

Colossians

CHAPTER 1

PAUL, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God, and Timotheus our brother,

2 To the saints and faithful brethren in Christ which are at Colosse: Grace be to you, and peace, from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

3 We give thanks to God and the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, praying always for you,

4 Since we heard of your faith in Christ Jesus, and of the love which you have to all the saints,

5 For the hope which is laid up for you in heaven, whereof you heard before in the word of the truth of the gospel;

6 Which is come to you, as it is in all the world; and brings forth fruit, as it does also in you, since the day you heard of it, and knew the grace of God in truth:

7 As you also learned of Epaphras our dear fellow-servant, who is for you a faithful minister of Christ;

8 Who also declared to us your love in the Spirit.

9 For this cause we also, since the day we heard it, do not cease to pray for you,

and to desire that you might be filled with the knowledge of his will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding;

10 That you might walk worthy of the Lord to all pleasing, being fruitful in every good work, and increasing in the knowledge of God;

11 Strengthened with all might, according to his glorious power, to all patience and longsuffering with joyfulness;

12 Giving thanks to the Father, which has made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light:

13 Who has delivered us from the power of darkness, and has translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son:

14 In whom we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins:

15 Who is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of every creature:

16 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:

17 And he is before all things, and by

1:3,4 Some people applaud when sinners step forward to make a decision for Christ. It is more biblical to hold the applause until the genuineness of their repentance is evidenced by "fruit." See verse 6.

1:15,16 Was Jesus God in human form? The One who created all things and brought life into being is the Word of God, who became flesh in the person of Jesus of Nazareth (John 1:3,4,14). See Colossians 2:9.

QUESTIONS & OBJECTIONS

1:20

“I’ve made my peace with the ‘Man upstairs.’”

When people refer to God as “the Man upstairs,” they reveal that they have no concept of (nor living relationship with) Him. They will use such words because they feel uncomfortable saying His name. Often they will have a measure of reverence for God, but not enough to obey Him. Ask if the person thinks he will go to heaven when he dies. He’ll almost certainly say he will, and a little probing will reveal that he’s trusting in his own goodness to save him. However, the only way sinners can have peace with the God they have offended is through the shed blood of the Savior.

Therefore, it’s important to take the person through the Ten Commandments and strip him of his self-righteousness and his false sense of assurance of salvation. As you do so, you may feel bad that you are making him uncomfortable, but if you care about his eternal salvation, you must ask yourself, “Which is worse: a few moments of conviction under the sound of God’s Law, or eternity in the Lake of Fire?” Unless there is a knowledge of sin (which comes by the Law—Romans 7:7), there will be no repentance.



him all things consist.

18 And he is the head of the body, the church: who is the beginning, the first-born from the dead; that in all things he might have the preeminence.

19 For it pleased the Father that in him should all fulness dwell;

20 And, having made peace through the blood of his cross, by him to reconcile all things to himself; by him, I say, whether they be things in earth, or things in heaven.

21 And you, that were sometime alienated and enemies in your mind by wicked works, yet now has he reconciled

22 In the body of his flesh through death, to present you holy and unblameable and unreproveable in his sight:

23 If you continue in the faith grounded and settled, and be not moved away from the hope of the gospel, which you have heard, and which was preached to every creature which is under heaven;

whereof I Paul am made a minister;

24 Who now rejoice in my sufferings for you, and fill up that which is behind of the afflictions of Christ in my flesh for his body’s sake, which is the church:

25 Whereof I am made a minister, according to the dispensation of God which is given to me for you, to fulfil the word of God;

26 Even the mystery which has been hid from ages and from generations, but now is made manifest to his saints:

27 To whom God would make known what is the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles; which is Christ in you, the hope of glory:

28 *Whom we preach, warning every man, and teaching every man in all wisdom; that we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus:*

29 Whereunto I also labor, striving according to his working, which works in me mightily.

1:21 This runs contrary to the secular concept of man’s relationship to his Creator. We are alienated from God, separated from Him by our iniquities (Isaiah 59:2). We are His enemies, and our works are wicked.

1:27 Salvation doesn’t come from *what* we know, but from *Who* we know. Jesus said, “This is life eternal, that they might know you the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom you have sent” (John 17:3).

