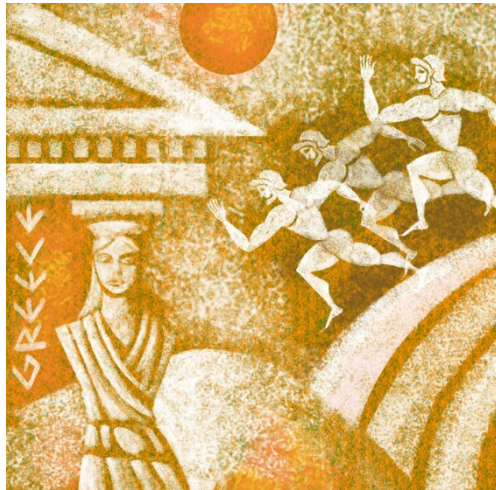


# COLOSSIANS

*Κολοσσαεύς*



## Calvary Bible Church Colossians 1:15-23 Study Guide

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**Wednesday Night Discussion Groups**

**Tim & Melinda Inman**

**Dec. 8, 2010 – Jan. 19, 2011**

**Group party: Dec. 15, Christmas Break: Dec. 22 & 29, Group resumes: Jan. 5**

**Material contains meditations of this passage to use during the Christmas break**

# The Inductive Method

## Observation

What does the text say?

### Overview

Establish Context by determining Historical Background

Where does it fit in the Bible timeline?

**Ask: Who, What, When, Where, Why, and How?**

Make simple lists of people, places, and events mentioned in the text

Make simple lists of key words that are used throughout large portions of the entire book

Determine Book and Chapter Themes

Mark questions to return to later for future study

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### Chapter Studies

**Ask: Who, What, When, Where, Why and How?**

Make more thorough lists of people, places and events

Make more thorough lists of Key Words in chapter or section

Ignore chapter divisions when the theme is carried forward

Mark Contrasts, Comparisons, Expressions of Time, Terms of Conclusion

**Beginning of Interpretation:** Tie this all together by examining text verse by verse

Outline or complete Structural Analysis to break down difficult text

Examine meanings of Key Words as you study verse by verse

Meditate on text to determine paragraph themes

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## Interpretation

What does the text mean in correct context?

What principles do I see that tie to other sections of scripture?

Complete Cross References of those passages of scripture

Complete examination of Key Words: meaning, tense, voice

Notice and examine meaning of verbs & descriptive adjectives

Note commands and warnings

Consult commentaries after completing your own study

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## Application

Based on correct interpretation of the text:

What must I do?

How can I apply this truth to my life?

How does this affect me?

How does this better knowledge of God change me?

Meditate on scripture and Memorize important, applicable passages of scripture

## What do I see? What does it *mean*? How does this *change* me?

### Digging in: Observing, Interpreting & Applying the Text

**Read and study prayerfully each day.** “Prayer is really a key to effective Bible study. Learn to pray before, during, and after your reading of the Scriptures. Prayer is especially crucial when you come to a place in your study where you are stuck and confused.”<sup>1</sup>

**The Text:** Everyone studies in their own unique way; therefore, there are several studies options available to you regarding the text of Colossians 1:15-23.

- (1) If you prefer to work from one marked copy, remove the working copy at the end of the Overview material, place it in a three-ring binder, and use it for our entire study of Colossians.
- (2) If you don't like the above option, the text will be printed throughout this material; therefore, you can use this Study Guide alone. The entire first chapter of Colossians is printed at the back to help you set this particular section within the entire chapter.
- (3) Or, use your own bible and simply refer to this material for your study suggestions.

**We will now focus in and observe Colossians 1:15-23 carefully and thoroughly.**

#### **The importance of careful, thorough Observation continues:**

“The more time you spend in **observation**, the less time you will need to spend in interpretation, and the more accurate will be your results. The less time you spend in observation, the more time you will need to spend in interpretation, and the less accurate will be your results.”<sup>2</sup> To observe the text thoroughly ask **who, what, when, where, why, and how** of the text. Always look for the obvious. Slow down to *see* what is actually there in the text, not what you *think* is there. Repeated, significant words and phrases, which are crucial to understanding the text, are always important. A key word or phrase is one that is vital to what the author is attempting to communicate.

#### **What words or phrases are significant in this particular section?**

As you read through the book and completed the Overview you will have noted that, in addition to the words that are significant in the entire book, there are key, significant words specific to each chapter or section. These essential words unlock the meaning of the text.

**As always, use any study suggestions that help you; and, skip those that don't.**

**Turn the page and begin...Instructions are on page 5.**

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<sup>1</sup> Howard G. & William D. Hendricks, *Living by the Book*, (Chicago: Moody Publishers, 2007), 100.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, 43.

**Read the text in at least two different translations (instructions on facing page):**

**Prior text to set the passage in context: Colossians 1:9-14 (NIV),** **9**For this reason, since the day we heard about you, we have not stopped praying for you and asking God to fill you with the knowledge of his will through all spiritual wisdom and understanding. **10**And we pray this in order that you may live a life worthy of the Lord and may please him in every way: bearing fruit in every good work, growing in the knowledge of God, **11**being strengthened with all power according to his glorious might so that you may have great endurance and patience, and joyfully **12**giving thanks to the Father, who has qualified you to share in the inheritance of the saints in the kingdom of light. **13**For he has rescued us from the dominion of darkness and brought us into the kingdom of the Son he loves, **14**in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins.

**Colossians 1:15-23 (NIV)**

**15**He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation. **16**For by him all things were created: things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities; all things were created by him and for him. **17**He is before all things, and in him all things hold together. **18**And he is the head of the body, the church; he is the beginning and the firstborn from among the dead, so that in everything he might have the supremacy. **19**For God was pleased to have all his fullness dwell in him, **20**and through him to reconcile to himself all things, whether things on earth or things in heaven, by making peace through his blood, shed on the cross.

**21**Once you were alienated from God and were enemies in your minds because of your evil behavior. **22**But now he has reconciled you by Christ's physical body through death to present you holy in his sight, without blemish and free from accusation— **23**if you continue in your faith, established and firm, not moved from the hope held out in the gospel. This is the gospel that you heard and that has been proclaimed to every creature under heaven, and of which I, Paul, have become a servant.

**Colossians 1:15-23 (ESV)**

**15** He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation. **16** For by him all things were created, in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities—all things were created through him and for him. **17** And he is before all things, and in him all things hold together. **18** And he is the head of the body, the church. He is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, that in everything he might be preeminent. **19** For in him all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell, **20** and through him to reconcile to himself all things, whether on earth or in heaven, making peace by the blood of his cross.

**21** And you, who once were alienated and hostile in mind, doing evil deeds, **22** he has now reconciled in his body of flesh by his death, in order to present you holy and blameless and above reproach before him, **23** if indeed you continue in the faith, stable and steadfast, not shifting from the hope of the gospel that you heard, which has been proclaimed in all creation under heaven, and of which I, Paul, became a minister.

## Week One: Dec. 8-15, 2010—Read the instructions on pg. 3, then...

Focus on this: What do I see? (We'll worry about what it *means* later.)

1. **Starting with the prior paragraph (Col. 1:9-14), read Colossians 1:15-23 on the facing page. Read it in each translation.** Read thoughtfully. Read contemplatively. Read like you've never read it before. Reading a text in more than one translation helps us to comprehend meaning, and reveals new things to us because we see the same thought stated in a new way. **Use the margins to write down observations and questions so you can investigate them later. Mark it up.**
2. **Flip to the back of this Study Guide (pg. 33) and read the entire first chapter of Colossians in order to set our text within the chapter.**
3. **Read through Colossians 1:15-23 thoughtfully one more time.** If you're using the working copy from the Overview, you will see the words you already marked in the Overview—those that were crucial to interpreting the entire book. Now focus in on the significant words in this section. A key word or phrase is one that is crucial to understanding the meaning of the text. **Determine what the key words and phrases are for this particular section. With a pencil, lightly circle those words that you *think* are "key" to understanding this section.**
4. **Pay attention to the persons mentioned: God, Christ, the church universal, the Colossians, Paul.** Especially focus in on the person of Christ Jesus. **What do you notice here about him?** Number or underline each aspect of his person that you want to know more about.
5. **Notice things you want to study in greater detail later and make a note in the margin.**
6. (See the information on outlining, pg. 21, and make an outline if you'd like.)

