

Colossians 1, Part 4 (Conrad Bowman) (Summer 2006)

Okay. We're in Colossians. If you didn't pick it up – if you got a set of these Notes from last week, there're dated at the top – May 13th, I think. This May 20th set is the first version of the completion. I finished Colossians, I went all the way through that thing, so this is a complete set of Notes on the whole Book. And we'll follow it for the rest of the way through. There're a few changes in that first part just so – there were a couple of people complaining about changing the Notes. They didn't want to have to – because they had notes written in the margin. But there are a few things – there're minor changes. So keep the ones you've got, and we'll go from there.

The Epistle of Paul to the Colossians – you remember where we were going in our class studies. We have gone through Ephesians, and we have launched into the Pastoral Epistles, and went through Titus – and that was the first one. And then before we got to 1st Timothy, we decided – and it was a great decision – I never would have done that – Joe and Phil have surprised me again. Because they took us into Colossians. A stroke of genius. Because Colossians backs up and precedes Ephesians. So, what we're doing – all the things we studied in Ephesians, now we're going to look at them in seed form in Colossians. And when Paul wrote the letter to the Ephesians, he borrowed from this letter to the Colossians. Now, the letter to the Ephesians was written to a church in an area that was committed to intellectual understanding. Ephesus was a center of reason and thought. And as such, Ephesians was a technical letter. **So when we went through Ephesians, you remember we studied very carefully our position in Christ. What happens when an unbeliever comes face to face with the Gospel and he accepts the Gospel by faith; and the Spirit takes him from where he is – lost and separated from Christ – and puts him in union with Christ.** That's Ephesians. Then it talks about all the benefits that come because you are in union with Christ. **I'm going to tell you, union with Christ, and all that derives from that, has almost been erased from the doctrinal instruction of the Evangelical Church in this country today.** From fifty years ago to sixty years ago, it as been discarded because it's hard work. You have to work to understand that. You have to put your mind to it. You have to get intimate with Scripture. And the church has discarded it because it's easier to teach them principles of how to live. And principles of how to organize. And principles of how to deal with the family. And you pull books off the shelf that were written by guys that wouldn't know Christ if they met Him face to face on the street. Okay. **The doctrine of union with Christ is the pathway to understanding intimacy with the Lord that we serve.** Okay. Because the classification is the identification

truth. The general category is Union with Christ. The rest of it is how to express that union with Him in and through your life in as a unique fashion as you are unique. And it's going to be different with every one of us. Alright. That's what Ephesians does. It introduces us to the technical aspects of our union with Christ and everything it obtains and everything that goes with that. Now when Paul turns, and he's written to the Colossians, and when he did that, his problem was *Gnosticism*. The *Gnostic* gospels came from this same group of people. *Gnosticism* is a mixture of Jewish ritualism and just spiritual conjuring, for want of a better word. And the Colossians were – the people around Colosse – the *Gnostics* – were encroaching onto this group of believers into this church and were trying to draw them into the worship of the mother goddess of the earth. The word for "wisdom" in the Greek is *sophia*. The mother goddess of *Gnosticism* was *sophia*. That word also is associated with two other words: *gnosis*, or *epignosis* – which is – *gnosis* is the word for knowledge in the Greek. *Epignosis* is knowledge that has been tested through experience. But we know already that wisdom is the application of doctrine to your experience. So, to gain wisdom, you take the *gnosis* in your *nous* and test it though your experience and it become *epignosis*. Okay? For a little play on words, that will help you remember what the process is. You take the facts as you find them. You apply them to your experience. They become then tested truths on which you depend and move. And you fill your mind with that. In fact, that's what the Holy Spirit does when He builds in you the mind of Christ. He's giving you those tested truths in your own experience on which you now base your forward decisions. Okay. The *Gnostic* claimed you got those things by ethereal communication. You received them. In the late 1800s, E.W. Kenyon started a movement called "Word of Faith." And "Word of Faith" is this today. It's continued, from the late 1800s right on through until today. Oral Roberts was a "Word of Faith" proponent. We call it the "name it and claim it crowd." That's the whole thread of word of knowledge. It has its roots in *Gnosticism* of the first century. You need to know that. It's not something that's new that just sprang up a hundred years ago. It's been around since the first century. And it's tracked all the way across. Its biggest enemy for years was the organized church which was for centuries the Catholic Church. So there was a lot of battles between them. Truth suffered on both sides, as you might imagine. And through the 1800s, on into the early 1900s, there was a period of intense scholarship that went on where truth was redefined. Martin Luther and the Reformation began quite early, and this was the product of that after a lot of contention and a lot of battles. And so when we moved out of the 1800s into the 1900s and up through 1940 – 1950, there was a huge worldwide battle for truth as doctoral issues began to form, and people divided themselves into different camps or denominations, following different aspects of doctoral development.

