

## LESSON TEXT: Colossians 1:1-29

Prepared by Paul T. Butler, Th.D.

### INTRODUCTORY COMMENTS:

Warren Wiersbe, preacher on Back to the Bible Broadcast and former preacher at the Moody Memorial Church in Chicago, wrote, It used to bother me to sing the familiar song, "This is My Father's World." I thought Satan and sin were in control of this world. I have since changed my mind, and now I sing the song with joy and victory. Jesus Christ made all things; He controls all things; and by Him all things hold together. Indeed, this *is* my Father's world.

This letter to the Colossians from the Holy-Spirit-inspired pen of Paul tells us that Christ created all things and all things were created **for** him. Everything exists **by** him, **in** him, and **for** him. Jesus Christ is the *Sphere* in which everything exists, the *Agent* through which they came into being, and the *One* for whom they were made.

If everything in creation exists **for** him, then nothing can be evil of itself except free-willed creatures---including Satan and fallen angels---who choose to behave contrary to his will. And even willful and wicked creatures---humans included---will ultimately acknowledge his sovereignty (Phil. 2:9-11). All of God's creation, even though under bondage to sin and "subjected to futility and decay" (Rom. 8:18-25), can be used for God's glory and enjoyed by God's people (1 Tim. 4:1-5; 6:17).

Is Christ "Lord" of every part of our lives? We must **not** call him, "Lord, Lord" and **not** do the things he commands (Lk. 6:46). Christ demands to be the "arbiter, umpire" (Greek, *brabeueto*) of your heart (Col. 3:15). He alone is authorized to call "safe" or "out" in our lives.

You will not want to miss any of our four lessons from Colossians. They will fill you with the knowledge of God's will in all spiritual wisdom and understanding. They will set you free---they will change your outlook and your life. BE IN BIBLE SCHOOL.

Jesus Christ is Lord of all--or he is not Lord at all!

### QUESTIONS

1. How did the Colossae Christians know they had a "hope laid up...in heaven?" 1:3-8
2. How were the Colossians to "lead a life worthy of the Lord?" 1:9-10
3. When are people "transferred" to the kingdom of God's Son? 1:13 And what happens to the "transferred" ones?
4. What does it mean "in him all things hold together"? 1:17 Does this apply in social structures like home, marriage, nation, etc.?
5. How does Jesus' death reconcile hostile-minded people? 1:21-22
6. What does man have to do to remain reconciled to God? 1:23 How does man do this?
7. What is lacking in Christ's afflictions? 1:24 How could Paul complete that? Are Christians today to be completing Christ's afflictions?
8. How could the word of God be made fully known? If it is a mystery? 1:25
9. Why is your hope of glory dependent upon Christ being in you? 1:26-27 How do you know when Christ is in you? See Gal. 3:26-27; Eph. 3:17; 1 Jn. 3:24; Col. 2:8-15
10. How are people matured (perfect KJV & NIV) in Christ? 1:28-29; see also Eph. 4:11-16; 2 Tim. 3:14-17; Heb. 10:1-39; 1 Pet. 2:2; 1 Jn. 2:5

"He (Jesus Christ) was sent by God; his miracles show it; and the authority of God in his precepts can not be questioned. His morality has a sure standard, that revelation vouches, and reason can not gainsay nor question; but both together witness to come from God, the great Lawgiver." ---John Locke (1632-1704), English philosopher (3<sup>rd</sup> most quoted author by America's Founding Fathers framing our Constitution and Bill of Rights)

## LESSON TEXT: Colossians 2:1-23

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### INTRODUCTORY COMMENTS:

The conversation on Albert Einstein's sailboat drifted back and forth from profundities about the nature of God, the universe and man, to lighter questions. Suddenly, Einstein lifted his head, looked up at the skies and said, "We know nothing about it at all. Our knowledge is but the knowledge of school children. Do you think that we shall ever probe the secret? Possibly, we shall know a little more than we do now. But the real nature of things----that we shall never know, never!"

Thomas Alva Edison said much the same: "We do not know one-millionth part of one per cent about anything. We do not know what water is. We do not know what light is. We do not know what electricity is. We do not know what gravity is. We do not know anything about magnetism. We have a lot of hypotheses, but that is all."

But it is not oversimplification or boasting to say that the Christian has available to him all that Einstein and Edison wistfully pronounced unattainable. Yes! The Christian knows the secret! He knows the real nature of things. "By faith we **understand** (Gr. *nooumen*, know, comprehend, reason) that the world was created by the word of God, so that what is seen was made out of things which do not appear." (Heb. 11:3; see also Psa. 33:6-9; 104:30; 148:5).

