

FOCAL PASSAGE

1 Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God, and Timothy our brother, 2 To the saints and faithful brothers[a] in Christ at Colossae: Grace to you and peace from God our Father. 3 We always thank God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, when we pray for you, 4 since we heard of your faith in Christ Jesus and of the love that you have for all the saints, 5 because of the hope laid up for you in heaven. Of this you have heard before in the word of the truth, the gospel, 6 which has come to you, as indeed in the whole world it is bearing fruit and increasing—as it also does among you, since the day you heard it and understood the grace of God in truth, 7 just as you learned it from Epaphras our beloved fellow servant.[b] He is a faithful minister of Christ on your behalf 8 and has made known to us your love in the Spirit. 9 And so, from the day we heard, we have not ceased to pray for you, asking that you may be filled with the knowledge of his will in all spiritual wisdom and understanding, 10 so as to walk in a manner worthy of the Lord, fully pleasing to him: bearing fruit in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God; 11 being strengthened with all power, according to his glorious might, for all endurance and patience with joy; 12 giving thanks[d] to the Father, who has qualified you[e] to share in the inheritance of the saints in light. 13 He has delivered us from the domain of darkness and transferred us to the kingdom of his beloved Son, 14 in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins. 15 He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation. 16 For by him all things were created, in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities—all things were created through him and for him. 17 And he is before all things, and in him all things hold together. 18 And he is the head of the body, the church. He is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, that in everything he might be preeminent. 19 For in him all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell, 20 and through him to reconcile to himself all things, whether on earth or in heaven, making peace by the blood of his cross. 21 And you, who once were alienated and hostile in mind, doing evil deeds, 22 he has now reconciled in his body of flesh by his death, in order to present you holy and blameless and above reproach before him, 23 if indeed you continue in the faith, stable and steadfast, not shifting from the hope of the gospel that you heard, which has been proclaimed in all creation[g] under heaven, and of which I, Paul, became a minister. 24 Now I rejoice in my sufferings for your sake, and in my flesh I am filling up what is lacking in Christ's afflictions for the sake of his body, that is, the church, 25 of which I became a minister according to the stewardship from God that was given to me for you, to make the word of God fully known, 26 the mystery hidden for ages and generations but now revealed to his saints. 27 To them God chose to make known how great among the Gentiles are the riches of the glory of this mystery, which is Christ in you, the hope of glory. 28 Him we proclaim, warning everyone and teaching everyone with all wisdom, that we may present everyone mature in Christ. 29 For this I toil, struggling with all his energy that he powerfully works within me.

APOSTLESHIP & BIBLICAL LEADERSHIP

What is an Apostle?

Comes from the Greek word apostolos which means “one who is sent.”

In the New Testament, an apostle is someone commissioned by Christ and given authority to represent Him and bear authoritative witness to the Gospel.

The primary duties of an Apostle' as seen in Scripture are as followed:

- Proclaim Christ and the Gospel
- Bear authoritative witness to Christ (Paul says, have I not seen Jesus our Lord? 1 Corinthians 9:1)
- Establish and strengthen churches
- Teach and guard the Gospel
- Exercise spiritual authority – they instructed, corrected, warned, encouraged, and at times disciplined churches
- Provide leadership beyond one local congregation
- Suffer for Christ' mission

Who is an Apostle?

- The original twelve: Peter, Andrew, James (son of Zebedee), John, Philip, Bartholomew, Thomas, Matthew, James (son of Alphaeus), Thaddeus, Simon, Judas Iscariot.
- When Judas hung himself, Matthias took Judas' place
- Paul becomes an apostle after he has seen Jesus in His resurrected form (Acts 9:1-22; 1 Corinthians 1; 1 Corinthians 9)

Can there be new apostles today?

In the traditional sense, we [Baptist] do not believe that new apostles are possible or necessary. Every apostle to include Matthias (1 Corinthians 15:5) and Paul (see above)

This is called a Cessationist/Foundational view that says:

- The twelve and Paul were foundational apostles just as the ministry of the prophets was foundational
- Since the foundation has been laid apostles and prophets aren't continuing offices in the same sense evangelists, pastors, and teachers continue. When the church's foundation is laid you don't continually lay the foundation
- Paul writes in Ephesians 2:20, that believers are built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets with Jesus as the chief cornerstone.

What about the five-fold ministry in Ephesians 4?

