

“Equipping believers for growth and service by encountering God through his word.”

THE BIBLE FOR TODAY
JUNE 2, 2010



OUTLINE OF COLOSSIANS

Greetings (1:1-2)

The Themes (1:3-2:5)

A. Thanksgiving

B. Prayer and Meditation

C. Paul's Ministry and Reason for Writing

Appeal for Christian Maturity (2:6-4:6)

A. Continue in Christ

B. Let No One Exclude You

C. Live in Accordance with Life of Christ

Final Greetings (4:7-18)

PAUL AND HIS MINISTRY—1:25-2:5

*25 I have become its servant by the commission God gave me to present to you the word of God in its fullness—²⁶ the mystery that has been kept hidden for ages and generations, but is now disclosed to the Lord's people.
27 To them God has chosen to make known among the Gentiles the glorious riches of this mystery, which is Christ in you, the hope of glory.*

- Paul is a steward of the gospel given to him by God (Acts 9)
- Mystery: related to Jewish thought--hidden plan of God for a moment in time; Paul understands it as the person of Christ, not an event; not continually hidden, like mystery religions, but now revealed. Available for all people, not just elite few (as mystery religions). Richness, the treasures of God opened and available.

28 We proclaim him, admonishing and teaching everyone with all wisdom, so that we may present everyone fully mature in Christ. 29 To this end I strenuously contend with all the energy Christ so powerfully works in me.

- Paul is at work because God is at work.
- “Proclaiming:” a first priority of Paul’s work (the sum of Colossians 1:15-20).
- “Admonish:” set in proper order; help in confusion so that whole mind may understand and apply the teaching.
- “Struggle:” (athletic term) not half hearted and hope that gaps get filled in with other effort or luck, but hard work (with Christ at work in Paul).

Context provides:

- a) All believers are capable of maturity.
- b) The maturity involves training, discipline and warning to hold/ stand firm in the gospel.
- c) Paul will not be satisfied with anything other than the full maturity of faith of believers.

Summary thus far:

- a) The gospel is for everyone, not an elite group (as mystery religions)
- b) The goal is the maturity of spiritual life of believers in and through Christ (not as the Gnostics—mature only when you get the secret knowledge—elite disciples)

2: ¹ *I want you to know how hard I am contending for you and for those at Laodicea, and for all who have not met me personally.* ² *My goal* *is that they may be encouraged in heart and united in love, so that they may have the full riches of complete understanding, in order that they may know the mystery of God, namely, Christ,* ³ *in whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge.*

- Growth should come in the whole community with proper understanding of the gospel; truth seen in action and action confirms truth—assurance of future hope
- The community has all that is needed, but believers must personally grow in that knowledge; must experience the gospel and growth yourself

- “Encourage in heart:” strengthen inwardly so can stand against false teachings and its threats
- Christ is the full wisdom of God, not as Gnostics teach; no initiations needed to bring people into the community of faith; faith in Christ is alone what brings us into relationship with Christ.
- Love unites (Eph. 3:16-21) *And I pray that you, being rooted and established in love, ¹⁸ may have power, together with all the Lord's people, to grasp how wide and long and high and deep is the love of Christ, ¹⁹ and to know this love that surpasses knowledge—that you may be filled to the measure of all the fullness of God.*

⁴ I tell you this so that no one may deceive you by fine-sounding arguments. ⁵ For though I am absent from you in body, I am present with you in spirit and delight to see how disciplined you are and how firm your faith in Christ is.

- “Fine-sounding:” pithy, persuasive speech-- close to the truth, but actually deceiving; kind of deception that leads to devastating results
- “Deceive:” delude, seductively charm (Greek word is used only hear and James 1:22)
- “Disciplined/ firm:” (military terms) a solid wall of defense; already standing firm—evidence in how people and the community lives

- “In spirit with you:” Christ is present and because he is present, and Paul is in Christ, Paul is somehow in spirit with them also.

2:6 So then, just as you received Christ Jesus as Lord, continue to live your lives in him, ⁷ rooted and built up in him, strengthened in the faith as you were taught, and overflowing with thankfulness.

“So then:” (Therefore) “Whenever you see a therefore in Scripture, go back to see what it is there for.”

Vs 6: The summary of the letter: You received Christ as Lord, so walk, live your life in him.

(An imperative sentence)

- “Living in:” (walking in)— a theological and ethical requirement; If one is a Christian, he or she is to become what they proclaim in their daily life.
- “Rooted in:” Present state is the result of a past action; rooted in Christ, thus conduct your life in him (Eph. 3:17 and here).
- “Built/ strengthened:” construction terms showing the ongoing—continuous building of a structure.
- Thanksgiving: our gratitude is to God for what he has done in Christ. What we do in worship

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- We are stewards of the gospel given to us through Christ and his apostles; we are in the long line of believers holding the gospel and sharing with others.
- We must grow in Christ through personal experience with him and also from learning and living the gospel, not just taking what others tell us about the gospel
- How are we living—standing firm; evidence of the gospel at work in us?
- We are united in spirit with believers everywhere; the mystery of God
- We are to walk in Christ—our doctrine and behavior should match (theological and ethical)