



DISCIPLES & THE EARLY CHURCH

Unit 8 • The Colossian Church

UNIT DESCRIPTION

"If Ephesians can be labeled the epistle portraying the 'Church of Christ,' then Colossians must surely be the 'Christ of the Church.' Ephesians focuses on the Body, Colossians on the Head." [1]

"Jewish Christians imbued with heathen philosophy were leading the converts astray in two directions, doctrinally and practically, theologically and ethically. On the one hand they were substituting inferior and created beings, angelic mediators, for the Divine Head Himself (2:8, 18); and on the other hand, they were insisting on ritual and ascetic observances as the foundation of their moral teaching (2:11, 16, 17, 20-23).

"... The one is known as Gnosticism, and the other as Judaism; and their common source was the conception of matter as the origin and abode of evil.

"Paul has but one answer for both these errors, namely, the supremacy of Christ."

"He shows that wrong views as to the true nature of the Lord mean wrong views about everything else throughout the universe, for Christ is the revelation and manifestation of God." [2]

"The resounding theme in Colossians is the preeminence and sufficiency of Christ in all things. The believer is complete in Him alone and lacks nothing because 'in Him dwells all the fullness of the Godhead bodily' (2:9); He has 'all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge' (2:3). There is no need for speculation, mystical visions, or ritualistic regulations as though faith in Christ were insufficient." [3]

"... Paul stresses the supremacy of the person of Christ and the completeness of the salvation He provides in order to combat a growing heresy in the church at Colossae. Christ, the Lord of creation and Head of the body which is His church, is completely sufficient for every spiritual and practical need of the believer. The believer's union with Christ in His death, resurrection, and exaltation is the foundation upon which his earthly life must be built." [4]

"... Colossians divides neatly in half with the first portion doctrinal (1-2) and the second practical (3-4). Paul's purpose is to show that Christ is preeminent—first and foremost in everything—and the Christian's life should reflect that priority. Because believers are rooted in Him, alive with Him, hidden in Him, and complete in Him, it is utterly inconsistent for them to live life without Him. Clothed in His love, with His peace ruling in their hearts, they are equipped to make Christ first in every area of life." [5]

[1] Talk Thru the Bible, Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1983, p. 411.

[2] W. Graham Scroggie, The Unfolding Drama of Redemption, ©1994 by Kregel Pub., Vol. 3, p. 161-2.

[3] Talk Thru the Bible, Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1983, p. 412.

[4] Talk Thru the Bible, Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1983, p. 410.

[5] Ibid, p. 411.



THE IMAGE OF GOD

Disciples & Early Church • U8#1 1st-3rd Gr. • Feb.9, 2025

Concept

Jesus is God in a human body; He is the visible image of the invisible God.

Goal

Students will learn that Jesus is God and that we can know what God is like through looking at Jesus as well.

Passage

Colossians 1:15; 2:9

Key Verse: "... He is the image of the invisible God." Colossians 1:15

Planning Ahead

Lesson Supplies	Craft Supplies
<p>Lesson:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>"Spread of the Early Church" laminated map</i> <p>Learning Activity #1:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>4" – 6" white taper candle, 1/room</i> • <i>Sand in sugar shaker, 1/room</i> • <i>Dishpan, 1/room</i> <p>Learning Activity #3:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>3 sets of matching pictures</i> • <i>Velcro strip</i> 	<p>Activity Stations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Matching card game (e.g., Old Maid, Rummy, Memory)</i> • <i>The Children's Encyclopedia of Bible Books, Mark Water</i> • <i>Adventure Bible Handbook</i> • <i>Copy paper, ½ sheet/student</i> • <i>Q-tips, 1/student</i> • <i>Styrofoam dessert plates, 4/CT class</i> • <i>2-3 colors of finger paint</i>

*TEACHERS PLEASE NOTE

For clarity, the italicized areas in the Planning Ahead section indicate supplies that are in—and should be returned to—your classroom SHARED SUPPLY bag.

Background Information (for the teacher)

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"It is a fascinating problem for us human beings to consider how the Eternal Being—wishing to show men His own Character focused, His own Thought expressed, and His own Purpose demonstrated—could introduce Himself into the stream of human history without disturbing or disrupting it. There must obviously be an almost unbelievable "scaling-down" of the "size" of God to match the life of the planet. There must be a complete acceptance of the space-and-time limitations of this present life... If it is to be done at all God must be man."^[1]