### Christmas meditations to read and meditate on over the holidays:

Here at the Christmas season, we arrive at this section extolling and praising the person of our Savior. In Ephesians we learned all we have *in* Christ Jesus; in Colossians, we learn all Christ *is*.

**Therefore, in order to give us a full picture of the glory of Christ as we enter this season, read the following passages of scripture throughout the holidays. Meditate on the wonder of who Christ is. Contemplate his character, attributes, worth, preexistence, preeminence, wisdom, and glorious, compassionate kindness to plan our redemption before he even laid the foundation of the world.**

#### Ephesians 1:3-10 (NIV, italics added)

<sup>3</sup>Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in the heavenly realms with every spiritual blessing in Christ. <sup>4</sup>For he chose us in him *before* the creation of the world to be holy and blameless in his sight. In love <sup>5</sup>he predestined us to be adopted as his sons through Jesus Christ, in accordance with his pleasure and will— <sup>6</sup>to the praise of his glorious grace, which he has freely given us in the One he loves. <sup>7</sup>In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, in accordance with the riches of God's grace <sup>8</sup>that he lavished on us with all wisdom and understanding. <sup>9</sup>And he made known to us the mystery of his will according to his good pleasure, which he purposed in Christ, <sup>10</sup>to be put into effect when the times will have reached their fulfillment—to bring all things in heaven and on earth together under one head, even Christ.

**Titus 1:1-3 (NIV, italics added)**

<sup>1</sup>Paul, a servant of God and an apostle of Jesus Christ for the faith of God's elect and the knowledge of the truth that leads to godliness— <sup>2</sup>a faith and knowledge resting on the hope of eternal life, which God, who does not lie, promised *before* the beginning of time, <sup>3</sup>and at his appointed season he brought his word to light through the preaching entrusted to me by the command of God our Savior...

**Hebrews 1:1-4 (NIV)**

<sup>1</sup>In the past God spoke to our forefathers through the prophets at many times and in various ways, <sup>2</sup>but in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son, whom he appointed heir of all things, and through whom he made the universe. <sup>3</sup>The Son is the radiance of God's glory and the exact representation of his being, sustaining all things by his powerful word. After he had provided purification for sins, he sat down at the right hand of the Majesty in heaven. <sup>4</sup>So he became as much superior to the angels as the name he has inherited is superior to theirs.

**John 1:1-18 (NIV)**

<sup>1</sup>In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. <sup>2</sup>He was with God in the beginning.

<sup>3</sup>Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made. <sup>4</sup>In him was life, and that life was the light of men. <sup>5</sup>The light shines in the darkness, but the darkness has not understood it.

<sup>6</sup>There came a man who was sent from God; his name was John. <sup>7</sup>He came as a witness to testify concerning that light, so that through him all men might believe. <sup>8</sup>He himself was not the light; he came only as a witness to the light. <sup>9</sup>The true light that gives light to every man was coming into the world.

<sup>10</sup>He was in the world, and though the world was made through him, the world did not recognize him. <sup>11</sup>He came to that which was his own, but his own did not receive him. <sup>12</sup>Yet to all who received him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God— <sup>13</sup>children born not of natural descent, nor of human decision or a husband's will, but born of God.

<sup>14</sup>The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the One and Only, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth.

<sup>15</sup>John testifies concerning him. He cries out, saying, "This was he of whom I said, 'He who comes after me has surpassed me because he was before me.'" <sup>16</sup>From the fullness of his grace we have all received one blessing after another. <sup>17</sup>For the law was given through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ. <sup>18</sup>No one has ever seen God, but God the One and Only, who is at the Father's side, has made him known.

### Genesis 1:1-2:3

<sup>1</sup> In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.

<sup>2</sup> Now the earth was formless and empty, darkness was over the surface of the deep, and the Spirit of God was hovering over the waters.

<sup>3</sup> And God said, "Let there be light," and there was light. <sup>4</sup> God saw that the light was good, and He separated the light from the darkness. <sup>5</sup> God called the light "day," and the darkness he called "night." And there was evening, and there was morning—the first day.

<sup>6</sup> And God said, "Let there be an expanse between the waters to separate water from water." <sup>7</sup> So God made the expanse and separated the water under the expanse from the water above it. And it was so. <sup>8</sup> God called the expanse "sky." And there was evening, and there was morning—the second day.

<sup>9</sup> And God said, "Let the water under the sky be gathered to one place, and let dry ground appear." And it was so. <sup>10</sup> God called the dry ground "land," and the gathered waters he called "seas." And God saw that it was good.

<sup>11</sup> Then God said, "Let the land produce vegetation: seed-bearing plants and trees on the land that bear fruit with seed in it, according to their various kinds." And it was so. <sup>12</sup> The land produced vegetation: plants bearing seed according to their kinds and trees bearing fruit with seed in it according to their kinds. And God saw that it was good. <sup>13</sup> And there was evening, and there was morning—the third day.

<sup>14</sup> And God said, "Let there be lights in the expanse of the sky to separate the day from the night, and let them serve as signs to mark seasons and days and years, <sup>15</sup> and let them be lights in the expanse of the sky to give light on the earth." And it was so. <sup>16</sup> God made two great lights—the greater light to govern the day and the lesser light to govern the night. He also made the stars. <sup>17</sup> God set them in the expanse of the sky to give light on the earth, <sup>18</sup> to govern the day and the night, and to separate light from darkness. And God saw that it was good. <sup>19</sup> And there was evening, and there was morning—the fourth day.

<sup>20</sup> And God said, "Let the water teem with living creatures, and let birds fly above the earth across the expanse of the sky." <sup>21</sup> So God created the great creatures of the sea and every living and moving thing with which the water teems, according to their kinds, and every winged bird according to its kind. And God saw that it was good. <sup>22</sup> God blessed them and said, "Be fruitful and increase in number and fill the water in the seas, and let the birds increase on the earth." <sup>23</sup> And there was evening, and there was morning—the fifth day.

<sup>24</sup> And God said, "Let the land produce living creatures according to their kinds: livestock, creatures that move along the ground, and wild animals, each according to its kind." And it was so. <sup>25</sup> God made the wild animals according to their kinds, the livestock according to their kinds, and all the creatures that move along the ground according to their kinds. And God saw that it was good.

<sup>26</sup> Then God said, "Let us make man in our image, in our likeness, and let them rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air, over the livestock, over all the earth, and over all the creatures that move along the ground."

<sup>27</sup> So God created man in his own image,  
in the image of God he created him;  
male and female he created them.

<sup>28</sup> God blessed them and said to them, "Be fruitful and increase in number; fill the earth and subdue it. Rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air and over every living creature that moves on the ground."

<sup>29</sup> Then God said, "I give you every seed-bearing plant on the face of the whole earth and every tree that has fruit with seed in it. They will be yours for food. <sup>30</sup> And to all the beasts of the earth and all the birds of the air and all the creatures that move on the ground—everything that has the breath of life in it—I give every green plant for food." And it was so.

<sup>31</sup> God saw all that he had made, and it was very good. And there was evening, and there was morning—the sixth day.

<sup>2:1</sup> Thus the heavens and the earth were completed in all their vast array.

<sup>2</sup> By the seventh day God had finished the work he had been doing; so on the seventh day he rested from all his work. <sup>3</sup> And God blessed the seventh day and made it holy, because on it he rested from all the work of creating that he had done.

