



24 Hours Through the Bible*

*Primarily sourced from 'Learn the Bible in 24 Hours', by Dr. Chuck Missler, and *The Analyzed Bible*, by G. Campbell Morgan

Hour 19: The EP(i)C Epistles: Ephesians, Philippians, and Colossians

Ephesians

Morgan:

Background: It is open to question whether this letter was originally sent to the church at Ephesus alone
-Or to a group of churches in Asia, of which Ephesus was one.
-Unlike the other letters of Paul, this one does not seem to involve any direct local circumstances
-But is rather a document concerning the whole Church.
-The absence of local coloring makes it unnecessary to dwell upon the history of the church at Ephesus.
-All of it, so far as recorded, is to be found in the Acts, and in The Revelation.

The letter may be spoken of as the Manifesto of the Church's ultimate vocation.

- In it the apostle is no longer dealing in detail with the fundamental doctrine of justification by faith
- As he did in the letter to the Romans
- Nor with the Church's equipment for present labors, as in those to the Corinthians
- But with the still more glorious matter of the Church's eternal vocation.
- This is not a doctrine revealed merely for the sake of the instruction of the intelligence of the believer.
- It has its bearing upon the present earth life
- The first** half of the epistle deals with the heavenly calling
- The second** half shows the effects that should be produced in this present earthly life.

The contents may thus be analyzed:

Introduction (1:1-2)

The Church, the Heavenly Calling (1:3-ch. 3)

The Church, its Earthly Conduct (ch. 4-6:18)

Conclusion (6:19-24)

Introduction (1:1-2)

- The apostle introduced himself by claiming apostleship through the will of God
- He wrote to the saints, that is, to such as live by faith in Christ Jesus.
- He saluted his readers with the benediction of grace and peace.

The Church, the Heavenly Calling (1:3-ch. 3)

- The main object of the letter is suggested by the benediction which thrice affirms the blessedness of God
- Declaring that God has conferred blessings upon the saints in Christ.

-The subject of the Church's heavenly calling is commenced.

-It falls into three sections:

Election and predestination, or the Church's origin and destination

Edification, or the Church's construction

Vocation, or the Church's function

Predestined Purpose and Method (1:4-14)

-Before the foundation of the world God chose One, even Christ, and all who put their faith in Him.

-God's predestination of the elect saints was to a holy relationship with Christ

-That issues in the manifestation of His grace.

-Predestination was not only to this purpose, but included the method of redemption by blood

-And the revelation of and consequent realization of grace in the character of such as believed.

Application thru Prayer (1:15-23)

-This doctrine of grace created desires in the heart of the apostle for the saints, expressed in prayer.

-This prayer asked that they might have a full knowledge of His purpose and His power at their disposal.

Edification: the Church's construction (2:1-10)

-Passing to the subject of the edification, or building of the Church

-According to the predestined purpose and method, he first described the materials of the building.

-These are individuals living in the midst of conditions absolutely opposed to the will and purpose of God.

-These are made alive, raised up, made to sit in the heavenlies in Christ Jesus.

-The words "**in Christ Jesus**" refer to the whole process.

-Thus out of the deep and awful darkness God brings, through Christ

-The redeemed building materials with which He will build His Church.

-These are His workmanship as to preparation and ongoing perfection.

Unification of these materials into one building (2:11-22)

-Writing to primarily Gentiles, he declared that Jews and Gentile were to be united in Christ.

-Those united become, "**a holy temple in the Lord**"

-The purpose of which is that it should be "**a dwelling place of God in the Spirit**."

-The creation of the temple is accomplished through the work of Christ and of Spirit appropriation.

-Thus the edification or building of the Church goes forward according to predestination.

Vocation, or the Church's Function (3:1-13)

-The apostle showed that God's dwelling was for equipping for work not just His presence.

-By the indwelling Spirit the Church is equipped for the fulfilment of her Divine purpose.

-That purpose is also to the higher intelligences, "**the principalities and powers in the heavenlies**,"

-The Church is to be the medium for the manifestation of "**the manifold wisdom of God**."

-The stupendous magnitude of the subject is clearly set forth in the second prayer of the apostle

-The final petition therein was, "**that you may be filled unto all the fulness of God**."

