

## Lesson 7- Colossians, chapters 1 and 2

### The Supremacy of Christ, Fullness of Life in Christ, Warnings Against False Teachers

The letters of Paul that are considered to be genuine works of Paul, include Romans, 1 and 2 Corinthians, Galatians, Philippians, 2 Thessalonians and Philemon. The letter to the Colossians is among the disputed or Deutero-Pauline letters, along with the Letter to the Ephesians, 2 Thessalonians, 1 and 2 Timothy, and Titus. This letter does share some of the same ideas that are found in the Letter to the Ephesians. Like the Letter to the Romans, it refers to members of the community as “saints.” It also describes the Church as the “body of Christ” as does Romans 12 and 1 Corinthians 12. However, there is language and vocabulary not used in any of the undisputed letters of Paul, and a few theological teachings seem to differ slightly from Paul’s earlier letters. The Letter to the Colossians is beautifully written. In the first chapter **note the imagery about Christ** as the *firstborn of creation*. When you read chapter 2, see if you can find clues as to why there is so much concern about false teachers. What was going on in Colossae?



1. Read the introduction to Colossians in your bible and share information you find there with your group. Find Colossae, Ephesus, Galatia, and Tarsus on the map of Asia Minor, which is modern day Turkey.
2. Read Colossians 1:1-8 in your bible and footnotes. Share any helpful footnotes with your group.

3. a. Who had been instructing the people of the Church in Colossae? (Col 1:1-8 and Col 2:1)

b. How did Paul become aware of the Spiritual growth of the Colossians?

4. Read Colossians 1:9-14 and footnotes. Verses 9-12 form a single run-on sentence.

a. In his prayers for the Colossians, for what does Paul pray? (Make a list.)

b. How does this serve as an example of how we should pray for the members of our Church community?

c. For what is Paul thankful in Col. 1:12-14.

d. What theological teachings does Paul spell out in verses 12-14?

5. Read Colossians 1:15-20 and footnotes. Share any interesting or helpful footnotes with your group. Read also John 1:1-5 on the next page. Then answer the questions below.

*John 1:1-5* In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.<sup>2</sup> He was in the beginning with God.<sup>3</sup> All things came to be through him, and without him nothing came to be. What came

to be <sup>4</sup> through him was life, and this life was the light of the human race;  
<sup>5</sup> the light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it.

- a. Some early Christians, known as *Gnostics* believed that Jesus was not one with the Father but somehow less than the Father; a created being. How do Paul's words in Col 1:15-20 help to explain the "oneness" of God the Father and Jesus?
- b. Compare John 1:1-5 above with Paul's hymn. How are they similar?
- c. What was Jesus's role in creation according to Colossians?
- d. What was Jesus' role in creation according to the Gospel of John?

**6. Read Colossians 1:20-23.**

- a. How had Jesus Christ brought redemption and reconciliation to His people?
- b. What does 1:23 say we must do to *remain* worthy of redemption?

**7. Read Colossians 1:24-29.**

- a. What image does Paul use to describe the relationship between Christ and the Church?
- b. Paul has suffered for the Church. Can you recall how Paul suffered for the Church?

**8. Read Colossians 2:1-8 and footnotes.**

**Reflections.** a. What does it mean to "walk in Christ Jesus"? (2:6-7)

b. *From where* might bad influences and false teachings arise? (2:8)

**9. Read Colossians 2:9-23 and footnotes. Share interesting footnotes with your group.**

- a. What does Paul say about the nature of Christ and God the Father here? (2:9-10)
- b. One problem in Colossae was that some Jewish Christians taught that those not circumcised could not be saved or be "real" Christians. What does Paul say?

**10. Paul is addressing issues with false teachers; those who insist on circumcision, those who still worship sun, moon and stars as gods, and those who call for dangerous levels of fasting and asceticism. All are all false teachings. Where does *real* truth come from?**