

A Study
of

COLOSSIANS

The Preeminence of Christ

By
Mary Duchow

Introduction

I find in Mary's writings simplicity of thought, yet a depth of truth that flows from a sincere walk with Jesus. Each thought is carefully weighed in the balance of God's word and then has been tried in the fires of adversity. In spite of much personal trial, there is no bitterness. There is a sweet reminiscence of what God has done from the perspective of one who has experienced much. Scripture references are abundant and offered in context. You never get the feel that she is searching for a text to prove or justify her position or opinion. Her writings are simple, profound, and refreshing.

Living in the Glory

Steve Fletcher
Faith Bible Alliance Church
W2799 Lehman Road
Neosho, WI 53059
(920) 625-3538 Office
(920) 625-3757 FAX
fbac@nconnect.net

STONE TENDER

Website: <http://stonetender.googlepages.com/home>

Acknowledgements:

Throughout this study, Scripture is taken from the New International Version Study Bible, unless otherwise indicated, in the left margin. Also, in the left margin Scripture references are listed, as are additional source materials. Occasionally, to implement the text with personal experience or viewpoint, the words, Personal Comment, will occur in the left margin, indicating that the material to the right is from the author of this study.

Footnotes are primarily based upon those that appear in the NIV Study Bible, and are written in the left margin. The author paraphrases most of the footnotes, in order for them to be read more easily. Hence, quotation marks are rarely used. The object is to get the material before the reader with as few interruptions as possible.

The text of this study is typed in **boldface**, and quotation marks are not used.

Since the author was blessed with salvation, her desire to share this gift of redemption is strong. The memory of her past weakness, bitterness and sin, prompted her to tell others how the Lord brought her through repentance and forgiveness, and to the place of trust in Him. The Lord laid out all that was needed to accomplish this Bible Study. Scattered throughout this work are Personal Comments, which tell of her own experience. These show others a little of her life before she was able to accept the forgiveness and peace the Lord gives, in hope that her readers will be able to truly trust in God. She encourages the reader to come to Jesus, let Him into your heart and He will do the rest. Just follow His lead, learn from the Lord and live in the freedom of His peace.

Dedication

These Bible studies are dedicated to my children and grandchildren: Christine Palafox, her husband Nick, their children, Tahlia and Jansen; Robin Schickert and her husband Norb; and Mark Duchow. With gratitude, in the name of Jesus, these studies are written by your loving mother.

Sources:

Scripture taken from the Holy Bible, New International Version ® NIV ®
Copyright© 1973, 1978, 1984 by International Bible Society.
Used by permission. All rights reserved worldwide.

Comments taken from Dr. Erwin Lutzer's words and wisdom, from memory from listening to radio and audio tapes. Catalog available. Contact:

Dr. Erwin Lutzer
Moody Church Media
The Moody Church
1609 North LaSalle
Chicago, Illinois 60614-6095

www.moodyradio.com

THE KING JAMES OPEN BIBLE, Expanded edition, published by Thomas Nelson Publishers, Nashville, 1985.

THE ONE VOLUME BIBLE COMMENTARY, published by the Macmillan Company, 1908

STRONG'S EXHAUSTIVE CONCORDANCE, published by Dugan Publishers, Inc., Gordonsville, TN, 1984

THE AMERICAN HERITAGE DICTIONARY, published by the Houghton Mifflin Company, Boston.

WEBSTER'S NEW COLLEGIATE DICTIONARY, published by G.&C. Merriam Company, Springfield Massachusetts, USA.

NIV QUEST STUDY BIBLE, revised, Published by Zondervan, Grand Rapids, Michigan 49530, USA

Mary

Her hair is gray.
The years of her life are evident
In the lines of her face.
Her hands show the delicate tracery of veins
That mark their aging.
She is now in her 75th year.

But this façade is deceptive.
For many, at this stage of life,
The light within is growing dim.
But, not so for this unique person;
For this woman has,
In the not so distant past,
Just begun to live.

The events of her life
That have aged her physically,
Were a necessary prelude
To the wisdom and insight
She has gleaned from them.

It has become her mission in life
To use this precious gift
That was bestowed on her
By God's Holy Spirit,
To help as many hurting people
As He sends her way.

What words can I use
To describe her?
I sat across the table from her
On that first day,
Never dreaming that I was about to embark
On one of the most meaningful journeys
Of my life!

I looked at her there,
An ordinary woman,
At first glance.
How could I know
What wisdom and insight were stored
Within that all too human frame?

How could I know, then,
That God would use this
Ordinary, extraordinary vessel
To free me from the bondage
Under which I had lived
All of my life!

*The woman who was counseled by the writer
Of these Bible studies, wrote this poem.*

<p>A Study of COLOSSIANS Introduction</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Prayer from the author of this study—</p> <p>Dear Lord, as these Bible Studies evolve, I ask again for Your guidance and help. Please keep my own pride and selfishness from entering into the comments written throughout. It is so easy to be carried away with the deceptions of “self.” Please fill this study with the power of Your Holy Word and the comments with the influence Scripture has made on my life. Let the Holy Spirit direct the words and wisdom written here and fill the hearts of those who read and study. Much of my life seems to have been wasted on the way of this world. You, Lord, have saved me from this corruption and I pray that those experiences, when placed beside Your truth, will serve to help others who struggle in their Christian walk. It is a main reason for these studies. Let Your voice be the one the reader hears.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">In the name of Jesus. Amen.</p>
<p>Introduction based on KJ Open Bible</p>	<p>(The Greek word for “a letter of correspondence” is epistle.) In the epistle to the Colossians, part one is about the supremacy of Christ in the church, which deals with doctrine. In part two, Paul writes about the submission to Christ in the church. Paul’s purpose is to show that Christ is preeminent—first and foremost in everything—and the Christian’s life should reflect that priority.”</p>
<p>See Jn 1:1-18</p>	<p>Colossians is comparable to John’s later concept that Christ is the Logos. This parallel shows also that Paul was dealing with the evils of an early form of Gnosticism which didn’t develop fully until the second century AD. However, Paul wrote this letter to the Colossians in AD 60.</p> <p>Colosse was a small Greek city, about a hundred miles east of Ephesus, in the fertile Lycus Valley. It was a center of commerce, known for its glossy black wool. But by the time that Paul wrote to the Colossian Christians, the nearby cities of Laodicea and Hieropolis had become more powerful and important.</p>
<p>See Col 4:7-9; Phm 23</p> <p>Eph 6:21; Phm 10-12</p>	<p>He wrote to and about the people of Colosse but Paul had never visited the church there. Epaphrus, a citizen of Colosse and founder of the Colosse church, carried the gospel to the cities of the Lycus valley. Colossians is one of the four “prison” epistles. The other three are Ephesians, Philippians and Philemon. All were written by Paul during his imprisonment in Rome, AD 60-61.</p>
<p>See Col 2:4-23</p>	<p>The heresy of that time, prior to the full-blown Gnosticism of the second century AD was based on Greek speculation, Jewish legalism and Oriental mysticism. It held a low view of the physical human body and nature as a whole. Circumcision, dietary regulations and ritual observances were included in this philosophy and method of worship. It involved the austere life of asceticism, worship of angels as intermediaries and mystical experiences as an approach to the spiritual realm. Any attempt to fit Christ into such an arrogant and deceptive system would undermine His person and redemptive work.</p>
<p>American Heritage Dictionary</p>	<p>An ascetic is a person who renounces the comforts of society and leads a life of austere self-discipline, especially as an act of religious devotion. In a sense, it describes Martin Luther before he was inspired to believe and teach the doctrine of justification by faith in Christ alone.</p>
<p>See Jn 1:3; Col 2:10</p>	<p>In this Colossian letter, however, Paul centers on the “Cosmic Christ.” The word cosmic pertains to the universe. John wrote in his Gospel, “Through Him (Christ) all things were made.” Paul writes that He, Christ is “the head of all principality and power.”</p>

See Col 1:16-17	<p>“For by Him all things were created.” He is the Author of reconciliation; the basis for believer’s hope; the source of our power for a new life; He is the Redeemer and Reconciler; the embodiment of full deity; Jesus is the Creator and Sustainer of all things; the Head of the church; He is the resurrected God-Man and the all-sufficient Savior.</p>
Continuing from KJ Open Bible Intro. To Colossians	<p>“The resounding theme in Colossians is the preeminence of Christ in all things. The believer is complete in Him alone and lacks nothing.”</p>
See Jn 15:4	<p>There is no need for speculation, mystical visions, or ritualistic regulations, making it appear that faith in Christ is insufficient. An appropriate understanding of Christ is the remedy against heresy! We must continue in Christ so that we may live a worthy life to please Him and to bear fruit in good works.</p>
Key verses: Col 2:9-10	<p>“For in Christ all the fullness of the Deity lives in bodily form, and you have been given fullness in Christ, who is the head over every power and authority.”</p>
Col 3:1-2	<p>“Since, then, you have been raised with Christ, set your hearts on things above, where Christ is seated at the right hand of God. Set your minds on the things above, not earthly things.”</p>
Key Chapter NIV paraphrase	<p>Chapter three of Colossians connects the three themes of the epistle showing their cause and effect relationships: When the believer is risen with Christ, he is to put off the old self and put on the new, setting him and her apart from the world in spirit. It is this union with Christ that equips the believer to “go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the son, and of the Holy Ghost.”</p>
KJ Mt 28:19	<p>“Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the son, and of the Holy Ghost.”</p>
Personal Comment:	<p>In writing the above, I realized that when one is baptized, immersed in water, one is symbolically acknowledging belief and trust in the Triune God. God the Father, Christ the Redeemer, the Holy Spirit, the enlightener and counselor. It is the indwelling of God-with-us that we, as believers, are able to recognize the fullness of the Presence of the Lord within ourselves! Therefore, it is always amazing to me, having been a believer and Bible reader for several years, that as I age, I find I’m still connecting the dots! I would like to say that by now I’ve got it all together, but that is when I realize that I haven’t!!</p>
	<p>It is such a delightful blessing when I read Scripture, because some bright and shining clarification, some new facet of comprehension that I didn’t see before will suddenly blind me with its brilliance. It is a “wow” moment of awesome understanding!! Having been raised Catholic, I had a basic belief in the Trinity, but when I began to comprehend that God the Father is the LOVING GOD and that HE LOVES ME—my whole world began to change, as that powerful warmth and acceptance filled my heart one Sunday morning in January, 1987.</p>
	<p>Prior to that blessed insight, I saw only the formidable God of the Old Testament. Somehow I grasped the Deity of Christ but didn’t understand the humanity of Jesus. The Holy Spirit was a bit easier for me to recognize because of how God wired my brain: creativity dominated my life. With awe and wonder, I often associated the products of the mind He gave me with the empowering of the Holy Spirit.</p>
2Tim 3:16 Jer 29:13 Gen 2:7 Jn 4:10-13	<p>So, these Bible studies are every bit as enlightening for me as for others. Constantly, joy leaps from my pen as I cite verses and comprehend the associations of meaning. The Bible is a never ending source of blessing. I believe the whole of Scripture is “God breathed.” Therefore: read to seek, to hungrily digest the very word of God. As we need oxygen for our physical bodies, our spirits need “the breath of life” breathed into us! Our bodies need water to be healthy, so our spirits need the “living water” Jesus abundantly gives to us.</p>