Now, all those things have their roots in the earliest *Gnostics* and Paul is dealing with them right here in the letter to the Colossians. This is really quite pertinent to this weekend with the Da Vinci Code filling everybody's news broadcasts. You'll find some of these conversations are coming back again.

Now, we stopped last week at verse 18 and 19. I'm going to back up to 16 to start this morning, and I want to move from 16 through 29. Okay.

16. For in Him [in Christ] all things were created,

Notice it didn't say "in Him" all things were created, but "in Him" all things were created. And that's a subtlety we need to pay attention to.

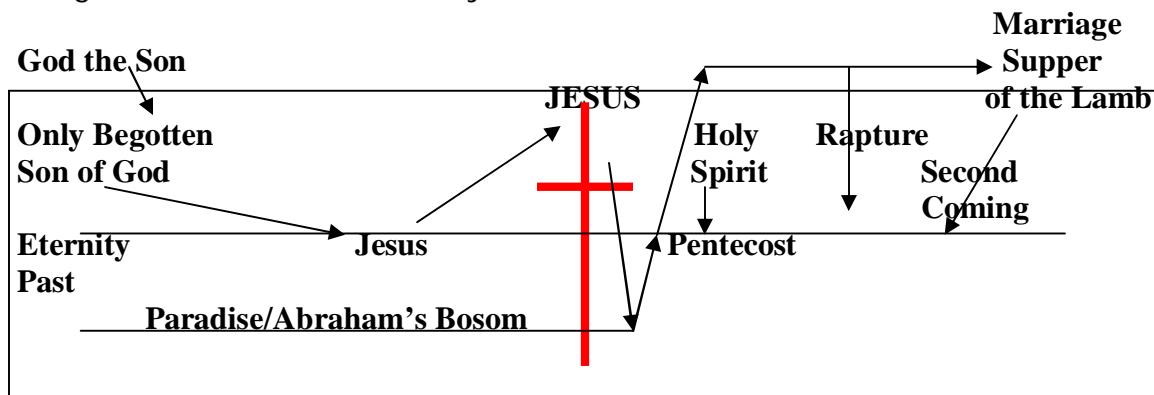
16. In Him all things were created, both in the heavens and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities--all things have been created through Him and for Him.

So in Him, through Him, and for Him are all associated with the act of creation with regard to Christ. I have given you on page 9 a description – a little background. And I want you to take a look at that on page 9. Yes ma'am?

Lady. [Inaudible].

Conrad Bowman. Yes ma'am. Sure am. On page 9. The page titled "The Son of His Love," and the diagram that's there. Okay?

[Diagram From the Commentary].



In this diagram, you'll see that I've indicated, that in eternity past, and I've done this before, God the Son is named the Son of God with respect to the Trinity. It describes His relationship to the Trinity. And that's what we start with over here. When He came into time, He became – not that He changed in substance – His designation changed. The Only Begotten Son of God. That is His name and title relative to man, and mankind. In fact, to all of creation. He is the Only Begotten Son of God. Because it's the Begotten thing. He has always been in eternity past, God the Son. But now with respect to time and finite time and creation, He's the Only Begotten Son of God. That's His title. Same person. Different title. That happened in eternity past. The Only Begotten Son of God in the incarnation when He was born, the Son of Mary, became Jesus. Same person. No change. Change of title and designation. Because Jesus became His identity relative to man. Not just to creation, but relative to man. Jesus who went to the cross became – and is known as, for Israel – the Kinsman Redeemer. Okay? That's His title relative to Israel. Because as the Kinsman Redeemer, He was qualified by the Law under which Israel lived, to pay the price for their redemption and deliverance from the slave market of sin into which they had fallen through the sin of Adam. Any questions on that? Jesus on the cross became the Savior of all mankind. Because His sin [see 2 Corinthians 5:21] – His sacrifice – paid for the sin, not only of those of faith, but also paid for the sin of everyone. Okay? It was a complete efficacious sacrifice.

