

# HEARING THE WORD



NIGEL BARGE

## Colossians

Leader's Guide

# Hearing the Word Colossians Leader's Guide

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*Nigel Barge, April 2018*

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## Resources

The *New Bible Dictionary* 3<sup>rd</sup> edition, published by Inter Varsity Press  
The *New Bible Commentary* 21<sup>st</sup> century edition. A commentary on every Bible book, IVP

[www.blueletterbible.org](http://www.blueletterbible.org)

# *Hearing the Word: A Tool for Bible reading*



**LOOK** – What does it *say*?

- 1) The Text
  - a) What questions does it raise -  
*Who, What, When, Where, Why, How?*
  - b) What surprises you?
- 2) The Context?
  - a) the surrounding text
  - b) the Book of the Bible
  - c) the whole Bible
  - d) the place in the Bible Story



**LEARN** – What does it *mean*?

- 1) What type of writing is it?
- 2) Answer the questions
- 3) Summarise the passage



**LISTEN** – What is the *message*?

- 1) Which is the main point?
- 2) Which is the key verse?



**LIVE** – How should we *respond*?

- 1) What does it show about God,  
(Father, Son, Holy Spirit) :
  - a) His nature and character?
  - b) His grace\*
  - c) Jesus / his salvation\*\*
- 2) What should I do?

\* God's undeserved generosity is evident throughout the Bible, and it is perfectly expressed in Jesus.

\*\* The Bible, from 'the fall' onwards, describes God's plan of salvation through his Son. Thus, all the Scriptures speak in some way of Jesus (Luke 24:27).

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# READING 'LETTERS' IN THE BIBLE

In seeking to hear the Word of God throughout the Bible, we need to take into account the *type of literature* in which each part is written. The New Testament (from now on, 'NT') contains letters written by five Apostles to various parts of the church of their day. They are part of the Word of God, authoritative for the church then, *and* for the church for all time.

Since Colossians is *a letter*, we need to remember that letters are:

- a) *Relational*. A letter is addressed to a particular person or group of people and its contents apply to them. So in the Bible, we must first remember that Paul (or James/Peter/John/Jude) is addressing named individuals or churches, in the first century. It is only once we have grasped what they are saying to *them, then*, that we may generalise as to what God might be saying to *us, now*. The two will *always* be consistent.
- b) *Occasional*. Letters are one side of a 'conversation' between two people. They refer to matters in which details of situations and people are assumed to be common knowledge. A third party reading a letter needs to 'read between the lines' to work out the other side of the story. We have to understand the situation to which this Bible letter was written, so as to grasp how the writer was addressing *it*. Only then may we ask how God might apply this Word to our own circumstance.
- c) *Dated*. Letters are written at a particular time and place, and within a particular culture. So in the Bible, the letters of the first century are expressed within the habits and traditions of that day. In discerning what God might be saying to us, now, we need to separate any instructions which are 'time-bound' from principles that are *timeless*.
- d) *To be read as a whole*. When we open a letter from a friend nowadays, we read the whole thing. We recognise it as a single communication whose contents are all related. So with letters in the Bible: every part must be viewed in the context of the whole letter. Thus, it is best practice to read a Bible letter *right through*, before analysing its parts.

## COLOSSIANS Introduction

### The people

Colossae, Hierapolis and Laodicea were a group of three towns close together, in the Lycus Valley in *Phrygia* (an area in modern-day Turkey), situated about 100 miles from Ephesus (see map, p4).

### The history

500 BC Colossae was a prosperous city, the centre of the local wool trade.

- c200 BC Antiochus the Great settled c 2000 Jews from Mesopotamia and Babylonia in Colossae to bring stability.
- 133 BC Kingdom of Pergamum (inc. Colossae) given to Roman Senate and became a Roman State. Laodicea was capital – it increased, Colossae decreased and faded in significance (There has been no contemporary archaeological dig of the area.)
- c30 AD Jews had travelled to Jerusalem for the harvest festival of Pentecost; in the crowd listening to Peter when the Holy Spirit inspired the first believers were some from *Phrygia*, the region around Colossae (Acts 2:10).
- c60 AD Paul's letter to the church in Colossae

### **The church**

The place seems insignificant. The planter would appear to have been Epaphras (1:7; 4:12,13) who remained as overseer for the region. The people were mainly Gentiles, not Jews (cf 1:21,27; 3:5). Paul lived for two years in Ephesus (Acts 19:10) just 100 miles away, yet never visited it. Nonetheless, amongst the many letters Paul wrote, this one is the Word of God

### **The date and context**

Paul writes to the church in Colossae c 60 AD. It is thought that the first Gospel to take written form (as opposed to being spoken by eyewitnesses) was Mark's Gospel, before the destruction of the Jewish Temple in AD 70. If so, it was possibly written for the Church in Rome under persecution.

Two points should be noted

- 1) the Gospel was taken to the church in Colossae not by an Apostle but by Epaphras (who had learned it from Paul).
- 2) there was no collected New Testament when 'Colossians' was written. The only Scriptures they had were the Hebrew Scriptures 'the Old Testament'. To most of them, non-Jews, this would all have been completely new.

### **The Occasion**

Paul wrote *Colossians* 'in chains' (4:18) but it is not certain where he was at the time. It seems most likely he sent it *with* the letter to *Philemon* about Onesimus (4:9), plus *Ephesians*. (Colossians 4:7-8 and Ephesians 6:21-22 have 32 identical *Gk* words.) If written from Rome, it was probably about AD 60.

### **The religious situation**

Despite the generally positive state of this church there was a challenge. No specific false teachers are mentioned. Scholars have 44 theories about what the problem was or might have been! This has led some to suggest that there was no one particular heresy. (Given that Scripture is God's Word, if it were important to know the particular heresy, you might expect it to be clear?!) If

this is the case, it may have been that this young church was surrounded by all manner of spiritual views and teachings.

Contemporary religious life was a ‘mishmash’. In this declining, unfashionable backwater of perhaps c 100,000 people, there were different strands:

- 1) The cult of the emperor. This demanded that any worship was permissible, provided it included that of the worship of the emperor.
- 2) Local religions. Some of these had practices confusingly like the early church – the cult of Mithras had an initiation ceremony like baptism. Mithras was referred to as *gk* ‘Logos’ (Word). In fact Christians regarded it ‘as a mockery of their own faith’ (Henry Neil).
- 3) Jewish observance. There were probably a few thousand Jews locally. But, following hundreds of years of Jewish exile, local practice was very confused. A contemporary Jewish lady was both an honorary ruler of the synagogue *and* a priestess of the imperial cult !
- 4) Greek philosophy. Many Greeks thought God was spirit, and good, while anything material, like the world and the human body, were to be shunned as evil. Both of whom would have found the Incarnation, God becoming man, very puzzling!

### **The message ‘...Christ in you the hope of Glory’ (1:27)**

Paul’s desire is to ground the church in Jesus, stressing three things:

- a) Jesus is God  
*the mystery, the fullness of the Godhead lived in him (1:19)*
- b) Jesus is sufficient  
*no religious discipline can bring you nearer to God (2:20-23)*
- c) Jesus is the authority for a Christian’s life (3:17)  
*our whole lives are lived in Him and for Him*

### **The subject - ‘Jesus’!**

The title given to each section might demonstrate this by including His name

E.g. 1: 1 – 14	Servants of <b>Jesus</b>
1:15 – 18	The Supremacy of <b>Jesus</b>
1:19 – 23	Life through <b>Jesus</b>
1:24 – 2:5	Suffering with <b>Jesus</b>
2 :6 – 24	Dead and alive with <b>Jesus</b>
3: 1 – 4	Seated with <b>Jesus</b>
3: 5 – 16	Life (- ve & +ve) in <b>Jesus</b>
3:17 - 4:1	Submitting to <b>Jesus</b>



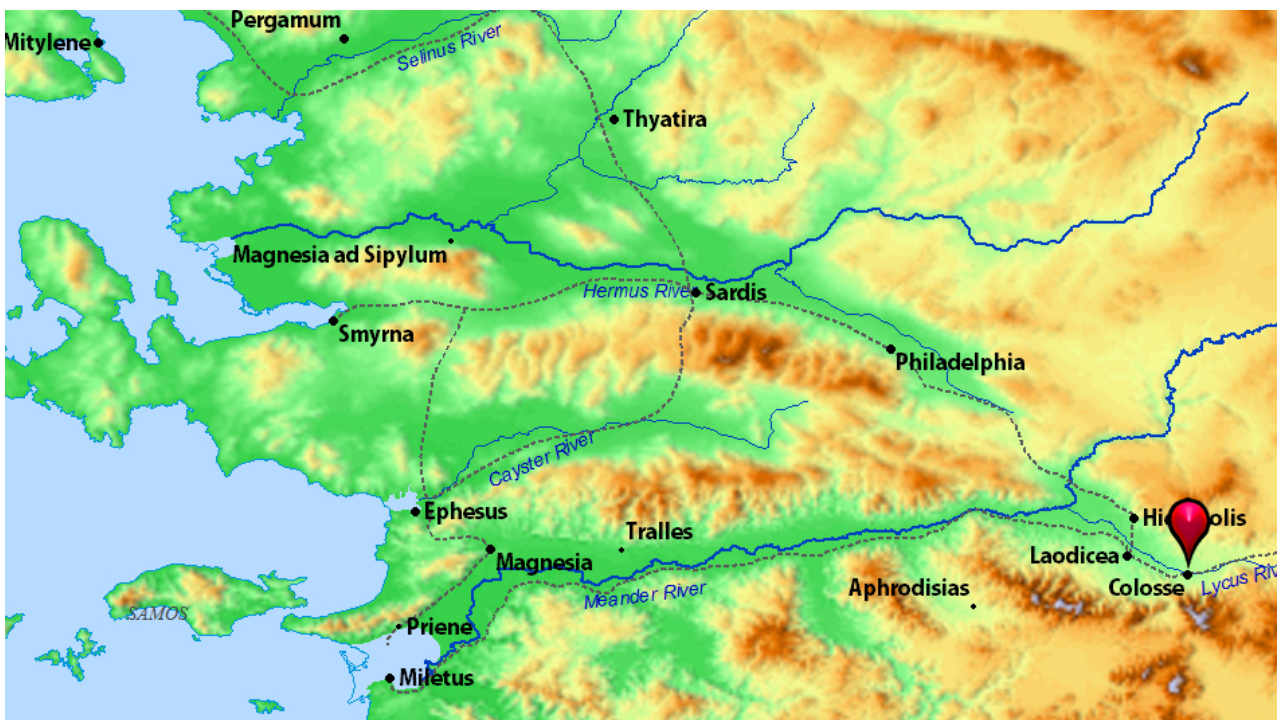
4: 2 – 6                      Depending on Jesus

4: 7 – 18                    Following Jesus

## MAPS



Paul wrote to churches in South Galatia, Corinth, Thessalonica, Rome, Ephesus, Colossae and Philippi.



