - It had been an important town during the Greek and Persian War of the fifth century B.C., but by the first century new trade routes had carried most traffic to Laodicea and Hierapolis leaving Colosse as a small country village.
  - The Greek historian and geographer Strabo, writing about two generations before Paul wrote Colossians, calls the Colosse of his day “a small town.”
  - Colosse was insignificant in Roman history and was only ever mentioned by a few Roman writers.



***"Without doubt Colossae was the least important church to which any epistle of St Paul is addressed."***

- J. B. Lightfoot, St. Paul's Epistles to the Colossians and to Philemon, p. 16.

<sup>1</sup>Iran, Vol. 36. (1998). In D. French, *Pre- and Early-Roman Roads of Asia Minor. The Persian Royal Road* (pp. 15 - 43). British Institute of Persian Studies.

## A Place Where The Word of God Grew Mightily and Prevailed

Colosse was in the Roman province of Asia, all of which heard the Word as Paul was preaching for two years in Ephesus. The church at Colosse was likely established at this thrilling time.

### **Acts 19 9a – 10, 20 WT**

**9b** reasoning daily in the school of Tyrannus.

**10**This continued for two years with the result that everyone living in Asia heard the Word of the Lord, both Judeans and Greeks.

**20** In this manner, the Word of the Lord was growing and prevailing mightily.

There is no scriptural indication that Paul ever got to Colosse. Many at Colosse and Laodacia had never even seen him before.

**Colossians 2:1 WT** As a matter of fact, I want you to know how greatly I contend for you and for them at Laodicea and for whoever has not seen my face in the flesh

Paul wrote **Colossians** while imprisoned either at Caesarea or in Rome.

## Phrygian Religion, Jewish Mysticism, Early Gnostics and Earthquakes

- **Phrygian Religions**

Colosse was an ancient city in the center of the region of “Phrygia, where the national character was so prone to a mystic fanaticism.”<sup>2</sup>

- **Early Gnosticism and Mystery Religions**

The beginnings of what would erupt into a much larger heresy were already beginning to be seen in this region with the introductions of early Gnosticism and the “Mystery Religions.” These were secretive groups that taught that salvation is through a hidden knowledge (*gnosis*) by which individuals come to know themselves, their origin and destiny. Born out of a mixture of Eastern religion and Greek philosophy, at the root of their beliefs is that all things material are bad and all things spiritual are good.

The philosophy was highly malleable and so the versions varied, but the basic explanation of our current existence was that the true, good God created or emanated beings called aeons and/or archons. A mishap by the aeon Sophia (Wisdom) led to the creation of the evil Old Testament God who created our world and pretends to be the true God. He hides truth from humans, but sparks of Sophia in some humans fill them with an urge to return to the Pleroma (divine realm) where they belong. The obtaining of this deeper spiritual wisdom and understanding is obtained through many methods and modes of denying the physical body (known as asceticism) and the worship of (often to placate) elemental spirits.

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<sup>2</sup> W. J. Conybeare, J. S. (1866). *The Life and Epistles of the Apostle Paul*. (p. 643) New York: Thomas Y. Crowell & Co.

- **Jewish Mysticism**

Antiochus the Great (223-187 B.C.) had relocated thousands of Jewish families from Mesopotamia to this region. With them, they brought strict adherence to the keeping of the law along with their own versions of mysticism. These schools of thought would later come to be known as “Kabbalah” and many of their mystical teachings regarding cosmogony (coming into existence), the nature of souls and the relationship between the "universal energy" and man, were committed to writing in books like the Zohar. Their practices frequented worshipping, conjuring (summoning) and abjuring (sending away) angels.

- **Earthquakes**

The entire region is surrounded by the Anatolian Faults and is therefore an area of intense geothermal activity and subjected to frequent earthquakes, flooding and releases of noxious gases even to modern day.

- **Notable Colossian Earthquakes**

- **17 A.D.** Colosse, Laodicea and Hierapolis were all destroyed by an earthquake in 17 A.D. during the reign of Tiberius
- **60 A.D.** "Colossae was completely destroyed by the AD 60 earthquake. After that it survived only as a small village before being finally abandoned in eighth century, AD, replaced by Chronae (today Honaz). At present, the archaeological site is only a mound over the surrounding flat plain..."<sup>3</sup>
- **1999 A.D.** At 3 a.m. on August 17, 1999 occurred “one of the most punishing earthquakes of the past century. The magnitude 7.4 catastrophe created headlines worldwide. Tens of thousands dead. Some 250,000 homeless. And billions of dollars' worth of damage...”<sup>4</sup>

- Mystical attempts to explain frequent seismology lent the area to a veritable hodgepodge of errors.

- **Pick your poison**

From angel-worship and asceticism, to mysterious philosophies (or gnosis) and religions, to Graeco-Phrygian mythos and folklore, to ridged observances of Jewish festivals and keeping of Sabbaths, the Colossian church had no lack of “alternatives” from the simplicity that is in Christ.

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<sup>3</sup> Archangel Michael Apparition at Colossae. (2007). In W. B. Luigi Piccardi, *Myth and Geology* (p. 99). London: The Geological Society of London.

<sup>4</sup> Gore, R. (2000, July). Wrath of the Gods • Earthquake in Turkey • A History Forged by Disaster . *National Geographic*.

## The “Why” of Colossians

Through the years the deceptions are rebranded and repackaged, but today is just as much an age of syncretism as the deceiver remains the same. The attempts to harmonize and unite many different schools of thought to come up with superior versions and offshoots of Christianity has not ceased. The threats of mysticism, legalism, asceticism, and man-made philosophies still secretly creep into churches and beguile Christians of their reward.

To many, Jesus Christ is only one of several great religious teachers. In preaching, they are not denying Christ, but they are dethroning Him. In practice, they are not disregarding his work of salvation, but they are stripping Him of His rightful place as Lord and Head. They may acknowledge him as prominent, but not preeminent.

Colossians stands as a warning shot across the bow to the faithful in Christ Jesus. It stands as a safeguard; beware lest any man should beguile you with enticing words. Walk worthily of the Christ you have received as Lord. Don't let any man spoil you through any doctrine not after Christ.

For we are dead and our life is Christ. We are risen with Christ and seeking the things above where Christ sits. Christ is our complete savior. Christ is head over every ruler and authority. We are completely filled in Christ and need no other. We are missing nothing; Christ is our all in all.

## To the Saints and Faithful Brethren in Christ which are at Colosse...

### **Verses 1 - 2**

2 **Faithful** (*pistos*): An adjective related to the noun *pistis*(believing, faith). These are those who believe consistently. The Colossian believers were "saints" (*hagios*, those set apart to God) in their position, and "faithful brethren" in their practice.

The only other epistle addressed to the faithful is **Ephesians**:

**Ephesians 1:1** Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God, to the saints which are at Ephesus, and to the faithful in Christ Jesus

### **Verses 3 – 5a**

3 **Thanks** (*eucharisteō*): to express gratitude, to be grateful.

Thankfulness is a big theme and occurs six times in this epistle:

**1:12** Giving thanks unto the Father, which hath made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light

**2:7** Rooted and built up in him, and stablished in the faith, as ye have been taught, abounding therein with thanksgiving.

**3:15** And let the peace of God rule in your hearts, to the which also ye are called in one body; and be ye thankful.

**3:17** 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.

**4:2** Continue in prayer, and watch in the same with thanksgiving

5 **For** (*dia*): can be translated many different ways, however, it is used here with the word “hope”, which is in the accusative case and may best be translated as “because.”

**NASB Colossians 1:4 – 5a**

**4** since we heard of your faith in Christ Jesus and the love which you have for all the saints;

**5a** because of the hope laid up for you in heaven

Their love to all the saints was because of the hope laid up for them in heaven.

“Faith, love and hope” appear closely together, as in **1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians 13:13** and **1<sup>st</sup> Thessalonians 1:3**.

5 **in heaven** (*en tois ouraniois*): meaning, “in the heavens” and occurs three times in this chapter (verses **5**, **16** and **20**). It is similar to the phrase “in the heavenly places” or “in the heavenly realm” used in **Ephesians**. The word heaven(*ouranos*) also occurs in **1:23** and **4:1**.

**Verse 5b – 6**

6 **bringeth forth fruit** (*karpophoreō*): Following this, all critical Greek texts add *kai auxanoemnon*, meaning “and growing”.

**WT Colossians 1:5b - 6**

**5b** You previously heard of that [hope] in the Word of the truth of the gospel

**6** that came to you. Just as it is bearing fruit and growing in all the world, even so it is also [bearing fruit and growing] in you since the day in which you heard and knew about [acknowledged] the grace of God in truth

The same words will be used again in verse **10**.

6 **knew** (*epiginōskō*): the verb form of *epignosis* meaning, a full knowledge that has a powerful influence on the knower, a knowledge that perfectly unites the subject with the object. A knowledge which expresses a more thorough participation on the part of the knower.

Occurrences of *Epignosis* in Colossians:

- As “knowledge” in **1:9**, **1:10** and **3:10**
- As “acknowledgment” in **2:2**

**Psalm 143:10a** Teach me to do thy will; for thou art my God

Once the Colossians had acknowledged the grace of God in truth, it had powerful influence on them and that gospel began to bear fruit and grow in them.

