

By Jan Lilleby

CHAPTER 1



Colossians was written about the same time as the epistle to the Ephesians, 62-63 A.D.

In these epistles we are given *the entire doctrine of Faith for the Church dispensation* – the foundation which the Body of Christ is built upon.

It is the doctrine contained in the two epistles – and here we shall go through the Colossians – which Paul and his co-workers made in speech and in writing, many years before one could purchase and read the four Gospels, Matthew, Mark, Luke and John. Matthew was issued in 80 A.D., Mark in around 82-83 A.D., Luke is debated whether it was issued in 62 – or in 73 A.D., and I find the latter to be the most probable. John came around 90-92 A.D.

IMAGE: *Asia Minor as it was in the time of Paul. In our time, this is of course Turkey.*

When Paul preached and established his fresh new free Grace Gospel – it is clear that no one had been able to read of Jesus' earthly ministry, neither had anyone read of His twelve apostles/disciples. Nobody knew anything of the so-called 'Great Commission' in Mat. 28! Oh, well – except those among the twelve who still were alive. Luke, who wrote the Book of Acts, may occasionally have given Paul diverse information in their conversations on what he knew of Jesus and the twelve, - at least I find that to be very logical. But as far as the Bible scholars and the expertise in Christianity know, there is *no written material of history* on Jesus before the four Gospels.

Paul's teaching was all dominant, actually *just about exclusive* the whole time from 62-63 A.D. until his death. Some Theologians/historians have tried to settle a time for when exactly Paul died, and came up with 66-67 A.D. – and Catholic legends wants to say that Paul was executed in Rome, and thus he did not die of old age or so-called natural causes. But there is *no documentation* for such beliefs anywhere. Regarding Paul's passing away, history remains mute.

Later on, the so-called Church Fathers, as well as the early Catholic Church with its Bishops, after them, began using *the four gospels* as basis for much of their faith

doctrine. It is proven (have you read their teachings?) that they taught an incredibly heretical works-related type of gospel, much like we find in the Law of Moses. You had to do a lot of good works if you wanted to get saved! Their quotes leaned rather on the four gospels, and never on what Paul taught of his Grace Gospel. Check out Rev. Stuart Allen's book on that subject – the follower of Charles Welch; he wrote much about topics like that.

They missed out completely that the four Gospels only were Bible history, and never meant to be for the Church dispensation. They only concerns God's dealing with Israel sending His Messiah King Jesus to them as promised by the prophets of old, and how Israel responded by killing Messiah – and so they had to take the punishments which destroyed them in 70 A.D., Mat. 22:7.

I just wanted to draw a little background, so that we readily understand that it is exclusively Ephesians and Colossians which are the valid Doctrine of Faith for the present Church dispensation, which now, 2021 A.D., has existed for 1958 years.

Colossians chapter 1 is very clarifying and extremely edifying to us believers, to say the least. It is formulated in a way that we notice it has nothing in common to Jewish tradition, the Law of Moses or any ordinances. Neither is there any mention of the New Covenant to Israel or any offer to them to have an earthly kingdom. The Grace Gospel of Paul has a free structure in that regard, and we Gentiles can freely receive the salvation promised to us by faith in Christ without having to present ourselves to God via works or abiding the Law, or any rituals performed.

Verses 1 – 5 goes naturally together:

(ALL BIBLE QUOTES FROM AMPL. BIBLE)...I may choose to drop clammers at certain verses...

“Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus, by the will of God, and Timothy (our) brother. 2: To the saints and believing and faithful brethren in Christ who are at Colossae: Grace to you and peace from God our Father. 3: We continually give thanks to God the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, as we are praying for you. 4: For we have heard of your faith in Christ Jesus and of the love which you (have and show) for all the saints. 5: Because of the hope laid up for you in heaven. Of this you heard in the past in the message of the truth of the Gospel”

In both Ephesians and Colossians we find an expression which is not found in the other parts of the New Testament. That is the expression “Heaven” as based on the Greek *Epiouranos*. That means ‘Heaven up above the Heavens’ – pointing to where now Jesus Christ is residing at the Father's right hand.

Epiouranos-heaven cannot be found in any of the four Gospels. In these, we only find ‘Kingdom of Heaven’ and ‘The Kingdom of God’, both pointing to the promised earthly

Kingdom of Israel with Jesus as their future king. Often mentioned in Christianity as the Millennial Kingdom to come with the return of Jesus.

The five verses above are introducing Paul's review of his prayer of thanks for the ministry he had heard about taking place at Colossae – and he gave them praise for their efforts – encouraging them since they display such affection and love for all the saints. Notice, that Paul points to the 'Generator' which urge the believers to go forth, and that generator is THEIR HOPE, the hope for that salvation laid up for them in heaven. And they got to know this hope, since Paul came on with his new free Grace Gospel according to God's revelation.

The expression '...all the saints' – actually carry in it the dismissal of a grave misunderstanding in Christianity, even if that misunderstanding was not willfully taught or planned by anyone, - it dismisses the idea which has sneaked in among us believers for centuries: That there is a class divide, some are elevated as 'Holy Ministers' or 'Holy Father', at the same time as a common regular Christian Church member belongs to a 'Second-Class' below the before-mentioned leaders.

This has derived from the hierarchy of large assemblies, such as the Catholic Church, and even the Lutheran Protestant Churches, thus creating a 'Them' and an 'Us'.

The means to achieve such 'Holiness Status' has been through the primitive use of diverse effects of ritual value: Long expensive Priest Garments/coats, tall fancy hats, scepters ornamented with a Cross, use of incense, stanching of holy water, church buildings of considerable dimensions and height, declarations made of certain outstanding dead believers to become 'Holy Saints', - and then we see the Liturgical – priests facing an altar to illustrate he is standing before God representing the members present, thus saying that he acts as a mediator between God and the Church. Unfortunately, Martin Luther, back in the day, did not achieve any progress in removing that Catholic Entity, their innermost religious being...and so, also the Lutherans have dragged along with them that outwardly 'Make Up' of a leadership which is holier than the regular believer.

They actually, both the Catholics and the Lutherans seem to have copied much of the Jewish Temple enterprises – priests behaving as if there were sacrificial ceremonies and the likes. However, that kind of ministry was established by God, and it pleased God as such. In our time, priests have not been ordained by God. It is purely a human invention, nothing more.

This whole thing has mislead the average Christian believer (not in all denominations though) to think that priests, pastors, elders and other ministers, they really are holy men. Am I exaggerating now? I don't think so.

I recall a peculiar incident in this regard, you know –

overdone respect for 'Holy Men' in long robes – which happened many years ago in my home town here in Norway.

Then I was just a fresh convert and knew very little of the Bible. Still, one of the many things in the New Testament fastened into my mind, such as Jesus chastising His opponents, the Pharisees. He 'Branded' them in various ways. And I took special interest in what He said of their puffed-up pride:

"(Free quotation) ...You who seek to take the upper seats at the dining table, you who wear long robes and craving for salutes as you walk over the market place, woe unto you, chalked graves upon which people are walking, not knowing that inside the graves there are bones of the dead and all impurity..." and so on. Check out also Mat. 23!