Paul wrote to the churches in Ephesus and Colossae.

(John, in Revelation, was given messages for the churches in Ephesus, Smyrna, Pergamum, Thyatira, Sardis, Philadelphia and Laodicea – not Colossae.)

## God has been gracious to you

### Background and Word List

Paul is writing to people he has never met. They know and trust Epaphras, (Paul's 'dear fellow servant') who had preached Jesus to them, and had told Paul about them. Paul greets them warmly and thanks God for their faith in Christ Jesus and the love they have for all the 'saints', i.e. other Christians. At the outset, Paul needs to state his authority for writing to them (*see* v1).

1	<i>Paul</i>	A Jew who believed in Jesus - sent to preach to the non - Jews (Acts 9:15)
	<i>apostle</i>	means 'a person sent' (by Jesus) Also used to refer to the founders of the church
	<i>Timothy</i>	church leader / co worker with Paul
2	<i>holy</i>	those 'set apart' by God and for God
	<i>faithful</i>	believing
	<i>Colossae</i>	Town in Asia Minor ( <i>see map p4</i> )
	<i>grace</i>	Greek <i>charis</i> , the favour of God
	<i>peace</i>	Greek <i>eirene</i> transl. of OT <i>shalom</i> : healthy harmony
4	<i>saints</i>	Gk <i>hagioi</i> , holy ones, <i>ie</i> reckoned holy by being in Christ, not by level of holy behaviour attained.
5	<i>hope</i>	objective sense of something given
	<i>stored up</i>	Kept securely
	<i>gospel</i>	Good news
6	<i>understood</i>	Greek <i>epi-gnosis</i> , intensive word, knowledge deeper than mere mental grasp
7	<i>Epaphras</i>	Church planter / Paul's co worker
13	<i>dominion</i>	rule
14	<i>redemption</i>	to 'buy back' a thing once owned; pay ransom for a slave

### Bible Connections

1	<i>a standard format for letters</i>	<i>eg</i> Philippians 1:1; Ephesians 1:1
	<i>Apostle of ... by the will of God</i>	<i>see</i> Acts 9:15; 13:2
2	<i>grace and peace</i>	<i>cf</i> Numbers 6:22-27
3	<i>other prayers of Paul for churches</i>	<i>see</i> Ephesians 1:17; 3:16
	<i>hope</i>	<i>see</i> 1 Peter 1:4; 2 Timothy 4:8
6	<i>bearing fruit</i>	<i>see</i> John 15:4; Galatians 5:22
9	<i>God's will</i>	<i>cf</i> 1 Thessalonians 4:3; 5:16-18
12	<i>inheritance of the saints</i>	<i>see</i> Ephesians 1:11,14,18

# LOOK

## 1) The Text

What questions does the passage raise?

- 1 Why 'Christ' before 'Jesus' (cf 3 & 4)?  
Why only mention Timothy?
- 2 Why 'Holy and Faithful'?  
What does 'grace' mean as a blessing?  
What does 'our father' imply?
- 3 Why 'Father of our Lord Jesus Christ'?
- 4 Why 'faith in Jesus' and 'love for the saints'?
- 5 What is 'the hope'?  
What is 'the Word of Truth'?
- 6 Where is 'the world'?  
What is 'the fruit'?  
What had they understood about 'God's grace in all its truth'?
- 7 Why 'our dear fellow servant'?
- 8 What is 'love in the Spirit'?
- 9 What is 'His will'?  
What is 'spiritual wisdom and understanding'?
- 10 What is 'a good work'?
- 11 Why endurance / patience / joy?
- 12 How has he qualified us?  
What is the inheritance of the saints?  
Why 'kingdom of light'?
- 13 How have we been brought into the Kingdom of light?  
Why the son 'he loves'?
- 14 Why 'the forgiveness of sins'?

What surprises or confuses you?

- 9 Why if, he has been praying for them so much, did he not just visit them?

## 2) The Context

a) surrounding passage,

1:6 All over the world (1:23)

b) individual book

*1:12 Thanksgiving (2:7; 3:15,16,17; 4:2)*

c) whole Bible,

*1 Timothy our brother: (2 Corinthians, Philippians, 1 & 2 Thess, Philemon)*

*3 Faith expresses itself as love. (Galatians 5:6, 22)*

*4 Works (love) produced by faith (Ephesians 2:8,9)*

*5 Faith hope love (1 Corinthians 13:13; 1 Thesalonians 1:3; 5:8)*

*Hope stored up in Heaven (1 Peter 1:4; 2 Timothy 4:8)*

*Faith is being sure of what we hope for. (Hebrews 11:1)*

*6 All over the world – gentiles (Ephesians 2:11- 3:13)*

*Bearing fruit (Galatians 5:22 c.f. Genesis 1:22, 28)*

*Growing & spreading of the Word of God (Acts 6:7; 12:24; 13:49; 19:20)*

*9 Asking God – reporting content (Romans 1:9; Philippians 1:9 etc)*

*10 Worthy of the Lord does not mean perfection (Philippians 3:12)*

*Pleasing God (Romans 12:1-2; 1 Thessalonians 4:1)*

*Good work (Romans 13:3 2 Corinthians 9:8; Galatians 6:10; Titus 1:16)*

*The work of God is to believe in the one who he sent. (John 6:29)*

*11 Power (Romans 1:16,17; 1 Corinthians 1:24)*

*Joy set before (Christ) (Hebrews 12:2)*

*Consider it pure joy when you face trials of diverse kinds. (James 1:2)*

*13 Beloved son (Matthew 3:17)*

*14 Forgiveness of sins – New Covenant (Jeremiah 31:31 ff; Ezekiel 36:16-36)*

d) Bible story

*The barrier of sin had broken the bond between God and man.*

*God's Law had been given but man was unable to keep it all.*

*God Himself in Jesus paid the price required by the Law.*

*Believers, filled with His Spirit, spread the message of God's salvation.*

*Problems were addressed in growing churches.*

# LEARN

1) What kind of literature is this? *Letter*

2) How do you answer the questions that the passage raises?

1 *The stress is on function – Apostle and Messiah.*

*Only Timothy as he was Paul's 2<sup>nd</sup> in command – authority of station*

2 *'Holy and Faithful' – Paul is greeting them as equals – God's people.*

*'Grace' means, may you receive God gift to humanity.*

*Revelation in Jesus*

3 *'Father of our Lord Jesus Christ' roots him specifically in His Father.*

4 *'faith in Jesus' and 'love for the saints' are inevitable.*

5 *'The hope' is what gives rise to faith.*

*'The Word of Truth' is the apostolic message of Jesus.*

6 *'The world' is everywhere that man might be.*

*'The fruit' is believing the Word of God.*

*Jesus is the truth; in grace he died for us while we were yet sinners.*

7 *'Our dear fellow servant' shows that Epaphras is preaching the same Gospel and there is mutual recognition.*

8 *'Love in the Spirit' is love caused by / produced in through the Spirit.*

9 *'His will' is joyful always, pray continually, thankful at all times.*

*It is wisdom and understanding caused by / due to the Spirit.*

10 *'A good work' is to believe in Jesus.*

11 *Endurance / patience / joy are the Spirits inspired response to trials.*

12 *We are qualified by our position in / through Jesus.*

*The inheritance of the saints is a place in the kingdom of light.*

*'Kingdom of light' is the antithesis of the dominion of darkness (note – the latter is not a kingdom).*

13 *We have been brought into the Kingdom of light through faith in Jesus.*

*The Son 'he loves' describes the divine Son.*

14 *'The forgiveness of sins' because that is our greatest need before a righteous God.*

3) How do you resolve issues that surprised or confused you?

*Paul didn't visit them as he didn't view their town as strategic.*

4) Give an overall 'picture' of the passage in a few sentences.

*From an Apostle of Jesus to the family of believers in Colossae bringing the grace of Jesus in the peace of Jesus. (1,2a)*

*We impart grace and express thanks to God for the love you have for fellow believers who share your hope of heaven, having believed God's Truth. (2b-5)*

*This is happening all over the world just as it did to you when you heard what Epaphras preached. He told us of the evidence of God's love in you. (6-8)*

*So, we constantly ask the Spirit to teach you so that you may be a credit to the Lord, growing in knowledge about God, in demonstrating the power of his glory, and in sharing his attributes of endurance, patience and joy as you thank him for enabling you to be part in His Kingdom. (9-12).*

*For he has rescued us for His Kingdom by forgiving our sins. (13,14)*

## LISTEN

1) What is the lesson or the main point?

*Because of your evident faith in Jesus and love for His people we pray to God that you will know how to live and what He has done for you.*

2) Which verse best sums up the message of the passage? **v 9**

*'For this reason .... we ask God to fill you with the knowledge of His Will through all spiritual wisdom and understanding'*

## LIVE

1) What does it show about God (Father, Son, Holy Spirit)?

a) His nature and character?

*1 God's will is supreme.*

b) His grace?

*1 Grace and peace are a gift of the Father to us.*

*8 The Spirit enables us to love.*

*9 God fills us with the knowledge of His Will just because we ask.*

*12 God qualifies us to share in His Kingdom.*

*13 God rescues us/ brings us into His Kingdom/ redeems us from sin.*

c) Jesus and His salvation?

2 *Christ holds His people within Himself*

Now underline the application of the Main Point.

2) What should I do?

1 *Do not soft peddle Jesus' identity (Messiah/Christ) to non Jews.*

2 *Be specific who I thank - God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.*

4 *Put my faith in Christ Jesus.*

5 *Let faith in Jesus and love for God's people spring from my hope of Heaven.*

6 *Look wider and see the fruit of the Gospel all over the world.*

7 *Affirm fellow ministers of Jesus.*

9 *Be constant in prayer for other Christians*

10 *Our aim is to 'live a life worthy of the Lord.*

*Grow in the knowledge of the Lord.*

11 *Be strengthened with power according to his glorious might.*

*Have endurance, patience and joy.*

Now underline the application of the Main Point.

## Jesus is the divine saviour

### Background

Many Greeks imagined God as Spirit, entirely different from Matter; they presumed the created world (being material) was made by something far removed from God. Paul puts the spotlight on Jesus Christ, stating the world was created through him, and God was *in* him as he did so. A spirit being (as they thought) could not suffer, but God was in Christ, whose physical suffering on the cross brought about reconciliation, enabling true peace with God.

### Word List

- 15 *image*                      exact representation.  
18 *church*                     the body of believers.

### Bible Connections

- 15 *image of God*                      see John 14:9; Hebrews 1:3  
    *first born over all creation*      see also John 1:1-3  
16 *creation*                              see Genesis 1:1; John 1:1  
17 *all things hold together*        see Hebrews 1:3



# LOOK

## 1) The Text

What questions does the passage raise?

