

Studies in Colossians

I. Introduction

A. The city of Colosse

1. in the country of Phrygia (now Turkey) in Asia Minor on the Lycus river
2. 10 miles from Laodicea and 12 miles from Hierapolis (would explain references in 4:13-16)
3. "The city received an Epistle because of the unique and insidious errors taking hold there, not because of its size. The site is abandoned today, near the village of Honaz."
(<http://www.enjoyturkey.com/Tours/Interest/Biblicals/Collosae.htm>)
4. "The dark red wool from the region took the special name "colossinium". The attraction of wealth and industry brought together a mix of Jews, Phrygians, and Greek traders." (ibid.)
5. at one time located on an important trade route
6. destroyed by an earthquake in the latter part of the first century and the people moved away

B. The church

1. when did it start?
 - a. Acts 2:10 – there were Phrygians in Jerusalem on Pentecost (interestingly, no commentators suggest that anyone there who obeyed the Gospel went back and started the church)
 - b. Acts 16:6; 18:23 – Paul went through there twice
 - c. Acts 19:10 – Paul was in Ephesus two years and the Gospel went into Asia during that time (Colosse about 100-120 miles east of Ephesus)
2. makeup of church seems to be a mixture of Jew and Gentile

C. The epistle

1. Acts 28:30-31 - written during Paul's Roman imprisonment, probably between 61 and 64
2. Colossians 4:7-9 – delivered by Tychicus along with Onesimus (cf. Ephesians 6:21 where Tychicus went to the Ephesians also)

D. Theme and specific issues

1. Theme: Completeness in Christ
 - a. 2:10
 - b. theme developed by stressing the following facts about Christ:
 - i. the uniqueness of His personality
 - ii. the completeness of His work
 - iii. the finality and perfection of His revelation
 - iv. relevant verses: 1:4,13-22,27,28; 2:2-3,6,9-10,15,17,19
2. why was it necessary for Paul to write on this theme?
 - a. there was a clear effort by some in the church to bring their former teachings into the church (sound familiar?)
 - b. 2:11-16 – example of Jewish efforts
 - c. 2:18-23 – example of Gentile efforts
 - d. in essence, we'll see an effort by some to return to Judaism, by some to turn to Gnosticism (explained later) and by some to return to worldliness
 - e. 2:18 – angel worship apparently an issue as well
3. Paul stresses the need to be satisfied with Christ and His doctrine
4. as we read, notice Paul's great concern for their spiritual welfare
 - a. 2:1 – "conflict" (Greek word, "agon" from which we get "agony")

- b. 2:4
- c. 2:8
- d. 2:16
- e. 2:18
- f. 2:20
- g. 3:5
- h. 3:25

E. Some applications

- 1. the kingdom exists (1:13)
- 2. baptism is a burial (2:12)
- 3. old law taken away (2:14,16)
- 4. instructions for new life in Christ (3:1-17)
- 5. our authority (3:17)
- 6. family (3:18-21)
- 7. tongue control (4:6)

F. Five divisions of study (Thomas B. Warren)

- 1. 1:1-12 – introductory matters
- 2. 1:13-2:3 – doctrinal matters
- 3. 2:4-3:4 – consideration of some errors, warnings and obligations
- 4. 3:5-4:6 – application of preceding facts
- 5. 4:17-18 – personal messages and greetings

II. 1:1-12 – Introductory Matters

A. 1:1

- 1. as he often did, Paul again shows his authority
 - a. he was an apostle
 - b. he was in that position by the authority or will of God
 - c. other instances of his noting his place as an apostle (Romans 1:2; I Corinthians 1:1; II Corinthians 1:1; Galatians 1:1; Ephesians 1:1; I Timothy 1:1; II Timothy 1:1; Titus 1:1)
 - d. why necessary?
 - i. to show that his work and words were from God
 - ii. because of the challenges that were often made to his position as an apostle (II Corinthians 11-13; I Thessalonians 2:1-12)
- 2. Timothy is with him

B. 1:2

- 1. why “saints” and “faithful brethren”?
 - a. were they not both saints and faithful brethren?
 - b. is there a distinction, a classification of two levels of Christian living?
 - i. no distinction
 - ii. no different than when we speak of a fellow Christian as a friend and brother
 - iii. descriptive terms are used here to tell who they are
 - c. descriptive terms
 - i. saints
 - A. most frequently translated “holy”

- B. means to be holy or set apart
- C. set apart from what?
 - I. the world
 - II. II Corinthians 6:17 – “Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate...”
- D. set apart to whom?
 - I. God
 - II. Romans 1:1 – Paul said he was separated unto the Gospel of God
 - III. “sanctify” is a similar term (Hebrews 10:10 – Christians are “sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once”)
- ii. faithful
 - A. faithful to whom?
 - B. God
- iii. brethren
 - a. shows the family relationship (Ephesians 3:15)
 - b. later in the verse, “God our Father”
 - c. Matthew 12:46-50
 - d. John 3:3-5 – we are born again into the family of God when we are immersed into Christ for the forgiveness of sins
- iv. these terms mean nothing without the two word phrase that follows – “in Christ”
 - a. holiness is in Christ
 - b. faithfulness means abiding in Christ
 - c. we are a family in Christ
- v. remember the introductory part of this lesson that noted the fact that some were trying to move the church away from Christ and into Judaism or human philosophies
 - a. right from the start of the epistle Paul subtly sounds the letter’s theme that we are complete in Christ
 - b. holiness, faith and spiritual ties approved by God are found in Christ and no other
- 2. grace and peace
 - a. the word “grace” has various definitions
 - i. typically we think of it as being unmerited favor from God
 - ii. here it seems that it’s used in a generic sense relative to all the blessings that God bestows
 - iii. he’s wishing God’s blessings upon them
 - b. with those blessings of grace comes peace
 - c. he’s wishing them good spiritual health
- 3. these blessings come from God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ
 - a. “Father” reminds us of that family relationship that Christians have
 - b. three terms applied to Jesus
 - i. “Lord” = “the possessor or owner of something” in this case, “of someone” – Christians
 - ii. “Jesus” = “Savior, Jehovah is salvation” (Matthew 1:21)
 - ii. “Christ” = “anointed One”
- C. 1:3
 - 1. “God and the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ”
 - 2. NKJV – “the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ”

3. “and” is not in some of the original texts
4. “and” is also translated “even” (see II Corinthians 1:3)
5. the letter will bring out more fully the relationship between the Father and Son, but this verse indicates that relationship

D. 1:4-5

1. the reason for Paul’s thankfulness and prayers
 - a. their faith (notice, “in Christ Jesus”)
 - b. love for all saints
 - c. the hope of heaven
 - d. faith, hope and love a familiar triad in Paul’s writings (I Corinthians 13:13; I Thessalonians 1:3; 5:8)
2. “the hope which is laid up for you in heaven”
 - a. “laid up” = “reserved” (see also I Peter 1:3-4)
 - b. this hope is in heaven, not earth
 - i. ties in with what he would later write in 3:1-2
 - ii. Matthew 6:19-20
 - iii. Philippians 3:20 (“citizenship”)
 - c. the source of this hope is “the word of the truth of the gospel”
3. what is the significance of the word “before” here?
 - a. the only time the Greek word is used in the New Testament
 - b. compound word meaning, “hear before”
 - c. he’s talking about the hope of which they had learned through the word of the truth of the Gospel?
 - i. is he saying, “this is the Gospel you have heard in the past”?
 - ii. or is he saying, “this is the Gospel you heard before the error that you’re being taught now?”
 - iii. in either case, he’s reminding them that the hope they knew was in the word of the truth of the Gospel, and not in man’s words

E. 1:6

1. the word of the truth of the Gospel that you heard is the same that is being taken to all of mankind
 - a. it is bearing fruit (necessity of fruit bearing in John 15:1-8; cf. Romans 7:4)
 - b. you have yourselves benefited from this word of the truth of the Gospel
2. you have been partakers of the blessings of God (consider the warning in Hebrews 6:4-6)

F. 1:7-8 – Epaphras

1. “fellow servant” = “slave together”
2. “minister” is Greek “diakonos”
 - a. also translated “deacon” in I Timothy 3:8,12
 - b. a servant
3. 4:7 – apparently a Colossian himself (“who is of you”)
4. Philemon 23 – appears that at least for a time he too was in prison for the Gospel
5. “the” is not in verse 8 so does not have to indicate the Holy Spirit

