

Greetings in the name of our Lord!

Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ!

It is a blessing and joy that we can gather together and start the day with God's word.

Today, I will be starting a series on the book of Colossians.

Every morning this week, we will read through the book of Colossians,

so to maximize our study, I want to encourage you to preview the entire book in advance.

Today please take time to read through the entire book of Colossians.

I will be giving you an introduction to Colossians this morning.

Now before, we delve into the book of Colossians, I would like to lay out some important principles of interpretation to help us learn how we can get a right interpretation as we study the Bible.

First of all, we need to submit to Scriptural authority: 2 Timothy 3:16, 17.

All Scripture is breathed out by God and is profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, so that the man of God\* may be competent, equipped for every good work.

Another principle we should apply is to let the Scriptures interpret for us. – this means:  
we never go by what we feel about the passage –  
(Bible study should not be a purely subjective activity) –

we do not determine the meaning for ourselves. Instead, we let the Scriptures speak, we let God speak through scripture for Himself because it is the word of God.

Admittedly, there are obstacles to understanding: foreign language, foreign history, foreign culture, and our own biases and presuppositions.

We do not practice Isogesis, just good Exegesis

### Isogesis

- to read into the text
- pour meaning into the text that's not there

### Exegesis

- to properly explain or interpret Biblical text.

The key to good exegesis is context. Context is key!

Having said that, let us first look at **Contextual Information**

When?

Paul was in prison, approx. A.D. 60-63

Where?

Colossae lay in the heart of a cluster of cities (near Laodicea and Hieropolis) in SW Phrygia, in the Roman province of Asia Minor, or modern Turkey.

If We look at the

Map of Pauls Journey to Rome

Paul in prison in Rome

Paul Writes:

Ephesians

Philippians  
Colossians  
Philemon

Epaphras brings word  
to Paul Col. 1:8  
Paul sends a letter  
by Tychicus Col. 4:7-8

The church in Colossae  
Paul did not establish the church in Colossae (2.1) was  
probably founded by Epaphras, an associate of Paul  
(1:7).

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- Acts 2.10 for Phrygians at Pentecost
- The church is at least ethnically mixed, with both  
Jewish and Gentile converts.
- Paul spends considerable time in Ephesus and Asia  
(Acts 19.10) 110 miles away
- Epaphras brought some of them to faith, perhaps  
during Paul's time in Ephesus in Acts 19.

### Structure of the Letter

- In form, ancient letters share these elements:
  - Author
  - Recipients
  - Greeting
  - Prayer/thanksgiving
  - Body of the letter
  - Farewell/final greeting

### Structure of Colossians 1:1-8

- Author 1.1
- Recipients 1.2a
- Greeting 1.2b
- Prayer/thanksgiving 1.3-8

## Main Themes of Colossians

- I “All-Sufficiency of Christ” (1:9,11,15-19,20,28; 2:2-3,9-10; 3:11,16; 4:12)
- Paul addressed the danger of human philosophy by reminding the Colossians of the preeminence of Christ.

Studying Colossians is like reading somebody else’s mail. Paul wrote it to a specific people, in regards to a specific situation, on a specific occasion. Have you ever read someone else’s letter before?

Most scholars agree Paul wrote Colossians in response to a wave of heresies that was infiltrating the young church.

### Heresy

- False teaching, usually affecting your salvation – eg. Jesus is not God (J.W.),
- Jesus was not a man like us,
- he was only a spirit (Gnosticism).
- Salvation by works (almost all religions, besides Christianity)
- They called these heresies the “Colossian heresy.”/ proto-Gnosticism

*Now I want to go through a list of some possible characteristics of the*

### **Colossian Heresy:**

- New teachers offered a “fullness” not previously experienced by early Christians –
- They taught that Jesus and the Apostles teachings were insufficient – “we have a fuller teaching.”
- Hence, they called themselves the super-apostles.
- New teachers offered new “spiritual freedom” and greater experiences of power above and beyond the Gospel, the power of God unto salvation (Rom. 1:16)
- Claims of special new insight into the powers of darkness, offering special protection.
- Excessive Asceticism – denying or mortification of the flesh

The teachings were

#### **Anti-body**

(1) it denigrated the created world and the human body, calling for asceticism;

(2) in its calling for a radical individualistic spirituality, it did not care about preserving the church as the body of Christ, a community of believers in mutual care and love.

This new individualistic spirituality and piety promoted –  
Divisiveness – it was causing divisions and factions in the church.

That's why **Our beliefs, teachings, and worship practices must be historical, and Biblical – never novel. New teachings and new methods of worship, new traditions have historically always ended up dividing the church. When it comes to Christian beliefs and worship – God hates human creativity.**

This heresy taught a “Deeper” knowledge of God (Don't stop at Jesus – there's more, I have something new, something deeper – a new experience – with Christian heresies, it's always Jesus plus something more).

