

## Colossians 1:9-20

New English Translation Bible 2019

Fifth century or earlier manuscript variants: [inserted] [~replaced] [–omitted]

### Working Outline of Colossians 1:9-20

#### I. Greeting

#### II. My co-workers and I write to strengthen you. 1.3–4.6

A. We thank and pray to God for you. 1.3-12

B. Because Christ ranks above all created things. 1.13–3.17

1. God has brought us into Christ's kingdom. 1.13 – 2.5

a. God has made peace with us. 1.13-23

(1) He has redeemed us. 1.13-20

### Learning objectives

- Participants will know and rejoice in their privileges as the redeemed.
- Participants will seek to conduct themselves in a manner pleasing to the Lord.
- Participants will worship Jesus Christ who is superior to all created beings.

### We pray to God for you. 1.9-12

***9 For this reason also, since the day we heard, we have not ceased to pray for you [–and to ask] that you may be filled with the full knowledge of His will in all spiritual wisdom and understanding, ...***

Query: For what reason? **1** Preceding text (1:4)? Or **2** following text (1:9b 'that...')?

Spiritual: **1** About spiritual matters. **2** Given or revealed by the Holy Spirit.

Wisdom: Take action that pleases God.

Understanding: Know how God works in the world.

1 Samuel 12:23

*22 For the sake of his great name the LORD will not reject his people, because the LORD was pleased to make you his own. 23 As for me, far be it from me that I should sin against the LORD by failing to pray for you. And I will teach you the way that is good and right. 24 But be sure to fear the LORD and serve him faithfully with all your heart.*

***... 10 so that you may walk in a manner worthy of the Lord, to please Him in all respects, bearing fruit in every good work and multiplying in the full knowledge of God; ...***

Worthy: **1** appropriate to. **2** deserving of (reward).

Good work: "These things are excellent and profitable for people." Titus 3:8

Know God: **1** Perceive his will (9). **2** Experience his actions (10).

Query: What kinds of behaviour please God most?

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Wisdom of Solomon 3

*4 Their hope is full of immortality, 5 and having been disciplined a little, they will be greatly benefited, because God tested them and found them worthy of himself.*

2 Maccabees 15

*21 Makkabaios ... called upon the Lord who works wonders because he knew that it is not by arms, but as it seems good to God that he procures victory for those who are worthy.*

***... 11 being strengthened with all power, according to His glorious might, for the attaining of all steadfastness and patience; joyously 12 giving thanks to the Father, who has qualified us [~you] to share in the inheritance of the saints in light.***

Query: What does God's powerful might enable us to do, according to these verses?

Query: How can we tap into that power, according to these verses? (Thanksgiving.)

Query: Who are these 'saints'? (Spiritual beings who dwell with God.)

Query: What or where is 'light'? (The heavenly realm of God.)

### Benefits and privileges that are ours as Christians

1. full knowledge of His will 1:9
2. all spiritual wisdom and understanding 1:9
3. you may walk in a manner worthy of the Lord 1:10
4. please Him in all respects 1:10
5. bearing fruit in every good work 1:10
6. multiplying in the full knowledge of God 1:10
7. being strengthened with all power 1:11
8. attaining of all steadfastness and patience 1:11
9. joyously giving thanks to the Father 1:11-12
10. qualified to share in the inheritance of the saints in light 1:12
11. rescued us from the authority of darkness 1:13
12. transferred us to the kingdom of the Son of His love 1:13
13. we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins. 1:14
14. peace through the blood of His cross 1:20

### Jesus' titles, privileges, and accomplishments

1. the Son of His love 1:13
2. He is the head of the body, the church 1:18
3. the image of the invisible God 1:15
4. the firstborn of all creation 1:15
5. in Him all things were created 1:16
6. He is before all things 1:17
7. in Him all things hold together 1:17
8. He is the head of the body, the church 1:18
9. Who is the beginning 1:18
10. the firstborn from the dead 1:18
11. have first place in everything. 1:18

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12. in Him all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell, 1:19
13. through Him to reconcile all things 1:20
14. having made peace through the blood of His cross 1:20

**13 Who rescued us from the authority of darkness, and transferred us to the kingdom of the Son of His love, 14 in whom we have redemption [\*], the forgiveness of sins.**

[\*] 13th cent mss: 'through his blood' from Eph 1:7

Query: What or where is 'darkness'? (Outside of the camp.)

