

# The MYSTERY

Hidden for Ages

## Is Now REVEALED

*A Study of the Book of Colossians*

LESSON 9

This Week's Passage:

### Colossians 1:26–29

New International Version (NIV)

<sup>24</sup> Now I rejoice in what I am suffering for you, and I fill up in my flesh what is still lacking in regard to Christ's afflictions, for the sake of his body, which is the church. <sup>25</sup> I have become its servant by the commission God gave me to present to you the word of God in its fullness— <sup>26</sup> **the mystery that has been kept hidden for ages and generations, but is now disclosed to the Lord's people.** <sup>27</sup> To them God has chosen to make known among the Gentiles the glorious riches of this mystery, which is Christ in you, the hope of glory.

<sup>28</sup> He is the one we proclaim, admonishing and teaching everyone with all wisdom, so that we may present everyone fully mature in Christ. <sup>29</sup> To this end I strenuously contend with all the energy Christ so powerfully works in me.

### Memory Verse: Colossians 1:18

<sup>15</sup> The Son is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation. <sup>16</sup> For in him all things were created: things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities; all things have been created through him and for him. <sup>17</sup> He is before all things, and in him all things hold together. <sup>18</sup> **And he is the head of the body, the church; he is the beginning and the firstborn from among the dead, so that in everything he might have the supremacy.**

### Day One: Read Colossians 1.

1. In verses 25–27, Paul describes the commission he has been given by God. Fill in the blanks below to see the three different expressions Paul uses to describe the message committed to him.

The \_\_\_\_\_ in its fullness =

the \_\_\_\_\_ that has been kept

hidden for ages and generations =

\_\_\_\_\_, the hope of

glory.

2. This mystery, then, is not an idea, it is a person: Christ in us. How does Christ live in us? (Jn. 14:16–20; Acts 2:38; Eph. 3:16–19)

### Mystery

"This word [mystery] was much used in the pagan religion of the first century to refer to secret insights given (usually for a fee) to a select, initiated few, so it was with some irony that Paul applied this term to the revelation of God's Son that has been freely made available to the nations."<sup>1</sup>

3. What do we gain when Christ lives in us? (the end of v. 27)

“Christ is not simply the reason we can hope for glory, but *Christ is himself that glory*. The glory...that makes all suffering and pain and disappointment in this life unworthy of comparison is the person and presence of Jesus Christ himself. He is our glory. Being with him, to know him, to see him, to relish and rejoice in his beauty, is the glory for which we hope.”<sup>2</sup>

How do the following verses expand on this?  
Rom. 8:10–18

2 Cor. 4:14–18

Col. 3:1–4

1 Jn. 3:2–3

## Day Two: Read Colossians 1:26–29.

4. Christ was present at creation, as Colossians 1:16 says, “all things have been created through him.” Christ himself states that the “Scriptures...testify about me” (Jn. 5:39) and “[Moses] wrote about me” (Jn. 5:46). How do the following Old Testament verses clearly testify of Christ now that he has been revealed?  
Gen. 1:26a

1 Chr. 17:12–13

Is. 7:14

Is. 53:5; Zech. 12:10

Jer. 23:5–6

5. In the Old Testament God chose to reveal himself exclusively to one people, the Jews. Here in Colossians Paul makes a surprising statement. To whom does he say the mystery has now been revealed? (v. 27)

6. What Old Testament hints are there that this was God's plan all along?  
Gen. 26:4

Hos. 2:23

Is. 49:6

7. How do the apostles make clear what the Old Testament had only hinted at?  
Acts 11:1–4, 15–18

Eph. 2:11–13

**Day Three: Read Colossians 1:26–29 in ESV below  
(emphasis added).**

...the mystery hidden for ages and generations but now revealed to his saints. To them God chose to make known how great among the Gentiles are the riches of the glory of this mystery, which is Christ in you, the hope of glory. Him we proclaim, warning **everyone** and teaching **everyone** with all wisdom, that we may present **everyone** mature in Christ. For this I toil, struggling with all his energy that he powerfully works within me.

8. In verse 28 Paul boils down his commission even further to three words: "Him we proclaim" (ESV).  
a. What are the two ways Paul says he proclaims Christ in verse 28?

- b. What is the goal of his proclamation? (v. 28b)

9. "As Murray Harris has said, 'There is no special gospel or teaching for a spiritual or intellectual elite.' All the truth of God is for all the people of God, no exceptions allowed."<sup>4</sup> What word does Paul repeat in verse 28 that drives this point home?

The word translated "**perfect**" or "**mature**" in verse 28 in fact refers to the "complete and undivided way in which a person, with all one's positive and negative attributes, is oriented toward God or toward Christ."<sup>3</sup>

10. We might think of other believers as “super spiritual” Christians or as “lesser” Christians. Maybe we even put ourselves into one of these categories when we compare ourselves to others. How does Paul refute these false notions and reframe how you see yourself and others in Christ?

### **Day Four: Read Colossians 1:26–29.**

11. When Paul says he is “admonishing and teaching everyone with all wisdom” (v. 28), he is not bragging. What does he reveal about this wisdom in 1 Corinthians 2:6–16?
12. Paul describes his ministry of proclaiming, admonishing, and teaching as strenuous work. What perspective and power helps him to persevere? (v. 29; 2 Cor. 4:7–10; 12:9–10; Eph. 1:18–20)

Like Paul, how can you appropriate God’s power and his perspective?

### **Day Five: Read Colossians 1—4.**

13. It could be easy to look upon this text with a yawning familiarity, but look again. “Look at what God has done. Contemplate the wonder of his plan of salvation. He authored it. He wove it together in time. He executed it. He accomplished it. It is done.”<sup>5</sup> The great I AM, the one who always knew you, has laid down his life to become your healer, savior, and redeemer. Read Colossians 1 with that in mind and write down what you now have because of Christ – “who was, and is, and is to come” (Rev. 4:8b).

\*  Indicates verses for further study

<sup>1</sup> Note on Col. 1:24, *NIV Spirit of the Reformation Study Bible* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2003), 1930.

<sup>2</sup> Sam Storms, *The Hope of Glory: 100 Daily Meditations on Colossians* (Wheaton: Crossway, 2007), 129.

<sup>3</sup> E. Schweizer quoted in: Douglas Moo, *The Letters to the Colossians and to Philemon* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2008), 161.

<sup>4</sup> Storms, 131.

<sup>5</sup> Davis, Marc B. “Wisdom Comes Full Circle.” New Life Presbyterian Church, Glenside. 16 Sept. 2016. Sermon.