G. Brief overview of Gnosticism appropriate here as Paul begins turning his attention to dealing with this error

1. keep in mind that this error was not the only one troubling the church as they also had to deal with the Judaizers who were trying to get them to go back to the Law of Moses
2. Gnosticism appears to have been a hodgepodge of ideas brought in by those who had not fully left their worldly religions behind when they obeyed the Gospel
3. from International Bible Encyclopedia on “Gnosticism”
 - a. “A section of the church was dissatisfied with the simplicity of the gospel, and sought to advance to something higher...”
 - b. “It (Gnosticism, mg) involves, as the name denotes, a claim to `knowledge,' knowledge of a kind of which the ordinary believer was incapable, and in the possession of which `salvation' in the full sense consisted.”
 - c. characteristics of the Gnostic systems
 - i. A claim on the part of the initiated to a special knowledge of the truth, a tendency to regard knowledge as superior to faith, and as the special possession of the more enlightened, for ordinary Christians did not possess this secret and higher doctrine.
 - ii. The essential separation of matter and spirit, the former of these being essentially evil, and the source from which all evil has arisen.
 - iii. An attempt at the solution of the problems of creation and of the origin of evil by the conception of a Demiurge, i.e. a Creator or Artificer of the world as distinct from the Supreme Deity
 - iv. A denial of the true humanity of Christ, a docetic Christology, (which looked upon the earthly life of Christ and especially on His sufferings on the cross as unreal).
 - v. The denial of the personality of the Supreme God, and the denial also of the free will of man.
 - vi. The teaching, on the one hand, of asceticism as the means of attaining to spiritual communion with God, and, on the other hand, of an indifference which led directly to licentiousness.
 - vii. A syncretistic tendency which combined certain more or less misunderstood Christian doctrines, various elements from oriental and Jewish and other sources.
 - ix. The Scriptures of the Old Testament were ascribed to the Demiurge or inferior Creator of the world, who was the God of the Jews, but not the true God.
4. in the rest of chapter one and all of chapter two, watch for the following
 - a. knowledge is not restricted to a select group of Christians
 - b. Jesus came in the flesh (a fact that denies that flesh is evil)
 - c. the Divine nature of Jesus

H. 1:9-12

1. already mentioned in verse 3 that he had been praying for them, but here notes additional prayer brought on by something in particular
 - a. “for this cause, since the day we heard, do not cease to pray”
 - b. heard what?
 - c. Paul was encouraged by the report that Epaphras had given him of the faithful brethren in the Colossian church
 - d. the attackers were all around them but some of them had not given in to their error
2. the specifics of his prayer
 - a. knowledge of God’s will

- i. this is not the Greek word “ginosko” commonly translated, “to know”
 - ii. “ginosko” is part of the word
 - iii. it’s a compound word, “epiginosko” which suggests a deeper or fuller knowledge
 - iv. “It was a favorite word of the Gnostics who used it to designate the superior knowledge which they claimed as their exclusive possession” (Wuest’s, Word Studies in the Greek New Testament)
- b. wisdom
 - c. spiritual understanding
 - d. all of this is in direct contrast to those false teachers who were claiming a superior knowledge above and beyond that which God had revealed in the Gospel
3. what was (is) the source of this knowledge?
 - a. he had just exalted the word of the truth of the Gospel in verse 5 as being the source of hope and fruit bearing
 - b. by implication, it seems that in verse 5 he contrasted the word of the truth of the Gospel with what was being taught by the false teachers
 - c. so when he prays for them to be filled with knowledge of God’s will, for what is he praying? that they might fill themselves up with the knowledge of the word of the truth of the Gospel
 4. what comes with the filling of the knowledge of the will of God?
 - a. wisdom (James 3:17)
 - b. spiritual understanding
 - c. a knowledge of what pleases God
 - d. fruitfulness
 - e. strength
 - f. patience
 - g. longsuffering
 - h. joy
 5. God is to be thanked for revealing His will and for blessing His people with the ability to have this knowledge
 - a. “made us meet” = “equipped us”
 - b. God has equipped His children with what they need to enjoy His blessings in eternity
 6. summing up verses 9-12
 - a. Paul received word of the love of these brethren to whom he was writing
 - b. he knew the source of their love and hope and faith was the word of the truth of the Gospel
 - c. he prayed that they would grow in the knowledge of that word or will of God and enjoy the blessings that come with that growth
 - d. he knew the source of all the blessings was and is the Father
 - e. he knew that the Father had fully equipped His saints to prepare for eternity
 7. in the next section of verses, he will expand on that in proving Jesus to be, as he says in 1:15, “the image of the invisible God” and in 2:9, “in him dwelleth all the fullness of the Godhead bodily”

III. 1:13-2:3 – Doctrinal Matters

A. 1:13

1. “delivered” = “rescued”

2. what is the meaning of “darkness”?
 - a. Matthew 25:30 – used in reference to hell
 - b. Luke 22:53 – same phrase used, “power of darkness”
 - c. John 3:19
 - d. Acts 26:18
 - e. Romans 13:12
 - f. I Thessalonians 5:5
 - g. I Peter 2:9
 - h. I John 1:6
3. in what sense is this darkness powerful?
4. we need to appreciate what we’ve been delivered from (eternal darkness)
5. God delivered and also translated
 - a. “translated” = “to remove from one place to another”
 - b. when one obeys the Gospel, he is rescued from the power of darkness, removed from that darkness and placed into the kingdom
6. into whose kingdom were these Colossians placed?
 - a. that of “his dear Son,” or “the Son of his love”
 - b. not the kingdom of angels or the philosophies of men
 - c. the term, “Son” might cause some to think that Jesus is inferior to the Father
 - i. but the ensuing verses will demonstrate the deity and eternity of Jesus
 - ii. He is not a created being as some falsely teach
7. also note here that at that time people were being placed by God into the kingdom of Christ when they obeyed the Gospel – the kingdom existed then as it does now and is not some future establishment

B. 1:14

1. redemption (apolutrosis)
 - a. freedom as the result of the paying of a ransom
 - b. a compound word in Greek (“from” or “out of” a ransom)
 - c. combined into one compound word, the two words together mean a separation brought about by a ransom paid
 - d. reminds us of the term, “saints” used in 1:2 (those who are set apart)
 - e. Christians have been separated from the slavery of sin by the price paid for their souls through the blood of Christ
 - f. other usages of this Greek word
 - i. Romans 3:24
 - ii. Ephesians 1:7
2. forgiveness (aphesis)
 - a. a release from bondage, imprisonment
 - b. the root word means, “to send away”
3. “in whom” - one must be in Christ in order to have redemption and forgiveness

C. 1:15

1. “is” – present active indicative meaning that He is the image, He is the firstborn, He is alive
2. “image of the invisible God”
 - a. “image” means a likeness or representation

- i. Matthew 22:20
- ii. Romans 1:23
- b. context has to determine its precise meaning in a verse
 - i. example at Hebrews 10:1 where the shadows of the Law of Moses are contrasted with that which cast the shadows or that toward which the shadows pointed, namely, the Gospel
 - ii. in this context, Paul is not saying that Jesus is just a likeness of God
 - iii. contextually, he is arguing for the Deity of Jesus
 - iv. He is not a copy or a shadow but the very image of God
 - A. John 1:1,2,14; 12:45; 14:9
 - B. Hebrews 1:3 (Greek = “carakter”)
- c. Jesus had been in the flesh, a fact denied by the false teachers trying to influence the Colossian Christians
- 3. “firstborn of every creature”
 - a. is Paul saying that Jesus was the first of God’s creation?
 - i. some teach that Jesus was an angel and thus a created being and thus not equal with the Father
 - ii. again, the context determines the meaning of “firstborn”
 - iii. 1:16 says “all things were created by him” and 1:17 says “by him all things consist”
 - iv. more to say about these verses in a moment, but consider this:
 - A. did Jesus create Himself?
 - B. if all things were created by Him and by Him all things consist, and He is one of those things, then He would have to have created Himself
 - C. one writer said, “Jesus is before all things that were created through him.”
 - I. http://www.heraldmag.org/2001/01so_3.htm
 - II. that’s not what the text says
 - III. “he is before all things”
 - D. the New World Translation says this in 1:16-17: “because by means of him all **[other]** things were created in the heavens and upon the earth, the things visible and the things invisible, no matter whether they are thrones or lordships or governments or authorities. All **[other]** things have been created through him and for him. **17** Also, he is before all **[other]** things and by means of him all **[other]** things were made to exist.”
 - I. no support for “other” in Greek texts
 - II. man has to add to God’s Word to come up with his doctrines
- b. the Bible teaches the eternity of the Son
 - i. John 1:1
 - ii. John 8:58 (refer to “I AM” in Exodus 3:13-14)
 - iii. Revelation 1:8,11
- c. there seems to be general agreement that the word translated “firstborn” can have reference to rank or position
 - i. we would have to come to this conclusion based on the context
 - ii. since Jesus is the image of God, He cannot be a created being and to define “firstborn” in this way is to suggest a contradiction in just this one verse
 - iii. the usage of the term in 1:18 also sheds light on the meaning

