

CLASS NOTES -- COLOSSIANS

OUTLINE OF THE BOOK -- (Heath)

- 1A. 1:1 - 12 Introduction
 - 1B. 1:1, 2 Greeting
 - 2B. 1:3 - 12 Prayer for the Colossians
 - 1C. 1:3 - 9-a The occasion for the prayer
 - 2C. 1:9-b - 12 The prayer
 - 1D. 1:9-b - 11 Petition
 - 2D. 1:12 Thanksgiving
- 2A. 1:13 -- 2:19 The preeminence of **CHRIST**
 - 1B. 1:13, 14 As Redeemer
 - 2B. 1:15 - 17 As source, consummation, maker & sustainer of creation
 - 3B. 1:18 - 29 The (mystical) Body, His fulness ("For He willed that in HIMSELF all the fulness ... should dwell." -- Conybeare translation)
 - 1C. 1:18, 19 The determination of this relationship
 - 2C. 1:20 - 23 The outcome -- reconciliation through the Cross
 - 1D. 1:20 Reconciliation of the universe, **apart** from man, -- **absolute**. (cp. John 6:39; Rom. 8:19 - 21)
 - 2D. 1:21 - 23 Reconciliation of **man** -- **dependent** on the proclamation and acceptance of the "word of reconciliation" (cp. John 6:40; 2 Cor. 5:19, 20)
 - 2C. 1:24 - 29 The responsibility of Paul in this relationship
 - 1D. 1:24 To suffer
 - 2D. 1:25 - 27 To complete the word of God (for this Age of Grace -- v. 26)
 - 3D. 1:28, 29 To seek by every means to bring about completion of every man. The NASB translates the last part of v. 28, "—that we may present every man complete in Christ." The idea in the Greek word used here ("*teleion*") is maturity.
 - 4B. 2:1 - 9 Christ, God's fulness
 - 1C. 2:1, 2 The mystery of God is CHRIST
 - 2C. 2:3 - 8 All treasures of wisdom & knowledge are in CHRIST
 - 3C. 2:9 The fulness of God is in CHRIST, in bodily form
 - 5B. 2:10 - 19 Christ is the believer's fulness
 - 1C. 2:10 The believer's fulness stated
 - 2C. 2:11 - 19 The believer's fulness delineated
 - 1D. 2:11, 12 The rites of circumcision & baptism are replaced by realities in **CHRIST**
 - 2D. 2:13 - 17 The shadows incorporated in legal requirements are replaced by the substance in **CHRIST**
 - 3D. 2:18, 19 "**Religious exercises**" replaced by **a growth which is from God** -- as **CHRIST** is given His place of **Head-ship**
- 3A. 2:20 -- 4:6 **CHRIST** in the believer's daily life
 - 1B. 2:20 - 23 The basis for breaking with the old life: we died with **CHRIST**

