

## Message #1

Colossians 1:13-14, 21-22, 25;  
2:10-14, 16; 3:10-11; 4:18

Almost every religion in the world and almost every church in the world will tell you that you need something more than Jesus Christ if you really want to be right with God.

- 1) Some will tell you that you need to have some dynamic and exciting religious experience.
- 2) Some will tell you that you need specific discipleship works or legal codes of life.
- 3) Some will tell you that you need their system of man invented rules that you need to follow.
- 4) Some will say you must worship on the Sabbath day and keep Sabbath day mandates.
- 5) Some will say you must not taste or touch certain things, but live a rigid ascetic life.
- 6) Some will say if you don't follow their traditions or catechism they are your judge.
- 7) Some will say you need their commandments and rituals.

Every one of these kinds of things says Jesus Christ is not enough. Every one of these teachings is out to rob you of the freedom and liberty you have in Jesus Christ.

**There is a book that God put in His word that is designed to teach the truth about this, and that book is the book of Colossians. God gives us this book to show us that Jesus Christ is enough. He is what we need and He is all we need.** You don't need man-made rules and regulations and any system of religion that tells you otherwise is heresy.

**What we need is a close relationship with Jesus Christ based on the written word of God.** He is all we need. Colossians is a book that says do not let anyone rob you as a believer of everything you have in Jesus Christ. You have position and you have freedom.

To begin our journey, we want to introduce this book to you today by asking and answering some introductory questions:

**INTRODUCTORY QUESTION #1 – Why study Colossians?**

Let me give you some reasons:

**Reason #1** - Because Colossians is one of only 66 inspired books God has given to man.

Colossians is one of only 66 God-breathed books that God has put in the Bible. Colossians is a N.T. book with tremendous manuscript support.

One of the most important collections of New Testament manuscripts is in the Beatty Museum near Dublin and also at the University of Michigan in Ann Arbor. These manuscripts are called the "Chester Beatty Papyrus Manuscripts."

Around the year 1930, a man by the name of Chester Beatty purchased 86 "slightly mutilated leaves" of New Testament books that had been written on Papyrus paper. The pages were 11 by 6 ½ inches and they dated back to the year AD 200. These manuscripts were considered to be exact copies of the originals. On these papyrus pages were 9 of Paul's letters plus the entire book of Hebrews. This group of manuscripts was given the title "p 46." **In those manuscripts was the entire book of Colossians.**

**Every one of the early church canon listings of books belonging in the Bible lists**

**Colossians:** Marcion (AD 140); Muratorian (AD 170); Apostolic (AD 300); Cheltenham (AD 360); Athanasius (AD 367).

**Every one of the early church council meetings identified Colossians as an inspired book:**

Nicea (AD 325-340); Hippo (AD 393); Carthage (AD 397); Carthage (AD 419).

**The early Bible translations contained Colossians: Old Latin (AD 200); Old Syriac (AD 400).**

**Many early church leaders specifically said Colossians was an inspired book of God:**

Ireneaus (AD 130-202); Clement of Alexandria (AD 150-215); Cyril of Jerusalem (AD 315-86); Eusebius (AD 325-340); Jerome (AD 340-420); Augustine (AD 400).

Plus these and many others quoted Colossians in their studies: Ignatius (AD 110); Polycarp (AD 110).

Clearly Colossians is an inspired book of God so when we go through it we are actually studying a book that God has specifically given to man. We may expect God to speak to our hearts and our minds when we go through His word and Colossians is in the word of God; it is a very rare book that has been written by God that is in existence for our study.

**Reason #2** - Because Colossians reveals, defends and exalts the preeminence of Jesus Christ.

Jesus Christ is God and Colossians says it and proves it. Back when this book was written, a group known as Gnostics were tampering with the concept of the identity of Jesus Christ. This tampering is still going on.

H. A. Ironside said, “Old errors are being paraded in new terms on all sides” (*Colossians*, Preface). Mormons tamper with the Person of Jesus Christ, Jehovah’s Witness tampers with the Person of Jesus Christ, Judaism tampers with the Person of Jesus Christ, Muslims tamper with the Person of Jesus Christ. Colossians sets the record straight—**Jesus Christ is the God Creator! Jesus Christ is the only Savior and the only Messiah King.**

**There are 95 verses in the book of Colossians and there are 30 mentions of the proper names of Jesus Christ.**

**Paul uses the name Christ 23 times in Colossians:** 1:1, 2, 3, 4, 7, 27, 28; 2:2, 5, 6, 8, 11, 17, 20; 3:3, 4, 11, 15, 16, 24; 4:3, 12.

