

COLOSSIANS

Main Theme: The Supremacy & Preeminence of Christ

Primary Reference Source: The McArthur Study Bible

Background: Paul's letter to the Colossian church was written during the first Roman imprisonment between A.D. 60 and A.D. 62. This epistle is referred to as a prison epistle along with Ephesians, Philippians, and Philemon. Colossians may have been composed at the same time as Ephesians. The church of Colosse began during Paul's three year pastoral ministry in Ephesus. Epaphrus returned home to Colosse and started the church there. "Although Colosse's population was mainly Gentile, there was a large Jewish settlement dating from Antiochus the Great (223 – 187 B.C.)" Colosse's population of Jewish and Gentile people manifested itself in the church membership and in the Jewish and Gentile heresies that plagued it. The Jewish heresy (taught by a group called the Judaizers) embraced aspects of Jewish legalism, which included physical circumcision as a prerequisite for salvation, observation of the ceremonial rituals of the Old Testament law, and rigid asceticism. The Gentile heresy focused on pagan mysticism, and contained elements of what later became known as Gnosticism. The Gnostic belief system taught that God is good but matter is evil, that Jesus Christ was merely one of a series of emanations descending from God (a belief system that led to denial of Christ's humanity), and that a secret higher knowledge was necessary for enlightenment and salvation. This Gentile heresy also called for the worship of angels. Epaphrus was so concerned about the false teachings from these heresies in the Colossian church, that he journeyed to Rome where Paul was a prisoner. The Colossian and Philemon epistles were sent with Tychicus back to Colosse.

Colosse was a city in the Roman province of Asia (part of modern Turkey), about 100 miles east of Ephesus in the region of the seven churches addressed in the book of Revelation (Chapters 2 & 3).

Overview of the Text: Consistent with Pauline writing, Paul's epistle to the Colossians consists of two parts. The first part (first two chapters) addresses doctrine. The second part (third and fourth chapters) addresses the practical application of doctrinal teaching.

**SCRIPTURE VERSES AND SCRIPTURE TEXT FROM
THE NEW KING JAMES VERSION BIBLE IN BOLD**

Colossians Chapter 1

1. Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God, and Timothy our brother,

Colossians 1:1 Paul introduces himself as an Apostle of Jesus Christ in partnership with Timothy in the gospel ministry.

2. To the saints and faithful brethren in Christ who are in Colosse:

Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

Colossians 1:2 Saints is a term used for those who have been set apart from sin and reconciled to God through the shed blood of Jesus Christ. True believers are identified as being faithful. Colosse was located about 100 miles east of Ephesus in present day Turkey. Colosse was in the region of Phrygia in the Roman province of Asia.

3. We give thanks to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, praying always for you,

Colossians 1:3 Paul identifies Jesus Christ as having God as His Father, therefore, He has the same eternal Being as the Father. This affirms that Jesus Christ is God.

4. since we heard of your faith in Christ Jesus and of your love for all the saints;

Colossians 1:4 One of the visible fruits of true saving faith is love for fellow believers.

5. because of the hope which is laid up for you in heaven, of which you heard before in the word of the truth of the gospel,

Colossians 1:5 The hope of eternal life and knowing God energizes our faith. The hope of eternal life comes to us through the gospel or the good news.

6. which has come to you, as it has also in all the world, and is bringing forth fruit, as it is also among you since the day you heard and knew the grace of God in truth;

Colossians 1:6 “The gospel was never intended for an exclusive group of people; it is good news for the whole world (Matthew 24:14, 28:19-20, Mark 16:15, Romans 1:8, 1 Timothy 2:3-4). It transcends all ethnic, geographic, cultural, and political boundaries.” “Fruit refers to the saving effect of gospel preaching and to the growth of the church.”

7. as you also learned from Epaphras, our dear fellow servant, who is a faithful minister of Christ on your behalf,

8. who also declared to us your love in the Spirit.

Colossians 1:7-8 Epaphras was probably the founder of the church at Colosse. Epaphras informed Paul that the church shows love for the brethren.

9. For this reason we also, since the day we heard it, do not cease to pray for you, and to ask that you may be filled with the knowledge of His will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding;

Colossians 1:9 Being filled with the knowledge of His will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding is not a mere spiritual feeling, but a deep and thorough knowledge of the will of God that is finally and completely revealed in the word of God.

