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## Colossians 1:19-23, *Christ the Reconciler!*

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Into Thy Word Ministries Bible Study [www.intothyword.org](http://www.intothyword.org)

**General Idea:** God was pleased to have His Fullness live and dwell in Christ, and by this, all things were reconciled to the Father. Thus, His Blood shed on the cross made peace for everything in heaven and earth. So, anyone who was far away from God now has the opportunity to know God. All of us were His enemies and now He can call us His friends. All of humanity were strangers and separated by sin from God the Father, but now through Christ's sacrifice, this torn relationship is mended and we have newness of life in God. Our evil thoughts and actions separated us but now we are reconciled. Christ's death on the cross was the incredible act that made all this possible—our salvation, our place in eternity, and our contentment here and now—all because of what Christ did as a result of His shed blood. He has brought us into the presence of God; we who had no right or ability to come before Him can now approach God! We are even holy and blameless because of Christ, so God now sees us clean and pure and without fault. But, for this to happen, we have to receive His work; we have to believe Who Christ is and what He did for us; we must stand firmly in Him and never drift away from His Good News. Now we, as His servants, can preach this Good News and Hope, heralding to all, just as Paul did.

### Contexts and Background:

This church in Colosse was in a prime earthquake zone, and whenever the earth shook, buildings fell and people died. Instead of making stronger buildings, they worshipped and sought to placate the gods, which resulted in haplessness and then hopelessness, and finally the destruction of the city a few decades after this letter was written. Thus, Paul points out, using a hymn, that if they are not clinging to Christ, but rather are seeking to dilute His Presence by substituting strange teachings of others and things, they are, in a sense, making more weak buildings that will just fall.

### Commentary—Word and Phrase Meanings:

- *Pleased.* This is our chief purpose, means, and mission of life—to be a friend of God; when we do this we please Him. We give Him our honor, love, and service, which we do to glorify Him. We worship and praise Him by loving and behaving, and putting Him first just as Jesus demonstrated by His obedience. When we are merely self-focused or ungrateful, we nullify our impact and do the opposite of pleasing God. In context, when we trust and obey Him, and make Christ our primary and foremost outlook in our lives as He is in the universe, we are pleasing Him. Our hearts filled with gratitude and a life that overflows with His fruit are the quintessence of a pleasing sacrifice (Deut. 10:17-19; 2 Chron. 20:7; Psalm 69:30-31; Matt. 5:16; Luke 12:4; John 8:29; 15:14; Rom. 15:1-3; 1 Cor. 10:31; Eph. 3:10; Phil. 2:12-13; 4:18; Col. 1:10; 3:17-20; 1 Thess. 2:4; 2 Tim. 2:4; Heb. 11:5-6; 13:16, 21).
- *Fullness.* Normally refers to God's wisdom, attributes, and glory, giving us completeness—His presence amongst us and in us. Paul used it to describe God's indwelling to refute the Gnostics. As Christ is all, He is full and the ultimate Wisdom and Truth. This means God fully dwelt in Christ, and for us this means we are filled with Christ and ruled by Christ. For a Christian, *fullness* is placing Christ and His work first in us, so we are pursuing righteousness and all that is good as a way to glorify Christ as Lord. *Fullness* equals personally knowing for certain who we are in Christ, and what He did for us on the Cross—so that our confidence comes from knowing we are complete in Him! As a result, we become more disciplined in His encompassing power and His influence that has transformed us and is now manifested in us. I can trust in my Lord to lead me, *fill* me, and use me (Psalm 40:17; Joel 2:26; Matt. 5: 6; 6:33-34; John 1:16; 3:5; 4:13-14; 6:35; Gal. 2:20-21; 4:4; 5:15-21; Eph. 3:19; 5:15-21; Col. 1:1-23; 2:9-10; 2 Tim. 1:12; James 1:22-25; 1 John 4:19).
- *Dwell.* A Greek term meaning *where a god chooses to go or a place to live*. Jesus being fully God, there is only One God and the Father's interpersonal relationship with the Trinity. Here it also refers to *dwelling*, as God dwells in the Temple and in us. The Tabernacle, God's dwelling place prior to the

Temple being built, was about God dwelling amongst man, being with them. This was to show the Promise Land was not just about the possession of the land; rather, it was about God possessing our hearts and minds (2 Chron. 7:1-18). The Temple was man's idea so to place God in a permanent location—a God of limitless boundaries. On the contrary, we can't possess God, It is He who desires to possess us. It is about being humble so we are dependent upon Him and His dwelling amongst us, as we are full in Him (Eph. 2:16; 1 Tim. 2:5; Heb. 1:8)!

