

# COLOSSIANS

The Preeminence and All-Sufficiency of Christ

Lord Jesus Christ Son of His love  
image of the invisible God

**FIRSTBORN OVER ALL CREATION**  
before all things in Him all things

consist **head of the body** firstborn from  
the dead **hope of glory** fullness of the

Godhead *bodily* **HEAD OF ALL PRINCIPALITY**  
**AND POWER** *sitting at the right hand*  
*of God*

who is our life **is all and in all**

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**The Forum Terrace Church of Christ in Grand Prairie, Texas**

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# Introduction to Colossians

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## *Colossians 1:1-2*

*1 Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God, and Timothy our brother, 2 To the saints and faithful brethren in Christ who are in Colosse: Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.*

### **City of Colossae**

The city of Colossae was located in Asia Minor in the Roman province of Phrygia. Ephesus was the capital of Phrygia and was only one hundred miles west of Colossae. Colossae was one of three cities located in the Lycus River valley. The Lycus was a tributary to the Meander River. The city was built in the shadow of Mount Cadmus. The other two sister cities were Laodicea and Hierapolis. Laodicea was twelve miles from Colossae and six miles from Hierapolis. Hierapolis was thirteen miles northwest of Colossae. The three formed a sort of triangle. They not only shared a geographical region but a economical relationship. Colossae was known for its sheep and wool. The textile industry at Laodicea was added by the chalky waters of the Lycus River where the wool garments were dyed. In fact, the name “Colossae is derived from the Latin “colossinus” which means “purple-colored wool.”

In the time of the Greek historian Herodotus Colossae “a great city of Phrygia.” Xenophon called it “a populous city, wealthy and large.” However, by the time Paul wrote his epistle to the church at Colossae, it had become a small city. This was due to a couple of factors. The major road which brought travel to Colossae had been moved in Roman times and rerouted through Laodicea. Furthermore, the area was prone to earthquakes. According to Tacitus a major quake hit the Lycus River valley in 60/61 AD right about the time Paul’s letter was sent (Annals 13.27.1). Although Laodicea was able to rebuild without help from Rome, the smaller city of Colossae would have struggled.

Not much more is known about the city itself. The location was not rediscovered until about 1835. It has never been excavated by archeologists. However, in recent years the Turkish government has been approached for permits to work the site.

### **Composer of Colossians**

There is plenty of internal evidence that Paul is he author of the letter to the Colossians. Three times he names himself in this letter. First, in the introduction of the letter: “*Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ*” (1:1). In the body of the epistle, he wrote, “*I, Paul, became a minister*” (1:23). Finally, in the conclusion it says, “*this salutation by my own hand—Paul*” (4:18).

Paul wrote four prison epistles. Besides Colossians the other three letters are: Philippians, Ephesians, and Philemon. Ephesians and Colossians share a great deal of similarities in style and content. There are even common traits seen in comparing Colossians with Philippians. This demonstrates that they may have been written by the same author.

The letter to Philemon also has a strong connection to the Colossian letter. Onesimus was the slave of Philemon. When Tychicus brought the letters to Ephesus and then to Colossians, Onesimus was his travel companion (Col. 4:9). Onesimus brought the letter to Philimon (12) in whose house the church at Colossae met. It is true that Tychicus is not mentioned in Philemon and Philemon is not mentioned in Colossians. However, both men along with Onesimus were present when the two letters were delivered.

There is a wealth of personal material found in 4:7-17 which could only make sense if Paul were the author. Paul names several close companions, such as, Luke, Tychicus, Archippus, Epaphras, Nympha, Oneimus, Demas, and Mark. Many of these men were known traveling companions of Paul

and were with him at Rome.

The early Christian writers provide plenty of external evidence to Paul's authorship. Eusebius, Origen, Clement of Alexandria, Tertullian, Irenaeus, and others believed that Paul was the writer of this letter.

Paul's authorship of Colossians was not in dispute until the nineteenth century. Some scholars point out that the vocabulary, style, etc. do not fit with Paul's normal writings. In fact, some thirty-four words found on Colossians is not found anywhere else in the New Testament. However, differences and vocabulary can be accounted for due to Paul's using the heretics' own works to refute them. The differences in style do not represent contradictions with Paul's other writings.

There is not logical reason to reject Paul's claim to being the author of Colossians.

## **Colossian Letter's Place of Origin & Date**

Paul wrote this letter to the church at Colossae while he was in prison (1:24; 4:3,10,18). But which imprisonment? Some argue that Paul was at Ephesus, others Caesarea, and traditional many claim he was at Rome when the letter was written. According to Acts 27:2 Luke and Aristarchus (Col. 4:14,10) were with Paul in Rome. Onesimus was with Paul. Most runaway slaves went to Rome as a haven.

