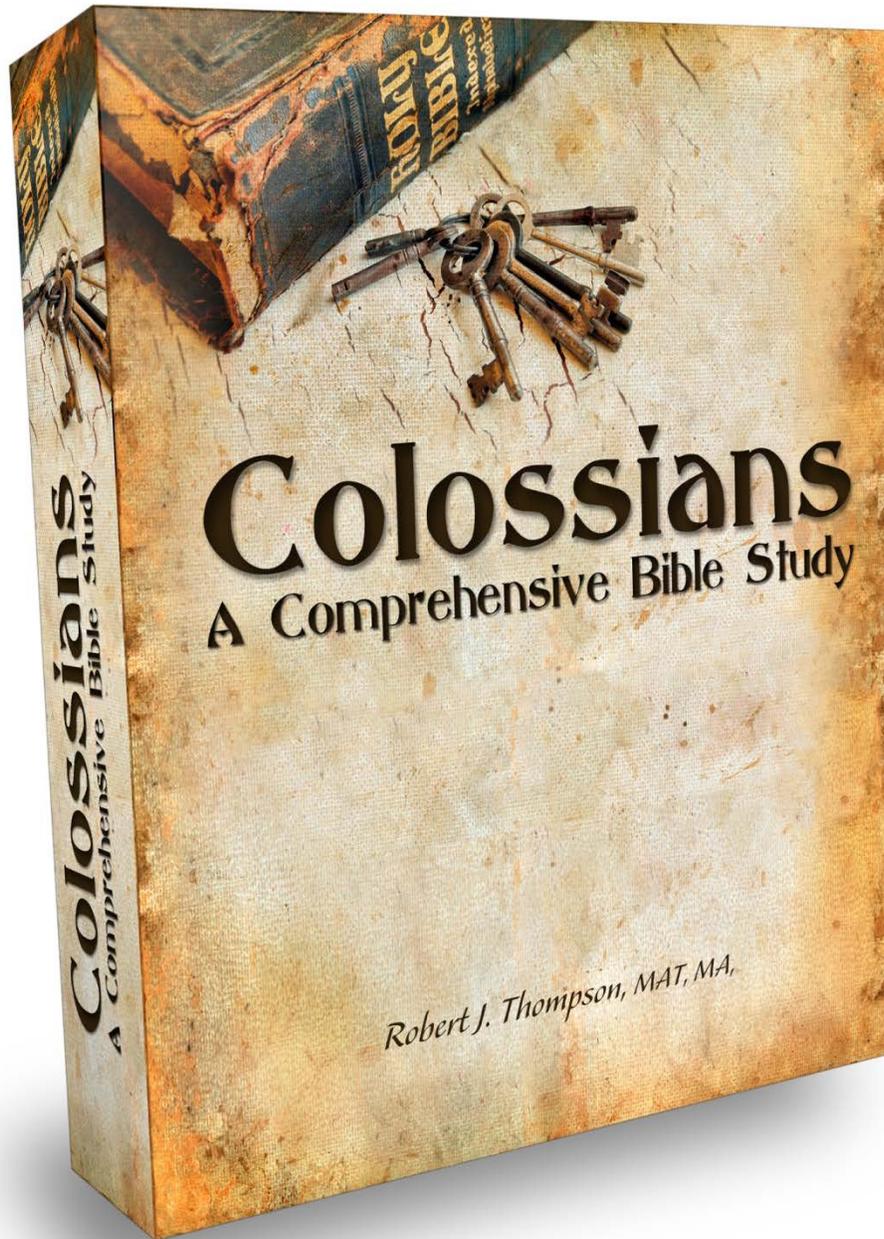


# Colossians

## A Comprehensive Bible Study



Robert J. Thompson

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## There Are Three Ways To Use This Study

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### The Individual Student

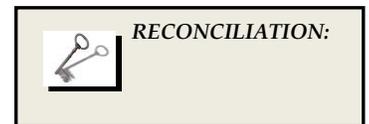
This study is not auto-didactic, in that some of the answers may not be completely derived without use of the key. However, an individual seeking a more advanced study of the Word may employ this study with no reservations that he may be answering the questions incorrectly. The key provided allows the individual the opportunity to look back at the answers as a self-diagnostic tool to determine whether or not the correct answer has been determined.

### The Small Group Bible Study

This study might be used in a small group setting with a single, or group facilitator. This offers a small group with little or no formal Bible education an opportunity to conduct a more in depth study of the Word without having to spend hours in preparation or classroom study. The key provides the facilitator the necessary tools to offer clues to direct, or simply guide members of the group to the correct answers. Should the group arrive at an incorrect conclusion, the facilitator can offer correction without fear of supplying erroneous or speculative answers.

### The Church or Class Setting

This study may be useful both in and out of the classroom. It was developed with both introductory level and intermediate/advanced students in mind. As often as possible the Analogy of Faith (allowing Scripture to interpret itself) has been used to arrive at the correct answers. However, when the Bible is silent on matters of history, geography, language interpretation, etc., Key Points have been inserted for clarification or interpretive purposes.



### A Word of Caution

This study is intended for all student levels, but may be more advanced than you're used to. This study cannot be rushed, or moved through in a few days. Some of the material will require more time, discussion, and cross referencing for deeper appreciation and understanding. Cross references provided are in no way exhaustive, and outside resources may be helpful. Emphasis has been placed on the Word of God as the primary resource, with multiple cross references for accuracy, and students should have no trouble following the progression of thought once all references are carefully read and studied.

Don't be discouraged that you may be asked to look up the same verses many times throughout this study. The multitude of cross referencing will help you to memorize passages that you may not ordinarily study on your own. Cross referencing will also help you to learn that the Bible is vastly interconnected, and can be used to interpret itself.

**Important:** Before you begin this study, take some time and read the book of Colossians all the way through, preferably in one sitting

# 1 Background

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## **Background:**

Let's start with some straightforward questions about Colossians

Who are the players?

- Colossians: the church in Colosse in Asia Minor – Laodiceans – Epaphras - Philemon
- Onesimus – Tychicus – Archippus – Mark – Aristarchus – Justus - Timothy - Paul

## *The Colossians*

Members of the church in the city of Colossae or Colosse, a city in the Roman province of Asia Minor (western Turkey, see map), situated in the Lycus River Valley about 100 miles east of Ephesus. From Colossians 1:7 and 4:12 it has been concluded that Epaphras was the founder of the Colossian church to whom Paul wrote this letter.<sup>1,2</sup>

## *Laodiceans*

Members of the church in the city of Laodicea. This city is located in the fertile Lycus Valley of the province of Phrygia where one of the seven churches of Asia Minor was situated (Revelation 3:14). It sat 40 miles east of Ephesus and about 10 miles west of Colosse. The apostle Paul does not seem to have visited Laodicea at the time he wrote this letter (Colossians 2:1). Epaphras, Tychicus, Onesimus, and Mark seem to have been the early messengers of the Gospel there (Colossians 1:7; 4:7-15).<sup>2</sup>

## *Epaphras*

Spoken of by Paul (Colossians 1:7; 4:12) as "his dear fellow-servant," and "a faithful minister of Christ." He was evidently with him at Rome when he wrote to the Colossians. He was a distinguished disciple, and probably the founder of the Colossian church. He is also mentioned in Paul's Epistle to Philemon (23), where he calls him his "fellow-prisoner."<sup>1</sup>

## *Philemon*

Lived in Colosse, and was apparently a person of some note among the citizens (Philemon 1). He was brought to a knowledge of the Gospel through the instrumentality of Paul (Philemon 19), and held a prominent place in the Christian community for his goodness and generosity (Philemon 4-7). He is called in the epistle a "fellow-laborer," and therefore probably held some office in the church at Colosse; at all events, the title denotes that he took part in the work of spreading a knowledge of the Gospel.<sup>1,2</sup>

## *Onesimus*

A slave who, after robbing his master Philemon at Colosse, fled to Rome, where he was converted by the apostle Paul, who sent him back to Philemon, carrying the letter that would eventually become the Book of Philemon in the New Testament. He was accompanied on his return by Tychicus, the bearer of the Epistle to the Colossians (Philemon 16,18).<sup>1</sup>

### *Tychicus*

A "faithful minister in the Lord" (Ephesians 6:21,22), who, with Trophimus, accompanied Paul on a part of his journey from Macedonia to Jerusalem (Acts 20:4). He is alluded to also in Colossians 4:7, Titus 3:12, and 2 Timothy 4:12 as having been with Paul at Rome. Paul sent him to Ephesus, probably for the purpose of building up and encouraging the church there. <sup>1</sup>

### *Archippus*

A "fellow-soldier" of Paul's (Philemon 2), whom he exhorts to renewed activity (Colossians 4:17). He was a member of Philemon's family, probably his son. <sup>1</sup>

### *Mark - Aristarchus - Justus*

Paul's only fellow-laborers at Rome, where he wrote his Epistle to the Colossians (Colossians 4:11). Aristarchus was a native of Thessalonica (Acts 20:4), a companion of Paul (Acts 19:29; 27:2). He was Paul's "fellow-prisoner" at Rome (Colossians 4:10; Philemon 24). <sup>1</sup>

### *Timothy*

Timothy was one of Paul's converts and coworkers. His mother was a Jew and his father was a Greek. He was a native of Lystra that Paul evangelized in his first missionary journey. He was ordained by Paul himself (2 Timothy 1:6). Of all Paul's friends, with the exception, perhaps, of Luke, Paul's beloved friend, Timothy was regarded by him with the most tender affection; he was his dearly loved son, faithful and true (Acts 17:14; 18:5; 19:22; 20:4; Romans 16:21; 1 Corinthians 4:17; 16:10; 2 Corinthians 1:1,19; Philippians 1:1; 2:19; Colossians 1:1; 1 Thessalonians 1:1; 3:2,6; 2 Thessalonians 1:1; 1 Timothy 1:2,18; 6:20; 2 Timothy 1:2; Philemon 1; Hebrews 13:23).<sup>3</sup>

### *Paul*

Paul authored 13 of the 27 NT books, and may have authored Hebrews. He was a Tentmaker by trade, and an apostle by calling (Acts 18:1-3; Ephesians 3:6-8). Educated as a Pharisee, he was more zealous than many Jews at the time (Acts 22:3). His zeal extended to his being a passionate persecutor of Christians (Acts 7:58; Acts 8:1-3). He was converted by none other than Jesus Himself, and was stoned on his first missionary journey at Lystra (Acts 9:1-31; Acts 14:8-19). Paul met with the Jerusalem Council to discuss salvation and the law (Acts 15; Galatians 2:1). On his second missionary journey he was joined by Timothy (Acts 16:1-3). On his third missionary journey he spent two-plus years in Ephesus (Acts 19). He was taken into Roman custody and jailed (Acts 22:24), where he wrote the Prison Epistles - Colossians, Philemon, Ephesians, Philippians. Tradition tells us that Paul was martyred by the Roman emperor Nero around A.D. 87. Paul taught that it is impossible to be so bad that God would not forgive you: "This is a faithful saying and worthy of all acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am chief." (1 Timothy 1:15) Prior to his conversion, Paul relentlessly persecuted Christians (Acts 7:58; 8:1-3; 9:1-18; 22:5,19; 26:10-11; Galatians 1:13), yet God's grace was sufficient to save him.<sup>4</sup>

1. Now that you've read through the book and the background information, read Colossians 1:7-8 and 4:12 to determine how Paul knew about the church in Colosse.

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2. Read Colossians 1:4-6 and determine specifically what three pieces of good news Epaphras told Paul about the church.

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_

There was heresy being taught in the Lycus Valley where we find the Colossian church. The problem of identifying exactly which heresy stems from the fact that we only have Paul's letters, as if you were only listening to one side of a conversation, with which to identify those heresies. From these we discover that the heresy which later became known as Gnosticism had begun to creep into the church there. This will be covered in greater detail further in the study. But for now, read the following verses and determine what these false teachings were:

3. Colossians 2:8,9

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4. Colossians 2:16

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5. Colossians 2:18

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6. Colossians 2:20-23

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7. Continuing our discussion of the background, we must understand that Colossians is a letter, written to believers, for the purpose of instruction. If you wanted to instruct people about something, and the only way you could contact them was to write a letter, what might you say in it? Paul wrote to the Colossians and to the “church of the Laodiceans” (4:16) to give them vital information. Read 1:9-14 again and find ten aspects of Paul’s prayer that would serve to instruct the Colossians.

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_
5. \_\_\_\_\_
6. \_\_\_\_\_
7. \_\_\_\_\_
8. \_\_\_\_\_
9. \_\_\_\_\_
10. \_\_\_\_\_

The Apostle Paul wrote four letters from his cell in Rome, also called the Prison Epistles. Three of these letters, Colossians, Ephesians, and Philemon have many traits in common, and should be studied together for a clear understanding of Paul’s message. However, as we will only be looking at Colossians in this study, let’s take some time to at least become familiar with some aspects of Ephesians and Philemon. Answer the following questions and see if you can see the many traits that link these books together.

8. Start by reading Philemon verses 10-16 (remember Philemon is only one chapter), and determining who Paul was with and what that person was doing there. With this, you will begin to see the many who labored for the cause of Christ.

\_\_\_\_\_

9. Now read Colossians 4:7-9, and determine who was with Onesimus.

\_\_\_\_\_

10. Compare Ephesians 6:21 with Colossians 4:7, and determine what they have in common.

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\_\_\_\_\_

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11. Read Colossians 4:17 and Philemon 2, and determine what they have in common. Keep in mind our goal of trying to see the big picture of who labored for Christ, and how the Biblical characters are interconnected.

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It is important to remember that these people, whom you might soon forget, played a very important and significant role in God's program of calling out a people for the Lord. While we might gloss over them, they were doing the work of the Father by spreading the Gospel and ministering to the saints. For a more advanced study of this topic, and to gain a clearer understanding of God's will for your life, read the following verses on your own: (Acts 11:26; 1 Peter 2:9; Acts 15:14-17; Acts 13:47)

12. Continuing to look for continuity in the Prison Epistles, read Ephesians 4:17-24 and Colossians 3:8-11, and determine what ***contrast*** links these passages together.

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13. Read Ephesians 5:22-6:9 and Colossians 3:18-4:1, and find three topics these passages have in common.

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14. Read Ephesians 5:19-20 and Colossians 3:16-17, and determine what three things these passages have in common.

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15. Read Ephesians 3:2-9 and Colossians 1:23-29. What was Paul's ministry supposed to be?

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Colossians 1:23 and Ephesians 3:2 It is important to understand that these verses are not teaching that loss of salvation is possible. The Greek first-class conditional sentence (*ei*, Gk., "if, since," plus the indicative mood) expresses Paul's certainty that they will in fact continue/hear. The word "if" could well be translated "since." Colossians 1:23 then would read, "since indeed you continue in the faith..." Every true believer in Christ will endure to the end (John 10:28-29; Philippians 1:6).<sup>6</sup>

NT:1489: **IF** εἴγε εἴγε; particle from *ei* (1487), if, and *ge* (1065), indeed. A particle of emphasis or qualification meaning if at least, if indeed, if so be, followed by the indicative mood and spoken of what is taken for granted (Ephesians 3:2; 4:21; Colossians 1:23; Sept.: Job 16:4).<sup>7</sup>

16. Tychicus was a key player, working with Paul. Read Colossians 4:7-8 and Ephesians 6:21-22, and determine what two things he was to do.

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Now that we've covered some of the background consider this, we know that Paul wrote to the Colossians, and we've seen evidence of similarities between the different books, but do we know if he ever actually visited Colosse?

17. Read Colossians 2:1, and find evidence whether Paul visited Colosse or not.

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18. What is the significance of there being Christians in the world whom you've never seen or heard from?

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19. Keeping in mind who the key players are, read Colossians 1:5-7 and 4:12-13, and determine the role of Epaphras in evangelizing the Colossians.

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20. Remember, we're still looking at the Prison Epistles and determining what they have in common in an effort to complete the background. Read the following verses and determine the common relationship between Paul and Epaphras: Colossians 1:7; Colossians 4:12; Philemon 23.

Bible Reference	Paul and Epaphras
Colossians 1:17	
Colossians 4:12	
Philemon 23	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•</li> <li>•</li> </ul>

21. Whether or not Paul actually visited Colosse is important, but we mustn't lose sight of the fact that the Gospel was spread, and especially to the Gentiles. Read Acts 21:19, Romans 11:13, and 1 Timothy 2:7, and determine Paul's mission.

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22. As you read through Colossians, did you notice how Christocentric (Christ centered) this book is, even though it's only four chapters long? If not, read through the book, noting the number of occurrences of the words Christ and Lord.

- How many times does Paul use the word Christ? \_\_\_\_\_
- How many times does Paul use the word Lord? \_\_\_\_\_



Paul's letter to the Colossians is loving and at the same time didactic. He takes the opportunity to let fellow believers know that he is praying for them, he loves them, and is concerned about them. Heresy was being preached to the young church in much the same way it is today. It is fundamentally important to study this book because, as Peter wrote, "Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil walks about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour." (1 Peter 5:8) The people Paul mentions greatly impacted the cause of Christ both in the past as well as in the future; your future to be exact. The fact that we see these people in many books tells us that they were busy spreading the Gospel and combating heresy. We have a tremendous responsibility to do the same: attacking heresy where we find it, telling people about their salvation in our risen Lord, and strengthening the body of Christ by teaching the principles of God to those who would fall victim to the Devil's devouring. The author of Hebrews said it best when he admonished Christians, "For though by this time you ought to be teachers, you need someone to teach you again the first principles of the oracles of God; and you have come to need milk and not solid food." (Heb 5:12) How true it is that we've become a body of Christianettes desiring only a diet of sermonettes. Yet, too many Christians are complaining that the Scriptures don't apply to their lives. Colossians is rich in doctrine, and necessary for defense of the faith. It is definitely not a sermonette with no application. The applications found in this little letter are far reaching and vitally important, as you will discover as you study it. Christ is at the center of this book; May He always be at the center of your study, and your lives.

# 2 *The Apostle Paul*

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Colossians 1:1-2

*Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God, and Timothy our brother, To the saints and faithful brethren in Christ who are in Colosse: Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.*

1. Right away the author of this letter identifies himself as Paul. Paul, also called Saul, was not one of the original Apostles who lived with Jesus. Since Paul wrote the book of Colossians, it is only fitting that we study the man that helped change the course of human history. Read Acts 9:1-20, and determine who Paul *WAS*, what he *BECAME*, and who he knew Jesus to be.

- Who was Paul?
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- What did Paul become?

(NT:1589 ἐκλογή eklogê; gen. eklogês, fem. noun from eklégœ (1586), to choose, select. Election, choice, selection.)

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- Who did Paul know Jesus to be?
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2. How did Paul come to be an Apostle if he was not one of the original 12? Read the following verses and determine the overriding theme and answer to this question:

Colossians 1:1, Ephesians 1:1, Galatians 1:1, 1 Corinthians 1:1, 2 Corinthians 1:1, Romans 1:1, Acts 9:15; 26:16.

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## APOSTLE



A person sent by another; a messenger; envoy. This word is once used as a descriptive designation of Jesus Christ, the Sent of the Father (Hebrews 3:1; John 20:21). It is, however, generally used as designating the body of disciples to whom he entrusted the organization of his church and the dissemination of his Gospel, "the twelve," as they are called (Matthew 10:1-5; Mark 3:14; 6:7; Luke 6:13; 9:1). We have four lists of the apostles, one by each of the synoptic evangelists (Matthew 10:2-4; Mark 3:16; Luke 6:14), and one in Acts (1:13). No two of these lists, however, perfectly coincide.<sup>1</sup>

NT:652 **APOSTLE** ἀπόστολος one who fulfills the role of being a special messenger (generally restricted to the immediate followers of Jesus Christ, but also extended, as in the case of Paul, to other early Christians active in proclaiming the message of the Gospel) - 'apostle, special messenger.'<sup>8</sup>

3. We know that Paul was not one of the original Apostles, but how did he come by his knowledge of the Gospel if he didn't live with and learn from Christ? Read Galatians 1:11-12, and let the Scripture interpret itself.
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4. Read Colossians 1:2. The word saint(s) is used over sixty times in the New Testament, and the word brethren is used over 190 times. In Colossians 1:2, Paul was writing specifically to the saints and faithful brethren in Christ. Read the Key Point below and determine what the words saints, faithful, and brethren mean. How are they especially linked with the words “in Christ”?