Again he prayed (3:14-19)

-That they might be "**rooted and grounded in love**"

-And being so, were strong to apprehend that which they were apprehended for.

-In order to accomplish this he prayed that Christ might "**dwell in their hearts**".

-In order to accomplish this he prayed that they might "**be strengthened with power through the Spirit**".

This three chapter division ends with the great doxology (3:20-21)

-So stupendous is the idea developed here, that in the presence of it faith staggers

-Except where faith recognizes that God bestows power equal to the accomplishment of the purpose.

-That power is already at work in those who are saints by faith in Christ.

The Church, its Earthly Conduct (ch. 4-6:18)

Introduction: At once he moved to the application of these great doctrines to the earth life of the Church

-And dealt with it as it concerns the Church as such, as it affects conduct, and as it creates conflict.

The responsibility of the Church is to maintain the unity of the Spirit (4:1-16)

-Having described the creation of unity, and its glorious inclusiveness, he dealt with its maintenance.

-In doing so he maintained the figure of his previous section, that of a building

-Yet it is the building of a living organism.

-To every individual, grace is given, in order that all may grow up to the fulness of the entire Church

-Which he described as a "**full grown man, the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ.**"

-There is an individual bestowment of grace from the Head

-That there may be mutual growth into right relationship and simultaneous action with the Head.

Turning to the subject of conduct (4:17-21)

-He dealt first with individual responsibility.

-In a series of eight remarkable contrasts, illustrating the difference between the old life and the new

-He urged the believer to put off the former old, and to put on the latter new.

-These contrasts are between lying and truth, malice and mercy, stealing and giving

-Corrupting and edifying speech, hatred and love, purity and impurity, folly and wisdom, excitement and enthusiasm.

-This whole section of contrasts and injunctions must be considered and obeyed

-In the light of the opening words, which describe inclusively the earthly conduct

-Of the people of the heavenly calling he says, "**Walk worthily of the calling.**"

Two commands stand out as dynamic centers in this section

First, "Grieve not the Holy Spirit of God, by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption," (4:30)

Second, "Be continuously filled with the Spirit." (5:18)

Passing from individual conduct the apostle approaches Christian Family conduct (5:22-6:11)

Dealing first with the heads thereof: husbands and wives (5:22-33)

-The wife is to be subject to the love of the husband

-The fulfilment of the natural capacities of the love of woman in trusting so perfectly the loved husband

-As to rejoice in his guidance and direction, knowing that it is the expression of his love.

-The apostle's teaching concerning the husband was the exact correlative of that concerning the wife.

-He spoke only of his love, which is to be self-emptying

-And is to have as its purpose the perfecting of the wife.

-The picture is of the perfect love of Christ to His Church, and the true ideal of the Church's love to Christ

-And is the pattern of the relationship which ought to exist between husband and wife.

Concerning children (6:1-4)

The apostle had two commands, which should be carefully distinguished

The first is that they are to obey

The second that they are to honor their parents.

-Obedience is the attitude of the child under age, during the process of training

-Ends with the coming of manhood and womanhood and the duty of honoring parents never ends.

The responsibility of parents is stated only with reference to the fathers.

-The exercise of authority is to be on the principle of reasonableness

-Its method that of nurture, which suggests the thought of developing the child

-Chastening, which includes restraint in all its forms; and admonition, which is that of warning.

The wider circle of Christian responsibility is dealt with between servants and masters (6:5-9)

-Servants (*employees*) are to obey, remembering that their final reward comes from the hand of Christ.

-The master (*bosses*) is ever to have in mind his own Master in heaven

-And is to remember that with the Lord there is no respect of persons.

The last section of the second division of the letter deals with spiritual conflicts (6:10-18)

-The apostle recognizes the fact that life on earth after the pattern of the heavens

-Necessarily brings conflict with all the forces that are opposed to God.

-He recognized that behind all the opposition of man is the more terrific opposition of spiritual forces.

-The conflict is indeed a terrible one

-Yet there is not a single note that indicates the necessity for cowardly fear.

-Perfect provision is made for the saint in the **“whole armor of God.”**

-If advantage is taken of this provision, conflict always issues in victory.

