

Colossians

“Introduction to the Epistle of Paul the Apostle to the Colossians

Colossians is another of what are called “the prison epistles.” These are the letters that Paul wrote as he was imprisoned in Rome around A.D. 62. (The other prison epistles are Ephesians, Philippians, and Philemon.) Colosse was a church that was not formally founded by Paul, as he had never been there personally. It was most likely founded by someone who had been converted at Ephesus while Paul was ministering there. Colosse was around a hundred miles from Ephesus. It was at one time a great city, but it was on the decline at the time of Paul’s writing and was destroyed shortly thereafter by an earthquake. The book was closely related to the Book of Philemon, and was probably delivered at the same time as Philemon by Onesimus. It was related to the book of Ephesians, which was written about the same time. But whereas Ephesians was written to teach about the church, Colossians was written to teach about Jesus. At this time in Colosse, there were several heresies that were sprouting up concerning the nature of Jesus. It would seem that there was a growing Gnosticism, combined with Jewish legalism.

The Gnostics believed that they had a special, mystical understanding of who Jesus was, believing Him to be less than God. They saw Him as a step in the progression from God to man, but they denied His deity and also His humanity. This mystical philosophy was combined with a legalism that held to the teaching that you could somehow earn status with God by keeping the outward rules of the Law. [i.e. probably the ceremonial parts of the Law, like circumcision.] Paul responded to this heresy by presenting Jesus as the Creator God, “By Him all things were created” (Co. 1:16). He declared Him to be completely God and completely man, as he said, “For in Him dwells all the fullness of the Godhead bodily (Col. 2:9). Jesus was God in a body. He wasn’t a spirit being, nor was He any less than completely God...The Book then goes on to give practical application of the truth of who Jesus is and forms a beautifully outline of the Christian life, centered around the Person

of Jesus Christ, God in the flesh.” [Comment by Pastor Chuck Smith in The WORD For TODAY BIBLE, New King James Version, p. 1565]

Colossians 1:1-18

“Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God, and Timotheus *our* brother, to the saints and faithful brethren in Christ which are at Colosse: Grace *be* unto you, and peace, from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. We give thanks to God and the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, praying always for you, since we heard of your faith in Christ Jesus, and of the love *which ye have* to all the saints, for the hope which is laid up for you in heaven, whereof ye heard before in the word of the truth of the gospel; which is come unto you, as *it is* in all the world; and bringeth forth fruit, as *it doth* also in you, since the day ye heard *of it*, and knew the grace of God in truth: as ye also learned of Epaphras our dear fellowservant, who is for you a faithful minister of Christ; who also declared unto us your love in the Spirit. For this cause we also, since the day we heard *it*, do not cease to pray for you, and to desire that ye might be filled with the knowledge of his will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding; that ye might walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing, being fruitful in every good work, and increasing in the knowledge of God; strengthened with all might, according to his glorious power, unto all patience and longsuffering with joyfulness; giving thanks unto the Father, which hath made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light: who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated *us* into the kingdom of his dear Son: in whom we have redemption through his blood, *even* the forgiveness of sins: who is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of every creature: 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.”

“We’re in Colossians this evening, chapter 1, Paul writing to this church at Colossi, close to Laodicea, Asia Minor. You read chapters 19, 20 in the Book of Acts, Paul as he was there in area of Ephesus had such a dynamic ministry, it said **‘The Word of God spread out to all of the surrounding regions,’** and no doubt it was in that time when Paul was ministering in Ephesus that this church in Colossi was born. It seems that Epaphras, and we’ll meet him in our first chapter, was the pastor there, by some of the grammar that it uses describing him. And it seems that he is a separate personality than Epaphroditus, possibly the same. But it seems a different personality. Paul is in Rome, in prison, chained to a Roman guard. This letter to the Colossians goes with the letter to the Ephesians and Philemon. Because Colossi was on a trade route, spiritual life in Colossi was a soup-pot of all kinds of crazy things. And there was a strong teaching that the material world was evil, there was a strong teaching that Jesus was a created being, less than Divine, less than God, a perversion of the Gospel of Christ, along with a Pandora’s box of other spiritual insanity. [Comment: That’s Arianism. To learn what this heresy was all about, which even now infects some parts of the Body of Christ, see, <http://www.unityinchrist.com/wwcofg/What%20is%20Arianism.htm>.] And Paul then uses 34 Greek words in this short Epistle we find nowhere else in the New Testament, as he talks of the magnificence and the beauty and the power and the Divinity and the Eternality of Christ, and he does a beautiful, beautiful presentation of the Person of Christ, certainly standing alone with the first chapter of Hebrews and the first chapter of John’s Gospel, of the Divinity of Christ. He’s never seen these Colossians. He’s going to tell us he heard of them. He knows of the fruit that the Word of God has been bearing there, and it is you know of course the Spirit of God moving on his heart, and to write this Epistle to them, which is very instructive and very passionate in some ways. He begins by saying, **“Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God, and Timotheus our brother, to the saints and faithful brethren in Christ which are at Colosse: grace be unto you, and peace, from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.” (verses 1-2)** He uses a very, typical of Paul, this introduction, speaking that his apostleship is by the will of God. He’s writing to a church he’s never met, he’s never stood among them, but there is a weight to the things he has to say. He says his apostleship, what he’s doing, is **“by the will of God,”** it’s according to God’s sovereignty and God’s will that he is what he is, that he is who he is. And no doubt they’re accepting of that. And again, he writes some remarkable things to them here. And it’s sad to say, within 30 years, as we read the letter to the Laodicean church in the Book of Revelation, because this Epistle was also passed on to them, there was such a turning away from