## As ye also learned of Epaphras...

### Verse 7 – 8

7 **Epaphras**: His name means, “lovely” and to the Colossians; he certainly was. He was a faithful (*pistos*) minister of Christ to them and it seems that they heard the gospel from Epaphras. To Paul and Timothy he was a beloved fellow servant who declared unto them about the Colossians.

There is no scriptural indication that Paul or Timothy had even been to Colosse. Paul mentions in **2:1** that “many as have not seen my face in the flesh”, but the Colossians certainly knew Epaphras well.

8 **love** (*agapē*): again, their love is mentioned. The love of the Colossians had its origin from the gift of holy spirit.

### Verse 9

**do not cease to pray for you**: Paul mentioned this also to the Colossians in verse **3** that he and Timothy are, “praying always for you”.

**knowledge**(*epignosis*): a full knowledge that has a powerful influence on the knower, a knowledge that perfectly unites the subject with the object. A knowledge which expresses a more thorough participation on the part of the knower.

Their continual prayers were for them to be filled with *epignosis* of His will.

**understanding** (*sunesis*): meaning, a running together, a flowing together with, used for a mental “putting together”. The word was used by Homer (the secular writer of *The Odyssey* and *The Iliad*) at about 800 B.C. of two rivers flowing together. Understanding occurs when thoughts flow together with God’s Word in our minds to the end that we can separate truth from error.

**spiritual**(*pneumatikos*): an adjective modifying the wisdom and understanding.

This all wisdom(*sophia*) and understanding is spiritual.

## Walking Worthily

### **Verse 10**

**That ye might walk**: This construction in the Greek is an infinitive being used to indicate result. This was the view in their prayers for the Colossians to be filled with knowledge, spiritual wisdom and understanding. It was all so that they would walk worthily.

**worthy**(*axiōs*): suitably, worthily, in a manner worthy of or in balance with.

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

Walking worthily is the focal subject of the last half of **Ephesians** (chapters **4 – 6**) and it is also the focal subject of **Colossians**.

Following the “that ye might walk” infinitive are four constructions introduced by participles indicating the attendant circumstances of walking worthy of the Lord:

- 1) Bearing Fruit
- 2) Growing
- 3) Being Empowered
- 4) Giving Thanks

### **#1. being fruitful in every good work**

**Matthew 13:23a** But he that received seed into the good ground is he that heareth the word, and understandeth it; which also beareth fruit

#### **John 15:4 – 5, 8**

**4** Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; no more can ye, except ye abide in me.

**5** I am the vine, ye are the branches: He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without me ye can do nothing.

**8** Herein is my Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit; so shall ye be my disciples.

#### **Romans 6:21 - 22**

**21** What fruit had ye then in those things whereof ye are now ashamed? for the end of those things is death.

**22** But now being made free from sin, and become servants to God, ye have your fruit unto holiness, and the end everlasting life.

## **#2 increasing in the knowledge of God**

**knowledge** (*epignosis*): Earlier in verse 9, the result of their acknowledgment of the will of God would be walking worthy. Here in verse 10, we see that increasing in acknowledgment is a quality of walking worthy.

Acknowledgement -> Walking Worthy -> Increasing in Acknowledgement

Acknowledgment can be a beautiful virtuous cycle leading to growing in even more acknowledgment.

**Increasing**(auxanō): The same word is used in **1<sup>st</sup> Peter 2:2**

**1<sup>st</sup> Peter 2:2 - 3**

**2** As newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby:

**3** If so be ye have tasted that the Lord is gracious.

**Acts 12:24** But the word of God grew and multiplied.

**Acts 19:20** So mightily grew the word of God and prevailed.

## **Verse 11**

### **#3 Strengthened with all might**

Strengthened and might are the related words *dunamoo* and *dunamis* and could be translated as "being empowered with all power."

This empowering with all power is according to God's glorious strength (*kratos*). This empowering with power from God is done with a view to patient endurance and long-suffering while maintaining joy.

**Ephesians** also refers to strength with regard to the walk worthy:

**Ephesians 6:10**

Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might.

**Verse 12**

**#4 Giving thanks unto the Father**

One of the chief errors of sinful, natural man is unthankfulness:

**Roman 1:18 – 21a**

**18** For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who hold the truth in unrighteousness;

**19** Because that which may be known of God is manifest in them; for God hath shewed it unto them.

**20** For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead; so that they are without excuse:

**21** Because that, when they knew God, they glorified him not as God, neither were thankful...

**Ephesians 5:3-4**

**3** But fornication, and all uncleanness, or covetousness, let it not be once named among you, as becometh saints;

**4** Neither filthiness, nor foolish talking, nor jesting, which are not convenient: but rather giving of thanks.

**1<sup>st</sup> Thessalonians 5:18**

In every thing give thanks: for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you.

**Psalm 69:30**

I will praise the name of God with a song, and will magnify him with thanksgiving.

## Chapter 1: 13 - 29 - Sam Pittenger

### Jesus Christ the Firstborn and the Image of God

#### Verse 13

**delivered** (*ruomai*): to draw or snatch to one's self; hence, generally to draw or snatch from danger, to rescue, to deliver.

**power** (*exousia*): authority, delegated authority. We were delivered from the authority of darkness, that is, the authority of the kingdom of Satan.

**translated**: to transfer. We are transferred from the authority of darkness into the Kingdom of God. We are now under the authority of the Kingdom of God's dear Son, Jesus Christ.

This transfer is in position and status. Although the literal entrance into the kingdom of God has not yet occurred, we have been transferred in position and status as those who are now part of the Kingdom of God's dear Son.

#### Verse 14

**redemption**: redemption as a result of expiation, a releasing effected by payment of a ransom. One aspect of this redemption is from the authority of darkness and into the kingdom of God's dear son.

**forgiveness** (*aphesis*): remission, forgiveness, discharge, setting free, remission of the debt or punishment of sin.

#### Verse 15

Here, two things are learned:

- 1) Christ is the image of the invisible God
- 2) He is the first born of every created being

**image** (*eikōn*): an image, a figure, likeness, to be like. Used here of Jesus Christ as essentially and absolutely the perfect expression and representation of God; "the image of the invisible God" gives the additional thought suggested by the word "invisible," that Christ is the visible representation of God. This word occurs 23 times in the NT and not once is used of something being the actual thing but rather a representation of the thing.

It is generally used in this manner:

**Mark 12:16** And they brought it. And he saith unto them, Whose is this image and superscription? And they said unto him, Caesar's.

The coin was not Caesar himself, but it bore his image; it was like him.

**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.

Here this same word is used of us being in Christ's image, certainly we are not him, but we are in his likeness.

**1) Jesus Christ is the image of the invisible God:**

**John 14:6 - 11**

**6** Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me.

**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?

**10** Believest thou not that I am in the Father, and the Father in me? the words that I speak unto you I speak not of myself: but the Father that dwelleth in me, he doeth the works.

**11** Believe me that I am in the Father, and the Father in me: or else believe me for the very works' sake.

Jesus Christ was the representation of God, the Father was in him and he was in the Father. Jesus Christ was and still is the representative of the nature of the Father.

**Colossians 2:9** For in him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily.

All the fullness of the divine nature (His "Godness" or "Godhood") dwells in Christ. He is now a life-giving spirit (**1st Corinthians 15:45**), and he has been filled with the fullness of God, he is in God's image. He is the visible image (the bodily) of the invisible God.

**Hebrews 1:2-3 WT**

**2** has spoken to us in the last of these days by His Son, whom He appointed heir of all things, and through whom He also prepared the ages.

**3** His Son (who is the reflection of the glory and representation of His essence and who upholds everything by the Word of His power), having accomplished a cleansing from sins, sat down on the right side of the Majesty on high.

**2<sup>nd</sup> Corinthians 4:4, 6**

**4** In whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them.

**6** For God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ."

## 2) Jesus Christ is the firstborn of every creature (created being):

**first born of every created being:** This is explained in **verse 18** as “the firstborn from the dead” referring to Jesus Christ being the first to be created with the new life-giving spirit, the new resurrected body.

### **Acts 13:33-37**

**33** God hath fulfilled the same unto us their children, in that he hath raised up Jesus again; as it is also written in the second psalm, Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee.

**34** And as concerning that he raised him up from the dead, now no more to return to corruption, he said on this wise, I will give you the sure mercies of David.

**35** Wherefore he saith also in another psalm, Thou shalt not suffer thine Holy One to see corruption. **36** For David, after he had served his own generation by the will of God, fell on sleep, and was laid unto his fathers, and saw corruption:

**37** But he, whom God raised again, saw no corruption.

**Verse 33:** This is a quote from **Psalm 2:7**

**This day have I begotten thee:** the context shows that this quote from **Psalm 2** is referring to Jesus Christ having been “begotten” in the resurrection, that is, being begotten from the dead.

**Verse 37:** Part of the significance of the Jesus’ resurrection is that he was raised and never saw corruption again. He is the only one of all time to be raised from the dead never again to see corruption.

What was he raised with? A new spiritual body. He received new-life out of the state of death.

### a beginning, the firstborn from the dead:

#### **1st Corinthians 15:20 - 23**

**20** But now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the firstfruits of them that slept.

**21** For since by man came death, by man came also the resurrection of the dead.

**22** For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive.

**23** But every man in his own order: Christ the firstfruits; afterward they that are Christ's at his coming.

**firstfruits** (*aparche*): first fruit, first fruit offering. Jesus Christ’s first resurrection appearances occurred on the first day of the week during the Feast of Unleavened Bread, which was the day when the priest was to wave a sheaf of the first fruits’ of harvest as described in **Leviticus 23:19 - 24**.

