
Colossians

Introduction

Colossae

Colossae was a city of Phrygia on the Lycus river. It stood on the great highway between Ephesus to the Euphrates valley, twelve miles from Hierapolis and ten miles from Laodicea. Its history is chiefly associated with these two cities. Its permanent population was Phrygian with a mixture of Greeks and Jews. It was constantly visited by travelers of all nationalities.

THE CHURCH AT COLOSSE:

The establishment of the church is uncertain. At issue is whether Paul himself had ever been there. Some suggest that Paul may have done some work there during his third journey, on the way to Ephesus (cf. Ac 18:23; 19:1). Others point out that Paul's comments imply that he had not personally been in Colosse (cf. 2:1). One possibility is that the church was established during Paul's extended stay at Ephesus, where the effect of his work spread throughout Asia Minor (cf. Ac 19:8–10). It may not have been Paul himself, but one of his co-workers who went out to Colosse. Paul's remarks in the epistle indicate that Epaphras was the one who preached the gospel there (1:5–8) and in Hierapolis and Laodicea (4:12–13). Though he was with Paul at the time the epistle was written, Epaphras is identified as "one of you" (4:12), suggesting that he may have originally been from Colosse.

Other members of the church at Colosse included Philemon, Apphia, and Archippus, who may have been father, mother, and son. By comparing the epistle to the Colossians with that written to Philemon, it is reasonable to suppose that the church at Colosse met in their home (cf. 4:17 with Phe 1–2, and the references to Archippus). If Philemon and his family were hosts of the church at Colosse, then Onesimus (Philemon's slave) would have also been a member there upon his return (cf. 4:7–9 with Phe 8–16).

PURPOSE OF THE EPISTLE:

Paul had received a report of the situation at Colosse by way of Epaphras (1:7–8). This report was for the most part favorable (2:5). But the subject matter in the epistle strongly suggests that the church was facing a two-fold danger:

- The danger of relapse into paganism with its gross immorality (cf. 1:21–23; 2:6; 3:5–11)
- The danger of accepting what has been come to known as "The

Colossian heresy". This heresy was a syncretism involving four elements of both pagan and Jewish origin:

- Philosophies of men – which denied the all sufficiency and pre-eminence of Christ (2:8)
- Judaistic ceremonialism – which attached special significance to the rite of circumcision, food regulations, and observance of special days (2:11, 16–17)
- Angel worship – which detracted from the uniqueness of Christ (2:18)
- Asceticism – which called for harsh treatment of the body as the means to control its lusts (2:20–23)

To guard against these dangers, Paul writes to:

- Warn the Colossians against relapse (1:21–23)
- Warn them against the "solution" being urged upon them by those denying the all-sufficiency of Christ (2:8–23)
- Direct their attention to the "Beloved Son", the "All-Sufficient and Pre-Eminent Savior" (1:13–18; 2:8–10)

Time of Writing

Colossians, as well as Ephesians and Philemon are thought to be written from Rome about 62 A.D. There are many links that connect the letters together.

- Tychicus was the bearer of both the Colossian and Ephesian letter (Col 4:7–8; Eph. 6:21–22)
- Onesimus was the subject of the letter to Philemon and was the companion of Tychicus (Col. 4:9)
- Greetings were sent to the same group of people in Colossians and Philemon (Col. 4:10, 12, 14; Phile. 23, 24)
- In Philemon 2 a message was sent to Archippus who was a very useful man at Colosse (Col. 4:17)

OUTLINE

I. INTRODUCTION (1:1–14)

- A. Salutation (1–2)
- B. Thanksgiving and prayer (3–14)

II. THE PREEMINENCE OF CHRIST (1:15–23)

- A. IN CREATION (1:15–17)
 - i. The image of the invisible God (1:15a)
 - ii. The first-born over all creation (1:15b–17)
- B. IN REDEMPTION (1:18–23)
 - i. The head of the body, the church (1:18a)
 - ii. The beginning, the first-born from the dead (1:18b)
 - iii. That He might have preeminence in all things (1:18c)
 - a) In Whom all the fullness dwells (1:19)
 - b) In Whom all things are to be reconciled to God (1:20)
 - c) The Colossians as a case in point (1:21–23)

