

ALL IN HIM (Colossians, Part 1)

THE CHURCH AT COLOSSAE (1:2) ...

- Colossae was one of three cities located about 100 miles inland from Ephesus – the other two were Hierapolis and Laodicea.
- It was a wealthy cosmopolitan area, and all kinds of religions and philosophies were represented; there was even a large Jewish colony right in Colossae. It was a fertile breeding ground for heresy.
- But Colossae never would have been mentioned in the New Testament had it not been for the powerful Apostolic church there!
- Paul didn't start the church in Colossae, and never even visited it – but he had HEARD of their faith (1:4, 1:9)
- This church was an outgrowth of Paul's ministry in Ephesus – there was such a powerful move of God that it impacted the whole region!
- *WE want to have a move of God's Spirit just like this!*

Acts 19:1-7 And it came to pass, that, while Apollos was at Corinth, Paul having passed through the upper coasts came to Ephesus: and finding certain disciples, He said unto them, Have ye received the Holy Ghost since ye believed? And they said unto him, We have not so much as heard whether there be any Holy Ghost. And he said unto them, Unto what then were ye baptized? And they said, Unto John's baptism. Then said Paul, John verily baptized with the baptism of repentance, saying unto the people, that they should believe on him which should come after him, that is, on Christ Jesus. When they heard this, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. And when Paul had laid his hands upon them, the Holy Ghost came on them; and they spake with tongues, and prophesied. And all the men were about twelve.

Acts 19:10 And this continued by the space of two years; so that all they which dwelt in Asia heard the word of the Lord Jesus, both Jews and Greeks.

- Epaphras was one of Paul's converts in Ephesus, and he returned home to start the church in Colossae – and he also ministered in Hierapolis and Laodicea (1:7, 4:12-13).
- When false doctrine started to threaten this young church, he traveled to Rome where his mentor Paul was a prisoner – and the Apostle Paul sent this letter back to the church in Colossae.
- What was the heresy that threatened the Colossian church? It was a “blended message” – part Christianity, part Jewish legalism, part Eastern philosophy, and part Gnosticism. These people had created their own brand of spirituality – and were denying Apostolic truth.
- These false teachers would not DENY the importance of Jesus Christ, they would just DETHRONE Him. They gave Him PROMINENCE in their teaching, but not PREEMINENCE.

- *This is the critical error of much of “Christianity” today!*

Paul puts down false doctrine by lifting up Jesus Christ – over thirty times in just four chapters he uses the little word “ALL” – **because it's all in HIM!** Jesus Christ is not just “prominent” here, He is PREEMINENT!

Colossians 2:3 In whom are hid ALL the treasures of wisdom and knowledge.

Colossians 2:9-10 For in him dwelleth ALL the fulness of the Godhead bodily. And ye are complete in him, which is the head of ALL principality and power:

Colossians 1:16-19 For by him were ALL things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: ALL things were created by him, and for him: And he is before ALL things, and by him ALL things consist. And he is the head of the body, the church: who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead; that in ALL things he might have the preeminence. For it pleased the Father that in him should ALL fulness dwell;

Colossians 3:17 And whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do ALL in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by him.

1:2 – God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ

1:3 – God and the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ

Neither “and” indicates two persons! AND in these verses means EVEN.

Just as the Old Testament speaks of “the God of Abraham” to remind His people of the relationship and blessings resulting from the Abrahamic covenant, so the New Testament sometimes speaks of “the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ” to remind us of the relationship and blessings available to us through the atoning work of Jesus Christ.

1:6 – the gospel is for “all the world” – these false teachers were not interested in evangelism, they went where the gospel had already gone and tried to lead believers astray (*if what they believe is so awesome, they shouldn't have to talk you into it – their life should make you want it!*)

1:6 – “bringeth forth fruit” – BELIEF DETERMINES BEHAVIOR!

When missionary John G. Paton was translating the Bible in the Outer Hebrides islands, he had trouble finding the exact word to translate the concept “BELIEVE.” Finally, he discovered a word in the Gaelic language that meant “lean your whole weight upon” and he used that. In the

Biblical sense, **BELIEF** means that I totally lean on Jesus Christ, and that my life is totally given to Him without reservation.

