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Colossians 1

(2019)

Bible House of Grace contains an easy to read New and Old Testament commentary full of spiritual treasures and pearls, complete with an insightful resource guide illuminating God's love and grace.



Although I believe my aim is pure and God's will perfect this document is still the product of a human man, as to such I neither claim perfect knowledge or perfect understanding.

Colossians 1.

Topics.

- Jesus is God's gift of grace.
- Delivered from the kingdom of darkness to the Kingdom of God's Son.
- Jesus is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation.
- By him all things were created in heaven and on earth.
- Christ is before all things, and in him all things hold together.
- In Christ all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell.
- The Gospel has been proclaimed in all creation.
- The mystery hidden for ages and generations, but now revealed.
- Christ in you.

INTRODUCTION: Paul wrote this letter to the church in Colossae (about A.D. 60) to counteract false teachers. Evidently these teachers were trying to impose strict rules about eating and drinking and religious festivals, and were advocating the worship of angels. Paul shows the superiority of Christ over all human philosophies and traditions. He writes that Christ is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation (Col. 1:15) and of the reconciliation he accomplished with his blood. He explains that the right way of living in this world is to focus on heavenly rather than earthly things looking to Christ as the head of the church and to living in a manner that honours God (Col. 1:18).

NOTE: for information concerning people, places and the meaning of words see Map Locations and People of the Bible, and Bible Dictionary on Website Menu. Paul told the Colossians to have this letter read to the church in Laodicea and instructed Colossians to read the letter he had written to the Laodiceans (Col. 4:16).

COLOSSIANS 1:1-8

Paul's Greeting to the Colossians.

- **Colossians 1:1-8:** Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God, and Timothy our brother, ²To the saints and faithful brothers in Christ at Colossae: Grace to you and peace from God our Father. ³We always thank God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, when we pray for you, ⁴since we heard of your faith in Christ Jesus and of the love that you have for all the saints, ⁵because of the hope laid up for you in heaven. Of this you have heard before in the word of the truth, the gospel, ⁶which has come to you as indeed in the whole world it is bearing fruit and growing—as it also does among you, since the day you heard it and understood the grace of God in truth, ⁷just as you learned it from Epaphras our beloved fellow servant. He is a faithful minister of Christ on your behalf ⁸and (Epaphras) has made known to us your love in the Spirit.

This letter is addressed to the faithful brothers and sisters (Jews and Gentiles) at Colossae and by extension all the faithful in Christ of all ages. Paul and those with him are thrilled with the Colossians faith for the following two reasons:

1. Because they love others who have faith in Christ (v4) meaning they are not only humble and forgiving but also show each other kindness, compassion, grace and mercy contrasted to exalting themselves above others and causing divisions, strife and contention etc.

2. Because they are excited about the "Hope laid up for them in heaven" (v5) this hope refers to the Gentiles in Christ becoming partakers with Israel in all the promises God made to Abraham and the promise of eternal life with the Lord Jesus Christ and God the Father in everlasting glory. This hope includes the return of the Lord Jesus Christ, our mortal body putting on immortality, the resurrection to eternal glory and rulership of the world from Jerusalem with the Lord Jesus Christ as King of kings and Lord of lords establishing God's Kingdom of righteousness, justice, joy and peace over the earth.

This is what God's promised majestic and glorious "Hope laid up in heaven" (v5) is for all who are faithful in Christ Jesus. It is called "The grace of God in truth" (v6) because both it and the hope come by faith and God's grace to all who belong to Christ

HOPE: in the context of eternal salvation is not called hope because it is doubtful or unsure it is called hope because it is unseen and not yet realised, but the hope is certain and guaranteed, because it is based on the promise of God and He cannot lie. Paul in his letter to the Romans wrote:

- For in this hope (the adoption as sons and the redemption of our bodies) we were saved, but hope that is seen is not hope. For who hopes for what he sees? But if we hope for what we do not see, we wait for it with patience (Rom 8:23-24).

This shines a spotlight on the truth that the hope, though unseen and as yet not realised is certain. Thus; the majestic and glorious words, 'the grace of God in truth' in the context of Paul's statement, "The hope laid up for you in heaven has come to you since the day you heard it and understood the grace of God in truth (v5-6) does not refer to every doctrine of the Bible or of the New Testament, but to the truth about God's grace. The Colossians have clearly understood' something about God's grace that others haven't (especially certain Jewish converts) and even today many who confess to believe in Christ still don't fully understand the truth about God's grace. This awe-inspiring and humbling truth is that we are not saved by self-effort and religious rites, customs and traditions, but by God's grace. This is what Paul is referring to when he states that the Colossians have clearly understood the grace of God in truth.