CHAPTER 2

FOR I would that you knew what great conflict I have for you, and for them at Laodicea, and for as many as have not seen my face in the flesh;

2 That their hearts might be comforted, being knit together in love, and to all riches of the full assurance of understanding, to the acknowledgement of the mystery of God, and of the Father, and of Christ;

3 In whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge.

4 And this I say, lest any man should beguile you with enticing words.

5 For though I be absent in the flesh, yet am I with you in the spirit, joying and beholding your order, and the steadfastness of your faith in Christ.

6 As you have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk in him:

7 Rooted and built up in him, and established in the faith, as you have been taught, abounding therein with thanksgiving.

8 Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ.

9 For in him dwells all the fulness of

1:28 Our primary task. A lighthouse keeper gained a reputation as being a very kind man. He would give free fuel to ships that miscalculated the amount of fuel needed to reach their destination port. One night during a storm, lightning struck his lighthouse and put out his light. He immediately turned on his generator, but it soon ran out of fuel, and he had given his reserves to passing ships. During the dark night, a ship struck the rocks and many lives were lost.

At his trial, the judge knew of the lighthouse keeper's reputation as a kind man and wept as he gave sentence. He accused the lighthouse keeper of neglecting his primary responsibility—to keep the light shining.

The Church can so often get caught up in legitimate acts of kindness—standing for political righteousness, feeding the hungry, etc.—but our primary task is to warn sinners of danger. We are to keep the light of the gospel shining so that sinners can avoid the jagged-edged rocks of wrath and escape being eternally damned.

My friend, I stand in judgment now,
and feel that you're to blame somehow.
On earth I walked with you by day,
and never did you show the way.
You knew the Savior in truth and glory,
But never did you tell the story.
My knowledge then was very dim.
You could have led me safe to Him.
Though we lived together, here on earth,
you never told me of the second birth.
And now I stand before eternal hell,
because of heaven's glory you did not tell!
(Anonymous)

"Each person we meet on a daily basis who does not know Christ is hell-bound. That may make some folks bristle—but it's a fact. When we refuse to warn people that their actions and lifestyles have eternal consequences, we're not doing them any favors. If everybody feels good about his or her sin, why would anyone repent?" *Franklin Graham*

"If they are breathing . . . they need Jesus." *Mark Cahill*

2:9 Was Jesus God in human form? Some may ask how Jesus could be both God and man. It has been well said that when God, the Creator and Sustainer of the universe, became a man, He didn't cease to be God. He created a body, and then filled that body as a hand fills a glove (Hebrews 10:5). See 1 Timothy 3:16.

2:16

Freedom from Sabbath-keeping

Some today insist that Christians must keep the Sabbath day, that those who worship on the first day of the week (Sunday) are in great error. They reason that “Sun-day” comes from the pagan worship of the Sun god, that Jesus and Paul kept the Sabbath day as an example for us to follow, and that the Roman Catholic church is responsible for the change in the day of worship. Those who continue to worship on Sunday will receive the mark of the beast.

Let’s briefly look at these arguments. First, nowhere does the Fourth Commandment say that Christians are to *worship* on the Sabbath. It commands that we *rest* on that day: “Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy. Six days shall you labor, and do all your work: But the seventh day is the Sabbath of the LORD your God: in it you shall not do any work . . . For in six days the LORD made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is, and rested the seventh day: wherefore the LORD blessed the Sabbath day, and hallowed it” (Exodus 20:8–11).

Sabbath-keepers worship on Saturday. However, the word “Satur-day” comes from the Latin for “Saturn’s day,” a pagan day of worship of the planet Saturn (astrology).

If a Christian’s salvation depends upon his keeping a certain day, surely God would have told us. At one point, the apostles gathered specifically to discuss the relationship of believers to the Law of Moses. Acts 15:5–11, 24–29 was God’s opportunity to make His will clear to His children. All He had to do to save millions from damnation was say, “Remember to keep the Sabbath holy,” and millions of Christ-centered, God-loving, Bible-believing Christians would have gladly kept it. Instead, the only commands the apostles gave were to “abstain from meats offered to idols, and from blood, and from things strangled, and from fornication.”

There isn’t even one command in the New Testament for Christians to keep the Sabbath holy. In fact, we are told not to let others judge us regarding Sabbaths (Colossian 2:16), and that man was not made for the Sabbath, but the Sabbath for man (Mark 2:27). The Sabbath was given as a sign to Israel (Exodus 31:13–17); nowhere is it given as a sign to the

Church. Thousands of years after the Commandment was given we can still see the sign that separates Israel from the world—they continue to keep the Sabbath holy.