Bible Reference	Linked
<b>Saint</b>	
<b>Faithful</b>	
<b>Brethren</b>	



NT:40 **SAINTS** ἅγιος Holy, set apart, sanctified, consecrated, saint. Its fundamental idea is separation, consecration, devotion to the service of Deity, sharing in God's purity and abstaining from earth's defilement.<sup>7</sup>

NT:4103 **FAITHFUL** πιστός 'to trust,' pertaining to being trusted - 'faithful, trustworthy, dependable, reliable.' Worthy of belief, trust, or confidence.<sup>8</sup> Used of persons who show themselves faithful in the transaction of business, the execution of commands, or the discharge of official duties.<sup>9</sup>

NT:80 **BRETHREN** ἀδελφός denoting unity. A brother, generally denotes a fellowship of life based on identity of origin, e.g., members of the same family, members of the same tribe, countrymen, and so forth. One of the same nature, a fellow man was regarded as a brother.<sup>7</sup>

The term saints, ones set apart, is used to denote all believes, not a special group of people with special powers or abilities. These are ones who believe in Christ and are set apart unto or “in Christ.”<sup>6</sup>

5. Read Ephesians 4:17. What does it mean to be a saint, to be set apart? Now read Ephesians 4:18-19, and describe those who are not set apart. (See also 1 Corinthians 1:2, 10.)

Bible Reference	Set Apart
Ephesians 4:17	
Ephesians 4:18-19	

6. Read Colossians 3:1-2. What is it that saints are supposed to do?

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7. As the definition of saints states, we are set apart. Why are we set apart? This will be covered in greater detail later in the study, but for now take a sneak peek at Ephesians 5:8 and then Matthew 5:16. From Ephesians 5:8, answer who we were, who we are in the Lord, and what we are supposed to do. Continue the thought from Matthew 5:16, and answer what we are supposed to do with it.

Bible Reference	Set Apart
Ephesians 5:8	
Matthew 5:16	

8. While we examine Colossians 1:2, we find that Paul offers grace and peace to the saints. These words are very important to the Christian. They exemplify the love God has for us. The word grace means the unmerited favor of God toward man. Peace in both the Old and New Testaments (OT shaalown; NT eireenee) means completeness, soundness, wholeness. Read the following verses and explain how we, as believers, have both grace and peace from God: Galatians 1:3-4; Romans 5:8, 6:23.

Bible Reference	Grace and Peace
<b>Galatians 1:3-4</b>	
<b>Romans 5:8</b>	
<b>Romans 6:23</b>	

9. Read Colossians 1:3-8. In 1:3, Paul prays for the Colossian believers. Read 1 Thessalonians 1:2, 2 Timothy 1:3, Romans 1:8, and 1 Corinthians 1:4, and determine what example Paul is giving us about how we should pray.

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10. Prayer is the unspeakable privilege of having an audience with the Sovereign of the universe. God is the Father of our Lord Jesus. Read John 1:12 -13 and Galatians 3:26, and determine why we can, as mere men, stand in the presence of an infinite God and offer up prayers.<sup>10</sup>

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11. Link John 14:20 with John 14:6, and offer a COMPLETE picture of how we can stand before God.

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12. How often do you pray for loved ones? Think back to the start of this study, then read Colossians 1:3 and determine the significance of Paul's prayer for the Colossians. Especially consider his relationship to them.

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13. Read Colossians 1:4. What two things set Paul and Timothy praying for the Colossians?

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14. In his prayer in Colossians 1:4-5, Paul brings together three triadic Christian virtues. Read Romans 5:2-5, 1 Corinthians 13:13, and Galatians 5:5,6 to determine what these virtues are. If you need further examples, read 1 Thessalonians 1:3, 5:8, and Hebrews 10:22-24.

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15. Let's pause for a minute and discuss the idea of faith. Blind faith is not a saving faith. There are many who are religious and say they have faith, or that they believe in God, but this is insufficient.<sup>10</sup> Faith must have an object, and there is only one Object that matters. Read the following verses and determine what object is necessary for faith to be a saving one: Acts 20:21, 24:24, Romans 3:22, 5:1, Galatians 2:16, 3:26, and John 9:35-38.

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16. So, did the Colossians have saving faith? Using Colossians 1:4-6, offer three pieces of evidence that prove the Colossians were saved.

- a. \_\_\_\_\_
- b. \_\_\_\_\_
- c. \_\_\_\_\_

17. Colossians 1:5 indicates that these believers have a "hope" that is laid up for them in heaven. Read the Key Point and determine what hope really is.

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NT:1680. **HOPE** ἐλπίς desire of some good with expectation of obtaining it. Spoken especially of those who experience the hope of salvation through Christ, eternal life, and blessedness.<sup>7</sup>

The question becomes, then, what is the *something* for which we have hope? The hope Paul is referring to has many components. The following questions will guide you to a fuller understanding of the hope that we have as believers.

18. The first point about our hope is fundamental to our salvation. Read 1 Timothy 1:1, and determine the significance of this first point.

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19. Read 1 Thessalonians 5:8-9, and write down what we can expect with our hope.

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20. Along with our salvation, we also have the hope of something else. Read Titus 3:4-7 to determine what that hope is. Keep in mind that hope is more than wishful thinking. It is an *expectation* of obtaining something.

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21. The Lord promised that He would return and receive us to Himself (John 14:3). Read 1 Thessalonians 2:19, and determine what hope we have when He returns.

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22. Paul tells us that we needn't be sorrowful if we have loved ones who have died as believers. Why? Read 1 Thessalonians 4:13-14, and discover another aspect of the hope that we can expect.

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23. When Our Lord and Savior returns, He will bring us something that we hope for. Read 1 Peter 1:13 to determine what it is.

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We know we have the grace of God through our salvation, but not the redemption of our bodies, yet. When Christ comes, He will give us our glorified bodies, and we will ever be with Him.

24. There are still more aspects of hope that need to be studied. Answer the following questions concerning the hope that Paul mentions in Colossians 1:5.

- According to Romans 8:16-18, what is our position, and what is going to be revealed in us?
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- The hope we have in Christ's return is punctuated by what will happen to the Earth. Link Genesis 3:17-19 with Romans 8:19-25, and explain why the creation eagerly awaits the revelation of the sons of God?

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Looking carefully at these verses to explain the hope we have, and the hope the Earth has, that is spoken of in Colossians 1:5, we come to this conclusion:

If we are children of God, and joint heirs with Christ because of this hope, the redemption is what is in view. Like the Earth itself, our bodies will be redeemed, and our very salvation will be realized from knowing Christ. This is the fulfillment of our salvation when we shall be taken to heaven and will enter our eternal inheritance. The Colossians had heard about this hope previously when Epaphras preached the Gospel to them.<sup>10</sup>

Before we move on to chapter three, let's take a closer look at Gnosticism.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>† There is One, Original, True, Unknowable, God</li><li>† The One God emanated Aeons<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ Pairs of lesser beings in sequence</li><li>○ Aeons together made up the Pleroma, or fullness, of God</li></ul></li><li>† The lowest of these pairs of Aeons was Sophia and Christ<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ Sophia sinned by seeking to know the unknowable One</li></ul></li><li>† Sophia's sin created the evil Demiurge—a lesser god</li><li>† Demiurge created the physical world: matter<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ Matter is evil because it was created by evil.</li><li>○ Human bodies contained within them a divine spark that is part of the true God.</li><li>○ The spark strives to obtain unity with the true God.</li><li>○ Knowledge “gnosis” enables the divine spark to return to its source, the true God.</li><li>○ Demiurge created Archons to rule over the material world.</li><li>○ Demiurge and Archons fight against the spark returning to the true God.</li></ul></li><li>† Christ was sent to earth as a messenger of light from God to give men the gnosis (knowledge) they needed to rescue themselves from the physical world and return to the spiritual world.</li><li>† Once man becomes aware of his true nature by way of the gnosis, he can combat the Archons and Demiurge, and attain unity with God.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>† The name itself comes from the Greek word gnosis, or "knowledge" because Gnostics believe they have a secret, or hidden, knowledge from God.</li><li>† The gnosis was needed to assist the soul on its journey back to God.</li><li>† Gnostics taught that matter was evil, and consequently, Christ could not have had a human body because the body is matter.</li><li>† The human body, however, had a divine spark obtained from God that strives to break free of the imprisonment of material existence, and move towards unity with the true, infinite God.</li><li>† Gnostics generally taught docetism, the belief that Jesus did not have a physical body, but rather his apparent physical body was an illusion, and hence his crucifixion was not bodily.</li><li>† Most Gnostics practiced celibacy and asceticism (strict self-denial as a measure of personal and especially spiritual discipline), on the grounds that the pleasures of the flesh were evil.</li><li>† Some Gnostics practiced libertinism, arguing that since the body was evil they should defile it.</li><li>† Christ was only a small, even the lowest, part of the godhead. He was one of the pairs of “Aeons” that made up the fullness of God.</li></ul>
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# 3 Walk Worthy

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As stated earlier, Paul's point for writing Colossians was to combat heresy. False teachings must never be allowed to creep into the Church body, as they will serve to corrupt even the strongest Christians. The heresy in question is Gnosticism. Even though it is still part of his prayer, in Colossians 1:5, we find a veiled polemic (or attack) on Gnosticism when Paul writes, "the word of the truth of the Gospel."<sup>11</sup>

We will be looking at the specific Gnostic teachings Paul addressed as we progressively move through the book. Interjections will be added for your study so as to maintain continuity.

1. Unfortunately, we do not know exactly what Epaphras told Paul about the Colossian church that prompted him to write this letter. So, our task is to discover what Paul had in mind. It seems reasonable to conclude that he was beginning his polemic against Gnosticism, and he begins by reminding the Colossians of something. Read Colossians 1:5-8, and the Key Point below to come up with one collective answer to why Paul used the terms:

v.5 - *heard before*

v.6 - *since the day you heard*

v.7 - *also learned*

v.8 - *also declared*

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The Gospel is the word of truth, and what we may safely venture our immortal souls upon: it proceeds from the God of truth and the Spirit of truth, and is a faithful saying. Paul calls it the grace of God in truth. (v. 6)<sup>12</sup>

"The truth" is the contents of "the word," and "the Gospel" defines the character of the truth.<sup>13</sup>

2. The Gnostics had much to say about the Person and work of Jesus Christ. It is imperative that we examine Paul's phrase: *the word of the truth* and flesh out the person of Christ. This will shed some light on the Gnostic teachings, and about who Christ *really* is. Read John 1:1 and 1:14 to determine exactly who the Word is and what He did.

- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_

3. Read Ephesians 4:21, and determine where the truth is, specifically.

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4. Read John 1:17. Where did the truth come from?

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5. Read John 14:6. Ultimately, what did Jesus say He was?

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6. So, what exactly is the word of truth? Read 1 Thessalonians 2:13 to confirm the answer.

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7. Read Ephesians 1:13, and explain what the power of the word of truth is.

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8. Read Genesis 1:3, 6, 9, 11, 14, 20, and 24 for a further demonstration of the power of God's word. What one word is indicative of God's power? Why?

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9. Read Psalm 33:6 and 148:5. What did God do with the power of His word?

Bible Reference	Power of His Word
Psalm 33:6	
Psalm 148:5	

Read Colossians 1:9-12. Once Paul reminds the Colossians that they have Christ, he starts telling them what he's praying about.

10. Gnostics teach that they have a secret, or hidden, knowledge given to them from God. In 1:9, how does Paul refute this claim?

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NT: 4137 **FILLED** πληρώω, plerôœ; to make full, to fill, to fill up, to render full, i.e., to complete, properly, to fill up to the top, to perfect, consummate, to make complete in every particular; to render perfect, to carry through to the end, to accomplish, carry out.<sup>7,9</sup>

NT: 1922. **KNOWLEDGE** ἐπίγνωσις epignôsis; Genesis epignôseœs, fem. noun from epiginôskœ (1921), to recognize. It is more intense, than gnôsis (1108), knowledge, because it expresses a more thorough participation in the acquiring of knowledge on the part of the learner. In the NT, it often refers to knowledge which very powerfully influences the form of religious life, a knowledge laying claim to personal involvement. When used as an object (Ephesians 1:17; 4:13; Colossians 1:9,10; 2:2; 1 Timothy 2:4; 2 Timothy 2:25; 3:7; Titus 1:1; Hebrews 10:26; 2 Peter 1:2,3), it shows the relationship of the learner to the object of his knowledge (2 Peter 1:8).<sup>7</sup>

11. About Colossians 1:9, John MacArthur writes that, "Spiritual modifies both 'wisdom' (the ability to accumulate and organize principles from Scripture) and 'understanding' (the application of those principles to daily living)."<sup>14</sup> Read the following verses and determine how much spiritual wisdom and understanding the believer has: Colossians 3:16; 1 Timothy 2:3-4; 1 Corinthians 1:4-5; Ephesians 3:14-19.

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12. What is the purpose of this knowledge and wisdom that we gain from knowing Christ, our Lord? Read Colossians 1:10, and find the four reasons we are given the full knowledge of wisdom and spiritual understanding.

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_

13. Colossians 1:10 tells us to walk worthy of the Lord. What does it mean to walk worthy of the Lord? Read Micah 4:5 and Psalm 74:18 to answer that question.

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14. Read Ephesians 4:1-3 and 5:2-4, and write down what it means to walk worthy.

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Alexander the Great conquered almost the entire known world by age 33. One night he came across a soldier asleep on guard duty - a serious offense punishable by death. "Soldier, what's your name?" demanded Alexander the Great. "Alexander, sir." Alexander the Great repeated the question: "What is your name?" "My name is Alexander, sir," the soldier repeated. A third time and more loudly Alexander the Great asked, "What is your name?" A third time the soldier meekly said, "My name is Alexander, sir." Alexander the Great then looked the young soldier straight in the eye. "Soldier," he said with intensity, "either change your name or change your conduct."

15. Read Colossians 3:17 for the ultimate in walking worthy of the Lord.

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In Colossians 1:10, Paul prays that the Colossians would bring forth fruit. What does “being fruitful in every good work” mean? The Bible offers several examples of bearing fruit. Read the following verses and explain what it means to bear fruit:

16. Read 1 Corinthians 16:15. What fruit is being exemplified here?

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17. Fruit comes from many places. Read Hebrews 13:15. What is the fruit? Do you exhibit this fruit?

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18. Read Romans 15:26-28. What fruit does Paul have in mind here?

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19. Read Hebrews 12:11. What is the fruit that should not be feared because it’s for our own good? Remember, Hebrews 12:6 tells us that if God loves you, He will chasten you.

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20. In Galatians 5:22-23, what are the nine types of the *fruit* of the Spirit?  
 (Believe it or not, there are plenty more in the Bible. For further study read Psalm 1:3; Hosea 14:8; Matthew 12:33; Romans 16:22; Ephesians 5:9; Colossians 1:10)

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21. Read Ephesians 2:8-10. What are the two sides of the works “coin”? What is the salvation contrast in these passages? Now, look at Matthew 5:16 and write down why these works are so important.

<b>Heads</b>	
<b>Tails</b>	
<b>Contrast</b>	
<b>Why</b>	

22. Once saved, believers have a knowledge of the Lord, but to grow in Him, to gain a fuller understanding of Him, and to walk in His ways, we must, as Colossians 1:10 states, "increase in the knowledge of God." Read 1 Peter 2:2, and determine what we should want as new Christians.

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23. Milk, however, is not enough. Read Hebrews 5:13-14. What should we be eating, and what is the consequence if we stay on milk?

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24. Hebrews 5:12 and 14 demonstrate the need for solid food. How does the author admonish the believers? What must the believer do to make the transition from milk to solid food?

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Read Colossians 1:12-14.

25. Let's not forget why we came this way in our study. We're looking at how Paul was combating heresy. How does Colossians 1:12-13 combat the Gnostic heresy that the "gnosis" was needed to assist the soul on its journey back to God?

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26. Colossians 1:14 states that we have redemption and forgiveness of sins through His blood. This flies in the face of the Gnostic teaching that states that only through the gnosis can we be reconciled to God. Read Colossians 1:19-20. How, specifically, is man reconciled to God? Now read 1:14 again. Where are we when this reconciliation occurs?

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27. The blood is significant and should not be overlooked. Read Leviticus 17:11. What is in the blood?

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28. Blood is important, as the life is in the blood. Now read Hebrews 9:22. What part does blood play in remission?

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29. In the Leviticus 17:11 passage, God gives us the blood upon the altar to make atonement for our souls, and we know from Hebrews 9:22 that blood must be shed for remission to take place. Read the account of the first "Passover" in Exodus 12:13.

(1) What sign was given in order that they be spared God's wrath?

(2) What did God *HAVE* to see?

(3) What was the result of the sign?

1) \_\_\_\_\_

2) \_\_\_\_\_

3) \_\_\_\_\_

30. The Gnostics taught that man needed special knowledge (gnosis) to be reconciled to God. Jesus, however, reconciled man to God with His blood. Read Matthew 20:28. What did Jesus come to earth to do?



NT: 3083 **RANSOM** λύτρον Ransom or price paid for redeeming captives, loosing them from their bonds and setting them at liberty. In Matthew 20:28 and Mark 10:45, it applies spiritually to the ransom paid by Christ for the delivering of men from the bondage of sin and death.<sup>7</sup>

31. Read Matthew 26:28. What was the purpose of Christ shedding His blood? What is the remission for? Keep Hebrews 9:22 in mind here.

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32. Can we know for sure that His blood reconciled us to God? Read Revelation 5:9. What answer do you find there?

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33. But the blood of Jesus does more. Read 1 John 1:7. What does His blood do for us? Don't lose sight of the quantity that John indicates. Once you see what His blood does, write down the quantity as well.

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34. We're still working on the false teachings about Jesus, and His work in our redemption. In the Book of Romans, Paul tells us that "the wages of sin is death." Read Romans 5:8-10. Why does God make sure we escape death and reconcile us to Himself? What three things do we receive from His death?

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If you've never heard these words before, or even if you have and just need a refresher, the Key Points below will give you some insight into what Paul is teaching.



**SALVATION:** In the NT we are saved from the power and dominion of sin, and Jesus Christ is always the author (see Matthew 1:21; Acts 4:12; Hebrews 2:10; 5:9). It is freely offered to all men but is conditioned upon repentance and faith in Christ (see John 3:16; Heb 2:3). Salvation proceeds from the love of God, is based upon the atonement wrought by Christ, is realized in forgiveness, regeneration, and sanctification, and culminates in the resurrection and glorification of all true believers. See Atonement; Forgiveness; Justification; Regeneration; Sanctification; Resurrection.<sup>19</sup>



**JUSTIFICATION:** The declaring of a person to be just or righteous. It is a legal term signifying acquittal.<sup>18</sup>  
The basic fact of biblical religion is that God pardons and accepts believing sinners. Paul's doctrine of justification by faith is an analytical exposition of this fact in its full theological connections. As stated by Paul, the doctrine of justification determines the whole character of Christianity as a religion of grace and faith. It defines the saving significance of Christ's life and death by relating both to God's law. It displays God's justice in condemning and punishing sin, His mercy in pardoning and accepting sinners, and His wisdom in exercising both attributes harmoniously together through Christ. It makes clear what faith is -- belief in Christ's atoning death and justifying resurrection, and trust in Him alone for righteousness.<sup>18</sup>



**RECONCILIATION:** The process by which God and man are brought together again. The Bible teaches that God and man are alienated from one another because of God's holiness and man's sinfulness. Although God loves the sinner (Romans 5:8), it is impossible for Him not to judge sin (Acts 17:30-31) Therefore, in biblical reconciliation, both parties are affected. Through the sacrifice of Christ, man's sin is atoned and God's wrath is appeased. Thus, a relationship of hostility and alienation is changed into one of peace and fellowship.<sup>18</sup>

# 4 *Gnostic Heresy*

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## Quick Review of Gnostic Teachings

- † There is one Original, True, Unknowable, God
- † The One God emanated Aeons, pairs of lesser beings in sequence
- † Aeons together made up the Pleroma, or fullness, of God
- † The lowest of these pairs of Aeons was Sophia and Christ

1. Read Colossians 1:15-16 where we see another Gnostic heresy defeated. Why can't Jesus be one of the Aeons emanated from God?