-The armor must not only be put on, it must be taken up; and the soldier must fight.

-His true mindset-attitude in conflict is that of dependence upon God in prayer.

Conclusion (6:19-24)

-The final injunction in the previous section concerning prayer

-Merges into the personal element with which the apostle concluded.

-They were to remember him as **“an ambassador in chains.”**

-The letter closes with a benediction, consisting of words of peace and of grace

-The Source of blessing, **“God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ,”**

-The recipients are: **“all that love our Lord Jesus Christ in incorruption,”**

Focusing

Missler:

Ephesians: The Great Mystery Revealed

Our Wealth in Christ 1-3

-Praise for spiritual possession 1:3-14

-Prayer for spiritual perceptions 1:15-23

-Our new condition in Christ 2:1-10

-Our new relation in Christ 2:11-22

-Revealing of the Divine Mystery 3:1-12

-Receiving of the Divine Fullness 3:13-21

Our Walk in Christ 4-6

-Church corporately 4:1-16

-Believers individually 4:17-5:2

-Sensual-living outsiders 5:3-21

-Special Relationships 5:22-6:9

-The Armor of God 6:10-20

Conceded to be the most profound and most majestic of the epistles. It deals with special relationships: parents/children; husband/wife; employees ("master/slave"); and, fiduciaries.

Foreordained

Eph. 1:4-5

According as He hath chosen us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love: Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the good pleasure of His will,

"Chosen": Greek aorist tense, "once and for all" [middle voice: adds the sense of choosing for one's own self]. Chosen out of the world, once and for all, to be God's own peculiar treasure. Chosen to be holy: not because we were holy, but to be holy.

"Adoption:" public attestation of adult sonship and conferment of privileges. (cf. Ben-Hur, Quintus Arrius...) Already we are the "Sons of God": John 1:11, 12; 1 John 3:1.

Redemption

Eph. 1:7

In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace;

Redemption = to release by ransom. Paid in respect of the eternal principles of righteousness which govern the universe, to the holy law of God which humans have outraged.

Sealed

Eph. 1:13, 14

In whom you also trusted, after that you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation: in whom also after that you believed, you were sealed with that holy Spirit of promise, Which is the earnest of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, unto the praise of his glory.

Sealing: Ownership and Security. We are His, and we are safe. Earnest: a prepayment to secure the bargain.

Our Salvation

Eph. 2:8-10

For by grace are you saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast. For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God has before ordained that we should walk in them.

-Workmanship = Greek, poema; poem. But why? Why all the trouble....? [Cf. previous verse 7!]

His Ultimate Purpose

Eph. 2:7

...That in the ages to come He might show the exceeding riches of His grace in his kindness toward us through Christ Jesus.

-Infinite power? Infinite knowledge? Infinite love?

The Mystery

Mt 11:11

Verily I say unto you, Among them that are born of women there hath not risen a greater than John the Baptist: notwithstanding he that is least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he.

Mt 11:13

For all the prophets and the law prophesied until John.

-John the Baptist ends the Old Testament "dispensation." Cf. Luke 16:16.

A Mystery Revealed: Ephesians 3:1-12

-It was no secret that:

- Christ was to come, bear the sins of the many,
- to be a Prince and a Savior to both Jews and Gentiles;
- that the Holy Spirit was to pour out;
- that remission of sins to be preached; Throne of David, etc.

There is not a more profound passage in the Bible. The mystery is predicted (Mt 16:18) but not explained.

The "Body" of Christ

Eph. 3:3-6

How that by revelation He made known unto me the mystery... Which in other ages was not made known unto the sons of men, as it is now revealed unto His holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit; That the Gentiles should be fellow heirs, and of the same Body, and partakers of His promise in Christ by the gospel

Hope of His Calling: Ephesians 2:18

-Resurrection and Immortality

1 Cor 15

-Joint reign with Christ

Rom 15; Rev 3:21

-Eternal inheritance in Heaven

Col 1:5; 1 Pet 1:4

-Perfect transformation into the image of Christ

Rom 8:29; 1 John 3:2 Rev 22:3-5

To pass from time into eternity thus dead toward God, alienated and separated from Him, is surely a dread enough thought to send us out with renewed concern for the saving of countless Christless souls around us...