**Not only did these false teachers infiltrate the church, but many also actually arose from within the church**

**Now where did these heretical teachings originate - Many of the heretical doctrines came from a hodge-podge of philosophies and religions (syncretism) such as paganism, Judaism, and especially Greek philosophy.**

**That which ensued from this syncretic amalgamation of beliefs were early Gnostic teachings – proto-Gnosticism.**

**These teachings were misleading members of the church away from the Gospel message of Christ.**

**There is more to learn, more to experience, more to feel, more to do, more to meditate.**

**One must reach a higher plane of spirituality through self-realization, inner meditation, or must go through special spiritual techniques and steps.**

**However, Jesus underscores that**

**His grace is sufficient**

**“My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness.” Therefore I will boast all the more**

gladly about my weaknesses, so that Christ's power may rest on me. **2 Cor. 12:9**

**The sufficiency of Christ, the sufficiency of the Gospel, is the main point that Paul cogently drives across in Colossians and in all his epistles.**

Now that I've given you an intro, let us quickly read vs 1 and 2 first.

Col. 1:1,2

From Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God, and Timothy our brother, to the saints, the faithful brothers and sisters in Christ, at Colossae. Grace and peace to you from God our Father!

How does Paul greet the church, he says " Grace and Peace"

Why Grace and peace? Let's start with Peace. What race is Paul? He is a Jew, How do Jews  
Shalom ..

Now is Paul writing to Christians or non-Christians?

How do you know?

In vs. 2 it says "faithful brothers and sisters in Christ."

Now that we have established that they are Christians, let me ask you: were the Colossians strong Christians or weak, immature Christians? How many of you say strong Christians? How many say weak?

Yes, they were strong in their faith.

In fact, their faith was so strong that in Vs. 4 word about the Colossians' faith in Christ had spread to churches in other countries.

Col. 1:4

since we heard about your faith in Christ Jesus and the love that you have for all the saints.

Can you imagine what Christians from other countries would say about the church in Colossae:

“Those Colossians – wow! they are so strong in faith. I wish our church was like theirs.”

Can you imagine if our church was like the Colossians?

Can you imagine if we had faith like the Colossians?

– Can you imagine churches all over Korea saying this: “Wow, did you hear about the faith of the SEM church – they are so strong in faith.”

That's what the Colossians were known for – being faithful.

In fact, in vs. 2 Paul calls them saints.

Do you know what saint means? It means holy one!

Can you imagine if people would call you holy one!

Wow, Elder Keum – He's the holy one! Wow, Deacon

Kim – you holy one! Wow, Saint Laura! Saint Danny!

Now, holy means separated from sin.

In other words, it means to be without sin – sinless.

Anyone here without sin?

When I say, Saint Laura or Saint Danny, does it meant they are truly (intrinsically/inherently) holy? Truly sinless?

No, nobody is holy.  
We are all sinners according to God's word!  
In fact, Rev. 15:4, says, "only God is holy."

If only, God is holy, how can the Christians at the Colossian church be holy, holy ones.

Is Paul contradicting the Bible?

No, let's look at vs.5

Col. 1:5

Your faith and love have arisen from the hope laid up for you in heaven, which you have heard about in the message of truth, the gospel that has come to you.

Vs. 5 says they have heard the message of truth, the gospel and they had faith – they believed in the message. Does this remind you of a passage in Romans? Which passage?

Romans 10:17

So faith comes from hearing, and hearing through the word of Christ.

Do you want to have strong faith? Where does our faith come? From hearing. Hearing what? The word of Christ? What is the word of Christ? The Gospel.

If you want faith, hear the Gospel.

Col. 1:6

Just as in the entire world this gospel is bearing fruit and growing, so it has also been bearing fruit and growing

among you from the first day you heard it and understood the grace of God in truth.

Vs. 6 says they heard the Gospel and understood the Grace of God in truth.

Col. 1:7 You learned the gospel from Epaphras, our dear fellow slave, a faithful minister of Christ

Vs. 7 –Epaphras, a faithful minister of Christ. Why is he called faithful? Because he was faithful to preaching the Gospel.

In other words, because they heard the Gospel and believed in it, - even though they were sinners, they had been forgiven of their sins – once and for all.

They had been declared righteous, holy (which we call justification – they were justified) because of Jesus, because of the Gospel.

Remember what I said the Gospel is Jesus' Life, Death, and Resurrection for the forgiveness of sins for those who believe in Him.

The church in Colossae believed in Jesus' life, death and resurrection for the forgiveness of their sins and that is why we can call them holy ones and that is why I can also call you holy ones – saints – but only for those who trust in Christ for their salvation.

Praise God that He has provided hopeless sinners like us a way into His holy presence (into heaven) – so that we sinners can be called holy – and that way is only through Jesus.

John 14:6

Jesus says, "I am the way, the truth, and the life, no one comes to the Father except by Me."

Praise God that He has provided a way for us sinners to be holy and enter His presence! Thank God for Jesus!

Let us pray!