

=BOOKS OF THE BIBLE=

Lesson 51

Colossians

Objects to have:

The sign for this new Bible book: COLOSSIANS

Learn About Jesus

Some stationery and your pen

Your mailman with the letter addressed to the Colossians

Pictures with which you can illustrate Creation according to Genesis, chapter one (There can be buildings, etc., in each picture, but let the predominant part of each picture illustrate a particular day of Creation.)

Your Bible.

Introducing the lesson:

Many books of the New Testament are letters. They are letters like we receive in the mail. Let's pretend that we are writing a letter. (Lay down your Bible, and pick up a sheet of stationery and your pen.) We'll pretend that we are away from home, on vacation. We want to tell a friend of ours what we are doing. So, we will write a letter to our friend. In the letter we will tell where we are on vacation, what we have done, what new places we have seen. Maybe in the letter we will ask our friend how he is and what he is doing. Then we will put the letter into an envelope, put a stamp on the envelope and take it to a post office to mail it. (Demonstrate all this.)

Paul wrote a lot of letters. We can read in the Bible the letters which he wrote. Let's name the letters which we know Paul has written. (Review with the children the names of the books Romans through Philippians.) Now, let's say all the books of the New Testament together; that is, all that we have learned so far. (Do this.)

Let us look into our mailbag today. There is another letter, one which we have not read thus far. This letter has the name *Colossians* on it. Paul wrote this letter to the people who lived in the city of Colosse. (Show the children the location of the book of Colossians in your Bible. Put down your Bible.)

(Pick up the pictures illustrating the story of Creation.) I have brought several pictures with me today. Let us talk about what we see in these pictures. (You talk about them; fill in details about what you think is happening in the pictures. While discussing each picture, call to the attention of the children everything that was made or created by Jesus as it is listed in the first chapter of Genesis. When you talk about the creation of earth itself, you could point out that the steel that is in the buildings in the picture that you might have was first iron ore, and that Jesus put the iron ore into the ground when He made earth. If there are people in the picture that illustrates the creation of animals, you could talk about the wool in their clothing and that God made the sheep from which the wool comes. As time permits, your conversation could follow this line for all the pictures, according to what is pictured. Lay down the pictures when you have finished the days of Creation.)

Jesus also had made beings who live in Heaven. He had made angels—thousands of angels. People never become angels, and angels never become people. Sometimes people might say to you, "Oh, you little angel," but that is just a fun saying. People never become angels. Angels were made by Jesus, to be angels; they are not people. The Bible tells us about angels. When God let people see angels, the angels looked like men. In some places where the Bible tells about angels, it tells that they were dressed in white clothing. Whenever people could see angels, the angel had suddenly appeared!

Some angels are God's messengers; they come to tell people something that God wants the people to know. Some angels are God's guards; angels protect us if we trust Jesus. Paul wrote about angels in the book of Colossians.

Telling the story:

Paul was in a dark room. The walls and the floors and the ceiling of the room were made of big, thick stones. The room was cold because it was built down below the ground—like a basement. Not much light could get into the room; the only time a lot of light could get into the room was when the cover in the ceiling was lifted out by someone on the floor above. The room never dried out completely. There was a little trickle of water down the walls and across the floor of this room. The room was in a prison.

Paul was in this room. Paul was in prison. He was held by chains that were fastened to the wall. What a dark, dismal, uncomfortable place the prison cell was! Prisons are for criminals, but Paul was no criminal. Paul had not done anything wrong. Paul had loved the people and wanted them to know about Jesus. That is why he was in prison. Isn't that strange!? Some men hated Paul because Paul was telling people about Jesus and people were trusting Jesus. Some people who would not trust Jesus hated Paul! These people convinced lawyers and judges that Paul should be thrown into prison.

Paul was not alone in prison. There were other prisoners there, too. One day a prison guard moved aside the cover in the ceiling. The guard let down another man into this prison room, maybe on a rope. Guards came down into the room after him, sliding down the rope. The guards put chains on his arms and legs just as Paul had chains on, holding him to the wall. Then the guards climbed back up out of the room, pulled the rope up after them, and put the cover back over the hole in the ceiling of the prison cell.

In the nearly pitch-dark, Paul spoke to the man. He said to him, "Hello. My name is Paul. What is your name? Why are you here in prison?"

The man answered, "My name is Epaphras. I have not broken any laws. I have simply told people about Jesus. I love Jesus. Some men became angry because I was preaching. They had me thrown into this prison." Well, now, wasn't that something! Both men were in prison just because they loved Jesus and loved people enough to tell them about Jesus!

Neither man seemed to mind too much the fact that he was in prison. Paul and Epaphras both knew that Jesus knew where they were. They both knew that He had allowed them to be put into this place. There had to be a reason why they were allowed to be put into prison, and now there had to be a reason why they were in prison together.

Paul and Epaphras sat talking. Epaphras told Paul of the places which he had visited. One place which he had visited was the city of Colosse. He told Paul that he had preached in that city. He told Paul how wonderful it was that many people in Colosse had asked Jesus to be their Saviour. Many of the Colossians loved Jesus.

Paul asked Epaphras, "How is the church doing now? Do the people still want to serve Jesus? Do they want to do right always?"

Epaphras answered, "The people are fine people. There are a few problems, however. They have started to worship angels."

How astonished Paul was to hear this! It is God only Whom we should worship. Paul said, "I would like to help the Colossians. I will write them a letter. In the letter, I will give them some instructions."

The next time Paul saw a guard, he asked if someone could come and write a letter which he would dictate. Someone did come down into the prison cell, and he had paper and pen in his hand. (Pick up your stationery and pen again.) Paul said, "Write a letter to the Colossians for me, please. Tell them to remember that Jesus the Son of God created everything. Tell them to remember that they should worship God—God the Father, God the Son, God the Holy Spirit—and Him only. Tell the Colossians that they should not worship angels. Remind them that Jesus made the angels, and that the angels are messengers and helpers for God. Remind the Colossians that they are to love Jesus and to do right. Remind the children to obey their parents. Remind all the Colossians that they should obey God."

When the letter to the Colossians was finished, the man folded the letter (fold your letter), and he sealed it (put yours into an envelope and seal it). The man said, “I will deliver the letter to the Colossians. I will travel to Colosse and be a mailman.”

The guard came after a while, moved the cover in the ceiling, let down a rope, and the person who wrote the letter climbed back up out of the prison cell. He had to travel several miles from the prison where Paul was. The Colossian Christians were meeting together when the messenger got to Colosse. The messenger delivered the letter to the Colossian Christians. Someone stood up and read the letter to them.

(Pick up your Bible which is open to Colossians.) We can read this letter, too. Even though it was written to the Colossians, it is meant for us also. Many wonderful things are in this book—this letter which Paul wrote to the Colossians. We read that Jesus made everything; we read that we are to trust Jesus always; and we read that we are to worship the true, living God only.

LEARN OUR BIBLE VERSE: Colossians 1:16, “For by him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth....”