

*Analysis of*

# COLOSSIANS

## "THE PREEMINENCE OF CHRIST"

"He is also the head of the body, the church; and He is the beginning, the first-born from the dead; so that He Himself will come to have first place in everything."  
Colossians 1:18

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Colossians 1:18

### **A1 THE PROLOGUE TO THE COLOSSIANS 1:1-14**

#### **B1 Paul's Greeting to the Colossians 1:1-2**

C1 The writers 1:1

D1 Paul

E1 His mission: An apostle ("sent one") of Jesus Christ

E2 His reason: "by the will of God"

D2 Timothy, "the brother"

C2 The addressees 1:2

D1 To those in Colosse

D2 Who are saints and faithful brothers in Christ

C3 The blessing from God our Father

D1 Grace to you

D2 And peace

#### **B2 Paul's Prayer for the Colossians 1:3-14**

C1 His Thanks 1:3-8

D1 For their faith 1:3, 4a

E1 His thanks to God, the Father of our Lord Jesus 1:3

E2 His constant prayer for them

E3 His having heard of their faith in Christ 1:4a

D2 For their love: His having heard of the love which they have toward all the saints 1:4b

- D3 For their heavenly hope 1:5-8
  - E1 The impact of their hope: It feeds their faith and their love 1:5
  - E2 The focus of their hope: It is laid up for them in the heavens
  - E3 The source of their hope 1:5b-8
    - F1 The content of their hope: The word of the truth of the gospel 1:5b-6a
      - G1 Their previous hearing of it 1:5b
      - G2 Its present access to them 1:6a
      - G3 Its action in all the world as well as in them
        - H1 Bearing fruit
        - H2 Growing
    - F2 The beginning of their hope 1:6b-8
      - G1 The time of its beginning 1:6
        - H1 The day in which they heard the gospel
        - H2 (The day in which) they fully knew the grace of God in truth
      - G2 The agent of its beginning: Epaphras 1:7-8
        - H1 Paul's beloved fellow-slave 1:7
        - H2 His ministry on their behalf as a faithful servant of Christ
        - H3 His having shown to Paul their love in the Spirit 1:8
- C2 His Request 1:9-11
  - D1 Objective: That they might know God's will 1:9
    - E1 The urgency of his request
      - F1 Beginning on the day in which he heard [of their response]
      - F2 His ceaseless prayer for them

- E2 The content of his request: That they might be filled with the full knowledge of God's will
  - F1 In all wisdom
  - F2 In all spiritual understanding
- D2 Result: So they can walk worthy of the Lord 1:10
  - E1 Pleasing the Lord
  - E2 Bearing fruit
  - E3 Growing in full knowledge
- D3 Application: For their empowerment 1:11
  - E1 The level of empowerment
  - E2 The standard of empowerment
  - E3 The result of empowerment
- C3 His Proposal of Their Thanks 1:12-14
  - D1 For their inheritance 1:12
    - E1 The emotion of their thanks: Joy [from 1:11]
    - E2 The object of their thanks: The Father
    - E3 The content of their thanks
  - D2 For their deliverance 1:13
    - E1 God's having delivered them out of the authority of the darkness
    - E2 God's having transferred them into the kingdom of the Son of His love
  - D3 For their redemption 1:14
    - E1 The source of their redemption: In Christ
    - E2 The nature of their redemption: forgiveness of sins

**A2 THE PREEMINENCE OF CHRIST 1:15-23**

**B1 Because of His Essence: The Image of God 1:15a**

**B2 Because of His Activity: The Creator 1:15b-17**

C1 Creator of all things 1:15b-16

D1 His priority and importance over creation 1:15b

D2 The totality of His creation 1:16

E1 In all locations of significance

E2 In all modes of existence

E3 In all areas of authority

D3 The exclusiveness of His creation

D4 The purpose of His creation

C2 Sustainer of all things 1:17

D1 His transcendence over creation

D2 His sustenance of creation

**B3 Because of His Position: The Head of the Church 1:18a**

**B4 Because of His Victory over Death: The "First-Born" from the dead 1:18b**

C1 The initiator of victory over death

C2 The prominent one because of His victory over death

C3 The purpose of His victory over death – pre-eminence

**B5 Because of His Fullness 1:19**

**B6 Because of His Work: The Reconciler 1:20-23**

C1 The extent of His reconciliation: All things 1:20

C2 The means of His reconciliation: The blood of His cross 1:20

C3 The location of His reconciliation 1:20

D1 Things on earth

D2 Things in heaven

- C4 The present example of His reconciliation: The Colossian saints (The bright prospects of His former enemies if they continue in the faith.) 1:21-23
  - D1 Their former antagonism 1:21
  - D2 Christ's subsequent reconciliation of them 1:22-23
    - E1 The means of their reconciliation: The death of Christ's fleshly body 1:22a
      - F1 The disadvantage of His reconciliation
      - F2 The mortal struggle of His reconciliation
    - E2 The purpose of their reconciliation: That Christ might present them to Himself 1:22b-23
      - F1 Their character in their presentation 1:22b
      - F2 The condition of their presentation: If in fact they continue in the faith (and it is assumed they will) 1:23

