

ONE STORY | ONE SAVIOR - UNIT 7 | LESSON 15




Letters – The Promise Explained Through the KING’S Church

God is a PROMISE Completing God

JESUS as the 1) **PROMISED KING** has 2) **RESCUED** His people through His Perfect Law Keeping Life and Sacrificial, Substitutionary Death on the Cross, whereby 3) **DEFEATING** the enemy of sin and death, and is 4) **RESTORING** them to the PLACE OF REST where Heaven and Earth are rejoined and God reigns and abides 5) so that His people shall be with Him forever for their **JOY**.

“He Is First In Everything” Colossians 1:17, 18

¹⁷ He was before all else began and it is his power that holds everything together. ¹⁸ He is the Head of the body made up of his people—that is, his Church—which he began; and he is the Leader of all those who arise from the dead, so that **he is first in everything**; [Living Bible]

	<p>THE HEAD - To Know how Jesus only and alone is the gospel message. Q – How can you grow in your understanding of the Bible’s single Story with Jesus at the Center?</p>
	<p>THE HEART - To Choose Jesus only and alone in every area of your life. Q – What are the kinds of things that seek to pull you away from or add to JESUS ONLY?</p>
	<p>THE HAND - To Pray the Holy Spirit keeps you focused on Jesus only and alone. Q – What does Jesus only look like in your daily activity with your parents, your siblings, your classmates, and your friends? Q – What are some “things” you can do to “guard” your heart and mind from evil?</p>

EMPHASIS

The EMPHASIS of this lesson is . . .

1. **Colossians shows us how Jesus is first in everything.** Jesus is enough to complete or perfect His people. By preaching the preeminence of Christ, we warn against the deceivers and teach the disciples.
2. Anyone or anything that diminishes the “**firstness**” of Christ in any area of life is to be resisted and rejected.
3. A healthy Christology warns against the deceivers and teaches the disciples.
4. It is only by preaching HIM that Christian maturing and maturity takes place.
5. We enter into this perfection or enjoy this perfection by believing Jesus is enough in this life and in the life to come. This “resting/trusting” shows itself by a putting off and putting on action.
6. It is only as we rest in His “**firstness**” that we have hope in the present and for the future.

[This lesson focuses on Paul's warning in 2:4-23]

LITERARY CONTEXT

A celebration of the resurrected Christ: He lived, died, was buried and on the third day he arose from the grave. He appeared to His witnesses, ascended to the right hand of His Father, and now sits exalted over His church and creation. Paul's overarching intent is to provide the church with this unmatched picture of an exalted Christ that faces the siege by her enemies and puts down every stronghold that seeks to exalt itself over the ascended Christ.

The Book of Colossians forms one of the most transparent revelations of Jesus Christ found within Holy Scripture. The veil has been rent and we are privileged and exposed to a full portrayal of who he is and what he has done for his people. **Here, the recipient celebrates the high-standing status of Jesus.** Words like supremacy and preeminence are often employed to describe this ascended standing. **What prompts Paul to write such impregnated words? Simply put, the church is under siege. Those who would undermine the person and work of Jesus destabilize the church by subverting the gospel.**

"Paul never explicitly describes the false teaching he opposes in the Colossian letter. The nature of the heresy must be inferred from statements he made in opposition to the false teachers. An analysis of his refutation suggests that the heresy was diverse in nature. Some of the elements of its teachings were:

1. *Ceremonialism.* It held to strict rules about the kinds of permissible food and drink, religious festivals (2:16-17) and circumcision (2:11; 3:11).
2. *Asceticism.* "Do not handle! Do not taste! Do not touch!" (2:21; cf. 2:23).
3. *Angel worship.* See 2:18.
4. *Depreciation of Christ.* This is implied in Paul's emphasis on the supremacy of Christ (1:15-20; 2:2-3, 9).
5. *Secret knowledge.* The Gnostics boasted of this (see 2:18 and Paul's emphasis in 2:2-3 on Christ, "in whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom").
6. *Reliance on human wisdom and tradition.* See 2:4, 8.

These elements seem to fall into two categories, Jewish and Gnostic. It is likely, therefore, that the Colossian heresy was a mixture of an extreme form of Judaism and an early stage of Gnosticism."¹

The error or falsehood says, "Jesus is necessary, but He is not enough." The GOSPEL says, "Jesus is necessary and enough!"

