

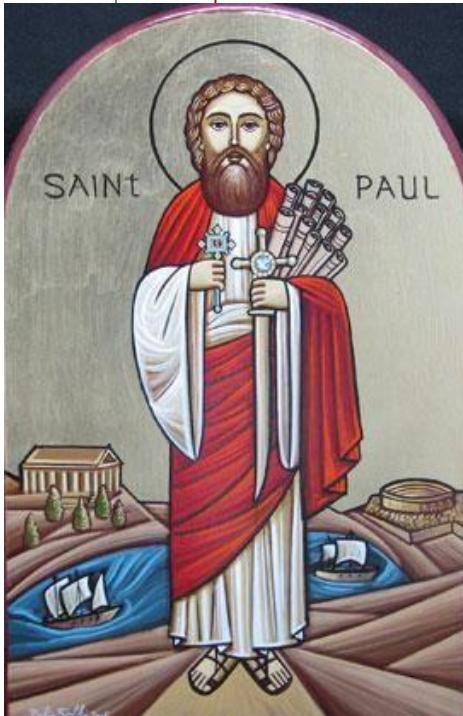
Colossians - Introduction

2021-07-09

Saint Paul's Epistles

14 Epistles

- Romans
- 1 & 2 Corinthians
- Galatians
- Ephesians
- Philippians
- **Colossians**
- 1 & 2 Thessalonians
- 1 & 2 Timothy
- Titus
- Philemon
- Hebrews



4 are called Prison Epistles

(written
*from prison
in Rome*):
Ephesians
Philippians
Colossians
Philemon

"Remember my chains"

Colossians

Chapter 1:
Pre-eminence of Christ

Chapter 2:
Warnings against Heresies

Chapter 3:
Christian Behavior

Chapter 4:
Final Exhortation

Background

- **Colossae** is in modern-day Turkey, roughly 200km West of Ephesus
- **Personalities**
 - **Epaphras** (Bishop of Colossae) who preached Christianity to the Colossians
 - **Philemon** (his house was used as a Church in Colossae)
 - **Onesimus** (servant of Philemon who escaped)
- **Jewish & Pagan people intermingled**
 - Jewish people wanted to impose their beliefs on the Christian believers
 - Pagans also wanted to impose pagan beliefs & rituals on the Christians
 - Also Gnostics ...



Heresy of Gnosticism

- Gnostics believe that sin comes from lack of men’s “knowledge” (philosophy) – leaning on their own understanding
- Think that any physical material is bad, only the spirit is good
- Could not accept that God could take flesh (they think all flesh is sin)
- Claim that God did not create physical material
- Say that creation was through a power from God, like a mediator
- Claim that it is not appropriate to worship God directly
- They say it is humble to worship the mediators, and worship angels
- Claim that Christ is not God, but that he is just a mediator
- They go through extreme asceticism to discipline the flesh
- ***The Gnostics wanted to impose their beliefs on the Christians***
- **Saint Paul wrote to Colossae to discuss these false beliefs (heresies)**

Context

St Paul received a report from Bishop Epaphras about the Colossians.

- General report was positive
- But there were dangers ...

DANGERS:

- **Apostasy**
(falling back to paganism)
- **Gnosticism**
(heresy denying divinity of Christ, focus on knowledge, harsh asceticism, falsely considering all physical material as evil)
- **Jewish Traditions**
(Jewish people wanting to impose Jewish traditions on Christians)

Purpose of Epistle

Saint Paul writes this letter to:

- Warn against Apostasy
- In Christ we will have our satisfaction
He is all sufficient
- Christ is Divine
He is God in the flesh (the Incarnate Logos)
- The only Knowledge is the Knowledge of Christ
He is the Truth
- Through Christ, we can be saved
He is our Savior
- Through Christ, we attain our eternal Salvation & Inheritance

Theme of Epistle

**Christ is
the Fullness of God,
(PERFECTION)**

**the Pre-eminent
(SURPASSING ALL OTHERS)**

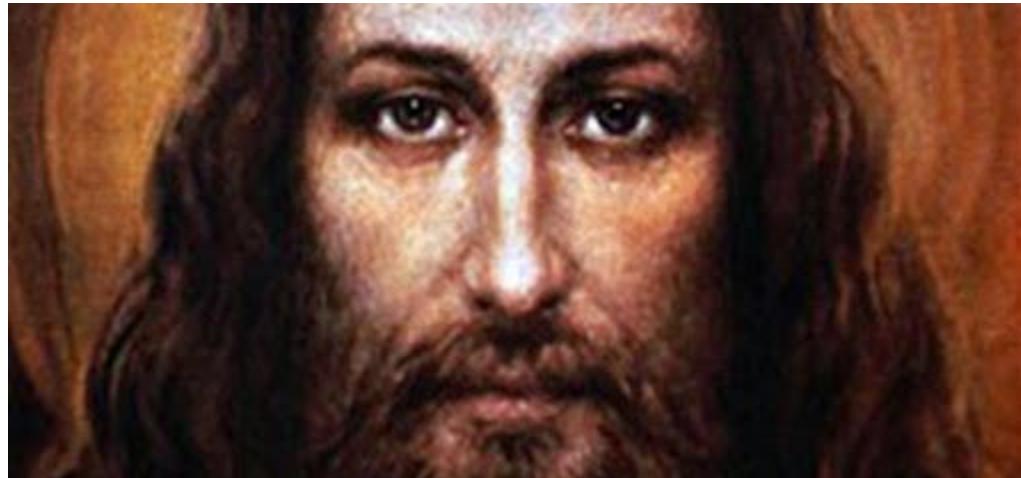
**and All-sufficient
(NO NEED FOR ANY OTHER)**

Savior

Comparison

Colossians:

Emphasis on Christ as the **Head** of the Church
(Christ is the fullness of God and His pre-eminence)



Ephesians:

Emphasis on the Church as the **Body** of Christ

Many ideas & verses are in common between Colossians & Ephesians.

