

Colossians & Ephesians – “Already/Not Yet” & “The Heavlies”



Your instructor wrote the notes to Colossians & Ephesians in the New Geneva Study Bible.

Colossians

- Arnold, Clinton. *The Colossian Syncretism: The Interface between Christianity and Folk Belief at Colossae*. Grand Rapids: Baker, 1996.
- Harris, Murray. *Colossians and Philemon*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1991.
- O'Brien, Peter. *Colossians and Philemon*. Word Biblical Commentary 44. Waco: Word, 1982.
- Lightfoot, J.B. *St. Paul's Epistles to the Colossians and Philemon*. Reprint by Hendrickson Publishers, Peabody, MA, 1875, 1993.

Philemon

- Barth, Markus, and Helmut Blanke. *The Letter to Philemon*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2000. How could a one-page letter generate over 500 pages of commentary? One word: magisterial.
- Callahan, Dwight Allen. *Embassy of Onesimus*. Valley Forge, PA: Trinity Press International, 1997. An intriguing attempt by an African-American to rescue Paul from a pro-slavery position.
- Martin, Dale. *Slavery as Salvation: The Metaphor of Slavery in Pauline Christianity*. New Haven: Yale, 1990.
- Peterson, Norman. *Rediscovering Paul: Philemon and the Sociology of Paul's Narrative World*. Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1985.

Ephesians

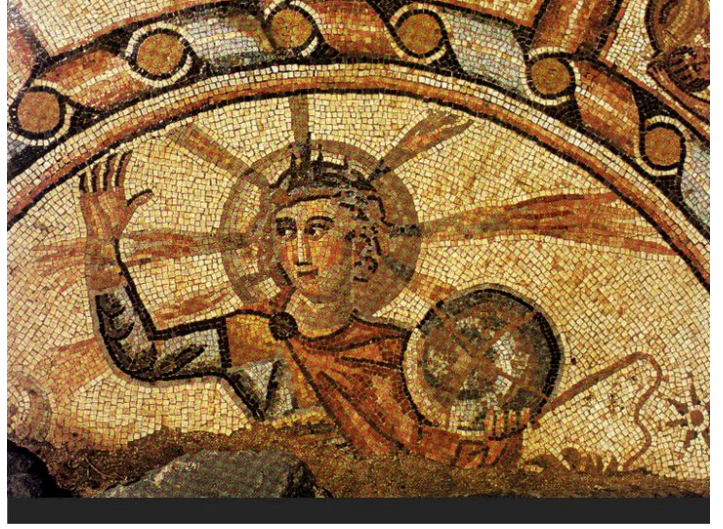
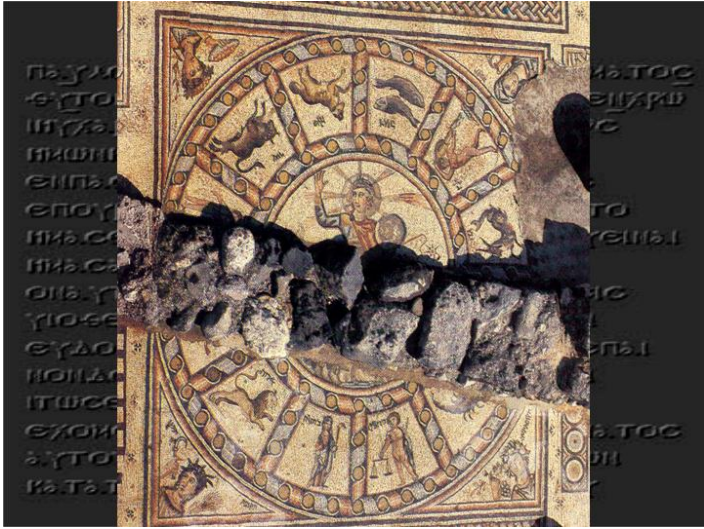
- Arnold, Clinton. *Ephesians: Power and Magic — The Concept of Power in Ephesians in Light of Its Historical Setting*. Grand Rapids: Baker, 1989, 1992.
- Arnold, Clinton. *Powers of Darkness: Principalities and Powers in Paul's Letters*. Downers Grove, IL: IVP, 1992.
- Lincoln, Andrew. *Ephesians*. Word Biblical Commentary 42. Waco: Word, 1990.
- Stott, John. *God's New Society: The Message of Ephesians*. Downers Grove, IL: IVP, 1979, 1980.