- A. the “firstborn from the dead”
 - B. more to say about that, but suffice it to say here that Jesus was not the first one to be raised from the dead (John 11, et al.)
 - d. “firstborn” shows the preeminence of Jesus over every creature because He is God and not part of that which had been created
- D. 1:16-17
1. very simply, a created being does not have the power to create
 - a. Hebrews 11:3
 - b. yet these verses clearly that Jesus is the Creator
 - i. why?
 - ii. because He is God
 2. “by him,” “by him,” “for him” and “by him” can also be “in him,” “through him,” “unto him” and “in him” (notice similarity in Romans 11:36 where Paul says of God, “of him,” “through him” and “to him” or “out of him,” “through him” and “unto him”)
 3. “created” used twice
 - a. first usage is in the aorist tense which means it was done once in the past (Genesis 2:1)
 - b. second usage is in the perfect tense
 - i. literally, “all through him and unto him are created”
 - ii. it shows the continuous relationship of the Creator to that which He created
 - iii. Matthew 28:18
 4. verse 17
 - a. He is before all
 - b. by Him all consists
 - a. “consist” is in perfect tense
 - b. compound word meaning to bring together
 - c. all things were created by Him and all things continue by Him
 - d. again stresses the continuous relationship of the Creator to that which He created
- E. 1:18
1. notice repetition of “is” in verses 15-18
 - a. verse 15 – “who is”
 - b. verse 17 – “he is”
 - c. verse 18 - “he is”
 - d. shows the present existence of Jesus
 2. what “is” He according to this verse?
 - a. the head of the body, the church
 - i. head and body signify a relationship
 - ii. physically speaking, our heads tell our bodies what to do and, if all is working correctly, our bodies respond
 - iii. Ephesians 5:23
 - iv. the body
 - A. Romans 12:5
 - B. I Corinthians 12:13-31, esp. verse 27
 - C. Ephesians 1:22-23
 - D. Ephesians 4:4

- v. the church = the called out
- b. the beginning
 - i. John 1:1,2 – He was there with God when the world began, meaning that He could not have come after the beginning and been created
 - ii. Hebrews 1:10
 - iii. Revelation 1:8
 - iv. Revelation 21:6
 - v. Revelation 22:3 (if “beginning” here means Jesus was created, does “end” mean that He will cease to exist?)
 - vi. Greek word can mean the first of something or it can mean origin, the active cause by which something came to be
 - A. Revelation 3:14 – used that way here also
 - B. this is its usage in verse 18 (if not, there is a clear contradiction with the other verses)
- c. the firstborn from the dead
 - i. same word as in verse 16
 - ii. Revelation 1:5
 - iii. I Corinthians 15:20 – “firstfruits of them that slept”
 - iv. first to rise from the dead, never more to die
- 3. so that in all things He might have the preeminence
 - a. “hold the first place”
 - b. only time used in the New Testament
- F. 1:19
 - 1. transitions from a discussion of Jesus as God to a discussion of Jesus in the flesh in this verse plus verses 20-22
 - 2. “pleased”
 - a. “1) it seems good to one, is one's good pleasure 1a) think it good, choose, determine, decide 1b) to do willingly 1c) to be ready to, to prefer, choose rather 2) to be well pleased with, take pleasure in, to be favourably inclined towards one”
 - b. other usages of word when spoken by God regarding Jesus
 - i. Matthew 3:17
 - ii. Matthew 12:18
 - iii. Matthew 17:5
 - iv. Mark 1:11
 - v. Luke 3:22
 - vi. II Peter 1:17
 - c. each occurrence, including Colossians 1:19, is in aorist active indicative
 - i. Barnes' Notes on the Bible: The language implies that he was constantly or uniformly well pleased with him”
 - ii. Robertson's Word Pictures of the New Testament (on Matthew 3:17): “The good pleasure of the Father is expressed by the timeless aorist”
 - iii. could express the Father's eternal pleasure with the Son, the aorist tense giving the understanding of something that has always been fixed or factual (see John 8:29)
 - iv. could also express that it pleased the Father for the Son to dwell in the flesh
 - v. the latter seems to be the thought of Colossians 1:19

- vi. it was the Father's good pleasure that all the fullness should dwell in the Son
- 3. "fullness"
 - a. fullness of what or whom?
 - b. Colossians 2:9 (same word)
- 4. "dwell" – this fullness continued in Him
- G. 1:20-22
 - 1. while He was the fullness of Deity, He shed His blood, meaning that He was also in the flesh (Hebrews 2:14)
 - a. notice use of term "blood" rather than "death"
 - b. reminds of the sacrifice
 - c. Hebrews 9:22
 - 2. what did the shedding of His blood accomplish?
 - a. made peace
 - i. this is a verb and is the only time it occurs in this form in the New Testament
 - ii. through His death, Jesus made peace
 - iii. peace for our souls with the Father
 - b. reconciliation
 - i. similar to term just used
 - ii. "katallasso" – "to reconcile, return to favor, to change or change as coins for others of equivalent value"
 - A. Romans 5:10
 - B. II Corinthians 5:18
 - iii. the word used in this verse is "apokatallasso," a compound word which suggests an emphasis
 - iv. before moving from this verse, notice the emphasis of the whole verse
 - A. Paul speaks of peace having been made
 - B. he speaks of reconciliation
 - C. and he stresses how this was done
 - I. "through the blood of his cross"
 - II. "by him"
 - III. and again, "by him"
 - D. this peace-making and reconciliation could only be done by one individual, God in the flesh, Jesus Christ
 - c. release from alienation
 - i. they HAD been (sometime, formerly) alienated
 - ii. "to be shut out from one's fellowship and intimacy"
 - iii. again, a compound word, the latter half of which means, "belonging to another" and the first half which provides emphasis
 - iv. you were shut out from fellowship with God and you belonged to one other than God
 - d. release from being an enemy of God
 - i. further drives home the truth about one's spiritual status without Christ
 - ii. James 4:4
 - e. made holy
 - f. made unblameable = "without blemish"

- g. made unreprouvable = "blameless"
- 3. verse 22 again emphasizes that all this was done through the body of Jesus through His death (notice the repetitive, "the body of his flesh")
- 4. the blood of Christ made all of these blessings available
 - a. His blood was given so that Christians could be presented holy, unblameable and unreprouvable in his sight
 - b. these Colossian Christians enjoyed these blessings by virtue of their obedience to the Gospel
 - i. but now all this was being threatened
 - ii. false teachers were trying to persuade them that Jesus had not come in the flesh or that He was not God
 - iii. is it possible that they could lose all of these blessings?

H. 1:23

- 1. "IF" is a big word – there is a contingency here
- 2. the second word in the Greek is left out of the KJV - if INDEED or TRULY ye continue in the faith
- 3. "the faith" (definite article used) = the body of faith established by Christ through His death
 - a. Acts 6:7 – the faith can be obeyed
 - b. Acts 16:5 – Christians are established or strengthened in the faith
 - d. II Corinthians 13:5 – Christians must be sure that they are in the faith
 - e. I Timothy 4:1 – the faith can be disobeyed
 - f. Titus 1:13 – Christians must be sound in the faith
 - g. I Peter 5:9 – Christians resist Satan in the faith
 - h. here Paul says that they were to be grounded and settled in the faith so that they would not be moved away from the hope of the Gospel
 - i. what is the hope of the Gospel? (salvation, eternal life)
 - ii. Jesus came in the flesh to give this hope of the Gospel through His death
 - A. these Colossian Christians had heard this Gospel through the preaching of the faith
 - B. it was up to them to continue firmly grounded in the faith
- 4. as in 1:5-6, Paul reminds them that this is the same message that had been preached, which he himself had preached and which he was now preaching
 - a. the false teachers were the ones who had tried to change it
 - b. God had not changed the message nor had any of His faithful ministers
- 5. "preached to every creature which is under heaven"
 - a. some say this was Paul using an exaggeration
 - b. others say that it represents the fact that all of mankind, both Jew and Gentile, were having the Gospel preached to them
 - c. still others say that the Gospel literally went around the world
 - d. David Lipscomb – "It seems strange that at that time the gospel had been preached among all the nations, but if we consider the earnest character of the Christians, who gloried in persecution and death for Christ's sake, it will not seem so strange. The greatest hindrance to the gospel in our day is the lukewarm and indifferent character of professed Christians. Personal consecration and devotion are the great needs to spread the gospel abroad. (The motive of Paul here is at once to emphasize the universality of the gospel, which had been offered without reserve to all alike, hence he warns the Colossians not to be led by false

teachers into a course contrary to the gospel.”)