Here, Jesus Christ is referred to as “the first fruit offering of those who have fallen asleep.” **Verse 20 WT**. He was the first to be raised from the dead, those who believe on him are next in line.

Compare with **Colossians 1:18b** “who is a beginning, the first born from among the dead, that in all things he might have the preeminence.”

**1st Corinthians 15:45 WT** So it has also been written: **Genesis 2:7:** “The first human, Adam, *became* a living soul.” The last Adam became a life-giving spirit.

**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.

God predetermined that we should be conformed to image of Christ and that he would be the first born among many brothers. We are now in the image of Christ but he was the firstborn of every created being.

**2<sup>nd</sup> Corinthians 5:17** if any man is in Christ he is a new creation, old things have passed away, new things have come.

Jesus Christ is the image of the invisible God, he is God’s representative and in him dwells all of the fullness of God’s nature. Jesus Christ is the firstborn of every created being, that is, he is the firstborn from the dead. Jesus Christ is the first to have the new life-giving spirit and the new resurrected body. He was “begotten” from the dead in that he received new spiritual life out of the state of death.

We are now in his likeness, having been conformed to his image as new creations in him.

#### **Verses 16-17**

**created** (*ktizō*): These things were all created by God. We know from the scriptures that God is the Creator of these specific things and so it must refer to God. In regard to things that were created, this verse also serves to show that God was the One Who created that which Christ now is and which we are in him; “every created being.”

**Nehemiah 9:6** You alone are the LORD, You have made the heavens, the heaven of heavens with all their host, the earth and all that is on it, the seas and all that is in them, You give life to all of them and the heavenly host bows down before You.

These verses also establish authorities. God was the One Who created all and so He has the authority to establish thrones, lordships, rulers and authorities and to give authority, fullness, preeminence to whom He wills.

**before** (*pro*): Used of God as before all (things) in that He was the One Who created all of these things and preexisted before they were created, He is first and superior in regard to having created all things.

**and** (*kai*): the second “and” can be translated as “also,” God “also” put all things together in Christ.

**by him**: this should read “in him.”

**Consist**: to cause to stand together, to put together. God has caused all things to stand together, to be put together in Christ. In this context, it is in regard to things such as fullness, preeminence, the church, resurrections, and reconciliations.

## The Fullness and Preeminence of Jesus Christ

### Verse 18

#### the head of the body, the church:

##### **Ephesians 1:20-23**

**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,

**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:

**22** And hath put all things under his feet, and gave him to be the head over all things to the church,

**23** Which is his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all.

All things are in subjection to Jesus Christ, including the church because he is the head of the body, it is his body, and he fills all things in all people in that body.

In terms of God establishing lordships and authorities, He has given the authority, position and status of the head of the church to Jesus Christ, it is his church and his body and he is not outranked by any member of it, in fact, he is their fullness.

##### **Ephesians 4:15-16**

**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.”

Christ is the head of the body and all of the members and functions of the body stem from the head.

the beginning: this refers to him being a beginning in terms of the resurrection, the firstborn from the dead.

Preeminence (*prōteuō*): to be first, hold the first place, or highest dignity. It is used here with a triple meaning:

- 1) Christ is preeminent in his resurrection. He was the first to be born from the dead, given the new life-giving spirit and resurrected body:

**Acts 26:23 WT** That Christ should suffer, [and] that he should be the first that should rise from the dead, and should show light unto the people, and to the Gentiles.

- 2) Christ is preeminent within the Church. He is the head of the body and is to be esteemed as supreme, it is his body. God gave him this authority, position, and status.

- 3) Christ is preeminent in everything else (“all things”)! God gave him this authority, position, and status.

## Verse 19

**pleased** (*eudokeō*): to be well pleased, to think it good.

**Fullness**: refers to that which has been completely filled or that which fills up. Here, ALL fullness dwells in Christ; Jesus Christ is completely filled with the fullness of God and he also fills all things in all people:

**Ephesians 1:23** Which is his body, the fullness of him that filleth all in all.

**Colossians 2:9** For in him dwelleth all the fullness of the Godhead bodily.

Jesus Christ received his fullness from the Father.

We are to fully recognize Christ's preeminence, he is first, and he is chief. This is essential to walk worthy. We must first recognize the accomplishments and lordship of Jesus Christ in order to fully live the instruction of Colossians.

Jesus Christ's preeminence sets the stage for what is written in this epistle regarding walking worthy of lord, not being subject to fleshly ordinances (**Chapter 2**), the new man thinking and conduct (**Chapter 3**), and the daily lives of those who are members of the body of Christ (**Chapter 3:18-Chapter 4**).

## Verse 20

**all**: it useful to note that in these few verses this word is used 6 times:

**16** "by Him (God) **all** things were created."

**17** "He is before **all** things." and "He put **all** things together in Christ."

**18** "that in **all** things he (Jesus Christ) might have the preeminence."

**19** "For it pleased the Father that in him should **all** the fullness dwell."

**20** "to reconcile **all** things to himself."

The work of God and His work in Christ is **all** encompassing.

**blood of the cross**: Peace was accomplished by the blood of the cross. It took the sacrifice of his body and the shedding of his blood in order to restore and bring peace between man and God and all between God and all things. The shed blood of Jesus Christ fulfilled the requirements of justice in order to reconcile man and all things to God.

**things in earth, things in heaven**: God has reconciled all things to Himself by Jesus Christ, whether they are things on earth or in the heavens. The reconciling work of Jesus Christ was both full and broad; all things were affected by it.

**Ephesians 1:10-WT** so that in the administration of the fullness of times He might bring **all** things together **under one head in the Christ**, that is, the things in heaven and the things upon the earth, in him (Christ).

At this time we do not currently see the effects of all things being reconciled, however, in the administration of the fullness of times these things will be a present reality.

The next few verses speak of things that are a present reality now regarding *our* reconciliation...

## Christ in You

### **Verses 21 – 22**

**sometime**: formerly, at one time. This word is contrasted against the Greek word *nun* meaning “now” or “this present time.” Formerly, in the past we were alienated from God and enemies because of wicked works but NOW we are reconciled.

**unblameable** (*amōmos*): without blemish, without a visual defect.

**unreproveable** (*anenklētos*): unblameable, unimpeachable, not accused, with nothing laid to one’s charge as the result of investigation, undeserving of blame even if blamed.

Due to the reconciling work of Jesus Christ we are now (presently) presented before God as holy, unblameable, and unreproveable as opposed to formerly having made ourselves alienated and hostile toward Him.

This is a part of the recognition of the preeminence and the fullness of Christ, he has accomplished these things for us, having shed his own blood and sacrificed his own body unto death so that we would gain from his reward, to be identified together with him.

### **Verse 23**

**If**: is a simple condition and assuming that it is true it may be translated as “since.”

**if ye continue**: there is an ellipsis here where the thought is to be supplied from the previous verses. The thought content immediately preceding this is regarding reconciliation, thus the ellipsis would be rendered “since you are reconciled, continue in the believing.”

**believing**: occurs with the definite article, “the believing.”

**grounded**: to lay the foundation, to found.

**settled**: firm, immovable, steadfast.

**I Paul am made a minister**: Paul was a minister of the gospel. The topic will now move toward the actions and intention of his ministry.

**Verses 24 – 27**

**Colossians 1:24 – 25 NASB**

**24** Now I rejoice in my sufferings for your sake, and in my flesh I do my share on behalf of His body, which is the church, in filling up what is lacking in Christ's afflictions.

**25** Of *this church* I was made a minister according to the stewardship from God bestowed on me for your benefit, so that I might fully carry out the *preaching of* the word of God

**fill up:** is a phrase used of supplementing or filling in a gap where there is a need or lack. It is used here of Paul's responsive devotion to Christ in "filling" up, or undertaking on his part a full share of the sufferings which followed after the sufferings of Christ, and are experienced by the members of the Body of Christ, the church.

**dispensation** (*oikinomia*): administration. Here, it refers to the administration of God given to Paul regarding the gospel and the church, that is, his stewardship.

**Verse 28**

**perfect:** complete, mature.

Paul and co were preaching among all people in order to present all people fully mature in Christ. **1<sup>st</sup> Timothy 2:4** says, "God would have all men to be saved and come to knowledge of the truth."

**every man:** without distinction of Judean or Gentile, this was for all.

**Verse 29**

**striving:** to contend, exert one's self, strive very earnestly. Paul was contending for *all* men, and was contending for the Colossians as we will see in **chapter 2**.

**working** (*energeia*) **which worketh** (*energeō*) **in me mightily:** The working in him with mighty working was from God. Paul was certainly fulfilling that which God was working in him.

## Chapter 2 - 3:4 – Jim Nichols Sr.

### The Teeth of Colossians, The Shot Across the Bow

#### Verse 1

**For:** goes back to striving (*agonizomai*) according to the previous verse but also the previous chapter which the focus is walking worthily in the full precise experiential knowledge of the Gospel of God concerning Jesus Christ according to the revelation of the Mystery.

**would** (*thelo*): desire or wish that

**knew** (*eido*): to see or understand as one seeing, to perceive.

**conflict** (*agon*): exerted effort as in struggle of a contest. What was at stake was **their faith**.

For you (Colossians, Laodiceans (18 miles away) and those who have not seen my face (going back to *eido* met me) in the flesh [**Colossians 4:13,16**]

Refer back to **Chapter 1:25-28** we preach warning **every man**, teaching **every man**, to present **every man**...