10. that you may walk worthy of the Lord, fully pleasing Him, being fruitful in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God;

Colossians 1:10 The believer is to live his life (walk) in a way that is consistent with his identification with the Lord who saved him. "The Bible identifies spiritual fruit as leading people to Christ, praising God (Hebrews 13:15), giving money (Romans 15:26-28), living a godly life, and displaying holy attitudes." Spiritual growth cannot take place apart from increasing your knowledge of God. By getting to know your Bible you get to know your God.

11. strengthened with all might, according to His glorious power, for all patience and longsuffering with joy;

Colossians 1:11 As we grow in our knowledge and understanding of the Lord, and consistently conduct ourselves in accordance with His will, we are strengthened by God's power and might in our lives. This will result in patient endurance of difficult circumstances and difficult people.

12. giving thanks to the Father who has qualified us to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in the light.

Colossians 1:12 God qualifies us for participation in His Kingdom through the finished work of the Savior. Apart from God's grace through Jesus Christ, all people would be qualified to only receive His wrath. Light is used in this passage as being synonymous with God's Kingdom. "Each believer will receive his own individual portion of the total divine inheritance, an allusion to the partitioning of Israel's inheritance in Canaan (Numbers 26:52-56, Numbers 33:51-54, Joshua 14:1-2)."

13. He has delivered us from the power of darkness and conveyed us into the kingdom of the Son of His love,

Colossians 1:13 God delivers or rescues the believer from Satan's kingdom of darkness to the Kingdom of the Son of God. This Kingdom of God speaks of the realm of salvation in which all

believers live in current and eternal spiritual relationship with God under the care and authority of Jesus Christ.

14. in whom we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins.

Colossians 1:14 Salvation or redemption through the blood of Christ points to the totality of Christ's atoning work as a sacrifice for the forgiveness of sins. Blood is a frequently used term to represent the whole atoning work of Christ (Ephesians 1:7, Ephesians 2:13, Hebrews 9:14, 1 Peter 1:19, 1 Corinthians 1:18, Galatians 6:12 &14, and Ephesians 2:16).

15. He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation.

Colossians 1:15 "Jesus Christ is the perfect image, the exact likeness – of God and is in the very form of God (Philippians 2:6, John 1:14, John 14:9), and has been so from all eternity." "By describing Jesus in this manner, Paul emphasizes that He is both the representation and manifestation of God." "Thus He is fully God in every way." "The Greek word for 'firstborn' can refer to one who is born first chronologically, but most often it refers to pre-eminence in position or rank." Jesus Christ is the firstborn in the sense that He has the pre –eminence over all creation (Hebrews 1:2).

16. For by Him all things were created that are in heaven and that are on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or principalities or powers. All things were created through Him and for Him.

Colossians 1:16 Paul lists the various categories of angels whom Christ created and rules over. There is no comment whether they are holy or fallen, but ultimately Christ rules over both groups. The false teachers had incorporated into their heresy the worship of angels, including the lie that Jesus was one of them, a created being. The purpose of cataloging the angelic ranks was to show the immeasurable superiority of Christ over any being the false teachers might suggest. The scripture goes on to say that all things were created through Him and for Him. This means, that as God, Jesus Christ created the material and spiritual universe for His pleasure and glory.

17. And He is before all things, and in Him all things consist.

Colossians 1:17 Before the material and spiritual universe was created, Christ already existed. Christ sustains the physical and spiritual universe maintaining the power and balance necessary to its existence and continuity and the physical and spiritual life forms that are in them.

18. And He is the head of the body, the church, who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, that in all things He may have the preeminence.

Colossians 1:18 Just as the body is controlled by the brain, Christ controls every part of the church and gives it life and direction. Christ is the origin or beginning of everything. Even the church had its origins in the Lord Jesus Christ, and He (Christ) gave life to the church through

His sacrificial death and resurrection and became its Sovereign. Jesus was the first chronologically to be resurrected, never to die again.

19. For it pleased the Father that in Him all the fullness should dwell,

Colossians 1:19 Paul countered the Colossian heresy by stating that the fullness of deity (all divine powers and attributes) was not spread out among created beings, but completely embodied in Christ alone.

