

COLOSSIANS: DISCERNING TRUE DOCTRINES
"Part I: Becoming SURE We KNOW God's Truths"
(Colossians 1:1-14)

Introduction: (To show the need . . .)

(1) We Christians find it easy to differ with those who do not know Jesus Christ as Savior on important doctrines. For example:

(a) Jon Murray, President of American Atheists, has claimed: "There was no such person in the history of the world as Jesus Christ. There was no historical, living, breathing, sentient human being by that name. Ever." **We Christians would respond, saying, "Oh yes, there WAS an historical Jesus Christ -- He saved my soul!"**

(b) Peter A. Bien, Professor of English at Dartmouth College, wrote: "I realize much of what we know about Jesus is novelistic. But I **act** as if it *isn't*." **We Christians would respond, saying, "All of the Bible is inerrant, inspired fully by God. Thus all it says about Jesus Christ is true, every bit of it!"**

(2) However, **among us Christians** are enormous differences of opinions on beliefs as follows:

(a) Some Christians believe we should tithe like Abraham did, giving a tenth of the gross income we have where others hold to 2 Corinthians 9:7 which gives every believer the choice of setting the amount he wants to give in his own way. **Well, ARE we obligated to give a tenth of our gross income or NOT? WHY?!**

(b) Some Christians think that after accepting Christ as Savior, you must live a godly life or lose that salvation, and cite a passage like John 15:6 as proof. That text says: "If a man abide not in me, he is cast forth as a branch, and is withered; and men gather them, and cast them into the fire, and they are burned." Others say that once one believes in Christ, he is passed from death unto life never to face condemnation again as John 5:24 would teach. **Are we eternally secure upon being saved or not, and WHY? How do we know?**

(c) Some Christians think the Church will be raptured after the antichrist has been revealed. This view causes them to be nervous and defensive in view of deteriorating world events. Others of us believe the Church will be raptured before the Tribulation, and so choose to live in peace and comfort in facing the future.

Well, IS there any way of KNOWING for SURE that we have the TRUTH, and, IF so, HOW?!"

(We turn to the sermon's "Need" section . . .)

Need: "There are so many differing beliefs even among believers in Christ that I wonder if we are destined to be theologically agnostic! CAN we be SURE just WHICH view is correct, or not? HOW?!"

- I. **Conservative Christian scholars reveal Paul addressed the Gnostic heresy in its infancy in his Epistle to the Colossians: this error held (among other things) that God's truths was mystically knowable ONLY to a select FEW, Bible Knowledge Com., N.T., p. 668.**
- II. **To COUNTER this error, Paul wrote of the way ALL believers could gain ASSURANCE they KNEW God's truths, Col. 1:1-14:**
 - A. Paul first **exampled** his *assurance* of knowing God's truths, 1:1-8:
 1. He **knew** he was an apostle as Paul said as much, Col. 1:1a.
 2. He **knew** his Christian readers were **saints**, calling them such, 1b.
 3. He **knew** his Christian readers had faith in God and love toward fellow believers, signifying they were truly saved, Col. 1:3-8.
 - a. Paul had heard of the faith in Christ these Colossians believers had, and of their love for all other believers, Colossians 1:3-4.
 - b. He mentioned their works that exhibited this faith and love, showing their hope for eternal life was valid, Col. 1:5-6.
 - c. He noted that Epaphras, a beloved and trusted fellow worker with Paul testified of the validity of their love as well, Col. 1:7-8.
 - d. Accordingly, Paul was **sure** his readers were **truly saved**.
 - B. Second, Paul stated in his prayer request that his Christian readers **themselves** could **also KNOW** God's will and hence His truth, 1:9a:
 1. Paul prayed that **all** of his Colossian readers might be **filled** with the *knowledge* of God's will in **all** wisdom and understanding, 1:9.
 2. Since he **prayed** this request, it must then be **possible** for **all** believers to **know** God's truth in **all** wisdom and understanding!
 - C. So in discussing the **results** that insight would **produce**, Paul revealed **HOW** one could **tell** when he **HAS** such insight as follows: (1:10-14)

