

# Introduction to Colossians

## *The all Sufficient Nature of the Person and Work of Christ*

### **Author:**

Internal and external evidence points to Paul. Paul is imprisoned. Colossians is most likely written during his first Roman imprisonment around 60 to 61A.D.

### **Recipients:**

The recipients have never met Paul. The church seems to have started through the work of Epaphras. The letter is also to be read in the church of Laodicea. Tychicus and Epaphras are bringing this letter to them and coming to provide encouragement.

### **Location:**

Colossae is a second-rate market town. It had peaked centuries before and was now a very minor city even within its region. The Apostle never visited this city. It is located about 100 miles east of Ephesus in the region of the seven Asian churches of Revelation. It plays basically no role in church history after the death of Christ.

### **Occasion:**

"I say this so that no one will delude you with persuasive argument" (2:4). Paul writes to respond to false teaching. Paul seems encouraged by the Colossians, but recognizes the deceitful nature of the false teaching. It is difficult to determine the exact nature of the false teaching. "It was apparently a religious system that combined elements from Greek speculation (2:4, 8-10), Jewish legalism (2:11-17), and Oriental mysticism (2:18-23). It involved a low view of the body (2:20-23) and probably nature as a whole. Circumcision, dietary regulation, and ritual observances were included in this system, which utilized asceticism, worship of angels and intermediaries, and mystical experiences as an approach to the spiritual realm" (Wilk. & Boa, 412). The NIV study Bible lists; Ceremonialism, Asceticism ('Do not Handle or Touch'), Angel worship, Depreciation of Christ, Secret Knowledge & Reliance on Human Tradition. Paul's answer to all of these false teachings is the sufficiency of Christ in salvation.

Paul also wants to let them know that Epaphras is okay. He also introduces Tychicus to them, the carrier of the letter. Philemon gives us insight to the second traveler with Tychicus, Onesimus.

### **Major Themes & Doctrines:**

- The primary theme in Colossians is the preeminence and sufficiency of Christ in all things
- The Nature of our Salvation & Sanctification
- Our Position in Christ
- Identifying and Answering false teaching

### **Additional Thoughts:**

This is considered the sister letter to Philemon and the twin letter to Ephesians. Ephesians is said to be a study of the Body and Colossians the study of the Head. This is a difficult book to break up. Not knowing the opponents makes it hard to understand exactly why Paul says the things he does. This might be best taught in connection with Ephesians. It follows the same pattern as Ephesians of position and practice.