The apostles came together on the first day of the week to break bread (Acts 20:7). The collection was taken on the first day of the week (1 Corinthians 16:2). When do Sabbath-keepers gather together to break bread or take up the collection? It’s not on the same day as the early Church. They tell us that the Roman Catholic church changed their day of worship from Saturday to Sunday, but what has that got to do with the disciples keeping the first day of the week? That was the Roman Catholic church in the early centuries, not the Church of the Book of Acts.

Romans 14:5–10 tells us that one man esteems one day of the week above another; another esteems every day alike. Then Scripture tells us that everyone should be fully persuaded in his own mind. We are not to judge each other regarding the day on which we worship.

Jesus did keep the Sabbath. He had to keep the whole Law to be the perfect sacrifice. The Bible makes it clear that the Law has been satisfied in Christ. The reason Paul went to the synagogue each Sabbath wasn’t to keep the Law; that would have been contrary to everything he taught about being saved by grace alone (Ephesians 2:8,9). It was so he could preach the gospel to the Jews, as evident in the Book of Acts. Paul had an incredible evangelistic zeal for Israel to be saved (Romans 10:1). To the Jew he became as a Jew, that he might win the Jews (1 Corinthians 9:19,20). That meant he went to where they gathered on the day they gathered.

D. L. Moody said, “The Law can only chase a man to Calvary, no further.” Christ redeemed us from the curse of the Law so we are no longer in bondage to it. If we try to keep one part of the Law (even out of love for God), we are obligated to keep the whole Law (Galatians 3:10)—all 613 precepts.

If those who insist on keeping the Sabbath were as zealous about the salvation of the lost as they are about other Christians keeping the Sabbath, we would see revival.

the Godhead bodily.

10 And you are complete in him, which is the head of all principality and power:

11 In whom also you are circumcised with the circumcision made without hands, in putting off the body of the sins of the flesh by the circumcision of Christ:

12 Buried with him in baptism, wherein also you are risen with him through the faith of the operation of God, who has raised him from the dead.

13 And you, being dead in your sins and the uncircumcision of your flesh, has he quickened together with him, having forgiven you all trespasses;

14 Blotting out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to his cross;

15 And having spoiled principalities and powers, he made a show of them openly, triumphing over them in it.

16 Let no man therefore judge you in meat, or in drink, or in respect of an holyday, or of the new moon, or of the sabbath days:

17 Which are a shadow of things to come; but the body is of Christ.

18 Let no man beguile you of your reward in a voluntary humility and worshipping of angels, intruding into those things which he has not seen, vainly puffed up by his fleshly mind,

19 And not holding the Head, from which all the body by joints and bands having nourishment ministered, and knit together, increases with the increase of God.

20 Wherefore if you be dead with Christ from the rudiments of the world, why, as though living in the world, are you subject to ordinances,

21 (Touch not; taste not; handle not;

THE FUNCTION OF THE LAW

2:21

Some may wonder whether using the Law in evangelism produces legalism. When the Law is used to show a sinner that sin is “exceedingly sinful”—that nothing can commend him to God—he clings to the cross knowing that he is saved by grace and grace alone. This knowledge gives the Christian the understanding that even after a lifetime of good works, fasting, praying, seeking the lost, etc., his “works” don’t commend him to God—he is still saved by grace and grace alone.

However, when the Law *isn’t* used before the cross, and a sinner simply makes a “decision for Christ,” he comes with a lack of understanding about the true nature of sin. After his commitment, he thinks that his good works, his fasting, praying, evangelism, etc., commend him to God. He is the one who thinks that what he eats, what he wears, and what he does become relevant to his salvation. He is the one who is liable to say “touch not, taste not, handle not”—the one who becomes “legalistic.” Using the Law in evangelism before the cross liberates a new convert from legalism.

22 Which all are to perish with the using;) after the commandments and doctrines of men?

23 Which things have indeed a show of wisdom in will worship, and humility, and neglecting of the body; not in any honor to the satisfying of the flesh.

CHAPTER 3

IF you then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sits on the right hand of God.

2 Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth.