1:9 – “do not cease to pray for you” – Paul was in prison, but he spent his time praying for these people that he had never met!

1:9 – “that ye might be filled” – in the language of the Bible, to be FILLED means to be CONTROLLED BY (we need to be filled with the Spirit!)

ILLUSTRATION: WATER AND OPAQUE GLASS. We were sinners because we were empty, and in the absence of anything dwelling in us we were vulnerable to whatever was around us (i.e. air around the glass actually in the glass). When water is poured into the glass the air is displaced, and when you keep on filling the glass it begins to overflow and now it affects the environment around it! Be filled with the Spirit!

1:10 – “that ye might walk worthy” – there is no separation between LEARNING the Word of God and LIVING the Word of God

1:11 – “patience and longsuffering WITH JOYFULNESS”

1:13 – “translated” – describes moving from one country to another

1:14 – “redemption” refers to the payment of a ransom to release a prisoner – Jesus didn’t pay Satan, but he met the demands of the Law

1:14 – “forgiveness” means “to cancel a debt” – Satan can’t find the records of our sin, so he can’t ever indict us again!

1:15 – “image” means “an exact representation and revelation”

Hebrews 1:3 Who being the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person, and upholding all things by the word of his power, when he had by himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high;

John 14:9 Jesus saith unto him, Have I been so long time with you, and yet hast thou not known me, Philip? he that hath seen me hath seen the Father; and how sayest thou then, Shew us the Father?

John 10:30 I and my Father are one.

1:15 – “firstborn” does not refer to TIME but to STATUS (“of first rank”) – Jesus was not the first being created, He was the Creator of everything!

1:18 – “firstborn from the dead” – Jesus was not the first person to be raised from the dead, but without His resurrection there could be no resurrection for anyone else!

1:17 – “by him all things consist” – God says that He is literally the One who **HOLDS US TOGETHER** by His power!

A protein molecule called LAMININ is the cell adhesion molecule within the human body. It is like the REBAR of the human body, the steel bars they put in concrete when they lay the foundations of buildings. It holds your membranes together – it is the GLUE of the human body.

ILLUSTRATION: LAMININ – scientific diagram, electron microscope

1:18 – “Despite our efforts to keep him out, God intrudes. The life of Jesus is bracketed by two impossibilities: a virgin’s womb and an empty tomb. Jesus entered our world through a door marked ‘No Entrance’ and left through a door marked ‘No Exit.’”

1:18 – “PREEMINENCE” in this verse is from the Greek word “PROTOS” meaning “first in rank or influence”

3 John 1:9 I wrote unto the church: but Diotrephes, who loveth to have the preeminence among them, receiveth us not.

“PREEMINENCE” in this verse is from a compound Greek word – “PHILOS” and “PROTOS” – meaning “FOND OF BEING FIRST” (*you have to decide who is going to be first – God or you!*)

1:19 – “fulness” – “the sum total of all the divine power and attributes”

1:20 – because Jesus is both God and man, He can function as the mediator who can RECONCILE lost sinners with a holy God

1:21 – we were “alienated” (“estranged”) by our NATURE (sin) and “enemies” (“actively hostile”) by our ACTIONS (sins)

1:22 – “through death” – we are not saved by Jesus’ LIFE, we are saved by His DEATH – He is not just our EXAMPLE, He must be our SAVIOR

1:22 – the purpose of this reconciliation is PERSONAL HOLINESS – God did not forgive our sins so we could keep on living as rebels!

1:22 – “in his sight” – the most important thing is how we look to GOD, not to others or even to ourselves

1:23 – “be not moved away” – Colossae in a region prone to earthquakes – “moved away” can mean “earthquake stricken”

1:24 – “rejoice” – Paul was happy to suffer to move the church forward

1:27 – the mystery that had been hidden is now made known to the Gentiles – and it all happens because of “CHRIST IN YOU” (the baptism of the Holy Ghost) – being BORN AGAIN is our “hope of glory”!