

WORLD MISSION TOPICS



**FALL
QUARTER®**

SEPTEMBER • OCTOBER • NOVEMBER 2025

**CHRISTIAN CONCEPTS
FOR THE
GREAT COMMISSION**



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CHURCH OF GOD IN CHRIST, INC.

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Presiding Bishop

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Chairman, Publishing Board

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Lessons written by:
Elder Joseph Gill

LETTER from the PRESIDING BISHOP



Greetings in the name of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.

In this time of rapid change, it is vitally important for blood washed individuals to actively participate in our churches and communities to assure our voices are heard and God is glorified.

We must remain “steadfast, unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labor is not in vain in the Lord”.

With that being said, I want you to know, we have “Unfinished Business” in upholding our Christian duties and engaging in constructive dialogue to address societal challenges and the continued advancement of the Kingdom of God.

I encourage you to share the Word of God on every occasion and live so God can use you, anywhere and anytime.

Sincerely,
J. Drew Sheard,
Presiding Bishop and Chief Apostle
Church Of God In Christ, Inc.

The WORLD MISSIONS CHALLENGE

In the past it was a popular interpretive understanding that Canaan—the prize for the ancient Israelites—was a type of heaven. In hymns (e.g., “I Am Bound for the Promised Land”), in sermons, and in everyday Christian parlance, “Canaan” was used symbolically to represent our eternal reward. However, Bible commentators have recently observed that possession of the Promised Land is a poor metaphor for our heavenly inheritance. Heaven won’t be populated by enemies. Its residents won’t be embroiled in battles. Its landscape will not be marked by pitfalls and dangers. In the language of Charles Spurgeon, Canaan is a far better emblem of that state and condition of the soul in which a man is found when he has become a believer.” Indeed, enlarging of the metaphor of the exodus from Egypt as the salvation experience, going forward to dwell in Canaan represents choosing to live boldly for God. Conversely, lingering in the wilderness is a consequence of living beneath your privileges, in doubt and disobedience.

This quarter we will examine the Book of Joshua. We will encounter some historical high-points from the Israelites’ preparation to cross the Jordan River to their early skirmishes and setbacks in the land. But we are not studying this material to simply learn history. We will see in the experiences of Israel a reflection of the principles we need to live godly lives. The battles Israel faced correspond to many of the challenges Saints encounter dealing with the larger society. The temptations that beset them are analogous to the ones we endure today. And the tools the Israelites employed to achieve success have parallels in our modern context. If your goal is to learn how to live the saved life more abundantly, I trust you will find this journey through Joshua helpful.

Yours in Christ,
Elder Joseph W. Gill

LESSON 1

What Was Going on in Colossae?

Lesson Text: Colossians 1:1,2,9; 2:1,2; 4:7-9

Memory Verse

"To the saints and faithful brethren in Christ which are at Colossae: Grace be unto you, and peace, from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ."

Colossians 1:29

Key Terms

Heresy • Belief or opinion contrary to orthodox religious (especially Christian) doctrine.

Salutation • A gesture or utterance made as a greeting or acknowledgment of another's arrival or departure.

Syncretism • The combination or blending of different religions, cultures, or schools of thought.

Suggested Emphasis

This letter from the Apostle Paul was directed to the church in Colossae—a town in what is modern-day Turkey, approximately 100 miles east of Ephesus. Paul had never been to Colossae; he had not played a personal role in the founding of this church (we know this from his comments in Col. 2:1). However, he may have felt a certain responsibility for them because a disciple of his, Epaphras, had been a leader there. It seems that Paul's heart was bound up with his fellow workers and beloved friends. His love for Epaphras became an emotional connection with the church at Colossae. He was curious about their spiritual development (Col. 1:9), and he knew they would be concerned about his well-being (an implication of Col. 4:7).