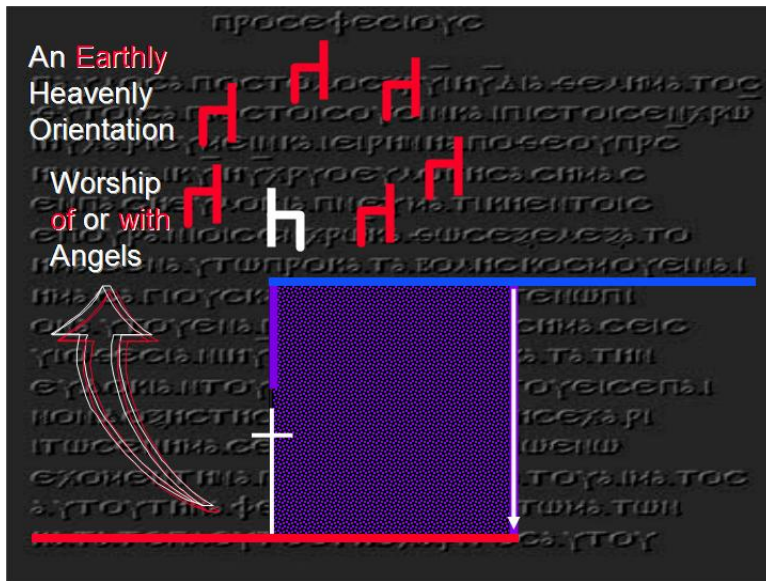


A mosaic in a 3rd or early 4th century A.D. synagogue in Hammath Tiberias illustrates the kind of syncretistic angel-speculation within Judaism against which Paul was warning the Colossians.

- Hershel Shanks: "A belief in magic and superstition has often existed side by side with more elevated religious beliefs, including those of Judaism ... A belief in the influence of the planets on the affairs of the world was part of the intellectual baggage of the time ... Some third-, fourth-, and fifth-century Jews ... did not see a necessary conflict between traditional Judaism and a belief that by paying attention to the zodiac they might improve their chances of having sufficient rain at the right time ... For these Jews ... there was no reason why their God could not work through the zodiac ... For centuries, the calendar had been regarded as a reflection of godly regularity, and the zodiac may well have been a living symbol which many Jews adopted to represent this divine order" (*Judaism in Stone*, pp. 160-161).
- Lee Levine: "[There is] no room for doubt that certain Jewish circles of Byzantine Palestine did not regard Helios as merely a decorative element, or even as representing the power of God as creator of the universe. Rather, he functioned as a kind of super-angel capable of affecting one's life" (*Ancient Synagogues Revealed*, p. 9).

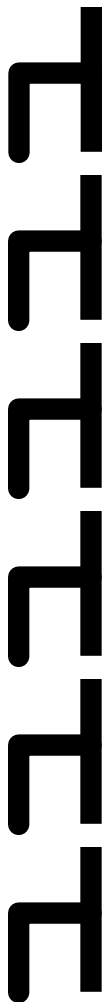
See the article by Hershel Shanks with photos by Zev Radovan, "Synagogue Excavation Reveals Stunning Mosaic of Zodiac and Torah Ark," Biblical Archaeology Review (May/June 1984), pp. 32-44





Recall that for Paul the Devil is the one over this sinister conspiracy (Eph 6:12). The Devil is also the Prince of the power (ἐξουσία) of the air, the spirit that is now (νῦν) at work among the sons of disobedience (Eph 2:2); & he is “the god of this age” (ὁ θεὸς τοῦ αἰῶνος τοῦτου — 2 Cor 4:4).

As to the little godlings under Satan, whom Paul calls “beings that are by nature not gods ... the weak and beggarly elements” (Gal 4:8-9), and “the elements of the world” (Col 2:20):



Thrones – θρόνοι (Col. 1:16)

Dominions – κυριότητες (Col. 1:16; Eph 1:21)

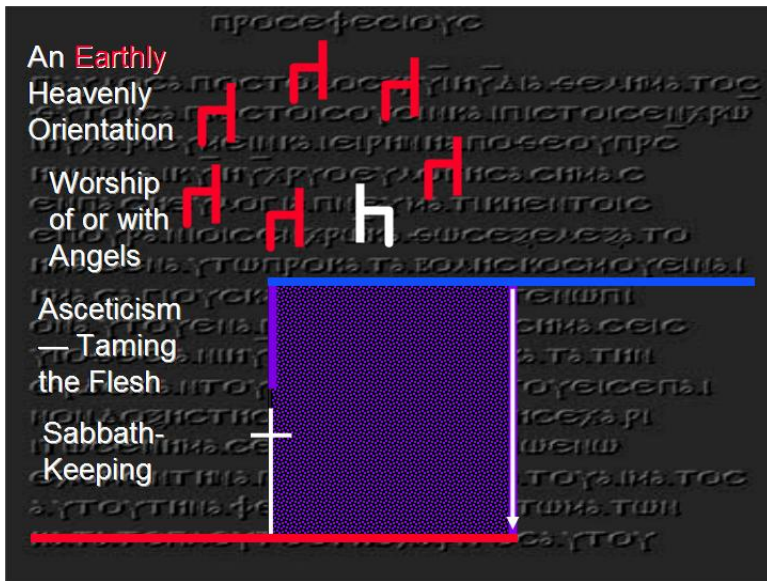
Principalities – ἀρχαί (Rom 8:38; Col 1:16; 2:10, 15; Eph 1:21; 3:10; 6:12)

Authorities – ἐξουσίαι (Col 1:16; 2:10, 15; Eph 1:21; 3:10; 6:12)

Powers – δυνάμεις (Eph. 1:21)

World Rulers – κοσμοκράτορες (Eph 6:12)

Spiritual Hosts – πνευματικά (Eph 6:12)



Col 2:16-23

προσεφεςιογς

Lord of Creation
Col 1:15-17
Lord; Not Peer of the Powers

πα... το... πο...
ε... το... πο...
π... το... πο...
π... το... πο...
ε... το... πο...
ε... το... πο...
π... το... πο...
π... το... πο...
ε... το... πο...
π... το... πο...
π... το... πο...
ε... το... πο...
π... το... πο...
π... το... πο...
ε... το... πο...
π... το... πο...