1. The KJV phrase "that ye might walk" [NIV - "that you may live a life"] in verse 10 is from an **infinitive**, indicating the **result** of knowing God's will, Colossians 1:9. (U.B.S. Greek N.T., p. 693).
2. After the infinitive is a long list of experiences one has when filled with this knowledge, Bib. Kno. Com., N.T., p. 671. (Col. 1:10b-14)
3. Thus, a believer can tell **when he HAS** God's truth by the following characteristics that **describe** one who **has** it in Colossians 1:10b-14:
 - a. A believer who **knows** the **truth** enjoys spiritual productivity in **every** area of his Christian ministry, Colossians 1:10b.
 - b. A believer who **knows** the **truth** experiences a **continued** growth of **deeper** insights **into that** truth, Colossians 1:10c.
 - c. A believer who **knows** the **truth** finds God strengthening him to be more patient, longsuffering and joyful while suffering, 1:11.
 - d. A believer who **knows** the **truth grows in thankfulness**: (a) he grows thankful for being delivered from the spiritual ignorance of Satan's former dominion of his mind, Col. 1:13a; (b) he grows thankful for being inducted into the kingdom of God's beloved Son, Col. 1:13b and (c) he grows thankful for the redemption and forgiveness of sins that he enjoys in Jesus Christ, Col. 1:14.

Application: (1) *If we do (a) NOT enjoy God's productivity blessings in ALL our Christian service efforts, if we don't seem to keep growing in our insight into God's truths, if we are not growing in patience and long-suffering while under duress and if we are not growing in thankfulness for deliverance from Satan's bondage to spiritual ignorance, for our induction into the rule of God's Beloved Son and for our redemption and forgiveness in Christ, THEN we are NOT filled with the KNOWLEDGE of the truth that we SHOULD be. We must (b) EITHER believe in Christ for salvation from sin and become a child of God, Jn. 3:16; 1:12-13, OR (c) confess our sins as BELIEVERS for restoration to fellowship with God, 1 John 1:9. (d) In this position, we should get back to HEEDING God's revealed will in Scripture (1 Jn. 2:3-6) and see Him give us even deeper insight into the truth we know as a result, cf. Mk. 4:23-25. (2) If we DO enjoy all of the things Paul states in Col. 1:10-14, REJOICE in GOD'S revelation that we ARE IN His will and growth of knowledge, and PRAY for other believers around us to come to that fulfilling point along with us, cf. Colossians 1:9.*

Lesson: *We believers CAN tell that we know God's truth by the following experiential factors: we KNOW we WALK in the truth when (a) all our Christian service efforts enjoy God's productivity blessings, (b) when we keep growing in our insight into the truth we have, (c) when we find a growth of patience and long-suffering under duress and (d) when we grow in thankfulness for deliverance from Satan's bondage of spiritual ignorance, for our induction into the rule of God's Beloved Son and for the redemption and forgiveness of sins we enjoy in Jesus Christ.*

Conclusion: (To illustrate the sermon lesson . . .)

added, **deeper** insight that works to **confirm** these views in accord with Colossians 1:10c as follows:

(1) Regarding **tithing**, though it was willingly practiced by Abraham before the Mosaic Law, and though tithing was commanded under the Law, we are no longer under the Law, cf. Romans 7:6. Accordingly, the stipulation in 2 Corinthians 9:7 about giving the amount one chooses on his own accord is the rule God wants for the believer today. **Thus, a believer should give as he sets the AMOUNT from his OWN will, NOT under a tithing compulsion! [As an ADDED encouragement that this view is correct, believers who have given bountifully ABOVE 10% of their OWN choice have seen God bless PROFUSELY in accord with 2 Cor. 9:6-10!]**

(2) Regarding eternal security and John 15:6, note that **men** are said to cast the **branches** into the **fire**. **Nowhere else** in Scripture are **men** said to cast **men** into hell, but Scripture teaches the **angels** do that, cf. Mtt. 24:31, 40-41. Thus, John 15:6 is not speaking of a loss of salvation and the soul's being cast into hell, but shows Jesus presenting the analogy of discipline that occurs when a believer sins.

Rather, just as John 5:24 teaches, once one believes in Christ, he is **eternally secure** in Christ. **[As an ADDED encouragement that this view is correct, I found in doing my seminary thesis that Ephesians 4:30 confirms this view from the Greek text!]**

(3) Regarding when the Rapture will occur, 2 Thess. 2:3-12 reveals that the **purpose** of the antichrist's being **revealed AS the man of sin** is that of judging the world for its rejecting faith in Christ, cf. esp. 2 Thess. 2:12. However, the believer is not guilty of such a sin, for he has received Jesus Christ by faith in His Gospel. Thus, the rapture must occur **before** the antichrist is **revealed** as the man of sin, and that occurs at the **beginning** of Daniel's seventieth prophetic week, at the **beginning** of the **Great Tribulation PERIOD!** Thus, we believe in the **PREtribulation** rapture position! **[As an ADDED encouragement that this view is correct, a NEW proof was found for the PREtribulation Rapture from the doctrine of the seal of the Spirit in a master's thesis done at Dallas SEMINARY in 1976!]**