He who knew no sin became sin for us in order that we might become the righteousness of God in Him. [2nd Corinthians 5:21].

So Jesus became sin. Sin went into the grave. And there in the grave He left that sin and captured those in Paradise – or Abraham's Bosom – and led them captive to Himself. Now I have to tell you that Kenneth Wuest is one of my favorite sources. I love that guy, and use him extensively in my Greek studies. Because Wuest says what He captured in the grave were the angels who fell. The fallen angels and principalities and powers. He led them captive to Himself. And when He took them to heaven, He took them to heaven in a show of His victory to all mankind and all creation. I have a problem with that, because those guys are still with us. I have not seen anything that Kenneth Wuest has written on it that fully explains that. So, I'm sticking to my guns on this. I believe that the captives that He led captive to Himself were those saints of the Old Testament from Abraham's Bosom that He took with Him as friends of the Groom to the Marriage Supper of the Lamb. When He rose from the grave, He emptied

Paradise – He emptied Abraham’s Bosom – right up through the thief on the cross who was one of the last people who entered it.

Lady. Was that in his *Word Studies* or in his other book?

Conrad Bowman. No. it’s in his *Word Studies*. When you go through the study on Colossians – when you get to this particular passage, you’ll see his statement on it. About a half a paragraph of some very long comments. Uh, and if you find something else that Wuest has written on that ...

Lady. [Inaudible].

Conrad Bowman. Now, that takes us from the beginning through the cross. His ascension to the Marriage Supper of the Lamb and now the descent of the Holy Spirit. But this covers what I want to for verse 16.

16. For in Him all things were created,

“In Him,” by the way. A.T. Robertson, in his *Word Pictures [of the New Testament]* in the Greek – and we spoke about “in Him” in that first reference. Then “through Him” and “for Him” in that last reference in that particular verse.

16. In Him all things were created,

“Were created” is an aorist tense which is a past creation with present standing. And that’s talking about original creation in his “all things created.” So that’s way back in eternity past

16. ... both in the heavens and on earth, visible and invisible,
whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities—

It’s my distinct understanding – and Wuest agrees with it and Robertson agrees with it – that all the way down to that dash in the *New American Standard*. “Rulers or authorities” – everything down to there is original creation. Prior to the organization and creation of man in Eden. All things have been created “through Him” and “for Him.” That was His involvement as God the Son. He was involved in that original creation, and it’s prior to Genesis 1:2. It would be prior to the creation and organization of earth as we know it.

16. ... all things have been created through Him and for Him.

Or for His benefit. Created – perfect in that last occurrence, and it introduces something else. So in verse 17 when it says,

17. He is before all things, and in Him all things [consist, or] hold together.

We're still talking about the original creation right down through and including Genesis 1:1.

18. He is also head of the body,

Now look what it does. It jumps from that original creation right to the Church. Now to me this is fascinating because we studied Ephesians first. If I hadn't studied Ephesians first it wouldn't have just smacked me. But you remember in Ephesians when we were studying through that and it says, "we are God's masterpiece." The Church is God's masterpiece. We're His *poiema*. Okay? His poem of glory. This didn't hit as hard until I tied it and connected it with that verse in Ephesians. No wonder He goes from the original creation, right to, He is also head of the Body,

the Church; and He is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, so that He Himself might come to have first place in everything.

