

EASTERN BIBLE CONFERENCE

YOUNG PEOPLES STUDIES 2013

The Epistle to the Colossians

Let's begin our introduction with a word on the value of the prison epistles as well as others – where Paul did not visit the actual assembly – such as Romans. Satan thought he had the advantage by locking up the apostle – but look what blessing has come to the Assembly down through the ages because Paul was locked up and had to write. Where would we be if Paul had visited Rome and given ministry orally and we did not have the Epistle to the Romans? Consider the Epistle to the Ephesians and the Colossians in the same way. This ministry has been preserved for His Assembly until He comes back for us!

At first glance, we would think the Epistles to the Ephesians and the Colossians are very close to one another in their content. Both show that the Church is the body of Christ and that Christ the Head of that body and that we are united to Him by the Holy Ghost. But now the differences begin to come out as Ephesians shows us to be “in Christ” and “seated in the heavenlies” while Colossians shows “Christ in you” and we are still here on the earth! Again, we find God's great purposes and counsel outlined in Ephesians while we have little or no mention of such purposes or counsel in Colossians. Ephesians brings in the great privileges of the body of Christ while Colossians emphasizes the glories of the Head – even Christ Jesus! What can account for such a difference in the approach of the Spirit of God to these two assemblies? The difference appears to be the moral condition of the saints to whom he is writing. The Colossians need to be reminded of the glory of the Head and that they need to add nothing to Christ – they are “COMPLETE IN HIM”.

CHAPTER 1

1. Paul – an apostle of Jesus Christ - When Paul writes as an apostle, what should we expect to find? Discuss
2. Discuss that for which the apostle could give thanks:
 - A) Your faith in Christ Jesus.
 - B) The love which ye have to all the saints.
 - C) The hope which is laid up for you in heaven. There is very little said in reference to this hope other than that it is in heaven - Discuss
3. How had they been brought into this blessing and what is the effect born by it? Discuss – were they bearing fruit?
4. How did Paul learn of what was going on in Colosse?

5. Verses 9-14 The things he was praying for in the Colossians were already seen in the Ephesian saints – Discuss.
6. Verse 9 He prays that they “might be filled with the knowledge of His will in all spiritual understanding” - Discuss
7. We need “wisdom and spiritual understanding” – Discuss
8. Paul then prays for three things for the Colossian believers:
 - A) “That they may walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing”
 - B) “That they might be fruitful”
 - C) “That there might be spiritual growth”
 Discuss
9. Discuss the things that we are strengthened to in verse 11.
 - A) *Patience*
 - B) *Longsuffering* with joyfulness
10. Discuss the place we are brought into by the Father in vs 13 & 14
 - A) “*Meet (made suitable) to be partakers*”. . .
 - B) Delivered from:
The Authority (power) of darkness
 - C) Translated into the:
‘Kingdom of the Son of His love’
11. Verse 14 – The words “through his blood” are not in the original. The great thought on the Apostles mind is the PERSON of Christ. Discuss
12. Verse 15-19

The Glory of the Son in relation to God Himself!

 - A) “The Image of the invisible God” - Discuss

The Glory of the Son In relation to creation:

 - A) “The firstborn of every creature” -
 - B) “All things were created by Him” -
 - C) “All things were created for Him” -
 - D) “He is before all things” -
 - E) “All things subsist by Him” -

The Glory of the Son in relation to the Assembly

 - A) “He is the HEAD of the body – the Church” –
What comes from the head?
 1. Nourishment
 2. Direction
 3. Control
 - B) “He is the beginning – the firstborn from among the dead.
Discuss
13. He is the FIRSTBORN in relation to Creation. (Vs 15)
He is the FIRSTBORN from the dead. Discuss (Vs 18)

The Glory of the son as seen in the Cross!

14. Verses 20 - 23

- A) Discuss the Condition of man as seen in these verses and the great need of his heart.
- B) What is the thought behind the word reconciliation?
- C) What things are to be reconciled?
- D) Discuss the cost!

15. We find the word “IF” in verse 23. Discuss

16. What is a dispensation?

17. What does Paul mean by “fulfilling” or completing the Word of God?

18. What does the word mystery when used in scripture? What is this mystery that is referred to in vs 23?

19. Discuss two distinct ministries given to the Apostle Paul in verse 28

Chapter 2

1. Verses 1-3

A. Great conflict carries with it the thought of great opposition. Discuss – what was at risk for this assembly? How many assemblies appear to be affected by the working of the enemy?

B) What condition are hearts in that need comfort?

C) If he desires that their hearts might be “knit together in love” – it is obvious that they were not so when he was writing to them.

D) Can one be a Christian and not apprehend the mystery of God? What does this “mystery of God” entail? Some aspects of it would include: (Hamilton Smith)

- 1. Jew and Gentile united in one body.
- 2. United to Christ and to one another by the Spirit of God.
- 3. This company is beyond the reach of death.
- 4. It is above the power of the enemy.
- 5. It is “in the world” but “not of the world.”
- 6. It is passing through time but belongs to eternity.
- 7. It is formed on earth but destined for heaven.

THE MAN OF ENTICING WORDS

2. Vs 4 – 7

A) The man in verse 4 is *very dangerous* – especially for believers who are not in the good of the “*mystery of God*.” Discuss the two (2) areas of attack that he uses.

B) Discuss two (2) things that characterized these believers in verse 5.

- C) Discuss the “As” at the beginning with the “so” at the end of this verse.
- D) Discuss: Verse 7
 - 1. *“Rooted and built up in Him”*
 - 2. *“Established in the faith”*
 - 3. *“As ye have been taught.”*
 - 4. What role does *“thanksgiving”* have in my life now?

