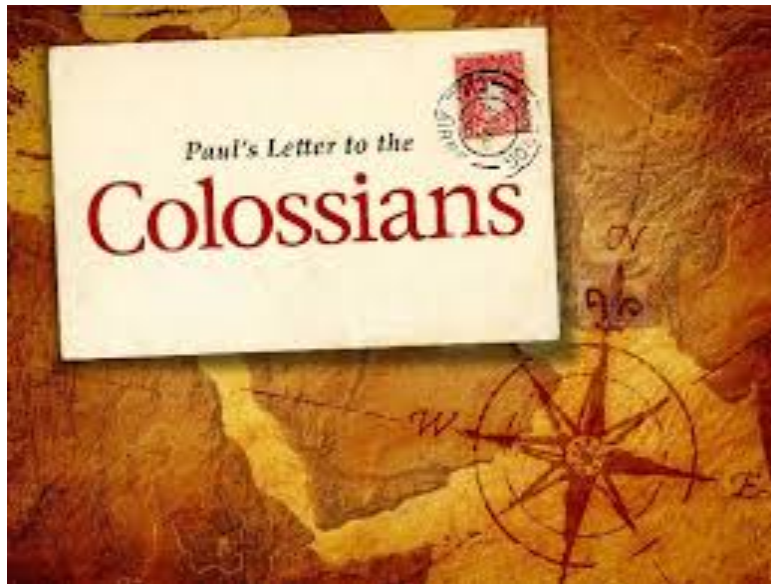


Study Notes on



by W. W. Patterson

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The Pauline Epistles are built upon the Old Testament, the Life of Christ, and especially upon the Book of Acts.

In them is a detailed explanation of the Redemption of Christ and of His Church. The Old Testament and the Four Gospels look forward to the death and resurrection of Christ. The Epistles look back upon the Finished Work of the Cross and elucidate the results of that Work. The Epistles unfold the doctrine of "the Church".

Colossians was written by Paul (1:1) when he was at Rome as a prisoner (4:10, 18). Written about 64 A.D. It was taken to Colosse by Tychicus (4:7). Paul had never met or visited the Church at Colosse (2:1). Epaphras was the probable founder of the Church (1:7-8; 4:12). Epaphras brought to Paul the report of the condition of the Church in Colosse (1:3). This epistle was also written for the Church at Laodicea. (4:16) Note Rev. 3:14-22.

Colossians

Note the names and designations of the Lord Jesus in this epistle.

"Christ"-----26 times (19 times alone).

"Lord"-----13 times.

"Jesus"-----7 times.

"Head"-----3 times (Twice as Head of the Body, once as Head of all principality and power).

"Son"-----1 time.

"Image of the invisible God", "Firstborn of every creature", "The Beginning",

"The Firstborn from the dead", "Our Life", "All and in all", "Master in heaven".

Thus we see that this epistle shows the dignity, honor, and glory of the Christ.

The foundation of this church was excellent but errors had come in by:

1. Worldly Philosophy and vain deceits. Col. 2:4, 8.
2. Asceticism (self-denial)---Observing Jewish days, abstaining from certain foods, etc. Col. 2:16, 20-23.
3. Worship of angels. Col. 2:18.

(1. Dishonoring the Lord Jesus in His Person and Work.

Resulting in: (2. Bringing them into bondage to ordinances.

(3. Spoiling their proper worship of the Lord Jesus.

These errors came from heretics, possibly the forerunners of the Gnostics who passed as "brethren in Christ" but who were enemies of the truth.

In this epistle the Apostle Paul corrects these errors and their results. In Chapters 3 and 4, he emphasizes that pure morality which these early heretics despise

- Thus this epistle
- (1) Magnifies the Lord Jesus in His proper place,
 - (2) Shows our freedom from ritual,
 - (3) Shows our proper worship of the Lord Jesus,
 - (4) Shows the practical life of holiness in Christ.

These last three are an outgrowth of the first.

Outline of Colossians

- I. Thanksgiving and Prayer for the Colossians 1:1-12.
- II. Christ Preeminent in His Person and Work. 1:12-2:23.
- III. Christ Preeminent as the Believer's Life. 3:1-4:6.
- IV. Epilogue 4:7-18.

The theme of this letter is "Christ the Head of the Church" or the "Preeminence of the Lord Jesus."