- 1C.** 2:20 - 22. Living by man-made "rules" is linked with the old life.
- 2C.** 2:23. Living by man-made "rules" has a show of wisdom, but has no power to keep the flesh in check. "For these precepts, though they have a show of wisdom, in a self chosen worship, and in humiliation, and chastening of the body, are of **NO VALUE** to check the indulgence of fleshly passions" (Conybeare's translation). See the note under Col. 2:21 on why we should abstain from things men often list in their "rules of conduct for Christians" without resorting to the rules.
- 2B.** 3:1 - 4 Basis for living the new life: we are **risen with CHRIST**
- 1C.** 3:1 The goal set before our life (aspiration) -- **our ambition** -- seek things above.
- 2C.** 3:2 The objective set before our heart (disposition) -- **our affections** -- we are to set our affections on things above
- 3C.** 3:3 The spiritual reality set before our minds (position) -- **our apprehension** -- ye are dead, your life is hid with **CHRIST** in God
- 4C.** 3:4 The hope before our soul (destination) -- **our assurance** -- with Him in glory
- 3B.** 3:5 - 9 What to put off because we are **dead** -- the **old man**
- 1C.** 3:5 - 7 **Vices** -- they characterize the "children of wrath" (carbon black sins)
- 2C.** 3:8, 9 **Works of the flesh** -- they characterize the "old man" ("tattle tale gray" sins)
- 4B.** 3:10 -- 4:6 What to put on because we are **risen** -- the **new man**
- 1C.** 3:10, 11 Who he is -- **CHRIST** (in us) -- our all in all
- 2C.** 3:12 - 14 The character of the new man.
- 1D.** 3:12 Merciful
- 2D.** 3:12 Kind
- 3D.** 3:12 Humble
- 4D.** 3:12 Meek
- 5D.** 3:12 Longsuffering
- 6D.** 3:13 Forgiving
- 7D.** 3:14 Loving
- 3C.** 3:15, 16 The native environment of the new man
- 1D.** 3:15 Peace of God -- resulting in thanksgiving
- 2D.** 3:16 Word of Christ -- resulting in ministry (notice the punctuation of 3:16 by Conybeare, "Teach and admonish one another in all wisdom. Let your singing be of psalms, and hymns, and spiritual songs, sung with thanksgiving in your hearts to God.")
- 4C.** 3:17 -- 4:6 The deeds of the new man
- 1D.** 3:17 General rule
- 2D.** 3:18 - 21 At home
- 3D.** 3:22 -- 4:1 At work
- 1E.** 3:22 - 25 Labor
- 2E.** 4:1 Management
- 4D.** 4:2 - 6 Everywhere
- 1E.** 4:2 - 4 Responsibility toward believers

- 2E. 4:5, 6 Responsibility toward unbelievers
 - 1F. 4:5 In walk
 - 2F. 4:6 In talk
- 4A. 4:7 - 17 CHRIST in the lives of Paul's companions & friends
 - 1B. 4:7 - 9 Messengers from Rome to Colosse
 - 1C. 4:7, 8 Tychicus - faithful in ministry
 - 2C. 4:9 Onesimus - transformed through conversion
 - 2B. 4:10 - 14 Greetings from Rome to Colosse
 - 1C. 4:10, 11 Paul's "soothing syrup" (the word for "comfort" taken from the Greek word *paragoria* from which we get the word "Paragoric").
 - 1D. 4:10-a Aristarchus - fellow sufferer
 - 2D. 4:10-b Mark - restored worker
 - 3D. 4:11 Justus - fellow worker
 - 2C. 4:12, 13 Epaphras - "prayer warrior"
 - 3C. 4:14-a Luke - "lay worker" (physician)
 - 4C. 4:14-b Demas - eventually an "also ran" (2 Tim. 4:10)
 - 3B. 4:15 - 17 Instructions regarding the responsibilities of the Colossians
 - 1C. 4:15 Extend fellowship to believers
 - 2C. 4:16 Share the Scriptures with believers
 - 3C. 4:17 Continue in the ministry to its fulness
- 5A. 4:18 Salutation

INTRODUCTORY

Colossians looks at the church with the Head (Christ) in the foreground, while in Ephesians the Body itself is in the foreground. The truths set forth in Ephesians, are defended against their enemies in Colossians. Both were evidently written at about the same time -- probably Colossians first to combat error, to be followed with a more orderly and complete setting forth of the doctrines which had been assailed by false teachers. (See Class Notes on Ephesians -- Appended material -- "Where did the Ephesian letter originate?")

Since the Head of the Body is in the foreground in this book, there are a multitude of personal references to Christ by names and pronouns. There are at least 29 such references in chapter one alone. Chapter two is, likewise, rich in allusions to our wonderful Lord Himself.

MISCELLANEOUS NOTES

1:1. "Saints" = the **standing** of the believers: "faithful brethren" = their **state**. The former is perfect, the latter, in the Colossian church, noteworthy. "Saints" is what we all **are**, "faithful brethren" is what we all **should be**.