The date of the letter to the Colossians depends on where it was penned and who was the author. Since Colossians and Philemon were written at the same time, from the same place, and by the same author. The date for this between 60-63 AD from Rome by Paul.

## **Church at Colossae**

The book of Acts does not mention the church at Colossae or who started it and when. However, Luke does mention that there were some from Phrygia on the day of Pentecost (Acts 2:10). Paul indicates that he did not know many of those at Colossae personally. Paul mentions the "*many as have not seen my face in the flesh*" (Col. 2:1). Yet he had heard of their faith (1:4). We do know that the church met in the home of Philimon (Phile. 1,2).

Paul did have a three year stay in Ephesus on his third missionary journey. Ephesus was about one hundred miles west of Colossae. During this time the gospel spread from the city into the region. At Ephesus Paul "*went into the synagogue and spoke boldly for three months, reasoning and persuading concerning the things of the kingdom of God. But when some were hardened and did not believe, but spoke evil of the Way before the multitude, he departed from them and withdrew the disciples, reasoning daily in the school of Tyrannus. And this continued for two years, so that all who dwelt in Asia heard the word of the Lord Jesus, both Jews and Greeks*" (Acts 19:8-10).

Epaphras may have been the one who started the church at Colossae and possibly Laodocia. He was with Paul in Rome (Col. 4:12). Paul referred to him as a "*a bondservant of Christ*" (4:12b); "*our dear fellow servant*" (1:7); and "*my fellow prisoner*" (Phile. 23). Paul told the Colossians that Epaphras was "*one of you*" (4:12a). He demonstrated a great care for the church and churches in the area. Paul says he was "*always laboring fervently for you in prayers, that you may stand perfect and complete in all the will of God*" (4:12c). Paul may have taught Epaphras while at Ephesus and Epaphras took the Gospel to Colossae and other cities in the area. Paul wrote, "*as you also learned from Epaphras, our dear fellow servant, who is a faithful minister of Christ on your behalf, who also declared to us your love in the Spirit*" (1:7-8).

Although there was a considerable population of Jews in the area around Colossae and no doubt some members of the congregation would have come from the Jewish community (3:11), it appears that most of the members were Gentiles (1:27). There is hardly a mention of the Old Testament scriptures in the letter. The sins listed in chapter three fit better with a Gentile audience.

## **Circumstances Behind the Letter**

The circumstances behind the writing of the letter to the church at Colossae had to do with what

has become known as the Colossian Heresy. There is no evidence that the church had accepted any of the tenets of this heresy. However they were obviously vulnerable to it. Therefore, the letter is more preventative than corrective. Paul's letter is not one of condemnation as it is one of warning.

The main features of the Colossian Heresy has many aspects. Some readily see the ancient doctrine of Gnosticism. Although it had to be here in Colossae in its rudimentary stages as it was not fully developed until 150-200 AD. Gnosticism comes from the Greek term *gnosis* which means "to know" or "knowledge." Gnostics believed they were blessed with special knowledge or wisdom giving them greater and deeper insights than the average Christian. They would have loved philosophy, which means "love of wisdom".

This Heresy could not have been composed of Gnosticism alone for how could it account for the references to circumcision (2:11,13; 3:11), the Sabbath, other holy days, and Jewish dietary laws (2:16-17), and the written code (2:14). Furthermore, the "powers" and "authorities" could be synonymous for the Jewish Law.

Within the letter is the mention of asceticism. This is the practice of self-denial through abstinence from food and possibly from sexual relations (2:22). It may be for means of attaining a vision or to aid in obtaining salvation. Paul indicates as much when he wrote, "*Do not touch, do not taste, do not handle, which all concern things which perish with the using—according to the commandments and doctrines of men? These things indeed have an appearance of wisdom in self-imposed religion, false humility, and neglect of the body, but are of no value against the indulgence of the flesh*" (Col. 2:21-23).

Often associated with Gnosticism is dualism. The idea that all matter is evil. The flesh is evil. Therefore, asceticism is needed to curb the evil desires of the flesh. On the other hand, some advocate hedonism, the full indulgence of the desires of the flesh. After all, it is the spirit which is good. The flesh and its desires are already evil.

Supposing that all matter is evil, a good God could not create matter or be associated with the flesh. Therefore Gnosticism would create levels of intermediaries between God and man. These are normally angels. The angels are in contact with the material world and not the holy God. God is so transcendent from the fleshly material world, He can only be approached via a long chain of angels. This may account for angel worship (Col. 2:18).