That's talking about our head. Now notice what he's doing. He's inserted the Church way back in God's purpose and God's plan to way back here. He didn't wait to cover the Church after Pentecost. He inserted the Church all the way back here in terms of God's purpose. Look at what that says about you. That from the very onset, before Eden was a thought, God had His Son head of the Body – the Church – and His poem in mind. No wonder in Ephesians it says, "that unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places are now being made known by the Church, the manifold wisdom of God, according to His eternal purpose." You see that? How easy that would be to miss. How easy it would be to miss. If we weren't going through a systematic tying together of the Pauline epistles and his letters that he's writing, that would be so obscure. But look at what we're finding, right here in this letter to the Colossians, he lays the seed down for that. When he gets to Ephesians, he nails it shut. And he makes sure there's no doubt about it. Now we today have to be careful that we treat the Church exactly as what it is. It is God's masterpiece in His pen. All He's done throughout all of history points to this organization with Christ as its head as the organization as His Body getting ready to be taken to a moment of glory –

the Marriage Supper of the Lamb – in heaven where the Church is made the object of adoration with Christ. Okay? This is really important. This is a fantastic revelation. Now Paul has said repeatedly and he'll say it again. He's been made the keeper of this mystery. It's been hidden in the Ages of the past. It's never been revealed before. Christ Himself didn't reveal it. It was given to the Apostle Paul to reveal this to mankind. Is it important that we study these things? Absolutely. We can drag our tails through years of study of the Law. Okay? And burden ourselves down with God's accusing finger and the condemnation of the Law, because that's what it is. It's a record of man's failure. You won't begin to soar until you get to Paul's epistles. *Because you won't learn what your relationship is to God until you get to Paul's epistles. And that's what he's telling us.* Everyone of us, as rotten as we are. Okay? Wrinkles. Bailed hair. Bad attitude and all. We're related to the Father of the creator of the universe. And He loved us enough with His infinite love from before the foundation of the world to declare us His poem to all creation. How can we throw that away? How can we not take that as the treasure that it is and pour ourselves into it? It's essential reading. Now,

17. He is before all things, and in Him all things hold together.

Yes?

Lady. [Inaudible].

Conrad Bowman. Absolutely. Absolutely. Here's the way it fits together. From eternity past, the Son always did the will of the Father. That means that what we are today is according to the Father's will. Now, you remember last week we talked about this, and I made a remark last week that the Father is the forgotten member of the Trinity? This is why. This is why, see. Because when we start studying the work of the Son and the position of the Son as the head of the Church, and the Spirit as the revealer. And we've got whole segments of evangelical Christianity dedicated to the worship of the Spirit, and promotion of the Spirit, and that's what their worship consists of. We need to recognize as Paul does – and Paul does not open a letter or write a letter that he doesn't repeatedly come back and promote and call attention to the Father – because it's the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ who has provided our salvation. It's the Father who has provided those gifts. Well, when we begin to see that and Paul is attached to that, then we begin to understand that it's the Father's will that the Son is doing. The Son, with all the attributes of the Godhead, made Himself obedient to the Father's will. That's the pattern of obedience – that he's the head of the Church.

That also drives the attitude that we should have as a Church Body toward our leadership, our elders. That would be Tom and all the other guys that are elders over us. It's the same thing that drives our attitude as children to parent. We think about that in Ray's request this morning for prayer. That should shape and train our prayer for Ray that he should act like Christ, and that his children should act like Christ in obedience to their heavenly Father. So that pattern is established, and it's a headship in everything. It directs creation in terms of its order, because our God is a God of order. So that helps us keep things in perspective. And that's what He's going through here, in verse 18.

18. He is head of the body, the Church; He is the beginning; He is the firstborn out from the dead,

And that was His resurrection and bring out of the grave those in Abraham's Bosom

18. ... so that He Himself might come to have first place in everything.

And look at verse 19 – the sweeping small statement.

