



# Book of Colossians

New Testament Workshop  
Morrison Heights Baptist Church  
November 29, 2020

# Overview

## Author

The name “Paul” is the first word, appears three times in the letter (1:1, 23; 4:18); equal to Philemon (1, 9, 19), only exceeded by 1 Corinthians (1:1, 12, 13 [2x]; 3:4, 5, 22; 16:21).

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Colossians is one of four “Prison Epistles.” In chapter 4, Paul mentions his imprisonment three times (vv. 3, 10, 18). New Testament scholars debate the location of the jail: Ephesus, Caesarea, or Rome.

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## Recipient

*“to the saints and faithful brethren in Christ who are at Colossae” (1:2)*

# Overview

## Recipient



Modern-Day Turkey

Colossae no longer exists. An earthquake destroyed the town in A.D. 61.

*Craig S. Keener, The IVP Bible Background Commentary: New Testament*

Colossae was approximately 100 miles east of Ephesus; much nearer, however, to Hierapolis and Laodicea in the Lycus River Valley (**2:1; 4:13, 15-16**). Smaller than its two neighbors, the town straddled the river twelve miles upstream.

*Archibald M. Hunter, Introducing the New Testament*

# Overview

## Occasion

### What is happening to Paul?

Typically, Paul addressed letters to churches that he already knew. His personal relationship with local congregations began during lengthy layovers in their communities.

The writing of Colossians was an exception—the other being Romans. It *preceded* the Apostle's first visit to Colossae (**SEE 1:4-12; 2:1-5**).

Regardless, Paul knew some of the church leaders at Colossae (**SEE 4:7-17**); one of them being Epaphras. He had informed Paul (**1:7-8**), while in prison with Paul (**Philem. 23-24**), about the situation at Colossae.

# Overview

## Occasion

### What is happening at Colossae?

In chapter two, Paul referred to a heresy that had debilitated the church both theologically and ethically. Profiling it, he used the following words and phrases: “*philosophy*” (v. 8), “*tradition of men*” (vv. 8, 20-22), “*elementary principles of the world*” (vv. 8, 20), “*regard to food or drink*” (v. 16), “*respect to a festival or a new moon or a Sabbath*” (v. 16), “*self-abasement*” (vv. 18, 23), “*worship of the angels*” (v. 18), and “*visions*” (v. 18). These clues, being diverse, have not been enough to determine if it were just a cult (i.e. distortion of Christianity, Judaism, or Gnosticism) or a new sect.

# Overview

## Occasion

What is happening at Colossae?

Whatever it was, the Colossian heresy had demoted Christ (corrected theologically in **1:15-20**) and distorted morality (corrected ethically in **chaps. 3-4**). God's Son had been subject to a hierarchy of spiritual beings. Salvation provided freely had, by legalism, become ever costly. Freedom in Christ had been replaced by a dread of *and* devotion to elemental forces.

## Theme

Christ, His Supremacy and Utter Sufficiency

*Eerdmans' Handbook to the Bible*

# Overview

## Outline

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|-----------------|--|
| <b>1:1-14</b>   | <b>Introduction</b>  |
|                 | 1:1-2 Greeting   |
|                 | 1:3-8 Prayer   |
|                 | 1:9-14 Thanksgiving  |
| <b>1:15-20</b>  | <b>“Great Christology”: The Thematic Cornerstone of Colossians</b>                       |
| <b>1:21-23</b>  | <b>Salvation Through CHRIST</b>  |
| <b>1:24-2:5</b> | <b>Personal Word from Paul, A Minister of the Gospel and<br/>Apostle to the Gentiles</b> |
| <b>2:6-7</b>    | <b>Appeal to Live Properly: Walk in CHRIST as One Receives<br/>CHRIST</b>                |
| <b>2:8-15</b>   | <b>Appeal to Think Correctly</b>   |
| <b>2:16-23</b>  | <b>Correction of False Instructions (Absolutely Insufficient)</b>                        |
| <b>3:1-4</b>    | <b>Reasons to Live Properly</b>  |



# Overview

## Outline

3:5-17	Live Properly: Personally
3:18-4:1	Live Properly: Interpersonally/CHRIST: Motivation for ALL Relationships
3:18	Wives
3:19	Husbands
3:20	Children
3:21	Fathers
3:22-25	Slaves
4:1	Masters
4:2-6	Personal Word from Paul
4:7-17	Conclusion
4:18	Handwritten Greeting from Paul



# Content

Colossians is a timeless countermeasure to the constant assaults that marginalize and minimize Christ.

TYPICAL COMMENT	COLOSSIAN COUNTERPUNCH
Jesus never existed.	<i>“For by Him all things were created, both in the heavens and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities—all things have been created by Him and for Him. And He is before all things, and in Him all things hold together.” (1:16-17)</i>
Jesus was a prophet.	<i>“When Christ, who is our life, is revealed, then you also will be revealed with Him in glory.” (3:4)</i>

# Content

TYPICAL COMMENT	COLOSSIAN COUNTERPUNCH
Jesus was just a Jew.	<i>“Put on the new self who is being renewed to a true knowledge according to the image of the One who created him—a renewal in which there is no distinction between Greek and Jew, circumcised and uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave and freedman, but Christ is all, and in all.” (3:10-11)</i>
Jesus was a good teacher.	<i>“A true knowledge of God’s mystery, that is, Christ Himself, in whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge.” (2:2-3)</i>
Jesus is the Man upstairs.	<i>“For in Him all the fulness of Deity dwells in bodily form.” (2:9)</i>

# Content

## How many ways can one say “Jesus is God”?

### ❶ “Great Christology” (1:15-20)

- 1:15 | *“And He is the image of the invisible God, the first-born of all creation.”*
- 1:16 | *“For by Him all things were created.”*
- 1:17 | *“And He is before all things, and in Him all things hold together.”*
- 1:18 | *“He is also the head of the body, the Church.”*

Jehovah’s Witnesses is a cult because it denies Jesus’ divinity; partly based upon a misinterpretation of the title “first-born” (1:15, 18; SEE also Rom. 8:29; Rev. 1:5).

Jehovah’s Witnesses, focusing on “born,” assert that Jesus had a beginning. Therefore, He could not have been God.

Ignoring the word “first” misses Paul’s point: Jesus outranks everyone and everything.

# Content

How many ways can one say “Jesus is God”?

## ② Fulness

**1:19** | *“For it was the Father’s good pleasure for all the fulness to dwell in Him.”*

**2:9** | *“For in Him all the fulness of Deity dwells in bodily form.”*

→ **SEE also John 1:16; Ephesians 1:19b-23.**

Relationship with the Book of Ephesians

**Colossians 3:18-4:1 = Ephesians 5:22-6:9**

25% of Ephesians is in Colossians.

33% of Colossians is in Ephesians.



# Content

## Forgiveness

*“Having been buried with Him in baptism, in which you were also raised with Him through faith in the working of God, who raised Him from the dead. And when you were dead in your wrongdoings and the uncircumcision of your flesh, He made you alive together with Him, having forgiven us all our wrongdoings, having canceled the certificate of debt consisting of decrees against us, which was hostile to us; and He has taken it out of the way, having nailed it to the cross.” (2:12-14)*

The Greek verb, translated “to forgive” (χαρίζομαι), is a derivative of the noun “grace” (χάρις).

**SEE also Luke 7:40-43.**