If all matter is evil and the spirit is good, then Jesus could not have come in the flesh. Unless He was not God but one of the higher intermediaries between God and Man. Perhaps Jesus was like an archangel. This view not only denies the deity of Christ, but his incarnation and Him as Creator of the universe.

The Colossians Heresy consisted of other ideas such as astrology and visions. There is also mention of "*the basic principles of the world*" (2:8). This could merely refer to fundamentals like an alphabet or basic religious doctrines. However, the Greeks applied the phrase to the four physical substances they thought made up the world; earth, water, fire and air. Other views compare it to spiritual powers that rule the universe. The term "honor" in 2:23 is said to carry "technical significance in local religions for privilege someone experienced of being chosen by a deity and going through a mystery initiation rite" (Arnold 220). This heresy seems to be a mixture of various religious beliefs which blended the teachings of Judaisers, Gnosticism, mysticism, Greek philosophy into a new speculation about Christianity.

The Heresy is combated by Paul when he explained who Jesus Christ really is and how He alone is the means of salvation. He is not an angel but the Creator of all things. He did come in the flesh even though He has the fulness of deity. Paul corrected these false ideas by exalting Christ as the pre-eminent, all-sufficient One from God.

## Greeting

The greeters are two-fold. First, Paul greets the church at Colossae. He identifies himself as an apostle. He did not merely assume this title, but it was "*by the will of God.*" He had not simply assumed this position. It was not by his own efforts but his authority is from God who appointed him to be an apostle according to the purposes of God. This self-description is not for Paul's self-aggrandizement,

but to show the authority behind his letter.

Timothy also sends his greetings. He is often mentioned in the beginning of Paul's letters sending his greetings along side the apostle's. This is seen in Paul's other letters: 2 Corinthians, Philippians, 1 and 2 Thessalonians. Some have the mistaken idea that the mention of Timothy at the beginning of this letter and others as proof that Timothy was a co-author. However, Paul identifies himself as the writer of this letter in 4:18. Paul's self-description in the letter as "I Paul" in the first person pronoun proves this point. Peter mentions that the letters bearing Paul's name were written by Paul (2 Pet. 3:15-16).

Timothy was a very important part of Paul's ministry. In fact, Paul called him "our brother" here but in other places He calls him: "*son Timothy*" (1 Tim. 1:18); his "*own son in the faith*" (1 Tim. 1:2); and "*beloved son*" (1 Cor. 4:17). So close were these two men that Paul could send him in his place to represent the apostle to the church at Philippi (Phil. 2:19-24). The brethren at Colossae would know Paul and also would know of Timothy. It was to Timothy that Paul wrote his final letter (2 Timothy) and passed the care of the gospel.

The ones greeted are described as "*saints*." A saint is one who is holy. They are separated from the world and its sin and set apart unto God. They are true and faithful brethren. The term "*faithful*" means "steadfast." These Christians are "*in Christ*." This phrase is used throughout the letter (1:4,16,17,19; 2:3,9,10,11,12,15; 3:18,20; 4:7,17). It is not a term of special privilege.

"*Grace to you and peace*" is the same greeting Paul used in all of his letters. It combines both the Greek and Hebrew greetings. This helps demonstrate that the Gospel message is for both Jew and Gentile alike. Peace is the natural result of grace. "Archaeologists tell us that many of the nameless slabs in the catacombs of Rome carried the inscription 'in Christo' (in Christ), and significantly also bore on the same slab its spiritual corollary 'In pace' (In peace)" (Hughes 16).

Both grace and peace come from "*God our father*" and Christ. The term "*our*" shows we are family and it applies to all Christians.

### Questions:

1. Locate Colossae on a New Testament map.
2. What cities were trade partners with Colosse?
3. How did Colossae derive its name?
4. Why did Colossae decline as a large city in Asia Minor?
5. Why do we know so little about the city of Colossae today?
6. What is the evidence for Paul's authorship of Colossians?



7. Why do some reject the authorship of Paul? How can this be explained?
8. Where was Paul when he wrote Colossians? What is the date for the letter?
9. True False Paul was personally known by the church at Colossae.
10. Who most likely founded the church at Colossae?
11. True False There is strong evidence showing that the church at Colossae was mostly composed of former Jews.
12. What is gnosticism?
13. What are the elements of Judaism found in the letter?
14. What is asceticism?
15. What is dualism?
16. How did Paul combat the Colossian heresy?
17. Why is Timothy mentioned as a co-greeter along with Paul at the beginning of Colossians?
18. How are the Christians at Colossae described in verse two of chapter one?
19. What is the relationship of grace and peace?