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2. Let's move to a more detailed exploration of Paul's argument in Colossians 1:15-16. First of all, we must learn about God the Father. What do Colossians 1:15 and 1 Timothy 1:17 say about God, physically?

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3. Link those verses with 1 John 4:12 and John 4:24, and write down God's physical attributes.

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4. Now read Exodus 33:20, and write down why it is good that we cannot see God.

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5. Jesus spoke plainly about Himself and the Father in John 14:7-11. Offer four points that demonstrate the relationship between Jesus and the Father in these passages.

- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_

6. It is critical that we not lose sight of exactly who Jesus is. Read again John 1:1-14, and write down the two points about who Jesus is.

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7. Let's pull it all together. According to Gnosticism, Jesus was a lesser being, emanated from God. Why can Jesus not be a lesser being?

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8. Read 1 John 5:7. Why can Jesus not be part of a pair, as the Gnostics taught?

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Colossians 1:15 tells us that Jesus is the image of God, but we know that God is Spirit and invisible. So, what does the word *image* really mean? It must mean something besides "Jesus is what God the Father looks like up in Heaven." Read the Key Point below to gain a sense of the word *image*. Crucial words that should be focused on are *same form* and *representation*.



NT:1504 **IMAGE** εἰκών that which has the same form as something else<sup>8</sup>

NT: 1504 εἰκών to be like, resemble. A representation, an image, image, resemblance, likeness<sup>7</sup>

9. To begin our exploration of the word image, let's go all the way back to Genesis 1:26, to Adam. What does Moses say about Adam and his image?

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OT: 6745 **IMAGE** דְּבָרֵי The word basically refers to a representation, a likeness.<sup>16</sup>

OT:6754 The word also means "image" in the sense of essential nature. So Adam "begat a son in his own likeness, after his image; and called his name Seth" Genesis 5:3. Human nature in its internal and external characteristics is what is meant here rather than an exact duplicate. So, too, God made man in His own "image," reflecting some of His own perfections: perfect in knowledge, righteousness, and holiness, and with dominion over the creatures Genesis 1:26.<sup>17</sup>

The Key Point above clearly indicates that Adam was the representation of God on Earth. Adam represented some of God's attributes, not that he looked like God. We err when we place too much emphasis on any single attribute of God found in man. We are the composite of many attributes of God, though some may have been diminished by sin.<sup>19</sup> Read the following verses to gain a sense of how we are the image of God.

10. What is one of God's attributes that is given to man in Genesis 1:26 and 28?

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11. Compare Deuteronomy 5:26-28 with Genesis 2:7. What attribute do we share with God?

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12. We know that God is Spirit. Compare John 4:24 with Job 32:8 and 1 Corinthians. 3:16 and write down what attribute we share with God.

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13. Compare Psalm 90:2, Hebrews 13:8, and Revelation 1:8 with Romans 6:22, Galatians 6:8, and John 6:47. What attribute of God's do we share in these verses?

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14. One more of the many attributes we must look at is found in 1 John 4:16. While we have this *capacity* and are told over and over to practice it, what attribute is being described here? Read Mark 12:28-31 and 1 John 4:19. What is the command and why do we do it?

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Christ is called the image of the invisible God in Colossians 1:15. Adam was created in God's image in Genesis 1:26. Both men represented the attributes of God. The differences, however, are worth studying.

15. Read 1 Corinthians 15:45-47. How are Adam and Christ connected?

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16. So, what's the difference between Genesis 1:26 and Colossians 1:15 when it comes to image?

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17. Adam was God’s first representative on Earth. He failed as a representative where Jesus succeeded. Notice God’s image is ascribed to both. Read Romans 5:12-19 before completing the chart concerning the results of Adam’s failures and Christ’s successes.

Romans 5	Results of Adam’s Failures	Christ’s Successes
Verse 12	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪</li> <li>▪</li> <li>▪</li> </ul>	
Verse 15		
Verse 16		
Verse 17		
Verse 18		
Verse 19		

18. We as believers have a crucial role to play in this whole image scenario. Read Philippians 3:21, Romans 8:29, and 2 Corinthians 3:18. What is happening to us?

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19. Being transformed into the image of Jesus carries with it certain responsibilities. Let’s begin by reading Romans 13:12-14. What five points does Paul make about what we should do?

- 1) \_\_\_\_\_
- 2) \_\_\_\_\_
- 3) \_\_\_\_\_
- 4) \_\_\_\_\_
- 5) \_\_\_\_\_

20. Read Ephesians 5:8. What are we to do, and more importantly, what have we become?

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21. Matthew 5:16 gives us a direct command from Jesus, Himself, concerning our newly acquired light. What are we supposed to do with it, and what are the two results of our actions?

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22. How does Philippians 2:14-15 indicate how we should live? Why?

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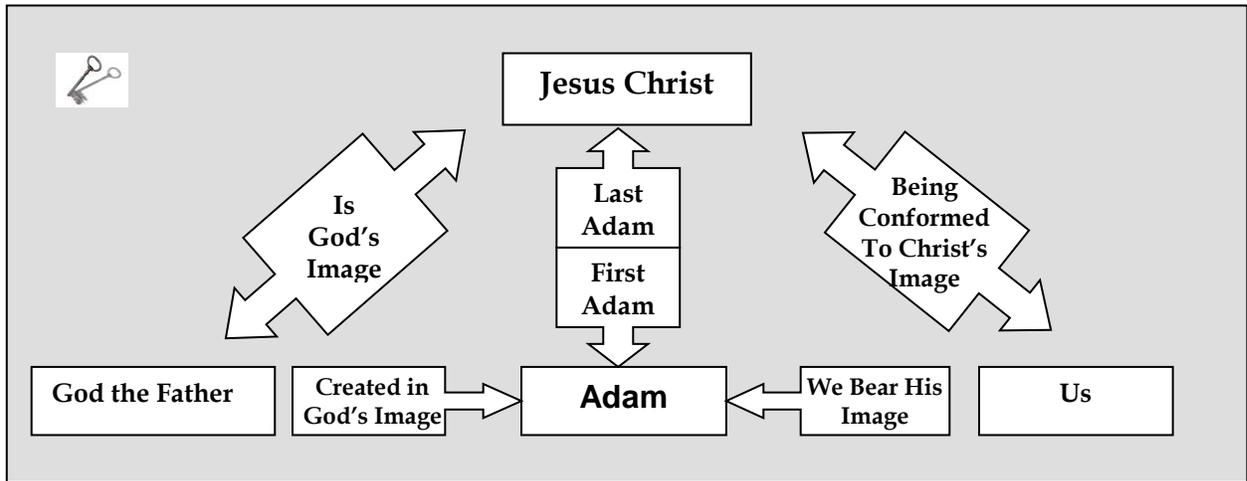
23. What does Paul mean about the new man when he says in Colossians 3:9-11 that we are the image of Christ? Remember the Key Point about the word *image*.

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24. Read 1 Corinthians 15:45-49. Complete the chart below to discover what our two-fold image is.

**1 Corinthians 15:49**

	Who was Adam	Who is Christ	Our Two Fold Image Verse 49
<b>Verse 45</b>			▪
			▪
<b>Verse 47</b>			



Read Colossians 1:15-18.

25. We can see from verses 15-16 that Christ is called the *firstborn* over all creation. So, what does *firstborn* mean? Scripture uses the term in three ways: literally, figuratively, and as a way to designate something as superior or having a place of superiority.<sup>10</sup> Read the following verses and label each as Literal - Figurative - or Place of Superiority:

Bible Reference	Label
Exodus 4:22	
Psalms 89:27	
Luke 2:7	

26. The question here is does the use of this term in Colossians denote the time when Jesus was born? There is evidence in verse 16 that firstborn is a position (or place of superiority), rather than the timing of His birth. Do you see the evidence?

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27. According to the fully developed Gnostic teaching (2<sup>nd</sup> Century A.D.), as many as 40 emanations served to separate God from matter which they saw as evil.<sup>6</sup> How does Colossians 1:16 defeat this argument?

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28. Verse 16 has far reaching implications for who has ultimate authority. Read the Key Point below, then read Colossians 2:18. Who were the Colossians worshipping in 2:18? Why did Paul include the four terms of verse 16? Why is Christ superior to them?

- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_



NT:2362 **THRONES** θρόνος: Position of power and authority to rule - rule, authority, throne.

NT:2963 **DOMINIONS** κυριότης: A supernatural ruling power - 'ruling power.'

NT:746 **PRINCIPALITIES** ἀρχή The meaning is "primacy," whether in time or rank. In time it denotes the point of a new beginning in a temporal sequence. The relativity of the time sequence is implied, as in the religious statement that God is beginning and end. In rank the senses are: a. "dominion," b. "realm," and c. "authorities."<sup>18</sup>

NT:1849 **POWERS** ἐξουσία The right to control or govern over - authority to rule, right to control.

In general, the series of terms θρόνοι, κυριότητες, ἀρχαί, and ἐξουσία in Colossians 1:16 (as well as in Ephesians 1:21) are understood as being supernatural cosmic powers, whether angelic or demonic, but it is possible that these could be understood in terms of human rulers.<sup>8</sup>

29. How does Colossians 1:17 tie into the overall argument Paul is making about Christ, Gnostics, and angel worship?

- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_

30. Colossians 1:18 tells us that Christ is the head of the body, *the Church*. The fact that Christ is the Church body is reiterated in verse 24 and again in Ephesians 1:23. What must not be overlooked here are the terms *firstborn from the dead* and *the beginning*. Read 1 Corinthians 15:20-23. What has Christ made possible that Adam started? Don't overlook the quantity here.

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31. Read Acts 26:23. What would Christ be the first to do?

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While Acts 26:23 does indicate that Christ was the first to be raised from the dead, we know that others were raised before Him:

- The son of the widow of Zarephath (1 Kings 17:17-23).
- The Shunammite woman's son (2 Kings 4:32-37).
- The young man laid in Elisha's grave (2 Kings 13:21).
- The widow's son (Luke 7:12-15).
- Jairus' daughter (Luke 8:49-55).
- Lazarus (John 11:43-44).

32. What is the difference between these people and Jesus? Read Revelation 1:18 to find the answer.

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33. Christ is the firstborn from the dead and will never die. Read John 11:25-26. How are we linked to His resurrection?

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34. Let's get back to the word "beginning" in Colossians 1:18. Tie the fact that Jesus (notice the word *who*) is the beginning to the fact that He is the head of the Church to the fact that He is the firstborn from the dead. What does it all mean? Go up to the Key Point and reread the definition of the word *Principalities*. Pay attention to the time part of the word. This is the same word. If that still doesn't make sense, simply read Revelation 22:13. What does Jesus have to say about Himself?

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35. We did say that the word firstborn has some significance. And while it is true that Jesus is the first and the last time-wise, He also enjoys a special place in relation to the Father. Read Romans 8:15 and Galatians 4:5. What type of son are we to God?

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36. Read Luke 3:22. What two descriptions are offered about how God feels about His Son? Read Isaiah 42:1. What evidence is there that God is happy with His son?

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In Jewish society the rights and responsibilities of being a firstborn son resulted in considerable prestige and status. The firstborn son, for example, received twice as much in inheritance as any other offspring.

The use of πρωτότοκος 'firstborn' does not imply in Greek that other children were also born to a woman, though in a number of languages one would never use 'firstborn' unless other children followed. Such an individual would be spoken of merely as 'the only child.' It is also frequently necessary to employ an appropriate qualifier for 'firstborn' in order to mark clearly the fact that it is 'a firstborn son' rather than 'a firstborn daughter.' Colossians 1:15 may be interpreted as 'existing before all creation' or 'existing superior to all creation'.<sup>8</sup>

37. How do John 3:35 and 5:22 describe the Father and Son's relationship?

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38. The last item to consider is also the summation of Paul's argument. Read the last part of Colossians 1:18. What is the capstone of Paul's instruction?

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One of the problems with Gnosticism is that they didn't teach that Christ was God; simply that He was a part of God. Let's take a moment to explore Christ's Deity. Understanding the Deity of Christ is essential to the study of Colossians. The following verses will shed some light on His Deity. What you're looking for is Christ's Deity as revealed through His relationship to the Father.

Bible Reference	Christ's Deity
<b>John 1:1</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•</li> <li>•</li> </ul>
<b>John 1:14</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•</li> <li>•</li> <li>•</li> </ul>
<b>John 3:16</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•</li> </ul>
<b>John 14:7</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•</li> </ul>
<b>Philippians 2:6</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•</li> </ul>
<b>Philippians 2:7</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•</li> </ul>
<b>Colossians 1:13</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•</li> </ul>
<b>Colossians 1:15</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•</li> </ul>
<b>Colossians 1:18</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•</li> </ul>
<b>Colossians 1:19; 2:9</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•</li> </ul>
<b>Hebrews 1:2</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•</li> </ul>
<b>Hebrews 1:5</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•</li> </ul>
<b>Hebrews 1:6</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•</li> </ul>

39. Christ's Deity is also manifested through His role in creation. Look up the following verses, paying careful attention to this critical aspect of His Deity. Some of these should start to look familiar to you.

Bible Reference	Christ's Deity
John 1:1-3 What was made without Jesus?	•
Colossians 1:16-18 What was created? By whom?	•
Hebrews 1:2,10 What did Jesus make?	• •

40. Jesus shows His Deity through our salvation. Look up the following verses that illustrate His soteriological role (salvation). Some of these you should be beginning to memorize.

Bible Reference	Christ's Deity
John 1:12-13 How is one saved?	•
Philippians 2:6-8 What did Christ do for our salvation?	•
Hebrews 1:3; 2:10,11 What did Jesus do?	• •
Colossians 1:4,5,19-22; 2:6,13-15 Salvation comes from:	• • • •

41. The very nature of Jesus shows His Deity. Look up the following verses and demonstrate how His nature is divine. By now you should know some of these.

Bible Reference	Christ's Deity
John 1:1	•
Philippians 2:6	•
Colossians 2:9	•
Hebrews 1:8	•

42. Jesus shows His Deity because it is only through Him that we can be saved. The following verses bear this out. This may be a repeat to look up, but it's good practice for memorizing verses.

Bible Reference	Christ's Deity
John 1:18; 14:6	• •
Colossians 1:19; 2:9	•
Hebrews 1:3	• • • •

43. Jesus' Deity is demonstrated in that He is God, made flesh. Read the following verses, looking for evidence that Jesus is God, made Man.

Bible Reference	Jesus is God, Made Man
John 1:14	•
Philippians 2:7-8	•
Colossians 2:9	•
Hebrews 1:6; 2:14-18	• •



We must be very careful with Colossians 1:19 that we don't mistake the reading of *The Father*. The Father is not in the original Greek, and if your Bible shows it, it probably shows it in italics. Remember John 10:30 when Jesus said, "I and My Father are one."

# 5 *Christ Is Preeminent*

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## Quick Review of Gnostic Teachings

- The name itself comes from the Greek word gnosis, or “knowledge,” because Gnostics believe they have a secret, or hidden, knowledge from God.
- The gnosis was needed to assist the soul on its journey back to God.
- Gnostics taught that matter was evil, and consequently, Christ could not have had a human body because the body is matter, and matter is evil.

Read Colossians 1:19-23

1. That Christ is preeminent is reinforced in Colossians 1:19-20.<sup>19</sup> Read verse 19 and 20. How does Paul demonstrate Christ’s preeminence in 19? In what two ways does verse 20 demonstrate His preeminence?

- 1) \_\_\_\_\_
- 2) \_\_\_\_\_
- 3) \_\_\_\_\_

2. Read Colossians 2:9 and link that verse with 1:19. How do these two passages refute one of the Gnostic teachings from the list above?

\_\_\_\_\_

3. In your own words, how does Colossians 1:19 counter the Gnostic teachings?

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

4. To the Gnostics, Jesus was only one more step on the stairway to God. Read Colossians 1:19 again. Reason through the passage and determine why Jesus had to be more than another link in the chain.

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

The whole of the Gnostic heresy rested on Jesus not being God, and that the only way to God was to follow the emanations. Because the fullness of God rested with Jesus and Jesus is God, and He reconciled all things to Himself, Jesus also reconciled us to God, or Himself. The Gnostic teaching that Jesus cannot be God is therefore false, for it was Jesus who did the reconciling. God and man are alienated from one another because of God's holiness and man's sinfulness. Reconciliation is the process by which God and man are brought together again.<sup>2</sup>

5. Paul says in Colossians 1:20 that Christ would reconcile all things to Himself. What exactly is reconciliation? To answer this question we must turn back to the book of Genesis and examine the relationship between God and His creation. Read Genesis 1:31. How does God describe His creation? How does this differ from Genesis 1:25?
- 
- 



OT:3966 **VERY** **רַב־רַב**: noun masculine muchness, force, abundance, good, exceedingly.<sup>20</sup>

This term is used three hundred times in the OT, mainly as an adverb. It is found in many combinations, all expressing the idea of exceeding (e.g. Genesis 1:31, in which the Creator calls his creation exceeding good) or very greatly (e.g. Exodus 1:7, where this term is used twice in describing the prolificacy of the Israelites under the hand of God).<sup>17</sup>

6. Read Genesis 2:7, 18, and 3:9. Each verse shows a different relational aspect of God to man. Find each and write them here.

Bible Reference	Relational Aspect
Genesis 2:7	
Genesis 2:18	
Genesis 3:9	

7. Let's take a look at some of the attributes of God: Read Leviticus 11:45. What do you find there about God?



Holiness is one of the essential attributes of the divine nature. It is, on the one hand, entire freedom from moral evil and, on the other, absolute moral perfection. The Scriptures lay great stress upon this attribute of God (Exodus 15:11; 1 Sam 2:2; Psalm 71:22; 99:9; 111:9; Isaiah 6:3; Hab 1:12; Revelation 15:4; etc.). Of great consequence in this connection is the revelation of God's holiness in the character and work of Jesus Christ.<sup>21</sup>

Holiness is moral and ethical wholeness or perfection; freedom from moral evil. Holiness is one of the essential elements of God's nature required of His people. Holiness may also be rendered "sanctification" or "godliness." The word holy denotes that which is "sanctified" or "set apart" for divine service.<sup>2</sup>

8. Read 1 Samuel 2:2 and Revelation 15:4. What do you discover about God's holiness?

---

9. Read Psalm 145:17 and 20. What two attributes of God do you find there?

1) \_\_\_\_\_

2) \_\_\_\_\_

10. Deuteronomy 32:4 makes six attributes of God clear. What are they?

1.
2.
3.
4.
5.
6.

11. Isaiah 45:21 gives us insight into another very singular attribute of God's. What is it?

---

12. We're still working on the definition of reconciliation. Now let's take a look at the other side of the coin: man's attributes. Read Genesis 3:1-8. Does Adam reflect the holiness of God? Offer evidence for your answer. Use the Key Point about Holiness (pg. 38) to aid you.

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13. Read James 4:4. What happens to man's relationship with God when we sin?

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14. So, all we have to do is not sin in order to maintain a right relationship with God. Is that possible? Read Romans 3:23 for the answer and write it here. Don't lose sight of the quantity here.

---

15. If we all sin, what is it that we deserve? Romans 6:23 will give you the answer. How, then are we like Adam? Read Genesis 2:16-17.

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16. Colossians 1:21 says what about us and our holiness? Explain why.

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17. Read Romans 5:16-17. Paul tells us that three things happened because of Adam. What were they?