1:4, 5. Here is the glorious spiritual triad (faith, hope and love) which we see in 1 Cor. 13:13, the Thessalonian epistles, and elsewhere. See "Help in Hard Places" by W. P. Heath, pages 210, 211 (first printing), page 193, 194 (second printing).

1:6. "Since the day -." This dates back to their conversion during the period covered by the book of Acts -- and it says at that time (long before Acts 28) they "knew **the grace of God in**

truth."

1:9, 10 "Knowledge is *"epignosis"* -- full or complete knowledge. "-- that ye may fully attain to the **knowledge** of His will; that in all wisdom and spiritual understanding ye might walk worthy of the Lord, to please Him well in all things; that you may bear much fruit in all good works, and grow continually in the **knowledge** of God." -- Conybeare.

1:11. "All might" is *"pasee dunami."* It is the same expression that occurs in 2 Thess. 2:9, where it speaks of the power of Anti-Christ to do "lying wonders."

The word "might" is translated "miracles" in 1 Cor. 12:10, 28, 29. This does not mean it has that connotation here. This "all might" does not produce miracles or miraculous gifts. Instead it produces something better -- and consistent with this Age of Grace -- "patience and longsuffering with joyfulness." Compare Eph. 1:19 & context.

1:15. See Jer. 31:9 where God speaks of Ephraim as His "firstborn" -- though he was not the first son of his father, Joseph (Gen. 48:13, 14, 17 - 19), and Joseph was not the first son of his father, Jacob (Gen. 49:3).

The word translated "firstborn" in Col. 1:15 (*prototokos*) is used only in: Matt. 1:25; Luke 2:7; Rom. 8:29; Col. 1:15, 18; Heb. 1:6; 11:28; 12:23; Rev. 1:5.

See appended material on 1:15, 16.

1:16, 17. See Neh. 9:6; Isa. 44:24; John 1:3, 10; Rev. 4:11.

1:17, 18. "He, **Himself**, is before all things ... He, **Himself**, is the Head -." -- Wuest.

1:18. The headship of Christ: Eph. 1:22, 23; 4:15, 16; Col. 1:18; 2:19. See 1 Cor. 11:3 for His headship over the individual Christian man.

"Body" (mystical) -- See Rom. 12:5; 1 Cor. 10:16, 17; 11:29; 12:13, 27; Eph. 1:23; 2:16; 3:6; 4:4, 12, 16; 5:23, 30; Col. 1:24; 2:19; 3:15. (Heb. 13:4 seems to be a reference to the believer's physical body.)

"Preeminence" (*proteuo*) -- This Greek word used only here and in 3 John 9, where it is combined with the love of emotion (*philoproteuo*) and translated "loveth to have the preeminence."

"That in all things He might have **first place.**" He is:

- * King of kings (Rev. 19:16)
- * Lord of lords (Rev. 19:16)
- * Prince of princes (Dan. 8:25)
- * First begotten of creation (Col. 1:18)
- * First begotten from the dead (Col. 1:18)
- * Head of the Body (Eph. 1:22, 23)
- * Head over all rule and authority (Col. 2:10 -- NASB)
- * Visible image of the invisible God (Col. 1:15 -- Conybeare footnote)
- * Door of the sheepfold (John 10:7)
- * Father of eternity (Isa. 9:6 -- literal Hebrew)
- * --- Etc.

1:19. Compare Col. 2:9; Eph. 1:23 (same word -- "fulness").

1:20 - 22. The personal pronouns in these verses refer to **Christ**.

1:22 - 24. Christ suffered in His physical body so there could be a mystical Body through reconciliation (Eph. 2:15, 16). Paul suffered in his physical body for the sake of that mystical Body. Christ suffered to make salvation possible; Paul suffered to make it available. Christ suffered that there might be a mystical Body; Paul suffered to build it up.

1:23. "If" here is not the word which casts doubt on a thing -- Wuest.

1:25. See 1 Cor. 9:17; Eph. 3:2.

1:27. I.e. Christ in you **Gentiles**. Contrast Eph. 2:12 where gentiles were **without** Christ.

