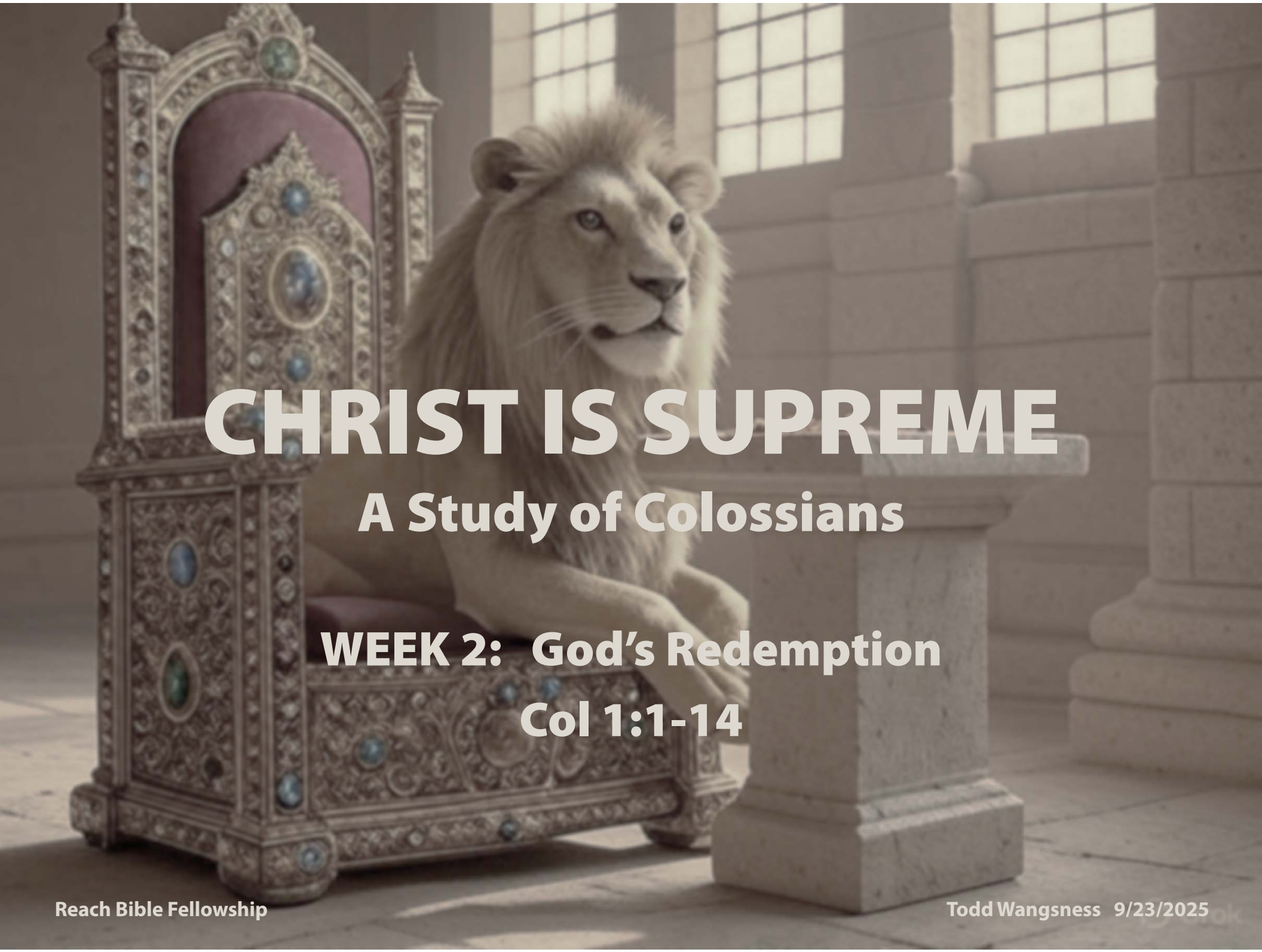


CHRIST IS SUPREME

A Study of Colossians

WEEK 2: God's Redemption

Col 1:1-14

Reach Bible Fellowship

Todd Wangsness 9/23/2025

Christ is Supreme: God's Redemption

WEEK	TOPIC	DESCRIPTION
Week 1	Overview	Overview of the book of Colossians
Week 2	Col 1:1 – 14	Introduction and God's Redemption
Week 3	Col 1:15 – 20	The Pre-eminence of Jesus Christ
Week 4	Col 1:21 – 29	The Mystery of the Ages
Week 5	Col. 2:1 – 20	The Futility of Legalism
Week 6	Col. 3:1 – 17	Set Your Mind on Things Above
Week 7	Col. 4:1 – 18	Exhortation to Prayer and Final Greetings