I. 1:24

1. this Gospel, the faith, of which Paul was a minister, had cost him dearly
 - a. he had suffered for them and for all Gentile Christians
 - i. Acts 9:15-16
 - ii. Romans 11:13
 - b. he's not saying that the afflictions that Christ suffered were lacking
 - c. he's talking about what he had experienced in his body, i.e., the afflictions of Christ that he endured
 - d. seems to be saying that he has gladly suffered for Christ and that he is aware that these sufferings will continue
 - e. the context bears out that these Christians were themselves suffering for the faith
 - f. Paul wants them to endure as he has
2. again, as in 1:18, the body is referred to as the church

J. 1:25

1. another reminder, like in 1:1, of Paul's Divine authorization to preach
2. "dispensation" also translated "stewardship"
3. Acts 26:16-18 – Paul's commission
4. he was given this responsibility with the task of fulfilling it
5. alternate reading of end of verse is, "fully to preach the word of God"
 - a. Romans 15:19
 - b. Acts 20:20,26-27

K. 1:26

1. mystery
 - a. the word indicates nothing more than something that is hidden
 - i. when something is revealed, it's no longer a mystery or hidden
 - ii. the rest of the verse says that was ("made manifest" is aorist) revealed
 - iii. verse 27 says God made it known (aorist tense)
 - b. I Peter 1:9-12 sheds light on what the mystery was
 - c. the New Testament reveals the prophecies or mysteries of the Old Testament
 - d. II Corinthians 3:12-16 – why some do not see this
 - e. Matthew 13:10-13
 - i. why could some not know the mysteries even though they were being revealed?
 - ii. John 5:38,39
 - f. the mystery had been hidden from ages and from generations
 - i. Acts 1:7 – an eternal principle
 - ii. Galatians 4:4 – God's timeframe
2. here's how this fits into this context
 - a. apparently some were claiming to have superior knowledge and that only a chosen few could have that superior knowledge
 - b. Paul acknowledges that something had been hidden that needed to be revealed, but rather than saying it had been revealed only to a chosen few with special knowledge, he says that it has been manifested and made known to all saints

L. 1:27

1. the riches of the glory of this mystery were available to all
2. Christ, the hope of glory is the culmination of this mystery

M. 1:28-29

1. He's the one whom Paul preached
2. look at what Paul wanted to do
 - a. he wanted to present every man perfect or complete in Christ Jesus
 - b. 1:22 says that Jesus gave His life for the purpose of presenting man holy and unblameable and unproveable
 - c. in other words, Paul had the same goal in preaching as Jesus did in giving His life

N. 2:1

1. "conflict" shows how disturbed Paul was by what was happening in that area
 - a. "agon" (Strong's G73) – "an assembly, especially an assembly met to see games, the place of contest, the arena or stadium, the assembly of the Greeks at their national games, a struggle or contest, a battle"
 - b. other usages
 - i. I Thessalonians 2:2 ("contention")
 - ii. I Timothy 6:12 ("fight" – noun)
 - iii. II Timothy 4:7 ("fight")
 - iv. Hebrews 12:1 ("race")
 - v. Colossians 4:12 – the verb form is translated "laboring fervently"
 - c. ASV – "For I would have you know how greatly I strive for you"
 - d. he had just used the verb form in 1:29 – "striving according to his working"
 - e. just as he had exerted great effort in the spreading of the Gospel, he was exerting great emotional strain in his concern over these brethren
 - f. reminds us of II Corinthians 11:28
 - g. Paul did not want anyone to be lost
 - h. he shows a special concern here for those who had obeyed the truth and were being tempted to go back into the world
2. it would seem that he had not personally met these brethren, although he had been in the area at one time (Acts 16:6; 18:3)

O. 2:2-3

1. continuous exhortation as to how they can withstand the false teaching and the pressures from those advocating it
 - a. "knit together in love"
 - b. rely on the knowledge of the truth that has been revealed by God and Christ for therein lies the true treasures of wisdom and knowledge
2. some suggest that the Gnostic error is not being treated in Colossians, but these two verses seem to indicate otherwise
 - a. Gnostics claimed to have a special or superior knowledge
 - b. look at the words Paul uses
 - i. "full assurance"
 - ii. "understanding"
 - iii. "acknowledgement" (compound word, "epignosis" that emphasizes one's knowledge of something)

- iv. “wisdom”
- v. “knowledge”
- c. there was indeed a mystery
 - i. that mystery was hidden with God
 - ii. but that mystery had been revealed and all could know it, not just a select few
- 3. “all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge”
 - a. if we want to gain wisdom and knowledge, to whom should we turn?
 - b. James 1:5-8

IV. 2:4-3:4 – Consideration of Some Errors, Warnings and Obligations

A. 2:4

1. he had just written to them about the fact that all wisdom and knowledge is found with the Lord
2. this verse gives his reason for saying that
3. “beguile”
 - a. “to reckon wrong, to reason falsely, to deceive by false reasoning, to delude”
 - b. “deceiving” in James 1:22
4. “enticing words”
 - a. compound word in Greek meaning speech designed to persuade
 - b. only time the word is used in New Testament
 - c. could have a positive connotation but here it does not
5. he’s warning them against those who were persuasive individuals and who could craft their words in such a way to make them believable
6. they didn’t have to be beguiled
 - a. that’s why Paul was writing to them
 - b. knowledge is the solution to the problem of people being dragged off into error through persuasive speakers and their error

B. 2:5

1. certainly if Paul had been with them he would have spoken out against these false teachers directly
2. the challenge before them was whose words they would believe
3. Paul again reminds them of the fondness he had for them and the relationship they had in Christ
4. they had been exhibiting strength in the faith and in their battle against error
5. “I am with you in spirit” – words of encouragement to keep in order (stand as one) and be steadfast (firmly grounded) in their faith in Christ

C. 2:6-7

1. how had they received Christ?
 - a. not like the denominational concept of “receiving Christ into your heart”
 - b. they had received Christ by the hearing of the Word
 - i. they must continue in that same Word that showed them Christ, not someone else’s word
 - ii. I Corinthians 11:23
 - iii. I Corinthians 15:1,3
 - iii. Galatians 1:9,12
 - iv. I Thessalonians 2:13
 - c. they had received Him through the Word

2. they could walk with Him by following His Word
 - a. “walk” is imperative, meaning it’s a command
 - b. again, you did not learn of Christ by means of the enticing words of those now tempting you
 - c. you learned of Christ through the truth spoken by Paul, by Epaphras and others who had adhered to that truth
 - d. that truth has brought you all of your blessings
 - e. if you want to walk in fellowship with Christ, you must walk in His truth, and not in the words of men
 3. verse 7 continues this thought
 - a. walk with Him, being rooted and built up IN HIM, established in THE faith (remember 1:23)
 - b. again reminds them that this is what they had been taught and obeyed and enjoyed the blessings from as opposed to what they were now being taught by some
 - c. thanksgiving for these blessings that were only in Christ
 4. A.T. Robertson in “Robertson’s Word Pictures of the New Testament” points out that this phrase, “Christ Jesus the Lord” is used only in this verse
 - a. in English, II Corinthians 4:5 uses it
 - b. but this particular phrase is unique
 - c. “the Christ Jesus the Lord”
 - i. He is the Christ, referencing His deity
 - ii. the name, “Jesus” references His humanity
 - iii. being the Lord, He is the one who should be the master and leader and no one else
- D. 2:8
1. another warning
 - a. Greek word for “beware” is most commonly translated “see”
 - b. open your eyes and discern between what you have been taught in Christ and what you are now being taught by some
 - c. knowledge is the enemy of error
 2. “spoil”
 - a. “to carry one off as a captive”
 - b. NKJV = “cheat”
 3. methods they will use to lead you away from Christ
 - a. philosophy
 - i. “love of wisdom”
 - A. nothing wrong with loving wisdom
 - B. the error is in placing the “wisdom” that man taught above the wisdom in Christ as referred to in 2:3
 - ii. “It is worth observing that this word, which to the Greeks denotes the highest effort of the intellect.” (John Lightfoot)
 - iii. Acts 17:18 – philosophers
 - b. vain deceit
 - c. tradition of men
 - d. rudiments of the world (first principles of worldliness)
 4. the key phrase is, “AND NOT AFTER CHRIST”
 - a. these are the methods being used by the false teachers

b. each of them is opposed to Christ

E. 2:9-15

1. these verses demonstrate why they should listen to the words of Christ rather than the words of men

2. verse 9

a. “for” is correctly translated, but it can also be translated, “since, that, because”

i. “because” would make sense here

ii. why should the readers beware of following the errors of verse 8 instead of Christ?

iii. because “in him dwelleth...”

b. “dwelleth” is same word as “dwell” in 1:19

c. “fulness” the same as 1:19

i. same Greek construction, “all the fulness”

ii. notice the emphasis, that it is ALL the fulness

iii. on the surface seems redundant but he’s reminding them of the completeness that is in Christ and in the next verse will come right out and tell them that they are complete in Christ

d. “the Godhead”

i. very similar Greek word translated “Godhead” in Romans 1:20

A. the root word is translated “Godhead” in Acts 17:29

B. root word translated “divine” in II Peter 1:3,4

ii. this is a different word though

A. the word in Romans 1:20 is defined as “divine nature” while the word here is defined as “the state of being God”

B. only time this Greek word is used in the New Testament

C. Richard Trench in “Trench’s Synonyms of the New Testament” discusses the distinction: “We have rendered both by ‘Godhead;’ yet they must not be regarded as identical in meaning, nor even as two different forms of the same word... Comparing the two passages where they severally occur, we shall at once perceive the fitness of the employment of one word in one, of the other in the other. In the first (Rom. 1:20) Paul is declaring how much of God may be known from the revelation of Himself which He has made in nature... Yet it is not the personal God whom any man may learn to know by these aids: He can be known only by the revelation of Himself in his Son... But in the second passage (Col. 2:9) Paul is declaring that in the Son there dwells all the fulness of absolute Godhead; they were no mere rays of divine glory which gilded Him, lighting up his person for a season and with a splendour not his own; but He was, and is, absolute and perfect God; and the Apostle uses θεότης to express this essential and personal Godhead of the Son...”