<p>Rev 3:20 Isa 55:6</p>	<p>Throughout the Scriptures we are advised to come to know our Almighty God: Father, Son and Spirit. He is to be found, though in reality it is He who finds us! Welcome the Lord into your heart and spirit. "Seek the Lord while He may be found; call on Him while He is near."</p>
<p>COLOSSIANS 1 : 1 – 2</p>	<p>Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God, and Timothy our brother. To the holy and faithful brothers in Christ at Colosse: Grace and peace to you from God our Father.</p>
<p>Footnote: Col 1:2</p>	<p>Because of Christ's substitutionary death (He died in our place) for the Colossian believers (and all believers) they are declared holy in the sight of god and because of the Holy Spirit's work, they are continuing to be made holy in their lives. Paul mentions the spiritual union with Christ thirteen times in Colossians.</p>
<p>COLOSSIANS 1 : 3 - 8 v.5 v.6 v.7 v.8</p>	<p>We always thank God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, when we pray for you, because we have heard of your faith in Christ Jesus and of your love you have for all the saints — the faith and love that spring from the hope that is stored up for you in heaven and that you have already heard about in the word of truth, the gospel that has come to you. All over the world this gospel is bearing fruit and growing, just as it has been doing among you since the day you heard it and understood God's grace in all its truth. You learned it from Epaphras, our dear fellow servant, who is a faithful minister of Christ on our behalf, and who also told us of your love in the Spirit.</p>
<p>Footnote: Col 1:5 See Titus 1:2-3</p>	<p>The tree great Christian virtues of faith, love and hope appear also in five other epistles by Paul. Hope is not wishful thinking but a firm assurance. This unusual thought of faith and love coming from hope is found in Paul's letter to Titus: "A faith and knowledge resting on the hope of eternal life, which God, who does not lie, promised before the beginning of time, and at His appointed season He brought His word to light through the preaching entrusted to me (Paul) by the command of god our Savior."</p>
<p>One Volume Bible Commentary Titus 1:12</p>	<p>This hope believers have is in contrast to the devil and all who lie. Paul's letter to Titus, based on common sense and spirituality, was written to encourage Titus to appoint elders with strength and character to keep the faith pure because of the evil influence of the Judaizers and citizens of Crete who were described as, "liars, evil brutes and lazy gluttons."</p>
<p>See Jn 8:42-47 Jn 8:44</p>	<p>John also wrote about the very real dangers faced by the believers of his day — and in our day, the 21st Century. Jesus is speaking to Jews and exposing their relationship to Satan. Truth is foreign to Satan and to those who follow him. "You belong to your father, the devil, and you want to carry out your father's desire. He was a murderer from the beginning, not holding to the truth, for he there is no truth in him. When he lies, he speaks his native language for he is a liar and the father of lies."</p>
<p>Personal Comment:</p>	<p>So, we who claim to be believers and followers of Christ, why do we worry so much about so many things? We often say, "I hope so..." but with a tone of voice and facial expression that negates our word of hope. When I hear this, I want to ask, "Do you believe in the promises of God?" And the answer I get—in a shocked and incredulous voice—is, "Yes, yes of course I do!!" Then why in the world do you fret and worry and tremble and frown about so very many things? Why in the world, indeed, for that is why, because you are operating in the way of the world and not in the way of our Lord Jesus Christ.</p>
<p>Jn 14:6</p>	<p>When you believe in the hope of heaven, your final resting place is with Jesus Christ. So that whole monumental question of hope is answered. Think about it: If God will forgive your sin</p>

<p>Ecc1 1:2-10 See 1Jn 3:1-14; 4:18</p>	<p>and raise you up to heaven on the last day, why can't you trust Him to be in control of everything else in your life? And, if He is in control of everything, why do you feel it is necessary to fret and worry about everything else "under the sun.?" I wonder what God thinks of those hesitant believers whose response to the knowledge that God is in control is, "yes, but..."</p> <p>If you put the "yes, but," conditions on God's unconditional love, it is then essential for you to pray that god will open your heart to receive His love fully. Before I was aware that <u>God loves me</u>—a real curmudgeon sinner— I worried and fretted and simply didn't believe God really cared all that much for me. The fact was that I didn't care that much for ME because I thought no one else did either. And I really didn't care that much for God.</p> <p>What a cataclysmic emotional and spiritual impact that awareness and comprehension was: at a moment in time, I suddenly knew God loves me. Ultimately, that changed everything! The impact of those changes in me reverberated over the years. I didn't change my ways over night. I was very used to my sins and wasn't going to give them up without a fight. But, God won.</p>
<p>Mt 6:33 Rev 3:20</p>	<p>I sincerely believe this can and will happen to you! "But seek first His kingdom and His righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well." When you become a believer you open the door of your heart and ask Jesus in. It is necessary to feel sorrow for your sins, and Jesus will give you a new re-born spirit and the indwelling Holy Spirit, and with this awesome equipment you begin to change and grow, spiritually, at your own rate. Just as each infant grows at his or her own rate, so too, do we who have been blessed with salvation and belief begin to mature by exchanging our past for a present and future of "seeking the kingdom."</p>
<p>Mk 4:26-29</p>	<p>Jesus also said, "this is what the kingdom of God is like. A man scatters seed on the ground. Night and day, whether he sleeps or gets up, the seed sprouts and grows, though he does not know how. All by itself the soil produces grain—first the stalk, then the head, then the full kernel in the head. As soon as the grain is ripe, he puts is sickle to it, because the harvest has come."</p>
<p>Read 2Ch 15:2 See Jn 15:1-17</p> <p>(NIV footnote : Mk 4:26-29) See Mt 13:1-23</p>	<p>"The Lord is with you while you are with Him. If you seek Him, He will be found by you; but if you forsake Him, He will forsake you."</p> <p>Only Mark records this parable. Whereas the parable of the sower stresses the importance of proper soil for the growth of the seed and the success of the harvest, here the mysterious power of the seed itself is emphasized. The gospel message contains its own power.</p>
<p>COLOSSIANS 1 : 9 – 14 v.10 v.11 v.12 v.13 v.14</p>	<p>(Paul continues to speak to the Colossians through this letter.) For this reason, since the day we heard about you, we have not stopped praying for you and asking God to fill you with the knowledge of His will through all spiritual wisdom and understanding. And we pray this in order that you may live a life worthy of the Lord and may please Him in every way: bearing fruit in every good work, growing in the knowledge of God, being strengthened with all power according to His glorious might so that you may have great endurance and patience, and joyfully giving thanks to the Father, who has qualified you to share in the inheritance of the saints in the kingdom of light. For he has rescued us from the dominion of darkness and brought us into the kingdom of the Son He loves, in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins.</p>

<p>Personal Comment: Eph 4:7</p>	<p>We need our spiritual tanks filled daily, with sustenance from the Holy Spirit in order to grow. Food, rest, love and activity for the toddler...Bible reading and study, fellowship and rest in the sure knowledge that God supplies the means for the maturing believer.</p>
<p>Footnote: Col 1:9</p>	<p>Biblical knowledge is not merely the possession of facts. Rather, knowledge and wisdom in the Bible are practical, having to do with godly living. This is borne out by verses 10-12, where knowledge, wisdom and understanding result in a life worthy of the Lord.</p>
<p>Paraphrased from The One Volume Bible Commentary</p>	<p>Such knowledge is not indeed an end in itself. It must lead to a life well pleasing to Christ; you must bear fruit and increase in every good work by means of your knowledge of God.</p>
<p>James 1:22</p>	<p>“Do not merely listen to the word, and so deceive yourselves. Do what it says.”</p>
<p>Personal comment:</p>	<p>A common phrase is, “take the ball and run with it.” It means for one to utilize an opportunity to one’s advantage. Pursuing the Christian life is not just a matter of going to church (that is, being physically present but not really involved in worship service) or watching something on Christian TV or listening to a worship service on the radio. It is also not merely about a feel-good-comfort experience.</p>
<p>Colossians, Chapters 1&2 And Chapters 3&4</p>	<p>However, being in the fellowship of believers and the good feeling one has in the knowledge of having been saved by Christ is definitely wonderful. But it is not just about “me” feeling good—about what Christ and the church can do for “me.”</p>
<p>See 1Co 9:24-27; Heb 12:1-13</p>	<p>It is about submitting to Christ and what Christ does through “me” and my submitting to Him!</p> <p>We may start that way—feeling good about salvation. To have been so immersed in the sin, sorrow and shame of our past that we hungrily read and digest the words of Scripture. Our lives are changed because we have repented and have been re-born. Then this transformation of grace becomes our peace, and it is just for “me,” until we are healed and strong enough spiritually to be ready to “run” with it.</p> <p>The toddler learns to walk and run, but it takes maturing before he or she is ready to play football, for instance. But, by the natural progression of growth and development, strong legs and arms, running, throwing and catching skills are combined with the desire to play the game successfully. Then it becomes more than a game of football—it is the affirmation of what has developed, physically, mentally and emotionally.</p>
<p>Jn14:6</p>	<p>However, the two forms of maturation cited above are not really the same. One is a statement of what is considered typical of growth and development in this world. The other has to do with eternity! The Christ-believer does grow and develop in this world but the goal is to be experienced not in this world but in the next world. Believers look forward to their being home in heaven with the Lord in heaven, but they are to live here on earth by following His Way with that goal in mind. They are not to live just for “me,” but for the Lord Jesus Christ and to bring others to belief in the Savior. That is a whole different picture of the concept of “me—taking the ball and running with it!” And Christianity is not a game, it is the Way of Life taught to us by the Lord Himself.</p>
<p>Footnote: Col 1:12-14 See 2Co 4:6;</p>	<p>“Light” symbolizes holiness, truth, love, glory and life. Accordingly, God, Christ and the Christian are characterized by “light.” The “kingdom of light” is the opposite of the “kingdom of darkness.” The “kingdom” here does not refer to a territory but to the authority, rule or</p>