I do this for **all** believers, and I'm doing this for **you**.

**2<sup>nd</sup> Corinthians 11:28**

Beside those things that are without, that which cometh upon me daily, the care of **all the churches**.

#### Verse 2

**that** (*hina*): in order that the purpose of his effort and struggle.

**knit together** (*sumbibazo*): knit together or join together

**Ephesians 4:16** - "compacted"

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**.

From whom the whole body fitly joined together and compacted (knit together by every joint of supply), according to the **effectual working** in the measure of each one part of the whole maketh increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love

See **Colossians 1:4** Since we heard of your faith in Christ Jesus and of the love which ye have to all the saints.

**riches** (*plutos*): **fullness** or plenitude (a condition of being full or complete)

"treasures" - \*\* πλοῦτος, ploutos, **Thayer Definition:**

1a) abundance of external possessions, 1b) **fullness**, abundance, plenitude, 1c) a good, i.e. that with which one is enriched - root word - *pletho*- completely filled, or fulfilled

**Full assurance** (*pleroforia*): **full** assurance, **full** confidence

**Understanding** (*sunesis*): a flowing together, a putting it together.

**Acknowledgement** (*epignosis*): Vines - "**full**, or thorough knowledge, discernment, recognition,"

*epignosis* - a full knowledge that has a powerful influence on the knower, a knowledge that perfectly unites the subject with the knower. A knowledge which expresses a more thorough participation on the part of the knower.

It is in the living of The Mystery that it is fully known and understood. And as you understand it more fully, it is lived more fully, and in the living it is more fully understood... **A Virtuous cycle.**

**The Mystery of God, and of the Father and of Christ:** **mystery of God concerning Christ** becomes experiential, participatory in the loving. We have a full knowledge, a participatory knowledge of the riches of this mystery as we are knit together in love.

### Verse 3

**in whom** (*hos*): a relative pronoun, (here referring back to the full knowledge of the Mystery)

**Wherein**

**hid** (*apokrufos*): secret, by implication treasured

**the riches** (*hos*): definite article

**riches** (*thesaurus*): the place in which treasures are stored, the treasures that are stored in a treasury.

definite article **the** "wisdom" *sophia* **and** definite article **the** "knowledge" *gnosis*

Wherein (in the mystery are treasured **all the** treasures of **the** wisdom and **the** knowledge).

There is no need for any **additional** help in wisdom and knowledge from **any** other source.

Paul's gospel here is setting the record straight on where the **true** and **only** treasure of wisdom and knowledge is, - The gospel of God concerning Jesus Christ according to the revelation of the Mystery

#### Verse 4

**beguile** (*paralogizomai*): to cheat by false, wrong reckoning, delude - *para* - alongside, besides, and *logizomai* - to reckon

**James 1:22** But be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, **deceiving** your own selves.

In the Septuagint, Jacob used **paralogizomai** when he reproached Laban for refusing to live up to his bargain with him concerning Rachel, saying:

**Genesis 29:25** What is this thou hast done unto me? did I not serve with thee for Rachel? wherefore then hast thou beguiled (Greek translates the Hebrew with **paralogizomai**) me?

**2<sup>nd</sup> Corinthians 11:4 RSV** For if some one comes and preaches another Jesus than the one we preached, or if you receive a different spirit from the one you received, or if you accept a different gospel from the one you accepted, you submit to it readily enough.

**enticing words** (*pithanlogia*): a convincing argument leading to error. Sincerity is no guarantee for truth.

Paul claimed on the other hand that:

**1<sup>st</sup> 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:

"my message and my preaching were not in **persuasive** (**pithos** = persuasive) words of wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power"

The apostle has just expressed his intense concern for the Colossians in **Chapter 2:1-3** and he now elaborates on the why.

**this I say:** makes the connection, the "this" referring to that which has just been stated. The treasures or the fullness of authentic, genuine, true spiritual wisdom are in Christ, and in Christ alone. And if we allow ourselves to be deceived about this pivotal truth (the source of all The spiritual wisdom and The spiritual knowledge) the deception will produce disorder and break the immovability of the individual and the church upon the truth.

If we allow this, we will leave ourselves open for conquest by the persuasive speech of the deceivers.

On the other hand, the conviction that all spiritual wisdom is found in Him **dispels** the false teaching.

### Verse 5

**joying**: rejoicing or cheering and **beholding**

**your: the** order (*taxis* - and **the** steadfastness (*stereoma*) it has been noted that both words have military associations both used for the orderly rank or arrangement and the solidarity of an immovable front, an example of this would be the orderly immovable phalanx (Movie 300 Thermopolis)

**faith in Christ: They were in order and they were steadfast, immovable! And Paul wanted them to stay that way.**

### Verse 6

**As you have** (*hos*): which how, in that manner [referring back to their order and steadfastness, hearts knit together in love, unto all the riches or fullness of the full assurance of understanding, to the full knowledge of The Mystery of God concerning Christ]

**Therefore** (*oun*): certainly, likewise

**received** (*paralambano*): (Strong's) to receive near, that is, associate with oneself (in any familiar or intimate act or relation) (Thayers) ) to take to, to take with one's self, to join to one's self. [Mystery knowledge and wisdom here]

They received the Word from Epaphras (see **Chapter 1**)

In that manner (in your order and steadfastness) you certainly have taken to join yourselves with Christ Jesus, **walk ye in him**. Keep doing what you're doing! Keep walking, living who you are in the revelation of the gospel of God concerning His son, Jesus Christ according to the revelation of The Mystery.

**Chapter 1:23** "If you **continue** in the faith grounded and settled, and be not moved away from the hope of the gospel..."

This is more of a caution rather than a correction.

Walk **in him** – imperative

## Verse 7

**rooted** (*rhizoo*): cause to strike roots ["we have put our roots down here" we have established our lives here] Opposite would be uprooted.

**built up** (*epoikodomeo*): build thereupon, **In him**

**established** (*bebaioo*): establish, make sure, confirm [confirm our flight or payment they give us a confirmation number, our confirmation is the gospel of God concerning His son Jesus Christ according to the revelation of The Mystery and the experiential participatory knowledge of The Mystery by the living it]

**"The Faith"**: definite article

These 3 things, rooted, built up, established are not in the imperative voice as commands but rather they are in the Passive voice - out growths of living The Mystery, the epignosis

**abounding** (*perissueo*): - Strongs: to superabound in quantity or quality

**Wuest**: having been rooted with the present result that you are firmly established, and constantly being built up in Him and constantly being established with reference to the Faith, even as you were instructed, abounding in it in the sphere of thanksgiving.

### **Ephesians 3:17-19**

**17** That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith; that ye, being rooted and grounded in love,

**18** May be able to comprehend with all saints what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height;

**19** And to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, that ye might be filled with all the fulness of God.

If we ever want to open ourselves up to deception, unthankfulness is a great place to start.

On the other hand to be thankful guards our hearts and minds:

### **Philippians 4:6 -7**

**6** Be careful for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God.

**7** And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.

## Verse 8

**Beware** (*blepo*): to see or perceive, used in verse as "beholding" but here it is in the sense of have your eyes open, **be aware**

**spoil** (*sulagogeo* - to carry one of as booty, or **to carry one off as a slave or in bondage**)

**philosophy** (*phiosophia*): Thayers - 1) love of wisdom

1a) used either of zeal for or skill in any art or science, any branch of knowledge. Used once in the NT of the theology, or **rather theosophy** [so called divine wisdom], of certain Jewish Christian ascetics [Jewish Sophistry who through bodily anguish of injury or neglect] , which busied itself with refined and speculative enquiries into the nature and classes of angels, into the ritual of the Mosaic law and the regulations of Jewish tradition respecting practical life

**vain deceit**: empty delusion

**Esoteric** Wisdom only for the few enlightened ones. [See **Colossians 1:26-28**, for every man.]

**after** (*kata*): according to

- 1) after the traditions of men
- 2) after the rudiments - elements of the World

Both of which put men in bondage

**rudiments of the world** (*stoichea*): elements of the World

**Elementary Principles**: a primary element, a force, or law which determines results, destiny  
Colossian philosophies

"The main object of the epistle is to warn the Colossians against the spirit of semi-Judaistic and semi-oriental philosophy which was corrupting the simplicity of their belief, and was noticeably tending to obscure the eternal glory and dignity of Christ."<sup>5</sup>

- Dr. William Smith

The "philosophy" against which the Colossians were warned, (**Colossians 2:8**) seems undoubtedly to have been of eastern origin, containing elements similar to those which were afterward embodied in various shapes of Gnosticism, as a selfish asceticism, and a superstitions reverence for angels, (**Colossians 2:16-23**) and in the Epistles to Timothy, addressed to Ephesians, in which city St. Paul anticipated the rise of false teaching, (**Acts 20:30**) two distinct forms of error may be traced in addition to Judaism, due more or less to the same influence.<sup>6</sup>

- Dr. William Smith

<sup>5</sup> Smith, Dr. William - Smith's Bible Dictionary (1884), page 168

<sup>6</sup> Smith, Dr. William - Smith's Bible Dictionary (1884), page 744

Reicke argues that the meaning of *stoicheia* is best discerned in the context of Hellenistic Judaism, where it is used of angelic mediators of divine revelation, whether in writing Scripture or through religious experiences such as visions or oracular speech<sup>7</sup>

Other translations to consider:

**RSV** See to it that no one makes a prey of you by philosophy and empty deceit, according to human tradition, according to the elemental spirits of the universe, and not according to Christ.

