



SCIENCE OF THE NEW TESTAMENT

Colossians & Science



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Introduction:

Of course Paul is the writer of Colossians. The Book divides itself first into doctrines and the second into more practical aspect of living the Christian life. Paul's purpose in the letter was to show that Christ was preeminent, first and foremost in everything. So this theme of preeminence or Christology is highly prevalent within the text.

The city of Colossae was about a hundred miles east of Ephesus in the fertile Lycus Valley by a mountain pass on the road from Ephesus to the East. It was once better off economically but by the time of Paul, it had slid down several levels and had become a minor city. The church at Colossae was founded by Epaphras at the time when Paul was in Ephesus. The letters to the Colossians, to Philemon, and to the Ephesians were probably written around the same time from Rome because of the overlapping themes and personal names associated with the three books. The church was beginning to experience an infiltration of Gnostic heresy which Epaphras had told Paul about, thus the reason for the letter. As already mentioned the theme is the preeminence and sufficiency of Christ. The believer is complete in Him alone and lacks nothing because in Him dwells all the fullness of the Godhead. This was Paul's message. But Paul also wrote the letter as an encouragement to the church to continue in faith. This was a basic message of Paul in many of his other letters. The book is thought of as being the most Christ-centered book in the Bible.

The Gnostic heresy was making more of ritualism, mysticism and asceticism than Christ. This is why Paul talked about doctrines in the first half while in the second half of the letter he discussed the basic principles of life and Christ's importance and submitting oneself to Him. Look at the outline below:

- I Introduction
 - A Greetings and Thanksgivings 1:1–8
 - B Paul's Prayer 1:9–14
- II Christ's Preeminence
 - A in Creation 1:15–18
 - B in Redemption 1:19–23
 - C in the Church 1:24–2:3
- III Freedom in Christ
 - A Enticing Words 2:4–7
 - B Vain Philosophy 2:8–10

C	People's Judgment	2:11–17
D	Improper Worship	2:18–19
E	Man's doctrines	2:20–23
IV	The Believer	3:1–4
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	1 in Family Life	3:18–21
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	3 in Public Life	4:2–6
VI	Conclusion	
A	Commendation of Tychicus	4:7–9
B	Greetings from Paul's Friends	4:10–14
C	Introduction of the Letter	4:15–18

Now let's look at Walter Lang's book, 'Colossians and Science' a thirty day devotional study on the Book of Colossians. This is the text book for this research study. We'll first look at the various verses in Colossians with the idea of seeing how the author relates them to certain important Christian topics, and then we'll move on to discussing the different scientific topics the author brings to our attention in relation to science. But first, Lang has a major theme running through his devotional which refers to the 'Total Christ.' He uses this instead of the word, 'preminent.' Christ is the where all in all things whether earthly, scientific or spiritual. Another point in regards to the scientific aspect which the author is pursuing is comparing the science of Paul's day which was Gnosticism and the science of today which is the New Gnosticism or more commonly known as evolution. This New Gnosticism has gained a dominance that it didn't have in the day of Paul and this dominance has come about because it is the world's 'god' in our day. However, the message in Colossians demonstrates that science based on Scripture is a far superior science, and how some are willing to explore these mysteries that are in Gospel.

Part I

In Colossians 2:8, Paul condemns the heresy of Gnosticism. Other than the false teachings that came about from certain Christian Jews saying that the Gentiles had to be circumcised to be fully accepted within Christendom, Gnosticism was one of the truly first