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Notable quotes on the Col 1:1-14

"Paul gives thanks to the Father, who has qualified us for the inheritance of the saints in light. This inheritance is not earned but given through Christ's redemption, which delivers us from the dominion of darkness and brings us into the kingdom of His beloved Son. The forgiveness of sins is the result of this redemption, a complete removal of guilt that fits us for fellowship with God. All this is by grace, from salvation to glorification, securing our place in the everlasting kingdom."

- **H.A. Ironside**

"""In this passage, Paul sums up the work of Christ: He has delivered us from the dominion of darkness, a tyranny that held us captive, and transferred us into the kingdom of His beloved Son. The word for redemption here implies the payment of a ransom, as for a slave set free. This redemption brings forgiveness of sins, wiping away all guilt. The Christian is not merely freed but brought into a new kingdom, where they live as sons and daughters, no longer slaves, under the rule of Christ's love and grace."

- **William Barclay**

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Emphasis of Jesus' Ministry in NT Books	
Ephesians	**Prophet**: Highlights Jesus as the ultimate prophet, revealing God's mystery and wisdom. Through His teachings and the gospel, Jesus proclaims the "mystery of Christ" (Ephesians 3:4-6), uniting Jews and Gentiles into one body. His prophetic role is seen in His revelation of God's plan for salvation and the establishment of the church as a unified community under His truth.
Hebrews	**Priest**: Presents Jesus as the great High Priest, surpassing the Old Testament Levitical priesthood. He offers Himself as the perfect sacrifice for sins (Hebrews 7:27, 9:12), mediating between God and humanity. His priestly role involves interceding for believers and providing eternal redemption through His once-for-all atonement, fulfilling and replacing the Levitical system.
Colossians	**King**: Emphasizes Jesus as the sovereign King, reigning over all creation. He is described as the "image of the invisible God" and the one in whom "all things hold together" (Colossians 1:15-17). His kingship is evident in His supremacy over all powers and His role as head of the church, ruling with divine authority and reconciling all things to Himself.

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Repeating some slides from last week …

- **The Colossian Heresy**
  - The church at Colosse was being corrupted by a combination of false teachers promoting legalistic Judaism and early mystic Gnosticism
    - Judaizing Teachers: False teachers claimed that gentile believers needed to adhere to the Circumcision (i.e., keeping the Sabbath and holy days, avoiding unclean foods, ceremonial washings, being circumcised, etc.)
    - Gnosticism: Taught that all matter was evil. They maintained that Jesus never came in the flesh as flesh was evil. They taught He was never incarnate, He just manifested in a spirit form.
  - Apparently, Paul thought the situation at the church in Colosse was serious enough to warrant an apostolic intervention

- **The Solution of the Epistle**
  - Paul dwelt on the solution: A better understanding of Jesus
  - Knowing the real Jesus helps us avoid the counterfeit, irrespective of how the counterfeit is packaged

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Legalistic Judaism

- False teachers emphasized strict adherence to Jewish practices, such as dietary laws, Sabbath observance, and festival celebrations
- Paul counters that these are a "shadow of things to come," but the reality is found in Christ, indicating the heresy placed undue importance on Mosaic Law over faith in Christ
  - ***Col 2:16-17 So let no one judge you in food or in drink, or regarding a festival or a new moon or sabbaths, 17 which are a shadow of things to come, but the substance is of Christ.***
  - ***Col 2:20-21, 23 Therefore, if you died with Christ from the basic principles of the world, why, as though living in the world, do you subject yourselves to regulations— 21 "Do not touch, do not taste, do not handle," … 23 These things indeed have an appearance of wisdom in self-imposed religion, false humility, and neglect of the body, but are of no value against the indulgence of the flesh.***