15 Who is 'He'?

*How can you be an image of something that is invisible?*

*What does first born mean (as opposed to first created)?*

16 Why does he go on to specify 'all things'?

17 What does it mean that he was 'before all things'.

*What does it mean that in Him – 'all things hold together'?*

18 What does 'the first born among the dead' mean?

*What does having 'supremacy in everything' mean?*

What surprises or confuses you?

*Why does he not mention Jesus by name in this passage?*

## 2) The Context

a) individual book,

16 *Having disarmed the 'rulers' (powers) NIV (2:15)*

b) whole Bible

15 *In the beginning was the Word and the Word was with God (John 1:1)*

*Invisible – no one has ever seen God (John 1:18)*

*Equal to God (Philippians 2:5)*

*All authority was given to Jesus (Matthew 28:18)*

16 *Nothing is able to separate us from the love of God in Jesus. (Romans 8:39)*

*He made all things. (John 1:3)*

17 *God sustains all things by His powerful Word (Hebrews 1:3)*

*Before all things – one with the Father cf God is love (1 John 4:8,16)*

18 *He is the head of the body, the church (1 Corinthians 12:12ff; Romans 12:5)*

*The first born among the dead – cf first fruit (1 Cor 15:20)*

19 *God so loved the world (John 3:16)*

*Before Abraham was born, I am. (John 8:58)*

*Forgiver of sins (Mark 2:5-7)*

20 Reconciling (2 Corinthians 5:19)

*Making peace (Romans 5:1)*

*Rejection of reconciliation (Romans 1:18ff; 14:10; 2 Thessalonians 1:5-10)*

*Life is in the blood. (Leviticus 17:11)*

c) Bible story

See study 1

## LEARN

1) How do you answer the questions that the passage raises?

15 'He' is Christ Jesus.

*Image means all characteristics of God but not visible.*

*First born means of./ proceeding from the Father (not created by Him).*

16 He specifies 'all things' to show it is everything in creation.

17 'Before all things' means before God created them.

*'All things hold together' means that creation is within God not separate from Him.*

18 'The first born among the dead' means the first human to be resurrected.

*'Supremacy in everything' means control is absolute.*

19 God was 'pleased' because He loved the World.

*'All His fullness' means every part of His being.*

20 'All things' means he removed all the obstruction of our sin from His side -  
(we need to receive it from our side),

*He is making peace between God and man.*

*His blood makes peace by removing every trace of our sin.*

2) How do you resolve issues that surprised or confused you?

*The absence of the name 'Jesus' and the repeated 'He' emphasises that ALL this refers to Him.*

3) Give an overall 'picture' of the passage in a few sentences.

*Jesus is God and in charge of all creation, having made every part. (15,16)*

*He keeps it all going. (17) As a man, he is the head of the church and leads the way for us having been raised from the dead. (18)*

## LISTEN

1) What is the lesson or the main point?

*Jesus was completely, in every way, God*

2) Which verse best sums up the message of the passage?

*He is the image of the invisible God (15)*

## LIVE

1) What does it show about God (Father, Son, Holy Spirit)?

a) His nature and character?

b) His grace?

c) Jesus and His salvation?

*15 Jesus is God.*

*Jesus is the ruler of ALL creation.*

*16 Jesus created all things.*

*17 Jesus is eternal.*

*Jesus sustains creation.*

*18 Jesus is the head of the church.*

*Jesus leads the way through resurrection.*

*Jesus is in absolute control.*

2) What should I do?

*Believe in Jesus.*

*Receive Jesus.*

*Trust Jesus.*

*Worship Jesus.*

## Receive the saving grace of Jesus

### Background

Paul now gives a highly personal application of the great truths in 1:15-18 - Jesus' divinity, creativity, authority and leadership.

Having established that Jesus is God, he then shows how He was therefore in a unique position to 'reconcile' God and human beings.

Believing in this we are called to continue in our faith in Jesus and His Gospel.

### Word List

- |    |                      |   |
|----|----------------------|---|
| 19 | <i>for</i>           | <i>Gk oti</i> = because. Ie because Jesus is God, creator, sustainer, leader – God was pleased.....         |
|    | <i>fulness</i>       | the main idea is of completeness or totality.   |
| 20 | <i>reconcile</i>     | restore harmony between.<br>Greek is aorist tense <i>ie</i> it is a decisive act.                           |
| 21 | <i>minds</i>         | not just the mind but the way it works but the process of understanding and intellect                       |
| 22 | <i>physical body</i> | spiritually neutral – (not <i>gk sarx</i> , which refers to flesh and humanity opposed to God)              |
| 23 | <i>creature</i>      | In OT means 'all living things'. In NT only used once, here, outside the book of Revelation (4:7; 5:13 etc) |

### Bible Connections

- |    |                           |   |
|----|---------------------------|---|
| 18 | <i>Head of the Church</i> | <i>see</i> Romans 12:5; 1 Corinthians 12:12; Ephesians 5:23 |
| 20 | <i>reconciliation</i>     | <i>see</i> Romans 5:9,10; 2 Cor 5:18                        |
|    | <i>Cross and curse</i>    | <i>see</i> Galatians 3:13                                   |
| 21 | <i>enemies of God</i>     | <i>see</i> Romans 5:10                                      |
| 22 | <i>without blemish</i>    | <i>see</i> Ephesians 5:27                                   |
| 23 | <i>hope</i>               | <i>see</i> Hebrews 11:1                                     |

# LOOK

## 1) The Text

What questions does the passage raise?

19 Why was he 'pleased'?

What is 'all his fullness'?

20 What does he mean – 'all things'?

Why do things in heaven need reconciled?

How does his blood on the cross make peace?

21 When were we alienated?

How were we enemies in our minds?

What was our evil behaviour?

22 When is 'now'?

Why is reconciliation to Christ's 'physical' body?

Whose death is it?

Who might be our accuser?

23 How do we continue 'established' and firm?

What is the hope held out in the Gospel?

How has the Gospel been proclaimed to every person under heaven?

How is Paul a servant of the gospel? Was he not a servant of Christ?  
(Romans 1:1)

What surprises or confuses you?

Why after such a focus on grace (15-22) and then the conditional seems to be put? – 'if you continue in your faith .....' (23)

## 2) The Context

a) surrounding passage,

20 All things (16,17)

His blood shed on the cross (1:22; 2:11-15)

b) individual book,

19 Fullness (of the deity) (2:9)

20 Called to peace (3:15)

Heaven (1:5,23; 4:1)

c) whole Bible,

- 19 *Pleased (Luke 3:22; John 1:14; 1 Corinthians 1:21; Galatians 1:15)*
- 20 *Reconcile Jew and Gentile by the Cross through which he put to death their hostility (KJV enmity) (Ephesians 2:16; cf Genesis 3:16)*  
*Reconciler means mediator (1 Timothy 2:5; Galatians 3:20)*  
*All things mean the whole creation. (Romans 8:22)*  
*Since we have been justified by faith, we have peace... (Romans 5:1)*  
*By his blood – atonement (Romans 3:25) justified (Romans 5:9)*  
*redemption (Ephesians 1:7)*
- 21 *Trying to be justified by Law alienates us from Christ (Gal. 5:4)*  
*While we were God's enemies, we were reconciled to Him by the death of His Son. (Romans 5:10).*
- 22 *To present you before His glorious presence without fault and with great joy (Jude 1:24).*  
*Our death (Romans 6:4,5; Galatians 2:20).*  
*The accuser (Revelation 12:10).*
- 23 *Been clearly seen by men - without excuse (Romans 1:20) .*  
*Possible to reject the reconciliation (Romans 1:18; 2:16; 14:10; 2 Corinthians 5:10; 2 Thessalonians 1:5-10).*  
*Foundation of rock (Luke 6:38).*  
*The true light gives light to every man. (John 1:9).*

d) Bible story

See study 1

## LEARN

1) How do you answer the questions that the passage raises?

19 *He was 'pleased' shows it was a unilateral act of his favour.*

*It means an exact duplicate – every characteristic repeated.*

20 *'All things' – redemption is universal – we then have an 'opt out' by rejecting Jesus.*

*He reconciles things in Heaven to things on earth by reconciling all things to Himself.*

*His blood (life) offered on the cross (given as a sacrifice to God) removes the obstacle of sin between God and man.*

- 21 *We were alienated through Adam's / our sin.  
We were enemies in our minds through our will to sin.  
Our evil behaviour was / is our rejection of God's authority.*
- 22 *'Now' is when you put your trust in Jesus and His redeeming death.  
Christ's 'physical' body was our human payment.  
It is our death.  
The devil is our accuser.*
- 23 *'Established' and firm – built on the rock.  
The hope held is presentation in God's sight as holy / blameless.  
The Gospel been proclaimed / light given to every person under heaven.  
To be a servant of His Gospel is to serve Christ.*

2) How do you resolve issues that surprised or confused you?

*If is not a threat but an observation – there are some who appear to be faithful but then fall away.*

3) Give an overall 'picture' of the passage in a few sentences.

*God willed in Christ to reconcile His creation to Himself by Christ's sacrificial death (19,20). You were cut off from God but now by Christ's death you are blameless before God as you receive Him. This is the message for all that I have been given. (21-23).*

## LISTEN

1) What is the lesson or the main point?

*God sets believers right with Himself completely, by their dying with Christ.*

2) Which verse best sums up the message of the passage? **v 22**

*'But now He has reconciled you by Christ's physical body through death to present you holy in His sight ...'*

# LIVE

1) What does it show about God (Father, Son, Holy Spirit)?

a) His nature and character?

*19 God has pleasure / emotions.*

*22 God's presence demands absolute holiness.*

b) His grace?

*21 God reconciles us to himself even while we were His enemies!*

c) Jesus and His salvation?

*19 Jesus is completely divine.*

*20 Jesus death on the cross is the means by which all things are reconciled to God.*

*22 Jesus has a real physical body.*

*Now underline the application of the Main Point.*

2) What should I do?

*22 Marvel at God's grace that **HE** reconciled you.*

*23 Persevere in my faith in Jesus.*

*Allow nothing to sway me from my hope in Jesus.*

*Acknowledge that every creature under Heaven has heard the gospel (though to some the name of Jesus may not have been explicit).*

*Now underline the application of the Main Point.*



# Study 4                      ‘Proclaim the mystery –                      1:24-2:5

## Christ in you the hope of Glory’

### Background

Paul now gives a highly personal application of the great truths in 1:15-23.