1) \_\_\_\_\_

2) \_\_\_\_\_

3) \_\_\_\_\_

18. God's plan to save us from this condemnation begins with Him reconciling man to Himself. Remember, however, from the previous portion of this study, that the world was also cursed along with man. Read Colossians 1:20. In context, who is doing the reconciling?

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19. Does man reconcile himself to God? Read 2 Corinthians 5:19, and explain your answer.

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20. Since God does the reconciling Himself, how do we obtain this reconciliation? Romans 5:11 gives us the answer.

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21. How do we receive this reconciliation? Read Romans 4:4-8 and answer the following questions. (1) What do we have to do? (2) What is the result? Tie this together with 2 Corinthians 5:21. (3) What is the end result?

1) \_\_\_\_\_

2) \_\_\_\_\_

3) \_\_\_\_\_

22. Remember what the Bible says about Abraham in Genesis 15:6 and Galatians 3:6?

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23. So, what do we have to do to receive this reconciliation? Read John 5:24. What does Jesus have to say about the death we received from Adam's sin?

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

24. Read Colossians 1:21. How can we tell that Paul believed the Colossians had accepted Christ?

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

25. In Colossians 1:22, what three descriptors does Paul use to describe the Colossians after their reconciliation?

\_\_\_\_\_

### What We Know



- Reconciliation is the process by which God and man are brought together again. God and man are alienated from one another because of God's holiness and man's sinfulness. Although God loves the sinner (Romans 5:8), it is impossible for Him not to judge sin (Acts 17:31-31). Therefore, in biblical reconciliation, both parties are affected. Through the sacrifice of Christ, man's sin is atoned and God's wrath is appeased. Thus, a relationship of hostility and alienation is changed into one of peace and fellowship.
- The initiative in reconciliation was taken by God. While we were still sinners and "enemies," Christ died for us (Romans 5:8,10; Colossians 1:21). Reconciliation is thus God's own completed act, something that takes place before human actions such as confession, repentance, and restitution. God Himself "has reconciled us to Himself through Jesus Christ" (2 Corinthians 5:18). Man's responsibility comes later in the study.
- Paul regarded the gospel as "the word of reconciliation" (2 Corinthians 5:19). And knowing "the terror of the Lord," Paul pleaded, implored, and persuaded men: "Be reconciled to God" (2 Corinthians 5:20).<sup>2</sup>

Now that we know what the reconciliation is, we must look at how it was done. Colossians 1:20 says that Christ made peace through the blood of His cross. This is the atonement, or reconciliation, through Christ's shed blood. Some of this will be a bit of a review, but stay with it, for as the Bible says,

*Whatever things are true, whatever things are noble, whatever things are just, whatever things are pure, whatever things are lovely, whatever things are of good report, if there is any virtue and if there is anything praiseworthy - meditate on these things. Philippians 4:8*



Atonement is the act by which God restores a relationship of harmony and unity between Himself and human beings. Through God's atoning grace and forgiveness, we are reinstated to a relationship with God, in spite of our sin.<sup>2</sup>

26. Eccl 7:20 tells us that "there is not a just man on earth who does good and does not sin." (1) Given this statement, what kind of relationship can we have with a Holy God? (2) Read Psalm 51:5 to see what we can do to correct this. (3) Read Hebrews 4:13. Is there any way to hide our sin from God?

- 1) \_\_\_\_\_
- 2) \_\_\_\_\_
- 3) \_\_\_\_\_

27. According to Romans 3:19, who is guilty before God? Again, don't miss the quantity.

---

28. There is a penalty that must be paid for our sins. God is loving, but He is also just. Read Romans 6:23 again. What is the penalty for sin?

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29. Read Leviticus 17:11. Why did God give the Jews the system of animal sacrifice?

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30. The big question is, what does the word *atonement* mean? Read the Key Point below and write your own definition for the term as it is used in Leviticus 17:11.

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OT:3722 **ATONEMENT** כָּפַר<sup>22</sup> "to cover over, atone, propitiate, pacify." This root is found in the Hebrew language at all periods of its history, and perhaps is best known from the term Yom Kippur, "Day of Atonement." Its verbal forms occur approximately 100 times in the Hebrew Bible. Kapar is first found in Genesis 6:14, where it is used in its primary sense of "to cover over." Here God gives Noah instructions concerning the ark, including, "Cover it inside and out with pitch" (RSV). (The KJV translates, "Pitch it within and without with pitch.") Most uses of the word, however, involve the theological meaning of "covering over," often with the blood of a sacrifice, in order to atone for some sin.<sup>16</sup>

31. Did the sacrifice of the animals actually take away the sins of the Old Testament Jews? Remember, Abraham believed God and had righteousness accounted to him. Read Hebrews 10:1-2. Why couldn't the sacrifices make one perfect? Now read down to verse four. What is the explicit meaning here?

---

Take some time and use the chart below to review. The information found there consists of questions and answers you've done previously. The blood of Christ in Colossians 1:20 is the key element in the atonement.

## Here's What We Know

Verse	Blood
<p>Colossians 1:14</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ We have redemption and forgiveness of sins through His blood.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ We obtain forgiveness because we are <i>IN</i> Christ, when He gave up His life (blood) on the cross.</li> </ul>
<p>Leviticus 17:11- What is in the blood?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ The life of the flesh is in the blood.</li> </ul>
<p>Hebrews 9:22</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ What part does blood play in remission?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ The shedding of blood <b><u>must take place</u></b> or there can be no remission.</li> </ul>
<p>Leviticus 17:11</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ God gives us the blood upon the altar to make atonement for our souls.</li> <li>▪ We know from Hebrews 9:22 that blood must be shed for remission to take place.</li> </ul> <p>Exodus 12:13</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ What was the sign given in order that they be spared His wrath?</li> <li>▪ What did God <i>HAVE</i> to see?</li> <li>▪ What was the result of the sign?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ The <b><u>blood shall be a sign</u></b> for you on the houses where you are.</li> <li>▪ God had to <b><u>see the blood</u></b>.</li> <li>▪ When God saw the blood, He said He would <b><u>pass over them</u></b>; “and the plague shall not be on you to destroy you when I strike the land of Egypt.”</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Jesus, however, reconciled man to God with His blood.</li> </ul> <p>Matthew. 20:28</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ What did Jesus come to earth to do?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ The Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many.</li> </ul>
<p>Matthew 26:28</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ What was the purpose of Christ shedding His blood?</li> <li>▪ What is the remission for?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ For this is My blood of the new covenant, <u>which is shed for many for the remission of sins.</u></li> </ul>
<p>Revelation 5:9</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Can we know for sure that His blood reconciled us to God?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Yes. Christ's blood reconciled us to God.</li> </ul>
<p>1 John 1:7 What does His blood do for us?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ His blood cleanses us from <b><u>ALL</u></b> sin.</li> </ul>
<p>Romans 5:8-10</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ In the book of Romans, Paul tells us that “the wages of sin is death.”</li> <li>▪ How does God make sure we escape death and reconciles us to Himself?</li> <li>▪ What three things do we receive from His death?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ God demonstrated His love for us by sending His Son, Jesus, to die for us.</li> <li>▪ Through His blood we are <b><u>justified</u></b>, <b><u>reconciled</u></b>, and <b><u>saved</u></b>.</li> </ul>

32. Hebrews chapter nine contains many references to the ritual sacrifices performed by the Israelite priests. It further contains references to Christ as a better sacrifice in that He needed only to offer Himself once, rather than year after year. How do we know that the OT sacrifices were meant only to point to the coming sacrifice in the Person of Jesus? Read the following verses and indicate what ties them all together: Hebrews 8:5, 9:9, 9:11, 10:1, and Colossians 2:17.

Bible Reference	Evidence
Hebrews 8:5	
Hebrews 9:9	
Hebrews 9:11	
Hebrews 10:1	
Colossians 2:17	

33. Read John 1:29. (1) What title was Jesus given? (2) What was He here to do? (3) Why do you suppose Jesus was given that particular title? Read Exodus 12:3, 5-7, and 12-13 for more on this subject.

- 1) \_\_\_\_\_
- 2) \_\_\_\_\_
- 3) \_\_\_\_\_

34. Read 1 John 2:2. The word *propitiation* is very similar to the OT word atonement. What was the purpose of Jesus' death?

\_\_\_\_\_

35. The Levitical Law indicated that any sacrificial lamb must be without spot or defect. Read Hebrews 9:14 and 1 Peter 1:18-19. Read also Hebrews 4:14-15. How did Jesus, as the Lamb of God, compare with the Levitical requirements?

\_\_\_\_\_

36. Read Hebrews 10:5-10. Offer five pieces of evidence that made Jesus the perfect sacrifice.

Bible Reference	Evidence
Hebrews 10:5	
Hebrews 10:6	
Hebrews 10:7, 9	
Hebrews 10:8	
Hebrews 10:10	

37. Colossians 1:20 says that God reconciled all things to Himself through the blood of Jesus. How do we know this one sacrifice was sufficient for all sin for all time? Read Hebrews 9:25-26 and 10:12 and answer this question.

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38. What is the significance of Him sitting down? Compare Hebrews 10:1 with 10:12.

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39. Go back to Colossians 1:20-22. God reconciles Himself to man through what two means?

1) \_\_\_\_\_

2) \_\_\_\_\_

40. Read Hebrews 10:12 again. How does Jesus' death reconcile man to God?

---

41. Let's be clear about this atonement. Christ is a substitute for us, in that He died in our place. Read the following verses and write down evidence of this substitutionary atonement. 2 Corinthians 5:21; 1 Peter 2:24; Isaiah 53:5.

Bible Reference	Evidence
2 Corinthians 5:21	
1 Peter 2:24	
<b>Underline the pertinent parts of this passage:</b>	
Isaiah 53:5	But He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities; The chastisement for our peace was upon Him, And by His stripes we are healed.

42. Remember that Gnosticism teaches that Jesus could not have been a physical person, denying the incarnation. What three terms does Colossians 1:22 use to defeat this argument?

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43. Reread Colossians 1:19-22. Did Jesus' incarnation make Him "evil matter," as the Gnostics would have you believe?

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44. Read Hebrews 2:14-16. How do these passages argue for the necessity of Jesus' incarnation and death? In Hosea 13:14, what did God say He would do?

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45. Read 1 Timothy 2:6. What did Jesus come to do? Now read the Key Point below and write out a definition of ransom in your own words.

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**RANSOM** is the price or payment made for our redemption, as when it is said that the Son of man "gave his life a ransom for many" (Matthew 20:28; compare Acts 20:28; Romans 3:23-24; 1 Corinthians 6:19,20; Gal 3:13; 4:4,5; Ephesians 1:7; Colossians 1:14; 1 Tim 2:6; Titus 2:14; 1 Peter 1:18,19. In all these passages the same idea is expressed). The debt is represented not as cancelled but as fully paid. The slave or captive is not liberated by a mere gratuitous favor, but a ransom price has been paid, in consideration of which he is set free. The original owner receives back his alienated and lost possession because he has bought it back "with a price." This price or ransom is always said to be Christ, His blood, His death. He secures our redemption by the payment of a ransom.<sup>1</sup>

**RANSOM** λύτρον, or ἀντίλυτρο<sup>23</sup> A price paid for freeing a captive; implies vicarious, equivalent substitution, "a ransom for many" (Matthew 20:28; Ephesians 1:7; 1 Peter 1:18-19). Man was the slave of Satan, sold under sin. He was unable to ransom himself, because absolute obedience is due to God; therefore no act of ours can satisfy for the least offense. Leviticus 25:48 allowed one sold captive to be redeemed by one of his brethren. The Son of God therefore became man in order that as our elder brother He should redeem us (Hebrews 2:14-15).<sup>24</sup>

46. The second half of Colossians 1:22 is the result of the reconciliation. What is the three-fold purpose of Christ's death on the cross?

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47. Why is it so important that we have to be presented holy, blameless, and above reproach? Keep in mind the work we did on the attributes of God.

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48. In Colossians 1:23, Paul makes the security of the believers a non-issue. Read John 10:28-29 and Philippians 1:6. Use these verses, and the Key Point below to provide evidence for Paul's statement. Be specific and use each verse to offer evidence.

Bible Reference	Evidence
John 10:28-29	
Philippians 1:6	



Colossians 1:23 and Ephesians 3:2. These verses are not teaching that loss of salvation is possible. The Greek first-class conditional sentence (*ei*, Gk., “if, since,” plus the indicative mood) expresses Paul’s certainty that they will in fact continue/hear. The word “if” could well be translated “since.” Colossians 1:23 then would read, “since indeed you continue in the faith...” Every true believer in Christ will endure to the end.<sup>6</sup>

NT:1489 **IF** εἴγε εἴγε; particle from *ei* (1487), if, and *ge* (1065), indeed. A particle of emphasis or qualification meaning if at least, if indeed, if so be, followed by the indicative mood and spoken of what is taken for granted (Ephesians 3:2; 4:21; Colossians 1:23; Sept.: Job 16:4).<sup>7</sup>

# 6 *Persecution and Suffering for Christ*

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1. Read Colossians 1:24-29. In verse 24, Paul says that he rejoices in his sufferings. Jesus suffered in fulfillment of the OT prophecies concerning the Messiah. However, His suffering did not end with His death. The world, seeing that they could no longer persecute Him, turned to His church. For evidence of this persecution, read Galatians 1:13. What did Paul do before his conversion, and how severe were his actions?

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2. You will remember that Colossians 1:18 clearly teaches that Christ is the Head of the body, the Church. Read Acts 22:7. Specifically, who was Paul persecuting when he said he persecuted the church?

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3. Jesus' sufferings were not complete upon His death. Indeed, (1) what do we see in support of this fact from John 15:18-20? (2) Can you offer a reason for this? (3) What did Jesus say would happen to us because of Him?

- 1) \_\_\_\_\_
- 2) \_\_\_\_\_
- 3) \_\_\_\_\_

4. In accordance with Jesus' words, Paul continues this message in 2 Timothy 3:12. What is the message?

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5. Paul suffered terribly, but he knew it was for a good reason. While this is only a partial reason, read Romans 5:1-5 and offer Paul's reason for these trials. What was his conclusion in this case?

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6. James had another reason for our trials. Read James 1:2-4, and write down his reasons. What does Acts 5:38-42 indicate about this subject?

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7. What two things did Jesus have to say about this subject in Matthew 5:11-12?

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8. We shouldn't consider this suffering a bad thing. What is significant about what Paul said in Philippians 1:29?

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9. Several aspect of this suffering must be brought to mind. The first is that we are set apart as followers of Christ, and in that we will suffer. The second is that the Body (of believers) will become stronger through suffering (James 1:2-4). The third is that Paul says he's suffering for the sake of the Church (2 Timothy 2:10). Read Philippians 1:12-14. (1) How was Paul suffering for the sake of the Church? (2) What had become evident? (3) What result did Paul's chains have on the brethren?

a) \_\_\_\_\_

b) \_\_\_\_\_

c) \_\_\_\_\_

10. We will suffer as Paul did, and as Christ did. Read Acts 13:44-50. What brings on this suffering that is common to Paul, Christ, and us? Be specific and detailed as to what the commonality is and the result for Paul. Can we expect the same?

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Colossians 1:24 It is important to note that Paul is in no way adding to the finished work of Christ. His sufferings were gained by way of his work in preaching the Gospel. We as believers suffer as Christ suffered in that we are hated by the world. However, our sufferings produce maturity (1 Peter 1:6-7), patience (James 1:3), and privileges with Christ during the Millennium (2 Timothy 2:12; Revelation 5:10; 20:6).<sup>6</sup>

11. Even with all of this suffering, we can still rest assured that Jesus will never leave us or abandon us. Read Romans 8:35-39, and find evidence of this fact.

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12. In Colossians 1:25, Paul suffers as a minister, though not without joy (1 Thessalonians 2:19-20; Philippians 1:4, and 2:17). What did Paul become a minister of? Be careful, because the first instinct is to say he became a minister of the Church, or the Body.

13. What exactly is a minister, and what does a minister do? Read the Key Point below, and then look at 2 Corinthians 4:5 for the answer. the following verses to determine in what other ways Paul is a minister: Colossians 1:23; Romans 15:16; 2 Corinthians 3:6; 2 Corinthians 6:4

Bible Reference	Minister
2 Corinthians 4:5	
Colossians 1:23	
Romans 15:16	
2 Corinthians 3:6	
2 Corinthians 6:4	



NT:1249 **MINISTER** δῆκονος: One who executes the commands of another, especially of a master; a sergeant, attendant, minister:

1. Universally: of the servant of a king, Matthew 22:13
2. A deacon, one who, by virtue of the office assigned him by the church, cares for the poor and has charge of and distributes the money collected for their use
3. A waiter, one who serves food and drink: John 2:5,9.<sup>9</sup>

14. What is expected of one who ministers the Gospel? Use 2 Corinthians 6:3-10 to complete the chart below.

What do they give offence in?	Why?
▪	▪
In what things do they commend themselves as ministers of God?	By what things do they commend themselves as ministers of God?
▪	▪
▪	▪
▪	▪
▪	▪
▪	▪
▪	▪
▪	▪
▪	▪
▪	▪
▪	▪
▪	▪
As what do they commend themselves as ministers of God?	
▪	
▪	
▪	
▪	
▪	
▪	
▪	

15. Why is the information in the chart above so important to us, today? Go back to Colossians 1:7, and answer this question: Who was Epaphras, and what does all of this have to do with me? What about Tychicus in Colossians 4:7? If you still do not see it, read 1 Peter 4:7-11.

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16. Paul tells the Colossians in 1:25 that he is a minister according to the stewardship from God. In Genesis 39:1-6, the Hebrew word used for *overseer* is very similar to the Greek word for *stewardship*. Using the Genesis and Colossians passages, and the Key Point below, write down in your own words, a basic working definition for stewardship.

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NT:3622 **STEWARDSHIP** οἰκονομία The management of another person's property, finances, or household affairs. As far as Christians are concerned, stewardship involves the responsibility of managing God's work through the Church. God has appointed all Christians to be His stewards on Earth. Stewardship is not an option, as Paul points out about his own call. Being a steward is a necessary part of believing the Gospel, even if it involves sacrificing personal rewards (1 Corinthians 9:17).

As the Parable Of The Talents (Matthew 25:14-30) shows, Christians will be held accountable for the way in which they manage God's affairs as stewards. These matters include extending the Church's ministry through the preaching of the Gospel (Colossians 1:24-28), supporting the Church financially (Acts 4:32-37), and ministering to the sick and needy (Matthew 25:31-46).<sup>2</sup>

17. Take a look at the creation story of Genesis 1:26, 28, and 2:15. How does this relate to our study of Paul's stewardship? Look carefully at the relationship between God and Adam, and Paul and God. You should be able to find at least three pieces of evidence concerning stewardship.

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**BEFORE WE GO ANY FURTHER, RE-READ COLOSSIANS 1:26-29.**

18. (1) What is Paul a steward of, exactly? (2) For how long has it been hidden? (3) To whom is it now revealed?

1) \_\_\_\_\_

2) \_\_\_\_\_

3) \_\_\_\_\_

The Greek word mystery (μυστήριον) refers to some plan of God's that has been previously unrevealed. The mystery Paul is discussing in Colossians 1:26 is both broad and deep. We must take some time here to explore this great mystery.

19. First, take a look at Colossians 1:26, 1 Corinthians 2:7, and Ephesians 3:9. (1) Where is the mystery hidden? (2) How long has the mystery been hidden? (3) From whom has the mystery been hidden?

1) \_\_\_\_\_

2) \_\_\_\_\_

3) \_\_\_\_\_

Colossians 1:27 tells us that the mystery is "Christ in you, the hope of glory." This, however, is only the surface level. We have to go deeper. There was no mystery concerning Jews and Gentiles both being saved.<sup>26</sup>

20. Let's begin with Romans 11:25. What is the mystery Paul is telling the Romans about? What time frame does he give concerning the mystery?

\_\_\_\_\_

21. In Romans 11:26, Paul gives the result of this mystery. What is it?

\_\_\_\_\_

22. Now we need to dig a little deeper to understand this mystery. Read Romans 9:24-25, and determine who is going to be saved.