Jesus is God's gift of grace: the following words of Paul are breathtakingly awe-inspiring and overwhelming comforting to all who like the Colossian brothers and sisters have fully understood that their salvation depends solely on their faith in Christ and on God's grace. Paul in his previous letters wrote, "I do not nullify the grace of God, for if justification were through the law, then Christ died for no purpose." This means, when a brother or sister in Christ begin to justify themselves through the law, they nullify the grace of God and by their actions declare that Christ's death was of no value. Equally as horrific as this Paul states, "When we forsake grace, we separate ourselves from Christ because it was only by grace that God made us alive in Christ. Paul to highlight even more the majestic glory of grace wrote with absolute boldness that; "It is only by grace that any brother or sister has been saved." Paul in these verses is shining a brilliant floodlight on the truth that every brother and sister in Christ is saved, solely by faith and by grace and it is not their own doing, but the gift of God. This means that without grace no-one can be united to Christ and whoever is without Christ is separated from God and without God no-one can be saved to eternal life, which means that eternal salvation, Christ, God, grace and faith in regards to salvation are all on an equal par with each other since no-one can be saved to eternal life without any one of them. (Gal. 2:21) (Gal. 5:4) (Eph. 2:5) (Eph. 2:8). This is what the glorious words the grace of God in truth mean and the truth the Colossian brothers and sisters clearly understood.

The whole world: the expression, "The whole world" (v6) does not mean that the entire world of Paul's era was being saved, but that the "Hope laid up in heaven and the grace of God in truth" (v6) is now available to the entire world, because the hope of salvation to eternal life and God's

grace are in the Lord Jesus Christ and whoever accepts the gospel and believes in Christ will be saved. Jesus himself said that he laid his life down for the whole world (John 3:16) so it is in this sense that the hope and God's grace has come to the whole world.

Your love in the Spirit: the words, "Your love in the Spirit" are not referring to some mystical gift or hidden spiritual secret, but rather to the brothers and sisters in the Colossian church love for the Lord Jesus Christ and their faithfulness in following him, meaning they live to honour God and the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, but the words, "Your love in the Spirit" are not limited to loving Christ only, but also embrace the, fruit of the Spirit (i.e., showing love, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control) toward each other contrasted to being conceited, jealous and argumentative, envying one another and by quarrels provoking each other causing contention, strife and divisions (Gal. 5:19-26).

COLOSSIANS 1:9-12

Filled with the knowledge of his will in spiritual wisdom and understanding.

- **Colossians 1:9:** And so, from the day we heard, we have not ceased to pray for you, asking that you may be filled with the knowledge of his will in all spiritual wisdom and understanding, ¹⁰so as to walk in a manner worthy of the Lord, fully pleasing to him bearing fruit in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God. ¹¹May you be strengthened with all power, according to his glorious might, for all endurance and patience with joy (KJV says, for the attaining of all steadfastness and patience; joyously) ¹²giving thanks to the Father, who has qualified you to share in the inheritance of the saints in light.

Paul's statement they have, "Not ceased from praying" (v9) does not mean they are praying 24/7 for the Colossian brothers and sisters, but that when they do pray (which would be often) they always include the Colossians in their prayers.

The knowledge and understanding of Christ's will: Christ's will in Paul's prayer, "That you may be filled with the knowledge of Christ's will in all spiritual wisdom and understanding" (v10) is not referring to the will of the Lord in regards to a Christians choice of which university courses they should take, or whether to choose a career or the ministry, or to the choice of a marriage partner, but rather it refers to the will of Christ for every brother and sister who follows him. Paul is praying that the Colossian brothers and sisters and by extension all Christians would know and understand how the Lord desires us to live, act and behave which of course is to love our neighbour as ourselves and live a lifestyle that honours God and the name of Jesus in speech and behaviour and thereby we will not only be counted worthy of the Lord, but also will be pleasing to him.

Increasing in the knowledge of God: it is interesting to notice that even though Paul and those with him were thrilled with the faith the Colossians had in Christ and with the love they had for their brothers and sisters in the Lord (v4) and even though the Colossians not only understood the hope laid up for them in heaven and the truth regarding God's grace (v5-6) but were also filled with love in the Spirit (v7) Paul still prays that they would, "Increase in the knowledge of God" (10), this teaches us two important things:

1. That though we are saved and may even have a strong faith we should never stop growing in the knowledge of God and learning of His ways, nor should we ever think we have arrived in knowing the full glory of His will His character and His word, but continue to seek and discover greater insights and wisdom in the knowledge of God, but not to get more saved (something that is impossible to do) but to spiritually know God and the Lord Jesus Christ in deeper depths.

