

Colossians in Review (Colossians 1:10-18)

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Introduction

1. Verse-by-verse exposition of Scripture over an extended period (36 weeks to be exact) presents its own problem.
 - a. In focusing on details, we can forget the overall purpose of the author.
 - b. We can also forget the important truths that shape the purpose.
2. The occasion of the letter to the Colossians was false teachers that were getting a hearing in the church.
 - a. Churches can fail through error.
 - b. At the same time, God permits error to reveal the power of the gospel in the lives of true believers.
 - c. Epaphras (1:7; 4:12, 13), probably the founder of the tri-city churches, Hierapolis, Laodicea, and Colossae, sought the apostle's help in combating the error that threatened them.
3. The threat of the false teachers
 - a. A threat of deception—to take as “spoils” souls by means of worldly wisdom (philosophy)
 - b. A method of deception— an unbiblical worldview—not after Christ but by means of human tradition empowered by demonic forces
 - c. An occasion of exaltation—the pre-eminent Christ.

I. The Potential of the Saints

1. The proof of the saints' standing in the gospel
 - a. As contrasted to the present uncertainty
 - 1) Epaphras's gospel work was being threatened. If the false teachers succeeded, the fruit of Paul's gospel in that region would come to nothing.
 - 2) The greater issue—the truth and power of the gospel. If the error was successful, what did that say about the strength of truth to prevail?
 - b. The present predicament considered by the fact that these believers were somewhere between two realities:
 - 1) What they had been before the gospel (1:21)
 - 2) What they were to become (1:5, 6). How were they to navigate that gap (2:4, 6)?
 - c. Paul wrote with great confidence because his gospel produced genuine fruit, the proof of which lay in two observable facts (1:4):
 - 1) Their faith in Jesus Christ
 - 2) Their love expressed to the saintsHowever, his confidence was not in what he saw but what he saw as promised by God through the gospel.
2. Their progress toward the realization of hope depended on understanding their gospel potential (1:9-12); thus Paul prayed for the saints (1:10, 11):
 - a. To be filled with knowledge of His will
 - 1) In all wisdom (the right use of knowledge)
 - 2) In understanding
 - b. To be strengthened with all spiritual power
 - 1) For all endurance
 - 2) For patience with joy

3. The potential of their success (1:12-14)
 - a. The Father qualified them to “share in the inheritance of the saints in light.”
 - b. The Son
 - 1) Delivered them from the domain of darkness,
 - 2) Transferred them into the domain of light,
 - 3) Redeemed them from the threat of judgment,
 - 4) Forgave them of all sins and iniquities.
4. Their responsibility in their success
 - a. To perseverance in the faith as received (1:23)
 - b. To walk in Christ, *rooted* and *established* in the faith (2:7)
 - c. To heed the warnings against false teaching (2:8)
 - 1) Not deluded with plausible arguments (2:4)
 - 2) Not disqualified by rules and rituals (2:16-23)
 - d. To seek Christ, setting their minds on heavenly things (3:1-4)
 - e. To put to death whatever earthly remained in them (3:5-9)
 - f. To put on the qualities of the new self created in the image of Christ (3:10-17)
 - g. To demonstrate the new self
 - 1) At home (3:18-21)
 - 2) At work (3:22-4:1)
 - 3) At large (4:2-6)

II. The Preeminence of the Savior

1. Christ, the Lord of creation and reconciliation (1:15-20). This paragraph is central to Paul’s argument.
 - a. Christ is the creator of all things visible and invisible, being before all things and holding all together.
 - b. Christ is the head of the church by means of resurrection from the dead.
 - c. Christ is the fullness of God.
 - d. Christ is the reconciler of all things to God.
2. Christ is the great mystery of God.
 - a. The revelation of this mystery—the gospel
 - b. The hope of this mystery—“Christ in you”
 - c. The goal of this mystery—the perfection of Christ
 - d. The apprehension of this mystery—Christ, in whom are all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge
 - e. The relevance of this mystery—Christ, your life
 - f. The anticipation of this mystery—to appear with Him in glory

In light of the message, we need to ask—

1. Does my life resemble the pattern established for my progress between what I was before the gospel and what I am to become when He returns to take me to Himself?
2. What do I know and understand about the person of Christ in all His fullness and glory revealed in the gospel?