**Exodus 20:1-11 (NIV, italics added)**

<sup>1</sup> And God spoke all these words:

<sup>2</sup> "I am the LORD your God, who brought you out of Egypt, out of the land of slavery.

<sup>3</sup> "You shall have no other gods before me.

<sup>4</sup> "You shall not make for yourself an idol in the form of anything in heaven above or on the earth beneath or in the waters below. <sup>5</sup> You shall not bow down to them or worship them; for I, the LORD your God, am a jealous God, punishing the children for the sin of the fathers to the third and fourth generation of those who hate me, <sup>6</sup> *but* showing love to a thousand {generations} of those who love me and keep my commandments.

<sup>7</sup> "You shall not misuse the name of the LORD your God, for the LORD will not hold anyone guiltless who misuses his name.

<sup>8</sup> "Remember the Sabbath day by keeping it holy. <sup>9</sup> Six days you shall labor and do all your work, <sup>10</sup> but the seventh day is a Sabbath to the LORD your God. On it you shall not do any work, neither you, nor your son or daughter, nor your manservant or maidservant, nor your animals, nor the alien within your gates. <sup>11</sup> For in six days the LORD made the heavens and the earth, the sea, and all that is in them, but he rested on the seventh day. Therefore the LORD blessed the Sabbath day and made it holy.

**Isaiah 9:1-7 (NIV), a prophecy of what the Messiah, Christ Jesus, would and will accomplish:**

<sup>1</sup> Nevertheless, there will be no more gloom for those who were in distress. In the past he humbled the land of Zebulun and the land of Naphtali, but in the future he will honor Galilee of the Gentiles, by the way of the sea, along the Jordan-

<sup>2</sup> The people walking in darkness  
have seen a great light;  
on those living in the land of the shadow of death  
a light has dawned.

<sup>3</sup> You have enlarged the nation  
and increased their joy;  
they rejoice before you  
as people rejoice at the harvest,  
as men rejoice  
when dividing the plunder.

<sup>4</sup> For as in the day of Midian's defeat,  
you have shattered  
the yoke that burdens them,  
the bar across their shoulders,  
the rod of their oppressor.

<sup>5</sup> Every warrior's boot used in battle  
and every garment rolled in blood  
will be destined for burning,  
will be fuel for the fire.

<sup>6</sup> For to us a child is born,  
to us a son is given,  
and the government will be on his shoulders.  
And he will be called  
Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God,  
Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.

<sup>7</sup> Of the increase of his government and peace  
there will be no end.  
He will reign on David's throne  
and over his kingdom,  
establishing and upholding it  
with justice and righteousness  
from that time on and forever.  
The zeal of the LORD Almighty  
will accomplish this.

### **Isaiah 53 (NIV), a Messianic prophecy**

- <sup>1</sup> Who has believed our message and to whom has the arm of the LORD been revealed?
- <sup>2</sup> He grew up before him like a tender shoot, and like a root out of dry ground.  
He had no beauty or majesty to attract us to him, nothing in his appearance that we should desire him.
- <sup>3</sup> He was despised and rejected by men, a man of sorrows, and familiar with suffering.  
Like one from whom men hide their faces he was despised, and we esteemed him not.
- <sup>4</sup> Surely he took up our infirmities and carried our sorrows,  
yet we considered him stricken by God, smitten by him, and afflicted.
- <sup>5</sup> But he was pierced for our transgressions, he was crushed for our iniquities;  
the punishment that brought us peace was upon him, and by his wounds we are healed.
- <sup>6</sup> We all, like sheep, have gone astray, each of us has turned to his own way;  
and the LORD has laid on him the iniquity of us all.
- <sup>7</sup> He was oppressed and afflicted, yet he did not open his mouth;  
he was led like a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is silent,  
so he did not open his mouth.
- <sup>8</sup> By oppression and judgment he was taken away. And who can speak of his descendants?  
For he was cut off from the land of the living; for the transgression of my people he was stricken.
- <sup>9</sup> He was assigned a grave with the wicked, and with the rich in his death,  
though he had done no violence,  
nor was any deceit in his mouth.
- <sup>10</sup> Yet it was the LORD's will to crush him and cause him to suffer,  
and though the LORD makes his life a guilt offering, he will see his offspring and prolong his days,  
and the will of the LORD will prosper in his hand.
- <sup>11</sup> After the suffering of his soul, he will see the light of life and be satisfied;  
by his knowledge my righteous servant will justify many, and he will bear their iniquities.
- <sup>12</sup> Therefore I will give him a portion among the great, and he will divide the spoils with the strong,  
because he poured out his life unto death, and was numbered with the transgressors.  
For he bore the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors.

### **Jeremiah 31:31-34 (NIV), a Messianic prophecy of the New Covenant in Christ**

<sup>31</sup> "The time is coming," declares the LORD, "when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah. <sup>32</sup> It will not be like the covenant I made with their forefathers when I took them by the hand to lead them out of Egypt, because they broke my covenant, though I was a husband to them," declares the LORD. <sup>33</sup> "This is the covenant I will make with the house of Israel after that time," declares the LORD. "I will put my law in their minds and write it on their hearts. I will be their God, and they will be my people. <sup>34</sup> No longer will a man teach his neighbor, or a man his brother, saying, 'Know the LORD,' because they will all know me, from the least of them to the greatest," declares the LORD. "For I will forgive their wickedness and will remember their sins no more."

**Romans 4:13-17 (NIV, italics added), a Messianic prophecy pertaining to all believers**

<sup>13</sup>It was not through law that Abraham and his offspring received the promise that he would be heir of the world, but through the righteousness that comes by faith. <sup>14</sup>For if those who live by law are heirs, faith has no value and the promise is worthless, <sup>15</sup>because law brings wrath. And where there is no law there is no transgression. <sup>16</sup>Therefore, the promise comes by faith, so that it may be by grace and may be guaranteed to all Abraham's offspring—not only to those who are of the law *but also* to those who are of the faith of Abraham. He is the father of us all. <sup>17</sup>As it is written: "I have made you a father of many nations." He is our father in the sight of God, in whom he believed—the God who gives life to the dead and calls things that are not as though they were.

**John 17:1-5, After the Last Supper, Jesus prayed:**

<sup>1</sup>After Jesus said this, he looked toward heaven and prayed: "Father, the time has come. Glorify your Son, that your Son may glorify you. <sup>2</sup>For you granted him authority over all people that he might give eternal life to all those you have given him. <sup>3</sup>Now this is eternal life: that they may know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom you have sent. <sup>4</sup>I have brought you glory on earth by completing the work you gave me to do. <sup>5</sup>And now, Father, glorify me in your presence with the glory I had with you before the world began..."<sup>24</sup>"Father, I want those you have given me to be with me where I am, and to see my glory, the glory you have given me because you loved me before the creation of the world. <sup>25</sup>"Righteous Father, though the world does not know you, I know you, and they know that you have sent me. <sup>26</sup>I have made you known to them, and will continue to make you known in order that the love you have for me may be in them and that I myself may be in them."

**John 16:7b-15 (NIV), Jesus teaches his disciples right before the above prayer:**

"It is for your good that I am going away. Unless I go away, the Counselor will not come to you; but if I go, I will send him to you. <sup>8</sup>When he comes, he will convict the world of guilt in regard to sin and righteousness and judgment: <sup>9</sup>in regard to sin, because men do not believe in me; <sup>10</sup>in regard to righteousness, because I am going to the Father, where you can see me no longer; <sup>11</sup>and in regard to judgment, because the prince of this world now stands condemned.

<sup>12</sup>"I have much more to say to you, more than you can now bear. <sup>13</sup>But when he, the Spirit of truth, comes, he will guide you into all truth. He will not speak on his own; he will speak only what he hears, and he will tell you what is yet to come. <sup>14</sup>He will bring glory to me by taking from what is mine and making it known to you. <sup>15</sup>All that belongs to the Father is mine. That is why I said the Spirit will take from what is mine and make it known to you.

