

# *THE GOSPEL OF CHRIST*

SPREADING THE SOUL-SAVING MESSAGE OF JESUS

## COLOSSIANS LESSON 1 (Chapter 1)

### **Introduction by narrator accompanied by a cappella singing:**

*THE GOSPEL OF CHRIST*. Spreading the soul-saving message of Jesus. And now, Kevin Pendergrass.

This is the first lesson in our study of the Book of Colossians. In the Book of Colossians we will see that the emphasis is on Christ as Head of the church, with a great deal of significance pointing to Christ, His importance in salvation, and His importance to the church in general. In Colossians 1:12-14 we read,

“...giving thanks to the Father who has qualified us to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in the light. He has delivered us from the power of darkness and conveyed *us* into the kingdom of the Son of His love, in whom we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins.”

Notice in verse 12 that it is “the Father who has qualified us.” This means that we do not automatically have Heaven as our eternal home simply because we have been born. But it does mean that we can have such an opportunity if we will follow the Bible and do what God commands us to do. How are we qualified? Verse 14 tells us when it says, “in whom we have redemption through His blood.” Through the blood of whom? Through the blood of Jesus Christ. In this lesson, then, I want us to look at the importance of blood—especially the blood of Jesus Christ.

When we think of blood, we can understand the importance of blood in daily living. If you did not have blood flowing through your body, you could not have life. In Leviticus 17:11 the Scriptures say in regard to blood, “The life of the flesh is in the blood, and I have given it to you upon the altar to make atonement for your souls; for it is the blood that makes atonement for the soul.” When we think of blood, we realize that it is essential for living—not just in a physical fashion, but in a spiritual fashion as well. There always had to be a blood sacrifice. In Leviticus 16 (under the Old Law) we find the Day of Atonement. Every year on a single day, the people would come together to make animal sacrifices. It was a day when the people remembered their sins. They did not repent and then forget their sins. Rather, they remembered their sins. In Hebrews 10:3 we are told that “in those sacrifices there is a reminder of sins every year.” However, the people had to be obedient and make these blood sacrifices.

Today, under the New Covenant, we have to understand that Christ has been sacrificed, and that His blood was shed for those of us who live today. In Hebrews 7:22-27 we read,

“By so much more Jesus has become a surety of a better covenant. Also there were many priests, because they were prevented by death from continuing. But He, because He continues forever, has an unchangeable priesthood. Therefore He is also able to save to the uttermost those who come to God through Him, since He always lives to make intercession for them. For such a High Priest was fitting for us, who is holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and has become higher than the heavens; who does not need daily, as those high priests, to offer up sacrifices, first for His own sins and then for the people’s, for this He did once for all when He offered up Himself.”

Hebrews 7:22-27 teaches us that Christ offered the ultimate blood sacrifice. He came to Earth and shed His blood so that we could have our sins forgiven. Do we understand the importance of why Jesus had to come to Earth? If someone asked you, "Why did Jesus come to Earth?," would you be able to say, "He had to come so He could shed His blood, because without that, we could not be saved"? Or, would you say, "I don't know. I guess He just came because He wanted to." Many people in the religious world do not understand the significance of the blood of Jesus Christ. Some in the Methodist denomination have tried to take the word "blood" out of their song books, and refuse to even preach about it because it is too gory and gruesome. But it is beautiful to know that Jesus' blood was shed for us. It is a great thing for us, even though it was a terrible thing that He had to die and suffer. It is a wonderful thing for us to realize that because He came and shed His blood, we can have our sins forgiven.

We need to understand the importance of this sacrifice. In Hebrews 9:22 the Bible says, "According to the law almost all things are purified with blood, and without shedding of blood there is no remission." Without blood having been shed, we never could have received forgiveness of sins. Hebrews 10:4 speaks of animal sacrifices that Jews made under the Old Covenant: "It is not possible that the blood of bulls and goats could take away sins." Animal sacrifices never could have taken away sins. People could make as many animal sacrifices as they wanted, but if Christ had never come to Earth to shed His blood, no one would have had an opportunity spend an eternity in Heaven—because without the shedding of blood, there can be no forgiveness.

Many people ask, "Did Christ really have to come to Earth and shed His blood? Could there have been another way?" Some people say, "I don't know why Christ chose this way." Was His coming something that He chose? Could He have done anything He wanted to do? Could He have said, "I think I'm going to go about it this way," or "I think I'm going to die this way"? Or, was it mandatory (based on what we read in the Bible) that He had to come—if we wanted our sins taken away. Let's see if there was another way.

