

Gleanings of Grace

Colossians 1

Lesson 12

The church in Colossae, as well as many others, had been threatened by the theology of Gnosticism. This theology was based on the wisdom of man. Gnosis means to know; an agnostic does not know. Their doctrine minimizes the role of Jesus. Paul begins this epistle to the Colossians, first reminding them of the change that had occurred in their life through the power of the gospel and then proclaiming the absolute pre-eminence and supremacy of Jesus. May the study of this lesson renew your awe of Jesus and stir you to *fulfill the word of God*.

OBSERVATION: Read Colossians 1

1. Read through this week's verses using both your Observation Worksheet (the last page of this homework) and another Bible translation or paraphrase. After reading through these verses, what would you say to someone if they asked you what they are about?
2. Key words help us to better understand the verses. We have listed below key words. Mark each one in a distinctive way (either with a symbol, highlighting, or some form of boxing, circling, or underlining). Mark each of the key words each time they are used in the text. Remember to mark any personal pronouns that refer to *Jesus, God, and Holy Spirit*.

Key Words: *Jesus, God, and Holy Spirit*
3. Scan the references to God, the Father. List four things revealed about Him.
4. Scan the references to Jesus, God, the Son. List four things revealed about Him.

5. The contrasting words *but* and *yet* are used two times in Colossians 1. Mark the words; choose one instance of their use and record what is being contrasted.

Background:

1. Colossae, the recipient city of Paul's *epistle* (letter) to the Colossians, was one of three cities located about 100 miles east of Ephesus. Read Colossians 4:13 and circle the other two cities on the map.



2. According to Colossians 4:16, what was Paul's intention for the reading of this *epistle*?
3. Colossae would probably never have been mentioned in the New Testament had it not been for the church there. The city is never named in the Book of Acts because Paul did not start the Colossian church, nor did he ever visit it (Colossians 2:1). However, Paul had *heard* about them. According to Colossians 1:4,8, what had Paul *heard* about them?
4. Acts 19:8-10 reveals that when Paul first arrived in Ephesus, *he taught in the synagogue for three months. When some were hardened and did not believe, but spoke evil...he departed from them...reasoning daily in the school of Tyrannus... for two years.* What was the result?
 - a. It is believed that it was at this time that the gospel was preached in Colossae, not by Paul but by men unnamed in Scripture. In what way does this encourage you to pass on what you have learned from those who have taught you?
5. Paul wrote the letter to the Colossians from a prison cell in Rome. During the time of his imprisonment, Paul met a runaway slave named Onesimus who belonged to Philemon, one of the leaders of the church in Colossae. Paul led Onesimus to Christ. He then wrote a letter to Philemon. What did Paul ask Philemon to do? see Philemon 1:12.
 - a. How did Paul refer to Onesimus at the close of his epistle to the Colossians? Colossians 4:9

- b. What can we learn from Paul's availability to be used by the Lord even in dire circumstances?

Read Colossians 1:1-8 - Loving Saints

1. Paul began this letter by identifying himself as not only the writer of the letter, but as *an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God*. It is believed that Timothy was with Paul, but Paul was the actual author of the letter. Although Paul did not personally know *the brethren in Colossae*, what did he say he and Timothy did *since they heard of their faith in Christ*? Verse 3
 - a. How has your love for others changed since you placed your *faith in Christ*?
2. The reception of the *gospel* changed their lives. They had a *new hope* and *fruit*. What *hope* do we have when we receive the *gospel*?
 - a. Reflect upon this *hope*. How has it changed your life?
 - b. What *fruit* has come from your life?
3. Paul spoke well of the believers in Colossae before he instructed them. How have you discovered this to be beneficial?
4. If Paul were to write you a personal letter, what might he say to you (what changes might he have noticed in your life since you received the *gospel*)?

Read Colossians 1:9-14 - Qualified Saints

1. Paul not only told them that he prayed for them; he told them what he prayed. Using Colossians 1:9-11, list Paul's petitions for them.
 - a. Write this prayer using your own words.

2. What can we learn about praying for others from Paul's prayers for the Colossians?
3. Paul moved from petitions to *giving thanks* in verses 12-14, expressing his gratitude that God has:
qualified us to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in the light
 - a. Record the words of Paul's prayer in Ephesians 1:18.

- 1.) Paul wanted them to know what they had because of their *inheritance*. What do you know you have?

delivered us from the power of darkness and conveyed us into the kingdom of the Son of His love

- a. Consider the *power of darkness* that you once belonged to. What was it like?
- b. Consider the *kingdom of the Son of His love* that you now belong to. What is it like?

redeemed us through His blood, given us forgiveness of sins

- a. Reflect upon the words of Colossians 2:13 and write a few words of gratitude that God has done this for you.