20. What is grace and peace from God and Christ?

**Application & Discussion:**

1. The Colossian Heresy was composed of elements from Gnosticism, Judaism, asceticism, dualism, etc. What are some of the "ISMS" which attack the New Testament church today? How do we combat them?

**Homework:** Read all four chapters of Paul's letter to the Colossians this week.

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# Giving Thanks for Faith, Hope & Love

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## *Colossians 1:3-8*

*3 We give thanks to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, praying always for you, 4 since we heard of your faith in Christ Jesus and of your love for all the saints; 5 because of the hope which is laid up for you in heaven, of which you heard before in the word of the truth of the gospel, 6 which has come to you, as it has also in all the world, and is bringing forth fruit, as it is also among you since the day you heard and knew the grace of God in truth; 7 as you also learned from Epaphras, our dear fellow servant, who is a faithful minister of Christ on your behalf, 8 who also declared to us your love in the Spirit.*

### Questions:

1. List things for which Christians should give thanks?
2. Why is it important to pray always for our fellow-brethren?
3. What does "*faith in Christ Jesus*" involve? (John 3:36; Acts 6:7; Rom. 15:18; 2 Thess. 1:8; Heb. 5:9; 1 Per. 4:17; Acts 6:7; Rom. 1:5; 16:26).
4. What does loving all the saints involve? (John 13:34-35; 1 John 3:16-23)
5. List the other passages where "*faith*," "*hope*," and "*love*" are found together. Why are they so often found together?
6. What is the hope we have laid up in heaven? (1 Peter 1:4; Heb. 6:18-19)
7. How is the gospel described in verse five? Why?

8. Where else has the gospel gone?
9. What is the fruit which is brought forth by the Gospel?
10. Can one know the grace of God apart from truth? Explain.
11. How is Epaphras described in relation to Paul?
12. How is Epaphras described in relation to the church at Colossae?
13. What did Epaphras declared about the Colossians?

**Application & Discussion:**

1. How has the gospel been fruitful in your life?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
2. How can we be more like Epaphras?

**Homework:** Make a prayer list this week of things you are thankful to God for in relation to other Christians.

# Intercession for the Saints

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## *Colossians 1:9-14*

*9 For this reason we also, since the day we heard it, do not cease to pray for you, and to ask that you may be filled with the knowledge of His will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding; 10 that you may walk worthy of the Lord, fully pleasing Him, being fruitful in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God; 11 strengthened with all might, according to His glorious power, for all patience and longsuffering with joy; 12 giving thanks to the Father who has qualified us to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in the light. 13 He has delivered us from the power of darkness and conveyed us into the kingdom of the Son of His love, 14 in whom we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins.*

### Questions:

1. Make a list of those in the Bible who prayed for others? (Job 42:10; 1 Sam. 7:5,9; John 17; Num. 12:13: etc)
2. How long has Paul been continually praying for the Colossians?
3. With what did he pray they be filled?
4. What is "*wisdom and spiritual understanding*"?
5. What sort of things can a Christian do to "*walk worthy*"? (Eph. 4:1-3; Rom. 13:13; 1 Cor. 7:17; 2 Cor. 5:7; Eph. 2:10; 4:17-32; 5:2; 8; 3 John 1:3-4).
6. In what good works do Christians bear fruit? (1 Cor. 16:15; Heb. 13:15; Rom. 15:26-28; Gal. 5:22-23; John 15:4-5; 2 Peter 1:5-8; etc.)
7. Give examples of those in the New Testament that were increasing in knowledge? (Acts 17:11)

8. How was Paul strengthened through his thorn in the flesh (2 Cor. 12:9f)?
9. What does joy have to do with patience and longsuffering? (Acts16:25; James 1:2f)
10. How did God qualify us for the inheritance?
11. What does "*light*" represent in verse 12?
12. What is the power of darkness?
13. How does one get into the Kingdom of Christ? (John 3:3-5)
14. What does redemption mean?
15. What role does the blood of Christ play in redemption?

**Application & Discussion:**

1. How can you be filled with the knowledge?
2. Describe how one becomes captive to the power of darkness and how they are transferred into the kingdom of light.