- *Reconciles*. Means that God has paid our penalties so the severed relationship between humanity and God is repaired and restored. This is the basic Gospel message that we are all sinners and have no worth, merit, or ability to receive salvation. So, in God's mercy, He sent us His Son, whose sacrifice paid our debt of sin. We were once enemies, but by being reconciled, we are brought back to a perfect relationship. This also refers to order and not just salvation, as all *powers* and *authorities* are subordinate to God. God *reconciles* all things and is supreme over all things (Gen. 3; Rom. 3:21-26; 5:10-12; 8:18-21, 37-39; 2 Cor. 5:17-21; Eph. 2:2; 6:12; Col. 2:9-15; 2 Pet. 3:10; 1 John 2:1; Rev. 21:1).
- *All things*. Means that Christ's work shook the entire universe and affected all things as He restored harmony both on earth and in eternity. This does not mean that Christ gives universal salvation and that we do not have to receive Christ to be saved, nor does it mean His death will save all people. What it means is, Christ's sacrifice is powerful enough to save all, but it is our responsibility to receive this work as stated later in this passage. All will not believe, but one day all will submit (Rom. 8:19-22; 14:11; Phil 2:9-11).
- *Peace*. This refers to the end of war or hostilities, as there is now peace between God and we who are in Christ because of what Christ did for us on the cross. However, the wars and sufferings of humanity will continue because of our sinful nature; our peace is with God, and our call is to be at peace with one another; yet, the main theme is the Kingdom of God, not the nations of man.
- *Blood, shed on the cross*. Meaning the totality of Christ's sacrifice and atoning work and its saving power. Jesus' death became the ultimate, sufficient, atoning sacrifice worthy to appease God's wrath. His blood became the means for our reconciliation and our atonement that covers our sin so we become holy in God's sight and thus can have a personal, effectual relationship with Him (Rom. 3:23-25; 5:6-10; 7:4; 8:3; 1 Cor. 1:18; 2 Cor. 5:18-21; Gal. 6:12-14; Eph. 1:7; 2:2-16; Heb. 9:14; 10:10; 1 Pet. 1:19).
- *Alienated*. Refers to our separation from God by our original sin and our willful, continual rebellion; our thinking and actions are cause enough to separate us, in addition to original sin. We conspired against God; Christ united us to Him. All of humanity has fallen into sin and total separation from God. Our further corruption compiled to seal our fate! We were enemies to God and eternally separated from Him! The incredible, fantastic, great news of the universe is Christ; His incarnation, Lordship, and grace atoned for our sins. He freed us. We now have peace with God and deliverance from our sins, which restores our hope, acceptance, and our salvation (Gen. 3; Matt. 5:27-28; Rom. 3:21-26; 5:1-2; 12; 8:20; 2 Cor. 5:17-21; Gal. 5:19; Eph. 2:2, 12-13; 4:17-19; 6:12).
- *Christ's physical body through death*. Christ pacified God's righteous hostility toward humanity. He became the sacrificial Lamb that brings together God and us (John 3:16-20; 15:18-25; Heb. 9:22).
- *Without blemish/blameless/holy/irreprovable*. Meaning we will not be called to account for the sins He has covered. It is by what Christ has done that God does not see or is unaffected by our sin; we are declared clean. No charge can be brought upon us because of His forgiveness. He brings not only our salvation but also personal renewal (Rom. 5:6-12; 8:33; 2 Cor. 11:2; Phil. 2:15; 3:8-9; Eph. 1:4; 2:4-10; 5:25; Col. 2:13; 1 Tim. 3:10; Jude 24).

- *If you.* The part most Christians do not like is that we have a condition attached to this. It has to be given (election) and then received (by faith alone) and confessed by us (1 John 4:2).
- *Continue in your faith.* Meaning a call to persevere. The implication here is that we have the responsibility to act on Christ's work; once God elects us and the Gospel message is proclaimed, we receive this by faith alone. Therefore, our response to His work further fuels our faith and our disposition and character. This is also a call that we can persevere in Christ; nothing can move us from Him when we are in Him. If we have real effectual faith, that faith will stimulate, endure, and carry us through all things. Our faith anchors us to God, sets us upon Him as Lord, and takes our eyes off our circumstances so we see hope and joy. Thus, this real kind of faith is in Christ alone; the world may mimic it, but this is only an imitation to facilitate emptiness and despair. Is your faith real? The answer will signify your hope and confidence in Christ! This is the faith that produces more faith, devotion, obedience, and glory to our Lord (Mark 16:15; Acts 11:23; 14:22; Rom. 8; 1 Cor. 3:11; 7:37; 15:58; 2 Cor. 5:17-21; Phil. 1:6; 2:11-13)!
- *Not moved/grounded/firmly established from the hope.* We have confident expectation in Christ! Our faith is absolutely, confidently established and rests on Christ alone; but it is also predicated by hope. That means hope does not save us; rather, it is an anchor to help us focus on Christ, helping us endure by faith what the world throws at us. Our hope is not determined by our situation or feelings; it is a fact by what Christ has done. For the Colossians, this meant their hope was built on Christ and not superstitions, family, or worldly pressures (1 Cor. 7:7:37; 15:58).
- *Proclaimed/was preached to.* Meaning the Gospel has no bounds or borders. Paul directly combats the false teachers in the church. The Gospel is simple; it is not about secret or esoteric ideas of God as the Colosse church proclaimed as they mixed in pagan philosophies and Gnosticism. This is also a window in the future hope fact that Christ will be proclaimed to every creature (Gen. 41:57; 1 Kings 10:24; Matt. 24:14; Mark 13:10; Acts 1:8; 13:47; 19:10; Rom. 1:8; 15:18-25; Col. 1:6).
- *All creation.* Creation proclaims the work of Christ. Paul is appealing to the witness of creation and the Jewish Scriptures to prove his point and demonstrate his obedience to it (Psalm 8:1; 19:1; 89:37; 97:6; Isa. 51:16; Mark 13:10; Acts 19:10; Rom. 10:18; 15:18-25). The point is that the Gospel is not hidden and is for all peoples (Rom. 1:8, 13; Matt. 24:14).

