

THE BOOK OF COLOSSIANS • The Greatness of Jesus Christ
Lesson #3 • Colossians 1:24-29 & 2:1-7
The Mystery of God: Once Hidden – Now Revealed!
•HANDOUT•

► This lesson will focus on the fullness of the Word of God and how the New Testament Church has had been the recipient of the revelation that previously was kept hidden.

Paul begins his discussion by telling his readers that he rejoices in what he has had to suffer for the sake of Christ, because of the enormous benefit it has had on others, such as the believers in Colosse. Paul is writing this from a Roman jail.

Colossians 1:24 [NLT] • I rejoice when I suffer for you in my body, for I am participating in the sufferings of Christ that continue for His body, the church.

Q: What had Paul suffered from the time of his conversion on the Road to Damascus to this point where he is sitting in a Roman jail?

Q: Why would Paul say that he was rejoicing because of all this suffering?

Acts 9:15-16 • But the Lord said, "Go, for Saul is my chosen instrument to take my message to the Gentiles and to kings, as well as to the people of Israel. And I will show him how much he must suffer for my name's sake."

Q: When Paul said he was participating in "the sufferings of Christ" what did he mean?

Q: Could this statement be interpreted to mean that the Cross was an "affliction or suffering" that Jesus Christ was forced to endure?

Colossians 1:25-27 [NLT+NIV] • God has given me the responsibility of serving His church by proclaiming his entire message to you. This message was kept secret for centuries and generations past, but now it has been revealed to God's people. For God wanted them to know that the riches and glory of Christ are for you Gentiles, too.

And this is the mystery—the secret: Christ lives in you. This gives you the hope of Glory.

Q: What facts do we learn about Paul's ministry from this passage?

Q: What was this “mystery”– the “secret” that was kept hidden for centuries and generations? Was this some kind of treasure to be discovered or an enigma to be figured out?

Q: Why was this knowledge kept hidden and why did it take centuries and generations for this secret mystery to be revealed?

Q: What are the two aspects of this mystery of Christ in us, which Paul writes about?

1. First, God always intended for the Gentiles_____

Isaiah 49:6 • *[Father God is speaking to His Anointed One, the Messiah]* He says, "You will do more than restore the people of Israel to me. I will make you a light to the Gentiles, and you will bring my salvation to the ends of the earth."

2. The second aspect of the Mystery is the fact that Jesus_____

This mystery, now revealed, forms the very foundation of Paul's Apostolic ministry ...

Colossians 1:28-29 [NLT] • So we tell others about Christ, admonishing everyone and teaching everyone with all the wisdom God has given us. We want to present them to God, perfect in their relationship to Christ. That's why I work and struggle so hard, depending on Christ's mighty power that works within me.

Q: What was the stated **focus** of Paul's preaching?

Q: What is Paul's stated **purpose** of his ministry?

Paul eloquently gives a rebuttal to this false teaching in 1 Corinthians:

▶ 1 Corinthians 1:25-28 • This foolish plan of God is wiser than the wisest of human plans, and God's weakness is stronger than the greatest of human strength.

Remember, dear brothers and sisters, that few of you were wise in the world's eyes or powerful or wealthy when God called you. Instead, God chose things the world considers foolish in order to shame those who think they are wise. And he chose things that are powerless to shame those who are powerful. God chose things despised by the world, things counted as nothing at all, and used them to bring to nothing what the world considers important.

Q: What does Paul mean when he said he “admonished” and “taught?”

Finally, Paul begins to address the Colossian Heresy ...

Colossians 2:1-3 • I want you to know how much I have agonized for you, and for the church at Laodicea, and for many other believers who have never met me personally. I want them to be encouraged and knit together by strong ties of love.

I want them to have complete confidence that they understand God's mysterious plan, which is Christ himself. In Him lie hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge.

Q: What is Paul referring to by saying that he agonized for the Believers at Colosse and other churches such as Laodicea?

Q: Why did Paul include the city of Laodicea?

Q: What was Paul's stated goal for the two churches?

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

Q: Why does Paul speak of God redeeming mankind from the curse of sin, as a “mysterious plan?”

Colossians 2:4-7 • I am telling you this so no one will deceive you with well-crafted arguments. For though I am far away from you, my heart is with you.

And I rejoice that you are living as you should and that your faith in Christ is strong.

And now, just as you accepted Christ Jesus as your Lord, you must continue to follow Him. Let your roots grow down into Him, and let your lives be built on Him. Then your faith will grow strong in the truth you were taught, and you will overflow with thankfulness.

Q: What warning does Paul give the Believers at Colosse?

Q: We have already established that Paul had never been to Colosse, so in what way is Paul “with the believers” at Colosse?

Q: We know there was a great heresy spreading through the Christian churches in the Asia Minor churches, including both Colosse and Laodicea. **Why does Paul say that he rejoiced that the Colossian believers were living as they should and their faith in Christ was strong?**

Q: When Paul says that the Colossians *'received Christ Jesus as their Lord,'* he uses a verb for *"received"* which specifically denotes the receiving of something which was part of a tradition. Why is that significant?

Q: What does Paul say will protect these believers from deception?

Q: How does a person let their "roots" grow down into Jesus?"

Q: What does Paul say about the idea of a reward?

Paul's encouragement sounds very much like one of Jesus' parables:

Luke 8:4-9; 11-15 • One day Jesus told a story in the form of a parable to a large crowd that had gathered from many towns to hear him:

"A farmer went out to plant his seed. As he scattered it across his field, some seed fell on a footpath, where it was stepped on, and the birds ate it. Other seed fell among rocks. It began to grow, but the plant soon wilted and died for lack of moisture. Other seed fell among thorns that grew up with it and choked out the tender plants. Still other seed fell on fertile soil. This seed grew and produced a crop that was a hundred times as much as had been planted!"

When he had said this, he called out, "Anyone with ears to hear should listen and understand." His disciples asked him what this parable meant.

"This is the meaning of the parable: The seed is God's word. The seeds that fell on the footpath represent those who hear the message, only to have the devil come and take it away from their hearts and prevent them from believing and being saved. The seeds on the rocky soil represent those who hear the message and receive it with joy. But since they don't have deep roots, they believe for a while, then they fall away when they face temptation. The seeds that fell among the thorns represent those who hear the message, but all too quickly the message is crowded out by the cares and riches and pleasures of this life. And so they never grow into maturity.

And the seeds that fell on the good soil represent honest, good-hearted people who hear God's word, cling to it, and patiently produce a huge harvest.



IN THE NEXT LESSON, PAUL GIVES STERN WARNING ABOUT THE COLOSSIAN HERESY ...

Next Time ◆ **Lesson #4**

"The Colossian Heresy & the Cross"

