

PETE BUMGARNER MINISTRIES

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COLOSSIANS

STUDY GUIDE



COLOSSIANS

SCRIPTURE READING

The Book of Colossians

THEME

The letter to the Colossian believers depicts the preeminence of Christ. Christ is revealed as the Creator of all things and the Head of the Church, which is His body. All things were made through Him and for Him. As the body of Christ, we must manifest His preeminence in our lives. The theme of Colossians can be summarized as “Christ--the preeminent One.”

I. INTRODUCTION

- A. Colosse was a city commonly associated with the Roman province of Asia (western Turkey). Ethnologically, Colosse was in Phrygia, but politically, it was in the province of Asia.
- B. Based on Paul’s comment in Colossians 2:1, it is commonly believed that Paul had not been to Colosse prior to the writing of this letter.
- C. The letter to the Colossians is believed to have been written while Paul was in prison. (Philemon 9-10 & 23)
- D. It is generally believed that Philemon lived in Colosse and that the church of Colosse may have been meeting in his home. (Colossians 4:17; Philemon 2)

II. CHAPTER ONE

- A. Paul begins this letter in his usual manner. He identifies himself as an apostle of Jesus Christ, declaring that he is an apostle by the will of God. (Colossians 1:1)
- B. It seems apparent that Timothy is with Paul at the time this letter is written. (Colossians 1:1)
- C. The letter is addressed to the saints and faithful brethren in Colosse, to whom Paul extends God’s grace and peace. (Colossians 1:2)

- D. Paul tells the Colossians believers that he always gives thanks to God, Who is the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, when he prays for them. (Colossians 1:3)
- E. Paul had heard of the Colossian believers' faith and their love for all the saints. (Colossians 1:4)
- F. The hope that awaits the believer is revealed through the Word of Truth, which is the gospel. (Colossians 1:5)
- G. The gospel that had been presented to the Colossians was being preached all over the world, and it was producing fruit. The Colossian believers were products of this gospel, which revealed to them the truth of God's grace. (Colossians 1:6)
- H. It appears that Epaphras was one of those who had proclaimed the gospel to the Colossians. Paul identified Epaphras as a fellow servant and a faithful minister of Christ. (Colossians 1:7)
- I. Epaphras was the one who told Paul of the Colossian believers' love in the spirit. (Colossians 1:8)
- J. From the time that Paul heard of the Colossian believer's love for Christ, he did not cease to pray for them. His desire was that they be filled with the knowledge of God's will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding. (Colossians 1:9)
- K. He wanted the Colossian believers to live their lives in a way that pleased the Lord. He wanted them to be fruitful in their works and to increase in their knowledge of God. (Colossians 1:10)
- L. It is by God's power that the believer is enabled to please the Lord in lifestyle and action. The glorious strength of His power gives unto us the ability to exercise patience and forbearance surrounded by cheerfulness. (Colossians 1:11)
- M. The believer should give thanks to God the Father, Who gives him opportunity to share in the inheritance of the saints through illumination. (Colossians 1:12)
- N. The believer has been rescued from the authority of darkness and has been transported into the kingdom of God's dear Son. (Colossians 1:13)

- O. In Jesus, we have redemption; through His blood, our sins have been pardoned. (Colossians 1:14)
- P. Jesus is the representation of the invisible God; He is the first-born of all creation. (Colossians 1:15)
- Q. Jesus created all things in heaven and in earth, both visible and invisible, including seats of power, rulers, leaders, and authorities. All things were created by Him and for Him. (Colossians 1:16)
- R. Jesus preceded all things, and by Him, all things exist. (Colossians 1:17)
- S. Jesus is the Head of the body, which is the Church. (Colossians 1:18)
- T. Jesus is the highest in authority; He is the first One **born** from the dead. (Colossians 1:18; Revelation 1:5)
- U. God caused Jesus to be first in everything so that completion would reside in Jesus. (Colossians 1:19)
- V. Through Jesus, all things have been reconciled to God, both in heaven and in earth. Peace between God and humanity is available through the blood of Jesus' cross. (Colossians 1:20)
- W. "You who were alienated" refers to the non-Jewish population, who had no access to God. In thought, they were enemies of God; in works, they were wicked, but now, those who had no access to God have been reconciled to God through the crucifixion of Jesus. (Colossians 1:21-22)
- X. When Jesus presents the believers, they will be pure, unblemished, and unaccused. (Colossians 1:22)
- Y. Those who remain persuaded, established, and immovable do not relinquish their expectation of the gospel which they have heard proclaimed. (Colossians 1:23)
 - 1. This gospel is being preached to all creation under heaven. (Colossians 1:23)
 - 2. Paul declares that he has been made a minister of this gospel. (Colossians 1:23)