**ESV** See to it that no one takes you captive by philosophy and empty deceit, according to human tradition, according to the elemental spirits of the world, and not according to Christ.

**New English Bible** Be on guard; do not let your minds be captured by hollow and delusive speculations, based on traditions of man-made teaching and centred on the elemental spirits of the universe and not on Christ.

**Moffatt Bible** Beware of anyone getting hold of you by means of a theosophy which is specious make-believe, on the lines of human tradition, corresponding to the Elemental spirits of the world and not to Christ.

Colossian philosophy of the day located the divine fullness in the angel/elements/powers, which accounted for their worship of them.<sup>8</sup>

Elements were part of the angel cult, these "powers" were either understood as representatives of the divine fullness (Bornkamm) **or** dangerous principalities who block the way to fullness and allow free passage only after they had received due reverence (Dibelius)<sup>9</sup>

**Galatians 4:1-11**

**3** bondage - *douloo* - to enslave.

**8** Hobeit then, when ye knew not God, ye did service unto them which by nature are no gods.  
Ye did service - *douleuo* - to be a slave.

Two separate things are mentioned here in Galatians most likely blended together, the law and the elements, what do they both have in common? Men were in bondage to both of them from which Christ has made men free.

<sup>7</sup> Reicke 1951:259-76 Colossians and Philemon, Robert W. Wall pg106.

<sup>8</sup> A. Moyo, The Colossian Heresy in Light of Some Gnostic Documents from Nag Hammadi, Journal of Theology for Southern Africa 48, pp 34-35 (1984)

<sup>9</sup> The Colossian Controversy Wisdom In Dispute, Richard E. DeMaris pages 24,25

**Galatians 1:6-12**

**8** But **though we, or an angel from heaven**, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed.

**11** But I certify you, brethren, that the gospel which was preached of me is **not after man**.

**12** For I neither received it of man, neither was I taught *it*, but by the revelation of Jesus Christ.

**1<sup>st</sup> Timothy 2:5** For *there is* one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus;

These false teachers were teaching that angelic or spirit beings were mediators to the divine, a teaching that was, and is, an insult to the one to whom the honor belongs, the one mediator, Christ Jesus our Lord.

**Verse 9**

In Christ alone dwelleth the fullness of the divine bodily

In Christ alone is an understanding of divine Wisdom

In Christ alone is our holiness, is our justification is our redemption

In Christ alone is our access to God

**I Corinthians 1:30** But of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption:

**Verse 10**

We are completely filled **in him and in nothing else**, no angel, no saint, no holy man, no archon etc. Christ is the head of all principality and power. Christ is our Lord, He has the preeminence. None other, no man, or no spiritual power of any sort.

**Ephesians 1:19 – 21**

**19** And what *is* the exceeding greatness of his power to us-ward who believe, according to the working of his mighty power,

**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*.

**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

**principality** (*arche*): Vines N.T. (G746), "beginning, government, rule," is used of supramundane [supernatural] beings who exercise rule, called "principalities"; (a) of holy angels, Eph 3:10, the church in its formation being to them the great expression of "the manifold (or "much-varied") wisdom of God"; Col 1:16; (b) of evil angels, Rom 8:38; Col 2:15, some would put this under (a), but see *SPOIL B, No. 4*; (a) and (b) are indicated in Col 2:10. In Eph 1:21, the RV renders it "rule" (KJV, "principality") and in Tit 3:1, "rulers" (KJV, "principalities"). In Jud 1:6, RV, it signifies, not the first estate of fallen angels (as KJV), but their authoritative power, "their own" indicating that which had been assigned to them by God, which they left, aspiring to prohibited conditions.

#### Verse 11

**In Whom** - in Christ (in Christ dwelleth the fullness of the divine bodily) the embodiment of the divine and in him we are completely filled. In him who is the head of all principality and power.

#### Circumcision:

**Romans 4:11** the sign of circumcision and the seal of righteousness

**Sign** (*semeion*): sign, token, wonder, indication

**Seal** (*sphragis*): mark of genuineness, mark of authenticity, mark of authority, as in the signet ring.

The putting off the body of the flesh is **not** done by flesh, it is a circumcision made without hands **by** the circumcision of Christ. Not by any rite or ceremony of the flesh, but made without hands.

#### Verse 12

**Buried and risen with him in baptism:** in his identifying union with us and our identifying union with him.

#### **Romans 6:3-5**

**3** Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death?

**4** Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life.

**5** For if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also *in the likeness of his* resurrection:

**operation of God:** **operation** (*Energeia*) working, energy, strong effectual working. Thayer - In NT used only of superhuman power, whether of God or of the Devil

**energeia** is found in the classic Greek writings first in Aristotle describing diabolic influences. And so in In Hellenism, as in Philo, the word group **energeia/energeo** (noun/verb) is used of cosmic or physical forces at work in man or the world around.

### Verse 13

Forgiven **all** trespasses

### Verse 14

**Blotting out** (*exaleipho*): wipe away, to erase

**Acts 3:19** "...that your sins may be blotted out..."

**Revelation 7:17** "...and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes."

**handwriting** (*cheirographon*): a handwritten document in which one acknowledges a debt to be paid.

**ordinances** (*dogma*): doctrine, decree, or ordinance, from **any** source civil, ceremonial or ecclesiastical

**took** (*airo*): to take up, to lift up

**way** (*mesos*): in the midst of, among

### Verse 15

"**The Principalities and The Powers**"

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

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

**Spoil** different word than in **2:8** (*apekduomai*): to separate, to strip off wholly from one's self for one's own advantage

#### **Luke 22:52 – 53**

**52** Then Jesus said unto the chief priests, and captains of the temple, and the elders, which were come to him, Be ye come out, as against a thief, with swords and staves?

**53** When I was daily with you in the temple, ye stretched forth no hands against me: but this is your hour, and the power of darkness.

There is no doubt that Satan and his hosts marshaled together to fiercely attack our Christ with the utmost of their power and cruelty. And this stands as a vivid description of Christ's love and obedience fending off of their attack and of the power by which he triumphantly and completely overthrew them.

During the crucifixion they publically stripped our Christ, they put him up where all could see, they humiliated and shamed Jesus. In this glorious Triumph he divested them, stripped them, in his resurrection he publically made an exhibit of and triumphed over them

**shew** (*deigmatizo*): to exhibit

**openly** (*parrhēsia*): frankly, without concealment, with free and fearless confidence.

**triumphing**: - Victory processional - incense and flowers at the end - it lingers today through the fragrance of his knowledge

**2nd Corinthians 2:14 – 17**

**14** Now thanks be unto God, which always causeth us to triumph in Christ, and maketh manifest the savour of his knowledge by us in every place.

**15** For we are unto God a sweet savour of Christ, in them that are saved, and in them that perish:

**16** To the one we are the savour of death unto death; and to the other the savour of life unto life. And who is sufficient for these things?

**17** For we are not as many, which corrupt the word of God: but as of sincerity, but as of God, in the sight of God speak we in Christ.

**Ephesians 4:8** Wherefore he saith, When he ascended up on high, he led captivity captive, and gave gifts unto men.

**[For further study, see the appendix, "The Victory Triumph" on page 49.]**

**Verse 16**

"Let no **man** judge you", becomes clearer in **verse 18**

These were not exclusively Mosaic law, but according to "The philosophy" included the blending of Mosaic law, the syncretism of pagan festivals and ascetic practices of the Jewish Sophist Theosophy and the worshipping or serving of "angels" or spirits.

**Verse 17**

**Shadow** (*skia*): Strongs - Apparently a primary word; "shade" or a shadow (literally or figuratively [darkness of error or an adumbration])

**the body**: the actual, the real, the genuine is Christ

## Verse 18

(Refer back to **verse 16**)

**beguile** (*katabrabeuo*): judge against, as judge or umpire disqualifying, defrauding you of your prize of victory

**Colossians 1:5** For the hope which is laid up for you in heaven, whereof ye heard before in the word of the truth of the gospel

**2<sup>nd</sup> Timothy 4:8** Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing.

**Voluntary humility** – **voluntary** (*thelo*): intentional, to will, to be fond of, to take pleasure

**humility** (*tapeniphrosune*): having a humble opinion of one's self, humbleness of mind

**worshipping** (*threskeia*): religious worship, especially external that which consists of ceremonies; religious discipline; ceremonial observance

Vincent says: "The attitude of the false teachers would involve their sitting in judgment as to the future reward of those who refused their doctrine of angelic mediation. Paul speaks from the standpoint of their claim." We could go a step farther and say that these false teachers would actually deprive those Christians who would be led astray by them, of their reward at the Judgment Seat of Christ by reason of the fact that their Christian experience would be affected, and in a bad way.<sup>10</sup>

**not seen**: "not" - **WT** Omitted according to some critical Greek texts. This clause could therefore refer to things that he has not seen, such as spirit messengers, or to things that he has seen by natural means as opposed to that which is spiritual.

**Vainly puffed up**: notice it doesn't say "made up", but **puffed up** (*phusioo*): to be puffed up, to bear one's self loftily, be proud.