I. THANKSGIVING AND PRAYER FOR THE COLOSSIANS 1:1-12

1. Salutation. Col. 1:1-12. Paul, the apostle,--Timothy, our brother, to the saints and faithful brethren at Colosse.
2. Commendation of the state of assembly in Colosse. 1:3-6
 - a. Thanksgiving and prayer for them. vs. 3
 - b. Faith, Love, Hope vs. 4,5 - The 3 most commendable things. I Cor. 15:13
 - INITIAL c. Fruitful. vs. 6 by knowing the grace of God in truth.
 - SALVATION d. Their minister, Epaphras. vs. 7-8
 1. A dear fellow servant and a faithful minister.
 2. Reported their love in the Spirit. The only place the Holy Spirit is mentioned. Evidently they had been filled with the Spirit.
3. Paul's prayer for them. 1:9-12(Which blends into and becomes an exhortation to them and a praise to Christ), that they:
 - a. Be filled with the knowledge of His will,
 - b. Walk worthy of the Lord,
 - PROGRESSIVE c. Being fruitful,
 - SALVATION d. Increasing in the knowledge of God, From Prayer
 - e. Strengthened with all might, to
 - f. Unto all patience and longsuffering with joyfulness, Praise
 - g. Giving thanks unto the Father.

II. CHRIST PREEMINENT IN HIS PERSON AND WORK 1:13--2:23

- Christ's Preeminence: He is---
- In His Relationship: 1. The Son of God.(God's dear Son, or the Son of His
 - In His Sovereignty: 2. The King and has a kingdom of light. vs. ^{love.} 13
 - In Redemption from Sin, 3. The Redeemer. vs. 14 (forgiveness of Sin)
 - In Revelation: 4. The Image of the invisible God. vs. 15
 - In Eternity: 5. The Firstborn of every creature. vs. 15
 - and Superiority
 - In Creation: 6. The Creator of all things (by and for Him) vs. 16 including all angels and powers in the universe.
 - In Position: 7. He is before All, or the First of all. vs. 17a
 - In Providence: 8. The Sustainer of all things. vs. 17b
 - In the Church: 9. The Head of the Body, the Church. vs. 18
 - In Time: 10. The Beginning. vs. 18
 - In Life: (over death) 11. The Firstborn from the dead. vs. 18
 - In Deity: 12. The "All Fulness." vs. 19 Cf. Col. 2:9
 - In Reconciliation: 13. The Reconciler of all things. vs. 20-23. Complete and perfect reconciliation.
 - a. Of all things in earth or heaven.
 - b. Of the believer, presenting him holy, unblamable, and unreprouable.
 - c. No other agency needed---Christ is sufficient.
 - In the Believer: 14. The Indweller in the believer. "Christ in you the hope of Glory." vs. 24-27
 - In Perfection: 15. The Perfecter of the believer. vs. 28-29

Thus in Chapter One, we see--

1. Christ preeminent in His Person and Work. vs. 13-23
2. Christ preeminent in the Believer. vs. 24-29

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CHAPTER II

16. Christ preeminent in the realm of wisdom and knowledge. 2:1-8

a. Christ the mystery of God. vs. 1,2 I Tim. 3:16

1. The secret of God. Col. 1:26,27

2. The answer to occultism and its mysteries.

b. All wisdom and knowledge in Him. vs. 3-8

1. Christ is perfect in all wisdom and knowledge. He knows all and is Perfection in knowledge.

2. He knows best in performing all. Perfection is applied knowledge (wisdom).

c. Warning concerning enticing words, philosophy, and vain deceit. Rather.....

1. Having received Christ. vs. 5,6

2. Walk in Christ.

3. Rooted and built up in Him.

4. Established in the faith.

17. Christ preeminent because the Fulness of the Godhead dwells in Him. 2:9

"FOR IN HIM DWELLETH ALL THE FULNESS OF THE GODHEAD BODILY." vs. 9

For the believer Christ is the mainspring, the center, the fountainhead. This verse is the Heart of the Epistle. A unique gem of divine revelation. This is the Crown upon all of what has been disclosed in Chapter 1:1-2:8. Col. 1:19 and 2:2 brought us toward this revelation which is now fully uncovered.

Dwelleth, i.e., doth tabernacle, to abide or to have an abode, to indwell. Present tense...NOW.

All the fulness (all the characteristics and being and power) of God. The Father (John 14:10) The Son (John 10:36) The Holy Spirit (John 3:34) Godhead...The essence and nature of the Godhead.

Bodily...In a body, in His physical body, in a bodily frame, that is corporeally or physically.

18. Christ preeminent as the Believer's Completeness. 2:10 a.

"Ye are complete in Him." 2:10 a. ("Ye are in Him made full" - Young's translation) In Christ Jesus we have no lack in any way or in any realm.

19. Christ preeminent over all angels, powers, and ordinances. 2:10a-23

a. Over all principality and power. (vs. 18...warning concerning)

1. Christ the head of. vs. 10 b.

2. Christ victorious over - in His death and resurrection. vs. 15 We, in the resurrected Christ, have victory over them.

3. Christ the object of worship - above them all. vs. 18,19 Super-spirituality is pride of the fleshly mind.

Christ is the head - - We are the members of His body. All power, control, and nourishment comes from Him.

The Head (Christ) sees, balances, tastes, eats, drinks, hears, breathes, speaks, protects, and cares for the body (the Church).