the truths contained here. Paul writing *'an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God, with Timothy,'* he says, *'our brother, to the saints,'* that's us now. Remember as we go through the New Testament, we have a strange idea of saints, and that can come from a few different places, but the saints are not on the dashboard, not on the front lawn, they're here sitting at church, look around, remarkable. *'...To the believers, to the saints, "and faithful brethren in Christ which are at Colosse:"* So again, two addresses, and you and I have two addresses, "in Christ" and "in Philadelphia." If you've taken notice, the majority of our problems are in Philadelphia, not in Christ. But we have two addresses, we're here in this crazy world that is disintegrating, but we are also in Christ in heavenly places. **"Grace be unto you, and peace, from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ"**, the typical greeting, grace always needing to be realized before we experience God's peace. Never peace then grace, always grace, then peace.

We've Heard Of Your Faith, Love And Hope

And from verse 3 now down to verse 8 he begins to give thanks, and expresses what he's heard about this church in Colossi, **"We give thanks to God and the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, praying always for you,"** and he's going to reiterate that, now here's why, he says, **"praying always for you, since we heard [he has never met this church face to face] of your faith in Christ Jesus, and of the love which ye have to all the saints, for the hope which is laid up for you in heaven, whereof ye heard before in the word of the truth of the gospel;" (verses 3-5)** So...and he mentions three things here, *'faith, hope and love,'* of course, which should be predominant things in all of our lives, **"since we heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus Christ,"** very important, not *'since we heard of your faith in Calvary Chapel.'* If you don't know Christ personally, and one day you stand before God, and he says to you *'Why should I let you into heaven [for the Kingdom of heaven]?'* And you say to him, *'Because I went to Calvary Chapel.'* It's going to go [loud buzzer sound], "wrong answer." No, he's going to say, *'Sorry.'* **"since we heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus Christ."** You know, the best theology, and this is just so present in my heart right now, because you know we're living in the days when so many people are falling away. We're living in the days that Paul said would precede the coming of Christ, when men would be turning away from

the faith, be lovers of themselves, lovers of pleasure more than God. He describes the apostasy of these days, and the aberrant teaching and beliefs that would take place. And people can argue about predestination and Five-Point Calvinism and Arminianism, and are you a Secessionist or do you believe the gifts are, you know what? The most wonderful and powerful theological position is a personal relationship and walk with Jesus Christ the Lord. [applause] Let everything else grow from there. [To see what those theological doctrines teach, see: <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Arminianism> and <http://www.spurgeon.org/~phil/dabney/5points.htm>] Paul said **'We give thanks, pray for you, we've heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus,'** not in an "ism", not in a system, not in an organization, in the Lord Jesus. Look, even not in people. You know I know most of your faces, well, that's not true, I know a lot of your faces [kind of hard to know all the faces in a congregation with multiple thousands in it]. I've forgotten most of your names, but I remember most of your faces. I'm just there, you know. But you know if you've been in the Church for any length of time, that one of the things the Lord will be faithful to do in your life is to crush your trust in Christians. Now, now in the good way. There's a good way it can happen, and there's a bad way it can happen, trust Christians. Certainly the Body of Christ is to be a place where we can be vulnerable, we can trust one another and so forth. But you know, if you start to look to man in the wrong way, God will let someone, a mentor, a friend, when that person fails, or that person demonstrates their humanity, sometimes young Christians are flabbergasted, they can't believe it. *'You mean this person that I looked up to is as **human** as I am!?' Where do I go now? Who do I look to now?'* The Lord Jesus Christ. **'Since we heard of your faith in Christ Jesus,'** Paul says, **'we're praying, we're giving thanks, and your love which you have to all of the saints.'** You know something supernatural is happening when you love all of the saints. When you love some of the saints, you're making progress, when you love all of the saints, Paul knows something's happening. And he's going to talk about it.

What Is The Hope Of The Church, Gospel?

"And for the hope" now look, it is an interesting grammatical structure, it says **"because of the hope which is laid up for you."** You know, faith, hope and love, these three abide [1st Corinthians

13:13]. But he says ***‘their faith and their love is driven and supported by and couched by and enabled to continue by, because of the hope that you have that’s laid up in heaven,’*** ***“whereof ye heard before in the word of truth of the gospel;”*** You know he says the blessed hope of the Church, it’s purifying, it’s sustaining, it drives us. You know, and again I’ll hear people say, *‘Well you know all this stuff about the 2nd Coming and the Rapture of the Church and the anti-christ and the end-times, you know, that’s fine, but people need to be grounded in the foundational things,’* and I understand what you’re saying. But you read 1st and 2nd Thessalonians and you realize Paul was only there for three weeks before he was driven out of Thessalonica, and you read what Paul taught them and what he spoke to them about, because Paul knew the power of hope. Paul knew the power of the Church understanding the blessed hope of the Church, that this is earth. You know, as we’re looking at the news, are we going to war next week? Are we going to go to war next month, in November? And if you and I are thinking about that, and it seems like we might be preparing to do that, well Saddam Hussein must be aware of that, he watches CNN too. [And he had a thing for CNN reporters too, he let them right into Baghdad, set up shop there.] What is he going to do, just sit quietly by, or is he going to preempt something against Israel to try to draw the Muslim world onto his side [he would have been smarter if he had done so]? We’re living in troubled times. You know again, my responsibility now is to say, *‘OK, next week we’re going to be in Colossians chapter 2, read ahead. And Sunday we’re going to cover this number of Psalms, and the next week we’ll be moving onto Proverbs.’* And I hope that’s one of my responsibilities until the Trumpet blows. But before this is all over, my responsibility might be to say, *‘OK, everybody with radiation burns, meet in that corner back there, some of our doctors are there. Everybody who hasn’t had any food for the last two days, please go to that back corner over there, everybody who has their mortgage paid off and can have two or three families move in with you please come up over here, we’ll be sneaking out that way over there.’* Well what’s in for us before we go? Well none of that’s going to touch the hope that we have. None of that is going to touch the hope that should keep us in the most difficult of times, that is keeping our brethren all around the world tonight that are persecuted, they’re living in unthinkable conditions, that keeps their love and their faith alive, because of the hope that we have, he says here,