The ‘messianic woes’ (Rom 8:18-25) are experienced by the Messiah, then by his followers in the time between this present (evil) age (Gal 1:3) and the age to come - (the resurrection and Jesus second coming). These are the birth pangs of the new age. (Rom 8:22). Thus his people, during this time, share in His sufferings (Jn 15:20,21; Phil 3:10)

His commission, to convey and explain ‘the mystery’ (v26) is that the gospel of Jesus Christ is for the Gentiles as well as the Jews, *see* Ephesians 3:2-6. This may have countered a Jewish ‘lobby’ but also a Greek one that sought ‘wisdom and knowledge’ rather than ‘mystery’. (cf 1 Cor 1:22b)

### Word List

1:24	<i>Christ’s afflictions</i>	Hostile opposition but ever used of the Cross
1:26;27; 2:2	<i>Mystery</i>	a secret that would remain as such but for revelation
1:27	<i>Gentiles</i>	non Jews
	<i>Christ in you</i>	<i>Christ in/ among (cf ‘among the gentiles’) you (pl)</i> <i>Nb different from believers being (in Christ)</i>
1:29	<i>labour</i>	a strong word
	<i>struggling</i>	<i>gk agon</i> – a struggle or fight - word indicates single-mindedness
2:1	<i>Laodicea</i>	A city about 12 miles west of Colossae, one of the seven churches in Revelation ch 2-3. (Map p 4)

### Bible Connections

#### Ch 1

24	<i>suffering with/ for Jesus</i>	<i>see</i> John 15:18ff; Rom 8:17; Phil 3:10
25	<i>commission</i>	<i>see</i> Acts 9:15, 13:2. Galatians 1:1,11,12; 2:9
28	<i>perfect in Christ</i>	<i>see</i> Ephesians 5:27

#### Ch 2

1	<i>Laodicea</i>	<i>see</i> Revelation 3:14
2	<i>united in love</i>	<i>see</i> Ephesians 4:2ff
2-3	<i>Jesus, the wisdom of God</i>	<i>see</i> 1 Corinthians 1:24
4	<i>fine sounding arguments</i>	<i>cf</i> Genesis 3:1f; Romans 16:18
5	<i>present in spirit</i>	<i>see</i> 1 Corinthians 5:3-5

# LOOK

## 1) The Text

What questions does the passage raise?

24 *Why – ‘now’?*

*What was suffered?*

*What does he mean ‘fill up in his flesh’?*

*What might be ‘still lacking in regard to Christ’s afflictions’?*

25 *Whose servant has he become?*

*When was he commissioned by God?*

*What is ‘the Word of God in all its fullness’?*

*How was the mystery disclosed?*

*Who are the ‘saints’?*

26 *What is ‘the mystery’?*

27 *Why among the gentiles specifically?*

*What is ‘the hope of glory’?*

28 *What does admonishing’ mean?*

*What does ‘perfect’ mean?*

2:1 *How was he ‘struggling’?*

*What would their ‘complete understanding’ be of?*

3 *Why the stress of ‘all wisdom and knowledge’?*

*Who might deceive with ‘fine sounding arguments’?*

*What does ‘present in the Spirit’ mean?*

5 *What does ‘orderly’ mean?*

What surprises or confuses you?

*Why the stress on ‘mystery’? (1:26; 2:2)*

## 2) The Context

a) surrounding passage,

24,27,28; 2:2,5      *Christ*   c.f. 1:1,2,3,4; 2:6,8,9,10,11

b) individual book,

2:1 *‘Struggling’ cf in prayer’ (1:9)*

c) whole Bible,

*1:24 Rejoice in our sufferings (Romans 5 :3)*

*Rejoice in the Lord always (Philippians 4:4)*

*Suffering for people to whom he writes (2 Corinthians 1:16; Ephesians 3:13; cf 2 Timothy 2:10)*

*Suffering with Christ (Romans 8:17; Philippians 3:10)*

*Warning of suffering (Acts 9:16)*

*Paul's sufferings (2 Cor 11:23-28)*

*What you did for the least of my brothers, you did for me. (Matt. 25:40)*

*25 God's commission to Paul to preach (Acts 9:15)*

*A mystery hidden (1 Corinthians 1:27)*

*Mystery – gentiles are heirs (Ephesians 3:6)*

*He (the Holy Spirit) will guide you into all truth. (John 16:13)*

*27 riches of His Glory (Ephesians 3:16)*

*Rejoice in the hope of glory (Romans 5:2)*

*Faith is sure of what we hope for and certain of what we do not see (Hebrews 11:1)*

*'Christ in (gk. 'en') you' c.f. 'God dwelt among us' (gk en) (John 1:14)*

*28 Be perfect as your heavenly Father is perfect (Matthew 5:48)*

*2:3 Wisdom and Knowledge (2 Chronicles 1:10-12; Romans 11:23)*

*Greeks seek wisdom (1 Corinthians 1:22)*

*5 Absent in body, present in Spirit (1 Corinthians 5:3; 1 Thessalonians 2:17)*

*Orderly – not tossed about c.f. (Ephesians 4:14)*

d) Bible story

See study 1

## LEARN

1) How do you answer the questions that the passage raises?

*24 'Now' i.e. 'because you are continuing in your faith ....etc' (23)*

*Paul suffered physically, mentally etc as he brought the Gospel.*

*'Fill up in his flesh' means he continues to suffer in this fallen body/world.*

*His followers share in his afflictions to the end on this age.*

*25 He has become a servant of Christ.*

*He was commissioned by God on the road to Damascus.*

*'The Word of God in all its fullness' are the complete Scriptures.*

*The mystery was disclosed by the coming of the Holy Spirit.*

*The 'saints' are all who believe and receive Jesus.*

26 *The mystery' is /Christ in you the hope of Glory. (27)*

27 *God has included not just the Jews – so he mentions the gentiles specifically.*

*'The hope of glory' is the certainty of being with God / Jesus in heaven.*

28 *Admonishing' means to caution / warn.*

*'Perfect' in Christ means completely like Jesus.*

2:1 *His 'struggling' was in prayer. (1:9)*

*'Complete understanding' be of Jesus / His love.*

3 *The stress of 'all wisdom and knowledge' was in the face of Greek religion*

*The 'Greeks' might try to deceive with 'fine sounding arguments'.*

*'Present in the Spirit' means they share in the same Spirit who is omnipresent.*

5 *'Orderly' means they are not tossed about with every wind of teaching.*

2) How do you resolve issues that surprised or confused you?

*The mystery is key -the revealed fellowship the Spirit of Jesus*

3) Give an overall 'picture' of the passage in a few sentences.

*I rejoice in my sufferings for the church/you as it is part of Jesus sufferings. (24)*

*God sent me tell you, his saints, of His mystery revealed in Jesus. (25,26).*

*This is for all, Gentiles too – Christ among you, the hope of Glory (27)*

*We are devoted to just presenting Jesus so that all of you might be complete in Him 28,29.*

*I strive for all of you equally – that together you might know the Wisdom and knowledge of*

*God's mystery in Jesus (2:1-3) To protect you from false teachers, I stand with you (4,5).*

## **LISTEN**

1) What is the lesson or the main point?

*For all men our faith is that the King of the Jews is the way to Heaven.*

- 2) Which verse best sums up the message of the passage?  
*'The mystery – Christ in (among) you the hope of Glory'. (27b)*

## LIVE

- 1) What does it show about God (Father, Son, Holy Spirit)?  
a) His nature and character?  
*25 God sends His people to do His Work.*  
*26 God gives His Word in all its fullness through the message of Jesus.*  
*27 God dwells among us / within us.*  
*2:2 God exists above all human wisdom and knowledge.*

- b) His grace?  
*27 God chooses to make Himself known.*

- c) Jesus and His salvation?  
*24 In Jesus, God suffers.*

*Now underline the application of the Main Point.*

- 2) What should I do?  
*1:24 Rejoice in what you suffer for Christ on other's behalf.*  
*Expect to share in Christs afflictions.*  
*25 Expect God's call.*  
*26 Look at Christ in all the Scriptures as God's Word in all its fullness.*  
*27 'Christ in you' – know that nothing can separate you from Him*  
*28 Proclaim Jesus with the intention of presenting people complete / perfect in Christ.*  
*29 Work to make Jesus known by His power.*  
*2:1 Struggle for those Christians who you have not met.*  
*Aim to make the mystery of Jesus known.*  
*2:4 Do not to waste time in 'fine sounding arguments'.*  
*2:5 Put your faith IN Christ.*

*Now underline the application of the Main Point.*

## Chose to live freely, in Christ

### Background

Paul urges these new Christians to continue to grow and develop in their faith. He introduces a word of warning in v8 by calling on them to be constantly vigilant and not be taken in by false philosophies/world views.

In the OT, God gave Abraham a promise, and a sign to show a man covered by that promise: circumcision. In v11 Paul uses the word metaphorically; it had been replaced by the sign of coming under the new promise: Baptism.

In Colossae, other religions also practised circumcision, observing festivals that worshipped other gods and angels on special days, avoiding some foods.

In v15 Paul uses a vivid picture to show how Jesus has conquered all the powers of evil. A Roman general who was triumphant in battle would strip his foes and lead them into his home city as captives behind his chariot in a victory procession. In the same way, Christ has broken the power of sin

Nb Christ is - on (8), in (9), by (11), with (13).

### Word List

8	<i>basic principles</i>	Elemental spirits <i>i.e.</i> deities the local people thought of as having local power
11	<i>circumcising</i>	Literally, removing male foreskin, as a sign of faith in God's promise to Jews
14	<i>written code</i>	The Law given by Moses.
15	<i>powers &amp; authorities</i>	Ungodly beings with power in spiritual realm.
16	<i>religious festival</i>	Holy day
	<i>New Moon celebration</i>	Jewish festivals
	<i>Sabbath day</i>	Seventh day of the week / day of rest
18	<i>worship of angels</i>	This may refer to a local practice of fasting that was thought to induce visions.

### Bible Connections

6	<i>growing in Christ</i>	<i>see</i> 2 Peter 3:18
8	<i>captives of philosophy</i>	<i>see</i> 1 Corinthians 1:20ff
9	<i>fullness of deity</i>	<i>see</i> Hebrews 1:1-3; John 1:1
11	<i>circumcision</i>	<i>see</i> Genesis 17:1ff
	<i>Non-physical – of heart</i>	<i>see</i> Deuteronomy 10:16
12	<i>buried/ raised with Jesus</i>	<i>see</i> Romans 6:3-6
13	<i>forgiveness of sins</i>	<i>see</i> Psalm 130; 1 John 1:9
14	<i>cancelled code (fulfilled law)</i>	<i>see</i> Matthew 5:17
15	<i>powers</i>	<i>see</i> Ephesians 6:12
17	<i>shadow of things to come</i>	<i>see</i> Hebrews 9:9; 10:1
19	<i>the body</i>	<i>see</i> 1 Corinthians 12:12
22	<i>ritual cleanliness</i>	<i>see</i> Luke 11:39

# LOOK

## 1) The Text

What questions does the passage raise?

