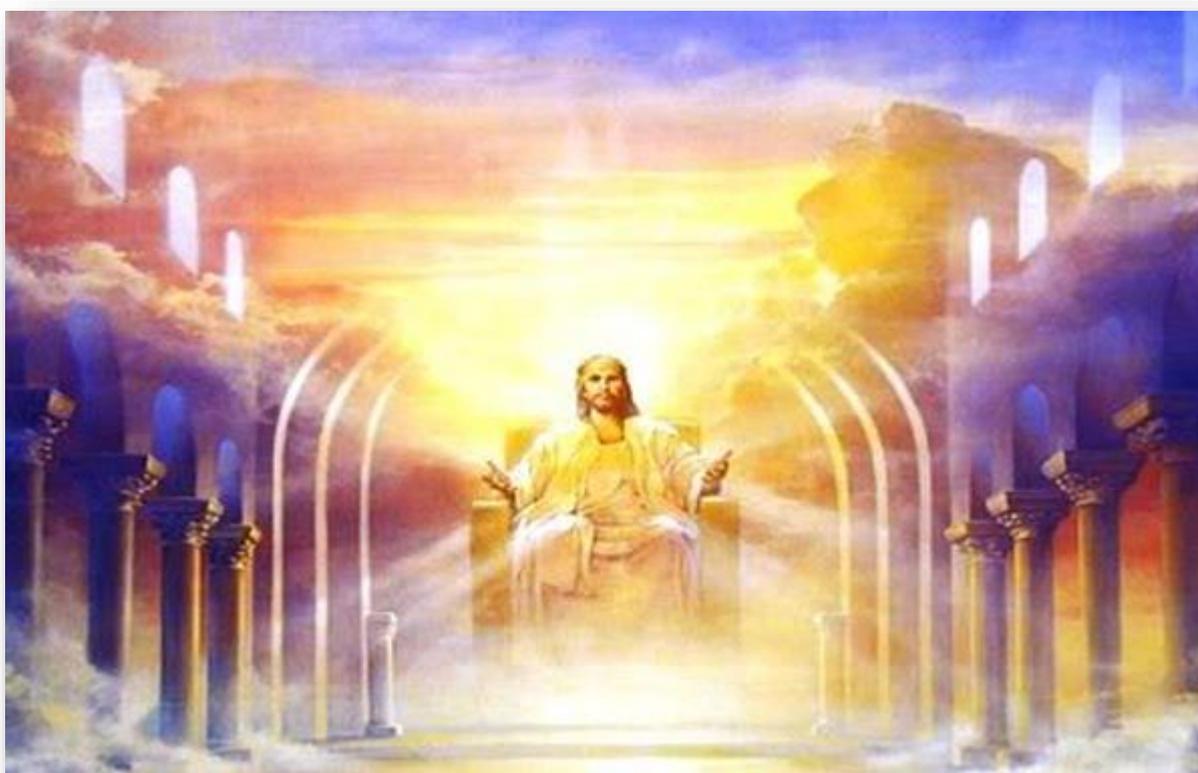


Book of Colossians

Synopsis



Introduction

Book No	51
Name	Colossians
Written By	Paul
Testament	New
Category	Epistles
Date Written	Approx. 60 A.D
Place Written	Rome
Audience	Church in Colosse
Purpose	To combat errors in the church and to show that believers have everything they need in Christ
History Covered	NA
Chapters	4
Verses	95
Key Verse	For in him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily. And ye are complete in him, which is the head of all principality and power (2:9, 10)
Key People	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Paul ❖ Timothy ❖ Tychicus ❖ Onesimus ❖ Aristarchus ❖ Mark ❖ Epaphras

Key Places	❖ Colosse
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Purpose of the Book

No other book of the New Testament sets forth more fully or defends the universal lordship of Christ more thoroughly. Combative in tone and abrupt in style, Colossians bears a close resemblance to Ephesians in language and subject matter. Over seventy of the 155 verses in Ephesians contain expressions echoed in Colossians. On the other hand, Colossians has twenty-eight words found nowhere else in Paul's writings and thirty-four found nowhere else in the New Testament.

