

Introduction:

Today we continue our study of the Prison Epistles, looking again at *Introducing Colossians*.

Things we will look at in this lesson: The Relationship of Colossians to Ephesians, The Occasion, The Purpose and Theme, The Outline of Colossians.

The Relationship of Colossians to Ephesians:

01. What is one issue that has troubled Bible scholars over the years?

The Occasion:

02. What prompted Paul's letter to the congregation at Colossae?

03. What were influential teachers within the church attempting to deceive the believers with?

04. What had some Christians not experienced that led them to feel unworthy of God's best?

05. What did the false teaching appear to have come through?

06. What kind of belief system does one get from Syncretism?

07. What did Paul urge believers to recognize?

08. What did the ritualistic error that Paul addressed teach Christians to follow?

09. What were the teachers within the Colossian community trying to induce by stressing self-denial?

10. What did the false teachers emphasize submission to?

11. What did the supposed super-saints do to other Christians?

12. Why did Paul consider the teachings dangerous?

13. What did the ideas and principles that characterized the Colossian error have the appearance of?

14. Why was the Christology of the Colossian church so dangerous?

The Purpose and Theme:

15. What does Paul proclaim to the Colossians in light of the false teaching?

Article 1) The Reason for Paul's Writing: Colossians 1:2...

Paul wrote to the Colossians because false teachers were coming in among the believers in the church there and proclaiming that devotion to Jesus Christ and loyalty to the teachings of Christ's apostles were not enough for a true Christian's faith and spiritual salvation. This false teaching mixed human "philosophy" and "tradition" with the gospel (Colossians 2:8)—the true message of Christ—and called for the worship of angels as mediators between God and humans (Colossians 2:18). These imposters (i.e., pretenders who presented themselves as true Christians) also demanded a strict obedience to certain Jewish religious requirements (Colossians 2:16, 21–23). They justified their misguided rules by claiming to have received special revelation through visions (Colossians 2:18).

(1) The same basic philosophy behind these errors appears today in the teaching that Jesus Christ and the original message of the NT are not completely adequate to meet our spiritual needs (2 Peter 1:3).

(2) Paul speaks out boldly against this heresy (i.e., false teaching that contradicts the true and proven basis of faith as revealed in the Bible). He does so by showing that Christ is not only our personal Savior (i.e., the One who forgives sins and rescues us from spiritual death), but also the head of the church and Lord (i.e., the supreme authority) of the universe and all creation. For this reason, Jesus Christ (and his power in our lives)—not human efforts, ideas or wisdom—rescues us from sin's power, puts us in a right relationship with God and saves us eternally. We do not need any other mediator—human or spiritual—to go between us and God. We may approach him directly.

(3) Being a believer means showing true faith in Christ and his message by actively yielding the guidance and keeping of our lives to him, loving him, obeying him and living by his purpose. We must never add anything to the gospel—the "good news" and true message of Christ—nor support any other experience, teaching or philosophy that is offered in its place.

The Outline of Colossians:

- I. Introduction
 - A. Greeting (1:1–2)
 - B. Thanksgiving (1:3–8)
 - C. Prayer for the Colossian Believers (1:9–14)
- II. Powerful Doctrine: Our Supreme Savior (1:15 to 2:23)
 - A. The Supremacy of Christ (1:15–23)
 - B. Paul's Work for the Church (1:24 to 2:7)
 - C. Warnings Against False Teachers (2:8–23)
- III. Practical Teaching: Guidelines for Holy Living (3:1 to 4:6)
 - A. The Old Self and the New Self (3:1–17)
 - B. Rules for the Family of God (3:18 to 4:1)
 - C. More Teaching (4:2–6)
- IV. Conclusion (4:7–18)