**Homework:** Be grateful for the knowledge of the truth which leads us to redemption and forgiveness.

# The Preeminence of Christ

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## Colossians 1:15-23

15 He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation. 16 For by Him all things were created that are in heaven and that are on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or principalities or powers. All things were created through Him and for Him. 17 And He is before all things, and in Him all things consist. 18 And He is the head of the body, the church, who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, that in all things He may have the preeminence. 19 For it pleased the Father that in Him all the fullness should dwell, 20 and by Him to reconcile all things to Himself, by Him, whether things on earth or things in heaven, having made peace through the blood of His cross. 21 And you, who once were alienated and enemies in your mind by wicked works, yet now He has reconciled 22 in the body of His flesh through death, to present you holy, and blameless, and above reproach in His sight— 23 if indeed you continue in the faith, grounded and steadfast, and are not moved away from the hope of the gospel which you heard, which was preached to every creature under heaven, of which I, Paul, became a minister.

### Questions:

1. How is Jesus the image of the invisible God? (Phil. 2:6; Jn. 14:9).
2. Does "firstborn" mean that Jesus was created first? Explain. (Jn. 1:18)
3. Name one thing that was created which was not created by Jesus Christ? Explain your answer.
4. What are some of the invisible things of creation?
5. What do you think "thrones or dominions or principalities or powers" represent? (1 Pet. 3:22)
6. Why were things created "for" Christ?

7. In order for Christ to exist "*before all things*" created, what divine attribute must He possess?
8. What does it mean that in Christ "*all things consist*"?
9. How many heads and how many bodies make up the New Testament church?
10. If Lazarus, Jarius' daughter, the widow of Nain's son, and others in the Old Testament were raised from the dead, how can Jesus be the "*firstborn from the dead*"?
11. What does "*preeminence*" mean in this context? Why does Jesus have preeminence?
12. What is the "*fullness*" which dwells in Christ?
13. What does peace have to do with reconciliation? How did Christ reconcile all things?
14. Who has Christ reconciled?
15. In what three ways were these changed by reconciliation?
16. What are the conditions of reconciliation?



17. How much had the Gospel been preached by the time of Paul's letter to the Colossians in about 62 AD?

18. Why did Paul become a minister?

**Application & Discussion:**

1. How does this passage help refute the false doctrine of evolution?

2. Why was there a need for all of creation to be reconciled by Christ?

**Homework:** Meditate on the preeminence of Christ this week and focus on what it has done for your spiritual life.

# Motives for Paul's Ministry

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## Colossians 1:24-29

*24 I now rejoice in my sufferings for you, and fill up in my flesh what is lacking in the afflictions of Christ, for the sake of His body, which is the church, 25 of which I became a minister according to the stewardship from God which was given to me for you, to fulfill the word of God, 26 the mystery which has been hidden from ages and from generations, but now has been revealed to His saints. 27 To them God willed to make known what are the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles: which is Christ in you, the hope of glory. 28 Him we preach, warning every man and teaching every man in all wisdom, that we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus. 29 To this end I also labor, striving according to His working which works in me mightily.*

### Questions:

1. Why do sufferings bring joy for the faithful Christian? (John 15:18; 2 Tim. 3:12; 1 Pet. 4:14; Rom. 8:17-18; 2 Cor. 4:17).
2. What does suffering accomplish for Christ?
3. What is Christ's body in this context?
4. How is Paul's ministry a "stewardship" from God?
5. How does Paul's ministry "fulfill the word of God"?
6. When was the ministry hidden? To what time period in history would this correspond?
7. How has this mystery been revealed?

8. What group in particular is named in this context that God willed to reveal this mystery?
9. What is "*the riches of the glory of this mystery*"?
10. What or who is "*the hope of glory*"?
11. What are the two reasons given here for preaching Christ?
12. What is the end goal of preaching Christ in the life of the hearers?
13. Why is Paul able to labor so hard in preaching the gospel?

**Application & Discussion:**

1. Do Christians today have a stewardship when it comes to preaching the gospel? If so, how should we go about fulfilling this stewardship?
  
2. The Roman Catholic church believes in the doctrine of Purgatory. This is where souls go after death to "burn off" their sins, so they can have eternal life. Does verse 24 support this doctrine? Explain.

