

C. The Truth Engaging the Lost. (In Paul's day and today)

Remembering Paul's Day:

While we do not *need* history in order to be fully blessed and edified by this passage, history provides some wonderful insights into Paul's day and it helps us understand how relevant this passage is to our postmodern/pagan times. Under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, Paul was targeting the growing *spirit of his time*, a spirit which would soon be labeled Gnosticism. Mystery Gnosticism not only came into vogue, it infected "institutional" Christianity for centuries to come. The Nag Hammadi library, discovered in 1945 (and translated into English in 1977) enriched our views on the growing mood in Paul's day and following decades.

The five minute video - [*A Micro Lesson on Gnosticism*](#) - represents commonly accepted descriptions of core Gnostic tenets. It is available for download from Jim or at StandingTrue.com

Responding Today: Four Thoughts to Take Away

1. While Rome and the modern cults have long embraced elements of gnosticism and paganism, we are saddened to see *evangelicalism slowly adopting these same values* as the mystery of iniquity mushrooms! Can we identify and rebuke these elements?
2. The point is, *Paul engaged the lie fully and extensively throughout his epistles*. Take special note of Corinthians, Romans, Colossians and Ephesians. The apostle John was no less aggressive in addressing this gnostic error. Modern fundamentalism stands rebuked for not aggressively challenging the spirit of error.
3. Modern evangelism has often presented an *exclusively utilitarian* Christ. (Just look at a typical gospel tract.) Never present the gospel outside of presenting the Christ of the gospel who is our absolute authority. When we separate the full person of Christ from His salvation there is always a consequence*.
4. Am I and my family fortified? Can I present Christ as creator, sustainer, ruler, redeemer, and reconciler? Start with Colossians 1!

D. The Truth Enabling the Believer. Col. 1:23-29 (For future study.)

* Note: This teacher does not teach the misrepresented doctrine of Lordship salvation - but he certainly does teach Lordship presentation!



Stash It or Trash it!

A disposable mini-guide to keep us on task for today's study.

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PRAGMATIC OR PREEMINENT?

"For it pleased the Father that in him should all fulness dwell;" Col. 1:19

Our Lesson Goal: Our goal is to focus on the *preeminent Christ* using Colossians 1. New believers are often content with a pragmatic or utilitarian view of Christ. After all, He is the one who is able to save us and meet our needs. As we grow in Christ we become increasingly dazzled by his preeminence in *all* that pertains to life, creation, and the program of God.

Our Lesson Outline: **A.** The Truth Expressed. Col. 1:3-11, **B.** The Truth Embodied in Christ. Col 1:12-22, **C.** The Truth Engaging the Lost (In Paul's day and today) and, **D.** The Truth Enabling the Believer Col. 1:23-29. (For future study.)

A. The Truth Expressed. Col. 1:3-11

In Col. 1:3-11 please notice how Paul seeds our minds with the discussion of the word (logos) of *truth* and its fruit, the grace of God expressed in *truth*, and his prayer that we would be filled with the *knowledge* of His will, in *wisdom*, and *spiritual understanding* and so strengthened to fill our roles as partakers of the inheritance in *light*. This book is about the *knowledge* (gnosis) of God revealed in Christ. These well used terms under-gird much of our New Testament!

Some of these words may have been specially chosen by the Holy Spirit in response to common false assumptions made in Paul and John's day:

- *logos* - "Word" carries the same basic meaning as it does in English, but it also had much deeper connotations. John uses this word when speaking of Christ.
- *gnosis* - Both of these words for knowledge, *gnosis* and *epignosis* are familiar to all Bible students. They speak of knowledge and a deeper, full knowledge.
- *sophia* - The so-called wisdom of the erudite was highly prized and emulated.
- *phos* - It means light, but it also conveyed the far deeper connotation of enlightenment in Paul and John's day.

B. The Truth Embodied in Christ. A closer look at Col 1:12-22 (1:13-19 is printed below.)

OUR PREEMINENT CHRIST

Watch Micro Lesson First

Truth Embodied in One Person!	A true <i>epicenter</i> of Christology! (See also Jn. 1, Rev. 1)	Christ Counterfeited Then...	...and Now
(13) Kingdom Authority This is a reference to His kingdom in the broadest sense as opposed to Satan's dominion. Once placed in Christ we are <i>translated immediately</i> into His kingdom. No "progression" required. Eph. 2:6	*So <i>13 Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son:</i>	(13) Gnostics, in particular, taught that we must <i>progress</i> from the kingdom of darkness to the kingdom of light.	(13) Today's Postmodern is just as pagan as the Gnostic. We <i>progress</i> through enlightenment and human effort.
(14) Redemptive Authority	So Ha <i>14 In whom we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins:</i>	(14) The idea of being placed in the kingdom of light by being placed <u>in</u> a person (substitution) is unique to biblical Christianity and Christ.	(14) The PM believes evil exists due to lack of enlightenment, but biblical sin does not exist. No redemption.
(15) Preemptive Authority (Preemptive priority by virtue of His substance <i>and</i> His position).	Th <i>15 Who is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of every creature:</i>	There was no sin and redemption - only escape from evil matter through mediums and methods.	(15) Christ is just another wise facilitator.
(16) Creation Authority This claim <i>could not</i> be more comprehensive. Don't miss the point, His redemption and reconciliation are just as comprehensive. See Romans 8:37-39!	Co An Ag <i>16 For by him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by him, and for him:</i>	(15) Christ was just another medium or facilitator.	(16) We connect mystically with the universe through methods and mediums (just as the pagan Gnostics taught).
(17) Positional Authority	Co <i>17 And he is before all things, and by him all things consist.</i>	(16) In contrast, the Gnostic world was created by accident.	(17) We are all part of one great self existing and self sustaining whole which arose out of nothing.
(17) Persistent Authority (He holds the creation together and carries it forward in the immediate. Hebrews 1:3)	Ec <i>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 might have the preeminence.</i>	(17) The pleroma was self existent.	There is no need or place for Jesus Christ except as a medium - a vendor of wisdom and good will through His example.
(18) New Creation Authority (All that has been shown true of the old creation is equally true of the new creation, the church which is His body).	Th Co <i>19 For it pleased the Father that in him should all fulness dwell;</i>	(19) The Gnostics saw the combined spiritual and material worlds as one great fulness or "pleroma." The fulness of the godhood exceeds this! Col. 2:9	> <i>There are no new lies!</i> <
(19) Divine Authority (The Father has remanded all to His Son and nothing inside heaven and earth is excepted).	So Es <i>20 And, having made peace through the blood of his cross, by him to reconcile all things unto himself; by him, I say, whether they be things in earth, or things in heaven.</i>	* Legend: " Christ in: " An =anthropology (man), Ag =angelology, Co =cosmology (the creation), Ha = hamartiology (sin), Sa = sanctification (our practice & position), So =soteriology (salvation), Th =theology (God), Ec =eclesiology (church), Es =eschatology (prophecy).	