2. Since Paul prays that even those who are saved will, "Continually increase in the knowledge of God" (10) we should understand that even though a faithful brother or sister maybe saved to eternal life and have a strong faith in the Lord and in his return and fully understand that they are saved by God's grace and their faith in Christ we are all nevertheless still at varying levels of intellectual knowledge. Understanding this we should be willing to show grace toward those who love Christ and faithfully follow him, but differ in certain areas of biblical and Scriptural knowledge as we do.

When we expand our minds outside our local church or the religious institution we may belong to and cast our eyes on the global body of Christ, we quickly discern that the church worldwide is filled with brothers and sisters from different nations, backgrounds, cultures and languages. Many are still overcoming certain teachings or mindsets they developed from false religions or the pagan faiths they were raised in. Others are struggling to overcome strong addictions and habits while some are coping with all kinds of past baggage and deep emotional hurts, divorce and family breakdowns etc., thus the reason grace needs to be extended like a merciful blanket not only over a brothers or sisters behaviour, but also over the differing areas of knowledge that we may have that is outside the glorious Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ. When we understand that the central desire of every faithful brother and sister who knows the Lord is to honour God and the name of Jesus (howbeit none of us do this perfectly) and deliver the lost from the kingdom of darkness into the glorious and eternal Kingdom of God and realise that in this we are all seeking the same goal, perhaps rather than separate from those who differ in knowledge a better attitude might be to adopt Paul's and pray that we would all, "Continually increase in the knowledge of God" (10) and be humble enough to help and encourage each other to do this in the spirit of love and grace contrasted to attacking, defending and arguing etc.

His glorious power: Paul prays that the Colossians would be strengthened with, "All power, according to Christs glorious might, for all endurance and patience with joy" (v11) the purpose of this power Paul is praying they would be strengthened with is so that they would be able to endure in their faith, not only with patience and joy, but also with a heart filled with gratitude. This power comes in two ways:

1. This power comes by endeavouring (howbeit imperfectly) to live a life that honours God and the name of Jesus and by fully trusting and knowing that God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ love unconditionally those who trust in Christ for their righteousness. It comes by clearly understanding the truth about God's grace and having total confidence that we will be accepted to eternal life when the Lord Jesus Christ returns, not because of our self-effort, but because of God's grace and our faith in Christ.
2. This power comes by the supernatural work of the Holy Spirit working in the hearts, minds and circumstances (good and bad) of the lives of those who are devoted to Christ and faithfully follow him.

Qualified you to share in the inheritance of the saints in light: the saints in light: refer to the faithful Jews. Paul's stunning words, "Giving thanks to the Father, who has qualified you to share in the inheritance of the saints in light" (v12) are awe-inspiring since they show that even though Paul prayed the Colossian brothers and sisters would "Continually increase in the knowledge of God" (10) he was not implying they needed more knowledge to be saved to eternal life since he now tells them that "God has already qualified them to share in the inheritance." Paul can confidently say this because all the promises of God are in Christ. Whoever is in Christ will inherit the eternal promises made to Abraham, Isaac, Jacob and David and Israel. This is because every brother and sister of the Lord Jesus Christ is adopted by God as a son or daughter into His eternal family and as children of God, they become an heir to God's promise of eternal life and everlasting glory.

A worldly example: (howbeit limited) Children may have a father who is an oil tycoon and as such is a global billionaire. They may not know much of the detail about how their fathers money is invested, what banks it is kept in or even how his company works, but providing they continue to love him and honour his name they will inherit the family fortune in spite of their lack of knowledge simply because they are the fathers children and greatly loved by him.

The inheritance of those who belong to the family of Christ: the promised inheritance refers to the following oath God swore to Abraham by Himself when he promised Abraham that from:

- His seed will come from his own bowels and be thine heir.
- His seed will multiply as the stars of heaven and the sand on the sea-shore.
- His seed shall possess the gate of his enemies.
- His seed will inherit all the land of Israel for an everlasting possession.
- In his seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed.
- God will be the God of his seed.

This is the promise inheritance and everlasting covenant God made to Abraham. Paul in the following glorious and majestic words, "Now to Abraham and his seed were the promises made. He saith not, and to seeds, as of many; but as of one, and to thy seed, which is Christ" (Gal 3:16) reveals the eternal wonder of the everlasting promise God made to Abraham thousands of years ago which is, Abrahams seed is the Lord Jesus Christ.

(Gen. 12:1-7) (Gen. 13:14-16) (Gen. 15:1-6, 18) (Gen. 17:1-8)
(Gen. 17: 15-19) (Gen. 17:21) (Gen. 21:12) (Gen. 22:11-18).

Some may think the promises made to Abraham was for the Jews only, but Paul magnificently explains in the book of (Ephes. 2:11-22) that the promises of God have been extended to all nations through being baptised into the Lord Jesus Christ and clearly shows that the promises made to Abraham and to his offspring the Lord Jesus Christ are not limited to the Jews only but embraces whoever will come to God through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ (Rom. 4:13) (Rom. 4:16-18) (Gal. 3:16) (Gal. 3:27).