Then one day, I found myself at the market place in down town, and I noticed just a few meters ahead a well-known Lutheran priest was walking. He wore a long black coat and I could see he had on that typical priest-shirt under his blazer jacket. People saluted him, and he nodded back politely and smiled. And then I had to admit to myself, sure, Jesus hit the nail spot on with His Pharisee warnings! Right, okay – I admit I was a bit naïve – but remember that I was unexperienced in the understanding of the Bible. To his defense, this priest was a Jesus-believer. But the Pharisees were absolutely not – the majority of them. But still: At least to me I saw this incident as an illustration – especially now 50 years later, that people regard 'Men in long robes' as so-called 'Holy Men' and which demands more attention and calls for more respect than just a regular every-day-Christian. That misunderstood concept of 'Holiness' has got a grasp on many people yet today!

But then we find proper correction to such a misunderstanding: Paul's epistles clearly declare ALL BELIEVERS IN CHRIST AS HOLY SAINTS. We are all on the very same spiritual level in all aspects of faith. One hundred percent holy, saved, loved by God, reconciled by God in Christ, and without reproach or any sin whatsoever of which God could judge us.

The Biblical concept of a person being holy, is because it means *taken aside for God and His high purposes. The believer is actually spiritually segregated from the profane world, in the eyes of God. God is now every believers Father.*

The very same moment a person enters the faith in Jesus Christ according to Paul's Gospel, that person is *made holy by God instantly*. Salvation is by Grace only, and not by ourselves and our efforts, Eph. 2:8, 9.

Let me just add to this, that I do *not* want to put any leader or priest or minister down a notch or two. No, all I am saying is that we ALL as believers are on same equal level regarding standing with God. Another matter entirely is the fact that assemblies *must have leaders* to keep the flock gathered and united for the purpose of the Gospel

preaching. We must remember this.

Verses 6 – 12 goes well together:

“(the Gospel) which has come to you, indeed, in the whole world, is bearing fruit and still is growing, even as it has done among yourselves ever since the day you first heard and came to know and understand the grace of God in truth. 7: You so learned it from Epaphras our beloved fellow servant. He is a faithful minister of Christ in our stead and as our representative and yours. 8: Also he has informed us of your love in the Spirit. 9: For this reason we also, from the day we heard of it, have not ceased to pray and make request for you, that you may be filled with the full knowledge of His will in all spiritual wisdom and in understanding and in discernment of spiritual things. 10: That you may walk in a manner worthy of the Lord, fully pleasing to Him and desiring to please Him in all things, bearing fruit in every good work and steadily growing and increasing in and by the knowledge of God. 11: (We pray) that you may be invigorated and strengthened with all power according to the might of His glory, every kind of endurance and patience with joy. 12: Giving thanks to the Father, Who has qualified and made us fit to share the portion which is the inheritance of the saints in the Light.”

In these verses Paul makes the point of the Grace Gospel, having come to the Colossians – as well as in THE WHOLE WORLD, that is, the Roman Empire firstly. Just a side-remark: We Norwegians here up in the high north, did not receive the Gospel before around 997 A.D. when there are found documented proof of that on Iceland. However, it was the kind of ‘Gospel’ you find with the Catholic Church – all written in Latin. Never the less, the name of Jesus Christ is mentioned in the writings found. Think of it: It almost took a Millennium for the Gospel to reach us in Scandinavia.

Paul never talked about the four Gospels – Matthew, Mark, Luke and John. No, he spoke only of the *ONE PARTICULAR GOSPEL* entrusted to him by God, the free international Grace Gospel, which had been hidden in God for ages, but now revealed to His saints by their leader, Paul the apostle. It happened as he was in Rome 62-63 A.D.

In Acts 28:28 we find a prophesy by Paul, that the Gospel would be received by the Gentile world, as opposed to Jewry which refused it. So Paul was absolutely *dominant in early Christianity* by his preaching of this new free Grace Gospel as it is put forth in the Ephesians and Colossians, MANY YEARS before the historical Gospels of Matthew, Mark, Luke and John could be purchased by the common man, like I said above.

In spite of this Biblical fact, still we find in *our time* that the four Gospels are actually being used as doctrine of Faith in the Church. Paul’s epistles are mostly used for Bible Classes and not so much in open meetings. But here it is great variations regarding such practices. My point is:

We should not at all use any of the four as basis for preaching Grace salvation to people. We should use Paul's epistles only – Ephesians and Colossians. We cannot keep using historical writings as basis for sermons on the free international Grace Gospel, but only the Faith doctrine written for that purpose.

Put top priority on using Paul's epistles – since these became the foundation of this very dispensation, the Body of Christ, the One New Man according to the Mystery (Eph. 3:1-9).

But it was the message and Gospel of the Kingdom of God on earth for Israel which took up the twelve apostles ministries, based upon what we find in the four Gospels, and in Acts. They just went and did what Jesus taught them to do: Preach the offer to Israel to have the millennial kingdom with Jesus as their king.

Paul sent forth Epaphras to follow up the teachings in the Colossian assembly as well as those at Hierapolis and Laodikea. As we read in verse 6, of that one new Grace Gospel Paul had been given...'*still is growing even as it has done among yourselves*'...we readily understand what I am emphasizing here, that it was just ONE Gospel preached, namely the *new free Grace Gospel revealed to Paul*. The apostle never referred to the four Gospels, since they did not exist at that time. But if they had, then Paul would be quick to point out the fact that those four has nothing to do with the one he had gotten from the Lord.

I am not talking about the four Gospels as something we cannot mention or casually use quotes from in our sermons. It is quite alright to give illustrating quotes picked up from O.T. or from the four Gospels, casting light on the new free Grace Gospel of Paul. It is quite alright to be told the difference between the two types of Gospels – the Gospel of the Kingdom of God for Israel and the free Grace Gospel revealed to Paul to be preached to the whole world.

But it is all wrong to steadily try to use only the four Gospels to deliver sermons of salvation by faith in Jesus. We must use Paul's epistles to the Ephesians and Colossians! As we learn what Paul had in mind regarding prayers for the Colossian assembly, we cannot find anything concerning miracles and wonders – such things that we find in the four Gospels. No, Paul said NOT ONE WORD about such things to them. Instead he prayed that *they would be strengthened in their knowledge with all spiritual wisdom and understanding.* And so keep growing in all good works in the knowledge of God. Adding, being strengthened with endurance and patience. In the four Gospels we find (Mark 16) *these signs shall follow those who believe,...they will lay hands on the sick and they will get well...and so on.*

But with Paul – he makes it a huge case of immense importance to rather have knowledge, wisdom, understanding, and endurance in the faith, patience in ministry.

Remember also this historical fact on Paul's ministry: He was saying this to existing and established assemblies!

The believers at Ephesus (and therefore I believe this to have influenced those believers in the nearby cities of Laodicea, Hierapolis, Colossae, - maybe even Smyrna, Antioch in Pisidia, Sardis, Philadelphia, Lustra) *had seen and heard Paul working miracles probably by the hundreds,* demon possessed were set free, he sent forth his aprons to the audiences and the sick were instantly healed of sickness. *He had an apostle's signs, he said of himself in II Cor.*

So, the assemblies in the Post-Acts times had already seen these things, and still – not a word of this in his two only letters of faith doctrine to the Body of Christ, Ephesians and Colossians. Hope you have got the point!