Four Dimensions?

Eph. 3:18

That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith; that you, being rooted and grounded in love, May be able to comprehend with all saints what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height; And to know the love of Christ, which passes knowledge, that you might be filled with all the fullness of God.

Our Cosmic Warfare

Eph. 6:12

For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places.

Our Imperative

Eph. 6:11

Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil.

Be completely armed before the battle begins...

Old Testament Allusions

For he put on righteousness as a breastplate, and an helmet of salvation upon his head; and he put on the garments of vengeance for clothing, and was clad with zeal as a cloke.

Isa 59:17

Our Armor: Ephesians 6

- Girded with Truth
- Breastplate of Righteousness
- Feet shod with preparation
- Shield of Faith
- Helmet of Salvation
- Sword of the Spirit
- Our Heavy Artillery: Prayer

[Preparation? Bible study given 12 different times by 7 different people, always fruitful, yet never given today: presenting Jesus Christ entirely from the OT!]

Our Imperative

Eph. 6:10

Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord, and in the power of His might.

- Imperative Mood: This is a command.
- Present Tense: Be continually strong.
- Passive Voice: You receive the action.

Philippians

Morgan:

- Philippi was the first city in Europe in which Paul preached.
- This letter differs from his other writings in that it has no readily discernable teaching scheme.
- It is, however, of the utmost value as a revelation of Christian experience.
- The word 'sin' is not mentioned.
- There are no direct reproofs, the nearest approach to one being the exhortation to Euodia and Syntyche.
- It is largely personal, written by one who loves, to those whom he loves, and who love him.
- Its atmosphere is that of joy, and this is the more remarkable seeing that it was written from prison.

-Some of the sublimest things concerning Christ and the Christian life are written here.

-Recognizing the difficulty of analysis, and remembering that the ultimate value of the letter

-Is its revelation of the triumph of the Christian experience 'in joy' over all adverse circumstances

It may be divided thus:

- Introduction (1:1-2)**
- Experience (1:3-26)**
- Exposition (1:27-4:1)**
- Exhortation (4:2-20)**
- Conclusion (4:21-23)**

Introduction (1:1-2)

- Paul's introductions of Timothy with himself is a gracious identification with his beloved son in the faith.
- For the first time, officers of the church are named in the introduction—**"bishops and deacons."**
- These, according to the New Testament ideal, are the two orders of the 'servant leaders' in the Church
- First**, the bishops, or overseers, who are entrusted with the spiritual content and application
- Second**, the deacons, who are to 'serve tables', or attend to the business details.
- Both are to be spiritually minded and modeling

Experience (1:3-26)

The apostle first poured forth his own experience of joy (1:3-11)

- In doing so revealed the joy of experience, and the joy of expectation.
- His memory of them filled his heart with thankfulness
- The activity of such joy was that of prayer on their behalf.
- His ultimate desire for them was that they might, **'approve the things that are excellent'**
- In order that they might be sincere, and avoid offence unto the day of Christ.

He then turned to the subject of his experience in prison (1:12-26)

- Using the phrase **"my bonds"** three times in quick succession.
- Thus we see the circumstances under which he wrote.
- He declared that these things **"have fallen out rather unto the furtherance of the Gospel."**
- It had become known that he was a prisoner because of his relationship to Christ
- This had been his opportunity to testify for his Lord
- His brethren had become confident as the result.
- He rejoiced moreover in the fact that Christ was preached, even though some were doing it of envy
- All this is a radiant revelation of the triumph of Christian experience over all circumstances.

- Out of the midst of such circumstances he expressed his confidence that **"Christ shall be magnified in my body, whether by life or by death."**
- From the purely personal aspect, death would be far better.
- On the other hand, to abide would be to have new opportunity of service for them
- The triumph is on the side of that service rather than on that of selfish interest, even of the highest kind.
- He was confident that he would abide.
- His whole experience was that of joyful triumph in and over the most trying and difficult circumstances
- Because of his relationship to Christ.

Exposition (1:27-4:1)

Introduction: His care for the Philippians is expressed in application exposition

- Out of that very personal experience which he had described
- He taught them what manner of the life is worthy of the Gospel
- What is the mind of Christ which will produce this manner of life
- Finally he described the attitudes which would enable them to rejoice in the Lord.