<p>Jn 1:4; 8:12</p> <p>(v. 14) See 1Jn 4:9-18 Paraphrased: One Volume Bible Commentary</p>	<p>sovereign power of a king. Here it means that the Christian is no longer under the dominion of evil (darkness) but under the benevolent rule of God's Son.</p> <p>"Redemption" is deliverance and freedom from the penalty of sin by the payment of a ransom—the substitutionary death of Christ, who died sacrificially for the sins of mankind.</p> <p>This Epistle was written by Paul for the Colossians, who were at that time being influenced by false teaching, as already mentioned in the introduction of this study. The danger came essentially from "Jewish Tradition" which developed during the 400 years before Christ's birth. Emphasis was placed on the worship of angels, the strict observance of religious, sacred seasons, such as the Sabbath, the new moon festivals, etc.</p>
<p>Mt 15:3-20; Mk 7:6-23</p> <p>From the Good News Bible TEV</p>	<p>Often in the Gospels, Christ points out how ridiculous and wrong these man-made "religious" teachings are. (This will be covered more closely in Colossians, chapter two.) How can a set of rules and regulations replace faith? Paul writes to oppose these teachings with the true Christian message. The heart of Paul's reply to these false teachers was that Jesus Christ is able to give full salvation and that other beliefs and practices actually lead away from Him. Through Christ, God created the world and through Him, God is bringing it back to Himself. Only in union with Christ is there hope of salvation for the world. Paul then spells out the implications of this great teaching for the lives of believers. Paul continues with the supremacy of Christ.</p>
<p>COLOSSIANS 1 : 15 – 20 See Jn 14:9 v.17 Jn 1:1-2; 8:58 v.19 v.20</p>	<p>He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation. For by Him all things were created: things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities; all things were created by Him and for Him. He is before all things, and in Him all things hold together. And He is the head of the body, the church; He is the beginning and the firstborn from among the dead, so that in everything He might have supremacy. For God was pleased to have all His fullness dwell in Him, and through Him to reconcile to Himself all things, whether things on earth or things in heaven, by making peace through His blood, shed on the cross.</p>
<p>Footnote: Col 1:15-20</p>	<p>It is thought these verses may have been an early Christian hymn on the supremacy of Christ—used here by Paul to counteract the false teaching at Colosse. The hymn is divided into two parts. 1. Christ's supremacy in creation (vv.15-17); 2. Christ's supremacy in redemption vv.18-20).</p>
<p>(v.15) 2Co 4:4; Heb 1:3 Jn 1:18 Jn 14:9</p>	<p>Christ is called the "image of God" here and also in 2Corinthians. In the book of Hebrews He is described as the "radiance of God's glory and the exact representation of His being." This figure of the image suggests two truths: 1. God is invisible ("no one has ever seen God.") 2. Christ, who is the eternal Son of God and who became the God-Man, reflects and reveals God. Just as the firstborn son had certain privileges and rights in the Biblical world, so also Christ has certain rights in relation to all creation—priority, preeminence and sovereignty.</p>
<p>Footnote: Col 1:16-17</p>	<p>Paul stresses that Christ is supreme over "all creation," all things," and "everything"—"thrones, powers, rulers, authorities" and "angels." In the heresy in Colosse, angelic hierarchy figured prominently, and Paul makes it clear that Jesus Christ is supreme over all angels as well. And as we read in the Gospel of John, Jesus Christ, "the Word" was "in the beginning."</p>
<p>(v.17) See Jn 1:1-2; 8:58 Ps 41:13 Footnote: Col 1:18</p>	<p>The Lord Christ is not only supreme over all but He has no beginning and no end, He is eternal. He is "from everlasting to everlasting."</p> <p>Christ "is the beginning and the firstborn among the dead." He was the first to rise from the</p>

1Cor 15:20	dead with a resurrection body. Elsewhere Paul calls Him the “firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep.” Others, who were raised from the dead, were raised only to die again.
Personal Comment: 2Ki 4:35; Mt27:52-53; Lk 7:15; Jn 11:1-12-12:19 Ac 9:36-41; 20:7-11	Earlier, in another study, I was asked, “what happened to those ‘who came out of tombs, and after Jesus’ resurrection they went into the holy city and appeared to many people,” and “what happened to Lazarus who was raised from the dead and the other people in Scripture who were brought back to life?” The answer is that they were raised to exhibit God’s miraculous powers with emphasis on Christ’s redemptive work. They all went on with their lives and then died “in the flesh” again as normal.
Footnote: Col 1:19	For Paul, the word, “fullness” meant that totality of God with all His powers and attributes. He stresses this because in the technical vocabulary of the Gnostic philosophies, fullness meant the sum of the supernatural forces controlling the fate of people.
Footnote: Col 1:20	The words, “reconcile to Himself all things” does not mean that Christ, by His death has saved all people. Scripture speaks of an eternal hell and makes it very clear that only believers in Christ are saved. When Adam and Eve sinned, not only was the harmony between God and man destroyed, but also disorder came into creation. So when Christ died on the cross, He made peace possible between God and man, and He restored in principle the harmony in the physical world, though the full realization of this harmony will come only when Christ returns.
Ro 8:19-22	The words, “reconcile to Himself all things” does not mean that Christ, by His death has saved all people. Scripture speaks of an eternal hell and makes it very clear that only believers in Christ are saved. When Adam and Eve sinned, not only was the harmony between God and man destroyed, but also disorder came into creation. So when Christ died on the cross, He made peace possible between God and man, and He restored in principle the harmony in the physical world, though the full realization of this harmony will come only when Christ returns.
COLOSSIANS 1 : 21 -23	Once you were alienated from God and were enemies in your minds because of your evil behavior. But now He has reconciled you by Christ’s physical body through death to present you holy in His sight, without blemish and free from accusation—if you continue in your faith, established and firm, not moved from the hope held out in the gospel. This is the gospel that you heard and that has been proclaimed to every creature under heaven, and of which I, Paul, have become a servant.
Personal comment On Col 1:21-23	Let us realize what Christ has done. All things are reconciled through Him because He made peace through the blood of His sacrifice on the cross for us. Through this same sacrifice all things on earth and in the heavens are also reconciled. We who were once alienated and enemies because of evil in our hearts and minds (who now believe in Jesus Christ’s miracle of salvation) are reconciled in the body of His flesh that was sacrificed for us. This is what Paul shows the false teachers, telling them that nothing they could do or believe or pretend or claim—that non-incarnate angels could redeem anything or anybody. Angels are spirit and cannot be sacrificed because only flesh and blood can be nailed to a cross and bleed. Only Christ Jesus, true God and true Man was able to do that—for those who believe!
COLOSSIANS 1 : 24 – 29 v.25 See Ro 16:25-27 v.27 See Mt 13:11 v.28 v.29 Se Eph 1:18-19	Now rejoice in what was suffered for you, and I fill up in my flesh what is still lacking in regard to Christ’s afflictions, for the sake of His body, which is the church. I have become its servant by the commission God gave me to present to you the word of God in its fullness—the mystery that has been kept hidden for ages and generations, but is now disclosed to the saints. To them God has chosen to make known among the Gentiles the glorious riches of this mystery, which is Christ in you, the hope of glory. We proclaim Him, admonishing and teaching everyone with all wisdom, so that we may present everyone perfect in Christ. To this end I labor, struggling with all His energy, which so powerfully works in me.
Good News Bible TEV ABS Col 1:24-29	These verses are hard to understand. I am including this same passage, above, from The Good News Bible because I believe the translation is more easily understood. It describes Paul’s work as a servant of the church.