The Power Of The Gospel, It Brings Forth Fruit

“For [because] of the hope which is laid up for you in heaven, whereof ye heard before in the word of the truth of the gospel.” (verse 5) Now, he’ll reiterate some of these things as he talks about his prayer for them, because he’s heard these things are laid as foundations in their lives. **“which is come unto you, as it is in all the world; and bringeth forth fruit, as it doth also in you, since the day ye heard of it, and knew the grace of God in truth:”** (verse 6) So, the Word of God, the Gospel of Christ, in and of itself, able to bring forth fruit. [Just what is the Gospel of Christ? See, <http://www.unityinchrist.com/misc/WhatIsTheGospel%20.htm>] And he says **“as it is [as it has] in all the world”**, well that’s the Roman world, the Mediterranean world, it’s the world that they knew. But you have to understand, that’s without radio, it’s without television, without fax machines, without phones, without publications, without *begathons*, without powerpens and powerpartners and power this and power that, [and also don’t forget, without the power of the Internet] they touched the known world, through the power of the Holy Ghost, and through the power of the Holy Ghost producing in them love, faith, hope. They touched their world. Imagine, you know this was 12 apostles and it was the 120 in the upper room, then it was the Church in Jerusalem that was driven through persecution out through the Roman world, they touched the world, without all of the benefits---but are they benefits, if we lean on them instead of falling on our knees?---but they touched the world. They didn’t have illustrations and overheads, but the power was in the spoken Word, and they touched the known world. [And I will say this, over all the technological advances of communication, the Gospel going out over radio and the printing press, coupled to the light of our good works, has remained the two most powerful media for promoting the Gospel of Christ. See, <http://www.unityinchrist.com/wwcofg/wearesalt.htm>] **“which is come unto you, as it is in all the world,”** Paul says. This is about 30 years since Acts chapter 1. [i.e 62AD] That’s not bad. **“and bringeth forth fruit, as it doth also in you, since the day ye heard of it, and knew the grace of God in truth;”** So the Word of God, the Gospel of Christ, as it is spoken to us, as we study the Scripture, as we’re taught the Scripture, it says it brings forth fruit. Peter says **‘You’re not born again of corruptible seed, but incorruptible, which is the Word of God.’** And that as the Word of God is sown, maybe you’re here tonight and you don’t know Christ, the Scripture says of itself that as the truths of God, the Word of God, falls upon human hearts just like seed falls upon the soil, and that when it hits the human heart in the right way, and the human heart is broken up, and becomes receptive to truth and tired

of this world, and ready to listen, that it brings forth fruit, here a little, there a little, line upon line, precept upon precept, how the Word of God brings truth in our lives. Jesus in **John 17:17** said **“Father, sanctify them through thy truth, thy word is truth.”** **‘Father, set aside their lives, take their lives and set them aside from this world, sanctify them with thy truth, thy Word is truth.’** Paul says, **‘You know, I’m hearing about you guys in Colossi, I’ve never seen you in the face, but as I listen, we’re thanking God, we’re hearing about your faith, hope and love, the kind of the fruit of the Spirit, the things that we want to hear, and we’re seeing that the Word of God,’** in a church that Paul didn’t start, in a church that Paul never visited, and yet a church that was growing, he said **‘That we’re hearing that there’s good fruit and that the Word is being taught and that you’re growing.’** **“As ye also learned of Epaphras our dear fellowservant, who is for you a faithful minister [diacona, deacon, servant] of Christ;” (verse 7)** So, this man Epaphras, it says **‘they learned,’** literally **‘they were disciplined by Epaphras.’** The idea is that of constantly teaching the Word of God and constantly sowing, **‘that you learned these wonderful things we’re hearing about, of Epaphras, our dear fellowservant, who is for you a faithful servant, faithful.’** It is required of a steward, Paul says, first of all that he be found faithful, dependable. When somebody says **“I’ll be there,”** they’ll be there. When somebody signs up for something, they show up for it. Servant-hood, when they say **“I’ll be there and do this,”** they’re there and they do it. **‘A faithful servant of Christ,’ “who also declared unto us your love in the Spirit.” (verse 8)** Evidently Paul had questions. Epaphras is in Rome, Paul says, **‘Well, what’s happening in their lives? Well what do you mean there’s a church thriving in Colossi? Well what have you been teaching them?’** because they didn’t have New Testaments, they didn’t have, you know, CD-ROMs...Paul said, **‘Well, what’s going on? How do you explain Christ? Yea, that’s right, and what if you said this, and what’s the warfare there in Colossi, and what’s coming against those ideas you communicated? Ah, tell me about the fruit you’re seeing?’** And he said, **‘Well, the love, we’re seeing the fruit of the Spirit, the love they have in the Spirit, the self-sacrificing attitude they have is reflecting the fact that the Living Saviour has moved into their hearts, and they’re reflecting in their own lives that self-sacrificing life of Christ.’**

