

Engage

Thursday 3 December 2020

God's Treasure Revealed

Colossians 2:1-7

BEFORE MEETING TOGETHER

Watch the Bible Project video: Colossians, an Overview <https://youtu.be/pXTXIDxQsvc>

OPEN

In many adventure stories such as Robert Louis Stevenson's *Treasure Island*, the plot hinges on the discovery of an ancient map or chart. The people who have found it realize that, if only they could understand and follow it, it would lead them to buried treasure that had been hidden for many years, perhaps centuries. They would be rich beyond their wildest dreams.

Paul has spoken of God's secret plan, a plan that has lain hidden, like a map in a locked and dusty cupboard, for ages and generations. Now, quite suddenly, it has come to light in the events concerning Jesus the Messiah. Paul is in possession of the map and is inviting as many people as possible to come with him to find the treasure.

What is the most valuable thing you have ever found? What did you do with what you found? Who did you tell?

STUDY

Read Colossians 2:1-7.

Paul tells the Colossians plainly what the treasure is, what dangers they will face as they try to make it their own and which route they must take to get to it. After what Paul has already said, we shouldn't be surprised that his theme all through is Jesus, Jesus, Jesus. He is the secret plan; he is the treasure; he is the one 'in whom' they will be able to ward off danger; he is the one 'in whom' they must find their way to the goal.

From verses 1-5, sum up Paul's joys and concerns for the Colossians.

On the 'map' of your life what were the signposts along the way that led you to Christ?

Nobody, no matter how learned or devout, could have guessed that when the one true God unveiled his blueprint for bringing the whole world under his sovereign and saving rule, that blueprint would consist of a man suffering the cruel punishment that the Romans used for rebel slaves—and then rising from the dead three days later. But once these astonishing events had unfolded, Paul and others came to see that this map did indeed make sense. The treasure that was hidden, to which the map would lead them, was Jesus Christ himself.

Paul didn't see the human plight like so many do today, that people need to have some kind of spiritual experience and that Jesus the Messiah could supply it if they wanted. It was that Jesus himself was the centre of the cosmos, the key to life and the universe, the image of the invisible God, the clue to genuinely human existence.

Have you had difficulties with the idea that Jesus Christ is not one alternative way to have a spiritual experience but is the centre of reality? Explain.

If the centrality of Christ has not been a problem for you, why do you think other people find it offensive?

Paul indicates that people are quite likely to try to deceive the new Christians with arguments that sound plausible but are in fact designed to lead them astray.

What would protect the Colossians from these lies (2-5)?

What are some of today's 'plausible words' which can deceive Christians?

Paul is anxious, since he can't be personally present with the little churches, that they should be able to line themselves up in battle array against any attack. The morale and firmness he speaks of (5) would probably sound like military formation and readiness to defend. They mustn't be caught off their guard.

In verses 6-7 Paul uses the three word-pictures of a journey, putting down healthy roots and a building being built.

How have you found your life in Christ to resemble

- *a journey?*
- *developing healthy roots?*
- *a building under construction?*

In what areas of your life do you especially need the 'wisdom and knowledge' of Christ?

PRAY

Reread Colossians 2:2. Pray that the qualities Paul longed to see in the lives of the Colossians will also be apparent in you.¹

NEXT TIME

Complete in Christ: Colossians 2:8-3:4

¹ Tom Wright, Dale Larsen, and Sandy Larsen, *Colossians & Philemon: 8 Studies for Individuals or Groups, For Everyone Bible Study Guides* (London: SPCK, 2009), 25–31.