

# Outline of Colossians

This outline of Colossians is intended to assist you as you investigate the pages of God's holy Word — His letter to you.

Colossae was a city that came to prominence under the Greeks and was at one time the major city in southwest Asia, but by Paul's time it had declined in importance, being outstripped in its own region by Laodicea 12 miles to the northwest and Hierapolis which was 13 miles to the north. It was destroyed by an earthquake somewhere around 61 A.D. which may have ended its occupation. Later, the city was rebuilt, being protected by a fortress some three miles southeast, but gradually the city moved around the fortress leaving nothing there today but a tell.

Colossae is located three miles from Mt. Cadmus, a mountain (8,435 feet) at the head of a gorge about 100 miles east of Ephesus. Apparently Paul never visited the city (1:4, 7-8; 2:1; 4:12). The gospel most likely was taken to the city by Epaphras while Paul was in Ephesus. Philemon was apparently a resident of the city, as his slave, Onesimus, (Philemon 10) was a Colossian (4:9).

This book may be the most Christological of any of Paul's epistles, if Hebrews is not taken as his. The book centers on the person of Christ, with direct references to him 81 times in 95 verses. Paul argues for the deity of Christ in the book, using some strong words focusing all into Christ.

- 1:14 In Him we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins
- 1:15 He is the image of the invisible God
- 1:15 He is the firstborn over all creation.
- 1:16 He is the creator of all things.
- 1:16 All things were created for Him.
- 1:17 He is before all things.
- 1:17 All things are held together by Him.
- 1:18 He is the head of the church.
- 1:18 He is the firstborn from the dead
- 1:18 He has firstplace in everything
- 1:19 All fullness dwells in Him
- 1:20 He reconciled all things by Himself
- 1:27 His indwelling in us is our hope of glory
- 1:29 He works in us mightily
- 2:3 In Him are hidden all of the treasures of wisdom & knowledge
- 2:9 In Him all of the fullness of the Godhead dwells bodily
- 2:10 He is the head of all principality and power
- 2:11 In Him we were circumcised
- 2:12 With Him we were buried in baptism
- 2:12 With Him we were raised
- 2:13 With Him we have been made alive
- 2:14 He took away the law on the cross

- 2:15 He disarmed principalities and powers
- 2:17 He is the substance
- 3:1 He sits at the right hand of God
- 3:4 He is our life
- 3:11 He is all and in all
- 3:24 He rewards us for our work efforts

The book appears to have been written to counteract some heretical teaching, although the exact form of it is hard to pinpoint. It appears to have been philosophical in basis (2:8) focusing on the attainment of wisdom (2:3-4) and the observance of certain days (2:16), as well as a worship of angels (2:18) and ascetism (2:20-23). There are 34 Greek words found in this book and nowhere else in the New Testament.

**Date:** 61 A.D.

**Structure:**

This book easily divides into two main divisions: The Person and Work of Christ (1:1-2:5) and the Exhortations for Living (2:6-4:18). In this, it follows the pattern of Romans and Ephesians. It stresses the sufficiency of Christ for us.

**I. Introduction 1:1-2**

**II. Paul's thanks for the Colossians. 1:3-8** (commended for faith and love)

**III. Paul's prayer for the Colossians. 1:9-23** (161 word sentence (vs. 9-17))

A. The request for worthiness 9-11

We can only walk worthy when we are filled with the knowledge of His will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding; then we will please Him and be fruitful.

B. The thanks to God 12-23

1. What He has done for us. 12-14

- a. Qualified us for the inheritance
- b. Delivered us from the power of darkness
- c. Transferred us into the kingdom of His Son
- d. We have redemption (forgiveness)

2. Christ 15-23

- a. He is the image of God
- b. He has the highest station
- c. He is the creator
- d. He is the sustainer
- e. He is the head of the church
- f. He has all of the fullness
- g. He is the reconciler
- h. He is the perfecter (if we continue in the faith)

#### **IV. Paul's rejoicing for the Colossians 1:24-2:5**

- A. In sufferings
- B. In ministering
  - 1. It was given to me
  - 2. To reveal to the saints Christ in you, the hope of glory)
  - 3. Preach, warn, teach to perfect
  - 4. I work to this end.
    - a. I endure great conflict
      - i. Be encouraged
      - ii. Be knit together in love
      - iii. Know God & be smart
    - b. I am writing for this purpose
      - i. Don't be deceived
      - ii. Be steadfast in Christ

#### **V. Paul's Exhortations for the Colossians 2:6-4:6**

- A. Walk by faith in Christ 6-7
- B. Abound with thanksgiving 7
- C. Watch out for those who will cheat you 8-15
  - 1. The cheaters 8
    - a. Philosophy
    - b. Deceit
    - c. Traditions of men
    - d. Elements of the world
  - 2. Christ 9-15
    - a. All the fullness of the Godhead dwells
    - b. We are complete in Him.
    - c. We are circumcised in Him
    - d. We are buried with Him
    - e. We are raised with Him
    - f. We are made alive with Him
    - g. We are forgiven
    - h. We are free from the law in Him
    - i. We are free from our enemies in Him
- D. Don't live by external things 16-23
  - 1. What you eat
  - 2. What days you observe

3. Delighting in humility
  4. Worshipping angels
  5. What you touch
  6. What you handle
  7. Your ascetism (these have no value)
- E. Seek heavenly matters 3:1-4
- F. Put to death earthly matters 3:5-11
1. Fornication
  2. Uncleanness
  3. Passion (passive, ungoverned aspect of evil desire)
  4. Evil desire (active desire, more comprehensive)
  5. Coveteousness
  6. Anger (a more settled condition of the mind)
  7. Wrath (a more agitated condition, an outburst)
  8. Wickedness
  9. Slander
  10. Abusive language
  11. Lies
- G. Clothe yourselves 3:12-17
1. Tender mercies
  2. Kindness
  3. Humbleness of mind
  4. Meekness
  5. Longsuffering
  6. Bear with one another
  7. Forgive one another
  8. Love
  9. Peace
  10. The Word of Christ
  11. Singing
  12. Doing all for the Lord Jesus
  13. Giving thanks
- H. Relational matters 3:18-4:1
1. Wives, submit
  2. Husbands, love
  3. Children, obey
  4. Fathers, don't provoke
  5. Servants, obey
  6. Masters, be fair

I. Continue in prayer 4:2-4

1. Earnestly
2. With thanksgiving
3. For us to speak

J. Walk in wisdom 4:5-6

1. Using the time
2. Answering properly

## **VI. Paul's Friends for the Colossians 4:7-15**

- A. Tychicus
- B. Onesimus
- C. Aristarchus
- D. Mark
- E. Jesus (Justus)
- F. Epaphras
- G. Luke
- H. Demas

## **VII. Closing 4:16-18**

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**Key Idea:** We are complete in Christ

**Key Passage:** 2:9-10

**Key Lesson:** Set your mind on Christ