**Romans 1:1-4, 16-17; 3:21-26 (NIV)**

<sup>1:1</sup>Paul, a servant of Christ Jesus, called to be an apostle and set apart for the gospel of God—  
<sup>2</sup>the gospel he promised beforehand through his prophets in the Holy Scriptures <sup>3</sup>regarding his Son, who as to his human nature was a descendant of David, <sup>4</sup>and who through the Spirit of holiness was declared

with power to be the Son of God by his resurrection from the dead: Jesus Christ our Lord... <sup>16</sup>I am not ashamed of the gospel, because it is the power of God for the salvation of everyone who believes: first for the Jew, then for the Gentile. <sup>17</sup>For in the gospel a righteousness from God is revealed, a righteousness that is by faith from first to last, just as it is written: "The righteous will live by faith."

<sup>3:21</sup>But now a righteousness from God, apart from law, has been made known, to which the Law and the Prophets testify. <sup>22</sup>This righteousness from God comes through faith in Jesus Christ to all who believe. There is no difference, <sup>23</sup>for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, <sup>24</sup>and are justified freely by his grace through the redemption that came by Christ Jesus. <sup>25</sup>God presented him as a sacrifice of atonement, through faith in his blood. He did this to demonstrate his justice, because in his forbearance he had left the sins committed beforehand unpunished— <sup>26</sup>he did it to demonstrate his justice at the present time, so as to be just and the one who justifies those who have faith in Jesus.

#### **Hebrews 2:14-18; 4:12-16 (NIV)**

<sup>2:14</sup>Since the children have flesh and blood, he (Christ Jesus) too shared in their humanity so that by his death he might destroy him who holds the power of death—that is, the devil— <sup>15</sup>and free those who all their lives were held in slavery by their fear of death. <sup>16</sup>For surely it is not angels he helps, but Abraham's descendants. <sup>17</sup>For this reason he had to be made like his brothers in every way, in order that he might become a merciful and faithful high priest in service to God, and that he might make atonement for the sins of the people. <sup>18</sup>Because he himself suffered when he was tempted, he is able to help those who are being tempted.

<sup>4:12</sup>For the word of God is living and active. Sharper than any double-edged sword, it penetrates even to dividing soul and spirit, joints and marrow; it judges the thoughts and attitudes of the heart. <sup>13</sup>Nothing in all creation is hidden from God's sight. Everything is uncovered and laid bare before the eyes of him to whom we must give account.

<sup>14</sup>Therefore, since we have a great high priest who has gone through the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold firmly to the faith we profess. <sup>15</sup>For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but we have one who has been tempted in every way, just as we are—yet was without sin. <sup>16</sup>Let us then approach the throne of grace with confidence, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need.

#### **Revelation 21 (NIV)**

<sup>1</sup>Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and there was no longer any sea. <sup>2</sup>I saw the Holy City, the new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride beautifully dressed for her husband. <sup>3</sup>And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, "Now the dwelling of God is with men, and he will live with them. They will be his people, and God himself will be with them and be their God. <sup>4</sup>He will wipe every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death or mourning or crying or pain, for the old order of things has passed away."

<sup>5</sup>He who was seated on the throne said, "I am making everything new!" Then he said, "Write this down, for these words are trustworthy and true."

<sup>6</sup>He said to me: "It is done. I am the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End. To him who is thirsty I will give to drink without cost from the spring of the water of life. <sup>7</sup>He who overcomes will inherit all this, and I will be his God and he will be my son. <sup>8</sup>But the cowardly, the unbelieving, the vile, the murderers, the sexually immoral, those who practice magic arts, the idolaters and all liars—their place will be in the fiery lake of burning sulfur. This is the second death."

<sup>9</sup>One of the seven angels who had the seven bowls full of the seven last plagues came and said to me, "Come, I will show you the bride, the wife of the Lamb." <sup>10</sup>And he carried me away in the Spirit to a mountain great and high, and showed me the Holy City, Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God. <sup>11</sup>It shone with the glory of God, and its brilliance was like that of a very precious jewel, like a jasper, clear as crystal. <sup>12</sup>It had a great, high wall with twelve gates, and with twelve angels at the gates. On the gates were written the names of the twelve tribes of Israel. <sup>13</sup>There were three gates on the east, three on the north, three on the south and three on the west. <sup>14</sup>The wall of the city had twelve foundations, and on them were the names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb.

<sup>15</sup>The angel who talked with me had a measuring rod of gold to measure the city, its gates and its walls. <sup>16</sup>The city was laid out like a square, as long as it was wide. He measured the city with the rod and found it to be 12,000 stadia in length, and as wide and high as it is long. <sup>17</sup>He measured its wall and it was 144 cubits thick, by man's measurement, which the angel was using. <sup>18</sup>The wall was made of jasper, and the city of pure gold, as pure as glass. <sup>19</sup>The foundations of the city walls were decorated with every kind of precious stone. The first foundation was jasper, the second sapphire, the third chalcedony, the fourth emerald, <sup>20</sup>the fifth sardonyx, the sixth carnelian, the seventh chrysolite, the eighth beryl, the ninth topaz, the tenth chrysoprase, the eleventh jacinth, and the twelfth amethyst. <sup>21</sup>The twelve gates were twelve pearls, each gate made of a single pearl. The great street of the city was of pure gold, like transparent glass.

<sup>22</sup>I did not see a temple in the city, because the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are its temple. <sup>23</sup>The city does not need the sun or the moon to shine on it, for the glory of God gives it light, and the Lamb is its lamp. <sup>24</sup>The nations will walk by its light, and the kings of the earth will bring their splendor into it. <sup>25</sup>On no day will its gates ever be shut, for there will be no night there. <sup>26</sup>The glory and honor of the nations will be brought into it. <sup>27</sup>Nothing impure will ever enter it, nor will anyone who does what is shameful or deceitful, but only those whose names are written in the Lamb's book of life.

**Now, return to page 4 and read and meditate on Colossians 1:15-23 again. Prepare your heart to dig into this passage as the hustle and bustle of the holidays subsides and we return to our regular study and discussion schedule on Jan. 5, 2011. We will discuss your holiday meditations as they relate to our passage.**

## Week Two: January 5-12, 2011

**What do I see (observation)? What does it *mean* (interpretation)?  
How does this *change* me (application)?**

### Day One: What we'll be doing and why?

We will now complete some marking in the text that will help us to pull together all the observations we made during the earlier weeks. We want to mark the key words to help us see them more clearly and to see how each use of that particular word is connected to the other uses. Use **color** or **pencil** or **ink**, whichever you prefer. Mark each key word with a unique mark for that particular word (a different color for each key word, or a different way of circling it, or drawing a box around it, or any other creative mark you want to use for each particular word). The purpose of marking is to help us see what's there.

**(1)** If you are using the working copy you used to complete your Overview, you will see that some of these words are marked already—words that are significant for the entire letter.

**(2)** If you're not using the working copy, use the text on the facing page (pg. 15), or **(3)** complete this exercise in your own bible. Or do any combination of the three; it's up to you.

**WHAT TO DO: Mark any of these words you see in the text with unique markings for each:**

- **God**
- **Jesus (draw a box around these phrases: in, by, through, for Christ)**
- **Author** (including pronouns [we, I], Paul and Timothy)
- **Recipients** (words that refer to the Colossians, including pronouns [you, your])
- **Key/Significant Words observed and marked during the Overview** (refer to the Overview material, if needed)
- **Other Significant Words which are crucial for understanding Col. 1:15-23**

**So what other words are significant and crucial?**

- 1. First, reassess the words you circled the first week (look at your copy on pg. 4). Then consider the questions you answered and meditated on from pg. 5.** What words that pertained to answering those questions are crucial to understanding the text and to answering the meditation questions? What words, if you removed them from the text, would remove the meaning or intent of the passage? Were your initial assessments of what the key words were correct? If not, adjust.
- 2. On page 15, mark the words you now understand to be crucial—the words that have definitions you *must* know in order to understand the text. (If you're using your working copy, mark them there.)**

**Before moving forward in your study, in order to keep Paul's praise of what God did through Christ Jesus in context, flip to the back (pg. 33, or use your working copy) and read all of Colossians 1.**

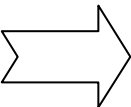
**Read carefully and thoughtfully, remembering your Christmas season meditations.**

### **Colossians 1:13-23 (NIV)**

**13**For he has rescued us from the dominion of darkness and brought us into the kingdom of the Son he loves, **14**in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins.