Colossians is a book of connections. Writing from prison in Rome, Paul combatted false teachings, which had infiltrated the Colossian church. The problem was "syncretism," combining ideas from other philosophies and religions (such as paganism, strains of Judaism, and Greek thought) with Christian truth. The resulting heresy later became known as "Gnosticism," emphasizing special knowledge (gnosis in Greek) and denying Christ as God and Savior.

To combat this devious error, Paul stressed Christ's deity—his connection with the Father—and his sacrificial death on the cross for sin. Only by being connected with Christ through faith can anyone have eternal life, and only through a continuing connection with him can anyone have power for living. Christ is God incarnate and the only way to forgiveness and peace with God the Father. Paul also emphasized believers' connections with each other as Christ's body on earth.

Paul's introduction to the Colossians includes a greeting, a note of thanksgiving, and a prayer for spiritual wisdom and strength for these brothers and sisters in Christ (1:1-12). He then moves into a doctrinal discussion of the person and work of Christ (1:13-23), stating that Christ is "the visual image of the invisible God" (1:15), the Creator (1:16), "the head of the church, which is his body" (1:18), and "the first of all who will rise from the dead" (1:18). His death on the cross makes it possible for us to stand in the presence of God (1:22).

Paul then explains how the world's teachings are totally empty when compared with God's plan, and he challenges the Colossians to reject shallow answers and to live in union with Christ (1:24-2:23).

Against this theological backdrop, Paul turns to practical considerations—what the divinity, death, and resurrection of Jesus should mean to all believers (3:1–4:6). Because our eternal destiny is sure, heaven should fill our thoughts (3:1-4), sexual impurity and other worldly lusts should not be named among us (3:5-8), and truth, love, and peace should mark our life (3:9-15).

Our love for Christ should also translate into love for others—friends, fellow believers, spouses, children, parents, slaves, and masters (3:16–4:1). We should constantly communicate with God through prayer (4:2-4), and we should take every opportunity to tell others the Good News (4:5-6). In Christ we have everything we need for salvation and for living the Christian life.

Paul had probably never visited Colosse, so he concludes this letter with personal comments about their common Christian associations, providing a living lesson of the connectedness of the body of Christ.

Because this is an age of religious pluralism and syncretism (that is, a diluting of truth for the sake of unity), Christ's lordship is deemed irrelevant by many religious groups that believe one religion is as good as the other. His preeminence is denied by others that place the Christian stamp upon a fusion of beliefs from several religions. Usually hailed as an advance beyond apostolic Christianity, this blend promises self-fulfillment and freedom without surrender to Christ.

“Jesus is Lord” is the church's earliest confession. It remains the abiding test of authentic Christianity. Neither the church nor the individual believer can afford to compromise Christ's deity. In His sovereignty lies His sufficiency. He will be Lord of everything or not Lord at all.

Read Colossians as a book for an embattled church in the first century, but read it also for its timeless truths. Gain a fresh appreciation for Christ as the fullness of God and the only source for living the Christian life. Know that he is your leader, head, and power source, and make sure of your connection to him.

Overview

- ❖ 51st book of the BIBLE, 12th of the New Testament, 7th of the 21 epistles and 7th of the 14 epistles written by Paul

- ❖ The Book of Colossians is one of four “Prison Epistles,” so titled because they were written by the apostle while he was a Roman prisoner in Rome at the time they were written. The four “Prison Epistles are:
 - Ephesians
 - Colossians
 - Philippians
 - Philemon
- ❖ The church at Colosse was established by Epaphras
- ❖ At the time of the Colossians letter, Paul had not visited Colosse
- ❖ The Colossian letter was sent from Rome to Colosse by Tychicus and the converted slave, Onesimus.
- ❖ While the Book of Ephesians focuses on the Body (the Church), Colossians focuses on the Head (Christ).
- ❖ Colossians is indeed a Christ-centered book:
 - Christ - 19 times
 - Christ Jesus” - 3 times
 - Lord - 8 times
 - Lord Jesus Christ - 2 times
 - He, Him, His - 30 times
 - Whom - 4 times
 - Firstborn - 2 times
 - The head - 2 times
 - The Son - 1 times
 - Master - 1 time
- ❖ According to Colossians 4:16, Paul wanted the Colossian letter read to the surrounding congregations around Colosse.
- ❖ In the Book of Colossians, 55 Greek words are used that do not appear in any other of Paul’s epistles.
- ❖ The city of Colosse:
 - Was located about 100 miles east of Ephesus.
 - Was located in the region of the Seven Churches of Asia.
 - Was a populous commerce center, famous for its glossy black wool.

