

Read the Bible in a Year

Week 30 – December 26, 2021 – January 1, 2022

Read on Your Own this Week:

Psalm 88-90
Proverbs 29-31

Readings in Class:

2 Chronicles 20-36

Introduction to Colossians

Colossians is one of the three letters that Paul wrote from prison. The other two being Ephesians and Philippians. Colossians is aimed at exhorting and reminding the Christians in Colossae to remain true to their Lord. Colossians is filled with some of the most descriptive terms for Jesus Christ though the book is very short. The Christ Hymn in 1:15-20 contains all of the letter's themes and titles that are given to Jesus that are fleshed out later.

The occasion that Paul is writing to the Colossians stems from the fact that there are teachers promoting a type of Christianity that is warped into a religion of the law. There could be Jewish elements at work here, but there is also an appeal to watch out for the wisdom of living toward the elemental spirits of the world and an asceticism that ignores the physical world that God through Christ loves and rules over. Jesus is seen as the path to all wisdom and knowledge. His will is the one that is supreme, and Jesus is given titles and attributes that confirm and exalt his deity and Lordship over all.

Therefore, the Colossians should seek to find their hope in him and their identity in him and wait for him to appear to find themselves. In the meantime, they have died with him and are raised through him in baptism.

A Brief Overview of Colossians

1. Proclamation of Supremacy of Christ
 - a. Greeting 1:1-2
 - b. Letter's Purpose 1:3-20
 - i. Thanksgiving Report 1:3-8
 - ii. Work of Christ 1:9-14
 - iii. The Christ Hymn 1:15-20
 - c. Body of Letter 1:21-2:23
 - i. Ministry of Peace 1:21-29
 - ii. True knowledge 2:1-5
 - iii. The fullness of Christ 2:6-15
 - iv. True Freedom 2:16-23
2. Paul's Instructions for Congregation

- a. The Christian Life 3:1-4:6
 - i. Death and Life 3:1-4
 - ii. Put off and Put On 3:5-17
 - iii. Table of Duties 3:18-4:1
 - iv. Encouragement to Pray 4:2-6
- b. Final Instructions 4:7-18

The Christ Hymn

1:15-20 contains the central theme and point of the book. Paul pulls out all the stops when describing Jesus. Here is a helpful list and short description of each title:

Image of the invisible God: Jesus is what you see and hear from God.

Firstborn of all creation: Jesus is the blueprint for how God made this Creation

All things created and exist for Jesus: Jesus is the Creator, and all creation looks to him.

Before all Things: Jesus is eternal. The Son of God always has existed.

In Him all things hold together: Creation continues to exist because of Jesus.

The Head of the Church

The Firstborn from the dead: Jesus is the first person to rise to the dead and live forever. He is the guarantee that there will be more fruit to grow from him.

Fullness of God dwells in him: Jesus is not part God, or some of God. He is fully God.

Reconciler: Jesus give us our peace. Through his death, Christ is making peace with all.

Christ as Head

Jesus is declared to be the head throughout the letter. What does it mean for Jesus to be the head? In Greek thought, the head was the source. To come to Jesus is to find the source of all that we need in life. We find out how to live, the kind of kingdom he has brought us into. To be the head means also that Jesus takes responsibility for what he has made. And the work of Jesus stems from the creation to the new creation. There is not a place where Jesus does not have control.

Because Jesus is Lord and is Head, we should look to him to find everything we need to have life here on earth.

Christ as Wisdom

In the bulk of the letter, Jesus is declared to be the wisdom of God. The opponents that Paul was writing against had most likely regulated Jesus to less than divine. They also denied that God made and loved the world. For these opponents, the creation of our world is an accident or chance and not the result of God. That is why Paul's letter is filled with exhortations to cling to Christ and through him find hope and peace for all the creation.