

“Grace-Filled Greetings”

Colossians 1:1-2

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Big Idea: *Background & Overview of Colossians*

Fun Facts About Colossians:

1. Colossians was written around 60-62 A.D.
2. Colossians is known as a Pauline Epistle (Paul wrote 13 of the New Testament Epistles)
3. Colossians is known as a Prison Epistle (along with Ephesians, Philippians, Philemon)
4. Paul did not establish the church of Colossians. It was most likely started by Epaphras

Information

- *Paul*
 - Born Saul of Tarsus
 - Well-educated Jew, who was persecuting believers after the crucifixion.
 - Acts 9:3-19 | the conversion of Paul
- *An Apostle*
 - Apostles were men specifically chosen by Christ and given authority to establish and lead the early church. Each apostle had seen the risen Christ firsthand. There are no apostles today.
 - Jesus created the “apostleship.” [Mark 3:13-14]
 - Paul starts many letters with credentials as an “apostle” [2 Corinthians 1:1; Galatians 1:1]
- *Of Christ Jesus by the Will of God*
 - Christ → the Greek word for the Hebrew word “Messiah,” meaning “anointed one.” [John 1:41]
 - Jesus → Personal name which means “Savior” [Luke 1:30-33; Matthew 1:20-21]
 - Paul did not take this authority for himself. Rather it was given to him by Christ. [Galatians 1:14-16]
- *And Timothy our brother*
 - Paul meeting Timothy [Acts 16:1-3]
 - Timothy would partner with Paul for 15-20 years
 - 1 Timothy 1:1-2... “Timothy, my true child in the faith.”
 - 2 Timothy 2:1-2... “Timothy, my beloved child.”
 - Character of Timothy [Philippians 2:19-24]
 - Timothy traveled with Paul on mission trips [Acts 16:1-20:4], And on at least one occasion he served as Paul’s spokesman [1 Cor. 4:15-17]. He also preached alongside Paul [2 Cor. 1:19].
- *To the saints and faithful brothers in Christ*
 - Paul describes the Colossian believers as “saints,” he’s not saying that they had achieved a super-high level of spiritual maturity. All who belong to Christ by faith, no matter their level of growth, are saints. They are “set apart” ones, chosen by God for Salvation.
 - “Faithful” is an identifier of the type of Christians the Colossians are.
 - Their holiness and faithfulness to Christ are the direct results of their being “in Christ.” (a central theme of Colossians).
- *At Colossae*
 - Ancient city was located in Asia Minor, which is now modern-day Turkey.
 - Situated on the bank of the Lycus River; 12 miles above Laodicea and 100 miles east of Ephesus.
 - The city of Colosse was once a major mill town, known for its wool-working and cloth dying industries. Wool making and dyeing contributed to the economic health of the region. Colosse in particular, was famous for its production of fine, dark red wool called “colossinum.”
 - Devastating earthquakes hit the city in 17 A.D. and 60 A.D.



- *Grace to you and peace from God our Father*
 - Common greeting of Paul's letters [Romans 1:7; 1 Corinthians 1:3]
 - It combined the common Greek greeting of "grace" with the common Hebrew greeting of "peace" or "shalom." The grace and peace which Paul extends comes from "God our Father." He is the source of all true grace and peace.
 - Grace → God's unmerited favor
 - Peace → Peace is not just the absence of conflict but echoes the OT concept of shalom, where a person's life with God and with everything else is in ordered harmony, both physically and spiritually, and "all is well."

Inspiration

- *Why did Paul write the letter to the Colossian church?*
 - Paul writes to correct false teachings and help the Colossians stand firm "in Christ."
 - The Colossians church was a very diverse city with people from lots of different backgrounds with all sorts of teachings and philosophies that began to infiltrate the church. Paul confronts the false teachings and affirms the sufficiency and supremacy of Christ.
- False Teaching "isms"
 - Syncretism (buffet of beliefs)
 - combining ideas from other philosophies and religions (such as paganism, strains of Judaism, and Greek thought) with Christian truth.
 - The resulting heresy later became known as "Gnosticism" emphasizing special knowledge (gnosis in Greek) and denying Christ as God and savior.
 - Dualism (creation; incarnation; asceticism)
 - The teaching that spiritual things are good while material or physical things are evil.
 - Legalism (circumcision; holy days; Jewish ceremonies)
 - The teaching that we approach God on the basis of our works rather than by faith in Christ.
 - Mysticism (visions; worship of angels; secret wisdom)
 - The teaching of attaining special and/or secret wisdom through mystical experiences.

Declaration

- *What is the major theme/point of the letter of Colossians?*
 - **JESUS IS EVERYTHING!!!**

Reflection Questions:

1. Do you have the right view of who Jesus is that aligns with what scriptures say about him?
2. What are false "ism" teachings today that seek to diminish the divinity, person, or work of Christ?
3. What is central to your life? What does everything else revolve around? Is Jesus your everything?
4. Have you understood and experienced the grace and peace of God that comes from being "in Christ?"