20. and by Him to reconcile all things to Himself, by Him, whether things on earth or things in heaven, having made peace through the blood of His cross.

Colossians 1:20 In context of the believer, the term reconcile means the sinner who was in enmity with God is brought into right relationship with God. In context of the unbeliever and everything else in the universe, the term reconcile means that all will ultimately submit to the Lord. (Romans 8:21, 2 Peter 3:13, Revelation 21:1)

21. And you, who once were alienated and enemies in your mind by wicked works, yet now He has reconciled

Colossians 1:21 Before being reconciled through saving faith, all of us are completely estranged from God. People who are unbelievers are enemies with God because they resent and hate His holy standard and they love their sin. Since unbelievers love sin, sinful man is alienated from God because he hates holiness, and God is alienated from man because He hates sin.

22. in the body of His flesh through death, to present you holy, and blameless, and above reproach in His sight --

Colossians 1:22 Through the sacrificial death of Jesus Christ, believers are made holy and blameless in God's sight. Jesus Christ took upon Himself our sin and transgression at the cross, and imputes to believers His own righteousness. It is this righteousness that makes the believer blameless and above reproach.

23. if indeed you continue in the faith, grounded and steadfast, and are not moved away from the hope of the gospel which you heard, which was preached to every creature under heaven, of which I, Paul, became a minister.

Colossians 1:23 "Those who have been reconciled will persevere in faith and obedience because, in addition to being declared righteous, they are actually made new creatures with a new disposition that loves God, hates sin, desires obedience, and is energized by the indwelling Holy Spirit." Although sinful flesh is still present with the believer, the inner man hates sin and loves God. "The gospel has no racial boundaries. Having reached Rome, where Paul was when he wrote Colossians, it had reached the center of the known world."

24. I now rejoice in my sufferings for you, and fill up my flesh what is lacking in the afflictions of Christ, for the sake of His body, which is the church,

Colossians 1:24 The sufferings Paul was enduring was his imprisonment. Paul knew that his sufferings resulted because he partnered with Christ to preach the gospel. Since he was being persecuted for Christ's sake, he was filling up what was lacking in Christ's afflictions. Paul endured his sufferings because he desired to build the church.

25. of which I became a minister according to the stewardship from God which was given to me for you, to fulfill the word of God,

Colossians 1:25 Paul knew that the church is God's property, but he (Paul) was given the task to steward and lead a part of the church. Paul knew that he was accountable to God for his stewardship. Paul's objective was to "fulfill the word of God." This means that Paul had a single-minded devotion to completely fulfill the ministry God gave him to preach the whole counsel of God to all he came in contact with.

26. the mystery which has been hidden from ages and from generations, but now has been revealed to His saints.

Colossians 1:26 Until the coming of Jesus Christ, the gospel was hidden in the Old Testament types and prophecies. The coming of Jesus Christ accomplished man's salvation through His own perfect life, His perfect sacrificial death to once and for all time put away sin, His conquering of sin and death through His resurrection, and His sending the Holy Spirit on Pentecost which established the church. All of this and more has been revealed to all New Testament believers known as His saints.

27. To them God willed to make known what are the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles: which is Christ in you, the hope of glory.

Colossians 1:27 "The Old Testament predicted the coming of the Messiah and that the Gentiles would partake of salvation, but it did not reveal that the Messiah would actually live in each member of His redeemed church, made up mostly of Gentiles." "That believers, both Jew and Gentile, now possess the surpassing riches of the indwelling Christ is the glorious revealed mystery." "The indwelling Spirit of Christ is the guarantee to each believer of future glory."

28. Him we preach, warning every man in all wisdom, that we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus.

Colossians 1:28 It is the complete revealed mystery which Paul desires to teach and warn all men about so that he could present each man perfect in Christ. Perfection focuses primarily on a believer's justification, which is Christ's perfect righteousness imputed to the believer.

29. To this end I also labor, striving according to His working which works in me mightily.

Colossians 1:29 "Paul gave the effort to serve and honor God with all his might." This refers to his preaching the gospel to all men. Paul, however, does not attribute his intense good work to himself, but to God who works in him.