**15**He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation. **16**For by him all things were created: things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities; all things were created by him and for him. **17**He is before all things, and in him all things hold together. **18**And he is the head of the body, the church; he is the beginning and the firstborn from among the dead, so that in everything he might have the supremacy. **19**For God was pleased to have all his fullness dwell in him, **20**and through him to reconcile to himself all things, whether things on earth or things in heaven, by making peace through his blood, shed on the cross.

**21**Once you were alienated from God and were enemies in your minds because of your evil behavior. **22**But now he has reconciled you by Christ's physical body through death to present you holy in his sight, without blemish and free from accusation— **23**if you continue in your faith, established and firm, not moved from the hope held out in the gospel. This is the gospel that you heard and that has been proclaimed to every creature under heaven, and of which I, Paul, have become a servant.

 **WHAT NEXT?** We will now break down and consider this beautiful, glorious, poetic description of who Christ is. **Examine page 16.** On this page, the text has been broken up into two different ways to help you examine this densely packed description of Christ. **Take the time to contemplate both formats of Colossians 1:15-20 on page 16.** Commentators agree that either Col. 1 contains a first-century hymn or Paul himself was hymning, writing poetically as he was overcome with the rhapsody of who Christ is and what he has done for us.

## Does this format help you to see the hymn? Meditate on the majestic mercy of the Firstborn.

15He is the image of God,  
the invisible *ONE*  
**the firstborn** over *all* creation  
16**because in him** *all things* were created:  
in heaven and on earth,  
visible and invisible,  
whether thrones or powers  
whether rulers or authorities;  
*all things* were created **by him and for him**  
17**And, He is** before *all things*, and **in him** *all things* hold together.  
18**And he is** the head of the body, the church;  
18b**He is** the beginning,  
**the firstborn** from among the dead,  
so that in *everything* **he might have** the supremacy.  
19 **Because in Him** God was pleased to have *all* his fullness dwell,  
20and **through him** to reconcile *all things*  
to himself,  
making peace **through his blood**,  
shed on the cross.  
whether things on earth or things in heaven.<sup>3</sup>

### Here's another way to examine the text that helps you to see the details:

**Christ is** these things:

- the image of God, who is the invisible one, v.15
- **the firstborn** over *all* creation, v. 15
- before *all things*, v. 17
- the head of the body, the church, v. 18a
- the beginning, v. 18b
- **the firstborn** from among the dead, v. 18b

**Christ is** the image of God, the invisible *ONE*, and **the firstborn** over *all* creation **because:**

- **in him** *all things* were created, v. 16:
  - in heaven and on earth,
  - visible and invisible,
  - whether thrones or powers
  - whether rulers or authorities
- *all things* were created **by him and for him**, v. 16
- and **in him** *all things* hold together, v. 17

**Christ is** the beginning, **the firstborn** from among the dead, **so that:**

- in *everything* **he might have** the supremacy, v. 18, **because in Him:**
  - God was pleased to have *all* his fullness dwell, v. 19
  - and **through him** to reconcile *all things* to himself, v. 20a
    - whether things on earth or things in heaven
  - by making peace **through his blood**, shed on the cross, v. 20b

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<sup>3</sup> David E. Garland, *The NIV Application Commentary: Colossians and Philemon*, (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan, 1998), adapted from p. 85-86.

**Day Two: Okay, the key words are marked. Now what? Read the passage again and then...**

**Before moving on to the next step—interpretation—pause to see what Paul has told the Colossians so far about Christ.** It's all part of the same package; the prior descriptions led up to this packed section. To understand all he means in Colossians 1:15-23, you need to be aware of the information Paul has previously given them in the ways he has named and described Christ. **Examine each name or phrase used to describe Christ and see if you understand all that is entailed. Do you know the significance of each of these names and their meanings?**

- **Christ Jesus, 1:1, 4**
- **Our Lord Jesus Christ, 1:3**
- **The Lord, 1:10**
- **The Son he (God) loves, 1:13b**
- **In whom (Christ) we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins, 1:14**

**NOW WHAT: Then, make a list of all you observe about each Key Word you marked:**

In your notebook, or the margin of your working copy or bible, or the margin of pg. 14, or along the edges of the facing page (pg. 16), **make a thorough list of everything you observe about each of the key words, especially observing carefully all you see about Christ—who he is and what he's done.** Some lists can be noted by numbering right into the text, such as lists of qualities or attributes. We'll be examining the definitions of these qualities and attributes this week and next. Question the text in order to slow you down to observe the important facts surrounding each key word or phrase. Ask: **who, what, when, where, why and how.**

**Not all key words require a written list. Some can be marked right into the text by numbering or lettering. Example:**

**21**Once you <sup>A</sup>were alienated from God and <sup>B</sup>were enemies in your minds because of your evil behavior. **22****But now** he has <sup>#1</sup>reconciled you by Christ's physical body through death to present you <sup>#2</sup>holy in his sight, <sup>#3</sup>without blemish and <sup>#4</sup>free from accusation—

**Why are we doing this?**

Completing this exercise causes us to slow down and really *think* about the meaning of the text and how it applies to us, as well as to the Colossians—this is called meditating on Scripture. The bottom half of the facing page (pg. 16) is a type of “key word observation list” containing the ways Christ is described in this passage. **Now, make your own observations about what you see. Then, as you consider your observations, question the text. Write down your questions to consider later. An example of how to do this is given on the next page...**

An example of what a Key Word observation list might look like:

**KEY WORD:** each reference to Christ Jesus (he, him, his)


- **1:15a, He is the image of the invisible God**
  - (I wonder, exactly what does the word "image" mean? I must look it up. In what ways is Christ God's image? Does this mean that Christ is God in a physical body? Are they equal in essence? Do they differ in personality? How? There's a lot here.)
- **1:15b, He is the firstborn over all creation**
  - (I realize that I am going to *have* to look up the word "firstborn"? I want to understand it correctly. Does it mean that God created Christ, making him his firstborn or first creation? That seems contrary to all I've been taught. Plus, Christ is described as "firstborn" *over* all creation, v. 15b, and from among the dead, v. 18b. And, verses 16-17 make clear that Christ himself *is* the Creator, and is *before* all things. I need to know the meaning of the word "firstborn.")
- **1:16a, For by him all things were created...all things were created by him and for him.**
  - (*All things* were created *by* Christ and *for* Christ. That includes everything in all creation, including me. What purpose does this glorious Christ have for my life? How magnificent is his sovereignty over *all* of creation? He shapes history; *all things* are created by him, for his purposes. I'm stunned. I remember the meditations we completed over the Christmas season. Some of this was detailed in those meditations, from Genesis to Revelation. I decide to flip back and review what I read over the holidays.)
- **1:16b, He created things all things: in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or powers or rulers, or authorities**
  - (Immediately I recognize that I will need to think about what this means; it's all encompassing. Who are these thrones, powers, rulers, and authorities? How is Christ the driving force between everything that is and has been created? I will need to look up some word meanings. This is significant because it includes everything.)

In this way I then work through the rest of the section. The purpose of the above exercise is to slow you down and cause you to really *think* about what the text says and how it applies to you.

**WHAT TO DO:** Today, complete these types of complete and contemplative lists for each of the key words in Col. 1:15-23. Take it apart in any way that is useful to you. Experiment and discover what helps you see the richness of this text clearly. Try to ponder on what you're learning. Question the text. Ask yourself the same types of questions as in the example above. Determine what words you must look up. Experiment with different ways to "unpack" or take apart the text, such as was done on page 16. Use what works for *you*, what helps you to comprehend the text.