The Epistle to the Colossians is one of the "prison epistles" Paul wrote while under house arrest in Rome, presumably A.D. 60–62. Paul's experience at this time is described in Acts 28. He was under guard (Acts 28:16), but was allowed to receive visitors (Acts 28:30). Paul endeavored to be productive during his imprisonment. For example, he chose to write the "prison epistles" to encourage the Saints in Ephesus, Philippi, and Colossae.

Emphasis 1:

A Looming Danger

Paul also had a special purpose for reaching out to the Colossians. It is assumed that Epaphras had informed him of a looming danger facing that local church. An early Christian heresy was making inroads into the region. It appears to have been a case of syncretism: an attempt to combine Christian teaching with other forms of belief. In effect, "the false teaching failed to give its rightful place to the work of Christ, and it failed likewise to ascribe divine and unique glory to the person of Christ" (Erdman, 1966, p. 22). The Colossian heretics were specifically promoting doctrines of ceremonialism (mandatory observance of sacred days and seasons), asceticism (celebrating austerity and the denial of physical appetites), angel worship, secret knowledge, and reliance on human wisdom and tradition (Williams, 2015). Some of these false doctrines are similar to the teaching of the Essenes, while others remind us of the Gnosticism that would rise a century later. Perhaps the most we can say is that several streams of thought shaped the Colossian heresy.

Emphasis 2:
**Holding Up the Truth
to Combat Error**

"The best way to meet error is to emphasize truth...Thus when Paul has learned from Epaphras of the heresy, which threatens the Colossian church, and as he writes to warn and encourage the Christian believers, he wastes no time in denouncing the false teachers or expounding the false doctrines. In fact, he refers to the heresy in such general terms and says so little of its specific features that its exact origin and character are still the subjects of conjecture and debate" (Erdman, 1966, p. 23). Instead, it becomes the apostle's mission to focus on the nature and ministry of Jesus Christ, including Christ's relation to the universe, His centrality to the Church, and His complete sufficiency for all human needs.

Emphasis 3:
**The Heritage Belonging
to God's People**

The revelation that Paul wants to share with the Colossians about the Son of God is part of the "grace and peace" he commends to them in his salutation. The message that he has for the Saints will prove to be an impartation of God's grace. The Corinthians being called "Saints" connotes their separation unto God; that they are called "brethren" is a designation that indicates their adoption by "God the Father" into His Holy family. Everything Paul will reveal about Jesus Christ is the birth-right and heritage of God's people. It is a consequence of their being "in Christ." Paul knows that the believers in Colossae are already in mystical union with the Lord. He intends to explain to them the full significance of that standing. This proper doctrine would expand their understanding of the unmerited favor they have through salvation. It would indicate the depth of peace they could now enjoy with God.

Missions Application Questions

1. Describe the heresy creeping into the Colossian community.
2. How did the Apostle Paul address the looming danger to the Saints?
3. In what way is Paul's teaching a "birth-right" of believers in Christ?

World Missions Prayer Points

- Let us pray that the Church guards against syncretic forms of worship today.
- Let us pray that our teachers and leaders emphasize the truth of the Gospel.
- Let us celebrate the heritage we have as believers.

LESSON 2

Paul's Prayer for the Colossians

Lesson Text: Colossians 1:9-14

Memory Verse

"That ye might walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing, being fruitful in every good work, and increasing in the knowledge of God."

Colossians 1:10

Key Terms

Practicalities • The aspects of a situation that involve the actual doing or experience of something rather than theories or ideas.

Translate • To convert something or to be converted into (another form or medium).

Will of God • For this lesson, we are referring to the "perfect will of God," by which we mean what God prefers we do, rather than the "sovereign will of God," by which theologians mean God's predetermination of what will happen.