The fulfilment and absolute awesome wonder, splendour and breath-taking magnificence of God's promise to Abraham will reach its climax when the following event comes to pass.

The Lord will return as, King of kings and Lord of lords (Rev. 19:11-16) to rule and reign from God's Holy City Jerusalem (on Mount Zion God's Holy Mountain) to establish God's Kingdom on earth during his millennial reign. In the first resurrection (Rev. 20:4-5) the dead in Christ and the faithful, who are alive, will be gathered together to rule and reign as kings and priests with the Lord over those nations who are left outside the Holy City of God. Christ the King united with his people will not only bring peace to the Middle East, but establish God's Kingdom of steadfast love, faithfulness, righteousness, joy and peace throughout the world and the glory of God will cover the earth. Jesus will do justice to the poor and oppressed, he will be a faithful and compassionate King forever. He will not allow anyone to strike terror in the earth or use lies and deception to enlarge their own wealth and power. The land will abundantly produce and even the deserts will flourish. The animals will not feed on each other and even the lamb will be able to lie down with the wolf and everyone will eat of their own hands because all that they plant will produce. All nations the LORD has made will come and worship before the Lord Jesus Christ. They will glorify God's Name, proclaiming the LORD is great and does wondrous things and that He alone is God. The book of Revelation states:

- Jesus Christ, the faithful witness who loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood has made us kings and priests unto God and his Father is coming in glory and every eye shall see him, and they also who pierced him and all kindreds of the earth (Revelation 1:5-7).

And in Revelation chapter five we are told that:

- Christ was slain, and by his blood he redeemed a people for God from every tribe and language and people and nation and made them a kingdom and priests to God and they shall reign on the earth (Revelation 5:9-10).

At the end of this glorious Kingdom age God descends to earth on a Great White Throne the sea, death and hades (the grave) give up the dead. They stand before God and are judged according to what is written in certain heavenly books according to what they have done. Death and those counted unworthy are cast into the Lake of Fire a symbol of eternal destruction (i.e., total extinction) (also called the, Second Death) (Rev 20:11-15). Christ hands the Kingdom over to his heavenly Father and God is ALL in ALL and ETERNITY begins in all its fullness and majestic royal glory. For further information see titles:

- Kingdom of God (ON WEBSITE MENU).
- The Second or Great White Throne Judgment.

In, Resurrection (ON WEBSITE MENU).

For further information on the Promised Seed of Abraham see:

- Galatians chapter 3 in, Commentary New Testament (ON WEBSITE MENU).

Summary of the inheritance

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When the Lord Jesus Christ returns all who belong to his family will inherit an immortal body that will never again feel tired, depressed, sad, jealous, angry, lustful or have any other sinful thoughts or attitudes, added to this they will inherit an eternal family of brothers and sisters in Christ and an everlasting world without hurt, suffering, sickness, pain or sorrow in which wild animals will be harmless, a world that is full of love, righteousness, justice, goodness, joy, peace and love in which God Himself will not only dwell in and amongst the people, but also be all in all. How sad it is that some religious teachers today have turned the glorious eternal Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ into a Gospel of money, success, wealth and worldly possessions to be attained here and now. The faith that should have been the least materialistic has in certain religious groups today become one of the most materialistic religions on earth (is it any wonder many turn to New-Age faiths and spiritual teachings) when the spiritual riches, blessings and promises that are in Christ are being traded for the delights, pleasures and instant gratification of this mortal world.

NOTE: from here on the entire context is not the original creation of the world at Genesis, but the creation of the New Testament church which came by Christ and for Christ.

COLOSSIANS 1:13-14

Delivered from the Kingdom of Darkness to the Kingdom of God's Son.

- **Colossians 1:13-14:** He has delivered us from the domain of darkness and transferred us to the kingdom of his beloved Son, ¹⁴in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins.

This means that God the Father has delivered Jews and Gentiles alike from being separated from God to being united with God and that God does not forgive our sins and redeem us because we legalistically keep certain religious rites, customs and traditions, but because of our faith in His beloved Son. It is by faith in Christ that God the heavenly Father is able to reach down to the lowliest child of Adam and lift them in Christ to the highest heights of eternal glory.

COLOSSIANS 1:15

Jesus is the Image of the Invisible God, the Firstborn of all Creation.