Verse 12 follows up that which Paul earlier had said to them, of them as already saved and made holy before God in their faith, now fit *to share the portion which is the inheritance of the saints in the Light.*

The latter sentence, is pointing to our hope, which is the *epiouranos-heaven up above.*

Verses 13 – 20 are naturally bonded:

"The Father has delivered and drawn us to Himself out of the control and the dominion of darkness and has transferred us into the kingdom of the Son of His love, 14: In whom we have our redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of our sins. 15: He is the exact likeness of the unseen God, He is the Firstborn of all creation. 16: For it was in Him that all things were created, in heaven and on earth, things seen and things unseen, whether thrones, dominions, rulers, or authorities; all things were created and exist through Him and in and for Him. 17: And He himself existed before all things, and in Him all things consist. 18: He also is the Head of His body, the church; seeing He is the beginning, the Firstborn from among the dead, so that He alone in everything and in every respect might occupy the chief place. 19: For it has pleased (the Father) that all the divine fullness should dwell in Him permanently. 20: And God purposed that through Him all things should be completely reconciled back to Himself, whether on earth or in heaven, as through Him, (the Father) made peace by means of the blood of His cross".

In these seven verses Paul managed to present to us a grand epos – a gigantic mighty intervention performed by God, for the salvation of all those who believe on Jesus Christ. All the believers in Christ are already in the faith *transferred into the kingdom of the Son of His love,* verse 13. Jesus is the One who redeemed us through the blood sacrifice He gave on the cross. We are already forgiven ALL OUR SINS, past – present – future. You don't have to see the vicar to confess your sins – for there are no more sins to confess! All sin is totally blotted out

regarding us who believes on Him. But – some will say – ‘I commit sins...since I am not a perfect sinless saint, and should I not then confess them whenever I ‘arrest’ myself in sin?’ Answer is already given. God knows very well that none of us can live in ‘Sinless perfection’. And did you know: God only saves sinners! But as sinners, we only feel *it is natural* to resist sin the best we know how. That is the least we can do. Thieves quit stealing, extortionists quit extorting, murderers quit murdering, liars quit lying, and on and on.

In the verses 15-20 Paul described for us what an exalted power and authority and creative power which Jesus Christ possesses. He was BEFORE ALL THINGS – that is, He was not ‘created’ but He has always been in existence – from eternity and forever and ever, verse 17.

Now He is portrayed by our apostle as the Head (Chief, Leader) of His body which is His Church, verse 18. Jesus has absolutely ALL THE POWER such as God His Father has – He has God’s entire full power dwelling in Him! It can’t get better than that!

Right now, all Christian believers are looking forward to the promised great day of departure from this earthly life, *the day of redemption, Eph. 4:30.*

Therefore, dear reader – we no longer just think of Jesus as the plagued and tormented one, the suffering man up on that cross described in the four Gospels. No, we are those who have gotten the gracious Grace Gospel of Paul of the free Grace by faith alone – and thus *a Jesus seen in the upper heavens in an indescribable exalted position of might and glory. One who is upholding the entire universe and all things by His mighty power, One to whom all rulers and powers/dominions in heaven and on earth have been laid submissive.*

We have a mighty Lord and Savior, and not a little local hero – a common anonymous fellow trying his best. Jesus is *The Ruler* of heaven and of earth, as well as the entire universe, all things which can be seen, and all those things we cannot see. *That* is the Jesus to whom we are introduced by our great apostle Paul, as he saw Him in the heavenly visions given him.

Verses 21 – 23 belongs together:

“And although you at one time were estranged and alienated from Him and were of hostile attitude of mind in your wicked activities, 22: yet now has reconciled you to God in the body of His flesh through death, in order to present you holy and faultless and irreproachable in the Father’s presence. 23: provided that you continue to stay with and in the faith, well-grounded and settled and steadfast, not shifting or moving away from the hope by the glad tidings, which you heard and which has been preached to every person under heaven, and of which (Gospel) I, Paul, became a minister.”

We can’t miss or overlook the obvious move by Paul here:

Again he pushes the 'Salvation Facts' button, hard (!), repeating and 'drilling' into the minds of the Colossians that God REALLY DID RECONCILE THEM with Himself (in faith in Christ), those who he characterized as *...estranged and alienated from Him and were of hostile attitude of mind in your wicked activities.*

This is typical of Paul, that he repeated and repeated again and again the important facts of salvation by faith alone, and that the believers in Christ were saved and even made **holy and faultless and irreproachable** in the Father's presence. (And still, there are ignorant Christians that run to the vicar as soon as he catches himself of having sinned !!??)

The only 'catch' connected to such a great salvation, Paul wrote in verse 23, and we better make notice of this:

*...'provided that you continue **TO STAY WITH AND IN THE FAITH** well-grounded and settled and steadfast, **NOT SHIFTING OR MOVING AWAY** from the hope...'*

You may have heard the saying 'Once saved, always saved'? Well, it is partially true, but there is a 'catch' to it: We must STAY IN THE FAITH. In other words, it is up to you and me whether we will stay saved. We have a free will before God. Actually, there are people who foolishly moved away from their hope of salvation. Let us not follow those. Let us rather get strengthened in our faith and our hope in Christ!

Paul was *entirely dominant in early Christianity Post-Acts*. Only he and his close co-workers preached that new fresh Grace Gospel. Not only in a local setting, but...quote: *...and which has been preached to every person under heaven, and which Gospel, I, Paul became a minister.*

Nobody can top that!

Verses 24 – 29 concludes Chapter 1:

"Even now I rejoice in the midst of my sufferings on your behalf. And in my own person I am making up whatever is still lacking and remains to be completed of Christ's afflictions, for the sake of His body, which is the church. 25: In it I became a minister in accordance with the divine stewardship which was entrusted to me for you, to make the Word of God fully known (among you)- 26: The mystery of which was hidden for ages and generations, but is now revealed to His holy people. 27: To whom God was pleased to make known how great for the Gentiles are the riches of the glory of this mystery, which is Christ within and among you, the Hope of glory. 28: Him we preach and proclaim, warning and admonishing everyone and instructing everyone in all wisdom, that we may present every person mature in Christ. 29: For this I labor, striving with all the superhuman energy which He so mightily enkindles and works within me."

When we read the epistle to the Colossians, one could get the feeling – if I turned off the lamps in the room I am sitting, these verses making up the epistle would continue

and light up the place by its own glory!

It is such a clarity and power in these words of Paul on God's behalf, of the Grace salvation by faith and the hope of heaven which beams at us from the pages in the Bible.

Paul did not mean to brag of his sufferings, no, he just used this so that the Colossians shouldn't go around feeling sorry for Paul, weighed down and depressed because of him. Paul simply tells that he sacrificed himself in ministry for their sake...taking whatever sort of sufferings that came his way.

He also made point of that *God had chosen him* to carry out the mission for the Grace Gospel – thus fulfilling the written Word of God. After Paul's writings (Colossians was the very last one) there exist no other following writings containing faith doctrine to the Body of Christ. Paul is the one and only teacher and apostle in Christendom, *chosen to be our teacher and minister* handpicked by God and Christ. Therefore, Paul is the very icon of Gospel preaching – one we have as our ideal in that regard, and of which there are nobody in Bible history matching him. He is alone at the top when it comes to Gospel ministers! So consequently, we as Christians must see to it that we stay faithful to Paul's doctrine as written in the *two only Church Epistles*, Ephesians and Colossians.