Hebrew Names of GOD used in Colossians

❖ THEOTES

Revelation of JESUS CHRIST

Paul lifts up Christ as the center and circumference of all that exists. The incarnate Son of God, He is the exact revelation and representation of the Father (1:15), as well as the embodiment of full deity (1:19; 2:9). He who is Lord in creation (1:16), in the church (1:18), and in salvation (3:11) indwells believers and is their “hope of glory” (1:27). The supreme Creator and Sustainer of all things (1:16, 17) is also a sufficient Savior for His people (2:10). See also “Content” above.

Work of THE HOLY SPIRIT

Colossians has a single explicit reference to the Holy Spirit, used in association with love (1:8). Some scholars also understand “wisdom and spiritual understanding” in 1:9 in terms of gifts of the Spirit. For Paul, the lordship of Christ in the believer’s life is the most crucial and clearest evidence of the Spirit’s presence.

Mega Themes of Colossians

CHRIST IS GOD

Jesus Christ is God in the flesh, Lord of all creation, and Lord of the new creation. He is the expressed reflection of the invisible God. He is eternal, preexistent, omnipotent, equal with the Father. He is supreme and complete.

Because Christ is supreme, our life must be Christ-centered. To recognize him as God means to regard our relationship with him as most vital and to make his interests our top priority.

CHRIST IS HEAD OF THE CHURCH

Because Christ is God, he is the head of the church, his true believers. Christ is the founder, the leader, and the highest authority on earth. He requires first place in all our thoughts and activities.

To acknowledge Christ as our head, we must welcome his leadership in all we do or think. No person, group, or church can regard any loyalty as more critical than that of loyalty to Christ.

UNION WITH CHRIST

Because our sin has been forgiven and we have been reconciled to God, we have a union with Christ that can never be broken. In our faith connection with him, we identify with his death, burial, and resurrection.

We should live in constant contact and communication with God. When we do, we all will be unified with Christ and with one another.

MAN-MADE RELIGION

False teachers were promoting a heresy that stressed self-made rules (legalism). They also sought spiritual growth by discipline of the body (asceticism) and visions (mysticism). This search created pride in their self-centered efforts.

We must not cling to our own ideas and try to blend them into Christianity. Nor should we let our hunger for a more fulfilling Christian experience cause us to trust in a teacher, a group, or a system of thought more than in Christ himself. Christ is our hope and our true source of wisdom.

