

# The Letter to the Saints at Colosse—Part 1

## Southside church of Christ, Huntsville

Reading Assignment—Colossians 1-2

### Introduction

In our last lesson we examined a book written to a Christian who was probably a member of the Colossian church. We don't have a direct record of when the Colossian church was founded, but Colosse was located in Phrygia in Asia Minor. Phrygia is mentioned in Acts 16:6 and 18:23 leading some to conclude that the church was founded during that time. If that's true, then, at some point, Paul and his traveling companions may have split up. In Colossians 2:1 Paul states that those in Colosse had never seen his face indicating that he had never met with that group. Paul probably wrote the letter from Rome and it may have been delivered by Onesimus himself.

The letter bears much resemblance to Paul's letter to the Ephesian Christians. Many passages and ideas are almost identical. In particular, Paul uses the same imagery of the church as a body. In Colossians, Paul spends much time developing the idea that Christ is the head of that body. He talks about the 'mystery' at the end of chapter 1, which is also mentioned in Ephesians 2. In Colossians 2:10 he prays that they might "walk worthy" which is also his plea in Ephesians 4:1. Many passages seem to be repeated word-for-word in both letters.

The letter can be roughly divided into two parts. Chapters 1-2 are mostly comments on both the doctrine of Christ and principles. Principles include the headship of Christ, the abolishment of ceremony, and spiritual fellowship. Chapters 3-4 are the application of the teachings of Christ. He gives specific ways to put away the flesh and seek after those things above. As an example, he gives specific instructions on how to treat others in our lives. Finally, he wraps up the book with some salutations.

As you read the first two chapters, you will notice that Paul opens the letter with his characteristic greeting and a prayer. He immediately transitions to make the case that Christ is the head and we are the body. Because we are the body, we must be careful to be holy. Being holy is accomplished by not straying from the preaching as it was delivered. Straying from the preaching could include returning to the old law, constructing ordinances, or seeking some other type of worship that seems right or feels good.

### Instructions

While reading chapters 1 and 2, be sure to identify the major and minor themes as well as the major arguments used to support the themes.

#### Chapter 1

Major Theme:

#### Chapter 2

Major Theme:

Major Argument:

Major Argument:

Minor Themes:

Minor Themes:

### **Questions**

1. Why did Paul write the letter to the Colossians?

2. For what cause does Paul pray for the Colossian brethren?

3. What three things had Paul heard about the Colossian brethren?

4. What is the condition that must be fulfilled in order to be holy, unblameable, and unproveable in his sight? Hint: look for the word 'if.'

5. What did Christ do to the handwriting of ordinances?

6. List the ministers named in chapter 1.

7. With the removal of the handwriting of ordinances, what else was removed? (Co. 2:16)

**True or False**—Be sure to provide scripture for your answer.

T or F—In this reading we learn the Laodiceans were lukewarm.

T or F—The truth of the gospel brings forth fruit.

T or F—Angels are worthy of worship.

T or F—Christ was a prophet with the power of God, but was not God himself.

T or F—Christian hearts are knit together by the physical riches that come from serving God.

### **Thought Questions**

1. What is the working of God that works mightily in Paul? Is Paul saying that God dwells in him and directly chooses the works he accomplishes? (Co. 1:29)

2. Is it possible to be beguiled by our own religion? Is there any benefit to such? (Co. 2:23)

3. How does the truth bring forth fruit? (Co. 1:10)