In Matthew 26:36-37, before Jesus was crucified, we read, "Then Jesus came with them to a place called Gethsemane, and said to the disciples, 'Sit here while I go and pray over there.' And He took with Him Peter and the two sons of Zebedee, and He began to be sorrowful and deeply distressed." We can only imagine how sorrowful Jesus was, or how distressed He was. He realized that He was about to die. He was about to be crucified and experience terrible things. He was sorrowful and very distressed. In verses 38-38-39 we read,

"Then He said to them, 'My soul is exceedingly sorrowful, even to death. Stay here and watch with Me.' He went a little farther and fell on His face, and prayed, saying, 'O My Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from Me; nevertheless, not as I will, but as You will.'"

This shows the humanity of our Lord and Savior. We know that Jesus was 100% God, but also 100% human (John 1:1ff.). This emphasizes His humanity. He prayed, "If there is any other way, please, let's go about it that way. But if not, Your will be done." In verses 40-41 we read, "Then He came to the disciples and found them asleep, and said to Peter, 'What? Could you not watch with Me one hour? Watch and pray, lest you enter into temptation. The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak.'" This again shows us His humanity. In verse 42 we are told, "Again, a second time, He went away and prayed, saying, 'O My Father, if this cup cannot pass away from Me unless I drink it, Your will be done.'" In verses 43-44 we read, "And He came and found them asleep again, for their eyes were heavy. So He left them, went away again, and prayed the third time, saying the same words." When we look at Matthew 26:36ff., we realize that there was no other way. This was the will of

the Father, and was the only way that men could have their sins forgiven—by Christ dying on the cross and shedding His blood so that we could come in contact with that blood and be cleansed of our sins. This was the only way that man ever could have been forgiven—by the blood of Christ being shed. In Hebrews 10:10 we read, “By that will we have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all.” Christ presented Himself as a one-time sacrifice. Christ does not come back to Earth every year and die on the cross. He made a once-for-all-time sacrifice. He went to the cross, died, and shed His blood as a one-time sacrifice that would last forever. We, therefore, can be obedient to God and come into contact with the blood of Jesus as we have our sins washed away. In Hebrews 10:11-14 we are told,

“And every priest stands ministering daily and offering repeatedly the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins. But this Man, after He had offered one sacrifice for sins forever, sat down at the right hand of God, from that time waiting till His enemies are made His footstool. For by one offering He has perfected forever those who are being sanctified.”

When Jesus shed His blood and died on the cross, His blood went both ways. It was a one-time sacrifice that was essential if mankind was going to be saved and have a relationship with God. Only through the blood of Christ and His sacrifice can we now have our sins taken away. In Hebrews 10:19 we read, “Therefore, brethren, having boldness to enter the Holiest by the blood of Jesus....” How do we know we can do this? Because of the blood of Jesus Christ.

For those of us who are faithful members of the one church (the church of Christ) and who are Christians, we remember every Sunday the sacrifice of Jesus, as well as His blood that was shed on our behalf (1 Cor. 11:23-26 and in Acts 20:7). But consider what the Bible says in regard to the Lord’s Supper, why we are to come together, and what we are to remember. In Matthew 26:26-29 we read,

“And as they were eating, Jesus took bread, blessed and broke it, and gave it to the disciples and said, ‘Take, eat; this is My body.’ Then He took the cup, gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying, ‘Drink from it, all of you. For this is My blood of the new covenant, which is shed for many for the remission of sins. But I say to you, I will not drink of this fruit of the vine from now on until that day when I drink it new with you in My Father’s kingdom.’”

When we come together every Sunday to partake of the Lord’s Supper composed of unleavened bread and fruit of the vine, we are remembering the precious blood of Jesus that was shed for us. That is what we are to remember when we come together. Sometimes when we are partaking of the Lord’s Supper, we may be thinking about what we are going to have for lunch. Or, we may be wishing that the preacher would hurry up and finish his sermon. We are there for the wrong reason. We do not have the right heart and spirit. Those are not the things about which we should be thinking. We need to be thinking about the ultimate sacrifice that Jesus Christ made for us when He went to the cross. If we really read our Bibles and understood this concept, I believe that more people would be willing to follow Christ because they would understand the love He displayed for us by going to the cross.