Life Lessons in Colossians

Truth	Lesson
<p>Growing in Godliness</p> <p>Relationships often prove to be the crucible in which our godliness is tested. Colossians challenges us to bring the life and character of Christ into the way we relate to others. Drawing strength from the power and might of His glory, we must remove and discard our old ways of living and relating.</p> <p>God has made us new creations in Christ; let us be continually renewed to live and love in a manner worthy of the Lord.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Continually live a life worthy of the Lord. Be productive in doing good, and grow in your understanding of God. Be strengthened with power from the might of His glory, enduring patiently with joy. ❖ Throw off your old self and its lifestyle. Refuse to take part in ungodly sexual behavior. Do not be harsh or rude in your relationships. Align your emotions and passions with the character of Christ. Put on the new you, created in Christ's image. ❖ Put on love. From the core of your being, be tender, merciful, humble, patient, and forgiving in all relationships.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Let the peace of Christ control your thoughts and emotions. Be thankful. ❖ Believe that a walk worthy of the LORD. Pleases the LORD, is fruitful in good works, grows in knowing GOD and is strengthened by GOD's power
<p>Cultivating Dynamic Devotion</p> <p>Our relationship with God is strengthened and our devotion and worship of Him grows deeper as we spend time praying and studying the Bible. We need the Word and prayer to become part of who we are, part of our “spiritual DNA” so that they influence and direct all aspects of our lives. Remember that prayer is dynamic, not static. It is active and engaging, as well as quiet and reflective.</p> <p>Make a commitment today to invest time talking with God and learning about Him and His ways through the Word. This is a vital key to Spirit-filled, Spirit-formed, energized devotion.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Understand that the revealed mystery of God is Christ living in you. Relationship with Jesus is our hope of glory, both now and eternally. ❖ Study, think about, memorize, believe, and live the Word of God so that it becomes part of who you are. Let the Word inhabit your conversation with others and your worship of God. Devote yourself to Jesus and to knowing God's Word. ❖ Give yourself constantly to prayer. Be watchful, wakeful, and thankful. Ask the Lord to teach you to pray and to increase your endurance and your capacity to pray. Remember, prayer is an exciting and incredibly fulfilling journey with God.
<p>Pursuing Holiness</p> <p>Jesus has secured completely our salvation.</p> <p>In Him, we lack nothing and have been made holy, removing all grounds for accusation through His</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Understand that you have been transferred from the power and authority of darkness into the kingdom of Christ. Know that, in Jesus, your sins are forgiven. ❖ Hold on confidently in faith to the hope of the gospel. In Jesus, you have been brought into relationship with God, your

<p>death on the cross. Therefore, we are free to focus our minds on God and the things that are important to Him.</p> <p>We live holy lives not to gain righteousness, but because we have already been made righteous. Let us turn away, then, from legalism that has only an appearance of wisdom, knowing that in reality it is powerless and can add nothing to the completed work of Christ for salvation.</p>	<p>Father. Through Jesus' death on the cross, He has made you holy, unable to be accused of anything. Be assured that, in Jesus, your salvation is complete, lacking nothing.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Understand that though religious legalism may appear wise, it is powerless to help overcome sin. Do not embrace spiritual experiences that produce the fruit of pride and are contrary to the gospel of Jesus. ❖ Focus your thoughts and attention on the things that are important to God. Understand that when Jesus died, your sinful nature died, too. Your life is now hidden with Christ in God. ❖ Reject rules that aim to cleanse the spirit by means of humanly contrived regulations ❖ Realize that in CHRIST you are no longer subject to human wisdom or works but to GOD ❖ Set your thinking and affections on JESUS CHRIST and build your relationship with HIM ❖ Do not allow worldly pursuits to waste your mental or emotional energy
<p>The Walk of Faith</p> <p>Colossians clearly portrays Jesus as superior to and preeminent over all things. As you read this letter, look for all of the things said about Christ (the verses noted here</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Believe in Jesus, the exact representation of the invisible God. When we see Jesus, we see God. ❖ Believe in Jesus, by whom all things were created. In Him, all things are held together and sustained.

<p>represent but a beginning of what you will find). Let faith rise in you as you see the unsurpassed greatness of who Jesus is and all that He has accomplished on our behalf.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Believe in Jesus, who has pre-eminence in all things. He is head of the body, the church, and rose from the dead first that we might follow Him in resurrection life. ❖ Believe in Jesus, the reconciler of all things. ❖ Through His blood, He made peace so that we are no longer separated from God and one another. ❖ Believe in Jesus, in whom all the fullness of the Godhead dwells in bodily form. ❖ Believe in Jesus, in whom we have life and forgiveness and through whom all demonic powers have been utterly defeated.
<p>Lessons for leaders</p> <p>Wise leaders focus their ministries on JESUS CHRIST and avoid presumptions and transient teachings. Let us prioritize believers maturity stressing the finished work of CHRIST</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ leaders concentrate on the spiritual maturity of your people ❖ lessen your emphasis on any programs that do not foster maturity ❖ leaders focus on JESUS CHRIST ❖ build your congregation's unity and understanding on HIM ❖ leaders teach your people to base their whole life on the work done in them through CHRIST's death and resurrection

Praise Points in Colossians

- ❖ Granting us an inheritance with God's holy people in glory (1:12)
- ❖ Delivering us from the kingdom of darkness to his own glorious Kingdom (1:13)
- ❖ Giving us an exalted view of Christ, which helps us to live for him (1:15-23)
- ❖ Revealing his mystery of salvation through Christ to all peoples (1:26-27)
- ❖ Continually renewing us in our new position in Christ (3:10)
- ❖ Breaking down the barriers of race, class, and culture (3:11)

- ❖ Rewarding us for living out our faith (3:23-24)
- ❖ Blessing us with the fellowship of believers (4:7-18).