As always, use any study suggestions that help you; and, skip those that don't.

### Day Three: What now? How do I tie all of these ideas together?

**Mark Grammatical Phrases:** This exercise will help you see how the main ideas of this section tie together. Note these with marks in the working copy or in the copy of Colossians on the next page. 


- Mark **words of contrast** (*but, however, nevertheless, or, neither, nor, not only, etc.*) with a lightning bolt mark above the word (or any mark you choose that you feel shows contrast). **In the margin of the text, write what is being contrasted. For example:**

v.21, *Once you were alienated from God and were enemies in your minds because of your evil behavior*

 **BUT NOW**

v. 22, *he has reconciled you by Christ's physical body through death to present you holy in his sight, without blemish and free from accusation*

- Mark **words of comparison** (*like, likewise, also, in addition, as, in the same way, furthermore, just as, etc.*) with an = sign or arrow (or any mark you choose). What things are similar? What is the same? In the margin of your working copy, write what is being compared. **Are there any? Mark these in the same way you marked comparisons in Col. 1:1-14.**

-  Draw a little clock face (or another mark you choose) above words showing **expressions of time** (*once, now, after, before, at that time, the day, etc.*). **Why are these words or phrases important? What do they tell us about Christ's pre-existence and what he has done for us?**

- Mark with an "X" words that show **conclusions or an end result** (*therefore, so that, for this reason, in order that, because, since, consequently, etc.*) and **draw arrows** to connect the linked ideas. **Ask yourself, "What is the "therefore" there for?" What is the author trying to show or prove? What is the conclusion or result that he is emphasizing? For example:**

*He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation. For by him all things were created...*



- Mark **commands** in a way which draws the eye, such as highlighting, in order to ponder on these: they clarify the purpose of the letter. They are the forceful statements. There are no commands in Col. 1:15-23.
- The New Testament was written in Koine Greek. Due to Greek word formation and syntax, some things would be obvious in the original Greek that are not obvious in English.

- In the Greek, these words express continuous, habitual action. Mark like this ( ~ ):
  - 1:18, "supremacy"
  - 1:21, "were"
  - 1:23b, "not moved from the hope"
- These words express action that was completed in the past, but which have an ongoing or continual result. Mark like this ( → ):
  - 1:16, "were created"
  - 1:17, "hold together"
  - 1:21, "alienated"
  - 1:23, "established"
- Circle the conditional and/or inclusive words "whether", v. 20 and "if," v. 23

**As you completed this exercise, what was revealed about the passage? Write down anything you discover that you hadn't seen in the text before. Continue tomorrow.**

## Colossians 1:13-23 (NIV)

**13**For he has rescued us from the dominion of darkness and brought us into the kingdom of the Son he loves, **14**in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins.

**15**He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation. **16**For by him all things were created: things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities; all things were created by him and for him. **17**He is before all things, and in him all things hold together. **18**And he is the head of the body, the church; he is the beginning and the firstborn from among the dead, so that in everything he might have the supremacy. **19**For God was pleased to have all his fullness dwell in him, **20**and through him to reconcile to himself all things, whether things on earth or things in heaven, by making peace through his blood, shed on the cross.

**21**Once you were alienated from God and were enemies in your minds because of your evil behavior. **22**But now he has reconciled you by Christ's physical body through death to present you holy in his sight, without blemish and free from accusation— **23**if you continue in your faith, established and firm, not moved from the hope held out in the gospel. This is the gospel that you heard and that has been proclaimed to every creature under heaven, and of which I, Paul, have become a servant.

Start to work on the following pages during days 4 or 5 of Week Two (Jan. 5-12); and then, continue working on these same assignments during Week Three (Jan. 12-19).

- Read the ideas on pg. 21-23 and then divide the work up according to your own schedule and preferences, starting on pg. 24. Do whatever you can to slow down and observe the text thoroughly, verse by verse, breaking it down in any way that helps you understand. What works best will vary from person to person. In your own way, contemplate, question, and meditate on all you've discovered about the text so far.

### **OPTIONAL: Make an Outline**

Consider making an outline of the book at this point: Some people find that making an outline opens the text up for them. A simple outline could be made at this point if this is something you find beneficial. **Skip it if this doesn't help you.**

- **Complete a word-for-word outline of each section.** If you are the type of person who benefits from this type of structural work, prepare this initial outline skeleton by filling in the theme of the entire book with a theme for paragraph as Roman numerals under the theme of the entire book. Then you can add the text word-for-word under the Roman numerals, with each new paragraph being categorized by a letter of the alphabet.

- C. For this reason, since the day we heard about you,
  1. we have not stopped praying for you
  2. and asking God
    - a. to fill you with the knowledge of his will
      - i. through all spiritual wisdom
      - ii. and understanding.

- **Other people find that it helps them to break down the text from the first day they begin to study a book or section of the Bible.** Experiment with outline forms or simply breaking down the text in a way that makes grammatical structure more obvious to see if this helps you comprehend more.

- **Example:** Acts 1:8 (NIV)

But you will receive power  
when the Holy Spirit comes on you;  
and you will be My witnesses  
in Jerusalem,  
and in all Judea  
and Samaria,  
and to the ends of the earth.

**Question the text:** "If you want to understand a biblical text, you've got to bombard it with questions. The Bible is never embarrassed to be asked questions. That doesn't mean it will answer all of them. But you still need to ask to determine if they can be answered. Obviously, if you're going to ask questions, you've also got to look for the answers. Where will you find them? In the text. Observation will give you the basic building blocks out of which you will construct the meaning of a passage. The answers to your questions will come directly from your observation process."<sup>4</sup>

<sup>4</sup> Howard G. & William D. Hendricks, *Living by the Book*, (Chicago: Moody Publishers, 2007), 43.

**Example of “how-to” question the text, Colossians 1:15, 16:**

- **How** is Christ the image of the invisible God? **What** does *image* mean? **What** does Christ’s incarnation reveal about God? **How** does the fact that Christ became a man with a physical body play a part in God’s plan of salvation?
- **What** does *firstborn over all creation* mean? **What** about the meaning of *firstborn over all creation* leads Paul to say next that “by him all things were created...”?
- **What** is invisible that Christ created? **What** is visible?
- **Who or what** are these thrones, powers, rulers, or authorities? **When/How** did Christ create them? **How** does he demonstrate authority as Creator over them? **Where** else are these things/entities discussed?
- **In what way** are all things created *by* him and *for* him? **What** is the significance of being created *by* and *for* Christ? **How** does this say about our reason for existence?

**Ask questions of the rest of this section (Col. 1:15-23) and take whatever steps are necessary to answer those questions. Focus on comprehending the text.**

Use the following steps to aid your understanding. Each person studies differently, so make it a practice to always try new techniques to see if they help. **If a particular step or idea doesn’t help you, try something else. Come at the text from as many angles as possible. Dissect it.**

**PRAY FIRST! Ask the Holy Spirit to help you interpret correctly. Options to try:**

- Begin by **reading the passage in other translations**, like we did on pg. 4. Sometimes just reading the passage stated another way helps us to comprehend.
- **Look up word definitions** for words in this passage that you *need* to understand, for instance “image,” “firstborn,” “all things/all/everything,” (same Greek word used 8 times in this section), “hold together,” “beginning,” etc. There is *a lot* of word definition work needed in this descriptive passage. **Starting today, record your definitions, beginning on page 25, in your working copy, or in the text box on page 24, as you choose.** Examine any of the words that will help you comprehend the text. How? **The facing page, page 23, details “how to use a concordance,” or ask your group leader.**
- Use your concordance to **find other places these same key words are used.** (This is called finding the “cross references.”) We used our concordances to find people mentioned in this book and all the other places in the New Testament where they are discussed. Use the same process here, but **look up the words that are assigned the same Greek reference numbers.** For instance, “firstborn” is Strong’s #4416 or GK (NIV) #4758. Use your concordance to find other verses that include words that have the same numbered definitions. This will help you understand the word better. **Consult the facing page, page 23 for “how to find a cross reference,” or ask your group leader.**
- **Final option:** Examine the notes at the bottom of your study bible or in one of the listed commentaries (pg. 31), **after** you’ve completed the above steps.