\_\_\_\_\_

23. Notice that Paul, in the next few verses, uses Old Testament prophecies in his letter. In Romans 9:25, from Hosea 2:23, who is the Scripture referring to as My People and Not My People?

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24. In Romans 9:27, Paul pulls from Isaiah 10:22. Compare the two verses and determine who the remnant (or remainder) is that will be saved?

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25. In Romans 9:29, Paul again quotes from Isaiah. Compare Romans 9:29 with Isaiah 1:9. Now read Deuteronomy 29:23, and 2 Peter 2:6. Unless God saved a remnant, explain what would become of the Jews.

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26. The big picture question here in Romans is why Paul keeps referring to Israel by way of the Old Testament in the New Testament. Is God done with Israel now that she has rejected her Messiah?

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27. Now that we see that there was no mystery that both Jews and Gentiles would be saved, we still have to dig into this mystery that Paul is discussing in Colossians 1:26-27. Paul indicated in Romans that part of the mystery is that Israel is partially blinded. This means that they won't see their Messiah until the time of the Gentiles is over. Read Colossians 3:10-11. When Paul says the mystery is "Christ in you," what does this verse tell you about who the you is? Be specific and detailed.

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28. Keeping in mind that Paul's argument is that both Jews and Gentiles will be saved, read Genesis 17:1-11. What is the covenant that God makes, and with whom does He make it? What is the sign of this covenant?

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29. The Jews, having Abraham as their father, are called the circumcision. Read Ephesians 2:11. Who are the Uncircumcision?

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30. Paul was a Jew, and as such, saw Abraham as his father (see Romans 11:1). Read Romans 9:3-5. How does Paul identify his brethren in these verses (don't forget about Christ):

Bible Reference	Paul's Brethren
Romans 9:3	
Romans 9:4	
Romans 9:5	

31. What five things does Ephesians 2:12 say about the Gentiles?

- 1) \_\_\_\_\_
- 2) \_\_\_\_\_
- 3) \_\_\_\_\_
- 4) \_\_\_\_\_
- 5) \_\_\_\_\_

32. Read Ephesians 2:13. Where were the Gentiles, where are they now, and how was this accomplished?

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33. Ephesians 2:14-15 gives a distinct reckoning of both Jews and Gentiles in Christ. What is it?

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34. What is our threefold position in Christ described in Ephesians 2:19?

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 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

35. The mystery is further unveiled in Ephesians 2:11-3:7 concerning Jews and Gentiles. Read these passages and write down the meaning of the Colossians mystery.

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36. Read John 15:5. What does it indicate there about the relationship we have with Christ? Does this shed any light on the Colossians mystery, "Christ in you"?

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37. Now that we know what the mystery is, let's explore in greater detail what it means about us being the branches. Read Romans 11:1-5. Has God cast away the Jews? What has he done that we've already studied?

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38. Read Romans 9:33. Who was the stumbling stone for the Jews?

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39. Did the Jews stumble concerning Christ and fall? Read Romans 11:11. What was the result of their stumbling?

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40. Read Romans 11:15. What was their casting away for, and what will their acceptance be?

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41. Read Romans 11:17-21. Who are the two sets of branches? What happened to the natural branches? Why?

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42. Read Romans 11:23-24. What is God able to do with the Jews? Why?

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43. Finish off the mystery by reading Romans 11:25-32. What will become of the Jews? When?

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44. How do we know that the Jews will have their blindness removed? Read Zech 12:10. What was prophesied concerning the Jews and their Messiah?

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So we see that the “mystery” of Colossians 1:27 is not that both Jews and Gentiles will be saved, but that both will be made into one new man in Christ. God wants to reconcile Himself to man, but through His Son, not through the Jews who were preaching Law keeping. “That the Gentiles were to be saved was no mystery (Romans 9:24-33; 10:19-21). The mystery 'hid in God' was the divine purpose to make of Jew and Gentile a wholly new thing – 'the Church, which is His (Christ's) body,' formed by the baptism with the Holy Spirit (1 Corinthians 12:12,13) and in which the earthly distinction of Jew and Gentile disappears (Ephesians 2:14,15; Colossians 3:10,11). The revelation of this mystery, which was foretold but not explained by Christ (Matthew 16:18), was committed to Paul. In his writings alone we find the doctrine, position, walk, and destiny of the Church.”<sup>26</sup>

45. Read Colossians 1:28-29. Paul is not preaching religion or dogma. What, or should I say, Whom is Paul preaching?

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46. Paul sets an example for us to follow in Colossians 1:28. Read the Key Point below along with Acts 20:20-21 and 1 Corinthians 4:17, and determine what example Paul sets for us.

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NT: 3560 **WARNING** νουθετέω The verb means "to impart understanding," "to set right," "to lay on the heart." The stress is on influencing not merely the intellect but the will and disposition. The word thus acquires such senses as "to admonish," "to warn," "to remind," and "to correct." It describes a basic means of education. <sup>18</sup>

NT:1321 **TEACH** διδάσκω to hold discourse with others in order to instruct them, to deliver didactic discourses: Matthew 4:23; 21:23; Mark 1:21; 6:6; 14:49; Luke 4:15; 5:17; 6:6; John 6:59; 7:14; 18:20, and often in the Gospels; 1 Timothy 2:12. <sup>9</sup>

47. Compare Colossians 1:29 and Philippians 2:13. What message is Paul sending in 1:29?

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48. Don't lose sight of Paul's goal in writing Colossians. In verse 28, Paul tells the Colossians that he wants to present them "perfect." What two things does Paul do in verse 29, and what does God do, to achieve this goal?

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49. But what exactly does it mean to be perfect? Read the Key Point below, then read Hebrews 5:12-14, taking note that in this passage, *full age*, in the Greek, is the same word in Colossians for *perfect*. What is Paul laboring and striving to achieve in the Colossians?

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NT: 5046 **PERFECT** τέλειος: Signifies "having reached its end, finished, complete perfect." It is used of persons, primarily of physical development, then, with ethical import, "fully grown, mature." <sup>16</sup>

# 7 False Teachers

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One of the main reasons Paul is writing this letter is to warn the young church against the false teachings that could lead them astray (2:4). Remember our key points of contention come from the false teachings of the Gnostics. To Paul, this is a competition, a race, if you will, for Christian maturity and perseverance. His word choices are not surprising, as he frequently uses terms that would be found in competitions (Acts 20:24; 1 Corinthians 9:24-27; 2 Timothy 4:7; Philippians 3:12-14). In Colossians, for example, the two Greek words, *striving* ἀγωνίζομαι, and *conflict* ἀγών, share the same root word, and both center around this idea of competition. (See Key Point below.) Strong's tells us that this word, *striving*, means, "to struggle, literally (to compete for a prize), figuratively (to contend with an adversary), or genitive case (to endeavor to accomplish something)." <sup>22</sup> We know that Paul is *laboring* and *striving* (1:28), and has a great *conflict* for the Colossians and Laodiceans (2:1). Paul's labor, striving, and conflict, however, are key to these passages, and this letter, in as much as he is in competition with the Gnostics so that the early Church would be knit together and encouraged (2:2). The purpose for this encouragement is so that they can attain the full assurance of understanding of the knowledge of the mystery of God, both of the Father and of Christ. (2:3)



NT:75 **STRIVING** ἀγωνίζομαι: To contend for victory in the public games. It generally came to mean to fight, wrestle. Figuratively, it is the task of faith in persevering amid temptation and opposition. It also came to mean to take pains, to wrestle as in an award contest, straining every nerve to the uttermost towards the goal. Special pains and toil. Implies hindrances in the development of the Christian life. <sup>7</sup> (Colossians 1:29)

NT:73 **CONFLICT** ἀγών: Masc. noun. Strife, contention, contest for victory or mastery such as was used in the Greek games of running, boxing, wrestling, and so forth. Paul applies the word to the evangelical contest against the enemies of man's salvation. <sup>7</sup> (Colossians 2:1)

Read Colossians 2:1-10. In Chapter two, Paul begins his defense of the Colossians' faith and his attack on the false teachings in the church at Colosse.

1. In Colossians 2:5, Paul is doing more than offering a word of encouragement. Use the following passages to answer the question of what Paul's two goals are: Colossians 2:5, Acts 14:21-22, Hebrews 3:13, and 2 Timothy. 4:2-4. (Sometimes the answer is found not in what is said, but in why it is said.)
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2. Paul tells the believers in the Lycus Valley that they can have full assurance of understanding to the knowledge of God (Colossians 2:2). Gnosticism teaches that we must have special knowledge, secret knowledge, to be able to return to God. In verse four, Paul encourages us so that we might not be taken in by persuasive words. Colossians 2:6-7 are extensions of Paul's intent to build up the believers in the faith. What are the four things Paul says to aid the Colossians?

- 1) \_\_\_\_\_
- 2) \_\_\_\_\_
- 3) \_\_\_\_\_
- 4) \_\_\_\_\_

3. Thus far, Paul has used the term *Lord* four times in this little letter. In Colossians 2:6, Paul specifically mentions that the believers have received Christ *the Lord*. Let's take some time to explore what this term *Lord* really means. Read Philippians 2:9-11. What four pieces of evidence can you offer that afford some insight into Jesus' position as Lord?

- 1) \_\_\_\_\_
- 2) \_\_\_\_\_
- 3) \_\_\_\_\_
- 4) \_\_\_\_\_

4. Read Matthew 28:18. What did Jesus Himself say about His position?

\_\_\_\_\_

5. If there is yet doubt concerning what His position is, read Ephesians 1:19-23.

- (1) Where did the Father seat Jesus?
- (2) What five things has Jesus been placed above?
- (3) What two timeframes deal with Jesus' placement? Now quantify the matter.
- (4) What is under Jesus' feet and what is He head over?

- 1) \_\_\_\_\_
- 2) \_\_\_\_\_
- 3) \_\_\_\_\_
- 4) \_\_\_\_\_

6. Read the definition of *Lord* in the Key Point, and write in your own words how Jesus fits this definition.

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NT:2962 **LORD** κύριος: Might, power. Lord, master, owner. Also the NT Gr. equivalent for the OT Hebr. Jehovah. Also from κύρος (n.f.): kuróō (2964), to give authority, confirm. <sup>7</sup>

Historically the concept of lordship combines the two elements of power and authority. A true realization of the unity of the two arises only in encounter with God, who creates us with absolute power but is also the absolute authority before which it is freedom rather than bondage to bow. <sup>18</sup>

7. Read 1 Corinthians 8:6 and John 13:13. How many Lords are there through whom we live? Who is it that rightfully claimed this title, *Lord*?

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8. In Colossians 2:8, Paul warns the believers against being cheated (or *robbed* συλαγωγέω of the complete riches available in Christ)<sup>7</sup>, and gives four things that may cause this to occur. Read the verse and determine what these four things are.

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9. Let's look at the items that may cheat us. God tells us in 1 Corinthians 3:19 that "the wisdom of this world is foolishness with God. For it is written, 'He catches the wise in their own craftiness'." The word *philosophy* literally means love of wisdom. Philosophy in and of itself is not evil, but apart from Christ it can lead believers astray (Colossians 2:8). Read 1 Corinthians 1:18-21, and write down in your own words what God has to say about the philosophy of this world.

Bible Reference	God's Message
1 Corinthians 1:18	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪</li> <li>▪</li> </ul>
1 Corinthians 1:19	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪</li> <li>▪</li> </ul>
1 Corinthians 1:20	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪</li> <li>▪</li> </ul>
1 Corinthians 1:21	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪</li> <li>▪</li> </ul>

We Will Be Using These Charts Again, To Answer Some Questions That Follow

† There is One, Original, True, Unknowable, God

† The One God emanated Aeons

- Pairs of lesser beings in sequence
- Aeons together made up the Pleroma, or fullness, of God

† The lowest of these pairs of Aeons was Sophia and Christ

- Sophia sinned by seeking to know the unknowable One

† Sophia's sin created the evil Demiurge—a lesser god

† Demiurge created the physical world: matter

- Matter is evil because it was created by evil.
- Human bodies contained within them a divine spark that is part of the true God.
- The spark strives to obtain unity with the true God.
- Knowledge “gnosis” enables the divine spark to return to its source, the true God.
- Demiurge created Archons to rule over the material world.
- Demiurge and Archons fight against the spark returning to the true God.

† Christ was sent to earth as a messenger of light from God to give men the gnosis (knowledge) they needed to rescue themselves from the physical world and return to the spiritual world.

† Once man becomes aware of his true nature by way of the gnosis, he can combat the Archons and Demiurge, and attain unity with God.

† The name itself comes from the Greek word gnosis, or "knowledge" because Gnostics believe they have a secret, or hidden, knowledge from God.

† The gnosis was needed to assist the soul on its journey back to God.

† Gnostics taught that matter was evil, and consequently, Christ could not have had a human body because the body is matter.

† The human body, however, had a divine spark obtained from God that strives to break free of the imprisonment of material existence, and move towards unity with the true, infinite God.

† Gnostics generally taught docetism, the belief that Jesus did not have a physical body, but rather his apparent physical body was an illusion, and hence his crucifixion was not bodily.

† Most Gnostics practiced celibacy and asceticism (strict self-denial as a measure of personal and especially spiritual discipline), on the grounds that the pleasures of the flesh were evil.

† Some Gnostics practiced libertinism, arguing that since the body was evil they should defile it.

† Christ was only a small, even the lowest, part of the godhead. He was one of the pairs of “Aeons” that made up the fullness of God.

10. Using the charts on the previous page, coupled with what you've just studied about philosophy apart from God, what do you suppose Paul meant by "empty deceit" in Colossians 2:8?

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11. In Colossians 2:9, Paul takes on the Gnostic heresy directly in two ways. What are the two teachings Paul is refuting? Give the teaching and the refutation.

Gnostic Teaching	Paul's Refutation



The two Greek words Paul uses in Colossians 2:9, πλήρωμα or *fullness*, which literally means, "a total quantity, with emphasis upon completeness - 'full number, full measure, fullness, completeness, totality,'"<sup>8</sup> and θεότης, or *Godhead*, which means, "the nature or state of being God - deity, divine nature, divine being,"<sup>8</sup> clearly indicate that Jesus *IS* God.

12. Paul's response to the heresy of Christ's deity in Colossians 2:9 is very important, and he states plainly that Jesus is God. On the chart on the next page, see if you can match the religion that denies Christ's deity with the proper description and evidence:

Islam - Masons - Jehovah's Witness - Christian Science - Mormonism

The answer chart below contains words and phrases that were taken out of the question chart so as not to give away the answers.

Gnosticism is not a choice because all of these "religions" are Gnostic in nature.

Choose From: *Mormonism - Christian Science - Islam - Masons - Jehovah's Witness - Gnosticism*

	<p>"He is nothing but a slave on whom We bestowed favor, and We made him a pattern for the Children of Israel." Sura 43:59</p> <p>"The Messiah, Jesus son of Mary, was only a messenger of Allah." Sura 4:171</p>
	<p>"Christian Theologians first made a fetish of the Impersonal Omnipresent Divinity; and then tore the Christos from the hearts of all humanity in order to deify Jesus, that they might have a god-man peculiarly their own." J.D. Buck, <i>Symbolism or Mystic [this cult]</i>, p. 57</p> <p><b>The Jesus of Masonry did not create the universe, instead Ormuzd from the Zend-Avesta did.</b> "Creations took place by emanation from Him. The first emanation was the primitive Light, and from that the King of Light, Ormuzd." <i>Page 256, p. 3 ('Morals and Dogma' by Albert Pike who is considered to be the 'Father' of [this cult]).</i></p>
	<p>"Jesus was Michael the archangel who became a man." <i>The Watchtower, May 15, 1963, p. 307; The New World, 284.</i></p> <p>"Jesus was only a perfect man, not God in flesh." <i>Reasoning from the Scriptures, 1985, pp. 306.</i></p>
	<p>"Christ is the spiritual idea of sonship." S&amp;H 331:30-31</p> <p>"Jesus was not the Christ." S&amp;H 333:3-15; 334:3</p> <p>"Jesus Christ is not God, as Jesus himself declared..." S&amp;H 361:12-13</p> <p>"Jesus did not reflect the fullness of God." S&amp;H 336:20-21</p> <p><i>Science and Health with Key to the Scriptures, by Mary Baker Eddy</i></p>
	<p>"Jesus and Satan are spirit brothers and we were all born as siblings in heaven to them both." [This cult's] Doctrine, p.163</p> <p>"There is no salvation without accepting Joseph Smith as a prophet of God." Doctrines of Salvation, Vol. 1, p.188</p> <p>"God himself was once as we are now, and is an exalted man, and sits enthroned in yonder heavens!!! . . . We have imagined that God was God from all eternity. I will refute that idea and take away the veil, so that you may see." <i>Teachings of the Prophet [this cult's founder], p.345</i></p>

Why is Christ's deity so important that Paul would devote so much of Colossians to defending it? The most basic reason is that if Jesus were simply a man, there could be no salvation. To understand this more fully, follow the next set of questions with a mind to comprehend the fact that Jesus had to be God in order to die for our sins.

So, why did Jesus have to die for our sins? Matthew J. Slick, M. Div, from Westminster Theological Seminary, tells us that:

“Jesus is God in flesh and only God can satisfy the Law requirements of a perfect life and perfect sacrifice that cleanses us of our sins. All people have sinned against God. But, God is infinitely holy and righteous. He must punish the sinner, the Law breaker. If He didn't, then His law is not law for there is no law that is a law without a punishment. The punishment for breaking the Law is death, separation from God. Therefore, we sinners need a way to escape the righteous judgment of God. Since we are stained by sin and cannot keep the Law of God, then the only one who could do what we cannot is God Himself. That is why Jesus is God in flesh. He is both divine and human. He was made under the Law (Galatians 4:5-6) and He fulfilled it perfectly. Therefore, His sacrifice to God the Father on our behalf is of infinite value and is sufficient to cleanse all people from their sins and undo the offense to God.”<sup>27</sup>

13. Since we've established that God is Holy from our past study, and we see from Deuteronomy 32:4 that “He is the Rock, His work is perfect; For all His ways are justice, A God of truth and without injustice; Righteous and upright is He,” read Psalm 90:2 and 147:5, and find something about God that both of these passages have in common. Now, write down in your own words a summary of who God is.

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14. God spoke the Law in Exodus 20:1-17, and it is a reflection of His perfect character. Now, we know that we cannot keep the Law, and the Law cannot save us, but read Romans 7:12, Matthew 5:17-18, and James 2:10, and write down what you learn about the Law.

Bible Reference	The Law
Romans 7:12	
Matthew 5:17-18	
James 2:10	

15. Because God is holy, perfect, and just, not to mention infinite, how do you think a violation of His Law will be seen by Him?

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16. God is loving and kind, and will forgive, but He is also just and righteous. His justice must be satisfied. In other words, sin against Him must be punished. Read Ezekiel 18:4, Isaiah 29:15-16, and Romans 9:14-16, and put together a clear picture of God concerning us, our sin, and His judgment.

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This idea of mercy is a hard pill to swallow for new believers, as is God's idea of justice. Because God is merciful, and we reflect that emotion in ourselves, we want everyone to be saved and no one to be condemned. This, however, will not be the case. There are those who will be consigned to Hell, and will suffer for all eternity. The Scripture teaches this fact in no uncertain terms. As we've seen before, God is loving and kind, merciful and longsuffering, but He is also perfectly just. Those who do not accept the gift of God's mercy, and allow Jesus to pay for their sins, though they be good people, will not enter His kingdom, for how would that be just? If God allows someone's sins to go unpunished, how is that justice? If God made us, and tells us that sin will be punished, but then turns around and says He will take your punishment for you, why would anyone say no and pay for their own sins? How many people today, if after being convicted of a crime, would jump at the chance if the judge said, "you can go to jail for the rest of your life, or you can allow this man over here to go in your place"? The fact is that everyone *can be* saved, and all they have to do to avoid damnation is to accept a free gift and allow Jesus to pay for their sins. Unfortunately, the Bible tells us, even though Jesus died for everyone's sins, many will refuse to accept this gift, and will therefore perish.