Colossians Chapter 2

- 1. For I want you to know what a great conflict I have for you and those in Laodicea, and for as many as have not seen my face in the flesh,**

Colossians 2:1 Continuing his thought from verse 29, both the Colossians and Laodiceans were among those whom Paul struggled to bring to maturity in the Christian faith. Laodicea is the chief city in Phrygia in the Roman province of Asia, located just south of Hierapolis in the Lycus River valley.

- 2. that their hearts may be encouraged, being knit together in love, and attaining to all riches of the full assurance of understanding, to the knowledge of the mystery of God, both of the Father and of Christ,**

Colossians 2:2 Through genuine belief and understanding concerning the full counsel of God, there is inner encouragement, shared love among the brethren, and the assurance of salvation.

- 3. in whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge.**

Colossians 2:3 Paul declared that all the riches of truth necessary for salvation, sanctification, and glorification are found in Jesus Christ, who is God.

- 4. Now this I say lest anyone should deceive you with persuasive words.**

Colossians 2:4 “Paul did not want the Colossians to be deceived by the persuasive rhetoric of the false teachers which assault the person of Christ. That is why throughout chapters 1 and 2 he stressed Christ’s deity, and His sufficiency both to save believers and bring them to spiritual maturity.”

- 5. For though I am absent in the flesh, yet I am with you in spirit, rejoicing to see your good order and the steadfastness of your faith in Christ.**

Colossians 2:5 It had been reported to Paul that the Colossian church was in good order and steadfast. This brought great joy to the apostle’s heart.

- 6. As you therefore have received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk in Him,**

Colossians 2:6 To walk in Christ is to live a life patterned after His.

- 7. rooted and built up in Him and established in the faith, as you have been taught, abounding in it with thanksgiving.**

Colossians 2:7 “Spiritual maturity develops upward from the foundation of biblical truth as taught and recorded by the apostles.” (Titus 2:1, 2 Timothy 3:16-17)

8. Beware lest anyone cheat you through philosophy and empty deceit, according to the tradition of men, according to the basic principles of the world, and not according to Christ.

Colossians 2:8 Paul makes another attack on the false teachers. Paul equates the false teacher's philosophy with empty deceit or worthless deception. "Far from being advanced, profound knowledge, the false teacher's beliefs were simplistic and immature like all the rest of the speculations, ideologies, philosophies, and psychologies, the fallen satanic and human system invents."

9. For in Him dwells all the fullness of the Godhead bodily;

Colossians 2:9 "Christ possesses the fullness of the divine nature and attributes bodily. In Greek philosophical thought matter was evil; spirit was good. Thus it was unthinkable that God would ever take on a human body. Paul refutes that false teaching by stressing the reality of Christ's incarnation."

10. and you are complete in Him, who is the head of all principality and power.

Colossians 2:10 "Believers are complete in Christ, both positionally by the imputed perfect righteousness of Christ, and the complete sufficiency of all heavenly resources for spiritual maturity. Jesus Christ is the Creator and Ruler of the universe and all of its spiritual beings, not a lesser being emanating from God as the Colossian errorists maintained."

11. In Him you were also circumcised with the circumcision made without hands, by putting off the body of the sins of the flesh, by the circumcision of Christ,

Colossians 2:11 Paul uses physical circumcision to demonstrate a basic spiritual reality. Just as the foreskin is cut off the male organ during circumcision, so a person who receives Jesus Christ cuts himself or herself off from a life of sin. This cutting off from sin is spiritual circumcision.

12. buried with Him in baptism, in which you also were raised with Him through faith in the working of God, who raised Him from the dead.

Colossians 2:12 Paul continues his use of symbolism in verse 12. In water baptism, when a believer is placed under the water, the believer is spiritually buried with Christ. This is a testimony that the believer has died to sin, and has been raised to a new life in Christ. Baptism also symbolizes that we share in the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. The absolute fullness of Christ's resurrection will be experienced when we are glorified.

13. And you, being dead in your trespasses and the uncircumcision of your flesh, He has made alive together with Him, having forgiven you all trespasses,

Colossians 2:13 Prior to a person being saved, such an individual is spiritually dead in trespasses and sins. A person who is dead has absolutely no capacity to make himself or herself alive. That is why God must take the initiative to infuse life-giving power to awaken and unite sinners with

His Son. Only through union with Jesus Christ by faith can those hopelessly dead in their sins receive eternal life. Only Christ can pay the penalty for sin through His death on the cross and offer forgiveness.

