



Sunday School

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# ***Colossians***

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# Background Information



In order for us to really understand the book of Colossians, we first have to understand what was going on at this time in history when Paul wrote his letter to the church at Colosse. If we look back to the letters written to the Galatians and the Ephesians, we remember that those churches there were dealing with Judaizers. Now, we learn that the church at Colosse had to deal not only with the Judaizers but also a group known as the Gnostics.

“Gnosis” is the Greek word for “knowledge.” Believe it or not Gnostics considered themselves to be Christians. But they preached a Gospel much different than what Paul preached. So what did the Gnostics of the first century believe?

- **Legalism:** They added a long set of rules to the Gospel. These rules were not scriptural and had nothing to do with salvation.
- **Ceremonialism:** Religion and salvation were based on their ceremonies and festivals. Their salvation would be safe if they abstained from certain foods and drink.
- **Angel Worship:** They advocated the practice of angel worship. (How does this compare to denominations today?)
- **Human Wisdom and Traditions:** This belief advocated that the wisdom of people and their traditions were the only things necessary to attain salvation.
- **Attainment of Knowledge:** They claimed to have knowledge that was not known to most people. They claimed to know spiritual secrets that had only been given to them.
- **Unimportance of Jesus:** Jesus was not the center of worship. Instead, all heavenly bodies were to be worshipped.

These are just a few of the beliefs they taught. Now the Gnostics claimed to be Christians, but were they? What makes us a Christian? For example, Mormons call themselves Christians. So what is it that makes us a true Christian?

In this letter, Paul was reminding the Christians at Colosse that these teachings were false and that they were saved from this “dominion of darkness.” He also reminded them that they need to keep with the teachings of the “kingdom of light,” which is the Gospel of Jesus. Paul also wanted to assure the Christians that there was no new knowledge about God that only a few were allowed to know. All the wonderful news about Jesus was for everyone to know.

But most of all Paul focused on the Supremacy of Jesus Christ. He wanted these Christians to know full well that worship is for no one or nothing other than Jesus. He is the Son of God, and only he is worthy. Paul, as he always does, gives them proof of this headship.

How does Gnosticism compare to some of the teachings of today? Does this exist today?

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# Chapter 1



1. To who was Paul writing this letter?
2. From where does their faith and love come?
3. In verses 3-4 Paul says he has heard about their faith in Jesus and their love for the Saints. Who told Paul about these things?
4. Who is Epaphras?
5. In verse six Paul mentions “this Gospel of truth.” In Galatians 1, what does Paul say about any other Gospel other than that of the Apostles?
6. So what should we consider any other teaching other than that of the Bible?
7. Who had been preaching to the Christians in Colosse?
8. With what had Paul asked God to fill them?
9. What does Paul say we should “grow in?”
10. Of whom is Paul speaking in verses 15-18?
11. How do these verses compare to John 1: 1-5?
12. Why were we enemies of God?
13. Because of Jesus Christ we can be presented without blemish and from what can we be free?
14. What does verse 23 say I must do to continue to be without blemish and accusation?
15. What does Paul say has been disclosed to the Saints?
16. Read verse 29 and tell me what Paul is saying?

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## Chapter 2



1. According to chapter 2, what is Paul's purpose?
2. Where can we find "all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge?"
3. In verse 4 Paul says not to be deceived by "fine sounding arguments" and he speaks of the same in verse 8. Name one deceptive philosophy of today?
4. What have we been given in Christ?
5. In verse 11 we read about circumcision. Compare verse 11 with Romans 2: 28 and briefly explain in your own words what Paul is saying?
6. When you read verse 12, how do you picture baptism (immersion or sprinkle) and why?
7. How did God make us alive in Christ?
8. How did God cancel the written code?
9. What was the written code?
10. Read verses 16-19 and in your own words tell me what Paul is saying?
11. Read verses 20-23, then read 1<sup>st</sup> Timothy 4: 1-5, and name some regulations that some follow that are not scriptural?
12. What does verse 18 say will disqualify us?
13. Read verses 20-23 and in your own words tell me what you think Paul is saying.
14. If you have an NIV Study Bible, read the introduction to 1<sup>st</sup> John and tell me what was the most dangerous of heresies in the first two centuries?

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## Chapter 3a (verses 1-17)



1. Read verse 1. Tell me what comes to mind when you read “raised with Christ?”
2. What has happened to my life if I am saved?
3. Find one other place in the New Testament that gives us a list like verse 5.
4. Why should we get rid of these things in our lives?
5. Read verse 8. What do you think Paul means by “but now you must rid?”
6. Why do we need to stop these things?
7. Read verse 11. What do you think Paul means then in verse 12 by “God’s chosen” if there are no favorites?
8. Read verses 12-13 and Matthew 6: 14-15. When you read these verses what idea do you get in your mind about the importance of forgiveness?
9. Read Matthew 18: 21-35 and explain how important forgiveness is in your own words?
10. What binds us together in perfect unity?
11. What does admonish mean?
12. What is the definition of Psalms?
13. How should we do all things?
14. Who are God’s chosen people?
15. What book are we studying?

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## Chapter 3b (verses 18-25)



1. What does the word “submit” mean?
2. List the chain of command that God has established?
3. Read the following: Colossians 3: 18-25, Ephesians 5: 22-33, 6: 1-4 and Titus 2: 1-8. After reading these passages, write in your own words how you feel God expects us as Christians to live. Write a few lines for each group. Use a separate sheet of paper if you need to.
  - Husbands:
  - Wives:
  - Children:
  - Fathers:
  - Young men:
  - Young women:
4. Who are considered the “older men and women?”
5. Read verse 22 and explain what you think Paul is saying? What is meant by the word “slaves?”
6. What kind of work would we do if we really put verse 23 into action?
7. Why should we work this way?
8. What will happen to anyone who does wrong to someone else? By whom will this happen?

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# Chapter 4



1. To what should we devote ourselves?
2. What does Paul mean by the “mystery of Christ?”
3. What do you think Paul means when he says that we should be watchful?
4. Do you think that God opens doors for all of us to share the Gospel?
5. What do you think Paul means in verse 5?
6. What does Paul mean in verse 6 when he says, “seasoned with salt?”
7. Read the last part of verse 6 as well as 1<sup>st</sup> Peter 3: 15 and tell me what is being said?
8. Why would this be important in the life of a Christian?
9. Who is Mark’s cousin?
10. Who was he?
11. Who is Epaphras?
12. What was Luke’s profession?
13. Are we studying a book or a letter? How can you prove it?