3 For you are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God.

2:16 “I am no preacher of the old legal Sabbath. I am a preacher of the gospel. The Sabbath of the Jew is to him a task; the Lord’s Day of the Christian, the first day of the week, is to him a joy, a day of rest, of peace, and of thanksgiving. And if you Christian men can earnestly drive away all distractions, so that you can really rest today, it will be good for your bodies, good for your souls, good mentally, good spiritually, good temporally, and good eternally.” *Charles Spurgeon*

4 When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall you also appear with him in glory.

5 Mortify therefore your members which are upon the earth; fornication, uncleanness, inordinate affection, evil concupiscence, and covetousness, which is idolatry:

6 For which things' sake the wrath of God comes on the children of disobedience:

7 In the which you also walked some time, when you lived in them.

8 But now you also put off all these; anger, wrath, malice, blasphemy, filthy communication out of your mouth.

9 Lie not one to another, seeing that you have put off the old man with his deeds;

10 And have put on the new man, which is renewed in knowledge after the image of him that created him:

11 Where there is neither Greek nor Jew, circumcision nor uncircumcision, Barbarian, Scythian, bond nor free: but Christ is all, and in all.

12 Put on therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, longsuffering;

13 Forbearing one another, and forgiving one another, if any man have a quarrel against any: even as Christ forgave you, so also do.

14 And above all these things put on

charity, which is the bond of perfectness. 15 And let the peace of God rule in your hearts, to the which also you are called in one body; and be thankful.

16 Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom; teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord.

I am told that Christians do not love each other. I am very sorry if that be true, but I rather doubt it, for I suspect that those who do not love each other are not Christians.

CHARLES SPURGEON

17 And whatsoever you do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by him.

18 Wives, submit yourselves to your own husbands, as it is fit in the Lord.

19 Husbands, love your wives, and be not bitter against them.

20 Children, obey your parents in all things: for this is well pleasing to the Lord.

21 Fathers, provoke not your children to anger, lest they be discouraged.

22 Servants, obey in all things your masters according to the flesh; not with eyeservice, as men-pleasers; but in singleness of heart, fearing God:

3:3 "There was a day when I died, utterly died, died to George Mueller, his opinions, preferences, tastes, and will—died to the world, its approval or censure—died to the approval or blame even of my brethren and friends—and since then I have only to show myself approved to God." *George Mueller*

3:6 The Bible calls us children of disobedience. Children know naturally how to be selfish and lie. Rebellion is rooted deep in the human heart until we are born again and become children of God (John 1:12).

3:10 Feminists bristle at the Bible's statement that God made man in *His* image. This verse doesn't mean that God is a man, or that He looks like man (John 4:24). It means that when God made man and woman, He endowed them with a mind, emotions, and will. Humans are rational, moral beings with an inherent God-consciousness. However, in revealing Himself to mankind, God describes Himself in the male gender using terms such as Father, Son, Bridegroom, etc. Those who consider God to be female and call Him "Mother" are engaging in idolatry. To change who God has revealed Himself to be is to create a god in their own image.

23 And whatsoever you do, do it heartily, as to the Lord, and not to men;

24 Knowing that of the Lord you shall receive the reward of the inheritance: for you serve the Lord Christ.

25 But he that does wrong shall receive for the wrong which he has done: and there is no respect of persons.

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*For scientific facts in the Bible,
see Hebrews 11:3 footnote.*

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CHAPTER 4

MASTERS, give to your servants that which is just and equal; knowing that you also have a Master in heaven.

2 Continue in prayer, and watch in the same with thanksgiving;

3 Withal praying also for us, that God would open to us a door of utterance, to speak the mystery of Christ, for which I am also in bonds:

4 That I may make it manifest, as I ought

to speak.

5 Walk in wisdom toward them that are without, redeeming the time.

6 Let your speech be always with grace, seasoned with salt, that you may know how you ought to answer every man.

7 All my state shall Tychicus declare to you, who is a beloved brother, and a faithful minister and fellow-servant in the Lord:

8 Whom I have sent to you for the same purpose, that he might know your estate, and comfort your hearts;

9 With Onesimus, a faithful and beloved brother, who is one of you. They shall make known to you all things which are done here.

