

## NOTES

## I. UNIT 14 - FOUR LETTERS FROM PAUL'S NEW "OFFICE" IN ROME — part 1

## A. Connecting the "Dots" Between Romans and Colossians (Acts 21-28)

1. **Acts 21:1-8** — Paul sails from Miletus in Asia to Caesarea on the coast of Palestine; we discover that Philip from the original seven deacons, now called "the Evangelist" lives in Caesarea along with his four unmarried daughters "who prophesied."
2. **Acts 21:17-26** — Paul travels to Jerusalem, meets with the apostle James and the elders and reports on the ministry to the Gentiles. They are encouraged, and ask Paul to be "sensitive" to the Jews in Jerusalem because his name is very volatile there.
3. **Acts 21:27-22:29** — Paul is arrested by Roman officers after a near riot breaks out, instigated by some Jews from Asia (the areas that had rejected Paul; Lystra, Pisidia, etc.). He is allowed to address the Jewish mob, but when he makes reference to Yahweh's call on his life to go to the Gentiles, another riot breaks out. The Roman officers nearly beat him, but find out he's a citizen.
4. **Acts 22:30-23:22** — Paul defends himself before the Sanhedrin to no avail. He is given assurance by Yahweh that he will testify in Rome, and then discovers a plot to assassinate him in Jerusalem.
5. **Acts 23:23-26:32** — Paul is transported to the governor's headquarters in Caesarea by military escort and *stays there for 2 years* (AD 58-60), and has opportunity to testify before two Roman procurators and Herod Agrippa II. He appeals to Caesar and plans are made for that journey.
6. **Acts 27:1-28:13** — Paul's journey to Rome is interrupted by a shipwreck on an island called Malta, where Paul ministers to the son of a high-ranking Roman official.
7. **Acts 28:14-31** — Paul is escorted on foot to Rome and is imprisoned in a "minimum security" cell (i.e. house arrest). Luke ends Acts with Paul in prison (AD 60-62).

## B. Filling in the "\_\_\_\_\_ " Between Acts and Colossians (a plausible chronology)

1. In the mid-50's, Paul spends \_\_\_\_ years (cf. Acts 20:31) in the city of Ephesus, 120 miles west of Colossae, so that Luke can say, "*all Asia heard the word of the Lord.*" (19:10).
2. Ephaphras, a resident of Colossae, journeys to \_\_\_\_\_ where he was convinced the Jesus was the Messiah, and is discipled by Paul during this time.
3. Ephaphras returns home, bringing the Story to \_\_\_\_\_, most likely to the Jewish and god-fearing Colossians associated with a synagogue there (Col 1:6-7).
4. \_\_\_\_\_ comes to faith, and hosts a church in his home (Ph 2).
5. The Story spreads to the neighboring city of Laodecia, where a house church is hosted in the home of \_\_\_\_\_, to whom Paul wrote a letter that is lost (4:15-16).
6. Ephaphras travels to \_\_\_\_\_ to inform Paul of the status of the church, bringing a mixture of good news and bad. Paul writes our letter of Colossians in response, likely carried by Tychicus (4:7,12).

7. Paul writes to \_\_\_\_\_, his family, and the Colossian church about his runaway slave Onesimus. The letter is carried by Tychicus or perhaps even by Onesimus himself.

C. The World *Behind* the Letter: Geography, History, and Heresy



1. Colossae was the “*ugly step-city*” in a tri-city cluster with Laodicea and Hierapolis, its two very \_\_\_\_\_ and influential neighbors (cf 4:13).
2. These three cities were 6-12 miles from each other, and about 100 miles east of \_\_\_\_\_.
3. Laodicea is the “\_\_\_\_\_” church rebuked by the aged John 30 years later for its arrogance and affluence (Rev 3:14-22).
4. Hierapolis was a \_\_\_\_\_ center, boasting of healing spas and mineral waters.
5. It had a significant Jewish population, *but* the \_\_\_\_\_ was largely Gentile:
  - a. Antiochus the Great had relocated \_\_\_\_\_ Jewish families to this area and many others joined them so that Palestinian Jews lamented how many Jews had moved there for the “...*wine and baths of Phrygia.*”
  - b. Paul used the phrase, “*alienated and hostile in mind*” to describe them, a description he used for Gentiles (1:21).
  - c. In the context of speaking of “...*the mystery of Christ among the Gentiles,*” he refers to “*Christ in you, the hope of glory*” (1:27).
  - d. In referring to their pre-Story lives, his list of their sins is very “\_\_\_\_\_”:  
 “*Put to death therefore what is earthly in you: sexual immorality, impurity, passion, evil desire, and covetousness, which is idolatry. On account of these the wrath of God is coming. In these you too once walked, when you were living in them.*” Col 3:5-7