17. Read Romans 6:23 and the Key Point below. What is the punishment for those who sin?



NT:2288 **Death** θάνατος Separation of man from God; Adam died on the day he disobeyed God (Genesis 2:17), and hence all mankind are born in the same spiritual condition (Romans 5:12,14,17, and 21), from which, however, those who believe in Christ are delivered (John 5:24 and 1 John 3:14). "Death" is the opposite of life; it never denotes nonexistence. As spiritual life is "conscious existence in communion with God," so spiritual "death" is "conscious existence in separation from God."<sup>16</sup>

18. Read Romans 7:5 and Galatians 3:10-11, 21. What do you discern about the Law and salvation?



Since the sinner cannot fulfill the law and satisfy God, it follows that only God can do this. This is simple logic. If we are unable to fulfill the Law, then we will be punished by it. But, since God desires us to be saved, the Law must be satisfied. Since we cannot keep the Law and it must be satisfied, then the only one capable of keeping the Law must keep the Law: God.<sup>27</sup> Jesus fulfilled the Law by keeping all of the Law, and thus didn't deserve death. He died for us even though we deserved to die. Because we're in Him, we have the life of Him who kept the Law.

19. Since we cannot keep the Law, how do we reconcile ourselves to God? Reread Colossians 1:19-22 for the answer.

20. So, how can Jesus pay the penalty of death for us? (1) Read John 1:1 and 14, and Colossians 2:9 for the first part of the answer, and (2) 2 Corinthians 5:21, 1 Peter 2:24, and Romans 8:3-4 for the last part. (3) Read Matthew 5:17 again. Why did Jesus come? Could we do what He came to do?

1) \_\_\_\_\_

2) \_\_\_\_\_

3) \_\_\_\_\_

21. Go back in the study and review the Gnostic teachings (pg. 62). Now, read Colossians 2:8-10 as a block. Use the Key Point below to help you answer this question: Which of the Gnostic heresies is Paul addressing? Do you understand why this is a heresy?

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_



We are complete without the aid of Jewish ceremony (*could be the "basic principles" 2:8*). Complete without the help of philosophy (2:8). Complete without the inventions of superstition. Complete without human merit, our own works being regarded as filthy rags. <sup>28</sup>

*Spurgeon on Colossians 2:8,10*

22. Looking back to our study of Colossians 1:15,16, we find that Christ is preeminent over all things because He created all things. Using the Key Point below to aid you, how does the second half of Colossians 2:10 further show that we are complete in Christ?

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NT:746 **PRINCIPALITIES** ἀρχή: The meaning is "primacy," whether in time or rank. In time it denotes the point of a new beginning in a temporal sequence. The relativity of the time sequence is implied, as in the religious statement that God is beginning and end. In rank the senses are: a. "dominion," b. "realm," and c. "authorities." <sup>18</sup>

NT:1849 **POWERS** ἐξουσία: The right to control or govern over - authority to rule, right to control.

Read Colossians 2:11-15.

23. Colossians 2:11 tells us that, "In Him you were also circumcised with the circumcision made without hands." We're going to begin with a brief study of what the circumcision is, what it is not, and what it means for Christians. Read Genesis 17:10-11, and determine what circumcision was.

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Circumcision was the typical rite of Judaism. It is a minor surgical operation in which the knife jaws applied to the flesh of the male child. Spiritually, it signified death of the flesh, or a putting aside of the evil, corrupt, unregenerate nature of man. Unfortunately, the Jewish people became occupied with the literal ceremony but neglected its spiritual meaning. In trying to achieve favor with God, through ceremonies and good works, they were saying in effect that there was something in human flesh which could please God. <sup>10</sup>

24. While it is true that this procedure helps keep disease from forming in the folds of the male foreskin, the sign was the removal of the skin. This, in and of itself, does not please God. How do we know this? The Scriptures teach us, through linking the circumcision idea to the heart, that God wants us to be cleansed and remove sin from our lives. Read Jer 4:1 and 4 and write down what three things God really wants.

- 1) \_\_\_\_\_
- 2) \_\_\_\_\_
- 3) \_\_\_\_\_

25. Why does God want men to change their hearts? Read Jeremiah 17:9-10. What is the condition of man's heart and how does God know?

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26. Read Mark 7:21-23, and write down the thirteen things that proceed from the heart. What is the result of these things?

<b>Mark 7:21-23</b>	
<b>From the Heart</b>	1.
	2.
	3.
	4.
	5.
	6.
	7.
	8.
	9.
	10.
	11.
	12.
	13.
<b>Result</b>	

27. In Deuteronomy 10:16, God gives Israel a simple command in two parts. These two parts go together, but the idea of the second part is more fully illustrated in Acts 7:51-53. What are the commands and what does the second part mean?

- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_

28. Read Romans 2:25. According to Paul, what happens to your circumcision if you don't keep the Law?

\_\_\_\_\_

29. Paul's greater argument is that circumcision in the flesh is not the way to righteousness like the Jews thought. Read Romans 4:1-13, and answer the following questions.

Questions from Romans	Answers from Romans
<b>Romans 4:1-3</b> <b>How was Abraham Justified?</b>	
<b>Romans 4:4-5</b> <b>How does one obtain righteousness?</b>	
<b>Romans 4:9-10</b> <b>Does it matter if one is circumcised in the flesh? Why?</b>	
<b>Romans 4:11</b> <b>What is the circumcision?</b>	
<b>Romans 4:12</b> <b>Who can obtain this righteousness?</b>	

30. Read Romans 2:25-29, and break down each verse as it pertains to the circumcision. In verses 26 and 27, how is uncircumcision counted as circumcision?

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31. Read Romans 2:28-29 again. Who is considered a true son of Abraham? Does this have anything to do with Abraham's faith?

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32. Remember the great mystery Paul spoke of in Colossians 1:26? Read Ephesians 2:11-22. How is our study of the circumcision related to this great mystery?

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33. What does Paul mean, then, when he says that we are “also circumcised with the circumcision made without hands”? Don’t forget Abraham. Read Romans 2:25-29 again if you don’t remember.

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34. Every person who puts his faith in Christ undergoes a spiritual circumcision<sup>7</sup> “by putting off the body of the sins of the flesh.” What does Paul lament about this body of sin in Romans 7:24?

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35. In Colossians 2:12, Paul tells believers that they have been buried with Christ in baptism (our baptism symbolizes our sins being put away, unto death), and raised with Him through faith. Read Romans 6:4-6, and explain what this means for Colossians 2:11’s “putting off the body of sins in the flesh.” Galatians 5:24 will also help you see this picture. Read 2 Corinthians 5:17 for further clarification.

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36. Colossians 3:1-11 gives us clear indication of how we should live now that we are IN Christ and were raised with Him. Complete the chart below concerning the things Paul indicates we should be doing as believers.

Colossians 3	What Are Believers To Be Doing?
v.1	
v.2	
v.5	
v.8	
v.9	

37. Colossians 2:13 says that we're dead in our trespasses. Read the following verses and follow the progression.

(1) Read Romans 3:23, and quantify how many people have sinned.

(2) Now read Isaiah 64:6, and decide which of our works are worthy to be counted for righteousness.

(3) Read James 1:15. What is the consequence of sin?

(4) Read John 3:36 and Revelation 20:15. What happens to sinners without Christ?

(5) Read John 14:6 and 3:16. How do you get to heaven?

(6) Finally, read Colossians 2:13, and write down how you can change being dead in your trespasses.

- 1) \_\_\_\_\_
- 2) \_\_\_\_\_
- 3) \_\_\_\_\_
- 4) \_\_\_\_\_
- 5) \_\_\_\_\_
- 6) \_\_\_\_\_

In Colossians 2:14, Paul is painting a picture of one who is in debt and one who pays that debt. We have already studied that all have sinned, thus owing a debt to God. We can only pay the penalty for sin, which is death, with our own lives. Unfortunately, once paid, we're dead!



When the Romans crucified a criminal, the crime was posted, or nailed, to the cross for public display. A sign, or *titulus*, that delineated the crimes of the guilty, was carried by a soldier and/or put around the condemned man's neck, and would be attached (nailed) to the top of the cross. According to Rome, what "crime" did Christ commit for which He was being punished?

NT:5498 **Handwriting** χειρόγραφον: Handwriting, record of debt, a note written by the hand which makes one obligated to fulfill what is written (Colossians 2:14 [cf. Ephesians 2:15]).<sup>7</sup>

NT:1813 **Wiped Out** ἐξάλειψω: Out of or off, to smear or rub. To smear out, blot out, expunge, wipe off ointment.<sup>7</sup>

38. In John 1:29, who does John the Baptist say Jesus is, and what is He going to do?

39. How are the sins taken away and how are they not taken away, according to Hebrews 10:4 and 12?

40. What do 1 Peter 2:24 and Isaiah 53:3-5 say about our debt?

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41. Again, the mystery Paul describes in Colossians and Ephesians is applicable here. Cross reference Colossians 2:14 and Ephesians 2:15-16.

(1) How did Jesus abolish the enmity that existed between Jews and Gentiles?

(2) What is that enmity (*handwriting of commandments*)?

(3) How did Jesus reconcile both Jews and Gentiles to God in one body?

1) \_\_\_\_\_

2) \_\_\_\_\_

3) \_\_\_\_\_

42. So, the big picture Paul is painting becomes clear when we see all the verses in context. What does Paul mean when he says that the handwriting of requirements has been wiped away?

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43. Colossians 2:15 paints the picture of a victorious Roman general parading his conquests (captives) through the streets. Here, Paul shows that though Satan, as from the beginning, tried to corrupt the seed promised in Genesis 3:15, he was unsuccessful because of the work of Jesus. Satan began his work in the Garden with Eve. What are four of Satan's ambitions? Read Isaiah 14:12-14 for the answer.

1) \_\_\_\_\_

2) \_\_\_\_\_

3) \_\_\_\_\_

4) \_\_\_\_\_

44. Paul uses the word *disarmed* in Colossians 2:15, which in the Greek means to strip of power and authority. Satan is the ruler of this world (John 12:31; Revelation 12:9), and we know that he is constantly looking to devour us, for he has the power of death (1 Peter 5:8 and Hebrews 2:14). What and who no longer has power over us? How did Jesus triumph over Satan? Read Hebrews 2:14-15, John 5:24, 1 John 1:7, and Revelation 1:5 for the answer.

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# 8 *Legalism in the Church*

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## **Colossians 2:16-19**

*So let no one judge you in food or in drink, or regarding a festival or a new moon or sabbaths, which are a shadow of things to come, but the substance is of Christ. Let no one cheat you of your reward, taking delight in false humility and worship of angels, intruding into those things which he has not seen, vainly puffed up by his fleshly mind, and not holding fast to the Head, from whom all the body, nourished and knit together by joints and ligaments, grows with the increase that is from God.*

1. In Colossians 2:16, Paul deals with legalism in the church. The Jews, for example, had many rituals in their observance of the Law. They were given 613 commandments in the Torah that include the most famous Ten Commandments. Complete the chart below by looking at specific commandments. Correlate them to Colossians 2:16.

<b>Commandment</b>	<b>Describe the Commandment</b>	<b>Compare to Colossians 2:16</b>
<b>Leviticus 23:14</b>		
<b>Leviticus 23:37</b>		
<b>Leviticus 23:4,9,15</b>		
<b>Numbers 29:1-6</b>		
<b>Leviticus 23:1-3</b>		

2. Read Galatians 2:11-21. What does Paul have to say about putting yourself back under the Law?

There are churches today, some who claim to be Christian and others who don't, that use legalism to put you back under the Law and take you out from under God's grace. Paul tells us in Colossians 2:16, Galatians 2:21, Romans 6:14, and John 1:17 that we are under grace and no longer under the Law. In fact, the Scriptures state specifically that we are not to place ourselves back under the yoke of the Law.

Fill In The Chart Below Concerning Legalism And Some Of Today's Churches

<b>Seventh Day Adventism</b>	<b>How is this Legalism?</b>
"Here we find the mark of the beast. The very act of changing the Sabbath into Sunday, on the part of the Catholic church, without any authority from the Bible." (Ellen G. White, <i>The Mark of the Beast</i> , page 23)	
<b>Mormonism</b>	<b>How is this Legalism?</b>
"This grace is an enabling power that allows men and women to lay hold on eternal life and exaltation after they have expended their own best efforts." ( <i>LDS Bible Dictionary</i> , p. 697) "We know that it is by grace that we are saved, after all we can do." (2 Nephi 25:23)	
The book of Mormon is more correct than the Bible. ( <i>History of the Church</i> , 4:461)	
God used to be a man on another planet. ( <i>Mormon Doctrine</i> , p. 321. Joseph Smith, <i>Times and Seasons</i> , Vol. 5, pp. 613-614; Orson Pratt, <i>Journal of Discourses</i> , Vol. 2, p. 345, Brigham Young, <i>Journal of Discourses</i> , Vol. 7, p. 333)	
"One of the most fallacious doctrines originated by Satan and propounded by man is that man is saved alone by the grace of God; that belief in Jesus Christ alone is all that is needed for salvation." ( <i>Miracle of Forgiveness</i> , Spencer W. Kimball, p. 206)	
<b>Jehovah's Witnesses</b>	<b>How is this Legalism?</b>
Jesus' Prehuman Existence The Watchtower Society teaches that Jesus Christ was the first created being of Jehovah God. Jehovah God created Jesus as a divine-like spirit at some point in ancient, pre-creation time. "This means that he was created before all the other spirit sons of God, and that he is the only one who was directly created by God." ( <i>You Can Live Forever in Paradise on Earth</i> [Live] [Brooklyn: Watchtower Bible and Tract Society of New York, 1982], p. 58)	

Roman Catholic Church	How is this Legalism?
<p>Pope John Paul II            "Sins must be expiated. This may be done on this earth through the sorrows, miseries and trials of this life and, above all, through death." (Vol. 1, p. 63)</p>	
<p>Pope John Paul II            "She conceived, brought forth and nourished Christ, she presented him to the Father in the temple, shared her son's sufferings as he died on the cross. Thus, in a wholly singular way she cooperated by her obedience, faith, hope and burning charity in the work of the Savior in restoring supernatural life to souls. For this reason she is a mother to us in the order of grace." (Vol. 1, p. 418)            "Taken up to heaven she [Mary] did not lay aside this saving office but by her manifold intercession continues to bring us gifts of eternal salvation." (Vol. 1, p. 419)            "Having entered deeply into the history of salvation, Mary, in a way, unites in her person and re-echoes the most important doctrines of the faith: and when she is the subject of preaching and worship she prompts the faithful to come to her Son, to his sacrifice and to the love of the Father." (Vol. 1, pp. 420 and 421)</p>	
<p>"If anyone says that the sacraments of the New Law are not necessary for salvation but are superfluous, and that without them or without the desire of them men obtain from God through faith alone the grace of justification, though all are not necessary for each one, let him be anathema." (Vatican II, p. 52 -- Seventh Session, Sacraments In General, Canon 4)</p>	
Islam	How is this Legalism?
<p>"To those who believe and do deeds of righteousness hath Allah promised forgiveness and a great reward." (Surah 5:9)</p>	
<p>"Then those whose balance (of good deeds ) is heavy, they will be successful. But those whose balance is light, will be those who have lost their souls; in hell will they abide." (Surah 23:102-103)</p>	

Colossians 2:17 tells us that the food, drink, festivals (feasts), and Sabbaths were only shadows of the things to come, but that the substance of those things is Christ. Before we focus our attention on the feasts, take a look at the following verses and write down how they link Christ to being the substance of these shadows.

3. Read Hebrews 10:1-12. What was the shadow that was to point to Christ? Why was this only a shadow?

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4. Read Luke 24:44. Where was it written concerning that which must be fulfilled? Specifically, who was written about in the Old Testament?

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5. Read Hebrews 10:7 again. The word volume (scroll) signifies the knobs of the scrolls the Jews rolled the Scriptures onto. This word is used to indicate that it is the whole of the Old Testament. The picture is that someone was written about to do the will of God. Who was that person? What did that person come to do (Hebrews 10:14) that the Law could not do.

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6. We know that the Old Testament points to the Messiah, starting back in Genesis 3:15 when God promised Adam and Eve that their seed would crush the seed of the serpent. However, there are literally thousands of “shadows” and references to the Messiah in the Old Testament. Complete the chart below as we study the feasts of Israel.

<b>Feast: What is the shadow that points to Christ?</b>	<b>Fulfilled in Jesus the Messiah</b>
<p><b>Firstfruits Leviticus 23:9</b>            On this Feast each Israelite family brought a single bundle of barley to the Temple. The priest would then wave it before the Lord. This bundle represented the very first of the harvest. It was gathered at the beginning of the harvest and given to the Lord.</p>	<p><b>Read 1 Corinthians 15:20 and 23</b></p>
<p><b>Weeks/ Pentecost Leviticus 23:15</b>            Harvest Offering Fifty Days (hence: Pentecost) after Passover.            This feast pictures Moses receiving the Law on Mt. Sinai when God came in a cloud, with fire and smoke and a blast of God's trumpet, to establish His covenant with His people.</p>	<p><b>Read Acts 2:1-13</b></p>
<p><b>The Passover Exodus 12:21-23</b>            God promised that the Angel of Death would pass over the houses that had sacrificed a lamb and placed its blood on the doorposts.</p>	<p><b>Read Hebrews 9:12 and 1 Corinthians 5:7</b></p>
<p><b>Feast of Unleavened Bread Leviticus 23:6</b>            This feast celebrates the journey of the children of Israel through the wilderness, when God fed them with manna from heaven and supplied water out of the rock.</p>	<p><b>Read John 6:51</b></p>

7. In Colossians 2:18, Paul warns the Colossian believers not to let anyone cheat them of their reward. Christian rewards is a big topic; too big, in fact for this study. Therefore, we're only going to spend a little time exploring it. To begin, we don't want to confuse gifts with rewards. Obviously we receive several gifts when we accept Christ: salvation, the Holy Spirit, a home in Heaven, a glorified body (upon His return). These are not rewards, but gifts. We receive rewards for our good works, and we lose rewards for our bad works. The idea of rewards begins with an understanding of the Bema Seat of Christ. Read 2 Corinthians 5:10, where Paul describes the Bema (or "judgment") Seat. What will happen here?

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8. Let's keep a little perspective here. Who is Paul talking about when he says, "we all" must appear? Read 2 Corinthians 1:1, and take careful note of who he is talking to in this letter. What evidence is there of who he is talking to?

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9. So, what is this judgment seat all about? Keep in mind that Paul uses many illustrations from athletic competitions in his writings. The Bema is no different. The Key Point below will be helpful in clearing up any misconceptions concerning this judgment. Read it, and 1 Corinthians 9:24-25 to understand what the Bema really is. What happened to the victor? How is Paul using this illustration for Christians?

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968 **BEMA** (judgment seat)<sup>7</sup> This word was taken from Isthmian games where the contestants would compete for the prize under the careful scrutiny of judges who would make sure that every rule of the contest was obeyed (cf. 2 Tim. 2:5). The victor of a given event who participated according to the rules was led by the judge to the platform called the Bema. There the laurel wreath was placed on his head as a symbol of victory (cf. 1 Corinthians 9:24-25).<sup>29</sup>

10. (1) How can we be sure that we will be rewarded at this Bema Seat of Christ? Start with Matthew 16:27. What does Jesus promise? See also Romans 2:6, Revelation 22:12, Psalm 62:12, and Job 34:11. The parable in Luke 14:14 also concerns this idea. The words *repaid*, *recompensed*, and *reimbursed* are all translated from the same Greek word, ἀποδίδωμι, and share the same meaning. (2) Without looking at an Interlinear, which word in Matthew 16:27 is ἀποδίδωμι?