14. having wiped out the handwriting of requirements that was against us, which was contrary to us. And He has taken it out of the way, having nailed it to the cross.

Colossians 2:14 “Through Christ’s sacrificial death on the cross, God has totally erased our certificate of indebtedness and made our forgiveness complete.” “The list of crimes of a crucified criminal was nailed to the cross with that criminal to declare the violations he was being punished for. Believers’ sins were all put to Christ’s account, nailed to His cross as He paid the penalty in their place for them all, thus satisfying the just wrath of God against crimes requiring punishment in full.”

15. Having disarmed principalities and powers, He made a public spectacle of them, triumphing over them in it.

Colossians 2:15 “In yet another element of the cross work, Paul tells that the cross spelled the ultimate doom of Satan and his evil host of fallen angels. While His body was dead, His living, divine Spirit actually went to the abode of the demons and announced His triumph over sin, Satan, death, and hell. The picture is that of a victorious Roman general parading his defeated enemies through the streets of Rome. Christ won the victory over the demon forces on the cross, where their efforts to halt God’s redemptive plan were ultimately defeated.”

16. So let no one judge you in food or in drink, or regarding a festival or a new moon or sabbaths,

Colossians 2:16 Paul strongly admonishes the Colossian believers that they are not subject to any external man made religious observance, or even any of the Old Testament ceremonial laws. This includes festivals (Passover, Pentecost, Tabernacles), new moons (the monthly sacrifice offered on the first day of each month), and Sabbaths (the weekly celebration of the seventh day, which pictured God’s rest from creation).

17. which are a shadow of things to come, but the substance is of Christ.

Colossians 2:17 “The ceremonial aspects of the Old Testament law were mere shadows pointing to Christ.” “Since Christ the reality has come, the shadows have no value.”

18. Let no one cheat you of your reward, taking delight in false humility and worship of angels, intruding into those things which he has not seen, vainly puffed up by his fleshly mind,

Colossians 2:18 The false teachers took great delight in false humility, which was actually pride which God hates. The false teachers promoted the worship of angels, a heresy that plagued the region for several centuries. The false teachers claimed that they had received visions and

revelations from God on these and other matters. Their claims were false and the product of an unregenerate (fleshly) mind. Jesus Christ is the final and complete revelation to mankind.

19. and not holding fast to the Head, from whom all the body, nourished and knit together by joints and ligaments, grows with the increase that is from God.

Colossians 2:19 Christ is the Head not the false teachers. Spiritual growth only comes through union with the head.

20. Therefore, if you died with Christ from the basic principles of the world, why as though living in the world, do you subject yourselves to regulations --

Colossians 2:20 Paul reminds the Colossian believers that through faith in Christ they died to the world system and its false teachers. Therefore, they are not subject to their religious regulations.

21. “Do not touch, do not taste, do not handle,”

22. which all concern things which perish with the using – according to the commandments and doctrines of men?

23. These things indeed have an appearance of wisdom in self-imposed religion, false humility, and neglect of the body, but are of no value against the indulgence of the flesh.

Colossians 2:21-23 “These verses point out the futility of ascetism, which is the attempt to achieve holiness by rigorous self-neglect, self denial, and even self-infliction. Since it focuses on temporal things which perish with the using, ascetism is powerless to restrain sin or bring one to God. While reasonable care and discipline of one’s body is of temporal value, it has no eternal value, and the extremes of ascetism serve only to gratify the flesh. All too often, ascetics seek only to put on a public show of their supposed holiness.”

Colossians Chapter 3

1. If then you were raised with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ is, sitting at the right hand of God.

Colossians 3:1 A better translation is since you were raised with Christ, believers should seek the things of Christ who is above all things.

2. Set your mind on things above, not on things on the earth.

Colossians 3:2 “As a compass points north, the believer’s entire disposition should point itself toward the things of heaven. Heavenly thoughts can only come by understanding heavenly realities from Scripture.”

3. For you died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God.

Colossians 3:3 At the death of Jesus Christ the penalty of sin was paid in full. Through saving faith in Jesus Christ (Trusting in Jesus Christ alone for salvation) believers are united with Him and the penalty of their sin is paid or forgiven. Believers have the following three realities:

1. A common spiritual life with the Father and Son.
2. A new life which the world cannot understand.
3. Eternal security, including protection from all spiritual enemies and access to God through Jesus Christ.

