

*Teachings on*

*The Book of*

*Colossians*



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## Background of Colossians

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OK, let's turn to Colossians chapter four. We're into the last church epistle, the only one that has not been covered on a Corps night yet and I'm excited about getting into this. So we are going to start at the end and work our way back to the beginning. Now, we're going to chapter four. I was thinking how those of you, especially at Indiana and Emporia who are in your first year in-residence about this time, these workings of the Word ought to become real alive and vital to you. I've heard more of the Interim Corps talk to me this year as well as the people that are in their second in-residence year about, how much more they learn now than they did before. I think this is the general consensus. It's not that I teach any differently than Dr. Wierwille did or that I teach any differently this year than I did last year. I think it's your growth in the Word. And I think as perhaps this time in the year for those of you that are in your first year in-residence, these things ought to start taking on a new picture. And you get the greatness of God's Word living in your heart and you start working it for yourself. And it's not just another class. But it's the greatness of God's Word. I was thinking how the first and great commandment is to love God with all your heart, soul, mind and strength. But you've also got to love God's Word. It's one thing to just look at the Word and say boy isn't that great. And you have a desire to teach it. You have a desire to be able to present it to others, share it. But you've got to love it. It's God's Word. And just to see how it fits together and patterns in your life. And you've got to love people the same way.

And then, you've got to fight for your own mind first of all, you've got to fight for the other believers in the Body of Christ, and you've got to fight for the Mystery and that's where the Colossians fell short, is that they were not fighting for the Mystery. And perhaps they weren't fighting for other believers, because they're a part of that one Body that Mystery and they weren't fighting for their own minds consequently. And if you really love God and love His Word and really love people, you're going to fight to make known that greatness of the Mystery, you're going to fight for your own mind. You're going to fight for God's people. As Rev. Martindale was sharing earlier, I thought again of how, sometimes in life there are some very traumatic situations happen or maybe a number of things, or a tornado comes through and screws up the area and you have a very devastating situation. But you can never let your mind get lazy. Again, you've got to fight for your mind. You've got to learn to stay that mind and not let those things get to you. The great stayed mind. I've been thinking about teaching the Renewed Mind again. We've been letting the video do it too long, but I'd sure love to get in and teach that again because it's..., you know, some of the great principles for how you lock in your mind and no matter what happens, no matter what people say, no matter what environmental situations happen, you still stay your mind on God.

I always remembered Bishop Pillai saying that you come home, you see your house burning down, what do you do? You get all excited, frustrated, and down in the mouth, and everything else. No. You just say, that's OK, we'll build another one. Now that was Bishop's illustration, but it's a great illustration to my mind, that no matter what's happening, your house is on fire, or anything else, you can still stay your mind, and He's going to keep you in perfect what? Peace, that's right. And you've got to fight for your mind and fight for God's people, the one Body, fight for the Mystery. And none of us are perfect. At least I haven't arrived yet. Maybe a few of you have but I'm still working on it. And I think we've just read something about that in Philippians, but I don't go around and brag about my problems. I don't go around and dwell on the mistakes that I made. But I don't deliberately sin either. I don't deliberately sin. I've got to learn to lock my life into God's Word and His heart and His throne room. I've got to learn to so discipline my mind and so what if I make a mistake then, once in a while. I'm sorry, I ask God for forgiveness and He is faithful and just to do what? [To forgive]. Right! See. I know I'm not perfect, well, I've never claimed to be perfect but we don't dwell on our mistakes, that's the key. See. You don't dwell on those things. And if you make a mistake, and you recognize it, you move on. See. God's faithful and just to forgive you. So, that's all a part of fighting for your mind. As long as you're able to do that, you'll never get to that place where you do one of two things; where you feel you just never make a mistake, and that's wrong because we all make mistakes, none of us are perfect, or you get to the place where you condemn yourself. And that's one of the

big things Dr. Wierwille hit at Sound Out '84 where you don't want to condemn yourself because that's what gets you into a lot of the problems and the soup that you do get into. So, love God, love His Word, love God's people and fight for your mind, fight for God's people and fight for the Mystery. And that's where the Colossians I believed messed up. They were not fighting for the greatness of the Mystery that Paul had once taught to them...or Epaphras or whoever.

If you have your map, Colossae is located about a hundred miles inland from the Aegean Sea. You know where Ephesus was in Asia. Well, Colossae is also in Asia, but it's about a hundred miles inland, to the east of the Aegean Sea. As a matter of fact, there are three towns nearby. One is Hierapolis, one is Laodicea and the third one is Colossae and they're all mentioned here in Colossians four, verse 13.

**Colossians 4:13:**

For I bear him record....

Talking about Epaphras who was one of them that ministered to the Colossians, who had taught the Word to them,

**Colossians 4:13:**

...I bear him record, that he hath a great zeal for you, and them *that are* in Laodicea, and them in [where?]Hierapolis.