- 1) \_\_\_\_\_
- 2) \_\_\_\_\_

11. Let's consider Paul's argument in 1 Corinthians 3:1-15 verse by verse. In 1-4, Paul is telling the Corinthians that they are carnal because of their sectarianism. That is, they were boasting in whom they were baptized, Paul or Apollos. They missed the point. Complete the chart below to understand Paul's larger argument concerning rewards.

1 Corinthians 3

V	Question	Answer
5-6	What is the distinction between Paul and Apollos?	
6-7	Who does the work that matters?	
8	What will Paul and Apollos receive? Why will they receive it?	
10-11	What is the foundation Paul laid? What are we supposed to be careful of?	
12	What are the six building materials Paul mentions?	
13	What will become clear?	
14	What does one who built receive if his work endures? What is the difference in endurance between Gold, Silver, Precious Stones Wood, Hay, Straw?	
15	What happens to the person whose work does not endure? What is the caveat?	



**The phrase "suffer loss" would be better translated: "to suffer the loss of something which one has previously possessed."<sup>8</sup> One would suffer loss of rewards that he could have had, had he been faithful to his work.**

12. In 1 Corinthians 3:1-15, that the believer will receive rewards and loss of rewards is clearly in view. Punishment, however, is not in view. Go back and reread Colossians 2:13. Why would punishment here be inconsistent?

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13. What does Colossians 2:10 say about our standing in Christ? In Hebrews 2:10, what does Christ's one sacrifice do for us?

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14. Read Ephesians 6:8. What do we KNOW about rewards from this passage?

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15. We must remember that we do not do the works that allow God to reward us. Read the following verses and describe these works, where they're from, and who is doing them.

Bible Reference	Works
<b>Philippians 2:13</b>	
<b>1 Corinthians 15:10</b>	
<b>Colossians 1:29</b>	
<b>Galatians 2:8</b>	
<b>Ephesians 2:10</b>	



Will we be sorrowful at the loss of our rewards at the Bema, the Judgment Seat of Christ? Consider Keathley's words:

"At a Thanksgiving dinner, each person eats a different amount, but each is satisfied. After our glorification, there will be no sinful nature to produce envy, or jealousy, or resentment, or feelings of dissatisfaction. We will each be enthralled with God and our glorified state. Any young man who loves baseball would probably be thrilled to be a bat boy in the World Series, but he would not be jealous or resentful because he was not one of the stars of the game. He would just be delighted to be there and do what he was doing."<sup>29</sup>

The Bible has much to say on the subject of rewards. This is not an obscure topic drawn from one or two verses that must be massaged into a doctrine. The Lord Jesus, Himself, *tells* us to store up treasure in Heaven, and we do this by our works! What about doing the works because we love Jesus? Reflect on His words below, taking careful note of the last statement.

*"Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal; but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also."*

*Matthew 6:19-21*

16. Paul indicates that we can be cheated out of our rewards. The question is, how? Read 2 John 7-8. Who does John warn against following, and what are the consequences if you do?

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17. Reviewing the teachings of the Gnostics, we find that they have a false wisdom through their supposed knowledge, or *gnosis*. Given what you now know from 2 John 7-8, read Colossians 2:16,18, and 23. What is the link between what Paul is teaching and what John is teaching? How does the Lord's working through the believer and the idea of rewards play a part?

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18. Read John 16:23, Hebrews 7:25, and 1 Timothy 2:5. Given what you know about the Gnostic hierarchy, how does the worship of angels lead to loss of rewards?

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19. When someone comes to you and claims to have had special revelation from God, read to them Revelation 22:18 and Jude 3, 4, and 10. What do these verses say about, “intruding into those things which he has not seen,” (Colossians 2:18) that may cause you to lose your rewards?

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20. Once Paul warns us in 2:18-19 about how we might lose our rewards, he finishes v. 19 by offering the solution. Look back at Colossians 1:18. What is the Body and who is the Head of the Body?

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21. In Colossians 2:19, Paul is discussing spiritual growth, not only for the believer but also for the whole church. What is the author of Hebrews admonishing the believers about in 5:12-14? How does this pertain to Paul’s discussion of Gnosticism and Angel worship?

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22. Read Ephesians 4:14-16, and explain what happens when we move away from Christ, the Head, and toward false teachings. Can you explain the child imagery? Why does Paul use the image of the body being knit together?

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23. Jesus has the final say concerning this matter. Read John 15:4-5. What is the final word?

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24. Read Colossians 2:20-3:4. Paul begins a discussion of what the Christian should and should not do. The first example Paul gives is of us having died with Christ (2:20) and having been raised with Christ (3:1). Read Romans 6:2-14, and explain what he means. What are we free from? What is it that we should and should not do?

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25. In Colossians 2:20, subjecting ourselves to regulations is living in the world and not living for Christ. This is a form of asceticism (depriving the body in an attempt to create a false sense of spirituality). Read 1 Timothy 4:1-4. What is the prophecy and what is the command? What is the truth about the false command?

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26. What does Genesis 9:3-4 say about what we can eat?

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27. The regulations Paul spoke of in Colossians 2:20-23 were for an outward showing and only had the appearance of wisdom, and would perish as would the doctrines of men. Read Matthew 23:27-28 and Luke 11:37-44. What does Jesus have to say about how the Pharisees are living? Now look at Matthew 15:9. How does this compare with what Paul is saying?

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28. Keep in mind that Paul is warning the Colossians not to fall back into the rituals of Judaism. Read Isaiah 1:13-17. What three things does God tell the Israelites not to offer? What eight things does God tell Israel to do?

Israel Is Not To Do	Israel Is To Do
1.	1.
2.	2.
3.	3. 4. 5. 6. 7.

29. Colossians 2:23 shows the failing of: (1) asceticism, (2) adhering to the things that perish and are according to the commandments of men, and (3) regulations. What is the failing?

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30. Since we know that the things of the flesh are of no spiritual value, Paul begins his litany of those things that **are** of value. The “if” in 3:1 could easily be translated “since” because the Greek εἰ is a first class conditional clause that assumes the statement that follows is true. In this case, what is true?

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31. Why are we told to seek those things which are above? Read James 1:17 for the answer.

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32. Paul’s goal, here, remember, is to afford the believer tools to fight off the indulgences of the flesh (2:23). In Colossians 3:2, Paul tells us to set our minds on the things above. Read 1 John 2:15-17, and see if you can discover why.

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33. What four points does Romans 8:5-8 have concerning why you should keep your minds on the things above?

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- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_

34. Reread Colossians 3:3. As we've studied previously, Paul's reference to our death was in relation to our death, burial, and resurrection in Christ. At the point of conversion (Ephesians 2:8-9) the believer is placed in Christ (1 Corinthians 12:13), indwelt with the Holy Spirit (Acts 2:4), and permanently and forever sealed (Ephesians 1:13) until the day of redemption.

**What about our lives being hidden with Christ in God?** MacArthur tells us that this has a threefold meaning.<sup>14</sup> Read the following verses to uncover the first of the three meanings: 1 Corinthians 6:17 and John 17:20-23.

35. The following verses should be understood in the context of the "believer against the world" in order to uncover the second of the three meanings concerning our lives being hidden with Christ in God: 1 John 3:1b and John 15:18-19.

36. The last of MacArthur's three meanings is found in the following verses: John 10:24-29, Romans 8:31-39, Hebrews 7:25 (and the corresponding Key Point below), and 1 Peter 1:3-5.



NT: 3838 **UTTERMOST** παντελή<sup>7</sup>: This word refers to full completion and hence has such senses as "full," "complete," "intact," or adverbially "completely," "altogether," "permanently." The NT uses the term only in the adverbial phrase eis tó pantelés. The totality of Christ's saving work in Heb 7:25 means that he is able to save both "forever" and "altogether"; the term has both nuances. <sup>18</sup>

37. In Colossians 3:4, Paul gives us the end result of our lives being hidden with Christ in God. We are in Him, but how do we know we have life? Read John 14:6. What specifically does Jesus call Himself?

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38. In Colossians 3:4, what does Paul mean about Jesus appearing? Read John 14:1-3. What two things does Jesus say He will do, and what does He promise?

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39. When will Jesus appear? There are two thoughts concerning Paul's reference to Jesus' appearance: The Rapture and the Second Coming. Read 1 Thessalonians 4:16-17. What happens at this first appearance of Christ?

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40. Now read Mark 13:24-26, and write down what Jesus said about His second coming.

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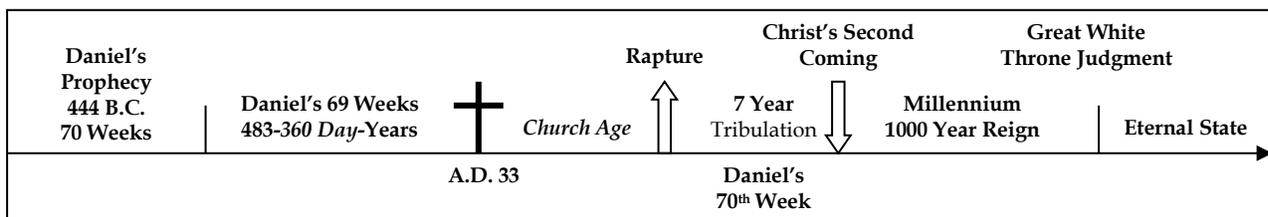
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The Church will be taken away, or raptured, before the beginning of Daniel's 70<sup>th</sup> week. At that time, Christ will descend and receive us to Himself, just as He promised in John 14:1-3. His second advent will see His return to earth as Lord and King where He will rule for a thousand years. Both times Jesus appears (1 Thess 4 and Mark 13), He does so WITH His saints, those who have trusted in Him for salvation. The argument in Colossians 3:4 is not when He will appear, but that when He does, both times, we appear with Him in glory. The timeline below will help you sort it out if you choose to study this topic on your own. Unfortunately, this must be left for another study as we concern ourselves with Paul's main point in Colossians 3:4: the glorification of the saints.



41. Complete the chart below and learn what Paul means when he says we “appear with Him in glory” (Colossians 3:4).

Bible Reference	Old Body	New Body
Philippians 3:21	▪	▪
1 Corinthians 15:42	▪	▪
1 Corinthians 15:43	▪ ▪	▪ ▪
1 Corinthians 15:44	▪	▪
1 Corinthians 15:48	▪	▪
1 Corinthians 15:49	▪	▪
1 Corinthians 15:51	▪	▪
1 Corinthians 15:52	▪	▪
1 Corinthians 15:53	▪ ▪	▪ ▪
1 Corinthians 15:54	▪ ▪	▪ ▪
1 John 3:2	▪	▪

# 9 *It's All About Grace*

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Colossians 3:5-7

*Therefore put to death your members which are on the earth: fornication, uncleanness, passion, evil desire, and covetousness, which is idolatry. Because of these things the wrath of God is coming upon the sons of disobedience, in which you yourselves once walked when you lived in them.*

1. You will notice right away in Colossians 3:5 that Paul is not saying that we should put to death our members as a condition for salvation. Read Colossians 3:3, Romans 5:8, and John 15:13, and explain how God's grace is demonstrated in these passages.

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The word *members* that Paul uses is the Greek word *me/lo\$,* and is defined as "a part of the body - body part, member."<sup>8</sup> He is in no way preaching suicide, but that you not use your body for evil. Read the following verses and answer each question to see the argument Paul is building:

2. In Romans 6:2-14, what is Paul saying about our death, life, and their relationship to sin?

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3. Is Paul saying that if you sin, you're not saved? Certainly not. Paul is saying that there is a war being fought in your body, and he gives you tools to win that war.

Read Galatians 5:16-17.

(1) What is the war?

(2) How do we fight it successfully?

(3) What is the outcome if we do?

1) \_\_\_\_\_

2) \_\_\_\_\_

3) \_\_\_\_\_

4. What is manifested when one is not walking in the Spirit, but walking in the flesh?

In Galatians 5:19-21, Paul gives a short list of seventeen items. List them.

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\_\_\_\_\_

5. In Galatians 3:3, Paul admonishes the believers there concerning this war. What is the admonishment? Now read Philippians 1:6. What confidence do we have?

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6. Paul's larger argument is presented in Romans 8:5-11. The chart below will help you sort out the rationale for putting to death your members and the reasons for doing so.

Romans	Rationale For Putting To Death Your Members	Reasons For Putting To Death Your Members
Romans 8:5	▪	▪
Romans 8:6	▪	▪
Romans 8:7	▪	
Romans 8:8	▪	
Romans 8:9	▪	▪
Romans 8:10		▪
Romans 8:11		▪

7. The definitive word as to the reason for putting to death your members is found in Colossians 3:6-7 and John 3:36. What is the message for believers and non-believers?

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8. In Colossians 3:6, Paul tells believers that the wrath of God is coming and only by the grace of God has it been postponed. What does Isaiah 13:11 say about the wrath of God? In Jeremiah 9:25-26, whom does God say He will punish?

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9. Read Jude 14-15. Who is the Lord coming to judge, and why? Don't overlook the quantifying element.

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10. Read Romans 5:9, 1 Thessalonians 1:9-10, and John 3:36. Who will escape the wrath of God, and who will not?

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11. Read Romans 3:23 and Romans 6:23. What do we as sinners deserve?

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12. Why does God simply not destroy us and start over? He almost did, once.

Read Genesis 6:6-8.

(1) What was God's plan?

(2) Why was He going to do it?

(3) Why did He change His mind?

1) \_\_\_\_\_

2) \_\_\_\_\_

3) \_\_\_\_\_

13. Since we all sin against God, and deserve death, why does God not simply give us what we deserve? Read 2 Peter 3:9-13, along with the Key Point below, and write down the answer. What is the promise that Peter mentions?

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NT:3114 **LONGSUFFERING** μακροθυμέω: To be of a long spirit, not to lose heart. 1. To persevere patiently and bravely. (Heb 6:15) 2. To be patient in bearing the offences and injuries of others; to be mild and slow in avenging; to be long-suffering, slow to anger, slow to punish. (1 Corinthians 13:4)<sup>9</sup>

14. Always keep in mind the reasons the writers of the Bible wrote their letters. In Colossians 3:5-17, Paul's instruction concerns the Colossians following the Gnostic teaching of Antinomianism: a heresy that taught that once saved, all believers were free to ignore the moral and ethical laws as taught in the Old Testament. What other Gnostic teaching do you find Paul arguing against?

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15. Paul describes in Colossians 3:8-9 what we should put off because we have put off the old, sinful man, and replaced him with a new man. The Greek word for *renewed* has in clear view a completely new creation. The Greek word he uses is ἀνακαινόω, which means "to make new, qualitatively new. To be renewed completely by God."<sup>7</sup> Read 2 Corinthians 5:17, and write down what it means to be a new creation.

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16. Link this notion of a new man, a new creation, with Colossians 3:11. How does this defeat the Gnostic teaching of needing the gnosis?

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17. Believers are taught that they are being conformed to the image of Christ (Colossians 3:10). This process is called sanctification and is ongoing throughout the believer's life. There are many ways sanctification takes place. Complete the chart below, but keep in mind that the doctrine of sanctification is huge, and cannot be completely dealt with in this study.

Bible Reference	How We Are Sanctified
Romans 15:16 1 Corinthians 6:11	
Ephesians 5:26	
Hebrews 13:12	
Colossians 3:5 2 Corinthians 7:1	
1 Thessalonians 2:12 Ephesians 4:1	
Romans 12:2	
Philippians 4:8	
Philippians 3:21	



Colossians 3:12 describes the elect of God. This corresponds to the doctrine of Election: God's sovereign choice of whom He grants eternal life. The doctrine of Election is taught in the Bible, that much is clear. Some might be led to believe that because of election (since they were chosen before the foundation of the world), they need not witness, disciple, spread the gospel, do good works, or even believe! The problem is that while election is taught, so are the commands to witness, disciple, spread the gospel, do good works, and even believe. The big question (and debate) is how do we reconcile these two seemingly opposing doctrines? The answer is simple. We can't! One of the first rules of Hermeneutics (Bible Interpretation) is that when the Bible is silent on a subject, so must we be. If the Lord had wanted us to know, He would have told us. The fact is that we cannot reconcile God's Sovereignty with Man's Responsibility because Christ died for the sins of the whole world, not just the elect, and the offer of salvation is extended to any who would believe in the Son. Complete the next chart and you'll begin to see.

How is God's Sovereignty Displayed?	What is Man's Responsibility?
<b>Ephesians 1:4-5</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪</li> <li>▪</li> </ul>	<b>John 6:47, 6:40, and 3:15-18</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪</li> </ul>
<b>2 Thessalonians 2:13-14</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪</li> </ul>	<b>Acts 16:30-31</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪</li> </ul>
<b>Romans 8:29-30</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪</li> <li>▪</li> </ul>	<b>John 1:12</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪</li> </ul>
<b>Ephesians 1:11</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪</li> </ul>	<b>Romans 10:16-17</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪</li> </ul>
<b>Romans 9:15-16</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪</li> <li>▪</li> <li>▪</li> </ul>	<b>Romans 10:9</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪</li> <li>▪</li> </ul>
	<b>Revelation 3:20</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪</li> </ul>
	<b>John 5:39-40</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪</li> </ul>

18. While the debate may rage concerning God's Sovereignty and Man's Responsibility, I suggest you allow the Scriptures to speak for themselves. God is 100% sovereign and man is responsible to that sovereignty. Read John 6:44 and 12:32, and identify God's Sovereignty and how He will accomplish His goal.

God's Sovereignty	How God Accomplishes That Goal



It seems almost paradoxical to ask someone to believe something, and in the same breath say, after they do, that you knew they would. The Bible, however, does just that. God knows who will accept His Son, even though He requires that you make a conscious decision to accept Him. Is this a paradox that cannot be explained? Which one should we believe? Both! Both are taught in the Bible, and both must be believed. Perhaps we cannot explain it, but God can.

19. Please do not misinterpret the doctrine of election to mean that God has chosen some to be saved and some to be damned. Read John 3:16. What two pieces of evidence can you find that refute this interpretation? What about 1 John 2:2? Finally, look at 1 Timothy 4:10.

Bible Reference	Evidence
John 3:16	<p>†</p> <p>†</p>
1 John 2:2	
1 Timothy 4:10	

20. In Colossians 3:12-13, Paul gives the characteristics that believers put on in order to live like the new man. Take some time to become familiar with the five terms Paul gives that must be put on, and the two terms he gives for what actions to take, and write them on the lines below. On the next page try to create a real life scenario wherein one **WOULD NOT** be able to use all of these elements.