Paul’s Prayer For Colossi

“For this cause we also, since the day we heard it, do not cease to pray for you, and to desire that ye might be filled with the knowledge of his will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding; that ye might walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing, being fruitful in every good work, and increasing in the knowledge of God; strengthened with all might, according to his glorious power, unto all patience and longsuffering with joyfulness...” (verses 9-11) So Paul now then moves in **verse 9**, into this prayer. And you know, I look at this, and I think, it’s a model prayer, certainly for those that we love, if you have parents that are newly saved, or parents that are saved but not being taught somewhere, or friends that have just come to Christ, and you know, you get on your knees. What should you say? How should you pray for them? It’s beautiful to see how Paul is praying for this young church, and you know, it takes me to task, because I look at this and I think, *‘How many times have I prayed for my 13-year-old daughter like this? How many times have I been before the Lord and prayed these kinds of things for my 15-year-old son? How many times have I prayed these for my 21-year-old son, my 23-year-old daughter? How many times, Lord please teach me to pray like this, give me that ability to pray the effectual, fervent prayer of a righteous man that availeth much.’* Look what it says, **“For this cause we also,”** *‘because we’ve heard about what God is doing here, we hear about the fruit of the gospel and what’s happening, Epaphras has told us about your love,’*

*Pray They Will Be Filled With The Knowledge Of His Will---
Have All Their Spiritual Ducks Lined Up*

“For this cause we also, since the day we heard it, [these are difficult words] **do not cease to pray for you,”** We say that about our parents, our friends, our children, **“do not cease to pray”**, and these are people that Paul hasn’t met, **“do not cease to pray for you, and to desire that ye might be filled with the knowledge of his will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding.”** (verse 9) The longing of Paul’s heart, and he tells us what it is now. So if you’re going to pray for your kids [or for your church, your congregation. Don’t forget, that’s what Paul was praying for here], pray for your friends, pray for those who have come to the Faith, and you’ve watched them recently saved, you know, they’re growing. And you

know what, pray for me this way too. **“that ye might be filled with the knowledge of his will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding”**, that you might be filled with the knowledge of his will. You know, *‘What’s the will of the Lord? I’m trying to figure out what the Lord’s will is, I want to know what God’s will is.’* Well first of all, you don’t have to worry about putting out fleeces, *‘I’ll put out a fleece,’* no, no, no, no, don’t do that. Ok? You’re not Gideon, where you’re gonna go out and skin a sheep in put it out in your back yard, and say in the morning, *‘No dew.’* We need dew, you know it’s been dry, got some rain later, so don’t put out any fleeces. You have the author of the Book living in your heart now. These are doctrinal things. Paul says, ***‘I want you to be filled with the knowledge of his will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding, I want you to believe properly, have all wisdom and spiritual understanding, that doctrinally your ducks would be in a row, you would understand the Truth. I want you to continue to grow in these things that I’ve heard that you’re hearing and being taught, that you might be filled with the knowledge of his will.’*** All that comes here [probably pointing to his Bible]. You know the Jew always knew that. The Greek was a hedonist, he’d go out and drink wine and have sex and do these other things, to experience so that me might discover truth. Even Solomon gets caught up in that. You know the Book of Ecclesiastes, ***‘I gave myself to wine, I gave myself to women, I gave myself to this, I gave myself to that.’ And at the end he says ‘Really, you know, in the final analysis, there’s one thing, and that’s to serve God and to keep his commandments.’*** Well the thing is, the Jew always knew that he didn’t have to go search experience, or explore the universe to try to find God’s will, he always knew the Truth was contained in a Book. And it is today. And the problem isn’t that the Word of God is not sharp, and it’s not powerful, it’s like Amos said, there’s a famine of the **hearing** of the Word of God. There’s no famine of the Word of God. There’s a famine of the **hearing** of the Word of God. The Word of God is everywhere. It’s on television, it’s on radio, it’s in print, it’s in the movies, everywhere. The problem isn’t that there is a famine of the Word, there’s a famine of the **hearing**, people don’t want to hear the Word. Paul says, ***‘I pray that you might be filled with the knowledge of his will, in all wisdom and spiritual understanding.’***

‘That You Walk Worthy Of The Lord, Fruitful In Every Good Work, Increasing In The Knowledge Of God, Strengthened With Might Unto All Patience And Longsuffering With Joy’

