

The Bible Companion Series

# *THE PRE-EMINENCE OF CHRIST*

**"And he is before all things, and by him all things consist.  
And he 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."**

Colossians 1:17,18

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## **A Study of the Letter to the Colossians**

**A Bible-Believing Study Guide**

**an AV 1611 Bible Companion**

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# Colossians Chapter One

## Paul's Prayer List

(Colossians 1:9-12)

### I. Introduction

#### A. Continuing to work through chapter 1 of Colossians

1. A city near to Laodicea (MAP)
2. Paul was previously forbidden by the Holy Spirit to go there – because God had someone else (Epaphras) who would do the job well!
3. But here he is writing to them, to help encourage them, and to straighten out some confusion they had about the Messiah
4. Many of Paul's epistles were for this purpose
5. LET the Bible do that to us! Straighten out our doctrine, and confusion!

#### B. Focus of this chapter is, What Christians Need to Know About Their Messiah

#### C. We are still in the greeting part of the letter by Paul

#### D. We now come to a very few lines (Col 1:9-12) where Paul writes out that he has been praying for the Colossians about – and if you blinked, you might miss the six vital things that the Church had need of.

### II. Preview

#### A. Paul Reason for Prayer. Paul starts here by saying, “For this cause...” (1:9)

1. He had a good reason to write these next few lines
  - a. That they had a great Christian testimony (1:4)
    - 1) Of their visible Faith
    - 2) And of them loving the saints
  - b. Without those two things being clearly evident, then Paul's prayers for the Colossians would be vastly different
  - c. This church qualified for these prayer requests
  - d. Some churches do not qualify
    - 1) See how Jesus speaks to the different churches in Revelation. So carnal, lukewarm, so in need of repenting
    - 2) See how Paul speaks to the church at Corinth – as carnal, and unable to learn what Paul wanted to teach them (1Cor 3:1,2)
2. Paul writes that he prays for them according to their spiritual needs – not physical
3. Isn't that unusual? Normally we pray for people's physical needs: health, jobs, need for a wife or husband, God to supply the finances towards a need, etc
4. Maybe we need to elevate OUR prayer requests – yes, for people's physical needs, but do not neglect their spiritual needs!

#### B. Paul's Unceasing Prayer “I do not cease to pray for you” (1:9)

1. Paul had a massive prayer life (2Cor 11:28)
  - a. As do all of God's great men and women (1Sa 12:23) “Moreover as for me, God forbid that I should sin against the LORD in ceasing to pray for you.”
  - b. And great churches (Acts 12:5)
  - c. And great ministers of the Gospel (Rom 1:9; Eph 1:16; Philp 1:4)
  - d. Prayer – constant, persistent, believing prayer - is for all Christians to make a vital part of their lives (1Thes 5:17)
  - e. Prayer is NOT the compliance with habit, dull and mechanical
  - f. It is NOT a petty performance

- g. It is not the repetition of words, guided by prayer-beads, or prayer-wheels
  - h. But the communing of your heart with the God of heaven
  - i. My favourite missionary was Adoniram Judson who wrote, "Arrange thy affairs (your daily schedule), if possible, so that thou canst leisurely devote **two or three hours every day** not merely to devotional exercises but to the very act of secret prayer and communion with God. Endeavour seven times a day to withdraw from business and company and lift up thy soul to God in private retirement."
  - j. Spurgeon wrote of the power of prayer: "All hell is vanquished when the believer bows his knee in importunate (unrelenting) supplication. Beloved brethren, let us pray. We cannot all argue, but we can all pray; we cannot all be leaders, but we can all be pleaders; we cannot all be mighty in rhetoric, but we can all be prevalent in prayer. I would sooner see you eloquent with God than with men. Prayer links us with the Eternal, the Omnipotent, the Infinite, and hence it is our chief resort. . . Be sure that you are with God, and then you may be sure that God is with you."
2. Paul gladly added these unknown men and women to his burden of prayer!
- a. These Colossian Christians, even though unknown to Paul personally, were still very dear to him as family he had not met yet!
  - b. It must have been amazing to hear of churches being started all over the world with such a right testimony!
  - c. Paul was not just writing words, but a yearning for them to have what they needed
  - d. Here was Paul WATERING the seed that Epaphras had planted!
3. This section records Paul's prayer-list for the Colossians, and hence for ALL churches
- a. To know God's will for your life? To do it
  - b. To living worthy of the Lord
  - c. To producing lots of fruit in every good work
  - d. To grow / increase in your own knowledge/personal relationship with the Lord
  - e. To seek for God to strengthen you with all might
  - f. To learning to be always thankful unto God

### **III. Message - Six Things Paul Prayed for (1:9-12)**

#### **A. For US (not just the Christians in Colosse) to be filled with the knowledge of God's will (Col 1:9; Eph 1:7; 6:6)**

- 1. To actually know God's will
  - a. Like John the Baptist knew it
  - b. Like Elijah knew it
  - c. Like Noah knew it
  - d. Like Sarah knew it
  - e. Like David knew it
  - f. Like Paul knew it
- 2. I know His WORD, and God invites me to seek His will!
  - a. Psa 40:8 I delight to do thy will, O my God: yea, thy law is within my heart.
  - b. Psa 143:10 Teach me to do thy will; for thou art my God: thy spirit is good; lead me into the land of uprightness.
  - c. Mat 6:10 Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven.
- 3. God's will has two layers to it
  - a. What God wills for all men: to be saved, to be saturated in the word, satisfied/content with where you are at, submissive to the authorities in your life, sanctified and godly in your life, and a soul-winner
  - b. What God wills for just you: suffering, place of service, gifting