heresies that tried to divide the young Christian Church. It promoted the idea of Greek philosophy and combined it with Jewish asceticism. The Gnostics divided life into stages and people had to complete one stage before they could go to another stage. (Sort of sounds like Hinduism, doesn't it?) The objective was to reach fullness. Paul out right condemned this as a false teaching and warned the Colossians Church against it. The next point involves the inspiration of the Colossians. 2nd Peter 1:21 plainly states that, 'holy men of God spoke as they were moved by the Holy Spirit.' Paul confirms himself as an 'apostle', called of God. The inerrancy of the Scriptures is made possible through the perfection of Christ. The truth of the Gospels also verifies that perfection. Paul wanted to show the Colossians that Perfection in Christ. Epaphras wanted the Colossians to be perfect in Christ and to live their lives according to the will of God. They would not be able to do this in Gnosticism. Like the Gnostics, there are many secret societies today that claim to possess mysteries but there are greater mysteries in Christ which Paul speaks about in 1:26, 27 and 2:2. In Colossians 1:6 and 1:23, Paul also speaks of Christ as being preached worldwide but today's Gnosticism or evolution for both are the same today; evolution is a dominant theory which is also now being preached worldwide. This dominance of evolution has come about because it has become the world's 'god' in our day. In chapter 1:9, Pauls prays for the Colossians that they have knowledge, wisdom and spiritual understanding. Spiritual understanding relates to the idea of being able to put things together. Knowledge here also refers to information that is gained from experimentation. Verse 10 provides us with a clearer explanation of what Paul is talking about. There is true wisdom and total knowledge in Christ; this is contrasted to the false and deceptive wisdom of the Gnostics with their imaginary fullness. Pauls shows that Christ is the basic foundation for education and science as well as spiritual life.

Colossians 1:11, Paul talks about suffering. Oh, there is perfection and hope in Christ, but we live in a wicked world where we must put up with certain afflictions. Christ's power helps us to change these afflictions into blessings. Paul suffered more than his share of suffering throughout his life. He was in prison in Rome even while writing this letter, and we are seeing more and more of this kind of suffering throughout the mission world today. In Colossians 1:13, 16; 2:10, 15 Paul provides several references to devils. In 1:16 thrones, dominions, principalities and powers refer to angels and devils and in 2:15 we see that Christ triumphs over these devils. Paul was preaching against Gnostic Philosophy which was allegedly ruled by angels that were called principalities, power, might, dominions, and thrones; they were devils and the apostle was trying to show the Colossians that Jesus had power over these. Colossians 1:16 & 17, we learn about the word 'ktisis' meaning 'creation'

from the Greek. This means the same as the Hebrew word in the Old Testament, 'bara.' The verse has to do with something that only God can do and thus Paul is showing the Colossians that Jesus is beyond these so called stages of Gnosticism; He is God and He created the angels. He created it all in six days. Paul continues this thought in 1:18 where he states that Christ is preeminent in all things. Christ was born in the flesh, and in 1:22 we read that He reconciles us by His blood and His body. For Christ to be preeminent in all things, His forgiveness must have material regenerating power as well as spiritual regeneration. In 1:21, Paul tells the church that at one time they were separate from God and they were enemies of God. As mentioned above, Paul told the Colossian Christians that the Gospel was a mystery. Christianity is a mystery and also creation is a mystery. Scientists search out mysteries in nature but they don't believe that the mysteries in the Bible have any scientific value. Christ is the centre of Scripture and the emphasis in Colossians is Christ because He who is greater than the angels worshiped by the Gnostics. In 2:2, we see mentioned the mystery of God the Father and Christ and the Holy Spirit. We see how the Spirit in us creates faith, this is beyond human comprehension.

In chapter 2:4, 8, 18 and 23, Paul warns the Colossians to avoid the Gnostic heresy. Those who follow Gnosticism has replaced the worship of Christ with angel worship, but they are not to worship angels nor intrude into things unseen, and not to be proud. Those who follow Gnosticism will no long be grounded in Christ. Thus we can say that those who follow any aspect of evolution will eventually no longer be grounded in Christ. Back to 1:16, we see that Christ created everything in heavens and on earth, visible and invisible which includes life. And in 1:17, Christ holds all things together, everything. The Creation of life demands more thought than scientists are capable of providing. In Gnosticism, there was also an emphasis on the ceremonial law of the Old Testament. This observation of the law helped the person to advance from one angel stage to the next. In Colossians 2:9 and 10, Paul changes tack and describes the conflict between our old selves and our new selves under Jesus. Paul challenges the Colossians to put away their old selves through the power of Christ and be renewed in the image of God. This image was lost to us when Adam and Eve sinned but in Christ there is perfect knowledge and through the inspired Word, God restores this knowledge to us. Christ has perfect holiness for us and putting on the new self is the perfection of holiness and knowledge in Christ. We have to do this even on a daily basis. In Colossian 3:14 Paul says that love is the bond of perfectness. God is satisfied with nothing less that total perfection and this goes right back to the Law and the summary of the Law being love, first to God and then to our fellowmen.