Hierapolis, there was another town nearby called Thereapolis too. [Laughter] But, this one was closer. Laodicea, Hierapolis and then Colossae was the third one. Now, keep those in mind. Colossae was a Phrygian city, perhaps a frigid city at this time on the Word. At least in some respect. Now Phrygian, we've covered that before. Phrygian. Remember some of them lived in Galatia, that province, and some of them lived in Asia. So you have it crossing over the border, but they came from a certain cultural background. But they were living in that area. Now, Colossae was a Phrygian city. It was in the eastern part of the province of Asia. And it was in the Lycus valley. The Lycus valley in the province of Asia. It commanded the approach to a pass in the Cadmus mountain range. The Cadmus mountain range and it lay on the main road between Ephesus and the Euphrates. Now, where is the Euphrates? That's way over in Mesopotamia. So, it was a long road. But Colossae lay on that road between Ephesus and the Euphrates. The Lycus river runs through the city of Colossae. Then, the Lycus river joins with the Maeander river which meanders through Asia into the Aegean Sea, about a hundred miles west of Colossae. The towns of Colossae, Laodicea and Hierapolis, those three, we just read about, lie very close together in the Lycus valley. Now, if you get a picture, the Lycus valley where the Lycus river runs is just south of the Maeander river. I guess it would be like the Ohio river flowing into the Mississippi, only the Lycus isn't as big as the Ohio. It is a shorter river. But anyway, you've got one river flowing into the other. Well, these three towns were on that one little river, the Lycus and it flowed into the Maeander. Maeander, did I spell that for you, M-a-e-a-n-d-e-r. Maeander.

Now, they lie very close together, these three cities. Hierapolis lies on the north side of the valley, about six miles from Laodicea. Laodicea lies on the south side of the valley and also to the south side of the river. Colossae is south east of both towns lying thirteen miles from Hierapolis and ten miles from Laodicea. Now, that whole area, the Lycus valley was subject to violent earthquakes. Although large portions of Asia Minor have always been in danger of earthquakes. The region around the Lycus valley is noted by ancient writers as a chief theater of earthquake activities. Major earthquakes were recorded in this region around 125 B.C., 12 B.C., 60 A.D. and 235 A.D. There was one in 1720 A.D. that killed about 12,000 people, but there have been others too. It's interesting that one happened in 60 A.D. which was either shortly before or shortly after this epistle was written. I think, shortly before, at least about the same time. Another interesting feature affecting Colossae is that the Lycus river is full of travertine, the calcite mineral which forms stalagmites and stalactites in caves. This is resulted in beautiful travertine formations in the Lycus valley. The travertine however, coats, covers and finally buries ancient monuments and artifacts. The Roman scholar Pliny wrote that Colossae had a river which turns brick into stone, Pliny was probably referring to the Axsu, a stream that contains even more travertine than the Lycus river. The Axsu flows into the Lycus river at Colossae.

Now, during the Persian period which was before Christ, Colossae was a very important city. As a matter of fact, the Greek author Xenophon who lived from 434 to 355 B.C. wrote during the time of the Persians..., or that during the time of the Persians when they controlled Colossae, he described Colossae as a populous city, prosperous and great. So, at least at that time, some 500 years before Christ, or 400 years, it was a very populous, great, magnificent city. After the Persian period, the glory of Colossae began to wane. This was in large part due to the growth of the two nearby cities, Laodicea and Hierapolis. Now watch this. Laodicea was not even founded until 260 B.C., but it became politically more important than Colossae and by the time of Christ had become the chief city of its district. In 133 B.C. the kingdom of Pergamum which included the cities of Colossae, Laodicea and Hierapolis was bequeathed to the Roman Senate. The three cities thus became part of the newly organized Roman province of Asia. Under Roman rule, Laodicea continued to grow in political importance. Now Laodicea was the one that wasn't founded until much later.

Also, during the Roman empire, the road that led north to Sardis and Pergamum and that had contributed so much to the importance of Colossae ceased to be used as a major route, because of a new road built through Laodicea. They put a four lane highway through Laodicea, so they stopped using the old route through Colossae. It's a figure of speech. Hierapolis also became..., now that was Laodicea that became the political center, but Hierapolis also became more popular than Colossae due to its being more physically beautiful and also because of the mineral streams there that gained a reputation for their healing qualities. People seeking pleasure and health went to Hierapolis instead of Colossae. So now, you see Hierapolis and Colossae becoming very important cities, I mean, Hierapolis and Laodicea, becoming very important cities. Hierapolis was the healing center, health center and pleasure center, whereas, Laodicea was the political center, the seat of government and Colossae was a nice little textile town. That's what it was. Superseded politically by Laodicea and culturally by Hierapolis, and with the main road going to the north moved out of town, the city of Colossae lost its preeminence. The Greek geographer Strabo, who lived at the time of Christ, described Colossae as a small town. Although it was still recognized as a city and was an active center of the textile industry. The name Colossae came from collossinus, a Latin word, the name of the color dark red, of a dyed wool, peculiar to that area. In other words, they dyed their wool collossinus. They dyed their wool, a dark red, collossinus. And that's how the city got its name. As the city declined after the first century, the name Colossae was replaced with Colassae, change the "o" to an "a", I overemphasized that. Colossae, became Colassae. Change the "o" to an "a", in the second "o". Now Colassae, comes from Kolasis, and it means punishment or chastisement and may make reference to the earthquake destructions as well as to the general decline of the city. Early in the fifth century, Orosius the historian wrote: "In Asia, three cities, Laodicea, Hierapolis and Colossae have fallen by earthquakes. During the seventh and eighth centuries A.D. Colossae was overrun by Serasen and in the eighth century the site of Colossae was abandoned and the stones of the buildings were quarried by neighboring towns. In 1835, William J. Hamilton identified the uninhabited ruins of Colossae, some of which can be seen today, although the site has never been excavated." So like most biblical cities, it's ruins today.