<p>v.25 v.26 v.27 v.28 v.29</p>	<p>“And now I am happy about my sufferings for you, for by means of my physical sufferings I am helping to complete what still remains of Christ’s sufferings on behalf of His body, the church. And I have been made a servant of the church by God, who gave me this task to perform for your good. It is the task of fully proclaiming His message, which is the secret He hid through all past ages from all mankind but had now revealed to His people. God’s plan is to make known His secret to His people, this rich and glorious secret which He has for all peoples. And the secret is that Christ is in you, which means that you will share in the glory of God. So we preach Christ to everyone. With all possible wisdom we warn and teach them in order to bring each one into God’s presence as a mature individual in union with Christ. To get this done I toil and struggle, using the mighty strength which Christ supplies and which is at work in me.”</p>
<p>Personal Comment:</p>	<p>Christ suffers in His members, His church, because of their union with Him. The inflictions that Paul undergoes in prison are in a sense filling-up the measure of sufferings that Christ is to endure through him. This realization of Paul’s is that his suffering is part of the allotted suffering Christ must yet endure in His church. In Christ, all who believe can share in Him in this way. But it is not all about suffering. It is about the depth and breadth of what it means to us believers in Christ Jesus on earth, now. In John, Jesus prays for all believers. We know that Jesus Christ and God the Father are “One.” As we are “in Christ,” Jesus prays—He says to the Father, “I in them (believers) and You in Me. May they be brought to complete unity to let the world know that You sent Me and have loved them (believers) even as You have loved Me.” Within this unity, Christ on earth suffered in body while the Father in heaven suffered in spirit, for they are “One.” Since we are “in Christ” and therefore “one” with Him and the Father, as Paul indicates, believers continue to achieve the allotted suffering necessary to bring about the completion which God, Father, Son and Spirit, agreed upon since before the beginning—until—the times of the Gentiles are fulfilled.”</p>
<p>See Jn 17:20-26 Jn 10:30; 17:11 Jn 17:23</p>	<p>To get a picture of why Paul understood the role of “suffering” in his ministry, we must go to the Book of Acts, where the Lord speaks to Ananias concerning Paul: “...This man is My chosen instrument to carry My name before the Gentiles and their kings and before the people of Israel. I will show him how much he will suffer for my name.” In the above verses of Colossians, Paul is explaining this role of suffering that often accompanies those who are chosen to carry the Good News of Jesus Christ’s salvation.</p>
<p>Lk 21:24 Ac 9:15-16</p>	<p>Paul gives us another picture of this “role” in Corinthians where he compares the ordinary people whom God chooses to carry the Good News of His Son and His salvation to “clay jars.”</p>
<p>2Co 4:7</p>	<p>“But we have this treasure in jars of clay to show that this all-surpassing power is from God.” It was customary to conceal treasure in ordinary clay jars, which had little value or beauty and did not attract attention to themselves, or to their precious contents. Here the clay jar represents Paul’s human frailty and his feeling of unworthiness. The “all surpassing power” is from God and not from him! The idea is that the absolute insufficiency of man reveals the total sufficiency of God.</p>
<p>(the above based on NIV footnote for 2Co4:7)</p>	<p>So, what is done with a clay jar, especially a jar that is not “for show” but designed to hold the blessed news of salvation? It is filled up with great amounts of Christ’s work on the cross being completed in Paul, giving him the power and the pain, the passion and the punishment, measured by God into Paul’s mind, body and spirit.</p>
<p>Lk 10:37; Gal 3:8</p>	<p>It is no wonder for anyone who has received salvation to desire to tell others of the wonder of</p>

See Col 1:24	it all..."to go and do likewise..." The great commission is filled up in Paul and it becomes for him, his very life to carry the name of Jesus and His redemptive work to the "Gentiles and their kings and before the people of Israel."
Footnote: Col 1:25	Paul recognizes in his role as a servant with a great commission from the Lord that he must "present...the word of God in its fullness." What he means here is that the word of God is brought to completion, that is, its intended purpose, only when it is proclaimed. Paul's commission to bring the word to completion, therefore, required him to make the word of God heard in Colosse as well as elsewhere.
Isa 55:11	
Ro15:19	
Footnote: Col 1:26	Paul uses the word, "mystery," because the purpose of God is unknown until it is revealed. But in Paul's day, as in our world today, the word "mystery," is used in Pagan and Mystery Religions to refer to secret information that is available only to a self-appointed exclusive group of people.
Personal comment:	The supposed sacred mysteries of the Roman Catholic church as well as some subsequent protestant doctrine, and other well known religions of our day, come readily to my mind. Having been raised Catholic, I remember being caught up in the rites and ceremonies. But for me, along with these rituals, there was an awareness of the power and spiritual presence of the Holy Spirit. Yet, I became disenchanted with the sham "mystery" of this man-made religion for a while. Thank the Lord that He led me out of that pompous display to read the Bible. Through reading Scripture and the firm desire to know Jesus Christ and about the redemption He gives, I am saved! As a Catholic, no matter how often I went to confession, I never felt absolved. I carried the whole ugly mass of my sins around with me until finally I was able to dump them at the foot of the cross! Oh, Lord what a blessing of forgiveness and grace I received, then, for the first time! And then I read, "...I will forgive their wickedness and will remember their sins no more."
Heb 8:12	
Footnote: Col1:27	It had not been previously revealed that the Gentiles would be admitted to the church on equal terms with Israel. Paul also wrote about this in his letter to the Ephesians, also. It was a unique aspect of the mystery—the equality and mutuality that Gentiles had with the Jews in the church, as the one body. Jews were amazed that the Gentiles would turn to the God of Israel and be saved, and that the Christian church fellowship would become an organic unity.
See Eph 3:6	
Ro 15:9-12	
Gen 12:3	However, Paul brought to the Jews the proof they needed—he wrote in Romans that this was prophesied in the OT!
Personal Comment:	Having read and reread the OT, I marvel at the fact that so many of the Jews, who were exposed to Scripture every Sabbath and most Feast days, etc., seemed to have no recall of what the Scriptures said—unless it was about the exclusivity of the Jews! Talk about a cultural blind-spot!
Footnote: Col 1:28	The word, "perfect," was employed by the mystery religions and the Gnostics to describe those who had become possessors of the secrets or special knowledge boasted of by that particular religion of cult. But, Paul emphasizes that in Christ every believer is one of the "perfect!"
Personal Comment:	Again, I am reminded of what I was told as a child in Catholic school: that only Roman Catholics were able to go to heaven because of the participation in the mysteries of the sacraments. Wrong! Thank You, Lord, You have brought me to salvation! It is only through belief in the redemption of Christ Jesus that I am "perfect in Christ" and destined to go to heaven when I die!

<p>COLOSSIANS 2 : 1 – 5</p> <p>v.3 Isa 11:2 v.5 1Cor 5:4</p>	<p>I want you to know how much I am struggling for you and for those at Laodicea, and for all who have not met me personally. My purpose is that they may be encouraged in heart and united in love, so that they may have the full riches of complete understanding, in order that they may know the mystery of God, namely, Christ, in whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge. I tell you this so that no one may deceive you by fine- sounding arguments. For though I am absent from you in body, I am present with you in spirit and delight to see how orderly you are and how firm your faith in Christ is.</p>
<p>Personal Comment:</p>	<p>It amazes me how profound Paul’s words are. Because of this, I have always felt the very character of the wisdom of the Holy Spirit in his epistles. Was Paul aware of the future or was his concern basically for those of the early church? It is evident that his desire was to reach as many people as possible. His plans included more journeys than he was able to make. Though his words and immediate concern are sometimes directed to those of his time-frame and culture, the message he delivers is universal and fits our time and culture as only the words inspired by the Holy Spirit could. We in the 21st Century are technically advanced but as human beings we are “not for from the cave.”</p> <p>When I first began reading the Bible, especially the OT, I thought: those Israelites were the “chosen” and they weren’t any better than I am—worse, even!! Of course the inspiration of the holy Spirit works not only in those who wrote Scripture but fortunately, the Spirit works for those who read with a heart to know the truth. Eventually, I realized, though the Israelites were God’s chosen people, they were just like you and me and they sinned. Thank God that He takes care of our sin through the redemption of Christ Jesus His Son!</p>
<p>Lk 24:45-47</p>	<p>So whether or not Paul knew of the innumerable people in the future all over the world who would read the truth of the Spirit in his words, the Scriptures are read now and will be until the end of time.</p>
<p>Footnote: Col 2:1</p>	<p>This letter was to be read in Laodicea, a town about 11 miles from Colosse. Most of the letters written by Paul and the other Apostles and Scripture writers were meant to be read by more than one small church or Christian community. They were universal, containing information and instruction that is valuable to all who read them, now, as well as when and for whom they were written and addressed.</p>
<p>Footnote: Col 2:2 See Ro 11:25; Col 1:26</p>	<p>The word, “mystery,” refers back to Colossians, chapter 1, verse 26 and to Romans, chapter 11, verse 25. We must remember that Paul’s use of the word, mystery, is to describe to his readers the purpose of God which would be unknown to man except by revelation. The word mystery here refers to something formally hidden or obscure that has now been revealed by God for all to know and understand.</p>
<p>Footnote: Col 2:3</p>	<p>Paul stressed knowledge in this letter because he was showing how wrong the Gnostics were. Their use of “special knowledge” was heretical, because they emphasized “knowledge” as “the” means of salvation. Paul insisted that the believer (in Christ and His Salvation) possessed genuine knowledge—but the Gnostic possessed only heresy and was totally wrong in his belief.</p>
<p>Footnote: Col 2:5 See 1Co 5:3</p>	<p>Paul may be confined to a prison cell, or just in another city, but in his heart and spirit, he is with the Colossians to whom he writes this letter. This was true with all the letters he wrote to the people he loved, as a father loves his children, and in his heart he is with them. In the Apostle’s life were periods of isolation and loneliness and the cause of some of his suffering.</p>

