

Background: Though there is no record of Paul ever visiting the city of Colosse, most scholars believe this church was heavily influenced by Paul's ministry in Ephesus (second missionary journey). Some have even gone so far as to speculate that Epaphrus (the carrier of the letter) was converted and mentored by Paul during his stay in Ephesus and was later sent by the Apostle to Colosse to plant a church. Colosse was originally a fortress city aimed at protecting Rome from Eastern intrusion. By the time Paul wrote his letter the city was in complete decline economic and moral. Colosse was completely devastated by an earthquake soon after Paul's letter arrived.

Main Point: Paul's letter to the church in Colosse was written in 62 AD while Paul was being held in a Roman prison making Colossians the third prison epistle. In his letter to the Ephesians, Paul describes Jesus as being the "head of the church." In Colossians, Paul develops this idea further by discussing the preeminence of Christ for two important reasons. First, because of the ethnic diversity within Roman society, Roman religious culture was the epitome of pluralism. Within the Gentile sects of Christianity it wasn't an uncommon practice for a new convert of Jesus to simply add Christianity to the other religions the person already adhered too. In the predominately Gentile city of Colosse, Paul makes it clear Jesus can be added to no other religious system.

Secondly, Paul emphasizes the preeminence of Jesus to head off two growing trends within the Colossian church. Paul stresses the "Christ-centricity" of Christianity to correct both the intellectual liberals and the traditional legalists. Paul's concerned the Christian message could be warped into either a dead series of rituals and routines by the traditionalist, or twisted into nothing more than a new intellectual philosophy. Christianity is about Jesus and Him alone.

COLOSSIANS OUTLINE:

1. CHRIST-CENTRICITY: EXPLAINED

COLOSSIANS 1:1-18
COLOSSIANS 1:19-23
COLOSSIANS 1:24-29

DOCTRINE OF PREEMINENCE
EFFECTS OF PREEMINENCE
RESULTS OF PREEMINENCE

2. CHRIST-CENTRICITY: DEFENDED

COLOSSIANS 2:1-10
COLOSSIANS 2:11-23

AGAINST INTELLECTUAL LIBERALISM
AGAINST TRADITIONAL LEGALISM

3. CHRIST-CENTRICITY: DEMONSTRATED

COLOSSIANS 3:1-11
COLOSSIANS 3:12-21

IN PERSONAL CHARACTER
IN HOW WE INTERACT WITH OTHERS
IN CHRISTIAN FELLOWSHIP
IN THE HOME
IN OUR WORK ETHIC
IN OUR CHRISTIAN WITNESS
IN OUR CHRISTIAN SERVICE

COLOSSIANS 3:33-4:1
COLOSSIANS 4:2-6
COLOSSIANS 4:7-18

Key Verse: "And He (Jesus) is the head of the body, the church, who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, that in all things He may have the pre-eminence." - Colossians 1:18



Day 1: Christ-Centricity: What is it....

Colossians 1:1-18 // THINKING POINTS: (1). What does it mean for Jesus to have "preeminence" in your life? (2). In what ways can we be guilty of adding our worship of Jesus to the pantheon of other things we already worship? (3). Is Christianity a "relationship with Jesus" or just another "religious system?" What is the difference?

Day 2: Christ-Centricity: Why is it important....

Colossians 1:19-28 // THINKING POINTS: (1). Why should Jesus be the most important thing in your life? What has He done to earn this place of priority? (2). Paul warns us against being "moved away from the hope of the gospel." What does he mean by this? (3). Is Jesus the most important person or thing in your life? If not, what should change?

Day 3: Christ-Centricity: Anti-Liberalism....

Colossians 2:1-10 // THINKING POINTS: (1). When Paul warns against being "cheated through philosophy and empty deceit" what is he telling us to be careful of? (2). How do we fall prey to Christianity being just a system of intellectual beliefs? (3) What is more important "knowing about Christ" or "knowing Christ?"

Day 4: Christ-Centricity: Anti-Traditionalism....

Colossians 2:11-23 // THINKING POINTS: (1). Why is "self-imposed religion... of no value?" (2). How do we fall prey to Christianity being just another tradition? What kind of "self-imposed" religious rituals do we seek to obey? (3). What is the difference between "following the commandments of Christ" or "following Christ?"

Day 5: Christ-Centricity: Personal Implications....

Colossians 3:1-17 // THINKING POINTS: (1). If Christ is the center of my universe - preeminent over everything else, what kind of implications should this have for my life? (2). Why does Paul first stress "who I am in Christ" before discussing "what I do for Christ?" (3). How can I practically "seek those things which are above?"

Day 6: Christ-Centricity: Tangible Applications....

Colossians 3:18-4:18 // THINKING POINT: (1). If Christ is the center of my universe - preeminent over everything else, what kind of implications should this have for the way I live my life? (2). How should a Christ-centric outlook effect the way I live at home, interact with others, my work ethic, and Christian service? (3). A preeminent Jesus should have radical effects on my life and the way I live. Does it?

DEVOTIONS

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