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6. Colossae featured an “All-You-Can-Take” \_\_\_\_\_ smorgasbord that was encroaching on the Story:
- a. Coins minted in Colossae show a veritable “Wal-Mart’ of deities in the city:
    - (1) Egyptian: *Isis and Sarapis*
    - (2) Greek: *Athena, Demeter, Helios, Hygieia, Tyche*
    - (3) Ephesian: *Artemis*
    - (4) Laodecian: *Zeus*
    - (5) Colossian: *Men & Selene* (lunar god and goddess)
  - b. Archeological, epigraphic and documentary sources reveal the same:
    - (1) Curse \_\_\_\_\_ (“*Curses for Dummies*”) have been found, detailing how to curse individuals and property.
    - (2) \_\_\_\_\_ have been found that contain prayers to angels (pagan *and* Jewish).
    - (3) Spirits, especially \_\_\_\_\_ spirits, associated with nature, ancestors, stars and planets, were a central part of the mythology of the area.
7. Colossae appears to have been infiltrated by an individual who was serving up a sort of spiritual “\_\_\_\_\_,” blending all the local “stories” of the \_\_\_\_\_ into a *replacement* for the One Story:
- “I say this so that **no one** will delude you with persuasive argument.” Col 2:4*
- “See to it that **no one** takes you captive through philosophy and empty deception, according to the tradition of men, according to the elementary principles of the world, rather than according to Christ.” Col 2:8*
- “Therefore **no one** is to act as your judge in regard to food or drink or in respect to a festival or a new moon or a Sabbath day-...” Col 2:16*
- “Let **no one** keep defrauding you of your prize by delighting in self-abasement and the worship of the angels, taking his stand on visions he has seen, inflated without cause by his fleshly mind...” Col 2:18*
8. This “Smoothie” included:
- a. the worship of angels (2:18)
  - b. a fear and preoccupation with the \_\_\_\_\_ (“*rulers and authorities*”; 1:16; 2:15).
    - (1) Paul uses the word, *stoicheia* to refer to the “*elemental spirits of the world...*” (2:8)
    - (2) A 1st century AD Jewish occult document known as The Testament of Solomon sheds tremendous light on the seriousness of Paul’s concern: “*Then [Solomon] commanded another demon to appear before me. There came to me thirty-six heavenly bodies [stoicheia], their heads like formless dogs...When I, Solomon, saw these things, I asked them saying, ‘Well who are you?’ All at once, with one voice they said, ‘We are thirty-six heavenly bodies [stoicheia] the world rulers of the darkness of this age.’*”
  - c. \_\_\_\_\_ elements of diet, circumcision, and ritualistic self-denial and abuse (2:11,16-17,21-23).

- d. A \_\_\_\_\_ “aristocracy” built around knowledge:
- (1) there are \_\_\_\_ references to knowledge and wisdom in all four chapters.
  - (2) Paul goes out of his way to dismantle any idea of “\_\_\_\_\_” in The Story:  
*“Him we proclaim, warning **everyone** [panta] and teaching **everyone** [panta] with **all** [pasa] wisdom, that we may present **everyone** [panta] mature in Christ. For this I toil, struggling with all his energy that he powerfully works within me.” Col 1:28, 29*

e. The most \_\_\_\_\_ element in this counterfeit story was its relegation of Jesus Christ to a supporting role.

