

## Colossians Chapter 1

This is a letter from Paul, assisted by Timothy to a church in a city called Colossae. At the time of writing Paul was in prison, shackled with chains, probably in Rome. He seemed to have plenty of visitors of which Timothy was a regular. This was a more upbeat Paul as compared to some of his later epistles like 2 Timothy so it's likely that this was written in one of his earlier stints in prison or right at the beginning of his final stint.

Colossae is in modern day Turkey but in Biblical times it was in a region called Phrygia, Asia Minor, it was close to Laodicea, both cities were renowned for wool production. The city suffered earthquakes with a particularly devastating quake in the 1st century. Eventually it was abandoned in the 8th century. Whilst there are a few big-name missionaries visiting the church in Colossae, there is no record of Paul ever visiting it either in Acts or this epistle and there is no record of who founded or started the church there but it seems that Epaphras was instrumental in those early days. Epaphras was later imprisoned with Paul, Philemon v 23.

Whilst there are plenty of warnings and advice, there are no direct criticisms of the church in Colossae from Paul so we can safely assume that it was pretty stable and well run and Paul makes mention of this in verse 3.

V 3 So Paul tells us that he prays for this church daily; 'asking that you may be filled with the knowledge of His will in all spiritual understanding, so as to walk in a manner worthy of the Lord.' Do we pray for our church daily and are we specific in our prayers or are they generic; please God, bless the Inghamite Church? Do we all really seek spiritual understanding?

V4-8 Never having been to this church, Paul seems to have a pretty good insight into how well it's run, in terms of-

Depth of faith.

Knowledge (hope) of their place in Heaven.

Love for the saints. The concept of faith, hope and love is a recurring theme of Paul's.

Increases in the form of bearing fruit.

Depth of love.

With Colossians 1:9-12 in mind, what specific areas of our church do you feel needs prayer? Bear in mind that in this passage, Paul was praying for this church's strengths but sometimes a mixture of acknowledgement and praise of the church's strengths as well areas needing Heavenly intervention make for a good balance.

In verse 12 that word inheritance is important there. To qualify for inheritance you have to be a son or daughter. It's not a reward for work undertaken or what you might have achieved.

Amplified - For He has rescued us and has drawn us to Himself from the dominion of darkness, and has transferred us to the kingdom of His beloved Son, in whom we have redemption [because of His sacrifice, resulting in] the forgiveness of our sins [and the cancellation of sins' penalty]. Colossians 1:13-14 AMP

V 13-14 an emphasis about the contrast of where you were and where you are now. If you had an actual true insight into the horrors we were rescued from against the riches and

wonder that awaits us, might that radically change your perspective on your faith? Luke 16:19-31. Note v 14, 'redeemed' a word adopted by pawn brokers. If you want your engagement ring back you've got to pay a redemption, then that ring re-belongs back to you.

V 15-20 is a picture of Jesus confirming His place in the Trinity and as such His role in creating Heaven, the heavens (the Universe) and the Earth. Interestingly, also -

He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation. For by Him all things were created that are in heaven and that are on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or principalities or powers. All things were created through Him and for Him. Colossians 1:15-16 NKJV. The Word image has retained its context and meaning through to today. When a young child looks like his dad, we say, 'he's the image of his dad.'

Was God or Jesus the creator? V16. John 1:3, 1 Corinthians 8:6, Hebrews 3:3-4. Genesis 1:1-2, Psalm 121:1-2, Ecclesiastes 3:11.

We can imagine why God created Heaven, the angels and all the heavenly beings but also included in this passage is - all things that are thrones or dominions or principalities or powers, including Hell, Hades, Satan and his entourage of devil's, demons etc. Satan does not have the power to create these; so why did God?

Verse 17 And He is before all things, and in Him all things consist. God's role in creation didn't end on the 6th day. Psalm 65:9.

Verse 18 And He 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. Jesus's role in the church is to be number 1.

Verses 19-20 Amplified Version but with no brackets - For it pleased the Father for all the fullness [] to dwell [] in Him (the Son), and through [] the Son to reconcile all things to Himself, making peace [] through the blood of His cross; through Him, [] whether things on earth or things in heaven. Colossians 1:19-20 AMP.

V 19. For it pleased the Father that in Him all the fullness should dwell. Fulness, everything that's in God is likewise in Jesus, in no way is Jesus inferior to God. He was temporarily in Psalm 8:5 but restored, Hebrews 1:3. Having crashed all barriers between Heaven and the believing Earth.

V 21. I look back over my life and I shudder at some horrific sins I've done. And yet Paul tells me: 'And you Andy, who once were alienated and enemies in your mind by wicked works, yet now He has reconciled in the body of His flesh through death, to present you holy, and blameless, and above reproach in His sight.' — Yes, in God's eyes we were once filthy rags, Jesus has not only rescued us, He's transformed us, making us holy and beyond reproach and then He presents us to His father (V 23) but that's an ongoing process, we have to continue in the faith and not lose hope in the Gospel.

V 24. Paul seems quite ready to parade his sufferings, they have become like a badge. For him they are like an opportunity to showcase and prove God's care in getting him through these situations. People may want to hurt, silence or even kill him but nothing happens to Paul except what God permits. Paul describes the church as Jesus's body on

Earth. What does that mean in terms of suffering and purpose? Paul describes himself as the church's servant (NIV) minister (NKJV) appointed by God to give to the church the word of God and to reveal mysteries starting with how Jesus lives within all Christians including Gentiles.

Mysteries, what Mysteries? The idea of us having a soul and having God's Spirit in us is not to be found in any medical journal or text book, to the outside world it's a total mystery but I believe it, in the same way that I believe I have a liver that breaks down my food and drink.

Paul knew that his stints in prison were within the will of God. Any that weren't, Paul was released immediately Acts 16:25-26. It was during his times in prison that Paul had time to write many of his epistles.

Paul tells us that we have to proclaim, admonish and teach with the aim of making everyone fully mature in Christ.