And then he goes through these four things. **“that ye might walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing,”** Now what he’s going to do, he’s going to say, **‘Proper doctrine produces proper ethics. Proper belief produces proper behavior.’** If we know the love of Christ, if we know what he’s done for us, if we feel our hearts cooling, we need to go and sit alone at Golgotha, we need to go sit alone at Calvary, and look up at that mutilate figure, that brutalized face, and his life running into the ground, his blood running into the ground. We need to go back, we need to sit, we need to look. Because that’s what we believe, that God Almighty died for us there, and he paid for our sins, and he loved us so much that he who knew no sin became sin, that we might be the very righteousness of God. And if that is engraved upon our hearts, proper doctrine, proper belief should illicit from our lives proper behavior, proper living. And Paul says that, **‘that you might be filled with the knowledge of his will, in all wisdom and spiritual understanding, that you might walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing.’** Now “worthy” is a word from the marketplace, *aksios*, again, **‘that your walk would weigh as much as your talk,’** “worthy” is to be put on the scales and weigh as much as. First thing he says, if you believe the right things, Paul says, **‘I don’t stop praying day and night, I’m hearing about the good work that’s begun there, I don’t want to see you derailed doctrinally, I don’t want you to start to believe some of these things that are being brought into the Colossian church, but I want you to be filled with the knowledge of his will, and wisdom and all spiritual understanding,’** **“that ye might walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing, being fruitful in every good work,”** “Being fruitful in every good work,” that our lives, God saying to us through the apostle Paul, that he wants our lives to be fruitful unto every good work. **It says that there are good works foreordained for us, that we should walk in them, for every person in this room that is a believer. There are good works foreordained that we should walk in them.** Why? Well, he says here, because “for the hope that is laid up for you in heaven,” that we will then be able to take our crowns and throw them at the feet of Christ the Lord. There are good works foreordained that we should, that then he will be able to lavish upon us eternally the rewards of serving Christ and bearing good fruit, and that then there would be an abundant entrance into the Kingdom of God ministered unto us. There is not a selfish motive anywhere on the part of God when he asks us for our lives, and he asks us to stop living in compromise, and he asks us to give him our all, because he measures all of that in light of eternity and in light of eternal values. And he knows that there isn’t

anything done for Christ in this world that won't last forever. And you can see a value system, that sometimes we get mucked up and muddled up in this world. And sometimes it's hard for us to leave go of what is tangible for what is intangible. It's sometimes hard for us to leave go of what is present for what is eternal, that God is always by his Spirit and by his Word begging our hearts, loving us as his sons and his daughters. He doesn't want anything from us. I have four kids, I don't want anything from them. I don't want their money, they want my money. [laughter] I didn't have kids to support me, I had them to go broke. I don't want to be left with anything left, I want to give it all to them. I don't hold anything back. He loves us more than we love our earthly children. He's asking that we would serve him and bear good fruit, not because he wants something from us, because he wants something for us. **“that ye might walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing, being fruitful in every good work, and increasing in the knowledge of God;” (verse 10)** And that is my prayer, to be growing in grace and in the knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ. I come back to passages in the Scripture that I thought I was fairly familiar with, and I see things that I had never seen before, and the Word of God never ceases to amaze me. That we'd be **“strengthened with all might, according to his glorious power, unto all patience and longsuffering with joyfulness;” (verse 11)** Now we want that, don't we?---power, glory, sounds good, doesn't it? Watch these guys on TV, *'Glory! Power! In the name of JEESUS! POWER!'* And when you hear all that stuff, what's in your mind? Besides, *'Turn down the sound and just watch this guy,'* what is it, and what is it in context with what you're seeing? Usually it's in context of a big offering and a second offering. [i.e. money-hungry televangelists] But it's in context with people getting slain in the spirit. But look what he says here, **“strengthened with all might, according to his glorious power, unto all patience and longsuffering with joyfulness;”** I need Divine power to be patient, I don't know about you, I understand this perfectly. Put me in a traffic jam, something supernatural has to happen in my heart at that point in time, to stay sanctified. [i.e. “practical sanctification.” There are two types of sanctification, “positional” and “practical.” He's talking about “practical sanctification.” see: <http://www.unityinchrist.com/corinthians/1st%20Corinthian.s.htm>] **“his glorious power unto all patience”**, that's Greek *hupomene*, *willing to bear up under situations when there's pressure...*and that's when we fall apart, isn't it? We need to bear up under pressure in situations the way that the Lord wants us to, that we'd be pleasing. And longsuffering, that is a word related to human beings. Whatever the first word is related to, “all patience,”

the second one is related to other human beings. And I get the idea, to be in this world that has six billion, over six billion human beings, and to be in this church of several thousand, you need longsuffering. And God wants to see it in your life. And why shouldn't we give it to each other, because who is there that is not the beneficiary of the longsuffering of Jesus Christ in our own lives? If this was based on perfection, he would have struck me with lightning a long time ago. 'Sorry, BLAM!!! Next pastor.' Everybody'd be in line for that job [laughter]. His longsuffering, his longsuffering, he desires to see it manifested in our lives, **"with joyfulness."** Now, you know, I don't put those words together, "patience, longsuffering and joy." In my mind I put "Leave me alone" with "joy." [laughter] "Let me alone," with "joy." "Continually leave me alone," with "joy." In the present perfect tense "leave me alone with joy." Then I'm joyful, just let me alone, let me sit, let me space out, let me be quiet. I don't put together "patience" and "longsuffering" with "joyfulness", God does, God does. You know, I'm not teaching this because I have it nailed down. I'm teaching this because it's true, it's the Word of God. So you can all remember to pray for me, that I would have patience and longsuffering, with joy. Ok? It's not a confession, I'm just trying to be an example to you, because I know you need the same things, too.