But what are some of the things when we remember when look back at Christ’s sacrifice and at the shedding of His blood? One thing is that we remember the forgiveness of sins. Colossians 1:14 says, “...in whom we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins.” We see from this verse that we can have forgiveness of sins. We therefore should think back to the blood of Jesus, and how He forgave us of our sins when we obeyed Him. For those of us who are Christians, we can look back and realize that it is because of Christ’s blood that we have forgiveness of sins.

What are some other things that the Bible teaches that we need to remember? What are some other things that the Bible teaches that the blood of Jesus Christ does? According to Ephesians 1:7, it is through the blood of Jesus that we have redemption. We have been “bought back.” Ephesians 1:7 says, “In Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of His grace.” We have been bought back by the blood of Jesus Christ. When a baby is born, he does not have sin, but is born innocent (Is. 7:14-16; Ezek. 18:19-20). That baby has no sin. But as a person grows older and comes to know the difference between right and wrong, he ends up sinning (Rom. 3:23; 6:23). Isaiah 59:1-2 says that we then no longer have a relationship with God because our sins have separated us from Him. We can see, then, the importance of being redeemed and of being bought back so that we once again can be brought into a relationship with God. That is what Christ’s blood has done for us. In 1 Peter 1:18-19 we read, “knowing that you were not redeemed with corruptible things, like silver or gold, from your aimless conduct received by tradition from your fathers, but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot.” The Bible tells us that we have been bought back and redeemed, but not with things like silver or gold, but with the precious blood of Jesus Christ. It is that blood which puts us back into a relationship with God. In Acts 20:28 we see that Christ’s blood was shed, and is what purchased the Lord’s church—the one true church, the church of Christ. We see in that verse the importance of Christ’s coming to Earth in order to shed His blood to purchase the church. The Lord did not purchase denominations or manmade religions. He purchased only one church—His church. The church of Christ belongs to Him. We must remember that it is because of the blood of Christ that we can be saved in the one body (Eph. 4:4) and go to Heaven. What a wonderful thing it is for us to remember all of these things as we look back and see how Jesus shed His blood for us.

Now I want to think about a topic on which there is a lot of disagreement—not because the Bible is unclear on it, but because men have confused the subject. **How** do we come in contact with Christ’s blood? There are very few people (who believe in the Bible) who would disagree that Christ had to shed His blood. It is His blood that cleanses us from our sins. The Scriptures plainly teach this. But some people say that after Christ died on the cross, everyone’s sins were automatically forgiven. Think about how ridiculous this concept really is. If that were the case, then every single person would go to Heaven. If, when Jesus died on the cross and shed His blood, every person received forgiveness of sins because of His sacrifice, that would mean that everyone would go to Heaven. But Matthew 7:13-14 teaches differently. The Bible says that few will enter into Heaven. People do not receive forgiveness of sins automatically merely because Jesus died and shed His blood. What does the Bible say about how we come into contact with Christ’s blood?

Suppose you were running low on blood, and needed a blood transfusion in order to live. Suppose further that you had a rare blood type. The hospital contacted you and said, “We have finally found the blood you need. Someone came into today who is your blood type. They gave their blood for you. And now you can come in and receive the blood you need.” You would be happy about that. But if you simply said, “This is wonderful. This is great. And I believe it.” But you never went to the hospital to receive the blood, how much good would that blood do you? It would not do you any good. Just believing that a person gave his blood for you will not put you in contact with that blood. You must receive that blood. If it was given at the hospital, you will have to go to the hospital to come into contact with that blood. The same is true spiritually speaking. We somehow must come in contact with the blood of Jesus Christ. Where was Christ’s blood shed? We must go back to where His blood was shed in order to have our sins forgiven. Where was Christ’s blood shed? It was shed at His death. How do we come in contact with Christ’s death and blood? In 2 Thessalonians 1:7-9, here is what the Scriptures teach.

“And to give you who are troubled rest with us when the Lord Jesus is revealed from heaven with His mighty angels, in flaming fire taking vengeance on those who do not know God, and on those who do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ. These shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of His power.”

Here we see two groups of people who will be condemned forever in Hell. The first is those who do not know God. The second is those who do not obey the Gospel. What is the Gospel? The word “Gospel” means “good news,” and is talking about the Word of God in general. But what is the core Gospel? What must a person obey? In 1 Corinthians 15:1-4 we learn that the core Gospel is the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus Christ. We must somehow obey that. But how do we do that? Romans 6:1-4 teaches us how to come in contact with the blood of Christ that was shed at His death.