**A3 THE PROTECTION FOR THE COLOSSIANS 1:24 - 2:23**

**B1 The Ministry / Service of Paul: The proclamation of a secret hitherto unrevealed (Christ within the believing Gentiles) 1:24-29**

- C1 Paul's joy at his suffering for the Colossians 1:24
  - D1 His present filling up in his flesh that which is lacking in regard to Christ's afflictions
  - D2 His willingness to do so for the sake of Christ's body, the church
- C2 Paul's stewardship (dispensation) from God to be a servant ("minister") of the church 1:25-29
  - D1 The repository of the stewardship: Paul, it's servant ("minister") 1:25
  - D2 The giver of the stewardship: God
  - D3 The beneficiaries of the stewardship
    - E1 The church in general 1:24, 25
    - E2 The Colossians in particular 1:25

- D4 The nature of the stewardship 1:25b-26
  - E1 Fulfillment of the word of God, namely 1:25b
  - E2 The mystery hidden from the ages and generations 1:26
  - E3 The mystery now revealed to God's saints
- D5 The Divine motive for the stewardship: God's wish to make known to His saints the wealth of this glorious mystery among the Gentiles 1:27
- D6 The content of the stewardship – the indwelling Christ 1:27
- D7 Paul's discharge of his stewardship 1:28-29
  - E1 His policy: To proclaim Christ 1:28a
  - E2 His objective: "To present every believer perfect in Christ" 1:28b
  - E3 His effort 1:29
  - E4 His power – Christ's powerful working within him 1:29

**B2 The Warning of Paul 2**

- C1 Not Philosophy, But Christ 2:1-10
  - D1 His struggle that they might truly know God's mystery, the **wisdom-filled** Christ 2:1-3
    - E1 His great struggle on behalf of believers 2:1
      - F1 The Colossians
      - F2 The Laodiceans
      - F3 Any who had never seen him personally
    - E2 His strong desire that their hearts might be encouraged 2:2-3
      - F1 By being joined together in love 2:2
      - F2 By the complete wealth of assurance in their understanding
      - F3 By their full knowledge of the mystery of God, namely, Christ, in whom are hidden all the treasures 2:2, 3
        - G1 Of wisdom 2:3
        - G2 Of knowledge

- D2 His warning against **enticing words** 2:4-7
  - E1 The purpose of his communication: that no one would beguile them with persuasive speech 2:4
  - E2 The intensity of his interest in them 2:5
    - F1 His absence in body
    - F2 His presence with them in spirit
    - F3 His attitude
      - G1 Rejoicing
      - G2 Observing
        - H1 Their orderliness
        - H2 The firmness of their faith in Christ
  - E3 His exhortation to them 2:6-7
    - F1 The comparison: "As you received the Christ--Jesus the Lord, walk in him!" 2:6
    - F2 The accompaniments 2:7
      - G1 "Having been rooted [in him]"
      - G2 Being built up in him"
      - G3 "Being confirmed in the faith as you were taught"
      - G4 "Abounding in thanksgiving"
- D3 His warning against **human philosophy** 2:8-10
  - E1 The warning 2:8
    - F1 The description: "Look out lest anyone abduct-and-rob you"
    - F2 The methods (of abduction)
      - G1 Through philosophy
      - G2 Through empty deceit
      - G3 According to human tradition
      - G4 According to the basic principles of the world rather than through Christ



- E2 The completeness of Christ 2:9
- E3 The completeness of the believer in Christ 2:10
  - F1 Their fullness as existing in Him
  - F2 The reason for their fullness: He is the head of all rule and authority
- C2 Not Legalism, But Christ 2:11-23
  - D1 Their position in Christ because of the Cross 2:11-13
    - E1 **Circumcised** in Christ 2:11
    - E2 Buried with Christ 2:12a
    - E3 Resurrected with Christ 2:12b
    - E4 Regenerated with Christ 2:13a
    - E5 Forgiven 2:13b
  - D2 The power of Christ on the Cross 2:14-15
    - E1 His abolishment of the indictment of the **Law** 2:14
    - E2 His triumph over [evil] principalities and powers 2:15
  - D3 The required practice of the Colossians because of the Cross 2:16-23
    - E1 *Do not live by trying to keep the Law:* ("Let no one judge the way you observe Jewish **religious rituals**") 2:16-17
      - F1 The examples 2:16
      - F2 The reason: These are a shadow of things to come 2:17a
      - F3 The reality: The real essence is Christ 2:17b
    - E2 *Do not live by using a "superior" knowledge:* ("Let no one defraud you of your reward") 2:18-19
      - F1 Through ignorant, self-abasing, but proud worship of angels 2:18
      - F2 Through failure to hold fast to the nourishment and support provided by the Head [Christ] and the body [the Church] 2:19