III. THE APOSTLE OF CHRIST (1:24–2:7)

- A. PAUL'S SERVICE (1:24–29)
 - i. His joy in suffering for them (1:24)
 - ii. His ministry (1:25–29)
 - a) A stewardship to proclaim the mystery of God now revealed (1:25–27)
 - b) A labor to present every man perfect in Christ Jesus (1:28–29)
- B. PAUL'S SOLICITUDE (2:1–7)
 - i. His great concern for them (2:1–3)
 - ii. Reasons for this concern (2:4–5)
 - iii. Exhortations to be firmly established in Christ (2:6–7)

IV. WARNINGS AGAINST THE "COLOSSIAN HERESY" (2:8–23)

- A. WARNING AGAINST PHILOSOPHY (2:8–10)
 - i. Beware of being cheated by philosophy and empty deceit (2:8)
 - ii. In Christ dwells the fullness of God, and you are complete in Him (2:9–10)
- B. WARNING AGAINST JUDAISTIC CEREMONIALISM (2:11–17)
 - i. In Christ you have a circumcision made without hands (2:11–12)
 - ii. You are made alive in Christ, and the handwriting of requirements that was against us has been taken away at the cross (2:13–15)

- iii. Therefore don't let anyone judge you in regards to food, festivals, or sabbath days (2:16–17)

C. WARNING AGAINST ANGEL WORSHIP (2:18–19)

- i. Don't let anyone defraud you of your reward by appealing to angel worship and imagined visions of a fleshly mind (2:18)
- ii. Such people do not hold fast to Christ as the Head, and from whom true divine nourishment comes (2:19)

D. WARNING AGAINST ASCETICISM (2:20–23)

- i. Having died with Christ to the world, there is no need to submit to human ordinances (2:20–22)
- ii. While having appearances of wisdom, such practices have no value in controlling the indulgences of the flesh (2:23)

V. THE CHRISTIAN SOLUTION (3:1–4:6)

A. SET YOUR MIND ON THINGS ABOVE (3:1–4)

- i. Since you were raised with Christ, seek those things above (3:1–2)
- ii. For you have died and your life is now hidden in Christ, to be revealed when He appears (3:3–4)

B. PUT OFF THE OLD MAN (3:5–9)

- i. Put to death your members here on the earth, for the wrath of God is coming on the sons of disobedience (3:5–7)
- ii. Put off the old man with his deeds (3:8–9)

C. PUT ON THE NEW MAN (3:10–17)

- i. Put on the new man, renewed in the image of our Creator (3:10–11)
- ii. As God's elect, put on Christ-like qualities (3:12–14)
- iii. Let God's peace rule in your hearts, and be thankful (3:15)
- iv. Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly, teaching and admonishing one another with song and singing with grace in your hearts (3:16)
- v. Do all things in the name of the Lord Jesus, with thanksgiving (3:17)

D. FAMILIAL RESPONSIBILITIES (3:18–4:1)

- i. Wives toward their husbands (3:18)
- ii. Husbands toward their wives (3:19)
- iii. Children toward their parents (3:20)
- iv. Fathers toward their children (3:21)
- v. Servants toward their masters (3:22–25)
- vi. Masters toward their servants (4:1)

E. EXHORTATIONS TO PRAYER AND PROPER CONDUCT (4:2–6)

- i. Devote yourselves to prayer (4:2–4)
- ii. Walk in wisdom and let your speech be with grace (4:5–6)

VI. PAUL'S COMPANIONS (4:7–14)

A. COMMENDATIONS OF HIS MESSENGERS (4:7–9)

- i. Tychicus, a faithful servant who will inform them of Paul's circumstances (4:7–8)
- ii. Onesimus, a faithful and beloved brother (4:9)