D. while the root word for that translated “Godhead” in Romans 1:20 had reference to the divine nature, the root word for this term in Colossians 2:9 is “theos” or “God”

e. “bodily”

i. in the flesh

ii. this fact lies behind everything that Paul wrote, everything that is said in the Bible, about the bodily sacrifice of the Christ

3. verse 10

- a. “complete” and “fulness” in 2:9 are from same root word
 - i. you don’t need anyone other than Christ
 - ii. you are who you are spiritually because of Him
 - iii. the philosophies and traditions of the world have done nothing for you spiritually
 - b. “the head”
 - i. Christ is superior to those things in verse 8
 - ii. also in 1:18
 - A. there He is the head of the church
 - B. here He is head over all
 - I. “principality” is same word translated “beginning” in 1:18
 - A. any argument about Jesus being the beginning or first of the things created should end with this verse
 - B. He is the head of the beginning
 - II. “power” is same word translated in Matthew 28:18
4. verse 11
 - a. now Paul begins a series of statements designed to offset the error of the Judaizers
 - i. the reference to circumcision
 - ii. later in 2:16, the Sabbath and other religious days
 - b. abuses of this verse
 - i. those who say that baptism is the New Testament version of circumcision (those who argue for “baptizing” babies use this)
 - ii. those who say that as circumcision was a sign of being in covenant with God, so also is baptism a sign that one has been saved
 - iii. both views center around the idea that circumcision is equivalent to baptism
 - c. other references to circumcision in the New Testament after the church began
 - i. Romans 2:25-29 (reference Romans 3:1,2 and note that the definite article is used {“the circumcision”} in reference to Jews and not in a way commending advantages of literal circumcision)
 - A. “the circumcision” used in Acts 10:45 and 11:2 to refer to Jews
 - B. “the UNcircumcision” used in Galatians 2:7 and Ephesians 2:11
 - ii. most of the time, when speaking of the physical act, circumcision is presented in a negative light after Acts 2
 - A. Acts 15
 - B. Romans 4:10
 - C. I Corinthians 7:19
 - D. Galatians 5:2,3,6,11; 6:15
 - iii. there is a figurative use of the term and a literal use of the term
 - A. the literal use of the term was used to represent Judaism and the law of Moses as a whole, specifically, the doctrines of those who wanted Christians to go back and keep the old law
 - B. the figurative use of the term is in Colossians 2:11
 - d. the idea here is that something was put off
 - i. in physical circumcision, it was a putting off or cutting off a piece of the physical body
 - ii. in this circumcision, it is a putting off or cutting off of the whole body, namely, the body of

sin

iii. NIV, New Living Translation and Today's NIV err greatly in translating this phrase, "putting off of the sinful nature"

e. how was sin cut off?

i. by the circumcision of Christ or Christ's circumcision

ii. what is Christ's circumcision?

iii. verse 12 begins with a participial phrase that runs parallel to what has just been said

5. verse 12

a. buried with Him in baptism is written in a way that it is in conjunction with "ye are circumcised" in verse 11

b. their spiritual circumcision was accomplished when they were buried with Christ in baptism

c. when they were buried with Christ in baptism, the body of the sins of the flesh was put off

d. Romans 6:3ff (<http://www.apologeticspress.org/APContent.aspx?category=108&article=1232>)

Romans 6	Colossians 2&3
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• (6:2) "we died"• (6:8) "we died with Christ"• (6:4) "buried with Him/baptism"• (6:4) "Christ raised from dead"• (6:4) "Walk in newness of life"• (6:2) "live any longer in it"• (6:4) "Walk in newness of life"	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• (3:3) "you died"• (2:20) "you died with Christ"• (2:12) "buried with Him/baptism"• (2:12) "raised Him from dead"• (3:5) "put to death your members"• (3:7) "when you lived in them"• (3:1) "Seek things above"

e. that this is immersion in water is evident

i. it is a burial

ii. it is an element out of which they had been risen (cannot be immersion in the Holy Spirit)

f. "through the faith of the operation of God" or "working" of God

i. I Peter 3:21

ii. faith is involved, which excludes babies

iii. involves knowledge of what one is doing, specifically, that this immersion is a putting off of sin

g. we are able to die to sin because Christ died in the flesh

h. we are able to rise up in newness of life because of Christ's resurrection

6. verse 13

a. continues the thought

b. you were dead in your sins

c. Christ made you alive and forgave you of your past sins

d. "sins" and "trespasses" are from the same Greek word

i. latter usage includes "all"

ii. emphasizes the completeness of forgiveness in Christ

iii. no need for returning to the old law

e. you were made alive with Him while at the same time you were forgiven of all trespasses ("forgiven" = aorist middle participle)

7. verse 14

a. verse 10 seems to be the beginning of the context of this and the previous verses

- i. completeness is in Christ
 - A. it is not found in the teachings of the Gnostics
 - B. it is not found in the old law of Moses
- ii. here is a list of what Christ has done for you
 - A. He has saved you from your sins in baptism
 - B. He has quickened you or made you alive
 - C. and He has taken something out of the way that was contrary
- b. a quick reading might lead one to conclude that Paul is saying that Jesus blotted out our sins, but there are words in the verse that indicate otherwise
 - i. the first is the word “ordinances”
 - A. Greek word = dogma
 - B. NKJV = “requirements”
 - C. defined as “doctrine, decree, ordinance”
 - D. “handwriting” is translated “bond” in ASV (a note acknowledging that money has been deposited or loaned to someone and is to be repaid”)
 - I. can’t have reference to our sins because we cannot pay for our sins
 - II. furthermore, it’s not the handwriting that was blotted out but the handwriting of ordinances or doctrines
 - III. he’s not talking about sin
 - ii. the second is the word “us”
 - A. Paul went from second person to first person pronouns
 - B. he had been telling them that they had been forgiven
 - I. of course, he had been forgiven too but that is not the context of this discussion
 - II. however, whatever was blotted out was against, not just you, but US
- c. keeping in mind that he is reminding his readers that they are complete in Christ and that they don’t need to follow the doctrines of men and looking at the immediate context in which he refers to circumcision and in verse 16 to meats, drinks, holy days, and other aspects associated with the law of Moses, it’s apparent that he is telling them that they don’t need to go back and keep the old law because it has been taken out of the way and was nailed with Christ to His cross
- d. these doctrines were against us or contrary to us
 - i. no one can be justified by the law of Moses
 - A. Acts 13:39
 - B. Romans 3:20,28
 - C. Galatians 2:16; 3:11; 5:4
 - ii. Hebrews 10:1
 - iii. what was the purpose of the law of Moses?
 - A. Galatians 3:19,24
 - B. Galatians 3:25 – “But after that THE faith is come...”
- e. “took it”
 - i. “to remove, to cause to cease”
 - ii. in perfect tense
 - A. this was done once in the past and its results are still in effect
 - B. “you are not bound to the law of Moses because Jesus took it out of the way”

- iii. “nailing it to his cross” agrees with “blotting out”
 - A. how did Christ blot out the handwriting of ordinances?
 - B. He nailed it with Him to the cross
- f. the cross was the fulfillment of Old Testament prophecy (Isaiah 53, et al.)
- g. the cross was the singular event that put away the law of Moses
 - i. Romans 15:4 – its purpose now
 - ii. salvation is found through the blood of Christ that He shed on the cross
 - iii. salvation cannot be found by going back to that which Christ had nailed and taken away
- 8. verse 15
 - a. “having spoiled” is same Greek word as that translated, “put off” in 3:9
 - b. “principality” and “powers” are the same words used in 1:16 and 2:10
 - c. “made a show of them” was a word that described how a victor in battle would show off his spoils in the city, particularly parading the leaders of those whom he defeated
 - i. made a public example of, made an exhibition of
 - ii. in the immediate context, it appears he has reference to those Jewish leaders who brought about Jesus’ death
 - iii. Greek word is similar to that translated “rulers” in I Corinthians 2:8 where reference seems to be to the Jews
 - e. Judaizers were trying to get these brethren to go back to the law of Moses
 - f. Paul says that Jesus showed them who is the true power
- F. Verses 16-17
 - 1. THEREFORE...
 - a. ...because you have been circumcised with Christ’s circumcision and not the physical circumcision of the law of Moses
 - b. ...because Christ took the law of Moses out of the way at His cross
 - c. ...because Christ demonstrated His superiority over the leaders of Judaism who opposed Him
 - d. don’t allow the Judaizers to run your life and tell you what to do spiritually
 - e. don’t look to the false teachers for either condemnation or commendation
 - 2. “in meat or in drink”
 - a. better translated, “in eating and drinking”
 - b. could have reference to traditions they created or Old Testament regulations
 - c. Acts 10:9-15 (spiritual application of this to Gentiles also)
 - d. this is based on the continuation of the sentence in verse 17
 - 3. holy days, new moons and Sabbath days
 - a. F. C. Cook in The Bible Commentary says, ‘We have here an exhaustive enumeration of the Jewish days of observance – annual (as Passover, Pentecost, Tabernacles); monthly (Numbers 28:11); weekly, in the Sabbath day”
 - b. I Chronicles 23:31, II Chronicles 2:4; 31:3; Hosea 2:11 – references to these days
 - 4. all of these things are merely shadows and to go back to them would be to leave the one to whom the shadows or types pointed
- G. Verses 18-19
 - 1. “beguile of reward” is one Greek word and is used only here
 - a. “to decide as an umpire against someone, to defraud or beguile of the prize of victory, to

