

Paul Writes Colossians



When: *The winter of A.D. 62 or spring of A.D. 63*
From Where: Roman imprisonment (Acts 28:30-31)

Synopsis

- One of four epistles written by Paul while in his first Roman imprisonment
- Most likely, Colossae was not a place Paul had been or labored (2:1)
 - He seems to include the Colossians in the list of those "...who have not personally seen my face"
 - With a high degree of certainty, the origin of the church at Colossae can be attributed to Epaphras (1:3-7; 4:12-13)
- Three times Paul refers to himself as a "prisoner" (4:3, 10, 18)
- This letter was carried from Rome to Colossae by Tychicus, with the help of Onesimus (4:7-9)
 - Tychicus was an Asian...perhaps even from Colossae (Acts 20:4)
- A "companion letter" to Ephesians
 - Written at the same time
 - Also carried by Tychicus (Eph. 6:21-22)
 - Strikingly similar themes...often called "*The Twin Epistles*"
- Others who are mentioned in the letter...
 - Timothy has joined Paul in Rome (1:1)
 - Aristarchus was Paul's "fellow prisoner" (4:10; cp. Acts 27:2)
 - Archippus was a member of the Colossian church (4:17; cp. Phlm. 2)
 - Mark is identified as "Barnabas' cousin" only here (4:10; cp. Acts 13:5, 13; 15:37-39)
 - Luke is identified as a "physician" only here (4:14)
 - Demas is portrayed as "faithful"...yet, later departs (4:14; cp. Phlm. 24; 2 Tim. 4:10)
 - Onesimus was a Colossian...he was "one of their number" (4:9; cp. Phlm. 8-18)
- An unknown letter is mentioned in 4:16
 - Paul instructed this letter to be read to the church in Laodicea
 - He also wanted the letter coming from Laodicea to be read in Colossae
 - Some have conjectured the letter coming from Laodicea was the Ephesian letter
 - Not knowing really anything about this letter from Laodicea, we can say with certainty that letters were obviously shared among N.T. churches
- The theme => "*You are complete in Christ.*"
 - Thematic statement (2:10)

The Two Treatises

Lesson 60

Outline

Paul sends his opening greetings and admonitions (1:1-12)

- Faithful saints for whom the apostle continued to pray (vv. 2-3, 9-12)
- They had a hope “laid up in heaven” because of what they have been taught (vv. 5-7)
 - Epaphras had been their teacher (v. 7)

Paul describes the Christ in Whom every man can be made “complete” (1:13 – 2:23)

- God has delivered us from Satan and placed us into the kingdom of the King (1:13)
- He has redeemed and forgiven us (1:14)
- He is the image of the invisible God & the “firstborn” [*preeminent One*] (1:15)
- He is the Creator of all things and the One who holds all things together (1:16-17)
- He is the Head of the church, His body (1:18-23)
- Paul includes his own labors on behalf of this kingdom (1:24-29)
 - Gospel preaching can help “...present every man complete in Christ” (v. 28)
- Paul praises the Colossians for how they have been “...built up in Christ” (2:1-8)
 - They were “...knit together in love” (v. 2)
 - In Him are hidden “...all the treasures of wisdom & knowledge” (v. 3)
 - They had “stability in Christ” (v. 5)
 - Receiving Christ requires that we also “...walk in Him” (v. 6)
 - They were “firmly rooted” and could resist “.. being taken captive by philosophy & deceitful human wisdom” (vv. 7-8)
- In Christ dwells the fulness of Deity (2:9)
- In Christ man is made complete (*perfect, whole*) (2:10)
- In Christ man is “circumcised without hands” (*baptized*) and forgiven our transgressions (2:11-13)
- In Christ the former covenant has been removed (2:14-15)
- As a result, we can be spared the judgments that come from Judaizing teachers (2:16-23)

Paul instructs on how those who are “complete in Christ” should live (3:1 – 4:6)

- Properly set affections (3:1-4)
 - On things above, not on things on the earth
 - We have been “raised up with Christ” because we also “died with Him” (v. 1; 2:20)
- Mortifying, or killing, the members of our earthly body & their unlawful desires (3:5-9)
 - Immorality, impurity, greed, idolatry, anger, wrath, malice, slander, lying
 - “Against all these things the wrath of God will come” (v. 6)
- Putting on the “new self” of the man “made complete in Christ” (3:10-17)
 - Compassion, kindness, gentleness, patience, forgiveness, love, peace
 - Submission to the word of Christ => “Whatever you do in word or deed...” (vv. 16-17)

The Two Treatises

Lesson 60

Outline (cont.)

- Behaving appropriately in all human relationships (3:18 – 4:1)
 - Husbands & wives
 - Parents & children
 - Masters & slaves
- Being devoted to prayer (4:2-4)
 - Paul personally requests prayers for him & his ministry
- Proper conduct towards those outside the kingdom of Christ (4:5-6)

Paul gives his closing personal remarks & final exhortations (4:7-18)

- A commendation of Tychicus & Onesimus (vv. 7-9)
- Personal comments from & to different brethren (vv. 10-17)
- Final request (v. 18)