Colossians chapter 1

Paul, an **apostle** of Jesus Christ by the will of God, and Timothy our **brother**,

² To the **saints** and faithful **brethren** in Christ who are in Colosse:

Grace to you and **peace** from God our **Father** and the Lord **Jesus Christ**.

- Teaching is not Paul's own, but he is an **apostle** of Christ by the will of God
- Timothy was Paul's disciple, yet he call him **brother** out of humbleness
- To the **saints** and faithful brethren, reminding them of their status in Christ (we are all called to be saints, holy, perfect, living in a Godly way)
- Calls them **brethren**, as we are all children of God, brethren in Christ
- **Grace** & **Peace** are the most needed gifts for us all!
- Emphasises the equality between God the **Father** and the Lord **Jesus Christ**

Thanksgiving

³ We give thanks to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, praying always for you, ⁴ since we heard of your faith in Christ Jesus and of your love for all the saints; ⁵ because of the hope which is laid up for you in heaven, of which you heard before in the word of the truth of the gospel, ⁶ which has come to you, as it has also in all the world, and is bringing forth fruit, as it is also among you since the day you heard and knew the grace of God in truth; ⁷ as you also learned from Epaphras, our dear fellow servant, who is a faithful minister of Christ on your behalf, ⁸ who also declared to us your love in the Spirit.

Why Thanksgiving?

³ We give thanks to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, praying always for you,

⁴ since we heard of your **faith** in Christ Jesus

[*they believed in the Lord Jesus Christ*]

and of your **love** for all the saints

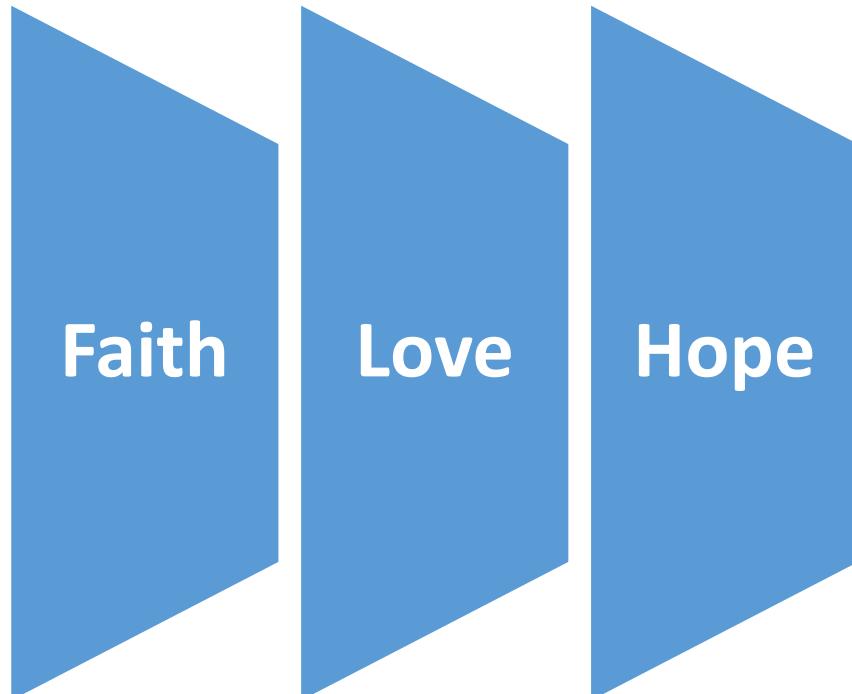
[*their faith was turned into practical works of love*]

*Love is not just emotion;
Love is shown through action, through works.*

Thanksgiving for their faith, love and hope

⁵ because of the **hope** which is laid up for you in heaven ...

Giving thanks on their behalf for their ...



Hope of

- *Salvation*
- *Inheriting the Kingdom*
- *Living Eternally with God*

Truth of the Gospel

⁵ because of the hope which is laid up for you in heaven,
of which you heard before
in the word of the **truth of the gospel**

*Saint Paul confirms that the **only truth** & knowledge is that
of the **Word of God**, not the philosophies of men.*

Message for All

⁵ because of the hope which is laid up for you in heaven,
of which you heard before in the word of the truth of the
gospel, ⁶ which has come to you,
as it has also in **all the world**, and is **bringing forth fruit**

*This Gospel is not for a certain race, nor for a certain nation, nor tribe, nor tongue, but for **all the world**.*

*Accepting the Message of the Gospel **brings forth fruit**:
love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness,
faithfulness, gentleness, self-control (Galatians 5)*

Love in the Spirit

⁶which has come to you, as it has also in all the world, and is bringing forth **fruit**, as it is also among you since the day you heard and knew the **grace** of God in **truth**; ⁷as you also learned from Epaphras, our dear fellow servant, who is a faithful minister of Christ on your behalf, ⁸who also declared to us your **love in the Spirit**.

Colossians were not only hearers, but doers of the Word.

*They accepted the Word of God in their heart, and therefore bore fruit: **love in the Spirit**.*

Fellow Servant

⁷ as you also learned from Epaphras,
our dear **fellow servant**,
who is a faithful minister of Christ on your behalf,
⁸ who also declared to us your love in the Spirit.

Servants having love for one another is essential.

Disciples of Christ must bear the fruit of love.

Reference (Google: Bishop Youssef Colossians)

www.suscopts.org/diocese/bishop/bible-study/epistle-to-the-colossians/
www.youtube.com/watch?v=ODFj-zrMxIc&t=80s