- declare one unworthy of the prize”
- b. Vine’s Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words – “let no man decide for or against you, do not give yourselves up to the judgment and decision of any man”
 - c. compound word
 - i. kata = “against”
 - ii. brabeuo = “to be an umpire, decide, determine, direct, rule, control”
 - iii. don’t let these false teachers rule you with the things that were about to be mentioned
 - iv. the reason for giving such attention to this word is the fact that in Colossians 3:15, the latter half of the word (brabeuo) is used to tell what we SHOULD let rule in us
 - d. Lenski suggests that Paul is speaking strictly in the negative here, in the sense that he is talking about false teachers who were ruling against faithful Christians, saying that they could not have the reward because they did not follow their teachings; i.e. – these faithful brethren had won the prize of salvation from past sins, were enjoying the prize of being in Christ and having the hope of heaven, but these false teachers were trying to deny them of the prize
 - e. can someone take our reward away from us?
 - i. only if we allow them to do so
 - ii. the verb is an imperative which means they were responsible for not letting someone beguile them
 - iii. we today are responsible as well
2. that which beguiles
- a. voluntary humility
 - i. “voluntary” means “will” and is connected with “no man”
 - A. let no man by his will beguile you (rule over, take control of you)
 - B. can also mean “take delight, to like to do a thing”
 - C. let no one who likes to engage in humility and worshipping of angels...
 - iii. some translate “false humility”
 - A. NKJV puts “false” in italics
 - B. not supported by the text but perhaps implied
 - b. worshipping of angels
 - i. connected with this humility
 - ii. humility a necessary trait (James 4:10) but when coupled with the worshipping of angels, it does seem to suggest a wrong type of humility
3. what these false teachers are doing when they engage in these actions
- a. intruding...
 - i. “not” is not in some texts
 - ii. “to enter or frequent”
 - iii. reference to that mentioned earlier about those who advocated that one could have superior knowledge and thus be more Godly
 - iv. to this point, Paul seems to be warning against those who claimed that their “superior knowledge” had allegedly taken them to a new level of spirituality with its humility, worshipping of angels and things that they had seen
 - v. Paul said these were nothing more than the products of fleshly minds
 - vi. Adam Clarke, Clarke’s Commentary – paraphrase: “Let no man spoil you of the prize

adjudged to you, who delights in mortifying his body, and walking with the apparent modesty of an angel, affecting superior sanctity in order to gain disciples; intruding into those things which he has not seen; and, notwithstanding his apparent humility, his mind is carnal, and he is puffed up with a sense of his superior knowledge and piety.”

- b. not holding the Head...
 - i. these false teachers were not exalting Christ as the head
 - ii. Colossians 1:18 calls Jesus the “head of the body, the church”
 - iii. the false teachers were, at best, putting others on the same level as Christ
 - iv. the church exists because of Him; there could be no living body without the living head
 - v. it is by this head that the church is sustained
 - A. joints and bands refers to parts of the body (NKJV says “ligaments”)
 - B. I Corinthians 12 speaks of parts of the body that we see such as eyes and hands
 - C. here Paul speaks of that which is inside the body
 - D. all work together for the health of the body, BUT they all need the head
 - E. the growth of the body is tied directly to the head

H. Verses 20-23

1. verse 20

- a. “wherefore” is same as “therefore” in verse 16
- b. notice contrast with 3:1
 - i. “if you died with Christ to the world”
 - ii. “if you are risen with Christ (to a new life – mg)”
- c. “rudiments” is same as in 2:8
 - i. first principles of worldliness
 - ii. also translated “elements” in Galatians 4:3,9 where worldliness is also the topic
- d. you put off the worldly things (2:11) and you are dead to them (cf. Romans 6:2,7,11-12)
- e. if you put off the worldly things, why are you acting as one who is still living that life you used to live?
- f. why are you allowing others to subject you to the dogmas? (from same root word as “ordinances” in 2:14)
- g. perhaps, “Why are you even listening to the false teachers?”

2. verses 21-23

- a. the dogmas of men
- b. an example is “touch not, taste not, handle not”
- c. we can speculate about exactly what is not to be touched, tasted or handled, but verse 23 explains why this has been put into the category of dogmas of men
 - i. they involved neglecting of the body but they were a mere show of wisdom and humility
 - ii. NKJV ends the verse with, “but are of no value against the indulgences of the flesh”
- d. touch not, taste not and handle not could refer to anything that would bring one pleasure
 - i. these false teachers advocated abstinence from pleasures of the flesh
 - ii. they looked like very pious people
 - iii. but just neglecting these things did not make them pious or righteous in God’s eyes
 - iv. they were engaging in “will worship”
 - A. only time used in New Testament
 - B. “voluntary, arbitrary worship”

- C. Thayer's Lexicon – "worship which one prescribes and devises for himself, contrary to the contents and nature of faith which ought to be directed to Christ"
- D. arbitrary refers to something of one's own choosing based on his or her own will or individual judgment
- E. they were worshipping according to their way and not God's
- v. could also refer back to verse 16
- e. "which all are to perish with the using"
 - i. is this Paul's comment about the doctrine of touch not, taste not and handle not?
 - ii. is this a continuation of the touch not, taste not, handle not doctrine?
 - iii. the word for "using" means "abuse, misuse"
 - iv. "perish" refers to corruption or destruction
 - v. seems to be a continuation of the false doctrine: "Don't touch, taste or handle for the abuse of things leads to destruction"
 - vi. that he uses the word "all" suggests the idea that everything that could be touched, tasted or handled inherently involved abuse and led to destruction
- I. 3:1-4
 - 1. verse 1
 - a. "if" does not suggest doubt
 - i. instead encourages one to think about his present state as well as his past state
 - ii. its purpose is to lead the readers to a conclusion
 - iii. if you were raised with Christ (aorist passive indicative), where should you be focusing?
 - iv. remember 2:20 – if you died with Christ (aorist active indicative), should you be going back to that from which you were separated when you died with Him?
 - v. verses 3 and 4 reemphasize the point that they had died but now had a new life in Christ
 - b. what is a Christian to do in this new life?
 - i. change focus and look to God, not to men, for guidance and authority
 - ii. look toward things that lead to heaven because that's where Christ is now
 - iii. Matthew 6:19-21
 - c. "seek" is in imperative mood
 - d. "sitteth on (at or by) the right hand of God" indicates a place of honor or authority
 - i. I Timothy 3:16 – Christ was "received up into glory"
 - ii. I Peter 1:21 – God "raised him up from the dead, and gave him glory"
 - iii. Matthew 28:18 – Jesus said, "All power (authority) is given unto me in heaven and in earth."
 - 2. verse 2
 - a. is Paul being redundant when he says, "seek those things which are above" and then in this verse says, "set your affection on things above"?
 - i. no, this seems to be an emphasis of what he had just said
 - ii. the phrase, "set your affection" is from one Greek word
 - A. it is also translated "mind," "think," "regard," "be minded" and "savor"
 - B. put your mind to seeking the things which are above
 - C. Philippians 2:5 – same word translated "mind" here
 - iii. again, this is imperative
 - iv. the things above are things that a Christian should want to find

- b. set your mind on spiritual things and, in turn, take your mind off earthly things
 - i. doesn't mean that we don't tend to daily matters such as our food, clothing, shelter, etc.
 - ii. it means that we train our minds to turn away from worldliness, those things that can lead us away from God
- 3. verse 3
 - a. the reason why the mind should be on things above and not worldly things is because you died to sin and are now dead to sin
 - b. "hid"
 - i. Thayer's Lexicon – "is kept laid up with God in heaven"
 - ii. in the perfect tense: when you died to sin, you gave your life to the Lord
- 4. verse 4
 - a. Christ will come and reward you for your faithfulness
 - b. "who is our life" is literally, "the life of you"
 - i. John 14:6
 - ii. John 11:25
 - c. "appear with him in glory"
 - i. Christ has been glorified
 - A. John 17:4-5
 - B. I Peter 1:21
 - ii. I John 3:2
 - d. this is the goal, to be with Christ in glory
 - i. this is why we obeyed and died to sin
 - ii. this is why we remain dead to sin
 - iii. this is why we obeyed and were risen to a new life
 - iv. this is why we now have our hearts and minds on heavenly things
 - v. we want to be with the Lord in eternity

