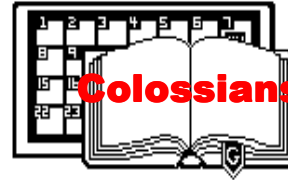


QUESTIONS ON COLOSSIANS 1:1-23

- What had Paul heard of the Colossians? 1 _____
2 _____ From whom could he have heard it? _____
- Where is our hope? _____ Where had the gospel gone? _____
What does it bring forth? _____
- With what should we be filled? _____ How should we walk? _____
- In what should we be fruitful? _____ In what should we increase? _____
- Strengthened with might unto what? 1 _____ 2 _____

- What has the Father done for us? 1 _____
_____ 2 _____
_____ 3 _____
- What do we have in Christ? 1 _____
2 _____ How is Christ described?
(v.15) 1 _____ 2 _____
(v.16) 3 _____ 4 _____
(v.17) 5 _____ 6 _____
(v.18) 7 _____ 8 _____
9 _____
- What dwells in Christ? _____
How are men made enemies of God? (v.21) _____
Tell how Christ makes peace. _____
- How would Christ present us in His sight? 1 _____
2 _____ 3 _____
On what condition? 1 _____
2 _____
- Where was the gospel preached? _____
To whom had God's mystery not been known? _____
To whom now known? _____ What did Paul do for every man? 1 _____ 2 _____ 3 _____



COLOSSIANS

Lesson # 1

THE PREEMINENCE OF CHRIST DECLARED

Text: Luke 9:23-25

Introduction

The message of this book is greatly needed today. In a time when Christ is scorned and his teaching rejected, we need to hold forth the grand truth of this inspired letter penned by the apostle Paul. (Be sure to read the background study sheet for the background on this epistle.)

Paul's main theme was "The Pre-eminence of Christ." It was time when false teachers (the Gnostics), and Judiazers were attacking the gospel, and Christians themselves were not living up to principles it set forth. We will look at the book under these headings:

- Ch. 1 The Preeminence of Christ **Declared**.
- Ch. 2 The Preeminence of Christ **Defended**.
- Ch.3-4 The Preeminence of Christ **Demonstrated** in our lives.

Paul begins by showing the Preeminence of Christ in five areas:

1. Christ is Preeminent In The Gospel. (v.1-12).

The Gospel is the "good news" of the solution to man's 'sin problem' which has separated him from God (Isaiah 52:2-3). And this good news is centered in a person, JESUS CHRIST. Some false teachers at Colossae were trying to remove Jesus Christ from His place of preeminence, but to do this was to destroy the gospel.

The Gospel is the "word of truth" (1:5), which means that it came from God and can be trusted. "Thy Word is truth" (John 17:17). There are many messages and ideas that can be called true, but only God's Word can be called Truth. Satan is the liar; and to believe his lies is to be led astray into death (John 8:44).

The Gospel is the message of God's grace (1:6). God's love and favorable disposition toward man has been His motive for providing us with a Savior-centered gospel. There is no man that God doesn't look favorable upon and doesn't

want saved, "The grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men" (Titus 2:11).

The Gospel is for the whole world (1:6). The Word of God is the only seed that can be planted anywhere in the world and it will bear fruit. It is to be preached "to every creature which is under heaven" (1:23). If people are to be saved, they must hear the gospel.

2. Christ is Preeminent in Redemption. (v.13-14)

Man's problem is SIN and he needs a SAVIOR. These two verses present four vivid pictures of Christ's actions on our behalf:

1) He delivered us (1:13). This means that he rescued us from the danger of an eternity apart from God.

2) He translated us (1:13). This word was used to describe the deportation of a population from one country into another. Jesus did not rescue us from bondage only to have us wander aimlessly, He moved us into His own kingdom of light.

3) He redeemed us (1:14). This words means "to release a prisoner on the payment of a ransom." Satan seeks to imprison us because he knows we're guilty of breaking God's law. But the ransom has been paid on Calvary and through Christ we have been set free.

4) He has forgiven us (1:14). Redemption and forgiveness go together (ph.1:7). The word *forgiveness* means "to cancel a debt." Christ has not only set us free and transferred us to a new kingdom, but He has canceled every debt so that Satan cannot find anything in the files that will indict us!

Jesus Christ is preeminent in salvation. No other could redeem us, forgive us, transfer us into God's kingdom, and He did it "through His blood" (v.14).

3. Christ is Preeminent in Creation. (v.15-17).

1) He existed before creation (1:15). The term *firstborn* does not refer to time, but to place or status. This verse is not teaching that Jesus Christ was the first being created, since He Himself is the Creator of all things. *Firstborn* simply means "of first importance, of first rank". Solomon was certainly not born first of all of David's sons, yet he was named the firstborn (Ps. 89:27). "*Firstborn of all creation*" means "priority to all creation."

2) He created all things (1:16). Christ is the Firstborn because He created all things. It is no wonder that the winds and waves obeyed Him, and diseased and death fled from Him, for He is Master over all. "All things were made by Him" (John 1:3).

3) All things exist for Him (1:16). Everything exists **in Him, for Him, and through him**. Everything exists for His glory and honor and the Living God gives

us all things richly to enjoy.

4) He holds all things together (1:17). Again this is an affirmation that Jesus Christ is God. Only God exists before al of creation, and only God can make creation cohere. To make Jesus Christ less than God is to dethrone Him. We can dearly sing "This is My Father's World"

4. Christ is Preeminent in the Church. (1:18-24).

There are many images of the church in the New Testament, and the body is one of the most important (Rom. 12:4ff; I Cor. 12:14; Eph. 4:8-16). Each Christian is a member of this spiritual body and Jesus Christ is the Head. In Greek usage, the word **head** meant "source" and "origin" as well as "leader, ruler." Christ's preeminence is declared by his "headship" over the church.

1) Christ's church is God's kingdom on earth today (1:13). Hebrews 12:28 "Wherefore we receiving a kingdom which cannot be moved, let us have grace, whereby we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear."

2) Christ's church is a "body" of followers with Christ as the "head" over all things pertaining to the "body". He is the lawgiver, and he provides salvation for those who are a part of His spiritual body (Eph. 5:23).

5. Christ's Preeminence Declared in Paul's Ministry. (1:23-29)

1) Paul's imprisonment (v.23-25). Paul was a minister of the gospel of Christ and was not ashamed of his imprisonment but was willing to rejoice in his suffering to fulfil his God given task.

2) Paul's responsibility (v.25-27). Had Paul compromised with the Jewish enemies of Christ he might have been spared a great deal of suffering. But God had committed the Gospel to him, to declare the *mystery* (how God reconciles both Jews and Gentiles in one body). The word *mystery* was used in the first century to mean a "sacred secret" hidden in the past and now revealed by the Holy Spirit (See Ephesians 3:1-13).

3) Paul's preaching (v.28-29). "**Whom** we preach." Paul didn't preach himself but Christ Jesus (2 Cor. 4:5). Paul "preached," "warned," and "taught" in verse 28. And a literal translation of the first part of verse 19 would read "For this I labor to the point of exhaustion, agonizing".

In Chapter One the Preeminence of Christ is DECLARED.