B. GREETINGS FROM HIS FRIENDS (4:10–14)

- i. Aristarchus, Mark, and Justus, fellow workers for the kingdom of God (4:10–11)
- ii. Epaphras, one of them, and a servant of Christ (4:12–13)
- iii. Luke the beloved physician, and Demas (4:14)

VII. CONCLUSION (4:15–18)

- A. Greetings to those in Laodicea, and to Nymphas and the church in his house (4:15)
- B. A command to read and exchange the epistles from Paul (4:16)
- C. A personal exhortation to Archippus (4:17)
- D. A personal signoff from the hand of Paul, with a request for remembrance and a prayer in their behalf (4:18)

Outline by Mark Copeland

Colossians

Lesson 1

1:1 Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus through the will of God, and Timothy our brother,	the heavens, whereof ye heard before in the word of the truth of the gospel,
1:2 To the saints and faithful brethren in Christ that are at Colossae: Grace to you and peace from God our Father.	1:6 which is come unto you; even as it is also in all the world bearing fruit and increasing, as it doth in you also, since the day ye heard and knew the grace of God in truth;
1:3 We give thanks to God the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, praying always for you,	1:7 even as ye learned of Epaphras our beloved fellow-servant, who is a faithful minister of Christ on our behalf,
1:4 having heard of your faith in Christ Jesus, and of the love which ye have toward all the saints,	1:8 who also declared unto us your love in the Spirit.
1:5 because of the hope which is laid up for you in	

Questions

1. Why was Paul able to be called an apostle? _____

2. Who were the saints at Colossae? _____

3. What was Paul's attitude toward these saints? _____

4. What attribute did these Christians display? _____

5. Why did they do these things? _____

6. Who widespread was the gospel? _____

7. What effect was the gospel having on the people? _____

8. Who was a preacher to the Colossians? _____
9. How was Epaphras a faithful minister on Paul's behalf? _____

10. What report did Epaphras give Paul concerning the Colossians? _____

Colossians

Lesson 2

1:9 For this cause we also, since the day we heard it, do not cease to pray and make request for you, that ye may be filled with the knowledge of his will in all spiritual wisdom and understanding,	and translated us into the kingdom of the Son of his love;
1:10 to walk worthily of the Lord unto all pleasing, bearing fruit in every good work, and increasing in the knowledge of God;	1:14 in whom we have our redemption, the forgiveness of our sins:
1:11 strengthened with all power, according to the might of his glory, unto all patience and longsuffering with joy;	1:15 who is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation;
1:12 giving thanks unto the Father, who made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light;	1:16 for in him were all things created, in the heavens and upon the earth, things visible and things invisible, whether thrones or dominions or principalities or powers; all things have been created through him, and unto him;
1:13 who delivered us out of the power of darkness,	1:17 and he is before all things, and in him all things consist.

Questions

1. What was Paul's prayer for the Colosians? _____

2. How were they to walk? _____

3. What was required of their spiritual growth? _____

4. What does he mean by "strengthened with all power"? _____

5. What does the word inheritance suggest to us? _____

6. What is the power of Darkness? _____

7. How do we know the kingdom already exist? _____

8. What does redemption mean? _____

9. How is Jesus the "firstborn af all creation"? _____

- 10.To what extent is God's creation unto him? _____

- 11.How does vs 17 show the majesty of God? _____

Collosians

Lesson 3

1:18 And he is the head of the body, the church: who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead; that in all things he might have the preeminence.
1:19 For it was the good pleasure of the Father that in him should all the fulness dwell;
1:20 and through him to reconcile all things unto himself, having made peace through the blood of his cross; through him, I say, whether things upon the earth, or things in the heavens.
1:21 And you, being in time past alienated and

enemies in your mind in your evil works,
1:22 yet now hath he reconciled in the body of his flesh through death, to present you holy and without blemish and unreprouable before him:
1:23 if so be that ye continue in the faith, grounded and stedfast, and not moved away from the hope of the gospel which ye heard, which was preached in all creation under heaven; whereof I Paul was made a minister.