The apostle Paul states in our lesson (Col. 2:3) that **all** the "treasures" of wisdom and knowledge are "hidden" (Gr. *apokruphoi*, secreted, encrypted) in Christ. In other words, if we are in Christ, studying his word, believing and doing his word, we have the key that unlocks the vault to **all that is precious and valuable** for man to know and understand! In Christ man knows where he came from, why he is here, and where he is going! In Christ the Christian has "come to fulness of life" because in Christ dwells all the fulness of God. Any person who is "in" Christ according the word of Christ, is complete. There is nothing lacking. The Christian needs no extra-Biblical experience!

Jesus Christ is God's *EVERYTHING* for man's total need!

### QUESTIONS:

1. How can we have all the riches of assured understanding if all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge are hidden in Christ? 2:2-3
2. Do you have to get faith in Christ by being taught? 2:6-7 (see Rom. 10:17)
3. What has philosophy to do with elemental spirits of the universe? 2:8
4. Why does Paul contrast the elemental spirits against the fulness of the Christian in Christ? 2:9-10
5. If Christian baptism is our circumcision shouldn't we be baptizing children when they are 8 days old? 2:11-12
6. How were principalities and powers *disarmed* and *triumphed over* by the death of Christ? 2:14-15
7. What is wrong with self-abasement? 2:18 How does it disqualify a Christian?
8. Why isn't self-abasement and severity to the body of value in checking the indulgence of the flesh? 2:23
9. Did you notice Paul's emphasis, again in this chapter as in the first, upon teaching, knowing, wisdom---both good and bad? People become what they are taught and what they learn! Thank God for the Bible and for Bible School!

"To become a disciple" means "to learn, to be taught." Followers of Christ are know and think. Christians are not permitted the luxury of putting their brains into neutral. The apostle Peter wrote, "Therefore, *gird up* your minds...." which means, "put your minds to work" (1 Pet. 1:13)

## LESSON TEXT: Colossians 3:1-17

Prepared by Paul T. Butler, Th.D.

### INTRODUCTORY COMMENTS:

John R.W. Stott says in his little book, *Your Mind Matters*, “Many secrets of holiness are given us in the pages of the Bible. Indeed, a major purpose of Scripture is to show God’s people how to lead a life that is worthy of him and pleasing to him. But one of the most neglected aspects of the quest for holiness is the place of the **mind**, even though Jesus himself put the matter beyond question when he promised “you will know the **truth**, and the **truth** will make you free.” It is by his **truth** that Christ liberates us from the bondage of sin. How is this? Wherein lies the liberating power of the **truth**? “The best example of this may be found in the earthly life of our Savior. Three times the devil came to him and enticed him in the wilderness of Judea. Three times he recognized that the devil’s suggestion was evil and contrary to the will of God. Three times he countered the temptation with the word *gegryptai*, “it stands written,” The matter was settled in his mind at the outset. For Scripture had laid down what was right. This clear Biblical knowledge of God’s will is the first secret of a righteous life. “It is not enough to *know* what we should be, however. We must go further and set our minds upon it. The battle is nearly always won in the mind. It is by the renewal of our mind that our character and behavior become transformed....Self control is primarily mind-control. What we sow in our minds we reap in our actions.”

John R.W. Stott is *right on* target! This is precisely what our lesson in Colossians 3:1-17 is all about! Be in Bible School and learn the equation

Bible + Mind-set = Hope of glory & happiness!

“If I only had 3 years to serve the Lord, I would spend 2 of them studying and preparing.” -----Dr. Donald G. Barnhouse

### QUESTIONS:

1. Can man actually direct his mind? Or is he a victim, mentally, of his environment? See Rom. 1:18ff; 8:1ff; 12:1ff; Phil. 3:19; Mt. 22:37; Eph. 4:23, etc.
2. How, with our minds so occupied by staying alive in this world, is it possible for us to set our minds on things above? 3:1-2
3. Why does Paul say we have died and our life is hid with Christ in God? 3:3-4
4. How can a person put to death what is earthly in him? 3:5-11 see Rom. 6:1-23; 8:1-8; 12:1-2; 2 Cor. 5:14-15; Gal. 2:20
5. In ch. 2 Paul said humility disqualifies us---now in ch. 3 he says we are to put on humility----which is right? 3:12
6. How has the Lord forgiven you? 3:13 Can you forgive like he did?
7. Does the peace of Christ *arbitrate* (i.e., **decide, judge, determine**) in our hearts? 3:15 Just what *is* the **peace** of Christ?
8. If the word of Christ is to dwell in us richly and in all wisdom through the songs we sing, what should the lyrics of those songs contain? 3:16 see also 1 Cor. 14:13-19
9. What is doing everything *in the name of* the Lord Jesus? 3:17

“Truth can *never* win unless it is promulgated. Truth does not carry within itself an antitoxin to falsehood. The cause of truth must be championed, and it must be championed dynamically.”