Language and culture. The majority of the population of Colossae, Laodicea and Hierapolis was composed of native Phrygians and Greek settlers. There would have been some Romans present, particularly in Laodicea because of the political government there. There would have also been Judeans present. You know how I know that? Because Seleucid..., the Seleucid king Antiochus III, [remember him?] Antiochus III, who reigned from 223 to 187 B.C. moved 2,000 Judean families out of Mesopotamia and Babylon and settled them in Lydia and Phrygia. Phrygia, this is the area. His motive for moving the Judeans was to stabilize the areas of Lydia and Phrygia where sedition against him had arisen. He moved them to the places that lie most convenient and promised them the use of their own laws, houses, lands for farming, freedom from taxes for ten years, protection from enemies and free grain until the ground they were tilling started to produce. Of course, you know with all that calcite material there, you might have a little problem growing in certain places. But, nevertheless farming still was a major industry there. Once Judeans were settled in Phrygia, other Judeans came and settled there. Flaccus the Roman procurator of the province of Asia, in 62 B.C., a very important date. 62 B.C. Why is that so important? Because that's around the time this epistle was written. Remember there was an earthquake in 60 A.D. Here is 62 A.D. I'm going to tell you about something else and it's right around this time that this epistle was written. In 62 A.D. Flaccus the Roman procurator forbade the Judeans that lived there, forbade them to send gold to the temple. When they continued to send gold, Flaccus seized 20 pounds of gold from the district in which Colossae lay of which Laodicea was the capital. If each Judean freeman had given only the half shekel

traditionally required that would calculate to a population of more than 11,000 Judean freemen; eleven thousand that could have been living there. Of course, 20 pounds was only the amount Flaccus confiscated and probably was not the total amount of gold collected from the Judeans in the district. So, there could have been a lot of Judeans living in this area. The presence of Judeans in Phrygia is also attested to in Acts 2 on the day of Pentecost. Remember? There were devout men out of every nation under heaven, including men from Phrygia. Let me add something else here. Since they had this attitude of giving, with their Judean background,...had the attitude of sending gold to the temple..., would probably explain why there is nothing in Colossians on abundant sharing, because they did it. They were in the habit of giving. It's the only correctional epistle that does not mention abundant sharing. Now there were many languages spoken in Colossae. Phrygian which was the native language, Greek, Latin and Aramaic would have all been spoken. The epistle to the Colossians sent by the Apostle Paul would have originally been in Aramaic and quickly translated into Greek and possibly Latin for the benefit of the believers in Colossae that spoke those languages. There were many religions in Colossae, Laodicea and Hierapolis. The native Phrygian mother goddess Cybele, was worshipped as well as the standard Greco-Roman pantheon. In 29 B.C. Caesar authorized Asia and Bithynia to build temples to him and emperor worship quickly spread throughout Asia. There were also Judeans in Colossae and although no mention is made in the Word of God of a synagogue there, there were certainly enough Judeans in the city to have one. After Alexander the great conquered Asia Minor, Palestine, Egypt and Persia which would have been in the fourth century B. C., there was an influx of Eastern and Egyptian gods into Asia Minor. The Egyptian goddess Isis was so respected in the area that her image was placed on one of the coins of Hierapolis. As in the rest of the Greco-Roman world, in the first century B.C. and A.D. syncretism, a word that we've had before, the blending of Eastern and Western gods occurred, and there was also,...or there arose also and flourished, mystery religions that promised information that would give help beyond the grave. Professor John Whiteford wrote: "the syncretists, the mystics, the devotee, the puritan, would find a congenial climate in these regions of Asia minor." A religious practice uniquely mentioned in Colossians is found in Colossians 2:18. I'd like you to look at it.

**Colossians 2:18:**

Let no man beguile you of your reward in a voluntary humility and worshipping of angels, intruding into those things which he hath not seen, vainly puffed up by his fleshly mind.

