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*Saint Mark's Church
Sunday School*

The Epistle To the Colossians **Code: 12/ NT / 6**

1. General Aims of the unit

Better Understanding of the "word of God" to live according to its instructions

2. Special aims of the lesson

1. To have an overview of the establishment of the church of Colossi , and the founder of the church.
2. To acknowledge that this epistle is one of the four epistles of the prison (Ephesians , Colossians ‘ Philippe and Philemon) , and its date (~60-62 AD)
3. To explore the main theme of the epistle" the supremacy of Christ ”, and the heresies appeared in that church. [pls. explain 1:15 “the firstborn over all creation”] ,
4. To communicate the sub-themes of the epistle.
 - ❖ Christ is supreme overall 1:15 -2:3
 - ❖ Christ is sufficient for our spiritual progress 2:4 -2:23
 - ❖ The fruits of union with the risen Christ 3:1 -4:6

3.Outcomes

By the end of this lesson the teens are able to:

1. be a part in a discussion about the establishment of the church , the main characters there and the main heresies disturb the church there.
2. Remember by heart the epistles of the prison and their time and their themes
3. Describe the supremacy of Christ as recorded in this epistle.
4. List the behavior of the Christian who accepted the life in Christ and baptized in His name.
5. List the instructions to the Christian family

4. Verses: 1:15-21 ; 2:6 , 9-12 ; 3:1-3 , 5-6 , 12-14 , 20-21 ; 4:2

5. References:

1. Orthodox Bible or any commentary on the epistle to the Colossians
2. The attached notes



The Epistle of St. Paul to Colossians

This epistle is one of the four epistles St. Paul sent from the prison. The other three are Ephesians, Philippians, and Philemon.

The Time of the epistle

About 61 -63 AD while St. Paul was in his first captivity at Rome.

The Main Theme:

To defend the faith in Jesus Christ as the only Savior against the heresy found in the Church. Jesus is the preeminent, first and foremost in every thing. It is the most "CHRIST" centered epistle in the NT.

The Colossian heresy:(Col. 2:8-23)

It was a religious system that combined:

- **Gnostic ideas:** (Gnostic =knowledge) -
 - Human wisdom is more important than faith in Christ.
 - Elementary principles or creatures which are between God and man. Jesus Christ was considered one among many of them. So, Jesus is a savior among many saviors.
- **Greek speculations** Philosophy and traditions of man to be added to the faith.
- **Jewish legalism** Traditions as circumcision, food, drink, festivals of new moon, or Sabbath to be practiced.
- **Oriental mysticism** false humility, worship of Angels, regulations and doctrine of man, and self imposed religion.

The city of Colossi

Colossi was a city in the Roman province of Asia about 100 miles east of Ephesus. It was found in the 5th. century BC. At that time, it was an important trading center. But, at the time of St. Paul, the status of the city declined and it became a small city. The neighboring two cities LAODICIA and HIERAPOLIS became more important as trading centers. The city was abandoned in the 8th. century AD. Now the only mark of the ancient city is a mound of dirt and rubbles.

The Church of Colossi:

+ Most probably established by Epaphras as it is evident from the epistle *"as you also learned from Epaphras, our dear fellow servant, who is a faithful minister of Christ on your behalf," (Col. 1:7), "Epaphras, who is one of you, a bondservant of Christ, greets you, always laboring fervently for you in prayers, that you may stand perfect and*

complete in all the will of God.” (Col. 4:12) . St. Paul did not visit the Church “For I want you to know what a great conflict I have for you and those in Laodicea, and for as many as have not seen my face in the flesh,” (Col.2:1)

+ Epaphras :

1. Probably a native of Colossi who started the Church at Colossi ,Laodicea , and Hierapolis as it is understood from this verse “For I bear him witness that he has a great zeal for you, and those who are in Laodicea, and those in Hierapolis. (Col. 4:13) .. The timing was while St. Paul was in his 3rd. mission preaching at Ephesus (Refer to Acts 19:10 , 20:31)
2. Probably he visited St. Paul at his prison in Rome to seek his apostolic guidance concerning the heresy in the Church.

+ Philemon :

A resident in Colossi , converted by St. Paul . He was a member in the Church and her largest financial supporter, who opened his home for the meetings of the Church..

+ Archippus :

Philemon’s son (refer to Phil. 2)and had a post in the service of the Church at Colosse.

