

An overview of the book of Colossians

Author, Date, and Place of Writing

- Colossians was written by the Apostle Paul.
- It has been recorded that Paul wrote Colossians in the same year that he wrote Ephesians and Philemon – AD 60; during his Roman imprisonment.
- Paul wrote the letter from Roman Prison (Paul's house arrest in Acts 28:16–31). He was in his own rented house, where for **two years** he was free to impart the gospel to all who came to him.
- Paul had never been to Colosse at the time when he wrote to them.

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- During Paul's 3year ministry in Ephesus, Epaphras had been converted and he carried the gospel to Colosse. (Colossians 1:7-8; Acts 19:10). This is what gave Colosse New Testament importance.
- The young church that resulted then became the target of Christological heretical attack, which led to Epaphras's visit to Paul in Rome and ultimately to the penning of the Colossian letter.

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- Perhaps as a result of the efforts of Epaphras or other converts of Paul, Christian churches had also been established in Laodicea and Hierapolis. Some of them were house churches (Col [4:15](#); [Phil 2](#)). Most likely all of them were primarily Gentiles.
- The letter to the Colossians was sent through Tychicus, accompanied by Onesimus. The also had with them letters for the Church in Ephesus (Ephesians) and Philemon. (Col 4:7; Phil 1:10-12).

Reason

- In the book of Colossians, Paul does not specifically tell us what heresy he was addressing.
- However, based on his writing, it can be inferred from the statements Paul makes.
- Some areas of his teaching in this book were focused on the following;

Some of the elements of teachings were:

- **Ceremonialism**. It held to strict rules about the kinds of permissible food and drink, religious festivals ([2:16–17](#)) and circumcision ([2:11](#); [3:11](#)).
- **Asceticism**. “Do not handle! Do not taste! Do not touch!” ([2:21](#); [2:23](#)).
- **Angel worship**. See [2:18](#).

Some of the elements of teachings were:

- **Depreciation of Christ.** This is implied in Paul's emphasis on the supremacy of Christ ([1:15–20](#); [2:2–3:9](#)).
- **Secret knowledge.** The Gnostics boasted of this (see [2:18](#) and Paul's emphasis in [2:2–3](#) on Christ, “in whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom”).
- **Reliance on human wisdom and tradition.** See [2:4,8](#).

Purpose & Theme

- Paul's purpose is to refute the Colossian heresy (Christological heresy).
- To accomplish this goal, he exalts Christ as the very image of God ([1:15](#)), the Creator ([1:16](#)), the preexistent sustainer of all things ([1:17](#)), the head of the church ([1:18](#)), the first to be resurrected ([1:18](#)), the fullness of deity in bodily form ([1:19](#); [2:9](#)) and the reconciler ([1:20–22](#)).

Purpose & Theme

- Thus, Christ is completely adequate.
- We “have been given fullness in Christ” ([2:10](#)). On the other hand, the Colossian heresy was altogether inadequate. It was a hollow and deceptive philosophy ([2:8](#)), lacking any ability to restrain the old sinful nature ([2:23](#)).

Summarily

- The theme of Colossians is the complete adequacy of Christ as contrasted with the emptiness of mere human philosophy.

Why Colossians is important

- The church at Colossae was under attack from false teachers who were denigrating the deity of Jesus; they were teaching that He was not actually God.
- Though Paul had never been to the church itself, he addressed these issues head-on.

Why Colossians is important

- The nature of Jesus Christ as Creator and Redeemer was nonnegotiable, so Paul wrote to them that he might bring his wisdom to bear on this difficult and trying situation.
- It was critical to him that this church know God in His greatness and glory, rather than in the deficient view given them by the false teachers (Colossians 1:25; 2:1–2).

Noteworthy!

- Our view of Jesus Christ will impact every area of our life. Many today want only practical instruction and helps for living, deliberately avoiding that which is most relevant and intended for purposeful living. Topics such as doctrine and theology because they seem to be out of touch with their day-to-day reality.
- However, the truth about Jesus Christ cannot be escaped yet, still live a fulfilled life.

Outline

- Introduction ([1:1–14](#))
 - Greetings ([1:1–2](#))
 - Thanksgiving ([1:3–8](#))
 - Prayer ([1:9–14](#))
- The Supremacy of Christ ([1:15–23](#))

Outline

- Paul's Labor for the Church ([1:24—2:7](#))
 - His Ministry for the Sake of the Church ([1:24–29](#))
 - His Concern for the Spiritual Welfare of His Readers ([2:1–7](#))
- Freedom from Human Regulations through Life with Christ ([2:8–23](#))
 - Warning to Guard against the False Teachers ([2:8–15](#))
 - Pleas to Reject the False Teachers ([2:16–19](#))
 - An Analysis of the Heresy ([2:20–23](#))

Outline

- Rules for Holy Living ([3:1—4:6](#))
 - The Old Self and the New Self ([3:1—17](#))
 - Rules for Christian Households ([3:18—4:1](#))
 - Further Instructions ([4:2—6](#))
- Final Greetings and Benediction ([4:7—18](#))



References

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