The worship of angels was a unique practice at Colossae or in this area. As a matter of fact, it was strong throughout Phrygia being primarily an old Judean heresy. Angels figure prominently in the Old Testament. One author noted that some Judeans believed the entire activity of God in the world is mediated through angels. One could and some people did easily fall into the error that the angels should be worshipped instead of God, since they help men more than the eternal. That's what this author noted. Now all this is a form of gnosticism. The Gnostics believe that God was totally righteous, which he is, but that a God who was such, that began everything, could never be the God of the Old Testament. Therefore, from this God came certain emanations called aions or which these people called angels. And the God of the Old Testament was simply one of these aions. But he was bad in some ways and good in other ways. See? But he was not the original God of the God of heaven overall. So they believed that these aions or angels were mediators between God, the real God, and men. And that these angels were sometimes good, sometimes bad, sometimes this, sometimes that. But they were not God and they were not men. The wide spread nature of angel worship here is attested to by the fact that there are numerous Talmudic prohibitions against that form of religion, so the main stream Judeans didn't like it. Furthermore, angel worship did not stop after the epistle to the Colossians was sent. As a matter of fact, it became a Christian heresy. Michael, became the chief angel and protecting saint of Colossae, which of course laid the ground work for many other angels to develop in Christianity later on, under the control of Rome. Now, how Michael got to be the chief angel for Colossae is the subject of a Greek legend. An overwhelming inundation threatened, to destroy the Christian population of that city. They were fleeing before it in utmost consternation and imploring superior succour for their deliverance at this critical moment the archangel Michael descended from heaven, opened the chasm in the earth to which they still point, and at this opening the waters of the inundation were swallowed up and the multitude was saved.

Well, that's how Michael got to be their archangel. The council of the Christian church which was held in Laodicea in 363 AD condemned angel worship and called it idolatrous. Of course, which council was it, later on, in 451 was it, that really encouraged the use of idols and so on,...that it was O.K.? Well, anyway, here in 363 they condemned angel worship. Now this is not an ecumenical church council. This was a local one, in 363. Because that's between Nicea which was 325 and Constantinople in 381. This is a local one. Nevertheless, the worship continued. Theodoric sometime between 420 and 450 A.D. mentioned that it continued to infect Phrygia. Philosophy, like the various religions, found a home in the area around Colossae. As a matter of fact in Col. 2:8 you have the only occurrence of the word "philosophy" in the New Testament. It says...

**Colossians 2:8:**

Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ.

The only occurrence of this word in the New Testament... Although, there are philosophers mentioned in Acts 17:18. Those were the ones on Mars Hill. Now, Christianity in Colossae... The Bible does not state how Christianity first reached Colossae. There is evidence in the scripture that the Apostle Paul did go to Colossae, although he may not have been the first Christian to teach the Word of God there. The Apostle Paul spent over 2 years in Ephesus (remember?) on his third itinerary. And it was during this time that Paul could have visited Colossae if he had not been there earlier. It was while Paul was at Ephesus, that all they which dwell in Asia heard the Word of the Lord, both Judeans and Greek. And the Apostle Paul would have done some personnel follow-up work during that time. So it's very possible, he could have been in Colossae.

Besides that, the main road to the east from Ephesus went where? Through Colossae. Now the one north, you know, before went through Colossae but it went...later was moved to Laodicea. But this one, went through,...this is the east west road, went straight through Colossae. It was never moved. And it was only about a hundred miles away. Only four or five days travel by foot. So, those who argue that the Apostle Paul never saw Colossae,...the only scripture they have used is Colossians 2:1. I would like you to look at that.

**Colossians 2:1:**

For I would that ye knew what great conflict I have for you, and *for* them at Laodicea, and *for* as many as have not seen my face in the flesh.

Now, it doesn't say, as many others, "...as have not seen my face...," but that's how they read it. O.K.? This verse really doesn't say, one way or the other. Actually it says those of you and those of Laodicea and whoever hasn't seen my face in the flesh. Now, that "whoever" then, could include the Colossians and Laodiceans or it may not. We'll get to this verse later on and handle it in more detail but I think verse 2...

**Colossians 2:2:**

That their hearts might be comforted, being knit together in love, and unto all riches of the full assurance of understanding, to the acknowledgement of the mystery...

You see, the Colossians already knew it. Now he is correcting the error there, but he wants others to know about it, mainly "those who have not seen my face in the flesh." That's a point to consider. Well, in chapter one verse 7, talk about the grace of God in truth.

**Colossians 2:7:**

As ye also learned of Epaphras our dear fellowservant, who is for you a faithful minister of Christ.

At least, Epaphras had been there and had taught them many things. Now whether Paul had been there, we could argue from now until doom's day. It won't make any difference. We still know they heard the

Word. They knew the Mystery, but somehow, they'd gotten away from it. Now, the Apostle Paul intended to visit Colossae after he was released from prison at Rome. I know that because Philemon 22 says that, and Philemon was from Colossae. Although, the Word never says whether he went there or not after he left Rome, we know he did travel to Asia and could have easily seen Colossae. Now the epistle to the Colossians. Colossians, like Ephesians and Philippians and Philemon was written while Paul was a prisoner at Rome. Tychicus, who carried Ephesians carried Colossians at the same time. I would like you to look at,...keep your finger here in Colossians,...but look at Ephesians 6:21.