- Z. Paul was cheerful even though he had gone through many hardships. He realized that the distress he had experienced was a continuation of what Jesus Christ had experienced. Paul was willing to suffer these afflictions on behalf of the Church, which is the body of Christ. (Colossians 1:24)
- AA. Paul said that he had been made a minister according to the government of God. This responsibility was given to Paul for the purpose of fulfilling the Word of God concerning the Gentiles. (Colossians 1:25)
- BB. Paul's ministry was to reveal a mystery that had been concealed from previous ages and generations, but now had been made known to the saints. (Colossians 1:26)
- CC. To these Gentile saints, God chose to reveal the mystery of the riches of His glory, which is: "Christ in you, anticipating the glory." (Colossians 1:27)
- DD. Paul preached Jesus Christ, admonishing and teaching everyone through the wisdom given unto him by God. His objective was to present them complete in Christ Jesus. (Colossians 1:28)
- EE. Paul worked hard to accomplish his objective. He earnestly attempted to fulfill his ministry, relying on the energy that was powerfully active in him. (Colossians 1:29)

III. CHAPTER TWO

- A. Paul wanted the Colossian believers to know how much apprehension he had for them and for the believers in Laodicea and for those who had never physically seen him. (Colossians 2:1)
- B. He desired their hearts be consoled and united in love into all richness with confident understanding of the mystery of God the Father and of Christ. (Colossians 2:2)
- C. All the wealth of wisdom and knowledge is concealed in Jesus. (Colossians 2:3)
- D. The previous information is given to prevent the believer from being deceived with persuasive speech. (Colossians 2:4)

- E. Although Paul was not physically with the Colossian believers, he assured them that he was with them in spirit. He was cheerful when he observed their order and their established faith in Christ. (Colossians 2:5)
- F. “According to the manner that you received Christ Jesus our Lord, live in Him” is a command that should be followed by all believers. (Colossians 2:6)
- G. The believer should be established and reared up in Jesus, steadfast in the faith he has learned, and abundantly grateful. (Colossians 2:7)
- H. Paul warns the Colossian believers against being seduced through philosophy and foolish false beliefs that come from the traditions of people. These deceptions come forth from the world system, not from Christ. (Colossians 2:8)
- I. In Christ Jesus, all the completion of the divinity (Godlike character) physically resides. (Colossians 2:9)
- J. The believers are complete in Jesus, Who is the Head (authority) of all the most influential leaders and authorities. (Colossians 2:10)
- K. In Jesus, the believer is circumcised with a circumcision that cannot be wrought with the hands of men. The believer’s circumcision occurs inwardly; this circumcision removes the body of sin (carnality) by accepting Christ. (Colossians 2:11; Romans 2:29)
- L. The believer is buried with Jesus through baptism, thereby identifying with the death of the flesh. He is risen with Jesus through faith in the power of God, Who raised Jesus from the dead. (Colossians 2:12; Romans 8:11)
- M. The believer was previously dead in his transgressions; the body of sin had not been removed through the circumcision of the heart. Jesus gave life to him, in this state, and forgave all his transgressions. (Colossians 2:13)
- N. Jesus completely did away with the written laws that were against humanity; He took them out of our way and nailed them to His cross. (Colossians 2:14)

1. Jesus fulfilled the law. Once the law was fulfilled, it was no longer needed.
 2. The physical body that fulfilled the law was nailed to the cross, thereby removing the written laws from the believers.
- O. When Jesus accomplished this feat, He totally deprived the most influential leaders and authorities of their privileges. (Colossians 2:15)
- P. He publicly exhibited His victory over the opposition through His resurrection. (Colossians 2:15)
- Q. The Colossian believers were given this warning: “Do not allow people to decide for you what you should eat or drink. Neither succumb to their sacred days, festivals, or sabbaths.” (Colossians 2:16)
- R. The food, drink, sacred days, festivals, and sabbaths were the shadow of that which was to come. All of these observances were fulfilled through the body of Jesus Christ; therefore, they are no longer needed. (Colossians 2:17)
- S. Paul warns the Colossian believers against deception. They are told not to let anyone deprive them of their reward. Through humility and worship of angels whom they have not seen, these uninvited people, who are prideful in their carnal thinking, attempt to deceive others. (Colossians 2:18)
- T. These deceivers do not retain Jesus as the Head of the Body, which is unified through the help of ligaments and tendons. As the body grows, God increases. (Colossians 2:19)
- U. Those who die with Christ are dead to the world system; therefore, they should not subject themselves to the statutes of the world system—Do not touch, eat, or handle. (Colossians 2:20-21)
- V. These statutes will diminish to nothing; they are the doctrines and instructions of men. (Colossians 2:22)
- W. These statutes appear to be words of wisdom because they demand voluntary worship, humility, and neglect of the body. They oppose gratification of the flesh. (Colossians 2:23)