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Gnosticism

- False teachers claimed esoteric or superior spiritual knowledge, a hallmark of early Gnostic-like movements
- The heresy involved venerating or worshipping angels as mediators between God and humanity
- The phrase "elemental spirits" (*stoicheia*) refer to spiritual powers, suggesting a belief in supernatural intermediaries that detracted from Christ's supremacy
- While the philosophy admitted to the transcendence of God (that He is above everything), it denied his immanence (that He is also in everything)
- This view ruled out the incarnation of Christ, special divine creation, prayer, faith, miracles, the second coming, and the accuracy of the Bible
- The goal of human life was either morbid asceticism (avoiding all joys of life, and abusing the body for the spirit's sake) or that of unrestrained licentiousness (if it feels good, do it)
- The first was known as Stoicism and the second view Epicureanism. Scofield once observed: "Pure Christianity lives between two dangers ever present: the danger that it will evaporate into a philosophy … and the danger that it will freeze into a form."

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- **Colossians was written about the same time as the Letter to the Ephesians;**
- **Ephesians is about the church, the Body of Christ**
- **Colossians is about Christ, the Head of the Body**
- **Paul uses the vocabulary of the false teachers, but with their true meaning**
- **In Colossians, we find such words as *fullness*, *perfect*, *complete*, *wisdom*, etc.**
- **The word "*all*" is used over 30 times in Colossians!**

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Chapter 1: Christ's Preeminence Declared

- Paul did not begin by attacking the false teachers or their doctrines
- He began by exalting Jesus Christ and showing His pre-eminence in four areas:
  1. The Gospel Message
  2. Redemption
  3. Creation
  4. The Church

Chapter 2: Christ's Preeminence Defended

- Here he exposes the origins of the false teachings and how they contradict everything Paul taught about Jesus Christ
  - The believer who masters this chapter is not likely to be led astray by some alluring and enticing "new and improved" brand of Christianity

Chapter 3 & 4: Christ's Preeminence Demonstrated

- Paul concludes with important exhortations:
  - The greatest antidote to false teaching is a godly life!
  - Wrong doctrine always leads to wrong living
  - What we believe determines how we behave

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With that backdrop, now we can start our study of Colossians!

Chapter 1: Christ's Preeminence Declared

- **Col 1:1-12 In the Gospel Message**
- **Col 1:13-14 In Redemption**
- **Col 1:15-17 In Creation**
- **Col 1:18-29 In the Church**

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1:1-2 Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God, and Timothy our brother, 2 To the saints and faithful brethren in Christ who are in Colosse: Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

- **Paul describes himself "*an apostle of Jesus Christ*"**
  - **The title 'apostle' applies primarily to those directly commissioned as apostles by the risen Lord (ref. 1 Cor 9:1; 15:8-10)**
  - **Paul exercised the office of an apostle "*by the will of God*"**

- ***"To the saints and faithful brethren in Christ"***
- **Saints vs. faithful brethren? Are they different?**
  - **Saint: Divine call … You must be born into it!**
  - **Faithful brethren: Our response to His call!**

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Col 1:3-6 We give thanks to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, praying always for you, 4 since we heard of your faith in Christ Jesus and of your love for all the saints; 5 because of the hope which is laid up for you in heaven, of which you heard before in the word of the truth of the gospel, 6 which has come to you, as it has also in all the world, and is bringing forth fruit, as it is also among you since the day you heard and knew the grace of God in truth;

- **Paradigm of Graces**
  - **Faith: Past** — **Substance based on experience of things hoped for**
    - ***Heb 11:1 Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.***
  - **Love: Present** — **The emblem of our calling**
    - ***Mat 22:36 You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind.***
    - ***Mat 22:39 You shall love your neighbor as yourself.***
  - **Hope: Future** — **Encouragement to live for the hope we have in Jesus**
    - ***Tit 2:13 looking for the blessed hope and glorious appearing of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ***

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Col 1:7-8 "as you also learned from Epaphras, our dear fellow servant, who is a faithful minister of Christ on your behalf, 8 who also declared to us your love in the Spirit."

