

Paul's Gratitude and Prayer for the Colossians

I. Introduction

- a. At the beginning of most of Paul's epistles,
 - i. He tells them how thankful to God he is for them
 1. Romans 1:8
 2. 1 Cor. 1:4
 3. 1 Th. 1:2-4
 4. 2 Tim. 1:3-5
 5. Philemon 1:4
 - ii. On four occasions, he offers thanks to God and also shares a prayer of his for them:
 1. Eph. 1:15-21
 2. Phil. 1:3-11
 3. Col. 1:3-12
 4. 2 Th. 1:3-12
 - iii. The letter to the Colossians is an example of this, and we can learn from Paul's expressions of gratitude and prayer
 1. What good qualities of the congregation at Colossae Paul consider the most important
 2. What blessings he most desired for them
 3. What progress he was most concerned that they make
- b. The church at Colossae
 - i. Had never met Paul
 1. He had not started the church there or ever visited it
 2. Col. 2:1
 - ii. Accepted Paul's authority as an apostle
 - iii. Had been ministered to by an evangelist named Epaphras (1:6,7)
 1. Will look at him in more detail in a moment
 - iv. Appears to have been troubled by some false teaching (2:4,8,18)
 1. Involved the diminishing of Jesus' power and authority
 2. Mixing of Christianity with Greek and Jewish philosophy
 3. And the binding of Old Testament laws and Jewish traditions
 4. Undermined the gospel as it had been taught by Epaphras (1:6-7)
- c. Paul
 - i. Is a prisoner (4:18) (most likely at Rome about 60-62 AD)
 - ii. Sends this letter by Tychicus & Onesimus at the same time as he writes Ephesians and Philemon (Eph. 6:21; Col. 4:7-9; Phil 1:10-12)
 - iii. Colossians is very closely linked with Ephesians in subject matter and presentation
 1. Ephesians – The preeminence of Christ in the church
 2. Colossians – The preeminence of Christ over all creation

3. There are very few verses in either letter that do not have a parallel in the other
 - iv. Colossians is very closely linked with Philemon geographically and relationally
 1. Philemon appears to be a member of the church at Colossae and host the church in his home (Phil. 1:1-7)
 2. Onesimus was a native Colossian who brought the letter to Colossae (Col. 4:9) and was the subject of the letter to Philemon (Phil. 1:10-12)
- II. Paul's Gratitude for Them
- a. Was continuous gratitude
 - i. Since he heard that they had heard (1:3-5)
 - ii. He was always giving thanks (1:3)
 - iii. This tells us something about Paul
 - b. Their faith (1:4)
 - i. It was in Christ
 - ii. Paul was grateful for this
 - c. Their love (1:4)
 - i. for all the saints
 - ii. Paul was grateful for this
 - d. Their hope (1:5)
 - i. was in heaven
 - ii. Paul was grateful for this
 - iii. They had learned of it (1:5)
 1. In the gospel, the word of truth
 - a. It is good news
 - b. It is true
 - c. It is a verbal message of God's words
 - d. It had come and was bearing fruit (1:6)
 - i. in all the world
 - ii. in Colossae
 2. Previous to What? – (1:5)
 - a. Before they had been troubled with false doctrines that sought to alter their understanding
 - b. They heard it right the first time
 - c. They had heard it from Epaphras (1:7)
 - i. He was a dear fellow servant of Paul's
 - ii. A faithful minister of Christ
 - iii. No one could truthfully say that Epaphras had gotten it wrong or that they had fuller understanding of the truth of the gospel than he did
 - e. Epaphras' Work
- III. Paul's Prayer for Them
- a. Was continuous prayer
 - i. Since he heard that they had heard (1:9)

- ii. Tells us something about Paul
- b. Filled with the knowledge of His will (1:9)
 - i. Knowledge – epignosis – full knowledge
 - 1. In contrast to hidden knowledge of philosophers
 - 2. And later Gnostics (So-called knowledge)
 - ii. In all wisdom
 - iii. and spiritual understanding
 - iv. But he does not want an isolated knowledge, it must be applied
- c. Walk worthy of the Lord (1:10)
 - i. Pleasing Him in everything
 - ii. Being fruitful in every good work
 - iii. By increasing in the knowledge of God
 - 1. The case of this expression tells us that is the means of what comes before
 - 2. The dative of instrumentation
- d. Empowered with power (1:11)
 - i. For patience
 - ii. and long-suffering
 - iii. with joy
- e. Giving thanks to God the Father, He... (1:12)
 - i. Qualified us
 - ii. To be Partakers of the saint's inheritance
 - iii. In the light
- f. If Paul wanted these things for them, we can be sure they are part of God's will for us as well

IV. Conclusion

- a. Could Paul be grateful for the same things regarding us as he was the Colossians?
 - i. Their faith in Christ
 - ii. Their love for all the saints
 - iii. Their hope laid up in heaven
- b. Do we have what Paul desired for the Colossians?
 - i. Full knowledge of God's will
 - ii. A walk worthy of the Lord
 - 1. Pleasing him in all things
 - 2. Fruitful in good works
 - iii. The power of God's glorious might strengthening us
 - iv. Thankful hearts toward God
 - 1. Because of the inheritance we are entitled to
 - 2. In the realms of light above
- c. Has the same thing happened to us as the Colossians? (1:13-14)
 - i. Out of the power of darkness
 - ii. Into Christ's kingdom
 - iii. Redeemed
 - iv. Forgiven
- d. INVITATION