The diagram shows the Greek word προσεφεςιογς. A central vertical bar contains a white 'h' and red symbols resembling 'H' and 'U'. A blue horizontal line is drawn across the middle of the word. A red horizontal line is drawn at the bottom. A white vertical line is on the left, and a white arrow points down from the blue line to the red line.

προσεφεςιογς

Lord of Creation
Col 1:15-17

Lord of Recreation
Col 1:18-20;
2:15; Eph
1:20-21

πα... το... πο...
ε... το... πο...
π... το... πο...
π... το... πο...
ε... το... πο...
ε... το... πο...
π... το... πο...
π... το... πο...
ε... το... πο...
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“Watch this!!!”
Eph 3:10

Individual Reconciliation
Corporate Reconciliation

“Watch this!!!”
Eph 3:10

...No Longer Dead...
...No Longer Strangers...

“Watch this!!!”
Eph 3:10

Col — “Seek the Things Above”
Eph — “Sit, Walk, Stand”

The Letter to Philemon

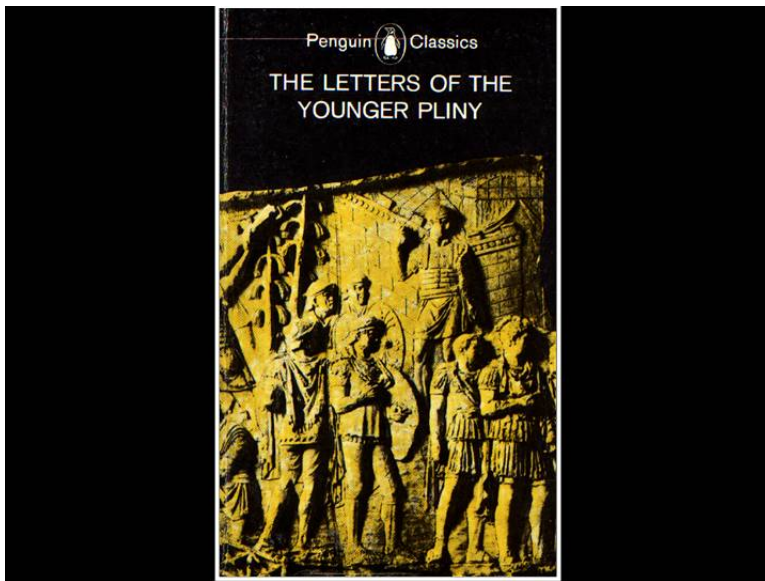
A Case Study in "Seeking the Things Above"



The Letter to Philemon

**A Case Study in
"Seeking the Things Above"**

Onesimus
Georges Rouault



From *The Letters of the Younger Pliny* — Book Nine
(a little before AD 111)

Epistle 21 To Sabinianus

The freedman of yours with whom you said you were angry has been to me, flung himself at my feet, and clung to me as if I were you. He begged my help with many tears, though he left a good deal unsaid; in short, he convinced me of his genuine penitence. I believe he has reformed, because he realizes he did wrong. You are angry, I know, and I know too that your anger was deserved, but mercy wins most praise when there was just cause for anger. You loved the man once, and I hope you will love him again, but it is sufficient for the moment if you allow yourself to be appeased. You can always be angry again if he deserves it, and will have more excuse if you were once placated. Make some concession to his youth, his tears, and your own kind heart, and do not torment him or yourself any longer. Anger can only be a torment to your gentle self.

I am afraid you will think I am using pressure, not persuasion, if I add my prayers to his, but this is what I shall do, and all the more freely and fully because I have given the man a very severe scolding and warned him firmly that I will never make such a request again. This was because he deserved a fright, and is not intended for your ears; for maybe I shall make another request and obtain it, as long as it is nothing unsuitable for me to ask and you to grant.

Epistle 24 To Sabinianus

You have done the right thing in taking back into your home and favour the freedman who was once dear to you, with my letter to mediate between you both. You will be glad of this, and I am certainly glad, first because I see you are willing to be reasonable and take advice when angry, and then because you have paid me the tribute of bowing to my authority, or, if you prefer, granting my request. So accept my compliments as well as my thanks, but, at the same time, a word of advice for the future: be ready to forgive the faults of your household even if there is no one there to intercede for them.