Questions

1. Why is Jesus the "firstborn" from the dead? _____

2. How did these things allow Jesus to have the "preeminence"? _____

3. What is "all the fulness"? _____

4. Why was it necessary to "reconcile all things" unto Christ? _____

5. How did the cross bring peace? _____

6. How were the Colossians alienated from Christ? _____

7. What did this reconciliation cost Jesus? _____

8. How does Jesus' sacrifice present us? _____

9. What are all of these blessings dependent upon? _____

10. At this time, how far had the gospel been preached? _____

11. How does Paul describe himself? _____

Colossians

Lesson 4

1:24 Now I rejoice in my sufferings for your sake, and fill up on my part that which is lacking of the afflictions of Christ in my flesh for his body's sake, which is the church;

1:25 whereof I was made a minister, according to the dispensation of God which was given me to you-ward, to fulfil the word of God,

1:26 even the mystery which hath been hid for ages and generations: but now hath it been manifested to his saints,

1:27 to whom God was pleased to make known what is the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles, which is Christ in you, the hope of glory:

1:28 whom we proclaim, admonishing every man and teaching every man in all wisdom, that we may present every man perfect in Christ;

1:29 whereunto I labor also, striving according to his working, which worketh in me mightily.

Questions

1. Why did Paul rejoice in his sufferings for their sake? _____

2. How did his rejoicing fill up that which was lacking in him? _____

3. What is the body of Christ? _____
4. How was Paul made a minister? _____

5. How was Paul to "fulfill" the word of God? _____

6. What was Paul's mission to the saints? _____

7. What was the hidden mystery? _____
8. What was God's attitude toward the saints? _____

9. In proclaiming Christ, what did Paul do for every man? _____

10. How did Paul describe his efforts? _____
11. How did the gospel effect Paul? _____

Colossians

Lesson 5

2:1 For I would have you know how greatly I strive for you, and for them at Laodicea, and for as many as have not seen my face in the flesh;	persuasiveness of speech.
2:2 that their hearts may be comforted, they being knit together in love, and unto all riches of the full assurance of understanding, that they may know the mystery of God, even Christ,	2:5 For though I am absent in the flesh, yet am I with you in the spirit, joying and beholding your order, and the stedfastness of your faith in Christ.
2:3 in whom are all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge hidden.	2:6 As therefore ye received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk in him,
2:4 This I say, that no one may delude you with	2:7 rooted and builded up in him, and established in your faith, even as ye were taught, abounding in thanksgiving.

Questions

1. How does Paul describe his efforts? _____
2. Who did Paul Strive for? _____

3. Why did Paul labor for hard? _____

4. What does being "knit together" indicate to us? _____

5. What is hidden in Christ? _____

6. How are some people deluded? _____

7. How was Paul "with them in spirit"? _____

8. What did he see in the Colossians? _____

9. How did they receive Jesus? _____

10. How should they walk? _____

11. How did they receive their stedfastness? _____

12. What were they to abound in? _____

Colossians

Lesson 6

2:8 Take heed lest there shall be any one that maketh spoil of you through his philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ:	working of God, who raised him from the dead.
2:9 for in him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily,	2:13 And you, being dead through your trespasses and the uncircumcision of your flesh, you, I say, did he make alive together with him, having forgiven us all our trespasses;
2:10 and in him ye are made full, who is the head of all principality and power:	2:14 having blotted out the bond written in ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us: and he hath taken it out that way, nailing it to the cross;
2:11 in whom ye were also circumcised with a circumcision not made with hands, in the putting off of the body of the flesh, in the circumcision of Christ;	2:15 having despoiled the principalities and the powers, he made a show of them openly, triumphing over them in it.
2:12 having been buried with him in baptism, wherein ye were also raised with him through faith in the	

