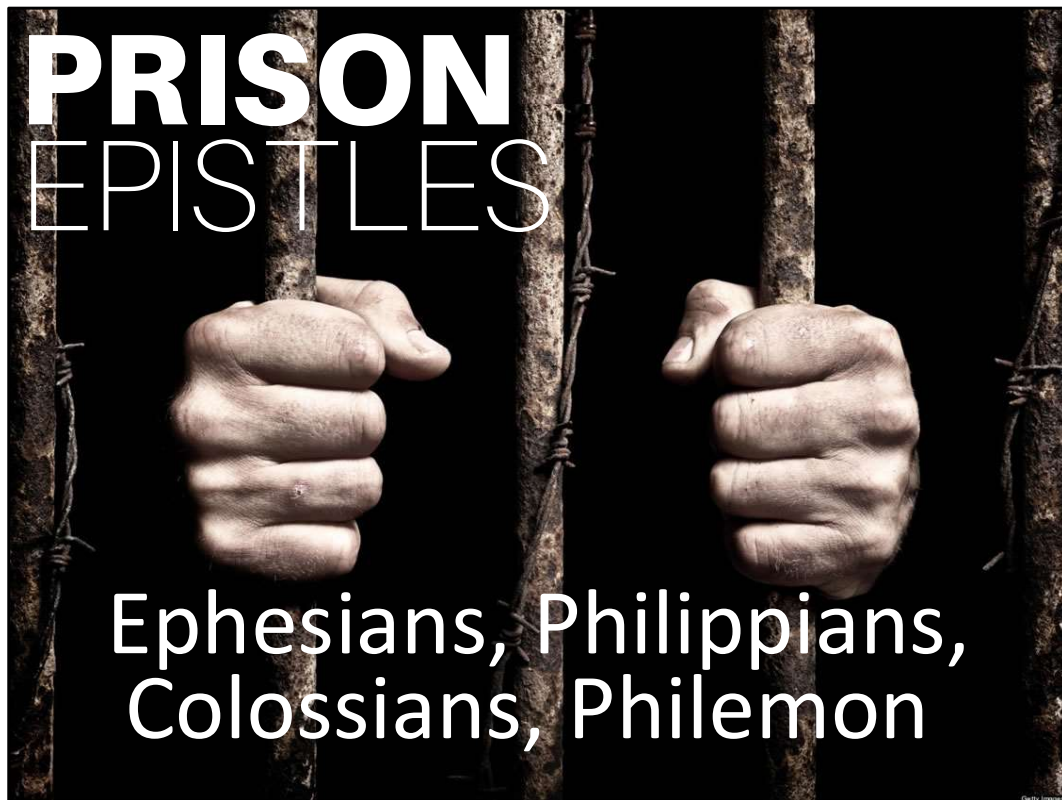
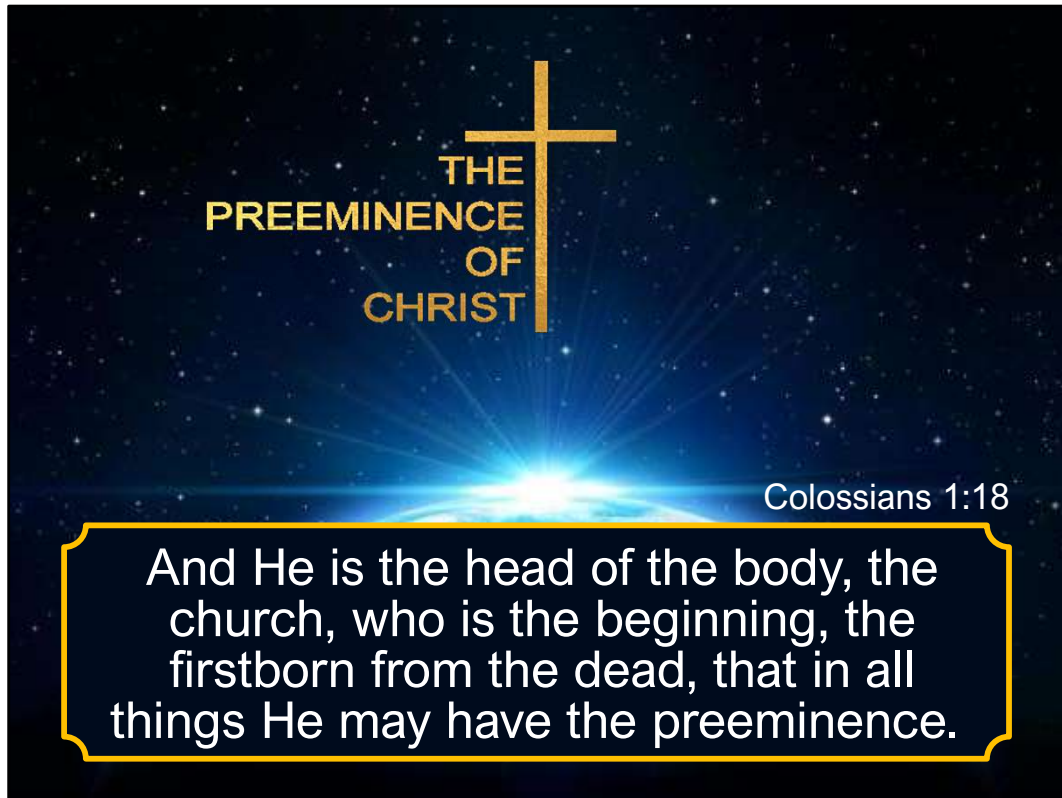


Paul's 2,000 year-old letter to a small home church in insignificant Colossae provides answers to today's most difficult questions and has become perhaps the most contemporary book in the New Testament.



The apostle Paul wrote four of the 27 New Testament letters during his time under house arrest in Rome between approximately 60—62 AD. Each letter — Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, and Philemon — is addressed to a specific church or individual. There are many parallels between Ephesians and Colossians, but the emphasis in Ephesians is on the church, the body of Christ, but the emphasis in Colossians is on Christ, the Head of the body.



The theme of Colossians is that Jesus Christ is preeminent. This little book shows Paul's "full-length portrait of Christ." There is no need to worry about angelic mediators or spiritual emanations.

[CLICK] The Key verse is Colossians 1:18 "And He is the head of the body, the church, who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, that in all things He may have the preeminence."

Outline

Doctrine: Christ's Preeminence Declared (Colossians 1)

- A. In the gospel message—1:1-12
- B. In redemption—1:13-14
- C. In creation—1:15-17
- D. In the church—1:18-23
- E. In Paul's ministry—1:24-29

Danger: Christ's Preeminence Defended (Colossians 2)

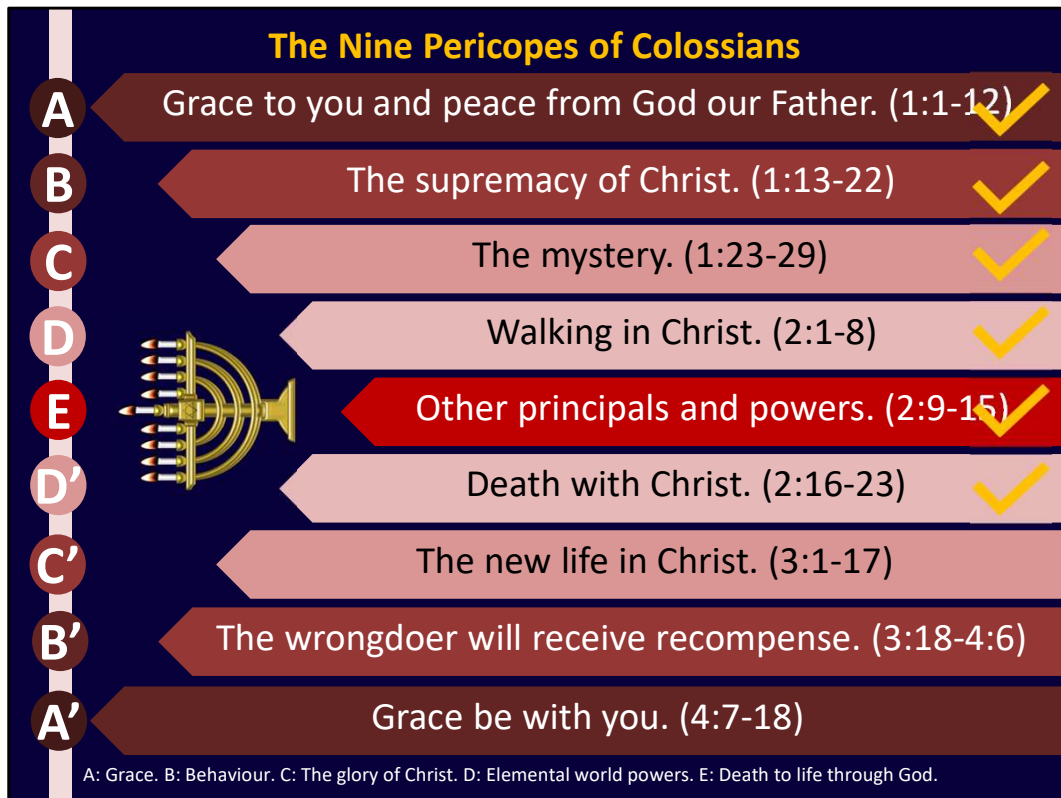
- A. Beware of empty philosophies—(2:1-10)
- B. Beware of religious legalism (2:11-17)
- C. Beware of man-made disciplines (1:18-23)

Duty: Christ's Preeminence Demonstrated (Colossians 3-4)

- A. In person purity—3:1-11
- B. In Christian fellowship—13:12-17
- C. In the home—3:18-21
- D. In daily work—3:22-4:1
- E. In Christian witness—4:2-6
- F. In Christian service—4:7-18

This relatively brief letter has a three-fold message:

- In the first doctrinal portion, Paul declares Christ's preeminence. **[CLICK]** Paul did not begin by attacking the false teachers and their doctrines. Chapter 1 exalts Jesus Christ and showing His preeminence in five areas: the gospel message, redemption, creation, the church, and Paul's own ministry.
- **[CLICK]** He then addresses the danger that has arisen in Colossae and defends Christ's preeminence. **[CLICK]** Paul attacks the heretics on their own ground, exposing the false origin of their teachings and showing how their teachings contradict everything Paul taught about Jesus Christ. The believer who masters this chapter is not likely to be led astray by some alluring and enticing "new-and-improved brand of Christianity."
- **[CLICK]** Finally, Chapters 3 and 4 applies the preeminence of Christ to the daily affairs of life. **[CLICK]** The greatest antidote to false teaching is a godly life, but what we believe determines how we behave. Wrong doctrine **always** leads to wrong living, so right doctrine should lead to right living.



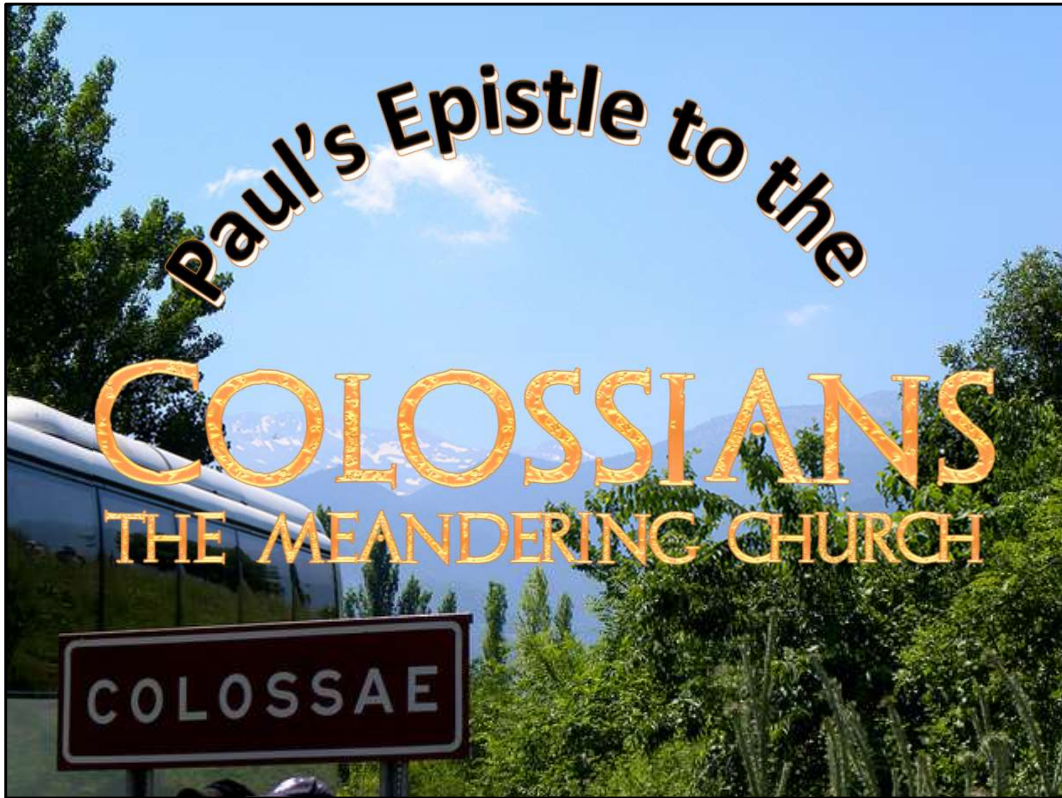
The letter consists of nine pericopes, or thought bubbles, which form a balanced chiasm, or menorah literary structure.