"... as the image of the invisible God, the Son is, first of all, himself God. 'In him all the fulness of the godhead dwells bodily' (Col. 2:9; cf. Rom. 9:5). 'In him all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge are hidden' (2:3). Secondly, as the image of the invisible God, the Son is God Revealed. In Paul's writings this identification of the Son with God himself, the Son being God's image or God made manifest, is not new... 'In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was face to face with God, and the Word was God....God himself no one has ever seen... It is in the Son that the invisible God has become visible, so that man sees him who is invisible (cf. I Tim. 1:17; 6:16)."^[2]

"The essence of Paul's message in this Epistle is this: Christ is the Head of the Universe. We approach Him directly, not through intermediary angels. He, not this or that philosophy, or this or that set of rules, but Christ Himself is our Wisdom, our Life, our Hope of Glory. Being a Christian, essentially, is Loving HIM, Living in HIM, a Person, a Glorious, Divine Person, through whom the universe was created, and in whom is entire sufficiency for Man's Redemption and Eternal Perfection."^[3] God is invisible. However, except for the physical limitations, Jesus is like Him in every way (Phil. 2:6-8). When the disciple, Philip, asked Jesus to show him the Father, Jesus said, "He who has seen Me has seen the Father. . ." (John 14:9).

"God's purpose in the Incarnation goes far beyond breaking through the dimensional barrier to communicate with us face-to-face, to help us understand and believe His message, to show us His love, and to give us hope. He came to break the sin barrier, to repair the damage done in the Garden of Eden. Christ came in human flesh to be the second Adam, the Man who would resist the temptation to 'do his own thing.' In perfectly obeying the Father, even to the point of death, He would finalize God's victory over the original and most powerful insurrectionist, Satan. The author of Hebrews explains at length why our Redeemer, the mediator between God and humankind, had to share in our humanity, to be made like us in every way, tempted in every way as we are, and yet without any sin.

[1] J.B. Phillips, *Your God is Too Small*, Macmillan Publishing Co., Inc., 1961, p.73.

[2] William Hendriksen, *Philippians, Colossians and Philemon*, ©1962 by William Hendriksen, Baker Book House, pp. 71, 72

[3] Halley's Bible Handbook, ©1965 by Halley's Bible Handbook, Zondervan Publishing Co., pp. 622, 623.

Set Up

Instructions: On a piece of paper, use the candle to write "Jesus." Press hard to make sure there is enough wax on the paper to catch the sand. Brush off any loose wax.

Incorporation Lg. Group

Activity Stations:

- **Research – The problem in Colossae**
 - **Instructions:** Use the provided reference books to determine why Paul wrote his letter to the church in Colossae. See p. 221 in the Adventure Bible Handbook, p. 64 in The Children's Encyclopedia of Bible Books.
- **Craft – The Exact Image**
 - **Instructions:** Pour a small amount of paint and put several Q-tips in the dessert plates. Give each student a ½ sheet of paper. Fold the paper in half. Open the paper and paint one half of the paper with the Q-tips. When finished painting, fold the paper and press it with your hand. As you open the paper, you'll see that each side is exactly like the other. Jesus is exactly like God, just like these two images are exactly alike.
- **Game – Matching Card Game (e.g., Old Maid, Rummy, Memory, etc.)**
 - **Instructions:** The objects in the card game match because they are the same. Jesus and God match because they are the same.

Introduction Lg. Group

This week we are beginning the study of another letter that Paul wrote. He wrote this letter to the people in the church in the city of Colossae. Colossae is not labeled on this map but was just to the east of Ephesus (point to Ephesus on map). Paul wrote this letter to the Colossians while he was in prison in Rome. He was worried about the Christians in this city because false teachers were teaching that belief in Jesus wasn't enough for a right relationship with God. In order to convince the Colossians to believe the truth, Paul reminded them that Jesus is God and no one is greater than He is. He is everything and all we need to have a relationship with God. Our key verse says, "... He is the image of the invisible God" (Colossians 1:15). God is spirit so He is invisible to us. Jesus, as man, is the image of the invisible God.

Transition

Let's look at something that is invisible become visible.

Learning Activity#1 Lg. Group

Object Lesson - Invisible writing

Goal: To see the invisible become visible.

Instructions: Have students sit in a semi-circle. As you talk, hold the paper over the dishpan and sprinkle the sand over the paper. Shake the excess sand into the dishpan. The words will appear in black as the sand sticks to the wax.

Because God is Spirit we can't see Him. He is invisible to us now. Colossians 1:15 says, "... He is the image of the invisible God."

Learning Activity#1 Continued

Transition

Learning Activity#2 Lg. Group

Transition

Lesson Lg. Group

On this piece of paper is an example of something that exists but we can't see; there is some invisible writing. Just as the invisible writing was made visible, the invisible God was made visible when Jesus came into the world as a man.

We're going to see a puppet skit about why God became man.