Questions

1. What was Paul's concern that others would make of them? _____
2. How would they do this? _____

3. Are traditions binding religiously? _____
4. What dwells in Christ? _____

5. What are principalities and powers? _____

6. What is the circumcision of Christ? _____

7. What type of baptism is described in vs.12? _____

8. How were these people dead? _____

9. How were they made alive? _____

10. What is the bond that Paul refers to? _____
11. When and how was it removed? _____

12. How did he make an open show to the principalities and powers? _____

Colossians

Lesson 7

2:16 Let no man therefore judge you in meat, or in drink, or in respect of a feast day or a new moon or a sabbath day:	God.
2:17 which are a shadow of the things to come; but the body is Christ's.	2:20 If ye died with Christ from the rudiments of the world, why, as though living in the world, do ye subject yourselves to ordinances,
2:18 Let no man rob you of your prize by a voluntary humility and worshipping of the angels, dwelling in the things which he hath seen, vainly puffed up by his fleshly mind,	2:21 Handle not, nor taste, nor touch
2:19 and not holding fast the Head, from whom all the body, being supplied and knit together through the joints and bands, increasing with the increase of	2:22 (all which things are to perish with the using), after the precepts and doctrines of men?
	2:23 Which things have indeed a show of wisdom in will-worship, and humility, and severity to the body; but are not of any value against the indulgence of the flesh.

Questions

1. What thing would some try to use to judge the Colossians with? _____

2. What three things would some be judged on? _____

3. How could they prevent others from this type of judgment? _____

4. What were the things to come? _____

5. What are we not allowed to worship? _____
6. Explain "vainly puffed up by his fleshly mind". _____

7. What do vain teachers refuse to uphold? _____
8. How important is the head to the body? _____

9. What did their death in Christ do for them? _____

10. According to Vs. 10, what were they doing? _____

11. How were they to handle the precepts of men? _____

12. What does the precepts and doctrines of men show? _____

Colossians

Lesson 8

3:1 If then ye were raised together with Christ, seek the things that are above, where Christ is, seated on the right hand of God.	3:7 wherein ye also once walked, when ye lived in these things;
3:2 Set your mind on the things that are above, not on the things that are upon the earth.	3:8 but now do ye also put them all away: anger, wrath, malice, railing, shameful speaking out of your mouth:
3:3 For ye died, and your life is hid with Christ in God.	3:9 lie not one to another; seeing that ye have put off the old man with his doings,
3:4 When Christ, who is our life, shall be manifested, then shall ye also with him be manifested in glory.	3:10 and have put on the new man, that is being renewed unto knowledge after the image of him that created him:
3:5 Put to death therefore your members which are upon the earth: fornication, uncleanness, passion, evil desire, and covetousness, which is idolatry;	3:11 where there cannot be Greek and Jew, circumcision and uncircumcision, barbarian, Scythian, bondman, freeman; but Christ is all, and in all.
3:6 for which things' sake cometh the wrath of God upon the sons of disobedience:	

Questions

1. What are we to seek? _____

2. What are we not to set our minds on? _____

3. What does it mean for our lives to be hid with Christ? _____

4. What happens with Christ' manifestation? _____

5. What are we to put to death? _____

6. What is God's attitude toward those things we should put to death? _____

7. What as the Colossian's attitude toward these things before their conversions? _____

8. What other things were they to put away? _____

9. How is the "new man" being renewed? _____

10. How does God view man in Christ? _____

Colossians

Lesson 9

3:12 Put on therefore, as God's elect, holy and beloved, a heart of compassion, kindness, lowliness, meekness, longsuffering;	to the which also ye were called in one body; and be ye thankful.
3:13 forbearing one another, and forgiving each other, if any man have a complaint against any; even as the Lord forgave you, so also do ye:	3:16 Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly; in all wisdom teaching and admonishing one another with psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts unto God.
3:14 and above all these things put on love, which is the bond of perfectness.	3:17 And whatsoever ye do, in word or in deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.
3:15 And let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts,	