'He Has Made Us "Qualified" To Be Partakers Of The Inheritance Of The Saints In Light'

"Giving thanks unto the Father, which hath made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light:" (verse 12) 'Who hath made us qualified, who hath made us,' the idea is, **'he has made us into the condition where we are qualified to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light.'** He has done that, he's done that. Is there anything in us? You know, when the Lord descends with a shout, the voice of the Archangel and the Trumpet of God, whenever you believe that is, is there anything in us that defies gravity? Is there anything in us that's so holy that as soon as he gives us the chance, this mortal will put on immortality and this corruption will put on incorruption? **He** has made us fitted for this, qualified for this, to present us before his throne faultless, with exceeding joy. Paul says, **'I want you to know that, it's part of you, it's part of what I want you to grow in, giving thanks unto the Father, which hath made us qualified to be partakers**

of the inheritance of the saints in light.' *'Joe, why do you deserve to go to heaven [up to the Sea of Glass for the Wedding of the Lamb]?' 'I'm qualified, didn't you read my resume?' 'I'm qualified.'* I mean, why should you be in the kingdom of heaven, shining like the sun, like the stars of heaven throughout eternity, holy and spotless and beautiful and glorious, and a king and a priest? *'Well, I'm qualified, that's why.'* *'What do you mean you're qualified?'* *'Well I'm a sinner saved by grace. I went to Jesus, I told him I was a sinner, I asked him for his forgiveness, his strength to repent and turn away from my old life, asked him to fill me with his Spirit, and I'm qualified. I provided the sinner, and he provided the Saviour. We have a deal.'*

'I am qualified to be a partaker of the inheritance of the saints in light.' **"Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son:"** (verse 13) He has literally rescued us, he has rescued us from the power of darkness. Now whether you know that or not, you needed to be rescued from the power of darkness. Because when I was shackled by the powers of darkness, I didn't even know I was shackled. I was having a great time. *'Kill me a little more today, this is great, I'm dying, it's wonderful, if I die today I'm going to hell,'* I was out of my mind, I needed to be rescued. I was so deceived, I didn't know eternity was real. I was meditating, dropping acid, swallowing rags, I was out of my mind. [part of Indian Yoga] I needed to be rescued. It says that, that he's rescued us, **'who hath rescued us from the power of darkness,'** **"and hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son:"**, the kingdom of his "dear Son." He's taken us and rescued us. And you know, like ancient armies would take a people and displace them, and put them in another place, God has done that with us [but in a much nicer manner than those ancient armies]. He's translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son. It says today, we're seated in heavenly places with Christ Jesus, we are in Christ and in Philadelphia, two addresses. **"In whom we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins:"** (verse 14) And there's a definite article "in whom we have the redemption." **"through his blood, even through the forgiveness of sins."** So, no wonder he's saying, *'I thank God, because I've heard about your faith in Christ Jesus, and then the fruit of that, the love, the hope,'* and then he goes through this whole prayer, the things that are relative to that, that he's praying. And he's gong to say, *'All of that is in Christ Jesus.'* All of it's in Christ Jesus. That's nothing to be ashamed of. All of it's in Christ Jesus. You know the civil service in this city can sign any legislation they want, I am not ashamed of Christ Jesus. They can tell me that I am not allowed to publicly believe what I believe, I believe it publicly, I believe it privately, I am not ashamed of the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

And if it means they put me on the guillotine and take off my head, then that's what my head was made for, let it bounce on the ground and I'll go to heaven. I'm not ashamed of the Gospel of Christ. He says, *'All of this is ours, in Christ Jesus.'* And then he goes, I don't know, I want to take a lot of time here, but we'll hit it, and back up and run over it again next week if the Lord tarries, and if not you'll see it for yourself. Now what he's going to do, he's going to talk about his divinity, he's going to talk about the fact that he's eternal, he's going to talk about the fact that he's the Creator, the Sustainer, that he's sovereign, that his providence rules everything, that he's the head of the Church. He's going to say this to the Colossians because they had been demeaning the person of Christ. They had believed, believing less things. You know you hear this today, *'That Jesus is one of the ascended Masters. Oh yeah, I believe in Jesus, he went to India, he went to the Himalayas, and he sat there and got enlightened.'* No he didn't. It says ***'He went to the synagogue on the Sabbath as was his custom. Isn't this the carpenter's son, the kid who grew up in Nazareth with us?'*** He didn't go to India. He didn't go up in a saucer, flying-saucer. He is the Jewish Messiah, of the line of David, of the tribe of Judah, born of a virgin, the Jewish Messiah, Jesus Christ [Hebrew: *Yeshua haMeshiach*].

Who Is Jesus, Really?

Verses 15-18, Who is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of every creature: 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." And he is, Paul says, **"who is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of every creature:"** (verse 15) He is Divine, he is the image of the invisible God. Jesus said, ***'if you've seen me, you have seen the Father.'*** ***'In the beginning was the Word, the Word was with God, and the Word was God, and the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, and we beheld his glory, as the only begotten of the Father full of grace and truth.'*** (cf. **John 1**) No man at any time hath seen God, but Jesus Christ has displayed him. He is the image of the invisible God. *'Well*