Verses 26-27 let us know about the revelation of the mystery – which is this dispensation of the free Grace Gospel and the Body of Christ, which in times and ages before this had been hidden in God alone; and nobody knew anything about it before Paul had it revealed to him.

Col. 1:26, 27 correspond perfectly with Eph. 3:1-9 regarding the revelation of that mystery.

Paul makes a gross point of the fact that the new Grace Gospel had become...*'how great for the Gentiles are the riches of the glory of this mystery, which is Christ in and among you.'*

Gentiles...???? Yes, Gentiles. Which *underlines the fact* that this Grace Gospel is an international Gospel, as opposed to the Gospel preached to Israel in Acts period, which was only a *national Jewish Gospel* regarding the earthly kingdom.

Verse 29 says of Paul, that it was for *that Gospel* – the free Grace Gospel, he was laboring.

CHAPTER 2

As we read on, it comes clearer and clearer to us that when Paul came forth with that new free Grace Gospel revelation, he was *met with much opposition*.

You may recall what we read in Chapter 1 – of what Paul said of his *sufferings for the sake of the Gospel?*

Here in Colossians 2 we will read of his warnings to them, because there were folks and certain powers out there trying to lead believers astray in heretical doctrine.

It comes to light that this opposition against Paul came from the Jewish believers, those who held to the Law even if they did not really keep it, and they kept on trying to lead people away from faith in Jesus. At best they tried to have certain things added to the faith doctrine.

So, therefore we find Paul once again taking a full round explaining to them the matters of salvation and the greatness of Jesus Christ. Paul was in a constant battle against these heretics who disturbed the assembly at Colossae.

Verses 1 – 4 belongs together:

“For I want you to know how great is my solicitude for you and for those at Laodicea, and for all who have never seen my face and known me personally. 2: That their hearts may be braced as they are knit together in love, that they may come to have all the abounding wealth and blessings of assured conviction of understanding, and that they may have become progressively more intimately acquainted with and may know more definitely and accurately and thoroughly that mystic secret of God, which is Christ. 3: In Him all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge and enlightenment are stored up and lie hidden. 4: I say this in order that no one may mislead and delude you by plausible and persuasive and attractive arguments and beguiling speech.”

Paul held back at first, not allowing to bring up negative issues to the Colossians. But here in Chapter 2 he goes straight to the matter.

The apostle first brought up the greatness of the Lord, and the immense wisdom and power He has. But then he comes to his warning, that they must take care not falling prey to the deceitful teachings certain believers had gotten into, verse 4.

These heretics came on with pretty slick manners - ...by plausible and persuasive and attractive arguments and beguiling speech. Paul knew exactly what was going on, because his fellow ministers and servants brought back reports of this, to him who was in jail at Rome. Not only did they disturb the assembly at Colossae but also the one in Laodicea, a town nearby.

The next selected verses will bring us more knowledge of what those heretics were trying to preach, what type of speech they taught and practiced.

Verses 5 – 10 goes well together:

“For though I am away from you in body, yet I am with you in spirit, delighted at the sight of your orderly array and the firmness and the solid front and steadfastness of your faith in Christ. 6: As you have therefore received Christ, Jesus the Lord, walk in union with and conformity to Him. 7: Have the roots firmly and deeply planted, being continually built up in Him, becoming increasingly more confirmed and established in the faith, just as you were taught, and abounding and overflowing in it with thanksgiving. 8: See to it that no one carries you off as spoil or makes you

yourselves captive by his so-called philosophy and intellectualism and vain deceit, following human tradition, just crude notions following the rudimentary and elemental teachings of the universe and disregarding Christ. 9: For in Him the whole fullness of Deity continues to dwell in bodily form. 10: And you are in Him, made full and having come to fullness of life. And He is the Head of all rule and authority.

When Paul wrote the epistle to the Ephesians and shortly thereafter wrote the one to the Colossians, he was in jail, at Rome; probably his second time. He delivered the epistle to the leadership and had them promise to read it to the Colossians, and they in their turn had the epistle copied and sent to Laodicea to be taught there as well. Epaphras became the link between Paul and the assembly at Colossae.

We shall make a stop at verse 8 – which mentions that these heretics held forth *philosophy and intellectualism (same as human ideas/brain spin) and vain deceit, ...elemental teachings of the universe, disregarding Christ.*

In Norwegian Bible translations... 'elemental teachings of the universe', are translated – 'the learning of children regarding this world with its universe' etc. In other words, kid stuff – things you only bring up when trying to make an innocent child grasp some common understanding of the world we live in.

Never the less, these *heretics disregarded Christ*, and that meant that they taught that a believer had to have things *added to the Gospel*. Jesus was not enough. It is among scholars held for true that these *philosophers and believers keeping a human tradition* were originally Christian believers, but they got caught up in the mentioned deceitful beliefs.

The same scholars also hold that these heretics were mainly *Christian Jews – and thus carrying a lot of Jewish cultured religion not conforming to Moses.*

So we find that Paul actually *warned against these Jewish believers who opposed his Grace Gospel, - and among Jewry that philosophical movement was called "The Jewish Philosophy" - which was instigated by a Jewish philosopher named Philo (10 B.C. – 50 A.D.). He referred to Judaism as "The Philosophy of Moses", but he also used the term "The Philosophy of our Fathers" and as "Judaic philosophy".*

I can imagine these heretics preaching, - 'you see, we think it is reasonable that you must also practice keeping certain food off your table, and you must keep certain holy days and observe the New Moon and Sabbaths. Paying homage to Michael and Gabriel, our angels, is also needed. This is what our forefathers have practiced for centuries, you see. Our philosophy has gained much respect with our people, so you should start to keep this as well. Your faith in Christ may be in vain if you don't follow our traditional philosophies!' And on and on....

Knowing this background information, of the *actual situation* in Paul's time, makes it very easy to understand Paul's *immensely strong* vivacious warnings. He used two 'rhetorical lines' – one was to exalt and give high praise to Jesus Christ and teaching the believers everything he knew of Him, His divine power, glory and greatness. And the other line was: Speaking directly against these heretics, even branding them – you know – *liars, heretics, deceivers, disregards of Christ, vain human wisdom, doctrine not worthy of any honor, just crude notions.*

You name it!

Actually I recently made the discovery – *reading Colossians in particular* – that the reason we find such a wide and *alive dynamic in Paul's words*, is the very reason he wrote the epistle in the first place: It is a letter with warnings on the one side, contrasted with high praise to God and Christ on the other side. The two different issues *come together in constant clashes*, creating waves as we read this. It makes the Colossian epistle *come to life* in a way that we could almost feel that they are here today – even if we know this happened 1958 years ago.

We also learn of Paul's personality, on the one hand he was tough as a nail, firm and decisive, and he had a commanding presence; the other side of him was *more melancholic* by nature: suffering, worrying, caring, praying and edifying, comforting and supportive – I am even sure that Paul must have cried with tears for the saints...like we can read of his departure at Miletus and the brethren from Ephesus seeing Paul off, *boarding a ship for Palestine (Acts 20:36-38).*

Can Paul's extensive warnings against heresy and sneaky 'Philosophy' written in 63 A.D. – which is 1958 years ago (it is 2021 now) – be of serious interest to believers of our time?

Yes – absolutely!