19. For it was the Father's good pleasure for all the fullness to dwell in Him,

And you'll find repeatedly in that set of Notes [the Commentary] the word for "fullness" in the Greek is *pleroma*. That's the word for "fullness." And what that means is the entire package of attributes that make up what you are. And then added to that, the elements of your character that express what you are. That's what *pleroma* is. Fullness. Fullness. Fullness. It's something that's complete. It's perfect. It's mature. It's filled to overflowing. That's *pleroma*. Christ is all that God the Father intended to see of His mind of His will expressed. To use an answer for morphism. Okay. Because the Father who is spirit does not have mind. But we use the term mind to express His thoughts. When the Father in eternity past – it was all Him – had His first thought and expressed it, what came out of Him was the Son because no man has seen God the Father at anytime the Son has perfectly revealed Him. You see how all Scripture hangs together? Okay? It's just a tight package. Now the Son perfectly expresses the Father. Then the Son in His creative work – all things were created in Him through Him and by Him – He made all of this that we see – this material world. **Because the Father's purpose was eternally to complete His Son. And the Bride of Christ completes the Son of God. Israel was never promised that position.** Never. Never. Israel was never

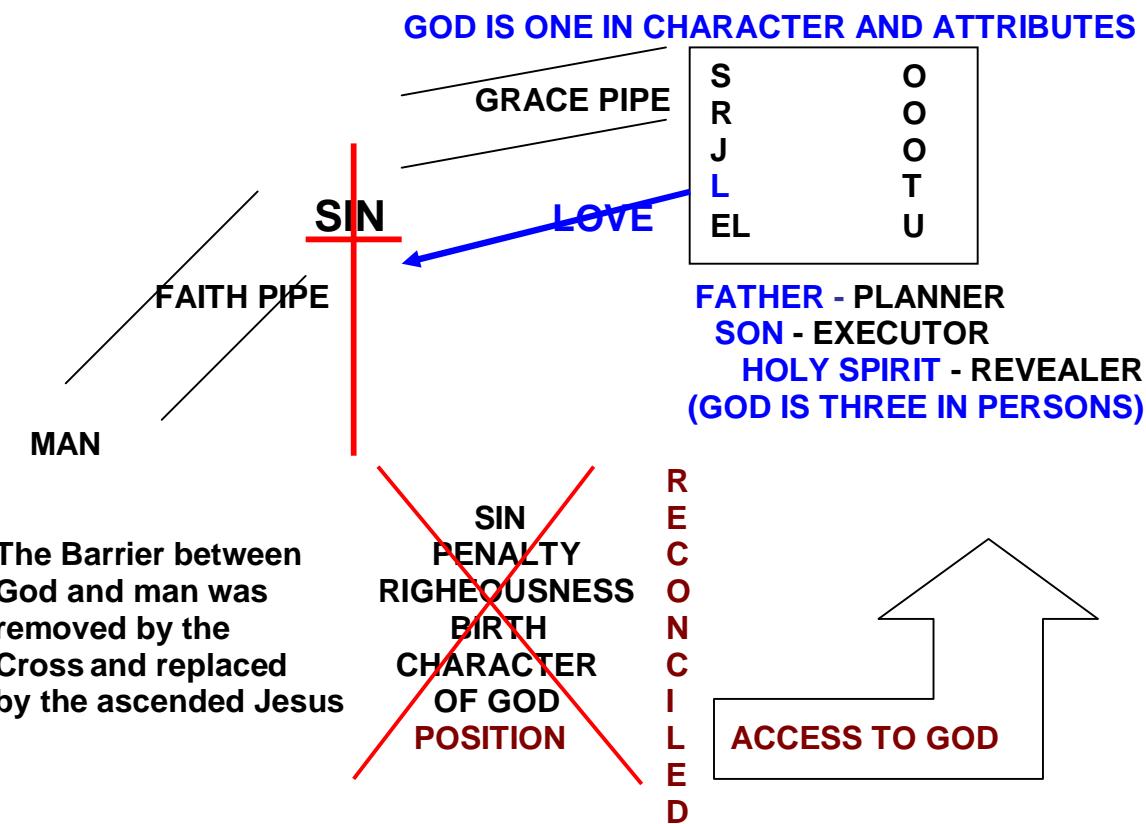
promised that position or that relationship to God. Would any of others – would a believer – the believing children of Adam; from Adam to Exodus 20 and the Law. Were any of them ever promised that kind of relationship. Was Abraham promised that kind of relationship. No. No. Abraham was promised a position as an exalted servant of God. David was promised a throne. Israel was promised real estate. The Church – the Church was given union. It's unique. You can't join the Church to Israel. Historically. It won't work. They were not promised the same thing. They have different destinies. Israel has its destiny on a piece of real estate that was promised to them in hard terms on earth forever. The Church is the Bride of Christ. We'll spend eternity adoring our Groom. Eternity adoring Him, while He reigns supreme, King of Kings, Lord of Lords, over all. It's not a bad thing to look forward to. Okay? Why we would want to give that up in order to manage real estate on earth is beyond me. It just doesn't make sense. Okay? Our destiny is not an earthly destiny. It's a heavenly destiny, because that's where the Father's throne is and that's where the Son's throne will be. And that's why there's a New Heavens and a New Earth. Okay? Because that New Earth is a redeemed earth on which Israel would exist forever, on the land God promised them. Now, in verse 19, for