**Homework:** Make known the mystery this week to the lost by sharing the gospel message.

## Desires for the Saints

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### *Colossians 2:1-7*

*1 For I want you to know what a great conflict I have for you and those in Laodicea, and for as many as have not seen my face in the flesh, 2 that their hearts may be encouraged, being knit together in love, and attaining to all riches of the full assurance of understanding, to the knowledge of the mystery of God, both of the Father and of Christ, 3 in whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge. 4 Now this I say lest anyone should deceive you with persuasive words. 5 For though I am absent in the flesh, yet I am with you in spirit, rejoicing to see your good order and the steadfastness of your faith in Christ. 6 As you therefore have received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk in Him, 7 rooted and built up in Him and established in the faith, as you have been taught, abounding in it with thanksgiving.*

#### **Questions:**

1. For whom is Paul in agony or "great conflict"?
2. Who are those who have not seen Paul's face in this context?
3. How are Christians' hearts encouraged?
4. How are Christians' hearts "knit together in love"?
5. What does Paul want them to attain?
6. Where is the source of "all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge"? Is there any wisdom and knowledge man needs from other sources? Explain.



# Philosophy vs. Christology

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## Colossians 2:8-15

*8 Beware lest anyone cheat you through philosophy and empty deceit, according to the tradition of men, according to the basic principles of the world, and not according to Christ. 9 For in Him dwells all the fullness of the Godhead bodily; 10 and you are complete in Him, who is the head of all principality and power. 11 In Him you were also circumcised with the circumcision made without hands, by putting off the body of the sins of the flesh, by the circumcision of Christ, 12 buried with Him in baptism, in which you also were raised with Him through faith in the working of God, who raised Him from the dead. 13 And you, being dead in your trespasses and the uncircumcision of your flesh, He has made alive together with Him, having forgiven you all trespasses, 14 having wiped out the handwriting of requirements that was against us, which was contrary to us. And He has taken it out of the way, having nailed it to the cross. 15 Having disarmed principalities and powers, He made a public spectacle of them, triumphing over them in it.*

### Questions:

1. Why are they to beware of "*philosophy and empty deceit*"?
2. Through what two means can philosophy cheat them?
3. What is the fulness of the Godhead?
4. When did it dwell bodily in Christ?
5. How are we "*complete in Him*"?
6. What is Jesus the head of in verse ten?
7. How were they circumcised?

8. How is baptism a burial (Rom. 6:3-5)?
9. By what power or means are we raised out of baptism?
10. In what way were they dead?
11. How have they been made alive?
12. What is the "*handwriting of requirements*"?
13. What did Jesus do with it?
14. What did Christ do with the "*principalities and powers*"?

**Application & Discussion:**

1. What philosophies and traditions of men are cheating men and even saints today?
2. What is the nature of the forgiveness we have from God in Christ? (See Titus 3:4-7; Eph. 1:7; Ps. 86:5; Acts 26:18; Micah 7:18; Eph. 4:32; etc.)

**Homework:** Remember that Christ's way is superior to anything mankind has come up with, so beware of their empty deceptions.

## Dead to the Old World

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### Colossians 2:16-23

16 So let no one judge you in food or in drink, or regarding a festival or a new moon or sabbaths, 17 which are a shadow of things to come, but the substance is of Christ. 18 Let no one cheat you of your reward, taking delight in false humility and worship of angels, intruding into those things which he has not seen, vainly puffed up by his fleshly mind, 19 and not holding fast to the Head, from whom all the body, nourished and knit together by joints and ligaments, grows with the increase that is from God. 20 Therefore, if you died with Christ from the basic principles of the world, why, as though living in the world, do you subject yourselves to regulations— 21 “Do not touch, do not taste, do not handle,” 22 which all concern things which perish with the using—according to the commandments and doctrines of men? 23 These things indeed have an appearance of wisdom in self-imposed religion, false humility, and neglect of the body, but are of no value against the indulgence of the flesh.

#### Questions:

1. What were some of the food and drink restrictions under the Old Testament?
2. What festivals or feasts were required in the Law of Moses?
3. What was significant in the Law concerning a new moon?
4. How were the Jews to keep the Sabbath in the Old Law?
5. What is the "shadow" and what is the "substance" in verse seventeen?
6. What is the reward of which the Colossians could be cheated?
7. Give an example of "false humility".



8. Why is the "*worship of angels*" forbidden (see Matt. 4:10; Rev. 19:10; 22:9).
9. How are the worshipers of angels "*puffed*" up?
10. Who is the "*Head*" and what is the "*body*" in verse nineteen?
11. What does God do for the body?
12. Why should the Colossians no longer subject themselves to the regulations of men?
13. Give an example from the Old Law and from the philosophies of men which command "*do not touch, do not taste, do not handle*"?
14. In what three ways do these things have an appearance of wisdom?
15. Why don't these things have any "*value against the indulgence of the flesh*"?