- 6 *What was before?*  
*Why 'Christ Jesus' as Lord?*  
*What does 'live in Him' mean?*
- 7 *What is 'the faith'?*  
*What are you 'overflowing with thankfulness' for?*
- 8 *What are human 'traditions and basic principles'?*  
*How are you 'taken captive' by hollow philosophy'?*
- 10 *How have they been 'given all the fulness'?*
- 11 *What is the 'sinful nature'?*
- 12 *What happens if you are not baptised?*
- 13 *How were they 'dead in their sins'?*
- 14 *What is the written code?*  
*How was the code against us?*  
*Who were they a spectacle to?*
- 16 *How is the sabbath day 'realised in Christ'?*
- 20 *What are the basic principles?*
- 22 *How are these rules 'destined to perish'?*
- 23 *What is sensual indulgence?*  
*How is it restrained?*

What surprises or confuses you?

*Why when we have been buried with him / raised with Him do we still need to be warned encouraged etc.?*

## 2) The Context

a) surrounding passage,

- 6 *How firm your faith is (5) - So then, just as you received Christ (ie by faith)*

b) individual book,

- 9 *God was pleased to have all His fullness dwell in Him (1:19)*
- 10 *The head (1:18, 2:19)*

c) whole Bible,

- 7 *Thankfulness (1 Thessalonians 5:18)*
- 8 *Resist the Devil and stand firm. (1 Peter 5:8,9)*  
*Human tradition (Isaiah 29:13; Mark 7:5ff)*
- 9 *Fullness of God (Ephesians 1:23)*
- 10 *All authority (Matthew 28:19)*
- 12 *Buried with Him in baptism (Romans 6:4)*
- 13 *Dead in sins (Ephesians 2:1)*  
*Dead to sin but alive to God in Christ Jesus (Romans 6:11)*
- 16 *Judge not lest you be judged. (Matthew 7:1)*  
*Eat or drink (1 Corinthians 8:8)*  
*Sabbath days rest (Hebrews 4:9)*
- 18 *The prize (Philippians 3:14)*
- 22 *Human commands (Mark 7:1ff)*
- 23 *Sensual indulgence (Matthew 5:21-30)*

d) Bible story

See study I

## LEARN

1) How do you answer the questions that the passage raises?

- 6 *Before they received Christ Jesus, by faith*  
*'Christ Jesus' emphasises Jesus was the Jewish Messiah, the Lord.*  
*'Live in Him' means to have faith in Him.*
- 7 *Faith is 'being sure of what we hope for and certain of what we don't see'*  
*(Hebrews 11:1)*  
*You are 'overflowing with thankfulness' for receiving Christ.*
- 8 *Human 'traditions and basic principles' are the ways of the world.*  
*You are 'taken captive' when you believe in / 'buy' into it.*
- 10 *They have been 'given all the fulness' (of the deity) as they have received Christ.*
- 11 *The 'sinful nature' is the part of us that rebels against God.*
- 12 *Nothing happens if you are not baptised – it is the sign / symbolic.*
- 13 *'Dead in their sins' means the inevitable effect of our sin is death.*
- 14 *The written code is the Law.*



*The code was against us as it inevitably condemned us / our sin.*

*They were a spectacle meaning they were seen by all creation.*

*16 The Law of the sabbath day was 'realised in Christ'. The benefit now is to the 'wise'.*

*20 The 'basic principles' are the 'rules' of the world.*

*22 They are 'destined to perish' as they will be found to be ineffective (i.e. They may clean the outside but not the inside).*

*23 Sensual indulgence – (3:8) in thought word or deed  
It is restrained by the Spirit through faith.*

2) How do you resolve issues that surprised or confused you?

*We need to be warned because we are between the ages / in a battle.*

3) Give an overall 'picture' of the passage in a few sentences.

*Because Jesus is your Lord, act accordingly. (6-8)*

*Your Christ is Lord of all. (9-11) In Him, you have fulfilled the covenants God made (11,12) and have new life with Christ, standing completely forgiven and victorious through the Cross. (13-15)*

*Therefore, do not let anyone judge you within the church. That would not be 'of Jesus'. (16-19) Why would you trust in human rules that promise 'holiness' but deliver nothing? (20-23)*

## LISTEN

1) What is the lesson or the main point?

*Though 'in Christ' by faith, we need to choose to live with Him and for Him.*

2) Which verse best sums up the message of the passage?

*So then just as you received Christ Jesus as Lord continue to live in Him....'  
(2:6)*

## LIVE

1) What does it show about God (Father, Son, Holy Spirit)?

a) His nature and character?

*9 Jesus was / is God among us in bodily form.*

10 *Jesus is head of all power and authority.*

b) His grace?

9 *We are given fulness in Christ.*

13 *When we were dead, God made us alive.*

c) Jesus and His salvation?

6 *Jesus Christ is Lord.*

13 *Through Jesus, God forgave all our sins.*

17 *Jesus fulfils ALL our religious habits.*

Now underline the application of the Main Point.

2) What should I do?

6 *Receive Christ Jesus as Lord.*

*Choose to live in Christ.*

8 *Be aware / resist deception and false doctrine.*

9 *Acknowledge that I have been given fulness in Christ.*

12 *Believe that by your faith in Jesus, you are buried with Him through baptism and raised with Him.*

15 *Reckon that all spiritual powers have been defeated by Christ.*

16 *Do not accept (i.e. ignore) judgment by others of religious practice.*

19 *Discern that spiritual legalists and 'superiors' have lost contact with the head – Jesus.*

20 *Since I died with Christ, live (freely).*

21 *Avoid human practice that attempts 'ritual' purity.*

22 *Acknowledge that ALL religious practice will perish.*

23 *Do not try and counter 'the flesh' with cosmetic religion.*

Now underline the application of the Main Point.

# Study 6      Remember, you are now      3:1-4

## eternally hidden in Jesus, in Heaven

### Background

In ch. 1-2, Paul has laid the foundations of what the Christian faith teaches (doctrine). This is what a Christian 'is' in Christ. Now he starts to say, '**Be** what you have been made in Christ'. He applies the doctrine to everyday life, like building an ethical superstructure on those doctrinal foundations. Being 'raised with Christ' means having a new aim in life, a new attitude of mind, which leads to new patterns of behaviour, instead of living by lists of rules like those mentioned in 2:16-23.

This section, 3:1-4, though short, is the hinge of the book, as Paul turns from doctrine to apply it to practice.

### Word List

- |   |                                 |  |
|---|---------------------------------|--|
| 1 | <i>at the right hand of God</i> | place of holiness, intercession and power        |
| 4 | <i>glory</i>                    | Radiance of God's being / his immediate presence |

### Bible Connections

- |   |                                  |                                     |
|---|----------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| 1 | <i>Christ seated with Father</i> | Ephesians 1:20f                     |
| 4 | <i>appearing with Jesus</i>      | 1 Thessalonians 4:16-18; 1 John 3:2 |

# LOOK

## 1) The Text

What questions does the passage raise?

1 Why 'since'?

*How were we raised with Christ?*

*Why 'Christ', not 'Jesus'?*

*Why 'hearts'?*

*What are the things 'above'?*

*What does 'seated at the right hand of God' mean?*

2 Why 'minds' as opposed to 'hearts'?

*What are 'earthly things'?*

*When did we 'die with Christ'?*

3 Why 'hidden'?

*What does 'with Christ in God' mean?*

4 How is He 'our life'?

*When will he appear?*

*How will I also appear if I am still living on earth?*

What surprises or confuses you?

*How did I 'die' (2), How was I 'raised' (1) with Christ?*

## 2) The Context

a) surrounding passage,

1 *Since you died with Christ (2:20)*

*Raised with Him through faith (2:12)*

2 *On earthly things (3:5)*

*Heavenly things (3:12)*

3 *Died with Christ (2:11-12, 20)*

b) individual book,

1 *In Christ Jesus (1:2,28)*

4 *Appear with him in glory (1:27)*

c) whole Bible,

- 1    *Raised with Christ and seated us with him (Ephesians 2:6 cf Romans 6:4)*  
      *Hearts on things above (Matthew 6:20)*  
      *All authority is Jesus'. (Matthew 28:20)*  
      *Seated at the right hand (Psalm 110:1)*  
      *Where are you? (Genesis 3:9)*
- 2    *Heavenly things (Philippians 4:8)*
- 3    *You died (Galatians 2:20)*  
      *Citizenship in Heaven (Philippians 3:19ff)*
- 4    *He who believes has eternal life. (John 5:24)*  
      *Come again (Acts 1:11)*  
      *Life (John 1:4)*  
      *Glory revealed. (Romans 8:18ff)*  
      *When he appears we will be like Him. ( 1 John 3:1)*

d) Bible story

See study 1

## LEARN

- 1) How do you answer the questions that the passage raises?
  - 1    *'Since' i.e. because you died with Christ, you have also been raised with Him.*  
      *We were raised with Christ through our faith in Him.*  
      *'Christ', because Jesus died and was raised as the Jewish Messiah.*  
      *'Set your hearts' means literally 'seek the things above'.*  
      *The things 'above' are true, noble pure, admirable, excellent, praiseworthy.*  
      *(Philippians 4:8)*  
      *'Seated at the right hand of God' means the place of ultimate authority.*
  - 2    *'Set your minds' means 'focus on'.*  
      *'Earthly things' - power, position, popularity...*  
      *I 'died with Christ' when He physically died.*
  - 3    *'Hidden' because all my sin is paid for in Him and I am righteous.*  
      *'with Christ in God' because Jesus is God to be hidden with Him is to be in God*
  - 4    *He is 'our life' because we are raised to eternal life in Him*  
      *He will appear when he returns from glory?*

*I will appear if I am living as I am taken to meet Him in the air.*

2) How do you resolve issues that surprised or confused you?

*I must have an existence outside of time and been included with Him in His crucifixion /resurrection.*

3) Give an overall 'picture' of the passage in a few sentences.

*Because you were raised with Christ, share the values and objectives of His heavenly rule. Personally, focus on things of heavenly not earthly Significance. (1,2) For you now exist in Him and for Him, as will be evident when he returns. (3,4)*

## LISTEN

1) What is the lesson or the main point?

*As you shared in His resurrection, the reality is that you are now with Him in Glory.*

2) Which verse best sums up the message of the passage?

*Since, then, you have been raised with Christ, set your hearts on things above, where Christ is seated at the right hand of God. (1)*

## LIVE

1) What does it show about God (Father, Son, Holy Spirit)?

a) His nature and character

*I God is in charge.*

b) His grace?

*I God raised us with Christ and seated us with Him in Glory.*

c) Jesus and His salvation?

*I Christ rules over all things.*

*4 Christ is everything we have / need.*

*Now underline the application of the Main Point.*

2) What should I do?

1 Reckon yourself raised with / seated with Christ in Glory.

Seek the will of Jesus – what does He want?

Acknowledge / obey the rule of Jesus.

2 Prioritise heavenly over earthly things.

3 Reckon your (old) self dead with Christ.

Believe that in Jesus ALL your sin is 'hidden' / paid for.

4 Anticipate the return of Jesus in glory.

Believe we will be with Jesus when he returns.