----William F. Buckley, Jr., in *God and Man at Yale*, 1951

“If I had my life to live over again, I would spend less time praying and more time studying the Word of God.” -----Reuben A. Torrey, founder of BIOLA University

## LESSON TEXT: Colossians 3:18---4:18

Prepared by Paul T. Butler, Th.D.

### INTRODUCTORY COMMENTS:

Pres. Bernice McNeela of St. Joan's Int'l. Alliance, an international Catholic Women's organization, protested to Catholic bishops about the traditional Scripture text read at all masses on Holy Family Sunday in December. The text, in Colossians 3, includes Paul's admonition for wives to be in submission to their husbands. A liturgy booklet carried the explanatory note: "Paul outlines ideal family relationships." The Alliance says the reading is *anti-feminist* and *unrealistic* in modern times. A better selection, said Ms. McNeela, would be the mutual love exhortations of 1 John 4.

And there is the story of Jan Erteszek, Polish Christian. Through much privation and danger he and his family escaped the Hitler holocaust in Poland. They came to America penniless. Today he is the president of the Olga Company, one of America's finest women's-wear companies. It does over 14 million dollars worth of business a year. In February 1970, Mr. Erteszek told members of the Layman's Movement at a New York luncheon how he applies his faith in Christ to his business. Through profit-sharing more than 20% of the company's annual profits are shared with all the employees; he maintains an open-door relationship so that if a worker has a grievance he is encouraged to take it up with his supervisor, if he gets no satisfaction, Pres. Erteszek insists that the worker come straight to him. When termination is necessary and a person is let go, he is told what the firm thinks his weaknesses are, but he is not fired---he is kept on the payroll until he finds another job.

Are the admonitions of the apostle Paul in our lesson text *unrealistic*? Has society really *outgrown*, ideologically and morally, Biblical absolutes for wives, husbands, children, employees and employers. Isn't it a foregone conclusion that life in the 20<sup>th</sup> century is much too complex for first century, Biblical, simplicities? Or, could it be possible that Biblical doctrines are relevant and workable today, for us, in the home and the shop? BE IN BIBLE SCHOOL AND TALK IT OVER!

### QUESTIONS:

1. What is fitting about a wife being in subjection to her husband? 3:18
2. When is a husband harsh with his wife? 3:19
3. Are children to obey a parent's prohibition to their becoming a Christian? 3:20
4. Is a Christian slave to work heartily at a task assigned him which he considers to be unchristian? 3:22-25
5. What is justice and fairness between a master and his slave? 4:1
6. What is wise conduct for a Christian toward an outsider? 4:5-6
7. To what purpose had Epaphras worked hard concerning the saints at Colossae? 4:13
8. What happened to the church at Laodicea between Paul's letter to them here about 60 A.D., and John's (Rev. 3:14-22) about 98 A.D. Could that happen to any church within 38 years? This one? How?

"By the year 2000 we will, I hope, raise our children to believe in human potential, not God..." ---Gloria Steinem in, *Ms.*

"It's a dilemma. In order to raise children with equality, we must take them away from families and communally raise them," --Dr. Mary Jo Bane, *Tulsa World*, 8/21/77

"It is my conviction that the family is God's basic unit in society. God's most important unit in society..." ---Jerry Falwell

"The security and elevation of the family and of family life are the prime objects of civilization, and the ultimate ends of all industry." ---Charles William Eliot (1834-1926), Pres. of Harvard University

"Lo, children are a heritage from the Lord, the fruit of the womb a reward...Your wife will be like a fruitful vine within your house; your children will be like olive shoots around your table. Lo, thus shall the man be blessed who fears the Lord." Psalms 127:3; 128:3-4

"So great is my veneration of the Bible, that the earlier my children being to read it the more confident will be my hope that they will prove useful citizens of their country and respectable members of society."

John Quincy Adams (1767-1848), 6<sup>th</sup> President of the USA