

The Book of Colossians

Lesson 1

Study Notes

Introduction and Background

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Text: Colossians 1:1-8.

Paul's letter to the Colossians was written about AD _____ to the church at Colosse, a city in Asia Minor, situated on the Aegean Sea. It is generally supposed that Epaphras founded and afterwards ministered to this church and that Paul never visited the city, as Colossians 1:4,9 and 2:1 seem to indicate. Paul's object in writing was to send _____ and _____ in connection with serious heresy which had come into the Colossian church, a false doctrine which was a mixture of speculative oriental mysticism and Judaistic legalism.

This Epistle derives its name from those at Colosse, to whom Paul was writing.

Epaphras was the founding pastor. Under his ministry we learn that this insignificant city, due to faithful _____ there, had made a name for itself in the faith.

The Location of Colosse.

The city of Colosse was situated in the valley of the Lycus river (modern _____). The city was approximately 10-12 miles north of the two more prominent cities of Hierapolis and Laodicea. Colosse stood on a very important trade route from Ephesus to the River Euphrates. This great highway of commerce guaranteed the city's wealth and continual growth in ancient times.

Asia Minor has a documented history of _____. The majority of the seismic activity is in the Lycus Valley. Being located in this "valley of earthquakes" allowed Colosse to enjoy certain benefits.

1. The seismic activity of the area produced many _____ pools. The medicinal value of the waters brought many travelers for rest and relaxation.
2. The calcareous deposits from the hot springs created beautiful natural _____. This in turn drew thousands of tourists to see the magnificent beauty.
3. The earthquakes caused the river to consistently flood the valley floor creating extremely fertile plains. The fertile ground allowed for excellent pastures for raising livestock. The Colossians took advantage of this fact by raising enormous herds of sheep. Colosse was famous for its production of wool. In fact, the name Colosse is relative to a special type of wool known as *colossinus*.

Note: Some _____ years before the birth of Christ, the city was described as a "small town". The political power of Laodicea made the closer Hierapolis a more desirable town than Colosse. The continual earthquakes of Colosse along with its further distance of travel caused many to turn to the south deserting the city. The Turks overtook the city and completely destroyed it in the 12th century.

The Occasion of Writing.

The visit and report of Epaphras of the church in Colosse to Paul in Rome, and Paul's desire to write Philemon at Colosse regarding Onesimus, induced him to write this Epistle and send both to their destination through Tychicus.

Colossians 4:7-9

From Epaphras Paul learned of a need to combat _____ and wrong practices concerning circumcision, mysticism, salvation through asceticism, (severe self-discipline and avoidance of all forms of indulgence) worship of angels, all of which errors had the tendency to deny the supremacy and the universal mediatorship of Christ, hence this letter to those at Colosse “that in all things He might have the preeminence” (1:18).

Paul writes to warn of two main forms of error, Judaism and mysticism, and to exhort them to true godly living, dead to the rudiments of the world but alive with Christ.

It is believed that the church was founded in the home of Philemon who lived a Colosse.

At the time of the writing, it is believed that Archippus was the _____ of the church.

Colossians 4:17 And say to Archippus, Take heed to the ministry which thou hast received in the Lord, that thou fulfil it.

Some believe Archippus was the _____ of Philemon. (Philemon 1:2)

Food for thought:

This book bears a similar relationship to Ephesians, the same as does Romans to Galatians. Ephesians emphasizes the *oneness* of Christ; Colossians the *completeness* of Christ. The theme of Ephesians is the church; the theme of Colossians Christ the Head of the Church.

Chapter One emphasizes doctrine, Christ’s deity, sufficiency, and His preeminence.

Chapter Two emphasizes polemics, (the art or practice of disputation or controversy) refuting argument about Christ’s fullness and warning against being led astray by false teachers.

Chapter Three devotes itself to spiritual things and solid Christian living.

Chapter Four emphasizes the need to pray for others, to walk circumspectly, and be ready to give an answer for their _____.

Names and References to Christ.

1. Jesus Christ: 1:1
2. Christ: 1:2
3. Lord Jesus Christ: 1:2
4. Christ Jesus: 1:4
5. Lord: 1:10 2:6
6. God’s dear Son: 1:13
7. Our Redeemer: 1:14
8. Image of God: 1:15
9. Firstborn of every creature: 1:15
10. Creator: 1:16

11. Head of the Church: 1:18 2:19
12. The Beginning: 1:18
13. Firstborn from the dead: 1:18
14. The Preeminent One: 1:18
15. The Fullness of God: 1:19 2:9
16. Peacemaker: 1:20
17. The Reconciler: 1:21,22
18. Hope of glory: 1:27
19. The Treasure of wisdom and knowledge: 2:3
20. Head of principalities and powers: 2:15
21. Forgiver of sins: 2:13 3:13
22. The End of the Law: 2:14
23. The Spoiler of principalities and powers: 2:15
24. Our life: 3:4
25. Our All: 3:11
26. Lord Jesus: 3:17
27. Our Rewarder: 3:24a
28. Lord Christ: 3:2b
29. Master: 4:1

I. Paul's Presenting of His Letter to the Church at Colosse.

A. The letter is directed to the saints. (vs. 1-3)

1. *He personally communicated to them. (vs.1-2)*
2. *He prayed constantly for them. (vs. 3)*

B. The letter is descriptive of their state. (vs. 4-5)

1. *Faith in the Savior described them. (vs. 4)*
2. *Love for the saints described them. (vs. 4)*
3. *Hope of the saved described them. (vs. 5)*

C. The Letter is delighting in their salvation. (vs. 6-8)

1. *Paul delights in the reality of their salvation. (vs. 6a)*
2. *Paul delights in the results of their salvation. (vs. 6b-8)*

II. Paul's Description of Himself.

Colossians 1:1 Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God, and Timotheus our brother,

A. An apostle of Jesus Christ.

The word means “a sent one” An apostle was one who had seen the Lord and was witness to His resurrection.

B. An apostle by the will of God.

Paul’s call and authority were derived from God himself.

Conclusion: When we finished this study of the Book of Colossians, we will have learned of the fullness we have with the indwelling Christ and that He is to be preeminent in all matters.