

# Colossians 1

**Colossians 1:1-8 NKJV** Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God, and Timothy our brother, (2) To the saints and faithful brethren in Christ *who are* in Colosse: Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. (3) We give thanks to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, praying always for you, (4) since we heard of your faith in Christ Jesus and of your love for all the saints; (5) because of the hope which is laid up for you in heaven, of which you heard before in the word of the truth of the gospel, (6) which has come to you, as *it has* also in all the world, and is bringing forth fruit, as *it is* also among you since the day you heard and knew the grace of God in truth; (7) as you also learned from Epaphras, our dear fellow servant, who is a faithful minister of Christ on your behalf, (8) who also declared to us your love in the Spirit.

Paul the apostle and his son in the LORD wrote this letter to the church in Colosse. This first passage is full of praise and love for them. He tells them that he prays for them especially that the LORD encourages them to remain faithful and loving towards all those in the Body of Christ.

We had discussed in our Introduction to the letter that there were several concerns that Paul had heard about in the church.

*Doctrinal errors which are not new began even in the early church. These lies crept in from the outside and from the inside.*

1. *Wisdom and philosophies of man instead of God-Breathed Words from God through the Holy Spirit*
2. *Jesus+ movement; you had to be observant to the Old Testament Law in order to be “fully saved”.*
3. *Special knowledge that was given to a select group of people, especially about the Nature of Christ being fully God in the flesh as well as fully human in Jesus.*

**Colossians 1:9-14 NKJV** For this reason we also, since the day we heard it, do not cease to pray for you, and to ask that you may be filled with the knowledge of His will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding; (10) that you may walk worthy of the Lord, fully pleasing *Him*, being fruitful in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God; (11) strengthened with all might, according to His glorious power, for all patience and longsuffering with joy; (12) giving thanks to the Father who has qualified us to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in the light. (13) He has delivered us from the power of darkness and conveyed *us* into the kingdom of the Son of His love, (14) in whom we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins.

Since Paul praised them for the fruit of the Spirit being exhibited in the church and their faith in the true Gospel of grace, he and others with him offered up many and fervent prayers to Jesus, their High Priest and Intercessor.

He prayed that they

1. would be filled with the knowledge of His will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding;

2. would walk worthy of their calling in Christ which included pleasing the LORD, being fruitful in every good work and increasing in their knowledge of God;
3. would be strengthened in all might; both words have the Greek word “Dunamis” in mind; “Be mighty in all might” and, of course, this word is related specifically to the power of the Holy Spirit. The goal of this type of power is for the Colossians to continue in patience and longsuffering with “calm delight” as the Greek word indicates;
4. would continually give thanks to the Father who delivered us from the power of Darkness (that is, our former kingdom of sin, error, misery and death) into the kingdom of the Son of the Father’s love who lives in pure light. Paul wants us to be exceedingly grateful because it was through His blood that we are redeemed, justified and have forgiveness of ALL sins.

And as if the Holy Spirit wanted to answer Paul’s prayer about having spiritual understanding and knowledge of God, Paul begins with an amazing passage on the Truth of Jesus as the Son of God.

Before we dig in, I need to defend the teaching of doctrine. Some tire of doctrine and theology because it is often difficult to understand, and they do not see the relevance to their daily lives. Some would rather hear a list of do’s and don’ts that they can check off their naughty/nice list. But God is operating at a much deeper level. He’s digging down into deep-rooted ideas that are in our minds and hearts so that any errors can be corrected, and all truths can be refined. The goal is move us to a place of exceeding gratitude where our inner motivation is to do the “good works” that He created for us before the foundations were laid. These are to be done with an eye towards pleasing Him who created you. For the truth is what John taught: “But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, to those who believe in His name: (13) who were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God. [John 1:12-13 NKJV](#). This “rebirth” is more important than your physical birth, even though it precedes it.

What He doesn’t want is any form of legalism, any “quid pro quo” whereby we believe that He owes us anything.

[Colossians 1:15-23 NKJV](#) (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. All things were created through Him and for Him. (17) And He is before all things, and in Him all things consist. (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. (19) For it pleased *the Father* that in Him all the fullness should dwell, (20) 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. (21) And you, who once were alienated and enemies in your mind by wicked works, yet now He has reconciled (22) in the body of His flesh through death, to present you holy, and blameless, and above reproach in His sight— (23) if indeed you continue in the faith, grounded and steadfast, and are not moved away from the hope of the gospel which you heard, which was preached to every creature under heaven, of which I, Paul, became a minister.

There’s so much meat in here that to try to take all of it in at once would choke us.

Here’s what I believe is important to understand:

1. If we want to see God, we look to Jesus. Firstborn is poetic and simply declares Him as

eternal. He is also our Eternal King who reigns over us.

2. Jesus is the Creator God of everything we can see and all that we cannot see. It says that everything was created “for Him”. **What do you think that means?**
3. Being the Eternal one and the Creator, He “holds all creation together”. **What do you think that means?**
4. I am the undershepherd of this local church. Christ is the head of the entire Body. **What is the Body of Christ?**
5. He is the “firstborn” of the dead. **What do you think that means?**
6. Jesus the Man is God. He was fully God for no one ever did the things He did. How did he “prove” that He was God made flesh? **Was He in anyway not God?**
7. Paul says that He reconciled everything to Himself and He made peace with all of creation. **What do you think that means? Then, how did He accomplish it?**
8. What were we like before this reconciliation and peace? Were we seeking to be “right” with God? What does “alienated” and “enemies” speak to you?
9. What is Jesus’ heart desire concerning us? Do we ever resist Him in His work of holiness, blamelessness being above reproach? Why is that?
10. Are you bothered by the “if” in verse 23? What will Christ do with someone who does NOT continue (stay abiding in Him) in the faith? Does NOT stay grounded (based in truth) and NOT settled (remain immovable).
  - a. Here’s the paradox: the expectation of Jesus is that we continue in godly conduct – but know that we are not saved by it. We must continue in the truth of the Gospel because we are “saved by grace through faith”.
  - b. One commentator put it this way:

*“If the gospel teaches the final perseverance of the saints, it teaches at the same time that the saints are those who finally persevere - in Christ. Continuance is the test of reality.” (Bruce)*
  - c. My take is if any of this really bothers you, be honest and come to Jesus with a broken and repentant heart. He will not turn you away. He wants you “in Him” not “in your-self”.

So, the point of these things is to come to a painful place called humility. We must understand and confess our inability to truly know Him on this side of heaven and therefore be awestruck by His personal presence in our lives. Awestruck, not into paralysis but in loving obedience to Him who saved us, reconciled us, and who has the power and authority to present us, His Bride, to His Father, holy and blameless. And just because we cannot truly know Him now, we do not give up. For in His Word and in our words of prayer, we will draw closer and closer still.