

Further Bible Study Questions

- A) Read Colossians 2:1-5 several times. Based on Paul's warning in verse 4, what do you think the substance of the "persuasive arguments" were with which the Colossians were being distracted?
- B) Colossae was a city of wealth and influence which was surrounded by other cities in the area which were also wealthy and influential. The Colossians were living a good middle-class to upper-middle-class lifestyle in the Lycus Valley region. There were many responsibilities for work and family in this environment, and many local distractions (Hierapolis had a popular "spa" experience) for a quick "getaway." The towns of the Lycus Valley sound a lot like Southern California! When you think of the modern distractions from being devoted (time, talents, treasure) to Jesus Christ, what are some of the pressures you face?
- C) I seldom think of the things in which I participate (TV Shows, Local Sports Teams, Internet, Kids Activities, Exercise, etc.) as being part of a larger set of "false teachings" which are distracting me from the Lord. But it seems that Paul was bringing the whole culture of Colossae into play as he encouraged the people to walk with God in a mature faith. How do you bring "good discipline and stability" (Colossians 2:5) to your priority of Jesus Christ (first) and other activities (second, third, fourth, etc.)?
- D) We live in a world which says that knowledge and wisdom can be sought through myriad sources and avenues. In fact, many would say that seeking truth, wisdom, knowledge, etc., through Islam, Buddhism, Hinduism, Christianity or any other religion are simply "many roads leading to salvation, many roads leading to truth." How would you respond to this kind of "persuasive argument?" Is Jesus Christ unique, and how?

Hidden Treasure

Long Beach Alliance Church • August 26th, 2007 • Pastor Chris Lankford

THE LORD IS EXALTED, FOR HE DWELLS ON HIGH; HE HAS FILLED ZION WITH JUSTICE AND RIGHTEOUSNESS. AND HE WILL BE THE STABILITY OF YOUR TIMES, A WEALTH OF SALVATION, WISDOM AND KNOWLEDGE; THE FEAR OF THE LORD IS HIS TREASURE.

~ISAIAH 33:5-6 (NASB)

1) It's Not Just The Diamond Ring

- A) When describing the Kingdom of Heaven, Jesus compared the Christian life to a laborer who had found a hidden treasure in a field (Matthew 13:44).
- B) The field, which was obviously in plain sight for everyone to see, had been ignored. No one could perceive the value of the field, because what it contained was hidden.
- C) After encountering the hidden treasure and realizing the value of the field, the laborer sold everything he had in order to obtain the field (and the hidden treasure).

- D) The man risks everything he has in order to gain that which he could never obtain through regular means. In the eyes of the world, the man found a fortune. In biblical terms, the fortune found the man.

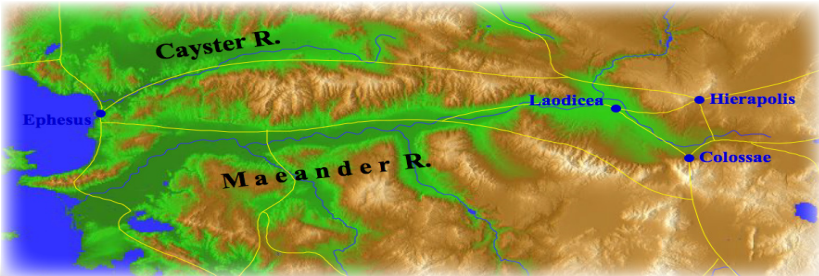
- E) Imagine if the man opened his newly obtained treasure and extracted the largest and most opulent diamond ring from his treasure trove, but then closed the treasure chest and buried it back in his field. Why would he do that?

- F) Why indeed?! Yet, this is what many Christians choose to do in their relationship with Jesus Christ. They wear the "wedding ring" which Christ has given them (salvation), but seek treasure elsewhere, like a married widow.

- G) The Apostle Paul noted this tendency amongst the followers of Christ in Colossae (Colossians 2:1ff). While rich in their relationship to Jesus Christ, they acted poor, seeking their wealth from sources other than Jesus Christ.

2) The Lycus Valley, Abundant Wealth For Many

- A) Paul extends his thought-line on suffering (1:24) and struggles (2:1) to extend to the entire Lycus Valley region.



- B) The Lycus Valley was known for its rich commerce and abundant wealth. Laodicea (2:1), Hierapolis, and Colossae were all cities of significance and great wealth during the time of Jesus Christ.*

- C) Paul gently chides the wealthy Colossians to pursue wealth which comes from the source, Jesus Christ Himself (2:2).

3) Dig Deeper In The Treasure Chest

- A) Rather, the Colossians were seeking the treasure of wisdom and knowledge (2:3) from sources which were outside of Christ. Paul counters that wisdom and knowledge about the mysteries of God (2:2) comes from Christ **ALONE** (2:3).

- B) Clearly, false teachers had come into the assembly of the Colossians and convinced them that God's mysteries could be known through some sort other mediator or method (2:4). This was/is **FALSE TEACHING!**

- C) There is only one mediator who reveals God to man, Jesus Christ **ALONE** (Colossians 2:2-3, cf. 1st Timothy 2:5).

- D) Paul calls on Christians to be mature in the faith, avoiding false teaching through a knowledge of Christ, the living Word of God (cf. John 1:1, 14, 1st Peter 1:23, Hebrews 4:12).

* The seminal work on the Lycus Valley is Colin Hemer's *The Letters to the Seven Churches of Asia in Their Local Setting*. In addition, the introduction section to F.F. Bruce's *New International Commentary on the New Testament, Colossians, Philemon & Ephesians* is a good resource for some general Lycus Valley information.