IV. CHAPTER THREE

- A. Those who have identified with the resurrection of Jesus should seek to be where Christ is—seated at the right hand of God. (Colossians 3:1)
- B. Our interest should be on things above, not on things of the earth. (Colossians 3:2)
- C. Believers are dead to the world; their lives are hidden with Christ in God. (Colossians 3:3)
- D. When Christ, the believer's life, is revealed, the believer will also appear in glory concurrently with Christ. (Colossians 3:4)
- E. The believer must subdue the earthly body, thereby abstaining from fornication, impurity, passion, concupiscence, moral corruptness, and greed, which is idolatry. (Colossians 3:5)
- F. It is because of these previously mentioned infractions that the wrath of God comes to those who refuse to believe. (Colossians 3:6)
- G. Paul reminds the Colossian believers that prior to their salvation they were guilty of committing these infractions. (Colossians 3:7)
- H. Paul exhorts the Colossian believers to put away from them violent emotions, passion, moral corruption, defamatory remarks, and disgusting conversation. (Colossians 3:8)
- I. He instructs them not lie to one another now that they have put away the old man and his evil practices. (Colossians 3:9)
- J. By receiving Christ, the believer puts on the new regenerate man, who is renewed to full recognition, according to the likeness of Him Who created him. (Colossians 3:10)
- K. In Christ, there is neither Greek nor Jew, circumcision nor uncircumcision, foreigners nor savages, slaves nor free. All are the same in Jesus. (Colossians 3:11)
- L. As one chosen of God, the believer is holy and loved; therefore, he must put on compassion, moral excellence, humility, gentleness, and calmness in adversity. (Colossians 3:12)

- M. Believers should be patient with one another and forgive one another. If a believer finds fault with another, he should forgive the person, just as Christ forgave him. (Colossians 3:13)
- N. Above everything previously mentioned, the believer must adorn himself with love, which is the controlling factor that produces completeness. (Colossians 3:14)
- O. Each believer must allow the peace of God to govern his heart. As believers, we have been called into one body; therefore, it is imperative that we live in peace, being grateful for our inclusion. (Colossians 3:15)
- P. Believers must allow the word of Christ to dwell in them abundantly. With godly wisdom, we are to teach and admonish one another in psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs. With gratitude, our hearts should sing to the Lord. (Colossians 3:16)
- Q. Whatever a believer does should be done in the name of Jesus, and thanks should be given to God the Father through Jesus. (Colossians 3:17)
- R. Wives should submit themselves to their husbands in a manner that is appropriate to the Lord. (Colossians 3:18)
- S. Husbands are instructed to love their wives. They are warned against arousing bitter feelings toward them. (Colossians 3:19)
- T. Children are commanded to become subordinate to their parents in everything because it pleases the Lord. (Colossians 3:20)
- U. Fathers are warned against provoking their children; provocation may cause them to become discouraged. (Colossians 3:21)
- V. Slaves are commanded to subordinate themselves to their masters in all things, not just when they are watching. They are told to serve with a sincere heart, which is stimulated by their awesome respect for the Lord. (Colossians 3:22)
- W. Whatever one does should come from the heart; he should carry out his tasks as though he were doing them for the Lord, not men. (Colossians 3:23)
- X. We must realize that Christ the Lord will award us with an inheritance. We are His slaves. (Colossians 3:24)

- Y. One who has done wrong will receive according to the wrong that he has done. God does not show favoritism. (Colossians 3:25)