The Nine Pericopes of Colossians

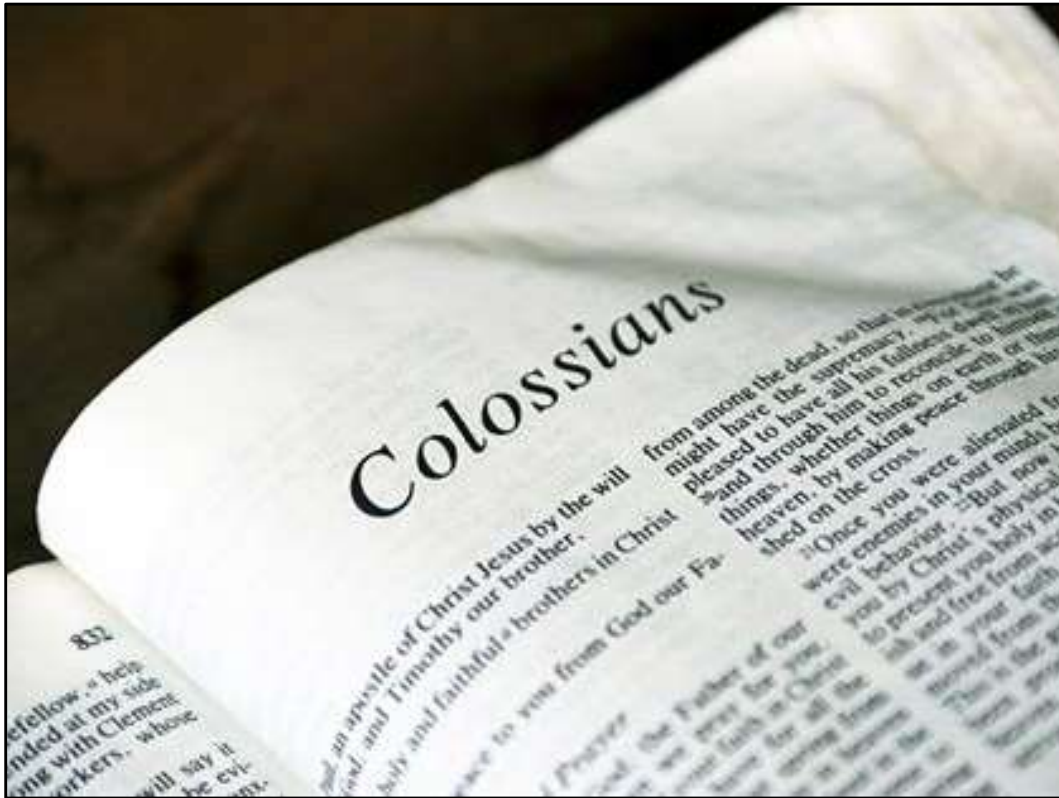
Former half	Relation	Latter half
Salutation (1:1-12) grace to you and peace from God our Father. (1:2)	Grace	Final greetings (4:7-18) Grace be with you. (4:18)
The supremacy of Christ (1:13-22) And you who once were alienated and hostile in mind because of evil deeds (1:21)	Human behaviour	Exhortations (3:18-4:6) For the wrongdoer will receive recompense for the wrong he committed, and there is no partiality. (3:25)
The mystery (1:23-29) to whom God chose to make known the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles; it is Christ in you, the hope for glory. (1:27)	The glory of Christ is open to Gentiles	The new life in Christ (3:1-17) When Christ your life appears, then you too will appear with him in glory. (3:4)
Walking in Christ (2:1-8) See to it that no one captivate you with an empty, seductive philosophy according to human tradition, according to the elemental powers of the world and not according to Christ. (2:8)	The elemental powers of the world	Death with Christ (2:16-23) If you died with Christ to the elemental powers of the world, why do you submit to regulations as if you were still living in the world? (2:20)
Christ is Preeminent over all Principalities and Powers (2:9-15) For in Him dwells all the fullness of the Godhead bodily; and you are complete in Him, who is the head of all principality and power. (2:9-10)		

This is another way to show the chiasmic structure. It adds a little bit more information by selecting the most relevant verse(s) from the pericope to summarise its main thought. As you can see, both salutation and final greetings focus on grace, a concept near and dear to Paul who knew that he could only be saved by God's grace.

Because Colossians is written to remind the local believers what they were initially taught about Christ's preeminence, and because the Colossian heresy apparently attacks that very concept, the centrepiece of the book confirms that Christ is preeminent over all principalities and powers.



Paul addresses the meandering Colossian ekklesia



His message is that Christ is preeminent. Colossians 1:18 will state “He is the head (the lifesource and leader) of the body, the church, and He is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, that in all things He may have the pre-eminence.” So what is pre-eminence? Preeminence is:

- The quality of being superior
- It's a high status or distinction given to anything considered to be the best at something
- To be in front of or have priority over
- To be foremost in time, place, order or importance
- To Hold first place in Rank and Influence.

Christ's Pre-eminence Defended

Beware of:

- Empty philosophies (Col. 2:1–10)
- Religious legalism (Col. 2:11–17)
- Man-made disciplines (Col. 2:18–23)

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- Empty philosophies (Col. 2:1–10)
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Warnings

Lest any one beguile you (Col 2:4);

Lest any man spoil you (Col 2:8);

Let no one judge you (Col 2:16,17);

Let no one cheat you (Col 2:18,19);

Let no one enslave you (Col 2:20-23).

- Lest any one beguile you (Col 2:4);
- Lest any man spoil you (Col 2:8);
- Let no one judge you (Col 2:16,17);
- Let no one cheat you (Col 2:18,19);
- Let no one enslave you (Col 2:20-23).

SO WHAT'S
THE
SOLUTION?

So what's the solution?

EMBRACE THE SIMPLICITY OF JESUS CHRIST!

Embrace the simplicity of Jesus Christ!

Remember that Jesus Christ is all in all. Without Him, the finest minds in antiquity, and the weakest minds today, had to invent a untestable and unprovable complex theory of emanations to speculate how the vast gap between a perfect and pure God and corrupt and immoral Mankind might be bridged.

But, as usual, God solved the most complex of problems with a simple solution... so embrace the simplicity of Jesus Christ!



- But before we move into Chapter 3 of Colossians where Paul will apply the preeminence of Christ to the daily affairs of life, let's briefly look at a topic that Paul has raised in Chapters 1 and 2, the spiritual realms. A Barna Research survey identified that a majority of North American Christians believe that a person can be under the influence of spiritual forces, such as demons or evil spirits. Two out of three agreed that such influence is real (39% agreed strongly, 25% agreed somewhat), while just three out of ten rejected the influence of supernatural forces (18% disagreed strongly, 10% disagreed somewhat). 8% were undecided.
- "A LA Times poll revealed that more women in West Los Angeles consult spiritual channelers than psychologists or counselors."
- Wikipedia Lists 75 films focused specifically on angels since 1940. Of these, 13 (17%) are about Fallen or Dark angels.
- The adoption of Christian angelology into new ageism and occult practices is unfortunately widespread.
- Misunderstanding angels can have consequences. For example, we can end up worshipping a created thing rather than God; we can be sidetracked from Biblical truth, or we can misread spiritual warfare.



Christian apologist J.P. Moreland stated in an interview, “I don’t believe they (angels) exist, I know they exist—and there are two reasons. First, I’m convinced Christianity is true, so angels and demons being real is a system dependent belief. Second, there are just too many credible, intelligent people who’ve had encounters with angels and demons to dismiss it.”

So where should we start our overview? The Apostles’ Creed begins, “***I believe in God, the Father almighty, creator of heaven and earth.***” This phrase gives a concise statement of the God in whom we believe.

God is considered to be omnipotent, omniscient, omnipresent and infinite to human beings. Most people find these characteristics impossible to fully understand. We call on faith (the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen) to attribute to God characteristics outside the four dimensions that humans can physically experience: length, height, depth, and time.

So faith tells us that there are more dimensions than the four that we experience.

- 1:13 He has delivered us from the **power of darkness** and conveyed *us* into **the kingdom of the Son** of His love,
- 1:14 And He has taken it out of the way, having nailed it to the cross. ¹⁵ Having **disarmed principalities and powers**, He made a public spectacle of them, triumphing over them in it.
- 1:15 He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation. ¹⁶ For by Him all things were created **that are in heaven and that are on earth, visible and invisible**, whether thrones or dominions or **principalities or powers**.
- 2:18 Let no one cheat you of your reward, taking delight in *false* humility and **worship of angels**, intruding into those things **which he has not seen**, vainly puffed up by his fleshly mind,

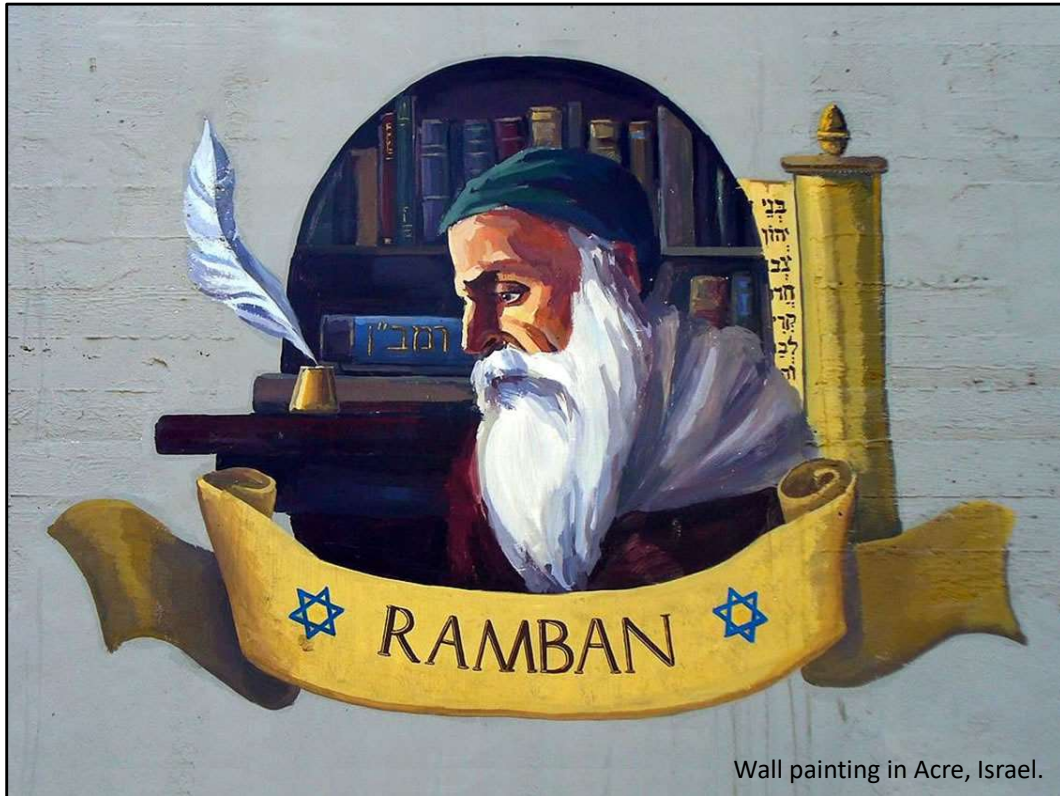
Well, Colossians does, too. Four passages in Colossians are just a few of many in the Bible that can be interpreted to assert the existence of dimensions outside the four that we experience.

1:13 He has delivered us from the power of darkness and conveyed *us* into the kingdom of the Son of His love,

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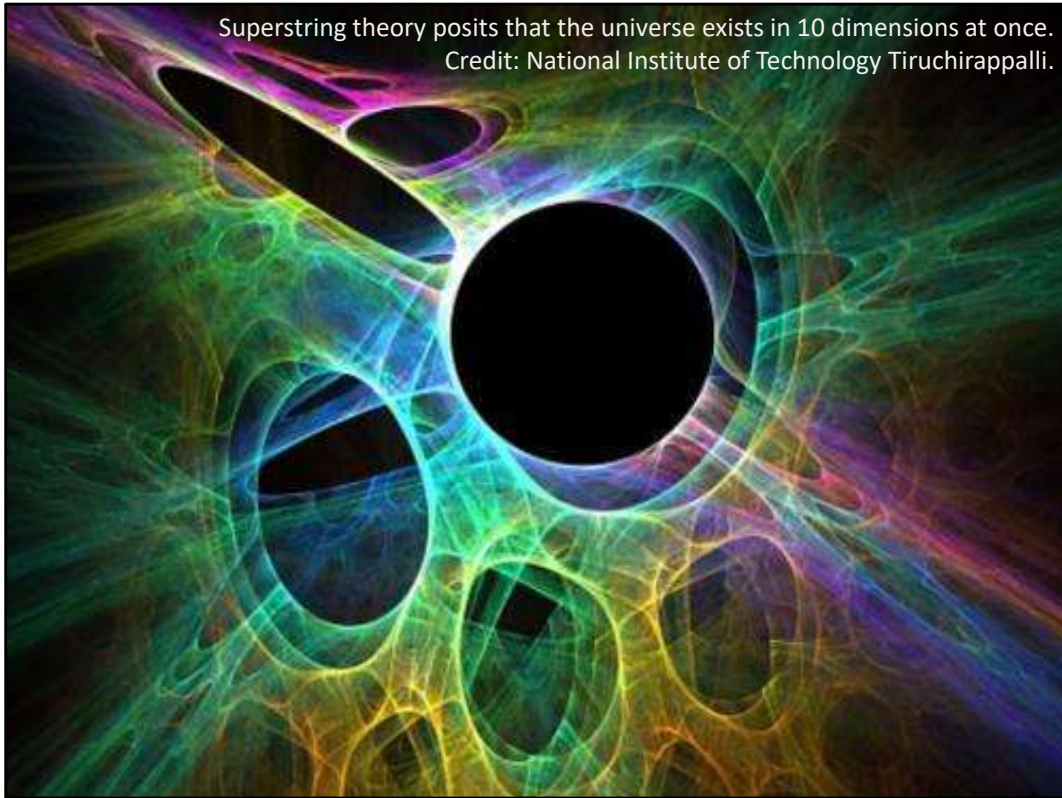
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Wall painting in Acre, Israel.

In his 1263 AD Commentary on Genesis, Spanish scholar Rabbi Moses ben Nahman, a.k.a. Nahmanides (1194-1270) concluded from Genesis 1 that the universe has ten dimensions, six of which are beyond our knowing.

