

The Supremacy of Christ: Colossians

One of four shorter epistles written by Paul while he was in prison, the others being Philippians, Ephesians, and Philemon. The Epistle to the Colossians focuses on the person and work of Christ. It reaches heights of expression that rival anything said of Christ elsewhere in Scripture and shares many similarities with Ephesians. Colossians probably was written as a companion to the brief letter to Philemon (compare Col 4:7-13 and Philem 12,24).

Structure of the Epistle

Colossians is neatly divided into doctrinal chapters 1-2 and practical chapters 3-4. Following the opening address, Paul expresses his thankfulness for the Colossians (1:3-8), then develops a majestic hymn to Christ, emphasizing His role in both creation and redemption (1:9-23). In light of the surpassing worth of Christ and what He has accomplished, Paul also appeals to the Colossians to take root in Christ rather than in confusing speculations (2:6-23).

In the second section, Paul urges the Colossians to mold their behavior to fit their beliefs. Since believers share in Christ's resurrection (3:1-4), Paul also encourages them to continue living to please God. He urges them to "put to death" various vices and to "put on" the character of Christ (3:5-17). True Christianity also works itself out in social relationships between wives and husbands (3:18-19), children and parents (3:20-21), and slaves and masters (3:22-4:1). Paul concludes with a note on witnessing to unbelievers (4:2-6) and his customary greetings (3:7-18).

Authorship and Date

Written by Paul from a Roman prison cell in the late 50-early 60s AD.

Historical Setting

False teaching had taken root in Colosse, it combined Jewish observances (2:16) and pagan speculation (2:8); it is possible that this resulted in an early form of GNOSTICISM. This teaching pretended to add to or improve upon the gospel.

Theological Contribution

Paul unmasks the false teaching of Gnosticism as "empty" (2:8), then focuses on Christ as sufficient for every need (1:15-23).



THE
SUPREMACY & SUFFICIENCY
OF CHRIST



A Study of Colossians

Pastor's Wednesday Bible Study Schedule

September 3

Congregational Dinner

September 10

Colossians—Introduction

September 17

Colossians—Rev. Charlie Buchanan

September 24

Colossians—Rev. Dr. Claire Ripley

October 1

Colossians—RG

October 8

Colossians—RG

October 15

Colossians—RG

October 22

Colossians—RG

October 29

Colossians—RG

November 5

Colossians—RG

November 12

Colossians—RG

November 19

Colossians—RG