19. It was the Father's pleasure for all the fullness to dwell in [Him] the Son.

20. and through Him to reconcile all things to Himself, having made peace through the blood of His cross; through Him, I say, whether things on earth or things in heaven.

When Jesus Christ went to the cross and paid the price, what was created right there is the ground of peace. When we as man without righteousness accepted the cross by faith, and loved the Father which He makes available by grace, that exchange takes place right here on the ground of peace where Christ is everything. Okay? He who is all and all occupies this ground and created that ground of peace. And we moved into Him. Through Him we reconcile all things to Himself. What's the word "reconcile" mean to you? We've dealt with it a couple of times in the past. What does it mean to reconcile all things to God?

[CONRAD'S DEPICTION OF THE FAITH PIPE AND THE GRACE PIPE]



Lady. [Inaudible].

Conrad Bowman. Okay. On a bank statement, you've got two sides on the ledger. You've got the incoming and you've got the outgoing. Alright. You've got the things you owe, and the things that you've earned. Okay? Man is here, and God is there. And what is between man and God is a series of things that constitute a barrier – just like a brick wall. There's sin in that barrier. There's penalty for sin in that barrier. There's the fact that we were born to Adam in that barrier. There's a lack of righteousness that keeps us separated from God in that barrier. There's the high character of God that has to be satisfied – His justice. His sovereignty – which has to come into play. And there's the fact that God is perfect love and absolute truthfulness – and we're not – and that's part of that barrier. Now when you draw that down and you list those things, you have the foundation for every major doctrine that the Christian Church teaches. Because to satisfy that there is – turn to page on page 10 and you've got a picture of some of that. What satisfies Him is Christ's attainment. To atone means to cover, and that's what happened in the Old Testament. When the Priest went into the Holy of Holies – and the Ark of the Covenant sat here. And on top of the Ark of the

Covenant was the Mercy Seat of God – that golden flat platform. And on either end of that was an angel with his wings folded out over that Mercy Seat. And when he took the blood of the sacrifice for sins from the Altar on the outside, and the Priest went behind that veil, and he carried that blood in the bowl. And he sprinkled that blood on the four horns of the Altar indicating that it was going to cover everything, and then he sprinkled that blood on the Altar right under those two angels – do you remember what was in the Ark of the Covenant? Aaron's rod that budded. The bowl of manna. And the Ten Commandments. Those three things represented three things of abject failure on the part of God's people – Israel. They didn't represent victory. They represented failure. They're in the Ark of the Covenant, because you took that failure into the grave with Him – and that's what that Ark represented. And when His blood – the blood of the sacrifices spread on top of that – on the Mercy Seat – the angel that represented justice – and the angel that represented righteousness – were looking down into the contents. And they didn't see the failure of Israel. What they saw was the blood of the sacrifice – and God was satisfied. And he poured the rest of that blood out right at the base of the Ark of the Covenant and it soaked into the ground. If the blood wasn't from an acceptable sacrifice, and the sacrifice wasn't made worthily, the priest died. So they had a dilemma, because nobody but the High Priest could go back there. They tied a rope around his waist. They tied it to his sash. And they sewed bells into the hems of his robe. And as long as those bells would tinkle, they knew that he was still in the process of putting that blood out. If it stopped and they didn't hear the bells anymore, they pulled him out from under the veil with that rope until they could elect another High Priest to go back there. Watch a Catholic mass. And just before the priest picks up the wafer and offers it to God, he picks up the bells and rings the bells. Ask a priest why he does that and he won't be able to tell you.