Colossians

- b. Christ preeminent over the law and ritualism.
1. Circumcision versus true spiritual circumcision. vs. 11-14.
We are buried with Christ and raised with Him in the power of the Holy Spirit. The Baptism of the Holy Spirit is the sign or seal of the New Covenant. Circumcision was the seal of the Abrahamic Covenant.
 2. Freedom from judgment concerning holy days, new moons, and sabbath days. vs. 16-17.
They are shadows. Christ is reality. Don't live on "shadows."
 3. Dead with Christ we are free from ritualism and the commandments and doctrines of men. vs. 20-23.
There is a vain display of earthly wisdom in:
will worship...which is not in the Spirit. (John 4:24),
humility...which is not truly inwardly and of God,
neglect of the body...which is not in accord with God's will.

Thus in Chapter 2 we see Christ preeminent in wisdom and knowledge, in the fullness of the Godhead dwelling in Him bodily, in Him as the fullness (completeness) of the believer, above all angels and powers, and above the law and ordinances.

III. Christ preeminent as the Believer's Life. Col. 3:1--4:6.

1. In Union with Christ, our Life. 3:1-4.
 - a. Dead with Christ. vs. 3. Col. 2:12a, 13a, 2:20a.
 - b. Risen with Christ. vs. 1a. Col. 2:12b, 13b.
 - c. Ascended with Christ. vs. 1b.
At the right hand of God.
 - d. Glorified with Christ when He appears. vs. 4.
Therefore seek those things above, set your affections on things above!
Summary: Christ is our Life. (vs. 4a).
Our life is hid with Christ in God.

Contrast this with worldly philosophy, vain deceits (Col. 2:8), ascetism (Col. 2:16), ritualism and angel worship (Col. 2:18, 20-23).
These are earthly things. vs. 2b.

2. Put off the old man. vs. 5-9.
Salvation is not a gradual reformation or process to get rid of sin, nor is it cutting off a little sin each day until we gradually get better. It is not educating mankind out of sin but transforming him in the midst of it.

Mortify means to put to death.

- a. Grosser sins. vs. 5. Fornication, uncleanness, inordinate affection, evil concupiscence, covetousness...which is idolatry.
- b. Other sins, (some of them are the so-called nicer kind, often condoned) vs. 8-9. Such as anger, wrath, malice, blasphemy (evil speaking), filthy communication out of your mouth, lying.

Because of these things the wrath of God cometh on the children of disobedience.

3. Put on the new man. vs. 10-17.
 - vs. 10. Renewed in knowledge after the image of Him that created him. The "image of Him" is the Lord Jesus. Col. 1:15, Heb. 1:3.
 - vs. 11. Race, religion, status, culture do not exist in Christ.
All are ONE in Christ. Christ is all and in all.

Love in the bond of perfectness. vs. 14

Contrast the qualities in Col. 3:10-17 with the pride and vain glory of every false teaching that detracts from the preeminence of the Lord Jesus. The Lord Jesus must be preeminent in our words and deeds. vs. 17

4. The Domestic Life of the Believer. Col. 3:18--4:6
The practical demonstration of "Christ our Life!"

a. In the believer;

1. Wives. vs. 18
2. Husbands. vs. 19
3. Children. vs. 20
4. Father. vs. 21
5. Servants. vs. 22-25

Note; Onesimus was a runaway slave. Paul did not condone his sin.

b. Three exhortations;

1. Prayer. vs. 2-4
2. Walk. vs. 5
3. Speech. vs. 6 Cf. I Peter 3:15

With grace, seasoned with salt, that is palatable and proper.

IV. Postlogue. Divers greetings and instructions. Col. 4:7-18

The Gospel of the Lord Jesus manifests a deep personal fellowship.

Tychicus was recommended in a worthy way as (1) a beloved brother, (2) a faithful minister, and (3) a fellowservant.

Onesimus, the converted runaway slave, was now a faithful and beloved brother.

Epaphras, a servant of Christ and one of their own number, always labored in prayer for them. He had a great zeal for three churches.

Demas received no word of commendation. Had he in his heart already begun to turn away? Later he forsook Paul, having loved this present world, and departed to Thessalonica. Philemon 24; II Tim. 4:10

This epistle was also for the church at Laodicea. vs. 15-16

When we remember that prophetically speaking the church at Laodicea represents the church in these last days, (Rev. 3:14-22) then the Epistle of Colossians has a special message for this hour.

The epistle to Laodiceans mentioned in vs. 16 is no doubt the Epistle to the Ephesians which was a general letter for the churches.

Note that the church was in Nymphas' house. Cf. Rom. 16:5; I Cor. 16:19; Philemon 2. The large Oriental home would be ideal for the assembly of the believers.

Paul's word of warning to Archippus to fulfill the ministry which he had received in the Lord. vs. 18. Let us be faithful and fulfill that to which the Lord has called us.