- **Love is the evidence of salvation**
- **Doctrinal correctness will never atone or compensate for the lack of Love**
  - ***Rev 2:4-5 "Nevertheless I have this against you, that you have left your first love. 5 Remember therefore from where you have fallen; repent and do the first works, or else I will come to you quickly and remove your lampstand from its place—unless you repent."***
- **This is the only verse in this epistle that mentions the Holy Spirit explicitly and it is in connection with love**
  - ***John 16:13 "However, when He, the Spirit of truth, has come, He will guide you into all truth; for He will not speak on His own authority, but whatever He hears He will speak; and He will tell you things to come."***

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Col 1:9 For this reason we also, since the day we heard it, do not cease to pray for you, and to ask that you may be filled with the knowledge of His will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding;

- **Knowledge: Greek 'epignōsis'. Super-knowledge or divinely revealed knowledge.**
  - **As opposed the "enlightened" knowledge of which the gnostics boasted**
  - **Keynote of Paul's reply to the conceit of Gnosticism. The cure for these intellectual upstarts is more knowledge of the will of God.**
- **Wisdom: Greek 'sophia'. Wisdom of God as evinced in forming and executing counsels in the formation and government of the world and the scriptures.**
  - **Used six times in Colossians**
  - **Practical application of knowledge imparted directly from God**
- **Spiritual Understanding: Greek '*pneumatikos synesis*'. A 'God-breathed' mental putting together; the application of godly intelligence or intellect.**
  - **Speaks of clear analysis and decision-making in applying this knowledge and wisdom to live a godly life**

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- By contrast, the false teachers offered only "an appearance of wisdom" which captivated their minds and lives in legalistic regulations
- But true spiritual wisdom is both stabilizing and liberating (Eph 4:14)
- Truth is not learned through the intellect alone
- Paul emphasizes neither an abstract intellectualism nor an occult experience of the "powers," but a thorough knowledge (*epignōsis*) of God's will in accordance with wisdom and discernment

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Col 1:10 that you may walk worthy of the Lord, fully pleasing Him, being fruitful in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God;

- **Walk worthy of our vocation**
  - ***Eph 4:1-2 Walk worthy of the calling with which you were called, 2 with all lowliness and gentleness, with longsuffering, bearing with one another in love***

- **Walk worthy of the gospel**
  - ***Phil 1:27 Only let your conduct be worthy of the gospel of Christ, so that whether I come and see you or am absent, I may hear of your affairs, that you stand fast in one spirit, with one mind striving together for the faith of the gospel …***

- **Walk worthy of God**
  - ***1 Thess 2:12 "… you know how we exhorted, and comforted, and [c]charged every one of you, as a father does his own children, 12 that you would walk worthy of God who calls you into His own kingdom and glory."***

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Col 1:11 Strengthened with all might, according to His glorious power, for all patience and longsuffering with joy.

- **The same spiritual dynamic that raised Christ from the dead operates in us … the Holy Spirit. (Wow!)**
- **Patience and long-suffering, not with stoic tolerance, but with joyfulness!**
    - ***Jam 1:2-4 My brethren, count it all joy when you fall into various trials, 3 knowing that the testing of your faith produces patience. 4 But let patience have its perfect work, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking nothing.***
- **A lack of endurance often results in despondency or losing heart**
- **A lack of patience often leads to wrath or revenge**

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Col 1:12 giving thanks to the Father who has qualified us to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in the light.

- **Here is the beginning of the list of things for which Paul says we are to be most thankful!**
  - ***Col 1:13 He has delivered us from the power of darkness and conveyed us into the kingdom of the Son of His love,***
    - **Light and darkness are common theological terms used in many religions**
    - **Paul contrasts the realm or sphere of the new age—light, with that of the present age, the evil sphere or authority (exousia) of darkness**
      - **This evil sphere is equated with the power of Satan**
  - ***Col 1:14 in whom we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins.***
    - **These verses, describe a past deliverance and translation into Christ's Kingdom!**
    - **We also have redemption as a present possession!**

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Questions to ponder …

- ***Col 1:12 giving thanks to the Father who has qualified us to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in the light.***
  - **What does it mean when Paul says God has qualified us? Does that imply that we have 'achieved' something that warrants our qualification?**
    - ***Eph 1:5-6 Having predestined us to adoption as sons by Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the good pleasure of His will, 6 to the praise of the glory of His grace, by which He made us accepted in the Beloved.***
- **There appears to be a strong parallel in verse 9 to that of Eph 1:17. Is being 'filled' the same as receiving the gift of wisdom and revelation?**
  - ***Col 1:9 That you may be filled with the knowledge of His will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding***
  - ***Eph 1:17 That the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give to you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Him***
- **Verse 13 sounds incredibly momentous to us as believers. How should the REALITY of this verse change us?**
  - ***Col 1:13 He has delivered us from the power of darkness and conveyed us into the kingdom of the Son of His love,***