In our time, like never before, all sorts of false doctrine, false religions, false lying TV-evangelists craving for your hard-earned dollar cheating and lying to you with false promises of getting miracles from God if you support them. All sorts of nutty stuff is promoted in medias of our time – TV-Channels, YouTube internet, films, - it's all filled with ludicrous sinister and lude material.

Allow me to list up a few heretic movements to you. I cannot find room to get at them each and every one though. There are three movements which have derived from Christian believers.

□□

UNIVERSALISM, the doctrine saying that all mankind is saved or will be saved, eventually given a second chance after death if they lived in unbelief on earth.

PRETERISM, the doctrine/idea that Jesus has come back invisibly and secretly, and He is now ruling from His kingdom (several variables exist).

ANTHROPOSOPHY, promoted by Dr. Rudolph Steiner (ref. The Steiner schools), made a formal denomination in 1912. This is a *Philosophical movement* teaching that a human being with his/her intellect may be able to enter into the invisible spiritual world. Steiner mentions the arch angel Michael in some of his teachings. Maybe he was a worshipper of angels? However, Steiner was not directly hostile towards Christian faith as far as I know. In the movement's practices one can get a glimpse of good old *Paganism or White Magic*: A farmer could in springtime burry the head of a bull in his field, so this would make a successive crop! Books on the movement written by critics mention a lot of pretty weird stuff regarding this Steiner-sect.

Additionally I can mention a few of the non-Christian movements of considerable proportions – such as the 'The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints' – called commonly for Mormons. Even if they take the liberty to put the name of Jesus in their headline/title of their movement, it is far from Christian in faith.

Their heresy is based upon an angel by the name of Moroni, who supposedly gave to Joseph Smith in Utah (a drifter, alcoholic and criminal in his time) a mysterious book, The Book of Mormon. This is supposed to be read on same level as with the Bible. Yes, it is complicated!

Their doctrine is so confusing that they hold Michael to be same person as Jesus and that Lucifer (devil) is the brother of Jesus. They are incredibly derailed, if you are asking me.

Their headquarters are in Salt Lake City, Utah, and they have a cathedral there. It was raised in 1893 and had a time for completion of 40 years. The huge building is named *Salt Lake Temple*.

As most of us know, we find their 'apostles' on streets all over the world, walking the cities two-by-two wearing Sunday clothing, and on their shirt front you will observe a small black plastic name-badge reading, for instance: "John Hansson –Elder".

The comical part of this observation is the fact that these 'street apostles' from Utah are *squeaky freaky young boys* rather than elders, men of some experience. They have not even grown up to 'Beard level' of manhood, and if any signs of hair on their chins showed up, all they would need is erasing rubber – not a shaving machine. They don't even have the Bible knowledge that an 'Elder' *actually was an elderly/old man*, one with quite a few years on his back, and never a youth. The badges these Mormons wear on their shirt

fronts are lying!

And their teachings are of same material: Lies and human fiction.

And there are another heretical movement/denomination we all have heard of, the 'Jehovah's Witnesses' – or the formal name of this organization, 'Watchtower Society', and they have headquarters in New York state. The founder was Charles Taze Russell. There are a vast number of books and articles on the internet criticizing/exposing them, and also on YouTube there are lots of videos. They are infamous due to all the *false prophecies* they have issued over the years. They cannot be considered as a Christian movement, far from it.

Lastly I will mention the *Word-Faith movement*, which still exist after having had their highs during the eighties and nineties, and over into the early 2000 era.

Deriving from classic Pentecostalism, one has to consider this movement as Christian. Their believers in general, are *faithful regular Jesus-believers*. But as time went, much of the Pentecostal people went along with *extreme fractions* of it, and one is the Word-Faith fraction.

It was mainly *Rev. Kenneth Hagin Sr.* in Tulsa, Oklahoma, who got on with great exaggerations and fanaticism regarding healing, miracles, and not to forget – the 'Name-it-and-claim-it' Prosperity confessing. Hagin Sr. had read the books of E.W. Kenyon and was fired up by that. Kenyon taught that if you only had great faith and you confessed having received a miracle (healing for instance) in advance, then this action would bring along the miracle needed. Hagin Sr. and many others took this also into financial enterprises: promise the TV-viewers that if they only gave money to them, then God would surely bless the donators by giving them the wanted miracles; even giving them back a lot of money since they had given to God.

Hagin Sr. wrote a book full of lies unfortunately, but thousands of Christian believers bought it and accepted the contents as true. The book is called 'Seven Visions of Jesus' – and it was even published in the eighties here in my own land, Norway. Hagin Sr. lied as he said that Jesus gave him seven visions by visiting him. He actually tells of having had regular conversations with Jesus.

Would Paul have gone against such nonsense if he had been alive today? The answer gives itself.

As we have read from Colossians, Paul did not just go warning them against heretical movements, but he also told them what kind of doctrine which was the correct one; namely, his Grace Gospel, given to him by Jesus Christ, in

divine revelation.

Verses 11 – 14 goes well together:

“In Him also you were circumcised with a circumcision not made with hands, but with a circumcision (performed by) Christ by stripping off the body of the flesh. 12: You were buried with Him in (your) baptism, in which you were also raised with Him through faith in the working of God when He raised Him up from the dead. 13: And you who were dead in trespasses and in the uncircumcision of your flesh, God brought to life together with Christ, having forgiven us all our transgressions, 14: Having cancelled and blotted out and wiped away the handwriting of the note with its legal decrees and demands which was in force and stood against us. This He set aside and cleared completely out of our way by nailing it to (His) cross”.

Paul touched in at what is the very same thing, but in other words, what he wrote to the Ephesians in Eph. 4:5,

“There is one Lord, one faith, one baptism”.

In the times of Jesus and the twelve, and in the time reported in the Book of Acts there are found three ‘types’ of baptisms; these were John the Baptist’s baptism in Jordan, the Apostle-baptism, and then also an illicit ‘baptism’ – believers who took water baptism on behalf of the dead. The latter were chastised by Paul.

In addition to these water baptisms, we also find the ‘baptism’ of the Holy Spirit like what happened at Pentecost Acts 2 and also later on by the laying on of the apostles hands, and finally – the ‘One baptism’ lined out by Paul in Eph. 4:5 – a baptism which is performed by God and Christ in its entirety, the baptism into the death of Christ (and thus also into the resurrection of Christ). This sort of baptism takes place in the very same instance as a person comes to faith in Christ. It is not a process taking a certain time, but it is an instant intervention performed by God in the Spirit.

Notice that Col. 2:11 clearly say that the circumcision is **not made by hands**, which is Paul’s way of saying that it was made by God

By these doctrinal words written by Paul in 63 A.D., it is pointing to a final decision made by God of water baptism as ceased. From then on it is only the baptism into the death/resurrection of Christ.

The Acts-era also had this baptism of course. But it was together with the water rite. Why was that? Because Israel/the Jews under the apostles had the offer to get the promised Kingdom of God on earth with Jesus as their king,

also including the fact that it involved Israel to become a Royal Priesthood of God (Exs.19:5-7) – a kingdom of priests, a holy nation. ☐☐ And like Aaron was water baptized by Moses before he could enter into the Tabernacle for service, Israel's believers had to be☐☐ ritually☐☐ cleansed likewise. Had Aaron just walked in there without that cleansing by the baptism, he would☐☐ *probably have died*. So we see that such a priesthood under God and Christ, they surely☐☐ had to be water baptized.☐☐ Water baptism was☐☐ *not*☐☐ for the common believer, but it was for the believers of Israel's house – God's old nation which had a covenant with God☐☐ and in the time of His apostles was offering them a☐☐ *New Covenant*☐☐ in the blood of Jesus Christ (Heb. 9:15).

