

NEW TESTAMENT SYNTHESIS NOTES

by Dr. Fred Wittman

THE EPISTLE TO KOHLOHSSAH-EÏS (COLOSSIANS) BY PAUL THE APOSTLE

INTRODUCTION:

What would you do if you were to learn that most of what people call ‘worshipping God’ is indicated in The God’s Word to be ‘will-worship’ or ‘will religion’ in the sight of The God?

Review:

1. The Theme of The Bible: **The Coming of The Messiah, The King and His Kingdom of Righteousness and Peace.**
2. The Purpose of The Bible: **To Present The Lord Jesus Christ as The Redeemer or To Teach The God’s Plan of Redemption.**

PRESENTATION:

I. Facts to Be Noted

A. Pertinent Facts.

Author: Paul, the Apostle Date Written: late mid A.D. 62 Key Verses: 2:9,10 Key Word: “Christ” (25x)
Written to: the saints at **Kohlohssaí** (Colossæ) and faithful brothers in union with Christ” (1:2)

Provenance: Rome Content: The Preeminent Christ Theme: Christ, The Head (of The Body, The Church)
Thrust of The Book: Christological: Christ is all and in all (1:15-19)

1. Authorship

a. The Writer of this Epistle was the Apostle Paul, whom God used to write fourteen New Testament Books. He was chosen by The Lord Jesus Christ to replace Judas Iscariot and to be the Apostle to the Gentiles (Acts 9:15; Gal. 1:1,15; 2:7-9; 1 Cor. 9:1,2; 15:9; 2 Cor. 1:1; 12:12; Eph. 1:1; Col. 1:1; 1 Tim. 1:1; 2:7; 2 Tim. 1:1,11).

He was a fellow-laborer and companion of **Bahrnábhahs** on the first missionary journey, who befriended him and testified in behalf of him upon his return to Jerusalem from **Dahmahskóhs** (Acts 9:27,28).

b. Most scholars acknowledge Pauline authorship, but some deny it. To do so is to deny verbal inspiration and reject the author’s own claim to be the author since both text and title refer to the author.

c. Evidence of Paul’s Authorship:

(1) Internal Evidence to Paul’s authorship is clear both by the accepted title that bears his name and the text. Paul identified himself in his opening greeting (1:1) and in his closing salutation (4:18). He also refers to his bonds (4:3,10,12,18).

(2) External Evidence comes from the writings of the “Church Fathers” (patristic tradition of The Early Church) and The Muratorian Canon (A.D. 160-200): “For the Epistles of Paul . . . he wrote to not more than seven churches, . . . the fourth to the Colossians.” There is no contradictory evidence found in Early Church writings, but Paul’s authorship was an accepted fact and never doubted until the eighteenth century.

2. The Readership:

Of three cities in the region of **Frugéeah** (Phrygia) in the province of Asia cited in 4:13, **Kohlohssaí** (Colossæ) was the oldest, located in the valley formed by the Lycus River, outside the perimeter of the seven churches of Asia Minor, 10 miles ESE of **Lah-ohdee-keh-éeah** (Laodicea), which is c. 98 miles East of **Éhfehsohs** (Ephesus) and c. 18 miles SSE of **Hee-ehráhpohlees** (Hierapolis). With the rise of **Lah-ohdee-keh-éeah** (Laodicea) and **Hee-ehráhpohlees** (Hierapolis), **Kohlohssaí** (Colossæ) became unimportant with only a village called Chonos remaining. The religion of the natives included worship of angels, while many Jews had immigrated to reside there. Paul never personally visited Colossæ (2:1), but was no doubt responsible for its existence (Acts 19:10) from his ministry in **Éhfehsohs** (Ephesus). The local church met in the house of **Feeláymohn** (Philemon) (Phile. 1,2 cf. Col. 4:17). Paul implied receiving a secondhand report (Col. 1:4). **Ehpahfráhs**, a fellow-bondslave disciple of Paul’s founded this local church (1:6-8) and demonstrated his concern as he reported the doctrinal problem to Paul which no doubt became evident in his prayer times with Paul (4:12).

