

LECTURE 4
THE THEOLOGY OF PAUL¹

The Preeminence of Christ

1. The preeminence of Christ breathes through all of Colossians. Apparently, the church was influenced by certain _____ who contended for a different path to divine fullness.
2. The teachers advocated divine fullness through _____ and _____ to angels (Col 2.8-23). Paul emphatically repudiates this teaching because it _____ Christ of His supremacy.
3. The magnificent hymn of Colossians 1.15-20 emphasizes the _____ of Christ:
 - a. He is the _____ of God, the firstborn, the agent of creation and the purpose of creation. (Col 1.17)
 - b. Not only is he the ruler of _____, but he is also the ruler of the _____. (Col 1.18)
 - c. The divine fullness is in him, and _____ of all things is through his cross (Col 1.19-20)
4. The rival teachers may claim to have the '_____' that is the secret to vitality and growth, but they should be dismissed. The 'mystery' is '_____ in you' (Col 1.27).
5. Seeking to find _____ through any other source than Christ is folly. The _____ offered by the teachers is deficient because 'it is not according to Christ' (Col 2.8)
6. Growth in the Christian life comes by _____ in him (Col 2.6-7), not by following some ascetic regime where certain _____ are forbidden and special _____ days are observed.

Righteous Living and the Priority of God in Christ

1. In Colossians, the recipients are exhorted to _____ sin and be clothed with righteousness (Col 3.5-17).
2. _____ cannot be separated from the preeminence of Christ, for everything done by believers is to be done in the name of Jesus and for his honor.
3. In 1 Corinthians our motive is the _____ of God (1 Cor 10.31).
4. These two passages are not a contradiction, but are compatible for Paul. _____ God should be the goal of ethics. Dishonoring God is the root of sin.

¹ This lecture is based in substance on a proposed perspective on Paul's Theology found in Thomas R. Shreiner's work, *Paul, Apostle of God's Glory in Christ: A Pauline Theology*, Downers Grove, Illinois: InterVarsity Press, 2001.

5. The fundamental sin is the _____ to honor, praise and glorify the one and only true God.
6. The _____ of sin is failure to serve and worship God – ‘whatever is not of faith is sin.’ (Rom 14.23)
7. God and Christ are the _____ and circumference of the ethical life.
8. Ephesians 5.21-6.9 is a prime example of how the preeminence of Christ looks when one considers the _____. Ephesians 5.21 lays the foundation of the passage: “Submitting yourselves one to another in the fear of God.” What does this submission look like?
 - a. _____ submitting to their _____ as unto the Lord (5.22-24)
 - b. _____ submitting to their _____ by loving them as Christ loved the Church (5.25-33)
 - c. _____ submitting to their _____ in the Lord (6.1-3)
 - d. _____ submitting to their _____ by not provoking them unto wrath (6.4)
 - e. _____ submitting to their _____ as unto Christ (6.5-8)
 - f. _____ submitting to their _____ by forbearing threatening (6.9)

The Centrality of God in Christ in History

1. When human beings reflect on their lives, the fundamental issue, according to Paul, is not their social status but whether they are in _____ or in _____. For Paul these two persons (Rom 5.12-19) are the key individuals in human history.
2. If people are in Adam, then they are under the reign of _____ and _____.
3. If they are in Christ, they have been _____ from these tyrannical powers.
4. The ‘old person’ has been _____ with Christ (Rom 6.6) and replaced with the ‘new man.’ (Col 3.9-10)
5. Thus, Paul can say that _____ distinctions are irrelevant (Col 3.11). Ethnic identity constitutes no advantage relative to salvation.
6. During the present evil age believers face suffering, pressures and afflictions. Such sufferings are designed to bring _____ to God. (2 Cor 1.3-11)
7. Those whom God has chosen (1 Cor 1.27-28) are deemed foolish, weak and of ill-repute in the world. God has selected the _____ in the world ‘so that no flesh should boast in his presence.’ (1 Cor 1.29)