Worship Insights in Colossians

The letter to the Colossians is Paul's "sermon" identifying some of our barriers to worship and the need to focus on the person of Christ. With a strong love for his readers, Paul pointed out that a preoccupation with vain activities and philosophies prevents us from adoring God as we should (2:4, 8). Real worship is neither a false humility nor a preoccupation with angels (2:18). It is neither a work of the flesh (2:20-23) nor the exclusive privilege of a particular group of people (3:11).

So what should be the focus of our worship? Paul directed the Colossian believers to focus on the person of Jesus Christ (1:15-22). He is the invisible God, the Sovereign One, the Creator and Sustainer of life. Christ is the head of the church and the source of our reconciliation with God. Our relationship with him frees us to experience him in his glory (3:1-4).

How are we to worship Christ? Paul's message about the person of Jesus Christ should move us to honor, adore, worship, and thank him with an open and seeking heart (3:1). Our worship of God is reflected in our relationships with fellow believers (3:12-15) and our family (3:18-21). We can both honor and adore him through varied musical celebrations (3:16), through our words and deeds (3:17), through prayer (4:2), and even in how we live out our faith in everyday life (4:5-6). All these are part of acceptable and pleasing worship.

With so many ideas and opinions of what true worship is, the apostle Paul left us with the simple truth that Jesus Christ should be the primary object of our affection. This is the foundation for true worship.

Without a true knowledge of God there is the danger of being caught up with the empty philosophies of other people (2:8). Mere knowledge without relationship leads to legalism (2:16-17). Worship without a proper knowledge of Christ promotes self-styled religion (2:18-23). Only when the believing heart is wedded to a proper understanding of who Christ is can there be God-exalting worship (3:16-17). Someone has said that what we believe about God is the most important thing about us. Let us allow Scripture to lead us in our worship of the Lord.

- ❖ Living out our faith encourages other believers to give thanks to God (1:3-8).

- ❖ Knowing Christ frees us to please him (1:9-10).
- ❖ Religious deeds are a poor substitute for the fullness of Christ (2:11-16).
- ❖ A thorough understanding of who God is releases us to adore him (3:16).
- ❖ There are many different ways to praise and worship the Lord (3:16).
- ❖ Those who love the Lord should express thanks to him in all they do and say (3:17).

An Outline of Colossians

I. A Question of Identity: Col_1:1-14

- A. Greeting and Gratitude: Col_1:1-8
- B. Saints in the Light: Col_1:9-12
- C. In Whom We Have Redemption: Col_1:13-14

II. The Centrality of the All-Sufficient Christ: Col_1:15-23

- A. Christ and Creation: Col_1:15-17
- B. Christ and Re-Creation: Col_1:18-20
- C. New Creation by Reconciliation: Col_1:21-23

III. The Secret: Christ in You: Col. 1:24-2:19

- A. Christ in You: Col_1:24-29
- B. A Person, Not a Philosophy: Col_2:1-10
- C. The Cross: God's Answer to Our Deepest Needs: Col_2:11-19

IV. The New Life in Christ: Col. 2:20-3:17

- A. Life Hidden with Christ: Col. 2:20-3:4
- B. Put to Death the Old: Col_3:5-11
- C. Put on the New: Col_3:12-14
- D. The Fellowship of New Persons in Christ: Col_3:15-17

V. A Christian Style of Relationships: Col. 3:18-4:18

- A. The Family: A Place for Persons: Col_3:18-21
- B. Relationships Outside the Family: Col. 3:22-4:6
- C. The Game is for a Team: Col_4:7-18