what do you mean God, don't give me all this God stuff, where is he? Well God is inscrutable, you can't examine him, he's the invisible God. He's the invisible God, you can't see him. He's eternal, he's invisible. But he's done this. He's manifested himself. It says here, that he's [Jesus, that is] the image, we get the word "icon" from that, we get the word "impress" from that, like the king would take his ring and make an impression. It's almost as if God pushed his face into the material world and made an impress. Ever see one of those things with all of those metal nails or rods and you put your face in it and pull it out and there's an impression of it there? That's the idea, that God, Jesus Christ is the "impress" of the invisible God onto this material world. So that if you have seen him [Jesus], you have seen the Father. He's talking about his [Jesus Christ's] Divinity. He is what the invisible God is, in essence and nature. He is the image of the invisible God. When Adam and Eve were created, they were created in the image and likeness of God. What image? The image of God the Son. God the Father is Spirit, they were created in the image of a pre-existing one. He is the image, this One who has died for us, whose come for us, who suffered for us, he is the image of the invisible God, he's Divine, he is **"the firstborn of every creature:"** Now, Jehovah's Witnesses and the Mormons, and there are those who are going to say, *'Well, you see that, he's not God, how can he be God and be the firstborn? So he's less than God, because it says he's the firstborn.'* Well, if you look down in **verse 17**, it says **"And he is before all things, and by him all things consist."** It says in verse 18, he's **"the firstborn from the dead;"**. What, was he the firstborn from the dead? No, Lazarus was raised from the dead before him, there's others that were raised from the dead before him. ***He's the firstborn from the dead in that he is the pre-eminent, the only one born from the dead that produces life for everyone else thereafter that would be born from the dead.*** And here where it says **"he is the firstborn"**, it is **"he is the pre-eminent One of all creation"**. Why, **verse 16** tells us, "because" is the idea, King James says, **"For by him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible,"** and the idea is, in his person. It isn't just that the Father created everything that exists through the Son, that's not what it's saying. It says [in John 1:1-14] ***'In the beginning was the Word, the Word was with God, and the Word was God, and all things were made by him, there was nothing that was made that was not made by him.'*** It says, here, he is pre-eminent in all creation, he's Divine, but he's pre-existent also. He can't be the image of God, whose eternal, and pre-existent, unless he is eternal and pre-existent. And that makes him Sovereign or Divine or Pre-eminent over all created things, because all of those things were made in him. And **verse 16** gives us some interesting things, look it says, **"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:” ‘visible, and invisible,’ notice the invisible world created by him. **“created by him,”** notice, that’s a different word, it means **‘issuing forth from him,’ “and for him:”, ‘going to him:’** the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End. Everything was made by him. It was all made by him in such a way, that it all issued forth from him, and it is all ultimately returning to him. He is pre-existent. He is Divine. He is eternal. All things were made issuing forth from him, and all things are on their way back to him. That’s what our lives are all about. You were created for him. Not for your boyfriend, not for your girlfriend, your husband or your wife, for him. Revelation chapter 4 tells us **‘all things were created for his pleasure, were all things created.’** Not that he’s an ego-maniac. His pleasure is to fellowship with you. His pleasure is to exalt you. His pleasure is to cleanse you, and to wash you, and to redeem you, and to embrace you. He compares his relationship to us as that of a shepherd to his flock, or of a father to his children, or of a groom to the bride. **‘All things have issued forth from him, Jesus Christ, who is the image of the invisible God, and all things are on their way to consummating in him.’** You know, what’s interesting, the word “gospel” is used one hundred and one times in the New Testament. The first time it’s used in Matthew chapter 4, verse 23, it talks there about “the gospel of the kingdom,” looking forward to the consummation. The last time it’s used in Revelation 14, verses 6 and 7, it talks about “the everlasting gospel”, talks about from the beginning to the everlasting. So from the front it’s looking to the back, and from the back it’s looking to the front, the gospel of the kingdom gives us the blessed hope, the everlasting gospel gives us the foundation. And the Gospel of Christ has a sure foundation and a blessed hope, and in the middle it is built on the blood and the resurrection of Jesus Christ. What an incredible picture. [see, <http://www.unityinchrist.com/misc/WhatIsTheGospel%20.htm>]

Jesus Is Both Creator And Sustainer Of Everything

He says it’s happening this way because **“he is before all things, and by him all things consist.” (verse 17)** He had said that,

remember he said, **“Before Abraham was, I AM.”** He is before all things. And what it’s going to say to us is this, *(I can’t believe it’s five of)*...He’s saying to us, **‘He is God, very God, he is Creator, and he is Sustainer.’** It’s pointing to his sovereignty and his pre-eminence. Not only is he the image of the invisible God, not only has everything issued forth from him in his own creative power, not only is it all going to him in consummation, but this pre-existent one is also both Creator and Sustainer, **“by him all things consist”**, they’re existing today, by him. Sitting in this room, this floor, this carpet, this mike stand, you, the pew you’re sitting on, he’s holding it all together, he’s sustaining. His providence, effective in our lives every day. **“by him all things consist”**, the very structure of the universe, his work, presently. Again, you know scientists, when they study atomic structure, are astounded about the mysteries of it. They don’t understand it. Because in the nucleus of the atom you have a cluster of protons. Revolving around them you have electrons. There’s a problem there. Because protons should never be in a cluster. Have you ever taken two positive ends of magnets and tried to push them together, they push apart. If you switch around and put a negative and positive end together, they go together like that **snap!** Opposites attract. But if you put two positive ends together, there’s no reason for that nucleus of that atom to stay together. They don’t understand what holds it together. [They use the term **gluons**, an imaginary particle-force, that holds protons together. They’ve never seen this imaginary force-particle.] And the electrons have a negative charge, they’re circling around it, they should collapse right into it [the nucleus]. The protons should be blowing apart [which they do in a nuclear explosion]. Science talks about Coulombs law, repelling positive charges. So, atomic structure, a mystery. As scientists are seeking, you know, as they develop nuclear weapons and as they are splitting the atom, they’re working with anti-matter and protons [and now quarks], and so forth, they’ve discovered that it takes 600,000 electron-watts to separate one proton from the center of a nucleus, to drive a proton in there and separate the center of a nucleus. If you take one gram of protons, ok, do that tomorrow, just listen to me. That’s one one-hundred and fifty fourth of a pound, imagine how small that is, 1/154th of a pound, one gram of protons, and you put one gram of protons at the North Pole, and you put one gram of protons at the South Pole, that’s 8,000 miles apart, it will take 50,000lbs to keep them from pushing apart. You’ll have to put fifty-thousand pounds on each end of the planet to keep the one gram of protons from pushing apart from the other gram of protons, 8000 miles from all that dirt and rock on the other side. That’s how powerful the force is to push apart. Well what’s holding all of that together? Well, excuse me [laughter], **“he is before all things, and by him all**