His writings also have many mystical insights. For example, Genesis 2:1 reads “Thus the heavens and the earth, and all the host (sah-baw) of them, were finished.” Nahmanides explained “sah-baw” to indicate that “It is here that he [God] has hinted at the formation of the angels in the work of creation. Similarly, the souls of men are included in the host of heaven.” Although later the Chief Rabbi of Catalonia, Ramban became a physician because he did not want to personally profit from his studies of the Torah.



Fast forward 720 years and modern quantum physicists concluded that there are at least ten dimensions in the universe, only four of which are measurable. M-theory suggests 11 dimensions to spacetime and bosonic string theories suggest 26 dimensions. What are these additional dimensions? No one knows for certain, but in all theories the outermost dimension is a doozy. As an article in physics.org puts it, “In the ... final dimension, we arrive at the point in which everything possible and imaginable is covered. The existence of these additional six dimensions which we cannot perceive is necessary for String Theory in order for there to be consistency in nature.” ([A universe of 10 dimensions \(phys.org\)](#))

While some believe that God exists in the highest dimension, we have no Scriptural reason to limit God to any dimensionality.

Anyway, this all sounds great in theory, but does it have any practical value for believers? The answer is a resounding “YES!”



- `Twice the Risen Jesus entered the room of the disciples without using a door (John 20:19-23, 26-29). John 20:19 specifically states that the doors were shut for fear of the Jews. On the second occasion in John 20:26-29, with the doors again shut, Jesus appeared again to Thomas, not as a spirit, but in the flesh.
- In Acts 8:39-40. Philip baptized the Ethiopian Treasurer on the road to Gaza and then was swept up by the Lord and found later that day at Azotus, which was several days journey from where Philip had baptized the eunuch.
- Jesus inexplicably escaped from threatening multitudes twice- John 8:59 and 10:39.
- Genesis 5:24 and Hebrews 11:5 describe Enoch walking with God and then disappearing because God took him.

These are just a few of the strange appearances and disappearances in the Bible that are easily explained when we understand that dimensions exist that we do not normally experience.



'Gabriel appears to the Prophet Daniel' by School of Francesco Solimena, c. 1700.

The Bible also includes seven episodes where the veil between our four dimensions and the others is briefly opened to give us a glimpse of spiritual goings-on around us outside of our knowledge.

- For example, in Daniel 9, Daniel is finishing his prayers when the Archangel Gabriel suddenly arrives to give him the crucial Seventy Weeks prophecy. In the next chapter, Daniel was fasting when he is visited again by a messenger bringing a vision of the Son of Man in the latter days. This messenger, probably Gabriel again, mentions how he was delayed because he was contesting with the prince of Persia until the Archangel Michael came to spell him, but he must return to fight the Prince of Persia.
- Ezekiel, Stephen, John, and Paul all were given glimpses beyond the veil.



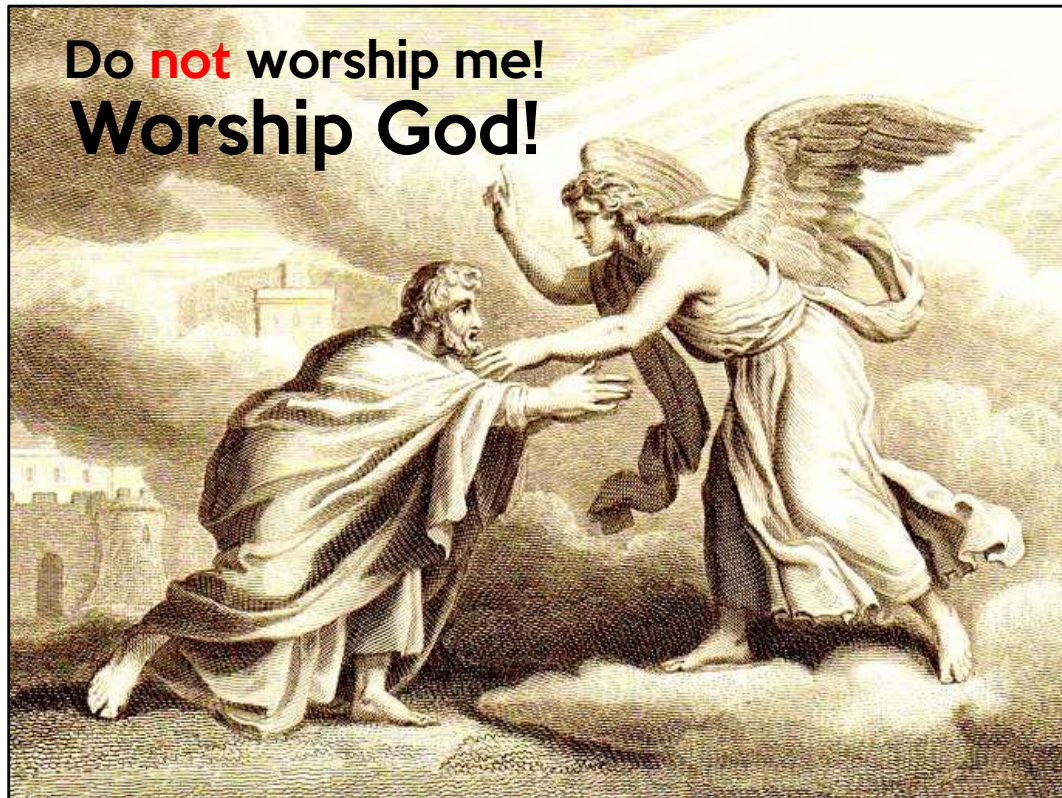
In 2 Kings 6 the army of Aram had surrounded Elisha in Dothan and his servant was terrified, but Elisha prayed the young man's eyes would be opened and "And behold, **[CLICK]** the mountain *was* full of horses and chariots of fire all around Elisha." Elisha said, "Do not fear, for those who *are* with us *are* more than those who *are* with them."

Angels have a mystique in modern cultures and can seem "special" enough to be worshipped, but before we get carried away, let's be clear about their status. The Torah refers to them as bene ha Elohim, sons of God. In other words, they are not gods themselves but simply created beings. People are bene ha Adam, children of Adam.

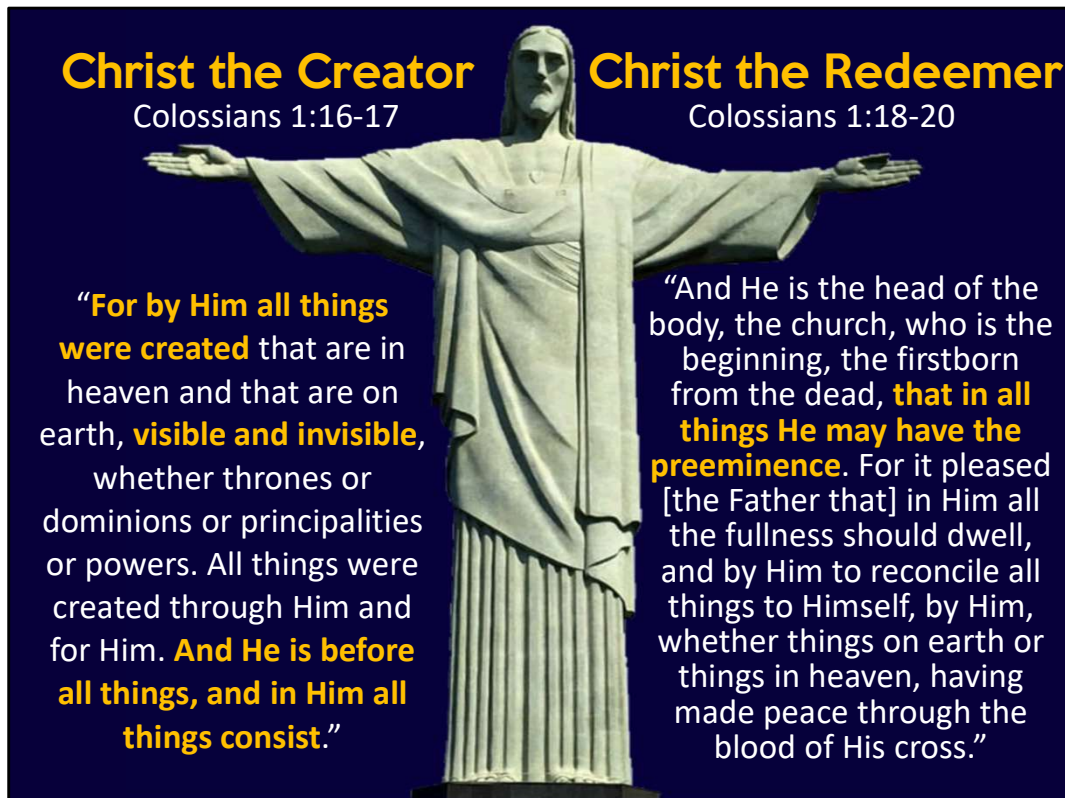


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In Revelation 22:9, an angel cautions John,
[CLICK] "Do not worship me! I am a servant like you, your brothers the prophets, and
all those who obey the words in this book.
[CLICK] Worship God!"



Angels are not our hope, our hope is in Christ. Any wonder we feel at angels should remind us of who created them. Paul is very explicit in telling the Colossians that Jesus is above all things, and this includes the angels, “that in all things He may have the preeminence.”

[CLICK] Christ is the Creator, “For by Him all things were created that are in heaven and that are on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or principalities or powers. All things were created through Him and for Him. And He is before all things, and in Him all things consist.”

[CLICK] Christ is the Redeemer, “And He is the head of the body, the church, who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, that in all things He may have the preeminence. For it pleased [the Father that] in Him all the fullness should dwell, and by Him to reconcile all things to Himself, by Him, whether things on earth or things in heaven, having made peace through the blood of His cross.”



In both testaments, an angel is one of the host of heavenly spirits that wait upon the monarch of the universe and are sent by him to earth to execute his purposes.

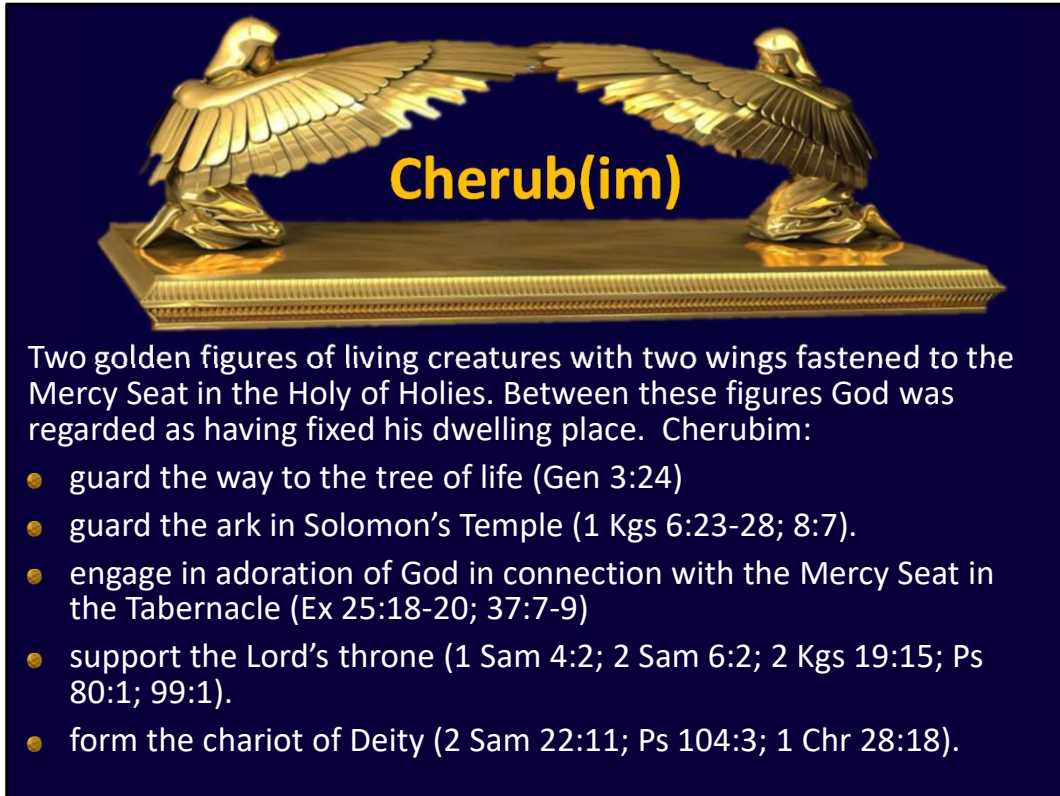
Characteristics of Biblical Angels

- Angels are **personal beings**:
 - They have intellect (Mt 28:5; 1 Pet 1:12).
 - They have emotions (Job 38:7; Lk 2:13; 15:10).
 - They have will (Jude 6)
- Angels are **spirit beings**:
 - They are not limited to material bodies (Heb 1:14).
 - An angel can be in only one place at one time (Dan 9:21-23; 10:10-14).
 - They appear in the form of men (Mt 1:20) in natural sight with human functions (Gen 18: 1-8; 22: 19:1); seen by some and not others (2 Kgs 6:15-17).
 - They do not reproduce (Mk 12:25).
 - They do not die (Lk 20:36).
- They have **physical reality**:
 - They lead people by the hand (Gen 19:16).
 - They indulge in combat (2 Kgs 19:35); they slaughtered 185,000 Syrians.
- They **can be entertained unrecognized** (Heb 13:2).
- Angels have attributes **greater than man but less than God**:
 - They have more knowledge than man (Mt 24:31; Lk 1:13-16)
 - They have more power than man (2 Pet 2:11; Acts 5:19).
- Angels are **organized and ranked**:
 - One "archangel," Michael, is named (Jude 9).
 - There are also "Chief princes" (Dan 10:13); "Cherubim" (Gen 3:22-24); "Seraphim" (Isa 6:1-3); and "Living creatures" (Rev 4).