4. Paul adds that we should know God's will wisely – not foolishly
  - a. In wisdom – don't be stupid about God's will (wisely consider whatever God asks you to be or do for Him)
  - b. And in spiritual understanding – God's will can ONLY be understood spiritually, not logically, or by sight and physical experiences (1Cor 2:12-16)
  - c. God will never show you to do something contrary to His written word:
    - 1) Like, tell a wife to divorce her husband so she can go out and preach!
    - 2) Or tell a teen to quit school, and disobey their parents so that they can marry their one and only love!
5. What do YOU know about God's will for you right now?
  - a. He wills you to live for Him (Col 3:23)
  - b. He wills you to live different than the world and culture around you (2Cor 6)
  - c. He wills you to walk with Him – spend time just with him, every day
  - d. He wills you to suffer sometimes (see Job and his wife)
  - e. He wills you to be willing to do what you do not want to do (see Jonah)

**B. That WE would walk worthy of the Lord, for His pleasure (1:10)**

1. Such a high calling being a Christian!
2. To be unworthy, would be someone who let Jesus down with our lives – fail Him
3. To be worthy, walk worthy, means to NOT let Him down – honour Him
4. Israel did NOT live up to their name
  - a. Israel... Prince with God
  - b. See 2Chron 7:14 – MY people, called by MY name
  - c. They let God down
5. Examples:
  - a. A child of a KING has a great responsibility to live UP to his name, and his calling – to be a prince
  - b. If you get hired by a company, they expect you to live worthy of that employment – no complaining, no loafing, no rebelling, not bad testimony – because your life now is reflecting on that company!
6. As a CHRIST-ian, you and I need to live up to THAT name by our testimony
  - a. NOT catholic, or Baptist, or Irish
  - b. But Christ-like
7. Our lives can bring Him pleasure/joy (Philp 2:13; Heb 13:21; Rev 4:11) – not shame, sorrow or grief

**C. That we would produce lots of fruit in every good work we attempt (1:10)**

1. Productive – children needs to be trained to be PRODUCTIVE citizens of our society – not drains or destructive
  - a. Normally, an employee is hired to be fruitful – to make money for the company
  - b. A Christian is saved NOT to make money for anybody, but yet STILL to be productive!
2. Producing Spiritual fruit in their life
  - a. Raising spiritual children
  - b. Winning people to Christ
  - c. Influencing our world with the word of God
3. Not just fruit, but LOADS of fruit – like our single apple tree, produces LOADS of apples (fruits)

- a. Paul prayed for Colosse to be fruitful
  - b. So should WE be fruitful
  - c. That's why we stay busy being evangelistic – to bear spiritual fruit
4. Are you just a spectator, or an active, fruitful participant in this church body of believers?

**D. That we would increase in our own knowledge/personal relationship with the Lord (1:10)**

1. Day after day, week after week, year after year your own personal “religion” ought to be increasing, not decreasing
  - a. Always learning new things
  - b. Always growing in your understanding of His ways
2. But NOT in just knowledge of facts and words
  - a. Memorise loads of Scripture
  - b. Take as many Bible Institute classes as possible
  - c. Read as many books as you can on Bible topics
  - d. But don't stop there
3. Grow in your intimate knowledge of the heart of God and the heart of His Son (Philp 3:8-10)
  - a. That's real intimacy with God
  - b. And as we grow, our intimacy with HIM ought to grow too!

**E. That we would be strengthened with all might (1:11)**

1. David asked God to show him NOT how strong he was, but how FRAIL he was (Psalm 39:4)
2. Paul discovered just how weak he was before Jesus taught him how to be strong in His grace (2Cor 12:7-10)
3. Paul prayed for these Christians in Colosse to be strengthened:
  - a. According to HIS/God's glorious kind of power – limitless
  - b. A kind of power that makes us have the following things
    - 1) NOT superhuman powers like Superman
    - 2) But SUPER-PATIENCE - all patience
    - 3) SUPER-ENDURANCE - longsuffering
    - 4) SUPER-JOY – joyfulness
4. Do you think you and I need THAT kind of strengthening? I do!

**F. And that we would always be thankful unto God (1:12)**

1. Thankful that God has made us all “meet” / fit, able, as partakers of the great inheritance of the saints
2. Thankful for delivering us from the power of darkness
3. Thankful for translating us into the kingdom of God's Son
4. Thankful for redemption itself!
  - a. Redeemed – bought back
  - b. THROUGH Christ's perfect blood
  - c. Perfect forgiveness!
  - d. When Paul starts writing about our “redemption” it seems he just can't stop! He is in awe of it so much!

**IV. Application**

- A. There are MANY times in the Bible that people record their prayer requests for the people of Israel, and later for Christians in churches in the New Testament
- B. They are important to apply to ourselves
- C. Can anyone remember any of Paul's prayer requests for the Colossians?

1. To wisely know God's will
2. To live worthy of the Lord
3. To produce loads of spiritual fruit
4. To grow in their knowledge of God's Son
5. To be strengthened enough to put up with the trials and troubles of this life
6. To always be thankful for everything

D. Well...

1. Do YOU know God's will for your life? Are you doing it, or running from it?
2. Are you living worthy of the Lord?
3. Are you producing lots of fruit in every good work?
4. Are you growing / increase in your own knowledge/personal relationship with the Lord?
5. Is God being sought to strengthen you with all might?
6. Are you learning to be always thankful unto God?