- E3 *Do not live as an ascetic:* ("Do not subject yourself to regulations") 2:20-23
  - F1 The principle precluding asceticism 2:20
    - G1 The fact of their having "died with Christ to the elementary **principles** of the world"
    - G2 The contradiction of their then submitting themselves to **decrees**
  - F2 Examples of asceticism 2:21
    - G1 "Handle not"
    - G2 "Taste not"
    - G3 "Touch not"
  - F3 The analysis of asceticism 2:22
    - G1 The taboos deal with things perishable, non-eternal
    - G2 The taboos are man-made, not God-made
  - F4 The failure of asceticism 2:23
    - G1 It has only the appearance, not the substance of wisdom
    - G2 It is really pride, exalting self
    - G3 It fails to extinguish "fleshly indulgence"

**A4 THE PRACTICE FOR THE COLOSSIANS: His Strategy for Applied Living 3:1 - 4:6**

**B1 In Their Attitude: Think Heavenly** ("As one risen with Christ, set your affection on heavenly things") 3:1-4

- C1 "Keep seeking the things above": Reasons for obeying this command 3:1
  - D1 The believers' post-death condition: "If (as is true) you were all raised up with Christ"
  - D2 Christ's heavenly location: "Christ is sitting at the right hand of God"

- C2 "Keep fixing your mind on the things above, not on the things on the earth":  
Reasons for obeying this command 3:2-4
  - D1 The believers' past death with Christ 3:3
  - D2 God's present hiding of the believers' life with Christ
  - D3 God's future glorious exhibition of believers alongside Christ 3:4
    - E1 The time of the exhibition: "Whenever Christ is exhibited"
    - E2 The correlation with Christ: He is "our life"
    - E3 The certainty of the exhibition: "Then you (all) also will be exhibited with him"
    - E4 The glory of the exhibition: "In glory"

**B2 In Their Lifestyle: (In everyday living) 3:5-17**

- C1 "Put to death your earthly members" (as resurrected ones) 3:5-7
  - D1 The death list 3:5
    - E1 Fornication
    - E2 Uncleaness
    - E3 Passion
    - E4 Evil desire
    - E5 Greed (= idolatry)
  - D2 The motivation: It's because of these things God's wrath is coming 3:6
  - D3 The need: The Colossians used to walk in these things when they lived in them 3:7
- C2 "Put away" (Get rid of) 3:8-11
  - D1 Targets of the command 3:8-9a
    - E1 Wrath 3:8
    - E2 Anger
    - E3 Ill will
    - E4 Slander
    - E5 Filthy language
    - E6 Deceit ("Stop lying to one another") 3:9a

- D2 Accompaniments of the command 3:9b-11
  - E1 Having put off the old man with his practices 3:9b
  - E2 Having put on the new man 3:10-11
    - F1 The character of the new man: He is being renewed in full knowledge according to [Christ], who created him 3:10
    - F2 The equality of the new man 3:11
      - G1 Neither Greek nor Jew
      - G2 Neither circumcision nor uncircumcision
      - G3 Neither barbarian nor Scythian
      - G4 Neither slave nor freeman
      - G5 Christ is all and in all
- C3 "Put on" 3:12-17
  - D1 The status of the believers 3:12
    - E1 God's chosen people
    - E2 Holy
    - E3 Objects of God's love
  - D2 The qualities with which they are to clothe themselves 3:12b-15
    - E1 Compassion 3:12b
    - E2 Kindness
    - E3 Humility, gentleness
    - E4 Patience
    - E5 Bearing with one another 3:13
    - E6 Forgiving yourselves
      - F1 The circumstance: If anyone has a complaint against anyone
      - F2 The standard: "Forgive as the Lord forgave you"