V. CHAPTER FOUR

- A. Masters are exhorted to be honorable and impartial with their slaves. They are to care for them properly, realizing that they, too, have a Master in heaven. (Colossians 4:1)
- B. Paul exhorts the Colossian believers to continue in prayer, being both observant and grateful. (Colossians 4:2)
- C. Paul requests prayer for himself and his companions. His request is that God give them an opportunity to present the gospel of Jesus, even though he is in prison because of the gospel message. Paul wants to reveal the gospel message in an appropriate way. (Colossians 4:3-4)
- D. Paul instructs the Colossian believers to live according to wisdom in the presence of those who do not yet know Jesus and to take advantage of every opportunity. (Colossians 4:5)
- E. He tells them that their speech should always be gracious and tasteful and that they should know how to respond to everyone. (Colossians 4:6)
- F. Paul tells the Colossian believers that Tychicus, who was a beloved brother, faithful minister, and co-slave in the Lord, would further inform them about him. (Colossians 4:7)
- G. Paul was sending Tychicus to the Colossian believers for the purpose of revealing to them Paul's circumstances and condition so that their hearts might be comforted. (Colossians 4:8)
- H. Onesimus, whom Paul called a faithful and beloved brother, would accompany Tychicus. From Paul's comment, it appears that Onesimus was a Colossian. (Colossians 4:9)
- I. Tychicus and Onesimus would reveal to the Colossian believers everything that was going on with Paul. (Colossians 4:10)
- J. Greetings are sent to the Colossian believers from Aristarchus, who is a fellowprisoner with Paul, and from Mark, who is a relative of Barnabas. Paul instructs the Colossian believers to receive Mark if he comes to them. (Colossians 4:10)

- K. Jesus, who was called Justus, also sent his greeting. He was a Jew. (Colossians 4:11)
- L. Paul declares that the men he had named were his only co-laborers in the kingdom of God. These men had been a comfort to Paul. (Colossians 4:11)
- M. Epaphras, who appears to be a Colossian, sent his greetings. He was a slave for Christ who, according to Paul, earnestly prayed for the Colossian believers that they might stand mature and complete, always doing the will of God. (Colossians 4:12)
- N. Paul declares himself to be a witness of the great effort Ephaphras had put forth for the Colossians, those in Laodicea, and those in Hierapolis. (Colossians 4:13)
- O. Luke, the beloved physician, and Demas sent their greetings to the Colossian believers. (Colossians 4:14)
- P. Paul exhorts the Colossian believers to greet for him the Laodicean brethren, Nymphas, and the church which was meeting in his house. (Colossians 4:15)
- Q. After reading this letter, the Colossians were to send this letter to the Laodicean church so they could read it. They were also to read the letter that had been sent to the Laodiceans. (Colossians 4:16)
- R. Paul instructs the Colossian believers to tell Archippus to give attention to the ministry that he had received from the Lord and to fulfill it. (Colossians 4:17)
- S. Paul personally writes his greeting to the Colossian believers and asks them to remember his imprisonment. (Colossians 4:18)
- T. Paul concludes this letter by pronouncing grace among the Colossian believers. (Colossians 4:18)

VI. SUMMARY

- A. The theme of Colossians is “Christ the preeminent One.”
- B. Colosse was a city commonly associated with the Roman province of Asia (western Turkey).

- C. It is commonly believed that Paul had not been to Colosse prior to the writing of this letter.
- D. The letter to the Colossians is believed to have been written while Paul was in prison. (Philemon 9-10 & 23)
- E. Jesus is the representation of the invisible God; He is the first-born of all creation. (Colossians 1:15)
- F. Jesus preceded all things, and by Him, all things exist. (Colossians 1:17)
- G. Jesus is the Head of the body, which is the Church. (Colossians 1:18)
- H. Jesus is the highest in authority; He is the first One **born** from the dead. (Colossians 1:18)
- I. Through Jesus, all things have been reconciled to God, both in heaven and in earth. Peace between God and humanity is available through the blood of Jesus' cross. (Colossians 1:20)
- J. The mystery revealed to the Gentile saints is: "Christ in you, anticipating the glory." (Colossians 1:27)
- K. In Christ Jesus, all the completion of the divinity (Godlike character) physically resides. (Colossians 2:9)
- L. Whatever a believer does should be done in the name of Jesus, and thanks should be given to God the Father through Jesus. (Colossians 3:17)

VII. CONCLUSION

- A. The letter to the Colossians gives great insight into God's plan of redemption that has been accomplished through Jesus.
- B. Through Jesus, God dealt with the past, present, and future.
- C. From the beginning, it was God's plan to consummate all things in Jesus; therefore, it is imperative that we place much attention on Jesus.
- D. Without Jesus, no one has any hope. We must proclaim the gospel of Jesus wherever we go!