<p>COLOSSIANS 2 : 6 – 12 v.8 v.9 v.11 v.12</p>	<p>So then, just as you received Christ Jesus as Lord, continue to love in Him, rooted and built up in Him, strengthened in the faith as you were taught, and overflowing with thankfulness. See to it that no one takes you captive through hollow and deceptive philosophy, which depends on human tradition and the basic principles of this world rather than on Christ. For in Christ all the fullness of the Deity lives in bodily form, and you have been given fullness in Christ, who is the head over every power and authority. In Him you were also circumcised, in the putting off of the sinful nature, not with a circumcision done by the hands of men but with the circumcision done by Christ, having been buried with Him in baptism and raised with Him through your faith in the power of God, who raised him from the dead.</p>
<p>Footnote: Col 2:6 Read 1Tim 6:20-21 Read Col2:20</p>	<p>The believer's intimate, spiritual, living union with Christ is mentioned by Paul repeatedly on this letter. Paul wrote to Timothy a warning that could be implied here to caution believers that because of their intimate union with Christ they must "guard what has been entrusted to your care. Turn away from godless chatter and the opposing ideas of what is falsely called knowledge, which some have professed and in so doing have wandered from the faith." Paul wrote in this letter to the Colossians, in verse 20 of this chapter, "Since you died with Christ to the basic principles of this world, why, as though you still belonged to it, do you submit to its rules."</p>
<p>Personal Comment: See Gal 4:3 Eph 4:23-24 1Pe 1:3 Dr. Lutzer Col 2:7 Isa 6:9-10</p>	<p>Before we knew Christ, we, too, were in slavery and subject to the basic principles of this world, that is, knowledge without Christ. How profoundly comforting, blessed and assured it is to know Him! To know Christ Jesus, the true light and Redeemer and through Him to learn trust in God the Father. What a gift!</p> <p>In a recorded sermon, I heard Dr. Lutzer say that when you are born again, something changes inside of you, and you truly become a new person! And this knowledge is based and rooted in faith as Paul goes on to write, "as you were taught..." That is why I wrote (above), "this life would seem hopeless but for two things: Christ and the Bible: really only one and that is Christ." However, we need to be taught! We need to learn!</p>
<p>Col 2:6</p>	<p>We were taught as infants to speak, think and eventually to read. Words are the framework of thought, therefore it is through the words of the Bible, (and true Bible teachers and preachers) that we are taught.</p> <p>In these words from Paul, as with the words of the Old and New Testaments, we are able literally, to live and mature in Christ, as we are "rooted and built up in Him." The building blocks are words which are written for us to be "strengthened in faith" as we are taught. This results in our being able to overflow with gratitude that our Lord is in control!</p>
<p>Jn 1:29; 8:12; 15:19; 16:33; 18:36 Read Jn 14:1</p>	<p>So we do not really need to be fearful of the horror that the media brings into our homes, even though we have compassion on those who are hurting. Actually, it has already been declared to us in this Holy Book, the Bible. Jesus Himself comforts us: "do not let your hearts be troubled. Trust in God; trust also in Me." Trust is the antidote for a troubled heart.</p> <p>Though Paul and John caution their readers about false teaching, particularly Gnosticism, we can understand that whatever teachings of the world, regardless of what they are labeled are just as false now as in the first century. If we stretch our minds for this wisdom to include not only what is taught as false religion, but what the world in general accepts as truth.</p> <p>I do not want to get into a discussion about these atrocities, but simply to indicate that the</p>

Jn 12:31	world is under the influence of its Prince, the devil. It is valuable to realize that whatever happens here on earth, heaven is our home! Always remember these words of Christ: "I have told you these things so that in Me you may have peace. In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world."
Jn 16:33	
Footnote: Col 2:8 Gal 4:3-9; Col 2:20	In this concept of "the basic principles of the world" Paul means the false teachings which were elementary and religious, that is, full of rites, rituals and mystery. Paul was counteracting the Colossian heresy, which in part taught that for salvation one needed to combine faith in Christ with secret, mysterious knowledge and with man-made regulations, rites and rituals concerning such physical and external practices as circumcision, certain practiced taboos on eating and drinking, and the observance of religious festivals, complete with specific activities.
Personal Comment:	One of the great deceptions of the devil is that we need the endless and diverse rituals of man-made religion in order to prove our devotion and obedience so we can "work" our way into heaven. Not true. We need Christ!
See Gen 3:1-19	There is in us a deep desire for maintaining a level of control in life. It is called pride. We seek ways and means to govern our spiritual, mental, emotional and physical environment. Hence, we feel comfortable in a religion that has a large number of "dos" and "don'ts" because this set-up gives us a relatively tangible guide to judge our moral fiber. This type of religion gains a large, universal membership. Organized religion gives us this false sense of security. When we follow the rules it is like being able to eat our cake and have it too. Or at least we can pretend that works that way.
Dr. Lutzer	As Dr. Lutzer says, "It all began in Genesis, chapter 3." And we love to attempt to make bargains with God. But we do not love to be obedient. The only real and effective sacrifice we can make is in repentance and obedience. The only bargain or covenant is in surrendering our heart, mind, body and soul to God in love. And the only real saving redemption is in believing in the Atoning sacrifice of Jesus Christ. That "good" thief did not get down off his cross and do any of the many things required by various religions and cults. Yet, he is the first believer (in Christ's kingship and Salvation) recorded in Scripture to have entered paradise!
Lk 23:39-43	
Footnote: Col 2:9 Eph 2:2 Heb 10:5-18	The word, "fullness," in the language and philosophy of the Gnostics meant the sum of the supernatural forces controlling the fate of people. Those forces are explained by Paul in Ephesians, where he writes about the power of the "prince of the air" (Satan) and the evil forces at work in the world. In this verse of Colossians, however, the fullness is the declaration that the very essence of deity was present in totality in Jesus' human body.
Footnote: Col 2: 10-12	In the Israelite faith, circumcision was a sign that the individual stood in covenant relation with God. While this is the only reference where circumcision is associated with baptism, some see the passage as implying that, for the Christian, water baptism is the parallel sign of the covenant relationship.
Personal Comment:	In a sense, this "circumcision done by Christ," establishes that all believers, male and female, receive this new covenant relationship with God. It seems, in the Old Testament, that women were somehow included in the covenant relationship with God by association, as long as they were a daughter, wife, relative, slave or servant of a circumcised male. Talk about second-class citizens! Or perhaps because they were submissive already in that culture, they didn't need a sign to signify their relationship to God.

<p>COLOSSIANS 2 : 13 – 15</p> <p>v.15</p>	<p>When you were dead in your sins and in the uncircumcision of your sinful nature, God made you alive with Christ. He forgave us all our sins, having canceled the written code, with its regulations, that was against us; He took it away, nailing it to the cross. And having disarmed the powers and authorities, he made a public spectacle of them, triumphing over them by the cross.</p>
<p>Personal comment:</p>	<p>The power of these words makes me breathless with awe. That God made this rebirth possible in the person of His Son (and in His perfect design and will), for us sinners! Every time I read words similar to these in Scripture, I experience the same sense of gratitude and thrill—and the realization of God’s love for <u>me</u>! It took many years for me to comprehend this love God has for us. All I was taught about love made no sense until I was able to accept, fully, the love of God: first as Father Creator then as Son Redeemer. I’m not leaving out the Holy Spirit here. Perhaps because of the creative mind God gave me, I have always been aware of the influence and power of the Holy Spirit in my life. I didn’t always understand it, but simply knew it was there.</p>
<p>Footnote: Col 2:14</p>	<p>The “written code” is actually a business term, meaning a certificate of indebtedness in the debtor’s handwriting. Paul uses it as a designation for the Mosaic law, with all its regulations, under which everyone is a debtor to God.</p>
<p>Footnote: Col 2:15 See Eph 6:12</p>	<p>Not only did God cancel out the accusations of the law against the Christian, but He also conquered and disarmed the evil angels (powers and authorities), who entice people to follow asceticism and false teachings about Christ. (An ascetic is one who practices strict self-denial as a measure of personal and spiritual discipline.) The picture to which Paul is referring is that of conquered soldiers stripped of their clothes as well as their weapons to symbolize their total defeat. He continues with military analogy, “triumphing over them,” which literally means “leading them in a triumphal procession.” The metaphor recalls a Roman general leading his captives through the streets of his city for all the citizens to see as evidence of his complete victory. That Christ triumphed over the devil and his cohorts is seen in several Scriptures.</p>
<p>2Co 2:14; Mt 12:29; Lk 10:18; Ro 16:20</p>	
<p>Personal Comment: See Eph 6:12</p>	<p>Paul’s use of military terms and concepts should be a constant reminder to us that we are in a spiritual war, waged on earth <u>and</u> in the heavenly realms. In Ephesians we read, “...our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world (here on earth) and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms.” Paul wrote, “not against flesh and blood.” He is cautioning us to not lash out against human opponents as though they were the real enemy! He tells us not to assume that the battle can be fought by using merely human resources.</p>
<p>Job 1:6-12; 2:1-6</p>	<p>It is really jarring to human thought when we read, “the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms.” Somehow we don’t think of evil authorities and powers as being in the heavenly realms. But the apostle Paul wrote in accordance with the inspirations of the Holy Spirit of God. So there can be no doubt that he meant what he wrote as truth.</p>
<p>2Co 12:2</p>	
<p>2Cor 5:8</p>	<p>In 2Corinthians Paul wrote about being “caught up to the third heaven.” This “third heaven” is synonymous with paradise, where those believers who have died are even now “at home with the Lord.” The nature of the inexpressible things that Paul heard remains unknown to us because this is something Paul was not permitted to tell.</p>
	<p>So we assume Paul wrote about “the spiritual forces of evil in heavenly realms” as the Holy Spirit gave him to write. It is for us to contemplate the meaning here and meditate upon it,</p>