**Application & Discussion:**

1. Why don't New Testament Christians observe the Sabbath Day (see Ex. 31:16-17; Acts 20:7; Rom. 14:5; Gal. 4:10-11)?
2. What is the difference between self-control and asceticism ("*neglect the body*") when dealing with the lusts of the flesh? Why is one commanded and the other rejected?

**Homework:** Carefully guard you reward in Christ every day.

# Dead to the Old Life

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## *Colossians 3:1-9a*

*1 If then you were raised with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ is, sitting at the right hand of God. 2 Set your mind on things above, not on things on the earth. 3 For you died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God. 4 When Christ who is our life appears, then you also will appear with Him in glory. 5 Therefore put to death your members which are on the earth: fornication, uncleanness, passion, evil desire, and covetousness, which is idolatry. 6 Because of these things the wrath of God is coming upon the sons of disobedience, 7 in which you yourselves once walked when you lived in them. 8 But now you yourselves are to put off all these: anger, wrath, malice, blasphemy, filthy language out of your mouth. 9a Do not lie to one another,...*

### **Questions:**

1. When was the saint "*raised with Christ*"?
2. Now that a Christian has risen with Christ, what should they do?
3. Where is Christ now?
4. Where should we place our mind? Why?
5. How is our life "*hidden with Christ*"?
6. What will happen when Christ returns?
7. How does one put to death a sin?
8. What are the specific sins included in "*fornication*"?

9. What is "*uncleanness*"?
10. What is the difference between "*passion*" and "*evil desire*"?
11. Why is covetousness considered the sin of idolatry?
12. Why should they be motivated to put these things to death?
13. How did the Colossians use to live?
14. Is all anger sinful? Explain.
15. What is the difference between "*wrath*" and "*malice*"?
16. Give examples of "*blasphemy*" against God and against our fellow man?
17. Is there any time or situation where God approves of lying? Explain.

**Application & Discussion:**

1. What things do you put to death or put off when you became a Christian?
2. How can we control the tongue?

**Homework:** Remember you have resurrected to a new live in Christ.

# Living a New Life

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## Colossians 3:9b-17

*9b ...since you have put off the old man with his deeds, 10 and have put on the new man who is renewed in knowledge according to the image of Him who created him, 11 where there is neither Greek nor Jew, circumcised nor uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave nor free, but Christ is all and in all. 12 Therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, put on tender mercies, kindness, humility, meekness, longsuffering; 13 bearing with one another, and forgiving one another, if anyone has a complaint against another; even as Christ forgave you, so you also must do. 14 But above all these things put on love, which is the bond of perfection. 15 And let the peace of God rule in your hearts, to which also you were called in one body; and be thankful. 16 Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom, teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord. 17 And whatever you do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through Him.*

### Questions:

1. What must be put off before the new man is put on?
2. Into whose image is the new man created?
3. Where is there "neither Greek nor Jew" etc.?
4. Who was considered a barbarian?
5. Who were the Scythians?
6. What is the "therefore" there for in verse twelve?
7. What three ways are the saints described in verse twelve?

Define each of the following:

8. tender mercies:
9. kindness:
10. humility:
11. meekness:
12. longsuffering:
13. Give an example of a Christian in the New Testament "*bearing with one another*"?
14. What is the standard for forgiving one another?
15. What is the "*bond of perfection*"? Why is it needed?
16. What is to rule their hearts?
17. What is to dwell in them?
18. How are they to sing?
19. What is the purpose of singing?
20. What does "*do all in the name of the Lord Jesus*" mean?



# Living in Christ with Others

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## Colossians 3:18-4:6

*18 Wives, submit to your own husbands, as is fitting in the Lord. 19 Husbands, love your wives and do not be bitter toward them. 20 Children, obey your parents in all things, for this is well pleasing to the Lord. 21 Fathers, do not provoke your children, lest they become discouraged. 22*

*Bondservants, obey in all things your masters according to the flesh, not with eyeservice, as men-pleasers, but in sincerity of heart, fearing God. 23 And whatever you do, do it heartily, as to the Lord and not to men, 24 knowing that from the Lord you will receive the reward of the inheritance; for you serve the Lord Christ. 25 But he who does wrong will be repaid for what he has done, and there is no partiality. 1 Masters, give your bondservants what is just and fair, knowing that you also have a Master in heaven. 2 Continue earnestly in prayer, being vigilant in it with thanksgiving; 3 meanwhile praying also for us, that God would open to us a door for the word, to speak the mystery of Christ, for which I am also in chains, 4 that I may make it manifest, as I ought to speak. 5 Walk in wisdom toward those who are outside, redeeming the time. 6 Let your speech always be with grace, seasoned with salt, that you may know how you ought to answer each one.*

### Questions:

1. To what extent are wives to submit to their husbands?
2. How might a husband manifest bitterness toward his wife?
3. Why should children obey their parents?
4. Why are fathers not to provoke their children?
5. How might a servant manifest "eyeservice" in working for his master?
6. How should a servant serve his master?
7. How does one work "heartily"?