4. When Christ who is our life appears, then you also will appear with Him in glory.

Colossians 3:4 Christ will appear at His second coming. At this time believers will appear with Him in glory.

5. Therefore put to death your members which are on the earth: fornication, uncleanness, passion, evil desire, and covetousness, which is idolatry.

Colossians 3:5 As Paul specifically mentions in Romans 8:13, we are to do everything possible to put our sin nature to death. This includes:

1. Fornication – Translated immorality, this term refers to any form of sexual sin.
2. Uncleanness – Translated impurity which encompasses all evil thoughts and intentions.
3. Passion, Evil Desire – Similar terms that refer to sexual lust. Passion is the physical side to sexual lust. Evil desire is the mental side to sexual lust.
4. Covetousness – Also known as greed, this term means to have more. It is the insatiable desire to gain more, especially things that are forbidden.

When people engage in sins of greed or sexual sins, they follow their own desires rather than God's, worshipping themselves which is idolatry.

6. Because of these things the wrath of God is coming upon the sons of disobedience,

Colossians 3:6 God is not neutral toward sin. He is angry with sin and will judge sin. This includes unbelievers because they embody the sinfulness which they love.

7. in which you yourselves once walked when you lived in them.

Colossians 3:7 Before believing on the Lord Jesus Christ, we all walked in disobedience. This is natural for all of fallen humanity because we are all sinners by nature.

8. But now you yourselves are to put off all these: anger, wrath, malice, blasphemy, filthy language out of your mouth.

9. Do not lie to one another, since you have put off the old man with his deeds,

Colossians 3:8-9 “Like one removes his dirty clothes at days’ end, believers must discard the filthy garments of their old, sinful lives.” Spiritual dirty laundry includes the following:

1. Anger – A deep smoldering bitterness.
2. Wrath – A sudden outburst of sinful anger.
3. Malice – General moral evil. Here it probably refers to damage caused by evil speech.
4. Blasphemy – In reference to people it means to slander. To slander people is to blaspheme God (James 3:9).
5. Lying – Devoid of truth. This sin forms the basis for unjust anger, wrath, malice, and blasphemy.

10. and have put on the new man who is renewed in knowledge according to the image of Him who created him,

Colossians 3:10 “The reason believers still sin is their unredeemed flesh.” “Just like a baby is born complete but immature, the new man is complete, but has the capacity to grow.” “It is God’s plan that believers become progressively more like Jesus Christ, the one who made them.” Without developing a deep thorough knowledge of the Lord, there can be no spiritual growth. The full counsel of the word of God provides the means for us to grow spiritually.

11. where there is neither Greek nor Jew, circumcised nor uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave nor free, but Christ is all and in all.

Colossians 3:11 Through faith in Jesus Christ there are no longer national or social barriers to separate people. The old has passed away and all is made new. “Because Jesus Christ is the Savior of all believers, He is equally the all-sufficient Lord of them all.” This passage identifies the following national and social barriers:

1. Greek – A Gentile or non-Jew.
2. Jew – A descendant of Abraham through Isaac.
3. Barbarian – In Paul’s day, a barbarian is someone who had **not** been educated in Greek language and culture.
4. Scythian – “An ancient nomadic and warlike people that invaded the Fertile Crescent in the seventh century B.C.” Noted for their savagery, they were the most hated of the barbarians.
5. Slave – One who is the property of another.
6. Free – One who is not owned by another.

12. Therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, put on tender mercies, kindness, humility, meekness, longsuffering;

Colossians 3:12 “In view of what God has done through Jesus Christ for the believer, Paul describes the behavior and attitude God expects in response.” Because of what Christ has done believers are elect of God and beloved.

1. Elect of God – true believers do not choose God solely on their own, but only in response to God’s calling us.
2. Beloved – Because believers are elected by God, believers are objects of God’s incomprehensible love.
3. Tender Mercies – Heart of compassion.
4. Kindness – Showing goodness toward others.
5. Humility – The opposite of seeking personal glory. Putting others first.
6. Meekness – Means gentleness. It is the willingness to suffer injury or insult rather than to inflict such hurts.
7. Longsuffering – Means patience. It is enduring injustice and troublesome circumstances and trusting in the faithfulness of the Lord.

