

Colossians Intro

Colossians is the 51st book in the English versions of the Bible. It has 4 chapters, 95 verses, 1979 words, and was written by the Apostle Paul from his Roman prison incarceration.

Paul addresses this letter to three different churches:

1. Obviously to the believers at Colosse.
2. 4:15 - Paul says to share this letter with the church at Laodicea
3. 4:15 - He also mentions a "home church" that meets in the house of Nymphas, (born of sacrifice)
4. We could also add another Church to this list: CCSV.

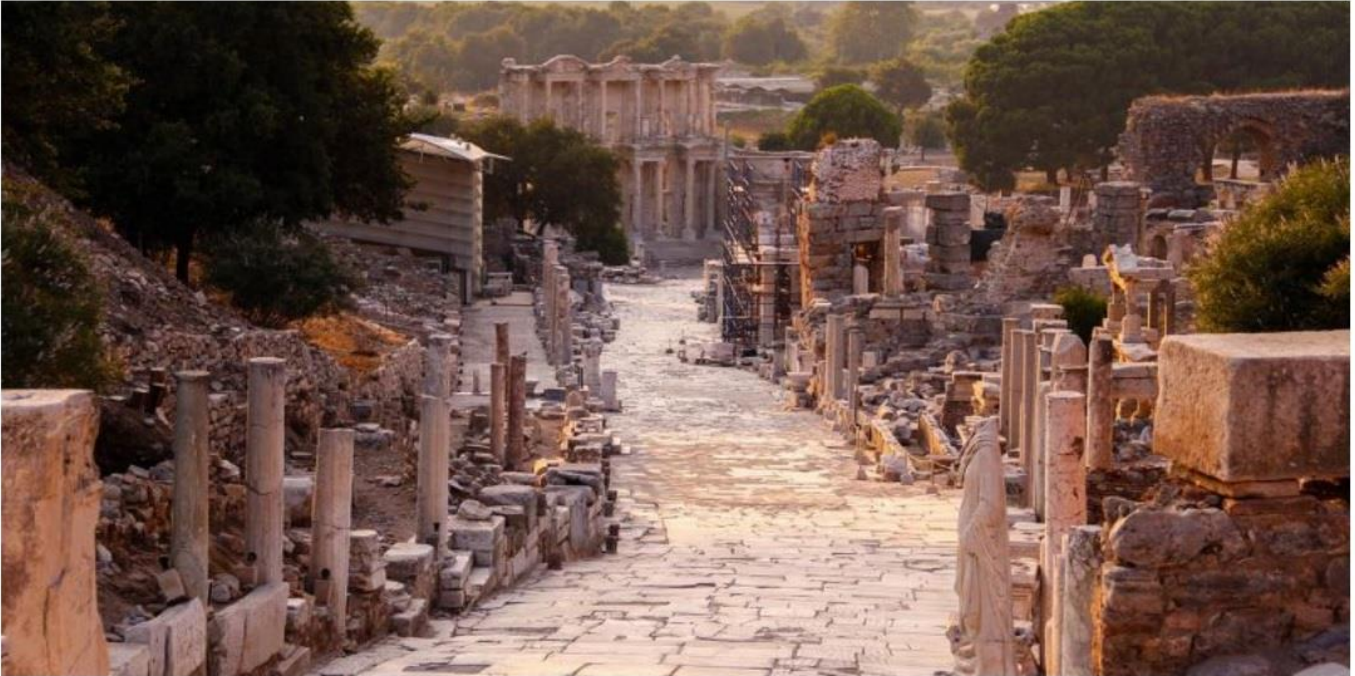
For extra credit – Who knows the OTHER book that Paul wrote to the Colossians? 

About Colossae - Like Detroit & Seattle, Colossae was once a vibrant commercial city that had fallen into tough times. It had decreased in size and influence as the surrounding cities were growing. Then, in 61 A.D. a catastrophic earthquake destroyed most of the city. It was rebuilt somewhat, but never like it was at its zenith. Today, there are ruins to visit, but no buildings to visit.

Why is this significant? Because the Colossians were going through what many Americans are going through, what MANY of you are going through as well. What once were good times had turned to tough times. In the ensuing aftermath the Colossians had looked to find something they could turn to for comfort - many things in fact. Paul writes to warn them that there is but one source, one place, one person to go to for help - and His name is Jesus!

That is the message of Colossians: That Jesus is our sole place of solace, of peace, of help.

WOULD YOU CARE TO TAKE A SHORT TOUR OF COLOSSAE?





The Apostle has a "tell" if you will, a hint as to what is coming in his letters. His clue is in his introduction of himself. When there is trouble to deal with, Paul starts the letter with his credentials: Paul, an Apostle, called by God - IE, given the authority to say what I am about to...

Let's compare Ephesians, Philippians and now Colossians - shall we?

