

Bible Study Notes and Questions on Paul's letter to the Colossians

Overview: This letter of Paul to the Colossians was written in about **61AD** from prison most likely in Rome. It was passed on by Epaphras from Colosse who had become a Christian through the ministry of Paul whilst he was in Ephesus for three years (**Acts 19:1-41**). There is no record known of how the church began in this small town of Colosse situated in the Lycus valley about 100 miles east of Ephesus. There were neighbouring places of Laodicea, a prosperous city, and Hierapolis (**4:13, 16**), where the church of Jesus Christ was established. Paul never came to Colosse. He had relied on Epaphras to tell him the progress of the church in Colosse (**1:3-8; 4:12-13**).

Paul begins by showing encouragement to the church in Colosse in its progress of faith in Jesus Christ, love for the brethren and their hope in the gospel (**1:1-6**). He had continued to pray for the church to mature spiritually in Christ stressing deliverance, redemption and forgiveness of sins (**1:9-14**). Paul shows the supremacy of Jesus Christ (**1:15-23**) exhorting the Colossian believers to stand firm in knowing Jesus Christ as God, as creator and head of the church. Paul has shown his calling as a minister of the gospel especially to the Gentiles (**1:24-29**).

Paul has revealed the all-sufficiency of Jesus Christ (**2:1-23**) contending against the false teaching that had come in to the church such as traditions of men, worship of angels and additional rules leading to much legalism (**2:4,8,16-23**).

In **chapters 3 & 4** Paul has stressed the practical ways to live in Jesus Christ. We are to set our affections on things above not on the earthly things (**3:1-4**) hence to be earthly good we need to be heavenly minded! The saying that a person "is too heavenly minded to be earthly good" is false! In growing to be like Jesus Christ we put off the old man/nature/self and his deeds and put on the new man/nature/self (**Colossians 3:5-17**).

Paul has emphasised the relationships in a Christian household (**3:18-4:1**) followed by encouragement for prayer especially for personal prayer support (**4:2-4, 18**), secondly a brief word on our testimony to others especially to those who do not know Jesus Christ personally (**4:5-6**), thirdly commendation of faithful brethren who had worked with Paul (**4:7-15, 17**) and lastly passing on this letter to be read in Laodicea along with final greetings (**4:16, 18**).

Questions

Chapter 1

Q.1) How did Paul commend the brethren in Colosse in **1:1-6**? Compare **1Thessalonians 1:3** and see also **1:23**.

Q.2) What was known of Epaphras? Read **1:7-8; 4:12-13; Philemon 23**.

Q.3) Show the way Paul (and team) prayed for the Colossian believers in **1:9-12**. You may find it helpful to make a list of at least seven essential characteristics we need to grow spiritually.

Q.4) What are the seven blessings that we have received in the great salvation that our Father has obtained for us through Jesus Christ? See **1:12-14 & 1:20-22**.

Q.5) Read carefully **1:15-20** which shows important information of the real Christ. Make a list of what is known of Jesus Christ in these verses.

Q.6) Look again at **1:15-20**. In what ways do we know Jesus Christ is supreme/pre-eminent?

Q.7) Show how Paul defines the commission God has given him in **1:23-29; 2:1-4**.

Q.8) Read carefully **1:20-23** and show what is meant by reconciliation.

Q.9) What is meant by "*Christ in you, the hope of glory*" (**1:27**). It is helpful to read

Galatians 2:20; 4:19; Ephesians 4:24; 1John 5:12.

Q.10) What is the mystery Paul has revealed in this letter according to **1:25-28 & 2:1-3**?

Questions continued

Chapter 2

Q.1) Show how Paul desired the Colossian believers to really come to know Jesus Christ?

See **2:1-3, 6-7, 9-10**.

Q.2) Show the warnings Paul has written in **2:4-5, 8, 16-23**. Can you see the deceptions that were affecting the church in Colosse?

Q.3) Read carefully **2:11-15**. What has Jesus Christ done for you to become a believer in him?

Q.4) How can we grow to know Jesus Christ more intimately?

See **1:9-12; 2:6-7; 2Peter 1:5-11; 3:18**.

Q.5) Show from this chapter that Jesus Christ is all-sufficient and that we have all we need in him. See **2:3, 9-10. John 14:6; Romans 5:1-2; Ephesians 1:3; 1Timothy 2:5; 2Peter 1:3-4**.