13. bearing with one another, and forgiving one another, if anyone has a complaint against another; even as Christ forgave you, so you also must do.

Colossians 3:13 Because Christ has forgiven all of our sins totally, believers must be willing to forgive others.

14. But above all these things put on love, which is the bond of perfection.

Colossians 3:14 Our salvation was motivated by God’s love for the world. Supernatural love is also what motivates believers to serve God, and it is the foundational basis for the church.

15. And let the peace of God rule in your hearts, to which also you were called in one body; and be thankful.

Colossians 3:15 Peace is not an idea it is a person, and this person is Christ. When a person exercises saving faith in Jesus Christ, the Holy Spirit, also known as the Spirit of Christ, indwells the heart and life of the believer providing rest, security, and an attitude of peace.

16. Let the word of Christ 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.

Colossians 3:16 The word of Christ is Scripture, and Scripture is inspired by the Holy Spirit. To be filled with the Holy Spirit is to be filled with Scripture. “Scripture should permeate every aspect of the believer’s life and control every thought, word, and deed.” Giving Christ the preeminence in your life requires faithful study of scripture. “Let the word of Christ 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.”

17. And whatever you do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through Him.

Colossians 3:17 The extent to which Scripture permeates a believer's life, this is the extent to which we have a walk which is consistent with that of Jesus Christ.

18. Wives, submit to your own husbands, as is fitting in the Lord.

Colossians 3:18 The Greek word for submit means to willingly put oneself under someone or something.

19. Husbands, love your wives and do not be bitter toward them.

Colossians 3:19 Husbands must not be harsh or angrily resentful toward their wives, rather they are called to love their wives selflessly. Christ must be given the preeminence in your marriage so that it reflects God's relationship to His church.

20. Children, obey your parents in all things, for this is well pleasing to the Lord.

Colossians 3:20 Children are to respect the law of their parents except when it conflicts with the word of God.

21. Fathers, do not provoke your children, lest they become discouraged.

Colossians 3:21 Fathers are not to have too high of an expectation for their children. Such pressure can be discouraging if children cannot live up to expectations.

22. Bondservants, obey in all things your masters according to the flesh, not with eyeservice, as men-pleasers, but in sincerity of heart, fearing God.

23. And whatever you do, do it heartily, as to the Lord and not to men,

24. knowing that from the Lord you will receive the reward of the inheritance; for you serve the Lord Christ.

25. But he who does wrong will be repaid for what he has done, and there is no partiality.

Colossians 3:22-25 Bondservants (Employees) are not to labor only when being watched by their master, but they are to be continuously industrious. They should recognize that God is sovereign and that He has placed them where they are, therefore, their labor is unto the Lord and not to men. Through their work they show their sincerity of heart and fear of God. Christ must be given the preeminence in your work, so Christ is reflected through productive quality work efforts.

“The Lord ensures the believer that he will receive a just, eternal compensation for his efforts, even if his earthly boss or master does not compensate fairly. God deals with obedience

and disobedience impartially. Christians are not to presume on their faith in order to justify disobedience to an authority or employer.”

Colossians Chapter 4

- 1. Masters, give your bondservants what is just and fair, knowing that you also have a Master in heaven.**

Colossians 4:1 Paul reminds masters of bondservants that they in turn have a Master (Christ) who is in heaven. Therefore, they should treat their servants in the same manner as they themselves would want to be treated.

- 2. Continue earnestly in prayer, being vigilant in it with thanksgiving;**

Colossians 4:2 Paul admonishes masters to persistently pursue prayer, especially about specific needs. Thanksgiving to God should be continually made for answered prayer and God’s common graces. Christ is to be given the preeminence through an effective prayer life. Prayer is especially important for those engaged in ministry.

- 3. meanwhile praying also for us, that God would open to us a door for the word, to speak the mystery of Christ, for which I am also in chains,**
- 4. that I may make it manifest, as I ought so speak.**

Colossians 4:3-4 Paul calls for prayer for himself and the other apostles that they may faithfully share the word of God through every divinely given opportunity.