things consist", they all cohere, he's not only the Creator, he's the Sustainer, he's actively holding it all together. We're told this in **2nd Peter, 'the day is coming, the Lord is not slack concerning his promise as some count slackness, but is longsuffering to us, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance. But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night, in the which that the heavens shall pass away with a great noise,'** so listen, the Big Bang isn't at the beginning [well, one was, it marked the beginning of the creation of the physical universe] it's at the end, you have to remember that, this doesn't all start with a Big Bang, it ends with a Big Bang. **'the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, the elements shall melt,'** that word's **"luo", 'shall be loosened'** whatever is holding them together, **'they shall be loosened with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up. Seeing then that all these things shall be dissolved, shall be loosened,'** the entire universe, when he lets go of it is going to be one HUGE nuclear detonation, 20 billion light-years wide. [personally, seeing this truth, which is also described in Revelation 20:14-15 and Revelation 21:1, this cataclysmic nuclear detonation now becomes the Gehenna fire described here. Ask yourself, how long would people condemned to the Lake of Fire suffer? Nano-seconds? Interesting speculation, which is all we can do at this point.] **'Seeing that all these things shall be dissolved, and the elements shall melt, shall be loosened with fervent heat, what manner of men should you be? Seeing these things are going to take place,'** it's an exhortation. The interesting thing is it takes more power, when you see the power demonstrated in a nuclear detonation, understand this, it takes more power to hold those atoms [proton groups] together than it does when you see them released. The power you see demonstrated in the release is not as great as the power that it takes to hold them together. And he's holding the whole universe together.

What's It All Mean?

You say, *'Ok, big deal, let's get the science project over with, I want to go to Friendly's, I need some ice cream that he's holding together.'* OK, look, wonderful. What does it all mean? Well you know there's a time for us to take off the sandals of our intellect, and to walk onto holy ground. Because ultimately what it means is that, this One

who is the Creator of all things, the very image of the invisible God, who brought everything into existence, and as Adam and Eve fell and sin entered in, instead of him just loosening the atomic structure of the entire universe right then, incinerating everything and going with plan-B, what he did, was he brought his impress onto this physical world. He entered into the womb of a virgin, he was born, the Creator, that could tell Peter to walk on the water, that could tell the dead to rise, that could cleanse lepers. None of that was anything for him. But because he's the one sustaining everything, what it means is that when the Roman soldiers put a bag over his head and began to beat his face, he was holding together the knuckles of those Roman soldiers that were battering the nerve endings in his own face, while he sustained that and sustained the pain of it. When they ripped his beard out of his face, he held together the follicles that ripped and shredded his skin. He held together the scourge that tore the flesh off of his back. He held together the iron in the nails that went through his wrists, and the thorns that went through his brow. He came into the midst of his own creation, sustained it, and then bore responsibility for the sin of it, and let it all come upon himself, while he sustained the whole thing. ***And in that he is just to grant forgiveness for anyone who will come to him, because for time and eternity he bore responsibility for the fall of his own creation, entering into the middle of it, sustaining it, sustaining it as it disfigured him, sustaining it as it brutalized him.*** I don't understand that. It's not for understanding, it's for the heart, it's for faith, it's for hope, it's for love. If you're here tonight and you don't know Christ as your Saviour, God, 'Ah, he's the guy up there with all the rules and regulations, can't do this, can't do that,' no, please, like you're gonna have to give something up for what you're gonna get in return? 'I'm giving up this Honda to get that Rolls Royce, really hurts me, I love that Honda. Giving up that shack to get that mansion,' giving up my pain and emptiness and sin, to get joy, forgiveness, love, eternity, giving up death to get life. God doesn't hate us, he loves us. He doesn't want anything from us, he wants everything for us. He came into the midst of his own creation so that we could see who he was. He said, ***'If you have seen me, I am the image of the invisible God, if you have seen me, you have seen the Father.'*** Paul says we see God, we see God in Christ, on the cross, reconciling the world to himself, sustaining his own suffering in some mystery that we'll never understand...[transcript of a connective expository sermon on Colossian 1:1-18 given by Pastor Joe Focht, Calvary Chapel of Philadelphia, 13500 Philmont Avenue, Philadelphia, PA 19116]

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