

COLOSSIANS: STABILITY BY CHRIST'S ALL-SUFFICIENCY AND SUPREMACY

Part III: Stability Through Acknowledging The Universal Evidences For The Christian Faith (Colossians 1:4-8)

I. Introduction

- A. Today's unsettling, insecure world has led many believers to become equally unsettled and insecure, so we believers need to focus on the stability and security we have in the Lord.
- B. The Colossian epistle presents Christ's all-sufficiency and supremacy in ways that settle and provide security, and one way it does this is by teaching the universal evidences of the truthfulness of the Christian faith.
- C. Colossians 1:4-8 teaches these evidences, and we view them that we might acknowledge them for stability:

II. Stability Through Acknowledging The Universal Evidences For The Christian Faith, Colossians 1:4-8.

- A. In mentioning that he prayed for his readers, Paul wrote that he gave thanks to God for the "triad of Christian graces" of "faith, love and hope" that were in them, Col. 1:4-5; Ryrie Study Bib., KJV, 1978, ftn. to Col. 1:4-5.
- B. These "Christian graces" are mentioned in some of Paul's other epistles to other Christians, so they serve as universal evidences of the reality of the Christian faith (as follows):
 - 1. Paul mentioned that his ministry team was grateful to God for the "faith in Christ Jesus" in his Colossian readers (Col. 1:4a), and such a faith is noted by Paul of believers in Rome (Romans 1:8) and Thessalonica (1 Thessalonians 1:3a; 2 Thessalonians 1:3a) and of Philemon who was in the Church at Colossae (Philemon 5; *Ibid.*, p. 1727) Faith in Christ is thus a universal mark of true Christians and it serves as an evidence of the true Christian faith.
 - 2. Paul mentioned that his team was grateful to God for "the love" which his readers had "to all the saints" (Col. 1:4b), and such a love is noted of believers in Thessalonica (1 Thessalonians 1:3b; 2 Thessalonians 1:3b) and of Philemon who was part of the Church at Colossae (Philemon 5; *Ibid.*) Love for other believers is thus a universal mark of true believers, and thus acts as an evidence of the true Christian faith.
 - 3. Paul mentioned that his ministry team was grateful to God for "the hope" which was "laid up in heaven" for his readers (Col. 1:5), and such a hope is noted of believers in Rome (Romans 5:4-5; 8:23-25) and at Thessalonica (1 Thessalonians 1:3c), and the Apostle Peter wrote of this same hope of believers in Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia and Bithynia in 1 Peter 1:3-4. Hope for a blessed future with God in heaven is thus a universal mark of true Christians, and thus serves as an evidence of the true Christian faith.
- C. Paul also wrote that the true Gospel of Christ that was believed by his Colossian readers and had produced these universal graces in them had born fruit unto salvation throughout the world, Col. 1:6. Thus, the Gospel that faith in Christ's death, burial and resurrection saves one from sin and hell in accord with Old Testament Scriptural prophecy as noted in 1 Corinthians 15:1-11 is the true Gospel because of its universal productivity of saving those who believe it, thus acting as another universal evidence of the reality of the Christian faith.
- D. Paul noted that Epaphras, his dear fellowservant whom the Colossian readers also knew as a faithful minister of the Lord in their behalf, had declared unto Paul's ministry team the love of Paul's Colossian readers as evidence of the Holy Spirit's presence in them, Colossians 1:7-8. Since the indwelling of the Holy Spirit can occur only to true believers (Romans 8:9b), though Paul had never personally met these readers (Colossians 2:1), testimony of their Holy Spirit-produced love through the witness of credible co-worker Epaphras signaled to Paul that his readers were true believers. Hence, the evident fruit of the Spirit in the form of godly love was a universal mark of a true Christian, and acted as a universal evidence of the true Christian faith.

Lesson: Paul explained that the true Christian faith is tangibly evidenced to be the REAL and TRUE faith by way of its universal faith in Christ, its universal love for fellow believers and its universal hope for blessings in eternity with God in heaven. In addition, the universal fruitfulness of the Christian Gospel of salvation by faith in Christ seen in the conversion of people from all over the world who believe its message and the universal evidences of the fruit of the Holy Spirit in those who are converted to Christ all indicate that the Christian faith is true and real.

Application: If tempted to doubt the reality of the Christian faith, recall that (1) faith in Christ, (2) love for fellow believers and (3) hope for eternal bliss in God's heaven UNIVERSALLY show up in the experiences of all men everywhere on earth who believe the Gospel, that (4) the Christian Gospel produces changed lives in those who believe wherever it is proclaimed and (5) the fruits of the Holy Spirit show up in the lives of true converts wherever the Gospel is believed. The fact that these realities are UNIVERSAL give evidence to a SPIRITUAL reality that transcends race, ethnicity, culture and gender, marking Biblical Christianity as the TRUE faith.