In Colossians 3:20 we see that children should obey their parents in all things, for this is pleasing to God and in 3:21, fathers are not to provoke their children to wrath. The Book of Ephesians is the 'sister' book to Colossians. Ephesians 5:22-23 deals with more family matters saying that wives are encouraged to submit themselves to their husbands and husbands are told to love their wives as they love themselves and as Christ loves the church. (In this way, husbands are submitting themselves to their wives) Phoebe Courtney warns us in his book 'Beware Sensitivity Training Seminars' where people are encouraged to rid themselves of inhibitions, mainly those regarding sex and any ideas of wives and husbands and love and submission are thrown aside. Today in church circles, one finds a very loose attitude toward marriage and not enough emphasis is going into the teaching of the sanctity of marriage. Paul continued in Colossians 4:5 to 'redeem the time.' We have a very limited time here on earth. We are to make the most of time as it is a very precious commodity. Paul asks the Colossian Church to pray for him. Paul didn't waste his time in prison, he managed to write encouraging and instructive letters to the churches in Asia Minor and these letters are still being read today.

Part II

In Colossians Paul condemns the science of 'Gnosticism.' Lang relates this old heresy as continuing today in the form of 'evolution.' He quotes a number of authors to demonstrate his condemnation. First Langs quotes Philip Mauro in his book, 'Evolution – A religious Dogma' which says that the love of Christ is being substituting by the destructive survival of the fittest. But G. Kenneth An-deen in his book, 'Genesis – The Book of Beginnings,' says that God's creation account is a myth, Eden is not historical and the global flood is out-right rejected. Yet as there is perfection in Christ, there's also perfection in the Scriptures. Psalms 12:7 says that the Scriptures are preserved from one generation to another. A great discovery was found in the Dead Sea Scrolls; a complete set of Old Testament books that dated back to a hundred and fifty years BC. This is the same Old Testament as we have today and the same Old Testament as Jesus quoted 2,000 years ago. It hasn't changed! This is consistency! Consistency and perfection can be found in Christ along, with absolutes. We see that without absolutes science and disciplines become pagan idolatry just like evolutionary theory is. In Romans 1:20, we see that the Godhead may be discovered through nature. Lang uses Dr Henry Morris in 'Studies in the Bible and Science,' in his attempt to do justify this, refers to time, space and matter, a threefold division. Morris also notes that time are three fold: past, present and future and again there are three divisions of matter: energy, motion and phenomena. In the book titled 'Genesis and Science,' we see that Lang continues with three

references to the Trinity in Genesis, chapter one. First: Gods (plural) create (singular verb) the heavens and the earth. There are three persons, but only one God. The Father is in verse 1; the spirit is in verse 2 and the Son as the Word in verse 3. Then in Genesis 1:26 we read ‘Let us make man.’

Lang uses George Gaylord Simpson’s book, ‘The Meaning of Evolution,’ Simpson which says absolutes are not possible in nature or the Bible. But yet, we are taught about the perfection in Christ in the book of Colossians. In Colossians 1:22, we see that we can be holy and blameless through Christ. We are clothed with love, which is the bond of perfectness. The Colossian doctrine of perfection has God creating a perfect world and even though sin came into this perfection, it can be restored only through the atoning sacrifice of Jesus. And because of this beginning perfection of the world, there can be no gradual evolution. We further see this perfection in the God head of God the Father, the Son and Holy Spirit. We see Christ as the centre of the Trinity. The best in science cannot be attained unless it is based on Jesus Christ. The book, ‘Evolution Equals One,’ published in India, tries to portray evolution as a superior religion. Dr. Bolton Davidheiser suggests that scientific methods are based on the principle of uniformity which says that under the same situation, the same cause will produce the same result. Of course, this can happen, but evolutionists maintain that everything arrived through a combination of chance happenings. Now Lang quotes from Rutherford and Pollard: in 1938, elements were obtained beyond uranium by the success of Lord Rutherford and many others through splitting the atom. Wm. G. Pollard in his book, ‘Science and Faith,’ says that scientists think they are coming closer to understanding the atom. They discard one theory for another but there is much more information in the atom which has not yet been discovered. The new atom model according to Dr. Thomas Barnes (Lang quotes) in his book ‘Space Medium’ says that the atom is fluid and subject to magnetic forces and that it actually depends on thought. Of course so far it has been discovered that there are a host of activities going on within the atom. Keth Wikes, theologian of Bristol, England, author of ‘Religion and the Sciences’ says that the atom is not a solid substance but composed of many forces, thus he sees a ‘thought’ behind all of these substances. There are many more mysteries in Christ which Paul talks about in chapter 1:26, 27 and 2:2. Interestingly, the current model of the atom which is built on quantum physics is no longer reliable as those physics are based on uncertainties and reliance on chance, thus it has become deceptive.