The worthy life is maintaining unity, manifesting courage, and sharing in suffering (1:27-30)

- As in his own case the apostle measured all their current circumstances
- By the effect they produced in the great work of progressing the Gospel
- He tested their manner of life by the measure in which it ministered to the same great result.

To exhibit such a manner of life the great necessity is 'putting on the mind of Christ' (2:1-11)

- This he first urged upon them, and then in a stately passage unfolded the nature of that mindset.
- Its master principle is love: first as the motive of self-emptying second, as the reason of Divine exalting.
- The examination of this passage should be undertaken in lonely and reverent contemplation.
- The manner of life which is worthy of the Gospel must be impelled by the 'put in' mind in Christ.

He passed to his next injunction, which reveals the value of the mind of Christ (2:12-18)

- There is to be the 'working out' into visibility that salvation which God wills and works within.
- The will be, that in the midst of a crooked, perverse generation they will be seen as lights in the world.
- The whole section on the mind of Christ is seen to be intimately connected

- With the one that deals with the manner of life worthy of the Gospel.
- He declared in conclusion that if these ideals are fulfilled
- There will be cause for glorying in the day of Christ
- Therefore such as minister the Word rejoice, even though he is “poured out as a drink-offering”

Immediately he spoke of his hope of sending Timothy and hopefully Epaphroditus (2:19-30)

- In which the point of value is that of the principle of the apostle's selection of these messengers.
- Timothy is not numbered among those who “seek their own”
- Epaphroditus he spoke of as “your messenger, and a minister to my need.”
- He was to be sent back to help them, the apostle having noticed how he longed for them

The apostle now urged them to rejoice (3:1-3)

- The ultimate attitude of a life that ‘puts on the mind of Christ’ is that of rejoicing.
- Having stated the duty to rejoice, the apostle proceeded first to warn them of the peril that threatens joy
- That of conformity to the earthly ceremonies from which they had escaped

We then have his great autobiographical paragraph (3:4-14)

- Which shows how he had lived in the midst of the things against which he was warning them
- When apprehended by Christ, he turned from them
- Thus his past story becomes an illustration of how they might fulfil his injunction to rejoice.
- His past life was a remarkable one
- In it he realized the possibilities of the Jewish economy at their highest and best
- The vision of Christ was such that not by gradual elimination, or slow and tedious process
- But immediately, he had counted all the things in which he had trusted as valueless.
- He described the determination and devotion of his whole life
- To the one supreme object of apprehending that for which Christ had apprehended him.

Then the responsibility of those who are to fulfil the injunction to rejoice in the Lord (3:15-4:1)

- They are to walk by the same rule, that is, make progress, according to the principles already learned.
- He described the true attitude of the Christian
- In the midst of his description, in a parenthesis for the sake of contrast
- He referred to those who were walking in such a way as to cause him sorrow.
- The true walk has as its motive the consciousness of heavenly citizenship
- Its direction is toward the goal of life, which is the completion of salvation at the advent of the Lord.
- Therefore they were to stand fast in the Lord.

Exhortation (4:2-20)

Introduction: The last division is occupied with exhortation in harmony with all that has preceded it.

- The apostle first gave an illustration of the necessity for exhortation
- Finally revealing his perfect confidence in his children at Philippi.

The illustration is that afforded by the case of Euodia and Syntyche (4:2-3)

- Evidently there had been some difference between them, which was to be healed
- On account of their differences, they had been somewhat neglected by others in the fellowship.
- This neglect was to cease.

That which follows has a far wider application than the case of Euodia and Syntyche (4:4-7)

- Differences are to be dealt with by rejoicing, forbearing, praying
- The result being that the peace of God will guard the heart and the thought life.

- The peace of God is His quietness, His certainty based upon His infinite knowledge and unlimited power.
- All possibility of neglecting certain of the saints because of their failure is for evermore corrected
- As the things of glory and of beauty, which the apostle lists, are thought upon.
- These things they were to do, and the result would be that the God of peace would be with them.