Seraph(im)

- Seraphim (Isa 6:2, 6:6) serve in the presence of God's throne:
 - ²"Above it (God's throne) stood seraphim; each one had six wings: with two he covered his face, with two he covered his feet, and with two he flew."
 - ⁶"Then one of the seraphim flew to me, having in his hand a live coal *which* he had taken with the tongs from the altar."
- Seraphim have hands.
- The seraphim proclaim God's holiness to one another.
- One seraph plays a part in forgiving Isaiah of his sin.

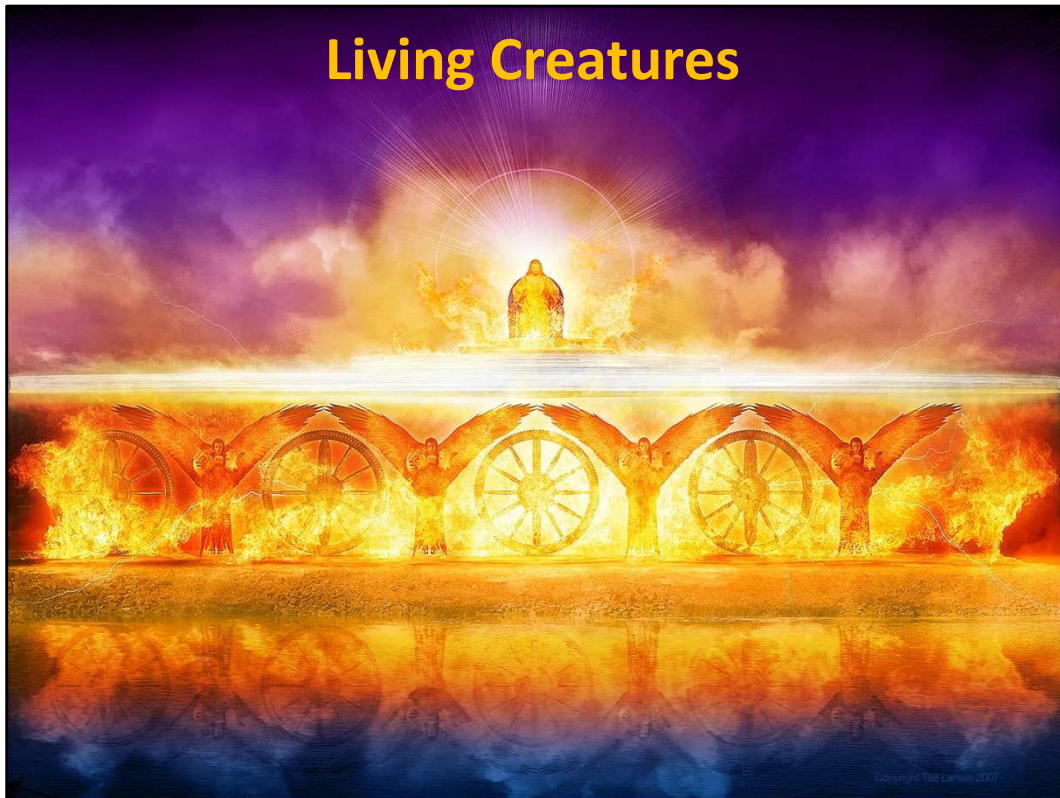




Two golden figures of living creatures with two wings fastened to the Mercy Seat in the Holy of Holies. Between these figures God was regarded as having fixed his dwelling place. Cherubim:

- guard the way to the tree of life (Gen 3:24)
- guard the ark in Solomon's Temple (1 Kgs 6:23-28; 8:7).
- engage in adoration of God in connection with the Mercy Seat in the Tabernacle (Ex 25:18-20; 37:7-9)
- support the Lord's throne (1 Sam 4:2; 2 Sam 6:2; 2 Kgs 19:15; Ps 80:1; 99:1).
- form the chariot of Deity (2 Sam 22:11; Ps 104:3; 1 Chr 28:18).

mentioned 65 times in OT; 1x in NT



John sees a vision of the heavenly throne room in Revelation chapter 4, but instead of cherubim or seraphim *per se*, he sees four “living creatures” surrounding the throne. These creatures seem to combine the attributes of both seraphim and cherubim— John would have been familiar with both Isaiah’s and Ezekiel’s visions.

Like cherubim, the living creatures resemble a man, an ox, an eagle, and a lion. They are four in number, and full of eyes. They also play a part in administering God’s judgments on earth (Rev 15:7).

Unlike cherubim, the living creatures seem to have one face each. Instead of all four having the face of the man, ox, lion, and eagle, one living creature resembles a man, one an ox, etc. There’s also no mention of whirling wheels.

Like seraphim, the living creatures have six wings each and never cease to proclaim God’s holiness. Other than that, we get a more thorough physical description of the living creatures!

Some authors consider the cherubim, seraphim, and living creatures to be distinct creatures in a hierarchy. Others consider them one and the same, guarding the and supporting the Throne of God and proclaiming His holiness.

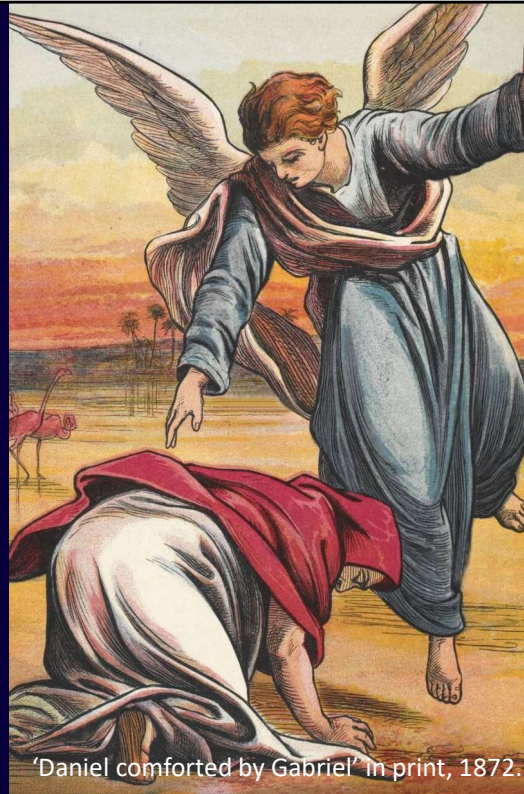
Archangels

- “Arch” means “chief.” Gabriel calls Michael “one of the chief princes” (Dan 10:13, 21; 12:1; Jude 1:9; Rev. 12:7).
- Archangels are a rank up from the next kind of angelic being: princes.
- Michael is the only named archangel in the Bible. He is militant, contending with Satan over Israel.



Princes

- Daniel is praying when an angel (Gabriel?) interrupts him with a message that was delayed for three weeks by spiritual warfare. He mentions three princes:
 - The Prince of Persia (Dan. 10:13, 20)
 - The Prince of Greece (Dan. 10:20)
 - Michael, a “chief prince” who stands guard over Israel (10:13; 12:1)
- Jewish legend lists Gabriel as the guardian angel of Israel. He also appears to Zechariah and the Virgin Mary.



An angel has an urgent to deliver to Daniel, but an opposing figure known only as the Prince of Persia stood in this angel's way. This prince blocks the angel for three weeks, until Michael the archangel intervenes. This buys the angel enough time to rush his message off to Daniel before returning to the fray.

Kings / Rulers

- In Daniel 10 the Prince of Persia was accompanied by “the kings of Persia” (Dan 10:13). While speculative, it is possible that the “princes” were spiritual beings (angels) while the kings were human rulers.
- Paul refers to rulers, authorities, principalities, thrones, dominions, powers, names, and world forces (Romans 8:38; Eph 1:21; Col 1:16).
 - Jesus refers to “the ruler of this world” as someone who has nothing to do with him (John 12:31; 14:30; 16:11)
 - Paul believes that the church’s struggle is against the rulers and forces of darkness “in the heavenly places” (Eph 3:10; 6:12).

Gnostics's spiritual entities

- **θρόνος *thronos* Thrones**
 - A chair of state; a potentate.
- **κυριότης *kyriotēs* Dominions**
 - Angels who possess dominion, power, or lordship.
- **ἀρχή *archē* Principalities**
 - The first estate, place, principality, rule, magistracy as of angels or demons.
- **ἐξουσία *exousia* Powers**
 - The power of him whose will and commands must be submitted to by others and obeyed.



There is a tone of contemptuous impatience in Paul's voice as he quotes the pompous list of sensuous titles, which a busy fancy had coined. It is as if he had said, You are being told a great deal about these angel hierarchies, and know all about their ranks and gradations. I do not know anything about them; but this I know, that if, amid the unseen things in the heavens or the earth, there be any such, my Lord made them, and is their Master. Christ fills all the space between God and man. There is no need for a crowd of shadowy beings to link heaven with earth.

Demons

- Per Scripture, demons exist:
 - Demon possession (16x in Scripture): bearing a demon within oneself with resultant physical and mental suffering.
 - Demonization (13x): being controlled by a force in a way that the person cannot resist.
- Their origin is uncertain. Suggestions include:
 - Disembodied spirits of a pre-Adamic race
 - Souls of pre-Flood Nephilim
 - Fallen angels
 - ???

Nature of Demons

- Nature of demons:
 - Knowledgeable spirit beings with Free Will
 - Know of Christ and accept the authority of His Name
 - Capable of locomotion and volition
 - Varying in degree
 - Disembodied beings that seek to possess a body
 - Require permission to enter and possess a body
 - Some believe 1st century only: bound by Christ

Jesus Christ has the answer

- Jesus Christ has authority over demons and evil spirits. You can resist the devil and serve Christ (Rom 6:3-18)
- God will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you can bear (1 Cor 10:13)
- Resist the devil and he will flee from you (James 4:7)
- You can be “enslaved” by the devil – but you can also be set free through Christ (2 Tim 2:25-36; John 8:32-36)



Things Paul condemned

- **Gnosticism**

- Claimed philosophic deeper wisdom (knowledge = gnosis).

- **Legalism**

- Salvation comes from living a holy life by following rules.

- **Mysticism** (visions, angels, astrology, chants, etc.)

- Man can experience a higher level of spirituality; people who allegedly achieve it claim high status and even reverence.

- **Asceticism** (“voluntary humility”)

- Salvation comes through self-abasement, self-denial, self-discipline

- **A fleshy mind** (religious pride)

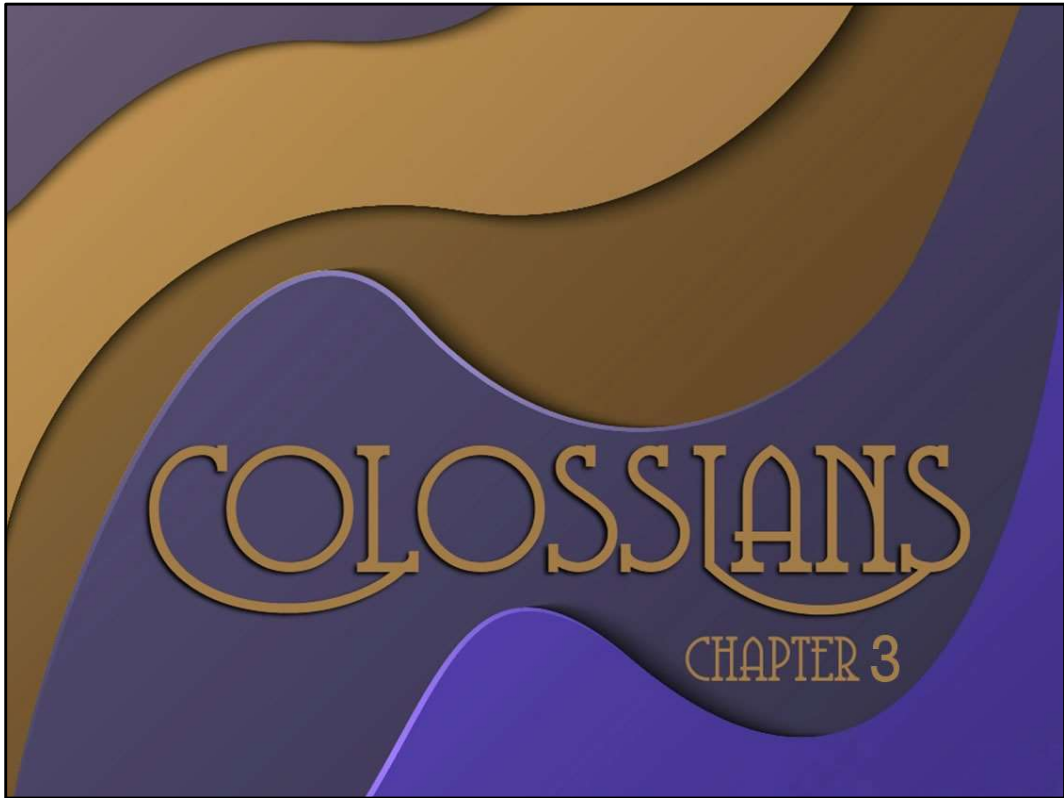
- Acted spiritual but lived carnally; factions; tolerant of error.

SO WHAT'S
THE
SOLUTION?