Now underline the application of the Main Point.

## For Christ sake, change your clothes!

### Background information

The Christian is a new person on the inside, but is still living in his or her physical body. They must therefore contend with their old nature, which Paul calls the 'flesh'. In chapter 3, he uses two vivid metaphors to show what needs to happen to our bias towards sin: the first (v5) is, 'Put to death the old nature' Cf Matthew 18:8ff. The other is in v9.

For a description of a 'church service', see Pliny (61-113 AD), Roman governor of Bithynia, reporting the activities of the Christians to Trajan, the Emperor. In it he said, 'they meet at dawn to sing a hymn to Christ as God.'

### Word List

5	<i>earthly nature</i>	Humanity's self-centred character and tendency to rebel against God, inherited from Adam and Eve who first disobeyed God in the Garden of Eden. Cf In Adam and In Christ (1 Corinthians 15:22)
	<i>idolatry</i>	Worshipping anything or anyone but the God of Israel / Jesus.
6	<i>wrath of God</i>	God's righteous anger.
8	<i>malice</i>	Greek word is a general one for wickedness.
9	<i>old self</i>	the self-centred nature they had in Adam.
	<i>new self</i>	transformed nature given as we believe in Christ.
11	<i>barbarian</i>	foreigner, alien to Greek culture, 'uncivilised'.
	<i>Scythian</i>	from the northern reaches of Asia, 'savages'.
12	<i>chosen people</i>	covenant people, the new Israel
	<i>holy</i>	set apart
	<i>dearly loved</i>	as chosen people they are the objects of God's love
15	<i>one body</i>	ie the Church
16	<i>psalms/hymns</i>	Poems in the Bible set to music: in OT, eg Psalms; in NT, hymns like the <i>Magnificat</i> (Luke 1:46-55).
	<i>spiritual songs</i>	sacred songs possibly on themes other than direct praise to God or Christ.

### Bible Connections

5	<i>earthly ways</i>	see Galatians 5:19-21
6	<i>wrath of God</i>	see Romans 1:18; 2:5
10	<i>image of creator</i>	see Genesis 1:26
12	<i>God's chosen people</i>	see Deuteronomy 7:6; 1 Peter 1:1; 2:4
	<i>Godly conduct</i>	see Galatians 5:22-26
14	<i>unity in love</i>	see Ephesians 4: 2f
15	<i>peace of Christ</i>	see Philippians 4:7
16	<i>hymn</i>	see also Matt 26:30; Mark 14:26



# LOOK

## 1) The Text

What questions does the passage raise?

- 5 *How do you 'put to death'?*  
*What is your 'earthly' nature?*  
*Why is greed 'idolatry'?*
- 6 *When is 'the wrath of God coming'?*
- 7 *When did I 'walk in these ways'.*
- 9 *When did I take off my old self?*  
*What practices?*
- 10 *How do I put on my new self?*  
*What is 'in knowledge in image of its creator'.*
- 11 *Where is 'here'?*  
*Why Barbarian and Scythian?*
- 12 *Why 'clothe yourself'*
- 13 *How did 'the Lord forgive you'?*
- 14 *What does it mean 'over all put on love'?*
- 15 *What is the peace of Christ?*  
*When were we called to peace?*  
*Who called us?*  
*What should you be thankful for being 'called to peace'.*
- 16 *How does 'The Word of God dwells in you richly'?*  
*What does it mean 'as you teach one another'?*
- 17 *What are you grateful to God for?*  
*What does it mean to do something 'in Jesus Name'?*  
*Why would you give thanks to God the Father, through Jesus?*

What surprises or confuses you?

*Why did he start with the negatives (5-11) before coming on to the positives?*

## 2) The Context

a) surrounding passage,

- 5 *Therefore it is because you're seated with Christ at the right hand of God 3:1*

b) individual book,

- 8 *But now (1:22)*
- 11 *Christ is all in all (1:15-19)*
- 15 *One body = the church (1:18; 2:19)*
- 16 *Word of God (1:27)*  
*Teaching, admonishing etc (like Paul) (1:28)*  
*Christ is Wisdom of God (2:3)*
- 17 *So just as you received Christ Jesus as Lord..... (2:6) (completes section)*

c) whole Bible,

- 5 *Put to death (Matthew 5:29-30; 18:8-9)*
- 7 *You must be born again (John 3:3)*
- 9 *Do not lie – ie speak the truth (Romans 9:1)*
- 11 *Neither Jew nor Greek – all one (Galatians 3:28)*
- 12 *Forgive (Luke 11:4)*  
*Holy one (John 6:69; Acts 4:27)*  
*Dearly loved by the Father (Matthew 3:17; Ephesians 1:6)*  
*Humility (Philippians 2:5-11)*
- 13 *Forgive as God forgave you (Matthew 18:23-25)*
- 14 *Love binds all together (1 Corinthians 13)*
- 15 *Peace be with you (John 20:19)*  
*Be thankful (1 Thessalonians 5:18)*

d) Bible story

See study 1

## LEARN

1) How do you answer the questions that the passage raises?

5 *'Put to death' means to actively remove its power / life force.*

*Your 'earthly' nature is what causes you to sin.*

*Greed is worshipping the idols of possessions.*

6 *'The wrath of God is coming when Jesus returns and there is judgment.*

7 *I 'walked in these ways' before I believed in Jesus / had been raised to life.*

9 *I 'took off my old self' when I believed in Jesus.*

*Practices are deceit.*

*10 Put on my new self in / by faith.*

*'In knowledge in the image of its creator' means the truth – not a lie*

*11 'Here' is 'in the image of the creator'.*

*Barbarian and Scythian were on the extreme of 'uncivilised'.*

*12 'Clothes' are something you deliberately and consciously put on.*

*13 The Lord forgave us freely and completely.*

*14 Love 'trumps' every other emotion.*

*15 The peace of Christ is the knowledge that all is well and under His control*

*We were called to peace when we believed in Jesus.*

*Jesus, the head of the body, called us.*

*What should you be thankful for?*

*16 'the Word of God dwells in you richly' as you believe / meditate on it.*

*Since God may work through us, any of us may teach any other.*

*17 I am grateful to God for Jesus.*

*'In Jesus Name' means on His behalf and for His glory.*

*It is only through Jesus that we have access to the Father.*

2) How do you resolve issues that surprised or confused you?

*He didn't start with the negative, he started with the positive – 'you have been raised with Christ' (3:1).*

3) Give an overall 'picture' of the passage in a few sentences.

*Clinically, deal with your sin, which God will judge. (6&7) Your old self did such things but now, be like Jesus. (8-10) Here we are all equal and Jesus is Lord.*

*(11) Therefore, as he has loved you, you love others completely, living in harmonious peace together. (12-14).*

*Let the peace of Christ, with thankfulness, be your main concern together. Let the Word of Christ be the centre of your lives and the praise of God. (15-16)*

*Whatever you say or do, do it with thankfulness to God the Father, for the benefit of Jesus. (17)*

## **LISTEN**

1) What is the lesson or the main point?

*Put to death the old man and put on the new man with Jesus, for Jesus and through Jesus expressing thanks to God.*

2) Which verse best sums up the message of the passage?

*And whatever you do, whether in Word or in deed, do it all in the name of Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through Him. (17)*

## LIVE

1) What does it show about God (Father, Son, Holy Spirit)?

a) His nature and character?

*6 God's is wrathful against man's evil.*

*15/16 The Peace/Word of Christ is intended to be part of us / in us.*

*16 God is worthy of our praise.*

*17 God is worthy always of our thanksgiving.*

b) His grace?

*10 God is renewing us in His image*

*13 The Lord forgave us*

c) Jesus and His salvation?

*11 Christ is everything we need and everything we have*

*Now underline the application of the Main Point.*

2) What should I do?

*5 I can, and ought to, resist ruthlessly my sinful temptations.*

*9 Do not lie to each other (ie pretend).*

*12 Treat one another well.*

*13 Forgive one another.*

*14 Love one another.*

*15 Let God do His work in You, in bringing peace etc.*

*Be thankful to Him.*

*16 Submit to and share His Word together.*

*17 Do everything for Jesus / in His power, giving thanks to God.*

*Offer my thanks to God through Jesus.*

*Now underline the application of the Main Point.*

## Christians, treat one another as in Christ

### Background information

A Jewish population of about 2000 from Mesopotamia and Babylon had been settled in the area around 200 BC by the emperor, Antiochus the Great. Their religious identity was very confused: e.g. a Jewish lady was known to be simultaneously, honorary ruler of the synagogue and a priestess of the imperial cult. (Inscriptional evidence nos 530 and 559 – Ramsay, *Cities and Bishoprics of Phrygia*, Oxford 1897).

In this situation, Paul seeks to explain to those who are faithful brothers in Christ (1:2) the relationships that are at the very heart of society – the family.

Hellenistic society had Household Codes for ethical behaviour in the family. But for believers, *every* human relationship must be considered from the standpoint of our basic relationship with Christ *ie 'in the Lord.'*

The extra space given to the relationship of slaves and masters may be because of the issues raised by the return of the runaway slave Onesimus, who was travelling with Tychicus as he delivered this letter to the Colossians. (4:7,9: *See also* the book of Philemon.) In the first century many slaves were merely property, with no civic or other right. The Roman penalty for a runaway slave was crucifixion! Paul's emphasis is that a slave is a person.

Children became adults, in Paul's Jewish culture, at their 'Bar mitzvah' at the age of about 12 years old. From this time marriage was possible and adult employment was expected. NB Only BOYS had a Bar mitzvah.

### Word List

18	<i>love</i>	Greek <i>agape</i> , <i>ie</i> love that seeks primarily the good of the beloved.
24	<i>slave</i>	<i>gk doulos</i> Earthly slaves could not inherit property (vs 24)
4:1	<i>masters</i>	<i>gk kurios</i> lord
2	<i>devote</i>	<i>lit 'continue steadfastly'</i> - implies diligence and persistence.

### Bible Connections

18	<i>submission</i>	Romans 13:1ff; Ephesians 5:21ff; 1 Peter 3:1.
20	<i>pleases the Lord</i>	'find out what pleases the Lord' - only once in rest of Bible: Ephesians 5:10
24	<i>Lord Christ</i>	God (1:10) Messiah (1:1-4)

# LOOK

## 1) The Text

What questions does the passage raise?

- 18 *Why does it start with wives to husbands?*  
*What does 'submit' mean? How does it differ from 'obey' in 20,22?*  
*What does 'fitting in the Lord' mean?*
- 19 *What does being 'harsh' mean?*
- 20 *What does 'everything' embrace?*  
*Why should children being obedient please the Lord?*
- 21 *How might fathers 'embitter' their children?*  
*What might them being discouraged result in?*
- 22 *Why specify 'earthly masters'?*  
*What does 'everything' mean?*  
*How might their behaviour 'reverence the Lord'?*
- 23 *What does 'whatever you do' cover?*  
*What does 'with all your heart' mean?*
- 24 *What would our inheritance be for the Lord?*  
*Why is he called 'the Lord Christ'?*
- 25 *When will wrong-doers be repaid?*  
*Where is there no favouritism?*
- 4:1 *What is right and fair?*  
*Why is having a master in Heaven, relevant?*
- 2 *What does 'devote' involve?*  
*What are we to be watchful for?*  
*What are we to be thankful for?*

What surprises or confuses you?