Outline of the epistle

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|--|-----------------------|
| 1. Introduction | 1:1-14 |
| a) Greeting | 1:1-2 |
| b) Thanksgiving for the Colossians growth | 1:3-8 |
| c) Prayer for continued growth and victory | 1:9-14 |
|
2. Apostolic Christology |
1:15 -2:23 |
| a) Christ is supreme overall | 1:15 -2:3 |
| b) Christ is sufficient for our spiritual progress | 2:4 -2:23 |
| • when we walk in Him | 2:4 -2:7 |
| • Through His crucifixion, and resurrection but not through “vain philosophy” and people traditions | 2:8 -2:15 |
| • Through holding fast to the Head , but not through the Jewish traditions and oriental mysticism | 2:16- 2:19 |
| • Through practicing death with Him , but not through abiding by the traditions of the other religions | 2:20 -2:23 |
|
3. The fruits of union with the risen Christ |
3:1 -4:6 |
| a) Seeking heavenly things | 3:1 -3:4 |
| b) putting off the old sinful passion | 3:5 -3:11 |
| c) putting on new righteous virtues | 3:12 -3:14 |
| d) dwelling of the Word of God inside us ,and praising | 3:15 -3:17 |
| e) Christian family relations (husbands , wives , children) | 3:18 -3:20 |

- f) Christian work relations (masters and slaves) 3:22 -4:1
- g) Christian behavior towards others 4:1 -4:6

4 Conclusion

4:7 -4:18

- a) commendations 4:7 - 4:9
- b) greetings 4:10 - 4:14
- c) instructions 4:15 -4:18

Study questions to the epistle of St. Paul to the Colossians

*Please read the epistle more than one time , and ask the Holy Spirit who inspired the epistle to open your spirit, heart and understanding to accept the message and truth of the Word of God. The target of the study is not to increase the knowledge rather than to love and live according to light of the scripture
It is suggested that the study is conducted in groups .All the members of the group are encouraged to participate ,and share the experience of the Word of God .*

1. Introduction

Question 1

St. Paul defined himself as an apostle of Jesus Christ . Give a short account about his call as a believer and as an Apostle. Can you remember your personal call ?
[Acts 9:1-22 , Acts 13:2 , Gal. 2:9]

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Question 2

What do you know about St. Timothy?(Timothy = worshipping God)
[Acts 16:1-3 , 1Tim. 1:2 , 2Tim: 1:5, 2Ti 3:15 , 1Tim. 1:18,19]

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Question 3

St Paul called all the Believers in the church of Colossi saints, so, what is the meaning of the word "saints" in the bible , how does the Church select her saints now?.

[Ps. 99:5 , Ex. 30:10 , Ps. 93:5 , Lev. 11:45 , 1Pe. 1:15 , Jo. 17:19 , 2 Cor. 7:1]

- 1.....
- 2.....
- 3.....
- 4.....

The saints of the Church are
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Question 4

St. Paul in this epistle -and all the other epistles - started his greetings with " grace and peace".

What is meant by Grace?

[refer to Eph. 2:8 , Ro. 5:21 , Jo. 1:17 ,]

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What is meant by Peace ?

[refer to Lu. 24:36 , Jo. 20:26 , Eph. 2:14]

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So, is it clear now why the presbyter repeats "peace be with you" many times during any ritual prayer?

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Question 5

St. Paul gave thanks to God in regard to the Church in Colossi , why?

[Col. 1:3-6 , Eph. 1:15 16]

- 1.....
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- 2.
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can we apply the same principles today as servants of the Lord ?

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Question 6

What is the hope that is laid before us in heaven?

[Col. 1:5,12 , Tit. 1:2 , Rev. 21:1-4]

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Question 7

Give some reasons why the servant (St. Paul for example) prayed for his / her children in Christ .

[Col. 1:9-12 , Col. 1:28 , Phil. 1:9 , Eph. 1:16 -20]

1.
- 2.....
- 3.....
- 4.....
- 5.....
6.

Question 8

What is the role of the Father towards the believers ?

[Col. 1:12-13 , Col. 2:13 Eph. 1:3-14 , Eph. 2:4-8]

- 1.....2.....
-
- 3.....
- 4.....
- 5.....
- 6.....
- 7.....
- 8.....
- 9.....
- 10.....
- 11.....
- 12.....

2. Apostolic Christology

Question 1

Highlight the reasons St. Paul used to prove the preeminence of Jesus Christ.

[Col.1:16 -29 ,]

- 1.....
- 2.....
- 3.....
- 4.....
- 5.....

Question 2

Many sects create their own gods , but the scripture defines for us the “Son of God” in whom we believe . JESUS CHRIST is the :

[Col 1:14 -22 , Col. 2:3 , 9 , 10 , 19 , Eph . 1:7 , 10 , Eph 4:15 ,16 , Jo. 1 :3 , 4 , Heb. 1: 2 -4].

- 1.....
- 2.....
- 3.....
- 4.....

- 5.....
- 6.....
- 7.....
- 8.....
- 9.....
- 10.....
- 11.....
- 12.....
- 13.....

Question 3

What is the meaning of “ first born” in Col. 1:15,18 and “ the beginning of ...” in Rev. 1:5 and Rev. 3:4 ?

(Arians and modern Jehovah’s witnesses are using these verses to prove that Jesus Christ is less than the Father and that He was created.)

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Question 4

Relate “Col. 1:19 , Col. 2:9” and “Col. 2:10 , 1Pet. 2:4” . What is the message to us as believers ?