Drawing to the conclusion of his letter (4:8-20)

- His thankfulness for their love is manifested in their having ministered to his needs.
- This expression of thanks called forth words which reveals a deep experience of his life.
- He is able to be content in any circumstances through Christ.
- And yet again he expressed his gratification at their care of him
- In order that he might tell them the deepest reason of his thankfulness.
- It was not that he had been enriched, but that their giving meant "**fruit that abounds to your account.**"
- His confidence regarding them was finally based upon the Divine provision for them
- Which he expressed in the great and gracious words, "**My God shall fulfil every need of yours according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus.**"
- The doxology is a fitting expression of the experience of the Christian
- As it has been revealed throughout the epistle, **Now to our God and Father be glory forever and ever.**
Amen.
- This prisoner of the Lord Jesus, ascribed to Him the glory
- And is thus seen to be superior to all the limitations of life which characterized his position.

Conclusion (4:21-23)

- The final words are those of personal and tender salutation
- Followed by pronouncement of the single and inclusive benediction of the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Focusing

Missler:

Philippians: Resources Through Suffering

This was written during Paul's imprisonment at Rome, about 30 years after the Ascension, 10 years after the first preaching of Paul at Philippi.

- Christ in our Life Ch. 1
- Christ our Mind Ch. 2
- Christ our Goal Ch. 3
- Christ our Strength Ch. 4

Phil 1:21

For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain

Phil 3:7

But what things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ.

Phil 4:13

I can do all things through Christ which strengthens me

Phil 4:4

Rejoice in the Lord always: and again I say, Rejoice.

Kenosis

Phil 2:5-8

Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus: Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God: But made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a bondman, and was made in the likeness of men: ...He humbled Himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross...

Colossians

Morgan:

- We have no information concerning the founding of the Church at Colosse
- It is probable that when this letter was written, Paul had not visited it.
- Paul wrote because information had reached him that false teachers were troubling the Church
- Gnosticism and its ascetic practices and teachings of angelic intercession
- The apostle combats these errors by declaring the absolute sufficiency of Christ, the Church's Head

This letter as to doctrine, correlates well with the Ephesians Letter

- The Ephesian epistle deals with the glorious vocation of the Church in its union with the Head
- The Colossian letter deals with the glory of the Head, as at the disposal of the Church.
- In this, the subject is that of the fulness of God in Christ, and the Church's participation in that fulness
- The subject is that of the Church as the medium for the display of the glory of God in union with Christ.
- In dealing with his great theme the apostle first wrote of the glorious Christ and His Church
- Then of the Church and her glorious Christ

The scheme of the epistle may thus be stated:

Introduction (1:1-8)

The Glorious Christ and His Church: Provision (1:9-2:5)

The Church and Her Glorious Christ: Possession (2:6-4:6)

Conclusion (4:7-18)

Introduction (1:1-8)

- A great carefulness of method is evident in this letter.
- In both major divisions ('Provision' and 'Possession') the same method is followed.
- The systematic statement is preceded by an introductory word, and followed by application.
- After the usual introduction of himself as "an apostle ... through the will of God,"
- Paul declared his gladness of heart at the news which Epaphroditus brought to him concerning them.

The reasons of his thankfulness are:

First their "faith in Christ Jesus"

Second their "love ... toward all the saints"

Third their "hope ... laid up ... in the heavens."

-The apostle indicated the connection between these three essential graces of Christian character.

Faith in Christ issues in **Love toward all the saints**, and this is consequent upon **hope in the heaven**.

The Glorious Christ and His Church: Provision (1:9-2:5)

- Introduction:** The apostle introduced his subject by declaring the constancy of his prayer
- Then presented the glorious Christ, and the glorious Church

-Concluding with a statement of the reason of his writing

Paul was conscious of the need of those to whom he wrote (1:9-14)

- That they might “be filled with the knowledge of His will,”
- In order that they might “walk worthily of the Lord.”
- He was conscious of the absolutely perfect provision made for the saints in Christ
- His prayer merged into a declaration concerning it.
- Two words indicate the values of that provision
- “delivered (out of),” “translated, (into)” : that is, salvation out of, and into.
- No longer operative are the old forces which dominated life
- And made impossible the achievement of good even when it was seen and admired, but undoable
- From this slavery of darkness the saints have been delivered ‘out of’.
- They are brought ‘into’ the “Kingdom of the Son of His love.”
- Instead of the power of darkness there is now the authority of light.
- Instead of the clutches of the forces that spoil
- There is now the dominance of the One Who saves and perfects.