**Ephesians 6:21, 22:**

But that ye also may know my affairs, *and* how I do, Tychicus, a beloved brother and faithful minister in the Lord, shall make known to you all things:  
Whom I have sent unto you for the same purpose, that ye might know our affairs, and *that* he might comfort your hearts.

See, it was Tychicus, who Paul was sending with the epistle, to comfort the people. Now in Colossians four, in verse seven:

**Colossians 4:7, 8:**

All my state shall Tychicus declare unto you, *who is* a beloved brother, and a faithful minister and fellow-servant in the Lord:  
Whom I have sent unto you for the same purpose, that he might know your estate, and comfort your hearts.

Again it is Tychicus and there really was not enough time here for Tychicus to run over there, to run back (I guess he could have), but he could have taken them together too. See? And it would make more sense because when Paul did send them, he didn't send them there to go in and then sneak out, but to stay there and work with the people, comfort their hearts. But verse 9 says, he sent him with who?

**Colossians 4:9:**

With Onesimus, a faithful and beloved brother, who is *one* of you. They shall make known unto you all things which *are done* here.

So, Onesimus is going with him and look at Philemon again, Philemon ten.

**Philemon 10-13:**

I beseech thee for my son Onesimus, whom I have begotten in my bonds:  
Which in time past was to thee unprofitable, but now profitable to thee and to me:  
Whom I have sent again: thou therefore receive him, that is, mine own bowels.

So, it's very possible that here these two were heading for Asia carrying three epistles. Or, it's possible that Philemon followed after and that he had already sent Onesimus with Tychicus with the other two epistles. But anyway, they were all three written around the same time, as well as Ephesians which I believe Tertius took, and then Philippians. And it was Epaphroditus that took that one. So, at any rate, here you have the mail department in the first century. But isn't that interesting?

Now, the epistle..., we've got to look at Colossians again, chapter four, verse 16. Now, when they get this epistle it says:

**Colossians 4:16:**

And when this epistle is read among you, cause that it be read also in the church of the [what?] Laodiceans; and that ye likewise read the *epistle* from Laodicea.

Now, all of you have memorized the books of the Bible and you've never run across this epistle to the Laodiceans. Have you? O.K. And of course, in our work on Ephesians a couple years ago, Dr. Wierwille mentioned the possibility of Ephesians being the epistle also that was sent to the Laodiceans, because every church epistle was an encyclical, which meant it never went to one church and stopped. But, it went to them first, then it went to another church, then to another church and so it passed around. Copies were made, translations were made and it circulated. They were encyclicals.

Now, the epistle to the Ephesians deletes those words "en Ephesos", "in Ephesus", in many of the manuscripts. In other words, it still retains the blank. Where the church could write in it's own name...so to speak. Now look at the logic of this. If Tychicus is carrying Ephesians and Colossians, whether or not, Onenimus is carrying Philemon is immaterial... but Tychicus is bringing, let's say those two..., he's coming from Rome to Colossae. What's his first stop? Ephesus. Isn't it on the way? What's the next stop? How about Hierapolis? Oh yeah, that was thirteen miles away from Colossae. Laodicea was only ten miles away. So the next stop, 100 miles down the road, roughly, you come to Hierapolis. Then you come to, three miles further or six miles, I guess, 'cause you have to cross over the river and you come to Laodicea. Then you come to where? Colossae. Now, let's suppose that he dropped the epistle to the Ephesians, then he went on to Colossae. Both these are encyclicals. The epistle to the Ephesians, next stop Hierapolis, next stop, Laodicea and so now, you read the epistle that is coming from where? And you also likewise send yours over to where? Laodicea. And then what? Send it on to Hierapolis, send it back to Ephesus, send it any place, just send it! See. Now isn't that beautiful? I think that is the explanation for this epistle here and for the blank space in Ephesians. I just told you all the stuff that's in my notes here,...or the other possibility is that he read it to the Ephesians. Maybe a copy was made there. Then he traveled to Hierapolis, reads Ephesians to them; travels to Laodicea, reads Ephesians to them; then travels to Colossae, reads them Colossians first, because they needed that, then reads them Ephesians. [Laughs] So anyway...

Colossians, at any rate is part of the Mystery package of Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, written while Paul was a prisoner at Rome. The great Mystery is mentioned in each of these epistles. Now we've read it in Ephesians and Philippians and here in Colossians primarily, you see it in chapter one, verse 26 to 29 where it talks about the riches of the glory of this mystery which is Christ in you, the hope of glory. And in chapter two, where it talks about the acknowledgment of the Mystery, and in chapter four verse three, praying, you know..., for God would open a door of utterance to speak the Mystery of Christ. So, those three places particularly mention the Mystery. Colossians is a correction epistle and corrects the doctrinal error that arose in the church due to the failure of believing to adhere to the principle that are laid out in Ephesians. Philippians corrects the practical error, but Colossians corrects the doctrinal error. The major theme in Philippians, as you remember were likemindedness and joy, because they were not unified practically..., in the practical end. They were not holding together the one Body in their walk. But at Colossae, the believers were no longer holding the head, Christ. Now the doctrine for this, is given in Ephesians one, chapter one of Ephesians and in verse 22.