<p>Comment continues:</p>	<p>asking for the enlightenment of the Holy Spirit. For that is how the indwelling Spirit of God works in the mind and heart of the born-again believer. The Holy Spirit not only inspired those who wrote Scripture, but we, who read it in the desire to know, are also inspired by the Spirit of God to understand and acquire the wisdom written there.</p>
<p>Jn 3:18 Ps 51:10-12; Isa 6:9-10; Jn 3:16-17; Rev 7:14-17</p>	<p>Oh, how good it is to know that God is in control—that Christ triumphed over Satan and fallen angels. It seems like such a waste for humans who refuse to believe in the redemption of Christ and therefore are condemned already. Yet, the power of salvation, redemption and atonement of Christ is so great that even if the most vile sinner were to repent and believe, he or she would be saved! That is how awesome is our God and Savior!</p>
<p>Rev 12:12 Ro 11:32-36, v.34 Isa 40:13;42:1-9; Rev 19:15-16 Lk 12:31</p>	<p>We look at our beautiful world crumbling around us because of one assault after another of indescribable cruelty and evil. Our hearts grow sick and terror lurks in the dark corners of our very lives. Some of us live nightmares and we cry, “God, where are You?” It is truly a test of faith not to be sucked into corruption and despair. It is hard to see a loving Father God in all this chaos. But, “who can know the mind of God?” Or, “who has been His counselor?” If we knew the answers to these many questions that we have about God’s purpose in this crazy world, we would not have to have faith or trust. But, we are, after all, God’s creatures and we are left in the dark, so that we may seek Him and choose to believe.</p>
<p>See Eph 2:1</p>	<p>With belief in the salvation of Christ, comes rebirth. We are given a new, re-born spirit which allows us to grasp a deeper comprehension about truth—and the gift of the indwelling Holy Spirit who gives us the ability to understand the wisdom we read in Scripture. If we choose not to believe, we then accept the consequences of spiritual death. Though we may feel very much alive, we are spiritually dead in our trespasses and sins. Literally, the walking dead!</p>
<p>Eph 4:23 2Pe 3:8</p>	<p>The enlightenment received through the Holy Spirit allows us to recognize as true that “with the Lord a day is like a thousand years and a thousand years is like a day.” God’s time is not like our time. We humans have a tiny bit of control over that split second called “now present.” Eternity, however for God is now-present eternally! God is now-present continuously since before the beginning and after the end of time as we know it.</p>
<p>Mt 19:17 See Eph 2:8</p>	<p>Jesus said, “Why do you ask Me about what is good? There is only One who is good. If you want to enter life, (spiritual life) obey the commandments.” God alone is good and all other goodness derives from Him. Even our obedience, when we choose to obey is not to establish one’s own merit before God but to be an expression of true faith. When we realize that even our own quality of life is a blessing of grace given to us by God, how then can we question God’s purpose in how the world is run? This is the time of trials. “Therefore rejoice you heavens and you who dwell in them! But woe to the earth and the sea, because the devil has gone down to you! He is filled with fury, because he knows his time is short.”</p>
<p>Jn 16:33</p>	<p>As we approach the end times, God withdraws His influence and allows the devil his last stand. If this is a shocker, remember Jesus said, “I have told you these things, so that in Me you may have peace. In the world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world.” Just before His death on the cross, Christ Jesus affirms His final victory—He has overcome the world and its evil—it is now just a matter of time, but the victory has been won for all who believe in the salvation of Christ.</p>
<p>Isa 40:13; Ro 11:34</p>	<p>When we are told that God is in control, it is true. Before time began, all creation—human beings, the universe, and as a result of disobedience, damnation and salvation—the beginning and the end, was “in the mind of God.” It is beyond us to comprehend, so we must</p>

Mt 11:28-30	either go mad—or trust that God knows what He is doing and praise Him in gratitude that we do have salvation in the atonement of Christ. Concentrate on these words that Jesus speaks to us. “Come to Me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and humble in heart and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy and my burden is light.”
See 1JN 5:1-5	
See Col 1:15-20	Remember, Paul wrote to a society and culture somewhat different from ours. Colosse was under the political power of the Roman Empire. Many Christians in those fledgling churches were originally Jews. Some were Greeks and some were from other ethnic origins. They all brought with them concepts and practices from various religious beliefs. It was as hard for them to erase their traditional thinking, after being exposed to the teachings of Christ from the Apostles, as it is for many of us today. We humans—and especially the Jews of the first century—have a tendency to want our religion to be a combination of belief in Christ and the traditions we knew before. Also, because we are designed by God to have free will and a big helping of pride, we want to maintain a portion of control over what we believe. In this epistle, Paul strives to “counter-act the false teaching at Colosse,” which included the Gnostic heresy (that had all kinds of special knowledge, mystery and ritual in their religious philosophy) and the Judaizers (who wanted a religion that required a man to become a Jew first, especially in circumcision and then accept Christ). They were all of the “Christ and whatever” group that Paul had to expose.
COLOSSIANS 2 : 16 – 23 v.18 v.19 v.20 v.22 v.23	Therefore do not let anyone judge you by what you eat or drink, or with regard to a religious festival, a New Moon celebration or a Sabbath day. These are a shadow of the things that were to come; the reality, however, is found in Christ. Do not let anyone who delights in false humility and the worship of angels disqualify you for the prize. Such a person goes into great detail about what he has seen, and his unspiritual mind puffs him up with idle notions. He has lost connection with the Head, from whom the whole body, supported and held together by its ligaments and sinews, grows as God causes it to grow. Since you died with Christ to the basic principles of this world, why, as though you still belonged to it, do you submit to its rules: “Do not handle! Do not taste! Do not touch!”? These are all destined to perish with use, because they are based on human commands and teachings. Such regulations indeed have an appearance of wisdom, with their self-imposed worship, their false humility and their harsh treatment of the body but they lack any value in restraining sensual indulgence.
Footnote: Col 2:17	The ceremonial laws of the OT are here referred to as “a shadow of things to come,” because those laws symbolically depict the coming of Christ, so any insistence on the observance of such ceremonies as were synonymous with the OT laws is a failure to recognize that their fulfillment has already taken place. This element of the Colossian heresy was combined with a rigid asceticism, as verses 20-21 reveal.
Footnote: Col 2:18	Humility in which one delights is of necessity “false humility” and mocks sincere humility. In their “false humility,” the heretics believed that man was so beneath God that He (God) could only be worshipped in the form of the angels that He created. What utter nonsense! In the Book of Hebrews, we read that “it is not to angels that He (God) has subjected the world to come,” that is the future kingdom. In the Psalm we read, “what is man that You (God) are mindful of him, the Son of Man (Jesus Christ) that You care for Him? You made Him a little lower than the heavenly beings (angels) and crowned Him with glory and honor.” The author of Hebrews is trying to dissuade his readers from turning back to Judaism. He shows that Christ, as bearer of the new revelation, is superior to angels who had participated in bringing the revelation at Mount Sinai, where Moses received the law from God. By the Second
Heb 2:5-9 Ps 8:4-6	

	<p>Century, Gnosticism had conceived a list of spirit beings that supposedly emanated from God. And it was believed that God could be approached only through these angels or spirit beings.</p> <p>Paul uses the term, “disqualify,” which depicts an umpire or referee who excludes from competition any athlete who fails to follow the rules. The Colossians were not to permit any false teacher to deny the reality of their salvation because they were not delighting in mock humility and in the worship of angelic beings. Some of these false teachers professed to have seen visions. Paul cautions the people not to believe such fabricated lies.</p>
<p>Personal Comment:</p> <p>Jn 8:44</p>	<p>Have you ever heard of the controversy in times past of the question about how many angels could dance on the head of a pin? It boggles the mind that people could be so gullible. Often, these same people were the elite and educated whose imaginations were puffed up and fueled by the devil himself, who is the “father of lies.” And in the media today (TV, books, painting, etc.,) how often do we see syrupy-sweet depictions of angels, usually quite feminine in form?</p>
<p>The Dictionary of the Bible See Col 2:18 American Heritage Dictionary</p>	<p>Worship of angels was probably due to Jewish influence. The Biblical concept of these heavenly beings is in general remarkably restrained when compared to Jewish literature. These mythological allusions in turn influenced apocalyptic literature. The word, apocryphal is defined as writing that is of questionable authenticity. It is false and contains counterfeit concepts and principles. However, this “imagined truth” has been generally accepted throughout history as true representations of angels.</p>
<p>Lk 20:36</p> <p>Mt 22:23-35; Mk 12:18-27; Ac 4:1-2; 23:6-10 Dan 8:16;9:21; Jude 9 Rev 12:7</p>	<p>Jesus is speaking of the new age to come in which there will be no marriage, no procreation and no death—for those who take part in the resurrection of the righteous. He compares the resurrected saints to angels by saying, “they can no longer die; for they are like the angels...” God created the total number of angels once, whereas He told mankind to pro-create. Therefore, there is no need for angels to be male and female, as we understand gender. Yet, those angels depicted in Scripture appear as male and have masculine names. It is quite obvious that an angel sent by God would have to be male in appearance and voice to be believed, in that ancient culture, especially.</p>
<p>Dt 4:16</p>	<p>We are left to wonder why the typical worldly depiction of angels has evolved to have an appealing female form and voice. “Mother Earth,” a pagan concept as old as time, is probably the model for these imagined angelic concepts. We are warned: “do not become corrupt and make for yourselves as idol, an image of any shape, whether formed like a man or a woman.”</p>
<p>Isa 6:9-10; 29:9-13</p>	<p>Much of this letter that Paul wrote to the Colossians warns against false religion (man-made rules and regulations that are based on the fiction of man’s creative mind) which was influencing the growing Christian church in Colosse.</p> <p>Remember, after the last of the OT prophets, there were about 400 years of virtual silence from God, until John the Baptist and then Jesus Christ came on the scene and spoke to those who were hungering and thirsting for a real relationship with their Lord God. Many Jews at the time of Christ were spiritually dead because of the emphasis their religious leaders and teachers placed upon rules and regulations. These men, the high priests, priests, Pharisees, Sadducees, scribes, rabbis, etc., should have known better because God was very clear in the words He had given to the prophets and other writers of Scripture. But the underlying reason God became silent was because of the blatant disobedience, especially of these men, as well as the general population of Jews who they were supposed to lead.</p>