Read Colossians 1:15-23 – Reconciled Saints

1. As Paul considers the changes wrought in our lives because of the gospel, he bursts into an acknowledgment of who Jesus is. Scan verses 15-20 and list the plethora of characteristics of Jesus. (the list is long, but rather than sigh, rejoice that He is who He is)

- a. Only Jesus fits this description. Using the verses above, what is Christ's relationship to:
God, the Father

creation

the church

2. Colossians 1:21 begins with the words, *And you*. We are the needy ones. Jesus has met our needs. How did Paul describe us?
 - a. In what ways do you personally relate to that description?
 - b. Define the word *reconciled*.
3. In spite of the fact that we *once were alienated and enemies in our mind by wicked works*, what does verse 22 promise Jesus will do?
 - a. Rejoice in the words of Colossians 1:22 as you underline or highlight the words *holy*, *blameless*, and *above reproach*. What does Jude 1:24 add to this?
 - 1.) Using your own words, define *holy*, *blameless*, and *above reproach*.
 - b. Colossians 1:23 uses the words *if indeed you continue in the faith*. In other words, we are not saved by *continuing in the faith*. But when we *continue in the faith*, we prove that we are saved. What are some evidences in your life that remind you of the transformation God has done in you?

Read Colossians 1:24-29 – Transformed Saints

1. Colossians 1:24 reminds us that although Paul had not seen the believers in Colossae, he viewed his sufferings in prison for preaching the gospel as beneficial to them. He understood them to be a means of continuing the ministry of Christ, *for the sake of the body, which is the church*. What are your thoughts as you consider Paul's heart for the *church*?
2. Paul wrote of a *mystery* in Colossians 1:26. A *mystery* is something that had not been *revealed* in the past, but has now been *revealed*. What did Paul say about *mysteries* in Ephesians 3:1-7?

3. What does Colossians 1:27 declare is the *mystery among the Gentiles*?
 - a. Gentiles have equal access to the *gospel* as do the Jews. Imagine what it would have been like if you did not know the *gospel* was available to you and someone shared that you also could have *hope of glory* because of Christ. How do you think you would have responded?
 - 1.) What does Paul say about this in Romans 8:10?
4. Paul shared his goal in Colossians 1:28. What was it?
 - a. Using verse 29, describe his *feroency*.
 - b. Paul stated that he *labored*, indicating that he put forth much effort. Yet, he also stated that his *labor* was *according to God's working in him*. Record the words of Hebrews 13:21.
 - 1.) Explain how we are to *labor*, yet the power to do so comes from God.

REVIEW: Read Colossians 1

1. In what ways have you been challenged to pray for others in the manner Paul did?
2. What impresses you about the supremacy of Christ?
3. Share one thing that you have gleaned from this lesson that you will apply to your life.

And of His fullness we have all received, and grace for grace.
- John 1:16

Observation Worksheet

Colossians 1

Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God, and Timothy our brother, ² to the saints and faithful brethren in Christ who are in Colossae: Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. ³ We give thanks to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, praying always for you, ⁴ since we heard of your faith in Christ Jesus and of your love for all the saints; ⁵ because of the hope which is laid up for you in heaven, of which you heard before in the word of the truth of the gospel, ⁶ which has come to you, as it has also in all the world, and is bringing forth fruit, as it is also among you since the day you heard and knew the grace of God in truth; ⁷ as you also learned from Epaphras, our dear fellow servant, who is a faithful minister of Christ on your behalf, ⁸ who also declared to us your love in the Spirit. ⁹ For this reason we also, since the day we heard it, do not cease to pray for you, and to ask that you may be filled with the knowledge of His will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding; ¹⁰ that you may walk worthy of the Lord, fully pleasing Him, being fruitful in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God; ¹¹ strengthened with all might, according to His glorious power, for all patience and longsuffering with joy; ¹² giving thanks to the Father who has qualified us to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in the light. ¹³ He has delivered us from the power of darkness and conveyed us into the kingdom of the Son of His love, ¹⁴ in whom we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins. ¹⁵ He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation. ¹⁶ For by Him all things were created that are in heaven and that are on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or principalities or powers. All things were created through Him and for Him. ¹⁷ And He is before all things, and in Him all things consist. ¹⁸ And He is the head of the body, the church, who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, that in all things He may have the preeminence. ¹⁹ For it pleased the Father that in Him all the fullness should dwell, ²⁰ and by Him to reconcile all things to Himself, by Him, whether things on earth or things in heaven, having made peace through the blood of His cross. ²¹ And you, who once were alienated and enemies in your mind by wicked works, yet now He has reconciled ²² in the body of His flesh through death, to present you holy, and blameless, and above reproach in His sight-- ²³ if indeed you continue in the faith, grounded and steadfast, and are not moved away from the hope of the gospel which you heard, which was preached to every creature under heaven, of which I, Paul, became a minister. ²⁴ I now rejoice in my sufferings for you, and fill up in my flesh what is lacking in the afflictions of Christ, for the sake of His body, which is the church, ²⁵ of which I became a minister according to the stewardship from God which was given to me for you, to fulfill the word of God, ²⁶ the mystery which has been hidden from ages and from generations, but now has been revealed to His saints. ²⁷ To them God willed to make known what are the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles: which is Christ in you, the hope of glory. ²⁸ Him we preach, warning every man and teaching every man in all wisdom, that we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus. ²⁹ To this end I also labor, striving according to His working which works in me mightily.