A blend of false mystic philosophies and the Mystic Jewish Sophistry

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<sup>10</sup> Wuest, K. S. (1973). Wuest's word studies from the Greek New Testament: For the English reader. Grand Rapids, Mich: Eerdmans.

## Verse 19

**Not holding the head**: Christ

**joints** (*haphe*): bond, connection

**Ephesians 4:16** From whom the whole body fitly joined together and compacted (knit together by every **joint** of supply, according to the **effectual working** in the measure of each one part of the whole maketh increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love

**Ephesians 3:21** In whom all the building fitly framed together groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord:

**1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians 12:18** But now hath God **set the** members every one of them in the body, as it hath pleased him.

**bands** (*sundesmos*): That which binds together, a band, bond

**Ephesians 4:3** Endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the **bond** of peace.

**Colossians 3:14** And above all these things *put on* charity, which is the **bond** of perfectness.

### Connections and fastenings to the head and to each other

**having nourishment ministered** (*epichoregeo*): fully supplied

The nourishment the supply the life is from the head Christ and no other source, the body of Christ is exactly that, Christ's body.

## Verse 20

**rudiments of the world** (*stoicheon tou kosmos*): elements or elemental spirits of the world, as in verse 8.

**from** (*apo*): away, off, separating, cessation from

Since you died in Christ with all the identifying and redemptive ramifications of our being united with Christ, *from the stoichea* of the world why are you subjecting yourselves to decrees putting yourselves back under the bondage of the elemental spirits of this world by means of these ascetic, self prescribed doctrines, which will perish

**Verse 21**

**Touch not, taste not, handle not:** Part of the Asceticism promoted by "the philosophy"

**Verse 22**

Which all are to perish with the using after the commandments and doctrines of men  
Unlike the Word of God which liveth and abideth forever.

**Verse 23**

**will worship**(*ethelothreskeia*): self prescribed worship

voluntary service or worship, which men **choose** for themselves at their **own** volition, without **any** authority from God.

Ascetic practices as part of their quest to know the divine, to appease the divine, to initiate themselves into the realm of the divine.

**1<sup>st</sup> Timothy 4:1 - 8** behind all these doctrines were spirits

**bodily exercise:** Strongs figuratively asceticism

**Cognate:** **1129** *gymnasía* (from **1128** /*gymnázō*, "to *train*, work out, exercise" and the root of the English term, "gymnasium") – properly, physical training ("bodily exercise"). **1129** /*gymnasía* ("bodily exercise"), used only in **1<sup>st</sup> Timothy 4:8**, refers to *bodily disciplines used for extreme ascetic practices*. That is, when physical exercise (like yoga) is viewed as "the *necessary* gateway to experience true spirituality." Thus exercise *per se* is not discouraged here, only required *bodily exercises* in mystical-physical teachings like *theosophy*. This ancient (and current) philosophy contends the discipline of the body is one of life's chief concerns and special physical exercises as necessary for spiritual advancement.<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>11</sup>In Nicoll, W. R. (1912). The expositor's Greek Testament. London: Hodder and Stoughton.

**Colossians 3:1-4**

**Colossians warns every man that:**

In Christ alone is the preeminence

In Christ alone is The fullness of The Wisdom and The Knowledge

In Christ alone is fullness of the divine

In Christ alone are we completely filled with the same

In Christ alone are we circumcised with the circumcision made without hands

In Christ alone are the handwritings of ordinances wiped away

In Christ alone is our victory and triumph

In Christ alone is our reality

In Christ alone is our nourishment and our knitting together, our increase and growth

## Chapter 3: 1 - 17 – Sam Pittenger

### Seeking Things Above

#### Verse 1

**if:** introduces a condition, assuming that it is true; “since.”

#### risen with Christ:

**Colossians 2:12** 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.

#### where Christ sits on the right hand of God

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

Christ is seated at the right hand of God and we are seated together in the heavenly realm in Christ.

**seek** (*zēteō*): This same word is used of Herod seeking the child Jesus:

**Matthew 2:13** “And when they were departed, behold, the angel of the Lord appeareth to Joseph in a dream, saying, Arise, and take the young child and his mother, and flee into Egypt, and be thou there until I bring thee word: for Herod will **seek the young child to destroy him.**”

#### Verse 2

**set your affection** (*phroneō*): to think.

We are to think the things that are above and not to think earthly things:

**Colossians 2:20** 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?

### Verses 3 – 4

**you are dead:** is an aorist tense verb, it should be translated as having occurred in the past, “you died.”

**life:** our life is not in the things on earth, it is in Christ.

#### Colossians 2:12-13

**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.

**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”

**shall you appear with him in glory:** Appearing with Christ in glory refers to a time in the future when we will be manifested with him. When the scriptures speak of Christ coming/appearing in glory it refers to a time period that follows the return of Christ to gather the church. Our appearing with him in glory refers to his subsequent appearances with us *after* the return to gather the church.

**See: Matthew 16:27, Matthew 19:28, Matthew 24:30, Matthew 25:31, Mark 8:38, Mark 10:37, Mark 13:26, Luke 9:26, Luke 21:27, Acts 1:9-11 and Colossians 3:4.**

### Verse 5

**mortify** (*nekroō*): put to death, deaden

**members** (*melos*): a member, limb, or part of the physical body. Here, it refers to the practices of that body such as fornication, uncleanness, inordinate affection, evil cravings, and covetousness which are practices associated with idolatry, something that greatly impedes walking balance with the lord.

Additionally, these are practices that are upon earth, they are earthly practices. What did **verses 1- 4** tell us in regard to earthly things?

### Verses 6 – 7

**wrath of God:** refers to the wrath of God that is to come upon the ungodly in the future. Here, it says that it is because of these types of practices that the wrath of God will come upon the children of disobedience in the future, they are earthly practices.

**the children of disobedience:** Is an idiom referring to those who are disobedient regarding Christ, that is, they refuse to believe on him. See also **Ephesians 2:2, 5:6** and “children of wrath” in **Ephesians 2:3**

**in which, lived in them:** the words “which” and “them” are both neuter nouns referring back to the “children of disobedience.” This is not referring only to living in the *works* of the earthly practices, but living with the children of disobedience themselves, *earthly* people. This verse could be understood as WT “**among whom** you also walked formerly when you were living **among them.**”

## Verses 8 - 9

**put off** (*apotithēmi*): to put off oneself, to put away.

**anger, wrath, malice, blasphemy, filthy communication, lying:** these things are not practices specifically associated with idolatry, however, they are practices that are earthly. We are to put off these things. As we will see, these things are counterproductive to putting on the new man, thinking and conduct that is according to the mystery.

**seeing that you have put off** (*apekduomai*): This is a different Greek word than what was used for “put off” earlier. It is a word that means “to strip off oneself” as in taking off clothing. This word is used as a circumstantial participle and should be read as “stripping off the old man” A comparison will soon be made to “putting on” or “clothing oneself” with the new man.

## Clothing Ourselves with the New Man

### Verse 10

**new man:** refers to **Ephesians 2:15** and the one new man/person created between Judean and Gentile.

#### **Ephesians 2:14-16**

**14** For he is our peace, who hath made **both one** [*Judean and Gentile*], and hath broken down the middle wall of partition [between us];

**15** Having abolished in his flesh the enmity, [even] the law of commandments [contained] in ordinances; for to make [*ktizō- to create*] in himself of twain [*two*] **one new man**, [so] making peace;

**16** And that he might reconcile both unto God **in one body** by the cross, having slain the enmity thereby:”

Here, the new man is something brand new that was *created* in Jesus Christ where Judean and Gentile became one new man, reconciled in one body.

**Ephesians 4:24** And that ye put on the **new man**, which after God is **created** in righteousness and true holiness.

Here, it spoken of again as something *created*. This time it is created in accordance with God in righteousness and true holiness (devotion to the truth). This one new man was created in Christ Jesus in accordance with God, Who gave him the authority to do so.

**put on** (*enduō*): to put on, to clothe oneself. Here, clothing ourselves with the new man is contrasted with stripping off that which hinders the new man, the old man.

**renewed** (*anakainōō*): to make new, to anew.

**knowledge** (*epignosis*): a full knowledge that has a powerful influence on the knower, a knowledge that perfectly unites the subject with the object. A knowledge which expresses a more thorough participation on the part of the knower.

Clothing ourselves with the new man is made anew in the *epignosis* of the image of him who created it. As we fully acknowledge the one who created the new man, we are renewed and clothed with it.

**Created:** This is the third occurrence of the new man and it is the third time it is referred to as something that was created. In Ephesians 2:15 it speaks of Jesus Christ creating it in himself, that is, he had authority from God in creating the new man.

How do we clothe ourselves with the new man (Judean and Gentile as one new man)? By aligning our thinking and conduct with the realities of the one new man. This is detailed in the verses to follow.

Here, clothing ourselves with the new man is done by deadening and putting away the practices upon earth and by being renewed in a full acknowledgment (*epignosis*) according to the image of him who created the new man, which was Jesus Christ by the authority from God. Thus, As we fully acknowledge (*epignosis*) him who created the new man, we are renewed and clothed with it.

Having a full acknowledgment (*epignosis*) of the image of Christ in this one new man where “Christ is all and in all” is the motivating influence to clothe ourselves with the thinking and conduct of the one new man (as detailed in verses to follow).