Drama – “The Boy and the Ants” puppet skit performed by the Puppet Team

Let's return to our classrooms and learn more about why it is so important to believe that Jesus is God.

Can someone tell me why Jesus came to the earth? (The kids will most likely respond that He came to die on the cross for our sins.) That's right. Jesus died on the cross to take the punishment for every sin that was ever made by anyone—even people like you and me who weren't born yet. If you tell God that you want Jesus' punishment to count for you, it will. God will forgive you for all your wrong choices, you will have a relationship with God now and you will live forever with Him in heaven. He wants only what is best for us. He gives us what is best for us. We can depend on Him for everything because He is ALL that we need. Jesus came to earth as a man so people could see what God is like. Jesus – God the Son – is exactly like God the Father. Isn't that great? God really loves us more than we can imagine.

Jesus and God have lived forever. The Bible says that Jesus is God. Jesus and God created the whole world and hold everything together. How could Jesus and God be two different people yet both be God? This is something that is hard for everyone to fully understand. We probably won't completely understand while we are here on earth. Find Colossians in your Bible. Follow along as I read our key verse, Colossians 1:15. God is God the Father and Jesus is God the Son, but they are both God. No one has ever seen God because He is invisible, but Jesus became a person who could be seen.

Let me tell you what God is like. God is always unselfish and loving. He has never sinned. Can any of you say that you are always unselfish? When Jesus was on earth He never sinned. He never ever made a single wrong choice. He was never selfish! That is amazing, isn't it? He never spent time thinking about what He needed and wanted. Instead, He thought about other people. He helped them and told them how much God loved them. That isn't like us, is it? Sometimes we think about others and help others, but usually we think about ourselves. Jesus came to the earth just for us. He was born as a baby just like you and I. His mother took care of Him. He had to do chores around the house just like we do. Let's read part of Colossians 1.

Lesson Continued

Transition

Learning Activity #3 Lg. Group

Let's look at our key verse, "... He is the image of the invisible God." Jesus is God as a human. Because Jesus is God, His death on the cross is all we need to be His child.

We're going to play a game. We'll match things that are like each other.

Game - "This is Like That"

Goal: To illustrate that 2 unique objects can have similar characteristics

Instructions: Divide the class into three groups. Place Velcro starting line on carpet and have the students line up in their groups behind it. Each teacher will sit in a chair across the room from a group. At the signal, the first student will run to the teacher across from his/her line look at the column of pictures. The student will choose the two pictures that have similar characteristics and tell why they are alike. If correct, the teacher says "okay," the student runs back to the end of the line and sits down. If the incorrect, he/she will try again until a correct match is made, then go back to the end of the line. Continue until all correct matches have been made.

Before the debrief, hold up each column and quickly show that the pictures are matched according to the following properties:

- Stapler & staple gun are used to attach items together
- Lantern & lamp make light
- Microscope & telescope magnify objects
- Ice cream cone & snowman are frozen/cold
- Map & globe show areas of the world
- Push mower & tractor cut grass
- Bus & car are vehicles that take people places
- Saw & scissors cut
- Snowflake & glass of water are both forms of water
- Pen & pencil both write messages

Debrief: The snowflake and the glass of ice water are alike because they are both cold. The lamp and the lantern are alike because they both make light. The pictures match because the objects are alike in some ways. Jesus and God are alike in all ways except that Jesus is God as a person. Jesus and God are alike because they love perfectly. Jesus and God are alike because they both created the world. Jesus and God are alike because they never sin. Jesus and God are alike because they are never selfish. "... He is the image of the invisible God" (Colossians 1:15). Jesus and God are alike because Jesus is God.

Transition

Let's get into small groups.

Learning Activity #4 Sm. Groups

- What is our key verse? What does it mean?
- In what ways are Jesus and God the same as each other? (Created the world and hold everything together; know everything and forgives us; only wants what is best for us; gives us what is best for us; can depend on Him for everything because ALL we need.)
- In what ONE way were they different? (Jesus is a man so we can see what God is like.)
- In what ways are we different from Jesus and God? (Selfish; think of selves before others; sinful; not God.)
- Have you ever thought about some of the things about Jesus and God that make you feel happy, safe or protected? (Teachers, be prepared to give age appropriate example from your life.)

Missions Prayer: Talk about and pray for the Oasis Giving Campaign.

Let's pray and thank God that Jesus came to earth to die on the cross to take the punishment we deserve for our sins. Let's thank God that He will become our best friend so we will know and trust that Jesus is all we need.

Optional Activities

Craft – Make another "Exact Image" picture.

Game – Mirror Image

- **Instructions:** Pair students and have them take turns copying the movements of each other as if in a mirror.