- E7 Love 3:14
  - F1 Its importance: "Over all these things"
  - F2 Its function: Love "binds all these virtues together in completeness"
- E8 Peace 3:15
  - F1 The command: "Let the peace of God rule in your hearts"
  - F2 The reason: "Since, as members of one body, you were called to peace" (NIV)
- E9 Thankfulness
- D3 Their preoccupation: with the Word of Christ 3:16
  - E1 Saturation: "Let the Word of Christ richly indwell you"
  - E2 Edificational overflow: "Wisely teaching and cautioning yourselves"
  - E3 Musical overflow:
    - F1 Styles: "Psalms, hymns, spiritual songs"
    - F2 Attitude
      - G1 Perspective: "With grace" (understanding they are the fortunate beneficiaries of God's grace)
      - G2 Sincerity: "Singing in (or 'with') your hearts"
      - G3 Motive: "To God"
- D4 Their life agenda 3:17
  - E1 Their scope: "whatever they do"
    - F1 In word
    - F2 In work
  - E2 Their aim: "do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus"
  - E3 Their attitude: "giving thanks to God the Father through Him"

**B3 In Their Relationships: As a new man, living the resurrected life requires the following relationships 3:18 - 4:6**

- C1 In the home 3:18-21
  - D1 Submissive wives 3:18
    - E1 The command: "Be subject to your husbands"
    - E2 The reason: "As is befitting in the Lord"
  - D2 Loving husbands 3:19
    - E1 The command to love their wives sacrificially
    - E2 The command not to be bitter against their wives
  - D3 Obedient children 3:20
    - E1 The command: "Obey your parents"
    - E2 The jurisdiction: "In all things"
    - E3 The reason: "This is well-pleasing to the Lord"
  - D4 Understanding fathers 3:21
    - E1 The command: "Don't stir up your children"
    - E2 The reason: "Lest they be broken-spirited"
- C2 In the work place 3:22 - 4:1
  - D1 Obedient slaves 3:22-25
    - E1 The command: "Obey your 'lords (masters)-in-the-human-realm'" 3:22a
    - E2 The jurisdiction: "In all things" 3:22b
    - E3 The motivation 3:22c
    - E4 The sincerity 3:23
    - E5 The pay 3:24
    - E6 The issue of justice 3:25

- D2 Fair-minded masters (lords) 4:1
  - E1 The command to provide for their slaves
    - F1 Justice
    - F2 Equality
  - E2 The motivation: They must know that they also have a master (lord) -- in heaven
- C3 Toward God 4:2-4
  - D1 The importance of prayer 4:2
    - E1 The imperative to continue in prayer
    - E2 The necessity of watching (for answers) with thankfulness
  - D2 The request for prayer 4:3-4
    - E1 Paul's request that they corporately pray for the Apostolic team (at least Paul and Timothy) 4:3a
      - F1 That God would open to them a door for the(ir) message
      - F2 That they might speak the mystery concerning Christ
    - E2 Paul's urgency 4:3b-4
      - F1 He has been bound in prison on account of this mystery 4:3b
      - F2 He wants to reveal his message as it is necessary for him to speak it 4:4
- C4 Toward unbelievers: A wholesome walk 4:5-6
  - D1 The appropriate lifestyle 4:5
    - E1 With wisdom
    - E2 With efficiency
  - D2 The appropriate conversation 4:6

**A5 THE PAULINE CONCLUSION 4:7-18**

**B1 His Commendation to the Colossians of Tychicus and Onesimus 4:7-9**

C1 Regarding Tychicus 4:7-8

D1 His qualifications 4:7

D2 His function 4:7, 8

E1 To inform the Colossians of the circumstances of Paul and his team 4:7, 8

E2 To comfort their hearts 4:8

C2 Regarding Onesimus 4:9

**B2 His Conveying of Greetings 4:10-15**

C1 From fellow prisoner Aristarchus 4:10

C2 From Barnabas' cousin Mark (whom welcome)

C3 From Jesus called Justus 4:11

D1 These three are Jewish

D2 These are the only fellow-workers for God's kingdom who proved to be a comfort to Paul

C4 From Epaphras 4:12-13

D1 One of them 4:12

D2 A slave of Christ

D3 A continual wrestler in prayer for them

E1 That they might stand complete

E2 That they might have been filled to the full in all God's will

D4 Possessed of concern for them, and for believers in Laodicea and Hierapolis 4:13

C5 From Luke, the beloved physician 4:14

C6 From Demas

C7 To other "brothers" 4:15

D1 Those in Laodicea

D2 To Nympha and the church in her house



**B3 His Closing Instructions 4:16-18**

- C1 For a Pauline letter-exchange with the Laodiceans 4:16
- C2 To tell Archippus to fulfill his ministry from the Lord 4:17
- C3 His personal signature 4:18
- C4 His urging them to remember his imprisonment
- C5 His bequest of grace upon them

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