## Christ All in All

### **Verse 11**

**Greek nor Jew:** there is no distinction between Judean and Gentile because of **Ephesians 2:14 - 15**, “to create in himself of the two, one new man, so making peace.” Here, “Greeks” would include all Gentiles, that is, all who were not of Judean descent.

**Barbarian:** These were people that were foreign to the Greeks.

**Scythians:** They were considered the most savage of all barbarians.

**bond nor free:** in the one new man both slaves and free men do not exist, they are one new man. This is particularly important in light of biblical culture because as Colossians will later address because there were both believing masters and believing slaves.

**Christ is all and in all:** This refers to Jesus Christ being all things in all people. Compare with:

**Ephesians 1:22b - 23**

**22b** ...and gave him to be the head over all things to the church,

**23** Which is his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all.

In the new man, it is the image of Christ that each person bears, and not a flesh image (Judean, Gentile, barbarian, Scythian, bond or free). These flesh distinctions *do not exist* in the new man, instead Christ is all and in all.

**Galatians 3:27 - 28**

**27** For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ.

**28** There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus.

We have been clothed with Christ and that is our identification. Being clothed with Christ is a closer association than our flesh, even than being male or female. In the one new man, "Christ is all *things* in all *people*."

**Verse 12**

**therefore:** This kind of thinking and conduct is in response to the truth of Christ all and in all in the new man. The realities of the one new man are the motivating influence for this type of thinking and conduct.

**put on** (*enduō*): to clothe oneself. In clothing ourselves with the new man, we specifically clothe ourselves with this type of thinking and conduct.

**bowels of mercies** (*oiktirmos*): bowels of compassion, bowels in which compassion resides; a heart of compassion.

**compassion:** one dictionary gave this definition of the English word "a feeling of deep sympathy and sorrow for another who is stricken by misfortune, accompanied by a strong desire to alleviate the suffering."

**kindness** (*chrēstotēs*): goodness and kindness displayed in benevolence. The opposite would be cruelty. The root word is used as pleasant, useful, mild, or mellowed as aged wine would be. Kindness has no edge to it, it has no sharpness.

**Luke 5:37-39**

**37** And no man putteth new wine into old bottles; else the new wine will burst the bottles, and be spilled, and the bottles shall perish.

**38** But new wine must be put into new bottles; and both are preserved.

**39** No man also having drunk old wine straightway desireth new: for he saith, The old is better (*chrēstos*: gentle, mild, pleasant, mellowed).

**humbleness** (*tapeinophrosunē*): to be subject under something or someone and to perceive it as greater than self.

**Ephesians 5:20 ESV** “submitting to one another out of reverence for Christ.”

**meekness** (*praotēs*): Mildness of disposition, gentleness of spirit. It is sometimes used of being teachable; to be able to receive information readily and change.

**longsuffering** (*makrothumia*): patience, forbearing, slow in avenging, to be long-minded, longanimity.

### Verse 13

**forbear** (*anechō*): here used not in sense of “to put up with” or “tolerate” but “to uphold” or “to sustain.” We uphold one another. **Ephesians 4** says to “uphold (*anechō*) one another in love.”

**forbearing and forgiving**: These are both participles, they are things that we will be doing consistently in the one new man.

**forgiving, forgave** (*charizomai*): Used of gracious forgiveness; no strings attached, a free forgiveness.

### Verse 14

**put on** (*enduo*): to clothe oneself. Above *all* of these things we clothe ourselves with love. We wear love. Love encompasses all of these things.

In putting on new man thinking and conduct we put on love, as we put on love, we are putting off earthly practices. This love is based on the realities of the one new man, we love *because* Christ is all in all.

**bond of perfectness**: a uniting bond of maturity, that which binds us together in maturity.

#### **Colossians 1:4, 8**

**4** Since we heard of your faith in Christ Jesus, and of the love which ye have to all the saints

**8** Who also declared unto us your love in the Spirit.

**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 4:15** But speaking the truth in love, may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ

**Ephesians 4:16** 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.

**Verse 15**

**God:** Christ, according to all critical Greek texts.

**peace of Christ: Ephesians 2:15b** “making in himself of two, one new man so making **peace.**”

**rule:** to be an umpire; control, direct, to be a decider.

When there is cause for hostility because of other’s actions or flesh, we bring our thinking back to the peace accomplished in the one new man.

**Verse 16**

**WT** “Let the Word concerning Christ dwell in you richly, teaching and admonishing one another with all wisdom, singing in psalms, hymns, *and* spiritual songs with grace [*favor*] in your hearts to God.”

**Verse 17**

**do all in the name of the lord Jesus:** everything that we do is in light of the lord Jesus Christ and what he has accomplished for us individually and in the one new man. We do all things with an acute awareness of him. This will be shown in practice in the verses that follow.

**giving thanks:** participle.

## Chapter 3: 18 - 4:18 – Shawn Weir

### Worthy walking in every aspect of our lives (Continued)

Moreover, whatever you do in word or in work, do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God, the Father, through him.

**Colossians 3:17 WT**

### Interpersonal Relationships

The word "Lord" occurs very frequently (seven times) from **3:18 - 4:1**, highlighting the importance of applying the Lordship of Christ in all of our interpersonal relationships.

#### Verses 18 – 19

##### Wives and Husbands:

What God did in Christ changed everything about what's available in the relationship between God and man, between man and man and between man and woman. The depths of these realities were hid in God as a mystery, but these now accomplished truths are revealed. Our Christ has healed, enhanced and enriched everything; including what's available in our marriages.

In **Ephesians 5**, the eternal realities of God's purpose in Christ, the one new man, our unity of the spirit and the practical doctrine of worthy walking with our calling in Christ have all been greatly detailed. The switch to speaking to those specifically in a marriage relationship happens after one last verse applicable to all members.

##### **Ephesians 5:21 WT**

Be subject to one another in the fear [reverence] of Christ.

**Subject**(*hupotassō*): to arrange under; to be under obedience, put under, to be in subjection to, submit self-unto

All members are to be submitting one to another in the reverence of Christ. Submitting is a core part of the Christian life in the one body. What follows next specifically to wives is not some awkward shift to a new concept.

##### **Ephesians 5:22 -24 WT**

**22** Wives, be subject to your own husbands, as to the lord,

**23** because the husband is head of the wife as Christ is also head of the Church. He is the savior of the body.

**24** Therefore, as the Church is subject to Christ, so let the wives also be to the husbands in everything.

**Head** (*kephalē*): God doesn't say taskmaster, overseer or master. He specifically uses the term "head", which is used of Christ and only of Christ for the Christian.

**Ephesians 5:25 -27 WT**

**25** Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the Church and delivered himself up for it

**26** so that he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water in the Word.

**27** He did so that he might present the Church illustrious to himself without spot or wrinkle or any of those things, but so that it might be holy [sanctified] and without blemish.

**Love** (*agapaō*): God defines the way Christian husbands are to love their wives, as Christ loves his Church.

**Holy** (*hagios*): sacred, pure, blameless and consecrated. Set apart from that which is common.

As Christ sees the members of his body separated out as holy from all the other people, Husbands are to see their wives as separated out from all other women.

**Ephesians 5:28 – 31 WT**

**28** Even so, husbands ought to love their own wives as their own bodies. He who loves his own wife loves himself.

**29** As a matter of fact, no one has ever hated his own flesh, but he nourishes and tenderly cares for it, even as Christ also does for the Church

**30** because we are members of his body.

**31** “For this reason will a man leave his father and mother and will be joined to his wife, and the two will become one flesh.”

**become one flesh:** This is a command of God that has spanned administrations.

**Genesis 2:24** Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh.

**Matthew 19:5 - 6**

**5** And said, For this cause shall a man leave father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife: and they twain shall be one flesh?

**6** Wherefore they are no more twain, but one flesh. What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder.

**1st Corinthians 6:16** What? know ye not that he which is joined to an harlot is one body? for two, saith he, shall be one flesh.

In the church there is a unity of the spirit (**Ephesians 4:3**) between all members, which is to be guarded.

In the marriage there is an additional unity of the one flesh between both members, which is also to be guarded.

**Verses 20 – 21**

20 **Children:**

**Ephesians 6:1 - 3**

- 1 Children, obey your parents in the Lord: for this is right.
- 2 Honour thy father and mother; (which is the first commandment with promise;)
- 3 That it may be well with thee, and thou mayest live long on the earth.

One way children can walk in a way that is worthy and well pleasing to their Lord is by obeying their parents.

21 **Fathers:**

**1<sup>st</sup> Timothy 3:4 – 5**

- 4 One that ruleth well his own house, having his children in subjection with all gravity;
- 5 (For if a man know not how to rule his own house, how shall he take care of the church of God?)

**Ephesians 6:4 WT**

Likewise, fathers, do not provoke your children to anger, but nurture them in the disciplined instruction and admonition of the lord.

21 **provoke**(*erethizō*): to stir up or to rouse. In can be used in a good sense (see **2<sup>nd</sup> Corinthians 9:2**)

21 **discouraged**(*athumeō*):disheartened, broken in spirit or to be dismayed

**Verses 22 – 4:1**

22 **Servants:**

**Ephesians 6:5 – 7 WT**

- 5 Servants, obey your lords according to the flesh with fear and trembling [reverence and obedience], with integrity of your heart as to the Christ,
- 6 not with eye service as people-pleasers but as servants of Christ doing the will of God from the soul,
- 7 serving with good will as to the lord and not to people.