<p>1Sa15:22; Ps 40:6; 51:16; Pr 15:8; Hosea 6:6; Mt 9:13; Heb 10:5-18 1Jn 4:10</p> <p>Ro 3:19-31</p>	<p>Isaiah and the other prophets spoke of the danger of these man-made additions to the law, which was given to Israel through Moses by God. A great deception of the devil is to influence us to add onto the basis of belief given to us by Jesus Christ with rules, rituals, regulations, sacraments, sacrifice, etc. The prophets of the OT warned against this human weakness; Christ in the gospels warns us; so do Paul and the other NT writers. This whole problem is beautifully expressed in Romans. The God-given law is just, but one is saved by belief in the atonement of Christ alone!</p>
<p>Mt 23:4; Lk 11:46</p>	<p>But mankind, with the willing help through deception of the devil, wants to add to this beautiful, perfect plan of God's salvation. And if we look around at the idiotic nonsense that is substituted for true faith, we are appalled that people can be so deceived and gullible!</p>
<p>Footnote: Col 2:19-23</p>	<p>The central error of the Colossian heresy is that they "lost their connection with the Head"—with Christ! The heresy is a defective view of Jesus Christ, in which He is believed to be less than deity! How blind and absurd! This letter was written in AD 60, just about 30 years after Christ was on earth doing miracles , teaching, changing many peoples lives—the Messiah who had been predicted throughout the OT and lived on earth performing miracles, was sacrificed on the cross for mankind—Yet these men sought to bring Him down in order to exalt themselves. And didn't Lucifer do the same thing? And look where it got him!</p>
<p>(v.20)</p>	<p>(For the "basic principles" delineated in this study, see page 12, Col 2, verse 8 and footnote.)</p>
<p>(v.21)</p>	<p>Paul draws attention to the strict ascetic nature of the rules and regulations of the Colossian heresy by writing, "Do not handle! Do not taste! Do not touch!" These prohibitions the OT laws to the extreme! An ascetic is a person who practices strict self-denial as a measure of their spiritual discipline. These ascetics were austere in appearance, manner and attitude.</p>
<p>(v.23)</p>	<p>The following is a rather detailed analysis of the Colossian heresy. 1. It appeared to set forth an impressive system of religious philosophy. 2. It was, however, a system created by the false teachers themselves. It was self-imposed rather than being of divine origin. 3. The false teachers attempted to parade their humility. 4. This may have been done by a harsh asceticism that brutally misused the body.</p>
<p>Mt 23:1-7; Mk 12:38-39; Lk 20:45-46</p>	<p>Paul's analysis is that such practices are worthless because they totally fail to control sinful desires. The self-imposed worship was instituted by the false teachers themselves, who had created the regulations of their heretical system. These worship practices were not from God.</p>
<p>Dr. Lutzer</p>	<p>There is a story that Dr. Lutzer tells about two brothers who became monks. One read his Bible and lives as the Lord said. He was devout but happy and blessed others with his love of god. The other shut himself away as a hermit, deprived himself of creature comforts, whipped his body regularly and was convinced he had rid himself of the sins of the flesh. He felt that he was righteous and free of all the temptations that consume those who were weak and had not chastised themselves. There came a day when the first monk was honored and elevated to become a leader. Eventually he was made a bishop of the church. When the second brother heard of this honor and promotion, he became so jealous that he renounced the church and the monastic life. He went off to live a life of sin.</p>
<p>Personal Comment: Isa 64:6</p>	<p>It is through Christ and our belief and trust in the Lord to be our strength, that our battles with Satan, sin and our own weak sin-nature are won. There is no way we can fight against sin on our own power!</p>

Pastor Fletcher	<p>Before we continue with Colossians, I'd like to paraphrase parts of a sermon by Pastor Fletcher. The sermon was based on Philippians, chapter 4, verses 13-19. Pastor Fletcher was talking about the term, "sweet-spot." It is used in various sports to signify the best place on the bat, club, racket, etc., to hit the ball, to have the greatest impact on the ball and the least sting or vibration on the hands. Pastor compared the "sweet-spot" in sports to the Christian life lived in peace. According to Paul in Philippians, He practiced and "learned the secret of being content in any and every situation." Paul experienced this peace or contentment because he discovered the basic need we all have to be dependent upon God for the things that only God can provide. In the midst of poverty, abuse and neglect is where Paul experienced his "sweet-spot" or peace in truly living the Christian life as exemplified by Christ Himself. Pastor concluded his sermon by stating that the very place where God gives His power is when we are in a position of want and in need of help.</p>
Phil 4:10-12	
Jn 14:6	
Mt 7:8 (Paraphrased from KJ Open Bible)	<p>What a lesson there is in these words. I Pray that you who study Scripture will come to know that our sufficiency for life comes from the power and love of Christ. The next chapter is the key chapter of this epistle. It could be entitled, Rules for Living. The key words of chapter 3 are the "Preeminence of Christ." Paul links the three themes of Colossians together by showing their cause and effect relationships. Because believers are "risen with Christ," they are to put off their old way of life and put on the new way of life as shown to us by the teachings of Christ. Living this new life will result in holiness in all relationships. The focus of chapters 3 and 4 is our submission to Christ and the practical application of our faith because of what Christ does through us, His instruments.</p>
<p>COLOSSIANS 3 : 1 - 11 v.3 v.5 v.7 v.9 v.10 v.11</p>	<p>Since, then, you have been raised with Christ, set your hearts on things above, where Christ is seated at the right hand of God. Set your minds on things above, not on earthly things. For you died, and your life is now hidden with Christ in God. When Christ, who is your life, appears, then you also will appear with him in glory. Put to death, therefore, whatever belongs to your earthly nature: sexual immorality, impurity, lust, evil desires and greed, which is idolatry. Because of these, the wrath of God is coming. You used to walk in these ways, in the life you once lived. But now you must rid yourselves of all such things as these: anger, rage, malice, slander, and filthy language from your lips. Do not lie to each other, since you have taken off your old self with its practices and have put on the new self, which is being renewed in knowledge in the image of its Creator. Here there is no Greek or Jew, circumcised or uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave or free, but Christ is all, and is in all.</p>
Footnote: Col 3:1-10	<p>Paul uses the word, "then," to link the doctrinal section of the letter with the practical section, just as it does in Romans 12:1; Ephesians 4:1; and Philippians 4:1. Here in Colossians, chapter 3, verses 1-10 set forth what has been described as the standing and the state of the Christian. The "standing" statements describe the believers' position in Christ. He and she are dead (v.3); they have been raised with Christ (v.1); they are with Christ in heaven, that is, "hidden with Christ," (v.3); he and she have "taken off the old self" (v.9); and have "put on the new self" (v.10). The "state" of the Christian indicates what the believer is to do as a result of being "in Christ." He and she are to set their hearts and minds on things that are above this world (vv.1-2); they are to put to death practices that belong to their earthly nature (v.5); and they are to rid themselves of practices which characterized their former spiritually-dead self (v.8). In summary, Christians are called upon to become in daily experiences what they are positionally in Christ.</p>
See Ro 6:1-13 (v.4)	<p>The word, "appears" refers to Christ's second coming.</p>

Footnote: Col 3:11	buried with Him through baptism into death in order that just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, We too may live a new life.
<p>COLOSSIANS 3 : 12 – 17</p> <p>v.14</p> <p>v.16</p> <p>v.17</p>	<p>A barbarian was someone who did not speak Greek and was thought to be uncivilized. Scythians were known especially for their brutality and were considered by others as little better than wild beasts. They came originally from what is today (as of 1995) south Russia. However, Paul emphasizes that Christ transcends all barriers and unifies people from all cultures, races and nations. Such distinctions are no longer significant. Christ alone matters.</p> <p>Therefore, as God’s chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience. Bear with each other and forgive whatever grievances you may have against one another. Forgive as the Lord forgave you. And over all these virtues put on love, which binds them all together in perfect unity. Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, since as members of one body you were called to peace. And be thankful. Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly as you teach and admonish one another with all wisdom, and as you sing psalms, hymns and spiritual songs with gratitude in your hearts to God. And whatever you do, whether in word or deed, do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through Him.</p>
Footnote: Col 3:12 See Dt 4:37 1Pe 2:9 Eph 1:4	Israel was called “God’s chosen people’ and so is the Christian community. Divine election is the calling of God to all peoples. It is the individual’s choice to respond to this call by recognizing and confessing one’s own sin and believing in the salvation of God’s provision, the atonement of His Son, Jesus Christ. Divine election is a constant theme in Paul’s letters but the Bible never teaches that it dulls human responsibility. On the contrary, as this verse shows, it is precisely because the Christian has been elected to eternal salvation that he must put forth every effort to love the godly life. For Paul, divine sovereignty and human responsibility go hand in hand.
Footnote: Col 3:15-16	“The peace of Christ” is the attitude of peace that Christ alone gives—in place of bitterness and quarrelsomeness. This attitude is to “rule,” literally to function like an umpire in all human relations. The “word of Christ” refers especially to Christ’s teaching, which in the time of the writing of this Colossian letter was transmitted orally, because the NT had not yet been written and completed, collected together, compiled into one testament and eventually printed and published. But “the word of Christ” by implication includes the OT as well as the NT. Some of the most important doctrines were expressed, at that time, in Christian hymns, which are now preserved only in Paul’s letters. “Psalms” refers to the OT psalms, some of which may have been set to music by the young church at that time. However, “Psalm” could also describe a song newly composed for Christian worship. Often, the words “psalm” and “hymn” are used interchangeably in the original Greek text. (The NT was mainly written in Greek.)
Eph 5:14; Php 2:6-11; Col 1:15-20; 1Ti 3:16	A “hymn” was a song of praise, especially used in a celebration. These hymns were used like the OT psalms that praised God for all that He is. A “song” recounted the acts of God and praised Him for them, much like the OT psalms thanked God for all that He had done.
1Co 14:26 Mk 14:26; Heb 2:12 Rev 5:9; 14:3;15:3	The final verses of Chapter 3, in which Paul gives rules for the Christian household, lead to Chapter 4, with further instructions and final greetings.
Personal Comment: COLOSSIANS 3 : 18 – 25 v.22	<p>Wives submit to your husbands, as is fitting in the Lord. Husbands, love your wives and do not be harsh with them. Children, obey your parents in everything, for this pleases the Lord. Fathers, do not embitter your children, or they will become discouraged. Slaves, obey your earthly masters in everything; and do it, not only when</p>