## How to use a Concordance: skip this box if you already know how.

**Complete Word Studies:** The Old Testament was originally written in Hebrew (some Aramaic). The New Testament was originally written in Koine Greek. Use an exhaustive concordance for a basic definition, or a lexicon or bible dictionary for expanded definitions.

### How to use a Concordance:

1. Look up the word in the alphabetized front section of the concordance. (Remember: If you're using a Strong's concordance, you have to find how the word was translated into English in the KJV. The same Greek word (πρωτεύω) that is translated as "supremacy" in the NIV is translated as "preeminence" in the KJV, for instance).
2. Under the word, look for the verse reference where that specific word is used.
3. Look for the number on the right. Each number corresponds to a Greek or Hebrew word.
4. Turn to the appropriate dictionary or lexicon in the back of the concordance (Hebrew for the Old Testament and Greek for the New Testament).
5. Look up the number for the definition.
6. The words in italic are the definition. Write down the Greek word's transliteration (in English alphabet *πρωτεύω* is *prōteúō*); and write the definition down.

**How to Find a Cross References:** Using the concordance, compare references in the Bible which use any word(s), or quoted passages of scripture, that you determined needed further study. To find these look in the concordance at the list of all the references given for the same word. Find the same Greek or Hebrew reference number that is given for the Greek or Hebrew word you are examining. (For instance, *πρωτεύω*, which is "preeminence" in the KJV is Strong's #4409, if you're using a Strong's Concordance, and "supremacy" in the NIV—GK (NIV) #4750 if you're using an NIV Concordance).

Examine several other verses or all the verses that use the same number. Look up these other scripture references that use the same Greek or Hebrew word to compare the usage of the word. When the same word is studied in more than one account it is understood more fully.

**Try these online sources: [www.blueletterbible.org](http://www.blueletterbible.org), [www.biblegateway.com](http://www.biblegateway.com), and [www.crosswalk.com](http://www.crosswalk.com). Find which you like best; they all have online concordances. Example:** The steps to Blue Letter Bible's concordance are clean and simple. On the opening page, enter the passage you want to examine in the Bible/Dictionary Search. Pick the version (translation) and press "search." When the new page opens, click the button for what kind of help you want: C is for "Concordance and Hebrew-Greek Lexicon." Next, click on the concordance number by the word you want to investigate. This opens the concordance with the definition, or *biblical usage*, as well as the cross references. All the verses where this word is used are at the bottom of the concordance entry. Also, a very thorough Greek lexicon (dictionary) is available at: <http://www.studydrive.org/lex/grk/>. Just enter the word or the Strong's number you want to look up in the search box on the right hand of the page. A detailed definition will be given.

**START HERE: Read carefully, calling to mind all your previous meditations on this section.** Which words have you determined you need to look up in the concordance? **Circle them. Start to investigate these today. Continue tomorrow & next week.**

### **Colossians 1:13-23 (NIV)**

**13**For he has rescued us from the dominion of darkness and brought us into the kingdom of the Son he loves, **14**in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins.

**15**He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation. **16**For by him all things were created: things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities; all things were created by him and for him. **17**He is before all things, and in him all things hold together. **18**And he is the head of the body, the church; he is the beginning and the firstborn from among the dead, so that in everything he might have the supremacy. **19**For God was pleased to have all his fullness dwell in him, **20**and through him to reconcile to himself all things, whether things on earth or things in heaven, by making peace through his blood, shed on the cross.

**21**Once you were alienated from God and were enemies in your minds because of your evil behavior. **22**But now he has reconciled you by Christ's physical body through death to present you holy in his sight, without blemish and free from accusation— **23**if you continue in your faith, established and firm, not moved from the hope held out in the gospel. This is the gospel that you heard and that has been proclaimed to every creature under heaven, and of which I, Paul, have become a servant.

**HINTS & HELPS:** Start with the most significant words or concepts in order to be sure you get those covered. Record the definitions, starting on the facing page. After you learn the meaning of a key word and think you comprehend the verse, paraphrase it—write what the verse means in your own words. This will help you determine if you really understand it.

## End of week Two, Jan 5-12, and into Week Three: January 12-19, 2011

What does it *mean* (interpretation)? How does this *change* me (application)?

### Part 1: Investigating key words (may take several days):

#### WHAT TO DO:

- Examine the definitions of the words you circled on pg. 24 until you've looked up all you need to in order to understand the text.
- Fill in the meaning in the space given below.
- Add any words that you want to examine, but which we didn't include. Conversely, if you're already thoroughly acquainted with the definition of the Greek word we've listed, skip looking it up and jot in the meaning in your own words.
- Paraphrase each verse as you comprehend it. Put it in your own words.
- Meditate on it.

v. 15, "He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation.

- *image*:

- *firstborn*, v. 15 & 18:

- *all* (same Greek word as *all things* and *everything*, v.16, 17, 18, 19, 20):

- \_\_\_\_\_:

Write the verse in your own words:

v. 16, "For by him all things were created: things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities; all things were created by him and for him."

- *thrones:*
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
- *powers:*
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
- *rulers:*
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
- *authorities:*

Note the uses of "by" and "for"

Write the first two verses, 1:15-16, together in your own words:

v. 17, "He is before all things, and in him all things hold together."

- *before:*
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
- *hold together:*

Write the first three verses, 1:15-17, together in your own words to tie this together:

v. 18, "And he is the head of the body, the church; he is the beginning and the firstborn from among the dead, so that in everything he might have the supremacy."

- *head:*
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
- *beginning:*
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
- *supremacy:*

Write the verse, v. 18, in your own words:

v. 19, "For God was pleased to have all his fullness dwell in him..."

- *pleased:*
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
- *fullness:*
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
- *dwell:*

**Write v. 18 and 19 together in your own words:**

**v.20, “...and through him to reconcile to himself all things, whether things on earth or things in heaven, by making peace through his blood, shed on the cross.”**

- *reconcile, v. 20 & 22:*

- *making peace:*

**Write, v. 18-20 together in your own words:**

**v. 21, “Once you were alienated from God and were enemies in your minds because of your evil behavior.”**

- *alienated:*

- *enemies:*

- *minds:*

**Write verse 21 in your own words:**

v. 22, “BUT now he has reconciled you by Christ’s physical body through death to present you holy in his sight, without blemish and free from accusation—“

- *to present:*
  
- *without blemish:*
  
- *free from accusation:*

v. 23, “if you continue in your faith, established and firm, not moved from the hope held out in the gospel. This is the gospel that you heard and that has been proclaimed to every creature under heaven, and of which I, Paul, have become a servant.”

- Ponder and consider the use of the word “if” before moving on. What does it mean or imply?
  
- *established:*
  
- *firm:*
  
- *not moved from:*
  
- *hope:*
  
- \_\_\_\_\_:

Write verses 21 -23 together in your own words:

## Part 2: Now integrate all this information and put it all back together

### Identify themes within this section; then define the entire section:

You have pondered on the meaning or interpretation of all you discovered from observing the text, questioning the text, and completing the word studies and cross reference examination. Therefore, you should now be able to construct a title or theme of each paragraph within this section. **Why do this?** Paraphrasing helped you to ponder on the text and to see if you really comprehended the verses clearly; so too, stating the theme allows you to pull together the basic ideas of the section. It also helps you retain what is in each section when you walk away from the text and go about your daily life. This step aids your meditation on scripture by organizing in your mind what's here. **See if it helps you to write a concise sentence that summarizes the theme of each paragraph.**

### Colossians 1:15-23 (NIV)

Theme of v. 15-20: \_\_\_\_\_

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15He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation. 16For by him all things were created: things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities; all things were created by him and for him. 17He is before all things, and in him all things hold together. 18And he is the head of the body, the church; he is the beginning and the firstborn from among the dead, so that in everything he might have the supremacy. 19For God was pleased to have all his fullness dwell in him, 20and through him to reconcile to himself all things, whether things on earth or things in heaven, by making peace through his blood, shed on the cross.