22 **singleness**(*haplotēs*): meaning simplicity, singleness or integrity as opposed to a double heart or intentions other than what you're displaying.

22 **God**: should read as "lord" according to all critical Greek texts

23 **heartily**(*ek psuchē*): made up of two Greek words meaning literally "from the soul".

25 **doeth wrong**(*adikeō*): to be unjust or act wickedly

**Colossians 3:25 WT**

Moreover, he who is unjust will receive in return for what he has done unjustly, and there is no respect of persons.

**Romans 12:19 - 20**

**19** Dearly beloved, avenge not yourselves, but rather give place unto wrath: for it is written, Vengeance is mine; I will repay, saith the Lord.

**20** Therefore if thine enemy hunger, feed him; if he thirst, give him drink: for in so doing thou shalt heap coals of fire on his head.

4:1 **Masters:**

**Ephesians 6:8 – 9 WT**

**8** Be aware that whatever good thing each person does, he will receive the same in return from the lord, whether he is a servant or a free person.

**9** Likewise, lords, do the same things unto them, and cease from threatening, being aware that the lord of them and of you is in heaven, and there is no respect of persons with him.

## Praying Always

**Verses 2 – 4**

**Colossians 4:2 NASB** Devote yourselves to prayer, keeping alert in it with an attitude of thanksgiving

**Ephesians 6:18 WT** praying always with every prayer and prayer request in the spirit and watching in this very thing with all perseverance and in prayer request concerning all the holy [sanctified] ones.

3 **utterance**(*logos*): referring to the Word of God. Literally, “a door of the Word”.

## Interactions with Unbelievers

**Verse 5**

5 **without**(*exō*): outside, away, forth. Referring here to those outside of the body of Christ and not born again.

5 **redeeming**(*exagorazō*): to buy up. This is not Christian time management, but buy up your opportunities.

**Ephesians 5: 15 – 16 WT**

**15** See to it then that you walk accurately, not as unwise but as wise,

**16** redeeming the time because the days are evil.

**Psalms 90:12** So teach us to number our days, that we may apply our hearts unto wisdom.

## Verse 6

**always**(*παντοτε*): at all times, always, ever. Regardless of audience, we speak one way.

### salt:

**Leviticus 2:13** And every oblation of thy meat offering shalt thou season with salt; neither shalt thou suffer the salt of the covenant of thy God to be lacking from thy meat offering: with all thine offerings thou shalt offer salt.

**Bullinger's Companion Bible**: "salt is prescribed, because, when partaken of by the two parties, it made the covenant inviolable (never to be broken, infringed, or dishonored.)."

## Personal Greetings and Closing Remarks

### Verses 7 – 9

8 **Encourage**(*παράκαλεō*): meaning to call to one's side to exhort, comfort, admonish, and strengthen by consolation

**Tychicus**: Tychicus was entrusted with not only carrying epistles, but also to encourage the hearts of the churches, communicate their state back to Paul, and Paul's to them. This is important because you would hear rumors, many taught with a pretense to add to affliction to his bonds

#### **Ephesians 6:21 - 22 WT**

**21** So that you may also be aware of my affairs, what I am doing, Tychicus, the beloved brother and faithful minister in the lord, will make all *things* known to you.

**22** I am sending him to you for this very purpose, that you may know our affairs and that he may encourage your hearts.

*Encourage*: *παράκαλεō*

- Tychicus accompanied the Apostle Paul on a part of his journey from Macedonia to Jerusalem (**Acts 20:4**).
- He was also likely with Paul in Rome, from where his last orders from him in **2nd Timothy** (likely carrying that epistle) were to go to Ephesus, probably for the purpose of building up and encouraging the church there.
- The sending of Tychicus to Ephesus would free up Timothy so that he could visit Paul at Rome before winter as he requested of him. See **Titus 3:12** and **2nd Timothy 4:12**

9 **Onesimus**: The subject of the epistle of **Philemon**

- Not Onesimus "the slave", rather "one of you" being a native Colossian, but more importantly a faithful and beloved brother in the body of Christ.
- "They will make known to you all *things* that *are done* here." both were equally qualified.

**Verses 10 – 11**

10 **Aristarchus**:

**Acts 19: 29 WT** Then the city was filled with confusion, and having seized Gaius and Aristarchus of Macedonia, Paul's companions in travel, they rushed into the theater with unity of purpose.

10 **Marcus**:

**Acts 12: 25 WT** and having fulfilled their service, Barnabas and Saul returned from Jerusalem, taking with them John, who was called Mark.

**Acts 15: 36 – 39 WT**

**36** After some days, Paul said to Barnabas, "Let us now return and visit the brothers in every city in which we have preached the Word of the Lord, and see how they are doing."

**37** Now Barnabas intended to also take along John, who was called Mark,

**38** but Paul did not consider it fitting to take along him who had deserted them at Pamphylia and who had not gone on with them in the work.

**39** Thus there arose a sharp contention so that they parted from one another. Taking Mark with him, Barnabas sailed to Cyprus,

11 **comfort**(*parēgoria*): relief, alleviation, consolation

**Verses 12 – 13**

12 **Epaphras**: Faithful Epaphras, who was one of them, was not with them now, but he was still fervently praying for them. Where was he?

**Philemon 23 WT**

Epaphras, **my fellow prisoner** in Christ Jesus, greets you

12 **Contends**(*agōnizomai*): from which we get our English word "agonizing." It means a striving or contending for a prize. It was used secularly of those wrestling in the completion of the Olympic Games.

13 **zeal**(*ponos*): exhausting labor or exertion resulting in pain or stress

**Verses 14 – 18**

14 **Luke**: The writer of Luke and Acts

- With Paul in the "we" sections of **Acts 16:10-17, 20:5-15, 21:1-18, and 27:1-28:16**
- He is mentioned by Paul here, **Philemon 24** and **2<sup>nd</sup> Timothy 4:11**

14 **Demas**: mentioned also in **Philemon 24** and **2<sup>nd</sup> Timothy 4:10**

15 **Nymphas**: The church in Laodacia meets in his (possibly her) home.

The church of Colosse met in Philemon's home:

**Philemon 1 – 2 WT**

**1** Paul, a prisoner of Christ Jesus, and the brother Timothy, to our beloved and fellow working Philemon

**2** and the sister Apphia, and to Archippus, our fellow soldier, and the church in your home.

There is no evidence that Christians met in church buildings until the third century.<sup>12</sup>

16 **the epistle from Laodicea**: The epistles were encyclical and carried from church to church. This epistle, "from Laodicea" referenced is likely what we know as the book of **Philemon**.

Paul sends greetings from the same group of men (Epaphras, Marcus, Aristarchus, Demas and Luke) in both epistles.

**Philemon 23 – 24 WT**

**23** Epaphras, my fellow prisoner in Christ Jesus, greets you,

**24** and so do Mark, Aristarchus, Demas, and Luke, my fellow workers.

17 **Archippus**: A Colossian believer also mentioned in **Philemon 1:2**

18 **by the hand**: Paul's closing greetings were always handwritten by him personally as the mark of their authenticity.

**2<sup>nd</sup> Thessalonians 3:17**

*The salutation of Paul with mine own hand, which is the token in every epistle: so I write.*

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<sup>12</sup> Lightfoot, J. B. (1892). Saint Paul's Epistles to the Colossians and to Philemon. (p. 241) London: Macmillan and Co.

## Appendix – The Victory Triumph

### 2nd Corinthians 2:14-16 WT

**14** Now thanks be to God, Who always leads us in triumph in Christ and makes the fragrance of His knowledge manifest by us in every place,

**15** because to God we are a sweet aroma of Christ among those who are saved [delivered] and among those who are perishing.

**16** To the one, we are a fragrance of death unto death, and to the other, a fragrance of life unto life. Who is competent for these things?

This is talking about a specific Roman victory parade know as a Victory triumph.

A Triumph was given if the following conditions were met:

- 1) Massive and decisive victory
- 2) War on foreign soil
- 3) Territory added to the Roman State
- 4) Conquering General had to be of an elite rank
- 5) The victory had to be so decisive that the Roman army could come home

The parade always took the same circular route through Rome:

- 1) started at the field of mars
- 2) passed through the arch of triumphs
- 3) passed by the various temples
- 4) ending at the temple of Jupiter

The order of the parade, the Triumph:

- 1) Dignitaries
- 2) Trumpeters and musicians
- 3) The captives led in chains, usually stripped naked, they were destined for death or slavery, coliseum a living death
- 4) spoils of war, carts and carts of gold and silver and valuables
- 5) Floats depicting the battle, helping the spectators to understand the magnitude of the battle
- 6) Conquered king with his family dressed in mourning black, mourning the loss of his kingdom
- 7) Conquering General with his family in Chariots, the General dressed in the garb of Jupiter, right down to the red boots of Jupiter
- 8) Victorious troops
- 9) White oxen to be sacrificed, and to be eaten so that the spectators could participate in the celebration and victory

The war for us is not completely over, but the victory is absolutely assured. Part way through the section the imagery for us shifts, and now we Christians taking a stand are referred to as the fragrance of Triumph that still lingers today. The fragrance of Christ to those who are saved and to those who perish.

- To the saved we are as a fragrance of life.
- To those who reject Christ as the fragrance of death.

Regardless of audience, we are the same fragrance of Christ - Let us not water down our fragrance.