9. Paul’s Solution: Recasting the \_\_\_\_\_ Around the Pre-Eminence of Christ

- a. This is Paul’s most “\_\_\_\_\_” letter:
- (1) Paul’s use of “Christ” in comparison to “\_\_\_\_\_” in this letter is nearly 2x to every other letter he wrote.
  - (2) There is no other letter by Paul that \_\_\_\_\_ Christ more than Colossians.
    - (a) Christ is the \_\_\_\_\_ (*musterion*; 2:2)
    - (b) Christ is the image (Gk, *eikon*) of the invisible God and in him all \_\_\_\_\_ dwells (1:15,19)
    - (c) Christ is the “\_\_\_\_\_ of all creation” (1:15; cf Ps 89:27).
    - (d) By him were all things \_\_\_\_\_ (1:16)
    - (e) In him all things \_\_\_\_\_ together (1:17)
    - (f) In him are hid all the \_\_\_\_\_ of wisdom and knowledge (2:2)
    - (g) In him dwells the fullness of the godhead in \_\_\_\_\_ form (2:9)

D. The Long “Half-Life” of Colossae’s Error

1. Because there *can* only be One Story, any religious counterfeit has to “\_\_\_\_\_” the key character.

**Islam** - *“Jesus was no more than a mortal whom Allah favored and made an example to the Israelites. They are unbelievers who say God is Messiah, Mary’s son.” Surat al Nisa 4:157-158 “And because of their saying: we slew the messiah Jesus son of Mary. Allah’s messenger-they slew him not nor crucified- Sura 43:59*

*“Such was Jesus, the son of Mary; it is a statement of truth, about which they vainly dispute. It is not befitting to the majesty of God, that He should beget a son. Glory be to Him! When He determines a matter, He only says to it, ‘Be’ and it is” (Quran 19:34-35).*

*“The Messiah (Jesus), son of Mary, was no more than a Messenger before whom many Messengers have passed away; and his mother adhered wholly to truthfulness, and they both ate food (as other mortals do). See how We make Our signs clear to them; and see where they are turning away!” (Quran 5:75).*

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**Jehovah's Witnesses** - (Charles Taze Russell) - "There is Scriptural evidence for concluding that Michael was the name of Jesus Christ before he left heaven and after his return." (WT 5/15/1969, p. 307) ... "Michael the great prince is none other than Jesus Christ himself." (WT 12/15/1984 p29) "Michael the archangel is no other than the only begotten son of God, now Jesus Christ.." (New Heavens and New Earth pg.30-31).

**Mormonism** - "..That Lucifer, the son of the morning, is our elder brother and the brother of Jesus Christ." (Apostle B. McConkie Mormon doctrine p.163-164) "...Jesus, our elder brother, was begotten in the flesh by the same character that was in the garden of Eden, and who is our Father in Heaven," (Journal of Discourses, Vol. 1, pp. 50-51). "Jesus got married at Cana and had many wives Martha, Mary and others he also had many children," (J & D vol.1 345-346 vol.2 79-82 vol.4:259-260 the seer p.172)

**Benny Hinn** - "What was the appearance of God the Father? Like that of a man...God has the likeness of fingers and hands and a face." (Good Morning Holy Spirit, p. 82) "Have you been begotten? So was He. Don't let anyone deceive you. Jesus was reborn." (Our Position 'In Christ,' Part 1 1991), videotape #TV-254. "God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Ghost - three separate individuals, one in essence, one in work - and, may I add, each one of them possesses His own spirit-body." ("Praise the Lord", 10/23/92)

E. The World Before the Letter: Colossians and the 21<sup>st</sup> Century

1. It is very significant, that in Paul's "practical" chapter in this letter (ch 3), he uses " \_\_\_\_\_ " more than in the others (8x), and makes 16 references to the Lordship of Jesus.
2. His first corrective is for them to \_\_\_\_\_ themselves that they are in The Story (3:1-3).
3. Paul lays out three \_\_\_\_\_ that are to be employed in the meantime:
  - a. "Let the \_\_\_\_\_ of Christ rule in your hearts to which indeed you were called in one body. And be thankful." (3:15)
  - b. "Let the \_\_\_\_\_ of Christ dwell in you richly...with thankfulness in your hearts to God" (3:16)
  - c. Do everything you do "In the \_\_\_\_\_ of Christ, giving thank to God the Father through him." (3:17)
4. Paul then lays out four \_\_\_\_\_ where these those in The Story are to obey these commands:
  - a. husbands and wives (3:18-19)
  - b. parents and children (3:20-21)
  - c. masters and slaves (3:22 - 4:1)
  - d. " \_\_\_\_\_ " and " \_\_\_\_\_ " (4:5-6)