3. Vs 8 – 15

THE RATIONALIST - GOD SAYS “BEWARE”

- A) The chief characteristic of this man is that he does not *need* the WORD OF GOD! He explains things by his reasoning.. Philosophy – human reasoning – traditions – the elements of this world – all play a very important role in his theology! He needs *no revelation* from God! Things he will not talk with you about: (William Kelly)
 - 1. Creation and the fall of man
 - 2. The conscience that God has given you.
 - 3. Sin and God’s judgment of it!
- B) Vs – 9 - Where does the fullness of the Godhead *dwell*? What do I need besides Christ?
- C) Vs 11 - The *“circumcision made with hands”* we are familiar with from the Old Testament. But what does *“the circumcision made without hands”* refer to?
- D) Vs 12 - If I want to find Christ – I must follow Him to where He is now! Discuss – He was *buried literally!* We are buried in figure (JND) by baptism! Who is *risen* in verse 12 – is it YE or HE? With whom are we risen?
- E) Discuss our condition in Verse 13.
- F) In verse 14 He blotted out the *“handwriting of ordinances that was against us”* – to whom does the *“us”* refer?
- G) Vs 15 – Discuss the *public display* of His victory at the Cross in this verse – *“Triumphing over them in it.”*

THE RITUALIST – THE MAN OF RELIGION

4. Vs 17-18

- A) The danger is to allow this man to have dominion over us. To judge us – in relation to that which has to do with **THIS WORLD!** I have followed Christ into *another world* – why am I occupied with meats – drinks – holy days – new moons – sabbath days. These days – which were shadows – have had their fulfillment!

THE MYSTIC

5. Vs 18 – 19 1) This man beguiles – and the price can be great! You loose your reward by following him. Driven by his fleshly mind – no world is beyond him! And he appears so humble After all – angels have to do with the believer he reasons. Should we not worship them also?
2. Christ is the Head – but this is not only his title. It has very practical implications. We are to “Hold the head”! All the body through the various members received its nourishment from Him and is knit together – grows by the increase of God. The ministry of angels has nothing to do with the growth of the assembly – it is the Head who ministers to His own through his various members.
6. Vs 20 – 23 The Christian is “dead with Christ” and is no longer looked at as “living in this world.” Ordinances are for this world – they played a great part in Judaism! The observance and recognition of these earthly things appear great – but really only lead to the satisfaction of the flesh. Discuss

CHAPTER 3

THE NEW WORLD

1. Vs 1 – 11 A) The “If” in verse 1 means “Since” I now have a new world before me – it’s interests are totally different from the world through which I am passing. Christianity is very practical – it affects my affections! I also learn here that my affections are not to control me – I am to control them – “set them on things above.”
- THE NEW LIFE
- B) The reason in vs 3 is given – it is not that the world has died – it has not! But “I have died” – my life is no longer here! It is hid with Christ in God! When Christ appears (not His coming) then will I appear with Him in glory. What will happen tomorrow – is the great motivator for me today! Meanwhile I have the capacity here in this world to enjoy heavenly blessings!
- B) Verse 5 reminds us that while the Cross has dealt with the flesh – I have to deal with the manifestations of the flesh in my life on a daily basis. Scripture provides only one way – “Mortify therefore your members”. Discuss

C) Verse 8 reminds us that not only do we have to deal with the improper actions of the body but we have to deal with our emotions. Discuss

THE NEW MAN

D) Vs 9 does not tell me “to put off” but reminds me that I “have put off the old man” and “have put on the new man”. When and how did this happen? Discuss

E) The expression “the new man” is found in both Ephesians 2 – vs 24 and Colossians 3 – Vs 10. The word “new” is different in Ephesians than in Colossians. In Ephesians – it is altogether new – never been anything like it in this world. In Colossians it is abidingly new – it never becomes old! Discuss.

E) This new man is “renewed in knowledge” and takes character from its creator! Who is the perfect expression of “the new man?” Discuss

THE CHARACTER OF CHRIST SEEN IN THE ASSEMBLY

A) This is the great aim of the Spirit of God in this epistle – that Christ may be seen – may be represented in His people here. This is seen in three circles:

- 1) The Christian Circle
- 2) The Family Circle
- 3) The Social Circle

Verses 12 – 17

THE CHRISTIAN CIRCLE

B) Verse 12 shows us the very characteristics of Christ himself.

1. Mercy
 2. Kindness
 3. Humbleness of mind
 4. Meekness
 5. Longsuffering
 6. Forbearing
 7. Forgiving
 8. Love
- Discuss these each

C) Verse 15 - “Let the peace of Christ rule in your heart”

D) Verse 16 – “Let the Word of God dwell in you”

E) Verse 16 - How are we able to help one another? - Discuss

F) Verse 17 - Discuss the limits of this verse

Vs 18 – 21

THE FAMILY CIRCLE

- A) Wives - exhorted in the area where they are prone to fail. Also Godly limits are set forth. Notice that the exhortation is relation to the Lordship of Christ.
- B) Husbands – again addressed in the area where he is prone to fail. What kind of love is this that is to be shown toward the wife?
- C) Children - are told to obey – why the difference between the wife submitting and the child called upon to obey?

THE SOCIAL CIRCLE

- D) Servants - obey in all things. What is the driving motive with the servant? Notice the “limits” established in verses 23 and 24. Who does a servant really serve?
- E) Masters – reminded that they also have a Master in heaven and their life in this world should reflect this in their dealings with others.
- F) Them that are without - Here again our behavior reflect the fact that we are “just passing through” this world. Two vital areas come under the scrutiny of our Saviour :
1. Our Walk
 2. Our speech
 3. Our response to others

Closing salutations.