“What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin that grace may abound? Certainly not! How shall we who died to sin live any longer in it? Or do you not know that as many of us as were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into His death? Therefore we were buried with Him through baptism into death, that just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life.”

According to Romans 6:1-4, how do we have our sins forgiven? How do we die? How are we buried? How are we resurrected? It is when we are baptized in water for the forgiveness of sins (Acts 2:38; 1 Pet. 3:20-21). It is at the point of baptism that we access and come in contact with the blood of Jesus Christ. In John 19:34, after Jesus had died, we are told, “But one of the soldiers pierced His side with a spear, and immediately blood and water came out.” There were two elements that came from the Lord’s side when He died—blood and water. It is absolutely impossible to reach the blood of Christ except through the watery grave of baptism where we are buried in a watery grave and have our sins forgiven, because it is there that we come in contact with the blood of Jesus. Then we are raised to walk in newness of life.

The Bible never says that we simply are to believe in order to come in contact with blood and have our sins forgiven. Must we believe? Absolutely! But does the Bible teach that we must “only believe” in order to have our sins forgiven? James 2:19 says that even the demons believe and tremble. Believing alone is never said to wash away a person’s sins. In Revelation 1:5 we read, “And from Jesus Christ, the faithful witness, the firstborn from the dead, and the ruler over the kings of the earth. To Him who loved us and washed us from our sins in His own blood.” We have been “washed from our sins in His own blood.” When does this take place? It is at the point of baptism. Notice how the word “washed” is used. Do you know where that word also is used in reference to salvation? In Acts 22 Saul was told to go into the city of Damascus where he would be told what he needed to do to be saved. Saul had not yet come in contact with the blood of Jesus Christ. He was still lost as he was on the road to Damascus. Once in the city, he then was told what he needed to do to be saved by having his sins forgiven. Christ had already shed His blood; there is no doubt about that. But Saul had to come in contact with that blood. He had to access that blood. Acts 22:16 says, “Why are you waiting? Arise and be baptized, and wash away your sins, calling on the name of the Lord.” At what point, according to the Bible, are our sins washed away? It is when we are baptized in water. There is nothing magical or mystical occurring in the water. But we are saved at the point of baptism because that is where we find the blood of Jesus Christ (Rom. 6:1-4; Acts 22:16; Rev. 1:5). When we are baptized, we have obeyed God by doing what He commanded us to do. But that is true only when we have been baptized in water for the forgiveness of our sins. That is the only way we can come in contact with the precious blood of Jesus Christ.

Maybe you are not a Christian. Maybe you have not yet done what the Bible commands you to do to being saved through baptism. If you have not yet obeyed the truth, we pray today that you will have your sins washed away as you obey the Gospel of Christ.

**Narrator accompanied by a cappella singing:**

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## STUDY QUESTIONS FOR COLOSSIANS LESSON 1 (CHAPTER 1)

1. According to a statement made at the outset of this lesson, what does the Book of Colossians emphasize?
2. According to Colossians 1:13, **from what** has God delivered Christians?
3. According to Colossians 1:13, **into what** has God placed Christians?
4. According to Colossians 1:14, what is the source of each Christian's forgiveness from sin?
5. What, according to the closing words of Leviticus 17:11, does blood do in God's sight?
6. According to Leviticus 16 and Hebrews 10:3, how often did the Israelites have to make atonement for their sins?
7. According to Hebrews 7:27, how often was Christ required to make atonement for the sins of the entire world?
8. How many times, according to Hebrews 10:12,14, did Jesus offer Himself for humanity's sins?
9. What, according to Hebrews 9:22, is absolutely essential if forgiveness of sins is to occur?
10. What, according to Hebrews 10:19, permits Christians to go to the throne of God with boldness in order to offer their praises and requests?
11. There are two things, according to Ephesians 1:7, that Christians receive as children of God. What are those two things?
12. What important spiritual message (for all times and people) is taught in Ezekiel 18:19-20?
13. What important spiritual message (for all times and people) is taught in Isaiah 59:1-2?
14. What important messages are contained in Matthew 7:13-14?
15. According to 1 Peter 1:18-19, what redeems people from the terrible burden of sin?
16. Who, according to passages such as John 1:29 and 1 Peter 1:19, is the Lamb of God Who takes away the sins of the world?
17. In 2 Thessalonians 1:7-9, two groups of people are mentioned as those who will be condemned on the Day of Judgment. What people compose each of those groups?
18. In 1 Corinthians 15:1-4 we find what has been referred to as "the core Gospel." What is its main message?