

Week 1: CHRIST IN COLOSSIANS

Colossians 1: 15 - 23

Feeling inadequate, lack of Christian assurance, Bible and prayer sameness, emptiness, bored, concern with world events. Aspects of The Person and Work of Jesus Christ. **Colossians 1: 1&2**, addressed; *to the holy (saints) and faithful (believing) brothers in Christ at Colossae (Adelaide)*. An insignificant town known for its paganism, idolatry, lack of vision; and faced with strong social pressure. Paul had not visited Colossae but addresses the believers as *saints* which referred to status not actual degree of any holiness attained. The OT regarded Israel as 'a people apart ... saints because they were marked off from the nations around and consecrated to God ... The Colossians may live in a small Asiatic town but they do so as the people of God'.¹ **Emphasis: 1: 19 & 20**; our use of the word "full" re food, tide, glass, cup – 'complete'. The wonderful truth that the church and we as individuals are 'complete in Christ' or 'filled with his fullness'. **Colossians 1: 19 & 20 &** next week, **2: 9 & 10**; again that significant word *fullness*. – Christ has no competitors and needs no helpers. Fullness is nowhere else. --- Prayer v3 – 14; see **v6 & 12 – 14**.

1:15 – 20 the expression: *all things*, is mentioned five times. *His blood shed on the cross*; in verse 20, means 'propitiation'. See also **Hebrews 9: 11 – 14**, 'conscience'; how is your conscience? --- 'Propitiation presupposes the wrath and displeasure of God, and the purpose of propitiation is the removal of this displeasure. Very simply stated the doctrine of propitiation means that Christ propitiated the wrath of God and rendered God propitious to his people'.²

Therefore, think what 'His fullness in us' means to us as believers. Being filled with the fullness of God is like a bottle in the vast ocean without its cork. Plunge the bottle under the water and the bottle is completely full. The bottle is in the ocean, and the ocean is in the bottle. The ocean contains the bottle, but the bottle contains only a little of the ocean; so with us as believers.

Basis of 'fullness' must be action of God in Christ; **atonement**. John Stott, "The Cross of Christ"; records, Dr. Martyn Lloyd-Jones; unrivalled position of evangelical leadership in decades following Second World War. Spoke of fundamental change that occurred in his outlook and preaching in 1929. Had always emphasised necessity of new birth but after preaching one night in

¹ Leon Morris, *The Epistles of Paul to the Colossians and Philemon*, Tyndale Press, 1960, 27

² John Murray, *Redemption: Accomplished and Applied*, Banner of Truth, 1979, 30

South Wales, the minister challenged him that the Cross and the Work of Christ, had little place in his preaching. L-J quickly visited his favourite second-hand book shop and requested two standard books on the Atonement. The bookseller produced R W Dale's, *The Atonement* (1875) and James Denney's, *The Death of Christ* (1903). On his return home he gave himself to study, declining both lunch and tea, and causing his wife such anxiety that she telephoned her brother to see whether a doctor should be called. When her husband later emerged, he claimed to have found "the real heart of the gospel and the key to the inner meaning of the Christian faith". The content of his preaching changed and with this its impact. He himself explained that the basic question was not "Why did God become man"? but; "Why did Christ die"?³ John Stott adds that the Biblical doctrine of atonement is SUBSTITUTION from beginning to end. No 'fullness' without death, resurrection and ascension of Christ.

³ John Stott, *The Cross of Christ*, 10; Iain Murray, *DML-J*, 190-191.