Yet, it is because of this direct assault against the joy of his people and the glory of His person that Paul pours forth this significant declaration. Here we read of our Lord's preeminent position in creation (1:15-18). He continues by celebrating the preeminent position of Jesus in redemption (1:19-23) and finally, His preeminent position in the church (1:24-2:3).

By calling the church back to the “Firstness” of Jesus, the church is free from enticing words (2:4-7), vain philosophy (2:8-10), the judgment of others (2:11-17), improper worship (2:18, 19), and the fabricated and imposing teaching of extra-biblical instruction (2:20-23).

Paul openly speaks of the Jesus Seed producing Gospel Fruit. Everything Paul calls the church to (chapters 3, 4) flows from the root of the gospel (chapters 1, 2). The flow of the gospel is one way. The work of Jesus flows into and through his church.

HISTORICAL CONTEXT

The apostle Paul wrote this letter to Christians living in the small city of Colossae. It was probably written c. a.d. 62, while Paul was in prison in Rome (Acts 27–28). This was about the same time he wrote Ephesians and Philemon. All three letters were sent with Tychicus and Onesimus.

STRUCTURE

[the **BOLD** section of the outline is your study]

Opening Greeting (1:1, 2 [l.e. top])

Thanksgiving and Prayer (1:3-14)

The Preeminence of Christ (1:15-23 [l.e. Jesus is ENOUGH])

- Because Jesus is who He is and did what He did, His people are complete in Him.

The Ministry of Paul (1:24-2:3 [v. 28 “We proclaim Him”])

- Jesus is the content of Paul’s proclamation. His proclamation has two prongs.

First, Warning (2:4-23 [v. 28a])

- Paul warns his audience of four things.
- Q1 – Why is Paul warning his audience against these four threats?
- A1 – Because there are those teaching that something more is necessary for “Christian Maturity, Fullness, or Completeness.”
- Q2 – What do you need that you do not already have in Christ?
- A2 – Nothing! Jesus + Nothing = Everything
- Q3 – What hope do we have in this life and in the life to come apart from Christ?
- A3 – Nothing! Everything – Jesus = Nothing

a. Let no one delude you (2:4)

b. Let no one take you captive (2:8)

c. Let no one pass judgment on you (2:16)

d. Let no one disqualify you (2:18)

By preaching the “**firstness**” of Jesus, we are kept from being deluded, taken captive, judgmentalism, and becoming disqualified.

Anyone or anything that diminishes the sufficiency of Christ in any area of life is to be resisted and rejected.

Second, Teaching (3:1-4:1 [v. 28b])

- Paul teaches his audience one thing with two sides.

You have been raised with Christ, therefore, (3:1-4)

Put off / put to death the old man / self (3:5-11)

Put on the new man / self (3:12-17)

What this looks like: the HOUSEHOLD.

Thanksgiving and Prayer (4:2-6)

Closing Greeting (4:7-18 [i.e. tail])

JESUS IN THE TEXT

Through the proclamation of Jesus, God is reclaiming what is rightfully His as Creator and Redeemer.

Jesus is God’s means of setting up His “heaven on earth.”

As Jesus is proclaimed, the glory of God covers the earth as the waters cover the sea whereby every nation shall be blessed.

APPLICATION

1. What are some “things” that pull you from the sufficiency of Jesus?
2. What are some “things” you can do to keep Jesus first in your life?
3. Name five “things” you can do to keep Jesus first in your life.

VISUALS | CRAFTS

1. Lining kids up. One of the children is “first.”
2. Jesus is the “A” and “1”. Whatever happens after that follows Him.

3. He is the “tip” of the Pyramid.
4. Stack blocks; Connect Legos. Staying in the “stack” keeps you “safe” from the onslaughts of the serpent’s seed.
5. Cut out stop signs and have the kids color them and glue to popsicle stick. Believing in Jesus keeps us from bad things.
6. Have several objects and line them up according to value / importance. The most valuable and important is Jesus!

MEMORY VERSE

Colossians 1:17, 18

¹⁷ He was before all else began and it is his power that holds everything together. ¹⁸ He is the Head of the body made up of his people—that is, his Church—which he began; and he is the Leader of all those who arise from the dead, so that **he is first in everything**; [Living Bible]

RESOURCES

ENDNOTES

¹ <https://www.biblestudytools.com/nkjv/colossians/>