

THE PRISON EPISTLES: NURTURE FOR OPPRESSED BELIEVERS

II. Colossians: Nurture In Living Focused On The Supremacy And All-Sufficiency Of Christ

J. Nurture In Applying Christ's Supremacy And All-Sufficiency To Our Walk

6. Nurture In Applying Christ's Supremacy And All-Sufficiency By Prayer To The Angelic Conflict (Colossians 4:2-4)

I. Introduction

- A. Paul's call for the believer to focus on his positional certainties in Christ in the heavens to offset trials he faces from evil pressures on earth as Colossians 3:1-4 with its Colossians 2:1-23 context teaches becomes pointedly significant when considering the believer's incessant involvement in the angelic conflict, Ephesians 6:10-20.
- B. Accordingly, Colossians 4:2-4 in light of the rest of Scripture's context on the subject gives great instruction on applying Christ's Supremacy And All-Sufficiency by prayer for victory in this conflict (as follows):

II. Nurture In Applying Christ's Supremacy And All-Sufficiency By Prayer To The Angelic Conflict.

- A. The Colossians 4:2-4 instruction on prayer focuses heavily on the need for prayer due to the angelic conflict:
 1. Paul called for believers to "continue" in prayer and to "watch" in the same in Colossians 4:2b, recalling Christ's directive to His disciples in the Garden of Gethsemane in Matthew 26:40-41: there He urged His disciples to watch with Him for at least an hour and to pray that they not enter into temptation, that temptation being the lure to abandon Christ at His arrest in the Garden due to the work of Satan through Judas to betray Jesus to the religious rulers, cf. John 13:26-30 with Matthew 26:43-46.
 2. Also, in the unusually similar and thus "sister" epistle to Colossians, that of Ephesians (cf. Donald Guthrie, New Testament Introduction, 1971, p. 483-484, 492-496), Paul asked for prayer to utter the Gospel boldly as he needed to do in the context of discussing the believer's armor for the angelic conflict, Ephesians 6:18-20 with 6:10-17. This request is similarly made in the Colossians 4:3-4 passage we now study.
- B. Thus, Colossians 4:2-4 in view of Colossians 3:1-4 with Colossians 2:1-23 instructs the believer on applying Christ's Supremacy and All-Sufficiency by Prayer for overcoming in the angelic conflict (as follows):
 1. Relying on the indwelling Holy Spirit (Galatians 5:16), the believer should focus on his heavenly position in Christ (Colossians 3:1-4) Who is seated high above all angelic forces (Ephesians 1:20-21) to "be busily engaged in [with the dative prepositional phrase as it is used here]" (*proskartereo*, Arndt & Gingrich, A Grk.-Eng. Lex. of the N. T., 1967, p. 722-723) prayer, Colossians 4:2a. The angelic conflict rages around the believer on a continual basis, so prayer in regard to this conflict must be a consistent practice in life.
 2. Colossians 4:2b adds that the believer must "watch" (*gregoreo*, Ibid., p. 166) in prayer, recalling Christ's admonition in the Garden of Gethsemane (Matthew 26:40-41) where the same word for "watch" is used (Ibid.), meaning the believer must constantly pay attention to the events he faces in life to detect Satan's movements so as to intercept them by intercessory prayer for God's aid in overcoming Satan's temptations!
 3. This constant prayer with watchfulness is to be accompanied by thanksgiving for God's help, Col. 4:2c.
 4. Since the believer's ultimate function is to be a witness to a world of darkness controlled by Satan, Paul asked for intercessory prayer for God to provide the opportunity to proclaim the Gospel, for it would take God's power to invade the domain of Satan, the god of this world who has blinded the minds of the lost lest they should believe, Colossians 4:3a with 2 Corinthians 4:3-4.
 5. This request was especially pertinent in Paul's case as he wrote this epistle in bondage in his first Roman imprisonment, Col. 4:3b; Ryrie Study Bible, KJV, 1978, p. 1690. Paul realized that enemies of the Gospel under Satan's influence had caused him to be imprisoned and thus inhibited from proclaiming the Gospel openly as a liberated man (cf. Acts 21:27-28:31), so he requested prayer for an open door to evangelize.
 6. Paul also noted his need to make the Gospel "plain, clear" (*phaneroo*, Ibid., Arndt & Gingrich, p. 860), so he added to his request for prayer for the opportunity to evangelize the petition for the power and the wisdom from God to make the Gospel clearly understood as was necessary in his ministry, Colossians 4:4.

Lesson: *Since we believers regularly face Satanic opposition in our lives and God-assigned ministries, we must appeal to our Supreme and All-Sufficient Savior Who sits in the heavens enthroned above all evil spirits to pray continually, watching for angelic conflict threats so as to avoid temptation to sin that would mar our holiness and hamper our ministry productivity, with a focus on our need for ministry opportunities and effective efforts in them.*

Application: *May we apply Christ's Supremacy and All-Sufficiency to the challenges we face in the angelic conflict by practicing continual watchful prayer for effective spiritual victory in our personal lives and ministries.*