

Colossians Part 4

Colossians chapter 1, select passages set 4 (1:2, 1:11, 1:27, 1:29)

Tuesday Night Bible Study, February 7, 2012

PASSAGE / DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1:1 Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God, and Timothy our brother, 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.** 3 We give thanks to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, praying always for you, 4 since we heard of your faith in Christ Jesus and of your love for all the saints; 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, 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; 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. 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; 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; 11 **strengthened with all might, according to His glorious power**, for all patience and longsuffering with joy; 12 giving thanks to the Father who has qualified us to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in the light. 13 He has delivered us from the power of darkness and conveyed us into the kingdom of the Son of His love, 14 in whom we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins. 15 He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation. 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. 17 And He is before all things, and in Him all things consist. 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. For it pleased the Father that in Him all the fullness should dwell, 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. 21 And you, who once were alienated and enemies in your mind by wicked works, yet now He has reconciled 22 in the body of His flesh through death, to present you holy, and blameless, and above reproach in His sight — 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. 24 I now rejoice in my sufferings for you, and fill up in my flesh what is lacking in the afflictions of Christ, for the sake of His body, which is the church, 25 of which I became a minister according to the stewardship for God which was given to me for you, to fulfill the word of God, 26 the mystery which has been hidden from ages and from generations, but now has been revealed to 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.** 28 Him we preach, warning every man and teaching every man in all wisdom, that we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus. 29 To this end I also labor, striving according to **His working which works in me mightily."**

1. How does Scripture prove the existence of the Trinity by proving the deity of Christ?
2. What is the "mystery among the Gentiles" spoken of in Colossians 1:27?
3. Why is the doctrine of the Trinity important? What practical ramifications does it have in our relationship with God?
4. What role does worshipping God have in our daily lives?
5. What can creep into our lives and replace worship and intimacy with God?
6. challenge question: What was one of the main cultural factors that influenced (for lack of a better word) the working of the Holy Spirit during the birth of the church?

THE TRINITY

"God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ..." (1:2)

--Scriptural evidence for the deity of Christ which points to the reality of the Trinity...

1. The Holy Spirit is the "Spirit of God" and the "Spirit of Christ". (Romans 8:9-10; Ephesians 3:16-17; Philippians 4:13; Galatians 2:20; 1 Corinthians 6:19)
2. The triune nature of God is first hinted at in Genesis where God uses a plural pronoun to refer to Himself: "Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness... So God created man in His own image..." (Genesis 1:26-27)
3. God the Father refers to Jesus Christ His Son as "God". (Hebrews 1:8)
4. Jesus Christ is the "Immanuel" which means "God with us". (Matthew 1:20-23)
5. Colossians 2:9 states that in Christ "dwells all the fullness of the godhead bodily." Jesus said, "He who has seen Me has seen the Father" (John 14:9); and Hebrews 1:3 states that Jesus is the "express image of His person".
6. The Jews accused Jesus Christ of blasphemy because He claimed to be God. Under Mosaic Law blasphemy was punishable by death (Leviticus 24:16), and therefore the Jews sought to kill Him (Mark 14:61-64; Matthew 9:3-6).
7. I AM is the self-disclosed name of God (Exodus 3:14), which means that He is the self-existent One, unlike all of creation that is sustained by Him (Colossians 1:17). Jesus inferred that He is the I AM, when He said, "Most assuredly, I say to you, before Abraham was, I AM." (John 8:58)
8. Only God is holy. Jesus Christ is holy, therefore proving His deity. (Revelation 15:3-4; 3:7; 1 Peter 1:18-20)
9. The angels in heaven only worship God. The angels in heaven worship Jesus Christ, therefore proving His deity. (Revelation 19:10; 22:8-9; 4:8; Hebrews 1:5-6; Matthew 4:9-10)
10. The disciples worshiped Jesus, thus proving His deity. (Matthew 14:33; Luke 24:52)

*--in-depth studies on the Trinity and the deity of Christ by Arnold Fruchtenbaum, a Jewish scholar:
www.arielm.org/dcs/pdf/mbs063m.pdf
www.arielm.org/dcs/pdf/mbs050m.pdf*

--the gospel and deity of Christ hidden in the Torah (the heart of the Old Testament)...

--in Hebrew culture and literature the meaning of people's names was very significant and names were often chosen based on circumstances of the person's birth.