Theme of v. 21-23: \_\_\_\_\_

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21Once you were alienated from God and were enemies in your minds because of your evil behavior. 22But now he has reconciled you by Christ's physical body through death to present you holy in his sight, without blemish and free from accusation— 23if you continue in your faith, established and firm, not moved from the hope held out in the gospel. This is the gospel that you heard and that has been proclaimed to every creature under heaven, and of which I, Paul, have become a servant.

[If you discovered that you like to outline, make these themes the paragraph headings within your outline. Take the time to do that now. Experiment with outlines to help you discover what aids you in understanding the meaning of the passage.]

**Now, put the main idea for this entire section, Colossians 1:15-23, into your own words.** Tie together the key words and themes that you saw throughout this section. Summarize all your work in your own words in a statement that summarizes this section.

**The theme of Colossians 1:15-23:** \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

### **Part 3: Next, check your conclusions**

**Final step of interpretation:** Don't consult a commentary until you are at this point in your study. Use the commentary to verify your own findings and to double-check what you have discovered. If you consult commentaries before beginning they will influence your own study. Now is the time to check your conclusions. You'll gain from someone else's study by doing this; but, remember commentary notes aren't scripture. They aren't infallible.

**Good commentaries to use (hard copies are all available in the church library):**

- *The NIV Application Commentary: Colossians/Philemon*, by David E. Garland, Zondervan
- *The MacArthur New Testament Commentary: Colossians & Philemon*, by John MacArthur, Moody Press
- *The Expositor's Bible Commentary, Abridged Edition*, Barker & Kohlenberger III, Zondervan.

**Check the online sources to see what commentaries they have and what they say.** Usually these are older commentaries because they're beyond copyright law regulation. For instance, you'll always find *The Matthew Henry Commentary*, a solid, highly respected, reformed commentary from the 1700s. It's always worth reading. Check out: [blueletterbible.org](http://blueletterbible.org), [crosswalk.com](http://crosswalk.com), and/or [biblegateway.com](http://biblegateway.com). Investigate their commentary section.

### **Part 4: Apply what you've learned. Let God's word change you.**

**Application: How does this work in my life? How can this change me?**

**Live it:** Begin to implement the specific portions which the Holy Spirit has brought to your attention as areas of growth necessary for your own life. As you studied, periodically we asked you questions to help you consider how the text might relate to you. Now, consider the questions on the next page to contemplate even further application. What additional applications can you find from this letter?

**Consider these personal questions:**

1. In coming to the text, what did I find to be the most significant statements? Why?
2. How can these statements affect my life and change it?
3. What specifically does this section tell me about who Christ is and what he did for me?
4. Is there an example here for me to follow?
5. What positive motivations do I find in the passage that convince me to lead a righteous life?
6. Do any portions of Col. 1:15-23 produce a sense of conviction within me?
7. Do any portions of Col. 1:15-23 draw me into worship, calling me to praise Christ Jesus, God the Father, and the Holy Spirit for their plan of redemption?
8. Do any parts of this section cause me to want to live differently? What solid steps am I going to take in that direction?
9. Is there a prayer to repeat? Personalize Col. 1:15-23 and turn it into a prayer. Use it as a time of adoration of Jesus Christ. Pause to adore him and add your own words of praise:  
“You are the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation. For by You all things were created: things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities; all things were created by You and for You. You are before all things, and in You all things hold together. And You are the head of the body, the church; You are the beginning and the firstborn from among the dead, so that in everything You might have supremacy. For God was pleased to have all his fullness dwell in You, and through You to reconcile to himself all things, whether things on earth or things in heaven, by making peace through Your blood, shed on Your cross...”
10. What practical steps am I taking in my life to continue in the faith, established and firm, not moved from the hope held out in the gospel?
11. Is there a verse or verses to memorize?

This section provides us with one of the most glorious descriptions of Christ Jesus in the bible, bracketed between 1:13, 14 and 1:21-23, which describes what our glorious Savior, the image of the invisible God and the firstborn over all creation and from among the dead, has done for us on his cross. Ponder the implications for your own life. Now that you are no longer alienated from God, an enemy in your mind because of your evil behavior, how is your life affected? How are you a different person? What has changed? What practical steps does this section bring to mind for your own growth?

**In moving forward, don't make these mistakes:**

1. Don't substitute interpretation for application and do nothing.
2. Don't substitute superficial obedience for substantive life-change.
3. Don't substitute rationalization for repentance.
4. Don't substitute an emotional experience for a volitional decision to change.
5. Don't substitute communication for transformation and merely talk about what you've learned.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> Some of these application ideas are from *Living By the Book*, Howard G. Hendricks and William D. Hendricks, Moody Press Publishers, Chicago, 2007.

## Colossians 1 (NIV)

**1**Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God, and Timothy our brother,

**2**To the holy and faithful brothers in Christ at Colosse: Grace and peace to you from God our Father.

**3**We always thank God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, when we pray for you, **4**because we have heard of your faith in Christ Jesus and of the love you have for all the saints— **5**the faith and love that spring from the hope that is stored up for you in heaven and that you have already heard about in the word of truth, the gospel **6**that has come to you. All over the world this gospel is bearing fruit and growing, just as it has been doing among you since the day you heard it and understood God's grace in all its truth. **7**You learned it from Epaphras, our dear fellow servant, who is a faithful minister of Christ on our behalf, **8**and who also told us of your love in the Spirit.

**9**For this reason, since the day we heard about you, we have not stopped praying for you and asking God to fill you with the knowledge of his will through all spiritual wisdom and understanding. **10**And we pray this in order that you may live a life worthy of the Lord and may please him in every way: bearing fruit in every good work, growing in the knowledge of God, **11**being strengthened with all power according to his glorious might so that you may have great endurance and patience, and joyfully **12**giving thanks to the Father, who has qualified you to share in the inheritance of the saints in the kingdom of light. **13**For he has rescued us from the dominion of darkness and brought us into the kingdom of the Son he loves, **14**in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins.

**15**He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation. **16**For by him all things were created: things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities; all things were created by him and for him. **17**He is before all things, and in him all things hold together. **18**And he is the head of the body, the church; he is the beginning and the firstborn from among the dead, so that in everything he might have the supremacy. **19**For God was pleased to have all his fullness dwell in him, **20**and through him to reconcile to himself all things, whether things on earth or things in heaven, by making peace through his blood, shed on the cross.

**21**Once you were alienated from God and were enemies in your minds because of your evil behavior. **22**But now he has reconciled you by Christ's physical body through death to present you holy in his sight, without blemish and free from accusation— **23**if you continue in your faith, established and firm, not moved from the hope held out in the gospel. This is the gospel that you heard and that has been proclaimed to every creature under heaven, and of which I, Paul, have become a servant.

**24**Now I rejoice in what was suffered for you, and I fill up in my flesh what is still lacking in regard to Christ's afflictions, for the sake of his body, which is the church. **25**I have become its servant by the commission God gave me to present to you the word of God in its fullness— **26**the mystery that has been kept hidden for ages and generations, but is now disclosed to the saints. **27**To them God has chosen to make known among the Gentiles the glorious riches of this mystery, which is Christ in you, the hope of glory.

**28**We proclaim him, admonishing and teaching everyone with all wisdom, so that we may present everyone perfect in Christ. **29**To this end I labor, struggling with all his energy, which so powerfully works in me.