

God's Amazing Book

Journey Through the New Testament

JESUS IS EVERYTHING

A Quick Look at the Letter to the Church of Colossae

Fast Facts on Colossians

Written by? Paul

Written to whom?

Christians in Colossae

Written when? c. A.D.

60-63

Written where? Rome

(Paul's first Roman imprisonment)

Written why? Arrival of

Epaphras with the news about heretical teaching at Colossae (1:7-8), which was a blending of Judaism and incipient Gnosticism.

The Book of Colossians

Focus	Christ...Preeminent in All Things			
Divisions	Christ, Supreme in the Church	Christ, Supreme in the Universe	Christ, Supreme in the Home	Christ, Supreme in the Community
	1	1 2	2 3	3 4
Topics	Christ, the Head of the Body	Christ, the Lord of the Universe	Christ, the Head of the Home	
	Reconciliation	Creation	Submission	Conversation
Place	Roman Prison			
Time	A.D. 60			
Author	The Apostle Paul			

No other New Testament book is more relevant in our generation, for the manifestations of the heresy at Colossae are present today. – Charles N. Pickell

Epaphras, the pastor and probable founder of the church at Colossae, traveled well over 1,000 miles – from Colossae to Rome – just to seek Paul's counsel and help in handling serious doctrinal attacks against the Christian faith in that region. The epistle to the Colossians is Paul's answer to Epaphras' plea for help. Paul's epistle did not come back with Epaphras, either because he himself was imprisoned with Paul (Philemon 23), or because Paul had asked Epaphras to stay and help him there. The letter was probably written c. a.d. 62. Paul wrote it at roughly the same time that he wrote Philemon and Ephesians. **All three letters were sent with Tychicus (see Eph. 6:21) and Onesimus.**

FASCINATING FACTS:

- Colossians is one of only two of Paul's epistles written to a church that he had never previously visited (Romans).
- Colossians, like Philippians, contains some of the greatest passages on the deity and ministry of Christ (1:15-20; 2:9-10)
- Over four-fifths of the verses here in Colossians are repeated in Ephesians with some slight variations.

4. In Colossians, Paul dealt with many forms of false teaching and harmful doctrines, including legalism, mysticism, asceticism, and Gnosticism.
5. There are no references made in Colossians to the Old Testament. Perhaps this shows the church coming from a Gentile background, not a Jewish background.
6. Though the epistle to the Colossians is very important, the city of Colossae itself was by far the least important city to which Paul had ever sent a letter, and afterward, the church disappeared from Church history.
7. The writing of this epistle to a small church in an unimportant city proves that though Paul's strategy was to hit the major cities with the gospel, expecting the major cities to convert the minor cities, he was still concerned with the small churches, like Colossae.

THINGS TO REMEMBER:

1. Gnosticism has two tenets: 1) Matter is Evil; and 2) Salvation comes through knowledge
2. Jesus is Creator and Sustainer of all creation.
3. Colossians ch 1-2 (What Christ did FOR us); ch 3-4 (What Christ does THROUGH us).
4. A correct view of Christ (His Supremacy) causes a correct attitude in me (My Submission).
5. Don't listen to anyone who tries to tell you that anything – more or less – than Christ's sacrifice is required for salvation (2:8).
6. As a result of their new life in Jesus, Christians should live in a way that's noticeably different from the way non-Christians live (3:1-17).

Extra Study: The Colossian Heresy *(source: Life Application Study Bible)*

The Heresy	Reference	Paul's Answer
Spirit is good; matter is evil.	Col 1:15-20	God created heaven and earth for his glory.
One must follow ceremonies, rituals, and restrictions in order to be saved or perfected.	Col 2:11,16-23;3:11	These were only shadows that ended when Christ came. He is all you need to be saved.
One must deny the body and live in strict asceticism.	Col 2:20-23	Asceticism is no help in conquering evil thoughts and desires; instead, it leads to pride.
Angels must be worshiped.	Col 2:18	Angels are not to be worshiped; Christ alone is worthy of worship.
Christ could not be both human and divine.	Col 1:15-20;2:2, 3	Christ is God in the flesh; he is the eternal One, head of the body, first in everything, supreme.
One must obtain "secret knowledge" in order to be saved or perfected - and this was not available to everyone.	Col 2:2, 18	God's secret is Christ, and he has been revealed to all.
One must adhere to human wisdom, tradition, and philosophies.	Col 2:4, 8-10; 3:15-17	By themselves, these can be misleading and shallow because they have human origin; instead, we should remember what Christ taught and follow his words as our ultimate authority.
It is even better to combine aspects of several religions.	Col 2:10	You have everything when you have Christ; he is all-sufficient.
There is nothing wrong with immorality.	Col 3:1-11	Get rid of sin and evil because you have been chosen by God to live a new life as a representative of the Lord Jesus.