Query: What kept us under rulers of darkness? (Our sin.)

Query: How does 'redemption' solve that issue? (Forgiveness of sins.)

Query: How to translate 'Son of his love'? (The Son whom He loves.)

Query: What is the distinction between the kingdom of the Son and the kingdom of God? (See the chart below.)



**15 Who is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation.**

Image: Greek, *eikôn*. God made visible. In OT, God sometimes appeared in human form.

In the NT, born as a human being.

Firstborn: Greek, *prôtotokos*. **1** birth order. **2** status of a firstborn. Cp Col 1:15 [creation];

Heb 1:6 [world]; Rom 8:29 [believers]; Rev 2:8 (5th cent codex A variant).

Query: How do 15a and 15b explain each other? (Fully God and fully human.)

David, the Firstborn

***'And I will make him the firstborn,  
the highest of the kings of the earth'.*** Psalm 89:17 (Heb)

Hebrew: *b<sup>e</sup>kôr*, **1** first-born, oldest offspring (animal and man... **2** first-born of Yahweh ... Israel ... Ephraim ... king ... plague.

***'And I will make him a firstborn,  
high among the kings of the earth'.*** Psalms 88:28 (LXX)

LXX Greek: *prototokos*.

***16 For in Him all things were created, both [those] in the heavens and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities—all things have been created through Him and for Him.***

Query: All what things?

Query: Is the Son a created being? A co-creator? Or the Creator?

Query: In what two realms are found 'rulers'? (Human and divine.)

Query: Who rule over our national and international leaders? (Fallen spirits.)

***17 And He is before all things,  
And in Him all things hold together.***

Before: Greek, pro. 'Before', in time? Space? Status? Order? Rank? Strength? Or all of that?

All things: Greek *ta panta*, neutre plural, 'the alls'. All which things?

Hold together: Intransitive verb = 'to come to be in a condition of coherence, continue, endure, exist, hold together'. BDAG

***18 And He is the head of the body, the church;  
Who is the beginning, the firstborn from [~of] the dead, so that He Himself will come to have first place in everything.***

Query: Why the switch from 'all things' to 'the church'?

Beginning: Greek, *arché*. **1** Beginning. **2** Starter. **3** First cause. **4** Corner. **5** Basis. **6** Authority figure. **7** Office, domain.

Firstborn: 'from the dead' (first one resurrected, two earliest mss) or 'of the dead' (preeminent over death)?

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**19 For in Him all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell,  
20 And through Him to reconcile all things to Himself, having made peace through the blood of His cross — [—through Him] — whether things on earth or things in heaven.**

Fullness: 'sum total, fullness, even (super)abundance ... full measure of deity'. BDAG.  
Reconcile to himself: God has already solved the human sin problem from his side by Jesus' crucifixion.

### Fullness

Fullness: Col 1:18, 20; Psa 24.1; Jer 23:24; Seneca, '(God) himself fills all his work'; Aristides, 'Zeus has filled the all'; Philo, 'God fills all things'; Wisdom 1:6-7, 'The Spirit of the Lord has filled the world'; Enoch 49:3-4, 'In him dwells the spirit of wisdom, ... for he is the Elect One before the Lord'. (Dunn, NIGTC, 1996)

### Conclusion

Every idea in Colossians proves 'pre-gnostic', having OT, 'first-temple' Jewish and pagan parallels. Thus, it was Paul who wrote this epistle in the 1st century, not a 2nd or 3rd century pseudopigrapher, as 19th-century scholars surmised, as 20th century liberals taught, and as the 21st century Wikipedia asserts.