- **Colossians 1:15:** He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation (Or the New Creation)

Image: means a likeness, resemblance and representation it carries the idea of 'the faintness of a copy. The words, "Jesus is the image of the invisible God" (v15) means that Jesus is the perfect reflection of his heavenly Father in the following ways:

1. He not only manifested God's holy character, God's love, God's compassion, God's grace and God's mercy etc., while on earth, but also the miraculous power of God's spoken word, to heal, to control the weather (calming the storm) and to create from nothing (feeding the 5000) added to these he taught God's eternal plan of salvation, God's promises, God's will and God's desire without fault thus Jesus though he was not God himself he was nevertheless in this sense the perfect mirror image and reflection of God materialised on earth in human form.
2. Jesus is the fullness of God's Spirit in that he was God's word perfectly and fully manifested in the flesh (a human body) teaching the wisdom, knowledge, plans, purposes and promises of the invisible God in heaven and God's entire plan of salvation for all mankind (Jews and Gentiles) in this sense Jesus was the manifestation or perfect image of God's mind on earth.

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The firstborn of all creation: Paul's statement, "Jesus was the firstborn of all creation" (v15) can mean the following two things:

1. Jesus was the first to be born to be resurrected to eternal glory and everlasting life (see v18). Though others had been resurrected none had been resurrected to eternal life.
 2. Since his death was in reality his birth into the eternal world of God the expression, "Firstborn of all creation" can refer to his resurrection to eternal glory and everlasting life. For further information regarding this, see the titles:
- Heaven.
 - Death (what happens when we die).
 - Both titles are in, Death (ON WEBSITE MENU).

COLOSSIANS 1:16-17

By Him all things were Created in Heaven and on Earth.

- **Colossians 1:16-17:** For by him all things were created, in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities—all things were created through (by in KJV) him and for him ¹⁷And he is before all things, and in him all things hold together.

The entire context of this letter and Paul's focus is on faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, the truth of God's grace, love in the Spirit, being filled with the knowledge of God's will in all spiritual wisdom and understanding and living a lifestyle that is worthy of Christ. Enduring with patience in the faith and sharing in the eternal inheritance. Being delivered from the domain of darkness and transferred into the Kingdom of God's beloved Son, redemption and the forgiveness of sins. Paul's entire focus throughout this chapter is on Christ being the head of the church, on the church itself and on the new Kingdom Jesus has created in himself. When Paul's statement:

- By him all things were created in heaven and on earth (v16).

Is read with this in mind it becomes clear that Paul does not have the original creation of Genesis in focus, but rather to all things that were created or came into being through Christ's death and resurrection, i.e., the global church which is also called a new creation in Christ, a new nation, the body of Christ and the Kingdom of Christ. It is this New Testament age of the New Covenant and the worldwide Kingdom of God that Jesus has created in his name that Paul's statement refers to. If anyone doubts the magnitude and enormity of this world God has created through the Lord Jesus Christ simply consider the world without Christ, we would still be under Moses laws of purification, the Levitical priesthood, the demands of the law and no-one could go to God without going through a priest. Christ through his death and resurrection destroyed the Old World of the Old Covenant and has created a New World and a New Covenant or it could be said that Jesus death and resurrection destroyed the Old Religious World and created an entirely New Spiritual World of which he is the head.

The Bible also calls this 'New World' that Christ has created:

- The body of Christ and the church.
- A new nation in Christ (Jews and Gentiles together) and a new creation.
- One man in Christ (Jews and Gentiles together) and the Kingdom of God.

Jesus said, "Truly, I say to you, among those born of women there has arisen no one greater than John the Baptist" (Matt 11:11) this is because it was John who introduced to the world the Lord Jesus Christ and it was Christ who totally changed the Old Religious World of God forever by establishing an entirely New Spiritual Word (Or Age). For over four-thousand year's circumcision, the Sabbaths, the feasts, the sacrifices, the entire Levitical priesthood and the ceremonial law was the Jews world. Jesus death and resurrection entirely destroyed this world and created an entire new Christian or Spiritual world, thus the reason it is called a New Creation in Christ. This New Word that Christ created is based on grace and one eternal merciful and perfect High Priest the Lord Jesus Christ through who all (Jews and Gentiles) can boldly enter into the presence of God and be saved to eternal life in contrast to the Old World in which only the High Priest could ever enter into the presence of God and salvation belonged to the Jews and to those who adopted Moses laws and the religious customs of Israel.

All things were created through Him and for Him: the all things in the statement, "All things were created through (by in KJV) him and for him" (v16) in this context refer to salvation by grace now made available to Jews and Gentiles alike and to the global and worldwide church it is the church that is created by Christ since without his obedience to God and his death and resurrection it would not exist.

Christ is before all things, and in Him all things hold together: the word, before (Greek pro) from Strong's Concordance means, in front of, prior to, ever and above, figuratively carries the idea of being superior to. When Paul's statement:

- And he is before all things, and in him all things hold together (v17)

Is read with the understanding that the word before does not mean that Jesus pre-existed with God, but rather that he is superior to and above every authority, power and government it becomes clear that Paul is not saying Jesus existed before creation, but that he is the superior Head who is above all principalities and dominions it is in this sense that Paul is saying, Jesus is before all things i.e., he is before all things in authority, rule and dominion which of course harmonizes with the entire Bible from Genesis to Revelation.