3. The Dating of the Epistle is determined by the fact that Paul was in prison in Rome for two years from March A.D. 61-63 (3:1; 4:1; 6:20 cf. Acts 28:16,30). Shortly thereafter he wrote this Epistle in mid A.D. 62. Both the Ephesian (6:21,22), Colossian (4:7,8) and **Feeláymohn** (Philemon) Epistles were delivered by **Tukh-eekóhs** (Tychicus) along with **Onáyseemohs** (Col. 4:7,9) so all were written at approximately the same time.

4. The Purpose for writing Epistle to **Kohlohssaí** (Colossians) was twofold: doctrinal and practical.

a. Doctrinally, he wrote to combat worldly, gnostic philosophy (2:8), Jewish legalism (2:16-17), angel worship, mysticism, and pride (2:18), asceticism (2:20-23), and worldly, sinful practices (3:2,5-9) that began to creep

into this local church. Since little is known about gnosticism, a helpful summary of explanation is provided for a better understanding.

“Gnosticism laid great stress upon knowledge, which was the exclusive privilege of the select few. It taught that evil had its origin and abode in matter, in the material, sensible world. And to explain how God, Who is perfect, could create matter, which is evil, it maintained that there were certain emanations of God, in which the Divine element became more and more feeble, until at length contact with matter was possible, and creation ensued. These emanations were called aeons or angels. This heresy is one of the most fantastic productions of the human brain. And it was the first attempt to bring Christianity under the influence of heathen speculation. The report of this menace was the occasion of this epistle” (W. Graham Scroggie).

Although Scroggie saw this heresy as the occasion for this Epistle, its brief mention in light of the whole Epistle appears to be an insertion to alert the local church of its dangers which lead to will-worship and thereby eliminate worship in and motivated by The Holy Spirit.

b. Practical reason for writing

Practically Paul wrote because the propagation of such doctrine resulted in behavior unbefitting to regenerated saints who should have died, been spiritually circumcised, and been buried by means of baptism together with Christ and raised up together with Him to live in newness of Absolute Life (2:11-14). This behavior and practical living for and in union with The Lord Jesus Christ must be addressed and corrected, not only with the male saint, but also with the wives and the lords in proper treatment of their bondsalves (3:1-4:5).

3. Characteristics in the Epistle to **Kohlohssah-eîs** (Colossians)

a. Doctrinal and didactic: instruction in doctrinal Truth concerning Christ and worship in The Spirit and not from the flesh; and prayer on the one hand and on the other hand teaching practical living concerning behavior and daily walk.

b. Corrective: False Teaching propagated in Colosse.

(1) Angelology: Worship of angels (2:18).

(2) Christology vs. another aeon or angel (1:13-18; 2:9-11,17-19).

(3) Judaism: Circumcision, ordinances, dietary restrictions, feast days, dogmas (2:11,16,20,21-23; 3:11).

(4) Will-worship(2:23). In the Old Testament there are two instances of will worship recorded. The first instance is recorded by Moses on 1/01/1626 B.C., eight days after the Tabernacle was erected, when his two sons, Nadab and Abihu offered strange fire in their censers before The Lord which The Lord commanded them not to do. So The Lord sent fire upon them and devoured them (Lev. 10:1-6). The second instance was in 752 B.C. when King Uzziah intruded into the priest's office to burn incense on the golden altar of incense in The Holy Place of the Temple and was stricken with the dreadful, debilitating disease, leprosy isolating him from all well people for thirty-seven years slowly consuming his flesh until He died (2 Chr. 26:14-21). Paul called this selfishly contrived, intrusive worship by the Greek noun ἐθέλω θρησκεία (etheloh-thrayskeh-éeah), a compound word made of a verb θέλω meaning determinedly will and the noun θρησκεία (thrayskeh-éeah) meaning “willful clamorous religious observance.” This Greek word is used in reference to religious service in the house of Bacchus, the Greek god of wine. Bacchanalia is a festival of carousal with dancing, noisy song in peculiar off-beat meter, drunken revelry, and orgy. It is an annual religious celebration in New Orleans. How applicable a description this is for contemporary religious services with music which is loud and noisy (clamorous) with off-beat rhythm and called “worship”! But the New Testament Greek verb translated worship is προσκυνέω (proskunéō) which “means to bow one’s self in homage and adoration.” To understand genuine worship requires a full study of its use in Scripture. But briefly stated,