**Paul uses the name Jesus 7 times in Colossians:** 1:1, 3, 4; 2:6; 3:17; 4:11, 12.

Clearly this book is focused on Jesus Christ. Colossians dogmatically defends the Deity of Jesus Christ and that is one doctrine that you do not want to budge one inch.

We need Colossians because we need to be able to dogmatically defend Jesus Christ and this book will help us do that.

**Reason #3** - Because Colossians reveals the total sufficiency of Jesus Christ.

Get this thought in your mind and never let it leave your mind—a relationship with Jesus Christ is all you need to be complete in your relationship with God. Listen to what Paul writes in Colossians 2:10: “and in Him (*Jesus Christ*) you have been made complete...”

A relationship with Jesus Christ means we have been set free from sin, from the law and from all legal codes. We are not under the O.T. law and we are not required to follow a bunch of man-made codes or rules.

My relationship with Jesus Christ means I do not have to listen to your opinions about what we eat or drink and I don't have to listen to your diatribes about worship on the Sabbath Day (Col. 2:14, 16). That O.T. Law and Sabbath day rituals were nailed to the cross (2:14, 16).

Our relationship with Jesus Christ makes us complete. It doesn't need your codes or rules or works. Colossians sets the record straight on this. Also I am convinced that a relationship with Jesus Christ is sufficient for every area of life. We don't need psychoanalysis or anti-depression medicine; what we need is a proper relationship with Jesus Christ. He is sufficient.

**Reason #4** - Because Colossians presents the value of sound Christological doctrine and theology.

Colossians is not a light fluff book. It is a book that contains deep doctrine and deep theology (i.e. 2:12). It is a book that presents the most glorious doctrine of Christology found in the entire Bible.

Paul emphasizes the importance of grasping this truth about Jesus Christ so that we may present Him accurately (1:28-29). Colossians is clearly a book that shows that sound doctrine produces sound lives and proper theology leads to proper Christology that leads to proper doxology.

One theologian said, “There is nothing in my heart that was not first in my head.” What we think about is critical to our hearts and minds and critical to our faith. The Christological doctrine is deeply developed in Colossians and we need to study it.

**Reason #5** - Because Colossians clearly presents the practical lifestyle of our relationship to Jesus Christ.

There is a practicality to theology. In Colossians we not only learn about Jesus Christ, but we learn how we are to live the truth of Jesus Christ. Our relationship with Jesus Christ is not theoretical, but it is also practical. In this book Paul develops how we live out our relationship with Christ in our own lives (3:5); with other believers (3:12-13); in our homes (3:18-21) and even on our jobs (3:22-4:1).

Jesus Christ is preeminent and He is to be preeminent in our own lives and Colossians spells that out.

**QUESTION #2** – Who wrote Colossians?

**We may dogmatically say that Colossians was written by Paul.** There are two evidences we may offer to prove it:

**Evidence #1** - The internal evidence in the book.

The book of Colossians has much in it that proves Paul wrote it:

**(Proof #1)** - Paul specifically identifies himself as the one who wrote it. **1:1, 23; 4:18**

If Paul is not the author, we must invent another man named Paul who is the author because someone named Paul did write this book and it has to be a Paul who is an Apostle.

**(Proof #2)** - Paul specifically names many of his close associates in Colossians.

Paul names Timothy (1:1); Tychicus (4:7); Onesimus (4:9); Aristarchus (4:10); Barnabus (4:10); Mark (4:10); Justus (4:11); Epaphras (4:12); Luke (4:14); Demas (4:14) and Archippus (4:17).

**(Proof #3)** - Paul wrote Ephesians and Ephesians is similar to Colossians.

Curtis Vaughan wrote: “Even from a casual reading of Ephesians and Colossians one must conclude that they are kindred Epistles” (*Colossians*, p. 168).

Edgar Goodspeed wrote: “Three-fifths of Colossians is reflected in Ephesians” (*The Key to Ephesians*, p. 8).

H. C. G. Moule lists 33 specific parallels of subject, expression and doctrine that exist between Ephesians and Colossians (*Studies in Colossians and Philemon*, pp. 47-48).