In Jeremiah 31:37 we read that a person will never be able to measure the end of space as it appears to be continuously expanding. And we read in Job 15:15 that the heavens

are not pure, the moon doesn't shine and the stars are not pure but in II Peter 3:13 we read there will be a new heaven as well as a new earth. God will redeem the awesome expanse of space through His power. This essay has mentioned over and over that there is fullness in Christ as shown in Colossians 1:19. In Dr. Bolton Davidheiser, 'To Be As God,' explains how scientists attempt to bring in a brave new world. This was illustrated in George Orwell's 1984 but that date has come and gone and still we live in a wicked world and it's getting worst all the time. Scientists are playing God through gene therapy. This is no different that the Gnostics 2,000 years ago who maintained that they could advance from one angel stage to another with the final stage being 'fullness'. Paul said that we have that fullness right now in Jesus Christ. (Lang quotes again from Benedict, Keith and Smith) In Robert Benedict's book, 'Journey Away from God' says that scientists are in a dilemma. They know that the theory of evolution doesn't explain scientific data; they can not accept the creationist position. A British palaeontologist Sir Arthur Keith, has said that evolution is unproved and unprovable. Dr. Wilder Smith also says that scientific data do not support a billions-of-years age for the universe nor an amoeba-to-man development. In addition, two laws of thermodynamics thoroughly disprove the theory of upward development. Also the rapid decay of the earth's magnetic field demands a young age for the earth. The problem comes down to the fact, in accepting the Biblical account of origins will demand facing a just God with personal sins. Further to this, Dr. Duane Gish, a biochemist and author of Speculations and Experiments related to the Theories on the Origin of Life. He demonstrates that the spontaneous origin of life is impossible. The idea of life coming about through a process of methane, ammonia, hydrogen and water vapour with lightning faces impossible difficulties. Oxygen can not be present at first but will be needed later at the exact right time! Like the discoveries concerning the atom, there is much more to the cell than DNA. There's a coding process which is still beyond human understanding. Man was made in the image of God.

I worked through the book separating what Paul said to the Colossians and what Lang said about science. I didn't know any other way to do it. The arguments from Lang in his book were very enlightening. The message of the book requires a bias attitude to the subject which is rightfully so. The combination of the Book of Colossians and references to scientific discoveries were excellent. I believe the author's objectives were fully met. However, one problem which I noticed was when scientific points were made and the author went into an explanation of how we could look to Christ; trust in Christ or how Christ was the answer to this and the statement, 'there's a far superior science in the Bible.' I felt that Lang should have said more, in regards to what we look at in Christ, why we should trust Christ and how

Christ was the answer because and how scripture is a far superior science. These sorts of explanations of Lang are very rhetorical. They leave the non-believer unconvinced and angry at the lack of explanation. For me, I thought the book was great! My kind of reading!

I also thought it very interesting how the author took Gnosticism in the days of Paul and applied it to our day in the form of evolution and how evolution has become the god of this world. I think the way he did this was really good and his explanation of it was through. There was another point I want to question. There was a reference in regards to a conference held by the creationist. They invited three non-Christians who believed that space was absolute instead of relative. I questioned what this actually means in terms of creationism.

G. Kenneth An-deen in his book, 'Genesis – The Book of Beginnings,' says that God's creation account is a myth, Eden is not historical and the global flood is alright rejected. Why would we pay attention to such a person as An-Deen. I sometimes feel that in acknowledging these kinds of people are acknowledging their importance. What I find strange also is who would read such garbage. Why would a person who isn't a Christian write such stuff? But then again, I know the devil is at work and he works through people such as this for his own end.