All this leads to his declarations concerning the glorious Christ (1:15-19)

- He first dealt with the glories of His Person.
- These he set forth in three relationships, by an inclusive statement.
- His relation to God is that of “the Image of the invisible God.”
- His relation to creation is that He is the originating cause and the upholding power thereof.
- His relation to the Church is that He is the Head of it.
- The whole truth is summarized in the sublime and awe-inspiring declaration that:
- “it was the good pleasure of the Father that in Him should all the fulness (of the Godhead) dwell.”

He then passed to the glorious purpose of His earthly mission (1:20-23)

- The extent of that purpose is the reconciliation of all things to God.
- In the fall of man, discord was introduced into the cosmos.
- The purpose of God is to restore the lost harmony by reconciling all things to Himself.
- The immediate Agent of the restoration is Christ, and the method is that of the Cross.
- The central reconciliation is man
- What comes forth from reconciliation are men and women “holy … without blemish … unreprovable.”

Those redeemed constitutes the glorious Church (1:24-2:3)

- Which is the Body of Christ.

The apostle declared his joy (1:24-27)

- In the fact that he had fellowship with Christ in the accomplishment of His purpose
- Claiming the stewardship of the truth concerning the Church

He dealt with it by referring to a threefold mystery (1:28-2:3)

- The first phase of the mystery is that of the Church itself, which is composed of Christian souls.
- The second phase of the mystery is that of the Christian in whom is Christ as the Hope of glory
- Who is perfected in Christ.
- The third and deepest mystery is that of the Christ Himself.
- It is the mystery of “Christ in you, the hope of glory”, transcending human grasp
- Yet demonstrated in the changed lives of those in whom Christ dwells
- To be manifested in the whole company of such as constitute the Church, which is the Body of Christ.

He concludes by declaring his reason for stating this doctrine of Christ and the Church (2:4-5)

- That the Colossian Christians may not be deluded with persuasiveness of speech.
- Though he was absent from them, he declared that he was with them in spirit
- Finding his joy in the steadfastness of their faith in Christ.

The Church and Her Glorious Christ: Possession (2:6-4:6)

Introduction: The apostle introduced his subject by injunction and warning

- Declaring the truth concerning the identification of the Church with Christ
- And Christ's identification with the Church
- Concluding with a statement of the conditions upon which the saints are to possess their inheritance.

He first exhorted them that as they had received Christ the Lord they were to walk in Him (2:6-10)

- Solemnly warning them against any that would rob them
- Making the great central declarations of the epistle that all the fulness of the Godhead
- Bodily dwells in Christ, and that the saints are made full in Him.

The believer stands in identification with His death, and with His resurrection (2:11-15)

- Union with the death of Christ means union with His purpose
- With His great work of reconciliation.
- Union with the resurrection of Christ means union with His Person, with all the glories described.
- Thus in Him the saints are made full, for they are reconciled through His death to the eternal order
- And are equipped in His life for continued harmony therewith.

Following this is a brief section on the perils specially threatening the Colossians (2:16-19)

- There were those who were attempting to bring believers into bondage to external observances
- The apostle urged them that they should allow no man to judge them in these matters.
- The other peril was that of false intermediation, and the consequent worship of angels
- He warned them against any such subservience, which is in itself false.

He returned to his teaching concerning the identification of the believer with Christ (2:20-23)

- In view of identification with Christ in death, they were not to submit themselves to ordinances
- Because the whole fact of their relation to evil was dealt with in the fact of their death in Christ.

Through His death they are set free from bondage to the commandments of men (3:1-11)

- Believers are in life brought into captivity to the authority of Christ, and the things of Christ.
- They are therefore to seek and set their minds on the things above
- That is to say, the aspiration, the desire, the passion of the life is to harmonize with that of Christ.
- Thus the life of the Christian in union with Christ has to do with the things above.
- They create the activity of, "**seek the things**"
- They condition the aspiration, "**set your mind on the things above**"
- They constitute the anticipation, "**Christ ... shall be manifested ... in you also.**"

He then showed Christ's identification with His Church in all earth life relations (3:12-17)

- This discussion he introduced by a general statement as to responsibility.
- There must be answer to the fact of union in the putting to death of the things of the earth.
- Of these there are two lists are given, one dealing with sensuality, and the other with bitterness of spirit.
- The injunction to put these things to death is based upon affirmation
- That they have put off the old man, and have put on the new.
- That which is a fact by faith, is to be made a fact in experience.