**Ephesians 1:22, 23:**

And hath put all *things* under his feet, and gave him *to be* the head [head] over all *things* to the church,  
Which is his body, the fullness of him that filleth all in all.

But the Colossians needed to hear that again. Now, the Colossians had been..., Asia, had heard some of this thing taught before, but now Colossians is written to correct doctrinal error because they were not holding that head, who was Christ. In Colossians chapter one, and in verse 18, it says it again, just like it said it in Ephesians.

**Colossians 1:18:**

And he [Christ] is the head of the body, the church: who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead: that in all *things* he might have the preeminence.

Christ is the head, and then in chapter two, verse 19, well verse 18, that way you have...

**Colossians 2:18, 19:**

Let no man beguile you of your reward in a voluntary humility and worshipping of angels, intruding into those things which he hath not seen, vainly puffed up by his fleshly mind, And not holding the Head, from which all the body by joints and bands having nourishment ministered, and knit together, increaseth with increase of God.

You see, they were not holding that head, Christ. Once believers lose sight of Christ as the head of the Body, there is no genuine way to maintain unity. You see, they had a problem with unity at Philippi, but at Colossae, it had gone up the neck further. You can have a pain in your body, but eventually, it gets to your head. Once the true doctrine is gone, believers fall prey to religious practices. The Colossians had, to some extent, fallen prey to the rudiments of the world. Right here in Colossians two. They weren't holding the head in verse 19. But in verse 20, it says:

**Colossians 2:20-23:**

Wherefore if ye be dead with Christ from the rudiments of the world, why, as through living in the world, are ye subject to ordinances, (Touch not; taste not; handle not; Which all are to perish with the using;) after the commandments and doctrines of men? Which things have indeed a shew of wisdom in will worship, and humility, and neglecting of the body; not in any honour to the satisfying of the flesh.

But you see, it's after the rudiments of the world. And that word "rudiments" refers to the ritualistic practices, the ceremonialism, the religion that replace the genuine doctrine of godliness. And it's significant that both the Aramaic and the Greek word that's used here, that's translated "rudiments", appears twice in Galatians, and twice in Colossians and in no other church epistle. Both correct doctrinal error, where they were into the rudiments, the religion, the ceremonialism, the ritual. In Colossians chapter two is the other place this word occurs.

**Colossians 2:8:**

Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments [the ceremonialism, the ritualistic practices, the religion] of the world, and not after [the head, who is] Christ.

The head is Christ and they were not holding the head in it's place, verse 18, they were substituting the worship of angels. That was their head. Now, remember, I started to tell you before that angels were neither God, nor men, they were those aions. They were somewhere between God and man. They were those spirit beings. The "god of the Old Testament", they called an angel or an aion. He was not the God who was overall, they said. That was part of their religion. It's angel worship. Now, if you start calling Christ an aion or an angel, which some of them did even in the later centuries..., they referred to Christ as one of these aions. The angel to them was a mediator, being neither God, nor men but is in between. But, Jesus Christ was both the son of God and the son of man and he had to be a man, a perfect human, in order to be that perfect sacrifice, the perfect sacrificer, the perfect high priest, perfect in every way, but he had to be one of the flock. He had to be one of us, a man. But he had to be a perfect man and that's why he had to be the son of God. To be the perfect mediator. Therefore, the Christology or knowing what Christ was in Colossians becomes very important. Because they were looking at him..., some of them, were looking at him as one of those aions; who's some kind of spirit being, which is a very Gnostic idea, nasty idea too. (Laughter) But, it was one of those Gnostic...or showed the Gnostic influence already at work in Christianity which support what led to the trinity later on. Look at Colossians 1, verse 15, this is Christology. It's what Christ is. Colossians tells you who he is. Verse 15:

**Colossians 1:15:**

Who is the...

Invisible God. Oh! He's an invisible aion somewhere between God and man. No. He is the *image* of the invisible God. Now, if he is the image of Him, is he God? No! I'll refer you to Mary Lawler's paper be coming out in *GMIR* in a month or two or three or four. But anyway, "image", she worked on that word. If he's God, then he is not "image". But if he is the image of God then he can't be God. He's only the image...

**Colossians 1:15:**

...image of the invisible God, the firstborn of every creature.

**Colossians 1:18:**

And he is the head of the body, the church: who is the beginning, the firstborn [now here, it defines first born, the first born] from the dead....

Christ is the firstborn from the dead. Now 16 and 17 are a parenthesis dealing with God, *Elohim*, the creator of the heavens and the earth. But Christ is the head of the Body, one of us, but the head of the Body of Christ..., now we're showing who Christ here...he is the image of God, because he is the son of God. He's the first born from the dead that these others are going to be getting up from the dead.

**Colossians 1:18:**

... that in all in all *things* he might have the preeminence.

**Colossians 1:19:**

For it pleased *the Father* that in him should all fullness dwell.

He is the image of God, what dwells in Christ? All fullness, what fullness.