V. 3:5-4:6 – Application of Preceding Facts

A. Verses 5-7

- 1. verse 5
 - a. THEREFORE...
 - i. since you died to sin
 - ii. since you have been risen with Christ
 - iii. since you have the hope of being with Him in glory
 - iv. eliminate the following from your lives
 - b. put these things to death – imperative mood
 - c. Greek word for "members" is used 34 times in the New Testament and each time it refers to the parts of our bodies
 - i. figuratively (I Corinthians 12:12,14,18)
 - ii. literally
 - a. here
 - b. Romans 6:13
 - iii. don't give your bodies over to unrighteousness
 - iv. significance of this is found in the fact that some taught (and still teach) that things done in

the body cannot affect the soul

A. verse 6 will go on to say that these actions bring out the wrath of God

B. what we do in our bodies does affect our souls

C. II Corinthians 5:10

d. specific sins noted

i. fornication (Greek = “porneia”)

ii. uncleanness (impurity)

iii. inordinate affection (vile passions)

iv. evil concupiscence

A. word for concupiscence sometimes translated positively (“desire” in Philippians 1:23)

B. “evil” modifies the term (evil desire)

c. most frequently translated “lust”

v. covetousness (greedy desire), which is idolatry

2. verse 6

a. some Greek manuscripts do not contain the words, “on the children of disobedience”

b. the wrath of God

i. some suppose that the wrath of God was only under the Old Testament

ii. to the contrary, the New Testament speaks of it as well

A. John 3:36

B. Romans 1:18

C. Ephesians 5:5-6 (parallel passage; “children of disobedience” is found here)

3. verse 7

a. they had walked in sin and lived in sin

i. “walked” is in aorist tense, indicating something that was done one time in the past

ii. “lived” is in imperfect tense, indicating something that was done continuously in the past

iii. it would seem that by saying they walked in sin, he referred to the actual performance of the evil deeds mentioned in verse 5 but by saying they lived in sin, he referred to the state of their lives while they were outside of Christ

iv. Romans 6:20 – speaks of people being servants of sin

b. some say that a person can’t live in sin

i. used to defend unscriptural marriages

ii. if we can’t live in sin, then how can we die to it?

iii. whatever sins a person commits, unless he or she repents of them, they are living in them in that they are accountable for them

B. Verses 8-11

1. verses 8-9

a. now the focus is on sinful attitudes and sinful use of the tongue

b. you have put these things off

i. anger (most commonly translated “wrath”)

ii. wrath (outbursts of anger)

iii. malice (ill will, a desire to injure)

iv. blasphemy (injurious, impious speech)

v. filthy communication (foul speaking, low and obscene speech)

c. verse 9 goes back to the present tense with an imperative

- i. “lie not”
 - ii. specifically, don’t lie to one another
 - iii. the reason is because you have put off the old man with his deeds
 - A. “put off” is same as “spoiled” in 2:15
 - B. you put the old person to death and when you did you put the deeds of that worldly person to death as well
 - d. why does Paul specifically say lie not to “one another”?
 - i. does this mean that it was okay for them to lie to non-Christians?
 - A. no
 - B. 4:5-6 deals with how they were to act toward those who were outside of the church
 - ii. notice the immediate context
 - A. beginning in this verse he gives three different instructions that involve the words “one another”
 - I. lie not (3:9)
 - II. forbearing (3:13)
 - III. forgiving (3:13)
 - B. going through the rest of the chapter and on into chapter four, he talks about relationships among them (husband and wife, parent and child, master and servant)
 - iii. notice the larger context
 - A. there were those who were wanting to beguile them (2:4), cheat them (2:8) and rob them (2:18)
 - B. it’s obvious that there were attempts at sowing discord
 - C. the unity of the church was threatened
 - D. they needed to remain strong doctrinally, but they also needed to conduct themselves in a Godly manner,
 - E. they needed to band together and help each other
 - F. reminds us of 2:2
 - G. they were one in Christ and needed to appreciate that fact and help each other
 - I. the false teachers would lie, but the faithful should not
 - II. the false teachers would quarrel but the faithful should not
2. verse 10
- a. not only did you put the old person and his deeds to death, you put on the new
 - i. “put on” = “clothe one’s self”
 - ii. you put on new clothes
 - b. “renewed” = “new strength and vigor, to be changed into a new kind of life”
 - c. “knowledge” (again, referencing the fact that they had knowledge and it wasn’t limited to a select few as the Gnostics taught)
 - d. this new man or new clothing is to bear the mark of the one who gave the new life
3. verse 11
- a. the false teachers’ error would lead to divisiveness
 - b. this does not take away who they were, but instead shows that they were to treat each other equally
 - c. the Greeks thought they were more educated than the Jews
 - d. the Jews thought they were more spiritual than the Greeks

- e. circumcision was a divisive issue
- f. a Barbarian was a crude, rough person (the Greeks said that anyone who did not know the Greek language was a Barbarian)
- g. a Scythian was considered even more rough and crude
- h. whether a servant or a free person, all were to be treated equally
- i. the reason for this treatment is that Christ is the focus (Lenski: “Christ is all in all ways”)
- j. completeness is in Christ

C. Verses 12-15

1. verse 12

- a. “put on” is same as in verse 10
 - i. “clothe yourself”
 - ii. here it’s imperative
 - iii. verse 9 says to put off but here and in verse 10 we’re told to put on; no middle ground
- b. who you are
 - i. elect of God
 - ii. holy
 - iii. beloved
 - iv. because you are these, you should put on the following
- c. what should be put on
 - i. bowels of mercies
 - A. NKJV says “tender mercies”
 - B. ASV says, “a heart of compassion”
 - C. some Greek texts apparently have just one word, but in the text used in the KJV there are two words here and both need to be translated
 - D. “bowels”
 - I. Acts 1:18 – literal usage
 - II. II Corinthians 7:15 – “inward affection”
 - III. most often used figuratively to refer to the depths of one’s, the seat of one’s emotion, the heart
 - E. “mercies” = compassion, pity, mercy
 - F. together they indicate compassion from the heart
 - ii. kindness
 - A. moral goodness, integrity, goodness in action
 - B. also translated “goodness” and “gentleness”
 - iii. humbleness of mind
 - A. from a compound word meaning exactly this
 - B. emphasis on humility in the mind perhaps in contrast with the false humility possibly implied in 2:18,23
 - iv. meekness (gentleness, mildness)
 - v. longsuffering
 - A. patience, but actually more than that
 - B. endurance, perseverance, slowness in avenging wrongs

2. verse 13

- a. forbearing one another

- i. to hold up, to sustain, endure
 - ii. Robertson, “holding yourselves back from one another”
 - iii. NKJV – “bearing with one another”
 - iv. Clarke’s Commentary – “Avoid all occasions of irritating or provoking each other”
 - v. Gill’s Exposition of the Entire Bible – “Not only bearing one another’s burdens, and with one another’s weaknesses, but forbearing to render evil for evil, or railing for railing, or to seek revenge for affronts given, in whatsoever way, whether by words or deeds
 - vi. Jamieson, Fausset, Brown Commentary – “forbearing as to present offenses, forgiving as to past offenses”
- b. forgiving one another
 - c. quarrel
 - i. only time used in New Testament
 - ii. blame, a complaint
 - d. the type of forgiveness
 - i. even as Christ forgave you...
 - ii. Ephesians 5:32
 - iii. Matthew 6:12,14-15
 - iv. Mark 11:25-26
3. verse 14
- a. first and foremost, have love
 - b. love is the bond
 - i. same word translated “bands” in 2:19
 - ii. “that which binds together, of ligaments by which the members of the human body are united together”
 - c. love is the bond of perfection
 - i. spiritual and moral maturity
 - ii. “the state of the more intelligent” (interesting definition in light of the context in which there were those who felt they had superior knowledge)
4. verse 15
- a. rule
 - i. brabeuo = “to be an umpire, decide, determine, direct, rule, control”
 - ii. remember in 2:18 that this was part of a compound word
 - A. let no one rule against you
 - B. this is what is to be ruling you – the peace of God
 - iii. don’t let these false teachers rule you with the things that were about to be mentioned
 - b. what is the peace of God?
 - c. how can we “let” the peace of God rule in us? (Philippians 4:6-7)
 - d. in what ways would allowing this peace to rule in us be beneficial to the church, to ourselves?
 - e. noted earlier in comments beginning in 3:9 that the reason for emphasis on “one another” was because the false teachers threatened the unity of the church
 - i. you were not called to be a divided body
 - ii. I Corinthians 14:33 – “For God is not the author of confusion (“instability, a state of disorder, disturbance”), but of peace, as in all churches of the saints” (also James 3:16 regarding confusion)

- iii. God did not intend for you to be led off into conflicting doctrines
- iv. you were called to be one body, banded together as the joints and marrows of the physical body, fit and bound together in love
- f. “and be ye thankful”
 - i. thankful for the facts just mentioned
 - ii. thankful for one another
 - iii. thankful for the truth
 - iv. thankful that they didn’t have to be divided up among the false doctrines