### **Devotional Thoughts and Applications:**

Christ is supreme! That means He is also the Head of the Church! We tend to run our churches as if we are in control, making our decisions based on gathering needs then developing programs to fill those needs. Yet, as good as this may sound, the main thing in church leadership is usually left out. Where is Christ? Where are His purpose and direction? We close the door to our Lord! Even though He is the head, we leave Him outside of our preparations and purposes. What does this mean? We are off base on the function He has for us and miss the call for His Church and ourselves. What we must do is line ourselves up to Him and His Lordship. Not our ideas, trivialities, and agendas; rather seek Him as Lord over all—our lives and our churches! When we think of the church, we tend to think of it as buildings and programs; but the real, true Church is the people all interconnected to one another while being intercepted in and with Christ as LORD. When we get this, that Christ is eminent and He reconciles us to Him, we will start to see how important our commitment to honor Christ and His precepts are. We were enemies to God; damned for eternity with no hope or plan. Now with Christ, we have salvation, assurance, and an eternity of hope. Then perhaps we can start to really build and rebuild our churches back to a godly direction of making disciples. It is about His fullness in us! It is to be our passion and directive to lead Christians to grow in Him and into His way, and away from false perceptions. All Christians, especially Christian leaders, need the desire to see a church committed to His purpose and poured out to His ways. When we proclaim Christ as Lord, then we will see revival through real prayer and devotion to His Lordship. We must allow His work in us, live in His presence, be a doer of the Word, stand firm in our faith and teachings, and never drift away from His “true Truth” and precepts or His love.

**The Essential Inductive Questions** (for more Inductive questions see Inductive Bible Study):

1. What does this passage say?
2. What does this passage mean?
3. What is God telling me?
4. How am I encouraged and strengthened?
5. Is there sin in my life for which confession and repentance is needed?
6. How can I be changed, so I can learn and grow?
7. What is in the way of these precepts affecting me? What is in the way of my listening to God?
8. How does this apply to me? What will I do about it?
9. What can I model and teach?
10. What does God want me to share with someone?

**Additional Questions:**

1. Have you ever been in an earthquake or another natural disaster? How did you feel? How does Christ settle such fears?
2. What does “fullness” mean and how does it apply to you? How do you feel that you were once His enemy but now Christ can call you His friend? How do you have newness of life in God?
3. How do you feel that anyone who is far away from God now has the opportunity to know God? What if someone you hated became a Christian? How would you/should you respond?
4. What do we have to do for this work of grace to happen? If grace is free to we who do not deserve it, why do we have to do something to receive His work?
5. What took place in your life for you to believe Who and what Christ did for you? Why do most Christians not like the fact that we have a “condition” attached to His grace?
6. How is Christ your all in all and above it all, above your fears, hurts, expectations, and circumstances? How can He be more so?
7. What happens when we do not place Christ first in our lives and in our church boardrooms? How does this create shaky ground that will crush our spiritual lives and church?
8. What does it mean to put Christ first just as Jesus Himself demonstrated by His obedience? How is it that if you are self-focused or ungrateful, you nullify your impact and do the opposite of pleasing God?
9. How can your faith stimulate, endure, and carry you through all things in life? How can you better anchor yourself to God and take your eyes off your circumstances so you can see more hope and joy?
10. How is hope an anchor to help you focus on Christ, and thus help you endure what the world throws at you? How can it better?
11. What happens when the Supremacy of Christ is absent, lost, or forgotten in our churches? How does this cause Him to be pushed aside for false teachings and misrepresentation of God?
12. How can you better stand firm in Him and never drift away from His Good News? What have you done to preach this Good News and Hope? What can you do? You do not have to be a preacher or evangelist, but what can you do to make Christ known more and be His servant and herald?