Recommendations; I don't know exactly what to recommend in regards to Lang or this Module. I was very impressed with the book in this module. However, I think the information was far too short and wish the book would have been longer but then again maybe these kinds of books are in short supply and unavailable. But I would recommend more information a long these lines, simply because it's such an eye opener in understanding how scripture applies to science. I believe we need more of this knowledge as it is so beneficial. Thankyou!

Part III

Stated in Lang's book above, the Creationist had a conference and had invited three non Christian scientists who believe in absolute space instead of relative space. Now, from what I understand, the idea of absolute space brings God into the mixture of Newton's theories which he believed in earnestly. It goes without saying that these articles on Absolute space and relative space were difficult to follow for me.

Newton's Assumption of Absolute Space: There was an initial problem with accepting the theory of relativity by which Newton assumed the existence of absolute space and of absolute motion. Is space real or not? He said, 'For it may be that there is no 'body' that is really at rest, to which the places and motion of others may be referred. You see, Newton envisaged absolute space as an absolute order of 'places'; this order of places was a

‘primary’ system to which motion ultimately can be referred. Since these absolute or real places cannot be observed by the senses, the question arises as to what purpose we should assume their existence? This delicate the question Newton covers by his vague reference to the ‘philosophical disquisitions’ that make such deeds necessary. Newton decided that rest and motion, absolute and relative, could be distinguished by their properties, causes, and effects. Thus, he said, ‘It was a property of rest and bodies really at rest do rest in respect to one another.’ This is true in spite of the fact that such absolutely resting bodies, if they exist, may be found only in the region of the fixed stars, or even beyond that region, but absolute rest cannot be determined ‘from the positions of bodies in our region.’ Even though empirical observation doesn’t show this, Newton introduced this concept because he needed it in order to maintain the first law of motion, ‘every body continues in its state of rest, or of uniform motion in a line, unless it is compelled to change that state by forces impressed upon it.’ He also believed that the concept of absolute space protected the notion of God as the divine substance that reveals its own infinity in the double infinity of absolute space and time. This showed the world as matter obeying a uniform law.

Newton’s Views on Space, Time, and Motion: Newton was the founder of classical mechanics with his view that space is something separate from body and that time passes uniformly without regard to whatever happens in the world. Thus, we have the resulting theory of absolute space and absolute time. So Newton went on to define true motion of a body to be its motion through absolute space. Others felt that true motion could be seen in terms of the specifics of the relative motions or its causes. Newton’s theses have been given the name, ‘substantivalism’ which contrasts ‘relationism’. Newton regarded space and time as real entities with their own manner of existence as shown by God’s omnipresence and eternity. To paraphrase his ideas:

- ✓ Absolute time passes equably without relation to anything external
- ✓ Absolute space remains similar and immovable without relation to anything external. Relative spaces are measures of absolute space defined with reference to a system of bodies and so relative space may be in motion.
- ✓ The place of a body may be absolute or relative according to whether the space is absolute or relative.
- ✓ Absolute motion is the translation of a body from one absolute place to another; relative motion is the translation from one relative place to another.

Newton’s argument concerning motion are not designed to show that true motion is separate from merely relative motion but the only feasible analysis of true motion requires reference to

absolute places, and thus the existence of absolute space. So these views dominated physics from the 17th century to the 20th century with the coming of relativity.

Einstein's development of general relativity was a desire to provide a general principle of relativity which says that all motion is relative motion. Einstein's theory says that the rules of physics must be the same for all observers, regardless of the frame of reference, and that light propagates at the same speed in all reference frames. So, as far as the absoluteness of space-time, it no longer has the character of something that acts without being acted upon. But there's still controversy because of the question, 'what counts as matter?' So the controversy is whether space-time can exist without matter and whether a gravitational field is matter or isn't matter. So motion is relative to something else. This consists of two points: one body moving and the other body stationary or also moving. To back up to Newton, a body cannot move relative to absolute space because there is nothing to compare it with. Absolute space is not necessarily empty. It contains natural phenomena that govern the actions of matter and energy and according to the article it is what gives the universe its personality. Inertia is a phenomenon which Newton explains as being a force which must be exerted on a body to accelerate the body. It was thought that speed was relative to a fixed medium. To take this further, Newton thought this to be equal but in order for a body to reach a higher level of speed, more force is required than the force it is exerting. This is where the equation $E=MC^2$ comes into being. This represents the scalar inertial mass/energy of the body relative to absolute space. Other words, it simply indicates the body's needed energy relative to absolute space. A body by itself, according to Newton, has only inertial mass as understood by 'space energy level'. A body of matter has no intrinsic inertial mass; it really depends on the body's level of energy relative to absolute space. So we can say that $E=MC^2$ represents the energy, matter is relative to space only.

