

Lessons from Colossians

Chapter 1

The Supremacy of Christ in Creation (Colossians 1:15–17):

SDA commentaries (such as the *Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary*) emphasize that Jesus is not a created being (refuting any arian or diminished view of Christ). He is the exact "image of the invisible God" and the active Creator through whom "all things were created." Christ's preexistence and agency in creation establish His divine authority.

Christ as the Head of the Church (Colossians 1:18):

Jesus is the head of the body, the church. Adventists view this as a reminder that no human leader, philosophy, or angelic mediator holds authority over God's people. The church derives its life, breath, and direction exclusively from a living connection to Christ.

The Reality of Deliverance (Colossians 1:13–14):

Believers have been rescued from the "power of darkness" and transferred into the kingdom of His Son. SDA teaching stresses that redemption and the forgiveness of sins are complete in Christ, freeing believers from the guilt of the past and the tyranny of sin through His blood.

Christ in You, the Hope of Glory (Colossians 1:27):

The "mystery" revealed to the Gentiles is the indwelling Christ. In Adventist theology, this highlights the experiential aspect of righteousness by faith—Christ living inside the believer provides the moral and spiritual power necessary to grow, bear fruit, and reflect God's character in daily life.

Guarding Against Human Philosophy (Colossians 1:23):

Paul warns the believers to remain grounded in the faith and not be moved away from the hope of the gospel. SDA interpretation connects this to remaining faithful to biblical truth in the last days, resisting worldly philosophies or man-made traditions that dilute Christ's all-sufficiency.

Chapter 2

All Wisdom is in Christ (Colossians 2:2–3): Paul warns against secret or exclusive knowledge. SDA commentary notes that true spiritual insight comes from knowing Jesus, not human speculation or modern skepticism.

Beware of Vain Philosophy (Colossians 2:8): Paul warns against taking believers captive through human traditions and worldly rudiments. Adventists view this as a caution against evolutionary theories and secular philosophies that undermine creation and God's power.

Completeness in Jesus (Colossians 2:9–10): The full Godhead dwells in Christ bodily, meaning believers lack nothing when united with Him. Grace replaces the need for human or angelic intermediaries.

The Handwritings of Ordinances Nailed to the Cross (Colossians 2:14): Adventists explain that the "handwriting of ordinances" refers to the ritual laws of animal sacrifice and ceremonial decrees, which pointed forward to Christ and ended at His death.

Shadows vs. The Body/Substance (Colossians 2:16–17): Regarding the mention of food, drink, festivals, and "sabbaths," SDA teaching emphasizes the word "shadow".

Annual ceremonial sabbaths (associated with yearly feasts like Passover or Pentecost) met their antitype in Christ and ceased. The weekly seventh-day Sabbath, instituted at Creation before sin entered the world, stands separate as a permanent memorial and was not abolished.

Chapter 3

Setting the Mind on Heavenly Things (Colossians 3:1–4)

- **The New Status:** Believers are raised with Christ, meaning their old sinful life is dead and their true life is hidden with Christ in God.
- **The Adventist Hope:** SDAs view verses 3–4 as a direct pointer to the Second Advent. When Christ—who is the believer's life—appears, the saints will appear with Him in glory.
- **The Daily Focus:** Christians must intentionally choose heavenly values over worldly ambitions and distractions.

Putting to Death Earthly Sins (Colossians 3:5–11)

- **Mortifying the Flesh:** Paul calls believers to "put to death" earthly vices like sexual immorality, impurity, passion, and greed (which he defines as idolatry).
- **Rethinking Character:** Anger, rage, malice, slander, and lying must be stripped off like dirty clothes.
- **The Creator's Image:** Seventh-day Adventist commentary emphasizes that this renewal restores humanity back to the moral image of God in which we were originally created.

Clothed in Christian Virtues (Colossians 3:12–17)

- **The Uniform of Grace:** Believers are instructed to "put on" tender mercy, kindness, humility, meekness, and patience.
- **Love as a Binder:** Christian love (agape) acts as the perfect bond that holds the church body together in unity.
- **The Rule of Peace and the Word:** Allowing the peace of God to arbitrate in the heart and letting the Word of Christ dwell richly connects directly to the SDA emphasis on daily devotional life and Sabbath rest.
- **Doing Everything in Jesus' Name:** Actions, speech, and service should reflect gratitude to God the Father.

Christian Living in the Home (Colossians 3:18–25)

- **Order in Relationships:** Mutual submission, loving sacrifice by husbands, respectful obedience by children, and fair treatment of others reflect the character of Christ within the Christian household.
- **Working for the Lord:** Whatever a person does, they should work at it heartily as working for Christ, not just for human approval, awaiting the eternal reward.

Chapter 4

1. Devotion and Watchfulness in Prayer (Verses 2–4)

- **Persistent Prayer:** Believers are urged to continue steadfastly in prayer, developing spiritual endurance.
- **Watchfulness with Thanksgiving:** Prayer must be coupled with alertness to God's leading and an attitude of gratitude, which guards against discouragement.
- **Open Doors for the Gospel:** Paul asks for prayers not for his release from prison, but for clear opportunities ("open doors") to proclaim the mystery of Christ.

2. Wise Conduct and Gracious Speech (Verses 5–6)

- **Walking in Wisdom:** Christians must act wisely toward "outsiders" (those outside the faith), making the best use of time. SDA teachings emphasize that our daily lifestyle is a powerful silent witness.
- **Speech Seasoned with Salt:** Conversation should be gracious and pleasant, designed to preserve, encourage, and create a spiritual thirst for Christ rather than alienating others through harsh arguments.

3. Justice and Equity in Relationships (Verse 1)

- **Fairness as a Reflection of Christ:** Masters are told to treat their servants with justice and fairness because they, too, have a Master in heaven. SDA commentary notes that Christian principles break down tyrannical human hierarchies, calling for mutual accountability before God.

4. The Value of Christian Fellowship and Unity (Verses 7–18)

- **A Diverse Team:** Paul highlights coworkers like Tychicus, Luke the beloved physician, and Onesimus (the former runaway slave now received as a beloved brother).
- **Intercessory Prayer:** Epaphras is commended for "striving" or laboring fervently in prayer for the Colossians to stand mature and fully assured in God's will.