**Colossians 2:9, 10:**

For in him dwelleth all the fullness of [what?] the Godhead bodily [dwells in Christ].

And ye are complete in him, which is the head [he is the head, the head] of all principality and power:

And it's, Colossians 1:27, Christ where? IN YOU! CHRIST IN YOU! That head is not some aion out some place in the atmosphere or stratosphere, he's not some angel out there some place else, but it's Christ where? IN YOU, THE HOPE OF GLORY. He is not some mythical being some place. He's not something in between God and man, but he is a perfect man. But he's a man, who is the firstborn from the dead, all the fullness dwells in him, he's the image of God, because he is the son of God, all the fullness of the Godhead bodily dwells in him. And, you are complete in him, because it's CHRIST IN YOU. Now, this is what Christ is according to Colossians. Verse 28.

**Colossians 1:28:**

Whom we preach, warning every man, and teaching every man in all wisdom; that we may present every man perfect in [the aions, no. In the angels, no. In...] Christ Jesus.

Boy, Oh Boy, Oh Boy! To present every man perfect, fully mature.

**Colossians 2:6:**

As ye have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord, *so* [do what?] walk ye in him.

**Colossians 3:1:**

If ye then be risen with Christ [what Christ? the Christ is not some aion, some angel out some place but it's Christ in you, the hope, the one who has the Godhead bodily dwelling in him, who is

the image of God. That one. You are living with him.], seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on [his own hand, (No!) Oh, he is seated at...] the right hand of God.

You know where they put the aions in Gnosticism? They say God is way out there and that all these aions are somewhere else. You know, doing their own little thing. Like you've got the aion of the Old Testament. You've got the aion of the Gospels and they're all separate from him, because, you know, they're not perfect, but he was, well anyway. Christ sitting where? Right hand of God. Not on his own hand. Then verse 16 of chapter 3:

**Colossians 3:16:**

Let the word of Christ [what word of Christ are we talking about in this book, the word of Christ in you, the word of the fullness of the Godhead bodily dwelling in Christ, the word that Christ is the image of God, that it's Christ in you, let that word...] dwell in you richly [let it dwell in you richly] in all wisdom; teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord.

Boy, oh boy, oh boy! That verse is the goal of this epistle; to get to the point where you let that word of what Christ really is, that he is the image of God, the fullness of Godhead bodily, that it's Christ in you, let that word of Christ in you dwell in you richly. See. In all wisdom, then teaching and admonishing one another.

The epistle to the Colossians brings the believers back to the true doctrine of the Mystery, it sets Christ back at it's proper place as head over the one Body. Christ is the head, not some angel out some place else. He's not your head. Colossians declares the truth. That's why all the saint worship is nothing but a take off from angel worship. All saint worship, relic worship. It's a take off, derivation, of this angel worship and you see, even though at the church council in 363 at Laodicea they condemn this, look how it's still spread throughout the church. Today, you've got all kinds of saints, angels, that are worshipped. It's nothing more than devil spirit worship. See. But those saints aren't our heads, Mary is not our head. Jesus Christ is the head of the Body, because he's the image of God, it's the fullness of Godhead bodily that dwells in him, and it's Christ in you! That's why. The Colossians declares the truth that the believer does not need to observe worldly ordinances, those religious things, since he is completely, completely, complete in Christ. Ephesians...key concepts..., Ephesians exhorts the entire Body of Christ to keep the unity of the spirit, the practical error manifested at Philippi was that the believers were not staying likeminded and joyful. Now Colossae. At Colossae, the believers were not holding the head, Christ. They were not firm on their knowledge of the great Mystery and they were not teaching the Mystery. That the Colossians needed to be reaffirmed in the great Mystery is obvious because this word *epignosis*; *epignosis*, which means what? A full, complete, precise, accurate knowledge, not just *gnosis*, knowledge, but a full precise, complete, accurate knowledge. It occurs four times in the book of Colossians, more than in any other epistle. It appears in Colossians 1:9 and 10 where it says...

**Colossians 1:9, 10:**

For this cause we also, since the day we heard *it*, do not cease to pray for you, and to desire that ye might be filled with the [*epignosis* of his will, the full complete...] knowledge of his will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding;

That ye might walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing, being fruitful in every good work, and increasing in the [*epignosis*, the full complete...] knowledge of God.

It is also in 2:2.

**Colossians 2:2b:**

...the acknowledgement of the mystery [that's the full precise, complete knowledge of the mystery, *epignosis*]...

And in Colossians:

**Colossians 3:10:**

And have put on the new *man*, which is renewed in [*epignosis*] knowledge after the image of him that created him.