The logical explanation for the amazing similarities is that the same author wrote both books. The Author is Paul.

**(Proof #4)** - Paul wrote Philemon and Philemon is similar to Colossians.

Here is another powerful proof that Paul wrote Colossians that makes Pauline authorship, as Norman Geisler said, “virtually impeccable” (*Colossians*, Bible Knowledge Commentary, p. 667).

- 1) Both books include Timothy’s name in the greeting (Col. 1:1; Philemon 1:1).
- 2) Both books include greetings from Aristarchus, Mark, Epaphras, Luke and Demas (Col. 4:10-14; Philemon 23-24).
- 3) Both books include a reference to Archippus (Col. 4:17; Philemon 2).
- 4) Both books contain a mention of Onesimus, slave of Philemon (Col. 4:9, Philemon 10).

**Clearly just as Paul wrote Ephesians and Philemon, he wrote Colossians.**

**Evidence #2** - The external evidence.

We have already cited many from church history concerning the fact that Colossians is a book of the Bible and there is no evidence that any from church history thought Colossians was written by anyone other than Paul.

**Paul wrote Colossians.**

**QUESTION #3** – When was Colossians written?

There are four books written by Paul that are called Prison Epistles because Paul wrote them while he was in Prison. The four books are Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians and Philemon.

The irony of this is that Paul was locked up to shut him up. But while he was locked up, he wrote many inspired books that would change the world.

If we can determine the date of writing just one of these Epistles, we can determine the date he wrote all of them.

Paul Benware made an interesting observation about these Epistles when he said there are many commentators who classify the prison Epistles as being Christological Epistles because they all focus on the glorious theme of the Person and Work of Jesus Christ (*Survey of the New Testament*, p. 207).

There is an important principle to observe from this background and that is when you find yourself in depressing circumstances, focus your mind on the Scriptures and Jesus Christ.

There are four observations we may make to determine the date:

**Observation #1** - Paul is a prisoner when he writes Colossians. **1:24; 4:3, 10, 18**

Paul was under house arrest in Rome while he waited for a trial before Nero.

**Observation #2** - Paul sensed the potential of an open door to preach while in prison. **4:3-4**

**Observation #3** - Paul had Tychicus and Onesimus, who could visit him and carry the letters of Colossians, Philemon and Ephesians to the various designations on one trip. Col. 4:7-9/ Philemon 10-12/Eph. 6:21-22

**Observation #4** - Paul does not mention some decision he expected concerning his freedom like he does when he writes Philippians (Phil. 1:19-21).

These facts fit Paul's first imprisonment in Rome, which is described by Luke, in the book of Acts (Acts 28:30-31). **The time when Colossians was written was somewhere near the years AD 61-62.**

**QUESTION #4 – Why did Paul write Colossians?**

There was a man who lived in Colossae whose name was Epaphras. He had apparently traveled all the way to Rome to see Paul, which is a distance of about 1,300 miles. The reason he made the trip was because some doctrinal problems had developed in the church of Colossae (1:7; 4:12-13). Someone in the church was very persuasive in their argumentation of faulty doctrine (2:4).

From the letter that Paul writes, we learn something about what was happening:

- 1) Some were promoting the idea that the word of God and Jesus Christ were not enough, but what was needed was deeper hidden knowledge. **2:2-3**
- 2) Some were promoting the faulty doctrines that seemed very intellectual and philosophical but they were not Biblical. 2:4, 8
- 3) There was a denial of the deity of Jesus Christ. 2:9
- 4) There was an attempt to put people back under the O.T. law. 2:14-17
- 5) There was a promotion of the worship of angels. 2:18
- 6) There was a promotion of intense legalism. 2:20-23
- 7) There was a promotion of licentious things. 3:5-6

This stuff was infiltrating the church and Epaphras was so troubled by this that he travelled all the way to Rome to talk with Paul.

So Paul wrote this letter to the Colossians for the purpose of presenting God's truth and straightening out their doctrinal errors.

**QUESTION #5 – What is the theme of Colossians?**

The theme of Colossians is this—**Jesus Christ is everything you need and all you need for a relationship with God and for a development in a relationship with God.**

A relationship with Jesus Christ and an understanding of the word of God is all you need to have a fulfilled and blessed life.

Keep your focus on your faith in Jesus Christ and keep your focus on understanding God's word and your life will blossom for God and be blessed by God.