

Class 1: Colossians 1.1-23

“The Supremacy of the Son of God”

Introduction¹

- Themes:
 1. **Christ is supreme.** Col 1:15-19.
 2. **Continue to grow.** Col 1:10, Col 1:28-29. Practicals: i. Set mind on spiritual things, Col 3:1-3; ii. Things to put off, Col 3:5; iii. Things to put on, Col 3:12-14.
 3. **Stand against false doctrine.** Col 2:8, which philosophies are the most influential on me and on our culture? Col 2:17-18, Col 2:20-24, be strong.
 4. **The importance of the church,** Col 1:18. Love the church because it belongs to Jesus, and he loves it. Jesus believes in the church, and so did Paul.

1. Paul - His Hopes for the Colossian Disciples, vv1-14

a. Thanks

- “[Paul] says, in effect, ‘this is how I am thanking God for you’ (1:3–8), ‘this is how I am praying for you’ (1:9–23) and ‘this is what I am doing for you’ (1:24-2:5).”²
- **v4**, Faith and love always go together in the Christian ‘faith’, **Gal 5.6**.
- **v5**, faith hope & love. For a good quiet time, study John 11 and pray through the themes of faith, hope and love there.³ Also in Colossians for faith, see 1:23; 2:7; for love, 1:8, 13; 2:2; 3:14; for hope, 1:23, 27.
- **v5**, treasure awaits.⁴
- “[The gospel] is a command to be obeyed and a power let loose in the world (cf. Rom. 1:16–17), which cannot be reduced to terms of the persuasiveness or even the conviction of the messenger. It works of itself to overthrow falsehood.”⁵

b. Prayers

- “Pray for you” - asks them to pray for him too, **4.3**. See this in Rom, Eph, Phil, 1 Thess, 2 Thess, Philem - do we pray for one another and ask for prayers?
- **v10**, How do we ‘walk’ in such a way as to please God?

¹ Background handout here: <https://db.tt/MfnZRbnE>

² Wright, N. T. Colossians and Philemon: An Introduction and Commentary. Tyndale New Testament Commentaries 12. IVP/Accordance electronic edition, version 1.5. Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 1986.

³ 1. Love, Jn 11.5, 36. 2. Hope, Jn 11.4, 11, 25-26 - not the word hope, but hope-inspiring. 3. Faith, Jn 11.26, 40. See also, Rom 5.1-5; 1 Cor 13.13; 1 Thess 1.3; 5.8; Eph 4.2-5; Heb 6.10-12; 10.22-24; 1 Pet 1.3-8; 21-22.

⁴ Matt 5.20, 1 Pet 1.4, Rom 8.18, Phil 3.10, Jn 14.1-4.

⁵ Wright, N. T. Colossians and Philemon: An Introduction and Commentary. Tyndale New Testament Commentaries 12. IVP/Accordance electronic edition, version 1.5. Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 1986.

- "Power detains reluctant captives, a kingdom cherishes willing subjects."⁶
- Darkness to light: **1 Pet 2.9**

2. Christ - Lord of Creation & Redemption, vv15-20

a. Creation; vv15-17

- Reminder of **Gen 1.27**.
- **v17**, A passage strongly affirming the deity of Christ. "...a generation after Paul's death Pliny the Younger, describing Christians of his day to the Emperor Trajan, states, "They affirmed, moreover, the sum-total of their guilt or error was this, that they were in the habit of meeting on a certain fixed day before it was light, when they sang in alternate verses a hymn to Christ as to a God..."

b. Redemption; vv18-20

- **v19**, Jn 1, Heb 1:3ff. All God's fullness in Jesus. When you see Jesus you "get" God.
- The church is the fullness of Christ. This is a challenge to us. The world cannot really see Jesus until the world sees Christ in us. Do people see Jesus in me/the church?

3. Us - Our Benefits and Responsibilities, vv21-23

a. Past

- What does it mean to you that you were "alienated" from God?

b. Present

- How do you feel about being "blameless" in God's sight?

c. Future

- Are you losing your grip on any particular part of the faith? Ask a good friend if you are not sure.
- What will help you stand firm?

Conclusion

- It's a spiritual war, but worth the battle: "There is no neutral ground in the universe: every square inch, every split second, is claimed by God and counterclaimed by Satan."⁷
- The war is won - hold on to the supreme commander!

⁶ Wesley, John. Wesley's Notes on the Bible. Accordance electronic edition, version 1.3. Altamonte Springs: OakTree Software, 1997.

⁷ C. S. Lewis, 'Christianity and Culture' in Christian Reflections, ed. W. Hooper (Bles, 1967), p. 33 (2nd edn, Fount Paperbacks, 1981, p. 52).