In Christ all things hold together: the words, "In him all things hold together" (v17) means that in Christ all things in the world-wide church are held together. There are two reasons for this this because:

1. There is no other name under heaven whereby anyone can be saved.
2. In Christ is love, compassion, kindness, grace and mercy etc.

These are the glue that holds brothers and sisters together in the Lord and the cement that holds them together in his eternal worldwide Kingdom and in his spiritual global family.

COLOSSIANS 1:18-20

Christ is the Head of the Body the Church.

- **Colossians 1:18-20:** And he is the head of the body, the church. He is the beginning the firstborn from the dead, that in everything he might be pre-eminent. ¹⁹For in him all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell ²⁰and through him to reconcile to himself all things, whether on earth or in heaven, making peace by the blood of his cross.

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The church is pictured as an eternal awe-inspiring body with Christ as its head. The glorious words, "He is the beginning the firstborn from the dead" shows us that God views death as a birth and a new beginning. Unfortunately some religious teachers use this verse to support the mistaken theory that certain faithful Old Testament fathers were raised to heaven when they died, but that would contradict what Paul is saying here, i.e., Jesus was the first to be resurrected from the dead, meaning he was the first to be resurrected to heaven, if the Old Testament fathers had been raised to Heaven Paul would not be able to make this statement. For further information regarding this, see the title:

- Heaven.
- Death (what happens when we die).
- Both titles are in, Death (ON WEBSITE MENU).

God planned and purposed that Jesus would be first to be raised from the dead to eternal life and everlasting glory so that he would be pre-eminent (v18), meaning he would be the most high-ranking authority in God's Kingdom and stand out in majestic and royal glory amongst all others in all things regarding salvation, dominion and rule.

In Christ all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell: the words, "For in him all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell" (v19) does not mean that Jesus is God, but that God's Spirit dwelt in him without limitation. John the Baptist said of Jesus, "For he whom God has sent utters the words of God, for he gives the Spirit without measure, the Father loves the Son and has given all things into his hand" (John 3:33-35) which means that God gave Jesus His Spirit without any limitation or restraint. This is why Jesus was able to heal everyone who came to him regardless of whether their sickness was physical or mental, a virus or a disease and why he was able to create fish from nothing and calm the

storm by a spoken word in contrast to the prophets of the Old Testament and apostles of the New Testament having a limited measure of God's Spirit and in contrast to every brother and sister in Christ even today having a limited portion of God's Spirit (also called the Holy Spirit) dwelling within them.

God lifts the Spirit off Moses: the following verses show that God is able to take a portion of His Spirit from one person and place it onto others:

- Moses went out and told the people the words of the LORD and he gathered seventy men of the elders and placed them around the tent then the LORD came down in the cloud and took some of the Spirit that was on Moses and put it on the seventy elders as soon as the Spirit rested on them, they prophesied. but they did not continue doing it and Eldad and Medad remained in the camp and the Spirit rested on them and so they prophesied (Numbers 11:24-26).

This clearly shows that God is able to pour out His Spirit in varying portions on whoever he chooses.

To reconcile to Himself all things, whether on earth or in heaven: the heavenly and glorious words, "Through Christ God is reconciling to himself all things making peace by the blood of his cross" (v20) show us the following two things: -

1. It is God's desire that mankind would be saved
2. Why God was so thrilled with His Son, i.e., if Jesus had not been prepared at the Garden of Gethsemane to say those famous words, "Father not my will but yours be done" (knowing in that moment he was surrendering his life to brutal torture and a cruel death) God's plan of salvation would have failed, is it any wonder God has exalted Christ above all principalities, authorities, dominions and powers and why Christians make the Lord the most treasured possession of their hearts.

COLOSSIANS 1:21-23

Gentiles were Alienated and Hostile in Mind to God.

- **Colossians 1:21-23:** And you (Gentiles) who once were alienated and hostile in mind, doing evil deeds, ²²he has now reconciled in his body of flesh by his death, in order to present you holy and blameless and above reproach before him, ²³if indeed you continue in the faith, stable and steadfast, not shifting from the hope of the gospel that you heard, which has been proclaimed in all creation under heaven, and of which I, Paul, became a minister.

The mind of all mankind is carnal (dominated by self, ego, pride, greed and lust etc.,) and as such is against God and therefore alienated from Him which is manifested in the teaching and theory of evolution and corrupt works throughout all nations, but this alienation is spoken particularly of the Gentiles because the Jews were at least by profession dedicated to the true God while the Gentiles were given up to denying God altogether or to the worship of other gods or other spiritual teachings which they dedicated themselves, their minds and their religious and spiritual service to.