1:29. See Eph. 2:10; Phil. 2:13; 4:13; Heb. 13:20, 21. Our labour must be the result of **His** laboring in us. Thus our laboring and striving should be **outstanding!** "It is not weakness to say, 'I can't' if we go on in faith to cry out, 'But **He CAN [through me]!**'" -- Tim Heath.

2:2. "Acknowledgment" is "*epignosis*" -- full or complete knowledge. "- resulting in a true knowledge of God's mystery, that is, Christ Himself" -- NASB. "- truly to know the mystery of God, wherein are all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge hidden" -- Conybeare.

2:3. See Prov. 8:22 - 36; Rom. 11:33; Eph. 3:9, 10.

2:4. See 1 Cor. 2:4, 5. "Beguile" -- "Be led astray by fallacious reasoning" -- Lightfoot. Compare "spoiled" in v. 8. (It is not the same word as in 2:15 however)

2:6. According to this verse, if a person receives Christ when he goes under the water in baptism, as some teach, he would have to live his whole Christian life under the water. We receive Christ by **faith** -- so we must also walk by **faith**.

2:7. Rooted as a tree, built up as a house (Psa. 1:3; Eph. 2:20, 21).

2:9. See 2 Chron. 6:18, where Solomon prayed, "But will God in very deed dwell with men on earth? Behold heaven and the heaven of heavens cannot contain Thee; how much less this house which I have built!" Yet God did indeed dwell on earth (for 33 years), but not in the temple of Solomon. Solomon recognized that He was not going to literally dwell in the temple for, in the following verses, the prayers were made toward the **temple** (v. 21), but God was expected to hear and answer them from **heaven**, His **dwelling place** (vs. 21, 30, 33, 39). How glorious that God, Who could not be contained by heaven or the heaven of heavens, could dwell in a human body -- for Paul said, "In **HIM all the fulness of DEITY** dwells in a **BODY**" (Col. 2:9 -- NASB).

2:10. That is, we do not need circumcision or water baptism, for we have the shadowed realities in Christ (v. 11, 12).

2:11. "In Him, also, you were circumcised with a circumcision not made by hands, even the off-casting of the whole body of the flesh, the circumcision [cutting off] of Christ" -- Conybeare.

His note on this verse reads, "*The casting off, not (as in outward circumcision) of a part, but of the whole body of the flesh, the whole carnal nature. 'Of the sins' in the T.R. is an interpolation.*" The "circumcision of Christ" is either a reference to His death on Calvary (Dan.9:26), or a spiritual circumcision **accomplished by Christ**. See Jer. 9:26; Phil. 3:3.

2:12. "**Having been buried WITH Him in baptism, in which you were also raised up WITH Him through faith in the working of God, Who raised Him from the dead**" (NASB). We were not buried **LIKE** Him (in a ritual -- 1,900 years later), but **WITH** Him, at the time He was buried -- in His tomb! We were raised up from the dead not by the working of a preacher, but by **faith** in the working of **God**. As with circumcision in v. 11, we do not need the shadow for we have the reality -- we are **complete in Him!**

2:14, 15. Victory over the Law (v. 14) and satanic hosts (v. 15). -- Tim Heath. "It" refers back to the Cross in v. 14.

2:14 -- 3:3. Delivered from **God-given "religion,"** and satanic counterfeits, by **Christ's** death (2:14 -- 19). Delivered from **man-made "religion"** by **our** death with Christ (2:20 - 23). We have something infinitely better than "**religion**" by our **resurrection** with Christ (3:1 - 3).

2:18. "Let no one keep defrauding you of your prize by delighting in self-abasement and the worship of the angels, taking his stand on visions he has seen, inflated without cause by his fleshly mind" - NASB.

2:20. Since ordinances given by God have been taken out of the way, why substitute our own ordinances? Verse 21 does not refer to those things spoken of in Scripture **for this age**, but to lists of "don'ts" made up by **men**. Such lists of man-made rules:

- * are a new legalism (Gal. 3:2, 3);
- * miss the point -- they deal only with the externals;
- * fall short of what God desires in our lives;
- * are not needed when we walk in the Spirit (Gal. 5:16).