Suggested Emphasis

In his familiar structure of "prayer as salutation," Paul tells the Colossians that "we give thanks to God and the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, praying always for you." But then he specifically remarks how he heard of their faith in Christ and their love shown to all the Saints (Col. 1:3,4). Paul explains that his source about the Colossians was Epaphras (Col. 1:7). Epaphras was a native of Colossae, presumably a disciple of Paul's, and a founder of the Colossian Church. By the time the Epistles to the Colossians and Philemon were being composed, Epaphras was himself imprisoned in Rome (Philem. 23). However, we presume he visited Paul before he was arrested. Concerning this week's lesson text, the reason Paul gives for this letter to the Church is the report from Epaphras; since he and Timothy heard it, they have not ceased to pray for the Saints from Colossae (Col. 1:9a). Now let's take a closer look at the content of their prayers.

Emphasis 1:

Understanding the Will of God

The apostle's first assertion is that he continually prays "that ye might be filled with the knowledge of his will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding" (Col. 1:9b).

This is in line with that famous appeal he made to the Roman Church: "And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God" (Rom. 12:2). Consider also what he said to the Ephesian Church: "Wherefore be ye not unwise, but understanding what the will of the Lord is" (Eph. 5:17). These passages presuppose that "the will of God" can be discerned by thinking through the challenges you're facing, reflecting on the appropriate counsel from God's word, and applying your acquired wisdom. So Paul chose to pray that the Colossians develop the very skills they would need to discern God's will: knowledge, wisdom, and understanding.

Emphasis 2:

Being Pleasing to God

Now the apostle explains that discernment of God's will results in certain practicalities. It will inspire us to try to please God. Paul explicitly instructs his audience to "walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing"

(Col. 1:10a). He has often expressed this sentiment in his epistles. For example, he told the Thessalonians that he had “exhorted and comforted and charged every one of you, as a father doth his children, that ye would walk worthy of God, who hath called you unto his kingdom and glory” (1 Thess. 2:11,12). Then Paul includes a list of characteristics that he identifies in the Colossians. The placement of these attributes immediately after his charge to “walk worthy” suggests these are the means to do so. Paul observes that the Colossians are being fruitful in every good work, are getting to know God better, are becoming stronger in the power of God, yet are showing patience and endurance, and are full of joy and thanksgiving (Col. 1:10b–12a). The conclusion of the matter is that the Colossians have shown themselves to be “partakers of the inheritance of the saints in the light” by exhibiting these attributes.

**Emphasis 3:
Because They Escaped
Satan’s Kingdom**

Perhaps now the apostle begins to transition from prayer to doctrine. Essentially, Paul claims that we Saints should be thankful because God “delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son” (Col. 1:13). Of course, Paul always felt his own mission was to perform deliverance ministry. He told King Agrippa he was sent to the Gentiles “to open their eyes, and to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins, and inheritance among them which are sanctified by faith that is in me” (Acts 26:18). It is important to remember—if you’re a believer—how God transported you from Satan’s authority to that of His beloved Son. Your fealty is now to Christ. “We are citizens of heaven, where the Lord Jesus Christ lives. And we are eagerly waiting for him to return as our Savior” (Phil. 3:20,

NLT), the One who redeemed us and forgave us!

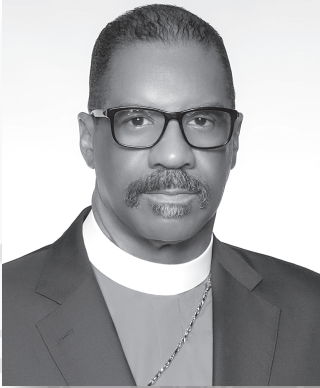
Missions Application Questions

- 1. How can we discern “the will of God” in any given situation?
- 2. What appears to be the means of walking worthy of the Lord?
- 3. Why might we describe Paul’s ministry to the Gentiles as “deliverance ministry”?

World Missions Prayer Points

- Let us pray that believers continue to seek an understanding of the will of God.
- Let us pray that the whole Body of Christ walk worthy of their Lord and Savior.
- Let us pray to remember how God transported us “into the Kingdom of His dear Son.”

The Presiding Bishop, Chairman of the Publishing Board, World Missions Department President, Writer, Missions Information Content Manager and the entire World Missions Topics Editorial Staff would like to thank you for your continued support.



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