Questions

1. What are we to put on? _____

2. How should we treat each other? _____

3. What is the perfect bond? _____
4. What must rule in our hearts? _____

5. Describe the rich indwelling of God's word. _____

6. What does our songs do for each other? _____

7. What do our songs do for God? _____

8. What should control our speech and actions? _____

9. What are we to do through Christ? _____

Colossians

Lesson 10

3:18 Wives, be in subjection to your husbands, as is fitting in the Lord.	3:23 whatsoever ye do, work heartily, as unto the Lord, and not unto men;
3:19 Husbands, love your wives, and be not bitter against them.	3:24 knowing that from the Lord ye shall receive the recompense of the inheritance: ye serve the Lord Christ.
3:20 Children, obey your parents in all things, for this is well-pleasing in the Lord.	3:25 For he that doeth wrong shall receive again for the wrong that he hath done: and there is no respect of persons.
3:21 Fathers, provoke not your children, that they be not discouraged.	4:1 Masters, render unto your servants that which is just and equal; knowing that ye also have a Master in heaven.
3:22 Servants, obey in all things them that are your masters according to the flesh; not with eye-service, as men-pleasers, but in singleness of heart, fearing the Lord:	

Questions

1. What does subjection mean? _____

2. What does love mean? _____

3. How should children act toward their parents? _____

4. How should fathers act toward their children? _____

5. Define provoke. _____

6. How should servants conduct themselves? _____

7. How should we do everything in this life? _____

8. What shall we receive from God, that man cannot give us? _____

9. What shall the wrongdoers receive? _____

10. How should masters treat their servants? _____

Colossians

Lesson 11

4:2 Continue steadfastly in prayer, watching therein with thanksgiving;	each one.
4:3 withal praying for us also, that God may open unto us a door for the word, to speak the mystery of Christ, for which I am also in bonds;	4:7 All my affairs shall Tychicus make known unto you, the beloved brother and faithful minister and fellow-servant in the Lord:
4:4 that I may make it manifest, as I ought to speak.	4:8 whom I have sent you for this very purpose, that ye may know our state, and that he may comfort your hearts;
4:5 Walk in wisdom toward them that are without, redeeming the time.	4:9 together with Onesimus, the faithful and beloved brother, who is one of you. They shall make known unto you all things that are done here
4:6 Let your speech be always with grace, seasoned with salt, that ye may know how ye ought to answer.	

Questions

1. How should our prayers be? _____

2. What prayer request did Paul ask of the Colossians? _____

3. How was Paul in bonds? _____

4. What was Paul's obligation to teaching? _____

5. How are we to walk? _____

6. Describe our speech? _____

7. Who was Tychicus? _____

8. What would Tychicus do? _____

9. Who was Onesimus? _____

10. What would Onesimus do? _____

Colossians

Lesson 12

4:10 Aristarchus my fellow-prisoner saluteth you, and Mark, the cousin of Barnabas (touching whom ye received commandments; if he come unto you, receive him),	Hierapolis.
4:11 and Jesus that is called Justus, who are of the circumcision: these only are my fellow-workers unto the kingdom of God, men that have been a comfort unto me.	4:14 Luke, the beloved physician, and Demas salute you.
4:12 Epaphras, who is one of you, a servant of Christ Jesus, saluteth you, always striving for you in his prayers, that ye may stand perfect and fully assured in all the will of God.	4:15 Salute the brethren that are in Laodicea, and Nymphas, and the church that is in their house.
4:13 For I bear him witness, that he hath much labor for you, and for them in Laodicea, and for them in	4:16 And when this epistle hath been read among you, cause that it be read also in the church of the Laodiceans; and that ye also read the epistle from Laodicea.
	4:17 And say to Archippus, Take heed to the ministry which thou hast received in the the Lord, that thou fulfil it.
	4:18 The salutation of me Paul with mine own hand. Remember my bonds. Grace be with you.

Questions

1. What people have included their greetings at the close of this letter? _____

2. What were these people to Paul? _____

3. What was Epaphras prayer for the Colossians? _____

4. Who did Epaphras labor for? _____

5. Who wee the Colossians to greet for Paul? _____

6. What were the Colossians to do with this epistle? _____

7. What were they to do with te epistle from Laodicea? _____
8. What were they to do for Archippus? _____

9. What did he finally ask of the Colossians? _____

10. What was his prayer for the Colossians? _____