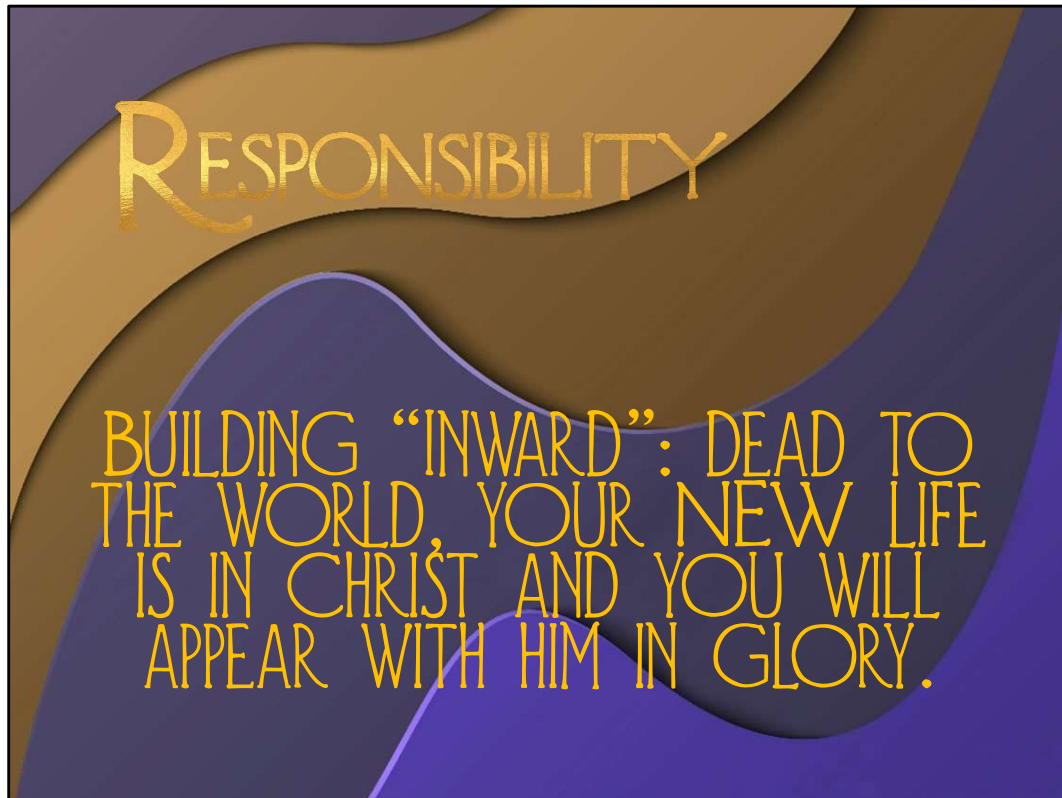
At the risk of being redundant, so what's the solution?

EMBRACE THE
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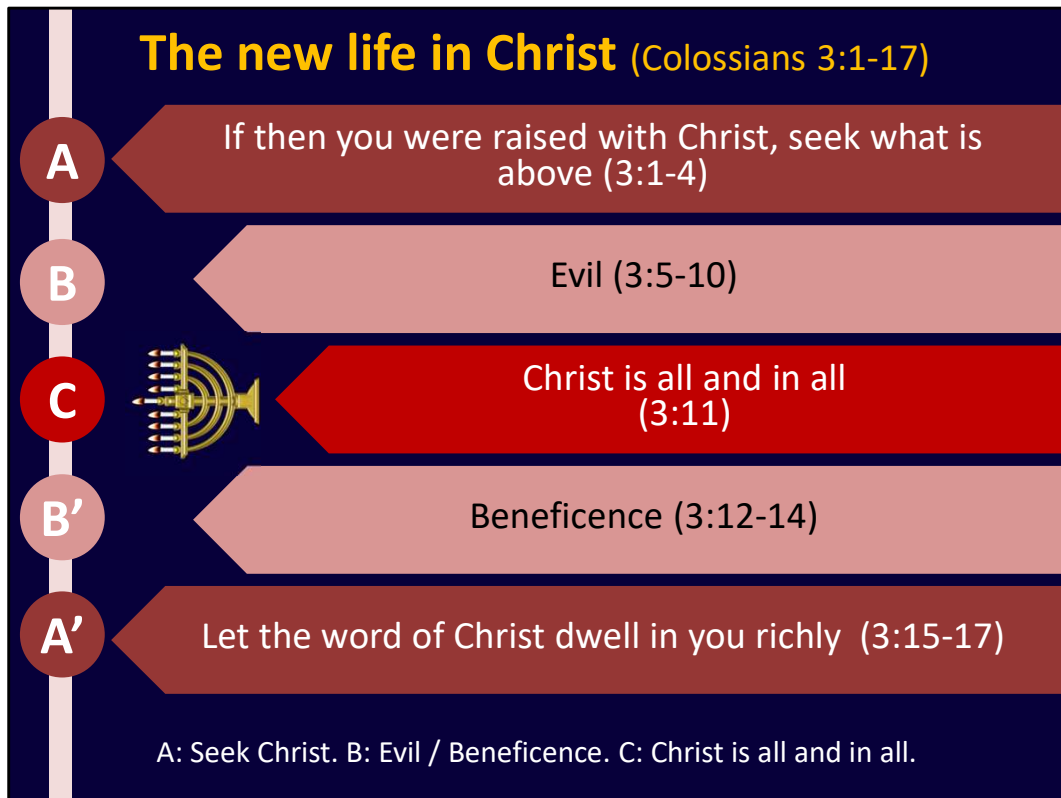
Embrace the simplicity of Jesus Christ!



Colossians Chapter 3



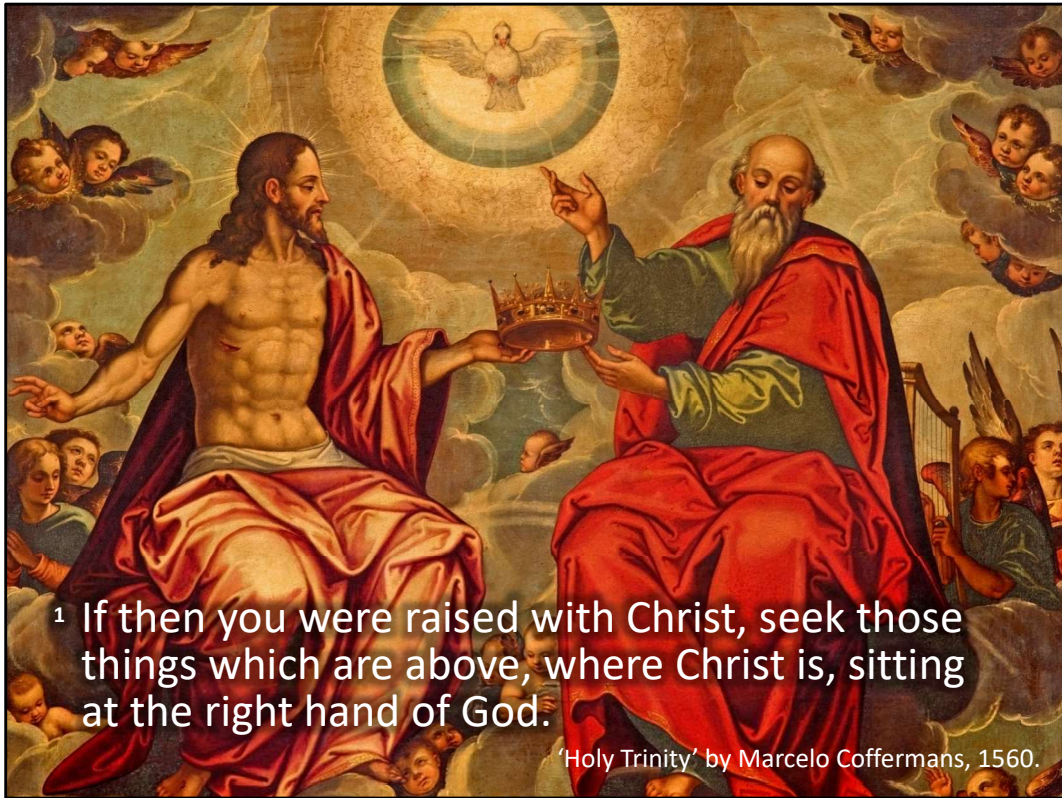
Paul now discusses the believer's responsibility in Christ.



The first pericope in Chapter 3 shows a very clear concentric parallelism.

Unsurprisingly, the central message of this section on the supremacy of Christ is on Christ as the Head of the body, the church. The false teachers in Colossae, just like today, usually don't deny the importance of Jesus Christ, they simply dethrone Him, giving Him prominence but not preeminence. In their philosophy, Jesus Christ was but one of many "emanations" through which people could reach God. Paul will strongly refute this claim with four unanswerable arguments:

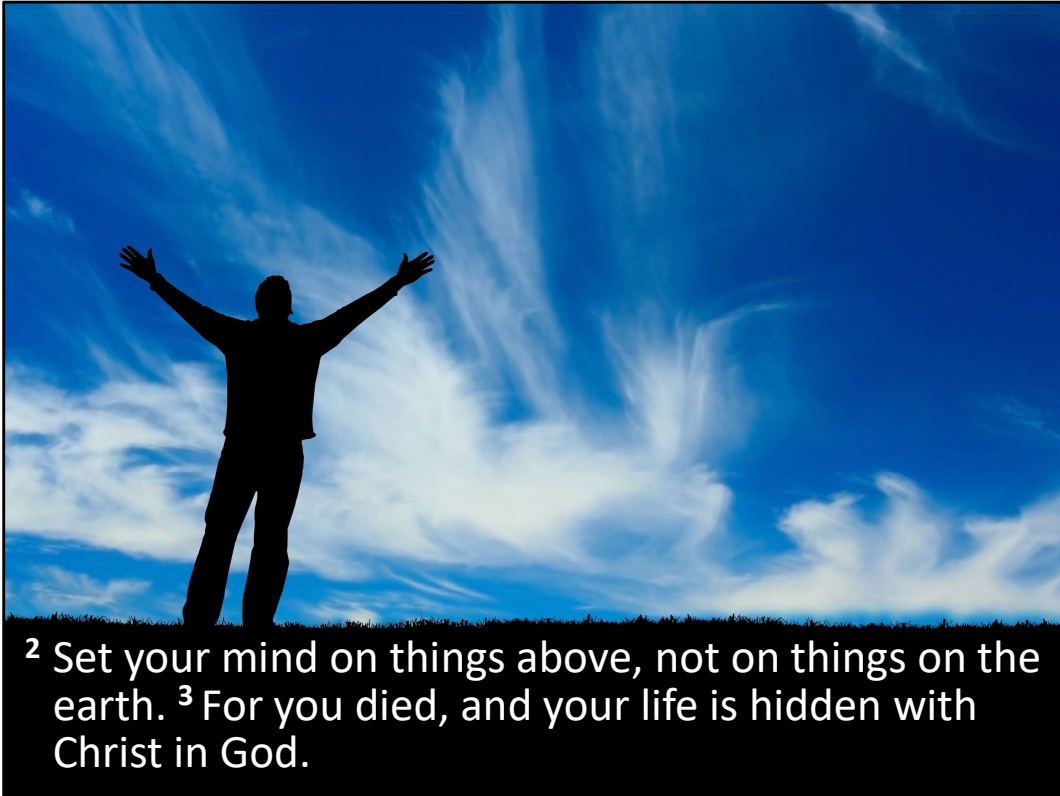
1. Christ is the Savior (1:13–14); He is the only possible solution to sin for us sinners!
2. Christ is the Creator!
3. Christ is the Head of the Church!
4. Christ is the Beloved of the Father!



¹ If then you were raised with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ is, sitting at the right hand of God.

'Holy Trinity' by Marcelo Coffermans, 1560.

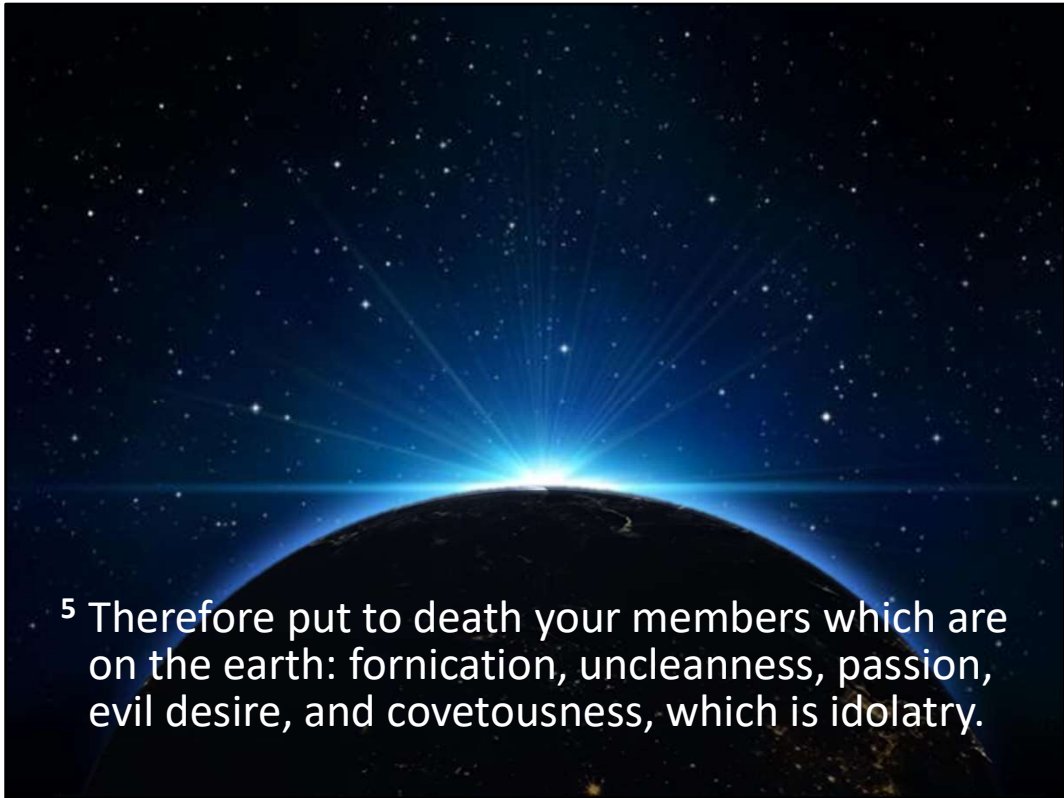
If then you were raised with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ is, sitting at the right hand of God.



² Set your mind on things above, not on things on the earth. ³ For you died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God.