- 5. Walk in wisdom toward those who are outside, redeeming the time.**

Colossians 4:5 Those outside refers to unbelievers. “Believers are called to so live that they establish the credibility of the Christian faith and that they make the most of every evangelistic opportunity. Christ is to be given the preeminence by walking in wisdom. By following Paul’s teachings on doctrine and application of doctrine, the believer will grow in wisdom.

- 6. Let your speech always be with grace, seasoned with salt, that you may know how you ought to answer each one.**

Colossians 4:6 Speech with grace refers to communication which is spiritual, wholesome, fitting, kind, sensitive, purposeful, complimentary, gentle, truthful, loving, and thoughtful. “Just as salt not only flavors, but prevents corruption, the Christian’s speech should act not only as a blessing to others, but as a purifying influence within the decaying society of the world.”

- 7. Tychicus, a beloved brother, faithful minister, and fellow servant in the Lord, will tell you all the news about me.**
- 8. I am sending him to you for this very purpose, that he may know your circumstances and comfort your hearts,**

Colossians 4:7-8 Tychicus was a Gentile convert Paul took to Jerusalem as a representative of Gentile churches (Acts 20:4). “He had the responsibility to deliver Paul’s letters to the Colossians, Ephesians, and Philemon.” Tychicus was also sent by Paul to find out the circumstances of the church in Colosse and report back to him.

9. with Onesimus, a faithful and beloved brother, who is one of you. They will make known to you all things which are happening here.

Colossians 4:9 Onesimus was sent with Tychicus. Onesimus was a runaway slave whose return to his master was the basis for Paul’s letter to Philemon.

10. Aristarchus my fellow prisoner greets you, with Mark the cousin of Barnabas (about whom you received instructions: if he comes to you, welcome him),

Colossians 4:10 Aristarchus is a Greek name for Jewish native of Thessalonica of Paul’s day. Aristarchus was one of Paul’s companions who was seized by a rioting mob in Ephesus (Acts 19:29) and also accompanied Paul on his trip to Jerusalem and his voyage to Rome (Acts 27:4).

11. and Jesus who is called Justus. These are my only fellow workers for the kingdom of God who are of the circumcision; they have proved to be a comfort to me.

Colossians 4:11 Justus (Jesus) possibly one of the Roman Jews who believed Paul’s message.

12. Epaphras, who is one of you, a bondservant of Christ, greets you, always laboring fervently for you in prayers, that you may stand perfect and complete in all the will of God.

Colossians 4:12 Epaphras was saved during a visit to Ephesus through Paul’s ministry. He then started the church of Colosse when he returned home.

13. For I bear him witness that he has a great zeal for you, and those who are in Laodicea, and those in Hierapolis.

Colossians 4:13

Laodicea – The chief city of Phrygia in the Roman province of Asia, located just south of Hierapolis in the Lycus River valley.

Hierapolis – A city in Phrygia 20 miles west of Colosse and six miles north of Laodicea.

14. Luke the beloved physician and Demas greet you.

Colossians 4:14 Luke was Paul's physician and close friend who traveled frequently with him on his missionary journeys and wrote the gospel of Luke and Acts. Demas was a man who demonstrated substantial commitment to the Lord's work before the attraction of the world led him to abandon Paul and the ministry.

15. Greet the brethren who are in Laodicea, and Nymphas and the church that is in his house.

Colossians 4:15 "Other manuscripts make the name feminine (Nympha) and indicate the church met in her house, probably in Laodicea.

16. Now when this epistle is read among you, see that it is read also in the church of the Laodiceans, and that you likewise read the epistle from Laodicea.

Colossians 4:16 This epistle (Colossians) was to be read publicly in the churches in Colosse and in Laodicea. The epistle from Laodicea, spoken of in the second half of the verse refers to the epistle to the Ephesians. This epistle was also to be read publicly. "The oldest manuscripts of Ephesians do not contain the words "in Ephesus", indicating that in all likelihood it was a circular letter intended for several churches in the region.

17. And say to Archippus, "Take heed to the ministry which you have received in the Lord, that you may fulfill it."

Colossians 4:17 Archippus was most likely the son of Philemon.

18. This salutation by my own hand – Paul. Remember my chains. Grace be with you. Amen.

Colossians 4:18 Paul would usually dictate his letters to a recording secretary. Paul would often add his own greeting at the end of his letters. Paul admonishes his readers to remember his chains indicating that the Christian life is not health, wealth, and prosperity.