- **Eph 1:1** Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God,
- **Philippians 1:1** Paul and Timothy, bondservants of Jesus Christ
- **Col 1:1** Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God,
- **1 Cor 1:1** Paul, called to be an apostle of Jesus Christ through the will of God,
- **1 Thessalonians 1:1** Paul, Silvanus, and Timothy, To the church of the Thessalonians in God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ: Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

The book of Colossians is an attempt by the Apostle Paul of anchoring the believers there to the Christ of the cross. He knew that if they let go of the Jesus of the cross, all would be lost... Its like the tragic story of Michael Plant:

In 1991, a famous American Yachtsman named Michael Plant set sail for a trans Atlantic crossing to France. His state-of-the-art vessel named the Coyote was outfitted with the best electronic gear money could buy. The Coyote was built of the latest and greatest material. It was designed to be battened down to endure the worst of weather conditions. It had an entire emergency beacon system that would activate by itself if Michael became unable to do so himself.

Attached to the bottom of the Coyote was an eight thousand pound scientifically designed keel that made capsizing virtually impossible.

Eleven days into the journey Michael failed to check in on his avant-garde satellite communication system. After several more days of silence a search was begun for the Coyote. It was found empty and upside down, floating in the Atlantic.

Apparently the bolts holding the Keel onto the bottom of the Coyote were defective. Even a mid-sized wave would have been capable of capsizing the yacht once it had let go of its keel.

Paul's warning to the Colossians was this: DON'T LET GO OF JESUS, or ALL is lost!

Jesus is our keel beloved - it is He and He alone holding us up in the storm. Even a mid-sized trial is capable of upturning us if we ever replace Jesus with religion, discipline, ritual, Eastern / new age philosophy or loyalty to a famous and false teacher!

You don't need Jesus AND a psychologist to reach heaven. You don't need Jesus AND a denomination; you don't need Jesus **AND ANYTHING** else!

You need Jesus - and THAT is the message of Colossians!

Colossians 1:1 Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God, and Timothy our brother, *(Probably transcribing this letter for Paul)*

- Even while in prison, Timothy was Paul's faithful assistant and friend.

2 To the saints and faithful brethren in Christ who are in Colossae: Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

- "Grace and Peace..." Why grace before peace?
- This was Paul's normal opening salutation. For extra credit, which of his letters DID NOT open this way?

THANKSGIVING AND PRAYER

3 We give thanks to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, praying always for you, ***Ah, this is an important part of being a Pastor... It is one of my favorite jobs*** ***What was Paul praying for them? We will see in V9...***

4 since we heard of your **faith** in Christ Jesus and of your **love** for all the saints; 5 because of the **hope** which is laid up for you in heaven, of which you heard before in the word of the truth of the gospel,

- Faith... Love... & Hope... Why do these three words sound familiar? **1 COR 13:13**
- Paul calls these three blessings the truth of the gospel! Faith, Love & Hope...

6 which has come to you, as *it has also in all the world*, ***(Wow, that is SOME claim!)***

- The Disciples had reached the world in a little over 30 years since Jesus had sent them out! They were filled with the Spirit; and they were willing to put it all on the line for their Savior. BTW, not one of them ever recanted their story.

THE GOSPEL...

6b ...is bringing forth fruit, as *it is* also among you since **the day** you heard and knew the grace of God in truth; ***(Do YOU remember the day you accepted the gospel? 1963 for me)***

7 as you also learned from Epaphras, ***(probably Epaphroditus)*** our dear fellow

servant, who is a **faithful minister** of Christ on your behalf, 8 who also declared to us your love in the Spirit.

- We know that Epaphras was Paul's mail carrier, but he might have actually started this church in Colossae too.
- Paul was SO thankful for his ministry partners AND SO AM I! CCSV is blessed with faithful people doing their part of the ministry here. THANK YOU!

9 For this reason we also, since the day we heard it, **(About their love)** do not cease to pray for you, and to ask that you may be filled with the knowledge of **His will** in all wisdom and spiritual understanding;

- I love this prayer! I pray this a lot for you all too. My prayer is:" Lord, give them the desire of their heart!" IE, put what YOU want in their heart.

UNDERSTANDING...

10 ...that you may **walk worthy** of the Lord, **fully pleasing Him**, being fruitful in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God;

- **Revelation 4:11** – KJV - Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honor and power: for thou hast created all things, and for thy pleasure they are and were created.
 - **Why did God create you? WHY ARE YOU HERE?** You bring Him pleasure. He LIKES you! **Remembering this will help you be...**

11 **strengthened** with all might, according to His glorious power, for all patience and longsuffering with joy;

- Patience, longsuffering, and joy ARE the results of being filled with the Spirit!
- People with the Holy Spirit HAVE these.
 - What about when I don't have them?
 - You have to do what you do when you get to your car without your keys. What do you do? Sit by your car and wish you had keys? NO. You go back inside and find them! Go back and find your joy!
 - **When you do you will....**

WITH JOY...

12 giving thanks to the Father who has qualified us to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in the light.

13 **He has delivered us** from the power of darkness and conveyed us into the kingdom of the Son of His love, 14 in whom we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins. **WITHOUT THAT WE HAVE NOTHING!**

Conclusion: The support team and friends of Sailor Michael Plant didn't begin worrying or looking for him for four days - You know why?

Because he was such an experienced sailor they thought he could handle any situation that came his way...

But, without his keel... He didn't stand a chance.

Friend, without Jesus, neither do you.

Believers, make Jesus your go-to source for help, otherwise you will be the next Michael Plant to capsize.