2:21. Reasons why we should abstain from some of the things listed in men's rules -- even though we are not "under law" to such rules.

- * Because they may harm or defile the body, temple of the Holy Spirit (1 Cor. 6:19, 20).
- * Because of the weaker brother (Rom. 14:13, 15; 1Cor. 8:13).
- * Because of our testimony (Rom. 14:16 - 20).
- * Because of our conscience (Rom. 14:14).
- * Because of our crown (Rom. 14:10; 1 Cor. 9:24 - 27).
- * Because we have something infinitely better (Col. 3:1, 2).

2:23. "These matters ... have, to be sure, the appearance of wisdom in self-made religion

and self-abasement and severe treatment of the body, but are of **NO VALUE against fleshly indulgence**" -- NASB.

3:1 - 3. Ignore the chapter break here in order to see the connection between 2:20, "If you be **dead** with Christ -," and this verse, "If you be **risen** with Christ -." Our **death** with Christ cuts us off from a man-made solution to sin in our lives. Our **resurrection** with Him is the basis for a God-given solution: not merely dropping our worldly ways, but living a heavenly life from the heart (v. 2).

Both concepts, death ("for you have died -") and resurrection ("your life is hidden with Christ in God"), are found in v. 3 NASB.

3:4. The appearance of Christ here must be the Rapture. When He appears we will be with Him (1 Thess. 4:17; 5:10) -- not on earth, as would be the case if the Rapture took place at the close of the Tribulation and we accompanied Him from the meeting in the air back to earth, but in **GLORY**. The "glory" here seems to be a reference not to a condition, but to a **place** -- heaven (as in 1 Tim. 3:16 -- "- received up into glory").

3:8 - 10. Christ has "put off" our enemies in the heavenlies (in 2:15 "spoiled" is the same word) and made an open show of His triumph. We have "put off" our enemy here (the flesh – 3:9) so let us display our victory by mortifying (3:5) and putting off (3:8) his deeds (3:9). This is possible because we have **put on** the new man, made in the image of Christ (3:10). See Eph. 4:22, 24.

3:10. "Knowledge" is "*epignosis*" -- full or complete knowledge.

3:11. Could the last part of this verse be paraphrased, "Christ is **everything** and in **every one** [who believes]"?

3:15. **Sin** and **death reign** in the unbeliever (Rom. 5:17, 21) but the **believer reigns** in life (Rom. 5:17) and **grace reigns** in him to eternal life (Rom. 5:21). Here **peace reigns** in our hearts.

3:16. Better, perhaps, "Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly; in all wisdom teaching and admonishing one another; in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing --" (compare Conybeare). However, as my son, Tim, pointed out, **much** teaching in Scripture is done in psalms and other songs (the Song of Moses, Song of David, Song of Solomon, etc.), and **much** of the prophetic scriptures are written in poetry. A considerable part of the hymnology a generation or two ago presented deep teaching in the lyrics. Today, sadly, much church music has a catchy tune, but little or no real message in the words.

3:16, 17. Compare Joshua 1:8.

3:18. See Eph. 5:22 - 24.

3:19. See Eph. 5:25, 28, 33. The word "love" (love of devotion) is used six times in these verses. Notice the husband is **commanded** to love his wife with the love of **devotion**. In

Titus 2:4 the wife is **taught** (by the older women) to love her husband with the love of **emotion** (*Philandros* -- from *phileo* = love, and *andros* = husband).

4:6. See Psa. 45:2.

4:7, 8. As these verses stand in the KJV they indicate Tychicus was able to bear reports both ways, without indulging in gossip -- and bring comfort. However, see the NASB on v. 8, "- that **you** might know about **our** circumstances."

4:12. "Fighting for you in prayers." "Laboring fervently" is translated "fight" in John 18:36; 1 Tim. 6:12; 2 Tim. 4:7. See Eph. 6:18 and context. (This is a thought from a message by Tim Heath preached 10/18/87).