D. Verses 16-17

1. verse 16

- a. another imperative
- b. the only time “word of Christ” is used in the New Testament
 - i. elsewhere, “word of the Lord,” “word of God”
 - ii. Christ is the emphasis
 - iii. He was the one being rejected by the false teachers
 - iv. His Word was and is to dwell within the Christian heart
- c. “dwell” = “to dwell in one and influence him, to be at home”
- d. “in you” (Robertson points out that this is indeed “in you” and not “among you”)
- e. “richly” = “abundantly”
- f. “in all wisdom” = God’s wisdom and not man’s
- g. “teaching and admonishing one another in psalms, hymns and spiritual songs”
 - i. contrast in the words translated “one another”
 - A. in 3:9 and 3:13, one word is used and it is defined as a reciprocal pronoun
 - B. the word here is different and, in the plural, can be translated “ourselves” or “yourselves” and this is considered a reflexive pronoun by some
 - C. what’s the difference?
 - I. reciprocal is something you give to others while they give back to you
 - II. reflexive “reflects” on yourself and thus is something you do for yourself
 - III. reciprocal would say that you are teaching and admonishing others while they are teaching and admonishing you
 - IV. reflexive would say that you are teaching and admonishing yourself
 - V. commenting on his thought that this is reflexive, Lenski wrote, “When we sing our psalms and our hymns in our Christian worship, all of us sing together, and we by no means chant the instructive and the admonitory words only to our fellow singers, nor do they chant them to us, we all say them first and foremost to our own selves. We speak as one body with this body present... Psalms and hymns are rich with imperatives... This is self-admonition.”
 - D. essentially, in our singing we are to be teaching ourselves
 - E. parallel in Ephesians 5:19 (same word, here translated “yourselves”)
 - ii. “dwell” appears to be the lead verb in the passage, so the Word of Christ is to dwell in us while we teach, admonish and sing
 - iii. three different types of music – psalms, hymns and spiritual songs
 - iv. based on the fact that the word translated “psalms” means to pluck or twang, some say this is support for playing a mechanical instrument of music in worship

- A. Ephesians 5:19 uses the verb form of the word, translating it, “making melody” and goes on to say what exactly is to be plucked or twanged – “in (with – dative case) your heart”
 - B. furthermore, if this is in the context of something that we are to do first to ourselves, and if the use of a mechanical instrument of music is inherent in this word, then everyone ought to be both playing and singing (but that’s not the way denominational churches do it – some sing, some play, maybe some do both, but others listen and do nothing)
2. verse 17
- a. this verse sums everything that Paul has just said, but also the whole letter to this point
 - i. seems to be an emphasis
 - ii. literally, “and every which any ever ye may be doing”
 - iii. do not be swayed by the false teachers
 - iv. let Christ be your authority (“in the name of”)
 - b. another reminder to be thankful, specifically to offer this thanks to God through Christ
- E. Verses 18-21
1. the previous verses dealt with how Christians are to act toward one another
 2. these verses cite specific relationships and how Christians are to be in them
 - a. family
 - b. work
 - c. those who are not Christians
 3. Christ is the authority in all things, including these vital relationships
 4. each group addressed begins with the definite article (the wives, the husbands, the children, the fathers, the servants, the masters)
5. verse 18
- a. imperative
 - b. as is fitting, not as it “seems fitting to you”
6. verse 19
- a. imperative
 - b. Lenski: “Be not bitter toward them’ is added because the wives are to be subject to their husbands. One easily becomes bitter toward an inferior. A husband is not to treat his wife as a subject, as an inferior in the home.”
7. verse 20
- a. imperative
 - b. Paul is presenting the ideals here
 - i. ideally, the wife is in subjection to her husband
 - ii. ideally, the husband loves his wife and treats her well
 - iii. next verse: ideally, the father is treating his children in a way that pleases God
 - iv. this is the context of the instruction to the children to obey their parents
 - v. it would not be pleasing to the Lord for the children to cheat or steal if their parents told them to do so
 - vi. it’s clear from the context that “all things” means things that are according to the will of God
8. verse 21
- a. imperative
 - b. “provoke” = “to stir up, excite, stimulate”
 - i. used positively in II Corinthians 9:2

- ii. “to anger” not in text
- iii. whatever this provoking is, it leads to discouragement (disheartened, broken in spirit)

F. Verse 22

1. “masters according to the flesh” = “those for whom you work or to whom you are bound”
2. “eyeservice”
 - a. “service performed only under the master’s eyes” (i.e., while he’s watching)
 - b. this is what menpleasers do
3. “singleness of heart, fearing God”
 - a. “simplicity, sincerity, mental honesty, free from pretense and hypocrisy”
 - b. put God first
 - c. do these things because it shows reverence for the will of God

G. Verses 23-24

1. summary statement in verse 23
2. “heartily”
 - a. two words used
 - i. “ek” = “out of”
 - ii. “psuche” = “the soul or the life”
 - b. give your best at all you do
 - c. give your best because it honors God
3. the Lord is the ultimate rewarder of your faithfulness
4. you may be physical bondmen and bondwomen, but first and foremost, you serve (verb form of word translated, “servant”) the Lord Christ
 - a. this is not a statement of fact
 - b. “serve” is actually an imperative
 - c. “serve the Lord Christ”

H. Verse 25 – just recompense

I. 4:1

1. treat those in your service in a fair and right way
2. James 5:1-5
3. just as you are a master, you have a Master

J. 4:2

1. Greek begins with “THE prayer...”
2. “continue”
 - a. imperative
 - b. “to adhere to, be devoted to, to be steadfastly attentive to, to give unremitting care to, to persevere”
 - c. compound word, literally, “be strong towards”
3. “watch” is participle agreeing with “continue”
 - a. continue and watch in prayer with thanksgiving
 - b. “give strict attention to”
 - c. watch for themselves in prayer that they remain strong
4. thankfulness an important aspect of prayer

K. 4:3-4

1. “withal” = “at the same time” or “together with”

2. “while you’re praying for yourselves, pray for me also”
 3. notice what Paul asked to be the subject of their prayers
 - a. opportunities
 - b. “a door of the word”
 - c. examples of these doors being opened (I Corinthians 16:9; II Corinthians 2:12)
 - d. “to speak”
 - i. infinitive
 - ii. “for the purpose of”
 - iii. “that opportunities for the Word would be given for the purpose of preaching the Gospel”
 4. “mystery”
 - a. same as in 1:27 and 2:2
 - b. “that which is hidden”
 - c. Paul wanted prayers so that he could reveal that which had been hidden
 5. imprisoned because of His teaching of the Gospel
 6. “manifest” = “known”
 7. the mystery was not limited to a chosen few
 8. Paul’s intention was to make known the Gospel of Christ
 9. “as I ought to speak”
 - a. “ought” = “it is necessary, right and proper”
 - b. interesting that an inspired apostle was concerned about the message
 - c. I Corinthians 2:3-4
- L. 4:5
1. conduct yourselves in Godly wisdom toward non-Christians
 - a. NKJV says “those who are outside” instead of “them that are without”
 - b. I Corinthians 5:12; I Thessalonians 4:12 – other usages of “without” in reference to those who were not Christians
 2. how should non-Christians see us?
 - a. I Peter 3:15-16
 - b. I Peter 4:4
 - c. John 13:35
 - d. Matthew 5:13-16
 - e. Philippians 2:14-15
 - f. Ephesians 5:11
 - g. I Peter 2:9
 3. why is it important for non-Christians to see us in these ways?
 4. “redeeming the time”
 - a. redeeming
 - i. compound word – “out of” “the marketplace”
 - ii. second part of the word most commonly translated, “buy”
 - iii. as one word, it is defined as, “by payment of a price to recover from the power of another, to ransom, buy off, to buy up, to buy up for one's self, for one's use”
 - b. how does one buy up time?
 - i. by using it wisely
 - ii. by being on a mission

- iii. by considering its brevity
- iv. by enjoying its moments
- v. by being thankful for it

M. 4:6

1. one definition of “grace” is “good will, loving-kindness”
2. seasoned with salt
 - a. “seasoned” is perfect passive participle indicating something in the present that is the result of something done in the past
 - b. this means that our speech is seasoned before we let it out of our mouths
 - c. we think about what we say before we say it
 - d. doing so allows us to be able to answer as we ought
3. “answer”
 - a. not the same as in I Peter 3:15 where Peter says to be prepared to give a defense
 - b. it indicates a response, not necessarily to a question, but to something that has been said (although we don’t have to respond to everything that someone says – Proverbs 17:27-28; Ecclesiastes 3:7)
 - c. be ready to speak up when wisdom dicatates
4. the whole idea of verses 5 and 6 is to be able to influence the lost for Christ

VI. Personal Messages and Greetings (4:17-18)

A. 4:7-14

1. list of those who were with Paul
2. notice how Paul in his epistles complimented whenever he could
3. you can see the relationship between Paul and these brethren coming out in these verses
 - a. he wants to comfort them
 - b. they’re obviously concerned about him so he says that Tychicus and Onesimus will let them know in more detail how he is doing
4. Mark is most likely the writer of the Gospel of Mark who had earlier left Paul and Barnabas (Acts 12:12,25; 13:13; 15:37-40) but then became a valuable aid to Paul (II Timothy 4:11)

B. 4:15-18

1. vs. 18 – Paul’s mark of authentication (cf. I Corinthians 16:21, and reason for it in II Thessalonians 2:2)
2. vs. 18
 - a. reminding them of the commitment he had made to Christ
 - b. he was imprisoned, yet he remained faithful