⁴ When Christ *who is* our life appears, then you also will appear with Him in glory.



⁵ Therefore put to death your members which are on the earth: fornication, uncleanness, passion, evil desire, and covetousness, which is idolatry.

⁶ Because of these things the wrath of God is coming upon the sons of disobedience, ⁷ in which you yourselves once walked when you lived in them.



'The Great Day of His Wrath' by John Martin, c. 1851.

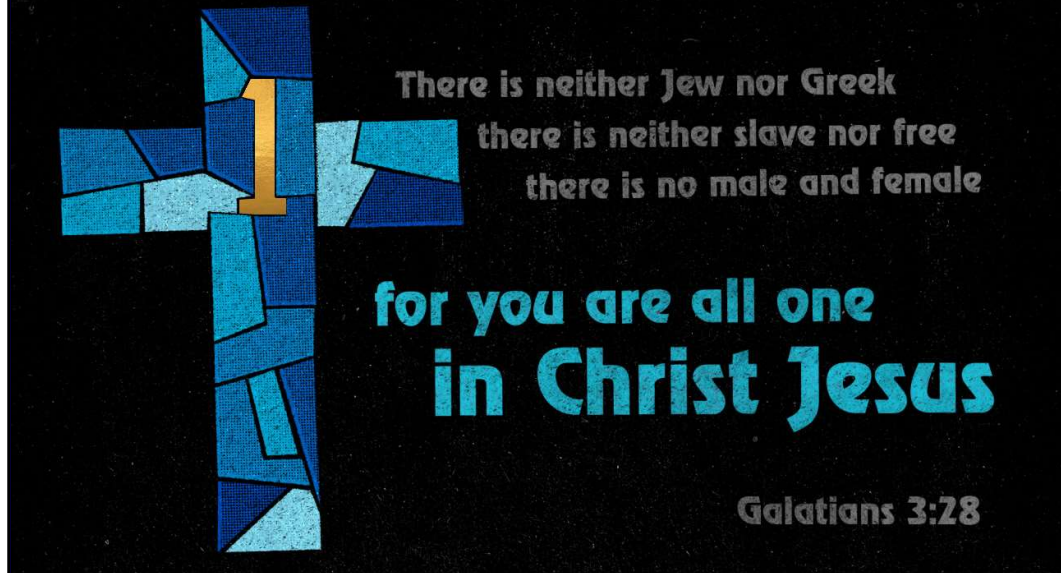
⁸ But now you yourselves are to put off all these:

**anger, wrath,
malice, blasphemy,
filthy language
out of your mouth.**

⁹ Do not lie to one another, since you have put off the old man with his deeds, ¹⁰ and have put on the new *man* who is renewed in knowledge according to the image of Him who created him,



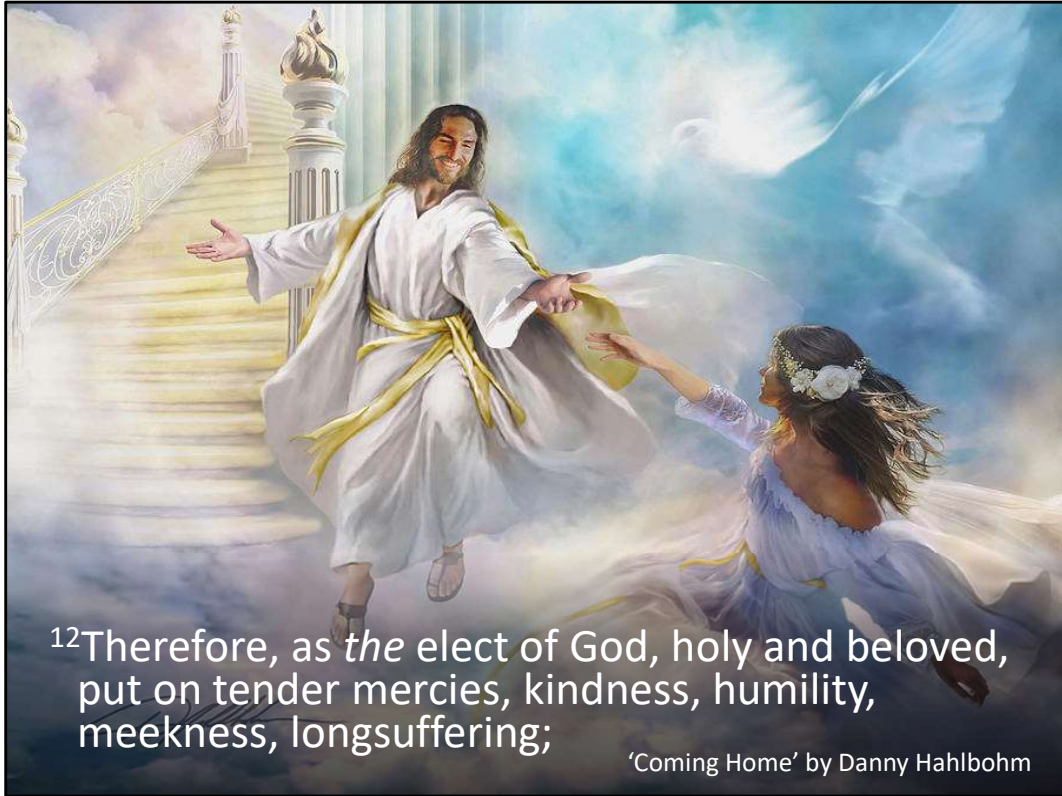
¹¹ where there is neither Greek nor Jew, circumcised nor uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave *nor* free, but Christ *is* all and in all.

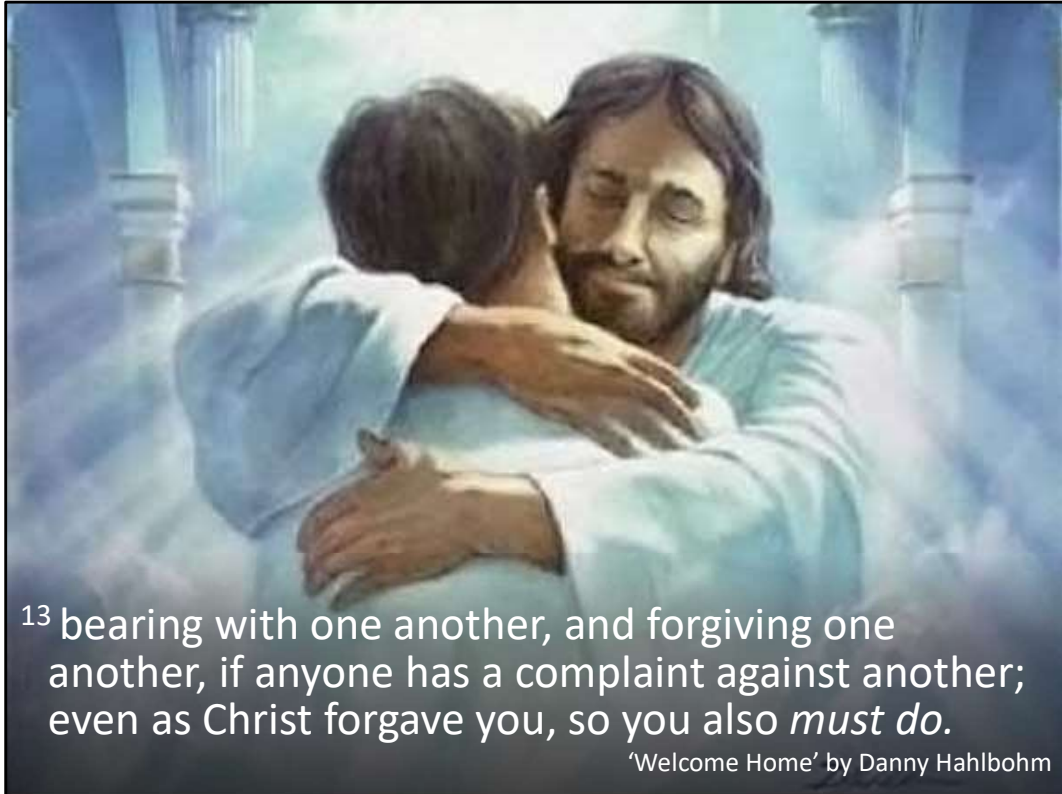


where there is neither Greek nor Jew, circumcised nor uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave *nor* free, but Christ *is* all and in all.

There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there

is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus. Galatians 3:28





¹³ bearing with one another, and forgiving one another, if anyone has a complaint against another; even as Christ forgave you, so you also *must do*.

'Welcome Home' by Danny Hahlbohm



[CLICK] Over all these virtues...

[CLICK] Truthfulness

[CLICK] Compassion

[CLICK] Kindness

[CLICK] Humility

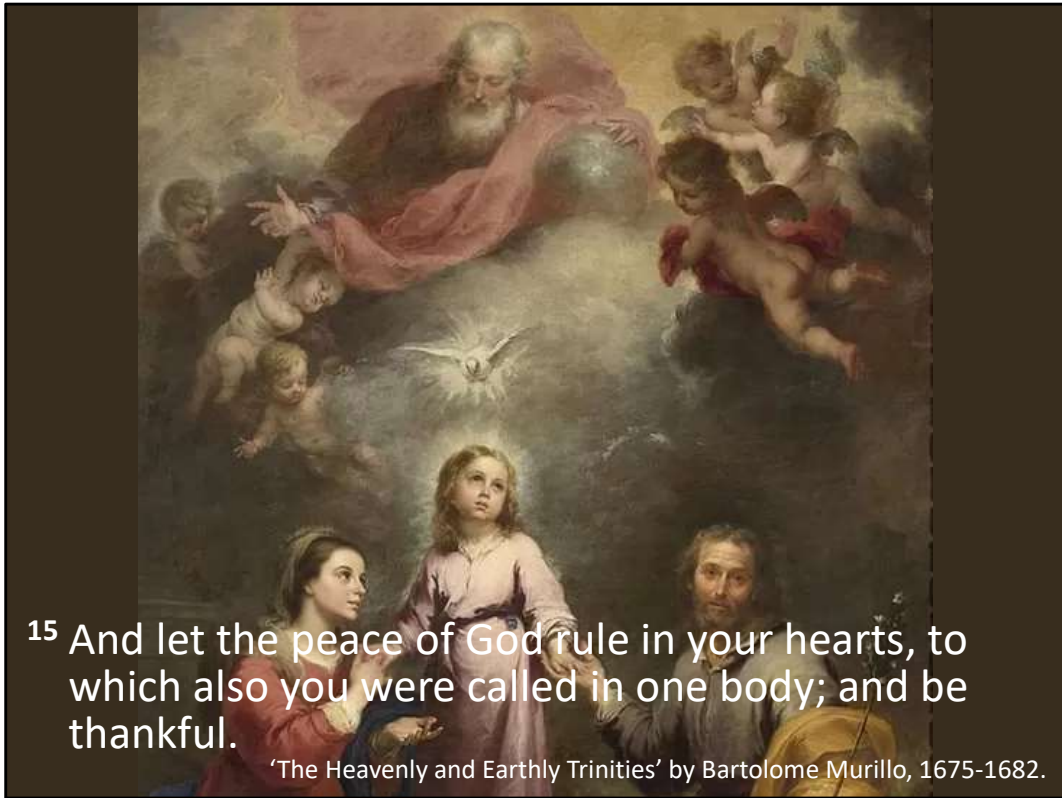
[CLICK] Gentleness, and

[CLICK] Patience

[CLICK] put on love. This is a conscious choice to love God and others, and to walk in this love.

[CLICK] And Love binds them all together in perfect unity.

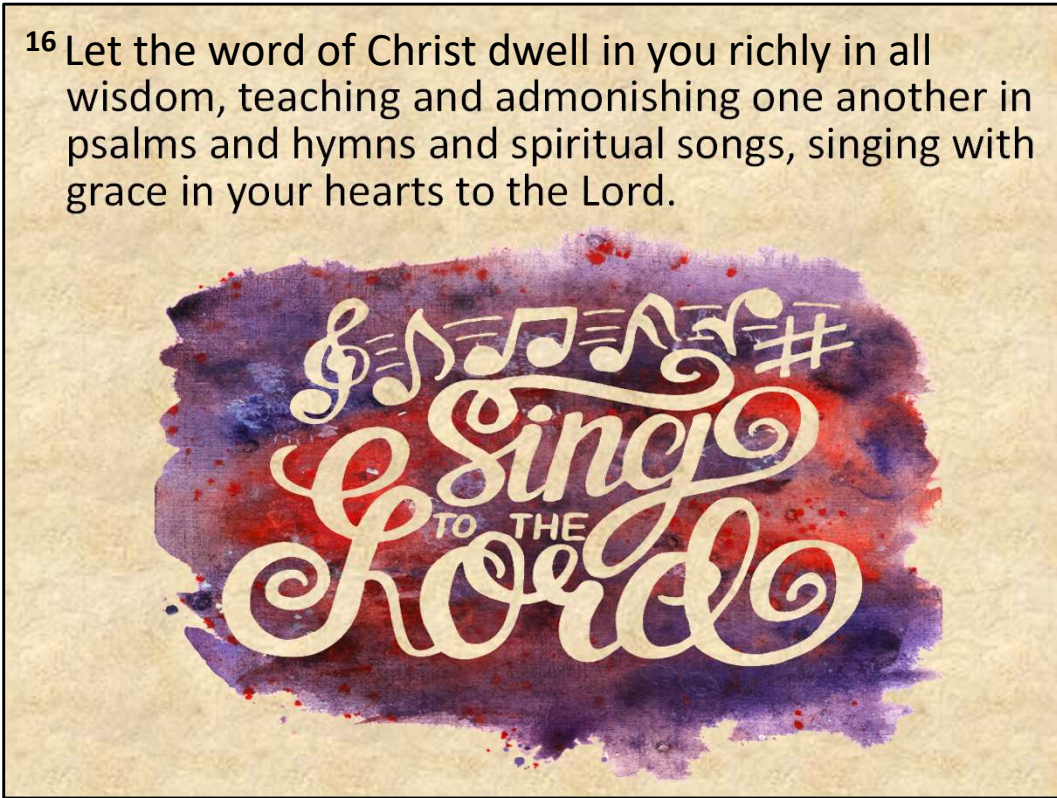
What do all these virtues have in common? They are all manifestations of love. One doesn't have to think too much about each of the Spiritual fruits, because if one understands love and puts it into practice, the other traits will be there.