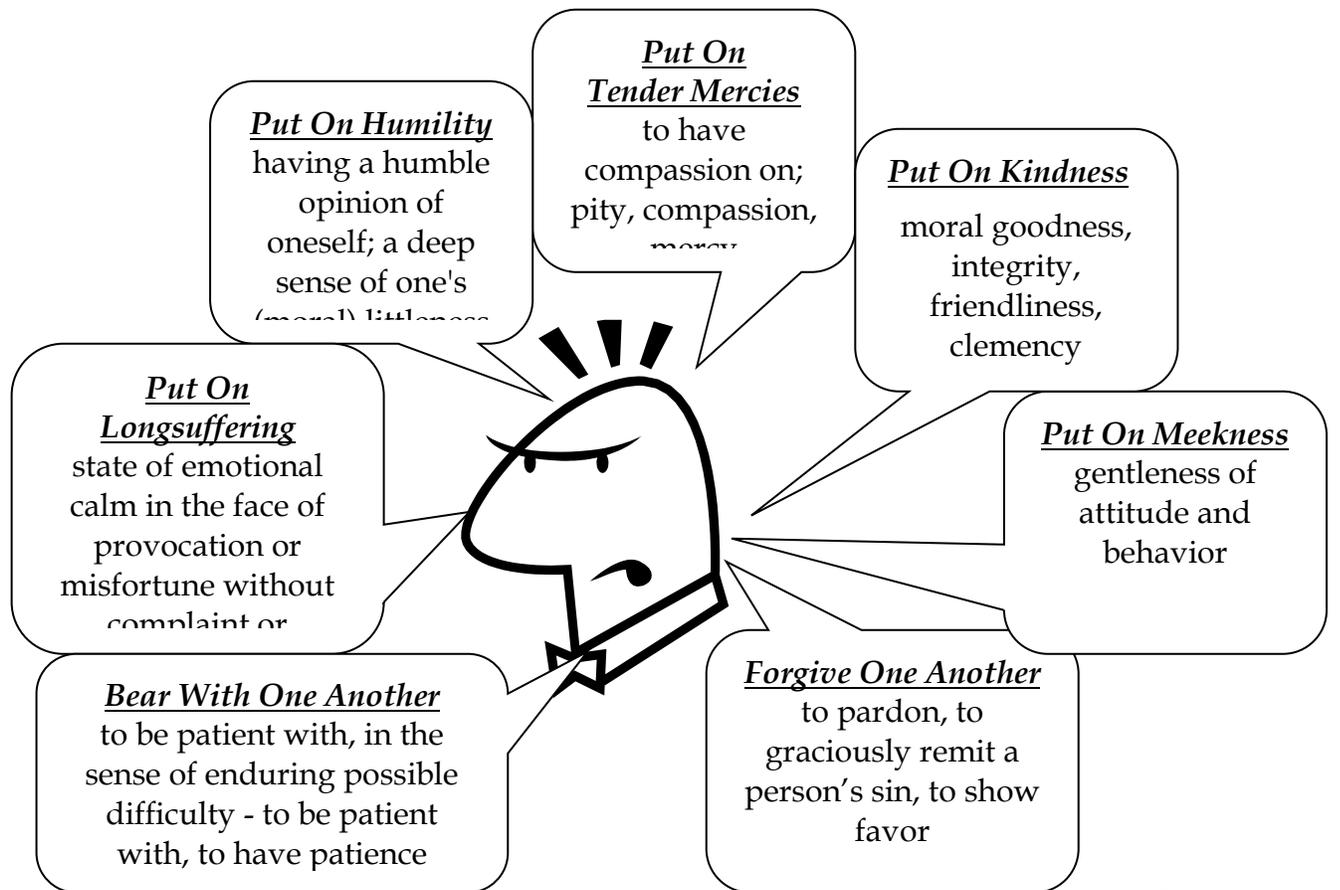
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*Scenario*

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21. Colossians 3:14 is of more importance to the Christian life than anything else. Read John 13:34. What is the command Jesus gives? Now read John 15:13. What is the greatest love?

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22. Are we, then, to lay down our lives for our friends to show the greatness of our love? Jesus is offering an example for us to follow. We are told to be perfect and holy, just like the Father is, but we know we can never be perfect. Read 1 Corinthians 13:1-3. What five things does Paul say we can have or offer, and what three things are the result?

What Does Paul Have Or Offer?	What Are The Results Without Love?
1.	1.
2.	2.
3.	3.
4.	
5.	

23. Letting the peace of God rule (Colossians 3:15) is more than just being peaceful, or at peace. The Greek word refers to settling strife, or allowing for unity by controlling your thoughts or emotions. But why the heart? Read Jeremiah 17:9 and Mark 7:21-23, and write down what God says about the heart.

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24. Continuing with Colossians 3:15, the peace of God is a powerful tool in the war against the flesh. Remember what Paul said in Colossians 2:23 about those things that have an appearance of wisdom? Read John 14:27 and Philippians 4:6-7. What is the application for believers? What do we have to do to obtain this peace?

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25. Paul exhorts us to let this peace rule our hearts, and that we were called together in one body (Colossians 3:15). What does Colossians 2:2 say about the hearts of the believers? There is a connection between these two verses, and 3:16. Read Hebrews 10:24-25, 13:3, and 1 Thessalonians 5:11, with these other verses in mind. What is the big picture Paul is trying to convey?

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26. The word *dwell* in Colossians 3:16 means to live in, or abide in. The “word of Christ” is literally translated *the words of Jesus*. Read John 15:3-7. Why are we clean, and how do we bear fruit? What is the relevance of John 8:37?

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27. In Colossians 3:16, Paul’s overall argument involves wisdom, the attaining of it, and the maintaining of it. Read Colossians 1:9, 1:27-28, 2:2-3, 2:23, and Ephesians 1:17-18. How do these verses support his point?

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28. Colossians 3:17 gives believers the practical application of verse 16, and the whole of the Christian life for that matter. Read Proverbs 9:10. This passage has two parts, but the second part is oft overlooked. What are the two parts, and how do they relate to Paul’s point? Proverbs 3:6 and Colossians 3:23 will help you with this answer.

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29. Read 1 Peter 4:11, Hebrews 1:3, Colossians 1:16-17, Romans 11:36, John 1:14, and Isaiah 42:1.  
(1) Who is the focus of the Father and who deserves all the glory and honor?  
(2) How does Colossians 3:17 afford honor to the Father through Jesus?

1) \_\_\_\_\_  
2) \_\_\_\_\_

30. In Colossians 3:17, when Paul says to do all things in Jesus’ name, how might this contrast with Gnostic teachings? What part of God’s plan does Jesus serve?

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31. How is Colossians 3:17 the capstone for Paul's argument so far, as it pertains to who we are and how we should live?

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Read Colossians 3:18-4:1. This next section concerns the Christian home, and the hierarchical relationships of the family and how they relate to our relationship with the Lord.

*"Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and they shall become one flesh." Genesis 2:24*

32. Colossians 3:18 gives wives a directive to be in submission to their husbands. The first thing we have to look at is what the word *submit* means. Read the Key Point below and write your own definition of the word.

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NT: 5293 **SUBMIT** ὑποτάσσεσθαι: To submit to the orders or directives of someone - to obey, to submit to, obedience, submission;<sup>8</sup> to submit to one's control; to yield to one's admonition or advice: absolutely.<sup>9</sup> This is not due to her being inferior to her husband, for they are both equal before God. It is a willing personal subjection demonstrated in Ephesians 5:21 (submitting to one another in the fear of God).<sup>7</sup> There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus. (Galatians 3:28-29)

33. God ordained that there should be a hierarchy in the home. To understand why, we have to look at some specific verses. Read Genesis 3:16. What was Eve's curse concerning this topic?

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34. Read 1 Timothy 2:11-14. What are the three things women are to do? What two reasons are given for this?

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35. For this reason, that Eve was deceived, men were set as the head of their wives. Read 1 Peter 3:7 and Ephesians 5:22-24. Where are men in the hierarchy and why?

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36. The characteristics women have, that have been given by God, are for a purpose. Read 1 Peter 3:1-6. Why are women's characteristics so important?

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37. Compare Ephesians 5:22-24, 28 and Colossians 3:19. Does submission mean that husbands can be tyrants and dominate their wives?

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38. Specifically, how are husbands to treat their wives? Read Ephesians 5:25, 28, and 33.

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39. Though there is a hierarchy, what do Ephesians 5:30-31, John 17:21-22, and Galatians 3:28-29 say about men and women? What does 1 Corinthians 11:11-12 say concerning men and women?

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40. The family is most important to the Lord, as it acts to strengthen, protect, and edify His creation. Read Genesis 2:18 and 20-24. Why did God start the first family? What reason did He give?

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41. The hierarchy continues with the children in Colossians 3:20. How are children to behave? Don't forget the quantity here. The Greek word for *provoke* (e)requi/zw) should not be overlooked. It means "to cause someone to feel resentment."<sup>8</sup> Given this definition, what is the caveat in verse 21?

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42. Colossians 3:22 discusses the relationship of bondservants to their masters. While there is little in the NT about Christian rulers, there is much concerning positions of service and servanthood.<sup>10</sup> Read Titus 3:1 and Romans 13:1. What is the example there for us to follow?

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43. Servants of Christ must serve using His example. Read Matthew 20:28. What is the example given there?

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44. Many of the writers of the New Testament give themselves the title of bondservant. Read Isaiah 42:1, Matthew 12:15-18, and Philippians 2:5-7. Who is the servant of God? Now read Hebrews 10:7 and 9. What does it mean to be a servant?

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“When we think of a servant we think of the word slave. When we think of the idea of a slave we think work. After all, that is pretty much what slaves do. But...we miss much of the idea of servanthood. A servant is one whose will is totally absorbed in the will of another. Servanthood and servitude are two different things. Associate servitude with labor if you will. Associate servanthood with the singular word *will*.”<sup>30</sup>

45. Compare Isaiah 14:12-17 with John 4:34, 5:30, and 6:38. Identify the two key characters, what role they play concerning the concept of servanthood, and why one is a servant and one is not.

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46. Colossians 3:22-25 explicitly deals with bondservants and their relationship with their masters. If, in verse 22, the bondservant only obeys when the master is watching (eyeservice), why is that person not a true servant?

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47. Using Colossians 3:24-4:1, why does Paul exhort the bondservant to obey with sincerity of heart (22), fearing God (22), heartily as to the Lord (23), and masters to give what is just and fair?

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If we're servants of Christ, then we should be absorbed in His will - which includes submission to one another (wives to husbands, children to parents, bondservants to masters, etc). These hierarchies are all individual pictures of that servant relationship: children to parents; wives to husbands; bondservants to masters - all pictures pointing us to THE servant relationship: Jesus to God.

# 10 Pray, Pray, Pray!

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Colossians 4:2-6

*Continue earnestly in prayer, being vigilant in it with thanksgiving; meanwhile praying also for us, that God would open to us a door for the word, to speak the mystery of Christ, for which I am also in chains, that I may make it manifest, as I ought to speak. Walk in wisdom toward those who are outside, redeeming the time. Let your speech always be with grace, seasoned with salt, that you may know how you ought to answer each one.*

1. With respect to Colossians 4:2, what do the following verses have in common?  
1 Thessalonians 15:17, Colossians 1:9, Philippians 4:6, Romans 12:12, Luke 18:1, and 1 Samuel 12:23.
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2. The second part of Colossians 4:2 gives the reason for all these other verses: being vigilant. What does Matthew 26:41 offer in the way of depth for why we should pray and be vigilant?
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3. A Christian's prayer life is more than just the hope that someone is listening. What does James 5:16-18 say about why we should pray? How does James' example show that it works?
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4. Read Numbers 11:1-2. What caused the people of Israel the need for prayer? How did prayer aid them?
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5. When will prayer be too late? Read Proverbs 1:23-33. Though God offers man many chances to come to Him, they refuse, and God promises to punish them. What are the eight reasons God gives for why He will not listen to their prayers?

- 1) \_\_\_\_\_
- 2) \_\_\_\_\_
- 3) \_\_\_\_\_
- 4) \_\_\_\_\_
- 5) \_\_\_\_\_
- 6) \_\_\_\_\_
- 7) \_\_\_\_\_
- 8) \_\_\_\_\_

6. How do you reconcile the following four verses: John 9:31, John 11:25, Hebrews 9:27, and 1 John 5:12?

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7. Prayer is important, but Paul exhorts us to add something to our prayers. What is it? Colossians 4:2 and Philippians 4:6 will give you the answer.

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8. While there are literally millions of things to be thankful for, James 1:17 and Ephesians 2:8 give us the most important reason. Where do we get our good things and what gift is the most important to be thankful for?

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9. In Colossians 4:3, what is significant about Paul's request, given his current situation?

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10. In Colossians 4:3, Paul asks the Colossians to pray the God would open a door for him to preach the gospel. This comes up again in 1 Corinthians 16:8-9 and 2 Corinthians 2:12. We are not to rely on ourselves, but on Him for guidance. Read John 16:13 and Psalm 119:133 along with 1 Thessalonians 3:11. Who and what can we rely on to guide us?

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11. Once the Lord opens the door to spread the gospel (Colossians 4:3), Paul gives instructions on how to go about spreading it. Read the Key Point below, along with 1 Corinthians 4:1-6 and Matthew 5:16. What does Paul mean in Colossians 4:5 when he says “to walk in wisdom to those who are outside”?

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4043 **WALK** περιπατέω: "to walk," is sometimes used of the state in which one is living,<sup>16</sup> to conduct oneself,<sup>9</sup> to live or behave in a customary manner, with possible focus upon continuity of action - to live, to behave, to go about doing.<sup>8</sup>

12. The Greek word *redeeming* ἐξαγοράζομαι in Colossians 4:5 means “an idiom, literally 'to buy out the time,' to take full advantage of any opportunity - to make good use of every opportunity, to take advantage of every chance.”<sup>8</sup> Looking at the context of the whole verse, what does Paul mean by redeeming the time?  
Read Romans 13:11-12, 1 Peter 4:7, and 1 John 2:17 to aid you with your answer.

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13. Continuing with his point about how to spread the gospel, Paul offers two characteristics in Colossians 4:6 for how we should talk to people.  
Read Ephesians 4:29 and 31, and Titus 2:4, and 6-8, and expand on Paul’s idea of speaking with grace.

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14. Jesus says that we are the salt of the earth in Matthew 5:13, and continues that we are the light of the world. Read the Key Point below and write down Paul’s intention for writing that our speech should be seasoned with salt (Colossians 4:6).

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"Seasoned with salt." Both words only here in Paul. The metaphor is...in rendering palatable. Both in Greek and Latin authors, salt was used to express the pungency and wittiness of speech. Horace speaks of having praised a poet for "rubbing the city with abundant salt," i.e., for having wittily satirized certain parties so as to make them smart as if rubbed with salt, and so as to excite the laughter of those who are not hit ("Satires," i., x., 3). Lightfoot gives some interesting citations from Plutarch, in which, as here, "grace and salt" are combined. Thus: "The many call salt *charitas* graces, because, mingled with most things, it makes them agreeable and pleasant to the taste."

"Seasoned" is, literally, "prepared." It is not likely that the fact has any connection with this expression, but it is interesting to recall Herodotus' story of a salt lake in the neighborhood of Colossae, which has been identified, and which still supplies the whole surrounding country with salt (vii., 30). The exhortation to well-seasoned and becoming speech is expanded in Ephesians 4:29 and 5:4, in a warning against corrupt communication.<sup>13</sup>

15. Colossians 4:6 tells believers that their speech must be full of grace and seasoned with salt, so that they know how to give an answer. The following verses will aid you in understanding how to give an answer. Begin with 1 Peter 3:15. When should we be ready to give an answer?

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16. Read Acts 17:1-4. What two tools did Paul use to preach the gospel? What was the result?

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17. In 1 Corinthians 4:1-4, Paul says he is a minister and a steward (or one who has authority and responsibility for something)<sup>8</sup> of the mysteries of God. What does Paul say a steward should be?

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18. Finally, what are the three aspects of this stewardship found in 2 Timothy 2:15?

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19. Read Colossians 4:7-18. In Colossians 4:7-9, Paul is establishing two way communication. (1) Who does Paul name, and what is their purpose? (2) By what three names does Paul identify Tychicus, and what is the significance of these names? Read 2 Timothy 4:12 and Titus 3:12 for the answer.

1) \_\_\_\_\_

2) \_\_\_\_\_

20. Paul sends Onesimus, and calls him a beloved brother. Who was Onesimus, and where was Onesimus heading next? Why? Go back to the beginning of this study for help on this answer.

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21. Paul next mentions Aristarchus. Read Acts 20:4 and 19:29. Where is he from and what happened to him in the service of the Lord?

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22. Paul says that Aristarchus is a fellow prisoner. Paul is in prison in Rome, so does he mean to say that Aristarchus is also in prison? Read Philemon 23-24 and Colossians 4:12, and extrapolate why Aristarchus is not in prison. Philippians 2:25 and Philemon 2 may shed some light on this subject.

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23. Paul mentions Mark in Colossians 4:10. Read this verse as well as Acts 15:37-40 and Acts 13:13 to find out who he was and what he did. What was the result?

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24. What is significant about Paul's mention of Mark in Colossians 4:10 with respect to Mark's actions from Acts 15? 2 Timothy 4:11 will help you.

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25. Read the Key Point below. What sense to you get about the importance of this Mark that Paul talks about?

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“And the presbyter would say this: Mark, who had indeed been Peter's interpreter, accurately wrote as much as he remembered, yet not in order, about that which was either said or did by the Lord. For he neither heard the Lord nor followed him, but later, as I said, Peter, who would make the teachings anecdotally but not exactly an arrangement of the Lord's reports, so that Mark did not fail by writing certain things as he recalled. For he had one purpose, not to omit what he heard or falsify them.”  
Papias, Bishop of Hierapolis, *An Exposition of the Lord's Reports* A.D. 140  
Justin Martyr, a Christian apologist, wrote around A.D. 150 that the Gospel of Mark was actually the memoirs of Peter. *Dialogue with Trypho* 106.1-3

26. In Colossians 4:11, Paul indicates that he and his fellow workers are working for the kingdom of God. Read Revelation 11:15. What does this passage say about kingdoms?

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27. In Colossians 4:12, Paul tells the Colossians that Epaphras is laboring fervently in prayers that they be complete in the will of God. What is the correlation between what he is praying for and his title? Review the definition of a servant in the Key Point below. What exactly is Epaphras praying for (not who, but what)?

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“When we think of a servant we think of the word slave. When we think of the idea of a slave we think work. After all, that is pretty much what slaves do. But...we miss much of the idea of servanthood. A servant is one whose will is totally absorbed in the will of another. Servanthood and servitude are two different things. Associate servitude with labor if you will. Associate servanthood with the singular word *will*.”<sup>30</sup>

28. Take a look at the map provided in the beginning of the study. From Colossians 4:13, what do you notice about the locations mentioned? Why do you suppose Epaphras had such a zeal for the believers there?

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29. While we know that Luke accompanied Paul on several journeys, and wrote the Gospel of the same name, as well as the Acts of the Apostles, Demas (Colossians 4:14) is a new figure on the scene. Read 2 Timothy 4:10. What happened to Demas and why did he do what he did? What part of Colossians 3:1-2 did Demas not heed?

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30. In Colossians 4:15, the fact that Paul mentions Nymphas and his home church is significant for us because we will hear of the church in Laodicea again. Read Revelation 3:14-22. What does Jesus have to say about this church?

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31. Paul intends that this letter be read in three places. What are the three?

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32. What is the most obvious reason Paul asks that this letter be read to the church of the Laodiceans? Read the Key Point below. How does Colossians 4:16 offer evidence of the idea of a circular letter?

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While the early church fathers, Irenaeus, Tertullian, and Clement, all held to an Ephesian destination, some early manuscripts do not show “in Ephesus” in Ephesians 1:1 suggesting that this letter was really meant for all churches in the area. Unlike Colossians 1:1-2 where the church there is mentioned by name, Ephesians could be considered a circular letter meant to be transferred and read across Asia Minor. The absence of personal greetings in Ephesians is also indicative of a circular letter.

33. What is the comparison of Colossians 4:17 with 4:6? Whose name could you easily replace Archippus’ with? Use Acts 20:28, 2 Timothy 4:1-2, and 1 Corinthians 4:1-2 to help you. How does the word steward come into play?

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34. Paul’s salutation of “Grace be with you” in Colossians 4:18 is expanded in 2 Corinthians 13:14. What three things does he want for the Colossians that can be derived from this passage?

Paul expresses to the Colossians, as well as the Corinthians, his desire for

- 1) \_\_\_\_\_
- 2) \_\_\_\_\_
- 3) \_\_\_\_\_

35. All of Paul's letters close the same way; he bids the readers grace. Read Hebrews 13:25. What do you find there that is familiar? What might this suggest about the authorship of the letter to the Hebrews? (This is only in academic fun, but many scholars use this as evidence.)

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It is fitting and appropriate that Paul should end his letter bidding his readers grace, because it is only by the grace of God that we are saved, through the sacrifice of His Son, once for all. Christ is at the center of this little letter, just as He should be at the center of our lives. When you read any part of the Scripture, are you seeking to find Christ? When you worship, do you honor Christ for His gift of salvation? When you fellowship with other believers, is Christ at the center? These are the ideas Paul is conveying to us through his admonition of the Colossians. His words are full of doctrine; this should not deter us, but encourage us, for it is through a study of the doctrines of the Bible that we find its application to our lives. As the Scripture teaches us: "Preach the word! Be ready in season and out of season. Convince, rebuke, exhort, with all longsuffering and teaching." 2 Timothy 4:2

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