“Genuine worship is the heart occupation with The Lord Jesus Christ wrought by The Holy Spirit and expressed to God The Father by regenerated disciples gathered to render homage in the presence of sacrifice at The Lord’s Supper. Genuine worship includes praise, homage, adoration, thanksgiving, laud, exaltation, extolment, glory, honor, blessing, and hearty remembrance by observing The Lord’s Supper with the elements He prescribed (Lk. 22:19,20).”

Since it is wrought by the Holy Spirit, it is guided by Him and not by liturgy or by a preplanned order of service. And since it is according to Scripture and Scriptural guidelines, it is in Truth. It is not a service because service is man-ward and worship is God-ward. Will worship is not worship of The God

in Spirit but rather it is worship of Satan, the god of this world, motivating the flesh to misdirect worship in disobedience.

(5) Humble-mindedness and Asceticism: Prohibition of natural body functions (2:20-23).

(6) Elements of the world: spirits, philosophy, vain deceit, and dogmas according to the commands and teachings of humans (2:8,20).

(7) Exclusivism: “We have arrived” (2:18).

c. Polemic and apologetic: Paul deals with controversial issues and defends Scriptural Truth.

d. Personal: Paul refers to twelve other people.

4. Contrasts with **Ehfêhseeous** (Ephesians):

Ehfêhseeous (Ephesians) presents The Church as The Body of The Christ, while **Kohlols-sah-eh-êes** (Colossians) presents The Christ as The Head of The Church.

5. The unfolding proposition from which to reason is the grand unfolding of the Christian position and privilege, and the glories of Christ. Error is most effectively combated by the positive presentation of the ministry of Christ, rather than by negative attack.

7. The whole teaching of Colossians is summarized in two statements: “In-union-with-Him continually-resides all the fullness of the Godhead bodily” (2:9 APT) and “You[&] are permanently-fully-fulfilled ones in-union-with-Him” (2:10 APT).

B. Localities mentioned in **Kohlols-sah-eh-êes** (Colossians):

Kohlolhsai (Colossæ), **Lah-ohdee-keh-éeah** (Laodicea) and **Hee-ehráhpohlees** (Hierapolis) (4:13-16).

C. Characters mentioned in **Kohlols-sah-eh-êes** (Colossians):

Paul, **Teemóth-ehohs** (Timothy), **Ehpafráhs**, **Tukh-eekóhs** (Tychicus), **Ohnýseemohs** (Onesimus), **Ahrée-stahrkohs** (Aristarchus), **Máhrkohs** (John Mark), **Bahr-náhbahs**, (**Yaysoûs** or **Yoústohs** (Justus), **Loukáhs** (Luke), **Daymáhs** (Demas), **Numfáhs** (Nymphas), and **Ahr-khéepohs** (Archippus).