10 Aristarchus my fellow-prisoner salutes you, and Marcus, sister's son to Barnabas, (touching whom you received commandments: if he come to you, receive him;)

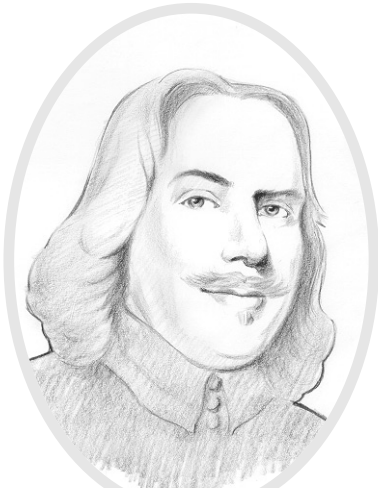
11 And Jesus, which is called Justus, who are of the circumcision. These only are my fellow-workers to the kingdom of God, which have been a comfort to me.

4:3,4 Paul asks the Colossian church to pray that God would open doors of opportunity for him to evangelize. Reaching out to the unsaved was the apostle's number one priority (see Romans 9:1–3). He often uses the phrase "as I ought to speak." He didn't see evangelism as a ministry only for people with a "gift" to reach the unsaved; he saw it as a moral responsibility, as each of us should. The only "gift" we need for evangelizing is the Holy Spirit, and every born-again believer has received Him.

4:4 Witnessing to telemarketers. If you are ever bugged by telemarketers, take the opportunity to share your faith. Simply say, "May I ask *you* a question?" Telemarketers will usually say yes. Ask, "Have you kept the Ten Commandments?" Then ask, "Have you ever told a lie?" Most admit to at least telling "fibs" or "white lies." When they admit it, ask what that makes them. If they refuse to call themselves a liar, say, "If I told a lie, what would I be called?" When they say, "Liar," ask, "Have you ever stolen something, even if it's small?" Be gentle and loving in your tone. Then say, "Jesus said that if you look with lust, you commit adultery in your heart. Have you ever looked with lust?"

Don't be afraid to inquire how they will do on Judgment Day—will they be innocent or guilty...heaven or hell? The worst thing that can happen is that they hang up in your ear. If that happens, you can rejoice that they were convicted enough to do so. You not only had the privilege of planting the seed of God's Word in the heart of a stranger, but you proved yourself to be faithful to the Lord, you conquered the fear of man, and now you can rejoice that you were rejected for the sake of righteousness. If they hang up, spend a moment in prayer for them. If they are open to hearing more, take them through the cross, repentance, and faith. Ask if they have a Bible at home, encourage them to read it daily, and then thank them for listening to you.

4:5,6 This is the spirit in which we should share our faith. See 1 Thessalonians 5:14.



"When thou prayest, rather let thy heart be without words than thy words be without heart."

John Bunyan

12 Epaphras, who is one of you, a servant of Christ, salutes you, always laboring fervently for you in prayers, that you may stand perfect and complete in all the will of God.

13 For I bear him record, that he has a great zeal for you, and them that are in Laodicea, and them in Hierapolis.

14 Luke, the beloved physician, and Demas, greet you.

15 Salute the brethren which are in Laodicea, and Nymphas, and the church which is in his house.

16 And when this epistle is read among you, cause that it be read also in the church of the Laodiceans; and that you likewise read the epistle from Laodicea.

17 And say to Archippus, Take heed to the ministry which you have received in the Lord, that you fulfil it.

18 The salutation by the hand of me Paul. Remember my bonds. Grace be with you. Amen.

4:12 Transforming prayer. "Prayer can move mountains. It can change human hearts, families, neighborhoods, cities, and nations. It's the ultimate source of power because it is, in reality, the power of Almighty God.

"Prayer can do what political action cannot, what education cannot, what military might cannot, and what planning committees cannot. All these are impotent by comparison.

"By prayer the kingdom of God is built, and by prayer the kingdom of Satan is destroyed. Where there is no prayer, there are no great works, and there is no building of the kingdom. Where there is much prayer and fervent prayer, there are great gains for the kingdom: God's rule is established, His power is directed, His will is done, society is transformed, lost persons are saved, and saints are enabled to 'stand against the devil's schemes' (Eph. 6:11). If that isn't enough to compel us to 'devote [ourselves] to prayer' and 'always [wrestle] in prayer' (Col. 4:2,12), I don't know what is!" *Alvin J. Vander Griend, "Your Prayers Matter," Discipleship Journal*