

Through the Bible Course

May 16, 1948

Colossians

The Reverend Dr. Girard Lowe

Key Thought: Pre-eminence of Christ

Key Verse: 2:9, 10

Time: Written from prison in Rome 62 AD

The heresy: False teachers were propagating the doctrine of Gnosticism. Their chief dogma was that all matter is evil and so the source of all evil. This led them to declare (1) that God could not have been the Creator of the world; (2) that Christ could not have been incarnate in the flesh. This led them to exalt angels as the mediators between God and creation and between God and man in process of reconciliation. This reconciliation took place through mediators called aeons. These theories of course limited the greatness and authority of Christ. In practice it led, on the one hand, to license since the body did not matter; on the other hand, it led to asceticism since man must as far as possible avoid all material things.

Occasion: Occasion for Paul writing is to be found in fact that Epaphras came to inform him of the heresy and to consult with him as to how to meet it. Paul's answer was to exalt Christ both in person as well as Mediator and show only way to live acceptably with God was through His power.

- I. 1:1-8 – Address and commendations
- II. 1:9-14 – Paul's desire for the Church as expressed in prayer of intercession and thanksgiving.
- III. 1:15-22 – Pre-eminence of Christ
 - 1. 1:15 – He was visible manifestation of invisible God.
 - 2. 1:16, 17 – In creation
 - a. All things created by Him, even those things such as thrones, principalities and powers so highly exalted by Gnostics.
 - b. All things were created for Him.
 - 3. 1:18 – Pre-eminent as Head of the Church
 - 4. 1:19 – Pre-eminent because in Him dwelt all the fullness of Godhead
 - 5. 1:20-22 – Pre-eminent in reconciliation
 - a. His reconciliation was effective since it not reconciled for time, but for eternity.
- IV. 1:23 – 2:3 – Urges them to continue in the faith
 - 1. 1:23a – Was Gospel preached to every creature
 - 2. 1:23b – Paul was suffering for preaching this Gospel

- a. Here he seems to appeal to them to trust the message he declared because he was willing to suffer for it.
 - 3. 1:24 – He rejoiced in his suffering because it was for them and for Christ and the Church.
 - 4. 1:25-29 – The Gospel was a mystery revealed. He was the agent. The mystery was “Christ in you the hope of glory” (verse 27).
 - 5. 2:1-3 – He assured them that he desired they might understand this mystery and hold to Christ “in whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge.”
- V. 2:4-23 – He warns against the heresy of Gnosticism
- 1. 2:4-7 – Against their enticing words
 - 2. 2:8 – Against being spoiled (led away) by philosophy, vain deceit, or traditions of men
 - 3. 2:9-17 – Against thinking Christ’s work was not complete
 - a. 2:9 – in Him dwelleth all fullness of Godhead bodily
 - b. 2:10-13 – we are united to Him in death and resurrection
 - c. 2:14-17 – He has spoiled (disarmed, conquered) principalities, etc. and made a show of them openly
 - 4. 2:18, 19 – Warning against worshipping angels
 - 5. 2:20-23 – Warning against asceticism
- VI. 3:1 – 4:6 – Union with Christ is only way of producing real Christian living
- 1. 3:1-4 – If risen with Christ seek those things which are above.
 - 2. 3:5-9 – Mortify your members, i.e. put to death that which is earthly in you.
 - 3. 3:10-17 – Put on new man that is your new nature renewed in knowledge, etc.
 - a. Here have description the life of a man living with power of indwelling Christ. Mercy, kindness, etc., also forgiving and love
 - b. 3:17 – Whatever do, will do in name of Lord Jesus.
 - 4. 3:18 – 4:6 – This new life will be especially manifest in the home.
 - a. Exhortation to wives, husbands, parents, children, master and servants.
- VII. 4:7-18 – The commendation of certain brethren and greetings
- 1. 4:18 – Paul’s signature