"Perfect" is "*telios*" and "complete" is a form of "*pleeroo*."

4:14. Compare 2 Tim. 4:10,11. Both were **involved** in the work of Paul, but Luke was **committed**. His involvement **lasted**. That of Demas did not. -- Tim Heath.

4:15 - 18. Fellowship in the **church** (v. 15); fellowship in the **word** (v. 16); fellowship in the **ministry** (v. 17); fellowship in **suffering** (v. 18).

4:16. Notice the emphasis on reading the word of God here, and in 1 Thess. 5:27; Eph. 3:4; 1 Tim. 4:13 (see Neh. 8:8; 2 Tim. 3:16, 17 with 2 Tim. 2:15).

4:17. "**Keep going, brother!**" -- Paul's charge to **US** also!

APPENDED MATERIAL ON COLOSSIANS 1:15, 16.

"Now Christ is the visible expression of the invisible God. He existed before creation began, for it was through Him that everything was made, whether spiritual or material, seen or unseen. Through Him, and for Him, also, were created power and dominion, ownership and authority. In fact, every single thing was created through, and for Him." --J. B. Phillips translation.

"Who is a derived reproduction and manifestation of the Deity, the invisible One, the One who has priority to and sovereignty over all creation, because in Him were created *the all things* in the heavens and upon the earth, the visible things and the invisible ones, whether they are thrones or lordships or principalities or authorities. *The all things* through Him as intermediate agent and with a view to Him stand created." -- Translation by Kenneth S. Wuest (formerly Professor of Greek at Moody Bible Institute):

Wuest comments on this verse. "The word 'firstborn' is *prototokos*. The Greek word implied two things, **PRIORITY** to all creation and **SOVEREIGNTY** over all creation. In the first meaning we see the absolute pre-existence of the '*logos*' (Word). Since our Lord existed before all created things, He must be uncreated. Since He is uncreated, He is eternal. Since He is eternal, He is **God**. ...

"In the second meaning we see He is the natural ruler, the acknowledged head of God's household. He is Lord of creation. In verse 16 the word 'for' is '*hoti*' -- 'because.' Lightfoot says, 'We have in this sentence the justification of the title given the Son in the preceding clause, "the firstborn of every creature." It must therefore be taken to explain the sense in which this title is used. Thus connected, it shows that the *prototokos* (firstborn) is not included in the "every creature;" for the expression used is **NOT** "the other things of a like nature" or "the rest of the things," but "**the all things** were created" -- words which are absolute and comprehensive, and will admit of **NO EXCEPTIONS**. "By Him" is "*en hoti*" here, not instrumental but locative; "in Him" were all things created.' Vincent says: "'in" is not instrumental but locative; "in Him" were all things created.' He also says: "'in" is not instrumental but local; not denying the instrumentality, but putting the fact of creation with reference to its sphere and center. **IN HIM**, within the sphere of His personality, resides the creative will and the creative energy, and in that sphere the creative act takes place. Thus creation is dependent on Him.'"

Scofield's note on Col. 1:15 (in the revised Scofield): "As used of our Lord here, this term (Greek - '*prototokos*') refers to priority of position rather than of origin. This meaning is clear in Psalm 89:27, 'Also I will make Him my first-born, higher than the kings of the earth.' The assertion in 1:15, therefore, is that Christ, as the eternal Son, holds the position of priority in relation to all creation, in that He was before all things (v. 17), He created all things (v. 16), and by Him all things consist, that is, hold together (v. 17)."

Notice how many ways Christ is shown to have the "preeminence." Creation is "in Him," "through Him" and "for Him" (1:16); He is "before" creation and holds creation together (1:17). No words have been spared to tell us that when the Old Testament said, "God created the heavens and the earth" the word "God" included Jesus Christ before His incarnation as well as the other members of the triune Godhead.

See: Class Notes -- Bible Prophecy, Isaiah, Appendix # I -- "The Deity of Christ in Isaiah."

-- William P Heath

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