

COMMUNITY BIBLE CHURCH
PAUL'S LETTER TO THE COLOSSIANS – LESSON 1
INTRODUCTION - COLOSSIANS 1:1-8
WEEK OF DECEMBER 8 – DECEMBER 13

JESUS CHRIST IS PREEMINENT

Colosse was a city in Phrygia which is now part of modern-day Turkey. Colosse was located about 100 miles east of the city of Ephesus (If you have a map in the back of your Bible locate the city of Ephesus, travel east, and you will see the region of Phrygia). Colosse was located in the region of the seven churches of Revelation 1-3. Colosse was part of the Tri-City area that included Hieropolis and Laodicea. Paul never visited the city of Colosse.(Col.2:1) The church in Colosse was established by Epaphras who first communicated the gospel to the Colossians. Epaphras, according to Colossians 4:12, was a resident of Colosse. Epaphras most likely became a believer as a result of Paul's three-year ministry in the city of Ephesus. Epaphras was one of those who spread the word of the Lord, the gospel, "to all who lived in Asia." (Acts 19:10). Epaphras was instrumental in the commencement and growth of the churches in the Tri-City area. (Colossians 4:13)

Epaphras traveled to Rome to meet with Paul seeking his assistance in defending the gospel and responding to the threat of heresy in Colosse. The Colossian heresy could not be identified with any historical heretical teaching or system. Rather, the Colossian heresy was a combination of a false Greek philosophy mixed with Jewish legalism and ceremonialism. This heretical teaching denied the deity of Christ and the sufficiency of Christ for salvation. This heresy also emphasized the necessity of circumcision, keeping Jewish dietary laws and observing Jewish festivals for salvation. In essence, the Colossian heresy denied the sufficiency of Christ for salvation. Paul's theme in writing this letter to the Colossian church is to clearly establish the sufficiency of Christ for salvation and the preeminence of Christ, "that He Himself would come to have first place in everything." (Col.1:18)

The first two chapters of Colossians focuses on the preeminence of Christ (Doctrine). Chapters 3 and 4 provide instruction for the practical application of those truths (Duty).

As we study this letter to the Colossians, may we grow in the knowledge of Christ to fully embrace and understand the preeminence and sufficiency of Christ and then to act upon those truths.

1. What does Paul say about the Colossians in his greeting in **verses 1 and 2**?
2. In **verse 3**, Paul gives thanks to God the father and the Lord Jesus Christ giving an affirmation of the deity of Christ. From **Col.1:3-7**, how does Paul describe the Colossian church?
3. How are faith, love and hope connected in **Col.1:4-5**?