--for example, the name Isaac means "to laugh" and was chosen by Abraham because laughter was Sarah's first reaction to the idea of her having a child at her old age. (Genesis 21:6-7)

--genealogy of Noah in Genesis ch. 5:

Adam = man (is)
Seth = appointed
Enosh = mortal
Kenan = sorrow; (but)
Mahalael = the blessed God
Jared = shall come down
Enoch = teaching (that)

Methuselah = his death shall bring ...
Lamech = the despairing
Noah = comfort, rest

Putting it all together: *Man is appointed mortal sorrow; but the blessed God shall come down teaching that His death shall bring the despairing comfort.*

--not only does this clearly summarize the gospel but it also identifies the Messiah as being God Himself ("the blessed God shall come down") thus proving the deity of Jesus Christ.

--there is no way that Jewish rabbis who reject Jesus Christ as the Messiah (and reject the idea of the Messiah dying) would deliberately put names with these meanings in the first genealogy in their venerated Torah!

--only the Holy Spirit could orchestrate history that resulted in the people in this genealogy being given names with these meanings.

--articles with further information on this genealogy:
www.allabouttruth.org/bible-codes.htm
www.khouse.org/articles/1996/44/

INTIMATE RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD THROUGH THE REALITY OF THE TRINITY

**"Christ in you the hope of glory" (1:27), "His working which works in me mightily" (1:29),
"strengthened with all might according to His glorious power" (1:11)**

--the triune nature of God gives us a profound insight into our very nature and the nature of our relationship with God.

--if God was only the Father in heaven then our relationship with Him would be very much a long distance relationship.

--it is **the reality of the Holy Spirit** that makes an intimate, personal relationship with Him possible.

--**"this mystery among the Gentiles, which is Christ in you the hope of glory..."**

--Jesus Christ brought about a profound change in how we relate to God, and this change was a "mystery" before the time of Christ.

--Colossians speaks of "Christ in you, the hope of glory" as being "this mystery among the Gentiles..." / "the mystery which has been hidden from ages and generations but has now been revealed to His saints." (1:27, 1:28)

--the Holy Spirit is called the "Spirit of God" and the "Spirit of Christ"... the phrase "Christ in you" is the equivalent of saying *the Spirit of Christ in you or the Holy Spirit in you.*

--in the words of Ephesians, the Holy Spirit is the "guarantee" of our future in glory. (Ephesians 1:13-14)

--a good introduction to this profound change that Jesus brought about is the conversation that Jesus had with the Samaritan woman at the well in John ch. 4...

--at the time of Jesus, there was a sharp dispute between the Jews and the Samaritans ("half Jews") about where the temple was supposed to be. The Jews rightly claimed that Jerusalem was the place that God ordained for the temple to be while the Samaritans claimed that Mt. Gerizim was where the temple was supposed to be. The Samaritan woman at the well questioned Jesus about this, and Jesus replied, "The hour is coming when you will neither on this mountain, nor in Jerusalem, worship the Father. ... But the hour is coming, and now is, when the true

worshippers will worship the Father in spirit and truth; for the Father is seeking such to worship Him. God is Spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth." (John 4:21-24)

--the temple in Jerusalem was replaced by the temple of the heart.... rather than being restricted by time and space through the ceremonial law, people can now freely worship God in the temple of their heart through Christ anywhere, anytime. The physical reality of the temple in Jerusalem was replaced by the spiritual reality of the temple of the heart.

--it wasn't possible for the Holy Spirit to dwell in the temple of the heart until Christ made atonement for our sins.

--before Christ, the concept of the temple of the heart, where anybody, anywhere in the world could worship God, was a "mystery".

--the power of the Holy Spirit in our daily lives...

--worshiping God through the reality of His Spirit dwelling in the temple of our hearts leads to the power of the Holy Spirit impacting everything that we do in our daily lives.

--in Colossians the apostle Paul speaks of how we should live our lives by the power of the Holy Spirit and not our own power – the apostle Paul was "striving **according to His working which works in me mightily**" (1:29)

--Ephesians 5:18-19: "Do not get drunk on wine, which leads to debauchery. Instead, **be filled with the Spirit.**"

--Galatians 5:25: "If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit." [*in other words, if our heart is the temple of the Holy Spirit then that reality should overflow into the rest of our lives*]

--the word of God is the "Sword of the Spirit" (Ephesians 6:17) and through the Word of God the Holy Spirit transforms our lives and makes us more like Christ – in a sense forming Christ in us.

