

The Book of Colossians –
“For in Him All the Fullness of God
Was Pleased to Dwell”

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Lesson: 1 “The Kingdom of His Beloved Son

Text: Chapter 1:1-14



TEXT:

Greeting

1:1 *Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God, and Timothy our brother,*

2 *To the saints and faithful brothers in Christ at Colossae:*

Grace to you and peace from **God our Father.**

Thanksgiving and Prayer

3 We always thank **God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ**, when we pray for *you*, **4** since we heard of your faith in **Christ Jesus** and of the love that you have for *all the saints*, **5** because of the hope laid up for you in heaven. Of this you have heard before in the word of the truth, the gospel, **6** which has come to you, as indeed in *the whole world* it is bearing fruit and growing—as it also does among you, since the day *you* heard it and understood **the grace of God** in truth, **7** just as you learned it from *Epaphras our beloved fellow servant*. *He is a faithful minister of Christ on your behalf* **8** and has made known to us your love **in the Spirit.**

9 And so, from the day we heard, we have not ceased to pray for *you*, asking that you may be filled with the knowledge of his will in all spiritual wisdom and understanding, **10** so as to walk in a manner worthy **of the Lord**, fully pleasing to him, bearing fruit in every good work and increasing in **the knowledge of God**. **11** May you be strengthened with all power, according to his glorious might, for all endurance and patience with joy, **12** giving thanks to **the Father**, who has qualified you to share in the inheritance of *the saints in light*. **13** He has delivered us from the domain of darkness and transferred us to the kingdom of **his beloved Son**, **14** in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins.

NOTES:

Author, Date and Place of Writing

That Colossians is a genuine letter of Paul is not usually disputed. In the early church, all who speak on the subject of authorship ascribe it to Paul. In the 19th century, however, some thought that the heresy refuted in ch. 2 was second-century Gnosticism. But a careful analysis of ch. 2 shows that the heresy there referred to is noticeably less developed than the Gnosticism of leading Gnostic teachers of the second and third centuries. Also, the seeds of what later became the full-blown Gnosticism of the second century were present in the first century and already making inroads into the churches. Consequently, it is not necessary to date Colossians in the second century at a time too late for Paul to have written the letter.

Instead, it is to be dated during Paul's first imprisonment in Rome, where he spent at least two years under house arrest (see Ac 28:16-31). Some have argued that Paul wrote Colossians from Ephesus or Caesarea, but most of the evidence favors Rome as the place where Paul penned all the Prison Letters (Ephesians, Colossians, Philippians and Philemon). Colossians should be dated c. A.D. 60, in the same year as Ephesians and Philemon.

Colosse: The Town and the Church

Several hundred years before Paul's day, Colosse had been a leading city in Asia Minor (present-day Turkey). It was located on the Lycus River and on the great east-west trade route leading from Ephesus on the Aegean Sea to the Euphrates River. By the first century A.D. Colosse was diminished to a second-rate market town, which had been surpassed long ago in power and importance by the neighboring towns of Laodicea and Hierapolis (see 4:13).

What gave Colosse NT importance, however, was the fact that, during Paul's three-year ministry in Ephesus, Epaphras had been converted and had carried the gospel to Colosse (cf. 1:7-8; Ac 19:10). The young church that resulted then became the target of heretical attack, which led to Epaphras's visit to Paul in Rome and ultimately to the penning of the Colossian letter.

Perhaps as a result of the efforts of Epaphras or other converts of Paul, Christian churches had also been established in Laodicea and Hierapolis. Some of them were house churches (see 4:15; Phm 2). Most likely all of them were primarily Gentile.

The Colossian Heresy

Paul never explicitly describes the false teaching he opposes in the Colossian letter. The nature of the heresy must be inferred from statements he made in opposition to the false teachers. An analysis of his refutation suggests that the heresy was diverse in nature. Some of the elements of its teachings were:

1. Ceremonialism. It held to strict rules about the kinds of permissible food and drink, religious festivals (2:16-17) and circumcision (2:11; 3:11).

2. Asceticism. "Do not handle! Do not taste! Do not touch!" (2:21; cf. 2:23).

3. Angel worship. See 2:18.

4. Deprecation of Christ. This is implied in Paul's stress on the supremacy of Christ (1:15-20; 2:2-3,9).

5. Secret knowledge. The Gnostics boasted of this (see 2:18 and Paul's emphasis in 2:2-3 on Christ, "in whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom").

6. Reliance on human wisdom and tradition. See 2:4,8.

These elements seem to fall into two categories, Jewish and Gnostic. It is likely, therefore, that the Colossian heresy was a mixture of an extreme form of Judaism and an early stage of Gnosticism (see Introduction to 1 John: Gnosticism; see also note on 2:23).

- (vv. 1,2) Paul- apostle, Timothy-brother (**Acts 16:1**), to the saints at Colossae
Christ Jesus, the will of God, God the Father - grace and peace (**Jn 14:27; 20:19**)
(vv. 3-8) in the Spirit: thanks, faith, love, hope (**Rom 5:2-5; 1 Cor 13:13; Heb 10:22-24**)
the truth of the Gospel, bearing fruit, grace of God,
Epaphras (**Phm 23**) our beloved fellow servant. He is a faithful minister of **Christ**
(he is considered an evangelist and the founder of the Colossian church, also was in Laodicea, Hierapolis)
(vv. 9-14) the knowledge of his will, in all spiritual wisdom and understanding,
walk in a manner worthy **of the Lord**, fully pleasing to him,
bearing fruit in every good work and increasing in **the knowledge of God.**
strengthened, power, his glorious might, endurance, patience, joy, giving thanks
qualified you to share in the inheritance of *the saints in light.*
(**Mt 5:14; 2 Cor 4:6; 1 Jn 2:9,10; 1 Tim 6:16; Jn 8:2**)
He has delivered us from the domain of darkness transferred us to the kingdom of **his beloved Son,**
in whom we have redemption (**Rom 3:24**) the forgiveness of sins (**Eph 1:7**)

LIFE APPLICATION:

1. How does the faith, hope and love from God through Christ Jesus shape our daily living?
2. To have redemption and forgiveness of sins is to be justified - Where does this come to your life?
3. To walk in a manner worthy of the Lord and bear fruit is to be sanctified - Why can you do this?