¹⁵ And let the peace of God rule in your hearts, to which also you were called in one body; and be thankful.

'The Heavenly and Earthly Trinities' by Bartolome Murillo, 1675-1682.

¹⁶ Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom, teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord.



Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom, teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord.

¹⁷ And whatever you do in word or deed, *do* all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through Him.

Whatever you do, whether in word or deed, do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.
Colossians 3:17

The Christian Community (Colossians 3:18-4:6)

A1

Exhortation to wives (3:19)

A2

Exhortation to husbands (3:19)

A3

Exhortation to children (3:20)

A4

Exhortation to parents (3:21)

A5

Exhortation to bondservants (3:22-25)

A6

Exhortation to masters (4:1-6)

The Christian Home

¹⁸ Wives, submit to your own husbands, as is fitting in the Lord.

¹⁹ Husbands, love your wives and do not be bitter toward them.

²⁰ Children, obey your parents in all things, for this is well pleasing to the Lord.

²¹ Fathers, do not provoke your children, lest they become discouraged.



hupōtassō, (hoop-ot-as'-so), which is a voluntary attitude of cooperating and carrying a burden. Yes, "submit" is a decent translation, but it overlooks the voluntary and cooperative aspects.

Note that there is but one rule for wives and one for husbands.

One rule for children, and this is one of the Ten Commandments, "Honor your father and your mother." In fact, in Deuteronomy, disobedience was punishable by death by stoning. Lack of obedience of children a sign of moral decay in the nation (Isa 3:4, 12). Children who do not obey their parents when young will not obey their parents when older. For the most part, children do not create problems; they reveal them.

Paul has one rule for fathers, don't stimulate your children to anger. The word fathers in Col 3:21 could be translated "parents," as it is in Heb 11:23. Paul made it clear that parents must make it as easy as possible for children to obey.

²² Bondservants, obey in all things your masters according to the flesh, not with eye service, as men-pleasers, but in sincerity of heart, fearing God.



Now we again address a topic that arose in Philemon, the issue of slavery. Bondservants, obey in all things your masters according to the flesh, not with eye service, as men-pleasers, but in sincerity of heart, fearing God. The Greek term “doulos” which means servant, technically applies to slaves, bonded servants, or anyone who provides service or attends to others, whether voluntary or involuntary. We use it metaphorically to indicate those who willingly give themselves wholly up to Christ but its literal translation indicates subservience. So why didn’t Paul or other apostles openly oppose slavery? As noted in Session 2, until just a few hundred years ago when Christians successfully overturned it in the Western world, slavery was, and still is in many parts of the world, an institution built into the social order. In fact, many in the West today are embracing a move from democracy back into subservience to global elites that has accelerated because of draconian suppression of individual freedoms due to the CCP-virus.

²³ And whatever you do, do it heartily, as to the Lord and not to men, ²⁴ knowing that from the Lord you will receive the reward of the inheritance; for you serve the Lord Christ.

WHATEVER YOU DO,
WORK AT IT WITH
ALL YOUR HEART
AS TO THE
LORD
AND NOT TO MEN.

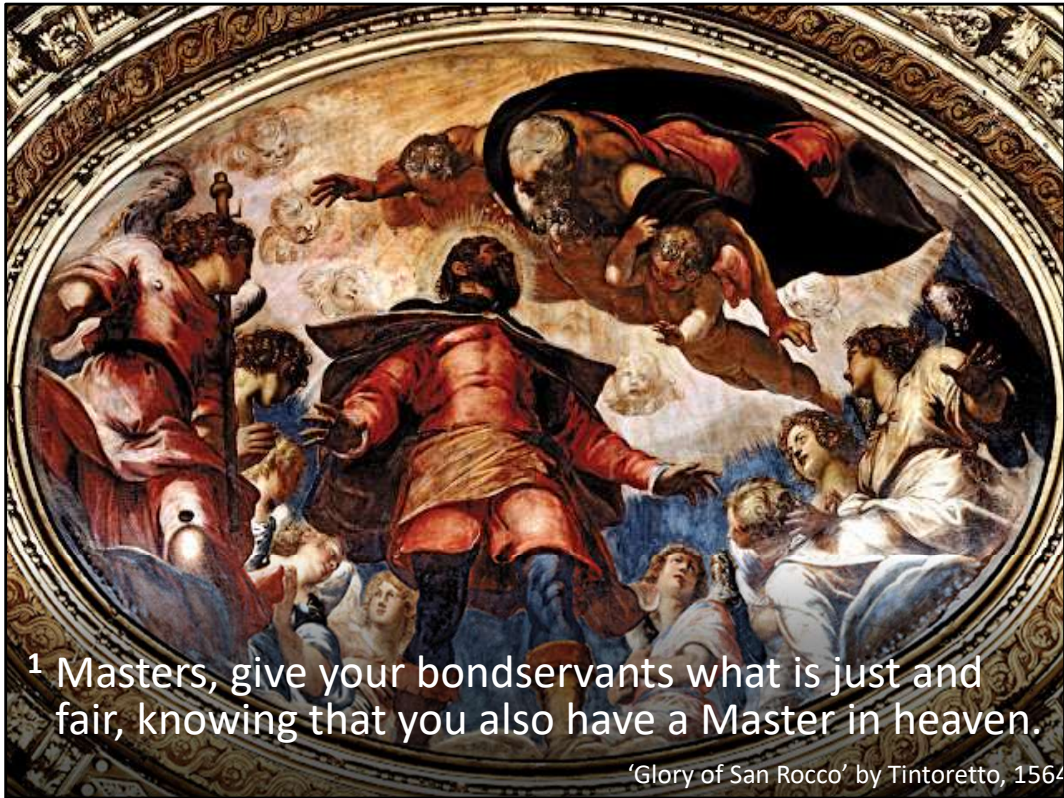


And whatever you do, do it heartily, as to the Lord and not to men, ²⁴ knowing that from the Lord you will receive the reward of the inheritance; for you serve the Lord Christ.



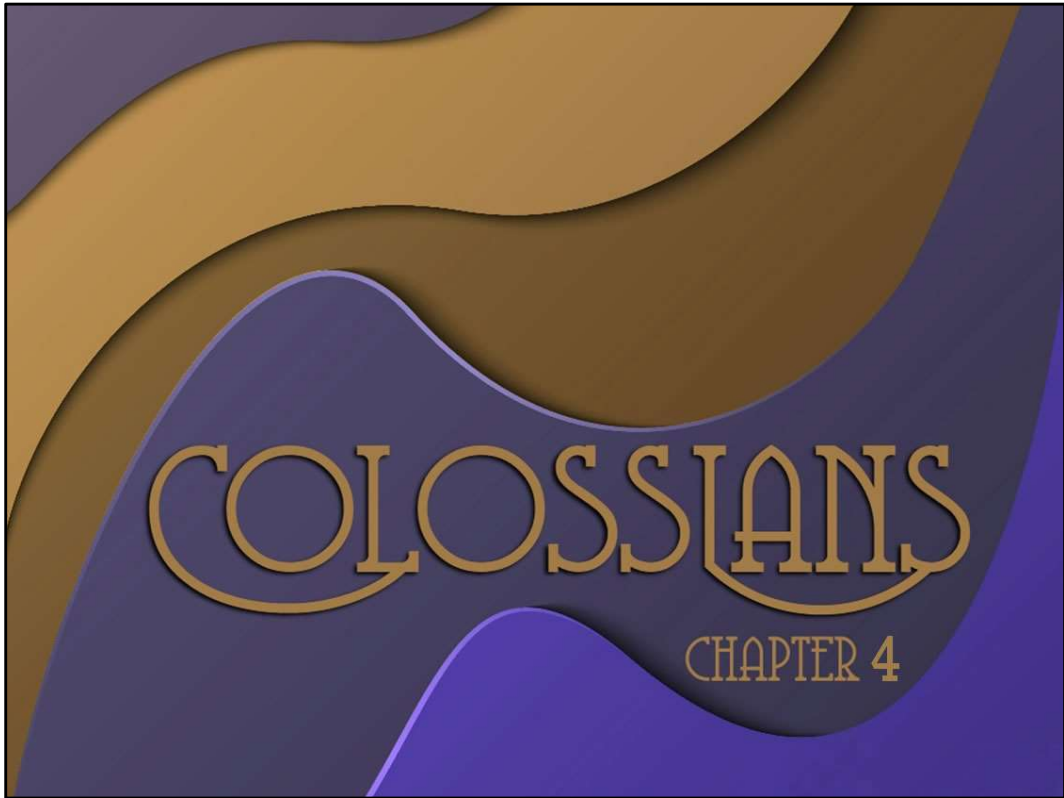
²⁵ But he who
does **wrong**
will be **repaid**
for what he has
done, and there
is **no partiality**.

But he who does wrong will be repaid for what he has done, and there is no partiality.

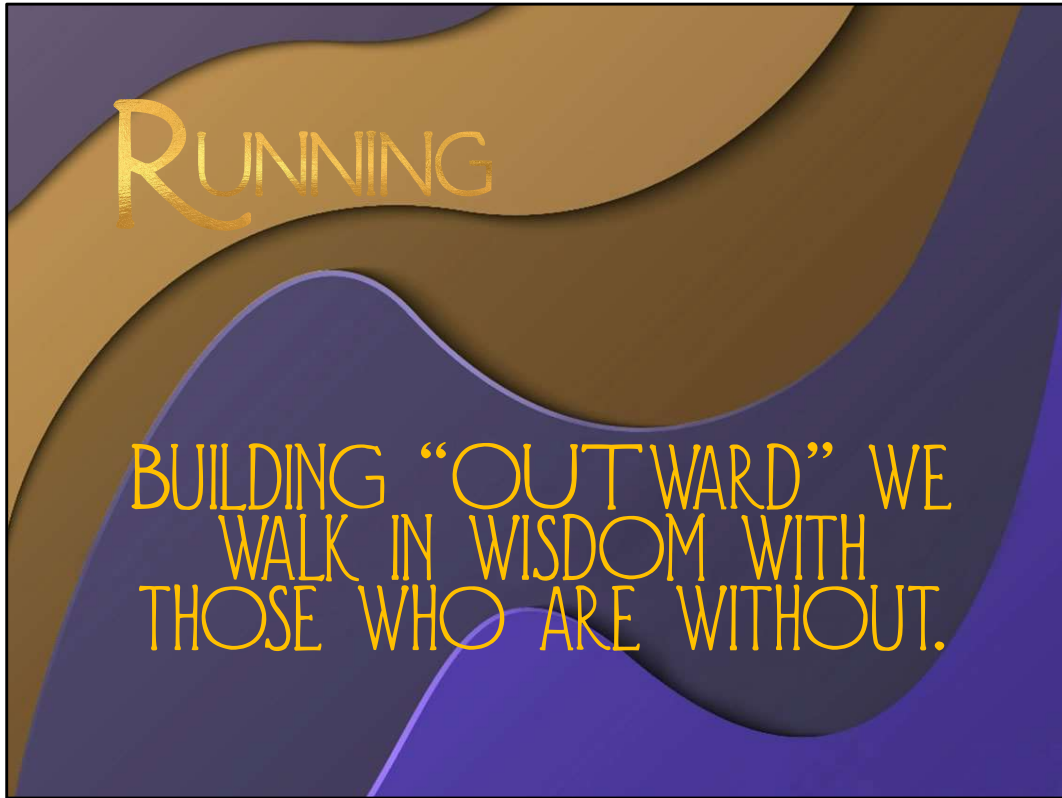


¹ Masters, give your bondservants what is just and fair, knowing that you also have a Master in heaven.

'Glory of San Rocco' by Tintoretto, 1564



Chapter 4



Paul now discusses running the race as a believer.

Exhortation for masters (Colossians 4:1-6)

A

Love for bondservants (4:1)

B

Continue earnestly in prayer (4:2)

C



Pray for the apostles; pray for Paul (4:3-4)

B'

Walk in wisdom (4:5)

A'

Let your speech always be with grace (4:6)

A: Love. B: Wisdom. C: Pray.

¹ Masters, give your bondservants what is just and fair, knowing that you also have a Master in heaven.



'The Miracle of St. Mark Freeing the Slave' by Tintoretto, 1548.

This painting portrays an episode of the life of Saint Mark, patron saint of Venice, taken from Jacopo da Varazze's "Golden Legend" (compiled around the years 1259–1266). The scene shows, in the upper part, the saint intervening to make invulnerable a slave about to be martyred for his veneration of another saint's relics.