--speaking of the process of this transformation, the apostle Paul wrote, "My dear children, for whom I am again in the pains of childbirth **until Christ is formed in you.**" (Galatians 4:19)

--becoming more like Christ in this life leads to the day in eternity where we will be like Him in our glorified bodies... "but we know that when He is revealed, **we shall be like Him**, for we shall see Him as He is. And everyone who has this hope in Him purifies himself, just as He is pure." (John 3:2-3:)

--"Christ in you, the hope of glory" speaks of the hope of the future reality of being like Christ in our glorified bodies.

--Galatians speaks of this hope as "the hope of righteousness"

--"We through the Spirit eagerly wait for the hope of righteousness by faith" (Galatians 5:6)

--important side note: even though we will be "like Him" we will never be equal or identical to Him...He will always be eternal God and we will always be His creation that came into being at a point in time. (refer back to points about the deity of Christ)

--the controversial concept of "the baptism of the Holy Spirit..."

--the very nature of being a Christian involves the presence of God's Spirit in the temple of our hearts, but there is debate about when and how the reality of the Holy Spirit overflows into the rest of our lives.

--some say it is a gradual process that begins when we are saved, others say it is a dramatic moment in time that occurs after we are saved, and yet others say it can happen when we are saved or some time after we are saved.

--one interesting observation in the New Testament is that the term "baptism of the Holy Spirit" is only found in the book of Acts.

--the workings of the Holy Spirit in the book of Acts that suggest the possibility of the baptism of the Holy Spirit occurring after salvation may have been unique to the infant stage of the church. In particular, the signs of the working of the Holy Spirit provided tangible evidence that the divisive, cultural barriers of the Old Testament had been removed – "For by one Spirit we were all baptized into one body, **whether Jews or Greeks, whether slaves or free**, and have all been made to drink into one Spirit." (1 Corinthians 12:13)

--to the Corinthian church that was plagued with problems, the apostle Paul seems to be saying that all Christians have been baptized by the Holy Spirit, thus equating baptism by the Holy Spirit with salvation. Back to 1 Corinthians 12:13: "For **by one Spirit we were all baptized** into one body, whether Jews or Greeks, whether slaves or free, **and have all** been made to drink into one Spirit."

--many of the Corinthians seemed to have lost touch with the reality of the Holy Spirit in their lives... "do you not know that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God, and you are not your own?" (1 Corinthians 6:19)

--the epistles of the New Testament **clearly emphasize our dependence on the Holy Spirit** in our daily lives, as the verses listed in the previous section indicate; **but not once do any of the epistles speak about the need to be "baptized by the Holy Spirit" after we are saved.**

--with all the problems in the church that the epistles address and our dependence on the Holy Spirit in overcoming those problems, if we need to be "baptized by the Holy Spirit" after we are saved in order to experience the fullness of His power, then it would seem logical that the epistles would speak about making sure that we are baptized by the Holy Spirit, for if someone isn't baptized by the Holy Spirit then there would seem to be little point in talking about what we can only do through the power of the Holy Spirit.

--furthermore, if Christians needed to be baptized by the Holy Spirit after salvation, then wouldn't Paul speak of this in the prayers that he records in Colossians and Ephesians? In those prayers he clearly prays for the power of the Holy Spirit in our lives but not once does he mention the concept of a singular event of being baptized by the Holy Spirit after salvation. (Colossians 1:9-14, Ephesians 3:14-21)

--after the birth of the church, Peter commanded that all people should be baptized "in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins", and then in the very next sentence he says that "**you will** receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. [*not you may if you are baptized by the Holy Spirit*] The promise is for you and your children and for all who are far off-for all whom the Lord our God will call." (Acts 2:38-39)

--the book of Romans also seems to equate salvation with the baptism of the Holy Spirit:

--"What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin that grace may abound? 2 Certainly not! How shall we who died to sin live any longer in it? 3 Or do you not know that **as many of us as were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into His death**? 4 Therefore we were buried with

Him through baptism into death, that just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life." (Romans 6:1-4)

--being "baptized into His death" is a transforming work of the Holy Spirit in our lives... In the words of Romans 8:13-14: "For if you live according to the flesh you will die; but if **by the Spirit you put to death the deeds of the body** [*the flesh*], you will live. For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God."

--this passage ends with another statement that seems to make the reality of the Holy Spirit in our daily lives inseparable from salvation – "for as many as are led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God."

--can we be "led by the Spirit of God" without having been "baptized by the Holy Spirit"?

--consistently experiencing the fullness of the Holy Spirit in our daily lives seems to be a matter of growth, and we need to promote that growth through prayer and God's Word which is a primary instrument that the Holy Spirit works through ("the Word of God which is the Sword of the Spirit" – Ephesians 6:17)