

Colossians 1:28- 2:5

Ultimately, Christ is the center of the mystery which is “Christ in the Colossians.” Christ has been revealed to the Gentiles, but the Colossians are Gentiles who have believed. So, the Colossians have Christ in them. 1 Timothy 3:16 describes this “mystery” perfectly: “the mystery of godliness –

- The Son of God manifested in the flesh
- The Son of God vindicated by the Spirit (resurrected by God after men condemned)
- The Son of God seen by angels (mystery “seen” or understood in the heavenlies!)
- The Son of God proclaimed to the Gentiles (Christ among the Gentiles)
- The Son of God believed on by the Gentiles (Christ in the Gentiles, or, ‘Christ in you’)
- The Son of God taken up in glory (fulfilled eschatological purpose)

1:28 – Paul describes his ministry with “we” to include all who were branching off and helping in the proclamation of this mystery to the Gentiles. Paul uses three verbs:

1. “proclaim” (“kataggello” καταγγελλω) is used as a technical term for preaching the gospel. And this is describe as being done with the following two words. For Paul, the proclamation of Christ, the mystery, included :
 - a. “warning” or “admonition” – this verb “noutheteo” νουθετεω meant to set the mind of someone in proper order by correcting their world view and putting them in a right relationship with reality. This word is used in Ephesians 6:4 concerning parents giving admonition to their children. In Titus 3:10 it is used to refer to correcting those with false beliefs. In the NT this word can be used for correcting an error, but it is also used to reer to general instruction and proclamation. See Rom. 15:14
 - b. “teaching” or “instruction” – NOTICE THAT PROCLAIMING CHRIST CONTINUES WITH THE TEACHING MINISTRY! Also NOTICE – the proclamation of Jesus is never considered to be a brief 3-minute invitation to accept Christ at the end of a sermon about “How to be a Better Man,” or “How to Find and Keep Friends.” The proclamation of the mystery involved creating a new worldview and understanding the mystery! This will take more than a few classes and a few memory verses.
 - c. Acts 4:2 – “the apostles were teaching the people and proclaiming in Jesus the resurrection of the dead.”

2. “Perfect” is “teleios” τελιος which means “complete,” “whole,” “perfect.” This is a reference to the “parousia” or the coming of the Lord.

In an attack against the elitists Paul makes it clear this knowledge and the understanding is for everyone. Notice the three uses of “everyone”:

- “warning everyone,”
- “teaching everyone” and
- “presenting everyone.”

Three things to point out here:

1. The sequence of Paul’s ministry that falls under the general category of “proclaiming the gospel.” It involves a three-step process of ministry: Warn, Teach, and, finally, Present. Warning is evangelism. Teaching is discipleship. Presenting is the eschatological event of glorification (phase three)
2. Paul’s ministry was aimed at “everyone” and he says that three times.
3. The focus was eschatological when the believers are presented as perfect before the throne of God.

1:29 – “struggling” Is *agonidzomai* “to strive, to exert effort. It is the picture of an athlete struggling. “labor” (*kopiao*) “to work, to labor, to labor with wearisome effort, to work to exhaustion”

This concept is used by Paul to refer to himself also in: 1 Cor. 15:10; Gal.4:11; Phil. 2:16; 1 Thes.2:9; 3:5; 2 Cor. 6:5; 11:23....and, to others in Rom. 16:6; 16:12 and 1 Thes. 5:12.)

“**This**” refers back to “present everyone mature in Christ.”

“Striving” makes the “

2:1 – “**struggling**” (*agon*) is the image of an athletic contest which is strenuous and demanding. This is the athlete striving, straining, suffering, enduring, and overcoming.

Laodicean church would likely have started while Paul was in Ephesus in the early 50’s

2:2 –

Purpose of Paul visiting/writing: “*My purpose is*” Encourage believers in heart and united in love.

The word “encouraged” can be translated “exhorted.”

The “love” in “united in love” is according to the parallel verse in Ephesians 3:17 the love Christ has for all the believers. So, the idea is that Paul’s words would encourage/exhort them to manifest the unity they have by being in Christ (See Ephesians 4:14, etc.)

The Target: “*so that*” So they may have full riches of complete understanding. The encouragement/exhortation and unity in the body of Christ would manifest the “full riches of complete understanding.” Those who encourage/exhort and are committed to the body of Christ (the church) have access to the spiritual blessings.

End Game: “*in order that*” Know the mystery of God (which is to know Christ) in whom are the treasures of wisdom and knowledge! The ultimate goal is to know Christ (this is much more than accepting him as savior and knowing him as Lord.) See Ephesians 3:14-21

2:3 – Christ is the source of wisdom, just as he is the source of life.

2:4 – The Colossians needed to know these things and have a unified front as a community (church) to critically analyze and reject “fine-sounding arguments” that tried to squeeze in beside Christ or tried to replace him.

“fine sounding arguments” is *pithanologia* and was a word used by Aristotle, Plato, Epictetus not with negative connotations, but with the idea of a plausible and persuasive speech. Paul uses this idea in 1 Cor. 2:4 when he says that he does not do that. These were not bad or worthless speeches, but sermons and messages with solid points heard with a convincing presentation. We would say it, “to talk someone into something” or “to sell you something you really weren’t interested in.” It is a good word for marketing a product.

2:5 – Paul’s desire was to be with them and lead them into this understanding. Paul feels the lack of his presence may be the weak link in the Colossians defense, so he desires to be with them and take command of these troops.

But, Paul is present with them “in Spirit” and this could refer to:

1. His attitude
2. The Holy Spirit
3. Paul’s leadership manifested through the Holy Spirit’s leading
4. Paul’s ‘spirit’ (wisdom, insight, instruction, leadership) in the form of this letter (or, his words)

Paul uses two military terms that refers to the Colossian’s camp being in order and the forces of their defenses strong.

“orderly” is *taxis* and refers to troops being aligned in battle formation. “Taxis” is used in Greek literature and in the LXX for military troops organized in battle formation.

“firm” is *stereoma* and refers to the strength of troops and their power to resist the enemy. Here in context their faith was their defense and the strength of their weapons.

This could be translated, “your orderly formation and the firm front which your faith in Christ presents.”

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