

Union Bethel AME Church Bible Study

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Zoom Meeting ID 863 1188 9288, Passcode 782781

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Tuesday, November 10, 2020, 6:30 -7:30 PM

An Exposition of the Epistle of St Paul to

THE COLOSSIANS

Introduction

Colossae, was a considerable city of Phrygia, and probably not far from Laodicea and Ephesus. It was buried in ruins at the time of the writing of this epistle, A.D. 62. The design of the epistle is to warn the church of the danger of the Jewish zealots, who pressed the necessity of observing the ceremonial Mosaic Law and to fortify them against the mixture of the Gentile philosophy with the Christian principles. This epistle, was written while Paul was in prison in Rome, therefore, Paul had never seen the members of the Colossian church, or had any acquaintance with them. The church was planted by Epaphras, an evangelist, who was from Colossae, and a fellow servant of Paul. This proves that God uses what hands He pleases, and is not tied to those of note, that the excellence of the power may appear to be of God and not of men. Though the Colossian Church was planted by Epaphras, Paul was very concerned about the welfare of this church. Hence, Paul writes this letter based on the information that was given to him by Epaphras.

Colossians 1 Verses 1-8

1 Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God and Timothy our brother. 2) To God's holy people in Colossae, the faithful brothers and sisters in Christ; Grace and peace to you from God our Father.

Paul calls himself an apostle of Jesus Christ, who is a prime –minister in the kingdom of Christ, called by Christ which extraordinarily qualified his work of planting Christian churches, to confirm the Christian doctrine. He attributes this not to his own merit, strength or sufficiency but to the free grace and good will of God. Paul acknowledges Timothy in the work in Colossae, and calls Timothy his brother in ministry, while at other times he referred to Timothy as his son in the ministry. This exemplifies Paul's humility in his reference to Timothy as his brother in ministry. Though Paul had heard of the mixed doctrines taught in the Colossian church he refers to the Christians in Colossae as saints, and faithful brethren in Christ. Paul felt it was necessary to correct the teaching by the Gentiles that angels were a part of the creation with God and therefore should be worshipped. Also to correct the teaching of Jews who taught that the laws of Moses should be strictly taught and obeyed. It was extremely important that Paul clarified that only Christian principles should be taught in the church.

3) We always thank God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, when we pray for you, 4) because we have heard of your faith in Christ Jesus and of the love you have for all God's people; 5) the faith and love that spring from the hope stored up for you in heaven and about which you have heard in the true message of the gospel, 6) that has come to you. In the same way, the gospel is bearing fruit and growing throughout the whole world – just as it has been doing among you since the day you heard it and truly understood God's grace. 7) You learned it from Epaphras, our dear fellow servant, 8) who is a faithful minister of Christ on our behalf, and who also told us of your love in the Spirit.

Why was it very necessary for Paul to speak to the Christians of the Colossian Church, and to mention both Timothy and Epaphras?

Paul's Prayer for the Colossians – Verses 9-11

9) For this cause, we also since the day we heard about you, 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 unto 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, so that you may have great endurance and patience.

Paul commends the Colossians for being good, but his prayer was that they would become better. He prayed that they would not only have knowledge and wisdom but that they should apply these to their lives in order to grow in grace and spiritual understanding. These Christians were encouraged to be filled with all the knowledge of the will of God so that could grow up and bear good fruit that would cause their behavior to be well pleasing to God. In order for them to be fruitful in good works, they had to not only increase in the knowledge and will of God, but they were encouraged to regularly practice what they were learning.

Why did Paul stress the importance of the Colossians being filled with all the knowledge and will of God? Why did Paul pray this prayer for the Colossians continually?

Verses 12-29

12) Giving joyful thanks to the Father, who has qualified you to share in the inheritance of His holy people in the kingdom of light. 13) For He has rescued us from the dominion of darkness and brought us into the kingdom of the His dear Son, 14) in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins.

The Supremacy of the Son of God

15) The Son is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation. 16) For in Him all things were created: things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities; all things have been created through Him and for Him. 17) He is before all things, and in Him all things consist. 18) And He is the head of the body, the church; He is the beginning and the firstborn from the dead, so that in everything He might have supremacy. 19) For God was pleased to have all his fullness dwell in Him, 20) and through Him to reconcile to Himself all things, whether things on earth, or things in heaven, by making peace through His blood, shed on the cross. 21) Once you were alienated from God and were enemies in your minds because of your evil behavior. 22) But now He has reconciled you by Christ's death to present you holy in His sight, without blemish and free from accusation – 23) if you continue in your faith, established and firm, and do not move from the hope held out in the gospel. This is the gospel that you heard and that has been proclaimed to every creature under heaven, and of which I, Paul have become a servant.

What encouragement do we have because Jesus reigns preeminent above all?

Paul's Labor for the church - Verses 24-29

24) Now I rejoice in what I am suffering for you, and I fill up in my flesh what is still lacking in regard to Christ's afflictions, for the sake of His body, which is the church. 25) I have become its servant by the commission God gave me to present to you the Word of God in its fullness – 26) the mystery that has been kept hidden for ages and generations, but is now disclosed to the Lord's people. 27) To them God has chosen to make known among the Gentiles the glorious riches of this mystery, which is Christ in you, the hope of glory. 28) He is the one we proclaim, admonishing and teaching everyone with all wisdom so that we may present everyone fully mature in Christ. 29) To this end I strenuously contend with all the energy Christ so powerfully works in me.