Lady. [Inaudible].

Conrad Bowman. That's right. That's exactly. That's exactly. The Catholic mass is based on the practice of the Old Testament Jewish Law.

Gentleman. That's why you've got to do it over and over.

Conrad Bowman. That's right. How many times do you have to do it? Yeah. But Christ – that's how many times Christ did it [once], and then He sat down at the right hand of the Father. Every priest on earth has to do it over and over again. Because he's covering the sins – actually he's doing nothing. But he's going through the motions of covering sin. And so the [penitent] comes to an earthly

priest – comes to the priest – and confesses his sin, and the priest ostensibly ties the sin to the wafer. And he rings the bell and he makes the offer. And he trusts that God has accepted the sacrifice – He covers the sin and forgives him for a while. And then it has to be done over and over again. Christ, who is all and all and who is our head, made one sacrifice for sin forever. And He sat down at the right hand of the Father in heaven; and took His place and it was done. There He makes intercession for us once and for all. He makes intercession with the Father for us. The poem of the Father to all creation. And He doesn't want us – He doesn't ask us to go through that continual motion anymore. He's done it all for us.

And you remember back in Ephesians what our responsibility is? Our responsibility is to walk in the works which He's prepared beforehand that we should walk in them. It's amazing! He doesn't expect us to do work. He expects us to walk in the works which He's prepared beforehand that we should walk in them. The Father has sent the Spirit to take the place of the Son who's now in heaven preparing the Wedding – so that the Spirit does the work and we walk in those works. Who was it last week in this class that said, you know, I joy in presenting the Gospel in our missionary work is to offer the Gospel, and God privileges us when He takes His Spirit and draws someone to the Son to allow us to be on site when that happens. And then lo and behold, He rewards us for being there while He did His work. This is a marvelous life we have to live, that the world does not understand – and we're not going to finish!

He's reconciling all – you're surprised? Huh? He's reconciling all of us to Himself – He's done that. Having made peace. He removed the barrier. He did it through the redemption – and regeneration. And He imputed righteousness to us. And He put us in Him instead of Adam. And we who were spiritually dead are now made to be spiritually alive through regeneration.

21. And although you were formerly alienated and hostile in mind, engaged in evil deeds,

22. yet He has now reconciled you in His fleshly body through death, in order to present you before Him holy [which means set apart] and blameless [which means without flaw] and beyond reproach [which means not indictable]—

Verse 23. I'm not going to race to the end. Verse 23 is "if." First class condition. "If" and its true. So you would say, "since."

23. Since indeed you continue in faith, firmly established and steadfast, and not moved away from the hope of the Gospel that you have heard, which was proclaimed in all creation under heaven, and of which I, Paul, was made a minister.

What a gorgeous thing. First class condition. "If" and its true.

23. Since indeed you continue in faith,

"The" is not found in the text. I've got a "the" faith in my *New American Standard*.

23. ... you continue in faith, firmly established and steadfast,

That's the quality of the faith in which you continue. You have

23. ... not moved away from the hope of the Gospel that you have heard,

And that hope of the Gospel is an easy term for us. So He who left us behind will come and get us and take us to be His Bride at the Marriage Supper.

23. ... which was proclaimed in all creation under heaven,

If you want to reference right there the whole Gospel in the stars discussion, it would be a good place to do that. And that deserves a study all its own.

and of which I, Paul, was made a minister.

Verse 24 is where this thing needs to start next week.

Gentleman. Why don't you go back to [verse] 21 and ...

Conrad Bowman. ... and come forward to the end of that chapter? Okay. You need to do it after that?

Gentleman. [Inaudible]. Okay. I drug my feet a little bit when we started today. Okay. We'll plan to do it that way. Comments? I love this letter. I love this letter.

Lady. [Inaudible].

[TAPE ENDED]. [This recording was transcribed on a tape recorder, and transmitted to a digital format. The earlier recordings, of which this is one, were made on a tape recorder. Some are more audible than others].