**CONTINUE
EARNESTLY
IN PRAYER,
BEING
VIGILANT
IN IT WITH
THANKSGIVING;**

² Continue earnestly in prayer, being vigilant in it with thanksgiving;

³ meanwhile
praying also for
us, that God
would open to
us a door for the
word, to speak
the mystery of
Christ, for which
I am also in
chains,

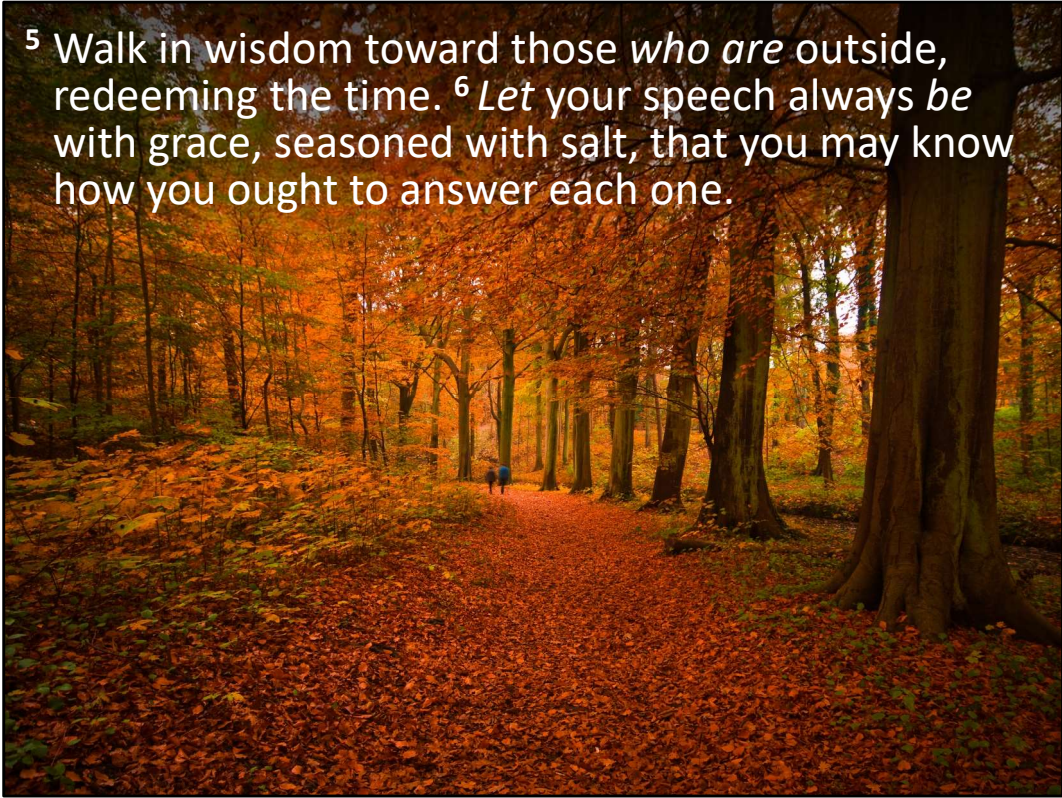


'St. Paul in his prison' by Rembrandt, 1627.



'Paul reaches Rome in chains' in the Granger Collection.

⁵ Walk in wisdom toward those *who are* outside, redeeming the time. ⁶ *Let* your speech always *be* with grace, seasoned with salt, that you may know how you ought to answer each one.



Final greetings (Colossians 4:7-18)

A

Tychicus will tell you all the news of me. (4:7-9)

B

Aristarchus and Epaphras, known to you, send you greetings, (4:10-14)

C



Luke and Demas also greet you. (4:14)

B'

Give greetings to the brothers in Laodicea and to Nympha and to the church in her house. (4:15-17)

A'

Remember my chains. Grace be with you. (4:18)

A: Situation of Paul. B: Greetings from countrymen. C: Other greetings.

⁷ Tychicus, a beloved brother, faithful minister, and fellow servant in the Lord, will tell you all the news about me.

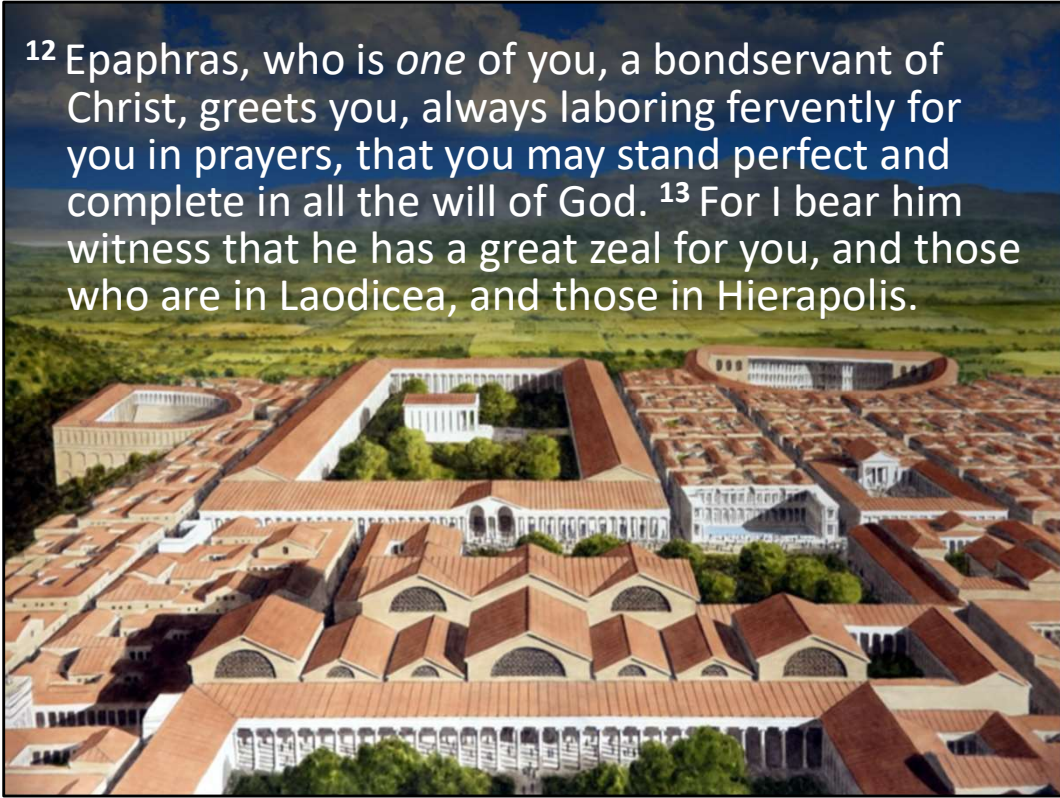
⁸ I am sending him to you for this very purpose, that he may know your circumstances and comfort your hearts,
⁹ with Onesimus, a faithful and beloved brother, who is *one* of you. They will make known to you all things which *are happening* here.





¹⁰ Aristarchus my fellow prisoner greets you, with Mark the cousin of Barnabas (about whom you received instructions: if he comes to you, welcome him), ¹¹ and Jesus who is called Justus. These *are my* only fellow workers for the kingdom of God who are of the circumcision; they have proved to be a comfort to me.

¹² Epaphras, who is *one* of you, a bondservant of Christ, greets you, always laboring fervently for you in prayers, that you may stand perfect and complete in all the will of God. ¹³ For I bear him witness that he has a great zeal for you, and those who are in Laodicea, and those in Hierapolis.

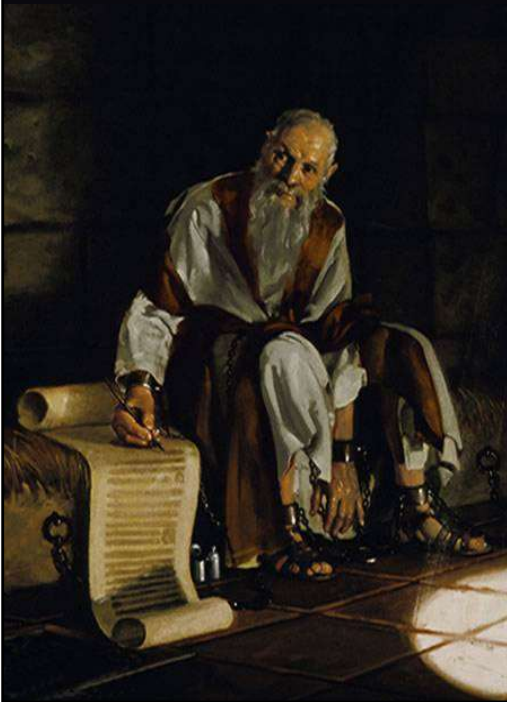


¹⁴ Luke the beloved physician and Demas greet you.

¹⁵ Greet the brethren who are in Laodicea, and Nymphas and the church that *is* in his house.



Closing Exhortations and Blessings



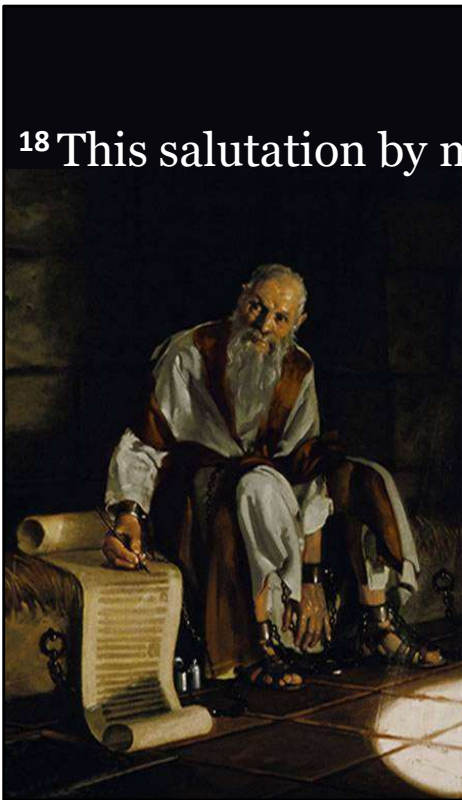
¹⁶ Now when this epistle is read among you, see that it is read also in the church of the Laodiceans, and that you likewise read the *epistle* from Laodicea.

¹⁷ And say to Archippus,

“Take heed to the ministry which you have received in the Lord, that you may fulfill it.”

- The *Epistle to the Laodiceans* (Col 4:16) was *written* before that to the Colossians, but probably was *sent* by Paul to Laodicea at the same time (or a little earlier) than that to the Church at Colossae. This letter is generally regarded as being lost. However, some ancient sources, such as Hippolytus, and some modern scholars consider that the epistle "from Laodicea" was never a lost epistle, but simply Paul re-using one of his other letters (the most common candidate is Ephesians, but some suggest Philemon), just as he asks for the copying and forwarding of the Letter to Colossians to Laodicea.
- Several ancient texts purporting to be the missing "Epistle to the Laodiceans" have been known to have existed, most of which are now lost. These were generally considered, both in antiquity and by modern scholarship, to be attempts to supply a forged copy of a lost document. The sole surviving version is a Latin *Epistola ad Laodicenses* ("Epistle to the Laodiceans"), first witnessed in Codex Fuldensis written in AD 546. The Latin epistle is actually a short compilation of verses from other Pauline epistles, principally Philippians. It is generally considered a "clumsy forgery" and an attempt to seek to fill the "gap".
- Tertullian (AD 155-220) claimed that the early Christian heretic (Gnostics) named Marcion of Sinope (AD 85-160) [Jesus was a spirit, etc.] reworked the letter to the Ephesians to suit his philosophy and named it the Letter to the Laodiceans.

¹⁸This salutation by my own hand— *Paul*.
Remember my chains.
Grace *be* with you.
Amen.



*Grace
be with
you*

This salutation by my own hand—Paul.
Remember my chains. Grace *be* with you.
Amen.

Christ's Pre-eminence Demonstrated

- In personal purity (Col. 3:1–11)
- In Christian fellowship (Col. 3:12–17)
- In the home (Col. 3:18–21)
- In daily work (Col. 3:22–4:1)
- In Christian witness (Col. 4:2–6)
- In Christian service (Col. 4:7–18)

RELIGION=RULES JESUS=FREEDOM

Being then made free from sin,
ye became the servants of righteousness.

Romans 6:18

Stand fast therefore in the liberty
wherewith Christ hath made us free, and be
not entangled again with the yoke of
bondage.

Galatians 5:1

Typical Gnostic beliefs

- God is holy.
- Matter is evil.
- Between spirit and matter is a huge gulf.
- Since a truly holy God can't span the gap, He created a bunch of intermediate beings.
- So where does Christ fit, if at all?????

Another problem – regulated behaviour

- **Ritualistic:** observed a church calendar (non-Christian, church calendars, liturgies, etc. today are largely of pagan origin)
- **Ascetic:** preached abstinence of body
- **Mystic:** Jewish ritualism + Eastern mysticism.
- **Moralism** – being a “good” person (individual or corporate)
[Get to heaven]
[Be respected]
[Get promoted]
- **Self-interest**—do good in order to... [Feel good], etc.
- **Comparison** – the heart of religious “worth”

“Religion” versus “The Way”

(True Christianity)

Religion

- If I obey, I am accepted
- If I’m good, God will love me; otherwise, probably not
- People are either good or bad
- The focus is what I do or don’t do
- Religion produces pride and despair
- Motivated by fear

The Way

- I am accepted so I obey
- I’m not good, but Jesus loves me anyway
- People are repentant or not repentant
- The focus is on Jesus and what He did/does/will do
- The Way produces humility and confidence
- Motivated by love

The solution: a relationship with Christ

- All divine fullness in the Eternal Christ
 - a. **CREATOR** of the universe
 - b. **CONQUEROR** of the powers
 - c. **CONTROLLER** of the church
 - All human focus on the Exalted Christ
 - a. **PURITY** in the passions
 - b. **CHARITY (LOVE)** in the assembly
 - c. **HARMONY** in the home
- Wives/husbands
 - Children/parents
 - Slaves/masters

CHRISTIANITY IS NOT MEANT
TO BE A RELIGION
(Man's way to get closer to God)

JESUS DIDN'T COME TO START A
RELIGION. HE CAME TO OFFER A
PERSONAL RELATIONSHIP.
(God's way to get closer to Man)



Many Bible scholars have concluded that Colossians is the most profound letter Paul ever wrote. The church today desperately needs the message of Colossians. When churches dilute the faith with legalism, man-made philosophies or other belief systems, no matter how well-intentioned, they may not be denying Christ, but they are dethroning Him and robbing Him of His rightful place of preeminence. This letter speaks loud and clear that:

2. Christ is the Head of the church.
3. Teaching errors about Christ can destroy a church.
4. Do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through Him.
5. Christ is preeminent over all principalities, powers and angels.
6. The believer's union with Christ results in holy living.