But we, the Body of Christ, the 'One New Man' (Eph. 2:14, 15) we are not going into the millennial earthly kingdom of God, but into the☐☐ *epiouranos heaven*,☐☐ the heaven up above heaven where Christ now sit at His Father's right hand.

Water baptism regardless of form or methods, has nothing to do with the Body of Christ, the Church. We are already in the sight of God raised from the dead by faith in Christ, remember. We have already been transferred over into the heavenly kingdom of God's Son.☐☐

I cannot say that it is a sin to perform water baptisms by Christian denominations;☐☐ however, it leaves the unmistakable impression of☐☐ *lack of Bible understanding*☐☐ – a lack of keeping ONLY Paul's faith doctrine from Ephesians/Colossians as our guide in the faith.

Verses 15 – 23 concludes the second Chapter:

“God disarmed the principalities and powers that were ranged against us and made a bold display and a public example of them, in triumphing over them in Him and in it (the cross). 16: Therefore let no one sit in judgement on you in matters of food and drink, or with regard to a feast day or a New Moon or a Sabbath. 17: Such (things) are only the shadow of things that are to come, and they have only a symbolic value. But the reality belongs to Christ. 18: Let no one defraud you by acting as an umpire and declaring you unworthy and disqualifying you for the prize, insisting on self-abasement and worship of angels, taking his stand on visions (he claims) he has seen, vainly puffed up by his sensuous notions and inflated by his unspiritual thoughts and fleshly conceit, 19: And not holding fast to the Head, from☐☐ Whom the entire body, supplied and knit together by means of its joints and ligaments, grows with a growth that is from God. 20:☐☐ If then you have died with Christ to material ways of looking at things and have escaped from the world's crude and elemental notions and teachings of externalism, why do you live as if you still belong to the world? 21: Do not handle! Do not taste! Do not even touch!.

22: Referring to things all of which perish with being used. To do this is to follow human precepts and doctrines. 23: Such have indeed the outward appearance for wisdom, in promoting self-imposed rigor of devotion and delight in self-humiliation and severity of discipline of the body, but they are of no value in checking the indulgence of the flesh."

Paul says here in a strong and persuasive manner, - that since Christ disarmed the principalities and powers that opposed us (attacked us) we should not let anybody put us under their heretical dominance using certain religious rules or 'ordinances'. Such as what we may eat and drink, neither that which concern ☐☐ feast days, New Moon and Sabbath. ☐☐ Those things only foreshadowed what was brought in by Christ as He died on the cross for our sins.

Remember what I mentioned above regarding the ☐☐ "Philosophy of the Fathers" ☐☐ brought into the assembly at Colossae, disturbing them in the faith. Jewish Christians had taken in heretical ideas, philosophy and traditions, along with fake humility, worship of angels, abstaining from certain types of meat and drink, insisting on keeping Jewish feast days as well as the Sabbath.

Paul was in no way hostile against regular philosophy, you know – sane interest in human nature and mind sets. ☐☐ The Greek texts implies that it ☐☐ was not the general philosophy he went up against, but only that ☐☐ *particular Jewish teaching first introduced by Philo.* ☐☐

Those Jews dragged along with them such heretical fraudulent teachings and tried to have the Christians take it into their existing faith in Christ. ☐☐

Paul's stern conclusion to this all, is what we read in verse 23, ☐☐ *...they are of no value.* ☐☐ Such heretical beliefs and practices just had the believers getting more carnally minded, ☐☐ and craving for the lust of the flesh.

☐☐

CHAPTER 3

In this chapter Paul is teaching on the heavenly perspective, the sin perspective, the human relations perspective, the equality brought in between Gentile and Jew, the Christian family perspective of man – wife – children, and finally that ☐☐ eventual ☐☐ unrighteous behavior ☐☐ when dealing with a family's 'Servants' (meaning slaves) would be punished. (In the Roman Empire it was lawfully to have private slaves in the households. But in our days this is forbidden by law. Check out the Epistle to Philemon.)

Verses 1 – 4 gives us the heavenly perspective:

"If then you have been raised with Christ, aim at and seek the (rich, eternal treasures) that are above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. 2: And set your minds and keep them set on what is above, not on the things that are on the earth. 3: For you have 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."

I feel mostly for to let these verses stand here without any comments!

Only, let me just say that Col. 3:1-4 clearly is pointing us away from any idea of an earthly kingdom. This was only for Israel. The verses speak of a hope which is in heaven where Christ now sits by His Father's right hand. Our hope is a heavenly hope.

Verses 5 – 10 gives us the sin perspective:

"So kill the evil desire lurking in your members: sexual vice, impurity (homo), sensual appetites, unholy desires, and all greed and covetousness, for that is idolatry. 6: It is on account of these that the anger of God is ever coming upon the sons of disobedience, 7: Among whom you also once walked, when you were living in and addicted to (such practices). 8: But now put away and rid yourselves of all these things: anger, rage, bad feeling toward others, curses and slander, and foulmouthed abuse and shameful utterances from your lips! 9: Do not lie to one another, for you have stripped off the old self with its evil practices. 10: And have clothed yourselves with the new (spiritual self), which is renewed and remolded into knowledge after the image of Him Who created it."

Also this portion of verses really doesn't need my commentary. Paul wrote this in a very straight forward manner. It is nothing mystical here. Keep away from sin, he says. This is in no way the same as 'Sinless Perfection' though. After having read Paul's very outspoken exhortation – and we still don't pay attention and end up wrecked, Paul could comment to us, without being arrogant: 'I told you so!'

Verses 11 – 17 deals with the Human Relations perspective:

"There is no room for and there can be neither Greek nor Jew, circumcised nor uncircumcised, barbarians or Scythians, nor slave or free man: but Christ is all and in all. 12: Cloth yourselves therefore, as God's own chosen ones, purified and holy and well-beloved tenderhearted pity and mercy, kind feeling, a lowly opinion of yourselves, gentle ways, patience. 13: Be gentle and forbearing with one another and, if one has a difference against another, readily

pardoning each other; even as the Lord has forgiven you, so must you also (forgive). 14: And above all these love and enfold yourselves with the bond of perfectness. 15: And let the peace from Christ rule in your hearts to which as one body you were also called. And be thankful. 16: Let the word of Christ have its home and dwell in you in richness, as you teach and admonish and train one another in all insight and intelligence and wisdom, as you sing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, making melody to God with (His) grace in your hearts. 17: And whatever you do in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus and in His person, giving praise to God the Father through Him."

Verse 11 show us that Gentiles and Jews in the faith now were set on equal level before God. But in Rom. 1:16 Paul taught different, that it was 'Jews first, then Gentiles'. Something has happened since Paul wrote to the Romans in 58 A.D. until he wrote to the Colossians in 63 A.D.