In reference to Newton's Mechanics, atomism in its basics is explained in terms of fundamental particles. Change is the result of collisions that take place in a void. Nothing can be created out of nothing (except when God wills it or does it) and nothing can ever become something that isn't. Atomic theories are devices used to talk about these phenomena. But first let's repeat what Newton thinks of absolute space. It always remains similar and immovable in its own nature, where as relative space is a moveable dimension or measure within absolute space. He says that absolute, true and mathematical time flows equably without regard to the external. Now, time is connected to motion because time is caused by the wave-motions of space. According to the author, we can assume an absolute time such that we have a continuous reference as to measure the velocity of wave-motion. Now the

author goes on to say that Newton was not correct in thinking that time was a 'thing in itself.' Now the writer of this essay doesn't agree with the author but who am I to say anything, I hardly understand what I'm attempting to summarize! Einstein in his attempt to bring about a uniform theoretical foundation said that in Newton's view, physical events are regarded as motions which are governed by fixed laws of material points in space. This is an atomistic and mechanistic scheme but Newton used particles with motion instead of motion of space itself according to Einstein. That which determines motion according to Newton is its relation to absolute space. Einstein did not believe that fundamental space and time was separate from matter, he thought that matter caused space and time but as it has been stated Wave Structure of matter according to Newton states the opposite. Einstein thus says that the concept of absolute space is not necessary as all motion in space should be understood as motion of matter relative to other matter. But, let's think back to the creationist conference where they invited three non Christian scientists who thought that space was absolute and not relative. The point of the summary is to find out why and how this applies to creationism. So they didn't believe that Einstein was correct in saying that Absolute Space didn't matter. But to continue, Einstein says that instant action-at-a-distance between discrete particles becomes action-at-a-distance between the In and Out-Waves. These In and Out Waves velocity is the velocity of light. According to the author, these actions are not instantaneous as Newton assumed but are limited by the speed of light. But the author now says in respect to absolute space Newton was correct! There is a fundamental physical space which acts as a wave medium and connects all things, but Newton assumed too many existents. (In regards to my thinking, space has to be real if it acts as a medium by which waves act or it's a medium by which objects or particles of the universe are being held.) To understand this, is not rocket science; as the sayings goes. Of course, this whole explanation relative motion has to do with how gravity of one object acts on another object through distance in a vacuum otherwise, space. But there's other arguments regarding whether space is indeed a vacuum. Part of the problem with regards to Newton seems to be if gravity is a particle how could it affect anything instantly? According to the author who says that matter is large, like Einstein says, it is spherically spatially extended; thus Newton's instant action at a distance from a particle becomes action at a distance from the Wave Centre of Spherical standing waves in space which is due to the interaction and change in velocity of their In and Out Waves. (Have I missed something? Supposably, the velocity of light is constant but the author is talking about the velocity of In and Out Waves changing. I do know that gravity affects light waves, but perhaps not its velocity as it already has been said that the velocity of light limited the In

and Out wave.) So Newton's idea of light waves as particles gave way to light as waves. But there are problems even with this statement as in the way light waves act, it seems to have certain properties of matter. But Newton's idea of particles as light waves solved many problems but at the same time created more problems according to the author. The author finishes up by saying that Newton's Law of Inertia was correct which states that mass is caused by the relationship between change in velocity of In Waves and the resultant change in location of the Wave Centre which results in the acceleration of the particle. So out of these articles, I'm still not sure what absolute space verses relative space has to do with creationism, except for that one point made by Newton about placing God as a control factor. Must more reading is obviously needed here and/or perhaps the subject is far too complicated in relation to this DRE programme.

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