

Study 4

COLOSSIANS 1:24-29

STARKLY DIFFERENT VALUES

PAUL is writing this epistle as a prisoner in Rome. His vocation as an apostle of Christ had cost him dearly.

1. Note some of what Paul had endured in the course of his service of Christ and His gospel based on Second Corinthians 11:23-28 -

2. Yet, what was Paul's attitude to all that he had suffered for Christ according to Colossians 1:24?

Paul states that his suffering were "filling up what is lacking in Christ's affliction" (ESV). It would be wrong to think that Paul was stating that Christ's suffering and death was insufficient to atone for the sins of mankind, and that His atonement needed to be completed by the suffering of His people. Rather, Paul's statement seems to correspond to what Christ told His followers in John 16:33.

3. Based on Colossians 1:25, what did Paul see as his primary ministry responsibility?

The Gnostics claimed that they had *special knowledge* of certain ‘mysteries’ that could lead a person to salvation.

4. Read Colossians 1:26 and notice to whom had the *true* mystery (that God’s plan was to save all people—including both Jews and Gentiles—would be accomplished through the atonement of His Son) actually been revealed?
 - (a) Just to the Gnostics because they specialised in mysteries.
 - (b) Just to women because they themselves are mysterious.
 - (c) Just to the Greeks who invented philosophical mysteries.
 - (d) To *all* Christians by the revelation of the Holy Spirit and taught by the apostles.

(*If you get stuck, refer to Colossians 1:27 for help.)

5. How does Paul explain what this mystery (which he refers to in Colossians 1:26) actually was, according to Colossians 1:27?

6. Paul regarded the message of salvation as the message of Jesus Christ. According to Colossians 1:28, how did he do this, and what was his goal?

7. Based on Colossians 1:29 what was it that Paul said motivated him so strongly to preach to so many people with such passion? What can we learn from this in our own service of Christ?

Amen.