<p>v.23</p> <p>v.25</p>	<p>their eye is on you and to win their favor, but with sincerity of heart and reverence for the Lord. Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord, not for men, since you know that you will receive an inheritance from the Lord as a reward. It is the Lord Christ you are serving. Anyone who does wrong will be repaid for his wrong, and there is no favoritism.</p>
<p>Footnote: Col 3:18-25</p> <p>See Eph 5:22-6:9</p>	<p>Paul records an aspect of mutual respect and submission for husbands and wives, children and parents and masters and slaves. To submit meant to yield one's own rights. There is an element of obedience here, but the word, "obey" does not appear in Scripture with respect to wives, though it does with respect to children and slaves. (Apparently the addition of "obey" in marriage vows is manmade and not from Scripture.) Paul shows that this is not a one-sided submission, but a reciprocal relationship. Christ's love for His church is the example of how a husband should treat his wife and children. In fact, the husband ought to devote himself to his wife's good. To give oneself up to death for the beloved is a more extreme expression of devotion than the wife is called to make. (These Scriptural rules ought to be part of the marriage vows.)</p>
<p>COLOSSIANS 4 : 1 – 6</p> <p>v.4</p> <p>v.6</p>	<p>Masters, provide your slaves with what is right and fair, because you know that you also have a Master in heaven. Devote yourselves to prayer, being watchful and thankful. And pray for us, too, that God may open a door for our message, so that we may proclaim the mystery of Christ, for which I am in chains. Pray that I may proclaim it clearly, as I should. Be wise in the way you act toward outsiders; make the most of every opportunity. Let your conversation be always full of grace, seasoned with salt, so that you may know how to answer everyone.</p>
<p>Footnote: Col 4:1</p>	<p>Paul neither condones slavery nor sanctions it. Rather, he calls on both slaves and masters to show Christian principles in their relationship and thus to attempt to change the institution from within.</p>
<p>Footnote: Col 4:6 See Eph 4:9</p>	<p>"Seasoned with salt" refers to the use of salt as a preservative and salt is also used, universally, to enhance the flavor of food. Consequently, the Christian's way of life and conversation is to be wholesome. It is to show the benefit of being a believer here on earth and salvation of the spirit, after this earthly life is over, and in that sense, salt is symbolic of the belief in Christ which preserves life after death. The believer's whole life is to be symbolically characterized as the "salt of the earth."</p>
<p>Personal Comment: Mt 5:13</p>	<p>In Matthew, Jesus explained to the Apostles what He meant about salt and light. He said to them, "You are the salt of the earth. But if the salt loses its saltiness, how can it be made salty again? It is no longer good for anything, except to be thrown out and trampled by men." Most of the salt in Israel at that time came from the Dead Sea and was full of impurities which caused it to lose its saltiness. Jesus identified the disciples as "the salt of the earth" and they were to diffuse their learning from Him to the people of the world—through their teaching and writing—as salt is diffused through food, to flavor and preserve.</p>
<p>COLOSSIANS 4 : 7 – 18</p> <p>v.9</p> <p>v.10</p> <p>v.11</p>	<p>Tychicus will tell you all the news about me. He is a dear brother, a faithful minister and fellow servant in the Lord. I am sending him to you for the express purpose that you may know about our circumstances and that he may encourage your hearts. He is coming with Onesimus, our faithful and dear brother, who is one of you. They will tell you everything that is happening here. My fellow prisoner Aristarchus sends you his greetings, as does Mark, the cousin of Barnabas. (You have received instructions about him; if he comes to you, welcome him.) Jesus, who is called Justus, also sends</p>

<p>v.12</p> <p>v.13</p> <p>v.15</p> <p>v.17</p> <p>v.18</p>	<p>greetings. These are the only Jews among my fellow workers for the kingdom of God, and they have proved a comfort to me. Epaphrus, who is one of you and a servant of Christ Jesus, sends greetings. He is always wrestling in prayer for you, that you may stand firm in all the will of God, mature and fully assured. I vouch for him that he is working hard for you and for those at Laodicea and Hierapolis. Our dear friend Luke, the doctor, and Demas send greetings. Give my greetings to the brothers at Laodicea, and to Nympha and the church in her house. After this letter has been read to you see that it is also read in the church of the Laodiceans and that you in turn read the letter from Laodicea. Tell Archippus: "See to it that you complete the work you have received in the Lord." I, Paul, write this greeting in my own hand. Remember my chains. Grace be with you.</p>
<p>Footnote: Col 4: 7-9</p>	<p>Tychicus was an associate of Paul who traveled as his representative. At about this same time, Paul wrote a short letter to Philemon, who was a believer in Colosse. He was a slave owner and the reason Paul wrote to him was to encourage him to forgive his run-away slave, Onesimus, who had come to know Paul in prison and Paul consequently converted him. Now the young slave was willing to return to his owner and Paul encourages Philemon to welcome him back as a returned slave and a fellow Christian.</p>
<p>Footnote: Col 4:10</p>	<p>Aristarchus was a Macedonian, who was mentioned three times in the Book of Acts. He was with Paul in Ephesus and therefore was known also in Colosse. Both he and Tychicus were with Paul in Greece. He accompanied Paul on his trip to Rome. Mark, who is mentioned here, was the author of the second Gospel, and though he and Paul had disagreements in the past, they were together again now that Paul was in prison in Rome.</p>
<p>Footnote: Col. 4: 11-12</p>	<p>Paul mentions the men who were working and praying with him, to strengthen him and to help towards his needs and the needs of others. Essentially without their care Paul would have been virtually left without concern in the Mamertine prison in Rome. Here, Paul writes about Epaphras, who obviously had great compassion for his fellow Christians in Colosse, for he prayed that they would be steadfast in their faith in God and mature in their assurance of salvation.</p>
<p>Personal comment: KJ Open Bible See Ro 8:28-39</p>	<p>When I was in the early stages of becoming a Christian, I asked several people who were active church members, "what does "assurance" mean?" I got a lot of different responses but no definite answer. However, I continued to study Scripture and seek answers to my many questions. Over the years, I have certainly come to understand the peace of that word, "assurance! The King James Open Bible defines the word, assurance, as the security of knowing that one's name is written in heaven. Wow!</p>
<p>Footnote: Col 4:14-15</p>	<p>Luke wrote about Paul in the Book of Acts, having often accompanied him on his travels. He was with Paul in Rome during his imprisonment, where this letter to Colosse was written. Demas was a Christian worker who would later desert Paul. Nympha was probably a Laodicean. For the most part, the early church had no buildings or special place to meet. It was customary for the early Christians to meet for worship and instruction in the homes of fellow Christians.</p>
<p>Footnote: Col 4:16-17</p>	<p>The practice of the early church was to read Paul's letters aloud to the assembled congregation. The letter from Laodicea may have been the letter Paul wrote to the Ephesians, which was a circular letter making the rounds from Ephesus to Laodicea to Colosse. Also, Paul reminds Archippus "to complete the work" that he had received from the Lord.</p>

<p>Personal Comment:</p>	<p>It is interesting to contrast our current mania for communication to what was available to the people in the first century. Most of the “communication” gluts our very existence with so much useless and deceptive verbiage. Thank God for the Bible! But, even in parts of the Bible, where the customs and the personalities of the authors overpower the actual information, we are overwhelmed by the names, genealogies and repetition. Oh, well.</p>
<p>Footnote: Col 4:18</p>	<p>Paul’s custom was to dictate his letters and then write a few words of greeting in his own hand writing at the end of the letter. His personal signature and obvious hand writing were the guarantee of the genuineness of the letter.</p>
<p>KJ Open Bible: Intro to Colossians</p>	<p>What have we learned from this study of Colossians? The following is based on the introduction to Colossians, found in the KJ Open Bible. This letter to the Colossians is considered to be the most Christ centered book in the Bible. Christ is the head over all power and authority. He is the head of the church; the Lord of Creation and Sustainer of all things; the Author of Reconciliation. Christ is the basis of the believer’s hope; the source of the believer’s power for a new life; Christ is the believer’s Redeemer and Reconciler; the embodiment of full deity; the resurrected God-Man, and Christ is the all-sufficient Savior. Paul felt responsible in teaching that “Christ is all and in all.”</p>
<p>Col 3:11</p>	<p>Paul felt responsible in teaching that “Christ is all and in all.”</p>
<p>Personal Comment:</p>	<p>Many of us have experienced being born into a specific religion with its own set of laws on how to live and work on earth in order to get to heaven. Some of these religions have little or no basis in Christ Jesus or the Bible. Thank God that He has delivered many from these false, heretical cults and religions. The truth is Christ!</p>
<p>Jn 3:16</p>	<p>Many of us have experienced being born into a specific religion with its own set of laws on how to live and work on earth in order to get to heaven. Some of these religions have little or no basis in Christ Jesus or the Bible. Thank God that He has delivered many from these false, heretical cults and religions. The truth is Christ!</p>
<p>Heb 1:3</p>	<p>In the Book of Hebrews, Christ is described as the “Radiance of God’s glory and the exact representation of His Being.” When man forgets this fact and begins to welcome the deceptions in his own mind, we can see how very wrong and evil are the results. Christ assures us by saying, “I am the way and the truth and the life. No man (or woman) comes to the Father except through Me.”</p>
<p>Jn 14:6</p>	<p>Christ assures us by saying, “I am the way and the truth and the life. No man (or woman) comes to the Father except through Me.”</p>
	<p>The long and convoluted read I travelled during these seventy-plus years, seems now to have been so much wasted time; so much abuse received and given; so much wrong believed! Yet, here I am, cleansed, forgiven, blessed and waiting for translation into an eternity with our Lord—and through His power, I am sharing with you some of what I have learned along the way.</p>
	<p>Thank You, Father God, for redeeming me on this earth to the extent that You have blessed me with spiritual rebirth through belief in the redemption and salvation of Your Son, Jesus Christ. And You have given me something to do with the mess I had made of my life before I believed! These studies are a small gift back to You, Father for the blessings You have given to me in being my inspiration and reason to write. It is my deepest desire that You, Lord, draw people to read these studies—that You, Lord, are in fact the publisher and distributor of the work, which is done in the name of Jesus. Amen.</p>