D. Outline of The Epistle to **Kohlols-sah-eh-êes** (Colossians):

I. Introduction (1:1-12).

II. Doctrinal (1:13-2:7). The Pre-eminence of Christ Presented.

III. Polemical (2:8-23). The Pre-eminence of Christ Threatened.

IV. Practical (3:1-4:6). The Pre-eminence of Christ Applied.

V. Salutations and Benediction (4:7-18).

E. Prophecies cited: None.

II. The Theme of The Bible: The Coming of The Messiah and His Coming Kingdom of Righteousness and Peace:

Since the initial coming of the Messiah has taken place and His Return was imminently expected, and since Paul discussed the doctrine of The Coming-Presence of The Lord Jesus Christ rather extensively in both of The Epistles to Thessalonians and in 1 Corinthians, and in Romans Paul only succinctly referred five times to The Coming-Presence of The Lord Jesus Christ. Then He reminded his readers that we all must present ourselves before the Báymah (Judgment Seat on steps) in anticipation of the coming-again of The Messiah. However in Ehfêhseeous (Ephesians), Paul does not mention The Coming-Presence of The Lord Jesus Christ directly, but alludes to His coming when referring to The Lord Jesus Christ loving The Church. He “delivered Himself over in Her behalf of Her . . . so that He present Her to Himself, The Church Glorious, not having spot or wrinkle or any such things.” Likewise The Kingdom of The God is not mentioned positively, but rather from the negative standpoint by reminding his readers of those who are sexually immoral or unclean or covetous or idolaters continually are not having inheritance in The Kingdom of The Christ and of God. In Feeláymohn (Philemon), since Paul was dealing with Redemption based upon love and forgiveness of seriously offensive Sin deserving death and resulting in a huge debt, discretely he tactfully analogized the imputation aspect of the redemptive work of The Lord Jesus Christ by alluding to the payment of the debt for Sin on our behalf which was charged to Him and His righteousness imputed to us. Paul requested **Feeláymohn** to charge **Ohnýseemohs’** debt to Paul’s account even as every sinner’s debt was charged or ‘imputed’ to The Lord Jesus Christ’s account and graciously received by The God even as The God received Paul and **Feeláymohn** as Jesus Himself did in union with Himself, so Paul urged **Feeláymohn** to do with **Ohnýseemohs** (Phlm. 12,17-19).

Then in Kohlols-sah-eh-êes (Colossians), The Kingdom is called “The Kingdom of The Son of His Love” (1:13 APT) as well as “The Kingdom of The God” (4:11). Firstly, Paul reminded his readers that in This Kingdom we are recipients of Redemption through His Blood and forgiveness of Sins and then he cited only the ones out of the circumcision (of Jewish heritage) in Rome, whom he deemed as fellow-workers in The Kingdom of The God.

III. The Purpose of The Bible: To Teach The God’s Plan of Redemption: So far, with regard to The Plan of Redemption, The Word of The God has revealed these Truths: in James the problem of faith demonstrated by works was clarified. In Galatians it is revealed that Faith is the means whereby we live in union with The Son of God, receive The Promise of The Spirit, become the sons of The God, and are in the sphere of Spirit. Also in Galatians a new dimension to Redemption is added, Justification by means of The Lord Jesus Christ’s Faith [note: it is our personal faith in The Lord Jesus Christ’s Faith that results in Salvation]. To be justified is to be declared righteous freed of: blame, guilt, and / or penalty of Sin as a result of The Lord Jesus Christ taking Sin upon Himself and becoming: a curse in behalf of us and the propitiation of our sins in order to provide Redemption which includes complete freedom from bondage to Sin and Satan. In Thessalonians we are taught that the exchange of bond-slavery of which Jesus spoke takes place at Redemption. Paul referred to the redeemed disciple-saints as “Salvation’s purchased possession.” Then Paul presented The God’s determined will as a result of Redemption