Q.6) How do we know that we are one with Jesus Christ? See again **2:9-10 & 1:18**.

Q.7) Look carefully again to see at least three different ways our liberty in Jesus Christ is being challenged. See **2:4, 16, 18-23**.

Chapter 3

Q.1) What should we be doing having been "*risen with Christ*"? See **3:1-4**.

Q.2) Having come to know Jesus Christ: **A)** What sinful things in us must we put to death? See **3:5-9**. **B)** What things must we put on having received a new man/nature/self? See **3:10-17**.

See also **2Corinthians 5:17; Galatians 6:15; Ephesians 4:21-33**.

Q.3) What kind of person could you expect to see if he/she has not been putting off the old man/nature/self in **3:5-9**? See also **Galatians 5:19-21; Ephesians 4:17-22**.

Q.4) What kind of person could you expect to see if he/she has been putting on the new man/nature/self in **3:10-17**? See also **Galatians 5:22-24; Ephesians 4:22-32; 5:1-7**.

Q.5) What should we expect to see taking place in the assembled church in view of what Paul has written in **3:15-17**?

Q.6) Show the kind of relationships that should be seen in a Christian household. Read **3:18-21**. See also **1Corinthians 11:3; Ephesians 5:22-33; 6:1-4; Titus 2:1-6; 1Peter 3:1-7**.

Q.7) Show the kind of relationships that should be seen between masters and servants or what could be seen today as employers/bosses and their employees. Read carefully **3:22-4:1** and see also **Ephesians 6:5-9; Titus 2:9-10**.

Chapter 4

Q.1) Read **4:2-4, 12, 18**. What do these verses teach us in how to pray for others?

See also **Romans 15:30-32; Ephesians 6:18-20**.

Q.2) How should we behave towards those who do not know Jesus Christ as their Saviour?

See **4:5-6 & 1Peter 3:15-16**.

Q.3) What is known of the brethren named by Paul in **4:7-17**?

Q.4) Read through **4:7-17** again. Is it true to say these verses can help us to live as believers in Jesus Christ?

Q.5) Show the attitude of Paul had towards Mark/Marcus in **4:10** bearing in mind the occasion Mark departed from Paul and Barnabas to return to Jerusalem (**Acts 13:13**) and secondly the disagreement between Paul and Barnabas over Mark coming with them on a second missionary journey (**Acts 15:37-40**). See also **2Timothy 4:11; Philemon 24; 1Peter 5:13**.

Q.6) Consider carefully **4:17** and see also **Philemon 2**. What can we understand about Paul's concern for Archippus? How does **4:17** apply to us as believers? See also **Ephesians 2:10 & Philippians 2:12-13**. You could put yourself in the place of Archippus and be considering what God could be saying to you

Miscellaneous Questions

- Q.1)** Read carefully the entire letter and maybe in a list show what is known of who Jesus Christ is. It is helpful to read **1:1-2, 13-20; 2:3, 9-10; 3:11-13; 4:3, 18.**
- Q.2)** Consider what is known of Paul in this letter. See **1:1-2, 23-29; 2:1, 5; 4:2-4, 7-8, 18.**
- Q.3)** Make a list of the important themes in this letter.
- Q.4)** What is known of the church in Colosse from this letter? See **1:4-8; 2:16-23.**
- Q.5)** How did Paul deal with the false teaching coming into the church to show that Jesus Christ was all-sufficient? The following verses are helpful to read: **1:15-19, 27; 2:3, 9-10; 3:11.** Can you see what heresies Paul confronted in this letter?
- Q.6)** Read carefully through this letter. Can you prove the deity of Jesus Christ that is Jesus Christ is God, from what is written by Paul? For further proof see **Psalm 1-4; Proverbs 30:4 Isaiah 9:6-7; Jeremiah 23:5-6; Micah 5:2; Zechariah 12:10; 14:3-4, 9; Matthew 1:23; Philippians 2:6-11; Hebrews 1:3; 1John1:3.**
- Q.7)** Is there any prophetic teaching in this letter? See **1:12, 22-27; 3:1-4, 23-25.**

Bibliography

The list of resources available will be helpful in finding out more about this letter. The author does not necessarily agree with the views held by the writers.

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