NOTICE: this alienation is seated in the mind and leads to a lifestyle contrary to the will of God. It is not the result of a fleeting passion or excitement, but has a much deeper seat that takes hold of the intellectual powers of the mind which renders reconciliation with God difficult. This alienation is a result of sin (empowered by self, ego, pride, lust and greed etc.,) it has corrupted the moral and intellectual powers of the mind and thereby set the whole of mankind against their Creator, but despite this God through Christ has brought harmony, love and friendship between Gentiles and Himself.

It should be noted: all this change is on the part of man and not God since it is us who have to lay aside our hostility toward God and not God toward us since His whole desire is to reconcile us to Himself so much so that Jesus himself said:

- God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life (John 3:16).

Holy and blameless and above reproach before God: the word, blameless in the following verse, "Christ has now reconciled Gentiles in his body of flesh by his death, in order to present you holy and blameless and above reproach (v22) does not mean that we can attain to a state of sinlessness, but that God counts us righteous because of our faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. This is why Paul adds, "If you continue in the faith, stable and steadfast, not shifting from the hope of the gospel (v23)." It is in our faith in Christ that we are counted blameless before God and not by our self-effort to attain to it by religious works or self-effort. Though good conduct and godly behaviour may store up eternal rewards in heaven they have no power in themselves to save a person to eternal life.

The Gospel has been proclaimed in all creation: Paul's statement, "The Gospel that you heard, which has been proclaimed in all creation under heaven, and of which I, Paul, became a minister" (v23) obviously does not mean that every man and woman has heard the Gospel, if this were the case Paul could stop preaching. What it does mean is that the gospel has now gone out to Gentiles in contrast to being limited to Israel only. Salvation is now available to people from all nations in contrast to the Jews only it is in this sense that the Gospel has been proclaimed to all creation.

COLOSSIANS 1:24-25

The Mystery Hidden for Ages and Generations, but now Revealed.

- **Colossians 1:24-25:** Now I rejoice in my sufferings for your sake, and in my flesh I am filling up what is lacking in Christ's afflictions for the sake of his body, that is, the church, ²⁵of which I became a minister according to the stewardship from God that was given to me for you, to make the word of God fully known,

Here we get an insight into the true heart of a shepherd and Paul's attitude to suffering for Christ. Paul's persecution, suffering and physical afflictions are a direct result of him proclaiming the Gospel, but though these things bring him grief he rejoices because he knows that he is suffering for the spiritual and eternal benefit of the lost and other brothers and sisters in Christ. Here is the true heart of a shepherd, Paul is saved he does not need to preach the gospel for his own benefit and if he stopped proclaiming it (especially publicly) the persecution would stop and he would suffer no longer, but because of his love for the Lord, the lost and for those in Christ he not only chooses to accept that his ministry cannot be separated from suffering, but rejoices in it knowing that his ministry is adding others to the body of Christ and encouraging the spiritual growth of many.

Paul is filling up what is lacking in Christ's afflictions: the words, "I am filling up what is lacking in Christ's afflictions" (v24) means that there were not many teachers willing to suffer for Christ's sake as Paul was and because of this Paul is saying (and perhaps feeling) that his enormous amount of suffering for Christ was making up for the lack of suffering other teachers of the Gospel were not prepared to endure. This no-doubt is one (there are others) of the reasons Paul said to the Corinthian brothers and sisters, "Though you have countless guides in Christ, you do not have many fathers. For I became your father in Christ Jesus through the Gospel (1 Cor. 4:15), many were willing to teach, but only a few were fathers like Paul and prepared to suffer for those they taught as any father willingly does for his own children.

The Mystery Hidden for Ages and Generations but now Revealed.

- **Colossians 1:26-27:** the mystery hidden for ages and generations but now revealed to his saints. ²⁷To them God chose to make known how great among the Gentiles are the riches of the glory of this mystery, which is Christ in you the hope of glory.

The word mystery in the following verse, "The mystery hidden for ages and generations but now revealed to his saints" (v26) refers to the fact that the people of Israel believed that all the promises God had made to Abraham, Isaac, Jacob and David regarding the coming Messiah the Christ and all that the Old Testament prophets had spoken about the Promised Seed to come who would bless and rule the nations where restricted solely to the nation of Israel. The Jews clearly believed that God's promises and the coming Messiah the Christ were for their nation and their nation only, which means that the mystery of Christ that was hidden in the Old Testament was not only that all the promises God made to Israel would also apply to the Gentiles, (because all God's promises are in Christ), but also that the Messiah the Christ would embrace the Gentile nations as well as the Jews.