and emphasized sanctification (separation unto a holy relationship with The God and the consequences of rejecting it. Thus far (up to early winter of A.D. 58), the contents of the plan of Redemption contain these practical doctrines emphasized in Romans: Salvation, Sin, exchange of Masters in bond-service, Redemption, Reconciliation and Justification (3:26-30; 4:25-5:18; 8:30-34), Sanctification, and Eschatology {the doctrine of last things} (8:19). The in Ehfêhseeous (Ephesians) Redemption was referred to in three instances. In the first instance (1:7), ‘Redemption’ referred to the initial occurrence of Redemption of every disciple-saint, when the sinner is identified in union with The Lord Jesus Christ through totally committed faith unto Him and His shed-blood results in forgiveness of gross stupid errors (sins). In the second instance (1:14), Paul referred to the occasion of the completion of Redemption of every disciple-saint, when the whole person in the glorified body united with the soul and spirit appears in the presence of The Lord Jesus Christ. In the third instance (4:30), Paul referred to the sealing by The Holy Spirit for security upon totally committed faith unto The Lord Jesus Christ which permanently lasts until the Day of completion of redemption (cf. 4:14). Now in Kohlhohs-sah-eh-êes (Colossians) redemption is only mentioned once (1:14), where the recipients of Redemption through the blood of The Son of The God’s Love are identified with Him.

IV. The Progressive Revelation of The God: Previously it was noted that foundation Truths of The Christian Faith were revealed, especially explaining The Righteousness of The God, Sin, condemnation and Judgment, Justification by Faith, Salvation including Sin, Exchange of Masters, and sphere of the flesh. It was revealed that Israel’s fall resulted in her being set aside, which resulted in blessing for the Gentiles for the duration of Grace and The Church Age until The Christ raptures The Church, followed by Israel’s suffering in Tribulation for seven years “until the fullness of The Gentiles enter.” This will take place before The Messiah King returns to Earth to set up The Promised Kingdom. Israel’s fullness in restoration will bring greater blessing for the world. Practical, reasonable, sacred service to The God is to be performed by a public presentation of the body as an Absolutely-Living sacrifice in return for the dying Sacrifice by The New Master, The Lord Jesus Christ. After this occasion transpires, each one is to be renewed in the mind so as to utilize the grace-gifts, serving as bondslaves to The Lord in love. The Truth concerning the future judgment for all saints, who shall present themselves at The Christ’s **Báymah** Seat was disclosed.

Then in Ehfêhseeous (Ephesians) at least sixty-three (63) doctrines, many of which were previously expressed, were mentioned or given, one of which is enlightenment, another dealing with the gifted leaders of The Church with their selected realm of ministry for the purpose of building -up The Church as The Body of The Christ to grow unto maturity by means of discipleship with each one having a part as a joint in adding to The Body increase of members and nurturing them to maturity in The Christ. Paul especially dealt with three doctrines specifically, on the one hand with unity (oneness) and union with The Lord Jesus Christ; on another hand The God’s determined will for a persistently, godly, daily walk and on another hand with the necessary armor with which the disciple-saints are to clothe themselves to be able to stand-fast strongly against the wiles of the Devil and his evil forces of various sorts of fallen spirit-beings. In addition to these two important doctrines, the following were further expanded or introduced throughout this Epistle: the determined will of The God; the sealing ministry of The Holy Spirit; the completion of Redemption when the glorified body shall acclaim His glory; the dead condition of all sons of the disobedience {unregenerated people under The God’s wrath and citizens of Earth}; three dispensations {periods of time under The God’s administration}: Dispensation of The Fullness of Times of The Gentiles, The Dispensation of The Grace of The God, and The Dispensation of The Mystery; and four more Mysteries to that which was previously noted: The Mystery of His Determined Will, The Mystery of The Christ, The Great Mystery of Christ and The Church, and The Mystery of The Gospel, also The God’s purpose and plan in providing Redemption; and His method of revealing His mysteries to the world, angels, and all created beings; and The God’s determined will for every saint is a persistently, godly, daily, walk and the persistent stand and withstanding in warfare by every disciple-saint of The God. **Finally**, Paul made it very clear that the warfare of the true child of The God, who is a summoned disciple-saint is on the spiritual level and not on a flesh and blood level, nor on a social level, nor on a moral level, nor on a legal level, and not a political level, nor even on a religious level. But on the contrary our warfare is spiritual. So often those claiming to be Christian, succumb to the trap and wile of the Devil, which is to get involved in battle on one or more of these other levels: religious, social, moral, legal, or political, all of which are aspects of flesh and blood warfare. A warfare on these levels shall result to the detriment of our intricate relationship with our Blessed Savior and Lord, Jesus Christ as well as hindering the effect of The Gospel in the Salvation of souls.