*Why does this so abruptly follow on from vs 17?*

*Why is there so much on the behaviour of slaves: 3:22 - 4:1 ?*

## 2) The Context

a) surrounding passage,

- 18 *In the Lord (4:7, 17)*

b) individual book,

24 *Inheritance of the saints in light (1:12)*

4:2 *Thankful (1:3-8, 12b; 3:15)*

*Not stopped praying for you (1:9)*

c) whole Bible,

18 *Woman sinned first (Genesis 3:6; 1 Timothy 2:13,15)*

*Submit to one another (Romans 13:1-7; Ephesians 5:21ff; 1 Peter 2:13ff) Equal marital duties (1 Corinthians 7:3-5)*

*Submit to God (James 4:7)*

*Man and woman are one in Christ Jesus (Galatians 3:28)*

*Wives submit.. the husband is head .. as Christ is head of the church (Ephesians 5:22,23)*

*In the Lord – children obey parents (Ephesians 6:1)*

19 *Husbands, love wives as Christ loved the church - and He gave His life for her (Ephesians 5:25)*

*Harsh, bitter (cf James 3:11,14)*

20 *Pleases the Lord (John 8:29; Ephesians 5:10; 1 Timothy 2:3)*

21 *Embitter – ‘provoke to anger’ Negative: provoke the Lord to jealousy (1 Cor 10:22). Positive: provoke unto love (Hebrews 10:24).*

22 *Slaves – the majority were poor disadvantaged (1 Corinthians 1:26)*

*Reverence = lit ‘fear of the Lord’ – beginning of wisdom (Ps 110:10)*

*delight in (Isaiah 11:3) walking in ... (Acts 9:3) knowing ... we persuade men (2 Corinthians 5:11)*

22/23 *Lit. ‘Sincerity of heart’ (22) ‘with all your soul’ (23)*

24 *Inheritance – kill and have his inheritance (Matthew 21:38) in Kingdom of God (Ephesians 5:5); imperishable (1 Pet 1:4).*

25 *Favouritism = lit ‘respect of persons’*

*The Lord will judge (Matthew 7:1)*

4:2 *Watch and pray (Matthew 26:41)*

*Thanksgiving – God’s will (1 Thessalonians 5:18)*

*The devil (Ephesians 4:27; 1 Peter 5:8)*

d) Bible story

See study 1

# LEARN

1) How do you answer the questions that the passage raises?

18 *It starts with wives because as they sinned first, they are called to take the spiritual initiative within the household.*

*Or, Paul puts first the command that was then culturally acceptable, (wives, children, slaves) then challenges the second partner.*

*To discuss 'submit' and how it differs from 'obey' in 20,22, use the Bible connections, esp Ephesians 5:21 submit 'to one another'.*

*'Fitting in the Lord' means because you are under Christ as Lord.*

19 *'Harsh' implies bitterness.*

20 *'Everything' embraces all things.*

*Children being 'obedient, submissive to rightful authority, is pleasing to the Lord.*

21 *Fathers might 'embitter' their children by not being just, fair, or proportionate in sanctions.*

*It might result in resentment and lack of effort.*

22 *'Earthly masters' suggests a contrast to non-earthly ie heavenly.*

*'Everything' means ALL things!*

*'Reverence means 'fear' ie to show that you fear the wrath of the Lord.*

23 *'Whatever you do' i.e. as a Christian slave*

*'With all sincerity of heart' means, obeying is what you desire to do.*

24 *Our inheritance be for the Lord – the inheritance of glory. (Eph 1:18)  
He is called 'the Lord Christ' because He is God and He is the Jewish Messiah.*

25 *Wrong doers will be repaid on the day of judgement day.*

*There is no favouritism before the judge in glory.*

4:1 *'Right' is same root as righteously. Fair is with equality*

*Master means the Master in Heaven, to whom they will give account.*

2 *'Devote' means 'continue steadfastly' i.e. 'don't be deflected'?*

*'Be watchful' for the temptations to ignore right relations under God.*

*'Thankful for' the human situation God has set you among.*

2) How do you resolve issues that surprised or confused you?

*It is inserted so precipitately because it is so important / urgent.*

*There is so much on slaves as they are the majority in that church.*



3) Give an overall ‘picture’ of the passage in a few sentences.

*Because you are in Christ ... (18b).*

*... Wives, submit to your husbands (18a).*

*... Husbands, love your wives, being self-sacrificial and gentle (19).*

*... Children, obey your parents as this pleases the Lord (20).*

*... Fathers, don’t domineer your children or they will become ‘cowed’ (21).*

*... Slaves, obey your masters sincerely, with the fear of the Lord in mind – it is He whom you serve, who will judge everybody. (22-25).*

*... Masters, treat your slaves justly and fairly as you hope to be treated by your heavenly master (4:1).*

*... Because you relate ‘as is fitting in the Lord’ – be prayer-ful, care-ful and thank-ful (2).*

## LISTEN

1) What is the lesson or the main point?

*Christians relate to one another with reference to the Lord to whom we will all have to give account.*

2) Which verse best sums up the message of the passage?

*‘Relate to one another – as is fitting in the Lord’ (18)*

## LIVE

1) What does it show about God (Father, Son, Holy Spirit)?

a) His nature and character?

*18 The Lord reigns over all*

*20 The Lord may be pleased by our behaviour in relating to one another*

*22 The fear of the Lord is the backdrop for human action.*

*24 The Lord Christ expects our service*

b) His grace?

*24 We will receive and inheritance (not payment)*

c) Jesus and His salvation?

*24 The Lord Christ / Jesus is the one we serve*

*Now underline the application of the Main Point.*

2) What should I do?

- 18 *If I am a wife, submit to my husband for Christ's sake.*
- 19 *If I am a husband, love / care for my wife self-sacrificially.*
- 20 *If I am a child, obey my parents in everything.*
- 21 *If I am a Dad, don't be harsh with my children.*
- 22 *If I am a slave (or employee), obey my earthly master – all the time - out of reverence for the Lord.*
- 23 *If I am a slave, work hard and the Lord will reward you.*
- 25 *Don't worry or judge – the Lord will give everyone their due.*
- 4:1 *If I am a Master (or employer), be just and fair to my workers - the Lord is watching and will call me to account.*
- 2 *Seek God in prayer for all my relationships.*  
*Be careful of all my relationships.*  
*Be thankful for the opportunity to serve God in all my relationships.*

*Now underline the application of the Main Point.*

## Pray the truth of Christ is spoken out

### Background information

Paul's final instructions cover the need to continue in prayer and the call to let every little part of our lives commend Christ to others.

Non-Christians then also used the phrase, '*conversation be full of grace*,' but they meant speech that sparkled, full of witty or clever remarks. Here it means speech that emerges from the heart of people who have been transformed by grace, God's undeserved love,

### Word List

3	<i>mystery of Christ</i>	the gospel is for the Gentiles too <i>see</i> 1:26,27; 2:2
	<i>in chains</i>	a prisoner of the authorities, whether held in an actual prison or under house-arrest.
3/4	<i>proclaim</i>	means 'make manifest or reveal'
5	<i>outsiders</i>	non-Christians.
6	<i>grace</i>	Undeserved favour, (cf 'find the positive?')
	<i>conversation...</i>	everyday speech, not just when consciously proclaiming the message of Christ.

### Bible Connections

3	<i>open a door</i>	Acts 14:27;
	<i>proclaiming</i>	Ephesians 6:19-20
	<i>in chains</i>	Acts 21:33
6	<i>seasoned with salt</i>	Mark 9:50; Ephesians 4:29
	<i>giving an answer</i>	<i>see</i> 1 Peter 3:15; Act 8:34-35

# LOOK

## 1) The Text

What questions does the passage raise?

3 *Why pray about our proclamation?*

*What is the mystery of Christ?*

*Why remind them of 'his chains'?*

4 *Why pray about how he presents the 'Gospel'?*

*Why does he put – 'as I should'?*

5 *How are we to be 'wise' in the way we act to outsiders?*

*Who are the outsiders?*

*How do we make the most of every opportunity?*

6 *What is conversation 'full of grace'?*

*How may your conversation be seasoned with salt?*

*Why may you need to 'answer everyone'?*

What surprises or confuses you?

*The abrupt way he changes from family relationships to prayer (cf 4:2)*

## 2) The Context

a) individual book,

3 *The message (lit 'word') cf word of truth (1:5)*

b) whole Bible,

3 *Door (Acts 14:27; 1 Corinthians 16:9; 2 Corinthians 2:12))*

*Mystery of Christ (Ephesians 3:4), the Gospel (Ephesians 6:19)*

*Watchful – stand firm against the devil (1 Corinthians 16:13; 1 Peter 5:8)*

4 *As I should means 'fearlessly declaring' (Ephesians 6:19)*

5 *Outsiders (1 Thessalonians 4:12; 1 Timothy 3:7)*

*No reason to cause criticism etc (1 Corinthians 10:32)*

*Make the most of every opportunity (Ephesians 5:32)*

6 *Conversation (speech) – in love, in faith and in purity*

*Go and make disciples of all nations (Matthew 28:19)*

*Salt (Matthew 5:13; Mark 9:49,50)*

c) Bible story

See study I

## LEARN

1) How do you answer the questions that the passage raises?

3 *Praying about the proclamation because its success is totally dependant on God.*

*The mystery of Christ is God's secret plan for the salvation of the world in Jesus.*

*Paul mentions 'his chains' to show their utter dependence on God.*

4 *Praying about how he presents the 'Gospel' shows his total dependence on God.*

*'As I should' reflects human responsibility (c.f. election and freewill)*

5 *'Be wise' refers to the proclamation of the Gospel.*

*'Outsiders' are those in Colossae who are not 'faithful brothers' (1:2)*

*Make the most of every opportunity commending the mystery of Christ.*

6 *'Full of grace' meaning speak well / generously / positively*

*'Seasoned with salt' c.f. 'edifying' – good to listen to.*

*'Answer everyone' because we are called to take the message to the world!*

2) How do you resolve issues that surprised or confused you?

*The abruptness appears because the inserted heading ('further instructions') is put between vss 1 and 2 instead of 2 and 3. "devote yourself to prayer and be thankful" is a conclusion to the passage on relationships, not the beginning of a new section.*

3) Give an overall 'picture' of the passage in a few sentences.

