

# Colossians

Colossians is one of the most Christ-centered books of the Bible. In it, Paul stresses the supremacy of the person of Christ and the completeness of the Salvation He provides in order to combat a growing heresy within the church at Colossae. Christ, the Lord of creation and head of His church, is completely sufficient for every spiritual and practical need. The believer's union with Christ in His death, resurrection, and exaltation is the foundation upon which our earthly life must be built. Relationships inside and outside the home can demonstrate daily the transformation that faith in Jesus Christ makes in the daily life of the believer.

## INTRODUCTION

Like Ephesians, the little book of Colossians divides neatly in half with the first portion doctrinal (chapters 1 & 2) and the second practical (chapters 3 & 4). Paul's purpose is to show that Christ is preeminent. He is first and foremost in everything and the Christian's life should reflect that priority. Because followers of Jesus are rooted in Him, alive in Him, hidden in Him, and complete in Him, it is utterly inconsistent for them to live life without Him.

## AUTHOR

The external testimony to Pauline authorship of Colossians is ancient and consistent, and the internal evidence is also strong. It not only claims to be written by Paul (Colossians 1:1, 23; 4:18), but the personal details and close parallels with Ephesians and Philemon make the case even stronger.

This epistle became known as *Pros Kolossaeis*, "To the Colossians," because of chapter 1, verse 2. Paul also wanted this letter to be read in the neighboring church of Laodicea (Colossians 4:16).

## DATE & SETTING

Colossae was a minor city about 100 miles east of Ephesus in the region of the seven Asian churches of Revelation, chapters 1 - 3. Colossae was once a populous center of commerce, famous for its glossy black wool. By the time of Paul, it had been eclipsed by its neighboring cities, Laodicea and Hierapolis, and was on the decline. It is evident that Paul never visited the church at Colossae, which was founded by Epaphras (Colossians 1:4-8; 2:1).

Colossians, Philemon, and Ephesians were evidently written about the same time and under the same circumstances. The bulk of the evidence indicates that Paul wrote all four "Prison Epistles" during his first Roman imprisonment, around A. D. 60 or 61 and sent it with Tychicus and the converted slave Onesimus to Colossae (Colossians 4:7-9; see Ephesians 6:21 and Philemon 1:10-12).