Then in Kohlhohs-sah-eh-êes Paul emphatically stated that the spread of The Gospel extended to bearing fruit in the whole world (1:6), but more it was proclaimed to every creature under heaven (1:23). This was accomplished by late mid A.D. 62, the time when this Epistle was written. This could only be accomplished by the precise obedience to The Lord Jesus Christ’s third and fourth commandments (Mk 16:15; Mt. 28:16-20) by every regenerated disciple’s enthusiastic participation in discipleship by training as disciples, and in turn, training others to become disciples and then disciple others. Next Paul reemphasized Christology: The Lord Jesus Christ is The Glorified Head of The Church, which is His Body. He also is The Preeminent One, absolutely preeminent in the sphere of all things (1:18). Paul’s aim should be the aim of every disciple saint, that is to present every human perfectly complete in union with The Lord Jesus Christ at The **Báymah** Seat judgment immediately after The Rapture of His Church (1:28). Then Paul exhorted this local church to deal positively with seven heresies that threatened to destroy the union with The Lord Jesus Christ that the saints had initially experienced. These were: Jewish festivals, new moon and Sabbath observance (2:16); angelology, gnosticism, asceticism, will-worship, prohibition of normal body ingestion and abuse thereof, elements of the world: spirits, philosophy, vain deceit, and dogmas according to the commands and teachings of humans, and exclusivism. Then in light of the fact of the glorification of the saints at Christ’s coming again is displayed (3:4), the readers are commanded to persistently mind the things above and not on things upon Earth and to put to death their body members, which were previously serving in union with sins as sons of disobedience, by stripping off the old human with his practices and clothe themselves at once with The New Human (3:2-12). Finally, the fact that there were two other churches established and existing in southeast Asia in addition to this one in Kohlhohssai (Colossæ) being ministered to by Ahr-khéepohs (Archippus), one in Lah-ohdee-keh-éeah (Laodicea) meeting in the house of Numfáhs (Nymphas) and the other in Hee-ehráhpohlees (Hierapolis). In Feeláymohn (Philemon), it is disclosed that the saints at Kohlhohssai (Colossæ) met in the house of Feeláymohn (vs. 1,2) and that Ohnýseemohs belonged to Feeláymohn as a runaway bonds slave. For some reason he was imprisoned in Rome and converted under Paul’s prison ministry and began to serve Paul domestically in the bonds of The Gospel in union with The Lord Jesus Christ (10-16). Ohnýseemohs was sent back to Feeláymohn by means of Tukh-eeekóhs (Tychicus) with this epistle (Col. 4:7-9). This Epistle exemplifies and applies the doctrine of imputation to the lives of the regenerated-disciple saints both in Paul’s life and throughout the remaining time until The Second Coming of The Lord Jesus Christ.

DISCUSSION:

A. What was the second commandment that The Lord Jesus Christ gave to His Disciples? (Lk. 22:19,20 cf. 1 Cor. 11:24-32).

B. What were the four distinct purposes for which The Early Church steadfastly, perseveringly gathered together in a cyclical week? (Acts 2:42; 20:7).

1.

2.

3.

4.

C. Which of these gatherings were for the purpose of genuine worship?

D. What statement did Paul make to the Corinthian church as to the frequency with which the local church is commanded to genuinely worship? (1 Cor. 11:23-26).

APPLICATION: What will you do to become a practicing genuine worshipper of The Only One True God observing His desires, commands, and restrictions?