*Pray for us that we may live for, and present, Jesus faithfully. (3,4) Pray for my presentation of Jesus. Always be wise as you present Jesus, always being gracious and careful. (5,6).*

## LISTEN

1) What is the lesson or the main point?

*We depend on God completely as we seek to make Christ known.*

2) Which verse best sums up the message of the passage?

*Pray for us that God may open a door for our message so that we may proclaim the mystery of Christ - for which I am in chains. (3)*

## LIVE

1) What does it show about God (Father, Son, Holy Spirit)?

a) His nature and character?

3    *God is sovereign – He opens doors for His proclamation*

b) His grace?

3    *The Gospel is a mystery that God may reveal*

c) Jesus and His salvation?

3    *The Gospel of Jesus Christ is the mystery that needs spoken out*

*Now underline the application of the Main Point.*

2) What should I do?

3    *Pray for your leaders for God's opportunities in presenting the Gospel.*

4    *Pray for your leaders for God's ability in presenting the Gospel.*

5    *In proclaiming Christ be wise.*

*In proclaiming Christ be permanently vigilant.*

6    *In your speaking, let the grace of Jesus be always evident.*

*In your speaking, let the Holy Spirit carefully guide you.*

*Now underline the application of the Main Point.*

**Background information**

In his final greetings Paul repeats his warm feelings and fellowship with them all.

We cannot be certain about 'the letter from Laodicea' referred to at the end of 4:16 since we do not have one by that name.

One person, Tychicus, delivered both Colossians (4:7) and Ephesians (6:21) and his route from Ephesus would have taken him *via* Laodicea (*see* map p4).

**Word List**

8	<i>our circumstances</i>	lit 'know how we are'
11	<i>comfort</i>	<i>gk paregoria</i> – comfort or exhortation
13	<i>Laodicea</i>	large city about 12 miles west of Colossae, Roman capital of a political district of 25 towns
	<i>Hierapolis</i>	large city about 6 miles from Laodicea, a famous spa
18	<i>grace</i>	undeserved gift

**Bible Connections**

7	<i>Tychicus</i>	<i>see</i> Acts 20:4; Ephesians 6:21
9	<i>everything...here</i>	<i>see</i> Acts 28:17ff (?)
	<i>Onesimus</i>	<i>see</i> Philemon 10
10	<i>Aristarchus</i>	<i>see</i> Acts 19:29; Philemon 24
	<i>Mark and Barnabas</i>	<i>see</i> Acts 15:36
12	<i>Epaphras</i>	<i>see</i> Philemon 23
	<i>stand firm</i>	<i>see</i> Ephesians 6:11,14
14	<i>Luke</i>	A doctor, who travelled with Paul from Acts 16:10 onwards. Writer of Luke's Gospel, and of Acts.
	<i>Demas</i>	<i>see</i> Philemon 24; 2 Timothy 4:10
15	<i>house church</i>	<i>see</i> 1 Corinthians 16:19
17	<i>Archippus</i>	<i>see</i> Philemon 2

# LOOK

## 1) The Text

What questions does the passage raise?

- 7 *When will Tychicus tell them?*  
*Why is Paul commending him so?*
- 8 *Why 'the express purpose'?*  
*Why do they need their hearts encouraged?*
- 9 *Why is Onesimus also called a dear brother?*  
*What is happening where they are?*
- 10 *What instructions did they receive about Mark?*  
*Why did he mention Barnabus – did they know him?*  
*Who are the only Jews?*
- 11 *Why 'for the Kingdom of God'?*  
*How have they proved a comfort*
- 12 *What would they be fully assured of?*
- 13 *Why should he 'vouch' for Epaphras?*
- 17 *What work had Archippus received in the Lord?*  
*Why did he need a reminder?*
- 18 *Why is it important that he 'wrote this in His own hand'?*  
*What did he mean 'remember my chains'?*  
*What does he mean – 'grace be with you'?*

What surprises or confuses you?

- 11 *Why should the only Jews among my fellow workers be important?*

## 2) The Context

a) surrounding passage,

- 18 *Afflictions (4:18)*

b) individual book,

- 7 *Fellow servant ... faithful minister (1:7)*  
*Brother (1:2) ie fellow Christian.*
- 12 *Epaphras – who brought them the Gospel (1:7,8)*  
*Fully assured – hidden with Christ in God (3:3)*
- 18 *My chains (1:24)*



c) whole Bible,

- 7 *Tychicus (Acts 20:4; 2 Timothy 4:12; Titus 3:12)*  
*Dear brother – only Paul (Ephesians 6:21); Philemon 16. Peter of Paul (2 Peter 3:15)*  
*Faithful minister (Ephesians 6:2; Colossians 1:7)*
- 8 *Rejoicing at all times (Philippians 4:6) delighting in weakness (2 Corinthians 12:10)*
- 10 *Mark – chequered career! (Acts 12:24; 13:13; 15:37-39; cf 2 Timothy 4:11 Philemon 24)*  
*Barnabas – rift, (Acts 15:36-41)*
- 18 *To live is Christ to die is gain (Philippians 1:21)*  
*Fellowship of His sufferings and the power of His resurrection (Phil 3:10)*  
*Paul's own hand (1 Cor 16:21; Gal 6:11; 2 Thess. 3:17 c.f. Philemon 17)*  
*In chains (Ephesians 6:20)*

d) Bible story

See study 1

## LEARN

- 1) How do you answer the questions that the passage raises?
- 7 *Tychicus will tell them when he visits.*  
*Paul is commending him like this because of the importance of the visit – the well-being of Onesimus.*
- 8 *'The express purpose' is knowing how Paul is and knowing what he wants: a welcome for Onesimus.*  
*Hearts 'encouraged' because they are tempted to be fearful.*
- 9 *Onesimus is also called a dear brother to identify him as part of the family in Christ.*  
*They are imprisoned and rejoicing in the Lord.*
- 10 *Mark is timid (?) therefore care for him.*  
*They must have known Barnabas – at least by repute.*  
*Aristarchus, Mark & Jesus Justus are the only Jews with Paul then.*
- 11 *The Kingdom of God – a Jewish concept following the appearance of the Messiah.*

*A comfort or exhortation to retain his Jewish roots (not traditions)*

*12 Fully assured of your situation means 'hidden in Christ'. (3:3)*

*13 Epaphras had been called away but still 'had them in his heart'.*

*17 Archippus had received some ministry in the church(?)*

*He needed a reminder because the work was 'unsavoury'(?)*

*18 He 'wrote this in His own hand' showing all that had been written was from him.*

*'Remember my chains' was an encouragement to follow his example - rejoice in all circumstances.*

*He means that all your acts should be informed by the grace of God to you.*

2) How do you resolve issues that surprised or confused you?

*The Jews have been exhorted to remember the Old Covenant's fulfilment in the New (not its traditions).*

3) Give an overall 'picture' of the passage in a few sentences.

*Receive Tychicus, as well as Onesimus, from us. (7-9) The Jews with me, who have exhorted me to remember our roots, greet you. (10,11) Your Epaphras who, I can assure you, is rooting for all in your area, greets you along with Luke and Demas. (12-14) Greet the church in Laodicea and the one that meets in Nympha's house. (15) Share your letters with the church from Laodicea. (16) Tell Archippus 'be sure and do what the Lord sets before you'. (17) I write this all as an Apostle. Let God's grace fill you. (18)*

## LISTEN

1) What is the lesson or the main point?

*The apostle Paul wrote this, triumphant though in chains charging the Colossians to be filled with God's grace.*

2) Which verse best sums up the message of the passage?

*I, Paul, write this greeting with my own hand. Remember my chains. Grace be with you (18)*

## LIVE

1) What does it show about God (Father, Son, Holy Spirit)?

a) His nature and character?

7 *God holds all His peoples existence together in Himself.*

11 *God includes all His people as workers in His Kingdom.*

12 *The will of God is to be discerned confidently.*

16 *The Word of God is to be shared.*

17 *Work for God is 'in the Lord'.*

b) His grace?

18 *The grace of Jesus is our hallmark.*

*Transmit the grace of Jesus.*

c) Jesus and His salvation?

12 *Jesus, is the Jewish Messiah.*

*Now underline the application of the Main Point.*

2) What should I do?

7 *Share the news about our brothers in the Gospel.*

*Endorse one another, publicly.*

8 *Let news of my life in Christ encourage other believers.*

10 *Welcome those who come in the name of the Lord.*

12 *Struggle in prayer.*

*Pray for believers that they may stand firm in the will of God, mature and fully assured.*

12/14 *Pass on greetings.*

15 *Keep in touch with local Christians.*

17 *Complete what God has given me to do.*

18 *Pass on greetings personally.*

*Now underline the application of the Main Point.*

## *Sharing the Word*

### **Use**

'Hearing the Word' can be used alone, with one other person, or in a group

### **Preparing for a group**

Time put in alone beforehand will greatly benefit time spent together.

Work through the stages - LOOK, LEARN, LISTEN, LIVE.

Write down your own questions and answers \*

### **A format**

If you have 45 mins together, you might like to try dividing it up like this.

(If longer or in a large group, you can extend the times)

- |   |           |
|---|-----------|
| 1) Drink, bite to eat, chat                         | (10 mins) |
| 2) A Bible reading                                  | ( 2 mins) |
| 3) A Bible study                                    |           |
| a. Any questions? (Whether answer is known or not!) | ( 2 mins) |
| (Don't answer any, till all questions noted!)       |           |
| b. Any relevant cross references?                   | ( 2 mins) |
| c. Discussion of answers                            | (13 mins) |
| d. Conclusion                                       | (10 mins) |
| i. A Key verse and Main Point?                      |           |
| ii. What does it show about God / Jesus?            |           |
| iii. What should I do?                              |           |
| 4) Sharing (Trials and joys – family, work, self)   | ( 5 mins) |
| 5) Prayer   | ( 1 min)  |

### **Remember!**

As we gather round God's Word

- a) Listen to the views of others
- b) Make room for the novice. They can join in too when you start by listing 'Any questions'
- c) Don't let the 'knowledgeable' dominate. Encourage everyone to think for themselves.
- d) Try to include others' especially, 'seekers' in your sharing together.

\* The **process** is explained and practised in a four-hour course, suitable for all, called '**An Introduction to 'Hearing the Word'**'. Email: [office@tpc.org](mailto:office@tpc.org)



## ***“I can read the Bible for myself!”***

To show that the Bible is accessible to all,  
the Rev Nigel Barge, minister of Torrance Parish Church,  
has devised a tool called ‘Hearing the Word’.  
The Manual explains the basic principles of Bible reading,  
teaches them by means of an interactive course,  
and practices them on a single passage, Mark 10:35-45,  
Participants follow in a Workbook: *Hearing the Word - Introduction*,  
which includes the next six passages in Mark,  
so they may follow on for themselves.

As the principles apply equally to all, the course will both  
instruct the novice and refresh the ‘hardened’ Bible student!

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