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Question 5

What are the prerequisites to be blameless in front of the Father?

[Col. 1:22 -23 , Col. 2:6 -7 , Col. 1: 4 ,10 ,12 , Eph. 3: 16 -17 , Tit. 2 :13]

- 1.....
- 2.....
- 3.....
- 4.....
- 5.....
- 6.....
- 7.....

Question 6

Define the heavenly ranks and their work.

[Col. 1:16 , Rev. 4:4 , 11 , Eph. 3:10 , Ge. 3:24 , Is. 6:2 , Lu. 1:19 , Heb . 1: 7 , 14 , [refer also to the “heavenly hymn” in the Liturgy of Eucharist .]

- 1.....
- 2.....
- 3.....
- 4.....
- 5.....
- 6.....
- 7.....
- 8.....
- 9.....
- 10.....
- 11.....
- 12.....
- 13.....

Question 7

What is the relationship between our sufferings and that of our Lord Jesus Christ on the cross?

[Col. 1:24 , 2Cor. 1:5 -7]

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Question 8

St. Paul in his epistles to the Colossians and the Ephesians talks about the “hidden mystery”. What does he mean.?

[Col. 1:26 -27 , Eph. 3:1 -6]

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3.The fruits of union with Jesus Christ

Question 1

What is the NT circumcision , compare it with that of the OT ?. Highlight also its fruits.

[Col. 2:11-13 , Col. 3:1-4 , Gal. 3:27 , Rom. 6:3-10., 1 Cor. 12:13 , 1Pet. 3:21]

OT circumcision is

NT circumcision is

The fruits are :

- 1.....
- 2.....

- 3.....
- 4.....
- 5.....
- 6.....

Question 2

What does St. Paul mean by “ *members which are on earth*” (Col 3:5)

[Rom. 8:4 -9 , 13 , 23 , 1Cor. 6:13 , John 1:14,hint: compare between flesh and body]

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Question 3

List the deeds of the “old man”, and that of the “new man” , and compare them.

[Col. 3:5 - 15]

deeds of the “ old man”		deeds of the “new man”	
1.	1.....	1.....	1.....
2.	2.....	2.....	2.....
3.	3.....	3.....	3.....
4.	4.....	4.....	4.....
5.	5.....	5.....	5.....
6.	6.....	6.....	6.....
7.	7.....	7.....	7.....
8.	8.....	8.....	8.....
9.	9.....	9.....	9.....
10.	10.....	10.....	10.....
11.	11.....	11.....	11.....

Question 4

Complete the missed words:

All deeds of the “old man” mean deeds of the

All deeds of the “new man” mean deeds of the

Question 5

The new life in Christ is to “put off” , and to “put on” Explain:

[Gal. 3:5 - 11 , Rom. 13: 12 -14 . , refer also to the rites of Baptism.]

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Question 6

what is the role of the brethren in the body of Christ towards themselves , towards others , and towards the servants of the Lord?

[Col. 3:16-17 , Col. 4:2-6 , Eph. 5:19 -20]

towards themselves	Towards others	Towards the servants
1.....	1.....	1.....
2.....	2.....	2.....
3.....	3.....	
	4.....	
	5.....	

Question 7

How does the Holy Spirit - through St. Paul - define the relationship between the members of the family. Explain.

[Col. 5:18 -21 , Eph. 5: 22 ,25 , 6:1 , 4 , 1Pet. 3: 1 ,7 , 1Co. 7: 10 -11]

- Wife
- Husbands
- Children
- Parents

Question8

How does Christianity understand the relation at work ?(slaves vs. Masters and workers vs. Bosses)

[Col. 3:22 , 4:1 , Eph. 6: 5 - , Rom. 13: 7 , 1Pet. 2:17-18]

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4. Conclusion

Question 1

Complete the following statements:

- a) St. Paul sent the epistle to the Colossians with two of his disciples ,and

[Col. 4: 7 - 9]

- b) There were two groups working with St. Paul for the kingdom of heaven. Identify the two groups and list the names of each .

[Col. 4:10 - 15]

Group 1 () group 2 (.....)

- | | |
|--------|--------|
| 1..... | 1..... |
| 2..... | 2..... |
| 3..... | 3..... |

Question 2

Compare Demas the coworker with St. Paul [Col. 4:14] , with Demas after about 5 years [2 Tim. 4: 9] . What is the message the Holy Spirit wants to send us ?
[1 Cor. 9 :27 , 1 Cor. 10:12 , Phi. 3:12]

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Question 3

“These are my only fellow workers for the kingdom of God.....; they have proved to be a comfort to me.” [Col. 4:11] . Would you write the name that St. Paul missed in the list ?

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Question 4

Compare your service with that of Epaphras ?
[Col. 4:12- 13]

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Question 5

Now , you have finished the study of the epistle of St. Paul to Colossians. What is the verse that affects you more ? , and what is the main concept in this epistle that attracts you ?

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