What happened was that Israel fell away from God as a nation to Him because of their rejection of Christ. That falling away had the consequences of Israel losing her status with God, which was to be God's nation sat above all other nations on earth. Which, in its turn, caused God to send His armies (Romans) to destroy Israel – not the least because Israel killed the apostles and their followers, for which Jesus had prophesied that God would kill those murderers and burn down their city (Jerusalem) – see Mat. 22:7 etc.

The judgement on Israel included, shortly before their material destruction in 70 A.D., that the loss of their standing with God as His nation, made God tearing down that 'Wall of Partition' referred to by Paul in Eph. 2:14, 15. The Law of Moses and the ordinances were abolished as they made up that wall.

Now that the wall is gone, it leaves Israel just as *one among all other nations.*

As I write this, God has *not* entered with Israel into any covenant whatsoever. It was all suspended as we find Paul in Rome confronting Sanhedrin there, and declared to them that from then on (Acts 28:28) the Gentiles had been given the Gospel. Also, verse 27 of their unrepentant ways had come to its 'end station' – God's wrath fell on Israel and He considered them fallen. Paul was God's messenger in that judgement.

Following this serious downfall of Israel, Paul was given the revelation of the 'Mystery' – the dispensation of the Grace of God, which Paul referred to in Eph. 3:1-9 and Col. 1:25-27. Christ has become all in all His believers, Ethnicity and cultural background has no longer any value before God. In faith in Christ all believers are on equal

level, no matter what.

A short time ago (in 2021) I worked on a new article for my website, the one on *'Daniel's Seven Weeks'* in Dan. 9 – and in that connection I come to read a passage found in Dan. 9:23 of the lovely and grand salute/greeting which the angel Gabriel spoke to Daniel,

*“At the beginning of you prayers, the word went forth, and I have come to tell you, **for you are greatly beloved (by God)**. Therefore consider the matter and understand the vision.”*

If I had gotten such a visit from God's arch-angel Gabriel, I guess that I would have been taken with awe and surprise, totally astonished!

But here is the thing: Through Paul's ministry, given to him by Jesus Christ and His Father, the Almighty God, ALL CHRISTIAN BELIEVERS HAVE BEEN TOLD THE VERY SAME SALUTE/GREETING as was once spoken to Daniel, God's beloved prophet.

Verse 12 says this fabulous greeting to us – the body of Christ:

(Ampl. Bible) *“...God's own chosen ones, purified and holy **AND WELL BELOVED BY GOD HIMSELF...**”*

(NASB) *“...chosen of God, holy and beloved...”*

(NKJV) *“...as the elect of God, holy and beloved..”*

Well, it can't get better than this!

At the same instance, this shows us the greatness of God and Christ, and all we have done to achieve such blessing was that we took to the faith in Christ. It is all by Grace and not of us; it is the gift of God.

Be still aware then, that what God has spoken to us, the body of Christ, is *not spoken to the unbelievers* in this world. We have to keep this in mind. Therefore we seek to preach this Grace Gospel of Paul to the world telling them of this great salvation, the gift of God in Christ.

The Epistles of Ephesians and Colossians are entirely *representative faith doctrine* exclusively to the Church, the body of Christ – the 'One New Man'. It has not changed over the 1958 years which have passed since Paul wrote it.

After bringing this great salute in Verse 12, Paul insists on us to be forgiving and overbearing showing goodness of mind and heart in our lives to one another. He also gave us ONE COMMANDMENT (I couldn't find any other word for it) for us all to keep: *Even as the Lord has forgiven you, so*

must you also forgive. Verse 13. Be aware though, that these words were not written on stone-plates but on a scroll – by God’s suffering and caring apostle, Paul.

We should readily keep up with all of Paul’s exhortations and warnings and cheer-ups. He was the one that God and Christ chose to give us the Grace Gospel.

If you happen to get into arguing, and harsh words falling from your lips, hurry to beg for pardon! Regardless whether you feel that you are the guilty party or not. Just do it!

Other than that, I think it is worth grasping the positive edifying words in Verse 16, of us singing praises to God in our hearts, making melody. And we should always thank God in the name of Jesus Christ.

Verses 18 – 25 having family – wife – children as perspective

“Wives, be subject to your husbands, as is right and fitting and your proper duty in the Lord. 19: Husbands, love your wives and do not be harsh or bitter or resentful toward them. 20: Children, obey your parents in everything, for this is pleasing to the Lord. 21: Fathers, do not provoke or irritate or fret your children, lest they become discouraged and sullen and morose and feel inferior and frustrated. (Do not break their spirit). 22: Servants, obey in everything those who are your earthly masters, not only when their eyes are on you as pleasers of men, but in simplicity of purpose because of your reverence for the Lord and as a sincere expression of your devotion to Him. 23: Whatever may be your task, work at it heartily, as for the Lord and not for men. 24: Knowing that it is from the Lord that you will receive the inheritance which is your reward. You are actually serving the Lord Christ the Messiah. 25: For he who deals wrongfully will be punished for his wrongdoing. And there is no partiality.”

What is marked by **red fonts** is what Paul wrote of a Christian believer if he had slaves in his household, or if one actually was a slave (servant). You may get some insight if you study the letter to Philemon, who had a slave (Onesimus) who ran off to be with Paul. Remember then, that in the Roman Empire slaves were legal in any household.

Can this exhortation be taken into our time and used as Biblical rule of conduct in regard to employers versus employees?

I am not so sure of that! What about the rights to participate in a strike or a lock-out? How about so-called ‘Social Dumping’ using cheap laborers from an underprivileged nation? Each of us must have his own

opinion in this case. Its complicated, isn't it?

In our time it is the *Justice System and the Courts of any civilized nation*, which will decide disputes between employers and employees. No doubt about that.

I just wanted to expedite this issue before going to the verses which are valid in a Christian's life-style in our time.

Verse 18 – of wives having to subdue and be obedient to their husbands, is a 'Hot Potato' everywhere, not the least with the Feminist-Movements! To them this man – wife thing is like a juicy Beef-Steak which they would like to sink their teeth into. The issue is often used in disputes against Christian morale and life style. Husbands making 'slaves' of their wives, forcing them to scrub the floors, and wash the laundry, and cook the meals every day for the rest of their lives. You can hear them hollering against Christian family life.

Was that what Paul wrote about?

Not at all! He wrote to the believers in a fair and realistic way. Wives do best what wives usually are good at; and so also for the husbands.

Would you rather stay in the kitchen cooking dinner, while your wife is out in the shed chopping fire-wood? Usually it is the other way around. Or would you rather shift diapers on your little infant baby, while your wife is outside washing the car? And so on and so forth.

A marriage is a two-way street, and one has to deal in all fairness and good spirit with one another, and getting things done without stupid and stubborn arguing and brawl.

When reading Paul's exhortation on familiar relations and life-style, please remember that this is God's Word. It is meant to be a blessing to you when you follow the instructions. It is PLEASING TO THE LORD, says Paul, to follow his instructions. I agree.

To men of our time, Christians in particular, I would suggest that those of you who still sit on your butt every evening staring at your TV-screens and sports news and all: Just quit that! Go and help your wife instead. Be a man and not a self-pitying egotistical playboy. Get filled with the Spirit, Paul says. Pray always, Paul says. And had he been alive today, with all that TV-media and Internet all around us, he would have said: Don't ever watch any of those sleazy crappy wicked soap-operas which you find on every TV-channel in our time, and cut out watching the just as wicked 'Reality-Shows' and 'Big Brother Shows', and do

the same with the Police-Series! What Paul would have shouted against the lying cheating money loving TV-Evangelist Shows of our time – I cannot even imagine.

