

# Survey of Colossians

---

David Rountree

## Introduction

1. Paul is the writer of this letter (1:1-2; 4:18). He is writing to a church that had never seen his face (2:1). Nevertheless, Paul was vitally concerned for those at Colossae and kept informed regarding them (1:4, 9).
2. The founder of this church was probably Epaphras (1:7; 4:12-13). Colossians was one of a group of three churches: Colossae, Laodicea, and Hierapolis.
3. The town of Colossae was a small Gentile town about 100 miles east of Ephesus in modern Turkey. Its near neighbors were Laodicea and Hierapolis (Col.4:16; Rev.3:14ff).
4. The main theme of the book is the supreme lordship of Christ written to counteract the heresies that were being propagated. The Colossian heresy emphasized human philosophy and sociology apart from divine revelation (2:8); Jewish and other traditions promoted legalistically including the worship of angels and the need to keep unsullied from the physical universe creating a superiority of life (1:20,23 28; 3:11). Thus, Paul stresses the preeminence of Christ (1:15-19).

## Outline

**Introduction: Greeting, Thanksgiving, Prayer (1:1-12)**

**The Preeminence of Christ in Christian Belief (1:13—2:23)**

**The preeminence of Christ in Christian Behavior (3:1—4:6)**

**Conclusion: Farewells and Benediction (4:7-18)**

## Main Points and Application

1. It is taught that the good news of Christ must travel to all the world before Christ can return to earth. Just how far had the gospel traveled by the time Paul wrote the Colossian letter (1:6, 23, 26; Rom. 1:8; 16:25-26)?
2. Paul's Prayer (1:9-12). What are the basic requests of God found in this prayer? How does this prayer define our genuine needs? If these prayer requests are our needs then what are they?

From this look at Paul's prayer, in our own words, what requests should we be making for our children and fellow believers?

3. Christ's Preeminence (1:15-23). Describe Christ's position and authority. How should this be seen in our daily lives? In our relationship to God (v.20)? In our relationship to sin (v.21-22)? What does it mean to "continue in the faith firmly established and steadfast, and not moved away from the hope of the gospel that you have heard" (v.23)?

4. Perhaps we have recorded here Paul's life verse—personal mission statement (1:28-29). How does this describe our mission in life? In what ways is it the same and in what ways would it be different?
5. The philosophy/education problem the church must address (2:8). How are we kidnapped and robbed of truth in our day?
6. Baptism replaces circumcision—the new circumcision in the New Covenant (**2:11-12**).
7. The judgment problem (2:16-23). Here is where we see the Jewish legalism the Colossians had to address. Why is it wrong to condemn people for what they eat, drink, celebrate, wear, or sing? What are some of those things mentioned in 2:20-23 that have no value against fleshly indulgence that parents often tell their children otherwise?
8. The solution to most doctrinal problems in the church (3:16-17). What are the practical applications of this today? Can we be a Christian and not sing to/for other Christians? Why or why not?
9. Directions for conduct when in the presence of non-Christians (4:5-6). What are the practical applications of this today?
10. What do we learn of our status as the church in the book of Colossians?
  - Knit together and wealthy in Christ (2:2)
  - Made complete in Christ (2:10)
  - Circumcised/baptized in Christ (2:11)
  - Died with Christ (2:20)
  - Resurrected with Christ (2:12; 3:1)
  - Forgiven and made alive with Christ (2:13-14)
11. What do we know about Christ from this letter to the Colossians?
  - The Lord of creation (1:16-17)
  - The author of reconciliation (1:20-22; 2:13-15)
  - The foundation of hope (1:5,23,27)
  - The source of power for new life (1:11, 29)
  - The redeemer and reconciler (1:14, 20-22; 2:11-15)
  - The embodiment of full deity (1:15, 19; 2:9)
  - The creator and sustainer of all things (1:16-17)
  - The fountain of all wisdom and knowledge (2:3)
  - The head of the church (1:18)
  - The head over all rule and authority (2:10)
  - The resurrected God-man (1:18; 3:1)
  - The all-sufficient savior (1:28; 2:3,10; 3:1-4)