- They are charged to put on all the things of the Christ life.
- They are moreover to let the peace of Christ rule, and the Word of Christ to dwell in them.
- The final and inclusive word is “**whatever you do, in word or in deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through Him.**”

This general statement of responsibility is followed by practical injunctions (3:18-4:2)

- Which show how Christ is identified with His people for the activities of the present life.
- Dealing with the relationships between wives and husbands, children and fathers, servants and masters
- All of them being set in the light of the supreme relationship to Christ.

This division closes with a statement of three matters of importance in the life of the saint (4:3-6)

- The first has to do with prayer, which conditions earth life in its relationship with God
- The second has to do with the walk or behavior of the believer
- The last deals with speech, these conditioning life toward those that are without.

Conclusion (4:7-18)

- The conclusion is local and personal.
- To the church at Colosse he recommended Tychicus and Onesimus
- And sent messages them from those who evidently were with him.
- It is interesting to notice three of these recipients were Hebrews, and three were Gentiles.
- He then gave instructions concerning his letters.
- Taking the pen from the one to whom he had been dictating
- He wrote words which indicate at once his sense of limitation, and his desire for sympathy
- “**Remember my bonds**”; and ended with the simple benediction.

Focusing

Missler

Colossians: Christ Preeminent

- A response to the Gnostics.
- Greek: Gnosis, knowledge (“Agnostic” = without knowledge Latin Equivalent: ignoramus!).
- Mixture of mysticism, Eastern speculations and Jewish legalism.
- Alexandria a major headquarters.

Gnosticism

These heresies promised people “spiritual perfection” if they entered into the esoteric teachings and ceremonies prescribed. This “depth” and “full knowledge” could only be enjoyed by those initiated, etc. These were all based on man-made traditions and philosophy, not on divine truth (Col 2:8). They came to the false conclusion that matter was evil (Col 1:16); that a powerful spirit world used material things to attack mankind.

They held to a form of astrology, believing that angelic beings associated with heavenly bodies influenced affairs on earth (Col 1:16; 2:10, 15). Added to these Eastern speculations was a form of Jewish legalism: Good and evil were derived from rules and regulations (Col 2:21); the idea that the rite of circumcision was helpful in spiritual development (Col 2:11); and, the OT dietary laws were also helpful in attaining spiritual perfection (Col 2:14-17).

The Epistle to the Colossians

Doctrinal: The Fullness of Christ 1 -2

- In the Creation (1:15-18)
- In Redemption (1:19-23)
- In the Church (1:24-2:7)
- Versus Heresy (2:8-23)

Practical: The New Life 3 - 4

- Believers individually (3:1-11)
- Believers reciprocally (3:12-17)
- Domestic relationships (3:18-21)
- Employment obligations (3:22-4:1)
- Outsiders (4:1-6)

Personal Addenda 4:7-22

Christology

- The visible form of the invisible God
- The Prior-head of all creation
- In Him the universe was created
- He is before the universe
- In Him the universe coheres
- The Head of the Body: the Church
- The Firstborn from among the dead
- Above the Angels—all of them. "...that in all things He might have the pre-eminence."

Christ the Creator

Col 1:16, 17

For by Him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by Him, and for Him: And He is before all things, and by Him are all things held together.

Christ the Redeemer

Col 1:18-20

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. For it pleased the Father that in Him should all fullness dwell; And, having made peace through the blood of His cross, by Him to reconcile all things unto himself; by Him, I say, whether they be things in earth, or things in heaven.

The EP(i)C Epistles: Ephesians, Philippians, and Colossians

-Bringing the Heavenly positions from **Ephesians** into the joyous experience in trials from **Philippians** all thru the all sufficiency of Christ in **Colossians**.

EP(i)C!

Amen