Under the five-fold ministry [apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors, and teachers] the evangelists, pastor, and teacher function today while the apostolic and prophetic ministries belong to the foundational era. God is not adding to the Scripture, they are complete thus the foundation has been laid.

OPENING GREETING & PAUL'S PRAYER FOR THE BELIEVERS

Timothy who is mentioned in Paul's opening is widely considered to be the scribe who wrote the letter as Paul communicated it orally.

Paul writes to believers who can be identified by two locations:

- In Christ
- At Colossae

Paul says he has heard of their faith in Christ Jesus, love for all the saints, and their hope. This is likewise what we must have faith in Christ Jesus, love for all to include the saints, and a future oriented hope of the return of Christ.

Paul describes the Gospel as a living organism once it is received it produces fruit, it increases, and it spreads. The Gospel is not mere head knowledge it informs our walk and our walk then produces fruitfulness unto the glory of God.

Paul's Prays that they will have and subsequently that we will have:

- Knowledge of God's will

- A worthy walk
- Bearing fruit
- Endurance
- Thanksgiving

THE PREMINENCE & SUPREMACY OF CHRIST

Paul identifies Jesus as the firstborn this means:

- He is supreme and over all creation.
- To be clear, He was not created, He has always been and always will be. Paul is NOT saying as Jehovah's witness do that God the Father created Jesus the son and then Jesus created all other things. Paul's claim here is that Jesus was there in the beginning and He has preeminence over all created things; everything that was created was created by Him and for Him.
- Reference: Genesis 1:1/John 1:1

Christ is holding it altogether! Karl Darrow a physicist says that "all the mass of nuclei has no right to be alive at all; they should have blown up instantly. Some inflexible inhibition is holding it together." This considers the reality that positively charged protons should repel each other and cause atomic nuclei to fly apart. He says an inflexible inhibition, but we know according to the apostle Paul it is Christ.

Without Christ holding it all together the world would crumble. And 2 Peter 3:10 tells us exactly what will happen in the end. One day Christ will stop holding it together leading us to the New Jerusalem.

Firstborn from the dead – Paul makes the firstborn came and then follows it up and says Jesus Christ is firstborn from the dead. The use of this word firstborn signifies the most important. There were others who rose from the dead prior to Jesus but he is the "firstborn" or most important because He is the only one who rose with the power to save.

Resurrections in Scripture Prior to Jesus:

- The first one to rise from the dead in scripture is the son of the widow of Zarephath 1 Kings 17:17-24
- The second in the OT is the Shunammite's son 2 Kings 4:8-37
- An unnamed man died and they unknowingly laid his remains in the same cave as Elisha and when the man had touched Elisha's bones he came back to life 2 Kings 13:20-21

New Testament Resurrections prior to Jesus

- The son of the widow of Nain Luke 7:11-17
- Jairus Daughter Mark 5:21-43
- Lazarus John 11

RECONCILIATION & PAUL'S MINISTRY

Reconciliation (Colossians 1:21-23)

Reconciliation means that God changed hostility into friendship; He has removed the barrier to acceptance

If you have been reconciled and you have real faith it means a daily continuance in your walk with Him

Paul's Ministry (Colossians 1:23-25)

Paul is NOT implying there is anything lacking in the resurrection. He is not presenting Jesus as having failed or otherwise not finished and we need to finish what He started.

Paul IS saying simply it is my turn to suffer for the cause of Christ through my ministry in His church. Christ has done it once and for all. Now it's my turn, Paul says, but it is also our turn!

THE MYSTERY REVEALED & REJECTION OF FALSE DOCTRINE

Mystery (Colossians 1:26-27)

Mystery = what was concealed is now revealed; Ephesians 3:1-7

The mystery is not that the Gentile would receive salvation that was God's plan all along beginning with Abraham. The mystery is that God would remove the barrier between Jews and Gentiles. In the Temple, there was the court of the Gentiles and the court of the Jews. If the Gentiles were to enter the court of the Jews, they were killed. But in Jesus that "wall" both spiritual and physical between them would be broken under Jesus Christ and they are both together in the same body having the same status in Christ.

Dual Covenant Theology holds that the covenant God made with the Jews remains completely valid and active. It argues that Jewish people do not need to accept Jesus as their savior to attain salvation, because God has one covenant for Jews through the Law of Moses and another covenant for Gentiles (non-Jews) through Jesus. Paul renders this as FALSE and that the Jew has to get saved the same way the Gentile does through Jesus Christ.