

# THE EPISTLE OF PAUL TO THE COLOSSIANS

## LESSON 3: CHAPTER 1, VERSES 18-29

1 NOVEMBER, 2013

**Verse 18** Jesus Christ is the head of the body; defined in this verse as the church (the saints in Christ, vs. 2). He is the beginning (Rev. 21:6, 1:8). **“Firstborn from the dead;”** not the first ONE, but the most IMPORTANT one raised from the dead. He has preeminence; He is above ALL things.

**Verses 19-20** Jesus Christ, in whom all fullness dwells, has made peace between God and man through His blood. His blood has reconciled “all things,” not just an elect few. Reconciliation is available to all. Some receive it and some do not, but God’s will is that all men repent (1 Pet. 3:9) and be saved (1 Timothy 2:4). God is not responsible for sin, but He paid the price for it so that we can be reconciled.

**Verse 21** Before salvation we were alienated from God. Our wicked works affected our thoughts so that we knew we were enemies against God. Usually our thoughts proceed from our heart and produce bad works (Mt. 15:19), but our actions (wicked works) also affect our thoughts. There are several types of wicked works mentioned in the Bible:

- Unfruitful works of darkness (Ephesians 5:11).
- Dead works (Hebrews 6:1).
- Works of darkness (Romans 13:12).
- Works of the devil (1 John 3:8).

Be careful not to take these verses out of context and read something into them to support your opinion or your view of what a wicked work is. Stick to the concrete: “Thou shalt not...”

The highlight of verse 21 is not the wicked works of your past, but the present reconciliation that God has provided through His Son, Jesus Christ (2 Corinthians 5:18-21). Now we are to minister this reconciliation to others.

**Verse 22** Jesus Christ reconciled us **“In the body of his flesh through death.”** Not by His teachings, His perfect life, or His miracles, but because God, in His body of flesh died to pay for all our sins. The person who is reconciled to God can now be presented to God as **“holy and unblameable and unproveable in his sight.”** God took all my sin and gave me His righteousness.

**Verse 23** **“If ye continue in the faith...”** The word “if” here is not a conditional word. The verse is not stating that you can lose your reconciliation if you don’t continue in the faith. It is used to present a statement of fact for the purpose of argument. The argument is, I am going to stand holy, unblameable, and unproveable in His sight, not because of my works, but because of faith in the Gospel.

**Verse 24** Paul is suffering for the sake of others in the body of Christ. He is suffering in his flesh just like Christ suffered in HIS flesh...for the sake of obtaining His Body (those who would be saved). That work is not finished yet today. There will still be suffering so people might be saved and added to the church.

**Verse 25** “Whereof I am made a minister, according to the dispensation of God which is given to me for you, to fulfil the word of God.” Dispensation means “to give out; to distribute.” God gave something to Paul, which Paul was to dispense to others in the church. What is the context? Reconciliation! (Verses 21-28 are one sentence; one thought).

**Verse 26** Here is what is being dispensed; given out. “**Even the mystery which hath been hid from ages and from generations, but now is made manifest to his saints.**” The mystery was hid, but now it’s not. Something that is a mystery is something that existed before it was made manifest (apparent, evident, visible).

Example: 1 John 3:2. “**Now are we the sons of God.**” Right now! “**It doth not yet appear what we SHALL be.**” Sons of God exist on earth today, but nobody can see it today. It’s hidden from the eyes of the world, but someday it will be manifest. “**When he shall appear, we shall be like him.**”

So Paul is about to reveal to the church, something that has been there all the time, but was not seen before. He’s going to turn on the gospel light.

**Verse 27** “**To whom God would make known what is the riches of the glory of THIS mystery among the Gentiles; which IS (!) Christ in YOU, the hope of glory.**” The Old Testament is full of picture forms of Jesus Christ. But the Old Testament saints didn’t know that. It’s revealed in the New Testament.

Examples: The Passover Lamb. The serpent on the pole. The offering of Isaac on the mountain. Joseph, the servant who became ruler. Solomon, whose fame brought a seeking sinner, the Queen of Sheba, looking for answers and found the king to be greater than she was told.

The New Testament has shed light upon those mysteries. “**As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up**” (John 3:14). “**That Rock that followed them was CHRIST**” (1 Cor. 10:4). “**Christ our PASSOVER is sacrificed for US**” (1 Cor. 5:7). It was there in the Old Testament all along, but they couldn’t see it until the Lord made it manifest. See First Peter 1:9-12.

**Christ in you, the hope of glory.** Believers have a sure hope that gives them cause to sing praises unto the Lord, even on their death bed.

**Verse 28** “**Whom we preach.**” We preach Christ; not glory, not hope, not you, but CHRIST. The main thing is preaching Jesus Christ; not what He can do for you; not what He can give to you; not what you get from Him. “**Warning every man, and teaching every man in all wisdom; that we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus.**” You can’t be perfect apart from Jesus Christ, so we preach, warn, and teach every man about Him.

**Verse 29** “**Whereunto I also labour, striving according to HIS working, which worketh in me mightily.**” Jesus Christ is working in me, doing a mighty work. He gets all the credit; all the glory.