We're to be renewed in the full, precise, complete knowledge, in the mind. And of course, 2:2 as I read, it's to be that full, precise, complete knowledge of the Mystery, that was deficient here at Colossae. Also Colossians 1:27, Christ in you, the hope of glory, where Christ is the head. Head is a very important concept; the key concept in Colossians. Also, the word "wisdom", *sophia*, because it's that full, complete knowledge which is the wisdom regarding the Mystery. That word *sophia* is used six times in Colossians, it's used seventeen times in I Corinthians where wisdom was a big issue, but all the other epistles, it's not used as much. Now the people at Colossae, not only needed to know the great Mystery, to have a full, precise complete knowledge of it, the wisdom regarding it. Or that Christ is the head, but they also needed to be bold in releasing it, in teaching it. The word teach, *didasko*, is used 11 times in the epistles. Three of those in Colossians. Similarly, the word *noutheteō*, you know nouthetic counseling means to warn, admonish, confront. It appears twice in Colossians out of the eight times in the entire New Testament. It's interesting this key verse we read in Colossians 3:16, where it says, "Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom, teaching and admonishing", both words are used in that verse, "one another". Teaching and admonishing in wisdom, *sophia*. There's wisdom also used in that verse. That's going to be a good verse, when we get around to it. And I've been cutting them out today, so we get lots of 'round to its. (Laughter) Alright. So those are the key concepts that you find. They not only needed to learn or know the Mystery, to be reminded of it, but they needed to learn to be bold in releasing it, teaching it, telling it, to be light bearers. See? Alright.

One other thing; the structure of Colossians. Colossians 1:1 and 2, this is letter A. Colossians 1:1 and 2; that's the Salutation. Letter B, if she screams let her be (Laughter) Alright. Colossians 1:3 to 8, prayer of thanksgiving for your affairs; that's why it's letter B. Prayer of thanksgiving for your affairs. Now letter C, indent further, this is introversion, now we go A, B, C, D, E, and then backwards, E, D, C, B, A. OK. Letter C is chapter 1, verses 9 to 23, prayer, to be filled with the knowledge of God's will. Prayer to be filled with the knowledge of God's will. Letter D, chapter 1, verses 24 to 29, labor for the doctrine of the Mystery. Labor for the doctrine of the Mystery. Letter E, chapter 2, verses 1 to 23, the whole chapter, conflict over the doctrine. Then below that, letter E again, straight below it, chapter 3:1 through 17, resolution of the conflict. And this a very powerful section of Colossians, because it's what you do; how to get back on the ball. And of course, that verse 16 is right in there; right in the climax of that whole section. Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly. Then, backwards, letter D, chapter 3, verse 18 through chapter 4, verse 1, labor for the practice of the Mystery. Then, letter C, backwards a little bit further, and that's Colossians 4:2 through 6, prayer for the knowledge of God's will to be made known. The letter B again, chapter 4:7 to 17, if you let her be, it'll be action for your benefit. Action for your benefit. Then, letter A, chapter 4 verse 18, the salutation. So, that's the structure of Colossians, it opens with the salutation in letter A and closes with one and letter B is prayer of thanksgiving for your affairs, but letter B at the end is action for your affairs or for your benefit. The action that he's going to take that will help them, as well as the prayer in the beginning. Then letter C, at the beginning is prayer to be filled with the knowledge of God's will, but letter C at the end is prayer for the knowledge of God's will to be made known, to be made known, to make it known and then letter D, labor for the doctrine of the Mystery and labor for the practice of the Mystery. And those will be two interesting sections. Then, letter E, conflict over the doctrine and resolution of the conflict which as I said is a very powerful section. A believer needs Colossians when he is not holding Christ as the head of the one Body. When he is not recognizing the power of Christ in you and when he is not walking in the wisdom and the full precise and complete knowledge of the Mystery. And when he is not teaching and confronting others with this knowledge. That's when the believer needs Colossians. And if the Mystery is going to live in our times, it needs to be both lived and proclaimed.

*Father, we sure thank you for the living Word in our times that we can live it, that we can proclaim it, teach it and share it with others that truly hunger and thirst after truth. We thank you again for the Corps, and for the wonderful evening we've had together, for Dr. and Mrs. Wierwille as they travel from Europe, for our Board of Trustees here at International Headquarters, and for all the work as it continues*

*throughout the world, this day and throughout the week that lie ahead of us. Thank you father in the name of your son Jesus Christ. Amen! God bless you!*

## The Structure of Colossians

A - SALUTATION - Col. 1:1 and 2

B - PRAYER OF THANKSGIVING  
FOR YOUR AFFAIRS - Col. 1:3-8

C - PRAYER TO BE FILLED WITH  
THE KNOWLEDGE OF GOD'S WILL - Col. 1:9-23

D - LABOR FOR THE DOCTRINE  
OF THE MYSTERY - Col. 1:24-29

E - CONFLICT OVER THE  
DOCTRINE - Col. 2:1-23

E - RESOLUTION OF  
THE CONFLICT - Col. 3:1-17

D - LABOR FOR THE PRACTICE  
OF THE MYSTERY - Col. 3:18-4:1

C - PRAYER FOR THE KNOWLEDGE OF  
GOD'S WILL TO BE MADE KNOWN - Col. 4:2-6

B - ACTION FOR YOUR (AFFAIRS OR)  
BENEFIT - Col. 4:7-17

A - SALUTATION - Col. 4:18