The mystery of Christ that was hidden in the Old Testament was that:

- Both Jews and Gentiles would be saved by faith in Jesus Christ.
- The plans, purposes and promises of God would be revealed in Jesus and would all be obtained through faith in Christ.
- Everything that is needed for salvation for Jews and Gentiles would be in Christ.
- The character nature and power of God and God's love, grace and mercy would be revealed in Christ to both Jews and Gentiles alike.

Christ in you

Paul no-doubt in magnificent and triumphant joy tells the Colossian brothers and sisters that the riches and the glory of this mystery is that; Christ the hope of glory is now in believers from all nations and not just the Jews (v27). Following are three common teachings regarding the majestic and awe-inspiring words "Christ in you"

1. The word, *in* from Strong's Concordance means, in, by, with, among, at, on, through and together with which means that the words, Christ in you can mean together with. Therefore, the following statement of Paul:

- To them God chose to make known how great among the Gentiles are the riches of the glory of this mystery, which is *Christ in you*, the hope of glory (v27),

Could read:

- To them God chose to make known how great among the Gentiles are the riches of the glory of this mystery, which is *Christ among you or together with you* the hope of glory.

Based on these facts some teach that the verse should actually read, "Christ amongst you" meaning that Christ by his Spirit is amongst the church and those who gather in his name. Though this is certainly a true statement since the Lord himself said, "For where two or three are gathered in my name, there am I among them" (Matt 18:20) it does not mean that the verse is wrong in saying, "Christ in you" since Christ by his Spirit and through faith dwells in every brother and sister who is devoted to him.

2. Jesus said, "Greater love has no one than this, that someone lays down his life for his friends," (John 15:13). When a person's eyes are opened to their fallen condition before God and perceive what it cost the Lord Jesus Christ to save them their heart is filled with love for him, it is in this sense that Christ dwells in the human heart.

The following is a true story and a good example of a person being in the heart of another. An eight-year old disabled girl, whose best friend was her mother was doing her first live stage show. The mother loved her daughter but could not be at the opening show as she was in hospital with terminal cancer. A television reporter asked the young girl if she would be sad and miss her mother at the opening of the show. The small girl with tears in her eyes said, "Yes I will miss her, but she will be in my heart where she belongs." Love for a person creates the reality or presence of that person in the human heart. This presence is in direct proportion to the love i.e., the greater the love the greater the presence. Every Christian, by looking at the bloodstained cross knows that God and Jesus love them.

3. Christ is the head of a new race and those outside this new race enter into it by faith in belonging to Christ. Adam was the head of the old race that believers were in prior to being in Christ's new race therefore the words, "Christ in you" in this context means:

- Fully belonging to Christ.
- Being together and in union with Christ.
- Agreeing with and sharing in the divine nature of Christ.
- Having the same mind as Christ (i.e., desiring to honour his heavenly Father).

These facts mean that the riches and the glory of this mystery not only refers to the truth that we are all (Jews and Gentiles) saved through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ and in him we have the glorious hope of eternal life in everlasting glory, but also includes the majestic glory that in this present age Christ dwells within the heart of all who are devoted to him by his spirit and by love.

COLOSSIANS 1:28-29

Paul's Desire is to Present Everyone Mature in Christ.

- **Colossians 1:28-29:** Him we proclaim, warning everyone and teaching everyone with all wisdom, that we may present everyone mature in Christ. ²⁹For this I toil, struggling with all his energy that he powerfully works within me.

Paul's primary focus and passion is always on the Lord Jesus Christ and bringing those who belong to the Lord's family to maturity and spiritual adulthood in contrast to them being infants in Christ and Christians of the flesh behaving only in a human manner (1 Cor. 3:1-4).

Christ's energy powerfully works within Paul: Paul's words, "I toil, struggling with all his energy that he powerfully works within me" (v29) show us that just because a person maybe faithfully serving the Lord it does not mean that their life or their ministry will be free of difficulty and that Christ energizes those who do faithfully serve him.

This spiritual energy comes in the following two ways:

- 1 Supernaturally by the Spirit of the Lord.
- 2 Through love.

Love generates an energy that transcends natural energy. It seems as though God has encoded a law into the universe and the DNA of all humanity that states; "The greater the love the greater the passion and the greater the passion the greater the energy" (if anyone doubts this statement just talk to someone who has fallen in love). Paul was so filled with the love of Christ that he not only considered death to be gain for him (2 Cor. 5:8), but preferred to be with the Lord rather than remain here on earth (Philip. 1:23) such was the love of Christ dwelling in him, is it any wonder he was so powerfully energized by the Spirit of Christ working in him?

As the founder of Bible House of Grace, I would like to thank the many Christian scholars, commentators and theologians who have gone before me, and the many today, who have freely made available their works to enhance the knowledge of the Bible to all people worldwide. It is only with the help of these faithful writers that much of Bible House of Grace exists as it does today.

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