Has it ever occurred to you that *maybe it is time for you* to be Paul's loud voice up against the ungodliness of our time? You are alive (I hope) but Paul is dead. What if you started a Christian website, making it your pulpit and preach to the world? This is not impossible, but it will cost you time and money, of course. Just a hot tip, nothing else.

Don't yell and swear at your children and thus rob them of their self-respect making them depressed, says Paul. This is not rocket-science; it only takes faith in Christ and a *regular sense of responsibility* to handle these common human affairs.

CHAPTER 4

Verses 2 – 6 belongs together:

(I skip verse 1 since I have already finished my comments regarding slavery above) - 2: Be earnest and unwearied and steadfast in your prayer (life), being alert and intent in (your praying) with thanksgiving. 3: And at the same time pray for us also, that God may open a door to us for the Word, to proclaim the mystery concerning Christ on account of which I am in prison. 4: That I may proclaim it fully and make it clear, as is my duty. 5: Behave yourselves wisely in your relations with those of the outside world, making the very most of the time and seizing the opportunity. 6: Let your speech at all times be gracious, seasoned with salt, to know how you ought to answer anyone."

It is prayer/intercession which is the main theme in these five verses. Paul was encouraging the assembly to pray for fellow believers as well as for their own eventual needs, mostly of spiritual character.

Not often do we find the great Apostle of Christ, Paul, asking for intercession, but here he did. And he did right by that: **He was jailed**, probably for the second and final time. I can also guarantee you that such a Roman jail had no resemblance of Hotel Hilton Royale, be assured of that!

We notice however, that *Paul had the Gospel preaching in mind*, and not so much his own situation even if that was bad enough. He must have had worrying thoughts – on how it would go, would he be freed from jail or would he be punished by execution? This is mentioned below, in verse 7...

Then Paul put focus on the importance of the *believers' walk with God*, to be friendly and behave wisely in meeting the outside world; knowing also to handle eventual

opposition from those who heard the preaching of the Gospel.□□

Then I take the liberty here at once, as we have the topic on the table: Pray also for me that I can proclaim the Grace Gospel of Paul in the right manner and in writing articles and expositions in that errand! Thanks for your attention!

Verses 7 – 14 belong together:

“Tychicus will give you full information about my affairs; he is a much-loved brother and faithful ministering assistant and fellow servant in the Lord. 8: I have sent him to you for this very purpose, that you may know how we are faring and that he may comfort and cheer and encourage your hearts. 9: And with him is Onesimus, our faithful and beloved brother, who is one of yourselves. They will let you know everything that have taken place here in Rome. 10: Aristarcus my fellow prisoner wishes to be remembered to you, as does Mark the relative of Barnabas. You received instructions concerning him; if he comes to you give him a hearty welcome.□□ 11: And (greetings also from) Jesus, who is called Justus. These (Hebrew Christians) alone of the circumcision are among my fellow workers (for the extension of) God’s kingdom, and they have proved a relief and a comfort to me. 12: Epaphras, who is one of yourselves, a servant of Christ Jesus, sends you greetings. He is always striving for you earnestly in his prayers, that you may stand firm and mature, convinced and fully assured in everything willed by God. 13: For I bear him testimony that he has labored hard in your behalf and for the believers in Laodicea and those in Hierapolis. 14: Luke the beloved physician and Demas salute you.”

In these seven verses Paul gives us an overview over who are his close□□ colleagues and fellow servants in the faith and the ministry. Two of the four Gospel Writers are mentioned here, Luke and Mark, so it is obvious that the two must have been well into the new free Grace Gospel of Paul. Still we only find that their Gospels focused on a□□ *historical report*□□ on the life of Jesus and of His elect disciples. It was not meant for faith doctrine to the Church. They both knew that such a task had been entrusted to Paul and nobody else.□□

Luke issued his Gospel and the Book of Acts around 73 A.D., Mark issued his Gospel around 83 A.D. Even if they knew very well what Paul taught in his free Grace Gospel, none of the two used any of Paul’s doctrine or mentioned it. In Acts, Luke only referred to Paul’s preaching as he went to Jews and proselytes with the Kingdom message, the earthly kingdom offered to Israel in Acts period.

Paul was jailed and in that situation he wrote the two

epistles to the Church dispensation, Ephesians and Colossians. Pardon my repeating this all the time!

Catholic legends have set forth their 'theory' that Paul was executed on the order of Nero in a general persecution of the Christians at Rome. But no Biblical documents have any such report.

Many have in mind the infamous fire in Rome in 64 A.D. and that Nero gave the Christians and Jews the blame for this. Films have been made of that drama.

The apostle mentions Aristarchus as one who also was in jail, calling him his fellow prisoner (verse 10). And of free fellow servants he gives these names: Timothy, Luke, Tychicus, Onesimus, Mark, Jesus Justus, Epaphras and Demas. That makes nine men including Aristarchus, the prisoner.

When Paul said in verse 7 *...Tychicus will give you full information about my affairs...* that was not regarding how Paul felt or if he was at good health, no, it was the imprisonment and what eventually the Romans would do with him – setting him free or executing him.

Epaphras made a good figure before the other ministers, in that he was the one working fulltime for the assemblies Paul mostly had contact with the Colossians, Ephesians, Laodiceans, and those at Hierapolis. See the image on top of this article.

Verses 15 – 18 is Paul's final words and exhortations ever:

"Give my greetings to the brethren at Laodicea, and to Nympha and the assembly which meets in her house. 16: And when this epistle has been read before you, see that it is read also in the assembly of the Laodiceans, and also see that you yourselves in turn read the letter that comes to you from Laodicea. 17: And say to Archippus, See that you discharge carefully the ministry and fulfill the stewardship which you have received in the Lord. 18: I, Paul, am writing with my own hand. Remember I am still in prison and in chains. May grace be with you! Amen."

We notice here how Paul, in spite of his prison situation, focuses on the preaching of the Grace Gospel and that his epistle will be read also in other assemblies than just Colossians. He had the Grace Gospel at heart all the time; that the world should hear of this glorious act of salvation in Jesus Christ.

Paul's last prayer: Remember my chains!

Paul's last greeting to his fellow believers: May grace be with you!

CONCLUSION

We have had a look upon the Epistle to the Colossians and the important Bible truths found in it; given to us by Paul, the apostle to the Gentiles, regarding the dispensation of the Church, the body of Christ.

It is a 'Bible truth within a Bible truth' that the two epistles can be seen upon as twin-epistles. These are the only Bible writings which have doctrine of faith for the Church dispensation.



Only Paul the apostle was entrusted with such a revelation that the Grace Gospel really is. It was a hidden mystery in God, until He found the time when it should be revealed to mankind.

Personally I hold the *belief or conviction* that the Church only has a few years left on earth. I think around 20 years rather than 30.

But until we enter that *...Day of Redemption (Eph. 4:30)* – and God takes us into His glorious heaven, it will still be our duty and privilege to preach and teach this Grace Gospel to all humankind.

We are those who breaks the 'Finish Line' when our run is over - and I pray and I hope you are among the ones coming over that winner-line and find yourself in heaven, our hope of salvation in Christ! I wish us all good luck in this ministry to the world!

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