8. What reward will the hard working servant receive from Christ? Why?
9. What happens to all those servants who do wrong?
10. What motivation is give for master to treat their servants fairly?
11. How are they to pray?
12. Why should they pray for Paul and his companions?
13. Before whom are they to *"walk in wisdom"*?
14. Why is their speech to be *"with grace, seasoned with salt"*?

**Application & Discussion:**

1. Can a wife be forced to submit to her husband? Explain.
2. List ways parents can provoke their children.
3. List the corresponding verses from Ephesians.
  - a. Col. 3:18 is parallel to Eph. \_\_\_\_\_
  - b. Col. 3:19 is parallel to Eph. \_\_\_\_\_
  - c. Col. 3:20 is parallel to Eph. \_\_\_\_\_



- d. Col. 3:21 is parallel to Eph. \_\_\_\_\_
- e. Col. 3:22-25 is parallel to Eph. \_\_\_\_\_
- f. Col. 4:1 is parallel to Eph. \_\_\_\_\_
- g. Col. 4:2 is parallel to Eph. \_\_\_\_\_
- h. Col. 4:5a is parallel to Eph. \_\_\_\_\_
- i. Col. 4:5b is parallel to Eph. \_\_\_\_\_
- j. Col. 4:6 is parallel to Eph. \_\_\_\_\_

**Homework:** Check all your relationships this week, with your spouse, parents, employees or employers and those in this world to make sure they are step with your walk in Christ.

## Paul's Fellow-Servants

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### *Colossians 4:7-18*

*7 Tychicus, a beloved brother, faithful minister, and fellow servant in the Lord, will tell you all the news about me. 8 I am sending him to you for this very purpose, that he may know your circumstances and comfort your hearts, 9 with Onesimus, a faithful and beloved brother, who is one of you. They will make known to you all things which are happening here. 10 Aristarchus my fellow prisoner greets you, with Mark the cousin of Barnabas (about whom you received instructions: if he comes to you, welcome him), 11 and Jesus who is called Justus. These are my only fellow workers for the kingdom of God who are of the circumcision; they have proved to be a comfort to me. 12 Epaphras, who is one of you, a bondservant of Christ, greets you, always laboring fervently for you in prayers, that you may stand perfect and complete in all the will of God. 13 For I bear him witness that he has a great zeal for you, and those who are in Laodicea, and those in Hierapolis. 14 Luke the beloved physician and Demas greet you. 15 Greet the brethren who are in Laodicea, and Nymphas and the church that is in his house. 16 Now when this epistle is read among you, see that it is read also in the church of the Laodiceans, and that you likewise read the epistle from Laodicea. 17 And say to Archippus, "Take heed to the ministry which you have received in the Lord, that you may fulfill it." 18 This salutation by my own hand—Paul. Remember my chains. Grace be with you. Amen.*

#### **Questions:**

1. How is Tychicus described?
2. About what is he to inform the Colossians?
3. How is Onesimus described?
4. What else is known of Onesimus? (see letter to Philemon)
5. What does the phrase "who is one of you" mean?
6. Who is Aristarchus? (see Acts 19:29; 20:4; 27:2-4)

7. Who is Mark? (See Acts 13:5,13; 15:37-39; 1 Peter 5:13; Phile. 1:24; 2 Tim. 4:11)
8. What are the Colossians to do for Mark?
9. What does it mean these men "*are of the circumcision*"?
10. What is Epaphras' attitude concerning the church at Colossae?
11. For whom does he have a great zeal?
12. What is known of Luke? (see Luke 1:1-3; Acts 1:1-3; Phile. 1:24; 2 Tim. 4:11)
13. What is known of Demas? (see 2 Tim. 4:9-10)
14. Who is Nymphas?
15. What were the Colossians to do with the epistle?
16. What were the Colossians to tell Archippus?
17. How are they to remember Paul's chains?

**Application & Discussion:**

1. Paul refers to the epistle coming from Laodicea. Do we have a copy of a letter to the Laodiceans in the New Testament? Could this be a lost book of the Bible? Explain.

**Homework:** Carefully re-read the letter to the Colossians this week and be prepared for the test next Sunday.

# Test

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*Colossians 1:1-4:18*